An Examination of Diachronic Change in Anglo-Saxon Barrow Burial Practices

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AN EXAMINATION OF DIACHRONIC CHANGE IN ANGLO-SAXON BARROW BURIAL PRACTICES

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The Anglo-Saxon period in British history is full of social, religious and political upheaval. Not only is this reflected in the surviving historical record, but also in the collection of burial sites through the island. Over the course of several hundred years the use of the barrow mounds burials seems to change. This study will examine data collected from early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, 'Final Phase' burials, Late Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, and Viking burials in order to better understand the burial traditions that span this period in time. The specific variable to be examined will be body positions, type of burials, the use of grave goods, treatment of outcasts, along with age and sex ranges within each of the above burial types. The use of historical documents will also be used in order to understand the mindset of the individuals reacting to the changes that this period experienced. The results produced by this study will show how the individuals during the Anglo-Saxon period reacted to large number of social changes that occurred because of the Viking invasions during this period of British history. This information may add to our understanding of how societies react to social pressure and stresses, both inside and outside their social control.

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Religion, Politics and Death: An Introduction

Anglo-Saxon England was a place of cultural mixing. The Britons, Romans, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Frisians all contributed to the collective culture that archaeologists have come to call the Anglo-Saxons. This was a time of social, political and religious upheaval caused by the influx of new cultures and peoples to the British Isles. Although there are few surviving written documents that can give a more in-depth picture of the events surrounding these social changes, archaeologists are able to study theses changes through a variety of material remains. One of the most telling examples of social change can be observed in changes seen in the group burial tradition. How a culture buries their dead is a clear indication of how they view gender, status, age and other determining factors in society. This applies to the burials that are seen in the Anglo-Saxon period of England.

There are numerous burial traditions present during this period and there is a pattern to these burial traditions. In the early stages of the Anglo-Saxon period, there are many different burial customs. These range from community burials to burials located on major landscape features such as barrows. The barrow burials were utilized in a variety of ways, changing over time. During the early period of Anglo-Saxon England, barrow burials were used as another variation in the range of accepted burials practices. In the mid-late Anglo-Saxon period, these once common places of burials were transformed to places of execution. This demonstrates a complete shift from a place as an acceptable location for the burial of law-abiding members of

society to one where only those who broke society's most important rules had their lives cut short at these places of execution.

There are many theories as to why this change in the burial tradition occurred during this time period in Anglo-Saxon England. One suggestion is that these were purely 'heathen burials' or a continuation of the pagan burial type that was seen in the early period of Anglo-Saxon burial tradition at these barrow sites. This theory goes on to state that these burials followed ancient ecclesiastical parish boundaries (Lucy 2000:148). Another states that this change in the burial usage of barrows was a mechanism of social control used by a local government as mode of marking social outcasts through the use of the landscape (Reynolds 2009:2). This theory further explains that although these local authorities answered to a centralized authority, the primary motivations were principally local in nature (Reynolds 2009: 240). Others have suggested that this is a reflection of the wider changes in the church's belief towards death and the soul (Petts 2002:44). As the conversion to Christianity became a permanent feature in the social landscape, acceptable places for burial changed from community and barrow based to church based burials (Petts 2002:44). Another theory posits that it was the expansion of the power by the Wessex central government that was behind the shift in the burial traditions seen during this period (Thompson 2004:35). As the powers of the state and the church became more centralized, so did the burial practices; moving away from individual local traditions to one that was standardized throughout society (Thompson 2004:35). All of the theories provide explanations for the change seen in the barrow mound burials during Anglo-Saxon England.

But what if it is not just one explanation, but a common factor that started a chain reaction, that led to this shift? My thesis will examine whether this change was caused surviving Anglo-Saxon kingdom centralizing in an effort to reclaim this territory from the Viking invaders.

By creating these places of execution which are located only on certain locations and visible on the surrounding landscape, the surviving Anglo-Saxon government was trying to solidify their claim of control over the land from the Vikings. By using these places of execution to punish the outcasts of their society, the Anglo-Saxon central government demonstrated not only to their own subjects, but also to their Viking enemies that they were the power to be reckoned with in this area. By cutting the ties to their pagan past, one extremely similar to that of the Vikings, they were reaffirming their ties to the Christian religion. In doing so they were proving to their God that as a political force they deserved to be saved from the Viking threat. Demonstrating their political authority and affirming their ties to the Christian faith, the central government of the Anglo-Saxon was trying, against all odds, to protect what they saw as theirs.

The organization of this thesis will follow with an introduction to the basic history of Anglo-Saxon England and will be followed by a more in-depth look at the Viking raid and invasion of the ninth through the eleventh centuries. The range of the Anglo-Saxon burial tradition will be the next topic discussed. This will be followed by a look at the methodology used to examine a wide range of burials. The burials of this early phase will be examined in the following section. The examination of later burials in a standard setting and the relationship to barrow mound execution will follow. Lastly, a discussion of the evidence examined and the causation for these changes will be discussed.

THE LAND OF THE *ANGELCYNN:* A BREIF HISTORY OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

The Anglo-Saxons were not just one group, but several who came to the British Isles by the end of fifth century A.D., shortly after the occupation of the Romans (Rosenthal 1973:1:3). Legend indicates that these Germanic peoples were welcomed by the Romanized Britons to help fight against the invading Celts (Wilson 1962:30). It is cited in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* that in A.D. 449 the British king Vortigern invited the Germanic leaders Hengest and Horsa to help him defend against the Celtic invaders (Whitelock 1955:142). Once these men realized that this land was in chaos, more and more came to take land for themselves from the less powerful Romanized Britons. These Germanic tribes stopped helping the Britons and started to fight them. It was said that "the Britons fled from the English as from fire" (Whitelock 1955:143).

Three tribes came to Britain; the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. In time, they would form seven primary kingdoms: Kent, Wessex, Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Sussex and Essex (Figure 1). While these primary kingdoms survived the longest, several smaller, though short-lived, kingdoms also existed. None of the seven kingdoms survived with any degree of independence or continuity throughout the Anglo-Saxon period (Rosenthal 1973:1:10). The variation among the kingdoms cannot be overstated; all had their own kings and political systems. Each saw the other as a threat to its own survival (Loyn 1977:31). It was this major factor of division amongst the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms that would come to play a large role in the Viking invasions and the shift of power that would occur.

Yellow- Wessex
Light Purple - Essex
Pink - Sussex
Lime Green - Kent
Red - East Anglia
Dark Green - Lindsey
Dark Purple - Mercia
Light Blue - Northumbria

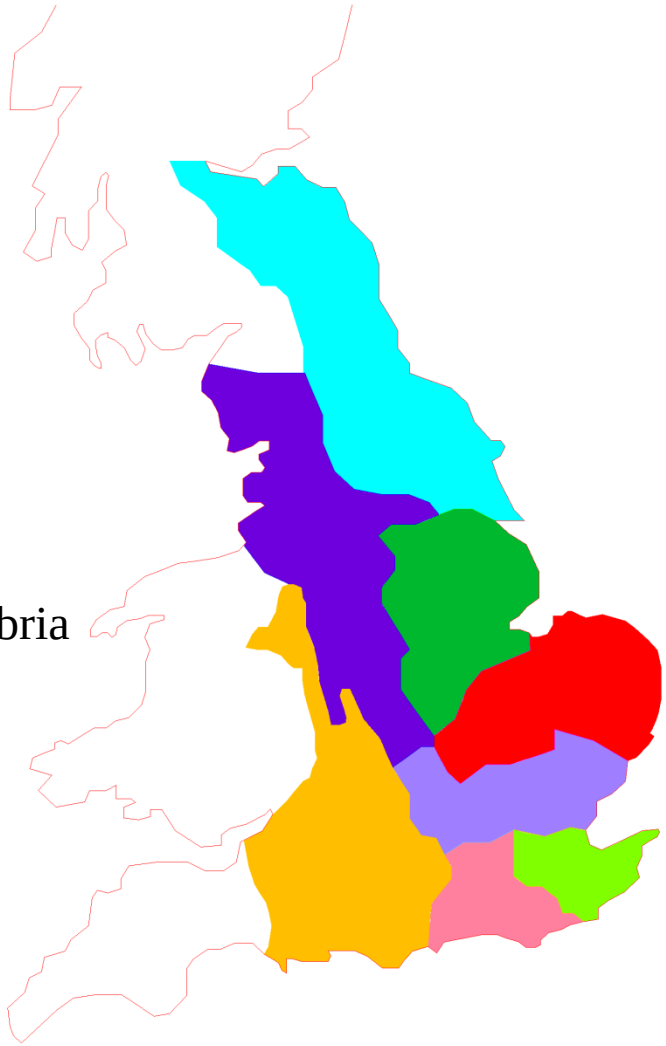

Figure 1. Map Demonstrating the Boundaries of Several of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms (Adapted from Rosenthal 1973).

The Religion of the Anglo-Saxons

When the collective peoples known as the Anglo-Saxons arrived in Britain, they were not practicing Christians. The shift away from paganism would not happen until the mission of Saint Augustine in A.D. 596 (Wilson 1962:34). Sent by Pope Gregory and landing in Kent, Augustine would begin the process of Christianization of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms (Rosenthal1973:133).

The conversion of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to Christianity was one that followed a very common theme: the king would convert and his subjects would follow (Dunn 2009:101). An example of this can be seen in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, in which a one of the monks that came with Augustine "converted Edwin, king of the Northumbrains, to baptism" (Whitelock 1955:147). This process of a king's conversion to the new religion and his subjects following would mean that the Christian faith among the Anglo-Saxons would not be entirely embraced by the populace for some time. This is a theme that is seen in many of the archaeological artifacts from this period (Dunn 2009: 191), and the theme will be explained using pertinent examples later on in this paper.

THE VIKING INVASION:

"AND THERE WAS MUCH SLAUGHTER ON EITHER HAND; BUT THE DANES BECAME MASTERS OF THE FIELD" (Whitelock 1955:168)

The Vikings had been raiding the areas around Britain for many years before they came to the island. They first came to Britain as casual raiders, taking what they wanted and then leaving for wealthier locations during the late eighth century (Rosenthal1973:17). *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* once again give an in-depth picture of these first raids, stating that in A.D. 789 "the first time three ships of the Northmen" arrived in Britain (Whitelock 1955:166). Although these initial raiders did not stay, they would only be the first wave of Viking invaders that would continue to land in Britain until the Norman Conquest of A.D. 1066 (Rosenthal1973:17).

Why Britain? The Vikings came to this new place much for the same reasons that the Anglo-Saxons had left their German homeland a few hundred years earlier: opportunity for a new life, land, and power that had become increasingly less available with the growing central

government in the area known as Scandinavia, further emphasized by the stress of population pressure. This was a land that was perfect for the Vikings' invasions; the governments of each of the independent Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were divided both amongst themselves and with each other, seeing the others as rivals for both land and power. Internally, the organization of the church caused a split between the northern and southern halves of the country, with an Archbishop in York and one in Canterbury (Wilson 1962:34). The kingdoms were too focused on fighting each other to pay attention to the growing threat of the Viking raiders. In A.D. 866, a "great Danish army" landed and within a few short years, the Vikings were on the verge of conquering the whole of Britain (Rosenthal 1973:21).

The Vikings, however, were not able to achieve this goal, although they came very close. After landing in East Anglia in A.D. 866, they quickly took over the northern-most kingdom of Northumbria in A.D. 866-867. This conquest was quickly followed with the take-over of East Anglia in A.D. 868. Much of the neighboring kingdom of Merica was also conquered by A.D. 878 (Loyn 1977:57-58). It was during this year that under Guthrum, the Danish army overran larger areas of Wessex. Forcing King Alfred into the marshes of Atheleny, the Viking army was on the verge of total control of the entire island. Alfred was able to stop the Viking army and protect his kingdom. Through the Treaty of Wedmore, the leader of the Danish army Guthrum converted to Christianity; a boundary which also established between the Anglo-Saxon and Viking controlled territory (Figure 2). This created the Danelaw, the area of Viking control in Britain where the laws of the Danes were the base of social control (Loyn 1977:59). In the Danelaw, there was a mixture of both Christian and pagan beliefs, as the pagan Vikings beliefs mixed with those of the Anglo-Saxons already living in this area. (Loyn 1977:61).

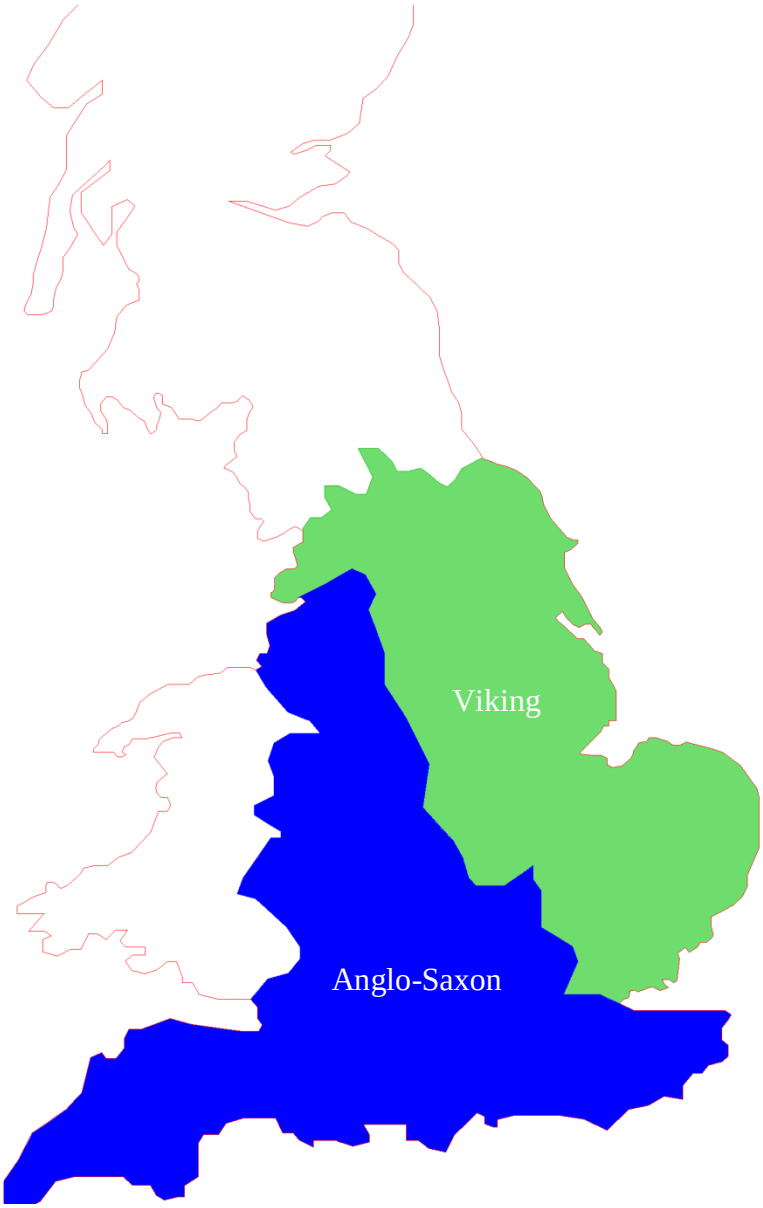

Figure 2. Map depicting the Anglo-Saxon (Blue) and Viking (Green) Territories in Britain, A.D. 878 (Adapted from Rosenthal 1973).

The attacks against the kingdom of Wessex did not stop in A.D. 878. Once again in A.D. 892, the Vikings attacked. After being defeated on the European continent, a Danish army landed in south-eastern Kent. This was the beginning of three years of attacks on Wessex (Loyn 1977:61-62). Again, Alfred was able to hold back the Vikings and forced their retreats. The fight

to take back the land from the Vikings would begin with Alfred's son, Edward the Elder. During his reign of A.D. 899-924, he reasserted political authority over the non-Danish controlled area of Merica and East Anglia. Under the reign of Athelstan, the son of Edward the Elder, he was able to bring Northumbria under control (Loyn 1977:63) In A.D. 937; he won a victory against a coalition of Vikings, Scots and even Britons at Brunanburgh (Loyn 1977:66). The creator of this alliance, Olaf Guthfrithson, the son of the man Athelstan expelled from York in A.D. 927, would come back to cause problems for Athelstan's successors. With Athelstan's death in A.D. 939, he would retake York from Anglo-Saxon control. The next year, he gained control of the Danelaw (Loyn 1977:66). This back and forth of political control over the north continued with King Edmund once again gaining control of the north through the years of A.D. 944-946. After his assassination, the Vikings once again gained control of the territory.

Under the reign of King Edgar was a period where the Anglo-Saxons had true political control over Britain (Loyn 1977:81). After his death in A.D. 975, the Viking attacks began again. After the murder of his son and heir, Edward, his younger son Ethelred would take the throne. The raids began again in A.D. 980 with attacks against numerous cities, including the burning of London in A.D. 982 (Loyn 1977:82). Ethelred would earn the term 'the Unready' from his lack of political experience and leadership that would persist in his regin (Loyn 1977:86). These threats continued with the King of Denmark, Sweyn Forkbeard invading in A.D. 994 (Loyn 1977:85). Although defeated, the period of calm would break in A.D. 997 with the threat from Viking raiders continuing for the next twenty years. In A.D. 1006-1007, the defenses established in the heart of Anglo-Saxon territory by Alfred the Great were broken and raids once again hit deep inland (Loyn 1977:88). In A.D. 1013, the King of Denmark invaded with his son Cnut the Great, quickly taking over the whole of England. This would began a period of Danish

rule, broken by Anglo-Saxon rule only a few times till the A.D. 1066 invasion by William the Conqueror following the death of the last Anglo-Saxon king, Edward the Confessor (Loyn 1977:89).

Viking Burial Styles

The Vikings were practicing pagans who termed their beliefs and practices as *siór* (Dunn 2011:15). Like the Anglo-Saxons before their conversion to Christianity, the Viking buried their dead in barrow mounds. These mounds were located near water, or in some cases, reservoirs were created by digging a ditch around the mound to substitute a river or stream. The importance of water in the burial ritual laid in the fact that it was seen as a separation of the realm of the living from the realm of the dead (Moen 2011:16). Written sources also demonstrate the importance of water, since many state that these were places where the dead dwelt. These mounds, like those of the Anglo-Saxons, were used by the elites to reinforce their standing in society (Dunn 2011: 16).

An example of this burial practice can be seen in the Norwegian burials at Oseberg, which is circled in red (Moen 2011: 20 and Figure 3). This site consists of a large mound, 40 m in diameter. Under the mound was a ship which was aligned north to south, with the ship prow facing south. The ship was also covered with stones.

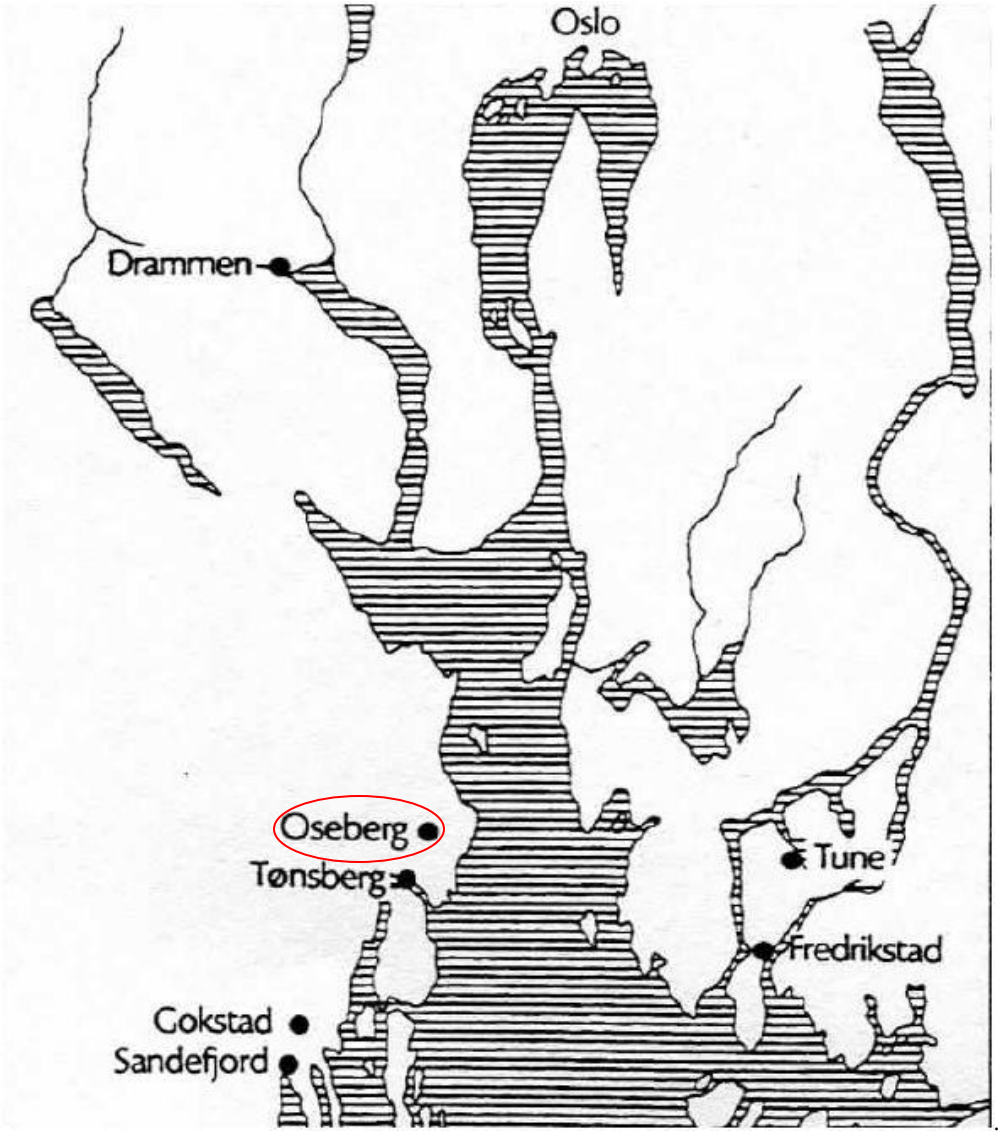

Figure 3. Map of the Norwegian Coast depicting the location of Oseberg (circled in red) (Adapted from Bonde and Christensen 1993, Figure 1)

Two bodies were located in the burial chamber behind the mast; both were females aged between 50-70 years. This burial mound was also located close to the sea (Moen 2011:21). The cemetery at Kaupang also follows this pattern. It is both near the sea and contains burial mounds (Dunn 2011: 29). Although this site also contained inhumations and cremations, this cemetery was dominated by burial mounds (Moen 2011:32).

Once the Vikings arrived in Britain, they continued the tradition of burying their dead in burial mounds, at least for the first few years after they arrived. It should be noted that few Viking graves have been identified in Britain because the Vikings assimilated quickly to the Anglo-Saxon Christian burial customs. One example of this rare burial type can be seen at Cambois, Bedlington (Northumberland). Three bodies were located in a cist grave in a mound that also contained burial goods (Richards 2002:159). These burials follow the burial tradition that is seen in the Viking homeland of Scandinavia. Within the archaeological record there are also examples of Viking churchyard burials, which are also very hard to identify because of the quick shift to Christiantiy. Each of these are aligned in an east-west orientation. These individuals were also buried with grave goods and were found when the floor of the church at Cambois, Bedlington was removed in 1867 (Richards 2002:160)

VARIATION IS THE SPICE OF LIFE, OR IN THIS CASE, DEATH: BURIALS TYPES OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS THROUGH THE 5TH-11TH CENTURY

Because the Anglo-Saxons came from many different areas of Germany, there was a wide range of burial traditions. There is, however, a standard form that they followed. There was consistent directional orientation of the bodies, as well as no preference for inhumations or cremations. The inclusion of grave goods is split fairly evenly between those graves which have them and those graves which do not. The graves are positioned in community plots and located in places of power that connected the community to the landscape (Williams 2011:255). This is why barrows and other prominent features on the landscape were reused regularly.

Barrow Burials

The use of the barrow mounds as places of burial was quite common during the Anglo-Saxon period. Through the fifth to the early eighth century, these were places where both communities and the elite used as burial locations.

The Early Phase Barrow Burials

Death in the fifth through the sixth century was seen as a ritualized transition, in addition to the biological event (Williams 2011:239). There was no accepted preference between inhumations and cremations. Both were used, although cremations fell out of style by the seventh century (Welch 2011:266). These early burials exhibited a significant degree of local and regional variability, which can be seen in the diversity present within each cemetery (Williams 2011: 240). The variations continued with burials being both furnished and unfurnished, along with the inhumation burials having no traditional body positions (Williams 2011: 240). During this early period, cemeteries were seen as places of power in the landscape. They were used by the living as way to claim territory, resources and seen as a statement of group identity (Williams 2011: 255). This is where barrows came into play. Often located along major travel ways and territorial boundaries, they served as a display of power on the landscape and the local communities took full advantage of them.

The 'Final Phase' Barrow Burials

This period ranged from the late sixth to the early eighth century, even though the conversion to Christianity had already happened (Welch 2011:266). At this point in the history of Anglo-Saxon burial practices, there was a shift in the use of barrow burials by the elites. These burials became incrediblly furnished large scale chamber graves (Welch 2011:269). An example of one of the

most famous of these burials, Prittlewell, can be seen in Figure 4. The barrows were now used by the emerging elite class as a symbol of their own personal power and prestige (Welch 2011: 269). Although the ruling elite soon abandoned this practice for church burials, the local elites continued the practice through the early eighth century (Welch 2011:274).

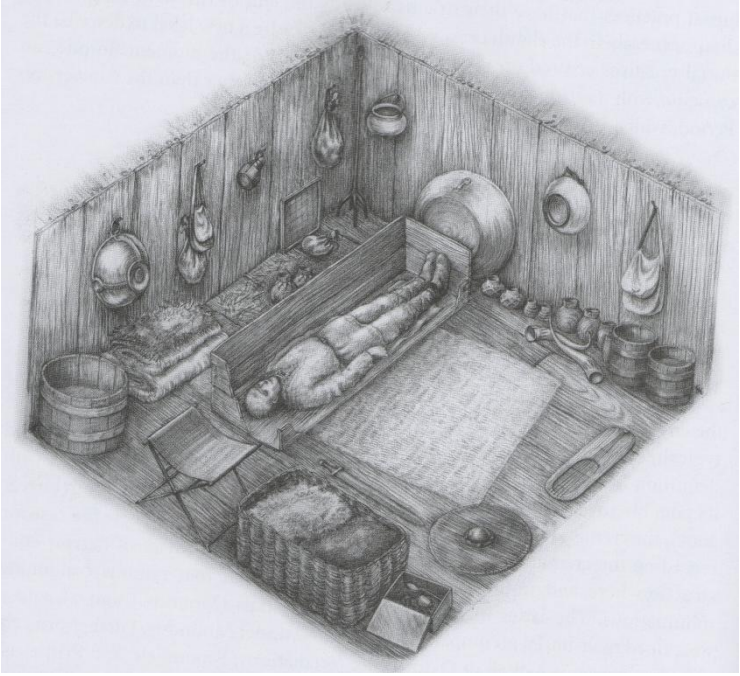

Figure 4. Drawing Demonstrating the burial style of the 'Final Phase' Barrow Burials (Welch 2011, Figure 15.1).

The Later Anglo-Saxon use of Barrows

By the ninth century, Christianity had become the major religion among the Anglo-Saxons. But even this did not mean that churchyard burials were common place. Cemeteries during this time still exhibited considerable variability. This was accepted by the church and seen as a meaningful way in society to exhibit the regional and local styles to the rest of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The variation of this period is tied to when the conversion to Christianity took place, along with

the social hierarchy of family ties of the individual (Hadley 2011:290-294). The church had yet to offer up specific guidelines for burial forms and churchyard burials would not be common place till the tenth century (Hadley 2011:290). Barrow burial, however, fell out of style and it is not until later in the early ninth century that they are once again used for burial.

The shift away from barrow burials that had been used in the earlier Anglo-Saxon period to the new functions of execution sites has been explored in several theories. One of the earliest theories states that they were purely 'heathen burials' and that these changes solely belonged in the realm of the pagan period of Anglo-Saxon England , along with following ancient ecclesiastical/church parish boundaries.(Lucy 2000:148). However, with modern dating techniques, this theory has been proven to be less than correct. In response, Andrew Reynolds (2009:2) states that this change in the burial usages of the barrows was a mechanism of social control used by a strong central government who saw the barrows as a way to mark social outcasts through the use of landscape.

Another theory states that the shift in burial tradition is a reflection of the wider changes in the churches belief towards death and the soul (Petts 2002:44). Still one more theory that expands on the ideas of social control is proposed by Victoria Thompson (2004). She combines the ideas of Julia Barrow and Catherine Cubitt with the idea that it was the expansion of the powers by the Wessex central government that was behind the shift in the burial traditions seen during this period (Thompson 2004: 35).

All of the above theories suggest an explanation for the changes seen in the barrow mounds burials in Anglo-Saxon England. What if it there is more than a single explanation or theory to why the change in the barrow burials took place during this time? In this paper, I hope to explore whether it was a reaction of the new centralized Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex

responding to the Viking invasion through the use barrows as execution sites as a way to reclaim the land for the central Anglo-Saxons state.

Outcast Burials

Every society has a way to deal with those that they see as living outside of the norm (Reynolds 2009:2). When this individual dies, they are often buried differently from the rest of society to continue to mark that difference even in death (Reynolds 2009:2). The Anglo-Saxons were no different. During the fifth through the eighth century, how an outcast in society was dealt with was based on local and regional variations. There is, however, some consistency in how these individuals were buried. The bodies were often placed face down, decapitated, dismembered or covered with stones (Reynolds 2009:37). However, this would change in the ninth century, when it seems that the barrows were being used primarily for the burial of these individuals. This idea will be expanded on later in the paper.

METHODS OF EXAMINING CEMETERY TYPES AND WRITTEN SOURCES

The period of Anglo-Saxon England was a time of incredible social and political change. The Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were falling to a pagan force that seemed unstoppable. Kingdom after kingdom fell to the Viking invaders. It was during this time that there is a shift in how the barrows were used. Instead of being places of community or elite burial, they were instead used as places of execution. What was the cause of this change? Through an examination of several forms of cemetery types (both Anglo-Saxon and Viking), in addition to a look at the historical records, I hope to further explore the causation for the shift in the use of barrow burials during this period of British history.

Cemetery Evidence

Looking at a variety of sites, I will examine the standard and non-standard forms in several periods of burials. The types that I will examine are: 1) Early/ Mid (fifth through early eighth century) Anglo-Saxon community/ barrow burials; 2) 'Final Phase' Barrow burials; 3) Later (ninth through eleventh century) Anglo-Saxon community/ church burials; 4) Later (ninth through eleventh century) Barrow Burials; and 5) Viking burials in both Scandinavia and Britain. This study will examine body position, age, sex, the presence of grave goods, along with the change in 'outcast' burials in all of the above burial types. By doing so, this study will strive to bring a better understanding of the changes through time of barrow burials. Once a change as been identified, I will then map out the location of the barrow mounds used as places of execution on a map of England, overlying a map that shows the extent of Viking influence in Britain. Once created, I will examine the map and see if the barrow execution sites line up with this boundary of influence between the Anglo-Saxon and Viking powers.

Written Evidence

In this paper, I will explore several historical documents and law codes, in order to gain an insight into how the Anglo-Saxons viewed the Vikings and how they dealt with this social upheaval. By looking at the law codes, which explain how crime and punishment were viewed during this time, this evidence will bring a better understanding of the driving ideas and trends of the Anglo-Saxons during the Viking invasions. These law codes also include the treaties signed between the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings. Through the examination of these documents, this study will tie the events present in these documents to the changes seen in the barrow burials during the Anglo-Saxon period.

The Pieces Come Together

This study will take the evidence of burial trends and deviations from the above mentioned burial type and connect those findings with the surviving historical documents. In doing so, the findings will demonstrate that the turmoil caused by the Viking invasions led the surviving Anglo-Saxon governments to use the landscape to claim their territories from the pagan invaders through the use of the barrows. Instead of using them in the traditional pagan manner, they instead turned these places into sites of execution for the outcast of Anglo-Saxon society. By creating these places in the landscape, the central Anglo-Saxon government was trying to both establish their control over the population and the land itself. Vikings were pushed back by the Anglo-Saxon kings, the execution barrow sites were moved further up. Not only located on the boundary between the Anglo-Saxon kingdom and the Viking territory, but also along the coastlines which were constant areas of Viking raids even after the formation of the Danelaw. Through this demonstration of central control, the Anglo-Saxon government was trying to protect what power they had over both the population and land.

THE BURIAL STYLES OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS: RESULTS OF CEMETERY DATA COLLECTION OF EARLY, 'FINAL PHASE', LATE ANGLO-SAXON BURIALS, VIKING AND EXECUTION SITES

Early Anglo-Saxon Cemetery

Nine cemeteries and the data that they presented were examined for this section (Table1).

Table 1. Sites Dating from the Early Anglo-Saxon Period (Adapted from Boyle, Dodd, Miles, and Mudd 1995, Drinkall and Foreman 1998, Leeds and Harden 1936, Malim and Hines 1998, Meaney and Chadwick-Hawkes 1970, Penn and Bryman 2007).

Name	Total Number of Graves	Date	Burial Types	Age Distribution	Sex Distribution	Grave Goods	Location Near/On Barrow	Outcast Burials
Castledyke South, Barton-on-Humber	196 Separate Cut Graves	Late 5th-Late 8th Century	Inhumations-199 Cremations-1	Adult-33 Subadult-46	Male-51 Female-69	Furnished-151 Unfurnished-33	No	Prone, Multiple
Winnall II, Winchester	49 burials/45 skeletons	7th-8th Century	Inhumation-45	Unknown	Unknown	Furnished-36 Unfurnished-19	No	Unknown
Morning Thorpe, Norfolk	329	Early 5th-Late 7th Century	Inhumations-320 Cremations-4	Adult-148 Subadult-183	Male-68 Female-111 Unknown-150	Unknown	No	Prone, Multiple
Westgarth Gardens, Norfolk	65	Early 5th-Late 7th Century	Inhumations-65 Cremations-4	Adult-32 Subadult-25	Male-27 Female-26 Unknown-16	Unknown	No	Prone
Berinsfield, Walley Corner, Oxford	100	Mid 5th-Early 7th Century	Inhumations-100 Cremations-4	Adult-61 Subadult-35	Male-30 Female-31	Unknown	No	Unknown
Didcot Power Station. Oxford	17/16	7th Century	Inhumations-17/16	Adult-13 Subadult-4	Male-3 Female-4 Unknown-6	Furnished-13 Unfurnished-4	No	Unknown
Abingdon, Berkshire	201	5th-7th Century	Inhumations-119 Cremations-82	Adult-75 Subadult-31 Infant-14	Male-54 Female-51 Unknown-15	Furnished-72 Unfurnished-47	Yes	Multiple
Edix Hill, Cambridgeshire	115	2nd-7th Century	Inhumations-149	Adult-102 Subadult-46	Male-48 Female-44 Unknown-10	Furnished-99 Unfurished-50	Yes	Unknown
Uncleby, Yorkshire	70	7th Century	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	Unknown

As observed above from the data sample of Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, there is a range in variation in the data set. Both cremations and inhumations are used in several of the cemeteries, a trend that has been commented on in other bodies of work, such as D.M. Wilson (1962). This is often viewed through the lens of the variation among the different cultural groups the make up that collective term of the Anglo-Saxon (Williams 2011: 240). Another variation seen in the cemetery data set is the use and lack of grave goods among the graves. This can be seen in three ways. One way this can be seen is that this is a representation of the social hierarchy represented within the living population (Reynolds 2009:10). Another, as stated above, that demonstrated in the data is the variation among the different cultural groups that make up that collective term of the Anglo-Saxon. Lastly, this data illustrates a gradual shift away from pagan burial practices to those that accepted by the new Christian religion (Williams 2011: 240).

What is noted from the data is that these early cemeteries were places of community burial. With the wide range of both sexes and ages buried at these locations, these were not places of restricted burial, but of community. Another variation is the choice of location of these places of burial. As seen above in the data set, several of these cemeteries are located on or near a barrow. This choice, in terms of location for the community cemetery may have been purposeful. These barrows were seen as places of power in the landscape (Lucy and Reynolds 2002:43). By choosing these barrows for the location of the community burial sites, the living population was making a large statement to those around them. They were in a sense claiming the territory and the resources that it contained for those within that community, along with a general statement of group identity (Williams 2011:255).

The burial type of the Early Anglo-Saxon period was one that was full a variation caused by the changing social structure among the population and the mixture of the many groups that

formed the cultural group known as the Anglo-Saxon (Carver, Sanmark and Semple 2010:71). As seen in the below figure, the cemeteries of this period contained a wide range of variation within them (Figure 5). There were no set rules on body position, grave goods, etc. It was left largely up to the individual communities to create a set of guidelines. The variation seen in the cemeteries during this period of time is not one that is too dramatic, but is one that shows the gradual changes that the populations of this period were experiencing, one that would bring them from the pagan traditions to those of the wider Christian world.

The variation is also noted in how social outcast are treated within the burial space. As noted in Table 1, each community dealt with the burial of outcast differently. Within each cemetery, each community had a style variation for those seen as living within societal norms and those viewed as outcasts. Those individuals were buried in a different fashion from the others in the cemetery, such as in a prone burial position or within a multiple burial context (Table 1). This is a burial treatment that has been identified as differing from the normal Anglo-Saxon burial practice, in a supine position and within an individual grave (Reynolds 2009:62) By burying these individuals in a different practice from others, the community was singling these individuals out even in death.

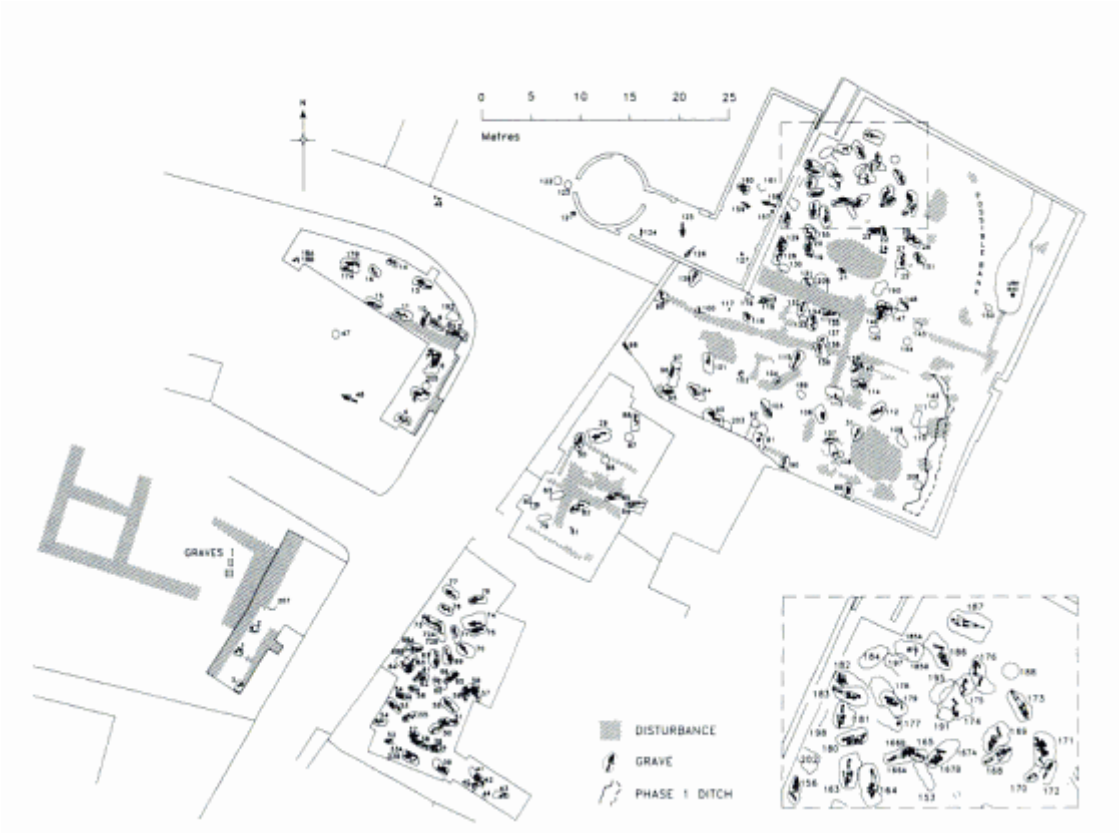

Figure 5. Map of the cemetery at Castledyke South, Barton-on-Humbar, demonstrating the wide range of burial variation within Early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries
(Drinkall and Foreman 1998, Figure 8).

'Final Phase' Anglo-Saxon Burials

A total of five sites were selected in order to give a general data set for the burials of this time period. The table below represents all and the data collected from them.

Table 2. Barrow Burials Dating from the 'Final Phase' Period (Adapted from Welch 2011).

Name	Type	Sex	Grave Goods
Prittlewell	Inhumations	Male	weapons, equipment for feasting, personal goods
Roundway Down, Avebury	Inhumations	Female	domestic and personal goods
Cow Low, Peat District	Inhumations	Female	Gold jewelry with linked pin set
Benty Grange, Peat District	Inhumations	Male	Weapons set-shield, bronze bowls, helmet
Wollaston, Northamptinshire	Inhumations	Male	Weapons set- shield, bronze bowl, helmet

The table above shows that the burials from this time were those of extreme elite status. Single inhumations that took places within barrow mounds fit within the rise of a prominent elite class among the Anglo-Saxons. By creating these large scale chamber burials and filling them with items considered to be symbols of social and political power, the elites were establishing their power over the landscape (Welch 2011:269). The community burials during the Early Anglo-Saxon period were a way that the larger community demonstrated their collective power over the landscape; here the elites of the society were doing the same, but for their own personal power. During this time, the burials of the non-elites continued in a community setting, with the barrow burials becoming reserved for the elites of the society (Welch 2011:269). With the central state becoming more powerful, they instead used the barrow burials to claim their own personal or family right over the collective landscape.

Late Anglo-Saxon Period Burials

This class of burials was a more difficult set of data to collect. Very few Late Anglo-Saxon cemeteries or individual burials for that matter have been excavated. The reasons for this range from the burials being located on active burial grounds to the areas were used for Late Anglo-

Saxon burial had also been reused by later generations. The few that have been excavated have been done so through rescue archaeology and some of these sites are recorded in the table below.

Table 3. Burials Locations Dating to the Late Anglo-Saxon Period (Adapted from Boddington 1980 and Thompson 2004).

Name	Total Number of Burials	Dates	Burial Types	Direction of Body	Position of Body	Grave Goods
St. Oswald's, Gloucester	Unknown	9^{th}-10^{th} Century	Inhumation	Head Faces West	Supine	Few to None
Raunds, Northamponshire	270	10^{th} Century	Inhumation	Head Faces West	Supine	None

The few examples that are available for study give an idea that by this period of the Anglo-Saxons. Christianity as a religion had been accepted by the majority of the population, resulting in a shift towards burials that would have been viewed in the Church's eyes as legitimate places for burial. Although these sites do exhibit some variation, this has been accepted in terms of when the conversion to Christianity happened, along with social hierarchy and families ties playing a role in the location of the burials within the accepted graveyard (Hadley 2011:294). These variations were accepted by society and the Church, seen as socially meaningful markers of the deceased (Hadley 2011:293).

Overall, the graves from this period seem to shift away from community-sanctioned burial locations to locations associated with the Church. These burials were all inhumation and contained no grave goods. The bodies of the dead were buried in a supine position, with a common head position facing to the west (Figure 6). The figure below, from the Raunds Cemetery, is an excellent example of the uniformity that burials from this time period contained. There is less variation during this period, owing to the fact that this was a period of greater social control by both the ruling elites and the Christian Church.

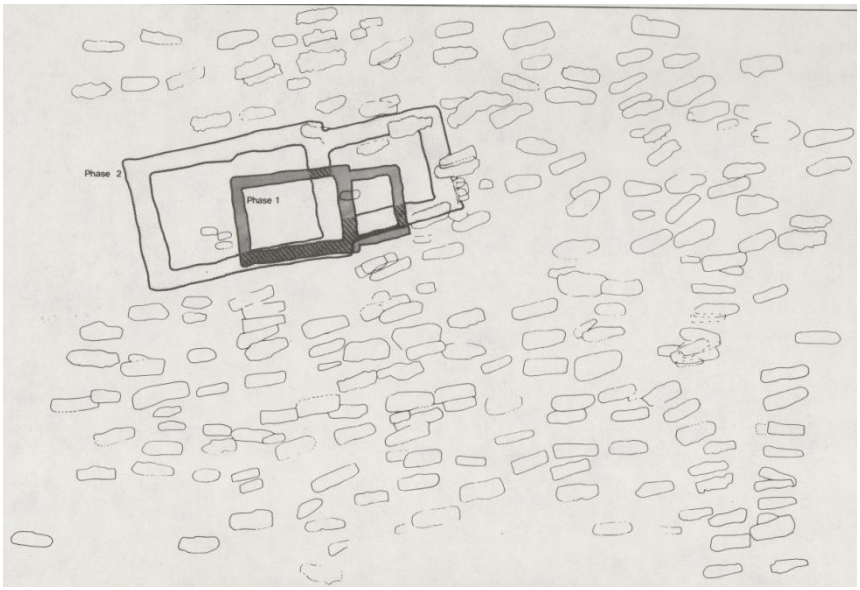

Figure 6. Map of Church Burial at Raunds, Northamponshire (Boddington 1980, Figure 25.1)

Viking Burials in Both Scandinavia and Britain

The purpose of this section of the research was designed to demonstrate whether the change in the barrow burials seen during this period was caused by the newly arrived Vikings who used the barrows for their own style of burial. Burials from both Scandinavia and Britain were studied and the data from both are observed in the below tables.

Table 4. Viking Burial Sites Located in Norway (Adapted from Moen 2011).

Name	Total Number of Burials	Type	Close to the Sea
Oseberg	2	Ship Burial in Mound	Yes
Nordre, Kaupang	120	Burial Mounds	Yes
Lamoya, Kaupang	94	Burial Mounds, Flat Graves	Yes
Bikjholberget, Kaupang	Unknown	Flat Graves- Inhumations	Yes

The above table is the data set from the Viking burials located in Norway and as the figure demonstrates there was a range of variation seen in how the dead were treated within Viking society. Burial mounds are incredibly common both for elite burials and community burials. One of the most important factors of Viking burials during this time is the location in proximity to water. As stated earlier, water was seen as an important for the separation of the boundaries between the realms of the living and the dead (Moen 2011:16).

The below is the data set for the collection of Viking burials located in Britain.

Table 5. (Adapted from Lucy and Reynolds 2002).

Name	Total Number of Burials	Location	Grave Goods
Cambois, Bedlington, Northumberland	3	Barrow	Yes
Kildale, North Yorkshire	7/8	Churchyard	Yes

The data for this section of the study was extremely limited, both for the examples of barrow and churchyard burials. However, the existing data does give researchers an idea of the type of burials that the Vikings implemented once they arrived in Britain. Barrow burials like the one in the above data set show, that when used for a short period, they seem to be following the Scandinavian tradition like those seen in Norway. They contain few individuals and are buried with grave goods in a barrow mound. The identification of Viking burials in a churchyard setting are extremely difficult to identify. The few examples that do exist show that the Vikings began to follow the Christian tradition of burial within a churchyard; however, they continued the tradition of including grave goods with the deceased.

The data collected from Viking style burials both in Scandinavia and Britain demonstrate that the change seen in the barrow burials are not caused by the Vikings. If anything, the barrow burials that are associated with the Vikings follow those traditions seen in the Early Anglo-Saxon period. They are nothing like the execution burials seen in the later periods, ruling out the Vikings as the individuals creating this new style of barrow burials.

Execution Barrow Burials

For this section of my study, data from twelve barrow sites were collected to show evidence for being used as places of execution were collected. The resulting data are represented below (Table 6). As the following data set demonstrate, these were sites that had a very special purpose within Anglo-Saxon society, with select barrows chosen for this purpose (Figure 7, 8, 9). In each, the layout of the barrow itself and the placement of the execution sites were all varied to a degree. Each of the included figures gives an example of how the bodies of those executed at these sites were laid out. The most telling evidence for executions at these sites are how the bodies are treated. There is evidence of the hands of these individuals being tied behind their backs, the heads decapitated from the body and the individuals buried in shallow, multiple burials.

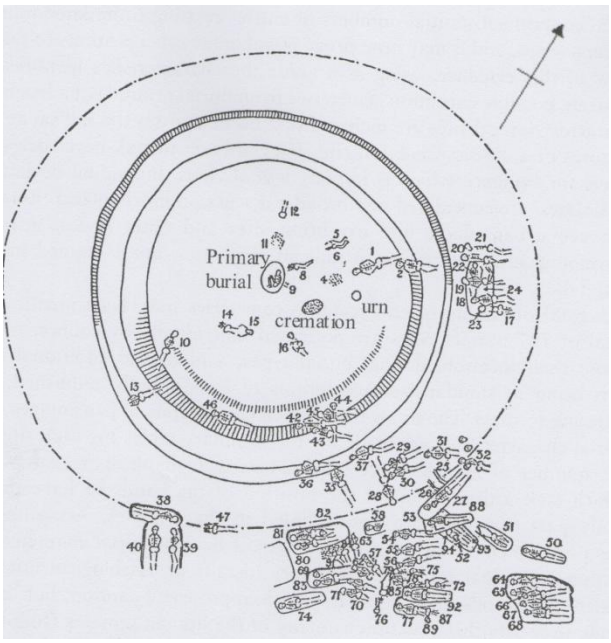

Figure 7. Map of the Burials at the Dunstable Barrow, demonstrating an execution barrow site (Reynolds 2009, Figure 12).

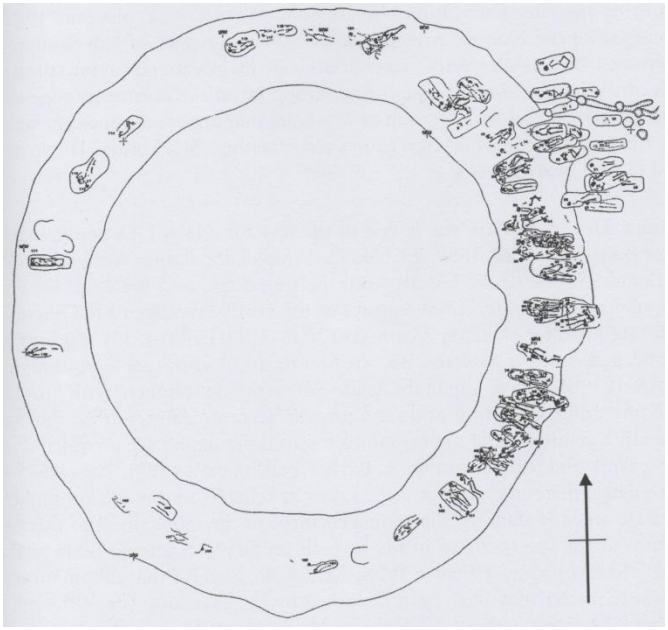

Figure 8.Map of the Burial at the South Acre Barrow, demonstrating an execution barrow site (Reynolds 2009, Figure 25).

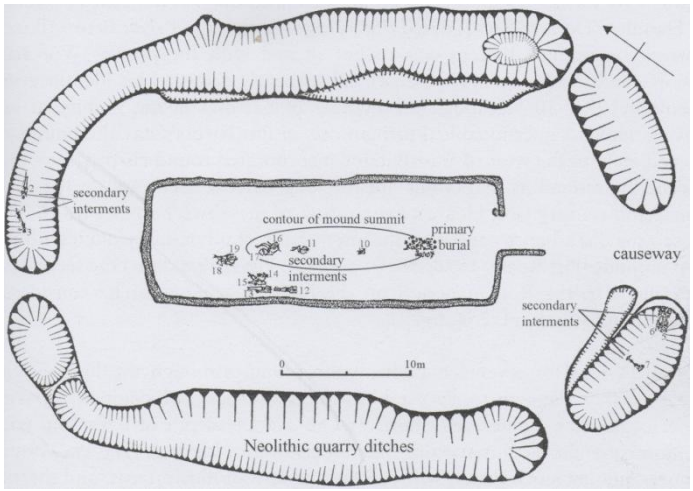

Figure 9. Map of the Burials at Wor Barrow, demonstrating an execution barrow site (Reynolds 2009, Figure 19).

The below map (Figure 10) shows the individual sites marked on the landscape, along with demonstrating the influence of the Viking on the landscape. The following map lays out the location of the twelve execution barrow sites, the extant of the Viking influence in Britain and the location of two major cities; Winchester, the royal capital and London the main economic center. As demonstrated by the map, the execution sites cluster around both Winchester and London, along with belong located in areas that have a heavily concentration of Viking influence. The red circles represent the twelve individual execution barrow sites, with the blue representing the cities of Winchester (in the south) and London (towards the center). As the Anglo-Saxon kings were able to regain territory from the Vikings through re-conquest, the central government established execution sites into these reclaimed areas. In doing so, they were able to restate the power of the central government over the area of Viking control. This was similar in how they maintained control over their own territory when the threat to the central government's authority was in question from the constant Viking threat. As seen in the establishment of execution barrow sites near the prominent cities (Winchester and London) and

along the contested border with the Vikings, the Anglo-Saxon government was using these places to maintain what power they had over the population. Through the use of the barrows as place of execution in these reclaimed areas, the Anglo-Saxon central government was reasserting their power and control over these areas. By executing people seen as outcasts, they were also re-establish what was seen the 'correct' social order and practice. Those who broke those rules could be executed in a fashion that demonstrated the Anglo-Saxon central governments control over these reclaimed peoples and landscape.

Table 6. Barrow Execution Sites (Adapted from Reynolds 2009).

Area	Name of Site	Barrow	Excavated	Date	Boundary/ Hundred	Earlier Anglo-Saxon Burials	Number Of Burials	Sex	Execution Evidence	Type	Position	Document Evidence
Bedfordshire	Dunstable, Five Knolls	Early Bronze Age	1925-1929	Late Anglo-Saxon	B:Hertfordshire, H:Manshead and Stanbridge	Yes	94	Male-52 Female-12	prone, tied hands, decapitations, and multiple burials present	Shallow and Intercutting	Unknown	None
	Galley Hill	Two Bronze Age	1961	Anglo-Saxon	B: Hertfordshire H: Flitt and Manshead	Unknown	25	Male-21 Female-4	Shallow and Hastily Buried	prone, tied hands, and multiple burials present	Unknown	place-name comes from Old English: gealga (gallows) and 1504 record, Gallowehill
Dorset	Wor Barrow	Neolithic Long	1893-1894 Lt-Gen. Pitt Rivers	10th Century	H: Handley, Cranborne	Unknown	17	Male	Intercut	decapitations and multiple burials present	Varied	Place name, may be corruption of Old English wearg beorg (criminal's barrows
Hampshire	Stockbridge Down	Yes	1935-1936	10th-11th Century	H:Leckford	Yes	41	Male	Intercut, Shallow, Prone	prone, tied hands, decapitation, and multiple burials present	Varied	None

Table 6 (continued).

Area	Name of Site	Barrow	Excavated	Date	Boundary/ Hundred	Earlier Anglo-Saxon Burials	Number Of Burials	Sex	Execution Evidence	Type	Position	Document Evidence
Norfolk	South Acre	Late Neolithic/ Early Bronze	1987-1988 Dr. John Wymar, Neorfolk Arch Unit	7th-10th Century (C14 Dating)	H: South Greenhoe Freebridge	Yes	136	Male-34 Female-36	Intercut, Shallow	prone, tied hands, decapitation, and multiple burials present	North South West	None
Nottinghamshire	Crosshill	Yes	1947-1948 Dr. F.M. Heichelheilm, University College Norfolk	Anglo-Saxon	B:Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire H:Rushcliff and Bingham	Yes	5	Unknown	Unknown	due to poor preservation no exact figures given	Varied	Field near site known as 'thieves
Suffolk	Sutton Hoo	Yes	1986 and 1992 Professor Martin Caver, University of York	9th-11th Century (C14 Dating)	H: Wilford	'Final Phase'	39	Male-37 Female-36	Unknown	prone, tied hands, decapitations, and multiple burials present	West-East	None
Surrey	Gally Hills	Round Barrow	1972 James Barfoot and David Price-Williams Surrey Arch. Society	7th *teminus post-quem*	H:Wallington, Copthorne	Unknown	5	Unknown	Shallow Multiple	tied hands and multiple burials	S-N, N-S	None
	Guildown	Round Barrow	1929 Col. O.H. North and A.W. G Lowther Surrey Arch. Society	11th Century ?	H: Godalming	Yes	183	Unknown	Shallow Multiple	prone, tied hands, decapitations, and multiple burials present	West-East	None
Sussex	Burpham	Yes	1893 by H.C. Collyer	Anglo-Saxon	H: Poling, Binstead	Unknown	13	Male	Shallow	due to poor preservation no exact figures given	South North	None

Table 6 (continued).

Area	Name of Site	Barrow	Excavated	Date	Boundary/ Hundred	Earlier Anglo-Saxon Burials	Number Of Burials	Sex	Execution Evidence	Type	Position	Document Evidence
Wiltshire	Old Sarum	Yes	Completely Levelled in 1894 by Arthur Tucker , Details supplied by H.P. Blackmore of Salisbury Field Club in 1894	Anglo-Saxon	H: Underditch and Alderbury	Unknown	14	Male?	Shallow	Tied hands	Varied	None
Yorkshire East Riding	Walkington Wold	Two Bronze age	1967 and 1969 by J.E. Bartlett and R.W. Mackey on behalf of East Riding Arch. Society	7^{th}-11^{th} Century (C14 Dating)	H: Welton	Unknown	12	Male	Shallow	tied hands, decapitations and multiple burials	Varied	None

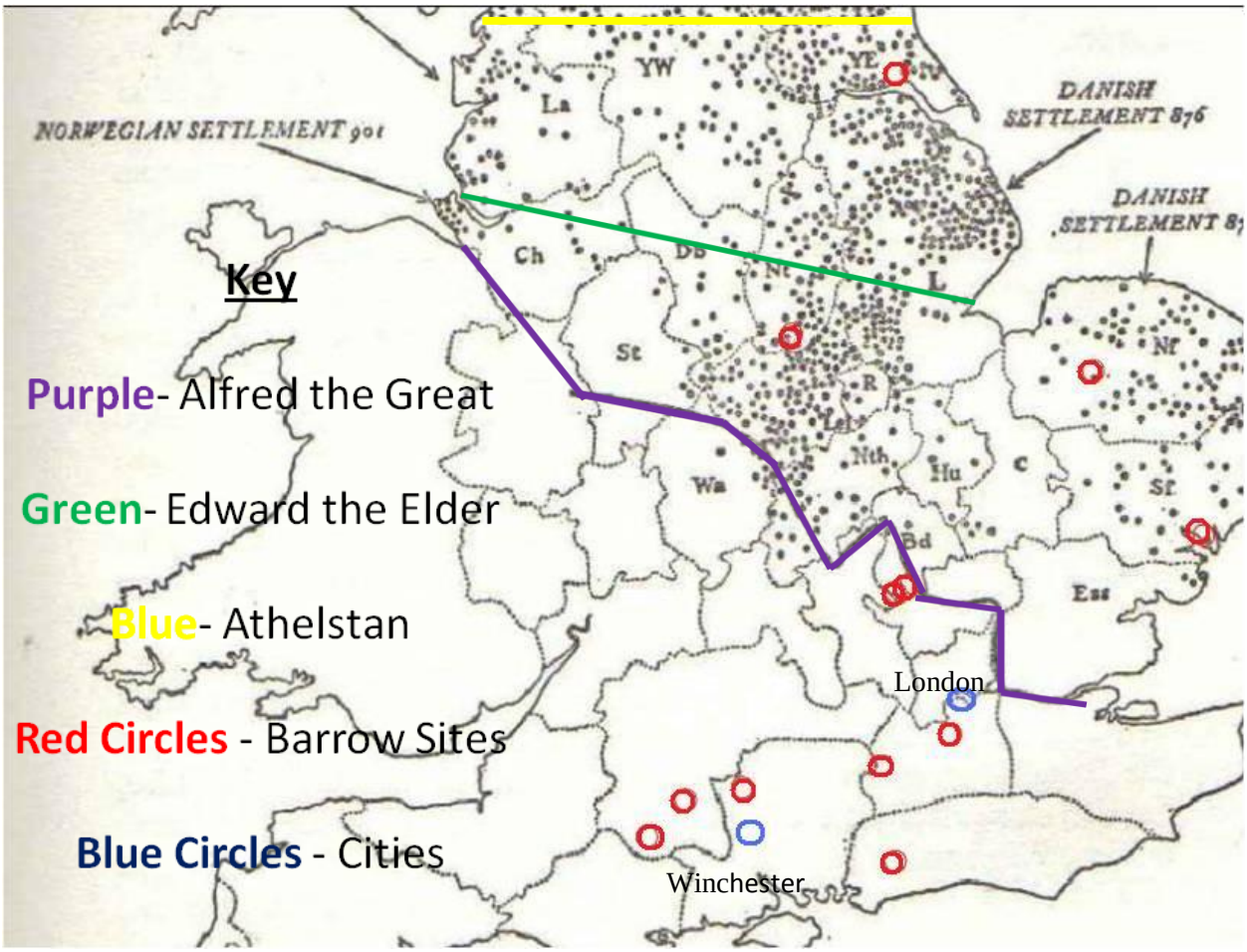

Figure 10. Map Demonstrating Execution Barrow Sites in location to major cities, along with the expansion of the Anglo-Saxon Territory into the Danelaw (Adapted from Loyn 1977, Rosenthal 1973, Reynolds 2009, Whitelock 1955 and Google Maps 2012).

A Look at the Written Evidence

The variety of written evidence exists from this period that gives an idea of the viewpoints of the Anglo-Saxons form this period. These sources range from literary sources, such as the story of Beowulf, to historical records originating from the Church.

<u>The Barrow Beliefs of the Anglo-Saxon</u>

The barrow mounds that were once used as places of burials for both the community and the elites were soon abandoned in the eighth century. Soon, they would be viewed as places of pagan

superstition through the Christian Anglo-Saxon mindset. The shift can be seen in the surviving literary sources. In the tale of *Beowulf*, the barrow mounds are seen as the home of dragons and their golden hoard. One example from the text states

> The ravager of the night, the burner who has sought barrows from old, then found this hoard of undefended joy. The smooth evil dragon swims through the gloom enfolded in flame; the folk of this country hold him in dread. He is doomed to seek out hoards in the ground, and guard for an age there heathen gold: much good does it do him! [Semple 1998: 109]

As the above text demonstrates, in this period of Anglo-Saxon England, the barrows were viewed as places associated with both riches and pagan demons.

This idea of evil being trapped in the barrows continued in the Old English poem entitled *The Wife's Lament* (Semple 1998: 110). In this poem, a woman is described as being exiled to the barrow in isolation, stating that she is "bidden to dwell among a thicket of trees under an oak tree in this earthen dugout" (Semple 1998:110). Current explanations of the poem have hypothesized that the woman in the poem is dead and that it is her sprit that is trapped in the barrow (Semple 1998:111).

It has been suggested that these barrows were used during the later period of Anglo-Saxon England as places of execution of criminals for the purpose of having the souls of those criminals to be tormented by the evil spirits that lived there during the afterlife. They were essentially trapped there, to occupy the barrow mounds for eternity.

A Look at the Historical Documents

The contact between the Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons is very well documented. As stated before, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* offers a year-by-year account of the encounters between the two cultures. The earliest records date from the eighth century, describing the first of the Viking raids in Britain, when they started to raid along the coast in A.D. 789 (Whitelock 1955: 166). As

the Viking raids increased and eventually became invading armies, the details in the written records provided a view on how these events took place. In A.D. 866, it is recorded that "a great heathen army came to England and took up winter quarters in East Anglia" (Whitelock 1955:176). This is the first time that the Vikings stayed in Britain and opened the door for more of the country to be conquered. The battles fought between the two sides are also recorded. An example can be seen in the account from the year A.D. 871 where "nine general engagements were fought against the Danish army in the kingdom south of the Themes" (Whitelock 1955:178).

There are no surviving historical documents from the Vikings, so the only perspective we get comes from Anglo-Saxons (Hart 1992:3). The surviving Anglo-Saxon documents come from the church. One of the most common topics recorded in the written documents is the effect of the Vikings on the church and its holdings. When the Vikings took over the city of York, the records state that "they destroyed the churches and the monasteries far and wide with fire and sword, leaving nothing remaining save the bare, unroofed walls" (Marsden 1993:143). Another record states that the

> most wicked pagans, destitute of all humanity, who roam through every place, sparing neither the female sex nor infantine age, destroying churches and ecclesiastics, ravishing holy women, and wasting and consuming everything in their way [Marsden 1993:150].

Along with the descriptive accounts of the Vikings once they arrived in the land of the Anglo-Saxons, the records also give insight into how the Anglo-Saxons viewed these attacks. The monk Alcuin gives an interesting explanation for the Vikings coming to Britain. He states that because the Anglo-Saxons did not fully follow the Christian doctrine, the Vikings were God's punishment for their sins (Marsden 1993:35)

These written works not only provide a look at the encounters and battles between the Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons, but also the treaties that were written up between the last surviving Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex and the collective Viking holdings (often referred to as the Danelaw). This Viking area was established by King Alfred of Wessex and the Danish King Guthrum through a treaty which defined the boundaries between the two (Hart 1992:3). The boundaries were created so that they follow "the Thames, and then up the Lea and along the Lea to its source, then in a straight line to Bedford, and then up the Ouse to Watling Street" (Attenborough 1963:99). In addition to outlining the boundaries between the two, the main goal of the Anglo-Saxons was to convert the Vikings to Christianity. This was the focus of all ensuing political treaties. This can be seen in the later treaty between King Alfred and King Guthrum, which states in the very first sentence that "they declared they would love one God and zealously renounce all heathen practices" (Attenborough 1963:103).

Law of the Land

The surviving law codes of this period give an insight into the legal systems of these early kingdoms. The earliest surviving record comes from the laws created under King Ethelberht the king of Kent. For the crime of murdering a free man, the offender "shall pay 50 shillings to the king for infraction of his seigniorial rights" (Attenbourgh 1963:5). This is a common penalty. The majority of offenses during this period were punished by in the form of monetary payment to the victims, the victim's family, the church, or the king. It was not until later that a death penalty was included into the surviving law codes. As seen in the law codes of the Wessex king Ine, if a member of society living in penal slavery absconds "he shall be hanged and nothing shall be paid to his lord" (Attenbourgh 1963:45). This is not extended to all, but only to those in the very lowest order of society who are seen to have broken the rules. During this later period of

Anglo-Saxon history, it is still common place for any offence to be punished by paying a fine to the victim, the victim's family, the church, or the king.

Even after the collapse of the seven kingdoms, the tradition of paying a fine for a crime continued in the new nation of England. However, the death penalty was extended to certain other offences. An example of this can be found in law code of King Ethelstan of England where the "penalty for witchcraft, sorcery or deadly spells" was death if the accused could not deny the charges (Attenbourgh 1963:131). The change over time in the law code of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms can be seen in how the death penalty becomes more and more common as Anglo-Saxon societies become more centralized.

CONCLUSION

The change from community burials, to elites, and to the later execution style burials follows the rise of the central state. When the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex became the sole surviving kingdom after the Viking invasion, it allowed this government an opportunity to form a strong central government. They served as the government of the Anglo-Saxon group identity; whose only threat to their survival not coming from internal divides, but from the outside Viking force.

In an effort to consolidate their power base, not only in the south, but in the Viking controlled areas that they would later come to re-conquer for a time, they used the symbols that represent their pagan past, the barrow mound. Cultures, when faced with a threat like the one that Vikings posed to the Anglo-Saxons, often "circle the wagons" in a sense. They clung to the collective past as a way to bring the group together to face the outside threat as a collective front.

The Anglo-Saxons did this in a different way. Both the Anglo-Saxon and the Vikings shared a common tie. At one point, the Christian Anglo-Saxon once practiced a pagan religion like the Viking invader currently did. This common tie would not serve as a rallying point for the Anglo-Saxon society. So instead, these sites were used by the central government as a way to show just how Christian they were as a society. Certain barrows were selected for execution, with a focus on those that were close to an important site. The locations ranged from the ancient capital of Winchester or the important trading city of London, along with being located among the various Viking influential communities in the northern areas of the country. In doing so, the central government was extending their power over the landscape. This is a common theme seen among the barrows usage by the Anglo-Saxons, but this time in a much different way.

This change is not a new Viking style of burial, which one could see as a cause for the change seen in the barrow burials. As the data shown above, the Viking use of barrows was extremely similar to the 'Final Phase' Anglo-Saxon barrow burials. They were elite in nature, containing just one or two individuals with a large number of grave goods. In the case of the Viking use, there was a focus on water as a separation between the world of the dead and the living. This aspect is not seen in the barrow burials in Britain, again ruling out Viking use for the barrow burial change.

Although it has been argued that this change is the result of local governments using the barrows for the execution, it has to be noted that the central government during this time was trying very hard to exert its own power on the land over which it had control. This was seen as a fight of pure survival, one that could not be won on the local level. This had been done in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms each fighting for themselves, and they had been conquered. The kingdom of Wessex knew that in order to survive, it needed to be seen as the primary force of

power in the Anglo-Saxon controlled areas. By using the prominent features of the barrows, at select locations, the execution of those seen to fall outside the social norms were used to demonstrate both the power of the central authority and the solitarily of the Anglo-Saxon cultural group.

The historical documents from this period provide an interesting viewpoint of the Anglo-Saxons and how they viewed the changing world around them. The literary sources, like the story of *Beowulf* or the poem of *The Wife's Lament* , demonstrate the growing superstition with which the barrows were viewed during the Later Anglo-Saxon period. In the cases of *Beowulf*, barrows were seen as place where supernatural creatures lived. With the poem of *The Wife's Lament*, the soul of the woman in the poem is trapped within the barrow, forever haunting the area around it. Both show that the barrows during the later period were viewed in the most negative of terms, making them the perfect places for the execution of those seen as the outcasts of the society.

The surviving documents also show the Anglo-Saxon views of the Viking invaders. Seen as a punishment from God for the Anglo-Saxon society not living up to the highest form of Christianity, it can be drawn that the surviving central government was trying in an extreme way to show that they, as a society, were being the best Christians possible. In doing so, the central government was not only demonstrating their power over the landscape by showing what happens to those who break the central government laws, but also by removing those demanding to live outside of the Christian norms. By focusing on the outcasts within Anglo-Saxon society, the central government was achieving two primary goals. One was to reclaim and solidify their authority over the landscape and the second was to prove to God that they as a society were worthy Christian who deserved His protection from the Viking threat.

The changes in barrow burials demonstrates how burial practices and the rise of a central government authority are often tied to each other; as one changes so does the other. In the case of Anglo-Saxons, as the society moves away from a local, community level focus to a central government focus, so do the barrow burials. The barrows move from places of community burials to elite burials to execution burials. The barrows were used in a way that demonstrated power of a certain group or individuals over the landscape, this is a common theme that is continuous throughout the variation in the burial methods located at these sites.

Even with the information that exists, more work is needed to piece together the causation for change in the barrow burial practice seen during this period. It is only recently that the later Anglo-Saxon burials have even been looked at by researchers; they may contain more information about the changing social, political and religious climate in which the barrow burial change occurred.

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