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FROM ONE SEA TO ANOTHER
TRADING PLACES IN THE EUROPEAN
AND MEDITERRANEAN EARLY MIDDLE AGES

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Central-places, exchange and maritime-oriented identity around the North Sea and western Baltic, AD 600-1100

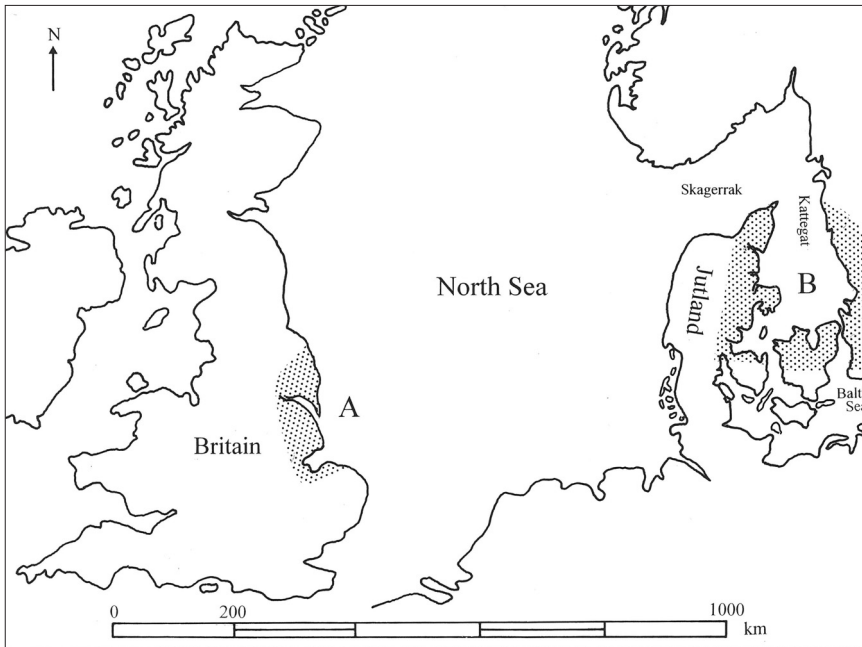
Introduction

This contribution to our understanding of the development and context of early medieval maritime trading centres will focus on the central-places within their wider coastal settings as much as on the nature of the settlements themselves. In a comparative overview, it will explore the role of particular coastal regions of the North Sea and the Kattegat Strait as thoroughfares for exchange and landscapes for the creation of central-places and maritime-oriented group identities between c.AD 600 and 1100. Trends observed through time will then be analysed and compared in order to establish whether parallels existed in the character, chronological development, outlook and archaeological manifestation of coastal societies in northwestern Europe during the later first millennium.

Discussion will be structured within four parts. The first will explore the nature of coastal communities in relation to their wider societies, examining especially the extent to which they were 'liminal' or outside the ordinary and the extent to which their environments and networks provided 'behavioural settings' for the creation of specifically maritime-oriented perspectives. The second and third parts of the paper will examine the archaeological reflections of coastal communities in two principal regions around the North Sea and western Baltic: namely, the region of eastern England, from the Humber estuary to the Lincolnshire Fens; and northeast Jutland and the Kattegat Strait (fig. 1). The evidence for the nature of these coastal societies, their involvement in seaborne exchange and travel and the social impact of such activities are then discussed in the context of wider trends from other parts of Europe.

Liminality and connectivity: coastal societies and emporia

Much has been written in the last thirty years about the emergence of coastal and estuarine ports (often termed *emporía*) around the English Channel and the North and Baltic Seas from the later 6th and 7th centuries onwards.



1. Location of case study regions around the North Sea and western Baltic Sea, discussed in the text: A – Humber estuary - Lincolnshire Fens; B – Northeast Jutland – Kattegat Strait (David Taylor).

These settlements have been classified and characterised using concepts borrowed from human geography and social anthropology, such as ‘gateway communities’ (using the work of Hirth¹), ‘ports-of-trade’ (borrowing from Polanyi² and Renfrew³), or even ‘dream cities’ (from the seminal works by Richard Hodges⁴). All of these terms describe settlements as outside or apart from the wider settlement and social hierarchies of their landward hinter-

¹ K.G. Hirth, «Inter-regional trade and the formation of prehistoric gateway communities», *American Antiquity*, 43 (1978), p. 25-45.

² K. Polanyi, «Ports of trade in early societies», *Journal of Economic History*, 23 (1963), p. 30-45; K. Polanyi, I. Polanyi, «Trade, markets and money in the European Middle Ages», *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 11 (1978), p. 92-96.

³ C. Renfrew, «Trade as action at a distance: questions of integration and communication», in *Ancient Civilisation and Trade*, eds J.A. Sabloff, C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, Albuquerque, 1975, p. 3-59.

⁴ R. Hodges, *Dark Age Economics – On the Origins of Towns and Trade, c. 600-1000*, London, 1982; R. Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, London, 1989; R. Hodges, *Towns and Trade in the Age of Charlemagne*, London, 2000.

lands. 'Gateway communities' are viewed as trading settlements designed to exploit hinterlands, usually from a coastal location⁵. 'Ports-of-trade' are defined as liminal settlements founded on social and geographical boundaries by elite groups with a view to controlling trade and wider socially-embedded exchange, usually in objects classified as 'prestige goods'⁶. The term 'dream cities' was applied to the maritime and riverine central-places of the 7th to 9th centuries in northwest Europe, apparently located beyond former Roman centres as a conscious action, perhaps influenced by monastic ideas of isolation from earlier Roman central-places⁷. Although, such centres also existed in pagan northern Europe, where such an argument could not apply. Additionally, certain trading centres had an undoubted association with secular and religious authorities housed in former Roman townscapes immediately adjacent to them, for example at Rouen, London and York⁸.

The 'ports-of-trade' model espoused by Richard Hodges in the 1980s, with some later amendments stressing the importance of specialist commodity production and exchange, has been particularly influential during the last quarter century for the interpretation of the roles of the trading and artisan settlements around the Channel and North Sea from the mid-7th to mid-9th centuries. Hodges argues that *emporia* centres were viewed by Frankish, Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian Kings as instruments of consolidation for the enhancement of their ruling authority. In particular, these central-places were seen as entry-points for the controlled redistribution of luxury 'prestige' objects, which had social value due to their rarity. In addition, Hodges suggests a change in the organisation of production in the rural world and in the fabrication of specialist products at *emporia*⁹. When these ideas were put

⁵ K.G. Hirth, «Inter-regional trade», *ibid.*

⁶ C. Renfrew, «Trade as action at a distance», *ibid.*

⁷ R. Hodges, *Towns and Trade in the Age of Charlemagne*, London, 2000, p. 86-92.

⁸ J. Le Maho, «The Fate of the Ports of the Lower Seine Valley at the End of the Ninth Century», in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe – Trading and 'Productive' Sites, 650-850*, eds T. Pestell, K. Ulmschneider, Macclesfield, 2003, p. 234-247; J. Le Maho, «Le palais archiepiscopal de Rouen à l'époque Carolingienne (Fin du VIII^e – début du IX^e siècle): les données archéologiques», in *Les lieux de pouvoir au Moyen Âge en Normandie et sur ses marges*, ed. A.M. Flambard Hélicher, Caen, 2006, p. 201-225; G. Malcolm, D. Bowsher, R. Cowie, *Middle Saxon London, Excavations at the Royal Opera House, 1989-1999*, London, 2003, p. 143; R.L. Kemp, *Anglian Settlement at 46-54 Fishergate. The Archaeology of York: Anglian York 7/1*, York, 1996, p. 76-83.

⁹ R. Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, p. 50-56; R. Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, p. 84-87; J. Moreland, «The significance of production in eighth-century England», in *The Long Eighth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, eds I. L. Hansen, C. Wickham, Leiden, 2000, p. 72-76.

forward and generally accepted, however, comprehensive publication of much of the excavated remains from most *emporía* had not yet been achieved. Furthermore, detailed studies of settlement patterns and the exploitation of coastal zones adjacent to *emporía* had not yet been undertaken, nor had relations between *emporía* and hinterlands in the interior, away from the coasts, been studied (apart from the suggested split functions between Hamwic-Southampton and Winchester, by Martin Biddle)¹⁰.

In that context, the theoretical associations linked with the ‘port-of-trade’ idea were superimposed onto English Channel, North Sea and Baltic *emporía*. Namely, that the settlements were controlled sites of exchange in luxury prestige objects and centres for specialist production, which were organised under the support of royal families and regional landholding aristocracies. John Moreland also highlights the multiple spheres in which these settlements functioned, with their roles as foci for the redistribution of prestige goods via gift exchange probably existing alongside their role in specialist commodity production, exchange and taxation. The likelihood that *emporía* contributed to profound transformations in the organisation of rural production and provisioning mechanisms, or reflected changes that had already taken place during the later 7th and 8th centuries, was also stressed – not least in the provisioning of the dietary needs of *emporía*¹¹. Significantly, Moreland also questions the paramount role of kings and royal families as the sole controllers of the distribution of rare commodities derived from the long-distance exchange apparently channelled by *emporía*, while still emphasizing the role of elites in controlling surpluses and their transformation into imported goods via exchange¹². Subsequent studies of import distributions in rural hinterlands of *emporía* in the later 1990s and early 2000s, have further emphasized the likely channelling roles and links between predominantly elite rural centres and *emporía*, emphasizing connectivity between the ports and their hinterlands, and also the impact of the ports on the use of specific artefacts, such as coinage, in their surrounding regions¹³.

¹⁰ M. Biddle, «Towns», in *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge, 1976, p. 99-150, particularly p. 114-115.

¹¹ J. Moreland, «The significance of production», p. 80-81.

¹² J. Moreland, «The significance of production», p. 101-103.

¹³ See B. Palmer, «The Hinterlands of Three Southern English Emporia: some common themes», in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe. Trading and Productive Sites, 650-850*, eds T. Pestell, K. Ulmschneider, Macclesfield, 2003, p. 48-60; J. Naylor, *An Archaeology of Trade in Middle Saxon England*, (BAR British Series 376), Oxford, 2004, and J. Naylor, this volume.

The recent trend to stress the connectivity of ports with their landward rural hinterlands, especially via elite hierarchies and networks, has diminished the analysis of the port settlements themselves, their liminality or 'otherness' and the study of the archaeological signatures provided by their populations as compared to (the studies of) most contemporary rural communities. In much of northern European scholarship, the emphasis on control of surpluses and exchange as a preserve of landed elites has also resulted in the presentation of merchants operating from these ports as highly subordinate clients, acting on behalf of secular and ecclesiastical patrons. In England, the potential for merchant seafarers to trade and make a profit, in addition to working for their patrons, has rarely been considered in the last twenty years, nor has their social background as people from coastal, seafaring regions been properly explored. Only in recent publications in relation to Hamwic-Southampton and Lundenwic-London have the independence and profit-making abilities of merchants been considered, although to a limited extent¹⁴. The studies by Stéphane Lebecq and Peter Schmid for Frisia and the North Sea coast of Germany provide a rare and now dated look at the social backgrounds of the seafaring and farming communities from whom specialist merchant households are likely to have emerged. Both envisage potential for profit as a stimulus to the emergence of specialist seafaring traders from the 6th and 7th centuries onwards¹⁵. Similarly, the more recent work of Sindbæk also stresses that a profit motive drove long-distance traders in Scandinavia, which stimulated a hierarchy of trading places as nodal points, not divorced from political support but alongside it¹⁶. However, the origin of long-distance traders, how such specialists developed and the social make-up of the nodal points themselves were not discussed.

Fortunately, during the 1990s and 2000s, the amount of archaeological evidence relating to settlement and exploitation of coastal landscapes has

¹⁴ V. Birbeck, *The Origins of Mid Saxon Southampton. Excavations at the Friends Provident St Mary's stadium 1998-2000*, Salisbury, 2005, p. 192; G. Malcolm, D. Bowsher, R. Cowie, *Middle Saxon London*, p. 189-190.

¹⁵ See S. Lebecq, *Marchands et navigateurs frisons du haut Moyen Âge*, 2 volumes, Lille, 1983; S. Lebecq, «Routes of change: production and distribution in the West (5th- 8th century)», in *The Transformation of the Roman World, AD 400-900*, eds L. Webster, M. Brown, London, 1997, p. 67-78; and P. Schmid, «Mittelalterliche Besiedlung, Deich- und Landesausbau im niedersächsischen Marschgebiet», in *Siedlungen und Landesausbau zur Salierzeit I: in der Nördlichen Landschaften des Reiches*, ed. H.W. Böhme, Sigmarinen, 1991, p. 9-36.

¹⁶ S.M. Sindbæk, «Networks and nodal points: the emergence of towns in early Viking Age Scandinavia», *Antiquity*, 81 (2007), p. 128-129.

increased considerably, especially in eastern England and southern Scandinavia, through a combination of systematic surface collection surveys (in England), palaeo-environmental surveys, targeted excavations and discoveries using metal-detectors. In certain regions we can now set the exchange, production and tax-collecting roles of major ports into their true landscape, seascape and social context. This increase in archaeological and palaeo-environmental data has been accompanied by a parallel change in how we view coastal landscapes, their settlements, populations and networks through new conceptual tool-kits. Perspectives from three of these interpretative tool-kits are applied to different degrees in this paper. First, ideas of the existence of discrete 'maritime cultural landscapes', as defined by Christer Westerdahl, where combinations of living environment in seafront and coastal zones, seafaring and the regular use of particular ports and coastal havens produced a specifically maritime world-view and identity¹⁷. Second, borrowing from Lawson, ideas of specific spaces, both natural and constructed, as 'behavioural settings' that promote certain types of activity and, as a corollary, a specific type of society¹⁸. And third, aspects of Bruno Latour's ideas concerning the role of networks of communication and the different roles specific actors can play as they interact with different nodal points within the same or different networks¹⁹.

It is also instructive to consider briefly early medieval perceptions of the coastal and intermediate landscapes between land and sea in order to place *emporium* and wider societies intimately linked to water transport in their appropriate setting. The contemporary written and pictorial sources associated with the detailed regional case studies and the centuries addressed in this paper present only a glimpse of the mentalities of particular sections of the societies that created them. Most of these contemporary materials derive from three sources: Anglo-Saxon writers, although some stories are Anglo-Saxon renditions of Scandinavian voyages, iconography from certain parts of Scandinavia (notably Gotland) and backward extrapolation from 13th-century sagas. The Anglo-Saxon writers were clerics, usually writing from monasteries, and their works express a duality of view in relation to the sea,

¹⁷ C. Westerdahl, «The maritime cultural landscape», *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 21 (1992), p. 5-6, 11-12; C. Westerdahl, «From land to sea, from sea to land. Or transport zones, borders and human space», in *Down the River to the Sea. Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium on Boat and Ship Archaeology, Gdańsk 1997*, ed. J. Litwin, Gdańsk, 2000, p. 11-16.

¹⁸ B. Lawson, *The Language of Space*, Oxford, 2001, p. 23-25.

¹⁹ B. Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, Oxford, 2005.

coastal margins and mariners. First, works such as the 8th-century *Life of St. Guthlac* present the marshland Fens and east coast of England (and their occupants) as 'liminal', on the 'edge' of the inhabited world, as desolate wastelands, and the beginning of the realm of demons²⁰. This liminal view of the 'edge' of land and its role in religious polemic, where Saints battled demons, has clear echoes in the heroic poem *Beowulf*, which survived in the Cotton collection of 11th-century manuscripts, although it was probably written in the later 7th or 8th centuries. The perception of a desolate waste between land and sea presented in *Beowulf* could reflect a generally held elite view of the wet margins of the land from the 7th to 8th century, albeit expressed through the filter of a Christian cleric who committed the poem to writing²¹. Above all, however, those who described the coastal margins of eastern England as liminal wastes wrote from the perspective of landholding authorities who judged value on the basis of potential for arable cultivation²².

The second representation of the watery edge of England from clerics stresses the connectivity provided by the coast, and more particularly, coastal ports. Again, this duality is reflected in passages from *Beowulf*²³ and in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. The latter work provides famous descriptions of key port centres, which housed transitory or permanent merchant communities of foreigners, often Frisians, notably in London and York²⁴. These ports were gateways and meeting points with those from foreign lands, as well as peaceful venues for interaction between Christian and pagan worlds – Frisia was largely pagan in Bede's day, despite the activities of the Anglo-Saxon missionary, Willibrord, from the 690s²⁵. Indeed, the extent of maritime connectivity between eastern England and Frisia probably encouraged the Anglo-Saxon missions, although with Frankish assent. From the end of the 8th century, however, we also see the presentation of the seaways by churchmen, such as Alcuin, as conveyors of death and de-

²⁰ B. Colgrave (trans.), *Felix, Life of Guthlac*, Cambridge, 1956, Felix 87. See also P. Coates, *Nature – Western Attitudes Since Ancient Times*, Cambridge, 1998, p. 58.

²¹ S. Heaney, *Beowulf. A New Translation*, London, 1999, x-xi.

²² C. Loveluck, D. Tys, «Coastal societies, exchange and identity along the Channel and southern North Sea shores of Europe, AD 600-1000», *Journal of Maritime Archaeology*, 1 (2006), p. 162.

²³ S. Heaney, *Beowulf*, p. 8-11, lines 161-300.

²⁴ B. Colgrave, R.A.B. Mynors (trans.), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Oxford, 1969, HE II, 3.

²⁵ D. Parsons, «England and the Low Countries at the time of St Willibrord», in *Utrecht, Britain and the Continent: Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions XVIII, ed. E. de Bièvre, Leeds, 1996, p. 30-48.

struction, primarily as a result of raiding or organised invasion by pagan 'northmen' from Scandinavia²⁶. Despite the seaways' image of danger, however, Susan Rose has recently observed that a very significant proportion of surviving Anglo-Saxon poetry, predominantly written down in the 10th and 11th centuries, demonstrates an intimate link between the sea, seaborne travel and the Anglo-Saxon mentality²⁷.

The connectivity and freedom of movement provided by the seaways is stressed equally, if not more so, in Scandinavian sources. The poem based on the travels of Ottar/Ohtere, written down at the court of Alfred the Great of Wessex, provides a key illustration of the range of maritime travel and the ports of call for this Norwegian chieftain-come-merchant, which stretched from the Arctic regions of northern Norway, to the trading centres of *Skiringsaal* (probably Kaupang, Vestfold, Norway) and the Danish town of Hedeby (Haithabu, now in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany), to the North Sea and Channel coasts of England²⁸. This connection with the sea and seafaring and its impact on the mental template of everyday life in the Scandinavian world has also been abundantly illustrated by Judith Jesch in her analysis of Late Viking Age iconography and later skaldic poetry²⁹. The role of the ship as a symbol of power and the use of ships, boats and ship-shaped collections of standing stones around graves as symbolic vehicles of transport to the 'otherworld' were critical elements of Scandinavian 'world-view' and burial practice during the period covered by this paper³⁰. The view of travel between this life and the next on a 'stellar seaway' was not just a belief maintained in a pagan context, seeing as many of the people buried around the 11th century wooden stave church at Sebbesund, on the eastern Limfjord in north Jutland, Denmark (see fig. 8) were also buried in small boats³¹.

²⁶ S. Allott (trans.), *Alcuin of York c. AD 732-804: His Life and Letters*, York, 1974, Alcuin Ep. No. 20.

²⁷ S. Rose, *The Medieval Sea*, London and New York, 2007, p. 1-3.

²⁸ J. Batley, A. Englert (eds), *Ohtere's voyages: a late 9th-century account of voyages along the coasts of Norway and Denmark and its cultural context*, Maritime culture of the North 1, Roskilde, 2007.

²⁹ J. Jesch, *Ships and Men in the Late Viking Age: The Vocabulary of Runic Inscriptions and Skaldic Verses*, Woodbridge, 2001.

³⁰ O. Crumlin-Pedersen, B. Munch Thye (eds), *The Ship as Symbol in Prehistoric and Medieval Scandinavia*, Copenhagen, 1995; also see K. Højlund Nielsen, «Rituals to free the spirit – or what the cremation pyre told», in *Mortuary Practices and Social Identities in the Middle Ages*, eds D. Sayer, H. Williams, Exeter, 2009, p. 94-103.

³¹ P. Birkedahl, E. Johansen, «The Sebbesund Boat Graves», in *The Ship as Symbol in Prehistoric and Medieval Scandinavia*, eds O. Crumlin Pedersen, B. Munch Thye, Copenhagen, 1995, p. 160-164.

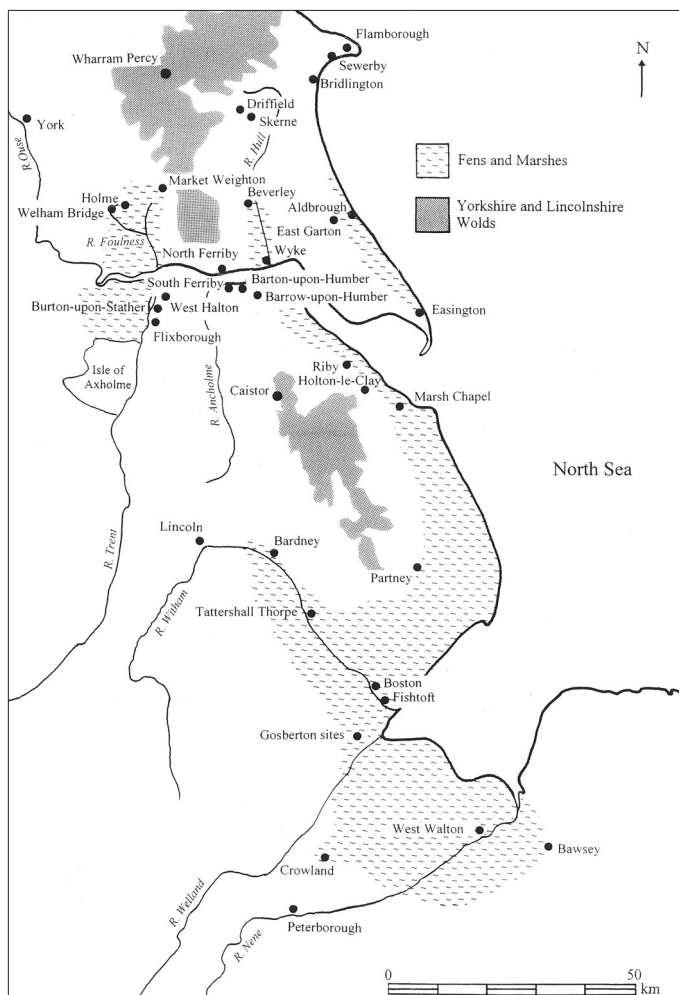
Liminality and connectivity on the part of coastal dwellers and seafarers, glimpsed in textual sources, is abundantly reflected in the growing archaeological signatures of coastal societies in the two regions chosen for detailed comparison below, in the period between the 7th and the late 11th centuries. The balance between their liminal and linking roles changed through time in association with the transformation of the roles of ports/towns and new socio-political circumstances.

Life on the edge: social dynamics of coastal regions around the North Sea and western Baltic, AD 600-1100

Eastern England from the Humber Estuary to the Lincolnshire Fens

By the mid-7th century, the Humber estuary gave access to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Northumbria via the River Ouse to the north and Mercia, via the River Trent to the south. An expanse of salt-marshes and silt-fen (the Lincolnshire Sea Marshes) extended southward down the coast to the larger expanse of marshes, comprising the Lincolnshire and East Anglian Fens (fig. 2). These marshes were interspersed with sand islands and waterways, in addition to river deltas in certain locations, for example, that of the River Witham in southern Lincolnshire. This coastal tract of marshes formed the eastern border zone of the Mercian Kingdom, although direct control of the marshes was probably difficult to maintain beyond major estate centres on the landward edge of the marshland territories. To the south, the Lincolnshire Fens merged with the northern border zone of the Kingdom of the East Angles.

The settlement pattern around the Humber estuary, between the mid-7th and 9th century, appears to have comprised landing places and hamlets in the vicinity of the coast or marshland edges, with major estate centres both in their immediate hinterland and further inland along major rivers. For example, the likely estate centre at Flixborough, north Lincolnshire, overlooked the delta zone of the River Trent; the possible estate centre at Holton-le-Clay, northeast Lincolnshire, overlooked a probable tidal creek and the Lincolnshire Sea marshes; and the estate centre at Driffield, East Yorkshire, was sited at the headwaters of the River Hull. Only the Northumbrian royal estate at Driffield, however, has a textual reference denoting its tenorial character. The status of the latter north Lincolnshire settlements rests on the archaeological record of their material wealth and consumption practices alone. Within the marshland landscape along the east coast from the Humber to the Fens, the results of the *Fenland Survey* and subsequent excavations indicate a series of farmsteads or small hamlets sited on sand islands (also known as roddons) within less well-drained



2. Location of sites in the Humber estuary –
Lincolnshire Fens study region (David Taylor).

marshlands, sometimes located in proximity to tidal creek waterways. Other farmsteads and hamlets seem to have lined the landward edge of the marshland. Furthermore, the excavated evidence does not necessarily suggest that the farmsteads and hamlets on the sand islands were only occupied seasonally. The landscape of small hamlets and farmsteads, dating from the 7th to 10th centuries (and later) excavated at Gosberton in the Lincolnshire Fens, and the settlement on a sand spur adjacent to a tidal channel at Fishtoft, near Boston, Lincolnshire, provide the best examples of such permanently occupied settlements to date (fig. 2). All comprise a small num-

ber of rectangular buildings, with varieties of post-hole and post-in-trench foundations and enclosures³².

The relationship between the inhabitants of the Lincolnshire Sea marshes and the Fens and estate centres is a matter of speculation for the period between the 7th and 10th centuries. Many marshland inhabitants may have been nominally subordinate to estate centres, perhaps paying renders in the form of livestock. Others, however, may have been small kindred groups of free proprietors independent of large estates, depending on the vagaries of the way territories and social groups became defined by charters. In the past, occupation of the Fenland landscape has been viewed as a consequence of an impetus to colonization within estate structures, predominantly from the mid-7th century and later, and monastic institutions have often been suggested as promoters of this activity. However, evidence is growing of settlement as early as the 5th and 6th centuries, although with an expansion in the number of settlements from the later 7th and 8th centuries. This expansion may be an archaeological illusion, however, since the increase in settlement recognition is related to an increased number of sites using widely exchanged imported and local well-fired pottery, such as slow wheel-turned 'Ipswich ware' and Maxey-type wares respectively. The smaller numbers of earlier settlements could reflect the less 'well-fired' nature of certain 5th- to 7th-century pottery forms or an inability to date certain hand-made pottery with any precision within the Anglo-Saxon period³³.

If many coast and marshland dwellers were integrated within estate structures, it would appear that such integration did not constrain their maritime contacts or their ability to gain materially after payment of estate renders. Their liminality may have made their activities hard to police, even if such policing was desired, due to the difficulties of communication

³² A. Crowson, T. Lane, K. Penn, D. Trimble, *Anglo-Saxon Settlement on the Siltland of Eastern England*, Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Reports Series, No. 7, Sleaford, 2005; for Fishtoft – E. Morris, pers comm., see P. Cope-Faulkner, *Clampgate Road, Fishtoft. Archaeology of a Middle Saxon Island Settlement in the Lincolnshire Fens*, Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Reports Series, No. 10, Sleaford, forthcoming.

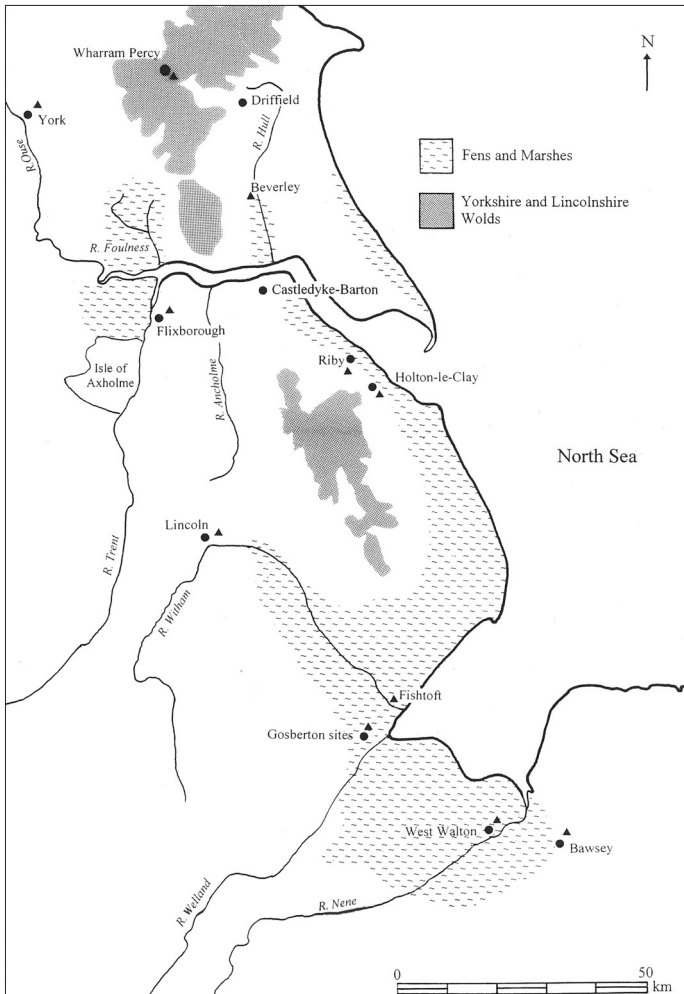
³³ See P. Blinkhorn, contributions in A. Crowson *et al.*, *Anglo-Saxon Settlement on the Siltland of Eastern England*, Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Reports Series, No. 7, Sleaford, 2005; and A. Vince, J. Young, «The Anglo-Saxon pottery from Flixborough within the context of the East Midlands of England», in *Life and Economy at Early Medieval Flixborough, c. AD 600-1000. The Artefact Evidence, Excavations at Flixborough Volume 2*, eds D. H. Evans, C. Loveluck, Oxford, 2009, p. 392-401.

within the world of sand islands and tidal creeks. The Domesday survey sheds some light on the social make-up of the inhabitants of the Humber coastal region and the Fens in the mid-11th century, showing that there were high concentrations of 'sokemen'³⁴ in these regions, who lost significant elements of their freedom after the Norman Conquest, but nevertheless retained an imprint on aspects of settlement topography³⁵. Such a situation also existed in the coastal regions of East Anglia, with its significant numbers of freemen. The presence of large numbers of sokemen in these coastal regions could reflect the legacy of large numbers of independent freemen occupying the transitory world between land and sea in earlier centuries, or it could reflect the fact that the coastal dwellers had won their freedom and broken away from earlier estate structures by the later 9th and 10th centuries, especially in eastern England, where changes in land ownership and dislocation of old estates would have been promoted by Scandinavian overlordship between the mid-9th and mid-10th century. There is little firm evidence, however, to suggest that many of these free kindreds were of Scandinavian origin, as has often been suggested.

The key feature of all elements of the settlement hierarchy of the seafront and coastal marshland zones between the Humber estuary and the Lincolnshire Fens, from the 7th to late 9th centuries, was access to and use of imports from the regions of Continental Europe facing the North Sea and Channel, as well as access to particular types of objects manufactured at certain major trading *emporium* (see figs. 3 to 5). There are certainly differences in quantities of imports consumed and sometimes differences in the types of imported goods found between farmsteads, small hamlets and larger settlements. Nevertheless, differentiation of the status of sites and the social spectrum of their inhabitants on the basis of access to imported goods is a complex task, as certain people on all settlements had access to these goods in this coastal region. Normative assumptions of value often applied to im-

³⁴ Freemen owning their own lands, in the 10th and 11th centuries, who were obliged to commend themselves to a 'lord', but who retained the right to change lords when they chose – see A. Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, Woodbridge, 1995, p. 74-76.

³⁵ David Stocker and Paul Everson have identified a series of very high concentrations of sokemen in certain villages in north Lincolnshire (some in proximity to the coast), which seems to have resulted in communal initiatives divorced from the secular and ecclesiastical aristocracy (at least before the Norman Conquest), such as the laying out of communal village "Greens – central open spaces – often with a village church built upon parts of them". See D. Stocker, P. Everson, *Summoning Saint Michael*, Oxford, 2006, p.74-76.



3. Map of sites, between the Humber estuary and the Fens, with imported pottery and lava querns from Continental Europe, circa AD 600–850. Black dot indicates pottery; black triangle indicates lava quern (David Taylor).

ported goods in the past have to be balanced with the specific dynamics of coastal situation, particularly ease of waterborne access and specialist activities in coastal settings. For example, the occupants of the hamlets at ‘Chopdike Drove’ and ‘Mornington House’, around the modern settlement at Gosberton (fig. 2) in the Lincolnshire Fens, possessed small quantities of imported black- or grey-burnished pottery wares from northern France or the Low Countries, as well as lava quern stones from the Niedermendig area of the middle Rhineland near Cologne. Both hamlets also had access

to larger quantities of Ipswich ware made at the *emporium* of Ipswich, Suffolk, in the kingdom of the East Angles³⁶. And the pattern is repeated at the hamlet of Ingleborough, Norfolk, which is also located on a sand island to the north of West Walton (fig. 2), where Ipswich ware, a sherd of northern French black/grey-burnished ware and one sherd of Tating ware from the Rhineland were recovered³⁷.

All the hamlets located on sand islands above seem to have had direct access to maritime communication routes via tidal creeks. Indeed, the site at Fishtoft was situated immediately adjacent to a feature interpreted as a tidal channel and Ingleborough was situated in very close proximity to the estuary and salt-marshes of the River Nene³⁸. None of the settlements, however, had large metalwork assemblages and coinage is largely absent, although early to mid-8th-century sceatta coins minted in Frisia (Series E) and at Ribe in Denmark (Series X) have been found at West Walton (fig. 5). All the hamlets above appear to have been permanently occupied, specializing in mixed farming economies suited to salt-marsh environments. A bias towards the raising of cattle, sheep and horses is reflected by the preponderance of young and sub-adult animals at the Gosberton sites, although barley – a salt-tolerant cereal – was also grown. Cultivation of barley also occurred at Ingleborough. A recurrent pattern of iron smithing was also found on the Gosberton sites, probably exploiting a bog-iron ore source; and possible hints of salt production were also identified. At Fishtoft, definitive evidence of salt production dating from the 8th and 9th centuries was recovered in the form of large quantities of securely stratified briquetage³⁹.

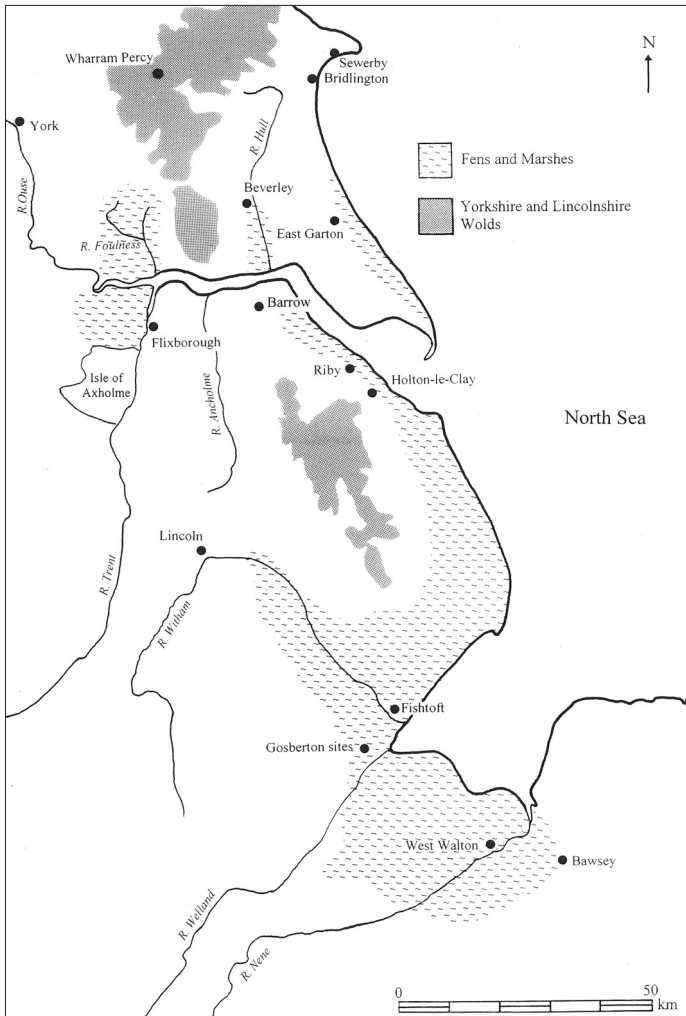
Hence all the hamlets seem to have been involved in specialist activities for exchange, perhaps in order to pay estate renders in some cases. At the same time, access to imported querns and pottery also suggests direct exchange with mariners. The generally limited discard of coinage and metalwork suggests, however, that exchange with mariners was conducted by direct barter, whether for re-provisioning or for commodities. The absence of metalwork on the fenland sites has been remarked upon by Katharina Ulmschneider in her analysis of metalwork scatters (so-called ‘productive sites’) in Lincolnshire. Sites yielding significant quantities of dress acces-

³⁶ P. Blinkhorn and V. Fryer contributions in A. Crowson *et al.*, *Anglo-Saxon Settlement*, p. 84-89, 114-119.

³⁷ P. Blinkhorn, in A. Crowson *et al.*, *Anglo-Saxon Settlement*, p. 178-186.

³⁸ J. Rackham pers comm.; P. Cope-Faulkner forthcoming; A. Crowson *et al.*, *Anglo-Saxon Settlement*, p. 171-172.

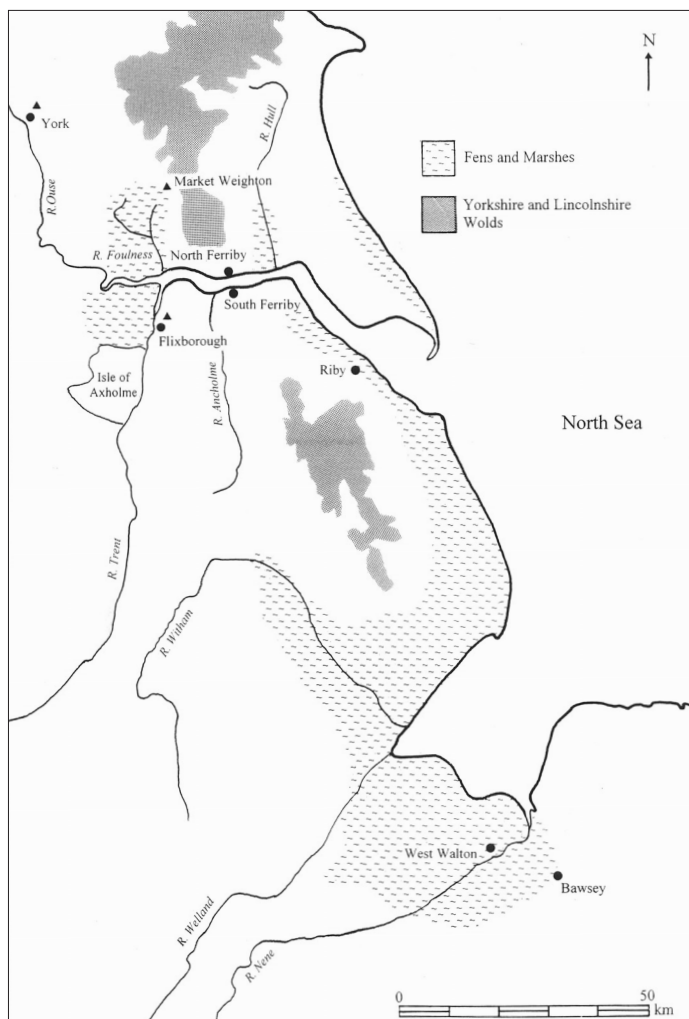
³⁹ E. Morris pers comm.; P. Cope-Faulkner forthcoming.



4. Map of sites with Ipswich ware, between the Humber estuary and the Fens (David Taylor).

sories and coinage were located on the landward side of the Fen-edge and these sites did not tend to possess Ipswich ware and Continental pottery. Hence the sites with imported pottery represent a particularly coastal distribution⁴⁰. Direct exchange transactions with mariners might have been

⁴⁰ K. Ulmschneider, «Settlement, Economy and the 'Productive' Site: Middle Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire, A.D. 650-780», *Medieval Archaeology*, 44 (2000), p. 53-79, especially p. 70.



5. Map of sites with imported Continental coinage, between the Humber estuary and the Fens, minted circa AD 680-864. Black dot indicates a sceat coin of the primary or early secondary series; black triangle indicates Frankish denarial coinage, c. AD 750 to 864 (David Taylor).

beyond all control of possible tenurial masters and was probably related to locational opportunity and a tendency towards specialist production and exchange⁴¹.

⁴¹ C. Loveluck, D. Tys, «Coastal societies, exchange and identity», p. 152-153.

The exchange activities of small coastal communities operated alongside those of larger settlements. From the Humber estuary to the Lincolnshire Fens, a series of larger settlements have been sampled by survey and excavation, some of which probably represent estate centres, although different sizes of settlement and consumption patterns also mark further differentiation between them. At the top of the social hierarchy were major secular estate centres and monasteries, supported by networks of subordinate estates and settlements. Some nucleated settlements may have housed tenants of major landholders, and others could conceivably have represented free kindred groups. Identifying 'high-status' and 'low-status' nucleated settlements, however, is an extremely complex matter, since some subordinate estate centres (for example certain monastic estate centres) were rented out to the highest echelons of the secular aristocracy (*ealdorman*)⁴², and as such, those settlements would have an archaeological signature of secular aristocratic lifestyles while being monastic in a tenurial sense. Furthermore, some subordinate estate centres may not have been points of consumption, but instead, points for the fabrication of goods or the collection of agricultural produce for redistribution, as suggested for Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire, on the River Nene, upriver from its Fenland estuary⁴³. Hence, given that tenurial character may not be directly reflected on settlement sites, analysis is best conducted on the basis of lifestyles exhibited. Another complicating factor is the difference in scales of excavations on different sites, and the difficulty of comparing data from different types of archaeological deposits. Nevertheless, some important observations can be made.

Excavations at the settlement at Flixborough, located on a sand spur eight kilometres south of the delta of the River Trent, which flows into the Humber estuary (fig. 2), provide an unprecedented picture of an important rural central-place on the coast of eastern England, illuminating changing lifestyles between the 7th and 11th centuries (fig. 6, Colour Plates). A history of transformation is reflected from secular aristocratic conspicuous consump-

⁴² See S. Foot, «The historical setting of the seventh-to tenth-century settlement within northern Lindsey», in *Rural Settlement, Lifestyles and Social Change in the Later First Millennium AD. Anglo-Saxon Flixborough in its wider context*, ed. C. Loveluck, Oxford, 2007, p. 133; and C. Loveluck, «Changing Lifestyles, Interpretation of Settlement Character and Wider Perspectives», in *Rural Settlement, Lifestyles and Social Change in the Later First Millennium AD. Anglo-Saxon Flixborough in its wider context*, ed. C. Loveluck, 2007, p. 154.

⁴³ A. Hardy, B.M. Charles, R.J. Williams, *Chapter 5 – Discussion*, in *Death & Taxes. The archaeology of a Middle Saxon estate centre at Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire*, eds A. Hardy, B.M. Charles, R.J. Williams, Oxford, 2007, p. 203-204.

tion to specialist production on a possible monastic estate centre or small monastery. A further transformation then occurred in lifestyles on the settlement during the 10th century, bringing new patterns of secular conspicuous consumption within the context of an Anglo-Scandinavian estate centre, documented as the *caput* settlement of a 'manor' by 1066 (*Temporis Regis Edwardi* of the Domesday survey)⁴⁴. Within the excavated area approximately forty buildings and huge surface refuse deposits were superimposed in six major structural periods. The role of exchange and the consumption and export of goods changed radically within this dynamic settlement history.

Between the later 7th and early 9th centuries, a lifestyle of conspicuous consumption was supported by imported feasting kits, primarily represented by fragments of sixty-five glass vessels (fig. 7, Colour Plates). Other imports included approximately fifteen pottery vessels from the Continent, derived ultimately from the Walberberg region of the middle Rhine, northern France and Belgium; lava querns from the Rhineland; and silver sceatta and penny coinage from Frisia, France, and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria. Most notable, however, is the very high proportion of Frisian sceattas in the first decades of the 8th century, although similarly notable were a small number of 8th-century sceattas and a later denier of Pippin III derived from Quentovic in northern France. This pattern of connectivity with the Continental Channel and southern North Sea coasts and the use of imported feasting utensils was accompanied by consumption of animal resources on a vast scale, especially cattle (which were of a particularly large stature, and may represent an improved or imported breed), but also sheep and pigs. None of the domesticated animals were young when killed. In addition to their use for traction in arable cultivation (plough shares have been recovered from the site), sub-adult and adult cattle may also have been rendered alongside other animals by subordinate landholdings as taxation-in-kind. This period was also marked by significant consumption of wild animal resources, especially wildfowl. Documented feast-species are also strongly represented, such as cranes and dolphins, known to have been a favoured prey of the secular Anglo-Saxon aristocracy⁴⁵. Exploitation of wild resources was far beyond that encountered at smaller settlements. The emphasis on conspicuous consumption and exploitation of the landscape, coastal seascape and objects derived through exchange with mariners probably reflects the presence of a secular aristocratic element at Flixborough between the later 7th and early 9th century.

⁴⁴ See C. Loveluck, *Rural Settlement, Lifestyles and Social Change*.

⁴⁵ C. Loveluck, *Rural Settlement, Lifestyles and Social Change*, p. 147-151.

During the 9th century, the focus of the inhabitants at Flixborough changed radically from conspicuous consumption to specialist production. Whereas small-scale non-ferrous metal casting, iron smithing and textile manufacture had occurred between the later 7th and early 9th centuries, the scale of production increased substantially during the 9th century, especially in relation to the manufacture of fine quality textiles and metalworking⁴⁶. New commodities such as lead were also worked at Flixborough in this period. Lead is known to have been moved within ecclesiastical transport networks, from the mines in the Peak District of Derbyshire, down the River Trent, out of the Humber Estuary and down the east coast of England to Canterbury in the mid-9th century⁴⁷. Although, the degree to which river boatmen and mariners were subordinates within such networks is a matter for debate, and on the one occasion in which the lead producers are textually visible prior to the 11th century, in 835, quantities of lead were mined and produced for the monastery of Wirksworth as rent for lands held from them by a secular aristocrat – *ealdorman* Humberht. He was also responsible for organising the transport of the lead from his lands to Canterbury. Hence, the degree of direct ecclesiastical involvement was minimal⁴⁸. The discard of fine iron tools for metalworking, woodworking and leatherworking is another feature of this period, an exhibition of a lack of need for recycling on this settlement. It is also during this period that a literate element became evident in the population at Flixborough, represented by styli, probably for estate management but possibly also for limited tuition. Window glass also appeared at Flixborough in the 9th century, alongside an inscribed lead plaque, dated on the basis of palaeography to the end of the 8th or early 9th century, which could have come from a reliquary. The latter could reflect

⁴⁶ P. Walton Rogers, «The importance and organisation of textile production», in *Rural Settlement, Lifestyles and Social Change*, ed. C. Loveluck, 2007, p. 106-111; P. Walton Rogers *et al.*, «Textile Production», in *Life and Economy at Early Medieval Flixborough, c. AD 600-1000. The Artefact Evidence. Excavations at Flixborough Volume 2*, eds D.H. Evans, C. Loveluck, Oxford, 2009, p. 281-316; C. Loveluck, *Rural Settlement, Lifestyles and Social Change*, p. 102-103.

⁴⁷ C.E. Hart, *The Early Charters of northern England and the north Midlands*, Leicester, 1975, p. 102; C. Loveluck, «A high-status Anglo-Saxon settlement at Flixborough, Lincolnshire», *Antiquity*, 72 (1998), No. 275, p. 146-161, notably p. 157; C. Loveluck, *Rural Settlement, Lifestyles and Social Change*, p. 117.

⁴⁸ C.E. Hart, *The Early Charters of northern England*, p. 102; C. Loveluck, «Acculturation, Migration and Exchange: the formation of an Anglo-Saxon society in the English Peak District, AD 400-700», in *Europe between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Recent archaeological and historical research in western and southern Europe*, BAR (Int. Ser. 617), eds J. Bintliff, H. Hamerow, Oxford, 1995, p. 84-98, notably p. 96-98.

transformation of the settlement during the early 9th century to a monastic estate centre directly managed for the benefit of a parent institution.

The absence of conspicuous consumption in favour of conspicuous production is reflected further in transformations in the consumption of meat resources. Cattle fell from approximately 40% of domesticated animals consumed to 10%⁴⁹; consumption of pigs also decreased. Whereas, consumption of sheep rose to approximately 50% of the animals consumed – again all animals were mature when eaten. The large rise in the proportion of sheep consumption could reflect increased breeding to provision for the wool needs of larger scale fine-quality textile production. The exploitation of wild resources also collapsed in comparison to the later 7th and 8th centuries, although exploitation of fish resources did not change significantly. All these trends suggest the absence of secular elite lifestyles – namely feasting and hunting.

Increased levels of commodity production, perhaps for export to a parent monastery or to the trading centre reflected at Fishergate, in York, was accompanied by a huge decline in evidence for continued integration with maritime networks to the Continent, which might suggest a decline in maritime-orientation if it were not for the large quantities (over 260 sherds) of Ipswich ware pottery discarded at Flixborough alongside silver pennies struck by the West Saxon kings and the Archbishop of Canterbury at mints in Kent. Both the Ipswich ware and the coins reflect the continuity of maritime networks from the Humber Estuary southeast England during the 9th century, but the particular networks and the identity of the mariners with whom exchange was undertaken may have changed to a certain extent.

If the trends from later 7th to late 9th century Flixborough are compared to other nucleated settlements excavated around the Humber Estuary and in the Lincolnshire coastal marshes, there are immediate similarities with settlements documented or postulated as estate centres, for example at Holton-le-Clay and in the Driffild area (fig. 2). Like Flixborough, the settlement at Holton-le-Clay was also located on a sand promontory and small-scale excavations have yielded a few buildings and quantities of imported Continental pottery and Ipswich ware from the 7th to 9th centuries. Stone sculpture from the 10th and 11th centuries is also incorporated into the church, and it was documented as a manorial centre in the Domesday survey. The scale of the excavations at Holton-le-Clay, however, do not allow

⁴⁹ On the basis of minimum number of individuals calculations. See K. Dobney, D. Jaques, J. Barrett, C. Johnstone, *Farmers, Monks and Aristocrats. The Environmental Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon Flixborough. Excavations at Flixborough Volume 3*, Oxford, 2007.

for comment on its control of land-based resources⁵⁰. Again, Continental pottery and early use of coinage was also a feature of the Driffield area during the 7th and early 8th centuries, as reflected in furnished graves. Despite the density of discoveries of Anglo-Saxon finds in the town of Driffield itself, the site of the documented Northumbrian royal estate centre has yet to be discovered⁵¹. Without large-scale excavation and the discovery of artefact- and bone-rich deposits, however, the discoveries of imports cannot be regarded as signs of exceptional wealth or status in their own right.

Indeed, smaller nucleated settlements comprising several enclosures, as discovered at Riby on the landward edge of the Lincolnshire Sea Marshes (fig. 2), have the same traits. In a small series of narrow excavations at Riby, a sherd of north French blackware pottery was discovered alongside some Ipswich ware and lava querns. Only the presence of a Frisian Series E sceatta, a fragment of an imported glass drinking vessel, some riding gear, weapons, some dress accessories and a large lead vessel distinguished the settlement from the slightly smaller marshland hamlets⁵². The occurrence of riding gear, some weapons and the large lead vessel at Riby, however, can be directly paralleled at Flixborough, even though the scale of excavation and the nature of excavated deposits did not indicate a level of control over agricultural resources equal to a site like Flixborough. Whether the settlement at Riby represents a secondary centre within an estate network, or a settlement of independent free proprietors is unknown. Its use of imported pottery and its limited use of coinage are akin to the marshland hamlets, but the presence of weapons and the ability to move round the landscape on horseback suggests, perhaps, 'free' rather than 'high' status.

Above all, the pattern of nearly universal access to Continental imports amongst the coastal social hierarchy between the Humber and the Fens, at least in terms of pottery and querns, may have resulted in different notions of value towards their possession compared to those of people further inland, who did not have direct contact with mariners. Indeed, within an environment of relatively abundant access to imported goods, their use may not have conveyed any significant social message in the zone of maritime con-

⁵⁰ J. Sills, «St Peter's Church, Holton-le-Clay, Lincolnshire», *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 17 (1982), p. 29-42; D. Stocker, P. Everson, *Summoning Saint Michael*, p. 190-193.

⁵¹ C. Loveluck, «The development of the Anglo-Saxon landscape, economy and society 'on Driffield', East Yorkshire», *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 9 (1996), p. 25-48.

⁵² K. Steedman, «Excavation of a Saxon Site at Riby Cross Roads, Lincolnshire», *Archaeological Journal*, 151 (1994), p. 212-306.

nectivity around the Humber and along the east coast. The archaeological signature of the coastal society between the Humber estuary and the Fens has a series of implications for the role of the trading centre linked to the royal and episcopal foci at York on the Rivers Ouse and Foss, upriver from the Humber. First, it would appear that the centre at York did not exhibit any significant control over the actions of seafaring traders around the Humber estuary, nor is there evidence of control of the traders' actions as they sailed up the east coast. The very widespread occurrence of imported goods in the coastal margins suggests that if there had been an intention to control access to imported goods on the part of Anglo-Saxon royal powers, using *emporia* as ports-of-trade, then they failed in that role. The distribution of imported goods amongst all social groups along the coast and their relative paucity (especially in terms of pottery) in both landward hinterlands and in the intervening area between York and the Humber zone, contradicts the idea that the coastal imports were funnelled back from *emporia*.

Certain distributions of imported goods also suggest the operation of different maritime connexions and trading activities along the coast between the Humber and the Fens in comparison to the trading and artisan centre at Fishergate in York. This is perhaps reflected most clearly in the distribution of Ipswich ware (fig. 4). The excavations at Fishergate and other deposits from later 7th- to late 9th-century York have yielded comparatively few sherds of Ipswich ware, perhaps as little as fifty sherds, and the ware is hardly represented in the intervening area between York and the Lincolnshire coast, except for a distinct concentration of the ware around the Humber estuary. The widespread occurrence of Ipswich ware only runs in a band approximately ten to fifteen kilometres in depth around the shores of Holderness and the Humber estuary, and then extends down the east coast. There is no apparent distribution linked to settlement type or status in this coast and hinterland zone. Single vessels have been found in both a certain and likely monastic context, at Beverley and Bridlington respectively, in East Yorkshire. Another sherd is represented at the settlement at East Garton in Holderness, East Yorkshire. At Flixborough, over 260 sherds were present; others were found at the fore-mentioned settlements at Holton-le-Clay and Riby, as well as on all the coastal hamlets southward to the Fens (fig. 4). A rank-related distribution may certainly be reflected in quantities of Ipswich ware and certain vessel types, but it is undeniable that a far greater spectrum of the population along the coast had access to Ipswich ware in comparison to the inhabitants of York and its immediate hinterland. This suggests the existence of different exchange networks operating via the coast and via the trading centre at York, even though the same seafaring merchants may have been involved in both networks.

The existence of different trading networks may also be reflected in the use of coinage. Around the Humber, coinage was deposited at landing places and larger settlements from the end of the 7th century, and the vast majority of the coinage dating from between 700 and the 730s was derived from Frisia and northern France (fig. 5). Although, significantly, the earliest silver coinage struck in Northumbria, by King Aldfrith (AD 685–705), was also concentrated around the Humber and East Yorkshire coast, with discoveries at Whitby and the Humber landing place at North Ferriby⁵³. Aldfrith also died at the royal estate of Driffield at the headwaters of the River Hull, which leads into the Humber, suggesting an interest in facilitating the trading activities of the Humber zone. Interestingly, silver coinage dating from between the late 7th century and the 730s is currently very rare in York, with only one Frisian issue being found at Fishergate prior to a predominance of Northumbria issues⁵⁴.

This difference between York and the coastal zone indicates, first, that the Humber estuary was the major contact and exchange zone prior to the foundation of a trading centre at York⁵⁵, and second, that the distinctiveness of the populations of the coast was maintained via direct maritime connections even after the Fishergate settlement existed. There is a greater quantity of Continental pottery at Fishergate, however, when compared to the coastal settlements, and this may reflect a greater concentration of foreign seafarers operating in York from the mid-8th century onwards. In this context, it is also interesting to note that the coastal concentration of Ipswich ware is archaeologically evident on the Humber from the early 9th century⁵⁶. This could reflect different mariners operating around the Humber, or differential choice on behalf of foreign seafarers in terms of what to trade – although this may be reading too much into pottery, which was normally a low-value commodity in its own right.

Until recently, the locations of where the direct transactions took place with coastal populations have proved elusive, and indeed, the possibilities are com-

⁵³ C. Loveluck, *Exchange and Society in Early Medieval England, 400–700 AD*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Durham, 1994, Vol 1, p. 158–159, and plate 5.1; C. Loveluck, «The development of the Anglo-Saxon landscape», p. 43–45.

⁵⁴ R.L. Kemp, *Anglian Settlement*, p. 66; and see Naylor in this volume.

⁵⁵ C. Loveluck, «The development of the Anglo-Saxon landscape», p.43–45.

⁵⁶ At Flixborough and Lurk Lane, Beverley. See C. Loveluck, D. Atkinson, *The Early Medieval Settlement Remains from Flixborough, Lincolnshire. The Occupation Sequence. Excavations at Flixborough Volume I*, Oxford, 2007, p. 68–81; and P. Armstrong, D.H. Evans, «The Excavation report», in *Excavations at Lurk Lane Beverley, 1979–82*, eds P. Armstrong, D. Tomlinson, D.H. Evans, Sheffield, 1991, p. 7–60, particularly p. 10–14.

plex. Concentrations of late 7th- to mid-8th-century sceattas and pottery at North Ferriby on the north shore of the Humber and similar concentrations at Halton Skitter and South Ferriby on the south bank suggest beach trading sites in these locations, but a series of Fen-edge and river landing places are also becoming apparent. For example, a 7th-to early 8th-century log-boat and wooden trackway formed part of the revetment from a landing place excavated at Welham Bridge, East Yorkshire on the landward edge of Fenland waterways that would have led into the Humber⁵⁷. A second wooden revetment for a jetty landing place has also been excavated at Skerne, on the River Hull, close to Drifffield, which may have been linked to the estate centre there⁵⁸. The actual locations of exchanges with mariners were probably the beach sites, and coastal and riverine boats such as the Welham Bridge log-boat could have been the principal method of dispersion of goods around the coastal zones. In some instances, however, seafaring merchants may have moored directly at riverine landing places close to deltas. Flixborough certainly had watermills below the settlement on the River Trent in 1066, and these are likely to have been combined with jetties, akin to Skerne. Such structures are certainly documented from the 13th and 14th centuries at Flixborough. It is less likely, however, that seagoing ships sailed up the Hull as far as Skerne, although it is a possibility given that seagoing ships were certainly based in Beverley, during the 12th century. The locations of contact between the inhabitants of small marshland hamlets and mariners are less easy to predict, but the situation of the hamlets on tidal channels near river estuaries suggests that ships moored for the night or to re-provision, were visible from some distance, and contactable via riverine and coastal boats.

From the late 9th century, however, there was a very significant change in the archaeological reflections of ‘otherness’ in the maritime cultural landscape from the Humber to the Fens. Imported goods from both Continental Europe and southern England are all but absent amongst the entire coastal settlement hierarchy. By the 10th century, the settlement known in the published literature as Flixborough was probably known as Conesby – ‘King’s settlement’ in Old Danish. It lay adjacent to the deserted medieval settlement of the same name in the parish of Flixborough. In contrast to the 9th century, when specialist production, possibly under monastic management,

⁵⁷ S.J. Allen, G. Dean, «Wooden Artefacts (including Log boat and Trackway)», in *A 614 Welham Bridge to Spaldington. An Assessment Report on the Archaeological Watching Brief and Excavation*, ed. G. Dean, York, 2005, p. 91-93.

⁵⁸ C. Loveluck, «The development of the Anglo-Saxon landscape», p. 44-45; J. Dent, W. Fletcher, C. Loveluck, «The Early Medieval Site at Skerne», in *Wetland Heritage of the Hull Valley*, eds R. Van De Noort, S. Ellis, Kingston-upon-Hull, 2000, p. 217-242.

was the principal feature of the economy, the 10th-century lifestyle was again that of conspicuous consumption, but based on the use of the resources of the estate and its landscape alone. The buildings of this era were the largest in the settlement's history and all the 'feast species', including cranes and dolphins, reappeared alongside a broader diversity of wild species than at any time in the occupation sequence. This secular aristocratic consumption was not supported by imported luxuries. Indeed, the evidence for the importance of maritime links is much diminished. Some exchange around the Humber estuary and its feeder rivers is indicated in the form of small quantities of 10th- and 11th-century pottery and the presence of the black rat, which has been found elsewhere only at York during this era, and was possibly a passenger carried on Scandinavian ships and trade routes. No coinage reached Flixborough between the 880s and the 970s, although lead weights and a silver ingot indicate that contemporary Scandinavian-style bullion exchange was used for transactions.

The definitive economic change from the 10th century, therefore, was the apparent disappearance of long-distance maritime links in the coastal zone, even for major centres like Flixborough-Conesby. There also appears to have been a similar reduction in specialist artisan activity on major centres. The scale of production at Flixborough diminished to small-scale textile production, boat maintenance and ironworking (both smelting and smithing) for the immediate needs of the settlement – a huge contrast with the 9th century. The end of the 9th and early 10th century, however, was the key era when Scandinavian leaders and their followers transformed former Anglo-Saxon central-places like York and Lincoln into dynamic towns. These towns became the principal locations for patronage of artisan activity, which produced for surrounding regions in a way that had not been the case with most of the earlier *emporium* (with the exception of Ipswich). This would account for the loss of such artisans at rural settlements like Flixborough. At the same time, Scandinavian rulers and their retinues established themselves primarily in major towns – especially York, which resulted in political leaders, patrons, artisans and merchants residing in the same place. Taking York as an example, we can show that the concentration of political patronage and ecclesiastical patronage (from Viking leaders and the Archbishops of York under Scandinavian, and then West Saxon rule) resulted in very wealthy artisan and merchant populations. The remains from the Coppergate excavations illustrate this point, with its concentration of ironworkers, gold and silver workers, textile workers and other craftsmen. Also within these artisan tenements, riding gear and weapons (spears, arrowheads and sword furniture) were found amongst silk and Arabic coins, denoting integration within Scandinavian trade routes to the Orient.

Elite patrons and artisans centred at an urban port like York attracted long-distance traders to these centres, in addition to creating the relationship between town and 'country' that existed during the Central Middle Ages, in that rural dwellers were increasingly obliged to travel to towns to buy certain goods. At Flixborough, these links with the new Anglo-Scandinavian centres are primarily reflected in small quantities of pottery made at Lincoln and Torksey. Other sites on the north bank of the Humber, such as Beverley, received pottery and coinage struck at York. The presence of 10th- and 11th-century pottery wares made in Lincoln also occurs on nearly all the other coastal settlements in Lincolnshire from the Humber to the Fens, sometimes appearing alongside other mass-produced wares from further south, such as Thetford ware from the Anglo-Scandinavian town in the Fens. As in the earlier periods, the absence of coinage is a feature on the marshland hamlets. Critically, however, these patterns of pottery and coinage supply no longer had any coastal distinctiveness. They were the patterns of supply common across Lincolnshire. No further direct contacts with southern English or foreign mariners are archaeologically detectable. The specialist activities of the inhabitants of the coastal margins certainly continued: for example, salt production at Marsh Chapel (fig. 2) in the Lincolnshire sea marshes, as well as the focus on animal husbandry⁵⁹. The trade in these products, however, must be assumed to have been regional. In the case of the Humber, coastal exchange had become focussed on key regional central-place towns, principally York, where mariners, merchants, artisans and 'buyers' combined. Hence, the scale of the networks and world-view of the coastal population had been transformed from the international to regional level, integrated with new regional central-places. Additionally, their liminality was also diminished during the course of the 10th and 11th centuries, by dike building and land drainage.

Northeast Jutland and the Kattegat Strait

Like the region from the Humber estuary to the Fens, a series of settlements dating from the mid- to late first millennium have been discovered in recent years along the coast of northeast Jutland and the Kattegat Strait – the bottleneck of water linking the North and Baltic Seas. Most of the

⁵⁹ H. Fenwick, «Medieval Salt Production and Landscape Development in the Lincolnshire Marsh», in *Wetland Heritage of the Lincolnshire Marsh: An Archaeological Survey*, eds S. Ellis, H. Fenwick, M. Lillie, R. Van De Noort, Kingston-upon-Hull, 2001, p. 231-241; P. Baker in A. Crowson *et al.*, *Anglo-Saxon Settlement on the Siltland*, p. 90-91.

settlements were located along the coastal margins and on fjords heading inland (fig. 8). In particular, settlements have been discovered as a result of metal-detector use. Initially, sites were identified due to the recovery of non-ferrous metal accessories, cult offerings, bullion, coinage and sometimes casting waste from non-ferrous metalworking. These metalwork assemblages have often appeared to reflect wealthy people, with links around the Baltic Sea, predominantly dating from the 6th to 11th centuries. The surface areas of some of the metalwork scatters run into the hundreds of hectares. As a consequence, the metalwork collections were assumed to reflect settlements of high social rank, and were labelled as 'central-places'. This term has become used in exactly the same way as the term 'productive site' has been used in England for an assemblage of apparently rich metalwork discovered by metal-detector⁶⁰.

Most attention has been directed towards the metalwork concentrations along the eastern coast of Jutland, bordering the Kattegat, giving the impression of a cluster of materially rich settlements in the region of the eastern Limfjord⁶¹. Other concentrations of 6th- and 7th-century metalwork, structures and Viking-Age remains have recently been discovered on fjords further south, extending from Stavnsager on the Grund fjord⁶², as far as Jelling on the Vejle fjord⁶³, (fig. 8). Most of these rich metalwork scatters are sited in coastal locations or immediately above fjord waterways, and in some cases the concentration of sites is such that it would not seem sensible to suggest that they all represented 'central-places', for example, along the eastern Limfjord. The problem of interpretation lies in the association of rich, unstratified metalwork collections with the assumption that they reflected a 'central', elite role for the owners of the material at a local level. This may have been the case to a certain extent, but the regularity of the occurrence of rich metalwork may reflect the impact of the maritime or

⁶⁰ K. Højlund Nielsen, pers comm.

⁶¹ J.N. Nielsen, «Bejsbakken, a central site near Aalborg in northern Jutland», in *Central Places in the Migration and the Merovingian Periods: Papers from the 52nd Sachsen-symposium, Lund, August 2001 (Acta Archaeologica Lundensia Series)*, eds B. Hårdh, L. Larsson, Lund, 2002, p. 197-213, notably p. 210-212.

⁶² See K. Højlund Nielsen, C. Loveluck, «Fortid og Fremtid på Stavnsager – om de Britiske Undersøgelser August 2005 og de Foreløbige Resultater», *Kulturbistorisk Museum Randers, Årbog*, 2006, p. 63-79; and R. Fiedel, K. Højlund Nielsen, C. Loveluck, «From hamlet, to central place, to manor. Social transformation of the settlement at Stavnsager, eastern Jutland, and its networks, AD 400-1100», in *Transformations in northwest Europe, AD 400-1100*, eds T. Panhuysen, F. Theuws, Amsterdam, in press.

⁶³ P. Mohr Christensen, «Kongeligt?», *Skalk*, 1 (2008), p. 3-10.

fjord situation of most of these settlements, and the opportunities for their populations, rather than the social rank of the inhabitants.

A number of key studies of the maritime-orientation of Danish society during the second half of the first millennium have been undertaken in an attempt to provide context and association between various types of settlements deemed as landing places, major rural centres (sometimes inland) or major trading towns, such as Ribe and Hedeby. The work of Jens Ulriksen in the 1990s and Søren Sindbæk over the last decade has been particularly influential⁶⁴. Ulriksen's study of 'landing places', which developed from analysis of a range of sites and settlement types, focusing on the shore of the Roskilde Fjord on the island of Sjælland (fig. 8), attempted to model and explain the links between shoreline settlements and other elements of the settlement hierarchy during the first millennium. He observed that the nature of Denmark's topography meant that most of the population had a maritime linkage, noting that farmers, artisans and merchants often abandoned their normal work to go herring fishing for extended periods during autumn, in the Central and Later Middle Ages⁶⁵. The use of the term 'landing place', however, encompasses all coastal settlements that were not deemed royal or cult centres, such as Lejre and Tissø, or *emporia*, like Ribe and Hedeby. These 'landing place' settlements have been interpreted as farming communities, which indulged in local and seasonal artisan activity, possibly linked to itinerant artisans and merchants. The archaeological signature of 'landing place' settlements, usually reflected only through metal-detected finds, tended to comprise bronze casting waste, weights, silver bullion and coins to facilitate exchange⁶⁶. The label 'landing place' is therefore a vague, 'catch-all' term for shoreline rural settlements lying below the highest stratum of society. The term was often applied, based on metalwork scatters or, more rarely, excavated data, to the same settlements that have become described as 'central-places'⁶⁷.

Using aspects of network theory⁶⁸, Sindbæk distinguishes 'network towns' or 'nodal points' (i.e. major trading centres) from secondary central-places during the Viking Age. He attempts this by quantifying im-

⁶⁴ J. Ulriksen, «Danish sites and settlements with a maritime context, AD 200-1200», *Antiquity*, 68 (1994), p. 797-811; S.M. Sindbæk, «Networks and nodal points», p. 119-132.

⁶⁵ J. Ulriksen, «Danish sites», p. 801.

⁶⁶ J. Ulriksen, «Danish sites», p. 805.

⁶⁷ J. Ulriksen, «Danish sites», p. 805-806.

⁶⁸ Influenced particularly by the work of P.M. Hohenberg and L. Lees, and B. Latour: See P.M. Hohenberg, L. Lees, *The Making of Urban Europe, 1000-1994*, Cambridge (MA), 1996; and B. Latour, *Reassembling the Social*.



8. Location of sites in the Northeast Jutland – Kattegat study region (David Taylor).

ported goods and evidence for specialist artisan activity in relation to the cubic area of excavations. Although recovery and sieving procedures were not considered, the study did show a difference between major trading centres or towns, like Hedeby, Ribe, Birka and Kaupang, and the settlements that have been described as either ‘landing places’ or ‘central-places’, such as Sebbersund. Like Ulriksen, Sindbæk concludes that beyond a few major trading towns, the coastal settlements involved in exchange represented networks of local markets. He also observes that the number and hierarchy of trading sites could not be viewed as a reflection of socio-political control alone, stressing instead the role of profit-led merchant dynamism in the success and establishment of both centres where long-distance seafarers congregated (major trading towns) and local coastal markets where regional mercantile activity occurred⁶⁹.

⁶⁹ S.M. Sindbæk, «Networks and nodal points», p. 128-129.

There are some shortcomings in this analytical approach, however, relating to the quantification of imports and artisan activity between settlements. If the same methodology was applied to the rural settlement at Flixborough, with its huge surface refuse deposits, it would undoubtedly have been defined as a major 'nodal point' (i.e. a trading town). Furthermore, it is not possible to model potential changes in exchange relations and artisan activity through time with Sindbæk's approach. His approach would have overlooked, for example, the drastic changes in import consumption and commodity production at different periods in the occupation sequence at Flixborough. To a considerable extent, the conclusions of Sindbæk's study also reflect excavation bias: only Sebbesund is represented among the settlements described as 'landing places' or 'central-places', and Sindbæk does not consider the implications of the close proximity of many rich metal-detected scatters to each other. Given their proximity, not all are likely to have reflected local market sites for their surrounding areas.

The small number of large metalwork scatters that have been sampled by excavation suggests a more complex picture of coastal settlements, networks and social dynamics than suggested in the models above. This is largely due to the optimum quality of data provided by excavations, sometimes with large-scale survey. The evidence indicates both functional and chronological complexity between the 6th and 11th centuries, and significant settlement transformation within some individual settlement histories.

At Stavnsager, near Randers in eastern Jutland, metal-detected discoveries since the 1990s and a systematic programme of superimposed geophysical and geochemical surveys with targeted excavations since 2005, have identified a scatter of metalwork which covered over one hundred hectares, with very intensive multi-phase occupation over at least forty or fifty hectares (and possibly more), between the 5th and early 12th centuries⁷⁰. Currently, magnetometer survey and minor-element geochemical survey (by energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence) over approximately twenty-five hectares, and a series of excavation trenches, have suggested several different activity zones within the settlement, and perhaps a poly-focal nature be-

⁷⁰ The project has been a collaborative undertaking between Reno Fiedel, Kulturhistorisk Museum, Randers; Karen Højlund Nielsen, now University of Southern Denmark; and Christopher Loveluck, University of Nottingham. The project has been funded primarily by the British Academy, the Danish Research Council for the Humanities, and Kulturhistorisk Museum Randers, with additional support from the University of Nottingham.

tween the 7th and 11th centuries⁷¹. This likely poly-focal settlement structure includes an association with the settlement at Hørning on its southwest periphery, with its wooden stave-church, built between 1060 and 1070⁷². The main concentration of settlement activity at Stavnsager lay alongside a now drained area of wetland with a watercourse called the *Oxenbæk*, which runs into the Alling Å river, and hence into the Grund fjord and the Kattgat Strait. Provisional estimates on sea level in the early medieval period, however, suggest that the entire waterway from the Kattgat to Stavnsager would have been a navigable fjord⁷³ with a distance of several kilometres from the coast to the settlement. The settlement seems to have expanded from a 5th-century hamlet along the fjord edge. Reno Fiedel excavated several longhouses and sunken-feature-buildings (SFBs/*Grubenhäuser*) from this phase, in advance of tree planting in the 1990s – although SFBs from later periods were also superimposed over the 5th-century remains. The 5th-century settlement was agricultural, supported by iron smelting and smithing and textile manufacture for its own needs.

During the mid-6th century, however, there was a distinct change in the metalwork discarded: brooch types typical of the opposite side of the Kattgat in southern Sweden were present, alongside a gold-foil votive plaque (a *Guldgubbe*), presumably reflecting the presence of a pagan cult focus. The presence of the brooches and the gold plaque directly parallels the cult centre at Uppåkra in southwest Sweden (fig. 8) on the opposite side of the Kattgat. Unlike Uppåkra, however, with its cult-house/temple, votive offerings at Stavnsager may have been associated with a chieftain's residence, as at Borg in the Lofoten islands in Norway during the 6th century and at Tissø on the island of Sjælland during the Viking Age⁷⁴. Male dress acces-

⁷¹ See K. Høilund Nielsen, C. Loveluck, «Fortid og Fremtid på Stavnsager», 63-79; and R. Fiedel, K. Høilund Nielsen, C. Loveluck, «From hamlet, to central place, to manor».

⁷² K.J. Krogh, O. Voss, «Fra hedenskab til kristendom i Hørning. En vikingetidss kammergrav og en trækirke fra 1000-tallet under Hørning kirke», *Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark*, 1961, p. 5-34; J. Jeppesen, H. Schmidt, «Rekonstruktion af stavkirken fra Hørning», *Kuml*, 1993-94, p. 263-276.

⁷³ Kindly provided by Bo Ejstrud, University of Southern Denmark.

⁷⁴ See L. Larsson, K.M. Lenntorp, «The Enigmatic House», in *Continuity for Centuries. A ceremonial building and its context at Uppåkra, southern Sweden (Uppåkrastudier 10)*, ed. L. Larsson, Lund, 2004, p. 3-48; G. Stamsø Munch, «Borg as a pagan centre», in *Borg in Lofoten – A chieftain's farm in north Norway*, eds G. Stamsø Munch, O. Sverre Johansen, E. Roesdahl, Trondheim, 2003, p. 253-263; L. Jørgensen, «Kongsgård-kultsted-marked. Overvejelser omkring Tissøkompleksets struktur og function», in *Plats och praxis. Studier av nordisk förkristen ritual, Vägar Till Midgård 2*, NAP, eds K. Jennbert, A. Andrén, C. Raudvere, Lund, 2002, p. 215-247.

sories and fragments of weapons and riding gear, including a sword pommel probably from southern England, certainly suggest a secular elite presence⁷⁵. The excavations to date⁷⁶, however, have only identified two broad activity zones during this period. The first activity zone is a landing place area or 'port zone' adjacent to the fjord associated with artisan activity (non-ferrous metal-casting and textile manufacture) and exchange or bullion measurement, as indicated by weights and 'hack-gold' bullion. And the second is a farming settlement zone with longhouses and sunken-featured-buildings (SFBs/ *Grubenhäuser*) behind the port zone, situated on a slope rising to the south of the fjord (fig. 9, Colour Plates). The use of space on the settlement remained constant in the 7th century, with longhouses and SFBs/*Grubenhäuser* replacing their 6th-century predecessors, although not always on the same alignment. Significantly, however, a larger longhouse was also excavated in the 'farming zone', which may indicate some internal social differentiation at Stavnsager.

During the 7th century, the quantity of discarded dress accessories decreased, but fine brooches and unique votive objects from the western Baltic region continued to be used in addition to foreign objects from the regions bordering the southern North Sea, the English Channel and the Irish Sea. These included a Frisian Domburg-type brooch (fig. 10), a fragment of a pennanular brooch possibly from southern Wales, and part of a Frankish bow-brooch. The 6th- and 7th-century phases of the settlement, with an apparent continuity in the use of space, an armed secular elite presence, a role as a pagan cult centre (perhaps diminishing during the 7th century), and the demonstration of long-distance networks with coastal regions of northwest Europe certainly do not suggest a farming settlement periodically engaged in local exchange as a market centre. The links with Frisia and the Rhine-Scheldt delta region, indicated from the 7th century, are paralleled by finds of gold *tremissis* coins, struck by the moneyer, *Madelinus*, at Dorestad, in the 670s, from the trading centre at Kaupang to the north, and at the rural centre at Jelling, on the Vejle fjord to the south⁷⁷ (fig. 8). Hence, during the 6th and 7th centuries, the settlement at Stavnsager seemingly acted in combination as a secular elite centre, cult centre and focal point for contact and exchange with foreigners and their maritime net-

⁷⁵ R. Fiedel, K. Højlund Nielsen, C. Loveluck, «From hamlet, to central place, to manor».

⁷⁶ Based on a combination of magnetometer and geochemical survey.

⁷⁷ D. Skre, (ed.), *Kaupang in Skiringssal*, Aarhus, 2007; P. Mohr Christensen, «Kongeligt?», p. 3-10.

works. Lars Jørgensen has also observed this combination of functions for the rural centres at Tissø and Lejre on Sjælland, although the *floruit* of their occupation sequences centred on the Viking Age, from the 8th to 11th centuries. In the latter cases, Jørgensen suggests that the settlements represent royal farm centres with linked functions as cult centres and markets, serving the same roles as the Carolingian palace centres of western Europe from the mid-8th to 10th centuries⁷⁸.

Between the 8th and 11th centuries, some longhouses from earlier phases may have continued in use, but the settlement was characterised predominantly by small buildings with post-hole or post-in-trench foundations in the zone adjacent to the waterfront, alongside a much larger number of very substantial SFBs/Grubenhäuser, some over six metres in length and three metres in width. All have been dated by their stratigraphic relationships and diagnostic artefacts. The buildings related primarily to craft-working, especially textile manufacture, ironworking and non-ferrous metalworking. This period was also marked by greater mobility between the settlement and the waterfront/port zone through the construction of metallised trackways and paths, made from fire-shattered granite. The waterfront zone itself was remodelled by a major reclamation event, probably between the later 8th and mid-9th century. A seven hundred metre waterfront embankment was constructed from fire-shattered granite (probably cooking debris). Huge deposits of material, much of it with large quantities of charcoal, were dumped to level the land up to the waterfront. The sequence is best illustrated in Trench 3 of the excavations, where a fire-shattered granite trackway and linking pathway to a well were laid on top of and cut through the dumped levelling deposits (fig. 11, Colour Plates). The well lining contained a large oak plank, which yielded a dendro-chronological date *c.* 746⁷⁹. Allowing for reuse of timbers lining the well, the major trackway and path to the well were probably constructed sometime in the 9th century.

There is no evidence, as yet, of a principal residential focus dating from the 8th to 11th century at Stavnsager, but very substantial areas of the one hundred hectare settlement concentration have not yet been excavated. It is possible, however, that an elite centre linked to Stavnsager had relocated further up the hill, moving from the waterway to Hørning on the south-west edge of the settlement agglomeration, near to the location of the mid-11th century stave church. The latter had been built over a late 10th-century

⁷⁸ L. Jørgensen, «Kongsgård-kultsted-marked», p. 243-245.

⁷⁹ R. Fiedel, K. Høilund Nielsen, C. Loveluck, «From hamlet, to central place, to manor».

barrow, which housed a very wealthy woman buried in silk garments⁸⁰. Geophysical survey has indicated the presence of a large enclosure around the stave church that may indicate the construction of a manorial residential complex around the church in the mid-11th century, similar to a stave church at Lisbjerg, near Aarhus⁸¹. In terms of dress, all typical brooch forms from 8th to 10th century Denmark were present in quantities similar to the 7th century. There are affinities to assemblages from Viking Age Tissø and Jelling, including a miniature silver sword votive offering. Trading activity is also suggested by the presence of Islamic silver coins, 'hack-silver' bullion, weights, glass beads, a soapstone vessel from Norway and dress accessories from the British Isles and Carolingian Francia. Brooches depicting Urnes and 'Agnus Dei' motifs and riding gear also indicate the presence of wealthy individuals at Stavnsager in an 11th-century Christian context⁸². Hence, the subordinate role of the Stavnsager settlement to a manorial centre at Hørning has yet to be proven. What is clear, however, is that the maritime-orientation of the Stavnsager settlement and its international networks had diminished and all but disappeared by the 11th century, presumably in favour of major congregations of merchants at the royal port-town centres of Aalborg, Aarhus, Hedeby and Roskilde. The settlement at Stavnsager had itself been abandoned by the 12th century, later replaced by a medieval open field system.

The picture of a dynamic and changing settlement at Stavnsager demonstrates the difficulty of the task of fitting settlements into functional classifications. The archaeological signature of Stavnsager in the 6th and 7th centuries has very close similarities with settlements viewed as royal centres, pagan cult centres and market centres, such as Tissø and Lejre. Yet it differs from the latter centres in having North and Irish Sea contacts before the Viking Age, like Kaupang and Jelling – a mark of the international maritime perspective of the northern Kattegat. In the Viking Age, from the 8th to the 11th century, the evidence for long-distance contacts is less marked but present, and the scale of the settlement and the construction of the seven hundred metre waterfront and linked trackways do not suggest a simple farming settlement with seasonal local market functions. Indeed, there are still some similarities with centres like Tissø, but the settlement

⁸⁰ A. Hedeager Krag, L. Ræder Knudsen, «Vikingetidstekstiler. Nye opdagelser fra gravfundene i Hvilehøj og Hørning», *Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark*, 1999, p. 159-170.

⁸¹ J. Jeppesen, «Stormandsgården ved Lisbjerg kirke. Nye undersøgelser», *Kuml*, 2004, p. 161-180.

⁸² R. Fiedel, K. Højlund Nielsen, C. Loveluck, «From hamlet, to central place, to manor».

has as much in common with the sites deemed 'landing places' or local markets by Ulriksen and Sindbæk in their generalising models. Excavations, discussed below, on a range of settlements previously categorised under the vague labels – 'landing place', central-place and local market – demonstrate further the limitations of the current generalising models.

The excavations at Bejsebakken and Lindholm Høje on the eastern margins of the Limfjord, close to the Kattegat coast, illustrate a complex range of settlement histories (fig. 8). The *floruit* of the Bejsebakken settlement seems to have been from the 5th to 8th century. When the metalwork scatter was sampled by excavation, approximately three hundred and fifty SFBs/Grubenhäuser and forty-two longhouses were uncovered. Most of the longhouses appeared to date from the 5th to 6th centuries, whereas most of the SFBs were dated to the 7th and 8th centuries – a transition that seems to have occurred at Stavnsager in the 8th and 9th centuries⁸³. Finds of imported reticella glass vessels also suggest contacts with Carolingian Francia via North Sea networks, and there are also similarities in the range of brooches present to those at Lejre, Tissø and Stavnsager. Rock crystal and garnet were also processed on the site, again setting it on a par with the major multi-functional centres, such as Sorte Muld on the island of Bornholm⁸⁴. A range of weapons – spears and arrowheads – were also found on the settlement, as was abundant evidence of textile manufacture, possibly on a large scale, ironworking, non-ferrous metalworking and woodworking. Weights also provide evidence for the facilitation of exchange transactions⁸⁵. Such activities almost directly parallel those at Stavnsager in the 7th and 8th centuries, including the indications of linkage within North Sea networks. Unlike Stavnsager, however, activities at Bejsebakken do not appear to have continued significantly into the 9th and 10th centuries, and it does not seem to have enjoyed a role as a cult centre.

At Lindholm Høje, situated on a sand moraine hill on the northern side of the Limfjord, different phases of a settlement have been excavated dating from the 6th to 11th century (and later), including the well-known cemetery of over six hundred graves, with its stone settings in ship-shaped, triangular and oval forms. The graves in the cemetery dated from the 6th to 10th centuries and contained individuals who seem to reflect a degree of ranked stratification. Some of the richer graves were furnished with metalwork similar to examples from the likely royal burial mounds at Vendel in Swe-

⁸³ K. Højlund Nielsen, «Bejsebakken, a central site», p. 197-213.

⁸⁴ K. Højlund Nielsen, «Bejsebakken, a central site», p. 207.

⁸⁵ K. Højlund Nielsen, *ibid.*



10. Fragment of a Frisian 'Domburg-type' brooch from Stavnsager, dating from the 7th century AD (R. Fiedel).

den from the 7th century; additionally, a 10th-century grave included a wooden wagon and Islamic silver coins⁸⁶. Similarities with metalwork from the Vendel grave mounds have also been found at Stavnsager⁸⁷. Longhouses, SFBs/Grubenhäuser and wells from the 7th to early 9th centuries have been found to the north of the Lindholm Høje cemetery⁸⁸. Again like Stavnsager and Bejsebakken, linkage within exchange networks from the North Sea littoral is reflected by the presence of fragments of imported glass vessels and beads, alongside artefacts of western Baltic and Norwegian origin⁸⁹. Textile manufacture, ironworking and non-ferrous metalworking were all actively practised on site. To the south of the cemetery, parts of the 10th and 11th century settlement were also excavated. The remains consisted predominantly of longhouses, ovens and refuse deposits. Just as at Stavnsager,

⁸⁶ K. Høilund Nielsen, «The burial ground», in *Lindholm Høje. Burial Ground and Village*, ed. A. Lerche Trolle, Aalborg, 1994, p. 27-38; K. Høilund Nielsen, «Rituals to free the spirit», p. 94-103.

⁸⁷ K. Høilund Nielsen, C. Loveluck, «Fortid og Fremtid på Stavnsager», p. 74-75.

⁸⁸ A. Pedersen, «The villages», in *Lindholm Høje. Burial Ground and Village*, ed. A. Lerche Trolle, Aalborg, 1994, p. 39-52.

⁸⁹ A. Pedersen, «The villages», p. 51-52.

some of the inhabitants used fine brooches and pendants in the Urnes and Agnus Dei forms⁹⁰; and, with the exception of soapstone vessels from Norway, receipt of imports from the North Sea littoral declined in the 11th century. At Lindholm Høje, however, silver coinage was found, most of it struck under the authority of Danish kings at their royal port-town centres – notably from Aalborg, founded in the early 11th century and situated on the fjord below Lindholm Høje. One of the coins was a silver penny of William the Conqueror of England (1066-87)⁹¹.

Hence, as in eastern England, very significant changes are emerging in the settlement evidence from eastern Jutland, relating to maritime-orientation, linkage within long-distance exchange networks and personal contacts with foreigners during the period between c.900 and 1050. Communities, which had for centuries conducted long-distance exchange transactions themselves, often from their own coastal or fjord-edge settlements, had their scales of contact redefined mostly to the local and regional levels. In Denmark, the 10th and 11th centuries saw the transformation of certain existing ports (and the foundation of new settlements) as major royal port towns: for example, Aarhus, Aalborg, Roskilde and Lund. It can be no coincidence that Danish and English coinage was present at Lindholm Høje from the mid-11th century, reflecting the new paramount role of port-towns as centres for seaborne trade and its taxation, and as places where artisans, seafaring merchants and customers congregated. The origin and distribution of the coinage represents the development of primarily local, regional and fundamentally rural perspectives in terms of exchange networks, with the Danish royal port towns acting as the points of access to the wider world, just as the pottery produced at the 10th and 11th century towns of York and Lincoln reflected the development of the same perspectives between the Humber and the Fens in eastern England. These changes around the Kattegat accompanied a wider cosmological change in world-view, namely the adoption of Christianity, represented physically in the construction of the stave churches at the settlements of Hørning, Lisbjerg and Sebbesund. The new definition of the 'rural' as opposed to 'urban' settings of the 11th century, however, and the disappearance of most of the archaeological reflections of long-distance maritime contacts did not destroy all signs of affiliation with the sea. Instead, that linkage was transferred to the cosmological level, seen in the funerary use of boats to transport people to the Christian

⁹⁰ A. Pedersen, «The villages», p. 46.

⁹¹ A. Pedersen, «The villages», p. 46-47.

afterlife at Sebbersund, and in the seasonal undertaking of fishing into the later Middle Ages⁹².

Conclusions: Changes in maritime-orientation and socio-political development, 600-1000

From the detailed comparative analysis above, a series of key observations of wider importance can be made. First, both the liminality and connectivity of the coastal marshes, deltas and estuaries between the Humber and the Fens resulted in a maritime cultural landscape between the 7th and 9th centuries where direct contacts with foreign mariners, the agricultural limitations of the coastal marshes and the need to trade specific products, such as salt, promoted the existence of a society with a tendency towards specialisation and exchange. Difficulty of access to the coastal marshes between land and sea for officers of political authorities from the landward interior made their inhabitants difficult to oversee directly on a regular basis, and hence, the coastal fringes were landscapes of opportunity. Exactly the same observation has been made by Horden and Purcell regarding coastal marshes of the Mediterranean in relation to the Venteto and the Po delta. A similar difficulty of access to the marsh islands by political powers in the latter regions aided in the rise of the seafaring and trading settlements of Comacchio and Venice during the 6th and 7th centuries, along with their similar tendency towards specialist production of commodities, such as salt, and their maritime connectivity⁹³.

The regularity of contact with mariners also gave all the inhabitants of fjords, estuaries, coastal marshes and tidal creek systems a material culture profile of access to certain imports, which was not matched except at *emporia* or on major rural centres between the 7th and 9th centuries. Indeed, the concentrations of certain types of imports, such as Ipswich ware, between the Humber and the Fens rather than at the emporium at York may reflect the operation of different networks of contact with mariners and different reasons for exchange between coastal settlement hierarchies and

⁹² P. Birkedahl, E. Johansen, «The Sebbersund Boat Graves», p. 161-164; J. Ulriksen, «Danish sites and settlements», p. 801.

⁹³ P. Horden, N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea. A Study of Mediterranean History*, Oxford, 2000, p. 189-190; S. Gelichi, «Tra Comacchio e Venezia. Economia, società e insediamenti nell' arco nord adriatico durante l'Alto Medioevo», in *Comacchio e il suo Territorio tra la tarda Antichità e l'Alto Medioevo*, ed. S. Gelichi, Comacchio, 2007, p. 365-386; S. Gelichi (ed.), *L'Isola Del Vescovo – Gli scavi archeologici intorno alla Cattedrale di Comacchio*, Comacchio, 2009, p. 22-35.

major trading centres. Between the 7th and late 9th centuries, networks spanned the North Sea and crossed the entire social spectrum of coastal societies between the Humber and the Fens, and along the Kattegat coast of east Jutland (especially at the entrance point with the North Sea). All the settlements that have been the subject of systematic survey and/or significant excavation in northeast Jutland have yielded evidence of links with Frisia or northern Francia, and some also had links with the British Isles. Similarly, all settlements within the coastal settlement hierarchy from the Humber to the Fens were characterised by archaeological reflections of maritime connectivity with Frisia and northern Francia. An identical signature of maritime connectivity is also indicated in the coastal marshes of Flanders and Frisia, in that all elements of the settlement hierarchy of the coastal regions, from hamlets on sand islands to larger nucleated settlements on the landward edge of marshes, used imported goods relatively abundantly⁹⁴. In these coastal circumstances, maritime connectivity, location and opportunity created communities that may have operated outside the expected social norms of land-focussed and cereal-based communities in the landward interiors, especially when outside the view of representatives of land-controlling authorities. Horden and Purcell again cite Mediterranean parallels to the above patterns, suggesting that ecological location in coastal marshland or island archipelagos in contrast to better-drained farming land may have defined divisions in social attitudes⁹⁵.

The major estate centres, such as Flixborough, Driffild, and possibly Holton-le-Clay, had their own landing places on rivers and tidal creeks leading from the Humber estuary; while the many settlements on sand islands and tidal creeks probably met mariners in estuarine havens, when they sought to re-provision, and hence, contacts were probably maintained by the log-boats (now becoming apparent in the waterways of the former coastal marshes in eastern England). Along the Kattegat coast of Jutland marine craft may have been larger, being the collective product of larger settlement communities, but the artefact assemblages suggest direct integration of all significant settlements overlooking fjords or on the coast within international maritime networks. In such a situation, it has become difficult to establish a 'central role' for settlements on the basis of evidence for exchange alone; and higher order settlements are best defined through evidence of the administration of a territory (if these are possible to identify): consumption and display of land and sea resources, religion, craftworking and exchange.

⁹⁴ C. Loveluck, D. Tys, «Coastal societies, exchange and identity», p. 154-159.

⁹⁵ P. Horden, N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea*, p. 393.

Another key trait observable on major rural centres, when the quality of the data permits it, is the tendency towards transformation of material culture profiles linked to changing social roles on settlements through time – witness the transformations at Flixborough and Stavnsager. These ‘moving targets’ defy easy labelling and integration into simplistic models designed to help in the interpretation of the relationships between different elements of settlement hierarchies and between different settlements involved in maritime exchange. Indeed, it is the variability and dynamic change evident in detailed data-sets at the level of individual communities that gives the necessary local and human dimension to the study of wider social change, while highlighting the simplicities of our generalising models. Linked to the transformation in settlement character and networks through time is also the loss or diminished scale of maritime-orientation in the occupation sequences at both Flixborough and Stavnsager during the course of the 10th and 11th centuries respectively. This seems to have related directly to the change in the nature and roles of major port towns in their regional vicinities.

The current evidence from the coastal regions, especially along the North Sea coasts of England, Flanders, Frisia, and the Kattegat coast of Denmark, suggests that *emporía* ports did not act successfully in controlling access to imported luxuries, if that was ever their intended role. Whereas, they certainly did play a key role as centres of taxation on the movement of bulk commodities by sea, as the textual sources have always suggested⁹⁶. However, if we remove their role on the control of socially-embedded exchange in coastal zones, as the data suggests that we should, it becomes necessary to re-evaluate the nature of the merchant and artisan communities living permanently or periodically at the *emporía* between the mid- to late 7th and late 9th centuries. The past emphasis on their subordinate role to royal authority and landed aristocracies has resulted in a lack of attention to the archaeological characteristics of the people themselves, who lived in the *emporía* communities. Yet, there are striking traits. For example, weapons were abundant amongst the artisan and trading tenements at Fishergate, York and Hamwic-Southampton in England, as was evidence of riding gear, suggesting the ability to move around quickly on land, in addition to maritime and river routes⁹⁷. Furthermore, in the refuse pits associated with the

⁹⁶ A. Verhulst, *The Carolingian Economy*, Cambridge, p. 130; C. Loveluck, D. Tys, «Coastal societies, exchange and identity», p. 146.

⁹⁷ N.S.H. Rogers, *Anglian and Other Finds from Fishergate. The Archaeology of York: The Small Finds 17/9*, London, 1993, p. 1428-1432; E. Loader *et al.*, «Grave goods from the inhumation burials», in *The Origins of Mid Saxon Southampton. Excavations at the Friends Provident St Mary's stadium 1998-2000*, ed. V. Birbeck, Salisbury, 2005, p. 53-79.

artisans and traders of these settlements imported glass vessel fragments of the finest quality, sometimes with reticella trails, were found (over a thousand fragments from Hamwic-Southampton). The vessel fragments do not appear to have been used in bead making, as previously assumed⁹⁸. It would appear, therefore, that a significant number of merchant and artisan households had access to the material culture of warfare, mobility, and luxury drinking normally associated with the highest secular aristocratic households at their rural estate centres, like Flixborough in the hinterland of the Humber and Portchester Castle in the hinterland of Southampton⁹⁹.

What set rural aristocrats apart from the merchant and artisan populations of the *emporium* was not their use of different items of portable wealth, but their control of the resources of agricultural territories, and especially rituals of dominance in landscapes, 'island-scapes' and 'seascapes': namely, activities such as hunting, wildfowling and the targeting of specific feast species, such as cranes and dolphins, in the case of 7th- to 8th-century and 10th-century Flixborough. In contrast, artisan and seafaring communities of *emporium* were defined by a much greater use of coinage, a broader usage of imported commodities in their everyday lives and a greater ethnic diversity. This is not to say that the merchant and artisan communities were not the subject of policing and control. The discovery of the rich late 7th-century burials, often accompanied by weapons, at the St. Mary's stadium cemetery in Hamwic-Southampton and the Buttermarket cemetery at Ipswich, may represent evidence of royal officers with local retinues to oversee toll collection and trade¹⁰⁰. The wider presence of weapons and other luxuries amongst the populations of the *emporium*, however, makes such an interpretation the subject of some debate. Although the need for a significant armed presence to control and tax armed and, to a certain extent, independent merchants would make sense from the administrative perspective of political authorities.

⁹⁸ J.R. Hunter, C.M. Jackson, «Glass», in *Anglian and Other Finds from Fishergate. The Archaeology of York: The Small Finds 17/9*, ed. N.S.H. Rogers, London, 1993, p. 1333-1342; J.R. Hunter, M.P. Heyworth, *The Hamwic Glass*, CBA research report 116, York, 1998; R. Every, E. Loader, L. Mephram *et al.*, «The artefactual evidence from the settlement», p. 130.

⁹⁹ C. Loveluck, *Rural Settlement, Lifestyles and Social Change*; B. Cunliffe, *Excavations at Portchester Castle, Volume II: Saxon*, Reports of the Research Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of London, No. 33, 1976.

¹⁰⁰ V. Birbeck, *The Origins of Mid Saxon Southampton*; C. Scull, *Early Medieval (Late 5th-Early 8th centuries AD) Cemeteries at Boss Hall and Buttermarket, Ipswich, Suffolk*, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph 27, 2009, Leeds, p. 302-303.

With the socio-political changes of the 10th and 11th centuries in England: namely, the Scandinavian elite presence in the urban centres of eastern England, the creation of the West Saxon Kingdom of England and the Danish and Norman Conquests, major port towns became much more integrated with their rural hinterlands at the same time as the scale of maritime-orientation and freedoms of coastal populations diminished overall. Exactly the same phenomenon can be seen in eastern Jutland between the mid-10th and mid-11th centuries, in the sense that direct exchange with foreigners was re-focussed on royal port towns and former complex coastal settlements were redefined within a process of rural land-based manorialisation. Again, the same phenomenon is also seen in coastal Flanders, where the populations of coastal marshes lost their long-distance contacts during the course of the 10th and 11th centuries, at the same time as the onset of major land reclamation and the growth of new port towns, such as Bruges, was sponsored directly and indirectly by the Count of Flanders¹⁰¹. Hence, long-distance contacts diminished as the demonstrable power of royal and regional governments increased over the liminal worlds of their coastal margins.

The towns, especially major sea or river ports, became the principal locations for artisan and trading activity, producing finished goods for their surrounding regions in a way that had not been the case with most of the earlier *emporia*. This resulted from the implementation of more developed governmental structures: towns administered as regional central-places, markets and taxation collection points; and the particular location choices on the part of seafaring merchants. For example, in 10th-century York, while under Scandinavian rule, the concentration of political and ecclesiastical patronage resulted in very wealthy artisan and resident, or transient, merchant populations. The concentration of remains discarded by ironworkers, gold and silver workers, and other craftsmen, from the Coppergate excavations, illustrates this point. Within these same 10th- to 11th-century artisan/merchant tenements, riding gear, weapons (spears, arrowheads and sword furniture) and the reused Coppergate helmet were found amongst items denoting integration within Scandinavian trade routes to the orient, in the form of silk and Islamic coins¹⁰². The exchange networks of coastal

¹⁰¹ C. Loveluck, D. Tys, «Coastal societies, exchange and identity», p. 162.

¹⁰² R. Hall, «Markets of the Danelaw», in *The Vikings in England*, eds E. Roesdahl, J. Graham-Campbell, P. Connor, K. Pearson, York, 1981, p. 95-139; P. Ottaway, *Anglo-Scandinavian Ironwork from Coppergate. The Archaeology of York: The Small Finds 17/6*, London, 1992, p. 698-718; D. Tweddle, *The Anglian Helmet from Coppergate. The Archaeology of York: The Small Finds 17/8*, London, 1992; P. Walton Rogers, *Textile Production at 16-22 Coppergate. The Archaeology of York: The Small Finds 17/11*, York, 1997, p. 1779.

settlements became reoriented towards the major port towns, although this did not result in significant quantities of imported luxuries being discarded in the rural world during the later 10th and 11th centuries. Instead, contacts were mostly manifested through pottery and coinage obtained from the urban centres, in both the English and Danish contexts. Exotic products, such as silk from the burial under Hørning church, were exceptionally rare. The rural world became dominated by expressions of control over land using local resources, even in coastal locations; and the urban worlds of port towns became the behavioural settings for expressions of wealth derived from the trade of finished goods and an increasingly global maritime orientation. By 1000, London was the object of twice yearly visits by merchants, known as ‘Esterlings’ – easterners who paid their port tolls in large quantities of pepper from Indonesia or the Malabar coast of India¹⁰³. By the 11th century, it was this early medieval ‘globalisation’ that set the major port towns and their societies apart from the countryside.

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¹⁰³ J. Keay, *The Spice Route – A History*, California Studies in Food and Culture 17, Berkeley, 2006, p. 108.