Deconstructing Anglo-Saxon Archaeology

A Critical Enquiry into the Study of Ethnicity in Lowland Britain in Late Antiquity (c. 350–600)

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Abstract

This thesis is the first major study of modern archaeological attempts to infer ethnic identity from the material record, in research on the Anglo-Saxon migrations to Britain after the end of Roman rule. It places these studies in their intellectual context, critically assesses their explicit methodologies and unstated analytical assumptions, and compares them with recent work in ethnic sociology. It asserts that Anglo-Saxon archaeology would benefit from drawing upon the most recent insights of this particular field, because, the thesis demonstrates, current scholarship relies upon epistemologically questionable categories, such as coherent 'Germanic' groups. The thesis uses post-structuralist philosophy to show that this reification results from belief that empirical methods can answer questions about ethnic identity unanswerable through purely archaeological means. In particular, it uses the philosophy of Jacques Derrida to show that even the subtler of such attempts rely on material interpretations based not on empirical observation, but pre-rational acts of interpretative choice originating from culture historical intellectual contexts.

The thesis then proposes possible alternatives, in conversation with recent historiography that treats the 'end' of the Roman world as a transformation of civic and military hierarchies of power in the wake of Roman state collapse. This produced complex renegotiations of gender identity and methods for the expression of status. The thesis uses the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to reinterpret two important early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries as well as the most important literary sources for Britain in the fifth century. This reinterpretation reveals that prioritising questions of ethnicity has precluded appreciation of the participation of the inhabitants of lowland Britain in such processes of renegotiation. The alternative interpretation offered instead does not deny the occurrence of migration to Britain in the fifth century, but posits that abandoning questions about the presence or absence of non-demonstrable ethnic identities can give those who experienced and witnessed such migration their part in the story of the transformation of the Roman world.

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Acknowledgements

It is clichéd to point out that the creation of a PhD thesis is never the work of a single individual. It remains no less the true for it, especially if one accepts the philosophical stance this thesis takes against the ontological reality of the 'individual'. I hope readers will therefore forgive me for repeating that truism here: this work could never have been finished without the aid of a number of people.

Foremost thanks must be given to Professor Guy Halsall. His effort, time and, most of all, patience in supervising a project which, as he might put it, is 'neither fish nor fowl', has been unwavering. I will always have him to thank for teaching me that my eclectic interests in critical theory and the early Anglo-Saxon period need not be incompatible.

Bailey Young once suggested that Guy's 'scholarly zest for thrusting at established ideas with the lances of new paradigms' could 'enthuse a new generation of graduate students',[1] and I hope that as just such a student I have been able to balance that enthusiasm with the prudence that Young also prescribed. The end result is not quite what either Guy or I envisaged, but my sometime youthful hubris in taking a differing approach does not lessen my gratitude for his stimulating, and exacting, supervision.

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My fellow subversives across the globe in the fields of Late Antique and Medieval Studies have been an exciting network of scholars with whom to converse.

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1. Bailey K. Young, "Halsall, Guy. Cemeteries and Society in Merovingian Gaul: Selected Studies in History and Archaeology (Review)," *The Medieval Review*, October 10, 2010,

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2. James M. Harland, Matthias Friedrich, and Nikolas Gunn, eds., *Interrogating the 'Germanic': a category and its use in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, Forthcoming).

love and support in the difficult moments. Lastly, Fiona merits special thanks for making any of this possible at all.

Without any of them, I would never have produced this thesis, and I only hope that it is sufficient reward for their labours.

Author's declaration

I declare that this thesis, and the research on which it is based, is my own work. Where reference is made to the works of others, the extent to which that work has been used is indicated and duly acknowledged in the text and bibliography.

This work has not been already accepted in substance for any degree, nor is it being concurrently submitted in candidature at any other university, or for any other degree. Excerpts from Chapter 6 have been published as an article in volume 5 of *Medieval Worlds*.[3]

The final word count, inclusive of appendices and discursive footnotes, is 79,137 words.

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3. James M. Harland, "Rethinking Ethnicity and "Otherness" in Early Anglo-Saxon England," *Medieval Worlds* 5 (2017): 113–142.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis is a historiography of the study of ethnic identity in the early Anglo-Saxon period. It focuses on the migration of the diverse groups known to modernity as the 'Anglo-Saxons' to Britain over the course of the 'long' fifth century (called by historians, after Bede, the *aduentus saxonum*),[1] which took place alongside the collapse of effective Roman rule over that diocese in the late fourth and early fifth centuries AD. In the thesis, I explore the means by which archaeologists from the 1980s to the present day have attempted to make use of the material remains of that period to infer the presence of ethnic identity, and the methods of those who have decried such attempts. The understanding that archaeologists have had of ethnicity is vastly variable, and in the work I aim to outline the unconscious assumptions and explicit theoretical thought processes that these archaeologists make use of when applying this concept in their analyses. To achieve this, I examine the methodological and interpretative choices which archaeologists make and the justifications made of these choices.

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1. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 1.15.

The work is not simply one of description, but of critical problematisation. In 2005, in an article reviewing the state of early medieval mortuary archaeology, Howard Williams noted that there had been little in the way of historiographical engagement with contemporary work on the subject, noting that studies on the origins of the field

> have identified the need for a critical appraisal of the socio-political context of the discipline in the light of racial theories and nationalism. However, to date there have been no sustained and detailed assessments that attempt to pull apart the theoretical agenda and biases of early medieval archaeologists, nor a consideration of how such biases are interpreted in academic and public contexts.[2]

Regrettably, this remains the case over a decade later. Though Sam Lucy's crucial work offers a coherent critical overview and rebuttal of nineteenth and early twentieth century approaches to this subject,[3] no such work has been produced for more recent archaeological scholarship, including that of Lucy herself. Some brief attempts have been made, normally in article form, to review what are increasingly regarded as the questionable discursive frameworks that still characterise this field,[4] and some minor skirmishes have resulted.[5] Yet there remains a lack of

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2. Howard Williams, "Rethinking Early Medieval Mortuary Archaeology," *Early Medieval Europe* 13 (2 2005): 197.

3. Sam Lucy, *The Early Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of East Yorkshire: An analysis and reinterpretation*, BAR British Series 272 (London: Archaeopress, 1998); Sam Lucy, *The Anglo Saxon Way of Death* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2000). See discussion in Chapter 2, below.

4. See, e.g. Philipp von Rummel, "The Fading Power of Images: Romans, Barbarians, and the Uses of a Dichotomy in Early Medieval Archaeology," in *Post-Roman Transitions: Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 365–406; Guy Halsall, "Ethnicity and early medieval cemeteries," *Arquelogia y Territorio Medieval* 18 (2011): 15–27; Florin Curta, "Medieval Archaeology and Ethnicity: Where are We?," *History Compass* 9 (7 2011): 537–548.

5. For a few examples of the exchanges of fire, see Heinrich Härke, "Ethnicity, 'Race' and Migration in Mortuary Archaeology: an Attempt at a Short Answer," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 14 (2007): 12–18; Guy Halsall, *Cemeteries and Society in Merovingian Gaul: Selected Studies in History and Archaeology, 1992-2009* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 49–88; Catherine Hills, "Anglo-Saxon migration: historical fact or mythical fiction?," *Antiquity* 87 (2013): 1220–1222; Michel Kazanski and Patrick Périn, "Archéologie Funéraire et Ethnicité en Gaule à l'époque mérovingienne (Réponse à Guy Halsall)," in *Entangled Identities and Otherness in Late Antique and Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Jorge López Quiroga, Michel Kazanski, and Vujadin Ivanišević, BAR International Series 2852 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2017), 199–212.

a sustained and detailed assessment of the field of early Anglo-Saxon archaeology, addressing theoretical agendas, biases, and their contexts.

Previous work to have critically interrogated and contextualised this subject has done so largely using inherited methodological tools, received either via post-processual archaeological theory, early medieval historical work on identity (especially that of the Toronto and Vienna schools[6]) or a combination of the two. In order to contextualise the field of study further, I compare the present state of research into early Anglo-Saxon archaeology with current scholarly understandings of ethnic identity, as articulated in the disciplines primarily focused on the study of this phenomenon, anthropology and sociology. I contend that a lack of sufficient attention to the most recent trends in these fields has produced work which—through drawing upon understandings of identity largely framed via archaeological theory—offers answers that are empirically unverifiable and epistemologically questionable. This is as much the case for studies that are critical of the ethnic paradigm in archaeological scholarship as for those that are in its favour.

In the following chapters, I argue that because of this problem of empirical verification, one which originates in the philosophical quandary of how to bridge the divide between subjectivity and objectivity, an alternative philosophical framework is necessary for studying identity in early medieval Britain. I draw upon the work of post-structuralist philosophers to propose such a framework. I make use of these philosophers not simply because I believe their ontological position to be correct, but because the means by which they demonstrate this is through rigorous empirical and critical engagement with the dominant frameworks through which philosophers of identity have sought to understand objective reality, and the human subject's engagement with that objective reality. This provides a powerful set of critical tools for outlining the contradictions, flaws and interpretative dead

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6. On which, see Andrew Gillett, ed., *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), and more discussion, below.

ends which all who attempt to assert absolute truths rely upon. I use those tools to highlight that such contradictions, flaws and interpretative dead ends are as prevalent in the study of identity in the early Anglo-Saxon period as in any other act of intellectual inquiry.

Although committed to empirical engagement with archaeological material, this thesis therefore rejects positivist approaches to archaeological interpretation. It has become commonplace to see it claimed in popular media that certain, previously-held 'facts' about the migration of the Anglo-Saxons to Britain have been proven— or refuted—by the introduction of new empirical methods, unlocking, at last, the 'true' answer to questions about the earliest origins of English history.[7] Though this is often the result of inaccurate reporting, these media often draw upon rigorous academic studies of the phenomena to which these questions are applied. These studies are often are no less guilty of assuming that such positivist methods are how these questions can be answered. I aim to demonstrate that this is an epistemological impossibility, one derived from the baseless assumption that absolute narratological truth is an achievable end goal.

1.1 Historical Approaches to the *aduentus saxonum*

All who come to the study the migration of those we now label 'Anglo-Saxons' to Britain are forced to grapple with the dearth of available historical evidence, and approaches to this evidence have altered dramatically even within the last two decades. What little written source material exists has been long studied, and the vast majority of it considerably postdates the events it purports to describe. Its historiography, too, has been well covered, so this account can be brief.[8] An

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7. For an especially egregious recent example, see Norman Hammond, "England's Ancient Growth Spurt," *The Times*, February 11, 2017.

8. For a recent statement see Guy Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur: Facts & Fictions of the Dark Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

earlier generation of historians took much of its content, such as the seemingly detailed accounts of Anglo-Saxon invasion and conquest offered by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* at face value.[9]

A more critical generation of historians, influenced among other things by anthropological and sociological theory as well as poststructuralist literary criticism have taken this thoroughly to task, highlighting that the older approaches could often display considerable naïvety in their understanding of the genre conventions, textual purpose and other contexts crucial to properly understanding these sources. These scholars have created a new body of source criticism that now renders it impossible for the informed and careful reader to simply take the content of these sources at face value.[10]

In addition to fragments of material found in entries by late Roman chroniclers and modern philological work done on toponyms,[11] the bulk of what we possess in the way of historical narrative comes almost entirely from two (at a stretch, three) complete sources. None of these are straightforward to deal with. The first of these is near contemporary, a member of the clergy known only to modernity as Gildas. His text, the *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae* ('On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain') is variably dated to between the late fifth and middle of the sixth centuries.[12] Though the meat of the text is a polemical section attacking Gildas' contemporaries, it begins with a historical description of the Britons'

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9.   See, for example, the approaches of Frank Stenton and John Morris. Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1943); John Morris, *The Age of Arthur* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973).

10.   There is an enormous bibliography, some of which is offered below, but for the most immediate refutations of more naîve readings see David N. Dumville, "Sub-Roman Britain—history and legend," *History* 62 (1977): 173–92 and James Campbell, "The Age of Arthur," in *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (1986), 121–30. An overview can be found in Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 51–86.

11.   For a summary, see Mark Vessey, "407 and All That: Insular Late Roman Historiography and the Literary-Historical Turn," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2 (1 2009): 30–48.

12.   For the state of dating, see Howard Wiseman, "The derivation of the date of the Badon entry in the *Annales Cambriae* from Bede and Gildas," *Parergon* 17 (2000): 1–10, which argues that Gildas' language is sufficiently impenetrable that any date from the late fifth to early sixth centuries is possible.

prior sins and eventual ruin at the hands of the Saxons.[13] Due to its apparently detailed discussion of the events that took place after the effective collapse of imperial authority in Britain, it has long been used as a fundamental source, in the absence of other options, for addressing all questions about the period.[14] Yet it is far from a straightforward source for such purposes. The text is a moralising tract, in which Gildas condemns the rulers and (mainly) priests of the day, in the guise of an Old Testament prophet. It has been long recognised that the use of the *De Excidio* for constructing straightforward narrative history is an impossible task, and no attempt to do so shall be made here. Useful information can be pulled from Gildas about the *aduentus saxonum*, but only with extreme caution. I have recently proposed that the narrative outlined by Gildas belies a far more complex and fluid situation, and that his apparently rigid depiction of ethnic boundaries lies in particular exegetical and eschatological goals drawing upon normative influences shaped by Gildas' background, steeped in normative classical Roman values.[15]

The second source is an early eighth century text produced by Bede, based at the dual monastic foundation of Monkwearmouth–Jarrow in the then Kingdom of Northumbria. In his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* ('Ecclesiastical History of the English People') Bede is the first to inform us that the new arrivals to Britain from *Germania* arrived in three distinct tribes, *Angli*, *Saxones* and *Iuti*, and it is this information upon which rest most early archaeological attempts to identify and delineate the cultural boundaries of early Anglo-Saxon migrants.[16] This seem-

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13. Gildas, *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*, ed. Theodore Mommsen, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Auctores Antiquissimi* 13 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1898), 4–26.
14. Michael Lapidge and David Dumville, eds., *Gildas: New Approaches* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1984); Nicholas J. Higham, *The English Conquest: Gildas and Britain in the fifth century* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994); Alex Woolf, "The Britons: from Romans to barbarians," in *Regna and Gentes: The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. Hans-Werner Goets, Jörg Jarnut, and Walter Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 345–380; Karen George, *Gildas's De Excidio Britonum and the Early British Church* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009); Thomas O'Loughlin, *Gildas and the Scriptures: Observing the World through a Biblical Lens* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012).
15. Harland, "Rethinking Ethnicity and "Otherness" in Early Anglo-Saxon England."
16. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I.15.

ingly straightforward narrative is actually contradicted by Bede himself, who in a later chapter of his text provides an alternative list of the tribal grouping of the new arrivals.[17] All attempts to study the putative tribal formations that Bede describes before their migration depend on a combination of philological reconstruction, guesswork, and, inevitably, the application of culture historical approaches to the archaeological record.[18] Sometimes elaborate theoretical frameworks (such as *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory[19]) have been relied upon to make such reconstructions.[20]

The final text is a composite collection of multiple chronicles, annals, and other texts collectively known as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, generally regarded as taking shape in its earliest form as the so-called 'Common Stock', assembled at the West Saxon court of Alfred the Great in the later ninth century.[21] The *Chronicle* offers an account that appears to describe the progress of Anglo-Saxon settlement in detail, including the migrations, battles and conquests of named figures of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes (such as 'Port', 'Hengest', or 'Wihtgar') responsible for the foundation of kingdoms and dynasties.[22] This account is now generally regarded as being largely fictitious, and is certainly too reliant on expected literary tropes and too full of scarcely credible personas to offer a useful account of the *aduentus saxonum*. Instead, this text, along with the geneaologies that it contains of various

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17. Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* IX.5; Ian N. Wood, "Before and After the Migration to Britain," in *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century. An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. John Hines (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 41.

18. For a classic example of such a study see John Hines, *The Scandinavian Character of Anglian England in the pre-Viking Period*, BAR British Series 124 (Oxford: BAR, 1984).

19. See discussion later in this chapter.

20. For summaries of the problems see Barbara Yorke, "Fact or Fiction?: The written evidence for the fifth and sixth centuries AD," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 6 (1993): 45–50; Wood, "Before and After the Migration to Britain."

21. Alice Jorgensen, "Introduction: Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," in *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History*, ed. Alice Jorgensen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 1–28; Nicholas Brooks, "Why is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle about Kings?," *Anglo-Saxon England* 39 (2011): 43–70.

22. Michael J. Swanton, ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).

royal dynasties (most notably that of the kings of Wessex) is best regarded as a contemporary political document, that can offer much insight about notions of political legitimacy, attitudes to the past, and culture in Anglo-Saxon England from the ninth century on.[23]

These difficulties have led most of those who consider these events to turn to the archaeological record, but another popular approach has been to refer to the more secure record for the political history of seventh-century Britain (again derived from Bede) in relation to documents such as the *Tribal Hidage*. These are often purported to offer a fragmentary snapshot of social and political conditions through the course of the so-called 'Migration Period', and are used to offer models reconstructing the gradual formation of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of the seventh century out of what are presumed to be collection of myriad smaller tribal polities.[24] This approach, too is far from unproblematic.[25] There is not the space to unpack these widely acknowledged difficulties here; the crucial point to observe is that all attempts to construct early Anglo-Saxon ethnic, social and political structures rely on inferences and conjecture made from an extremely fragmentary body of source materials. The study of the archaeological material is inseparable from these problems, because it is the guiding framework of Bede and those who have followed him that has ultimately governed the formation of the discipline of Anglo-Saxon archaeology.

We will see as the thesis progresses that many of the theoretical frameworks

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23.   Yorke, "Fact or Fiction?" On the geneaologies see, especially, David Dumville, "The Anglian collection of royal genealogies and regnal lists," *Anglo-Saxon England* 5:23–50 and David N. Dumville, "Kingship, geneaologies and regnal lists," ed. Peter H. Sawyer and Ian N. Wood, (Leeds), 1979, 72–104.

24.   See the collected articles in Stephen Bassett, ed., *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989).

25.   For the difficulties with this approach see discussion in Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 118–20. Harrington and Welch's 'Beyond the Tribal Hidage' project neatly unpacks some of these issues, but relies upon culture-historical assumptions about ethnic identity that are dealt with later in the thesis. Sue Harrington and Martin Welch, *The Early Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms of Southern Britain AD 450-650: Beneath the Tribal Hidage* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), 5–8. See below, 88.

scholars have attempted to draw upon to reconstruct the early details of Anglo-Saxon narrative history have also been applied to interpretation of the material culture that putatively evidences this history. All applications of this narrative to the material culture evidence, we will see, depend on interpretative leaps made from a body of assumptions that are themselves fraught with historiographical difficulty. This is the case both in the more traditional approaches which lie in Culture History and those approaches critical of this, drawing upon a constructivist framework, and which are simply an opposite reaction to the same set of interpretative frameworks. For this reason, the thesis attempts not to deny the possible applicability of the questions these written sources have offered to the interpretation of the archaeological record, but rather to suggest some alternative interpretative avenues, less fraught with either historiographical or methodological difficulty, that may more fruitfully be pursued.

It is also for this reason that the poststucturalist approaches alluded to above, and discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 3, are essential to the argument of this thesis. Current studies of the archaeological material rely upon a historiographical understanding of ancient ethnic groups based upon particular philosophical approaches to the study of identity. These approaches can vary from outright culture historical (assuming the existence of temporally and geospatially stable entities, often related through blood or 'race') to the more subtle and constructivist, sometimes drawing upon sociological frameworks such as those of Pierre Bourdieu or Anthony Giddens. All nevertheless hinge upon the assumption that identity consists of stable categories, that can be identified in the historical and archaeological record through empirical observation.[26] Poststructuralism, and its particular approach to the philosophy of being ('differential ontology'), offer both a toolkit for demonstrating the logical inconsistencies present in such putative acts

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26. See discussion, e.g., of the 'Germanic' in the subsequent section of this chapter, and the detailed discussion in Chapter 2.

of empirical demonstration, and an epistemological understanding of identity that enables one to circumvent such inconsistencies. The thesis' argument does not concern 'refuting' that which the documentary record 'tells' us. To understand that record, after all, is rather more complex than simply treating the source material as a compendium of narrative events and historical figures. Rather, the thesis seeks to outline the methodological stumbling blocks posed by any attempts to reconcile the narratives told by our documentary and our archaeological sources, offering alternative questions to be asked of these sources on this basis. This approach draws upon Halsall's appeal to avoid casual cross-disciplinary 'borrowings', recognising the different categories of data that archaeological and historical interpretation use, and bringing them into comparison only at the most sophisticated levels of interpretation.[27]

1.2 The structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured in two parts, and seven chapters, including this introduction. *Part I,* 'Shaking the Frameworks', opens with *Chapter 2,* which provides a critical literature review and historiography of the development of paradigmatic trends in the study of ethnic identity. It charts the reception and application (or lack thereof) of these paradigmatic trends in wider and specifically early medieval archaeological scholarship. This chapter highlights some of the critical junctures where over-reliance on outdated schools of ethnic sociology, as well as contemporary political contexts, have shaped Anglo-Saxon archaeological thinking in a manner that produces problematic interpretations. Alongside exposing the philosophical faultlines responsible for these problematic interpretations, it introduces

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27.   I.e., those high up 'Hawkes' Ladder'. C. F. C Hawkes, "Archaeological theory and method: some suggestions from the Old World," *American Anthropologist* 56 (1954): 155–68; Guy Halsall, "Archaeology and Historiography," in *Cemeteries and Society*, 44–8; Guy Halsall, "Commentary One: Archaeology and its Discontents," in *Cemeteries and Society*, 72–88

some possibly fruitful alternatives being developed on the continent, particularly those coming from the University of Freiburg.

Chapter 3 offers an alternative philosophical and ontological framework for the study of identity in late antiquity, drawing upon differential ontological thought as articulated in the works of Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The chapter charts the intersections and clashes of approach of these three thinkers, as well as the critical reception of these by other philosophers and, where appropriate, their current application in archaeological scholarship. The chapter uses this to shape a coherent hermeneutic methodology which draws upon these philosophers' respective strengths, while bypassing their weaknesses, for application in the subsequent analytical chapters of the thesis.

Chapter 4 is this methodology in action, drawing upon Derridean deconstruction as it is described in Chapter 3. This methodological tool is used to chart the most recent thinking of archaeologists of the early Anglo-Saxon period in relation to ethnic identity, and to expose the critical faultlines in their interpretation, by identifying the points at which their argumentation ceases to rely upon empirical demonstration and has instead moved into the realm of interpretative leaps (known in post-structuralist philosophy as '*aporiae*'). The chapter demonstrates that all such interpretative leaps are ultimately founded upon the non-empirical foundational axiom that early Anglo-Saxon material culture somehow conveyed something 'Germanic' in its semiotic properties.

Chapter 5 grapples with the empirical basis for this argumentation, highlighting the problematic nature of the evidence that Anglo-Saxon archaeologists claim provides the lynchpin for their interpretions. The chapter examines material, biological, and artistic evidence, and challenges the claims that such empirical data offers evidence for the existence of a contemporarily recognisable so-called 'Germanic' ideology. Application of post-groupist ethnic sociology as described in Chapter 2

shows these supposedly empirical lynchpins to be anything but.

Having drawn upon Derridean deconstruction as well as more traditional historiography to shake the frameworks of the field, *Part II*, 'Building an Alternative', outlines a path toward reconstructing the narrative. *Chapter 6* uses the alternative Deleuzo-Guattarian framework for ontology outlined in Chapter 3 to offer a possible interpretative approach to early Anglo-Saxon material culture. This approach emphasises difference and fluidity as core aspects of subjective being in the fifth century in Britain. It proceeds through three case studies, two focusing upon the key early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries of Spong Hill and Wasperton respectively (the rationale for the selection of which is explained in Chapter 3). These case studies highlight the flawed ethnic argumentation that has previously been applied to these two cemeteries, based upon the reasoning advanced in previous chapters. It then attempts to identify aspects of semiotic expression that can more reasonably be inferred from the material in these cemeteries, to advance arguments about ideological transformations identifiable in gendered uses of grave–goods and which may be tied to the militarisation of society. The final case study attempts an analysis of the semiotic content of the cruciform brooch—an early Anglo-Saxon artefact crucial to recent analyses which propose ethnic interpretations—to bolster these arguments. The chapter finally attempts to tie such transformative narratives to wider narratives about the transformation of the Roman world, that operate as an alternative to narratives which assert mass barbarian migration and invasion to be the cause of the shift from a stable imperial polity to a collection of early medieval barbarian *regna*. I draw upon the 'Freiburg School' of archaeology, as described in Chapter 2, and Halsall's understanding of the role which gender and martial expression played in the sociopolitical transformation of the Western Empire. Using a Deleuzo-Guattarian lens, I explain how the evidence discussed in my case studies can be explained as a consequence of this wider sociopolitical reconfiguration,

albeit with unique local particularities and differences. In so doing, I demonstrate that the rejection of 'ethnic' narratives renders us no less able to construct political historical arguments from our source material.

Chapter 7 draws the summative conclusions of these chapters together, comments on their implications for the study of the field, and offers some brief closing discussion of possible areas for future research that the thesis has exposed.

1.3 A note on terminology

Several terms that are ubiquitous in scholarship but by no means uncontentious are used frequently in the thesis. I offer some definition of these terms for the sake of clarity and precision.

'Ethnicity'

Definitional disputes over the concept of 'ethnicity' are so central to the argument of this thesis that any attempt to outline the concept here would be unhelpful. Chapter 2 charts these disputes at length and provides a full workable understanding of the concept in its most contemporary guises. Still, a brief definitional statement may be helpful, and for this purpose I use Andreas Wimmer who, after Weber, defines ethnicity as

> a subjectively felt belonging to a group that is distinguished by a shared culture and by common ancestry. This belief in shared culture and ancestry rests on cultural practices perceived as "typical" for the community, or on myths of a common historical origin, or on phenotypical similarities indicating common descent.[28]

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28. Andreas Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 7.

'Roman'

In a thesis dealing with late antiquity in Western Europe, 'Romanness' appears at face value a straightforward term. The thesis grapples, after all, with the transformation of a diocese of the Western Roman Empire, which was a polity defined largely by its possession of this quality of 'Romanness', and an ideological association, especially, with the city of Rome. Roman Britain eventually came to an end, and one might therefore assume that at some point, 'the Romans' ceased to be there. Sadly, things are not quite so simple. Romanness, like most such categories, was never static and this is especially the case in late antiquity, which witnessed shifting understandings of the concept especially after the extension of citizenship to all of the Empire's inhabitants in AD212 by the *Constitutio Antoninia*. Part of the difficulty in defining the concept of Romanness lies in its construction, at points where the Empire's survival was secure, through identification (and thus exclusion) of that which it was not: barbarity, effeminacy, irrationality, and the like. Such criteria are always subjective; contemporaries of the late Roman period were often conflicted over who did or did not 'legitimately' qualify as 'Roman', and some of these conflicts are explored in Chapters 6 and 7 especially.

In the fourth to sixth centuries, substantial political turbulence in, and the eventual collapse of, the Western Roman Empire saw the concept of Romanness undergo considerable dramatic shifts.[29] As Pohl notes, it is not simply enough to identify those who felt *themselves* to be Roman, nor will the universalising concept of classical Romaness suffice for our purpose.[30] For now, a heuristically useful definition is that 'Romanness' refers to the quality of in some way being associated with Rome, or the Roman Empire. This need not mean the Empire as an *actually existing* polity, but can also refer to 'the Roman' as an idealised abstract concept, given the central-

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29. Walter Pohl, "Romanness: a multiple identity and its changes," *Early Medieval Europe* 22 (4 2014): 406–18.
30. Ibid., 409.

ity of *imperium romanum* (literally 'Roman power') to expressions of authority both in and beyond the Roman frontiers in late antiquity and the early middle ages.[31] The thesis sometimes uses the word *romanitas* to refer to the state of something being 'Roman' or having 'Roman' qualities. The word is not a common one in our period of discussion but is widely used as shorthand in scholarship.

A crucial proposition which underpins this thesis is that the actual existence of Roman ideology and its various manifestations, artistic, political and literary, can be empirically demonstrated from our source material due to the survival of written sources. It is for this reason that I find it less contentious a term, in all its complexity, than the conceptual category often raised as its antagonistic opposite, the 'Germanic'.

'Germanic'

The 'Germanic' is a concept laden with political, ethnic, cultural and geographical resonances. These are complex, entangled and often controversial. Because of the crucial role challenging this concept plays in the argument of this thesis as well as the study of the early middle ages more generally, it is discussed here at some length.

Although in wide sections of late antique and early medieval scholarship the 'Germanic' has been rejected as a useful explanatory category to describe various phenomena,[32] its usage persists, and it is thus necessary to briefly discuss the problems with the concept.[33] It is difficult to know where to begin. In some respects, the presumed existence of a pan-'Germanic' cultural identity is inextricably bound with the development of medieval studies as a discipline in the nineteenth century,

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31. Guy Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West, 376-568* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
32. See discussion below.
33. Fuller discussion will be made in the introduction to Harland, Friedrich, and Gunn, *Interrogating the 'Germanic'*.

as it was partly the desire to shape a foundational narrative of 'Germanic antiquity' (*germanische Altertumskunde*) that led to the energetic editing and collation of medieval texts, compilation of encyclopaedic volumes, development of 'scientific' historical methodologies, and burgeoning excavation of medieval sites and antiquarian study of their artefacts, that so characterised this period. This was fuelled especially by the nationalist project of German unification under Bismarck (though it had earlier roots in the formative stages of enlightenment Romanticism in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and especially early nineteenth centuries), and then the disastrous ethnonationalist ideologies of the early twentieth century. Discussion on this subject could be (and is) vast. To note a few brief outcomes of these trends, they resulted in such formative textual projects as the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* and the *Reallexicon der Germanische Altertumskunde*.[34] In archaeology, too, the extent of interrelation of these discourses with contemporary nationalist ideologies is enormous, but an obvious example would be the foundation in the Third Reich by Heinrich Himmler of the *SS Ahnenerbe,* an archaeological research organisation intended to capture, collate and study items from German *'Volk'* antiquity, and which launched its expeditions sometimes only shortly after *Wehrmacht* panzers had rolled through the lands whose invasion and ethnic cleansing these artefacts were purported to justify.[35] Such concerns also had notable effects on the development of English historiography and archaeology, especially in the early twentieth

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34. Ian N. Wood, *The Modern Origins of the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

35. Wood, "Barbarians, Historians, and the Construction of National Identities," 77–8; Guy Halsall, "Two Worlds Become One: A 'Counter-Intuitive' View of the Roman Empire and 'Germanic' Migration," *German History* 32 (4 2014): 516. On the wider interrelation of these discursive contexts with ideologies of romantic nationalism in archaeology see, e.g., Hubert Fehr, "*Volkstum* as Paradigm: Germanic People and Gallo-Romans in Early Medieval Archaeology since the 1930s," in Gillett, *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages,* 177–200; Howard Williams, ""Burnt Germans", Alemannic graves and the origins of Anglo-Saxon archaeology," in *Zweiundvierzig. Festschrift für Michael Gebühr zum 65. Geburtstag,* ed. Stefan Burmeister, Heidrun Derks, and Jasper von Richthofen (Rahden, Westf.: Leidorf, 2007), 229–238; Bonnie Effros, *Uncovering the Germanic Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

century under the influence of pseudoscientific understandings of 'race'.[36]

The idea that there existed a coherent 'Germanic' cultural *ethos*, via which the disparate languages, actions, cultural products, cosmologies, social structures and political formations of putative 'Germanicness' could be both described and explained, has been a fundamental product of this nationalist context. To oversimplify slightly, the 'Germanic' world is held by those who follow this view to have been a coherent cultural system, functioning as a counterweight and antagonistic binary to the Roman world which it eventually overran and consumed, laying down its own distinct *regna* with their own, 'unique' Germanic laws, costume traits, and social structures in its place.

Yet this conceptual framework is entirely lacking in empirical basis. Crucial to the challenging of this in historiography has been the work of Walter Goffart of the University of Toronto, who since the mid-twentieth century has worked to demolish the elaborate, but entirely baseless, argumentative structures that generations of late antique and early medieval historians and archaeologists have conjured almost from air. Goffart and other scholars of the 'Toronto School' have, through careful historicising attention to the activities of the barbarian groups purported to share this unity, and the contexts of the sources alleged to preserve traces of their authentic myths, highlighted the total lack of any empirical basis for the assertion that so-called 'Germanic' peoples recognised their putative cultural unity and concomitant common interest in late antiquity.[37]

Debate about this point has raged without end in recent decades and it would take up far too much space to rehearse this debate fully here. To summarise in

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36. Williams, ""Burnt Germans""; Wood, *The Modern Origins of the Early Middle Ages*, 199–222.

37. See, especially, Walter Goffart, "The Theme of '*The* Barbarian Invasions'," in *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, ed. Evangelos K. Chryos and Andreas Schwarcs (Vienna: Bölau, 1989), 87–108; Walter Goffart, "Two Notes on Germanic Antiquity Today," *Traditio* 50 (1995): 9–30; Walter Goffart, "Does the Distant Past Impinge on the Invasion Age Germans," in Gillett, *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*, 21–38. See also the other contributions to Gillett, *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*.

brief, the core clash was fought in the 1990s and 2000s between the 'Toronto' and 'Vienna' schools of early medieval ethnicity. The Toronto narrative developed as a response by Goffart and his students to what they perceived to be lack of critical methodological reflection by proponents of *Traditionskern* Ethnogenesis Theory,[38] originally developed by Reinhard Wenskus, but which came to particular prominence under Herwig Wolfram and his students and associates, now known as the 'Vienna School'.[39] In its earlier guises, this was a form of ethnic constructivism but one that was ultimately predicated in the assumed existence of a broader, pan-Germanic cultural *ethos*, albeit divorced from racial and genetic essentialism, which held that an elite preserved a core of tradition (*Traditionskern*) based upon myths of origin, names of gods, and suchlike, which formed the basis for the formation of ethnic groups constructed out of peoples of diverse origins.[40]

Substantial scholarship has been devoted to critiquing of the concept of 'Germanic' cultural identity, but little in the way of substantive response to these criticisms is offered by those who remain wedded to it, who instead treat it simply as an axiom.[41] Yet numerous studies have grappled with the various aspects of the

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38. As it is popularly known, though Wenskus himself never used the phrase.

39. Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1961); Herwig Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten, von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts: Entwurf einer historischen Ethnographie* (Munich: Beck, 1979); Walter Pohl, "Introduction," in *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of the Ethnic Communities, 300-800*, ed. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1–15; Gillett, *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*; Andrew Gillett, "Ethnogenesis: A Contested Model of Early Medieval Europe," *History Compass* 4 (2 2006): 241–60.

40. Ibid., 244–6.

41. A few recent examples will suffice. In historiography, the word is liberally used as a legitimate diagnostic category in many works, but a recent example would be Peter Heather, *Empires and Barbarians: The Fall of Rome and the Birth of Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). In archaeology, numerous examples are available toward the latter end of Chapter 3 but clear recent examples are John Hines, "The origins of East Anglia in a North Sea zone," in *East Anglia and its North Sea World in the Middle Ages*, ed. D. Bates and R. Liddiard (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), 42–3 and Catherine Hills, "The Anglo-Saxon Migration: An Archaeological Case Study of Disruption," in *Migrations and Disruptions: Toward a Unifying Theory of Ancient and Contemporary Migrations*, ed. Brenda J. Baker and Takeyuki Tsuda (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2015), 45. In stylistic interpretation, Charlotte Behr, "The origins of kingship in early medieval Kent," *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (1 2000): 27; Alexandra Pesch, *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit: Thema und Variation* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2007), 378; Alexandra Pesch, "Facing Faces: The Head Motif in Migration-Period Archaeology," *Medieval Archaeology* 61 (2017): 41–68. In linguistics the

early medieval record held to embody authentic remnants, from before the *Völk-erwanderung,* of the protohistoric 'Germanic' past, and in all almost all cases these are found to be lacking.

The utility of the 'Germanic' as an interpretative framework has been questioned in application to almost all available forms of evidential material. The putatively 'Germanic' aspects of post-Roman barbarian law might well derive from provincial Roman law.[42] In the realm of linguistics, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is sometimes erroneously applied to argue that linguistic similarity produces contemporarily recognised cultural uniformity.[43] More recent work on the interrelation of the structures of 'Germanic' heroic poetry with the morphology and phonology of the 'Germanic' languages offers subtler interpretations of how these phenomena might relate, without needing to assume there was a contemporarily perceived unified cultural *ethos*.[44] In terms of material culture, the empirical basis for such assertions is grappled with at length in Chapter 5, but it suffices here to mention that many of allegedly empirically 'proven' instances of material culture bearing something 'Germanic' in its character rely entirely upon assumptions derived from interpretations of the linguistic, legal and documentary evidence.[45] The degree to which one remains wedded to assumptions of a pan-Germanic cultural *ethos* is

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assumption that Germanic speakers are equivalent to a coherent Germanic 'people' may be found in works as recent as Bryan Ward-Perkins, "Why Did the Anglo-Saxons Not Become More British?," *English Historical Review* 115 (462 2000): 513–533. An excellent example of a linguist who avoids such assumptions is Alaric Hall, "The Instability of Place-Names in Anglo-Saxon England and Early Medieval Wales, and the Loss of Roman Toponymy," in *Sense of Place in Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. Richard Jones and Sarah Semple (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2012), 101–29.

The Gillett volume *On Barbarian Identity* aims most of its ire at Wenskus' student, Wolfram, and Wolfram's student, Pohl. Yet Pohl's subsequent work on medieval ethnicity is in fact far more subtle than this criticism—which could be more reasonably targeted at some of the scholars just listed—suggests. Walter Pohl, "Ethnicity, Theory, and Tradition: A Response," in Gillett, *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages,* 221–240.

42.   Paul S. Barnwell, "Emperors, Jurists and Kings: Law and Custom in the Late Roman and Early Medieval West," *Past & Present* 168 (2000): 6–29.

43.   Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations,* 23.

44.   Cătălin Țăranu, "Who Was the Original Dragon-slayer of the Nibelung Cycle?," *Viator* 46 (2 2015): 23–40; Nelson Goering, "(Proto-)Germanic Alliterative Verse: Linguistic Limits on a Cultural Phenomenon," in Harland, Friedrich, and Gunn, *Interrogating the 'Germanic'.*

45.   For fuller discussion, see, e.g. Rummel, "The Fading Power of Images," 378–93.

often closely related to one's historiographical understanding of the 'end' of the Western Roman Empire.[46]

There is almost no evidence that the disparate social groups who existed along the Baltic and the North Sea coasts, in Germany, across the Danube and in Scandinavia consciously identified with one another in the late Roman and early medieval periods.[47] To assert that they did is to impose elaborate sociological constructs upon flimsy and scant traces of evidence, sometimes relying upon the linking of late antique texts with Roman ethnographic works four centuries younger,[48] or 'pagan' Icelandic texts preserved in a Christianising context almost six centuries later.[49] In historical scholarship of the late medieval, early modern or modern periods such an approach would be rightly derided as ludicrous. In some instances the very inclusion of some of these peoples under the rubric *Germani* is entirely a nineteenth-century imposition, 'correcting' the 'inaccurate' Roman ethnographers.[50] It is possible that such a phenomenon as 'Germanicness' became contemporarily recognisable during the seventh to ninth centuries,[51] perhaps in a context of Carolingian expansion into Saxony and the energetic work undertaken by Anglo-Saxon missionaries to convert the same region to Christianity.[52] But this could only occur

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46. For a summary see Guy Halsall, "Movers and Shakers: The Barbarians and the Fall of Rome," *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (1999): 131–145. For a sense of the range of historiographical dispute Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, Michael Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars: from the third century to Alaric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

47. Walter Pohl, *Die Germanen*, 2nd ed., Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte 57 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2004), 50–1.

48. That is to say, with Tacitus' *Germania*.

49. I.e., with the Norse myths contained in the *Prose Edda* of Snorri Sturlusson.

50. Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars*, 46–7; Walter Goffart, *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 187–229.

51. Such processes might be preserved, for example, in a reference to homilies being translated into *Theotisca* at the Council of Tours in 813. I am grateful to Nik Gunn for bringing this to my attention.

52. Giles Brown, "The Carolingian Renaissance: an introduction," in *Carolingian Culture: emulation and innovation*, ed. Rosamund McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 9–11. Even this was less obviously framed around 'Germanicness' than some have assumed. Cătălin Țăranu, "The Balloon that Wouldn't Burst: A Genealogy of 'Germanic'," in Harland, Friedrich, and Gunn, *Interrogating the 'Germanic'*.

after early medieval historiographers in the 'vernacular'-speaking parts of the former Western Empire began to conceptualise their own understandings of historical development through an ethnographic lens derived from the classical historiography to which they owed their stylistic heritage.[53] In the fourth to sixth centuries, those groups that some modern historians erroneously label *Germani* far more frequently communicated with the inhabitants of the Roman Empire than with their putative ethnic comrades. This should hardly be surprising, as the majority of such groups existed near the imperial frontiers.[54]

This is not to suggest that such a concept could not *possibly* have existed in localised contexts at specific points in the fourth to sixth centuries. The post-groupist view of ethnic sociology argued for in Chapter 2 necessitates recognition that the presence of ethnic expression in the absence of evidence can be neither proven nor disproven. Yet neither the evidence for such a concept nor the social infrastructure which would produce it exists to justify the coherence, self-awareness, and ideological power that is often attributed to it in opposition to Romanness. So thoroughly lacking in utility is this concept that some scholars have pleaded for the term to be dropped altogether in discussion of late antique historiography, and I am sympathetic to this view. Jörg Jarnut, for example, rejects the concept on the grounds that the notion is simply incoherent when applied to late Roman, post-Tacitean contexts:

> the critical historiographical application of the concept of 'Germanism' is justifiable and meaningful for Roman antiquity from the first

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53. *Pace* Nicholas J. Howe, "Rome: capital of Anglo-Saxon England," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34 (1 2004): 167. On this ethnographic lens, see Andrew Gillett, "The Mirror of Jordanes: Concepts of the Barbarian, Then and Now," in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. Philip Rousseau (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 392–408. On the classical frameworks which shaped early medieval historiography, Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, "1st paperback edition" (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

54. On this see A. D. Lee, *Information and Frontiers: Roman Foreign Relations in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 66–71, 158–161 and especially the application of the findings of this work by Philip A. Shaw, "Uses of Wodan: The Development of his Cult and of Medieval Literary Responses to It" (PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 2002), 50–4.

century before Christ to the third century after Christ, while the use
of the term should be, under all circumstances, be avoided for later
(or earlier) periods, because—in this context—it is anachronistic and
not based in the textual record.[55]

Even in application to the early imperial period the label is arguably mean-
ingless.[56] Yet we will see that such warnings tend to go unheeded in Anglo-Saxon
archaeological scholarship.

I reject the accuracy and utility of this term as an empirical diagnostic category
to describe cultural phenomena from the period this thesis concerns.[57] It could be
argued that such semantic pedantry is excessively purist, but arguments advanced
in the thesis will make clear that continual reliance on this concept has caused
considerable difficulties in the interpretation of mortuary material from our period,
and the construction of historical narratives from this interpretation. Therefore,
when I make use of the term, I refer in almost all cases to the conceptual category
as it is conceived and applied—with all the implications this carries—by those who
accept its utility as a legitimate term. Otherwise, I refer to a specific set of related
languages grouped by their shared linguistic traits, the 'Germanic languages'. To
refer to those who spoke these languages, I use 'Germanic-speaking peoples'.

'Anglo-Saxon'

The term 'Anglo-Saxon' bears many of the same problems as the concept 'Ger-
manic', though it has an advantage over the latter in that it is usually recognised

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55. 'An dieser Stelle zeichnet sich ab, dass die kritisch–geschichtswissenschaftliche Anwen-
dung des Germanenbegriffes für die römische Antike vom ersten vorchristlichen bis zum dritten
nachchristlichen Jahrhundert vertretbar und sinnvoll ist, während seine Benutzung für spätere
(oder auch frühere) Epochen unter allen Umständen vermieden werden sollte, weil er in diesem
Kontext anachronistisch und quellenfern ist'. Jörg Jarnut, "Zum "Germanen"-Begriff der His-
toriker," in *Altertumskunde – Altertumswissenschaft – Kulturwissenschaft: Erträge und Perspektiven nach
40 Jahren Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. Heinrich Beck, Dietrich Geuenich, and
Heiko Steuer (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2012), 400.
56. Nico Roymans, *Ethnic Identity and Imperial Power: The Batavians in the Early Roman Empire*
(Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004), 28–9.
57. These issues will be discussed at length in the preface to Harland, Friedrich, and Gunn, *Inter-
rogating the 'Germanic'*.

by those in the field who use it to be problematic, imprecise and anachronistic in its application to the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries.[58] The historiography on problems with the concept in its application to late antiquity is extensive, and will not be rehearsed here.[59]

Unlike with 'Germanic', I frequently use the term to discuss the new forms of material culture that appear in Britain in the fifth century, and, of course, use it for the title of this thesis. I do so because in the sub-discipline of archaeological scholarship to which 'Anglo-Saxon' lends its name, the term's problems are well-recognised. Because of this recognition of the term's anachronistic aspects, when one navigates the scholarship its use as a category referring solely to the body of material studied by this discipline,[60] with no necessary implications of ethnic or cultural affiliation, is far more apparent. In this thesis, unless explicitly referring to its deployment as an ethnic or cultural category I use the term 'Anglo-Saxon' as a diagnostic category referring solely to the types of material studied by the discipline of 'Anglo-Saxon archaology'. I intend no other implication unless it is explicitly stated.[61]

'Military'

This thesis devotes considerable space to the discussion of such processes as the 'militarisation' of social elites or behaviours. This is not intended to reify any single notion of what being a 'soldier' or of 'military' status meant. To be 'military' means

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58. See, e.g. Helena Hamerow, David A. Hinton, and Sally Crawford, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), xxiii.
59. The best overview is Susan Reynolds, "What Do We Mean by "Anglo-Saxon" and "Anglo-Saxons"?," *Journal of British Studies* 24 (4 1985): 395–414.
60. Namely, certain types of material culture that appear, by whatever cause, in lowland Britain in the late fourth to seventh centuries, and their stylistic and typological descendants, which partly have their origins in and show links with northern Germany and Scandinavia.
61. Other readers who apply Derridean deconstruction like that I have attempted to the thesis itself will likely find that other such implications are inadvertently expressed. This is an inevitable outcome of the slipperiness of language, and I make no apologies for it.

more than simply being a participant in violence, but what precisely this means is context-dependent and difficult to pin down.[62]

Gardner has commented extensively on late Roman military identity in Britain in the fourth century, drawing upon a Giddensian structuration framework to describe the nature of military identity as a recursive locus wherein certain features of social life, 'selectively drawn from the complexities of daily interactions', are reified as institutions. This process created the Roman military as an 'institution' which had an identity organised with a specific sense of its corporate nature, reproduced by those members recruited into and who participated in its specific lifeways.[63]

This definition is too precise to be heuristically useful for the material which I discuss; phenomena such as weapon burial, for example, can sometimes be associated with material culture likely affiliated with the institution of the Roman military, such as certain types of belt sets. But they often lack diagnostic criteria for explicit affiliation with such coherent institutional bodies, and there is considerable debate over whether such phenomena express 'militarisation' or trends such as the expression of power through aristocratic hunting symbolism.[64] Such trends clearly have more to them than mere participation in violence. Weapon burial and other acts of expression which appear in the fifth century, often described as 'militarised' by modern observers, are clear expressions of social power and the ability to enforce it through violent means, in the context of state collapse.[65] Such

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62. There is an enormous bibliography on corporate military identity in the late Roman and early medieval west. Good starting points are Guy Halsall, *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450-900* (London: Routledge, 2003); Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 101–10; Andrew Gardner, *An Archaeology of Identity: Soldiers and Society in Late Roman Britain* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2007); A. D. Lee, *War in Late Antiquity: A Social History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007); Simon James, *Rome and the Sword: How Warriors and Weapons Shaped Roman History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011), 22–8.

63. Gardner, *An Archaeology of Identity*, 209–217.

64. On this debate, see discussion in Chapter 6, 254.

65. I here rely on Wickham's definition of the late antique state and its arguments concerning the centralisation of legitimate enforceable authority. Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 57. See Guy Halsall, "Violence and Society: An Intro-

1.3. A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

phenomena represent a reconstitution of social relations in late antique western Europe that, whatever their degree of affiliation with the official Roman military, embody a shift from the negotiation of power structures within the former western Roman Empire via civic means towards violent means. This fundamental renegotiation of social conjunctures does not simply represent individual acts of violence within an existing civic state superstructure, but an alternative system of power relations. I therefore use 'military' to refer to the acts of expression, material or otherwise, which constituted this alternative system, whereby power relations were governed through violent means. This could partly draw some of its features from such institutions as the late Roman army, but needn't refer exclusively to this institution.[66]

To use this framework is not to refer to individual acts of expression within this system as being performed by 'warriors'. Discussion on the nature of military identity in early Anglo-Saxon England is vast. There is no space here for a full discussion. We will later see that there is much to challenge in Sam Lucy's approach to identity in early Anglo-Saxon England, but the fundamental premise of her thesis derives from the crucial point that early Anglo-Saxon society was not one of endemic warfare, but 'one consisting of men, women and children living in predominantly farming communities.'[67] The burial practices that survive for us today in the form of weapon burial do not necessarily represent the burial of 'warriors',[68] but this does not mean that they cannot convey 'military' symbolism.

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ductory Survey," in *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Guy Halsall (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), 3–4 on the significance of weapon burial in such contexts.

66.   See Halsall, *Warfare and Society*, 14–19 on the fluidity of such distinctions in the early middle ages.

67.   Lucy, *The Early Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of East Yorkshire*, 1.

68.   Heinrich Härke, "'Warrior Graves'? The Background of the Anglo-Saxon weapon burial rite," *Past & Present* 126 (1 1990): 22–43.

1.4 A note on the material under discussion

For reasons identified above, the thesis focuses primarily on attempts to infer ethnic identity from the remains of funerary rites, and the items involved in them, such as cremation urns and the various portable antiquities associated with furnished inhumation burial. The thesis does not discuss at length the considerable changes which take place in Britain in forms of domestic architecture and the settlement pattern.[69] This is simply to balance the scope of the thesis with the level of detail necessary to disentangle and scrutinise discursive trends. Nevertheless, it should become apparent from Chapters 2, 3 and 4 that many of the arguments encountered in this thesis about alleged instances of the empirical identification of ethnic expression in funerary rites or material cultural distributions are no less problematic in their application to domestic architecture, except for in exceptional circumstances.[70]

1.5 A note on contemporary political resonances

I end this introduction with a word on the political implications of this research. A position on the Philosophy of History that I inherit from Guy Halsall is that acts of historical interpretation can never be politically neutral. There is an ethical demand to any act of historical writing.[71] The influence post-structuralist philosophy has had on the shaping of this thesis should make it surprising that it does not treat the 'authentic' past, in a Rankean historicist sense, as something that can be straightforwardly accessed. This is not to suggest that the very occurrence of

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69. Which are helpfully reviewed in Helena Hamerow, *Early Medieval Settlements: The Archaeology of Rural Communities in North-West Europe 400-900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
70. See discussion of Siân Jones, below, 55–57.
71. Guy Halsall, "History and Commitment," in *Burn After Reading: Vol. 1: Miniature Manifestos for a Post/medieval Studies*, ed. Eileen A. Joy and Myra Seaman (Brooklyn, NY: punctum books, 2014), 60; Guy Halsall, *Why History Doesn't Matter* (Forthcoming).

past events is subject to fundamental relativism, as proposed by some of the more philosophically incoherent examples of so-called 'post-modern' historiography.[72] This radical subjectivism, derived from post-structuralist philosophy, applies instead to our ability to construct *absolute narrative truths* from these events. Ever perceptive of the difference between the straw man of absolute relativism, so often condemned by the historicists, and this more ontologically secure narrative relativism, Hayden White notes,

> whatever gestures are made in the direction of an appeal to factual evidence or the reality of the events dealt with, insofar as a history purports to explain the congeries of events that serves as its putative subject matter by telling a story about it, the explanation provided thereby admits of no assessment as to its veracity or objectivity by criteria that might be considered "scientific." To be sure, this does not mean that a narrative (or story) account of any given phenomenon has no truth-value; but it does mean... ...that historical accounts cast in the form of a narrative may be as various as the modes of emplotment which literary critics have identified as constituting the different principles for structuring narratives in general.[73]

This thesis is dedicated to demonstrating that Anglo-Saxon archaeologists are involved in drawing upon these various modes of emplotment in the construction of narratives from their evidence. The alternative that I attempt to shape does so no less. As is discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, all acts of historical interpretation depend upon interpretative leaps from that which may be empirically demonstrated by the source material.

Though I aim to show that in many respects the narrative I craft is more satisfying both empirically and epistemologically, it is therefore a given that elements of my interpretative approach are shaped by my own historical and philosophical outlook. This thesis is unashamedly anti-essentialist. I submit this thesis, as a committed believer in the destruction of the conjunctures of social oppression,

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72. As found, eg., in Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991).
73. Hayden White, "Historical Pluralism," *Critical Inquiry* 12 (3 1986): 486–7.

in response to some of the alarming political contexts to which widespread intellectual approaches to the early middle ages both owe their origins and that they have helped to fuel. These contexts of racial chauvinism, romantic nationalism, and, in the twentieth century, fascism, are well known in scholarly literature and will not be rehearsed here. My political leanings are likely evident in my approach to archaeological analysis of the material, also. Though post-structuralism and its complications of objective truth guide its core principles, my approach is nevertheless materialist: ideology is here held to be a product of the material relations that govern society.[74] It is this belief that governs the insistence in this thesis on the necessity of delineating what in ideological expression can and what cannot be empirically demonstrated. In this respect, the influence across these pages of Steve Roskams and several of his former students should be clear.[75]

In the four-year period that I have researched for and written this thesis a noise that was at its outset a low hum of threatening political discourse has crescendoed into a deafening cacophony. To rehearse but two examples from the last year alone, we have seen racist, xenophobic and chauvinist nationalist sentiments surge, relating to the United Kingdom's decision by referendum to leave the European Union. In the United States of America we have seen the election of a president with familial links to the Ku Klux Klan and whose campaign rhetoric directly channelled white supremacist ethnonationalism. As recently as July 2017, President Trump delivered a speech in Poland declaring that

> the West was saved with the blood of patriots; that each generation must rise up and play their part in its defence and that every foot of ground, and every last inch of civilisation, is worth defending with your life.

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74.   Anyone familiar with the intellectual heritage post-structuralism owes to western Marxism should be unsurprised by this.

75.   See, e.g., Steve Roskams and Tom Saunders, "The poverty of empiricism and the tyranny of theory," 61–74; Steve Roskams, "'Late antique field archaeology': a legitimate aim?," *Late Antique Archaeology* 9 (1 2012): 17–50.

1.5. A NOTE ON CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL RESONANCES

> Our own fight for the West does not begin on the battlefield–it begins with our minds, our wills, and our souls. Today, the ties that unite our civilisation are no less vital, and demand no less defense, than that bare shred of land on which the hope of Poland once totally rested. Our freedom, our civilisation, and our survival depend on these bonds of history, culture, and memory.[76]

Closer to home, in January 2017, Theresa May was the first leader of a foreign nation to make a state visit to Trump's United States. In a section of a joint speech dedicated to battling 'the ideology of Islamist extremism', she declared that the United Kingdom and the United States of America share a relationship based on 'the bonds of history, of family, kinship and common interests'.[77] Such shared bonds of kinship carry undoubted connotations of a shared Anglo-Saxon past, such as that imagined by the USA's founding fathers.[78]

Even in the last few months, alongside an escalation of NATO military operations against *Daesh* in Iraq and Syria and a consequent escalation in civilian deaths, the United Kingdom and the United States have witnessed a drastically escalated tempo of racist violence, intimidation and murder committed against British and American muslims and other minorities. The Islamists and white supremacists responsible for recent atrocities in Manchester, London, and Charlottesville, Virginia, alongside an increasingly xenophobic U.K. and U.S. media, have in recent months and years increasingly framed these events as an inevitable result of a multicultural society. A contemporary narrative of a clash of civilisations is being crafted, and the so-called 'alt-right', the online foot-soldiers of a new far-right movement, consciously draw upon an imagined medieval past to craft their mythology and

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76. Donald J. Trump, *Speech delivered in Warsaw, Poland,* Transcript from CNN, http://www.cnn.com/2017/07/06/politics/trump-speech-poland-transcript/index.html.
77. Theresa May, *Speech delivered at the White House, Washington D.C., USA*, Transcript and audio from gov.uk, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-press-conference-with-us-president-donald-trump-27-january-2017.
78. María José Mora and María José Gómez-Calderón, "The Study of Old English in America (1776-1850): National Uses of the Saxon Past," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 97 (3 1998): 322–336.

justify their participation in this conflict.[79]

The Anglo-Saxon past and its contemporary reception are indisputably part of this narrative. Current scholarship researching this past inadvertently reproduces discursive narratives that can be seized by the far-right groups discussed above.[80] Though this is often the result of distortion, I aim to show that the seizure of these narratives is inevitable because, even in their subtler constructivist iterations, they remain framed around questions which understand ethnicity via a Herderian normative framework, inextricably bound with the intellectual contexts of Romantic nationalism and imperialist colonialism.[81] This is not to impute malicious intent to researchers. Those who follow a post-structuralist understanding of text recognise that the reproduction of such contexts is an inevitable result of grappling with any discursive field, and this thesis is doubtless no less the guilty in that respect.[82]

Moreover, the nature of fascism is such that the actual empirical truth of the arguments put forward is irrelevant. Fascism, an ideology with roots in pseudo-Nietzschean philosophy, functions as 'a fuzzy totalitarianism, a collage of different philosophical and political ideas, a beehive of contradictions.' The inconvenient penetration of the truth cannot halt it. It

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79. The events of the previous two years have been so rapid as to preclude the formal publication of responses to them. A range of online articles by academic researchers addressing the subject in relation to medieval studies may be found at *The Public Medievalist's* recent *Race, Racism, and the Early Middle Ages* series, including Paul B. Sturtevant, "Introduction: Race, Racism, and the Middle Ages: Tearing Down the "Whites Only" Medieval World," *The Public Medievalist*, Race and Racism in the Middle Ages, http://www.publicmedievalist.com/race-racism-middle-ages-tearing-whites-medieval-world/; Dr. Dark Age (*pseud.*), "A Brief History of a Terrible Idea: The "Dark Enlightenment"," *The Public Medievalist*, Race and Racism in the Middle Ages, http://www.publicmedievalist.com/dark-enlightenment/; Andrew B. R. Elliot, "A Vile Love Affair: Right Wing Nationalism and the Middle Ages," *The Public Medievalist*, Race and Racism in the Middle Ages, http://www.publicmedievalist.com/vile-love-affair/ and James M. Harland, "'Race' in the Trenches: Anglo-Saxons, ethnicity, and the misuse of the medieval past," *The Public Medievalist*, Race and Racism in the Middle Ages, http://www.publicmedievalist.com/race-in-the-trenches/. See also Dorothy Kim, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Medieval Studies," *In the Middle*, October 10, 2016, http://www.inthemedievalmiddle.com/2016/11/the-unbearable-whiteness-of-medieval.html and Sierra Lomuto, "White Nationalism and the Ethics of Medieval Studies," *In the Middle*, http://www.inthemedievalmiddle.com/2016/12/white-nationalism-and-ethics-of.html.
80. See discussion, e.g., of responses to recent genetic studies outlined in Chapter 2.
81. On Herderianism, see discussion below, Chapter 2.
82. See discussion, Chapter 3.

> tolerate[s] contradictions. Each of the original messages contains a sliver of wisdom, and whenever they seem to say different or incompatible things it is only because all are alluding, allegorically, to the same primeval truth.[83]

Many who write well-intentioned, well-researched and empirically accurate historical work, and who would never dream of associating with or assisting far-right politics, nevertheless operate within discursive frameworks which facilitate the seizure of their works by the far-right.

It is for this reason that I offer a critical enquiry grappling primarily with the epistemological and philosophical contradictions of the field. People only deconstruct works that they respect, and I offer the following chapters in this spirit, as, I hope, a tool to grapple with interpretative frameworks which have, all too frequently, been harnessed to projects their authors, and myself, have no wish to fuel.

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83. Umberto Eco, "Ur-Fascism," *New York Review of Books*, June 22, 1995,

Part I

Shaking the Frameworks

Chapter 2

Ethnicity and Archaeology

This chapter discusses trends in the study of ethnicity in the humanities and social sciences, and has a tripartite structure, first addressing ethnicity as a concept developed in anthropology and sociology, before exploring the influence of this conceptualisation in archaeological scholarship and, lastly, considering its specific application in the archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon period. Given the degree of affinity found between these disciplines, and the frequent dissemination of knowledge across disciplinary boundaries (which, like ethnic boundaries, can be treated as fluid and unstable), the separation here of the disciplines of 'social anthropology' and 'archaeology' may seem somewhat artificial. Nevertheless, it remains the case that most theorisation of ethnicity as a phenomenon has taken place within what may be classed as the anthropological and sociological disciplines, whose findings subsequently filter into general archaeological discourse before finally achieving dominance in period-specific archaeology. For this reason, the three-tier structure of this chapter addresses these three domains as separate entities, whilst nevertheless recognising the complexity of overlap that such treatment can occasionally mask.

2.1 Ethnicity: Its general conception and theorisation

Many useful works have already detailed the development of the study of ethnicity,[1] so this account can be brief. The following focuses primarily on developments from the 1960s onwards as it is these, and the disputes that these developments prompted, that have the most significance for current archaeological interpretation of material culture. Nevertheless, a very brief discussion of earlier taxonomic classifications of peoples and cultures is offered to contextualise them.

Romantic nationalism

It is important to note, for all the well-justified polemic directed at them, that nineteenth-century European ideas of race and culture were varied and complex, with notable distinctions, for example, between categorisations of race that emphasised physical anatomical and phenotypical traits and those that emphasised linguistic and national genealogical traits (though this distinction became less pronounced as the century progressed, partly due to the growing influence of Darwinian evolutionary theory).[2]

These varying approaches to classification and categorisation, at times bewilderingly complex, have been summarised by Andreas Wimmer as 'Herderianism', after the eighteenth-century Romantic philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder, whose *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* conceived of a world of distinct, unique peoples and cultures, bounded in essence by shared identity, sense of self, and unique culture and language.[3] Due to its emphasis on the potential for these

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1. E.g. Patrick Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Oxford and Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 15–40.
2. Siân Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 41–45.
3. Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making*, 16.

bounded groups to rise and fall, to subjugate, merge and alter in the process of interaction, 'Herderianism' can encompass a wide variety of approaches and thematic separations, which all nonetheless share the same fundamental problem of normativity.[4] Wimmer observes that even in the more complex theoretical discussion found in current situationalist and constructivist thinking about ethnicity, Herderianism (normativity), remains a persistent problem that needs to be overcome if we are to avoid the fallacy of reification ('making real') in the study of social groups.[5] Some potential means of overcoming this problem have thus been proposed.

The rise of constructivism

Though much scholarly ink has been spilled over the ancient Greek origins of the word *ethnos*, the term 'ethnicity' emerged as a general classificatory descriptor in the human sciences in the 1950s and 1960s, as a result of increasing dissatisfaction with the chauvinistic connotations of 'tribe' and 'race'. These were rejected as embodiments of colonialist and imperialist discourse which faced growing resistance in the aftermath of the Second World War.[6]

Intricately bound with this development were revisions of methodology in anthropological interpretation, posing a challenge to primordialist, essentialist, and perennialist interpretations of ethnic groupings.[7] Although there are several works which have been noted as precursors of this trend,[8] the real shift has been near

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4. That is to say, the expectation that ethnic groups as extant things can be expected to operate according to certain, pre-conceived rules.
5. Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making*, 16–21.
6. J. Helm, ed., *Essays on the Problem of Tribe, Proceedings of the 1967 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968); Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*, 51-52
7. These three categories are here treated as separate, though they are often found together. As Wimmer notes, the presence of one category by no means necessitates the presence of the other. This is also the case in their opposites, constructivism, instrumentalism, and circumstantialism. Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making*, 1.
8. Examples being Edmund Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma: a study in Kachin social*

unanimously identified, by both anthropologists and those applying their insights, as occurring with the publication of Fredrik Barth's *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* in 1969.[9] This work primarily differed in that it treated ethnic groups as 'categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves', and that it attempted to explore the generative processes involved in the creation and maintenance of ethnic groups and boundaries.[10] The principal significance of this was thus a shift in 'the focus of ethnic studies... ...from group characteristics to social process.'[11]

The vital implication of this was that ethnicity was no longer a given, something someone simply 'was' and would always be, but something one could manipulate, maintain, assert, and even choose. Its 'constructed' nature was emphasised. Barth's particular interpretation regarded 'constructed' ethnicity as fundamentally 'instrumentalist': its manipulation and adoption was seen as a beneficial response to social situations.

Theories of practice and ethnicity

Toward the latter end of the 1980s and through the 1990s, several scholars sought to overcome the apparent irreconcilability and mutual flaws of instrumentalist and primordialist positions. Bentley, for example, noted that the apparent dichotomy of the two positions in fact obscured much commonality, and that both failed to adequately explain the origin or recognition of commonalities that would enable ethnic phenomena, in whatever form, to emerge in the first place.[12] Theories of

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structure (1954; London: G. Bell & Sons, 1964); Michael Moerman, "Ethnic Identification in a Complex Civilisation: Who are the Lue?," *American Anthropologist* 67 (5): 1215–30; Michael Moerman, "Being Lue: use and abuses of ethnic identification," in Helm, *Essays on the Problem of Tribe, Proceedings of the 1967 Annual Spring Meeting of the American Ethnological Society*, 153–169.

9.   E.g. Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 36; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 36; Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making*, 22–23.

10.   Frederik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little Brown, 1969), 10.

11.   Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "The Cultural Contexts of Ethnic Differences," *Man* 26 (1 1991): 128.

12.   G. Carter Bentley, "Ethnicity and Practice," *Comparative studies in society and history* 29 (1 1987): 25–26.

practice that had been developed in sociological literature through the works of Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens were seized as an apparent effective means of achieving reconciliation.[13] Bourdieu's theory of practice has been particularly influential in this regard, especially the notion of *habitus*, 'systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*', derived from an environment's constitutive structures, that generate and structure practice. Practice then feeds back into and alters these dispositions, and thus, the *habitus*.[14] Directly influenced by this, Bentley believed that

> sensations of ethnic affinity are founded on common life experiences that generate similar habitual dispositions. While people sense (correctly or incorrectly) likenesses and differences among themselves, practical mastery of these patterns does not require consciousness of their objective bases. It is commonality of experience and of the preconscious *habitus* it generates that gives members of an ethnic cohort their sense of being both familiar and familial to each other.[15]

The selection of material for ethnic expression was thus, for scholars such as Bentley, not arbitrary, but ethnicity remained no less constructed for all that. Difficulties remain with this interpretation, not least in the unstated assumption that *habitus* and ethnicity are fundamentally one and the same, and in the refocus of attention upon the interior construction—and thus reification—of ethnic groups, rather than their production in the expression of difference. It is possibly for this reason that an extreme constructivism, for all its flaws, remains the dominant paradigm in ethnic research—not least due to its implications being substantially less dangerous than those of its direct inversion.[16]

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13. Bentley, "Ethnicity and Practice," 27; Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1976; Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).
14. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 72.
15. Bentley, "Ethnicity and Practice," 32-33.
16. Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making*, 2.

Ethnic constructivism rethought: Beyond groupism and reification

Recent work in the social sciences has aimed not merely at further demonstrating the usefulness of constructivist approaches in conceptions of 'identity'.[17] This work instead problematises and re-shapes the very analytical criteria by which such social phenomena are discussed. Especially fruitful in this regard has been the work of Rogers Brubaker on ethnicity, which has posed an epistemological challenge to the validity of the concept of ethnic 'groups' as an analytical framing device. Brubaker observes that groupness is 'a key part of what we want to explain, not what we want to explain things *with*.'[18] Brubaker's research is borne out of frustration with what he sees as increasingly uncritical use of constructivist terminology, resulting from its firm establishment in academic consensus and the consequent rendering of its use as shallow or superficial. He suggests it is often deployed alongside arguments with conclusions and implications contrary to those of a correctly constructivist perspective:

> It is not that the notion of social construction is wrong; it is rather that it is today too obviously right, too familiar, too readily taken for granted, to generate the friction, force, and freshness needed to push arguments further and generate new insights. One symptom of this intellectual slackness is that one often finds constructivist and groupist language casually conjoined.[19]

How resonant such words are to anyone who has devoted time to the study of such issues in fifth-century Britain. Such casual conjoining is an occurence that has become all too prevalent, and the result is, as Chapter 4 will show, a reification of that which is attempted to be suppressed.

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17. A term which though ubiquitous is increasingly seen as problematic for its ambiguity and reification of contradictory categories. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 28-63.
18. Ibid., 9.
19. Ibid., 3.

2.1. ETHNICITY: ITS GENERAL CONCEPTION AND THEORISATION

Brubaker's proposed alternative model has not found much in the way of consensus from sociologists and anthropologists, though the grounds for disagreement appear, from an outsider's point of view, to be based on semantics. Jenkins, for example, critiques Brubaker's 'almost puritanical' search for 'unambiguous analytical categories', attacking the positivist implications and assumed conceptual order that can be imposed upon the world in such a search.[20] Nevertheless, Jenkins himself acknowledges that Brubaker's targets for criticism are not straw men,[21] and the value of Brubaker's arguments are here taken to lie in their critical power, not in the schematic models of categorical ascription that Brubaker may demand as an alternative.

Similarly, Andreas Wimmer has constructed a comparative framework for the study of group-making as an ethnic process, in an attempt to transcend debates between primordialism and structuralism. Wimmer takes the boundary model outlined by Barth and aims to 'show how such boundaries emerge in the first place and what the logic of their subsequent transformation might be'.[22] In doing so, Wimmer aims to avoid treating the assumptions of a given society about the salience of ethnic boundaries as universal; instead he sees these as part of the empirical phenomena requiring explanation. By attempting to disentangle 'ethnic and non-ethnic processes', and to consider 'the full variation of ethnic phenomena from around the world', the focus is placed upon the degree to which ethnicised mechanisms of social interaction play an important role in each given society, in order to obtain greater insight into the operation of such mechanisms.[23] The method developed rejects the 'Herderian' ontology (as Wimmer describes it) of ethnic groups as bounded, culturally distinct groups that inhabit defined spaces and act as singular

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20. Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, 2nd ed. (1997; London: SAGE Publications, 2008), 25-26.
21. Ibid., 26.
22. Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making*, 4.
23. Ibid., 3-7.

autonomous agents. The approach is systematic, and moves in the following steps: it constructs a typology of strategies of boundary making and the resources used to achieve this. It identifies four important aspects of variation in ethnic boundaries deemed vital for comparison: social closure, political salience, cultural differentiation, and historical stability. A processual theory derived from Bourdieusian thought is then developed to explain these degrees of variation: three characteristics of society determine which strategies and resources are deployed in a given situation—institutions, power hierarchies, and political networks. The delineation of the boundary and its degrees of variation are a result of conflicts over classification resulting from the deployment of these strategies and resources, the nature of the consensus reached at the outcome of this struggle determines the degrees of variation in the boundary.[24]

The approach is ultimately positivist in outlook.[25] It offers, nevertheless, some substantial advantages over prior approaches. It necessitates an understanding of ethnicity as nested, and does not treat it as an empirical given, thus avoiding the pitfall of reification. It also enables the observer to explain instances where ethnicised discourse becomes strongly embedded in social interaction, without confusing 'constructivism as an epistemological stance... ...with an ontological statement about the nature of empirical reality: that ethnicity is inherently ephemeral and unstable'.[26] This enables one to acknowledge the social reality of strongly-felt ethnic sentiment within a constructivist framework. I refer to this alternative approach throughout the thesis as 'post-groupist' ethnic sociology.

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24. Andreas Wimmer, "The Making and Unmaking of Ethnic Boundaries: A Multilevel Process Theory," *The American Journal of Sociology* 113 (4 2008): 970–1022; Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making*, 11-12; Rogers Brubaker, "Beyond Ethnicity," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37 (5 2014): 805.
25. A position acknowledged and regarded as advantageous by the author. Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making*, 7.
26. Ibid., 3.

Conclusion

It is easy to picture ethnicity today as a universal, inherent trait—operating unchangeably in all circumstances. Globalisation creates societies whose members are engaged in a constant dialectical discourse of 'us' versus 'them', a process facilitated and guided by modern media operating within the superstructure of the nation-state. Yet this is a contingent product of its era. Just as we do not assume that the social structures or behavioural rules of the past correlate with our own, or indeed, that those of the present are singular or coherent, neither should such assumptions be made of the processes by which human beings categorise and identify their relation to the world around them. Supporting this, anthropological studies have demonstrated the contingent, socially-constructed nature of ethnicity. That this construct also operates in response to its situation, exists only in its iteration, and relies on conscious self-acknowledgement and assertion of its ethnic character by agents or entrepreneurs, are core underlying principles guiding the argument of this thesis.

There has been some minor disagreement between the two,[27] but Brubaker and Wimmer propose far more epistemologically sound methodologies for dealing with these problems. Yet these methodologies and their implications may pose some problems for those who would study ethnicity via the medium of mortuary archaeology.

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27.   Brubaker has, for example, criticised the subsuming of national phenomena under the 'ethnic' rubric, and suggested that the model Wimmer has constructed appears to stretch the metaphor of 'boundaries' too far, appearing to describe more the making of categories than of coherent boundaries as such—an interpretation which would sharpen the constructivist aspects of the model. Brubaker, "Beyond Ethnicity," 805-8.

2.2 Ethnic theorisation and archaeology

Several useful introductions to the formation of Merovingian, Anglo-Saxon, and early medieval mortuary archaeology, and the associated concept of *Tracht* (a form of ethnic 'folk costume') already exist.[28] It is worth drawing attention, nevertheless, to the fact that criticisms of the possibility to infer ethnicity from material evidence were made even in the early stages of the professionalisation of the discipline in the later nineteenth century.[29] Nevertheless, such critiques did not garner anywhere near the same degree of academic support as those championing the ethnic paradigm.[30]

Though challenges to the normative ethnic interpretations present in the paradigm of Culture History emerged in anthropological scholarship in the 1960s, these did not enter archaeological discourse until substantially later. For the bulk of the 1970s discussion on stylistic variation—in processualist archaeology at least—was primarily concerned with the extent to which style and function could be regarded as dichotomous.[31]

The challenge came in the late 1970s and 80s, aided by Polly Wiessner's development of the notion of style as actively used in the 'disruption, alteration and creation of social relationships.'[32] Ian Hodder's development of this argued for the manipulation and negotiation of material symbols in the production of ethnic boundaries in response to economic stress—a negotiation which would presum-

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28. For Merovingian, see Fehr, "*Volkstum* as Paradigm" and Bonnie Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology and the Making of the Early Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). For Anglo-Saxon, see Lucy, *The Anglo Saxon Way of Death*, for early medieval archaeology more generally, see Fehr, "*Volkstum* as Paradigm," Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology and the Making of the Early Middle Ages*; Bonnie Effros, "Dressing conservatively: women's brooches as markers of ethnic identity?," 165–184 and Philipp von Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus: Kleidung und Repräsentation spätantiker Eliten im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2007), 18-59.
29. Ibid., 59.
30. See Pohl, "Ethnicity, Theory, and Tradition: A Response," 224.
31. Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*, 110-112.
32. Ibid., 113.

ably become manifest in the material record.[33] These developments, emphasising the active nature of material manipulation, whether stemming from Wobst's theory of information-exchange or post-processualist thought as developed under Ian Hodder and his students, began to play a vital role in discussion of style.[34] An extremely important development in this regard was the recognition that no singular definition of style could be effectively applicable in all circumstances, and that the methods of inference and analysis used to isolate and interpret stylistic variability would thus be highly context-dependent.[35] This conclusion emerged largely from robust debate in anthropology between Wiessner and James Sackett, who challenged Wiessner's 'iconological' approach to style as purposefully manipulated in all instances.[36] He contested that style instead consisted of

> highly specific patterns of isochrestic variation[[37]] that are socially bounded and that therefore may be regarded as idiomatic or diagnostic of ethnicity.[38]

In the debate, an apparent consensus was eventually reached, and some particular iterations of style identified in this discussion (for example, Wiessner's 'emblemic' style') were held to contain information signalling ethnic groups and boundary formation. Instrumentalist theories of ethnicity thus became of substantial importance. However, positivism very much remained the primary interpretative framework under which these developments were subsumed—Hegmon, in synthesising these developments, expressed hope that an integrated theory of style

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33. Ian Hodder, *Symbols in Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*, 114.
34. Michelle Hegmon, "Archaeological Research on Style," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21 (1992): 517–536.
35. Ibid., 522-523.
36. James Sackett, "Style and ethnicity in the Kalahari: a reply to Wiessner," *American Antiquity* 50 (1 1985): 155.
37. The selection of particular options from equally viable alternatives to achieve a given manufacturing end.
38. Sackett, "Style and ethnicity in the Kalahari," 157.

might soon be within reach.[39] This positivism is manifest in some questionable reasoning for criticism of certain developments in the interpretation of style:

> While [the active perspective] is obviously attractive in view of current anthropological interests, it is somewhat problematic analytically because it separates the subject (style as a component of human activity) from the object of study (material culture variation). While archaeologists are often skilled at developing effective bridging arguments that relate subject and object, it is all too easy in stylistic research to ignore rather than recognise and bridge the subject-object gap... ...material culture variation is sometimes treated as if it were human activity or stylistic communication.[40]

Nowhere is this gap more clearly manifest than in ethnic interpretations of archaeological data, if we are to accept the above-outlined conclusions regarding the nature of ethnic phenomena. Yet this problem cannot necessarily be overcome by developing more sophisticated bridging methodologies that would be no less dependent upon equally flawed and contextually-contingent data, which would risk merely reifying rather than empirically isolating ethnic categories. Understanding material culture as an actively-embodied social articulation instead calls into question whether we can always bridge this gap.

In the 1990s Anglo-American archaeology, under the influence of post-processualism and similar movements in anthropology and sociology, placed a more critical focus on the presumed identification of cultural identity in the material record, and of ethnicity more specifically. A core criticism of previous work—directly derived from those already discussed above—was that instrumentalist approaches to ethnicity and culture reduced culture to 'an epiphenomenal and arbitrary set of symbols randomly selected from existing practices or beliefs, or even brought into being in order to signify ethnicity and justify instrumental ends', and failed to adequately explain whence came the common traits that enabled the active creation of

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39. Hegmon, "Archaeological Research on Style," 532.
40. Ibid., 518-519.

such ethnic boundaries in the first place.[41] The publication of Siân Jones' doctoral thesis in the late 1990s represented the culmination in Anglo-American scholarship of a growing scepticism toward the trend exemplified by the Sackett and Wiessner 'style' debate. As with the anthropological and sociological material above, theories of social practice derived from Giddens and Bourdieu were deployed by such scholars as Jones and her allies in an attempt to overcome the problem with the assumed arbitrary nature of ethnic signalling. These drew upon, and sometimes updated or amended, sociological applications of the notion of *habitus* to the realm of ethnic boundary making.[42] The importance of Bentley's work in this area was quickly recognised, for example, by Shennan,[43] but Jones found it necessary to alter Bentley's application of *habitus*, in order to overcome the problems posed by Bentley's taking for granted the relationship between shared habitus and ethnic construction, leading to what Jones identifies as reification of the bounded homogeneity of ethnic groups.[44] Jones attempted to overcome this via the application of Bourdieu's conception of *doxic* knowledge, the process whereby an established order reproduces 'the naturalization of its own arbitrariness':

> ...systems of classification which reproduce, in their own specific logic, the objective classes, i.e. the divisions by sex, age, or position in the relations of production, make their specific contribution to the reproduction of the power relations of which they are the product, by securing the misrecognition, and hence recognition, of the arbitrariness on which they are based[.][45]

Jones proposed that the nature of ethnic consciousness as an active expression of difference could be explained via this particular level of discourse. A disruption

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41. Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*, 119-120.
42. S. J. Shennan, ed., *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 14-17; Siân Jones, "Discourses of identity in the interpretation of the past," in *Cultural Identity and Archaeology: The construction of European communities*, ed. Paul Graves-Brown, Siân Jones, and Clive Gamble (London: Routledge, 1996), 67-74; Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*, 87-100, 120.
43. Shennan, *Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity*, 15.
44. Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*, 92-94.
45. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 164.

of knowledge previously held as natural and self-evident required rationalisation, and the construction of an ethnic boundary was a means of achieving this.[46] What this meant for Jones, as far as archaeological practice was concerned, was that archaeological investigation of ethnicity was to be 'distinguished from mere spatial continuity and discontinuity'.[47] Instead, analysis of stylistic variation was to proceed contextually, attentive to subtleties of stylistic patterns to ensure that emphasis was placed upon the heterogeneity and variable interpretation of different types of cultural expression.[48] Highly varied degrees of relationship between *habitus* and ethnic expression were to be expected in this model, and Jones proposed that in the event of strong coherence between these, isochrestic style could be held to signify ethnic expression.[49] But a problem still remains where archaeological inference is concerned: Jones offers a single concrete example of ethnic expression in her work, in Roman domestic architecture found at Skeleton Green and Gorhambury. Jones argued for the ethnic nature of the expression by claiming that

> as an important part of the *habitus*, domestic architecture, such as bath houses and villas, may have been involved in the recognition and signification of a broad Roman identity with relation to a particular people in some social domains.[50]

The problems of positivism identified above manifest themselves here. Though Jones' conclusion seems a fair one, this does not represent a means of deducing ethnic expression through purely archaeological means. Awareness that domestic architecture formed an important component of Romanised *habitus* derives from documentary evidence produced by a specific, unusually literate society, in a rare instance where the interpretation of this literature is unequivocal. This does little to aid us where the documentary evidence has proven more historiographically

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46.   Jones, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*, 94-95.
47.   Ibid., 122-3.
48.   Ibid., 131-133.
49.   Ibid., 123.
50.   Ibid., 134.

problematic, if it exists at all. This is a bridging tool of limited applicability, and must be used with tremendous care.

2.3   Ethnicity in Anglo-Saxon archaeology

The importance of the *aduentus saxonum* to the formation of a nationalist discourse in some British and American spheres of consciousness[51] has produced an enormous bibliography of material which deals implicitly with questions of ethnicity. This is manifest primarily in attempts to identify Anglo-Saxon settlers in the material record, that have taken place since at least as early as James Douglas' identification of the pertinent material from mortuary contexts as such in 1793.[52] Very little, however, has dealt explicitly with questions regarding the validity of ethnic interpretations in and of themselves, but has rather aimed to identify such ethnic groups as Anglo-Saxons (and their sub-categories of Jute, Saxon and Angle) and Britons, their activities and their dispositions, in order to provide further clarification and development of the historical events of the fifth and sixth centuries.[53] Unsurprisingly, many of the interpretations offered, and the assumptions bound with them, were also uncritically adopted in studies using the same material to address other questions.[54]

Such investigations nevertheless saw plentiful debate. By the middle of the twentieth century, the firm establishment of methodologies and a well-understood

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51.   On which see Richard Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen: The Imperial Origins of Roman Archaeology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 63-108.

52.   Lucy, *The Anglo Saxon Way of Death*, 8.

53.   Classic examples are Edward Thurlow Leeds, *Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935); Edward Thurlow Leeds, "The distribution of Angles and Saxons archaeologically considered," *Archaeologica* 91 (1945): 1–105; John Nowell Lynton Myres, *Anglo-Saxon Pottery and the Settlement of England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Michael J. Swanton, *The Spearheads of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (London: Royal Archaeological Institute, 1973). Lucy, *The Anglo Saxon Way of Death*, 5-14 offers an excellent summary.

54.   There were, of course, exceptions, such as may be found in Lethbridge's reactions against attempts to infer ethnicity from distributions of brooch types. T. C. Lethbridge, "The Anglo-Saxon Settlement in eastern England: a reassessment," in *Dark Age Britain: Studies Presented to E. T. Leeds*, ed. D. B. Harden (London: Methuen, 1956), 112–122.

set of data enabled Sonia Hawkes and Vera Evison, two titans of typological analysis, to debate vigorously whether the *laeti* then held to be responsible for importing Anglo-Saxon material culture originated from northern Germany and Scandinavia or *Francia*.[55] Catherine Hills and Tania Dickinson critiqued interpretations of British extermination derived from the relative absence of a visible Romano-British population in the material record, suggesting acculturation—the gradual assimilation of one ethnic population to another—as an alternative mechanism. Both suggested that such issues could become more easily clarified with more careful analysis of data.[56] Hines' work engaged in substantial theorisation about the nature of ethnic groups to justify a broadly culture historical methodology.[57] Processualist thinking, meanwhile exerted considerable influence upon interpretations of this issue, with two of Colin Renfrew's students, Richard Hodges and Chris Arnold, posing challenges to migration as an explanatory mechanism for cultural change.[58] Arnold's work took pains to emphasise that its use of terms such as 'Anglo-Saxon', 'Germanic', or 'Romano-British', did not refer to the ethnic origins of the populations described, but simply zones of material culture.[59] Such work was itself largely inspired by an article by Edward James published in the late 70s. Previous scholars, such as Böhme, had continued to debate the precise nature of *Reihengräber* ('row graves'), a putatively classic indicator of Germanic migration, with Böhme asserting they were established military *foederati*.[60] But James argued

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55. Sonia Chadwick Hawkes and Gerald C. Dunning, "Soldiers and Settlers in Britain, Fourth to Fifth Century," *Medieval Archaeology* 5 (1961): 1–70; Vera I. Evison, *The Fifth-Century Invasions South of the Thames* (London: The Athlone Press, 1965).

56. Catherine Hills, "The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England in the Pagan Period: A Review," *Anglo-Saxon England* 8 (1979): 297–330, Tania Dickinson, "The present state of Anglo-Saxon cemetery studies," in *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries 1979*, ed. Phillip Rahtz, Tania Dickinson, and Lorna Watts, BAR British Series 82 (Oxford: B.A.R., 1979), 11–33, Lucy, *The Early Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of East Yorkshire*, 17.

57. Hines, *Scandinavian Character*.

58. Christopher Arnold, *Roman Britain to Saxon England* (London: Croom Helm, 1984); Richard Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).

59. Arnold, *Roman Britain to Saxon England*, 20, 121.

60. Horst W. Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Beck, 1974).

that they were an indicator not of migration, but rather the spread of the Frankish military aristocracy and an increased need to emphasise their status.[61] Such cultures as the *Reihengräberzivilisation* on the continent and the new forms of cemetery that appeared in lowland Britain in the fifth century were nevertheless held to be fundamentally 'Germanic', 'Roman', or 'Romano-British' 'in derivation'.[62] Though Arnold argued against migration as an explanatory mechanism for the end of Roman Britain, 'Saxon' and 'Roman' ethnic origin were nevertheless traits which he argued to be identifiable through the study of physical anthropology.[63] An apparent disjunction between those of 'Roman stock' or 'migrant Germanic' and the possession of 'Germanic style grave-goods' was argued, in conjunction with evidence for urban and economic collapse which preceded migration and agricultural continuity, to suggest that the migrating population was small, and played no role in the end of Roman Britain.[64] Much of the counter-offensive witnessed in the 1990s and 2000s, in favour of migrationist interpretations, framed itself in response to this interpretative approach.[65]

Probably most significant in this trend, if its influence in other disciplines is an indicator, was the move, best represented by Nick Higham, towards models of acculturation and elite emulation. Higham, inspired by Edward James' work on *Reihengräber* as well as the anti-migration positions of Arnold and Hodges, argued that the putative *laeti* allegedly represented in furnished inhumation burials comprised a very small contingent of immigrants, and that growing evidence for the continuity of Roman field systems suggested the likely mechanism of change to be acculturation of a majority Romano-British population to the cultural practices of

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61. Edward James, "Cemeteries and the problem of Frankish settlement," in *Names, words and graves: early medieval settlement*, ed. Peter H. Sawyer (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1979), 55–89.
62. Arnold, *Roman Britain to Saxon England*, 121.
63. Ibid., 129-130.
64. Ibid., 130, 157-165.
65. Accusations of a return to processualism remain a feature in more recent reactions to anti-ethnic interpretations. Florin Curta, "The Elephant in the Room: A Reply to Sebastian Brather," *Ephemeris Napocensis* 23 (2013): 163–174. See the discussion on Curta versus Brather, below.

a small, mercenary Saxon elite.[66] This nevertheless unproblematically linked items such as dress or pottery assemblages to ethnic identities,[67] and was occasionally circular or otherwise problematic in argumentation. Higham argued, for example, that although Anglo-Saxon cremation cemeteries yielded no weaponry, as weapon burial had 'died out in Germany during the second and third centuries', the possession of weapons was a 'normal attribute' of 'families from free Germany', and warriors could thus be expected to be found in such cemeteries. The argument required for warriors to be present in cremation cemeteries (itself dependent upon problematic Roman ethnographic and modern scholarly assumptions) undermines the criteria Higham uses to identify such warriors in other regions of Britain.[68] His position has nevertheless been substantially influential, and much later debate has revolved around using larger and more diverse datasets to test its feasibility.[69] At this point, in consequence, the mechanism of acculturation that had earlier been proposed by Hills and Dickinson became an increasingly popular interpretation.[70]

A differing school of thought emerged concurrently, driven by Anglo-Saxonists influenced by Ian Hodder's post-processualism. These scholars rejected that mate-

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66.   Nicholas J. Higham, *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons* (London: Seaby, 1992).

67.   Ibid., 178-182.

68.   Ibid., 174. A major criticism of the interpretation of *Reihengräber* and their accompanying weapon burials as those of Germanic *laeti* or *foederati* was first published in the same year. Guy Halsall, "The Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*: Forty Years On," in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?*, ed. John F. Drinkwater and Hugh Elton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 196–207). Even Swanton was attentive to the emergence of weapon burials as a late phenomenon more or less coincident with the 'migration' period—the basis for later criticisms of their identification as 'Germanic' by such scholars as Halsall. Yet Swanton nevertheless considered this a 'Germanic' practice. Swanton, *The Spearheads of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements*, 16.

69.   E.g. Heinrich Härke, "Archaeologists and Migrations: A Problem of Attitude?," *Current Anthropology* 39 (1 1998); Catherine Hills, *The Origins of the English* (London: Duckworth, 2003); Mark G. Thomas, Michael P. H. Stumpf, and Heinrich Härke, "Evidence for an apartheid-like social structure in early Anglo-Saxon England," *Proceedings. Biological sciences / The Royal Society* 273 (1601 2006): 2651–7; Alex Woolf, "Apartheid and Economics in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Britons in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Nicholas J. Higham (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 115–129.

70.   E.g. as evidenced by Chris Scull, "Approaches to Material Culture and Social Dynamics of the Migration Period in Eastern England," in *Europe Between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Recent archaeological and historical research in Western and Southern Europe*, ed. John Bintliff and Helena Hamerow (Oxford: Archaeopress, 1995), 71–83 and Chris Loveluck, "Acculturation, Migration and Exchange: The Formation of Anglo-Saxon Society in the English Peak District, 400-700 A.D.," in Bintliff and Hamerow, *Europe Between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, 84–95.

rial culture merely simplistically reflects social reality, but asserted that it instead operates to actively construct reality on the ideological plane. Their application of this principle was varied. Unsurprisingly, given wider trends in archaeological thought, much of this work also drew explicitly upon sociological theories of practice. The first to apply this approach to Anglo-Saxon England was Ellen-Jane Pader, a doctoral student of Hodder. Pader published her doctoral thesis in 1982, at a point when most archaeological scholarship had barely begun contemplating Bourdieusian and Giddensian thinking.[71] The work dealt with symbolism in the Anglo-Saxon burial rite and its variation across cemeteries in relation to differing burial practices based upon biological sex.[72] Pader's work is frequently cited for its conclusions and basic assertions regarding symbolism, but its important theoretical implications are often paid less heed. Drawing upon post-structuralist problematisation of semiotics, Pader's work explicitly noted the non-arbitrary nature of the sign in symbolic patterning—a core challenge to the Saussurean understanding of symbolic structure—while also recognising the fundamentally context-bound nature of symbolic meaning, and the ultimately infinite chain of signification bound with any instance of a particular sign.[73] This understanding manifested itself in a careful, and necessarily complex analysis of structural and social relations in Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, using a modified variant of the Gower co-efficient of similarity in order to ensure that the interrelation of all structuring factors of mortuary ritual remained central to the approach.[74] Pader's analysis is remarkably limited in its conclusions—necessarily so. She argued that many interpretative schemes in the social analysis of mortuary remains are overly simplistic, and suggested

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71. Much of Pader's research took place as Giddens' structuration theory was still in development, but was informed by direct communication with Giddens and reading of his then-published work. Ellen-Jane Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations and the Interpretation of Mortuary Remains*, BAR International Series 130 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 1982), 2.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid., 34-35. On this see discussion of post-structuralism in Chapter 3, 97-100.
74. Ibid., 85.

that such questions as those pertaining to 'the specifics of the socio-political level of complexity and ascribed versus achieved position were 'probably not answerable' within contemporary schemes, or Pader's own.[75] Though some very brief discussion of notions of 'a coherent Germanic identity... ...realised at special ritual occasions' featured in Pader's work (as a hypothetical possibility), it did not form a remotely significant component of discussion, nor was this assumed to be something identifiable through the analysis of mortuary remains.[76] The bulk of Pader's discussion instead focused on distinctions that can be made between age- and gender-based social categories—an approach adopted in much later work.[77] Others applied Pader's approach to the study of ethnicity, acknowledging the active and instrumentalist nature of ethnic boundary construction. In reality, however, such approaches largely manifested as a supporting framework for longer entrenched ethnic ideas. Heinrich Härke, who trained at Göttingen[78] but was then lecturing at Reading, championed Pader's attention to symbolism, but critiqued her relatively small dataset and its consequent lack of attention to specific artefact types. His own study, using a far larger dataset, rejected the commonly-held assumption that weapon burial could be held to signify the burial of warriors.[79] He proposed instead that the rite symbolised the ritual expression of an ideological 'warrior status', one that Härke alleged had a basis in contemporary ethnic and social structures which could be unproblematically read from such indicators as

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75. Pader, *Symbolism, Social Relations and the Interpretation of Mortuary Remains*, 134.
76. Ibid., 193.
77. Alongside the clear influence of his supervisor, Edward James, Pader was a direct influence, for example, on Guy Halsall's doctoral thesis, the published version of which itself substantially influenced much later archaeological scholarship in this area. Guy Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization: The Merovingian region of Metz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Halsall, *Cemeteries and Society*, 4-5. Current approaches to gender are also now being subject to much greater critical scrutiny. Katherine Fliegel, ""Not born, but made": Maleness, Masculinity, and the Cross-Gendered Grave Phenomenon in Early Anglo-Saxon England" (Paper presented at the International Medieval Congress, Leeds, July 5, 2017).
78. Under Jankuhn, who served in the *Ahnenerbe*.
79. Härke, "'Warrior Graves'? The Background of the Anglo-Saxon weapon burial rite," 23-24, fn. 8.

skeletal stature.[80] Julian Richards' work on cremation urns, meanwhile, adopted an explicitly structuralist understanding of meaning,[81] nowhere more evident than in his assertion that ambiguous, context-dependent meaning is a trait more characteristic of material culture than of language: 'speech and writing are both linear forms of communication; whereas with material culture there is no fixed direction in which to read a message'.[82] As will be later discussed, a basic tenet of post-structuralism is the rejection of such clear fixed direction or linear communication in the problematically-separated concepts of 'speech' and 'writing'.[83] As did many who implemented Pader's ideas, Richards failed to observe her crucial recognition of the non-arbitrary nature of the sign and its link to its signifier, instead treating these as arbitrary in the classic structuralist mode.[84] Those elements of post-structuralist thought that *are* present in Richards' work come second-hand, via Shanks and Tilley, and pertain only to the active use of material culture.[85] In Richards' theoretical approach, unlike post-structuralism, rigid distinction is maintained between the symbol, whose meaning is arbitrary, and the sign, which bears an intrinsic link to its signified.[86] Richard's structuralist stance may explain why he is more optimistic than Pader about the possibility to infer motivation from the material record. Richard's thesis uncritically treated such categories such as 'Angles, Saxons, and other Germanic' peoples as meaningful and thus capable of 'mixture'.[87] Later, similarly to Härke, Richards suggested that 'Germanic burial' constituted a symbol 'used to assert the domination of Germanic culture'.[88] John

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80. Ibid., 43.
81. Julian Richards, *The significance of form and decoration of Anglo-Saxon cremation urns*, BAR British Series 166 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 1987), 8-9; Julian Richards, "Anglo-Saxon Symbolism," in *The Age of Sutton Hoo*, ed. Martin Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 133.
82. Ibid., 133.
83. Jacques Derrida, *De la Grammatologie* (Paris: *Les Éditions de Minuit*, 1967).
84. Richards, *The significance of form and decoration of Anglo-Saxon cremation urns*, 14-5.
85. Richards, "Anglo-Saxon Symbolism," 134.
86. Ibid.
87. Richards, *The significance of form and decoration of Anglo-Saxon cremation urns*, 48.
88. Richards, "Anglo-Saxon Symbolism," 135.

Hines, meanwhile, suggested that it was unproblematic to identify material culture groups found in England and on the Continent with the ethnographic categories described by Bede,[89] and later made the claim that

> there is a valid *prima facie* case that, in northern *Germania*, in the crucial period from the late second to the end of fourth century, material culture was used to symbolise identification with specific political units such as we should call a kingdom or a confederation *to a very limited extent*.[90] [Italics original]

This was used to assert an unproblematic link between this material culture and its use in Britain, as an import of 'Germanic' migrants, by an elite to construct a 'consistent and distinctive Anglian English culture', which, though fluid, was essentially 'Germanic' in nature.[91] Symbolism and the active use of material culture are here implicit, but the interpretations that Hines proposes for this active expression are, we will see in subsequent chapters, themselves derived from older, culture historical assumptions.

New extensive typological works on various early Anglo-Saxon artefacts were also produced in this period. Such works did not generally grapple with questions of ethnic identity, but treated assertions from earlier work about the 'Germanic' nature of this material and its function in ethnic expression as axiomatic, sometimes upon the basis of beliefs about the nature of *peplos* dress and the role it played in *Tracht*.[92]

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89. John Hines, "The Becoming of the English: Identity, Material Culture and Language in Early Anglo-Saxon England," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 7 (1994): 50.

90. John Hines, "Cultural Change and Social Organisation in Early Anglo-Saxon England," in *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe's Barbarians*, ed. Giorgio Ausenda (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), 80.

91. Ibid., 81.

92. Heinrich Härke and Tania Dickinson, *Early Anglo-Saxon Shields* (London: The Society of Antiquaries, 1992), 61-2; John Hines, *A New Corpus of Great Square-Headed Brooches* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 280-1; Sonja Marzinzik, *Early Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles (late 5th to early 8th centuries A.D.): Their classification and context*, BAR British Series 357 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2003), 4. The exception is John Hines, *Clasps. Hektespenner. Agraffen* (Stockholm: Kungl Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 1993), 90-3 which makes similar arguments upon the basis of wrist clasps about ethnic boundary construction to those Hines makes in his earlier work, and that we will grapple with at length in Chapter 4. Tania Dickinson, "Material Culture as Social Expression:

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Sam Lucy is a notable critic of the ethnic paradigm, and the insufficient attention paid to its problems by other post-processualists in the discipline. Lucy, a student of Catherine Hills, was substantially influenced by the growing consensus on interpreting material culture as a conscious, active, symbolic and ideological constituent of social practice, and by developments in the understanding of ethnicity in wider scholarly discourse.[93] Her doctoral thesis produced the first major critical history of Anglo-Saxon archaeology as a discipline.[94] She used this in conjunction with contemporary approaches to ethnicity in early medieval history to demonstrate the continued interrelation of Anglo-Saxon archaeology with nineteenth-century racialist thought.[95] Lucy argued that the fluid nature of ethnic identity, and the demonstrable contingency of modern interpretations of 'Briton' and 'Anglo-Saxon' burial practices, necessitated a move away from interpretations based on concepts of 'race' and toward 'identities' of a fluid nature. Lucy cautioned against the automatic inference of ethnicity, sex or social position from such practices.[96] This manifested itself largely in discussion of 'localised' identities and affiliations.

Lucy's arguments were not widely accepted, and a goal of this thesis is to ascertain why. Although he did not explicitly refer to Lucy, in 1998 Härke published an article pleading for recognition of the contingent and contemporary nature of migrationist and anti-migrationist models of change in late Roman Britain.[97] This was itself subject to some criticism. Lucy, defending her criticism of Härke's ar-

The case of the Saxon Saucer Brooches with running spiral decoration," *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 7 (1991): 60-8 draws upon a nuanced understanding of structuralist semiotics in its analysis of the saucer brooch but nevertheless relies upon culture historical assumptions about *Tracht*.

93. Similar developments also took place among Anglo-Saxon archaeologists studying gender, including Lucy herself and Nick Stoodley. Sam Lucy, ""Housewives, warriors and slaves?" Sex and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Burials," 150–68; Nick Stoodley, *The Spindle and the Spear: Critical Enquiry into the Construction and Meaning of Gender in the Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Rite*, BAR British Series 288 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 1999).

94. Lucy, *The Early Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of East Yorkshire*.

95. Ibid., 9-12.

96. Ibid., 104.

97. Härke, "Archaeologists and Migrations: A Problem of Attitude?"

guments that ethnic traits could be isolated via skeletal analysis, retorted that 'it is not always a matter of subjective opinion when one archaeologist's views are questioned'.[98] It is interesting that Härke felt it necessary to vindicate the study of ethnicity through reference to contemporary events:

> Today, ethnicity is back on the intellectual agenda because of recent political experiences in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Sociologists have admitted that the resurgence of nationalist and ethnic feelings took them by surprise, and they have begun to reassess their attitudes.[99]

Simple 'resurgence' does not seem to be a fully satisfactory explanation. Rather, it would seem to risk reifying ethnic groups. Even this period other scholars in the field seemed entirely unaware of these trends and could publish major surveys of Anglo-Saxon burial practice that made no reference to these fraught and technical debates.[100]

Dickinson's observation that Lucy's historiographical critique of her discipline failed to extend to 'the contexts of her own preferred agenda' may be pertinent here.[101] We are forced to wonder what precisely the contexts of this agenda are. The general movements which Siân Jones and her contemporaries were a part of may perhaps be interpreted in light of the collapse, then very recent, of the Soviet Union. This removal of any clear counterweight (however merely symbolic) to the advances of neoliberal capitalism, and the subsequent triumphalist championing of the 'The End of History' that this fostered,[102] led to a retreat by Western

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98.   Lucy, *The Anglo Saxon Way of Death*, 165.

99.   Härke, "Archaeologists and Migrations: A Problem of Attitude?," 24.

100.   Elizabeth O'Brien, *Post-Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England: Burial Practices Reviewed*, BAR British Series 289 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 1999). Though they could not do so without criticism, see discussion of O'Brien in Tania Dickinson, "What's new in early medieval burial archaeology?," *Early Medieval Europe* 11 (1 2002): 71–88.

101.   Ibid., 74.

102.   'What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.' Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," *The National Interest*, 1989.

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European and North American intellectuals with leftist sympathies into rumina-tion of disparate, multivariate political causes based around the advancement and solidification of 'identity', resulting in a form of politics principally defensive in form, incapable of building a universalist alternative hegemony to the ideological dominance of neoliberalism, and which may be regarded as the ultimate com-mercialisation and fetishisation of the self–Williams and Srnicek call this 'folk-politics'.[103] As the decade progressed, while the end of Communist rule led to an apparent eruption of simmering ethnic and nationalist tensions in the Balkans,[104] in the U.K., John Major's Conservative government was swept away and replaced by Tony Blair's 'New' Labour Party, promising an alternative 'Third Way', a puta-tive integration of economic free market policies and leftist emancipatory politics, and this economic approach was also adopted by Bill Clinton's Democratic Party in the USA, and by the Social Democratic Party under Gerard Schröder in Ger-many.[105] Crucially, Blair's policy was directly advised by Giddens and influenced by his academic work.[106]

Now, of course, 'Third Way' politics have never seemed less inevitable.[107] The problem, as it manifests itself in Anglo-Saxon archaeology, results from a need to offer cogent alternatives to the ethnic paradigm in order to avoid accusations of

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103. Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek, *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World without Work* (London: Verso, 2015).
104. That the primary driver of this conflict was ethnic tension is one of the assumptions that Brubaker's work challenges. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*.
105. Leo Panitch and Colin Leys, *The End of Parliamentary Socialism: From New Left to New Labour*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Verso, 2001), 273.
106. Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998).
107. Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (London: Verso, 2010); Alain Badiou, *The Rebirth of His-tory* (London: Verso, 2012). Williams and Srnicek, *Inventing the Future*. For a convincing argument that Giddens' sociological work is inseparable from his political inclinations, see Brian O'Boyle, "Reproducing the social structure: a Marxist critique of Anthony Giddens's Structuration Method-ology," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 37 (5 2013): 1019–1033. Ironically, I wrote these words in February 2015—before the Labour Party's catastrophic defeat in the general election of that year—and could not have anticipated the monumental assault on the dominance of neoliberal pol-itics inside the Labour Party that took place with Jeremy Corbyn's election as Labour leader later that year.

deconstruction and destabilisation without the offer of constructive alternatives.[108] Although 'ethnicity' could be subject to scepticism or critique, the inability to tackle the problematic nature of contemporary notions that identity is a coherent, individual construct remained, for this was a core assumption of 'Third Way' ideology, referred to as 'life politics'.[109] Dickinson's review of this trend's development noted 'the sentiments are now widely shared because they accommodate a critique of traditional culture-history without abandoning concern for individuals, ideas, and an historical approach'.[110] Though this is by no means a negative thing, we may see that it produces inconsistencies. This particular form of theoretical malaise manifests itself in the somewhat haphazard way that scholars in the following decade engaged with ethnic concerns in their work. Howard Williams, for example, clearly understood and sympathised with the need to move towards an archaeology of the period critical of simplistic ethnic interpretations, arguing that as the loci of the interaction of diverse groups, 'archaeological manifestations of death and burial embody a complex network of exchanges and influences of different ideas and practices from frequent inter-group relations', which could not be expected to clearly demonstrate the expression of ethnic identities.[111] Williams still drew, however, upon a framework which believed the cultural types manifest in these cemeteries could be derived from, and linked to, the relative degrees of

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108.   This problem and its implications are usefully discussed in relation to phenomenological archaeology in Matthew Johnson, "Phenomenological Approaches in Landscape Archaeology," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41 (2012): 270-272

109.   Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), 214. Mark Whyman, "Late Roman Britain in Transition, AD 300 - 500: A Ceramic Perspective from East Yorkshire" (PhD Thesis, University of York, 2001), 222-3 makes similar criticisms of 'post-colonial' archaeological responses to the privileging of market mechanisms in late Roman British archaeology, noting that failure to criticise the structures of capitalism produced absurdly positive, non-materialist interpretations of the economy. Marxist readings are sometimes no less guilty of reaching dubious conclusions, however. See discussion of Faulkner, in Chapter 7.

110.   Dickinson, "What's new in early medieval burial archaeology?"

111.   Howard Williams, "Identities and cemeteries in Roman and early medieval Britain," in *TRAC 98: Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology*, ed. Patricia Baker et al. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1999), 102-103.

dominance held by coherent 'Germanic' or non-Germanic social groups.[112] Catherine Hills, too, no doubt firmly persuaded by her student Sam Lucy, would state that 'it is not, after all, possible to read ethnicity or rank directly from burials, although they may provide much information relating to these topics.'[113] All the same, on the basis of a putative ability to discern the 'precise, continental origins' of the buried, Hills argued that the 'incomers must have arrived in organised groups, which retained clear memories and practical knowledge of how things ought to be done'.[114] Upon the basis of parallels between the material patterns found on stamped cremation urns at Spong Hill and bracteates in central Denmark, Hills made the interesting suggestion that other interpretations of symbolic language, such as politico-religious affiliation could offer potential beyond ethnic interpretations, but this was nevertheless predicated upon the suggestion that it would be those of 'British or Germanic ancestry, Angle, Saxon or Jute' that would make use of such symbolic language.[115]

Several important critical works came at the turn of the new millenium. John Moreland, drawing upon Shennan and Jones, was, like Lucy, highly sceptical that fifth-century 'Germanic' metalwork signified the presence of 'Germanic' ethnic groups.[116] Yet this again was based entirely upon an apparent lack of boundary construction in this period, and Moreland echoed Hines in assuming that material culture evidenced the active construction of ethnic groups in later periods, based upon the allegedly preserved memory of 'Germanic myths'.[117] Another important publication was Ken Dark's *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire*, a elaboration

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112. Ibid., 103-104.
113. Catherine Hills, "Spong Hill and the Adventus Saxonum," in *Spaces of the Living and the Dead: An Archaeological Dialogue*, ed. Catherine E. Karkov, Kelley M. Wickham-Crowley, and Bailey K. Young, American Early Medieval Studies 3 (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1999), 19.
114. Ibid., 22.
115. Ibid., 24.
116. John Moreland, "Ethnicity, Power and the English," in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrell (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 33-5.
117. Ibid., 42-44, 49-51.

upon his doctoral thesis, which argued for far greater survival of 'Roman' features in post-Roman Britain. Dark argued that 'Germanic' burial rites in Anglo-Saxon England need not have been indicative of ethnic status, but he argued this on the basis that the items used in such burials did not represent a 'complete portfolio of Germanic culture', and therefore could not be indicative of the presence of *Tracht*, but instead signified contact with Germanic cultures through trade.[118] Geoff Harrison, a doctoral student under Sam Lucy at Durham, produced a sadly neglected thesis that set out to demonstrate the contingent nature of archaeological discourse on our subject, and proposed alternative approaches material cultural change again derived from theories of practice. This in itself was nothing new, but Harrison's work was monumental in its range of material examined, both textual and archaeological, and proposed an interesting approach which discussed material appropriation through time and space within local contexts as an alternative.[119] He concluded that

> material culture once thought to show that Germanic people settled in England may instead reflect appropriation made by people from around the North Sea in order to renegotiate or create identities when previous 'Roman' identities were being undermined.[120]

The thesis does not appear to have made much impact on mainstream scholarship. This may be because its immense scope left limited space for each of the areas it discussed.

Harrison noted the urgency of discussion on the subject of ethnicity, and this theme becomes most relevant in the transition to the new millennium. Commenting upon the continued resilience of constructed identities derived from historical origin myths, the final sentence of Harrison's thesis states that the power of these

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118. K. R. Dark, *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire* (Stroud: Tempus, 2002), 71-73.
119. Geoffrey J. Harrison, "Migrations and material culture change in Southern and Eastern England in the fifth century AD: the investigation of an archaeological discourse" (PhD Thesis, University of Durham, 2001).
120. Ibid., 271.

'should warn us against using those identities to legitimize national(ist) antagonism or even violence because, in the final analysis, they are a highly flexible and malleable form of "truth"'.[121] We witness here an even more marked turn towards the contemporary applicability of the field than Lucy's. This trend culminated in the publication of Hills' *The Origins of the English*. This work explicitly noted connections between attitudes toward modern immigration and study of the *aduentus saxonum*.[122] Its detailed summary of current contemporary approaches, be they genetic, archaeological, linguistic, or via stable isotope analysis, outlined the immense problems in interpretation that all of these encounter. The work argued ultimately for a version of the acculturation hypothesis, but suggested that the precise implications of this were difficult to generalise beyond a region-by-region context.[123] Nonetheless, this still based a large proportion of its criticism upon positivist arguments about the insufficient size or unsuitable location of samples,[124] and a belief was still maintained that a 'Germanic' component of identity can be isolated, whether this was an identity derived from 'genuine' ancestors and celebrated, or one later adopted in response to southern Scandinavian hegemony.[125] The book was criticised by Härke, who complained that 'more space [was] given to find weaknesses and holes in the traditional than in the fashionable model.'[126] This choice of wording here is interesting, implying as it does that opposition to interpretations that favour mass migration is simply a temporary, passing phase in scholarship.

The attention Hills gave to newly developing scientific methods of analysing evidence from the past was especially timely. It was at this point that increasing

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121. Ibid., 274.
122. Hills, *The Origins of the English*, 110.
123. Ibid., 114.
124. Ibid., 70-71.
125. Ibid., 111.
126. Heinrich Härke, "The debate on migration and identity in Europe," *Antiquity* 78 (300 2004): 455.

legitimacy was being optimistically attributed to early forays into the use of the molecular analysis of environmental, genetic and epigenetic determinants of human biological traits as a possible means of identifying historical migrations, by both the media and the scholarly community.[127] Bryan Ward-Perkins, for example, confidently asserted that the study of modern DNA in conjunction with the analysis of what he uncritically called 'Anglo-Saxon and British skeletons' could soon show 'how many Anglo-Saxons crossed the water to Britain'.[128] Such studies using genetics have been especially controversial. These use samples of Y chromosome or mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), which preserve mutations in genetic sequence that are inheritable (down the male line for Y chromosome and the female for mtDNA, respectively) and can be identified with sufficient resolution that related genetic sequences (organised into 'haplotypes' and 'haplogroups') can be identified in different localities. A very early study on ancient mtDNA samples found that although there was substantial haplotype variation in European populations, the majority of samples in both 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Welsh' cemeteries differed sufficiently little to suggest any meaningful pattern.[129] Such data is also difficult to obtain, and a more common approach involves samples from modern populations. Statistical models are then employed to determine the generational splits that result in the modern sequence sample. From this, the historical dating of these splits may be estimated, and interpretations suggested about causes of such splits.[130] This method had previously been used in studies of historic population changes in relation to the likes of Iceland and Orkney,[131] and early attempts at conclusions concerning the British Isle as a whole suggested a spread of genetic material from east to west

127. Hills, *The Origins of the English*, 63-71.
128. Ward-Perkins, "Why Did the Anglo-Saxons Not Become More British?," 520.
129. Martin Richards et al., "Archaeology and genetics: analysing DNA from skeletal remains," *World Archaeology* 25 (1 1993): 22-23.
130. Mark Jobling, "The impact of recent events on human genetic diversity," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 367 (2012): 793–799.
131. Ibid., 797.

explained by simplistic invocation of Anglo-Saxon expansion.[132] Others, contradictorily, suggested substantial genetic continuity from prehistoric times.[133] The first explicit attempt to apply these methods to study of the *aduentus saxonum* was undertaken by scientists based principally at University College London. Based upon a sample from seven towns bordering modern England and Wales, in comparison with samples from Friesland and Norway, the researchers came to the conclusion that mass migration was responsible for a 50-100% contribution of 'Anglo-Saxon Y Chromosomes' to the gene pool in central England.[134] It is interesting to note that this particular study explicitly framed itself as an attempt at addressing the 'mass migration' debate, and that it framed this problem as one where the 'contribution of Anglo-Saxon immigration to the modern English gene pool [remains] uncertain'.[135] Somewhat bizarrely, a study appeared only a year later suggesting rather different conclusions. Using a wider range of urban samples, a study by other geneticists also based at UCL produced results that suggested difficulty in distinguishing 'Anglo-Saxon' from 'Danish' genetic alteration, and suggested substantial regional variation in the distribution and alteration of haplogroups.[136] This study also found the development of genetic difference in England and Wales to be more gradual.[137]

Until very recently, the most famous (or infamous) of these studies was a development of the works by Weale *et al.* and Capelli *et al.*, written in consultation with Härke, who had also acted as an archaeological consultant on earlier stud-

132.   Anthony B. Falsetti and Robert R. Sokal, "Genetic structure of human populations in the British Isles," *Annals of Human Biology* 20 (3 1993): 215–229.
133.   James F. Wilson et al., "Genetic evidence for different male and female roles during cultural transitions in the British Isles," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 98 (9 2001): 5083.
134.   Michael E. Weale et al., "Y chromosome evidence for Anglo-Saxon mass migration," *Molecular biology and evolution* 19 (7 2002): 1008–21.
135.   Ibid., 1009.
136.   Cristian Capelli et al., "A Y Chromosome Census of the British Isles," *Current Biology* 13 (11 2003): 979–984.
137.   Ibid., 983.

ies.[138] This study sought to reconcile the contradictory outcome of the previous two articles, drawing on inspiration from a conference paper presented by Alex Woolf in 2004, which attempted to reconcile apparent linguistic evidence requiring mass migration with apparent archaeological evidence only explicable by the influx of a small elite.[139] This did so via evidence from the law code of Ine for an unequal *wergeld* value for Welsh compared with English subjects in the West Saxon kingdom.[140] This was proposed to culminate in the eventual disenfranchisement and bankruptcy of Welsh noble households, resulting in the eventual incorporation of the children of these households into Anglo-Saxon households 'as slaves, hangers-on, brides and so forth'.[141] Computer simulations were produced in the 2006 study to emulate this sort of process and, drawing upon Härke's prior arguments concerning skeletal stature and weapon burial, suggested that such a process could enable 'the proportion of 'immigrant' Y-chromosomes [to] rise from 10% to in excess of 50% in considerably fewer than 15 generations under plausible parameter values.'[142]

Most recently, a study has been published in *Nature*, using a far larger sample than previous efforts, and claiming to have successfully isolated substantial genetic differentiation across the British Isles, which could be tied to historical events including the *aduentus saxonum*.[143] Interestingly, this study, easily the most comprehensive of those presented, claimed that its analyses showed 'clear evidence in modern England of the Saxon migration, but [that] each limit[ed] the

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138. Thomas, Stumpf, and Härke, "Evidence for an apartheid-like social structure in early Anglo-Saxon England."
139. Alex Woolf, "Apartheid and Genocide: legal theory and economic reality" (Paper delivered at *Britons in Anglo-Saxon England*, Manchester, UK). This paper is now published as Woolf, "Apartheid and Economics in Anglo-Saxon England."
140. Ibid., 127.
141. Ibid., 129.
142. Thomas, Stumpf, and Härke, "Evidence for an apartheid-like social structure in early Anglo-Saxon England," 2654.
143. Garrett Hellenthal et al., "Fine scale genetic structure of the British population," *Nature* 519 (2015): 309–314.

proportion of Saxon ancestry, clearly excluding the possibility of long-term Saxon replacement'.[144] The authors consequently 'estimate[d] the proportion of Saxon ancestry in Cent./S England as very likely to be under 50%, and most likely in the range of 10–40%.'[145]

It did not take long for such studies to be subject to criticism, though the vast majority of this mainly concerned until recently issues of sample size, imprecise geographical terminology, and selective geographical sampling which resulted in the questions asked shaping outcomes.[146] Though the most recent *Nature* article can claim to overcome these particular problems, others remain. The maps used to suggest the location of migrating ethnic groups depict a situation straight out of Bede.[147] The only substantial response to the 'apartheid' model that circulated in biological publications regrettably drew on somewhat outdated historiographical work on these events, which probably helped the longevity of the model's acceptance.[148] Martin Carver's long-known thesis regarding the material cultural distribution patterns found in the fifth and sixth centuries simply being reflective of the relative facility of movement offered by such bodies of water as the North Sea applies equally to genetic distribution patterns.[149] Even more crucially, in my view, such studies have been opposed on the grounds that it is erroneous to conflate genetic material with ethnic identity.[150] Despite such studies frequently attempt-

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144. Ibid., 313.
145. Ibid.
146. Hills, *The Origins of the English*, 69-71; Catherine Hills, "Anglo-Saxon DNA?," in *Mortuary practices and social identities in the Middle Ages: Essays in burial archaeology in honour of Heinrich Härke*, ed. Duncan Sayer and Howard Williams (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2009), 134.
147. Hellenthal et al., "Fine scale genetic structure of the British population," 312, fig. 3.
148. John. E Pattison, "Is it necessary to assume an apartheid-like social structure in Early Anglo-Saxon England?," *Proceedings. Biological sciences / The Royal Society* 275 (1650 2008): 2423–2429; The response from the authors of the 2006 study was suitably scathing. Mark G. Thomas, Michael P. H. Stumpf, and Heinrich Härke, "Integration versus apartheid in post-Roman Britain: a response to Pattison," *Proceedings. Biological sciences / The Royal Society* 275 (1650 2008): 2419–2421.
149. Martin Carver, "Pre-Viking traffic in the north sea," in *Maritime Celts , Frisians and Saxons,* ed. Seán McGrail (London: Council for British Archaeology, 1990), 117–125.
150. Martin P. Evison, "All in the Genes?: Evaluating the Biological Evidence of Contact and Migration," in *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 280, 285; Sam Lucy, "Ethnic

ing to address the complex debates surrounding material culture, the point that 'migrant' Y chromosomes need not necessarily identify a 'Saxon' (or whatever) is rarely addressed. The only study to recognise this is the earliest mentioned here, which examined ancient mtDNA:

> It might well be the case that a particular DNA sequence was only found in individuals of a particular population, with a particular history: it could then be used as a marker for that population. However, in general this would be the result of chance, and in the case of mtDNA a number of quite distinctive lineages might occur in a single population, some or all of which might be shared to some degree with otherwise quite distantly related populations. We would not expect to see a one to one relationship between DNA and ethnicity.[151]

The lack of attention to such concerns in other studies using this data leads to simplistic statements being made, such as (in this case to justify the substantial contribution of a genetic haplotype with a firm establishment in France to the UK genepool):

> The Germanic ancestry these migrations brought to what is now France would have been Frankish rather than Saxon.[152]

and

> ...the geographic pattern of pattern of [haplogroup] FRA17 contributions differs from that of GER3 (*which we see as very likely Saxon*)... [my emphasis][153]

Only a year later, it was pointed out that even the authors' own supplementary reports recognised the implausibility of so readily separating, e.g., genetic contributions from Saxons and 'Danish Vikings'.[154] Ultimately, the arguments upon

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and cultural identities," in *The Archaeology of Identity: approaches to gender, age, status, ethnicity and religion*, ed. Margarita Diaz-Andreu and Sam Lucy (London: Routledge, 2005), 93; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 451-452; Hills, "Anglo-Saxon DNA?," 134; Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 244-245.
151. Richards et al., "Archaeology and genetics," 22.
152. Hellenthal et al., "Fine scale genetic structure of the British population."
153. Ibid.
154. Jane Kershaw and Ellen C. Røyrvik, "The 'People of the British Isles' project and Viking settlement in England," *Antiquity* 90 (354 2016): 1672.

which this study is founded are *historical*. They are partly, for example, grounded in the location of the majority of GER3 samples being in the vicinity of the Viking Age emporium of Hedeby.[155] It would labour the point to outline all instances of this culture historical argumentation, but these arguments are ultimately subject to the same epistemological criticisms that can be made of culture historical readings of material culture; these interpretations rely upon terminology that is increasingly regarded as outdated and unhelpfully imprecise. It is salutary to consider that, by the end of the day on which the *Nature* article was published, a substantial media response had already offered a wide variety of interpretations, ranging from the *Telegraph's* 'Britons still live in Anglo-Saxon tribal kingdoms',[156] the *Independent's* emphasis on the article's demonstration of 'successive waves of immigration',[157] to the the BBC's focus on its undermining of notions of a single 'Celtic' genetic inheritance (as if this were a surprising conclusion).[158]

This research has clear and manifest potential for political applications. The *Telegraph's* interpretation of the study, for example, was immediately championed by far-right, white supremacist, so-called '*Englisc*' nationalists as vindication of their cause.[159] It is therefore essential that the use of ethnic terminology by such research receives careful critical scrutiny, given the incautious use of such phrases as 'Saxon DNA'.[160] Current attempts at critically scrutinising this material have not always been adequate. Moreland's synthesis of this research, for example,

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155. Ibid., 1673.
156. Sarah Knapton, "Britons still live in Anglo-Saxon tribal kingdoms, Oxford University finds," *The Daily Telegraph*, March 18, 2015, accessed March 18, 2015, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/11480732/Britons-still-live-in-Anglo-Saxon-tribal-kingdoms-Oxford-University-finds.html.
157. Steve Connor, "New genetic map of Britain shows successive waves of immigration going back 10,000 years," *The Independent*, March 18, 2015, accessed March 18, 2015, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/new-genetic-map-of-britain-shows-successive-waves-of-immigration-going-back-10000-years-10117361.html.
158. Pallab Ghosh, "DNA study shows Celts are not a unique genetic group," *BBC News*, March 18, 2015, accessed March 18, 2015, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-31905764.
159. http://www.englisc-gateway.com/bbs/topic/47410-anglo-saxons/ [accessed 4 September 2017].
160. Hellenthal et al., "Fine scale genetic structure of the British population," Supplement, p. 5.

attempted to offer a constructivist slant on its relationship with research on material culture. But Moreland's argument ultimately culminated in presumed ethnic 'groups' with identifiable labels being the thing reified.[161] Patrick Geary's major project on ancient DNA from late antiquity may offer an alternative means of grappling with this data. Geary has already had some results which, if treated uncritically, could be taken to support traditional arguments. Thankfully, with Geary at the helm, such methodological errors are being addressed at every stage of the research project to avoid simplistic (and dangerous) interpretations.[162]t

While this debate progressed, that concerning material culture stagnated. For the most part, the same arguments were made, and discussion appeared to continue to revolve around mass migration versus elite emulation, with critiques of ethnic inference made from the sidelines, offering the use of theories of practice and 'local' identities as an alternative.[163] Some of Lucy's later work, however, attempted to deal with the risks of group reification that have been outlined in earlier sections of this chapter,[164] and rightly noted that 'we must be aware of mistaking description for explanation' with regard to such issues as ethnic conflict.[165] Nevertheless, the inference of the 'recreation and rearticulation of identities' (albeit ones that cannot presently be determined) remained.[166] These were suggested to be based in such potential phenomena as 'familial lineages' or 'territorial group-

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161. John Moreland, "Going native, becoming German: Isotopes and identities in late Roman and early medieval England," *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies* 1, no. 1 (2010): 142–149.

162. Though Geary's first international presentation of preliminary results from this research project, given at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of Birmingham in April 2017, was far more cautious, an approach that for all its statements of ethnic constructivism nevertheless frames its enquiry as one related to questions of Lombard migration can be found in the first publication of these results. Carlos Eduardo G Amorim et al., "Understanding 6th-Century Barbarian Social Organization and Migration through Paleogenomics," *bioRxiv* 268250 (18), doi:https://doi.org/10.1101/268250.

163. E.g. Sam Lucy, "Burial Practice in Early Medieval Eastern Britain: Constructing Local Identities, Deconstructing Ethnicity," in *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales,* ed. Sam Lucy (London: Council for British Archaeology, 2002), 72–81.

164. Lucy, "Ethnic and cultural identities," 96.

165. Ibid., 98.

166. Ibid., 105.

ings'.[167] As a result, movement shifted to a focus on 'symbolism' of rituals, and their connection to ideology, social power, and their legitimation.[168] Other scholars, meanwhile, sought to overcome divisions by appealing to the breaking down of disciplinary boundaries, suggesting that much hostility to mass migration interpretations was the result of insufficient communication between archaeologists, historians and philologists.[169] As an apparent crisis developed in archaeological interpretation, Howard Williams, while reviewing Bonnie Effros' historiographical intervention into Merovingian mortuary archaeology, pleaded for more historiographical and methological reflection on the state of the discipline, as we saw in Chapter 1.[170] Though Effros certainly contributed to a critique of nineteenth and early twentieth century approaches,[171] and, as we have seen, others such as Lucy did similarly for Anglo-Saxon archaeology, a lack of such a thing for contemporary archaeological discourse remains the case. William's suggested reason for this lack seems plausible:

> The question is, then, whether archaeologists and historians of early medieval Europe are working in a socio-political and academic climate that both tolerates and actively supports a self-reflexive critical appraisal; or alternatively, would any individuals or groups of scholars participating in such an appraisal quickly find themselves castigated by their peers, and their careers in jeopardy?[172]

Williams' approach, emphasising the possibility that 'mortuary material culture had an active role in constituting ethnicity in a situational and ideological way',[173]

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167. Ibid., 109.
168. Williams, "Rethinking Early Medieval Mortuary Archaeology," 195.
169. Alex Woolf, "A dialogue of the deaf and the dumb: archaeology, history and philology," in *Approaching Interdisciplinarity: Archaeology, History and the Study of Early Medieval Britain*, ed. Zoe Devlin, BAR British Series 486 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009), 10–23.
170. Williams, "Rethinking Early Medieval Mortuary Archaeology," 200; Chapter 1, 12.
171. Effros, *Merovingian Mortuary Archaeology and the Making of the Early Middle Ages*.
172. Williams, "Rethinking Early Medieval Mortuary Archaeology," 201. See also Halsall, *Cemeteries and Society*, 2, n. 2.
173. Williams, "Rethinking Early Medieval Mortuary Archaeology," 202.

appears to have become the status quo.[174] This is visible in later studies, which attempted to overcome such issues and return the ethnic paradigm in a more subtle manner, emphasising the potential for an active creation of such identities from both fictive and real connections to the past. Similar studies were subsequently extended to the continent, by students trained under Anglo-Saxon archaeologists.[175] Other studies seemed largely to be reiterations of older arguments, continuing to treat as axiomatic that certain trends in material culture represented cultural differences that might be read as ethnic identity.[176] Some were especially wedded to this idea. Ravn's study of 'Germanic' social structure drew upon a hermeneutically useful theorisation of 'analogy' as a means of overcoming the limits of empiricism in archaeological interpretation, and imported concepts from post-processualism to apply such analogical methods.[177] Ravn was also one of the first to apply multivariate statistical analysis to make sense of the vast volume of data from Spong Hill.[178] Yet certain 'ethnic' ideas are held as axioms and never subject to questioning. For Ravn, despite considerable differences in the various geographically disparate sites he analyses, a coherent 'Germanic' world existed, and drawing upon source material as geographically and temporally diverse as Tacitus' *Germania*, *Beowulf*, and the *Codex Argenteus*, he held it possible to piece together a 'Germanic world order' which served as the principle interpretative lens through which the disparate sites he studied were unified.[179] The idea that aspects of the Roman world might inform the similarities in this material was never even considered. In consequence, many

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174. Duncan Sayer, "Investigating the Social Aspects of Early Medieval Mortuary Practice," *History Compass* 11 (2 2013): 147–162.

175. Susanne E. Hakenbeck, "Situational Ethnicity and Nested Identities: New Approaches to an Old Problem," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 14 (2007): 19–27; Susanne E. Hakenbeck, *Local, regional and ethnic identities in early medieval cemeteries in Bavaria*, Contributi di archaeologia medievale 5 (Florence: All'Insegna del Giglio, 2011).

176. Heinrich Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis," *Medieval Archaeology* 55 (1 2011): 1–28.

177. Mads Ravn, *Death Ritual and Germanic Social Structure (c. AD 200-600)*, BAR International Series 1164 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2003), 1-21.

178. Ibid., 99-129.

179. Ibid., 132-133.

of the interpretations Ravn put forward, such as the idea that drinking could be related to the cult of Odin,[180] are, in light of current historiographical work, entirely baseless.

Likewise, Ravn drew upon ethnic interpretations of the Sîntana de Mureș/Černjachov culture of the Baltic region,[181] alongside the works of Jones and the Vienna school, to assert '[a]ny isochrestic variation in the archaeological record may be interpreted as an emblemic use of material culture to show ethnicity, social relations, or a chronological development.'[182] For Ravn, this culture could therefore be unproblematically associated with Gothic ethnic expression, even if this expression was situationally constructed. Futhermore, the presence of a mixture of La Tène, Hallstatt and Sîntana de Mureș/Černjachov cultures was held to represent ethnic 'mixing'.[183] Ravn, therefore, committed the same fallacy as others in their use of isochrestic interpretation to infer ethnic expression.[184] We will explore the problem with these assumptions about the Sîntana de Mureș/Černjachov culture in more detail in Chapter 5.

With somewhat more nuance, Toby Martin produced a doctoral thesis which attempted to infer the presence of ethnic groups via the construction of a new typology of the cruciform brooch utilising data from the Portable Antiquities Scheme. This study, inspired by Anglo-American writing on the *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory of the Vienna school, argued that such items as cruciform brooches, though not passive signifiers of migration or ethnic identity, were used in Britain to actively create an 'Anglian' identity by functioning as a kernel of tradition around which this identity was constructed, based upon perceived descent: 'Fundamen-

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180.   Ibid., 134.
181.   As advanced, among others, by Volker Bierbrauer, "Archäologie und Geschichte der Goten vom 1.-6. Jahrhundert," *Frühmittelalterlichen Studien* 28 (1994): 51–172 and Peter Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996). For a refutation of this culture historical reading of this material culture see Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars*, 63-8 and Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*.
182.   Ravn, *Death Ritual and Germanic Social Structure (c. AD 200-600)*, 53.
183.   Ibid., 65.
184.   Above, 53.

tally, the individuals who wore these items are suggested here to have been the perceived bearers of the ethnos or cultural tradition'.[185] John Moreland supervised Martin's thesis and the influence of his 2000 publication is clear, here. This thesis has not yet received substantial criticism, though this is more likely with the recent publication of Martin's first monograph.[186]

Stable isotope analysis is another posited means of overcoming current conflicts in the field, and offers some considerable advantage over the use of genetic evidence due to its much greater effectiveness at revealing past people whose origins must have been from a place other than the site of their burial.[187] This method has been championed by Härke as vindicating mass migration interpretations, owing to a study of burials in West Heslerton which he argued demonstrated that 17% of those buried were migrants.[188] But moving from such calculations to the arguments Härke made is more problematic. Härke himself noted that those who were migrants were frequently not from the expected Anglo-Saxon homelands, as is also true in the case of Lankhills and Wasperton,[189] and that migrant presence rarely coincided with what is normally perceived as intrusive material culture.[190]

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185.   Toby F. Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use" (PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 2010), 179.
186.   Toby F. Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015). See further, below, 162-174.
187.   Though when attempting to reveal precisely where these origins were this method suffers from the same issues with sample size and selection found in DNA analysis. Robert Hedges, "Anglo-Saxon Migration and the Molecular Evidence," in Hamerow, Hinton, and Crawford, *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*, 82-84.
188.   Paul Budd et al., "Investigating population movement by stable isotope analysis: a report from Britain," *Antiquity* 78 (299 2005): 127–141; Janet Montgomery et al., "Continuity or Colonization in Anglo-Saxon England? Isotope Evidence for Mobility, Subsistence Practice, and Status at West Heslerton," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 126 (2005): 123–138; Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis," 6.
189.   Martin Carver, Catherine Hills, and Jonathan Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton: A Roman, British and Anglo-Saxon Community in Central England,* ed. Martin Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009); Hella Eckardt et al., "Oxygen and strontium isotope evidence for mobility in Roman Winchester," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 36 (12 2009): 2816–2825; Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis," 6.
190.   Montgomery et al., "Continuity or Colonization in Anglo-Saxon England? Isotope Evidence for Mobility, Subsistence Practice, and Status at West Heslerton," 133-4. Interestingly, the three burials at West Heslerton with cruciform brooches *did* coincide with nonlocal origin. Ibid., 134. This, it need hardly be stated, does not necessarily mean that the rite signals ethnic status, but this

Indeed, the most recent isotopic study, of Berinsfield, Oxon., used precisely such a discovery to argue in favour of the acculturation hypothesis.[191] Evidently, even this type of evidence suffers from many setbacks, methodological and theoretical. Despite Härke's claim that 'input of new data and new interdisciplinary perspectives is likely to achieve more than yet another theory-driven reassessment of the same archaeological data that underpinned much of the debate in the 1990s',[192] current attempts at integrating these data and these perspectives continue to swing between the same, tired interpretative models. Perhaps the frameworks of the debate are at fault, rather than the flaws and merits of a particular side.

Discontent with the frameworks is growing. In medieval studies more widely, scholars are taking tentative steps towards questioning the utility of 'groupism' in ethnic interpretations of the historical record.[193] This has not yet filtered into Anglo-Saxon archaeology,[194] but Guy Halsall's recent *Worlds of Arthur* provides a strong critique of both advocates and opponents of migrationist models, doing so upon the basis of Halsall's understanding of ethnic identity as situationally constructed. Halsall, also a long advocate of post-processualism, argues first, largely upon the basis of his previous work on northern Gaul, that furnished inhumation cannot be an indicator of Anglo-Saxon migration.[195] He then suggests, based on arguments for a Saxon federate settlement in the late fourth century derived from

issue will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 4.

191.   Susan S. Hughes et al., "Anglo-Saxon origins investigated by isotopic analysis of burials from Berinsfield, Oxfordshire, UK," *Journal of Archaelogical Science* 42 (2014): 81–92.

192.   Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis," 21.

193.   See the collection of articles in the thematic cluster 'Ethnicity and Nation' for the latest volume of *Medieval Worlds*, especially the introduction by Ilya Afanasyev and Nikolas S. M. Matheou, "Revisiting Pre-Modern Ethnicity and Nationhood: Preface," *Medieval Worlds* 5 (2017): 54–6.

194.   Though see Harland, "Rethinking Ethnicity and "Otherness" in Early Anglo-Saxon England," 119 in the volume mentioned in the previous footnote, for a brief attempt. A criticism of groupist approaches to early medieval archaeology may also be found in K. Patrick Fazioli, "Rethinking Ethnicity in Early Medieval Archaeology: Social Identity, Technological Choice, and Communities of Practice," in *From West to East: Current Approaches to Medieval Archaeology*, ed. Scott D. Stull (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2014), 20–29, but his proposed solution is somewhat lacking. See below, 117.

195.   Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 228-234. For the earlier work on which this argument is based see Halsall, *Cemeteries and Society*, 89-167.

textual sources, that the appearance of a cremation ritual, in around the 430s, similar to that found in regions thought of as being the Saxon homelands, suggested the active declaration of an Anglo-Saxon identity by already-settled federates, their descendants, followers, and contacts across the North Sea in the wake of a mounting social crisis in Britain.[196] This allows for the fluidity and constructed nature of ethnic identity, effectively tackles assumptions that migrations into the Roman Empire from *Germania* were a uniquely post-Roman occurrence, and allows that the identity declared is one entirely situated in its own time and context. Halsall effectively marshalls the range of evidence overwhelmingly suggesting movement from northern Germany into Britain during this period,[197] and provides good reason to believe, if his reading of the written material is correct, that any putative Saxon identity would be unlikely to have been made manifest until the crisis period of the 430s.[198] Nevertheless, that the expression found in this burial rite is an ethnic one is an assumption which remains unaddressed. The archaeological manifestation of this material may be the result of a decision by some Saxons to mark their identity as 'non-Roman', but there are possible alternatives. Perhaps cremation was employed due to a desired political affiliation with societies across the North Sea, which had no implications about one's ethnic status. Perhaps its use was related to ideas about the creation of ancestors in the afterlife, as has been suggested by Howard Williams (though this, too, is ultimately unprovable).[199] Perhaps Halsall is broadly correct: such a phenomenon this could represent an example of Jones' understanding of *doxic* knowledge—a crisis in the stablility of civic Romanness could result in the demarcation of alternative ethnic groups. The difficulty, however, lies in demonstrating ethnicity to be a component of the symbolic structure being

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196. Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 186, 234-7.
197. Ibid., 104.
198. Ibid., 234-7.
199. Howard Williams, "Material culture as memory: combs and cremation in early medieval Britain," *Early Medieval Europe* 12 (2 2003): 89–128.

constituted. We lack a signifying trace for cremation burial—we cannot demonstrate its affiliation with at least some level of ethnicised *habitus,* as we may be able to do with Roman architecture. We can decode its symbolic meaning only via its evident novelty (and similarities with practices in northern Germany). There might be, we will see, reason to believe that the furnishing of other goods, such as cruciform brooches, in such early cremations may itself have been concerned with expressing affiliation with Rome.[200] What we witness here need not be an active declaration of Saxonness, but may be an 'inadequate' attempt at conveying Romanness, in a context where the supply of material and ideological building blocks for such expression had been thrown into crisis.[201]

James Gerrard has recently published a monograph offering a new explanation for the transition from Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England.[202] In his discussion of material culture in the east of Britain during the fifth and sixth centuries, Gerrard notes the problematic nature of present terminology, stating 'ancient identity is written in to the vocabulary of the period', and suggests that such terms as 'Germanic' ultimately explain very little about the material so labelled.[203] Nevertheless, he states that

> by deconstructing such labels the very grammar and analytical language of the period is dismantled and to invent a new term for the east of Britain would also be a ridiculous affectation. Instead, the label 'Germanic' is used here to describe a series of cultural phenomena that clearly have their origins, at least in part, in northern Germany. The use of this term does not necessarily imply anything about the genetic makeup, or linguistic abilities, or ethnic identity of the individuals and communities to which it is applied.[204]

Gerrard argues that the emergence of 'Germanic' burial practices in eastern

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200. Below, Chapter 6, 260-268.
201. See Chapter 6.
202. James Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain: An Archaeological Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
203. Ibid., 180.
204. Ibid.

Britain in the fifth century need not have had anything to do with signalling ethnicity, and that such practices were rather part of a larger shift, toward symbolic emphasis on martial prowess as an indicator of status.[205] This shift was argued to be the result of the collapse of Roman power in Britain in the early fifth century, which resulted in the militarisation of Romano-British elites coupled with the recruitment of 'Germanic' barbarians for defence.[206] Gerrard takes care to emphasise that this would not have been at all out of place at the time, but argues that the culture of these barbarians would have eventually offered an alternative ideology for those seeking to legitimate claims to power.[207] Gerrard rejects arguments for Anglian, Saxon, and Jutish identities emerging from *Traditionskerne* preserved by migrants from across the North Sea.[208] Nevertheless, Gerrard suggests that the material cultural patterns frequently identified as Jutish, Saxon, or Anglian were

> a means of unifying disparate groups and providing social cohesion. [They] allowed small-scale social units to see themselves as part of a larger whole and this was useful because it provided a framework in which groups could define themselves as 'us' in opposition to 'them'.[209]

Perhaps it is here that Gerrard's refusal to reject contemporary terminology creates problems. Such statements are a reification of putative ethnic groups, irrespective of Gerrard's rebuttal that it is moot 'whether or not the small communities considered themselves as belonging to these ethnicities'.[210]

Though both Halsall's and Gerrard's interpretations have their own problems, they suggest an increased emphasis away from seeing much of what is traditionally thought of as 'Anglo-Saxon' material culture as necessarily indicative of the ethnic identity of its users, emphasising instead what can be learned from this material of

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205. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 201–7.
206. Ibid., 250–254.
207. Ibid., 253–4, 261–2.
208. Ibid., 266–268.
209. Ibid., 268–9.
210. Ibid., 268.

increased militarisation of the British elite in the wake of social crisis. This has parallels with some trends in archaeological scholarship on the continent, and when these are brought into conversation, they may offer a means of movement beyond the traditional ethnic paradigm. There is already some movement in this direction. Susan Oosthuizen's research on patterns of landholding and cultivation in the immediate post-Roman period emphasises the possibility for 'long-term continuities in landholdings and governance from the fourth century onward' and rejects the necessity for Germanic migration to be invoked as an explanatory mechanism for wider social change.[211] That said, Oosthuizen's work still treats the 'Germanic' as a meaningful category and Germanic 'groups' as real phenomena, the question of whose role in such processes is a question of scale, demonstrated by empirical analysis.[212] Yet not all are satisfied with drawing the line at ensuring careful caution is taken in outlining the intended definition of one's chosen terminology. In the questions and answers session after a recent British Academy paper given by Robin Fleming, I asked why it still seemed necessary for authors to caution against terminology and interpretations of said terminology that have been doubted for over thirty years. She replied:

> I think we need to change terminology. I think until we give up these ethnic terms to describe people, we endlessly repeat our errors. There's a new giant volume, it's a companion to Anglo-Saxon Archaeology that's been edited by Hamerow *et al.*, in the introduction it says: 'when we say "Anglo-Saxon" of course, we don't mean "Anglo-Saxon" '. I think if you write that sentence it's time to reevaluate the language that you use![213]

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211. Susan Oosthuizen, "Recognizing and Moving on from a Failed Paradigm: The Case of Agricultural Landscapes in Anglo-Saxon England c. AD 400–800," *Journal of Archaeological Research* 24 (2 2015): 214; Susan Oosthuizen, *The Anglo-Saxon Fenland* (Oxford: Windgather Press, 2017).
212. Oosthuizen, "Recognizing and Moving on from a Failed Paradigm: The Case of Agricultural Landscapes in Anglo-Saxon England c. AD 400–800," 203; Oosthuizen, *The Anglo-Saxon Fenland*, 31–47.
213. Pers. comm. after Robin Fleming, "Medieval Migrants: On the move in Britain after Rome's Fall" (The British Academy, London, March 26, 2015), accessed April 22, 2015, http://www.britac. ac.uk/events/2015/Medieval_Migrants.cfm. The exchange can be heard at 50:00. Fleming's comments presumably refer to the preface of *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*, which

Fleming has a point. In the first volume offering published results from Sue Harrington's and Martin Welch's 'Beyond the Tribal Hidage' project, it is treated as a given that the earliest diagnostically 'Anglo-Saxon' material represents the 'earliest phase of Germanic settlement'.[214] In a recent study of Harddown Hill, a site long regarded as the westernmost 'Anglo-Saxon' cemetery, indeed, described as 'essential to our understanding of the fifth- and sixth-century Anglo-Saxon material culture fringe',[215] Matt Austin proposes that the assemblage of artefacts found at the site is best interpreted as a hoard rather than as indicative of no longer extant graves. The argument is compelling, but even more interesting is that Austin treats the artefacts' putative 'Germanic' character, in opposition to the generally 'Romano-British' character of the region, as a problem requiring resolution for his interpretation to be advanced. Austin treats 'Germanic' artefacts as items whose presence is most likely explained either as possessions brought to the region by North Sea migrants or raiders, or as items obtained by the Romano-British population through trade. Although he discounts all of these interpretations and proposes an interpretation based upon the long-term circulation of metallic objects and the proposal that the deposition of the artefacts was motivated largely by economic considerations, Austin nevertheless implicitly asserts that such artefacts signalled something fundamentally 'ethnic' in their creation.[216]

Despite cogent and powerful critique, the direct inference of ethnic identity from material culture, and other conflations of etic and emic categories, remain frequent and widely accepted practices in Anglo-Saxon archaeology. It has already

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states: 'The term "Anglo-Saxon" has the disadvantage of hinting at ethnic specificity... ...Its convenience and common usage, however, give it more currency in defining much of the archaeology of this period than, for example, terms such as "post-Roman" or "Dark Age" or even "early medieval".' Hamerow, Hinton, and Crawford, *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*, xxiii.
214.   Harrington and Welch, *The Early Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms of Southern Britain AD 450-650*, 99-102.
215.   Matthew Austin, "Rethinking Hardown Hill: Our Westernmost Early Anglo-Saxon Cemetery?," *The Antiquaries Journal* 94 (2014): 18.
216.   Ibid., 16–19.

been suggested that this has its roots in theoretical malaise stemming from the implications of recognising the situationally-constructed nature of ethnicity, and the attempt to use theories of practice to reconcile this. The conjecture has been made that the triumphalist rhetoric of neoliberal capitalism in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and an economic shift to the right in mainstream politics offers a potential historical context for this development, resulting in misdirection in present criticism that enables it to be reconciled with conceptual frameworks that it would otherwise dismantle.[217] An alternative approach being developed by continental scholars, influenced by the trends discussed above but very much of its own character, will now be outlined as a possible route out of this impasse.

2.4   The Freiburg School

The 1990s were a crucial point of change for theoretical archaeological discussion on ethnicity. The observations that had been made could not be unmade. This has posed substantial problems for subsequent investigations. Any archaeologist who has not simply ignored the implications of these theoretical archaeological considerations has been forced to attempt to ensure that their implications are correctly recognised in their work. This has led to something of a crisis of identity in the discipline, with clearly demarcated lines of battle being drawn between those who believe that these findings necessitate far more careful scrutiny of the assumption of our ability to read ethnic significance in the reading of the material record, and those who believe that such an approach is tantamount to a denial of the possibility that ethnic phenomena were responsible for the production of this record at all.[218]

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217.   On this phenomenon in political discourse more widely see Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is there no alternative?* (Winchester, UK and Washington, USA: Zero Books, 2009).

218.   Philipp von Rummel, "Gotisch, barbarisch oder römisch?: Methodologische Überlegungen zur ethnischen Interpretation von Kleidung," in *Archaeology of Identity/Archäologie der Identität,*

Florin Curta summarises the problem, as he perceives it: 'to deny the possibility that ethnicity can explain [material culture distribution patterns] is at best an exaggeration and at worst evidence of theoretical malaise'.[219] Malaise is precisely the problem here, and with little wonder. To have what is known, and what can possibly be known, entirely redefined is an experience so unsettling that the inevitable result was surely, for some, to be the complete denial of the presence of ethnicity as a phenomenon in the early medieval material cultural record. Such denial is, however, far less common than Curta implies. The problem is particularly tangible in that advocates of both positions insist that it is the opposing side who fail to correctly recognise the implications of a practice-oriented conception of ethnic boundary-making. Evidently, both cannot be correct.

Curta's recent characterisation of the state of play suggests a point of consensus between the current distinct poles of opinion in early medieval mortuary archaeology, in the recognition that collective identities are socially constructed.[220] A noticeable conflict has nevertheless developed. Some question the ability to read ethnic interpretations from early medieval mortuary archaeology, most notably Brather, Effros, Halsall, Theuws, Fehr and von Rummel—who might reasonably be referred to as the 'Freiburg School' due to the substantial predominance of scholars based at (or who trained under Heiko Steuer at) the Albert–Ludwigs–Universität, Freiburg-im-Breisgau, Germany—though they are themselves frequently influenced by wider trends in Anglo-American archaeology.[221] They are opposed by a conti-

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ed. Walter Pohl and Mathias Mehoffer (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), 52–53.

219.   Curta, "Medieval Archaeology and Ethnicity," 540.

220.   Ibid., 537.

221.   See, e.g., Effros, "Dressing conservatively"; Sebastian Brather, *Ethnische Interpretationen in der Frühegeschichtlichen Archäologie* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2004); Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*; Fehr, "*Volkstum* as Paradigm," Hubert Fehr, "Germanische Einwanderung oder kulturelle Neuorientierung?: Zu den Anfängen des Reihengräberhorizontes," in *Zwischen Spätantike und Frühmittelalter. Archäologie des 4. bis 7. Jahrhunderts im Westen*, ed. Sebastian Brather (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2008), 67–102, Hubert Fehr, *Germanen und Romanen im Merowingerreich* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010); Halsall, "Ethnicity and early medieval cemeteries." Roymans, *Ethnic Identity and Imperial Power* is an example of a similar approach in earlier classical archaeol-

nental reactionary movement which opposes what is perceived as the subversive influence of Anglo-American post-processualism in its various forms,[222] but also, in some of the more vociferous criticism, by US-based scholars who view certain elements of the Freiburg School as threatening to introduce a 'processualist agenda' *à la* Binford into German archaeology.[223]

Curta's criticism is directed primarily at Sebastian Brather, and the processualist agenda that he claims to identify in Brather's work is built on the assertion that the denial of a *demonstrable* self-conscious construction of ethnic boundaries amounts to a denial of the active use of, and thus conscious construction of identity in, the material record. One can see why this would superficially appear to be an argument along the lines of processualism. Binford, after all, argued that though migration can affect mechanisms of cultural process, it 'add[s] nothing to the explanation of the processes of culture change and evolution',[224] though later processualists were somewhat subtler than this.[225]

To tear down the straw man he makes from this argument, Curta draws substantially upon the ethnographic work of Ian Hodder to assert the non-arbitrary nature of the selection of material employed in the construction of an ethnic boundary.[226]

> It is true that ethnicity is concocted out of a few cultural elements—
> and never of the entire 'culture'—but those elements are not arbitrarily chosen, to the extent that they are meant to mark the boundaries

ogy.
222.   See, for example, Florin Curta, "Some remarks on ethnicity in medieval archaeology," *Early Medieval Europe* 15 (2 2007): 159–185 for a summary, of the dispute in German scholarship; Michel Kazanski and Patrick Perin, "»Foreign« Objects in the Merovingian Cemeteries of Northern Gaul," in *Foreigners in Early Medieval Europe: 13 International Studies on Early Medieval Mobility*, ed. Dieter Quast (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseum, 2009), 149–167 or Halsall, "Ethnicity and early medieval cemeteries" for the same dispute in Merovingian mortuary archaeology which, perhaps unsurprisingly, is a greater concern in French scholarship.
223.   Curta, "The Elephant in the Room."
224.   Lewis R. Binford, "Archaeology as Anthropology," *American Antiquity* 28 (1962): 218.
225.   David W. Anthony, "Migration in Archeology: The Baby and the Bathwater," *American Anthropologist* 92 (4 1990): 895–914.
226.   Curta, "Some remarks on ethnicity in medieval archaeology," 169–172; Curta, "Medieval Archaeology and Ethnicity," 538.

of the ethnic group as visibly as possible for outsiders to acknowledge the existence of that group.[227]

By applying the observations made by Brubaker and Wimmer that were outlined above, we can see that Curta here conflates etic and emic categories. He assumes, upon the basis of isolated ethnographic case studies, that selection of material culture is always performed with the intent of producing maximum salience of the ethnic boundary. But if we follow Brubaker's maxim that the degree of salience is itself something which needs explanation and analysis, we can no longer assume that the visibility of a constructed boundary demands an ethnic interpretation.

Similarly, though more sympathetic to the Freiburg School, the work of Susanne Hakenbeck shows frustration with its denial of the possibility to make ethnic interpretations, suggesting that neither it nor the Culture History it opposes 'offer a constructive approach for studying the material expressions of ethnicity'.[228] Yet, though Hakenbeck carefully handles questions of multi-layeredness, and draws upon nuanced theoretical work which treats ethnicity as active expression, her arguments in favour of ethnic interpretations of the cemeteries of early medieval Bavaria still hinge upon asserting that the use of artefact types with foreign origins (or imagined foreign origins) represented acts of ethnic expression:

> Brooch types on their own cannot... ...be considered ethnic markers. However, this does not mean that brooches did not carry any ethnic meaning at all. Their designs were varied and full of complex symbolism... ...This symbolism may have been associated with the brooches' real or assumed geographical origins. The existence of brooches in a grave meant that their wearer was associated with areas beyond the local... ...Brooches were therefore carriers of a common identity that arose out of long-distance connections between populations.[229]

This form of argument ultimately falls foul of the post-groupist criticisms of ethnic sociology discussed above, which refute that such acts of expression need

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227. Curta, "Medieval Archaeology and Ethnicity," 538.
228. Hakenbeck, *Local, regional and ethnic identities in early medieval cemeteries in Bavaria*, 25.
229. Ibid., 87.

necessarily be ethnic. They could have been, of course, but such a thing would have to be empirically demonstrated via means not possible for this material.

The position of the Freiburg School in its more subtle iterations is not, whatever accusations are made, the denial of the possibility that patterns in the archaeological record emerged (at least in part) as a result of the active construction of ethnicity. Rather, the position simply observes that the precise identification, within the archaeological record itself, of the ethnicities involved is impossible to prove.

Philipp von Rummel is an advocate of the Freiburg positions who has made some overtures toward reconciliation. He suggests that much of the criticism directed toward the skeptics of ethnic readings has been unfair, and proposes that greater 'willingness to overcome terminological obstacles, narrow disciplinary boundaries, misunderstandings and mutual incomprehension' should enable productive discussion to the benefit of advocates of both positions.[230] The method proposed to achieve this is a far more rigorous application of current historiographical thinking with regard to the written sources for late antique and early medieval *gentes* to archaeological investigation, recognising the nature of such distinctions as 'Goth' from 'Roman' as discursive constructions, whilst nevertheless maintaining that such constructions could still 'constitute the basis of real perceived differences'.[231] The importance of this position is that it sufficiently distinguishes modern conceptions of such constructions from contemporary constructions, rather than simply reifying the latter. Von Rummel argues, in his thesis and later articles, that the contingent and variable nature of late antique written material dealing with costume and identity suggests that greater caution is required in applying such sources to the archaeological material:

> *A priori* assumptions about ethnic differentiation cannot serve as a

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230. Rummel, "Gotisch, barbarisch oder römisch?," 52.
231. '...denn selbst wenn etwa das, was einen Goten von einem Römer trennt, als diskursive Konstruktion dargestellt wird, bedeutet dies nicht zwangsläufig, daß diese Konstruktion nicht die Grundlage real wahrgenommener Unterschiede konstituieren konnte.' Ibid., 54.

basis of argument here. The etic perspective, that of the external observer, which modern archaeologists and historians are forced to take, meets its limits when they attempt to label and interpret recognized phenomena and to integrate their findings with the written sources'.[232]

Von Rummel demonstrates that the dichotomy of Roman/Germanic driving such *a priori* assumptions survives even in the explanatory frameworks of modern scholarship.[233] He does not deny, however, that the *habitus barbarus*[234] was nevertheless a real phenomenon found within the borders of the Roman Empire,[235] and he argues that this phenomenon resulted from inevitable developmental variation in clothing style taking place alongside continued extolling of an Augustan era ideal of *habitus romanus*. The eventual end result was the establishment of this *habitus barbarus* (defined as such only in that it deviated from this ideal[236]) due to the appeal of its ferocious connotations, even within the confines of a militarised imperial court.[237] Von Rummel develops this to argue that 'barbarised' elements of the material culture that emerged in the fifth and sixth centuries were barbarian 'only in the sense that they did not symbolise the civilian *romanitas* of the toga',[238] and instead represented a dichotomy between this civilian ideal and a new, military ideal:

> The analysis of graves... ...demonstrated what various individual studies of particular material types had surmised: that accessories of "barbarian" graves from the region of the former western Roman Empire are almost exclusively Mediterranean or confined to Gaul. Far better to describe them as 'Roman'. These people were interred in the clothing of a late antique *militia*...[239]

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232. Rummel, "The Fading Power of Images," 390. See also Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 100–101.
233. Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 81–82; Rummel, "The Fading Power of Images," 378–390.
234. As he calls the new funerary costume which appeared in late antiquity and is often erroneously assumed to be the product of 'Germanic' immigrants.
235. Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 101.
236. Ibid., 94.
237. Ibid., 96.
238. Rummel, "The Fading Power of Images," 394.
239. '*Die Analyse der Männergräber... ...bestätigte, was verschiedene Einzelstudien zu bestimmten Materialgattungen schon vermutet hatten: Die Accessoires der "barbarischen" Männergräber auf dem*

2.4. THE FREIBURG SCHOOL

We find here an approach that does not deny the power of archaeology to explain, but is sufficiently cognisant of its limits. Von Rummel's work, though a profound step and one which may well bridge what was previously an apparently unbridgeable gulf between scholars of opposing interpretations, nevertheless faces a wave of hostility to the very notion that such concepts as 'Germanic', and their dichotomous relationship with *romanitas* which is implied, may be fundamentally fraught with difficulty. This may be because, ultimately, the decisions archaeologists make on the use of such categorical labels move beyond a point of empirical determination, to the point of interpretation based upon a context-laden act of choice. Part II of this thesis will attempt to determine whether the material may, when such a dichotomy is discarded, be more accurately explained by the interpretative framework von Rummel has suggested. In order to do this, however, it is necessary to demonstrate the extent to which the dichotomy may be observed in Anglo-Saxon archaeological scholarship. Further, it will be demonstrated that the recourse to this dichotomy, and its rejection, depends by its nature on something pre-rational. Thus, we turn to philosophy.

Gebiet des ehemaligen römischen Westreiches sind fast ausschließlich als mediterran, oder um Gallien einzuschließen, wohl besser als "römisch" zu bezeichnen. Die Männer wurden in einer Kleidung der spätantiken militia bestattet...'. Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 404.

Chapter 3

Empiricism and Metaphysics

I have demonstrated that ethnicity and its associates remain conceptual categories embedded within the very roots of the discipline. This chapter will discuss the means by which these concepts will be uprooted, their *aporiae* exposed, and an alternative forged from this process. My methodology may need justification, especially in its application to a discipline that can be proud of the many advancements in understanding that have been achieved through the application of positivist principles.

The previous chapter argued that the utility of Brubaker's approach to ethnic interpretation lay not in his search for unambiguous analytical categories, but rather in the persuasiveness of his critical opposition to the etic reification of ethnic groups, these being a fundamentally emic set of phenomena. It was noted that this problem made the effective identification of ethnic expression impossible through purely archaeological means–throwing into disarray the sorts of arguments which hold certain aspects of material culture to represent, *prima facie,* the disruption of *doxa*—habituated mental schemata perceived by their possessors to represent the

natural order of things.[1] Thus, both Giddens and Bourdieu were shown to represent unsatisfying theoretical bases upon which to investigate our subject of concern. This situation is destructive of our ability to talk about identity in the early Anglo-Saxon period, well known to exist as a problem, and hitherto a seemingly impassable dead end. What is to be done?

3.1 Differential ontology

There is a way out of this bind, and an alternative theoretical framework for examining motions of human subjectivity, and how these might be made manifest in the material record, might help. The problems identified above have principally emerged from a need to reconcile the power and constraints of structure with the agency of the autonomous human subject. The work of several philosophers normally grouped under the heading of 'post-structuralism' might help us with this, providing a philosophical foundation that offers both space for emancipatory potential while being far more attentive to the constraints of structure imposed upon this potential.

The particular strength post-structuralism offers lies in its breaking down the dichotomy of subject-object by a quite different means: the recognition that no human subject can truly possess an individual essence, thus rendering this dichotomy an artificial concept. These philosophers are not offered to provide 'yet another theory' to be loosely attached to standard archaeological data collection and interpretation. The problem that their work equips us to solve is one present not merely in archaeological research but inherent in all philosophical enquiry: how does one adequately capture and represent the multiplicitous and complex nature of being in observable phenomena, and how does one adequately deal with problems inherent in assumptions regarding the unity of the subject? In short, how

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1. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 164–171.

does one overcome the subject–object divide in philosophy without imposing hierarchies of essence? To move even some small way towards solving this problem can offer new interpretative methods relating to identity in the material record that can evade both the empirical and epistemological flaws in present discussion about identity in research on the late Roman/early Anglo-Saxon material record.

Post-structuralism, part of a wider, post-Hegelian philosophical tradition known as 'Continental' (as opposed to 'Anglo-American' or 'Analytic') Philosophy, deals, among other things, with what is referred to as the 'metaphysics of presence'. This philosophical concern can be traced back to Plato, but takes its recognisable modern form in the dualism of René Descartes. Cartesian dualism holds that the mind, the 'thinking thing' (*res cogitans*) and the body, the 'extant thing' (*res extensa*), are ontologically distinct. This is a necessity for Cartesian dualism for the reason that the existence of one's mind must, unlike one's body, be philosophically certain (as captured in the famous Cartesian proposition *cogito ergo sum*).[2] From a Cartesian perspective, we may state there to be a fixed, stable truth. This truth is normally held, by necessity, to be transcendental in nature—many of Descartes' disciples would offer God as the anchor providing this fixed, stable order, for example. The reason this stable transcendental truth is necessary in Cartesian thought is precisely because this line of reasoning depends upon a metaphysics of presence. That is to say, it hinges upon the axiom that through thought one accesses an authentic, 'self-present' voice that in some way constitutes the essence of one's being.

3.2 Derridean deconstruction

The philosophy of Jacques Derrida represented a profound move in the conception of ontology and epistemology.[3] Derrida's work posits that meaning is never fixed

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2. Rendered in its first iteration in the French, *'je pense, donc je suis'*. René Descartes, *Discours de la méthode*, vol. 1, Oeuvres de Descartes (Paris: Victor Cousin, 1824-6), IV.

3. Derrida would, of course, have problematised such a use of language.

or stable, but operates via a constant shift of differing and deferring (encapsulated in his neologism, *différance*), in an operation which imposes the primacy of absence and the state of alteration as the originary state of semantic conveyance.[4]

This may sound somewhat abstract, but Derrida's method is ultimately rooted in empirical processes. Derridean deconstruction, though not the first attempt at doing so,[5] offers one of the most effective critiques of the metaphysics of presence. Derrida grapples with the question of what it means to speak of 'self-presence', 'authentic' voice, concerns associated with the phenomenology of being. He does so by interrogating that which is usually upheld as the subversive derivative of 'authentic' presence: writing. That is to say, 'mediated' presence. Derrida's work highlights how western metaphysics has been endlessly been concerned with demonstrating (and rebuking) the subversion of 'authentic' speech by writing–i.e., a move away from pure, unmediated innocent being. Yet Derrida proposes that such concern (which he calls 'logocentrism'), though inevitable, is misguided. For, as he demonstrates through close and careful reading of prominent philosophers[6] of this metaphysics of presence (in this respect it is absurd to deny Derrida's empiricism), all attempts to adequately convey or capture this putatively self-present voice ultimately convey, in some form or another, yet another instance of mediated language. For Derrida, this implies a far more radical truth. There can be no unmediated meaning. All meaning is a form of writing or code–that is to say, it draws its meaning only from its relation to other aspects of meaning in a contextual web, forming an endless chain of signification, the implication of which is the radical institution of difference in being. Deconstruction is a process whereby

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4. See, especially, Derrida, *De la Grammatologie* and Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," in *Limited Inc*, ed. Gerald Graff, trans. Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman (*Les Éditions de Minuit*, 1972; Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 1–24.
5. He is pre-empted in this line of thinking by Nietzsche, Husserl and Heidegger.
6. 'Philosopher' is here meant broadly. Derrida's remit spans from the political treatises of Jean Jacques Rousseau to the structural linguistics and anthropology of Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Lévi-Strauss.

the suppressed contradictions inherent in and necessary for any truth claim, philosophical proposition or state of being are exposed, examined, and brought to the fore of intellectual activity.[7]

There are several reasons why a Derridean approach may be pertinent for this thesis. Not the least is that, as outlined in the above discussion, we are witnessing in the development of the discipline of Anglo-Saxon archaeology a very similar movement to that into which Derrida interposes himself in the development of anthropology, through its seizure of Saussurean structural linguistics. Structuralist principles have been both explicitly and implicitly put to use in the analysis of 'Anglo-Saxon' material culture, in addition to the foundational anthropological approach of Claude Lévi-Strauss derived from these principles.[8] Derrida treats the emergence of these structuralist principles as fundamental to his deconstruction of the ethnocentricity and logocentricity of western metaphysics, and his foundational works (if we can use such a term) are an extended meditation upon the ways in which these texts contain within them *aporiae*—i.e. gaps, moments of undecideability—which ultimately force a decision on interpretation. Such decisions are not decided by a process of empirical retracing to an originary point, but are always already caught in a system of signification, differentiation and deferral. The link between signs and their signifiers, therefore, in a rebuttal of structuralist approaches, can never be arbitrary. Through interrogating the abstractions and recourse to the non-empirical upon which such processes are based, the implicit alternatives to such decisions may be reinstated, and raised as alternate possibilities.[9] If Derrida can successfully deconstruct Lévi-Strauss, there seems little reason why the same cannot be done with those Anglo-Saxon archaeologists who

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7. Derrida, *De la Grammatologie.*
8. Dickinson, "Material Culture as Social Expression"; Richards, "Anglo-Saxon Symbolism"; Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use"; Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England.*
9. See Derrida, *De la Grammatologie*, 101–140 for the most famous application of this principle to Lévi-Strauss and Rousseau.

use him.[10]

Another reason is that deconstruction offers a genuinely alternative reading of the material in question, and one which may overcome the theoretical malaise identified in Chapter 3. Much of the hostility to previous 'deconstructive readings' stems not so much from their being 'deconstructive' in the proper sense (for as we shall see, they are not) but rather because they attempt to 'purify' the language of our field from all 'improper' appurtenances, by asserting the 'correct' significations of post-Roman material culture to be something 'other' than ethnic.[11] We have already seen one reaction to precisely this sort of putatively 'deconstructive' approach with Gerrard's comment, above.[12] To further demonstrate that the problem lies not with deconstruction, but its misrepresentation, let us take another recent comment by a different author, addressing this very concern, from a volume published in the same year, in the same discipline and by the same publishing house:

> At a grand narrative level, it is pretty much impossible to unthink questions such as 'decline and fall' or 'Germanic settlement'.[13]

There is nothing here that I would disagree with. Deconstruction proper does not treat such thorny concepts as 'Germanic settlement' as a violation of a pure, interpretative ground zero somehow predating the 'intrusion' of 'Germanic' interpretations– as Saussure treats 'writing' in its conventional sense as a violation of orality as a pure, unitary self-presence. Deconstruction instead reveals the aporetic moment implicit in this moment of interpretation, and the other pathways that may be

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10. See Michael Dillon, *Deconstructing International Politics (Interventions)* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2013), especially pp. 5–8, for similar justification of the application of Derrida's philosophy to the study of defence policy.
11. We may take Lucy's claim that ethnicity's contingent nature requires inferring its non-existence in her reading of the burial evidence as prime example of such previous 'deconstructive' approaches. Lucy, "Burial Practice in Early Medieval Eastern Britain."
12. See Chapter 2, 85.
13. Simon Esmonde Cleary, *The Roman West, AD 200-400: An Archaeological Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 4.

cleared by contemplation on this interpretative decision. Fundamentally, what is being asserted here is *not* (and it is important to emphasise this) that the phenomena which compose the material record *cannot* represent ethnic identity (or, indeed, 'Germanic' identity, whatever that might mean). My assertion is that the impossibility of empirically demonstrating that they *do* represent this makes it bizarre that the discipline remains obsessed with this particular question, rather than attempts to formulate alternatives.

3.3 Deleuze and Guattari's approach to differential ontology

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, though working in an entirely different intellectual tradition, make an observation on the subject of their 'nomad' epistemology which anticipates well Brubaker's problematisation of ethnic groups as salient entities:

> One does not go by specific differences from a genus to its species, or by deduction from a stable essence to the properties deriving from it, but rather from a problem to the accidents that condition and resolve it. This involves all kinds of deformations, transmutations, passages to the limit, operations in which each figure designates an "event" much more than an essence...[14]

This describes exactly the nature of ethnic formation and expression as outlined in Brubaker's sociology. Perhaps, then, we can draw upon Deleuze and Guattari further in our efforts to articulate alternative epistemological possibilities. The exposure of aporetic moments enabled by Derridean deconstruction may usefully be brought into conversation with Deleuze and Guattari's conceptions of 'desire', 'assemblage', 'territorialisation and 'lines of flight'.[15] These, as will be explained,

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14. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 362.
15. Ibid.

offer a means of conceptualising human subjectivity which avoids the problematic reinstitution of essentialist identities or categories.[16]

There are important points of intersection in Derridean and Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy. Such is the interrelation that Derrida once remarked upon it himself, in an eulogy given after Deleuze's death.[17] We have already discussed Derrida's exposing of *aporiae* in western metaphysics, which, he shows, is dominated by logocentricity. Fundamentally, the issue with which he grapples is that of differential ontology–that is to say, the assertion that difference constitutes not merely a relation between essential entities (be these 'ideal' in the Platonic/Hegelian or 'individual' in the most literal of senses), but instead constitutes the core and foundational nature of being and identity.[18] This, as we have already seen, is of some obvious relevance for the questions with which this thesis deals, and when we turn to Deleuze and Guattari's seminal work, we can see similar operations at work:

> A first type of book is the root-book. The tree is already the image of the world, or the root the image of the world-tree. This is the classical book, as noble, signifying, and subjective organic interiority (the strata of the book). The book imitates the world, as art imitates nature: by procedures specific to it that accomplish what nature cannot or can no longer do. The law of the book is the law of reflection, the One that becomes two. How could the law of the book reside in nature, when it is what presides over the very division between

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16. There are precedents for using these philosophers to overcome such problems in our field. Cătălin Țăranu, "The Elusive Nature of Germanic Heroic Poetry: A Rhizomatic Model," *Networks and Neighbours* 1 (1 2013): 44–66; Țăranu, "Who Was the Original Dragon-slayer of the Nibelung Cycle?"

17. 'Since the beginning, all of his books... ...have been for me not only, of course, provocations to think, but, each time, the unsettling, very unsettling experience—so unsettling—of a proximity or a near total affinity in the "theses"—if one may say this—through too evident distances in what I would call, for want of anything better, "gesture," "strategy," "manner": of writing, of speaking, perhaps of reading... ...Deleuze remains no doubt, despite so many dissimilarities, the one to whom I have always considered myself closest among all of this "generation."' Jacques Derrida, "I'll have to wander all alone," *Tympanum: A Journal of Comparative Literary Studies* 1 (1998).

18. It is the recognition and constant referencing of the problem that this poses for concepts such as 'nature' or 'foundation' which is responsible for much of what is deemed 'obscurantist' in Derrida's writing. In truth—contrary to the many (ab)uses of his work found in literary theory—it is Derrida's relatively simple observations concerning the relational nature of reality, not this self-referencing 'nuance', wherein lies the utility of his work. For more on this, see Kieran Healy, "Fuck Nuance," *Sociological Theory* 35 (2 2017): 118–127.

> world and book, nature and art? One becomes two: whenever we
> encounter this formula, even stated strategically by Mao or under-
> stood in the most "dialectical" way possible, what we have before us
> is the most classical and well reflected, oldest, and weariest kind of
> thought. Nature doesn't work that way: in nature, roots are taproots
> with a more multiple, lateral, and circular system of ramification,
> rather than a dichotomous one. Thought lags behind nature.[19]

We immediately see similar concern with the same problems as Derrida: unequiv-
ocal rejection of the notion that an originary essence can be isolated and demon-
strated in ontology, and the diagnosis that the obsessive search for such has its
'roots' (irony here very much intended) in the thought-systems of classical phi-
losophy and western metaphysics. Nor does the 'taproot' subsequently discussed
overcome this problem (as is illustrated in a comment which seems pertinent to
the discussion in the previous chapter of current applications of post-structuralist
thought in the form of post-processualism to the study of Anglo-Saxon archaeol-
ogy):

> The binary logic of dichotomy has simply been replaced by biuni-
> vocal relationships between successive circles. The pivotal taproot
> provides no better understanding of multiplicity than the dichoto-
> mous root. One operates in the object, the other in the subject. Bi-
> nary logic and biunivocal relationships still dominate psychoanaly-
> sis... ...linguistics, structuralism, and even information science.[20]

By 'biunivocal relationship' is meant a system of relation between two entities,
characterised by domination of the one by the other. The structuralist relation
of signifier/signified is such a relationship (because of the guarantee of the signi-
fied by a transcendental form). So too is the relationship between the language
acquisition device and generative grammar in Chomskyan linguistics. There are
innumerable examples where 'Anglo-Saxon' or 'Germanic' as essential categories
are deemed acceptable in scholarship when the post-processualist caveat that they

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19. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 5.
20. Ibid.

are 'constructed' or 'situational' is made. Such, too, is a biunivocal relationship. An empirically detached signifier is deemed sufficient to explain the examined phenomena. The heart of the problem is that even present attempts to articulate multiplicitous and anti-essentialist conceptions of being still ultimately depend upon assumptions, however unconscious, which reinstate hierarchy and essence.

Deleuze and Guattari overcome this by remarking upon the interrelation, differentiation and assembling which constitutes being. Being (and Guattari's training as a psychoanalyst becomes evident here) is libidinal. It consists of ceaseless motions of the self towards a non-existent ideal: '[a]ssemblages are passional, they are compositions of desire. Desire has nothing to do with a natural or spontaneous determination; there is no desire but assembling, assembled desire.'[21]

In this moment of libidinal motion, we see how Deleuze and Guattari enable an opening up of *aporiae* in a fashion not unlike Derrida. Biehl and Locke, too, note this:

> Deleuze's cartographic approach makes space for possibility, what could be, as a crucial dimension of what is or what was. It brings crossroads—places where other choices might be made, other paths taken—out of the shadow of deterministic analytics. It brings alternatives within closer reach.[22]

Be this as it may, it remains important to recognise the substantial differences in the philosophies of Derrida and Deleuze and Guattari. Unsurprisingly, a substantial body of literature already exists addressing this point. There is space to discuss only a limited selection, here. The most sustained critical intervention on this issue in English that I know of opens by noting that

> over and above the differences in manner of writing, there are parallels between the manner in which [Deleuze and Derrida] forged a

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21. Ibid., 399.
22. João Biehl and Peter Locke, "Deleuze and the Anthropology of Becoming," *Current Anthropology* 51 (3 2010): 323.

path out from under the repressive apparatus of the history of philosophy by inhabiting canonical texts in their own way in order to transform or deform the thought in question.[23]

For Paul Patton, Derrida and Deleuze may be unified in that both see the 'aim of philosophy' as lying not in truth, but in 'the destabilisation or deconstruction of established institutions'. Their shared aim is 'change rather than truth; the provision of 'new descriptive vocabularies [that provide] new means of orientation in relation to everyday events and processes'.[24] We can see some utility, here. My goal is to offer not merely a demonstration of the fundamentally non-empirical basis upon which interpretation of material culture proceeds (indeed, as it *must*), but to develop new descriptive vocabularies, and thus in Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari's, and Patton's view, new means of '*acting* upon the world.'[25] [My emphasis]

Differences remain, but none of these pose problems for the utility of these two authors. This notion that being *is* difference, and thus in some way supplementary, a form of 'excess', of speaking to the 'Other', is reached at differently and given differing emphasis by these two authors. They take differing views, for example, on the creation of philosophical 'concepts':

> We had never stopped asking this question previously [the question being 'what is philosophy?'], and we already had the answer, which has not changed: philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts.[26]

> I did on occasion happen to grumble against this or that proposition in *Anti-Oedipus*... ...or perhaps against the idea that philosophy consists in "creating" concepts. One day, I would like to explain how such an agreement on philosophical "content" never excludes all these differences that still today I don't know how to name or situate.[27]

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23. Paul Patton and John Protevi, "Introduction," in *Between Deleuze and Derrida*, ed. Paul Patton and John Protevi (London and New York: Continuum, 2003), 2–3.
24. Paul Patton, "Future Politics," in Patton and Protevi, *Between Deleuze and Derrida*, 16.
25. Ibid.
26. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 2.
27. Derrida, "I'll have to wander all alone."

3.3. DELEUZE AND GUATTARI'S APPROACH TO DIFFERENTIAL ONTOLOGY

Derrida perhaps complains here on the grounds that the creation of concepts has implications of the creation of something *ex nihilo*, which would of course be a principle entirely in violation of the Derridean project. Yet all discussion of creation in Deleuze and Guattari's work suggests not this, but the creation of concepts as the rearticulation and reformulation of previous ones—it is 'territorialisation' in their sense:

> Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant! Don't sow, grow offshoots! Don't be one or multiple, be multiplicities! Run lines, never plot a point! Speed turns the point into a line![28]

The point about *rhizomes*, Deleuze and Guattari show, is that they are always already there. There is no starting or end point in the system, all points are connected to and networked with all others. Derrida's grounds for contention are thus odd, perhaps, for a philosopher so concerned with demonstrating the slippage of meaning; perhaps the 'rhizome' metaphor does not sufficiently emphasise the centrality of absence to all forms of meaning for Derrida's liking. Yet these passages make it clear that the Deleuzo-Guattarian notion of concept-creation shares much with Derridean deconstruction–indeed, absence is central to Deleuzo-Guattarian concept creation. As Patton illustrates, all creation comes from the transformation of previous (and therefore subsequently absent) concepts:

> It is not clear that [Derrida] is entitled to grumble. It all depends on what is mean by 'creating' and what is meant by 'concepts'. Deleuze and Guattari's characterisation of the creator of concepts as a 'friend' in the sense that a craftsman is a friend of his chosen material shows that they do not envisage the creation of concepts *ex nihilo*. Rather, concepts are produced by means of the transformation and combination of certain conceptual or pre-conceptual raw materials.[29]

These differing attitudes thus not only fail to be fatal to the complementary use of these philosophers, but are in fact essential, useful and *complementary* elements

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28. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 24.
29. Patton, "Future Politics," 16–17.

in the co-correspondence of their philosophies. Gregg Lambert, in the Patton and

Protevi volume, perhaps articulates their difference best:

> And yet, there is also a divergence present here between the two
> manners of reaching this point, and it is on this ridge line or border
> that we can sharply distinguish the philosophical projects of Derrida
> and Deleuze. Whereas Derrida will trace the effects of this profound
> disequilibrium of a difference 'that speaks everywhere throughout
> language', Deleuze will understand it as an act or activity of creation:
> to place language in a situation of a boom, close to a crash. For the
> latter, difference is essentially, and perhaps 'supremely', created dif-
> ference and not the effect of some flaw or crack, some essential lapse,
> in the orders of being and language. It is here that we might locate
> a difference in style between these two philosophers, or rather, be-
> tween the style of these two major philosophies of difference today.
> To put it succinctly... ...while I would say that Deleuze is a philoso-
> pher of the boom, Derrida is the philosopher of the *crash*.[30]

Jeffrey Bell offers us a similar interpretation, and is sensitive to the way that these

philosophers can be used together to strengthen their respective flaws. Unlike

many critiques of Derrida, usually derived from the Anglo-American philosophical

tradition, Bell readily concedes Derrida is attentive to empirical demonstrability;

a decline into absolute relativism is not his concern. Bell is among Derrida's more

nuanced commentators for this reason. Instead, Bell argues, the flaw in Derridean

thinking lies neither in Derrida's destabilising of transcendental truth, nor in the

accuracy of his reading of texts in so doing. Bell notes that Derrida is keen to

follow the logic of the texts which he reads.[31] Instead, the problem lies in Derrida's

failure to provide adequate critera to ensure that the logic of a text is adhered to.

For Bell, this problem derives from Derrida's failure to establish the criteria via

which a deconstructive reading might proceed: 'Derrida does indeed demonstrate

the limits of oppositional differentiation, or the logic of either/or, but he leaves

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30.   Gregg Lambert, "The Philosopher *and* the Writer: A Question of Style," in Patton and Protevi,
Between Deleuze and Derrida, 130.
31.   Jeffrey A. Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos: Gilles Deleuze and the Philosophy of Difference*
(London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 108-109.

unanswered the question of how a positive, non-binary mode of differentiation *ought* to proceed, or what protocol it is to follow.'[32]

One might object that this would threaten the very deconstructive project but there are potential guidelines available that nevertheless avoid logocentricity in their description and application. These, the reader may guess, are found in the work of Gilles Deleuze. As Bell puts it

> The problem for Derrida arises in that he understands system (i.e., Saussure's and Hegel's view of system) as an 'effect' of differance. Derrida therefore does not have Saussure's complete system (*langue*) at his disposal in order to account for identifiable meanings or for a criterion. Derrida's theory of differance accounts quite well for the undermining of self-contained meaning and self-presence, but runs into difficulties in explaining how there can be identifiable meanings in the first place, how there can be acceptable criteria and standards. Derrida is correct, we argue, to claim that the complete system of Saussure is undermined by differance; however, Derrida then proceeds to prioritize differance over system, and hence the understanding of 'system' as effect. We will claim that there is a reciprocal presupposition between system, that is, system as closed and complete (if only provisionally so, as we will see) and difference.[33]

If we replace the Saussurean stable, closed system with a Deleuzian, rhizomatic system, a system in a constant process of becoming, we can overcome this problem. This passage and that of Lambert demonstrate amply the respective uses of Derridean and Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophies for present purposes: Derrida traces 'the effects of disequilibrium of difference'; we may use him to excavate and expose the differential and unstable nature of the signifiers offered as transcendental and stabilising in the works that will be explored in the immediately subsequent chapter. In a process that is not contradictory, merely differently articulated, Deleuze and Guattari treat this difference as 'an act of creation'; in every moment of creation something new emerges. We may use them to begin to articulate alternatives, much as—as the case study chapters will propose—the differen-

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32. Ibid., 112.
33. Ibid., 34.

tiating process taking place in identity and subjectivity in post-Roman Britain, too, produced something entirely new, yet still owing much to the old, in character.[34] These sorts of processes are precisely what Deleuze and Guattari mean by 'de-' and 're-territorialisation'.

3.4 Applying a differential ontological approach

All this being resolved, the question remains: what is it about Deleuze's and Guattari's formulations of ontology in particular that may be of use in tackling the questions with which we are concerned? Let us begin with their concept of 'territorialisation' already alluded to, which, in conjunction with 'assemblage',[35] may represent one of the most useful contributions of their work to descriptive vocabularies for our purposes.

Some definitions and their uses.

Deleuze and Guattari's most lucid definition of an assemblage defines it as

> a concretization of power, of desire, of territoriality or reterritorialisation, regulated by the abstraction of a transcendental law. But we must declare as well that an assemblage has points of deterritorialisation; or that it always has a line of escape by which it... ...makes the segments melt and... ...liberates desire from all its concretizations in order to dissolve them.[36]

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34. As is also proposed by Guy Halsall, "The Space Between: the 'undead' Roman Empire and the aesthetics of Salin's Style I" (The Sir David Wilson Lecture in Medieval Studies, UCL, October 15, 2014).

35. This is not meant here in an archaeological sense, though some scholars have attempted to integrate the two, see discussion of Fowler and Lucas, below and Yannis Hamilakis and Andrew Meirion Jones, "Archaeology and Assemblage," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 27 (1 2017): 80–2. This was Massumi's choice of translation from *agencement* in the original French, but this could otherwise be translated as 'layout or arrangement', and the French carries more overt psychoanalytical connotations.

36. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: toward a minor literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 86.

An assemblage, then, is a locus or node where we may identify a coherent entity–be this an institution, a subject, a being (etc.). It represents a moment of territorialisation. A point where various movements of subjectivity and desire intersect sufficiently that we may draw some form of boundary around them and label them a 'thing'. This thing, however, is never static. It is constantly in a process of 'becoming'–of territorialisation and concomitant deterritorialisation. As Deleuze and Guattari state, such assemblages are always in some way extending themselves, their 'lines of flight', towards and constituting part of other assemblages. They are always in some way in a state of alteration, and sometimes these states of alteration are such that we may demarcate or identify a new entity in their stead.

By this definition, what was, say, 'the late Roman Empire', if not an assemblage? One that consisted of bundled relationships of law, costume, ideology, expected standards of behaviour, territory (in a literal, geographical sense) and state infrastructure (the army, the senatorial aristocracy, town *curiae*, etc.). Philipp von Rummel's arguments concerning the dislocation of actual dress behaviour in the Roman Empire from the expected dress norms of imperial ideology have already been discussed.[37] These form a perfect demonstration of the nature of assemblage as constantly in a state of simultaneous de- and re-territorialisation. As one aspect of imperial ideology ('the toga') shifted and reshaped itself in flux, it simultaneously instituted another in its stead: the new ideology of late antique military costume, the *habitus barbarus*.

Though the above may have begun to formulate an adequate definition of 'territorialisation', it may help to discuss this concept explicitly at length. territorialisation is the demarcation of the territory (i.e., those libidinal movements of subjectivity) which an assemblage constitutes. Deleuze and Guattari state this to be 'made of decoded fragments of all kinds, which are borrowed from the milieus

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37. See above, Chapter 2, 93–95.

but then assume the value of "properties".'[38] But territory does not simply 'represent' the assemblage spatially and/or conceptually, it 'makes the assemblage. The territory is more than the organism and the milieu, and the relation between the two'.[39] As has been already hinted at, the demarcation takes place with a simultaneous state of a reuniting, via 'lines of flight', of the demarcated territory with aspects of that from which it is distinguished:

> the other aspect [of an assemblage] is constituted by lines of *deterritorialisation* that cut across it and carry it away. These lines are very diverse: some open the territorial assemblage onto other assemblages... ...Others operate directly upon the territoriality of the assemblage, and open it onto a land that is eccentric, immemorial or yet to come... ...The territoriality of the assemblage originates in a certain decoding of milieus, and is just as necessarily extended by lines of deterritorialisation. The territory is just as inseparable from deterritorialisation as the code from decoding.[40]

Here there is another point of unity with Derrida. Patton comes to our aid in outlining the utility of this concept:

> These schizoanalytic or pragmatic vocabularies [Deleuze and Guattari's earlier discussion of assemblages, lines of flight, etc.] provide us with philosophical concepts rather than social science. Nevertheless, they enable a form of description which is immediately practical, to the extent that, for example, it makes a difference whether we are dealing with the territorialisation of a given apparatus of capture rather than simply a modification of its mechanism.'[41]

The advantages of this are manifold. It overcomes some proposed problems with structuration in sociology, in that it pays due attention, by definition, to structure. Unlike, for example, Giddensian structuration (in which, due to the existence of social structures merely in their instantiation by actors, the ability to determine

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38.   Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 504.
39.   Ibid.
40.   Ibid., 504–5.
41.   Patton, "Future Politics," 16.

the rules governing the transformation of these structures arguably becomes impossible),[42] territorialisation provides a heuristic framework for identifying *loci* wherein the particular conditions for specific structural changes may be described, and for ensuring simultaneously that these descriptions are both attentive to the role played in this change by human agency, while avoiding anachronistic or primitivist assumptions about the nature of structural constraints.

Using von Rummel's work, an example the 'effective deterritorialisation of an apparatus of capture' can be provided:

> [The antique tradition] had disappeared by the second half of the sixth century. The senatorial class, as the bearers of Roman tradition *par excellence,* had been unable to sustain the conflict [over the definitions and social expectations of costume and behaviour] in which they had been engaged around 400... ...but at the same time, a new form of rulership, based on military power, had asserted itself. 'Romanness' had to be reconceptualized.[43]

The difference of this from a 'simple modification of its mechanism' lies in nuance, labelling, and effect—many of the changes in costume discussed (wearing of trousers by the military, for example) had already taken place well before this 'effective deterritorialisation'.[44] They were—in Patton's terms—simply a modification of the 'apparatus of capture'.

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42. O'Boyle, "Reproducing the social structure," 4–5.

43. Rummel, "The Fading Power of Images," 396. Late Antique emperors had always had to be soldiers, of course, but this new form of rulership was nevertheless fundamentally different, representing an end of civic authority derived from a chain of command ultimately connected to the personhood of the emperor.

44. Theodor Mommsen and Paul M. Meyer, eds., *Codex Theodosianus* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1905), 14.10.1, 14.10.2; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 110.

3.5 Earlier applications of differential ontology to archaeological interpretation

This is far from the first attempt to draw upon such ontological propositions for the purpose of archaeological study, though the majority of previous work to do so has been by prehistorians.[45] There is not space here to discuss every one of these approaches in depth.[46] Chris Fowler's work is worth taking as exemplary, however. It is highly popular (relatively speaking, considering the small population of archaeologists interested in differential ontology). It is also worth addressing for the reason that Fowler's 'relational realist'[47] study of northeastern Britain in the early Bronze Age tackles, albeit briefly, questions concerning the inference of ethnic identity in the material record.[48]

Drawing on the earlier work of Gavin Lucas, Fowler asserts that the modern archaeological assemblage, and the assemblages of the past in a Deleuzian sense, are fundamentally intertwined. The network of ideas, material and environmental forces, and excavation and interpretative practice all contribute to the biography of material culture and one's reading of it.[49] A consequence of this is that it is

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45. Important examples being Melanie Giles, "Open-weave, Close-knit: archaeologies of identity in the later prehistoric landscape of East Yorkshire" (PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 2000), Gavin Lucas, *Understanding the Archaeological Record* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Chris Fowler, *The Emergent Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) and Tatiana Ivleva, "A Totality of a Thing with Objects. Multifaceted British-made Brooches Abroad," in *Massendinghaltung in der Archäologie: Der Material Turn und die Ur- und Frühgeschichte*, ed. Kerstin P. Hofmann et al. (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2016), 365–386.
46. The recent special section on 'Archaeology and Assemblage' in the *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* can be taken as a sign of the concept's growing acceptance by practitioners. Hamilakis and Jones, "Archaeology and Assemblage."
47. I use the term 'differential ontology' because I find it to be both more accurately reflective of the philosophical positions upon which my approach is founded and because there are some aspects of Fowler's 'relational realism' which I have not adopted, mainly for reasons of scope. Much of Fowler's work and that of Gavin Lucas originates in assemblage theory as conceived by Manuel DeLanda and Bruno Latour, whose implementations of the concept are arguably so mechanistic as to defeat the purpose. Ibid., 81.
48. Fowler, *The Emergent Past*, 69–73.
49. Ibid., 49–51.

unhelpful simply to dismiss societal abstractions, and to fail to engage with their

modern conceptions:

> ...we cannot do away with or ignore the role of abstractions in in how
> things are materialized, dematerialized and rematerialized: it seems
> very likely to me that past assemblages did include persons, religious
> beliefs, and codes of behaviours. The point of relational approaches
> is to acknowledge that there are no clear and transcendent forms or
> types of religious beliefs, persons, or social relations, and to argue
> against reifying such relations as, for instance 'social organizations'
> or chiefdoms' or 'prestige goods economies.'[50]

Ethnic groups would also be such a transcendent form, of course. So far, so

good. The subsequent suggestion for implementing this conclusion, too, is useful:

> [archaeological material] is entangled with concepts like chiefdoms
> and prestige goods [or perhaps, ethnic groups] whether we like it or
> not. It is therefore a vital starting point for me to consider whether
> each of these concepts remains well articulated within this assem-
> blage of things, ideas and practices, and to unravel these problematic
> entanglements one by one... ...how secure is the resulting region of
> the assemblage, and what happens if we untie the supporting con-
> nections and take some of the strands elsewhere?[51]

Again, this seems a similar interpretative approach to my own. There are prob-

lems, however, when Fowler's attempts to extend his assertions to his own interpre-

tative practice, at least in discussion of ethnic groups. Fowler discusses the emer-

gence of Beaker culture and tackles earlier antiquarian and proto-archaeological

interpretations of this culture as representing the arrival in Britain of distinct ethno-

racial groups, before then tackling the critical reaction against such interpretations

which took place in the 70s and 80s.[52] In moving to the most recent interpretations

of Beaker culture in his chosen region, Fowler draws upon studies which suggest

a 'widespread network' of 'entangled peoples, things and practices'. So far, so

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50. Ibid., 52.
51. Ibid., 52–53.
52. Ibid., 69.

good. But Fowler uses this to propose an interpretation of ethnic solidification and change.[53] He proposes the possibility that 'early Beakers were the trappings of a specific community'[54] but that this ethnic group's material trappings 'might by the mid-twenty-third century BC have been more widely adopted as emblematic of certain values and practices'. It is important to understand that Fowler's 'relational realist' approach is concerned principally with challenging the 'correspondence theory of truth'–attempting to take apart the notion that there exists a real past 'out there', separate from our interpretations of the material used to identify it. Consequently, Fowler summarises present understanding of Beaker thus:

> We are no longer in thrall to a culture history of bounded ethnic groups, though some ideas about cultural identity and ethnicity have endured... ...Beaker burial is now articulated as a repeatedly 'invented tradition'... ...At some times, practices and things associated with Beakers perhaps had currency as an ethnic ascription—'boundary object'—at other times arguably not...[55]

Fowler's approach is thus misdirected in its application of differential ontology. His recognition that past materials can never be independent of contemporary interpretations does not mean that his application of the theories of ethnic identification which happen to be the most recent known to archaeological scholarship provides an acceptable alternative. Fowler has not engaged with contemporary understanding of ethnic sociology, and thus has not successfully achieved his goal of unravelling problematic entanglements. Those aspects of relationism applied here remain problematic in that they still do not address the issue that ethnic identification is entirely non-demonstrable through purely archaeological means. In consequence, Fowler simply reasserts older constructivist arguments—seen very

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53. Fowler, *The Emergent Past*, 70.
54. Ibid., 71.
55. Ibid., 73.

much through the lens of current archaeological consensus on ethnicity—but with a relational flavouring.

K. Patrick Fazioli's recent challenge to groupist interpretations of ethnicity in archaeological interpretation is similar, drawing upon relational philosophy derived from Bruno Latour to identify alterations in ceramic manufacturing techniques which he asserts enable one to trace how 'objects participated in the complex processes of identity formation and negotiation'.[56] Fazioli used compositional analysis of fabric types to identify a new range of variable local practices in the southeastern Alps in late antiquity. Yet ultimately, Fazioli's interpretation of these new finds is equivocal:

> Whether or not these new technological traditions correspond to the arrival of Slavic-speaking populations, the results from this ceramic compositional analysis do strongly suggest a meaningful change in the habituated, embodied practices and social knowledge of the 'communities of practice' responsible for the production of this material. In other words, these technological shifts also represent a change in the way potters at Tinje inhabited their worlds—a change that may or may not overlap with ethnic, linguistic, political, or religious dimensions of identity.[57]

As with Fowler, lip service is paid to relational understandings of habituated practice in the formation of identity, yet little work is done to escape ethnic interpretation. Ethnicity is the only possible interpretation that is posited for the introduction of these rites in those localities where there is an overlap with putative Slavic migration. Fazioli's only alteration is to suggest that this needn't be the case; no attempt at offering alternative interpretative explanations is made. Description is thus held to suffice for explanation. A more subtle approach lies in Tatiana Ivleva's recent article, and its use of recent developments in the 'Material Turn' of philosophy,[58] yet Ivleva's arguments still cannot empirically demonstrate

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56. Fazioli, "Rethinking Ethnicity in Early Medieval Archaeology," 26.
57. Ibid., 39.
58. Ivleva, "A Totality of a Thing with Objects. Multifaceted British-made Brooches Abroad," especially 377–9.

the proposal her article makes—that the British brooches she examined evoked 'an ethnic consciousness, allowing the brooches to become a token of ever-changing and shifting ethnicity.'[59]

3.6 Differential ontological archaeology: Some final methodological principles

Where does this take us for practical archaeological analysis? As discussion on Derrida has shown us, archaeological interpretation, whatever its claims to empiricism, ultimately becomes a non-rational act of choice. Deleuze and Guattari can guide us in the choices of interpretation that we make. It is my contention that such choices will be more ontologically useful and historically accurate if framed in a context informed by these concepts. As will be further justified below, the methodology of this thesis will be heavily based in semiological analysis of material culture. Structuralist frameworks have been put into application in reading such material culture. As Deleuze and Guattari's iteration of the classic post-structuralist position on semiotics puts it:

> one may not establish a radical break between regimes of signs and their objects.[60] Even when linguistics claims to confine itself to what is explicit and to make no presuppositions about language, it is still in the sphere of a discourse implying particular modes of assemblage and types of social power.[61]

Von Rummel's analysis of the *habitus barbarus* again provides an ideal example of this process. A regime of signs can begin to function in new, uncertain and un-

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59. Ivleva, "A Totality of a Thing with Objects. Multifaceted British-made Brooches Abroad," 378.
60. I have here been forced to deviate from Massumi's translation. Massumi's translation reads 'it is not impossible to make a radical break between a regime of signs and their signifiers', but the original French reads *et l'on peut pas établir de coupure radicale entre les régimes de signes et leurs objets*. This carries the opposite meaning to Massumi's translation, which would undermine a post-structuralist approach.
61. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.

predictable ways, whilst still entirely dependent upon the lines of flight a given

assemblage has extended, in some way derived from earlier signifying contexts.

This should enable us to move past an approach which deems it sufficient to iden-

tify symbolic features which may be identified simply as 'Roman', 'Germanic' (or

whatever), and treat the construction of these features and their association with

a given ethnic category as a satisfactory historical interpretation. Instead, we may

follow the traces and references that particular symbolic actions inhabit, without

then using them to make what are ultimately essentialist assumptions about the

identities of their users, including assumptions which entail a rejection of the tra-

ditional labels used (such as a replacement of 'Germanic' identities with 'local'

identities).[62] What does it mean to deploy symbols with traces in material culture

originating from the Roman Empire? What does it mean to have these symbols

interacting with and interlacing with entirely new semiology? How can we read

this material, the sites where it is found, and the people presumed to have used it,

without resorting to essentialist identity categories? If we proceed, always, with

the ontological propositions outlined above in mind, we may begin to answer such

questions.

There are some cautionary notes to make in doing so: our net must not be

cast too widely, for this would risk failing to allow sufficient space to properly

engage with the precise problematic entanglements of certain discursive assump-

tions. Fowler's study of ethnic identity illustrates this. In addition, we must be

attentive to the precise points where empiricism can, and those where it cannot,

illustrate something to be the case in the archaeological record. It is for this reason

that the subsequent chapters deal first with an explicitly Derridean deconstruction

of those points where concepts from outdated historiography are imported in prob-

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62. Similar arguments are being advanced by others in the field. E.g. Susanne E. Hakenbeck, "Is
that a Roman or a Germanic Helmet? A Case for an Archaeology of Ambiguity" (Paper presented
at Interrogating the Germanic: A Category and its Use in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages,
York, 2016).

lematic fashion, and function as a transcendental *logos*, as a substitute for genuine empirical demonstration.

As a final observation for my interpretative approach, the following points, again from Jeffrey Bell, are instructive. He provides some criteria for interpreting subjects rhizomatically (which he describes as 'pragmatics'). He does so in response to the earlier noted problem with Derrida—that he does not specify a programme by which choices are to be made in a moment of undecideability. As Bell notes, Derrida admits that such changes are to be made *pragmatically*, and that such a pragmatics requires further elaboration.[63] Unlike Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari offers us this elaboration in the form of their rhizomatic conception of being, and Bell summarises this as follows:

1. 'Pragmatics is not to be used after the fact, but to be applied "in the course of events... [and it should be sufficient] to guide us through dangers," such as the danger of collapsing into one of the two poles of the either/or.'

2. Pragmatics should 'reject the idea of an invariant immune from transformation'. There is 'nothing that is not part of becoming, and hence susceptible to becoming other than what it is'.

3. 'Pragmatics will explicate the internal reasons which will not allow something (e.g. language) "to close itself off", or to be immune to transformation'.

4. Pragmatics will trace and map processes of transformation whereby non-formed flows and processes of becoming are selected, territorialised, and stratified, and will then show how these territorialisations are in turn susceptible to deterritorialising flows, to 'lines of flight' that will transform them again.[64]

What can we take from this? First, that we do not know, nor can we anticipate in advance, what the outcome of reading material rhizomatically will be. This would

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63. Bell, *Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos*, 108–110.
64. Ibid., 111.

defeat the purpose. Instead, the goal is to experiment, and see if what we produce through this experimentation offers a narrative more heuristically useful than those previous. Second, if nothing is 'not a part of becoming', we should not be afraid of unusual conclusions or outcomes. Any entangled strand of that strange bundle we label 'identity' can become distangled, and entangle itself with other, seemingly dissociated strands in ways that may not be expected in more essentialist modes of interpretation. Third, we should seek to examine those internal phenomena by which and because of which such a process of reentanglement takes place; empiricism remains crucial. Lastly, pragmatics, for our purpose, should not merely operate to create a closed narrative wherein this analysis may be assumed to speak merely for a state of affairs pertinent to late antiquity. Such an approach should cause us to reconsider how identity formations were captured, re-shaped, and used for various political and intellectual ends in subsequent contexts, most especially our own.

3.7 Selecting and approaching the case studies

It is well beyond the scope of this thesis to attempt substantive analysis of new, unaddressed data, and this would go against its objectives both practical and epistemological. The goal is not to produce new data to further, in a positivist framework, advances towards a 'correct' understanding of post-Roman/early Anglo-Saxon England, but rather to posit a potential alternative interpretative framework suitable both for presently existing and presumed future datasets. The method will therefore consist of two strands. The first, in the immediately subsequent chapters, will take Jacques Derrida's deconstructive philosophy to demonstrate precisely those points at which empirical observation ceases to be of use in the interpretation of Anglo-Saxon mortuary data. This will be accomplished by means

of a general survey of recent, important authors in this field and deconstructive examination of their approaches to this material, in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 6, meanwhile will use those aspects of Deleuzo-Guattarian differential ontology which have been outlined above to propose, via small selected case studies, a reinterpretation of certain sites and artefacts. For this reason, it is necessary that the selected sites be well-excavated, well-published, fall within a chronological span enabling adequate examination of the full transition from Roman to post-Roman Britain, and offer data derived from a wide range of modern analytical techniques. For this reason, the sites of Spong Hill and Wasperton are selected, which are both completely published and and have been analysed with a full range of modern analytical tools.[65] The cruciform brooch is the subject of a third case study, chosen because of the recent publication of a full typology by Toby Martin of this artefact which includes an extensive philosophical consideration of ethnic identity (and an argument proposed for the cruciform brooch's role in its construction),[66] which Chapters 4 and 5 will grapple with prior to the development of the alternative advanced by the case study.

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65. Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton*; Catherine Hills and Sam Lucy, *Spong Hill. Part IX: Chronology and Synthesis* (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2013).
66. Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use"; Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*.

Chapter 4

Interrogating the 'Germanic': Anglo-Saxon Archaeology in Deconstruction

4.1   Introduction

This chapter focuses upon deconstruction in the proper sense of the word. That is, it burrows through the written messages, unstated implications and hidden meanings produced by authors of Anglo-Saxon archaeology to excavate the unintended *aporiae* contained in any truth claim they assert. Fundamental to this is addressing the notion that Anglo-Saxon material culture expresses something intrinsically 'Germanic' in its use, or, indeed, 'Anglian', 'Jutish', 'Saxon', or simply 'Anglo-Saxon' . This claim, though lacking empirical basis,[1] is continually drawn upon both as explanation for the recurrence of certain patterns of material culture in Anglo-Saxon archaeology and justification for certain interpretations of its use. This chapter

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1.   See Chapter 5.

will deal not so much with the aforementioned empirical problems with this conceptual framework, but rather with the implicit textual problems inherent in its use, though these are themselves derived from the fundamentally non-empirical nature of the 'Germanic' construct. The chapter demonstrates that the types of terminology employed are frequently used uncritically, or with criticisms that are then forgotten or ignored in practice.

The chapter focuses upon crucial authors working in the field of early Anglo-Saxon archaeology who explore questions related to ethnicity and the *aduentus saxonum*. The chapter does not study, or claim to represent, the entirety of recent Anglo-Saxon archaeological output, but instead focuses on a select few authors whose arguments may be taken as foundational for the sorts of axiomatic ethnic assumptions that are present in other scholarly works. The methodological approach was outlined in the previous chapter, drawing explicitly upon a Derridean philosophical framework to outline the points at which the author has ceased to demonstrate something through empiricism, and instead makes an interpretative leap of judgement. Substantial space is dedicated to the works of John Hines, for the reason that he is the scholar to whom those that continue to defend ethnic interpretations of material culture most frequently make reference.[2] We will also see that much of his argumentation lends itself to deconstructive readings. Catherine Hills and Sam Lucy are also discussed at length; the former due to her centrality to debates over migration and her frequent critical interventions on questions of ethnic interpretation, the latter because her work is that most explicitly dedicated to grappling with the problems with ethnic narratives. Howard Williams is discussed as a scholar whose innovative work on memory offers alternative interpretative avenues. James Gerrard is discussed as a recent example of an author

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2. E.g. Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use," 171; Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis," 5-6, fn. 18 and 11, fn. 58; Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 179-80, fn. 40.

4.1. INTRODUCTION

of a work of synthesis which attempts to think beyond ethnic interpretations of early Anglo-Saxon mortuary material but which, when subjected to deconstruction, is revealed to nevertheless rely upon the same frameworks. Space is devoted latterly to Toby Martin's recent work on cruciform brooches and the implications of its language choices, for two reasons. The first is that Martin is the most recent example of several more subtle attempts to interpret Anglo-Saxon mortuary material through an ethnic lens, and he represents the most sophisticated theoretical consideration of this particular paradigm. The second reason, closely related, is that much of Martin's theoretical framework lies explicitly in structuralist thinking derived from Claude Lévi-Strauss, rendering it ideal for extended deconstruction in the Derridean sense.

The arguments here might equally apply to the works of earlier scholars, such as Nowell Myres and Martin Welch, whose seminal publications emerged from contexts in which culture historical archaeology was often un-contextualised and unquestioned.[3] Heinrich Härke's core assertions concerning ethnicity, though important for the debates that we witness across this chapter, can be disputed almost entirely on empirical grounds, without discussing epistemological concerns, and for this reason discussion of his work is largely restricted to Chapter 5. The range of scholars engaged with here is inevitably limited, and there have been necessary omissions of works I should have liked to have also critically grappled with.[4] Nevertheless, the material below should suffice to demonstrate the sorts of questions that are repeatedly posed to early Anglo-Saxon mortuary material in relation to the study of ethnic identity, and to highlight where such scholars rely upon non-empirical interpretative leaps to answer these questions.

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3. John Nowell Lynton Myres, *The English Settlements* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Martin Welch, *Discovering Anglo-Saxon England* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).
4. To note two examples: the work of Tania Dickinson, though important to debates on early Anglo-Saxon ethnic expression is more typologically focused than explicitly engaged. Nick Stoodley's work, though many axiomatic assumptions can be identified in it on the subject, relies largely upon the arguments of Härke.

The chapter will occasionally make reference to certain types of artefact or art style, and assertions made of these, such as their putatively Germanic nature. The subsequent chapter will explore and interrogate the empirical basis for any such claims.

4.2 John Hines and culture history

Probably one of the most important authors for the concerns of this thesis is John Hines, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Cardiff. Hines' monograph *The Scandinavian Character of Anglian England in the pre-Viking Period,* based on his Oxford doctoral thesis, laid much of the groundwork for present understandings of the geographic origins of much of the material culture present in lowland Britain, especially, as the title suggests, in the eastern and northern regions.[5]

Hines adopted, in this early work, an explicitly cultural historical approach, using a combination of modern toponyms, historical evidence ranging from Ptolemy to Bede, and arguments derived from philology to propose that Anglian, Jutish and Saxon ethnic groups were contemporarily recognised as such in the fifth century.[6] Hines accepts that Bede's grasp of historical ethnography is likely somewhat dubious, and draws upon the polytheticism of David Clarke to outline what he believes can reasonably be inferred about the nature of Jutish, Anglian and Saxon *ethnē*. That is to say, that these *ethnē* were intersections at the 'differently bounded sets' of 'race, culture and language'.[7] For Hines in 1984, although the unity of these sets may have been imperfect, and although scholarly knowledge of material culture vastly outstripped that of other forms of evidence (such as genetics), an approach that combined all of these elements, even recognising that Jutes, Anglians and

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5. Hines, *Scandinavian Character*.
6. Ibid., 1-5.
7. David L. Clarke, *Analytical Archaeology*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert Chapman (London: Methuen, 1978), 365, quoted in Hines, *Scandinavian Character*, 5.

4.2. JOHN HINES AND CULTURE HISTORY

Saxons only imperfectly map onto their material culture groups, '[made] the best and most comprehensive use of the diverse forms of evidence available to us to accept that there is likely to be a positive correlation between material culture and ethnic identity.' Hines therefore concluded that, 'although the ethnographic conclusions that can be drawn from a study of material culture are restricted, it [was] fully justifiable to seek to improve understanding within these limits.'[8] Such proposals of course, imply that the more data that is collected, the more possible it becomes to 'improve understanding' with regard to the putative 'positive correlation' that is proposed. Ultimately, therefore, this assertion hinges upon the assumption that there existed a demonstrable correlation between the delineation of material cultural boundaries and ethnic boundaries. The ability to demonstrate such correlation, we saw in Chapter 2, has been empirically challenged by ethnic sociologists. The leap from empiricism to interpretation is therefore made at the point where Hines makes this assumption about ethnic boundary construction.

Hines makes a case for a complex range of explanations for the varying factors of influence seen in the presence of Scandinavian material in Anglian England, dependent upon the specific production techniques and find contexts pertinent to each studied item and the possible mechanisms of cultural transfer which these aspects of each item allowed for.[9] Yet many of Hines' arguments nevertheless hinge upon the assertion that social expression of the type witnessed in this material *must* in some instances have been ethnic in nature. It would labour the point to discuss every example of where this assertion is relied upon,[10] but, by way of example, we can look at Hines' discussion of the cultural significance of wrist clasps. The nature and spread of their adoption in Anglian England is a point of particular confusion and contention. In the process of their adoption they underwent some

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8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., 272–6.
10. Explicit examples may be found at Ibid., 108–9, 252–3, and 270–285.

interesting changes that for Hines may point to ethnic significance: they shifted from being predominantly female to almost exclusively female; they were adopted from Scandinavia and spread extremely rapidly in the late fifth century,[11] and that spread appears to have been limited to the borders of the 'Anglian province of culture'.[12] For Hines, these qualities necessitate that the rite was brought by migration. The reasoning for this is as follows:

1. Insufficient pre-existing demand for wrist clasps existed for trade to explain the introduction of the clasp.

2. The shift in use from predominantly to exclusively women is more easily explained by the transfer from Scandinavia to Britain of a pre-existing association of clasps primarily with women by a large migrating body. The small number of men using the rite would disappear in the proc∂ess.

3. This demand is likely because the clasps have an ethnic significance.[13]

For Hines, then, as a result of this, the clasps formed part of a new '*östenglische-westskandinavische Trachteziehungen*' in existence between the 'Anglian culture province' and Scandinavia. There are two *aporiae* present here. The first lies in the assumption that female costume formed a component of ethnic *Tracht*, the lack of empirical basis for which is dealt with in Chapter 5 but which ultimately hinges on the assumption that a shared, mutually recognisable 'Germanicness' was inherent in such costume. The other *aporia* lies in the assumption that migrating populations necessarily produce demand for items of ethnic significance. This assertion entirely hinges upon the assumption that ethnic boundaries lie at the intersection of the bounded sets of race, culture and language. It is, of course, almost certain that migration was responsible for the introduction of wrist clasps into 'Anglian' England, but the attribution of an ethnic significance to this, contrary to Hines'

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11.   Hines, *Scandinavian Character*, 108–8.
12.   Ibid., 275.
13.   Ibid., 108–9.

assertions, has no *prima facie* basis.

Hines has, of course, developed his views significantly since the publication of this work. We saw in Chapter 2 that as late as 1994 and 1995 he made what he described as a *'prima facie* case' for the use of material culture to 'symbolise identification with specific political units' in northern *Germania* in the late fourth century. Ethnic expression thus continued to be a cornerstone principle in Hines' interpretative method, but in this later work the influence of post-processual archaeology is clear on Hines' thinking, and he begins to integrate into his interpretations post-processualist assertions about the active expression and construction of ethnic groups in the material record. He nevertheless sticks to the fundamental assertions of his 1984 study. Let us take the 1994 article, where Hines asserts the interpretation of material culture as ethnic to be unproblematic, as an example.[14] In this article, Hines' discussion of the ethnographic descriptions of the migrants to Britain provided by Bede assumes, without extensive discussion or justification, that 'culture-groups in the areas Bede points out on the continent' can be unproblematically associated with 'the ethnic groups Saxon, Angle and Jute'. Hines does this partly on the basis that the pertinent material culture generally fits the distribution pattern of these ethnic groups as Bede later describes them.[15] The only major distortion of this association in Bede's narrative, Hines alleges, is 'the implicit apportioning of the settlers only to the kingdoms that later bore their names'.[16] Hines links this 'culture narrative' to earlier, fifth-century acts of putative ethnic expression by suggesting that Bede worked with a schema in which '[l]ocation within a given territory seems to have been one of the definitive attributes for an ethnic group'.[17] Hines suggests subsequently that ideas about a unitary language

14. Hines, "The Becoming of the English: Identity, Material Culture and Language in Early Anglo-Saxon England."
15. Ibid., 50.
16. Ibid., 51.
17. Ibid.

which the sub-groups of the *gens Anglorum* allegedly shared suggest that Bede held a 'concept of common English, in fact as a constellation of different identities'.[18]

These notions are then linked to the clear emergence of a distinctive set of material cultural trends which appeared with a 'strikingly focused' concentration on the 'historical (i.e. Bedan) Saxon homeland' in the fourth century, including equal-armed brooches, saucer brooches, cremation urns, and the Saxon Relief Style, in the case of the Saxons. A later 'Anglian' jewellery culture performed a similar function in the fifth century.[19] The emergence of these cultures marks, for Hines, '[o]ur best introduction to the destiny of the real and distinct Germanic group–identities that were introduced into Britain'.[20] In the article in question, these assertions are the entire basis upon which a link may be made between historical ethnic identities and material cultural groups. The link is thus never empirically demonstrated, but merely asserted. The basis for the link is evidently the same, then, as that outlined in *The Scandinavian Character of Anglian England*; Clarke's understanding of polytheticism. Indeed, Hines explicitly refers to discussion of group marking from the 1984 volume to make this case.[21] Clearly, then, the assumption of the empirical existence of the ethnic group *qua* group is an *aporia* in Hine's text.

When Hines restates his case that the function of the adoption of Scandinavian material was the active adoption and alteration of Anglian identity, as expressed in the later fifth century 'by adherence to a particular material culture, represented by the adoption of a particular female costume', we witness an interpretative leap. Not a claim that is empirically demonstrated.[22] What are the bases upon which this interpretative leap is made? The arguments with regard to female costume are evi-

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18. Hines, "The Becoming of the English: Identity, Material Culture and Language in Early Anglo-Saxon England," 51.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 52.
21. Hines, *Scandinavian Character*, 8-13, cited in Hines, "The Becoming of the English: Identity, Material Culture and Language in Early Anglo-Saxon England," 52.
22. Ibid., 53.

dently derived from earlier arguments by scholars about the nature of *Frauentracht,* the lack of empirical basis for which as a putative expression of ethnic identity is discussed in Chapter 5. Beyond this, Hines' sole basis for the assertion is that a clear boundary is delineated by the distribution of the material, and the apparent blocking of the spread of this material by the presence of other, 'pre-existing identities' which must have 'acted as boundaries to its further spread'.[23] After this section of the article, Hines no longer attempts to justify the link between material cultural boundaries and the ethnic boundaries made in his discussion. This is simply treated as an axiom.[24] Hines' subsequent linguistic discussion hinges entirely upon the assertion that an establishment of 'a set of conceptual *norms* in linguistic usage'—which is one plausible model for how the diverse groups of language speakers from northern Germany established a mutually intelligible, discrete 'English language'—is sufficient for us to infer the existence and expression of a common ethnic group–recognised always as signifying such by observers of this other than Bede.[25] Let us turn back to Brubaker and Wimmer to demonstrate why such assertions are an interpretative leap, rather than empirical.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, Wimmer outlines carefully the various mechanisms and processes involved in the drawing of specific types of boundary in a given social field. Wimmer notes, contrary to Barth's earliest assertions on the nature of ethnic boundaries (that they are always more important than the things which they enclose), that it is sometimes possible for the 'cultural stuff' which such boundaries enclose to play a significant role in the formation of the ethnic group.[26] But Wimmer shows that this cannot be axiomatically assumed, but must be empirically demonstrated in each instance, as this specific type of relation between

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23. Ibid.
24. E.g. 'As has been seen (above), the Saxons established the marks of their own identity early'. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 56.
26. Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making*, 86.

cultural value and ethnic difference is but one in a broad continuum of means by which ethnic boundary formation can take place.[27] In a study exploring such processes, making use of mass survey data far more informative about people's self-perception than distribution patterns of jewellery, Wimmer is able to demonstrate that cultural value heterogeneity has no intrinsic link with ethnic delineation.[28] This study finds that pre-existing social closure is more often a source for ethnic boundary construction than vice versa.[29]

This exposes an *aporia* in Hines' assertions: he argues that a range of new and distinct material influences derived from Scandinavia was distributed solely within Anglian ethnic boundaries, with the outcome of there being forged a new form of Anglian ethnic group, based on the presumed existence of a recognisably 'Germanic' aspect inherent to both the earlier Anglian and the newer Scandinavian material cultural forms. Simultaneously, he assumes that a pre-existing cultural divide between Angles and Saxons—both of whom would, according to the logic of this 'pan-Germanic' framework, have recognised one another as 'Germanic'— inhibited the spread of the adoption of such material culture in Saxon regions.

These positions are plainly contradictory, because it is assumed that the material cultural boundary between the 'Anglian' and the 'Saxon' regions is defined by ethnic expression. It is possible, of course, that an alternative axis of social closure is represented by the boundaries Hines describes between what he calls 'Saxon' and 'Anglian' culture. Such a closure could, after Wimmer, even function as the material basis for a subsequent formation of Saxon and Anglian ethnic groups in the regions these boundaries represent. This is partially, we will see below, the argument which Martin makes. But it remains that such a thing would have to be empirically demonstrated. Here, it has not been, and this is because it

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27. Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making*, 87–8.
28. Ibid., 191.
29. Ibid., 191–200.

cannot be. The putatively mutually recognised 'pan-Germanicity' of these groups, that Hines claims was an element of any such ethnic formation, would surely undermine claims that these boundaries represented specifically *ethnic* axes of social closure. Thus, such evidence hardly constitutes the '*prima facie* case that assertions of identity were a powerful factor shaping the history of Anglo-Saxon England' that Hines claims them to be.[30]

In 1999, growing discontent about the possibility to infer ethnic identity from the material record could clearly no longer be ignored. Hines consequently attempted to critically refine and justify his approach. The article in which he does so examines the putative overlap between 'culture groups' and 'ethnic groups' (*Formenkreise* and *Stammesgruppen*)[31] in northern Germany, Hines explicitly draws upon the insights of postprocessualist developments, noting their relative lack of their influence on German archaeological practice and consquently on the study of material culture from northern Germany.[32]

That Derridean deconstruction is necessary becomes clear after reading Hines' assertions about what is required for post-processual archaeology to 'achieve maturity':

> this newer school of archaeological thought needs to add semantics to semiotics.'[33]

Hines thus explicitly disputes the poststructural destabilisation of the distinction between sign and signifier. Hines believes that an originary point of meaning can be reached through the subjection of material culture to archaeological analysis. Indeed, not merely is it possible to identify an originary point of meaning,

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30. Hines, "The Becoming of the English: Identity, Material Culture and Language in Early Anglo-Saxon England," 58.

31. The usual translation of *Stammesgruppen* would be 'tribal groups', but Hines opts for 'ethnic groups' in the article. John Hines, "Culture groups and ethnic groups in northern Germany in and around the Migration Period," *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 13 (1999): 219.

32. Ibid., 219–223.

33. Ibid., 223.

but Hines asserts that this originary point must be explicitly *ethnic* in character, drawing upon the 'the ancient and early-medieval historical sources that survive for us'. These, he argues, 'create a framework for the study of social groupings in late Iron-age Europe that cannot either be wished away or ignored.'[34] Though the vagueness of their testimony is alluded to and the Roman ethnographic lens through which such sources are distorted is mentioned, Hines makes a case for nevertheless drawing upon the names (and thus signified coherent ethnic groups) which these sources putatively preserve through asserting:

> The most positive way to grapple with this problem is to treat the early historical sources as cultural products of essentially the same kind as material culture—not as something which is independent of the processes by which the archaeological record has been created, preserved and recovered.'[35]

This implies that any who reject the ability to make use of the ethnic names contained in these early historical sources in archaeological analysis (such as the Toronto or Freiburg Schools) fail to treat these sources as products of the same world as the material culture being analysed (even if we were to accept that these shared the same geographic or chronological context, which Bede and fifth-century Anglo-Saxon material culture clearly do not). This is a troubling assertion. As a general observation, Hines' statement above is reasonable and broadly accurate, but it is quite another step to go from this to asserting the legitimacy of using *Formenkreise* to study *Stammengruppen*. This surely elides the substantial barriers that we face as etic observers of this fragmentary source material in bridging the gap between the emic productive contexts of written and archaeological source material–the most obvious gap being that the majority of written material was framed through a Roman ethnographic lens. Nevertheless, Hines presses on. How, he asks unless we follow his method,

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34. Hines, "Culture groups and ethnic groups in northern Germany in and around the Migration Period," 223–4.
35. Ibid., 224.

> are we to account for the consistencies of material-cultural form within discrete areas of the kind repeatedly identified in Iron-age Germany?[36]

After discounting the economic arguments of Genrich and the discussions of 'associative space' (*Verkehrsraum*) of Jahnkuhn, or ideas of religious unity, Hines finds what he considers must be the only explanation, and I intend to dwell on this explanation at length because numerous *aporiae* reveal themselves therein:

> However, especially when we consider what are manifestly highly regular and non-random traditions of pottery decoration—irrespective of how simple they are in technical terms—it appears to be the harder task to argue for the casual meaninglessness of these material-cultural norms. A more satisfactory view is that this type of conformity of practice reflects and reinforces within-group identity and solidarity. It would thus be truly a symbol of a unified and well-ordered society, for which common material culture does not so much express difference from some other group as stand in opposition to its own absence. Cultural regularity may thus be achieved as the alternative to random disorder and social chaos.'[37]

The binary choice which Hines offers at the closing of this excerpt is the space where the interpretative leaps made in this entire section are most clear. Hines presents a pair of opposed options: cultural regularity versus disorder and chaos. There is no middle ground. Either the ordering of culture resembles the former or our reading grants us only the latter. We can dispute this, and upon doing so, the assertions preceding it unravel. That a consistent material culture 'stands in opposition to its own absence', rather than serving as an expression of difference, can be rejected on two grounds. The first is empirical. The works of Brubaker and Wimmer show that we cannot make such an assertion about what such a kind of consistent material patterning means without empirically demonstrating it.

More crucially, this claim should be rejected on epistemological grounds. The notion that a material culture may 'stand in opposition to its own absence', thus

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36. Ibid., 225.
37. Ibid., 224–5.

signifying the existence of a unified social order in the face of chaos, becomes impossible if one accepts the understanding of ontology for which a case was made in Chapter 3. All cultural expression, understood through a differential ontological lens, is a reinforcing of the constitutive lack which it strives to repel; a society most apparently coherently expressed is one which has constructed the greatest constitutive lack of all: its expression strives towards a coherent ideal which is ultimately unachievable. In order to identify those who most conform to it, it is necessary to identify those who do not. Regularity cannot merely stand in opposition to disorder—an assertion of 'order' always involves defining that which is 'disordered'. A material culture cannot merely make an ethnic (or other type) group through 'standing in opposition to its own absence', but by identifying those not part of the group. This being the case, we fall back to the empirical problems outlined above.

With this criticism established, a final *aporia* appears: why is it 'more satisfactory' to assert that such cultural expression must reflect and reinforce within-group identity? This rhetorical slippage is perhaps intended as a means of hurriedly advancing discussion away from the problems inherent in the putative pair of polarised options Hines presents, here. Allegedly, accepting this 'more satisfactory' explanation is easier than arguing for what is otherwise asserted to be the 'casual meaninglessness' of the *Formenkreise*. Hines claims that such meaninglessness is the only alternative if his proposal is rejected. This is a false dichotomy. To assert that it is impossible to empirically demonstrate the forms of meaning which Hines argues for does not render the cultural patterning subject to our analysis meaningless. It simply outlines that we are forced to make non-empirical, interpretative leaps when making assertions about that meaning. Let us grapple further with the rhetorical steps which Hines subsequently takes to bolster the form of meaning which he asserts to be the only option.

4.2. JOHN HINES AND CULTURE HISTORY

Hines uses this argument to assert that this necessary stability of 'meaning' forms a 'minimal but universal level of active symbolism inhering in material culture'.[38] He argues, drawing upon Tacitus' *Germania*, that such lifestyle-relevant artefacts as bodily equipment and personal adornment bear the brunt of this expression.[39] Yet ultimately, the sole argument Hines offers for such acts of expression as therefore representing ethnic identities that we may label 'Angle' or 'Saxon' emulates that of the culture-historical model:

> Genrich... emphasised how variation in the forms and distributions of relief-decorated equal-armed brooches distinguished a north-western and an eastern district within the Saxon homeland of the Elbe-Weser triable, a point that is firmly corroborated by the distribution of cast saucer brooches. Both of these distinctions are made... ...within a series of brooch types... ...is indisputably centered within the general Elbe-Weser region, which can be identified as the focus of the Saxon homeland of the date through historical sources... ...in the context of other forms of group symbolism just discussed we can go so far as to argue that the use of this category of material for such symbolism can be interpreted as a purposeful assertion of a particular ethnic identity.[40]

What is empirically demonstrated? The distribution of the material culture in the Elbe-Weser region and that later historical sources claimed that the Elbe-Weser region was the Saxon homeland. It is also probably true that this material culture was a 'purposeful assertion' of some kind. Yet Hines' assertion that such distributions of material culture expressed a Saxon *ethnic identity* is an interpretative leap. It hinges upon his prior assumption about the necessary stability of meaning in cultural expression, and depends upon an assumption of the universality of modes of ethnic expression in material culture which is refuted by post-groupist ethnic sociology.

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38. Hines, "Culture groups and ethnic groups in northern Germany in and around the Migration Period," 225.
39. Ibid., 225–7.
40. Ibid., 227.

Hines' most recent statement on these questions provides considerable updates in terms of empirical material and further bolsters his already considerable evidence for the remarkable connectivity of and levels of communication between the 'Anglian' culture region and Scandinavia.[41] His assertion that the thing being expressed through the culture of this region was 'ethnicity', however, remains dependent entirely on the methodogical assertions, and the Germanic construct underpinning them, made in Hine's previous articles.[42]

4.3   Catherine Hills: the migration debate

Catherine Hills is Senior Fellow at the McDonald Institute of Archaeology and fellow of Newnham College at the University of Cambridge.   Hills is particularly known for involvement with the excavations at Spong Hill, a cremation cemetery of incomparable importance to studies of the transition from Roman to post-Roman Britain, but she has contributed to a vast range of research on material culture and identity in late antique Britain, and on the contexts and ideas that frame this research.   Hills supervised the doctoral theses of numerous archaeologists whose work has addressed this subject, and whom we encounter across these pages, including Sam Lucy, Mads Ravn and Susanne Hakenbeck.

Hills' 1979 article, 'The archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England in the pagan period: a review' was an early example of work in the field to query the assumption that 'Germanic' material culture was necessarily used by 'Germanic' migrants. The material culture was nevertheless held to embody something coherently 'Germanic', easily separable from Romanness.[43] Positivist questions such as the volume of material excavated (and thus the implied mechanisms of its transfer to Britain) were believed by Hills to imply things about the scale of ethnic acculturation ver-

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41.   Hines, "The origins of East Anglia in a North Sea zone."
42.   Ibid., 38–43.
43.   Hills, "The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England in the Pagan Period."

sus direct population movement.[44] Such an approach is also reflected in her early work on Spong Hill.[45] From the 1990s on, it becomes apparent that a constant in Hills' work is that debate about the *aduentus saxonum* is always framed in terms of the *scale* of migration. Reference to questions such as the nature of ethnic identity is often made but the primary question that such concerns are always used to frame is that of the nature and scale of the *aduentus saxonum* in its regional specificity, and whether or not in each regional instance the processes of material cultural change (taken by Hills to either resemble ethnic expression or, in her later work, the expression of an ambiguously conceived Germanic 'ideology') which took place in early Anglo-Saxon England (and usually, in Hills' case, with focus on East Anglia) were the result large-scale mass migration over the *longue durée* or the migration of a small dominant elite.[46] Hills engages with and draws upon results from developments in ethnic theory but remains primarily concerned with this polarity of options in so doing.

This approach frames the expectations Hills has of what can be inferred from material evidence, and a form of positivism is constantly at work in the belief that these questions will be answered by the accumulation of more data. This is true even when this latter method's problems are addressed, as post-processualism visibly begins to influence her approach. Let us take, for example, her 1993 article, 'Who were the East Angles?', in which Hills offers first a summary of the state of research and then explicitly examines Spong Hill to answer the paper's titular question. In it, she states that

> [e]ven if we had a complete map of all the Anglo-Saxon cemeteries

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44.   Ibid., 318–9.

45.   Catherine Hills, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Spong Hill, North Elmham, Part I: Catalogue of Cremations, Nos. 20-64 and 1000-1690*, East Anglian Archaeological Reports 6 (Dereham: Norfolk Archaeological Unit, 1977).

46.   E.g. Catherine Hills, "Who were the East Angles?," in *Flatlands and Wetlands: Current Themes in East Anglian Archaeology*, ed. Julie Gardiner and Malcolm Atkin, East Anglian Archaeological Reports 50 (Dereham: Norfolk Archaeological Unit, 1993), 14–23; Hills, *The Origins of the English*; Hills, "The Anglo-Saxon Migration: An Archaeological Case Study of Disruption."

> that ever existed it would show the distribution of a burial practice,
> not necessarily of a whole population.

Hills suggests that an invisible British population might be hidden by such phenomena.[47] Implicit in these assertions is that if we had some means of viewing the entire population, rather than merely the surviving burial practices, questions about Jutes, Britons, Saxons and Angles could at last be resolved; this is a position post-groupist ethnic sociology would reject. This implication is manifest in Hills' subsequent discussion in the 1993 article. She frequently notes that 'Saxon' or 'Germanic' artefacts need not represent equivalent ethnic groups, but asserts that such descent-based ethnic groups were nevertheless extant 'things' that material evidence could mask.[48] As noted, Hills' real priority lies in proving that migration occurred,[49] and through comparison of the stylistic and artefactual relationships of the Spong Hill assemblage with the crucial continental sites of Westerwanna, Issendorf and Süderbrarup, Hills charts shifts in apparent affiliation of the site from Schleswig-Holstein to Saxony and finally reaches the conclusion that 'it seems sceptical to deny that some at least of the East Anglians must have been Angles from Angeln', and that the presence of 'Germanic' people 'cannot be dismissed as largely mythical'.[50] Though Hills was reacting to a particular anti-migrationist trend, the fact of migration is not especially contentious, and the interpretative leap made in these statements lies not in asserting the fact of migration but in the assertion that the peoples who moved in this migration drew meaningful ethnic distinctions between such categories as 'Saxon' or 'Angle'.

Yet over the subsequent two decades, this question is continually that around which Hills frames her discussion. A 1998 article tackles the same problems. Empirical data from Issendorf updates some of the 1993 paper's conclusions, suggest-

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47. Hills, "Who were the East Angles?," 14–15.
48. Ibid., 15.
49. A response, no doubt, to the processualist assertions of Arnold and Hodges.
50. Hills, "Who were the East Angles?," 22.

ing that the movement of people and information across the North Sea was a more constant process. Yet throughout, the paper relies on the axiomatic notion that there existed a coherent 'Germanic' ideology, perhaps conveying aspects of cosmology, that people utilising the new material culture that appeared in England in the fifth century might ascribe to.[51]

Hills' *Origins of the English* is aimed at a popular audience, and offers a clear overview of the evidence available to the Anglo-Saxon archaeologist, and the interpretations applied to this evidence. It is perhaps Hills' attempts to outline the difference between academic and popular understandings of ethnicity that offer the most apt section for deconstruction. Drawing upon then contemporary notions of ethnic identity from anthropology and sociology, Hills tells the reader:

> Ethnic groups define themselves, or are defined by others... ...While inheritance is always claimed as a defining factor, the role it plays may in reality be less than that of current political and social forces... ...Group identity also manifests itself visibly.. ...It is also true that material culture is used consciously and unconsciously to define political boundaries... ...So the basic principles of culture-historical archaeology have real support and should not be entirely discarded... But material culture has, and had in the past, many different structuring principles. The difficulty we face as archaeologists is in understanding which to use in our interpretation, especially given the incomplete nature of our evidence—its partial survival, preservation and recovery.'[52]

There is a lot to unpack in this set of propositions, derived largely via analogical reasoning (which is removed here for the sake of brevity). Largely they are derived from a received constructivist and structuralist theoretical framework. It is clear

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51. E.g., 'It has been argued that some aspects of material culture... ...were deliberately chosen and used to emphasise a specifically Germanic ancestry. This might well mean that some European rulers were descended from Germanic leaders, and that it was important to them to emphasise that ancestry... ...[some people in Anglo-Saxon England] might have taken on Germanic material culture... ... while actually being mostly of native British ancestry'. The meaning of these categories is never explained. Catherine Hills, "Did the People of Spong Hill come from Schleswig-Holstein?," *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 11 (1998): 147.
52. Hills, *The Origins of the English*, 93–4.

that Hills believes ethnic structures to be there—something we as archaeologists can analyse. The question is simply which of these structures we should assume is in operation. In some respects this aligns with post-groupist ethnic sociology, yet the core difficulty lies the final statement; Hills asserts that methodological difficulty derives from the 'incomplete' nature of our evidence, a point Hills constantly makes to defer her interpretative decisions, as we saw in discussion of her earlier articles. Yet we saw in discussion of Wimmer in relation to Hines above that that even with far more complete datasets to hand, clear ethnic structures could not necessarily be inferred. This is because the presumption of the existence of these structures as coherent entities is an epistemological illusion. Hills, however, still relies upon the axiom that ethnicity is something that is formed in 'groups'. The positive collection of data is therefore held to be able to tell us whether or not these 'groups' were or were not present at given historical conjunctures. Seeing ethnicity in a post-groupist light turns Hills' reasoning on its head. For example, drawing upon recent debates about the nature of furnished inhumation,[53] Hills later concludes:

> The burials with weapons found through northern Europe in the late fourth/fifth centuries are not necessarily all to be explained as graves of 'Germanic' soldiers, but rather as members of a new and insecure military aristocracy of various ethnic origins, including Germanic...
> ...They were the graves of the elites of these countries... ...It is possible to interpret the Anglo-Saxon burials in the same way, as the graves of the local aristocracy who might have been of mixed or British ancestry–or even predominantly native.[54]

These arguments begin to move towards those advanced by the Freiburg School, yet several curious language choices are apparent. First, the ethnic 'group' is continually reified as an aspect of identitarian behaviour that is potentially at work

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53. Hills cites Higham, *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons*, but the content of this section also owes clear origins to James, "Cemeteries and the problem of Frankish settlement" and Halsall, "Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*."
54. Hills, *The Origins of the English*, 99.

alongside these trends, even if this cannot be identified by the archaeological data. More significantly, it is suggested that such groups are likely to be defined by their being 'Germanic'. Finally, Hills attempts to assert a counter-argument to the Freiburg proposition that reveals the major *aporia* in her intellectual framework:

> The counter-arguments are that there are far too many of these burials for them all to be elite, that this flies in the face of both history and language, and that there are other kinds of archaeological evidence which also show migration.[55]

This seems to conflate two different arguments. Questions concerning the interpretation of furnished inhumation surely concern the nature of ritual funerary expression, not the actual occurrence of or scale of migration. The implication of Hills' statement is that if the *aduentus saxonum* can be positively demonstrated to have occurred, this necessitates that we read rites such as furnished inhumation as acts of ethnic expression originating from this migration. This is a conflation of etic with emic categories.[56] It results from Hills' constant conviction that to dispute the meaning of the signifier is to dispute the meaning of the signified: Hills presumes that to query the expression of 'Germanicness', utilised to varying degrees by coherent ethnic 'groups', is tantamount to querying the occurrence of an Anglo-Saxon migration. This is erroneous, logocentric, and not empirically derived.

To point this out might seem excessively fastidious. But this etic/emic conflation, including the assumed existence of a coherent 'Germanic' cultural package that relates to the existence of coherent ethnic groups, does not alter in Hills' subsequent publications,[57] and we will see further examples in Chapter 6, where Hills' epistemological commitment to positivism leads to contradictions in her stated un-

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55. Ibid.

56. I.e., it presumes that our ability to observe a migratory process necessitates that those who participated in it and brought material culture with them must attribute an ethnic significance to this process.

57. Hills, "Anglo-Saxon DNA?"; Hills, "Anglo-Saxon migration: historical fact or mythical fiction?," 1221; Hills, "The Anglo-Saxon Migration: An Archaeological Case Study of Disruption," 45–8.

derstanding of ethnicity and attempts to infer it from the material record. In Hills'
most recent discussion of the issue, the frameworks within which the terms of the
debate are set remain the same as they have always been:

> The key question is the extent to which there was migration by Germanic people from northern Europe to Britain, and whether that took place on such a scale that the migrants replaced the native British population in what became England.[58]

It is evident that Hills' interpretative framework, then, is entirely reliant on the
presumed existence of a coherent 'Germanic' cultural package. The question, for
Hills, is always whether or not 'migration' occurred, and the importation of this
putatively coherent 'Germanic' package is crucial to establishing the answer. We
will see in Chapter 6 that it is perfectly possible to interpret the material culture
she studies without either making the assumption that such a package and was expressed through funerary ritual or denying the occurrence of the *aduentus saxonum*
and the transfer of material culture with it.

4.4   Sam Lucy: 'deconstructing' ethnicity?

Sam Lucy is a fellow of Newnham College, Cambridge, but has previously held
a lectureship at the University of Durham. We saw in Chapter 2 that Lucy was
one of the first scholars to dedicate scholarship to grappling explicitly with the
rejection of ethnic interpretations of early Anglo-Saxon material culture. Lucy's
extensive historiographical work on the development of the discipline will not be
repeated here.[59] Lucy rejects the identification of material culture as indicative of
ethnic expression, on the basis of anthropological theory, as well as ideas about
ethnic identity inherited via from post-processual archaeology and early medieval
historiography. Lucy's method proceeds via careful examination of relationships

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58.   Hills, "The Anglo-Saxon Migration: An Archaeological Case Study of Disruption," 34.
59.   On which, see above, 65.

between grave structure, the positioning of grave-goods and of the body, attempting to infer the presence of consistent semiotic patterning in these traits, both within and between cemeteries. Lucy then uses this to argue that archaeologists have imposed an ethnic reading onto material cultural distributions, arguing instead that the individual selection of artefacts from the general repetoire available was a more important phenomenon.[60]

Lucy is highly critical of such mapping of cultural boundaries via artefact distribution. In her early work, based on her doctoral thesis, Lucy acknowledged the truism that ethnic identity is multi-layered, stating 'We must recognise that even a single person could have had several different "ethnic identities" and that these may have changed over a lifetime'.[61] Yet the basis upon which she asserts that ethnic expression was absent in early Anglo-Saxon England is epistemologically dubious, according to post-groupist ethnic sociology, and Lucy here reveals her entrapment within the traditional frameworks. Despite clearly recognising the socially-constructed nature of ethnicity, Lucy falls back on the use of the very primordialist frameworks which she disputes. In the sections of Lucy's argument immediately preceding her recognition that ethnic identities are multiplicitous, she claimed that people living in the British Isles in the fifth and sixth centuries would not have seen themselves living within singular political entities, despite attempts by Bede and Gildas to 'persuade us otherwise'. She extended this to conclude, on the basis that no historical conception of 'English' identity existed prior to the reign of Æthelstan, that 'any loyalties which did exist in the fifth- and sixth-centuries would have a localised and personalised basis'.[62] Indeed, Lucy suggests that the initial impetus for the 'Anglo-Saxon' burial rite was as a way for people to 'symbolically distance themselves from Roman ways of burial, and thus from

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60. Lucy, *The Early Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of East Yorkshire*, 31, 63–5, 74–5.
61. Ibid., 20.
62. Ibid., 19–20.

Roman ways of life'.[63]

There is an *aporia*, here. The implication that (alleged) attempts by Bede and Gildas to persuade us of the presence of single political entities (and whether their texts do this is questionable) do *not* qualify as instances of people residing in the British Isles having such conceptions is self-contradictory. What are Bede and Gildas' texts examples of, if not the presence of such conceptions? It is surely not that such *conceptions* did not exist, but that they do not necessarily reflect the *actual* construction of ethnicity in its various conjunctures in post-Roman British society. In the words of Walter Pohl: 'our written sources are not just more-or-less distant reflections of the social reality of a group out there. They also represent traces of the constant process of identification and negotiation which is part of social reality'.[64] In claiming that Bede's and Gildas' observations are simply misleading or incorrect, Lucy reifies the ethnic group *qua* group by asserting that it must be empirically identifiable through the available evidence in order to have existed. Recognising a subject's processes of identification (including such aspects of social identity as gender, class, ethnicity etc) as motions towards an unattainable ideal[65] reveals that Bede's and Gildas' representations are not universally *representative*,[66] but this is not the same as being *misleading*. We can infer the following from Lucy's observations:

1. Any larger political or ethnic identities that might have been present in the fifth and sixth century were not *necessarily* the most important aspect of one's identity.

2. That they did not necessarily have to have any form of continuity with what

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63. Lucy, *The Early Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of East Yorkshire*, 104.

64. Walter Pohl, "Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West: Introduction," in Pohl and Heydemann, *Post-Roman Transitions*, 5.

65. See discussion of Deleuze, above, 105.

66. For discussion on what apparent ethnic entrepreneurs such as Gildas might be up to *instead*, and in which specific conjunctures their ethnic constructions operated, see discussion in Chapter 7, ??–??.

4.4. SAM LUCY: 'DECONSTRUCTING' ETHNICITY?

would later become 'English' national identity.

3. They are not necessarily traceable in burial evidence (and, importantly, if they are, do not have to bear any resemblance to conceptions of identity as stated in the written sources).

A subject may stress local identities at times, 'ethnic' at others; the local can become (or be) the ethnic, and vice-versa. The simple recognition that mortuary archaeology does very little to inform us about the 'ethnic' layer of a subject's identity does not require that we conclude that such a layer does not exist, certainly not in the face of clear evidence to the contrary, yet this is the logical conclusion of Lucy's arguments. In this instance, absence of evidence is *not* evidence of absence. Moreover, the notion that Anglo-Saxon cremation burial was an act of symbolic 'distancing' from Romanness reifies, despite Lucy's attempts to the contrary, the notion of Romanness as something singular, coherent and distinct from the material that followed. Such a position reifies the same arbitary binary divide that other scholars use to separate presumed 'high-status' 'Roman' (and thus late-fourth to early-fifth century) and presumed 'low-status' (and thus mid- to late-fifth century) material culture that others use as the basis for the separation of 'Roman' from 'Germanic'.[67]

This argumentative approach is also present in Lucy's monograph, *The Anglo-Saxon Way of Death.* We can take the results of an examination of distributions of brooch type, and the question of their representing 'cultural groupings', as an example.[68] Lucy finds the boundaries of these putatively distinct ethnic types (saucer brooches as 'Saxon', cruciform brooches as 'Anglian', for example), to be rather more fuzzy than some might argue, and concludes:

> …What these very brief summaries of the evidence do not portray
> are clearly defined cultural areas on the basis of distinctive brooch

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67. On which see 178-183.
68. Lucy, *The Anglo Saxon Way of Death*, 133-9.

> types... ...both of these are also seemingly sixth-century artefacts and can tell little of fifth-century origins.[69]

Though valid observations, their unstated implication, the *aporia,* and a recurrent one in Lucy's approach to the analysis of material culture, is that if the distinctive brooch types examined were differently distributed and dated, the possibility would remain for clearly defined cultural areas to be visible that could tell us something about origins. Such an argument seems to be a vital part of the Lucy *oeuvre.* Responding, for example, to allegations by Heinrich Härke that her criticisms of his attempts to infer ethnic interpretations were solely a result of the political context in which she worked, Lucy emphasises that Härke's argument is flawed on scientific grounds.[70] Lucy uses this to suggest 'it is not always a matter of subjective opinion when one archaeologist's views are questioned'.[71] Though this was primarily intended to deflect Härke's criticism of the sceptics (and it effectively does so), this conclusion reveals a problem: it implies that the most sound basis for challenging intellectual frameworks formed by historical context is empirical observation.

The flaw of such a position is that these positivist modes of investigation *cannot* answer ethnic questions about material evidence. This makes the possibility of inferring the presence *or* absence of ethnic groups through purely archaeological means fundamentally questionable, no matter which artefacts have been found where. Criticisms of ethnic interpretations should proceed by highlighting the flawed *epistemological* grounds upon which these interpretations are made, rather than the flawed empirical grounds. Lucy, by de-emphasising ethnicity's importance and stressing 'local identity' as a more important identifier for the occupants of fifth-century graves, merely substitutes one form of Culture History for another – one of a myriad of 'local' cultures, rather than a homogenous over-culture. The rea-

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69. Lucy, *The Anglo Saxon Way of Death*, 135.
70. Ibid., 74, 165.
71. Ibid.

son why such 'local' cultures could not hypothetically themselves represent micro-scale ethnic boundaries is never made clear.

We see this most clearly in a statement made immediately before the end of the historiographical chapter of *The Anglo-Saxon Way of Death*, concluding a section where Lucy argues against the means by which scholars have attempted to determine the fate of the Romano-British 'natives' during the *aduentus saxonum*:

> we have the problem of trying to link artistic styles to people's identities. 'British' material culture (in the sense of objects which carry on in production from the fourth century into the fifth) is almost non-existent, therefore 'Britons' are impossible to identify.[72]

The clear implication is that the presence of just such a material culture would enable us to identify Britons more clearly—a position which contradicts Lucy's apparent understanding of ethnic sociology, but that makes rather more sense considered in light of the means by which she attempts to put this understanding into practice. Lucy makes reference to an article by Lethbridge, in a concluding paragraph used to attack the 'straightforward' view of material culture:

> [Lethbridge] published a paper which touched on the heart of this very issue. In it he stated: '... ...No one could prove that the wearers of these ornaments were Saxons, Angles, or Romano-Britons, or a mixture of them all...'.[73] In this short paper, dismissed by his contemporaries, Lethbridge got to the heart of an issue which has only recently come to the forefront in archaeology.'[74]

These ornaments cannot, it is true, prove the wearers were these things, but only for the same reason they cannot prove that they were not. Though Lucy's argument and her subsequent development of alternative approaches to mortuary material provide many important and valid observations, her desire to provide

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72. Ibid., 171.
73. Lethbridge, "The Anglo-Saxon Settlement in eastern England: a reassessment," 114.
74. Lucy, *The Anglo Saxon Way of Death*, 173.

such alternatives results in her, like those she criticises, attempting to use the evidence (or its 'absence'), to demonstrate that which it does not.[75]

Lucy extends this argument in a celebrated article from 2002, which claims to 'de-construct' assertions about the expression of ethnicity in any form in early medieval burial rites, and stresses instead the importance of localised selection by societies from 'the repertoire of material culture (which are thought of as being Anglo-Saxon)'.[76] Lucy suggests that the failure of archaeologists to recognise this localisation leads to the imposition of a non-existent uniformity upon this material.[77] There is much to be said for this argument, but a deconstruction of this 'deconstruction' reveals it to be trapped by the intellectual frameworks whence it emerged. The localisation of burial practices, and the neglect of their study, are issues rightly addressed, but the conclusions Lucy makes do not necessarily follow. Lucy's critique of inferring ethnic identity from material cultural boundaries recognises that such interpretations are problematic at the very epistemological level, and she proposes a Giddensian and Bourdieusian practice framework to reconcile this.[78] In the article, Lucy analyses the individual selections of material culture from the available repertoire in her East Yorkshire dataset using independent sexing and age data alongside burial position and the topographic position of her cemeteries, to attempt to infer acts of practice made by the community in each specific instance.[79] She identifies a range of micro-scale regional variations whose meaning cannot be inferred, but must simply have been the ' "way of doing" within each community when it buried its dead'.[80]

Lucy's proposal nevertheless rejects that ethnicity was a possible factor in the

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75. On the problems with this sort of argument see discussion of Michael E. Jones in Halsall, "Movers and Shakers: The Barbarians and the Fall of Rome," 140–2.
76. Lucy, "Burial Practice in Early Medieval Eastern Britain."
77. Ibid., 87.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid., 76-85.
80. Ibid., 85.

uses of this material culture. Her rebuttal of the imposition of ethnic interpretations upon cultural distribution patterns is based, for example, upon an apparent increasing homogeneity of culture at precisely the chronological point when larger kingdoms are alleged to have emerged.[81] This is where a post-groupist perspective problematises the Giddensian and Bourdieusian framework which Lucy relies upon. Lucy concludes:

> In the past, archaeologists have only concentrated on regional distributions of material culture, and thus seemed to have assumed that this *was* how cultural identities were expressed (and that these were ethnic identities). However, if the creation of identities of any form arises out of the initial formation and maintenance of local differences, then this view must be rejected.[82] [Emphasis author's own]

Lucy, therefore, takes the approach of Hines and inverts it. Her Giddensian/Bourdieusian practice framework correctly recognises that ethnic identity is iterative, yet her rejection of the presence of ethnic identity—not merely its demonstrability, but its very presence—is based entirely upon the absence of evidential material despite Lucy herself asserting this to be incapable of empirically revealing the ethnic axis of social closure.

It is precisely this problem with the argument—its proceeding upon empirical grounds which are easily enough disputed, rather than tackling the epistemological question of whether such material can answer such questions about identity in the positive *or* the negative—that has enabled Anglo-Saxon archaeologists to continue to make the case for the volume of certain types of material excavated offering answers to questions about the scale of migration and the role this played in ethnic expression, such as we encountered with Hills, above.

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81. Ibid., 86.
82. Ibid.

4.5   Howard Williams: remembering 'Germans' & 'ancestors'?

Howard Williams is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Chester and has produced important work on the function of memory in the use of early Anglo-Saxon material culture. Much of his work is significant for the questions of ethnic identity that concern this thesis. Williams has, for example, written a useful account of the development of racial identifications of Anglo-Saxon material culture, which notes the failure of other works to sufficiently take into account continental influences on this development,[83] and he is highly critical of the chauvinistic goals for which such racial readings, and the 'pan-Germanic' framework sustaining them, were developed. He concludes that such racial paradigms had 'a longer-lasting effect on how early medieval graves have been studied and interpreted in Britain than is usually acknowledged'.[84]

In his earlier work Williams nevertheles made use of the concept relatively uncritically, drawing on it, for example, in his arguments discussing the concept of cemeteries as 'central places,' where he suggests that the absence in the fifth century of the sort of evidence that in the seventh centuries evidences central organisation does not mean that alternative interpretations, such as a centralised identity using cremation cemeteries as foci, should not be pursued.[85] A substantial segment of this claim's basis is the cemeteries' nature as 'a new socio-political and sacred geography established over large areas of eastern England following the invasion and immigration of Germanic groups'.[86] It is their enduring nature,

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83.   Williams, ""Burnt Germans"."
84.   Ibid., 236-237.
85.   Howard Williams, "Cemeteries as Central Places: Place and Identity in Migration Period Eastern England," in *Central Places in the Migration and Merovingian Periods: Papers from the 52nd Sachsensymposium, Lund, August 2001*, ed. Birgitta Hårdh and Lars Larsson (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2002), 341–362.
86.   Ibid., 345.

evidencing conservative social practice, that Williams used to mark these as central places. He asserted that the possible relationships these sites had with Roman settlements as places for continuity of assembly as a possible explanation for the spatial positioning of early Anglo-Saxon mortuary practices, and saw this as emergent from a context of the 'settlement of Germanic mercenaries' as described by Bede and Gildas.[87] Although cremation burials certainly, unlike much of the evidence addressed here, represent an intrusive rite originating in northern *Germania*, other interpretations of this rite's appearance highlight the danger in assuming they must represent the first marker of 'Germanic' migration, noting that the migrants can frequently appear before the intrusive rite that is held to accompany them.[88] Was the appearance of this rite, then, the marker of the entry of 'the Germanic world' into post-Roman Britain, or is it better interpreted as a particular group of people expressing a particular connection with another particular group across the North Sea, in *very* specific circumstances? To label such a nuanced and complicated process with such a loaded term as 'Germanic' does it no justice. It is both misleading, due to the sedimented assumptions attached to the term, and far too broad in scope to claim to accurately or usefully characterise the appearance of this particular material.

In Williams' later work, the concept is applied more hesitantly. In his important monograph, *Death and Memory in Early Medieval Britain*, Williams notes the contingency of labels such as 'Celt' and 'Saxon' in application to burial rites and he makes no attempt to explain their ideological significance via such ethnic interpretative lenses, turning instead to the roles social memory plays in funerary ritual via selective acts of remembrance and forgetting.[89] His assertion that grave-goods functioned in a mnemonic role to serve in processes of identity formation leads

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87. Ibid., 349–350.
88. Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*.
89. Howard Williams, *Death and memory in early medieval Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 24–25.

him to conclude that debates on the possibility for utilising them in the tracing of migration and ethnic groups are redundant, a position not dissimilar from that being argued in this thesis.[90]

But his stance on this is not consistent. Demonstration of this mnemonic role occasionally, for example, follows assertions made elsewhere, which are unfounded, that these selective acts of remembrance and forgetting were sometimes grounded in a 'pan-Germanic' cultural ethos that allowed origin myths to be drawn upon in the expression of these mnemonic acts.[91] In particular, Williams relies upon his former supervisor Härke's interpretation of the weapon burial rite, stating the following:

> While there has been a reluctance by some to accept Härke's arguments concerning the ethnic symbolism of weapon burial [Williams here makes reference to Lucy and Tyrell], his study suggests that the burial of of weapons constituted a Germanic ethnic origin myth, symbolising perceived and/or real cultural origins through the burial ritual.[92]

After discussing the complex processes of circulation, production, recycling and selection which such weapons underwent in the course of their material biography, Williams notes:

> weapon burial did not simply construct real or imagined links to a Germanic past and mythic ancestors. It also employed weapons that may themselves have had long cultural biographies...[93]

Williams' assertions are entirely dependent here upon the arguments of Härke. That weapons had cultural biographies derived from their production, circulation and use contexts is perfectly reasonable. Yet that they conveyed a contemporarily recognisable pan-Germanic cultural ethos is a conclusion that results from an

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90. Williams, *Death and memory in early medieval Britain*, 42–43.
91. Ibid., 55–61.
92. Ibid., 59.
93. Ibid.

aporia. It is not something empirically demonstrated; rather, the 'Germanic' interpretation of weapon burial serves as the *logos* which underpins Williams' moment of interpretative decision. We will see in the subsequent chapter that to make such interpretations of weapon burials is wholly without empirical foundation.

We also see this manifest in Williams' discussion of the re-use of Roman material in Anglo-Saxon graves. In a co-written paper, Williams and Eckardt correctly note that the 'the identification of ethnic and cultural groups simply from the presence or absence of particular styles of object is inherently problematic',[94] but they continue to refer to the mortuary context within which such objects were re-used as one utilising 'Germanic-style objects'.[95] Moreover, the very basis of the paper proceeds from the premise that, although Roman material cannot necessarily be used to isolate the 'Romano-British' population, the context within which this population would be isolated is an 'Anglo-Saxon' one. Although Eckardt and Williams note that the extent of the Romano-British contribution to the material record is debated, the general standpoint remains one in which monolithic cultural entities, irrespective of the nature of these entities, existed and came into contact with one another. Eckardt and Williams observe that 'brooches may have multivocal symbolism relating to age, gender, kinship, political affiliation and ethnicity'.[96] Indeed they may, but we encounter here a recurrent problem: how does one prove that such phenomena as ethnicity were expressed in this material? A pan-'Germanic' ethos is the only putative empirical basis offered in this article.

For the most part Williams' interpretative approach offers potential to efface the logocentric ideal of the 'Germanic'. His focus upon moments of ritual, process, memory, and selection means that Williams rarely attempts to construct a narra-

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94. Hella Eckardt and Howard Williams, "Objects without a Past? The use of Roman objects in early Anglo-Saxon graves," in *Archaeologies of Remembrance: Death and Memory in Past Societies*, ed. Howard Williams (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2003), 156.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid., 161.

tives concerning ethnic groups. Indeed, he generally shows himself to be thoroughly uninterested in such questions. Even as he utilises the 'pan-Germanic' construct he acknowledges its undecidable nature, for example.[97] Aspects of Williams' interpretative approach have influenced the interpretative approach to burial semiotics in Chapter 6, especially those aspects which involve the active selection and repression of different aspects of social memory in the selective processes of funerary ritual. Yet there are aspects of Williams' argumentation where a more problematic set of *aporia* are relied upon in the construction of narrative, and these relate to Williams' assertions about cosmology and 'ancestors'.[98] These do not require detailing here, but it suffices to mention that these are asserted entirely upon the basis of anthropological analogy, and the applicability of such analogies to early medieval burial practice is not certain.

4.6 James Gerrard: ethnicities or 'ideologies'?

James Gerrard is Senior Lecturer in Roman Archaeology at the University of Newcastle. His recent characterisation of elite display (as evidenced largely through funerary archaeology) in the east of Britain during the fifth century suggests that elements of it are 'Germanic' in character, though he explicitly states this need have no direct relation to ethnicity.[99] Instead, Gerrard suggests (whilst aligning with arguments in favour of a small-scale but nevertheless significant migration) that the material used in such display represented an ideology 'adopted by the indigenous inhabitants of the former Roman diocese who, within a few generations, spoke and dressed as if, and believed that, they had originated on the far side of the North Sea.'[100]

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97. Williams, *Death and memory in early medieval Britain*, 61.
98. E.g. Williams, "Material culture as memory."
99. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 179–207.
100. Ibid., 181.

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Identifying material display as the creation and consolidation of a Germanic migration myth is therefore central to Gerrard's argument, which otherwise almost entirely effaces such Germanic myths. Gerrard denies that the material culture of fifth-century Britain carries ethnic significations and he suggests that rites such as weapon burial embodied a rejection of an ideology based around *paideia* in favour of a martial ideology which could appeal to Romano-Britons and barbarians alike.[101] These statements are precisely the sorts of move toward the Freiburg School's alternative approach that have already been noted.

Yet a problem remains. Gerrard rightly highlights a clear developing separation between east and west, lowland and highland Britain which develops as the fifth century progresses, but it is in the attempt to explain this separation that we return to the old answers, based again on ultimately undecidable interpretative leaps:

> Meanwhile in the east the burgeoning Germanic communities were looking across the North Sea for cultural inspiration.[102]

In order to look across the North Sea for inspiration, Gerrard asserts, those communities seeking this inspiration must have had at least a partial origin, as putatively must have had their material culture, across the same sea. The development of these communities' culture is linked to both late Roman and 'Germanic' traditions in Gerrard's interpretation, with its increasing 'Germanic' strand held to properly come into its own with the arrival in Britain of Style I from Scandinavia in the late fifth century.[103] Gerrard notes that

> much of the stereotypical 'package' that typifies early 'Anglo-Saxon' England is representative of the very late fifth and sixth centuries rather than the fifth century proper. Opposed caricatures of 'late Roman' and 'early Anglo-Saxon' do little to elucidate the process of transformation that altered life in lowland Britain between 300 and 600.'[104]

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101. Ibid., 207.
102. Ibid., 206–7.
103. Ibid., 202.
104. Ibid., 187.

Thus, for Gerrard, migration creates the 'Germanic' myth. But to what extent may the earlier forms of material culture that Gerrard labels 'Germanic' accurately be described as such? Remarkably, Gerrard focuses on furnished inhumation, rather than cremation, which certainly had its origins in northern Germany. In his discussion of cremation, the phrase 'Germanic' is never used. Gerrard never claims that the furnished inhumation rite was itself 'Germanic' in nature,[105] yet he applies the term on multiple occasions to the brooches found in early fifth-century furnished inhumation burials.[106] One can only assume this is to enable an effective link to be made between these items and the later emergence of Style I on female dress accessories, as a decoration which, though descending from late Roman provincial art, 'clearly originates beyond the frontiers of what had been the Roman Empire'.[107] We have established the utility, then, of the 'Germanic' to Gerrard's argument; it functions as an interpretative centre enabling a coherent link to be made between his earlier fifth-century material and his later fifth century material, and which enables easy reconciliation of the burial evidence with arguments concerning migration scale and the historical narrative.

Discussion of Gerrard's use of evidence in Chapter 5 will demonstrate that whilst it is certainly true that, as Gerrard puts it, communities increasingly looked 'across the North Sea for cultural inspiration', there is little reason to assume they did so as part of an adoption of an 'increasingly Germanic ideology' opposing an Anglo-Saxon east to a British west, at least on the basis of the evidence provided here.[108] Why, then, does Gerrard continually make recourse to this term? ∂ir We should look at Gerrard's own definition of 'Germanic'. Immediately after cautioning against a 'deconstruction' of the term—a surely significant choice of word—he states that he uses it

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105. He notes its possible late Roman origins, Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 198.
106. Ibid., 195–201.
107. Ibid., 201.
108. Ibid., 207. See Chapter 5, 210-213.

> to describe a series of cultural phenomena that clearly have their ori-
> gins, at least in part, in northern Germany. The use of this term does
> not necessarily imply anything about the genetic makeup, or linguis-
> tic abilities, or ethnic identity of the individuals and communities to
> which it is applied.[109]

This statement, surely, is in direct contradiction with the assertion that the 'Ger-manic' represents an ideology whereby its adopters 'spoke and dressed as if, and believed that, they had originated on the far side of the North Sea.'[110] Its reference to speech clearly denotes linguistic ability, and references to dress and belief in shared origins are difficult to dissociate from ethnic identity. Only genetics escape inclusion in the interpretation that Gerrard puts forward for these phenomena. To what end is this contradiction allowed to occur?

Gerrard makes this assertion in order to successfully piece together the diverse pieces of his narrative puzzle. He identifies the recruitment of 'Germanic' barbar-ians from across the North Sea as one of the various means—and not an atypical one—by which late Roman elites could respond to the effective collapse of the Ro-man state in Britain.[111] The instability of the elites' privileged status would lead to a transformation of social position, producing a drastic reduction of the complex gradations of status operating within the framework of the superstructure of the Roman state.[112] Within such a context, these barbarians'

> martial ideology and abilities... ...then either allowed them to usurp
> the indigenous power structures, or encouraged indigenous poten-
> tates to adopt the new martial lifestyle and its attendant customs
> and cultural traits.[113]

There is likely some truth to the broader frameworks of this narrative, but some of the evidence called upon to support it remains problematic. Gerrard correctly

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109. Ibid., 180.
110. Ibid., 181.
111. Ibid., 252–4.
112. Ibid., 254.
113. Ibid., 260.

observes on multiple occasions that the belt fittings of types described by Hawkes and Dunning do not originate with and are therefore not the costume of Germanic migrants.[114] Burials wearing such buckles, however, are still treated as possible migrants recruited as *foederati/laeti* even if there is nothing in the Hawkes and Dunnings belt buckles themselves to suggest this:

> Perhaps most importantly groups of Germanic warriors may not have been perceived as barbarians... ...The presence of one of the latter types of buckle at Westerwanna suggests that some who travelled from Germany to Britain returned'.[115]

Indeed, Gerrard acknowledges that this fact would have likely led to the wearers of such belts being perceived 'not as barbarians but as Roman soldiers'.[116] This being the case, it is puzzling why the belts are being discussed here as related to the recruitment of 'Germanic' migrants in a military context at all. It is often the very presence of such buckles in burials that earlier scholarship suggested identified their wearers as Germanic migrants at all (such as in the case of, e.g., Dorchester).[117] Gerrard, and most especially his student Douglas Carr, have shown instances such as Westerwanna to be anomalous.[118] This being the case, the continued use of these buckles in the construction of a narrative which Gerrard himself has shown they are of no relevance to is puzzling. Perhaps Gerrard intends for such examples to be anomalous, but the association in this section of the material with migrants from across the North Sea, whatever the perception of those migrants, speaks to the power traditional narratives have over even those interpretations which seek to break loose of them and that have rejected their empirical basis.

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114. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 62, 105.
115. Ibid., 253.
116. Ibid.
117. Hawkes and Dunning, "Soldiers and Settlers in Britain, Fourth to Fifth Century," 9-10.
118. Douglas Carr, "*Cingulum Militare*? A reappraisal of Hawkes and Dunning belt fittings in Britain (A.D. 300-500) and their relationship to the fifth century crisis" (BA Dissertation, Newcastle University, 2017), 74-6.

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Gerrard is sceptical of the application to *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory to the study of these events—and it is here that Gerrard may move beyond recourse to the 'Germanic'. Gerrard regards it as unlikely that there were 'nuclei of "Anglian, Saxon and Jutish" groups that were transferred from northern Germany to Britain in the fifth century'. He suggests, in line with current historical thinking, that the name 'Saxon' for ethnic 'groups' encountered on the North Sea littoral was simply a useful means of distinguishing these from the Franks of the lower Rhine, whose actual composition and group components are equally nebulous and uncertain.[119] 'There were no *Traditionskerne* for aristocratic warrior bands to perpetuate, or, if there had been, they were lost and reinvented by the time Bede was writing'.[120] Names such as Saxon are suggested, plausibly, to have been chosen by later kingdoms for their classical pedigree. Names such as Angle or Jute chosen for the geographical suitability.[121] Nevertheless, for Gerrard, that this migration had a coherent 'Germanic' element that enabled such new myths to be forged or reinvented remains accepted, and through this point alone, Gerrard's work becomes more similar to theories of Wenskus than he would have us believe for, as we will now see with critical examination of the recent output of Toby Martin, the 'Germanic' is no less able to be cast as a *Traditionskern* than such concepts as 'Angle' or 'Jute' and, like all putatively stabilising centres, it is shot through with contradictory implications.

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119.   Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 267-8.
120.   Ibid., 268.
121.   And in the case of 'Angle', perhaps due to awareness of a supposed depopulation of Angeln, as described by Bede. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 271, Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I.15.

4.7   Toby Martin: the cruciform brooch and Anglian identity

Toby Martin's recent doctoral thesis, completed under the supervision of John Moreland at the University of Sheffield, created a new typology of the cruciform brooch. It argues that the cruciform brooch functioned in the fifth century as an artefact used in a subsequent process of creation of an Anglian identity out of East Anglia's diverse inhabitants.[122] Martin's thesis has been summarised in a recent issue of *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*,[123] and was published as a monograph with substantial alterations.[124] The active creation of a regional Anglian identity around the year 500 has also been proposed by those most vehement of culture historical advocates, Martin Welch and John Hines.[125]

Martin's work also engages substantially with the research of historians influenced by post-1960s studies in ethnicity and social anthropology, and it does not do so uncritically.[126] Yet despite his considerably subtle application of ethnic- and migration-based material cultural interpretations, some aspects of Martin's discussion merit further examination. Martin links his material cultural evidence with ethnic labels derived from the written sources through examing both through the prism of Culture History; Martin directly embraces and defends certain aspects of a culture historical approach in the development of his thesis. He asserts that

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122.   Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use."

123.   Toby F. Martin, "Women, knowledge and power: the iconography of early Anglo-Saxon cruciform brooches," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 18 (2013): 1–17.

124.   Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England.*

125.   Martin Welch, "The Archaeology of Mercia," in *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe,* ed. M. P Brown and C. A. Farr (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2001), 150; Hines, "The origins of East Anglia in a North Sea zone."

126.   A point of note: although the published monograph is a much improved and in some respects far more coherent work, it omits much of Martin's discussion on the formation of social groups, such as his application of the concept of *bricolage* derived from Lévi-Strauss. Yet many of its arguments are clearly indebted to the theoretical positions shaped from this discussion, and for this reason the original thesis is the work most engaged with in these sections.

the abandonment of culture historical models risks 'losing the ability and confidence to talk about the grand historical narrative of Anglo-Saxon England'.[127] The reader may recall my adoption of Hayden White's position on historiography, which disputes the notion that one can speak of a singular 'grand historical narrative'. Despite careful and nuanced discussion of the social construction of ethnic and gender identities, Martin uncritically invokes one particular identificatory category to explain the nature of the cruciform brooch and its patterns of distribution and alteration: its putative 'Germanic' nature. Despite his frequent use of the term 'Germanic', at no point does Martin provide any definition of what he means by it. Although he recognises that 'the deep antiquity of most Germanic groups... ...is now generally doubted', after such historians as Goffart, Geary, or Halsall, Martin's thesis nevertheless takes on Wenskus- and Wolfram-influenced *Traditionskern* ethnogenesis theory in an almost entirely uncritical fashion. Martin does this despite seeming to have taken his understanding of this theory entirely from a volume whose *raison d'être* was to make a sustained assault on this theory.[128] The published monograph makes reference to the original works of Wenskus and Wolfram where these theories are discussed, but the essential argument remains unchanged. Interestingly, in this section, Martin uses Halsall's suggestion, that the ethnogenesis of post-Roman western barbarian groups resulted from the break-up of the Roman Empire, to support ideas for a 'Germanic' *Traditionskern*.[129] Certainly something which might be labeled 'ethnogenesis' here took place, but there is little clear reason why the *Traditionskern*, a surviving core of traditions maintained by an elite, is necessary to enable such ethnogenesis to take place, and such a use of Halsall's arguments ignores his criticism of the notion of the *Traditionskern* in other

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127.   Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use," 155.
128.   Citing Gillett, *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages*, Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use," 178–9.
129.   Ibid., 179, citing Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*.

sections of his book.[130]

The uncritical acceptance of the concept of the *Traditionskern* leads to the application of this concept to the cruciform brooch, here described in response to its apparently unquestionable 'Germanic'-ness as something embodied in the brooch's very form, identified as a core which both shapes, and around which was shaped, an Anglian ethnic identity emerging in the mid-fifth to mid-sixth centuries:

> ...the idea of Anglian identity must have existed before its objectification in cruciform brooches. Yet, the cruciform brooch also seems to have existed in England before the ethnogenesis of the Anglian identity (see above). This account therefore suggests that the cruciform brooch, as a pre-existing material form with Germanic connotations that connected it at least approximately with the perceived homelands, was appropriated in an act of opportunism by an emerging ethnic group seeking a suitably authentic symbol with which to demonstrate their descent.[131]

Martin's work defends linking the observed patterns of brooch development/distribution with the development of an Anglian identity on the following grounds:

> ...it is very difficult to observe high numbers of the same type of brooch occurring repeatedly in the same archaeological contexts within a restricted region, worn by a limited female age group (see below, Chapter 5) with a limited stylistic repertoire and not envisage that some kind of general symbolic meaning might be found that has wider significance to the constitution of Anglo-Saxon society in general.[132]

This may well follow, but this does not render the modern interpreter capable of determining such symbolic meaning without a clear guide: to do so is a leap of faith, not an empirical observation. Such a leap is itself dependent upon assumptions which lack any clear basis, either via *a priori* understanding or empirical

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130. Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 457–462.
131. Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use," 180.
132. Ibid., 155.

observation. The only clear guide apparent in this instance is the brooch's restriction to a limited female group. I aim to show that nothing may be inferred of an 'ethnic symbolic meaning' from such archaeological contexts alone.

Let us examine two statements from Martin's thesis, demonstrating the 'Germanic' interpretative framework in operation:

> The presence of the very early cruciform brooch Dorchester G2 in what seems to be a sub-Roman context should also warn us not to discount the possibility of Germanic peoples in Roman Britain long before the proposed *aduentus Saxonum. It is a possibility, albeit a slim one, that those early cruciform brooches were just as much a Germanic-influenced sub-Roman product as one that originated from strictly outside the bounds the Empire.*[133] [Emphasis mine]

The earliest insular cruciform brooches are never shown to be definitively later than the northern continental brooches (indeed, Reichstein's earliest 'Dorchester' type is named for the Dorchester-on-Thames cruciform brooch, and the scope of Martin's thesis prevented extension of his analyses of distribution and chronology to the continent), and we will see in the subsequent chapter that there is no reason to classify the applied brooches with the female burial as 'Germanic'. We are expected, then, upon the logic of Martin's argument, to conclude that Roman provinces, producing the earliest forms of a style with origins which ultimately lay in Roman military metalwork, must have produced 'Germanic-influenced' products, entirely on the basis of a historical context derived either from questionable readings of the textual sources, or the baseless assertion that this same military metalwork was somehow what demonstrated this putative context. In the published monograph, Martin excises the Dorchester brooch from the cruciform brooch corpus, treating it as a Nydam brooch.[134] Nevertheless, despite the questionable ability of the evidence to support the 'Germanic' construct, it is still this that forms the seemingly-unquestioned *logos* whence much of Martin's interpretation derives:

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133. Ibid., 172.
134. Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England,* 20.

'The Germanic influence behind cruciform brooches should not be underrated: they are very different in form from even their closest Roman parallels (crossbow brooches).'[135]

The former statement does not necessarily follow from the latter. The question has already been raised. How are we defining 'Germanic' influence upon this form? Martin is highly concerned with demonstrating the brooch's function as a medium of ancient tradition:

The cruciform brooch... ...having been around in England since at least the very early fifth century... ...possessed a deeper antiquity. As such, it constituted a more convincing demonstration of the pseudo-mythical homelands and the Anglian ethnos.[136]

When Martin argues that the brooch's 'pre-existing Germanic (as opposed to Roman) connotations' lend it this quality,[137] he produces a dichotomy. What, is it, then, that makes this artefact the possessor of a deep antiquity? One justification given is the decorative technique present on the foot of the earliest types of the cruciform brooch: notch, line and facet. This technique has its origins in late Roman provincial metalwork exported to *Germania*, a point Martin is well aware of, though he correctly notes that in the fourth century new brooch types with this technique became widespread in *Germania Magna*, existing on *Armbrustfibeln* and Nydam brooches, for example. He then interprets the technique's presence on the earliest cruciform brooches in England thus:

Despite their late Roman origins, it seems unlikely to me that any such subtle meanings *consciously referenced* any such heritage. Rather, the repetition of the notch-line-facet formula *implicitly referenced an older and perhaps therefore more authentic or authoritative style.*[138] [Emphasis mine]

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135.   Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use," 167–8. This line also appears in Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England,* 174.
136.   Ibid., 184–5.
137.   Ibid., 183.
138.   Ibid., 150.

4.7. TOBY MARTIN: THE CRUCIFORM BROOCH AND ANGLIAN IDENTITY

Several questions present themselves. First, what is this older and more authentic tradition? Martin has yet to show us any evidence of its existence, unless the style in question is the notch-line-faceting found on early Nydam brooches. Next, if this is the style, we have already been told that this definitely has late Roman origins, and the earliest forms only precede the later forms by about 40 years, and then become contiguous with the earliest cruciform brooches.[139] Thus, the style cannot be 'older' or 'more authentic'. Finally, we may link this notion of authenticity to Martin's references to 'implicit' as opposed to 'conscious' referencing of tradition. The notion of implicit reference has connotations of the purity of a tradition in its own self-presence. Thus, the 'older', putatively 'Germanic' tradition becomes the 'authentic' *logos* whence this presence and thus any foundation for a formation of an 'Anglian' ethnos emerges. The actual existence of an older tradition need not be demonstrated, because its implicit nature lends it an allegedly pure, self-reflexive authority. Martin may assert this, but it is not demonstrable from empirical consideration of the material. We have hit upon an *aporia* in the text.

Other instances abound of such aporiatic moments in Martin's text. In attempting to explain the significance of the presence of Style I motifs on later cruciform brooches, Martin makes some observations which have the potential to be profound. He attempts to explain the 'degeneration' of Style I motifs, a gradual reduction in the complexity of their depiction from earlier to later iterations, as indication of the 'tendency among Anglo-Saxon craftspeople for representing just the essence of the motifs'. From this he infers that '[e]arly Anglo-Saxon craftspeople were obviously comfortable reducing a subject to a sign, however abbreviated, this 'subject' being a stand-in for 'a complex realm of ideas concerning the nature

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139. Jan Bemmann, "Die Nydamfibeln. Eine Fibelform der Stufe C3?," *Germania* 71 (1 1993): 139–182.

of human, animals, and the cosmological relationship between the two'.[140]

Though the complex cosmology Martin outlines is of course unprovable, it is a possible reading. More problematic, and more fundamentally destabilising to his schema, is his attempt, hinted at here and then later made more boldly, to rigorously distinguish this act of signification of a (presumably) stable 'subject' from an alternative, 'essence-less' act of signification:

> The notion of the motif was sufficient to authenticate the brooch as part of a recognisable tradition...[141]

Martin then discusses reasons why conveyance of cosmological meaning is more likely than that the motif was replicated in ignorance of the motif's message—though why the refutation of the latter validates the former is never satisfactorily answered.[142] Martin's argument here represents a move like that Derrida describes by Rousseau to carefully delineate those realms that are mere 'supplement' or 'writing' from those of an 'authentic' presence.[143] This becomes clear in the next statement:

> This stands in stark contrast to the notches, lines, facets and punch marks discussed above, whose main purpose was to reproduce and emphasise just form. Both the figurative and non-figurative decoration, however, facilitated the continuity of cruciform brooches as authentic, intelligible members of a symbolic material tradition. The purpose of Style I in this interpretation was not so much as a vehicle for specific meanings, but to authenticate an item as part of a valued and recognisable tradition.'[144]

Due to an apparent absence of obvious figural meaning, Martin asserts that notches, lines, and facets represent 'just' form. The implausibility of this claim

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140.   Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 158.
141.   Ibid.
142.   It has been suggested, for example, that Style I's unintelligibility is precisely part of its appeal. Halsall, "The Space Between."
143.   'Writing is dangerous from the moment that representation there claims to be presence and the sign of the thing itself.' Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 144–5
144.   Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 159.

is made apparent by the immediately succeeding statements, for what is the 'authentication' of a 'symbolic material tradition'—for Martin, of course, a 'Germanic' tradition—if not a conveyance of meaning?

This is not to deny that something is conveyed in these brooches and their decoration, but merely to assert that it is fruitless to attempt to identify any stable, 'authentic' tradition in this conveyance. Notch, line, and facet decoration of course convey meaning, but only as part of a ceaseless chain of signifying play.[145] Martin treats this style as 'just' form precisely because, unlike Style I, no apparently obvious motifs may tie it to a putatively 'Germanic' cosmology.[146] Its signified is suppressed to hide its Roman trace, and a 'Germanic' tradition with no *prima facie* basis is supplied in its stead. The danger in terms like 'Germanic' is precisely that they implicitly propose dichotomous relationships between some artefact types and others, which allows for appeals to implicit tradition to be made.[147] Even if an explicitly non-Roman statement was being expressed, here, which seems unlikely, it could only be understood by its conscious rejection of 'the Roman' through a use of the same stylistic vocabulary. The earliest cruciform brooch's decorative style contains late Roman elements, so there is no authentic, self-present semiotic point of origin.

Martin notes the extreme degree of variability in the earliest Type 1 cruciform brooches, relative to other types. Given this degree of variability (prior even to any mention of the highly varied and disparate circumstances of existence in the region homogenised by Roman ethnographers as *Germania Magna*), and given the lack of a demonstrated origin in *Germania Magna* for many of these items, the use of 'Germanic' as a monolithic interpretative framework surely ceases to have any

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145. 'Through this sequence of supplements a necessity is announced: that of an infinite chain, ineluctably multiplying the supplementary mediations that produce the sense of the very thing they defer: the mirage of the thing itself, of immediate presence, of originary perception.' Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 157

146. Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 155.

147. On this see, especially, Rummel, "The Fading Power of Images."

useful meaning.

The effective deconstruction of this interpretative framework leads us to consider other aspects of Martin's discussion. It is important to emphasise that Martin's thesis is an important work, and its conclusions regarding typological classification and relative chronology are not here disputed. The lack of critique of the 'Germanic', however, leads the author to conclusions that one suspects would not otherwise be reached by an author with Martin's reading of the literature on the theory of ethnicity and identity. See, for example:

> From the very first introduction of Germanic material culture (by whatever means) a regional distribution of objects was set up which became increasingly defined through the process of intensification up to the mid-sixth century. Although the cruciform brooch may never before have been a signifier of ethnic identity (as might be suggested by its nebulous design structure and distribution in Phase A, and because of the suggestion that these ethnicities did not even exist at this point), as an object with perceived or actual origins in what was thought of as the homeland, it became an ideal symbol for "proving" or performing membership of a formal ethnic group.[148]

The hypothesis this outlines is dependent upon an assumption that origin myths could be attached to the material discussed *irrespective of the actual veracity* of these myths about the origin of this material from upon the continent. Given that Martin confidently links the cruciform brooch with continental origins, this is a puzzling statement. Is he less assured in this belief than he would have us believe? What basis, then, do we have for making such a link with origin myths, if we are operating on the basis that the objects' *actual* origin need not be from the continent? The only answer is a possible perceived origin, but how do we know that this origin was perceived at all? Martin's answer is the ascription of 'Germanic-ness' to these objects. Once this foundational pillar is removed, regional distribution suddenly lacks any secure link to the ethnic identities outlined by Bede.

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148. Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use," 181–2.

4.7. TOBY MARTIN: THE CRUCIFORM BROOCH AND ANGLIAN IDENTITY

There are two other observations that may deliver the final nail in the coffin, related to Martin's attempt to explain a decline in cruciform bow brooch usage around 600 by the Angles no longer claiming ethnic authority through migratory origin myths.[149] First, bow brooch usage declined across the former Western Empire as a whole towards the later sixth century.[150] Second, the very earliest reference we have to the migratory origin myths which these brooches are supposed to convey is recorded by Bede in the early eighth century.[151] Not only do these two points make Martin's argument highly implausible, but they suggest that we should instead look to processes taking place across the continent more widely. It seems prudent to ask whether the only party perceiving an origin in the 'homeland' for these objects is Martin, and it is clear that Martin's defence of culture historical methodology fails to address the problems with interpreting material culture in this manner.

Martin's earlier discussion on the flaws of the methodology of the culture historical approach to the interpretation of style concludes, immediately before the above-mentioned insistence of 'Germanic' influence upon the cruciform brooch:

> Stylistic influence cannot be used in isolation to declare whether these symbols were used to demonstrate an ethnic identity that, for instance, depended on descent. However, we can suggest that where ethnic identity is concerned, descent needs to be more than "real" and biological; it needs to be believed and demonstrated with various cultural forms (e.g. language, religion, material culture). Without these symbols, descent from, for instance, Germanic stock, may neither be important nor effective in socio-political terms.[152]

This does not distinguish between believed descent and actual descent as concepts bearing no necessary relationship to one another. It implies that, although belief

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149.   Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 187–190.
150.   Susanne E. Hakenbeck, "Roman or Barbarian?: Shifting identities in early medieval cemeteries in early medieval cemeteries in Bavaria," *Post-Classical Archaeologies* 1:55–57.
151.   Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I.10.
152.   Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use," 168.

was required for its operation to function, 'Germanic stock' remained a valid ideal classification which one's belief could or could not demonstrate. This contradicts Martin's later statement that 'although we do not know the precise and probably complex conditions of group membership... ...it is likely that descent (or at least perceived and demonstrated descent e.g. through dress) was an important factor.'[153]

It perhaps comes, in such a context, as no surprise that one of Martin's key theoretical frameworks for his conceptualisation of the active use of material culture is Claude Lévi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind*.[154] More specifically, the concept of cultural reiteration as *bricolage*. For Martin this concept functions in relation to the cruciform brooch both literally in the sense of an appropriation of a variety of pre-existing component types to form a single brooch, and semiotically, as 'a direct metaphor for the assembling of the *ethnos* (or its cultural traditions) from what was probably a mix of the real and mythical origins of the migrants and perhaps even natives that came to identify themselves as Anglians'.[155] Derrida's celebrated deconstruction of Lévi-Strauss revealed how denouncements of ethnocentric practices in ethnographic discourse instead work to reproduce such ethnocentrism.[156] Through privileged reference to 'Germanic' as an explanatory framework derived from Roman ethnographic contexts, Martin ultimately, if inadvertently, reproduces these contexts, and those derived from them in the development of archaeology and history as disciplines.

This is perhaps inevitable in any work. Nevertheless, Derrida's demonstration of the only logical outcome upon acceptance of the concept of the *bricoleur* illus-

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153.   Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use," 175.

154.   Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. George Weidenfeld and Nicholson Ltd (London: George Weidenfeld / Nicholson, 1966); Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use," 98, 180.

155.   Ibid., 180.

156.   Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference,* trans. Alan Bass (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 351–370.

trates perfectly the untenable nature of the 'Germanic' framework:

> ...it is at this point [the recognition that myths have no centre] that ethnographic *bricolage* deliberately assumes its mythopoetic function. But by the same token, this function makes the philosophical or epistemological requirement of a center appear as mythological, that is to say, as a historical illusion.[157]

The 'Germanic', which lacks any stabilising transcendental ideal, and without any sound empirical basis for its categorisation as a classificatory descriptor other than for certain linguistic groups, is such a historical illusion. Once Martin's thesis has moved beyond attempts to marshal a defence of the cruciform brooch as an essentially Germanic artefact, his work, like that of Saussure and Lévi-Strauss for Derrida points towards the effacement of this logocentric ideal:

> Though there may have been significant population movements into eastern England at some point around the mid-fifth century, they were not necessarily of distinct tribal groups, and were even more unlikely to have been an ethnically, or even racially, defined group of Angli from present-day north Germany/Jutland. The migrations of this period were likely to have been part of an ongoing (if perhaps accelerating) process, made up of groups only loosely affiliated as "Germanic" or "barbarian" (and even these identities may have only been applied by those external to them), with specific tribal or ethnic identities being the politically expedient creations of later generations.[158]

Martin's work notes, even as it imposes the 'Germanic' framework onto its evidence, just how unsatisfactory a label this is for the groups which migrated from the North Sea cultural zone to Britain in the fourth to sixth centuries. Indeed, in the later pages of the monograph version of this argument Martin suggests, despite suggesting earlier in the monograph that 'Style I' conveyed 'Germanic' qualities, that:

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157.   Ibid., 361.
158.   Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use," 172.

> ...as was the case for Anglo-Saxon cruciform brooches, where series
> of [Style I bow brooches] appear, they tend to follow internal de-
> velopments of the regions in which they are found, rather than ones
> transplanted from elsewhere. This is a crucial observation that may
> lead us to question the so-called Germanic nature of this material
> culture and even what we might mean by that.[159]

Here, then, it is possible to reconcile Anglo-Saxon archaeological scholarship
with historical and archaeological research which challenges the dominant paradigm
shaped by this framework. Martin treats the 'Germanic' nature of the artefact as
the 'means-to-hand' by which an Anglian identity was assembled, but as we know
from Derrida, 'If one calls bricolage the necessity of borrowing one's concept from
the text of a heritage which is more or less coherent or ruined, it must be said that
every discourse is bricoleur.'[160] There is no authentic, 'Germanic' means-to-hand
for the assembling of this identity, and we have no *prima facie* evidence for the
origin myths this that means-to-hand is assumed to have pieced together. Mar-
tin's work contains the resources for its own deconstruction, and the truly radical
moment in works like Martin's and Gerrard's is their recognition of the radical
instability of the group identities they attempt to isolate.

4.8 Conclusion

Some may object to dedicating such substantial space to discussing the finer nu-
ances of meaning that can or cannot be inferred when a scholar uses a word like
'Germanic' or 'ethnic' as an exercise in pedantry. It is evident, after all, that some
form of migration took place from northern Germany in the fifth century and we
have sources that tell us that those migrants sometimes organised as cohesive polit-
ical units. Material culture appears to have been transferred with those migrants.

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159. Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 237-8.
160. Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," 361.

4.8. CONCLUSION

Why such concern, above, with delineating where mechanisms of ethnic expression can or cannot be outlined?

It should have become clear that ethnic uses of material culture cannot be demonstrated to be the primary explanatory feature underlying the use of material culture in fifth-century lowland Britain. Such attempts at demonstration rely entirely on the presumption that the users of this material culture actively recognised that this material embodied 'Germanic' ideological or cultural traits. This chapter has made a case that this presumption is a *logos*, a putatively 'transcendental signified', a signifier that is its own justification, and provides stability and coherence to the unstable, uncertain arguments that rely upon it. The following chapter will demonstrate this presumption to be entirely lacking in empirical basis.

Chapter 5

Anglo-Saxon Archaeology in Deconstruction: The Empirical Basis

Chapter Three created a philosophical foundation upon which to base discussion of alternatives to the ethnic paradigm in early Anglo-Saxon archaeology. Most significantly, this philosophical foundation recognised that empiricism encounters certain limits in its claim to assert truth about given phenomena, ultimately forcing a non-empirical interpretative leap in any given act of analysis. Be this as it may, Anglo-Saxon archaeologists make use of very large bodies of data to make assertions about the past, including assertions about the presence (or absence) of ethnic phenomena in the material record. Often, an accusation of insufficient appraisal of data is the retort made to criticisms of ethnic analyses of material culture,[1] or, as we have seen, data is itself harnessed as a tool to dispute the existence of ethnic identity in the relevant period.[2] This chapter therefore explores the empirical bases upon which claims for the presence or absence of ethnic phenom-

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1. Above, 127, 139-142.
2. Above, 144-151.

ena in early Anglo-Saxon archaeology are founded, pushing these to their limits to demonstrate how far empirical analysis may *actually* take us in pursuit of such goals. The chapter first opens with two key critical issues that shape interpretative approaches to the *aduentus saxonum* and ethnic expression in lowland Britain more generally: the nature and scale of the *aduentus saxonum*, and the cause and nature of Roman Britain's collapse. These are examined because they have been formative in the interpretations of the available empirical evidence. The second section summarises the present state of that evidence, and is organised by the types of evidence brought to bear, beginning with the use of biological material, which may be viewed as a chronological bookend, being both one of the earliest means of identifying ethnicity in the professionalised discipline (in the form of phrenology, skeletal stature, etc),[3] and also, ironically, one of the latest (in the form of stable isotopes and mitochondrial/y chromosome DNA). The chapter then examines attempts to infer ethnicity from patterns of stylistic change, before finally examining attempts to infer ethnicity from the sorts of artefacts that such stylistic patterns are found on. Finally, the chapter performs a case study of Gerrard's recent use of these putatively empirical foundations, to argue for the presence of 'Germanic' ideology in late fifth century Britain. In so doing, it reveals that even the most subtle applications of such arguments rely upon foundational pillars that lack empirical basis.

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3. These earlier approaches are not discussed here, but see discussion in Lucy, *The Anglo Saxon Way of Death*.

5.1 Critical Issues

Economics and endings. Markets and collapses

Until the final decade of the twentieth century, discussion of the end of Roman Britain focussed largely on matters of economics, but then took what might be described as a 'post-colonial' turn towards issues of identity, with subsequent discussion often—with some exceptions—divorced from economic issues from the 1990s onwards.[4] Though Gerrard notes that this is partly due simply to current student interests,[5] a primary reason for this focus may simply be a prevailing consensus on the economic issues which has proven highly convincing, and very difficult to challenge. This consensus may be identified as drastic economic collapse caused by the invasion of Gaul by the British usurper Constantine 'III' in 407, which exacerbated an economic decline that took place in the later fourth century, causing cessation of the tax-pay cycle and a consequent collapse of urbanism (always seen as an artificially imposed economic system) and thus market exchange.[6] So complete has this consensus been that several major studies of the end of Roman Britain with a major emphasis on identity, and as well as major syntheses of the end of the Western Roman Empire since 1995 have explicitly stated that Simon Esmonde Cleary's *The End of Roman Britain*, now over 25 years old, remains the most convincing model.[7]

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4. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 74–76. Some regard this as a positive thing: 'The emphasis on economic aspects within studies of Roman urbanism, and of Roman archaeology more generally, has meant that other areas of Roman life have not been given sufficient attention.' Adam Rogers, *Late Roman Towns in Britain: Rethinking Change and Decline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 36.

5. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 74.

6. Richard Reece, "Town and Country: The End of Roman Britain," *World Archaeology* 12 (1 1980); Simon Esmonde Cleary, *The Ending of Roman Britain* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1989), 138–161; Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 76; Simon Esmonde Cleary, "Introduction," in *AD 410: The History and Archaeology of Late and Post-Roman Britain*, ed. Fiona K. Haarer et al. (Oxford: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 2014), 6.

7. Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 213; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 79, 358; Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, 47; Faulkner expresses the opinion, but does not follow standard referencing

5.1. CRITICAL ISSUES

It is a fallacy to treat the economic base in isolation from issues of identity. The disappearance of archaeologically visible Roman material culture—the evidence used for economic collapse—is crucial to historical discussion on the end of British participation in Romanisation, and the problems with Romanisation as a concept, more generally.[8] The same evidence is also vital for the dating of material culture and—closely-related—the application of identity labels such as 'Anglo-Saxon', 'Germanic', or 'Roman' to this material. Indeed, we saw to some degree in Chapter 4 (and will see especially in subsequent discussion and in Chapter 6) that a 'Germanic' quality is often ascribed to artefacts upon the basis of an absence of obvious 'Roman' qualities.

Two historical materialist doctoral theses were completed in the early 2000s, by students under the supervision of Steve Roskams at York, both producing detailed typologies of ceramic assemblages to infer continuity of economic productivity across the fourth- to fifth-century divide, challenging the hard boundary this divide imposed.[9] One of these students, James Gerrard, has recently posed a persuasive challenge to the interpretation which views the end of the tax–pay cycle, which occurred in Britain at the turn of the fifth century, as the cause of *rapid* economic collapse. Gerrard points out that the overwhelming emphasis placed by adherents of this viewpoint on archaeologically visible material.[10] Gerrard sug-

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conventions, and so no explicit mention can be demonstrated. Neil Faulkner, *The Decline and Fall of Roman Britain* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing Ltd, 2000), 171–2; Jones supports this to an extent, but emphasises the oppressive nature of the taxation system, and suggests that Britain's removal from participation in it was an intentional rebellion resulting from deep-seated resentment at this oppression—that is, de-Romanisation caused rebellion, which ended taxation, rather than vice versa. Michael E. Jones, *The End of Roman Britain* (London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 256; Ward-Perkins portrays the positions of Faulkner and Esmonde Cleary as being drastically different, despite their patent similarity in this regard.Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization*, 124, n. 2. This is perhaps to justify his claim that the 'only uncertainties in Britain are whether the late fourth century already saw serious economic problems developing, and exactly how fast change occurred'. Ibid., 128.

8. On which see the summary in Jeremy Taylor, "Encountering *Romanitas*: Characterising the Role of Agricultural Communities in Roman Britain," *Britannia* 44 (2013): 171–90.

9. Whyman, "Late Roman Britain in Transition"; James Gerrard, "Pottery and the end of Roman Britain: the view from Somerset and Dorset" (PhD Thesis, University of York, 2005).

10. James Gerrard, "How late is late? Pottery and the fifth century in southwest Britain," in *Debat-*

gests that to characterise the late Romano-British economy as market-based, with a subsequent collapse of these markets representing economic collapse, is ahistorical. He argues—without resorting to notions of peasant revolution[11] that are not only anachronistic but that would also be improbable from a non-vulgar historical materialist perspective—that even with the removal of the Roman state, 'socially-embedded economies enabled the production and transportation of goods even in the absence of that supposed economic lubricant: coinage'.[12] Agrarian surplus, in his view, is a more representative marker of Roman economic activity, due to the difficulty of arguing for the primacy of commerce and 'proto-industrial production'.[13] A shift in emphasis from arable agriculture to pastoralism, though a clear form of economic contraction, thus represents not collapse but a reduction in intensity of production relative to Britain's subsistence requirements, due to the collapse of the central Roman state, and thus the need to hand over this surplus in taxation.[14] Gerrard argues, consequently, that the end of the tax–pay cycle caused not so much a 'collapse' as 'a significant economic readjustment'.[15] Gerrard does not see this as especially beneficial to the non-elite population, noting that 'the local elite would have found itself able to feed, jackal like, on the state's corpse, appropriating its economic potential for its own end'.[16] This could only be done to a certain point, however, and the removal of the Empire's logistical structures would have made elites unable to convert surplus into liquid capital in the form of coinage or bullion. This would have led to moves to reduce agrarian surplus from a level that was neither necessary nor usable; this was managed decline, rather

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ing Late Antiquity in Britain AD300-700, ed. Rob Collins and James Gerrard (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), 65–76; Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 85–86.

11. Such as those of Faulkner, *The Decline and Fall of Roman Britain*.

12. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 114.

13. Ibid., 86; Peter Bang, *The Roman Bazaar: A Comparative Study of Trade and Markets in a Tributary Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 10–11

14. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 96–103.

15. Ibid., 117.

16. Ibid., 100.

than a crash.[17]

Gerrard is notable for a relatively brief discussion of urbanism—a result of his belief in its relatively small role in the economy. It is important to note, however, that he is not an advocate for continuity, in the vein of Dark, Rogers, or Speed.[18] Gerrard recognises that 'is impossible to argue that there was not a reduction in economic complexity between c.300 and c.500'.[19] When he comments on urbanism, he argues for its total failure, and notes recent arguments not only against interpreting such sites as Wroxeter as a continuation of urbanism, but as evidence for any form of post-Roman continuity at all.[20] In this regard we can distinguish his position from those such as that of Ken Dark. Though Gerrard offers a challenge to the model of rapid collapse brought about by the end of the taxation system, best characterised by Esmonde Cleary's work, he does not deny the collapse of what may be characterised as typical 'Roman' ways of life (i.e. conspicuous elite consumption of surplus in the form of the villa and urban activity) as a consequence of these processes. His argument simply concerns the rapidity of this collapse–noting that the immense difficulty of constructing reliable chronologies for the fifth century from the material evidence renders 'any attempt to assess whether the collapse was a "crash"... ...doomed to failure'.[21] He instead proposes the 'soft landing' model, a re-purposing of society and its establishments by the elite, based on changed material demands.[22] Such a repurposing, of course, would not be without conflict. Arguments for an almost immediate collapse are entirely

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17. Ibid., 100–101.
18. Rogers, *Late Roman Towns in Britain*; Gavin Speed, *Towns in the Dark: Urban Transformations from Late Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2014). On Dark see Chapter 3, 69.
19. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 76.
20. Ibid., 76–77. Gerrard refers to the most recent interpretation of Wroxeter via a personal communication he has received from Alan Lane. The interpretation has since been published as Alan Lane, "Wroxeter and the end of Roman Britain," *Antiquity* 88 (340 2014): 501–515.
21. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 82; For further problematisation of chronologies at the turn of the fifth century see H. E. M. Cool, "Which 'Romans'; What 'Home'? The Myth of the 'End' of Roman Britain," in Haarer et al., *AD 410*, 13–22.
22. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 78–86, 114–5.

dependent on these unreliable chronologies, and it is thus worth emphasising that in the absence of greater chronological calibration, one's preferred argument depends entirely upon their conception of the nature of the late Roman economy, and of the relative importance of elite-controlled agrarian versus free-market commercial activity to it.[23] Comparisons with northern Gaul, which allegedly underwent a similar economic collapse, likewise depend upon unreliable chronologies, and, although former villa sites may no longer be regarded as villas by whichever point their fifth-century use ceased, the pace of collapse in Gaul remains derived from excavations interpreted using chronologies and economic interpretative frameworks making the same assumptions as those critiqued by Gerrard for Britain.[24] On this basis, Gerrard is proposed to be the most convincing interpretation of the issue.

A considerable gap therefore opens in our interpretative framework for fifth-century material culture. Privileging the disappearance of high-status Roman material culture causes us to identify a bipolar set of visible 'elite' material cultural groups, one 'Roman', the other 'Germanic', defined both by the putatively ordered nature of the former relative to the latter, and an apparent hard and fast chronological boundary where no such thing may have actually existed.[25] An end to

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23. The two main positions in contemporary historiography are the 'tributary agrarian empire' position of Bang and the 'market economy' position of Temin. Bang, *The Roman Bazaar*, Peter Temin, "A Market Economy in the Early Roman Empire," *Journal of Roman Studies* 91 (2001): 169–181. The primary fault-line concerns the amount of information available to traders and the impact this had on the nature of the late Roman economy as a fully integrated market. Brughmans and Poblome have used computer modelling of trading networks for second-century ceramic tableware to propose that Bang's hypothesis is less likely than Temin's, but an immediately obvious flaw in their model is the assumption that traders would always attempt to maximise profits, reflecting the assumptions of neoclassical economics whose position the model thus unsurprisingly favours. Tom Brughmans and Jeroen Poblome, "Roman bazaar or market economy? Explaining tableware distributions through computational modelling," *Antiquity* 350 (2016): 400.

24. See Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 346–352 for a summary of northern Gaul, most of which does not, in my view, especially contradict Gerrard's claims. Note also Esmonde Cleary, *The Ending of Roman Britain*, 128–130, whose observations on the similarity of collapses in Britain and northern Gaul are derived from similar interpretations of the evidence in each instance.

25. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 181–6; James Gerrard, "Synthesis, Chronology, and "Late Roman" Cemeteries in Britain," *American Journal of Archaeology* 119 (4 2015): 565–572. For an example of this problem in action see discussion of interpretations of burials of late Roman belt sets in 'Anglo-Saxon' contexts in Chapter 6, 248-257.

visible elite material culture can hardly be ignored, of course; the disappearance of major metalworking industries and a consequent shift toward the recycling of metal inevitably, for example, altered the range of available products that people in Britain could create and use.[26] Indeed, artefacts such as cruciform brooches and early Anglo-Saxon spears were often made from recycled metal, and this possibly had important implications for the way such items constituted social relations in significant acts of expression, like funerary ritual.[27]

Mass migration versus elite emulation

Crucial to discussions of the appearance of early Anglo-Saxon material culture is the causal nature, date of occurrence, and scale of the *aduentus saxonum*. The majority of debate has been concerned with which side of the year 400 this event (generally presumed from the historical evidence to be a military settlement) took place, with further debate attempting to narrow this date down more specifically. Until very recently archaeological consensus had settled upon an early fifth century date, with the 430s generally being considered the mostly likely option, on the basis of the monumental work of Horst-Wolfgang Böhme.[28] Though the overall dating of the earliest material held to represent the *aduentus* remains generally

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26. Robin Fleming, "Recycling in Britain after the fall of Rome's metal economy," *Past & Present* 217 (2012): 3–45.

27. On this see especially Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England,* 140–144; Andrew J. Welton, "Encounters with Iron: An Archaeometallurgical Reassessment of Early Anglo-Saxon Spearheads and Knives," *The Archaeological Journal* 173 (2 2016): 1–39; Andrew J. Welton, "Spearheads of whose settlements? Recycled iron and new identities in post-Roman Britain," in Harland, Friedrich, and Gunn, *Interrogating the 'Germanic'.* See further discussion below in Chapter 6, 281-287.

28. Horst W. Böhme, "Das Ende der Römerherrschaft in Britannien und die Angelsächsische Besiedlung Englands im 5. Jahrhundert," *Jahrbuch des Romisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz* 33 (1986): 469–574; Christopher Scull, "Before Sutton Hoo: Structures of Power and Society in Early East Anglia," in Carver, *The Age of Sutton Hoo,* 3–23; Christopher Scull, "Archaeology, Early Anglo-Saxon Society and the Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 6 (1993): 6–82; Christopher Scull, "Migration Theory and Early England: some contexts and dynamics of cultural change," *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 11 (1998): 177–185; Birte Brugmann, "Migration and Endogenous Change," in Hamerow, Hinton, and Crawford, *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*, 35–40; Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur,* 185; Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX.*

sound, and is not here called into question, elements of its interpretation have recently been challenged.[29]

It is this particular issue that dictates the course of the debate. Halsall's re-assertion of Myres' 'fourth-century settlement' position, for example, quickly met a response from Catherine Hills. Hills agrees with a large number of Halsall's conclusions, and though she suggests that debate on the argument's textual basis is best left to others than herself, she claims its archaeological basis is difficult to accept due to a failure on Halsall's part to include more recent data, such as the substantial quantity of early cruciform brooch finds recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme in East Anglia.[30] Though highlighting these omissions is important and serves to advance debate about what distributions and datasets might tell us, as seen in Toby Martin's work, we nevertheless saw in the previous chapter that the fact of migration was never in contention.

Concerning the scale of migration, the two key paradigms have been usefully characterised by Hamerow as 'indigenist' and 'migrationist', referring to the processualist reaction against mass migration in favour of theories of acculturation and endogenous change, and the counter-revolutionary movement arguing that this cannot be reconciled with the sheer scale of intrusive cultural material apparently originating in *Germania* and thus considered 'Germanic'.[31] There have been several attempts at reconciling these two positions, but Hamerow's is possibly among the most historiographically significant—originally given as a paper at the Theoretical Archaeology Group, held in Durham in 1993. The paper sum-

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29. Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 185–187, 234–238. On criticism of the original mid-fifth century dating of the *aduentus saxonum*, see Ibid., Chapter 4, and Richard W. Burgess, "The Dark Ages Return to Fifth-Century Britain: The 'Restored' *Gallic Chronicle* Exploded," *Britannia* 21 (1990): 185–195.
30. Hills, "Anglo-Saxon migration: historical fact or mythical fiction?," 1221. Hills in fact suggests that such data may support these conclusions
31. Helena Hamerow, "Migration Theory and the Anglo-Saxon 'Identity Crisis'," in *Migrations and Invasions in Archaeological Explanation*, ed. John Chapman and Helena Hamerow (Oxford: Archaeopress, 1997), 33–44.

marises the history of the two positions and finishes by concluding that a means of reconciliation may be via ethnographic studies of migration.[32] Such appeals to turn to migration theory were later answered by Scull and, much later, Halsall.[33] This prescient attitude proved to lead to much informative study, but Hamerow's position remained at that time characterised by lack of engagement with the illusory nature of putative 'Germanic' cultural unity. Hamerow noted that there are pitfalls in attempting to 'disentangle Germanic and British strands of material culture',[34] but she still treated the 'Germanic' as an axiomatic phenomenon that could be assumed to be present:

> Few archaeologists today would argue that all, or even the great majority, of the people who were buried in 'Anglo-Saxon cemeteries' [...] were in fact Germanic immigrants, or the direct descendants of immigrants. Yet, if that is the case, what proportion were of Germanic stock, and how did 'the rest' perceive and express their ethnic identity?[35]

Arguments continuing to assert the mass migration paradigm, irrespective of length of time this migration is argued to have taken, tend to treat the 'Germanic' as an axiom. As late as 2001, when most of the issues discussed here had been long tossed back and forth, Welch continued to maintain the position that evidence for new dress patterns, burial practices, structures, and the like, coupled with alleged desertion of Angeln and the Weser-Elbe region overwhelmingly demonstrated mass migration.[36] In a recent attempt to rebut criticisms of his 'weapon burial' theories and their implications for Anglo-Saxon migration, Härke appealed to the documentary sources:

> The number of Vandals and Alans crossing from Spain to Africa in ad 429 is given in the written sources as about 80,000, a figure accepted

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32. Ibid., 40–41.
33. See discussion on the subsequent page.
34. Hamerow, "Migration Theory and the Anglo-Saxon 'Identity Crisis'," 40.
35. Ibid., 33.
36. Welch, "The Archaeology of Mercia," 148.

by most modern historians; this compares with a native population of Roman North Africa of some 2.5 to 3 million. The number of Ostrogoths moving from the Balkans into Italy in the late fifth century has been calculated to more than 100,000 on the basis of a critical analysis of the written sources.[37]

Even if we were to accept these figures (and the use of the word 'most' is telling. These figures are far more disputed than Härke implies),[38] and it is difficult to see how they can apply to the situation discussed here, given that the very same article defends the possibility of such a large migrating population to Britain (in response to critiques based upon sea transport capacity) by treating it as a process lasting approximately 100 years.[39] Though in itself a reasonable defence of such criticism, this renders the events occurring in North Africa and Italy incomparable to the situation in Britain (the former two being rapid military invasion, the latter gradual settlement), and thus the figures involved in these two situations, whatever these may be, have no relevance to the issue discussed. The only way they might be considered comparable is through associating them within a 'pan-Germanic' framework.[40]

Burmeister, too, suffers from such an axiomatic approach.[41] Despite his mastery of such processual theories of practice as those of Giddens and Bourdieu and his

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37.   Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis," 9.

38.   For a selection of the many arguments against incautious acceptance of the scale of barbarian armies, see Walter Goffart, "Rome, Constantinople and the Barbarians," *The American Historical Review* 86 (2 1981): 284; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, "Alaric's Goths: nation or army?," in Drinkwater and Elton, *Fifth-Century Gaul*, 75–83; John F. Drinkwater, "Julian and the Franks and Valentinian I and the Alamanni: Ammianus on Romano-German Relations," *Francia* 24 (1997): 1–15; Michael Kulikowski, "Barbarians in Gaul, Usurpers in Britain," *Britannia* 31 (2000): 325–345; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 144–145, 190–194, 206–7.

For the view of 'most historians', see Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History*, n. 5.18, which bases its argument entirely upon the works of Procopius and Victor of Vita (presumably the other representatives of 'most historians'), and dismisses Walter Goffart's contrary position on the dubious basis that Goffart also makes misjudgements in calculating the size of barbarian groups, an error which by no means validates Heather's position. We will encounter further reasons to reject Heather's interpretation of this event in Chapter 7.

39.   Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis," 9.

40.   Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 162–5.

41.   Stefan Burmeister, "Archaeology and Migration: Approaches to an Archaeological Proof of Migration," *Current Anthropology* 41, no. 4 (2000): 539–567.

use of these to develop a multiscalar theory of migratory processes, Burmeister's interpretation of material culture relies entirely upon the assumption that 'Germanic' Anglo-Saxon material culture was something distinct and separable from a Romano-British type.[42] Burmeister even goes so far as to suggest that the use of the latter at such sites as Queenford Farm could suggest 'an oppositional stance toward the immigrants' that he assumes are represented by use of 'Anglo-Saxon' material culture at such sites as Berinsfield.[43]

Not all responses, which there are too many to detail, treat this concept so axiomatically. Scull, though he nevertheless problematically reified the 'Germanicness' of the migration, was cautious in understanding its nature. In his attempt to apply migration theory to the study of this period, he suggested that while in East Anglia 'the archaeology is consistent with Germanic settlement... ...any attempt to assign precise ethnic identities to specific groups or individuals on the basis of the material culture evidence is likely to be problematic at best'.[44]

Halsall, too, criticised such interpretations of scale by observing the same phenomenon: that migration must have taken place over several centuries. The reason that this observation remains important is his conclusion: 'If we think of [the *aduentus saxonum*] as a mass migration this term must be qualified as implying the total movement of people over a long period, not a huge wave flooding the lowlands in one rush'.[45] This, when coupled with an observation from migration theory that migrants can also return home, led to the conclusion that the emergence of a material culture sharing similarities with northern *Germania* need not be a direct indicator of migration, instead representing an active declaration by descendants of military settlers in the fourth century of an identity based on contemporary con-

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42. Ibid., 552.
43. Ibid.
44. Scull, "Migration Theory and Early England: some contexts and dynamics of cultural change," 180.
45. Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 249.

tacts across the North Sea.[46] Thus, even the material indisputably arriving due to this migration does not function as a demonstration of 'Germanic' mass migration as an event, certainly not in a way that appeals to ideas of 'pan-Germanicity', but rather demonstrates processes resulting from this migration.

A key sticking point in analysis of the period has been the scale of linguistic change that occurs after the fifth century in lowland Britain, with clear eventual shift from a late Roman population speaking either Latin or Brythonic languages, or both, to a population speaking the diverse collection of West Germanic dialects that are collectively known as 'Old English'. The scale of this shift that has led some scholars to struggle to accept 'elite emulation' models for population change.[47] Thankfully, there is a fairly straightforward solution. A recent article by Alaric Hall examines the toponyms in which early Germanic forms are preserved, and finds that the vast majority of these were highly fissile and occurred in contexts where 'names of small places are used by small numbers of people, making it relatively easy for new names to take hold in the speech community.'[48]

The final word on attempts to estimate the scale of immigrating groups is perhaps best left to Chris Arnold:

> Estimating population figures is probably one of the most hazardous exercises that archaeologists can undertake, as there is rarely any absolute upon which such figures can be based.[49]

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46. Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 226–228. Scull also argues for connections between Britain and the migrants' points of origin, and the two positions are perhaps more similar than Halsall's comments might suggest!

47. For a summary of those that remain intransigent see Woolf, "Apartheid and Economics in Anglo-Saxon England," 116–127.

48. Hall, "The Instability of Place-Names in Anglo-Saxon England and Early Medieval Wales, and the Loss of Roman Toponymy," 110.

49. Arnold, *Roman Britain to Saxon England,* 12.

Conclusion

Examination of the key critical issues which empirical research has tended to explore has revealed two key trends:

1. Chronological problems exposed by an absence of secure dating methods available for the fifth century—alongside a privileging of high-status material culture in analysis of the late Roman economy—create an arbitrary binary separating so-called 'late Roman' from 'early Anglo-Saxon' (and therefore 'Germanic') material culture.

2. Scholars who attempt to insist upon the exceptional scale of the *aduentus saxonum* erroneously conflate the actual fact of migrating peoples with the development and expression of a coherent 'Germanic' ideology and/or ethnicity.

5.2 A summary of the present evidence base and problems with its use

Bones, isotopes and chromosomes

There is a long history of scholars and antiquarians using physical anthropology to dubious ends. None of these scholars are now taken especially seriously in modern research.[50] The earliest historiographically relevant and seriously regarded use of physical anthropology to study our question is in the work of Chris Arnold, who wrote of 'the first arrivals of the new physical type that could be identified' as immigrants, despite arguing against migration as explanatory of cultural change.[51] Though he challenged the linking of material culture and ethnicity, Arnold made,

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50. For criticism, see Lucy, *The Anglo Saxon Way of Death*, 74.
51. Arnold, *Roman Britain to Saxon England*, 130.

as do many discussed here, the error of conflating ethnicity with biological descent,
by directly linking identification of Anglo-Saxon migrants with skeletal stature;
he refers to 'Saxon/Germanic' and 'Roman' skeletal samples with no clear basis
for these labels, short of resorting to argumentation derived from the cultural-
historical models that Arnold ostensibly so vehemently opposed.[52]

The precise problems with such an approach are made clear in Heinrich Härke's
work, which is particularly well-known for its interpretion of weapon burial in
post-Roman Britain as signalling an immigrant 'Germanic' ethnic identity, based
upon stature differentials found between those buried with weapons and those
without. This work, in its most recent guise and based upon the conclusions of
the famous and controversial study arguing for an 'apartheid-like' social structure
in post-Roman Britain,[53] attempts to argue for a directly demonstrable, ethnically-
based societal divide, detectable in the archaeological record, with its origins in
an Anglo-Saxon immigration taking place over two centuries.[54] Härke's argument
draws upon three categories of biological evidence: skeletal evidence, mitochon-
drial DNA and stable isotopes. The latter two became especially pertinent within
the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Where skeletal data is concerned, Härke's argument is a development of his re-
search from the early 1990s, which made a case (based upon an unrivalled sample
of inhumation evidence) for the Anglo-Saxon weapon burial rite being indicative
of 'immigrant' Anglo-Saxon ethnic status, opposed to a 'native' Romano-British sta-
tus for those buried without the rite.[55] In Härke's most recent statement on the
subject this idea is combined with more recent genetic and isotopic research to ar-
gue for a substantial level of acculturation by the Romano-British population, but

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52. Arnold, *Roman Britain to Saxon England*, 130–133.
53. Thomas, Stumpf, and Härke, "Evidence for an apartheid-like social structure in early Anglo-
Saxon England."
54. Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis."
55. Härke, "'Warrior Graves'? The Background of the Anglo-Saxon weapon burial rite"; Heinrich
Härke, *Angelsächsische Waffengräber des 5. bis 7. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne: Rheinland-Verlag, 1992).

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with the same basic binary divide in place.[56] In supporting this argument, three claims are brought to bear. One of these, that 'weapon burial was a barbarian (largely Germanic) rite',[57] can readily be discounted, for reasons discussed below.[58] The two other claims require a little more examination. One of these is that the stature differential supposedly functioning as the key distinguishing feature between these two 'cultural and biological groups' mirrors 'the known differential between Romano-British and early Anglo-Saxon male populations'.[59] By what criteria have these male populations been defined as 'Romano-British' and 'Anglo-Saxon'? Average stature for the 'Romano-British' population is taken from a 1981 study averaging the stature of 62 skeletons from the British Museum of Natural History 'Oxford' collection, a collection of individuals from cemetery excavations taking place in the 1930s–1970s (a great many in the earlier part of this period).[60] The cemeteries in question are dated in the study to the 'late Romano-British period (third to fifth centuries AD)'.[61] No basis for dating is provided in the study; this was presumably derived from original site reports. Many of these excavations took place in rescue conditions, many of the attributed dates are thus likely to be unreliable, especially in the earlier excavations, which would have used typological dating methods derived from Culture History (also, presumably, the method by which the ethnicity of the cemeteries' inhabitants was determined). The basis for average 'Anglo-Saxon' stature, meanwhile, comes from Härke's own sample, which is described by Härke as a population of 'Anglo-Saxon immigrants' upon the basis of the 'ethnic-' nature of the weapon burial rite which the skeletal evidence

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56. Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis," 12.
57. Ibid.
58. See 208–209.
59. Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis," 12.
60. M. Harman, T. I. Molleson, and J. L. Price, "Burials, bodies and beheadings in Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries," *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History), Geology* 35 (3 1981): 149.
61. Ibid., 145.

Mean femoro-tibial stature estimates for some European series.

	Femoro-tibial Length	Pearson	Trotter-Gleser (1958)
	cm	cm	cm
French (10th–11th century)	82·6	167·0	171·2
Franks (500–800 AD)	82·0	166·3	170·4
Anglo-Saxon	83·5	168·1	172·3
S. German Reihengraber	85·5	170·4	174·8
Gallo-Roman	81·4	165·6	169·7
British Iron Age (Maiden Castle)	80·5	164·6	168·5
French and Belgian 'Neolithic'	79·9	163·9	167·8
Predynastic Egyptian (Nagada)	83·9	168·5	172·8
Mesolithic (Teviec, Brittany)	76·5	159·9	163·5

Figure 5.1: Taken from L. H. Wells, 'Stature in the Earlier Races of Mankind', 460.

is alleged to support.[62] Some circularity is apparent.

Meanwhile, the 'known differential' for the two ethnicities in question comes from an article by Wells published in 1969, titled 'Stature in Earlier Races of Mankind'.[63] It is clear that we are dealing with somewhat antiquated notions of ethnicity, and an examination of the section used as proof by Härke of the 'known' stature differential between 'Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon male populations' consists of a table listing a series of mean femoro-tibial stature for a series of racial classifications (fig. 1).[64]

No indication is given of how Wells obtained the mean averages for each category, and thus we have no means of identifying the basis upon which each category is identified as representing a particular 'racial' group (which conflated with ethnic group in Härke's study). Still, the inclusion of 'S. German Reihengraber' [*sic*]

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62. Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis," 6–7.
63. L. H. Wells, "Stature in the Earlier Races of Mankind," in *Science in Archaeology,* 2nd, ed. Brothwell D. and Higgs E. (London, 1969), 460.
64. Ibid., 459–461.

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among these categories implies that the methodological basis for ascertaining this was probably based upon identifying 'intrusive' artefacts in a region via typological study, according to outdated, axiomatic assumptions regarding the connection of these artefacts to the 'Teutonic' races.[65] The identification of *Reihengräber* as the graves of Germanic immigrants, of course, lacks *prima facie* basis (even prior to dealing with the epistemological issue of biological descent and ethnicity being separate phenomena).[66] If any basis at all for the categorisation of the other ethnic groups in the table exists, it probably derived from similarly questionable origins. Härke's stature argument, then, requires us to accept the following premises:

1. Two alleged biological groups, identified upon the basis of an allegedly intrusive burial rite, are Anglo-Saxons and Romano-Britons respectively.

2. The alleged groups have a certain average height differential.

3. This particular height differential matches that of Anglo-Saxons and Romano-Britons.

4. This is known because the respective material cultures of Anglo-Saxons and Romano-Britons are used by people of this particular height differential.

With the restrictive assumption that furnished inhumation signifies an intrusive Germanic ethnic group removed, the circularity of this argument is obvious. Even if we were to accept that the 1981 study provided an acceptable average stature for the pre-migration Romano-British population (which seems unlikely), we are not required to assume intrusion as the cause of change—which is Härke's third claim, based upon an equal incidence of tooth enamel hypoplasia in both weaponed and weaponless burials.[67] Even if we were to accept his argument based, upon epige-

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65. The author of the study makes reference to the shift in taller stature brought about by 'the Teutonic migrations'. On the axiomatic assumptions about *Reihengräber* held by scholars such as Werner at the time Wells was writing, see Halsall, "Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation.*"
66. Ibid.
67. Skeletal stature has long been known to be linked to human health, and is linked to genetic, epigenetic, and environmental factors. Richard Steckel, "Heights and human welfare: Recent developments and new directions," *Explorations in Economic History* 46 (1 2009): 1–23; Clark Spencer Larsen, *Bioarchaeology: Interpreting Behaviour from the Human Skeleton,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cam-

netic traits, that those buried with weapons were of a different familial descent from those without,[68] we still face the problem that little is empirically proven of the geographical origins of the people in question.

More recent figures do exist, and have been put to use by Simon Mays to test Härke's hypothesis.[69] In his 2011 article, Härke appears to have been informed (via an attendee of the conference where an earlier version of May's article was delivered) that the argument of May's paper rendered Härke's 'identification of the early Anglo-Saxon weapon burial rite as a symbolic and social marker of families of immigrant descent' and the 'results of [his] earlier studies... ...entirely valid'.[70] Yet this contradicts Mays' article in print. Though Mays' research did indeed provide 'statistical support for the idea that, in England, early medieval males buried with weapons of war were taller than average for the period', and Mays argued that his results 'may support the idea of taller immigrant males coming into England during the early medieval period',[71] the study was rather more critical in its discussion of Härke's approach and more cautious in the conclusions drawn from its own results than is implied. Mays noted that the statistical validity of Härke's approach was unclear, and that the subjectivity involved in scoring of dental hypoplasia across different authors made it difficult to use such data.[72] Mays' own study addressed this by producing results for hypoplasia incidence based upon his own scoring alone.

Mays was wholly unaware that such conclusions as Härke's had been alleged

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bridge University Press, 2015), 16–20; Simon Mays, "Estimation of stature in archaeological human skeletal remains from Britain," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 161 (2016): 1–2.

68. Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis," 13.
69. Simon Mays, "Stature of Males Interred with Weapons in Early Medieval England," in *Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Conference of the British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology University of Cambridge 2010*, ed. Piers D. Mitchell and Jo Buckberry, BAR International Series 2380 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2012), 167–174.
70. Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis," 6, n. 32.
71. Mays, "Stature of Males Interred with Weapons in Early Medieval England," 169, 170.
72. Ibid., 168.

from his work.[73] Turning to what his work actually says, we find

> …this interpretation is dependent upon the assumption that the western England cemeteries lacking typical Germanic grave-goods and burial practices represent indigenous British communities. Given the complex array of factors that may influence mortuary treatment, of which ethnicity is but one, this assumption may be simplistic.[74]

Mays notes, from more recent stature data, 'that early medieval populations from northern Europe should be regarded as a homogenous group as far as stature was concerned' and uses this to conclude that

> if the English burials with weapons were of Germanic stock, this would imply that migrants were not randomly drawn from continental populations with regard to stature, but that they were taller than average for continental communities.[75]

Given that the assumption that the burial populations in question can be appropriately identified as 'Germanic' relies upon the identification of 'Germanic grave-goods', removing the *prima facie* basis for the argument,[76] and given that the very statistics from which the more recent stature data are drawn concluded that the stature difference was more likely to be the result of health benefits from a dispersed settlement pattern, rather than immigration,[77] identifying 'Germanic immigrants' through osteoarchaeological evidence is impossible. It would seem that a shared desired outcome, rather than a shared empirical truth, is responsible for the 'remarkable coincidence of the order of magnitude' that Härke claims is found in the immigration figures calculated from the biological data.[78] Although Härke's latest iteration of his argument insists that 'ethnicity is not a given, but a flexible and situational concept: ethnicity is "in the heart", not "in the blood"',[79] this in-

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73. Simon Mays pers. comm., February 2014.
74. Mays, "Stature of Males Interred with Weapons in Early Medieval England," 170.
75. Ibid., 171.
76. Ibid., 173.
77. C. Roberts and M. Cox, *Health and disease in Britain from prehistory to the present day* (Sutton: Stroud, 2003), quoted in Mays, "Stature of Males Interred with Weapons in Early Medieval England," 171.
78. Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis," 9.
79. Ibid.

sistence fails to manifest itself in the logical conclusion of a separation between biological and ethnic affiliations.

This conclusion appears to be overlooked on all sides, even by those arguing vehemently against ethnic interpretations of biological data. Examining the approach to biological data taken by Sam Lucy, for example, we find:

> As early as 1956 Lethbridge had challenged the automatic equation of grave-goods and ethnicity: "Because a large number of ornaments are found in a series of graves and it can be shown that the origin of the style of ornaments lies in some continental district or other, is it any proof that the people in those graves were descended from those in the land in which that style of ornament was formerly common? Of course it is not."[80]

Yet this is not a critique of ethnic readings, but a critique of biological (or racial) readings. Ethnicity, when about descent at all, concerns belief in shared descent, not actual, demonstrable descent. Catherine Hills' *Origins of the English* is similar. Though the book takes a highly sceptical stance towards current interpretations of newer scientific techniques, a key conclusion is that DNA and stable isotope evidence offer the most reliable possibility to reveal the answers to questions about ethnicity in archaeology.[81] The book does not do so uncritically, but even its criticisms are problematic. The problems Hills raises with associating the differentiation of Anglo-Saxons from Britons through genetics are based upon such factors as flaws in the collection of empirical data and the possibility for the genetic patterns which studies identify to be explained via other historical events than those we have selected through interpretation of the primary sources, whether from the fifth century, earlier, or later.[82] Although the case for ethnicity being fluid is made, this is not drawn out to its full conclusion: that associating ethnic change with genetic evidence, whether positively or negatively, depends on false premises. The

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80.   Lethbridge, "The Anglo-Saxon Settlement in eastern England: a reassessment," 113, quoted in Lucy, *The Early Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of East Yorkshire*, 16.
81.   Hills, *The Origins of the English*, 112.
82.   Ibid., 66–7, 112–3.

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post-groupist sociological assertion that ethnicity exists only in its iteration leaves us with no means of determining the buried's ethnic status short of an element of burial which would directly declare this, in a manner than could be demonstrated through 'Cartesian' reasoning (i.e., reading the data entirely on its own terms, without application of an outside narrative).[83] This leads to mis-argumentation: A skeleton from Bamburgh is labelled "'Anglo-Saxon'" (the quotation marks implying the inaccuracy of this label), for example, on the basis that stable isotope analysis revealed its potential origins to be in western Scotland.[84] The point, surely, is not to argue that the skeleton in question 'was' or 'wasn't' an 'Anglo-Saxon', but that we cannot possibly know?[85]

Hills argues that the principal flaws in our ability to differentiate Anglo-Saxons from Britons through genetics lie in the empirical collection of data, and the ever-present possibility that modern genetic distribution patterns might be explained by alternative historical events than those identified by a given scholar's reading of the primary written sources.[86] Yet the presumed existence of the ethnic group *qua* group remains an unchallenged aspect of Hills' interpretative framework.

A pair of sites constantly referenced in recent studies that address the relationship between biology and ethnicity in our period are those of Queenford Farm and Berinsfield, in the vicinity of Dorchester-on-Thames, in Oxfordshire.[87] Attempting to address the implications that their new dating of these sites pose for current debates regarding 'apartheid' models of post-Roman Britain, Hills and Connell state the following:

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83.   See Halsall, "Ethnicity and early medieval cemeteries," 18.
84.   Hills, *The Origins of the English*, 63.
85.   If, after all, a descendent of Anglo-Saxon migrants born in Britain could remain 'Anglo-Saxon', as is argued, why not also one born in western Scotland that 'returned' to Bamburgh?
86.   Hills, *The Origins of the English*, 66–7, 112–3.
87.   See e.g. Joan R. Kirk and Edward Thurlow Leeds, "Three Early Saxon Graves from Dorchester, Oxon.," *Oxoniensia* 17-18 (1952-3): 63–76; Hawkes and Dunning, "Soldiers and Settlers in Britain, Fourth to Fifth Century"; A. Boyle et al., *Two Oxfordshire Anglo-Saxon cemeteries: Berinsfield and Didcot* (Oxford: Oxford Archaeological Unit, 1995); Hughes et al., "Anglo-Saxon origins investigated by isotopic analysis of burials from Berinsfield, Oxfordshire, UK."

> If Queenford Farm and Berinsfield were contemporary, this would
> provide evidence for the survival of a Romano-British population in
> the Thames Valley into the sixth century AD, and also for separation
> of the two populations, probably native and immigrant, or perhaps
> pagan and Christian, in burial. If the cemeteries do not overlap in
> date, we see two consecutive cemeteries in close proximity, implying
> that cultural factors operating on one community might have played
> as strong a role in change as population replacement. In either case,
> these cemeteries provide a rare opportunity for comparison between
> two successive populations in the same place, not many generations
> apart, but with different burial practices.[88]

Are these the only options? The only evidences the article provides for con-
firming Queenford Farm and Berinsfield as representing separate 'native' and 'im-
migrant' communities respectively is the sites' material culture. In this light, the
findings of the very recent isotopic analysis of some individual skeletons from
Berinsfield site, selected for the presence of 'Germanic' artefacts, become very in-
teresting indeed.[89] The only individual that can be attributed a continental origin
with any confidence appears to be an individual buried with the fragment of a
Roman belt fitting, who is held to be earliest on this basis. The rest, those buried
with the most 'Germanic' cultural artefacts, appear at least to be entirely British,
if not local, in origin.[90] The following conclusion is derived from this:

> Our results are most consistent with the acculturation hypothesis,
> however, the results do not rule out the possibility of slow immigra-
> tion perhaps beginning before the cemetery was founded. Some evi-
> dence from Dorchester and elsewhere hints at an early fifth century
> Germanic presence in the Upper Thames Valley prior to the appear-
> ance of early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries... ...If acculturation was the
> primary mechanism for cultural change in early Medieval Britain,
> then social and 'ethnic' identities changed rapidly within only a gen-
> eration.[91]

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88. Catherine Hills and T. C. O'Connell, "New light on the Anglo-Saxon succession: two cemeteries and their dates," *Antiquity* 83 (2009): 1105–6.

89. Hughes et al., "Anglo-Saxon origins investigated by isotopic analysis of burials from Berinsfield, Oxfordshire, UK."

90. Ibid., 90.

91. Ibid.

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The one assumption that is not submitted to questioning in the discussion is that the material is 'Germanic' in character. Sites in this region have exerted an influence over nearly all the scholars presented here, and their interpretations exert substantial influence on historians who attempt to synthesise their works to make historical arguments. Let us examine the most recent interpretations historians have derived from the arguments archaeologists have presented from the evidence at these two sites:

> ...by the end of the fifth century it seems as if ancestry in eastern Britain was becoming uncoupled from material culture.[92]

Why we need we assume that these phenomena were coupled in the first place? Let us look at another:

> Whether or not the population buried at Berinsfield were immigrants from across the North Sea is another question, but the sudden and total shift in burial customs and location, the intrusive nature of the Berinsfield material culture, and the significant higher stature of the Berinsfield burials compared to those of Queenford Farm makes it overwhelmingly likely that they were.[93]

Although this was written prior to publication of the results from the isotopic analysis, the possibility for such confident assertions to be so rapidly followed by direct empirical evidence demonstrating the contrary should give serious pause to those insisting upon the coherently 'Germanic' nature of 'Anglo-Saxon' grave-goods and their suggestion of an intrusive population that can be identified through biological material.[94]

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92.   Robin Fleming, *Britain After Rome: The Fall and Rise, 400-1070*, Penguin History of Britain (London: Allen Lane, 2010), 53.
93.   John-Henry Clay, "Adventus, Warfare and the Britons in the Development of West Saxon Identity," in Pohl and Heydemann, *Post-Roman Transitions*, 181.
94.   The edited volume in which Clay appeared was published near the end of 2013, the isotopic study was published in February, 2014.

'Germanic' artwork? The Saxon Relief Style and Salin's Style I

A set of artistic styles which appeared in northwestern Europe in the fifth century often form a vital component of arguments in favour of the existence of a contemporary 'pan-Germanic' cultural ethos. As was briefly discussed in previous chapters, these are a group of animal art styles usually referred to as 'Nydam Style', 'Saxon Relief Style' and 'Salin's Style I'.[95] These originated in Scandinavia and Northern Germany in the late fourth to fifth, mid-fifth, and late fifth centuries respectively.[96] Høilund Nielsen's description of these styles' development is about as concise as one may hope for:

> [Style I]... ...developed from the Nydam Style, which was again itself derived from Late Roman military art, especially as it is found in the Roman provinces, and the Saxon Chip-carving or Relief Style. In Style I, the sea beasts of the Nydam Style were replaced by quadrupeds, and changed from plastic animals to flat animals with every body-part surrounded by a contour-line. The animals are primarily found along the edges of designs with the plane surface within filled with Late Antique geometrical patterns. The animals gradually came to cover more of the surface of the objects.[97]

These styles are broadly distributed across Scandinavia, lowland Britain and north-western continental Europe, but with considerably differing chronologies across these regions.[98]

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95.   On Nydam Style and Style I see Gunther Haseloff, *Die germanische Tierornamentik der Völkerwanderungszeit. Studien zu Salins Stil I* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1981). On Saxon Relief Style see Peter Inker, *The Saxon Relief Style*, BAR British Series 410 (Archaeopress, 2006) and Leslie Webster, "Style: Influences, Chronology and Meaning," in Hamerow, Hinton, and Crawford, *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*, 465–7.
96.   The dating of these art styles is extraordinarily complex, and derived from a range of methods but is largely dependent upon integrating typological phases with a series of closed-context coin-dated burials. The most recent statement on Style I dating is Andreas Rau, *Nydam Mose 1–2: Die personengebundenen Gegenstände* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2010), 31–123. Rau places its introduction to Scandinavia about 25 years earlier than previous, to c. AD 455-65.
97.   Karen Høilund Nielsen, "Germanic Animal Art and Symbolism," in Beck, Geuenich, and Steuer, *Altertumskunde – Altertumswissenschaft – Kulturwissenschaft*, 589–90 Høilund Nielsen's article offers a comprehensive study on the scholarship of the styles from the nineteenth century to the present.
98.   Style I has a much longer lifespan in England than in Scandinavia, for example. Ibid., 590–1.

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Early attempts to explain the spread of the precursors to these styles to *Germania* hypothesised that Roman craftsmen must have been kidnapped by the societies beyond the Rhine.[99] This hypothesis is now, thankfully, met with little credence in scholarship.[100]

This artwork is often found on metalwork, which is then axiomatically held to be emblematically 'Germanic' in essence. We saw in the previous chapter that where attempts at ethnic problematisation are present, the adoption of this metalwork is still seen as representing a shift towards a '"Germanic" ideology'.[101] When the arguments for this are not simply based on outdated culture historical reasoning, this essence is often presumed to come from the metalwork's role in conveying cosmologies and ideologies that explicitly pertain to the 'Germanic' world, such as pagan myth, or migration narratives preserved in late Roman texts (sometimes interpreted through the lens of the Vienna School) and thus ascribed a cultural coherence that lends them their 'Germanic' quality.[102] I will not attempt to detail all attempts at this argument here, but Lotte Hedeager's is fairly typical. For Hedeager, the methodological bridge for material culture to be interpreted through this textual material hinges upon an understanding that material symbolism is an act of expression, signalling the identity of those using it.[103]

Such a premise seems reasonable enough. The problem is that there is no evidence for the idea that a coherent whole can be ascribed to these myths in their

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99.   Gunther Haseloff, "Salin's Style I," *Medieval Archaeology* 18 (1974): 4–6.
100.   Inker, *The Saxon Relief Style*, 1.
101.   Chapter 4, 156-174.
102.   Haseloff, "Salin's Style I," 8; Lotte Hedeager, "Kingdoms, Ethnicity and Material Culture: Denmark in a European Perspective," in Carver, *The Age of Sutton Hoo*, 279–300; Behr, "The origins of kingship in early medieval Kent"; Lotte Hedeager, "Migration Period Europe: the formation of a political mentality," in *Rituals of Power: From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Janet L. Nelson and Frans Theuws (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 15–58; Pesch, *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit*, 378; Charlotte Behr and Tim Pestell, "The Bracteate Hoard from Binham — An Early Anglo-Saxon Central Place?," *Medieval Archaeology* 58 (2014): 68. Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 154–5, though Martin, we saw, sometimes questions this. Above, 170-174.
103.   Hedeager, "Kingdoms, Ethnicity and Material Culture," 283; Hedeager, "Migration Period Europe: the formation of a political mentality," 37–8.

contemporary setting, or that such coherence was contemporarily recognised.[104] The precise aspects of the cosmological content that presumably would have functioned to express these identities, if this is what Animal Art Style conveyed, are unknown and unknowable.[105]

Interestingly, Hedeager accepts the empirically non-verifiable nature of the suggestion that early animal art may have conveyed 'mythological' content. But she does not extend this problem to the notion that this art and the metalwork which carried it could be associated with 'Germanic' peoples, and Hedeager deems it noteworthy that continental *Germani* putatively had Scandinavian origin myths, in this light.[106] Indeed, it is axiomatically assumed that

> Germanic peoples on the continent and in England will have had an understanding of the depictions on the bracteates and the brooches.[107]

Clearly, for Hedeager, there was something intrinsic to a Germanic cultural *ethos* that enabled those who participated in it to interpret these brooches where other cultural groups could not. This is entirely derived from empirically non-verifiable assertions that the iconography of these items transmitted Nordic myths later preserved in Icelandic eddaic material.[108] Hedeager then uses these non-demonstrable myths to explain the decline in use of Animal Art Style at the turn of the seventh century, stating that from this point

> it is no longer possible to define a common Germanic animal style. Once Catholic [*sic*] Christianity had put down firm roots, the pagan origin myth was bound to lose its offical political ideological significance.[109]

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104.   See discussion in Chapter 1, 25-32.
105.   Such statements as the assertion that animal art 'undoubtedly contained recognisable and interpretable references to known pagan myths and deities', for example, are preposterous. Hedeager, "Kingdoms, Ethnicity and Material Culture," 290–1. Such things are possible, but they are certainly not empirically demonstrable.
106.   Hedeager, "Migration Period Europe: the formation of a political mentality," 38.
107.   Ibid., 43.
108.   Ibid., 42.
109.   Ibid., 45.

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Likewise, such a premise is the basis upon which Inker ascribes a 'Germanic' significance to the Saxon Relief Style. Inker complains about attempts by earlier students of the style to 'play down' its 'Germanic' aspects because of its origins in provincial Roman military styles. Inker suggests that its creation was a material expression of identification of Germanic peoples with the martial prowess of the Roman army, asserting that this

> was set in train by the growth of warrior status of gods and leaders in north European peoples during the Later Roman Iron Age, a religious expression that was to find its most obvious manifestation in the so-called warrior graves of the next five hundred years.[110]

For Inker, this 'distinctly Germanic' material expression was 'bursting with dynamic force and expansionism'.[111] This is the sole empirical basis upon which he identifies the material explicitly as 'Germanic', other than its simple location in *Germania*.

It cannot be emphasised enough: we lack any empirical evidence for whether these pagan myths took the same form in the fourth to sixth centuries as those recorded in the high middle ages. Such arguments are entirely based upon temporal back projection from later source material.[112] Høilund Nielsen has recently provided an overview of current Animal Art Style scholarship and shows that it is starting to recognise this problem, but she appears reluctant to abandon the notion that these styles could convey gods and myths entirely, simply asserting that their names and stories are unknowable.[113] She also suggests that the results of research relying on cosmological propositions (i.e., assertions that these styles

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110. Inker, *The Saxon Relief Style*, 2.
111. Ibid., 1.
112. It is extremely unlikely that Wodan/Óðinn can be reliably associated with one another, or that such a deity was worshipped by cults in Anglo-Saxon England before the eighth century. Shaw, "Uses of Wodan." On general problems with attempts to use high medieval Scandinavian sources for the analysis of such material, see Jane Hawkes, "Symbolic lives: the visual evidence," in Hines, *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century. An Ethnographic Perspective*, 315.
113. Høilund Nielsen, "Germanic Animal Art and Symbolism," 608–9.

represent moments of cultural and ideological expression among 'Germanic peoples') 'would nonetheless stand' without these details.[114]

Even if we treat the cosmological content of the art as unknowable, and even if we were to accept that the use of this material culture in northwestern Europe in some respect represented some form of identity-based boundary construction, post-groupist ethnic sociology demonstrates that it is impossible for us to infer which conjunctures of social identity were being expressed. If the criticisms of the Vienna School by Toronto are taken onboard, it becomes clear that the adoption of these material styles by people in the regions where disparate groups such as Anglo-Saxons, Ostrogoths, Lombards and Alamanni resided is usually explained by the imposition of an elaborate interpretative construct in entirely the same fashion as a putatively coherent set of mythical material was constructed out of fragmentary textual sources by such scholars as Wolfram.[115]

A forthcoming paper by Halsall notes the long-recognised conformity of Style I and other 'Germanic' styles with motifs derived from imperial chip-carved metalwork, and observes that the sole unifying factor that the disparate and diverse peoples inhabiting *Germania Magna* were likely to share was involvement in the politics and military of the Roman Empire. Halsall suggests instead that the popularity of Style I and related styles was derived their development as a transformation from formerly stable motifs of centre and periphery to motifs of 'undecideability'.[116] Such an assertion, of course, is also necessarily an interpretative leap, but it is one that derives from aspects of these styles that are empirically verifiable, such as their origin in late Roman metalwork, rather than non-demonstrable assertions

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114.   Høilund Nielsen, "Germanic Animal Art and Symbolism," 609. Assumptions about the representation of 'Germanic deities' remain commonplace. See, e.g., Pesch, "Facing Faces."

115.   E.g., Hedeager, "Migration Period Europe: the formation of a political mentality," 38—9.

116.   Guy Halsall, 'The Space Between: The undead Roman Empire and the aesthetics of Salin's Style I', forthcoming. See also Sebastian Brather, "Acculturation and Ethnogenesis along the Frontier: Rome and the Ancient Germans in an Archaeological Perspective," in *Borders, Barriers and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages,* ed. Florin Curta (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 152–3.

about cosmology. Adams has also made a case—through detailed study of the specific forms of animal which appear in Style I jewellry and its precursors—for the considerable heritage these art styles owe specifically to late Roman hunting imagery, such as depictions of hounds or hares.[117]

Searching for ethnicity in 'folk' costume and weapon burials

None of these criteria are satisfactory for ascribing a conscious 'Germanic' expression to such material. Still, a final, commonly touted assertion is often made in relation to this material that is held to overcome any such particularities: that it represented a form of deep-rooted, traditional folk costume (or *Tracht*) that conveyed its unquestionable 'Germanicness' alongside whichever ethnic group was subsumed beneath this in a given context.[118] A crucial and ubiquitous aspect of the justification for this stems from the studied material being worn as a type of garment known as the *peplos* dress. This garment comprised a tubular cloth fastened at the shoulders by a pair of brooches, and has historic precedent in numerous ancient societies.[119] Toby Martin, for example, suggests that the presence of this costume in 'classical sculpture of Germanic dress' proves the 'authenticity and practicality' of this mode of dress, implying its traditionally 'Germanic' nature–thus contributing to his tradition-based argument of ethnic construction.[120] The wearing of such dresses certainly appears in depictions of female captives from *Germania* from the second century (such as the second-century Column of Marcus Aurelius in Rome),

117. Noël Adams, "Between Myth and Reality: Hunter and prey in early Anglo-Saxon Art," in *Representing Beasts in Early Medieval England and Scandinavia*, ed. Michael D. J. Bintley and Thomas J. T. Williams, Anglo-Saxon Studies 29 (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015), 13–52.

118. See e.g., Scull, "Approaches to Material Culture and Social Dynamics of the Migration Period in Eastern England," 75, Hines, *A New Corpus of Great Square-Headed Brooches*, 280–1, or Ravn, *Death Ritual and Germanic Social Structure (c. AD 200-600)*, 127 for typical examples of this concept's uncritical invocation.

119. Gale Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 2nd ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 42–43.

120. Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 192.

and is attested in later archaeological finds such as eighth-century Scandinavia.[121]

How, exactly, this reflects the 'authenticity' of such costume, rather than its being a simple and effective method of fastening a garment, is never satisfactorily argued, and there are reasons to argue against this being the case. Depictions of the garment in artwork vanish for three centuries prior to their re-appearance in northern Gaul and the *barbaricum* contemporarily, in the early fifth century.[122] Walton Rogers, whom Martin cites, simply repeats assertions made elsewhere that *peplos* represents the presence of Germanic settlers,[123] without addressing the substantial criticisms of these positions.[124] One such criticism is that *peplos* modes of dress were known in northern Gaul until the third century.[125] It thus becomes absurd to argue that *peplos* dresses, on the grounds that they enter use simultaneously in *Germania Magna* and in northern Gaul in the mid-fifth century, function as a component of an authentic, traditional 'Germanic' *Tracht*.[126] On these grounds the same could be said (and no less absurdly) for them forming a component of traditional, 'authentic' Roman dress! Likewise, garments closed with a single brooch, seen as the 'Roman' aspect of this Roman–Germanic dichotomy, were just as common in the *barbaricum*, and the argument regarding the absence of *peplos* garments in Roman mythological pictorial depictions is both an argument from absence, and an argument relying upon heavily context-specific artistic and documentary source

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121.   Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 43.
122.   Penelope Walton Rogers, *Cloth and Clothing in early Anglo-Saxon England, AD 450-700* (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2007), 150–151.
123.   Such as Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts* and Ellen Swift, *The End of the Western Roman Empire: An Archaeological Investigation* (Stroud: Tempus, 2000), 90–3. Some of these assertions are derived from Allason-Jones, who provides no substantiation whatsoever for her suggestion that chained brooches, presumably a form of *peplos*, indicate the presence of Germanic settlers. Lindsay Allason-Jones, *Women in Roman Britain* (London: British Museum Publications, 1989), 109–110. Such is the degree to which these assumptions are treated as axiomatic in present scholarly discourse.
124.   For these see Guy Halsall, "Commentary Two: Careful with that Axe, Eugenius," in *Cemeteries and Society*, 139–142.
125.   Fehr, "Germanische Einwanderung oder kulturelle Neuorientierung?," 90; Halsall, "Commentary Two: Careful with that Axe, Eugenius," 149.
126.   Effros, "Dressing conservatively," 176–9.

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material.[127] It is also worth noting that knowledge of precisely how *fibulae* were used in costume both in the Empire and *barbaricum* is quite lacking, due to the overwhelming predominance of the cremation funerary rite.[128]

Despite this, there is every reason to believe that *peplos* dresses were no less common in certain regions of the Empire than in the *barbaricum* in the relevant periods, in fact seeming to have been quite *uncommon* in both areas.[129] Arguments that contemporaneously emerging burial practices involving *peplos* are no less likely to have originated inside the Empire than without are often challenged on the grounds that Roman women 'did not dress' in such a manner, and that the practice must therefore have been Germanic. But Von Rummel notes that this an argument from silence, circular in its reasoning.[130] Thus, appeals to authenticity like Martin's will not do. Numerous works have proposed explanations of this phenomenon derived solely from contemporary contexts without making resort to such logocentric fallacies.[131] Eger has attempted to refute von Rummel's assertions regarding the *peplos* dress, but does so solely upon the basis of Böhme, whom Halsall dismantles,[132] and allegations of a lack of attention to the Danube.[133] This is hardly satisfactory for establishing a continuous Germanic tradition on two grounds. First, Eger overcomes von Rummel simply through following Böhme's assertion of there being a 'resurrection' of the rite.[134] Second, the only way that this would demonstrate a continuous 'Germanic' tradition would be if we were

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127.   Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 277.
128.   Ibid., 277–9.
129.   Max Martin, "Tradition und Wandel der fibelgeschmückten frühmittelalterlichen Frauen-kleidung," *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 38 (2 1991): 678; Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 281–3.
130.   Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 283-284.
131.   Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 400; Halsall, "Commentary Two: Careful with that Axe, Eugenius," 149–155; Hakenbeck, "Roman or Barbarian?," 42–3.
132.   Halsall, "Commentary Two: Careful with that Axe, Eugenius," 149–155.
133.   Christoph Eger, "Kleidung und Grabausstattung barbarischer Eliten im 5. Jahrhundert: Gedanken zu Philipp von Rummels "Habitus barbarus"," *Germania* 89 (1-2 2011): 225–226.
134.   Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts*; Eger, "Kleidung und Grabausstattung barbarischer Eliten im 5. Jahrhundert," 226.

to assume that trans-Danubian people (such as those who used the Sîntana de Mureș/Černjachov culture and whom, *pace* Eger, von Rummel discusses) could be subsumed under a pan-Germanic ethos. The most obvious example of such a putative group, the Goths, are never considered *Germani* in classical Roman ethnography.[135] In light of all of the above, it seems worthwhile to pursue further the nature of the presence of double brooches, especially cruciform brooch usage, possibly indicating *peplos* dress use, in early Anglo-Saxon cremation, and this will be done in Chapter 6. That cruciform brooches are a continental import, one with close ties to *Germania,* is undeniable. But to recognise this is not the same thing as asserting that there existed an 'authentic' Germanic tradition with a long, justifiable history.

As von Rummel notes, there *is* a substantial concentration of paired shoulder brooches in the northern *barbaricum,* the so-called 'Sîntana de Mureș/Černjachov culture'.[136] Unlike the Koudiat Zâteur artefacts from North Africa which are von Rummel's focus, some aspects of Anglo-Saxon burial, such as the use of Nydam brooches, *can* be linked decisively to material in northern continental Europe. But we nevertheless have no reason subsequently to assume that this lends such aspects greater, traditional 'authenticity'. We have seen that many supposedly authentic 'Germanic' stylistic elements of the brooches in fact have Roman parallels or precedents. The only way to argue for a meaningful alternative tradition is by linking these stylistic traits to a wider, contemporarily perceived pan-Germanic *ethos* that has been shown to be both groundless and meaningless. The case study of the cruciform brooch in Chapter 6 will offer some alternative interpretative avenues.

In the case of male burials, we saw in this and the previous chapter that weapon burials are held to convey something authentically 'Germanic' about their character. Härke's 'weapon burial' argument, for example, relies on the valid assertion that weapon burial does not necessarily reflect actual 'warrior' status, in the sense

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135.   Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars,* 46–7.
136.   Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus,* 279–282.

of merely signifying an actual combatant in warfare.[137] This was used in conjunction, we saw, with Härke's analyses of skeletal material to propose that weapon burials signified an ethnic expression by the intrusive population. Despite Härke's claims, the basis upon which weapon burial is interpreted as evidencing an immigrant's 'Germanic' ethnic status is derived entirely from notions of weapon burial being somehow inherently 'Germanic' in nature, usually upon the basis of Roman law forbidding citizens from carrying weapons.[138] There is nothing intrinsically 'barbarian' or 'Germanic' about the burial of an individual with weapons, and the arguments supporting such a claim have long since been dismantled.[139]

There has, as yet, been no satisfactory response to this dismantling, despite several attempts.[140] Without the narrative straitjacket of the *Völkerwanderung*, such changes would be unlikely to be interpreted as an indication of migration. We will see in Chapter 6 that weapon burial may instead emerge in a context of shifts from civic toward martial forms of masculinity prompted by the collapse of the Roman state.

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137.   Härke, "'Warrior Graves'? The Background of the Anglo-Saxon weapon burial rite," 35–37.
138.   Guy Halsall, "Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier in Northern Gaul: The So-Called *Foderätengraber* Re-Considered," in *Grenze und Differenz im früheren Mittelalter*, ed. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (Vienna: Österreichische Akadamie der Wissenschaft, 2000), n. 53.
139.   See Halsall, "Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*," 200 for the original dismantling of this claim; see also Halsall, "Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier in Northern Gaul: The So-Called *Foderätengraber* Re-Considered." Halsall's *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West*, which depends on the implications of these conclusions, is cited by Härke, but without any mention of the book's argument, thus portraying it almost as a confirmation of his own contrary claims to the less cautious reader.
140.   Halsall, "Commentary Two: Careful with that Axe, Eugenius." For further undermining of the argument, see Irene Barbiera's recent demonstration that weapon burials have a long history in antique Italy, declining in the third and fourth centuries in response to heightened funerary stone production. Irene Barbiera, "Remembering the Warriors: Weapon Burials and Tombstones between Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages in Northern Italy," in Pohl and Heydemann, *Post-Roman Transitions*, 407–435.

5.3   Non-empirical uses of data in action

A brief case study is now made of a pair of sites, that have been used in a very recent monograph to argue for the arrival of putatively 'Germanic' early fifth century material culture, to see how well such an argument bears scrutiny. The legitimacy of using case studies to represent wider changes in post-Roman British society is sometimes queried.[141] Be this as it may, many scholars continue to make use of such studies in the extrapolation of wider implications, and it is thus necessary to examine the foundations for the arguments derived from such case studies. In addition, it is unnecessary to discuss here every instance of an author utilising certain empirical bases to make their case, as nearly every scholar of importance arguing for the ability to infer the presence of Germanic peoples in Britain through archaeological means does so using the same methods, either biological, or through the types of artefacts outlined above, specific instances of which will now be discussed as an example. The case studies in question come from James Gerrard's *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, which has already been discussed at some length.[142] The grave-goods in furnished inhumations to which Gerrard refers come from several sites and there is not the space here to discuss them all. Gerrard argues that the culture he identifies need not indicate the ethnicity of the deceased but is instead a display which 'straddles the late Roman and early medieval worlds'.[143] London's eastern cemetery gives an indication of where Gerrard's use of the notion of 'Germanic' ideology relies upon empirically dubious material.[144] In this

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141.   Very recently, for example, in discussion at an excellent panel on post-Roman 'Landscapes of Power' at the Leeds International Medieval Congress, 2016, in which all four papers made use of case studies.

142.   Chapters 2, 85–86 and 4, 156–161.

143.   Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 201.

144.   Bruno Barber, David Bowsher, and Ken Whittaker, "Recent Excavations of a Cemetery of Londinium," *Britannia* 21 (1990): 1–12; Bruno Barber and David Bowsher, *The Eastern Cemetery of Roman London: Excavations 1983-1990* (London: Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2000); Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 199.

late Roman cemetery, two late furnished burials were found. One consisted of a male skeleton buried with a typical late Roman chip-carved belt set and gilded crossbow brooch.[145] The other consisted of a female skeleton wearing two silver tutulus brooches, with a bone comb of Böhme's Type D1.[146] For Gerrard, the belt 'sits comfortably within the late Roman military tradition of wearing such equipment and the brooches point to contact with the lands beyond the Rhine.'[147] The tutulus brooches in question, though difficult to classify, appear to best match either Böhme's Cortrat or his Oudenberg types,[148] which have their origins in late Roman Gaul.[149] Thus, one 'Germanic' pillar is knocked away.

Moving to the use of this data in conjunction with biological data, another of Gerrard's sites is the Dyke Hills in Dorchester. Gerrard refers to the applied brooches discovered in the earlier excavations which took place at this site as 'Germanic'. He also makes reference to the recent excavation of a burial in the same earthwork, then in press, by Paul Booth, which was described to Gerrard at the time as containing an axe of the 'so-called *francisca* type'.[150] Though we cannot be certain, Gerrard would thus appear to associate this axe with the 'Germanic' elements of the site. The author of the report from the most recent excavation suggests the likely origin of the buried subject to be from the continent, and likely beyond the borders of the Empire—evidenced by stable isotopic analysis excluding a British origin and suggesting probable childhood in either northern continental or high-altitude regions, such as the Alps or the Scandinavian littoral.[151]

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145.   Barber and Bowsher, *The Eastern Cemetery of Roman London: Excavations 1983-1990*, 206–8.
146.   Ibid., 183–4.
147.   Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 199.
148.   Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts*, 20.
149.   Halsall, "Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*," 202–204; Halsall, "Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier in Northern Gaul: The So-Called *Foderätengraber* Re-Considered," 171–2; Halsall, "Commentary Two: Careful with that Axe, Eugenius"
150.   Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 199. This excavation is now in print as Paul Booth, "A Late Roman Military Burial from the Dyke Hills, Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire," *Britannia* 45 (2014): 243–273.
151.   Ibid., 259–260.

The axe—probably, albeit not certainly, associated with the buried subject—and the belt buckle both have well known continental parallels in the Rhineland and northern Gaul.[152] Booth recognises that the pairing at Dorchester of the 1874 excavated burial with a female burial with 'Germanic' artefacts has parallels with the eastern London site discussed above,[153] but still treats any prospective ethnic significance of this with scepticism, stating: '[a]ssumptions about the ethnic character of the metalwork are no more appropriate in relation to the 'Roman' material than they are in relation to the Anglo-Saxon pieces found'. He suggests this instance of furnished inhumation is inconsistent with neither late Roman nor early Anglo-Saxon burial practice, and regards it as improbable that this burial 'can be seen in the broad context of the *aduentus Saxonum*', suggesting instead that it be read as claiming links with the Empire and traditional sources of authority.[154]

In addition, as Lucy demonstrated some time ago, there are no grounds for identifying the earlier excavated Dyke Hills female metalwork as 'Germanic'.[155] There is thus no more empirical basis for Gerrard's assertions about Dorchester than those he makes about the London burials. The isotopic evidence indicates that the individual from the later-discovered burial may have had origins beyond the imperial frontier, but they could as easily have been born within an alpine region in the Western Empire. Wherever this individual grew up, *all* material from the site derives from an imperial frontier culture. When we combine these observations with Booth's rejection of the ability to infer ethnicity from the male burials, any reason to link these early changes to material culture to Anglo-Saxon migration to Britain vanishes. We learn nothing from this of the identity of the buried individuals or how they would have perceived themselves, yet as we saw

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152. Booth, "A Late Roman Military Burial from the Dyke Hills, Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire," 261.
153. Ibid., fn. 104.
154. Ibid., 268–9.
155. Lucy, *The Anglo Saxon Way of Death*, 166–7.

in the previous chapter, Gerrard points out that they likely saw themselves as Roman.[156]

This is not to argue that the undoubted migrations that took place from the northern continent to Britain did *not* involve people that made use of brooches bearing motifs of a clear typological relationship to those found at Dorchester. Rather, that is a logical error to back-project such an association onto a period where the available contemporary data points to a more likely Roman origin and period for this type, on the basis of a putatively shared 'Germanic' *ethos* for these types of brooch.

5.4   Conclusion

In Chapter 4, we encountered commonplace arguments which assert that acts of ethnic expression or construction took place in early Anglo-Saxon England through distinctive uses of material culture. That chapter outlined how such arguments have as their *logos* the notion of a coherent Germanic cultural tradition which could be identified through expressions of martial military culture, certain forms of costume, and new artistic styles. This chapter has demonstrated that any allegedly 'empirical' works claiming to tie these phenomena to a coherent 'Germanic' construct are anything but.

The previous chapters should have made clear that this idea, and assertions relating to it, are often treated as axioms. This empirically non-demonstrable *logos* remains a foundational lynchpin upon which entire narratives of the end of Roman Britain and the foundation of early Anglo-Saxon England are constructed. This is not without consequence; the continued pervasiveness of these assumptions shapes a discursive framework for our period of study that actively precludes the seeking of alternative options. Through reliance upon this empirically non-demonstrated

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156. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 253.

concept we are excluding possible alternative interpretations. It forms an *aporia* in Anglo-Saxon archaeological discourse that forces debate down the same, tired paths, time and time again. The 'Germanic', therefore, should not detain us any longer.

Part II

Assembling an Alternative

Chapter 6

Beyond the 'Germanic': A Rhizomatic Model of Anglo-Saxon Material Culture

6.1   Introduction. Towards a differential ontology of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology

The rationale for this chapter is developed from the conclusions of the previous chapters, which found the following:

1. The expression of ethnic identity cannot be demonstrated in the material record through purely archaeological means. But neither, importantly, can the absence of such expression.

2. All attempts to argue otherwise ultimately depend on non-rational interpretative decisions, or 'leaps of faith', and a Derridean deconstruction of these arguments has revealed precisely those points (*aporiae*) at which an argument

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departs from a basis in empirical observation. Such points of departure are frequently marked by the assumption of a conscious 'Germanic' cultural *ethos* which had meaning for the members of the societies presumed to express it in material culture.

3. Interpreting this material via a Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophical framework may offer a better means of understanding semiotic traces and their significance for the burial community, one that may be integrated with the written sources.

4. This framework may perhaps best be implemented by understanding transformations across the former Western Empire as being part of a process of a 'de-' and 're-territorialisation' of Romanness.

5. Testing this hypothesis requires a narrowing of focus, in order to adequately tackle the problematic assumptions of certain discursive frameworks.

Chapter 2 argued that the near universal uncritical application of a constructivist framework to the study of archaeology has produced a theoretical malaise. In addressing this we should not merely demonstrate some of the underlying sources of this malaise, but try to offer possible ways out of it, which avoid the epistemological flaws at its root. To deny the demonstrability of the presence of ethnic identity in the material record need not amount to the denial of the presence of certain identifiable cultural traits, provided we are careful to ensure that in examining them, we do not leap to hasty conclusions about the implications of the presence of these traits for the social identity of those deploying them.

This chapter will proceed via examination of the semiotic features of certain burials selected from the two sites chosen in Chapter 3, Spong Hill and Wasperton. The implications of the specific discourses articulated by these burials are not assumed to be representative of Anglo-Saxon mortuary archaeology as a whole, but represent one of many narratives that can be identified in this material; one

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which, importantly, can be reasonably tied to wider processes of transformation in the former Western Roman Empire. Hills has previously suggested that analysis of broader patterns is the most satisfactory method of tackling the analysis of such sites.[1] To a point she is correct—certain insights can be gained by this analytical principle that broaden our understanding of these datasets and the period whence they derive—but we are nevertheless faced with the problem of *which* questions can be answered by a given method. For philosophical reasons already well-outlined, semiological analysis is the most satisfactory for answering the questions with which we are concerned.

This approach works to demonstrate the points made in Part I, and shows that alternative narratives can be advanced from empirical consideration of our material when the questions posed to it are not framed by the historiographical assumptions which normally accompany it.[2] It is remarkable, for example, that the sort of use-alteration analysis performed by Gareth Perry on Anglo-Saxon cremation urns, discussed below, has not been performed on such material previously, a point Perry makes explicit, observing that such analysis offers 'a plethora of data which is often completely ignored'.[3] Perry shows that this is entirely based upon circumstantial evidence for a separation of funerary from domestic ceramics,[4] but it is also possible, when examining the historiography, to see that this derives largely from historiographical assumptions about the 'primitive' nature of such material. These assumptions are framed by the study of this material primarily taking place with a view to establishing narratives of *Völkerwanderung,* or to respond to such narratives, rather than to study this material for its own sake. Myres, for example, whose goal was explicitly to use such pottery to chart 'Germanic settlement' (that

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1. Hills, "Who were the East Angles?," 16–17.
2. This is not to say that other assumptions will not play a role in the framing of what follows.
3. Gareth J. Perry, "Beer, butter and burial: The pre-burial origins of cremation urns from the early Anglo-Saxon cemetery of Cleatham, North Lincolnshire," *Medieval Ceramics* 32 (2011): 19.
4. Ibid., 9–10.

the pottery indicated such was accepted *prima facie*), asserted that the producers of Anglo-Saxon cremation urns were 'uprooted amateurs', 'unlikely to to maintain a typological exactitude of form'.[5] This is but one example of the sorts of interpretative option that an obsessive focus with issues of migration, ethnic strife or acculturation/assimilation has precluded.

Recent approaches have tended to avoid analysis of the semiotic content of the material culture of our period. For those who reject the presence of ethnic expression on positivist grounds, the idea that regional and local identities were pieced together via fragmented strands of meaning is popular, but suggestions for the semiotic content of these strands extend little beyond noting broad regional influences.[6] In the case of those more positive about the presence of ethnic expression, analysis is limited largely to the degree of 'Germanic' influence on material. General avoidance of the study of semiotics may thus stem from its association with 'ethnic' interpretations. Another possible reason may simply be that a majority of the younger archaeologists who have approached this material have trained primarily as osteoarchaeologists or in data-driven multivariate statistical analysis (or both), and have thus directed the majority of their attention towards the interrelation of large assemblages of artefacts with biological indicators of the social position of the buried. The notable exceptions are Toby Martin (who addresses the semiotic content of the cruciform brooch in detail),[7] Charlotte Behr (who focuses upon bracteates and is a proponent of drawing links between putatively 'Germanic' artefacts and cosmological conceptions derived from much later 'Germanic'

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5. Myres, *Anglo-Saxon Pottery*, 22–5. For criticism see Gareth J. Perry, "All Form One and One Form All: the relationship between pre-burial function and the form of early Anglo-Saxon cremation urns," in *The Chiming of Crack'd Bells: Recent Approaches to the Study of Artefacts in Archaeology*, ed. Paul Blinkhorn and Christoper Cumberpatch, BAR International Series 2677 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2014), 40.
6. Lucy, *The Anglo Saxon Way of Death*; Lucy, "Ethnic and cultural identities." See also Sarah Semple, *Perceptions of the Prehistoric in Anglo-Saxon England: Religion, Ritual, and Rulership in the Landscape* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
7. Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 148–160.

sources, such as Icelandic eddaic poetry),[8] and Howard Williams, whose work is principally concerned with anthropologically-derived discussions of the construction of social memory.[9] The willingness of two out of three of these scholars to directly invoke the 'Germanic' as an explanatory factor in their interpretations may explain the reluctance of others to follow suit in this methodology.

6.2 The case studies

The chapter examines the sites of Spong Hill and Wasperton, for reasons that were outlined in Chapter 3. The chapter then explores possible alternative readings of the semiotic content of one particular artefact type: the cruciform brooch, selected due to its importance in the most recent developments of the application of the ethnic paradigm to Anglo-Saxon material culture, and its frequent importance for the challenges to this paradigm produced in the previous chapters of this thesis. The chapter then attempts to tie these three case studies into a wider narrative that may offer a more satisfying alternative than current interpretations.

As was noted in Chapter 3, a narrow focus is necessary to effectively disentangle the discursive entanglements of meaning embodied in the material under study. The case study examining Spong Hill will make some proposals regarding possible messages contained in the cremation rite, with the assistance of a recently developed typology of cremation urns.[10] The case study examining Wasperton will focus on a specific spatial group in the cemetery that is held to represent a distinction between 'Germanic' and 'sub-Roman'/'Romano-British' cultures, and explore alternative possibilities. The case study examining the cruciform brooch will examine the traces of semiotic meaning identifiable in the brooch's construction and

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8.   Behr, "The origins of kingship in early medieval Kent," 36–7.
9.   E.g Williams, *Death and memory in early medieval Britain.*
10.   Perry, "All Form One and One Form All."

attempt to determine the sociopolitical influences upon this that can reasonably be inferred.

Case study 1: Spong Hill. A military identity from Anglo-Saxon cremation urns?

Spong Hill is the largest Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery ever excavated in Britain, and contains several thousand individual burials. The presence of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at the site has been known since at least 1711, but it was excavated over the course of ten summer seasons between 1971 and 1982, under the leadership of Peter Wade-Martins (1972–4), Robert Carr (1972–3), Jerzy Gassowski (1972–3) and Catherine Hills (1974–81).[11] The site was published before excavation was completed, in five catalogue volumes,[12] and has been the foundation of numerous important studies on mortuary ritual in early Anglo-Saxon society.[13] Its final publication was in 2013, with a full chronology and synthesis of the data using techniques only available after considerable advances were made in computer-driven statistical analysis, such as correspondence analysis and GIS software.[14] This represents the first full analysis and publication of a site of this type.

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11.   Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX*.
12.   Hills, *Spong Hill, Part I*; Catherine Hills and Kenneth Penn, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Spong Hill, North Elmham, Part II: Catalogue of Cremations, Nos. 22, 41 and 1691-2285*, East Anglian Archaeological Reports 11 (Dereham: Norfolk Archaeological Unit, 1981); Catherine Hills, Kenneth Penn, and R. J. Rickett, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Spong Hill, North Elmham, Part III: Catalogue of Inhumations*, East Anglian Archaeological Reports 21 (Dereham: Norfolk Archaeological Unit, 1984); Catherine Hills, Kenneth Penn, and R. J. Rickett, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Spong Hill, North Elmham, Part IV: Catalogue of Cremations, Nos. 30-32, 42, 44A, 46, 65-6, 2286-2799, 2224 and 3325*, East Anglian Archaeological Reports 34 (Dereham: Norfolk Archaeological Unit, 1981); Catherine Hills, Kenneth Penn, and R. J. Rickett, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Spong Hill, North Elmham, Part V: Catalogue of Cremations (Nos. 2800-3334)*, East Anglian Archaeological Reports 67 (Dereham: Norfolk Archaeological Unit, 1994).
13.   Including Catherine Hills' doctoral thesis, published as Hills, *Spong Hill, Part I*, and Ravn, *Death Ritual and Germanic Social Structure (c. AD 200-600)*.
14.   Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX*.

The site and its context

Spong Hill is located in North Elmham, c. 25km northwest of Norwich, on a ridge that falls away on three sides, forming the valley of the Blackwater river towards its southern end. The site has prehistoric features, including Neolithic and Bronze Age pits and finds, an Iron Age rectilinear enclosure, and Romano-British settlement with significant activity from the early second century. From the first through to the fourth centuries the site saw continuous occupation interpreted as a small farmstead or rural settlement, though when the site was first used as a cemetery, in the early fifth century, this settlement appears to have undergone significant alteration episodes, with visible dumping in the site's enclosures by the very late fourth century, perhaps coinciding with the first burials. At least six sunken-featured buildings were excavated towards the northwest.[15] The dating of these is difficult but is at the very least identifiable as contemporary with the cremations.[16] There appears to have thus been continuous occupation from the late Roman period at Spong Hill, which is typical of early Anglo-Saxon cremation cemeteries.[17] The site forms part of a landscape filled with early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries (which are associated with the watercourses of Norfolk), and numerous Romano-British settlements whose occupation extended into the fifth century.[18] The site was in the vicinity of numerous other Roman features including the Fen Causeway (a road forming part of the Roman fort system). Settlement density suggests that despite a visible decline in Roman high-status material culture, the surrounding area remained densely populated throughout the fifth century.[19] The cemetery appears to have functioned as a 'central place' during the fifth century, serving numerous contemporary sites over

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15. Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX*, 9–24.
16. Ibid., 267.
17. Mary Chester-Kadwell, "Spong Hill in its local context," in Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX*, 283.
18. Ibid., 272–9.
19. Ibid., 281–3.

a wide geographical area, before becoming a more localised burial site in the sixth century.[20] Again, this pattern is normal for such cemeteries.[21]

The current interpretation

Although the authors of the final report frequently make efforts to suggest that ethnic identity cannot be readily inferred in the archaeological record,[22] a basic assumption in discussion is nevertheless that Anglo-Saxon activity at Spong Hill (being ethnically 'Anglo-Saxon' in nature) represents 're-use', rather than reworking, of the site.[23] This is despite there being good reason to believe that the establishment of the cemetery in association with prehistoric and Roman earthworks was deliberate.[24] Earlier approaches to the site have been discussed in previous chapters, but Williams especially suggests that the site's early status as a 'central place' may have meant it functioned as a place of assembly, where the symbols, messages and rituals of burial were tightly controlled.[25] The establishment of such places of assembly has been assumed, based upon the presence of items of northern German origin such as early cruciform brooches, (and, of course, 'Anglo-Saxon' style cremation urns) to be 'part of a new socio-political and sacred geography over large areas of eastern England following the invasion and immigration of Germanic groups'.[26] For Ravn, the clear typological and stylistic links with continental sites axiomatically suggested that Spong Hill's inhabitants had a 'Germanic' ethnic identity, despite Ravn's avowed adoption of Siân Jones' understanding of ethnicity.[27] In the final evaluation of the site by Hills and Lucy, though it is recognised that such inferences are problematic, it is nevertheless asserted that large-scale multivariate

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20. Ibid., 293.
21. Williams, "Cemeteries as Central Places."
22. Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX*, 298.
23. Ibid., 283–6.
24. Chester-Kadwell, "Spong Hill in its local context," 292.
25. Williams, "Cemeteries as Central Places," 345–6.
26. Ibid., 345.
27. Ravn, *Death Ritual and Germanic Social Structure (c. AD 200-600)*, 128.

analysis might provide further insight into questions of ethnic origin. As we saw in Chapter 4, these authors' rejection of the inference of ethnic identity through material culture is principally based upon positivist epistemological reasoning such as the belief that stable isotope analysis demonstrating geographic origin can answer such questions.[28] The authors assert that the identification of certain of the artefact types found in Spong Hill as having origins in northern *Germania* and Scandiavia, through links to sites in Schleswig-Holstein, Jutland, and the Netherlands, suggests an importation of a cultural system identifiable as 'Germanic', and that it is ideologically distinct in this regard from 'Roman' culture preceding it.[29] The authors argue for the most part against the idenfication of specific ethnic groups via identifiable material cultural patterns, suggesting that sites such as Spong Hill represent the fluid utilisation and expression of multivariate symbols, rather than a single 'package'.[30] Nevertheless, assertions of ethnic expression or other non-demonstrable identification are present in the text. It is suggested, for example, that Style I ornament may have shown commemoration of 'elite ancestral connections' to Scandinavia.[31] The authors also follow Martin in his identification of the cruciform brooch as an expression of Anglian ethnic identity on the basis of its putative links to the Germanic past.[32] They suggest that the sixth century may have been a time of 'ethnogenesis' made physically manifest in the selection of components of an 'identity-bearing assemblage developed within England'. The authors suggest that it is thus reasonable to identify the region's identity as 'Anglian'[33] They use these conclusions to suggest that the large scale import of cultural material necessitates a large-scale population movement to Norfolk and neighbouring regions. This, it is asserted, cannot be extended to lowland Britain as a whole, and

28. Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX*, 298–9. See discussion above, 138–151.
29. Ibid., 299–331.
30. Ibid., 330.
31. Ibid., 314.
32. Ibid., 307.
33. Ibid., 330.

the authors state that we should expect 'a more locally varied and long-term process of adoption of Germanic culture and burial practices'. A fundamental link is thus maintained between cultural transfer and scale of migration, hinging upon an assumed cultural uniformity and affinity based in the geographical origin of this culture. The 'Germanic' as a diagnostically useful category is very much maintained here, in a manner that the earlier chapters of this thesis have shown to be quite problematic.

That this has taken place despite the apparent acceptance of constructivist models of ethnic identity by the authors underlines the points that were made in Chapter 2. That the symbolic imagery of Spong Hill embodies cultural boundary-erecting mechanisms asserting a new 'Germanic' identity (albeit one constructed separate from biological reality) is axiomatically assumed, falling foul of the methodological problems with such assumptions outlined by post-groupist ethnic sociology.

Let us accept that such scale of migration is possible. That there took place some form of ethnic expression through the use of material culture is also *possible*. But, as demonstrated in earlier chapters, these processes cannot be *demonstrated* by such positivist means as those employed above without recourse to the assumption of the existence of a coherent 'Germanic' construct. Let us bracket these concerns and attempt to identify acts of expression that are identifiable when we do not concern ourselves with questions of the *aduentus saxonum*.

Analysis of the material

Some new methods of studying Anglo-Saxon cremation might give us insight into post-Roman funerary activity at the site. Gareth Perry has recently performed use-alteration analysis on cremation urns from the early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries of Cleatham and Elsham, suggesting that they might have been used, prior to becom-

ing mortuary containers, as vessels for various domestic functions. In in at least 31% of instances the evidence suggested use in the various stages of the manufacture, storage, and consumption of fermented products, such as butter or beer.[34] Perry has also produced a new typology for Anglo-Saxon cremation urns, first applied to Cleatham and Elsham. Perry argues that previous typologies all ultimately owe their origin to that of Myres, who disputed the notion that the potters of these urns would have conceptions of form, size, and relation to functional class in mind when pursuing a given manufacturing end.[35] As Perry notes, this contradicts an extensive body of ethnographic data from a range of contexts suggesting the opposite,[36] and Perry has devised an alternative typology which focuses upon the aspects of form he argues to be most perceptible to those using ceramic goods. Perry's own reliance on ethnographic analogies from regions that have long been subjected to colonialism, such as Kenya or Mexico, raises its own questions regarding the discursive assumptions at play, but Perry's consideration of function seems reasonable and there is not space to unpack possible problems present, here.[37] Perry's typology consists of six groups (Table 6.1). Of these, Groups 1, 4, 5 and 6 are generally those Perry suggests are most apt for late stage production functions and functions such as pouring or storage, and groups 2/3 are generally apt for early-stage production (mashing, fermenting) and late-stage distribution (such as acting as a container which is dipped into or from which a beverage is ladled). These groups can also be reduced to subgroups with further distinctions in function (smaller subvariants of Groups 1, 2/3 and 4 are seen as apt for different consumption purposes, for example).

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34. Perry, "Beer, butter and burial"; Perry, "All Form One and One Form All."
35. Perry, "All Form One and One Form All," 40. Myres, *Anglo-Saxon Pottery*.
36. Perry, "All Form One and One Form All," 43.
37. Ibid., 42–4.

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Table 6.1: G. Perry's Typology of Anglo-Saxon Cremation Urns

Group	Characteristics
1	Approximately equal height to width, restricted neck
2	Squat wide bodies, unrestricted necks
3	As group 2, but slightly less squat
4	Approximately equal height to width, but wider mouths than Group 1
5	Tall, wide bodies and unrestricted necks
6	Large squat bodies with slightly restricted necks.

I applied this typology to Spong Hill.[38] Perry's first study does caution against extending the finds of his use-alteration analysis beyond Lincolnshire,[39] but previous studies of Cleatham have found it likely that the same potter produced urns for both Cleatham and Spong Hill.[40] Moreover, Perry explicitly urges application of his new typology to sites such as Spong Hill because of its apparent robustness.[41] In the absence of a use-alteration study of Spong Hill, well beyond the scope of this work, any conclusions advanced from the analysis below can therefore only be provisional explorations, but offer a possible alternative interpretative avenue never before considered, and one that avoids the ethnic paradigms previously relied upon. What follows should be seen less as a definitive statement on the function of cremation urns at Spong Hill and more a theoretical exercise, outlining how concern with previous interpretative concerns have precluded considering our material from alternative standpoints.

Of the 842 total pots which survived sufficiently to be possibly assigned, 701 could be assigned a group under this methodology (Table 6.2; Fig. 6.1. For the full list of pottery assigned to these groups and a detailed description of how this

38.   Catherine Hills and Sam Lucy, "Spong Hill Dataset Collection" (Distributed by Apollo - University of Cambridge Repository, 2014), https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/245133.
39.   Perry, "Beer, butter and burial," 19.
40.   Kevin Leahy, *'Interrupting the Pots': The excavation of Cleatham Anglo-Saxon Cemetery, North Lincolnshire* (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2007), 128–9.
41.   Perry, "All Form One and One Form All," 55.

was achieved, see Appendix A). Pilot attempts at separation of these groups into subgroups produced insufficient data for meaningful analysis, and so these have not been implemented. [42]

Table 6.2: Spong Hill Urn Corpus sorted by Perry's Typology.

Group	No. of pots
1	244
2/3	130
4	175
5	70
6	82
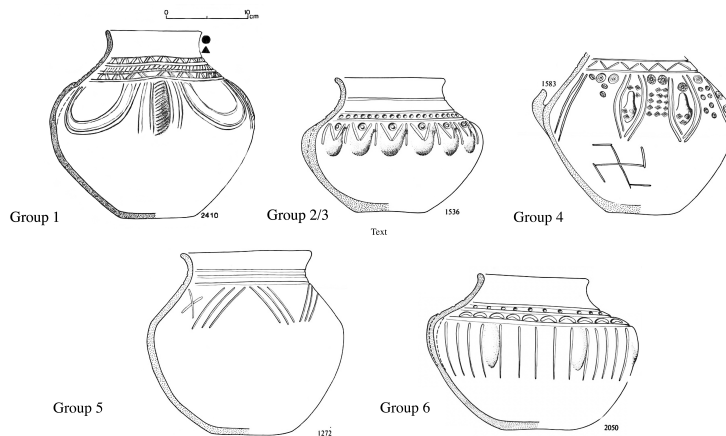
Figure 6.1: Urns from Spong Hill assigned to Perry's Type Groups.

Possible sex or gender characteristics have been linked to pot form and shape in all previous studies of the site data,[43] so this was examined to see if any correlations emerged from similar investigations using the new typology. These groups were therefore compared with the limited osteoarchaeological data available from the

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42. Groups 2 and 3 are treated as a single group, which Perry notes as a possibility.Perry, "All Form One and One Form All," 48.
43. Richards, *The significance of form and decoration of Anglo-Saxon cremation urns*; Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX*, 235–240.

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Spong Hill corpus (Table 6.3).[44] This comparison was restricted to phases A-B (c. 420-470) only, because from Phase C cremation burial at Spong Hill becomes almost exclusively female.

Table 6.3: Association of sexed bone with Perry's Cremations Urn Groups at Spong Hill

Group	Male	Female
1	47	65
2/3	6	24
4	15	19
5	8	7
6	12	24
Total	88	139

There is a strong association of females with Group 2/3 urns (80% compared with 62.2% of sexed cremations overall), and this was also higher than the total of female sexed cremations that could be sorted into Perry's groups. (61%, $p = 0.027$). The remaining groups conform broadly to the average sexing distribution of the cemetery (approximately 60% female to 40% male), suggesting that these did not have strong gender associations, though there are not enough data to suggest any statistically significant trends. Be this as it may, urns classed by Hills and Lucy as 'high-shouldered jars' (which broadly conform to Perry's groups 1, 4, 5, and 6, i.e. those with less 'squat' forms) have a strong association with adult males in their analysis.[45] Females are generally overrepresented among the sexed remains of younger individuals due to erroneous identification,[46] though there are good

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44. This entailed using three classes of sexing: unquestioned, probable (?), and possible (??). Jacqueline I. McKinley, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Spong Hill, North Elmham, Part VIII: The Cremations* (Dereham: Field Archaeology Division, Norfolk Museums Service, 1994), 19–21. I follow Hills and Lucy in Spong Hill Volume IX in treating all three of these as a single category for the purpose of analysing associations. Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX*, 235. All data come from the Spong Hill database available at https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/245133
45. Ibid., 242.
46. McKinley, *Spong Hill, Part VIII*, 36; Kirsty E. Squires, "Populating the pots: The Demography of the Early Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries at Elsham and Cleatham, North Lincolnshire," *The Archaeological Journal* 169 (1 2012): 335.

reasons to believe the sex demographics at Spong Hill are broadly correct.[47] As expected, then, when only older burials are examined the overall distribution of sexing of grouped urns remains broadly, the same, at 58% female to 42% male. Yet the distribution of female burials in Group 2/3 increases to 86%, and this remains statistically significant ($p = 0.043$). This alteration produced no statistically significant changes in the sexing of the other groups. As mentioned, refining groups by microlevel use was implausible.

The possible presence of a gendered rite primarily emphasising the female gender is interesting. Discussion later in the chapter draws upon Halsall's proposal that in the earlier fifth century, in accordance with Roman ideological norms, gendering generally proceeded upon the basis of a constitutive lack from an idealised, normative form of masculinity, but that by the early fifth century in Britain new forms of gendered expression began in opposition to this normative framework. This discussion will also propose that there is little reason to assume that the inhabitants of sites such as Spong Hill framed their understandings of power by different means than did the inhabitants of the other dioceses of the Western Roman Empire. An attempt was made to see if these patterns altered as the fifth century progressed (i.e., from Spong Hill Phase A to C) but when split into phase categories the data became so limited as to be statistically insignificant. More interesting, however, is that cremation became almost exclusively associated with women in Phase C, at precisely the point that there occurred at Spong Hill—and in lowland Britain more widely—an expansion of the furnished inhumation rite. Hills and Lucy suggest this reflected a degree of 'cultural conservatism' among this section of the population,[48] but it is interesting that at this point in time, although there was insufficient data to identify trends from the new typology, Hills and Lucy's 'bowl' vessel form (especially those with wider mouths,which broadly over-

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47. McKinley, *Spong Hill, Part VIII*, 68–9.
48. Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX*, 266.

laps with Group 2/3) almost entirely vanished from use.[49] As previously noted, only speculative suggestions can be made here, but perhaps the cremation form of the new gendered rite reached an apotheosis in the final quarter of the fifth century, and this can perhaps be related to the solidification of the new gendering system's expression in furnished inhumation. The near total concentration of the rite with women in the later fifth century alongside such processes suggests that something about the cremation rite in particular lent itself to feminine aspects of these new, deviant forms of gendered expression.[50]

Attempts to sort these groups into their subgroups produced data so limited that no meaningful patterns relating to gender or age could be discerned from them. Nevertheless, women are clearly associated with Groups 2/3, and therefore with the pots Perry suggests are most apt for early stage production and final stage serving of beverages, or the early stages of the production of butter, at the very least.[51] Other distinctions of sub-group with gendered activity might have been present but there is insufficient data to identify them, here.

What might this mean? There is considerable, well-established evidence on the funerary activities which took place prior to the burial of the deceased in post-imperial lowland Britain, and a well-known association of feasting with funerary activity in post-imperial Europe more widely.[52] Such feasting is known to have taken place at the graveside.[53] Such funerary ritual has been held to have served

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49.   Ibid., 240.
50.   See discussion below, 270–287.
51.   Perry, "All Form One and One Form All," 56, fig. 13.
52.   See, e.g., McKinley, *Spong Hill, Part VIII*, 79–86; Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 247; Bonnie Effros, *Creating Community with Food and Drink in Merovingian Gaul* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Guy Halsall, "Burial Writes: graves, 'texts' and time," in *Cemeteries and Society*, 218–225; Perry, "Beer, butter and burial," 18; Howard Williams, "A well-urned rest: cremation and inhumation in early Anglo-Saxon England," in *Transformation by Fire: The Archaeology of Cremation in Cultural Context*, ed. Ian Kuijt, Colin P. Quinn, and Gabriel Cooney (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 107.
53.   For specific discussion of Anglo-Saxon cremation contexts, including Spong Hill, see Christina Lee, *Feasting the Dead: Food and Drink in Anglo-Saxon Burial* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 55–61. More widely, Effros, *Creating Community with Food and Drink in Merovingian Gaul*; Halsall, "Burial Writes: graves, 'texts' and time," 218.

a variety of purposes, but the most common is that it functioned as a means of displaying status and position in, as Halsall puts it 'competitive discourse between families'.[54] Halsall here refers to furnished inhumation, where such competitive display served to smooth over tensions at times when the deaths of certain key family members would throw social order into doubt, but lavish cremation ceremonies with grave-goods and feasting activity surely also performed similar processes (see further discussion below). With this in mind, it is perhaps useful to return to Perry's discussion of urn function. Perry notes that un-hopped beer, the sort likely to have been brewed in Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries, would require consuming within a few days,[55] and would have been produced in relatively small quantities, roughly the capacity of early Anglo-Saxon cremation urns.[56] The case may be made that many of these vessels would not simply have served domestic functions in the households of the buried prior to their death,[57] but quite possibly were selected from a repertoire deemed appropriate to the deceased's social identity and then used in their appropriate function at the funeral itself. Such an association is even further supported when we recall that the inclusion of animal bones is more frequent in tall pots, which generally overlaps with the 'consumption' type group.[58] Though the majority of the animals found in cremations were likely not consumed, some were.[59] This is not to suggest that the bones were from meat products that were necessarily consumed *from* these vessels. The simple inclusion of the leftover bones in the cremation urn with the ashes of the cremated individual after the meat's consumption would be more than sufficiently potent an expression of this symbolic meaning. It is perhaps significant, in this regard, that the incidence of

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54. Halsall, "Burial Writes: graves, 'texts' and time," 221.
55. Perry, "All Form One and One Form All," 52–3.
56. Ibid., 55.
57. Perry notes that many on which use-alteration analysis have been performed show signs of frequent re-use. Perry, "Beer, butter and burial."
58. Richards, *The significance of form and decoration of Anglo-Saxon cremation urns*, 200.
59. Hills, "Did the People of Spong Hill come from Schleswig-Holstein?," 151; Lee, *Feasting the Dead: Food and Drink in Anglo-Saxon Burial*, 57–8.

inclusion of animal offerings was much higher in burials of individuals over thirteen years of age, which Squires shows to be, at Cleatham and Elsham at least, a social rather than practical choice.[60] Moreover, even though in the majority of instances where the bones in question were not of a consumed animal, the cremation of, for example, an entire horse with older male burials alongside drinking vessels certainly represented a form of expensive conspicuous consumption, even if this could not necessarily be tied to the 'Germanic' cosmological propositions that Ravn proposes.[61]

Howard Williams proposes that cremation burial functioned as the creation of a new social identity for the deceased, through use of mnemonic imagery and selective acts of remembering and forgetting, including the creation of a new 'costume', or 'skin' for its occupant.[62] The more supernatural aspects of this cosmological proposition, derived principally from ethnographic analogy, are well beyond the ability of our material to empirically demonstrate, but the basic principle that aspects of the deceased's social identities, old and new, were expressed in the cremation urn is entirely plausible, especially in light of Nugent's and Williams' arguments concerning the haptic qualities of this artefact:

> If considered from a perspective of embodied use, urns had a sensory surface rendering them visually and tactilely memorable to those at the funeral. In other words, the 'message' of urn decoration cannot be decoded from a single view-point since it was not representational art at all and certainly not portraiture to honour the dead. Instead, it was intended to be experienced in order to be remembered through touch and sight.[63]

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60. Kirsty E. Squires, "Piecing Together Identity: A Social Investigation of Early Anglo-Saxon Cremation Practices," *The Archaeological Journal* 170 (1 2013): 186–7.

61. Hills, "Spong Hill and the Adventus Saxonum," 152; Ravn, *Death Ritual and Germanic Social Structure (c. AD 200-600)*, 127.

62. Williams, "Material culture as memory"; Williams, "A well-urned rest," 104–105.

63. Ruth Nugent and Howard Williams, "Sighted Surfaces: Ocular Agency in Early Anglo-Saxon Cremation Burials," in *Encountering Images: Materialities, Perceptions, Relations*, ed. I. M. Back Danielsson, F. Fahlander, and Y. Sjöstrand (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2012), 190–1.

Given the possibility that urns were displayed for extended periods prior to their deposition in the ground,[64] it is likely that those handling such vessels would be well acquainted with their semiotic characteristics. An important such characteristic was perhaps related to feasting or consumption, with female burial generally taking place in pots used to produce or serve the beverages for consumption at these feasting events.

If the application of Perry's typology to Spong Hill is legitimate, this is surely significant. Changes in attitude to the collection, distribution and use of food are a notable aspect of the transition from the late Roman to the early medieval west. A key marker of phase alteration in, for example, Roman urban sites, normally held as indicative of a breakdown in these sites' integrity, is the presence of conspicuous food consumption.[65] Though this is often seen principally as evidence of the barbarism of the site's new inhabitants, it is perhaps better interpreted as an alteration of use, pertaining to the increased militarisation of post-Roman British society.[66] Beer consumption had always been acceptable in Roman military circles, but was seen as 'barbaric' in civilian settings, and there was a substantial amelioration of attitudes towards beer from the fourth century. This is sometimes assumed to be a result of 'Germanic' influence,[67] but was more likely linked to wider transformations in late antiquity of the normative system known as *paideia*.[68]

If the hypothesis that many of these pots initially served domestic functions is correct, this also gives us a clear alternative reading for the use of pots manu-

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64.   Williams, "A well-urned rest," 105.

65.   Such as the 'small pig horizon' for the *principia* of the Roman fortress beneath York Minster. D. Rackham, "Animal bone from post-Roman contexts," in *Excavations at York Minster Volume 1: From Roman Fortress to Norman Cathedral*, ed. D. Phillips and B. Heywood (London: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, 1995), 533–573.

66.   James Gerrard, "Rethinking the "small pig horizon" at York Minster," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 26 (3 2007): 303–307; Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 62.

67.   Max Nelson, *The Barbarian's Beverage: A History of Beer in Ancient Europe* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2005), 7–8.

68.   Joseph Wayne Strickland, "Beer, Barbarism, and the Church from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages" (MA Thesis, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 2007). On these wider transformations in *paideia* see below, 273–278.

6.2. THE CASE STUDIES

factured in what are normally described as 'Romano-British' styles, such as those found at Cleatham,[69] Caistor-by-Norwich,[70] and Millgate, Newark.[71] The possibility that some of these were simply alternative domestic vessels might explain why the Cleatham vessels, which Leahy suggests are possibly post-Roman, show no signs of defects.[72] Meanwhile, where the apparently second-century urns at Caistor are concerned, whether or not these were recycled from an abandoned Roman kiln aside,[73] the selection of clearly ancient urns need signify nothing about ethnicity but provides yet another instance of a fragmented piece of semiotic code being drawn upon in funerary expression. Whether the Roman nature of such items was recognised is unknowable,[74] but we should recall the observation in Chapter 2, that 'nothing is not a part of becoming',[75] meaning that any entangled strand of semiotic code could reasonably, in a context of deterritorialisation, interface with any other. It has been previously suggested that the decoration on 'Saxon urns' has origins in imitations of Roman bronze, silver and glass vessels.[76] Though Høilund Nielsen is keen to emphasise the apparent 'loss' of this semiotic trace,[77] a Deleuzian understanding of such expression would suggest that we should not so readily discount the possible recognition of such a trace in a context of ideological transformation. The possible semiotic expressions in the use of these urns are many, various, and

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69. Leahy, *'Interrupting the Pots'*, 126–7.
70. John Nowell Lynton Myres and Barbara Green, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of Caistor-by-Norwich and Markshall, Norfolk* (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1973), 74–6.
71. A. G. Kinsley, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Millgate, Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire* (Nottingham: Department of Classical and Archaeological Studies, University of Nottingham, 1989), 12.
72. Leahy, *'Interrupting the Pots'*, 127.
73. As suggested by Myres and Green, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of Caistor-by-Norwich and Markshall, Norfolk*, 74–6.
74. But see discussion below, 281–287.
75. Above, 120.
76. Karen Høilund Nielsen, "Saxon Art between Interpretation and Imitation: the influence of Roman, Scandinavian, Frankish, and Christian art on the material culture of the continental Saxons AD 400-100," in *The Continental Saxons from the Migration Period to the Tenth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. Dennis A. Green and Frank Siegmund (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 204.
77. Ibid.

ultimately unknowable, but hints are visible, such as associations of burial in them with feasting rituals at which gendered roles were expressed.

Case study 2: Wasperton. Acculturation, or alteration?

Wasperton, Warwickshire is a mixed rite cemetery which, like Spong Hill, was fully excavated, containing 182 inhumations and 32 cremations. It is noteworthy for its evidence of continuity of burial from the late fourth through to the late sixth centuries, which is held to represent both the continuity and transformation of burial practice from that of late Roman to Anglo-Saxon. The site features 'Anglo-Saxon' cremation urns that are radiocarbon-dated to the late fourth or early fifth centuries alongside 'late Roman' inhumation burials, and underwent a transition towards using so-called 'Anglo-Saxon' furnished inhumation which lasted until the early seventh century. The cemetery was first identified through aerial surveys which identified prehistoric cropmarks and field systems. The cemetery was first excavated in the winter of 1980/1, in a rescue operation in response to gravel extraction from the terraces on which the site is situated. The field work was first led by Giles Crawford of the Warwick museum, but this was assisted by the Birmingham University Field Archaeological Unit, then led by Martin Carver. Further rescue excavations took place over the course of the 1980s in response to continued gravel quarrying, and by 1985 the entire cemetery in addition to numerous features from surrounding fields had been excavated.[78]

The site has not been as extensively published as Spong Hill. A few reports have appeared in the *Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society*, and an unpublished (and unfinished) MA thesis contains a back catalogue of burials on which other students relied. The Department of Archaeology at the University of York, where Carver had relocated, produced cemetery plans in 1990

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78. Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton*, 1–10.

and Jonathan Scheschkewitz, jointly supervised by Carver and Michael Müller-Wille at the Christian-Albrechts Universität Kiel, produced a full contextual and chronological study including catalogue revisions for his doctoral thesis, which was submitted in 2004 and published in 2006.[79] Scheschkewitz' study depended on coin-dated continental chronological phases. A final study of the site commenced in 2005, which aimed at setting Wasperton in the context of English cemetery studies, drawing upon more recent technological developments such as advances in radiocarbon dating, stable isotope analysis, and multivariate statistical analysis, in addition to the post-processualist theoretical advances outlined in Chapter 2. This was published in 2009.[80]

The site and its context

The cemetery is situated on agricultural land south of the village of Wasperton, on the east bank of the River Avon, and less than 20km from both Stratford-Upon-Avon and Warwick. As mentioned, the site is situated on gravel terraces, which prior to excavation and quarrying were modern agricultural field systems. The cemetery is situated in one of the latest enclosures of a complex of structures and features stretching from the neolithic to the late Roman period. Most immediately relevant to the cemetery is a series of settlement enclosures interpreted as an industrial farming settlement beginning in the second century AD, which moved to intensive processing of grain and bread production in the later Roman period, demonstrated by the presence of two corn-drying ovens. This activity had ceased by the time the cemetery was established to the east of this area in the later fourth century, which is when, interestingly, two early 'Anglo-Saxon' style cremations are perhaps dated. The valley of the River Avon, a major watercourse, contains numer-

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79.   Jonathan Scheschkewitz, *Das spätrömische und angelsächsische Gräberfeld von Wasperton, Warwickshire* (Bonn: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH); Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton*, 13.
80.   Ibid., 13–14.

ous large early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, such as those at Alveston Manor, Baginton, Beckford, Bidford, and Stretton-on-Fosse, all less than 20km distant from Wasperton. The settlement pattern is clearly governed by the Avon, but also by the Roman road known as the 'Fosse Way', which roughly divides the frontier separating the southeastern civilian, lowland zones of Roman Britain, (with their extensive urbanism and villa use), from the more militarised highland areas to the northwest. It has been suggested that Wasperton was also a frontier location in the Roman period in relation to the boundaries of the *civitates* of the *Dobunni*, the *Corieltauni* and the *Catuvellauni*, and that in the later Anglo-Saxon period the site lay on the boundaries between the *Hwicce*, the *Stoppingas*, and Mercia, though such relationships are difficult to determine with certainty.[81] There is an important military camp in the vicinity but Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz suggest that the volume of Roman finds in lowland Britain now means that we need no longer assume that the location of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries sites is governed by a relationship with the position of earlier Roman settlement sites.[82] But no extensive statistical analysis of the possible relationship, or lack thereof, between Wasperton and the Roman settlement pattern that preceded it, as has been done by Chester-Kadwell for Spong Hill, has been carried out, and Wasperton's continuous occupation suggests that some form of relationship with the earlier Roman settlement pattern is reasonable to infer.[83]

The current interpretation

Inker, in his study of Saxon Relief Style metalwork in the Avon Valley, suggested that this metalwork bore 'testimony to the Anglo-Saxon settlement at an earlier date' than that historically attested by Bede (i.e., 449). Inker thus drew a direct

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81. Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton*, 127–133.
82. Ibid., 127–129.
83. Chester-Kadwell, "Spong Hill in its local context." See discussion above, 222.

link between the material at sites such as Wasperton and Stratford and migrating Saxons.[84] Inker also suggested that where variation in manufacture was concerned (such as an apparent adoption of manufacturing techniques from Britain in the case of cast saucer brooches), such processes reflected 'incoming Saxons... ...utilising sub-Romano-British metalworkers to manufacture brooches and belt sets in lieu of brooches made by their own metalworkers'.[85] Such was the impermeability of ethnic barriers in relation to manufacturing techniques, in Inker's view. That isochrestic variation[86] was a source of ethnic expression appears to have been a core (albeit not consciously stated) guiding principle in Inker's approach to the ethnic signification of material culture.[87] Noting these problems is important because, as we saw in earlier chapters, such untestable assumptions are crucial to Inker's inference of a coherent Germanic culture identifiable from the material from this region, a conclusion which others who study this region rely upon.

In his original study on the site, Scheschkewitz accepted uncritically arguments from Hines that differing items of jewellery such as cruciform brooches, wrist clasps, or saucer brooches, formed components of regionally distinct *Trachten* that could possibly be tied to distinct ethnic groups, partly on the basis of their functioning as components of *peplos* dress.[88] Scheschkewitz proposed that it is problematic to take simplistic readings of ethnic expression as a component of material culture for granted, but he nevertheless followed Hines by asserting that the arrival of this material culture from Scandinavia and its subsequent spread across England represented an active declaration of 'group membership', which through the adoption of new performative traditions legitimised the presence of the new group.[89]

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84. Inker, *The Saxon Relief Style*, 75.
85. Ibid., 56.
86. On which see Chapter 2, 53.
87. As found, for example, in an assumption that re-use of repoussé technique indicated a desired connection with earlier 'Germanic' ancestors'. Inker, *The Saxon Relief Style*, 2–3.
88. Scheschkewitz, *Das spätrömische und angelsächsische Gräberfeld von Wasperton, Warwickshire*, 183–5.
89. Ibid., 196.

For Scheschkewitz, early Anglo-Saxon artefacts at Wasperton, such as chip-carved equal-armed brooches, demonstrated the 'likely' Saxon ethnic origin of their wearers because of their geographic origin between the Elbe and Weser.[90]

Scheschkewitz also proposed that the mixing of artefacts of 'Anglo-Saxon' or 'Romano-British' significance in the same chronological contexts or burials suggested cohabitation of Romano-British or Anglo-Saxon populations, but he argued that this did not clarify whether the presence of these artefacts was the result of Anglo-Saxon 'takeover'. Scheschkewitz was principally concerned with whether or not acculturation was the cause of cultural change at Wasperton, and argued in the affirmative on the basis of, for example, burials that adopted 'Anglo-Saxon' furnishings but followed the so-called 'Romano-British' grave orientation.[91] He suggested that the possibilities for social protection based on military power offered by federate Saxon migrants enabled the Romano-British population to integrate into a social structure 'not so foreign' to 'Celtic' traditions of social power, based on systems of loyalty to small armed groups.[92] In this reading the archaeological material is thus assumed to give indication of distinct Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon ethnic groups and distinct 'Germanic' and 'Celtic' traditions.

Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz are somewhat more subtle in their final report on Wasperton. They propose that burial continued without interruption between the late Roman and Anglo-Saxon phases of the site,[93] though some of the chronological methodology underlying this argument has been problematised, suggesting that the authors cannot date artefacts as precisely through radiocarbon dating as

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90. 'Eine direkte Einwanderung vom Kontinent ist somit für die Trägerinnen dieser Fibeln nicht auszuschließen bzw. eine säschsische Herkunft wahrscheinlich.' Scheschkewitz, *Das spätrömische und angelsächsische Gräberfeld von Wasperton, Warwickshire*, 196.
91. Ibid., 189–95: '*Ein Zusammenleben der Romano-Briten mit den Angelsachsen ist für Wasperton damit wahrscheinlich*'. See especially discussion of Grave 169 from Spatial Group 3. Ibid., 195. For more discussion on this see below.
92. Ibid., 198.
93. A pattern that bears similarities with sites in northern Gaul. Chris Scull, "Martin Carver, Catherine Hills Jonathan Scheschkewitz. Wasperton: a Roman, British and Anglo-Saxon community in central England (review)," *Antiquity* 86 (122 2009): 1210.

they have suggested here.[94] As with Hills' and Lucy's final report on Spong Hill, a far more nuanced approach to questions of social identity is present. The authors state that questions of whether culturally 'Roman' versus culturally 'Saxon' grave-goods represent different ethnic or kin groups are 'not resolved by the Wasperton evidence' and they accept that objects cannot 'be equated with crude ethnic and religious terms.'[95] The hypothesis that the authors propose suggests that Wasperton instead represented a small local community on a frontier of different intersecting cultural influences, who loosely selected cultural alignments based on varying political affiliations with no implications of shifts of the ethnic makeup of those making these affiliations, or necessary implication of large-scale population change.[96]

There are nevertheless problems. It is never made especially clear where, for these authors, ethnicity ends and political affiliation begins. A clear pair of cultural packages in opposition to each other, one 'Roman', one 'Germanic' is implicit in the statement regarding the possibility for resolution of the meanings of these grave-goods, no matter how multilayered or fluid their precise iterations, no matter how many references are made to ethnicity's multilayered nature, or how often the authors suggest that an 'Anglo-Saxon' ideology, with no implications of the ethnicity of those expressing it, is what is discussed, rather than ethnicity.[97] Assumptions are present that production processes may be defined by broad cultural categories such as 'Germanic' or 'Romano-British', and that acculturation may be identified between the two.[98] It is also suggested that the arrival of the new cultural 'package' represented the arrival of incomers.[99] Positivist assumptions, as at Spong Hill, are made about the means by which ethnic identity might be inferred from the material record. For example:

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94.   Ibid.
95.   Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton*, 133.
96.   Ibid., 136–140.
97.   Ibid., 139.
98.   Ibid., 84–5.
99.   Ibid., 135.

> It is probably worth pointing out that even with an immense programme of dating cemeteries with perfect bones, there is unlikely ever to be enough material to generalise about Angles, Saxons and Jutes in the manner of Bede.[100]

The unstated implication of such a statement, of course, is that a sufficient volume of material would enable us to make such generalisations in a manner that, for reasons well-established in previous chapters, is epistemologically dubious.

That such material represented such things is, of course, entirely possible, but as already noted, it is empirically unverifiable that 'Germanic' grave-goods resembled any form of coherent cultural material meaningfully, coherently distinct from Roman material. Let us see which semiotic features *can* be identified.

Analysis of the material

We can begin by looking at the earliest arrival in the cemetery of the putatively 'other' burial rite, so-called 'Anglo-Saxon' style furnished inhumation. Spatial Group 3 is an ideal case study (fig. 6.2). Burial in this spatial group began either in the late fourth or early fifth century, in the form of inhumation of the dead wearing a costume archaeologically invisible except for the remains of hobnailed boots, at first with disorderly orientation and an absence of structuring materials.

As the fifth century progressed, the burials became consistently laid in a west-east orientation, and pieces of stone and planks began to be used to line the interiors of the graves. Three burials with 'Anglo-Saxon' style grave-goods appeared towards the latter end of the fifth century, at some point after 470. The earliest, inhumation 165, contained an iron buckle, a strap-end, and a knife. Notably, it was buried in exactly the same manner as the burials preceding it, with a west-east orientation and wooden and stone lining, and so seems to fit with the general semiotic framework of SG3. Two other burials also contained so-called 'Anglo-Saxon'

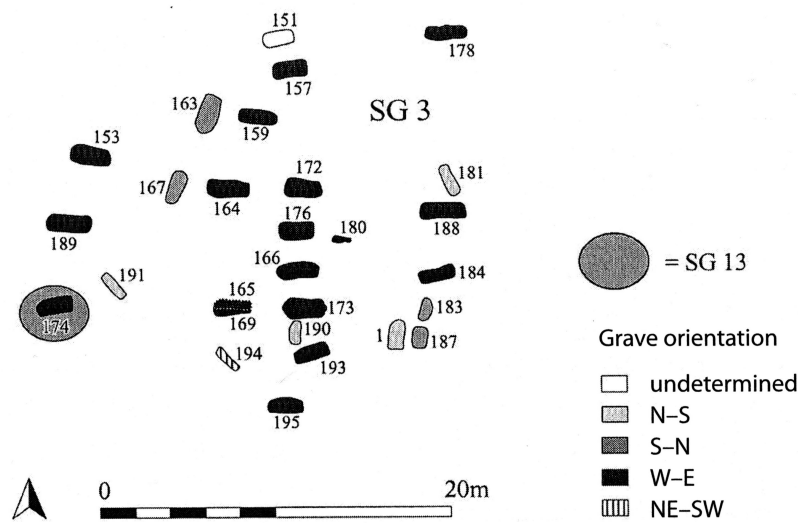100. Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton*, 86.

Fig. 5.4 The sequence in SG3

Figure 6.2: Wasperton, Spatial Group 3 (Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, 107, fig. 5.4).

grave-goods, and these are slightly more interesting. Both deviated from the original west-east orientation, facing south-north, less than a metre apart from each other. Both were identified as female burials, though on the basis of the associations of the grave-goods due to the general absence of survival of skeletal material at Wasperton.[101] 167 (fig. 6.3) contained a pair of cruciform brooches of Martin's Type 2.1.2 (which date to Martin's Phase B, beginning c. 475, though the possibly earlier dating of Style I could push this slightly earlier),[102] likely fastening a *peplos* dress, as well as coloured beads, a pin, and a small pot. Stable isotope analysis revealed the buried to have a probable local upbringing.

Inhumation 163 (figs. 6.4), meanwhile, had a pair of matching saucer brooches with chip-carved spirals and Style I decoration, as well as a pin, two iron belt

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101. The acidic conditions of the site meant that only soil stains survive for the majority of burials.
102. Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 31–2.

Inhumation 167   F3107/C3616, C3630
[SG3, Period 4]
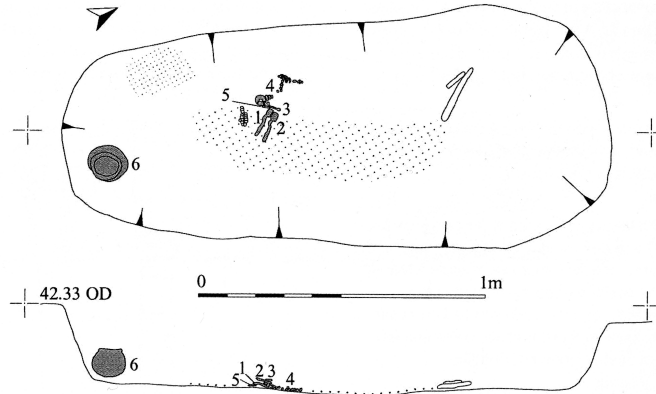
Figure 6.3: Wasperton, Inh. 167 (Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, 309).

buckles, various coloured beads and a small pot with decorations typically found on cremation urns from the period. Carver, Hills and Scheschkewitz prefer the later date range for these items (the early sixth century) in their final chronological sequence, though this is based solely on the *terminus post quem* for the pin in Inh. 167.[103] Inh. 163 has no obvious reason to be dated this late.
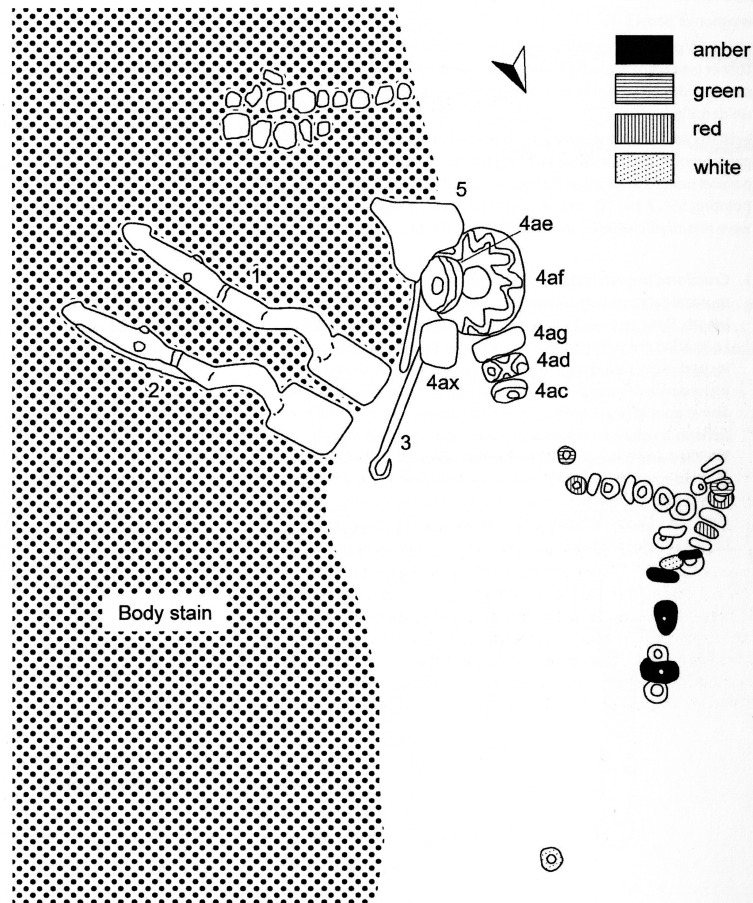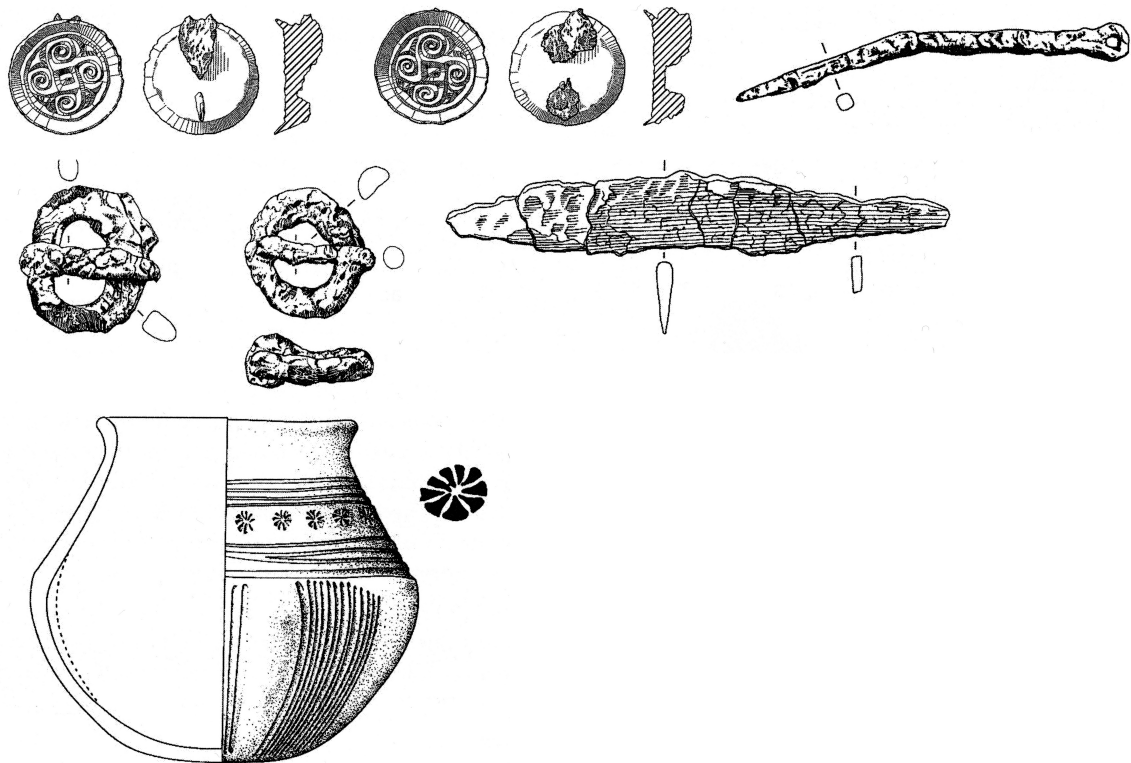

Figure 6.4: Wasperton, Inh. 163 grave-goods (not to scale) (Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, 302–3).

Carver, Hills and Scheschkewitz suggest that the general pattern of burial might denote 'a Roman and sub-Roman family that continued to assert its identity in the Anglo-Saxon period'.[104] To ascribe such ethnic significance to a set of burials defined largely by its absence of furnishings is problematic; their Roman character is defined largely by an absence of Germanic grave-goods. Nevertheless, the furnished inhumation burials 163 and 167 do stand out, and need explaining. Carver,

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103.   Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton*, 93. Scheschkewitz, *Das spätrömische und angel-sächsische Gräberfeld von Wasperton, Warwickshire*, 12–13.
104.   Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton*, 105.

Hills and Scheschkewitz propose that in the later fifth century, a group of what they call 'incomers', using furnished inhumation with grave-goods, occupied the northwestern section of the cemetery, while the east-west oriented burials of SG3 continued under management of the 'sub-Roman family'. They suggest that the cemetery underwent a 'shift in cultural' affiliation as a result of this (fig. 6.5).
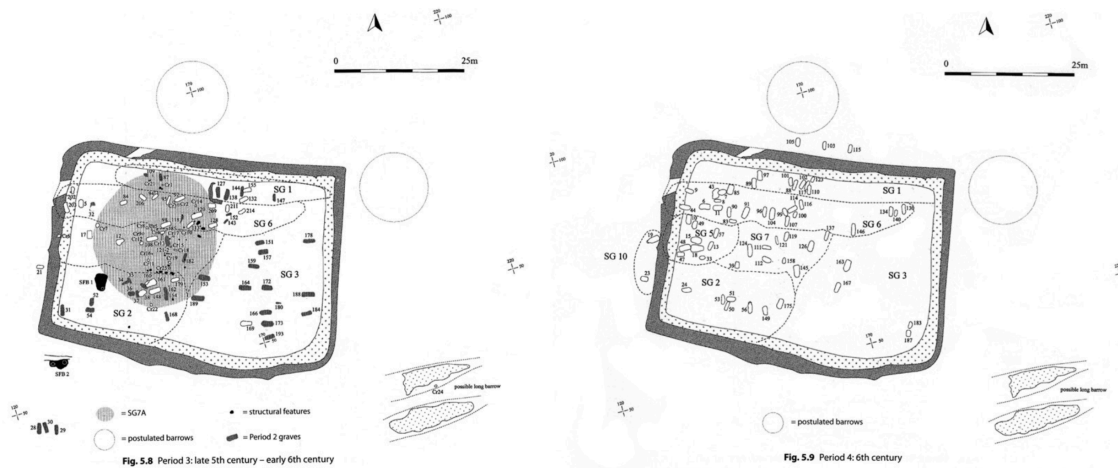
Figure 6.5: Burials from Wasperton period 3 (late 5th c. to early 6th c.) and period 4 (early to mid 6th c.) (Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, 117, fig. 5.8, 118, fig. 5.9).

One simple possibility is that these two graves should be treated as part of a wider separation of the two types of funerary rite—the 'Saxon' style graves are restricted to the western edge of the spatial group.[105] Despite the problems noted above with the dating, there is no clear chronological break between the 'Roman and the 'Anglo-Saxon' phases of burial and the example of ornament found on the saucer brooch in Inh. 163 is an early example of Style I's development from Nydam Style also found at Long Wittenham, making a mid-fifth century date possible.[106] Assuming a hard and fast chronological separation thus seems to oversimplify matters.[107] The two S-N aligned burials both contain Style I *fibulae*, both were oriented

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105. Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton*, 105.
106. Tania Dickinson, "The Anglo-Saxon burial sites of the upper Thames region, and their bearing on the history of Wessex, circa AD 400-700" (DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 1976), 61.
107. Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton*, 116-117.

at the same angle, a mere metre apart, in the middle of the perhaps earlier, unfurnished graves of SG3.

This appears to be more than coincidental. First, the date of most of the W-E burials, normally assumed to be earlier than the two S-N oriented burials, is derived from the few burials which were buried with hobnailed boots.[108] There is thus no *prima facie* reason other than the deviant orientation of Inhs. 163 and 167 to assume that the burials immediately surrounding them (Inhs. 153, 157, 159, 164, 189) were necessarily earlier than these two.[109] They could be broadly contemporaneous with, or even later than Inhs. 163 and 167, though there is also little obvious reason to prefer these options over an earlier date.

In any case, the continuity of burial at the site suggests that any burial taking place in this area would have proceeded with an awareness that the W-E ritual was present in SG3. Scheschkewitz proposes that Inh. 167, containing two Martin Phase B cruciform brooches (type 2.1.2) was one of the earliest 'Anglo-Saxon' style burials at Wasperton.[110]

Perhaps these burials should in some way be deliberately read in relation to the burial rite at SG3. A traditional reading would treat the N-E furnished inhumations in SG3 as a deliberate expression of otherness from the W-E rite. If we take Martin's understanding of Phase B cruciform brooches, for example:

> […]the elites who used cruciform brooches evidently saw themselves as distinct from, yet related to, the inhabitants of the homelands cited in their origin myths. Essentially, they were more interested in drawing links with the Germanic world than the Roman world, which alongside ongoing population movement into post-Roman Britain, *created a growing sense of superior otherness from preceding Romano-British society.*[111] [my italics]

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108. Ibid., 107, Table 5.6.
109. A point which the authors of the report acknowledge. Ibid., 95.
110. Scheschkewitz, *Das spätrömische und angelsächsische Gräberfeld von Wasperton, Warwickshire*, 176.
111. Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 184.

This explanation seems unsatisfying, especially when we consider earlier arguments which rejected the notion that Style I embodied emerging 'Germanic' consciousness, and which demonstrated that ascriptions of 'Germanic' cultural affinity to *peplos* burial have no empirical basis.[112] Let us consider what other semiotic functions these artefacts might perform.

As with Spong Hill, there is reason to associate the cruciform brooches in Inh. 167 with paramilitaristic (if not military) expression. As with other cruciform brooches, the Type 2.1.2 brooches found at Wasperton Inh. 167 (fig. 6.6) are rare this distant from East Anglia.[113] Nevertheless, despite the near absence of Type 2 cruciform brooches in Warwickshire, another pair of type 2.1.2 brooches, nearly indistinguishable from those at Wasperton, has been found less than 10km away, in the cemetery at Alveston Manor, Stratford-Upon-Avon, in a female inhumation burial also dated to after 475 on the basis of the brooches. So similar are the cruciform brooches from Alveston and Wasperton that it seems reasonable to attribute them to the same craftsperson, especially in light of Martin's suggestion that cruciform brooches are sufficiently individualistic as to suggest that they were manufactured with specific individuals in mind.[114] Such is the proximity of these sites that people and thus ideas, were likely to have been in exchange between them. Interestingly, the Alveston burial, G70, contained a Hawkes and Dunning Type IB (Marzinzik Type II.1b) belt buckle (fig. 6.7).[115] Type IBs are first used towards the end of the fourth century and continue to see use throughout the fifth.[116] Interestingly enough, the same belt type is found with the female burial in grave 2, Dorchester-on-Thames,[117] and Hawkes and Dunning believed this to have definite

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112. See Chapter 5, 200-205.
113. Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 31-2.
114. Toby F. Martin, "Riveting Biographies: The theoretical implications of early Anglo-Saxon brooch repair, customisation and use-adaptation," in *Make-do and Mend: Archaeologies of Compromise, Repair and Reuse*, ed. Ben Jervis and Alison Kyle (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2012), 61, fn. 8.
115. Hawkes and Dunning, "Soldiers and Settlers in Britain, Fourth to Fifth Century," 48, fig. 16.
116. Ibid., 26.
117. Kirk and Leeds, "Three Early Saxon Graves from Dorchester, Oxon."; Hawkes and Dunning,
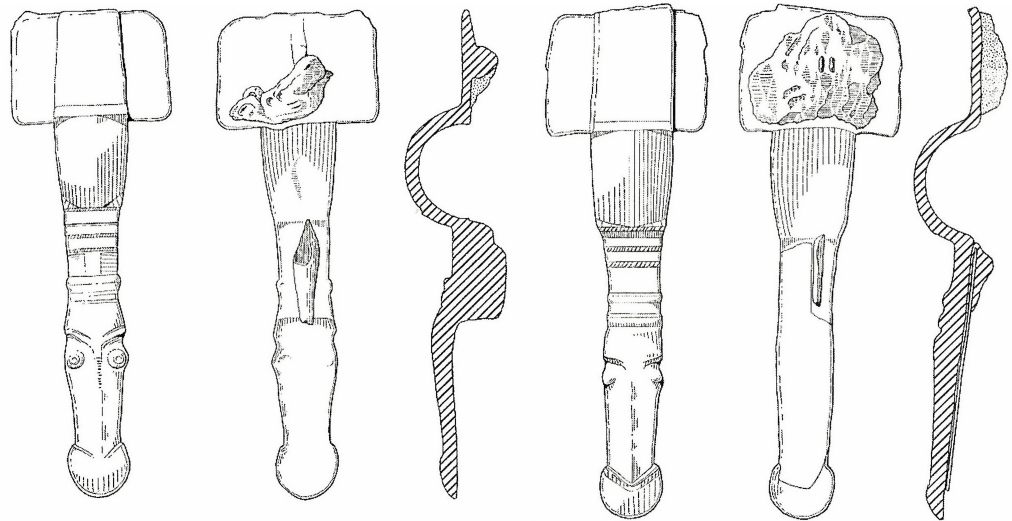
Figure 6.6: Cruciform brooches from Inh. 167, Wasperton (Carver, Hills, and Scheschke-
    witz, 310).

military connotations.[118] This particular buckle type has few continental parallels,
and Hawkes and Dunning thought it likely to be a type of British manufacture,
inspired by its continental antecedents.[119]

Type IB buckles, like other British-manufactured late Roman belt buckles, pos-
sess somewhat distinctive and individualistic patterns of manufacture, suggesting
individual construction rather than mass production.[120] Marzinzik believed the
Alveston Manor find to be exceptional for its discovery north of the Thames.[121]
Jarrett suggests that the distribution of unfinished and low quality buckles of this
type may suggest production focused on the Cotswolds.[122] Laycock claims that the
distribution of Type IB buckles, as with the other types (fig. 6.8), is indicative
of expression of a reemerging tribal *civitas* identity (in this instance Dobunnic).
Carr's more recent distribution, drawing upon Portable Antiquities Scheme data,

"Soldiers and Settlers in Britain, Fourth to Fifth Century," 47.
118.   Hawkes and Dunning, "Soldiers and Settlers in Britain, Fourth to Fifth Century," 28–9.
119.   Ibid., 26–28.
120.   Stuart Laycock, *Britannia the failed State: tribal conflicts and the end of Roman Britain* (Stroud:
Tempus, 2008), fig. 50a.
121.   Marzinzik, *Early Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles*, 36.
122.   Kirsten Jarrett, "Ethnic, Social and Cultural Identity in Roman to post-Roman Southwest
Britain" (PhD Thesis, University of Sheffield, 2010), 202, figs. 4.25, 4.26.
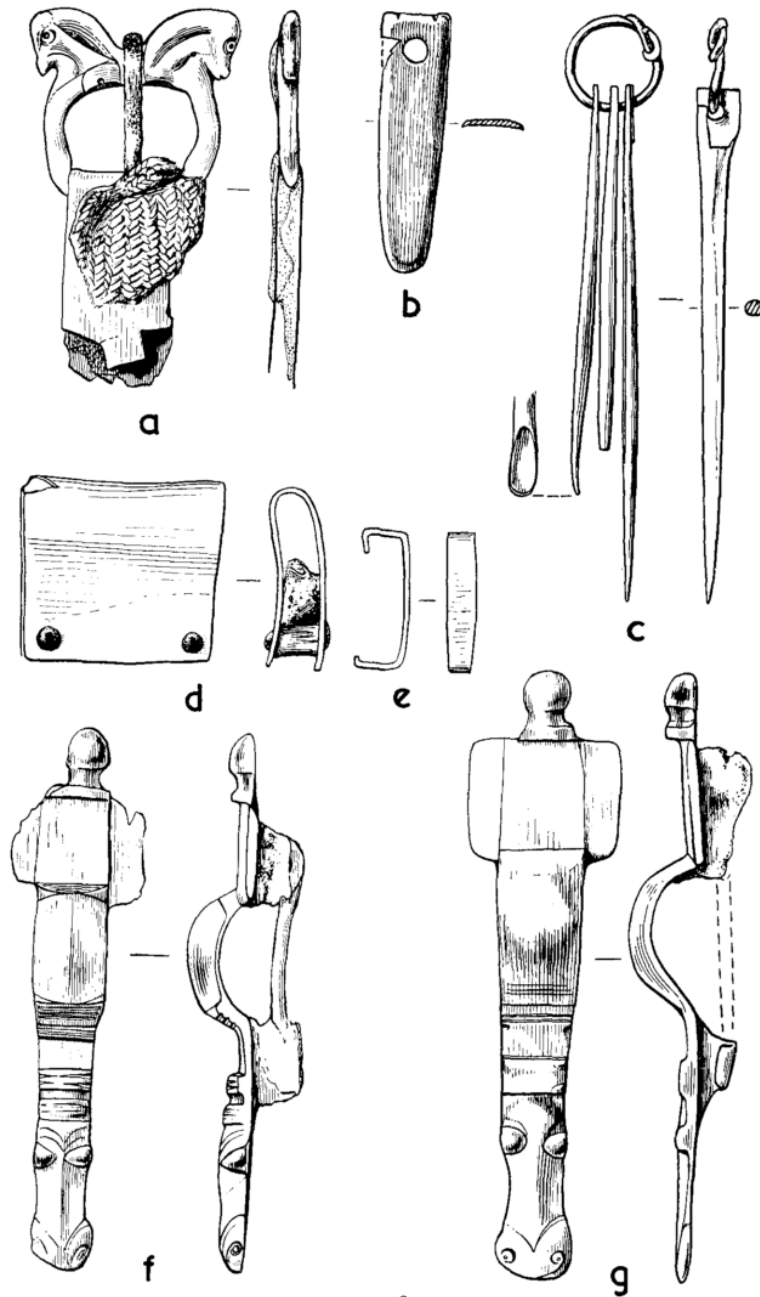
Figure 6.7: Items including a pair of cruciform brooches (f and g) and Type IB buckle (a), Alveston Manor G70 (Hawkes and Dunning, "Soldiers and Settlers in Britain, Fourth to Fifth Century," 48, fig. 16).

however, reveals that the IB's prevalence was in fact far more widespread in northern Britain, though there is a still a more significant concentration of Type IB in the southwest than its relatives such as IA.[123]

Such points surely stand as a repudiation of Laycock's position, but even without these, Laycock's position should be rejected on epistemological, not merely empirical, grounds. We have no *prima facie* reason to accept such an argument on the same grounds that we have no such reason to believe that cruciform brooches represent the expression of Anglian identity. Moreover, Laycock's approach and its invocation of 'tribalism' is based upon a naïve assumption about the continued survival of pre-Roman tribal identities well into Late Antiquity. Such approaches are no longer well regarded in current historiography, and Tom Moore demonstrates that such assumptions are the result of nineteenth-century assumptions about about the organisation of social systems, grounded in imperialism.[124] How can we understand the distribution differently?

To recognise that alternative possibilities for interpretation would exist whatever the state of the empirical evidence offers an alternative. Even if one were to take Böhme/Laycock's distribution as up to date, for example, one could link this to the observation that one of the primary organising units for the raising of armies in most of post-Roman Europe was the *civitas*.[125] Following this line of enquiry, such distribution patterns could be taken to represent not ethnic tribal groups, but processes of militarised organisation, producing distributions of metalwork based on *civitas* units, that nevertheless need carry no necessary implications about active expressions of identity—tribal, ethnic, or otherwise. Jarrett, for example, suggests the motif of confronted horse heads may have military resonances, perhaps suggestive of the *comitatensian* units of *equites* stationed in late fourth and early fifth

123. Carr, "*Cingulum Militare*?"
124. Tom Moore, "Detribalizing the later prehistoric past: Concepts of tribes in Iron Age and Roman studies," *Journal of Social Archaeology* 11 (3 2011): 334–360.
125. Halsall, *Warfare and Society*, 45–6; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 480.

century Britain.[126]
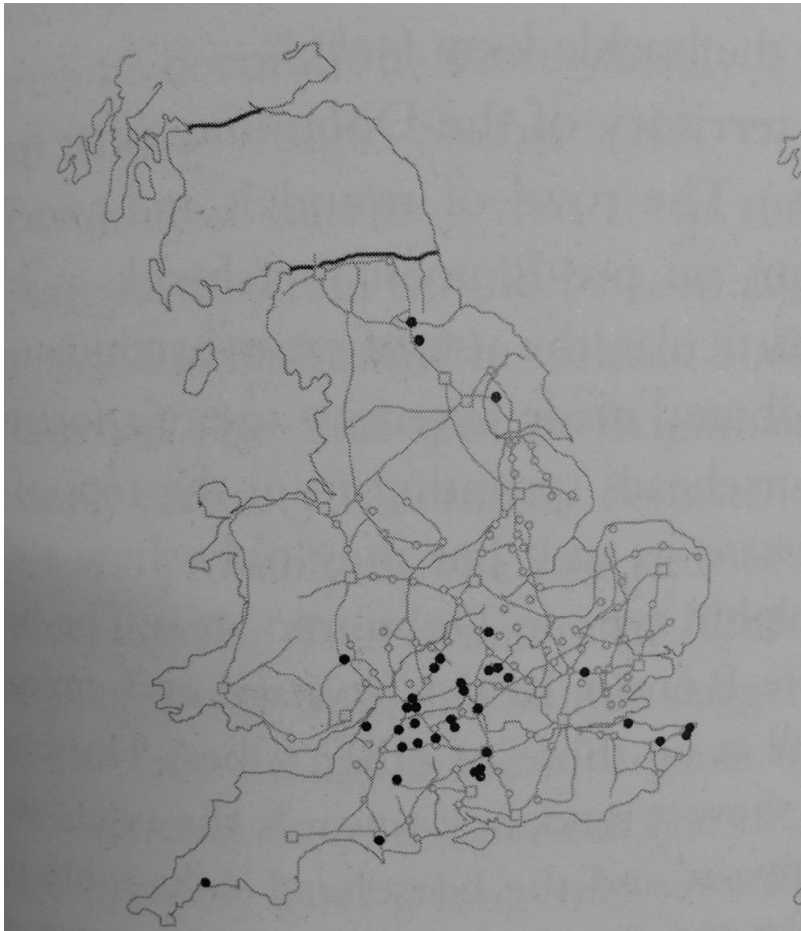
Figure 6.8: Laycock's 2008 distribution of putatively Hawkes and Dunning IB belt buckles. (Laycock, *Britannia the failed State*, fig. 51).

Carr's study, of course, reveals that such centralised control over production is untenable in interpretation of the Type IB (fig. 6.9).[127] Yet had Carr's study revealed the exact same distribution patterns as older studies, the epistemological issues inherent to proposing an 'ethnic' interpretation would remain.

The appearance of the Type IB in later burials, such as those at Wasperton, complicates this further. Hawkes attributed the appearance of such belts in later

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126. Jarrett, "Ethnic, Social and Cultural Identity in Roman to post-Roman Southwest Britain," 203; Otto Seeck, ed., *Notitia Dignitatum accedunt Notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae et Laterculi prouinciarum* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1876), Oc. VII.200-205.
127. Carr, "*Cingulum Militare*?," 82.
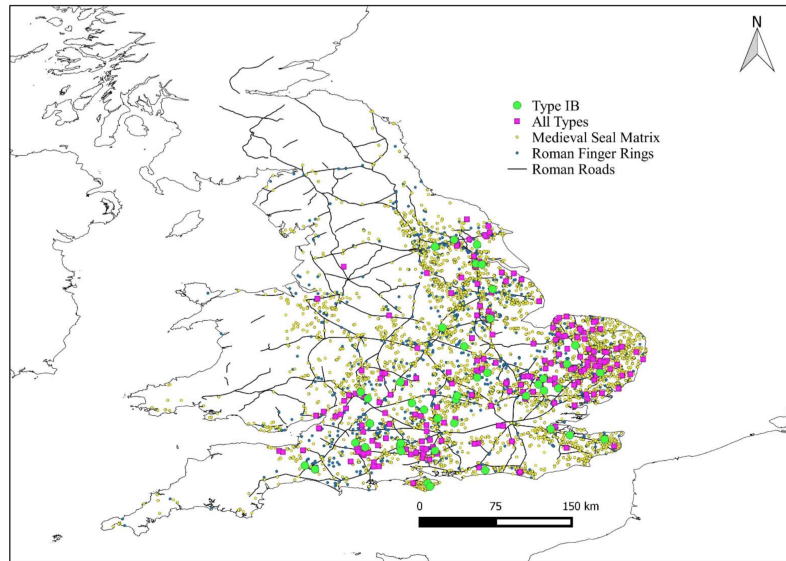
Figure 6.9: Carr's updated distribution of Hawkes and Dunning IB belt buckles. (Carr, "*Cingulum Militare*?," fig. 12).

fifth century burials to the plundering of Roman sites by Anglo-Saxons.[128] This clearly unnecessary interpretation can be discarded. Type IB belts also did not survive long as a putatively militarys type without criticism. Hills rejected their identification as such on two grounds. First, that there was 'nothing "Germanic" about their theme',[129] second, that owing to their usual burial with women, that they were possibly 'civilian, not military'.[130]

This argument employs two unhelpful binary distinctions. The first binary, that of Roman/Germanic, hinges upon a category of evidence defined by its other: it is difficult to think of a buckle type that *could* reasonably be called 'Germanic'. Hills presumably had here in mind a type with Saxon Relief Style decoration, which hardly qualifies, as we saw in Chapter 4. While Hills was correct to state that 'it is doubtful whether the presence of metalwork' previously used to argue for the presence of Germanic *laeti* demonstrates such presence, this positivist line of

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128.   Hawkes and Dunning, "Soldiers and Settlers in Britain, Fourth to Fifth Century," 28.
129.   This response came at a time when the nature of certain other 'Germanic' items as representing the settlement of Germanic *laeti* or *foederati* was undisputed.
130.   Hills, "The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England in the Pagan Period," 305.

reasoning hinged upon an assumed cultural binary separating earlier, orderly metalwork (signifying Romanness) and later, disorderly Style I chip-carved metalwork (signifying 'Germanicness') that has no *prima facie* basis. The separation of these, after all, is chronological, not cultural.[131] Furthermore that such buckles were later buried with Style I jewellery should not be seen as an aberration needing additional explanation. Style I, after all, owed its decorative grammar to the same stylistic principles as the earlier jewellery.[132]

The second binary here reified, that of civil versus military decoration, also requires addressing. A point frequently made is that the *cingulum* was not merely a symbol of military authority, but rather a symbol of office, whether civilian or military.[133] The extension of the concept of *militia* service meant that the civil bureaucracy was also associated with the 'military' in the late Roman Empire so this binary is somewhat anachronistic.[134] The two burials excavated at Dorchester-on-Thames in 1874 included a female inhumation with a famed example of Hawkes' Type IB. The male burial, and a much more recently-excavated male burial from 2010 both contain buckles of Marzinzik's types II.1a (Hawkes and Dunning's Type IIIB), with niello inlay, chip-carved decoration and accompanying weapons.[135] This type was almost exclusively found with men, both in Britain and on the continent, and usually dates, as with IB, to the late fourth to early fifth centuries.[136] There is

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131. Kevin Leahy, "Soldiers and settlers in Britain, fourth to fifth Century - revisited," in *Collectanea antiqua: essays in memory of Sonia Chadwick Hawkes*, ed. Martin Henig and Tyler J. Smith, BAR International Series 1673 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007), 234. Hills no longer adheres to such a rigid binary categorisation (E.g., Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX*; Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton*; Hills, pers. comm.) but this specific example has still not been challenged and so it is necessary to do so to further the present discussion. Marzinzik makes no further additions to this discussion, but instead simply follows the earlier analyses of Hawkes, Hills, etc regarding these buckle types' putative Germanicness or lack thereof. Marzinzik, *Early Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles*, 4.
132. Haseloff, "Salin's Style I."
133. *cingulum sumere* and *ponere* were the main idioms used to refer to joining or leaving the civil service. A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire, 284-602: A Social Economic and Administrative Survey* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964), 566.
134. James, *Rome and the Sword*, 246–7.
135. Booth, "A Late Roman Military Burial from the Dyke Hills, Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire," 278–10.
136. Marzinzik, *Early Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles*, 35.

general agreement that the type could perhaps be associated with military author-
ity, but it is also noted that such belts were also used to express civil authority,
and there is disagreement over whether this expression represented the Roman
military (in some cases with suggestions of production in continental *fabricae*), the
militarisation of provincials (perhaps more applicable for those types which are of
local production such as the Type IB) or claims to power through the expression
of aristocratic hunting symbolism.[137] The most recent comprehensive statement
on the IB is an undergraduate dissertation produced by Douglas Carr at Newcas-
tle University, which offers the largest catalogue of the belt type, made possible
by the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Carr proposes based upon these distributions
that there is very little evidence for these belts having connection with the Ro-
man army.[138] Their distribution nevertheless suggests, for Carr, that such belts
were 'trappings of sanctioned power, most likely to be associated with the retain-
ers of late Romano-British elites, official- esque trappings for the 'long arm' of
the Romano-British elite.'[139] Esmonde Cleary, similarly, suggests that the type IB,
though it cannot be associated with official military organisation, nevertheless sug-
gests the 'lasting influence of Late Roman official styles in south-eastern Britain,
even after the collapse of Roman control in those areas of the island.'[140]

Whatever one makes of the intricacies of these debates, the belts' symbolic

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137. Hawkes and Dunning, "Soldiers and Settlers in Britain, Fourth to Fifth Century," 11; Halsall,
"Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*," 205; Marzinzik, *Early Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles*, 4, 84; Frans
Theuws, "Grave goods, ethnicity, and the rhetoric of burial rites in Late Antique Northern Gaul," in
Ethnic Constructs in Late Antiquity: The Role of Power and Tradition, ed. Ton Derks and Nico Roymans
(Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 299–307; Halsall, *Cemeteries and Society*, 143;
Esmonde Cleary, *The Roman West, AD 200-400*, 82–90; Booth, "A Late Roman Military Burial from
the Dyke Hills, Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire," 268. In Böhme's case the mass-produced forms
are replaced with locally-produced forms in his *Zeitstufe III* (after AD 400). Böhme, *Germanische
Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts*, 97.
138. Their distribution is rare in military sites, for example. 62. 5% of the entire sample from
military sites were from Richborough. Carr, "*Cingulum Militare*?," 45–6.
139. Ibid., 46.
140. Simon Esmonde Cleary, "Roman state involvement in Britain in the later 4th century. An
ebbing tide?," in *Social Dynamics in the Northwest Frontiers of the Late Roman Empire*, ed. Nico Roy-
mans, Stijn Heeren, and Wim De Clercq (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 199.

imagery is certainly a deviation from idealised Roman costume norms. The belt's association with social competition, and expressions of authority based on a newly 'militarised' aristocracy in the face of collapse of state power seems more plausible.[141] There is good reason to believe that the Dorchester burials represent a family community.[142] Furthermore, multiple Type IBs were found in excavations in non-burial contexts at Dorchester—an unusually high concentration which may suggest production took place at the site, which is not implausible given the site's continued importance well into the seventh century.[143] If one were to take previous approaches to the gendering of these items at face value, one could propose that the IB perhaps, therefore, the feminine counterpart to a masculine *militarised* item.[144] This, too, does not quite work, for even the necessarily feminine associations of the belt cannot be solidly determined. A mere five examples of the belt were used in Marzinzik's study, of which only three could be osteoarchaeologically sexed. This hardly reveals a statistically significant gendered rite. Carr's study, meanwhile, found that in the rare occasions where this belt type could be associated with osteoarchaeological sex, the vast majority of burials from 'Roman' (i.e, earlier) contexts, were in fact *male*.[145] We should perhaps, therefore, hesitate to identify a gendered use of this belt type in the early fifth century, given other artefacts associated with this artefact, which have also previously been assumed to have been female gendered, have turned out to be less easily identified as such.[146]

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141. Fehr, "Germanische Einwanderung oder kulturelle Neuorientierung?," 96–7. See Halsall, *Cemeteries and Society*, 156–9 for refutation of Theuws' more peaceful conceptions of claims to land ownership.

142. Booth, "A Late Roman Military Burial from the Dyke Hills, Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire," 263–4.

143. Ibid., 265; Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.7.

144. As noted in Chapter 1, this does not necessarily mean these were associated with the army. Nor do I mean by this that such items represent a passive reflection of masculine material expression by women, or that these were simply 'military wives'. For criticism of such simplistic interpretations see Effros, "Dressing conservatively," 174–5. I mean, rather, that the same interrelation of structure and agency that led men to utilise a given brooch type in this context may have led to women doing similarly with the type IB, the distinction in choice carrying an expression of gender difference.

145. Carr, "*Cingulum Militare*?," 30.

146. See discussion of early cruciform brooches, below, 265.

6.2. THE CASE STUDIES

Thus, the full signification of the Type IB is difficult to determine but it cannot easily be separated from related, clearly militarised types.

In the later fifth century, when our Alveston Manor buckle was buried, the context of these belts changed. The majority of IB belts are found in later 'Anglo-Saxon' contexts, and only as individual buckles rather than full belt sets.[147] Booth sees this as perhaps detracting from potential associations of the type with 'Romanised' and 'militarised' authority:

> While such pieces may have been seen as having significance relating to 'Roman' authority, the wider context of the burials within which they are found suggests a character distinct from that of the Dorchester burials. Moreover, the apparent association in a number of cases of late Roman buckles with female burials... ...also suggests that in being reduced to individual pieces detached from their original context the significance of these objects has been transformed.[148]

That a transformation of signification of some form took place is doubtless, but there is no *prima facie* reason to assume that such a gendered transformation would have made Roman aspects of this signification irrelevant, especially in light of Carr's observation that the IB seemingly had in its early usage an association with the Roman state,[149] and for reasons that will be discussed at greater length in section 4 of this chapter.

Turning to examine Wasperton Inh. 163, further points can be raised. The buckles are of Marzinzik's Type I.10b-i.[150] These less elaborate D-shaped plateless buckles form part of a somewhat heterogenous typegroup far less securely dateable and more problematic to link to parallels than the Hawkes type IB discussed above.[151] Generally, the Type I.10b-i belt can only be assigned to the broad date

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147. Booth, "A Late Roman Military Burial from the Dyke Hills, Dorchester on Thames, Oxford-shire," 265; Böhme, "Das Ende der Römerherrschaft in Britannien und die Angelsächsische Besied-lung Englands im 5. Jahrhundert," 495.
148. Booth, "A Late Roman Military Burial from the Dyke Hills, Dorchester on Thames, Oxford-shire," 267.
149. Carr, "*Cingulum Militare*?," 45–6.
150. Marzinzik, *Early Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles*, 30–1.
151. Ibid., 29.

range of its cemetery, but has a general lifespan from the Late Roman Iron Age to the seventh century.[152] There is thus very little that can be inferred from it for our purposes, but it was hardly a culturally distinctive artefact. Turning to the saucer brooches, these fall under Inker's Avon Valley Group 10 (One-piece cast saucer brooches with a swastika or whirligig design),[153] or Dickinson's Type 2.1. This type has very few parallels, though, as mentioned, there is a similar brooch from Long Wittenham, one from Skåne, Denmark and a similar pair in Luton.[154] Though the general style is identified as Nydam Style and Dickinson dates the Long Wittenham example to the mid-fifth century, the Style I features found on the Wasperton example lead Inker to date it to the later fifth century, which would agree with Inh. 163's clear relationship with Inh. 167.[155] The saucer brooches in Inh. 163 are emblematic of the fluid relationship between the Nydam Style and Style I, and characterise, as with the cruciform brooches in Inh. 167, the mediation of art styles whose origins ultimately lie in late Roman provincial military metalwork.[156]

Both Inh. 163 and 167, as noted, share orientation and appear to have been deliberately placed in relation to each other. Both also contain small globular ceramic vessels.[157] That from Inh. 163 is decorated with stamps and grooves. In Perry's typology it is of Group 4 (approximately equal height to width, but wide mouthed), a type most suited to consumption due to its cup-like properties. The pot in 167 is undecorated and fits Perry's Group 2. This group's smaller sub-categories

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152.   Marzinzik, *Early Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles*, 29, 32.

153.   Inker, *The Saxon Relief Style*, 65, fig. 49. The specificity of the type owes to the rarity of its decoration.

154.   Dickinson, "The Anglo-Saxon burial sites of the upper Thames region, and their bearing on the history of Wessex, circa AD 400-700," 61, pl. 5e.

155.   Ibid., 61; Inker, *The Saxon Relief Style*, 65.

156.   'Da der Nydam-Stil [...] in allen wesentlichen Erscheinungsformen und Techniken unmittelbar an die römische Provinzialkunst anknüpft, muß sein Anfang in einer Zeit liegen, in der die römische Tradition in den Provinzen am Rhein noch lebendig war'. Haseloff, *Die germanische Tierornamentik der Völkerwanderungszeit. Studien zu Salins Stil I*, 16.

157.   The types in subsequent discussion are calculated from ratios provided at Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton*, 304, 311 and the present author's own measurements of maximum height/maximum diameter.

are suited to consumption due to their possible use as dipping vessels.[158] On their own these possible properties might not have signalled much meaning. Surely significant, however, given the signification of the other items in these burials, is the possible function of such vessels, as argued above, in ritual feasting processes that formed part of a transition towards expressions of conspicuous consumption, deviant from Roman civic norms.

The crucial point of this is that, unlike supposed 'Germanic' signification, traces of semiotic expressions of authority, derived from provincial Roman metalwork, associated with but not necessarily direct products of the Roman state and/or military, can be traced in these items. The Nydam Style and Style I came to lowland Britain via Scandinavian material, of course, but such processes of mediation were on the scale of many decades, and the meaning of this style's use around the North Sea is unknown and unknowable, though possibilities may relate to a crisis in the function of Roman authority as the master-signifier of the Empire's peripheries.[159] When selecting items such as late Roman belt sets and Nydam Style/Style I brooches to bury with their dead, the funeral's participants are unlikely to have recognised the firm ethnic, geographical or cultural boundaries imposed on these material types by the modern typologist. They would have surely seen such items as participating in the same semantic field of signification.[160] It is unlikely that the late fifth century community using the cemetery at Alveston Manor, selecting a Type IB buckle and a pair of cruciform brooches with Style I decoration as they prepared a corpse for burial, would have noted the distinct 'Scandinavian' aspects of the brooches versus the distinct 'Roman' aspects of the belt set. Likewise, at Wasperton, those burying the occupants of Inhs. 163 and 167 are unlikely to

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158. Perry, "All Form One and One Form All," fig. 13.
159. See discussion of Halsall, "The Space Between," below.
160. The ethnic signification of the belt sets has long been rejected, but not in a manner rejecting the 'Germanic' signification of the later material descended from it. Esmonde Cleary, *The Ending of Roman Britain*, 34.

have selected cruciform brooches or saucer brooches with Style I decoration, but to have 'excluded' IB buckles or similiar such items with a view to emphasising the 'Germanic' and de-emphasising the Roman traits of their burial. Both sets of items would have been deployed with the goal (however successful) of forming a coherent semantic whole, however fragmented its components. Some of these origins we cannot trace. Some, such as those lying in expressions of Roman authority that deviated from expected classical norms, we can.

Case Study 3: The cruciform brooch. Taking a rhizomatic approach to semiotic interpretations of stylistic expression

The cruciform brooch, like some of the other brooches discussed above, poses a problem. It is untouched by refutations of the empirical basis for assuming that certain other brooch types were imported from *Germania,* as is discussed in Chapter 5. It and its precursor, the Nydam brooch, definitely have their origins in northern Germany and Scandinavia.[161] Unlike the northern Gallic types of provincial military jewellery from which these brooches descend, it is reasonable to associate their arrival, and that of associated items,[162] with the movement of people from Scandinavia and Northern Germany.[163] This basic premise can be left unaltered. That an Anglo-Saxon migration happened, and that it introduced new types of material culture to lowland Britain, is not a fact disputed by this thesis. Nevertheless, recognising the origin of such material culture is, as was argued in Chapter 2, insufficient as an explanation for its use, or as a basis to argue that this material culture

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161.   Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts*; Halsall, "Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilisation*"; Halsall, "Commentary Two: Careful with that Axe, Eugenius."
162.   Such as chip-carved equal-armed brooches, *Stützarmfibeln* with banded bows, Lower Saxon Type A *Stützarmfibeln* with trapezoidal feet, Armbrustfibeln with trapezoidal feet, Liebenau type applied saucer brooches, cast saucer brooches, Westerwanna type applied saucer brooches and Issendorf, Babilonie and Ortbrook type Tutulus brooches. Halsall, "Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier in Northern Gaul: The So-Called *Foderätengraber* Re-Considered."
163.   Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use," 2.

can therefore be identified as expressing active ethnic boundary construction. The previous chapters demonstrated that not only the empirical, but more crucially, the epistemological grounds for the existence of a conscious Germanic construct in early Anglo-Saxon material culture are non-existent. We saw in Chapter 4 that the only basis for linking the cruciform brooch to ethnic expression is the unverifiable assumption that contemporaries believed that the brooch bore Germanic connotations. It remains, then, to suggest what the cruciform brooch *did* convey.

Interestingly, Toby Martin recognises and has commented at length on the possible martial qualities of Style I cruciform brooch iconography, and its late Roman military origins, but for him the putatively 'Germanic' and Anglo-Saxon nature of the brooch appears to have been so overwhelming that this iconography is simply assumed to have bound its craftspeople and consumers into an 'intelligible tradition, perhaps even referencing elements of mythology or cosmological belief'.[164] Indeed, the transmission in this iconography of this Roman martial inheritance is presumed to be undertaken by a group quite distinct from those groups whence this inheritance derived.[165]

But there is little obvious reason for this presumption. With the exception of the latest types of Nydam brooch, the transition type whence cruciform types derive, the earliest cruciform brooches do not appear in furnished inhumation burial.[166] They emerge in early cremation cemeteries, with the definitely intrusive Anglo-Saxon cremation rite. But a properly differential ontological approach nevertheless

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164.   Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England,* 155.
165.   Martin, "Identity and the Cruciform Brooch in Early Anglo-Saxon England: An Investigation of Style, Mortuary Context, and Use," 371–5, 374.
166.   The Dorchester type is in any case now largely regarded as tied to the Roman military, and not much else in any secure fashion, at least in Britain. Booth, "A Late Roman Military Burial from the Dyke Hills, Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire." It is remarkable that the evident similarity of Dorchester types to a wide range of *Bügelfibeln* found generally within the frontiers of the Roman Empire, which are nearly indistinguishable other than to the most trained of eyes, is almost never discussed. Mechtild Schulze-Dörlamm, "Romanisch oder Germanisch? Untersuchung zu den Armbrustfibel- und Bügelknopffibeln des 5. und 6. Jahrhunderts N. Chr. aus den Gebieten Westlich des Rheins und Südlich der Donau," *Jahrbuch des Romisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz* 33 (1986): 657-669.

does not render this sufficient for a Germanic interpretation. Von Rummel outlines effectively that this destructive burial method renders impossible the ability to determine dress characteristics, such as the presence of the wearing of *peplos*, in such burial contexts without committing circular argumentation.[167] First, as we saw in Chapters 4 and 5, the linking of *peplos* dresses to Germanic consciousness has neither empirical nor epistemological basis. Even if such a thing could be shown, if we understand acts of expression in a Deleuzian framework, the cruciform brooch, as a regime of signs, could not become radically detached from the Roman signifeds which underlay this, even as it formed new entanglements of semiotic operation.[168] It is worth investigating, then, precisely what meanings cruciform brooches conveyed in their own, contemporary, early fifth century context.

The referencing of a descendent of late Roman techniques on these brooches may offer this context. Brooch-wearing had become relatively rare by the late fourth century in Britain: of the nearly 12,000 examples of Roman-period brooches found in Britain catalogued by the Portable Antiquities Scheme dated from the first to fourth centuries, Gerrard notes that a mere 124, or 1%, belong to the fourth century.[169] By the later fourth century, the main kind of brooch that was worn (on the rare occasions brooches were worn at all) was the crossbow brooch, which could be associated in some respect with Roman state authority. As with Hawkes and Dunning belt buckles, the extent to which this association can be seen as 'military' is debated. That said, it seems fairly certain that brooch-wearing could be associated with an official presence of some kind in Britain by the late fourth century.[170]

Though we can accept that the geographical origin and modes of transmission of the particular brooches worn may differ, unless we assume that the population

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167.   Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 285.
168.   Chapter 3, 110–113.
169.   Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 90.
170.   Donald F. Mackreth, *Brooches in Late Iron Age and Roman Britain* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2012); Esmonde Cleary, "Roman state involvement in Britain in the later 4th century. An ebbing tide?," 194.

of Britain was erased, and a new population introduced for whom brooch-wearing carried no such connotations (a surely absurd proposition), such expectations concerning the connotations of brooch usage would surely have persisted into the fifth century. Cruciform brooch usage is not dissimilar in scale to late fourth century crossbow brooch usage. Martin's comprehensive study, drawing not only on excavated finds but the vast array of metal-detected finds logged by the Portable Antiquities Scheme, catalogued just 2075 examples. Of these only 192 can be found in his Group 1 and 346 in his Group 2, dated to the fifth century.[171]

It is therefore particularly interesting that the earliest precursors to cruciform brooches to appear in *Germania* (Nydam brooches, *Armbrust* brooches, etc) were often found in cemeteries whose contexts suggest a desire on the part of the burying community to demonstrate their affiliation with Roman authority—associated with crossbow brooches, chip-carved military belt buckles, and the like—often when the genuine products of Roman *fabricae* were not available.[172] Indeed, the earliest example of a Nydam brooch in Britain, at Dorchester-on-Thames, is found in just such a context.[173] By the 430s, when the cremation cemeteries believed to evidence Anglo-Saxon migration and which contained the earliest cruciform brooches appeared, Roman political authority had effectively collapsed in Britain. This need not mean, however, that placing a cruciform brooch with the body on or under the cremation pyre did not signify a desired affiliation with Rome. Crossbow brooches at the late fourth century cemetery of Lankhills demonstrate clear examples of the placing of brooches alongside military belt buckles on funerary

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171.   Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 19, 27.

172.   Bemmann, "Die Nydamfibeln. Eine Fibelform der Stufe C3?," 152, Abb. 8; 158–9 for association of Nydam brooches with Roman military belts and crossbow brooches. Brather, "Acculturation and Ethnogenesis along the Frontier," 152–3 for these as alternatives to the products of *fabricae*.

173.   Kirk and Leeds, "Three Early Saxon Graves from Dorchester, Oxon."; Hawkes and Dunning, "Soldiers and Settlers in Britain, Fourth to Fifth Century." Booth, "A Late Roman Military Burial from the Dyke Hills, Dorchester on Thames, Oxfordshire" for an interpretation that explicitly avoids making ethnic inferences.

pyres.[174] If we accept that at least some (if certainly not all) of those buried in early 'Anglo-Saxon' cremations had arrived as *foederati*, as Gildas seems to attest,[175] we should perhaps not treat this practice as so different. In serving as fighters for Roman elites, those first settlers followed in the footsteps of earlier recruits, possibly their own ancestors, and might have demonstrated this status by precisely the same means in burial. The collapse of stable political authority, brought about by successive usurpations, would have ended access to official metalwork from imperial *fabricae*,[176] so is it any wonder that people turned to what they knew were suitable alternatives to this metalwork?[177] If there was a 'Germanic' tradition, it was one constructed heavily in dialectic with its Roman reference points. When we move to later in the fifth century, too, with the emergence of Style I, we find a similar process. Though its semiotic function is usually assumed to refer to a Germanic cosmology, its trace, too, should be located in practices originating inside the Empire.[178]

These embodiments of this symbolic regime, however, represent a dialectic of Germanic-Roman dialectic only in so far as this can be shown to have been consciously reproduced. It was a rhetorical, ideological binary, not an ontological one. With the philosophies of Derrida and Deleuze and Guattari in mind, to assert such operations at play is not the same as asserting that the users of these brooches *embodied* a coherent, essential *Romanness* alongside whatever, unknowable multiplicitous meanings their cremation ritual signified.[179] The very artefacts themselves

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174. H. E. M. Cool, "Objects of Glass, Shale, Bone and Metal (Except Nails)," in *The late Roman cemetery at Lankhills, Winchester: Excavations 2000-2005*, by Paul Booth et al., Oxford Archaeology Monograph 10 (Oxford, 2010), 287.

175. Gildas, *DEB* 23.

176. Previous such usurpations being precisely the reason why no *fabricae* were located in Britain. Simon James, "The *Fabricae*: State arms factories of the Later Roman Empire," in *Military Equipment and the Identity of Roman Soldiers: Proceedings of the Fourth Roman Military Equipment Conference*, ed. J. C. Coulston, BAR International Series 394 (Oxford: B.A.R., 1988), 263.

177. A parallel example may be the manufacture of imitations of Roman belt buckes in the former *agri decumates*. Esmonde Cleary, *The Roman West, AD 200-400*, 85.

178. Halsall, "The Space Between."

179. That aspects of its signification might have entailed *Saxonness*, even in a differential sense,

were often made from recycled material, and it is interesting that this became especially the case in the later fifth century. As Martin notes, the crucible 'played no small role in converting the people we call Romans into Anglo-Saxons'.[180] These were fragmented elements of code variably seized upon and operating in the material cultural expression of these cemeteries.

This has important implications for another aspect of the argument that cruciform brooches expressed ethnic identity—their supposedly gendered nature. The clearly feminine association of cruciform brooch burial, and *peplos* burial especially, only becomes evident in Toby Martin's phase B of cruciform brooch chronology (c.475–520). Phase A (c.420-50) has no obvious gendered associations.[181] This is based upon a sample of 42 cremated individuals, across all phases, buried with cruciform brooches. Martin examined contemporary osteoarchaeological sex data on these individuals (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4: Gender associations of cruciform brooches in Britain

Female	Female (probable)	Male (probable)	Male	Indeterminate
5	7	2	0	28

More substantial, phase-specific statistical analysis is not terribly enlightening. In Phase A we find 1 male (probably or definite), and 2 female (probable or definite) cremated individuals buried with cruciform brooches compared with 0 male and 8 female in Phase B. A standard one-tailed Fisher's test returns a p value of 0.27, so it is hardly statistically significant.[182] Much of the apparent shift to a gendered rite thus appears largely to derive from the enhanced potential for obtaining

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is possible but entirely groundless.

180. Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England,* 141.

181. Ibid., 214.

182. The data for this analysis is contained in Toby F. Martin, "A Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Cruciform Brooches" (Distributed by the Archaeology Data Service, 2015), http://archaeologydataservice.ac. uk/archives/view/asbrooch_na_2015/index.cfm.

osteological data from inhumation burials relative to cremation (the sample sizes are otherwise remarkably small), and 475 is also the chronological horizon for the mass expansion of inhumation burial. Be this as it may, Martin attempts to suggest that the two cremation burials with cruciform brooches identified through osteoarchaeology as 'probable male' are incorrectly sexed, on the basis that both contained two brooches, and thus were probably *peplos* dresses. This claim relies on circular arguments about the ubiquity of the *peplos* dress that were discussed in Chapter 5. We cannot know what type of dress these brooches fastened. Furthermore, the type of iron bow brooch with which the cruciform fragment was buried in one of these burials (C1743), is a definitively male-associated item in Hills and Lucy's comprehensive analysis of Spong Hill and none of the other items in C1743 are definitively gendered.[183] In Martin's electronic corpus, Spong Hill C1743, one of the burials used to make his argument above, is labelled 'indeterminate', but is defined as 'probable male' in his monograph, so it is unclear whether modification has been made to this data because of unfounded assumptions about the *peplos* dress.[184] Martin accepts that this is hardly overwhelming evidence and he, too, tentatively suggests that Phase A cruciform brooches were 'not even gendered items'. Just like Hawkes and Dunning IB belt buckles, the desire to chase particular interpretative avenues has largely been responsible for guiding gendered interpretations.

If we accept this, and also proceed on the grounds that the putatively Germanic nature of these brooches is baseless, some interesting possibilities for alternative interpretation present themselves. If we tentatively accept, in the face of poor samples, that the gendering of cruciform brooches appears in Phase B, this coincides directly with the emergence of Style I. Martin explores this boundary of transition

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183. Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX*, 202-3, Table 3.5.
184. Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 214; Martin, "A Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Cruciform Brooches."

at some length and notes that it is also at this point in time that cruciform brooches become restricted largely to older women.[185] What Martin does not observe, however, is that this coincides with both the political demise of the Roman Empire in the West and, as will be discussed at length later in the chapter, it has been suggested that at this point in time, dramatic shifts in the conception of gender took place across the former Western Empire as a whole. Martin uses the apparent emergence of a gendered rite to argue for the formation of an ethnic identity through the rite's use, but if we bear in mind that such a shift in gendered rite was part of a phenomenon unfolding across the entire Western Empire, originating in a crisis resultant from the Empire's *de facto* political demise, this need not be the case.

This enhances my earlier assertions about the deployment of cruciform brooches as expressions of power with Roman referential frameworks. As will be discussed, the effective political demise of the Empire in Britain in the early fifth century would not have erased the expected discursive features necessary for political success, and we may read the deployment of brooches possessing Roman stylistic traits in burial costume, in however mediated a fashion, as reflective of this trend. This is plausible because not only do similar changes in burial rite take place more widely across northern Gaul contemporaneously, but there are also instances in the region of occasional Anglo-Saxon cremation burial, and the use of 'Anglo-Saxon' artefacts.[186] Usually this is explained by reference to Saxon settlers along the *litus saxonicum*,[187] and the presence of objects of Anglo-Saxon type is usually explained

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185. Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 222–5.
186. Jean Soulat, "Le mobilier de type anglo-saxon entre le Ponthieu et la Basse Vallée de la Seine," *Revue Archéologique de Picardie* 3/4 (2009): 77–90; Jean Soulat, *Le materiél archéologique de type saxon et anglo-saxon en Gaule mérovingienne* (Saint-Germain-en-Laye: Association française d'Archéologie mérovingienne, 2009); Jean Soulat, "La pénétration des groupes saxons et anglo-saxons dans le Ponthieu entre la fin du IVe et le milieu du VIe siècle," *Revue Archéologique de Picardie* 1/2 (2009): 27–35; Egge Knol, "Anglo-Saxon Migration Reflected in Cemeteries in the Northern Netherlands," in Quast, *Foreigners in Early Medieval Europe: 13 International Studies on Early Medieval Mobility*, 113–129.
187. Ibid., 116–7.

according to the presumed ethnicity of the buried.[188] Given the presence in such regions as Ponthieu and the northern Netherlands of 'Anglo-Saxon' cremation rites, there may by a kernel of truth in claims that these objects came from settlers from the same regions as the settlers who came to Britain in the fifth century (if it was not from here that this material moved to Gaul). But such an explanation alone is not entirely satisfactory. It is possible that this trend can be related to wider internal processes contemporaneously taking place in both Britain and northern Gaul. After all, much of the 'Anglo-Saxon' material in Ponthieu appears alongside material unique to northern Gaul, and reasons to doubt that such material is indicative of ethnicity have been well-established.[189]

The next section will attempt to synthesise those previous, producing an interpretation of the simultaneous trend that was developing concurrently in both these regions, which also share other characteristics unique in the Western Roman Empire.

6.3 Wider implications from the case studies: a rhizomatic model of Anglo-Saxon archaeology

It is sometimes assumed that to reject ethnic narratives destroys our ability to use early medieval mortuary artefacts to construct narratives related to the larger-scale political and cultural history of the former western Roman Empire.[190] In some studies this is championed as a strength,[191] and in many respects it is a respectable

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188. Soulat, "La pénétration des groupes saxons et anglo-saxons dans le Ponthieu entre la fin du IVe et le milieu du VIe siècle," 29–30; Knol, "Anglo-Saxon Migration Reflected in Cemeteries in the Northern Netherlands."

189. Halsall, "Archaeology and the Late Roman Frontier in Northern Gaul: The So-Called *Foderätengraber* Re-Considered."

190. See discussion of Martin, above, 163.

191. Julia M. H. Smith, "Did Women Have a Transformation of the Roman World?," in *Gendering the Middle Ages*, ed. Pauline Stafford and A.B. Mulder-Bakker (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 28; Fleming, *Britain After Rome*; Fleming, "Medieval Migrants: On the move in Britain after Rome's

6.3. WIDER IMPLICATIONS FROM THE CASE STUDIES: A RHIZOMATIC MODEL OF ANGLO-SAXON ARCHAEOLOGY

historiographical approach, one that aims to redeem voices often silenced in traditional histories about politics and war. But even the largest of empires required the active participation of the smallest and most humble of communities.[192] Bearing in mind the arguments made above regarding the dead-ends of relying upon a non-reflexive use of structuration and constructivism, and provided that a far more nuanced approach is taken, there seems no reason why the local communities of late- and post-imperial Britain should be denied the part which they played in the narrative of the transformation of the Roman world.[193] Deleuze and Guattari offer us this more nuanced approach.

Frequently, lack of attention to wider processes of transformation taking place across the former Western Empire can be attributed not to conscious historiographical decisions but rather to the assumption that the territories of the Empire had ceased to be relevant to lowland Britain in the fifth century, leading to a lack of comparative attention.[194] This derives from the assumption that Britain had been abandoned by (or had even actively rejected) and ceased to have any connection to the Empire. Relatively frequent contact is known to have taken place between communities in western Britain and the Eastern Empire, and there is growing evidence for communication in the fifth century between lowland Britain and those parts of the continental mainland which lay on the imperial side of the Rhine/Danube frontier,[195] so this seems a difficult assumption to maintain without making recourse to models which propose that fifth- and sixth-century Britain was a place of a stark ethnic divide between Britons and Saxons and that there was thus consequent coherent geographical divide between these two groups. These problematic histori-

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Fall."
192.   Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 7–10.
193.   See, similarly, Guy Halsall, "Gender and the End of Empire," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Modern Studies* 34 (1 2004): 18.
194.   For criticism of this trend see Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 221–234.
195.   David Petts, "Christianity and Cross-Channel Connectivity in Late and Sub-Roman Britain," in Haarer et al., *AD 410*, 81–3.

cal arguments aside, many of the changes which take place in Britain find parallels in northern Gaul and northern Germany, such as the arrival of new settlement and artefact features with putatively 'Germanic' characteristics, the emergence of furnished inhumation, and widespread economic contraction.[196] In both regions there have even been separate reassessments of what was assumed in earlier scholarship to be evidence of drastic economic collapse. These reassessments suggest that a more gradual process of economic decline took place concurrently in both regions.[197] Yet the possibility that wider processes developing across the northwestern Empire and its peripheries might offer better avenues of interpretation for such phenomena in lowland Britain in the fifth century is rarely considered.

The end of Roman rule in Britain and the transformation of the Roman world

Halsall has made some attempts at explaining these phenomena with such a geographical remit, and is continuing to work on this question in his ongoing research project, 'The Transformations of the Year 600'.[198] His principal proposal is that many of the phenomena which can truly be regarded as characterising the 'late

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196.   Paul van Ossel, *Établissements ruraux de l'Antiquité tardive dans le nord de la Gaule*, 51e supplement à Gallia (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1992); Hamerow, *Early Medieval Settlements*; Patrick Périn, "The origin of the village in early medieval Gaul," in *Landscapes of Change: Rural Evolutions in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Neil Christie (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 255–278; Harrington and Welch, *The Early Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms of Southern Britain AD 450-650*; Martin, *The Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*. For explicit comparative work see Guy Halsall, "Villas, Territories, and Communities in Merovingian Northern Gaul," in *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300–1300*, ed. Wendy Davies, Guy Halsall, and Andrew Reynolds (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 209–231 and the articles in Halsall, *Cemeteries and Society*.
197.   Paul van Ossel and Pierre Ouzoulias, "Rural settlement economy in Northern Gaul in the Late Empire: an overview and assessment," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 13 (2000): 133–160; Paul van Ossel, "Rural Impoverishment in Northern Gaul at the end of Antiquity: the contribution of archaeology," *Late Antique Archaeology* 3 (1 2006): 533–565; Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*.
198.   Its most coherent current articulation may be found in Guy Halsall, "From Roman *fundus* to Early Medieval *grand domaine*: Crucial Ruptures between Antiquity and the Middle Ages," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 90 (2 2012): 273–298.

Roman', as opposed to the 'early medieval', world come to an end, in general, in the mid-to-late sixth century, rather than in the late fifth, as is often assumed.[199]

This proposal is derived from Halsall's assertion that the spread of furnished inhumation was a result of the withdrawal of the presence of the imperial state from the northern provinces (i.e., Britain and Gaul north of the Loire).[200] For Halsall, this process was responsible first for the arrival of, then changes in, and finally the eventual end of, the furnished inhumation practice common from the late fourth to mid-fifth centuries and then the late fifth to late sixth centuries in northern Gaul and lowland Britain. The bulk of his data for his hypothesis, especially concerning changes in the construction of gender, comes from Gaul.[201] Beyond brief comparative forays,[202] the furnished inhumation rite in Britain is discussed more briefly, usually with the suggestion that the study of this rite would benefit from comparison to the changes taking place in Gaul.[203] The core proposal is that furnished inhumation in these regions represents a marker of the instability of social hierarchies at a relatively local level. Families that were relatively low-level members of social elites, that in other historical circumstances based their power on their place in networks of patronage, had their position thrown into doubt at times when these networks were less stable (e.g., in the context of imperial state withdrawal).[204] This made itself manifest especially in furnished burial, where aspects of gender and age identity were emphasised; the most lavish burials would

199.   Though this is not to be confused with the version of such a hypothesis argued for by Henri Pirenne.

200.   This particular argument may be found across most of Halsall's *ouevre*. Core texts are Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization* and Halsall, *Cemeteries and Society*, with discussion also present in such works as Guy Halsall, "Social Change around A.D.600: An Austrasian Perspective," in Carver, *The Age of Sutton Hoo*, 265–278, Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations* and Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*.

201.   Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, Guy Halsall, "Female status and power in early Merovingian central Austrasia: the burial evidence," *Early Medieval Europe* 5 (1 1996): 1–24, Halsall, *Cemeteries and Society*.

202.   As found, for example, in Halsall, "Social Change around A.D.600: An Austrasian Perspective."

203.   Ibid. and Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*.

204.   Halsall, "From Roman *fundus* to Early Medieval *grand domaine*," 280–7.

tend to be of members of a family group whose death was most likely to throw
the status of that family group into doubt, such as adolescent women, some young
adult men and especially mature adult men–that is, those likely to become heads of
households or those who served as the lynchpins in the family alliances that func-
tions as the primary means of maintaining social power.[205] Certain items would
be selected for burial that emphasised aspects of age, place in the lifecycle, and
gender, and the lavish deposition of graves which took place at such ceremonies
is held to have functioned to help smooth over tensions produced by the death of
these socially significant individuals.[206] Late fifth and early sixth century northern
Gallic cemeteries served areas that encompassed several settlements, suggesting
that these symbolic acts were intended to be witnessed by an entire community.
Symbols of authority were expressed in these burials as a further means of solid-
ifying or enhancing the social status of family groups at times of crisis. The rite
became widespread from around 470 but it was perhaps a revival of the rite that
appeared c. 375–450 in both northern Gaul and lowland Britain.[207] This possi-
bility would strengthen assertions I make subsequently in this chapter. This state
of affairs lasted until the decades around 600, when substantially different funer-
ary practices took hold alongside considerable differences in land tenure, urban
economic growth, and other evidence for increased aristocratic stability.[208]

We saw above that similar acts of careful selection and curation of material,
associated with the social identities of the deceased, also took place in the early
Anglo-Saxon cemeteries of eastern England, such as at Spong Hill. As already men-
tioned, the variation of artefact types found in these cremation burials differed to

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205.   Guy Halsall, "Burial, Ritual and Merovingian Society," in *Cemeteries and Society*, 207.
206.   Similar conclusions have been noted in relation to late fourth century Roman furnished
burials by Gowland and Cool. Rebecca Gowland, "Beyond Ethnicity: Symbols of Social Identity
from the Fourth to Sixth Centuries in England," *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 14
(2007): 56–65. Cool, "Objects of Glass, Shale, Bone and Metal (Except Nails)," 267.
207.   On this earlier see also Theuws, "Grave goods, ethnicity, and the rhetoric of burial rites in
Late Antique Northern Gaul."
208.   Halsall, "From Roman *fundus* to Early Medieval *grand domaine*," 291–6.

that found in cremation cemeteries on the continent.[209] Thus, even though the intrusive nature of cremation burial in England requires some different questions to be posed of its material compared to those applied to inhumation, the use of grave furnishings in this rite still appears to have performed similar roles to those it played in inhumation burial. Though the cremation rite was definitely intrusive, and so can partly be associated with migration, this does not render its interpretation as a response to social stress invalid. Squires asserts that different ideological beliefs were clearly held by groups practising inhumation from those practising cremation. Though she is technically correct, since choice of funerary rite is a form of ideology, Squire's justification of this hinges upon the assumption that the selection of material for burial was concerned with preparation of the body for the afterlife (in the event of inhumation) or transformation of the body for the afterlife (in the case of cremation).[210] These assumptions about cosmology are unverifiable. But it can more reasonably be inferred that furnishing burials with grave-goods had symbolic meanings that were deployed by the burying community to ease social tensions. Although sex and gender were weakly represented in those aspects of cremation burial which Squires studied (emphasis on the lifecycle was much stronger),[211] the application of Perry's typology to the cremations at Spong Hill offers an area where the relation of gender to conspicuous funerary display was more evident. Thus, though the inhumation rite and the cremation rite are not the same, it may be suggested that they represent variations of the same general process.

What was this process? Halsall notes that part of the emergence of the new inhumation rite in the late fifth century, in both lowland British and northern Gallic cemetery contexts, entailed a notable shift in depictions of gender in burial,

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209.   Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX*, 327-328, fig. 5.8.
210.   Squires, "Piecing Together Identity," 196.
211.   Ibid.

usually in the form of weapon burial for men and burial with lavish jewellery for women.[212] As we saw, the gendering of cruciform brooches, and the gendering of two-brooch burial also emerged in lowland Britain at this time, as did the appearance of Style I decoration on these items. If we accept that both furnished inhumation and cremation rites were a response to social instability caused by the collapse of the imperial system in Britain, the implications of that collapse for gender construction are surely relevant. Halsall has previously described the Roman Empire as a 'gendered edifice'.[213] Performance of certain types of behavior was crucial to conceptions of Roman identity, and thus the functioning of the Empire. After 212, Roman citizenship was universally extended across all provinces of the Empire, Romanness, in consequence had to be performed. This performance was highly gendered.[214] Conceptions of the good citizen, the good citizen, the good Roman, and thus, the good person, revolved around the notion of civic masculinity. Man represented an authority figure, expected to behave with reason and sound judgement, capable of controlling his emotions to justify his authority, whether this be in the political sphere, or the domestic. He that was an able leader in the household was deemed a true Roman and thus a suitable leader in public office. Passion, ferocity, vulnerability, these qualities were all deemed outside the acceptable norm. To secure position in the hierarchy of imperial public offices, which was necessary to advance in local politics, one was expected to have obtained a specific education, which emphasised subscription to these ideals—reason, civility. It was also what made one suitable for marriage. These were the essence of *paideia*.[215] Civic masculinity thus operated as a centralising pole, a 'master signi-

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212. Halsall, "Gender and the End of Empire."
213. Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*.
214. Guy Halsall, "Classical gender in deconstruction," in *Genre et compétition dans les sociétés occidentales du haut Moyen Ages (IVe-XIe siécle),* ed. Régine Le Jan and Joye Sylvie (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017, Forthcoming).
215. On which see especially Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 37–41; Halsall, "Gender and the End of Empire," 21–22. Discussion in Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 58–61 shows it to be in opera-

fier' in the Lacanian sense—a norm in relation to which all other identity categories were constructed, and were judged on their deviance from.

Of course, this meant various categories outside the norm could be related to one another. Barbarians were often feminised in imagery, for example. They were judged to be incapable of controlling their passions, making them unfit for political office or government. It also provided justification for them to be subdued. Barbarians, like women, were deemed in Roman gender ideology to be incapable of controlling themselves, and thus required control by force.[216] Barbarians and women were deemed by imperial ideology to be equivalent to children in terms of their capacity for reason and self-governance. If barbarians were incapable of mastering their own emotions and governing themselves, it would become justifiable for those who were capable of governing to do so in their place. Thus all elements of this discourse, each category constructed, be it woman, barbarian, child, savage, criminal, were defined by—and intersected with—each other, via circulation around the stabilising central pole of rational, civic Roman masculinity.[217]

In the fourth century, this alters. Martial models become more frequent. Before the late third century Roman civic duty and military duty had been operations which could be undertaken by the same body of elite citizens – those of senatorial and equestrian class. After the Tetrarchic reforms of the imperial bureaucracy, the civic and military routes through the imperial hierarchy were separated. This was partly in response to the brutal civil wars that had plagued the years prior to Diocletian's reign. A result of this was that there now existed two separate classes of political elite, one defined by its military duties and the other by its civic.[218]

Martial ways of being masculine were consequently increasingly introduced

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tion in the west as much as the east, among soldiers as well as civilians.
216. Halsall, "Gender and the End of Empire."
217. Halsall, "Classical gender in deconstruction."
218. Patrick Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 26–27; Halsall, "Gender and the End of Empire," 22.

into the political sphere. During the fourth century the Empire witnessed the emergence of the first military supremos, generals controlling the puppet-strings of imperial power behind young emperors for whom they might be regents, or simply the base for an emperor's of power in the case of older but less powerful emperors.[219] Examples are Merobaudes, *magister peditum* under Valentinian I, who had Frankish heritage,[220] Arbogast, who was similar,[221] or Stilicho, the controlling figure behind the underage emperor Honorius, and who had Vandal descent.[222] It is no coincidence that many of these controlling figures had some barbarian heritage. The separation of powers had forced many Roman elites to choose between military or civil service, leaving much more space for barbarian advancement in the Roman military—which had always heavily recruited among barbarians. As the fourth century progressed, indications grow that this barbarian influence, especially from Germanic-speaking peoples, heavily shaped the identity of the Roman military. Roman ethnographic stereotyping still remained very much at work, here. The Empire had always used barbarians so to assume that there was a drastic increase in their numbers or that there took place a direct, unmediated importation of genuine barbarian customs is misguided. More likely is that it became much more fashionable for the army to construct an identity around its 'otherness' from civic Roman ideals. Instead it emphasised and played up its martial and ferocious qualities, which were, of course, synonymous with being a barbarian, but only in a very constructed, stereotypical sense. It is difficult to say whether many of these perceived 'barbarian' traits were genuine importations or described as barbarous simply for their deviant, ferocious qualities. Nevertheless, despite this 'barbarian'

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219.   John Matthews, *Western aristocracies and the imperial court, A.D. 364-425* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 32–55, 88–100.
220.   A. H. M. Jones, ed., *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire,* vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 598–599.
221.   Ibid., 95–97.
222.   Ibid., 853–858.

influence, many provincial Roman aristocrats still performed military service.[223]

Perhaps the most dramatic change was in the forms of costume that late Roman soldiers wore: trousers, a long-sleeved tunic, a heavy, thick belt with a prominent buckle displaying rank.[224] Cloaks with brooches were worn, such as crossbow brooches (known in German as *Zwiebelknopffibeln*, 'onion-knobbed brooches'). Armour was mail or lamellar and shields, which were now circular or ovoid, and displayed regimental patterns of a different sort.[225]

The effect, compared to Roman literary expectations, was positively barbarous.[226] Regiments are also known from the *Notitia Dignitatum* to have had barbarian names, such as the *Franci* (Franks), *Saxones* (Saxons), but it has long been recognised that these names were very rarely an indication of where a unit's recruits originated.[227] Halsall proposes that these may have been sources of inspiration, because of their ferocious connotations.[228]

These alterations in the state of masculinity necessarily produced alterations in feminity.[229] And both of these were inextricably bound into the systems of patronage by which the Roman Empire was bound together into a cohesive political unit.[230] As Halsall puts it:

> the interstices between the empire's thundering absolutist pronouncements and the possibilities of their actual enforcement permitted local and regional elites (and others) to use their involvement (or claimed involvement) with the state to enhance their position. Thus, far from representing debilitating corruption, this was the glue that

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223. Halsall, "Gender and the End of Empire," 22–3.
224. Stefanie Hoss, "The Roman Military Belt," in *Wearing the Cloak: Dressing the Soldier in Roman Times*, ed. Marie-Louise Nosch (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2012), 38-40.
225. Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 104–5.
226. Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 376–381; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*.
227. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 620; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 106.
228. Halsall, "Gender and the End of Empire," 22–23; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 105–6, 494–6.
229. See also Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 394–400.
230. Halsall, "Gender and the End of Empire," 24–25. For more on these systems of patronage as they relate specifically to Britain see Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 120–124.

bonded the myriad communities of the empire into a single political entity.[231]

Thus, the impact of the removal of this system in the aftermath of Constantine 'III''s rebellion was devastating, as is noted by all who examine the impact of this event on the economy of Roman Britain.[232]

This impact is what is evidenced in alterations to gendered expression. Halsall has previously suggested that the emergence of certain types of funerary costume north of the Thames in the fifth century may have been tied to a renegotiation of gender categories related to the deployment of a new political allegiance, bound with settlers from northern Germany, though he has revised this opinion somewhat, and has nevertheless always recognised the heavily Romanised elements of this costume.[233] Of course, for reasons already discussed, we have no means of knowing what this sort of political allegiance would entail, or how it could be demonstrated in the archaeological record. I would propose, however, that even 30 years after the rebellion of Constantine 'III',[234] Romanised political frameworks would still have been the discursive trace underlying any prospective claim to political authority in the aftermath of Roman political collapse.[235] We witness the introduction into eastern Britain, therefore, of a clearly gendered rite emphasising conspicuous consumption in burial, making use of jewellery with clearly military and Roman referential symbolism, albeit Scandinavian and north German in origin, at a time when access to mass-produced Roman jewellery had ceased. Likewise, in more southern regions such as where Type IB belts are first encountered, we see the use of locally-produced jewellery making similar symbolic statements. Though the jewellery itself at first had no clearly gendered referential points, gendered ex-

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231. Halsall, "Gender and the End of Empire," 21.
232. Esmonde Cleary, *The Ending of Roman Britain*, 144–161; Halsall, "Gender and the End of Empire," 27–29; Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 179–180; Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 206–7, 243–4, 251–3.
233. Halsall, "Gender and the End of Empire," 27–8; Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 234–7.
234. On which see Chapter 7, **??–??**.
235. *Pace* Lucy, *The Early Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of East Yorkshire*, 194.

pression was nevertheless found in early Anglo-Saxon cremation cemeteries, tied
to ideas of military authority, and drawing upon systems of gendering that posed
a challenge to the traditional 'masculine normative' model of Roman gender ide-
ology. Recall that, although some suppression of male representation in consump-
tion urns was likely, the association of women with production urns was much
stronger.

Halsall suggests it is significant that the next major change in gendered con-
struction took place at about the moment of Romulus Augustus' deposition by
Odoacer in 476.[236] As we saw, the more widespread use of furnished inhumation,
the gendering of cruciform brooches, and the noticeable gendering of two-brooch
burial in the form of *peplos* dress emerged in lowland Britain at this time, as did the
appearance of Style I decoration on feminine metalwork. Halsall suggests that such
alterations can be related to the decline of civic Roman masculinity as the structur-
ing pole around which idealised norms of the self were constructed–this functioned
as the master-signifier. All other signs were judged by their degree of conformance
to it. Halsall also argues that uncertainty about the western successor states' claims
to Roman ideological legitimacy, brought about by Justinian's campaigns in North
Africa and Italy c. 533–554, caused the final failure of the utility of this pole as
a structuring system, resulting in new explicit forms of gendered expression that
both operated through an antagonism with the idealised civic masculinity now in
terminal crisis.[237]

Yet in northern Gaul and lowland Britain, where imperial rule had effectively
ceased in the early fifth century, and where the relative impoverishment of the
provincial elites had led to the dependence of these elites on imperial systems of
patronage, we should not be surprised that such systems had begun to collapse
much sooner. Where on other parts of the continent (such as southern Gaul) we

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236. Halsall, "Gender and the End of Empire," 28–30.
237. Halsall, "Gender and the End of Empire," 30–1; Halsall, "Classical gender in deconstruction."

witness in the late fifth century the earliest stages of the effect of such collapse on burial practice, in Britain especially deposition of Romulus Augustus by Odoacer would have been the final, fatal blow to a normative system which had already been thrown into crisis, simultaneously producing the uncertainty about imperial mechanisms of power evidenced in Style I jewellery and a shift in the gendering of such mechanisms. Ongoing doctoral research by Katherine Fliegel at the University of Manchester suggests that this shift in gendering may have represented a shake-up of the erstwhile normative system to such a degree that fluid experimentation with gender categories became possible, as evidenced by a cross-gendered burial rite that had far more prevalence than some previous commentators have suggested.[238] Likewise, later fifth century cruciform brooches saw significantly increased rates of repair, which Martin suggests indicated their increased importance as as inalienable items which expressed identity through performative use.[239] Such increased concern would surely make sense in the context of dramatic shifts in gender construction. Yet none of these observations alter that the semiotic trace of such items ultimately lay in expressions of Roman authority. Any questions of emerging ethnic consciousness, though of course a possible accompaniment, cannot be firmly demonstrated by these means in the same manner.

There are, as we saw, gendered items that emerge concurrently that are more problematic for this reading, with definite origins unique to Scandinavia, which neither bear Roman-derived decoration nor have clear origins in the so-called 'Anglian' homeland, such as Hines' wrist clasps.[240] We saw that Hines asserted the ethnic significance of such gendered clothing and that scholars such as Hines and Martin argued for its use in forming a new Anglian *ethnos* based upon the assumption that these items and other aspects of material culture bore connotations of a

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238. Fliegel, ""Not born, but made"," *pace* Stoodley, *The Spindle and the Spear.* Kat Fliegel has been kind enough to discuss the results of this early work with me in detail.
239. Martin, "Riveting Biographies," 55, 62.
240. Hines, *Scandinavian Character*, 108–9.

'Germanic' tradition. Such assertions are possible but, as we saw, lacking empirical basis. We also saw that Hines' assertions, that the arrival of these items marks the entry of Scandinavian migrants into the Anglian *Formenkreis*, are also unprovable. Hines' point that the scale of cultural transfer cannot be dissociated from migration is reasonable. But this needn't mean migration and the cultural transfer must have been chronologically coincident. With the arguments just made in mind, however, the use of these items could be interpreted as the weaving of a new semiotic strand into the costume ensemble, perhaps in the face of the decline of stable, imperial systems of power. Symbolic features from regions beyond the *limes*, introduced through the contacts established by migrants perhaps already present, would become far more acceptable in the context of the decline of such overarching systems. Such processes need carry no implications about the ethnicity of the wearers of the new material.

This hypothesis offers us a potential means of rehabilitating the ordinary people of post-Roman Britain into the narrative of the end of the Roman Empire in the West. Final reflections on this will take place at the end of this chapter, but the notion that the later use of material with Roman signifying traces represented 're-use' of material unconscious of the significance of these signifying traces must first be addressed.

'Re-use' of Roman material

The conclusion made above, that the inhabitants of sub-Roman Britain expressed their authority with Roman symbolism, is not a surprising one. Archaeologists of lowland Britain have long identified the presence of such symbolism in post-imperial material culture.[241] But we have seen that present approaches to the interpretation of some of this symbolism make too much effort to distinguish its

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241. E.g., Roger H. White, *Roman and Celtic objects from Anglo-Saxon graves: a catalogue and an interpretation of their use*, BAR British Series 191 (Oxford: BAR, 1988).

putatively Roman from its putatively Germanic aspects without basis. This has led to problems in the identification of Roman material in 'Saxon' graves, which we encountered with Hawkes' examination of the appearance of late Roman belt sets in such graves.

There is a burgeoning body of scholarship examining the so-called 're-use' of Roman material in Anglo-Saxon graves.[242] Much of this has been dedicated to examining the role of such material in the construction of social identity, but such scholarship has also often attempted to distance the use of such material from a conscious awareness of the Romanness of the artefacts being recycled. Such scholarship suggests that rather than outlining a 'coherent ideology of reclaiming a specifically Roman past', owing to their unknown 'biographies of production', such items may have become 'the focus of other kinds of social memory'.[243] Such studies have focused to date on the use of much earlier Roman material culture but investigation into the re-use, putative or actual, of later Roman material is also underway.[244]

The focus of the argument has, until recently, been upon demonstrating whether (or not) such artefacts might be used to indicate the presence of ethnic Britons in the material record. This poses a problem. For the purpose of such investigations, the putative presence of ethnic (or even 'biological') Britons, rejected by Eckardt and Williams, is conflated with conscious and intentional expressions of Romanness in these objects, and the dichotomy of 'Germanic'/'Roman' is reproduced as one of fundamental difference. We find, for example, the statement that 'many

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242. Much of which developed largely in response to the work of Roger White, *op. cit.* E.g. Eckardt and Williams, "Objects without a Past? The use of Roman objects in early Anglo-Saxon graves," Gowland, "Beyond Ethnicity: Symbols of Social Identity from the Fourth to Sixth Centuries in England," Fleming, "Recycling in Britain after the fall of Rome's metal economy."

243. Eckardt and Williams, "Objects without a Past? The use of Roman objects in early Anglo-Saxon graves," 146.

244. Research on this subject is being undertaken by Indra Werthmann at Durham University (pers. comm.), Jessica Dunham at the University of Oxford (pers. comm.) and Andrew Welton at the University of Florida. Welton, "Encounters with Iron," 21–7; Welton, "Spearheads of whose settlements? Recycled iron and new identities in post-Roman Britain."

items discovered on Roman sites were melted down as scrap and recycled into
new Germanic-style objects'.[245] This conflation means, in consequence, that the
presence of a conscious *Romanitas* in such items, in however limited a fashion, is
never considered a possibility.

Yet Eckardt and Williams' article recognises that other aspects of burial (espe-
cially, significantly, female burial) such as the use of girdle hangers and chate-
laines, appear to imitate Roman-period burial. Many copper-alloy artefacts too,
such as *fibulae,* have been demonstrated to be re-workings of older Roman brooches.[246]
It is also known that late Roman mixed-rite cemetery sites (and even graves) would
be re-used by fifth and sixth century persons.[247] It thus seems unhelpful to deem
such activity to be somehow a re-working of 'Roman' activity, in an ignorance of
this context, by a consciously 'Anglo-Saxon' people.[248] Instead we should query the
simplicity of producing such straightforward dichotomies of cultural invocation.

The so-called 're-use' of Roman objects (or, most significantly, Roman stylistic
traditions) need not signal ethnicity, but this fact in no way contradicts the possi-
bility for a conscious presence of ideas of Romanness in the use and re-use of these
objects. Williams' and Eckardt's proposal that these items were used for their per-
ceived amuletic or 'magical' properties is of course possible (if unprovable), but
need not be incompatible with any of what is suggested below.[249] The Roman her-
itage which these items exude has a traceable history in both the material and
the documentary record. It is true that this past 'need not' have been consciously
appropriated,[250] but there is no obvious reason to discount that the inhabitants of

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245.   Eckardt and Williams, "Objects without a Past? The use of Roman objects in early Anglo-
Saxon graves," 156.
246.   Ibid., 154.
247.   Ibid., 160.
248.   On this see also Gowland, "Beyond Ethnicity: Symbols of Social Identity from the Fourth to
Sixth Centuries in England."
249.   Eckardt and Williams, "Objects without a Past? The use of Roman objects in early Anglo-
Saxon graves," 155.
250.   Ibid., 165.

early medieval Britain would have been aware of this heritage to some degree. We will see in Chapter 7 that post-Roman elites grappled with Romanness in diverse ways, some of which deviated from expected civic norms, and contemporary commentators such as Gildas may make allusion to precisely such concerns, even using language which admits that though Gildas might not have regarded this heritage as legitimately 'Roman', those who wielded it might have.[251] The cultural binaries imposed on this material have even led to constructions of databases labelling the use of this material as 're-use' in circumstances where this is highly doubtful.[252]

6.4 Conclusion

The chapter has discussed at some length the historical context of the breakdown of imperial authority in Britain in the fifth century. In that discussion we encountered reasons to believe that the ideological frameworks governing expressions of power in Britain in the aftermath of imperial collapse would have remained shaped by association with Roman authority. It is worth remembering, also, that expressions of power in the *barbaricum* were shaped by such associations. With this in mind, perhaps we can take some ideas about alterity and 'otherness' to task.

Halsall has noted that what is ultimately at stake in communal burial practice, whatever the sort employed, is a claim for *inclusion*.[253] Thus, far from demonstrating a successfully achieved dramatic rupture from expected dress norms, expressions of difference within a mortuary display with uniform traces in fact emblemise

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251.   Chapter 7, **??–??**.

252.   Dunham, for example, has to date treated the finds from the Dyke Hills, Dorchester-on-Thames as 're-use' in her research, because of their 'Germanic' context, though in response to my querying of this Dunham, clarified that this derived from its listing as such in White's catalogue. Jessica Dunham, "New Approaches to the Examination of Roman Objects in early Anglo-Saxon Graves: summary and results to date" (Paper presented at The Past in the Past: Heirlooms and Curated Material in Past Societies, Durham University) and *pers. comm.*

253.   Guy Halsall, "Otherness and Identity in the Merovingian Cemetery," in López Quiroga, Kazanski, and Ivanišević, *Entangled Identities and Otherness in Late Antique and Early Medieval Europe*, 189–198.

attempts to 'smooth over' or play down the buried's putative alterity. Halsall observes that

> any identity or categorisation, ascribed or adopted, is never coextensive with itself but only exists by virtue of a system of relations and differences. It contains within itself the resources for its deconstruction.[254]

Deconstruction means here, of course, the raising of aporetic moments, suppressed choices, not simply 'destruction'.

This is where differential ontology becomes a useful medium for reading this burial practice, to highlight the means by which differing semiotic traces are all deployed with the goal of producing a cohesive ideal. In burial in fifth-century lowland Britain, these semiotic traces included possible associations of drinking and feasting with gendered cremation urns, items of north German and Scandinavian origin (with unknown and unknowable symbolic significance—yet even these possessed a Roman semiotic trace), but some of which were forged through the recycling of erstwhile Roman metal artefacts, and items clearly Roman by association. Perhaps the coherent ideal these traces sought to shape was not, as Halsall has previously suggested, a declaration of *Saxonness* in opposition to a declining Romanness, but an appeal for *inclusion* by those associated with the emergence of a new community both militarised and made for the purpose of Roman service in its origins, but using the only material resources then available to them to make such a sort of claim.

Chapter 3 discussed Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'territorialisation', the process whereby the territory of an assemblage is demarcated. In the context of our discussion assemblage can be taken to refer to various acts of subject expression which together form a given ideology: legal codes, expected dress norms, expected standards of behaviour (etc.) that, in this case, comprised the civic mode

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254. Ibid.

of Romanness. It was proposed in that chapter that deterritorialisation might be an apt description for the processes which produced the supremacy of what von Rummel has termed *habitus barbarus,* in the form of furnished inhumation burial in the Mediterranean—a dislocation of expected norms of classical dress from the actual dress practices of an increasingly militarised elite. Though there are differences in practice in early Anglo-Saxon England, namely that many of the selected arte-facts do have an origin in northern *Germania,* the specifically ethnic implications of these origins have been shown to be unprovable. Moreover, the chronology of the adoption of the rite remains broadly the same. The Anglo-Saxon artefacts have unique origins and are used in localised, regionally-specific burial practices (such as the widespread adoption of cremation burial), yet this material clearly refer-ences symbolically much of the same material upon which von Rummel bases his hypothesis, such as provincial frontier military metalwork and the artefacts found in such trans-Rhenan burials as that of the Zweeloo 'princess'.[255]

The Anglo-Saxon migration to lowland Britain occurred, and introduced with it new items of material culture. But the meanings expressed by this material cul-ture need have had nothing to do with ethnic identity, and there are numerous reasons to interpret this expression primarily through its initial ties to Roman ex-pressions of military power. That some of these acts of expression would have used material originating from the North Sea *barbaricum*, where power was also framed in such terms, is only to be expected, given Britain's dramatic dislocation from the Empire's logistical and hierarchical systems. The use of this material need not, therefore, imply complete separation from the Empire's modes of ide-ological expression, especially those of a military nature; much of this material still ultimately contained Roman referential symbolism, but processes of deterrito-rialisation resulting from the collapse of the Roman state dramatically altered the

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255. See Hills and Lucy, *Spong Hill, Part IX,* 52, 74, 304 for links to the Zweeloo 'princess' at Spong Hill. See Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 288-90 for his own discussion.

6.4. CONCLUSION

means by which these modes of expression were constituted. This was an ideological process, but this also could not be separated from its *material* contexts. The end of imperial rule produced both ontological and material instability, and those forced to grapple with this instability both literally recycled the material remains of the former regime and in so doing reshaped the social relations which these material remains helped to constitute.[256]

To frame this hypothesis explicitly in differential ontological language: new lines of flight were produced and reshaped in new apparatuses of capture. What we witness here is a *rhizomatic offshoot* of the wider assemblage: expressions of Roman military authority. If von Rummel's notion of the *habitus barbarus* represents an expression of appeals to military authority with its origins in Roman semiotic frameworks, what we witness in Britain is the expression of a similar process using the materials and semiotic resources specifically available in these regions with their specific conditions. Certain features expected in the normal construction of Roman military authority had by necessity become de-territorialised due to a shift in available material and ideological resources.[257] The most barbarous aspect of this clothing was not so much its being worn by actual barbarians, but its deviation from the expected norms of classical costume. In von Rummel's words: these people were interred in the clothing of a late antique *militia*.[258]

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256. This idea owes a great deal in its conception to Welton, "Spearheads of whose settlements? Recycled iron and new identities in post-Roman Britain."

257. See Oosthuizen, "Recognizing and Moving on from a Failed Paradigm: The Case of Agricultural Landscapes in Anglo-Saxon England c. AD 400–800," 197 for discussion of agricultural landholding systems as another material/ideological resource that may have functioned in such a role.

258. Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 404.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This thesis has exposed several critical fault-lines in current approaches to Anglo-Saxon archaeological scholarship, that continue to guide scholars down interpretative avenues that limit our range of interpretative options.

I have shown, in particular, that scholarship remains wedded to a 'Germanic' conceptual construct that entirely lacks empirical basis in the contemporary source material. The interpretative frameworks of post-processualism and the Vienna and Toronto Schools have led to more critical theoretical treatment of this construct, and we have seen some Anglo-Saxon archaeologists venture so far as to reject it. Yet it remains a pervasive axiomatic principle which Anglo-Saxon archaeologists rely on in their analytical explanations. This is because the field continues to depend on interpretative approaches that reify the ethnic 'group' as *the* category for historical analysis. The thesis demonstrated that even those scholars who recognise the analytical problems with this category have failed to reverse its popularity in Anglo-Saxon archaeological discourse. Chapters 3 and 4 proposed that this is the result of a positivist intellectual framework that privileges putative empiricism in realms of enquiry where it cannot be effectively applied. A post-groupist understanding of ethnic sociology shows us that archaeological analyses and questions

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of ethnic interpretation, whether in the positive or negative, are non-overlapping *magisteria*.

The alternative conception of ontology outlined in Chapter 3, and put to work in Chapter 6, enabled us to take a different approach. The case studies outlined that we can follow different interpretative avenues when we alter the questions applied to our material, provided we are honest about those points at which we have ceased to be empirical in our argumentation. In particular, these case studies showed that acts of symbolic expression can be identified in early Anglo-Saxon funerary ritual that relied upon new social conjunctures, sometimes drawing upon fragments of semiotic meaning originating, and perhaps therefore acting, as ideological expressions of Roman power. In some respects this is not a new assertion. The survival of Roman symbolism and ideology in post-Roman and early Anglo-Saxon material has long been recognised. This thesis' novel proposition is that, instead of being used (or 're-used') by peoples for whom the Roman past was something from which they distanced themselves, associations with Romanness which certain aspects of this material conveyed rendered them ideal for expressions of authority in the turbulent and shifting material and ideological circumstances of the fifth century.

Consistent patterning in semiotic expression, therefore, need not be placed into coherent, distinct 'ideology' boxes, that can then be tied to concepts like 'Germanicness' or 'Romanness', and which can be explained by models for the replacement of the one by the other. Such models, for all statements oft made about their fluidity and multiplicity, seem scarcely distinguishable from Culture History. Material and ideological expression are ultimately governed by the availability of material and ideological resources. Those available in lowland Britain were drastically altered by the effective end of imperial rule. In the same way that the consistent patterning of shared genetic haplotypes in lowland Britain and across the North Sea can

be explained by the remarkable interconnectivity that this seaway facilitated, so too can patternings in material culture. The North Sea coasts were home to migrants now often labelled, but with little good reason, 'Saxon' or 'Angle', and who journeyed to Britain to start new lives. These coasts and the material produced on them were the obvious place to turn once access to the Empire's logistical structures had ceased. But that is as far empiricism takes us. It does not explain why such material culture was rapidly adopted across lowland Britain in the fifth century. All interpretations beyond this proceed from the point of *aporiae,* and this is where the construct of 'Germanic consciousness' is normally suggested as a necessary component of our narrative. But this construct, and the ethnic signifiers held to derive from it, have no empirical basis, and consequently explain nothing. They are empty signifiers; a set of modern historiographical notions about cosmology, ideology, and ethnic and cultural affiliation, where we have no evidence for such things, and no tools by which to demonstrate them in the archaeological record. One thing that is certain, however, is that the people of the *barbaricum* conceived of and expressed power through grammatical frameworks based on their relationship with the Roman Empire.

Let us consider two images, both depicting a man armed with a spear and knife from a diocese, or former diocese, of the Western Roman Empire in the early fifth century, in similar costume (fig. 7.1). The first image is contemporary to the figure it depicts—the so-called 'Stilicho' diptych. This ivory diptych, now in Monza cathedral, depicts a member of the late Roman elite in typical military garb, and is often identified (though unverifiably) as being Stilicho. Certainly this was a Roman officer, but his military garb would likely have been little different from that worn by 'real' barbarians.[1]

The second image is modern. It is a drawing by Judith Dobie for English Her-

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1. Rummel, "Gotisch, barbarisch oder römisch?," 71.

itage, reconstructing the garb and kit of the figure buried in Inh. 979 at Mucking, an early Anglo-Saxon cemetery in Essex.[2] The reconstruction is based upon the grave-goods found in the cemetery, though clothing items such as trousers, cloaks and the specific types of boots are of course, reconstructions based upon speculative and comparative work from the extremely limited material remains we have of textile artefacts from excavations all across western Europe.[3]

Figure 7.1: Left: the so-called 'Stilicho' diptych, Duomo di Monza. Right: a reconstruction of Grave 979 from Mucking, Essex by Judith Dobie, for English Heritage.

Still, the similarity of the two images is striking. Yes, there is considerable variation in artefact type (the only items that securely give us indication of the British costume), but one wonders if lowland British contemporaries would really

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2.   Ann Clark et al., *Excavations at Mucking*, 3 vols. (London: English Heritage, 1993-2009).

3.   Judith Dobie, "Reconstructing Anglo-Saxon dress from graves at Mucking, Essex," *Research News: Newsletter of the English Heritage Research Department* 4 (2006): 38–41. This comparative work is detailed in Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, 104–127.

have been so attentive to putative ethnic signals given by slight variations in the metalwork composing the overall ensemble. It is entirely possible that they were, of course. Modern ethnic distinctions are often grounded in very slight variations in clothing choice. But post-groupist ethnic sociology has shown this to be neither universal, axiomatic, nor provable via purely archaeological means.[4] Perhaps lowland British observers would have been more struck by the general impression of such costume, than attentive to those aspects which to modern eyes render the one on the left a 'Roman' and the one on the right an 'Anglo-Saxon'. Such similarities would be even more striking in East Anglia with early cruciform brooches.

Those whose ideals of *romanitas* were grounded in normative classical ideals based on the ideology of *paideia* might have seen little (cost of their clothing aside) to distinguish these 'uncouth' miltary men. Though there is only space to consider this briefly, and to do this justice would require a separate study, it is possible that the fragmentary documentary evidence alluded to in Chapter 1 also offers some support for this interpretation. I have argued in a recent article that post-Roman elites in Britain grappled with Romanness in diverse ways, some of which deviated from expected civic norms, and that contemporary commentators such as Gildas may make allusion to precisely such concerns, even using language which admits that though Gildas might not have regarded the stylistic references this material culture made as legitimately 'Roman', those who wielded it might have disagreed.[5] Such complicated approaches to social identity may have rendered it difficult, I argued, to readily distinguish, for example, between 'Roman' or 'Saxon' militarised elites, lending support to the application of Von Rummel's concept of the *habitus barbarus* to lowland Britain.[6]

Such a hypothesis can only be tentative due to the nature of our source material,

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4. On this, see also Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 98–101.
5. Harland, "Rethinking Ethnicity and "Otherness" in Early Anglo-Saxon England."
6. Ibid.

but Euric, of the Goths in Aquitaine, had Leo to give him a voice.[7] Theoderic the Great had Cassiodorus, from whom we learn of his Romanising projects.[8] Would we view the Italian Gothic kingdom under Theoderic appear to us so great a preserver—indeed so great an innovator—of Roman tradition, if Procopius' *Gothic War* had been the only surviving source to discuss that kingdom? If the Saxons had found a contemporary to give them voice, might we see them completely differently? The few sources to give us a remotely contemporary depiction of Saxons are not terribly helpful. As mentioned, Sidonius Apollinaris, in a letter probably written around AD 470 to Namatius, a military commander serving the Visigothic Kingdom of Toulouse, mentions the latter setting out to fight Saxon pirates in the Bay of Biscay.[9] Most of the characteristics described in this letter—notions of savagery and ferocity, for example—likely served as an ideological tool to emphasise the *romanitas* of Euric and the Visigothic kingdom. They did not offer a description of anything resembling reality.[10] Detailed examination of Sidonius' references to the clothing of other barbarians from the lower Rhine, such as the Franks, suggests that this was scarcely distinguishable from the normal costume of the Roman military.[11] Numerous reasons to expect Saxons to have adopted similar dress in military contexts have already been discussed.[12]

Most interpretations of the written sources operate, whether consciously or not, within historiographical frameworks that treat the end of Roman Britain as part of a larger framework of ethnic strife. This is even the case when sources recognise

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7. See Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistolae*, in *Carmina et Epistolae*, ed. and trans. W. B. Anderson (London: Heinemann, 1936-65), 4.22.
8. On which see Yitzhak Hen, *Roman Barbarians: The Royal Court and Culture in the Early Medieval West* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 27–58.
9. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epist.*, 8.6.
10. James M. Harland, "Imagining the Saxons in Late Antique Gaul," in *Sächsische Leute und Länder: The Naming and Localising of Group Identities in the first Millenium AD*, ed. Matthias Hardt, Melanie Augstein, and Babette Ludowici, vol. 7, Neue Studien zur Sachsenforschung (Hannover: Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, forthcoming); cf. **flierman2017**.
11. Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 181.
12. Chapter 6, above, 270–287.

the now generally accepted fact that Roman Britain's end was not the result of barbarian conquest.[13] A notable exception to this is Gerrard who, we saw in Chapter 4, rejects both the ethnic signification and even the contemporary mutual recognition of the 'Germanic construct'. Nevertheless, he still treats the martial ideology that 'Germanic' migrants 'brought with them' as a 'novel alternative', that can be clearly demarcated by its Germanic nature and which prompted Romano-British opposition..[14] 'Alternative' though the material that shaped this ideology might have been, it likely appeared for those who made use of it neither 'novel' nor 'Germanic'.

I have argued that the most convincing historical narrative is one that understands the collapse of Roman Britain—and the filling of the vacuum that this left by new groups, ideologies, and material cultures—as a process primarily of the collapse of the state. Some would likely have interpreted the social formations that followed with an attitude that saw the military ideology (or rather, *ideologies*) of these social formations as deviant, perhaps even barbaric. Yet this need imply nothing about the ethnicity or the wider cultural affiliations ('Germanic' or otherwise) of those who adopted these ideologies. How can we better understand the mechanisms of the adoption of these ideologies more effectively?

Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the 'war machine' may help, here.[15] The 'war machine' in Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy refers to social formations defined by their exclusion from the state, the Deleuzo-Guattarian conception of which is the master-signifier, the coalescing embodiment of an ideology that proceeds by the necessary distinction of Self from 'Other'. The state maintains coherence by two methods: the violent method (control of legitimate force) and the judicial method

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13. E.g. Esmonde Cleary, *The Ending of Roman Britain*, 131–161, 188–205, which, though it rejects migration as the cause of collapse and makes efforts to problematise the ethnic significance of many artefacts nevertheless follows the fundamental framework of a 'Germanic' ideology in ascendency, opposed to a 'Romano-British' one.
14. Gerrard, *The Ruin of Roman Britain*, 260–2, 266–74.
15. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*.

(recourse to expected structures in the hierarchy of the state). These are

> the principal elements of a State apparatus that proceeds by a One-Two, distributes binary distinctions, and forms a milieu of interiority.[16]

The state survives by imposing categories of meaning on fluid social processes. These categories shape definitions of interiority and exteriority that are determined by conformance to these categories. But in Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy,

> the State itself has always been in a relation with an outside and is inconceivable independent of that relationship. The law of the State is not the law of All or Nothing (State societies or counter-State societies) but that of interior and exterior. The State is sovereignty. But sovereignty only reigns over what it is capable of internalising, of appropriating locally.[17]

In the likes of Gildas, with his strong words of chastisement for those who deviated from legitimate Roman authority, we may witness witness the survival of the state's modes of ideological expression.[18] His educative norms were manifest in his condemnation of those who deviate from the elevated signifier, civic Romanness. Yet such condemnation was not reserved for barbarians proper. Rather, the same discursive framework was applied across broader post-imperial British society. This suggests that principally in operation in this society was Deleuze and Guattari's inversion of the state, the 'war machine'.

The term, as they intend it, need not necessarily carry military connotations, but can instead be thought of as a 'difference engine', an operation that constantly chips away at and detaches aspects of the state from itself:

> What we wish to say, rather, is that collective bodies always have fringes or minorities that reconstitute equivalents of the war machine— in sometimes quite unforeseen forms—in specific assemblages such

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16. Ibid., 352.
17. Ibid., 360.
18. See Harland, "Rethinking Ethnicity and "Otherness" in Early Anglo-Saxon England."

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as building bridges or cathedrals or rendering judgments or making music or instituting a science, a technology.[19]

The war machine can be understood to be what takes place when an *episteme* is in a highly de-territorialized form. The state asserts itself to be the master-signifier. But the war machine gives the lie to this claim, breaking the state's closed operations open:

> War machines take shape against the apparatuses that appropriate the machine and make war their affair and their object: they bring connections to bear against the great conjunction of the apparatuses of capture or domination.[20]

In discussion of fifth-century Britain, where the collapse of the state produced a society consisting of bands of men whose strength derived from appeals to violent power, the military overtones of the concept make the metaphor apt.

The war machine is formed when the state, through creating an exterior 'Other', creates itself. We might recall Patrick Geary's famed dictum that

> the Germanic world was perhaps the greatest and most enduring creation of Roman political and military genius.[21]

These two opposed forces, the homogenising, hegemonic force of the state, and the heterogeneous, unstable 'war machine', could not exist without each other: the war machine's destruction of the master-signifier can only be understood by that which it destroys; the master-signifier defines itself through excluding that which seeks to subvert it. Likewise, Gildas' ideal behaviour could only be articulated through his identification of that which did not conform. Those claiming power through expressions of military authority, the radically excluded in Gildas's eyes, did so using the shattered material and ideological fragments of the formerly stable signifying regime.

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19. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 366.
20. Ibid., 423.
21. Patrick Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingan World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), vii.

7.1   Avenues for further research

A project of this scale inevitably contains omissions. This thesis has largely focused on critical methodology and epistemology, and a consequence is that I have not been able to fully grapple with every alleged instance of an empirical demonstration of material culture being 'Germanic'. I look forward to encountering these to test the epistemological rigour of my proposals. Nor have I been able to test the potential alternatives I have outlined through a detailed analysis of a large dataset, with full attention to the well-studied chronological shifts in the early Anglo-Saxon burial rite.[22] Another omission that cannot pass by without comment is the 'Celtic' (or 'Romano-British') half of the Germanic/Celtic binary. Such material is focused in western and highland Britain but is by no means absent from 'Anglo-Saxon' cemeteries, and the arguments made above surely have implications for such material and the 'Celtic' label often ascribed to it. To give such material its due would need another thesis.

Some of these omissions suggest clear potential avenues for future research. The supposed similarities in social transformation which lowland Britain and northern Gaul are often held to undergo in the fourth- to fifth-century transition, we saw, are often commented on but have received remarkably little comprehensive, comparative analysis.[23] Yet it is clear that the putative similarities in terms of land organisation, economic development, burial style, domestic architecture and economic productivity of these two regions would benefit from more rigorous examination. Studying the mechanisms and chronological features of the cultural and economic transformations that took place in these two regions in greater depth

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22. On which see Helen Geake, *The Use of Grave Goods in Conversion Period England, c. 600-c. 850*, BAR British Series 261 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 1997); John Hines and Alex Bayliss, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Graves and Grave Goods of the 6th and 7th Centuries AD: A Chronological Framework*, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monographs 33 (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).
23. See 269–270.

could clarify, develop and test the hypotheses concerning the *habitus barbarus* proposed in the final two chapters of this thesis. Testing the validity of Perry's cremation urn typology in regions such Ponthieu or at extra-liminal continental sites such as Issendorf or Suderbrarüp and seeing what patterns emerge from this could be a possible starting point. If the putative similarities scholars have identified between these regions prove to be as problematic as the 'Germanic' and ethnic paradigms rejected by this thesis, these hypotheses could be overturned. Such would hardly be surprising, the analysis offered above is, after all, a departure from a set of *aporiae*, making interpretative leaps from what is presently empirically demonstrable.

I believe, nevertheless, that the core of my proposal is defensible. A post-groupist understanding of ethnicity requires that we fundamentally rethink the way that material culture in the early Anglo-Saxon period is interpreted. It is not sufficient to state that ethnic identity is a situational construct, yet continue to frame our research around the same questions and priorities. Nor is it sufficient to assert that such identities simply were not important. Rather, we should be attentive to the different analytical insights that empirical analysis of differing types of source material grant us, and recognise that the posing of questions about ethnic identity or ideological transformation occurs at junctures beyond this stage. Through exposing the critical junctures where our analyses cease to be grounded in empiricism and are instead acts of interpretative choice, some fruitful new paths may emerge for future researchers to follow in the making of such choices.

Appendices

Appendix A

Spong Hill Data

The attached CD-ROM contains the data which form the basis for discussion of Spong Hill cremation urn typology and its implications in Chapter 6. Pots were assigned to Perry's typology[1] on the basis of the following set of calculations, applied to the Spong Hill dataset.[2] A new 'Ratio 1' was first devised because, though the final volume of Spong Hill describes Ratio 1 as Maximum Diameter over height, the dataset does the reverse of this. The specific figures utilised to apply categories to the results of these ratio calculations were determined from the quartiles (Q) calculated for the data distribution for a given ratio of dimensions from every pot from the corpus.

Several other new categories were applied to the Spong Hill dataset as follows: pots were sorted into 'Squat' if their Ratio 1 was greater than 1.2. All others were deemed 'Not Squat'. Pots were labelled 'Roughly Equal' if their Ratio 1 figure was between Q1 and Q3, i.e., neither squat nor tall. If the Rim Diameter/Maximum diameter (Spong Hill Ratio 4, Perry's Ratio 5) was less than 0.6 a pot was deemed to have a 'Restricted Rim'. If Ratio 4 was greater than 0.6 (the median value for

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1. Chapter 6, 225-231. See Perry, "All Form One and One Form All" for his organisation of data and for the basis of these calculations.

2. Available at Catherine Hills and Sam Lucy, "Spong Hill Dataset Collection" (Distributed by Apollo - University of Cambridge Repository, 2014), https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/245133.

that ratio's distribution) it was deemed to have an 'Open Rim'. If Ratio 1 was greater than 1.06 it was deemed 'not tall', otherwise it was deemed 'tall'.

A pot was sorted into Group 1 if it was deemed 'Roughly Equal' with 'Restricted Rim'. A pot was sorted into Group 2/3 if it was deemed 'Squat' with 'Open Rim'. A pot was sorted into Group 4 if it was deemed 'Roughly Equal' with 'Open Rim'. A pot was sorted into Group 5 if it was deemed 'Tall' with 'Open Rim'. A pot was sorted into Group 6 if it was deemed 'Squat' with 'Restricted Rim'. No pot was sorted into multiple groups, which suggests the robustness of the typology despite the relative hardness of these boundaries, which has produced 140 'boundary' pots which proved difficult to typologically classify. Tinkering with the ratio boundaries could alter these results and capture more 'boundary' pots, but the distinctness of each grouping means that the typology appears meaningful.

The data is stored in .xls format, and offers, in the form of a modified version of the data from Hills' and Lucy's Spong Hill corpus, the result of those sorting steps, displayed alongside sex, age and phase data from the Spong Hill dataset for each urn.

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