

**THE USE OF GRAVE-GOODS IN  
CONVERSION-PERIOD ENGLAND  
*c.* 600 - *c.* 850 A.D.**

In Two Volumes  
Volume 1: Text

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis seeks to describe and explain the changes in grave-good usage by the Anglo-Saxons during the time of their conversion to Christianity, roughly 600-850 AD. The first chapter describes past research in this area and the second establishes the corpus of data; over 7000 graves from 351 burial sites, detailed in an appended gazetteer. The third chapter explains the selection of a working sample of graves, used to explore the priority for research, the detailed chronology and social use of the objects, and explains the methods used.

Chapter 4 presents detailed and specific results, looking at each grave-good type separately. Each section contains a description, a chronology, an examination of practical function and social meaning, and a statement of geographical distribution. Chapter 5 puts the artefacts in context with an examination of the sources of inspiration for new forms and styles, concluding that many of the cultural affiliations are to the Roman and Byzantine worlds. Chapter 6 offers a summary of the changes in the use of grave-goods over time, and an interpretation of these changes drawing on theories of state formation processes and a resulting attempt at the legitimisation of newly won power. It is concluded that the rulers of the new Anglo-Saxon states, like those of other medieval European powers such as Carolingian France and the Holy Roman Empire, were seeking to show that *they were the heirs to the ancient power of Rome*.

This thesis is the first systematic attempt to describe, date, provenance and interpret the grave-goods accompanying seventh- ninth-century burials. Because it is a first attempt, the emphasis has been on evaluating, classifying and organising the material. The interpretations are provisional, but promise new study areas for the future.

# LIST OF CONTENTS

## VOLUME ONE

ABSTRACT .....	2
LIST OF CONTENTS .....	3
LIST OF TABLES .....	9
LIST OF MAPS .....	10
LIST OF FIGURES .....	12
PREFACE .....	15
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	16
DECLARATION .....	17

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CONVERSION-PERIOD ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERIES

1.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT .....	18
1.2 HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF THE CONVERSION PERIOD .....	18
1.3 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	23
1.4 GENERAL RESEARCH AIMS FOR CONVERSION-PERIOD BURIALS .....	25
1.5 SCOPE AND AIM OF PRESENT STUDY .....	28

## CHAPTER TWO

### IDENTIFICATION OF THE DATA: THE GRAVES OF CONVERSION-PERIOD ENGLAND

2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	30
2.2 DATING METHODS .....	30
2.2.1 Introduction .....	30
2.2.2 Occurrence seriation .....	32
2.2.3 Style II .....	33
2.2.4 Horizontal stratigraphy .....	34
2.2.5 Coin-dating .....	34
2.2.6 Gold analysis .....	37
2.2.7 Radiocarbon dating .....	37
2.2.8 Historical dating .....	38
2.2.9 Conclusion .....	39

2.3 IDENTIFICATION OF CONVERSION-PERIOD ANGLO-SAXON BURIALS . . . .	39
2.3.1 Introduction	39
2.3.2 Transitional sixth- to seventh-century grave-good types	39
2.3.3 Diagnostic grave-good types	40
2.3.4 Later grave-good types	52
2.3.5 Identification of unfurnished Conversion-period graves	53
2.3.6 The west and north of Britain	53
2.4 EVALUATION OF THE CORPUS OF CONVERSION-PERIOD BURIAL SITES . . . . .	54
2.4.1 Introduction	54
2.4.2 The range and bias of the corpus	54
2.4.3 The quality of the data	55
2.4.4 Distribution of the corpus in time and space	55
 <b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	
<b>RESEARCH AGENDA AND METHOD</b>	
3.1 INTRODUCTION . . . . .	61
3.2 DEFINITION OF SAMPLE SUB-SET OF CORPUS . . . . .	61
3.3 MATCHING THE RESEARCH AGENDA TO THE AVAILABLE DATA . . . . .	63
3.4 RESEARCH PROGRAMME . . . . .	65
3.4.1 Introduction	65
3.4.2 Construction of a chronological framework	66
3.4.3 The social use of grave-goods	68
3.4.4 Summary of method	70
 <b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
<b>THE GRAVE-GOOD TYPES</b>	
4.1 INTRODUCTION . . . . .	74
4.2 COIN . . . . .	76
4.3 DISC BROOCH . . . . .	78
4.4 WORKBOX . . . . .	80
4.5 LINKED PINS . . . . .	84
4.6 BULLA . . . . .	86
4.7 DISC PENDANT . . . . .	88
4.8 CABOCHON PENDANT . . . . .	92
4.9 MISCELLANEOUS PENDANTS . . . . .	95



4.10	AMETHYST BEAD	97
4.11	METAL BEAD	99
4.12	POLYCHROME GLASS BEAD	101
4.13	SMALL MONOCHROME GLASS BEAD	106
4.14	MISCELLANEOUS BEADS	108
4.14.1	Amber bead	108
4.14.2	Melon bead	111
4.15	WIRE RING	112
4.16	NECKLACE	116
4.17	ANNULAR OR PENANNULAR BROOCH	119
4.18	MISCELLANEOUS BROOCHES	124
4.19	BRACELET	126
4.20	FINGER-RING	128
4.21	CHATELAINE	130
4.22	TEXTILE PROCESSING EQUIPMENT	133
4.22.1	Whorl	133
4.22.2	Thread-picker and weaving batten	137
4.22.3	Heckle	139
4.23	COWRIE	141
4.24	COMB	143
4.25	LACE-TAG/STRAP-END	146
4.26	SHOE BUCKLE	148
4.27	HOOKED TAG	150
4.28	SINGLE PIN	151
4.29	SHIELD-BOSS	153
4.30	SPEARHEAD	155
4.31	SWORD	160
4.32	SEAX	164
4.33	WEAPON SETS	169
4.34	TRIANGULAR BUCKLE	172
4.35	DOUBLE-TONGUED BUCKLE	175
4.36	MISCELLANEOUS BUCKLES	177
4.37	SMALL SIMPLE BUCKLE	178
4.38	BAGS	180
4.38.1	Firesteel/purse-mount	180
4.38.2	Other bags	182

4.39	BOX	185
4.40	PADLOCK	187
4.41	VESSELS IN GENERAL	189
4.42	BRONZE VESSELS	192
4.42.1	"Coptic" vessel	192
4.42.2	Hanging bowl	193
4.42.3	Miscellaneous bronze vessels	197
4.43	GLASS VESSEL	199
4.44	POTTERY VESSEL	201
4.45	WOODEN VESSELS	204
4.45.1	Wooden bucket	204
4.45.2	Wooden cups and bowls	207
4.46	TOOLS	208
4.46.1	Spatulate tool	209
4.46.2	Pointed iron tool	211
4.46.3	Other iron tools	214
4.46.4	Whetstone	216
4.46.5	Shears	217
4.46.6	Spoons and spatulas	219
4.47	AMULETS	222
4.47.1	Food offerings and other animal amulets	223
4.47.2	Found amulets	225
4.47.3	Manufactured amulets	226
4.48	OTHER OBJECTS	227
4.48.1	Playing pieces	227
4.48.2	Bridle	228
4.48.3	Sword pyramid	230
4.48.4	Bell	231
4.49	KNIFE	232
4.50	CONCLUSION	232

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THE CULTURAL AFFILIATIONS OF THE GRAVE-GOODS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE**

5.1	INTRODUCTION	236
5.2	EVALUATION OF PREVIOUS HYPOTHESES	237

5.2.1 Kentish/Frankish hypothesis	237
5.2.2 Roman/Byzantine hypothesis	239
5.3 DETAILED GRAVE-GOOD PARALLELS .....	241
5.3.1 Jewellery	241
5.3.2 Non-jewellery costume items	251
5.3.3 Vessels	255
5.3.4 Weapons	258
5.3.5 Miscellaneous items	259
5.3.6 Ornament	265
5.4 CONCLUSIONS .....	267
5.4.1 Summary	267
5.4.2 Evaluation of results	268
5.4.3 Mechanisms for a revival	269
5.4.4 Conclusion	271

## CHAPTER SIX

### INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA: THE CONVERSION-PERIOD RENAISSANCE

6.1 INTRODUCTION .....	272
6.2 CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF ASSEMBLAGES .....	274
6.2.1 Period 1: Early seventh century	274
6.2.2 Period 2: Late seventh and early eighth century	275
6.2.3 Period 3: After <i>c.</i> 720/730	277
6.3 CHANGES IN THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTIONS OF ARTEFACTS ...	278
6.4 CHANGES IN DEPOSITED WEALTH .....	281
6.4.1 Sites with furnished graves	281
6.4.2 Sites with unfurnished graves	283
6.5 THE SIGNALLING OF AGE AND GENDER .....	284
6.5.1 Gender signalling	284
6.5.2 Age and female gender	286
6.6 CHANGES IN ARTEFACT ORIGINS .....	287
6.7 CONCLUSIONS .....	288
6.7.1 Introduction	288
6.7.2 Relations between Francia and the English kingdoms during Period 1	290
6.7.3 Relations between the eastern Empire and the English kingdoms	291
6.7.4 Relations between the Roman Church and the English kingdoms	293
6.7.5 The use of grave-goods in Conversion-period England	294

6.7.6 The decline of grave-goods in Conversion-period England	299
6.7.7 Conclusion	302
<b>NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY</b>	
CONVERSION PERIOD .....	309
MIGRATION PERIOD .....	310
EARLY, MIDDLE AND LATER PARTS OF CENTURIES .....	310
ENGLAND .....	311
METAL ALLOYS .....	311
BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES .....	311
DATA FROM UNPUBLISHED SITES .....	311
<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	312
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	313
<b>VOLUME TWO</b>	
LIST OF CONTENTS .....	345
MAPS .....	347
FIGURES .....	409
APPENDIX: GAZETTEER OF CONVERSION-PERIOD ANGLO-SAXON	
BURIAL SITES .....	484

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Shephard's seriation of Conversion-period grave-good types . . . . .	57
Table 2.2	Shephard's seriation with corrections and updates . . . . .	58
Table 2.3	Selected Conversion-period graves containing seventh- to ninth- century Anglo-Saxon coins . . . . .	59
Table 2.4	Objects found in sampled graves containing seventh- to ninth- century coins . . . . .	60
Table 3.1	Numbers of Conversion-period burial sites known, and number included in the sample sub-set . . . . .	71
Table 3.2	Numbers of furnished and unfurnished graves in the sample sub-set	72
Table 3.3	Main index for recording grave-good assemblages . . . . .	73
Table 4.1	Seriation diagram based on graves with disc brooches . . . . .	79
Table 4.2	Metals used to make wire rings, bullae, beads and disc pendants . . . . .	87
Table 4.3	Regional distributions of disc pendants by type . . . . .	92
Table 4.4	Average numbers of amethyst beads in graves, divided by region . . . . .	99
Table 4.5	Numbers of small monochrome glass beads per grave . . . . .	107
Table 4.6	Average numbers of small monochrome glass beads per grave, divided by region . . . . .	108
Table 4.7	Numbers of wire rings per grave . . . . .	114
Table 4.8	Average number of wire rings per grave, divided by region . . . . .	115
Table 4.9	Relative popularity of combinations of necklace elements . . . . .	117
Table 4.10	Average number of elements per necklace, divided by region . . . . .	119
Table 4.11	External diameters of annular and penannular brooches . . . . .	122
Table 4.12	Summary of bracelet forms . . . . .	127
Table 4.13	Numbers of Conversion-period spearheads, by Swanton types . . . . .	157
Table 4.14	Seax blade lengths and widths . . . . .	166
Table 4.15	Changes in the proportions of weapon combinations over time . . . . .	170
Table 4.16	Conversion-period graves with more than one vessel . . . . .	191
Table 4.17	Mouth diameters of wooden buckets . . . . .	206
Table 4.18	Numbers of different grave-good types in the sample . . . . .	233
Table 6.1	Chronological lifespan of selected artefact types . . . . .	304
Table 6.2	Radiocarbon dates from Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon cemeteries . . . . .	307
Table 6.3	Gender associations of various grave-good types . . . . .	308

## LIST OF MAPS

- Map 1 Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon burial sites
- Map 2 Conversion-period burial sites used in the sample for detailed study
- Map 3 Coins in graves
- Map 4 Disc brooches in graves, outside Kent (disc brooches outside sample from Avent 1975)
- Map 5 Workboxes in graves
- Map 6 Linked pins in graves
- Map 7 Bullae in graves
- Map 8 Disc pendants in graves
- Map 9 Cabochon pendants in graves
- Map 10 Miscellaneous pendants in graves, all types
- Map 11 Beaver tooth pendants and bead-in-wire pendants
- Map 12 Amethyst beads in graves
- Map 13 Metal beads in graves
- Map 14 Polychrome glass beads in graves
- Map 15 Small monochrome glass beads in graves
- Map 16 Amber beads in graves
- Map 17 Melon beads in graves
- Map 18 Wire rings in graves
- Map 19 Necklaces in graves
- Map 20 Penannular brooches and safety-pin brooches in graves
- Map 21 Annular brooches in graves
- Map 22 Bracelets in graves
- Map 23 Finger-rings in graves
- Map 24 Chatelaines in graves
- Map 25 Whorls in graves
- Map 26 Thread-pickers in graves
- Map 27 Weaving battens in graves
- Map 28 Cowrie shell in graves
- Map 29 Combs in graves
- Map 30 Lace-tags in graves
- Map 31 Shoe-buckles in graves
- Map 32 Single pins in graves
- Map 33 Group 3 shield-bosses in graves
- Map 34 Group 3/6 shield-bosses in graves

- Map 35 Group 6 shield-bosses in graves
- Map 36 Group 7 shield-bosses in graves
- Map 37 Spearheads in graves
- Map 38 Swords in graves
- Map 39 Seaxes in graves
- Map 40 Triangular buckles in graves
- Map 41 Double-tongued buckles in graves
- Map 42 Openwork buckles in graves
- Map 43 Serrated-edge buckles in graves
- Map 44 Small simple buckles in graves
- Map 45 Firesteels in graves
- Map 46 Bags (excluding firesteels/purse mounts) in graves
- Map 47 Boxes in graves
- Map 48 Padlocks in graves
- Map 49 Glass vessels in graves
- Map 50 Hand-made pottery in graves
- Map 51 Wheel-thrown pottery in graves
- Map 52 Metal-bound wooden buckets in graves
- Map 53 Wooden cups and bowls in graves
- Map 54 Spatulate tools in graves
- Map 55 Pointed iron tools in graves
- Map 56 All iron tools in graves
- Map 57 Whetstones in graves
- Map 58 Shears in graves
- Map 59 Spoons and spatulas in graves
- Map 60 Food offerings and animal amulets in graves
- Map 61 Found amulets in graves
- Map 62 Anglo-Saxon sites, both burial and settlement, c. 560 (after Hines 1990, fig 3)

## LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 4 FIGURES: OBJECTS FROM THE ANGLO-SAXON CONVERSION PERIOD .....	409
Fig 4.1	Coins and disc brooches
Fig 4.2	Workboxes
Fig 4.3	Linked pins
Fig 4.4	Bullae and disc pendants
Fig 4.5	Cabochon pendants, miscellaneous pendants and amethyst beads
Fig 4.6	Metal beads
Fig 4.7	Polychrome glass beads
Fig 4.8	Polychrome glass beads and melon beads
Fig 4.9	Small monochrome glass beads
Fig 4.10	Silver wire rings
Fig 4.11	Necklaces
Fig 4.12	Necklace from Desborough Nh
Fig 4.13	Annular, penannular and safety-pin brooches
Fig 4.14	Bracelets
Fig 4.15	Finger-rings and heckles
Fig 4.16	Chatelaine elements
Fig 4.17	Chatelaine elements
Fig 4.18	Chatelaines
Fig 4.19	Whorls and thread-pickers
Fig 4.20	Cowrie shells and beads
Fig 4.21	Combs and lace-tags
Fig 4.22	Lace-tags, shoe-buckle/lace-tag pairs and spiral-headed pins
Fig 4.23	Hooked tags and shield-bosses
Fig 4.24	Swords
Fig 4.25	Seaxes
Fig 4.26	Triangular buckles, double-tongued buckles, openwork buckles and serrated-edge buckles
Fig 4.27	Small simple buckles and firesteels
Fig 4.28	Bags
Fig 4.29	Bag and box elements
Fig 4.30	Casket elements
Fig 4.31	Casket and padlocks



- Fig 4.32 Hanging bowl and "Coptic" bowl
- Fig 4.33 Glass vessels
- Fig 4.34 Pottery vessels
- Fig 4.35 Metal-bound buckets
- Fig 4.36 Wooden cups and bowls, pointed iron tools
- Fig 4.37 Typical spatulate tools
- Fig 4.38 Atypical spatulate tools
- Fig 4.39 Whetstones and shears
- Fig 4.40 Roman-style spoons
- Fig 4.41 Iron spoons, bronze spoon spatulas and silver toilet set
- Fig 4.42 Playing pieces
- Fig 4.43 Bridles

CHAPTER 5 FIGURES: OBJECTS FROM THE CLASSICAL WORLD . . . . . 452

- Fig 5.1 Contemporary illustrations of collars and necklaces
- Fig 5.2 Contemporary illustrations of collars and necklaces
- Fig 5.3 Contemporary illustrations of collars and necklaces
- Fig 5.4 Necklace and cabochon pendants
- Fig 5.5 Necklace and bullae
- Fig 5.6 Collar and filigree pendants
- Fig 5.7 Coin pendants, tooth pendants and cross pendant
- Fig 5.8 Wire rings
- Fig 5.9 Small monochrome beads, polychrome bead and melon beads
- Fig 5.10 Metal beads and amethyst beads
- Fig 5.11 Linked pins
- Fig 5.12 Linked pins and chain elements
- Fig 5.13 Annular brooches, penannular brooches and safety-pin brooches
- Fig 5.14 Composite disc brooches
- Fig 5.15 Pictorial depiction of the single brooch fashion; finger-rings
- Fig 5.16 Bracelets
- Fig 5.17 Small cylindrical metal boxes, perhaps the prototypes of workboxes
- Fig 5.18 Keys and latchlifters
- Fig 5.19 Toilet sets and double-tongued buckles
- Fig 5.20 Buckles with serrated-edge plates
- Fig 5.21 Openwork buckles and hooked tag

- Fig 5.22 Anglo-Saxon skillets
- Fig 5.23 Roman skillet and glass bowls
- Fig 5.24 Medallions and tombstone showing warriors
- Fig 5.25 Tombstones showing mounted warriors
- Fig 5.26 Whorls
- Fig 5.27 Caskets
- Fig 5.28 Large and small padlocks
- Fig 5.29 Pointed iron tools and bucket fittings
- Fig 5.30 Tombstone showing shoe-maker at work
- Fig 5.31 Shears, die and playing pieces
- Fig 5.32 Conversion-period lamps, Roman candlestick and examples of Anglo-Saxon and Byzantine interlace

## PREFACE

The impetus for this study arose from my work over three summer seasons at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk. Listening to discussions on the unusual nature of the site and its role in illustrating the political developments of the seventh century, I asked what other contemporary Anglo-Saxon cemeteries were like and what they told us about the period. I was told that although there were not very many of them, they had never been collected up and studied as a group, so I should go and look up the individual excavation reports and make up my own mind. Looking through the examples usually cited as typical seventh-century cemeteries, often known as "Final Phase" cemeteries, it became clear that there was enough unanalysed material to justify studying them for a DPhil.

The initial object of the study was, therefore, to cover the whole range of burial practice from *c.* 600 AD, when it was agreed that there was a recognisable change in artefact styles, to the point at which the picture becomes complicated by the arrival of elements of Scandinavian culture, *c.* 850 AD. But this initial ambition was soon thwarted by the enormous quantity of data that was found, most already published. The remit of the study was then focussed on the grave-goods, and attention concentrated on bringing typological and chronological order into the material, with a preliminary interpretation of the variety and character of the chosen artefacts in terms of the taste and politics of the day.

Four recently excavated and still unpublished Conversion-period cemeteries, Castledyke SHu, Lechlade GI, Didcot Power Station Ox and Harford Farm Nf, have provided a substantial amount of the data used in this thesis. These cemeteries are all still undergoing post-excavation analysis, and the results used here are therefore provisional.

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#### **DECLARATION**

This thesis is based on original research by the author. No part of the research has been previously published, with the exception of an article summarising first impressions (Geake 1992), and a short note on double-tongued buckles (Geake 1994).

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CONVERSION-PERIOD ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERIES

#### 1.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The seventh and eighth centuries, or the "Conversion period" in England (see Note on Terminology) encompasses years in which the English kingdoms went through far-reaching transformations in their ideologies, technologies, trade relationships, social structures and other aspects of their society, and began to record these in their own contemporary written accounts. The problems that beset the study of the migration period - the extent of mass migration or élite takeover, the origins of the territorial units which developed into kingdoms, the nature of social control - have to a certain extent by the seventh century either become clearer or less relevant (Higham 1992; Bassett (ed) 1989; Yorke 1990, 1-24). The study of the Conversion period has to confront a new set of problems. The relationship between the newly arrived Church and secular authority, the conflicts and alliances between the various English kingdoms, and the appearance of controls on overseas trade are central themes, and the study of these persists into the later Anglo-Saxon period (Kirby 1991; Stenton 1971; Hodges 1982).

Although the themes which are studied in the migration period and the Conversion period do differ, the ways in which these themes are reflected in material culture, and the theoretical underpinnings on which the interpretation of the observed material culture can be founded, share a certain amount of common ground. The most basic assumption is that there is a meaningful degree of self-expression in the material culture, whether the expression is of German cultural identity, or of royal power, or of Christian ideology, or of cosmopolitan wealth. It will be argued in this thesis that the intended meaning of burial changes radically within the Conversion period, and the theory which allows interpretations to be drawn from the furnished burial of the migration period can equally be used to form hypotheses about the rather different world of Conversion-period England.

#### 1.2 HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF THE CONVERSION PERIOD

The archaeological remains of the early Anglo-Saxons were first recognised from their distinctively furnished graves. Among the earliest excavations of these were a series of Conversion-period sites in Kent, excavated most notably by Faussett and Douglas in the second

half of the eighteenth century (Faussett 1856; Douglas 1793). Douglas was the first to recognise the burials as those of early post-Conversion Anglo-Saxons, Faussett believing that they were "Romans Britonized" or "Britons Romanized" (1856, 38). The expansion of the leisured classes during the nineteenth century, together with advances in geology and evolutionary biology, led to a great interest in archaeology. Enormous numbers of visible monuments such as barrows were investigated, particularly in Kent, Derbyshire and East Yorkshire; among these were many of the Conversion period (e.g. Akerman 1855; Bateman 1848; Bateman 1861; Mortimer 1905). At this time, however, although Roman and Anglo-Saxon antiquities could now be distinguished, there had been no comparative work on Anglo-Saxon material to establish chronology.

The paramount interest in the early days of Anglo-Saxon archaeology was therefore the recovery of artefacts, often only to fill museum cases with lovely things. The first half of the twentieth century was a time of consolidation, with enough having been found to build up typologies and chronologies (e.g. Leeds 1913; Baldwin Brown 1915; Åberg 1926), and to relate various elements of the burials to historically known events, such as the arrival of Christianity. More work took place on migration-period (fifth- and sixth-century) artefact types, such as brooches and pottery, however, than on Conversion-period objects; there were more of the former and they could be more easily tied into mainland European sequences. The pioneering phase of early medieval archaeology, culminating in the construction of chronologies, was mirrored in the study of documentary history at the time, which was concentrating on establishing a basic framework of who had done what and where, before asking why.

The basic descriptive framework for Conversion-period cemeteries was largely the work of two people, Lethbridge and Leeds. It seems to have been a common assumption at this time that Christians would not have been buried with grave-goods (e.g. Fox 1923, 237-298), a view which was convincingly argued against by Lethbridge in his report on the Burwell Ca excavations (1931, 82-84). Lethbridge pointed out that if all furnished Anglo-Saxon graves had to date from before 600, there was a large gap in funerary deposition in the seventh century. He argued that Burwell had to have been in use in the seventh century, and that the comparatively small number of furnished graves were not incompatible with it being the burial place of a Christian community.

An alternative view, that those buried in the Conversion-period cemeteries were actually fifth-century Christian Romano-Britons, was put forward two years later by Kendrick (1933). In reaction to this, Lethbridge refined his argument in the Shudy Camps Ca report, to argue that not only were the graves seventh-century, but that their start coincided with the arrival of the

Augustinian mission, which was strong evidence for their Christian nature (Lethbridge 1936, 27-29). Lethbridge's chronology was then taken up by Leeds, who had excavated two Conversion-period cemeteries, in 1928 and 1930 (1936, 96-98; 1940). He entitled the last chapter of his book *Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology "The Final Phase"*, as the book was largely based on the art-styles on metalwork excavated from cemeteries, and these cemeteries represented the final phase of furnished burial. He believed that the continuing use of grave-goods was due to a slow popular acceptance of Christianity.

The popularity of Leeds's book and the clarity of his arguments meant that his views, and the term he coined, passed into the general consciousness of archaeologists working in the Anglo-Saxon period. Almost ever since, an interpretation of mortuary behaviour based on personal religion has been dominant in the study of Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon cemeteries.

Anglo-Saxon archaeology at this time was almost all based on cemetery evidence, due to the comparative visibility of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and invisibility of settlements. Questions about some types of technology, such as metalworking and pottery production, could be asked, and hypotheses about the spread of Anglo-Saxon settlement could be formulated and related to subsistence strategies and to the records of conquest (e.g. Myres in Collingwood and Myres 1936), but without settlement evidence little could be tested and the study of Anglo-Saxon society could not develop. Rahtz has described the rise of Anglo-Saxon settlement archaeology from its first beginnings and particularly from 1957 onwards (Rahtz 1976, 51-52). The ability to recognise timber-framed buildings revolutionised ideas about Anglo-Saxon building techniques, and as the number of settlements identified grew, many questions about the lifestyle of the Anglo-Saxons - agriculture, diet, living space, size of settlement and so on - could be answered (Wilson (ed) 1976).

In the 1960s and 1970s, at the same time as there was an explosion in the number of excavated settlements, developments in archaeological theory meant that there was an increasing interest in asking more sophisticated questions about social and political organisation and ideology. Within Anglo-Saxon cemetery studies, this led to an interest in establishing social ranking within communities from comparisons of the lavishness of deposit in furnished graves (e.g. Shepherd 1979a and 1979b; Arnold 1980; Brennan 1985). Both Lethbridge and Leeds, however, had described a decline in the numbers and the wealth of furnished graves as one of the characteristics of Conversion-period cemeteries, due to factors other than wealth or social ranking in life, and so these sites could not be included in studies on social organisation. The study of migration-period (fifth- and sixth-century) Anglo-Saxon cemeteries continued to yield interesting



results, then, but the study of the Conversion-period sites still lagged behind.

Conversion-period cemeteries continued to be excavated and published, with the publication of Gurney's excavations at Chamberlain's Barn Bd by Hyslop in 1963 being the most influential. Building on Leeds's work and the cemeteries excavated since, she summarised the attributes by which a Conversion-period furnished cemetery might be recognised (Hyslop 1963, 190-91), which has since become the standard model (Boddington 1990). This was followed by a long section, typical at the time, on how this particular cemetery fitted into the known documentary history of the region and of England as a whole, and this has been less well remembered (Hyslop 1963, 191-94). But in it she makes the perceptive observation that the phenomenon of a changed material culture is found all over England, not respecting the old "Anglian" and "Saxon" *Kulturkreise*, and that the new objects appear to draw much of their inspiration from Southern European and Roman prototypes.

Although by now quite a number of Conversion-period cemeteries had been excavated and published, only a very few had become well-known (Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 45 provides a list of the most famous), and there was little synthesis or explanation on an inter-site level; particularly, there was little work that brought together old data from the isolated mound excavations, and new data from the groups of furnished graves. Following the decline in the use of diffusion as an explanatory device in prehistory (Renfrew 1973) it became less and less fashionable within Anglo-Saxon archaeology to suggest putative "origins" for artefact types, and Hyslop's work on this seems to have been largely forgotten.

Instead, some important pioneering work was being done, notably by Evison and Hawkes, on the objects from the cemeteries, to try to establish the sort of chronologies that had been constructed for fifth- and sixth-century objects some time before. This was done partly by reference to the small number of famous English sites and partly by analogy with the better-dated Continental artefact series (e.g. Evison 1956; 1963a; 1987; Evison in Hurst 1961; Meaney and Hawkes 1970; Hawkes and Grove 1963; Hawkes in Philp 1973; Hawkes 1974).

The concentration on settlement archaeology in the 1960s and 1970s led to a rise in the number and quality of excavations on monastic sites (Cramp 1976). Almost as a by-product, a series of unfurnished Conversion-period cemeteries was found. As church archaeology in general became appreciated as a useful source of information, the monastic cemeteries were joined by other unfurnished churchyard cemeteries. As a result, interest in the origins of churchyard burial grew, but was still hampered by the perceived dearth of Conversion-period sites outside

churchyards (Morris 1983, 51-52, 54).

The study of Conversion-period cemeteries began to move towards the more sophisticated area of political and social organisation and ideology with the completion of John Shephard's (as yet unpublished) thesis on the barrow burials of the late sixth and seventh centuries (Shephard 1979a). Shephard created a barrow typology based on the isolation or grouping of mound burials, which took into account the different sections of the population that had access to mound burial. He used this, in conjunction with "wealth scores" (see below, section 1.5) to suggest that the rise of the barrow phenomenon in the later sixth and seventh centuries was due to a changed view of the ownership and holding of property, particularly resources such as land and mineral deposits. The decline in grave-goods was related to these changed notions of property, and was due primarily to a concomitant change in notions of inheritance. Shephard concentrated on an economic explanation, but he also viewed mounds as a device for active communication, using (though not in an explicit way) the structuralist concept of archaeological sites as language, with a decodable vocabulary and grammar, the barrows stating the ownership of the resource.

The 1983-92 campaign of field research at Sutton Hoo Sf became the focus for this type of more sophisticated structuralist-based interpretation. After the discovery of the ship-burial in 1939, initial work done on the material from Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo had largely centred around questions of the location of the body of the man commemorated in the mound, who this man was and who had buried him, inevitably concentrating on the beliefs of the man and of his buriers. The rite of the ship was much discussed, with reference to Scandinavia and to Beowulf, itself the subject of much argument about its Christian or pagan emphasis. Carver has since changed the course of the debate, arguing that the style of burial was primarily designed to advertise a set of ideological allegiances in the face of competitive threats, and to emphasise the power of those burying by manipulating the ideas of the living about both the dead and their descendants (Carver 1986; 1989; 1992c).

The increased interest in Sutton Hoo attracted scholars of many disciplines, who were used to seeing the Church as just one of the political forces within the power struggles of the middle Anglo-Saxon period (Farrell and Neumann de Vegvar (eds) 1992; Carver (ed) 1992). Sutton Hoo, however, was seen as so outstandingly unusual that at first it did not stimulate much comparative work on the more mundane cemeteries, as if Sutton Hoo had as much in common with a typical Conversion-period cemetery as a castle has with a cob cottage. In the late 1980s and 1990s, however, a number of well-furnished Conversion-period cemeteries have been excavated, notably at Castledyke SHu, Lechlade Ox, Didcot Power Station Ox, Harford Farm

Nf, Ipswich Buttermarket Sf and Garton Station NHu. These, in conjunction with the research based around Sutton Hoo, have kindled new interest in Conversion-period cemeteries.

### 1.3 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It has already been stated in section 1.1 that the fundamental theoretical perspective which underlies much of the archaeological interpretation of the Anglo-Saxon period is that its material culture is meaningfully constituted, the result of conscious or unconscious self-expression. Artefacts, "ecofacts" and structures vary, however, in the amount of self-expression that went into their manufacture and in the amount that they can reveal. The potential information to be gained from the material record depends on the choice of which data to examine, as well as its interrogation and interpretation; these in turn depend on the examiner's theoretical viewpoint, which should ideally be made explicit.

The view that material culture is meaningfully constituted means that purely functional explanations for the presence of grave-goods are unacceptable. Even if they were merely the concomitant of clothed burial, this begs the question of why the deceased should have been dressed for burial at all - and how the clothing was chosen. The furnishing of a burial is not an activity necessary for daily life, and must therefore be fulfilling some other need within society. The most obvious need is to counter the instability caused by the death of a member of the community. Furnished burial should, therefore, be a particularly rich source of data with which to reconstruct the idealised self-expression of a society.

The elements of society's self-expression which it is possible to reconstruct from burial archaeology depend on what that society was attempting to express through its graves. If the furnishings are the result of a feeling that the body should be wrapped before burial, this helps us to understand attitudes towards the human body and towards death. If it is considered that grave-goods were deposited as equipment for an afterlife, this may help in the reconstruction of religious belief. If luxury goods were deposited in order to advertise the wealth of the deceased, conclusions can be drawn about the social structure of the community. If styles of grave-good were being used to signal membership of particular groups, interpretations will centre on questions of cultural identity and the relationships between those groups.

In addition to the basic theoretical stance that material culture is meaningful, then, decisions have to be made as to what the material culture of burial archaeology means. This meaning will, of course, vary considerably over time and space, and will inevitably hold more complexities than

any theoretical model can encompass; the model is merely a way of presenting one of many possible comprehensible systems.

The constituents, the variety and the richness of Conversion-period burial assemblages mean that it is extremely unlikely that the objects found are simply the result of the wrapping of the body before burial; this model can be discarded. Similarly, it is unlikely that they represent equipment for the after-life. Those who had accepted Christianity, and therefore a stated belief in an afterlife, did not routinely furnish graves, and as far as non-Christians are concerned, there is a well-known paucity of evidence for belief in any sort of life after death. There is no reference to an after-life in any of the written sources cited in Wilson's study of paganism (1992), and the dissimilarity of burial assemblages from domestic assemblages, particularly in the amount of pottery and food debris, is marked.

The question of to what extent Conversion-period grave-goods were being used to indicate wealth or status is more of a problem. Although it is possible in theory to "score" a grave according to the objects it contains (English examples include Shephard 1979b; Arnold 1980; Brennan 1985) the validity of social interpretations drawn from these results have been questioned (Samson 1987). Extrapolating social ranking from Conversion-period assemblages is likely to be even more dubious in view of the generally declining numbers of grave-goods (Shephard 1979b, 58 and fig 4). Is Preshaw Ha, with a gold disc pendant and an unusual gold and garnet cabochon pendant, a rich grave? Not particularly, in terms of the number of objects, but it must have been the grave of a rich woman, or the grave of a woman buried by a rich family or community, with access to gold and garnets. When only one or two (perhaps token) grave-goods were included in the deposit, it becomes likely that much of the available resources were excluded from the grave, and it therefore becomes dangerous to speculate from negative evidence on the resources that may have been available to the burying community.

For example, Sutton Hoo Mound 1 is often cited as the grave of a king, partly on the basis of the great richness of its deposit. Certainly the wealth needed to construct such a burial must have been restricted to a very small section of society, and the wealth of very rich graves must imply that the buriers had access to considerable resources. But whether or not Mound 1 contained or was constructed by a pagan, a waverer or a Christian, there is reason to believe that other post-Conversion royal burials were unfurnished. The only historically known burial places of Anglo-Saxon kings have been in or around churches, and virtually all excavated graves in these contexts have been unfurnished (see Chapter 6 for discussion of churchyard burial). The status of church burials was expressed, instead, through other ideological investments such as

endowments to churches.

As we have such strong hints, both from archaeological and historical evidence, that unfurnished burial may be the preferred option of the highest social stratum, the simple use of wealth scores to infer the social rank of the buried individual is clearly untenable.

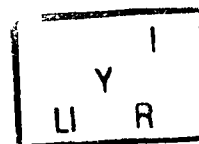
The other most obvious use of grave-goods is to show membership of a group, and more particularly to advertise a cultural identity. Migration-period grave-goods have long been used to infer that the occupant of a grave belonged to the "early Anglo-Saxon" culture, and some sixth-century assemblages can even be used to subdivide this into the identification of an "Anglian" or a "Saxon". Because these identities are difficult to recognise during the earliest part of the migration period, it has been suggested that they were perceived cultural identities constructed after the initial migrations rather than ethnic realities which were imported from the Continent (Hills 1979, 316). The continuing use of complex grave-goods into the Conversion period suggests that this model has lasting relevance beyond the end of the migration period.

The theoretical perspective of this study, then, is that grave-goods are used actively in Conversion-period burials, and that it is likely that they were used to signal some form of cultural identity.

#### 1.4 GENERAL RESEARCH AIMS FOR CONVERSION-PERIOD BURIALS

From section 1.2, it will be clear that much of the basic work of identification and description of the technology and subsistence activities of the Anglo-Saxons has now been carried out. The research agenda within early medieval archaeology has now expanded to add a social and ideological interpretation to the description of activity.

Anglo-Saxon mortuary remains are an ideal data-set to interrogate for answers to questions of social organisation and political influence, allegiances and power. The burial practices of the Conversion period, however, have received so little attention that the present study needed to begin with an exercise in identification (Chapter 2). An initial reconnaissance of the material suggested that Conversion-period burial sites could be divided into four types: princely, largely furnished, largely unfurnished and deviant (Geake 1992). These, it was thought, could be distinguished by differences in themes, such as investment in artefacts and in grave structures, isolation or grouping of burial, and so on.



As work has progressed, however, it has become clear that these differences do not combine to distinguish such broad and simple groups. The variability of Conversion-period sites would be better explored and characterised through looking at a number of aspects separately, which would produce more sophisticated statements about the range of burial practice in the Anglo-Saxon Conversion-period and its interpretation.

Some of these aspects of Conversion-period burial are looked at in more detail below. They include below-ground structural investments, such as coffins, chambers and other grave-linings; above-ground structural investments, such as mounds, markers and churches; aspects of the treatment of the body, such as multiple burial, cremation, and avoidance of or intercutting with earlier graves; the number of burials on the site; and the location of the cemetery in the landscape, particularly with respect to settlement.

Below-ground *structural investment* has a short-term effect, since it only benefits the buried or burier at the funeral, until the grave is filled in. Boats, beds, coffins, chambers and other sorts of grave-linings fall into this category. Above-ground structures, such as mounds, ring-ditches and other grave-markers, as well as churches, were long-term investments. Structural features are, of course, investments of energy, and can therefore be seen either as alternatives to grave-good investment, or as supplements, depending on whether they tend to be found with "poorly" or "richly" furnished graves. By the end of the Conversion period, the church building is the most obvious *structural alternative to ideological investment* in grave-goods, but many other material aspects of Christianity could be included under this heading, such as sculpture, manuscripts, vestments, liturgical vessels and so on.

Analysis of the *treatment of the body* can be split into two parts, the way the body is treated before and during the funeral, and the way in which the bodies in the cemetery as a whole are treated over the life of the cemetery. Variations in the first are largely differences in the amount of energy invested in this part of the funeral. Cremation, for example, takes more planning, effort and time than inhumation, and carefully orientated inhumation more than a grave just dug anyhow. Although the treatment of the individual body within the burial rite is only visible for a short time, it is as useful a signalling device as that of the artefacts placed within a grave.

One of the broad types of burial postulated in 1992 was the "deviant" burial site, characterised by a lack of grave-goods and a range of unusual body positions, particularly those indicating decapitation, hanging, binding of the hands and feet and prone burial. The first indication that these sites might date to the middle Anglo-Saxon period was the discovery of a number of

"deviant" burials at Sutton Hoo between 1986 and 1991 (Carver 1992a); "deviant" burials were then found in ones and twos at other Conversion-period sites. Since then, however, work has been done on other sites consisting largely or solely of "deviant" burials, which has firmly established their date in the tenth and eleventh centuries (Reynolds 1993, 31). Radiocarbon dates have recently been produced for five of the Sutton Hoo deviant burials, of 540-700, 650-780, 650-955, 670-830 and 680-820 AD (Carver 1993a, 18-19), so Sutton Hoo is at present unique in having a homogeneous group of Conversion-period "deviant" burials.

The second aspect of the treatment of the body is the way in which the bodies in the cemetery as a whole are treated over the life of the cemetery. There is a clear difference between sites where graves are marked and do not intercut, as if the preservation of the articulated skeleton is important, and sites where the dead are packed into a limited space in "generations" of intercutting burials, each generation in effect destroying the bodies of the earlier generation.

In general, both largely furnished and largely unfurnished Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon burial sites appear to be more carefully organised than earlier ones, with a greater proportion of sites adhering to a consistent west-east orientation, with well-spaced graves, probably marked, sometimes in rows. The reason for this might be thought to be an increasing importance placed on the body of the deceased, as emphasised by the Church's doctrines of the Second Coming. However, this change appears soon to be superseded in some unfurnished cemeteries, by a very noticeable increase in destructive intercutting burials, removing any chance of the literal resurrection of the body. The change in the way that bodies were treated in middle Anglo-Saxon Southampton has been discussed by Morton (1992, 74-76); it may be related to a change in ideology, or a simple practical effect linked to changes in the location of burials in the landscape, with space for burial within the settlement being necessarily restricted.

Examination of the *location of cemeteries*, coupled with data on the treatment of the body, provides information on attitudes to the dead, such as whether it is felt that the cemetery should be part of the settlement of the living community, and whether this attitude has changed over time. The siting of the cemetery also has implications for the visibility of any above-ground structures.

The type of settlement which the cemetery served is also relevant. Part of the state formation process during the seventh century was the foundation of proto-urban wics and burhs, which appear to have been subject to a considerable degree of planning control, and control could also have been exerted over the burial rites practised there. A particularly "urban" set of signals may

have been sent from the burial rite, showing a cosmopolitan society, or a conformist hierarchy. Similarly, burial grounds connected to royal palace sites may exhibit a different range of burial practices to those of village sites.

Knowledge of the *number of burials* on each site, and whether the entire cemetery has been excavated, helps to distinguish between the type of burial rite restricted to one particular person, or a small group, and that available to all members of the community. The theory that the grouping of graves was related to their function was the basis of Shephard's successful typology of mound burials (1979a, 1.9-1.16). Of course, there is a danger of subjectivity in deciding whether an isolated grave is one of a high-status person who has been isolated from the *hoi polloi*, or one of a rather unpleasant person whom no-one else wants in the communal burial-ground. This can perhaps be decided through an assessment of the amount of energy invested in the burial, whether in the form of grave-goods or structural features.

All of these aspects of Conversion-period burial are worthy of further study, but most would merit a research project in their own right. The quantity of data (see Chapter 2) is now too large to include these aspects in the present study.

## 1.5 SCOPE AND AIM OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Both for practical and academic reasons, the study of the grave-goods of Conversion-period burial sites is a priority. This is because none of the other aspects looked at in section 1.4 can be explored without a secure chronological framework within which to set the research, which can only be gained by using the closed assemblages of the grave-goods. The richness of form and ornamentation on many of the objects makes them powerful signalling devices, with detail that it is impossible to discern from the remains of, say, structures. The present study can form initial interpretative hypotheses from this detail, and future work can subsequently test them against datasets from other aspects of Conversion-period mortuary behaviour.

The aim of this study, then, is the first systematic descriptive analysis of the entire range of Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon grave-goods, and an exploration of their causes and meanings. It will begin with the identification of a corpus of Conversion-period burial sites (Chapter 2), and then go on to explain the research agenda and methodology of the study (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 will then examine selected artefact types in turn, looking at their form, chronology, practical and social functions, and distributions. A secure and detailed chronology will be constructed, enabling accurate and reliable dating of the burials. Chapter 5 presents the results



of a search for the prototypes and cultural affiliations of the grave-goods. Chapter 6 will then summarise the changes in the assemblages and the ways in which they were used over time. From this will be drawn a model based on the factors reviewed in Chapter 1; how the artefacts were used to convey and construct social, political and ideological meanings, how these things changed, and the historical context which could explain such things.

## CHAPTER TWO

### IDENTIFICATION OF THE DATA: THE GRAVES OF CONVERSION-PERIOD ENGLAND

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

As seen in Chapter 1, certain types of Anglo-Saxon Conversion-period burial site have been studied separately, such as barrows and "Final Phase" cemeteries. A study of the whole range has not previously been attempted, and until now there has been no systematic collation of the available evidence for burial in this period. It is therefore necessary to explain the criteria for the data-gathering for the present study, before assessing the quality of the data gathered.

Chronology is obviously crucial to the assessment of a burial site as Conversion-period. At its most basic, an Anglo-Saxon Conversion-period burial site must fall within the geographical area of Anglo-Saxon influence, must be pre-Viking and post-Roman, and must contain graves which are not dated by artefacts or vertical or horizontal stratigraphy before the seventh century, or after the middle of the ninth century. Section 2.2 will therefore examine some aspects of dating methods which are particularly relevant to the study of *Conversion-period burial sites*, and section 2.3 will define the criteria by which a site was identified as such. Section 2.4 will describe and evaluate the resulting corpus of all identifiable Anglo-Saxon burial sites from 600 to 850, details of which can be found in the *Gazetteer*.

#### 2.2 DATING METHODS

##### 2.2.1 Introduction

Most of the dating of Anglo-Saxon graves has been accomplished through relative dating techniques, such as form analogy, find-combination in sealed assemblages (more often termed "dating by association"), horizontal or vertical stratigraphy, and so on. The "finds" whose types and forms are studied do not have to be artefacts, but can be recognisable and comparable features of the interment, such as the treatment of the body, presence of different types of structural features and so on. Careless use of relative dating techniques has been deplored (Wilson 1959) but Gräslund's revision and clarification (1976) has made the procedures more explicit and easier to use.

When relative dating methods are applied to grave-goods, the problems of period of manufacture, curation, inheritance and date of final deposition emphasised by Wilson are particularly pressing. Broken and worn objects suggest that the artefacts were used in life and not made specifically for the burial, but we do not know whether personal possessions were kept throughout a lifespan or regularly traded in for the newest model. Use over a lifespan would mean that the earliest and latest dates of manufacture of the objects in a single grave could be over half a century apart. In addition to this, objects significantly older than the bulk of the assemblage do occur; although it has been suggested that personal items could not be inherited, and therefore had to be placed in the grave (Werner 1964, 202; Stein 1967, 181-83), the evidence for this comes from inferences extrapolated from later German law, and in England we do not know how much was inheritable at this time.

Despite these caveats, some object types, particularly female jewellery, can be consistently dated to within a half-century. Hirst has suggested that Anglo-Saxon women might have put their brooches back in the melting pot every ten years or so, which would provide a mechanism for the observed pattern (Hirst 1985, 95). Occasionally a grave has to be re-dated, because it has become impossible to stretch the chronological sequence to suit the date originally assigned to it, as in the case of the "Arnegunde" grave at St Denis described in section 2.2.3 below. When graves have to be moved fifty years later or earlier in order for a logical sequence to be maintained, it suggests that the sequence has a basis in fact, and is not merely a product of the classificatory instincts of the Anglo-Saxon archaeologist.

Some relative dating methods, such as coin-dating and gold-analysis (see below, sections 2.2.5 and 2.2.6), provide an absolute *terminus post quem* for a date of manufacture, but otherwise, like all relative dating, must be subject to the influences of inheritance and curation. Absolute dating methods, which are not subject to these problems, are however less precise; a radiocarbon date quoted as plus or minus eighty years at one standard deviation, a common level of resolution (Renfrew and Bahn 1991, 128), gives a range of equally likely dates over more than a century and a half. This imprecision, coupled with the affordability and apparent precision of the relative dating methods, has meant that cemeteries without diagnostic grave-goods are often neglected, as doubtful in date, likely to be medieval, and not worth the expense of radiocarbon dating (see below, section 2.2.7).

This section does not cover the details of all possible dating methods. It will examine a few crucial and currently debated issues particularly relevant to the Conversion period.

### 2.2.2 Occurrence seriation

The term "seriation" refers to the systematic tabulation of artefact type combinations. The word has been applied to two related techniques, frequency seriation and occurrence seriation (Gräslund 1976). Frequency seriation relies on the assumption that object types occur in small numbers at the beginning and end of their period of manufacture and use, and in larger numbers in their heyday. The frequency curves for each object type are combined to give a relative sequence of types. The technique needs large numbers of each object type to work successfully, and so has usually been used with flint or pottery assemblages (Carver 1985).

Occurrence seriation uses the association of individual finds within an assemblage without reference to their frequency. A table is constructed with the assemblages along one axis, and the find types along the other. Crosses are marked to show which finds occur in which assemblages, and then the diagram is shuffled, by hand or by computer, to obtain a diagonal pattern of crosses moving through time. Occurrence seriation requires much smaller numbers of each object type, and so is more appropriate for use on early medieval grave-finds; henceforth, the term "seriation" will refer to occurrence seriation.

Shephard has seriated some of the artefact types found in later sixth- and seventh-century barrows (1979a, fig 4.1; see Table 2.1). This seriation is anchored by three coin-dated graves, and appears to work well for the small sample of graves used. However, when more recent coin-dates and other graves are added to this seriation, the chronology becomes less clear, as the coin-dates are no longer in sequence and the relative chronological ranges show slightly more overlap (Table 2.2).

John Hines has written a critique of seriation methods as applied to the early Anglo-Saxon period (Hines 1992). Seriation merely orders artefact assemblages according to their similarity to one another, and a dissimilarity does not have to be the result of chronological differences, but can be due to differences in ideology; class, gender, religion, and so on. Obviously, positive evidence of association means that the artefacts in the assemblage must have been available at the same time to be buried together, but using negative evidence of association to imply chronological differences is dangerous. Many of Hines's objections hold true for the seventh to ninth centuries, and the results presented in Chapter 4 take these into account.

### 2.2.3 Style II

The decision as to which cemeteries to include as the earliest in the survey therefore depends to a great extent on the form and style of the grave-goods, and their current dating by the archaeological community. The origins in England of the major art-style associated with seventh-century metalwork, Salin's Style II, has been dated by some authorities (e.g. Webster and Ellis Davidson 1967, 29; Speake 1980, 26-28; Hines 1984, 30-32) to the second half of the sixth century. This has been suggested mainly by the assemblages from three Continental graves which apparently have independent evidence of date; St Denis 49 near Paris, Soest 106 in Westphalia and Klepsau 4 in Baden-Württemberg. With very few exceptions, however, Style II does not appear on classic Anglo-Saxon sixth-century metalwork such as cruciform, square-headed or saucer brooches (Speake 1980, 93). It might therefore seem that Style II is not, in England, used at the same time as these artefact types. Before this can be assumed, however, the question of when Style II was adopted in the rest of Europe must be answered.

St Denis 49, the famous "Arnegunde" grave, contains, among other things, strap-ends and buckles with crude but undeniable Style II decoration, and a ring with an inscription which has been interpreted as variously reading ARNEGUNDE REGINA or ARNEGUNDIS. The historical Merovingian Queen *Aregund*, wife of Chlothar I, was thought to have died in the second half of the 560s, and this was thought to be her grave. Soest 106 contained a pair of bow brooches decorated with early Style II, and an only slightly worn solidus of Justinian I, minted at Ravenna between 555 and 565, set in a pendant. Klepsau 4 contained a pair of bow brooches with elements of both Style I and Style II, buried in good condition, and six pierced gold coins, including a copy of the same type of Justinian solidus found in Soest 106.

But this early dating of Style II has caused all sorts of problems and inconsistencies. It now seems that the "Arnegunde" grave, St Denis 49, cannot be identified with Aregund, unless she survived to a very ripe old age, as her son Chilperic was born between 537 and 539; the arguments for a date for St Denis 49 in the early seventh century, and against a date in the 560s, are summarised by James (1992, 248-52).

Various authors have argued against using Soest 106 to support a sixth-century date for Style II (e.g. Welch 1987, 256). The slight wear on the solidus may be due to its inclusion in a pendant, and it may not have been buried until fairly old; Haseloff, perhaps the most authoritative voice, suggests a date of burial of c. 600 (1981, 673). The Klepsau assemblage appears to have been buried when new, and Haseloff suggests a date in the last years of the sixth

century (Haseloff 1981, 614). If so, it is probably the earliest securely datable grave with Style II.

Arrhenius argues that Vendel graves X, XI, XII and XIV, which all include objects bearing Vendel styles A and B, date from between 570 and 600 (Arrhenius 1983, 65 and 68). Vendel style A corresponds to an intermediary style between Salin's Styles I and II, and Vendel style B corresponds to full Style II (Speake 1980, 22). As the intermediary style A is only found in eastern Sweden, Salin's Style II presumably originated there, in the last decade or two of the sixth century. Style II was being used in Europe at the very end of the sixth century, and so its use in English burials can therefore safely be considered to date from around 600 onwards (Welch 1987, 258). Its presence has been used in this study as an indicator of Conversion-period date.

#### 2.2.4 Horizontal stratigraphy

A method of dating that has been accepted for phasing an entire cemetery, unfurnished as well as furnished graves, is known as "horizontal stratigraphy". The method depends on the assumption that graves close in space will also be close in time, particularly if there are identifiable plots which appear to have been used in succession.

This assumption leads to the acceptance of certain cemeteries as being entirely Conversion-period, even where only a minority of the graves are individually datable. Where every grave which can be dated on the basis of its artefacts produces a date in the seventh to ninth centuries, this use is acceptable; the method has also been used to provide a convincing argument for the linear development of the cemetery at Buckland Dover (Evison 1987), although in the case of certain graves, the method has perhaps been stretched a little further than it ought to have been (see Chapter 4 *passim*, particularly sections 4.25 and 4.34). In a long-lived and less well-organised cemetery, however, its use is questionable, and when "horizontal stratigraphy" is used to date grave-goods, rather than the artefacts used to confirm a hypothesis of "horizontal stratigraphy", the method is unsafe.

#### 2.2.5 Coin-dating

Although many of the caveats expressed in section 2.2.1 apply to coins as much as to other finds, they at least have the merit of having, in theory, a reasonably secure date of manufacture, if not of re-use or deposition. In practice, there are uncertainties surrounding the dating of early

Anglo-Saxon coins, as they do not in general bear the names of historically known persons. Many of the dates attributed to coins have depended on the dates of other historical events (e.g. Rigold 1960-61, 27-29; Hawkes *et al.* 1966, 117-23; summarised in Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 184-89); more recent work is moving towards a more purely archaeological view of the objects.

For coins of Anglo-Saxon issue (gold thrymsas and silver sceattas), where the type of coin has been stated, I have followed Rigold's system (1960-61), with dating modified by Grierson and Blackburn (1986, 163-64, 184, table 14). Grierson and Blackburn prefer a date in the 640s for the Crondall hoard of gold coins, and therefore a start date for the Pada and the Vanimundus thrymsas, which do not occur at Crondall and are very debased, in the 660s. Pada thrymsas can be divided into three types. The P I type only occurs in pale gold, and so production of this coin may have stopped relatively early. The P II and P III types also occur in silver with a trace of gold, but they represent a continuation of the thrymsa rather than the start of the sceatta (Rigold 1960-61, 14). The Primary phase of Series A and B sceattas in purer silver begins about 680 (Rigold's date of shortly after 694 (Rigold 1960-61, 28) being too dependent on historical circumstances), and replaces the thrymsas with no overlap.

Series A and B sceattas run concurrently, B being divided into B X, B I, B II and B III, which follow each other in that order (Rigold 1960-61, 19-22). Type C (the Runic sceattas) replaces Type A at about the time that B II replaces B I. Grierson and Blackburn term B II, B III and C sceattas, plus their rough contemporaries the D, E, F, W and Y series, the Intermediate phase. This phase is shortlived, covering just the first decade of the eighth century (*contra* Rigold 1960-61, 24; Grierson and Blackburn 1986, table 14).

Primary sceattas are mostly found in Kent, the Thames valley, and Essex. The distribution of Intermediate sceattas is wider, including coastal East Anglia and the East Midlands. In the Secondary phase, which continued into the second half of the eighth century, the distribution extends to all parts of Anglo-Saxon England. The remaining eighteen sceatta series belong to the Secondary phase, and their chronology is complicated (Grierson and Blackburn 1986, table 14). For the purposes of the present study it is only necessary to know that the Garton-on-the-Wolds NHu 44 hoard contains G, J, K and R series, and was probably buried *c.* 720-25 (Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 165 and table 13).

The dangers of spurious precision in coin-dating are highlighted by the example of Boss Hall Sf 93, which contained a gold solidus of the Frankish king Sigeberht, dating from between 634

and 656, and a B series sceatta, too poorly preserved to be securely classified, but probably dating to *c.* 690 (Evans in Webster and Backhouse (eds) 1991, 51; Chris Scull, pers comm). Had the sceatta not been included, the presence of a composite disc brooch and cabochon garnet pendants (see sections 4.3 and 4.8), as well as the solidus, would have probably suggested a mid-seventh century date for the grave, fifty years too early.

This well-known problem, of coins providing merely a *terminus post quem*, is only part of the trouble with coin-dating. The concentration of coins dated to between 660 and 710 (see Table 2.3) means that there is a corresponding tendency to date artefacts to the later seventh century. An analogy is provided by Whyman, commenting on the early post-Roman period in Yorkshire (1993, 64); the latest imported Roman coins, dated to about 420, tend by association to pull all post-Roman events towards the early fifth century. Similarly, recognisably Conversion-period, but otherwise not closely dated, burial assemblages tend to be dated to the late seventh or early eighth century if they can eventually be linked to a coin, and earlier if they cannot, on the unspoken assumption that coins are among the latest of objects that it was thought appropriate to inter (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 200).

The objects that were found in the graves with Anglo-Saxon coins are tabulated in Table 2.4. It will be seen that there is quite a restricted range of objects, *most of the furnished coin-dated* graves containing a female-linked assemblage. Four out of the five female graves contain a necklace of silver wire rings and small glass beads, and most also have metal beads or pendants. Five of the eight furnished graves contain bags. The effect is that the dating of relatively few object types is helped by finding coins in association.

Continental issues are found far less frequently in Anglo-Saxon graves. In some cases, such as the regal issues of Frankish kings, there is little doubt about their dating; in others, such as Merovingian non-regal "civic" issues, there has been much debate. Thus, in the case of Sibertswold K 172, a grave containing two tremisses of "civic" issue, Kent has argued for a date of *c.* 635 and *c.* 640 for the two coins (in Hawkes *et al.* 1966, 112). Rigold, in his catalogue of gold coins found in England, suggests a post-Crondall date for the second coin, from *c.* 660 to *c.* 680 (in Bruce-Mitford 1975, 672 and 659). Grierson and Blackburn comment that "the chronology of Merovingian gold coinage is a jig-saw puzzle still in process of being worked out", and argue that gold was supplanted by silver in *c.* 670 (1986, 122-28, 140). An accurate date for Sibertswold K 172 is fairly important, as the grave contains a good range of pendants; I have followed Rigold's dating as a rough guide, because of the amount of wear on the coins, but it should be remembered that this is far from conclusive.



There is a wide chronological spread of Continental coins in Anglo-Saxon graves, from the middle of the sixth century onwards, and so the problem of the concentration of deposition within a short timespan does not apply. A different caveat should, however, be borne in mind; these coins are far from their place of manufacture, and perhaps circulation, and "are not necessarily either typical or informative" (Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 127).

#### 2.2.6 Gold analysis

Related to coin-dating is the technique of gold analysis, which depends on the idea that the gold used for jewellery smithing, until c. 670 AD, comes from melted-down Merovingian coinage. The successive debasement of the gold coins, until their replacement with a silver currency, has been evaluated (Kent in Bruce-Mitford 1975, 578-607), and so in theory the gold content of a piece of jewellery can be measured, and linked to the relevant issue of coinage (Hawkes *et al.* 1966).

This technique depends on two assumptions; that jewellery was made only out of current coins, and that the gold content of those coins underwent a uniform decline. Brown and Schweizer warned that the first may be wrong (1973, 182-85) and Grierson and Blackburn have effectively demolished the second (1986, 108-09). So, even though it may be possible to see some debasement in gold jewellery during the course of the seventh century, it cannot be linked to specific dates.

#### 2.2.7 Radiocarbon dating

Radiocarbon dating has rarely been used in the furnished cemeteries of the early medieval period, due to its expense and relative imprecision (Renfrew and Bahn 1991, 128, and see above section 2.2.1). Even the most sparse and undiagnostic finds are generally considered to give as good an idea of date, and at much lower cost. Radiocarbon dating has more often been used on unfurnished cemetery sites, usually to establish a rough date for the cemetery as a whole (as at Hartlepool C1 and Kemp Howe NHu), more rarely to anchor stratigraphical dates (as at Rivenhall Ex and Christ Church Ox), and hardly ever to establish the period of use of the site (with exceptions, as at Sutton Hoo Sf). This last use, however, is potentially the most informative, as it could, for example, test hypotheses about the chronological relationship of churches, church control over burial, and unfurnished cemeteries, which have been debated for years with very little evidence to support the arguments (Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 51; Morris 1983, 49-62; Morris 1989, 153).

### 2.2.8 Historical dating

Historically derived dates may provide a general indicator of date for sites connected with churches of known foundation date. The possibility must be kept in mind, however, that the site could overlie an earlier burial ground, whether by chance or design. This has been suggested at Jarrow TW, where Cramp has detected a slightly different orientation in a group of graves, three of which contain single beads (Cramp 1976, 236).

Historical dates have also been used to refine the coin-derived dating of Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1, but the new series of excavations there has given cause for re-examination. The chronological arguments are based on the collection of coins in Mound 1, which was assembled at some date after 615, almost certainly after *c.* 620-25 (Kent in Bruce-Mitford 1975, 606-07; but see Brown 1981 for an argument that the latest three coins can be precisely dated to *c.* 622-29, and Stahl and Oddy 1992 for the possibility that all the coins were minted between 595 and 613). While Mound 1 was thought to be the unique memorial of a king, it was fairly easy to allocate the burial to Rædwald, a fitting candidate, with the right set of religious beliefs and a high level of power both within and outside his kingdom. The ascription of the mound to Rædwald (who died in *c.* 624) confirmed the burial no later than 625 (Bruce-Mitford 1975, 698, 715-17). However, now that the finds from the re-excavated Mound 2 suggest a comparably rich burial contemporary with Mound 1 (Evans 1989, 11), it becomes possible that Rædwald was in fact buried in Mound 2 and that Mound 1 represents a slightly later king of East Anglia (there is no slightly earlier candidate); or, perhaps more likely, that Rædwald was buried in Mound 5, 6 or 7 and that the co-kings Sigeberht and Egric, who died together in battle, probably in 636 (Bruce-Mitford 1975, 696) were buried in Mounds 1 and 2 (see Carver 1992a, 366 for other possible suggestions). So although the *terminus post quem* of the coin-date is still secure, the precision of the historical date, based on the date of death of a particular king, is no longer tenable.

Christian motifs on artefacts have been used to provide crude historical dating to some time during or after the conversion to Christianity, but this practice is fraught with problems. It can be hard to distinguish deliberate crosses and chi-rhos from other star-like motifs, and tripartite designs from deliberate references to the Trinity (Dierkens 1991). In view of the popularity of animal designs, too, it is impossible to be certain as to whether the use of a fish motif, as on the buckle from Crundale K, symbolises Christianity. It is also obvious that artefacts carrying exotic religious symbols could have been exchanged years before these symbols had any personal significance for the recipients. The political significance of the iconography, linked as it was to the Graeco-Roman world, must have been paramount, and overrides the chronological implication.

### 2.2.9 Conclusion

From consideration of the various dating methods described above, it will be clear that problems of curation and inheritance on the one hand, and problems of precision in radiometric methods on the other, make it unsafe to attempt to date any object within half a century or so. The nomenclature for half-centuries, however, can be unwieldy, and for this reason dates have been expressed using the terms "early", "middle" and "later" seventh or eighth century, which terms should be seen as overlapping fifty-year periods. The term "late seventh or early eighth century" covers the half-century centred on 700 AD. All these terms, however, should allow a degree of imprecision.

## 2.3 IDENTIFICATION OF CONVERSION-PERIOD ANGLO-SAXON BURIALS

### 2.3.1 Introduction

The use of relative and absolute dating methods has, over the years, produced a set of diagnostic attributes of Conversion-period burials, which can be used to identify burials in the absence of individual absolute dates. These attributes include, as seen in section 1.4, various artefact types, body treatments and structural features. Section 2.3 is divided into three sub-sections covering the identification of furnished graves. Section 2.3.2 discusses object types which overlap from the sixth into the seventh centuries, and looks at the problem of an early seventh-century gap in the chronology; section 2.3.3 summarises work on grave-good types thought to be diagnostic of a Conversion-period date; and section 2.3.4 examines the problems of identifying furnished graves at the end of the period. Section 2.3.5 then covers unfurnished graves, and a final section, 2.3.6, looks at the problems of identifying graves on the boundary of the Anglo-Saxon *Kulturkreis*.

The contribution of the present study to the chronology of seventh- to ninth-century grave-goods will be discussed in Chapter 4. Section 2.3 describes the position at the start of the study, which led to the compilation of the data, and therefore confines itself to a discussion of past research.

### 2.3.2 Transitional sixth- to seventh-century grave-good types

Grave-good types that are found in England in both the migration period and in the Conversion period include a number of common, simple items such as knives, pins, beads and buckles. These objects are dauntingly plentiful and varied in form, and most have not yet been thoroughly

researched. In consequence, little is known about their chronology. The way forward may be through computer analyses such as the one that Ross has carried out for pins (1991), although the limitations of a study such as this are explored more fully in section 4.28 below.

There are also a number of more closely datable items found both in late sixth- and early seventh-century burials. These include objects such as triangular buckles (Hawkes and Grove 1963, 24-26, with a revised Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1 date of *c.* 625 onwards), shield-on-tongue buckles (Evison 1987, 87), disc brooches (Avent 1975, and see below), seaxes (Down and Welch 1990, 92-93, and see below, section 2.3.3), Group 3 and 6 shield-bosses (Evison 1963a; Dickinson and Härke 1992, and see below), and bell-beakers (Harden 1956, and see below). They appear to be concentrated in Kent, and show affinities with Frankish material, and so can be dated by comparison with coin-dated Continental contexts to the late sixth and early seventh century.

In the rest of England, there is a noticeable dearth of burials attributed to the first half of the seventh century. As the "Anglian/Saxon" and the "Final Phase" assemblage types often have little in common, they are dated some time apart, and nothing as well dated as the Kentish material has yet appeared to fill the gap. The gap is all the more noticeable if the demise of the "Anglian/Saxon" type assemblage and the change from Style I to Style II are dated to as early as *c.* 560 (see above, section 2.2.3; e.g. Hines 1984, 231).

The dating of Sutton Hoo Sf Mounds 1 and 2 to *c.* 625 and no later has perhaps exacerbated this problem, as there is a consequent reluctance to allow "Anglian/Saxon" grave-goods, perhaps bearing Style I or other sorts of old-fashioned decoration, to be still in use in the early seventh century, contemporary with the magnificently competent Style II of Mound 1. There have been some brave attempts to allocate graves with these artefact types to the early decades of the seventh century (e.g. Matthews and Hawkes 1985, 93-97, but see Dickinson 1993, 34), but more work is still needed in this area. Some "Anglian/Saxon" type grave-goods may date to the early seventh century, but they are not part of the Conversion-period culture-group, and are therefore not relevant to the present study.

### 2.3.3 Diagnostic grave-good types

Many grave-goods can be assigned to the seventh or eighth century without reference to the style of their decoration. This is due to the immense change in dress and weapon fashion that took place during the seventh century. Dates referred to in this section are of deposition, rather than

of manufacture or use, unless otherwise stated.

Brooches in general become less common, and are usually worn singly. Avent has studied the *polychrome disc brooches* decorated with garnets and filigree, found earliest and most commonly in Kent, but also in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Hampshire (Avent 1975, 113-15, and see section 4.3). Keystone and plated disc brooches have a period of manufacture from the early or middle sixth century into the seventh century, but all composite brooches can be safely dated to the seventh century (Leigh 1984; Avent 1975, 62). Only composites, then, have been taken as certain evidence of seventh-century date, and other polychrome disc brooches have been rejected unless they had secure seventh-century associations. The later eighth- and ninth-century disc brooches, such as those from Ixworth and Pentney, have not been found deposited as grave-goods.

Annular or, more rarely, penannular brooches are the other most common type of brooch. The annular or penannular brooch is first found in Britain during the pre-Roman Iron Age, continues through the Roman period and is a common form in Anglo-Saxon and Celtic Britain throughout the migration and Conversion periods. The classic studies of annular and penannular brooches are by Leeds (1945, 46-49) and Fowler (1960; 1963) respectively; annular brooches have more recently been studied by Hines (1984, 260-69) and Ager (1985).

Leeds divided *annular brooches* into seven types, a to g. Types a to d are the quoit brooches, and types e and g are broader- and narrower-banded varieties of flat brooch, generally confined to the late fifth- and sixth-century Anglian *Kulturkreis*. Leeds's type f, the half-round or oval section brooch often with moulded bead-and-reel decoration, is less well understood. He considered it to have a "distinctly classical tinge" and to have its roots in the Roman period, but to be found also in sixth- and seventh-century graves (Leeds 1945, 48).

Not included in Leeds's typology were small annular and penannular brooches of about one inch in diameter, which he considered "unquestionably late" and to be found scattered across the country (1945, 49). More details are to be found in Leeds's earlier work on "Final Phase" cemeteries, where he described them as being "novelties", found singly or in pairs, usually small, of D-shaped section, and decorated with groups of transverse lines (1936, 98-99).

If we accept Leeds's chronology, we are then left with two types of annular brooch to consider, the larger type f and the smaller untyped variety. Leeds never defined a dividing line between these, and so the classification of some examples can be tricky. Hines, in his study of the

material culture of the Anglian regions of England, has remarked on the uncertainty surrounding the dating of many annular brooches (1984, 262). He has confirmed the presence of Leeds's small untyped brooches, and has identified a limit of under about 30 mm external diameter (Hines 1984, 263). These brooches tend to have a narrow ring, are sometimes made of silver, and can have garnet settings. Annular brooches under 30 mm in diameter were therefore used as diagnostic grave-goods, particularly when they had Style II animal heads, but larger examples were rejected unless a seventh- or eighth-century date could be confirmed.

Hines also suggests that very broad rings found in Anglian areas should be regarded as a late feature, giving the example of Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 32 (Hines 1984, 263). The brooch from Castle Bytham Li, decorated with early Style II interlace, presumably also falls into this category of broad-ringed Anglian brooches, which appears in fact to be a small group of quoit brooches. The Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 32 brooch is an antique, and the Castle Bytham Li brooch is the latest quoit brooch yet discovered (Ager 1985, 17), unless the annular brooch with pin-notch from Buckland Dover K 127 should be classed as a quoit brooch (Evison 1987, 243). Until more definite Conversion-period quoit brooches are found, the Castle Bytham Li brooch must be seen as an anomaly; there seems no reason to change the accepted fifth- and sixth-century dating of most quoit brooches.

Fowler divided her work on *penannular brooches* into two sections, the first dealing with Iron Age and Romano-British types (1960) and the second with Dark Age types (1963), mainly concentrating on British material. Her type C (coiled or bent terminals perpendicular to the plane of the ring) are the most common in Anglo-Saxon graves, concentrated in eastern England, but she notes that the brooches can be found in inhumations and cremations, with men, women and children, and in both sixth- and seventh-century graves, and that interpretations should therefore be drawn with caution (1963, 117). Penannular brooches in Anglo-Saxon graves have been reviewed more recently by White, who criticises Fowler but accepts that her classification is now too familiar to replace (1988, 6-25). He dates the bulk of graves with penannular brooches to the second half of the fifth century and the early to middle sixth century, with a small group of seventh-century graves (1988, 23). The characteristics of this group are not described, although there is a suggestion that some may be re-used Roman pieces, and presumably most of the group is indistinguishable from the earlier brooches. There are a number of brooches which are unquestionably of Anglo-Saxon manufacture, however, as they bear Style II decoration, and these were the only penannular brooches used as diagnostic Conversion-period grave-good types.

To some extent, brooches and long strings of beads are replaced as the main characteristic of female grave-goods by short necklaces, although no single aspect of the assemblage ever attains the predominance that beads and brooches had in the earlier period. Necklaces can consist of a wide range of objects: knotted wire rings tied or linked together, beads of glass, amethyst or metal, and pendants of various kinds. Some or all of these objects can be combined to form beautiful and varied designs.

These elements have received considerable attention from excavators of "Final Phase" cemeteries. Ozanne lists a number of find-spots of *knotted wire rings*, from Kent to Somerset and from Hampshire to Yorkshire (1962-63, 29). Although they are occasionally found in ones or twos in earlier graves (e.g. Sewerby NHu 12; Hirst 1985, 70), a group of wire rings in a grave appears to be an indicator of seventh- or eighth-century date (Leeds 1936, 110-11; Hyslop 1963, 191; Hines 1984, 232). Caution was initially exercised, due to the suggestion that the sixteen rings from Alfriston II ESx 43 were "early" (Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 37-38). By 1981, Meaney had re-dated this grave to the late sixth century (1981, 30-32), recognising that many of the objects included in the grave were heirlooms. I feel that due to the number of the rings, the nature of the beads strung on them and the presence of parts of a cowrie shell in the grave, Alfriston II ESx 43 should be dated to the seventh century, although it is an exceptionally odd assemblage.

Beads follow brooches in changing their forms and becoming less numerous. *Amber beads* become extremely rare, although not entirely absent. They are mostly found singly, and may therefore have been used as amulets (Meaney 1981, 67). Their presence, then, does not preclude a grave from being post-600.

The origins and dating of *amethyst beads* have been considered by Huggett in his study of imported Anglo-Saxon grave-goods (1988, 66-68). They are usually assumed to have been imported from the eastern Mediterranean, or even from as far away as India (Meaney 1981, 75-76). Amethyst beads are generally considered to be confined to the seventh century (Meaney 1981, 76) and Higginbottom has suggested (1975, 60-61) that amethysts were imported only from c. 590 to c. 650, when the trade from the East stopped due to the Arab incursions, and so none should be buried later than about 675. Amethyst beads, then, are a grave-good type diagnostic of a date after 600.

The most common type of glass bead found in a Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon burial is the *small monochrome glass bead*, usually biconical or barrel-shaped and blue or green. In

necklaces, they are used either directly on the string or hanging from a wire ring. Sarre has a famous necklace of these small monochrome glass beads and coin pendants which can be dated to the second or third decade of the seventh century (Haith in Webster and Backhouse (eds) 1991, 48-50, pl 31 b). Similar beads are found in earlier graves, and few comparative studies to determine exactly which types are susceptible to chronological analysis have so far appeared. It seems from cemetery reports such as Sewerby NHu (Hirst 1985) and Norton-on-Tees CI (Sherlock and Welch 1992) that, while small monochrome beads are found in the sixth century, the shapes are annular (with length less than half the diameter) without the barrels and bicones seen among the later beads. In the absence of any work to confirm this hypothesis, the presence of small barrel-shaped or biconical glass beads was merely taken as support that a grave should be seventh- or eighth-century, not as proof. Small glass beads of other shapes are also found, both polychrome and monochrome, but these are not nearly so popular, and could not be closely dated.

*Cylindrical or biconical metal beads*, of wire or of foil, made of gold or silver, are a well-known Conversion-period type (Hyslop 1963, 191). These beads formed part of Shephard's seriation (see above, section 2.2.2, and Table 2.1), in which he rather narrowly dated their floruit to 660-680 (1979a, 4.14-4.15 and fig 4.1). Gold examples are found in rich necklaces with cabochon pendants and bullae, as at Galley Low Db, Roundway Down Wi, and Desborough Nh. The spiral form of the wire biconical bead is closely related to the form of some of the loops of these pendants. All forms of metal bead were used to identify a burial as post-600, although this view has now been revised (see below, section 4.11).

The three most common Conversion-period pendant forms are the cabochon pendant, the bulla and the disc pendant. The first two of these featured in Shephard's seriation (1979a, fig 4.1; see above, section 2.2.2, and Table 2.1), and when found in rich necklaces are usually dated to the second half of the seventh century (e.g. Evans in Webster and Backhouse (eds) 1991, 29; Campbell 1982, 42; Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 49). *Cabochon pendants* found on their own or in simpler necklaces can be earlier; Hawkes gives a date of about 630-660 (1974, 255). Shephard concludes that cabochon pendants are not particularly closely datable, occurring throughout the seventh century, but peaking in popularity in the third quarter (1979a, 4.10-4.11).

Shephard allocates a narrower date range to *bullae* of the final third of the seventh century, both for those on rich and poorer necklaces, and comments that they may have been devised as a cheaper form of cabochon pendant (1979a, 4.16). Both bullae and cabochon pendants were used to identify a grave as being of Conversion-period date.



Disc pendants come in a number of forms. *Bracteates*, the term used for disc pendants bearing repoussé decoration, are commonest in Kent in the sixth century (Bakka 1981). Only those with Style II can be dated to the seventh century (Hines 1984, 219-20). *Pendants with filigree decoration* can bear a type of five-boss design similar to many of the composite disc brooches, and Shephard used this to assign them a form-analogy date of 660 onwards (1979a, 4.22-4.23). Those with all-over filigree decoration he dated by association to 660-690 (1979a, 4.23-4.24), and both types were used in this study as indicating a date of post-600. *Scutiform pendants* have been considered by Hines, who dates them from the early sixth century to the second half of the seventh (Hines 1984, 221-35). They were not therefore used to identify Conversion-period burials.

Cabochon garnets are found in another diagnostic grave-good type, the *linked pin suite* or union set. Shephard's seriation (1979a, fig 4.1; see above, section 2.2.2, and Table 2.1) puts the origin of linked pins in the second quarter of the seventh century, with Chartham Down K Barrow A, with linked pins and a disc brooch, being an early example (but see below, section 4.5, for a discussion of Chartham A). Meaney and Hawkes have argued for a date for linked pins in the latter part of the seventh century (1970, 48); they are often found with *workboxes*, an artefact type thought to date from the last quarter of the seventh century (Shephard 1979a, 4.12-4.14).

A comprehensive computer-based study of all Anglo-Saxon *pins* has recently been undertaken by Ross (1991), but his work is difficult to use. Many of his classes (especially the sub-sub-variants, such as type LXIX.i.a.1.A) contain only one or two examples; it seems that the immense variety of pins cannot be shoe-horned into any meaningful sort of classification. Because Ross's classes are so small, their chronologies are very uncertain, and as he includes almost all of the pins in the present study and very many more besides, the reader is directed to his thesis for conclusions on the detailed form and dating of Anglo-Saxon pins. As will be seen below, a considerable variety of pin forms and materials are contemporary with the well-dated workboxes (see below, and section 4.4), and it seems in general that single pins are too individual in construction to be of any chronological use. Ross has, however, distinguished certain characteristics of seventh- to ninth-century pins which apply to many types. Most are less than 80 mm in length, and have shafts of less than 2.5 mm and heads of less than 10 mm in diameter. There is a tendency for hipped or shouldered shafts to become more common during the course of the seventh century (Ross 1991, 370).

A few of Ross's classes of Anglo-Saxon pin contain larger numbers of examples. The two that are commonly found in furnished burials are type LXIV, the linked pins (see above), and type

LXVI, the *spiral-headed pins*. As the class of spiral-headed pins is large (Ross has 68 examples) they can be securely dated; although the form is found at many times in different places (e.g. Mohenjo-Daro in the second millennium BC to Lithuania in the seventh century AD (Pretty in Brodribb *et al.* 1972, 84)) in Anglo-Saxon England they appear to be confined to the Conversion period.

*Small oval buckles* of bronze and iron, often with folded and rivetted rectangular plates, have been recognised for years as the commonest type in the seventh and eighth centuries (Leeds 1936, 98; Hyslop 1963, 191; Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 42-43). Although Meaney and Hawkes described them as "virtually a type-fossil of the late period", the absence of any published criteria for deciding where the cut-off line for "small" buckles should lie, and the danger that any small buckle from a strap might look like this, meant that these small simple buckles were not used to identify a burial as Conversion-period.

*Buckles with openwork decoration* were identified as seventh-century by Leeds (1936, 102-04), and have been studied by Evison (1956, 92-93) and Shephard (1979a, 4.39-4.40). Evison and Shephard agreed on a date in the late seventh and early eighth centuries, based on the sceatta-grave at Broadstairs K grave L, dated to c. 690-700 (Grierson and Blackburn 1986, table 13). Studies of openwork buckles have not yet found a pre-seventh-century example. Shephard has also identified a group of buckles distinguished by notched or *serrated edges* to the plate, which he suggests should be dated to the second half of the seventh century (1979a, 4.45). In the absence of other work on serrated-edge buckles, however, this feature was not used to identify a burial as Conversion-period.

Small strap-ends, often called *lace-tags*, seem to have been recognised as a seventh-century Anglo-Saxon type by Meaney and Hawkes (1970, 39). Metalwork associated with shoes, such as tags for the ends of laces and tiny buckles, are, like seaxes, a sixth-century Frankish fashion, but unlike seaxes, they do not appear to be found in England until the seventh century (Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 39; Hawkes in Philp 1973, 194; Owen-Crocker 1986, 103).

Small triangular, circular or rectangular plates with a tiny hook attached, known as *hooked tags*, are well-known finds from middle and late Anglo-Saxon settlement sites, and are also occasionally found in burials. The dating and function of these little objects has always been a problem. Dickinson summed up the position in 1973 when discussing the five hooked tags found in a fifth- to seventh-century settlement context at Shakenoak:

"...tags of this type were in use between the seventh and tenth centuries. Precise dating

of individual tags does not seem possible on typological grounds: there is no convincing development in profile, the triangular shape persisting throughout the series, and the rectangular and round examples being, as yet, too infrequent for their dates to be taken as significant; nor is there any chronological distinction between tags with a definite break between plate and hook, the hook normally having a long neck and round section, and those made from one sheet of metal, one end bent to form a hook. The function of these tags has never been established." (Dickinson in Brodribb *et al.* 1973, 117).

More recently, Graham-Campbell and then Hinton have reviewed finds from Kent, Rome and Winchester (Graham-Campbell 1982; Graham-Campbell and Okasha 1991; Hinton in Biddle 1990), but the position remains much the same. The date-range has been extended to at least the eleventh century (Hinton in Biddle 1990, 549), but individual tags still can only be dated from their ornament, and their function remains obscure. They provide a broad *terminus post quem* of the seventh century, however, and when found in a furnished grave have been used to identify that burial as Conversion-period.

The occurrence of *amulets* of all sorts in Anglo-Saxon graves of all periods has been fully covered by Meaney (1981). Amuletic objects occur in Anglo-Saxon graves, particularly those of women, certainly from the fifth to the eighth centuries, but some types are peculiar to the seventh century onwards (Meaney 1981, 264). *Beaver teeth* and *cowrie shells* are almost never found before the seventh century (Meaney 1981, 136 and 123-28) and these were therefore used as support for a Conversion-period date.

For some time it has been suggested that *workboxes*, now considered more amuletic than practical (Meaney 1981, 181-89), are a type-fossil of the very end of the seventh century and the early eighth century. Hawkes noted that no workbox has ever been found with a disc brooch, and she also drew attention to the developed Style II decoration on the Burwell Ca 42 example (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 196-98). They appear at the end of Shephard's seriation (1979a, fig 4.1; and see section 2.2.2 and Table 2.1), with a date in the last third or quarter of the seventh century (1979a, 4.19). A short survey of all known workboxes was included by Evison as part of the Buckland Dover report, and a more comprehensive study was carried out by Gibson, including technological considerations, but the dating of the boxes was essentially confirmed (Evison 1987, 106-07, 269 and fig 117; Gibson 1993).

*Weapons* continue to be found in men's graves, but in far fewer numbers (Härke 1989b, 52 and fig 4.2). Some of Swanton's spearhead types continue into the seventh century, but in general

there is little dating evidence for many of his types (Swanton 1973, 139-45). No spear or sword types were considered to be sufficient to identify a grave as Conversion-period.

The single-edged *seax* was introduced in the sixth century from Merovingian Francia, but is very rarely found in sixth-century Anglo-Saxon contexts (Down and Welch 1990, 92-93). It becomes much more common in the seventh and eighth centuries, apparently replacing the sword as grave-furniture, although it is clear from documentary references that the sword continues to be used in life.

The dating of seaxes in this country, in the absence of datable associations, is usually accomplished by reference to the mainland European series defined by Böhner (1958, 130-45), of narrow or class A seax (fifth and sixth centuries on the Continent), long or class B seax (seventh century) and broad or class C seax (eighth century). This Continental chronology requires modification, though, for use in Anglo-Saxon England, as most seaxes found in England are not imports but insular varieties (Gale 1989, 71).

*Narrow seaxes* have an overall length of 260 to 480 mm, with blades 220 to 310 mm long and 24 to 34 mm wide (Down and Welch 1990, 93). The short-handled variety is found up to at least the later seventh century (Evison in Hurst 1961, 228). On the Continent, a longer two-handed grip is sometimes found on broad seaxes, and in England narrow seaxes with this feature have been found with sugar-loaf shield bosses. The two-handed grip may therefore be a later feature (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 189). *Broad seaxes*, with blade widths of 40 to 60 mm (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 189), are later again, and according to Evison (in Hurst 1961, 228-30) belong to the turn of the seventh and eighth centuries. The *long seax* is a rare find in England, but must be contemporary with or later than the broad seax. Its blade is between 500 and 760 mm long (Gale 1989, 72). Two-handed seaxes, broad seaxes and long seaxes were therefore used as proof of a date after 600, and single-handed narrow seaxes were seen as giving a very strong hint of this date.

*Sugar-loaf shield bosses* and their associated domed rivets have been fully studied by Evison (1963a). She divided them into low cones and tall cones, both either "straight" or "curved". Low cones were 4½ to 5½ inches (114 to 140 mm) in diameter and 3 to 4 inches (76 to 102 mm) tall, and tall cones were 5 to 6 inches (127 to 152 mm) in diameter and 4 to 8 inches (102 to 204 mm) tall. Evison's work was comprehensive, and needs to be only slightly adjusted by the re-dating of Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1 from c. 650 to c. 625, pushing the start of low cones back a few years (Evison 1963a, 62-65).

Evison's classification of sugar-loaf shield-bosses has now been supplemented by a computer-based study of the shield-bosses from the Upper Thames region, with additions from a national sample of bosses (Dickinson and Härke 1992). There are few Group 6 and Group 7 bosses, the equivalent of Evison's low and tall cones, in Dickinson and Härke's study, and so Evison remains the standard work on sugar-loaf shield-bosses. Dickinson and Härke (1992) is likely to become the standard for early Anglo-Saxon shield-bosses in general, however, and so for consistency their terminology is used here.

Dickinson and Härke's Group 3, a wider-flanged and more carinated boss than Group 6, begins in the sixth century but continues into the seventh (Dickinson and Härke 1992, 15). Group 6 bosses begin in the late sixth century and continue well into the seventh (1992, 20) while Group 7s develop just before the middle of the seventh century and presumably continue until the end of furnished burial (1992, 21). Group 3s are 73 to 93 mm tall and 140 to 174 mm in diameter (1992, 15). Dickinson and Härke follow Evison's criteria both for Group 6 and Group 7 bosses, with heights of 76 to 102 mm and diameters of 114 to 140 mm for Group 6s (1992, 20) and heights upwards of 102 mm and diameters of 127 to 152 mm for Group 7s (1992, 21).

Group 7 bosses were therefore considered safely to demonstrate a post-600 date. Group 6 bosses, while almost all seventh-century, can occasionally be found in later sixth-century graves, and so cannot be used as diagnostic grave-good types. Group 3 bosses are commonest in the sixth century, so were discounted unless there was overwhelming evidence to show that the grave should be dated later.

*Glass vessels* were classified and dated according to Harden's study of 1956. He dated most claw-beakers to the fifth and sixth centuries, but allowed that the tall slim Taplow Bu examples, unless heirlooms, must be seventh-century. One type of bell-beaker, waisted or "constricted" with a domed base, began in the sixth century and continued into the seventh. Large bag-beakers with vertical fillets were all seventh century at the earliest, whereas pouch-bottles could perhaps have begun late in the sixth. Most squat jars he dated from the seventh to the eighth or ninth century, with those with lattice decoration (such as those from Cuddesdon Ox, Broomfield Ex and Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 2) certainly not earlier, as they are made from the characteristic dark-blue metal of the seventh century or later. Harden followed Rademacher's Continental chronology for palm cups, and dated the ribbed examples to the sixth century and the plain type from the seventh until at least the eighth and perhaps the tenth century (Harden 1956, 139-42).

The date of *hanging bowls* has been much argued over, with art-historical assumptions about their cultural origin often clouding the issue (e.g. Kendrick 1932; Henry 1936; Fowler 1968; summarised in Brenan 1991, 5-26). Brenan has recently catalogued and studied all extant hanging bowls and fragments, giving primacy to the archaeological evidence and with no preconceptions about Celtic origins or Roman survivals. She has concluded that there is no evidence for a late Roman date. While they can occasionally date from the mid or late sixth century, they are much more common in the second half of the seventh (Brenan 1991, 65-74). Brenan's dating was uncritically accepted in the data collection phase of this study, but has since been substantially re-evaluated (see section 4.41.2).

The imported cast Byzantine bronze bowls known as "*Coptic*" vessels have traditionally posed chronological problems similar to those of hanging bowls. On art-historical and historical grounds their manufacture has been dated to the fourth to sixth centuries (Bruce-Mitford 1950; 1983, 740-752), but they do not seem to be found in western Europe before the seventh century. Richards has argued not only that the historical dates are based on very flimsy evidence, but also that the extreme conservatism of the Late Antique metalwork industry makes it impossible to date the manufacture of "Coptic" vessels on art-historical grounds. The archaeological evidence for their deposition, both around the Mediterranean in the later sixth and in western Europe in the seventh century, is far more secure and should be trusted instead (Richards 1980, 102-13).

In his article on the bronze bowls from Salona in Yugoslavia, Werner saw "Coptic" bowls as appearing in graves north of the Alps throughout the whole of the seventh century (Werner 1957, 116). Werner classified them into types A, B and C, and gave a catalogue of European findspots by type. In England, Werner listed twelve B1s and three Cs, from Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1, Taplow Bu and Cuddesdon Ox (Werner 1957, 127). Some of the English finds have since been re-typed by Richards (1980), who added classes B5 and B6 to the system. There are now seventeen B1 bowls, one definite B4 tea-pot shaped vessel from Wheathampstead Ht and the lid from a possible second at Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 3, a B5 pedestal-foot bowl from Taplow Bu, and five of the miscellaneous type C vessels, including the cast bucket from Cuddesdon Ox, the sheet-bronze buckets from Chessell Down IoW, the hybrid B1/B5 from Faversham K and the bowl from Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1. As all the types appear to date from the seventh century in northern Europe, they were used as an artefact diagnostic of the Conversion period in England.

The last type of bronze bowl to be considered as seventh-century was the *skillet*, with a curved base, no foot and a flat handle. Richards describes these spun vessels as exclusively seventh-

century, made in England and easily distinguishable from Continental skillets (1980, 17-18).

No systematic typology of early or middle Anglo-Saxon *knives* has yet been constructed, and therefore Böhner's classification of the Continental evidence has generally been used (summarised by Hawkes in Philp 1973, 199). Böhner's Types C and D are the main Conversion-period types, C (with straight cutting edge and angled back) being more popular than D (with convex blade curve and concave back curve). Ottaway has attempted a classification for later Anglo-Saxon knives based on a number of formal attributes (1990, 160-79) but even his multivariate analysis has failed to show much chronological development. In view, then, of the typological and chronological problems, the presence of a Type C or D knife was taken as support for a Conversion-period date, but not as proof.

Hawkes comments that "parallel-sided, blunt-edged, blunt-ended iron tools, with tang for attaching a wooden handle, occur very frequently in seventh-century graves.....they are presumed to have been some form of steel or sharpening tool." (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 199). Hirst has suggested that these objects, usually termed *steels*, should instead be called *spatulate tools*, and that in view of the metallurgical analysis of that from Sewerby NHu 48, which showed that the metal was softer than that of the accompanying knife, they cannot have been used as sharpening steels (1985, 88-89). They could, of course, have been used to put an extra polish on a not-too-blunt blade. There has been little work carried out on spatulate tools, but they seemed to be confined to the seventh and eighth centuries, and were therefore used as a indicator of Conversion-period date.

If these tools were sharpeners, they were not the only item used for this purpose. Evison has studied Anglo-Saxon *whetstones* from both settlement and grave contexts (1975). Although she comments that, among the grave-finds, "only the Great Chesterford grave contained objects from as early a date as the fifth century, the others, Soham, Uncleby, Dover, Caistor and Sutton Hoo, all belong to the seventh century", in fact Caistor-by-Norwich Nf 10 is not closely datable, and there are whetstone-graves without associations from sixth-century cemeteries such as Bifrons in Kent and Fonaby in Lincolnshire. Whetstones therefore cannot be regarded as a diagnostic Conversion-period type, although their presence in a burial deposit adds to the likelihood of such a date.

*Combs* continue to be found in Conversion-period graves, and a new type is introduced, the single-edged, hump-backed comb. Hawkes dates the earliest of them to the second quarter of the seventh century, and comments that the form became the most popular comb of the Viking

age (in Philp 1973, 198). Speake sees the hump-backed comb as becoming more common after the middle of the seventh century, both on the Continent and in England (1989, 54). Hump-backed combs were therefore used as indications of Conversion-period date.

The final artefact that was used to identify a burial as Conversion-period was the *bed*. In rare cases a body is laid on a bed, which serves more as a structure than as a grave-good proper. The custom of bed burial has been extensively reviewed by Speake (1989, 82-115) who dated the practice to the second half of the seventh century (1989, 110). The two bed-burials found at Barrington Ca in 1990 do not yet appear to conflict with this dating, although there is still a good deal of work to be done on the associated grave-goods (Malim 1990). Although beds appear in up to nine Conversion-period burials, they are used more as grave structures, instead of biers or coffins, than as grave-goods, and were therefore classified as such.

#### 2.3.4 Later grave-good types

There has been a reluctance to assign grave-good types to the eighth century or later, except for those, such as the Winchester hooked tags (Wilson 1965, 263-64), which must be dated later on art-historical grounds. No object has yet been found in a grave which bears recognisably eighth-century animal ornament; the only possible exception is the Ixworth Sf disc brooch, with Witham Pin style ornament, found in a field containing burials (Anon 1871, 259, fig 3, pl 12), although there are items in graves, such as the Winchester tags, which bear ninth-century Trehiddle style animal ornament.

This does not mean, however, that grave-goods were not being deposited in the eighth century. Ipswich Buttermarket Sf 38, with its coin of *c.* 790, was found with an awl, a knife and a possible buckle - simple, long-lived artefact types, which may have continued to be buried as grave-goods for many years. In addition to these, many types of more easily datable grave-goods which are assigned to the final quarter of the seventh century could easily have lingered on well into the eighth.

Due to the decline in the deposition of ornamented grave-goods over the seventh and eighth centuries, there are very few chronologically transitional grave-good types at this end of the timescale. Any difficulties in deciding whether a grave is Conversion-period or not come in assigning a type to an Anglo-Saxon as opposed to a Viking context, such as with the Reading Bk II sword-pommel, which is dated to the early ninth century (see section 4.31), or the Harrold Bd heckle (see section 4.22.4).



### 2.3.5 Identification of unfurnished Conversion-period graves

Stratigraphy, linked to radiocarbon and historical dates, provides much of the chronology for graves without datable artefacts, and these dating techniques have been discussed above in section 2.2. Intercutting graves seem to be less common in this period than in the fifth and sixth centuries, perhaps due to the more rigid imposition of a uniform orientation. Some unfurnished cemeteries, however, have in the past been assumed to be of Conversion-period or later date on the grounds of their rigidly imposed orientation. The circularity of this argument is apparent.

The position has been complicated by an apparently contradictory trend towards a *greater* degree of intercutting in cemeteries where space is limited, such as in towns (e.g. Southampton SOU13 Ha). The intercutting is of a different nature to that in many migration-period cemeteries, though, and appears to result not from a random placing of graves but again from a rigid imposition of rows, each row being re-used in turn when the first "generation" of the churchyard has been filled. Other possible characteristics of the Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon unfurnished grave include the use of charcoal, stone linings and pillow-stones, as well as structures of the type first recognised by Hogarth (1973). These attributes are not yet sufficiently diagnostic, however, to identify an unfurnished cemetery as Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon.

### 2.3.6 The west and north of Britain

Analysis of the post-Roman burials of the west and north of Britain has, as yet, isolated few of their diagnostic characteristics; they are therefore difficult to date, or to assign to an Anglo-Saxon or British cultural context (Rahtz 1977, 56). There are some well-furnished burials in these areas, such as those at Camerton Av, Hicknoll Slait So, Littlehampton HW and Capheaton Nb, easily recognisable as showing Anglo-Saxon influences rather than British, but there are pitfalls in the interpretation of others. Those with a documented historical context, such as the monastic cemeteries of Whithorn DG, Hartlepool Cl, Monkwearmouth TW and Jarrow TW, may appear from the records to have been wholly Anglo-Saxon, but the actual extent of British influence there is unknown. Long-lived "field" cemeteries, such as Cannington So, may have come under Anglo-Saxon influence towards the end of their life, perhaps in the eighth century, but at this time it is a moot point whether any Anglo-Saxon cultural identity would have been signalled via burial in an archaeologically recoverable manner. Many of these cemeteries have been cited as "doubtful" in the *Gazetteer*.

## 2.4 EVALUATION OF THE CORPUS OF CONVERSION-PERIOD BURIAL SITES

### 2.4.1 Introduction

It was decided to define the corpus to be investigated as those graves containing grave goods datable, on the criteria listed above, to the seventh to ninth century. The richest sources of data were Meaney's gazetteer (1964), and the annual updates in *Medieval Archaeology*, plus other published and unpublished lists such as Morris (1983, 54-55) and Dickinson (1976, volume II). References were followed up to produce a corpus of over 7,000 graves, contained within 351 burial sites (see Map 1 and *Gazetteer*).

### 2.4.2 The range and bias of the corpus

The time period of the present study represents about seven generations, giving a sample population of about a thousand individuals alive at any one time. This is obviously a very small sample of actual live Anglo-Saxons; if the population at this time was (say) two million, we would expect an actual buried population of 14 million. So we have a sample of 1/2 000, or 0.05%. The sample is not randomly composed. It is possible, looking at Map 1, to detect clusters, which may be due less to the behaviour of the Anglo-Saxons than to that of archaeologists, such as Bateman in Derbyshire, Lethbridge around Cambridge, and Dickinson in the Upper Thames region.

Meaney's gazetteer, although entitled *A Gazetteer of Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites*, covers furnished burial sites right up to the ninth or tenth century. It contains 1,150 sites (Hills 1979). As only 235 of these sites contain any Conversion-period graves, it is clear that there was, in 1964, a much higher proportion of evidence for the migration period, which lasted for a comparable length of time. The position was much the same in 1983, when Morris remarked that known Conversion-period cemeteries represented less than 10% of all Anglo-Saxon burials outside churchyards (1983, 54). We are now, however, in possession of considerably more evidence, being able to identify *c.* 7,000 graves out of an estimated total in 1988 of 25,000 graves from sites with furnished burials (Arnold 1988, 142), which represents 28%; even allowing for the graves which have been excavated since 1988, the Conversion-period graves must represent somewhere near a quarter of all Anglo-Saxon burials outside churchyards. The increase in the size of the sample means that the conclusions drawn from it should be better informed and therefore more accurate.

There is still, however, a detectable bias in the sample. Because it is easier to be certain of the date of a furnished burial than of an unfurnished one, there is a bias towards the former. This is particularly noticeable in long-lived sites with little stratification, such as Sewerby NHu, where unfurnished burials cannot be fitted into the sequence on the available data, and so have had to be excluded. Another example is Hurdlow Db, where one mound is dated to the Conversion period by its workbox, another to the Anglo-Saxon period in general by its knife, and the third is unfurnished and undatable; obviously only the first could be included in the corpus. The bias towards identification of well-furnished graves has also led to the exclusion of entire cemeteries of poorly furnished and hence undatable graves, a lacuna which an increased use of radiocarbon dating might do much to fill.

#### 2.4.3 The quality of the data

As is usually the case with Anglo-Saxon cemetery studies, it was found that a number of sites had been excavated in a manner that can most kindly be described as unscientific. Right into the twentieth century, furnished graves were often treated as a quarry for esoteric museum exhibits, and often the only information recovered from the site was represented by a few objects. The terrible story of the destruction of Baginton Wa, recounted by Brennan (1991, 57-58), is by no means unusual even for 1934. Unfurnished graves were less of a magnet for collectors, but where they were found they were frequently simply cleared and reburied with no details recorded at all.

Even when the quality of the excavation is better, many Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon burial sites remain largely unpublished. Some only appear as casual references in general books (e.g. The Beam Ox, cited by Blair (1988), but which is only otherwise recorded in the Sites and Monuments Record of Oxfordshire County Museum) or in summary form in Meaney (1964) or in *Medieval Archaeology*. Some sites have seen only certain aspects, usually the artefacts, published.

Details of the variable quality of the data, and the consequent implications for this study, are explored further in section 3.2.

#### 2.4.4 Distribution of the corpus in time and space

Most of the sites identified were confined to the seventh and eighth centuries. Around one-tenth of the sites had migration-period (fifth- or sixth-century) origins, and a similar number continued

into the later Saxon period. None of the sites with migration-period origins outlasted the early eighth century, and none of the sites in use in the second half of the ninth century or later appears to have originated before the "official" conversion in their area; Kent is the only region with church cemeteries that apparently date from the first half of the seventh century. The best candidate for the exception to prove the rule is the cemetery thought to belong to the first Anglo-Saxon monastery at St Mary Major, Exeter Dv, which overlay a sub-Roman cemetery and was succeeded by a late Anglo-Saxon cemetery, both on different alignments, but this is in an area with a substantial case for a lack of Anglo-Saxon acculturation and a consequent continuity of Christianity. The Conversion period did, therefore, represent a real watershed in burial location.

As has been seen above, furnished burials from the later seventh century were easier to identify than those from the early seventh century, and so a peak of furnished burial in the later seventh century may be more apparent than real, reflecting not a rise in burials but a rise in the distinctiveness of the burial rite.

Map 1 shows all known Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon burial sites. It can be compared with Hines's map of Anglo-Saxon sites, both of settlement and of burial, known to be in existence around the year 560, when he sees the transition from Style I to Style II occurring (Hines 1990, fig 3; see Map 62). There are a few more sites to the north and west on the Conversion-period Map 1, but on the whole the distribution pattern is very similar. Some small-scale differences between the maps, such as the concentration of sites in the seventh- to early ninth-century Derbyshire Peak district, can perhaps be explained by a bias in fieldwork; the later sites in Derbyshire are almost all mounds, attractive to early excavators and generally containing later burials. There has been comparatively little random sampling, for example via rescue excavation, in the Peak district.

In other areas, such as north Norfolk, south Lincolnshire, and especially the Isle of Wight, differences cannot be explained in this way. There are plenty of early sites recognised, but few later ones or none at all. In these areas, the possibility that a local Conversion-period burial rite is still unrecognised cannot be discounted.

Apart from these areas, the similarity of the sixth-century and the seventh- to early ninth-century maps is reassuring. It seems safe to assume that there is little additional regional bias in the criteria for assessing a cemetery as Conversion-period; the change in burial practice is through time, and not through space.

	disc brooch	cabochon garnet	linked pins	biconical metal bead	bullae	ann/penann brooch	workbox	openwork buckle	coin-dated graves
Buckland Dover K 29	x	x							
Sarre K 115	x	x							
Chatham Lines K XII	x	x							
Kingston Down K 142	x	x							
Chartham Down K A	x	x	x						
Kingston Down K 241		x		?					
Sibertswold K 172		x							650-660
Littlehampton HW		x	x						
Roundway Down II Wi		x	x	x					
Cow Low Db		x	x	x	x				
Winchester Lwr Bk St Ha 23		x			x				
Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 32		x			x				
Galley Low Db		x		x	x				
Desborough Nh		x		x	x				
Newton Lodge Wa		x		x	x				
Garton II NHu 12		x				x			
Woodyates Do			?	x					
Wigber Low Db			x			x			
Winnall Ha 8			x			x			
Finglesham K 7				x	x				675
Standlow Db			?	x		?	x		
Bidford Wa 100			x				x		
Uncleby NHu 62					x	x			
Garton II NHu 7					x	x	x		
Burwell Ca 121					x		x		
Kempston Bd 18.1.64					x		x		
Painsthorpe Wold NHu 5						x	x		
Hawnby NY 3						x	x		
Uncleby NHu 31						x	x	x	
Broadstairs K L								x	690-705

Table 2.1 Shephard's seriation of Conversion-period grave-good types (1979a, fig 4.1)

	disc brooch	cabochon garnet	linked pins	biconical metal bead	bullae	ann/penann brooch	workbox	openwork buckle	coin-dated graves
Buckland Dover K 29	x	x							
Sarre K 115	x	x							
Chatham Lines K XII	x	x							
Kingston Down K 142	x	x							
Chartham Down K A	x	x							
Kingston Down K 241		x		?					
Sibertswold K 172		x							660-680
Littlehampton HW		x	x						
Roundway Down II Wi		x	x	x					
Finglesham K 7				x	x				660-665
Cow Low Db		x	x	x	x				
Winchester Lwr Bk St Ha 23		x			x				
Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 32		x			x				
Galley Low Db		x		x	x				
Desborough Nh		x		x	x				
Newton Lodge Wa		x		x	x				
* Boss Hall Sf 93	x	x		x	x				690
Garton II NHu 12		x				x			
Woodyates Do			?	x					
Winnall Ha 8			x			x			
Standlow Db				x		?	x		
* Lechlade G1 14			x				x		
* Castledyke SHu 183			?				x		
Bidford Wa 100			x				x		
* Harford Farm Nf 18			x				x		700-710
Uncleby NHu 62					x	x			
Garton II NHu 7					x	x	x		
Burwell Ca 121					x		x		
Kempston Bd 18.1.64					x		x		
* Didcot Power Stn Ox 12						x	x		
Painsthorpe Wold NHu 5						x	x		
Hawnby NY 3						x	x		
* Finglesham K 57						x		x	
Uncleby NHu 31						x	x	x	
* Finglesham K 174								x	
* Finglesham K 180								x	
Broadstairs K L								x	690-700

Table 2.2 Shepard's seriation with corrections and updates  
(graves added marked with an asterisk)

Grave	Coin type	Date
Finglesham K 7	Sigeberht solidus P I A 2/i Pada thrymsa (30% Au)	634-656 660-665
Buckland Dover K 110	P II B 1/i Pada thrymsa (trace Au) P III 7/ic Pada thrymsa (trace Au)	660-680 660-680
Ipswich Buttermarket Sf 4	P III Pada thrymsa (trace Au) P III Pada thrymsa, base forgery	660-680 660-680
Ipswich Buttermarket Sf 44	Possible Pada thrymsa	7660-680
Lechlade GI 179	Vanimundus thrymsa, base forgery	665-680
Boss Hall Sf 93	Sigeberht solidus B sceatta	634-656 c. 690
Finglesham K 145	A 2, 4 (BMC 2a) sceatta A 3, 11 (BMC 2a) sceatta B I A, 10 (BMC 27) sceatta B I A, 12 (BMC 27) sceatta B I B, 5 (BMC 27) sceatta B I B, 8 (BMC 27) sceatta B I C, 1 (BMC 27) sceatta B I C, 4 (BMC 27) sceatta	all 680-700       Deposition date c. 690-700
Harford Farm Nf 18	B I B sceatta B sceatta, probably imitation B I C	c. 685-95 c. 690-700
Hamwic SOU 32 Ha F412	W (BMC 54) sceatta	700-715
Garton-on-the-Wolds NHu 44	B III B 5/i (a) (BMC 27) sceatta B III B 6/i (a) (BMC 27) sceatta J (BMC 37) sceatta J (BMC 37) sceatta K (BMC 32a) sceatta R (R2z runic) sceatta G (BMC 3a) sceatta G (BMC 3a) sceatta	c. 705-710 c. 705-710 710-725 710-725 720-730/40 710-740/50 710-720 710-720  Deposition date c. 720-25
Ipswich Buttermarket Sf 38	Offa penny, heavy issue	c. 792-796
Caister-on-Sea Nf 14	Ecgberht penny	828-839

BMC numbers refer to the British Museum catalogue. Many coins are still quoted with reference to this, and so the number is given for convenience. A concordance can be found in Stewart (1984).

**Table 2.3** Selected Conversion-period graves containing seventh- to ninth-century Anglo-Saxon coins

	small glass bead	silver ring	metal bead	bullae	cabochon pendant	chatelaine	bag	comb	knife	bracelet	shears	spoon	buckle	awl	disc pendant	toilet set	workbox	linked pins	box	no other grave-goods	Deposition date after:	
Finglesham K 7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●														660-665	
Buckland Dover K 110	●	●						●	●	●	●	●										660-680
Ipswich Buttermkt Sf 4							●		●				●	●								660-680
Ipswich Buttermkt Sf 44	●	●	●			●			●													660-680
Lechlade Gl 179	●	●				●									●							665-680
Boss Hall Sf 93	●	●	●		●		●								●	●						690
Finglesham K 145									●													690-700
Harford Farm Nf 18					●										●		●	●	●			690-700
So'ton SOU32 Ha F412																				●		700-715
Garton-o-t-W NHu 44							●															720-725
Ipswich Buttermkt Sf 38									●				●	●								792-796
Caister-on-Sea Nf 14																				●		828-839

Table 2.4 Objects found in sampled graves containing seventh- to ninth-century coins



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH AGENDA AND METHOD

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

So far, an outline of the scope of the material has been given, with an examination of some of the problems its study entails. According to the criteria defined in Chapter 2, a corpus has been identified of over 7,000 graves in 351 sites. A reconnaissance of the corpus has shown that many of these sites were poorly excavated, incompletely published, or both. The task of Chapter 3 is to match the research agenda outlined in Chapter 1 to the quality of the material, both the quality of the primary records and the quality of the publication.

The corpus is a large dataset, most effectively studied by the in-depth examination of a representative sample. Section 3.2 is concerned with the selection of the sample sub-set of sites, comprising 2583 graves from 107 sites (see Table 3.1). The possible themes for research into the Anglo-Saxon Conversion period outlined in sections 1.4 and 1.5 are then reprised in section 3.3, with the aim of matching the desired research agenda to the actual nature and quality of the sample data. The method of the research programme is explained in section 3.4.

#### 3.2 DEFINITION OF SAMPLE SUB-SET OF CORPUS

The nature of recovery and publication of many seventh- to early ninth-century burial sites means that the number of graves, their orientations, locations, assemblages and body positions are often unreconstructable. Cemeteries with this level of data recovery are of little use in making comparisons, as characteristics can only be compared if the data has been recorded. There is no point, for example, in analysing the position of the limbs in middle Anglo-Saxon burials, because this is recorded in so few cases. Comparative work has to be done at the level of the lowest common denominator.

Sampling should therefore be designed to remove the worst-recorded sites, while leaving a coherent body of data which exhibits as little bias as possible. Because random statistical sampling methods would have included unusable sites, it was decided to sample purely on the basis of the nature of recovery and publication, this being a practical way of producing a substantial and usable sample with no apparent additional bias.

The basic criterion for inclusion in the sample sub-set (Table 3.1) was that data should have been recorded and published at the level of the individual grave. Thus reports which merely highlighted a few interesting graves and ignored the majority, or which described the grave-goods and the structural features but which did not relate the two grave by grave, were excluded. Cemeteries where none or very few of the grave-goods were illustrated were also excluded, as descriptions were considered insufficient in most cases securely to identify and date the objects. Unpublished sites were included, however, where the archive was sufficiently ordered and complete.

The application of this criterion meant that some whole groups of excavations had to be removed. None of Sheppard's idiosyncratic reports on the cemeteries around Hull could be used, and despite Faussett's high standards, only one of his sites, Bekesbourne I K, was included. As most antiquarians confined their work to a particular geographical region, there was a danger of leaving some areas rather sparsely covered. In a few regions, particularly Northumbria and the west of England, known sites are more thinly spread to start with. In such places, the criteria for inclusion were occasionally relaxed; there were some uncertainties surrounding the data from Buckland Dinham So, Uncleby NHu and Howick Heugh Nb, for example, and these might have been left out of the sample if they had been in the south-east of England.

The process of quality control led to a final sample of 107 cemeteries, containing 2583 graves, to be used for further study. As the variability of burial practice within Conversion-period graves is high compared to that found either immediately before or immediately after, the sample needed to be as large as possible. This approximately 30% sample is considered to be adequate to cover the range of variability in time and space.

The geographical distribution of the sites within the sample is fairly similar to that of the full corpus (Map 2). There are rather fewer in the Midlands and Kent, and relatively more in Hampshire and the Thames valley, but the general coverage remains acceptable. The sites included in the sample sub-set are marked with an asterisk in the Gazetteer.

Kent contains a particularly large number of known sites (see Table 3.1). The richest cemeteries in Kent, such as Faversham, Kingston and Sarre, were located and excavated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and sites such as these may have attracted other antiquarians to the county. Kent has also been subject to much engineering work on railways, roads and housing, which has located further cemeteries. More recently excavated sites, such as Finglesham, Buckland Dover, Eccles, Broadstairs I and II, Polhill and Monkton, have not produced such a

quantity of richly furnished burials, but they contain many graves, and few of them have been both fully excavated and published. Kent has therefore produced some extraordinary Conversion-period burials and cemeteries, but until more synthesis has been carried out it will be hard to know how representative these graves really are. In the meantime, the criteria for selection of the sample of sites applied to Kent has resulted in the use of six sites, none of which is exceptionally richly furnished.

### 3.3 MATCHING THE RESEARCH AGENDA TO THE AVAILABLE DATA

As seen in Chapter 1, many of the basic subsistence and technology questions about Anglo-Saxon England now have a number of answers suggested for them, and we can now move on to more sophisticated cognitive and ideological matters. These are most easily sought through the study of activities which involve fewer essential survival strategies, and more ritualistic signalling components.

Once it has been established that the current research priority is the expression of ideology, and that this is best addressed through activities which involve a high degree of ritual signalling, such as furnished burial, we must re-examine the possible sets of burial data, also outlined in Chapter 1; artefact assemblages, structural features, the treatment of the body, and the position of the burial in the cemetery and in the landscape. Some aspects of burial practice, such as the use of external structures and the laying-out of the body, have been recorded only in recent years. Any study which relies heavily on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century excavations, as this does, discovers that grave-goods emerge as the largest viable set of comparable data. The use of grave-goods in the burial, then, potentially provides the most information on the burials of Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon England. Research questions must be refined to match this material; we must ask how the available information can be used to find out what we want to know.

In the Anglo-Saxon Conversion period, we can anticipate that social and ideological changes were fundamental and varied in their manifestation. Change takes place in every aspect of human activity all the time, but there are times of relatively fast and relatively slow change. The years from 600 to 850 were a time of exceptionally quick transition in many aspects. Various state formation and king-making processes were under way, inextricably tangled with the process of converting England to Christianity (Wallace-Hadrill 1975, 181-82; Carver 1989, 152). The structure of society was transforming, becoming more stable and apparently far more rigid (Scull

1993). Proto-urban life and controlled trade reappeared (Hodges 1982). Great numbers of monasteries were founded (Campbell 1981, 51; Morris 1989, 120 and fig 30) and these, with their very expensive ideological signals of manuscripts, sculpture and so on, attracted enormous investment.

Rapid change in so many areas of life means that we should expect rapid changes in burial customs too. Looking at either end of the period, in the late sixth century there are furnished burials in field cemeteries accompanied by Germanic-style objects, and in the later ninth century there are unfurnished burials around churches. It is clear that the immense transformations expected during the period did indeed take place.

Which aspects of these changes should have the priority for study? Some spring immediately to mind. Since every research theme must be examined as it changed over time, and so a firm *chronological framework* within a period is the first essential. As seen in Chapter 2, there are signposts and landmarks within the chronology of the Anglo-Saxon Conversion period, but these are sketched rather than accurately surveyed, and are too few to guide us effectively. A reliable chronological framework must be produced from the graves that can most securely be dated to the Conversion period; that is, from the furnished graves. The unfurnished graves which occur in the same cemeteries can often be dated by horizontal stratigraphy, and their attributes may then build up a prototype for the recognition of an unfurnished Conversion-period cemetery; but this stage of research will fall beyond the scope of the present study.

Secondly, the nature of the Conversion period as a time of fast transition is shown by substantial *changes in the range of grave-goods*, many of which have been described in section 2.3. Many artefact types came to an "abrupt and shared end" (Hines 1992, 83) at the end of the sixth century, and a significant change in many geographical distributions, particularly of female jewellery, has also been noticed (e.g. by Leeds 1936, Hyslop 1963, Meaney and Hawkes 1970, Hawkes in Philp 1973). Although these changes have often been noted, they have never been systematically quantified.

The third area of enquiry concerns the *disappearance of grave-goods*. Within a century and a half of the introduction of the new range of objects, furnished graves disappear almost entirely from the archaeological record. The considerable ideological investment that they represented appears to find other outlets, perhaps to be channelled into the coffers of the Church and also, it has been suggested, into those of the State (Duby 1973, 66-67; Carver 1989, 157). The exact date at which this happens has not yet been established, but it appears that there was a

considerable overlap between forms of investment, with items like the Book of Durrow, the Lindisfarne Gospels and the cross of St Cuthbert being produced at the same time as well-furnished barrow-burials. Also contemporary are a number of unfurnished burials around the new churches.

It is clear that the progression from furnished burial to churchyard burial is not a simple chronological one. Certain sections of society - the aristocracy, perhaps, or the wic- and burh-dwellers - may abandon furnished burial at different times; or it may be retained for use when some particularly heavy signalling is required, for example on the border of a kingdom. The signals sent are complicated, for they do not only come from the fact that the burial is furnished, but also from the connotations that the particular objects and art styles have for the community, indicating the identity and status possessed or sought by those involved in the funeral.

Study of the furnished burials of Conversion-period England, then, must not only provide a chronological framework for future work, but must also examine the ideological allegiances advertised by those using this form of burial; how the presence and constituents of a grave assemblage were being used to indicate affinities with particular social, political or religious groups. These priorities can all be addressed using data from grave-good types and combinations, resulting in a firm foundation for the period as a whole, and a small but interesting section of superstructure. Our primary research question is therefore refined to this. How were grave-goods used by the Anglo-Saxons in the Conversion period, and what did this practice mean?

### 3.4 RESEARCH PROGRAMME

#### 3.4.1 Introduction

The selection of a sample of good quality grave-good assemblages, spread over the area of Anglo-Saxon political and cultural influence, was described in section 3.2. Section 3.4 describes the method undertaken for the study of the grave-goods and their associations. Every grave-good within the sample of 2583 graves was separately recorded in detail. 1490 graves proved to be unfurnished, leaving a net dataset of 1093 furnished graves. Their geographical distribution is shown in Table 3.2.

The artefacts present in each grave were defined and classified in 39 categories, a mixture of functional and decorative types. Table 3.3 shows the working index for recording the artefacts

in their assemblages. Details of the individual objects were then noted on separate sheets, often with a sketch, to enable comparisons between object forms to be easily made. From the index and the detailed recording, find-combinations were used to build up as precise a chronology as possible for each artefact type, leading to the construction of a sequence of preferred assemblage types as they change over time, and to help tackle issues of the social use of the objects.

The construction of categories for the grave-goods was based partly on considerations of chronology, and partly on considerations of interpretation of social meaning. Chronological and interpretative assumptions were unavoidably made during the selection of the artefact types. These assumptions were subsequently tested, however, and the results of the analysis of the grave-goods presented in Chapter 4 include the outcome of the testing.

The prior selection of artefact categories led to a few slight difficulties in analysis; pottery vessels, for example, had to be extracted from the catch-all category of "other vessel". These minor irritations were rectified for clarity of presentation of the results of the grave-good analysis in Chapter 4.

#### 3.4.2 Construction of a chronological framework

The state of knowledge on the dating of Conversion-period objects has been described in Chapter 2, and the recording system was devised from this starting point. Some grave-good types were obvious choices for use as types for study, as usable chronologies had already been constructed for them. These were:

- \* Coins (Grierson and Blackburn 1986)
- \* Group 3, 6 and 7 shield-bosses (Dickinson and Härke 1992)
- \* Workboxes, cabochon pendants, bullae and linked pins (Shephard 1979a)
- \* Disc brooches (Avent 1975)
- \* Spearheads (Swanton 1973; Dickinson 1976)
- \* Seaxes (Down and Welch 1992; Hawkes in Philp 1973; Evison 1961 and 1987)
- \* Bronze vessels (Brenan 1991; Richards 1980)
- \* Glass vessels (Harden 1956)

The chronologies used have been summarised above in section 2.2. They have been useful signposts, but are not infallible, partly due to differences between England and mainland Europe, and partly due to the small sample of grave-goods from the seventh and early eighth centuries, which

makes computerised groupings less reliable for this period than for the fifth or sixth centuries.

Other grave-good types were selected for chronological study on the grounds that they could provide a reasonably secure *terminus post quem* of around 600 or later:

- |                         |                    |                  |
|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| * Double-tongued buckle | * Silver wire ring | * Amethyst bead  |
| * Hump-backed comb      | * Panther cowrie   | * Metal bead     |
| * Shoe buckle           | * Lace tag         | * Spatulate tool |

Other items were included which at the time had a date range including the earlier period, but giving a strong hint that the grave might be seventh or eighth century. These were:

- |                                      |                |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| * Triangular buckle                  | * Hanging bowl |
| * Small penannular/annular brooch    | * Box          |
| * Small monochrome glass bead        | * Disc pendant |
| * Bag, especially with contents      | * Chatelaine   |
| * Various amulets, e.g. beaver teeth |                |

A number of catch-all categories were also included, so that it would be possible to pick up other patterns in addition to those deliberately being sought.

- |                |                 |                |                |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| * Other buckle | * Other brooch  | * Other amulet | * Other object |
| * Other bead   | * Other pendant | * Other vessel |                |

During the evaluation of the data it became clear that the study of knives was likely to be unproductive. The only classificatory work on knives from Anglo-Saxon burials has been carried out by Evison, who distinguished six blade shapes at Buckland Dover K, the first three being used throughout the period of furnished burial and the last three during the Conversion period (1987, 113-16). Although Evison's typology has been used elsewhere (e.g. Evison 1988, 23-24; Down and Welch 1990, 102-03) it has not been tested against a wider sample, and its general applicability is doubtful. The reasons why knives have been neglected are manifold; there are a great number of knives to be studied, distinctions between their shapes can be difficult owing to corrosion, and the simplicity of the artefact makes the labour unrewarding (Dickinson 1976, 331-32). The 794 knives in 731 graves within the present study have therefore not been studied in detail.

There are a number of well-known Conversion-period object types, some well-dated, which are not listed here, such as rouletted pottery bottles and safety-pin brooches. This was because it seemed at the outset that there would be few individual examples. Some of the artefact categories used in Chapter 4 have therefore been adjusted, using the benefit of hindsight, from those used in the working index shown in Table 3.3.

The refinement of chronology depended largely on the technique of find-combination, with the occasional use of occurrence seriation (Gräslund 1976; see section 2.2.2). The strengths and limitations of this technique have been referred to above in section 2.2.1, and the results will be presented in Chapter 4.

### 3.4.3 The social use of grave-goods

The grave assemblages were also examined to assess the possible functions and social meanings of the objects, either singly or in combination. Functions can be summarised under a number of different headings, none of which are mutually exclusive. The first, and most obvious, is the range of *practical* interpretations. This includes both function as clothing and as an adjunct to clothing; knives, all types of buckle, all types of brooch, shoe fasteners, lace tags, chatelaines and probably beads, pendants and some types of decorative amulet, particularly workboxes, could be included here. A slightly different practical function is that of shroud-burial; the range of objects which could indicate this might include single pins, and beads acting as fasteners. Vessels and other containers could also be included under the "practical" heading, with an examination of how they might have been used in life, as could weapons. Coffin fittings, which do not have the function of grave-goods proper, were excluded from the study.

An alternative interpretation for many objects is that of the *amulet*, the cousin of the relic. The inclusion of almost any item in the grave could be seen as being for superstitious or prophylactic reasons, at a time of stress in the community on the death of one of its members. This interpretation is particularly useful for objects concealed in the grave, for example in a bag or box, and therefore not sending out visible signals. The interpretation of artefacts as amuletic objects may be appropriate for those who subscribe to a religious interpretation of burial practice. Whether the religion is pagan, perhaps spurred on to an extra outward show of religious practices by the actively evangelising Church (Carver 1992b, 199) or, alternatively, Christian, is a moot point. The link between religion and burial is explored further in Chapter 6.

The third major group is the range of *gender-symbolic* interpretations. This type of interpretation



would have been familiar to the earliest Anglo-Saxon antiquaries, who readily identified graves as those of men or women on the basis of the mutually exclusive presence of weapons or jewellery. The hypothesis of gender- or sex-linked grave-goods has since been confirmed, both by comparing assemblages with skeletal remains (e.g. at Buckland Dover K; Evison 1987, 123-27) and by statistical methods such as cluster analysis and multi-dimensional scaling, both used at Holywell Row Sf (Pader 1982, 90 and fig 6.2; Boddington 1990, 182-84 and fig 1) and principal co-ordinates analysis (Shephard 1979a, 7.5-7.7). Very few objects other than weapons appear to be male-linked, though, and it may be that while complex female dress was confined to women, the surviving inorganic aspects of the male costume could be worn by anyone. The more difficult identification of male-linked objects would then reflect a real rarity, rather than an absence of the right sort of statistical study.

Fourthly comes the question of the extent to which *social status* was signalled by the grave-goods present, in a period of declining grave-good use. The theory behind this has been fully considered in section 1.3. Although the simple wealth scores of individual graves can no longer be simply used to infer status, some idea of the resources available to be buried can be gained from a grave that contains rare or imported materials, or objects which need skilled manufacturing techniques to produce. The absence of this sort of material, however, cannot be used to show that the grave contained or was constructed by a person without access to it. Graves such as this are henceforth referred to as "low-wealth" graves, but this term should not imply anything about the wealth of the buried or burier.

Lastly, and most pertinent to this study, is the problem of the extent to which some form of perceived or desired *group membership* was being signalled through the grave-goods. This approach is of course not new, as it underpins the entire concept of the archaeological culture. The active use of the burial assemblage to broadcast messages of status group, allegiance and identity, however, is a more recently developed concept (e.g. for pottery cremation vessels, Richards 1987; for weapons, Härke 1990). The presence of very rich assemblages in the early seventh century, for example, has led to the suggestion that this burial rite was being used actively to signal membership of a "defiantly pagan" group, in reaction to the arrival of the imperialist and non-grave-good-using Church (Carver 1992b, 199). In the case of a constructed cultural identity, the true origin of imported or indigenous objects or burial rites is not the issue, but rather the connotations that the objects had for the wearing or observing population.

#### 3.4.4 Summary of method

Each of the artefact types which occur in the furnished graves of the sample was *described*, its *chronology* studied, then its *function*, its *social meaning* (including its gender implications), and its *distribution*. The results are presented in Chapter 4. The provenance of the objects, or the provenance of the influences on their design, was then studied by searching for parallels from Britain, mainland Europe, and the Mediterranean. The results of this study are presented in Chapter 5. The studies of the chronology of the artefact types, their provenance and their distribution, allowed them to be put into five groups, each of which was diagnostic of a particular cultural practice confined in time and in space. These different manifestations of the grave-good habit were then used to illustrate the changes in mortuary behaviour in Conversion-period England; and, within their historical context, to explain them. This is attempted in Chapter 6.

Region	Total known sites	Sample sub-set of sites
Kent	45	6
E Anglia: Cambs	11	3
Norfolk	9	2
Suffolk	21	5
Essex	12	4
Wessex: Avon	3	1
Berks	3	0
Bucks	7	1
Devon	1	0
Dorset	3	2
Glos	6	3
Hants	27	12
Oxon	25	12
Somerset	5	2
Wilts	15	5
Mercia: Beds	11	4
Derbys	17	8
Hereford & Worcs	3	1
Herts	5	1
S Humbs	5	1
Leics	5	0
Lincs	10	1
London	9	2
Northants	8	2
Notts	1	1
Shrops	1	1
Staffs	4	2
Warwicks	8	0
Northumbria: Cleveland	2	1
Cumbria	2	0
Dumfries & Galloway	1	0
N Humbs	16	6
Northumberland	7	3
Tyne & Wear	4	1
N Yorks	14	3
W Yorks	4	1
Isle of Wight	1	0
Sussex	13	7
Surrey	7	3
Total	351	107

**Table 3.1** Numbers of Conversion-period burial sites known, and number included in the sample sub-set

Region	Furnished graves	Unfurnished graves	Total
Kent	340	171	511
East Anglia	219	275	494
Wessex	215	296	511
Mercia	169	113	282
Northumbria	99	386	485
Essex	6	189	195
Sussex	33	50	83
Surrey	12	10	22

(For details of which counties make up the regions, see Table 3.1.)

**Table 3.2** Numbers of furnished and unfurnished graves in the sample sub-set



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE GRAVE-GOOD TYPES

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The database for this chapter consists of 1093 furnished graves. This represents 42% of the total of 2583 graves in the sample sub-set (see section 3.2 for selection of sample). The chapter is divided into sections, each devoted to an artefact type; some are sub-divided or grouped for convenience. The aim is to describe the range of forms of artefacts that occurred within the graves selected for detailed study, to attempt to construct or refine artefact chronologies and distributions, and to explore the practical and symbolic functions of the objects.

A number of functions that the artefacts may have had for the contemporary Anglo-Saxons were suggested in section 3.4.3. These included a practical function in life or in death, an amuletic function, gender- and age-symbolic functions, a status-seeking function and a cultural or ideological signalling function. These are not mutually exclusive, however, and it is difficult conclusively to establish any meaningful precise function or set of functions for individual object types. The practical and social function parts of Chapter 4 should, therefore, be regarded as floating a number of possible ideas.

The combination of the data on chronology and distribution, the ideas on function and meaning, and the evidence for the provenances and parallels for the object types presented in Chapter 5, will result in a unified hypothesis for the use of grave-goods in the corpus of Anglo-Saxon Conversion-period graves presented in Chapter 6.

Each class of artefact found in Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon grave assemblages was therefore examined under five headings. The first covers a *description* of the physical form and fabric of the objects, and the numbers of the object type in the sample (see Table 4.18 for a visual summary of relative numbers of different grave-good types). The second looks at their *date*, and under the third heading, *function*, the practical use of the object type in life and in the grave is examined.

The fourth heading, *social meaning*, explores age and sex correlations as well as any evidence for an artefact type's costliness or rarity value. In the case of sex or gender correlations, the

evidence was based both on osteological data and on tested assumptions about the types of grave-goods found with each sex. In the case of age correlations, osteological evidence was used wherever possible, but in its absence the length or the grave was occasionally held to allow a distinction between "child" and "adult", without assuming finer divisions of age-group. The dividing line between the status of "child" and "adult" seems to occur at about twelve years of age (Crawford 1991). Correlating both the age and the sex (biological) or gender (social) of those buried provides evidence for whether gender is acquired at adulthood or ascribed at birth.

There are difficulties, however, in interpreting the observed age and sex patterns. In Merovingian Metz, it appears that the seventh-century decline in grave-goods affects age-specific and gender-specific items, such as weapons and jewellery, first. Neutral objects continue to be deposited to the end of the century (Halsall 1990, 298-99). Halsall interprets this as being a reaction to the increasingly rigid social stratification of society. Status now flows not from being a grown-up male or female person, but from the family of origin. Grave-goods are no longer needed to express the attained status, and the family is much more secure in its status, which is not so compromised on the death of a member; a huge outward show of wealth at the funeral is therefore unnecessary, and the investment can be channelled elsewhere (Halsall 1990, 378).

An entirely opposite theory, however, could be used to explain the same observed phenomenon. It could be suggested that a diminishing of the division between the ages and/or the sexes visible in funerary deposits is due to a much *less* rigid division between the sexes and ages in life. Additional contextual evidence in a historic period helps to decide between these interpretations, but the conclusions are by no means certain.

In Chapter 1, it was seen that the ranking of graves according to the "wealth score" of their contents is unacceptable in the Conversion period, due to the decline in the grave-good custom. It is still possible, however, to assess the rarity value or costliness of any artefact type intuitively, based on the ease of its production and distribution. Factors such as the availability of materials, the length and complexity of manufacture, the distance that the finished object had travelled can all be considered. Shephard compared this intuitive method with three statistical methods of scoring grave-good types. His Statistic 2, based on the average number of artefact types each individual type is associated with, tends to score artefacts in much the same order as the subjective method, suggesting that the intuitive, subjective method does have some validity (1979b, 52-63). Although it cannot be concluded from an unfurnished or "poorly" furnished grave that the buried or buriers had few surplus resources, it can be concluded from a grave containing a rare imported object that costly artefacts were available to be buried.

The fifth heading, geographical *distribution*, looks at where in Britain the various types of object were being used. The sample sub-set seems, in most cases, big enough to make distribution patterns meaningful, although there are clusters of furnished graves in Kent, by the Humber and in Derbyshire, and there is a dearth of sampled graves in the midlands. The extent to which the observed distribution patterns can change in just a few years is shown by the number of cemeteries excavated within the last decade - Castledyke SHu, Lechlade G1, Didcot Power Station Ox, Harford Farm Nf, Ipswich Buttermarket Sf, Boss Hall Sf, Ailcy Hill NY. The first four of these contain many furnished graves, and provide much of the data for this chapter.

The grave-good types are taken in a rough order of their precision as chronological tools, for ease of argument and to avoid repetition. They have been additionally loosely grouped into items of female jewellery, weapons, unisex objects such as buckles, containers, and other objects. Parallels and possible sources for the object types will be discussed in Chapter 5.

#### 4.2 COIN (Fig 4.1)

*Description:* 23 graves in the sample contained coins. Nine graves contained 27 coins of the seventh to ninth centuries, comprising two Frankish solidi and 25 Anglo-Saxon sceattas. Fourteen further graves contained twenty Roman coins. Four Roman and three later coins were pierced or mounted. Those pierced or mounted coins that were being used as disc pendants are also considered in section 4.7 below, and the Roman coins are also considered in section 4.47.2.

*Date:* The value of Anglo-Saxon coins for dating has been looked at above in section 2.2.5, and so will not be repeated here. It is possible, however, that the incidence of pierced coins in graves may be a chronological indicator. Meaney has suggested that more Roman coins are pierced in graves of the fifth and sixth centuries than are in the Conversion-period graves, and this has been confirmed by King (Meaney 1981, 216; King 1988, 225). King found that about 60% of Roman coins from Anglo-Saxon graves of all dates were pierced, except in Kent where the figure fell to 11%. Grierson and Blackburn also note a decline in mounted Anglo-Saxon and contemporary Continental coins after c. 625 (1986, 160).

*Function:* Of the four pierced Roman coins, both that from Buckland Dover K 141 and that from Buckland Dover K 129 were in bag collections, and the two from Didcot Power Station Ox 7 were on a necklace and in the fill respectively. Of the three later mounted coins, the solidus and thrymsa from Finglesham K 7 were both looped, and both were on necklaces. The Boss Hall Sf 93 solidus had the remains of a loop, and was



contained in a bag with, among other things, an unmodified Series B sceatta. A perforation or loop does not, therefore, always indicate a use as jewellery; the coins in bags may have been amulets (Meaney 1981, 215-16).

A number of unmodified coins were also found in bags or other containers. At King Harry Lane Ht 10, Shudy Camps Ca 11 and Camerton Av 100 the coins appear to have been in bags, and at King Harry Lane Ht 21 the two Roman coins were found in a workbox. Where the container was a purse specifically for coins, an alternative use as currency may be implied. This was the case at Garton-on-the Wolds NHu 44 and Finglesham K 145, where eight coins apiece were both found in bags with no other contents.

As only these two graves in the sample contained a collection of unmodified up-to-date coins, it may be that currency was little used, or that coins used as jewellery or as amulets were more often buried as grave-goods than those used as currency. The use of coin-pendants is linked to the use of other disc pendants (see section 4.7); the use of amulets is also examined below (section 4.47). The amuletic burial of a coin in the mouth of the corpse found in the Roman world and later adopted by the Franks is not common in Conversion-period England, however; the few isolated examples are from Kent (e.g. Broadstairs I K 71 and Broadstairs II K 362).

*Social Meaning:* Coins appear to be linked to female burial. Out of the 23 graves, thirteen contained female-linked objects, and one more could be considered female on osteological grounds. The skeletal remains in Finglesham K 145 and Camerton Av 100 were considered definitely male on osteological grounds, and those in Caister-on-Sea Nf 14 may have been male. Camerton Av 30 was considered by its excavator to be male, apparently due to the interpretation of one of its grave-goods as a spearhead. As this object is described as having a "tang", though, and in the absence of a drawing, the sexing of this grave must remain doubtful. This adds up to fourteen female graves, perhaps four male graves, and five unsexed. This distribution is probably linked to the use of coins as jewellery, as six of the women's graves had pierced or looped coins, but none of the possible men's graves did.

*Distribution:* The Roman coins are concentrated on sites which are close to Roman settlements, such as Camerton Av, King Harry Lane Ht and Buckland Dover K. The distribution of the various types of sceattas is summarised in section 2.2.5; as the present study contains such a tiny sample of the thousands of sceattas known, little can be added to this. It can be seen from the distribution map (Map 3) that the habit of depositing coins in graves is found across England, from the north-east to the south-west.

### 4.3 DISC BROOCH (Fig 4.1)

*Description:* Disc brooches have been thoroughly examined by Avent (1975). Only three brooches found since Avent's work have been recorded in the present study, a keystone brooch at Lechlade G1 17 and composite brooches at Harford Farm Nf 11 and Boss Hall Sf 93. It is hard to fit these brooches into Avent's classification, as the variability in disc brooches is so great that most of the classes contain only a few examples. These brooches evidently resist meaningful classification on the detailed level of Avent's work, and perhaps just a threefold division into keystone, plated and composite brooch would be more useful.

Twelve disc brooches were found in the recorded cemeteries of this study, but one (Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 13) was lost before any record could be made. They comprise four keystone brooches, one plated brooch, five composites and one miscellaneous, this last considered by Avent to show affinities with both keystone and plated brooches (1975, 55).

*Date:* The conventional dating of disc brooches is based both on gold analysis (giving a date of manufacture, though probably unreliable; see section 2.2.6) and on associated grave-goods (giving a date of deposition). Although these techniques are dating different events, the range is quoted as being from the middle of the sixth until the middle of the seventh century (Avent 1975, 62). The finds from Boss Hall Sf 93 and Harford Farm Nf 11 must alter the accepted date of deposition. Both brooches have affinities with the latest composite disc brooches to be manufactured, particularly those from Milton II (North Field) Ox and Monkton K 3 (Hawkes 1974, 254). The Boss Hall Sf 93 brooch shows signs of repair, and is associated with a Series B sceatta, so cannot have been buried before the last decade of the seventh century (see section 2.2.5). Harford Farm Nf 11's brooch is very battered, and has been subject to so much repair that the craftsman responsible signed it on the back in runes ("Luda repaired this brooch"). These two graves both also contain toilet sets and presumably are roughly contemporary, showing that it cannot have been particularly unusual for a valued brooch to have been curated for a long time before burial.

As disc brooches have been fairly well studied and dated, it was thought possible to use the sequence published by Avent to construct a seriation diagram based on the date of deposition of the disc brooches in the sample. This is shown in Table 4.1. Polhill K 37, despite being a keystone brooch, is towards the end of the sequence, as it was perhaps reused as a pendant, and was eventually buried as part of a bag collection in a fairly battered condition (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 190-91), perhaps in the second half of the seventh century.

	comb	chataleine	polychrome bead	whorl	monochrome bead	wire ring	amethyst bead	lace-tag	disc pendant	shears	toilet set	metal bead	cabochon pendant
Hadleigh Rd Sf 19	x	x											
Hadleigh Rd Sf 92		x											
Lechlade Gl 17			x	x	x	x							
Monkton K 3					x		x						
Winnall II Ha 5	x				x			x					
Polhill K 37					x	x	x		x				
Harford Farm Nf 11		x			x	x				x	x		
Boss Hall Sf 93					x	x			x		x	x	x

**Table 4.1** Seriation diagram based on graves with disc brooches

The main difference between this seriation and that shown in Table 2.2 is that here cabochon pendants are at the end of the sequence, and that in Table 2.2 they are near the beginning. It is possible that the two seriations, covering as they do largely different object types, run in sequence, Table 4.1 preceding Table 2.2. Further evidence for this will be found below, under the sections dealing with the various object types; comments on the seriation in Table 2.2 are given below in section 4.4. A full, computerised, seriation of Conversion-period object types would be an interesting project, but one which could not be carried out here.

Although the new finds of disc brooches are not in themselves sufficient to alter the accepted relative chronology of manufacture, they do therefore show that the brooches continued to be buried throughout the seventh century. Keystone brooches should still be seen as dating from the second half of the sixth century and the first few decades of the seventh century, with plated brooches generally later but still within the half-century either side of 600. The vast majority of composite brooches may still date from the first half of the seventh century, but it must be acknowledged that they could still be worn right up to the end of the century.

*Function:* All of the brooches were found singly in the grave. In two cases, Polhill K 37 and Boss Hall Sf 93, the brooches were not worn but in bags, and the Winnall II Ha 5 brooch had been cut down and converted into a pendant. At Winnall II Ha 21 the brooch was in the conventional position at the throat, but there is no information as to the position of the brooch in any of the other graves.

*Social meaning:* Avent (1975) did not consider the contexts of disc brooches and, as the present sample includes so few of the known disc brooches, little can be said about their social meaning.

Disc brooches have been found in some of the most famously well-equipped Kentish graves, such as Kingston Down K 205; the quality of the disc brooch from this grave has been likened to that of the Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1 jewellery (Haith in Webster and Backhouse (eds) 1991, 51). At the other end of the scale is the rather badly made gilded bronze brooch from Winnall II Ha 21, found with bronze and iron fragments which may represent a vessel. The complexity of their manufacture should, however, indicate some degree of wealth among their owners. All of the disc brooches in this study were found with other traditionally female-linked items, and mostly with adults, although the two disc brooch-graves at Winnall II Ha contained a child of seven to ten in grave 5, and an adolescent of twelve to thirteen in grave 21; both of these brooches were old and broken or modified.

*Distribution:* The predominantly Kentish distribution of disc brooches can be seen from Avent's list of findspots, with all but sixteen of his 168 provenanced brooches coming from Kent (1975, 113-15). The three new discoveries, although all outside Kent, do little to alter the proportions. Map 4 shows the distribution of disc brooches outside Kent, based on a combination of Avent's work and the present study; they are concentrated in eastern and southern England. Any changes in the distribution over time, perhaps a diffusion outwards from Kent, would be very interesting, but would depend on an exhaustive examination of the associations of Avent's corpus.

#### 4.4 WORKBOX (Fig 4.2)

*Description:* Up to 49 of these small cylindrical bronze containers are known from England, 22 of which occur in this study. One grave, Uncleby NHu 31, may uniquely have contained two workboxes, although it is possible that one box belonged to the otherwise unfurnished neighbouring grave 30 (Gibson 1993, 192).

In the Buckland Dover K report Evison listed a corpus of 42 workboxes (1987, 269) including two which she interpreted as being made of organic materials. One of these, from Buckland Dover K 84, is represented only by a hinge, which could equally have belonged to some other form of box, and so is not included in my total of 49. The other, at Haslingfield Ca, is interpreted more persuasively by Gibson as being the remains of three individual workboxes (1993, 168). Ozanne (1962-63, 31) lists a workbox from Chartham Down K, which has not been identified by other writers. Five discoveries since Evison wrote, at Lechlade Gl 14, Harford Farm Nf 18, Castledyke SHu 183, Didcot Power Station Ox 12 and a re-identification of a lid top from Marina Drive Bd E3 (Gibson 1994), bring the possible total to 49. The most recent study of workboxes, that of Gibson (1993), omits the workboxes from Chartham Down

K and Didcot Power Station Ox 12 and considers the Hepple Nb chain and the unprovenanced find in the British Museum to be too uncertain to include.

All known workboxes are made of bronze, but some are thought to have been silvered (e.g. Marina Drive Bd B3/B4) or gilded (e.g. Burwell Ca 42 and the two from Kempston Bd (Gibson 1993, 36, 48, 53)). They vary little in size or proportions, being generally about 50 to 60 mm in diameter and 60 to 70 mm tall; Gibson quotes outer limits of 40 to 70 mm diameter and 40 to 72 mm tall, excluding the anomalous tall thin box from Kingston Down K 222 (1993, 39). Gibson has divided workboxes into two types, Type I (with forty examples) being the simple type with pull/push lid secured by a chain, and Type II (with five examples) being the more complicated hinged lid type with a flat attachment flange or handle (Gibson 1993, 2-5).

Some workboxes are undecorated, but most commonly they have very simple designs of punched dots. Many have the dots arranged in a cross pattern, and while this may easily be a product of the simple designs, the cross on the lid of the workbox from North Leigh Ox (outside the sample for detailed study) seems more deliberate, with scratched interlace between the arms. Gibson has identified cross elements in the decoration of less than half of his workboxes and believes that there is no reason why the decorative style on workboxes should be considered deliberately Christian (1993, 20, 62-67). Burwell Ca 42, a Type II workbox, is so far unique in having much more complex decoration of repoussé animal ornament in developed Style II. On its lid and base it has identical die-stamped circular designs, divided into four pictures, two of which have been interpreted as scenes from the Sigurd legend or perhaps from Beowulf (Lethbridge 1931, 56; Gibson 1993, 70-73).

*Date:* Workboxes are one of the object types featured in Shephard's seriation of Conversion-period grave-goods (1979a, fig 4.1), reproduced here as Table 2.1. This seriation has been altered by the discovery of Boss Hall Sf 93, where supposedly early seventh-century artefact types such as a composite disc brooch and cabochon pendants were found with a Series B sceatta of c. 690; it seems, however, that the brooch at least was a curated antique (see section 2.2.5). The fact that the *terminus post quem* of this grave is some decades after its apparent place in the seriation means that the neatness and apparent precision of the seriation is compromised. When revised dates for the Merovingian tremissis in Sibertswold K 172 of c. 660-80 (Rigold in Bruce-Mitford 1975, 672 and 659, but see section 2.2.5) and for the Series A and B sceattas in Broadstairs I K grave L of 690-695 (Grierson and Blackburn 1986, table 13) are added, it becomes obvious that the chronological distinctions between many of the artefact types must have been so fine as to be practically meaningless. Table 2.2 shows the seriation

with these corrections and additions. The basic distinction, though, between earlier graves with disc brooches at one end and later ones with workboxes or openwork buckles at the other, appears still to be valid.

Hawkes (in Philp 1973) and Shephard (1979a) concluded that workboxes should be dated to the second half or the final quarter of the seventh century. Since then, this dating has been perhaps pushed slightly later by the finding of a workbox in a coin-dated grave at Harford Farm Nf 18, with two Series B sceattas, the later of which dates to *c.* 690-700 (see section 2.2.5). It is harder to assess the start date of workboxes, as many workbox-graves have no datable associations. Shephard's seriation (1979a, fig 4.1; see Tables 2.1 and 2.2) allocates a start date of around 675, and there appear to be only two graves which might challenge this.

First, Gibson has interpreted the bronze discs and bands from Haslingfield Ca as the remains of three workboxes, as all the rings "show a slight flaring at the end" and appear to have been constructed in exactly the same technique as other workboxes (Gibson 1993, 168). Neither Evison nor Gibson illustrate the Haslingfield Ca finds, but from a photograph they do look like parts of workboxes. Apart from the possible workboxes, however, Haslingfield has mostly produced fifth- and sixth-century items. The only other Conversion-period object from the cemetery is a cowrie shell. Little is known of the excavations, and it is possible that a later part of the cemetery exists which is barely recorded, but the lack of other Conversion-period objects casts doubt on the identification of the Haslingfield Ca workboxes.

Second, there is a report in the *Victoria County History* for Yorkshire that "bronze fragments of a 'thread box' with other items were found in a cremated burial at Sancton I" (Smith 1912a, 75). Gibson is inclined to believe Smith, on the grounds that he was familiar with workboxes from the Uncleby NHu excavation (1993, 32); but without a drawing of the fragments thought by Smith to have been a workbox, the Sancton I example must remain very doubtful. There is, then, no definite example of a workbox associated with objects of the first three-quarters of the seventh century or before.

*Function:* The function of workboxes has been considered by a number of writers, who have tended to concentrate on whether the boxes were designed to be frequently opened, and are therefore handy containers (e.g. Hawkes in Philp 1973, 196-98), or are in some way amuletic or symbolic. The most recent and most exhaustive examination is that of Meaney (1981, 181-89). She concluded that the preponderance of scraps of fine-weave textile and plant remains among their contents made it likely that the workbox and its contents were a sort of amulet,

specifically symbolic of housewifely skill and responsibility in the typically feminine areas of spinning, weaving and healing with herbs. As the present sample includes seven workboxes discovered since 1981 (the five listed above as found since 1987, plus King Harry Lane Ht 10 and 21), this conclusion is perhaps worth re-examining.

Out of these seven, one was fragmentary and four were apparently empty. King Harry Lane Ht 21 contained two Roman coins plus some thread wound onto an iron bobbin, and Harford Farm Nf 18 contained two hooked tags and a linked pin suite. King Harry Lane Ht 21 is an orthodox collection, with two amuletic objects and some textile. The Harford Farm Nf 18 collection, on the other hand, raises the possibility that the textile might instead represent scraps of clothing, probably still as an amulet, keepsake or relic, but of a different kind. "Pagan" amulets appear to be generally representational, such as cowrie shells, beaver teeth, Thor's hammers and so on - items that look like the protected thing or like an attribute of the protector (Meaney 1981, 6). "Christian" relics, on the other hand, tend to have a more direct physical relationship with the protector, such as a sliver of the True Cross, or a bone or scrap of clothing of a saint (Harries 1992, 63-65). Meaney's view of the workbox with textile is similar to the pagan amulet; it is representational of weaving skill. Conversely, a workbox containing clothing fragments, not just any scrap of fine fabric, would fit better with the Christian relic.

*Social meaning:* Workboxes are female-linked items, and other female-linked items occur in all but two of the workbox-graves in the detailed sample. They can occasionally be found with children, as at Marina Drive Bd E1/E2, with children of about twelve and about eight, and at Didcot Power Station Ox 12, with a three- to five-year-old. Despite their female link, and their frequent occurrence in graves with precious metals, only six of the workbox graves also contained necklaces, and in most cases these were fairly simple; one metal bead, two disc pendants, three graves with amethysts, two with bullae. Cabochon pendants have never been found in association with workboxes, and this has been used to argue the relatively late date of workboxes and early date of cabochon pendants (Shephard 1979a, 4.19). As will be seen below, however, cabochon pendants in good repair continue to be buried at least until the 690s, so it is possible, instead, that workboxes belong to a group of people who were beginning to keep jewellery out of graves and perhaps only to bury the more functional type of costume. A workbox was found with loomweights and pottery in the fill of a sunken-featured building in Dover (Webster 1976, 164; Evison 1987, 269, no 8), so it is unlikely that they were exclusively funerary items.

Chatelaines are the most common association of workboxes, with fourteen examples, but this

may simply mean that the workbox was seen as being part of the chatelaine. The next most common association, with ten examples, was the single pin. This could be of iron, bronze or silver, with a ring head, a knob head, a flat disc head, hipped or not, of round or square section, or be a single pin from a linked suite. There seems to have been a considerable choice available. Two graves contained linked pin suites, which brings the total of pins up even higher.

The lack of conspicuously non-functional grave-goods, such as jewellery, in the workbox graves, is underlined by the use here of bags and boxes. Twelve graves contained a bag or a box or both, mostly empty, but one or two bags and four boxes with objects. One box and possibly one bag contained the workbox among their contents. In one other case, the workbox was hidden in a pot.

*Distribution:* Map 5 shows the distribution of workboxes within the present study, and Evison has also produced a map of her corpus of 42 examples (1987, fig 117). These combine to show that workboxes are spread evenly over the country with no particular concentrations or gaps.

#### 4.5 LINKED PINS (Fig 4.3)

*Description:* Linked pins can be of gold, silver or bronze, and consist of two pins linked by a short and delicate chain. They form Type LXIV in Ross's classification (1991, 252-67). Thirteen graves within the present study contained pins which could reasonably be supposed to have been linked. Eight of the suites were made from silver (four with garnet settings), three from bronze (none with settings), one from gold (with a garnet setting) and in one case the material is not stated.

The figure of thirteen graves includes only those with pins still physically linked with a metal chain, plus one pair found symmetrically at the neck at Bourton-on-the-Water G1 7. It does not include Grave S517 at Goblin Works Sy, which contained two spiral-headed pins, one at the neck and one at the knees, perhaps fastening a shroud. This grave shows that the mere finding of two matching pins in a grave should not always be taken as indicating the presence of a linked pin set; however, the unlinked pair of spiral-headed pins at Bourton-on-the-Water G1 7 were found on either side of the lower jaw, and so it seems likely that they were originally linked with some sort of organic thread or thong.

One further possible linked pin set was found at Didcot Power Station Ox 16, where three fragmentary and corroded bronze shafts were found at the clavicle. One had a chain link



through a perforated head; although they have provisionally been identified as a toilet set, it is possible that they represent the remains of a linked pin suite.

The most common design of linked pins in this study was a round-sectioned shaft of 35 to 50 mm in length, ending in a disc head set with a garnet and with a suspension loop above. This type is found in silver at Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 39 and 55, Lechlade GI 14 and 138, and in gold at Cow Low Db. The presence of a setting puts them in Shephard's type a or Ross's sub-type LXIVi. Sub-type LXIVii, or Shephard's type b, do not have settings in the head and vary more in their design (Shephard 1979a, 4.12-4.14; Ross 1991, 252-67). Heads without settings can be mushroom-shaped (Castledyke SHu 46) or knobbed (Winnall II Ha 8) or of a variety of other shapes.

The variety of shapes of linked pins, especially those without settings, has led some writers, including Ross, to identify all perforated or looped pins as part of a linked set. Looped or perforated pins can, however, be found singly (e.g. at Winnall II Ha 10 and Castledyke SHu 183). The present study is concerned with functional types, and although contrary to Ross's judgement and experience, therefore treats these pins - even though they may once have been part of a linked set - as single pins.

Chains could be of figure-of-eight links, but are more commonly of folded elliptical links, usually joined by a simple loop-in-loop technique, where each link is threaded through both ends of the preceding folded link. At Harford Farm Nf 18 the chain is of double loop-in-loop, where each link is threaded through the loops of the preceding two links. At Harford Farm Nf 18 and Lechlade GI 14, the chain attachments to the pins are hidden by a decorative animal head.

*Date:* Linked pins are one of the classes of object that were seriated by Shephard (1979a, fig 4.1; see Tables 2.1 and 2.2). He concluded that their date range should be placed between those of cabochon garnets and biconical metal beads, beginning in the second quarter of the seventh century with the linked-pin grave of Chartham Down K Barrow A (outside the present sample), which also contained a plated disc brooch of Avent Class 2 (Avent 1975, corpus no 162). The small gold pin found in this grave, however, does not taper to a pointed end, and looks unlike any other linked pin known. It is attached to a short length of chain, and resembles part of a hinge, such as the shoulder-clasps from Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1, or the bronze hinge of the workbox at Sibertswold K 60 (Faussett 1856, 164 and pl XIII, 8; Leeds 1936, pl XXIX). With the removal of this grave, there are no examples of linked pins found in graves with disc brooches.

Shephard saw linked pins as popular throughout the third quarter of the seventh century and then declining in the fourth, as few of his sample (only two out of twenty-three) were found with workboxes (1979a, 4.12-4.14, fig 4.1). Out of the ten linked pin sets in my sample that do not appear in Shephard's, a further two are found with workboxes, and one of these, Harford Farm Nf 18, was found with a Series B sceatta of c. 690-700 (see section 2.2.5). Examples of linked pins are given by Ross from settlement sites including London and Southampton, and a probable pair of bronze linked pins has been recovered from the demolition layer of the early eighth-century settlement at Fishergate, York (Rogers 1993, 1363). Together with the unique triple disc-headed linked pins from the river Witham, dated on art-historical grounds to the middle of the eighth century (Wilson 1984, 67), they show that the concept of linking pins continued for at least another half-century or so after the end of furnished burial.

There is therefore no need for linked pins to have been manufactured in the first half of the seventh century. The latest date at which they could be included in a burial assemblage is certainly the eighth century, but how late in the century they continued to be used, in life or in death, is not yet certain.

*Function:* Hyslop's observation that linked pins began to fasten the costume when brooches disappeared from graves (1963, 190-91) might suggest that they were a direct replacement for brooches, used as dress fasteners. Owen-Crocker has pointed out, however, that the delicate nature of the pin sets means that they must have been used only for light fabrics; they appear to have been worn at the neck, perhaps securing a veil to the cloak or shawl (1986, 92-93, 97).

*Social meaning:* Linked pins are not found with male grave-goods, but they can be found with children, as at Shudy Camps Ca 131, where the only surviving skeletal remains were a few milk teeth. As most of the pins are made from gold or silver, and about half seem to have had garnet settings, linked pins appear on the whole to have been relatively valuable items.

*Distribution:* The thirteen linked pin graves in the sample are spread fairly evenly over the country (see Map 6). There are no linked pins in the sample from Kent or Northumbria; although Ross includes pins from a number of sites in Kent, even his corpus contains no examples from Northumbria (Ross 1991, map 5.15).

#### 4.6 BULLA (Fig 4.4)

*Description:* 71 bullae were included in the survey, in eighteen graves. The word "bulla" is the

Latin for "bubble", and these little metal pendants can be either a spherical bubble-shape or, more commonly, a hemisphere with a flat back. They are most frequently found in silver (59 examples, 83%), then bronze (nine examples, 13%), then gold (two examples, 4%). These proportions are similar to those of the materials used to make wire rings (see below, section 4.15). Metal beads and disc pendants are less often made of silver, using more of both gold and bronze (see Table 4.2).

	Gold	Silver	Bronze
Wire rings	< 1%	88%	11%
Bullae	4%	83%	13%
Metal beads	15%	70%	15%
Disc pendants	20%	53%	25%

(The disc pendants do not add up to 100%, because one is largely garnet and has been excluded.)

**Table 4.2** Metals used to make wire rings, bullae, beads and disc pendants

*Date:* Bullae are another of the objects studied in Shephard's seriation (1979a, fig 4.1; see Tables 2.1 and 2.2). Shephard noted that bullae were rarely found with cabochon pendants and never with disc brooches, and so deduced that they overlapped in date with the slightly earlier cabochon pendants and were significantly later than disc brooches - from about 660 "into the last quarter of the seventh century" (1979a, 4.16). Some bullae look like skeuomorphs in metal for cabochon pendants (see below, section 4.8), and so might be expected to be contemporary or slightly later.

Two bulla-graves in this study have been discovered since Shephard's work, Harford Farm Nf 22 and 28, and one, Cokethorpe Ox, was not included by him. Only Harford Farm Nf 28 contains a closely datable artefact, an openwork gold filigree pendant with a cross in the centre. It is very similar to cross-in-ring pendants from Gilton K 27 (Fig 4.6) and Chartham Down K Barrow A, both of which were found with disc brooches, Gilton K 27's being a keystone brooch and Chartham Down K Barrow A's a plated brooch (Hawkes *et al.* 1966, 107 and fig 2; Avent 1975, 25 and 41; Leeds 1936, pl XXIX); there is also an unassociated example from Faversham K (Dalton 1912, pl 1 no 8), and Hines draws attention to similar pendants from sixth-century Scandinavia (1984, 232). The Harford Farm Nf 28 pendant, however, is the only object found with a bulla which could be dated to the first half of the seventh century, and may be an antique.

Shephard's dating of bullae therefore continues to hold but, bearing in mind the dangers of

attempting too much precision in occurrence seriation (Wilson 1959), I would prefer to quote the date range as covering the second half of the seventh century, perhaps extending into the eighth.

As already noted, the largest and best-made bullae look very much like skeuomorphs of cabochon pendants. The corrugated loops and beaded collars are similar, although the shape of the bulla is always circular, and the shape of the cabochon usually oval. A hypothetical evolutionary path might be from cabochon pendants, influenced by domed rivet heads (seen on buckles including that from Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1), a new fashion for metal on the necklace and for the circular shape of disc pendants, and eventually "degenerating" into the small and fragile bullae without collars, as seen for example at Harford Farm Nf 22 and 28. But there is absolutely no dating evidence for this; the evidence, if any, points to a development the opposite way, with the Harford Farm Nf 28 openwork filigree pendant perhaps suggesting an early date for its rather shoddy bullae, and the Cow Low Db linked pins and Burwell Ca 121 workbox perhaps suggesting a later date for the well-made type.

*Function:* Apart from the possible exception of Shudy Camps Ca 19, where five silver bullae were found together on the lower ribs, and so were perhaps in a bag, all the bullae were on necklaces. Meaney includes bullae in her section on "Manufactured Amulets" (1981, 190-91) but does not offer any specific arguments for their talismanic or apotropaic nature.

*Social meaning:* As might be expected from their function, bullae are a female-linked artefact type; they can be found both with adults and with children. The necklaces on which they are found can be fairly ordinary, as for example at Castledyke SHu 61 (with a child of about three years old), or exceptionally rich, as at Desborough Nh and Galley Low Db. The material and quality of the individual bulla, not the basic form, appears to have been the status indicator; poorly made examples in bronze are found on short necklaces of mixed materials such as at Marina Drive Bd C7, D10 and F2, but well-made matching gold bullae are not out of place on the finest necklaces known from Anglo-Saxon England.

*Distribution:* The distribution pattern of graves containing bullae is shown in Map 7. The distribution is even over England, with no notable concentrations or absences.

#### 4.7 DISC PENDANT (Fig 4.4)

*Description:* 42 graves in the sample contained 75 disc pendants, all on necklaces. The only

graves to contain more than three disc pendants were Boss Hall Sf 93, with five, and Harford Farm Nf 22 and 28, with at least ten examples each. Silver was the most common material, with forty examples (not counting looped thrymsas, which are nominally of gold; see section 2.2.5). The twenty silver pendants from Harford Farm Nf 22 and 28 were all small and plain, but the most common silver disc pendant type after these was the scutiform pendant, with a central boss and punched dot decoration; there were at least thirteen of these.

The next most common material was bronze, with fifteen examples, generally made to a lower standard than the silver examples. Two were scutiform, and four were plain discs with a loop, but three appeared to be re-used escutcheons from a bucket or hanging bowl and others were simply scraps of bronze sheet with holes bored through.

There were fourteen gold disc pendants, not including those made out of coins. Three of them, Camerton Av 5, Preshaw Ha and Buckland Dover K 134, were bracteates decorated with repoussé designs of Style II animals with pelleted bodies. A fourth Style II bracteate, in silver, comes from Finglesham K 96. The Camerton Av and Preshaw Ha bracteates are the only ones with Style II decoration ever to have been found outside Kent (*contra* Hines 1984, 219), although a bronze die was found at Castledyke SHu in 1939. Harford Farm Nf 28 produced (in addition to the ten-plus small plain silver pendants) the openwork filigree pendant with a saltire cross described in section 4.6 above. The other ten gold disc pendants were all made of a gold backplate with filigree decoration, all originally having a central setting. The remaining disc pendants comprise a cloisonné pendant from Winnall II Ha 5 (see section 4.3) and five looped coins (see below, and section 2.2.5).

*Date:* Scutiform pendants in silver are known from the early sixth century (Hines 1984, 221-35). That from Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 39 was associated with a pair of linked pins, but the others lack clear dating evidence. On the grounds that most closely datable grave-goods appear to date from the second half of the seventh century, it may be that few scutiforms outlasted the first half of the century. Hines has seen a hiatus in the production and wearing of scutiform pendants between *c.* 560 and *c.* 650 (1984, 231) but this is caused by his early dating of the abandonment of Style I and its concomitant artefact types, and blanket dating of Conversion-period cemeteries to after 650, rather than any real gap.

Only one of the bronze disc pendants has any datable associations. At Polhill K 37, a flat bronze disc decorated with two concentric rings of punched dots and having a rough perforation was found in the same grave as a keystone disc brooch. The inner ring of punched dots was

perhaps intended to represent a boss, and so this pendant may have been a kind of scutiform. The brooch was in a very battered condition, had been crudely pierced and was being worn either on a chatelaine or in a bag (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 190-91). It is hard to assess when this assemblage was buried, but it must have been at least towards the middle of the seventh century if not substantially later.

The Style II ornament on the bracteates has been studied by Speake (1980, 66-72), but his work contains some errors or misprints. Speake says that the earliest Style II bracteate is from Buckland Dover K 20, which can be dated to the middle of the sixth century on the basis of the grave-goods; he subscribes to the early dating of Style II discussed in Chapter 2. In support of his argument, however, he illustrates the bracteate with the three non-linking animals from Buckland Dover K 29 (1980, 68-69 and fig 13 j). The bracteate from Buckland Dover K 20 is a Jutlandic Group 1 D-bracteate, so it is unlikely that Speake meant this; he seems to have mixed up the bracteate from 29 with the grave-group from 20. Buckland Dover K 29 is dated by Evison to shortly after 560-70 (1987, 55) but, as argued below (section 4.8), it is probably early seventh century. Speake may therefore be right in his relative, but not his absolute, dating of the bracteate.

Speake sees the silver pendants from Kingston Down K and Sittingbourne K as the latest of the Style II bracteates, apparently on the grounds of their material and "degenerate" design (1980, 69). These are dangerous grounds on which to base an argument, particularly as silver scutiform pendants are known in quantities from the sixth and first half of the seventh centuries, proving that silver could be the material of choice far earlier. Buckland Dover K 134, with a gold Style II bracteate, was dated by Evison to her Phase 5 (650-675) on the grounds of horizontal stratigraphy, although the associated cabochon pendants, beads and chatelaine are not precisely datable. Finglesham K 96 and Camerton Av 5 contained no precisely datable artefacts, although the amethysts in Finglesham K 96 might suggest that a date later rather than earlier in the seventh century is probable (see below, section 4.10). It seems that bracteates bearing Style II, then, lasted from the beginning into the second half of the seventh century, but their end date is not yet certainly known.

The objects associated with the gold filigree pendants are, where datable, more clearly of the late seventh or early eighth century. The Harford Farm Nf 18 pendant was buried with a workbox, a pair of linked pins and a pair of hooked tags, and the grave is coin-dated to *c.* 690-700. Lechlade G1 179 contained a very worn gold pendant with a shell setting, and a pierced bronze imitation of a Vanimundus thrymsa, the original of which would have been current from the later

660s to about 680 (Grierson and Blackburn 1986, table 14; see section 2.2.5). Garton II NHu 7 and Uncleby NHu 31 contained workboxes, the latter also with an openwork buckle. Boss Hall Sf 93 contained a sceatta of c. 690 (see section 2.2.5). There are no objects suggestive of the first half of the century, and therefore it becomes more probable that the gold filigree pendants grew out of the scutiform tradition.

The remaining disc pendants, a cloisonné pendant and five looped coins, are contemporary with the series of gold filigree pendants. Finglesham K 7 had a solidus of Sigebert (634-656) and a 30% gold P I Pada thrymsa of c. 660-665, and Buckland Dover K 110 had two Pada thrymsas made with only a trace of gold, of c. 660-680 (Grierson and Blackburn 1986, table 14; see section 2.2.5). A Sigebert solidus with the remains of a loop was also found with other necklace elements in the bag collection at Boss Hall Sf 93. The cloisonné pendant from Winnall II Ha 5 had been made from a late composite disc brooch, and had been worn as a pendant long enough to have become damaged.

*Function:* As all the disc pendants were on necklaces, it seems likely that their primary function was decorative. Many commentators, including Meaney, the major authority on amulets, have seen scutiform pendants as amuletic and, as their name suggests, as symbolic shields (Meaney 1981, 159-62). It is possible, however, also to see the form and decoration of most scutiform and filigree disc pendants not as deliberately imitative, but simply as part of the mainstream Conversion-period decorative tradition, with border, central boss and often four peripheral bosses, with or without star and cross patterns in between. This ornament can be seen on, among other things, disc brooches and the tops of workboxes. In addition, their circular shape within the necklace matches that of bullae and wire rings, and their metallic glitter that of the metal beads; aesthetically, they cohere with the rest of the necklace. The decoration on the disc pendants does not, therefore, require an explanation invoking amuletic function, but of course an amuletic function is not incompatible with a primarily decorative role.

*Social meaning:* Disc pendants are again female-linked items which can also be found with children; Camerton Av 5 was the grave of an "infant". Their great variability in quality, material and decoration means that it would be very hard to make any generalisations about their symbolic role in advertising wealth. Progress might be made through separate studies of scutiforms, bracteates and filigree pendants, but the present study is primarily concerned with the basic form, not the details of decoration.

*Distribution:* The distribution of disc pendants shows a concentration in Kent and East Anglia,

but this is not due to any one particular type of pendant; many of those found in these two regions are plain, fragmentary, or unusual. Map 8 shows the distribution of all types of disc pendant together, and Table 4.3 breaks this down into individual types for the regions.

	Graves with disc pendants	Scutiforms	Filigree	Coin	Style II	Total disc pendants
Kent	15	8	-	4	2	23
East Anglia	10	4	5	1	-	34
Mercia	6	3	-	-	-	6
Wessex	8	-	3	1	1	9
Northumbria	3	-	2	-	-	3

**Table 4.3** Regional distributions of disc pendants by type

The lack of regional concentrations of particular types of disc pendant may indicate that it is not the decoration on the discs that is important, but their basic form and material, but again only a detailed study of the individual types could confirm this.

#### 4.8 CABOCHON PENDANT (Fig 4.5)

*Description:* The term "cabochon" is defined as a stone or piece of glass cut with a convex polished surface. The term "cabochon pendant," therefore refers to a pendant with a glass or garnet setting, at least partially convex, backed by a metal sheet with a suspension loop and often a beaded surround. 22 graves in the present study contained 37 cabochon pendants but, within these limits, the pendants are various in their designs. There is a tendency towards a basically oval shape, but circular, triangular, rectangular and trapezoidal shapes also occur. Some have the cabochon sliced off to make a flat setting with a bevelled edge, and one of these, from Harford Farm Nf 33, is a re-used Roman intaglio.

Most cabochon pendant graves contained only one, but in five cases there were more. Polhill K 55, Buckland Dover K 134 and Boss Hall Sf 93 had two pendants, Winchester Lower Brook Street Ha 23 had three, and Galley Low Db, with a famously beautiful necklace, had eleven. The Galley Low Db pendants were all of garnet with gold backings, and so skew the relative proportions of materials somewhat; there are 21 gold, nine silver and five bronze backings, with one of unstated material and one which has lost its backing. 21 of the pendants are made of garnet, twelve of glass, one is composite, two of unknown material and one is made from a re-



used Roman intaglio.

*Date:* Coin-dated contexts with cabochon pendants include Boss Hall Sf 93, with a sceatta of c. 690, and Sibertswold K 172, outside the present sample. Sibertswold K 172 has been coin-dated to c. 660-680 (Rigold in Bruce-Mitford 1975, 672, 673, 659, but see section 2.2.5 for a possible earlier date) and contained a wide range of pendants; two glass cabochons with a trellised inlay, a garnet and two amethyst cabochons, a millefiori pendant and an intaglio. This last is Sassanian, according to Arrhenius (1985, 55); or Byzantine, possibly South Italian, according to Henig (1974, 197). All the pendants were on a necklace, with two amethyst beads, four large glass beads and 23 small glass beads. The glass cabochons inlaid with a trellis pattern of twisted glass rods are exactly paralleled at three other sites, Lechlade Gl 148, Everthorpe NHu and Riseley K. The coin at Sibertswold K 172 therefore provides a *terminus post quem* for the deposition of a number of cabochon pendant varieties.

Shephard claims two pre-seventh century examples of cabochon pendants. One is from a poorly recorded grave at Kempston Bd, which apparently contained both a cabochon pendant and a cone-beaker, and the other is from Chessell Down IoW (1979a, chapter 4 corpus). I have been unable to find any example in Arnold's subsequent republication of Chessell Down (Arnold 1982), however, and so cannot verify this.

A cabochon pendant has, however, been found in modern times in an apparently late sixth-century grave at Buckland Dover K 29. This grave is dated by Evison on the basis of its plated disc brooch and imitation coin, ultimately based on a tremissis of Justinian I, to shortly after 560-70 (1987, 55 and 181). The oval pendant is divided in half horizontally, one half being filled with a pale blue glass setting and the other with a garnet inlaid with a bone disc. A very similar pendant occurs in Buckland Dover K 6, but this grave is dated by Evison to 650-675 on the basis of its cowrie shell beads and the absence of a brooch (1987, 141 and 98). It is dangerous, however, to argue such a late date from the negative evidence of the lack of a brooch, when Buckland Dover K 6 contains not also the cabochon pendant but also an entire early seventh-century glass bell-beaker. Perhaps both graves should be re-dated to the early seventh century, a date already suggested by Hawkes for grave 29 (Hawkes 1979, 92, misprinted as "Dover grave 9"). In this case, they would be among the earliest, as well as the most unusual, cabochon pendants known. Buckland Dover K 29 has, however, already been left out of the sample for detailed study, so it appears in none of the figures here. None of the putative sixth-century cabochon pendants, then, provides a secure pre-600 date.

A number of other cabochon pendants lack any clear dating evidence, so, while it is clear that they were first buried at the start of the century, and still available to be buried in the years immediately after 690, it is not clear when their period of greatest popularity began and ended.

*Function:* Most cabochon pendants were found on necklaces, even if these are not worn, as at Boss Hall Sf 93. The disturbed grave at Harrold Bd 14 contained an unmounted damaged oval cabochon garnet and some bronze and silver rings which had probably formed a necklace, and similarly at Lechlade Gl 148 other scraps of necklace elements were found in the grave. At Garton NHu II 7, however, three other unmounted cabochon glass settings were found with other items at the feet, and these probably formed part of a bag collection. Whether or not these detached settings were amuletic or merely materials destined for re-use in jewellery is unknown, but Meaney specifically excludes cabochon pendants found in necklaces from an amuletic function (1981, 246-47).

*Social meaning:* As a general rule, cabochon pendants tend to be found in graves of fairly high wealth. Those set with garnets, which usually have a gold backing, tend to occur in rich necklaces, such as Galley Low Db, Winchester Lower Brook Street Ha 23 and Boss Hall Sf 93, even if there are few other objects apart from the necklace in the grave. Half of all graves with cabochon pendants contained at least one other item made of gold, and many of the others were on long necklaces, some with unusual elements such as cowrie shell beads. Buckland Dover K 160's necklace was understated, made up of only a silver-set garnet and three small monochrome glass beads, but the grave also contained a silver pin, ivory bag-ring and plain palm cup.

The two exceptions to the high-wealth rule are both from Kent, but the sample is too small to know whether this is a true pattern. Polhill K 55, thought to be the grave of a child aged between about one and five years, contained two glass pendants set in bronze, in a group with a bronze ring, a bronze disc and two beads. Bekesbourne I K 40 contained only a glass cabochon set in silver and five "earthen" beads.

In common with other necklace elements, no cabochon pendants were found with men. Polhill K 55 was thought to contain a child of between one and five, and Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 32 was also recorded as being the grave of a child.

*Distribution:* Graves containing cabochon pendants are spread evenly over England, but the distribution pattern for the numbers of individual pendants is slightly skewed by the presence of eleven pendants in the rich necklace at Galley Low Db (Map 9). Similar rich necklaces are

known outside the current sample from other parts of the country, for example from Roundway Down Wi and Desborough Nh, and so the pattern shown in Map 9 is more apparent than real.

#### 4.9 MISCELLANEOUS PENDANT (Fig 4.5)

*Description:* 27 graves contained pendants which fitted into no other category. Six of these graves contained fourteen beads made into pendants by the addition of an elaborate suspension loop made out of twisted wire. Four graves contained a single beaver tooth made into a pendant by piercing, or by the addition of a bronze or gold collar, and one other had part of a beaver tooth, but with no visible perforation, among beads at the neck. Beaver tooth pendants are also considered in section 4.47.1 below.

The other seventeen pendants are diverse. There are two pelta-shaped sheet-bronze pendants, one from Lechlade Gl 89/2 and one silvered example from Finglesham K 57. There are three tiny sub-rectangular pendants with perforations in the short sides, but of different materials - shell at Buckland Dover K 141, gilded bronze at Finglesham K 174 and silver at Cokethorpe Ox. A bucket pendant from Harford Farm Nf 28, a sheet-silver cross from Lechlade Gl 187, a cast human mask in bronze from Finglesham K 138 (published by Hawkes in Campbell 1982, 48; and see below, section 4.47.3), a lump of lignite in a bronze collar suspended from an iron ring from Shudy Camps Ca 31 and two triangular perforated pieces of bronze sheet from Winchester Lower Brook Street Ha 23 are typical of the bits and bobs that make up this category of artefact.

*Date:* There is enough information to suggest a date for the larger categories of miscellaneous pendants. Finglesham K 7, with its pale gold P I Pada thrymsa made into a pendant, contained in addition four bead-in-wire pendants. Harford Farm Nf 33 had six bead-in-wire pendants and a cabochon pendant, and Finglesham K 138 and 174, both graves with scutiform pendants, had one bead-in-wire pendant each. It therefore seems that bead-in-wire pendants may have been worn from the first half of the seventh century into its last few decades.

Two of the beaver tooth pendants, from Lechlade Gl 14 and the fragment from Marina Drive Bd E2, also contained workboxes. In contrast, the beaver tooth pendant from Castledyke SHu 134 was found with a pair of sixth-century brooches and nine amber beads, and may be one of the earliest graves in the sample (see below, section 4.14.1). Meaney (1981, 136-37) has collected other examples of beaver teeth in graves, at Castle Bytham Li, Wigber Low Db (from the nineteenth-century excavation) and Bidford-on-Avon Wa 178. The first is certainly seventh-century, the second possibly even early eighth-century, but the dating cannot be narrowed down

any further.

Pelta-shaped pendants have been discussed by Hawkes, who sees them as being based on a motif of opposed bird-of-prey heads (1979, 91-93). She discusses a number of parallels, some rather distant, and concludes that they were certainly in use by the early seventh century, if not the later sixth. The two graves with these pendants in the sample do not contradict this.

None of the other miscellaneous pendants are of a type that has been securely dated, largely because they are individual in design. The bucket pendant from Harford Farm Nf 28, however, with a wire "handle", is very similar to a bucket pendant in a late seventh-century grave from Updown (Eastry III) K 15 (Dickinson 1993, 51). The impression may be gained that the presence of odd pendants in a grave is more characteristic of a Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon grave than of an earlier one, but there has not been enough comparative synthetic work to confirm or deny this supposition.

*Function:* Many of these objects have only been identified as decorative pendants, as opposed to purely amuletic objects, owing to their presence on a necklace; a few other perforated or looped objects have been found not on necklaces but in amulet collections, and these are included in section 4.47 below. Discussion of the practical function of miscellaneous pendants is therefore apt to become circular, and may appear irrelevant given the possibility that most pendants of all sorts may have had some degree of amuletic function. In some cases, an amuletic function seems particularly likely; bucket-, hand- and pelta-shaped pendants are singled out by Meaney (1981, 166-69 and 191).

In occasional individual cases it may be possible to suggest a more specific function. There is a perforated horse tooth, ground down to a plano-convex shape, which was found on the chest of Nazeingbury Ex 64. This grave was one of only three in this cemetery found with objects; the cemetery appears to have been focussed on two churches. It would be satisfying if the undecorative nature of this object could be used to show that it must have been amuletic, but in fact the shape is perfect as a button or toggle, and it is just as likely to have been used as this as to have been used as any sort of amuletic pendant; it is also considered below in section 4.47.1.

*Social meaning:* In keeping with their possible functions as amuletic or decorative necklace elements, miscellaneous pendants are identifiers of women and children.

*Distribution:* Miscellaneous pendants in general are widely spread across England, with no particular gaps or concentrations (Map 10). Plotting the two most numerous types of miscellaneous pendant separately, however, reveals one interesting concentration (Map 11). All the bead-in-wire pendants come from East Anglia (eight examples) or Kent (six examples). Although these are contained in only three East Anglian and two Kentish graves, it is possible that the bead-in-wire pendant might be a regional speciality.

#### 4.10 AMETHYST BEAD (Fig 4.5)

*Description:* 90 pieces of amethyst, all beads, occurred in 37 of the graves in this study. All were ground and polished into a consistent long barrel- or drop-shape, with the perforation running along the long axis. Other pieces of amethyst occur occasionally in Kent, such as the amethyst cabochon pendants from Sibertswold K 172 (outside the sample), but are not common.

*Date:* None of the amethyst bead graves in the present study were coin-dated, although some amethyst bead graves outside the sample also contained coins. These include Sibertswold K 172, with coins including a Merovingian tremissis dated to *c.* 660-680 (Rigold in Bruce-Mitford 1975, 672, 673, 659, but see section 2.2.5); Gilton K 41, with a pre-regal pseudo-imperial Visigothic tremissis of perhaps *c.* 570 in mint condition (Hawkes *et al.* 1966, 103; Rigold in Avent 1975, 69-70; Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 46-49); and an un-numbered grave at Sarre K, with coins including an early solidus of Chlotar, perhaps of 613 or 614 (Rigold in Avent 1975, 71-72)).

The generally accepted date-range of amethyst beads, inferred from these coin-graves and from Continental evidence, is from about 590 to about 675 (Huggett 1988, 66; Higginbottom 1975, 60-61; Evison 1987, 60). In view of this, and their particularly Kentish distribution (see below), it might be expected that a number should be found with disc brooches. In fact, only two were, at Monkton K 3 and Polhill K 37. The Monkton K 3 composite brooch was made from a re-used bit of silver from an earlier brooch, and the keystone brooch from Polhill K 37 had been perforated and kept in a bag or on a chatelaine.

Neither grave, then, can be dated to the earlier stages of disc brooch use; they may have been buried at the earliest around the middle of the century. The four amethyst beads at Marina Drive Bd E2 (*contra* Huggett (1988, 68) who asserts that "no known burial outside Kent contains more than two amethyst beads") and those at Painsthorpe Wold NHu 6a and Garton II NHu 7 were found with workboxes, and so confirm the impression of a later concentration of amethysts.

The evidence from this study, then, implies a deposition date-range restricted to the late seventh or early eighth century, a dating already suggested by Evison on the basis of the amethyst beads from Buckland Dover K, which were found in graves 53, 67, 132 and 133 from Phase 5 (650-675), grave 124 from Phase 6 (675-700) and two, 75 and 127 from Phase 7 (700-750) (1987, 60 and 172). Occasionally, however, amethysts are known without context or from undated graves in cemeteries such as Mitcham Sy and Chavenage Gl, which otherwise have produced no seventh-century material. It is possible that this should imply a date-range beginning earlier than other Conversion-period artefact types.

Taken as a whole, then, present evidence cannot refine the dating further than a broad seventh-century range with perhaps a few years either side, but it remains likely that amethysts achieved their greatest popularity in burial towards the end of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth century; this is *after* the trade networks from the eastern Mediterranean are supposed to have collapsed.

*Function:* Of the 37 amethyst-graves, in 34 the stones were certainly part of necklaces, in one the two amethysts were by the feet, in one the single amethyst was with another bead at the back of the skull, and in one the amethyst was unlocated.

It has been suggested by P. D. C. Brown that amethyst beads may in fact have been used as pendants or earrings, rather than as beads, on the evidence of their shape and by analogy with their use in Europe and the Near East (in Meaney 1981, 76). In the absence of any post or ring to sit in the pierced ear, a use as earrings seems unlikely. Their use as pendants is possible, but they would have had to be knotted vertically on to the necklace string. The only amethyst bead to have been found with a wire ring or hitch was from the topsoil of a site at Abingdon which produced Saxon pits (Avery and Brown 1972, 77 and fig 5); this had a lump of corroded iron, a metal useless as an ear-post or ring, in the perforation of the narrower end. Until a necklace is found with the elements placed in such a way as to make it clear that the amethysts were used as drop pendants, it must remain more likely that they were used as beads, even if they were imported in the same form as those used as pendants and earrings elsewhere.

Classical writers, such as Pliny, attributed a number of magical powers to the amethyst. These were included by Bede in his description of amethyst as the 12th apocalyptic gem, quoted by Meaney, who also lists the many powers of amethyst (1981, 77).

*Social meaning:* In common with other beads, amethyst beads are female-linked and can be

found with children, such as the two-year-old in Lechlade GI 172. As an imported item, it might be expected that they would be found on richer necklaces, but in fact tend to be conspicuous by their absence from the more ostentatious deposits. Among other things, Garton II NHu 7 also contained a bucket and silver and gold jewellery, Harford Farm Nf 33 also contained a re-used Roman intaglio, and Finglesham K 132 also contained a palm cup, but these were the exception rather than the rule.

*Distribution:* The distribution map of amethyst beads contained in the present sample (Map 12) shows that they are found all across England, and Huggett's distribution map (1988, fig 2) shows this even more clearly. There is, however, a particular concentration of amethyst-graves in Kent, which was also found by Huggett. In the present sample, 20 of the amethyst-graves were in Kent, containing 60 beads. This average of three beads per grave, however, is similar to that in other areas of England which have fewer numbers of graves (see Table 4.4); none of the cemeteries that have produced graves with large numbers of amethyst beads listed by Huggett appear in my sample, and some of them (particularly those from Faversham K) may be exceptional.

	Numbers of graves with amethyst beads	Numbers of amethyst beads	Average numbers of beads per grave
Kent	20	60	3
East Anglia	3	6	2
Mercia	3	9	3
Wessex	4	7	1.75
Northumbria	3	6	2

(For details of which counties make up the regions, see Table 3.1)

**Table 4.4** Average numbers of amethyst beads in graves, divided by region

#### 4.11 METAL BEAD (Fig 4.6)

*Description:* 26 graves in the sample contained beads made entirely from metal. There were a total of at least 59 metal beads within these graves, and more may have entirely decayed. 41 of the beads were silver, nine bronze, and nine gold. There were a variety of shapes; the classic bicone of spiral-wound wire accounted for nearly half of all metal beads, but two-thirds of the gold beads. Another popular shape was a spherical or double-bell form, often with each bell-shaped component fixed around a frame of a disc with a tube passing through it (Evison 1987,

figs 37 and 53). The third most common form was an elongated almond shape, again generally made in two halves. There were a few oddities such as drum-shaped beads from Lechlade G1 14 and Marina Drive Bd E3, a carefully-made square-sectioned bead from Finglesham K 180, and a re-used stud from Finglesham K 174. All of these oddities were made of silver.

*Date:* The "bronze beads" described from Holywell Row Sf 48, a grave with four cruciform brooches, sound in fact more like bucket pendants ("little tubes of bronze with pendant rings"), and so cannot be used to argue for a sixth-century date for some metal beads. Metal beads are occasionally found in sixth-century graves, however; Sherlock and Welch list examples from Lincolnshire (Sleaford 143) and Norfolk (Morning Thorpe 384 and 400), all of double-bell type, in their discussion of the almond-shaped silver bead with herring-bone decoration found in grave 11 at Norton-on-Tees C1. Also in Norton-on-Tees C1 11 were, among other things, a small *Cypraea europa* cowrie shell, a bone whorl, a chatelaine, silver wire fragments, a double-sided comb and two annular brooches, one each of Leeds's types f and g (Sherlock and Welch 1992, 44 and 128); the grave should probably be dated to around 600, and was not included in the sample for detailed survey.

Almond-shaped metal beads, then, begin *c.* 600, and double-bell metal beads appear first in the late sixth century, and become more common in the seventh. Wound bronze beads have now also been found in sixth-century contexts at Portway in Hampshire. These were fragmentary, and their shape was not described or illustrated, but it was stated that they "seemed to have been made by winding either strips of a sheet or wire around a former" (Cook and Dacre 1985, 87).

The metal beads from Portway may, however, be isolated examples unrelated to the main series of biconical wire beads. Shephard's seriation of certain seventh-century grave-goods argued for a date in the third quarter of the seventh century for biconical metal beads (1979a, fig 4.1; see Table 2.1). A possible Pada thrymsa was found at Ipswich Buttermarket Sf 44 with a necklace containing an unspecified type of silver bead, and this confirms Shephard's dating. One further coin-dated grave containing biconical metal beads, Boss Hall Sf 93, can now be added to the seriation (see Table 2.2), and extends the date-range a little. As Boss Hall Sf 93 contained both biconical and almond-shaped types, these must overlap in date (see section 2.2.5 for details on the dating of the coins).

The latest metal beads in a grave may be the globular ones found at Saffron Walden Ex with pendants decorated in Borre style. There are arguments as to the date of this grave, Wilson preferring the ninth century (1976, n 23) but Evison arguing that the degree of wear on the



pendants means a later tenth-century date (1969, 338-40). The Saffron Walden Ex beads, however, are very different in form to the seventh- and early eighth-century metal beads, and should not be seen as part of the same series.

All the dating evidence taken together, then, suggests that almond-shaped metal beads at least span the whole of the seventh century, and perhaps continue into the early eighth century, and that biconical wire beads, unless those of unknown shape at Portway can be counted, may be confined to the second half of the seventh and perhaps the early eighth century. There is less evidence for double-bell beads, but they certainly start at the very end of the sixth century and continue into the seventh.

*Function:* In common with other beads, all metal beads were on necklaces. Meaney has argued that the winding of wire to form biconical metal beads may have imparted an amuletic nature to these objects, as knots and windings are well-known in magic and may have served to distract the evil eye (1981, 172-74).

*Social meaning:* In keeping with their function as necklace elements, metal beads were found with women and children, including a two-year-old in Lechlade Gl 172 and a two- to five-year-old in Finglesham K 7. None were found with male-linked items. They are found on a variety of necklaces, from a necklace with three glass beads and a silver double-bell bead at Castledyke SHu 96, to the remarkable necklace of two gold bullae, eleven gold and garnet cabochon pendants and a gold biconical bead at Galley Low Db. As with bullae, then, the material and quality of the individual bead, not the basic form, appears to have been the status indicator.

*Distribution:* The distribution of metal beads over the country is reasonably even across the south, but they are comparatively rare in Northumbria (Map 13).

#### 4.12 POLYCHROME GLASS BEAD (Figs 4.7 and 4.8)

*Description:* 73 graves within the sample contained 124 beads which could be identified as being of polychrome glass. 105 of these beads were illustrated or described in enough detail to enable their form and decoration to be reconstructed.

Very few studies have been published of the glass beads from single sites, whether in England or on the Continent (e.g. Koch 1977; Hirst 1985; Evison 1987). An overview of later prehistoric and Roman beads is also available (Guido 1978), but at the time of writing, Guido's projected

overview of Anglo-Saxon beads is not yet published. No published study has yet formulated a system of classification which seems to hold across a number of sites; as a whole, migration-period glass beads in Europe are notoriously diverse (Evison 1987, 61).

It was surprising, therefore, that almost all of the polychrome glass beads could be grouped into distinct and fairly homogeneous classes based on form and decoration (colour was recorded too rarely for it to be included). It is hoped that most of the descriptions that follow are self-explanatory; a by-product of the lack of a uniform classification is that there is no generally agreed system of description, but I have in general followed Evison (1987, 61-67). Disc-shaped beads have a perforation narrower than the thickness of the bead, whereas annular beads have a larger perforation; long cylinders are longer parallel to the perforation than they are perpendicular to it, and short cylinders *vice versa*. Unless a different shape is noted, most of the beads were roughly globular or a short barrel-shape or cylinder.

Disc-shaped beads with a spiral trail were the most common form, with seventeen examples. There were sixteen small beads, all less than 10 mm across, with double crossing trails. Eleven beads, of varying shapes and dimensions, had a single wavy trail. Ten, again varying in shape and size, had double crossing trails and spots. There were eight beads with millefiori decoration, with flower shapes visible on the surface of the bead. Seven beads bore a single row of spots around the circumference of the bead; most of the spots were of single colours, but in two cases the spots were made up of two colours. Five annular beads were inlaid with a twisted cable of one or more colours, and all of these were at least 20 mm in diameter. Four beads bore two rows of spots, and another four were made of "mosaic" glass on two colours. Three beads were of zig-zag "combed" glass, all short thick drum-shaped cylinders. The smallest group comprised two distinctive "horned" beads, shaped like a five-point star when viewed down the length of the perforation.

In all, then, 87 of the 105 reconstructable beads fall into one of these eleven groups. Most of the other eighteen beads bear some relationship to these groups. Three beads have "scrabble" decoration (Guido 1978, 6-7), which looks like a bungled attempt at a double crossing trail. Three further beads bear spiral decoration, but the trail has been applied to a melon bead, a bicone and a cylinder, rather than discs. Two have a single wavy trail with spots, and two cylindrical beads have a triple row of spots. One more has spots applied randomly, and another has rings instead of spots. Two have multiple zig-zag lines which are more sharply drawn than the "combed" beads; one is a tall barrel-shape and one is globular. Finally, there are two mottled beads and one reticella (with marvered surface of twisted cable) bead.

*Date:* The dearth of studies on glass beads from migration-period Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemeteries makes chronological comparisons difficult. As far as numbers are concerned, at Sewerby NHu all of the polychrome beads were from sixth-century graves. There were 27 polychrome beads from 10 graves, giving an average of 2.7 per grave. At Buckland Dover K, there are four graves with a single polychrome bead from Phases 1 and 2 (475-525 and 525-575) but eight graves from Phase 3 (575-625) containing 77 beads. All of the Phase 3 polychrome bead graves dated from the first half of the phase. At Buckland Dover K, then, there is an average of 9.6 polychrome beads per grave for the late sixth century and 6.7 per grave for the migration period overall. The average number of polychrome beads in Conversion-period graves, 1.7, therefore appears to represent a decline from the sixth century, but how precipitous this was depends on which data are chosen for comparison.

There is ample evidence to show that the use of polychrome glass beads continued into the later seventh or eighth centuries. Spiral beads were found with bullae at Galley Low Db and Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 32; the latter grave also contained a millefiori bead. The workbox-grave at Didcot Power Station Ox 12 also contained a spiral bead, a "horned" bead, a "combed" bead and one with a single wavy trail. Another workbox-grave, at Castledyke SHu 183, contained a bead with one row of spots and one with a single wavy trail; another of the latter was found with linked pins at Cow Low Db.

As far as individual bead types are concerned, those with spots or double or single wavy trails, or combinations of these, can be found in sixth-century graves, as at Apple Down WSx (Down and Welch 1990, pls 40 and 41) and Sewerby NHu (Hirst 1985, fig 23). Mosaic, millefiori and reticella beads can also be found in migration-period graves (Evison 1987, 65). There does not, as yet, appear to be any distinction between beads of these types found in Conversion-period and in earlier graves.

Koch described the spiral disc bead found at Schretzheim as a Roman survival, although it occurred in a grave of her Phase 4 (590/600-620/630) (1977, 251 and 41). Hirst draws attention, however, to the lack of these beads in Guido's study of prehistoric and Romano-British beads (Hirst 1985, 66 and n 141; Guido 1978). Only a few fifth- or sixth-century graves - Holywell Row Sf 39 and 47, Sewerby NHu 35, Bergh Apton Nf 82, Buckland Dover K 59 and Morning Thorpe in Norfolk grave 358 - contain spiral disc beads, and they seem to be an unusual type at this time. At present, then, it seems plausible to suggest that the spiral disc bead is largely a Conversion-period type, with its origins in a rare type of migration-period Anglo-Saxon bead, and that the Schretzheim example may have been exported from England.

Guido has published a short note on annular twist-inlay beads, in which she argued that they were developed and manufactured in England; the only close parallels were a number of late Iron Age beads from Britain (in Speake 1989, 51). Her catalogue leaves out the fragment of twist-inlay bead from Shudy Camps Ca 11, and misprints Holywell Row Sf 26 (grave 26 had no grave-goods, and I cannot find a bead answering Guido's description in Lethbridge 1931); but it cites no examples that can be shown to be earlier than Conversion-period. Further annular twist-inlay beads have now been found at Ipswich Buttermarket Sf 26 (outside the sample) and at Harford Farm Nf 20, but the total number known is still less than twenty. All the datable examples (Shudy Camps Ca 11, with biconical silver beads; Harford Farm Nf 20, with shears; and Swallowcliffe Down Wi, for which see below, section 4.18) are from the late seventh or early eighth century.

The two "horned" beads have parallels from Breach Down K and, unprovenanced, from the *VCH* for Kent (Smith 1908, pl II, 12); no certainly pre-Conversion-period "horned" beads are known.

*Function:* In 51 of the graves with polychrome glass beads, the beads were certainly on a necklace, and in twelve further graves one bead was alone, near the head or upper body and could have been strung around the neck. In eight graves, the beads appeared to have functioned more as amulets, either being in amulet collections, or strung on a chatelaine, or found alone at the waist. In one further grave, one bead was in a collection, and the other was in a necklace, and in two cases the position of the bead was disturbed.

In the case of beads in collections, on chatelaines or at the waist, the beads are clearly performing a different role from those strung in groups about the neck. It has, however, been argued that most Anglo-Saxon beads, including those used primarily for decorative purposes, would have had an amuletic function (Meaney 1981, 192-210, esp 205).

The beads in amulet collections tend to be different in form from those found on necklaces. Monochrome beads rarely appear in amulet collections, and it seems that large or unusual beads were selected; they include three of the twist-inlay beads.

Some of the larger polychrome glass beads found on necklaces appear to have been worn in a slightly different way to most beads. A few have small wire hitches or slings enabling the bead to be strung so that the perforation is visible, some almost approaching the style of the bead-in-wire pendants (see above, section 4.9). On some other beads, noticeably the spiral discs and the twist-inlay beads, the decoration is almost invisible from the front as conventionally strung. On

the other hand, the effect of other motifs, such as the eye-like effect of the double crossing trail and spot bead depends on a conventional stringing.

*Social meaning:* Unusually, for an object often found on a necklace, some polychrome glass beads appear to have been found in male graves. Two, Finglesham K 83 and Harrold Bd 3, were with male-linked objects. Finglesham K 83 contained, in addition to the bead, a knife, firesteel, spearhead and triangular buckle. The bead was mottled, very large (30 mm diameter) and was found at the waist; a function as a toggle is considered below in section 4.22.1. Harrold Bd 3 is considered in detail below in section 4.22.3; it also contained, among other things, a sword and a spearhead. The grave was disturbed, and the position of the bead is not known; it was probably a spiral disc, but even this is not absolutely secure.

Three other graves, Finglesham K 30, Burwell Ca 26 and Alton Ha 39, were anatomically sexed as male; in the first two cases, there seems to have been some doubt about the sexing. Finglesham K 30 contained an openwork serrated-edge buckle, a knife, and a small red bead and a polychrome glass bead which were interpreted by the excavator as sleeve fasteners. Burwell Ca 26 contained a single bead with a silver ring at the neck, and Alton Ha 39 a string of three amber and fourteen glass beads, a small simple buckle and a knife.

Occasionally a polychrome bead can be found in a churchyard cemetery, as at Jarrow TW 69/14. This bead, with double crossing trails and spots, was the only object in the grave.

Some types of polychrome glass beads, such as millefiori or twist-inlay beads, are technically difficult to make. Guido suggested that all twist-inlay beads may have come from one glassworking site or one group of craftsmen (in Speake 1989, 51); Evison has argued that the manufacture of millefiori and reticella rods may also have been centralised (1987, 65).

*Distribution:* As can be seen from the distribution map (Map 14), polychrome glass beads are found all across England, with a concentration of polychrome glass beads in Kent. This concentration is largely caused by one type of bead, that with double crossing trails. There are eleven of these beads from graves in Kent, and only five from the whole of the rest of England. The only other type of polychrome bead which seems to have a regional distribution is the annular twist-inlay bead; Guido noticed a concentration in East Anglia and Kent (in Speake 1989, 51), and this is borne out by the present sample, only Swallowcliffe Down Wi being outside East Anglia.

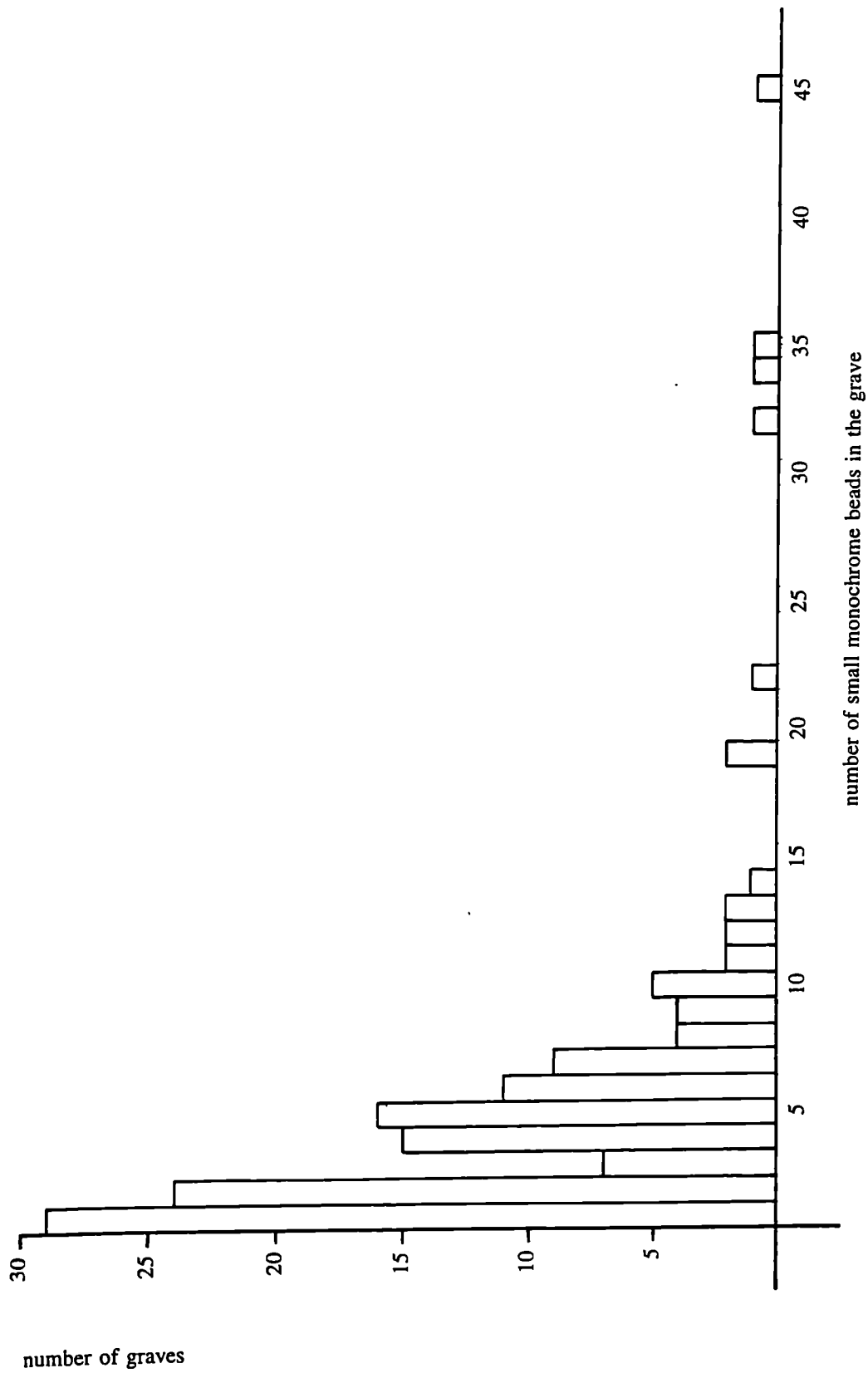
#### 4.13 SMALL MONOCHROME GLASS BEAD (Fig 4.9)

*Description:* Small monochrome glass beads are very common, occurring in 140 of the graves studied. They are usually green or blue or, slightly less often, red or yellow. They tend to be barrel-shaped or biconical and around 10 mm or less in diameter. Beads in Conversion-period graves occur in much smaller numbers than did the amber or glass beads found in sixth-century graves. Nearly three-quarters of Conversion-period graves with small monochrome glass beads have three or fewer (see Table 4.5) and when they are formed into necklaces with other beads, these necklaces also tend to be shorter and smaller than others (see below, section 4.16). Across England, the average number of small monochrome glass beads in graves containing them is five.

*Date:* The small monochrome glass bead, as seen above in section 2.3.3, is not confined to the Conversion period. Whether the small beads actually increased in absolute numbers, as well as merely in proportion to other beads, is hard to answer, due to the lack of a comprehensive study of migration-period Anglo-Saxon beads. Small monochrome glass beads seem to remain popular throughout the century, being associated with about half of all disc brooches (five out of eleven) and half of all workboxes (eleven out of 21) in the sample. The latest securely dated small monochrome glass beads in the present study are those in the necklace at Boss Hall Sf 93, with a Series B sceatta of *c.* 690 (see section 2.2.5). At Purton Wi, outside the sample, a small monochrome glass bead was found with a broad seax, dated to *c.* 700 (Evison in Hurst 1961, 229-30).

*Function:* Small monochrome glass beads almost always occur on necklaces. Occasionally all sorts of beads are found away from the head or upper body area, and these have often been interpreted as button-type fasteners. Meaney has argued that all beads should be regarded as amuletic, including these apparently commonplace little glass ones (1981, 192-210).

*Social meaning:* The small and simple nature of these beads, together with their ubiquitous presence on short necklaces, has tended to result in them being seen as cheap, low-status objects. They are almost always found with women and children. A few graves containing beads have been anatomically sexed as possibly male, such as Northolt Manor GL 1, which had a single blue glass bead, and Finglesham K 30, with its openwork serrated-edge buckle, knife, and possible bead sleeve fasteners, but there is doubt about the sexing in both these cases. Outside the detailed study, the grave from Purton Wi contained a broad seax, a knife and a single blue glass bead.



**Table 4.5** Numbers of small monochrome glass beads per grave

Graves of men with beads, however, remain rare, and more than a single bead should probably be seen as an indicator of female or child status.

*Distribution:* Small monochrome glass beads show a similar distribution pattern to polychrome and amethyst beads, being spread across the country but particularly popular in Kent (Map 15). Not only are there more graves with the beads, but there is a higher average number of beads per grave (Table 4.6). In addition, all graves with over twenty small beads come from Kent.

	No of graves with small glass beads	Total no of small glass beads	Average no of small glass beads per grave
Kent	56	419	7.5
Wessex	29	121	4.2
Mercia	30	108+	3.6
East Anglia	18	85	4.7
Northumbria	7	31	4.4
Sussex	1	1	1

(For details of which counties make up the regions, see Table 3.1)

**Table 4.6** Average numbers of small monochrome glass beads per grave, divided by region

#### 4.14 MISCELLANEOUS BEADS

266 beads, in 76 graves, did not readily fit into any of the other categories of bead. 102 of these beads were glass of various types, 59 were of unidentified material and 37 of amber. 25 were of some form of shell, usually unidentified. These figures exclude all shell beads with corrugated edges, which were tentatively identified as being of cowrie shell; cowrie beads are looked at together with whole cowrie shells, separately in section 4.23. There were one or two beads each of a number of other materials - crystal, coral, stone, faience, fossil, jet, fishbone, bone, and glass wound round a bronze core. So although the occurrence of some materials (particularly amber and crystal) becomes rarer than it was in the earlier period, there is certainly no decline in the variety of materials used. The largest homogeneous groups of miscellaneous beads, amber and melon beads, are looked at below.

##### 4.14.1 Amber bead

*Description:* There were 45 amber beads in 24 graves. Strings of amber beads are, of course,



a type-fossil of the sixth century, and no seventh- or eighth-century grave has produced a long string. The grave with the highest number of amber beads in the present study is Castledyke SHu 134, which contained nine. Buckland Dover K 60 contained six, and Buckland Dover K 62 contained three. All other amber bead graves contained only one or two.

*Date:* All of the graves with more than two amber beads are relatively early. Castledyke SHu 134 was dated to the seventh century on the basis of its silver rings, silver disc pendant and beaver tooth pendant, but contained in addition two large flat annular brooches and the amber beads. It is therefore possible that this grave was either a deliberately archaic seventh-century grave, or a rather prescient sixth-century one. Buckland Dover K 60, dated by Evison to her Phase 3 (575-625), contains a box, a chatelaine, two whorls and a variety of beads including the six amber ones. Buckland Dover K 62, dated by Evison to her Phase 4 (625-650) contained, in addition to the three amber beads, a knife, a chatelaine, a bronze pin and some large monochrome glass beads.

A case can be made, then, for amber beads being generally found only in ones or twos after the first few years of the seventh century. The amber bead found with a workbox in Marina Drive Bd E2 shows that they can be found towards the end of Conversion-period furnished burial, as well as at its start.

*Function:* In fourteen graves the amber beads were definitely part of necklaces; at Castledyke SHu 76 and 134, the amber beads were found in groups at the pelvis and below the feet, and so may have formed an unworn necklace. At Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 32, Burwell Ca 35 and 48, Garton II NHu 19 and Wigber Low Db 5, the amber beads were by the head, shoulder or neck, but were either alone or well away from a necklace; the necklace in Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 32 also contained an amber bead. Possibly in these cases the bead was worn as an amulet around the neck, but separate from the necklace and on a long string allowing the bead to rest by the head or shoulder. The separation may imply an extra significance for these amber beads, but they are not distinguishable from others by their form.

At Swallowcliffe Down Wi, the amber bead was in an amulet collection in a box, and at Bromfield Sh F104 and Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 39 the beads were unlocated. At Finglesham K 6, the bead was by the hip, next to a pointed iron tool, a padlock and what may have been the key to the padlock. This bead may have functioned as a toggle closing a bag holding the other objects (see below, section 4.22.1) or may have been part of the bag collection.

There is evidence to suggest that certain pieces of sixth-century amber were greatly valued for reasons beyond their decorative properties or rarity (Meaney 1981, 68). The use of amber as an amulet was condemned by Caesarius, an early sixth-century archbishop of Arles, and also in the Carolingian "Egbert" penitential (Meaney 1981, 10 and 14).

Salin felt that the distribution of amber over time was very different in Merovingian areas, with quantities being found in Frankish graves in the fifth and seventh centuries but little in the sixth century (Salin 1959, 78-80). Meaney suggested that Salin's perceived hiatus in the amber trade on the Continent may have resulted in greater quantities being briefly available for use in England (Meaney 1981, 69). However, Salin's view is contradicted by more recent archaeological evidence; at Schretzheim amber beads occur in small numbers (generally less than seven beads) throughout the sixth century, and then largely disappear in the seventh (Koch 1977, 72), and at Krefeld-Gellep, amber beads are largely confined to Stufe III (c. 525-600) (Pirling 1974 I, 120; 1979 I, 91). It is therefore possible that during the seventh century the organised export of amber from the Baltic to western Europe ceased. If amber was now a rare chance find from the coast of eastern England, or antique, it may have had increasingly magical connotations.

*Social meaning:* Meaney has suggested that amber is typically found in children's graves in the Conversion period (1981, 67). This is borne out by the present sample, with seven of the 24 amber bead graves certainly containing children under the age of twelve. In addition, Camerton Av 57 contained a skeleton only three feet four inches long, but the bones were fragmentary and could not be possibly identified, and at Wigber Low Db 5 the bead lay in between a woman of about seventeen years old and a child of four or five. The total proportion of possible child graves is therefore nine, an unusually high fraction of over one-third. Interestingly, the latest grave to contain amber beads at Schretzheim is also a child's grave, grave 50 (Koch 1977, 72). The children with amber beads used them in a variety of ways; on necklaces, by the neck on their own, by the head away from the necklace and in a group of beads by the pelvis.

As with other beads, the gender linkage of amber beads depends on how the beads were being used. In most cases, the beads were on necklaces, and so except for the anomalous sexing of Alton Ha 39 (detailed above in section 4.12) were in female or child graves. Finglesham K 6, where the bead apparently functioned as a toggle for a bag or part of the bag collection, was the grave of an elderly man who was buried with a spearhead, knife, and triangular buckle, in addition to the bag of oddments.

*Distribution:* The distribution of sampled Conversion-period graves with amber beads is shown in Map 16. This can be compared with Huggett's distribution map for amber beads from selected cemeteries of all dates (1988, fig 1). Huggett's map shows a well-spread distribution, with amber beads particularly common in central England from the Wash to southern Wiltshire, with a lesser concentration in Kent. Huggett applied a statistical test of significance to the distribution, and concluded that it was in fact little dissimilar from a random distribution over the same area; in other words, that the observed concentrations are not likely to reflect meaningful differences between areas of England (1988, 80-82).

Map 16 shows that the widespread distribution has been retained but the concentration in central England has disappeared, leaving that in Kent rather more noticeable. It is possible that the higher number of amber beads in Kent is due to the greater visibility of early seventh-century graves there; it is also possible that, as eleven of the Kentish beads come from three graves at Buckland Dover K, the pattern is skewed by the unconventional dating of some of the Dover graves.

#### 4.14.2 Melon bead (Fig 4.8)

*Description:* The typical melon bead is a large globular glass bead, ribbed parallel to the perforation. Fourteen graves contained single melon beads, and one grave, Finglesham K 200, contained four melon beads. Guido comments that "many of the Germanic ones are made from smoky yellow translucent glass" but that Roman melon beads were mostly blue or green (1978, 100); where the colour of the Conversion-period ones is known, it is blue or green. Diameters range from 13 to 21 mm.

*Date:* Melon beads are found in the migration period too, but numbers and distributions have not been collated. The only datable graves in the present sample to contain a melon bead are Garton II NHu 7, which also contained a workbox and bullae, and Cokethorpe Ox, which also contained bullae. Buckland Dover K 141 was dated by Evison to her Phase 6 (675-700) on the basis of its proximity to the thrymsa-grave 110 (see section 2.2.5). From these graves, it can be said that melon beads were still being deposited at the end of the seventh century.

Guido comments that melon beads continue right into Viking times, being found on Orkney and at Birka (1978, 100) but her study is primarily concerned with melon beads of Roman manufacture. Until a quantitative chronological study of all Anglo-Saxon beads is published, it will be impossible to assess whether melon beads are particularly popular in the Conversion

period.

*Function:* Six of the single melon beads, plus the four from Finglesham K 200, were on necklaces. Four others were at the neck on their own. One, from Camerton Av 97, was by the head but was some way away from the rest of the necklace, so perhaps was strung separately on a longer string, as with some of the amber beads. Three were in amulet collections, that from Buckland Dover K 141 in a bag and those from Harford Farm Nf 27 and Melbourn Ca VI perhaps on a chatelaine. As with amber beads, then, but unlike the glass beads, many melon beads find uses other than on necklaces.

*Social meaning:* Three out of the fifteen melon bead graves were found with children, aged to c. five years at Finglesham K 132, ten to twelve years at Finglesham K 200, and unaged at Camerton Av 97. None were found with male-linked objects or with skeletons anatomically sexed as male. There appeared to be no difference in the range of practical functions between those found with adults and those found with children.

*Distribution:* Graves with melon beads are found spread across the country, with small numbers from Wessex to East Anglia and from Northumbria to Kent (Map 17).

#### 4.15 WIRE RING (Fig 4.10)

*Description:* Wire rings were relatively common in the sample, occurring in 102 of the graves studied. By far the majority of them, at least 300 (88%), were made of silver. Bronze was the next most common material, with 38 examples (11%), one of which was gilded and four tinned. Two were made of gold and three of iron.

The form of the rings varied. Most complete rings have the ends of the wire formed into slip-knots, but they can also be of solid construction or have the ends formed into elaborate twisted bezels. Occasionally they bear decoration of beading or of groups of incised transverse lines. Diameter generally varied from less than a centimetre at Melbourn Ca XI, to 27 mm at Winchester Lower Brook Street Ha 23, but in the exceptional case from Buckland Dover K 129 a ring of 58 mm appears to have been used on a necklace.

*Date:* Wire rings are occasionally found in graves of the earlier period. This is not surprising, since their basic design is quick and easy to make and works well. A similar silver wire ring has also been found in an eleventh-century context at St Mary Bishophill Senior, York (Moulden

and Tweddle 1986, 55; Martin Carver, pers comm). The later and earlier rings are, however, not used in necklaces, and are not decorated.

Four coin-dated graves contained silver wire rings. Finglesham K 7, with three rings, contained a pale gold P I Pada thrymsa of c. 660-665, and Buckland Dover K 110, with one ring, contained silver P II and P III Pada thrymsas, both of c. 660-680. Lechlade Gl 179 had four rings and a pierced bronze imitation of a Vanimundus thrymsa, the original of which would have been current c. 665-680, and Boss Hall Sf 93 contained an unspecified number of wire rings and a B series sceatta of c. 690 (see section 2.2.5 for details on the dating of these coins). Wire rings have also been found with workboxes at, among others, Lechlade Gl 14, Garton II NHu 7, Uncleby NHu 3, Standlow Db and Burwell Ca 121. Early examples of wire rings on necklaces include Buckland Dover K 35 and 29, both with keystone disc brooches, and Castledyke SHu 160, with two annular brooches of Leeds's type g. The period of deposition of wire rings therefore covers the whole of the seventh and early eighth centuries.

*Function:* The most common use of wire rings was in necklaces. 82 of the necklaces in the study probably contained wire rings, generally not linked together but joined in some other way. At Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 8, 9, 39 and 57, rings were found tied together with thread, and it is often assumed that thread was used in other cases. Necklaces composed mostly of wire rings, however, were rare, most necklaces containing only one, two or three rings (Table 4.7). Wire rings could also be used on chatelaines or girdles (e.g. Finglesham K 32) or as part of bag collections (e.g. Finglesham K 58), or be used merely as an adjunct to something else, such as a suspension ring for a pin, but in this case the wire ring was not recorded in its own right.

Wire rings used as finger-rings were also included in this section, as well as being considered as part of the finger-ring category in section 4.20. Re-used finger-rings are occasionally found on necklaces, for example in gold at Finglesham K 61 and in silver at Finglesham K 157.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was often assumed that wire rings were used as earrings. The arguments for this seem to have been twofold. Firstly, wire rings are often found in pairs, at either end of a festoon of beads and pendants, and so can either be interpreted as the terminals of a necklace or as earrings. Secondly, there is no other piece of jewellery in the repertoire of the Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon woman that could have conveniently been worn in a hole in the ear. The interpretation of wire rings as earrings fell out of favour when Lethbridge found wire rings that were clearly part of a necklace; he later pointed out that they would have been impractical as earrings (Lethbridge 1931, 70; 1936, 5).

**Table 4.7** Numbers of wire rings per grave

The interpretation of wire rings as part of necklaces rather than as earrings has been borne out by the present study. They tend to be in the chin or chest area, or clearly associated with other elements of the necklace. A few are solid, and have no way of passing through the ear; even the knotted rings, given the nature of the knots, would have been permanent adornments. There are, however, occasional occurrences of one or two rings with or without beads, and it is possible that these could have been permanently worn earrings.

Meaney has suggested that wire rings may have had an amuletic function, partly on the grounds that they largely replaced beads, "many of which were of a form or substance which the evidence suggests were amuletic", and partly from their knotted construction, which may have served to distract the evil eye (1981, 172-74).

*Social meaning:* When wire rings function as parts of necklaces, they are associated with women and children, presumably girls. Although they were made from a precious metal, their large numbers show that they were not confined to richer necklaces. The only case of a wire ring found with a skeleton anatomically identified as male is Burwell Ca 26, described above in section 4.12; but this was not done by a specialist, and the identification may have been a mistake.

*Distribution:* Wire rings are, again, distributed fairly evenly over England (Map 18). The average number of wire rings per grave does not vary greatly, either, as is shown in Table 4.8.

	No of graves with wire rings	Total no of wire rings	Average no of wire rings per grave
Kent	34	82	2.4
Wessex	26	109+	4.2
Mercia	20	77	3.8
East Anglia	18	79+	4.4
Northumbria	4	8	2

(For details of which counties make up the regions, see Table 3.1)

**Table 4.8** Average number of wire rings per grave, divided by region

#### 4.16 NECKLACE (Figs 4.11 and 4.12)

*Description:* The definition of a necklace, for the purposes of this study, was an artefact or artefacts that can reasonably be supposed to have been worn, either in death or in life, strung at the neck or chest. The ten preceding artefact categories are usually found combined into necklaces. Single beads in the neck or skull area were excluded from this category, due to the possibility of their being used as buttons or on hair accessories. When counting the number of elements on a necklace, a bead suspended on a ring was counted as two elements in order to try to retain consistency, as many fragmentary rings are found with beads which may or may not have originally been strung on the ring, and so have to be counted separately.

159 necklaces occurred in the study in 155 graves, with four graves (Buckland Dover K 133, Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 9, Harford Farm Nf 28 and Winchester Lower Brook Street Ha 23) containing two necklaces. It is possible that Boss Hall Sf 93 also contained more than one necklace, as the items were found jumbled up in a bag.

Most necklaces included small monochrome glass beads (126 examples) and wire rings (82 examples). Only 23 necklaces have neither. There do, however, appear to be very few rules dictating the composition of a necklace. All the elements of the necklace appear to be able to be combined with any of the others (see Table 4.9). This confirms that the elements of the necklace are all roughly contemporary, as suggested by their position in the centre of Shepherd's seriation (1979a, fig 4.1; see Table 2.1 and 2.2), and suggests that the symbolic attributes of the individual elements do not conflict in any way.

Some necklaces - both of rare and commonplace materials - appear to have been very carefully put together and are symmetrical and well-matched. Others look like rag-bags of haphazardly arranged old junk. In Table 4.9 below, necklaces containing various elements are shown on the vertical axis, and the percentage of necklaces on which other elements occur can be read off along the horizontal axis; so 56% of necklaces with small monochrome glass beads also contained wire rings.



	small bead	wire ring	ameth bead	cowrie bead	metal bead	disc pend	bullae	cab pend	sample size
small bead	X	56%	24%	5%	15%	24%	10%	13%	125
wire ring	87%	X	15%	6%	17%	32%	15%	9%	82
ameth bead	74%	40%	X	6%	13%	16%	3%	5%	34
cowrie bead	75%	63%	25%	X	50%	25%	13%	13%	8
metal bead	76%	52%	16%	16%	X	20%	12%	24%	26
disc pend	76%	63%	15%	5%	15%	X	12%	20%	41
bullae	66%	66%	5%	5%	22%	28%	X	22%	18
cab pend	73%	45%	18%	4%	27%	36%	18%	X	22

**Table 4.9** Relative popularity of combinations of necklace elements

Reading downwards in the first column, it can be seen that small monochrome glass beads occur on about 75% of necklaces with amethyst beads, or with cowrie shell or metal beads, or disc or cabochon pendants. They are slightly more common on necklaces with wire rings, and slightly less common on necklaces with bullae. Much the same consistent pattern is seen with the other elements; perhaps the only rare combination is that of bullae and amethysts; only one necklace with bullae, at Garton II NHu 7, also contained amethysts. Metal beads appear to be particularly common on necklaces containing cowrie shell beads, but the sample is rather small.

The number of elements making up a necklace varied from one to 82, but most had less than twenty items. The average number of elements for all necklaces was around eleven; because there can be debate over exactly how an artefact was used, and therefore accuracy in the number of elements is impossible, greater precision in expressing the averages is pointless. The average length of necklaces varied only very slightly with their composition; those with wire rings had, on average, fifteen elements, small monochrome glass beads thirteen, amethyst beads sixteen, metal beads eighteen, cabochon pendants fifteen, bullae fourteen, disc pendants thirteen.

The number of elements does not seem to be correlated with the wealth of the necklace; necklaces which contained gold averaged thirteen elements. There was obviously no aspiration to long necklaces, with little deviation from the norm. The only exception to this homogeneity was the length of necklaces including miscellaneous pendants. They averaged 25 items, which may reflect a personal eccentricity.

*Date:* Necklaces are, of course, a very common grave-good in the migration period. The latest

coin-dated necklaces from the Conversion period are from Ipswich Buttermarket Sf 44 (outside the sample), dated by a possible Pada thrymsa to 660-680, and containing silver rings, silver beads and pendants; and Boss Hall Sf 93, with a sceatta of c. 690, comprising small glass beads, silver beads, silver wire rings, cabochon and disc pendants (see section 2.2.5 for the dating of the coins). Many other necklaces are found with workboxes and other relatively late items.

*Function:* Not all the necklaces were being worn. At Garton II NHu 19 eleven beads were found in a line between the right knee and ankle of the skeleton, with their axes parallel, suggesting that they were strung when buried. In other graves, such as Boss Hall Sf 93, all the necklace elements were in a bag.

The possibilities of amuletic functions for all necklace elements have been suggested above, but necklaces must have been appreciated primarily for their beauty and ornament. A few necklaces (e.g. Finglesham K 57) seem to have gone right round the neck, but most were probably designed to be only displayed from the front. Meaney has argued that, since many objects which are generally agreed to have been amuletic (animal teeth, amber beads, cowrie beads and so on) are found on necklaces, the likelihood of other apparently purely decorative items being talismanic in some way is increased (1981, 28). This, of course, does not make the necklace itself an amulet; it is, rather, a convenient place on which to keep amulets. The number of amber beads which appear to have been worn about the neck but on a separate, longer string from the necklace may imply that in fact the necklace served more to jumble up amulets with purely decorative pieces, and thus to dilute their magical powers.

*Social meaning:* Necklaces are never found with male-linked items, and so it has been inferred that they are identifiers of female status. They are also found with some children, presumably girls. The 155 necklace-graves represent 13% of all furnished graves; the number is uncannily close to the 157 weapon-graves in the sample (see section 4.33), although these were almost all adult burials. If the sample can be assumed to include roughly equal numbers of males and females, about a quarter of all furnished female graves contained necklaces.

As stated earlier, the length of a necklace is no guide to its richness or desirability. It is possible that long necklaces were positively undesirable, as a reaction to their popularity in the later sixth century.

*Distribution:* Necklaces are found in all areas of England, although there is a cluster in Kent (Map 19). Necklace length shows little regional variation (Table 4.10), with Mercia, Wessex

and East Anglia all averaging eleven items per necklace. Kent is a little higher, with thirteen, and the four necklaces with over thirty items all came from Kent. This may again be due to the easier recognition of early seventh-century burials in Kent. Northumbria's average is eight, but the sample is small; out of the fourteen necklaces, only nine have a known number of elements.

	No of graves with necklaces	Average no of elements per necklace
Kent	55	13
Wessex	33	11
East Anglia	26	11
Mercia	26	11
Northumbria	14	8

(For details of which counties make up the regions, see Table 3.1)

**Table 4.10** Average number of elements per necklace, divided by region

#### 4.17 ANNULAR OR PENANNULAR BROOCH (Fig 4.13)

*Description:* Annular brooches were far more common in this study than penannulars, there being 49 fairly certain examples of the former and only nine of the latter. Adding three dubious annular brooches from graves which already have one definite example, one from Snell's Corner Ha S6 and two from Painsthorpe Wold NHu 6a, brings the total up to 61 ring-shaped brooches, in 44 graves; no grave in the sample contained both an annular and a penannular brooch. Bronze was by far the most popular material for the rings, with only two iron rings, both annular, and six silver rings, of which three were annular and three penannular. 41 of the annular and penannular brooches had pins of known material, 23 of which were bronze, thirteen iron and five silver.

Many of the brooches are decorated. Several have groups of incised transverse lines, a motif which is also present on some buckle loops, such as Buckland Dover K 113, Holborough K 11 and 18, Finglesham K 57, 62a, 67, 144 and 180, Westgarth Gardens Sf 69 and Uncleby NHu 37. Sewerby NHu 24, Occaney Beck NY, Uncleby NHu 31, 43, 45, 62 and Castledyke SHu 106 have Style II animal heads forming part of the ring.

It is interesting that no grave within the present sample has contained both an annular and penannular brooch, but in view of the small sample size, it cannot be asserted that the two were

incompatible as costume elements.

*Date:* The chronology of annular and penannular brooches is still very uncertain (Hines 1984, 262). Of all the brooch shapes that have their origins in the fifth century - cruciform, saucer, plain disc, equal-armed, small-long and so on - the ring-shaped brooch is the only one that seems to survive with its original function intact into the Conversion period.

Four graves in the present sample contained Leeds's type g annular brooches. At Burwell Ca 83, one had been re-used on a chatelaine; at Monkton K 12, where three type g brooches were found in a very worn condition, the same re-use of antiques had probably taken place. Castledyke SHu 160, on the other hand, contained two type g brooches in the conventional position at the shoulders, along with two silver wire slip-rings, a silver pendant and small monochrome glass beads of various shapes including a bicone. The quantity of finds of Conversion-period character suggests that the brooches were antiques. Castledyke SHu 134 also contained a pair of type g brooches at the shoulders, but is difficult to date; this grave is discussed above in section 4.14.1.

Larger numbers of Leeds's type f annular brooches also continued to be deposited into the Conversion period. The materials used for all ring-shaped brooches, and their sizes, were analysed in an attempt to distinguish Conversion-period ring-shaped brooches from migration-period ones.

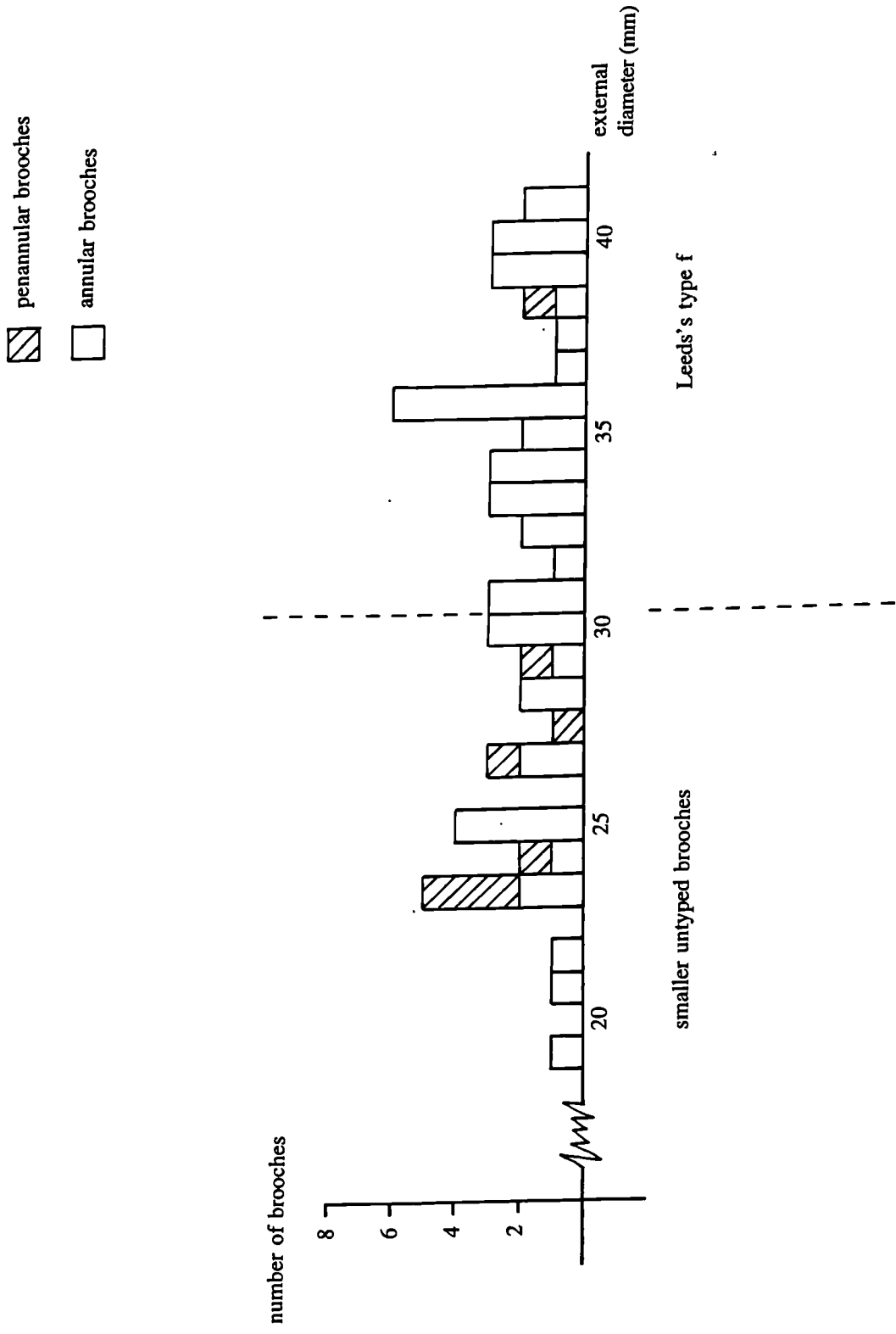
Migration-period ring-shaped brooches, such as the thirty from Sewerby NHu, tend to be of bronze with iron pins. Among the Conversion-period graves studied, however, there were a number of brooches with bronze pins. There was only one bronze penannular brooch with an iron pin, a 27 mm external diameter example from Castledyke SHu 88, which was buried with two linked slip-knot rings of gilded bronze and two beads found at the waist. Bronze annular brooches with iron pins include all the type gs where the pin material is known, and some type fs. The type fs have external diameters of 32 mm at Painsthorpe Wold NHu 6a, 34 mm at Garton II NHu 19, 35 and 36 mm at Castledyke SHu 96, 37 mm at Musden St IV and 37 and 39 mm at Milfield North Nb 1. Musden St IV has no other grave-goods; Milfield North Nb 1, Garton II NHu 19 and Castledyke SHu 96 are not closely datable and may easily be early seventh century, but Painsthorpe Wold NHu 6a was found with a workbox and thus must belong to the late seventh or early eighth century. It is possible, therefore, that bronze annular or penannular brooches with iron pins are more popular in the sixth and early seventh centuries than they were later; but Painsthorpe Wold NHu 6a shows that this is not a hard and fast rule.

To try to pick up a dividing line between Leeds's type f and the untyped smaller brooches, the range of diameters of annular brooches was plotted, excluding type gs (Table 4.11). There appears to be no clear division within the Conversion-period material, implying that the smaller untyped class does not represent a new type of brooch introduced in the seventh century, but rather a continuation of the old type f with a more extensive range of sizes. The larger size, however, is still more popular than the smaller.

The arbitrary division of 30 mm in external diameter was used in an examination of the datable associations of ring-shaped brooches, to see if there was any discernible development in size over time. Finglesham K 57, with small annular brooches of 26 and 30 mm external diameter, may date from the first half of the seventh century, as its necklace includes a pelta-shaped pendant similar in shape to those from the late sixth- or early seventh-century Buckland Dover K 29. Other datable small annular brooches include the 22 mm example from Didcot Power Station Ox 12, and the 30 mm example from Garton II NHu 7, both with workboxes, and the 24 mm example from Castledyke SHu 13, which was found with a hump-backed comb. The comb probably, but not definitely, dates the grave to the second half of the seventh century onwards (see below, section 4.24).

A number of graves with brooches of over 30 mm in diameter contained workboxes dating the grave to the late seventh or early eighth century. Uncleby NHu 31 had a workbox and a 34 mm brooch, and Painsthorpe Wold NHu 6a had a workbox, one certain 32 mm brooch, and two rings of 31 mm with groups of transverse lines which may be annular brooches, or may be part of the bag also in this grave. Garton II NHu 7 contained a workbox and a 40 mm diameter brooch as well as the 30 mm one mentioned above, but the two brooches were not being worn as a pair. The smaller brooch was at the shoulder, but the larger was in a bag collection at the foot, and so was perhaps an antique. Most of the pairs of brooches, however, are of similar size and so perhaps of similar date.

Evison dated Buckland Dover K 94a, with an annular brooch of 43 mm external diameter, to her Phase 3 (575-625) and Buckland Dover K 127, with an annular brooch of 31 mm diameter, to her Phase 7 (700-750). The only closely datable penannular brooch grave, Winnall II Ha 8, contained two brooches of Fowler's type C, 22 and 23 mm in external diameter, and a pair of linked pins.



**Table 4.11** External diameters of annular and penannular brooches

The sum of this evidence seems to be that small brooches can be early and larger ones can be late. There does seem to be a slight trend over time towards smaller sizes, but the lack of resolution at this scale of sample means that any trend could only be confirmed by a much larger-scale study. Unusually, then, ring-shaped brooches do not appear to participate in the disjunction of artefact types around 600 and, due to this, it must be agreed, with Hines, that the history of these brooches remains largely obscure (1984, 269).

*Function:* 25 of the annular brooches were found singly in the grave, although at Painsthorpe Wold NHu 6a the single brooch may have been augmented by the presence of two more in a bag. Where the position of the singletons is known they are usually at the neck or chest, and are probably therefore functioning as dress fasteners, although it is possible that some might have been used to fasten hair in a pony-tail. At Buckland Dover K 127, the single brooch was worn on a chatelaine. Eleven of the annular brooch-graves contained two brooches, and again these are almost always both in the chest or neck region; the exception is Garton II NHu 7, where the two brooches were found apart, one being at the shoulder and the other in a bag collection at the feet.

Out of the seven penannular brooch-graves, two contained two brooches, Winnall II Ha 8 and Wakerley Nh 10. The former were in the conventional position near the chest, but the latter were found by the shins and appear to have been used to fasten some sort of leg-covering. The position of the three brooches from Monkton K 12 is unknown, although the excavator suggested that they may have been worn on a chatelaine.

The usual function of annular and penannular brooches, then, is as dress fasteners. The migration-period custom of wearing brooches in pairs, confirmed by Hines (1984, 264), was however changing towards single brooches, which may imply a change in dress construction. This shift can also be seen among disc brooches, where keystone brooches are found more often in pairs than composite brooches (Avent 1975, table 5).

*Social meaning:* In common with other brooches, no annular or penannular brooch was found with a male-linked object. They can be found with both adults and children, the children including a three- to five-year-old at Didcot Power Station Ox 12 and fragmentary skeletons at Snell's Corner Ha 29 and Monkton K 12.

*Distribution:* The few penannular brooches are evenly scattered across the country (Map 20), but the annular brooches show a strongly regional bias (Map 21). Sites from both North and

South Humberside, such as Uncleby NHu, Garton II NHu, Painsthorpe Wold NHu and Castledyke SHu, have produced 23 graves with annular brooches, which represent 62% of all the annular brooch-graves in the sample. The pattern cannot be explained simply as the influence of type g brooches in the sixth-century Anglian *Kulturkreis* on later fashion, as there are few annular brooch-graves in East Anglia and Mercia away from the Humber. It appears that the recent expansion of fieldwork in South Humberside is beginning to pick up a regional similarity between Conversion-period furnished burial on either side of the Humber, showing that although the river acted as a boundary in political terms, it may have acted as a unifying force in the social and economic sphere (for some (dubious) historical evidence for this, see Myres in Collingwood and Myres 1936, 411-24).

#### 4.18 MISCELLANEOUS BROOCHES (Fig 4.13)

*Description:* There are very few brooches which are not basically circular in form, either ring- or disc-shaped. The only apparent instance of an antique brooch still being used to decorate clothing was the fifth- or sixth-century broad-banded annular brooch from Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 32, which may have been sewn on to clothing (but see below, under *Function*). This is of Leeds's type e, and of course conforms to the usual circular form (Ager 1985, 24).

Three other graves contained antique brooches. Marina Drive Bd E2 had a small-long brooch of Böhme's Typ Liebenau-West Stow, from the middle or second half of the fifth century (Böhme 1986, 555 and 572-73). King Harry Lane Ht 10 and Polhill K 53 both contained first-century bow brooches. All three brooches had missing pins, and all were found in close association with other objects, the groups being interpreted as amulet bag collections.

The only brooch form which is not circular and is apparently of Conversion-period manufacture is the safety-pin brooch. This brooch has a flat bow parallel to the pin, a larger or smaller part of which forms a flat plate which may be decorated. It occurs in three graves in this study, Swallowcliffe Down Wi (five examples), Uncleby NHu 43 and Shudy Camps Ca 19 (one example each). Those from Swallowcliffe Down Wi are of silver, and form a set, all bearing the common Conversion-period decoration of groups of transverse lines. The complete examples have a little pointed spur on the end of the catch. The other two examples are both of bronze, although that from Uncleby NHu 43 is silvered or tinned (leading Speake (1989, 49) to state that it is wholly silver). The Uncleby NHu 43 brooch is decorated with punched circles, and the Shudy Camps Ca 19 example has an ornamental curly spur on the end of the catch.



Two more silver safety-pin brooches were found in the famous well-furnished woman's grave at Kingston Down K 205. These bear groups of transverse lines, but the catchplates are triangular. Another very slender example, this time undecorated and in copper, was found with a bronze garnet-headed pin just above the floor of Gröbenhaus 42 at Mucking in Essex (Hamerow 1993, 60, 122, fig 105).

*Date:* The Swallowcliffe Down Wi burial has been dated by Speake to the later seventh century, mainly on art-historical grounds (1989, 126); although Speake's chronologies have been called into question elsewhere in this thesis, his date for Swallowcliffe is probably secure, as it is supported by the presence of a bed, a hump-backed comb, a casket and a pair of palm cups, all object types found more commonly in the second half of the seventh century than in the first (Speake 1989, 98-115; see below, sections 4.24, 4.39 and 4.43). Shudy Camps Ca 19 contained, among other things, five silver bullae, and therefore may also belong to the second half of the seventh century. Uncleby NHu 43 contained a bronze annular brooch with Style II animal-heads, which cannot be closely dated; Kingston Down K 205 can be dated to the first half of the seventh century by its remarkable composite disc brooch. The safety-pin brooch fashion therefore spans the century.

*Function:* As stated above, the non-circular antique brooches were all part of amulet collections. No position for the quoit brooch is recorded in the Chamberlain's Barn report, but as Hyslop suggests that the brooch may have been sewn on to the dress (Hyslop 1963, 179), she may have had supplementary information from the primary site records.

White has noted that safety-pin brooches tend to be found at the hip, and has suggested that they may have been fastenings for undergarments (1988, 41). At Swallowcliffe Down Wi, however, the brooches were found in a casket, and at Shudy Camps Ca 19 in a bag; at Kingston Down K 205 the brooches were found together at one hip, near an "iron instrument" which may have been a key or the lockplate from a box. The safety-pin brooch from Uncleby NHu 43 was also found at the hip, although the annular brooch from this grave was at the neck.

The evidence combines to suggest not that these brooches were dedicated to fastening one particular piece of clothing, but that they were typically not used as brooches at all, but rather kept in boxes or bags. Whether or not this implies a status as amuletic objects depends on the view taken of the function of box or bag collections; only the Swallowcliffe Down Wi brooches were associated with other presumably amuletic objects (a silver spoon, a comb, an iron rod, a strap-end, two knives, an amber and a glass bead).

The safety-pin brooches look at first sight like Roman bow-brooches, with a coiled spring and pin formed from the same piece of metal as the plate or bow. There is, however, one important distinction. Safety-pin brooches were all designed to be viewed from the side, lying flat and with their bow parallel to the pin, like a modern safety-pin. The Roman bow brooches, on the other hand, have their decoration on a protruding bow, and so were designed to be worn with this sticking out, perpendicular to the plane of the dress.

Because of their small, flat nature and their usual location in bags or boxes, it is possible that safety-pin brooches, despite their decorative nature, were in fact used much as modern safety-pins are, kept for emergencies or used on a variety of items kept in the bag or box.

*Social meaning:* Safety-pin brooches have so far been found only in the graves of adult women, and in the three cases where an age was suggested (Swallowcliffe Down Wi, Shudy Camps Ca 19 and Uncleby NHu 43) these women were considered young. Two of the four safety-pin brooch graves are among the highest-wealth Conversion-period graves known, and these objects may have been signifiers of high status.

*Distribution:* It is hard to draw any conclusions from the distribution pattern of an artefact type with only five or six findspots over a life of a century or more, but it can be noted that its range runs over the whole of Anglo-Saxon England, being absent only from Mercia (Map 20).

#### 4.19 BRACELET (Fig 4.14)

*Description:* Five graves in the study contained rings on the left forearm. Four more contained similar rings, two of these being found by the left arm and shoulder and two of unknown position in the grave. All of these were with adults anatomically sexed as female, or buried with female-related grave-goods, except for Harford Farm Nf 35, which was a small grave, probably of a child, buried with no other objects except for the bracelet. All these graves contained one ring, except for Snell's Corner Ha 6 which contained two, both on the left forearm.

The bracelet from Camerton Av 14 was made of iron, and is not illustrated or further described. The other nine bracelets were all made of bronze wire, of about 2 to 4 mm gauge. The child's bracelet from Harford Farm Nf 35 was oval, measuring about 33 mm across on one side and 24 mm on the other, but all the other bracelets were roughly circular, ranging from 63 mm to 76 mm in diameter as found. Three of the bracelets, however, have knots which, unlike the knots in the wire rings found in necklaces, really do appear to slip to give some size adjustment. A

summary of bracelet forms is given in Table 4.12 below.

	Diameter	Terminals	Decoration
Buckland Dover K 67	64 mm	Sliding slip-knot	
Buckland Dover K 110	69 mm	Scarf joint, animal head terminal	
Harford Farm Nf 18	70 mm	Hook and eye, plain terminal	
Harford Farm Nf 35	24-33 mm	Hook and eye, plain terminal	
Camerton Av 14	"nearly 3 inches"		
Finglesham K 34	72 mm	Sliding slip-knot	Groups of incised lines
Finglesham K 180	76 mm	Solid	Groups of incised lines
Castledyke SHu 138	63 mm	Sliding slip-knot	
Snell's Corner Ha S6	68 mm	Penannular, plain terminals	
	70 mm	Scarf joint, transverse grooves on terminals	Twisted opposite the terminals

**Table 4.12** Summary of bracelet forms

Three other graves contained objects, apparently originally bracelets, which had been re-used for other purposes. At Alvediston Wi Ic, part of a Kimmeridge shale bracelet was found at the right elbow of a skeleton furnished with a broken spear, a shield-boss and a broken knife. Kimmeridge shale bracelets are usually Roman or prehistoric in date, and so it seems likely that this object was residual. At Wakerley Nh 14, a Roman bracelet apparently bent in antiquity was found just above the skull of a skeleton osteologically sexed as probably male (White 1988, 110). The excavator suggested that it had been re-used as a hair ornament, presumably with a wooden pin. At Buckland Dover K 129, a bronze wire ring of 58 mm diameter with an elastic slip-knot was found by the neck, apparently forming the end of a necklace. This ring has been included in section 4.15 with other wire rings found on necklaces. One other possible bracelet is the ring with hook-and-eye terminal from Harford Farm Nf 20. This is 86 mm in diameter and has a large annular bead threaded onto it, which would make it uncomfortable to wear on the arm. The bodies at Harford Farm Nf have only survived as fragmentary soil stains, so it is impossible to tell exactly where on the body this ring was found.

*Date:* The only datable bracelet-graves in the present study are later seventh-century. Buckland Dover K 110 contains silver Pada thrymsas of c. 660-680, and Harford Farm Nf 18 has two

Series B sceattas, the later of which dates to c. 690-700 (see section 2.2.5). Evison has discussed bracelets, dating the five bronze and one silver elastic bracelets at Buckland Dover K to her Phases 1, 3, 5 and 6, corresponding to the years 475-700, which cover all but the last fifty years of the life of the cemetery (1987, 85-86). At Buckland Dover, at any rate, bracelets with elastic slip-knots appear to have no particular chronological significance. Speake illustrates a number of animal heads from seventh-century bracelets (1980, fig 11 h, j, k, l).

*Function:* There is no evidence for any practical function for bracelets, beyond that of decorative costume jewellery, and neither is there any good evidence for an amuletic function.

*Social meaning:* In her study of fifth- to seventh-century graves from the Upper Thames, Dickinson noted that bracelets were mostly from fifth- and early sixth-century contexts, and were found almost exclusively with children (1976, 200). At Buckland Dover K, the only bracelet found with a child was from Phase 1 of the cemetery (475-525). In the present study, only one bracelet-grave was that of a child, the rest being those of adult women. There seems, therefore, to have been a change in the social meaning of the bracelet.

Bracelets tend to be buried in rather well-furnished graves. The two Buckland Dover K graves in the study both contained a longer necklace than usual, grave 67 of 24 elements and grave 110 of sixteen elements. Finglesham K 180, Harford Farm Nf 18 and Snell's Corner Ha S6 all contained tools, bags, chatelaines and jewellery.

*Distribution:* Although the low numbers make it difficult to be confident, it seems that the nine bracelet-graves are spread widely across England (Map 22).

#### 4.20 FINGER-RING (Fig 4.15)

*Description:* Eight graves in the sample contained rings thought to be finger-rings, Finglesham K 58 and Lechlade GI 148 having two each. Four of the ten rings were of bronze, and five were of silver; the ring from Caister-on-Sea Nf 77 was of iron. Their construction varied; a plain D-section silver hoop at Polhill K 64S, fluted sheet-silver hoops at Lechlade GI 148, spiral hoops in bronze at Snell's Corner Ha S6 and in silver at Castledyke SHu 134, a bronze wire ring with slip-knot at Polhill K 53, a fragmentary bronze hoop decorated with lines and circles at Didcot Power Station Ox 4, wire rings with twisted bezels in iron at Caister-on-Sea Nf 77 and in silver at Finglesham K 58, which also had a gilt-bronze ring with a garnet setting. The two wire rings, from Finglesham K 58 and Polhill K 53, have also been included under section 4.15.

*Date:* The variety of Conversion-period finger-ring forms is similar to that of the migration period and the later Anglo-Saxon period, and does not allow for close dating. Castledyke SHu 134 may be early seventh century (see above, section 4.14.1) and Lechlade Gl 148, on the basis of its trellised glass cabochon pendant, paralleled at Sibertswold K 172, may belong to the late seventh or early eighth century. Polhill K 53 contained a hump-backed comb, suggestive of a date in the second half of the seventh or the early eighth century (see below, section 4.24). The other finger-ring graves are not closely datable, and as the number of datable graves is so low, no generalisations can be made about the relative popularity of finger-rings over time.

*Function:* In two cases, Snell's Corner Ha S6 and Polhill K 53, the rings were still in position on the left hand. At Didcot Power Station Ox 4, Castledyke NHu 134 and Caister-on-Sea Nf 77 the rings were by the hand or arm. At Lechlade Gl 148, the rings were by the hands, but the hands were up by the skull and so from the position in the grave alone it is difficult to decide whether the rings should be seen as finger-rings or as part of the necklace that was also in the grave. At Finglesham K 58 the two rings were at the neck, but may have been in a bag with the sword pyramid, rather than on a necklace (see below, section 4.48.3). The ring from Polhill K 64S was by the jaw, and there were no other objects in the grave, and so it is hard to reconstruct the original context of deposition. In the case of eight of the ten rings, therefore, their position within the grave is ambiguous. The form of the rings is different to those commonly found on necklaces, but it must be acknowledged that their classification as finger-rings is tentative.

*Social meaning:* All the sexable finger-ring graves were female; Lechlade Gl 148, at which the classification of the rings as finger-rings is perhaps most dubious, was the grave of a child of eight or nine years old. Finglesham K 58 was tentatively sexed as male from the rather poorly preserved bones, but thought to be female from the grave-goods (a pair of lace-tags and the collection of two rings and a sword pyramid at the neck).

In his comparison of various types of early medieval Germanic finger-rings, Filmer-Sankey noted that status-defining prestige rings were worn by men and women, usually on the right hand, and that decorative rings were worn only by women, and usually on the left hand (1989, 34 and 126-27). The two rings from the present study which were definitely still on the hand were both on the left hand of a woman, and so support Filmer-Sankey's observations.

*Distribution:* Again, the numbers of finger-ring graves in the present sample are low, but it seems that they can be found in most areas of England (Map 23).

#### 4.21 CHATELAINE (Figs 4.16, 4.17, 4.18)

*Description:* Up to 124 graves contained a chatelaine, defined here as one or more chains or rings hanging from the waist and carrying a collection of objects. In some cases the objects alone survive, without any obvious means of attaching them to the belt, and here it must be assumed that the chatelaine was made of cord, leather or wooden links. In most surviving examples, the chatelaine and objects are made of iron, and elements can be hard to identify due to corrosion. It seems, however, that chains can be made of links or rods, can reach as far as the knee, and can carry objects attached at various points.

The most common object found on a chatelaine is the L- or T-shaped slide key (Ottaway 1992, 660-62) or the simple hook latch-lifter. These seem to have occurred on at least half of all chatelaines, but this figure is certainly an underestimate, as corrosion has removed the "business end" of many iron rods. In the seventh and eighth centuries, the keys or latch-lifters on chatelaines always appear to be functional, and are generally made of iron, unlike the flat bronze symbolic girdle-hangers of the sixth century. The single bronze key in this study, from Buckland Dover K 54, also appears to be functional.

Other elements are much less usual, but can include openwork metal discs, perforated bone or antler discs, toilet sets, metal spoons, and amulets of various kinds including large beads and antique items. Occasionally, as at Finglesham K 157 and Marina Drive Bd F2, suspension devices of Frankish type are found. Bags, boxes and workboxes are sometimes found at the end of chatelaines, but it can be hard to say if they were attached or whether this placing is coincidental. Knives and shears could have been in sheaths attached to the top of a chatelaine, but could as easily have been separately fixed to a belt. Shears, however, do seem to have had a close relationship with chatelaines, as almost two-thirds of shears-graves also have chatelaines.

Keys, toilet items and other rods often have looped ends and are found permanently attached to a solid ring. Often, however, these rings are attached to the chatelaine chain, and most other items are also loose. Presumably the various elements were interchangeable, fixed by string or slip-rings of thin wire as the need arose. Bronze slip-rings are sometimes found, and sometimes their presence can be inferred from green staining on a bone disc. Thin iron wire rings could easily have entirely disappeared. Some chatelaines carry strap loops - bronze or iron loops ending in flat plates fastened (perhaps originally to a belt or strap) by rivets - and these may have served to link the chatelaine to the belt, or permanently to attach a variety of organic objects.

It is not always easy to distinguish a chatelaine from a belt fastener, from a bag or box fitting, or from items from a bag or box collection. This is compounded by the possibility that all the elements of the chatelaine could have been made in organic materials; cords or leather straps perhaps reinforced by metal plates (as may have been the case at Didcot Power Station Ox 2) replacing the chain or linked rods, wooden latchlifters replacing the keys, and so on. Therefore it is often impossible to interpret a single ring of under 50 mm diameter or a stray strap loop or openwork disc; keys or bunches of corroded iron rods between the waist and the knee, however, have been assumed to have been suspended from a chatelaine. Five of the 124 chatelaine-graves (Harford Farm Nf 27 and 28, Polhill K 66, Burwell Ca 76 and Shudy Camps Ca 76) are slightly doubtful, as there is a possibility that the complex identified as a chatelaine should instead be identified as a bag with contents (see below, section 4.38.2).

*Date:* Collections of items hanging from the waist were part of the sixth-century grave-good repertoire, especially in Anglian areas, but as a group these are generally distinguishable from later chatelaines due to their use of symbolic, non-functional girdle-hangers, and their lack of long chains. However, earlier chatelaines do occasionally exist which are very similar to those found in the Conversion period, notably at Buckland Dover K 28, which also contains a shield-on-tongue buckle and shoe-shaped rivets and is dated by Evison to her Phase 2 (525-575).

Long iron chatelaines are, therefore, not a Conversion-period type-fossil, but they are far more popular than earlier. Their popularity seems to peak in the late seventh or early eighth century; four are found with disc brooches (including the later, unusual brooch in Boss Hall Sf 93) but thirteen are found with workboxes. This high number may be a functional link, as workboxes might have been worn on the chatelaine, but the preponderance of later associations is confirmed by coin evidence. Finglesham K 7 contains a pale gold P I Pada thrymsa of c. 660-665, Buckland Dover K 110 contains silver P II and P III Pada thrymsas of c. 660-680, and Lechlade Gl 179 contains an imitation of a Vanimundus thrymsa of c. 665-680. Boss Hall Sf 93's sceatta is dated to c. 690 and Harford Farm Nf 18's latest to 690-700 (see section 2.2.5 for details on the dating of these coins).

This is a high number of coin-dates for a single artefact type, and shows that chatelaines were being buried in graves in quantity into the eighth century. A chatelaine similar to those found in Conversion-period graves was found in the demolition layer of the first phase of settlement at Fishergate; this could be as late as the second half of the eighth century, but as a settlement find it is unique (Rogers 1993, 1428).

*Function:* From the list of items found on chatelaines it will be seen that in fact few useful tools are permanently attached. All the common attachments - keys, toilet implements, discs, large beads, antique items - have been suggested as amuletic (Meaney 1981, 178-81, 152-53, 139-42, 176-77, 222-28). All these items might have practical functions as well, but the more purely useful items, such as shears, knives, awls, and so on, are not found with permanent attachments to the chatelaine. Perhaps the entire object was symbolic, as seems to be the case with the sixth-century collections of girdle-hangers, or perhaps it fulfilled an intermediate function, with useful items moving on and off the chatelaine as needed, and symbolic things staying on permanently.

*Social meaning:* Chatelaines have been seen as being traditionally female-linked items (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 195-96; Boddington 1990, fig 1). Surprisingly, two of the chatelaines in the present study were found with spearheads, at Buckland Dover K 9 and Shudy Camps Ca 76. In neither case were there any other gender-linked items in the grave. Lethbridge interpreted Shudy Camps 76's spearhead as a weaving tool, because it was found at the hip, probably itself on the chatelaine. He sexed the body as female, though whether from the grave-goods or from the bones is uncertain. Buckland Dover K 9, though, was anatomically sexed as male, and had the spearhead in a conventional position by the head. This, however, is the only case that I know of where an apparent chatelaine has been found with a weapon, and it may be that the three iron rods of which it is made up, which have all lost their terminals, should be seen as separate tools and not as part of an organic chatelaine. They are discussed further under section 4.46.2. By the late tenth century, the wearing of keys seems to be seen as a common male habit, as Riddle 44 in the Exeter Book describes something which may be a key, hanging "bi weres þeo" - by a man's thigh (Krapp and Dobbie (eds) 1936, 204-05).

It has been suggested that a chatelaine, particularly with keys, is a symbol of housewifely authority (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 195-96; Meaney 1981, 178-81), but this seems not to be exclusively true in the Conversion period, given that at least nine of the chatelaines, including some with definite keys, were in the graves of children under twelve. The ages of the children range upwards from Finglesham K 7 and Didcot Power Station Ox 12, both of which were less than five years old. Buckland Dover K 55 and Polhill K 104, each buried with a key, were about five and about seven years old respectively.

At Polhill K, none of the seven chatelaines was found in association with jewellery, and Hawkes suggested that this reflected a class distinction, the chatelaine-wearer being not the lady of the house but the housekeeper (in Philp 1973, 195). This is clearly not the case in other cemeteries; chatelaines have been found with linked pins (e.g. Lechlade Gl 138, Harford Farm Nf 1),



cabochon pendants (e.g. Garton II NHu 12, Buckland Dover K 160), disc pendants (e.g. Lechlade Gl 179, Harford Farm Nf 18), disc brooches (e.g. Hadleigh Road Sf 19 and 92) and many other items of jewellery.

*Distribution:* Chatelaines can be found in any area of England (Map 24). They do, however, show a concentration in Kent, which has 57 of the 124 chatelaine-graves.

## 4.22 TEXTILE PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

### 4.22.1 Whorl (Fig 4.19)

*Description:* Roughly doughnut-shaped objects a few centimetres across with large perforations through the middle are often termed whorls, although their function is to some extent obscure. 43 graves contained whorls, 34 graves with just one, six with two and three with three. Whorls were most commonly made of chalk (thirteen examples) or unidentified stone (nine examples). Six were of shale, six of bone and three of lead; eight were made of clay, presumably raw, and one was made out of "red pot", and looks as if it is part of a re-used vessel. There was one amber whorl, from Finglesham K 6, which has been mentioned above in section 4.14.1, and one, from Melbourn Ca XIX, made out of a naturally perforated white quartz pebble. In six cases the material is unstated or unknown. Glass does not appear to be a preferred material for whorls. Meaney has examined graves with very large glass beads, and has concluded that they are rarely the same shape or used in the same way within the grave as stone, bone or clay whorls.

All the the illustrated whorls are more-or-less round, never faceted. 21 are plano-convex or nearly so, and eleven are of a more symmetrical section, usually sub-rectangular or sub-oval. Their general size range is from 25 mm to 42 mm in diameter and 7 mm to 17 mm in thickness, although the amber whorl from Finglesham K 6 is only 20 mm in diameter. It is noticeable that the lead examples are rather small (both the measurable examples are 26 mm in diameter), and that the one which appears to be fashioned from re-used pottery has the largest diameter of all, 42 mm, perhaps compensating for its thin 10 mm section.

*Date:* It has been suggested by Brown (in Chambers 1975, 193) that plano-convex whorls are a seventh century, perhaps mid-seventh century, innovation, but no evidence is offered for this. Apart from Brown's observation, there appears to have been little dating work done on Anglo-Saxon whorls, either on settlement or on cemetery sites.

The only whorl in the mainly sixth-century cemetery at Norton-on-Tees C1 was a bone example found in grave 11, which appears to date from c. 600 (Sherlock and Welch 1992, 128). One grave from the fifth- and early sixth-century part of the cemetery at Alton Ha, grave 27, has a sherd whorl, and a "bone bead" found at the neck in an undated grave, 46, may possibly be another whorl. At Buckland Dover K whorls were found in two late fifth- or early sixth-century graves, 21 and 48, and the late sixth-century grave 60. There was a single clay whorl in the early sixth-century inhumation grave 22 at Spong Hill in Norfolk (Hills *et al.* 1984, 70). The impression from these cemeteries is that whorls are less frequent in migration-period burials, and that the profile of the earlier whorls is steeper and thicker, but these impressions could only be confirmed by systematic work on earlier graves.

Datable whorl-graves within the Anglo-Saxon Conversion period include Lechlade G1 17, with a keystone garnet disc brooch, and Finglesham K 6, with a triangular buckle. They continued in use until the end of furnished burial, with six whorl-graves having workboxes and one a linked pin set. Within the seventh and eighth centuries, though, there seems to be no development in shape, Lechlade G1 17 containing a plano-convex whorl and Finglesham K 6 a small oval one, and three oval and four plano-convex being found with the workboxes.

*Function:* The usual interpretation for the function of whorls is that they were practical spindle-whorls, used to weight a spindle. Support for this interpretation comes from the different sizes of whorls of different materials, with the lead ones being smaller and the thin sherd-whorl wider, apparently approximating to an ideal weight. The whorls from the settlement site at Mucking in Essex divide into groups according to their material and weight, suggesting that they were used to spin different qualities of yarn; these whorls are very similar to some of the Conversion-period cemetery examples (Hamerow 1993, 65 and fig 43).

Although no whorl has ever been found in a grave with any hint of a spindle attached, even in graves with very good organic preservation, other items commonly interpreted as textile processing equipment are found in whorl-graves. In the present study there is the spearhead apparently re-used as a weaving batten at Shudy Camps Ca 76, and there are bone thread-pickers at Cokethorpe Ox, Finglesham K 8 and Lechlade G1 107. Shears were found in seven whorl-graves; these may also be connected with textile production (see below, section 4.46.5).

The total of other possible textile processing equipment found in whorl-graves is therefore not outstandingly high, but most spinning and weaving equipment would have been made of wood and therefore subject to decay. Modern spindle-whorls themselves are often made of wood or

other organics; MacGregor quotes Sir Arthur Mitchell in the nineteenth century as having discovered an elderly Scottish woman "happily using a potato as a whorl, having used nothing else all her life" (1985, 187).

If whorls should be interpreted as part of the spinning equipment, why were they apparently placed in graves without their spindles, often apparently as part of amulet collections? Andren sees spindle-whorls as being appropriate items of grave-furniture in Scandinavian graves, because they expressed the female art of divination, the mythological Fatal Sisters or Norns using them to spin the thread of human destiny (Andren 1993, 49). Meaney prefers a more prosaic explanation, that part of the equipment was chosen as symbolic of a woman's skill at spinning (1981, 95). There is no evidence for a particularly talismanic function for whorls.

The interpretation of whorls as spinning tools, though, was challenged as long ago as 1931 by Lethbridge:

"They are objects which when found with household debris are unhesitatingly described as "spindle whorls", and in many cases this is probably correct. When, however, they occur singly with a skeleton in the manner described above, I am certain that they answer a different purpose. They are invariably found with bodies unprovided with a belt buckle, and I am positive that they were used as toggles to fasten the girdle." (Lethbridge 1931, 76).

In the present study, eight whorls were found with buckles. In Castledyke SHu 17B, Burwell Ca 24 and Bekesbourne I K 38, the buckles were at the elbow (possibly disturbed), the shoulder and the foot respectively, and do not appear to be fastening a waist-belt or girdle. In Finglesham K 202, both the buckle and whorl were in a box at the foot, and so either one or both may have been removed from their location in life. At Camerton Av 57, Finglesham K 163, Finglesham K 6 and Bekesbourne I K 32 the buckles were at the waist, the whorl being at the shoulder, in a box, outside the hip and also at the waist respectively. This last grave, then, is the only one where a waist-buckle and a possible waist-toggle were found in the same grave. Given that there are 340 buckles present in the sample, it would be expected that around twelve of the whorl-graves would include buckles, so Lethbridge's assertion, though perhaps a little too sweeping, seems broadly correct.

Some support for the "toggle" theory can be found in the locations of the whorls. The most common place for a whorl to be found on the body is in the pelvis or waist area, ten being found there. Other locations, such as the head, shoulder, arm, hand or foot, have four or fewer

examples each. Even more common than those around the midriff, however, are those found in bag or box collections, with thirteen examples. In one further grave, Finglesham K 6, the whorl was by the hip with a collection of objects, and it was suggested that it had been used as a fastener for the strings of a bag. Although a bag or a box might be thought of as the most appropriate place for a spindle, it is difficult to distinguish a bag closer from one of the contents of the bag.

In conclusion, then, it may be that many of the whorls, such as those found in bags or boxes, were indeed used for spinning, or as symbols of skill in spinning; but the low total of waist-buckles in whorl-graves argues that many could have been used as toggles. It seems most prudent to suggest that large round perforated objects, identical in size and shape to spindle-whorls, were used as belt-toggles or bag-fasteners in the seventh and early eighth centuries, and in this guise they were, for purely functional reasons, more often incorporated in the burial deposit than similar objects used for spinning. This model would explain the increased popularity of whorls in graves in the Conversion period, and the occasional occurrence of whorls in male graves (see below), and should warn against trying to assign a specific function to any particular whorl.

*Social meaning:* If whorls were used in spinning, it might be predicted that they would not be found in the graves of men or children, and this does appear to be the norm. It was suggested on anatomical grounds that Camerton Av 56 might be a male, but no analysis was carried out on the human remains at Camerton, and so this identification is probably unreliable; there were no other grave-goods besides the whorl, which was of shale. The only certain male whorl-grave was Finglesham K 6, which contained a spear, a knife and a triangular buckle in addition to a collection consisting of the whorl, a pointed iron tool, a padlock and what may have been the remains of the padlock's key. The whorl may have functioned as a bag fastener, with the rest of the collection inside the bag. It was an unusual object for a whorl, made of amber and rather small, only 20 mm in diameter and 8.5 mm in thickness.

The youngest occupants of whorl-graves were Lechlade G1 89/2, thirteen or fourteen years old, and Burwell Ca 76, thought by Lethbridge to be a "young girl" but from the plan at least four feet tall.

*Distribution:* The distribution map of whorls shows no particular concentrations, although there are noticeably few in Northumbria (Map 25).

#### 4.22.2 Thread-picker and weaving batten (Fig 4.19)

*Description:* Objects shaped rather like chunky pins, pointed at both ends, have usually been termed pin-beaters or thread-pickers. Studies of these objects have most recently been summarised and discussed by Brown (in Biddle 1990, 226). From experiment and drawings of recent Scandinavian looms, it seems that they were used for separating threads on a loom when the shed is changed, and so the name thread-pickers seems most apt. They appear in seven or eight of the sampled graves. The seven definite examples of thread-pickers are all of bone. The possible thread-picker was a curious stylus-like instrument from Finglesham K 180, bearing step decoration rather like that occasionally found on wheel-made pots of the period (e.g. at Finglesham K 59, 157 and 163).

Five female graves in the sample contained edged weapons. Lechlade G1 187 contained jewellery, and a sword 542 mm long. Four other graves contained spearheads, three of which were in unconventional positions. Lechlade G1 95 contained jewellery and a C4 spearhead at the hip, with the tip pointing towards the feet. Shudy Camps Ca 76 contained a chatelaine with a number of objects attached, including three whorls, a pair of shears, a knife and a C2 spearhead. Castledyke SHu 17B also contained a chatelaine with a knife and whorl, and a C3 spearhead 355 mm long, with the socket on the left hip and the broken tip on the chest.

Wigber Low Db 4, the double grave of a man and woman, is more difficult to interpret. It contained a spearhead, placed to the north of the skull of the northern, female skeleton. The fact that it was next to a woman may suggest that it was used as a weaving batten, but the position in the grave makes it possible that the spear was still shafted, and therefore being used as a weapon. The excavator comments that it "is so slightly shafted (internal diameter of socket 80 mm) that one could question whether it is really out of place in a woman's grave" (Collis 1983, 77). In view of the absence of weapons, even slender pretty ones, in female graves (Evison 1987, 125-27), it remains more likely either that the spearhead was used for weaving, or that the skeleton has been sexed incorrectly (there were no female-linked items in the grave and the bones were weathered), or that the spear should really belong to the southern, male skeleton.

Edged weapons found in female graves are almost always interpreted as weaving battens, for beating the weft threads together, and sometimes modifications to the basic form are visible, such as the formation of a second tang at the tip for ease of handling. None of the battens in the present study showed evidence of modification.

*Date:* The only datable thread-picker graves in the present study are Marina Drive Bd F2 and Cokethorpe Ox, which also contain bullae, and Castledyke SHu 46 which also contains a pair of linked pins. The stylus-like possible thread-picker from Finglesham K 180 was found in a grave with other unusual objects, such as square-section silver beads, and so far the grave has not been precisely dated. Thread-pickers are found throughout the medieval period on settlement sites, and are found in sixth-century graves; until more work is done, it will be impossible to assess whether or not they are found more or less frequently in the later graves.

Dating evidence for weaving batten graves is scanty. Neither Wigber Low Db 4 nor Castledyke SHu 17B contained any closely datable object. Lechlade Gl 95 contained a gold disc pendant; Lechlade Gl 187 contained a sheet silver pendant in the form of an equal-armed cross, which had been broken and repaired in antiquity; and Shudy Camps Ca 76 had a pair of shears (see below, section 4.46.5). While it is possible that all these items could have been deposited in the first half of the seventh century, it is much more likely that they were buried in the second half, or the first few years of the eighth century. In Sonia Chadwick Hawkes's discussion of weaving swords, which did not include spearheads, the date range of the nine examples then known encompasses the second half of the sixth century and the first half of the seventh (Chadwick 1958, 30-35); the examples from the present study should extend this range.

*Function:* The presumed function of these objects, as weaving tools, is heavily dependent on their gender associations (see below, under *Social meaning*). Meaney regards the presence of weaving battens in graves as symbolic of weaving skill (1981, 95) and cites documentary evidence to show that weaving in itself was seen as a magical activity (1981, 185).

*Social meaning:* None of the graves examined in this section were those of adult males. It is possible that, had either object been found in such a grave, its function would have been interpreted differently; thread-pickers as eel-gorges, perhaps, and edged weapons in odd positions as general-purpose cutting tools. Nevertheless, with a textile processing function in mind, it is interesting to note that at least one of the thread-pickers was found with a small child, at Marina Drive Bd F2.

The social meaning of thread-pickers and weaving battens can only be looked at in relation to other possible grave-finds of textile tools. Accessible data is lacking, but it would be very interesting if it could be shown that textile equipment in general was more common in Conversion-period than in migration-period Anglo-Saxon graves. If looked at simply as the personal tools of the woman concerned, a pattern of increase might imply a change in the nature

of the status of women or of textile production as women's work, which would not be unexpected given the changes in social stratification and mobility in the Conversion period.

It is also possible that the presence of textile equipment is an expression of a deeper symbolism, perhaps an expression of an increasingly religious form of paganism inspired as a reaction to Christianity (Carver 1992c, 181). While there are no general synthetic studies of earlier Anglo-Saxon cemetery finds, though, the essential data on which to base these ideas is lacking.

*Distribution:* Both thread-pickers (Map 26) and weaving battens (Map 27) are found thinly but evenly spread across the country.

#### 4.22.3 Heckle (Fig 4.15)

*Description:* A heckle is a sort of wool- or flax-comb consisting of two rows of iron teeth set in wood, which could then be bound with iron (Eagles and Evison 1970, 42; Ottaway 1992, 538-41). They commonly survive only as teeth, about 70 to 130 mm long, of round section, with a pointed tip and a step along the shaft where they have been set into the wood. Properly, a heckle was used in flax- or hemp-processing, and the term "wool-comb" should be used for the tool when used in wool processing. It seems, however, that the two processes used identical tools, and as the term "heckle" is more convenient than "wool-comb", I will use "heckle" for all fibre combs.

Heckle teeth have been found at Lechlade Gl 14 and Harrold Bd 3, and a bunch of iron rods from Harford Farm Nf 21 have been provisionally identified as the remains of another heckle (Patrick Ottaway, pers comm).

*Date:* Although they are rare finds, heckles are considered worthy of comment because that at Harrold Bd 3 has led to the burial's description as "evidently a Viking grave" (Goodall in Biddle 1990, 214). It is important to assess, therefore, whether or not the presence of a heckle in a grave means it must be Viking rather than Anglo-Saxon.

The cemetery at Harrold Bd was badly damaged by mechanical gravel-diggers. The graves were excavated single-handedly under very difficult conditions in 1951 and 1952 and published in 1970 (Eagles and Evison 1970, 38-46). The Anglo-Saxon graves were numbered 2 to 14; 2, 4, 6, 7, 11 and 12 were unfurnished and 9 and 10 had knives. Grave 5 had a glass and a "faience" bead, grave 13 two beads, now unidentifiable, and a knife, and grave 8 a strange object

comprising two large bronze slip-knot rings with a large glass bead and a bronze 8-shaped loop, perhaps part of a chatelaine. Only graves 14 and 3 had any datable items. Grave 14 contained one bronze and two silver wire rings and a damaged almond-shaped cabochon garnet, almost certainly from a pendant, and is therefore a conventional Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon burial.

Grave 3 contained a knife, a glass bead (probably a spiral disc) and a whetstone, all of which would not be out of place in any furnished Anglo-Saxon burial, plus the heckle, a plain sword-blade (not pattern-welded), a spearhead and an iron vessel. The C3 spearhead, which was found on a dump nearby but considered to have been from this grave, is unusual, with a very short socket and chevron decoration on the neck. Swanton sees the decoration and form of this spearhead as "quite certainly English" (1973, 57); Evison cited parallels for the shape from Holborough K, Marina Drive Bd and Snell's Corner Ha, all Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon graves (Eagles and Evison 1970, 44); the chevron decoration can be found on later Anglo-Saxon spears. The presence of a plain sword-blade may also argue for a post-seventh-century date (see below, section 4.31).

The heckle was represented by 39 teeth, found bunched together in an upright position near the feet. Each tooth was 95 mm long and had been set into wood to a depth of 15 mm. The number of teeth, and their dimensions, correspond with Viking-period heckles from Norway (Eagles and Evison 1970, 42).

A perceived absence of published iron vessels or heckles in Anglo-Saxon graves at the time of publication led Evison to conclude

"that grave 3 was the grave of a Viking who was buried in an Anglo-Saxon cemetery just within the boundary of the Danelaw, and his Anglo-Saxon possessions of the spear and hone suggest the ninth rather than the tenth century" (Eagles and Evison 1970, 46).

Only three other Anglo-Saxon iron vessels were suggested as parallels, none from funerary contexts. One was found in a well at Pagans Hill in Somerset and the other two came from Houses IX and XIII at Sutton Courtenay (Rahtz *et al.* 1958; Eagles and Evison 1970, 42). Evison, in an uncharacteristic fit of inaccuracy, stated that "no other iron vessels seem to be known from pagan Anglo-Saxon graves or dwelling sites." In fact, they are rare but they do occur; fragmentary iron vessels were found at Swallowcliffe Down Wi and at Broomfield Ex, both Conversion-period graves. The Pagans Hill find was associated with a blue glass squat jar of the seventh or eighth century. The other grave-goods from Harrold Bd 3, then, are unusual but not out of place in a Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon burial.



A pair of heckles has also recently been found in Lechlade G1 14, in a well-furnished woman's grave with a pair of linked pins, a workbox, a cowrie, a beaver tooth pendant, a necklace of silver rings and small beads, some shears and a key. Each of these heckles had 22 teeth set in two rows into a wooden block which was then covered with iron, the teeth being about 90 mm long. The possible heckle at Harford Farm Nf 21 was associated with a possible knife.

Published parallels for these heckles are rare. They are occasionally found on middle Anglo-Saxon settlement sites, such as Shakenoak, Maxey, Southampton and Wicken Bonhunt (Brown in Brodribb *et al.* 1973, 134-35; Goodall in Biddle 1990, 214-15), but they are absent from earlier sites, and generally seem to be most common in the late Anglo-Saxon or early post-Conquest period. Rarity, however, does not mean absence; in view of the presence of heckles in an undoubted Anglo-Saxon Conversion-period grave at Lechlade G1 14, plus the Anglo-Saxon nature of many of Harrold Bd 3's other grave-finds, it seems that Harrold Bd 3, with its heckle, should be re-dated to the Conversion period, as suggested by Wilson (1976, 402-03, n 23). The spearhead and sword may argue for a date late in the period, perhaps towards the middle of the eighth century.

*Function:* From the evidence of these three graves it is difficult to suggest any detailed function. As they are of comparable form to later textile combs, the same practical function can be assumed. The symbolic and perhaps magical function of other textile equipment suggested by Meaney (1981, 95 and 185) is equally valid for heckles.

*Social meaning:* The three heckle-graves are of widely varying character, comprising a well-furnished male and female grave as well as a poorly furnished, unsexed grave. Consequently no generalisations on the social meaning of heckles in the grave can be drawn.

*Distribution:* The distribution of the heckle-graves suggests that heckles were being made and used in more than one area of the country.

#### 4.23 COWRIE (Fig 4.20)

*Description:* Twelve graves had whole or nearly whole Panther cowrie shells, up to eleven had beads made from cowries, and three had both. Meaney has thoroughly examined the occurrence in graves of cowrie shells and beads (1981, 123-28); the present study includes five graves with whole cowries discovered since she wrote (Lechlade G1 14, 71 and 138, Goblin Works Sy S4 and Castledyke SHu 31) two with cowrie beads (Goblin Works Sy S14 and Monkton K 33), and

two with both (Lechlade GI 3 and 148). A large whelk shell, perhaps a substitute for a cowrie, was found in a female grave at Castledyke SHu 11 (see below, section 4.47.1).

Shell beads from Shudy Camps Ca 11, Camerton Av 5, Buckland Dinham So, Buckland Dover K 6, 67 and 157 and Finglesham K 124 have been included here, although there are no certain identifications of the species of shell used. They all bear corrugations and look very much like parts of cowrie shells. Unidentified shell beads without corrugations have been lumped together under the "miscellaneous beads" category (see above, section 4.14). The total of definite or possible cowrie-shell beads in all these graves was 29.

*Date:* As Meaney points out, there are a few cowrie-shell graves which could be dated to the end of the sixth century (1981, 123), but most have to be placed in the seventh. Closer dating than this, however, is difficult. Two were found with linked pins and two with workboxes, so they continued to be deposited until the end of furnished burial.

*Function:* Cowrie shells are used all over the world as amulets, because of their resemblance to various different things. The usual explanation is that the underside looks like a human vulva, and therefore the shell must have been an aid to fertility; Meaney, however, quotes instances of the cowrie also representing a half-open eye or a recumbent pig (1981, 128), and it is unclear exactly how the Anglo-Saxons regarded these shells. The normal place for whole or part cowrie shells was, as for other amulets, in collections, often in bags or boxes.

Meaney sees cowrie-shell beads as being a "poor man's version" of whole cowries (1981, 128). The number of whole cowrie shells found indicates that they were not just the raw material for making beads, although at Buckland Dover K 6 beads were found along with a shell from which the toothed parts had been sawn off, presumably to make beads. In most cases, cowrie-shell beads are found on necklaces, but occasionally, such as at Camerton Av 5 where the bead was found by itself between the knees, they are elsewhere.

*Social meaning:* In Anglo-Saxon graves, cowrie shells are found almost exclusively with women of child-bearing age and children. The whole cowries within the present sample were found in the graves of three women between 20 and 45, two teenagers between 14 and 16, a child of about eight and a "small child", two unaged women, two unidentifiable individuals and one man (Goblin Works Sy S4; see below). The beads were found with one "oldish" woman, six women of between 17 and 40, one "infant", two unaged women and one unsexable adult. Two women, of 25-30 and 35-40, and one child of eight or nine, had both.

A whole cowrie was found in Goblin Works Sy S4, the skeleton of which was anatomically sexed as male, but which had the gender-neutral artefact of a double-sided comb. This bears some similarity to the only male grave with a cowrie that Meaney knew of, from Ellesborough Bu, which was also accompanied by a double-sided comb, leading Meaney to suggest that a mistake had been made in the sexing (1981, 124). As seen below, though, although combs are found more often with women, they are certainly not absent from male graves.

It is noticeable that cowrie shells have been found with women of child-bearing age, with children and with men, but not with older women. It is tempting to agree with Meaney that the osteological sexing of the two male graves may have been unreliable; the presence of cowries could then be assumed to be connected with female fertility. Their occurrence in the graves of young girls could be explained by the suggestion that the prophylactic effect of the cowrie shell was complex, and also affected future fertility.

*Distribution:* The distribution of cowrie shells can be seen in Map 28. Huggett has produced a distribution map of cowrie shells, both the small native *Cypraea europa*, found occasionally in sixth-century cemeteries, and the larger imported seventh-century cowrie, mostly *Cypraea pantherina* (1988, 72, fig 6). There are a number of factual errors in Huggett's description of the incidence of cowrie shells, and he does not appear to include beads, but his comment that their distribution is sparse but widespread remains valid. In the present survey, the presence at Lechlade GI of three graves with whole shells only, and two graves with both whole shells and beads, provides a new concentration on the map.

#### 4.24 COMB (Fig 4.21)

*Description:* 45 graves contained combs. Ten had one single-sided, hump-backed comb, and 22 had one double-sided rectangular comb. Two graves contained pairs; Hadleigh Road Sf 85 had two double-sided combs and Garton II NHu 12 a hump-backed comb and fragments of another comb of unidentified type. A further eleven graves had such fragmentary or ill-recorded remains that the form of the comb is doubtful.

Early medieval combs have been comprehensively studied and described by MacGregor (1985). All combs in the present study are described as bone or antler, but MacGregor argues that bone is a mis-identification, and that antler is the most likely actual material in all cases (1985, 74).

The decoration of combs varies within a limited repertoire. It is always simply incised, and

often rather amateurish, unsymmetrical and haphazard. Single-sided, hump-backed combs in the present sample were invariably decorated, and often had combinations of border lines and vertical lines. More elaborate examples could have cross-hatching, rows of small diagonal lines resembling cabling, or concentric ring-and-dot ornament. Double-sided combs could bear a similar range of motifs, as well as an occasional single-twist interlace, but were not always decorated. Some combs, particularly the hump-backed type, were only decorated on one side. Both types could be from about 120 mm to about 200 mm long, with the hump-backs about 40 to 50 mm wide and the double-sided up to about 75 mm wide.

*Date:* The datable graves in this study containing hump-backed combs include Swallowcliffe Down Wi and two others, Marina Drive Bd B3/B4 and Burwell Ca 121, which contained workboxes. These three graves can be assigned to the late seventh or early eighth century.

Only one grave with a hump-backed comb, Kingston Down K 299, has been suggested as a grave of the first half of the seventh century (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 198). The comb was in a casket at the feet, with a worn and perforated keystone garnet disc brooch, two whorls, two pin-beaters, a bone plaque (perhaps a weaving tablet), a cowrie shell, a silver and glass cabochon pendant, an iron bell and a firesteel. A padlock could have been part of the collection or could have fastened the casket. At the neck were amethyst and glass beads and a slightly worn plated disc brooch. By the hip were a bracelet, a pair of shears, a chatelaine, a knife, and between the legs were some remains of wood, two Roman coins and a piece of gilt-bronze. The presence of keystone garnet and plated disc brooches have resulted in the attribution of a comparatively early date, but the presence of the shears (see below, section 4.46.5) and the wear on the brooches (Avent 1975, 24 and 42-43) must combine to suggest a revised date towards the middle of the seventh century at least.

Double-sided combs are found from the third to the thirteenth century (MacGregor 1985, 92), but due to the lack of comparative data on earlier cemeteries it is hard to say to what extent they were supplanted by the hump-backed fashion. Although the Hadleigh Road Sf 19 comb was found with a keystone garnet disc brooch, Ford Wi 18 was associated with a Group 7 shield-boss, Buckland Dover K 110 with two P II and P III Pada thrymsas of c. 660-680 (see section 2.2.5) and Castledyke SHu 183 with a workbox. It therefore appears that the popularity of double-sided combs did not decline substantially through the Conversion period.

*Function:* The location of combs within the grave varies. Some are found as part of bag or box collections, others are found by the skull or close by the side, often on or under the arm. At

Burwell Ca 83, Lethbridge suggested that the comb had been strung around the neck with four small monochrome glass beads, and many other hump-backed combs have loops to which a string could be attached. Most of these, however, are broken, and the only generalisation which can be drawn from the positioning of combs within the grave is that they do not appear to be part of the dress at all, but rather placed as a separate and deliberate grave-furnishing.

The symbolic significance of combs in the early medieval period has been reviewed by MacGregor (1985). Their presence in migration-period Anglo-Saxon cremation graves, along with miniature toilet sets, has led to the suggestion of a head or hair cult in cremating communities. Something similar can, perhaps, be detected in the long hair which was the exclusive preserve of the kings of Merovingian Francia (MacGregor 1985, 73). An unusual form of double-sided comb was placed in the grave of St Cuthbert, and by the later middle ages combs were regularly used in Christian liturgy. The symbolic use of combs, therefore, seems certain. This is supported by a seventh-century gravestone from Niederdollendorf, which shows a man with a large seax slung across his body and what looks like a squat jar or pot by his foot. Animals with gaping jaws are peeping out from behind him, and he is combing his hair with a hump-backed comb (Lasko 1971, 86-89).

*Social meaning:* The sex distribution of graves with combs is interesting. Male-linked grave-goods were found only once, in association with a double-sided comb at Ford Wi 18, but another three graves, with both forms of comb, contained skeletons anatomically identified as male, and another may have been male. Thirty-four graves either contained female-linked grave-goods, or were anatomically identified as female; one of these, Winnall II Ha 5, was a seven- to ten-year-old child. Combs seem to be an unusual case of an artefact with a symbolic function which does not serve exclusively to identify the owner as female, but nevertheless is much more common with women.

It has been shown that the introduction of hump-backed combs did not cause the extinction of the double-sided type, and so the two must have fulfilled different functions in life or in the grave. Although the hump-backed comb often bears more decoration, it does not appear from the present sample to occur in higher-wealth graves than the double-sided comb. Leaving aside pots, two out of the eleven graves with hump-backed combs contained vessels (see below, section 4.41), and six of the twenty-four graves with double-sided combs. Neither does there appear to be any difference in the geographical distributions, or age and sex range, of those buried with different types of comb. The different roles of the combs may have perhaps, therefore, been functional (the two sides of the double comb being used for different purposes)

or symbolic of some kind of group identity.

The double- and single-sided combs found at Schretzheim are similar, but were used in rather different ways. Double-sided combs were found almost twice as often with women as with men, and seem to have been everyday equipment; single-sided combs were found with men and with women in roughly equal numbers, but in much higher-wealth graves (Koch 1977, 91-92 and 132-33). The differences in use between the English and the Frankish combs makes the social meaning of these objects even more mysterious.

*Distribution:* As can be seen from Map 29, the distribution of both types of comb is even across the country. Both types occasionally occur at the same site.

#### 4.25 LACE-TAG/STRAP-END (Figs 4.21 and 4.22)

*Description:* Strap-ends under 10 mm in width, small enough to be termed lace-tags, occur in 39 of the graves in this study, with one other possible unillustrated example at King Harry Lane Ht 15. Two other strap-ends seem too large, those from Asthall Ox and Buckland Dover K 98, which are 19 mm and 12 mm wide respectively.

Lace-tags come in two basic forms, the one-piece rolled cone type and the usually two-piece tongue-shaped type. Rolled cones are usually of bronze, but can be of iron; when they are found in later medieval contexts, they are known as "points" (e.g. Biddle and Hinton in Biddle 1990, 581). They can be simply clenched onto a thong, or be rivetted. Some are decorated or flattened into facets. Thirty of the lace-tags studied here were of rolled type, and 26 of these were made of bronze.

The tongue-shaped type is marginally less common. There are 23 examples in the present study, eighteen of bronze, two of iron and two of silver. There are a variety of forms within the basic tongue-shape, from the animal heads of Finglesham K 95 and Polhill K 28 and the "keeled" type from Buckland Dover K 34 to the flat keyhole-shapes of Shudy Camps Ca 36 and Buckland Dover K 156.

*Date:* Larger tongue-shaped strap-ends are found in the sixth century, especially in Kent (Evison 1987, 90). Both of the larger strap-ends in this study, from Asthall Ox and Buckland Dover K 98, are early seventh-century; Asthall Ox is dated largely on art-historical grounds (Dickinson and Speake 1992, 106-07) and Buckland Dover K 98 was dated by Evison to her Phase 3 (575-

625). The largest of the smaller lace-tags, that from Finglesham K 95, is also early seventh-century (see below, section 4.34). The tongue-shaped example at Castledyke SHu 134 may also be of the same date, with two large flat annular brooches found on the shoulders and nine amber beads, in addition to silver slip-knot rings, a silver pendant, a serrated-edge buckle, a beaver-tooth pendant and a millefiori bead. One of the Buckland Dover K tongue-shapes, that in grave 34, is dated by Evison to her Phase 4 (625-650), apparently on the basis of proximity to an earlier row of Phase 3 graves (1987, 141) but all the other tongue-shapes and all the rolled examples from Dover are dated after 650.

No lace-tag in this study was found with a precisely datable piece of female equipment such as a disc brooch, linked pins or a workbox. Shudy Camps Ca 36, with its lace-tag from a bag or strap and two-handed seax (see section 4.32), may date to the second half of the seventh century, and Evison has dated Buckland Dover K 120, with a rolled iron lace-tag by the ankle, to her Phase 7 (700-750). Finglesham K 145's pair of rolled and flattened bronze tags came from a bag containing eight Series A and Series B sceattas, deposited c. 695-700 (see section 2.2.5).

It therefore appears that tongue-shaped lace-tags develop from a sixth-century Kentish tradition of larger tongue-shaped strap-ends, and that they last at least until the second half of the seventh century. A few tongue-shaped tags, both early and late examples, become expanded at the end into animal heads. Rolled lace-tags may replace or overlap with tongue-shapes, and there appears to be little practical difference between the two types. The classic ninth-century strap-end, flat, narrow and derived in shape from an animal head, are generally wider than the seventh-century tags, and they are not necessarily linked in an unbroken series.

*Function:* The different shapes do not seem to correlate with different uses, even though the rolled type uses a much narrower strap or thong. Both types have similar placings in the graves. In 26 of the 39 lace-tag graves, the tags were found singly or in pairs near the feet or lower legs, and appear to have functioned as shoe fittings or to secure some sort of puttee-type leggings. The lace-tags found at the feet consist of five rolled pairs, nine rolled singles, six tongue-shaped pairs and two tongue-shaped singles. Two pairs and two singles are of unknown shape.

In ten graves, the tags were at the waist or upper body, and appear to have been used on bags, knife sheaths or other small straps. There were two rolled pairs and eight single tongue-shapes found at the waist, and all but one of these had a matching buckle. The exception was the large strap-end found at the pelvis of Buckland Dover K 98.

Presumably in some cases of single lace-tags a second tag may have entirely disappeared, but it is notable that a third or fourth tag has never been found. This implies a function different to that of the modern lace-tag, which is found in pairs at each foot, one at each end of the lace. Matching buckles were found in only four of the graves with tags at the lower leg, in all cases with pairs of tongue-shaped tags. This scarcity of fasteners for the straps, and the variety of placings within the grave (from below the foot to nearly the knee) suggests that a use to secure puttee-type leggings, where the strap can be tucked in in the absence of a buckle, is more likely than use on a shoe.

*Social meaning:* The different shapes and functions do not show a strong gender correlation, sixteen of those found by the legs, for example, being with women, eight with men and three with unsexed skeletons. Four of the tongue-shaped type were found with women, six with men, five with unsexed bodies and one with a child of five or six; thirteen of the rolled type were found with women and five with men, one being with unsexed adult and one with a female seven- to ten-year old child. The remaining six tags were of unidentifiable type.

*Distribution:* Map 30 shows the distribution of both types of lace-tag; there seems to be no appreciable difference in the distributions of the rolled type and the tongue-shaped type. It can be seen from the distribution map that there is a concentration of lace-tags in Kent, but the Kentish lace-tags are from only two cemeteries, Finglesham K and Buckland Dover K, and so this apparent concentration may be a result of the sample. It is noticeable that the incidence of lace-tags varies greatly from cemetery to cemetery, as does the incidence of some other artefact types, such as pottery vessels. Some cemeteries with plenty of well-furnished Conversion-period graves, such as Lechlade G1, Chamberlain's Barn II Bd and Marina Drive Bd, have no lace-tags at all; Burwell Ca and Shudy Camps Ca have only one and two lace-tag graves respectively. It is entirely possible that had the sample been selected slightly differently, the apparent concentration in Kent shown here would not have been visible.

#### 4.26 SHOE-BUCKLE (Fig 4.22)

*Description:* Shoe-buckles were rarer than lace-tags, definitely occurring in six and possibly in eight of the graves in the sample. Tiny buckles are fairly common in Conversion-period graves, but are more often found away from the legs, presumably on bags, straps or boxes. The six definite shoe-buckle graves all contained matched pairs of bronze buckles by the lower leg or foot; those from Wakerley Nh 10 were tiny re-used penannular brooches, and so are also considered above in section 4.17. The two more doubtful examples were from Hadleigh Road



Sf 118, where a "tiny bronze buckle with shank" was found "on the leg" and from Portsdown II Ha 1, where an iron buckle was found between the knees. All the definite examples were designed for straps between about 6 and 11 mm wide, but the Portsdown II Ha 1 buckle was much bigger, and has been reconstructed to take a strap about 25 mm wide.

*Date:* Almost every shoe-buckle grave contained a datable object. Finglesham K 95 is dated by its triangular waist-buckle to the first half of the seventh century (see below, section 4.34), and the shoe-buckles from this grave were of a similar triangular shape. Hadleigh Road Sf 118 also contained a triangular buckle, decorated with Style II interlace. Polhill K 28 contained a waist-buckle, without a plate but with a shield on the tongue similar to those on the tongues of the triangular buckles at Finglesham K 95 and Hadleigh Road Sf 118. The Polhill K 28 buckle has been dated by Hawkes to the first half of the seventh century (in Philp 1973, 194). The shape of the buckles at Finglesham K 20B is similar to that of tongue-shields on larger buckles, and may well be of the same date. Finglesham K 198 contained a small narrow seax.

Finglesham K 157 contained a short necklace with amethyst beads, which may hint at a later date (see above, section 4.10), but apart from this all the dating evidence, including their association with tongue-shaped lace-tags, points to a date in the first half of the seventh century.

*Function:* At Finglesham K 20B, 95 and 157, and at Polhill K 28, the buckles were at the foot or ankle, and were accompanied by pairs of tongue-shaped lace-tags. At Wakerley Nh 10 and Finglesham K 198, the buckles were half-way down the shins and by the feet respectively, but had no lace-tags. The widths of all but the Portsdown II Ha 1 buckle matched the range of widths found among the lace-tags, and so could have been used to fasten the sort of narrow straps used in footwear. As this category of artefact was defined by its position in the grave, discussion of its function is, however, something of a foregone conclusion.

*Social meaning:* Two shoe-buckle graves contained female-linked grave-goods, and three contained male-related objects. In addition, two graves were osteologically sexed as male. Wakerley Nh 10 was the grave of a juvenile. There seems to be little consistency in the wealth deposited in shoe-buckle graves; Finglesham K 95 is well-furnished, but Polhill K 28 has only the waist-belt, a knife and some mysterious "iron objects on chest".

*Distribution:* Hawkes has suggested that shoe-fittings are most common in Kent (in Philp 1973, 194), and this is borne out by the present study, all of the five purpose-made pairs of shoe buckles being found in Kent. Outside the county, we have only the re-used pair of penannular

buckles at Wakerley Nh 10, the tantalisingly unillustrated singleton from Hadleigh Road Sf 118, and the dubious example from Portsdown II Ha 1 (Map 31). There are, strangely, no shoe-buckle graves from Buckland Dover K; this may be related to the patchy distribution of lace-tags noted in section 4.25 above.

#### 4.27 HOOKED TAG (Fig 4.23)

*Description:* The eight hooked tags found in this study are too few to be of much use in defining either the date-range or the function of these objects. They do, however, have the advantage of being found in sealed contexts, unlike most hooked tags found on settlement sites.

The six graves are Shudy Camps Ca 67, Burwell Ca 1, Harford Farm Nf 18 and 28 and Castledyke SHu 16 and 183. All the tags are roughly triangular except for that from Burwell Ca 1, which is rectangular. Four of the graves have single examples; Harford Farm Nf 18 and Castledyke SHu 16 have non-identical but very similar pairs. Both silver and copper alloy are used.

*Date:* Shudy Camps Ca 67, Burwell Ca 1 and Castledyke SHu 16 are not closely datable, as they include in addition only knives, small buckles and small glass beads. The dating of Harford Farm Nf 28 has been discussed above in section 4.6, and is problematic. Castledyke SHu 183 and Harford Farm Nf 18 have workboxes, and the latter is also coin-dated to after c. 690-700 (see section 2.2.5). I do not know of any sixth-century grave-finds of hooked tags, and so Castledyke SHu 183 and Harford Farm Nf 28 are the earliest securely dated sealed contexts to contain them. The tag from Harford Farm Nf 28 is unnervingly similar to Winchester 1413, from an early to mid-eleventh-century context at the Old Minster (Hinton in Biddle 1990, 551, fig 148), which emphasises the dating problems.

*Function:* Hooked tags are obviously part of some sort of hook and eye fastener arrangement. Any decoration is always only on one side, and the hook is always turned under, away from the decorated side. On a tenth-century inscribed pair from Rome the inscription is orientated so that it is readable with the hook at the top, the opposite way to which they are usually illustrated (Graham-Campbell and Okasha 1991, 222). The Rome pair were found with coins, and Graham-Campbell argues that many late Anglo-Saxon hooked tags may have been used to fasten bags or purses.

Dickinson and Hinton consider that they may have been used in a row, as they are so flimsy,

but as only pairs and singles have been found in graves, this seems unlikely (Dickinson in Brodrigg *et al.* 1973, 117; Hinton in Biddle 1990, 548). There seems to be no consistency in their grave placing; at Shudy Camps Ca 67, at the hip; Burwell Ca 1, by the skull; Castledyke SHu 16, one by the skull and one at the upper chest or neck; Castledyke SHu 183, in the fill over the foot; at Harford Farm Nf 18, both in a box; at Harford Farm Nf 28, perhaps in a bag. A use on a bag, which would fit in with their delicate nature, therefore seems more likely than a use on clothing, although a pair of hooked tags were found at the knees of a ninth-century burial at Winchester Old Minster Ha, and it seems in this case they were used to fasten garters (Wilson 1965; Graham-Campbell and Okasha 1991, 222).

*Social meaning:* The datable examples all come from female burials. Burwell Ca 1 is unsexable, and Castledyke SHu 16 is a child of six or seven, with two small glass beads and therefore perhaps female. Shudy Camps Ca 67 was sexed on osteological grounds as male, but the skeleton was fragmentary, and this sexing may be unreliable. There appears to be no published sexing of the ninth-century skeleton with hooked tags at Winchester.

*Distribution:* The hooked tags from the sample are from only four sites, three in East Anglia and one in South Humberside. This is, of course, a partial picture, but to have any meaning a full distribution map would have to take into account the wide chronological span of hooked tags, and this is outside the scope of the present study.

#### 4.28 SINGLE PIN (Fig 4.22)

*Description:* 118 single pins occurred in 103 of the graves of this study, and nearly all of them were different. Copper alloy was the most common material, with 62 examples. Iron came next, with 37 examples, though it is noticeable that more iron than bronze pins were apparently found at the waist, and some of these may be mis-identifications of tools or chatelaine elements. Silver was much less common, with seven examples. In addition, there were a number of composite pins, with three silver and garnet pins, one bronze and garnet, one iron pin with a glass head, and one pin represented only by a glass head. Gold was not used in any of the single pins in this study, except in composite pins as a backing for a garnet.

*Date:* Few single pin types occur in sufficient numbers to allow close dating, although single pins as a whole are a fairly common cemetery and settlement find during the whole of the early and later medieval period. As expected (see section 2.3.3), only the spiral-headed pins, Ross's type LXVI, were diagnostic of a Conversion-period date. Only three of the 68 or so spiral-

headed pins known from England occur within the sampled graves in the present study - Winkelbury Hill Wi flat grave II, Broadwell G1, Goblin Works Sy S517 - and none of these have any grave-goods in addition to the pin(s). However, it is clear that spiral-headed pins are a long-lived type, occurring in an eighth- to ninth-century pit and an eleventh- to twelfth-century grave at Fishergate, York, and in tenth-century levels at Coppergate, York (Rogers 1993, 1363).

*Function:* The single pin is an artefact type which might be expected to fulfill the role of "missing link" between furnished and unfurnished graves, as it can serve both as a clothing fastener or hairpin and as a shroud fastener. Medieval and modern shrouds are fastened at the head and foot, and indeed one grave, Goblin Works Sy S517, has two pins, one at the neck and one at the knees. This grave also included a knife, though, and from this would appear to have been a clothed burial.

There appears to be no difference in the location within the grave of pins which are the sole grave-good, and of those which were buried with other objects. In both cases, the neck or throat is the most common location, followed by the chest and other parts of the upper body. It therefore seems unlikely that the practice of shroud burial will be archaeologically distinguishable from that of clothed burial. The use of a pin as a shroud fastener might be inferred in the case of Nazeingbury Ex 53, where a bone pin was found in the mouth of an otherwise unfurnished body in a largely unfurnished cemetery, but in other cases the use of shroud pins cannot be determined.

*Social meaning:* The usual placing of a pin at the neck or throat (36 instances out of 118 pins) as opposed to the shoulder (ten instances) seems to argue against the use of pins to replace shoulder brooches on an unchanging female costume. Pins are more commonly found with women (at least 68 and possibly 72) than with men (nine to thirteen) and rarely with children under twelve (only three, all from Buckland Dover K); fifteen were unsexed. The most sensible explanation for this pattern seems to be that pins were a purely practical fastener of a new dress fashion, in themselves implying nothing about the gender identity of the wearer; and while women's clothing called more often for the use of a pin, men could occasionally also find them useful. Unlike most Conversion-period grave-goods, single pins are also found in quantity on settlement sites, and this also argues for a practical rather than symbolic use. As they are rarely found with children, and are usually found at the neck or chest, they perhaps secured some form of head covering.

*Distribution:* The new dress fashion appears to have been most popular in Kent, as 49 of the

single pin graves are from there. Pins are evenly, but comparatively thinly, spread over the rest of the country (Map 32).

The distribution of spiral-headed pins is fairly even over the area of Anglo-Saxon influence, although comparatively few have been found in Mercia (Ross 1991, map 5.16). Pretty suggests that this pin type is essentially Celtic, as it is not found on the Continent prior to the migrations, and some, such as that from Kingscote in Gloucestershire, may have come from late Romano-British contexts (Pretty in Brodrigg *et al.* 1972, 84-85). This view seems to depend on Pretty's dating of spiral-headed pins to the sixth century, for most seventh- and eighth-century objects do not and would not be expected to have Continental Germanic antecedents (see Chapter 5).

#### 4.29 SHIELD-BOSS (Fig 4.23)

*Description:* There is, unfortunately, no neat change in shield-boss types around the year 600. The Group 3 bosses are dated to the early sixth- to seventh-century, the Group 6s to the later sixth- and seventh-century and the Group 7s to the middle to later seventh-century (Dickinson and Härke 1992, 15-21; see section 2.3.3 for details of the characteristics of the Groups). The Group 7 is thus the only type that could be included in this study without some corroborative dating evidence, and therefore some results may be slightly skewed in favour of the Group 7s, as sparsely furnished graves with Group 3 or 6 bosses may not be closely datable, and hence may be unrecognisable as Conversion-period.

Accepting these caveats, I have included four graves with Group 3 bosses, two with borderline Group 3 or Group 6 (Dickinson and Härke 1992, 16), eleven (or perhaps twelve; see below) with Group 6, and fifteen with Group 7. In addition, two graves were included in this category with extant shield-fittings but where the boss has either been lost post-excavation or been ploughed away, giving a maximum total of 34 or 35 shield-boss graves.

Shield-bosses tend to be found singly in graves. Taplow Bu, exceptionally, contained two Group 6 bosses; another pair of Group 6s may have been found in Monkton K 19, but the site had been disturbed, and it seems more likely that one of the bosses came from another grave, perhaps the adjacent grave 18. There are therefore 36 bosses from the 34 or 35 graves.

*Date:* Anglo-Saxon shield-bosses have received a good deal of study, and consequently are one of the most precisely dated of artefact types; the chronology does not need repeating here (see section 2.3.3). Dickinson and Härke see a decline in the number of shield-graves in the seventh

century compared to the earlier Anglo-Saxon period (1992, 63 and fig 44). In addition, the proportion of weapon-graves containing shields dropped at this time. The numbers of bosses in the present study seem to contradict this, there being more of the later Group 7 bosses, but as explained above, this is probably due to *sampling bias*.

Dickinson and Härke believe that shield-burial ceases in the later seventh century (1992, 63), probably on the basis that the tallest, and therefore perhaps latest, of bosses (e.g. Tissington Db and Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 2) are found with few other objects, and nothing that can be dated to 700 or later. However, outside their sample is Lechlade G1 40, which contained a broad seax as well as a Group 7 boss 137 mm tall; this type of seax is thought to date from *c.* 700 (Evison in Hurst 1961, 228-30) and so Lechlade G1 40 should push the dating of Group 7 bosses into the eighth century.

*Function:* The practical function of any weapons deposited in a grave has been questioned by Härke (1990); discussion of this will be found under section 4.33 below. At present it should be noted that the taller convex bosses are less useful for active fighting than the lower carinated forms of the migration period, which can be used as bucklers; a change from individual to formation fighting, with increased defensive use of shields, has been suggested (Dickinson and Härke 1992, 55). Almost all of the shield-bosses were associated with spears, but whereas all the six Group 3 and borderline Group 3/Group 6 bosses were in graves with swords and one of these had in addition a seax, only three of the Group 6 and four of the Group 7 graves contained swords, and another Group 6 and two Group 7 graves contained seaxes.

*Social meaning:* No shield-grave contained any item of female dress. All the sexed graves were those of men, the youngest being described as a "youth" and the oldest over 45 years old.

Dickinson and Härke comment that "The shield is not normally associated with outstanding burial wealth" (1992, 68) but the present study shows that the wealth of graves with shields increases through the seventh century, shown by the rough shorthand method of counting the vessels in the graves (see below, section 4.41). Among the four graves with Group 3 bosses there are no vessels. Broomfield Ex and Taplow Bu, with their very high vessel counts, have a borderline Group 3/Group 6 boss and two Group 6 bosses respectively, and two other Group 6 boss-graves contain one vessel, a hand-made pot at Monkton K 19 and a turned wooden vessel at Buckland Dover K 90. Six of the Group 7 boss-graves, however, contain vessels; buckets, hanging bowls and wooden vessels.

A tentative conclusion may be that the later, and therefore perhaps more anachronistic, the weapon-graves are, the louder the message of grave-wealth becomes. The function may alter, from indicating a particular status within mainstream society, to indicating membership of a special smaller group who, for a variety of reasons, continue to bury with weapons. It is difficult to compare the apparent rising wealth of shield-graves with graves containing other weapons, as seaxes do not appear to occur in assemblages with vessels (see below, section 4.32), and other weapons cannot be finely dated within the seventh century.

*Distribution:* The distribution of the various Groups of shield-bosses have been plotted individually on Maps 33 to 36. The apparent pattern over time, as shown by these maps, is that the earlier Group 3 bosses are confined to Kent, with the later Group 3/Group 6 and Group 6 bosses gradually moving outwards, and the latest Group 7 bosses covering all of England south of the Humber *except* Kent. This chronological development is certainly exaggerated, but contains a grain of truth. Although there are many Group 3 bosses known from outside Kent, Dickinson and Härke's study found that the Group 3 is the predominant type here (1992, 15). Evison recorded six Group 7s from Kent, contributing to a roughly even distribution over England, in her study of the Group 7 bosses then known (1963a, fig 5). A dearth of Group 7 bosses in Kent was noted by Dickinson and Härke, however, and although this was attributed by them to an accident of sampling (1992, 21), the reoccurrence of this dearth in the present study suggests that it may be a real pattern.

It therefore seems likely that the lack of Group 7 bosses in Kent shows that the practice of shield-burial declined in Kent earlier than in other areas of England. There are no shield-graves among the Conversion-period burials at Finglesham, and none in the Phases 5 to 7 (650-750) graves at Buckland Dover (Evison 1987, 35). Conversely, the apparent concentration of early seventh-century boss types in Kent and its environs is more likely to be due to the greater use of a chronologically distinctive type in this area than a real lack of shield-burial outside Kent.

#### 4.30 SPEARHEAD

Swanton's classification of spearheads (1973) has been attacked over the years since it was first published, mainly for inaccuracy, inconsistency and difficulty in application (e.g. Dickinson 1976 I; Evison 1987; 1988). It remains, however, a useful shorthand for describing spearheads, and the results of this study confirm that some of Swanton's groups do have chronological significance. Male graves, however, usually cannot be dated as closely as female graves, and so it was felt that instead of examining individual poorly-dated associations of spears, it would

be more profitable to look at the different numbers of spearhead types among the group of spear-graves as a whole (see Table 4.13).

*Description:* In the 131 spearheads looked at, all Swanton types are represented except the ogival H and the corrugated or stepped I, J and K. L, the final corrugated type, may be represented by a single very slightly stepped-section spearhead from Alton Ha 16, but Swanton prefers to see this as an E2 and indeed the step is barely discernable (Evison 1988, 6). We are therefore left with a range of 73 leaf-shaped and 30 angular spearheads, together with a barbed A2, two needle-like B1s and two midribbed B2s. The rest were either too fragmentary or too poorly published to classify, except for Buckland Dover K 8, which was an odd single-sided implement with a hook at the end. Taplow Bu had three spears, and nine graves contained two. The total of spear-graves was 120, four of which were female graves containing spears which had presumably been adapted to serve as weaving battens (see above, section 4.22.2).

*Date:* Dickinson's survey of the Anglo-Saxon spearheads of the Upper Thames (1976, 293-329) showed that the types absent from the Conversion period are precisely those found in the greatest numbers in the sixth century. She did identify two H2s from possible seventh-century graves, at Purton Wi and Milton II Ox, but in both cases these were unassociated (1976, 194 and 183).

The single A2 spearhead in the present study, from Taplow Bu, has early seventh-century parallels at Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1. Although Swanton sees the Group B1s as fifth-century, in theory deriving from Continental types (1973, 37-39), Dickinson points out that in fact all known contexts are seventh-century (1976, 293); those in the present study, from Finglesham K 74 and 143, support Dickinson's view. Both Swanton and Dickinson see B2 spearheads as fourth- and fifth-century (Swanton 1973, 39-45; Dickinson 1976, 294), but Welch describes this opinion as "never particularly convincing" (Down and Welch 1990, 94). Welch has discussed fully the two B2s in the present study, from Finglesham K 117 and Apple Down WSx 148B, along with the B2 from Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1 (Welch 1983, 127; Down and Welch 1990, 94).

Swanton places the small leaf-shaped C1 spearheads, with blades longer than sockets, in the fifth and sixth centuries (1973, 49-51), but Dickinson argues that all his early examples are unreliable, and that the overwhelming majority of the C1s should be put in the seventh century (1976, 297-98). The next size up of the leaf-shapes, the C2, is the most common spearhead in the present study, with 22 examples; an additional C2 from Swallowcliffe Down Wi was excluded, as it seemed not to have been connected with the main burial deposit. Both Swanton (1973, 52) and Dickinson (1976, 297-98) agree on a seventh-century or later date for most C2 spearheads.



Swanton type	Single finds	In sets	In female grave
A2		1	
B1	2		
B2	2		
C1	5	2	
C2	19	2	1
C2/E2		1	
C3	9	3	2
C4	2		1
C5	14		
D1	3	2	
D2	8		
D3	1		
E1	2	1	
E2	3	1	
E3	9		
E4	2	1	
F1	3	1	
F2	4	1	
G1	1	1	
G2	1		
L/E2		1	
Unclassified	16	3	
Total	106	21	4

**Table 4.13** Numbers of Conversion-period spearheads, by Swanton types

Equally, there is little argument over a late sixth- and seventh-century date for the longer and thinner C3 spears (Swanton 1973, 55-57; Dickinson 1976 I, 298). One C3 spearhead, that from Harrold Bd 3, is decorated with incised chevrons at the junction of socket and blade, and may be one of the latest of weapon-graves (see sections 4.22.3 and 4.31). Dickinson's study has only one of the even thinner C4 form, an unprovenanced find; Swanton dates C4s to the later sixth and seventh centuries (1973, 59).

Swanton describes the rather stumpy C5 spearheads as a "handful of late and characteristically

Kentish blades", and there appear to be about eighteen on his distribution map (1973, 61 and fig 17). They can be difficult to distinguish from C2 spearheads, but fourteen seem to have occurred in this survey, making the C5 the second most numerous type.

Swanton and Dickinson agree on the dating of D1 and D2 spearheads, which are equivalent to their C series counterparts, except that the socket is longer than the blade. The D1 is considered to be fifth- to seventh-century and the D2 mid sixth- and seventh-century (Swanton 1973, 64-69; Dickinson 1976 I, 298). Dickinson has no D3s (characterized by an extremely small blade) and Swanton considers that "no example seems certainly to belong to the seventh century" (1973, 73). Evison, however, dates Buckland Dover K 90, with a Group 6 shield-boss and a spearhead typed as D3 by Swanton (Swanton 1974, 44), to her Phase 4 (625-650).

Angular spearheads are less common. Swanton dates most E1s to the fifth century, but allows that some may be sixth; Dickinson is more generous and extends the range to perhaps include the seventh century too (Swanton 1973, 79; Dickinson 1976 I, 301). The present study has only three examples, from Lechlade G1 40, Caister-on-Sea 63 and Westgarth Gardens Sf 68; the Caister one was found in the fill and may be residual, and the Westgarth Gardens one is a borderline E1/E2. The other versions of the E series are agreed to be sixth- and seventh-century (Swanton 1973, 81-91; Dickinson 1976 I, 304).

The angular equivalent of the D series, the F, is found throughout the period of furnished burial, but Swanton sees the F1 as being more common in the fifth and early sixth centuries (1973, 91). Dickinson comments that the F1 is often found in sets of two or more spears (1976, 306-07), but this was not the case in the present survey, the F1 being found in only one of the eleven sets of spears, at Alton Ha 16. Although no F3s occurred in the survey, they are known from seventh-century contexts, for example at Broadstairs II K (Swanton 1973, 97).

The three remaining spearheads in the survey were of the sword-shaped G group. The single G2, from Holborough K 7, had an inlaid rune on the blade; this type is dated by Swanton to the later sixth and seventh centuries (1973, 101). G1s are dated by Swanton to the sixth century, "being replaced in seventh-century cemeteries by the bulkier form of the next group" (the G2s). The present study, however, indicates that they can linger on into the early seventh century, being found at Alton Ha 1 and Apple Down WSx 99B with Group 6 bosses.

It therefore seems that the simple leaf-shaped C series was the most common type of spear in Conversion-period graves, and also that, in general, larger weapons were more popular than

smaller ones.

The incidence of spearheads in graves does not appear to decline over time. Four spearheads were found with Group 3 bosses, one with a borderline Group 3 or 6, nine spear-graves (including four sets of two or more spears) had Group 6 bosses, and twelve had Group 7s. As seen above, though, Groups 3 and 6 cannot automatically be classified as Conversion-period, and so it is possible that they may be under-represented in the present study. The identification of Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon spearheads could perhaps be improved by a study, based on the shield-boss dating, stretching from the early sixth to the eighth centuries.

*Function:* The spear tends to be thought of as the basic piece of equipment of the fighting man, and there is a considerable body of documentary evidence to suggest that the Anglo-Saxons also viewed it in this way (Swanton 1973, 2-3). Another very important use of the spear, though, is in hunting; perhaps a dual function is most likely. The small spearheads, though, seem to be best suited for throwing, and so perhaps would be more useful in the hunt than the longer-bladed spearheads, whose edges could be used in combat with a side-to-side motion.

When spears are looked at in relation to other weapons, there seem to be few differences between the weapon associations of the various types. Small spearheads are found as often with other weapons as larger ones, leaf-shaped as often as angular. Multiple spears can be distinguished, however, as they are almost always found with other weapons.

A few differences are apparent in the range of weapon types found with the various spear types. For example, the weapon-associations of the nine E3 spearheads include three seaxes, three shields and two swords, but the fourteen examples of C5 have only four seaxes between them. A simple chronological explanation, with the E3 spearheads being earlier and the C5s later, is unlikely, as the seaxes with the C5 spearheads are all narrow, and the shield-bosses with the E3s include a Group 7. Perhaps, if the seax should be seen as a hunting tool rather than as a weapon of war (see below, section 4.32), a concomitant functional difference between the spearhead types might be suggested, especially as the C5 is a particularly short spearhead, ideal for throwing in the chase, and the E3 is particularly long, ideal for multi-purpose use in battle (Swanton 1973, 61 and 83).

*Social meaning:* The four spears which were definitely found deliberately deposited in female graves have been examined above under section 4.22.2; these spears were not being used as weapons. Two D2 spearheads, from Buckland Dover K 61 and 96a, were with skeletons sexed

as female, but in the first case the body was badly preserved and only the skull and long bones survived, and in the second case the sexing was uncertain and the grave also contained a sword; neither of these graves are likely to have been those of women (Evison 1987, 125). The two spearheads from Caister-on-Sea Nf 63 and 86 were both with anatomically sexed females, but both were in the fill and may have been residual.

Two spearheads, from Finglesham K 74 and Wigber Low Db 3, were definitely with children of below teen-age, both about eight years old. In another four cases there were no bones preserved in a small grave, suggesting the graves of children. The spearheads with the definite children were a B1 and a C2, 144 mm and 206 mm long respectively. The possible children had the other B1 (105 mm), a C2 (290 mm), a C5 (89 mm) and a D1 (147 mm). These are mostly short spearheads, perhaps reflecting the youth of the children. Conversely, the multiple spear sets were found only in the graves of adult males, and when these were aged they were all in the late twenties and beyond.

*Distribution:* Map 37 shows that spears are much more numerous in graves in Kent than in the rest of the country, with 58 of the 119 spear-graves coming from Kent. There is an even but much more thinly spread distribution over the rest of England south of the Humber. North of the Humber, there is only one spear-grave, from Howick Nb.

There is one distribution within this pattern which is interesting. Swanton's maps of all D spearheads show widespread distributions concentrated in Kent, the Upper Thames and Mercia (Swanton 1973, figs 19, 22 and 33). The Conversion-period D spearheads all occur in Kent, from Buckland Dover K, Polhill K and Finglesham K. The D spearheads do not show any other distinctive chronological or stylistic traits, and so the retention of the form in Kent only is puzzling.

#### 4.31 SWORD (Fig 4.24)

*Description:* Twenty graves in the study contained single swords, and in one double burial, Buckland Dover K 96a and 96b, each body was furnished with a sword. The most common part to survive was the blade, all but one of which were pattern-welded, and the tang. A few had tangs formed into a bar-like pommel, and others had a thickened end to the tang, evidently from having been hammered over an organic upper guard/pommel bar (see Bone 1989, fig 5.1 and Ellis Davidson 1962 for terminology). A pommel proper would then have been fixed over the end of the tang in order to neaten its appearance. One sword, from Holborough K 2, has a

surviving separate upper guard/pommel bar of iron, but that they were usually organic is shown by the examples of Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 17, where the pommel and grip were probably of horn (Martin Carver, pers comm), and Buckland Dover K 96a, which had a wooden upper guard/pommel bar which had been preserved by an outer band of iron inlaid with bronze. The lower guard of Buckland Dover K 96a's sword is similarly preserved, and is straight; straight guards are found throughout the early medieval period, co-existing with curved guards from the ninth century onwards (Ellis Davidson 1962, 63-64). At least four of the swords in the present study, however, had plain whittle tangs and no fittings at all, and it is not known how the grips of these swords were secured.

Three of the swords retained separate pommels. The hump-backed iron pommel from Holborough K 7 and the concave-sided bronze pommel from Alton Ha 16 both had holes for the tang to pass through, rather than the tang being secured by hammering over the upper guard. The sword from Tissington Db, perhaps the latest sword to have been buried in an unquestionably Anglo-Saxon grave, is very badly published, but appears to have a plain hump-backed pommel which does not secure the end of the tang.

Tissington Db also appears to have a silver locket and rounded chape to the scabbard; the only other lockets were both in bronze, from Buckland Dover K 96a and 96b. There is, however, other evidence for scabbards with nearly all the swords, and Ellis Davidson thinks it very unlikely that any naked blades would have been deposited (1962, 96).

*Date:* The frequency of sword-graves declines over the course of the Conversion period, with perhaps eleven datable to the early years of the seventh century (generally with Group 3 or 6 shield-bosses), four to the middle (generally with the shorter Group 7 bosses), and perhaps two to the late seventh or early eighth century (Tissington Db, with a very tall Group 7 boss, and Harrold Bd 3, about which more later in this section). Bearing in mind the relative numbers of Group 3, 6 and 7 bosses in this study, the decline in sword-burial is precipitous.

Sword-blades, the most common part of the sword to survive, are always contained in a scabbard which can mask detail. They appear conservative in style, however, and are not easily dated. Scabbard- and hilt-fittings are more diagnostic, but only five swords have these surviving. In addition, there are many references in literature to "ancestral" swords (e.g. Beowulf lines 1457-58, 1487-88, 1558); it is clear that swords could be refitted with new hilts by a new owner (Ellis Davidson 1962, 52) and that they could be passed down in their entirety. Ellis Davidson quotes an eleventh-century will containing the bequest of a sword which is said to have belonged to

Offa of Mercia, who died in 796 (1962, 175), so some of the missing eighth-century swords (see below) could still have been unburied in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The caveats that accompany all artefactual dating of graves should therefore be multiplied in the case of swords.

It is possible, though, to isolate some features on a sword that may be indicative of a Conversion-period date. It seems likely that a beaded ring around the top and bottom of the grip, perhaps originally a later sixth-century characteristic and found on the Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1 sword, developed in the early seventh century into deeper "grip-sleeves" (Evison 1987, 22). These can be seen on the swords from Buckland Dover K 98 and Alton Ha 16 and also on some Continental and Scandinavian swords (Ellis Davidson 1962, fig IX).

A hole in the pommel for the tang to pass through, as in the swords from Holborough K 7 and Alton Ha 16, is generally seen as an early feature of a sword (Arnold 1982, 62). The fact that it occurs in two of the swords and two of the seaxes in the present survey, however, must argue for a later date. It does not appear to be a very strong way to secure the end of the tang, which is not hammered down.

All the blades for which evidence exists seem to have been pattern-welded, except for Harrold Bd 3, a sword with no fittings. In Lang and Ager's radiographic study of the Anglo-Saxon swords from the British Museum, all the seventh-century swords were found to have been pattern-welded, there were no eighth-century examples, and 45% of the ninth- and tenth-century swords were pattern-welded (Lang and Ager 1989, table 7.3).

Before Lang and Ager's work was carried out, Evison suggested that Harrold 3 might have been a Viking burial on the grounds of its associated iron vessel and heckle (Eagles and Evison 1970, 46). As seen above (section 4.22.3), this argument cannot now be sustained in the face of discoveries at Lechlade G1, Pagans Hill in Somerset and Swallowcliffe Down W1; but given the absence of pattern-welding on the sword-blade, Harrold Bd 3 may be exceptionally late for a furnished Anglo-Saxon burial, perhaps dating to the middle of the eighth century.

Another post-seventh-century sword burial which might just be Anglo-Saxon, although outside the sample, is that from Reading II Bk. The sword from this burial has straight upper and lower guards with rivet holes for a missing pommel, and rather worn decoration in Gripping Beast style. It was found in 1831, under the body of a horse which had been buried alongside a man, with no other grave-goods. East has dated the manufacture of the sword to the later eighth century, and suggests that the presence of the horse points to the burial of a Viking around 800,

rather than an Anglo-Saxon collector of exotica (East 1986). Horse burials are known from the Anglo-Saxon period, 28 examples being listed by Vierck (in Müller-Wille 1970-71, 218-220), but not as late as *c.* 800.

To sum up, then, it seems that the majority of Conversion-period swords had entirely organic fittings, with both upper and lower guards probably straight. The pommels were hump-backed or approached the cocked-hat shape. Taken together, however, these characteristics do not enable the seventh-century sword to be distinguished from the sixth-century sword, in the absence of datable decoration. The range of weapon-sets containing swords does not significantly differ, either, from those dating from the fifth to seventh centuries examined by Härke (1989b, table 4.3; and see below, section 4.33).

*Function:* There seems no evidence that Conversion-period swords varied in blade shape and thus in function, as is implied by the number of different words used for swords in poetry (Brady 1979, 90-110), but this may partly be due to the obscuring of the blade shape by the corrosion-preserved remains of a scabbard, as few blades have been X-rayed.

From literature, it seems that the sword would have been used most often with a sideways cutting stroke, using the edges, rather than using the point in a thrusting stroke, but no doubt this would depend on the fighting circumstances, both uses being possible (Ellis Davidson 1962, 196-98; Evison 1963b, 139).

*Social meaning:* None of the sword-graves contained any female-linked grave-goods. All of the sexed skeletons were male, with the single exception of Buckland Dover K 96a which, however, is likely to be a mistake (see above, section 4.30). Where the skeletons had been aged, they were mostly in their twenties or older; only Castledyke SHu 179, the grave of a twelve- to sixteen-year-old with a sword, a C2 spearhead and a hanging bowl, was younger.

The sword-graves of Taplow Bu and Broomfield Ex are the highest-wealth male burials in the present study, containing eighteen to twenty and eleven vessels respectively, in addition to gold objects and quantities of textiles. Alton Ha 16 and probably Oxton Nt had two vessels each, and a further four had a single vessel. Holborough K 2 contained a cauldron chain. So nearly half of the sword-graves contained vessels, and they were all of bronze, wood or iron, rather than the more ubiquitous pot. Uncleby NHu 5 was the only sword-grave to contain no other grave-goods. This is very different to the situation in seax-graves (see below, section 4.32), and confirms that seaxes should not be seen as a weapon that replaces the sword, but rather as

fulfilling a different function entirely.

Swords still seem to have maintained their prestige in the seventh century, as is clear from documentary sources. As shown above, graves with swords do appear to decline in numbers over time, perhaps caused by a rise in status of the "ancestral" sword. The increased rarity but continued prestige of sword-burial should mean that it is a more powerful signal within the burial than before. The decline in the numbers of swords buried may have been connected to a rise in the perceived importance of the age and experience of an inherited sword, as is apparent from poetry. The deposition of the sword may have become a deliberately archaic feature, signalling the membership of a particular group, as has been suggested above (section 4.29) for shield-burials; more prosaically, the rite could have become confined to the burial of a man with no sons or brothers. It is also possible that sword-burial became confined to an ever smaller group of conspicuous consumers, as wealth and social status became more polarised. A simple economic explanation seems unlikely, however, as fifteen swords come from cemeteries and only six from high-wealth isolated burials.

*Distribution:* Map 38 shows the distribution of Conversion-period sword-graves. Although the graves are spread over most of the country, there are slight concentrations in Kent and in the Derbyshire/Staffordshire Peak District. Those from Kent tend to be earlier, with Group 3 and Group 6 bosses. Those from the Peak District tend to be later; Tissington Db has a Group 7 boss, Lapwing Db a bed, and Barlaston St a hanging bowl, Wigber Low Db 4 being harder to date.

#### 4.32 SEAX (Fig 4.25)

*Description:* The division between large knives and seaxes is fairly arbitrary. It is difficult to distinguish between knives and seaxes on the basis of shape, as both object types can have straight, angled or curved backs. As far as size is concerned, Ottaway has suggested that an overall length of 250 mm should be taken as the borderline between knife and seax (1990, 185) and Härke has suggested that it should be a blade length of 180 mm (1989a, table 1). Härke's work has the merit of being published and well-known, so has been used here.

Seaxes occurred in 36 of the graves in this study, always singly. They are generally slim blades, gently curving at the tip. If any are angled, the angle is so obtuse that it has been obscured by corrosion. Their blades range in length from 183 mm at Portsdown II Ha 1 and 184 mm at Buckland Dover K 135 - right on the border with knives - to 554 mm at Kidlington Ox. In his



study of post-eighth-century seaxes, Gale has noted a complete absence of blade lengths in the 450 mm region (1989, 72). This is not true of the earlier seaxes; the smaller sizes (below 330 mm or so) are more common, but there are blade lengths of 428 mm (Marina Drive Bd B12), 468 mm (Lechlade Gl 40) and 400 mm (Polhill K 84).

Out of the 36 seaxes, by far the majority were of the narrow type (see section 2.3.3 for a detailed description of seax types). 23 were certainly narrow (under 40 mm in width) and one other, that from Polhill K 84, is of narrow proportions but is felt by Hawkes to share more of its characteristics with the long type (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 189-90). Two more, from Kidlington and SOU 20 F183, were certainly long seaxes, with blades over 500 mm in length, and nine were broad seaxes, over 40 mm wide. The last seax was represented only by a chape.

When the lengths and widths of the insular seaxes are plotted (*Table 4.14*), the traditional three-fold division is not apparent. The long seax from SOU20 F183 is omitted from the table, as details of the blade dimensions are not yet published, but its overall length is around 670 mm, and so it would fall somewhere in the gap at the top right-hand corner of the diagram. It has been clear for some time that the dating of Continental material cannot simply be transposed to England, and it seems possible from this diagram that the classification into Böhner's types (1958, 130-45) is also inappropriate for insular material. A formal analysis of all the English seaxes is needed to clarify the situation, but at present it seems that a classification based purely on blade dimensions is not as orderly as has been supposed.

The most common decoration for a seax is a groove along the back of the blade, on one side or on both. This can sometimes be seen on drawings of seaxes which clearly were in scabbards (e.g. Shudy Camps Ca 36, Marina Drive Bd B12), in which case it is unclear whether the decoration is on the scabbard or on the blade itself. It appears that many seaxes, unlike swords, were not contained in sheaths, although reports are often cursory with sheath details. One seax, that from Northolt Manor GL 3, had inlaid decoration as well as grooves along the back of the blade, but generally this type of ornament appears to be more common on the later seaxes studied by Gale (1989, 74-76; Evison in Hurst 1961, 229).

A few seaxes had fittings. Two (Harford Farm Nf 25 and Polhill K 84) had a tang forged into a bar-like pommel. Presumably a grip was glued and/or bound onto the tang with the bar to keep it in position. Three had more complicated pommels and tiny lower guards (for an explanation of the terminology, borrowed from that for swords, see Bone 1989, fig 5.1 and Ellis Davidson 1962).



Ford Wi 18 has a separate bronze pommel with a hole for the end of the tang (as in the swords from Holborough K 7 and Alton Ha 16 above) and silver grip-sleeves. It was contained in an elaborate scabbard with two buckles to enable it to be carried horizontally across the body, cutting edge uppermost, as is seen in sculpture (Gale 1989, fig 6.15). Ford Wi 18 is one of the few seaxes in existence to bear stylistically datable decoration, consisting of a chape in the form of a bird's head in an angled headframe, and a simple interlaced Style II animal crudely scratched onto one side of the top surface of the pommel after construction.

Shudy Camps Ca 36 has a downward-curving upper guard, apparently of iron, and a tang with a forged pommel above. The seax from Oliver's Battery Ha has a separate three-piece silver cocked-hat pommel above an *upper guard/pommel bar* of silver. Northolt Manor GL 3 has a surviving lower guard, but no pommel. Most of the seaxes, however, had no fittings, and were presumably hafted as knives. The downward-curving upper guard has been seen by Evison (in Hurst 1961, 228) as an insular development; it appears on the broad seax from Purton Wi, dated by Evison to c. 700 (in Hurst 1961, 229-30) and so may be a late feature.

Seaxes with a long tang (over 160 mm), commonly known as two-handed seaxes, are not unusual, six of the seaxes studied here being of this form. No two-handed swords, though, are *known from the Anglo-Saxon period*, and Evison has commented in her discussion of the Northolt Manor GL two-handed seax that "it hardly seems practicable to use such a light weapon in this way" (in Hurst 1961, 228). Two of the seaxes studied here, however, have mineral-preserved organic grip remains which show that a long tang does not necessarily require a two-handed grip. Harford Farm Nf 25 and Lechlade Gl 155 both have grip traces only on the half of the tang nearest the blade, leaving the rest of the tang to be covered presumably by an extended pommel. At least two of the two-handed seaxes in this study, though, Shudy Camps Ca 36 and Ford Wi 18, have the conventional small pommel. Hawkes sees the two-handed seax as being an innovation of the second half of the seventh century, as on the Continent it is often associated with broad seaxes (in Philp 1973, 189).

*Date:* Few of the seaxes were found with datable associations. Three of the shortest narrow seaxes, all under 240 mm blade length, were found with triangular buckles, and one of these, from Buckland Dover K 56, was also associated with a Group 3 shield-boss. Another narrow seax was found with a Group 6 boss at Alton Ha 4. At Ford Wi 18 a two-handed narrow seax was found with a Group 7 boss, and at Lechlade Gl 40 another Group 7 boss was found with a broad seax. This sparse evidence suggests that narrow seaxes continued through the seventh century, but whether they were superseded at the end of the century, or whether broad and long

seaxes co-existed with the narrow type, is still uncertain.

Ford Wi 18 is the only two-handed seax to occur in an otherwise well-dated grave, and it belongs to the second half of the seventh or the early eighth century. Of the other two-handed seaxes, one is broad and the rest narrow. This is not inconsistent with the Continental dating of two-handed seaxes. None of the seaxes with fittings need belong to the first half of the seventh century either, and it seems likely that they should be seen as a development towards the elaborate seaxes of the ninth and tenth centuries.

*Function:* Seaxes are not a simple replacement for swords. They are occasionally found in the same grave as a sword, arguing for complementary roles, and also they are often of different form and treated in different ways within the grave. For example, 23 (64%) of the seaxes were found in graves with no other weapons, but only three of the swords (14%). Again in contrast to swords (see above, section 4.31), very few seaxes are found with vessels. Only seven seax-graves contained even a single vessel, and only one (Ford Wi 18) contained two.

The slight form, and the decoration of the seax, very different from the sword, has led Gale to suggest their use as hunting knives rather than as weapons (1989, 80). In the present study, of those seaxes which were found with one other weapon, nine had a spear (which could also be used for hunting) but none had a shield or a sword. Two-handed hunting knives, too, seem eminently practical. And although the seax is mentioned in *Beowulf* as being used in combat by Grendel's mother (line 1545), it is also used by the hero himself in line 2703 as a hunting knife, to finish off the dying dragon.

*Social meaning:* None of the seaxes were found with female-linked grave-goods, and all the sexed skeletons were male. The youngest aged skeleton was the fifteen- or sixteen-year-old from Polhill K 9, and so there were no children with seaxes. Out of the 36 seaxes, fourteen were associated with other weapons and seven had vessels, including two with hanging bowls. Five seax-graves, however, contained no other grave-goods.

*Distribution:* The distribution of seaxes is shown in Map 39. There is a fairly even distribution over southern England, but there are noticeably few in the north midlands and Northumbria. There appears to be no regional preference for any particular type of seax.

### 4.33 WEAPON SETS

*Description:* In all, probably 150 of the graves in the present study contained weapons, including seaxes. The uncertainty arises over Monkton K 19, which may exceptionally have contained two shield-bosses; the cemetery was not excavated under ideal conditions, and it is probable that one of the bosses may have come from an adjacent grave. The figure of 150 represents 6% of the total number of 2583 graves in the sample, which can be compared with Härke's 18% of sampled fifth- to eighth-century graves which contained weapons (Härke 1990, 25 and see below).

The assemblages which contained shields were various. The most common combination was shield/spear, or sword/shield/spear, with ten (30%) and nine (25%) of the shield-graves respectively; six of the shield-graves (17%) contained no other weapon, and other combinations were represented by one or two graves.

Spears are most often found on their own, 74 of the spears (56%) being lone weapons. Ten of the spears (8%) were with a shield only, and there were nine (7%) each of spear/sword/shield combinations and seax/spear combinations. Other combinations were represented by a few graves only.

Swords tend to be found in weapon sets; only three (14%) of the swords were found in graves with no other weapon. The full sword/shield/spear set was the most common set among the sword-graves, with nine examples (41% of all sword-graves). Other combinations were rarer; three sword-graves (14%) had just a sword and spear, and other combinations were present in just one or two graves.

23 (63%) of the seaxes were found with no other weapon in the grave. Nine other seax-graves (25%) also contained a single spear, but other combinations were not common.

*Date:* Härke's work on weapon sets between the fifth and eighth centuries (1989b; 1990) means that this is one of the few areas in which it is possible to compare earlier and later practice. Härke (1989b) listed the proportions of various weapons as they change over time. Table 4.15 reproduces parts of his table 4.4 and adds my results to it; the percentages are of all weapon burials.

Weapon combinations	Härke's burial date groups						this study
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
spear(s) only	31%	42%	46%	26%	51%	47%	49%
shield, shield & spear(s)	46%	47%	37%	62%	24%	18%	11%
seax, combinations of seax, shield and/or spear(s)	-	-	2%	3%	12%	35%	25%
sword, combinations of sword, shield and/or seax and/or spear(s)	16%	7%	11%	9%	13%	-	14%
Total sample of datable burials	55	113	158	105	92	17	150

Burial date groups:

- |                                  |                                |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 early 5th to early 6th century | 4 mid 6th to early 7th century |
| 2 mid 5th to mid 6th century     | 5 late 6th to late 7th century |
| 3 late 5th to late 6th century   | 6 mid 7th to mid 8th century   |

**Table 4.15** Changes in the proportions of weapon combinations over time

Härke's sample contained no swords from the second half of the seventh century and the first half of the eighth; they do exist, although in small numbers, in the present far larger sample of burials of this date (see above, section 4.31). In general, although seaxes increase in number and shields decrease, the relative proportions of weapon frequencies seem fairly stable over time. The proportion of *weapon-burials to all burials* changes over time, with Härke giving figures of around 15% to 20% buried with weapons in the fifth and sixth centuries, but about 12% in the late sixth and seventh centuries and about 3% in the late seventh and eighth centuries (Härke 1989b, extrapolated from fig 4.3). In the present survey the decline is similarly marked, with 6% of all Conversion-period burials containing weapons.

*Function:* A difference is apparent between the purely military weapons and those that can also be used for hunting. Swords and shields are rarely found on their own, and rarely with seaxes; spears and seaxes are commonly found on their own, and the two together, without swords or shields. If a seax is found with another weapon, it will usually be a spear, although there appears to be no difference in the types of spearheads that are found with seaxes and the types found with other weapons. There is a difference, however, between the spearhead types that are found in sword/spear sets and those in sword/shield/spear sets; the former tend to be small thrusting or throwing spears, and the latter larger slashing types.

It has been suggested that the developments in weapon forms from the migration to the Conversion period are the result of a change in fighting techniques, from an essentially

individualistic *melée* style to more organised formation combat (Dickinson and Härke 1992, 63). Swanton's extensive study of spearheads appears to support a change at the end of the sixth century from a forward-thrust style of spear-fighting to a lateral-blow style; it is not clear if this is related to a change in the organisation of battle.

*Social meaning:* As a general rule it can be said that weapons do not occur in female-linked assemblages; exceptions to this rule always show a modification for secondary use (see above, section 4.22.2). Again as a general rule, weapons are not found with children. The youngest shield-bearer was described as a "youth", the youngest sword-holder twelve to sixteen, and the youngest with a *seax* fifteen or sixteen, reflecting a possible age of maturity in the early teens. Following earlier migration-period practice, however, a few short spearheads are found with children from about eight or so years old upwards (Sally Crawford, pers comm).

The burial of weapons is traditionally seen by Anglo-Saxonists as a mark of status within broad social divisions, such as noble/free/unfree, or *thegn/ceorl/slave*. This has been most explicitly stated by Alcock (1981, 262) but was implicit for decades before (e.g. Pollitt 1923, 114). This *view is now seen* as untested, simplistic and historically dependent (Härke 1989b; 1990), but whatever the social meaning of weapon-burial in the migration period, it is clear that it changes in the Conversion period.

It is often said that weapon-burial in general declines in frequency to vanishing point during the Conversion period (Härke 1989b, 52-53; 1990, 28-33; Boddington 1990, 188). As has been seen above, in sections 4.29, 4.30, 4.31 and 4.32, weapon-burial does continue until the end of furnished burial, but in ever smaller numbers. The graves in which late weapon-burials do occur, however, are often high-wealth burials, and at first glance it appears more as if weapon-burial is restricted to fewer and fewer privileged dead rather than lingering on in a handful of backward, impoverished and old-fashioned communities. Late weapon-burials include, for example, Tissington Db, Harrold Bd 3 and the famous weapon-grave excavated in the nineteenth century at Farthingdown Sy, outside the sample. But at the same time, weapon-burial is being abandoned by the majority of the population. Reasons must be sought both for the general abandonment of weapon-burial, and for the retention of the rite in a few, apparently high-status, cases.

A number of options can be suggested. Härke has disputed an argument that the weapon-burials are those of warriors and that a decline reflects a decline in the intensity of warfare, by integrating the dates of historically recorded battles with the incidence of weapon-burial (1990,

28-33). It could instead be suggested that, if weapon-burial was a socially restricted rite, a more pyramid-like stratification of society would result in fewer and richer weapon-burials. The observed pattern, however, does not fit this model quite as neatly as could be wished; although a few later high-wealth male burials do continue to be buried with weapons, there are not nearly as many, and they are not nearly as rich, as earlier weapon-graves, such as Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1, Taplow Bu and Broomfield Ex. Those who buried their fathers in the very highest-wealth weapon-graves are themselves invisible in death, and they may, like converted kings, have been buried in churches, presumably in unfurnished graves.

Although the very high-wealth burials which contained weapons in the first half of the seventh century have disappeared by the second half of the century, these are few and do not account for the bulk of the decline in weapon-burial. This must have taken place in the many lower-wealth graves which were still furnished, but now contained weapons less often. There is no contextual evidence to suggest that weapon-burial was in fact restricted to fewer and fewer people in the Conversion period, and it seems more likely that the meaning of the weapon-burial rite was simply no longer needed by most of the population.

At this point, the argument becomes linked to the wider problem of the end of furnished burial in general, and so will be pursued further in Chapter 6; it remains to be said here, however, that at the end of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth century there appear to be very many more high-wealth female burials with jewellery than high-wealth male burials with weapons. The view that the wearing of jewellery is not incompatible with Christian ideology but that a warrior culture is cannot be sustained in the face of descriptions of Christ as a warrior as, for example, in the *Dream of the Rood*.

#### 4.34 TRIANGULAR BUCKLE (Fig 4.26)

*Description:* 24 graves in the sample contained single buckles with triangular plates, sixteen of which were from two cemeteries in Kent, Finglesham and Buckland Dover. In addition, there was a bronze underplate from a triangular buckle at Finglesham K 200 (see below). Many of the triangular buckles have shield-shaped plates at the base of the tongue, and three large domed rivets at the corners. Others are simpler, but some still retain vestigial roundels at the corners.

Eight of the buckles are basically of iron, and twelve basically of bronze; two have bronze plates and iron loops. One is of silver, and one of gold. They tend to be large and well-made, ranging in length from 22 to 133 mm but most often being around 70 to 75 mm. Some bear Style II



ornamentation, in filigree on the gold buckle from Taplow Bu and the much-mended gilded one from Alton Ha 16, and cast on the bronze buckle from Hadleigh Road Sf 118. Other decorated triangular buckles include the inlaid iron example from Finglesham K 25, and the famous "Finglesham Man" gilt-bronze buckle from Finglesham K 95.

*Date:* Triangular buckles are a long-lived artefact type, originating from sixth-century Merovingian prototypes in Kent. As seen in section 2.3.2, Kentish objects tend to provide identification for burials from the later sixth into the first half of the seventh century. Triangular buckles are no exception, but it is harder to know when the use of the type ended. The burial excavated at Wigger Low Db in the nineteenth century, an assemblage outside the sample which contained a tiny triangular iron buckle, might be dated to the second half of the seventh century on the basis of the date of the latest object in the assemblage, but as the objects almost certainly came from at least two burials, the triangular buckle may easily have been considerably earlier. There is one other small simple iron triangular buckle in the sample, from Finglesham K 62A, which can be dated to the late seventh-century on the basis of its openwork buckle (see below, section 4.36).

The four Buckland Dover K graves with triangular buckles have been allocated to various phases. Grave 56 has a Group 3 shield-boss and so is placed in Phase 3 (575-625), whereas grave 135 is placed in Phase 4 (625-650) and graves 149 and 158 are allocated to Phase 6 (675-700) on the basis of horizontal stratigraphy, being allocated to Plots F and H respectively; no corroborative artefactual evidence is cited for the dating of these graves (Evison 1987, 141-42). It would be quite possible, however, to extend Plot F eastwards to include a number of the graves hitherto in Plot H, thereby altering the relative dates obtained from horizontal stratigraphy (Evison 1987, figs 98, 104 and 106). The Buckland Dover K evidence alone, therefore, cannot be used to suggest that triangular buckles survived into the second half of the seventh century.

The early seventh-century dating is supported by the associated shield-bosses. The tallest boss to be found in association with a triangular buckle is the 112 mm tall example from Alton Ha 16, a Group 7 boss dating perhaps from the middle of the seventh century, found with an ornate gilded triangular buckle bearing Style II filigree which was extremely heavily worn, having been broken and mended twice in antiquity. The Taplow Bu buckle was buried with a Group 6 shield-boss, and the Holborough K 7 and Buckland Dover K 56 buckles were with Group 3 bosses. Buckland Dover K 56 also contained a narrow seax, but there are no broad seaxes among the associations of triangular buckles.

The ornament on the decorated buckles does not conflict with an early seventh-century dating. The inlaid buckle at Finglesham K 25 belongs to a class of imported early seventh-century Continental buckles rare in England (Hawkes 1981). The cloisonné and filigree on the Taplow Bu and Alton Ha 16 buckles is characteristic of the first half of the seventh century, and the cast ornament on the Hadleigh Road Sf 118 buckle is not inconsistent with this date. The unique decoration on the Finglesham K 95 buckle has been dated to the middle or second half of the seventh century on the grounds of the simplicity of the ornament (Hawkes *et al.* 1965), but more recently this dating has been revised to the first half of the seventh century (Hawkes in Campbell 1982, 48).

In summary, there is no evidence that the large decorated triangular buckles continued to be buried after the middle of the seventh century. It is, however, possible that a few tiny plain triangular buckles were still around in the second half of the century, but these should perhaps be seen as part of the "small simple buckle" series (see below, section 4.37), rather than as conventional triangular buckles.

*Function:* Almost all of the triangular buckles were found in the waist area of the skeleton. Exceptions include Taplow Bu, where the bone preservation was very bad but the buckle appeared to be on the shoulder; Finglesham K 18, where the buckle seemed to be on a belt *which had been put unworn into the grave*; and Garton II NHu 10, where a rather small buckle was found on the shoulder. This consistency of positioning, plus the large and solid nature of many of the buckles, suggests that they fastened heavy belts at the waist.

*Social meaning:* The triangular buckles in the sample were not found in association with female-linked items, and where the skeletons wearing them could be sexed, they were always male. Apart from knives, which 22 of the 24 were buried with, spearheads were the most common association. At least nine and perhaps ten graves with triangular buckles also had spearheads, and of these, five had further weapons as well. In addition, Castledyke SHu 94 had a large knife, with a blade *c.* 175 mm long, almost a seax.

Although most of the skeletons which could be aged were adults, mostly between 18 and 45, two were children or adolescents. Finglesham K 75 contained a child of about ten, and Garton II NHu 10 was thought to have contained a youth of between 14 and 17.

The only exception to the male-linked rule for triangular buckles in the present study is that of Finglesham K 200, a child of between ten and twelve buried with, among other things, a

necklace, a chatelaine, and a bag collection including the backplate from a triangular buckle. She seems to have been a collector of curiosities, as a late Roman belt-plate hung from her necklace, and judging by the presence of an openwork buckle-plate in the bag, she must have been buried after the introduction of this type in the last decades of the seventh century. As the buckle fragment in this grave fulfilled a different function, that of an amulet, the grave has not been included in any statistics for the artefact type, and it cannot be considered as evidence that women could wear triangular buckles.

Outside the sample, however, two female graves appear to have included triangular buckles. At Breach Down K, a large silver-gilt triangular buckle with Style II decoration was found by Conyngham on 2 Oct 1841, apparently together with a box, a keystone disc brooch, a silver bracelet, some small beads and a tiny ring (Conyngham 1844, 52). This evidence that a woman was buried with a triangular buckle may depend on the view taken of the quality of Conyngham's work; he opened seven barrows on that day. More reliable, however, is the unusual openwork triangular buckle from Holywell Row Sf 31, associated with a badly preserved skeleton with glass and amber beads, a bronze wire ring, a piece of silver ribbon and some bronze clips. These two graves appear to show that triangular buckles can be found, albeit rarely, in female burials.

Triangular buckles were found among the higher-wealth male graves, occurring in gold at Taplow Bu, in iron inlaid with silver at Finglesham K 25, in gilt-bronze at Finglesham K 95 and in silver-gilt at Alton Ha 16, all graves containing wooden or metal vessels. Less ostentatious buckles were found in less well-furnished graves as well, some graves containing only a knife in addition to the buckle. As the triangular buckles were large objects, it is to be expected that in the higher-wealth graves the space available for ornament and conspicuous consumption was used to the full.

*Distribution:* Map 40 shows that, although triangular buckles can be found in all areas of England, they are still most popular in Kent, which has over twice as many as the whole of the rest of England.

#### 4.35 DOUBLE-TONGUED BUCKLE (Fig 4.26)

*Description:* Seven graves in the sample contained buckles with two tongues. Three were of bronze and four of iron. All but one, the iron buckle from Finglesham K 214, had a surviving rectangular plate with three rivets. Ford Wi 18's iron buckle had the rivets covered by cabochon

garnets with beaded gold collars. The buckles could take straps of 16 mm to 31 mm in width.

*Date:* Ford Wi 18 also contained a two-handed narrow seax, thought by Hawkes to be an innovation of the second half of the seventh century (in Philp 1973, 189). Swallowcliffe Down Wi, with a tinned bronze buckle, seems to be happiest dated to this time also (see section 4.18). The other graves with double-tongued buckles in the sample were not closely datable.

Outside the sample, there are two or possibly three more of these double-tongued buckles (Geake 1994). A bronze example is recorded from Breach Down K (Akerman 1855, 58 and pl XXVIII) with a tongue-shaped plate, but its associations are unknown. A large iron double-tongued buckle with no plate was found at Ailcy Hill NY, a largely unfurnished cemetery 200 m due east of Ripon Cathedral, with a knife in a grave carbon-dated to 563-661. The only other possible double-tongued buckle known from Anglo-Saxon England is one in the Meaney Gazetteer entry for Harrietsham III in Kent (Meaney 1964, 123), but which is not mentioned in any of the references given there. It was apparently found with a bronze strap-end, an iron ring and a knife, so does not help to refine the dating. The consensus from the three datable graves, then, is that double-tongued buckles date from the middle of the seventh century onwards.

*Function:* The buckle from Swallowcliffe Down Wi was found outside the right femur, and was reconstructed as belonging to the suspension strap or belt of a wooden-framed leather satchel. The other buckles were all found at the waist or hip, and probably fastened waist-belts.

*Social meaning:* The double-tongued buckle graves comprised two high-wealth burials, male at Ford Wi 18 and female at Swallowcliffe Down Wi; two male burials with a spearhead and a knife each, Goblin Works Sy S24 and King Harry Lane Ht 26; a male at Snell's Corner Ha S6 with a knife and a small iron object, perhaps a rivet; a male at Finglesham K 214 with a knife; and an unsexed burial at Polhill K 42 with no further grave-goods. This is a heterogeneous group, containing both men and women, both richly and poorly furnished. The appearance of a further double-tongued buckle in a "churchyard"-type cemetery at Ailcy Hill NY is unusual.

*Distribution:* The distribution map of all double-tongued buckles known (Map 41) shows a strong concentration in the south of England, with only King Harry Lane Ht 26 and Ailcy Hill NY being north of the Thames. This is, however, based on a rather small sample.

#### 4.36 MISCELLANEOUS BUCKLES (Fig 4.26)

*Description:* Out of 80 recorded miscellaneous buckles, in 65 graves, the most common type, with sixteen examples, was the buckle with a serrated or nicked edge to the plate. Five of these plates also had openwork decoration, and there were a further four openwork plates without serration.

*Date:* Evison and Shephard have agreed on a date in the late seventh and early eighth centuries for openwork buckles (Evison 1956, 92-93; Shephard 1979a, 4.39-4.40). Support for this comes from Uncleby NHu 31, which contains an openwork buckle and two workboxes, and Lechlade Gl 155, which contains a buckle with both openwork and serrated decoration, as well as a broad seax similar to those dated by Evison to c. 700 (in Hurst 1961, 228-30). A grave outside the sample, Broadstairs I K L, contains an openwork buckle with sceattas dated to c. 690-700 (Grierson and Blackburn 1986, table 13).

There are only two possible exceptions to this relatively late dating. At Finglesham K 62A, an openwork buckle was found with a small triangular buckle, which may just possibly be an early seventh-century type (see above, section 4.34). At Finglesham K 200, the grave also contained the backplate of another, larger triangular buckle, which must have been manufactured before the middle of the seventh century. As argued above, though (section 4.34), this backplate is likely to have been a curated antique in a later grave.

Shephard also looked at serrated-edge buckles, and concluded that the dating evidence for these was very slight, but not inconsistent with a date from the middle of the seventh century onwards (1979a, 4.45). The results of the present study support this conclusion; no grave containing a buckle with only serrated decoration contains any precisely datable artefact, although Castledyke SHu 134's assemblage is probably early seventh century, with an odd juxtaposition of sixth- and seventh-century artefact types (amber beads and large flat annular brooches with silver slip-knot rings and a silver disc pendant). The common occurrence of both serrated and openwork decoration on the same object, however, indicates that at least some serrated-edge buckles, too, could belong to the second half of the seventh century.

Some buckles of all types have groups of incised transverse lines on their loops, similar to the lines often found on annular brooches. This motif appears to be common on a number of Conversion-period objects, also appearing, for example, on wire rings. It is already in use early in the seventh century, appearing on a triangular buckle at Finglesham K 18, and continues into

the early eighth century, on openwork buckles such as that from Holborough K 11.

*Function:* Most of the buckles with openwork or serrated plates were found at the waist. The exceptions were the openwork plate with no loop from Finglesham K 200, which was in a bag collection, and the serrated-edge buckles from Castledyke SHu 132 and Uncleby NHu 37, which were at the upper chest and behind the shoulder respectively. The loops ranged in width from 11 to 22 mm, so the straps or belts that they fastened were not wide. A slender leather or tablet-woven braid belt or girdle seems the most likely.

*Social meaning:* Buckle-plates with openwork decoration, and those with serrated edges, are found with both men and women in fairly equal numbers, but they do not seem to be found with children. All the buckles with serrated edges were found with adults, and the youngest person to be found with an openwork buckle was the ten- to twelve-year-old with the broken buckle-plate from Finglesham K 200. Not only was this not being used as a buckle, but the age of the child means that it is possible that she was already considered an adult (Crawford 1991).

The women who were buried with these buckles lack the richer sorts of jewellery; none have bullae, linked pins, cabochon pendants or disc brooches. Three have silver disc pendants, but only one, in Uncleby NHu 31, was buried in what could be described as a high-wealth grave, with a gold disc pendant, a tripod-ring bronze bowl, a silver and garnet zoomorphic annular brooch and one or two workboxes. Although it is dangerous to argue from negative evidence, it seems possible that there was some incompatibility between openwork buckles and these richer types of jewellery. Because of their concentration in Kent (see below), it may be that these buckles were used as part of a distinctive regional costume, with which the more widespread rich jewellery was inappropriate.

*Distribution:* Maps 42 and 43 plot the incidence of openwork and serrated edges on buckle-plates separately. It can be seen from these that there is a concentration of both features in Kent, but that both can be found more rarely all across England. Out of the 21 openwork and serrated-edge buckles, ten came from Finglesham K and a further three from other cemeteries in Kent, although, strangely, none were found at Buckland Dover K (see above, section 4.26, for the lack of shoe-buckles at Buckland Dover).

#### 4.37 SMALL SIMPLE BUCKLE (Fig 4.27)

*Description:* Small simple buckles are common finds, with 275 instances in 253 graves. This

frequency is second only to that of knives (see below, section 4.49). The buckles were defined as carrying a strap less than 20 mm in width. They often have plates, commonly folded around the end of the strap and held by a row of two or three rivets, often with bossed heads. Buckles were only classed as "simple" if they were devoid of decoration, and the only plate shape that was included as "simple" was the common square, rectangular or tongue-shape; as commented above in section 4.34, however, it may be that small undecorated triangular plates should have been included here as well.

71 of the 275 buckles were entirely of bronze, with a further eight having bronze plates and iron loops. 179 were entirely of iron, with a further two having iron plates and bronze loops. Three were of silver and twelve were of an unidentified material. Although corrosion will have obscured the decoration on many iron buckle plates, leading them to be erroneously identified as simple, there still seems to be a preponderance of iron. Sixteen graves contained two simple buckles, and three graves contained three.

*Date:* Small simple buckles are overwhelmingly the most popular type of buckle in Conversion-period burials, with all other types put together only amounting to 111 buckles. They are, however, also found surprisingly often in migration-period cemeteries, and although there has been an intuitive feeling that they are a leading type-fossil of Conversion-period cemeteries (e.g. Leeds 1936, 98; Hyslop 1963, 191; Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 42-43), without examining the data for earlier cemeteries it is hard to know whether there was a rise in popularity of the type, or a decrease in the popularity of other buckles, between the migration and Conversion periods.

No grave with a disc brooch contained a simple buckle, but they were found with five of the 24 triangular buckles, so it is clear that they were already in use at the start of the seventh century. Three of the 22 workbox-graves contained simple buckles, as did three of the 22 openwork/serrated-edge buckle graves and one of the thirteen linked-pin graves. They therefore appear to have maintained their popularity throughout the century.

*Function:* The vast majority of graves with small simple buckles contained only one, and in most cases this was at the waist or hip, and had presumably fastened a belt. These buckles, however, were multi-purpose, many being found in other positions within the grave, and may also have fastened the straps of boxes, bags, knife sheaths, and so on.

*Social meaning:* The 248 graves represented men, women and children, and many contained no other grave-goods or only a knife in addition to the buckle.

*Distribution:* The distribution of small simple buckles is shown in Map 44. Although there are concentrations in Kent and the Humber area, this buckle type is widely spread across England.

#### 4.38 BAGS

Bag rings, collections of items with no discernable remains of a container, and firesteels/purse mounts were all included under this heading. Bags and boxes are important functional types, as they may have been used to conceal other grave-goods at a time when conspicuous grave-good deposition was seen as inappropriate, and so may perhaps be characteristic of an intermediate stage between furnished and unfurnished burial (Owen 1981, 74).

##### 4.38.1 Firesteel/purse mount (Fig 4.27)

*Description:* The form and function of these objects has been discussed by Brown (1977), with particular reference to the Continental material of the fifth and sixth centuries. The 24 definite and one possible firesteel/purse mounts in the present study, however, were different to those looked at by Brown. All were entirely of iron, with no discernable decoration. Only one or two (Finglesham K 180 and perhaps Burwell Ca 83) appear to have had attached buckles, while another (Burwell Ca 42) had a bronze wire ring in the central part which could have acted as a strap slider. It is possible that some buckles could have been lost through corrosion, but four (Polhill K 84, Harford Farm Nf 18 and Burwell Ca 90 and 123) have such wide triangular centres and large loops that there would have been no room for a buckle. As with all iron objects, corrosion makes it difficult to make secure pronouncements about typology and chronology, but many of the firesteels seem to have ends which curl right over to make a loop which could be used for attachment, instead of the hooks and rivet holes found on the earlier ones.

*Date:* Hawkes suggested that the slender firesteels with relatively thin bars were in vogue during the sixth century, with a distinctive humped or even triangular shape appearing in the seventh (in Philp 1973, 195). In the present study, a range of shapes was found, although at least a slight hump in the centre was visible on most. Of the more obviously triangular ones, Harford Farm Nf 18 is coin-dated to after c. 690-700, and Polhill K 84 contains a 400 mm long seax which is probably to be dated to the last part of the seventh century (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 189-90, and see above, section 4.32). The thinner type, sometimes with buckles, do continue, however, for example with a Group 7 boss at Lowbury Bk, outside the sample (Atkinson 1916,



21 and pl VI, 3).

The datable firesteel-graves tend towards the second half of the seventh century or the early part of the eighth. Harford Farm Nf 18 and Polhill K 84 have already been mentioned; Hadleigh Road Sf 58 also contained a Group 7 shield-boss, and Burwell Ca 42 a workbox with worn Style II decoration. Burwell Ca 83 also contained a pair of shears, suggestive of the same post-650 date (see below, section 4.46.5). From the early part of the century, though, come two firesteel-graves containing triangular buckles, at Holborough K 7 and Finglesham K 83. It is possible, then, even given the greater ease in identifying objects from the later part of the seventh century, that firesteels may increase in popularity after 650.

*Function:* Many people have speculated on the function of these objects, and opinion at the moment seems to follow Brown (but see Evison 1987, 110-11 for caveats). He has amplified Pirling's suggestion that they are dual-purpose items worn horizontally on the belt, providing a rigid frame for a purse or pouch containing flint and tinder (Brown 1977, 451-56 and fig 4). However, I can only find one example that has been found associated with a flint, and this is King Harry Lane Ht 2, in a naturally flint-bearing area. In the Buckland Dover K report, attention is specifically drawn to the absence of flint in the firesteel-graves (Evison 1987, 111). The parallel quoted in the King Harry Lane Ht report, Wigber Low Db 3, is a grave cut into a Bronze Age cairn containing considerable quantities of worked flint; the object thought to be a firesteel is, anyway, closer to a spatulate tool in shape and size, and is discussed below in section 4.46.1.

Plans are published of eight of the firesteel graves. At Burwell Ca 123, the firesteel was under the skull and clearly was not being worn. At King Harry Lane Ht 2 and Buckland Dover K 139, the firesteel appears to have been worn horizontally with the hump at the top, as suggested in Brown's reconstruction. In the remaining cases, however, the firesteel seems to have been in another bag or on a chatelaine. Buckland Dover K 53 and Shudy Camps Ca 19 both contained a firesteel lying vertically and apparently contained in a bag suspended from an ivory ring. In Burwell Ca 83 and Buckland Dover K 157, the firesteels are by the knees with complicated chatelaines. It seems that in these four cases the firesteels may have been used on their own, not as part of a pouch. The use of a firesteel without an attached pouch has been reconstructed for a find from Stabio in Switzerland (Donati 1978, Tav. LXXXVI). At Burwell Ca 42, the firesteel was lying horizontally amid the chatelaine, but an area of dark soil was noted below, and this may have been part of an attached pouch.

It is possible that the tinder was now contained in a pouch separate from the firesteel, which would also explain the disappearance of the rivet holes for attachment, but the absence of flint may suggest instead that the firesteel was not being deposited as a usable object. The wear apparently noted by Brown may be present on some of those examples with concave bottoms, but again corrosion makes it impossible to decide whether this was wear or an original design feature. In some cases the firesteel may have had a function as an amulet or keepsake, or it may have had some wider symbolic significance.

*Social meaning:* Firesteels are not confined to either sex; ten were found in female graves and seven in male graves. In one case, Buckland Dover K 139, there were no bones, and Evison has suggested that this was the grave of a child. The other firesteels were with unsexed adults. At the fifth- to eighth-century Frankish cemetery of Krefeld-Gellep, slim firesteels were found much more frequently in male graves than in female (Pirling 1966 I, 209; 1974 I, 165; 1979 I, 134).

*Distribution:* Map 45 shows the distribution of firesteels. These are markedly concentrated in East Anglia and the south-east of England, with only the possible firesteel at Wigber Low Db 3 falling outside this area.

#### 4.38.2 Other bags (Figs 4.28 and 4.29)

*Description:* 45 graves definitely contained other bags and, of these, Shudy Camps Ca 19, Finglesham K 57 and Finglesham K 138 had two bags. Marina Drive Bd E1/E2 (a double grave) appears to have contained three bags.

Another fifteen graves had collections of objects tightly packed together, which seem to indicate the presence of a bag; some of these have been interpreted by their excavators as box collections, but there is little evidence either way. At Harford Farm Nf 28 there was one of these collections at the waist, and another together with an iron ring at the hip. The presence of links and other items usually associated with chatelaines near the Harford Farm Nf 28 ring means that the complex may have been a chatelaine in a bag, or may not have been a bag at all. This is also the case in four other graves (Harford Farm Nf 27, Polhill K 66, Burwell Ca 76 and Shudy Camps Ca 76). In one other grave, Burwell Ca 55, an openwork bronze disc silvered on one surface only may have been part of a chatelaine, or attached to a box or bag.

In all, then, there may have been up to 65 bag-graves in the study, in addition to those containing firesteels which, as seen above, were probably not bags or pouches at all. Bags can

be difficult to identify, due to a lack of inorganic parts; those which close with a drawstring, or with the top held closed by a narrow ring, are often unidentifiable. Collections of tightly packed artefacts often include narrow rings, which have sometimes been identified as amulets (Meaney 1981, 176).

There was a great variety of construction in the definite bags. Six had ivory rings, which varied in size between 56 and 127 mm external diameter. Nine bags had similar rings of bronze or iron, ranging in size from 58 to 118 mm external diameter. Finglesham K 57 contained an iron ring of 65 mm, in addition to two small bronze catches (see below), and so contained two bags. Buckland Dover K 141 contained a decorated bronze ring interpreted by its excavator as a bracelet, which was found at the waist immediately next to a tightly packed group of objects including a perforated silvered bronze Roman coin, some S-shaped pieces of bronze wire, some iron pin fragments and two glass beads. This collection must have come from a bag, framed by the bronze ring. These nine bags do not include the five possible bags or possible chatelaines listed above.

Sixteen graves had small bronze catches, with a fixed rivet at one end and a hook to go around a free rivet at the other. These have been interpreted (e.g. by Lethbridge, 1931, 48) as box fittings, but their association with decoratively perforated leather at Bekesbourne I K 30 and 38 and with textile at Painsthorpe Wold NHu 6a shows that they are probably from flexible bags or pouches.

Leather and textile from a bag are occasionally preserved, sometimes with small rivets or clips, and in some cases, as at Finglesham K 82, Winkelbury Wi IX and Swallowcliffe Down Wi, the leather or textile appears to have been supported by a wooden or metal frame. The rare preservation of organic bags warns that very many more, perhaps with drawstring closures, may have decayed completely.

*Date:* It seems that, as expected, the datable bags in this study tend towards the last years of the seventh century and the first years of the eighth. Finglesham K 7 contained a P I Pada thrymsa of c. 660-65, Boss Hall Sf 93 a primary sceatta of c. 690, and Finglesham K 145 and Garton-on-the-Wolds NHu 44 eight sceattas each, deposited c. 695-700 and c. 725 at the earliest (see section 2.2.5 for details of the dating of these coins). Three of the definite bag-graves contained workboxes, and there was a fourth in one of the possible bag collections. An openwork buckle was found with a small bronze catch in Holborough K 11; Swallowcliffe Down Wi is dated on a number of grounds to the later seventh century (see above, section 4.18).

All of the ivory bag-rings were datable to the second half of the seventh century or the first half of the eighth. Buckland Dover K 53 contained amethyst beads and was dated by Evison to her Phase 5 (650-675) or later (Evison 1987, 141). Grave 160 contained a palm cup and was dated to Phase 6 (675-700), and grave 75, with shears and an amethyst bead, was dated to Phase 7 (700-750); these dates are based both on artefacts and on horizontal stratigraphy and are likely to be trustworthy. Finglesham K 200 contained an openwork buckle, Woodyates Do contained a chain and a millefiori glass pendant which may have originally come from a linked pin set, and Shudy Camps Ca 19 contained five silver bullae.

No bag-grave in the sample appeared to be in an early seventh-century assemblage, although it seems unlikely that there was a real hiatus in bag deposition, given its occurrence in the fifth and sixth centuries.

*Social meaning:* Bags (other than firesteels) are found far more frequently with female- than with male-associated objects. There are 21 definite bags in female-linked assemblages, but only two in male-linked ones, Finglesham K 82 with a spearhead and Shudy Camps Ca 36 with a spearhead and seax. This may, however, merely be a concomitant of their use as containers for small objects, which are more often female-linked. Apart from those bags for which the only evidence is a collection of objects, and the bag/chatelaine rings which were all found next to possible bag contents, seventeen had some surviving contents - usually coins or other amulets, jewellery or tools - but no organic contents have survived. In perhaps ten cases, all the objects in the grave were hidden from view inside the bag.

As bags seem to become more popular towards the end of furnished burial, it might be expected that they would be found predominantly in poorly furnished graves, but in fact this is complicated by two considerations; firstly their use as containers for often large quantities of small objects, and secondly the possibility that some bags were desirable items in their own right and others were not, being merely containers.

*Distribution:* Map 46 shows a fairly even spread of bags across England, although they were slightly more popular in Kent and East Anglia. From Huggett's map of ivory bag-ring graves of all periods, it appears that they were most popular in East Anglia in the fifth and sixth centuries (1988, 68 and fig 3). In the Conversion period, however, they are more popular in Kent. It is possible that the earlier and later rings are made from different sources of ivory, first walrus imported over the North Sea, and later elephant imported via a Continental source to Kent.

#### 4.39 BOX (Figs 4.29, 4.30 and 4.31)

*Description:* The most common type of box found in Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon graves is the wooden casket with iron fittings, about 300 mm by 200 mm and 200 mm tall. Fittings could include one or more of a rectangular or ring handle, angle irons, a lockplate or hasp, and hinges for the lid. Out of the 52 boxes in 48 graves in this study, all but eight were of the casket type. Three others appeared to have been of much the same size, but without metal fittings, all now represented by patches of decayed antler (the two boxes at Buckland Dover K 150) or antler and oak (at Buckland Dover K 141). No antler boxes had conventional metal fittings, but one of the boxes at Buckland Dover K 150 had the type of bronze repair clips that are usually interpreted as mending cracks in wooden vessels. Five other graves contain what appear to have been small wooden or leather boxes a few inches across, with small metal clips but no handles or hinges or locks.

There are scraps of organic matter and odd nails, staples and metal plates in a further thirteen graves. These could be boxes, but could equally well be parts of decayed coffins or any other wooden item reinforced by the odd bit of metal, and they are not included here.

The type of wood used is known for fourteen of the caskets with metal fittings. Out of the fifteen caskets at Finglesham K, seven were of beech, with one of maple and one of either apple, pear or hawthorn. Out of the five caskets at Buckland Dover K, two were of beech. The Swallowcliffe Down Wi casket was of maple, and the caskets from Cow Low Db and Castledyke SHu 35 were of ash. The casket fittings from Harford Farm Nf 18 have both ash and alder grain preserved.

*Date:* Speake has said that "With few exceptions caskets are not known in Anglo-Saxon graves until the seventh century, although they are found in sixth-century Frankish graves." (1989, 29). At Buckland Dover K, caskets are not found before Phase 3 (575-625), but appear to peak in popularity in this phase, six out of the eleven Buckland Dover K caskets being of this date (Evison 1987, 172). All these Phase 3 caskets, though, appear to date from before 600.

Of the other caskets from Buckland Dover K, one is from Phase 4 (625-650), three from Phase 6 (675-700) and one, grave 83, is from Phase 7 (700-750). At Finglesham K, a casket was found in grave 95 with the famous "Finglesham Man" triangular buckle, dating to the early or middle seventh century, and one in grave 8, with a workbox. Five other caskets were found with workboxes, and one of these, Harford Farm Nf 18, also contained a sceatta of c. 690-700

(see section 2.2.5). Two graves contained linked pins, and one contained an openwork buckle. There is therefore ample evidence to show that caskets were still used as grave furniture into the early eighth century, but little synthesised evidence, as yet, to help pin down their start date outside Kent.

Buckland Dover K has produced four antler boxes, one from the late sixth century and three in two graves both from Phase 6. As they are of the same size as the wooden caskets, there may be little functional difference between the two types.

Smaller boxes are occasionally found in sixth-century contexts, such as at Apple Down WSx 54 (Down and Welch 1990, 105). The five small boxes in this study include one from the early seventh-century Holborough K 7 and the mid seventh-century Alton Ha 16; the others are not closely datable.

*Function:* The proportion of boxes containing items (twelve, or 23%) is similar to the figure for bags (26%), excluding those known only from groups of contents. Although decayed organic contents are obviously not represented here, it seems likely that the majority of boxes were interred empty, and therefore have a function within the grave in their own right, not merely serving as a container. Boxes, unlike bags, are not part of the costume, but are intentional grave-offerings. It might be thought that intentional grave-offerings should decline earlier (see below, section 4.41), but the dating evidence cannot confirm this suggestion, boxes being found throughout the Conversion period. The dating evidence provides no support, either, for the view that boxes might function as concealing devices for grave-goods at a time when their conspicuous display was becoming inappropriate.

*Social meaning:* Caskets are most often found in adult women's graves, with at least 34 cases. Four were found with children under twelve, and in two of these graves there were other female-linked items; the children range in age from one or two years old to ten years old. At Finglesham K 62, a double grave containing a man and a woman, there were two boxes, one above the head of the woman and one below the feet of the man. The layout of the grave means that it is hard to decide which box belongs to which body, and it is possible that both boxes belonged to the woman; against this, it must be said that in no other grave is there more than one casket, although there are two antler boxes in Buckland Dover K 150. Similarly, Polhill K 102 is a double grave of a man and a woman and the owner of the casket is unclear. Patrick Ottaway has suggested that the iron "tweezers" at Buckland Dover K 156, in a male grave with a spearhead, may in fact be the leaf spring from a lockplate (pers comm). The only definite

male casket-grave in this study, however, is Finglesham K 95, with the famous triangular buckle and an F1 spearhead. None of the late sixth-century caskets at Buckland Dover was in a male grave and it may be that Finglesham K 95 is an anomaly.

The grave with the two antler boxes, Buckland Dover K 150, was, however, sexed on osteological grounds as male. Three out of the five graves with smaller boxes also contained weapons, with one of the others being unsexed and one with female-linked objects. It is possible that caskets were, like combs, a female-linked object that could occasionally be found in an unusual male grave, but that other boxes did not have any particular gender link.

Caskets were found in graves of varying wealth, from high-wealth isolated barrow burials to cemetery graves with no other grave-goods. It is interesting, however, that both the maple caskets, from Finglesham K 95 and Swallowcliffe Down Wi, were found in graves of relatively high wealth.

If a casket can be locked, it can be used to exclude people from the objects within, which has implications for the way in which property was perceived. This is explored further under section 4.40 below.

*Distribution:* All types of boxes were commonest in Kent (Map 47), with a thin but even spread over the rest of the country.

#### 4.40 PADLOCK (Fig 4.31)

*Description:* Six graves in the study contained barrel padlocks. These are cylindrical objects with lock mechanisms inside the cylinder and U-shaped shackles at one end; often both the shackles and the mechanisms are missing. Most of the padlocks are recent finds, and at the time of writing, no padlock has been published in detail, so there is only limited information about their character and context. The padlocks come from Finglesham K 6, Castledyke SHu 1, Cow Low Db, Harford Farm Nf 7 and 18 and Didcot Power Station Ox 2, and can be made entirely from iron, or partly of iron and partly of bronze.

*Date:* Padlocks are not found in graves before the seventh century, and most barrel padlocks in England have been found on Anglo-Scandinavian sites from the tenth and eleventh centuries (Rogers 1993, 1422). Four Conversion-period barrel padlocks are, however, figured in *Inventorium Sepulchrale* (Faussett 1856, 106 and pl 10, 8-10), from Sibertswold K 24 and 151,

Chartham Down K 44 and Kingston Down K 299. Those from Sibertswold K 24, Chartham K 44 and Kingston Down K 299 have an outer case, at least, of bronze; that from Sibertswold K 151 is of iron. Kingston Down K 299 is a high-wealth grave with datable objects; it contained worn keystone and plated disc brooches, and its dating is explored in section 4.24 above. It is probably to be dated to the middle of the seventh century.

Of the padlock-graves within the present study, only Cow Low Db and Harford Farm Nf 18 are closely datable. The former was associated with linked pins and the latter with two Series B sceattas, the later of which was minted c. 690-700 (see section 2.2.5).

In summary, then, it can be said that, apart from Kingston Down K 299 which may date to around the middle of the seventh century, barrel padlocks seem to date from the end of the seventh or the early eighth century onwards.

*Function:* At Harford Farm Nf 18, Cow Low Db and the four graves listed by Faussett, the padlocks were found close to the remains of a casket. At Castledyke SHu 1, the padlock appeared to be on its own by the pelvis, although the grave was disturbed. At Didcot Power Station Ox 2 the padlock was at the feet with the horse teeth and a whorl, all of which may have been in a bag. At Finglesham K 6, the padlock was also in a bag, but by the hip and with a pointed iron tool and an iron rod, which may have been the key to the padlock. A key was also found nearby at Harford Farm Nf 18.

The padlock was probably an all-purpose lock, as today, and would have found its way into the grave on boxes or in bags; although the Didcot Power Station Ox 2 bag seems to have contained items which may have been amuletic, from the other finds there seems no reason to assume that padlocks had an amuletic function as well.

*Social meaning:* Of all the Conversion-period graves to contain padlocks, Finglesham K 6 is the only male. The skeleton was of a man between 50 and 60 and contained a C2 spearhead, knife and triangular buckle as well as the bag and an amber bead which may have been the closure to the bag. Harford Farm Nf 7 was unsexed, and Sibertswold K 24 was the grave of a child, the coffin "not being above three feet long"; the other graves were of adult women. The preponderance of women may, however, be the result of the padlock's usual place on a casket.

Locks exclude certain people from places or objects, and so cast light on notions of private property. It has been suggested that barrel padlocks could have been used almost as seals,



visually emphasising the closure (Tomtlund 1978, 13). The symbolic use of padlocks in the burial, to close a life (Tomtlund 1978, 13), does not seem likely in an Anglo-Saxon context. At least some of the padlocks appear to have been buried in a functional condition, perhaps even with a key in the case of Finglesham K 6, and the rite is so rare that its symbolic meaning ought to have been more specialised.

*Distribution:* The example of padlocks shows well how distribution maps for Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon objects have changed in the past few decades. Of the five padlocks known before 1960, four were from Kent. Since 1960, another five have been found, but all but one is from outside Kent. The distribution map for all padlocks known from Conversion-period graves (Map 48) shows that although there is still a concentration in Kent, padlocks are beginning to be found in all areas of the country, excepting Northumbria, which is still blank.

#### 4.41 VESSELS IN GENERAL

*Description:* The vessels found in Conversion-period graves are classified below by material (bronze, glass, pottery and wood). They share a common practical function and, to a certain extent, social meaning, explored in this general section. In the individual sections below, only those aspects of practical function and social meaning particular to that vessel type have been included.

*Function:* To investigate the use of vessels in the burial deposit, it is necessary to decide whether the vessel was included merely to hold another desired object, such as food or drink, or because of its own innate qualities. None of the vessels in the present study were found with inorganic contents, and in many cases organic contents would have completely disappeared. The form of the vessel, however, may give clues as to whether it could hold solids or liquids in transit.

*Social meaning:* The incidence of vessels, as well as other containers such as boxes, is particularly important in graves of the Anglo-Saxon Conversion period. It can be argued that items of personal adornment, including weapons, are not, strictly speaking, grave-offerings at all, but are simply a concomitant of burial in clothes; therefore, a different symbolic role for other objects should be inferred. Even if clothing items were deliberately selected as grave-offerings, containers are still different in that their form and decoration may not have been connected with conventions of personal appearance.

It has been suggested by some writers (e.g. Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 46 and 53; Halsall 1990, 298-99) that non-clothing items such as containers cease to be used as grave-furniture, both in England and on the Continent, during the first half of the seventh century. This is seen as the beginning of a slow end for grave-goods; they lose their power to signal social relationships, become functional only as body wrappings, therefore superfluous in a demonstrative funerary context, and then disappear entirely. However, if vessels continue to be deposited for as long as other grave-goods, then the grave-offerings *are* being used for their power as signals, and not just in a functionalist way, right until the end of furnished burial, with the grave assemblage forming a tableau of objects, and not just consisting of a dressed body.

Vessels have also been identified as an indicator of rank (e.g. Shepherd 1979b, tables 2 and 3; Arnold 1980, table 4.5; Dickinson and Speake 1992, 112; Dickinson 1992, 431). It is possible to get a rough shorthand idea of the wealth of a burial by counting its vessels. The numbers of vessels in the multi-vessel graves in the sample are shown below in Table 4.16.

The four graves at the top of Table 4.16 have the highest wealth of all graves in the sample. The poorer graves all include a pot among their vessels, and so perhaps this most common of vessels should be excluded from vessel counts as a measure of wealth. When this is done, the vessel count is a fairly good measure of the relative wealth of the other grave-goods within a grave. It can also be seen from Table 4.16 that the graves with the highest vessel counts tend to be isolated barrow-burials.

The relatively high wealth of vessel-graves, and the occurrence of food remains in some of the vessels, suggests that the symbolism of the vessel-graves was in some way connected with feasting. The common literary descriptions of feasts provided by a lord show that this form of conspicuous consumption was valued in secular Anglo-Saxon society as a symbol of wealth and power (Campbell 1981, 77).

Grave	Vessel count	Type of vessels	Other grave-goods include:
Taplow Bu	18-20	Bronze, bucket, wood, glass, horn	Gold jewellery, textiles, many weapons, playing pieces
Broomfield Ex	11	Bronze, bucket, iron, wood, glass, horn, pot	Gold and garnet buckle, textiles, weapons, pile cloak
Asthall Ox	8+	Silver, bronze, organic, pot	Bronze strap-fittings, playing pieces, scraps of many other items
Swallowcliffe Down Wi	5	Bucket, iron, glass	Silver jewellery, casket, satchel, water-sprinkler, bed
Shudy Camps Ca 65	3	Pot	Bronze pin, amulet bead
Benty Grange Db	2 or 3	Bronze, wood, cauldron chain	Helmet, pile cloak
Buckland Dover K 137	2	Bronze, pot	2 knives, spear, simple bronze buckle
Melbourn Ca IX	2	Bucket, wood	Bronze pin, 2 amethyst beads, lace tags, double comb, chatelaine
Finglesham K 95	2	Bucket, pot	"Finglesham Man" gilt-bronze buckle, casket, spearhead, set of shoe buckles and lace-tags
Hadleigh Road Sf 85	2	Glass	2 combs, simple buckle, chatelaine
Finglesham K 86	2	Glass, pot	Knife, spear, steel
Finglesham K 132	2	Glass, pot	6 amethyst beads, other beads
Alton Ha 16	2	Wood	2 spears, sword, shield, silver-gilt buckle, box
Finglesham K 25	2	Wood	Inlaid buckle, set of tools
Finglesham K 7	2	Pot	Silver jewellery, gold solidus, Pada thrymsa
Marina Drive Bd G2	2	Pot	Knife, ?spearhead or ?ferrule
Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 57	2	Pot	Casket, necklace of beads and silver rings
Oxton Nt	?2	Wood, ?bucket	Sword, shield, ?spear, ?playing pieces
Ford Wi 18	?2	Bronze, ?wood	Seax, shield, 2 spears, comb, iron and garnet buckle

**Table 4.16** Conversion-period graves with more than one vessel

## 4.42 BRONZE VESSELS

Fifteen graves contained bronze bowls or parts of bronze bowls; in twelve graves the bowls were deposited entire. Out of these, two were "Coptic" cast bowls, four were hanging bowls, and six can be described as miscellaneous.

The other three graves (Camerton Av 32, Marina Drive Bd B3/B4 and perhaps Orsett Ex CF9) contained parts of hanging bowls, but these were apparently being used as amulets, and so are discussed in section 4.47.2 below.

### 4.42.1 "Coptic" vessel (Fig 4.32)

*Description:* The two "Coptic" cast bronze vessels in the sample are from Asthall Ox and Taplow Bu. The Asthall Ox bowl belongs to Werner's type B1 (Higginbottom 1975, table 4; Richards 1980, 233; Dickinson and Speake 1992, 101), but the Taplow Bu bowl, originally a type C (Werner 1957, 127), has been re-assigned by Richards to his new type B5 (1980, 233).

*Date:* Both Asthall Ox and Taplow Bu belong to the first half of the seventh century, having both Style I and Style II decorated objects. All other cast "Coptic" vessels in England also date from the first half of the seventh century. The Wickhambreux K bowl was associated with a step-cloisonné and filigree sword-bead, a triangular buckle with Style II decoration and a late type of claw-beaker; the Westwell K bowl was found with a pair of squat jars. The Cuddesdon Ox bucket is dated by Dickinson to the early seventh century (1974, 24). Sutton Hoo Sf Mounds 1 and 3 also follow this dating, while the tea-pot-shaped vessel from Wheathampstead Ht, found with a plain palm cup, could perhaps be later.

*Function:* Although bronze bowls provide a good micro-climate for organic preservation, no "Coptic" bowl has been found with any preserved contents. The wide and shallow shape of most of the "Coptic" bowls argues against a function as a container for goods in transit, and suggests instead a use at table. Paulsen and Schach-Döriges have drawn attention to the occasional presence on a "Coptic" bowl of a cross motif, and have postulated an additional use for liturgical washing of the hands or feet (1978, 50-53).

*Social meaning:* With so few examples in the sample, any comments regarding the social meaning of "Coptic" vessels must be limited. Both Taplow Bu and Asthall Ox are high-wealth isolated barrows; many other "Coptic" vessels outside the sample are stray finds, or come from

grave-groups which cannot be reconstructed, but those contexts which are known tend to be high-wealth. Taplow Bu is an inhumation with male-linked grave-goods, and Asthall Ox is an unsexed cremation. Where the sex of a body buried with a "Coptic" vessel is known, it is almost always male, although it seems that one of the B1 bowls from Sarre K was found in a woman's grave (Richards 1980, table 6).

*Distribution:* No "Coptic" vessel is known to have been found north of Norwich. Their distribution is concentrated in Kent and East Anglia, with over two-thirds of English bowls coming from these areas (Richards 1980, 233).

#### 4.42.2 Hanging bowl (Fig 4.32)

*Description:* Seven bronze bowls in the sample fall into the class of hanging bowls, defined by Brenan as being of spun bronze with escutcheons (1991, 1). Three other graves, Camerton Av 32, Marina Drive Bd B3/B4 and perhaps Orsett Ex CF9, contained escutcheons only.

*Date:* Brenan has summarised previous work on hanging bowls, and has concluded that these, which all saw the manufacture of the bowls as starting no later than the fifth century, depended too heavily on art-historical studies (1991, 5-41). From a combination of archaeological evidence and chemical analysis of the enamels, she has argued that, while the majority of hanging bowls date from the second half of the seventh century, they can occur in graves from the middle of the sixth century onwards (1991, 65-74 and 129-33). The seven bowls which Brenan believes may date from the sixth century are those from Baginton Wa, the vicinity of Hadleigh Road Sf and possibly Cleatham SHu and Garton Station NHu (referred to by Brenan as Garton Slack), all graves which lack datable associations, and so are dated by the chronological span of the cemeteries; and Sleaford Li (Thomas 1887, 395), Chessell Down IoW (Arnold 1982, 23) and Loveden Hill Li, graves which do have datable associations. Although none of these graves was included in the sample, it was thought worthwhile to re-examine their contexts to see if the use of the hanging bowl in graves really did represent a continuation of sixth-century practice, or was a seventh-century innovation.

The cemeteries at Cleatham SHu and Garton Station NHu have still not been published, but from preliminary inspection it seems that Garton Station NHu is an entirely Conversion-period cemetery, and that Cleatham SHu is partly seventh-century. Baginton Wa, a badly disturbed but apparently predominantly sixth-century cemetery, has produced a later seventh-century Group 7 shield-boss 172 mm tall (Evison 1963a, 44 and fig 24a). The Hadleigh Road Sf cemetery has

produced nine recognisably Conversion-period burials out of around 115 graves. From the chronological spans of the cemeteries, therefore, there is a possibility or a probability that these bowls came from Conversion-period graves.

There is doubt about whether the Loveden Hill Li hanging bowls come from sealed assemblages. The objects found nearby, however, include a palm cup as well as less well-dated items such as a firesteel and a double-sided comb. The cemetery at Loveden Hill Li continued in use into the seventh century and, in view of the nearby palm cup, there seems no reason to exclude the possibility that the hanging bowls date from the very end of its life.

Sleaford Li and Chessell Down IoW cemeteries are thought not to continue into the Conversion period. There is no published plan for Sleaford Li, but there are hints that one or two graves (such as grave 26, with a "small earring of twisted silver wire") may date from the seventh century. Grave 103, with the hanging bowl, is one such. It contained, in addition, a pair of bronze tweezers, and an iron-bound bucket with a bronze rim. East has examined the construction of this bucket and, while she does not attempt to date it, she does give the nearest parallels as the buckets from Melton Mowbray Le and Taplow Bu (in Bruce-Mitford 1983, 589 and n 2). Taplow Bu is well-known as an early seventh-century burial, and the cemetery at Melton Mowbray Le dates at least in part from the same century. Again, then, it is possible that the Sleaford Li 103 bowl was deposited in the seventh century, although its worn and patched state may argue for a date of manufacture considerably earlier.

The hanging bowl from Chessell Down IoW 26 was found with "rims of buckets", a sword, shield, spearhead and knife, ten arrowheads and a straight-sided bucket made entirely from bronze and decorated with incised horizontal lines. The hanging bowl, bronze bucket, sword and some of the arrowheads survive, but the latter are undatable (Manley 1985; *pace* Arnold 1982). The bronze bucket is similar in shape to one from Chessell Down IoW 45, decorated with punched outlines of a hunting scene. Grave 45 also contains three square-headed brooches, a keystone garnet disc brooch and a crystal ball and perforated spoon and must therefore be dated to the second half of the sixth century (Arnold 1982, 26-28).

The bronze bucket from grave 45 is part of a class of Late Antique decorated sheet-bronze vessels discussed by Mundell Mango *et al.* (1989), dated to the sixth century on art-historical grounds. However, the Chessell Down IoW 45 bucket is the only one with a datable context of deposition, and it is possible, due to the extreme conservatism of the Late Antique vessel industry (Richards 1980, 113 and see above, section 2.3.3), that manufacture continued beyond

the sixth century. Moreover, the relevance of transferring the art-historical date for the decorated bucket in grave 45 to the undecorated bucket in grave 26 is dubious, and so on balance the range of possible dates for grave 26 must include the seventh century. An examination of the possible sixth-century hanging bowls has, therefore, shown that it is likely that all hanging bowls should in fact date to after 600.

The recognition of hanging bowls as confined to the Conversion period means that Chessell Down IoW 26 now becomes the first Conversion-period burial to be identified on the Isle of Wight (Arnold 1982, 109). The apparent hiatus in burial on the island during the Conversion period must reflect a lack of participation in the rest of England's changing material culture, rather than a real lack of burials. A different material repertoire or different burial practices on the island at this time cannot be due to physical isolation, and may relate to its late conversion (see section 6.7.6). Cemeteries on the Isle of Wight which appear to end in the late sixth century, may have later, but as yet unrecognised, graves, with the hanging-bowl from Chessell Down IoW 26 providing a tantalising preview.

All the hanging bowls thought by Brennan to be sixth century fall outside the sample of graves included in the present study. Within the sample, two, Barlaston St and Castledyke SHu 179, have plain swords, and are therefore undatable. Two have seaxes, Oliver's Battery Ha and Ford Wi 18. The former is a narrow seax with a cocked-hat pommel, which may date from the first half of the seventh century, and the latter is a two-handed narrow seax, probably from the second half. Ford Wi 18 has a medium-height Group 7 boss (142 mm tall); the other boss in the group is that from Gally Hills Sy, at 163 mm one of the taller Group 7s. The Benty Grange Db helmet is dated on art-historical grounds to the second half of the seventh-century (Bruce-Mitford 1974, 242).

The graves in the sample which contained detached escutcheons only were Camerton Av 32, Marina Drive Bd B3/B4 and perhaps Orsett Ex CF9. Camerton Av 32 had three escutcheons, perhaps from two bowls, one re-used as a pendant at the throat and the other two perhaps in some sort of wooden container between the legs, next to a knife. The grave also contained glass beads and a plain bronze disc pendant and so is not closely datable. Orsett Ex CF9 also contained, among other things, an iron seax fitting, which may give a *terminus post quem* of the second half of the seventh century (see above, section 4.32). Marina Drive Bd B3/B4 is perhaps the best dated, containing among other things a workbox, a hump-backed comb and a pair of shears. As the escutcheons would have to have had time to become detached from the bowls, and most of the datable graves with entire hanging bowls date from the second half of the

seventh century, escutcheon-only graves might be expected, like Marina Drive Bd B3/B4 and perhaps Orsett Ex CF9, to date from the very end of the seventh century or the early eighth century.

No attempt has yet been successful at formulating a hanging bowl chronology based on the art styles of escutcheons (Brenan 1991, 129-33). The escutcheons from the seven bowls in the present study are a mixed bag: plain bird-shaped at Ford Wi 18 and St Paul-in-the-Bail Li, plain circular at Castledyke SHu 179, a rather messy debased spiral design at Barlaston St, trumpet spirals at Oliver's Battery Ha and animal motifs at Benty Grange Db. Dating the deposition of hanging bowls can therefore only be accomplished by looking at their associated assemblages, and from these, the date of deposition of hanging bowls must have been in the seventh or early eighth centuries. *The hanging bowls in the sample, moreover, confirm that the deposition of hanging bowls was most common in the second half of the seventh century or the early eighth century, three of the four datable graves belonging to this time.*

*Function:* Brenan, in her discussion of possible functions of hanging bowls, considers the suggestions that they may have been fixed on tripods, suspended by chains or hung by one ring from a hook, may have held liquids at table, have been hung by springs for the refreshment of travellers, been used as scale pans for weighing wool, functioned as water compasses, lamps, liturgical hand-washing basins or baptismal bowls (1991, 27-41). She concludes that no possible function can be excluded completely, but that on the current evidence a completely secular use is probable. As hanging bowls appear to fulfil the same role in the grave as other vessels, it seems likely that their primary function was connected with feasting and drinking.

Two of the hanging bowls in the study had surviving contents. Both Ford Wi 18 and Gally Hills Sy contained crab-apples and other organic remains, which in the case of Ford Wi 18 have been identified as onions. Richards has listed a number of other bronze bowls with contents, most of which seem to have been the remains of food; animal bones at Sarre K, Morken and Pry, eggs at Finglesham K and Morken, nuts and fruit at Bonn and Broadstairs I K 71, and nuts at Sarre K, Faversham K, Finglesham K, Hitchin Ht, Selzen, Worms, Charnay-les-Chalon and Bonn. In the *Fürstengrab* at Morken, though, a tripod-ring bowl contained cereal grains and dried flowers, and at Villey-Saint-Étienne the skeleton of a raven or crow was found in a bronze bowl (Richards 1980, 2-3). These last two finds reinforce the view that the presence of food should not be seen as a purely practical grave-offering, but rather, as with other grave-goods, as a symbolic deposit (see below, section 4.47.1).



*Social function:* The seven hanging bowls which appear to have been deposited entire were, with one exception, in male weapon-graves. The exception is St Paul-in-the-Bail Li, which was found hidden behind a stone slab in an otherwise empty grave. It seems that the bowl was left behind by mistake when the grave was cleared or the body translated, and therefore no conclusions can be drawn from its lack of associated objects. Of the rest of the whole bowls, five were found in isolated mounds, and one (Castledyke SHu 179) in a cemetery. The escutcheon-only graves were those of females; although Camerton Av 32 contained a ten- to twelve-year-old child, and Marina Drive Bd B3/B4 the bodies of both a young man and a woman, in both of the graves the escutcheons were found with other female-linked items. This seems consistent with a secondary use as pendants or as amulets or keepsakes.

*Distribution:* Brennan has produced a distribution map of 78 hanging-bowl finds, both from funerary and other contexts, in mainland Britain (1991, fig 0.2). As only six finds are from non-funerary contexts it is easy to edit these out, and when this is done it is apparent that the distribution covers almost the whole area of Anglo-Saxon influence in the seventh and eighth centuries.

Three finds from mainland Scotland, as well as a small number of finds in Ireland and the Scottish islands, have been linked to art-historical arguments to support the theory that hanging bowls were manufactured in some area of the British Isles not subject to Anglo-Saxon influence; the only piece of manufacturing debris connected with hanging bowls is a fragment of a clay mould for an escutcheon found at Craig Phadrig near Inverness.

The theory that hanging bowls were made in Scotland and exported to Anglo-Saxon England might be thought unlikely in view of the much greater numbers of hanging bowl finds in Anglo-Saxon areas, but a similar distribution is found among "Coptic" bowls, few being found in the core areas of Byzantine influence such as Syria and Greece, and the greatest numbers being found in England, the Rhine/Danube basins and Nubia (Higginbottom 1975, 72; Richards 1980, 81-89). Arrhenius has also suggested a similar pattern of core and periphery for the distribution of cloisonné jewellery (1985, 96-100, 141-42).

#### 4.42.3 Miscellaneous bronze vessels

*Description:* This group consists of two fragmentary and unidentifiable vessels from Asthall Ox (Dickinson and Speake 1992, 102-04), a cauldron (similar to that from Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1) at Taplow Bu, a tripod-ring bowl from Uncleby NHu 31, a mended hemispherical bowl from

Buckland Dover K 137, and a "Coptic"-looking bowl from Broomfield Ex. Richards comments (1980, 47) that the flat-bottomed pan with drop handles from Broomfield Ex is *not* a Byzantine vessel, *contra* Swanton (1973, 87), but there seems to be little else known about it. No skillets occurred in the sampled graves, although at least five and perhaps seven skillets of Anglo-Saxon manufacture are known, from Cransley Nh, Desborough Nh, Rodmead Down Wi, Salisbury Racecourse Wi, Newton Lodge Wa and perhaps Whitby NY (two examples).

*Date:* Evison allocated Buckland Dover K 137 to her Phase 5 (650-675), and it contained a D1 spearhead, a buckle, two knives and a wheel-turned pottery bottle in addition to the hemispherical bronze bowl (Evison 1987, 103-4).

Most tripod-ring bowls appear to have been deposited in the sixth century, including most of the English bowls, but Kingston Down K 205 should be dated to the first half of the seventh century, and a grave at Sinzig in Germany contained, in addition to a tripod-ring bowl, a finger-ring containing a solidus of Heraclius and Heraclius Constantine (613-629) (Richards 1980, 19-20 and appendix 4). Fragments of a tripod-ring bowl, not included by Richards, were found at Castledyke SHu in 1939, apparently with a hanging bowl, workbox and set of scales (Watkin 1980). This and the bowl from Uncleby NHu 31, which was in a grave with at least one workbox, an annular brooch decorated with Style II animal heads, a knife and a spatulate tool, and an openwork buckle, must be among the latest of all tripod-ring bowls to be buried, at the end of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth century.

*Function:* This diverse group of bowls may have had diverse functions, but none is suitable for containing goods in transit and all are suitable for table use. As mentioned above in section 4.42.2, some Continental bronze bowls have been found with contents, not all of which have been food remains. The very large cauldrons found in bronze at Taplow Bu and Sutton Hoo Sf Mounds 1 and 2 and in iron at Broomfield Ex would have held a number of gallons, and been suitable for large groups of people feasting together.

*Social meaning:* A high proportion of miscellaneous bronze bowls are found in high-wealth graves such as Asthall Ox, Taplow Bu, Broomfield Ex, Salisbury Race Course Wi and so on. Buckland Dover K 137, with its plain and patched bowl, was sparsely furnished for a grave with a bronze bowl. These vessels could be found both in male graves and in female graves.

*Distribution:* There are so few miscellaneous bronze bowls in the sample that any comment on their distribution would be meaningless. There are enough tripod-ring bowls known, however,

to be able to distinguish a concentration in Kent; six of the nine tripod-ring bowls known from England come from Kent, with the other three from Castledyke SHu, Uncleby NHu 31 and from Clifford Street, York.

The conclusion from this group of bronze vessels is that the "Coptic" imports were the most common type during the first half of the seventh century, with the hanging bowls and miscellaneous bowls being rarer. The position was then reversed during the second half of the seventh and the early eighth century. The decline in deposition of "Coptic" bowls cannot have been due to their unavailability following the Arab conquests of the Mediterranean in the mid-seventh century (Higginbottom 1975, 116-17), as it is clear that other imports, such as amethyst beads, continued to arrive and to be buried.

#### 4.43 GLASS VESSEL (Fig 4.33)

*Description:* Ten graves in the sample contained glass vessels. Two graves, Hadleigh Road Sf 85 and Swallowcliffe Down Wi, had two palm cups apiece, and four other graves (Cow Low Db, Buckland Dover K 160, Finglesham K AA4/14 and Finglesham K 132) contained a single palm cup. All of these palm cups were of Harden's type Xb, undecorated, with solid thickened or outward-rolled rims (Harden 1956). In addition to the palm cups, Broomfield Ex had a VIIIa iv latticed squat jar, Finglesham K 86 a VIa large bag-beaker, Buckland Dover K 6 a Vb domed and constricted bell-beaker, and Taplow Bu contained four tall slim IId claw-beakers.

*Date:* Over half of these glasses have been excavated since Harden wrote his seminal article in 1956, but his dating still stands in most cases. No plain (as distinct from ribbed) palm cup grave need belong to before c. 650, but all the datable graves with other vessel types belong to the first half of the seventh century. One possible exception is Buckland Dover K 6, containing an apparently early seventh-century bell-beaker, which has been allocated by Evison to Phase 5 (650-675); as discussed above (section 4.8), this was based on little evidence, and the grave is likely to have been earlier. Later glasses of various types are found on settlement sites, but it seems from the present study that the burial of all glass vessels apart from plain palm cups ceased in the middle of the seventh century.

Outside the sample is the rich burial of Salisbury Racecourse Wi, which contained five weapons including a Group 6 shield-boss, and five vessels including a skillet, ribbed palm cup and a IIIe cone beaker. Cone beakers, thought by Harden not to outlast the sixth century (1956, 140) can, therefore, occasionally linger on to be deposited in the early seventh.

Also outside the study is the early seventh-century grave at Wickhambreux K. This contained a "Coptic" bowl, a triangular buckle with interlaced ornament, a sword and a white sword-bead with a gold stud. The stud had a filigree collar, and garnet and blue glass in triangular and step cloisons. The grave also contained a claw-beaker of blue glass, but with the two rows of claws set vertically one above each other, not in the usual zig-zag configuration. This vessel was apparently unknown to Harden in 1956. The upper row of claws were not drawn out but remain as mere blobs. The beaker is of blue glass, a colour confined to the seventh century (Harden 1956, 142). The Wickhambreux glass joins the only Anglo-Saxon claw-beaker with claws in line known to Harden in 1956, that from Sarre (Harden 1956, 139). This is of an unusual bag-shape rather than the more common cone-shape, and Harden suggested that it was seventh-century. Despite the dangers of arguing from only two examples, it may be that in-line claws were a seventh-century characteristic.

*Function:* Harden has suggested that some glass vessels, especially palm cups, might have been used not as drinking vessels but as lamps, presumably either hanging or on stands (Harden 1956, 157). This idea may be supported by the similar size and shape of the iron lamp cups found on stands at Broomfield Ex and at Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1, where the cup still contained a lump of beeswax. The unstable bases of most of the glass vessels need not mean that they were unsuitable for drinking; it has often been suggested that Germanic society was characterised by drinking more notable for its ritual character than its practical nature, and "tumblers" may have exaggerated these traits (Näsman 1984, 96-97). The size of the glasses, however, makes it unlikely that they would have been used for communal drinking.

*Social meaning:* Looking at the list of graves with glass vessels, it is immediately apparent that they tend to be found in high-wealth graves, and others outside the sample for detailed study (e.g. Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 2 and Salisbury Race Course Wi) strengthen this impression. In contrast to the rich burials, however, are Finglesham K AA4/14, which had no other grave-goods, and Finglesham K 86, which had in addition a pot, a knife and a D2 spearhead.

Speake comments that

"Certainly two glass vessels in the Swallowcliffe grave are sufficient to confirm the high status of the Swallowcliffe woman. Indeed a pair of glass vessels, of any type, is rare in a single grave, but a pair of palm cups exceedingly so." (Speake 1989, 82).

The only example he quotes in addition to Swallowcliffe Down Wi is Kingston Down K 146, with two ribbed palm cups. I can add four other examples, all with pairs of plain palm cups:

St Martin-in-the-Fields GL, Desborough Nh, Hadleigh Road Sf 85 and Ipswich Buttermarket Sf 3. Little is known about the first of these, but the Desborough grave appears also to have contained a bronze skillet, a pair of scales, a silver spoon, and a silver hinge with Style II decoration. Hadleigh Road Sf 85 also contained a buckle, a chatelaine, two double-sided combs and two wire rings, and Ipswich Buttermarket Sf 3 also contained an unusual belt-set with a deeply jagged (not serrated) edge, and a full set of weapons - two spears, a seax, a knife and a shield. Kingston Down K 146 (dated by Harden to the sixth century (1956, 142)) contained a knife and a spear in addition to the pair of palm cups.

It may be interesting that out of the three sites reported as having stone coffins - Camerton Av, Peterborough II Ca and St Martin-in-the-Fields GL - the latter two have produced palm cups. However, it is possible that the description "stone coffin" may, in the latter two cases, mean simply "stone-lined grave", as at Mitcham Sy (Bidder and Morris 1959, 53-54). Glass vessels can be found in a variety of contexts, but the overall impression is of high status.

*Distribution:* At first glance, the impression gained from the distribution of glasses included in the sample (Map 49) is very different from that given by Harden's maps (1956, figs 30 and 32), which show distributions overwhelmingly concentrated in Kent. It is possible, however, that Harden's Kentish concentrations were caused by relatively few sites, and particularly by a very large number apparently found at Faversham K. Faversham was apparently seen as the best place for a dealer to attribute an Anglo-Saxon glass, and its large number of vessels may therefore be unreliable (Harden 1956, 133 n 3). Whether or not there is a change in distribution of glasses between the migration period and the Conversion period can only be answered by a broader and deeper study of the vessels than has been possible here.

#### 4.44 POTTERY VESSEL (Fig 4.34)

*Description:* Pottery vessels were found in 74 graves, usually singly. Three graves contained two pots, and two contained three. Vessels made on a fast wheel, either imported from Francia or derived from Frankish styles, were found singly in twenty-one graves, all but three in Kent. The rest of the pots were hand-made, a few imitating the wheel-made forms, but most being small, undecorated wide-mouthed jars or bowls. Some pots were small enough to be described as cups, and one grave (Shudy Camps Ca 65) contained three minuscule thumb-pots, interpreted by Lethbridge as having contained some form of ointment (1936, 21). No cremations in pottery vessels were included in the sample.

The study of middle Anglo-Saxon pottery is an enormous endeavour in its own right, and a detailed description of the fabrics and forms of pottery found in Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon graves would be inappropriate here, for three reasons. Firstly the wheel-made pottery has been well covered by Evison (1979), and discoveries since (e.g. a jug at Castledyke SHu 1) do not substantially alter her conclusions. Secondly, there is usually not enough information in the cemetery reports to compare fabrics, particularly if the pots are small, plain and hand-made. Chaff- and sand-tempered wares were certainly buried, but in most cases the fabric is not described. Thirdly, the number of pots in funerary contexts compared to those found on settlement sites in the seventh and eighth centuries is tiny, and any conclusions drawn from them would be subject to sampling bias. There is scope, however, for an examination of which pottery vessels were selected for burial, and why. The types chosen seem to have been subtly different to those found on settlement sites.

The only Ipswich ware or Ipswich-type ware vessel which may have been included in a grave was that from Framlingham Sf, a cemetery of doubtful date outside the sample. It was found near grave H.17, H.18 and H.19 but, as no grave cuts could be seen, its association is doubtful (Knocker 1958, 69). No other Ipswich ware vessel has any claim to use as a grave-good (Hurst 1976, 301; Alan Vince, pers comm). The only imported ware found in Conversion-period burials is the wheel-thrown pottery, although other exotica include Roman and even Iron Age vessels occasionally found in graves.

*Date:* Myres suggested that tall necks and round bottoms are characteristic of pots found in seventh-century cemeteries, compared to those found earlier (Myres and Green 1973, 69). At first glance, this does seem to be the case, pottery from earlier inhumation graves being more likely to be of the simple cup or bowl form with no neck, but without an exhaustive search of the literature it is hard to be certain, and any increased height of the vessels cannot yet be quantified. There seems to be little difference between seventh-century domestic and funerary pottery. Seventh-century cremations buried in pottery vessels are known (such as those at Apple Down WSx and Mucking Ex, and perhaps at North Stifford Ex and Bargates Ha), but these are dated stratigraphically or from their associated metalwork and, as yet, Conversion-period cremation urns out of context cannot be securely identified.

Hamerow has drawn attention to the lack of Ipswich ware in the settlement and cemeteries at Mucking Ex, and has suggested that this may show either that Ipswich ware has hitherto been dated too early, or that it was socially restricted. Hurst's influential dating of Ipswich ware to c. 650, if not a few decades earlier, depended on a number of sites, including Sutton Hoo Sf

Mounds 1 and 2 (1976, 301). Single sherds *were* found in both of the ship-burials, but neither were securely stratified and both may have been intrusive (Evison 1979, 53; Bruce-Mitford 1975, 279-80; 1983, 604-05). The few other sites cited by Hurst include the very dubious case of Framlingham Sf described above. As yet, the settlement evidence seems inconclusive, but the burial evidence suggests that Ipswich ware did not come into general use until *after* the main period of furnished burial, perhaps a hundred years later than the start date suggested by Hurst.

Most of the graves with pottery vessels cannot be closely dated. As the inclusion of a pot in the burial assemblage is a tradition continuing from the sixth century, the presence of associated early seventh-century objects such as the famous "Finglesham Man" triangular buckle in Finglesham K 95 is to be expected. The latest datable graves containing pots are probably Finglesham K 7, with a P I Pada thrymsa of c. 660-65 (see section 2.2.5), and Finglesham K 8, with a workbox. Buckland Dover K 109, a wheel-thrown pot, may date to Evison's Phase 6 (675-700) on the grounds of its position in the cemetery. A number of graves, however, have no other associated objects.

On this evidence, it does not seem justifiable to suggest that pottery vessels went out of use as grave-goods any earlier than other types of artefact. Without synthesised data on finds of pottery vessels in migration-period inhumations, it is hard to be sure if there is any decline in the numbers of pots deposited. It may be that the variation in numbers of pots at different cemeteries (see below) is also found in the earlier period, and so a large-scale survey would be needed to check whether pottery does become less popular.

*Function:* Unlike bronze vessels, no pottery vessels have been found with contents. This may be due to differential preservation; no residue analyses, which can identify certain contents, have been published, and it is thought that the imported wheel-made vessels were traded primarily as containers (for wine, olive oil, etc) rather than as prestige items in their own right. As many had a long life before they were buried, however, they almost certainly had secondary uses, and some of the more porous wheel-made vessels, such as that from Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1, may have held dry material (Evison 1979, 48-50).

*Social meaning:* For some reason, pottery appears to have been much more popular in certain cemeteries than in others. Chamberlain's Barn II Bd has nine pottery graves, but Marina Drive Bd only one. Uncleby NHu has none at all, and nor has Lechlade G1 among its seventh- and eighth-century graves. Buckland Dover K has seven, Finglesham K 27, and Polhill K one. Melbourn Ca and Burwell Ca have one each, but Shudy Camps Ca has six. This suggests that

pottery as a grave-good was considered more appropriate by certain communities than by others, and may support the argument that Ipswich ware is socially restricted, confined to communities who eschewed the burial of pots entirely.

Hurst offered another suggestion for the absence of Ipswich ware in graves, that its introduction and use may have been associated with the Conversion; but this has also been suggested for Frankish-derived wheel-thrown pottery, which is almost exclusively confined to graves, presumably because of its rarity (Evison 1979, 50).

Pottery as a grave-good does not appear to follow the rules which govern other vessel types. It is fairly common, found with both sexes and with all ages, and not correlated with particularly high-wealth graves. Only those wheel-made forms found outside Kent (perhaps imported from a different area; see section 5.3.3) conform to the norm for other vessels. The three non-Kentish graves in this study to contain wheel-made pottery were Asthall Ox, Broomfield Ex and Castledyke SHu 1. Castledyke SHu 1 was a disturbed grave, the upper body having been removed by a World War II air raid shelter construction trench, but the other two are high-wealth graves. Outside the sample, wheel-thrown pottery has been found at Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1, Brundcliff Db, in the robbed grave of Caistor-by-Norwich Nf 13 and among the finds from the cemeteries at Rainham GL and Prittlewell Ex; it is a rare find.

*Distribution:* Maps 50 and 51 show the distribution of hand-made and wheel-thrown pottery in Conversion-period graves. The strongly Kentish distribution of wheel-made pottery seen in Map 51 is to be expected, in view of the Frankish origin of these vessels (see section 6.6) but, more surprisingly, graves with hand-made pottery also show a concentration in Kent. Without comparing the pattern to earlier practice, it is hard to interpret the pattern, but it may be either that the increased prestige of imported pottery led to the greater popularity of all types of pottery in Kent, or that the existing popularity of pottery in Kent led to the larger amount of imported vessels being buried there. The first model would see imported pottery as being restricted to Kent, and the second would see it available in other areas, but simply more popular in Kentish burial deposits.

#### 4.45 WOODEN VESSELS

##### 4.45.1 Wooden bucket (Fig 4.35)

*Description:* A wooden bucket is defined as a straight-sided wooden stave-built container bound



with metal hoops. Fifteen graves in the sample definitely contained wooden buckets, and another two may have done. Broomfield Ex and Swallowcliffe Down Wi contained two buckets, Taplow Bu three, and the rest were all singletons. Out of the total of 21 possible buckets, fifteen were bound with iron only, two with bronze only (Portsdown II Ha 1 and Finglesham K 95), three with both bronze and iron (two from Taplow Bu and one from Swallowcliffe Down Wi), and the last was represented by only a handle. Where the wood used was specified, as at Swallowcliffe Down Wi, Finglesham K 95 and Portsdown II Ha 1, it was yew.

The metal fittings of most wooden buckets consisted of three hoops and an iron handle pivoted in perforated plates. Occasionally there were two or four hoops, and in one case (Portsdown II Ha 1) the perforated plates were replaced by hooked escutcheons holding rings, rather like those on a hanging bowl. A similar hook was found in Ford Wi 18, but could have belonged to anything organic which needed a hook; a strap, say. In the case of the buckets with both bronze and iron fittings, there were iron hoops but decorative bronze vandykes around the rim, which in the case of Swallowcliffe Down Wi was also bronze.

The mouth diameter of the buckets was the dimension most often recorded. This varied from 70 mm at Melbourn Ca XI to 440 mm at Taplow Bu (Table 4.17). Despite the small sample size, it can be seen that the bronze-bound buckets tended towards the smaller end of the scale, and that the buckets with both bronze and iron bindings tended towards the larger end.

*Date:* Iron-bound buckets appear in Anglo-Saxon graves from the middle of the sixth century onwards, and represent a technological advance over the fifth- and early sixth-century bronze-bound buckets, iron bindings being more likely to make the vessel watertight (East in Bruce-Mitford 1983, 587).

A number of the Conversion-period bucket-graves could be fairly closely dated. Taplow Bu, Broomfield Ex and Finglesham K 95 can confidently be dated to the early seventh century. Westgarth Gardens Sf 66 has a smallish Group 7 boss and perhaps belongs to the middle of the century, while Lechlade G1 40 has a broad seax and a taller Group 7 boss and therefore can be dated to the turn of the seventh and eighth centuries. All the datable female bucket-graves date to the late seventh or early eighth century; as well as Swallowcliffe Down Wi, there is Garton II NHu 7 with a workbox and Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 39 with a set of silver and garnet linked pins. There therefore appears to be a fairly even spread of dates throughout the seventh and early eighth century.

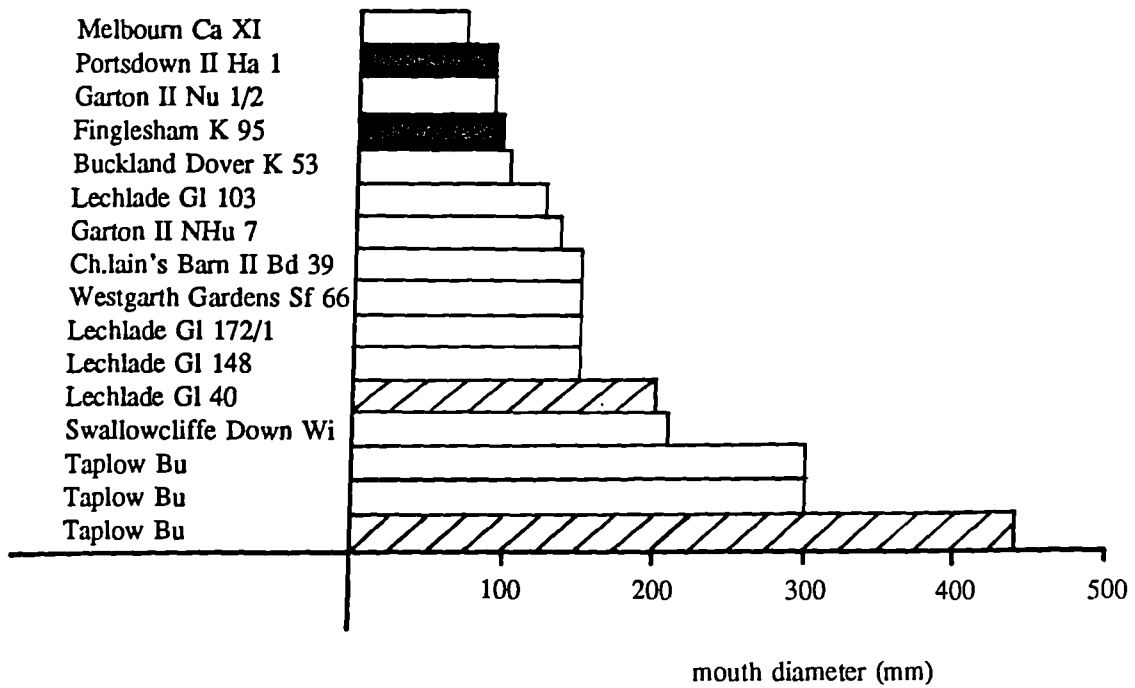
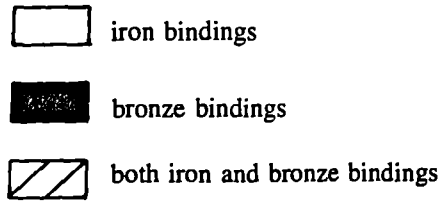


Table 4.17 Mouth diameters of wooden buckets

*Function:* The introduction of iron bindings does not mean that wooden buckets were intended to be watertight, but it does make it possible. The size range of the buckets is so large that they must have been used in a number of different ways; if they did hold liquid, perhaps the different sizes were used for different drinks. The largest approach the size of cauldrons, and could have been communal vessels used in feasting.

*Social meaning:* The sex correlations of the buckets were interesting. Apart from the possible bucket at Garton II NHu 1 or 2, every bucket was associated with at least one object that is linked to either men or women. Nine, including the detached handle, were in women's graves, and eight were with men, so although buckets in themselves do not indicate gender, they are found in graves which otherwise are sending strong signals of gender identity. Buckets were associated with particularly high-status graves, with three out of the seven weapon-graves containing more than three or more weapons, and the women's graves containing the silver and garnet linked-pin set as well as two gold pendants.

*Distribution:* The distribution of bucket-graves is shown in Map 52. They are spread over all regions, but seem particularly popular in central southern England.

#### 4.45.2 Wooden cups and bowls (Fig 4.36)

*Description:* The presence of a wooden vessel in a grave can rarely be established unless it bears some metal fittings, although all-wooden bowls are occasionally recognised where they are stacked with metal vessels, such as at Taplow Bu or Salisbury Racecourse Wi. Cups which have been made with metal rims, such as those found at Benty Grange Db, Alton Ha 16, Broomfield Ex, Melbourn Ca III, VI and IX, Finglesham K 25 and Taplow Bu, are readily identified in most cases, but in the particularly difficult case of the Asthall Ox cremation these mounts may be from a horn or horns. Small repair patches, on the other hand, could be from boxes or other organic items. In some cases the "repair patches" are so small that they are more like staples.

With these caveats taken into account, there are considered to be ten definite wooden cups or bowls in the survey made with bronze mountings, and eight made with silver mountings. The Asthall Ox mounts remain doubtful. There are then a further fourteen items with bronze repair patches and one with silver patches, which are considered more likely to be from vessels than from boxes. The total of graves with wooden vessels, including the dubious Asthall Ox, is 28.

Out of the definite, reconstructable vessels, all were cups with diameters between 65 mm and

100 mm, apart from a "platter" of diameter 230 mm from Finglesham K 56, and a mystery vessel from Oxton Nt, only represented by a U-section edging. It appears from the published eighteenth-century engraving to be around 150 mm in diameter, but whether this part of the engraving is at the same scale as the rest it is impossible to say.

*Date:* Most of the graves with wooden vessels are not closely datable. Objects of this kind are found in earlier cemeteries; Evison dates the metal-rimmed type to the later sixth and seventh centuries, and also lists a number of late sixth- and seventh-century findspots of repair patches (1987, 105). Early seventh-century examples from the present study include Asthall Ox, Taplow Bu and Finglesham K 25, this last being dated on the basis of its inlaid triangular buckle (Hawkes 1981, 59). From the second half of the century are Shudy Camps Ca 36, with a two-handed narrow seax, and Oxton Nt, which is associated with a Group 7 shield-boss. Many of the repair patches, though, are associated only with a knife and/or buckle. It can therefore be said that the deposition of wooden vessels continued throughout the period of furnished burial, but the dating cannot be focussed any more narrowly.

*Function:* The rimmed cups are all much the same size, and would have been suitable for holding drinks, having around a capacity of around half a pint. Other wooden vessels could have been of any size and shape and have been used for holding or storing virtually anything; as plates, bowls, storage jars, trays and so on.

*Social meaning:* The associations of wooden cups and bowls are different to those of buckets. Those with silver mountings are all with men, in rich graves except for Buckland Dover K 90. Those with bronze fittings are usually in graves fairly undiagnostic of sex; the few definitely female graves contain repair patches only. Those with metal rims of either metal tend, not surprisingly, to be in higher-wealth graves than those without, but this tendency is not universal. These associations show that the more prestigious wooden vessels are found in male graves.

*Distribution:* Map 53 shows the distribution of graves with wooden cups and bowls. Again, they are fairly evenly spread over England, with no particular concentrations or gaps.

#### 4.46 TOOLS

Most of the iron tools in this study have suffered badly from corrosion and were drawn without the aid of X-rays. Tools for working wood, bone, leather, metal, stone, etc., tend to be conservative in design from the Roman to the medieval period (Morris in Hamerow 1993, 69),

and so for interpretation, primary reference was made to the extremely well-preserved collection of 4700 iron objects from the ninth- to eleventh-century Anglo-Scandinavian site of Coppergate, York (Ottaway 1992), with further advice from Patrick Ottaway.

#### 4.46.1 Spatulate tool (Figs 4.37 and 4.38)

*Description:* There are 48 spatulate tools in this study, ranging from about 90 mm to about 155 mm in length, including tang, and from 6 mm to 20 mm wide; no grave contains more than one. The blade is of rectangular or sub-rectangular section, and the tang section can be square, circular or rectangular. In the classic cricket-bat-shaped spatulate tools there is a clear shoulder between tang and blade, but in other cases this shoulder can be so gently sloping as to be barely noticeable. The exceptions to these rules are Lechlade Gl 40, where the tool is quoted as 375 mm in length and 22 mm wide; Wigber Low Db 3, where the tool has a strange spiralled curly end but is otherwise perfectly normal; and the tools from Buckland Dover K 144 and Bekesbourne I K 31, which have expanded semi-circular tips.

*Date:* Sewerby NHu is the only cemetery which appears to have produced a spatulate tool from a pre-seventh century grave. Four objects are suggested as spatulate tools, from the seventh-century grave 48, the undated graves 37 and 52, and the apparently fifth-century grave 56, dated by its inlaid bronze buckle loop. All are in the conventional position parallel to and alongside the knife. The tools from 56 and 52, however, although they have rounded tips, have distinctly wedge-shaped sections, and are extremely doubtful members of the class defined as spatulate tools.

Two graves with spatulate tools, Finglesham K 25 and Castledyke SHu 94, contained triangular buckles and can therefore be dated to the first half of the seventh century. More graves can be allocated to the late seventh or early eighth century; Castledyke SHu 183 and Harford Farm Nf 28 with hooked tags and workboxes, Uncleby NHu 31 with a workbox or two and an openwork buckle, Lechlade Gl 40 with a broad seax and Group 7 shield-boss and Shudy Camps Ca 36 with a two-handed seax.

*Function:* Mortimer, writing in 1905, appears to have been the first person to refer to spatulate, cricket-bat-shaped iron objects as sharpening tools (e.g. Garton II NHu 3 and 14; Mortimer 1905, 247 and 251). He occasionally also appears to have identified the larger of the pointed iron tools (see below, section 4.46.2) as sharpening steels (e.g. Garton II NHu 13; Mortimer 1905, 251). Lethbridge and other writers followed his lead, until metallographic analysis of one

spatulate tool showed that its metal was softer than that of the accompanying knife. This, it was argued, made them impractical as sharpeners (Hirst 1985, 88-89). Since then, Patrick Ottaway has instead suggested that spatulate tools may instead be firesteels (pers comm).

The contexts in which the spatulate tools are found are very similar to those in which both whetstones and "purse-mount" type firesteels occur, and so do not really help in deciding between a sharpener function and a firesteel function. Neither spatulate tools, whetstones nor "purse-mount" type firesteels are confined to either sex (see below), and they are not mutually exclusive in graves. Two graves contain both a whetstone and a spatulate tool, and four graves contain both a "purse-mount" type firesteel and a spatulate tool.

Although the thinner end of the spatulate tool is always referred to as a "tang", it seems that this did not serve to attach a handle. Handles are not generally mentioned, even at Finglesham K where there was a good awareness of mineral-preserved organics. The exceptions are Sewerby NHu 48, with traces of bone or horn on the tang, and a small, very corroded and rather dubious example at Finglesham K 82. In the case of Finglesham K 163, traces of a leather sheath are visible on the metal of the blade and the tang, and so there cannot have been a handle in between the tang and the sheath.

The position of the tools within the grave may throw some light on the problem of function. Out of the 48 spatulate tool graves, 39 also contained a knife or knives. In 23 of the knife-spatulate tool graves, the position of the artefacts is known. Out of these, seventeen were placed in the grave as if they had been contained in the same sheath, and on some pairs mineral-preserved leather remains makes this certain. One further spatulate tool, from Harford Farm Nf 28, was contained in a bag with a pair of shears. Only one spatulate tool was found in a bag with pointed tools, and this was the wooden-handled dubious example from Finglesham K 82; in the other four graves which also contained pointed tools, the spatulate tool was not found with them. There is no evidence for spatulate tools being found with tinder pouches, though a small textile pouch with a drawstring is an ephemeral object. The only spatulate tool found with a flint is at Wigber Low Db 3 and, as explained in section 4.38.1, this is likely to be residual.

A function connected with the knife therefore seems more likely than a strike-a-light function or a function as some other sort of tool. It is possible that they could have been knife blanks, ready for forging into knives, but their typically rounded ends may count against this. Use as a sharpener should not be discounted merely because one example was made of a softer steel than its matching knife. A sharpener does not have to be harder than the object that it sharpens;

the leather strap used to sharpen razors in a barber's shop is a familiar example. The narrower tang could make it a multi-purpose tool. A firesteel function cannot be completely discounted, but there is no real evidence for this; after all, any flat piece of iron could be used to strike a light.

Two spatulate tools are perforated, from Milfield South Nb B3 upper burial and Finglesham K 59. Milfield South Nb B3's tool has three circular perforations along the length of the blade, each of 4-5 mm. Finglesham K 59's tool has a rather short blade, which looks as though it may have been broken, and a 1 mm circular perforation placed slightly off-centre. These tools are not wire-drawers, as they are not sturdy enough, and the holes are not countersunk or tapered (Scull and Harding 1990, 14; Patrick Ottaway, pers comm); the function of the perforations remains a mystery.

*Social meaning:* Spatulate tools are more common in Conversion-period graves than other types of tool, but in common with these are usually found in simply furnished graves. Four graves contained weapons, but two of these had just a spear and a knife. Four graves with spatulate tools contained richly furnished female burials, but of the rest, only twelve could be described as even medium-wealth, containing more than a knife and a buckle and perhaps one other item. As stated above, spatulate tools do not appear to be gender-linked, 23 being found with definite or probable males, and fourteen with definite or probable females.

The social meaning of iron tools in general is discussed below in section 4.46.3.

*Distribution:* The distribution of spatulate tools is shown in Map 54. They are found over the whole of England, although seem to be more popular, or more recognisable, in the east of the country.

#### 4.46.2 Pointed iron tool (Fig 4.36)

*Description:* The identification of pointed iron tools can be problematic. Corrosion tends to remove fine detail and, in the absence of X-rays, drawings can be vague or misleading. Iron rods or spikes partially covered with mineralised wood might also be identified as nails, or those without wood as part of a chatelaine.

Seventeen graves contained objects classed as pointed iron tools. They come from only five sites, Buckland Dover K, Burwell Ca, Harford Farm Nf, Garton II NHu, and Finglesham K. The

tools from Burwell Ca, three from grave 38 and one from grave 121, are not drawn, but are described as having pointed ends and wooden handles. The singletons from Garton II NHu 6 and 10 are described as "bodkins" whereas the larger tool from grave 13 is called a "sharpening iron" and the smaller an "iron pricker". The drawings show these to be corroded pieces of iron, pointed at both ends, with approximately half of the length of the object covered with mineralised wood. They range in size from 48 mm to 116 mm long. The single example from Buckland Dover K, from grave 149, is similar, with one end having a rectangular cross-section; that from Harford Farm Nf 4 has only a circular-sectioned tip surviving.

The records of the pointed iron tools from Finglesham K are more informative. There are fifteen mostly complete tools, plus three fragments which might represent one or more tools, from ten graves. Eleven of the tools have been tentatively identified by the excavator as awls. These generally have a circular-sectioned blade tapering to a point, and a square- or rectangular-sectioned tang embedded in wood with the grain parallel to the long axis of the tool. They range in size from 55 mm to 109 mm long and have handles of various woods, including holly, willow or poplar, and pear or apple or hawthorn. The other pointed tools from Finglesham K comprise two bent rods, one with a wooden handle, a straight slim rod with one end split and rivetted, and a handle-less circular-sectioned rod with a spherical head, possibly the remains of a suspension loop.

The objects from Buckland Dover K which Evison discusses under the heading "Awls" (1987, 110) are very different to those from other sites. Those from grave 65 have blunt points, thick square sections, and suspension loops instead of handles, but those from grave 9 are missing their points. No convincing explanation has yet been suggested for their use; they seem impractical for boring holes. They certainly cannot be classed as pointed iron tools; those from grave 9 were provisionally identified as a chatelaine, but the problems of this identification are discussed above in section 4.21. Both were buried with men, in graves dated by Evison to her Phases 4 and 5 (625-650 and 650-675) but both would probably be happier dated a little earlier; I have excluded grave 65 from this study on the basis of its late sixth-century shield-on-tongue buckle and shoe-shaped rivets. The dating of grave 9 appears to be based on its proximity to grave 6, which, however, is more likely to be early seventh-century (see above, sections 4.8 and 4.43).

*Date:* Graves with pointed tools begin in the early seventh century, with two awl-graves containing triangular buckles, although that from Finglesham K 6 had a broken plate and a replacement iron tongue and may have been buried after the middle of the seventh century. The



other, Finglesham K 25, contained the inlaid triangular buckle which is more certainly early seventh-century (Hawkes 1981, 59).

From the end of the seventh century or the early eighth century come Burwell Ca 121, with a workbox, and Finglesham 145, with two Series A and six Series B sceattas deposited after *c.* 695-700 (see section 2.2.5) contained in the bag with the tools. Outside the sample, Ipswich Buttermarket Sf 38 contained a pointed iron tool, a knife and a possible buckle, and a penny of Offa dating to *c.* 790. Graves containing pointed tools can therefore be found throughout the Conversion period.

*Function:* The identification of an iron object as a tool depends on an *a priori* assumption of function. To some extent, the location of the object within the grave helps in identification; some have been found in association with knives and other tools. Once an object has been identified as some sort of tool, allotting a precise function for it is difficult; a corroded, pointed iron rod with a wooden handle could be an awl, a gimlet or a punch, although they all tend to be described as awls. Patrick Ottaway has commented that awls can have sections of any shape, although diamond-shaped ones are the most practical for leather-working (pers comm).

The eleven tools from Finglesham which have been identified as awls are all small, and could have been used in leather, bone, wood or metal working. The other tools could also all have been used for making holes in something.

*Social meaning:* Out of the seventeen graves with pointed tools, ten are male, six are unsexed and one, Burwell Ca 121, is female. Burwell Ca 121 contained the largest of the tools, described as some seven inches long. This was the only pointed tool to have been contained in a box, but some of the tools were contained in bags of miscellaneous items (e.g. Finglesham K 6, 82 and 145). Others were placed together and parallel in the grave, sometimes with a knife and steel, and so may have been in small sheaths, toolcases or toolbags (e.g. Burwell Ca 38, Finglesham K 9 and all the pointed tools of uncertain identification from Finglesham K). Whether in a container or not, most pointed tools were found near the waist.

Pointed tools are found with a fairly restricted range of objects. Burwell Ca 121 is again the exception, with a necklace of bullae and silver rings, a chatelaine with a workbox attached and a casket containing a hump-backed comb, three whorls and an openwork girdle-ornament. Although all the graves contain other objects, most only have a knife, a buckle or two and perhaps one other object such as a strap-end, spearhead or pot. Garton II NHu 10 contained,

in addition to a knife, buckle and small box, two bridles; Finglesham K 6 contained a spearhead and a bag, perhaps closed by an amber toggle, and with a padlock and what may have been the remains of the key inside. Finglesham K 82 had a knife, buckle, spearhead and a satchel reinforced with bronze strips; and there is, of course, the coin-hoard at Finglesham K 145.

The social meaning of pointed iron tools is explored further in section 4.46.3, in conjunction with other types of iron tool.

*Distribution:* As only five sites are recorded as having produced pointed tools, the distribution map is patchy (Map 55). Tools at other sites may have gone unrecognised; the Uncleby NHu report mentions pieces of iron at the waist in graves 10, 26, 32, 38, 53, 56 and 63, but these are not illustrated, and cannot be positively identified. The Kentish concentration on the map may be due to the idiosyncrasy of individual cemeteries, as seen also in the distribution of some types of vessel. Finglesham K has ten graves with pointed tools, but Buckland Dover K has only one, from grave 149.

#### 4.46.3 Other iron tools

*Description:* Pointed iron tools are by far the most common type of iron tool in Conversion-period graves, but occasionally other types are found. A chisel has been identified from Finglesham K 144, a possible spokeshave from Lechlade Gl 40, and a bladed tool with a socketed handle from Wigber Low Db 4. Outside the sample for detailed study, there is a small hammer from Soham C Ca 1, found with two buckles, two knives and a whetstone. A detailed description of these tools, however, cannot be divorced from a discussion of their function.

*Function:* The chisel from the male grave of Finglesham K 144 has a square-sectioned shaft, 11 mm square, with a tip square in plan and V-shaped in section. It is 84 mm long, with 55 mm of its length covered with a wooden handle, the grain of the wood parallel to the long axis of the tool. It can perhaps be paralleled by the rather smaller chisel tip from Mucking Gröbenhaus 39, which has a 4 mm square-sectioned shaft (Hamerow 1993, 69, 121, fig 103).

The possible spokeshave from the male grave of Lechlade Gl 40 has a curved blade of about 80 mm long and 17 mm wide, originally with two tangs continuing the curve in the same plane. One survives, of about 76 mm, but the other is incomplete. Both tangs have the remains of wooden handles. Other spokeshaves or drawknives known from later Anglo-Saxon England have tangs bent at right angles to the long axis of the blade (Wilson 1976, fig 6.2 g; Carver

1979, 17 and fig 13; Ottaway 1992, 531-32).

The socketed blade from Wigber Low Db 4 seems to be unique. It was found next to the northern skeleton (apparently a woman, but see above, section 4.22.2). It is missing its tip, but appears to have a slightly curved blade 12 mm wide. It is perhaps no more than an idiosyncratic form of knife, but may be a more specialised tool, the concave curve of the blade perhaps suggesting a horticultural use (Patrick Ottaway, pers comm).

*Date:* Wigber Low Db 4 contained no precisely datable artefacts. The other two graves seem to date from around 700; Lechlade G1 40 contained a broad seax and a Group 7 shield-boss, and Finglesham K 144 had an openwork buckle. There are, however, earlier grave-finds of chisels, although they are by no means common; there is a chisel from inhumation 55 at the fifth- and sixth-century cemetery of Spong Hill in Norfolk (Hills *et al.* 1984, 108, fig 106), and there is an unillustrated "metal instrument, 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>-ins. long, possibly a chisel (metal not yet diagnosed)" from Alfriston II ESx 52 (Griffith and Salzmann 1914, 42). There are occasional finds of other tools in earlier graves, such as the sixth-century plane from Sarre K 26 (Dunning 1959).

*Social meaning of iron tools in general:* The function that the range of iron tools may have fulfilled in the grave is hard to reconstruct. They are not obviously status markers for any particular wealth-group, nor do they seem to be signalling any cultural allegiances, although the concentration of tools in Kent (see below) may argue against this. It is, of course, possible that small wood-, leather-, bone- or metal-working tools may have been deposited in the graves of wood-, leather-, bone- or metal-workers, and the predominantly male associations may be thought to reinforce this suggestion. Against this, it must be said that Anglo-Saxon furnished graves do not tend to produce "occupational" assemblages; complete sets of textile processing equipment are not found (see above, section 4.22), and weapon-assemblages can comprise apparently useless sets such as a single shield (Härke 1990). Similarly, comprehensive sets of tools are not found in graves.

An explanation must also be found for the sudden appearance of iron tools in graves. They are vanishingly rare in migration-period burials, but are common finds in migration-period settlements, and so had been available as grave-goods long before they were actually used.

The small size of many of the tools may mean that they were symbolic tokens rather than everyday tools. An interpretation which more closely fits the context of the graves might be that, with the changing patterns of manufacture and trade, there is a change in the symbolic

status of certain artisans. They may not have been wealthy, but with new openings for sculptors, scribes and coiners, the social value of their skills may have increased, and their tools may only then have been seen as useful funerary signalling devices.

*Distribution of iron tools in general:* Map 56 shows the distribution of all the iron tools considered here. It shows a very even and widespread distribution across England.

#### 4.46.4 Whetstone (Fig 4.39)

*Description:* Eight graves contained whetstones. They ranged from 99 mm to about 300 mm long and tended to be of square or sub-square section, of side between about 10 mm and 28 mm. Some tapered or were slightly rounded at the corners.

*Date:* No definitive list of Anglo-Saxon whetstones has been published since the Holborough report in 1956. Evison's later list (1975) is partial, only incorporating the Anglo-Saxon stones from Ellis's multi-period sample for petrological study (Ellis 1969). In the 1956 list of 21 findspots there are five sixth-century graves, seven seventh-century ones and one from the fifth century. Given that very many fewer seventh-century graves than sixth-century graves were then known, an increase in the rate of whetstone-burial could be suggested in the Conversion period.

The whetstone-grave at Harrold Bd 3 has already been fully discussed (sections 4.22.3 and 4.31); it should probably be dated to the early or middle eighth century. Of similar date may be Uncleby NHu 11 and Lechlade Gl 40, both with broad seaxes. Castledyke SHu 18A has a whetstone and a single iron prick spur, which is not an artefact type characteristic of furnished Anglo-Saxon burial and may indicate a comparatively late date. The late date indicated by these four graves is emphasised by the find of a small whetstone at the waist of grave 183, an otherwise unfurnished grave, in the eleventh-century execution cemetery at Guildown Sy (Lowther 1931, 32-33).

The other four whetstone-graves in the survey may be earlier, but do not need to be. Shudy Camps Ca 87 contains nothing closely datable; the most closely datable object at Camerton Av 95 is a pair of shears, which suggests a date in the second half of the seventh century or later (see below, section 4.46.5). Buckland Dover K 162 has been tentatively dated by Evison to her Phase 6 (675-700), or perhaps later (Evison 1987, 142).

Galley Low Db poses more problems. The assemblage was recorded by Bateman as including

the famous necklace of gold bullae and cabochon garnets, a bone pin, two large glass "amulet" beads, the whetstone and two iron arrowheads. The arrowheads are extant, although the whetstone is now missing; it appears that a mixture of male and female objects are represented, and so Galley Low Db may have contained two graves of differing dates, with the whetstone belonging to either.

*Social meaning:* Whetstones do not seem to be confined to either sex. Lechlade G1 40, Uncleby NHu 11 and Harrold Bd 3 were male graves, and Shudy Camps Ca 87 may have been. The shears in Camerton Av 95 probably indicate the grave of a woman, and the Galley Low Db whetstone may also have been in a female grave (see above). Whether or not they could be found with children is unclear. Buckland Dover K 162 had no surviving bone and was a small grave, only five feet four inches in length; Evison suggested that it had held a child, but this is not certain.

The symbolic significance of the whetstone in Icelandic literature has been explored by Simpson (1979), who concludes that it is a symbol of the thunderbolt, and thus perhaps a symbol of Odin, certainly a symbol of Thor, and generally connected with authority. This idea would, however, possibly not have been explored had the Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1 "sceptre" not been made from whetstone, and it is possible that those who have sought a high-status symbolic meaning for the whetstone have found what they are looking for. The varied contexts of whetstones, with men and women, and in both high- and low-wealth graves (Evison 1975, 83), argues against a high symbolic status for the object.

It is possible, however, that there may be two classes of whetstone, the first being the functional sharpener, smaller and showing signs of use, and the second the larger ceremonial stone, showing polishing consistent with having been held in the hand (as is the case with the stray find from Uncleby NHu, and the that from Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1), without marks of sharpening use, and occasionally decorated.

*Distribution:* Map 57, the distribution map of whetstone-graves, shows a remarkably wide geographical spread of graves for such a small sample size.

#### 4.46.5 Shears (Fig 4.39)

*Description:* 28 graves contained shears. The shears found in Conversion-period graves are always of a practical size and generally have a slight expansion to the loop, apparently a

transitional stage between the U-shaped loops of earlier shears and the circular loop of later ones. The circular loop is of greater mechanical efficiency than the U-shape (Goodall in Biddle 1990, 861). Buckland Dover K 83 is not included in this total; the object suggested as part of a pair of shears has a loop of rounded section, whereas all others are flat, and the "blade" has no cutting edge.

*Date:* Shears, many too small to be of any practical use, but a few full-size, are often found in fifth- and sixth-century Anglo-Saxon cremations. The miniatures always have a U-shaped loop, and are confined to cremation burials (Welch 1992, 66). Inhumation burials with shears, always full-size, became popular only in the seventh century (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 198; Evison 1987, 113), although there are occasional earlier examples; a grave from Mucking Ex with square-headed and saucer brooches and a pair of shears (Wilson 1968, 157) and a disturbed grave from Driffield I, in North Humberside, with a pair of shears and a pair of type g annular brooches (Mortimer 1905, 281).

The earliest shears-grave in the present study seems to be Finglesham K 138, which also contains a horned-head amulet. This has stylistic affinities with various other early seventh-century horned head motifs (e.g. the Finglesham K 95 triangular buckle and the Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1 helmet), but was re-used in a bag at the neck after being modified from an earlier use as a mount, so may have been old when buried. The majority of datable shears-graves, however, belong to the second half of the seventh or the early eighth century. Seven of the 28 shears-graves have workboxes, and two are coin-dated; Buckland Dover K 110 with Pada thrymsas of c. 660-80, and Harford Farm Nf 18 with a Series B sceatta of c. 690-700 (see section 2.2.5).

*Function:* Differences between fifth- and sixth century cremation shears-graves and seventh- and eighth-century inhumation shears-graves can be found, which argue for a different practical function and social role for the objects. In the cremation burials, the shears are usually found in sets with other toilet implements such as combs, tweezers and razors, often all miniature and unusable. As with combs (see above, section 4.24), the miniature shears may be connected with a cult of the head or the hair. In the 28 seventh- and eighth-century graves with shears, only six are found with combs and three others with a toilet set - not a particularly high total of toilet equipment.

It has been suggested that shears may instead be weaving tools (Evison 1987, 113), used for a variety of tasks such as nap shearing and thread cutting. Textile production might, however, seem to demand generally larger shears than those found in Conversion-period graves, and so

this suggestion should be re-examined.

Admittedly, many other weaving tools would have been of organic materials, but textile production tools are not particularly common in association with shears. One shears-grave, Buckland Dover K 75, contained a thread-picker, and another, Shudy Camps 76, a spearhead which appears to have been used as a weaving batten. Seven graves contained whorls, which may be connected with spinning. It should perhaps be concluded that shears were multi-purpose cutting tools.

*Social meaning:* None of the shears in this study were found with men. Green believed that shears and other miniature toilet implements found in cremation burials were in general indicators of male burial, but Richards found that one-third of his sample of shears were buried with females (Myres and Green 1973, 111; Richards 1987, 127). Shears are occasionally found in fifth- to seventh-century Frankish graves, but in both male and female graves (Pirling 1966, 210). The well-furnished grave of Didcot Power Station Ox 12 was that of a three- to five-year-old child.

In Conversion-period England, the restriction of shears to the graves of women and girls suggests a specialised function beyond that of multi-purpose cutting tools; shears were clearly fulfilling a function very different to that of knives.

The rise in the numbers of shears in inhumation graves may ultimately be due to a number of factors. One may have been a change in dress, with tools of all sorts now being worn by women on chatelaines, and hence being incorporated in the burial; men might have used shears in life, but not in such a way that they formed part of the dress, and so they may have been seen as incorrect items for the male burial assemblage. Another factor may have been an increasingly rigid division of labour between the sexes, with a consequent rise in the amount of gender-specific textile-related objects being deposited, including perhaps some shears.

*Distribution:* Map 58 shows the distribution of graves with shears. It is reasonably even across the country, with slightly more shears-graves per cemetery in Kent and East Anglia.

#### 4.46.6 Spoons and spatulas (Figs 4.40 and 4.41)

*Description:* Seven graves contained small iron spoons, with bowls ranging from 22 to 44 mm in length. These were initially classed as tools, because it seemed possible that they might have

been used as spoon augers or gouges. Two more graves, Holborough K 7 and Buckland Dover K 129, contained bronze "spatulas" with no dish to the bowl. In one of the graves with iron spoons, Burwell Ca 83, there was also a small bronze spoon.

Two further graves within the survey contained spoons. At King Harry Lane Ht 21, a tinned or silvered bronze spoon with part of the handle missing was found in a female grave. It was identified as a Roman spoon, probably of late third- to mid fourth-century date (Ager in Stead and Rigby 1989, 237). The silver spoon from the rich female grave at Swallowcliffe Down Wi is very similar to late Roman spoons, but was identified as of Anglo-Saxon manufacture from its close parallels to a gilded silver spoon from Broome Park in Kent.

The Broome Park spoon, a stray find, has a small Style II animal on the end of the handle and so is incontrovertibly of seventh-century manufacture. The only other comparable spoons are a shallow-bowled silver spoon from Desborough Nh, also with animal decoration on the end of the handle (Speake 1989, 43-47), and the silver pair from Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1. These spoons of Roman shape are of very different proportions to the iron spoons. The Roman-type spoons have long slim handles and large drop-shaped bowls, in contrast to the thick handles and small round bowls of the iron spoons.

*Function:* According to Patrick Ottaway (pers comm), a spoon auger should have an attachment for a transverse handle to get some turning leverage (e.g. Ottaway 1992, 532-37; Rogers 1993, 1243-45). None of the iron spoons in this study has this feature, some having suspension loops instead. Their shanks are insufficiently robust for use as an auger or gouge, and the bowls are too shallow and too blunt-edged.

All of the iron spoons were found on a chatelaine or by the hip; both the iron and the bronze spoons in Burwell Ca 83 were on the chatelaine. The spoon from King Harry Lane Ht 21 was by the middle of a very badly preserved body, although away from the chatelaine, and that from Swallowcliffe Down Wi was in a box with various oddments and amulets. The bronze spatula from Holborough K 7 was also in a box collection, but that from Buckland Dover K 129 was by the neck, close to the necklace but well away from the chatelaine.

A location on the chatelaine might seem appropriate for a symbol of domestic responsibility, rather than a practical object (see above, section 4.21) and so might indicate a function as a mixing or measuring device for medicines or ointments. This would be consistent with the other main location for the spoons, in a box collection.



The similarity between the dating and associations of the Roman-derived spoons and the iron spoons suggests a similar function but, if this is the case, it is mystifying that there was no attempt to copy the form of the Roman spoon in iron. There was certainly no technical barrier to this, given the delicately worked iron pins, buckles and cauldron chains that are known from Conversion-period contexts. The round bowls of the iron spoons echo the round bowls of scoops from toilet sets such as those in Harford Farm Nf 11 and 33, but these are again delicately worked and, moreover, have perforations.

*Social meaning:* With one exception, the sexed and aged skeletons with spoons and spatulas were those of adult or adolescent women. The single exception was the Holborough K 7 bronze spatula, which was found inside a box in a male grave with sword, shield and spear.

Despite the difference in form between the iron spoons and the Roman-shape spoons, they appear to be found in similar contexts. The three Roman-type spoons with known associations all come from well-furnished graves, two of which are female and one unsexed. Five of the iron spoons are also found in well-furnished female graves. Two of the iron spoons were buried with adolescents, one of which, Holborough K 11, was furnished with a good range of objects including a chatelaine, but the other of which, Burwell Ca 90, contained only a firesteel in addition to the spoon.

*Date:* Where datable, all spoon-graves appear to belong to the second half of the seventh century or the early years of the eighth. Desborough Nh, outside the sample, has little that is closely datable, but its assemblage, including a pair of plain palm cups, the silver spoon, and a hinge with triangular plates, shows a remarkable closeness to the late seventh- or early eighth-century grave-group from Swallowcliffe Down Wi, and so it may be similar in date. The Roman spoon from King Harry Lane Ht 21 was found with a workbox, as was the iron spoon from Garton II NHu 7. The iron spoon from Buckland Dover K 110 was found with P II and P III Pada thrymsas of c. 660-680 (see section 2.2.5), and Holborough K 11 also contained an openwork buckle. Of the two spatula-graves, Buckland Dover K 129 was dated by Evison to her Phase 5 (650-675), but Holborough K 7 can be dated by its Group 3 shield-boss to the first half of the seventh century.

*Distribution:* Map 59 shows the distribution of spoons and spatulas. Although it is based on a very small sample, it shows a distinct concentration of iron spoons in Kent, which has five out of the seven examples. The two spatulas are also from Kent, but the addition of the Roman-type spoons from Swallowcliffe Down Wi and King Harry Lane Ht 21 goes some way towards filling

in the gaps.

#### 4.47 AMULETS

It is difficult to decide where the boundaries of the term "amulet" should be drawn; the standard authority on the subject, Meaney (1981), includes herbs, pieces of crystal, jet, agate, quartz, amethyst, amber, shale, fossils, cowrie shells, tooth-pendants, antler rings, model weapons and toilet sets, bucket-pendants, spangles, wire slip-knot rings, girdle-hangers, workboxes, antiques, large beads, polychrome glass beads, figurines, and so on. In the present study, many of these categories have been dealt with separately, and so this final category is a catch-all for many miscellaneous finds which appear to have no practical function.

As well as amulets and talismans proper, that is, things retained for religious reasons, for good luck or to avert harm, included here are a range of animal bones or teeth, including possible food offerings as well as those made into pendants or kept in bag collections. Many of the finds recorded in this category may have been residual; considerable quantities of occupation debris were found at Winnall II Ha, for example, and so undue significance cannot be attached to the four graves there with animal teeth in the lower fills. The same caveat should be attached to antique items on multi-period sites.

An amulet can be defined as anything kept for luck, propitiation of the gods, or diverting the evil eye. The problem with this definition is that it often depends not at all on the form or practical function of the object, but on the state of mind of its owner; Meaney's approach to the study of amulets is heavily based on evidence of this from literary sources (1981). The range of objects included here may therefore include a number of mere keepsakes, and certainly must exclude many things considered by the individual Anglo-Saxon to be "lucky" but usually not archaeologically visible, such as clothing or herbs. Because of this, and to avoid repetition, the *Function* part has been removed from this section; this introduction serves instead.

Amulets may be seen as the forerunners of the later relics, and so may have been powerful ideological signals, different types of talismans perhaps indicating different groups within society. The current view on "paganism", however, is that it was less a coherent institutionalised religion, and more a collection of disparate superstitions and traditional propitiative practices (Morris 1989, 62; *contra* Wilson 1992). A lack of structure and organisation in pagan belief would lessen its political importance and therefore the signalling power of pagan amulets. On the other hand, it may be that paganism, in reaction to the arrival of the Christian church, began

to be seen as politically useful, and speedily acquired an emulative theology (Carver 1992c, 181). If this is the case, amulets should perhaps undergo a distinctive change in the Conversion period.

#### 4.47.1 Food offerings and other animal amulets

*Description:* This category covers most of the miscellaneous amulets. At least nineteen graves contained animal or vegetable remains which might have been food offerings, although the figure must be uncertain due to problems of residuality. Cattle were predominant among the possible food offerings, with three graves containing ribs, three with legs and one with a jaw. Sheep or goat bones were found in four graves (a jaw, two legs and some ribs). Bones thought to be from a pig were found in Castledyke SHu 16, and parts of a domestic fowl in Castledyke SHu 198. Other foodstuffs included mussel shells from Lechlade GI 137, eggshells from Finglesham K 57, and the onions and crab-apples preserved in the hanging bowl at Ford Wi 18. Harder to categorise are the unidentified bones from Snell's Corner Ha S14 and Castledyke SHu 167, and the burnt bone remains from Asthall Ox, which include horse bones and sheep astragali, identified by Meaney as a prophylactic against cramp (1981, 145).

The greylag goose found in Castledyke SHu 180 also possibly represents a food offering, but it seems to fit more happily in a group of other animal bones, including dog or fox bones from Marina Drive Bd G2 and Uncleby NHu 65, and a corvid (crow, raven or jackdaw) skeleton from Lechlade GI 91. These may have been symbolic grave-furnishings or could have been the remains of pets.

Tooth amulets found in graves fall into two groups, those modified for use as pendants and those in their natural state. There are six of the former, five beaver teeth and one horse tooth from Nazeingbury Ex 64. They have all been briefly considered above, in section 4.9, but are also included here. Three graves have unmodified animal teeth - one with a horse tooth, one with a boar tusk and one with a dog or fox tooth - and two graves have human teeth.

Finally, a whelk shell found in a collection at Castledyke SHu 11 is also included here. It may be a substitute for a cowrie shell, but because it does not share the same rare imported status as the cowries, it was not included under that heading. The other ingredients of the collection were a knife, two keys, a pair of shears, two fragments of beaded gold wire, an unmounted cabochon garnet and a chalk whorl, all positioned in such a way as to suggest that they had been contained in a box. The presence of jewellery scraps may be amuletic, but may also represent a collection

of bits for reworking; the whelk shell may have been destined for white inlays.

*Date:* Food offerings and other animal amulets continued to be deposited up until the end of furnished burial. The food offering at Burwell Ca 121 is dated by the associated workbox, and that at Castledyke SHu 16 by two hooked tags. Two beaver teeth are found with workboxes, and teeth are also found with linked pins. Apart from the beaver teeth, however, there appears to be little change in the form or type of the amulets from those found in the fifth and sixth centuries. Whether or not the frequency of deposition of amulets and food offerings increases or decreases from the migration period into the Conversion period is at present unknown; more quantitative studies are needed.

*Social meaning:* Graves with food offerings and other animal amulets are heterogeneous in character. Food offerings are found in the well-furnished graves at Ford Wi 18, Burwell Ca 121 and Asthall Ox, as well as nine graves with no other grave-goods, or only one or two other objects. Men, women and children are equally represented.

The four graves with symbolic or pet bones are all fairly poorly furnished, although Lechlade Gl 91 also contained the unusual find of an iron bell (see below, section 4.48.4); they include two men, one woman and an unsexed skeleton.

Meaney has examined the literary and archaeological context of beaver tooth pendants, and has concluded that they are found with women and children (1981, 135-38). The one possible exception is from Cokethorpe Ox, where a beaver tooth pendant was found under the skull of a probable male aged about fifteen years old. Whether or not this individual was young enough to have been considered a child is a debatable point, but as he had been buried in a triple grave next to a young woman and a child of about three, it is entirely possible that the pendant, if unworn, might have been intended for one of the others. Beaver tooth pendants tend to be found in rather wealthy graves, and Meaney has suggested that they may have been substitutes for the teeth of other carnivores, which were worn to safeguard the teeth of the owners. Carnivore teeth had pagan associations which, Meaney suggests, would have made them unacceptable to Christians (1981, 137).

The other tooth amulets in this study are found with both sexes. The horse tooth pendant from Nazeingbury Ex 64 is interesting, as it was found in a cemetery interpreted as that of an early Christian female religious community (Huggins 1978, 63-64). It was found in the chest area, and even though it would have been useful as a button or toggle with which to fasten the shroud,

horse teeth are thought to have had definite amuletic and even cultic associations (Meaney 1981, 131-32).

*Distribution:* The distribution of food offerings and animal amulets is shown in Map 60. It is a fairly widespread distribution, with no strong clusters in any part of the country.

#### 4.47.2 Found amulets

*Description:* This category includes objects that Meaney would class as "mineral" amulets, as well as antiques. The group consists of fossils, worked flints, Roman coins, jewellery, pottery and glass, pebbles, and pieces of jet, lignite, amber and ochre. Iron pyrites have not been included; this is for two reasons, firstly because there is doubt about their amuletic or practical function, or whether they were deliberate inclusions at all, and secondly because their presence has not been recorded by all excavators (Meaney 1981, 101). Worked flints may similarly be residual, but because they are seen as interesting items by excavators, their presence is more often recorded.

Some of the 31 graves containing found amulets contained a selection; Buckland Dover K 55, for example, contained a fossil echinoid, perhaps in a box, and a necklace with amber, stone and coral beads in addition to glass. King Harry Lane Ht 10 contained three Roman coins, a third-century finger-ring, a first-century bow-brooch and a Roman "lock-pin".

The most common class of found amulet was the Roman coin, which occurred in fourteen graves; these have already been considered in detail in section 4.2. Three of the Roman coins were pierced, and so may have had a primarily decorative value, but the majority were apparently being used in exactly the same way as other amulets.

The enormous variation in found amuletic objects of all dates means that a large sample is needed to pick up trends, and the 31 graves here are insufficient. The range of Conversion-period found amulets appears at first sight to be very much like that of earlier amulets, with no change apparent in the ideological signal. The only obvious difference is that amber is now only present as an amulet, and not as a decorative string of beads; this may be due to a new status as "something old" in the face of new southern imports rather than to any specific changes in belief (Meaney 1981, 67-71).

*Date:* None of the graves in the present study with found amulets contains any objects dating

from the first half of the seventh century, although Buckland Dover K 55 is dated by Evison to her Phase 4 (625-650). Five graves have workboxes, and one has a broad seax. The apparent pattern, of increased use of amulets in the burial rite during the second half of the century, may be the result of a brief decline in amulet use during the early seventh century, or the comparative invisibility of graves of that date. The known use of amulets in graves of all dates from the fifth to the eighth centuries, however, makes it likely that the use of "lucky" objects in the grave did not change significantly over this period, although this cannot be confirmed or rejected without a study of amulet-graves throughout time.

*Social meaning:* The 31 graves with found amulets are again a mixture of high and low wealth, and of men, women and children. In her large-scale study, Meaney found that male graves were very much less likely to include amulets, and those that did contained a restricted range. The three male graves with found amulets in the present study contained flint flakes and fragments of Roman glass vessels, both of which object types may have been accidental inclusions.

*Distribution:* The distribution over the country of found amulets is shown in Map 61, and again is fairly even across the country.

#### 4.47.3 Manufactured amulets

*Description:* A number of objects that appear to have been manufactured specifically for use as amulets are listed by Meaney (1981, 148-91). Some of these are found only in the fifth and sixth centuries - Hercules clubs and spangles - and others which do occur in the seventh and eighth centuries - scutiform pendants, keys and girdle-hangers, pendants in various forms including buckets, hands, peltae or crescents, polychrome glass or amber beads, knotted rings, workboxes and bullae - have been dealt with above. In some cases, the amuletic connection is tenuous, and the primary function of the object is probably practical or decorative.

Objects made purely as charms are surprisingly rare, both in the Conversion period and earlier. Meaney tentatively suggests that some sets of little bronze or silver implements, apparently toilet sets, may have been miniature weapon sets, and that these are confined to the seventh century. Her examples are from Kingston Down K, Gilton K, Chartham Down K, Alfriston II ESx, Burton Fields NHu, one of the cemeteries at Broadstairs K, and a stray find from the area of the Burwell Ca cemetery (1981, 148-59). Unfortunately, the interpretation of these objects is based on a personal view of whether or not they look like spears, knives, swords, hammers or whatever. My view is that most of them simply look like toilet sets, and recent finds, such as

those at Boss Hall Sf 93 and Harford Farm Nf 11 and 33, strengthen this impression. The scoops found on the toilet sets from these three graves do not fit well with an interpretation as miniature weapon sets.

Apart from workboxes, there were few objects in the present study which were considered to have been manufactured specifically for use as amulets. Three things - the "Finglesham Man" buckle from Finglesham K 95, a mount re-used as a pendant from Finglesham K 38 and an odd object from Buckland Dover K 161, thought to be a large pin or toilet implement - bear decoration of figures with horned heads. These may have been figures of Odin or Woden (Hawkes *et al.* 1965, 23-27), and therefore may have had some religious significance. Objects made specifically for inclusion in a funerary amulet collection, however, like the earlier non-functional miniature tweezers, shears, combs and razors found in cremation burials, are not found.

*Date:* Meaney's study of Anglo-Saxon amulets from all periods was not quantitative, but she occasionally refers to an impression that amulets become more popular and various in the "late pagan and early Christian" period (1981, 168, 252, 264). The present study is far too limited both in breadth and depth to discover whether this impression is correct, but the small numbers of both found and manufactured amulets do little to support it.

*Social meaning:* It is possible that the more unambiguous religious objects, such as those with horned-head motifs, may be connected with an increasingly formalised paganism, with the other amulets simply being indicative of a stable folk superstition, but there are so very few of the former that even this remains extremely doubtful.

#### 4.48 OTHER OBJECTS

This category covers objects which occur in only five graves or fewer, and so the *Distribution* part has been left out, as it is likely to be uninformative with so small a sample.

##### 4.48.1 Playing pieces (Fig 4.42)

*Description:* Four graves contained playing pieces made out of bone, antler or tooth. In addition, Oxton Nt apparently contained fifteen plano-convex glass counters, some yellow and some green. These are unique in an Anglo-Saxon context, and are no longer extant.

There appears to be no consistency in the numbers of playing pieces deposited. Didcot Power Station Ox 2 contained two polished horse teeth, Asthall Ox had a minimum of fourteen plano-convex bone counters and an antler die, Taplow Bu had at least 54 beautifully made hollow drum-shaped composite bone counters and Shudy Camps Ca 85 contained 56 plano-convex bone counters and a die.

*Date:* Graves with playing pieces were listed by Youngs in 1983 (in Bruce-Mitford 1983, 861), and the only grave in the present study to have been discovered since then, Didcot Power Station Ox 2, does not alter the picture given by this list. They occasionally occur in cremation burials from the fifth century onwards, but in inhumations appear to belong mainly to the seventh century. Oxton Nt also contained a Group 7 shield-boss, and Didcot Power Station Ox 2 had a barrel padlock (see below); these two graves may belong to the second half of the seventh century.

*Function:* Playing pieces are usually assumed to have been used in playing a board game, perhaps *tæfl*, which is known from documentary sources (Meaney 1981, 261). As the numbers found in both cremations and inhumations vary enormously, though, it is hard to identify any single game that they might have been used for. The site sketch of the Taplow Bu burial shows the playing pieces arranged in a square, on what may have been a board, but there is no mention of a board elsewhere in the records (Bruce-Mitford 1974, pl 16). There appears to be little difference in the numbers deposited and context of deposition between the plano-convex bone type, the polished horse teeth and the drum-shaped type (Myres and Green 1973, 98-100). Meaney has also suggested that playing pieces might have been used in divination (1981, 262).

*Social meaning:* Youngs noted a trend for playing pieces to be associated with male burials, but this is not absolute; women tend, however, to be buried with only one or two pieces, perhaps as a keepsake (Youngs in Bruce-Mitford 1983, 860-74). In keeping with this tendency, the woman's grave at Didcot Power Station Ox 2 had only two pieces. Taplow Bu and Shudy Camps Ca 85 were male and possibly male respectively, while the person or persons buried at Asthall Ox are of unknown sex.

#### 4.48.2 Bridle (Fig 4.43)

*Description:* Two graves contained bridles or parts of bridles, one in Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 45 and two in Garton II NHu 10. That in Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 45 consisted of a curved one-piece bit attached to one cheek-ring. The two bridles in Garton II NHu 10 each consisted



of a jointed bit attached to two cheek-rings, one having in addition four smaller iron rings and two buckles nearby. It is possible that other horse harness items may occur unrecognised in graves, as they could consist entirely of leather or textile, perhaps with a few rings.

Recently there has been a notable addition to the numbers of burials with horse harness, with the excavation of a human with horse harness, and a horse burial, under the same mound at Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 17. These graves raise the possibility that the burial of horse harness in human graves is connected to the burial of horses in separate graves.

*Date:* The chronology of horse burials and human graves with horse harness are dissimilar. European burials of horse bones or complete horses have been listed by Müller-Wille (1970-71). Out of the 29 English examples, 13 are from the fifth or sixth centuries, one is from the sixth or seventh, eight are from the seventh or eighth (Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 17 could now be added), and two are later. Five are undated (Vierck in Müller-Wille 1970-71, 218-20). These figures include all horse remains, even just a tooth, but show that the use of horse burial was declining.

On the other hand, the finds of harness *without* horses may all be from the Conversion period. Apart from the two in the detailed survey, those from England consist of the Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 17 burial, which may be early seventh century, plus those from Faversham K, Bishopsbourne K and Kirton-in-Lindsey II SHu. Nothing is known of the context of the Faversham K find, but the Bishopsbourne K burial also contained a "Coptic" bowl and a Group 7 shield-boss, and Kirton-in-Lindsey II SHu had a broad seax.

*Function:* The bit, buckles and rings from Garton II NHu 10 appear to have comprised a bridle of modern type with snaffle bit, and adjustable brow and nose bands joined with rings. The absence of buckles and rings with the other two bits does not mean that the bits were placed on their own in the grave without the rest of the bridle; a bridle made to measure for a particular horse can be constructed using stitched joints without rings.

*Social meaning:* Although bridles are rare, the graves that include them do not tend to be elaborate. Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 45, although it was within a ring-ditch, contained only a knife and buckle in addition, and Garton II NHu 10 contained a knife, some buckles which may have belonged to the harness, a pointed iron tool and a small box or wallet. Kirton-in-Lindsey II SHu contained a sword and C5 spearhead as well as the broad seax and bridle-bit. The Bishopsbourne K barrow, however, was richer, with a bucket and "Coptic" bowl, two playing pieces and a Group 7 shield-boss.

Horse harness, as a grave-good, is of a different order to grave-offerings of weapons or clothing. Like vessels, horse trappings are less intensely personal and more symbolic of power and wealth; both show the control of resources. The symbolic nature of the grave-deposit is underlined when the horse itself is not present. In this context, the prick spur from Castledyke SHu 18 should also be mentioned as denoting the grave of a rider.

#### 4.48.3 Sword pyramid

*Description:* Three graves in the study contained sword pyramids; Uncleby NHu 62, Finglesham K 58 and Broomfield Ex. The Broomfield Ex pyramid was made of gold and garnets, the Finglesham K 58 one of bronze and garnets, and the Uncleby NHu 62 one of bronze only, rather badly made, with ring-and-dot decoration. Most sword pyramids known from Britain are of precious metals and garnets, but the Uncleby NHu 62 pyramid is an exception. The Broomfield Ex and Uncleby NHu 62 pyramids had square bases, but the Finglesham K 58 pyramid rose from a round base.

*Date:* Broomfield Ex can be dated by its borderline Group 3/Group 6 shield-boss to no later than the first half of the seventh century, and the graves outside the sample in which sword pyramids occur, such as Salisbury Race Course Wi and Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1, are also of this date. The Finglesham K 58 pyramid was worn and old when deposited, but the grave cannot be closely dated. Uncleby NHu 62 also contained a silver bulla, and so should probably be dated to the second half of the seventh or the early eighth century.

*Function:* The pyramid from Broomfield Ex was found by the sword, and appears to have been fulfilling its original function as part of the sword fittings. The pyramids from Finglesham K 58 and Uncleby NHu 62, however, seem to have been re-used. The Finglesham K 58 one was at the neck with two finger-rings, one of silver wire with a twisted bezel and the other of bronze with a garnet setting. It is possible that these may all have been strung on a necklace, but it seems more likely that they were in a bag, as there was decayed organic matter in the area. The pyramid from Uncleby NHu 62 was at the hip, together with a knife, a chatelaine and a bone whorl, and so may have been connected in some way with the chatelaine or a bag suspended therefrom.

*Social meaning:* Broomfield Ex was an exceptionally high-wealth male grave; most sword pyramids found still fulfilling their primary function are in graves of this type. Neither Uncleby NHu 62 nor Finglesham K 58, on the other hand, were outstandingly low or high-wealth graves.

Uncleby NHu 62 was the grave of a woman. Finglesham K 58 contained a pair of tongue-shaped bronze lace tags in addition to the bag collection, and it was thought from the grave-goods that it was the grave of a woman, but the skeleton (in rather poor condition) was thought to be male.

It seems, from the dating of the graves and an examination of the practical and social function of the pyramids, that in early seventh-century male graves the sword pyramid is a prestige item. Its exclusive presence in male graves at this time may be due to its function as a sword fitting, as by the second half of the century the pyramid can be found fulfilling a secondary function, perhaps with a lower status, in female graves.

#### 4.48.4 Bell

*Description:* Two graves, Lechlade GI 91 and Lechlade GI 148, contained iron bells. They are both made from folded iron sheet with loops at the top and iron clappers, and are about 50 mm to 70 mm both in width and height. Two similar iron bells, from Kingston Down K 222 and 299, are illustrated by Faussett (1856, pl 10, 17 and 21).

*Date:* Iron bells are not found in inhumation graves before the seventh century, the Lechlade GI finds joining the iron bells from Kingston Down K 222 and 299. Lechlade GI 91 contained nothing datable, but Lechlade GI 148 contained jewellery including a trellised glass cabochon pendant which may date it to the late seventh or early eighth century (see above, section 4.8). Kingston Down K 222 contained an unusual tall form of workbox, which may date it to the late seventh or early eighth century. The dating of Kingston Down K 299 has been looked above in section 4.24; it contained worn keystone and plated disc brooches but also a hump-backed comb, and may date to the middle of the seventh century.

A bronze bell has been found in cremation 1291 at the migration-period cemetery of Spong Hill in Norfolk. It was hemispherical and 50 mm in diameter with an iron clapper and a bronze loop. Bronze is generally considered to give a better tone to a bell, but in the case of these very small bells the difference may not be noticeable.

*Function:* The iron bells may have been livestock bells, or may have been for Christian liturgical use (Raven 1907, 20-22). Their loops, rather than handles, may argue for a use for livestock, as may their small size and material; they cannot have been very melodious. The size is appropriate for a sheep or a goat.

*Social meaning:* The Kingston Down K bells were found in well-furnished female graves containing a number of unusual grave-good types, and Lechlade GI 148 also contained silver wire rings, glass and cowrie shell beads, a trellised glass cabochon pendant, an iron-bound bucket and a whole cowrie shell. Lechlade GI 91, however, contained in addition to the bell only a knife and the skeleton of a corvid (a crow, raven or jackdaw). Lechlade GI 91, then, conjures up a pastoral scene of the pet bird on the herder's shoulder, but this is not echoed in the other graves, where the bell seems to be just another aspect of a comprehensive and individually chosen assemblage.

#### 4.49 KNIFE

Knives were the most common grave-good of all, with 794 instances in 731 graves (see Table 4.18 for relative numbers of different grave-goods). In common with other studies of this type (Dickinson 1976 I, 331-32) they were not looked at in detail. The benefit of a definitive, chronologically-specific typology for any early medieval knives would be huge, but the amount of work needed to accomplish this would amount to a separate study in its own right. There would be the distinct possibility at the end of the exercise that local variability, not to mention corrosion, would render any typology meaningless; although this result in itself would remove much uncertainty, its risk deters researchers.

#### 4.49 CONCLUSION

Chapter 4 has revealed the enormous amount of data which can be extracted from Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. To digest and absorb this vast quantity is a challenging task. Tabular summaries of artefactual date-ranges and gender associations will be found in Tables 6.1 and 6.3, but the basic information presented in Chapter 4 needs to be put into context. This will be done in the next chapter, by looking at the cultural affiliations of the artefacts chosen as Conversion-period grave-goods.

Grave-good type	Maximum number of graves containing the type
knife	-----731
simple buckle	-----253
necklace	-----155
weapons in general	-----150
monochrome bead	-----140
chatelaine	-----124
spearhead	-----120
single pin	-----103
wire ring	-----102
miscellaneous bead	-----76 (including 24 amber and 15 melon)
pottery vessel	-----74 (21 wheel-thrown, 53 hand-made)
polychrome bead	-----73
misc. buckle	-----65
bag	-----65
box	-----48
spatulate tool	-----48
comb	-----45
whorl	-----43
disc pendant	-----42
lace-tag/strap-end	-----42
annular brooch	-----37
amethyst bead	-----37

...continued

**Table 4.18** Maximum numbers of sampled graves containing different grave-good types

seax	-----36
shield-boss	-----35
animal amulet	-----33 (19 food offerings, 14 other)
found amulet	-----31
wooden cup/bowl	-----28
shears	-----28
misc. pendant	-----27
metal bead	-----26
cowrie shell	-----26
firesteel	-----25
triangular buckle	-----24
coin	-----23 (9 early medieval, 14 Roman)
sword	-----22
workbox	-----22
cabochon pendant	-----22
bullae	-----18
pointed tool	-----17
wooden bucket	-----15
linked pins	-----13
disc brooch	-----12
spoon/spatula	-----11
glass vessel	-----10

...continued

**Table 4.18** Maximum numbers of sampled graves containing different grave-good types

bracelet	----9
whetstone	----8
finger-ring	----8
thread-picker	----8
shoe-buckle	----8
2-tongue buckle	---7
hanging bowl	---7
penannular brooch	---7
hooked tag	---6
misc. bronze bowl	---6
padlock	---6
playing pieces	--5
weaving batten	--5
safety-pin brooch	--3
heckle	--3
sword pyramid	--3
"Coptic" vessel	-2
bridle	-2
bell	-2

**Table 4.18** Maximum numbers of sampled graves containing different grave-good types

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE CULTURAL AFFILIATIONS OF THE GRAVE-GOODS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 has shown us that many diagnostic sixth-century grave-good types disappear *c.* 600, being replaced during the course of the seventh century by grave-goods very different in character. So far, there has been no discussion of the reasons behind this extraordinary revolution in grave-good types. Although most of the detailed discussion will be reserved for Chapter 6, there needs first to be an exploration of the choices of particular decorative artefacts and motifs, and the influences behind them.

The upheaval in grave-good types is most visible in female jewellery. During the migration period, especially in the sixth century, there are clear differences between the female jewellery assemblages of northern and eastern England and central southern England, which are labelled "Anglian" and "Saxon" respectively. The giving of such labels, however, does not necessarily imply that there is any real genetic difference between those buried with the two assemblages, or any particular link between the population of an "Anglian" region of *England and an* "Anglian" region on the Continent. Instead, the use of particular types of jewellery has been linked to a notion of *Tracht* or deliberately constructed national costume (Carver 1989, 148 and 157). It has long been recognised that the regional differences in female jewellery are less marked in the fifth than in the sixth century, and it therefore seems that the inhabitants of migration-period England came to use female costume as a way of actively indicating the cultural identity that they aspired to, rather than passively reflecting an ethnic identity that they could not escape (Leeds 1945; Hills 1979, 316).

This type of structuralist approach to early medieval material culture is also becoming influential in work on the early fifth century. The first appearance of Germanic-style objects has been explained as a desire on the part of late Romano-British society to emphasise a Germanic status, rather than using the traditional explanation of large-scale migrations from the Continent (Higham 1992, 225). In the Conversion period, observed changes in aspects of burial cannot be explained by a convenient recorded migration, and other explanations must be sought. We must ask what advantage followed from using these particular artefact types in life or in death.



Because grave-goods in the Germanic world appear to have been connected to the construction of a cultural identity signalled by the *Tracht*, it seems likely that a change in the female jewellery types buried in the seventh century should also be linked to a change in the desired cultural identity of those buried or burying. This is unlikely to have been a *de novo* construction. If it was to be recognisable and intelligible to the Conversion-period Anglo-Saxons, its connotations must have been familiar.

Chapter 5 is an attempt to locate the cultural origins of Conversion-period grave-goods. Section 5.2 describes previous work of this kind, which has resulted in two hypotheses for the sources of the material. Section 5.3 then covers the detail of the grave-good parallels, broadly ordered into groups which may highlight possible patterns. These groups comprise jewellery types, non-jewellery costume fittings, vessels, weapons, and miscellaneous items.

The provenances and parallels were researched in two stages. First impressions and received wisdom were initially collated for each artefact type during the research for Chapter 4. From first impressions, an Iron Age or Romano-British "Celtic" feel can be suggested for some items, a Frankish origin for others, and some look like a continuing development from sixth-century Anglo-Saxon practice. In other cases Hellenistic, Roman or Byzantine influences can be noted, and a few objects must have been directly imported via the Mediterranean. Parallels or origins for many objects, however, were difficult to find, and so more intensive research was undertaken among Romano-British and early medieval Continental and Byzantine material.

In this chapter, I use the terms "Byzantium" and "Byzantine" to refer to the whole of the eastern Empire from the fifth century onwards, calling the metropolis "Constantinople". The term "Roman" is used for the classical world up to the fifth century. As there is often uncertainty about dating, and as the two terms overlap somewhat, the term "late Antique" is used as a catch-all for the fourth to seventh centuries.

## 5.2 EVALUATION OF PREVIOUS HYPOTHESES

### 5.2.1 Kentish/Frankish hypothesis

Over the last two hundred years, the classic explanation for the appearance of "Final Phase" objects across the country in the seventh century has been that they diffused outwards from Kent, and therefore ultimately from Francia, as described in section 1.2. This explanation fitted the available data, and has since snowballed. It is now often implicitly or explicitly accepted

with little question, a state of affairs which is largely due to historical accident. To demonstrate this, it will be necessary to review briefly the verdicts of previous scholars.

The first work on, and recognition of, Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon cemeteries was in the barrow cemeteries of Kent in the eighteenth century, with the work of Faussett and Douglas in particular. During the nineteenth century, this was consolidated by the work of the British Archaeological Association and the publication of Faussett's monumental and still essential *Inventorium Sepulchrale* (Faussett 1856); Akerman's *Remains of Pagan Saxondom* (1855) also concentrated heavily on the Kentish barrows. The numerous and excellent illustrations in these books were used by educated archaeologists in other parts of the country to place their Conversion-period sites in context, which naturally became a Kentish context (e.g. Smith 1912b).

By the 1920s and 1930s the "Kentish" origin of Conversion-period artefacts had passed into the general consciousness of the few archaeologists studying the period. Lethbridge, an innovator in so much else, saw the women at Burwell Ca as wearing "Kentish" objects (1931, 85); a few years later, after he had excavated the Shudy Camps Ca cemetery, he was still making casual references to the spread of seaxes from Kent to East Anglia (1936, 27) but, in his discussion, he uses the Kentish links for dating rather than to indicate any cultural origin for the objects (1936, 28-29). Leeds, in his 1936 survey of Anglo-Saxon art and artefacts, devoted his last chapter to "The Final Phase". He covered objects from cemeteries as far apart as Uncleby NHu, Camerton Av, Burwell Ca, Long Wittenham Bk, Desborough Nh, Roundway Down Wi and Cow Low Db, but said "that the change of fashion represented by the novelties constantly recurring in these groups was initiated in Kent we may well believe" (1936, 107).

The next influential study to appear on Conversion-period cemeteries was that of Hyslop (1963), and with her the picture begins to change. Hyslop noted that the importance of the new fashions *outside* Kent had been "seriously underestimated", and that the closest parallels for the objects were "not found in North Germany and Scandinavia, but in South Germany, Switzerland and, more particularly, Italy". There were other artefacts, she suggested, "for which the prototypes were undoubtedly Roman" (1963, 192-93). In 1970, Hawkes combined the two approaches, describing the Roundway Down necklace as being "in the Roman-influenced fashion which undoubtedly originated and spread from Kent" (in Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 49). More recently, in a summary of the seventh-century changes in dress fashions, Owen-Crocker has characterised them as reflecting "the increasing influence of the Frankish Empire and, through the Empire, the Mediterranean world, especially Byzantium" (1986, 85).

Despite this recognition of a degree of Mediterranean inspiration, there is still a strong yet implicit Kentish bias, with fresh impetus coming from the remarkable series of Kentish cemeteries excavated in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, including Holborough, Buckland Dover, Finglesham, Monkton, Polhill, Broadstairs I and II, and Eccles. Although the last decade has seen many Conversion-period cemeteries excavated outside Kent (e.g. Castledyke SHu, Lechlade GI, Didcot Power Station Ox, Harford Farm Nf) which have vastly changed the distributions of some artefacts (e.g. padlocks, section 4.40), most of these are not yet published and therefore not well-known.

Interpretations of Conversion-period burial sites therefore continue to invoke Kentish parallels (notably Hawkes 1982, 76 and Parker Pearson *et al.* 1993). The implied advantage to the Anglo-Saxons of using "Kentish" object types is that those using them would have been recognised as basically Frankish, and therefore European and sophisticated, by their peers, at least some of whom may have been under a real or claimed Frankish hegemony (Wallace-Hadrill 1971, 25; Wood 1992).

Because of the pervasive emphasis on Kentish and Frankish parallels, the initial hypothesis for Chapter 5 was that the detailed influences and prototypes for Conversion-period objects would be found there. Access to Frankish and other western European material is straightforward, thanks to the excellent publication of cemetery reports and exhibition catalogues, and the kindness and generosity of colleagues in France, Germany and the Netherlands. A search for the prototypes of Anglo-Saxon Conversion-period objects among the cemetery finds and museum exhibits of the Frankish empire, however, produced very few parallels other than the well-known examples of disc brooch, seax, shoe fittings and triangular buckle, and the hypothesis of a Frankish dominance, in politics or trade, affecting artefact forms in areas other than Kent, had to be abandoned.

### 5.2.2 Roman/Byzantine hypothesis

The views of Hyslop (1963) quoted above, although never directly contradicted, have hardly begun to challenge the accepted view of a basically Frankish origin for the new Conversion-period assemblage. Since the publication of Schulze's (1976) and Vierck's (1978) arguments for the adoption of Byzantine fashions by the highest social stratum of the Frankish court, it has been common to argue that Byzantine influence was felt in Britain merely through the adoption of Frankish custom as, for example, in the case of Owen-Crocker, quoted above (1986, 85; for more on this, see below in section 5.4.3). Hyslop's view of a more direct emulation of southern

European practice has never been tested.

The necessary abandonment of the Kentish/Frankish hypothesis, however, together with a number of late Antique parallels that had come up in the course of research for Chapter 4, suggested that exploration in the old area of the Imperial heartland, rather than in the new empire of the Franks, might be fruitful. This is a more challenging practical problem than searching through the Frankish material, however. Another reason why the Kentish/Frankish hypothesis has been so popular may be that the sources for these objects - furnished graves - are familiar to those who study the Conversion-period graves. The contexts in which Roman and Byzantine objects are found, and the circumstances of their finding and study, are somewhat different, and published sources are generally far less comprehensive.

In the Roman Republic, the wearing of jewellery was officially disapproved of, and the amount of gold which might be worn by the living or buried with the dead was regulated by law (Higgins 1961, 178). The remains of this attitude may have lingered into the later Empire. Roman graves do not generally contain showy jewellery, and by late Roman times graves were anyway usually unfurnished (Philpott 1991, 226).

Jewellery is present in hoards, but not in the quantities of, for example, tableware; the numbers and range of "Sunday-best"-type dress ornaments so readily available from furnished Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are simply not matched in the Roman period. Since so many objects come from hoards and settlement finds, we have little data on the way that the objects were worn to assist with assigning a function, even when parallels are found. Although in general terms function can often be inferred from pictorial depictions, if (say) a gold openwork disc is found outside a grave, it could have functioned as part of a brooch, or a pendant, or a necklace terminal, or sewn to a bag, or hung on a chatelaine. Late Antique objects very rarely come from closed contexts, and the art-historical approach to classical studies has resulted in a concentration on the highest-status artefacts.

Another general problem is the conservatism of antique jewellery design. Many elements of design were retained for hundreds of years, and individual pieces can therefore be very hard to date (Johns and Potter 1983, 25). For example, Higgins dates a necklace from a grave near Damascus to c. 200-100 BC and a pin with a chain from Syria to the early second century BC (1961, 176, figs 50 and 53). Marshall considered the same pieces to be first century AD and the third century AD respectively (1911, 314, pl LVII). Because classical jewellery has been valued by the modern world for centuries, many museum pieces have lost their provenances as

they passed through the hands of collectors, which results not only in problems of dating but also problems of where the object was made, used or buried. It is difficult to tell from the object itself; the closest parallel to the late fourth- or early fifth-century Thetford Treasure, for instance, is the contemporary hoard from Ténès in Algeria, almost at the opposite end of the empire (Johns and Potter 1983, 10, 24 and *passim*).

Figurative art - paintings, ivories, statuary, mosaics and so on - provide another source for the dress fashions of the period, but they have drawbacks. Firstly, they show far more men than women (emperors, consuls, bishops, popes and apostles all being men), and secondly the resolution needed to see the detail of jewellery is often absent, especially in mosaics.

To summarise, the types of objects deposited in the classical world were generally different to those deposited as grave-goods in the Anglo-Saxon world. The types that are similar, such as the jewellery types, are usually buried away from their primary context on the body. The objects that do exist have been subject to different standards of recovery, conservation and study. They are difficult to date and provenance, not only because of the standard of recovery, but also because of the conservatism and lack of regional variation in the classical jewellery industry. Other sources of information, such as figurative art, also have drawbacks. Despite these problems, it has proved possible to find good parallels within Roman and Byzantine archaeology for a number of Conversion-period grave-good types.

The following section details the results of searches through migration-period Anglo-Saxon, Merovingian Frankish, Byzantine and Roman material.

### 5.3 DETAILED GRAVE-GOOD PARALLELS

#### 5.3.1 Jewellery

The *short necklaces* found in the Anglo-Saxon Conversion period (section 4.16, Figs 4.11 and 4.12) are very different in character to the long strings of polychrome glass and amber beads with few pendants found in sixth-century contexts. The short necklaces have, however, a number of equivalents in the late Antique world, ultimately derived from Hellenistic fashions. As a rule, the preservation of whole Roman or Byzantine necklaces is not common, but some high-status necklaces are preserved in modern collections and more are known from figurative art. I will look first at the parallels for the short necklace as a whole, before going on to examine each individual element.

The most famous mosaic with necklaces must be the sixth-century depiction of the Empress Theodora and her ladies in the church of San Vitale in Ravenna (Fig 5.1; a very good colour reproduction can be found in Cornell and Matthews 1982, 218-19). Theodora is wearing a short bead- or cabochon-set necklace with a deep collar and large pendants below; next to her, two attendants are wearing short necklaces of pendants. Next to them comes a woman with a more complicated necklace, with similar large pendants to Theodora's, and there are also two women with short necklaces of what look like small beads. All these necklaces encircle the neck and do not hang down onto the chest. They are so short that they could almost be described as chokers, as could most of the Anglo-Saxon Conversion-period necklaces.

Similar short necklaces, either made up of pendants or of small beads, can be seen in wall-paintings, on gilded glasses, on statuary and on ivories (e.g. Figs 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3; also Beckwith 1970, fig 6). The habit of wearing two necklaces together, occasionally found in the Conversion period, can be seen in some of these depictions, and the pendants are usually distinctively oval or drop-shaped.

There are some complete late Antique necklaces known from museum collections, but as these have had to survive the attentions of collectors, they are inevitably of a robust all-metal construction with links rather than a string. There are earlier examples in the British Museum showing the long classical tradition of the multi-pendant necklace over more than a millenium (Marshall 1911, pls XXI, XXIII, XLV, LVI). Contemporary necklaces similar to Conversion-period examples include a Byzantine gold necklace from Sardinia in the British Museum, with small drop-shaped pendants (Fig 5.4), an all-gold necklace with pendants, and a collar similar to the type worn by Theodora, both from Constantinople (Figs 5.5 and 5.6). These show that the richest of all Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon necklaces, the type with many pendants found, for example, at Desborough Nh, Galley Low Db and Roundway Down Wi (Fig 4.12), must have been developed from Byzantine prototypes.

The classical equivalents of the more commonplace Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon necklaces, mostly made up of beads or single pendants, do not tend to survive in one piece, and so it is more difficult to discuss whether the middle and lower echelons of late Antique society were wearing similar necklaces. Virtually all the individual elements of the Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon necklace, however, can be paralleled in the Roman or Byzantine Empires.

Large numbers of individual *cabochon pendants* (section 4.8, Fig 4.5) are known from classical archaeology. Up to the third or fourth centuries, the most common setting for these pendants,

especially the higher-status ones which find their way into hoards, was the engraved stone (e.g. Marshall 1911, nos 2726, 2872, 2873, 2997, pls LIX, LXV, LXIX; Johns and Potter 1983, colour plate 4). It seems that engraved gems were extremely desirable, perhaps even more so after the fourth century, when they were no longer being manufactured and so antiques were being re-used. By the sixth and seventh centuries, however, these gems had become very rare, and the plain cabochon setting was used instead. Plain cabochon settings are very common in all sorts of late Antique jewellery (e.g. Marshall 1911, nos 2746, 2749, pl LXI; Higgins 1961, figs 58, 59, 61; Ross 1965, no 13, pl XXI) and the cabochon pendant was one of the most enduringly popular types in a conservative industry (Higgins 1961, 186-87). There can be no doubt that the cabochon setting in itself would have been seen as a classical feature, and the cabochon pendant particularly so.

Some late Antique plain cabochon pendants are virtually identical to Conversion-period pieces, although a greater range of stones was used (Fig 5.4). Engraved gems, of course, were also used by the Conversion-period Anglo-Saxons when they were available (e.g. at Sibertswold K 172 and Harford Farm Nf 33) but are rare, as are other stones such as porphyry and amethyst.

It is possible that not only the fashion, but the garnets themselves used for making Conversion-period cabochon pendants may have been imported from the Mediterranean. It has often been suggested (e.g. Higginbottom 1975, 64) that garnets of a suitable size may come from a different source from the smaller ones used for cloisonné jewellery, but no mineralogical study has yet been carried out on the Anglo-Saxon cabochon garnet work to prove this. Arrhenius touches on the subject very briefly in her study of European cloisonné work; she sees a sudden decline in the availability of small garnets, all over Continental Europe, in the last decades of the sixth century. In Sassanian Iran, however, larger garnets were popular, and these continue to be found throughout the seventh century; in England, large cabochon garnets appear for the first time. The Sassanian and English garnets may, therefore, have had different origins from those of other European garnets (Arrhenius 1985, 55).

Arrhenius's mineralogical analyses of the smaller European stones show that they probably came from central European deposits, perhaps in Bohemia and Austria. Analyses were not carried out for the larger garnets, but Arrhenius suggested that a common source for these may lie in Sassanian areas around the Black Sea (1985, 34-36, 55, 156, 160-61). Other possible sources include Asia Minor, Sri Lanka and India (Higginbottom 1975, 64; Arrhenius 1985, 30 and 36). All of these sources would have depended on trading centres in the Mediterranean for distribution to western Europe.

The method of manufacture of many of the glass cabochon pendants also remains uninvestigated, although the circular pendant from Finglesham K 68 appears to have been made out of the thickened base of a blown glass vessel. Two almost identical glass cabochons inlaid with a trellis of paler glass occur, from Lechlade G1 148 and Melbourn Ca XI. Further examples of trellised pendants can be found outside the sample, at Everthorpe NHu and Sibertswold K 172 (Fig 4.5), and so it is possible that at least some variations of cabochon pendant were centrally mass-produced rather than individually made.

With its curved profile, the *bullae* (section 4.6, Fig 4.4) may have acquired some of the connotations of the cabochon pendant, but it is in itself a long-lived artefact type, Etruscan in origin (Higgins 1961, 140-41). Early examples (from the fifth century BC) are very large, but by the time they are used in Byzantine necklaces of the sixth and seventh centuries AD they have shrunk to the size of the Anglo-Saxon ones. They can be used as pendants, and are also found as necklace terminals and as spacers (Figs 5.5 and 5.9; also Ross 1965, no 11). As with Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon bullae, the Byzantine bullae can be both hemispherical and spherical (Fig 5.5).

The ultimate origins of many *disc pendants* (section 4.7, Fig 4.4), such as scutiform pendants and bracteates, lie in Scandinavia in the later fifth and sixth centuries, although by the seventh century they had been used in England for generations (Hines 1984, 235-43). Several aspects of scutiform and filigree pendants suggest that the two types are related. There are similarities between the form of the central boss on scutiforms and the central setting on filigree pendants, and between the use of punched dot decoration on scutiforms and beaded wire on filigree pendants. Scutiforms, however, are not made from gold (although four are gilded) and filigree pendants are not made from silver. These aspects may suggest that one type of disc pendant is a deliberate copy of the form of the other, but that the metal of each was inappropriate or unavailable for the other.

As the gold filigree pendants are generally later than the scutiforms, it is possible that they may represent an attempt to Romanise a basically Germanic artefact type. Prototypes for filigree pendants are plentiful in the Roman world, with a number of gold discs with filigree cross ornament, particularly used as necklace terminals rather than as pendants (Marshall 1911, nos 2738-42, pls LX and LXI). Similar discs are also occasionally found as brooches (Marshall 1911, 2972, pl LX). There are also gold filigree pendants proper, both Roman and Byzantine (Fig 5.6). Many of the Roman filigree discs are openwork, giving them a particular resemblance to the Anglo-Saxon openwork filigree cross-in-ring pendants discussed in section 4.6, which may



be earlier than the main series of sheet-gold filigree pendants.

Coin pendants were also common in late Antiquity. Sometimes the coins were barely modified, with just a simple loop added, but more often they survive set in decorative beaded or openwork borders (Fig 5.7, and Marshall 1911, pl LXVII). Late Antique coins do not, however, appear to have been pierced for use as pendants. As coin pendants and bracteates were also, of course, used in England in the migration period, it seems possible that these elements of the migration-period repertoire were selected for use in the Conversion period due to their classical feel.

Some *miscellaneous pendants* (section 4.9) have interesting origins. Many must have been converted from a different primary use, such as the millefiori plaque on a delicate gold chain from Woodyates Do. This appears to have had a final use as a pendant, but the closest Anglo-Saxon parallels for the chain are from linked pin suites, and the plaque may originally have been a centrepiece for a linking chain. A number of miscellaneous pendants were antiques; Finglesham K 200 contained, in addition to a pair of melon beads which may have been of first- or second-century Roman manufacture, a Roman belt fitting and part of a key, also possibly Roman, both re-used as pendants. Uncleby NHu 39 had "at the neck a piece of Samian ware on a necklace". That the Roman associations of these pendants were being used deliberately, to invest the wearer with their Roman-ness, seems likely in view of the small numbers of pendants transformed from earlier Anglo-Saxon material. The hand-shaped pendant from Melbourn Ca XI, perhaps ultimately derived from Egyptian prototypes (Meaney 1981, 169), may have been used in a similar way.

Perhaps surprisingly, antecedents to the Conversion-period beaver tooth pendant (section 4.9, Fig 4.5) can occasionally be found in classical archaeology. Fig 5.7 shows an Etruscan pendant in the British Museum made of an animal canine tooth mounted in gold, with another similar pendant made perhaps of basalt in a similar tooth shape, both from Chiusi in Italy. Philpott gives three examples of pierced dogs' teeth from Roman Britain, from Lankhills, Chichester and Colchester (1991, 162; Fig 5.7). More conventionally, cross-shaped pendants are common in the early Christian Byzantine world, one example from the collection at Dumbarton Oaks being remarkably similar to that on the Anglo-Saxon necklace from Desborough (Figs 5.7 and 4.12).

Moving on from pendants, the possible origins of the fashion for *wire rings* (section 4.15, Fig 4.10) in necklaces have rarely been discussed. If there is a consensus, it appears to be that the wire ring was an Anglo-Saxon development. However, the basic knotted wire ring is a simple design and is common in many periods. There are examples of single silver or bronze wire

rings from a number of Romano-British sites, but unless rings are found *in situ* on a body, it is difficult to assess their use. Direct parallels for the Conversion-period silver ring necklace as seen, for example, at Chamberlain's Barn II Bd 39 (Fig 4.10) are therefore rare.

Parallels for the habit of threading a bead onto a silver wire ring can be found in Roman Britain, for example at Cirencester (Viner in McWhirr *et al.* 1982, m/f fig 65), but as single finds these tend to be interpreted as earrings. Wire rings used as elements of composite jewellery pieces can also be found (Fig 5.8). The closest match to an actual ring necklace that I have been able to find is a first- or second-century row of six knotted rings, interpreted as a bracelet, from a grave at Sardis in Turkey. The rings are bronze, between twenty and forty millimetres in diameter and made of wire two to three millimetres thick; apart from the choice of material, they are strikingly like a Conversion-period necklace (Fig 5.8).

There are also two tantalisingly unillustrated British Museum necklaces, 2704 ("30 circular beaded links alternating with 31 oblong links") and 2708 ("plain gold wire loop links, upon each of which is threaded a small bead of blue glass"). It is possible that knotted wire rings were used on Roman necklaces, but have not survived in context. It is also possible that the wire ring fashion was an Anglo-Saxon transformation of the classical necklace of solid metal links, many of which survive in museum collections (Fig 5.8).

Classical necklaces of metal links or chain often incorporate *small monochrome beads* (section 4.13, Fig 4.9), those which survive usually being of emerald or sapphire, or glass imitations of these. Guido has commented that the range of form and colour was limited in late Roman beads, and by the third or fourth centuries only small beads of glass or precious stones, sometimes threaded on wire, are found (e.g. Figs 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.12). These beads are, however, very common, and there are even documentary references to the wearing of bead necklaces (Guido 1978, 37-38, pl IV). Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon small glass beads have a greater range of colours, but are essentially very similar. Although these may have been a development from migration-period glass bead types, the choice of the small monochrome bead as the favoured type argues for the influence of classical forms and materials.

As far as *polychrome glass beads* (section 4.12, Figs 4.6 and 4.7) are concerned, it appears that beads with spots, crossing double or single wavy trails, reticella, mosaic and millefiori beads represent a continuation of migration-period bead types, although occasional examples can be found on Roman sites (Fig 5.9). Spiral disc beads also have their roots in the migration-period tradition, but become far more popular in the Conversion-period. "Horned" beads are similar

to, but distinguishable from, both Iron Age "horned" beads (Guido 1978, 54) and beads "mit Warzen" from the Alamannic cemetery of Schretzheim, which mostly date from the early seventh century (Koch 1977, 203-04). There appear to be no direct parallels for drum-shaped "combed" beads or annular twist-inlay beads.

*Melon beads* (section 4.14.2, Fig 4.8) are a long-lived artefact type, being made both in the migration period and in the first and second centuries AD (Fig 5.9). Guido believed that these two chronological groups could be distinguished by their colour, most Germanic melon beads being smoky yellow, and most Roman melon beads blue or green (1978, 100). This was not based on an exhaustive study of Anglo-Saxon beads, however, and it is entirely possible that the melon beads in the present study (all of which were blue or green) were manufactured in the Conversion period rather than being antiques. Three melon bead graves, however, had Roman items either in the bag with the bead (Buckland Dover K 141) or on the necklace with the bead (Buckland Dover K 129 and Finglesham K 200). It may be, then, that Conversion-period melon beads were manufactured as reproductions of the Roman antiques; further work is needed to distinguish the two.

The use and development of *metal beads* (section 4.11, Fig 4.6) may be connected to the increasing presence of other metal objects on the necklace. The deep colours of the large amber and glass beads of the sixth century are replaced by gleaming metal pendants, rings and beads. The basic concept of the metal bead was present in late migration-period England, but must have been selected for the Conversion-period repertoire under the influence of late Antique jewellery, in which it is far more common. Cylindrical spiral-wound gold wire beads and similar rolled sheet gold beads are found on necklaces with small pendants in the British Museum; the biconical shape is also not unusual, and a sort of elongated barrel shape can be found as well (Fig 5.10, and Marshall 1911, nos 2698 and 2701). There are classical parallels for the unusual Conversion-period drum-shaped beads (Fig 5.10) but not, however, for the double-bell form of metal bead; the origins of this last form appear to lie in sixth-century England.

The amethystine quartz used in the manufacture of *amethyst beads* (section 4.10, Fig 4.5) is thought to have been obtained from the eastern Mediterranean (Huggett 1988, 66), or perhaps from India via the eastern Mediterranean (Meaney 1981, 76). The consistent shape of the beads, unlike the many different shapes of garnets, implies that the beads were imported ready-made. The habit of wearing amethyst drops was originally a Roman fashion, continuing in use into Byzantine times (Vierck 1978, 525 and 540), and the Anglo-Saxon amethyst beads are so like late Roman examples that Leeds suggested that some may have been looted from Roman graves

(1913, 131-32). Sometimes Roman or Byzantine almond-shaped amethysts are strung as pendants (Marshall 1911, no 2715, pl LVII), but more often they are used as beads in exactly the same way as they are used in Conversion-period England (Fig 5.10).

The wearing of long strings of *amber beads*, in contrast, must have been seen by the Conversion-period Anglo-Saxons as a recently abandoned Germanic fashion of the second half of the sixth century. The amuletic use of single pieces of amber, however (section 4.14.1), may have had quite different connotations and a continued significance, both in England and on the Continent. Its use should perhaps be grouped with amulets instead of with beads.

Antecedents for the fashion for pairs of *linked pins* (section 4.5, Fig 4.3) are exceptionally rare in the Germanic world. A pin with a chain on one side of the terminal and three hook-and-eye fittings on the other was found in the late fifth- to mid-sixth-century Ostrogothic hoard at Domagnano, San Marino (Fig 5.11), but it is described as unique by Kidd (in Menghin (ed) 1987, 428). The well-furnished late sixth-century grave at Finglesham K 203 contained four brooches and two necklaces, one consisting of a short string of beads and pendants linking two pins without settings; it is just possible that this may have been a precursor of the later linked pins.

Linked pins are found more often in Roman and Byzantine contexts. A crudely made bronze pin with a chain attached to it was found in early second-century levels at Verulamium, and another was found at Sardis in Turkey, dated to the Roman or Byzantine period. There are also linked gold and garnet pin heads in the Dumbarton Oaks collection of Byzantine antiquities. There is a single pin from Syria in the British Museum topped with the figure of Aphrodite, with a chain attached to the top of the shaft by a ring, dated to the first or second century AD. A pair of pins linked with a chain was found in the early fifth-century Piazza della Consolazione treasure in Rome (all shown in Figs 5.11 and 5.12). The essential principle of the linked pin fashion may also owe much to the common Roman habit of wearing brooches linked by a chain (Marshall 1911, no 2845-6, pl LXVII; Liversidge 1968, 144), the functional brooches being replaced by delicate ornamental pins.

The construction of the chains linking the pins can be paralleled on chain necklaces from the classical world. Roman chains can be of almost any construction, but the single loop-in-loop type and its heavy double counterpart (Fig 5.12) are particularly characteristic (Johns and Potter 1983, 99-103) and are also found on Conversion-period linked pins (Fig 4.3). The animal-head terminals of the linked pin chains from Harford Farm Nf 18 and Lechlade G1 14 (Fig 4.3) are very similar to those on chain 35/36 from the late fourth-century Thetford Treasure (Fig 5.12).

An examination of the origins and parallels of the *brooches* in use in the Anglo-Saxon Conversion period must have two strands. The form and decoration of the individual brooches is important, but equally so is the way in which brooches in general were worn. The fashion for wearing two brooches became far less popular, and was superseded by the single brooch. I will first discuss each brooch type in turn before looking at the brooch-wearing custom in general.

The origins of *annular brooches* (section 4.17, Fig 4.13) in general are based in sixth-century Anglian costume, ultimately derived from Germanic sources, whether Scandinavian (Hines 1984, 260-69) or Continental (Hirst 1985, 55-57). The round-section annular brooch common in the Conversion period owes little, however, to the large broad flat annular brooch characteristic of "Anglian" areas in the sixth century. Round-section brooches do occasionally occur in sixth-century Anglo-Saxon contexts, but are more common in the Romano-British period (Fig 5.13). The type therefore appears to have been deliberately selected from the repertoire, probably for its classical associations, in the Conversion period. The bronze pins which most of the Conversion-period brooches possess are also characteristic of Roman rather than migration-period Anglo-Saxon brooches, which tend to have iron pins (White 1988, 30).

*Penannular brooches* (section 4.17, Fig 4.13) were used throughout the Iron Age and the Roman period in western Europe, but are not common elsewhere in the Roman empire. They continued to be manufactured and worn in western and northern post-Roman Britain (Fowler 1960, 149). It has been suggested that some of the penannular brooches used in seventh-century Anglo-Saxon England could have been re-used Roman brooches (Mackreth in McWhirr *et al.* 1982, microfiche 2, B06-08), but others, such as those bearing Style II animal heads, are certainly of Conversion-period manufacture. The heads on even these brooches, however, hark back to the small Irish and Romano-British pseudo-zoomorphic brooches (Fig 5.13). The other common decorative motif on Conversion-period annular and penannular brooches, the transverse lines arranged in groups, can also be paralleled on Romano-British brooches (Fig 5.13).

Avent has discussed the origins of *disc brooches* (1975, 6-11; section 4.3, Fig 4.1). He traces both the use of filigree and cloisonné and the disc shape to Merovingian Francia, drawing attention to the small disc brooches in use in Frankish cemeteries. However, Avent allows that the larger English composite disc brooches are distinctively Kentish in design and quality, being far superior to the clumsy Frankish composite brooches, and one may wonder if by the Conversion period the influence was not flowing the other way, from England to the Continent. The development of the English composite brooch may have been assisted by the sixth- to

seventh-century Byzantine disc brooches found, for example, at Sardis (Fig 5.14), with a composite construction with cloisonné settings in a quincunx pattern.

All the circular brooches may have developed in interaction with each other, with different starting points but a common impetus. The only Conversion-period brooch type which is not basically of circular form is the *safety-pin brooch* (section 4.18, Fig 4.13). As noted above in section 4.18, safety-pin brooches look at first sight like Roman bow-brooches, but were designed to be worn lying flat like a modern safety-pin, instead of sticking out perpendicular to the plane of the dress like most bow-brooches; their bows are flat and parallel to the pin. There are few other brooches known of any date which appear to have been worn flat, perhaps because the potential decorative quality of such brooches is small. Occasional examples can be found, such as the late Iron Age or early Roman brooch from Skeleton Green shown in Fig 5.13.

Lethbridge likened the safety-pin brooch from Shudy Camps Ca 19 to Certosa-type brooches (Lethbridge 1936, 6-8). These have a small knob in place of the curl on the foot, but have a curved bow unlike those of the safety-pin brooches (Fig 5.13). The Certosa type is an early Etruscan brooch, named from the cemetery near Bologna, where many examples are known dating from the fifth century BC. Plain wire safety-pin brooches with flat bows are also known from the British Iron Age, although the size and proportions are somewhat different. A small plain wire safety pin brooch with a large spring was found at Whitby (Fig 5.13), and Christopher Hawkes argued that the odd proportions indicate that it had been cut down from one of these Iron Age brooches. Its date of deposition is unknown, but may be Anglo-Saxon (Peers and Radford 1943, 58 and fig 12.4; Hull and Hawkes 1987, 128 and pl 38). It seems therefore that the safety-pin brooch may have drawn its inspiration at least in part from these Iron Age and Romano-British brooches.

The tendency towards women wearing a *single brooch*, rather than the brooches in pairs more usual in the migration period, has been seen as resulting from Frankish inspiration, beginning in Kent with the garnet-set disc brooch and spreading to affect the way that other circular brooches were worn. It must also be noted, however, that brooch fashions in the Roman world followed a similar evolution. Pairs of functional brooches are found up to the fourth century or so, but after this there are very few types of functional brooch in any part of the Empire (Clarke 1979, 263). White has noted that some forms of late Roman brooch, particularly the circular ones such as the gilded and stamped disc, penannular and quoit brooches, appear to have been designed to be worn singly by both men and women (1988, 155-56). This fashion is also apparent from late Antique pictorial depictions, such as the missorium of Theodosius or the

mosaic of Justinian at Ravenna (Fig 5.15). It is therefore also possible that the fashion for wearing a single brooch was influenced by late Antique custom.

The various forms of *finger-rings* found in some Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon graves (section 4.20, Fig 4.15) are easily paralleled in Roman and Byzantine archaeology. There are spiral rings from Portchester, Verulamium and Cirencester, and twisted bezels from Cirencester and the fort of the Classis Britannica at Dover (Fig 5.15, and Viner in McWhirr *et al.* 1982, m/f figs 53 and 58). Rings with ball-mouldings at the junction of hoop and bezel, as at Finglesham K 58, are found in late Roman Britain at York (Ottaway 1993 colour pl 4) and Thetford (Johns and Potter 1983, figs 15 and 16) but are more common in seventh-century Byzantine contexts (Ross 1965, nos 6 F, 74, 75 and 76, pls XIV and XLVI; Filmer-Sankey 1989, 233). Spiral, solid and twisted-bezel finger-rings are, however, also found in sixth-century Anglo-Saxon contexts, and so interpretations can vary from an independent continuity of insular tradition, to a selection of potentially classical objects from the earlier repertoire.

All types of *bracelet* found in the Conversion period (section 4.19, Fig 4.14) can be paralleled from Romano-British contexts (Fig 5.16). The knotted wire form is a simple design, found in Britain from the Iron Age onwards, with Romano-British examples at Portchester and Lankhills, and remaining popular through the migration period. According to Evison, the bracelet with animal-head terminals was particularly popular in the Roman period (1987, 86) and Romano-British bracelets with hook-and-eye closures are also common, being known from Portchester, Thetford and Lankhills. The use of any style of bracelet as a grave-good became much more popular in Roman Britain in the third and fourth centuries (Philpott 1991, 143).

An examination of the cultural affiliations of the new jewellery types, then, has shown that the vast majority of them have antecedents in the classical world. Even those objects which, at first sight, represent developments from earlier Anglo-Saxon practice, can be seen to have developed under strong Roman or Byzantine influence.

### 5.3.2 Non-jewellery costume items

The origins of the *workbox* (section 4.4, Fig 4.2) have exercised minds for many years without finding more than one or two likely-looking antecedents. Hawkes has drawn attention to some rather tall thin cylindrical boxes, from Burgundian graves at Arçon and Lussy and a Lombardic grave at Nocera Umbra 87, and she suggests that the unusual tall thin workbox from Kingston Down K 222 may have been an import from the Continent (Hawkes in Philp 1973, 197).

Meaney cites the spherical amulet-capsules or pyxes found in Francia as parallels to the workbox, but these are very different in construction (1981, 186). Gibson looked in another direction, and found three short squat cylindrical examples in Denmark, two of which contained thread. These were from graves dated to the first half of the seventh century (Gibson 1993, 33-34). None of these items is quite like the English workboxes, though, and Hawkes has commented that they "represent and illustrate a wholly insular development" (in Philp 1973, 197).

This is certainly true, but it seems to have been overlooked that small cylindrical boxes, in ivory, shale, bone and other materials as well as metal, were very popular in the Roman and Byzantine periods (e.g. Weizmann (ed) 1979, no 170; Johns and Potter 1983, no 83). There is a particularly good parallel in bronze from the Roman grave of Krefeld-Gellep 241 (Fig 5.17). The "wholly insular development" thus presumably took these small cylindrical boxes as prototypes. It has also been noted that the small tubular Roman amulet-cases worn on necklaces can, like workboxes, contain threads (Johns and Potter 1983, 99).

The habit of wearing keys on a *chatelaine* (section 4.21, Figs 4.16, 4.17 and 4.18) was seen by Evison as having been adopted from Roman custom (1987, 117) but no evidence was cited in support of this. Allason-Jones has stated that, on the contrary, "Roman chatelaines appear to have included only toilet implements such as tweezers, *ligulae* and nail cleaners" (in Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 260). Roman keys similar to the iron Conversion-period examples are, however, fairly common (Fig 5.18). Early medieval chatelaines with keys are found on the Continent, but they often have distinctive elements, such as house-shaped suspension devices, which are not found in England. The non-functional bronze girdle-hangers of migration-period England are also identifiably different. The origins of the Conversion-period chatelaine, then, are still slightly problematic. It may have been adopted for functional reasons rather than as a specific part of the *tracht*, particularly if it was long and buried in the folds of a long skirt which could muffle its clanking.

One of the more enigmatic items to occur on the chatelaine, the iron *spoon* (section 4.46.6, Figs 4.40 and 4.41), does not appear to have any identifiable antecedents. The bronze and silver spoons found in similar contexts are obviously derived from classical prototypes, many being known from hoards such as Thetford and Hoxne (Johns and Potter 1983; Bland and Johns 1993), settlements such as Portchester, Verulamium and Exeter (Webster in Cunliffe 1975, 212 and fig 113; Waugh and Goodburn in Frere 1972, 124 and fig 35; Allason-Jones in Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 257 and fig 117). Their manufacture in the Byzantine world continues into the



sixth or seventh century (Ross 1962, 17-19, pl XVII, no 13).

As commented above in section 4.46.6, the similarity between the dating and associations of the Roman-derived spoons and the iron spoons suggests a similar function. Given this, it seems strange that there was no attempt to copy the form of the Roman spoon in iron. There also appear to be no sixth-century copies of Roman spoons in bronze or silver, although re-used Roman spoons are occasionally found in fifth- and sixth-century graves (White 1988, 137-39), nor do there seem to be any forms intermediate between the Roman-derived and iron spoons. The forms of the two seem to be completely divorced from each other.

The *toilet implements* that can also be found on a chatelaine (section 4.21, Fig 4.41) are easier to parallel. Sets of small implements, as found, for example, at Boss Hall Sf 93 and Burton Fields NHu, are found on many Romano-British sites (Fig 5.19).

The most common Conversion-period buckle type, the *small simple buckle* (section 4.37, Fig 4.27), is also found in migration-period cemeteries and should be seen as a continuation of earlier practice. A number of other buckle types, however, appear to have been developed from Roman or Byzantine prototypes. The *double-tongued buckle* (section 4.35, Fig 4.26) is not found in migration-period graves, nor in Merovingian cemeteries on the Continent, but it can be found in a number of late Roman contexts, including two from the hoard found at Ténès in Algeria (Fig 5.19). There are two late Roman examples in the British Museum, one from Kent with a rectangular bronze plate and counterplate (M & LA 1942, 10-7, 5) and one unprovenanced gilt-bronze example (M & LA 49, 11-27, 2).

*Serrated edges* (section 4.36, Fig 4.26) are also found on a number of late Roman buckle-plates (Fig 5.20). There are two dolphin buckles from Lankhills, Winchester, with serrations on the sides or ends of the plate, a rare triangular buckle with intermittent serration and a rectangular buckle with serration on the loop as well as all around the plate. All these examples date from the second half of the fourth century. There are also examples of serrated edges on buckles from Verulamium, and on a strap-end from Exeter (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, fig 111).

The origins of Anglo-Saxon *openwork buckles* cast in one piece (section 4.36, Fig 4.26) have hitherto been enigmatic. Leeds, when discussing the openwork buckle in 1936, commented that it "to the best of my knowledge has no counterpart abroad" (1936, 103-04). Twenty years later, Evison agreed, saying that it was "peculiar to Anglo-Saxon England" (1956, 94). Although similar buckles are absent from Continental Germanic contexts, the basic form and a number of

details can be found among late Romano-British objects. Hawkes and Dunning illustrate a number of their Type II animal-ornamented buckles which look like prototypes for the Anglo-Saxon buckles; notable among these are a hinged buckle with ring-and-dot decoration from Caerwent, and a one-piece buckle with serrated edges, found in the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Sleaford Li (Fig 5.21). These are both dated to the late fourth and early fifth centuries and were made in Britain (Hawkes and Dunning 1961, 21-26). Buckles similar to the Sleaford one, with both openwork and serrated-edge decoration, could have provided the inspiration for the mix of these two motifs on Conversion-period pieces.

*Triangular buckles* (section 4.34, Fig 4.26) are common in sixth-century Francia, and in England share the predominantly Kentish distribution of other artefacts derived from Frankish prototypes. The *shield-on-tongue* motif present on many triangular buckles, as well as on earlier buckles with rectangular plate or with no plate, is also of Frankish origin (Evison 1987, 87). *Shoe-buckles* (section 4.26, Fig 4.22), particularly those with matching tongue-shaped lace-tags, also seem to be a Merovingian fashion; famous examples from Frankish and Alamannic areas include St-Denis 49 in France and Löhningen-Hirschen 2 in Switzerland (Périn 1991, figs 3 and 7). A Continental origin for these artefact types is supported by the distribution pattern, which shows a concentration in Kent.

Hawkes suggested thirty years ago that the Finglesham K 95 *lace-tags* could be Swedish, as there were no precise parallels in England (Hawkes *et al.* 1965, 22). Since then, there have been a number of finds of similar lace-tags in England, though none so confidently modelled. The origins of tongue-shaped lace-tags are closely linked with those of shoe buckles (see above, and sections 4.25 and 4.26, Figs 4.21 and 4.22). The wearing of lace-tags, whether of tongue-shaped or rolled type, without buckles is less well understood, but the similarity in the distributions of the rolled type and the tongue-shaped type suggests either a common origin, or an Anglo-Saxon development starting from the areas where the buckle and tongue-shaped lace-tag set was most popular.

The origins of *hooked tags* (section 4.27, Fig 4.23) are most obscure. They are not part of the migration-period repertoire in England, and they do not appear to be used on the Continent. The only close parallel available seems to be a bronze hooked tag with a circular plate, decorated with a rosette motif, from a late fourth-century context at the rural site of Windmill Hill (MK96) beneath what is now Milton Keynes (Fig 5.21).

The simple and functional nature of *single pins* (section 4.28, Fig 4.22) make general

pronouncements on their cultural affiliations hard to make. The only diagnostic Conversion-period pin type identified, the spiral-headed pin, has a heart-shaped head formed from two spirals. This motif is also found on many items of filigree jewellery, and may ultimately be derived from "Celtic" or late Roman art styles.

Non-jewellery costume items, then, do not show quite such strong classical influences, although there are some clear relationships. As befits a collection of items more disparate than the jewellery, their antecedents are less uniform and, in a few cases, more obscure.

### 5.3.3 Vessels

To begin with bronze vessels, "*Coptic*" vessels (section 4.42.1, Fig 4.32) have been found in some numbers around the Mediterranean, Africa and Europe, with a particular concentration in Kent and in the Rhineland (Werner 1957, 117). This distribution might be seen as being consistent with a controlled import to Kent, via the Rhine, from an origin in the Byzantine east Mediterranean (Huggett 1988, 90; Richards 1980, 81-89).

The drop-handled sheet-bronze vessel from Uncleby NHu 31 combines with seven other English and a large number of Continental finds, to form the class of *tripod-ring bowls* (section 4.42.3), distinguishable both by form and by technology from the cast "Coptic" bowls. Richards disagrees with Werner that tripod-ring bowls are imitations of the "Coptic" type B1a vessel, also with a tripod foot (Werner 1957, Abb. 1), because the B1a bowl is only known from a single example. Richards would prefer to see tripod-ring bowls as a separate Frankish or Alamannic development in the sixth century from late Roman bowls (Richards 1980, 19-20 and 368).

Past work on *hanging bowls* (section 4.42.2, Fig 4.32) has been summarised by Brenan. All commentators have drawn attention to the similarities between hanging bowls found in Anglo-Saxon contexts and late Roman bowls, both with three or four rings held by hooks running from escutcheons placed on the body of the bowl to a fixing point on the rim (Brenan 1991, 7-24, 73-74 and 129-33). This has led them to conclude that the bowls are so like Roman examples that their manufacture must have started no later than the fifth century, and that most must have been made in Ireland or the west and north of Britain, and exported to an Anglo-Saxon market. This argument is weak, however, and Brenan demolishes it. It is based on art-historical foundations and takes little account of the dating or nature of the archaeological contexts. It does not address the question of why hanging bowls seem to have been virtually the only item to be traded, and why they were not buried until the seventh century.

If the manufacture of hanging bowls is re-dated to the Conversion period, however, they fit very well into a repertoire of consciously Romanised material culture. As has been seen in section 4.42.2 above, the range of art-styles represented on the escutcheons is large, but many used spiral La Tène-type designs; the bowls may therefore have been seen as being specifically Romano-*British*.

The *hemispherical bronze bowl* found at Buckland Dover K 137 (section 4.42.3) is seen by White as being an Irchester bowl, a late Romano-British type of shallow dish seen as a precursor of hanging bowls (1988, 119-20). Evison acknowledges Roman parallels, but owing to the large gap between the perceived manufacturing date of these and the Buckland Dover bowl suggested that the latter was a Byzantine import (1987, 104). There seems little evidence for Byzantine parallels, however, and it seems more likely that the bowl represents a revival of a late Romano-British form, perhaps the product of a hanging bowl workshop.

*Skillets* (section 4.42.3) are a fairly common Roman vessel type (White 1988, 120; e.g. Sunter and Brown 1988, 14-20 and figs 8-10; Brailsford 1951, 38, fig 18 and pl XVIII; Kent and Painter (eds) 1977, no 106). The Anglo-Saxon examples are so like Roman skillets (examples of both are shown in Figs 5.22 and 5.23) that the Newton Lodge Wa example was thought for many years to be of Roman manufacture (Richards 1980, 18 and n 91).

Evison has argued that the *wheel-thrown pottery* (section 4.44, Fig 4.34) found in Conversion-period graves was probably all imported from Francia, mostly as containers for oil or wine (1979, 48-49). Most seems to have been manufactured in what is now northern France or Belgium, but there is increasing evidence that some, particularly those vessels found outside Kent, were made in the Rhineland around Köln (Huggett 1988, 91; Alan Vince, pers comm). Some *hand-made pottery* (section 4.44, Fig 4.34) was made in direct imitation of the imported wheel-thrown wares, but a much larger proportion looks just like the inhumation accessory vessels of the migration period. The habit of including pottery in an inhumation grave is, of course, a migration-period trait.

Moving on to glass vessels (section 4.43, Fig 4.33), *palm cups*, with their simple shallow curved shape, may be derived from the small glass bowls found in Roman contexts (Fig 5.23; Harden 1956, pl XV e-h). The palm cup is a common type both in England and on the Continent, however (Näsman 1984, 85), and so the precise directions of any classical influences are hard to see clearly.

It was noted in section 4.43 that in-line claws on a claw beaker may be a seventh-century characteristic, and it is also possible that this trait may be a revived Roman design. Another claw-beaker with in-line claws was found at Mucking II Ex 843, in an early sixth-century grave, but the glass was thought by Evison to have been a rare late Roman survival due to its unfinished rim and top border of zig-zag trailed decoration (Evison 1982, 45-6, fig 9a, pl IVa). The claw configuration is not discussed by Evison, but Harden has commented on the resemblance between the Mucking II Ex 843 beaker and Roman claw-beakers with in-line claws from St Severin, Cologne (Harden 1978, 4).

Harden was of the view that most early medieval English glass vessels were imported, given their relative distributions (1956, 132). One type which begins in the sixth century, the domed and constricted bell-beaker, is very common in Francia but rare in England (Harden 1956, 141). Harden found few Continental parallels for most seventh-century types, such as bag-beakers, pouch-bottles and squat jars, and he concluded that these should be of insular - generally Kentish - manufacture. More recently, Näsman has published a survey of the origins of the imported glass found in Scandinavia from c. 550 to c. 750 or 800, in which he confirms Harden's earlier conclusions (1984, 84-85). Neither study attempts to explain why the bag-beaker, pouch-bottle and squat jar shapes were chosen; they are closely related, however, and may have been derived from the baggy shape of some bell-beakers or the in-line claw beaker from Sarre (Harden 1956, fig 25). In the case of glass vessels, then, Anglo-Saxon manufacture may have also meant Anglo-Saxon inspiration and design.

Bronze-bound and, very occasionally, iron-bound *wooden buckets* are found in migration-period Anglo-Saxon burials, and so the increased numbers of iron-bound buckets (section 4.45.1, Fig 4.35) should probably be seen as a development from earlier practice. It is possible that the retention of the rite of bucket-burial could be connected with a perceived desirability of other late sixth- and seventh-century straight-sided vessels, such as the cast-bronze "Coptic" bucket from Cuddesdon Ox and the sheet-bronze buckets from, among other places, Chessell Down IoW (section 4.42.2), both of Mediterranean manufacture. The selection of iron-bound rather than bronze-bound buckets, however, could be related to the fact that Roman buckets were normally iron-bound (e.g. Manning in Frere 1972, 178 and fig 66; Webster in Cunliffe 1975, 237-40 and fig 127); the fittings which survive are almost identical to Anglo-Saxon examples (Fig 5.29).

Because of the poor preservation of most other *wooden vessels* (section 4.45.2, Fig 4.36), it is difficult to make pronouncements on prototypes and parallels. The practice of including such vessels in the grave, however, is also found in migration-period contexts.

To summarise, then, the antecedents of Conversion-period vessel types are various. The metal vessels are clearly classical, either Byzantine imports or descendants from Romano-British vessels. The wheel-thrown pots are imports from Francia. The hand-made pottery, glass and wooden vessels are developments from migration-period custom, but the latter two at least have shown classical elements in their development.

#### 5.3.4 Weapons

Weapons are a common grave-good in Germanic inhumation graves all over Europe, but are not found in Roman or Byzantine furnished graves, perhaps because of a law forbidding civilians to bear arms (Philpott 1991, 178). Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon weapon-burial as a rite in itself must therefore be seen as a direct continuation of migration-period practice, with perhaps some aspects drawn from Frankish custom.

The *spearhead* types in use in the Anglo-Saxon Conversion period (section 4.30) seem to have resulted from a slow and steady development from migration-period Anglo-Saxon spearheads; there is no evidence of particular extraneous influence. Like the spearheads, Conversion-period *swords* (section 4.31, Fig 4.24) appear to be similar to those deposited with earlier Anglo-Saxons, with any stylistic developments being the result of slow evolution rather than dramatic change. Group 3 *shield-bosses* (section 4.29, Fig 4.23) are seen by Dickinson and Härke as being the result of Merovingian influence (1992, 16). Bosses similar to the tall Group 7 type (section 4.29, Fig 4.23) can be found in Frankish areas, and although they are thought likely to have had independent origins and development it does not seem likely that such a development would have taken place without knowledge of shield-boss fashions in Europe (Evison 1963a, 51; Dickinson and Härke 1992, 21).

The *seax*, however (section 4.32, Fig 4.25), whose function as a weapon must remain uncertain, differs from other weapons in having a clear derivation from Frankish origins. This derivation, and continuing links, are emphasised by the subsequent development of the long and broad seaxes from the earlier narrow variety, both in England and on the Continent. There are problems, however, in accepting a simple transfer or parallel development of the object. Although the rare sixth-century seaxes from England could be explained as imports, it is difficult to explain why these were not apparently copied in number until the seventh century, when the narrow seax had gone out of use on the Continent (Evison in Hurst 1961, 228). On the other hand, some aspects of seaxes, such as the two-handed grip, seem to have been adopted in England at much the same time as they appeared in Europe.

In addition, the distribution of seaxes in England is dissimilar both chronologically and spatially to the distribution of other Frankish-derived items, such as disc brooches and triangular buckles, in being even over the whole country and not concentrated in Kent. A more detailed study of the Frankish influence on artefact types in the sixth and seventh centuries is needed before the traits briefly noted here can be fully explained.

Not strictly speaking weapons, but related to war-gear, are spurs and sword-pyramids. *Sword pyramids* (section 4.48.3) are rare finds, confined to the seventh century in England and, more often, on the Continent (Dickinson 1974, 27; Werner 1953, 57-60). There is a single possible example of a *spur* in a Conversion-period grave, an iron prick spur from the disturbed grave of Castledyke SHu 18. Spurs are well-known from Roman Britain, with examples at Portchester and Verulamium (Webster in Cunliffe 1975, 233-34 and fig 125; Manning in Frere 1972, 170; also see Shortt 1959).

Depictions of fully armed warriors can be seen on many Roman and Byzantine objects, particularly tombstones and medallions (Figs 5.24 and 5.25). Tombstones would have been conspicuous parts of the funerary landscape for the Anglo-Saxons, and could have led to a view of weapons as appropriate items for the grave.

The range of weapons deposited in Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon graves, then, shows little change from the range found in the earlier Anglo-Saxon period, with the exception of the introduction of the Frankish-inspired seax. It is possible, however, that the practice of including weapons in the grave may have been influenced by the depictions of warriors on Roman tombstones; this is explored more fully under section 5.4.2.

### 5.3.5 Miscellaneous items

Items of *textile processing equipment* (section 4.22) are deposited both in Conversion-period and in migration-period Anglo-Saxon graves. The functional nature of such equipment means that its design is conservative, and that it rarely bears ornament. Nevertheless, it may be instructive to look at such parallels as may be found.

*Whorls* (section 4.22.1, Fig 4.19), because of their essential function as spinning flywheels, are found in all periods, but shale whorls, common in Conversion-period graves, are found particularly often in Roman contexts (Philpott 1991, 184). Roman whorls of all materials are known (Fig 5.26), and the problem of distinguishing spindle-whorls from similar objects which

may have been used as buttons or toggles has also turned up in the classical world (Davidson 1952, 296-304). The use of whorls as grave-goods in Roman Britain is a late third- and fourth-century phenomenon, and is considered by Philpott to be particularly Romano-British (Philpott 1991, 184).

Chadwick Hawkes saw the English *weaving battens* (section 4.22.2) as an Anglo-Saxon development from a tradition of wooden battens, contemporary to the Frankish development of comparable but generally slightly smaller (400-470 mm long) weaving swords. The iron battens must have been considerably more prestigious than the wooden ones, although perhaps not so practical, and so their development presumably occurred both in England and in Francia in order to satisfy a common need for more obviously high-status objects. Like the Group 7 shield-bosses, then, they may have had independent origins and development to their Continental cousins, but would not have been used in ignorance of them.

*Thread-pickers* (section 4.22.2, Fig 4.19) are common on early Anglo-Saxon settlement and burial sites. They have been described as essential equipment for the warp-weighted loom (Hoffmann, quoted by Brown in Biddle 1990, 226), but may also have been made of wood, and so subject to differential preservation.

Parallels for *heckles* have been cited in section 4.22.3 (Fig 4.15). Generally it seems that these should be dated to the later Anglo-Saxon or Viking period both in England and in Scandinavia, and so the heckles in graves may be among the earliest heckles known from England. This may, however, be an accident of preservation. It seems unlikely, given their simple and practical nature, that heckles were completely absent from migration-period life, and it is possible that their presence in settlement contexts may have hitherto gone unrecognised.

Their deposition may, of course, be connected with a putative rise in the amount of textile processing equipment being buried in graves, but without synthesised data from migration-period burial sites this cannot be assumed. It may be premature to attempt conclusions; the realisation that heckles are an element in the middle Anglo-Saxon material culture repertoire is recent, and more may be identified in the future.

Although there appears from the present study to have been a hiatus in the burial of *bags* during the first half of the seventh century (section 4.38.2, Figs 4.28 and 4.29), it seems likely that the use of bags in the grave was a continuation of migration-period Anglo-Saxon practice. Similarly, the range of Conversion-period *firesteel* shapes (section 4.38.1, Fig 4.27) must have



developed from the migration-period repertoire, although the distinctive humped Conversion-period firesteels are not easily paralleled in other areas and appear to have been an Anglo-Saxon development.

As *caskets* (section 4.39, Figs 4.29, 4.30 and 4.31) are also found in sixth-century Frankish burials (Speake 1989, 29), the late sixth-century caskets found at Buckland Dover K could be interpreted as showing Frankish affinities or connections. The strongly Kentish distribution of caskets is consistent with a Frankish source. The design of the casket, however, seems to flow from Roman practice. Very similar wooden caskets with iron fittings can be seen in pictorial representations of Roman life, and they can also be reconstructed from settlement finds (Fig 5.27). The fifth-century hoard from Hoxne in Suffolk was contained in a wooden casket with iron fittings, but this was larger than Conversion-period examples, c. 600 x 450 x 300 mm (Bland and Johns 1993, 12).

Green has noted that *antler boxes* (section 4.39) are uncommon in Anglo-Saxon graves, but that examples can be found from Roman and post-Roman contexts (Myres and Green 1973, 86); they are perhaps related to the ivory boxes often found in Roman and Byzantine contexts (Kitzinger 1955, 100-01). Evison gives a tenth-century example from Coppergate, York (Evison 1987, 106).

*Barrel padlocks* (section 4.40, Fig 4.31) appear to have no real migration-period Anglo-Saxon antecedents. Only one object found in England has a claim both to being part of a barrel padlock and to a sixth-century date. It is a fragment of cast bronze decorated with human masks, found in the upper fill of a ditch in Dorchester-on-Thames in Oxfordshire. The ditch contained mostly fourth-century pottery, but one "Saxon" sherd was present; the bronze fragment has presumably been dated on stylistic grounds, although it bears similarities to seventh-century human masks (Bruce-Mitford 1978, 369 and n 2). Although it has been suggested as a padlock fragment, it does not bear any similarity to the group of barrel padlocks considered here, and cannot really be cited as a parallel.

Ten pre-Viking barrel padlocks have been found at Helgö in Sweden, although they do not come from very precisely dated contexts. All have iron mechanisms, although the cases may be of bronze or iron (Fig 5.28). The Helgö padlocks are unusually early, and the few parallels cited for them include two in graves, one from grave 21 at Nocera Umbra in northern Italy, and one from a late fifth-century grave at Halle. Although the geographical spread of parallels is wide, the Helgö padlocks are thought to have been made on site (Tomtlund 1978).

Barrel padlocks, however, are common finds from Roman Britain. Examples are known from settlement sites at Portchester, Verulamium and Cirencester, and from graves at Lankhills (Fig 5.28).

*Spatulate tools* (section 4.46.1, Figs 4.37 and 4.38) appear for the first time in England in the Conversion period, and they are apparently not found anywhere else in Europe (Evison 1987, 110). *Pointed iron tools* (section 4.46.2, Fig 4.36) have not yet been identified from Anglo-Saxon sixth-century cemeteries either, although there are two examples from very well-furnished sixth-century graves at Krefeld-Gellep 1782 and 1812 (Fig 5.29). The absence of pointed tools from graves is surprising, as they are common finds on Anglo-Saxon settlement sites (Morris in Hamerow 1993, 69). They are known in quantity from Romano-British sites (Fig 5.29).

Apart from spatulate tools, parallels for most iron tools found in Anglo-Saxon Conversion-period graves can be found in Roman archaeology. In addition to its pointed iron tools, Portchester has produced a spokeshave, although this bears more similarities to later Anglo-Saxon examples than it does to the curved blade in Lechlade Gl 40 (Webster in Cunliffe 1975, 240 and fig 128). Chisels have been found at Verulamium, Portchester and Skeleton Green (Manning in Frere 1972, 164 and fig 60, 10; Webster in Cunliffe 1975, 240 and fig 128, 215; Partridge 1981, fig 60). Philpott has gathered a number of examples of tools in Roman graves (1991, 186-87). Gravestones showing scenes of people using tools are known from the Roman period (Fig 5.30) and, as with those that depict armed warriors, may have encouraged the Anglo-Saxons to see tools as appropriate grave-furniture.

The undecorated *whetstones* that are found in migration-period graves show that the custom of depositing a whetstone in a Conversion-period grave (section 4.46.4, Fig 4.39) could easily be derived from earlier practice. The decorated ceremonial whetstone from Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1 has been seen as a Celtic-inspired object, but recent critical study has suggested instead that it was a Germanic object which, Ryan has argued, was developed, from late Antique prototypes (Ryan 1992, 90). This source may also have provided the inspiration for the undecorated stones. The whetstone, then, may be another example of an object type with roots in the migration period which became part of the Conversion-period assemblage due to its classical connotations.

As the custom of including full-size *shears* in inhumation burials is found, albeit very occasionally, in migration-period Anglo-Saxon graves, it seems reasonable to suggest that the Conversion-period tradition was an insular development. The reasons behind the sudden rise in the popularity of shears as grave-goods have been explored in section 4.46.5 (Fig 4.39), and

depend on their precise function. It may or may not be relevant to note that shears are also common in Roman contexts, some having the simple U-shaped loop and others the expanded loop (Fig 5.31).

The gold and earliest silver Anglo-Saxon *coins* (section 4.2, Fig 4.1) copy both Merovingian and, more particularly, late Roman designs. Byzantine coins were copied in Francia, but not in England; it appears that imperial prototypes were being used in both areas, but that the view of the appropriate imperial prototype differed. The first Anglo-Saxon coins appear to have been minted in Kent, with the later *sceatta* issues of the rest of England being based on the earlier designs, with new elements coming in the Intermediate phase, especially from Frisia (Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 158-73).

The *cowrie shell* (section 4.23, Fig 4.20) is a good example of a Conversion-period grave-good which must have been imported from the Mediterranean. It is not confined to England; Meaney lists a number of Continental Germanic graves containing cowrie shells, nearly all from the seventh century (1981, 123). The custom of including them in the grave seems therefore to have developed contemporaneously in England and on the Continent. Because of this, it would be unwise to assume direct Mediterranean contact as the mechanism for the arrival of the cowrie shell in England, although in the context of the rest of Conversion-period material culture, it would not be unlikely.

The variety of other *amulets* (section 4.47) means that it is hard to be definite about parallels to the amulet habit in general. It has been seen that both tooth pendants and cowrie shells have parallels or origins in the Mediterranean area, but apart from this the collection is too disparate to say very much. The practice of including amulets in the grave, however, has its roots in migration-period Anglo-Saxon custom.

Although the burial of horses is also an essentially Germanic rite, as can be seen from Müller-Wille's map (1970-71, Abb 1), the burial of *horse equipment* (section 4.48.2, Fig 4.43) without the horse is a different matter. It seems to be a new development in the Conversion period, and although it may have developed from the burial of horses themselves, it may have had a different origin. Its occurrence in Europe has not yet been mapped; this might help elucidate its relationship to horse burial.

*Double-sided combs*, as noted in section 4.24 (Fig 4.21), are found in Roman and Germanic contexts all over Europe. Their ubiquity makes it hard to assess the connotations that the

double-sided comb would have had for the Conversion-period Anglo-Saxons, but their deposition in graves appears to represent direct continuity from migration-period practice.

A number of *hump-backed combs* (section 4.24, Fig 4.21) have been found in Frisia (MacGregor 1985, 87), but this may be related more to accidents of preservation and discovery than to a real pattern of development and distribution. Hills has shown that the preponderance of parallels for earlier zoomorphic barred combs in the Frisian terps was an accident of discovery, as these earlier combs now have a much more extensive distribution (Hills 1981, 101). Similarly, hump-backed combs can be found over much of the Merovingian world (Koch 1977, 91-92, 132-33). Single-sided combs are also known from Roman contexts (e.g. Webster in Cunliffe 1975, 220 and fig 117), but these have straight backs, not the characteristic Anglo-Saxon Conversion-period hump-back. It seems likely, then, that the hump-back comb is derived from Merovingian prototypes.

*Playing pieces*, as seen in section 4.48.1 (Fig 4.42), are found in Anglo-Saxon cremation burials from the fifth century, but in inhumations appear to belong mainly to the seventh century. Playing pieces are also common Roman finds, usually of glass (as found in the Conversion period at Oxton Nt) but sometimes of bone (Allen in Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 229; Fig 5.31). Youngs has suggested that some of the playing pieces found in Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon contexts may have been imported from Byzantium, and so presumably would have been seen as an up-to-date classical object rather than an archaic Germanic one (in Bruce-Mitford 1983, 860-74). *Dice* are also occasionally found both in Anglo-Saxon contexts and in Roman ones (Fig 5.31). Playing pieces are therefore a good example of an object with a long Germanic pedigree which was selected for a revived use in the Conversion period due to its Roman flavour.

*Bells* similar to the iron examples in Conversion-period graves (section 4.48.4) are occasionally found on Roman to medieval settlement sites, but these generally have brazed surfaces (Ottaway 1992, 557-58). Clappers can also be found separately (Rogers 1993, 1437-38). Many more all-bronze bells are known, particularly from Roman contexts; they are known from graves (e.g. Pirling 1966 I, 126-27) as well as settlement sites (e.g. Waugh and Goodburn in Frere 1972, 126 and fig 37; Cunliffe 1971, 112 and fig 46) and give a more resonant note. Very rarely, all-iron bells can be found, for example from Sardis (Waldbaum 1983, nos 91-103) where they are suggested as horse harness trappings. Bells are occasionally found in graves in Roman Britain (e.g. Lethbridge 1934, 119 and pl X).

Exploring the range of items from Roman and Byzantine contexts has also thrown up some object types which reappear very rarely in Conversion-period England. Notable among these are the three *lamps* known from Conversion-period England, from Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1, Broomfield Ex and Boughton Aluph K (Fig 5.32). Various lighting devices are common from classical contexts, but are absent from migration-period sites. The three Conversion-period lamps all have a construction with branched feet which can be matched on Roman and Byzantine candlesticks (e.g. from Lampsacus; Painter in Kent and Painter (ed) 88-89, and Fig 5.32).

In conclusion, it can be said that many of the objects in this disparate group of miscellaneous items have their roots in earlier Anglo-Saxon artefact types, but that they have developed or become more popular under the influence of classical prototypes. For these mundane items, many parallels survive from Romano-British settlement and cemetery sites.

### 5.3.6 Ornament

The start of the Conversion period is marked by a change in ornament from Salin's Style I to Salin's Style II (see section 2.2.3). Although the golden age of Style I animal art was already passing by the later sixth century (e.g. Hines 1984, 195) the change to Style II was accompanied by a further sharp fall in the incidence of animal art on metalwork. Some new design elements are discussed here without reference to their chronological significance; the changing nature of art styles over time, particularly the loss of animal art, is explored further under section 6.2.2.

The decline in the Germanic speciality of animal art, coupled with the extent to which Roman and Byzantine influences can be seen on Conversion-period object types, might suggest that classical prototypes would have been used as a source for various Conversion-period decorative motifs. Those elements of late Roman art which are familiar to students of the early Anglo-Saxon period, however, such as the floriate cross, the swastika and the running spiral (Dickinson 1991, 60-68), are not commonly found. It is possible that, as these had already been absorbed into the Germanic material repertoire (e.g. on saucer brooches and stamped pottery) they may, by the seventh century, have lost their classical tinge.

The origins of *interlace* patterns, common in middle Anglo-Saxon art, have been much argued over (Speake 1980, 17-37) but are now felt to be basically Germanic (Speake 1980, 24). Interlaced patterns very similar to those on Anglo-Saxon objects are found on a number of late sixth and seventh century Byzantine objects, however (Fig 5.32). In the same way that the use of the classical floriate cross and running spiral on Germanic objects may eventually have

rendered them Germanic to contemporary Anglo-Saxon eyes, the use of interlace on Byzantine objects may have given this motif classical associations.

Although interlace is seen as being a particularly distinctive motif in middle Anglo-Saxon metalwork, the use of *filigree* and *granulation* in non-interlacing patterns is actually more common than interlace on Conversion-period metalwork. The use of these techniques in the classical world is described by Higgins (1961, 18-23). Granulation is the use of single blobs of gold in patterns, and filigree consists of wires soldered in patterns on a background. The wires can be plain, twisted or beaded in Roman or Byzantine work, but are almost always either beaded or twisted in Anglo-Saxon (Bruce-Mitford 1978, 603-05). In practice, the term filigree is used loosely in Anglo-Saxon art-history, and can refer to any beaded-metal motif.

These techniques are not found in England before the seventh century, but are commonly found on classical metalwork (Higgins 1961, 18-23). They are adopted in Frankish areas before the seventh century from Roman prototypes, but given the low number of other Frankish influences on Conversion-period metalwork, it must remain more likely that filigree and granulation were adopted directly from classical models.

Another decorative element taken into Conversion-period metalwork from the Roman repertoire was the use of inlays of *millefiori* glass, which is confined to the Anglo-Saxon Conversion period in post-Roman Europe (Bruce-Mitford 1974, 292) but which is fairly common on Roman objects (Bimson in Bruce-Mitford 1978, 927; Wedlake 1982, 132 gives a number of examples). Some of the bigger slabs of millefiori used in Conversion-period jewellery may be re-used Roman work (White 1988, 148).

Other Conversion-period decorative motifs are sometimes termed "Celtic", such as the La Tène-type spirals on hanging bowls and spiral-headed pins (Figs 4.22 and 4.32). It can be argued, however, that these motifs would also have had a Roman flavour to the Anglo-Saxons. The most recent users of La Tène-type ornament would have included the Romano-British as well as those living in western and northern Britain.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the choice of decoration upon Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon objects was heavily influenced by the styles of Roman and Byzantine ornament. Like the artefactual assemblage, some aspects of the ornament can be seen to be developments from earlier Anglo-Saxon practice, but in almost every case these are coloured by a classical tinge.

## 5.4 CONCLUSIONS

### 5.4.1 Summary

To summarise the available evidence, a considerable number of object types - scutiform pendants, some polychrome glass beads, the occasional amber bead, chatelaines, hand-made pottery, bags, firesteels, double-sided combs, swords, spears, and perhaps simple buckles, wooden vessels, amulets and shears - can be seen as a continuing development from sixth-century Anglo-Saxon practice. In the case of some others - coin pendants, double-bell metal beads, annular brooches, whorls, finger rings, bracelets, iron-bound buckets, playing pieces, whetstones, claw-beakers with in-line claws - it seems that elements of the migration-period material repertoire were deliberately selected for continued use because they were similar to elements of classical costume, while the more emphatically Germanic items - long strings of amber beads, various sorts of brooches - were discarded.

A Frankish origin can be postulated for seaxes, keystone, plated and composite disc brooches, shoe buckles, triangular buckles, wheel-made pottery, tripod-ring bowls, domed and constricted bell-beakers, sword pyramids, hump-backed combs and perhaps lace tags and caskets. In the case of caskets and composite disc brooches their adoption and development may also have been influenced by classical prototypes. Some objects, such as Group 7 shield-bosses and weaving swords, may have developed separately in England but may also have been influenced by similar developments in Francia.

In some cases, such as short necklaces with pendants, cabochon pendants, bullae, filigree pendants, beaver tooth pendants, cross pendants, small monochrome glass beads, biconical and almond-shaped metal beads, linked pins, workboxes, double-tongued buckles, serrated-edge buckles, barrel padlocks, perhaps palm cups, iron tools and spurs, a general classical inspiration is noticeable. In addition to these, in the cases of melon beads, spoons of bronze or silver, toilet implements, skillets, coins and some miscellaneous pendants a classical influence is visible which is less Byzantine and more Roman, and these objects might have represented an archaising trend; spiral-headed pins, penannular brooches and hanging bowls seem to have a specifically Romano-British feel.

Amethyst beads, cowrie shells, "Coptic" vessels and perhaps some other bronze vessels would have been imported either from or via the Mediterranean. These items, however, can also be found in Frankish graves, and it is hard to tell whether they would have been seen by the

Conversion-period Anglo-Saxons as basically Roman, or basically Frankish.

Parallels or origins for some objects, such as hooked tags, wire rings used in necklaces, some polychrome glass beads, safety-pin brooches, openwork buckles, bells, iron spoons, heckles, spatulate tools, horse harness, bag-beakers, pouch-bottles and squat jars were difficult to find. In some cases, especially the simpler iron objects, these may have gone unrecognised and further work may find similar items.

There are some Roman artefact types which do not appear to have influenced Anglo-Saxon taste at this period. There are no earrings, and there is no pierced goldwork (often called *opus interrasile*); both of these are rare finds in Roman Britain (Liversidge 1968, 140; Bland and Johns 1993, 22), and the Conversion-period pattern may therefore reflect local British conditions.

One important result to emerge from this survey is that some long-lived artefact types which, it had been thought, had been developed from an insular Germanic tradition, are well matched among late Roman objects: small monochrome glass beads, disc pendants, double-sided combs, whorls, iron-bound buckets, playing pieces and many components of the chatelaine.

#### 5.4.2 Evaluation of results

Many of the parallels quoted above are not exact, but they are close. Objects identical to Byzantine or late Roman material need not be expected in Anglo-Saxon Conversion-period graves; as long as the inspiration is visible, it can be shown that the Anglo-Saxons would have had a continuing awareness of the Roman Empire, and their place in it, and needed little encouragement to revive its attributes. Most of the artefacts recognised as showing Roman or Byzantine influence would have been of English manufacture, with an analogy being the relationship between eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Chinese prototypes and European chinoiserie. Even those Conversion-period artefacts which were actually made in the workshops of the eastern Empire appear to have been manufactured specifically for an export market (Higginbottom 1975, 72). The Roman style would have been translated into a form desirable to Anglo-Saxon eyes, while still conjuring up the glory that was Rome.

It should be stressed that the classical influence visible in the Conversion-period assemblage cannot be used to argue for continuity from the Roman period. Although some artefact types have been used for this, such attempts have run into problems (Leeds 1936, 41-42; Brennan 1991), mainly caused by the hiatus in deposition between the late Roman prototype and the later



derivative.

Postulating a discontinuity in material culture with a subsequent renaissance of Roman- or Romano-British-inspired artefacts would help to clear up a number of artefactual dating and provenance problems. A well-known example is the uncertainty which surrounds the dating and origin of hanging bowls. In Chapter 4 it was argued that it is possible to date all hanging bowls to the seventh century, but that earlier dates are often proposed because the bowls appear to be so closely related to Roman bowls. This has caused a lot of sophisticated art-historical argument (summarised in Brennan 1991, 7-26) trying to solve the problem of why there appears to be no clear stylistic development in hanging bowls over a postulated period of manufacture from the third or fourth century into the eighth century, and why this artefact type and no other is apparently imported from British or Irish areas. If a general revival of Roman-derived material culture is accepted, then hanging bowls slip naturally into a coherent framework of manufacture in the seventh and eighth centuries only, and no special pleading is required to explain an apparent continuity.

#### 5.4.3 Mechanisms for a revival

To revive a style of material culture, knowledge of what that style entailed must have been present in the reviving society. Some would argue that, by 600, knowledge of what constituted the Roman style had been lost in the rush for all things Germanic of the fifth and sixth centuries. This argument can be countered, firstly by examining the evidence for the re-use of surviving objects and monuments from Roman Britain, which show that there was an awareness of what constituted the Roman way of life, and secondly by looking at the ways in which contemporary Byzantine objects may have been brought to England.

There are a number of objects of Roman manufacture which continue to find their way into graves throughout the migration period. These antique curios attest to the continuing presence of much Roman material culture in everyday life. Some may have been picked up from Roman sites, others may have been heirlooms. Greenhalgh has shown that far larger quantities of Roman antiquities were available in the medieval period than during and after the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Renaissance, and that portable antiquities were consciously re-used in Western Europe throughout the Middle Ages (Greenhalgh 1989). As well as actual Romano-British artefacts, there would have been plenty of pictorial depictions and carved tombstones to aid a re-creation of classical life and death.

In addition, the early medieval landscape would have been littered with the monumental remains of Roman life - town walls, temples, statuary, frescoes, mosaics. Higgitt has stressed this point, with reference both to archaeological and to literary evidence from Bede onwards (Higgitt 1973). The revival of Roman towns for the centres of bishoprics indicates that there was a living tradition of what constituted Roman life which had been preserved in England over two hundred years or so. Like Greenhalgh, Higgitt has argued that the medieval re-users of Roman culture would have known perfectly well what was and was not Roman.

There are slight indications that the pattern of Roman influences in the Conversion period reflected Romano-British sources rather than Empire-wide inspiration - the absence of earrings and pierced goldwork, and the presence of hanging bowls and penannular brooches, for example - but the lack of regional differences in high-status Roman jewellery throughout the Empire makes it difficult to argue this point. These slight indications make it likely that knowledge of Romano-British tradition was a continuing trend.

Sceptics may object that revivals of classical culture were common throughout Europe in the medieval period (Greenhalgh 1989), and that the most likely conduit for the flow of imperial ideology was the Frankish empire, with its continuing Roman heritage and Byzantine influence visible from the later sixth century onwards (Schulze 1976). This view has been expressed by, among others, Ager (1985, 3) and, in a more restricted context, Filmer-Sankey (1989), and implies that the classical tinge of Conversion-period England is due to an emulation of the Frankish and not the Roman empire. A number of points can be raised to counter this argument.

Firstly, the nature of the new material culture in Conversion-period England is very different from that of the artefacts in Merovingian Francia; research for this study included lengthy attempts to parallel Conversion-period objects among contemporary Continental material, many of which failed. Secondly, the conscious adoption of elements of classical culture is confined to the upper classes in Francia (Schulze 1976, 157-58), whereas in England it is found in all furnished graves. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the Merovingian court adopts elements of *contemporary* Byzantine culture, and does not revive late Roman styles. It is not a renaissance of former glory, but an emulation of contemporary power (Schulze 1976, esp 158).

There is thus no reason to suggest that the Conversion-period revival of classical culture in Anglo-Saxon England was inspired by the appeal by the Frankish upper class to contemporary Byzantine values. The difference between the way in which late Antique culture was revived

in Britain and the continuing effect of Byzantium on the rest of the former Empire, notably Merovingian and Carolingian Francia, argues instead for a specific knowledge of late Roman Britain.

A continuing awareness of Britain's Roman heritage, consciously revived, does of course not preclude the use of a number of Byzantine imports as well. The numbers of garnets, amethysts, cowrie shells and "Coptic" vessels, in addition to rarer imports such as books and silks, show that there was a conduit for Byzantine influences to come to England. The influence of Byzantine art can also be seen in later sculpture and manuscript art (Saxl and Wittkower 1948, 14-18).

The arrival of Augustine and his missionaries from Rome was suggested by Hyslop (1963) as a conduit via which new influences and object types may have arrived in England. It may also be significant that Theodore, from Tarsus near Antioch, now in south-east Turkey, arrived to become Archbishop of Canterbury in 669, accompanied by Hadrian, an African who had been the abbot of Niridano near Naples, who now became the abbot of the monastery of St Peter and St Paul at Canterbury (Stenton 1971, 130-32). The presence in England of many people such as Augustine's missionaries, and later Theodore and Hadrian, indicates that the range of Mediterranean influences would not only have included high-status imports, but many everyday personal objects as well.

#### 5.4.4 Conclusion

It has been argued in Chapter 5 that the new material culture visible in Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon graves represents a conscious revival of objects and ornament which the Anglo-Saxons would have considered Roman. This is the first of many revivals of Roman culture in the medieval period, and was made possible by the degree to which Roman life had ended in Britain and had been replaced wholesale by Germanic culture. The extent of continuity in other parts of the Empire meant that an appeal to Roman values meant an appeal to the present, not to the past. But why was the Conversion-period renaissance necessary, and why was it so effective? That is the subject of the final chapter.

## CHAPTER SIX

### INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA: THE CONVERSION-PERIOD RENAISSANCE

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 6 serves to combine the threads of Chapters 4 and 5 into an explanatory model. The first, and most crucial, task is to refine and strengthen the chronological framework; the second, following from this, is to examine changes in the various uses of the grave-goods. The third task is to assess the significance of the use of grave-goods in Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon England, and to suggest a possible interpretation.

From the results presented in Chapter 4, it will have been seen that the received artefact-chronologies summarised in Chapter 2 left much to be desired. It was possible to identify the artefact types diagnostic of a seventh- and early eighth-century burial, but greater precision was difficult. Any chronologies had been constructed either from a very small sample of grave-goods from English sites (usually taken from a selection of the 37 sites listed in Morris 1983, 55-56), or from a larger sample of Continental material, which was unreliable when used for insular objects. It is now possible to suggest more precise date ranges for a considerable number of Conversion-period objects.

The datable material is not evenly distributed over the period of the study. Using the dates derived from Chapter 4, it is possible to place the artefacts into five loose Groups according to their duration of use, or lifespan (Table 6.1). The relationship between these groups of artefacts and the years AD can be roughly summarised as follows:

- Group A    *c.* 600 or earlier to *c.* 650
- Group B    Earlier than 600 to *c.* 720/730
- Group C    *c.* 600 to *c.* 720/730
- Group D    *c.* 650 to *c.* 720/730
- Group E    Enduring after *c.* 720/730

From this it is possible to suggest three periods which are characterised by Groups or combinations of Groups. In Period 1 (*c.* 600-650) Group A goes out of use; in Period 2 (*c.* 650-720/30) Group D is current; and in Period 3 (after *c.* 720/30) only Group E is found. Groups

B and C have a long currency.

Groups B and C, the long-lived Groups, contain a varied range of objects, including jewellery and other costume items, weapons, vessels, amulets and miscellaneous items. Many of the items are fairly mundane, as might be expected from their undiagnostic nature, but there are items such as the imported cowrie shells, amethyst beads and tripod-ring bowls, and the unusual safety-pin brooches and bridles. They include some of the artefact types characteristic of the assemblage type which has been known for nearly sixty years as the "Final Phase" (Leeds 1936). The artefact types diagnostic of Periods 1 to 3 - Groups A, D and E - are discussed in section 6.2.

Regional variations across England are collated in section 6.3, which presents conclusions based on the distribution maps of Chapter 4. A remarkable unity of practice is revealed in the realm of the dead, while the territory of the living is split into the competing kingdoms of the Heptarchy.

Section 6.4 concerns itself with the degree to which the grave-goods can be held to signal rank or wealth. The sudden decrease in the amount of wealth deposited in the graves is one of the more noticeable features of Conversion-period burial, and section 6.4 charts the course of this decline and looks at its variations. The degree to which rank and wealth are obscured by the use of the grave to signal ideological preference is also examined.

The way in which grave-furnishings are used to signal the age or gender groupings within society is looked at in section 6.5.

The artefactual parallels influencing the forms of the grave-goods have been extensively discussed in Chapter 5, but with little chronological perspective. The choice of particular innovative artefacts as grave-goods at particular moments in time is significant, and section 6.6 explores this theme, relating the loose chronological groups of grave-good types to areas of influence on the Continent and beyond.

After the observations presented in sections 6.2 to 6.6, section 6.7 is concerned with the meaning of the patterns. Relationships between the Conversion-period Anglo-Saxons and other influential polities will be discussed, and models will be constructed for the use of grave-goods in Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon burials, and for their demise.

## 6.2 CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF ASSEMBLAGES

### 6.2.1 Period 1: Early seventh century

The examination of artefact types characteristic of the Conversion period in Chapter 4 has allowed the production of a table showing the duration of use of the main grave-good types in chronological sequence (Table 6.1). From Table 6.1, it will be seen that only a very small number of types are largely or wholly confined to the late sixth century and the first half of the seventh century (Group A).

Most of these Group A artefacts - the keystone and plated disc brooches, Style II bracteates, triangular buckles, shoe buckles, glass vessels, "Coptic" vessels, Group 3 shield-bosses - are concentrated in Kent, with only occasional outliers in the rest of England (Maps 4, 40, 31, 49, 33; sections 4.3, 4.7, 4.34, 4.26, 4.43, 4.42.1, 4.29; also see section 6.3). The practical result of this is that it can be difficult to identify specifically early seventh-century assemblages from the rest of the country, outside Kent.

It is unlikely that there was a pause either in furnished burial or in the development of object forms in England outside Kent (but see comments on the Isle of Wight and Sussex in section 6.7.6). This leaves two options which might enable the early seventh-century gap to be filled. Firstly, it is possible that assemblages of migration-period type continued to be buried in England outside Kent for another half-century; giving a slow transition to Conversion-period assemblages. In favour of this model of continuity, it can be noted that early seventh-century assemblages with the "Kentish"-type artefacts do not show a clear break with Kentish practice in the later sixth century. Decorative elements, such as animal art, cloisonné garnet-work and so on, continue earlier themes. A continued use of migration-period artefact types in the rest of England would therefore mirror Kentish practice.

As an alternative to this, a model of sudden change can be suggested. It is possible that over the whole of the country the characteristic migration-period artefact types were abruptly discontinued, and replaced by the long-lived Conversion-period artefact types shown in Table 6.1 (particularly Group C), which then ran as the mainstream of Conversion-period artefacts throughout the seventh and early eighth centuries. According to this model, only in Kent were the long-lived artefacts overlain by a relatively small number of diagnostically early seventh-century objects.

The evidence presented in Chapter 4 is clear enough to allow us to now decide between these two options. It has been confirmed that sixth-century "Anglian" or "Saxon" artefacts, particularly the distinctive Germanic female jewellery, are not found in association with either the early seventh-century Kentish objects or the long-lived Conversion-period ones. Those migration-period items which do continue to be buried in the Conversion period (Group B) are often utilitarian or unusual objects, and are usually used differently in the Conversion period, becoming either much commoner or much rarer. The extreme rarity of finds of distinctively "Anglian" or "Saxon" artefacts in Conversion-period assemblages would suggest that they are simply not available for burial after the introduction of Conversion-period artefacts. Thus these object types cannot have lingered into the seventh century.

It might be argued that the burial of different contemporaneous objects by different sections of the population would produce the same pattern; but the few migration-period items which do suggest contemporaneity, such as saucer brooches which appear to mimic plated and composite garnet disc brooches (Hawkes in Matthews and Hawkes 1985, 93-97; but see Dickinson 1993, 34) and saucer and square-headed brooches with Style II decoration (Speake 1980, fig 10b; Hines 1984, 173-75) have remained very scarce, and it must now be suspected that there are very few to be found. If there were any seventh-century "Anglian/Saxon" assemblages, there would surely have been more cross-fertilisation of the art styles and artefact forms.

It is unlikely, then, that the primarily Kentish early seventh-century assemblages are substituted in the rest of England by a continuation of the migration-period "Anglian/Saxon"-type assemblages. The alternative, that the gap must be filled by assemblages that cannot be dated more closely than to within the Conversion period, is to be preferred. As the dating of these assemblages is relatively imprecise, it is impossible to define which proportion of Group B and Group C assemblages should be allocated to Period 1, and which to Period 2 (section 6.2.2).

In Kent, many of the artefact types characteristic of Period 1 are found dating from the later sixth century, suggesting that their use there should perhaps be dated to *c.* 580-*c.* 650. Elsewhere, migration-period assemblages seem to continue a little later, and then to be discontinued much more sharply than can be discerned in Kent. In the rest of England, then, the beginning of Period 1, *c.* 600, means a real break with the past.

## 6.2.2 Period 2: Late seventh and early eighth century

Period 2 encompasses the rest of the period in which grave-goods were routinely being actively

and demonstratively used. The assemblages of Period 2 include objects from all Groups in Table 6.1, with those in Group D newly appearing and most of those in Group A disappearing. Artefacts from Groups B and C, of course, continue to be buried throughout Period 2.

The object types which occur for the first time in Period 2 are listed in Group D of Table 6.1. The types of artefact which make up Group D are increasingly diverse. They include a number of items which have been known as "Final Phase". There is a wide range of female jewellery, particularly beads and pendants worn in necklaces, but also more items worn at the waist, such as workboxes, spoons and shears. Rare and unusual objects, not obviously part of the costume, also appear, such as heckles, padlocks and iron bells. Vessels and weapons continue to be found; a decline in the number of vessels had been postulated (Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 46), but this study has suggested otherwise (section 4.41). The incidence of weapon-burial does decline, although the relative proportions of the individual weapons remain much the same (section 4.33).

Style II animal ornament, or related interlace, is often found on early seventh-century object types. Speake lists many triangular buckles and keystone and plated disc brooches (1980, figs 4, 6 and 9), and many items from early seventh-century graves, such as Taplow Bu and Sutton Hoo Sf Mound 1, carry it. Style II is far rarer on later objects, such as composite brooches and openwork buckles, and where it does occur is often in the form of only a debased head or a knot with no body elements. In the case of Swallowcliffe Down Wi, one of the more famous late seventh- or early eighth-century graves with Style II-decorated metalwork, the Style II occurs on foils re-used in the making of the composite disc in tandem with scroll ornament (Speake 1989, 65-80). In summary, Style II seems to be used on grave-goods up to the middle of the seventh century. It then falls out of favour, with an apparent hiatus in the use of animal art on metalwork until a resurgence in the eighth century.

Manuscript art, on the other hand, seems for a time to take over the depiction of animals. The earliest undoubtedly Anglo-Saxon manuscript we have, Durham A II 10, dates to *c.* 650 (Alexander 1978, 29). Although we only have fragments, it seems to follow an early Irish trend of having only the odd animal head. The first copiously illuminated manuscript to survive, the Book of Durrow, dates to *c.* 675 (Alexander 1978, 30). In contrast to Durham A II 10, it has great menageries of animals (folio 192v), as do the slightly later Durham A II 17 fragments (folios 38v, 69), Corpus Christi MS 197 B (folio 2), Lindisfarne Gospels (e.g. folios 2v, 3, 14v, 26v, 27, 29, 94v and 211) and Echternach Gospels (folio 2), all of which probably date to *c.* 700 (Alexander 1978, 35-44). These painted animals are not the ribbon-like beasts of Style II,



however, but fleshy-bodied animals with elongated, tendrilly, interlacing limbs. Higgitt has drawn attention to other differences between the animals found on earlier grave-goods and in later manuscripts, showing that certain types of animals were excluded from the manuscripts (1982, 63-64).

Although fleshy-bodied tendrilled animals often appear on middle and later eighth-century Anglo-Saxon metalwork, such as the Ormside bowl and the Witham linked pins, their late seventh- and early eighth-century counterparts, as seen in the manuscripts mentioned above, are exceptionally rare on English metalwork found in graves; the sword-pommel from Crundale K is perhaps the single example. Instead of the busy animal-ornamented glitter of migration-period jewellery, and middle and later eighth-century Anglo-Saxon metalwork, the overriding impression given by the new Conversion-period artefact types is of simple, curving lines, of a smooth, soft glow. The *horror vacui* so often invoked as the driving force behind Anglo-Saxon art in general is absent. But the lack of animal ornament means that there is no clear iconography to decode; the meaning of this new style is more subtle, and can only be approached through searching for the origins of its inspirations (see section 5.3.6).

From the lack of eighth-century ornament on grave-goods, it could be postulated that their deposition ended in the last years of the seventh century. But well-known coin-dated graves, such as Finglesham K 145 and Broadstairs K grave L, contain coins which cannot possibly have been buried before the last years of the seventh century. The more recently excavated grave of Harford Farm Nf 18 contains early eighth-century coins together with a full range of grave-goods; a gold filigree disc pendant, a pair of silver linked pins and a pair of silver hooked tags inside a workbox, a pointed iron tool, a pair of shears, a bag, a casket with a padlock, a bracelet, a firesteel, and a chatelaine with a curious cylindrical bronze object. It is not until a few decades later that coin-dated graves typically begin to have no associated grave-goods, such as Garton-on-the-Wolds NHu 44 (see section 2.2.5). From this it has been concluded that Period 2, with its graves containing the Groups B/C/D objects, must end *c.* 720/30.

### 6.2.3 Period 3: After *c.* 720/30

From the second quarter of the eighth century onwards, grave-goods become extremely rare, and so we enter Period 3. There is no object certainly known to be from a grave context which bears recognisably eighth-century ornamentation, the best candidates being the Ixworth Sf disc brooch, which was picked up near to the site of a cemetery, or the Ormside bowl, found in a Westmorland churchyard (Wilson 1984, 64). This implies that complex decorated items were

no longer being deposited after the first few decades of the eighth century.

A very few graves - notably Harrold Bd 3 and Ipswich Buttermarket Sf 38 - date to the middle of the eighth century or later, and contain a range of objects. More often, however, only a single simple item, such as a hooked tag or spiral-headed pin, is found. Graves with a range of items do not appear on present evidence significantly to outlast the eighth century. The latest securely dated well-furnished grave is Ipswich Buttermarket Sf 38, with a knife, buckle and pointed iron tool, together with a coin of Offa dated to *c.* 790. Furnished graves dating to after 800, such as Reading II Bk and the necklace-grave at Saffron Walden Ex, show more affinities with Viking than Anglo-Saxon material culture.

The range of grave-goods that have been found in Period 3 graves is shown in Group E of Table 6.1. They include a number of types, such as the sword, spear, knife, whetstone and simple buckle, that had been included in burials for generations, as well as some newer types, but they include no female jewellery and little upon which any stylistic comment can be based.

The near-complete abandonment of grave-goods in the first decades of the eighth century thus occurs suddenly among almost all types. There is no evidence from the sampled graves to suggest that some of the broad grave-good categories are abandoned earlier or later than others. Although there is a decline in the relative proportion of weapon-graves, a wide range of items - vessels, weapons, dress accessories, amulets and so on - can occur in early eighth-century graves. Furthermore, there is no seventh-century abandonment of strongly gender-signalling objects of the sort suggested by Halsall for Metz (1990, 292 and 378).

### 6.3 CHANGES IN THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTIONS OF ARTEFACTS

It has already been noted, in section 6.2.1, that the chronologically diagnostic elements of the Period 1 assemblage (Table 6.1, Group A) are concentrated in Kent. Objects of all the other Groups, chronologically located in the decades from 600 onwards, tend to show a different distribution pattern. Many of these object types are spread over the whole area of Anglo-Saxon influence, from Camerton Av to Milfield Nb and from the Derbyshire barrows to the Kentish cemeteries. They are present in all the kingdoms of Conversion-period England.

From the maps of artefact distributions (Maps 3 to 61) it will be seen that almost all the artefacts either follow this widely dispersed pattern or are concentrated in the Kent region. Those which apparently do not conform to the general trend include both those with very small sample sizes

(e.g. double-tongued buckles, Map 41) and those where a concentration in a single cemetery draws the eye (e.g. the large number of metal-bound buckets at Lechlade GI, Map 52). A few items, such as firesteels and bead-in-wire pendants (Maps 11 and 45) show a Kent/East Anglia concentration, and pointed iron tools (Map 55) have an east-coast distribution. Annular brooches (Map 21) are strongly concentrated around the Humber estuary, although the superficially very similar penannular brooches show no particular concentrations.

The widely dispersed pattern is new, and cannot be seen as a development from the distribution maps of migration-period object types, particularly brooches, with their familiar concentrations either in the south or in the midlands and east. These "Anglian" and "Saxon" *Kulturkreise* are not present in the fifth century, but become visible in the sixth. They seem to be markers of perceived or desired identity, constructed after any migration had taken place, rather than of ethnic reality (Leeds 1945, 78-79; Hills 1979, 317; Hines 1984, 275). But this should not diminish the importance of the ideological grouping to the people of the time. The Saxons may not have been "Saxon" in traceable blood-line, but their women were displaying differences to the Angles, and if that is what was significant in their lives, it is interesting to us.

Can we say that the new and larger archaeological *Kulturkreis*, which is visible from 600 AD onwards, reflects a real new, pan-English cultural identity, a *Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl*; or is it more probable that we are seeing merely a highly visible veneer laid down over the old territorial or tribal allegiances? To establish which, evidence can be culled from other disciplines. Studies have been done on Anglo-Saxon cultural identity from the point of view of the philologist (Hines 1990) and the historian (Wormald 1983). Hines concentrates on the fifth and sixth centuries, Wormald on the seventh to tenth centuries.

Hines, in an examination of the development of Old English from putative pre-migration dialects of north-west Germanic, concludes that the two poles of North Germanic and West Germanic, which may have been spoken by those migrating to the Anglian and Saxon areas respectively, appear to have reconverged in Britain, producing a normative language in which the original variability was submerged. Whether or not Hines's migration-based model for Anglo-Saxon England is accepted, a central plank of his evidence, that seventh-century England possessed a language norm with little regional variation, is compatible with the distributions of material culture mapped here.

Wormald examines the problem of how and why even the Saxons came to call themselves and their language "English". An emerging Englishness can be seen in the way that the most

powerful kings treated kings of smaller or less powerful nations not as dangerous and foreign equals to be crushed, but as if they were members of their own hereditary nobility; it has been described by Stenton as a "primitive form of confederacy under a common overlord". Stenton dates the effective beginning of this series of temporary confederacies to the supremacies of Edwin (c. 616-632), Oswald (633-641) and Oswiu (633-670) of Northumbria, and says that they "foreshadowed a kingdom of all England" (1971, 202).

Anglo-Saxon England is unusual among the early Germanic polities in that its named peoples, probably to be equated with its cultural groupings, are not coterminous with its kingdoms. The Franks, the Thuringians, the Alamans, the Lombards, the Burgundians all had their separate rulers, but at this point had only one ruler to a people. Only in England were the Saxons divided into West, East and South, and the Angles into the East Angles, the Mercians and the Northumbrians (Stenton 1971, 37); and these themselves were constructed from a patchwork of smaller entities like those mentioned in the Tribal Hidage (Davies and Vierck 1974; Kirby 1991, 1-12). In England, contradictory allegiances could be held simultaneously; to one *Volk*, but to one of a number of different, and perhaps competing, kings. This might warn that we should not expect such firmly delineated and separate cultural identities in England as elsewhere in Europe.

Both Stenton and Wormald see this as retarding the establishment of the unity of the English nation (Stenton 1971, 37; Wormald 1983, 102-03), but another view is possible. People used to fluid, shifting, occasionally contradictory loyalties may have been more adaptable to the idea of a military and political confederacy maintained at the same time as the individual kingdoms, and could have been more easily persuaded to perceive this confederacy as a real and desirable cultural unity.

Wormald suggests that the sense of community of the English, acquired as he sees it against the political odds, is visible in insular literary sources from the second half of the seventh century. He suggests that the image of the *gens Anglorum* arose from the famous pun of Gregory the Great in the Roman slave-market, and was promoted by the Church in general and Bede in particular, for reasons of political cohesion and church unity. The sense of communal identity grew as an ideal, only later to be used by Alfred and his successors to create a political reality (1983, 122-29).

The philological evidence presented by Hines (1990), together with Wormald's historical view (1983), and the material culture distributions gathered here, surely argue for the emergence, at

some time in the seventh century, of England as a virtual nation, although not yet as an actual one.

The idea of a seventh- and eighth-century pan-England homogeneity in burial customs, artefacts and language was originally put forward in 1992 (Geake 1992, 92-99), but at the time there seemed to be a stumbling block. The historically known kingdoms, at this time engaged in the last few rounds of Bassett's F.A. Cup analogy (1989, 26) might have been expected to attempt to assert their independence by selecting a strip, mascot and songs to distinguish themselves from their rivals. The observed behaviour, however, is the opposite; no sooner do they emerge into history, than the newly formed kingdoms become archaeologically indistinguishable. This problem is addressed in section 6.7.

## 6.4 CHANGES IN DEPOSITED WEALTH

### 6.4.1 Sites with furnished graves

Differences in the implied wealth of grave assemblages are noticeable in the sixth century and become more marked over time. This reaches its zenith during Period 1, with isolated, very rich "princely" burials such as those at Sutton Hoo Sf, Taplow Bu, Broomfield Ex and Salisbury Race Course Wi (Welch 1992, 71-96; Shephard 1979b, 55-56; Dickinson 1974, 1). Period 1 can therefore be characterised as continuing the developments of the later sixth century, with increasingly polarised grave-wealth.

Rich burials continue into Period 2 with, among others, Swallowcliffe Down Wi, Roundway Down Wi, Galley Low Db and Desborough Nh, but these later rich burials are different in nature. The richest Period 1 burials tend to be of men, with quantities of objects including many vessels. The richest Period 2 burials tend to be of women, with fewer objects, although the grave-goods that there are can be exceptionally rare and beautiful. The rich Period 2 graves are found both in barrows and in flat graves within cemeteries.

A general decline in the numbers of objects buried in Conversion-period graves becomes particularly visible in Period 2, with considerable numbers of unfurnished and poorly furnished graves. This trend can be seen wherever nearby migration- and Conversion-period practices can be compared, for example at long-lived shifting cemeteries such as Buckland Dover K, or where migration- and Conversion-period cemeteries are close together, as at Chamberlain's Barn I and II Bd and Apple Down 1 and 2 WSx. It has also been noted among barrow-burials (Shephard

1979a, 7.10-7.11).

Although the age of the very rich or "princely" burial is now past, there are still many middling-rich assemblages, perhaps with a bit of gold or silver, a few garnets, a container or two, an imported object. The range of objects to choose from in Period 2 is large, perhaps larger than at any time in the preceding two centuries.

The overall effect of these changes is that in Period 2 there are great differences between sites. Churchyard cemeteries co-exist with flat furnished cemeteries of varying richness, and a few rich isolated burials still occur. Similar differences have been noted in Chapter 4 among assemblages from different sites; particularly noticeable is the variation in the number of pottery vessels.

Period 3 sees an abrupt cessation of demonstrative wealth in graves. Any object in a grave is now unusual, and expensive or imported items are particularly rare. All burial sites begin to look like churchyards; but although there have been few full excavations of unfurnished cemeteries, it seems that many were, however, without any sort of structure which could be interpreted as a church.

According to long established (but also long debated) processualist theory for Germanic furnished graves (e.g. for England, Shephard 1979b; Arnold 1980; and see section 1.3), differences in deposited wealth indicate differences in social status in life. Therefore, the increasing polarisation of grave wealth during the later sixth and early seventh centuries should represent an increase in the degree and stability of rank within society. The decline in ostentatiously wealthy graves in Period 2, but the retention of some fairly rich graves, might, according to this theory, be interpreted as a rise in the power of the middle ranks of the aristocracy at the expense of the royal class.

The developments of Period 3, however, pose more of a problem. We know from historical sources that Anglo-Saxon society was ranked during the eighth century, but funerary practice has completely masked this in favour of an ostensibly egalitarian rite. The masking that can be seen in Period 3 burial practice should alert us to the possibility that the changes between Periods 1 and 2 are due more to ideological change than to social or economic factors (Hodder 1980, 168). Instead of seeing grave-wealth as a "mirror" of wealth and therefore status in life, then, we should look at what the buriers of the Conversion-period dead were trying to communicate using the ideological investment of funerary rites (Samson 1987), and what alternative investment replaced it.

#### 6.4.2 Sites with unfurnished graves

In Period 2 there begins to be a significant number of completely unfurnished cemeteries. Although many are dated on historical grounds, the limited amount of radiocarbon dating that has been carried out confirms the impression that these first begin to be found in large numbers during the second half of the seventh century. Table 6.2 presents all published radiocarbon dating of Anglo-Saxon Conversion-period cemeteries, most of which has been carried out on largely unfurnished sites.

For certain sections of society, furnished burial had been unnecessary since the early seventh century; this section used the environs of a church for burial. It is notable that very few furnished burials have yet been found in churchyard contexts in England. There are occasional finds of a pin or a bead, sufficient perhaps to fasten a shroud, and a few knives and buckles, but there are no assemblages from churchyard cemeteries with more than two or three everyday items. A simple chronological explanation for this phenomenon is not tenable, given that many of these burials have been radiocarbon-dated to the seventh century (Table 6.2). Exceptions to this rule are very few, and include the famous example of St Cuthbert with his comb and cross.

The only hint that this may not have been a universal pattern comes from St Paul-in-the-Bail Li, where a hanging bowl was found within an otherwise empty grave-shaped feature. This feature was centrally placed and aligned with, although not stratigraphically linked to, an apsidal building thought to be a church. The possible grave was stone-lined, and the bowl was found behind part of the lining, and therefore perhaps not strictly speaking *in* the grave. It was suggested by the excavator that the bowl was concealed during the preparation of the grave, and that those responsible for a translation of the bodily remains had been unaware of its presence (Gilmour 1979; Steane and Vince 1993, 72-74).

The situation at St Paul-in-the-Bail Li appears unique, but raises the possibility that other furnished churchyard graves may once have existed and been removed in antiquity. Given the numbers of churchyard burials that are now known, however, and the lack of conventional furnishings within them, even the possibility of remarkably thorough translations must remain very slight.

Burial within churches was reserved for those of the highest rank, and burial around a church is also likely to have been socially restricted (Morris 1983, 50). But the presence of well-furnished late graves of the Harford Farm Nf 18 type, contemporary with churchyard burials

such as those twenty miles away at Caistor-on-Sea Nf and Burgh Castle Sf, show that there is unlikely to have been a simple relationship between unfurnished churchyard burial and wealth or rank.

For the section of society with access to church burial, then, it seems likely that ideological investment in the form of grave-goods was replaced by investment in the new ideology of the Church, represented by new buildings, vestments, manuscripts, liturgical metalwork and so on. At the same time, the emphasis upon a life after death and a self-proclaimed egalitarian ideal would have made grave-goods less effective in the communication of ideological commitment to the Church. For the section of society not buried in churchyards or churchyard-type cemeteries, the abrupt cessation of furnished burial in the second quarter of the eighth century does not admit a simple explanation; models are explored under section 6.7.

## 6.5 THE SIGNALLING OF AGE AND GENDER

### 6.5.1 Gender signalling

The gender associations of Conversion-period grave-good types are summarised in Table 6.3. It can be seen that both innovative artefact types and long-lasting artefact types continue to transmit gender signals. The absolute number of gender-signalling objects deposited in graves, however, is markedly fewer than the number of neutral artefacts (see Table 4.18).

Gendered graves are not evenly distributed among all types of burial. Out of the 23 isolated barrow-burials in the sample, there are fourteen gendered male graves, seven gendered female, and two non-gendered graves, one containing the skeleton of a man and one that cannot be sexed. In flat cemeteries, which should contain a more representative selection of the population, the pattern is reversed, and men are comparatively less visible.

At Castledyke NHu, an example of a long-lived cemetery dated by artefacts, there are nineteen Conversion-period graves that can be identified as those of females on the basis of their grave-goods, eight of males, and eighteen that are unassignable to any gender. Of the non-gendered graves, four to six are female and three to four male, with two children and six unsexable. Even if all the unsexable skeletons are those of males, there is still a large imbalance in favour of females. If it is reasonable to expect that roughly equal numbers of men and women would have been buried, it must be concluded that our missing men are in unfurnished, undatable graves.



Among the Conversion-period graves at Buckland Dover K, there are 39 female-gendered and 22 male-gendered assemblages. Of the non-gendered graves, the bones of 27 could not be sexed, but six were women and 21 were men. Again, the men are in less demonstrative graves, status and identity in the cemeteries being largely expressed through women.

Thus it can be seen that the more prestigious barrow-burials usually contain gendered graves, and that these are more often male. The communal cemetery burial rite, on the other hand, contain fewer gendered graves, and the people who are buried in these gendered graves are much more likely to be female than male. These findings can be linked to the observations on high-wealth burials in section 6.4, which show a shift in the emphasis of rich burial from male graves to female.

These strands can be combined to suggest a number of alternative models for the changing expression of status and gender. Perhaps there was a rise in the status of women relative to that of men; or perhaps the status of women continued to be expressed in the grave for longer than that of men. It is possible that the expression of status in male graves declined, perhaps due to a preference for or easier access to churchyard burial, and so the female graves were used more actively to reflect the standing of the whole family. Further detailed work on gender signalling in the Conversion period, building on the chronological framework set up by the present study, would be necessary to confirm any of these suggestions.

These patterns of gender and status expression may be explained by Shephard's theory of the use of barrows as land-claiming devices (Shephard 1979a, chapter 8). If an active and conspicuous claim to land is needed, then the use of an ostentatious male burial would help. If, on the other hand, no active claim needs to be staked, land being held in the form of book-land (Loyn 1962, 171-74) then male burials can take place quietly in a communal cemetery where much of the signalling role is delegated to the women. Alternatively, the opportunities for improving social standing available through the administration of the Church may have been less easy for women than for men, leading women to continue to need communicating grave-assemblages for longer than men.

The small number of furnished burials which occur in Period 3 include some gendered graves, but these again reverse the pattern, as they are male. The numbers are too small, however, and the cultural affiliations of those buried too doubtful, to attempt interpretations.

### 6.5.2 Age and female gender

In Period 2 it may be possible to detect a change in the way that age and female gender are related. As a general rule, comprehensive assemblages of fifth- and sixth-century female jewellery are not found with children. For example, among the 600 or so saucer-brooches known, only one has been unequivocally found with a child of below twelve years old (Dickinson 1993, 38-39), and migration-period girdle-hangers are also not found with children (Sally Crawford, pers comm). During Period 2, virtually all types of female-linked objects, including jewellery made from precious metals and chatelaines, can be buried with children; whorls seem to be the only exception.

From 650 onwards, therefore, it appears that small girls can be buried in exactly the same way as adult women. The delay in the visibility of this change until the half of the seventh century could be the result of the comparative invisibility of female-linked artefacts during the first half, but it is notable that of the twelve disc brooches in this study, the only one to be found with a child (at Winnall II Ha 5, with a seven- to ten-year-old) was old and broken when buried, presumably after the middle of the century.

In the present study, many graves of children under twelve (the age at which Crawford (1991) suggests that Anglo-Saxon children may have achieved adult status) contain comprehensive female assemblages. They include Polhill K 51 and 55, both children under the age of five, with two disc and two cabochon pendants respectively; Polhill K 104 and Didcot Power Station Ox 9, children of around seven and around ten, both with elements of a chatelaine; Didcot Power Station Ox 12, a three- to five-year-old with a workbox, silver annular brooch, beads, chatelaine, a pin, shears and gold threads; Lechlade G1 172, a two-year-old child with a necklace of silver rings, silver and amethyst beads, and a cabochon pendant; Finglesham K 7, a two- to five-year-old child with two pots, a necklace of bullae, coins, wire rings, glass and metal beads, a knife, chatelaine and bag; and Winnall II Ha 5, a seven- to ten-year-old with a double-sided comb, lace-tags, beads and a disc pendant made from a composite brooch.

The age from which girls qualify for fully adult assemblages is unclear, as many old excavation reports do not give precise ages. Perhaps the youngest child in the present study to be buried as an adult, in a separate grave with furnishings, is Marina Drive Bd A1, a six- to ten-month-old baby with a necklace of two glass beads, an amethyst bead and a beaver tooth pendant.

The cause of the change in the burial rite for girls is unclear. Whatever it was, it does not seem

to have affected boys, and was therefore perhaps connected with specifically gendered activity, rather than, for example, an extension of property rights. There seems to have been no change in the marriageable age of girls at this time, but there may have been some change to the custom of marriage settlement. Some form of bride-price was in use in the seventh century (Hill 1979, 69-71) and it is possible that this was an innovation reflecting Roman or Continental practice or both (Wemple 1981, 44). Girls may have become more prized as commodities in a society where a marriageable girl earns a bride-price, particularly when social rank is determined by the family and can be changed by marrying "up".

The only weapons to be found with children in the migration period are short spearheads, which can be found with boys from about the age of eight. In the Conversion period, this pattern is maintained, and so it seems that the social status of boys as children is unchanged.

The overall proportion of identifiably female objects does not appear to decline in Period 2, contrary to the situation in Merovingian Francia, where it has been suggested that there is a reduction in the numbers of graves with strongly gender-specific assemblages (Halsall 1990, 292). In contrast, a decline in weapons, the male-identifying artefact type, is apparent, the proportion of weapon-graves between the fifth and eighth centuries averaging 18% of all burials (Härke 1990, 25) but that in the Conversion period only 6%.

## 6.6 CHANGES IN ARTEFACT ORIGINS

In Chapter 5, it was seen that throughout the Conversion period there was a shift from the strongly Germanic migration-period material culture to one with clear influences from elsewhere, particularly from the classical world. The nature of these extraneous influences changes over time.

Looking at Table 6.1, most of the object types in Group A, forming the chronologically diagnostic element of the early seventh-century Period 1 assemblage, are concentrated in Kent, and have analogous artefacts in Frankish areas on the Continent. As we go down through Groups B and C, representing assemblages of both Periods 1 and 2 and covering the whole of the seventh and early eighth centuries, there are fewer items of Frankish inspiration. Instead, the predominant influence is late Roman practice, perhaps specifically late Romano-British practice.

In Group D, the diagnostic Period 2 assemblage, many of the objects appear to have

contemporary Byzantine parallels. In many cases, however, it is difficult to distinguish Byzantine influences from Roman, due to the problems described in section 5.2.2. Because of this, it should be emphasised that, although an impression can be gained that the Period 2 assemblages contain more Byzantine-inspired objects than did those of Period 1, it is not an absolute rule. The "Coptic" vessel is the most obvious example of a Byzantine import belonging to Period 1, and the hanging bowl a good example of an object derived from late Romano-British prototypes but found most often in Period 2.

The more nondescript long-lived items in Group E are, unsurprisingly, less easy to categorise, but many of them have roots in migration-period Anglo-Saxon material. There are so few of them that firm conclusions cannot be drawn.

We have seen that the inspiration for the use of contemporary and archaic classically-inspired objects was present in Conversion-period England, either from imports (perhaps promoted by Theodore, Hadrian *et al.*), or from surviving antiques. We must now examine why it was decided to emulate this relatively rare and remote culture, rather than the closer Frankish or Scandinavian areas.

## 6.7 CONCLUSIONS

### 6.7.1 Introduction

It can be seen that the use of grave-goods during the Conversion period in England (600-850) shows a number of distinctive changes in the material culture of burial which need explanation. First is the change from the migration-period to the Conversion-period assemblage (Groups A-E of Table 6.1), which takes place *c.* 580 in Kent, and *c.* 600 elsewhere. Second is the change everywhere in *c.* 650, which sees the introduction of a new range of material (Group D). Third is the change after *c.* 720/30, which results in a sharp drop in the number of furnished graves.

The first change, at the beginning of Period 1, was the greatest, affecting weapons and containers and revolutionising women's jewellery, and removing the *Kulturkreise* into which England had been divided. A Roman flavour can be discerned among this group of objects, with a small additional group of objects with Frankish affinities found largely in Kent. Within the converted kingdoms, the very highest rank of society abandoned furnished burial at this point, and moved their mausolea to the churches; this cannot be seen archaeologically, but is known from documentary sources (Krüger 1971). There are also a small number of exceedingly wealthy

male graves.

Then, in the years around the middle of the seventh century, the Frankish-influenced Kentish objects disappeared, and the basic group of Conversion-period material was joined by another stratum of material. This had, in general, a more Byzantine flavour, and repeated the distribution pattern set in the first half of the century, not distinguishing the separate kingdoms. During this Period 2, high-wealth burials changed in character, and became more often the graves of women. The status of girls changed, and they became materially indistinguishable from grown women. Burial in wholly or largely unfurnished cemeteries was available to a larger proportion of society. Period 2 lasts until about 720 or 730, when it gives way to Period 3. Period 3 is represented by the adoption of unfurnished burial by all sections of society, although not necessarily in a cemetery with a church.

To interpret these changes, a number of related questions have to be asked. Why did the Anglo-Saxons choose, *c.* 600, to add radically new elements to their material culture? Why were these new elements chosen from a classical repertoire? Why did some, notably in Kent, use Frankish objects during Period 1, and why were these abandoned in Period 2? In Period 2, who chose to be buried with grave-goods, and who without? And why were grave-goods finally abandoned, in Period 3, by almost everyone?

The arguments which allow answers to these questions are intermeshed, but section 6.7 is divided into subsections which, it is hoped, will allow them to be clearly laid out. It begins with a short section suggesting a historical explanation for the limited occurrence of Frankish-influenced objects in Period 1. To begin to answer the question of why the Anglo-Saxons wanted to revive a classical tradition throughout the period, sections 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 examine the contemporary political situation in the two inheritors of the Roman power base in the Mediterranean, the eastern Empire and the Roman Church, as it related to Conversion-period England. Section 6.7.5 builds on this by looking at what the Anglo-Saxon powers were attempting to express with this new material culture, and ends by constructing a model for the changing use of grave-goods in Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon England.

The story cannot end neatly there, because a full picture of the ways in which furnished burial are used in the Conversion period must include the section of society which apparently did not need to use it at all. Section 6.7.6 looks at unfurnished burial and the decline in grave-goods, briefly relating it to the rise in churchyard burial and changing social structure. Chapter 6 then ends with a short conclusion summarising the continuing influence of a Conversion-period

"renaissance" on England and the rest of Europe.

#### 6.7.2 Relations between Francia and the English kingdoms during Period 1

At various points in the second half of the sixth century and the first half of the seventh, Merovingian kings asserted their authority over, or were assumed by contemporaries to be in some way superior to, kings in the southern part of England (Kirby 1991, 34-35; Wood 1992, 235). There is no clear documentary evidence for the political reality of this claim, but even in the absence of any tangible power wielded by the Frankish kings, Kent and the other English kingdoms would have been aware of its potential. For example, there are many good reasons why Gregory the Great would not have wished to send a Frankish mission to convert the English (the notorious independence of the Frankish Church being one), but it is likely that the southern English kings would not have wanted to take the risk of accepting a Christian mission from Francia, with its concomitant overtones of overlordship (Kirby 1991, 36; James 1992, 243).

The power of Merovingian kings in the late sixth and early seventh centuries could provide a context for the adoption of a few Frankish-inspired object types in Kent, where any attempted Frankish hegemony was most likely to have succeeded. In other areas of England, the smaller numbers of Frankish-inspired object types may simply be the result of the absence of direct Frankish influence. Where Frankish-inspired object types are found outside Kent, there is a tendency for them to be found in relatively high-wealth graves, and it is possible that these are the result of indirect contact between Francia and the richer and more powerful elements of society which did not trickle down to the rest of the population.

After the death of Dagobert I in 638, the Merovingian Frankish kingdom entered a period of internal strife and confusion, under a succession of *rois fainéants*, often minors, and their regents (James 1982, 145-55). After the middle of the seventh century the power of Francia in Europe declined (Wood 1992, 237) and this perhaps gives a historical context for the point at which the more noticeably Frankish-inspired object types begin to decline in England.

Despite the dangers of arguing from historically specific events, it seems possible to summarise an explanation for the occurrence of Frankish-inspired objects in England as follows. During the later sixth and early seventh centuries, the Frankish kingdom was relatively powerful in Europe and able to claim a hegemony over parts of southern England. This had real influence only in Kent, where there was considerable contact. After the death of Dagobert I, any claimed hegemony was impossible to sustain, and affinity with Francia became a less desirable thing to

advertise, leading to a cessation of recognisably Frankish-type objects in the archaeological record. There was no particular need, either, to assert independence from Francia; it was neither a threat nor a blessing.

### 6.7.3 Relations between the eastern Empire and the English kingdoms

The eastern Empire, based at Constantinople, represented the surviving political remnant of the later Roman Empire, with potentially all the ancestral grandeur and authority that this could convey. A convenient starting point from which to look at the state of the eastern Empire in the Anglo-Saxon Conversion period is the reign of Justinian (527-565). This began with the reconquest of Africa from the Vandals in 535; all of Italy was taken from the Ostrogoths by 553, and southern Spain from the Visigoths by 554. The price of the reconquest of parts of the western Empire, however, was a degree of neglect of the eastern frontiers in Asia and the Balkans, which resulted in the attacks of the Persians and the Slavs in the 540s and the Bulgars and the Avars in the 560s. Justinian "sank himself into a dogged routine of survival" and, it seems, held the Empire together virtually on his own (Brown 1971, 150-55).

The strategy worked during Justinian's long lifetime, but at his death he left a terminally shrunken administration dependent on a civilian bureaucracy composed of a few talented professionals, not on a whole educated governing class, surrounded by the military empires of Persia and the Avars. Justinian's successors, the most notable of whom were Maurice (582-602) and Heraclius (610-41) controlled an empire which was forced to look to the east, and therefore quickly became oriental in focus; this held as much for Spain as for Syria. Maurice began, in the face of external threats, to combine civil and military power under exarchs and strategoi, and this was continued by Heraclius. Heraclius was remarkably successful at warfare and diplomacy, spending large amounts of money on the latter, but in the campaigns against the Persians both had neglected the Arabs, newly bound together by Islam. Antioch fell to the Arabs in 637, Alexandria in 642 and Carthage in 698; Constantinople itself was besieged twice, in 674-78 and 717-18 (Brown 1971, 155-59, 194; Hodges and Whitehouse 1983, 54).

This bald political narrative, concentrating on the impact of barbarians and Arabs, sounds like a tale of mishap and disaster. The eastern Empire looks as if it would be in no state to export goods to England, or to inspire a classical renaissance. A wider picture, however, shows that the conquests at first seem to have had a surprisingly small effect on the cultural and economic life of the eastern Empire. Historians from Pirenne onwards have seen remarkable continuity in the social, economic and cultural life of southern Italy and the eastern Empire (Pirenne 1939,

184; Brown 1971, 194; Vryonis 1967, 65).

For historians in the wake of Pirenne, the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty and the rise of the Islamicised Persian Abbasid dynasty seems to have been the turning point when the prosperity of the eastern Mediterranean finally began to decline. This began with revolt in Iran in 750 and shifted the centre of power from Damascus to Baghdad (Vryonis 1967, 80). Hodges and Whitehouse, on the other hand, take an archaeological perspective, and argue that the archaeological evidence for trading communities in the eastern Empire indicates that their prosperity declined sharply a century before, after the reign of Heraclius; exceptional commodity movements were noted, however, and survived in documentary records to give a misleading picture (1983, 56-66 and 76).

Barnish has argued that Hodges and Whitehouse are mistaken, and that their view of the trading sites is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the classical city (1989, 386). Barnish argues that even the archaeological evidence shows substantial urban continuity in many areas, notably Syria, Africa and Italy (1989, 390-94). The opinion of Hodges and Whitehouse, that little export could have been taking place from the seventh- and eighth-century Mediterranean, runs into more problems when the distributions of traded *commodities* are examined; Hodges and Whitehouse appear to have based their conclusions on an examination of trading *sites* only. This is not the place to assess the extent of world-wide trade emanating from the eastern Empire at this period, but within England, at any rate, it is clear that imports from the south, such as amethysts, cowries, almandine garnet, porphyry, bronze jugs and bowls, ivory and textiles, are present in far larger numbers in Conversion-period graves than they are in earlier ones.

It will be argued later that this is due to the underlying currents of social and ideological change, but at this point it must be emphasised that the quantity and quality of imports in England emanating from the seventh- and early eighth-century eastern Empire point to a flourishing commercial life throughout the eastern and western Mediterranean, and into northern Europe, that continued to flourish throughout the Anglo-Saxon Conversion period. Whether there is any difference between the extent of trading contact between Period 1 and Period 2 of our period is harder to assess; the archaeological evidence from the Mediterranean is so controversial that consensus on detail within the seventh century cannot be found. There is no immediately apparent reason for an increase in the availability of objects with a Byzantine flavour in the later seventh century, and therefore explanations for the apparent rise in popularity of these objects in Anglo-Saxon graves should be sought among the social political circumstances in Conversion-period England.



It can be concluded, then, that even though there is evidence for the political decline of the eastern Empire, this did not affect its trading relationships with England. The surviving Roman Empire in the seventh and early eighth century could still have been seen as a vibrant and powerful entity, exporting both artefacts and ideologies.

#### 6.7.4 Relations between the Roman Church and the English kingdoms

The example of the Church's missions shows that direct contact between Britain and the Mediterranean at the end of the sixth century was, although slow, not unusual or particularly difficult. The history of the eastern Empire shows that there were solid political reasons for the Empire to send missionaries to northern Europe from the time of Justinian onwards; a lack of military resources and a decline in the quality of the imperial diplomats and bureaucrats meant that the Roman Church was increasingly used as the agent of Byzantine cultural imperialism in this region (Brown 1971, 155-56). The Roman Church also had its own reasons for wanting to expand. The Visigothic and, especially, the Frankish Churches were notoriously independent of Rome, being effectively controlled by their kings (Stenton 1971, 103-04); Arianism was still active among the Visigoths and the Lombards (Daniélou and Marrou 1964, 417-18; Richards 1979, 36-37).

The Pope's relationship with the emperor at this time was as insecure as it was with the Germanic kingdoms. Gregory I (Pope 590-604) had been sent to Constantinople as a papal envoy by Pope Pelagius II, to ask for reinforcements for the defence of Italy, but although he stayed for six years (579-585) he got no help at all from the emperor. As the Church was shouldering much of the civilian administration and defence responsibilities of the western Empire, it needed to feel secure. To establish a stronghold of papal power in north-western Europe, Gregory sent Augustine, a monk from his own monastery who spoke no English, direct to England to organise a church with unprecedented levels of direct papal control. Augustine proved to be the model of an obedient monk, often writing back to Gregory with questions and problems (Davis 1988, 74-78).

The history of the conversion of England is long and complicated, but Bede's account of it in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* can be briefly summarised as follows.

- 597        Augustine lands, and soon afterwards Æthelberht of Kent converts.
- 601        Mellitus is established as bishop of London, and converts Saberht of Essex.
- 616        Saberht dies and his three pagan sons take over in Essex. Æthelberht dies and

- Eadbald, a pagan, takes over in Kent, but is converted within the year.
- 627 Edwin of Northumbria is converted. A church is recorded as in existence in Lindsey.
- 632 Edwin dies and his kingdom is split between Osric, a Christian, in Deira, and Eanfrith, an apostate, in Bernicia.
- 633 Osric and Eanfrith die and are succeeded by Oswald, a Christian.
- 635 Sigeberht, a Christian, succeeds in East Anglia. Cynegils of Wessex is converted.
- 653 Peada of the Middle Angles is converted. Sigeberht of Essex is converted.
- 655 Oswy of Northumbria, a Christian, kills Penda of Mercia, a pagan, and rules his kingdom.
- 665 Sighere, joint king of Essex, briefly apostasizes; Sebbi, the other king, continues in the faith.
- c. 675 Æthelwath of Sussex is converted.
- 686 The Isle of Wight is conquered by the Christian Cædwalla of Wessex.

Later historians have modified Bede's dates somewhat. A recent re-dating by Kirby suggests that Eadbald of Kent may have remained pagan for between five and eight years, rather than the matter of months suggested by Bede, and that Cynegils may not have been converted until *c.* 640 (1991, 39-41 and 49-50). Even if Bede's dates are accepted, however, it can be seen that the first thirty to forty years of the Conversion are characterised by apostasy among the English kings (Angenendt 1986, 749-54). The second half of the seventh century, on the other hand, sees steady progress towards the acceptance of Christianity by all of them. This could perhaps be tentatively identified with the change from the Period 1 to the Period 2 burial assemblage.

#### 6.7.5 The use of grave-goods in Conversion-period England

The historical background, such as we have it, may be used in an attempt to answer the question of why there was an adoption of classically-derived objects in the Conversion period. Was the intention to use the new objects to show their allegiance to Christianity, with all the political ramifications that implies, or were they instead used to construct and advertise a desired cultural identity with a different political agenda?

If the Church was responsible for promoting the repertoire of classically-inspired objects used in graves, it does not therefore follow that the English recipients were Christian. There are arguments in favour of the furnished Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon graves being those of pagans (the presence of grave-goods in general and amulets in particular, the usual absence of

a church within the cemetery, the use of burial mounds), or, conversely, those of Christians (the west-east orientation and careful layout, the occurrence of cross and fish motifs on the objects, a later seventh-century date). The use of these arguments to establish a Christian or pagan character for furnished graves (described in Boddington 1990) has been attacked many times (Rahtz 1978 for orientation, Young 1977 for grave-goods, Meaney 1981, 264 for amulets, Dierkens 1991 for "Christian" motifs) and they must now be considered unusable. In any case, the identification of Christian acceptance on the level of the individual grave is irrelevant in an investigation of social trends.

Notions of the personal belief of those burying or being buried in Conversion-period cemeteries can be discarded while still recognising the crucial role of the Church as a political, spiritual and general all-round ideological force. The Church was the cornerstone of the medieval theory of sacral kingship and had a pivotal role in government, being tacitly seen as the embodiment of the Empire (Nelson 1977). The arrival of its mechanisms of power, as well as its doctrines, fostered the hardening of the social hierarchy.

It has already been suggested in section 5.4.3 that the arrival of the personnel of the Church from Mediterranean areas could have been a mechanism for the introduction of classical prototypes into England. Is it possible that the arrival of the Church from Rome could spark off a revival of Roman-style objects in the graves of the Anglo-Saxon dead, whether or not they owed a personal, social or political allegiance to it? Even if it is possible, is it more likely that the classical revival began for reasons unconnected with the church?

Invoking the Roman Church as the suspect, with motive, means and opportunity for imposing a new cultural identity on the Anglo-Saxons, however, raises some problems. Although the start of Period 1 coincides with the first arrival of Roman missionaries in Kent, the conversion process takes up the best part of the seventh century, and there is no evidence that a sixth-century type "Germanic" assemblage is used after *c.* 600 in those English kingdoms which remained unconverted. In addition, the fact that there are no churchyard burials which contain any conventionally furnished burial, let alone one with classical-style objects, must argue against the Church having been deliberately responsible for the use of the new objects as grave-goods.

Therefore, rather than seeing the first use of classical-style grave-goods as a way of advertising Christian allegiance in death, it seems that it was a way of advertising something else, but given an impetus by the presence of the Church in England. Wallace-Hadrill has argued for a similar impetus for the development of institution of kingship in Germanic Europe; it appears to develop

in an awareness of, but not necessarily a direct relationship with, the Church (1975, 181-82).

The fresh influx of new object types in Period 2 coincides more neatly with two developments in the Church's fortunes in England. Firstly, there is a change in the tempo of the conversion process in England, with the conversion of Essex, Sussex, the Middle Angles, the Isle of Wight and, most importantly, Mercia. Secondly, in 669, Theodore and Hadrian arrive in England to begin long and influential careers, as Archbishop of Canterbury and Abbot of St Peter's, Canterbury, respectively. It seems likely that the growing power of the Church in the second half of the seventh century gave fresh ideological impetus, visible archaeologically as the new Period 2 objects, to a process of classical revival which had been in train since the start of the century.

So if the Period 1 burial assemblage was not being used to advertise Christianity, what other impulse may have provoked the observed patterns? Thus far, the whole of England has been treated together, with no allowance made for the separate kingdoms. As has already been noted in section 6.3, however, there is very little archaeological material which allows us to discern individual kingdoms. The distribution maps of grave-goods link with philological and historical evidence to suggest that the cultural identity of the Anglo-Saxons was changing, away from an Anglian/Saxon split and towards a feeling of Englishness.

Wormald has suggested that some form of cultural unity was encouraged by the Church in England, especially at Canterbury; it wanted one people and one Church. He comments that "Archbishops of Canterbury had the same sort of interest in political cohesion within their sphere of authority as had sub-Roman aristocracies in the unity of their old 'province'" (1983, 124-26). As the concept of kingship in early medieval Europe was heavily dependent on the Church for its sacral legitimacy (Nelson 1977), it can be argued that what was good for the Church was good for the kings.

A Roman-style burial assemblage must have been attractive to all the English kingdoms at once, for reasons at first barely connected with the Church; we know this from the timing of the change and the location of its manifestations. The phenomenon may instead have been connected instead with changes in secular power.

The concept of the Roman Empire, past or present, has been used right up to the Treaty of Rome in the twentieth century to assert and legitimise power in Europe (Dickinson 1991, 60-68 for a migration-period attempt in England; Carver 1993b, 41). If early rulers could present themselves

as legitimate successors to the Roman state machinery, they could centralise, legislate, tax and control with greater ease. One way to achieve this legitimisation is for the rulers to rule from Roman towns, to use Roman regalia (such as Edwin of Northumbria's standard) or to construct genealogies incorporating Caesar (Bruce-Mitford 1975, 693-94 and fig 434); in other words, for the kings to become Romans, and therefore the natural and legitimate rulers.

Another way might be to encourage the property-owning population as a whole to see itself as inheriting the mantle of Rome, and therefore needing rulers as part of the whole "civilisation" package. The two options are not, of course, mutually exclusive. The first was occasionally taken, but never whole-heartedly; if Higham is right about the arrival of Anglo-Saxon culture in England being due to a takeover by an Anglo-Saxon élite (1992), the perceived origins of the rulers might have been seen as so strongly Germanic that an attempt to alter genealogies would have failed.

The English kings all apparently chose the second option, recreating *Romanitas* among the property-owning class, as the solution to the problem of how to assert and consolidate their kingship. This consistency was perhaps because of the Church's desire to see England as a unified cultural unit (Wormald 1983), or perhaps due to peer polity interaction (Renfrew and Cherry 1986).

Having examined the evidence for and against the involvement of the Frankish Empire, the ancient and contemporary Roman Empires and the Church, the strands can at this point be combined to suggest a hypothetical narrative context. There are many possibilities, but this story fits the available evidence quite well.

At the beginning of the seventh century, kingship develops throughout England under the influence of the nearby presence of the Church. In order to win recognition, a potential king must convince enough of his people that they need a king. It is easier to do this using old, tried-and-tested arguments, than to try to use an entirely new approach. Therefore, the potential kings look back to the last time that there was a supreme leader in Britain - the Roman period. If they can convince the people that they are really in essence Roman, then of course they will need a king as part of their civilisation.

There has been, however, strong Germanic acculturation during the fifth and sixth centuries, and this has to be dealt with. If the English are reminded of the Roman origins of the island, and encouraged to feel that those living here are heir to its traditions, they can then transfer their

Germanic acculturation into an origin myth, and get on with the business of displaying their new *Romanitas*.

The situation is slightly different in Kent, with its links to the Frankish empire. There may have been a brief attempt to use the notion of the Frankish empire, in conjunction with the Roman, to legitimise power in Kent; outside Kent, this strategy would have had no force. Alternatively, the different situation in Kent may have been the result of a more stratified society, with a "middle class" with access to imported objects and short-lived fashions.

Thus the Conversion-period renaissance is, in Period 1, a concomitant of kingship rather than the Church, and its material culture should contain a large proportion of antique revivals.

From about the middle of the seventh century onwards - our Period 2 - it is clear that the Church will provide a source of power at least equal to that of the kings. Notions of *Romanitas* are now firmly connected with the Church of Rome and the contemporary eastern Empire. The differences between Kent and the rest of the country are now negligible; either Kent has joined the rest of the country in seeing the use of Roman and Byzantine-inspired objects as the best way to secure the status of its kings, or the rest of the country has now caught up with Kent and is indulging in imports and short-lived fashions. A larger part of the material culture of England is now based on contemporary Byzantine models, perhaps promoted by Theodore and his entourage.

There are a few groups of people who need not be encouraged to display a particularly Roman material culture. First are those who show a strong allegiance to the Church by becoming part of its hierarchy. By the fact of their taking holy orders, they are already advertising an obedience to both sacred and secular authority. And they can therefore be buried, as befits Christian ideology, in an ostentatiously egalitarian manner. Secondly, it might be suggested that the mere fact of burial in a churchyard shows an acceptance of the authority of Church and state, with no need for grave-goods. The upper strata of society, who in Period 1 were separated from the mass of the population in isolated high-wealth burials, might now be separated from them into the churchyards. Whatever the cause, throughout Period 2 there are more and more unfurnished cemeteries.

By Period 3, the institution of kingship has become very secure. There is now no need to convince the population that they need kings; they have had them for long enough to accept them as a necessity. There is thus no need to continue to advertise a Roman identity, which

equals allegiance to the king, in the grave, and instead the family can inherit the grave-goods or give them to the Church so that the dead can enjoy their riches stored up in heaven. Burial according to the custom of the Church becomes the desired rite, and so we move out of the period of furnished burial.

#### 6.7.6 The decline of grave-goods in Conversion-period England

The explanation that a revival of an essentially Roman cultural identity promoted the legitimisation of newly won power in Conversion-period England works well as long as furnished burial lasts - for the furnished burials of Periods 1 and 2. It does not explain why furnished burial was not used by that section of society using churchyards, nor why the use of furnished burial stopped suddenly around 720 or 730.

This is not the place to embark upon a detailed examination of unfurnished burial. A few observations should, however, be made. During Period 1, roughly the first half of the seventh century, unfurnished and furnished burials seem to be intermingled in excavated cemeteries, as in the migration period. There are documentary references to burial in or around churches, but no comprehensively furnished burial has been excavated in a churchyard cemetery. During Period 2, as seen for example from Table 6.2, wholly unfurnished cemeteries can be recognised, both around churches and apparently unencumbered. Period 3 is distinguished by a sudden, almost complete abandonment of furnished burial contemporaneously throughout England. This does not necessarily include a sudden shift to burial around a church, as there appear to be a number of unencumbered cemeteries dating from Period 3.

The locations of furnished burials and the locations of known church activity never coincide; there are no conventionally furnished burials yet known from an Anglo-Saxon churchyard cemetery. This is very different to the situation in Merovingian Francia, where richly furnished graves are well-known from churches (James 1988, 145-48). But in England, extensive and wealthy grave depositions *are* completely incompatible with churchyard burial, the most obvious funerary sign of ideological commitment to the Church.

There is no evidence to suggest that the custom of furnished burial as a whole was abandoned earlier in areas converted first; in fact, quite the opposite seems to be true. In Sussex and the Isle of Wight, the two regions last to be converted, Conversion-period furnished burials are hard to recognise at all. It has been argued (in section 4.42.2) that the hanging bowl in Chessell Down IoW 26 should date this burial to the Conversion period, but it is the only one so far identified

on the island, which has many fifth- and sixth-century cemeteries (Arnold 1982). In Sussex, thirteen sites have been suggested as Conversion-period (see Gazetteer for details) but they are notable for their lack of furnishings.

Quite a lot of work had been done on the decline of furnished burial prior to the present study. The models proposed by Shephard (1979a) and Halsall (1990) suggest that the increasing rigidity of social structures at this time, both in England and on the Continent, firstly strengthens the status of a family so that it is not so threatened on the death of a member and so has to make less outward show of wealth, and secondly alters concepts of property ownership and patterns of inheritance, and so the possessions which formerly went into the grave are now inherited.

These hypotheses *all take as their starting point* an examination of the theory and chronology of furnished burial, and are plausible as mechanisms for a general decline in the deposition of grave-goods. There are, however, problems in detail. For example, the alternative forms of investment which now attracted conspicuous consumption, such as church buildings, monastic communities, sculpture and manuscripts, are even more marked displays of status, and result in just as little wealth being handed to the next generation. The main theoretical drawback is that these mechanisms are processes, rather than events, and so none can provide a convincing explanation for the apparently sudden end to furnished burial.

A different approach was taken by Morris in 1983. In his chapter entitled "The Origins of Churchyard Burial" he attempted to look at the problem from the opposite perspective, seeing how far back in time a study of early churches and churchyards could go. This approach enabled Morris to look at the range of churchyard burial in more detail, and raised some interesting questions at a time when relatively little was known about early churchyard burial (Morris 1983, 89). Morris emphasised the variation to be found within seventh- to ninth-century burial, and looked at the incidence of possible grave-goods found within churchyards, the control of the Church over burial practice, the chronological relationship between the founding of a church and the founding of a churchyard cemetery, and a possible change in location from field cemeteries to churchyard cemeteries within settlements.

Some answers to Morris's questions, and some modification of his suggestions, can now be found. It is now virtually certain that no churchyard cemetery developed from a burial site in use before the seventh century; where fifth- and sixth-century objects do occur within a later churchyard, these are coincidences. No cemetery certainly around a church can be shown to have contained conventionally furnished burials, so they cannot have developed out of seventh-



or eighth-century furnished cemeteries either.

It seems more likely that churchyards developed out of seventh-century and later unfurnished cemeteries. There are now a number of unfurnished, oriented cemeteries of churchyard type known which do not appear to have had churches close by. At Ailcy Hill NY, Garton-on-the-Wolds NHu, Kemp Howe NHu, Sedgford Nf and Roche Court Down Wi there are either archaeological or topographic reasons to suspect that there was no church. At Caister-on-Sea Nf, Newcastle Castle TW, Aylesbury Bu, Winchester Staple Gardens Ha and Burrow Hill Sf no church has been found, but it is possible that there may have been a structure in an unexcavated area. There are also a number of churches (two-thirds of the list of archaeologically dated seventh- to eleventh-century churches provided by Morris 1989, 152) for which the earliest archaeological evidence is pre-church burials. Although Morris thinks that it is theoretically unlikely that churches were built in earlier burial places (1983, 51-52; 1989, 153) the weight of empirical evidence leans the other way.

As no certain churchyard cemetery in England has produced conventional grave-goods, it must be concluded that the Church had a profound effect on burial practices within its jurisdiction. This requires an explanation drawing heavily on the influence of the Church. It may imply that the Church discouraged grave-goods, but it does not have to; it could be that, for some reason, grave-goods were not needed within the churchyard. The occasional presence of a bead, a buckle or a knife within a churchyard, coupled with the silence of English laws on funerary matters (Morris 1983, 50; Bullough 1983) suggest that the latter is more likely. The reason for this could have been that a tax was introduced which took the place of grave-goods, perhaps the grave-scot suggested by Duby (1973, 66-67). If it was administered by the Church, it may initially have been formally introduced within the jurisdiction of the churchyard, resulting in the Period 2 unfurnished cemeteries. Further development may have seen some part of the community voluntarily donating grave-scot, rather as some families endowed the church with land and others did not. The sudden change into Period 3 could therefore be explained as the formal imposition of grave-scot on every member of the community.

The hypothesis that the imposition of grave-scot was the general mechanism behind the cessation of grave-good custom was extended by Carver to include taxation in general (1989, 157). Given the embedded relationship between kings and the Church at the time, the two phenomena of taxation by the king and taxation by the Church were likely to have occurred simultaneously. Again, it is possible that royal taxation was at first imposed on certain sections of society, later being extended to the general property-owning population, and that this is reflected in the

increase in unfurnished burial.

What perhaps remains to be explained is why the practice of furnished burial continued for so long. There still does not appear to have been any other change in the first half of the eighth century which would make a climate for imposing tax more favourable than it had been half a century before. By then churches, with unfurnished burial around them and with sculpture and manuscripts within, had already become an accepted channel for ideological investment. It seems likely that those buried or burying in the latest furnished graves did not have, or did not want, access to churchyard burial; although in some ways the graves seem lavish, the lack of ornament on the objects is noticeable. It is just possible that they represent a marginalised class which did not subscribe to the party of the Church; but without further research into the occupants of unfurnished graves, particularly higher-status ones, it is dangerous to speculate. The area of unfurnished burial, both within and without the Church, is a fertile ground for further research.

#### 6.7.7 Conclusion

At the very end of the sixth century, the use of grave-goods in England suggests the beginnings of kingship in England, in a group of proto-states which were in a process of unifying in terms of cultural identity (shown, for example, by the linguistic evidence). At this point, the Germanic aspect of migration-period culture was still heavily signalled through the grave-goods.

Through the late sixth and early seventh century, there was a transformation in the stratification of society. Both from the evidence of settlement and cemetery archaeology there seems to be a more severely ranked society than before, and this needs to be maintained both by secular and, in those kingdoms which have accepted Christianity, spiritual powers. The development of the institution of kingship would have been accelerated by the nearby power base of the Church, the example of which could be used by the kings to perpetuate their power as sacral kings. Kingship was encouraged by the Church, which needed the kings to give it its economic and political power.

The problem is how to convince people that they should be ruled, perhaps by Church and certainly by king, and one method is to appeal to an ancestral right. This concept was familiar to the Anglo-Saxons, who were interested in genealogies. They would also have been aware of the Roman heritage of Britannia. Persuade the English that they are in essence Roman - transfer Germanic feeling to an origin myth - and they will then need an emperor, taxes, the Church and

"civilisation". Thus English material culture of the Conversion period reveals what is in effect the first classical "renaissance" in post-Roman Europe.

Anglo-Saxon England occupied a unique position among migration-period Germanic societies, in that it was the only culture which was adopted lock, stock and barrel into a Roman province, apparently wholly replacing the classical way of life. The other erstwhile Roman provinces - Gaul, Hispania, Italia, Pannonia, Africa, and so on - retained a degree of Roman language, institutional and cultural life which Britannia, at first glance, seems to have lost (Pirenne 1939, 141). It is perhaps because of this unique loss that the first "renaissance" was possible.

The grave-goods of Conversion-period England were being used to construct and express a pan-English neo-classical national identity. This newly constructed identity drew heavily on Roman prototypes, both from earlier Roman Britain and the contemporary eastern Empire. It is not just the grave-goods of the Conversion period which show Roman influence. The architecture (Clapham 1930, 16-54), the sculpture (Cramp 1986), the manuscript art (Bruce-Mitford 1969), laws (Wallace-Hadrill 1971, 33 and 37) and coins (Grierson and Blackburn 1986, 158-73) all show influences which can be considered to be Roman in the broadest sense, as do individual material manifestations of royalty such as the "amphitheatre" at Yeavinger, Rædwald's helmet and shoulder-clasps and Edwin's standard (Cramp 1972). They all combine to show firstly that this identity was promoted both by the Church and by the state to legitimise the power of their hierarchies, and secondly that it was effective at a popular level. This was the preferred solution to the problem of how to get and keep power, and resulted in an Anglo-Saxon imperial ideology, the earliest of the conscious revivals (rather than emphasised continuities of *Romanitas*) to have occurred in Europe.

Wormald ends his 1983 article by saying "did the use of *imperium* and its cognates by Bede and others reflect a coherent and uniquely "insular" imperial ideology, hegemonial rather than universal in character, which Alcuin then exported to influence what happened to Charlemagne on Christmas Day 800?" He concludes that the historical evidence cannot be pressed that far; but the archaeological evidence presented here goes a long way to support the idea that the medieval transformation of the Roman Empire into a series of renaissances began first in England, during the century before Bede wrote.

	550	600	650	700	750	800	850
<b>Group A</b>							
Type g annular brooch	←-----						
Keystone disc brooch	-----						
Ribbed palm cup	-----						
Plated disc brooch	-----						
Claw beaker	←-----						
Group 3 shield boss	←-----						
Scutiform pendant	←-----						
Domed/const bell beaker	←-----						
Group 6 shield boss	-----						
Triangular buckle	-----						
Shoe buckle	-----						
"Coptic" vessel	-----						
Squat jar	-----						
Bag beaker	-----						
Style II bracteate	-----						
	550	600	650	700	750	800	850
<b>Group B</b>							
Tripod-ring bowl	←-----						
Amber bead	←-----						
Melon bead	←-----						
Spotted/trailed bead	←-----						
Small monochrome bead	←-----						
Roman coin	←-----						
Necklace	←-----						
Pottery vessel	←-----						
Threadpicker	←-----						
Type f annular brooch	←-----						
Finger ring	←-----						
Single pin	←-----						
Serrated-edge buckle	←-----						
Double-sided comb	←-----						
Firesteel/pursemount	←-----						
Spiral disc bead	←-----						
Whorl	←-----						
Chatelaine	←-----						
Bracelet	←-----						
Bag	←-----						
Weaving batten	-----						
Wooden vessel	-----						

...continued

**Table 6.1** Chronological lifespan of selected artefact types

	550	600	650	700	750	800	850
<b>Group C</b>							
Bead-in-wire pendant		-----					
Composite disc brooch		-----					
Cabochon pendant		-----					
Lace-tag/strap-end	-----						
Iron-bound bucket	-----						
Casket	-----						
Double-bell metal bead		-----					
Seax		-----					
Cowrie shell		-----					
Playing pieces		-----					
Shears		-----					
Horse harness		-----					
Amethyst bead		-----					
Wire ring		-----					
Beaver tooth pendant		-----					
Almond-shaped metal bead		-----					
Spatulate tool		-----					
Hanging bowl		-----					
Safety-pin brooch		-----					
	550	600	650	700	750	800	850
<b>Group D</b>							
Padlock			-----				
Group 7 shield boss			-----				
Iron bell			-----				
Hump-backed comb			-----				
Bulla			-----				
Plain palm cup			-----				
Double-tongued buckle			-----				
Biconical silver/gold bead			-----				
Thrymsa			-----				
Twist-inlay bead			-----				
Workbox			-----				
Linked pins			-----				
Openwork buckle			-----				
Filigree disc pendant			-----				
Spoon			-----				

...continued

**Table 6.1** Chronological lifespan of selected artefact types

	550	600	650	700	750	800	850
<b>Group E</b>							
Sceatta				-----			
Sword	←-----						
Spear	←-----						
Heckle			-----				
Knife	←-----						
Simple buckle	←-----						
Pointed iron tool		-----					
Whetstone	←-----						→
Spiral-headed pin		-----					→
Hooked tag			-----				→

An arrow sign (← or →) at either end indicates that the lifespan of the artefact type extends before or after the date-range shown here.

----- indicates the main date-range of the artefact type; - - - indicates a period of rarer or more dubious occurrence.

**Table 6.1** Chronological lifespan of selected artefact types

Cemetery name	Unfurnished cemetery?	Unfurnished grave?	Date
Addingham WY	Y	Y Y Y Y	720 +/- 40 AD 730 +/- 60 AD 810 +/- 80 AD 936 +/- 50 AD
Ailcy Hill NY	largely	N Y Y Y Y	553-661 AD 660-806 AD 666-825 AD 685-876 AD 785-982 AD
Alfriston III Sx	isolated burial	disturbed	890 +/- 80 ad
Aylesbury Bu	Y	Y Y disturbed Y	770-870 AD 830-890 AD 840-900 AD 860-920 AD
Beckery So	Y	Y	730 +/- 80 AD
Brixworth Nh	Y	Y Y	780 +/- 80 AD 840 +/- 70 AD
Burgh Castle Sf	Y	Y Y Y	660 +/- 70 AD 720 +/- 70 AD 910 +/- 80 AD
Burrow Hill Sf	Y	Y	780 +/- 80 ad
Carlisle Cathedral Cu	not stated	not stated	750 +/- 70
Castle Green, Hereford HW	Y	Y	700 +/-70 ad
Christ Church Ox	Y	Y Y	2 or 3 x 735-825 2 x EC9
Harting Beacon Sx	isolated burial	disturbed	800 +/- 70 ad
Hartlepool Church Walk Cl	Y	Y Y Y Y	543-664 AD 654-777 AD 685-953 AD 780-969 AD
Ipswich Elm Street Sf	disturbed	disturbed	710 +/- 70 AD
Kemp Howe NHu	Y	Y	centred on 570 AD centred on 725 AD centred on 745 AD

...continued

**Table 6.2** Radiocarbon dates from Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon cemeteries

Nazeingbury Ex	largely	Y Y	560-720 AD 760-920 AD
Rivenhall Ex	Y	Y	centred on 810 ad
Thwing NHu	largely	Y Y Y Y Y Y N	410-670 AD 434-643 AD 642-758 AD 650-860 AD 673-852 AD 724-961 AD 781-991 AD 789-992 AD
Waltham Abbey Ex	Y	Y	640 +/- 50 AD
Wells Cathedral So	Y	Y	"730 +/- 70"
Wharram Percy NY	isolated burial	Y	636-673
Winchester South Gate Ha	2 ?casual burials	Y	centred on 683 centred on 742

Dates have been expressed in a variety of styles, as they have been published. For details, see Gazetteer. The radiocarbon dates from Sutton Hoo Sf have not been included in this list as the dating programme is not yet complete.

**Table 6.2** Radiocarbon dates from Conversion-period Anglo-Saxon cemeteries

Always female	Pendant Amethyst bead Metal bead Necklace	Linked pins Finger ring Thread-picker Weaving batten Hooked tag	Brooch Bulla Bracelet Whorl	Chatelaine Workbox Spoon Shears
Always male	Shield-boss Spear	"Coptic" bowl Hanging bowl	Sword Seax	
Mostly female	Coin Barrel padlock	Amulet bead Cowrie	Bag Box	Comb
Mostly male	Triangular buckle Pointed tool	Wooden vessel		

Grave-good types not mentioned in this table have no significant gender associations

**Table 6.3** Gender associations of various grave-good types



## NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

### CONVERSION PERIOD

The term "Conversion period" is defined as the time period covered by the process of conversion to Christianity in England. It was chosen in preference to other, more conventional, names because none of these described the period quite so succinctly.

The limits chosen to break any subject up into segments for manageable study are always arbitrary to a degree, and depend on the topic for research. The subdivisions within the Anglo-Saxon period vary, with the presence or absence of contemporary written history dividing the period into two with the boundary *c.* 600, and a number of archaeologically recognisable changes following soon after. The cessation of furnished burial, the onset of wheel-made pottery, the foundation of trading settlements, the adoption of Christianity all at much the same time have led to a division between the "early" or "pagan" period up to 600 or 650, and the "late" or "Christian" period (e.g. Campbell 1982; Welch 1992). Other researchers divide it into three, with an "early", "pagan", "migration" or "settlement" phase, a "middle" phase and a "late" phase influenced by the Viking raids and settlement (e.g. Wilson 1976, 4). This does not change the study of the earlier period, but allows the period of change from the seventh century to be investigated separately from the later Viking-influenced period.

The present study is therefore concerned with the "middle" Anglo-Saxon period, which is usually taken to run from *c.* 600 or 650 A.D. to *c.* 850 A.D. The particular repertoire of artefacts used in furnished burial with which it is concerned starts *c.* 600, and represents a sudden change, easy to define as a boundary; "a point at which a series of artefact-types that have characterised the Migration Period apparently came to an abrupt and shared end, and Style I gave way to Style II." (Hines 1992, 83).

Furnished burial has almost completely disappeared by the middle of the eighth century, but the decline was less easy to define in advance of data collection. Because of this, all sites with evidence of burial up to 850 have been included. As very few of these graves are furnished, the main interest of this study covers only the seventh and early eighth centuries. To call this period "middle Anglo-Saxon" would lead to confusion, and so another name had to be found.

The study of burial practice is the study of ideology, and the ideological change with the most far-reaching consequences in the period under study was the conversion to Christianity. The use

of the term "Conversion period" to cover this time acknowledges this, and is also flexible enough to encompass the different historical conversion dates of the different historically known kingdoms. It is a term analogous to "migration period"; it does not cover the conversion of any specific kingdom, but covers the time from the acceptance of Christianity by the Kentish ruling class to a time when the institutions of the new ideological power were commonplace throughout England.

Across England, therefore, the term is used as a convenient shorthand for the years beginning *c.* 600 AD. Its end is less clearly defined. It may be characterised by the start of mass burial in churchyards, but this is a poorly dated phenomenon. Alternatively, it could be seen as ending with the demise of furnished burial *c.* 720-730. For the purposes of this thesis, however, a later date was required in order to document the end of the period, and so an approximate date for the start of the late Anglo-Saxon period, *c.* 850, was adopted.

The term "middle Anglo-Saxon" is occasionally used in the gazetteer. This is generally due to the term having been used in the sources from which the gazetteer is compiled, usually to refer to settlement archaeology, particularly pottery; the term as applied in this way is popular and well-understood, and there seems no reason to avoid it.

## MIGRATION PERIOD

The term "migration period" is used as a shorthand for the Germanic cultures of the fifth and sixth centuries.

## EARLY, MIDDLE AND LATER PARTS OF CENTURIES

As described in Chapter 2, the precision of artefactual dates is limited to half a century or so. Consequently, the terms "early", "middle" and "later" seventh or eighth century should be seen as overlapping fifty-year periods. The term "late seventh or early eighth century" covers the half-century centred on 700 AD. All these terms, however, should imply a degree of imprecision.

## ENGLAND

The geographical area under consideration encompasses all of modern England and that part of southern Scotland which was under Northumbrian control during the Conversion period. As described in Chapter 2, however, sites in the extreme north and west of this area without archaeological or historical evidence for Anglo-Saxon influence have been excluded.

## METAL ALLOYS

For the sake of euphony, all copper-alloy objects have been referred to as bronze, and all white-metal as either tin or silver, depending on the term used in the sources. For the purposes of this study, knowledge of the detailed chemical composition of the metals used is irrelevant, and so none should be implied by the use of these terms.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Bulky bibliographical references have generally been omitted within the text where the reference would have been to the sources cited in the *Gazetteer*. Instead, the names of cemeteries appearing in the *Gazetteer* are suffixed with an abbreviated county name (see below), enabling the cemetery entry and all references to be easily located.

## DATA FROM UNPUBLISHED SITES

A number of sites used in this study were unpublished at the time that the research was carried out. Harford Farm Nf, Lechlade Ox, Didcot Power Station Ox, Finglesham K and Castledyke SHu are unpublished sites particularly rich in grave-goods, and some conclusions have been based on draft results from these cemeteries. Further study and consequent re-evaluations of many objects from these sites may have taken place by the time these cemeteries are published, and any factual statements made about these cemeteries in the thesis should be checked with the final report.

## ABBREVIATIONS

The counties used are correct at the time of writing, and thus refer to the reorganisation of local government in 1974. Humberside has been divided into North Humberside and South Humberside, because of the importance of the Humber as a land division in the Conversion period. The Isle of Wight has also been separated from Hampshire, because of its very different material culture signature in the Conversion period.

Av	Avon	GL	Greater London	Ox	Oxfordshire
Bd	Bedfordshire	Ha	Hampshire	Sf	Suffolk
Bk	Berkshire	Ht	Hertfordshire	Sh	Shropshire
Bu	Buckinghamshire	HW	Hereford & Worcester	SHu	South Humberside
Ca	Cambridgeshire	IoW	Isle of Wight	So	Somerset
Cl	Cleveland	K	Kent	St	Staffordshire
Cu	Cumbria	Le	Leicestershire	Sy	Surrey
Db	Derbyshire	Li	Lincolnshire	TW	Tyne and Wear
DG	Dumfries & Galloway	Nb	Northumberland	Wa	Warwickshire
Do	Dorset	Nf	Norfolk	Wi	Wiltshire
Dv	Devon	Nh	Northamptonshire	WSx	West Sussex
ESx	East Sussex	NHu	North Humberside	WY	West Yorkshire
Ex	Essex	Nt	Nottinghamshire		
Gl	Gloucestershire	NY	North Yorkshire		

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