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THE BRILLIANCE OF *COMITATUS*: AESTHETICS
AND SOCIETY IN EARLY ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

A Thesis Submitted to the Committee on Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Master of Arts
in the Faculty of Arts and Science

TRENT UNIVERSITY
Peterborough, Ontario, Canada

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ABSTRACT

The Brilliance of *Comitatus*: Aesthetics
and Society in Early Anglo-Saxon England

Kendra Adema

In this thesis, key items of Anglo-Saxon material culture are examined in order to demonstrate the relationship between socio-cultural and aesthetic values in early Anglo-Saxon England. The theoretical framework employed herein is one in which the anthropology of experience is joined with symbolic and aesthetic anthropology. This approach is primarily contextual - involving a re-examination of archaeological data from 5th to 7th century Kentish burials. Evidence from historical and literary sources is employed to interpret the role played by these same artefacts in reinforcing both the ethos and the aesthetic of the *comitatus* social relationship.

This study begins with the premise that there exists no simple dichotomy between persons and things; instead, objects contribute to shaping our *habitus*. The positioning of burial goods within Anglo-Saxon graves is revelatory of their actual role in the creation of individual and group identity within early Anglo-Saxon society. In this study, the life of these objects, the ways in which they moved through Anglo-Saxon society, were used, interacted with, and thought of, is examined to determine how aesthetic values were constructed and articulated within the *comitatus* relationship and how the interconnected roles of the *wæpned*, the "weaponed" or warrior, and the *webbe*, the "weaver", became lived metaphors within this society.

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Chapter I

Purpose, Theory and Method

Purpose

Archaeology in Great Britain, as in many other areas of the world, has progressed from the work of looters, grave robbers, amateur hobbyists and antiquarians to the efforts of dedicated professionals intent on improving our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon England. The exploration of burial sites has long dominated Anglo-Saxon archaeology, primarily because Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are numerous, rich in artifacts and relatively easy to find - hence their vulnerability to destruction. Burials of the Anglo-Saxon period continue to be of importance with the development of new ways of examining their evidence for fresh insights into the long departed communities which they represent (Webster 1986: 124).

Early approaches to Anglo-Saxon mortuary archaeology centred on historical, typological, or classificatory analyses. Later scholars of the period limited themselves to the study of particular classes of material, or the art-historical aspects of specific object types. Despite many technological advances, archaeological analyses are still too often narrowly focused and reliant on concepts inherent in a limited and over-specialized theoretical framework. The time has come for a more holistic approach to be taken toward the analysis and interpretation of the meaning of Anglo-Saxon mortuary remains. This thesis explores the manner in which the signification of the objects found within the burial context resides in both the objects themselves and in their "performative [or] 'gestural' patterns of behaviour" (Vastokas 1994: 337) in Anglo-Saxon social and cultural life.

Theoretical Framework

This thesis combines symbolic and cognitive archaeology with the anthropology of experience (Dewey 1958, Dissanayake 1992, Johnson 1987, Lakoff 1987, Turner 1974, 1990, Vastokas 1992). Aesthetic considerations

are not limited to "high art", but are relevant to material culture as well. A rethinking of what lies behind a society's aesthetic values, particularly with respect to the manner in which members experience the world around them is called for. In the Germanic world, societal relationships were defined and 'materialized' through the highly ritualized use and exchange of material objects (Alkemade 1997: 184); a closer look at the role these objects played in negotiating, creating and maintaining Anglo-Saxon social values, including aesthetic values, is necessary to a better understanding of Anglo-Saxon society as a whole.

Objects placed in a burial context are, in some ways, documents of the social role played by the buried individual and of the value placed on the individual by his or her community (Hodder 1980: 163; Pader 1980: 144; Richards 1992: 135, 143). On examination of the archaeological record for parts of Anglo-Saxon England, a discernible pattern in the placement of burial objects within individual graves is apparent (Pader 1980). A certain "congruence" between the graves of men and women may be seen in the patterning of this placement of objects (Pader 1980). It is shown that this complementarity is based on a system of categorization founded upon meanings which were created out of bodily experience and through interaction with the objects (Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987). Clues to the basis of this classificatory system can be found in the metaphors of surviving Old English prose and poetry as well as other cognate, and about contemporary, sources such as the Old Norse and Icelandic sagas.

The Germanic *comitatus* or warband (OE *duguð*) was the main structural and organizational feature of Anglo-Saxon society upon which all social, cultural, political, economic, religious and ritual aspects of the community were centred. The sets of Anglo-Saxon objects identified herein are key symbols of the buried individual's place within the *comitatus* structure, a complex of relationships based on an ideal of unwavering loyalty to one's lord and one's companions and upon a desire for personal glory (Evans 1997; Pollington 1996). At the same time, it is

important to recall that burial objects are not simply static markers of social roles; the meaning of such objects is not found by simply contemplating the object as a symbol for something else. Instead, signification must be discovered in the "life" of the objects themselves (Vastokas 1994: 341), by exploring the role played by objects as interactive agents in social life and cognition (Gottdiener 1995; Kopytoff 1986; Vastokas 1994). This can be done by looking at how the objects were manufactured, used, at changes in ownership and in use and at how the objects were experienced and interpreted (Vastokas 1994).

Meaning is based on bodily experience (Dewey 1958: 15, 246; Dissanayake 1992: 24-30; Johnson 1987; Lakoff 1987; Vastokas 1992: 32-4; 1994: 337) and "our reality is shaped by the patterns of our bodily movement, the contours of our spatial and temporal orientation, and the forms of our interactions with objects" (Johnson 1987: xix). Particularly significant moments of bodily experience are those which Csikszentmihalyi has identified as "deep flow" experiences when action and awareness are merged, resulting in a "loss of ego" and an increase in "kinesthetic sensation" (Csikszentmihalyi 1975: 43; but also 1990, 1996). This "holistic sensation" is "present when we act with total involvement [in] a state in which action follows action according to an internal logic which seems to need no conscious intervention on our part" (Turner 1974: 87). Research on the "flow" experience has focused on various forms of play and sport such as mountaineering, rock-climbing, hockey, chess, etc. (Csikszentmihalyi 1975, 1990, 1996; Turner 1974: 87). Anglo-Saxon literary sources suggest that the battlefield experience also contains moments of "flow". In the same way the phenomenon of the "berserker", a state of battle madness known from early Scandinavian literature and likely also present in early Anglo-Saxon society (Hemmingsen 1998), would represent an extreme or exaggerated form of the "flow" experience. As Turner has shown, such an experience relates to *communitas*, though "flow" is experienced by individuals and *communitas*

between or among individuals. Nevertheless, "flow" is one of the techniques whereby people seek to achieve "direct, unmediated communion with one another, even though severe subscription to rules is the frame in which this communion may possibly be induced" (Turner 1974: 89). What is sought in both "flow" and *communitas* is unity, "an indivisible unity, 'white', 'pure', 'primary', 'seamless'. This unity is expressed in such symbols... as running water, dawn, light and whiteness. Homogeneity is sought, instead of heterogeneity" (Turner and Turner 1978: 254-5). The members of the community, in this case of the *comitatus*, are regarded "at least in rite and symbol" as a single unit (Turner and Turner 1978: 255). The Anglo-Saxon *comitatus* was based upon frequent conflict and a strict code of honour; it was sustained by the positive re-enforcement of warrior ideals through the joys and camaraderie of the "bright" mead hall. The configuration of relationships which made up the *comitatus* provided the "main cultural flow-mechanisms and patterns" (Turner 1974: 90) within Anglo-Saxon society. At the same time, the "flow" experiences of battle reinforced the *communitas* of the warband while working to establish interrelating moral and aesthetic value systems.

An opportunity for "flow" experience can be noted amongst the activities of Anglo-Saxon women as well. Spinning is a repetitive and time consuming activity, yet it is a "pleasantly rhythmic" and "very restful activity" (Barber 1994: 39), one which affords moments of "flow". Spinning can be done sitting or standing, and the spindle stick with its attached whorl twirling like a top in mid-air would have been as familiar a companion to the Anglo-Saxon woman as the spear was in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon man. Both spindle and spear would become "extensions" of the bodies of their bearers, expansions of their personalities through habitual use so that the woman and the spindle, the man and the spear become indivisible and irreducible wholes (Shields 1994: 212-3).

The weaving process employed by Anglo-Saxon women made use of a hanging, warp-weighted loom to make bolts of cloth approximately six feet

wide. Weaving was difficult, heavy physical work which employed many of the same arm and bodily motions as did duelling or combat. Anglo-Saxon women walked back and forth on a wooden walkway suspended over a sunken floor. The loom weights held the warp threads straight, while the woman used a bobbin or bodkin to weave the weft thread from side to side. Once the weft thread was in place, the woman would then beat the weft thread up into the warp moving the weaving sword in a similar fashion to that of a man employing his sword in battle. Like warfare, weaving was an arduous "bodily" experience which required strategy and forethought. The rhythmic singing or chanting which is said to have often accompanied the weaving process (Barber 1994: 85) worked to induce the "flow" state. Textile production was an activity where the weaver or *webbe*, especially a skilled craftswoman, could become one with the weaving much as the warrior or *weapned*¹ became one with the moment of battle.

Many of the tools of textile production as well as the process of weaving itself carry erotic undertones which are often alluded to in Old English and Old Norse riddles and poetry. This metaphorical eroticism is inherent in the motions of a needle pushing through fabric and suggested by the progress of the shuttle as it is pushed into and between the warp threads. The sexual relationship between men and women is brought to the forefront here, as is the physical force of such union: to produce the cloth, an unsheathed weaving-sword is forced through the warp threads, beating the weft into place. In Germanic society, this aspect of textile weaving has often been likened to the play of swords upon the battlefield, the warp and the weft threads symbolically providing the blood and entrails of the upright warrior of the loom (Davidson 1962: 123). In *Njal's Saga*, a loom set up by Valkyries is said to have "human heads as weights" and heddle-rods of "blood-wet spears" (Enright 1990: 66). This strong metaphoric connection between the work of the loom and the work of the battlefield, I suggest, is a symptom of the similar nature of moments of "flow" experienced in both activities.

Combat is a strongly sensual event, the fierce bodily nature of the experience is characterized by moments of anticipation, fear, even terror, but also by moments of confidence and satisfaction. The combatant experiences surges of adrenaline, endorphins and other body chemicals before, during and after the activity. The emotional content of the "flow" moments adds to the physiological enjoyment of the experience. This "intensely pleasurable", "sexual" aspect of violence is well attested by modern combat veterans (Shay 1994). Violence, particularly structured, ritualized violence, like the choreographed movements of battle, can be considered "beautiful" in its performance, given the neurological responses it elicits in both combatant and observer (Moeran 1986; Riches 1986; Schechner 1993). In Anglo-Saxon England, where warfare and the role of the warrior were idealized, the neurological and physiological experiences of combat were also highly valued. These experiences were interpreted in terms of the animistic beliefs inherent in Anglo-Saxon society and a system of interdependent social mechanisms and institutions were brought into play which encouraged and validated participation in the "flow" experience of battle. The *comitatus* structure was principal among these.

Since social activity produces material forms which are embodiments of social values (Gottdiener 1995: 70), it follows that the ideology of the *comitatus*, grounded as it is in the structured violence of warfare, the animistic precepts of the cult of Woden, as well as the aesthetic values of the Anglo-Saxon community, should be found expressed in Anglo-Saxon material culture². The Anglo-Saxon preference for "brightness", as found in their literature and seen in their material culture, is a metaphor for the ideological values held within the *comitatus*. This metaphor is based ultimately upon the bodily "flow" experience of the battlefield, but it may also be seen reflected in a similar experience in textile production and in the mythologies and traditions which accompany both weaving and warfare. Together, weaving and warfare represent the

two ideologically dominant practices of Anglo-Saxon society, the *webbe* and the ~~wæpned~~, the "weaver" and the "warrior" its two halves (Fell 1984: 39). As Vastokas (1994) has argued, such dominant technologies, their processes and their products, provide the metaphors used for cultural expression. "[C]ultural ways, including moral and aesthetic values, art forms, social and ritual performances, as well as social structural patterns and relationships, are affected to a high degree by the dominant technological system" (Vastokas 1994: 343). This is the case in Anglo-Saxon society as well.

"Social and moral issues" are "inextricably intertwined with questions of aesthetic value" (Gombrich 1965: 19) and so meaning must be sought in the articulation of shared ideology, social context and material culture (Gottdiener 1995: 29). In other words, ideological and aesthetic values may be found embodied in material culture. It follows that past ideologies can be re-discovered today by considering the interactive role once played by objects within a society. Expressions of Anglo-Saxon ideology and its aesthetic value system are found in the metaphors of Old English literature. For that reason, the poetry and prose of the seventh to ninth centuries is called on here as evidence of the Anglo-Saxon aesthetic preference for the quality of "brilliance", expressed in the bright countenance of warrior and weaver alike and displayed in the shining characteristic of Anglo-Saxon material culture.

Methodology

Burial remains are virtually all that survive from the early centuries of the Anglo-Saxon period. The material culture examined and discussed herein dates from the fifth to seventh centuries and was recovered from inhumations on the Isle of Wight and in Kent. These two areas in the southeast of England were among the first to receive Germanic settlers during the Migration Period, and it is traditionally believed that they were both settled by the same ethnic or tribal group,

the Jutes (*HE* I. 15; Arnold 1990; Hines 1997). Evidence gathered from the Dover, Kent burial grounds and from the Chessell Down, Isle of Wight burials provides the main focus of this study. Data from other key Kentish burial sites are also used, where necessary, to provide an overall summary and to identify an overall pattern.

There are some two hundred known Anglo-Saxon burial grounds in Kent, and ten on the Isle of Wight; each contains anywhere from one to two hundred individual graves. Inhumation of the dead predominates in both of these areas, although cremations do occur. However, these latter will not be discussed here as they are outside the parameters of this investigation.

Few inhumation burials are identical, yet there are a number of underlying principles which may be employed to describe variation in the positioning of the body and the placement of artifacts within the grave. Such differences can be described in terms of "congruence", "addition", "substitution", "anomaly" or "deviation", with the most basic principle being "congruence" (Pader 1980, 1982). This term is used to imply consistency in positioning and placement and is to be distinguished from "identical" in that the latter would imply absolute correspondence in the position of the body and the placement of goods between graves. Two graves may be considered congruent if there is regular space use on and around the body in conjunction with a regularly corresponding skeletal position (Pader 1980, 1982).

Distinguishing elements are based on what is present as well as what is absent and on how the space is used. Evidence for "congruence" in the placement of the various key objects of Anglo-Saxon material culture within the burials is examined. This first step in this analysis ends with a comparison of the burial spaces for evidence of a significant comparative relationship between the genders. The various individual burials are also examined to establish whether or not there is any general pattern to the placement of burial goods in relation to the body

and within the space of the grave itself. Two particular sets or "kits" of objects are identified: a "male kit" and a "female kit". As well, a further or "supplementary" assemblage of objects is observed in certain women's burials. These supplementary assemblages, together with their possible connection to the role played within the *comitatus* by the women with whom they were buried, are discussed in detail. Where possible, representative museum examples of the identified "kit" objects were examined and compared for any similarity or contrast in characteristics such as colour, texture and luminosity.

The next step in the approach taken herein involves a review of Anglo-Saxon literary and historical sources and a comparison of contemporary written materials describing the Germanic peoples on the Continent and in Scandinavia. This is followed by recourse to secondary interpretive sources to determine how the various key objects were used in everyday life, how they were produced, exchanged and experienced, in short, to determine the context in which their meaning was established.

There are, of course, various difficulties inherent in using written sources. Firstly, most of the Anglo-Saxon historical and all of the literary evidence available to us dates from the seventh to the eleventh centuries. The earliest of the historical sources, the *Laws of Æthelbert of Kent* are roughly contemporary to the period being explored here, dating from the early seventh century; nevertheless, they were recorded after Kent came under Christian influence and so present difficulties for the analysis of material culture produced in predominantly non-Christian centuries. There is a similar difficulty with the eighth century writings of the Anglo-Saxon scholar, *Bede*, and his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*. There is also some uncertainty as to the dating of various Old English manuscripts; however, it is certain that all extant examples of Old English poetry and prose were written after the advent of Christianity. While much of this literature may be the result of transmitted oral tradition, such accounts

are also interpretive versions of reality and should be used with this point in mind.

Scandinavian myths and sagas were also transcribed in a later period, and although these materials are ethnographically analogous, they are not directly descriptive of Anglo-Saxon Kent. *Germania*, by the Roman historian *Tacitus*, provides one of the earliest accounts of the Germanic ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons on the Continent. Dating to the first century AD, this account provides valuable ethnohistoric material; yet it is also problematic because it predates the Migration Period. These relatively few documents comprise all available extant written sources. However, despite the shortcomings mentioned, these documents may be profitably consulted if employed with caution.

Finally, it should be pointed out that approximately half the inhumation burials dating from the period covered herein contain no or very few artifacts. It is therefore possible that any study which focuses on the significance of burial objects is neglecting a considerable segment of the period's population, those buried without grave objects. With respect to the archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England, unfurnished burials have been interpreted variously as burials of the lower classes (Alcock 1987), of the followers of Christ, particularly after the seventh century (Evison 1987), of a remaining British population under Anglo-Saxon rule (Härke 1989, 1992a) or as those outside the elite warrior community (Arnold 1997; Halsall 1989). Since this thesis focuses upon the warband structure, unfurnished burials lie outside the scope of this study.

Previous studies of Anglo-Saxon burials have concentrated primarily on the analysis of objects found in male burials - that is, upon the symbolic role of weaponry in that culture. Anglo-Saxon female burials have not been the focus of the same degree of diagnostic attention. While weaponry and vessels have been used to define male burials, items of self-adornment have formed the major diagnostic trait for females. As

far as it can be determined, no studies of Anglo-Saxon archaeological data, up to this point in time, have investigated the relationship between male and female graves.

Care must be taken here not to begin with assumptions of binary oppositions which presuppose public/private or political/domestic dichotomies or the strict sexual division of labour which may not have been categories for the Anglo-Saxons themselves. In the past, stereotypical identifications of artifacts as sexual correlates have resulted from the dominance of a male bias. Gender should not be separated from such other aspects as age, religion, class, status, and ethnicity, which would have combined to construct social identity in Anglo-Saxon England.

The presence of weaponry in burials has often been interpreted as a mark of manhood, male status or social standing. Women's burials have been analyzed according to a different scale. Although women's burials are often richer than male burials in artifact count and quality, such a wealth of objects has been disregarded as a marker of womanhood, status or social class. Instead, it has been seen as evidence of a predilection in the men of the society for the adornment of their women and so representative of male status only.

One of the principle products of women's labours, textiles, rarely survives in the archeological record. Given the socio-cultural significance of cloth, as well as its capacity to serve as a "repository" for the "artistry of competitive aesthetic development" (Weiner and Schneider 1989: 2), the loss of such material from the archaeological record leaves a considerable gap in our knowledge of the role played by Anglo-Saxon women in creating and marking social meaning and relationships. However, as noted above, meaning cannot simply be "read" off the artifacts or discovered solely from their placement within the burials. Meaning must be sought contextually in a study of the "life of

the objects themselves" (Vastokas 1994) as they moved about within a living Anglo-Saxon society comprised of both men and women.

Summary

No simple dichotomy exists between persons and things; instead, objects contribute to shaping our *habitus* (Bourdieu 1994). The placement of burial objects within Anglo-Saxon graves is indicative of their active role in the creation of individual and group identity within early Anglo-Saxon society. The life of these objects, the ways in which they moved through Anglo-Saxon society, were used, interacted with, and thought of, are examined herein to determine how aesthetic values were constructed and articulated within the *comitatus* relationship. One of the challenges inherent in this study is to discover what role Anglo-Saxon women played in this warband relationship and to explore how the interconnected roles of the *wæpned* and the *webbe* fit into the moral and aesthetic value systems to become lived metaphors within early Anglo-Saxon society.

Chapter II

Anglo-Saxon England

Historical Background

During the Roman Empire, Germanic peoples occupied a vast territory stretching from Scandinavia south to the Danube and from Gaul east to the Vistula. Generally tall, fair, blue-eyed and physically hardy, these peoples also shared a common cultural heritage: they spoke various dialects of a Germanic language, they worshipped northern, not Roman, gods and they lived a war-oriented lifestyle that included "a veneration for the prophetic powers of women and a predilection for feasting and drinking" (Owen-Crocker 1986: 19). These traditions were carried to Britain by the Angles, the Saxons, the Jutes and various other Germanic settlers during the period of migration of the fifth to the seventh centuries (Figure 1).

In the south-east of England, Kent was one of the first regions to be settled by Germanic peoples after the departure of the Roman legions from the island (Brooks 1989: 55-7; Hawkes 1969: 186; Hawkes and Pollard 1981: 320). By the end of the fifth century, Kent had a well-established governing structure with a stable royal dynasty. It was a small, compact kingdom with the River Medway as its western frontier. To the south, it was protected by Romney Marsh and the great Forest of the *Weald* while the English Channel and the Thames estuary provided natural borders on the remaining sides (Figures 2 and 3). The land was fertile and well-watered, the fishing abundant. The surviving sub-structure of Roman towns, villas, roads and ports gave Kent a unique advantage which its early rulers quickly realized (Hawkes and Pollard 1981: 321; Hawkes 1969: 188-9). Archaeological excavation of burial sites adjacent to these earliest Kentish settlement sites of the fifth century, such as Bekesbourne, Howletts, Bifrons and Lyminge show graves of individuals

"interred with all the outward signs of material prosperity and high social status" (Hawkes 1969: 189).

According to *Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica* written in 731 AD, Kent, the Isle of Wight, and an area of land in the south of Hampshire opposite the Isle of Wight known as the Meonware, were settled by the Jutes, who were Continental neighbours of the Angles and the Saxons (*HE* I.15; Hawkes 1969: 190; Yorke 1989: 89-1) (Figure 2). On reaching England, these two latter groups settled in areas to the north and west of Kent which came to be known as Anglia, Mercia, Essex, Wessex, Sussex and eventually, Northumbria. The exact Continental origin of the Jutes has been widely debated over the years. Early scholars pointed to the Danish peninsula of Jutland as an obvious choice³ but Frankish and Frisian origins have also been suggested (for instance, Alcock 1987: 268; Owen-Crocker 1986: 5). More recently, the argument has come full circle, once again positing a Scandinavian homeland for the Jutish settlers and a Scandinavian link between the peoples of Kent, the Meonware and the Isle of Wight (Arnold 1990; Brooks 1989: 71-3; Hawkes 1969; Hawkes and Pollard 1981; Hines 1997; Yorke 1989). Modern historians do agree, however, that by the middle of the fifth century AD most of the Germanic tribes had become divided and diffused by the migration, while the question of their place of origin remains difficult to assess.

Archaeology has shown linkages between the pottery styles and metalwork of Kent and those of the Isle of Wight; however, the links between Kent and the south of Hampshire are relatively weaker (Arnold: 1990: 168-175; Hawkes and Pollard 1981: 322; Yorke 1989: 92). The Kentish burials contain brooches, bracteates and pottery best paralleled in Jutland, parts of southern Scandinavia and Frisia (Hawkes 1969: 190; Hawkes and Pollard 1981: 322-5; Hills 1996: 42-4). Frisia is an interesting possible origin for the Jutes; for in a passage of his *Historia*, Bede records the presence of Frisians, as well as *Rugini*, Danes, Huns, Old Saxons and *Boructuri* among the original migrants (Owen-

Crocker 1986: 5). A common ancestry to the Anglo-Saxon and Frisian peoples is suggested as well by the fact that Old English and Old Frisian are cognates. At the same time, archaeological evidence suggests a substantial migration of peoples from Frisia in the fifth century AD, when the sea encroached upon their homelands (Hills 1996: 35; Owen 1981:6; Owen-Crocker 1986: 5). It appears that a fair number of these early Frisian migrants found a home in England (Alcock 1987: 268). Pottery with strongly marked Frisian characteristics and buckles and belt fittings similar to those found in Germanic burials on the Continent have been discovered in eastern England (Alcock 1987: 268; Evans 1997: 57; Hills 1996: 42). Excavations at Westbere show clear evidence for an early sixth century settlement of Roman *foederati*, quite likely Frisians (Jessup 1946:21). At this time, "the empire was desperately short of manpower, and north Germany desperately overcrowded"; many of the young men of the "warlike northern tribes" found a way out through service in the Roman army (Hawkes 1961: 10). A continuing tradition of cultural contact between Frisia and Anglo-Saxon England may be seen in the into the seventh century with the introduction of an Anglo-Frisian *futhorc*, or runic alphabet, together with the Frisian practice of inscribing coins with runes (Hines 1996: 56-7).

Other Germanic peoples also made their way to England during this time. Archaeology shows a strong Frankish element, particularly in Kent, as well as indications that Norwegian and Swedish groups settled in and around East Anglia in the sixth century (Hawkes 1969: 190; Owen-Crocker 1986: 6; Rhodes 1990: 55).

While tradition has it that "the settlement of the Anglo-Saxons in south-eastern Britain was accompanied by the expulsion or extermination of the native Britons", (Alcock 1987: 267) it is now believed more likely that there remained a segment of Britons or Romano-Britons within the population of not only Kent but the rest of Anglo-Saxon England. The continued presence of native Britons may be marked by the inclusion of

penannular brooches, in a style common to both pre-Roman and Roman Britain, in a number of early Anglo-Saxon period burials. The Romano-British first came into contact with larger groups of Germanic peoples in the third century AD, when such contact was mediated through Roman authority. There is archaeological, as well as historical, evidence for the use of Germanic troops to defend the province of Britain (Alcock 1987: 267-70). At Dorchester "a detachment of German soldiers settled with their womenfolk in or near the Roman town" (Hawkes 1961: 10). Here, the burials of two women, "very probably" immigrants from Frisia, were found near the burial of a man "of enormous size" who was accompanied by the Roman military equipment of the northern Gaulish troops (Hawkes 1961: 10). The progression of building construction from the Roman to the Germanic styles, particularly at Dorchester-on-Thames but also at Canterbury and Verulamium, shows a continuity of occupation from the fourth through the fifth and into later centuries (Alcock 1987: 272; Hawkes 1961: 10). Germanic troops were stationed along what came to be known as the "Saxon Shore" at forts such as Dorchester-on-Thames, Canterbury, Richborough and others. It is possible that the presence of these Germanic troops were an important factor in the transition from Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England (Alcock 1987: 272; Hawkes 1961: 17).

Alone of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, Kent was already a kingdom and then a state, long before the advent of the Germanic settlers. It had been a Celtic Iron Age principality and then a Romano-British *civitas* with its capital at Canterbury, where, as noted above, there is persuasive evidence for the presence of Germanic *foederati* (Alcock 1987: 268; Hawkes 1969: 186; Owen-Crocker 1986: 6). The survival of Kent as a political unit is paralleled by the survival of the name. As a geographical term, "Kent" is very ancient, known to *Strabo* and *Diodorus Siculus* in the first century BAD, and to *Ptolemy*, *Caesar* and *Bede*, respectively as *Kavriov*, *Cantium*, and *Cantia*. These are all taken from

the Celtic *C(h)ant* or *Cænt*, suggesting "that the Anglo-Saxon kingdom" of Kent was "formed not simply by the coalescing of groups of English settlers, but that it had also inherited something of its structure from the Celtic and Roman past" (Brooks 1989: 57). Initial Germanic settlement was concentrated in those areas where the major Romano-British sites had been located. Centres of Anglo-Saxon royal government emerged at the sites of former Roman villas, temples and metalworking centres such as Lyminge, Wingham and Faversham (Brooks 1989: 57). A deliberate policy was apparently adopted by the Germanic tribes to adopt the locations of previous settlement for their own use and to thus preserve elements of the past in a continuum that was cross-cultural. In any event, "Kent" continued as the name for the new kingdom (Brooks 1989: 58).

Æpelbert was the most powerful Anglo-Saxon ruler of his day. Not only was he king of Kent (c. 580-618 AD), but he was also styled *Bretwalda* or *Brytenwalda*, "ruler of Britain" or "wide ruler" (Campbell, et al 1986: 53). Kent prospered under his rule and with his marriage to the Frankish princess, Bertha (daughter of *Charibert*, king of Paris, and granddaughter of *Clovis I*, founder of the Frankish empire), the ties between Kent and *Francia* were strengthened. The importance of the trade connection between these two kingdoms is evident in the quality and variety of Frankish objects found in seventh century Kentish burials, particularly the jewellery, metalwork and distinctively Frankish wine bottles. Similar royal marriages throughout the seventh century continued this tie and for some generations the Kentish and Merovingian dynasties were closely linked (Brooks 1989: 65-7; Hawkes 1979; Hawkes and Pollard 1981: 320-5; Owen-Crocker 1986: 9).

Probably through the influence of Bertha, who was a Christian, *Æpelbert* welcomed Augustine and the first Christian missionaries from Rome in 597 AD. He was soon converted to the new faith and not long afterwards Canterbury became England's first archbishopric. With

conversion came literacy, written records, royal law-codes and charters. Under *Æthelbert*, Kent continued to exploit its geographical proximity to the Continent and its position as the leading commercial power of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms (Brooks 1989: 65; Hawkes 1969: 191; Hawkes and Pollard 1981: 187; Owen 1981: 129; Owen-Crocker 1986: 10). By 600 AD, Kent was the richest and most cosmopolitan of the Germanic kingdoms in Great Britain and already nominally a Christian diocese.

The Kentish ports were extremely busy during the Roman period and, once the Germanic immigrations and resulting turmoil had subsided, cross-Channel trade flourished once more. Roman roads were still open and provided links to Canterbury and London. The Saxon kingdoms, it seems, did not trade directly overseas but depended on Kent, at least in the sixth century, for the imports they required. Archaeological evidence shows that Kent's overseas interests reached to Gaul, Normandy, Frisia, Thuringia and Southern Scandinavia as well as Francia (Hawkes and Pollard 1981:321). Eventually, however, the power and influence of Kent went into decline. By the latter part of the seventh century the kingdom of Wight and the Hampshire lands of the Meonware had come under the control of Wessex (Yorke 1989: 92). By the beginning of the eighth century, Kent's power and political independence were also at an end as the kingdom came under the domination of first Mercia and then Wessex (Campbell, et al 1982: 26, 67; Hawkes 1969: 186).

Belief System

The Anglo-Saxon settlers from the Continent and Scandinavia who established themselves in Britain were non-Christians. At the time of their migration, both Christian and non-Christian cults were flourishing in late-Roman Britain. However, it seems that the native British population did little to impart their Christian beliefs to the newcomers (Hines 1997: 378) and the Britons are condemned for this in *Bede's Historia* (HE II.2, II.4, V.23). In fact, it seems that the "British

churches resolutely refused to have anything to do with these barbarians" and, as a result, the districts which came to be occupied by the incoming Germanic settlers were removed from allegiance to the Church (Hutton 1991: 264). By the end of the sixth century, "the area given over to this imported paganism consisted of virtually everywhere east of the Pennines, the Severn, and Somerset" (Hutton 1991: 264), that is, all of north-eastern and southern England to what is now the Welsh border.

Reconstructing the beliefs of the Anglo-Saxon peoples is a difficult task. They were more or less non-literate (though they did have a runic alphabet suitable for carving or incising) until their conversion to Christianity, and though they produced written records in those first centuries after the conversion, few remain today (Hutton 1991: 264; also Hines 1997: 393). As with most "transitional" cultures (Geertz 1973; Hines 1997), the early Anglo-Saxon period was a time of both change and continuity. Old beliefs lingered on for some time after the advent of Christianity; the progress of the conversion was slow and the "terms in which the newly converted Anglo-Saxons interpreted the Christian religion were shaped by their tribal culture", and "impregnated by the heathenism of the old religion" (Chaney 1970: 1). Conversion is, after all, "both an event and a process" whereby religious orientation undergoes change "in both belief and practice" (Jolly 1996: 10). The Germanic conversion was "a dynamic process, stretched over time" which involved "a great deal of cultural assimilation between the imported Romano-Christian religion and the native 'folklife' of the various 'Germanic' peoples" (Jolly 1996: 10). This process of accommodation was marked by a continuity of Germanic animistic beliefs and "a retention of Germanic folklore" (Jolly 1996: 10). In the end, Christian religion succeeded primarily by accommodating Anglo-Saxon culture (Jolly 1996: 9).

Very little is known about the holy places of the Anglo-Saxons although traces of their existence remain in place names. Although rarely found, *ealh*, meaning "temple" is found twice in place names in

Kent forming "the first element in Alkham, near Dover and Ealhfleot, an early name of the channel connecting Faversham with the sea (Stenton 1971: 101). *Hearh*, "hilltop sanctuary", occurs in place names throughout the south-east such as Harrough, Harrow Hill and Harrowden. *Weoh*, the "sacred space", is common throughout Anglo-Saxon England in names such as Wye, Wingham, Whilig, Weoland, Wyham and Cusanweoh (Hines 1997: 384-7; Hutton 1991: 270; Stenton 1971: 99-102). It is probable that the Anglo-Saxons employed hills or groves as sacred places, without actual buildings. However, *ealh* does imply a structure and Bede mentions temples in Northumbria, Kent and East Anglia (*HE* II; Hutton 1991: 270; Stenton 1971: 99-102). Archaeological evidence for such temples is scarce, however, possibly as a result of Pope Gregory's instruction to his bishops that they adapt pagan places of worship, festivals and sacrifices for Christian use in order to facilitate conversion (*HE* I, 30; Niles 1991: 129). There is convincing evidence for an Anglo-Saxon temple in Northumberland, at *Yeavering*, a seat of the seventh-century Northumbrian monarchs. This very large structure, situated near a Bronze Age *tumulus* and an ancient stone circle, contains no domestic material. Quantities of animal bones found on the site suggest the regular sacrifice of animals, especially oxen (Hutton 1991: 270-2; Niles 1991: 128). In Scandinavian tradition, oxen were offered to *Freyr* and it is "likely the English also honoured the fertility god in this way" (Owen 1981: 45). The horns of bulls served as symbols of power and were imitated in ceremonial helmets from the Bronze Age onwards (Davidson 1969b: 25). At Harrow in Sussex, another *hearh* or hilltop sanctuary, the presence of over a thousand oxen skulls argues for some sort of ritual activity (Hutton 1991: 270-2). In Kent, the Augustinian mission found evidence of similar sacrifice, reporting to the Pope that the people there "built shelters of branches around their temples and sacrificed oxen" (Hutton 1991: 272). Animal horn and skeletal material, especially the skulls and long bones, are important to Anglo-Saxon belief; they do

not disintegrate and it is in these substances that the strength of the animal spirit resides and from which it may be reborn. The special powers of the animal spirit may be accessed by the use or wearing of these materials (Figure 4) (Glosecki 1989: 26-7).

Little is known concerning Anglo-Saxon religious officials. Evidence from other Anglo-Saxon sources suggests that the "kings were the focal point of tribal life" and that it was the ruler, not a "priest", who was responsible not only for success in war but also for good harvests (Chaney 1970; Hutton 1991: 271; Owen 1981: 51). Continental evidence suggests there were both male and female practitioners, while the *Sagas* show that healing and divination rituals were conducted primarily by women (Glosecki 1989: 96-105; Owen 1981: 50). *Bede* records the presence of "priests", particularly a high priest, *Coifi*, amongst the Northumbrians (Owen 1981: 50) and in the *Life of St. Wilfrid* a pagan "priest" curses Christian missionaries from a high vantage point (Owen 1981: 50). It is possible that the word "priest" was used by later Christian writers, familiar with such an office, to describe religious practitioners of an earlier period rather than members of an organized priesthood. The "priests" referred to by *Bede* were not part of an ordered hierarchy of religious professionals; the pre-Christian cults of northern Europe had no "corpus", no "liturgy", no "scripture", no established theology and no political center at all like those of Christianity. Ritual and belief varied widely from farmstead to farmstead, village to village, kingdom to kingdom; there was no organized center to those sects, rites and customs that are labelled pagan (Glosecki 1998; Jolly 1996: 28).

There is no clear archaeological evidence for the presence of the shamanism in Germanic society, although there are many intimations. The presence of a spiritual leader is suggested at *Yeavering* where the body of an individual buried with a goat skull and a wooden staff with the possible effigy of a goat on one end has been interpreted as that of a

"priest" of the old faith (Wilson 1992: 175-6). At Dover, the burial of a woman with an unusual *Woden*-headed pin has been seen as that of a cult leader (Figure 5) (Evison 1987: 84-5). In addition to these, a great number of Germanic women's burials contain bags holding collections of objects which appear to have been amuletic or magical. There is a certain conformity to the nature of the objects found in these bags, pieces of glass, bone and horn, objects which were over 100 years old when buried, that has led to their interpretation as the medicine bags of the community healer or *cunniende wifman*, the "cunning" or "knowing" woman (Meaney 1981: 250-260). At Bidford-on-Avon, the burial of one of these "cunning women" contained an unusual apron or bib covered with miniature buckets, a possible link to ritual feasting of some kind (Dickinson 1993). The women of the Oseberg ship burial have been seen as healers, diviners and practitioners of the cult of *Freyja* based on the symbolic content of their burial artifacts (Davidson 1969b: 92; Glosecki 1989: 70). Given the monumental nature of their graves and the composition of their grave goods, it is believed that the women who were buried with *Woden*-linked bracteates and relief brooches were "probably the wives of tribal kings" and "priestesses" of *Woden*'s cult (Magnus 1997: 195, 202). These latter are discussed further in following chapters. Finally, from the heroic poetry, the accounts of *Tacitus* and the journal of *Ibn Fadlan*, we learn that funeral songs or poems were sung by particular women to mourn publicly the passing of a warrior (Pollington 1996: 213).

Germanic art forms frequently adapted and took on new meanings, which were just as often additions to an existing system as they were replacements for it⁴ (Jolly 1996: 9-11). It is often difficult today to discern the one from the other, given the sometimes ambiguous nature of Anglo-Saxon symbolism and the limited archeological, textual, and material culture evidence available. Furthermore, the Anglo-Saxons sometimes deliberately chose burial rites and customs "that seem

deliberately to select the opposite of all the most distinctive features of Christian burial" (Hines 1997: 382; also Carver 1992: 353-365; 1998: 92, 106): for instance, the group of richly furnished seventh century barrow burials at Coombe, Kent, with their cremated bodies and unburnt grave goods, and the elaborate ship burial of the same period at Sutton Hoo, Suffolk. These distinctively furnished barrow graves appearing in the Christian period have been interpreted as a self-consciously pagan reaction to the growing power of Christianity (Carver 1992: 365; 1998: 106; Hines 1997: 382; Hutton 1991: 279). Since all forms of material culture, burial objects and artworks, can serve to manifest both identity and allegiance as well as religion, the task of interpreting the Anglo-Saxon belief system is neither simple nor clear cut.

The Anglo-Saxon deities were very similar to those of other Germanic and Scandinavian tribes (Table 1) (Hutton 1991: 264; Owen 1981: 7). An extensive collection of tales of these gods survives, especially in the thirteenth century Icelandic *Prose Edda* (Owen 1981: 8). But virtually all of these tales were recorded after the coming of Christianity and so should be used cautiously in attempts to reconstruct pre-Christian beliefs (Hutton 1991: 264; Owen 1981: 8). Christian writers in Britain were more anxious to suppress than to record pagan rites, yet literary motifs rooted in paganism did sometimes survive in Christian poetry (Owen 1981: 8).

Germanic beliefs and rituals were also recorded by observers from outside the Germanic world as well. In the last decade of the first century AD, the Roman *Tacitus* described the ways of the Germanic peoples along the Rhineland. The later writings of the Arab traveller, *Ibn Fadlan*, provide a unique account of a tenth-century Viking funeral (Owen 1981: 8). These accounts can be used to supplement our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon ritual and belief, although we cannot suppose that the Germanic world had a uniform heathen "faith" (Davidson 1993: 35; Owen

1981: 8; Wilson 1992: 3 and 180), nor that their belief system remained constant over the course of the centuries.

With such caveats in place, however, a study of royal genealogy and place name evidence suggests that the cult of the creator god, *Woden*, was the most popular in Anglo-Saxon England from the mid-fifth century to the early part of the seventh century (Davidson 1969a: 225-226; Owen 1981: 8-9). First in a family of gods known as the *Æsir*, *Woden* is commemorated by place names in Kent, Essex, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Staffordshire, Somerset, Bedfordshire and Derbyshire. The fourth day of the English week, *Wodens dæg*, is named after him. *Woden* was the god of warriors and kings; six of the eight Anglo-Saxon royal houses legitimized their rule by claiming descent from him. Though the rulers of Wessex and Kent did not originally claim him for an ancestor, they eventually came to do so when patterning their genealogies after that of Northumbria, the politically dominant kingdom of the time (Chaney 1970: 29; Hutton 1991: 268; Owen 1981: 30). A tenth century Old English homily shows *Woden* to be dominant among the Anglo-Saxon gods (Jolly 1996: 197) while various of his characteristics make him roughly the equivalent of the German *Wotan* and the Norse *Odin*, marking his affinity with the same divine stereotype from which the Celtic *Lugh*, *Lud*, *Lug* and *Lleu* and Roman *Mercury* were derived (Hutton 1991: 265, 269).

The survival of a "shamanistic element" in the character of *Woden* "can hardly be doubted"⁵ (Davidson 1969: 148). *Woden* was a transformer who could cross all barriers between life and death, between male and female, between human and animal (Chaney 1970: 34; Davidson 1969b: 56; 1978: 107; Magnus 1997: 196; Owen 1981: 8). *Woden's* shamanic nature may be seen in his ability to work himself into a state of ecstasy and in his propensity for shape-shifting, astral flight and prophecy (Davidson 1969: 141-8; Pollington 1996: 52), abilities attributed to his consort, *Frigg* (OE *Frigg*, ON *Freyja*, OHG *Friga*), as well. *Woden* is often portrayed with a curling breath coming from his mouth and it is he, the "All Father" who

was believed to have breathed life into the first man and woman, *Ask* and *Embla*, Ash and Elm, who were created from trees on the shore (Davidson 1969b: 114; 1978: 107; Magnus 1997: 198; Glosecki 1989: 93). *Woden* was the patron of poets and seers as well as ecstatic warriors; mental inspiration, or exhilarated ecstasy, was his gift to them all (Davidson 1969b: 38-40, 45-56, 90; 1989: 15; 1993: 10, 99-100; Enright 1996: 17; 1998: 328-334; Owen 1981: 22-3; Pollington 1996: 52-5). *Woden* possessed the knowledge of the runes, the sacred objects he had discovered while hanging as a self-sacrifice upon the World Tree (Figure 6) (Davidson 1969b: 110-2; 1969: 141-8; Glosecki 1989: 70; Magnus 1997: 198; Pollington 1996: 52, 72). The sacred ash, *Yggdrasil*, is the source of unborn souls, and the Germanic peoples believed that the gods, as well as mankind, possessed two souls. The first soul was bound to the body but the second or free soul could leave the body as breath, during sleep, fever, hallucination or trance, to venture out in search of new knowledge or to fight against evil and disease in the spirit realms (Magnus 1997: 198). On a gold bracteate from Norway, *Woden* is shown in such a state with his head thrown back and a curling breath indicating his free soul slipping out of his mouth (Figure 7) (Magnus 1997: 198).

Woden's symbols include his spear, one of the great treasures of the gods. Called *Gungnir*, this was the weapon by which he provoked war and through which he allotted victory (Hawkes, et al 1965: 25). The dragon, the eagle, an eight-legged horse named *Sleipnir*, a pair of ravens, *Huginn* and *Munnin* and a pair of wolves, were *Woden's* known animal-spirit helpers (Davidson 1978: 102-4; Owen 1981: 15). The wolf and ravens were Beasts of Battle who warned of coming conflict and who fed on the dead of slaughter afterwards (Davidson 1978: 101-2; Owen 1981: 15). The ravens, Thought and Memory, were the prophets of the old religion; they flew out each day and returned to whisper their news into *Woden's* ears (Davidson 1978: 102) and they have been seen to represent the mind of *Woden* "as seer or shaman" (Speake 1980: 82). The horse

Sleipnir was a creature of ascent, the rhythmic pounding of his hooves made him the perfect vehicle for shamanic ecstatic travel (Chaney 1970: 134; Davidson 1969b: 45; 1978: 102-5; Glosecki 1989: 10, 70).

Differing traditions hold that *Woden* owns all those of higher rank who fall in battle or, alternately, half of those who fall in battle with the remainder falling to either *Thunor* or *Freyja* (Chaney 1970: 34-5; Davidson 1969b: 89). *Woden's* cult was made up of a warrior elite and entry into his hall upon death was reserved for kings and heroes and dedicated warriors. Representations of figures who are believed to be members of his cult are found on stone markers across Scandinavia (Figure 8) (Davidson 1978: 101, 110). It follows that members of his cult may be responsible for certain Anglo-Saxon burial rites, such as the practice of burying a spear, the symbol of a warrior's death, with the deceased (Davidson 1972: 4, 70; 1969b: 33-6; Owen 1981: 13). The cult of *Woden* may also be detected in the Germanic figural art which shows men wearing horned helmets, dancing and carrying spears. These "dancing and acrobatic figures emphasize...some type of shamanic ritual and belief" (Arnold 1997: 153) and confirm the "skilful dance in which naked youths dodged spears and swords" mentioned as "a traditional Germanic sport" by *Tacitus* (Figure 9) (Owen 1981: 14; *Germania* 24; also Glosecki 1989: 70). Certain of *Woden's* warriors, the *berserks*, were said to fight bare-skinned or wearing only cloaks of animal skin, like wild beasts, in a state of ecstasy which made them impervious to pain and fear (Figure 10) (Davidson 1969b: 38-40; 1989: 12; Owen 1981: 14). The legends surrounding *Woden* suggest that liquor, with its divine associations, may have been used to bring on this mantic trance although a more common means to dissociation is the use of monotonous sound to induce ecstasy hypnotically. Rhythmic chanting, drumming and dancing are often a common adjunct to ecstasy, while the skin of animals is commonly used as an agent of transformation for shamanistic shape-shifting (Glosecki 1989: 69).

In shamanic cultures, the possession of helper spirits is not limited to *shaman* alone. As among North American aboriginals, such magical or religious experience extends to warriors too, who have guardians in their armour and in wild beasts (Child and Child 1992: 32, 55-61, 64, 94; Glosecki 1989: 10, 14, 69). The warrior "believes himself so closely related to his animal companion that the two identities - human and animal - merge"; for the Germanic warrior "shapeshifting was dangerous and real", and not at all "symbolic" for someone in the midst of a culture suffused with animistic powers (Glosecki 1989: 188). The animal names and animal regalia attributed to the *berserkr* warriors equal *anagnorisis*, a non-Aristotolean form of "recognition", that defined the warrior with the beast whose shape he assumed (Glosecki 1989: 4). For instance, in later Scandinavian folklore, men who changed into wolves at night were said to put on a belt of wolf skin before leaving the house; the skin evidently represented the skin of the skin of the beast as a whole and alluded to the coming change in shape from human to wolf (Davidson 1989: 12). There is also a close connection between *berserks* and wolves and heroic warriors and bears, seen in names such as *Ulf* or *Bjorn* or *Bjarki*. A band of enemy warriors is often seen as a pack of wolves or berserking "Wolfcoats", while a hero or leader often bears a name associated with the Brown One (Davidson 1989: 13-4). Various figures on Germanic and Scandinavian helmet-plates, buckles and scabbards appear to be men wearing animal skins or animal heads, some resembling bears, others wolves (Davidson 1989: 13), while the Benty Grange and Pioneer helmets both carry the full figure of a boar on their crests. These animal names or regalia were key images which signalled someone superhuman. As such, they may be considered important shamanic emblems, concrete expressions of the warrior's abstract spirit-strength, his *mægen*⁶ or *mana* (Glosecki 1989: 147; Child and Child 1992: 32, 55-64, 94).

The whirling sun disc was "a fitting symbol for that intoxication and ecstasy which formed [an] essential characteristic" of Woden's cult

(Figure 11) (Davidson 1969b: 56). The human and animal shapes and faces on Anglo-Saxon jewellery and weaponry, which appear to metamorphosize into one another, were "intended to have a mythical or religious symbolism" (Arnold 1997: 153). The human masks portrayed on coins, gold bracteates and brooches are likely representations of *Woden* as "the masked god" (Figure 12) (Chaney 1970: 38); the visual riddles of Anglo-Saxon art, the interlocking animal and human forms most likely allude to *Woden's* shapeshifting or theriomorphic ability (Figure 13) (Arnold 1997: 153) or, at the least, to the Germanic belief in the "mythical transfer of men into animals" (Leigh 1990: 122). The emphasis on birds and movement in the art suggests the metempsychotic flight of the soul, a belief widespread in cultures, from Scandinavia to Indonesia, contemporary with the Old English period (Figure 14). The bird/soul association is "something more literal than a trope"; it "reflects a native tradition of ecstatic travel and shamanic transformation to avian form" (Glosecki 1989: 79; also Davidson 1969a: 221; Speake 1980: 83). The treatment of *Woden* and the features of his cult in Anglo-Saxon art link Germanic ecstasy to a wider Indo-European shamanism, placing them in the broader context of shamanic practice at large (Glosecki 1989: 72-9).

Women were not excluded from worshipping *Woden*. In Scandinavian mythology "women sometimes chose to die violently in company with their husband or lover in association with this god's cult" (Owen 1981: 15) and they are often found buried with miniature spears, or with brooches or bracteates bearing his profile or the shapes of his animal companions, tokens of his protection (Davidson 1969b: 36-7; Owen 1981: 15). There is an "apparent association of shamanizing with women in *Sagalore*" where the *seiðr* or *seance*, conducted predominantly by women, is the clearest reflex of shamanic ecstasy preserved (Glosecki 1989: 100; also Davidson 1988: 161-2). *Woden* knew and used *seiðr* to foresee the future, to cause death and misfortune, but the *seiðr* was a practice *Woden* had learned from his consort *Friga*, and it was generally considered unsuitable for a man since

it was the property of the goddess and presumably of her women followers (Glosecki 1989: 96-102).

Also of the *Æsir*, the next most popular deity appears to have been Woden's son, *Thunor*. Although there are fewer places named after him, they can be found in a number of counties including Kent (Hutton 1991: 265). God of the sky and thunder, *Thunor* has associations with the Roman *Jupiter*, the Scandinavian *Thor*, the Germanic *Donner* and the Celtic *Taranis* ("the thunderer"). The swastika or "hammer" and a zigzag design were *Thunor*'s symbols (Figure 15); they denote his creations, the bolts of thunder and lightning (Hutton 1991: 266; Owen 1981: 25) which are often seen to bring power from heaven down to humans (Glosecki 1989: 31). Among many cultures, light presages strength and knowledge and is sometimes objectified in talismans, tokens or symbols (Glosecki 1989: 30). The swastika is a variant of the whirling disc of Woden and as a moving wheel it betokens both fire and the sun (Davidson 1969b: 57). It is commonly found, both in Anglo-Saxon England and on the Continent, on cremation urns but also on weaponry and jewellery. The miniature hammers found in women's burials are believed to betoken *Thunor*'s general protective role; it is said that his hammer, *Mjollnir*, protected both humanity and the gods against giants and monsters. *Thunor*'s shamanic nature is revealed in *Mjollnir*'s ability to call the sleeping dead to renewed life. At weddings, this amuletic hammer was used to hallow the bride and to ensure fertility (Davidson 1969b: 57-72; Hutton 1991: 267; Owen 1981: 25). *Thunor*'s own marriage to *Sif* of the Golden Hair appears to be a folk memory of the ancient symbol of the divine marriage between a god of the sky and an earth goddess, when the rains met the earth and brought crops of fertile fields (Davidson 1969b: 72). Sacred oaks are associated with *Thunor* in Scandinavia and it is believed he was probably worshipped in groves or meadows. Pillars and poles are also connected with his cult and those discovered outside what is believed to have been

a temple at Yeavinger were quite likely used in rituals conducted in his honour (Davidson 1969b: 57; 1993: 22; Owen 1981: 23-4).

Balder or *Baldr*, was the second son of *Woden* and *Frigg* (or *Friga*). *Baldr* was killed by a dart of mistletoe, through the treachery of the trickster god, *Loki*. It is not clear whether this story was known to the Anglo-Saxons of the fifth to sixth centuries although it was known to the Viking settlers of the ninth century who included *Baldr* in their pantheon (Owen 1981: 25). It has been suggested that there are episodes reminiscent of the *Baldr* story in the Old English poems *Beowulf*, in the incident where one brother accidentally shoots another, and *The Dream of the Rood*, when the cross is also wounded with darts (Davidson 1969: 189; Owen 1981: 19-20; 27-8). In Scandinavian tradition, *Baldr* was the brightest, fairest and most beloved of the gods; his name, meaning "bright one", has a parallel in the OE *bealder* which means "warrior, lord, master" (Pollington 1996: 67). This connection between "brightness" and the person of the warrior or warleader are discussed in greater detail in Chapter IV.

Tiw, a god of the sky as well as of the battlefield, is believed to be one and the same as *Seaxnet* or *Saxnot*, the god from whom the East Saxon kings traced their descent (Hutton 1991: 268; Owen 1981: 30). Related to the Roman *Jupiter* and *Mars* as well as the Greek *Zeus*, *Tiw*, a god of greater antiquity than *Woden* or his sons, was known in Norse legend as the valiant god *Tyr* who gave law and order to mankind (Davidson 1969b: 52). Eventually *Tyr* seems to have lost his supreme role, yet his cult is confirmed in England by the Anglo-Saxon use of *Tiwas dæg* as well as by the presence of various place names which honour him, including Tysoe in Warwickshire where a horse figure is cut into the hillside (Owen 1981: 28). Horses were sacred animals in northern religion. *Tacitus* tells of white horses "believed to be confidants of the gods" kept in groves and "used for predictions" (Owen 1981: 28). Horse motifs and interlacing horse designs were used frequently by the Anglo-Saxons to

decorate weaponry, purses, buckles, belt fittings, brooches and other jewellery (Figure 16) (Owen 1981: 28; Hawkes 1961).

The T-rune, symbol of glory or victory, was named for the god *Tiw* (Table 1). This rune was traditionally carved on weapons to ensure success in battle; it is also the most commonly found rune on cremation urns (Owen 1981: 28-9). A thirteenth-century Icelandic poem provides an account of a *Valkyrie* instructing the hero to carve the name of the god *Tyr* twice, to place such victory runes on the hilt of his sword and the ridge of his blade. The glory rune has been found on a sword pommel recovered from Faversham and on a spear point found at Holborough, both in Kent, confirming that such marking took place (Figure 17).

The second family of gods known to the Anglo-Saxons, the *Vanir*, were always a pairing of male and female, and this is true of *Frey* and his twin sister *Freyja* (Davidson 1969b: 74-88). *Frey* or *Freyr*, meaning "lord", was the god of fertility and plenty. He is believed to have performed a comforting role (Hutton 1991: 268) and may have been connected with another fertility god, *Ing*. There is no place name evidence in England for cults of *Frey* although "certain rituals associated with the fertility god in Scandinavian mythology are demonstrated by English archaeological finds" (Owen 1981: 30-1); the horse sacrifices, of such great importance during the Migration Period, may have been linked to his worship (Davidson 1969b: 85, 92).

Both *Frey* and his sister were identified with the boar, a sign of fertility, protection and royalty (Chaney 1970: 124). It was said that boar meat was served at the feast hall of *Valhalla*, where *Woden* entertained the *einherjar*, his special champions, the warriors who were to lead his followers at the final world-ending battle of *Ragnarok* (Chaney 1970: 124; Davidson 1969b: 28). The decorative boar figures mentioned in *Beowulf* (303-4), the gilded boars' heads appearing on the cheekpieces of the Sutton Hoo helmet and the boar figures appearing on the crests of the Benty Grange and Pioneer helmets may all be seen as a

direct references to *Frey's* boar, *Gullin bursti*, the "Golden-bristled" (Owen 1981: 31). The boar's association with fertility is an ancient one; the Germanic *Aestii* who cultivated their crops and worshipped the Mother of the Gods wore boar masks instead of armour in her honour (Owen 1981: 31).

While no Anglo-Saxon place names can definitely be linked with the goddess *Freyja*, whose name means "Lady", there are possible derivations in Hampshire and Yorkshire (Chaney 1970: 26; Owen 1981: 22). The worship of *Freyr* in Sweden was probably a later development, replacing the original cult of *Freyja*; under the worship of *Freyja*, it was the Swedish queens, and not the kings, who were regarded as the representatives of the deity (Chaney 1970: 26). The deities of the *Vanir* were worshipped under a multiplicity of names and represented by many symbols (Davidson 1969b: 89). This is particularly true of *Freyja* who, in the Scandinavian sources is commonly associated with "the Great Goddess" (Davidson 1969a: 225). *Freyja*, *Friga* and *Frigg* are generally considered to be aspects of the same deity (Davidson 1969b: 90; 1993: 108; Owen 1981: 23); all three were concerned with sexual love and fertility; all three were called upon by women in labour; and all three may have been identified with the Mother Goddesses mentioned by *Bede* (Davidson 1969b: 90; Owen 1981: 23). Like *Woden*, the *Freyja-Friga-Frigg* figure is also a shapeshifter, able to take on "bird form" or "feather form" and go out in search of knowledge and power in the shape of a hawk (Davidson 1969b: 90-2; Speake 1980: 84; Enright 1996: 279-280; Owen 1981: 22); both *Friga* and *Freyja* were addressed as "mistress of the hawks" (Davidson 1993: 108-9) and it is possible that *Frigg* and *Friga* are incarnations of *Freyja* in much the same way that *Woden* is another form of the Scandinavian *Odin* and the Germanic *Wotan*.

The role of the bird in Germanic thought is paralleled in Celtic myth and belief where birds are believed capable of prophecy and it appears that *Woden* and *Friga*⁷ should be seen within a wider European

tradition where birds represent the mind of the deity as seer or *shaman* (Davidson 1993: 109; Speake 1980: 82-3). The bird-form brooches found in a number of Anglo-Saxon women's burials possibly mark these women as followers of *Friga*. It was *Friga* who originated the shamanic divination ceremony, the *seiðr*, which was led by a seeress or *völva* and *Woden* himself learned this art from her (Davidson 1969b: 92).

As *Woden*'s consort, *Friga*, figures in many of the stories connected with him. She appears in the myths as the weeping mother, shedding tears of gold, lamenting first the fall of her son *Baldr* and later the defeat of *Woden* (Davidson 1969b: 89; 1993: 108; Hutton 1991: 267; Owen 1981: 23). There is some indication that besides receiving the fallen heroes of battle - the dead she shares with *Woden* - *Friga* may have welcomed women into the Otherworld as well (Davidson 1993: 109). *Friga* is often described as wearing a necklace or amulet called *Brisingamen*, an ancient symbol of the Earth Goddess figures, and it seems she may have been one of the Mother Goddesses mentioned by *Bede* in *De Temporum Ratione* (Davidson 1969b: 89; Owen 1981: 23).

Though we do not have specific names for fertility goddesses from Anglo-Saxon England, "it is clear that like their Continental neighbours...the Anglo-Saxons acknowledged an Earth Mother whose favour was essential"⁶ (Owen 1981: 33; also Davidson 1993: 107-8; Jolly 1996: 28). The Anglo-Saxon goddesses *Erce*, *Eostre* and *Hreda* are known to us through *Bede* (*De Temporum Ratione*) (Hutton 1991: 268; Jones 1943: 211-2). *Hreda* and *Eostre* were equated with the spring months of March and April. *Hreda* may relate to the OE *hreða*, meaning "glory" or "fame". *Eostre*, whose name means "east" or "dawn" was the goddess of the spring festival and most certainly gave her name to Easter (Owen 1981: 37). Owen (1981: 33) claims an "Earth Mother" may have been worshipped with rituals similar to those described by *Tacitus* for *Nerthus*, the ancient Teutonic Mother Goddess of the Continent. In a charm for an unfruitful land from an eleventh-century manuscript, animate nature is addressed through "a

series of ritual actions...punctuated by metrical chants which both acknowledge the Christian God and make a timeless plea to the earth as fruitful Mother" (Owen 1981: 34).

In *De Temporum Ratione*, Bede tells us that in heathen times the year began on December 25. This night was called *Modranect* or Mothers' Night and it was part of a midwinter feast which featured boar sacrifice. The *Modranect* celebrations acknowledged a Mother Earth cult and ensured fertility in the coming year. The accompanying festival, *Giuli* or Yule, was absorbed into the celebration of Christmas (Chaney 1970: 125; Owen 1981: 37). Mother goddesses are known from Celtic and Scandinavian sources as well. The three hooded figures shown on a side panel of the Franks Casket (a seventh-century Northumbrian box of whalebone carved with depictions from Christian, Roman and Northern myth) may be depictions of Bede's Three Mother Goddesses (Figure 18). Alternately, the three female supernaturals from Northern mythology, the *Norns* or Fates, may be represented by these three hooded figures (Owen 1981: 37).

One of the final personalities of note is neither a god nor an ancestor, yet he achieved lasting fame and his legend is depicted on the front of the Franks Casket where the dismemberment scene alludes to the shamanic nature of his abilities (Figure 19) (Glosecki 1989: 147-9; Owen 1981: 38-9). *Weland the Smith's* full story comes to us from the Old Norse and is mentioned in the first stanzas of the Old English poem *Deor*. A smith of outstanding ability, he was captured and hamstrung by his enemy, King *Niðhad* and set to work for the king. *Weland* eventually revenged himself by killing the king's sons and raping the king's daughter. His name was used by Old English poets to indicate armour or weaponry of the highest quality. In his translation of *Boethius*, King Alfred translates *Fabricus* as *Weland* and refers to him as the illustrious and wise goldsmith (Owen 1981: 38-9), alluding to the Germanic smith's power and arcane knowledge (Pollington 1996: 109). *Weland* has very close associations with the shamanic cult of *Woden*. A closeness between the

skills of the smith and those of the *shaman* are perceived in other cultures as well; in the Siberian tradition smiths are believed to have shamanic powers and the two are said to come "from the same nest" (Glosecki 1989: 147). The many similarities in detail to the myths told about *Woden* and *Weland* (Davidson 1969a: 218; 1969b: 50) link them both to the goddess *Friga* and to the *Valkyries* (Davidson 1969a: 211-222) whose powers are also shamanic in nature.

The last of the supernaturals known to the Anglo-Saxons to be discussed here are the *Valkyries* or *Wælcyrge*s⁹. A spell recorded in a later manuscript describes a band of these "night women" riding over the hills, flinging spears to cause disaster to their victims (Davidson 1969b: 42). Originally of a fierce nature, these female spirits delighted in blood and carnage and were once thought to devour human corpses on the battlefield (Davidson 1969b: 41). As attendants of *Woden*, the *Valkyries* were known as "Choosers of the Slain", like the ravens and the wolf with which they were at times metaphorically equated (Davidson 1969a: 221). *Valkyries* can be seen in scenes of conflict on some of the Gotland stones and on the Sutton Hoo helmet (Figure 20, the small figure is believed to be that of a *Valkyrie* guiding the warrior's spear) (Davidson 1969b: 41). In later traditions, these psychopomps became more dignified, though they retained their shining eyes. They were conceived as dignified princesses, riding through the air on horseback, the shamanic creatures of ascent, escorting those who died in battle to the hall at *Valhalla* where the warriors were welcomed with horns of mead, the divine drink of inspiration which *Woden* won back from the giants for humanity (Damico 1990: 181; Davidson 1969b: 41; 1993: 72). This welcome given to the dead warrior as he enters *Valhalla* is represented in another favourite scene on the Gotland stones, that of a warrior on horseback being received by a woman holding a mead horn (Davidson 1969b: 45). This scene is similar to the welcoming ritual performed by the lady of the

hall in Anglo-Saxon society and it is discussed further below and in Chapter IV.

At least on the Continent, *Valkyries* acted as guardian spirits to the royal families, appearing and guiding successive generations. They were often regarded as the wives or consorts of the early kings, and as the "spirit-wives" of the *shamans* of Northeastern Europe (Davidson 1988: 96). *Friga* is believed to have played a similar role; however, she is linked to the *Valkyries* in other more sinister ways through the darker side of her cult (Davidson 1969b: 89, 92; 1993: 108-10). The animal-headed figure on the Franks Casket wearing a *fjathr-hamr*, a feathered cape or skin, and seen confronting an eagle-helmeted warrior "suggests a *Valkyrie* in her terrible aspect" meeting one of the followers of *Woden* (Figure 21, far left) (Davidson 1969a: 219; 1969b: 42).

As can be seen from the preceding, the weapons of the gods as well as their animal companions have names. The "talismanic weapons of Germanic literature all seem to have inherent powers, something like souls, and bloodthirsty ones at that" (Glosecki 1989: 64; also Brady 1979: 104; Pollington 1996: 96). The words used to describe the boar image on the helmet, the mail coat and various of the swords in the Old English poem *Beowulf* "imply that [each] is a living thing, with the immediate animistic power omnipresent in shamanic art, where representational figures are effective" as well as aesthetic (Glosecki 1989: 55, original emphasis). The animal figures on Anglo-Saxon weaponry were "viewed as a power source capable of independent action" (Glosecki 1989: 57). They were "animistically potent" guarding not only the corporeal body but the ethereal soul (or "breath") from powerful enemies of the spirit realm (Glosecki 1989: 57). As markers of royalty, boar helmets used "symbols drawn from the ancestral mythos to protect the *heafodmæg*, 'head-kinsman', and also to mark him out as the man most suffused with *mana*" or spirit-power (Glosecki 1989: 57). In Scandinavia, large caches of broken or destroyed weapons have been found in the bogs.

Possibly thank-offerings, the burial of these "dead" weapons is more likely evidence of a fear of the animistic allies of the vanquished. The weapons burial served to bury the power of the enemy war gear which had been ritually "killed to rid it of the residual spirits of the slain enemies" (Glosecki 1989: 57). Such phenomena are part and parcel of the early Anglo-Saxon animistic belief system; they are also manifestations of the lives of the objects themselves and an indication of the importance of material culture within the Anglo-Saxon lifeworld.

Woden was the primary god of life and death, a creator as well as a destroyer; he was the god of the warrior elite. For these reasons, the cult of *Woden* was strongly linked with the masculine side of Anglo-Saxon society, with the tools and rituals of warfare. His cult was central to the ideology of strife and combat which was paramount to the Germanic warrior aristocracy (Magnus 1997: 202). As discussed further below, while warfare was the main occupation of the Anglo-Saxon warrior aristocracy, textile production fell under the domain of the Anglo-Saxon women. Significantly, there is evidence for a goddess or group of goddesses closely associated with this softer, feminine technology of cloth manufacture. A number of gold bracteates bearing the representation of a female figure identified as "the weaving goddess" have been found in women's burials on the Continent (Enright 1990). This goddess holds a spindle or weaving beam in one hand and is surrounded by further symbols of the weaving process. As in the wider Indo-European tradition, there are very strong connections between weaving and prophecy in Germanic thought (Enright 1990: 67). As noted above, the tradition of ecstatic *seiðr* or shamanic prophecy belonged originally to the goddess known as *Freyja* or *Friga*. Evidence for "one supreme and powerful goddess" points toward this goddess in one of her incarnations (Davidson 1993: 108). As Queen of Heaven and consort to *Woden*, she is a goddess of health and bounty possibly similar in meaning to Earth Mother figures. With her Valkyrie-like function in welcoming women to the afterworld, these

attributes establish the *Freyja-Friga* figure as a foil to *Woden* himself. Given that the process of weaving was often likened to the waging of war (Enright 1990: 66; Owen 1981: 61), the connection of the two primary figures of the Anglo-Saxon belief system with the two main technologies of the time period, weaving and warfare, becomes essential. This connection between the two dominant technologies also lends greater significance to the division the Anglo-Saxons themselves made in their own world. Choosing the principal symbols of these two supernatural beings, the Anglo-Saxons divided their society into the "*spere-healf*" and "*spindle-healf*" (Keller 1906: 150; Fell 1988: 39), commonly referring to themselves as "*wæpman* and *wifman*", warrior and weaver¹⁰ (Fell 1988: 39).

With respect to metaphysical beliefs, religious images, and ceremonies, only a "stoical and slightly oppressive sense of the workings of *Wyrd*" or Fate can be noted (Hutton 1991: 272). This overwhelming "sense of an all-powerful destiny" greater than the gods themselves, runs through early Anglo-Saxon literature, a philosophy which seems to be unique to the Anglo-Saxons (Hutton 1991: 269-70). "[T]here is a famous passage" in *Bede's Historia* "in which the high priest of Northumbria describes the pagan English view of life and death" and likens it to "the experience of a sparrow who flies out of a freezing night into a warm hall full of feasting and merriment, and then out into the night" once more (Hutton 1991: 270). Hutton (1991: 274) cautions that this account may record a genuine belief or it may have originated with Christian missionaries who wished "to demonstrate the superiority of the new faith". To the Anglo-Saxons, the "gods [were] more...than merely names invoked" (Owen 1981: 40). Like their Continental counterparts, they worshipped through ritual, in groves where the presence of their gods was felt (Owen 1981: 40), where the world was alive with spiritual entities and humans were not exiled from their gods (Jolly 1996: 27; Niles 1991: 132).

Animal sacrifice, in particular that of oxen, "played a crucial role" in Anglo-Saxon ceremonials as it did throughout ancient Europe. "The Romans insisted that the Germanic tribes, like the Celts, sacrificed humans as well as animals" (Hutton 1991: 274). "[T]here is fairly clear evidence of this in Anglo-Saxon England" (Hutton 1991: 274). Within the Scandinavian tradition, human sacrifices were offered to *Woden*, his victims stabbed and then hanged (Owen 1981: 15). While there is no solid evidence for such practices in Anglo-Saxon England, *Bede* mentions incidents of self-sacrifice in times of famine when men leapt from cliffs to their deaths in *Woden's* honour (Chaney 1970: 38; *HE* IV. 13). There are also the well known finds from the royal cemetery at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk where burials show evidence of decapitation and possibly of hanging. It is believed that these may be the remains of retainers or slaves sent to accompany their masters; it is also possible that they were sacrificed to honour the gods (Hutton 1991: 274). However, it has also been argued that, as a place of royal burial, such sites were a focal point for the authority of the ancestors and so served as places for the judgment and execution of criminals (Carver 1992: 365; 1998: 143; Chaney 1970: 86-105). At Sewerby and at Dover, there is what some believe to be evidence for live burials: in each case, the body of a woman was apparently "thrown in alive", face down, and then "pinned down" with rocks and buried (Hutton 1991:274; also Evison 1987: 134). Both "the prone position" and the placement of the rocks suggest a desire "to confine the spirit of the dead person, either to ensure that it remained to guard the spot or to prevent it from seeking vengeance upon the burial party" (Hutton 1991: 276; also Davidson 1993: 122; Owen 1981: 73).

Funeral customs have provided the most abundant evidence of beliefs in early Anglo-Saxon England. Such evidence shows an immense range of variation: cremation was preferred amongst the Angles of the north and inhumation among the Saxons to the south but both modes can be found through England, often in close proximity to one another. The customs of

cremation and of passing the coffin or bier through fire may lie with the cult of *Woden*. According to Icelandic tradition, *Odin* established such rites so that the second or free soul might separate from the body to join him (Owen 1981: 20). Although there are examples of cremations for the very early years in Kent, inhumation burials are the norm (Owen 1981: 67) and they are the subject of the following chapter. There is significant evidence that many of the coffins found in the Kentish burials were passed through fire either before or as part of the burial ritual resulting in a charring of the coffin or bier but not of the skeletal material (Owen 1981: 78; also Arnold 1982; Faussett 1773; Jessup 1946). Inhumation burials were fairly standardized with the body supine, fully extended, and fully dressed. It was apparently deemed essential for bodies to be properly dressed and equipped for the next world (Hutton 1991: 275; Owen 1981: 66). The bodies of the fallen were apparently always looked after; *Tacitus* records how Germanic warriors always brought their dead home for burial. As a rule, only the bodies of criminals went unburied; the latter were usually left exposed to the elements on the gallows or hanging tree (Carver 1997; Niles 1991: 133).

Early English burial traditions varied over time and space. Fifth-century graves are flat, but round or oval tumuli appear over some sixth-century burials and become more frequent at sites dating from the early seventh century, when they are also found on the Continent. It is not certain whether any form of wooden markers or memorials were used (Hutton 1991: 277; Owen 1981: 74). In the early stages of the migration, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British round barrows were used by the newcomers (Hutton 1991: 277), possibly to claim some link to the ancestors of the land (Wilson 1992: 67). In the Jutish regions of Kent and the Isle of Wight, there are whole cemeteries of such barrow burials (Owen 1981: 77). Barrows are associated with *Woden*, *Freya* and *Weland* in Northern myth; their size ensuring lasting fame for the dead warrior buried below. There is an emphasis on location of burial in the

Sagas. It was important not only to know where kings were interred but also to recall the burial location of ancestral swords in order that they might be retrieved should some need arise (Davidson 1993: 122; Owen 1981: 75). Although ships feature as transports to the next life in sources such as *Beowulf*, the *Sagas* and *Ibn Fadlan* account, the evidence for such funerary rites in England is confined to two cemeteries in Suffolk, Snape and Sutton Hoo (Hutton 1991: 277); no ship burials have been found in Kent. The question remains as to whether differences in burial practices were due to personal whim, religious belief, social rank (Hutton 1991: 279), political affiliation or allegiance (Carver 1992: 365; 1998: 106; Hines 1997: 380, 391) and it seems that the early Anglo-Saxons maintained a rich variety in their cults as well as in their beliefs.

About a hundred years after the migration had begun, that is, by the middle of the sixth century, the new Anglo-Saxon kingdoms found themselves in the midst of Christianity with native British and Irish Christians to the north and the west and Frankish Christians to the south. During this period, for any "ruler to remain pagan was to cut his or her territory off from the main network of states which contained the greatest centres of power, wealth and culture. It was this fact which turned the new religion into an irresistible force" (Hutton 1991: 248). "The fact that Christianity was professed by the wealthier and more respected realms of Europe must have counted in bringing about the persuasion of the Anglo-Saxons to its ways" (Hutton 1991: 280). The conversion of Anglo-Saxon England which began with the Augustinian mission of 597 ended around the early 680s with the conversion of Sussex and the Isle of Wight (Hines 1997: 378). The conversion process is well documented and there seems to have been very little bitterness between the old and new faiths although the religious question was haphazardly subject to the fortunes of war endemic in seventh century Britain (Hutton 1991: 280). Christianity was adapted to Germanic culture as much as Germanic 'folkways' were converted to Christianity and these two

different, seemingly contradictory, belief systems eventually combined in the Anglo-Saxon consciousness (Jolly 1996: 11-4). The missionary effort was directed at the Anglo-Saxon kings because of their sacred status and political power (Chaney 1970: 18-9; Wilson 1992: 174). When a king converted, his people generally followed. Occasionally the people returned to the old rites under a succeeding king or following some disaster; in East Anglia, King *Raedwald* is noted for worshipping at the altars of both religions (Hutton 1991: 280). "Many features of the conversion period which have been interpreted...as Christian were undoubtedly seen with other - and familiar - overtones by the *Woden*-sprung rulers and their people" (Chaney 1970: 1). By the end of the seventh century, Christianity had securely established itself in Anglo-Saxon England and, possibly through the influence of the Church, the custom of depositing burial objects was abandoned (Hines 1997: 382; Owen 1981: 79). The extent to which the old cults lived on or continued in a new guise is difficult to determine. Religion is, after all, only one component of culture; when the Anglo-Saxons converted to Christianity, "they did not abandon their culture with their religion" (Jolly 1996: 15). Germanic cultural traits continued as Christian and pagan came together; the creative tension which marked "the wider and slower processes of accommodation and assimilation" resulted in the eventual transformation of a culture rather than the obliteration of pre-Christian traditions (Jolly 1996: 15, 29).

Settlement

The main buildings of the Anglo-Saxon settlers were frequently spacious dwellings, constructed entirely of timber. With an average floor area of around fifty square metres, these halls accommodated about a dozen people or so (Figure 22). In later Anglo-Saxon England, buildings with larger floor areas mark the higher status sites and provide evidence for a rising elite. Throughout the period, however,

various age and status groups lived and worked together under one roof although some halls do feature an internal partition and these areas have been interpreted as separate sleeping quarters for women and children. The early laws suggest that the households of kings and freemen held a number of dependants or other persons of lower status. These persons were not necessarily all of a single kin group. In Kent and Wessex, households were not just residences but, to a degree, also legal units with the master of the house responsible for the acts of all persons within his household (Alcock 1989: 287-8; Härke 1997: 129, 138-147).

Archaeological evidence shows that a complete farmstead consisted of the main hall and a few smaller, sunken-floored, ancillary buildings. Settlements were generally comprised of no more than two or three homesteads, and ranged in size from fifteen to thirty-six individuals, though some settlements were larger with about ten farmsteads. Available data suggest hamlets of between twelve and fifty people, but which rarely reached one hundred. These small communities of dependant households formed the basic residential and economic units of the fifth to seventh centuries (Härke 1997: 138-40).

Economy

Information from the eighth century portrays three levels of settlement in England: rural settlements, ports and royal centres. The rural settlements were principally concerned with food production and, increasingly, with supporting the populations of the ports and royal centres (Arnold 1988: 198). They accomplished this by way of mixed farming, supplemented with cottage industries and some trade. The early Anglo-Saxon period was characterized by horticulturalists and pastoralists rather than by intensive farmers. Archaeological evidence shows that animal husbandry, especially the raising of cattle but also the herding of pigs and sheep, and the cultivation of cereal crops played an important role. Nonetheless, it is probable that the large scale

eleventh century utilization of the arable lands of England began with the self-sufficient rural settlements of the fifth to seventh centuries. Unfortunately, however, no systematic analysis of the Anglo-Saxon economy has yet been worked out, partly because so few domestic sites are known and partly because it is questionable whether those sites which are known are truly representative (Alcock 1987: 285-7, 270; Arnold 1988: 198).

Farming settlements supported craftsmen at two levels. At the higher level were the metalworkers and the makers of fine swords, helmets and jewellery. After the seventh century, such craftsmen were likely peripatetic and worked, for the most part, at the royal centres under the patronage of chiefs and princes. At the lower level, craftsmanship included the production of iron tools and implements for farming and other crafts and were carried on within the village itself; however, to date no smithies have been found (Alcock 1989: 270-88; Arnold 1988: 198).

The numerous sunken-floor buildings of the Anglo-Saxon settlement period once believed to be dwellings are now recognized as ancillary buildings (Alcock 1987: 287-8). On occasion, these buildings were used in connection with metalworking but much more frequently, they have been found to contain significant evidence for textile production. Excavations have unearthed highly polished stones used as linen-smoothers, whorls for spinning, bone and iron spindles, clay loom-weights and the post-holes for the upright looms themselves. Sunken-floor buildings were distributed evenly throughout the settlements, with each household having its own weaving site (Alcock 1987: 287-8; Härke 1997: 136). The domestic production of leather goods, vessels, clothes and shoes, is suggested in the archaeological record by the presence of iron awls and heavy needles. Finally, pottery seems to have been a domestic craft as well, although it has been suggested that the more elaborate cinerary urns were made by specialized potters (Alcock 1987: 287-8).

There is very little evidence for internal trade, yet it is sure to have existed at least on a local basis. Redistribution between kin

members probably also accounted for the movement of goods from one area to another (Arnold 1988: 198) although similar artifacts discovered in different cemeteries may just as easily trace the movement of individuals, brides, hostages, craftsmen, as of goods. The presence of jewellery and other such objects implies a trade in metals such as gold, tin, copper, silver, and so forth. It also suggests the presence of communities engaged in extracting and refining the ores, though a trade in scrap metals and the melting down of Roman or other objects cannot be ruled out (Alcock 1987: 288).

External trade, on the other hand, is well attested by the archaeological record and seems to have been carried out over very long distances. Imported pottery from Gaul, millefiori glass from the Mediterranean, Byzantine silver, bronze, ivory, *lapis lazuli* and, above all, garnets, came to the Anglo-Saxons from as far away as Africa and Asia. Much of this wealth may have made its way to England as bribes or loot, or as dowries or diplomatic gifts rather than as commercial trade goods (Alcock 1987: 288). Most literary and archaeological materials argue for a system of barter based on the exchange of hides and bolts of woven cloth rather than the use of hard currency¹¹ (Hoffman 1964: 227-8; Owen 1986: 50; Weiner 1989: 2). Each of the two primary industries of the period, the one dominated by the men and other by the women, provided one of these forms of tender or exchange, perhaps indicating something of the power dynamics of Anglo-Saxon society. Although there is little site data available with which to identify incipient trading settlements, *Bede's* description of seventh-century London as "a market for many peoples coming thither by land and sea" does hint at a well established commercial trade by that time. Some form of coinage was also in use by *Bede's* time since the seventh-century Laws of *Æthelbert* of Kent demand that penalties be paid in shillings or *sceattas* (Alcock 1987: 288).

The royal centres were supported through an elaborate system of tributes, food-rents and obligatory service. In Kent as in the rest of

early Anglo-Saxon society, the royal townships or seats functioned as centres for tribute collection while, in more direct fashion, the king and his court also travelled a regular circuit from one township to the next receiving payments and consuming food-rents (Alcock 1987: 291-2; Brooks 1989: 67; Evans 1997: 123-5). There is considerable archaeological evidence for the presence of a royal vill at Eastry where, given the topographical advantages, "it would be surprising if the royal vill had not attracted the growth of some sort of township... perhaps partly industrial and mercantile in character" (Hawkes 1979: 96). There may have been a centre of jewellery production at Eastry and this major royal residence would have required other specialist services from weapon smiths as well as from ale, clothing and luxury merchants (Hawkes 1979: 96). It is also worth noting that Wodnesbeorge (Woodnesborough), a site with "one of the best claims in Kent" to be a place for the worship of Woden, "is situated only slightly over a mile north of Eastry" (Hawkes 1979: 97). This close positioning of royal vill and religious centre "can hardly be accidental" (Hawkes 1979: 97) and stresses the strong link between Anglo-Saxon kingship and religion. The rulers of Kent, like other Anglo-Saxon kings, also had halls at various centres where disputes could be settled and justice meted out. At Canterbury, the great Roman theatre served for centuries as a place of assembly for the *Cantwara*, the people of Kent (Brooks 1989: 68).

Kinship

A major controlling element of Anglo-Saxon society was duty to the kin group which protected, avenged, and paid compensation on behalf of its own. In the extreme, vengeance could lead to blood feud. However, various laws of the seventh century show the feud being replaced by a system of blood-payments such as the *wergild* and *manbot*. As can be seen from the Laws of King *Æpelbert* of Kent, these payments were pre-set, with compensation going to the king as well as to members of the wronged kin

group. Eventually, such sanctions became more and more the province of the king alone as royal authority gradually took precedence over kinship obligations (Alcock 1987: 292-4; Brooks 1989: 67-8; Evans 1997: 45; Loyn 1974: 199, 202-3).

Nevertheless, kinship ties were still a powerful force within Anglo-Saxon society. A man's status depended on his position in a free kindred; strangers were expected to make themselves known by declaring their kinship. A kinless man could find himself in dire straits unless he had *geferan* or *gegildan*, friends or associates, willing to make *wergild* payments on his behalf should the need arise. Scholars have described the Anglo-Saxon kinship system as bilateral, with a weak patrilineal bias and a tendency to virilocal residence (Arnold 1988: 145; Härke 1997: 137). The relationship between mother's brother and sister's son was a crucial one in Germanic society and there are numerous examples of its influence in both legend (*Beowulf*) and history (*Tacitus*) (Pollington 1996: 65). The importance of this relationship hints at an avuncular structure within Anglo-Saxon society which has not been fully explored. It seems possible that the fosterage system may also have followed an avunculocal trend, rather than the patrilineal one most often surmised; sisters' sons are regularly identified as leaders of a lord's *comitatus*.

"Kinship was also the initial basis of larger political units" and it has been suggested that "regional structures, and eventually kingdoms were created by the rise to dominance of individual lineages" (Härke 1997: 137). While knowledge of kin ties was important with respect to land rights and the transmission of land, there is no evidence for the existence of territorial clans in Anglo-Saxon England (Loyn 1974: 199-207). It seems that "kindreds were not given enough time to develop into full-fledged land-owning institutions" before territorial kingship came to the fore (Loyn 1974: 207; also Härke 1997: 137).

The kindred did, however, remain strong at the social level, retaining control over marriage. The groom was obligated to show that he could maintain his bride properly, that he could pay the remuneration proper for her upbringing, that he could grant an adequate gift in return for her suit, and that he could make adequate provision for her should she outlive him. Only after all of these conditions had been met would the bride's kindred agree to the betrothal (Loyn 1974: 206).

Social Organization

Upon the firm base of cottage industry and mixed farming rested a social pyramid with a warrior king at its apex (Alcock 1987: 289). The Anglo-Saxon institution of kingship had deep ancestral roots. According to Tacitus' account, the Germanic tribes acknowledged kings chosen from a royal stock (the rex or cyning, the kin-leader) and warleaders selected for military skill and valour (the dux) (Chaney 1970: 34). Apparently, during the Migration Period, "these two aspects of leadership coalesced" (Alcock 1987: 289; but also Chaney 1970: 34). However, early Anglo-Saxon kingship was not the simple and absolute institution which it later became. In the first centuries, rulers were not necessarily the heads of any form of centralized government though these leaders had freer access than most to goods, women and valuables. Positions of authority were initially more likely to have been achieved than inherited; despite the evidence for social stratification, "there is some justification for regarding the culture of Migration-Period England...as being fundamentally egalitarian in the sense that positions of power were open to any with the strength to seize and hold them" and they were "not restricted by non-utilitarian qualifications such as birth" (Hines 1989). By demonstrating superior oratorical skills, war prowess and success in ceremonial exchange, warriors could rise to the top, enhancing their own position and also the power of their kinship group. Thereafter, it seems likely that such successes developed into a system of leadership through

inheritance (Arnold 1988: 194). Over time, a system of rule headed by a high king came into being although the term *cyning* was used to describe more than one level of the Anglo-Saxon constitutional hierarchy; above a series of under-kings were the rulers of the individual English kingdoms who frequently shared their rule with a son or other member of the royal stock. At the ultimate peak of this system stood those rare kings upon whom the authors of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* bestowed the title of *Bretwalda*; seven of these "rulers of Britain" are recorded in the *Chronicle*, including *Æpelbert* of Kent (Alcock 1987: 290).

Anglo-Saxon custom held that the king should lead the host, whether it was to attack another kingdom or to defend his own. "The frequency with which the kings of the period met their deaths on the battlefield" confirms this practice (Alcock 1987: 292). The royal family performed other military functions as well. Both the *Chronicle* and the Laws of *Hywel* describe how the son or nephew of the king was required to command the royal bodyguard. This "bodyguard, or personal warband of the king, the *comitatus* attendants in Latin, *heorð-geneatas*, hearth-companions, in English" represented "the layer immediately below the royal stock" (Alcock 1987: 292). Among the Anglo-Saxons, an aristocracy based both on birth and service to the king developed (Alcock 1987: 292).

Below this class of nobility made up of the *eorls* or *thegns*, were the various classes of freemen, the *ceorls*. Apart from the few craftsmen mentioned above and the bards or *scops*, this class of freemen was made up of farmers or soldiery who were free but not noble. The spear burials of this period are often interpreted as the graves of members of this *ceorl* class - men who may have been warriors as well as farmers. This combination, however, is not supported by the surviving literature from the period which differentiates between a *rusticus* and a *miles*, between a farmer and a soldier (Alcock 1987: 293; Härke 1997: 141).

At the lowest level of the social hierarchy were the slaves and the semi-free, the class of *peow* and *læt* (Härke 1997: 141). An integral and

significant part of Anglo-Saxon society, this class included both war captives and those enslaved by a failure to meet legal obligations (Pelteret 1981: 99). Many slaves were native Britons. However, the various immigrant Anglo-Saxon groups "were not averse to preying on each other" (Pelteret 1981: 102), and the slave trade remained an important aspect of the commerce between England and the Continent (Alcock 1987: 294). There was a certain degree of internal differentiation and mobility within the class system. The slave class was divided into at least three sub-classes and the class of freemen into at least two. While a slave could be freed, a freeman could be put into slavery; at the same time, service to the king could increase the *wergild* of any man, free or unfree (Härke 1997: 142).

Warfare

Whether Celtic or Germanic, the peoples of Britain during the fifth to the seventh centuries "shared one cultural trait: the pursuit of warfare as a major activity of society" (Alcock 1987: 285; also Davidson 1993: 8). For these "heroic societies", "martial valour was the principal virtue of the leading social class" - society, economy, and both spiritual and material culture were all directed towards the same martial focus (Alcock 1987: 294). Successful warfare was essential to a stable kingship as well as a stable society (Hooper 1989: 191). In England, campaigning eventually became the province of a warrior elite, as it had been on the Continent prior to the migrations (Halsall 1989: 167; but also Hines 1989). In the fifth and sixth centuries, warfare took the form of feuds between villages. "As the small tribes and villages coalesced into larger states, and as political organization progressed beyond the tribal stage, changes occurred", although "it was probably impossible for kings to eradicate the deeply ingrained concepts which [gave rise to]...violence" (Halsall 1989: 167). For various social and political reasons, the continuous feuding and endemic warfare

remained useful to the early rulers. However, by the seventh century, Anglo-Saxon kings were making efforts to limit warring to that with royal backing. It was probably during this later "period of state formation" that "the right to fight became limited to certain classes of society", although this was still not a hard and fast rule (Halsall 1989: 167). "Royal initiatives could not... entirely remove the deep-seated concepts of war" fundamental to Anglo-Saxon society (Halsall 1989: 167).

The seventh century Laws of *Ine* of Wessex give an idea of force size and organization: a group of up to seven men were considered "thieves"; from seven to thirty-five were identified as a "band"; while a force consisting of more than three dozen armed men was considered an "army". Obviously, this is a minimum figure, although it is unlikely that any of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms could have raised a force of more than a thousand men. Throughout the early period, armies were instituted on a personal basis with the *comitatus* or *heorð-geneatas* of the king or the great lord at their core (Alcock 1987: 300-1).

In his seminal study of warfare in pre-Conquest England, Halsall (1989) has shown that violence was clearly graded (Table 2). At the first or lowest level of violence were the brawls, robberies and wayside killings. If the aggressor in these actions could be identified, the next level of violence, the feud, might ensue. Within a settlement, feuds probably ended fairly quickly with the payment of the *wergild* or blood price. If the guilty party came from outside the community or the king group, however, feuds were likely to be more serious. The feud was a significant part of Anglo-Saxon life and the law codes of the time reveal that various rulers were either unable or unwilling to put a stop to it (Halsall 1989: 159-167).

At the third level, armed violence became warfare. "On the one hand was small-scale, endemic or ritual fighting", which took "the form of raids and counter-raids" (Halsall 1989: 167) to acquire booty, either by loot or tribute. The ravaging of enemy lands and the short, quick

battles were the work of smaller armies made up of aristocrats and their retainers (Halsall 1989: 164; but also Alcock 1987: 305; Hooper 1989: 193). This small-scale warfare occurred "more or less every year, except in times of strictly enforced peace" (Halsall 1989: 167). The large-scale, non-ritual wars, on the other hand, appear to have broken out among neighbouring kingdoms only once every generation or so (Halsall 1989: 159-67). In the sources, the Anglo-Saxons themselves do not differentiate between these two types of warfare through the use of any clearly defined terms and it is unclear whether they formally distinguished the ritual from the non-ritual event (Halsall 1989: 173).

Certain rules of conduct governed the small-scale, endemic warfare with the warbands involved apparently following well-defined routes, marked with names such as *Fyrdstraet* and *Hereford* (roughly translatable as Militia Street and Raiders' Ford - OE *fyrd* denoted a local or friendly force while OE *here* designated an invading enemy). Any forces entering a territory were met by an official who would ask them their business and it is clear from the sources that "these officials did not expect to be killed out of hand" (Halsall 1989: 164). Under the "rules of war", poets or bards were also allowed to live, as were any godsons of the victors who may have been found as fosterlings amongst a defeated force (Halsall 1989: 164).

A chance at a fair fight was also the norm in ritual warfare, as was the option to avoid all-out conflict by paying a bribe or tribute to the invaders. Serious confrontation was further avoided through the exchange of hostages and the swearing of oaths of friendship and it is also likely, as *Felix's Life of Guthlac* records, that some of the booty taken was also returned to the victims for the same reason (Halsall 1989: 165).

The waging of large-scale warfare for conquest followed a different set of rules. In this form of warfare, paying tribute was not considered an option. Large-scale warfare also differed from the endemic variety in

that the final result of an encounter was often the political transfer of land. There is no evidence for permanent fortresses or defense garrisons in the early Anglo-Saxon period; the military activities engaged in were open and mobile. Frequently, battles took place at the frontier of the kingdom being attacked, usually near a river ford or some other well-known landmark such as prehistoric hillforts, barrows, Roman cities, dykes, or other earthworks (Alcock 1987: 305-9; Halsall 1989: 165). Apparently, one of the best ways to bring an enemy to battle was to occupy a well-known site as a challenge and await their arrival. Such a practice was characteristic of the full-scale battles fought during the Anglo-Saxon period and such places (revered as "the work of giants" by the Anglo-Saxons themselves) may have held some religious significance. Given the non-ritual nature of the battles fought at these locations, the deliberate act of going outside the norms of society by selecting these ancient and provocative monuments as a place of battle, may indicate just how serious these conflicts were (Halsall 1989: 166-7).

Both the ritual and non-ritual forms of warfare involved planning, a call to arms and mustering of troops, as well as intelligence regarding the movements of enemy forces (Hooper 1989: 192). Wooden swords, inscribed with runes, such as that found in the *terps* of Frisia, were possibly used as a summons to war (Davidson 1962: 44). Anglo-Saxon warriors rode to war, but it seems, preferred to fight on foot (Keefer 1996: 119-2). Leaders occupied a position near the centre, with their military households around them. The oft-described "shieldwall", a solid and disciplined formation wherein men stood shoulder-to-shoulder, seems to have been a tight defensive position employed in times of necessity; otherwise, engagements were general melees with each warrior requiring sufficient space in which to wield his weapons (Hooper 1989: 199-200).

In general, armies gathered in the spring when there was sufficient grass for the horses. "Small armies in hostile territory could live off the land, so long as it was fertile enough, but there would not be much

chance of this in most of Wales...or even parts of Northumbria" (Hooper 1989: 193). Apart from gathering provisions, such foraging "served to enrich those taking part as they seized valuable objects, captives and livestock" (Hooper 1989: 193). Such material gains of warfare were often "expressed most simply in terms of cattle driven in from border countries" (Alcock 1987: 305). Cattle-raiding, which characterized much of the small-scale, endemic warfare (Evans 1997: 126; Halsall 1989: 164-5), "was an exciting sport for the young men" with analogies to the sports of horse-raiding among the Blackfoot or camel-raiding among the Bedue (Alcock 1987: 305). In such cases, the purpose was to take animals, not lives. If a raiding party were opposed and blood shed, however, more serious conflict could result (Alcock 1987: 305). Raiding caused more than just physical damage to the enemy; the reputation of a king who failed to prevent his enemies' incursions suffered as well (Hooper 1989: 193-4). The importance the Anglo-Saxons themselves attached to this loss of reputation may be seen in the number of human grievances, insults or personal jealousies which are recorded in the historical sources as the reasons behind much of the full-scale warfare; only in a few instances is a conflict over land recorded (Arnold 1988: 167; Halsall 1989: 168). The extermination, expulsion or subjugation of another people in order to occupy their territory was, nevertheless, an obvious reason behind many of the major conflicts of the period (Arnold 1988: 167-9). There is some doubt in the early Anglo-Saxon period, however, as to whether the expulsion of a people affected anyone beyond the defeated king and his warband. For instance, it has so far been impossible to arrive at an assessment of the extent to which the Britons were actually physically removed from the lands which fell to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms (Alcock 1987: 305-6).

When an army fought on its own home ground, living off the land was, of course, inappropriate. In such cases, supplies had to be carried with the army. Provisions and other necessities were brought along in

carts, other supplies were collected on the march and beasts on the hoof provided fresh meat as well. A great deal of the labour required for such a supply train was drawn from the poorer lower classes. This is a very neglected area of study for the entire Anglo-Saxon period, yet there "is no reason to doubt that there were men whose duties required them to go with the army but not to fight in the front line" (Hooper 1989: 194-5). There is certainly evidence for this practice in *Bede's* account of the late seventh century battle of the Trent (*HE* IV 22). It seems that although warfare was the prerogative of the warrior elite, all classes in Anglo-Saxon society experienced armed conflict or its effects at some level.

The reasons given for war may be distinguished from the purposes which warfare actually fulfilled. There is some evidence that the constant warfare of the times eased stresses in the various kingdoms, limiting internecine disputes and civil strife as well as enabling some groups to retain their tribal identity for longer periods of time (Halsall 1989: 168). Though undoubtedly bloody, Anglo-Saxon conflicts may have fulfilled the concept of "war as play" as well. If the shieldwall formation was employed as more than a purely defensive measure, warfare need not have been too dangerous as long as cohesion was maintained. Traditionally, war as play is a way to bring forward new leaders, and warfare in Anglo-Saxon England certainly served this purpose; land and noble status were often the rewards for military service (Halsall 1989: 168). Nevertheless, there were maladaptive aspects to ritual warfare as well. Among the warrior classes, the quickness to quarrel which is characteristic of societies that practise endemic warfare can be seen. Fear of attack was great while boasting of and pride in warlike deeds was common and death in warfare the fate of a significant percentage of the rulers of the period (Halsall 1989: 172).

The economic purposes behind Anglo-Saxon warfare included the acquisition of treasure and its redistribution to followers (Halsall

1989: 168). As noted above, slaves were an important commodity of the period and endemic warfare could provide cattle, horses and other forms of wealth as well (Halsall 1989: 168). Such commodities most likely changed hands often in raid and counter-raid, and so long as a balance was maintained, endemic warfare could be beneficial to the rulers of both territories (Halsall 1989: 169). Nevertheless, though endemic warfare eased tensions within and between kingdoms, it did not remove them and eventually this failure brought about the escalation of small-scale conflict into large-scale warfare, with the seizure of land and often of kingship being the final result.

The Comitatus and the "Joys of the Hall"

The institution of the *comitatus* or warband was a dominant feature of Anglo-Saxon society, from the fifth century to arguably the end of the period. In general, the *comitatus* consisted of that body of men which a lord, king or chieftain, could muster from his own local resources, though a successful warband often attracted warriors from other groups with its promise of wealth, reputation and prestige for its members. The frequency of exile and dislocation of warriors added to the number of young men seeking service with another lord outside their own tribal area (Evans 1997: 33; Pollington 1996: 33). The core of this group of fighting men, however, always came from the royal or noble kinship, and the son or rightful heir of the lord led this force into battle.

The *comitatus* was a formal institution that possessed a definite structure and organization. It made use of the underlying cultural and social apparatus of its time to sustain its existence, yet its members were bound together solely on the strength of personal relationships (Alcock 1987: 302; Evans 1997: 2-52). These *heorð-geneatas*, or hearth-companions, were bound to the death by oaths of loyalty to their lord. They served "in return for arms, food, a share of the booty, and perhaps a permanent grant of land" (Alcock 1987: 302), yet they were not

mercenaries, but instead adventurous young men who offered their military skills to a leader who would reward them well in the feast hall with weapons, gold, mead, and the praise of bards (Alcock 1987: 302).

The mustering of larger military forces was accomplished by using the individual *comitatus* bands as building blocks for the larger scale armies; yet, these warbands retained their own commanders and were assigned particular missions or tasks for the battle. Thus each *comitatus* fought as a separate, integral unit inside the larger force (Evans 1997: 34), each warband beneath its own *gubfana*, war flag, or "standard" (Pollington 1996: 75). Within the *comitatus*, the warriors took up positions accorded to them through age and experience, serving together first as the *geoguð* (young retainers) and later as the *duguð* (the "doughty" or tried warriors). In battle, the younger warriors fought with javelins behind leading men who formed a wedge into the fray while the older seasoned warriors reinforced the warband from behind (Davidson 1989: 16-7). Within the *geoguð* or *duguð*, each warrior knew his place on the bench in hall and was assured a defined position within his society (Evans 1997: 97; Hume 1974: 65).

It is likely that groups of young men began their military training together and may have lived together as bands, training in the ways of war, practising skills of physical strength and endurance and hunting to sharpen their competence with weaponry before becoming part of a *comitatus* unit. We hear of such communities of young fighting men from both Norse and Irish literature. Old English heroic poetry and the various *Saints Lives*, such as those of St. *Cuthbert* and *Guthlac*¹², provide evidence for such communities within Anglo-Saxon England as well (Colgrave 1956 and 1969; Davidson 1989: 19-20).

One such community of fighting men were the *berserks* of Scandinavian tradition who fought with a wild fury, "cutting down all in their path and ignoring danger and the pain of wounds" (Davidson 1989: 12). These men were mentioned earlier in association with the cult of

Woden, and their precise role within the *comitatus* is unclear. They appear in some of the literature as monstrous creatures seizing wealth and women as they chose; in other sources they appear as the force of fierce fighters whom a wise king could trust most in times of battle (Davidson 1989: 12). It is possible that they were special troops, those picked warriors who dedicated their lives to the military that we know of from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (Evans 1997: 42).

Although rank within the warband came through birth, it was retained through service. The lord-retainer relationship was the most important relationship within a band, one that both protected and strengthened the bands' social and cultural integrity. Within this warrior elite, the bonds established between a lord and his men eventually became more important than those of the kinship, even though, especially in the smaller bands, a large proportion of the *comitatus* warriors were kin to the lord. Within larger warbands, while the proportion would have been smaller, the lord's kin still formed the core, his personal bodyguard (Evans 1997: 51); thus, as at Maldon, many in the *comitatus* were doubly bound to their lord through the ties of both blood and personal loyalty (*The Battle of Maldon*¹³).

The lord-retainer relationship was built upon a series of obligations and duties owed by lord and man each to the other. The lord was obligated to take an active part in warfare, for by doing so he provided an avenue through which his warriors could put into action the aristocratic, martial ideals that found frequent expression in the heroic poetry of the period (Evans 1997: 52). Battle experience validated the warrior class's way of life; fighting was a virtue and the best means to acquire honour and glory for the warriors, the band, and the lord (Evans 1997: 52). The shared hardships and dangers of the battlefield provided common experiences which worked to strengthen the bonds of loyalty within the band. Warfare also provided the lord with the material goods and luxury items with which to reward his men in the hall and through the

distribution of such rewards from the *gifstol* or giftseat, the bonds of loyalty between a lord and his retinue were confirmed and reinforced (Evans 1997: 53-4; Owen 1981: 61; Pollington 1996: 37).

Warriors were expected to give full and utter support to their lord, regardless of where he might lead. A warrior's duties and obligations encompassed virtually every facet of life - in battle, in hall, in exile and in the event of the lord's death. It was the aim of every warrior to earn his *weorþ*, prestige and honour, in battle (Pollington 1996: 24). Ideally, warriors were obligated to their lord in the bad times as well as the good and so they were bound to follow him into exile or into the grave. Victory or death were the only honourable ends; it was preferable to die with honour than to live in shame and the contempt of others (Evans 1997: 50-4; Pollington 1996: 33-7).

Yet there were lighter obligations, especially for the young: hunting, hawking, feasting, drinking, songs and all the joys of the hall (Evans 1997: 54-5). The ritual, ceremony and traditions of the hall formed an important part of military life; these hall-joys acted to hold together the individuals who formed the warband, lending "a sense of timeless permanence" to the group (Pollington 1996: 33). The faithful discharge of a warrior's duties, in repayment for these joys, for the gifts and honours bestowed in the hall, was known as "earning one's mead" (Evans 1997: 58) and final payment was often made in life's blood.

The migration period provided an opportunity for many an eager warrior to fight for a lord establishing himself on the island. Aside from social advancement and wealth, the endemic warfare of the period provided a greater chance for lords and warriors alike to "share in the excitement and exhilaration of battle" (Evans 1997: 57). Regardless of their status within the *comitatus*, the personal motives of the individual warriors recorded in the literature of the time reveal that honour, glory and reputation were the reward most sought after, and kings as well as ordinary warriors held much the same ambitions (Alcock 1987: 305-9). The

inclusion of a court poet, bard or *scop* seems to have been integral to the development and structure of the *comitatus* (Evans 1997: 74). Whether these poets remained with one warband or travelled from region to region, telling stories and gathering new ones wherever they went, their primary function was one of promoting the status of the lord and his warriors. Bardic duties involved recitation of eulogistic and narrative poetry and it seems to have been common for a *scop* to accompany the warband on expeditions and raids. Most likely this position was filled by someone with kin ties to the warband, although sharing the hardships and dangers of battle would have served to strengthen the bond between *scop* and *comitatus* and would have afforded him their respect (Evans 1997: 74-81). Woden's gift of inspiration to the *scop* was of the same nature as his gift of exhilarated battle fury to the warrior; the association may be seen as "typical of warband religiosity" (Enright 1998: 335).

Fame and disgrace were the essence of public life and provided natural sanctions to behaviour, so the publicizing of reputations was essential. In the Anglo-Saxon world, the lord's and the retainers' reputations lay in the hands of the *scop*. It would have been unlikely for a *scop* to criticize his own lord and equally foolish for a warrior to earn the enmity of the hall poet (Evans 1997: 74-81). The recitation of heroic poetry reinforced the ideals of the *comitatus* and the "influence of heroic literature, orally composed and recited in hall before a receptive audience, should not be underestimated" (Evans 1997: 83). Such poetry, its creation and its ceremonial declamation "were functions of the communal life and contributed to the consciousness of tribal cohesion and identity" (Evans 1997: 83). This poetry provided a consistent exemplar and model of behaviour for members of the warband, reinforcing values and beliefs while condemning acts detrimental to the whole. As shown by historical examples, such ideals often manifested themselves in life, on the battlefield, in exile and in the hall (Evans 1997: 83-4).

Within Anglo-Saxon society, the hall was not merely a place of

residence but an image which was used as a positive metaphor, representing the best that life had to offer; it was a circle of light, peace and safety enclosed by darkness, discomfort and danger (Hume 1974: 64). The "concept of the hall was a fundamental socio-cultural support that gave strength and vitality to the warband to which it gave shelter" (Evans 1997: 89). The hall's significance in this regard is comparable to the importance of the role played by the *scop* and his poetry. Indeed, the importance given the hall as a metaphor for values of the times may best be seen in the image of the ruined hall which is used "to signify the transience of the social structures which gave men their chance of earthly security and happiness" (Hume 1974: 70). The hall's supporting role was effected through its layout and construction and through the activities that took place there (Evans 1997: 89). Primary amongst these activities was the communal drinking, the sharing of the cup of mead, which created a "fictive kinship" between hall comrades and which "must also be viewed as having some of the aspects of a cultic act" (Enright 1996: 17). The cup ceremony was aimed at creating a bond of loyalty. Liquor was used because it "was the medium through which one achieved ecstasy and thus communion with the supernatural" (Enright 1996: 17); it was, after all, the gift of *Woden*.

The hall was also the physical setting for further hall-joys. Its walls were hung with tapestries and standards, with war trophies, weapons and shields, with reminders of victory and the rewards to be gained in battle displayed in the company of hall fellows; it provided the setting for vows of loyalty and boasts of deeds to come, and a fitting place for the lord's public recognition and praise of a warrior's service. It is no wonder that the poetry of the period celebrated the hall as a physical symbol for the ideals of the entire *comitatus* system. The hall dominated the Anglo-Saxon landscape in a literal sense, standing lofty and wide gabled (Hume 1974: 64), but also in a metaphorical sense appearing in

poetic text as the focus and center of the entire community (Evans 1997: 93; Pollington 1996: 36).¹⁴

The Role of Women

Despite the male bias in the written records, something of the role and status of Anglo-Saxon women can still be discerned. From the earliest laws, we find that a woman's social status was determined by that of her father and did not change with marriage; she retained the standing she had acquired at birth and kept her own *wergild*. The children of the marriage, however, inherited their social status from their father (Loyn 1974: 207). The next most important distinction for a free woman was her marital status, with widows sometimes achieving a degree of independence and self-determination not shared by maidens and married women (Ross 1985: 9). Betrothals required the agreement of the prospective bride and under the laws of *Æthelbert* of Kent, women had the right to leave a displeasing marriage with a share of the communal property. If the wife took the children with her, she was entitled to half the property (Fell 1984: 57-8). A form of elopement was also recognized; if the woman were desirous of ending her marriage in order to live with another, she might allow herself to be abducted by her new suitor. After the abduction, the lover would pay the appropriate *wergild* amount to the former husband, covering the brideprice of a new wife. *Wergild* payments also provided protection against rape and seduction although the consent required for an elopement would have meant little to "abductors of sufficient power, especially in cases where the women were captives of war" (Ross 1985: 12). If no compensation were forthcoming, the woman's husband or her kinship members were entitled to exact physical punishment on the offender (Fell 1984: 67; Ross 1985: 10).

After the conversion, the Church reproached the English for their pagan habits of marrying their own kin or keeping other women in addition to their lawful wife (Fell 1984: 72). The Anglo-Saxons had brought the

system of concubinage with them from the Continent and it was relatively widespread among the upper class, lasting until the Norman Conquest (Ross 1985: 6, 14, 18). Under the early laws of Kent, "there is no indication" that marriage "existed as a social model, with reference to which other liaisons were defined as unlawful" (Ross 1985: 11). Instead, there were several ways of entering into a recognized sexual union with a woman (Ross 1985: 11). Men were allowed a number of sexual partners, one of them being a legal wife to whom he had been formally betrothed, and others being concubines (Ross 1985: 6-14). Alternatively, a man might have a publicly recognized consort but no legal wife. Though the legal status for a concubine was not defined, she did have certain traditionally determined privileges and her children inherited from their father if he so wished it. The position of the concubine in Anglo-Saxon society was not a dishonourable one for in the early years of the Migration Period, she was a member of the household. Her power and status seems to have often been a matter of the dynamics of the relationship between the individual man and woman and was not strictly limited by law or tradition (Ross 1985: 6).

Charters and wills show instances of the equality or independence of women, but for the most part they preserve a picture of male economic dominance, at least with respect to land (Härke 1997: 132). Women are, however, represented in more than a quarter of the surviving wills and it appears, from the types of goods which they bequeathed, that women may have controlled a specific type of wealth. The items included in Anglo-Saxon women's wills were predominantly household furnishings, bedclothes, wall hangings, tapestries and other textile products (Fell 1984: 40-6). Items similar to those which women left to their sons and the women of their households are notably absent from the wills of men in the same period suggesting a women's right to bequeath and inherit certain types of wealth. Furthermore, after the advent of Christianity, records show that higher status women often presented churches and monasteries with

gifts of vestments, altar cloths and wall-hangings. For instance, after the Battle of Maldon, "Byrhtnoð's widow gave a wall-hanging depicting his deeds to Ely in his memory" (Fell 1984: 46). There is no reason to believe that this practice was not the continuation of a well-established tradition for the donation of textile products by the women who produced them.

There was one particular form of real estate which women did have control of, and this was land received as a *morgengifu* or morning gift. In Anglo-Saxon society, the morning gift, a form of brideprice, was paid directly to the new wife and not to her family. If a woman died childless, the land, livestock, jewellery or other items given as *morgengifu* went to her kin, not to her husband; land received as a morning gift was included in the wills of Anglo-Saxon women (Fell 1984: 56-7). A bridewealth system is often a characteristic of a society where women play an important role in food and craft production and it is likely that the *morgengifu* tradition is a reflection of the important role Anglo-Saxon women played in farming and cloth manufacture (Härke 1997: 132). Given the exclusive association of textile tools with the burials of women in this time period, the right to disposition of textile products evidenced in women's wills and the use of bolts of cloth as a form of currency, it can be argued that it was their role as weavers which earned women the substantial bridewealth paid to them and a certain economic power and autonomy in Anglo-Saxon society .

Historical sources provide examples of women who held a degree of economic, political and military power. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* refers to Queen *Seaxburh* of Wessex who ruled after *Cenwealh*'s death in 672, and later to *Æbelflæd*, the Lady of the Mercians and daughter of King Alfred of Wessex, who ruled Mercia after her husband's death from 911-918. *Æpelburh*, the wife of King *Ine* of Wessex, appears to have had some role in military leadership, since she was credited with having destroyed Taunton during the reign of her husband (Fell 1984: 91). There is also a

hint in *Beowulf* that *Hoðgar's* daughter, *Freawaru* would lead her own followers abroad on military exploits (Fell 1984: 91; Härke 1997: 130). *Bede* also makes mention of several royal or noble women who had enough influence to convince their husbands to convert to Christianity, and of others who played important leadership roles in the early Church, mainly as abbesses (*HE* IV.21). These positions would not have been possible had not similar levels of authority been available to women in contemporary secular society (Fell 1984: 13; Härke 1997: 130-1).

Following the Germanic tradition, there is significant evidence that the prophetic powers of Anglo-Saxon matrons were respected and their counsel sought (Enright 1996: 284; Meaney 1989: 12; Owen 1981: 61). We know from *Tacitus* that Germanic seeresses on the Continent were held in high esteem (Samplonius 1995: 72); it was they who cast lots to decide the expediency of warfare (Meaney 1990: 159). Icelandic sources give elaborate descriptions of prophesying women, and the figure of the *völva*, a kind of shamanistic sibyl, is well recorded in the *Sagas* (Samplonius 1995: 72-3; Glosecki 1989: 96-101). In *Eiriks Saga*, the description of the seance conducted by the *spokana* or seeress, *Borbjorg*, is so "remarkable for its minute detail", that it suggests such "shamanic ritual persisted into the Christian era" (Glosecki 1989: 97; also Davidson 1988: 161-2). The *spakona* figure of the *Sagas* carries a staff and a pouch of animal skins that contain the amulets required in the ceremony. She sits on a high platform to perform her rituals, revealing fortunes and predicting the weather (Glosecki 1989: 96-100; Davidson 1988: 161-2). In Anglo-Saxon England, women were the family healers and herbalists (Dickinson 1993: 54; Meaney 1981: 250-60; 1989: 10, 19). From the penitentials, we learn that the Church suspected Anglo-Saxon women of divining and working forms of magic over their weaving (Meaney 1981: 160; 1989: 10, 19). The weaving tools and amulet or healing bags found in certain Anglo-Saxon women's burials provide an archaeological link to such practices. As discussed both above and later in Chapter IV, the

Anglo-Saxon woman's role as *webbe* or weaver was connected to a system of beliefs which linked Germanic women with a goddess of weaving and prophesy. This role may also be detected in the archaeological record in richly furnished Anglo-Saxon women's burials which reveal deposits of weaving implements, particularly the weaving batten, gold bracteates which are connected with the cult of Woden and the gift of prophesy, and crystal balls which have talismanic or amuletic qualities.

Traditional scholarly understanding has not recognized the role of women within the *comitatus* structure (Evans 1997: 96). More recently, studies which have focused more directly on the role of Anglo-Saxon women have shown that women did perform functions which supported and reinforced the ideology of the warrior-oriented society and contributed to the organization, maintenance and cohesion of the warband. As Davidson (1989: 13) has shown, women and girls composed songs for their dances which praised the deeds and accomplishments of the young warrior heroes and encouraged them to perform even greater deeds of bravery. Women were among those who supplied armies on the move and were also present, with their children, on the sidelines of battle as *weccend*¹⁵, exhorting and encouraging the fighters through word and sometimes obscene gesture (Enright 1996: 59; Enright 1998: 306). The Scandinavian sources show that women acted as inciters or *whetters* provoking their men to take action or vengeance against an enemy (Jochens 1996: 162-203). Much of the fighting of the period was individual combat or one small group against another. The taunt "played a practical psychological role" (Enright 1998: 306), provoking a warrior to do his utmost. They may have been "intended to drive him to *berserkr* fury so he might hurl his entire being at honour and victory", at the pursuit of *mæro* or fame (discussed further in Chapter IV) (Enright 1998: 306). The effect of the condemnation or praise of women for the efforts of men in battle is also well known from the time of *Tacitus* who reports that the Germanic warrior's courage was spurred on by the fact that the warrior knew that women were the

witnesses to his bravery (Enright 1996: 58; *Germania* VII). Tacitus' reports of women as "stimulators of courage, witnesses to bravery, demanders and counters [and treaters] of wounds, entreaters and counsellors" is confirmed from other sources (Enright 1996: 59). Comparative materials from contemporary Celtic and Classical Greek culture as well as ethnographical data add weight to this conclusion (Enright 1996: 59; 1998: 305).

It is at the aristocratic level, however, that women can be seen performing on more than a peripheral level. The poem *Beowulf* gives the best example of a noble woman's place within the warband (Enright 1988:171) although this woman's role as cupbearer and adviser is also confirmed in the gnomic verse of the *Maxims II* (Enright 1988: 176; Meaney 1990: 167). In the poem, *Wealhþeow*, the chieftain *Hroðgar*'s wife, presents a vessel of mead or wine to the warriors of the *comitatus* in a ceremonial or ritual context. However, as Enright (1988, 1996) has convincingly argued, the activities performed by the lady of the hall go well beyond the performance of domestic duties. A detailed examination of the textual sources as well as the archaeological evidence has proven to be significant in showing that "contrary to common assumption, the royal consort normally played a significant...role in the establishment of order and hierarchy among the members of the warband" (Enright 1988: 171). Just as other women have served to bind families in alliances, so the lady of the hall acted to achieve cohesion and unity of purpose between the lord and his followers in the royal hall (Enright 1998: 35). Referred to in the sources as the *freoðuwebbe* or *friðusibb folca*¹⁶, literally the "peaceweaver" or "peacebond of the people" (*Beowulf* 1942, 2017), the lady or *webbe* figure served as the delegate of the king, performing a number of important functions. She gave gifts of gold and of textiles to cement the loyalty and enhance the stability of the volatile warband (Enright 1988: 170-6; Owen 1981: 61). The order in which she moved through the hall with the ceremonial cup determined the

hierarchy of the band, the order of service establishing each warrior's place within the *comitatus*, from the king or warband leader downwards (Enright 1988: 170-6; 1996: 2-11). This cup ceremony started and culminated at the *gifstol*, the gift-chair of the warband leader which was "a special, even holy, place which the unworthy dare not approach" (Enright 1996: 5). While many have recognized *Wealhþeow*'s role as a *freoðuwebbe* or peaceweaver (Owen 1981: 61), this term not only denotes "women given in marriage in order to secure peace" but also refers to the role performed by lords' wives when they give gifts, speak *freondlapu wordum* or "words of friendship", witness formal oaths and function as diplomats to construct bonds of allegiance between the lord and the members of his *comitatus* (Enright 1996: 21-2; Pollington 1996: 37). These women also acted as *whetters* or *weccend* on occasion and the words they spoke when presenting the cup of mead to the hero were calculated to elicit his promise or *beot*¹⁷ to perform some feat or deed of bravery in order to win *mærð* or fame (Enright 1996: 40; Pollington 1996: 36).

Given their role as whetters or exhorters, Germanic women had a secure niche as judges of reputation. The continuity of this function partially explains the *webbe*'s speech making rights in the midst of the warband when she speaks words of praise and awaits the warrior's boast of greater deeds to come (Enright 1996: 59). The relationship between women, the service of liquor and initiation into lordship is also essential, as is the long tradition of political intimacy between Germanic warlords and prophetic women (Enright 1996: 60). Germanic women who were revered as *sibyls* wielded some influence. From the end of the La Tène period in the first century AD, such women worked closely with the leaders of Germanic warbands; their positive prophecies influenced the morale of the troops. It seems the warleader controlled access to the *sibyl* as oracle and there is evidence from the Continent that such leaders regularly maintained prophetic women to interpret the supernatural on their behalf. For instance, *Civilis* employed the services

of *Veleda*, *Ganna* those of *Masgos* and *Vitellius* those of a woman of the *Chatti* (Enright 1996: 64). The relationship between the leader and the prophetess was eventually conventionalized through marriage and the prophetess's role became crucial to the maintenance and propagation of the *comitatus* institution (Enright 1996: 64-80). The lord's wife is closely identified with his authority and she helps to affirm that authority in various ways. The lady's or *webbe*'s symbolic status is both ancient and widely recognized. "Many sources as far back as the Migration Period refer to the capture of the queen as a technique for gaining legitimacy", and even then it appears traditional (Enright 1996: 69; also Chaney 1970: 27). Germanic claims to the throne were expressed in cohabitation with the former ruler's wife and the capture of his *thesaurus*, including his tableware which was an important symbol of his ability to feed and care for his people (Enright 1996: 69). In Germanic tradition, the queen is often regarded as the guardian of the royal insignia which have emblematic significance. The marriage of a conqueror to the former ruler's wife, therefore, worked to legitimize the new rule. Though the power of the queen or lady of the hall depended upon that of her husband, women of the Anglo-Saxon nobility, like their Germanic counterparts, served within the warband as binder, "weaver" or *webbe*, and oath carrier; this role was essential to the survival of the *comitatus* which was itself the most important social institution of the Germanic world (Enright 1996: 22-42).

Chapter III

Evidence from the Burials

The Burials

Throughout the early Anglo-Saxon period, burial practises remain remarkably similar despite minor variations from region to region and from cemetery to cemetery within each of the Anglian, Saxon and Jutish areas. The size and organization of the burial ground, the construction and orientation of the individual burials, the position of the body within the grave and the location of objects in relation to the body are all important features for consideration. "Whatever the major factors involved in determining the form of the burial, [the Anglo-Saxons] believed there was an appropriate form of burial for each individual" and "by this means the burial rites reiterated contemporary society" (Arnold 1997: 156).

As noted in Chapter I, some two hundred Anglo-Saxon burial grounds are known in Kent and ten on the Isle of Wight. These range in size from single burials (Coombe, Eastry II) to large cemeteries with close to three hundred interments (Dover, Sarre)¹⁸. Kentish graves of the early Anglo-Saxon period are predominantly oriented with heads to the north, although there are always deviations within a burial ground where, for the most part, burials are never found symmetrically in rows. There are no indications of marker stones, although it has now been shown that there were more structures associated with Anglo-Saxon cemeteries than was previously apparent (Arnold 1997: 156; Owen 1981: 73). In east Kent, evidence shows that graves were sometimes covered with timber structures; post holes and ledges are indicative of fences, buildings and individual wooden grave markers (Arnold 1997: 156), but the exact nature of these perishable features is uncertain.

Burial mounds are rare before the seventh century, yet barrow burials came into use in Kent and on the Isle of Wight much earlier than

in other parts of Anglo-Saxon England. Whole cemeteries of barrow burials have been found in both these areas (Owen 1981:75-7) where settlers in the early Migration Period took over prehistoric barrows for their own use.

With the exception of a few cremations in the early years of Kentish settlement, the Jutes of Anglo-Saxon England buried their dead in shallow single graves. Polhill is especially notable for its multiple burials, including triple internments, but other Kentish sites, Dover for instance, have also revealed double burials. In most cases, multiple burials hold an adult with a child or an infant, but there are also instances where two or three adults have been placed within the same grave. "The graves themselves vary in their shape, being sub-rectangular or more ovoid, but rarely in the past were details of the shape in three dimensions recorded" (Arnold 1997: 156).

Although the practice is uncommon in other parts of Anglo-Saxon England, many Kentish burials contained wooden coffins, some showing signs of contact with fire (Owen 1981: 78). Significant evidence for the presence of wooden biers and linen shrouds is also present at Kentish burial sites.

As noted in Chapter I, this analysis uses data primarily from the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Buckland, near Dover, in Kent and from the burial site at Chessell Down on the Isle of Wight. Supplementary information is provided by other key Kentish sites which also date from the late fifth to early seventh centuries. In these Jutish areas, the corpse was laid out with care. The bodies are normally found on their backs, extended or slightly flexed (Arnold 1990: 167). Where burial objects occur, they may be personal items that were, in life, attached to clothing or carried on the person and there is "a degree of regularity about the position of the artifacts in the graves, especially within individual cemeteries, as though such positions were considered appropriate" (Arnold 1997: 160). Regrettably, it is now "difficult to gauge the extent to which cosmetics,

leather-workings, paint and carving were used" within the burial "as surviving examples are rare or non-existent" and "we are forced to perceive early Anglo-Saxon society" solely "through those durable artifacts that have survived" (Arnold 1997: 100).

Early Anglo-Saxon burial ritual put a "remarkably strong emphasis on gender display through artifacts" with "the majority of adult burials" showing "a marked male/female dichotomy" (Härke 1997: 132). Although "there are gender-neutral burials without diagnostic objects or without any grave goods at all" (infants and young children, and approximately 44 percent of juveniles and adults) (Härke 1997: 132), suggesting status differentiation, it appears that gender is the first, and age the second, factor determining the choice of burial objects (Arnold 1997: 184). Women were often buried with a greater number and variety of objects than were men (Arnold 1997: 182, 185). Studies which have compared a number of contemporary Anglo-Saxon cemeteries emphasize how much greater is the variety in female grave items and how evident it is that the male and female hierarchies are not the same (Arnold 1988: 150, 156; Pader 1980, 1982). Two other factors are noteworthy with respect to the symbolic, ideational and socio-cultural significance of these burial objects. The first is the rarity of utilitarian tools for agriculture, carpentry, and metal working (Arnold 1997: 99). Secondly, in "the majority of cases where symbols of leadership are present [they] are [found in] female graves of the later sixth century and male graves of the early seventh century" (Arnold 1997: 208).

Kits, Object Placement and Patterning

Early work assumed a direct relationship between relative wealth of grave objects and the status of individuals. Studies such as those conducted by Pader have looked at new ways of interpreting the relationships of the various burial objects to each other and to the individual within whose grave they were included. Numerous comparative

studies undertaken over the last decade or so have resulted in the identification of "male" and "female" burial kits, composed of a limited range of artifact types. Research has also revealed in some cemeteries a pattern to the placement of these kits around the body within the space of the grave (Arnold 1988: 143-162; 1997: 132-6, 182; Pader 1980, 1982).

The Kits

In her analysis of two East Anglian cemeteries, Pader (1980; 1982) identifies four classes of artifacts found only with women (brooches, beads, holders and wristclasps) and two classes found only with men (shields, spears). The basic male kits consist of a knife, a spear, a buckle and a shield; containers are also "widely distributed among males but not to the same extent as the objects in the basic kit" (Pader 1982: 99-100). The basic female kit consists of "at least one brooch, a bead necklace, a knife and an implement holder" and, when spatial variation within the cemetery is considered, wristclasps also (Pader 1982: 101). "The majority of the fully kitted women have additional, non-basic items as well" such as buckles and containers and, Pader (1982: 101) notes, "it is not so straightforward a process to determine who is fully kitted among the females as it is among the males". With the male burials, it is more "appropriate to start with a basic kit and subtract objects in order to describe variability" whereas with female burials, analysis begins as well with the basic kit but artifacts or attributes of diagnostic value are added (Pader 1982: 101).

Knives are the only artifacts in the basic female kit which cut across the male-female boundary while containers and buckles, which also cut across the boundary, are part of the basic adult male kit. Only among the males are artifacts both age and sex linked (the shields, certain containers, spears). In female burials, the knife correlates to age, while all "other four items in the female basic kit are sex linked, but not constrained by age" (Pader 1982: 103).

Pader (1982: 130) also found the emphasis on gender display to be confirmed by other aspects of the inhumations and the studies of Härke (1997: 133) and Arnold (1997: 162) confirm this point. More women than men were deposited in a flexed position. The orientation of the bodies also differed, with men's heads more often to the west and women's more often to the south. Such traits link the positioning of female adults with that of children and Pader has suggested that women and children shared a similar status, different from men (and by implication, inferior to) (Pader 1982: 130). Härke, however, argues that since gender-specific differences in burial treatment vary from cemetery to cemetery, it is possible that local variations in gender-linked ritual behaviour may also imply variation in gender relations as well; therefore, women's status need not be interpreted as lower than that of men (Härke 1997: 133). While these differences are likely to relate to Anglo-Saxon perceptions of gender roles, the frequency of weapons in male burials and the exclusive appearance of textile-working tools in female burials need not lead to the obvious interpretation: "not all males buried with weapons had been warriors" and "probably not all females buried with [textile] tools had been weavers or spinners" (Härke 1997: 134). That is not, however, to say that "warriors" and "weavers" were not part of an ideal role envisioned for the "*spere-healf*" and "*spindle-healf*" of Anglo-Saxon society.

Object Placement and Spatial Patterning

Pader's study of the two Anglian cemeteries also reveal that though there are few graves which are absolutely identical, a number of underlying principles prevail. Pader uses the terms "congruence", "addition", "substitution", and "deviance" (including both positive and negative deviance) to describe the patterned placement of the objects in the above described kits within the graves at Holywell Row and Westgarth Gardens (Pader 1980; 1982). Of these, "the basic principle in effect is

congruence" which can be distinguished from 'identical' which implies "an absolute correspondence between any two or more compared entities, whereas congruence implies consistency and fit" (Pader 1982: 114). Pader (1982: 114) considered two graves to be congruent if she found "a regular space-use on and around the body in conjunction with a regularly corresponding skeletal position".

According to her scheme, two burials may be considered congruent if several key features correspond, such as skeletal position, placement of brooches at the shoulder or position of hangers at the waist in female graves (Figure 23) or placement of spears to the right and shields upon the chest in male burials (Figure 24). Even the most lavishly furnished graves may be considered congruent with the less well-furnished so long as the additional items in the richer burial are supplemental to but do not displace the basic structure (Pader 1982: 118).

Burials are also considered congruent should one item be substituted for another. The general spatial distribution within the grave itself does not vary, and Pader (1982: 119-123) notes how substitution, like addition, emphasises the importance of space use as a means of categorizing the social world. By substituting one object for another, a particular space is not left empty. This leads to the conclusion that particular locations within the burial needed to be filled, and that they should be filled using objects from some particular category. Additional objects take up other spaces within the grave, possibly indicating a greater number and variety of roles and social relationships for the interred individual.

Some graves deviate from the norm and Pader has divided them into "negative" and "positive" deviations (Pader 1982: 124). Positive deviance occurs when a grave differs from the norm yet fits the general structure, varying the usage of space in some ways but conforming in others. Negative deviance, on the other hand, can be seen in the unusual orientation of the grave itself or of the skeletal position. It also

refers to the presence of a multiple burial in a cemetery of single burials. An unusual placement of kit items within the grave can also mark deviancy as might the burial of extremely unusual objects in the absence of the normative set (Pader 1982: 124-6).

In some sectors of the Holywell cemetery, Pader (1982: 117) found that "the principle of congruence might also be applicable in unifying the males and females", based on skeletal positioning. Otherwise, she notes that the burials of women and children tend to form one group and the burials of men another. Pader (1982: 130) interprets several characteristics of male burial (such as the extended skeletal position) as "normative" (and by implication as superior) features and then proceeds to compare female and child traits as "deviations" from this norm. While this assumption may be criticized, her emphasis on space-use within a grave as a means of categorizing the social world and her assertion that the specific objects and their spatial distribution are symbolically significant (Pader 1982: 78) is suggestive. Space use, "like the treatment of the corpse and skeleton", might "also usefully be considered as one of the larger features of the burial ritual" and its evidence sought as a means of recognizing socio-cultural patterns (Pader 1982: 78). "The fact that an object is included and used in a particular manner must be both a relevant and important clue" to how the Anglo-Saxon peoples categorized their social world, whether real or ideal (Pader 1982: 80). For instance, it has been pointed out (Härke 1990: 36) that not all those buried with weapons were "warriors", some being too young, others infirm or disabled. At the same time, "having participated in fighting did not automatically qualify a man for weapon burial"; interred men exhibiting skeletal evidence for wounds incurred in battle were not always accorded a weapon burial (Härke 1990: 36). However, few forensic studies to determine the actual cause of death have been conducted. Since soft tissue injuries cannot be discerned, it is often impossible to determine, without skeletal evidence, whether the deceased was ever

wounded in battle or whether he died from something like a blow to the stomach which would leave little evidence in the archaeological record¹⁵. Nevertheless, from the information at hand it does appear that the weapon burial rite may indicate an ideal rather than an actual role. As such, it may show ascribed as well as achieved status. In this respect, it is important to note that all aspects of each burial should not "initially be considered as independent classes of data and examined separately", but instead interpreted as "integral, interdependent aspects of the burial" and treated as a unified entity for analysis, keeping the dynamic and ambiguous nature of material symbolism in mind (Pader 1982: 79).

Results of Further Studies

Pader's interpretations of the data have been corroborated by further research, although as Arnold points out, the patterning of artifacts within the graves appears to be stronger in some cemeteries (Arnold 1997: 160). Yet the choice of objects for inclusion in burial is fairly constant across the early Anglo-Saxon period, and is particularly noticeable among the richer of the women's graves (Arnold 1990: 173; 1997: 144, 182). In his various reviews of sixth and seventh century cemeteries, including samples from Kent and the Isle of Wight, Arnold also notes a strong association between particular grave goods and the individual's gender (Arnold 1988; 1990; 1997). For him, "keys, beads and brooches are as strongly correlated with females, as weaponry is with males" (Arnold 1997: 182). Arnold's analysis recognizes brooches, necklaces, buckles, rings, keys, weaving battens, toiletry items and vessels in the female kits (Arnold 1988: 176-7). His analysis reveals that spears and beads are the most diagnostic artifacts, being clearly gender-linked (Arnold 1997: 182). The spear is the most common grave object, occurring in over 80 percent of the weapon burials analyzed by Arnold (1997: 97). It should be noted, however, that Arnold has left the most common objects, knives and buckles, out of his study since he

believes "they cause a higher number of small sub-divisions" than "seems acceptable" (Arnold 1988: 148). Because of this, we are left wondering whether these objects may possibly form part of either or both the basic kits.

Nevertheless, Arnold does point out that sixth century "male-rich graves are characterised by an extensive array of grave-goods, always including weapons and some form of container" (Arnold 1988: 175). Rich women's graves of the same period "form an equally clear group in most, but not all, areas" and they are "characterized by richly decorated dress ornaments...in most cases by a key and a coin, and in a few cases by perforated spoons and crystal balls" (Arnold 1988: 175). That this same type of women's grave may be found not only in Kent and the Isle of Wight, where there are believed to be strong linkages, "but also in other parts of England as far north as Leicestershire carries a number of important implications" (Arnold 1988: 175). He believes that "the items associated with this very distinctive form of female rich burial were used in everyday life in a similar manner to which they are found as grave-goods, for how else would a social norm such as this be transmitted over such a wide geographical area..." (Arnold 1988: 178). "Poorer graves which nevertheless have some of the range of items found in the richer examples . . . may represent emulation of the elite in richer areas" (Arnold 1988: 178). Finally, Arnold's research shows that while rich male graves of the later sixth and early seventh centuries tend to reveal more variety than earlier examples, the concentration on weapons and containers remains; at the same time, rich women's graves of this period are more difficult to find and lack consistency (Arnold 1988: 179).

According to Härke's (1989; 1990; 1997) research, which incorporates data from some forty-seven cemeteries throughout various regions of Anglo-Saxon England, the basic "male kit" consists of weapons and tools (excluding textile-working tools), while the basic "female kit"

includes items of adornment, objects suspended from the belt, and textile-working. Dress ornaments include brooches, beads and pins; keys, girdle hangers and chatelaines make up the category of items suspended from the belt and spindle whorls, loom weights and weaving battens are representative of textile-weaving tools (Härke 1997: 132).

Weapon burials are the primary focus of Härke's research. He has found that spears occur in most weapon burials, shields in almost half, swords in approximately one out of ten. Seaxes and axes appear in less than 10 percent of burials. Patterns of weapon combination can be identified, as well as patterns of weapon placement within the grave as follows: a single spear alone, a shield and a spear, a sword with a shield and/or a spear. Alone or in combination, the spears are most often found lying to the right of the head or shoulder; the sword, when present, lies cradled in the left arm or along the left side of the body; seaxes are placed at the left waist, where also worn; as if in reach of the right hand, axes are found along the right side of the body; shields are usually placed horizontally over the body along the middle axis of the grave, although some are upright against a side of the grave pit or coffin (Figure 25). Shields and swords may have been used as alternatives in the burial ritual; the age pattern is almost identical for both. Seaxes are found alone or with a spear but rarely with a shield. Most axes are found without other weapons (Härke 1989: 52; 1990: 25-6; 1992b: 65-9) (Table 3). Helmets and mailcoats are found in only a handful of very rich burials indicating their role as symbols of rank or status (Härke 1990: 26; 1992a: 159). Only gradual changes over time are revealed by chronological analysis, with single spear and seax combinations increasing in frequency while shield and sword combinations decline (Härke 1989: 55; 1992a: 159). While there are variations in weapon combinations from cemetery to cemetery, they remain interpretable on a regional level (Härke 1989: 55).

On average, weapon burials are more richly furnished than burials

without weapons, having a greater number and variety of objects and being accompanied by more objects made of or decorated with precious metals (Härke 1990: 37; Härke 1992a: 157). They also contained a "much larger number of drinking vessels" (Härke 1990: 38). Drinking vessels and liquid containers, including glass vessels, bronze bound wooden vessels and buckets were found in 13.8 percent of male weapon burials. Bronze vessels in the sample were found only within weapon burials. Härke (1992: 152, 158) notes that all such feasting-related vessels belong to the richest of the weapons burials, along with the higher status weapons, sword, seax, and axe. As a result of examinations of archaeological, skeletal and epigenetic traits from over 1,600 Anglo-Saxon burials, Härke suggests that, "in the fifth and sixth centuries, burial with weapon was used as an ethnic marker by the immigrants and their descendants" (Härke 1997: 150).²⁰ By means of weapon symbolism, he writes, the Germanic population was ritually expressing its domination over the native Briton population - which may be represented by the inhumation burials without weapons found within the same cemeteries (Härke 1990; 1997b). No similar studies have been conducted for female burials.

Although Härke's research concentrates on weapon burials, he comments on the comparatively greater "burial wealth" of women's burials, noting as well that they are furnished with higher proportions of objects made of, or decorated with, precious metals and rare materials such as amber and rock crystal. This difference is absent from the graves of infants and young children but occurs among older children (7-14 years of age) and continues through succeeding age groups, clearly indicative of adult status (Härke 1997: 134). This contrast has been interpreted as a consequence of differences in dress styles between adult men and women; it has also been suggested that a woman's displayed wealth reflects her husband's wealth as well as her own. It is also possible that while men's grave goods were determined by social status, women's were determined by wealth (Shepherd 1979: 58). It is argued herein that this

display of women's wealth was more likely a reflection of women's own inherited wealth and their productivity as weavers as it was a reflection of their husband's prestige.

The marked gender dichotomy in Anglo-Saxon burials is considered surprising in light of recent research on frontier societies (Stoodley 1993 as cited in Härke 1997: 135) which suggests that gender roles and distinctions become more blurred and flexible among settlers, something not seen in the archaeological record of this period. It has been suggested that the differentiation in Anglo-Saxon burial practices was "a ritual way of coping with the erosion of traditional gender roles" in the migrant society (Härke 1997: 136). However, if we recall from Chapter II that men's wealth was acquired primarily through cattle raiding and women's wealth through textile production, the dichotomy in burial goods may be interpreted as a reflection of status and wealth based upon economic contribution and gendered technologies instead of a social ranking based solely on gender.

Dover and Chessell Down

Unfortunately, much of the archaeological excavation in Kent and on the Isle of Wight was undertaken in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Over 750 Anglo-Saxon burials in the Canterbury area alone were unearthed by the Reverend Bryan Faussett between 1760 and 1773 (Hawkes 1990: 1). Although Faussett and his successor, C.R. Smith, kept journal records, much of the archaeology of this period amounts to nothing more than grave robbing and treasure hunting. Many materials obviously not indicative of high status - skeletal material, charred pieces of wood, textiles, and unidentified lumps of iron - were discarded or left in the ground. It was not until 1847 that C.R. Smith noted the importance of recording the position of objects within the burial to determine their use. It was he who began the practice of drawing to illustrate the position of the burial objects and skeleton *in situ*

(Rhodes 1990: 49). Therefore, much was lost, given away or left behind that today could be analyzed for a more complete contextual interpretation of the burial remains.

The Buckland site at Dover is reported by Vera Evison (1987). Some of the burials were excavated under her supervision, others were rescued from the scraper and trencher. The individual burials are fully illustrated and catalogued by the archaeologist, enabling the review of burial kits, assemblages and spatial patterning which follows below. The Chessell Down site, however, has suffered a more uneven history of excavation, beginning with work claimed by Dennett for 1816, Skinner's explorations of 1817, 1818 and 1831 and Hillier's more complete excavations of 1854 and 1855. Records of skeletal positioning and placement of the objects within the grave, however, are sporadic at best. Therefore, while no attempt has been made to deal with questions of spatial distribution at Chessell Down, burial kits may still be identified.

The investigation for this thesis confirms the presence of male and female kits, as well as that of a consistency in choice of burial objects (with only minor variations) in line with those noted above. There is also a discernible pattern to the placement of objects within the graves at Buckland, Dover and possibly at Chessell Down (although this is a difficult determination given the limited information available). Nevertheless, the results of this study support the observation that burial object placement patterns cut across early Anglo-Saxon England in general (Arnold 1990: 173; 1997: 144, 182).

Buckland at Dover

Dover is situated at the mouth of the Dour River, in the south east of Kent, on the point of land nearest to the Continent. It served as a valuable port to the Romans and later to the Anglo-Saxons, with Roman roads leading to Richborough, to Lympne and to London by way of

Canterbury. The date that the Dover area passed from the control of the Romano-British to the Anglo-Saxons is uncertain. However, there are strong traces of Germanic peoples in the surrounding area in the fifth century. At Buckland, the earliest date "that can be definitely assigned to any of the graves [in the cemetery] is about AD 475, although one or two could be earlier" (Evison 1987: 172). Buckland continued in use throughout the early Anglo-Saxon period and well into the early Christian period of the late seventh to early eighth century. Burial objects disappear by the end of the seventh century, although burials continued to mid-eighth century. Burial is by inhumation only, with graves oriented with heads to the west (Evison 1987: 145, 172).

Seven burial phases beginning in the fifth century and ending in the latter seventh century can be discerned at Buckland where Anglian, Saxon, Jutish and Scandinavian elements appear unevenly "in a material culture which is mainly Kentish and Frankish throughout" (Evison 1987: 172). In Phase 1, connections with the Angles, Saxons and Scandinavians can be seen "but mostly with the Franks" (Evison 1987: 172). In Phase 2, there are still strong Frankish influences although there is evidence that the Kentish jewellers were in full production. By Phase 3, the jewellery is exclusively Kentish but male graves still show evidence of strong contact with *Francia*. Through Phases 4, 5 and 6 there is a gradual decline in Frankish imports although the continued connection cannot be denied. By Phase 7, grave goods are sparse and only the presence of amethysts and glass beads mark a foreign influence (Evison 1987: 172).

Out of the 165 graves excavated at Buckland, fifty-four adult male burials and sixty-six adult female burials have been identified. Thirty-five of the burials are juveniles and children under the age of eighteen. The balance are indeterminate as to sex, age or both. There are no infant burials. While fourteen or fifteen of the males lived past the age of

forty-five, only eleven of the women seem to have made it into their late forties or older (Evison 1987: 127-132)

Archaeological evidence reveals that "care was taken to lay out the body on the back with arms and legs straight, particularly in the male sword graves" (Evison 1987: 133). Variations from this position are slight; there are no crouched positions and only one prone burial. Out of 117 graves where the precise positions for the limbs were recordable, 92 were laid on the back with legs straight and feet together. Of the burials where the positions of the arms and hands could be ascertained, the majority were placed with the hands on the top of the femurs or "in the pelvis" (Evison 1987: 129). Of the ten burials where one arm was straight and the other bent inwards, five had the left arm only bent inwards and five had the right arm only bent inwards. Eight skeletons were found with the arms straight down beside the body. One burial had the right arm across the body and the left hand on the left shoulder, three had the left hand in the pelvis and the right arm across the waist, while only one had the right arm straight, away from the body. Ten of the burials showed a flexed or slightly flexed position. Of these, five had both knees bent to the left or right and five others had one knee only slightly bent. The variations are spread throughout the cemetery and not peculiar to any one plot or phase (Evison 1987: 129).

It is possible that some of the bodies were "displayed in the grave to onlookers" (Evison 1987: 133); in Graves 96 and 60, "the legs were crossed at the ankle in order to provide room for an object" and the excavating archaeologist sees this as having completed the overall burial picture for viewing (Evison 1987: 133). Whether or not the bodies were viewed in the grave as part of the internment ceremony, it is arguable that their contents were intended to reveal the identity of the occupant in much the same fashion as a memorial gravestone (Halsall 1998: 329-31; Richards 1992: 143-47). Some of the bodies were lowered into the grave in a coffin or a shroud and displacement in those graves may have

occurred during this operation (Evison 1987: 133). Graves 137 and 149 contain what appear to be remains of a wooden bier or coffin or some sort of stretcher beneath the body (Evison 1987: 19). In any event, the on site archaeologist notes that "the various positions do not appear to have specific reference to sex" (Evison 1987: 129) while, at the same time, "the range of positions of the bodies compare with the normal positions in Kentish cemeteries" (Evison 1987: 133) (Table 4).

Kits, Object Placement and Spatial Patterning at Dover

In the 120 burials found to contain objects at Dover, research reveals the presence of two distinctive burial kits, male and female, similar to those discussed above. As well, a secondary or "supplementary" female assemblage is also suggested. Unlike the above analyses, here the knife is not discounted as a possible element in the basic burial kits for both males and females.

Male Kits, Object Placement and Spatial Patterning at Dover

The basic men's kit consists of a knife, a buckle and a spear. The full kit includes these items plus a sword, a shield and a drinking vessel or container of some sort (Table 5). There is a slight deviation here from the results noted above. At Dover, it appears that swords are slightly more likely to be added as the next element to the basic kit than is the shield (as was the case in other studies as above).

Substitutions and additions also exist in male burials at Dover. Burial 65 contains a seax rather than a sword (knife+buckle +spear+seax), Grave 93 contains a seax in addition to both sword and spear (knife+buckle+spear+sword+shield+seax). Other additions include a balance or scale (Grave C), pins (33, 50, 96a, 96b, 136, 150, 158), belt mounts (56, 57), tweezers (50, 65, 156), shoe-lace tags (139, 150, 156) purses (47, 50, 139) and sharpening steels (65, 144, 148, 162). The sharpening steels are found primarily in the graves of juveniles, the

shoe-lace tags for the most part in poorly furnished burials. The pins present something of a dilemma in terms of interpretation: they may have served as fasteners for burial shrouds rather than items in the burial appointments.

It appears that containers acted either as substitutions for buckles or as additions to the basic male kit. Of the seven burials which hold vessels or containers, five are in burials without buckles. Of the remaining two container burials, one is the burial (137) of a juvenile with a knife+buckle+spear. There is a bronze bowl at the head of this grave and a pottery bottle at the foot. The last container burial (156), is the grave of an "old" man with a full basic kit, an arrow or awl, and two bronze shoe-lace tags.

Of the burials missing key items from the basic kit, five show possible signs of disturbance, seven are the burials of individuals over the age of 45 (one at least over 60), two are the graves of small children and the remainder which for the most part contain only a knife and buckle express some deviancy in skeletal position.

A number of the male burials at Dover are of high status containing a ring sword (C), sword knot (71), or inlaid sword (91), inlaid spears including one with a swastika design (50, 71, 93, 94b, 156), and shields with bronze appliques or other decoration (27, 50, 71, 93, 98). All of the swords have pattern-welded blades.

Both warriors in the double burial have a spear and a sword and one (96a) has a shield as well. There is a slight deviance to the skeletal placement of these two burials as well. The right arm of the left skeleton (96a) lies slightly outward and the feet of the skeleton on the right (96b) have been crossed, possibly to make room within the grave. Otherwise, the double burial is only slightly different than the established norm for this cemetery in space usage. Both skeletons have their swords to the left of the body; both have a spear pointing towards the top of the grave (one to the left and one to the right of each,

probably because of limited room within the grave); both have knives to the left of the waist. The buckle and shield of the skeleton to the left (96a) are placed in the standard positions for this cemetery, that is at the mid-waist and over the lower leg respectively.

Both seax burials are rather unusual. In the first (65) of these two burials, the seax lies diagonally across the body and the skeletal position deviates slightly from the norm with both hands on top of the femurs and the right knee slightly bent. The occupant of this grave was over 45 years of age at the time of death. In the second of the seax burials (93), the skeletal position is also slightly different from the norm with the right forearm bent in. The occupant of this burial was between 30 and 45 at the time of death and his grave contains a number of unusual additions including a cylindrical glass bead and an iron rod bent nearly into a triangle. Both these objects are to the left of the skull. The seax itself is unusual in that it appears that it held scabbards for two horn-handled knives on the outside of its own sheath. As well, this burial contains the only spear shaft that was likely broken before deposition.

Another unusual burial in this cemetery is Grave 114 which has been interpreted by Evison (1987) as belonging to a *scop* or bard who was approximately 20 to 30 years of age at death. Along with a knife at the waist and a spear at the right are what appears to be the remains of a lyre at the left ankle. Other features of note in this burial are the position of the spearhead, which is pointed to the foot of the grave rather than to the head, and some deviance in the placement of the skeleton in that the hands are placed on top of the femurs instead of lying within the pelvis.

Spatial patterning is fairly consistent among the male burials. Knives are placed at the left waist, swords at the left torso, sometimes cradled in the crook of the arm. It is possible this placement corresponds with where each was worn in life; the percentage of knives

and swords placed to the right roughly reflects the number of left-handed individuals expected in a given population. Spears point towards the head of the grave, with approximately twice as many on the left side as on the right. Shields can be found in one of four positions, over the head and upper chest, at the head but on edge above the skull, to the one side or the other of the upper burial, probably on edge, or over the lower legs and feet. The majority occupy the latter position. Most vessels and containers are found near the head. In summary, there is a significant degree of "congruence" between male burials at Dover in both space usage and object placement around the skeletal remains (Figure 26) as that term is defined by Pader, above.

Female Kits, Object Placement and Spatial Patterning at Dover

With respect to the female burials at Dover, frequency analysis shows the most basic kit to consist of a knife, beads and keys. The extended kit contains a pin, a hanger, a weaving tool, a disc brooch and/or a container (Table 5). This is in keeping with the identifications set out above as made by Pader, Härke and Arnold. As with the male burials, the presence of pins is once again problematic. Some of them are most likely shroud pins; others are not. The decoration and positioning of a number of the pins suggest they fastened cloaks or other items of dress for the living, while the placement of others (for instance above or beside the skull, especially in male burials) suggests their final use was as shroud pins. Unfortunately, it is often difficult to clearly distinguish between the two uses within the burial context.

As in Pader's study, the disc brooch, bead necklace, and hanger are sex linked. The vessels or containers are not. Nevertheless, twice as many female graves contain vessels. Given the slight disparity in sex ratio within the cemetery, this is a significant difference. As in Härke's (1997) study, the objects found in female graves at Dover may be grouped into items of adornment, objects suspended from the belt, and

textile-working categories. While this division is convenient, it is also in a sense misleading. Articles of adornment may also be ethnic or tribal markers of identification, objects from the belt may also serve as adornments and textile-working tools can be decorative symbols of status as well as functional tools. In comparison to Arnold's (1988: 177) analyses, the frequency of basic kit objects seems to differ somewhat at Dover although four burials (14, 20, 29 and 38) fit closely with Arnold's criteria for "female-rich" graves, lacking only the rare sieve spoons, crystal balls and gold threads of the very rich burials (Table 6)

Like the male burials, very few female burials do not contain a knife. In cases where no knife has been found, the clear majority have been disturbed in some fashion; the balance have a deviancy in skeletal positioning making them unusual in other ways as well or they are the burials of juveniles. Not all juvenile burials, however, are without a knife. Perhaps, beyond its obvious functional importance, the knife was somehow connected to Anglo-Saxon ideas of "personhood" since its inclusion in the burial context does not depend solely on adult status, nor upon gender (being found with juveniles and adolescents of both sexes as well).

Only five burials lack a full basic kit. Of these, three have been severely disturbed; nevertheless, they still contain at least one other object, one (126) a disc brooch with a runic inscription, another (116) a girdle hanger and the third (94a) a buckle. The remaining two contain just a single pin. These burials also slightly deviate slightly in skeletal positioning. Should the pins be shroud fasteners, as it is suspected, these burials would fall outside the considerations of this analysis. Should the pins be garment fasteners, the burials remain unusual but warrant inclusion for purposes of interpretation.

No female burials contain just a basic kit alone; there are always one or more additions or substitutions. Out of a total of 69 female graves containing burial objects, over one-third contain a basic kit plus

at least two other items. Of those, almost half contain an additional five or more different objects. A closer examination reveals that these additional items can be said to form at least one secondary or "supplementary" assemblage. In this schema, the basic kit (knife, beads, keys) acts as a core deposition. The supplementary assemblage, consisting of [weaving implement + ritual/feasting objects + bracteate-type pendant + amulet], reflects the position of higher-status women within the community. The combination of full basic kit plus complete supplementary assemblage is rare, apparently occurring only once per cemetery (Table 9) - with the exception of Finglesham cemetery where two such burials are found. Finglesham was a particularly rich settlement and possibly the holding of a prince or noble and this may account for the presence of the two rich burials. Dover 20 and Chessell Down 45 contain the full basic kit plus complete assemblage combination. Rich women's burials of the type outlined here have been found across Anglo-Saxon England and on the Continent. Women's burials with this particular combination of objects appear to reflect the roles played by royal women within the *comitatus* structure as discussed in Chapter II. As *webbe* or *freoðuwebbe*, such women acted as weavers of peace, cupbearers and advisors, *sibyls*, and probably healers. The category divisions set out in Tables 6 and 7 are based primarily on function and so give equal weight to spindle whorls, weaving picks, needles, etc. as indicators of the woman's role as a weaver, rather than singling out weaving battens simply as prestige items. Combs are not included in the weaving implement category, despite their possible use in wool preparation²¹. Categorization by function also moves all feasting and drinking containers into one category. The bracteate category has also been expanded and now includes silver and gold disc pendants which resemble bracteates in form and shape, as well as perforated coins and coin pendants which share similarities of size, decoration and function with the gold bracteates. It is also in keeping with the history and

iconography of the gold bracteates, which evolved from Roman coins (Owen 1986: 56) and came to have strong associations with both the cult of *Woden* and a weaver goddess (Enright 1990, 1996; Hawkes and Pollard 1981). Several archaeologists have remarked upon the similarity between the various disc pendants and Roman and Anglo-Saxon coins, noting the imitative nature of their design (Evison 1987: 224). Given the shared iconography of these pieces, there is no reason to believe they would not have shared symbolic content. Bracteates are strongly associated with healing, weaving and prophecy. In the context of women's burials discussed herein, the symbolic content of these bracteates is brought into association with weaving tools, healing amulets and the containers and vessels of ritual feasting.

The disc brooch is found in association with a full basic kit, but does not appear to be part of any further supplementary assemblage, unless one considers disc brooches, chatelaines, and boxes to be a grouping of prestige items. If such is the case, square-headed brooches and purses can be seen as either additions or substitutions, the former taking the place of the disc brooch or being an addition to it, the latter perhaps substituting for the box.

As noted above, skeletal positioning is fairly consistent throughout the cemetery with only minor deviations. The most obvious deviation is the prone burial (67) which, although it appears the woman was alive when interred, contains a number of beads, a gold pendant, two silver-gilt disc pendants with fragments of a third and a bronze wire bracelet (Figure 27). This grave does not contain a knife or keys; it does contain a lump of iron pyrites by the left foot. With respect to placement of burial objects within the space of the grave and in relation to the skeletal remains, there appears to be a certain degree of congruence between a number of graves (Figure 28) although this feature of Pader's methodology is more difficult to determine for female than for male graves.

Nevertheless, in-grave space usage at Dover remains fairly consistent. Knives are generally found at the left waist or hip; keys, work boxes, needles and chatelaines at the left hip. Shears are also outside the hip, or at the waist, apparently in a bag and not suspended from the handle. Beads and bracteate pendants are found at the neck or suspended from brooches or pins across the upper chest. Disc brooches lie at the center throat. Quite likely, such placements reflect the place where each was worn in life (Evison 1987: 19). Boxes are located at the foot, sometimes accommodated by crossed legs. All but one of the vessels are also at the foot. Amulets are generally at the waist, or contained in the boxes. Whorls can be found at the foot and the weaving pick between the knees. One of the weaving battens is in the upper left of the burial (20) beside the skull, the other two are in the lower right hand side of the burial outside the right leg; one (38) is pointed towards the head, the other (46) towards the foot. The patterning in female graves at Dover appears to be akin to those observed by Pader: burial kits can be identified and object placement is consistent within the burials with a degree of "congruence" between burials.

Congruence Between Male and Female Graves

A comparison of male and female burials at Dover and at Holywell Row reveals a similarity or "congruence" in space use between male and female burials as well. Similarly sized and shaped objects occupy comparable spaces within the graves (Figure 29).

Chessell Down

As noted above, the excavations at Chessell Down were conducted in the period 1816 to 1855 by a series of excavators. The most extensive and best recorded are those of George Hillier. The reports and journals of these excavations, as well as those of other early archaeological work on the Isle of Wight, were only recently brought together for publication

in 1982 by C. J. Arnold who notes that these early works were conducted by "not perhaps the most trustworthy excavators" (Arnold 1982: 13). This fact becomes immediately clear upon examination of the site report. There are innumerable unprovenanced finds, many objects listed as unidentified "lumps of iron" and a general intimation that only the most spectacular or desirable of the finds were ever recorded.

The cemetery at Chessell Down "was situated on the north slope of the chalk down in the parish of Shalfleet" on the western side of the Isle of Wight "at a height of 375 ft. O.D." (Arnold 1982: 18). It is believed that the name Chessell derives from the OE *ciest hyll* (chest or coffin hill), an indication of the cemetery's early presence (Arnold 1982: 18). The various reports give evidence that 133 graves were excavated in the early nineteenth century. Of these, 35 were without artifacts. It appears that the majority were north-east - south-east oriented, although a few exceptions are noted. In the majority of cases, there is no suggestion of the sex of the buried individual. Graves 10 and 51 are described as female, graves 52 and 53 as male, three more are described as adult and four as children. The basis for these determinations is not stated. In most cases, the sex of the individuals can now only be inferred from associated artifacts (Arnold 1982: 13-19). "None of the skeletal material is known to have survived" (Arnold 1982: 18). Portions of charcoal were frequently observed at the head and feet. Based on Hillier and Skinner's reports, the most usual skeletal position appears to have been extended with the arms by the sides, although there are cases with one or both arms across the body. There is also evidence for mounds or cists over a few of the burials (Arnold 1982: 18).

Male Kits at Chessell Down

Given the above restrictions, 22 burials can be identified as male. The male kit observed in these burials, based on an artifact frequency analysis, is similar to those described above. However, spears are the

most frequently reported artifact found here, instead of the generally more common knife. The basic male kit at Chessell Down could be said to consist of spear, knife and shield based solely on artifact count. The most common combination, however, is a knife or a buckle with a spear, showing the basic combination at Chessell Down to be in keeping with other areas reported above. Given the excavators' apparent inclination to report only the more sought-after objects as well as the large number of unprovenanced knives and buckles from the cemetery, it is likely that many associated finds went unreported. The extended kit includes a sword, shield and a vessel or container, agreeing in order with Arnold's (1980) determinations for a wider range of Anglo-Saxon England (outlined above). Rings, bracelets, arrows, an axe, and shears appear as additions to the basic kit.

Only one axe is recorded (grave 80). It accompanies a spear and the only reported pair of shears in the cemetery. This grave, like many in the cemetery, also contained a number of other objects described only as unidentified "lumps" and "pieces" by the original excavators, leaving much in doubt as to the original context.

Five burials have complete basic kits, one (26) lacks only the buckle of the full extended kit, two (53, 94) more lack only the sword, another (59) is missing shield and container, while the fifth (21), missing sword and shield, does contain a bowl. Two graves are recorded as having contained weapons only (38, 54): each holds a spear, sword and shield.

One knife (26) is reported to the left and another (17) to the right of the skeletal remains while the location of one buckle (21) is noted as on the "abdomen", three spears (17, 21, 26) are noted as having been found to the right hand side of the burial. According to the excavator's account, four burials may have contained more than one spear (53, 76, 105, 106) as they are recorded in the plural but no number given. Positions are not recorded for the swords. One shield was found

over the legs (26), another at the head (54). The bowl in grave 21 was found at the knees while grave 26 contained a bucket, hanging bowl and a bronze pail, none of which are given a recorded location.

Female Kits at Chessell Down

Out of the 113 recorded inhumations at Chessell Down only 16 graves containing burial objects can be identified as female. Once again, this is based upon artifact identification rather than upon sexing of the skeletal remains. Six burials containing only a single brooch or bead have been left out of this analysis. Single brooches have been found in male burials of the sub-Roman period and single beads are often found with juveniles of either sex. Therefore, these objects alone are not believed to be determinate without supporting skeletal evidence.

The basic female kit consists of beads, knife and buckle, the extended kit adds at least one brooch to this set. Rings, tweezers and pendants appear to be additions or substitutions. Three bird-shaped brooches, common on the Continent (Arnold 1982: 57), are found as substitutions or additions in burials 3, 23 and 40. The presence of a supplementary assemblage (similar to that identified at Dover) made up of a weaving implement, a food or drink container, a bracteate-type pendant and an amulet is also indicated (Table 7). However, given the poor quality of the site reports, this identification is not conclusive.

Once again, where noted, the knives are at the left waist, beads at the neck, disc brooch at right shoulder and the square-headed brooches down the front chest. The vessels in Grave 45 were arranged at the feet, the weaving batten is noted as being cradled in the right arm of the buried individual in Hillier's drawing but is shown beside the right forearm in C.R. Smith's illustration (Arnold 1982: 28). This burial and one other (40) contain crystal balls, the ball in Grave 45 found cradled inside the bowl of the perforated spoon lying between the knees of the woman interred.

Object Placement and Spatial Patterning at Chessell Down

While both a male and female kit can be distinguished at Chessell Down, no conclusive statement can be made concerning spatial use or the patterned placement of burial objects. As well, there is insufficient evidence to allow comment on any overall congruence in burial features.

Anglo-Saxon Men and Women: "Typical" Burials

Based on the above observations, two "type" burials may be identified and two social roles seem to be represented by the assemblages. Regardless of whether these roles were lived or ideal, the positions identified are those of the warrior or ~~wapned~~ and the woman as a weaver or *webbe*.

The first "type" burial, that of the warrior includes a knife at the left side, a buckle at the waist, a spear to the right, a shield over the body, a sword at the right hip and a drinking vessel near the head. In the richest burials, each of these objects is elaborately decorated. Spears and swords are patterned with inlaid metals or runic inscriptions. Sword blades are pattern-welded, their pommels enhanced with sword-ring or bead and their scabbards elaborately embellished with niello work while shields and buckles carry zoomorphic designs. The drinking vessels are of thinly blown glass, fragile and rare. These sets of objects symbolize the man's role as a warrior within the *comitatus*, his right to bear arms, his place within the hall and his obligation to participate in hall ritual.

The weaver or *webbe* burial includes a knife at the waist, festoons of beads down and across the chest, a pendant or bracteate at the throat, brooches at each shoulder and lower center chest as well as near the waist, keys or a chatelaine at the left hip, an amulet near the feet or attached to the chatelaine, a weaving implement of some sort at the side, and food and drink containers near the feet. The more elaborate burials contain a sieve spoon and crystal ball at the knees, a gold-woven

headband and finger rings. These sets of objects are representative the woman's role within the comitatus as well, marking her as a weaver and recognizing the associative functions of prophecy and counsel. These objects also symbolize the woman's role as distributor of food and drink within the hall, and her role in the cup ritual (as discussed in Chapter II).

Forms of these two burial types are found at both Chessell Down and Dover. Chessell Down Graves 26 and 45 provide examples of a typical man's and a typical woman's burials, respectively. These types are represented at Dover as well, where Grave 20 is much the same as Chessell Down 45, lacking only the crystal ball but containing a gold bracteate instead of the gold-braided headband. Typical men's burials are also well represented at Dover. Dover Grave 71 contains a bronze sword ring in addition to the other objects and the shield is decorated with iron appliques. Although Dover 96 is a double burial, it too fits the typical pattern, each man armed with a sword and spear in addition to basic kit items and although this burial holds only one shield, that is probably a result of space constraints within the grave itself.

Weapon Burial: Chessell Down Burial 26

The man buried in this grave was interred on his left side with an iron knife at his hip, a spear eight feet long at the right of his head and a shield at his knees (Figure 30) (Arnold 1982: 24). The position of the other burial objects is not recorded and there is no diagram showing placement. Nevertheless, one of the first objects recorded is a bronze hanging bowl with three bird-shaped escutcheons. Bowls of this type are peculiar to rich graves such as this one, accompanied by a full set of weaponry. Similar in size and shape to the pail in the woman's grave Chessell Down 45, the bronze pail in this burial is less elaborately decorated with a series of incised lines but may still have come from the same source; both pails have been identified as *Coptic* and share a Middle

Eastern origin. The bronze-bound wooden bucket in male grave Chessell Down 53, is slightly taller but of a similar diameter with bindings covered with a repoussé decoration of arcades and dots (Arnold 1982: 58). All such vessels are commonly interpreted as feasting containers, and, as such, symbols of the high ranking individual's ability to provide a bountiful table (Enright 1996: 49-50).

The sword found in this burial (26) has no surviving attachments. However, the sword in Chessell Down Grave 76 has a bronze pommel with traces of gilding as well as the remains of a scabbard, mouthpiece and guard-plates, all of which are silver gilt. The attachment of a sword ring is indicated by a rivet hole and an indentation in the pommel. The gold filigree work on the hilt is rare in England prior to the late sixth century, though if the sword is of Scandinavian origin, it could date to the fifth century. The niello-filled chevrons on the top of the scabbard mount are similar to a distinctive style of Scandinavian jewellery of the late fifth and early sixth centuries. It is most likely that the same craftsmen who made the jewellery of the time, made the weaponry; in fact, they may not have differentiated the two categories in the modern sense, making a sword as much an object of bodily adornment as a tool of war. In the openwork panel below the scabbard mouth has "an outward-facing man's profile head at each end" (Arnold 1982: 32). The scabbard plate carries a runic inscription which can be interpreted as "augmentor of pain" but may also be the owner's name, Acca. Runic or rune-like inscriptions have been found on swords and brooches across Anglo-Saxon England and on the Continent (Figure 31) (Arnold 1982: 63). The remaining objects in Grave 26 are seven metal arrowheads with diamond shaped blades. While common to adult burials of the early Anglo-Saxon period, arrows are later found more commonly in children's burials. Here, however, they make up the final element in this man's full burial kit.

From the fifth century onwards we may picture Germanic warriors, such as the man buried in Chessell Down 26, with spears in hand and

swords in rich scabbards against a background of shining armour and fittings, gold ornaments and bright colours (Davidson 1962: 105). In the *Hráfnsmál*, the warriors of Harald Fairhair are described as having scarlet cloaks with splendid borders, swords bound with silver carried on gilded baldrics while the *Eddic Guðrunarkviða* tells us that wooers of *Gudrun* wore red cloaks and short mail coats (Davidson 1962: 105). A fifth century description, written by *Sidonius*, later Bishop of Clermont, records the appearance of Germanic chiefs attending the wedding of a Burgundian princess: wearing green mantles with crimson borders, these warriors carried their arms as adornment - barbed spears and axes and shields which "flashed with tawny golden bosses and snowy silver borders" (Davidson 1962: 104). We know, from *Tacitus* once again, that men such as these intended their appearance to impress and intimidate their enemies (Owen-Crocker 1986: 83).

Webbe Burial: Chessell Down Grave 45

Although the skeletal remains were not aged or sexed by the excavator, Chessell Down Grave 45 appears to be that of a woman of adult stature and high status (Figure 32) interred with an extensive burial kit. The iron knife and kidney-shaped silver inlaid buckle at the waist, and the string of beads at the neck complete the basic kit. Although the beads from this particular burial cannot be identified, they are most certainly among the eleven strings of beads recovered from Chessell Down presently at the British Museum. Yellow, red, orange, blue, green, white and clear, in variegated and solid forms, the glass beads from Chessell Down are similar to those found in other Anglo-Saxon cemeteries as are the amber and amethyst beads also recorded (Figure 33). The variegated designs differ with spirals, dots and single lines marking a solid background but the markings are most often of a lighter colour than the background giving a contrast between light and dark to the design.

Further items in Grave 45 include two vessels or containers; the

first, a bronze pail at the foot, is decorated with a continuous frieze of leopards or dogs chasing deer executed in a form of punch work which would have made a dark contrast against the gleam of the bronze background (Figure 34). The runic inscription incised across one of the deer is epigraphically dateable to the sixth century and closely similar to the inscription on the sword scabbard in grave 76 (Arnold 1982: 60).

At the left foot are two silver rims which belong to one or possibly two wooden cups. Other drinking or feasting vessels were also found at Chessell Down, including two glass beakers, one amber and one light green coloured. Similar beakers are found in Germanic graves across England and on the Continent (Figure 35) (Arnold 1982: 57). Cone beakers are rather delicate vessels made of thinly blown translucent glass, often with glass beading around the upper rim which would have created a darker impression when the vessel was filled with liquid.

At the knees of Grave 45 are two rather unusual items, a silver gilt sieve spoon and a smoky crystal ball (Figure 36). The bowl of the spoon is joined to the handle by a triangular plate decorated with black inlaid niellure against reserved silver and punched circles (Arnold 1982: 27). Alternating plain and grooved bands decorate the handle which ends in a rounded knob which has been pierced for suspension. Such perforated spoons frequently have garnet inlays. Typically found in richer graves of the sixth century, they are often accompanied by crystal balls. There are eight other examples of this spoon type in England, six of them from Kent. The Lyminge 44 example is associated with a pair of disc brooches and a pair of silver-gilt inlaid square-headed brooches, a crystal ball and fragments of gold braid, as is the current example. The spoon from Sarre 4 also comes from a grave very similar to Chessell Down 45, again associated with a crystal ball, disc brooches and a pair of square-headed brooches. The Bifrons 42 grave contained a garnet and niello-inlaid sieve spoon, a crystal ball and a garnet-inlaid square-headed brooch. The spoon from Winterborne Gunner 7 in Wiltshire, also associated with a

square-headed brooch, is rather unusual in that it is made of bronze with rather crude decoration and "is almost certainly a local imitation of the Kentish types" (Arnold 1982: 65). Perforated sieve spoons are known on the Continent and found in association with various radiate and bird brooches, beads, vessels, coins, chatelaines and rings. These spoons are not as elaborate as the Kentish examples. With one known exception, they always appear in women's graves. "It is clear that most of the English examples had a uniform meaning or function to their users, as must apply to the other grave-goods frequently associated with them" (Arnold 1982: 65). The sieve spoon has commonly been interpreted as a symbol of a noblewoman's "ability to serve expensive imported wine" (Meaney 1981: 248) or some other drink, such as mead or beer, much as the lady of the hall in *Beowulf* serves the members of the *comitatus*.

The crystal ball in Chessell Down 45 is about 2 inches in diameter and is mounted in two engraved silver slings with a loop for suspension. No two like bindings have been found and although Chessell Down Grave 40 also contains a crystal ball, its binding is slightly different suggesting that the balls were probably manufactured individually as required. There is no sieve spoon in Grave 40 but the ball is of clear crystal, like the majority of rock crystal balls found elsewhere. Like the sieve spoons, crystal balls are found in England mostly in Kent, where thirteen examples are known. Like the Grave 45 ball, six of the Kentish examples are accompanied by perforated sieve spoons and gold brocade headbands.

The exact function or meaning of the crystal balls is unknown, though it has been suggested that they may have been believed to hold mystical powers and to have been used for divinations or healing (Glosecki 1989: 28; Meaney 1981: 242; Owen 1986: 58). Since sunlight will not focus on the optic axis of the crystals, it is unlikely that they were used as a lens for starting fires. In any event, they are rare possessions which were available only to a limited number of Anglo-Saxon

women. Crystal balls are known on the Continent as well, particularly in the Frankish areas. They are most often found between the knees or thighs and, when spoons are present, they are in, under, or beside the sieve spoon (Arnold 1982: 64-65). It is possible these objects mark the presence of a seer or prophetess.

At the outside left forearm in Grave 45 is an iron instrument originally with double hooked terminals (Figure 32). A similar instrument is found in Sarre 4, the Kentish grave mentioned above which is similar in so many respects to Chessel 45. It is believed that these instruments are a form of key, closely resembling a Roman form of latch-lifter. The size of this lifter indicates a thicker door and heavier pegs holding a bolt in position. It is thought that such latch-lifters belonged to women who held some authority in a household. Given the rarity of such keys, it can also be said that lockable doors were probably uncommon and used only by a small proportion of the community (Arnold 1982: 70).

As can be seen in Figure 37 there are three inlaid square-headed brooches down the chest of the individual in Grave 45 as well as a small garnet-inlaid silver gilt disc brooch on the right shoulder and a small, silver-gilt, garnet-inlaid, equal-armed brooch on the left shoulder. A fragment of gold braid across the forehead was most likely woven into the fabric of a woollen headband. The use of such braid is mostly a Kentish fashion, with 18 examples known from there. It is a style also found in contemporary burials in *Francia* and believed to have originated in Byzantium. A gold ring on the right hand and a silver ring on the left hand of the buried individual complete the list of personal adornments (Arnold 1982: 28, 66).

The three square-headed brooches are identical in being silver gilt with eight inlays of garnet and white paste. The outer margins are decorated with punched dots and zigzag niellure. The garnets are oval, triangular and diamond-shaped and are backed by patterned gold foil. The

upper borders contain "devolved opposed animal heads in which the head and perhaps the eye" can be distinguished on 45x (Figure 38) (Arnold 1982: 28). Several types of square-headed brooch have been identified, with varying degrees of decoration. Many of the brooches are decorated with elaborate animal and human figures and faces which, it seems possible given their popularity in Scandinavia as well as in England, may have connections to the cult of the masked god, *Woden*. Similar faces can be seen on the button brooches found in Graves 7, 12 and 89 (Figure 39).

The disc brooch has a beaded rim enclosing three panels of crouching animals and a central white setting (Figure 40). All other examples of this type of brooch come from Kent, a pair found in Sarre 4, two at Faversham and Howletts and a single in Dover 59 (Arnold 1982: 28, 52). The edges of the equal-armed brooch are decorated with circular knobs with linear and circular ornaments in between (Figure 41). This is a rare brooch, one of only five known examples, including Chessell Down unprovenanced 23. The other three known examples are from France (Arnold 1982: 28, 51). The gold foil beneath the inlaid garnets on all of these pieces adds to the brightness of the gems. Garnets set in this fashion tend to vary in colour from bright red to almost black, depending on how light falls upon them. The gilt finish common to jewellery of this period is most often gold in colour, while much of the gold employed has a reddish-gold tint (Evison 1987: 51).

Finally, to the outside right of burial is an iron weaving batten with traces of a wooden handle. "Used for beating up the weft at regular intervals on an upright loom", weaving battens or swords are quite rare and known in England from only nine other sites, seven of which are in Kent (Arnold 1982: 63). In England and on the Continent, weaving battens are most often found in rich women's graves of the sixth century (Arnold 1982: 63). Based on distribution, it is believed that the English group probably emerged at an early date, independent of Continental developments (Arnold 1982: 64). Often converted swords, weaving battens

are frequently pattern-welded and this element of their construction would have been quite visible as the battens were being used to beat up the lanolin-rich woollen threads on the loom. The natural oils present in the woollen fibres and the movement of the batten through the threads would have prevented rust and kept the weaving sword well polished and gleaming in the red-gold colour common to blades of this design²².

While contemporary descriptions of Anglo-Saxon women are found less frequently than those of their male counterparts, we know from *Tacitus* and Roman carvings that the jewel-bedecked appearance of Anglo-Saxon women was no less striking. We may picture these women, such as the one buried in Chessell Down 45 with brightly coloured cloaks, pattern-woven gowns, embroidered girdles and festoons of multi-coloured beads hanging between a series of ornate brooches. Anglo-Saxon women apparently shared their men's preference for "restless exuberance" in their jewellery and their taste for "brilliant vulgarity" in their overall appearance (Hawkes, et al 1965: 18).

Summary and Preliminary Observations

There is a certain degree of "congruence" in space usage between the rich male and female burials of this period. Objects of similar size and shape are similarly located within the space of the grave, regardless of the sex of the occupant. For instance, long narrow spears and weaving battens are often placed parallel to the body, on either side, with the blade of the batten and the head of the spear either beside the legs or outside the upper arm. Large round bowls are often placed across the legs or over the body in the women's burials, similarly positioned with the shields in the male burials. This similarity in placement or "congruence" may be seen in Figure 24.

The objects in the richer burials appear to be connected through stronger associations than just burial placement, however. Their metaphoric significance and the context in which they were used in life

appear to have been the primary determining factors for their inclusion in the burials. Discovering the role the objects played in the lives of the grave occupants is important to determining the nature of their symbolic, metaphoric and metonymic associations. The aspects of such relationships are set out in Table 8 and discussed further in Chapter IV.

Returning to Chapter II, we recall that the lady of the hall participated in the hall cup ritual and it seems likely that the women who performed this role in life may be found in those women's burials which contain the supplementary assemblages identified above (Tables 6, 7 and 9). Many of the less "rich" burials contain sets of objects which appear to be put together in an attempt to emulate the contents of the richer graves, for instance, with coin pendants and the iron spoons in place of bracteates and silver spoons. Examples of the "type" burial associated with the supplementary assemblage identified herein have been remarked upon across Anglo-Saxon England, most frequently in Kent (Table 9). It is possible that a particular "persona" or "role" is being portrayed. Given Enright's (1988, 1996) insights into the highly organized nature of the *comitatus* and the role of certain women in holding the warband together through hall ritual (and diplomacy), it is likely that the women buried with the supplementary assemblages may have acted in such a capacity, as *webbe* or *freoðuwebbe*, weavers of peace and prophecy. This aspect is discussed further in Chapter IV.

In the richer male graves, a "type" burial which exhibits strong associations with hall life and the warrior values of the *comitatus* may also be identified. The burial objects associated with these graves are indicative of the man's role within the warband as a warrior, a retainer, and possibly as a warlord. Often referred to as "weapon burials", these graves contain spears, shields and swords as well as the vessels and containers of ritual feasting. Rich weapon burials of this type appear across Anglo-Saxon England and appear to represent the ~~wapned~~ or warrior side of Anglo-Saxon society and this is discussed further in Chapter IV.

Chapter IV

Aesthetic Values, Archaeology and the Life of the Objects

Anglo-Saxon Colour Classification

Our common human physiology results in our having generalized responses to certain stimuli, yet "perception is an active and cognitive process in which several factors play a dominant role" (Coote 1992: 247). Colour vision is one of the chief cognitive systems that mediate the social perception of reality. Colour perception can evoke a positive emotional or "aesthetic response" (Morphy 1992: 181) and it is by means of such sensory experiences that people come to understand and organize the world around them (Lakoff 1987: 371); this is as true of the Anglo-Saxons as it is today. A review of the Anglo-Saxon colour classification system and the Old English colour vocabulary enhances our understanding of Anglo-Saxon aesthetic values.

The Anglo-Saxons, while distinguishing several hues, placed greatest stress on darkness and lightness²³ (Barley 1974: 17; Cramp 1957: 63; Millward 1989: 108). Scholars have been aware of this fundamental light-dark opposition in Old English literature and the symbolic load it carries since the nineteenth century. Old English poetry has been called "a literature of light and dark, white and black", and *Beowulf*²⁴ "a poem of bright day and darkest night, light ale-hall and gloomy wasteland" (Barley 1974: 17). The two most commonly referred to 'colours' in Old English poetry are black and white, expressed as *blæc*, *deorc*, *dun*, *sweart*, *wann* and *blac*, *hwit*, *beorht*, *leoht*, *scir*, respectively. Yet, it is "apparent that there is an equation of brightness and whiteness, darkness and blackness, or, more accurately, an absence of the distinction that follows from our own hue-stressing system" (Tables 10 and 11) (Barley 1974: 17). Anglo-Saxon colour words carried information which specified surface quality and reflectiveness along with hue (Barley 1974: 24) and so it is significant that "there is no Old English word

that can be regularly translated as 'colour'" (i.e. "hue") (Barley 1974: 21). There are several words, such as *færbu*, *hiw* and *bleo*, that can mean 'colour', but they are often better translated as 'appearance'. For the Anglo-Saxons, "colours were attributes of objects"; many of their colour words originated "as comparisons with concrete referents" (Barley 1974: 21; also Cameron 1968). These words eventually became detached from the original referent, taking on a separate lexical existence, yet their usage began in connection with a particular object or feature.

Although the Anglo-Saxon colour system did not stress hue, hues were of course distinguished (Millward 1989: 108). It is important to note, however, that there is substantial variation between Old English and Modern English in the position of boundaries. The Anglo-Saxons distinguished five basic colour terms, corresponding roughly to the Modern English blue, purple, red, yellow and green (Biggam 1995: 62; Millward 1989: 108). Because of the difference in category boundaries, Old English 'red' is not Modern English red, but contains hues which the Modern English system classifies as yellows (Table 12) (Barley 1974: 18).

Light and dark were associated with joy and sadness in the early Anglo-Saxon period and, by the coming of Christianity, the association had extended to good and evil as well (Barley 1974: 17-8). In both the early and the later Anglo-Saxon periods, "fairly light colours with an admixture of white [are] prominent"; "darker colours are less frequent and in some cases...have a sinister or threatening import" (Alexander 1975: 153). The "pale colours,...blobs of white and zigzag outlines...give a brilliant and vivid effect" and it appears "this is an aesthetic preference which is connected both with poetic conventions of light and dark as good and evil and also...with the Old English colour vocabulary" (Alexander 1975: 154). It is significant that words such as *wann* can mean both 'dark' and 'lurid' and *glæd* both 'happy' and 'shining'²⁵. This binary opposition between light and dark "serves as a basic structuring device, ordering the fields of experience and ethics" (Barley 1974: 18).

The Preference for Brilliance

The Anglo-Saxons included information in their 'colour' words which Modern English usage would not include under 'colour' at all. For example, the Old English *wann* is "used of such things as the raven, dark waves and dark chain-mail" (Barley 1974: 24). It is "applied to things negatively specified for hue, dark things which are glossy to the point of having highlights rippling across their surface" (Barley 1974: 24). This quality of "variegated surface-reflectivity" takes in not just hue but "the whole external appearance" of the referent, what might be termed its 'brightness' - its lightness, luster and scintillation²⁶ (Table 13) (Barley 1974: 24; Millward 1989: 108). "All of these effects are simultaneously present" and it is only through context or the addition of a prefix, that one or the other is made predominant (Cramp 1957: 63). This same basic quality occurs frequently in the Old English lexicon. For instance, *fealu* is applied to horses, glinting shield edges, waves and flame, *brun* to helmets, swords, waves and feathers. It has been suggested "that OE *fealo*, *brun* and *wann*, and also *græg*,²⁷ are terms generally applicable to glossy things" and that they have two components: hue and surface reflectivity (Barley 1974: 24). This attention to the discrimination of brightness above all other colour characteristics is of particular significance to the present study, marking as it does an aesthetic preference for brightness within Anglo-Saxon society.

In summary, the Anglo-Saxon approach to colour was far different from the modern Western hue-stressing system. The Anglo-Saxon system held words of "complex sense impression" that specified light and dark and general surface quality along with hue (Barley 1974: 24). The Old English colour classification system was concerned chiefly with the differentiation of light and dark. Brightness, light or brilliance carried positive emotional, social, and moral values. "Both as terms and concrete properties, colours are engaged as signs in vast schemes of social relations" (Sahlins 1977: 167). The Anglo-Saxon preference for

"brilliance" was significant to the ordering of experience and to the creation of meaning, relating to the ideology as well as the socio-political structure of the times.

Brilliance: A Quality in People, Things and Deeds

Throughout the corpus of Old English literature, "brightness" is a feature identified with people, objects and actions, and commented upon in the natural and supernatural world; it is always a positive valuation. Brightness as an aesthetic preference or value is important both to the organization of the *comitatus* and to the reinforcement of ideals inherent in the warband ideology. Examples of this usage and valuation of "brilliance" may be found in the heroic epic, *Beowulf*, but they are also apparent in the wisdom poems such as *The Fortunes of Men* and the *Maxims*.

The Anglo-Saxons used words denoting brightness or brilliance to describe the ornament, armament and the bearing of warriors who went off to win personal glory, greatness and splendour, to become *mære*, "famous" or "great"²⁶. In *Beowulf*, the watchman on the shore notes the coming of Beowulf and his men by their *beorhte rondas*, their "bright shields" (*Beowulf* 231). On approaching these strangers, the watchman knows immediately from Beowulf's carriage and the way he wears his armour and weapons that Beowulf is no mere retainer, unless his *wlite*, his "appearance" or "splendour", belies his *ænlic ansyn*, his "unique countenance" or "presence" (*Beowulf* 250). Here *wlite* may be interpreted as "brightness" or "adornment" as well,²⁹ and so it appears that the watchmen recognizes Beowulf's "greatness", his *mærð*, from the shining quality of the hero's physical presence as well as from his military adornments³⁰. The shining quality of Beowulf's armour and person is noted frequently throughout the poem; his *wlonc*, his "boldness of posture", is realized in the eloquence of his speech and the *dom*, the "shining" or "glory" of his deeds, in his defeat of both Grendel and Grendel's mother (*Beowulf* 338-47, 405-55, 1645). *Dome* is also used to refer to Beowulf's

stateliness and resplendence of form as he returns to the hall with Grendel's head, since his appearance with this token of success as well as the deed itself receive the favourable judgment of others (*Beowulf* 1645; Taylor 1990: 214). A strong connection between personal presence or charisma³¹ and a brightness of form and countenance is evident here within the Anglo-Saxon value system. These two positively valued qualities appear to be intrinsic to the figure of the *beorn mære*, the "famous warrior".

Terms for adornments which enhance the appearance of the wearer expressed in terms of brilliance are found in Old English literature in descriptions of women as well as men³². In Old English, a woman's attractiveness is described in terms of her adornments, not in terms of her own physical characteristics. Old English texts rarely mention the hue of a woman's hair, eyes or complexion (Millward 1989: 108). Instead, she is said to be *beaghroden*, "ring-adorned", *goldhroden*, "gold-adorned" or *sinchroden*, "treasure-adorned" (Taylor 1990: 216-18). The situation is similar with the descriptions of the physical characteristics of men. The appearance of a man or a troop is discussed in terms of the brightness of armour and weaponry and the degree to which they and their armament are *geatolic*, "adorned" (*Beowulf* 215, 308, 1401).

Both the men and women of Old English poetry were considered more attractive in appearance and more worthy in reputation by the addition of some bright object to their person. For instance, on leaving the land of the Danes, Beowulf gives a gift of a *bundengold swurd*, a "gold-bound sword" to the man who had guarded his boat (*Beowulf* 1900). Afterwards the man *wæs on meodubence mapme by weorpra yrlealafe*, "held in greater honour on the mead-bench because of that treasure and heirloom"³³ (*Beowulf* 1901-3). Similarly, after receiving the *wrætlicne wundeurmappum*, "wondrous treasure-neckring" of gold, Hroðgar's daughter's breast was *geweorðod*, "more nobly adorned"³⁴ (*Beowulf* 2173, 2175).

Damico's (1984) review of the role of female adornment concludes

that the radiance of women is an ornamental radiance which emphasizes a female strength or force distinct from the masculine battle strength. Nevertheless, the women of Old English literature share many of the characteristics admired in the heroic warriors (Damico 1990: 182). Women such as *Wealþeow*, *Judith* and *Elene* have "quickness of mind, sagacity of speech" and a "thoughtful intent toward duty" (Taylor 1990: 217). They are also of shining physical appearance, *beorht mæg*, "bright-maidens" described in terms such as *blachleor*, "bright-cheeked" or *ælfscienu*, "elf-shining" (*Judith* 58, 128, 254). Similar characteristics are observed in the *Valkyries*, the "sun-bright ones" who can be recognized by their "clear brilliant hue of countenance" (Damico 1990: 181; also Pollington 1996: 70). *Hwit*, *deall*, *glæm*, *leoht*, *scir*, *scine*, *scima* and *torht* all signify lightness or brightness, while designating radiance of form, particularly of the face (Taylor 1990: 212-7).

"Brilliance": The Personal Charisma of the Anglo-Saxon Warrior

Such descriptions, it seems, record the outward sign of some interior quality. A "particular force" has been observed in the Old English literature which is frequently manifested in terms for brightness; the manner in which this force or brightness is referred to "suggests a natural power" or "preternatural strength" (Taylor 1990: 217). Recognition of the strong connection between the Anglo-Saxon preference for brightness, the personal charisma of the Anglo-Saxon warrior and the conception of inner power is necessary to realizing the link between Anglo-Saxon beliefs and aesthetic values. In most societies, "social phenomena are not discrete: each phenomenon contains all the threads of which the social fabric is composed" (Mauss 1967: 1).

Within the Germanic tradition, light shines forth from the eyes of divinities including *Woden* and his creatures, the *Wælcyrge*s (Damico 1990: 181). In creating the light reflecting designs on sword, scabbard, buckle, brooch, etc., the Anglo-Saxons were imparting supernatural power

as well as surface decoration. Their craftsmen mixed the natural and the supernatural, working a form of effective magic which worked in harmony with the affective quality of the aesthetic value. The designs worked by the Germanic craftsmen were not meant to simply amuse the eye but to add to the brilliance of the warrior and so proclaim his success in battle.

As discussed in Chapter II, the ecstatic state is a recurring feature of the cult of *Woden* and central to the *berserkr* state of his warrior followers. While not a shaman himself, a *berserkr* may be seen as akin to a Plains Indian warrior who relies on guardian helpers - using animal names, animal behaviour, animal regalia and self-induced ecstasy. States of ecstasy, encouraged by the Germanic warrior cults,³⁵ were important as a "kinesthetic image schema" (Lakoff 1987: 372) which worked to create and shape the Anglo-Saxon value system. To predicate the metaphor of animal shape or behaviour upon the appearance or behaviour of an Anglo-Saxon warrior in battle-fury was a means to convey "inchoate psychological experiences" (Fernandez 1986: 25). The symbols used to give meaning to the kinesthetic experience began in metaphoric statement, using images from the natural world to give expression to the event (Fernandez 1986: 32, 43; Glosecki 1989: 89; and Johnson 1987: xv, 13-15). The states of *berserkr* rage may be likened to the extended periods of "flow" described by modern athletes (Csikszentmihalyi 1975, 1990, 1996; Enright 1998: 334), or the "adrenaline rush" recounted by war veterans (Shay 1994: 75-97).

Brilliance: An Aesthetic and Social Value

According to *The Fortunes of Men* (68-70), skill in combat and *gewealdenne wigplegan*, "mastery of the game of war" brought the Anglo-Saxon warrior *torhtlicne tiir*³⁶, "bright glory" or *guþe blæd*³⁷, "battle fame". In the poetry, the sun shines brightly on such deeds. After Beowulf's battle with Grendel, his *mæroðo mæned*, his "glory proclaimed" (*Beowulf* 857), and we are told that nowhere in the world was there a

shield-bearer nobler than he "beneath the broad sweep of the brilliant sky"³⁸ (*Beowulf* 859-801). For the Anglo-Saxon military elite, prowess, courage, generosity, a desire for fame and the fear of disgrace were meaningful ideals (Evans 1997: 85; Pollington 1996: 24). The *Maxims* declare that a man who is *sceomiande*, "ashamed" must walk in the shadows, but that *scir*, "brightness", or "bright things", ought to be in the light (*Maxims I*, A 66). Though evil and danger lurk in the darkness, "as soon as light dawns, and the sun, clad in heavenly brilliance shines from the south, anyone who so wishes will be able to walk once again with a bold heart to the mead-drinking"³⁹ (*Beowulf* 603-6). Such representations of brightness in Old English indicate the positive valuation given the concept within Anglo-Saxon society and shows its strong connection to their aesthetic value system.

Deeds of greatness, performed in *scir hame*, "shining armour" with bright sword or *beado leoma*, "battle-light", were rewarded in the *beorhte bold* or *goldsele*, the "bright building" or "gold hall", where the lord and the lady of the hall gave praise and splendid gifts to the worthy men (*Beowulf* 1441-54, 1895, 1523, 997, 715, 1020-34, 1195). Gilded and adorned weaponry and armour, rewards from the *gifstol*, both added to the personal wealth of the individual warrior and provided material proof of his success in battle. The "famous", the *mære*, wore their reputations upon their person for all to see - bright blades, shining shields and rings of gold (*Beowulf* 2036-8). In the end, the best warriors were those most "eager to win fame, glory" - those most *lofgeornost* (*Beowulf* 3182); death in battle ensured eternal brightness.

Sitting in the hall, the warriors of the *comitatus* shared mead from the same shining cup, from the *maðpumfæt mære*, the "famous" or "glorious treasure", delivered by the hands of the lady of the hall who walked amongst them *goldhroden*, "gold adorned" and bright-faced (*Beowulf* 2405, 614, 616-629). The lady with the mead cup accompanied each drink with an exhortation to display bravery, generosity and loyalty for her approval;

in accepting the hospitality of the cup, the warriors accepted the consequent obligations (Russom 1988: 182). The mead hall stood with timbered gables traced with gilding and filled with famous warriors; its "light blazed" forth "over many lands"¹⁰, illuminating the darkness - *lixe se leoma ofer landa fela* (*Beowulf* 307-11).

The *wynn* or "joys" of the hall, the *mondreamas*, "the joy of life among men"¹¹, the feasting and singing and camaraderie, promoted and reinforced the values of the society, the ritual providing a sense of timeless permanence to the group (Evans 1997: 93; Pollington 1996: 33). The poems celebrate "not simply the hall as a building but the social system associated with it" (Hume 1974: 64). Though assumptions about halls were never brought together into "an articulated social philosophy", the hall "had a positive value based on [its] role as protecting roof and as a centre of power"; life within its walls was "part of a larger pattern of obligations which gave a retainer the security of a defined position in his society" (Hume 1974: 64-8). Within the hall, recognition of worth was given publicly and status was unambiguous; it was formally acknowledged by place on the bench (Evans 1997: 97). The ceremony and ritual, the brightness of the hall-treasures and decoration, the music and stories of past heroes imposed pattern and order on hall life, "making it strikingly different from the chaos outside" (Hume 1974: 66). The structure of the hall was "poetically equivalent to the *mondream* it [enclosed], the best feature that society could offer to its members" (Hume 1974: 67). Destruction of the hall meant the end of order, social pleasure and security, the end of a way of life. It is not surprising that the *goldsele*, the "gold" or "gleaming hall", with all its joys, occupied a central place in Anglo-Saxon thought (Evans 1997: 93) and functioned as a "positive existential metaphor" within their social world (Hume 1974: 69; Evans 1997: 88).

This brief review of Old English literature reveals how intertwined was the Anglo-Saxon positive preferencing of brightness with the social

mechanisms and values of the culture, with the ideology and the beliefs of these peoples. The quality of brightness was seen to be present in people, objects and deeds and the valuations associated with brightness were employed to promote, reward and reinforce the ideals of the society and to fortify the structural organization of the *comitatus*.

The Wapned and the Webbe in Literature and Archaeology

Old English literature is also a source of information on the nature of various Anglo-Saxon social roles (Fell 1984: 25). Two particular figures in the literature are of primary concern to the present study: the warlord and the lady of the hall - the *wapned* and the *webbe*. Both the wisdom and the heroic poetry portray Anglo-Saxon men as weapon-adorned warriors seeking to become *mære* or great in battle. The ideal lord is the ultimate warrior, famous for his war deeds and his personal courage, a skilled strategist and a generous gift-giver. Heroic poetry thus reinforced values and beliefs that tended to strengthen the warband's structure while condemning detrimental behaviour. Therefore, the poetry paid close attention to the duties and obligations of all members of the warband since they were fundamental to the heroic value system upon which the *comitatus* was built (Evans 1997: 83).

As noted in Chapter II, the lady of the hall is often referred to as *freoðuwebbe* or *friðusibb folca*, literally "peaceweaver" or "peacebond of the people" (*Beowulf* 1942, 2017). A recent review of the contexts in which these compound forms appear show that the term "does not necessarily reflect a Germanic custom of giving a woman in marriage to a hostile tribe in order to secure peace" as it was once thought (Sklute 1990: 208). "Rather it is a poetic metaphor referring to the person whose function it seems to be to perform openly the action of making peace by weaving to the best of her art a tapestry of friendship and amnesty" (Sklute 1990: 208), and by so doing to construct bonds of allegiance within the *comitatus*, between the warleader and his warband,

and between the company of the hall and outsiders (Enright 1988, 1990; Sklute 1990: 208).

The warband was organized along aristocratic lines and its members were primarily of the dominant social class. It is this dominant military class with its martial ideals, activities and material culture that receives the exclusive focus of the heroic literature (Evans 1997: 41). While the strongest evidence for the nature of the *wæpned* and *webbe* roles comes to us from *Beowulf*, the gnomic verse of the *Maxims* also gives us something of the role of a young warrior,

Geongne æþeling sceolan gode gesiðas
byldan to beaduwe and to beahgife... (*Maxims II* 14-15)

A young prince ought to be encouraged in war and in generosity by good companions.

as well as an insight into life in the *comitatus*,

Gold geriseþ on guman sweorde,
sellic sigesceorp, sinc on cwene,
go scop gumum, garniþ werum,
wig towiþre wicfreopa healdan.
Scyld sceal cempaþ, sceaft reafere,
sceal bryde beag.... (*Maxims B* 56-61)

It is right for gold to be on a man's sword, and for a woman to wear precious things, fine clothes to be admired and give prestige; it is right for men to have a good poet and for warriors to fight with spears, defending the peace of their homes against war. A shield is for the warrior, a spearshaft for the raider, a ring for the bride...

More importantly, the *Maxims* confirm many of the details of the ritual roles of the *wæpned* and the *webbe* within the hall as they are set out in *Beowulf*:

Cyning sceal mid ceape cwene gebicgan
bunum ond beagum. Bu sceolon ærest
geofum god wesan. Guð sceal in eorle,
wig geweaxan, on wife geþeon,
leof mid hyre leodum, leohtmod wesan,
rune healdan, rumheort beon
mearum on marmum, meodorædenne
for gesiðmægen symle æghwær
eodor æþelinga ærest gegretan,
forman fulle to frean hond
ricene geræcan, ond him ræd witan
boldagendum bæm ætsomne. (*Maxims B* 10-21)

A king must endow his queen with good things, with beakers and bracelets;

both must from the beginning be generous with gifts. Valour and battle-power must grow in the man, and the woman must prosper, loved by her people; [she must] be cheerful-minded, keep secrets, be generous with horses and treasures; at the mead-drinking [she must] always and everywhere in the presence of the warrior-band first greet the protector of nobles, at once put the first cup in her lord's hand, and give wise advice for the pair of them, the hall-rulers¹².

It has been argued that the cup ritual described above was the earliest royal inauguration ritual within the *comitatus*, based on its simplicity, antiquity and applicability to both house-lord and territorial ruler. By such means, the ruler was recognized when his wife served him before others (Enright 1996: 89). The advice sought and given by Germanic women to their men is well attested elsewhere (Damico 1990: 160; Evans 1997: 96).

The *wæpned* and the *webbe* figures of the poetry are, it appears, extremely pertinent to an analysis of the two "type" burials identified in Chapter III, since those high status burials contain objects which appear to connect them with the roles identified in the poetry (Meaney 1981: 245). It is obvious that the Old English literary evidence and the archaeological materials are complementary sources which should not be seen in isolation (Cramp 1957: 57).

Burial Objects: Expressions of Aesthetic Value

For the most part, objects found in the archaeological burial context are the work of the jeweller and the metalworker. Articles of wood, horn and textile tend not to survive, yet there is no reason to believe that objects fashioned from these materials were not elaborated in some way, and in colours and designs similar to those observed on the less perishable artifacts. However, those objects which do exist exhibit the Anglo-Saxon preference for the "brilliant and vivid" identified above. The weapons, weaving tools, jewellery and other forms of body ornament, as well as the vessels associated with feasting, found in the *webbe* and *wæpned* burials were crafted in such a way as to attain the maximum effect of brightness, lustre and scintillation possible. The

aesthetic sense shown linguistically above "can be paralleled from archaeology in the Anglo-Saxon preoccupation with techniques of ornament which produce an effect of light and shade" (Cramp 1957: 63).

A great deal of the work of the Anglo-Saxon or Germanic metalworker is in small scale, and the ornament "an integral part of the object, executed by the same craftsman" (Speake 1980: 2). Full appreciation of the intrinsic qualities of this ornament demanded a close visual scrutiny (Speake 1980: 2). Basically, two kinds of decoration were used by Anglo-Saxon jewellers and metalworkers to create such an effect. The first resulted in "colouristic effects", that is, effects which accented both hue and brightness; the second resulted in "textural effects" (Leigh 1990: 108) which played up the amount of light seemingly reflected from the surface. Niello, garnet inlay, and mercury gilding were used to create colour and contrast, while incising and repeated impressions were used to break the smooth surface of polished metal by punching, notching, etc. (Leigh 1990: 108).

Some of the most elaborate brooches, pendants, sword beads and belt buckles were constructed individually, with their ornament consisting of "gold cells, or *cloisons*, painstakingly built in elaborate shapes and filled with semi-precious stones" such as garnets, or with pieces of red or blue glass or white shell (Figure 42) (Owen-Crocker 1986: 27). Garnet and white and garnet and gold were favourite combinations, the darkness of the garnets contrasting with the lightness of gold and shell. In this technique, the cells are lined with gold foil to catch and reflect the light (Evison 1987: 44). One of the more desirable characteristics of garnets (or even red glass) mounted in this fashion is the way they catch and reflect varying amounts of light, changing in colour as they do so from a deep bright red to a dark, blackish, blood colour. This change from light to dark was contrived "by various means, sometimes by varying the pattern of the gold foil backing, possibly by a foil of silver or gold with silver content, occasionally by setting the garnet without a

foil backing, and probably also by varying the thickness of the stones" (Evison 1987: 44).

Significantly, blood red designs are popular in many traditional cultures; the colour is seen to harbour a sort of dynamism, to carry symbolic life powers that ward off demons and illness. Beings who possess red inspire fear; warriors are feared because they release blood, blacksmiths because they are masters of fire, of the red-hot metal which they forge into weapons that shed blood and tools that wound the earth (Barber 1994: 94; Zahan 1977: 56-64).

"The reserved silver zigzag and niello triangles border" was "a well-defined feature" of the Kentish metalworkers' craft (Evison 1987: 39). Niello is a black inlaying material, of either a silver or copper mixed sulphide, applied in solid or molten form to indentations in the metal surface (Leigh 1990: 108). On silver brooches and other pieces of Kentish design, these indentations consist of rows of repeating triangles, sometimes with two rows in opposition - the black against silver creating a strong contrast "which gains in impact from the zig-zag metal lines seen in reserve between the pairs of triangles" (Figure 43) (Leigh 1990: 108). This technique makes the silver "peaks" appear lighter and shinier, while the dark inlay filling the indentations creates the desired contrasting shadow or darkness. Niello is often used as part of an effect referred to as "light and shade", a pattern of alternating plain and beaded sections (Philp 1973: 190). Gilding, in bright silver or gold, was applied to all manner of objects, from buckles and brooches to buckets, while tin overlaid onto bronze resulted in a "shining whiteness" of surface ornament (Davidson 1968: 353).

For textural effects, notching or chip carving was used on the edges and flat surfaces (Leigh 1990: 109); this technique of breaking small pieces off in a regular pattern of spacing produced a contrast in light and dark shading, adding to the luster of the piece. The sharp ridges "reflect light and shadow and give the surface...a three-

dimensional impression" (Figure 44) (Magnus 1997: 194). Stamping repeated punched shapes was also used to create a textural effect (Leigh 1990: 109) and this technique also worked to catch and reflect the light, as did the pierced or open work applied to the edges of bronze bowls, etc. which allowed light to shine through. Repoussé work was also an effective way to create surface texture. Hammering or pressing on the reverse side produced figures and designs in relief. This technique was common to Anglo-Saxon metalwork and a variation of the method was applied to leather work, such as that found on sheaths or scabbards, as well. The symbols incised into or nielloed onto the metal surfaces of the weaponry and personal ornamentation added to the scintillation of the objects they decorated not only visually, but also symbolically: the designs most often employed, the swastika, lightning bolt, ring and dot, and whirling disc all stood for nature's sources of light, the sun, lightning and fire, as well as the gods of the sky, *Thunor* and *Woden*.

Pattern-welding is a forging process which gave a decorative aspect as well as strength to the sword blades, seaxes and weaving battens it was used to create (Evison 1987: 25; Lang and Ager 1989: 115). In this process, separate rods of metal are welded together into rods and then twisted to give the blade added strength and a "certain vitality" (Figure 45) (Engstrom, et al 1990: 4; Pollington 1996: 108). The process also results in a boldly streaked or variegated pattern (Cramp 1957: 63; Engstrom, et al 1990: 4). In Old English literature, these powerful swords are often ancient and purportedly the work of *Weland*, the gods or giants (Davidson 1962: 103-6). There is a high degree of polish to the pattern-welded sword and the central panel "suggests molten metal poured out in a narrow stream as the light catches the surface" (Figure 46) (Davidson 1962: 107). The final stage in the making of a blade was the bringing up of the pattern; a type of tannic or acetic acid was probably used to give the "deep blue-black colour" to the steel (Davidson 1962: 28). The high degree of polish mentioned in the sources was probably

achieved using a type of mildly abrasive silica (Davidson 1962: 108). Weaving battens and pin beaters were often made from bone or ivory as well as steel (Hoffman 1964: 279, 320), materials which share a certain iridescence and which develop a luster with use.

Seaxes, spearheads, knives and battens were also often decorated with "incised lines, grooves and a variety of metal inlays or combinations of these" (Figure 47) (Gale 1989: 76). Decorative inlays were created using "plaited wire set into the blade, creating a herringbone pattern when laid in two or more rows side by side" (Gale 1989: 76). Swords and other arms were "immersed in wax or fat" to be "kept free of rust" (Davidson 1962: 149) and the lanolin oil in woollen scabbard linings kept sword blades shining (Evison 1956: 100).

Many of the materials used by the Anglo-Saxons were chosen deliberately for their natural brilliance or luminescence. For instance, one of the reasons Baltic amber was so popular was undoubtedly "its golden brilliance" which also "caused it to be connected with the sun" (Meaney 1981: 70). White quartz and rock crystal were also associated with fire and light (Meaney 1981: 95), probably because of their inherent brightness and luster, and these materials were used to form beads, spindle whorls, amulets and "life stones" (Meaney 1981: 198). The Anglo-Saxons would have responded to "the prismatic beauty of crystal" in similar fashion to the many traditional peoples who consider crystal "solidified light" (Figures 48, 49) (Glosecki 1989: 29; but see Eliade 1972: 47, 50-2, 138).

Ritual drinking vessels, the *bedweg* or "whetting cups" that stimulated heroic behaviour (Russom 1988: 181) - claw beakers, cone beakers and palm cups - were made of translucent blown glass in olive green, blue-green or amber. "Exceptionally thin and clear" these vessels are often quite delicate (Davidson and Webster 1967: 21) and decorated with spiralling trails of spun glass which are dark against the surface of the glass. These "bright cups" are the most called upon metaphor for

the life of "joy" and prosperity enjoyed in the hall (Figure 50) (Magennis 1985: 507-18).

Beads and spindle whorls were also often of glass and came in a variety of colours, usually "parti-coloured" with a dark background colour such as red or blue or brown decorated with trails or marverings, dots, spirals, zig-zag and rosette patterns added in contrastingly lighter shades of white, turquoise or opaque yellow. Many glass beads had designs cut into them as well, adding to their brightness (Meaney 1981: 195, 200, 202, 206). Some whorls were fashioned from a chalk material containing iron pyrites. Grooves cut into the chalk material revealed the lustrous, brass-yellow accents of the pyrite. Many amulets were picked up and carried in the first place simply because of their striking appearance (Meaney 1981: 6).

Gold thread or braid applied to textiles was also a popular means of ornamentation amongst the Germanic peoples. In Kent, the most commonly found items decorated in this fashion are the gold headbands found in the webbe burials, but cuffs and cloak borders were similarly decorated. To create the brocade, gold threads were woven into the fabric and then flattened and burnished, giving the appearance of solid gold against the background of the textile (Owen-Crocker 1986: 59). Hall wall-hangings and royal standards were probably brocaded as well; archaeological evidence from the Continent suggests such a possibility as do references in *Beowulf* (Davidson 1968: 352-54; Fell 1984: 46; *Beowulf* 1204, 2958). Diamond and broken diamond patterned twills were favourites of the Anglo-Saxons (Crowfoot 1967: 37-9), and if worked in differing hues of warp and weft, these patterns would have resulted in a weave of contrasting dark and light (Figure 51). Fabrics created from scarlet, blue, violet, purple, saffron and white were known to the Anglo-Saxons (Owen-Crocker 1986: 86-90), and worn in combination with the brilliant objects found in the burials.

All objects worn on the body were meant to be visible, both to

those viewing the wearer and to the wearers themselves. Beads hung in cascades down the front of women's dresses, multiple keys, the crystal balls and other small objects hung from women's waists, chiming with their movements. Parti-coloured glass whorls twirled spindles like tops, warding off the Evil Eye (Meaney 1981: 7-8, 208). Belts were worn diagonally across the chest as baldrics, with belt mounts and buckles clearly visible. Seaxes were worn across the abdomen, in the front of the body as well, while the symbols which decorated the handles of swords, done in niello, cloisonné or incise-work, were placed on the pommels where they would be most noticeable. It is here, as well, that the prestigious sword rings were placed: on the hilt or pommel, the *meces mærdō*, the "sword's glory"⁴³. While the bright metal objects described above would certainly have glittered in the light of day, it was in the softer yellow glow provided by the flickering fire and torches of the hall where their lustre and brilliance would have shown to the best advantage. It is here where interlocking animal and human shapes would have shifted in the light, where the crystal, beads and weaponry would have picked up the motion of the flames and reflected that light in their surfaces as the Anglo-Saxon men and women jostled together. It is here where the swirl of bright mead held in amber glass would have signalled the comfort, camaraderie and *communitas* which were the "joys" of the hall.

Wapned and Wabbe, The Life of the Objects

A multiplicity of social roles, real or ideal, may be identified from the assortment of objects found in burials. The greater variety and number of objects found in Anglo-Saxon women's graves has often been commented upon and this diversity in objects may reflect a greater range and flexibility of social roles and interpersonal relationships open to Anglo-Saxon women than was possible for their male counterparts (Arnold 1997: 185, 196). The wider range of objects found in Anglo-Saxon women's

burials leads to difficulties in interpretation as well (Fell 1984: 40). However, once it is realized that any one Anglo-Saxon woman may have performed a number of roles and that combinations of these differing social functions are being represented in the burial, the situation becomes more clear. With that in mind, the archaeological record becomes not a random collection of isolated objects, "but a coherent material construction - a contemporary native model of human orderings of the surrounding world" (Figure 52) (Alkemade 1997: 183).

Webbe Burials

In the case of the *webbe* or weaver graves, the differing social roles represented are those which were played out within the context of the *comitatus*, primarily those carried out in ceremonies of the hall. As discussed in Chapter II, the *webbe*, or lady of the hall, played an important diplomatic role in weaving peace within the *comitatus*. Her words and gifts encouraged the warriors to make good on their oaths to attain glory in battle (Enright 1988, 1996; Fell 1984: 37; Sklute 1990). The *webbe*'s original function probably included the foretelling of the outcome of battle; it is said Germanic women cast lots and read divinations to decide the expediency of warfare (Damico 1990: 159; *Germania*). From the La Tène period, Germanic warleaders maintained *sibyls* or seers to interpret the supernatural and their positive prophesies influenced the morale of the troops (Enright 1996: 62). The connection between the warleader and the *sibyl* can be traced historically from the time of *Civilis* and *Veleda* in the first century AD, during the same period during which the Germanic *comitatus* came into existence (Enright 1996: 93). Strong mythic traditions reinforce this connection: the goddess *Freyja* was seen as the "wife" of the reigning king in Scandinavia; the *Valkyries* served as guardians and consorts to the heirs of noble families (Davidson 1993: 111; Davidson 1969a: 222; Pollington 1996: 46). Given the utility of the prophetess in the binding, morale

building and governing of the *comitatus*, there is every reason to think that the warlord/prophetess pairing (which probably came to be a marriage union as well) continued as long as the warband structure lasted (Enright 1996: 94). Evidence provided by Old English heroic poetry confirms the significance of the role of the lady of the hall, as do the *Maxims* (as shown above).

In Chapter III, a series of rich women's burials were identified which may be interpreted as belonging to the women portrayed as the peaceweavers of the hall in Old English literature (Figure 53). What follows is a closer look at those objects which make up the *webbe* assemblage in an attempt to reveal their importance to the performance of the *webbe*'s functions as weaver, healer, *sibyl* and keeper of the hearth and stores. The drinking and feasting rituals of the hall appear to be the principal objects which set the *webbe*-type burials apart from the graves of other Anglo-Saxon women. As discussed in Chapter III, the *webbe* assemblage is made up of one or more of each of the following: a weaving implement, a feasting vessel or container, a gold bracteate or bracteate-type pendant, and an amulet.

Any weaving tool, spindle, shears, pin-beater or batten, may stand metonymically for the role of weaver (Figure 54 illustrates loom). However, in the *webbe* burials, they do not do so simply as a technological metaphor, though much of the Anglo-Saxon woman's power and prestige did result from her role in textile production and, particularly in the case of the *webbe*, her ability to give valued gifts of cloth on her own behalf (*Beowulf* 1192-6; Fell 1984: 40-5; Glosecki 1989: 60; Owen-Crocker 1986: 23); in Germanic tradition, prophecy is also symbolized by the carrying of weaving tools, particularly the weaving batten or the beam. Women at the loom are said to be working effective magic, weaving fetters that bind and thereby controlling fate and ensuring the outcome of battle (Barber 1994: 155; Enright 1996: 111, 113, 117; 1990: 60).

In the early Anglo-Saxon period, the production or elaboration of

sophisticated textiles involving expensive materials was probably carried out by women in the higher classes. In the richer households, slaves trained to do the work in greater quantities were supervised by the lady of the hall (Fell 1984: 40-1). It is possible that the prestigious weaving swords found in elite *webbe* burials, those often converted from war-swords or shaped from bone or ivory in the form of a sword, marked the lady's authority over a group of weavers, much as the same weapon is considered to mark the presence of a man of rank or authority in the warrior graves (Figures 32, 55).

Weaving was a heavy task; the weft threads had to be beaten violently in an upward direction on warp-weighted looms (Figure 56). It was also communal work, the threading of the warp onto the beam and the passing of the shuttle back and forth sometimes requiring the co-operation of at least two women⁴⁴. Well into this century, "European women often sang or chanted ritual songs to set the rhythm of the endless repetitive motions" (Barber 1994: 85). Old Norse poetic allusions to the use of the pin-beater speak of it producing a humming sound during weaving much like "the action of a plectrum on the strings of a lyre" (Figure 57) (Hoffman 1964: 320). It is interesting to note that one of the most common ways of encouraging dissociation is the use of monotonous sound - to induce trance hypnotically. A slow, droning chant may also have the cognitive effect of blunting one's awareness of the pain of aching muscles and the length of time spent, much the same benefits as are attributed to periods of "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi 1975, 1990, 1996). The use of rhythmic chanting or drumming to achieve altered states of consciousness is common to the circumpolar regions associated with the classic form of shamanism (Child and Child 1992: 86-9; Glosecki 1989: 10); this method may have been used by Anglo-Saxon women to weave protective spells into the cloth for the clothing of the household (Enright 1996: 118) or perhaps to "inspire or animate the product...and draw analogies between weaving and the life cycle of birth, maturation,

death and decay" (Weiner, et al 1989: 3). It has been suggested that perhaps the rationale behind consulting women regarding warfare and for the warleaders' maintaining a seeress was that it was man's role to fight and a woman's to protect him with the magic that was peculiarly hers and not accessible to him otherwise (Enright 1998: 118).

A pottery vessel from Hallstatt shows a scene with one woman spinning, one weaving at a weighted loom, two with their hands above their heads as if dancing and a fifth figure holding either a lyre or a frame for making the kind of plaiting called *sprang* (Barber 1994: 87). As ethnographic study has pointed out, dancing, with or without accompaniment, is a common adjunct to ecstasy (Child and Child 1992: 86; Eliade 1972: 122-5, 160; Glosecki 1989: 10).

In any event, there is an endless variability and related social significance to both the processes and the products of the loom. Ethnography shows that "cloth is a repository for prized fibres and dyes, dedicated human labour, and the virtuoso artistry of competitive aesthetic development" (Weiner, et al 1989: 2). Cloth attracts the attention of power holders, those who would "awe spectators with sartorial splendour" or strategically distribute beautiful fabrics (Weiner et al 1989: 2). As can be seen from later Anglo-Saxon sources, cloth acquires social and political significance in the domain of bestowal (Fell 1984: 46). The cloth-givers on such occasions generate political power as well, committing recipients to loyalty and obligation in the future. In many societies where women monopolize all or most of the cloth production, as in early Anglo-Saxon England, women generally have a larger say in distribution, giving the cloths that tie the living to the dead, the bride's family to the groom's family, the politically dominant to their dependent clients. They often preside over the allocation of cloth at major rituals. As producers of important textiles, women often influence decisions about bestowals regardless of their rank. Ethnographic evidence also shows that the position of women

as weavers of valuable textiles can offset or redress their subjugation after marriage and that the magic in weaving can be used to warn off in-laws. In many warlike societies, myths juxtapose textiles and the sacred traditions of warfare - a man's prowess is confirmed in battle, a woman's by weaving an elaborate garment (Barber 1994: 90, 128, 149, 155, 210; Weiner, et al 1989: 21-3). In societies where women are the main producers of cloth and control its distribution, "their contribution to social and political life is considerable" (Weiner, et al 1989: 21-3).

In Anglo-Saxon society, it is known that beside the garments given as gifts within the ritual of the *comitatus*, the women produced wall-hangings in great numbers (Fell 1984: 46). These wall-hangings, including the story-telling cloth given by *Byrhtnoð*'s widow to the foundation at Ely (Fell 1984: 46), added to the brightness of the hall, but also to the honour and fame of warriors in their pursuit of *mærð* or glory. In *Beowulf*, the walls shone with the gold brocade of woven wall hangings, "and much that was wonderful to see for all men who gaze on such things" (*Beowulf* 994-6). Anglo-Saxon women also wove the standards or banners which were used to mark the leader's place in battle and to mark his final resting place. Such objects possessed royal, ceremonial and religious significance (Davidson 1968: 354) and were considered a physical symbol of the warband, the flag round which they would rally in battle and the emblem of their group identity. It was also a symbol of their luck and in effect a group 'soul' which could not be allowed to fall into the hands of the enemy while the warband still existed (Pollington 1996: 76).

Gold bracteate pendants are important features of the *webbe* burials. These gold discs are almost always found in association with weaving tools, particularly weaving battens, in the rich burials of a few elite women. "These women may have had a special position in their local society to judge from their monumental graves and the composition of their grave goods" (Magnus 1997: 195). "This female dominance stands in

contrast to the mainly male motifs of the iconography... of the bold bracteates" (Magnus 1997: 195); however, strong metaphorical connections within these women's burials between weaving and prescient powers of women have been confirmed by the discovery, in women's burials on the Continent, of a series of bracteates bearing the likeness of a goddess, who may have associations with *Woden's* consort, *Friga*, carrying a weaving beam from the top of a warp-weighted loom (Enright 1990: 70; Davidson 1993: 40). The similarities between these pendants and the extent of their geographic locations have been interpreted as evidence for a long distance linkage within the Germanic world "in which the worship of a goddess and amulets worn by women played a significant role" (Enright 1990: 70; Enright 1996: 110-11, 117).

The imagery most common to the bracteates can be linked to the cult of *Woden*. Bracteates bearing what is believed to be *Woden's* image, a male head in profile, or the image of one of his warrior followers on horseback with flying birds overhead, have been found in women's burials across Kent and on the Continent (Evison 1987: 51-5). Other bracteates show scenes of dismemberment or shapeshifting, or bear the figure of a dancing man, again possibly *Woden* or one of his cult practitioners. The Risely Pendant, one of the finer Anglo-Saxon pieces, shows a *Wodenesque* figure who may be wrestling with, or listening to, two birds, possibly Thought and Memory (Figure 58). The figure on this pendant is very similar to the man of the Finglesham buckle plate which has also been interpreted as representing *Woden* or one of his adherents (Figure 59) (Glosecki 1989: 70; Hawkes, et al 1965: 20).

All of these bracteate images have strong transcendental meanings, the horse and birds symbolic of ascent (into the upper spirit realm) or flight; such symbolism is widespread in cultures from Scandinavia to Indonesia (Eliade 1972: 137, 296, 362 and 423; Glosecki 1989: 78). The dancing figure is believed to be *Woden* in ecstasy "having worked himself into a frenzy" in order to rid the world of the monsters often depicted

with him (Magnus 1997: 194-8). A bracteate from Norway shows the "ecstatic god" with "head thrown back with a curling breath slipping out of his mouth"; "this representation is seen on many gold bracteates", as well as on the large relief brooches and "is thought to indicate the free soul of *Woden*" (Figure 7) (Magnus 1997: 198). As discussed in Chapter II, the "Germanic peoples believed that humans as well as the gods had two souls; one was bound to the body, the other was free. The free soul could leave the body as breath during sleep, fever or hallucinations, and venture out seeking new knowledge or to fight against evil" (Magnus 1997: 198). *Woden* sought wisdom about the future in a state of trance or *seiðr* (Magnus 1997: 198), a skill he is said to have learned from his consort, *Friga*, who originated the divination ceremony or *seance* (Davidson 1969b: 92; Glosecki 1989: 97); thus, through the iconography of the bracteates, the link between the weaver women in whose burials his image is found and the act of prophesy is forged.

Although *Woden* knew and used *seiðr* to foresee the future, to cause death and misfortune, etc., this practice remained the concern of the goddess and unsuitable to a man. There is reason to believe this kind of magic remained a feminine specialty and it is conducted by female figures in Icelandic, Scandinavian and Germanic texts who go from farm to farm, carrying a staff or weaving beam, revealing fortunes and predicting the weather. Music played an important part in the *spokana's* ecstasy and she was said to travel through space in the form of an animal; the song she sang to unlock her soul for questing could only be sung by a woman (Glosecki 1989: 97-100). There is an "apparent association of shamanizing with women in saga lore" (Glosecki 1989: 100). As in many cultures, Germanic women were considered gifted in supernatural powers; most likely the association of women with the *seiðr* grew out of this early high status for Germanic women (Glosecki 1989: 100).

Burials containing bracteates have also been found with runic engravings or markings either on the bracteates themselves or on the back of accompanying relief brooches (Magnus 1997: 195). The magic or sacral character of the bracteates is strengthened by these runic inscriptions which may be seen to "connect the elite with the gods" (Magnus 1997: 194). Bracteates inscribed with the word *lauk* or *leek*, the name of a plant with purportedly invigorating properties is a further indication of the healing and amuletic powers widely attributed to the gold bracteate form; the association of healing with divine power is well known (Hines 1997: 392).

Gold bracteates are not common, even in elite burials, but when they occur they are often found in pairs, sometimes in combination with gold bracteate-type pendants which share many of the same connotations, particularly those pendants made from perforated Roman coins bearing a *Woden*-like male profile (Enright 1990; Davidson 1993: 37-45; Magnus 1997: 195; Chaney 1970: 38). It is worthwhile to note that a number of the less well-furnished women's burials often include a bracteate-type pendant, sometimes a perforated coin, sometimes a Roman intaglio, and sometimes an escutcheon from a bronze feasting bowl, which may carry symbolic content similar to that of the bracteates and may be less expensive versions⁴⁵. The escutcheon pendants in particular have associations with the feast hall and so with the role played by the *webbe* in supervising the feast (Dickinson 1993: 51). Bracteate-type pendants are often found together with what may be seen as the less prestigious weaving tools, the spindle whorls, shears, combs, etc. Such substitutions, if that is what they are, may indicate that a particular type of costume - or role - was being emulated.

As set out in Chapter III, amulets are the third class of objects which may be seen to be diagnostic of the *webbe*-type burial. Amuletic

and healing powers have been attributed to the pieces of bone, animal teeth, cowrie shell and fossil materials found in Anglo-Saxon women's burials as well as to spindle whorls and beads constructed of the same materials - materials which do not disintegrate, materials where the strength of the animal spirit resides (Glosecki 1989: 24-6). Like weaving implements, amulets are strong indicators of the animistic or shamanic nature of prophetic power; the pieces of amber or glass and the crystal balls which often form part of the *webbe* assemblage are particularly significant in this respect (Evison 1987: 98-9; Glosecki 1989: 28-9; Meaney 1981: 245-60, 275), often regarded, as they are, by traditional peoples as an outward sign of shamanic power (Eliade 1972: 47, 50-2; Lommel 1967: 49). When rubbed, Baltic amber, the most frequently found amuletic substance in Anglo-Saxon burials, has an "electric power of attraction" (Meaney 1981: 67-70) which may have been used to pull disease from the ill. Interpretations which recognized the healing, protecting and divining properties of these objects have long acknowledged the implications of the crystal balls found in the burials of elite Anglo-Saxon women (Arnold 1982: 64; Damico 1990: 160; Meaney 1981: 95, 242, 248-60; Owen 1986: 58).

Crystal balls are commonly found in association with ornate perforated, or sieve, spoons (Figure 60). Usually located between the knees of the buried individual, the sieve spoon and crystal ball most likely hung from a cord or thong attached to the waist and so were always ready to hand (Figure 32) (Meaney 1981: 82-4). Aside from their amuletic qualities, the sieve spoon and ball may give evidence for other aspects of the woman's role in Anglo-Saxon society. It has been suggested that the crystal balls marked her place as keeper of the hearth - the heart of the hall (Evans 1997: 93); it is also possible they are tokens of her power as a *sibyl* or seeress. The sieve spoons are believed to represent the woman's "ability to serve expensive imported wine" or some other

drink, such as mead or beer at table (Meaney 1981: 247-8) and so likely signal her authority over the distribution of ceremonial beverages and her participation in hall drinking ritual. The iron spoons found in less well-furnished burials may have served a similar purpose (Evison 1987: 118) and, if so, provide a further indication that a particular role was being emulated by women of lower station.

In any event, pottery wine bottles have been found throughout Kent and on the Isle of Wight and it is possible that the sieve spoons in Anglo-Saxon England were connected to wine service (Meaney 1981: 86). Sieve spoons and crystal balls were also popular with the Germanic peoples of the Continent who had probably seen them in use by the Romans; the "strainer is a well-known elegant domestic appliance in Greece and Rome, where it was used for clarifying wine" (Meaney 1981: 86; also Enright 1996: 106). Examples of such strainers are found in Scandinavian burials as well, often in association with drinking services and feasting vessels (Meaney 1981: 87). There is a likely connection between the sieve spoons and drink service in the hall (Enright 1996: 106), although cosmetic or medicinal uses should not be ruled out (Evison 1987: 118). Both crystal balls and sieve spoons have been found in Anglo-Saxon women's burials into the Christian period and it is possible that they were markers of the woman's service in the hall, of her role in the political organization of the *comitatus*, somehow signifying her place as lady of the hall. Since this role would most likely have been slow to change, adapting gradually with the growth of centralized government and the advent of Christianity, these objects and the position they signified would have been retained into the early Christian period.

A common feature of the group of rich female graves identified herein, is the number and variety of brooches included in the burials along with the objects described above, as well as "the unusually high incidence of metal finger rings and armlets", including "armlets of

textile, brocaded with gold thread", also present (Owen-Crocker 1986: 58-9). Furthermore, at least ten of the *webbe*-type burials also contain gold-brocaded headbands. This "brocaded metal would resemble solid gold" and "the effect of the gold pattern against the coloured braid, perhaps red, would be similar to that of the metal jewellery inlaid with garnet" popular in Kent at the time (Owen-Crocker 1986: 59). The presence of these gold circlets and rings further identifies the women in the *webbe* burials as the *beaghroden*, ring-adorned, peaceweavers of the heroic poetry (*Beowulf* 623, 1163; Owen-Crocker 1986: 57).

Meanwhile, many of the brooches found in the same burial context have animistic elements in their design and ornamentation, beginning with the most common of the zoomorphic brooches, the small bird-shaped figures predominant in Kent (Figure 14) (Arnold 1982: 94; Owen Crocker 1986: 28). The bird-form has strong connections to *Friga*, who was known to take on hawk form. The small mask-decorated button brooches are almost exclusively English and the human-mask design *Woden* inspired (Evison 1987: 48). They are clearly related to the square-headed brooches with their *Woden*-masks, animal forms, and bird shapes hidden amidst interlocking designs; these human and zoomorphic representations are associated with the "roles and guises" of the shapeshifting shamanic god of prophecy and healing (Speake 1980: 84,92; also Leigh 1990: 120). As such, they carried powerful amuletic qualities, being "both magical and decorative" (Speake 1980: 92).

The animal-human figures which embellish these brooches are of special interest: they are creatures meant to be seen as animals first, and then as humans when viewed differently. They are "not meant to be seen as having an instantaneous dual personality" (Figure 13) (Leigh 1990: 122). It is possible these figures were intended for reflection or even meditation; they are in any event, connected with the belief in a form of

metamorphosis argued for in the gold bracteates, and typified by the Germanic belief in the "mythical transfer of men into animals" (Leigh 1990: 122).

The high quality of these brooches may reflect these women's higher status while the "symbolic character of the ornamentation and higher degree of stylization . . . give the impression that only those initiated in the religious myth would understand the design" - "they may have functioned like skaldic kennings" (Magnus 1997: 202). The women who wore these brooches were probably the wives of tribal rulers and may have functioned as priestesses (Magnus 1997: 202). In any event, these brooches and their accompanying beads have also been seen as some of the strongest indicators of group identity - a function not readily recognizable in any of the objects found in male burials (Arnold 1990: 171).

Keys, or the larger latch-lifters, are the final objects found with regularity as additional items in the *webbe*-type burials (Figures 61). The presence of these objects in Germanic women's graves has been interpreted as indicative of her control over the *hordærn*, *cyste* and *teag*, the storeroom, chest and small box (Fell 1984: 59; Meaney 1981: 95). Possession of these keys may represent both "economic control of the household" and the supervision of supplies for the table or feast hall (Fell 1984: 60).

If so, their presence in the *webbe* burial complex is part of an overall theme of ritual feasting seen in the feasting bowls, drinking cups and sieve spoons; this theme was a principal focus of the elite Germanic lifestyle (Alkemade 1997: 183; Meaney 1981: 95). The lord's table with its rich setting and vessels was "a cardinal symbol of status" (Enright 1996: 49). The seating order at table was "a public visual statement of the hierarchy of the warband community" which expressed and renewed "the bond which joined all who ate or drank from it" (Enright 1996: 49). The highly decorated tableware was a visual sign of the

wealth and status of both the ruler and of his people. The table service was highly valued plunder, its loss a humiliation to the defeated. The lady of the hall, like the wife of a freeman held the keys to the storerooms and was responsible for the utensils and ornaments of the house. Her preparation of the table honoured the house and its guests. From the sagas, we learn that the way in which the woman of the house prepared the table reflected her opinion of her husband's status and that of his companions (Enright 1996: 51). The association of women with service to the table and thus to authority in relation to control of home and hall is "thoroughly embedded in the collective psyche of all segments of Germanic society" (Enright 1996: 53).

Many of the objects identified above are found in less rich graves; however, it is only in a few elite burials that the entire complex is brought together⁶ - in the rich *webbe* burials found in Kent, in other parts of Anglo-Saxon England and on the Continent (Alkemade 1997: 183; Enright 1996: 104-10; Hawkes and Pollard 1981: 351-62; Owen-Crocker 1984: 58). The presence of the incomplete *webbe* assemblages in the less well-furnished burials is most likely the result of an emulated lifestyle or particular social role and of a common Germanic ideology centred upon warrior ideals, ornamentation of the body and ritual feasting (Alkemade 1997: 183-4).

While the power held in Anglo-Saxon society may have been exercised by men, many of the symbols of that power were maintained and arranged by women, both in the hall and in the home (Enright 1996: 53). Their manipulation of the symbols of the warrior society could be brutally direct or subtly provocative and must have been "even more practiced and pointed in the exclusive and hierarchic society of a warrior sodality where the lord's wife must be present in the hall" (Enright 1996: 53). Germanic women frequently manipulated the concepts of honour, status and shame in attempts to influence men's decisions and actions and their proffering of the cup of unity, that containing the divine mead of

inspiration, was one of the most powerful instances of such manipulation. Women who can "whet", who can blame and provoke or incite, can also praise and mediate and thus reduce conflict within the warband. The Old English references to the offered cup, the *baedweg*, followed by praise and advice, as in *Beowulf* and the *Maxims* noted above, "clearly establish the positive role played by women of rank in the small but highly significant body of the *comitatus*" (Enright 1996: 56; also Davidson 1993: 86, Russom 1988: 181-2).

While the sixth century is marked by the presence of the richly furnished *webbe* burials, the archaeological record for the seventh century discloses a decline in the occurrence of these high status female burials and a growth in the frequency of higher status male burials (Härke 1992a: 162). This change may have been a result of the spread of Christianity or of a growing centralization of power (Härke 1992a: 165) which slowly but surely affected the structure of the *comitatus* and with it, the roles of the key *wæpned* and *webbe* figures.

Wæpned Burials

The second "type" of burial identified in Chapter III is that of the elite warrior, the *wæpned* (Figures 52, 62). Evidence from the Old English sources, especially the heroic poetry, shows the warrior role was of chief importance in a culture where the *comitatus* organization stood at the center of all cultural, economic, political, religious, martial and ritual aspects of the society working to create and define a worldview (Enright 1998: 309; Evans 1997: 2). The emphasis on warfare and the warband structure is clearly evident in male weapons burials where there is significantly less variety in the type of objects found than seen in the *webbe* burials. Nevertheless, given the nature of the artifacts they contain, the *wæpned* and *webbe* burials are complementary. The weaponry and feasting vessels of the *wæpned* burials are functionally and metaphorically linked to the same ritual events of the hall as are

those objects found within the *webbe* burials. The objects in both the *wæpned* and *webbe* burials are expressions of the ideals of the warrior-cult values which governed the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. Based on the iconography of the objects present in the burials, this warrior cult may have been a shamanic cult of *Woden* (Chaney 1970: 32, 35; Davidson 1972; 1989; 1993; Richards 1992: 136).

As outlined in Chapter III, male burials of the Anglo-Saxon period generally contain at least a knife and a buckle. It is the next most commonly found object, the spear, which is the most diagnostic of the warrior identity (Arnold 1997: 97). As a symbol of *Woden*, the god of warriors, the spear has long been regarded as a sign of a warrior's death (Chaney 1970: 34; Davidson 1969b: 36; Pollington 1996: 51). Judging from the representation of dancing male figures on memorial stones, helmets and the Finglesham buckle, it appears that the spear may have been carried by warriors engaged in ritual dance, possibly in inducement of the state of battle ecstasy which was also *Woden's* gift (Davidson 1993: 99). Additional weaponry in the form of shields, swords or seaxes extend the deceased's associations with the warrior ethos. The more poorly furnished warrior burials may contain only the basic kit items - a knife, a buckle and a spear - and a single earthen pot or bowl. Despite their paucity of furnishings, these burials still contain the objects necessary to mark the deceased warrior's right to partake in the joys and rituals of the hall.

The elite *wæpned* burials are marked by a greater number not variety of artifacts and by the inclusion of objects of better quality, finer manufacture and more elaborate decoration (Härke 1992a: 158). In the elite burials, often the knives are larger, sometimes with inlaid blades; the buckles are frequently decorated in garnet and cloissoné work, or embellished with zoomorphic figures or interlace. The swords found in these burials are most often pattern-welded, the hilts decorated with niello, cloissoné or engraving. Frequently these swords are accompanied

by sword beads or rings which mark the deceased as a warrior of renown or as a leader of men (Meaney 1981: 4-5, 68; Pollington 1996: 106).

Scabbard mounts and chapes are often elaborately decorated with *Woden*-masks or intertwined animal designs. These weapons are found with the remains of individuals who were obviously of larger and stronger build than those found with only shield or spear. Therefore, while the spear may be said to mark the presence of a warrior, it appears that the sword marks a warrior of higher rank, strength and privilege (Härke 1992a: 157).

The spear heads found in the better furnished ~~wapned~~ burials are often inlaid with metallic wire designs, sometimes in the form of the victory or glory rune associated with the war god *Tyr* or the swastika associated with the sky god *Thunor* (Davidson 1962: 127; Meaney 1981: 242). The mark of the free man, the spear was borne to the ~~wapentac~~, the court to which one took, or more probably where one showed or shook, one's weapons (Brooks 1978: 83; Pollington 1996: 116). At such gatherings, the brandishing of the spear was probably an essential part of the action, the movements of the spear emphasizing the words and becoming an integral part of the expression of intention⁴⁷. Public ceremonies involving symbolic actions with weapons were a standard feature of Germanic law and the means of making public and apparent the changes in legal status, and the legal judgements, that the court recognized (Brooks 1978: 83). The Anglo-Saxon warrior's spear was constantly in his hand, forming almost part of him when he was fighting, hunting, travelling, raiding, dancing, training or displaying himself in the hall; even at rest, it was always within reach. A proud warrior would probably never have tired of sharpening or polishing the spear he carried (Pollington 1996: 96).

In Old English poetry, *æsc*, ash is synonymous with spear - the *æsc berend* or *æsc bora* meaning spear-bearer; *æsc plega*, the play or game of spears, battle; *æsc stede*, the spear-place or battlefield; *æsc rof*, one

famous for or with his spear (Smith 1853: 7) and a warband standing firm, ash-wood iron topped spears held close together, an *æscholt* - a forest of spears (Brady 1979: 130-1; *Beowulf* 330, 1834). The term for a leader or prominent warrior, a champion, was *frumgar*, first spear - the warrior who stands in the front line of battle (Pollington 1996: 116). In times of feud, the spear which will not wait for revenge is the *bongar*, the killer-spear which will not rest (Brady 1979: 129; *Beowulf* 2031). At the end of the fighting, the poles which carry the dead away from the battle are the *wælsceft*, the body poles, the same spears which were carried into the fight (Brady 1979: 132; *Beowulf* 1638). For the Anglo-Saxon spear-bearer, the spear was an animate companion, an extension of the right hand and a continuation of the self - a representation signalled by the appellation *spere-healf* for the male side of Anglo-Saxon society (Fell 1984: 39)⁴⁸.

Unlike spears, shields are rarely the only weapon in a warrior's grave; they are usually accompanied by other weapons, a spear, a sword or a seax (Dickinson and Härke 1992: 1). The majority of early Anglo-Saxon shields are circular, with a flat or convex board and, on average, about sixteen inches in diameter (Figure 63). As with the knives, it appears that there is some correlation between the age of the individual buried and the accompanying shield's size; the largest shields were buried with mature individuals (Härke 1990: 20-30). The shield's function as a status marker can also be perceived from its very rare inclusion in the burials of individuals below the age of seventeen to eighteen years. There are only three such burials known in Anglo-Saxon England and all are slightly unusual. The youngest burial, that of a child of about six years, at Westgarth Gardens, contained an exceedingly small shield, possibly a toy. The second youngest shield burial is that of the coffin burial of a youth of about fifteen at Broadstairs I (Figure 64). This exceptionally rich burial contained a sword, shield, two spears, a bronze bowl and some other small items including a coin, placed in the young

man's mouth, ostensibly for the payment of his passage into the land of the dead (Härke 1992b: 68; Webster 1986: 127). The third unusual shield burial, that of another youth of about sixteen at Berinsfield contained a bucket with bronze fittings, another object seldom found in juvenile burials (Härke 1992b: 68). However, here it should be recalled that manhood often came early in Anglo-Saxon England (Evans 1997: 119-120; Hooper 1989: 196) and the latter two burials may just as easily have marked achieved as ascribed status. In either case, the weaponry and feasting vessels contained in these burials signals the place these two young men held in a warrior society and their right to participate in hall ritual.

Throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, shields were made of lightweight woods such as alder, willow, poplar and, of course, the linden wood which is well known from Old English poetic reference. A leather cover offered protection against water, as well as a surface for decoration (Härke 1992c: 31-52). Such decoration "was probably not just for display and ostentation; it could have served a serious purpose - that of identification in battle" (Härke 1992c: 52). Although "painting is extremely difficult to prove in the archeological record", there is some witness to this form of decoration in the written sources (Härke 1992c: 52; Pollington 1996: 137). "Polished" and "yellow" shields are mentioned in *Beowulf* (232, 437-8), and *Tacitus* (*Germania* 6) refers to colours on first century Germanic shields. The Romans decorated and painted their parade shields in a spectacular fashion, while elaborating their regular shields as well to provide for the identification of fighting units. Red paint has been found on Danish shield timber and leather and yellow and black paint on the shields of the Gokstad ship (Härke 1992c: 54). It is possible that the Germanic Anglo-Saxon warriors also marked their place in battle in such fashion (Smith 1853: 12).

Figural appliqués of fish, beaked quadrupeds, birds and dragons as well as non-figural geometric appliqués with animal-style decoration

have been found on shields across Anglo-Saxon England (Figure 65) (Härke 1992c: 52). "All English examples are made of or include precious metals in their design" and this gold, silver or gilt bronze indicates high status (Dickinson and Härke 1992: 27), while the form of the zoomorphic form of many of the appliqué signals a connection to the cult of *Woden* as well as having possible heraldic or totemic associations (Evison 1987: 34; Pollington 1996: 132). The "protective and symbolic" quality of the appliqué was intended to "guard the wearer from harm and give him protection in battle" (Davidson 1965: 23). Often bird forms decorated strap and harness mounts (Evison 1987: 32). The shield's decoration afforded its owner an opportunity to express his individuality as well as a certain "pleasure in [its] display" (Härke 1992d: 61-2). In the ranked society of Anglo-Saxon England, the shield provided a surface for the ostentatious and symbolic marking of the status, and most likely the reputation or *mærð*, of its bearer.

The shield's role in Germanic ideology and imagery is emphasized by penalties imposed upon warriors who lost their shields in battle; as *Tacitus* (*Germania* 6) tells us, the loss of the shield was the Germanic warriors' supreme disgrace. According to the custom of many Germanic tribes, warriors raised their new king or warleader, their *dux*, upon a shield to proclaim his new status (Härke 1992d: 62; Pollington 1996: 129). Although there are no specific instances noted in Anglo-Saxon sources, "the link between the shield and royal power is expressed in *Beowulf* (427-8, 610, 1866, 1972) where kings are referred to as the 'shield' of their people and of their warriors" (Härke 1992d: 62). The shield is perhaps the most culturally significant piece of defensive equipment. "Once the shield wall is drawn up, by implication all those on the same side of the wall are classified as 'us', and all those beyond it are 'them'" (Pollington 1996: 129) - thus the line between *fyrð* and *here*, "friend" and "enemy", is made clear⁹.

"Unlike the spear or bow", or later the seax "which could also be

used in hunting, the sword's only use was in warfare" (Bone 1989: 65). As such it was "a potent symbol of the aristocratic warrior class, marking its wearer as both wealthy and a warrior" (Bone 1989: 65). Swords of the Anglo-Saxon period were intended for slashing, not thrusting. The balance of the blades made thrusting tiring, but it also enabled the slashing blow to inflict potentially devastating cuts; even a relatively weak blow could cause damage. With the power of adrenalin behind the blow, swords could shear through armour and skulls and to an extent, the momentum of each blow could be used to start the next, enabling a flurry of blows to the enemy (Bone 1990: 70) in the fury of battle.

The scabbards which carried these swords were often highly ornamented, marking the status and wealth of the bearer, but also celebrating his battle prowess. The lower scabbard tip was protected by a gilt-bronze chape (Bone 1989: 68) while the upper metal edging and the locket at the mouth of the scabbard were usually highly ornamented with zoomorphic, interlace and Woden-mask designs (Figure 66) (Davidson 1962: 91). The weaponry of the Anglo-Saxon warrior was fashioned by the same craftsmen who made the jewellery which adorned the women, a fine sword was as much personal adornment as it was a tool of war. At the same time, the opening into the sheath from which the sword was drawn appears to have been a place deserving special decoration and attention. The Coombe scabbard is intricately decorated in niello work in this area and a sword found at Faversham has a tiny bivalve shell, a small thin piece of purple glass and a small incised flint inlaid into the mouth guard (Davidson, et al: 1967; Meaney 1981: 28). Perhaps such decoration was significant to pre-battle ritual we know of from the sagas. In *Kormaks Saga*, young *Kormak* is told not to let the sun shine on the pommel of the sword, that he is not to bear the sword, unless he is prepared to do battle; he is told to sit alone when first drawing the blade, to pull it slowly from the sheath, blowing on the blade as he pulls it forth. A little snake

will creep from beneath the hilt and he is told to turn the sword to allow the snake passage. When the young hero failed to heed this advice, the sword is said to have groaned as it came forth from the scabbard, its luck broken. The idea of a serpent creeping along the blade arises naturally out of the serpentine appearance of the pattern-welded blade (Davidson 1962: 166), but the idea remains that the power of the sword was propitiated within the scabbard, waiting to be properly awakened.

Some swords also carry a ring attachment, a small double link of metal riveted to the pommel-bar (Figure 67) (Bone 1989: 65). It is believed that such rings are a mark of distinction, "perhaps a token of special valour, perhaps a mark of leadership" (Davidson 1962: 181; Davidson and Webster 1967: 22-3). It is possible that they were awarded to the sword, as well as the man; references to ring swords in Old Norse poetry indicate the ring was the mark of a sword held in high repute (Davidson 1962: 125). It is possible that these rings were attached to the "peace strings" or *friðbond* mentioned in the Norse sagas which tied the sword into its scabbard (Davidson 1962: 185). It is also probable that because oaths were often sworn on sword hilts or on rings, a similar function is accentuated in the ring-swords (Davidson 1962: 151; Pollington 1996: 44). Some swords have had the ring removed, indicating that they may have been personal to one owner (Bone 1989: 65) and when that person's service to a lord had ended, they were removed. Swords are found with other attachments as well: beads of amber, rock crystal, meerschaum or glass or compound jewels of gold and garnet cloisonné (Davidson 1962: 83). In many cases, there is no dissimilarity in size, shape and material between these beads and those found and identified in women's burials as spindle whorls (Meaney 1981: 194-6). It appears that these beads were attached to the scabbard or pommel by leather thongs (Figure 68) (Davidson 1962: 89). These sword beads were probably amuletic, similar in material, form and function to the amulets found in women's burials; they are quite likely the "life stones" of the Iceland

sagas which were the only means of healing wounds inflicted by the sword to which they were attached. They could be used to "draw" pain and swelling from a wound, or they could be scraped and applied to the wound in a more medicinal fashion. These stones appear to have been a source of strength and healing for the warrior who carried them as well as talismans which ensured victory in battle to their wearer (Davidson 1962: 83, 181-3; Meaney 1981: 198). They may also have swung from the end of the "peace strings", those cords whose unfastening symbolically broke the peace (Meaney 1981: 198), before the first blow was struck.

Ring swords are usually much more splendidly decorated than ordinary swords (Davidson and Webster 1967: 24). The Coombe sword shows a central device on its pommel (Figure 69) which is clearly associated with the masks found on brooches of the same period. This device is on the front of the pommel, where it could be seen by all. In this position "of great power", it is "an impressive sight with its compelling stare and glittering contrast of sunken gold and matte silver" (Davidson and Webster 1967: 25). "The face has always been a powerful religious symbol" and "it is not impossible that the face on the Coombe pommel bore some...prophylactic or luck-bringing value" (Davidson and Webster 1967: 26); it may also have represented the helper-spirit of the warrior who carried the sword. The symbol of *Thunor* on the Bifrons pommel occupies a similar position on the hilt which, as we have seen above, was referred to as the sword's glory (Figure 70). Thus the sword rings, the beads, the runic markings and other embellishments found on the pommel or hilt of the swords may have served a number of purposes, not the least of which was to be carried as medals of honour, marks of the warrior's *mærð* or *weorð* displayed where they might be seen by all.

Swords were important in the life of a man of high rank from his birth unto his death. Swords were sometimes given to a child at birth with his name (Davidson 1962: 211), sometimes they were won in battle, sometimes they were the gift of a lord (Brady 1979: 103). Sometimes an

hereditary family sword was removed from the family grave-mound to be offered to a new born son who was to take on the dead man's name and, in time, inherit his wealth and his "luck" (Davidson 1962: 213; Davidson 1993: 122; Pollington 1996: 44). This "luck" was sometimes "personified as a supernatural female being whose favour and protection was passed on from generation to generation with the family sword, as inherited possession" (Pollington 1996: 46). These guardian helpers are often identified with the *Wælcyrge*s who guided the warriors in battle (Davidson 1989: 22; Pollington 1996: 46) and the warrior's relationship with these supernaturals was "partly filial, partly erotic" as they were sometimes guardians, sometimes wives of the hero giving birth to his children (Davidson 1989: 20; Pollington 1996: 46). These spirit-women appeared as young and beautiful maidens, covering a more sinister aspect to which they could change at will (Damico 1990: 177-180; Pollington 1996: 46).

The passing on of a family sword is often connected with the mother's line. Germanic women were said to receive arms from their husbands as wedding gifts which were to be passed on to their sons. Following a similar custom from Scandinavia, the father's weapons were entrusted to the daughter so that she could pass them on to her children. In such ways, the sword rested between generations, while in the safe-keeping of a woman, awaiting the next generation of warriors (Davidson 1989: 21; Pollington 1996: 46). In the Frisian tradition, an unsheathed sword was carried before the bride to her new home, the phallic nature of the symbolism invoking fertility for the couple. The Norse *Sagas* repeat the same symbolism; in Scandinavian tradition, the sword at the wedding is seen as an emblem of the continuing family and its prosperity; the sword's power is believed to bring forth "a new generation of healthy sons" (Davidson 1962: 152-6; Pollington 1996: 45) to take up the sword. Swords were often passed on for generations with the gift of the sword often signalling entry into adult society (Pollington 1996: 46).

A warrior could lose his glory - his sword or his reputation - by

being untrue to his word or failing to act in accordance with the ethos of the warband (Enright 1998: 325). The warrior's sword was believed to carry his word; he swore his oath of loyalty on its hilt and agreements were formalized in its presence (Davidson 1962: 151; Enright 1998: 318). "A sword of this type was called a 'testament' or 'witness' to its bearer's deeds and behaviour" (Enright 1998: 317). The sword was not simply inert matter; it was a party to the oath between the lord and retainer and a witness to the faith of both parties; it served as a daily reminder of the promise. Should a warrior make a false boast, his sword would cut him; should his conduct be unworthy, his sword would fail him in battle (Enright 1998: 316). In a world where a vital essence filled every creature, mortal and divine, organic and inorganic, weaponry was alive with a kind of energy, an immediate "animistic power", that sometimes "approximated sentience" (Glosecki 1989: 55; also Enright 1998: 326).

Almost every sword had its own name, each its unique personality (Brady 1979: 104). A sword was the fighting man's *guðwine*, "battle companion" or "friend in war" (*Beowulf* 1810; Brady 1979: 103); it was his constant *eaxlgestealla*, "shoulder-companion" (Davidson 1962: 155; *Exeter Riddle* 79). A special and peculiarly intimate relationship existed between a man and his sword (Brady 1979: 103). Some swords seem to have had wills and characters of their own. They were imbued with a quality beyond the mere metal, becoming the hero's other self, an extension of his person; they possessed skills and a sense of obligation (Brady 1979: 104; Enright 1998: 315-20). A man's sword was as good as his word, and vice versa. A good man's sword could not fail; a dishonest man's sword could not be trusted (Enright 1998: 319).

The richer burials sometimes contain a seax as well as a sword or an occasional second spear. In the more prestigious *wæpned* burials, tweezers, coins, decorated belt mounts or strap ends, sharpening steels, strike-a-lights or finger rings may be found, all of which were carried

upon the person and added to the overall ornamentation of the warrior's body. There is more to these objects of personal adornment than just their place as functional dress items or ethnic markers. In the Germanic world, "the body may be seen as the natural point of reference in contemporary human experience and a reflection of a person's position in the surrounding world" and "objects connected with the body are not mere symbols of social status; they are constituents of a person's being, of his/her fame and reputation" (Alkemade 1997: 184). In the elite Germanic lifestyle, "the body is the crucial connecting link between the realms of thinking and doing: everything the body does - when and where and how it dresses up, fights, feasts and so on - is guided by an overall image of life itself, its nature and continuity" (Alkemade 1997: 184).

The fact that many of those buried with weapons were either too old, too young or too infirm to have borne arms (Härke 1992a: 153) argues for the interpretation of the warrior figure as an ideal, a status achieved by some, particularly in the early period, and ascribed to others. It has been speculated that the warrior identity may have been part of a Germanic ethnic identity, or the result of a myth of conquest or invasion emphasized a shared ethnic past, valiant sea journeys, and distinguished ancestors which served to provide Germanic immigrants with a sense of group unity given their situation as a conquering minority in England in the early Anglo-Saxon period (Härke 1992a: 154; 1997: 125; Richards 1992: 147). Weapon burials may, therefore, have in a sense been political statements, marking Germanic dominance over the native population (Halsall 1998: 337; Richards 1992: 134). Nevertheless, the weaponry buried in the ~~wæpned~~ or warrior graves was selected for burial to mark the warrior aspects of the individual's social identity in preference to other roles (Härke 1989: 59; Richards 1992: 136). However, it is important to note that the warrior ideal was originally grounded in the harsh reality of warfare: plot F at Dover, "with its preponderance of

male weapon graves, particularly with the double grave 96, could represent the fatal results of a military skirmish" (Evison 1987: 146).

Regardless of these considerations, given the strong organizational role of the warband, the *wæpned* burials may still be seen as the graves of those men who participated in the *comitatus* structure, in real or idealized form (Arnold 1997: 178; Halsall 1998: 331), and who shared the ideology and value system of the social institution out of which had grown the roles of both *wæpned* and *webbe*. In the Germanic world, "being a warrior [was] not to be put on a par with actual participation in combat - warrior-culture is first and foremost a complex of ideas about the appropriate behaviour" of the men in society" (Alkemade 1997: 184).

Finally, the large bronze bowls or pails, silver or bronze bound buckets and finely blown glass beakers or palm cups associated with feasting and drinking rituals are the remaining objects which define the *wæpned* or warrior burials (Härke 1992a: 152). The very possession of these objects seems to have been a sign of elevated status and a marker of the deceased's rightful place within the *comitatus*. They represent his entitlement to the joys of the hall, the rewards given from the *gifstol*, his privilege to participate in oath-saying and his right to the company of his hearth-companions. It was in the hall that societal relationships were defined and 'materialized' through the highly ritualized use and exchange of material objects (Alkemade 1997: 184). The most highly charged symbols of this life, the weaponry and the vessels of the table, were included in the final ritual, the burial rite, to accompany the warrior into the next realm, to the eternal feasting of the Otherworld (Davidson 1993: 134).

Myth Imitates Life

It was in the hall where life and myth came together; the *Valhalla* of the Germanic peoples was a hall of eternal feasting, a place where the greatest warlord brought together the best warriors, the final reward of

marð earned by death in battle. The hall roles played by the *wæpned* and the *webbe* echoed those attributed to *Woden* and his followers, the qualities admired in the supernatural figures were emulated by the warriors and weavers of Anglo-Saxon society. While *Woden* and the *Einherjar* feasted, his consort *Friga* and the *Wælcyrge* greeted the arrival of the fallen heroes, mead horn in hand, much as the lady of the hall welcomed her lord and the members of the *comitatus* within the earthly feast hall. The cup offered by the *Wælcyrge* to the fallen hero entering the realm of the gods contained the drink giving freedom from time and mortality; the cup that the *webbe* offered to each warrior, as she urged him on to great deeds in battle, held the promise of immortality should he make good on his oath. Given the legends surrounding *Woden*, it is possible that liquor, with its divine associations, may have been used to bring on the mantic trance and the states of battle fury (Glosecki 1989: 69). Just as *Friga*, the weaving goddess, gave the gift of prophecy to *Woden*, the lady of the hall offered her counsel and foretold the outcome of battle. In the imagery of the hall, the codified ideology of the warband, the social, moral and aesthetic values of the *comitatus* and the material culture of the society came together to create and reinforce meaning.

Wæpned and Webbe - Crossovers in Meaning

There is one last phenomenon of Anglo-Saxon culture which appears worthy of note. Despite what appears at first glance to be a strict dichotomy between the sexes, at least in the burial record, upon closer inspection, a significant degree of fluidity in symbolic representation and metaphoric categorization may be detected. Although the Anglo-Saxon world was separated into *spere-healf* and *spinel-healf*, into warriors and weavers, objects, terms and meanings appear to have been free to move from one sphere or *healf* to the other.

For instance, weapons of war may become tools for the creation of

textiles as swords and spear heads are converted into weaving battens or slays (Pollington 1996: 70). As weaponry, swords and spears have strong connections to the warrior ethos and the male world of warfare. Perhaps it is the transformation of tools from one dominant technology to the other that is of relevance here, for the weapons are not converted for use by any other occupations that we know of. Possibly through the same metaphoric associations which link warfare to weaving, these weapons make the transition from one sphere to the other. From the richness of the burials in which the weaving battens are found, it appears that the women who used them were of higher status, possibly of the same class and authority as the warriors who bore the swords into battle. As pointed out above, it is likely that swords were the sign of a leader or "officer" who held authority over other; women who employed a sword as a weaving batten may have held a similar type of authority over a group of weavers, directing the quantity and quality of the textile production (Fell 1984: 40-1). In such respects, the meanings attributed to the presence of the sword may have been of a similar nature.

In a further expression of this convergence of meaning, the *webbe* or peaceweaver of the hall performs a function similar to that attributed to the sword of the king or lord of the hall. Again as mentioned above, swords were called upon to witness an oath of loyalty or a promise to perform a deed of valour; the peaceweaver also stood as witness to the oath sworn by a warrior over the ritual cup of mead. Both the lady of the hall and the lord's sword act as agents on his behalf, forging links of loyalty and obligation between the members of the *comitatus*. Just as the "oath-carrying nature" of the sword may be seen as "an essential part of warband religion" (Enright 1998: 326), perhaps the same inference may be drawn for the actions of the peaceweaver.

Other objects besides swords and spear heads moved from the warrior's half to the weaver's half of Anglo-Saxon society. Miniature weapons, in the forms of swords, spears, axes and shields are often found

in women's burials. It is thought that these objects were talismans or cult objects (Figure 71) (Meaney 1981: 154-5). Iconographically, these miniatures are equated with the full-sized objects which they resemble (Dickinson 1993: 51). Aside from their talismanic properties, it is possible they were used by Anglo-Saxon women to perform effective magic to aid in achieving victory in battle; it is also possible that, given their connection "with masculine daily life", they acquired something of a "male protectiveness" which made them appropriate as protective amulets for women (Meaney 1981: 159, 162). Such a meaning is more readily attributable to the shield appliques worn as brooches or to the scutiform brooches and pendants which were worn over the chest, in a manner similar to the carrying of a shield (Meaney 1981: 162), than it is to the models of offensive weapons worn at the waist and ready to hand.

Objects and their associated meanings travelled in the opposite direction, from the weaver's half to the warrior's half, as well. For instance, sword beads and spindle whorls are virtually identical in form, shape and material; it is only the context of the male or female burial in which they are found which has been used to define their purpose (Meaney 1981). Without the burial context, it is impossible to make a distinction. Many of the beads found in men's burials may have been spindle whorls or possibly the same beads women carried as amulets.

Again with respect to the movement of meaning from the weaver's side to the warrior's, textual evidence reveals that terms employed to refer to the products of textile production were also applied to the products of the smith. The techniques used by the smith in manufacturing weaponry and armour were described as part of the weaving process. Words of the "garment" vocabulary, *hrægl*, *pad*, *syrce* and *sceorp*, were used in compounds designating war attire, ring mail or corselets (Brady 1979: 111-3). Terms such as *net*, *seowed* or *broden*, for weaving, knitting or braiding, were used to indicate a "woven battle garment", an "army-byrnie interwoven by hands", or a byrnie "ingeniously [made] net sewn [linked]

by the skills of the smith" (Brady 1979: 113-5). Such terms refer to the ring mail shirts which were painstakingly crafted by smiths from tiny metal rings, each ring individually linked through another and welded closed to form a net or weaving of armour for the elite warrior. In a similar fashion, the process of pattern-welding a blade, the braiding of the strips of metal together, was likewise compared to the process of weaving, the *brogdenmæl* being a blade with a woven pattern (Davidson 1962: 122-3; 1968: 356). The patterns created on the sword blades were compared to the patterns of cloth, particularly to the herringbone patterns of richly woven silks or brocades (Davidson 1962: 123), yet the swords were fashioned in the smithy by men, not at the loom by women.

It is the threads of the spinster, the "peace-strings", which hold a sword into its scabbard yet it is the *darroð*, the dart or the spear, which carries the weft threads across the loom (Hoffman 1964: 320). The Old English verb *weorpan*⁵⁰, "to throw" or "to cast", refers to the action taken with a spear. It can also mean "to cast down" and is related etymologically to *wearp*, or *warp*, the long threads of the loom which are cast down and held in place by the loom weights. The flight of the spear forms the "image schemata" or referent (Johnson 1987) for the line marked by length of the warp threads. Such images find their parallel in the Old Norse terms *bloðvarp* and *iðvarp* which have been interpreted as the image of a piece of weaving in which the lines of the sword-blade form the woof or weft and the blood or vitals of the slain form the warp (Davidson 1962: 123). The image becomes more vivid when the sword is pictured as the weaver's implement, that used to part the threads of the weft and "force its way through the blood or vitals of the upright warrior" (Davidson 1962: 123). The imagery of weaving and warfare thus came together, the *spere-healf* and *spindle-healf* meeting on battlefield of the loom as a metaphor created in the dominant technologies of the time and worked to provide a striking image of the lives of the *wæpned* and the *webbe*.

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion and Conclusion

From the archaeological and literary sources, we can deduce that in the elite lifestyle of the Anglo-Saxons, three aspects recurred: the emphasis on warrior values, the prescient powers of women, and the feasting rituals of the hall. Through these main themes much of the archaeological information can be seen to articulate in various ways: the manufacture, design and use of the objects; the layout of the hall; the burial ritual; and the iconographic and narrative sources. The three main themes were expressed in the bright and shining quality of the personal adornment of the two ideal figures of Anglo-Saxon society, the *wæpned* and the *webbe*, the warrior and the weaver. The objects contained in the *wæpned* and *webbe* burials were used by the Anglo-Saxons "to order their world and define their position within a network of relations in the social, natural and supernatural sphere" (Alkemade 1997: 182). Significantly, these objects may all be said to be symbolically, metaphorically and experientially connected to the state of ecstasy achieved during battle and in the weaving process. The objects used in battle and those employed in weaving functioned as important symbols to mark the *mærð* of the warriors and the prescient powers of the women; they were used in the rituals of the hall to establish, express and reinforce the warrior ideals of the time which were expressed as a preference for brightness in object, person and deed.

The principal themes were also supported by a value system which encouraged states of "flow" or ecstasy. Periods of "flow" - "the holistic sensation that people feel when they act with total involvement" (Cziksentmihalyi: 1975: 36) - occurred during battle and in the manufacture of textiles, the two key activities of the Germanic peoples. The pursuit of *mærð* validated the exercising of battle skills and encouraged the warriors to test the limits of their abilities. Possibly,

the ritual warrior cult dances described by Davidson (1989: 12), Magnus (1997: 194-8) and Arnold (1997: 153) worked to induce a battle frenzy, while the danger of battle provided "the clear and immediate feedback required for a good flow activity" (Cziksentmihalyi 1975: 89). In a similar fashion, the rhythmic nature of the movements and sounds associated with the weaving process would have provided the necessary inducements to a state of "flow" or ecstasy necessary for prophecy and the working of effective magic.

"Deep-flow" experiences are translations of great emotions made after the fact - as when the emotions of battle were rehearsed and reflected upon in the stories of the hall. "Flow is potentially the most creative, the most fulfilling kind of experience" and "deep flow activities provide structure to perception and action for long periods of time. Such activities produce vivid experiences which can transform and give meaning to a person's life" (Cziksentmihalyi 1975: 106). In the case of the Anglo-Saxon warriors, such "deep flow" activities may be found in the ritual, praise, song, camaraderie and gift-giving of the hall, with the resultant shared *communitas* of the *comitatus* expressed in the poetry and prose of the time as the "joys of the hall" and represented iconographically in the concept of the hall itself, as a place of light, peace and safety.

ENDNOTES

1. As Christine Fell (1984: 39) has pointed out, Anglo-Saxon society was divided, by gender, into halves: the *spindle-healf*, and the *spere-healf*. The Anglo-Saxons referred to themselves as *wæpned*, one who bears or carries arms, and as *wifman*, one who weaves. *Wifman*, which may be also translated as "woman", is therefore etymologically connected to weaver, or *webbe*, in Old English.
2. For a discussion of aesthetic values expressed in material substances, see Gombrich (1965).
3. See Jolliffe (1962) for a full discussion of the argument in favour of Jutland as place of origin as well as issues of land use in England and on the Continent which have been used as evidence for the location of the origin of the Jutes.
4. See also Hawkes (1961) and Hawkes and Dunning (1961) for a full discussion of Germanic animal art.
5. Woden's name is related to the Germanic *wut* meaning "high mental excitement, fury, intoxication or possession" and to the Scandinavian *óðr* which has the similar meaning of "raging, furious, intoxicated" (Davidson 1969: 147).
6. Unless otherwise stated, definitions are taken from Bosworth and Toller's An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary. In this case, the Old English *mægen* is defined as "might" or "strength"; this concept is discussed further in Chapter IV.
7. In order to reduce confusion over the *Freyja-Friga-Frigg* combination, the form *Friga* is used hereafter unless the Scandinavian aspect of the goddess is specifically intended, in which case she is referred to using the Scandinavian form, *Freyja*. From the sources, it appears that *Friga* is the generally accepted spelling used when referring either to the Germanic or the Anglo-Saxon incarnation of the deity (for instance, see Owen 1981), possibly due to the MnE slang associations which have become attached to *Frigg*.
8. The Earth Mother figures and the warrior gods such as *Woden*, *Tyr* and *Thunor*, in all their incarnations, probably derived from divine stereotypes which began in the Bronze Age when a well-established cult of a god of the sky prevailed in conjunction with various earth and mother goddess (see Davidson 1969b; Hutton 1991: 277; Niles 1991: 128; see also Gimbutas 1982 and 1991 and Arabagian 1984 for discussion of the relationship between the sky god and earth mother figures in the Indo-European tradition).
9. According to Bosworth and Toller (1955), *wæl* means slaughter or carnage but may also refer to the dead bodies left on the field of battle or the battlefield itself. The *Wælcyrge*s or "Choosers of the Slain" decided who would live or die in the day's battle (Davidson 1969a: 211-222).
10. *Wæpman* or *wæpnedman* means a "weapon-bearing person" and *wifman* a "weaving person". Old English *wif* or *wifa*, also denotes woman but is etymologically related to *webbe* or weaver (Fell 1988: 38). *Webbe* is also of particular significance to the present study given its appearance in the compound *freoðuwebbe* or peaceweaver, a term

discussed in some detail in Chapters II and IV. Also worthy of note is the Old English *webbung* which may be used for a weaving, a contriving plot or a spectacle - further indications of the importance of technological metaphors in creating and expressing meaning within Anglo-Saxon society (see Bosworth and Toller 1955).

11. This appears to have been true throughout the Germanic and Scandinavian areas at this time including Frisia. Words such as *wede* were used to denote standard lengths of cloth (Hoffman 1964: 227-8).

12. The *Anonymous Life of St. Cuthbert* tells that when Cuthbert was a boy of eight, he was a member of a band of young boys who gathered to train in some sort of acrobatics during which "some of them stood naked, with their heads turned down unnaturally towards the ground, their legs stretched out and their feet lifted up and pointing skywards" (Colgrave 1956: 65). This account, together with *Tacitus'* description of the skilful dances performed by naked Germanic youths has been seen as possible evidence for the presence and training of age sets in Germanic society (see Davidson 1989). In any event, an early military life is indicated for both Sts. Cuthbert and Guthlac. While historical account tells us that St. Cuthbert gave up his sword upon entering Melrose Abbey, his traditional title *Magnus Miles*, refers to both his early life and his warfare for Christ. *Felix's Life of St. Guthlac* records Guthlac's rise as a young man to the head of a band of fighting men and his participation in a number of battles before he gave up the sword in favour of the cross (Colgrave 1969).

13. For instance, this dual relationship is expressed in lines 113 to 121 where the loss of *Byrhtnoð's* sister's son is avenged by *Byrhtnoð's* *burþegn* or personal chamberlain and again in lines 209 to 225 where the young retainer *Elfwine* tells of oaths of loyalty spoken over the mead cup and declares his willingness to die for the man who is his *mæg* and his *hlaford*, his kinsman and his lord (Mitchell and Robinson 1992: 241-252).

14. See also Magennis (1996) and Hume (1974) for discussions of the concept of the hall and its importance.

15. According to Bosworth and Toller (1955), the Old English *weccend* means one who rouses or incites.

16. This compound set appears four times in the corpus of Old English literature, twice in *Beowulf* - once as *freoðuwebbe* and once as *friðusibb folca*. It appears as *friðowebbe* in *Elene* and as *freopuwebban* in *Widsith* (Sklute 1990: 204-8). It is used twice with the adjective *fæle* meaning faithful, trusty, good, dear or beloved. This concept is discussed further in Chapter IV.

17. According to Bosworth and Toller (1955) the *beot* was a kind of boastful speech, ritually a promise or vow to perform some act of courage or bravery. The *beot* usually included an oath of loyalty and duty to the lord as well, sometimes expressed in the gesture of a ritual embrace or the laying of the head and hands on the lord's knee as he sat in the *gifstol* (Pollington 1996: 36-7).

18. See Meaney (1964) for the most inclusive listing to date of archaeological finds for Anglo-Saxon England in general and Arnold (1982) for a complete discussion of Anglo-Saxon burial sites on the

Isle of Wight.

19. See Wenham (1989) for one such study.

20. See also Härke (1990) for full details of this argument.

21. Gale Owen-Crocker has noted that combs may have been used as toiletry items or weaving tools and that the same comb may have been used for either purpose (personal communication, October 22, 1997).

22. Rosemary Cramp (1957: 63) notes that blades manufactured through the pattern-welding process were commonly of a red-gold colour.

23. This tendency agrees with the results of Berlin and Kay's (1969) study of basic colour terms that identified a regular, cumulative order of appearance of colour terminology cross-culturally. In Stage I of the series set forth in Basic Colour Terms, the light and dark distinction takes place. In Stage II a distinction of hue takes place, with 'red' being the first hue distinguished. Red is the most salient of colour experiences to the human eye, standing out in relation to other hues. At the same level of saturation, red appears brighter or more luminous than other colours. As well, a spatial effect known as "chromatic aberration" brings red surfaces subjectively nearer to the observer. Since red is, quite simply, "the most colour", it takes the "focal position in the contrast of hue to achromicity (lightness/darkness) at Stage II. In Basic Colour Terms Stages III to V, red is joined by green, yellow and blue, the modern "primary" colours or the cross-cultural "primitives". In Stages VI and VII, brown, purple, pink and orange are added (Sahlins 1977: 166-171). Thus, "the emergence of basic colour terms in natural languages follows a natural-perceptual logic" (Sahlins 1977: 171). According to the "opponent process" theory of colour vision, the four "primitives", together with black and white, are organized through the neural processing of colour sensation as a complex of binary contrastive processes: red-green, blue-yellow, black-white. Thus binary coding is a structural code based in "bodily" experience which manifests itself as "objectified thought" or cultural order (Sahlins 1977: 170; also Lakoff 1987: 25-6, 371).

While the perception of colour is physiological, the assignment of significance to colour differences is a cultural determination and it is these codes of social, economic and ritual value which carry meaning, not the colours themselves (Sahlins 1977: 166-171). "What actually develops at each stage is not a new term or perceptual substance but a new perceptual relation" and so "we are not confronted with the cumulative recognition of spectral differences in semantic categories, but with the meaningful differentiation of social categories in spectral terms" (Sahlins 1977: 175). Therefore, "contrast is from the beginning and throughout a necessary condition of colour terminology and colour discrimination" (Sahlins 1977: 175). The light/dark dualism of Stage I remains available for cultural use in more developed systems. This contrast is "perhaps universally significant, and usually symbolic of fundamental oppositions of the social life - pure and unpure, life and death, sacred and profane, male and female, etc." (Sahlins 1977: 175).

24. It has been pointed out that "there are no allusions in the poem" *Beowulf* "to objects or practices which must be dated later than the seventh century" (Davidson 1968: 359). Since neither archaeology nor literary study has produced any information to belie this statement, the use of the poem here as a source seems appropriate.

25. Quotations from *Beowulf* are taken from the Klaeber edition, with translations taken from Garmonsway and Simpson or Mitchell and Robinson, as noted. Quotations and translations of *The Fortunes of Men* are from Shippey. Quotations and translations of the *Maxims* are from Shippey or Mitchell, as marked. Quotations and translations of *The Battle of Maldon* are from Mitchell and Robinson.

26. A brief review of the frequency of words indicative of lightness, brightness, shininess, radiance or luminosity shows that *beorht*, appears 242 times in the Old English corpus, *scinan* or *scānan*, appears 200 times, *torht* 85 times, *blican* 56 times, *glād* 39 times, *sciene* 39 times, *scima* or *scimian* 14 times and *glisnian* or *glitenian* once each. A review of the frequency of words indicative of darkness or an absence of brightness shows that *sweart* appears 79 times, *scād* or *scadu* 21 times and *dimm* 19 times (Madden and Magoun 1967).

27. As Biggam (1998) has shown, OE *græg* is also associated with concepts such as "venerable" and "fearsome". As well, other OE words associated with grey or greyness, such as *har*, *hasu* and *wylfen*, are often semantically connected to ancient trees, frost, iron, warriors, saints and wolves.

28. The adjective *mære*, may be defined as famous, great, excellent, splendid, sublime or pure and the noun *mærð* as glory, fame or famous exploit. *Mærð*, its derivatives and compounds, appears 283 times in the Old English corpus with 9 of those occurrences in *Beowulf* (Madden and Magoun 1967). It is used in connection with persons, (*Beowulf*, *Hroðgar*, *Heremod*, *Offa*) objects (an heirloom sword and the hall mead cup) and the enemy, the marsh marauder Grendel (*Beowulf* 103, 129, 1023, 1046, 1715, 1767, 1952, 2405, 3070). *Mære* occurs as well in numerous other sources, including translations of the Bible (for example, *Genesis* A and B, *Exodus* and *Daniel*) where it appears in descriptions of "men", "life" and the "day". The concept of *mærð* was important to Anglo-Saxon thought and ideology and this significance is shown in the frequency and context of its use within the Old English literature.

29. Brightness, appearance, beauty, splendour and adornment are given as meanings for *wlite* and form, figure, presence and countenance as meanings for *ansyn*.

30. Taylor (1990: 214) has pointed out that *ænlic ansyn* may refer to an excellence or superiority of physical form as well and this is in keeping with the ideas of posture or carriage offered here. However, the *wlite* of *Beowulf*'s *ansyn* gives a sense of inner brightness visible in the form or presence of the man as well, a shining external quality indicative of an inner goodness or greatness. Taylor (1990: 212) notes that the association of radiance with goodness is of long Indo-European tradition.

31. The word "charisma" is used herein in the sense of personal magnetism, elegance and attraction.

32. See Taylor 1990 for a full discussion of the Old English vocabulary for "beauty".
33. Modern English translation is taken from Garmonsway and Simpson (1968: 51).
34. Modern English translation is taken from Garmonsway and Simpson (1968: 58).
35. See Enright (1998: 328-34), Evans (1997) and Pollington (1996: 52-5) for detailed descriptions of the warrior cult in Anglo-Saxon England.
36. *Torht* or *torhtlic* may be bright, clear, radiant or glorious as well as splendid, noble, illustrious or beautiful. *Tiir* or *tir* is the name of a rune and a god (*Tir*, *Tyr*) but also means fame, glory, honour and ornament.
37. It is worthy of note that while *blæd* may also be translated as "riches", perhaps indicating something of the profitable side of warfare, the word can also mean "inspiration" or "breath" or "spirit" as well. Such a use could be indicative of state of ecstasy or battle inspiration which has been seen to be a gift of the shamanic warrior god, *Woden* who is often symbolized by two wavy lines representing breath (see Chapter II).
38. Modern English translation taken from Garmonsway and Simpson (1968: 25).
39. Modern English translation taken from Garmonsway and Simpson (1968: 18).
40. Modern English translation taken from Garmonsway and Simpson (1968: 11).
41. Modern English translation taken from Mitchell and Robinson (1998: 280).
42. Translations of this verse vary, however the general impression remains constant. The version given here is taken from Bruce Mitchell (1995).
43. The sword's hilt is referred to as its glory or fame in *Solomon and Saturn*, and said to be a place for the carving of runes. The hilt which Beowulf delivers to *Hroðgar* after his fight with Grendel's mother is also carved in some fashion (*Beowulf* 1677-98; Davidson 1962: 151; Menner 1941: 89).
44. See Hoffman (1964) and Barber (1994) for detailed discussions of the weaving process, its techniques and the traditional role of women in textile manufacturing.
45. See Owen-Crocker (1986: 56), Evison (1987: 55) and Dickinson (1993: 51) for discussions of similarities in symbolic content and the possibility that lesser-valued or more common objects were substituted for more expensive objects.

46. From the archaeological record it appears that a number of different social roles, including the role of *webbe*, were available to women of the early Anglo-Saxon period. Meaney (1981: 249) and Dickinson (1993:) have pointed out that there is usually only one grave with a large amulet bag collection per cemetery. These graves have been interpreted as belonging to the community healer, diviner or "cunning woman" (Meaney 1981: 249; 1989: 10-12; Dickinson 1993: 54). Enright (1996: 124) believes such graves mark the presence of the warband prophetess. However, it is argued herein that the prescience of women and the role of such women within the warband is best illustrated by the burials of the individuals identified in Chapter III as those of the *webbe* or weaver.

47. See Evans-Pritchard (1973) for a detailed discussion of spear symbolism in a traditional society.

48. Again, see Evans-Pritchard (1973) for similar weapon symbolism in traditional societies.

49. As noted in Chapter II, the *fyrð* is the local or home force, the *here*, the enemy force.

50. Bosworth and Toller (1955) provide this definition and also show the etymological connection.

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Anglo-Saxon Deities and Supernatural Beings						Table 1
Deity or Supernatural Being	Weekday/Feast Day	Place Names/Genealogy	Family	Symbols	Associations	Sacrifice
<p><i>Woden/Odin/Notan</i> "All-Father" the "hanged god" the creator god creator of discord god of kings, warriors god of battle master of disguise, shape shifter smith or craftsman aka <i>Grim</i>, from OE <i>grima</i> for mask or helmet replaced <i>Tiw</i> ruler of <i>Valhalla</i></p>	<p><i>Wodenes dæg</i> Wednesday the day for planting</p>	<p>open land, hills, woods, primarily in Kent, Saxon Essex, Wessex, and Anglian Mercia</p> <p>evidence for a widespread cult</p> <p>six of the seven existing Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies trace descent from Woden legitimated their rule</p>	<i>Æsir</i>	<p>spear, eagle, two ravens, and wolf, all "Beasts of Battle" who fed on the dead and served as omens of battle to come <i>Sleipnir</i> - the eight-legged horse the serpent or dragon <i>Yggdrasill</i>, the sacred ash tree at the centre of the world and the place of Woden's self-sacrifice the runic symbol for ash wavy symbol for breath mead of inspiration</p>	<p>runes, secrets of runic writing, magic, wisdom, poetry, gaining of treasures, horned helmeted figures, dancing male figures power of the breath states of ecstasy, battle or <i>berserkr</i> rage, shamanism cremation or passage through fire - ritual separation of the 2nd or "free" soul from the body <i>Walcyrge</i> or <i>Valkyries</i> <i>Eiðherjar</i> - his champions</p>	<p>human sacrifice: execution by both stabbing and hanging together self-sacrifice by jumping over cliff dead of battle dedicated to him especially those of higher rank in possibly the sacrifice of bulls, oxen or wild auroch made in his honour horse sacrifice</p>
<p><i>Tiw/Tyr/Tiwaz</i> aka <i>Seaxner</i> or <i>Saxnet</i> older than <i>Woden</i> a sky god supreme at one time god of war god of law and order "the valiant"</p>	<p><i>Tiwes dæg</i> Tuesday</p>	<p>cult confirmed by place names - as at <i>Tysöe</i> where horse figure is cut into the hill claimed as ancestor by the East Saxon Kings of Essex - may have once been acknowledged by all Saxon tribes</p>	<i>Æsir</i>	<p>horses, in particular, white horses - the confidants of the gods - kept in sacred groves - used for predictions as mentioned in <i>Germania</i> rune of victory</p>	<p>rune of victory inscription gave objects talismanic qualities myth has <i>Walcyrge</i> giving instructions for such inscription on weaponry</p>	<p>human sacrifice - reliable evidence only from the Continent</p>
<p><i>Thunor/Thor/Donner</i> a son of <i>Woden</i> god of the sky god of thunder, lightning and rain the "storm god"</p>	<p><i>Thors dæg</i> Thursday</p>	<p>mostly in Saxon areas but also in Kent probably worshipped in groves, meadows, fields since most place names link him with OE <i>leah</i> meaning field</p>	<i>Æsir</i>	<p>swastika - symbol of the lightning he created - worn for luck, protection <i>Mjöllnir</i> - short-handled throwing hammer (linked to fertility) the World Serpent, the whetstone, the sacred oak, pillars and poles of oak (possibly replaced sacred oak trees)</p>	<p>hammer amulets found in Kentish women's graves <i>Mjöllnir</i> could call the dead to renewed life and in Sc tradition was used to "hallow" the bride swastika on sword hilts, brooches, urns <i>Thunor</i>'s symbols found in both burials and cremations throughout England</p>	<p><i>Thunor</i> is said to have claimed all those of lower rank, the "thrall-kind", who fell in battle</p>
<p><i>Balder/Baldr</i> "the bright one" son of <i>Woden</i> and <i>Friga</i></p>			<i>Æsir</i>	<p>mistletoe as symbol of his death</p>	<p>possible mention in <i>Beowulf</i> and <i>The Dream of the Rood</i></p>	
<p><i>Frey/Freyr/</i> fertility god possible associations with fertility god, Ing may have usurped some of <i>Freyja</i>'s role</p>			<i>Vanir</i>	<p><i>Gullin bursti</i> "golden bristled" boar - boar symbols of fertility and protection, horses, miraculous ship</p>	<p>boar as protective symbol - in poem <i>Beowulf</i>, on <i>Benty Grange</i> helmet, interlacing horse design common motif, ship burials</p>	<p>horse sacrifice boar said to be the meal at the final feast in <i>Valhalla</i></p>
<p><i>Frigg/Freyja/Friga</i> twin sister of <i>Frey</i> consort to <i>Woden</i> Queen of Heaven "mistress of the hawks" the "weeping mother" goddess of love, childbirth and marriage <i>frig</i> OE noun meaning physical passion may be derived from her name goddess of queens (Sc)</p>	<p><i>Frig-dæg</i> Friday</p>	<p>no place names definitely linked with her although there are a few which are possible derivations in Wessex and in Northumbria</p>	<i>Vanir</i>	<p>a marvellous necklace - symbol of the Earth Goddess golden boar, - as symbol of fertility boar masks (worn in honour of the Mother of the Gods as noted in <i>Germania</i>) wept tears of gold possibly goddess who welcomed women after death</p>	<p>foreknowledge/prophecy, prophecy of disaster sexual love, skill in magic, prescience (Germanic respect for wisdom of women well attested links with land of the dead and the undersea associations with Mother Goddesses mentioned by <i>Bede</i> able to take on bird form <i>Walcyrge</i> or <i>Valkyries</i></p>	<p>in Scandinavian tradition half those slain in battle belong to <i>Freyja</i></p>

Deity or Supernatural Being	Weekday/Feast Day	Place Names/Genealogy	Family	Symbols	Associations	Sacrifice
<i>Ere</i> Earth Mother	<i>modranect</i> or Mother's Night December 25 Bede tells us the new year began on this night			possibly illustrated as one of the three hooded female figures on the Franks Casket possibly boar as symbol through associations with the Germanic Nerthus described in <i>Germania</i>	mentioned in a charm for an unfruitful land possibly worshipped with rituals for fertility part of midwinter festival ensuring fertility for coming year possibly one of the "Mother Goddesses" possibly connected to Three Norns or Fates	boar sacrifices made at midwinter
<i>Eostre</i> goddess of the "east" or the "dawn"	Easter <i>Eosturmonath</i> - April			possibly illustrated as one of the three hooded female figures on the Franks Casket	possibly one of the "Mother Goddesses" or one of the Three Norns most probably celebrated with bonfires or "Easter fires" lit on the hills as part of festivals of spring	Bede tells us of sacrifices and feasts in her honour at the great spring festival but not their nature
<i>Hræda</i> may relate to OE <i>hræda</i> meaning "glory" or "fame"	<i>Hedramonath</i> March			possibly illustrated as one of the three hooded female figures on the Franks Casket	possible connection with the "Mother Goddesses" - possible connection with the Three Norns	Bede again tells us of sacrifices and feasts but does not specify their nature
<i>Weland</i> the Smith supernatural being or legendary hero smith of outstanding ability and skill maker of treasures cripple - hamstringed by his enemy many similarities to Nodens in various myths		England, Denmark and Northern Germany		the forge pictured as giant, troll, dwarf or headless man his legend is depicted on the front of the Franks Casket splendid weapons or armour of the past were attributed to his skill - the sword in particular	known from the OE poem <i>Deor</i> and from King Alfred's translation of <i>Fabrics Weolud</i> - the "illustrious and wise" goldsmith believed to work in an underground forge - hence associated with prehistoric and burial mounds and tombs	
<i>Walcyras/Valkyries</i> supernatural beings "Choosers of the Slain" "Wood Maidens" emissaries of Nodens		associated with forest clearings		swans, ravens often encountered in companies of three or nine and called "sisters" spear, throwing spear helmet, cup or horn depicted as maidens or as fierce bird-like creatures - benevolent and terrible aspects sometimes of gigantic stature	burial mounds and the dead, said to guard heroes and protect them in battle, able to fly act as brides to heroes escort hero from the battle- field offer welcoming cup of mead to hero entering <i>Valhalla</i> links with the Three Norns	believed to choose those who will die in battle

*names given in order: Old English/Scandinavian/Germanic

Information for this chart, primarily: (Owen 1981: 8-40)
but also from (Bede in Jones 1943), (Chaney 1970: 26-126), (Davidson 1969a), (Davidson 1969b: 28-92), (Davidson 1978: 105), (Davidson 1993: 72-109), (Hawkes, et al 1965: 24-27), (Hines 1997: 379-380), (Hutton 1991: 264-272), and (Magnus 1997: 198)

Violence and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England

<i>Scales of Violence</i>		
Brawl → Feud → Warfare		
<i>Scales of Warfare</i>		
Frequent, small scale warfare, obeying certain rules of conduct (<i>Endemic</i> or <i>Ritual War</i>).		
↓		
Periodic outbursts of serious, large scale conflict, in opposition to usual norms of behaviour (<i>Non-Ritual</i> or <i>Secular War</i> , or <i>War of Conquest</i>).		
<i>Reasons for War</i>		
	Ritual War	Non-Ritual War
Expressed	'Real'	
Avenging insult, or injury against a person or his/her family clan.	Pressure for land and resources means that population must be kept down. Limited war is a means of doing so.	Ritual wars have not resolved tensions completely, or have not solved population pressure problem. Occasionally a religious motive.
<i>Purposes of War</i>		
	Ritual War	Non-Ritual War
Solidarity within clan/tribe/kingdom; enemy or out-group defined.		
Acquisition of critical resources.		
Personal aggrandisement: wealth.		
War as Play (leads to:)		
Initiation for males.		
Personal aggrandisement (prestige).		
Leaders brought forward.		
Communication between components of a political system.		
<i>Results of War</i>		
	Ritual War	Non-Ritual War
Socio-economic purposes fulfilled.		Change in the political balance.
Warfare and weapons gain importance in everyday life and tribe's culture.		Major redistribution of land and/or people.
Quickness to quarrel becomes characteristic.		Sometimes complete conquest, absorption or annihilation of weaker group by stronger.
Fear of attack/ violent death.		
Population well below carrying capacity.		
Agriculture/ horticulture affected.		
Settlements dispersed/ No Man's Lands.		
Occasional solidification of warring tribes into political confederation.		

FREQUENCIES OF WEAPON SETS IN UNDISTURBED
ANGLO-SAXON BURIALS

Weapon set	Number of cases	Per cent
Spear	237	44.4
2 spears	6	1.1
3 spears	2	0.4
Shield	36	6.7
Shield + spear	139	26.0
Shield + 2 spears	14	2.6
Sword	9	1.7
Sword + spear	10	1.9
Sword + 2 spears	11	2.1
Sword + shield + spear	24	4.5
Sword + shield + 2 spears	4	0.7
Sword + axe + spear	1	0.2
Sword + axe + shield + spear	1	0.2
Sword + seax + shield + spear	1	0.2
Sword + seax + axe + shield + 2 spears	1	0.2
Seax	6	1.1
Seax + spear	9	1.7
Seax + shield + spear	4	0.7
Seax + shield + 2 spears	2	0.4
Axe	8	1.5
Axe + spear	2	0.4
Axe + shield + spear	1	0.2
Arrow	4	0.7
Arrow + spear	2	0.4
Total of undisturbed weapon burials	534	100.

Table 4
Skeletal Positions at Dover

MALE

Grave No.	Legs straight	Knees bent	One knee bent	Feet crossed	Hands in pelvis	L. hand in pelvis	R. hand in pelvis	Arms straight	Arms across	L. arm across	R. arm across	L. arm on L. shoulder	R. arm outstretched	Prone	Body on L. side	Body on R. side	Skull to L.	Skull to R.
9	X					X											X	
27	X							X										X
33	X				X													X
36	X				X	X												X
39	X				X													X
50	X				X												X	
56	X				X												X	
57															X			
63	X				X													
65			X		X													X
71	X					X												X
80	X							X										X
87	X					X												
90	X				X													
91	X				X													
96a			X			X												X
96b				X	X													X
98	X						X											
103	X							X										X
106	X				X													X
114	X				X													X
120	X				X													X
135	X						X											
145			X		X													X
148		X									X						X	
149	X							X										X
150	X				X													
156	X				X													

FEMALE

6	X						X											
12	X									X	X							X
14	X				X													X
15	X				X													X
25		X							X									
30	X				X											X		
32			X		X													X
42	X				X													X
44		X				X										X		
46	X					X				X								X
49	X						X											
54	X				X													X
58	X				X													
60				X	X													
62	X					X												X
66	X				X												X	
67													X					
81	X				X													X
82	X				X												X	
84	X				X													X
99	X							X										

(Evison 1987: 130-132)

[illegible][illegible]

102	X		X		X
130	X		X		

MALE

[illegible]

"Male" and "Female" Burial Kits - at Buckland-Dover and Chessel Down				Table 5
Male		Female		
Buckland-Dover	Chessel Down	Buckland-Dover	Chessel Down	
Basic Kit		Basic Kit		
Knife	Knife	Knife	Beads	
Buckle	Buckle	Beads	Knife	
Spear	Spear	Keys	Buckle	
Extended	Extended	Extended	Extended	
Sword	Sword	Girdle Hangers, Chatelaines, Pins	Brooches	
Shield	Shield	Weaving Tools	Weaving Tools	
Vessels	Vessel	Vessels, Containers Brooches	Pendants	
Additional		Additional		
Pin, Belt Mount, Sharpening Steel, Tags, Ring, Tweezers, Purse, Seax, Lyre, Bead, Balance	Ring, Tweezer, Bracelet, Axe, Purse	Buckle, Box, Rings, Pendants, Amulets, Bracelets, Purse, Coin Pendant or Bracteates, Hair Ornament	Amulets, Tweezers, Keys or Latch Lifters, Vessels, Crystal Ball, Rings, Sieve Spoon, Gold Braid	

Weaving Tool category includes: spindle whorls, weaving battens, needles, shears, work boxes, weaving picks - it is possible combs and tweezers and some of the pins may also belong in this category

Vessel category includes the following containers: bowls, bottles, beakers, palm cups, pails, pots

Amulet category includes: bone ornaments, fossils, cowrie shells, horse teeth, pebbles, pieces of glass - it is possible coins and single amber beads may also belong in this category - as might the crystal balls

A group of small objects commonly found suspended from the waist might also be grouped together as a "chatelaine" category - such objects are referred to in site reports as "hangers" (key-shaped objects) rings (for suspension), "diamonds" (perforated diamond-shaped pieces from which objects are suspended), chatelaines (small lengths of chain or a series of rings, sometimes with triangle-shaped joinery pieces) Gold braid headbands, arm rings or bracelets, gold braid armbands and finger rings might, as well, be considered a separate category - OE descriptions of beag-hroden women, generally interpreted as "ring-adorned", may indicate adornment in the form of rings, circlets, diadems, bracelets, collars or torcs.

Many of the Chessell Down excavations were poorly recorded - a great number of objects were considered insignificant or of little value and so were left in the ground and unrecorded, other pieces were collected but were left unprovenanced. It is quite likely that many knives and latch-lifters were left behind or recorded as "lumps" of iron. This should be kept in mind with respect to both the basic and extended kit contents; it is possible that had these objects been more conscientiously collected and recorded the Chessell Down kits would more closely resemble those identified at Buckland-Dover.

Buckland at Dover

Supplementary Assemblages

Table 6

Burial	Basic Kit	Brooches	Weaving Implement	Ritual/Feasting Objects	Bracteatte-Type Pendant	Amulet	Rings, Braid or Bracelets
1	X	X			gold bracteatte		bronze wire bracelet
6	X		whorl	bell beaker	amber disc	cowrie shell	
14	X	X			perf. coin	Roman coin, bone playing piece	
20	X	X	batten, comb	claw beaker/bronze bowl	gold bracteatte	large white cylindrical bead	silver and bronze bracelets
28	knife, key			bucket			
29	X	X		silver rim	gold disc with animal figs. silver disc, bronze coin imitation		silver rings
30	X	X	comb		silver disc		
32	X	X		silver rim	silver disc		
35	X	X		cone beaker	silver disc		
38	X	X	batten		silver disc		red gold ring
46	knife, beads		batten				
48	knife, beads	X	whorl	bronze rim			
53	X			bucket			
60	X		2 whorls				
67	beads				2 silver/1 gold discs		bronze wire bracelet
75	beads, key		shears/pick	spoon			
83	beads, knife		shears				
107	beads, key		workbox, comb tweezers				
110	X		shears, comb	spoon	2 perf coins with male profiles		bronze bracelet
113	knife, key		comb				
127	X	X		spoon			
129	X			pottery bottle	perf coin Roman coin	fossil	bronze bracelet
134	X				yellow gold disc serpent fig.		
138	knife, key		needle, pin			Roman coin	bronze bracelet
141	beads, key				perf coin/shell pendant		
155	X		comb				
157	X		work box	pottery bottle			
160	X			palm cup		garnet	

Basic Kit: [knife + beads + key]
 Supplementary Assemblage: [weaving implement + ritual/feasting objects + bracteatte-type pendant + amulet]

Chessell Down
Supplementary Assemblage

Table 7

Burial	Basic Kit	Key/Latch Lifter	Brooches	Weaving Implement	Ritual/Feasting Objects	Bracteate-type Pendant	Amulet	Rings, Braid or Bracelets
3	knife							
22	knife, buckle			tweezers?		bronze pendant perforated discs	amber bead	
34	X			tweezers?		perforated discs		
40	beads, buckle		X			bracteate		
44	knife			whorl, distaff			crystal ball	
45	X	X	X	batten	perforated spoon bronze pail drinking vessel		bone crystal ball	gold braid headdress gold and silver rings
55	beads, buckle					perforated Roman coin		
78				whorl			piece of glass pebbles	

Basic Kit: [knife + beads + buckle]
Supplementary Assemblage [weaving implement + ritual/feasting objects + bracteate-type pendant + amulet]

Interpretive Associations			Table 8
Men- Wapned	Association	Women- Webbe	
knife/buckle	personhood tribal/ethnic identity	knife/beads	
spear	social role technology prophecy ecstasy	weaving tools bracteates	
shield	protection	amulets/brooches crystal balls	
sword	authority office or rank	keys/chatelaine	
drinking vessels food containers	feasting/drinking rituals joys of the hall <u>comitatus</u> role oath-giving fame and glory: <u>mare</u>	drinking vessels food containers sieve spoon rings, bracelets, braid	

Objects may move between categories - are polysemous in nature:

sword + spear ---become---> weaving batten

weapons ---become---> amulets, jewellery

weapons ---become---> ceremonial objects

amulets ---become---> weapons

weaving tools ---become---> amulets, symbols of prophecy

swords and Webbe ---become---> oath-witnesses

Supplementary Assemblages - Kent and the Isle of Wight

Table 9

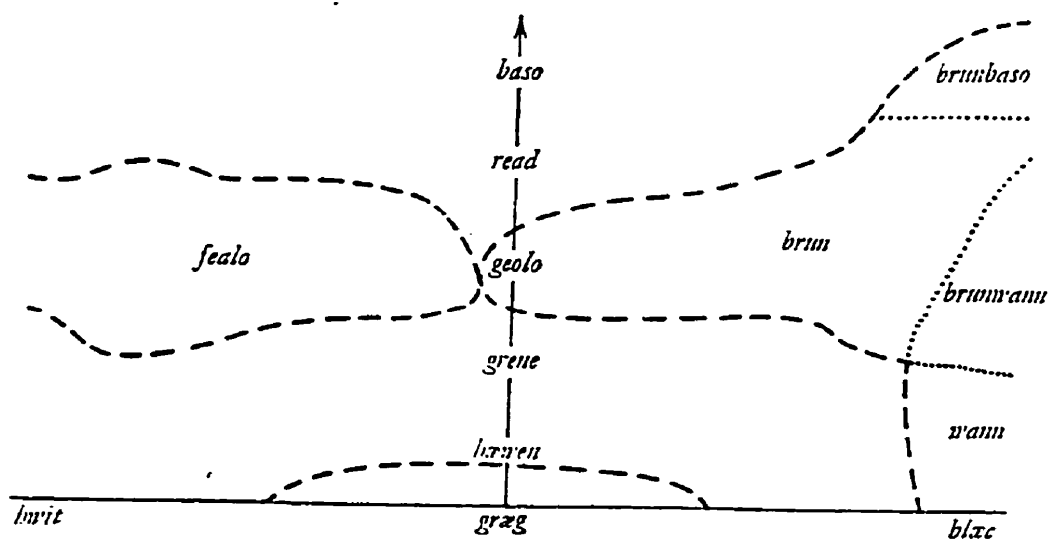
Burial	Brooches	Keys	Weaving Implement	Ritual/Feasting Objects	Bracteeate-Type Pendant	Amulet	Rings, Brocade or Bracelets
Beakesbourne 22	X			perforated spoon with swastika		bead, crystal ball	
Bifrons 6						crystal ball	
Bifrons 29	X	X			3 gold bracteeates		bracelet, rings gold brocade
Bifrons 42	X		weaving batten	perforated spoon		crystal ball	
Bifrons 51						crystal ball	
Bifrons 63	X			wooden bucket, pottery vessel	gold bracteeate		
Bifrons 64	X				gold bracteeate		
Chatham Lines 2	X			perforated spoon inset with garnets	perforated Roman coins	crystal ball	gold brocade
Chatham Lines 4				cup		crystal ball	
Chessell Down 45	X		weaving batten	perforated spoon, bronze pail, drinking vessel		crystal ball	gold brocade
Dover 20	X	X	weaving batten	claw beaker, bronze bowl	gold bracteeate	large white bead	gold and silver rings
Dover 38	X		weaving batten	cone beaker	silver disc		silver and bronze bracelets
Finglesham D3	X	X	weaving batten needle case	amber claw-beaker	3 gold bracteeates	belt buckle with shield design	red gold ring
Finglesham 203	X	X	weaving batten, comb	claw-beaker, bronze bowl	2 gold bracteeates	ball of pyrites, gold bead	
Lylinge 16	X				gold bracteeate	amber bead	ring, bronze bracelet
Lylinge 44	X			perforated silver spoon		crystal ball	gold brocade
Ovingell			weaving batten				
Ramsgate 2			weaving batten				
Sarre 4	X	X	shears, pin, comb	bell beaker, perforated silver spoon with garnet	6 gold bracteeates	Roman coins	silver ring
Sarre 90					gold bracteeate	crystal ball	gold brocade
Stodmarsh	X			perforated gilt spoon with garnet on handle			gold brocade

Possible burials of this type may also have been found at Chartham Down, Faversham, Gilton Ash, Harrietsham I, Kingston, Milton-Next-Sittinghouse III, Sibertswold-Barreston, Smeeth and Westbere. However, most of these finds date from the 18th century and the contents of the burials were not well recorded or reported. A number of artefacts, including silver spoons, crystal balls and bracteeates have since been lost or their provenance forgotten, and so the exact number of Nabbs type burials discovered to date remains unclear.

The Old English Light-Dark Axis			Table 10
White/Light	Grey	Black/Dark	
<i>blac</i> <i>hwit</i> <i>beorht</i> <i>leoht</i> <i>scir</i>	<i>græg</i> <i>hasu</i> <i>har</i>	<i>blæc</i> <i>deorc</i> <i>dun</i> <i>sweart</i> <i>wann</i>	

(after Barley 1974: 18, Fig 4)

Location of Old English Colour Words on the Hue Axis and on the Light-Dark Axis			Table 11
--	--	--	----------



(Barley 1974: 24, Fig 7)

The Old English Hue Axis Compared with that of Modern English		Table 12
blue	<i>hæwen</i>	
purple		
red	<i>baso</i>	
yellow	<i>read</i>	
	<i>geolo</i>	
green	<i>grene</i>	

(after Barley 1974: 19, Fig 5)

Old English Colour Terms Showing Focus on Characteristic of "Brightness" Table 13	
Saturation amount of grey in the colour, its vividness	Lightness how "light" or "dark" the colour is
<i>fealu</i> "dusky" <i>dunn</i> "dingy" <i>hasu</i> "ashen" <i>græg</i> "grey" <i>har</i> "hoary" <i>wann</i> "dark" <i>healfhwit</i> "half-white" <i>dungræg</i> "dusky" <i>brunwann</i> "dusky" <i>æscfealu</i> "ash-coloured"	<i>scir</i> "bright" <i>beorht</i> "bright" <i>torht</i> "bright" <i>scima</i> "brightness" <i>hador</i> "brightness"
Luster amount of light seemingly reflected from the surface	Scintillation sparkling or twinkling
<i>leoma</i> "gleam" <i>glæd</i> "shining" <i>blican</i> "glitter" <i>lyman</i> "shine" <i>brun</i> "having metallic luster"	<i>spircan</i> "sparkle" <i>scimerian</i> "shimmer" <i>bleobrygd</i> "scintillation" <i>brigd</i> "play of colour" <i>bregdan</i> "play of colour" <i>tytan</i> "sparkle"

(after Millward 1989: 108)

Figure 1

Germanic Peoples of the Migration Age (c. 400–600 AD)

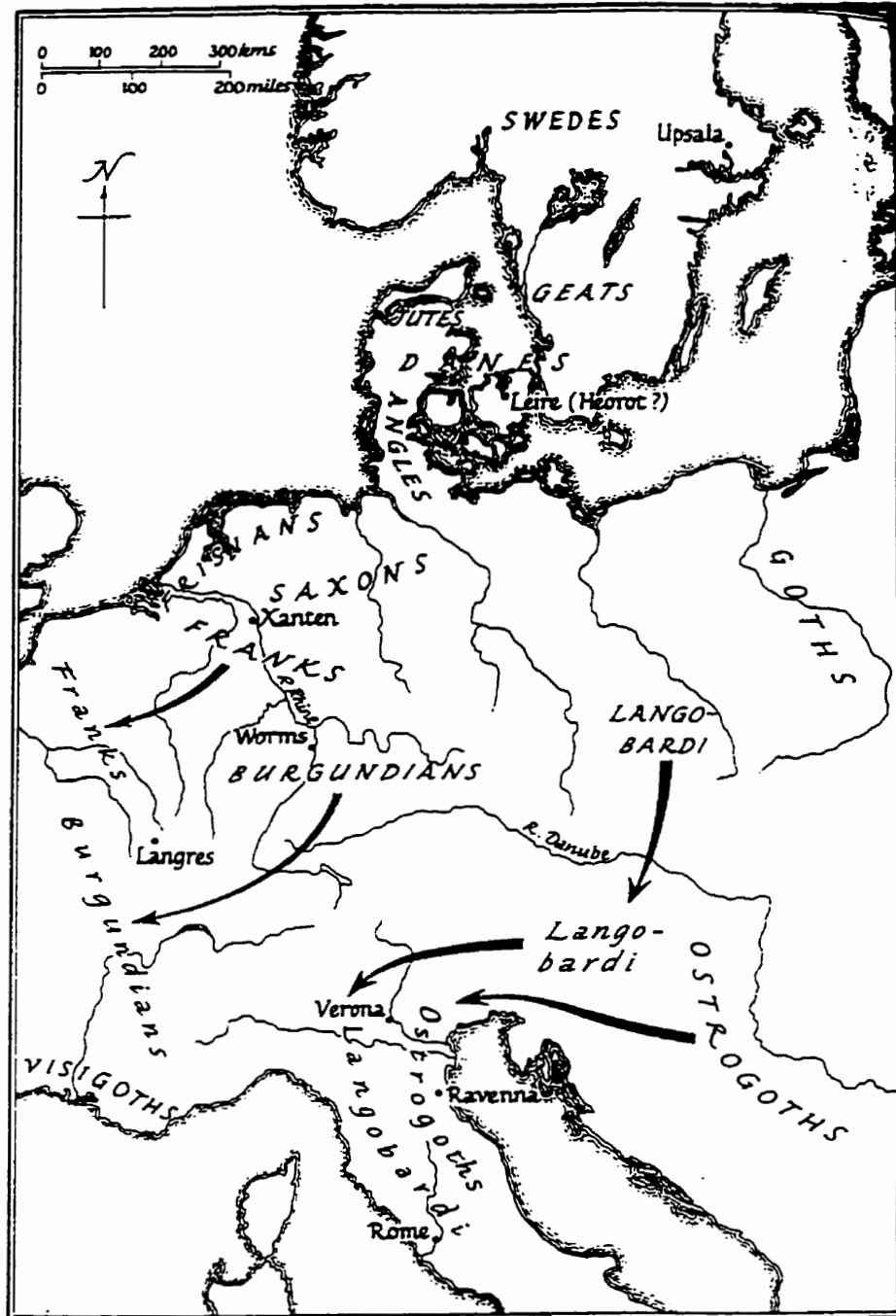


Fig. 1 Germanic peoples of the Migration Age (c. 400–600 AD)

(Godden and Lapidge 1994: n.p., Figure 1)

Figure 2

Anglo-Saxon Territories in the 7th/8th Centuries

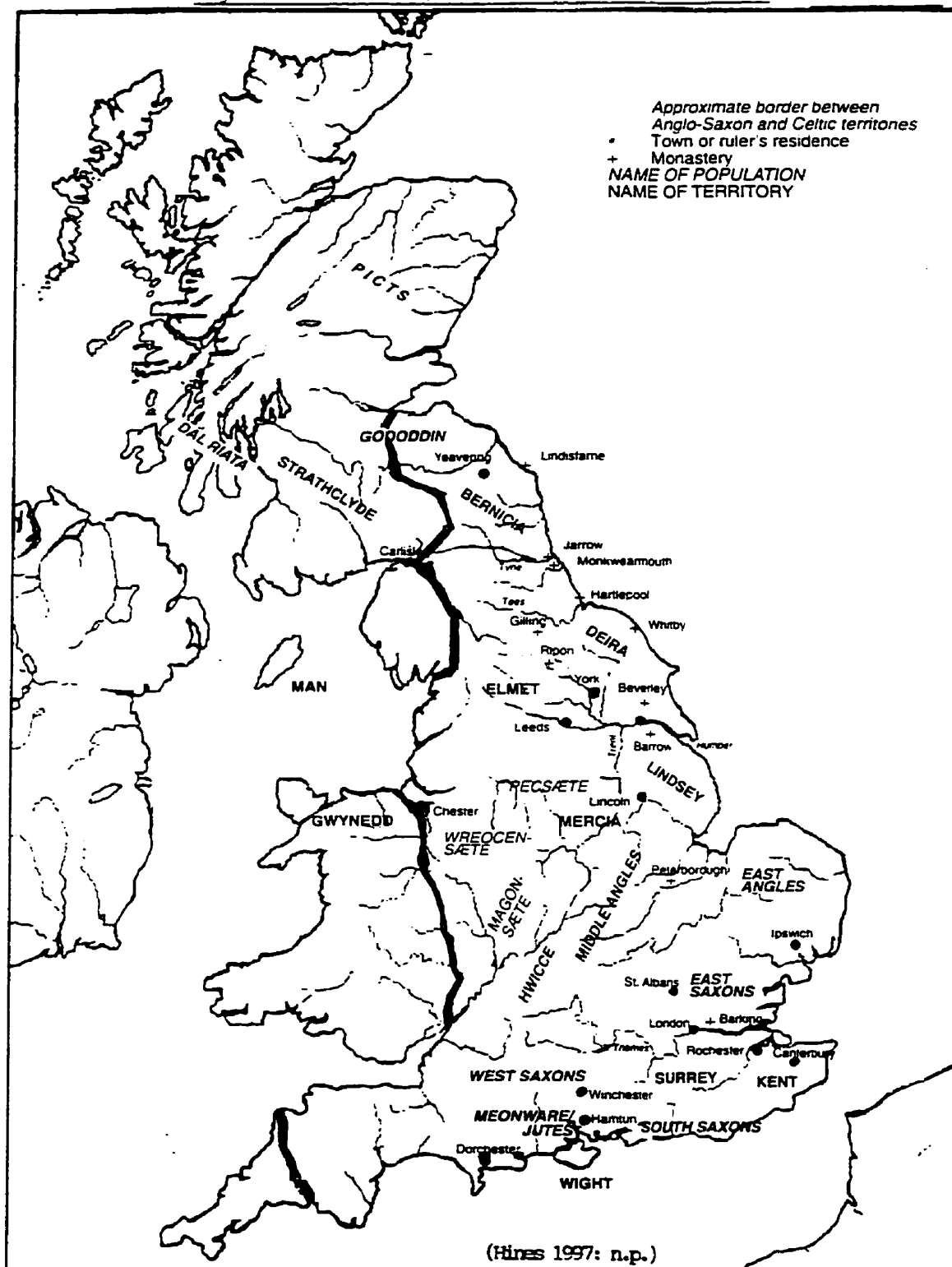
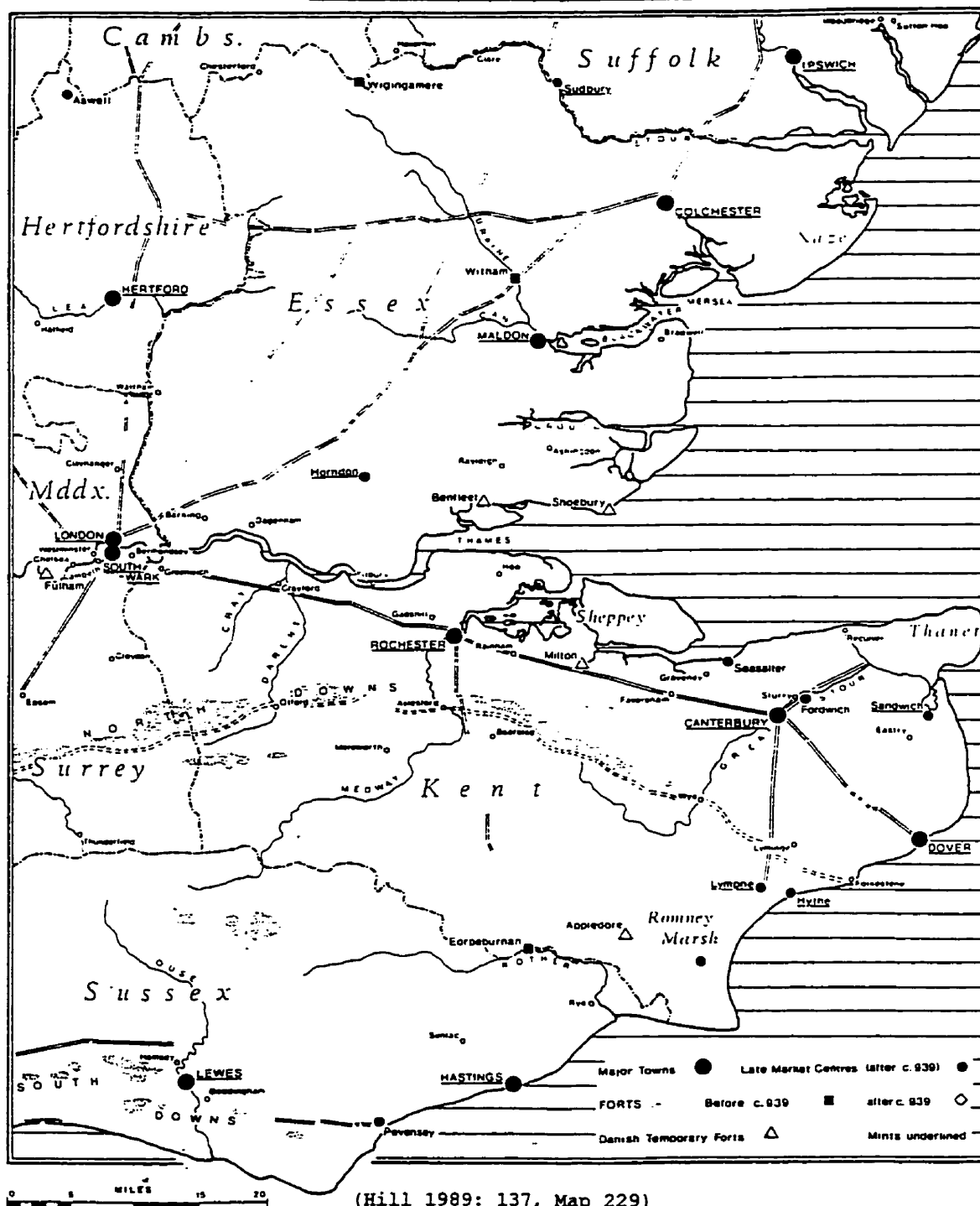
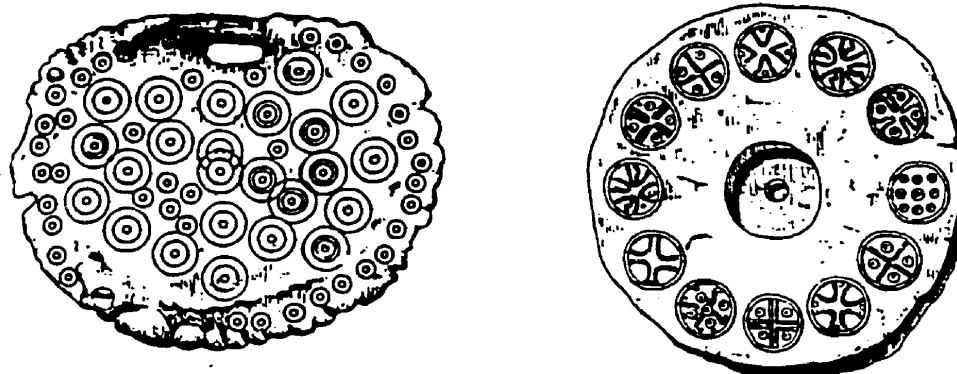


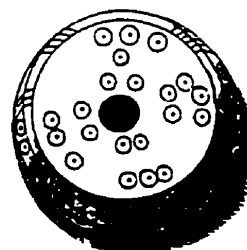
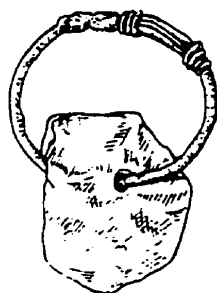
Figure 3

Southeastern England Showing Kent



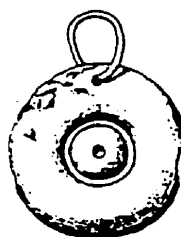
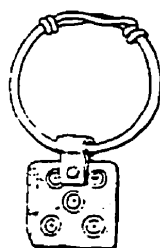


IV. ee Continental 'amulets of stags' antler' from (1) Friesland; (2) Sainte-Sabine on the Côte-d'Or (1/1). (Marey 1981: 140, Fig. IV)



IV. kk Kingston Kent, grave 142; animal bone on bronze ring.

IV. nn Kingston Kent, grave 142; ivory bead (1/1).



IV. oo Kingston Kent, 'ivory' pendants: (1) grave 7; (2) grave 177; (3) grave 297 (1/1).

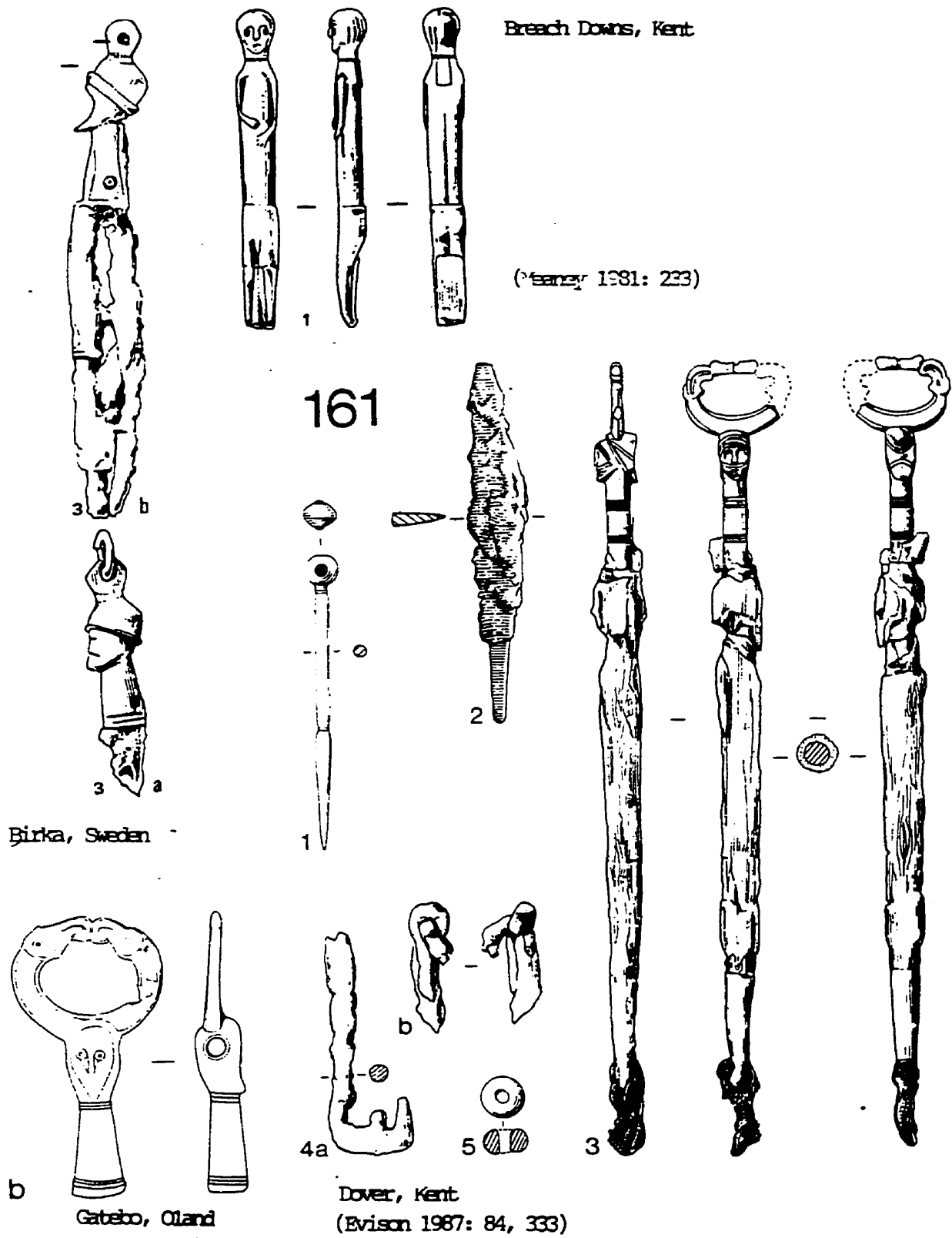


Figure 6

Woden Hanging on the Tree, Yggdrasil



A I M
Odin on the Yggdrasil,
or World Tree.
Spies the Runes



(Hawkes and Pollard 1981: 344)

Bifrons, Kent

Figure 8
Woden's Warrior on Horseback

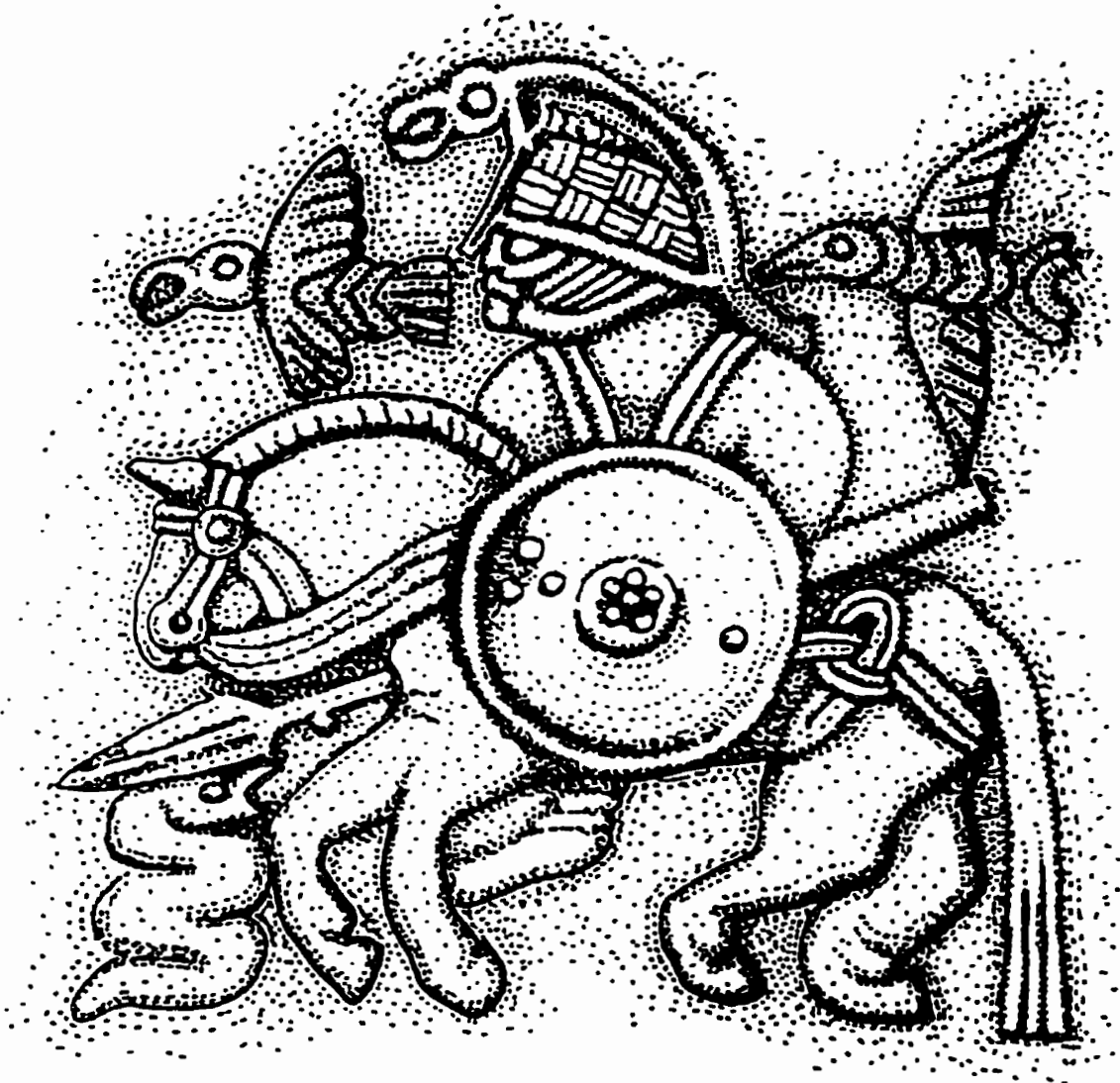


Figure 38 Mounted warrior based on detail of a helmet plate from Mound 1 at Vendel, Sweden. The warrior is accompanied by two birds of prey (eagle and raven?) and has a helmet surmounted by an eagle crest on the 'wala'.

(Pollington 1996: 191, Fig 38)

"Dancing Warriors" Plaque from Sutton Hoo Helmet



(Pollington 1996: 14, Fig. 2)

Woden's Warriors, the Berserks

73, 74
Figures on the Torshunda die



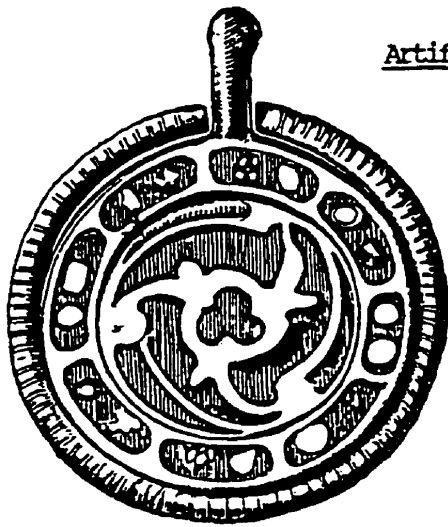


FIG. 52. Enamelled escutcheon of bowl,

(Smith 1993: 50, Figs 52 and 53)

4

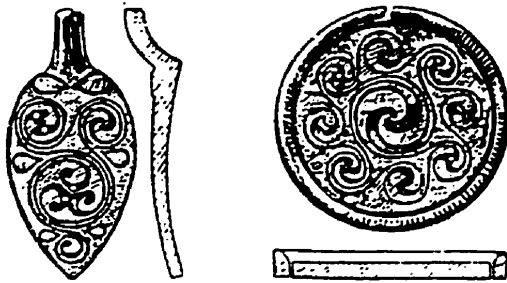
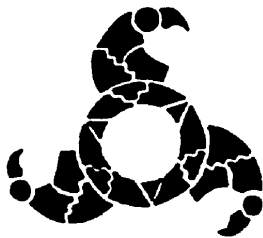


FIG. 53. Enamelled escutcheons of bowls, Faversham.



a

Faversham, Kent
(Speake 1980: n.p., Fig 3a)



1

Dover, Kent
(Evison 1987: 298, Fig 27)



2

Representations of Woden as "The Masked God"

Faversham, Kent
(Speake 1980: n.p., Fig 12f)

f



Odense, Denmark
(Evison 1987: 50, Fig 10)

l



Pendant
(Campbell, et al 1982: 48, Fig 7)

7 Bronze pendant from grave 138 at Finglesham, in the form of a head with a horned headdress with bird heads. length 2.5 cm (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum. Northbourne collection). This piece is clearly related to the buckle from grave 95 (no. 11).



12iii
D. 1.9cm



89i
D. 1.55cm

Chessel Down
Button Brooch
(Arnold 1982: n.p., Fig 18)

Chessel Down
Button Brooch
(Arnold 1982: n.p., Fig 5)



1



4



9



11



2



5



10



12



3



6



25



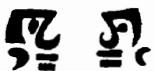
13



15



7



26



8



27



14

Masks on
Metalwork
Chessel Down

(Arnold 1982: n.p., Fig 74)

Visual Riddles - Animal and Human Masks

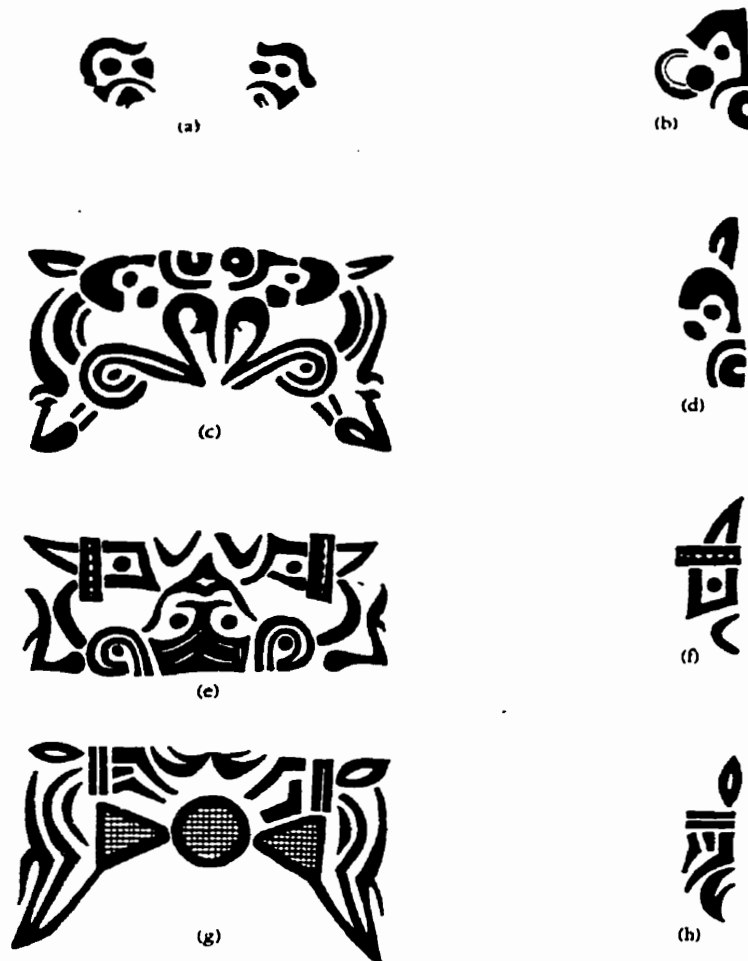


FIGURE 8 DETAILS FROM SQUARE-HEADED BROOCHES: (a)-(d) Apple Down; (e), (f) Donzdorf; (g), (h) Dover

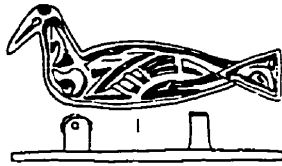
Anglo-Saxon Bird Brooches and Decorative Forms



Pin
(Warhurst 1955: 21,
Plate VIII, Fig 3)

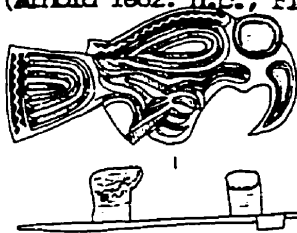
3

26 Brooch in the 'quoit' style from Sarre, Kent, mid-5th-century, diameter 8.5 cm (British Museum). The significance of such brooches is debated. Though the form and style are probably of Scandinavian origin, the craftsmanship has a Roman pedigree.



40v
L. 3.5cm

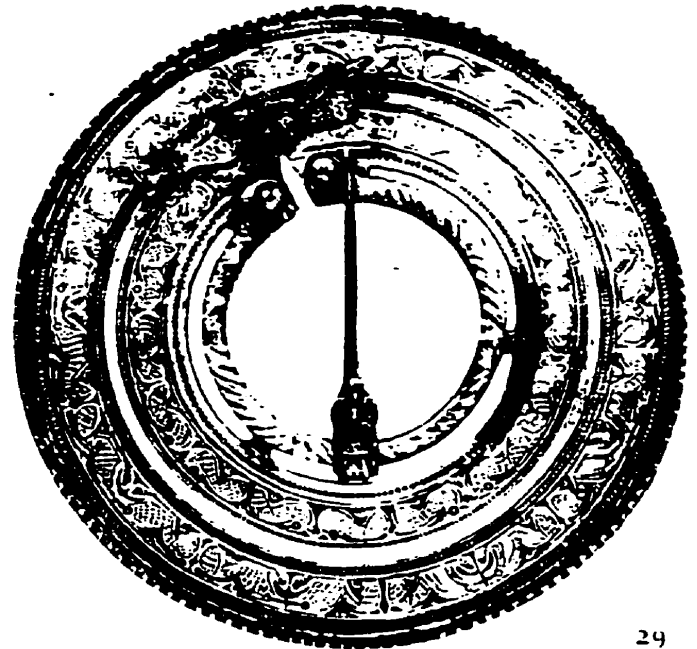
Brooch, Chessel Down
(Arnold 1982: n.p., Fig 9)



Brooch
Chessel Down

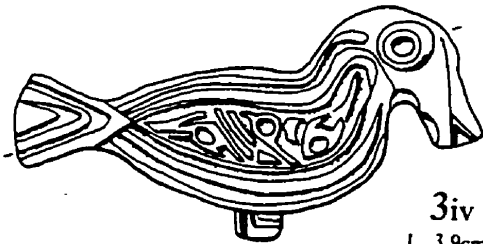
23i

(Arnold 1982: n.p., Fig 8)



29

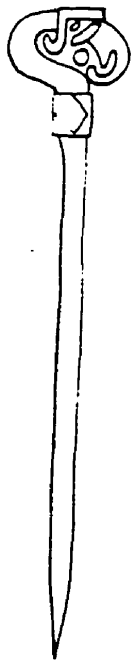
(Campbell, et al 1982: 29, Fig 26)



3iv
L. 3.9cm

Brooch
Chessel Down
(Arnold 1982: n.p., Fig 4)

Pin
Bifrons, Kent



m

Shield Mount
Hackington, Kent



c

Pin Head
Gilton, Kent



h

Mounts
Eastry, Kent

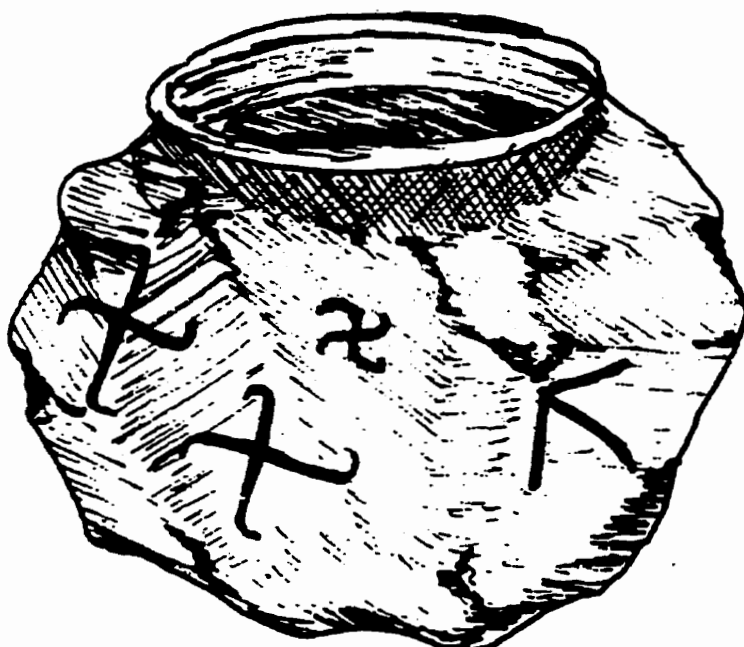


j



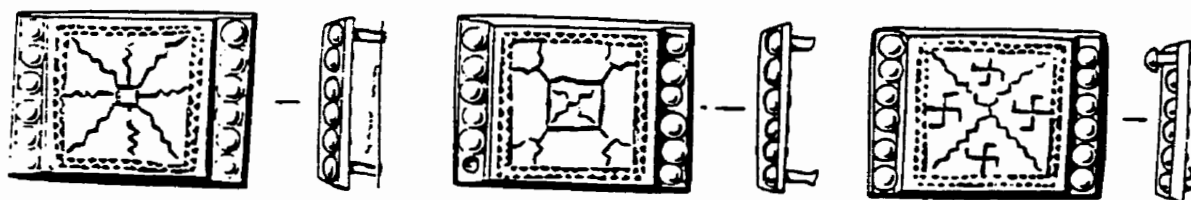
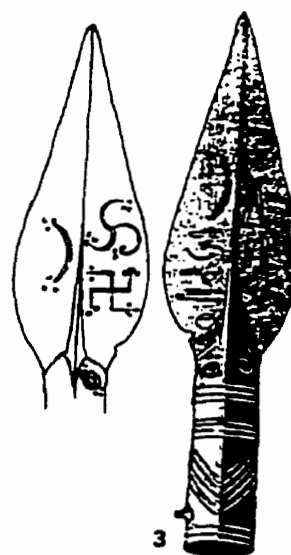
k

(Speake 1980: n.p., Fig 17, c,h,j,k,m)

Swastika, T-Rune, Whirling Disc, Lightning Flash Markings

Swastika (Thor's Hammer)
and T-Rune ("Glory" Rune)
(Pollington 1996: 29, Fig 9)

Swastika and Whirling Disc
(Meaney 1981: 242, Fig VII.f.3)

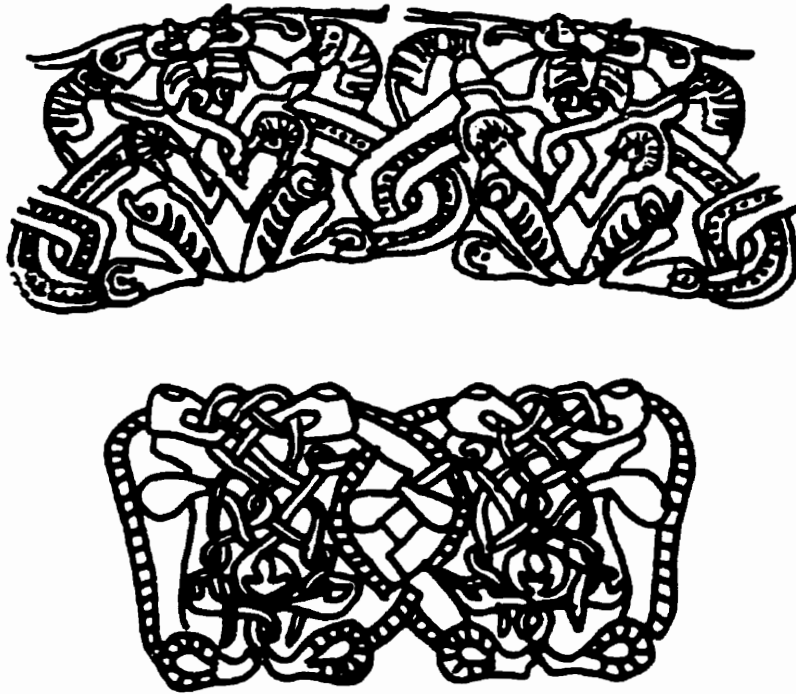


Lightning Flashes and Swastikas
(Meaney 1981: 243, Fig VII.d)

Figure 16

204

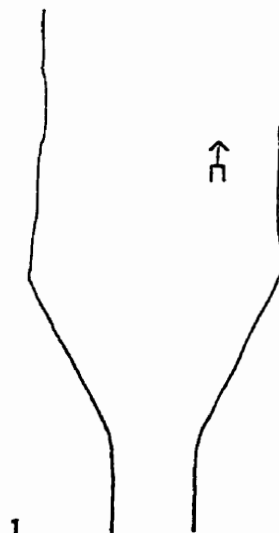
Horse Motifs and Interlacing Horse Designs



(Pollington 1996: 21, Fig 8)

Figure 17

Mark of Tyr, the T-Rune, on Spear at Holborough, Kent



(Meaney 1981: 242, Fig VII.f.1)

Side Panel of the Franks Casket (3 Hooded Figures at Right)



(Smith 1993: n.p., Plate VII)

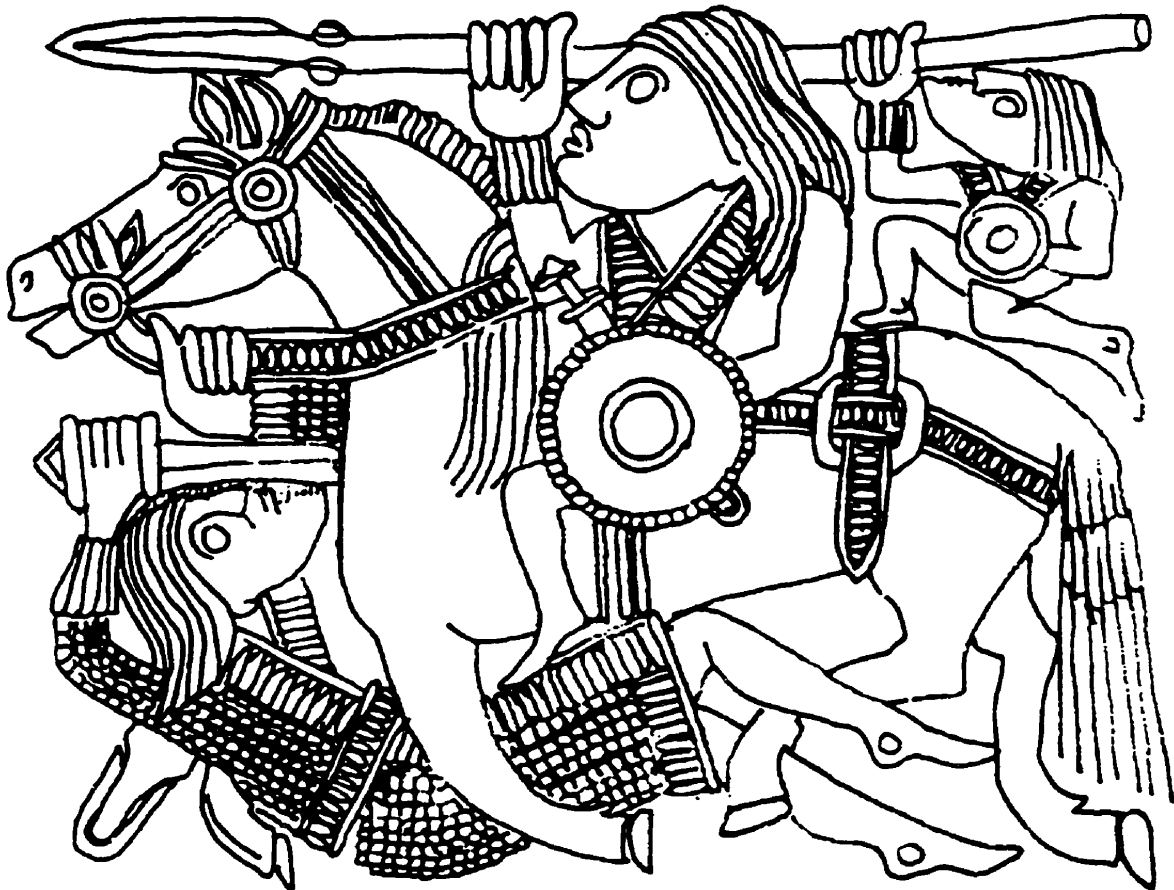
Figure 19

Front Panel of the Franks Casket (Weland Scene at Left)

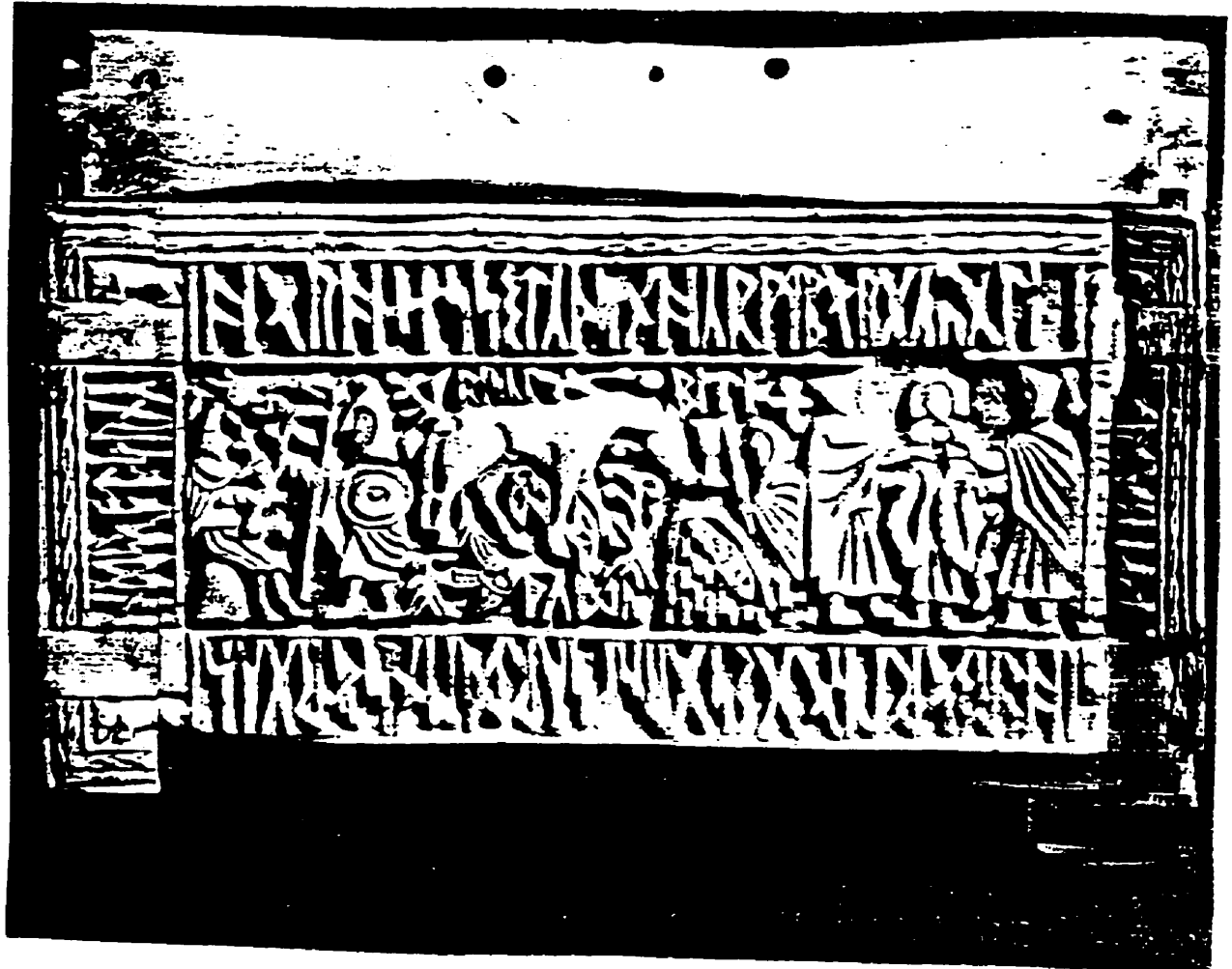


(Smith 1993: n.p., Plate VII)

Valkyrie Guiding Warrior's Spear

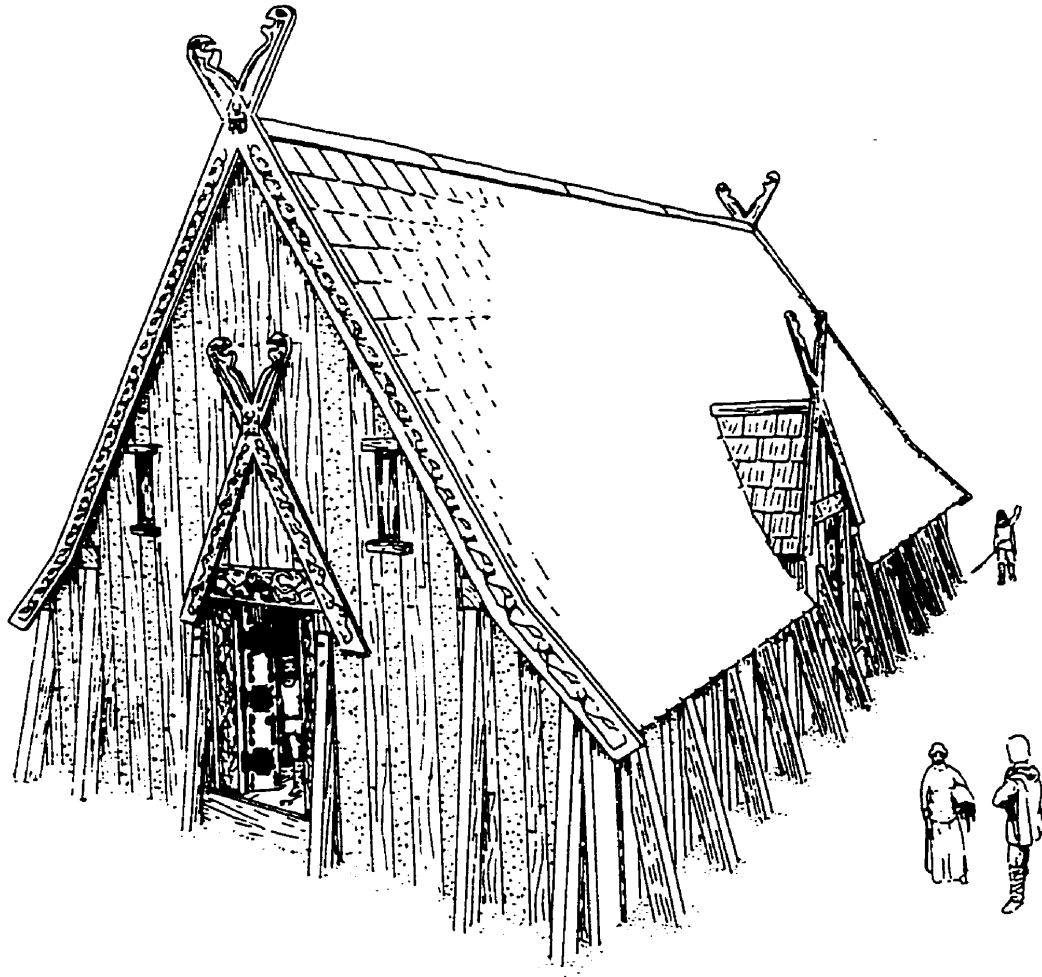


End Panel of the Franks Casket (a Valkyrie in her
"terrible aspect" meeting one of the followers of Woden at Left)



(Smith 1993: n.p. Plate VII)

Artist's Rendering of an Anglo-Saxon Hall



(Longworth and Cherry 1986: 137-138, Figs 72 and 73)

"Congruence" Between Female Burials, Holywell Row

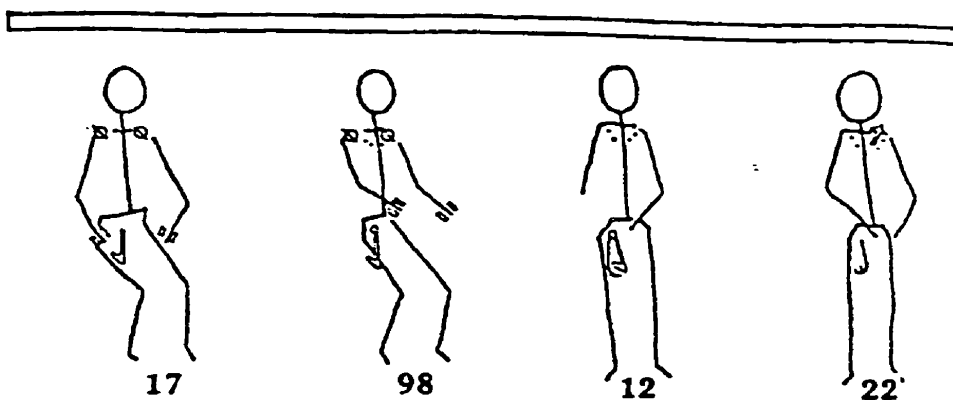


Figure 6.13. Sector 1 female graves: congruence.

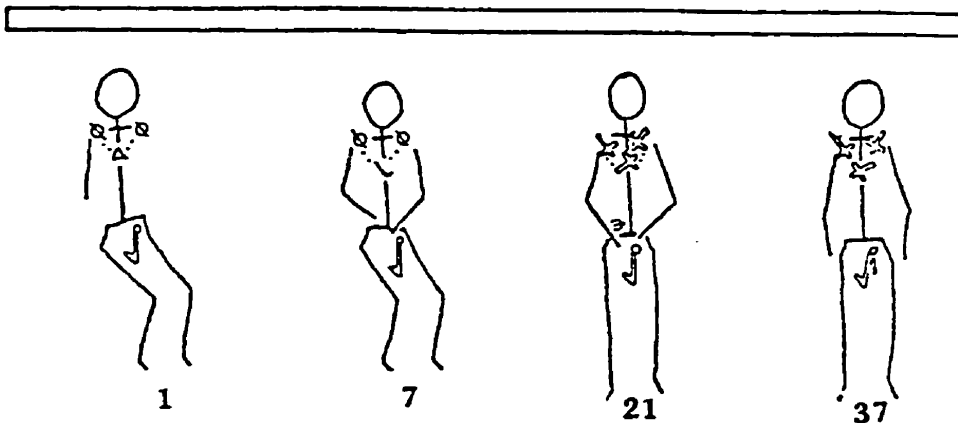


Figure 6.14. Sector 2 female graves: congruence.

11

Figure 6.15. Sector 2, female grave 11: addition.

"Congruence" Between Male Burials, Holywell Row

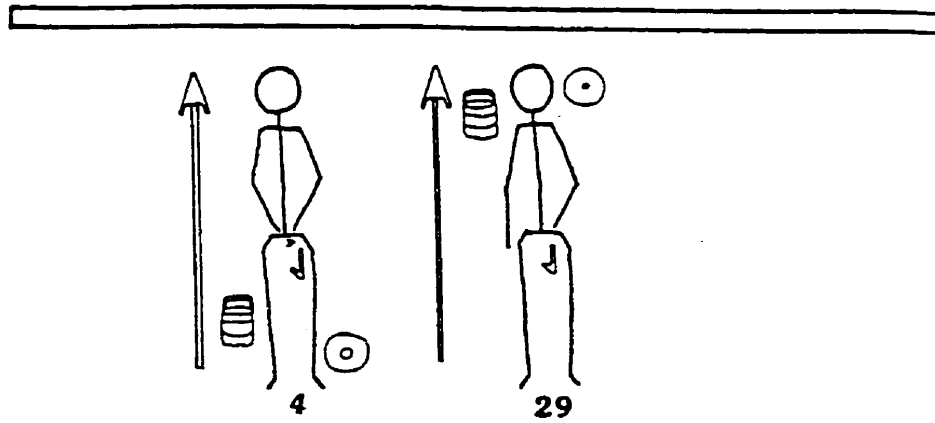


Figure 6.16. Male graves 4 (sector 1) and 29 (sector 2).

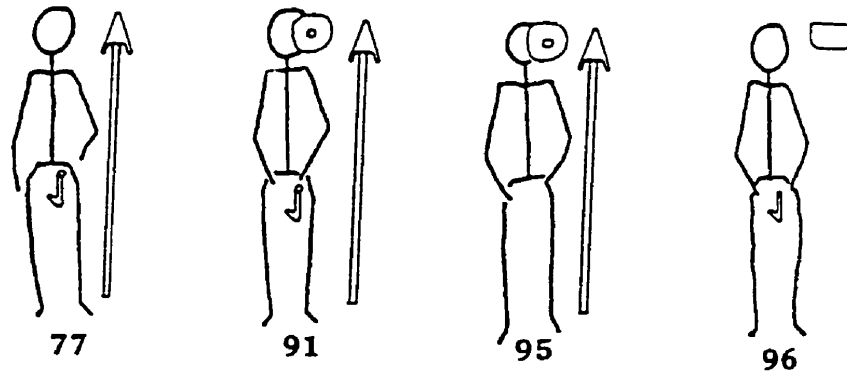


Figure 6.17. Sector 6 male graves: congruence.

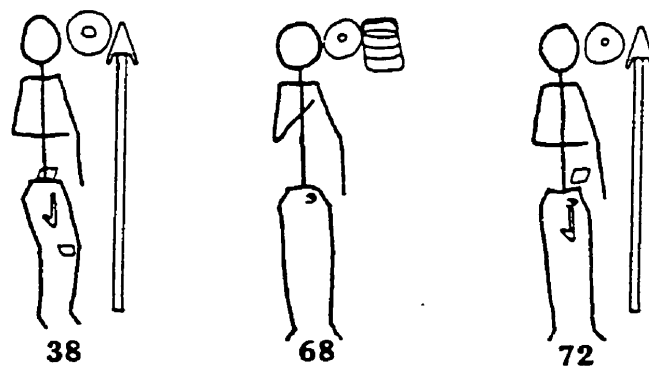


Figure 6.18. Sector 3 male graves: substitution.

Position of Shield Bosses in Anglo Saxon Burials

head end

	2		1	
1	11	34	5	3
3	6	34	9	5
1	9	42	8	5
1	1	34	3	1
1	3	16	3	2
		1		

foot end

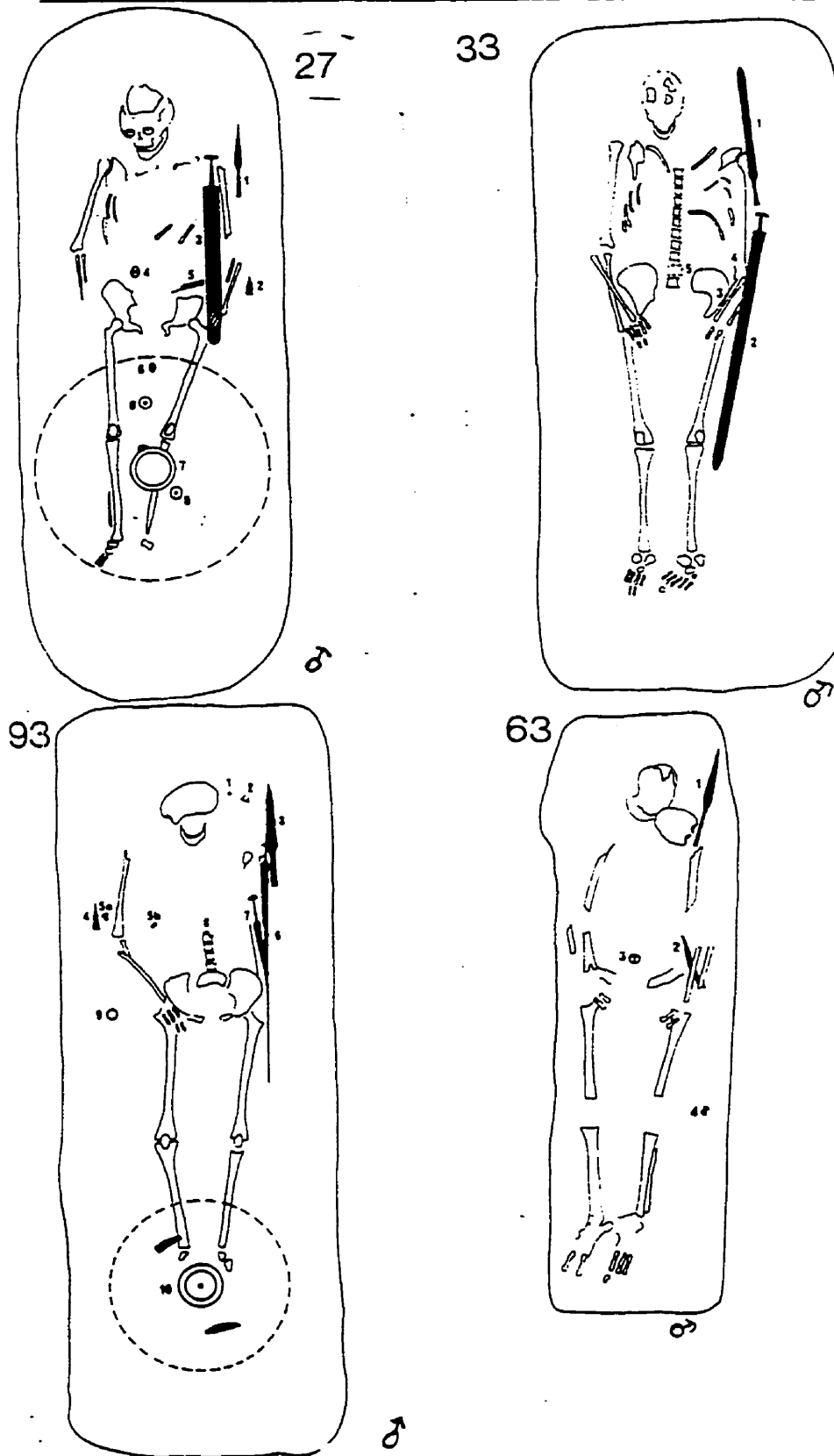
right

left

45. Positions of shield bosses in 245 Anglo-Saxon burials (schematic representation of the grave, with body area in bold outline)

Figure 26

"Congruence" Between Male Burials, Buckland at Dover

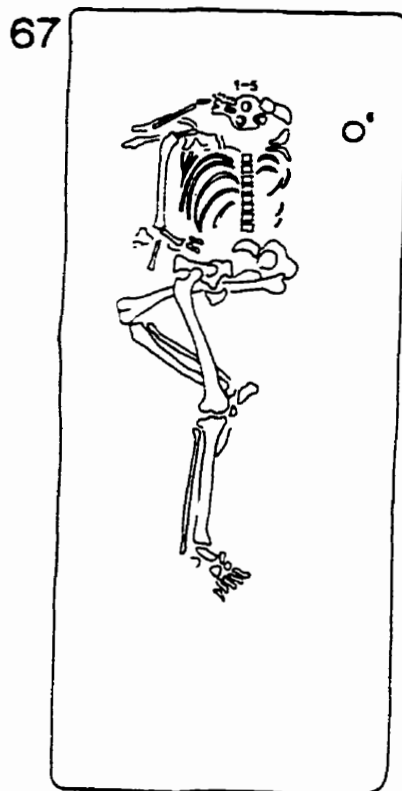


(Evison 1987: 340, 341, 344, 347)

Figure 27

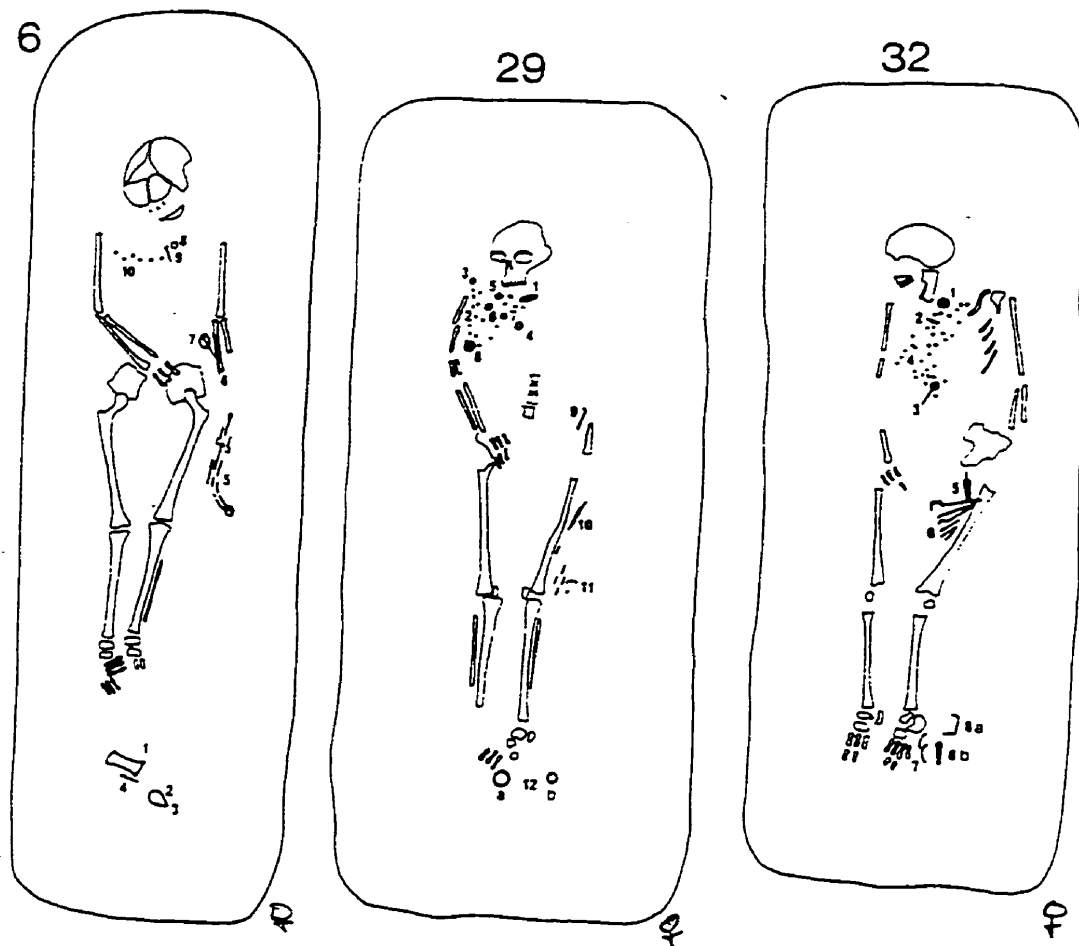
213

Possible Live Burial, Buckland at Dover

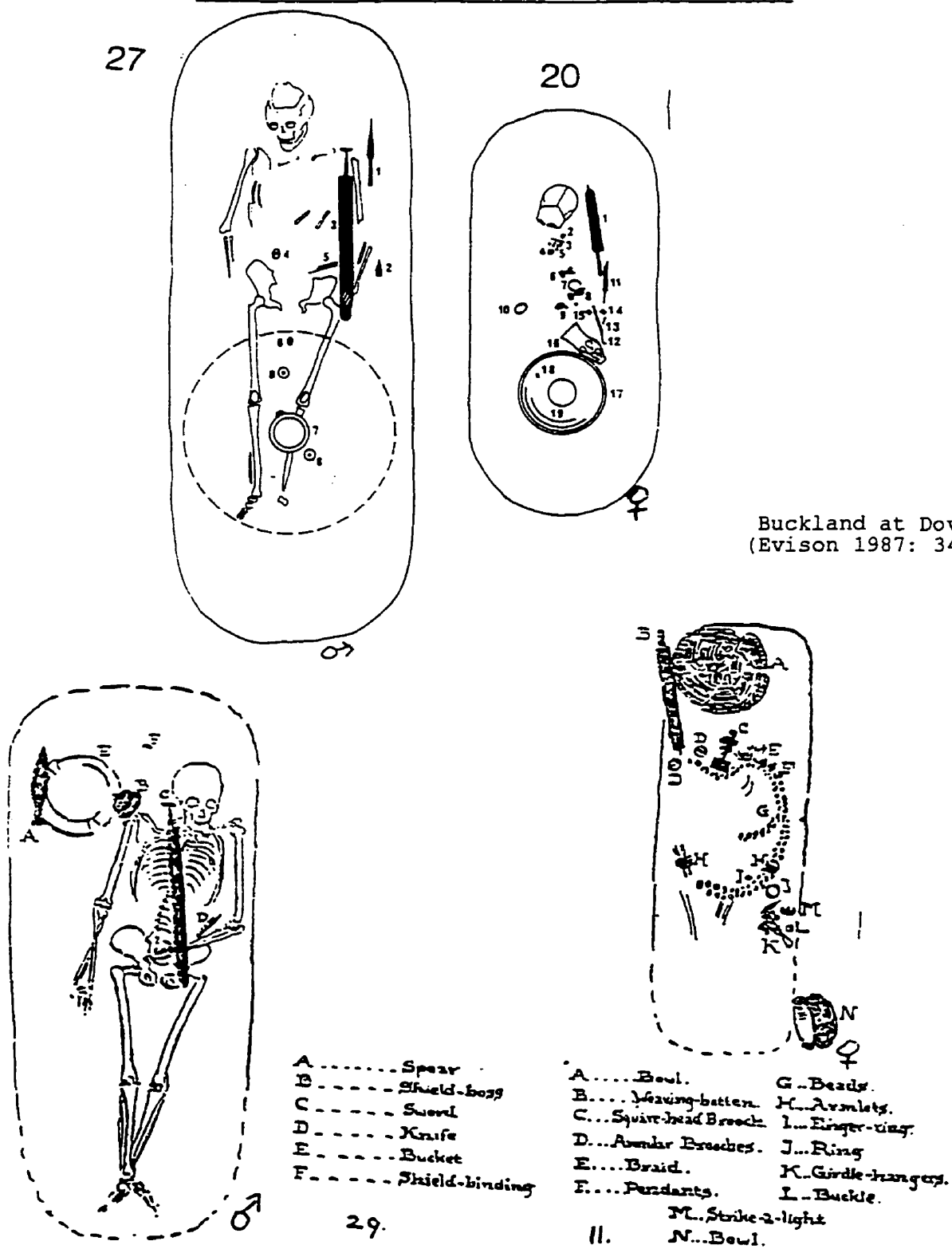


(Evison 1987: 344)

"Congruence" Between Female Burials, Buckland at Dover



(Evison 1987: 337, 340)

"Congruence" Between Male and Female Burials

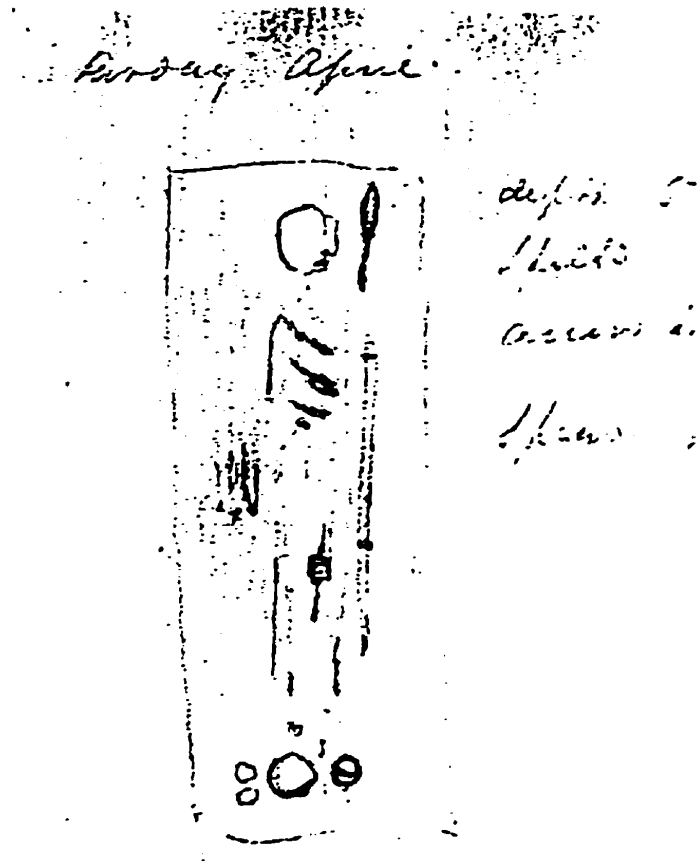
Wæpned Burial: Grave 26, Chessell Down

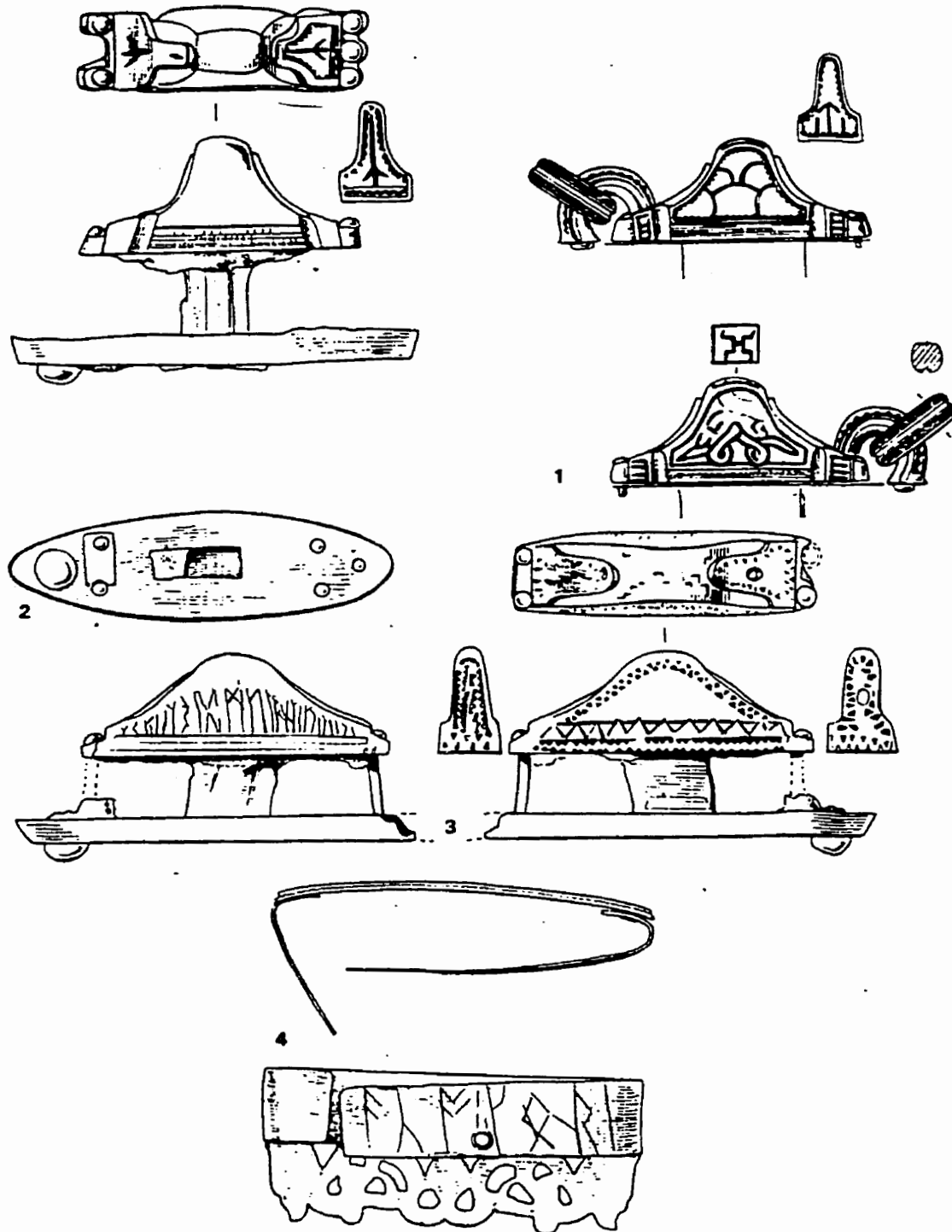
FIGURE 21

Chessell Down, plan of grave 26, not to scale (from Isle of Wight Record Office M.41, fol. 3)

Figure 31

Runic and Rune-Like Inscriptions

217



VII.e Runic or rune-like inscriptions: (1 - 3) on Kentish sword-pommels; (1) Faversham; (2 - 3) Gilton ; (4) on back of scabbard mount, Chessell Down IoW; all(1/1).

(Meaney 1981: 244, Fig VII.e)

Webbe Burial: Grave 45, Chessell Down

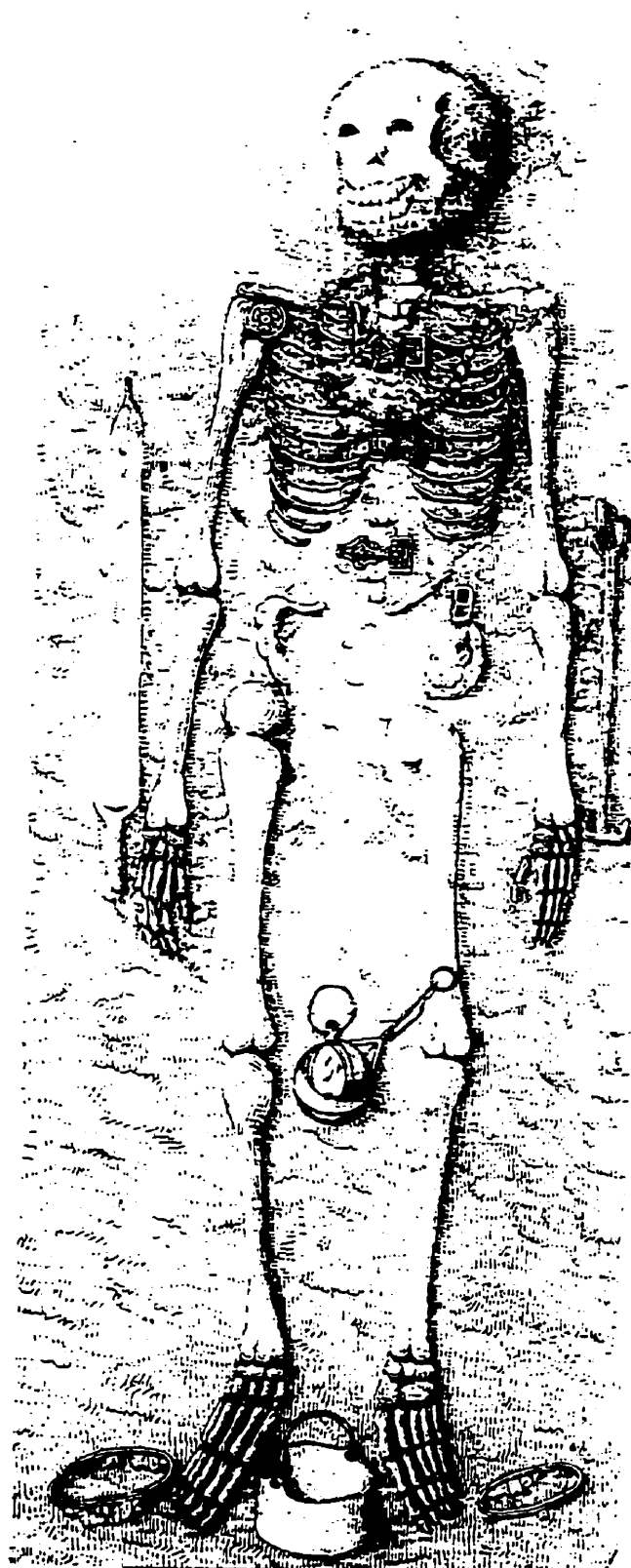
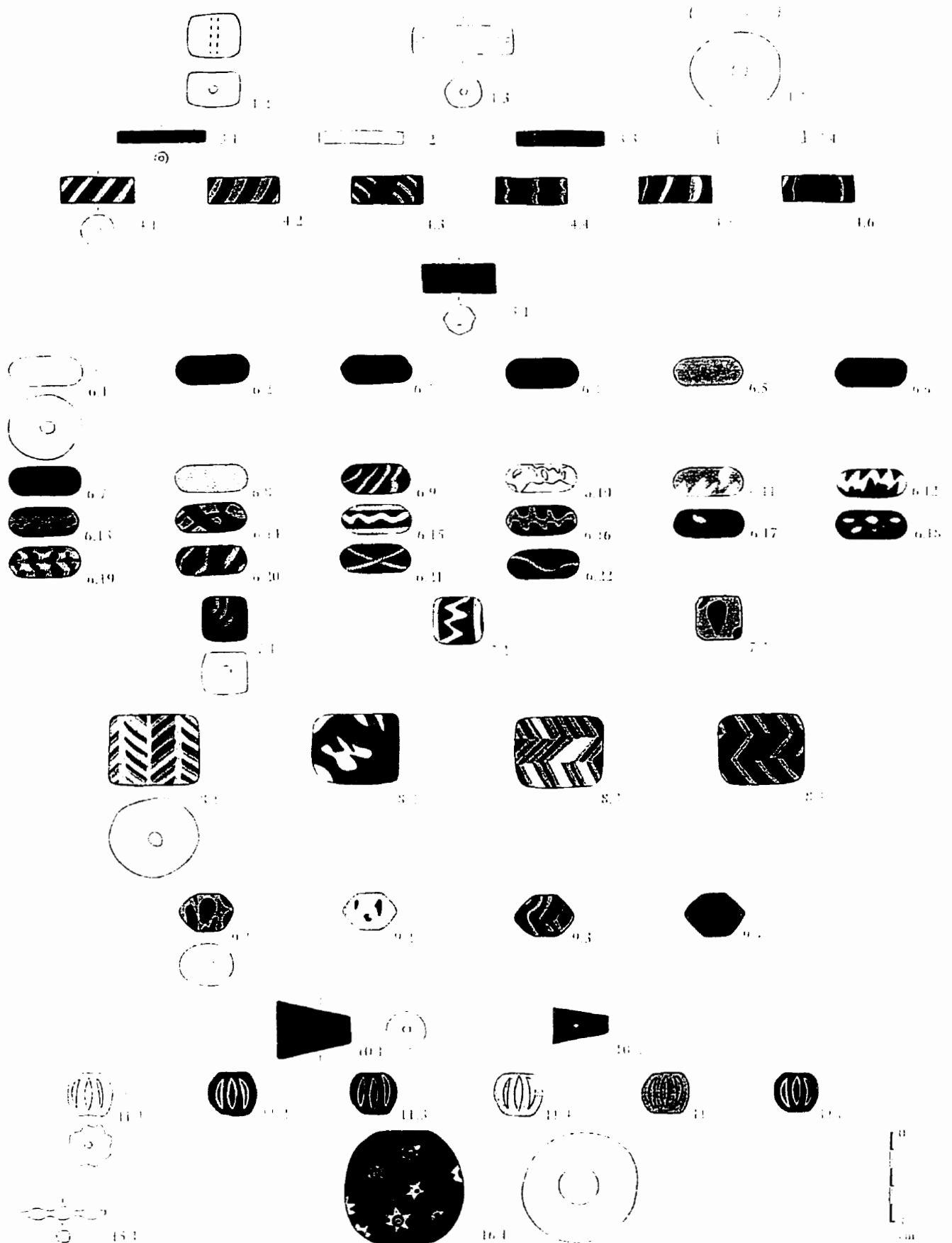


FIGURE 22
Chessell Down, plan of grave 45,
not to scale (from Smith
1868, pl. XXVIII)

(Arnold 1982: n.p., Fig 22)

Bead Types from the Isle of Wight

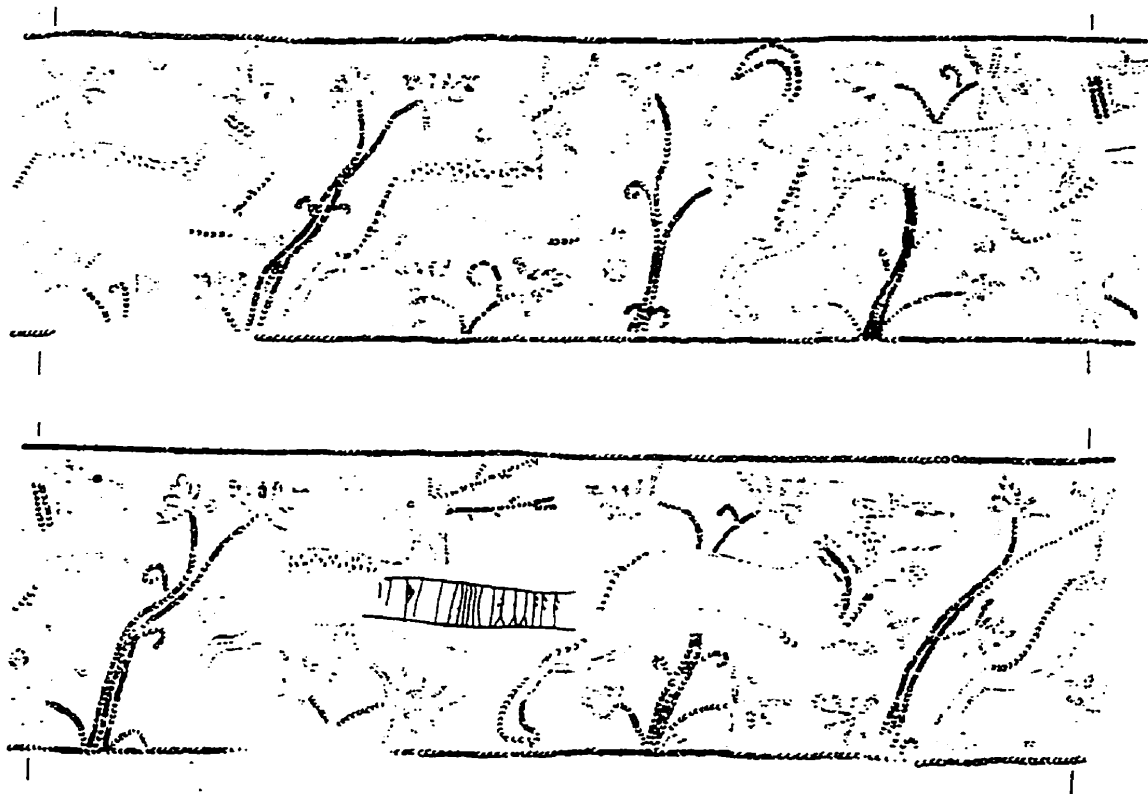
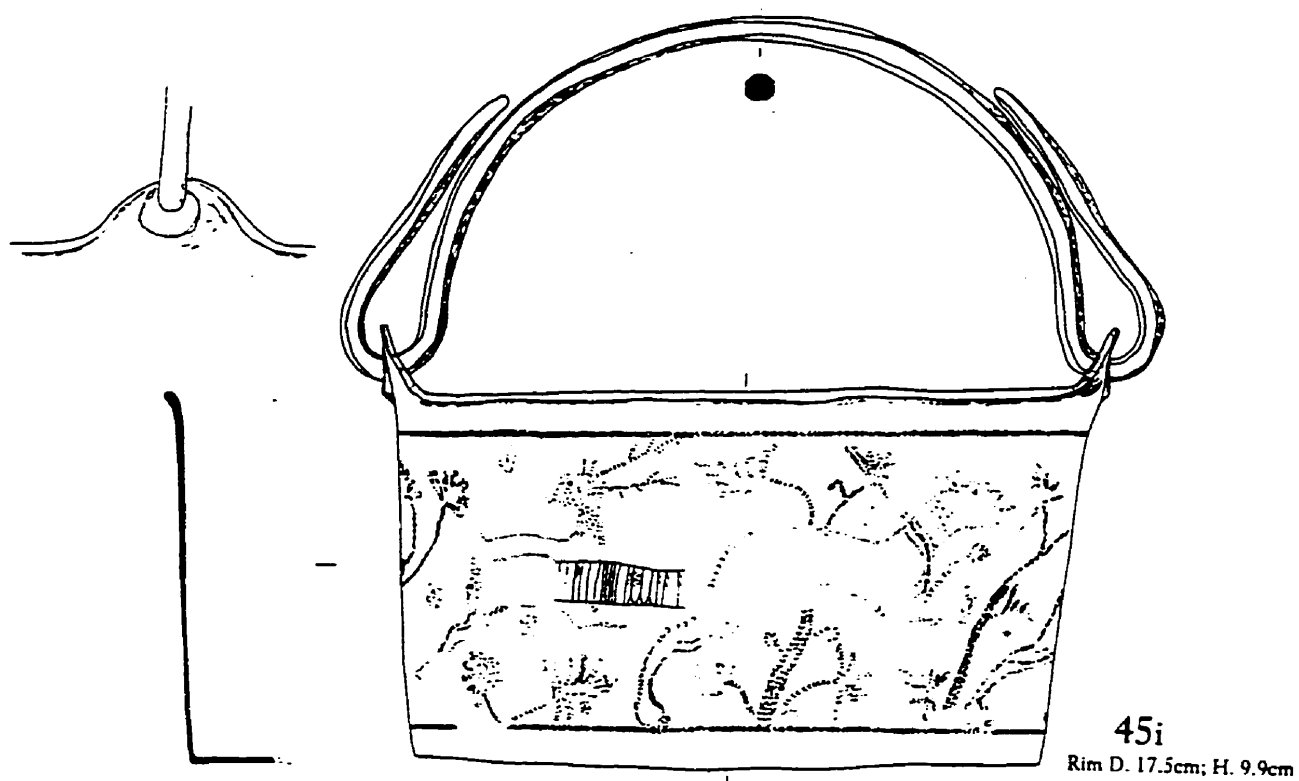


(Arnold 1982: Frontspiece)

Figure 34

220

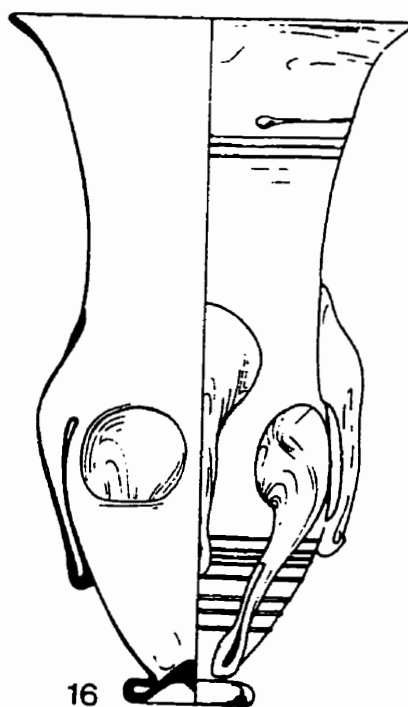
Bronze Pail from Grave 45, Chessell Down



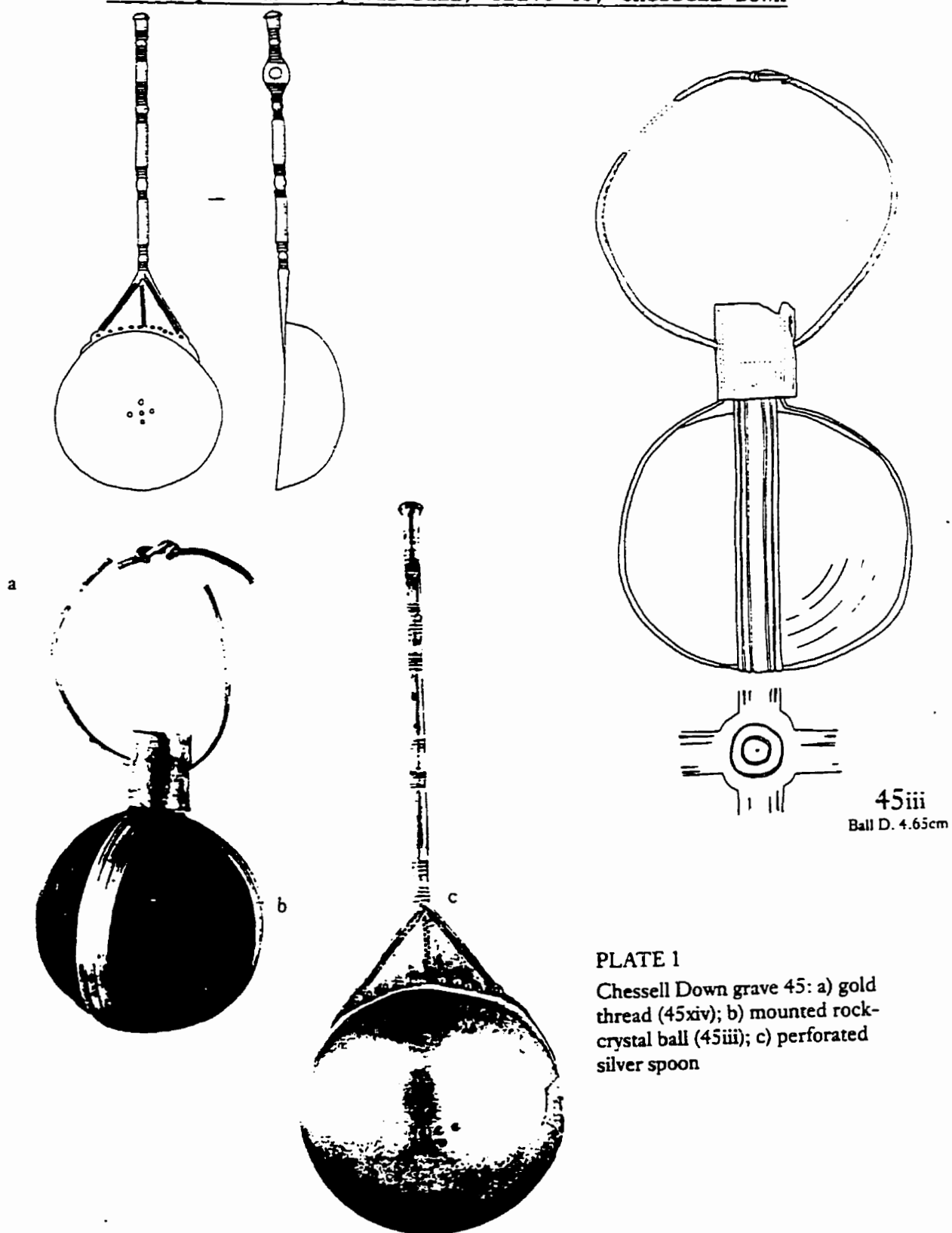
(Arnold 1982: n.p., Fig 10)

Anglo-Saxon Blown Glass Claw Beaker and Cone Beaker

22



Sieve Spoon and Crystal Ball, Grave 45, Chessell Down



(Arnold 1982: n.p., Fig 11, Plate I)

Square-Headed Brooches, Grave 45, Chessell Down

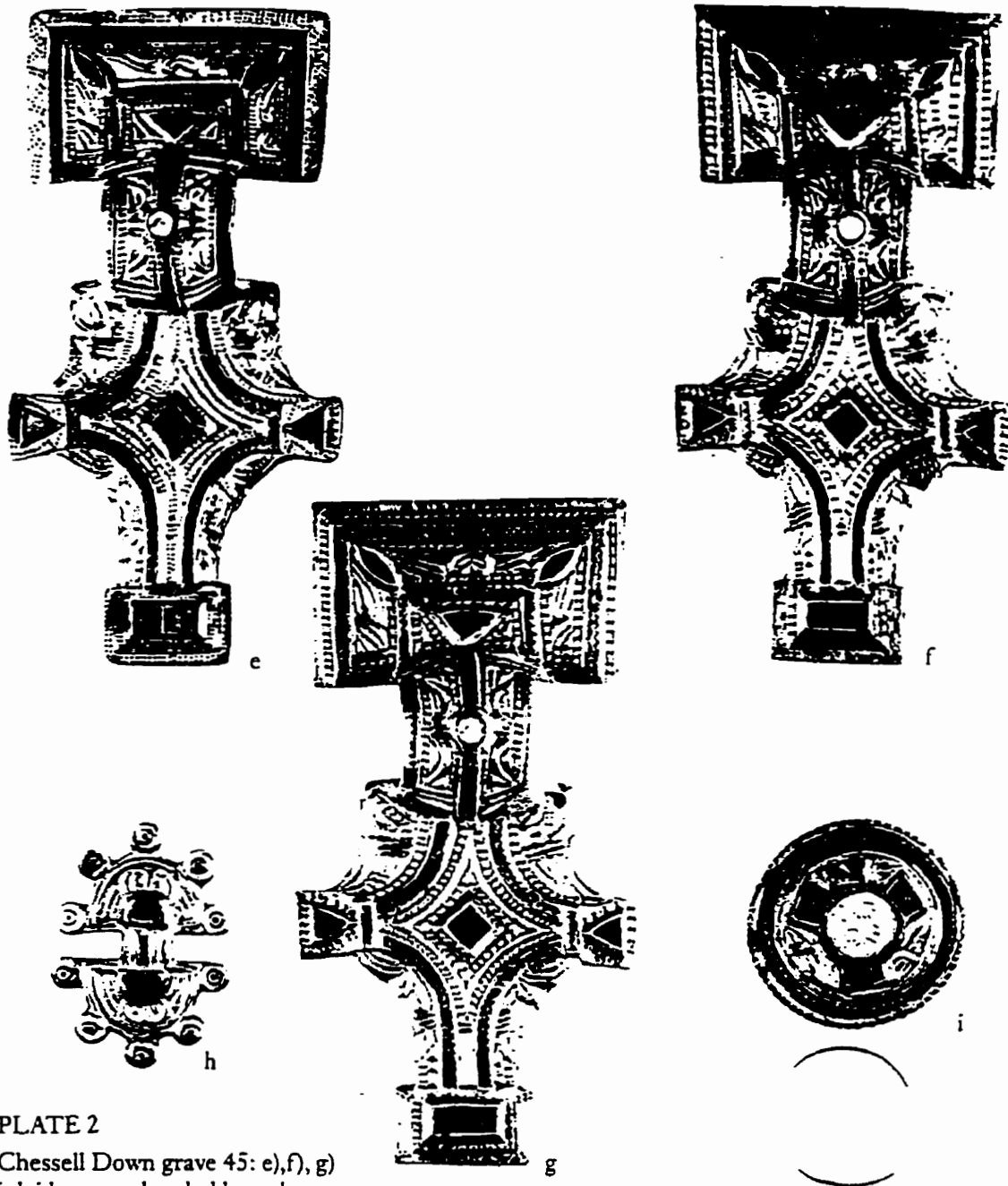


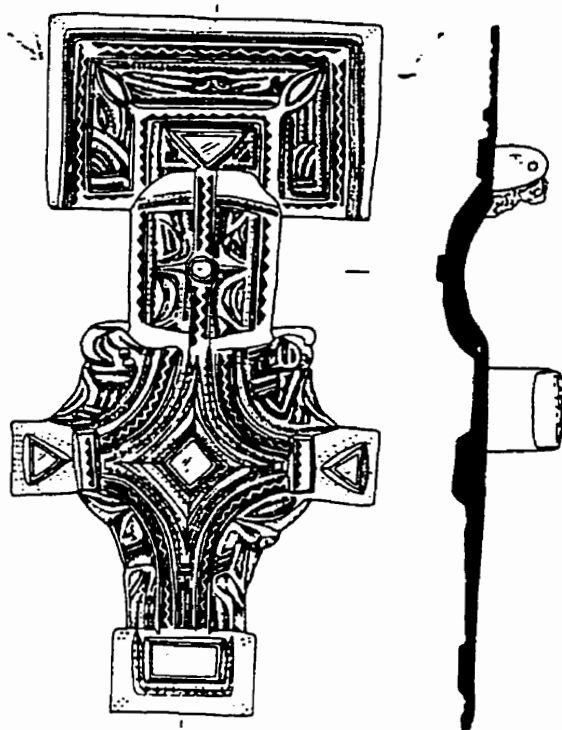
PLATE 2

Chessell Down grave 45: e), f), g)
inlaid square-headed brooches
(45ix, x, xi); h) inlaid equal-armed
brooch (45xii); i) inlaid disc brooch
(45xiii); j) silver ring (45xviii)

Figure 38

224

Square-Headed Brooch With Opposed Animal Heads
Showing Eye on Upper Border

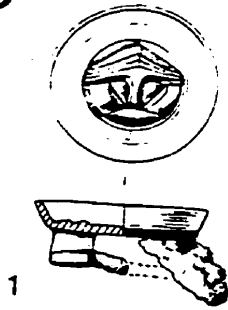


45x
L. 9.25cm

(Arnold 1982: n.p., Fig 2)

Masks or Faces on Button Brooches
Dover Grave 48, Chessell Down Graves 7 and 89

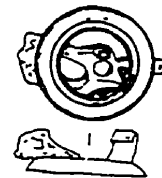
48



7v
D. 1.7cm



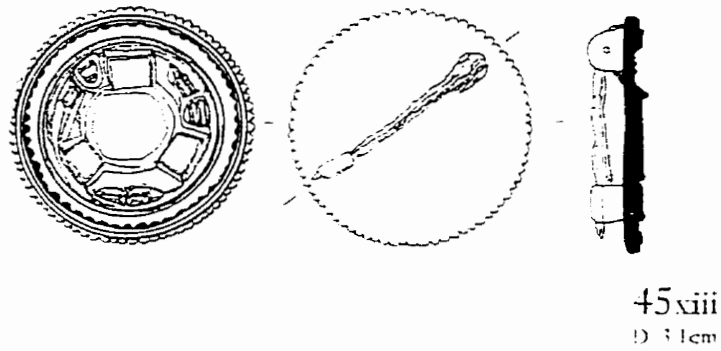
89i
D. 1.55cm



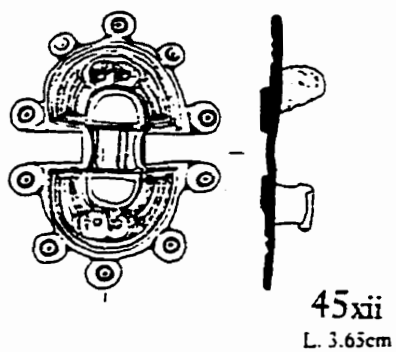
89ii
D. 1.5cm

(Evison 1987: 298, Fig 27; Arnold 1982: n.p., Figs 5 and 18)

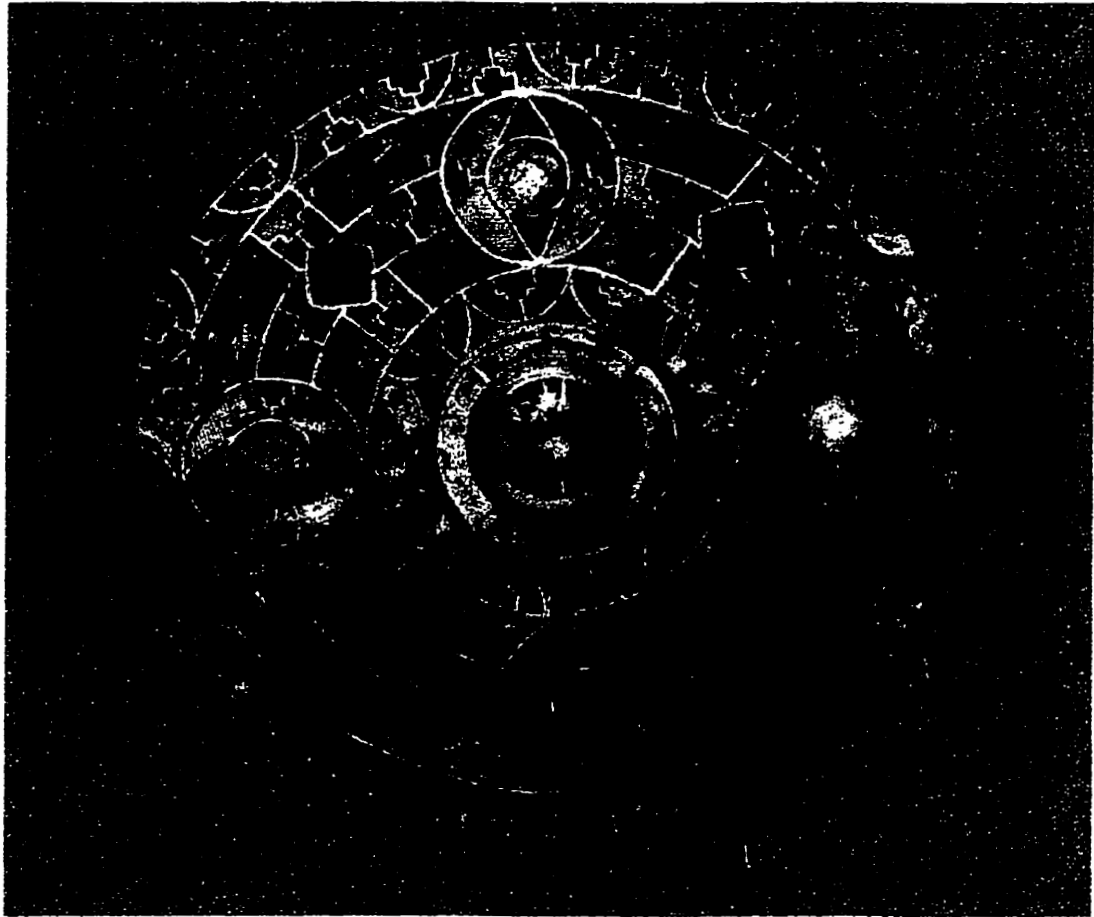
Disc Brooches Showing Beaded Rim and "Light and Shade" Effect



Equal-Armed Brooch, Grave 45, Chessell Down

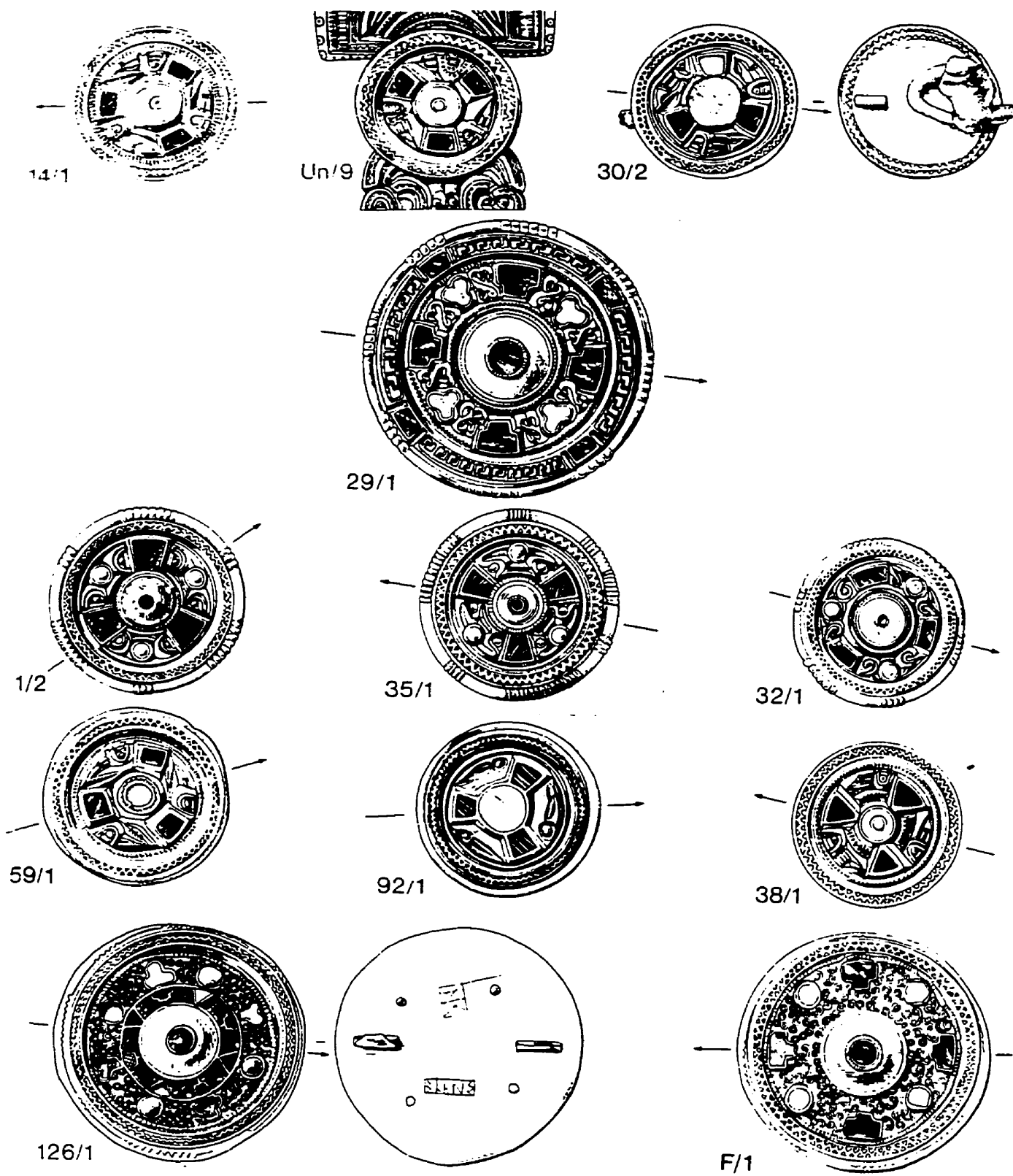


Kingston Brooch, Garnet-Inlaid Cloisonné



(Campbell 1982:47)

Disc Brooches with Reserve Neillure Borders



(Evison 1987: 40, Fig 7)

Figure 44
Examples of Notching

230

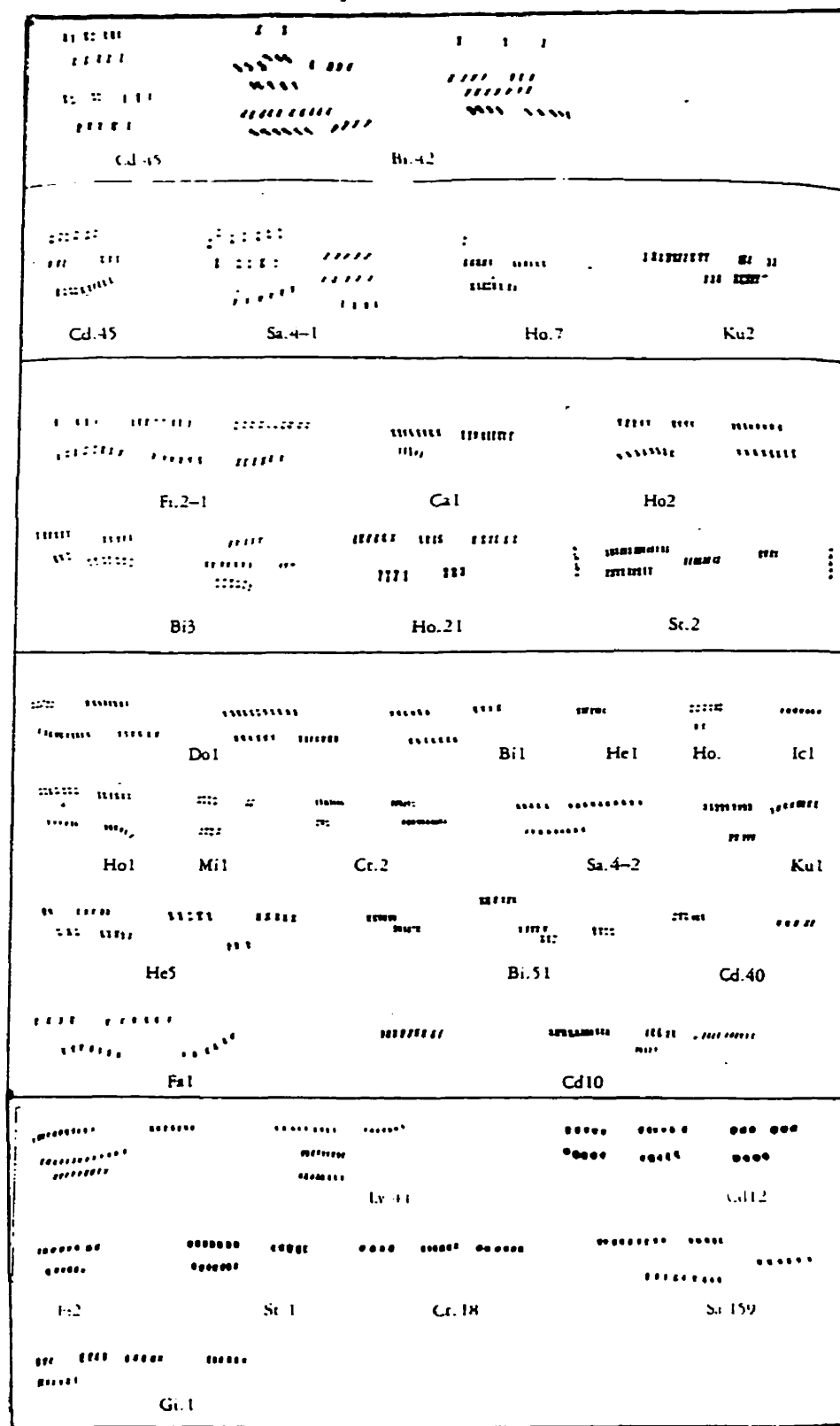


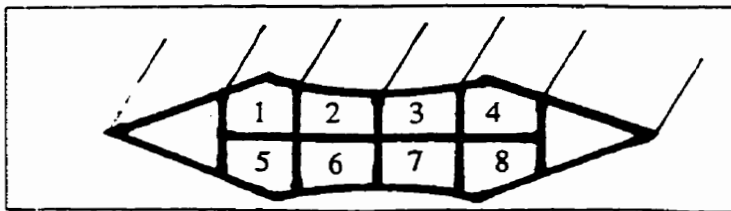
FIGURE 2 A SELECTION OF 'NOTCHING' EFFECTS produced on ridges and on flat surfaces

(Leigh 1990: 110-1)

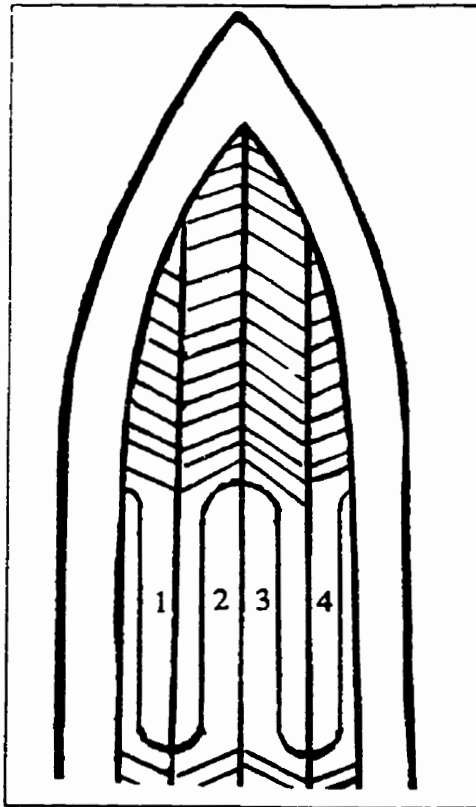
Rods of Metal Welded Together in Pattern-Welding Process



The billets were welded onto
 their long temporary handles
 during forging.



1. Cross section of the blade. The numbers which identify the individual rods correspond to those in fig. 2. below.

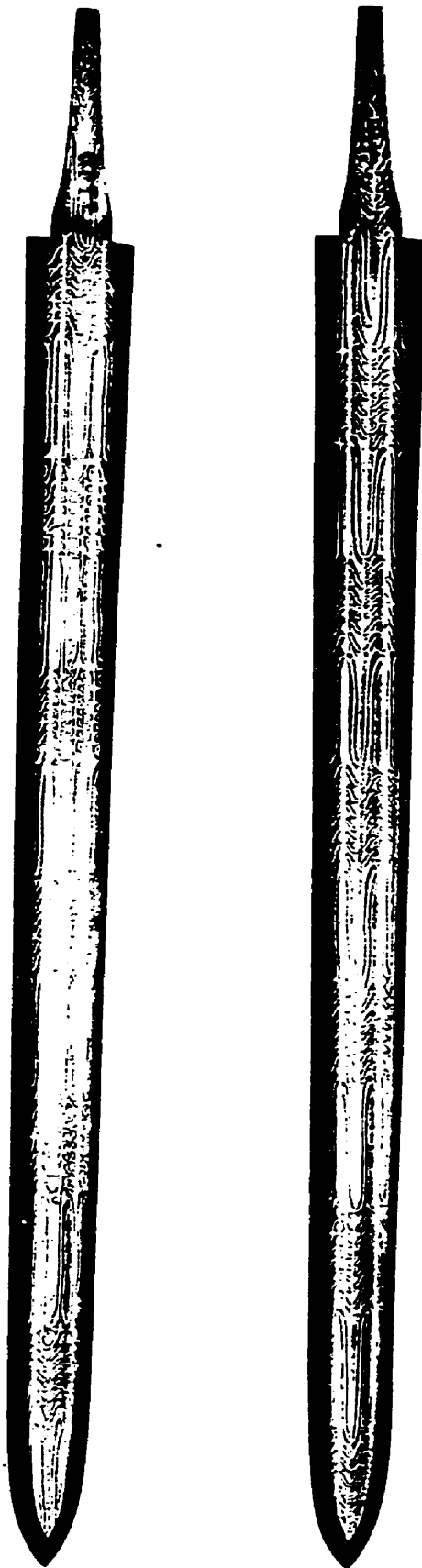


2. Face of finished blade showing four top pattern rods, edge wrapped around tip.



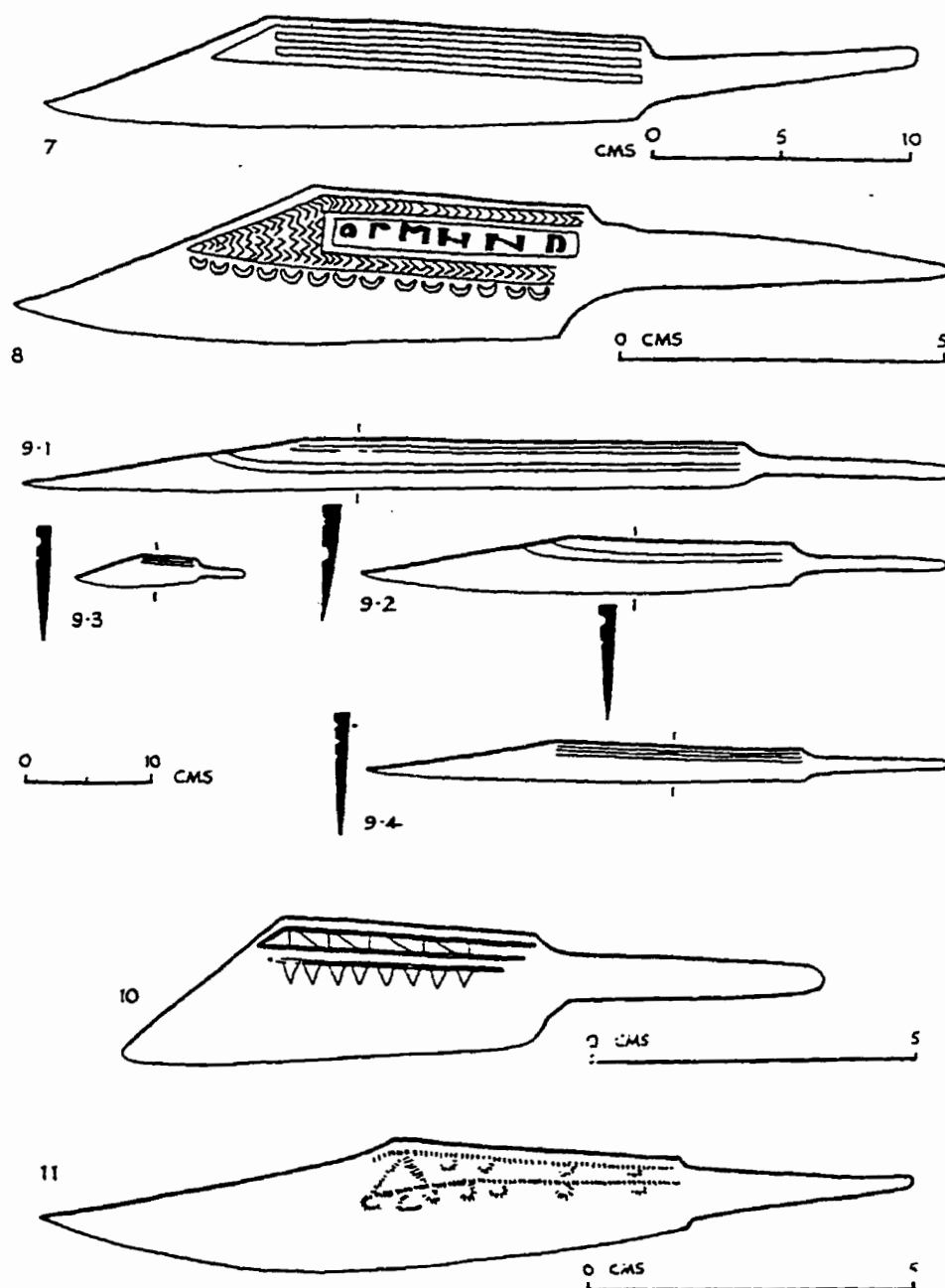
Plate III. Detail of bundle of core rods before welding. The center punch marks are visible.

Pattern-Welded Sword Blade



(Engstrom, et al 1989: 2, Plate I)

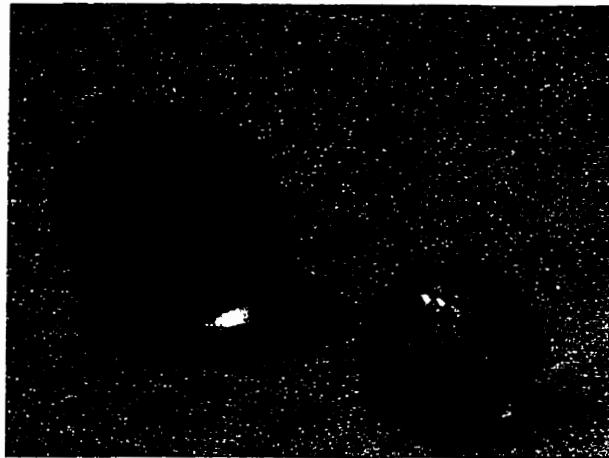
Figure 47

Seaxes Decorated with Incised Lines, Grooves and Metal Inlay*The Seax*

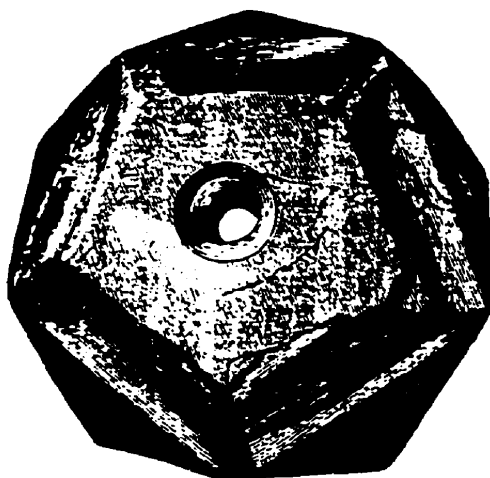
Figs. 6.7-6.11 Fig. 6.7 Seax with inlaid lines, Honey Lane, London. Fig. 6.8 Seax with inlaid inscription, Thames, London. Fig. 6.9 Seaxes with grooved decoration from London: 9.1. Thames, Battersea; 9.2. Thames, Wandsworth; 9.3. Mus. of London, C 727. Figs. 6.10, 6.11 Tiny seaxes with complex inlay, Wicken Bonhunt, Essex, and River Ouse, Cambridge.

(Gale 1990: 77, Figs 6.7-6.11)

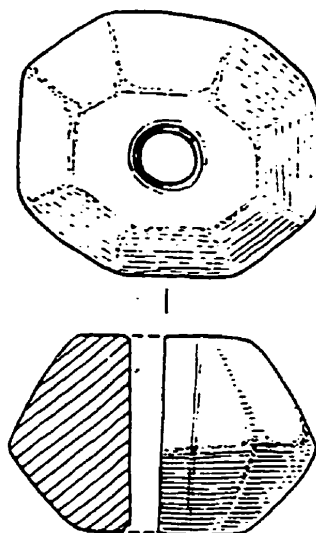
Balls Made from Quartz Crystal



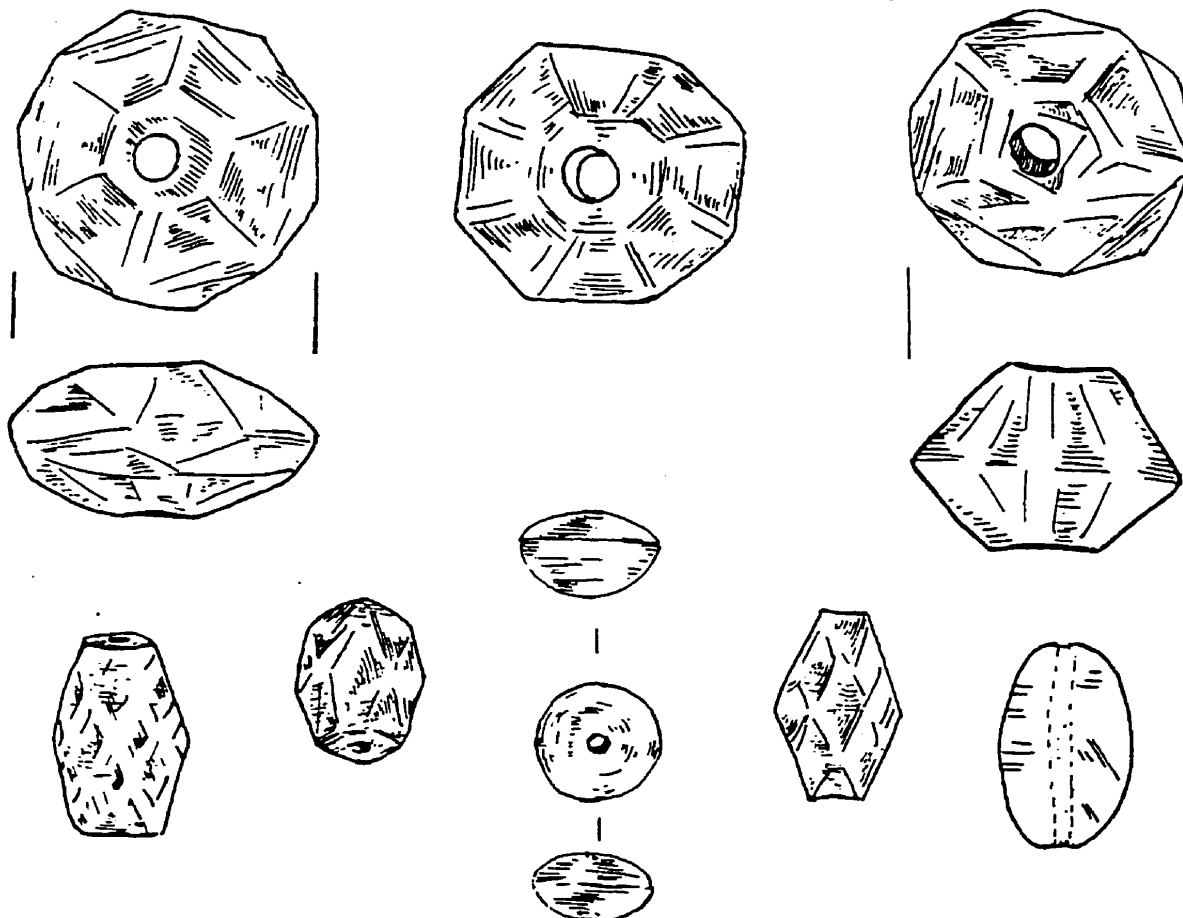
(Kentish Crystal Balls, Liverpool Museum, photo by K. Adema)

Rock Crystal Whorls and Beads

III.m Emscote Warwicks.; rock-crystal whorl (1/1).



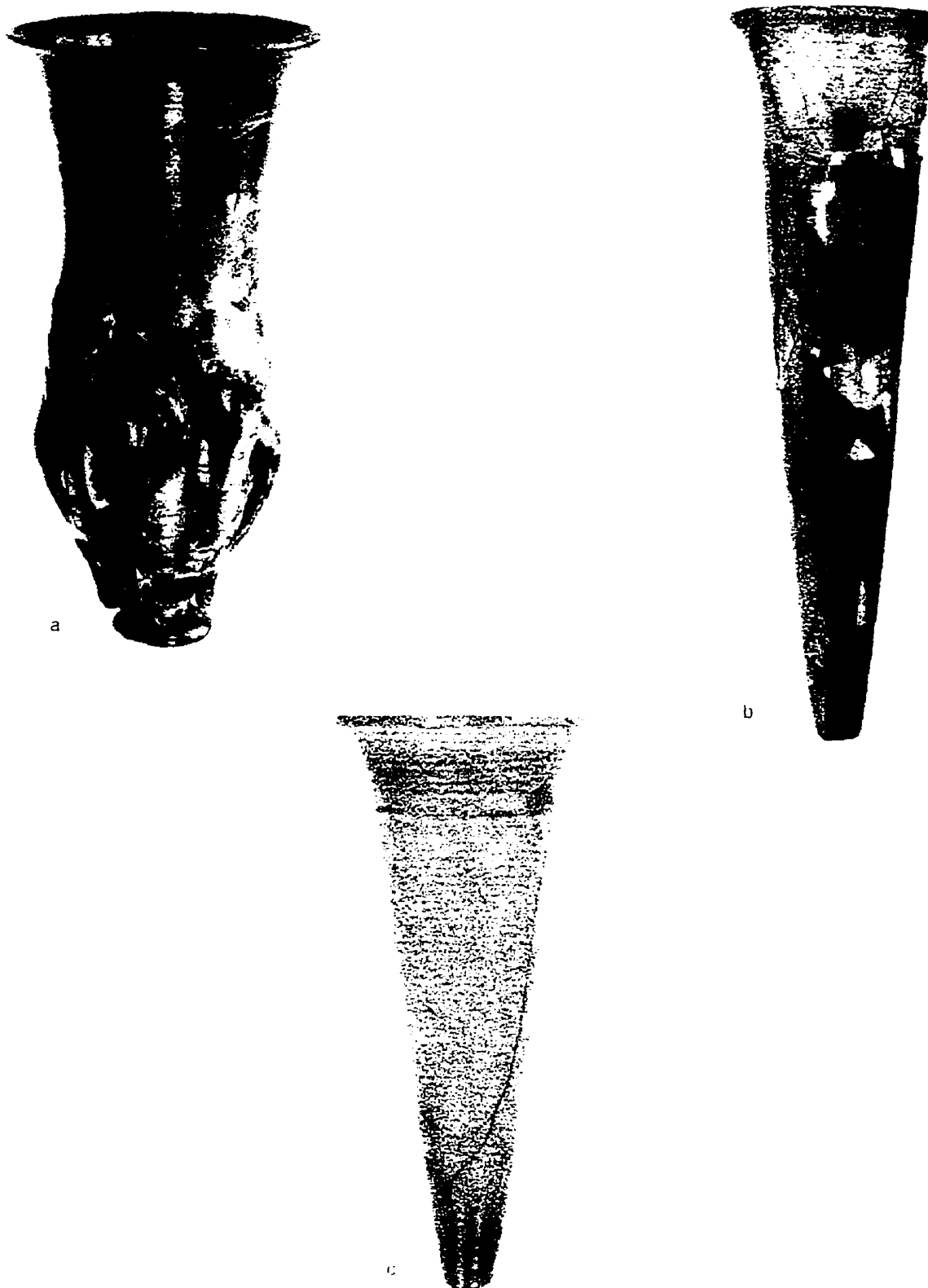
III.l Brighthampton Oxon., grave 22; rock-crystal whorl (1/1).



III.o Little Wilbraham Cambs.; rock-crystal beads and whorls (1/1).

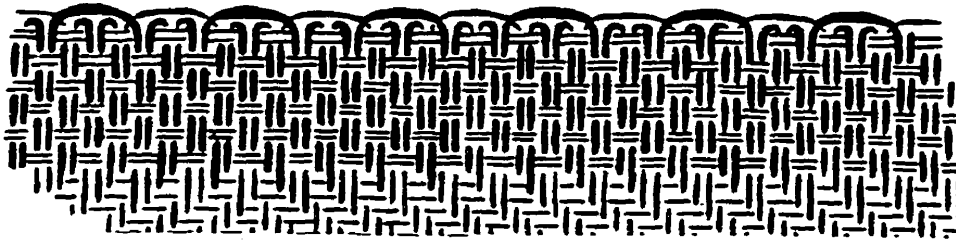
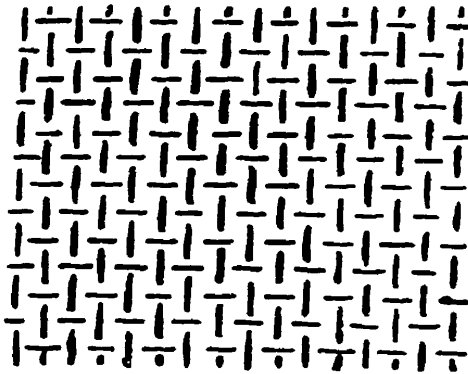
(Meaney 1981: 79, Fig III)

"Bright Cups" in Translucent Blown Glass

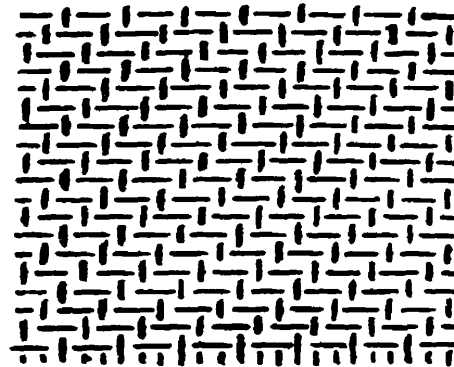


(Evison 1987:400 Plate 8)

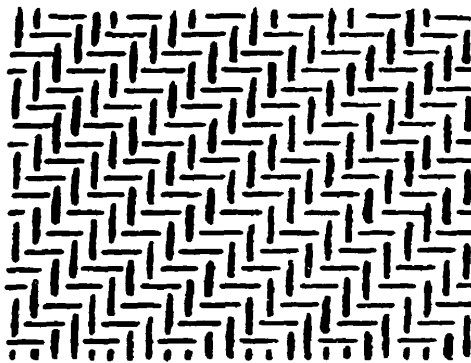
Woven Tabby and Twill Patterns

Broken Lozenge
Twill

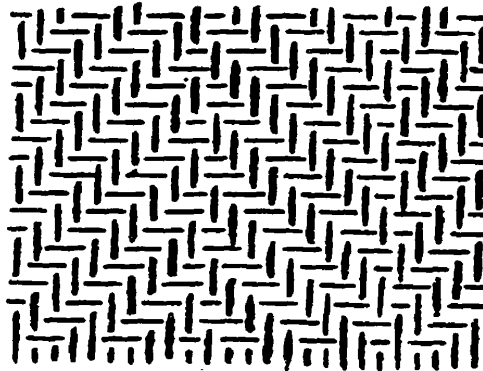
A



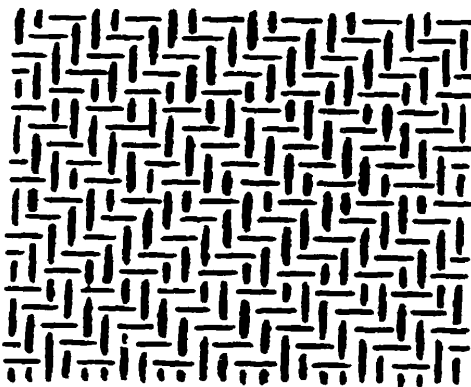
B

A. tabby
B. 1/2 twill

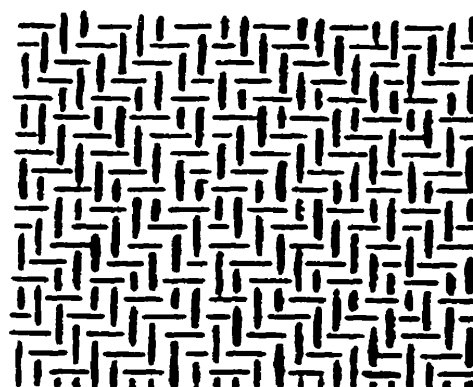
C



D

C. plain twill
D. 2/2 broken
twill

E



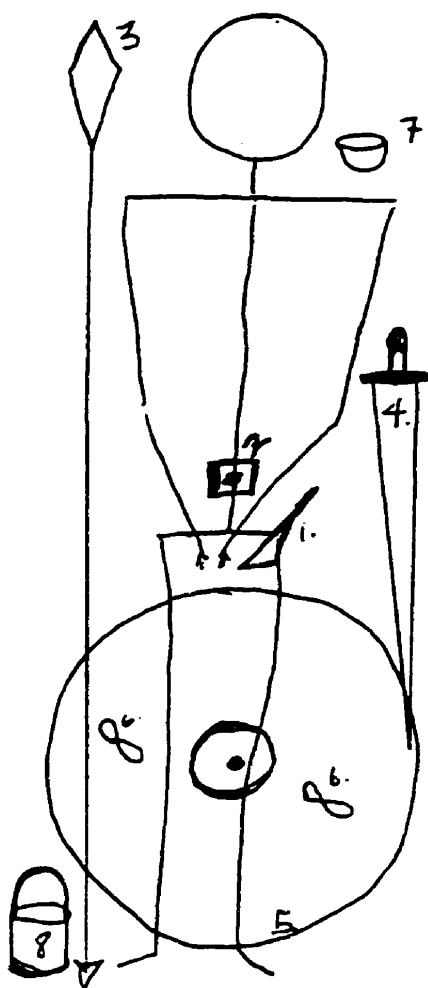
F

E. 2/2 broken
weft chevron
twill
F. 2/2 lozenge
twill

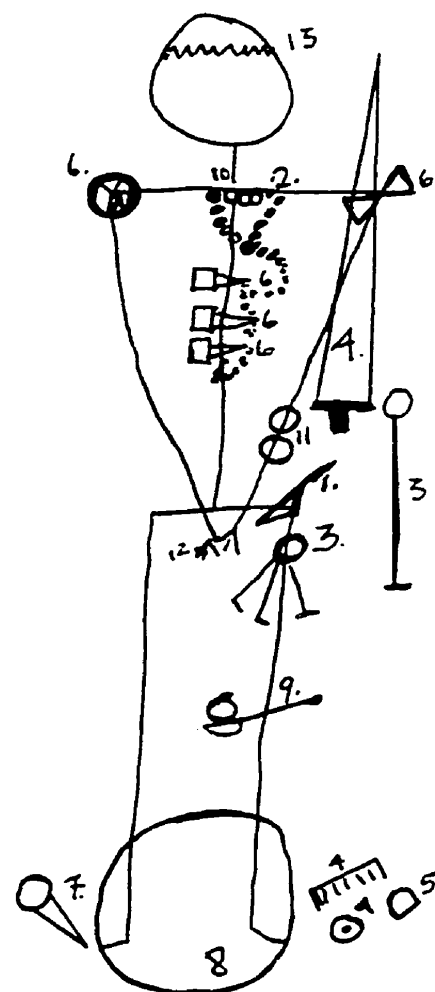
RT. 1961

Wapned and Webbe "Type" Burials

Figure 52

Wapned

- 1 - Knife
- 2 - Buckle
- 3 - Spear
- 4 - Sword
- 5 - Shield
- 6 - Appliques
- 7 - Vessel
- 8 - Container

Webbe

- 1 - Knife
- 2 - Beads
- 3 - Keys/Lifters
- 4 - Weaving Tools
- 5 - Amulets
- 6 - Brooches
- 7 - Vessel
- 8 - Container
- 9 - Spoon/Ball
- 10 - Bracteates
- 11 - Bracelets
- 12 - Rings
- 13 - Gold Braid

Artist's Rendering - Anglo-Saxon Webbe or Weaver



Webbe or "Weaver"

(drawing by Bruce Walker 1998)

Warp-Weighted Loom Similar to that used by Anglo-Saxons

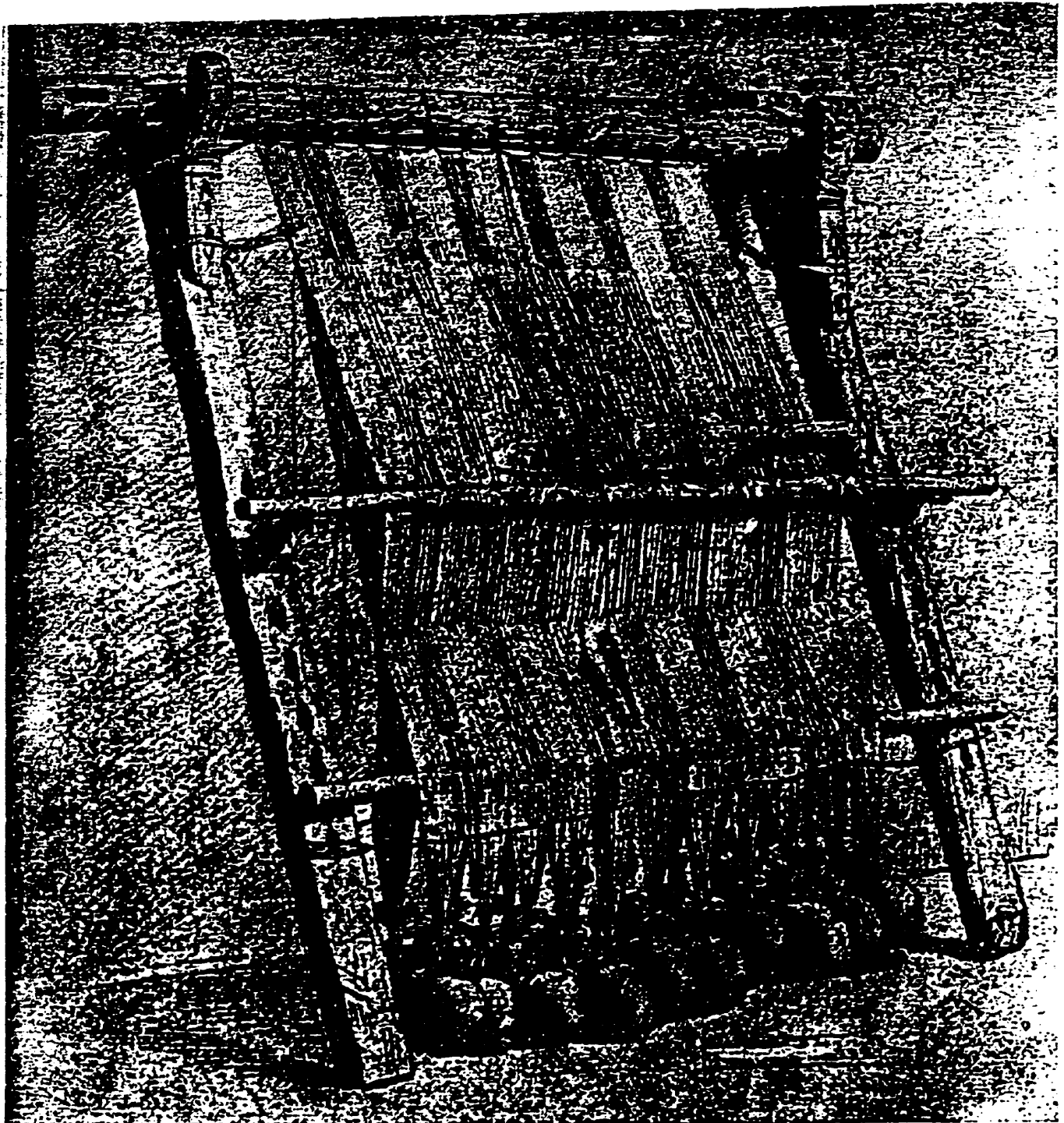


Fig. 62. Old drawing of the Færøese loom shown in Fig. 64. NMK, Copenhagen.

(Hoffman 1964: 138, Fig 62)

Sword-Shaped Weaving Battens Made from Bone and Ivory



Fig. 113. Sword beater of iron with a wooden handle, modern. NF, Oslo.



Fig. 114. Sword beater of whale bone from the Færoes. NMK, Copenhagen.

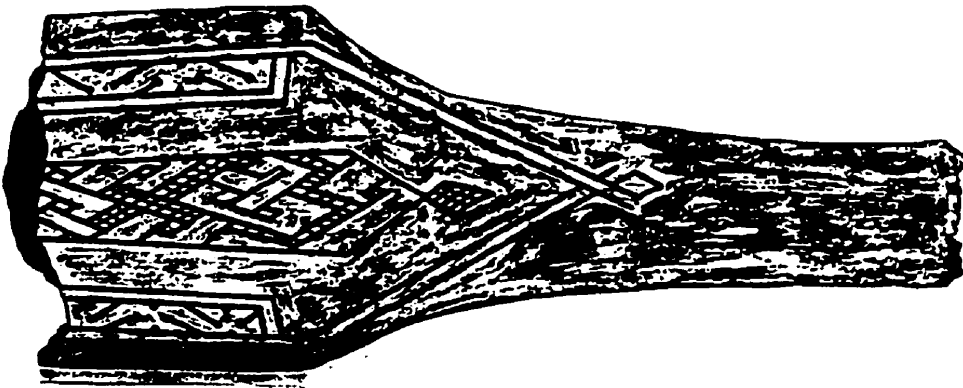
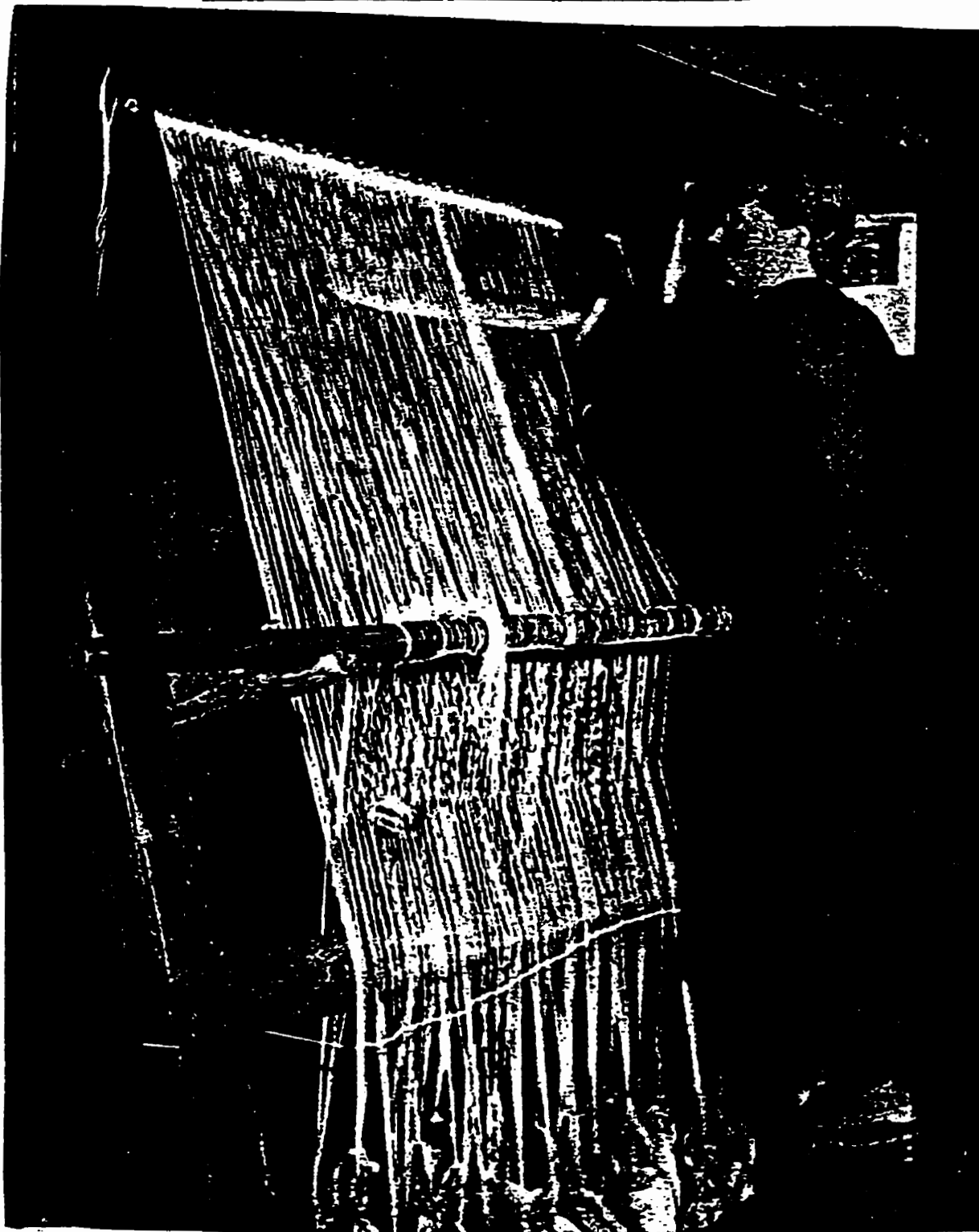


Fig. 115. Handle of sword beater of whale bone. Tromsøya.
Tromsø Museum.

Fig. 116
Sword beater of whale bone. Nesseby, Finnmark.



Woman Weaving at Warp-Weighted Loom
Shown Beating Weft Threads into Position



The weft is beaten up with the sword beater while the heddle rod is placed in the catches of the supports. Fitjar, Hord. 1956.

(Hoffman 1964: 47, Fig 14)

Scandinavian Pin-Beater of Whale Bone



Fig. 61. Pin beater of whale bone. NMI, Reykjavik.

(Hoffman 1964: 140, Fig 61)

Figure 58

Riseley Pendant with Woden Figure Between Two Creatures



Fig. 3. 'The man between monsters' on a pendant from Riseley, Kent, grave 56. Scale 2:1

(Hawkes, et al 1965: 22, Fig 3)

Finglesham Buckle With Horned Figure Carrying Two Spears

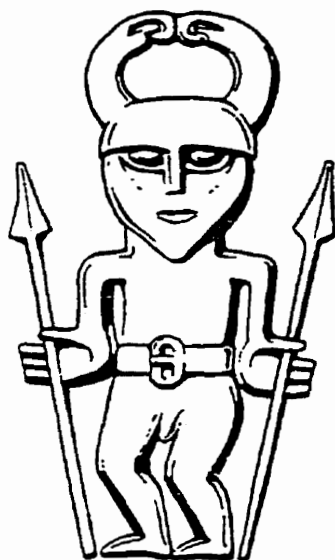


Fig. 1. The man in the horned helmet on a buckle-plate from Finglesham, Kent, grave 95. Scale 2:1.

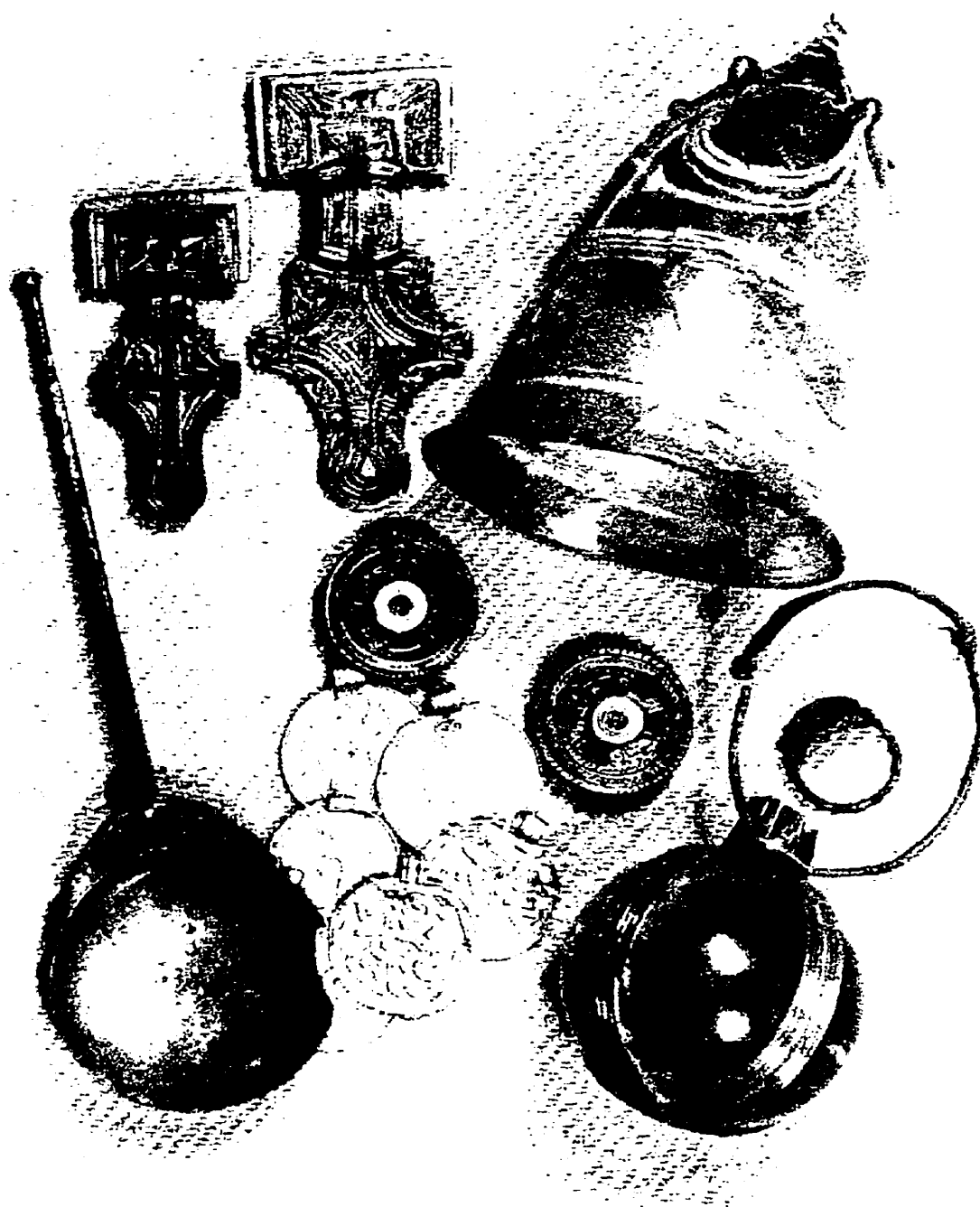


(a) Gilt bronze buckle, Finglesham, Kent, grave 95.

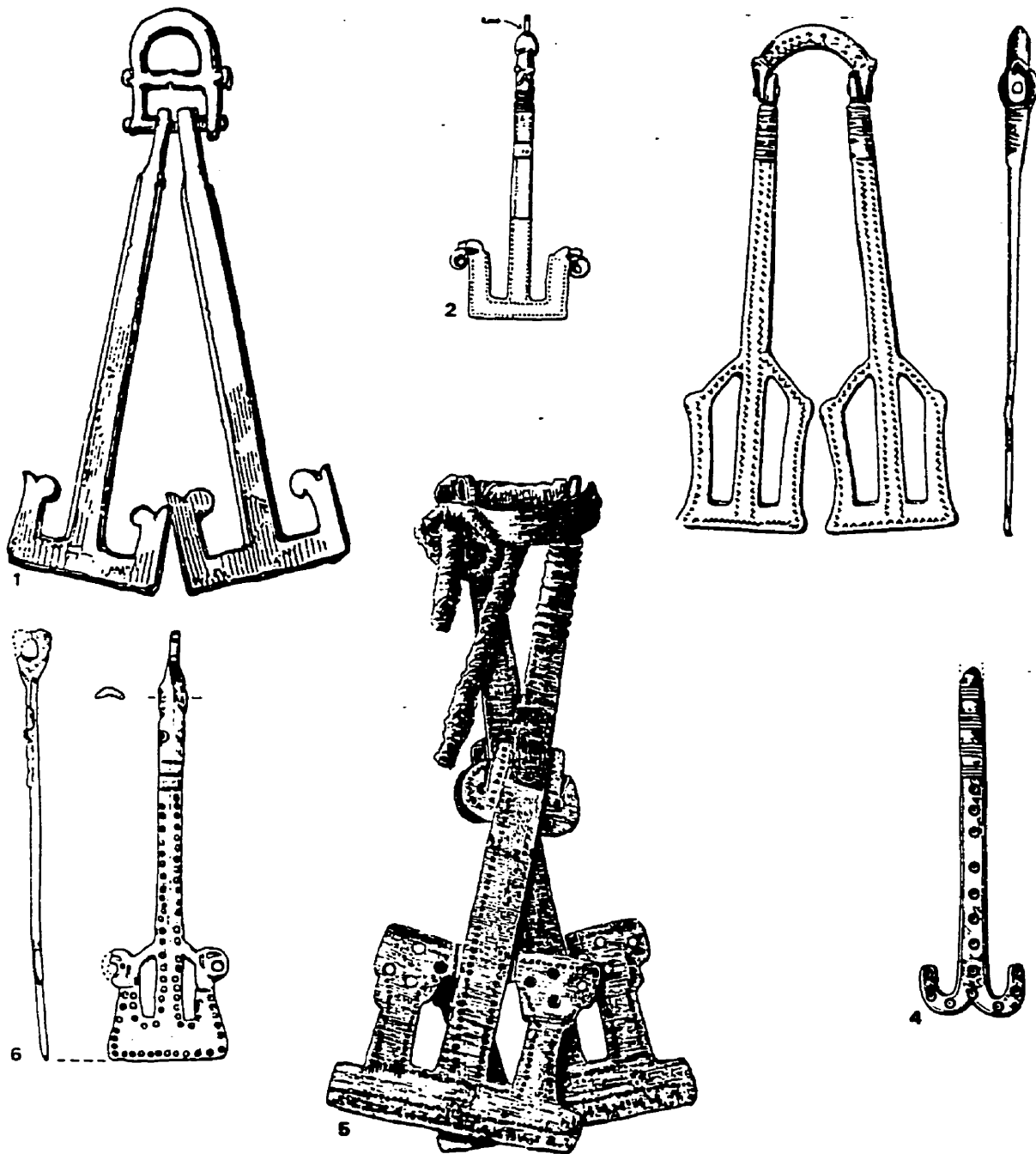
(Hawkes, et al 1965: 18, Fig I; n.p., Plate IV)

Figure 60

Contents of Grave 4, Sarre, Kent
Crystal Ball, Sieve Spoon, Brooches, Bracteates and Bell Beaker 245



(Campbell 1982:28)

Keys, Latch-Lifters and "Girdle-Hangers"

V.jj Bronze girdle-hangers, probably symbolic keys: (1-2) Little Wilbraham Cambs.; (3) Searby Lincs., with side view; (4) Faversham Kent; (5) Burwell Cambs., grave 25; (6) Rainham Essex; all (c. 1/2).

Artist's Rendering - Anglo-Saxon Wæpned or Warrior



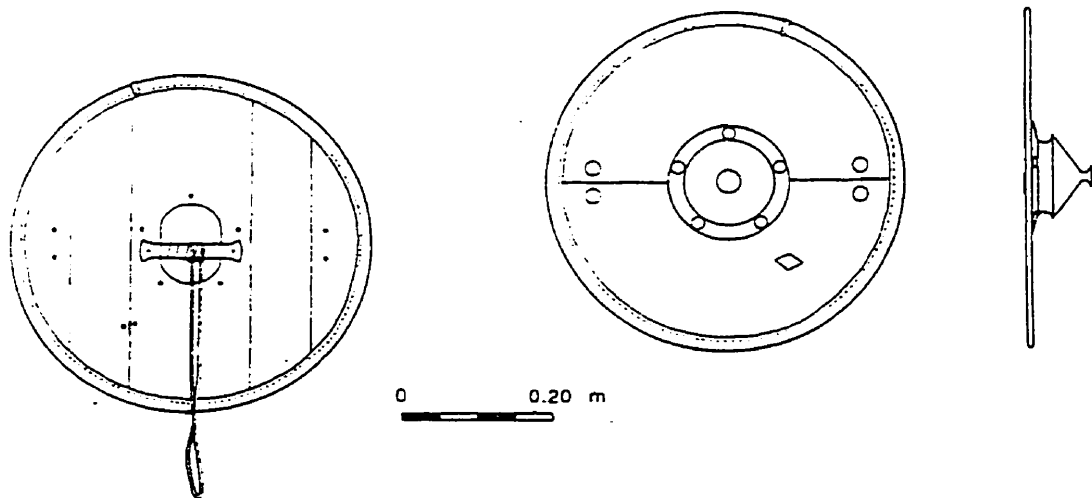
Wæpned or "Warrior"

(drawing by Bruce Walker 1998)

Early Anglo-Saxon Shields
as shown on the Franks Casket and in Reconstruction



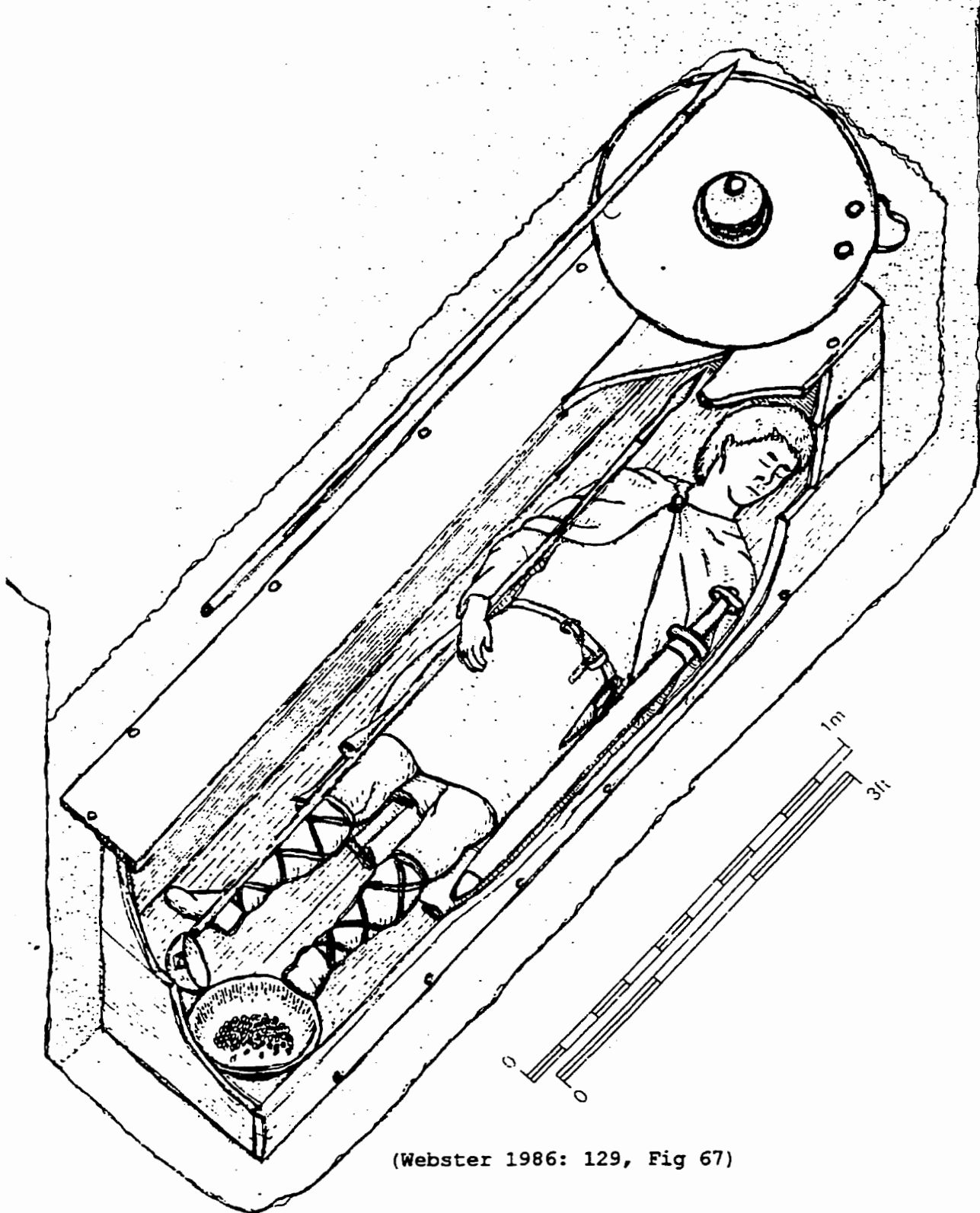
62 Shields on the Franks Casket (courtesy of the British Museum)



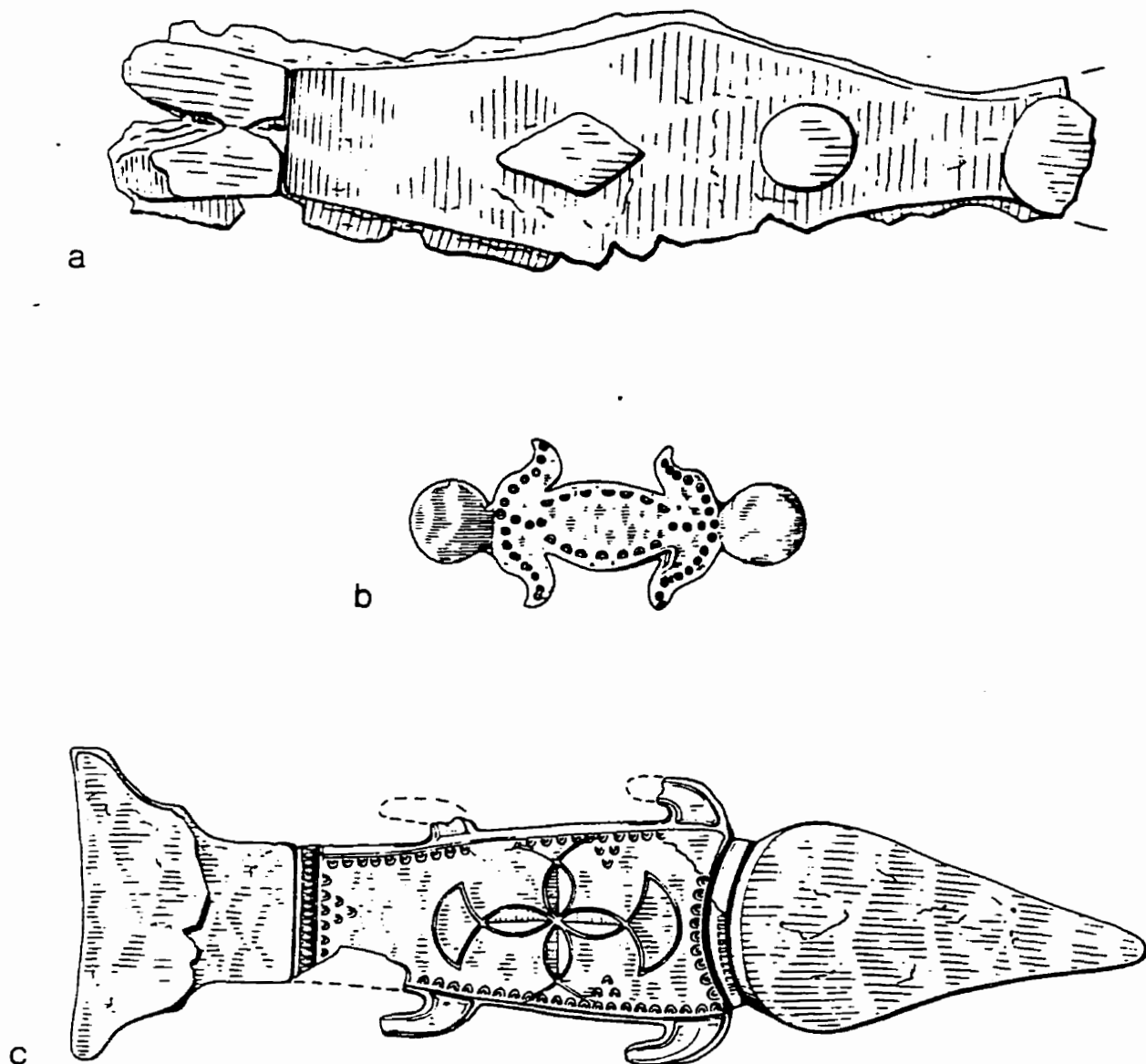
47. Reconstruction of an Early Anglo-Saxon shield, front, back
 and side views (for explanatory notes, see Appendix 6)

(Dickinson and Härke 1992: 44, Fig 32; 72, Fig 47)

Coffin Burial of a Youth of About Fifteen at Broadstairs I



(Webster 1986: 129, Fig 67)

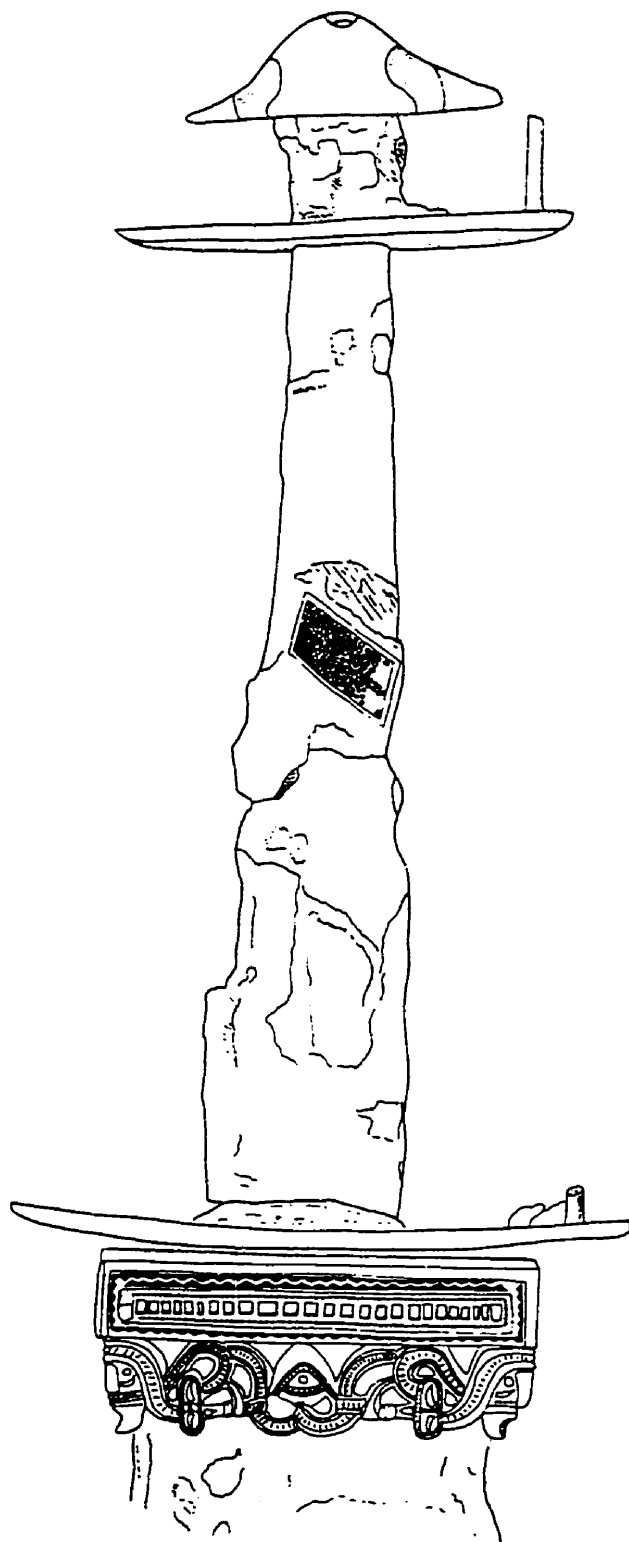
Shield Appliqués with Animal-Style Decoration

Text Figure 5 a Shield appliqué, Dover 93/10d
 b Shield appliqué, Mucking grave 600
 c Shield appliqué, Thames at Barnes. Scale 1/1

Figure 66

251

Upper Edge of Scabbard with Woden-Mask Design
in Reserve Niello Work, Grave 76, Chessell Down



(Arnold 1982: n.p., Fig 17)

Figure 67

Sword with Ring Attachment
Grave C, Buckland at Dover

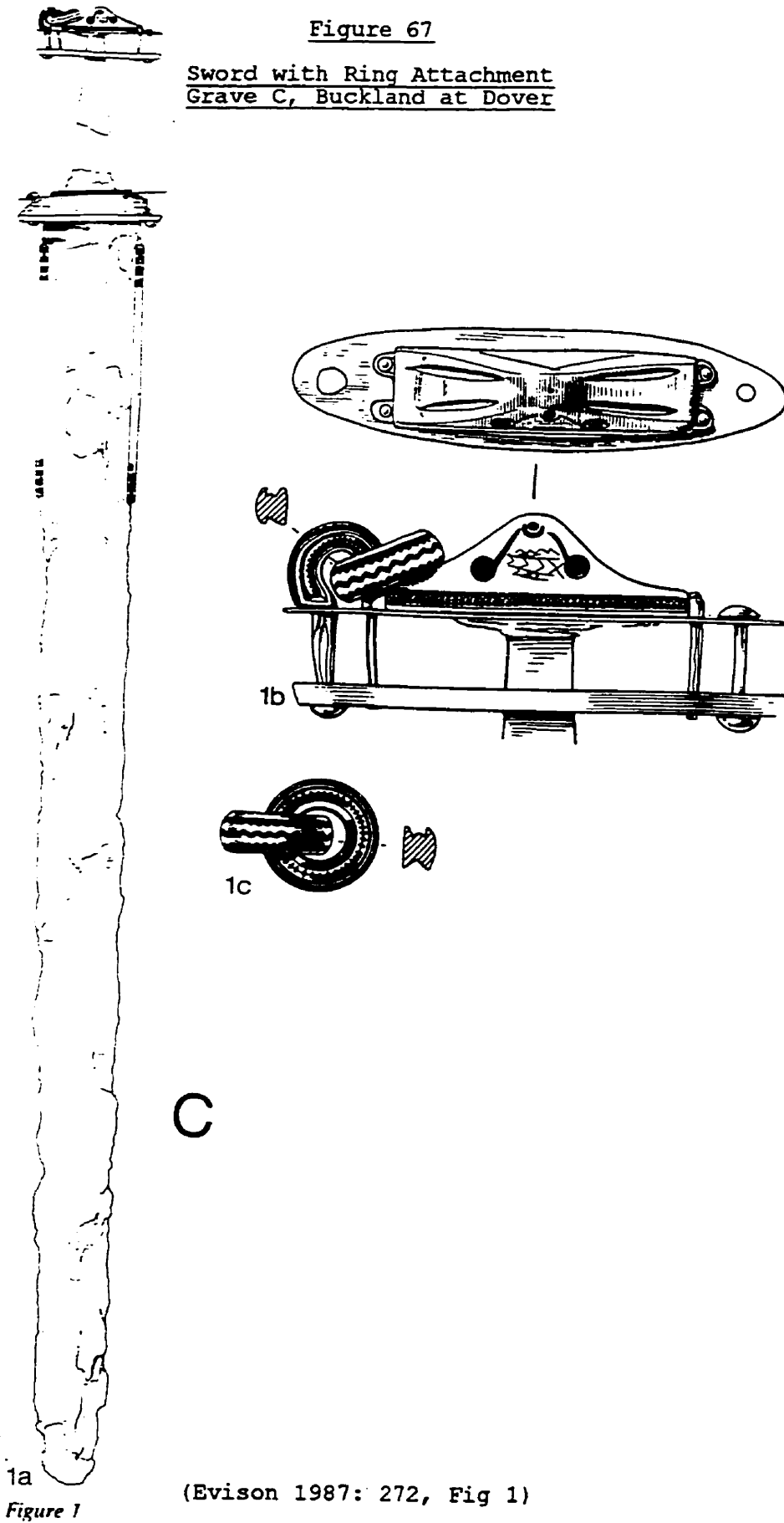


Figure 1

(Evison 1987: 272, Fig 1)

Anglo-Saxon Manuscript Illustration
of Sword Beads Hanging from Thongs at Hilt



5 Details of the temptations offered Christ by the Devil. from a coloured drawing in a mid-eleventh century manuscript (British Library, Cotton MS. Tiberius C VI, fol. 10v).

Sword from Coombe, Kent Showing Central Mask-Like Device
on Pommel Similar to that Found on Brooches

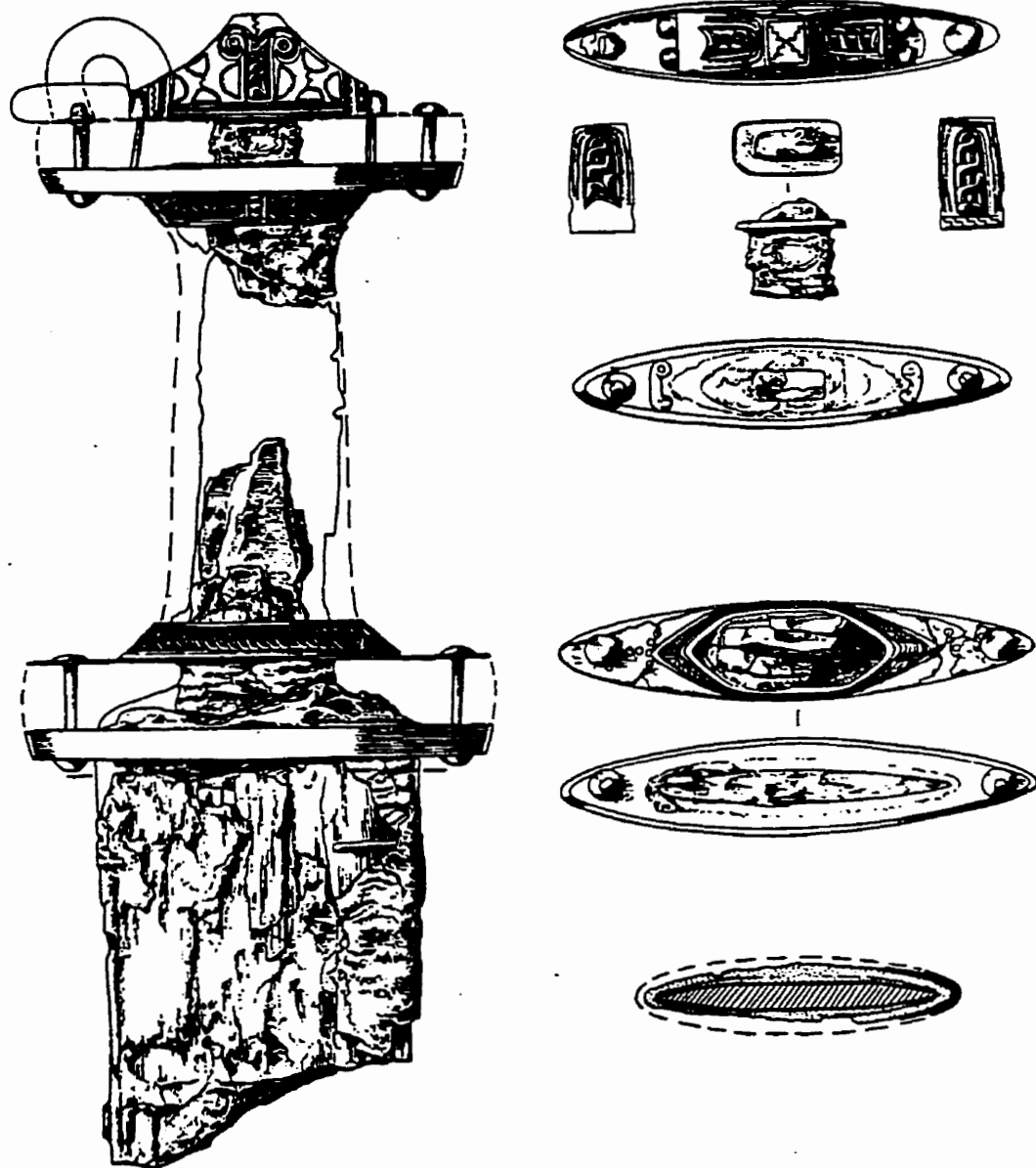
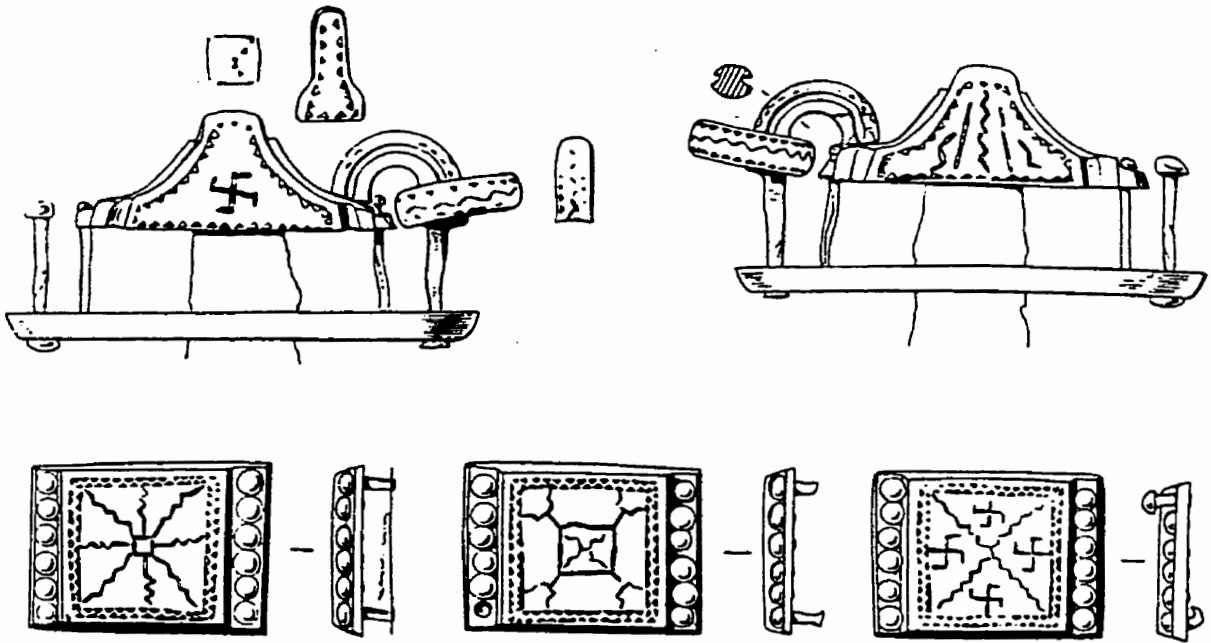


FIG. 3
COOMBE, KENT
Front view of sword, and details of pommel and guard (pp. 16 ff.). Sc. 1/2

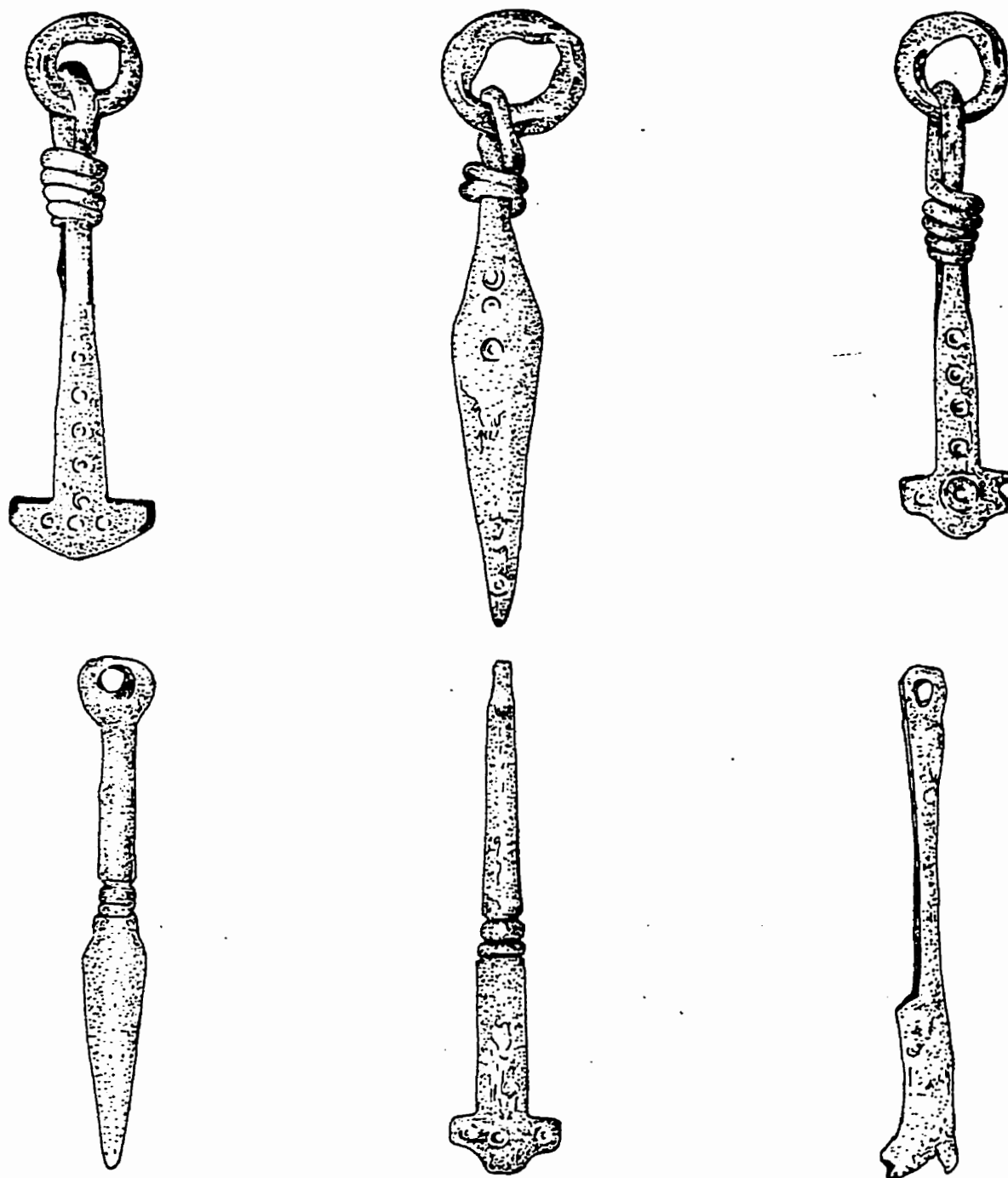
(Davidson 1967: 14, Fig 3)

Symbol of Thunor on the Bifrons Sword Pommel or "Glory"



VII.d Bifrons Kent, grave 39; matching sword-pommel and belt-plates with 'lightning flashes' and swastikas (1/1).

Miniature or Model Weapons Found in Kentish Women's Burials



V.b Model weapons and bill-hook from Faussett's Kentish sites; now in Liverpool Museum.