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3

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

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BREPOLS

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Coinage, Trade and the Origins
of the English *Emporia*, ca. AD 650-750

Archaeology in England has witnessed profound change in the last twenty years due to two shifts in policy from both archaeologists and politicians. The levels of excavation undertaken in both urban and rural areas have increased markedly since bringing archaeology within the remits of planning legislation in 1990, leading to a substantial increase in excavation and survey across England and Wales¹. Alongside this has been the willingness of archaeologists to engage with metal-detector users and appreciate the role that 'portable antiquities' can make to archaeological research². The latter has grown enormously since the inception of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in 1997 covering England and Wales and now regularly recording over 50,000 objects per year from all periods³.

The wide-ranging implications of these changes have affected the interpretations of every period of the past, and our perceptions of Anglo-Saxon England in the 7th to 9th centuries are no exception. The outline interpretation of these data show evidence for increasing specialisation in both craft and agriculture concomitant with emerging urban-like centres, *emporia*, and flourishing European networks of trade with increasingly monetised

¹ Department of the Environment (UK Government), *Policy Planning Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning*, 1990. T. Darvill, B. Russell, *Archaeology After PPG16: archaeological investigations in England 1990-1999*, Bournemouth, 2002, especially illustrations 33 and 35, which show the large growth in archaeological fieldwork during the 1990s.

² A wide range of archaeological research in the UK now includes the use of portable antiquities. A full discussion of the use of such data sources can be found in: J.D. Richards, J. Naylor, C. Holas-Clark, «Anglo-Saxon landscape and economy: using portable antiquities to study Anglo-Saxon and Viking Age England», *Internet Archaeology*, 25 (2009), http://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue25/richards_toc.html.

³ The Portable Antiquities Scheme can be found at <http://www.finds.org.uk>. The number of finds of all periods (Palaeolithic to early modern) recorded by the PAS exceeded 750,000 in December 2011. In addition to PAS, the Corpus of Early Medieval Coin Finds (EMC) (<http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/coins/emc/>) records many additional coins. Both data sources were utilised for this paper.

elements⁴. Our understanding of the role of coinage in the early medieval economy has also been profoundly shaped by these new data sources. Many rural areas, especially in eastern England, were clearly a part of a coin-using economy. Earlier models, heavily influenced by substantivist economic anthropology, have been seriously challenged, and as a result, market elements in the economy can be clearly defined⁵. The great circulation of the sceatta coinage of the later 7th and 8th centuries shows rapid development from c.680-750 before its replacement with the broad flan penny⁶. Alongside distribution analyses, more nuanced quantitative approaches regarding coinage have shown a massive increase in coin loss from the mid-7th to mid-8th centuries with highly comparable patterns seen at many sites and we can examine the evolution of coin use and the circulation of coinage with a degree of confidence⁷.

In conjunction with broader archaeological work, it is now known that there were substantial numbers of rural sites where sustained, continuous coin loss took place, and these are generally interpreted as economically significant locations, probably encompassing a market-type function⁸.

⁴ 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. 69-104. The term '*emporium*' is somewhat anthropologically loaded, even though used in some contemporary documents, for example Bede's description of London as an *emporium* (HE II.3), but is here preferred to other terms. Of these, '*wic*' is probably the most important and relating to the suffix *-wic* in the place-name, e.g. *Lundenwic* or *Hamwic*, being used by a number of scholars. See, for example, D. Hill, R. Cowie (eds.), *Wics: the early medieval trading centres of Northern Europe*, Sheffield, 2001. However, the settlements with the *-wic* suffix comprise a variety of site types, both inland and coastal, with the locations under discussion here only making up a part of this group. The terms 'port' or 'town' may also be appropriate but as the '*emporia*' appear to be particular forms of each, the latter term is used here throughout.

⁵ *Ibidem*; J. Moreland, «Concepts of the early medieval economy», in *The Long Eighth Century. Production, distribution and demand*, eds I.L. Hansen, C. Wickham, Leiden, 2000, p. 1-34.

⁶ M. Blackburn, «'Productive' sites and the pattern of coin loss in England, 600-1180», in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: trading and 'productive sites', 650-850*, eds T. Pestell, K. Ulmschneider, Macclesfield, 2003, p. 20-36. Fig 3.6 shows the pattern of coin loss for the whole of England with a distinct peak in the early 8th century.

⁷ *Ibidem*; J. Naylor, «The circulation of early medieval European coinage: a case study from Yorkshire, c.650-867», *Medieval Archaeology*, 51 (2007), p. 41-61.

⁸ For example, see many of the individual papers in T. Pestell, K. Ulmschneider, *Markets in Early Medieval Europe*, 2003, in which the interpretation of 'productive sites' is discussed, and their potential economic role highlighted. See also J. Naylor, «The circulation of early medieval European coinage», which shows that some distinction can be made between sites through the patterns of coin loss.

These sites were not randomly located but rather were situated at strategic points such as junctions on communication routes and on boundaries between environmental zones⁹. Many of these sites, especially those with larger coin assemblages, are also located within about 15 km of the coast or are very close to a major navigable river. The prevalence of larger coin assemblages in such areas implies that the coastal zone was acting in a somehow different manner economically compared to elsewhere¹⁰. This illustrates that the populations of the coastal zone around northern Europe had greater access to networks of exchange than those living inland, and that there were likely to have been numerous entry points for these goods¹¹.

This, in turn, has had a profound effect on the study of *emporia*. The ideas of monopolised long-distance trade for the benefits of a small number of elite groups now appears to be increasingly at odds with the evidence available, which indicates a seemingly inevitable level of market economy¹². However, debate remains surrounding the nature and extent of royal control over the foundation, evolution and function of *emporia*. Richard Hodges's seminal works have provided the accepted type-models for some time, although many now believe royal control to have been more limited. It now seems more likely that this was limited to the levying of tolls by the local elite¹³. Conversely, the prevailing view from zooarchaeological ev-

⁹ K. Ulmschneider, «Settlement, economy and the 'productive site': Middle Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire A.D. 650-780», *Medieval Archaeology*, 44 (2000), p. 53-79, see p. 66-72.

¹⁰ J. Naylor, *An Archaeology of Trade*, Oxford, 2004, p. 123; J.D. Richards *et al.*, «Anglo-Saxon landscape and economy», section 4.1.3. A broader discussion of coastal society and exchange presents similar conclusions, see 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. 140-169.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² For example, J. Henning, «Early European towns. The development of the economy in the Frankish realm between dynamism and deceleration AD 500-1100», in *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium, volume 1. The heirs of the Roman West*, ed. J. Henning, Berlin, 2007, p. 3-40.

¹³ Useful critiques of Hodges's work include G. Astill, «Archaeology, economy and early medieval Europe», *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 4 (1985), p. 215-231; and D. Skre, «Post-substantivist towns and trade AD 600-1000», in *Means of Exchange. Dealing with silver in the Viking Age*, Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series Volume 2., ed. D. Skre, Aarhus, 2008, p. 327-341. For discussion of tolls see S. Kelly, «Trading privileges from eighth-century England», *Early Medieval Europe*, 1 (1992), p. 3-28; J. Naylor, *An Archaeology of Trade*, p. 129-133; and N. Middleton, «Early medieval port customs, tolls and controls on foreign trade», *Early Medieval Europe*, 13 (2005), p. 313-358.

idence remains one of provisioning rather than market-oriented procurement¹⁴. With regard to the English *emporia*, little theoretical work has been forthcoming in last decade, despite the new evidence brought forth by a range of new excavations and reports¹⁵. In part, there has been a shift in

¹⁴ There has been much discussion on this topic in recent years, with a number of scholars remaining in support of the substantivist models both from zooarchaeological and broader perspectives. The zooarchaeological approaches are usefully discussed in P. Crabtree, «Production and consumption in an early society: animal use in Middle Saxon East Anglia», *World Archaeology*, 28 (1996), p. 58-75; T. O'Connor, «On the interpretation of animal bone assemblages from *wics*», in *Wics: the early medieval trading centres of Northern Europe*, eds D. Hill, R. Cowie, Sheffield, 2001, p. 54-60; and H. Hamerow, «Agrarian production and the *emporia* of mid Saxon England, ca. AD 650-850», in *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium, volume 1. The heirs of the Roman West*, ed. J. Henning, Berlin, 2007, p. 219-230. Recent work advocating a tributary focus in the early medieval economy can be found in T. Saunders, «Early mediaeval *emporia* and the tributary social function», in *Wics: the early medieval trading centres of Northern Europe*, D. Hill, R. Cowie, Sheffield, 2001, p. 7-13; and A. Hutcheson, «The origins of King's Lynn? Control of wealth on the Wash prior to the Norman Conquest», *Medieval Archaeology*, 50 (2006), p. 71-104. For some alternative views, including discussion of a greater extent of commercialism in parts of the early medieval economy see J. Henning, «Early European towns», p. 27-31; M. McCormick, «Where do trading towns come from? Early medieval Venice and the northern *emporia*», in *Post-Roman Towns, Trade and Settlement in Europe and Byzantium, volume 1. The heirs of the Roman West*, ed. J. Henning, Berlin, 2007, p. 41-68; and C. Loveluck, D. Tys, «Coastal societies».

¹⁵ For London see G. Malcolm, D. Bowsher, *Middle Saxon London. Excavations at the Royal Opera House 1989-99*, London, 2003; J. Leary, *Tatberht's London: archaeological excavations in middle Saxon London*, London, 2004; and R. Cowie, L. Blackmore, *Early and Middle Saxon Rural Settlement in the London Region*, London, 2008. For Hamwic see M.F. Garner, «A Middle Saxon cemetery at Cook Street, Southampton», *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society*, 56 (2001), p. 170-191; V. Birbeck, *The Origins of Mid-Saxon Southampton: excavations at the Friends Provident St Mary's Stadium 1998-2000*, Salisbury, 2005; M.F. Garner, «Excavations at St Mary's Road, Southampton (SOU 379 and SOU 112)», *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society*, 58 (2003), p. 106-129; C. Ellis, P. Andrews, «A Mid-Saxon site at Anderson's Road, Southampton», *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society*, 61 (2006), p. 81-133. For York: C.A. Spall, N.J. Toop (eds), *Blue Bridge Lane and Fisbergate House. Report on the excavations, July 2000 to July 2002*, York, 2005, <http://www.archaeologicalplanningconsultancy.co.uk/mono/001/> (access date: July 2009). Ipswich remains largely unpublished, although see C. Scull, «Ipswich: developments and contexts of an urban precursor in the seventh century», in *Central Places in the Migration and Merovingian Periods: papers from the 52nd Sachsensymposium, Lund, August 2001*, eds B. Hårdh, L. Larsson, Stockholm, 2002, p. 303-316.

focus to research exploring regional and rural economies¹⁶, but the general influence of post-processual archaeology, especially in England, has also led to a lack of interest in problems surrounding areas such as urbanism, trade and social organisation¹⁷. As a result, the more recent results from the English *emporia* have remained under-studied and broader interpretations of their nature have been lacking¹⁸.

One of the problems of interpretation for the founding of the *emporia* has been the lack of evidence for 7th-century occupation. A number of 7th-century cemeteries and burials are known from Ipswich, Hamwic and London but relatively little has been forthcoming regarding the nature of early occupation on these sites¹⁹. The classic perception of the English *emporia* has therefore been an image of these settlements at their most active, in the 8th and 9th centuries, with gridded street plans within a boundary ditch, evidence for large-scale production in various materials and goods, high levels of imported material, especially ceramics, and the large numbers of coins indicative of trade. Interpreted within a substantivist framework, such elements were seen within the remits of royal control, with an authority needed to both found and control the activities within the boundary²⁰. Since the height of this work on the *emporia* in the 1980s, the models have been modified to include aspects of the role of production, and the potential for elements of freelance activity²¹. The documentary sources do not com-

¹⁶ See for example, T. Pestell, K. Ulmschneider, *Markets in Early Medieval Europe*, Macclisfield, 2003; and J. Naylor, *An Archaeology of Trade*.

¹⁷ A. Harding, «A conversation with Colin Renfrew (Professor Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn)», *European Journal of Archaeology*, 11 (2008), p. 143-170, see p. 159-160.

¹⁸ Although see R. Cowie, «The evidence for royal sites in Middle Anglo-Saxon London», *Medieval Archaeology*, 48 (2004), p. 201-209; and H. Hamerow, «Agrarian production».

¹⁹ C. Scull, «Ipswich»; V. Birbeck, *The Origins of Mid-Saxon Southampton*. London has produced more evidence recently, see G. Malcolm, D. Bowsher, *Middle Saxon London*, p.17-57 and L. Blackmore, A. Vince, R. Cowie, «The origins of Lundenwic? Excavations at 8/9 Long Acre/16 Garrick Street, WC2», *London Archaeologist*, 10 (2004), p. 301-305.

²⁰ R. Hodges, *Dark Age Economics. The origins of towns and trade AD 600-1000*, London, 1982.

²¹ R. Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, London, 1989, built upon the thesis of *Dark Age Economics* to argue that the *emporia* were also centres of mass production. J. Henning, «Early European towns», and M. McCormick, «Where do trading towns come from?», both advocate freelance aspects to the early medieval economy, and much of the work on rural sites is based within such a framework, for example, J. Naylor, *An Archaeology of Trade*.

fortably support the notions of royal control against capitalisation of trade through the implementation of tolls²². However, whilst these ideas are mostly concerned and appropriate for the 'classic' 8th- and 9th-century *emporia*, their early phases have remained poorly understood, and until recently, little known.

A number of excavations undertaken in recent years at the known English *emporia* of Hamwic (Southampton), London, Ipswich and York (fig. 1), however, have all provided some evidence regarding their evolution and early history. Whilst importantly highlighting differences in their trajectory, these excavations have also provided vital new information regarding the beginnings of these settlements, and some broad trends can be brought out from the results. With the exception of the settlement by the River Foss in York²³, the origins of all three southern English *emporia* can be traced to the early or mid-7th century and are quite unlike the settlements known at these locations a century later²⁴. Whilst there is evidence for imported material and trade, the remains of the 7th century differ from those of later periods in several ways. The evidence suggests that these settlements were smaller than their urban-like successors and lacked a planned layout, showing much more in common with typical 7th-century rural settlements. Their cemeteries were close by, often underlying the 8th-century expansion of the *emporium*.

In London, for example, the earliest evidence comes from early 7th-century levels at Long Acre where pits and a well containing both local and imported pottery have been excavated, but the major excavations at the Royal Opera House have provided the fullest sequence of Middle Saxon occupation²⁵. Here, a number of mid-7th century burials were superceded around 675 by an initial building phase, which was neither planned nor aligned with any known routeways, before a second phase with large yards, but

²² For example, S. Kelly, «Trading privileges», and N. Middleton, «Early medieval port customs».

²³ At York, the phasing of the Fishergate site only dates occupation from the very late 7th or very early 8th centuries at the earliest and no coins issued before c. 700 are recorded. See R. L. Kemp, *Anglian Settlement at 46-54 Fishergate*, «The Archaeology of York 7/1», York, 1996, p. 12. The earliest coin finds are of Series C and D, the issue of both dated to around the first decade of the 8th century. My thanks to Dr. Richard Hall for permission to use the unpublished coin data from Fishergate, identified by the late Elizabeth Pirie.

²⁴ C. Scull, «Ipswich», p. 304-308; G. Malcolm, D. Bowsher, *Middle Saxon London*.

²⁵ L. Blackmore *et al.*, «The origins of Lundenwic?»; G. Malcolm, D. Bowsher, *Middle Saxon London*, p. 17-134



1. Location map showing the main sites discussed.

otherwise similar nature, was constructed. Intense occupation is only seen from the early 8th century with the installation of rigid plots and boundaries aligned along gridded streets; and the most intense period of activity did not begin until the 730s²⁶.

Similarly at Ipswich, the earliest settlement, roughly six hectares in size, had at least one contemporary cemetery in use during the 7th century, with a range of local and imported material represented. As elsewhere, the settlement underwent massive expansion in the early 8th century, and the Ipswich Ware pottery industry began around 720²⁷.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ C. Scull, «Ipswich», p. 303-308.

No early settlement is yet known at Hamwic, although there is some ephemeral evidence. The earliest phases of the St. Mary's site consist of a major 7th- to 8th-century cemetery but as elsewhere in Hamwic, contemporary settlement evidence is lacking²⁸. The burials here include a number of rich assemblages, some with imported material. Major settlement expansion in the early 8th century – probably centred around the Six Dials area and extending across St. Mary's cemetery – becomes evident when a gridded street plan was laid out within a boundary ditch²⁹. The combined presence of this cemetery and other early burials, and the small amount of other material strongly suggest that there was a 7th-century settlement at Hamwic, even though its precise location remains unclear.

One common aspect among all of the English *emporia* during the 7th century is a dearth, if not a complete lack, of coinage, both of the earlier gold and the initial phase of the silver sceattas dating from about 670/80 to 710³⁰. This dearth is especially evident when compared to the period from the early 8th century when the *emporia* become some of the most coin-rich settlements in the country; but pre-710 patterns of coin loss do not indicate them to be any more coin-rich than other sites of the period³¹.

²⁸ Some evidence, consisting of two pits and a post-hole which pre-date the Middle Saxon ditch, was found during the Cook Street excavations but little else is known. See M. F. Garner, «Further Middle Saxon evidence at Cook Street, Southampton (SOU 567)», *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club*, 52 (1997), p. 77-87, see p.79. For St Mary's see V. Birbeck, *The Origins of Mid-Saxon Southampton*.

²⁹ *Ibidem*; P. Andrews, *Excavations at Hamwic. Volume 2, excavations at the Six Dials*, York, 1992.

³⁰ Sceattas appear to have been issued in two main English phases, known as the Primary and Secondary phases, dating c. 680-710 and c.710-c.750/60 respectively. Alongside these are a number of Continental issues from what is now the Netherlands and Denmark, dating from the late 7th century. The Danish types now appear to continue as late as the early 11th century. The best general introduction to sceattas is P. Grierson, M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage I. The early Middle Ages (5th to 10th centuries)*, Cambridge, 1986, p. 155-189. The new, extended dating scheme for the Danish sceattas of series X is the result of excavations at Ribe, Denmark and can be found in C. Feveile, «Series X and coin circulation in Ribe», in *Two Decades of Discovery*, Studies in Early Medieval Coinage I, ed. T. Abramson, Woodbridge, 2008, p. 53-67.

³¹ Hamwic: 14 Primary phase and 110 Secondary phase sceattas are recorded. Ipswich: two Primary phase and 82 Secondary phase. London: five Primary phase and 14 Secondary phase. York: five Primary phase and 15 Secondary phase. All data derived from EMC with additions from excavation reports, see: D.M. Metcalf, «Coin», in M.F. Garner, «Middle Saxon evidence at Cook Street, Southampton (SOU 254)», *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society*, 49 (1993), p. 77-127, see p. 105; K. Ulmschneider, *Markets, Ministers and Metal-Detectors: the archaeology of Middle Saxon*

One important and interesting aspect of the excavations on the 7th-century levels is the lack of evidence for centralised planning, a trait which can realistically only be argued for the 8th century. This does not, of course, imply that a royal influence can be discounted, and David Hinton has suggested some of the grave finds were part of ceremonial *seaxes* and, as such, may have belonged to the *wic gerefa*, the king's representative or reeve at the port³². Their interpretation, however, may sit more comfortably within the remits of a vibrant coastal zone, so eloquently outlined by Chris Loveluck and Dries Tys. Additionally, there is a growing recognition that the character of a settlement can change quite radically and frequently during its existence³³. Indeed, it would seem that the very nature of *emporia* changed radically in the early 8th century, and this may have had ramifications for relationships with authority and the nature of interactions with

Lincolnshire and Hampshire compared, British Archaeological reports 307, Oxford, 2000; D.M. Metcalf, «The coins», in V. Birbeck, *The Origins of Mid-Saxon Southampton: excavations at the Friends Provident St Mary's Stadium 1998-2000*, Salisbury, 2005; M. Gaimster, «The coin», in J. Leary, *Tatberht's Lundenwic*, London, 2004, p. 102-3; D.M. Metcalf, «The Middle Saxon sceattas», in *Middle Saxon London: Excavations at the Royal Opera House 1989-99*, eds G. Malcolm, D. Bowsher, London, 2003, p. 285-287; R.L. Whytehead, R. Cowie, «Excavations at the Peabody Site, Chandlers Lane and the National Gallery», *Transactions of the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society*, 40 (1989), 35-176; R. Cowie, «A gazetteer of middle Saxon sites and finds in the Strand/Westminster area», *Transactions of the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society*, 39 (1988), p. 37-46; J. Newman, «Wics, trade and the hinterlands—the Ipswich region», in *Anglo-Saxon Trading Centres: beyond the emporia*, ed. M. Anderton, Glasgow, 1999, p. 32-47, see Table 1; C. Barclay, «Coins», in *Blue Bridge Lane & Fishergate House, York. Report on Excavations: July 2000 to July 2002*, eds C.A. Spall, N.J. Toop, 2005, http://www.archaeologicalplanningconsultancy.co.uk/mono/001/rep_coins.html; E.J.E. Pirie, «Initial revision of the Fishergate coin-list», York Archaeological Trust unpublished archive report. My thanks to Richard Hall (York Archaeological Trust) and the late Elizabeth Pirie for allowing me to use this material.

³² D. Hinton, *Gold and Gilt, Pots and Pins: possessions and people in Medieval Britain*, Oxford, 2005, p. 75-76.

³³ C. Loveluck, D. Tys, «Coastal societies»; M. McCormick, «Where do trading towns come from?», p. 42-3 sensibly suggests that different settlements most likely had different factors behind their emergence and development and that within settlements these factors would no doubt also vary with time. The excavations at Flixborough (Lincolnshire) are a case in point, interpreted throughout its life from the 7th to 10th century as including secular and ecclesiastical phases and differing relationships to the coastal economic landscape. See C. Loveluck, D. Atkinson, *The Early Medieval Settlement Remains from Flixborough: the occupation sequence, c. AD 600-1000*, Excavations at Flixborough volume 1, Oxford, 2007.

rural areas. This can be explored through an assessment of the patterns of the circulation of coinage in the early period. As a medium of exchange rather than a traded item, changes in the composition of the coin assemblage provide us with more direct evidence for the nature of the monetised economic landscape. In addition, their precise dating provides a vastly superior chronology compared with many other material groups, including both pottery and metalwork³⁴.

The evolution of coin use in 7th- and 8th-century England

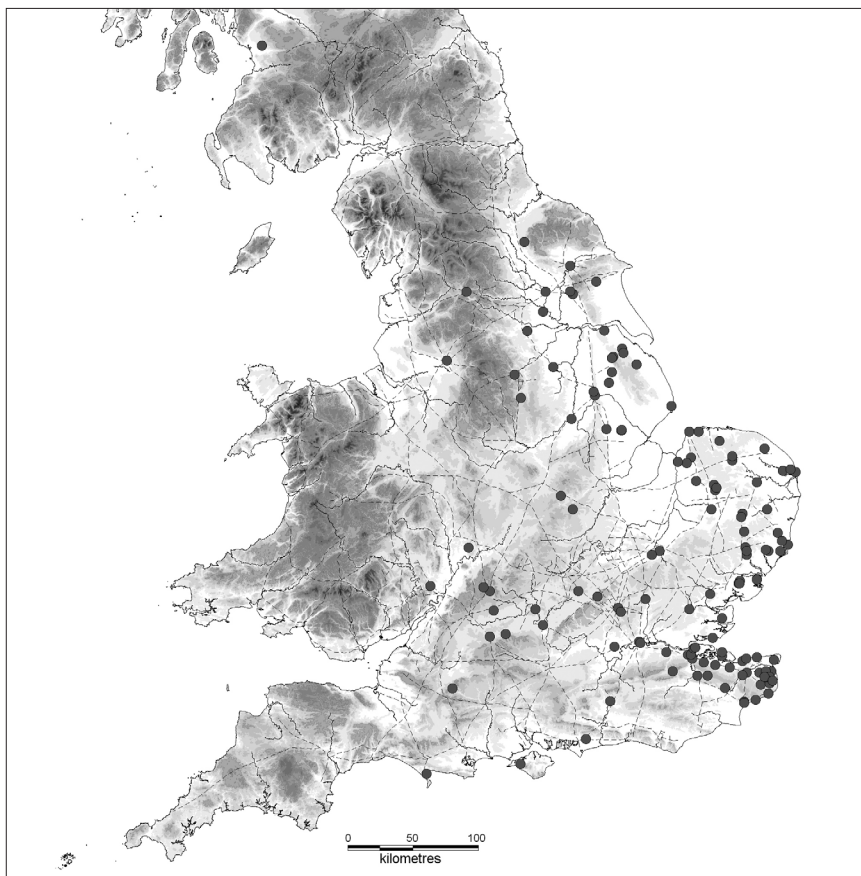
Figs. 2 to 4 show the general distribution patterns of gold coinage and Primary and Secondary phase sceattas. Although the large assemblages of early coinage now available for research have diminished the impact of broad-scale distribution analysis, and quantitative methods have largely superseded distribution analysis, they still provide a useful overview of coin use in Anglo-Saxon England³⁵.

The earliest medieval coins found in England in any substantial number are the 7th-century gold Merovingian and English tremisses (the latter are often referred to as *thrymsas*), and the distribution patterns of these coins, which has emerged in the last twenty years, has extended what we know of their circulation quite considerably (fig. 2)³⁶. The latest distribution patterns, with far

³⁴ A total of 3079 coins were used in this analysis, 197 gold coins, dating 600-70/75, 886 silver sceattas dating 670/80-710, and about 1996 sceattas dating 710-50. The dataset was produced from amalgamation of PAS, EMC and excavation reports, with all likely duplicates excluded. The PAS and EMC data was downloaded in July 2009. The chronology of the coinage is now well understood through a combination of hoard and archaeological evidence, including additional absolute chronological anchors provided through dendrochronology from certain sites. See P. Grierson, M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, 1986, p. 184-189, and C. Feveile, «Series X».

³⁵ National distributions are rarely considered, with preference given to regionally-based analysis, although brief discussion is made in J.D. Richards *et al.*, «Anglo-Saxon landscape and economy», section 3.4.1. Regional level analysis exploring the evolution of coin-use in the later 7th -to early 8th-centuries can be found for different areas, for example, in J. Naylor, *An Archaeology of Trade*, p. 37-46 (Yorkshire) and p. 89-101 (Kent).

³⁶ D.M. Metcalf, «The availability and uses of gold coinage in England, c.670: Kentish primacy reconsidered», *Festschrift Lagerqvist, Numismatika Meddelanden*, 37 (1989), p. 267-274, Fig. 1. 5th- and 6th-century coins are known in very small numbers in England, including Byzantine coinage, and copies of gold Byzantine *solidi* and *tremisses* issued by, for example, the Merovingians and Visigoths. For example, see R. Abdy, G. Williams, «A catalogue of hoards and single finds from the British Isles c. AD 410-



2. The distribution of gold coinage in England, c. 580-675.
Roman roads are shown as dashed line.

more finds having been discovered in eastern England, as well as a small, but significant number further west, no longer support the idea that Kent held a special place in the circulation of gold coinage. Very few of these coins, however, have been found at any of the *emporía*. There are no published finds from Hamwic or Ipswich and those finds made in London and York are not from

675», in *Coinage and History in the North Sea World c. 500-1250. Essays in honour of Marion Archibald*, eds B. Cook, G. Williams, Leiden, 2005, p. 11-73; T.S.N. Moorhead, «Early Byzantine copper coins found in Britain. A review in light of new finds recorded with the Portable Antiquities Scheme», in *Ancient History, Numismatics and Epigraphy in the Mediterranean World. Studies in memory of Clemens E. Bosch and Sababat Atlan and in honour of Nezahat Baydur*, ed. O. Tekin, 2009, p. 263-274.

the site of either *emporium*³⁷. Williams is right to consider the distribution as reflecting the free circulation of currency in both inland and coastal regions, and notes their occurrence away from navigable rivers³⁸. The distribution is also tightly bound to the known network of Roman roads, especially inland, illustrating the importance of these older routes of communication. However, the vast bulk of finds are derived from easterly areas, especially within the coastal zone, and a number of sites have produced quite substantial assemblages, including thirteen from a site in southern Lincolnshire, and fourteen from Coddendam (Suffolk), located only 10 km from Ipswich, and a number of other sites have produced around half a dozen finds³⁹. Such concentrations of non-hoard material must be indicative of a circulating currency, being used in some form of economic transactions, and it illustrates that the subsequent period of silver coinage and the expansion of the *emporia* can be grounded within a situation of longer-term monetisation.

The earliest silver sceattas, known as the Primary phase, date from about 680-710, were minted in England and Frisian areas⁴⁰. Although the areas where gold coinage was most abundant continued to produce larger numbers of coins, it is immediately obvious that the change to silver heralds a major expansion in coin circulation, both geographically and quantitatively (fig. 3). There are many more finds away from the eastern coastal regions, including southern England, east of Romney Marsh, and the area between London and the fenland of Cambridgeshire, stretching into the southeastern Midlands. The dearth of finds from Greater London highlights some of the constraints on data collection here⁴¹. Primary phase sceattas are rel-

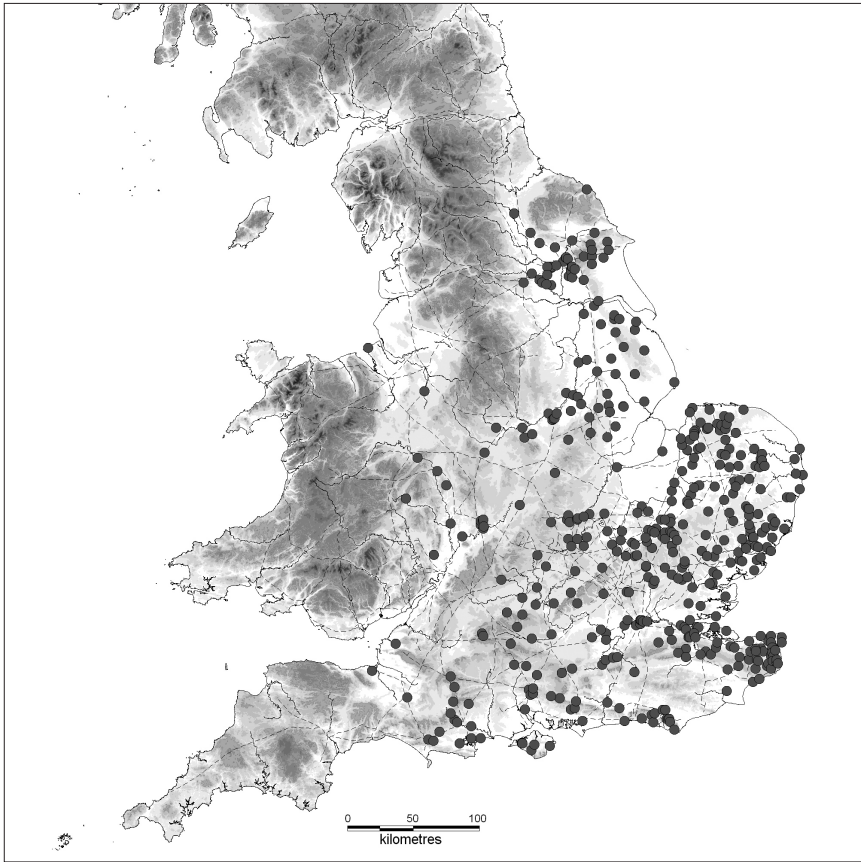
³⁷ P. Stott, «Saxon and Norman coins from London», in *Aspects of Saxo-Norman London II: Finds and environmental evidence*, ed. A. Vince, London, 1984, p. 279-325, especially p. 281; J. Moulden, D. Tweddle, «The 7th century gold coins from York», in *Anglian York: a survey of the evidence*, eds D. Tweddle, J. Moulden, E. Logan, York, 1999, p. 226-230.

³⁸ G. Williams, «The circulation and function of coinage in conversion-period England, c. AD 580-675», in *Coinage and History in the North Sea World c. 500-1250. Essays in honour of Marion Archibald*, eds B. Cook, G. Williams, Leiden, 2005, p. 145-192, see p. 170.

³⁹ The site in southern Lincolnshire, known publicly as the “South Lincolnshire productive site” is accurately located, but remains secret at the present time for fear of illegal metal-detecting.

⁴⁰ D.M. Metcalf, *Thrymsas and Sceattas in the Ashmolean Museum Oxford*, London, 1993, p. 63-165, p. 172-173 lists 13 groups or ‘series’ of Primary phase sceattas of English origin and three substantive contemporary Continental groups.

⁴¹ The constraints on data collection in, for example, urban areas are quite significant and make confident interpretations problematic in certain areas. A full assessment



3. The distribution of Primary phase sceattas in England, c. 680-710.
Roman roads are shown as dashed line.

atively rare in *emporia*, with a very low proportion of all assemblages containing early coins⁴².

Finds continue to be located predominantly near communication routes, including Roman roads, ancient trackways and waterways, and especially at junctions where some of the more 'productive sites' have been discovered⁴³. There are far more sites which produce more than a few coins, many of which

and discussion of constraints on recovery for metal-detected objects and how this can affect their subsequent analysis can be found in J.D. Richards *et al.*, «Anglo-Saxon landscape and economy», section 2.

⁴² See note 31.

⁴³ The term 'productive site' was coined by metal-detectorists in England to simply describe a site where high numbers of finds of any period can be recovered. It was then

are located within a coastal zone of about 15 km width or along easily navigable rivers⁴⁴.

Around 710, sceatta coinage entered what is referred to as the Secondary phase, which lasted into the middle of the 8th century⁴⁵. As silver content begins to decline, there is a massive expansion in minting, with numerous types of coin minted across southern England, and a number of the substantive types were probably minted in the *emporia* where they dominate the assemblages⁴⁶. Secondary phase sceattas are also found in high numbers at all of the *emporia* in comparison to earlier issues. The proportional increase in coin loss at the *emporia* is higher than the increase seen in the overall national or regional assemblages indicating a great expansion in activity at these sites⁴⁷.

The distribution patterns are similar to the Primary phase with some expansion across the east and south Midlands. However, the main pattern appears to be consolidation rather than expansion, with steadily increasing numbers of finds across all areas of southern and eastern England (fig. 4). The continuing dearth of material from northern and western areas may indicate the staunchly non-monetised nature of these societies and probably reflected their large distance and dislocation from the economic networks of the North Sea littoral. The patterns seen regarding the locations of find-spots are similar to those of the Primary phase, namely concentrating along communication routes and junctions between routes, broadly indicating a settling of England's economic landscape.

This broad examination of the distributions of sceattas illustrates how the evolution of a monetised zone around the south and east English coastal zones and major rivers appeared in the 7th and early 8th centuries and grad-

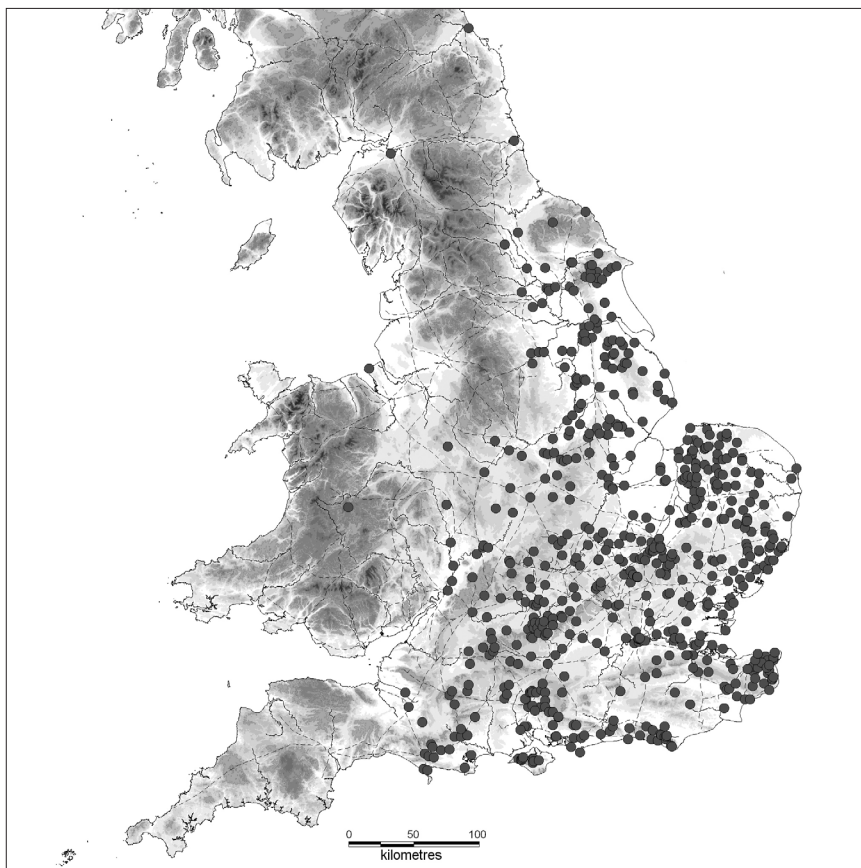
used by numismatists to describe sites, especially early medieval, which were coin-rich. The term has now entered the academic vernacular to describe early medieval sites with above average numbers of finds of metalwork and coinage, and is here used only to describe sites where recovery is predominantly by metal-detection. In this sense it is a useful way to demarcate rich metal-detected sites from excavated sites.

⁴⁴ J. Naylor, *An Archaeology of Trade*, p. 123.

⁴⁵ D. M. Metcalf, *Thrymsas and Sceattas in the Ashmolean Museum Oxford vol. 3*, London, 1994, lists 29 different groups of sceattas dated to the Secondary phase, reflecting the wide and varied nature of their issue in this period. Also, cf. C. Feveile, «Series X and coin circulation in Ribe», in *Two Decades of Discovery*, ed. T. Abramson, Woodbridge, 2008, p. 53-68. Feveile argues most persuasively from the excavation at Ribe (Denmark) that the series X sceattas circulated in the town into the early 9th century. Although there is no evidence that most types were so long-lived it is nevertheless important to recognise their circulation did not all come to an end at the same time.

⁴⁶ P. Grierson, M. Blackburn *Medieval European Coinage*, p. 168-183.

⁴⁷ J. Naylor, «The circulation of early medieval European coinage», Fig. 9; M. Blackburn, «Productive sites», Fig. 3.3.



4. The distribution of Secondary phase sceattas in England, c. 710-750.
Roman roads are shown as dashed line.

ually expanded westwards, which seemingly focused these areas toward the systems of North Sea trade. The steady increase in numbers of finds and findspots indicate that coinage was circulating more readily over time albeit as high value coins. It remains unclear quite how they functioned within the standard rural economy, and it must be recognised that the majority of exchange would have taken place without the use of coinage⁴⁸.

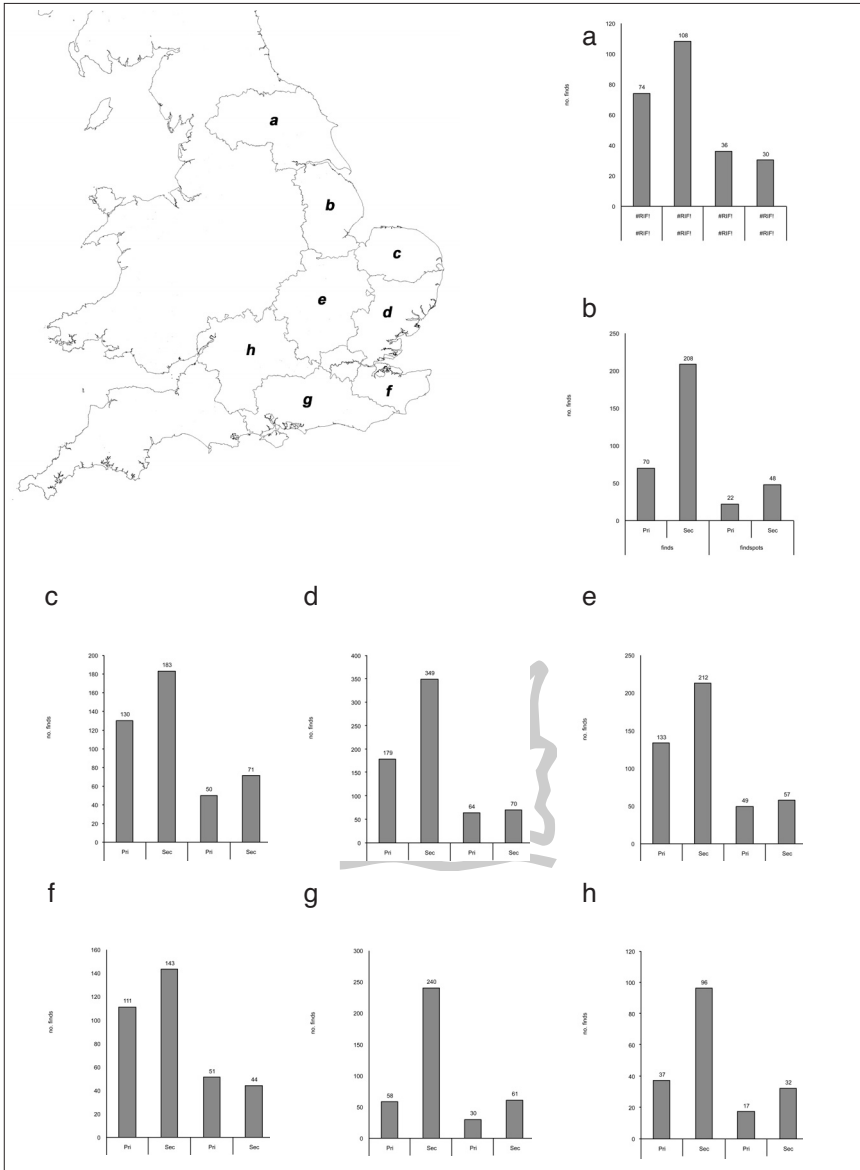
⁴⁸ Later 8th-century Frankish documents give the value of one silver denier for a variety of different commodities. For example, it could buy a dozen loaves of wheat bread. See C. Kilger, «Wholeness and holiness: counting, weighing and valuing silver in the early Viking period», in *Means of Exchange. Dealing with silver in the Viking Age*, Kaupang Excavation Project Publication Series Volume 2., ed. D. Skre, Aarhus, 2008, p. 253-325, at p. 270.

However, it is also clear that the process of monetisation in England was not homogenous, and its development was both complex and geographically variable. It will be useful to gain some insight into the relative chronological composition of the coin assemblage as this may tell us more about the evolution of coin use on a regional scale. Fig. 5 shows a broad regional overview of the Primary and Secondary phase sceattas by general abundance and the numbers of findspots in order to elucidate whether regions evolved in a similar manner or if the development of coin use may include additional variations.

Having seen the steadily evolving geographical distributions and the overall quantitative figures, it is no surprise that all areas showed increasing numbers of finds over time. The greatest proportional increases are inland (fig. 5, area h) and around two *emporia*, which held their own very large Secondary phase assemblages (fig. 5, areas d and g), neither of which is surprising. The modest increase in Secondary phase coins within most areas with higher Primary phase assemblages is also expected (fig. 5 areas a, c, e and f). However, the very large increase of Secondary phase coins in Lincolnshire (fig. 5, area b) is a surprise when compared to the areas around it, perhaps implying that the notion of an east coast monetised zone is an oversimplification and that these finds may be related to Mercian overlordship in the region from the early 8th century⁴⁹. Alongside this, the small increase in finds north of the Humber may be related to trade moving south from the Humber estuary rather than north, although the excavated evidence from the Fishergate settlement in York may belie this possibility. However, plotting the numbers of findspots provides some unexpected results. In most areas, the period of study witnesses a substantial increase in the numbers of findspots, for example doubling or near-doubling in the 'south midlands', south coast and Lincolnshire, and increasing by a quarter in Norfolk. However, in southeast England (fig 5, areas d-f) and North and East Yorkshire (fig. 5, area a) the change is different. In areas d and e, the increase is small, less than a 10% increase in findspots, and in areas a and f, the number of sites actually decreases, contrary to expectations.

Two important points can be made from these results. First, it is obvious that the process of monetisation is complex and regionally varied, continuing into the Secondary phase in inland areas. Second, south of Norfolk and in eastern Yorkshire, the increase in coin loss masks the likelihood that

⁴⁹ I have previously argued that the Series J sceattas belong to Lincolnshire and are a reflection of Mercian interest in the kingdom of Lindsey, now northern Lincolnshire. The kingdom of Mercia can be very roughly equated with the current Midlands of England. See J. Naylor, «Mercian hegemony and the origins of series J sceattas: the case for Lindsey», *British Numismatic Journal*, 76 (2006), p. 159-170.



5. Map and charts comparing the numbers of finds and findspots of Primary and Secondary phase sceattas by English region.

the underlying monetisation of these areas had reached its peak within the remits of a single, high value denomination. This is seen in a very modest increase in the number of locations of coin finds in most areas, and a decrease in others. The latter may perhaps be related to specific factors that

could have affected the circulation of coinage in those areas. In eastern Yorkshire, the changes may be related to the growing Mercian hegemony, and in Kent, for example, the effect of the massively increased activity at Hamwic, London and Ipswich may have taken international trade to other destinations even though sea routes would inevitably have been constrained by prevailing wind and sea currents. Regardless, these results are unexpected, and given that this coincides with the period of great expansion at the *emporia*, the role of these settlements in the circulation of coinage becomes potentially more important.

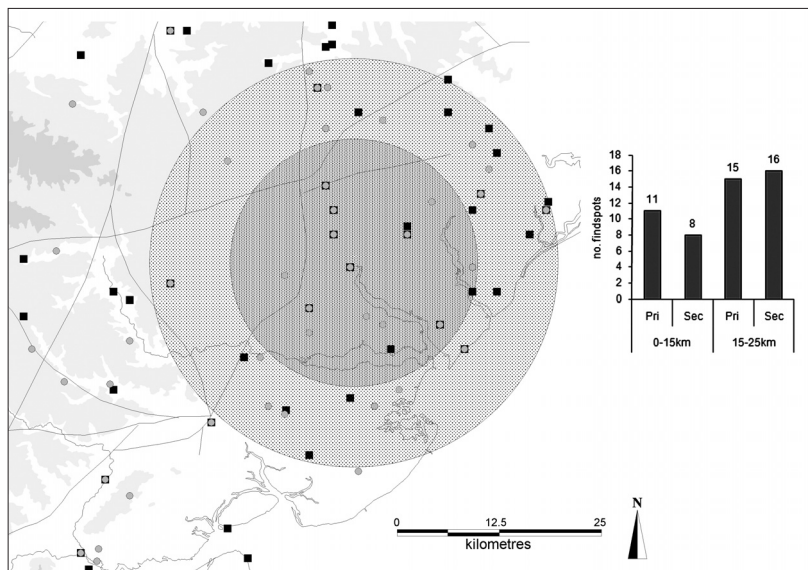
The impact of the early emporia on the circulation of coinage

As we have seen, the English *emporia* were either founded or saw great expansion in the early years of the 8th century. The coin evidence suggests that this occurred in the Secondary phase of sceattas, as only a few Primary phase coins have been found and a massive increase occurs thereafter. Despite the *emporium*'s central position in international economic networks, shown conclusively both by the general range and abundance of materials found and through other analyses, debate remains about their effect on the surrounding region. It is important to ask whether these places actually affected the circulation of coinage around them, or if the above results are simply part of a general, regional pattern⁵⁰. The data are treated in a more targeted way than previously, by looking at the findspots within zones out from each *emporium*. Two zones were explored, the first at 0-15 km from an *emporium*, roughly the distance for a day's return travel by non-mechanised means⁵¹. The second zone explored for comparison was an outer zone at 15-25 km for each *emporium* with the exception of London, which can only be treated broadly⁵².

⁵⁰ S.M. Sindbæk, «The small world of the Vikings: networks in early medieval communication and exchange», *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 40 (2007), p. 59-74 shows the importance of the Continental *emporia* as 9th-century 'hubs' in the communication networks of Europe. There is little to suggest that this was not the case in the 8th century or in England. Models interpreting the *emporia* within the models of monopolistic port-of-trade or gateway communities tend to see these locations as necessarily divorced from their surroundings, but others treat them more as ports or towns. For examples see T. Saunders, «Early medieval emporia and the tributary social formation», in *Wics: the early medieval trading centres of Northern Europe*, eds D. Hill, R. Cowie, Sheffield, 2001, p. 7-13 and C. Loveluck, D. Tys, «Coastal societies».

⁵¹ J. Naylor, *An Archaeology of Trade*, p. 22.

⁵² The constraints on data collection in Greater London mean that this type of analysis is impossible here and instead must simply rely on finds from excavations and the River Thames.



6. Map and chart showing the patterns of coin loss in two zones around Ipswich, at 0-15km and 15-25km distance.

Unfortunately, constraints on the collection of portable antiquities data means that levels of evidence vary widely around the different *emporia*. The effect of modern urbanism on data collection constrains and distorts find distributions quite radically, particularly in Greater London⁵³. Around Southampton, the Victorian expansion of the city constrains data collection within *c.* 5 km of the location of the middle Saxon *emporium*, although both Anglo-Saxon and longer-term economic trends have been previously explored here⁵⁴. However, Ipswich and York provide potentially more reliable results owing to their comparatively modest post-medieval urban development⁵⁵.

Fig. 6 shows the two zones around the *emporium* at Ipswich, with the general spread of finds focused towards the coastal zone northeast of the town and the northwest, along the Gipping Valley, which forms a natural route from the coast to the fenland further west⁵⁶. The modest increase in num-

⁵³ J.D. Richards *et al.*, «Anglo-Saxon landscape and economy», section 2.4.2.5.

⁵⁴ K. Ulmschneider, *Markets, Minsters and Metal-Detectors*; J.D. Richards *et al.*, «Anglo-Saxon landscape and economy», section 2.5.2.3.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, sections 2.4.2.1 and 2.4.2.4.

⁵⁶ J. Newman, «Exceptional finds, exceptional sites? Barham and Coddanham. Suffolk», in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: trading and 'productive sites', 650-850*, eds T. Pestell, K. Ulmschneider, Macclesfield, 2003, p. 97-109, see p. 99.

bers of sites and finds from Primary to Secondary phases for the region (fig. 5, area d) can be seen in the 15-25 km zone outside Ipswich; but within 15 km, the result is rather different. Here, eleven sites have produced Primary Phase sceattas whereas only eight have produced Secondary Phase types. The broad quantification also declines by over half, indicating that in the region immediately surrounding Ipswich, the period of the *emporium's* expansion coincides with a curtailing of coin use outside.

A closer examination of the evidence brings these results into even sharper relief. Two well-known and highly artefact-rich sites, Barham and Coddendam, are located within 10 km of Ipswich. Both have produced large amounts of coinage and metalwork, some imported, and in the case of Barham, a substantial ceramic assemblage of Ipswich ware was produced in the nearby *emporium* from c.720⁵⁷. The two sites were significant points in the landscape, had wide-ranging contacts and were no doubt important parts of the incipient settlement hierarchy of the 7th century. However, Newman has highlighted their very different chronologies and trajectories. Coddendam's metalwork assemblage contains greater levels of imported pieces, and there is evidence for metalworking on the site. The coin assemblage is also impressive, including fourteen gold *tremisses* and twenty-three Primary Phase sceattas before an abrupt early 8th-century decline, with only four identifiable Secondary Phase coins⁵⁸. Conversely at Barham, the metalwork assemblage is smaller and no gold coins are known, but seventeen Primary Phase and twenty-one Secondary Phase sceattas have been recovered, as have a few sherds of Ipswich Ware illustrating a longer-lived settlement than at Coddendam⁵⁹. It is also worth noting that both sites are thought to have covered about the same area as 7th-century Ipswich, indicating that the early settlement at Ipswich was not of a substantially different character to contemporary settlement in the region⁶⁰. Alongside these two sites and within the 15 km zone, the excavated site on the Whitehouse Industrial Estate, just outside Ipswich, appears to have been occupied

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 103-104; twelve Continental Series E sceattas are known, only a few of which are firmly dated to within a particular phase and so some may be later. The coin data is amalgamated from the EMC and J.D. Richards, J. Naylor, C. Holas-Clark, «The Viking and Anglo-Saxon Landscape and Economy (VASLE) Project» archive at http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/resources.html?vasle_ahrc_2008, site number 2 in "VASLE aim 2 artefact data" download.

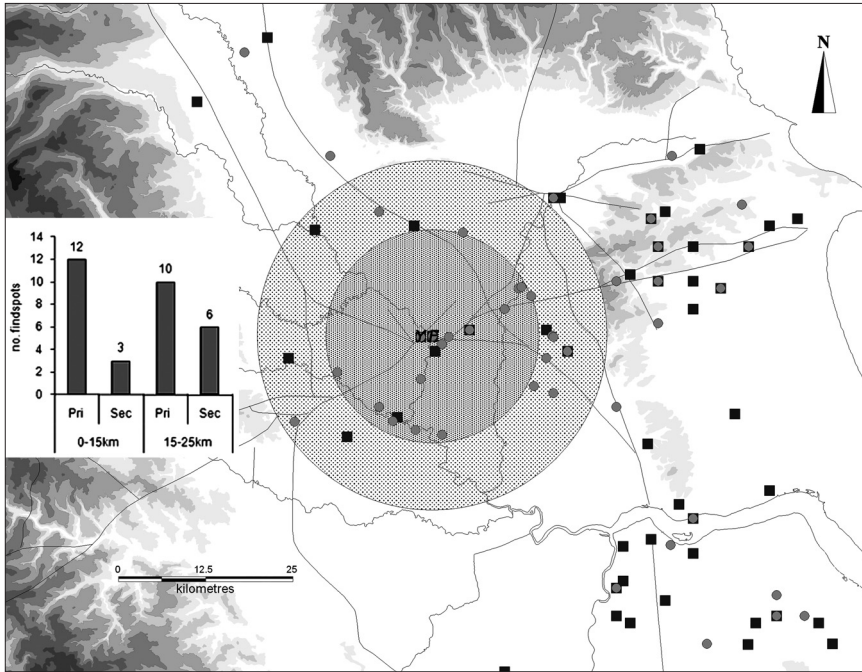
⁵⁹ J. Newman, «Exceptional finds», p. 101-102 for general discussion.

⁶⁰ J. Newman, «Exceptional finds», p. 101-103 cites Barham as covering 5 hectares and Coddendam nearly 6 hectares. C. Scull, «Ipswich», p. 304 states that 7th-century Ipswich was "approximately 6 hectares" in size.

from only the early 8th century, illustrating the complex and evolving nature of settlement in the area⁶¹. The site at Rendlesham, just outside of the 15 km zone, is also important here. A documented royal palace on the River Deben, found through field-walking in the 1980s, produced one of the largest Ipswich Ware concentrations in southeast Suffolk, and recent survey using both metal-detectors and traditional archaeology has brought further information to light⁶². Nineteen 7th- and early 8th-century coins, including six gold *tremisses*, seven Primary phase and five Secondary phase sceattas have been recovered around the present village. This assemblage mirrors that seen at Coddenham, although Rendlesham continued to be occupied throughout the 8th century, as shown by its high levels of gold, Primary phase coinage and less than expected numbers of Secondary phase sceattas. However, it still appears that two highly important sites in the immediate vicinity of Ipswich were greatly affected by the 8th-century expansion of the *emporium*. In sum, we seem to be witnessing two different scenarios. In the 7th century there were a number of similarly-sized settlements in the Gipping and Deben valley areas with wide-ranging contacts, evidence for high-status and monetised occupation. This does not support the notion that Ipswich was a royal foundation, but rather part of a vibrant, highly-connected coastal zone. The subsequent expansion of Ipswich in the 8th century, though, greatly affected the circulation of coinage and the economic landscape of the surrounding region. Whilst this could be seen as a more authoritarian guiding hand attempting to control trade, it may also merely represent one of the consequences of Ipswich's expansion, especially given that coin use continues to expand elsewhere. Indeed, Ipswich's growing local dominance may have simply drawn elements of the local population into the town for trade rather than traders moving around the nearby countryside. Alongside this, the changes in settlement patterns we seem to be witnessing around Ipswich could be interpreted as a movement of population into Ipswich from the local area. However, broader surveys will be required to more fully discuss these points.

⁶¹ B.S. Nenk, S. Margeson, M. Hurley, «Medieval Britain and Ireland in 1995», *Medieval Archaeology*, 40 (1996), p. 234-318, see p. 284-285.

⁶² J. Newman, «The late Roman and Anglo-Saxon settlement pattern in the Sandlings of Suffolk», in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: the seventh century in north-west Europe*, ed. M.O.H. Carver, Woodbridge, 1992, p. 25-38, see p. 36. My thanks to Faye Minter (SCCAS) for alerting me to the recent survey work and finds from this site and the work which has so far been done there. The coin finds are recorded with EMC from where the data used in this paper were obtained, and are listed simply as 'Rendlesham' rather than a specific location within the parish. It is unclear exactly how they relate to the Ipswich Ware scatters found previously.



7. Map and chart showing the patterns of coin loss in two zones around York, at 0-15km and 15-25km distance. In the centre, Y represent finds from central York, and F finds from the Fishergate settlement.

The clustering of Primary phase coin findspots around York, and indeed in the 45 km from the Humber estuary to York (fig. 7), have been noted previously, but the level of decrease between Primary and Secondary phase finds is remarkable and it is seen in both the 0-15 km and 15-25 km zones, dropping by two-thirds and a half respectively⁶³. Conversely, the upland but highly fertile region of the Wolds to the east shows a 30% increase from Primary to Secondary phases. The decrease in the numbers of findspots around York from *c.*710 coincided with the foundation of the *emporium* around the start of the 8th century⁶⁴. Unlike Ipswich, the zone affected was not seemingly confined to the 15 km around the *emporium*, but consisted of the whole Vale of York from the Humber estuary, where the site at North Ferriby declines after 710, and along the various water and land routes to

⁶³ J. Naylor, «The circulation of early European coinage», p. 47.

⁶⁴ Only five Primary Phase/early Intermediate Phase coins are known from the Fishergate area of York, as opposed to 13 Secondary Phase coins.

York. Topography may play a part here with the high ground of the Pennines to the west and the steep slopes of the Wolds rising to the east, creating a natural funnel into the Vale of York.

Hamwic (fig. 8) and London are more difficult to assess both for historical and practical reasons. As we have seen, monetisation in the Hamwic region lags behind the eastern regions of England, even though some early minting likely took place in southern Hampshire⁶⁵. In addition to this are the constraints on the collection of materials through metal-detection due to the urban development in both Southampton, Portsmouth and the New Forest national park, all within 15 km of Hamwic⁶⁶. However, between Southampton and Winchester there is much cultivated land where constraints should be few, but the patterns of finds are not as dense as those seen just to the north around Winchester, mirroring the known pattern of early medieval cemeteries⁶⁷. Around half of the material found within 15 km of Hamwic is Roman and the bulk of the rest belongs to the post-conquest period⁶⁸. This is not necessarily surprising⁶⁹, but the levels of early medieval material are exceptionally low, accounting for just 2% of the total, and the material recorded by PAS for the 7th and 8th centuries within 15 km of Hamwic consists of just four finds, a sceat, a 7th century brooch fitting, a strap-end and a pin⁷⁰. As such, the lack of coinage and artefacts around Hamwic may be taken as an indication that there was a strict control over the movement of materials outside of the port by a controlling authority. However, the general paucity of 5th- to early 7th-century finds in the same area hints that we may be witnessing a function of the settlement patterns rather than explicit

⁶⁵ D.M. Metcalf, «The first series of Sceattas minted in southern Wessex: series W», *British Numismatic Journal*, 75 (2005), p. 1-17.

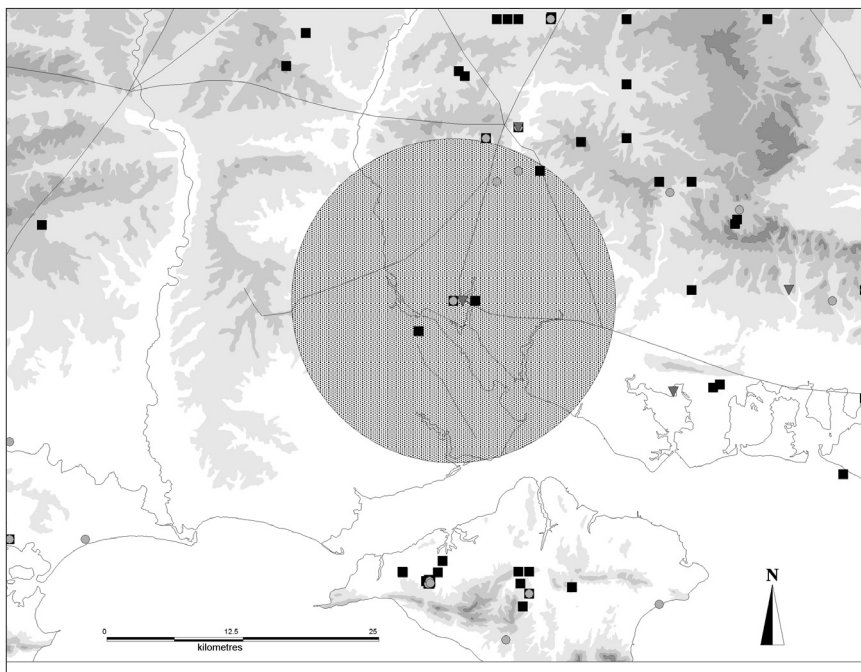
⁶⁶ J.D. Richards *et al.*, «Anglo-Saxon Landscape and Economy», section 2.5.2.3 shows large numbers of PAS finds in the Winchester region, c. 20 km to the north of Hamwic. Here the ground begins to rise away from the coastal plain, with virtually no material from around Southampton except along the Roman road eastwards from Hamwic.

⁶⁷ N. Stoodley, «Burial rites, gender and the creation of kingdoms: the evidence from seventh-century Wessex», in *The Making of Kingdoms*, eds T. Dickinson, D. Griffiths, Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 10, Oxford, 1999, p. 99-107, see fig. 1.

⁶⁸ Based on a download of PAS data on 22 January 2010.

⁶⁹ J.D. Richards *et al.*, «Anglo-Saxon Landscape and Economy», figure 28 shows the proportion of finds for southeast England, with almost 80% of all finds dating to Roman or post-Conquest periods.

⁷⁰ PAS database records HAMP-302F96, SUSS-B6E917, HAMP-ECE595, HAMP-285AA5. Interestingly two of the three non-coin artefacts are of precious metal (SUSS-B6E917 and HAMP-ECE595), but there is too little overall evidence to confidently discuss the implications of this.



8. Map and chart showing the patterns of coin loss in the 0-15km zone around Hamwic. The inverted triangles represent findspots of imported pottery.

control of material⁷¹. The number of finds and excavated early medieval sites increases dramatically around Winchester, where the ground rises away from the coastal plain. This is a pattern seen elsewhere in southeast England, with prime settlement areas where the chalk downland meets the coastal plain, often the locations of springs and water-sources⁷². Therefore, the lack of material within the immediate vicinity of Hamwic does not necessarily indicate that the port was divorced from its region. Obviously there were other settlements, known from documentary sources, but this also includes other portage contemporary with and close to Hamwic at Hamblemouth. Additionally, imported pottery has been found at other sites along the coast, again indicating that the coastal zone contained any number of entry points into the country⁷³.

⁷¹ Only three 5th- to early 7th-century objects have been recovered within 15 km of Hamwic and reported to PAS.

⁷² A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization: the evolution of Kentish settlement*, Leicester, 1986, p. 49.

⁷³ A. Morton, «Hamwic in its context», in *Anglo-Saxon Trading Centres: beyond the emporia*, ed. M. Anderton, Glasgow, 1999, p. 48-62. K. Ulmschneider, *Markets, Ministers*

London is a more problematic situation. The major constraints on the collection of data here are clear and hamper most attempts at interpretation⁷⁴. Away from the River Thames, there are barely any stray finds or excavated settlements⁷⁵. A range of stray finds of sceattas have been made from the River Thames, but these do not differ significantly from the assemblage at *Lundenwic*, consisting mostly of Secondary phase sceattas⁷⁶. In addition, the actual nature of the deposition of these finds and their origins is not entirely clear, and there is simply not enough evidence to assess the impact of the *emporium* in the early 8th century. However, like in the vicinity of Hamwic and Ipswich, there are examples of imported material found along the Thames, for instance, the imported pottery from Barking Abbey and sites east of *Lundenwic* suggesting numerous stopping points along the river, at least as far as the *emporium*⁷⁷.

Discussion

The preceding analysis has shown the research potential for the use of 'portable antiquities' within an archaeological framework. Exploring the circulation of coinage around the *emporium* allows for a range of important insights relating to the *emporium* themselves without the hazards of combin-

and Metal-Detectors, maps 20-31 give details of a range of data and information relating to the area, map 25 shows pottery including imports. These are Abbots Worthy, a few kilometres north of Winchester, "possibly originating... from the continent" (p. 152); Chalton where "one or more sherds... imported from the La Londe/Rouen area" (p. 154) have been found; at Porchester Castle, where four imported wares of middle Saxon date were present (p. 161); and at Staple Gardens, Winchester, from where a French import from Beauvais is known (p. 170).

⁷⁴ J.D. Richards *et al.*, «Anglo-Saxon Landscape and Economy», section 2.4.2.5.

⁷⁵ R. Cowie, L. Blackmore, *Early and Middle Saxon Rural Settlement in the London Region*, MOLAS Monograph 41, London, 2008.

⁷⁶ P. Stott, «Saxon and Norman coins»; R. Cowie, «A gazetteer of Middle Saxon sites and finds in the Strand/Westminster area», *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeology Society*, 39 (1988), p. 37-46; R. Cowie, R.L. Whytehead, «Excavations at the Peabody site, Chandlers Lane and the National Gallery», *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeology Society*, 40 (1989), p. 35-176; D.M. Metcalf, «The Middle Saxon sceattas», in *Middle Saxon London. Excavations at the Royal Opera House 1989-99*, MOLAS Monograph 15, G. Malcolm, D. Bowsher, London, 2003, p. 285-287; M. Gaimster, «The coin», in *'Tatberbt's London': archaeological excavations in Middle Saxon London*, PCA Monograph 2, ed. J. Leary, London, 2004, p. 102-103.

⁷⁷ R. Cowie, «The evidence for royal sites»; M. Redknap, «The Saxon pottery from Barking Abbey: part 2, the continental imports», *London Archaeologist*, 6 (1992), p. 378-381.

ing excavated coin data from the urban sites and metal-detected data from the rural areas. This shows that the evolution of coin-use and its circulation was undoubtedly highly complex and geographically variable, with differing patterns of monetisation from east to west and north to south. Areas such as the eastern coastal area, so often treated as a single zone have also been shown to be internally variable, Norfolk and Lincolnshire evolving differently to Suffolk and Yorkshire for instance.

Alongside this, we must consider the emergent settlement hierarchy and the growth of the *emporia*, which further complicates the picture. However, the analyses have shown some interesting points. 7th-century Ipswich was no bigger than a number of close-by contemporary settlements, including other coin-rich sites such as Coddensham and Rendlesham, the latter was the documented location of a 7th-and 8th-century royal palace. However, it was seen that the expansion of the port had considerable impact on the surrounding area, as was also seen around York. Hamwic and London are more difficult to assess given data collection constraints, although in London the archaeological evidence shows little or no planning in the settlement's layout until the early 8th century⁷⁸. Although the composition of coin assemblages *away* from the River Thames remains unknown, finds of sceattas from London and the River Thames are predominantly Secondary phase, indicating that the situation around Ipswich and York may not necessarily translate elsewhere. Too little is known about the zone around Hamwic to be conclusive, although the dearth of finds or other archaeology evidence may relate to underlying patterns of settlement. The development of coin-use in the region was also different, only expanding greatly during the Secondary phase therefore denying us the evidence we really require.

The character of the coastal zone is of great importance here, especially with respect to the nature of trade and settlement. Coastal zones were an area of fluidity and complexity, and high levels of connectedness and communication resulting in lower levels of control over the activities of the population⁷⁹. The early *emporia* sit more comfortably within this rubric than as a separate entity controlling trade for the elite. In any case it is clear that there were many stopping points for shipping and importing materials and coinage along the coast, arguing against the successful control of trade⁸⁰. Given the combined evidence, arguments that the *emporia*

⁷⁸ G. Malcolm, D. Bowsher, *Middle Saxon London*, p. 17-57.

⁷⁹ See, for example, C. Loveluck, D. Tys, «Coastal Societies», and M. McCormick, «Where do trading towns come from?».

⁸⁰ J. Naylor, «Access to international trade in Middle Saxon England: a case of urban over-emphasis?», in *Close Encounters: Sea – and Riverborne Trade, Ports and Hinterlands*,

did not need a guiding (royal) hand to come into existence seems entirely sensible and convincing, as are the assertions regarding the changing nature of sites over time, which can be illustrated so well from the excavations at Flixborough⁸¹. Certainly the archaeology of 7th-century *Lundenwic* and Ipswich is not consistent with the notion of specially-planned settlements for controlling trade as opposed to being well-connected communities within the coastal zone, like a number of other contemporary settlements. Indeed, the imported material and coinage found at so many sites in the coastal zone weakens arguments that the early *emporium* were in some way separate from these other places⁸². Hamwic is harder to assess but several factors can be taken into account. We know that there were cemeteries of similar date to Boss Hall (Ipswich) presenting similar overall assemblages, including some graves of status, and some graves exhibiting wide-ranging contacts⁸³. I have argued above that such evidence can be as readily explained within the nature of coastal communities as with recourse to royally-founded settlements and the role of the port funneling trade into it. However, the burial assemblages do raise interesting questions. David Hinton has recently argued that some of the finds from both

Ship Construction and Navigation in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and in Modern Time, eds M. Pasquinucci, T. Weski, British Archaeological Reports International Series 1283, Oxford, 2004, p. 139-148; C. Loveluck, «The settlement within the East Midlands, Humber estuary and continental exchange networks, AD 650-1000», in *Rural Settlement, Lifestyles and Social Change in the Later 1st Millennium AD. Anglo-Saxon Flixborough in its wider context*, ed. C. Loveluck, Excavations at Flixborough volume 4, Oxford, 2007, p. 112-121; M. Gardiner, R. Cross, N. MacPherson-Grant, I. Riddler, «Continental trade and non-urban ports in mid-Saxon England. Excavations at sandtun, West Hythe, Kent», *Archaeological Journal*, 158 (2001), p. 161-290; A. Morton, «Hamwic in its context», in *Anglo-Saxon Trading Centres. Beyond the emporia*, ed. M. Anderton, Glasgow, 1999, p. 48-62.

⁸¹ M. McCormick, «Where do trading towns come from?»; C. Loveluck, D. Atkinson, *The Early Medieval Settlement Remains from Flixborough, Lincolnshire: the occupation sequence, c. AD 600-1000*, Oxford, 2007.

⁸² C. Loveluck, D. Tys, «Coastal societies».

⁸³ A number of burial places have been found at a number of locations in Hamwic encompassing a range of smaller plots and the large cemetery at St. Mary's. See A. Morton, «A synthesis of the evidence», in *Excavations at Hamwic volume 1: excavation 1946-83, excluding Six Dials and Melbourne Street*, ed. A. Morton, London, 1992, p. 20-77, especially p. 48-55; M.F. Garner, «Middle Saxon evidence at Cook Street, Southampton (SOU 254)», *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society*, 49 (1993), p. 77-127; M.F. Garner, «Further Middle Saxon remains at Cook Street»; M.F. Garner, «A Middle Saxon cemetery at Cook Street»; V. Birbeck, *The Origins of Mid-Saxon Southampton*, p. 11-81.

Hamwic and Ipswich are indicative of a potential aristocratic presence and also notes other finds of some status from 7th-century London, citing these as evidence for royal foundation⁸⁴. Nevertheless, this evidence from the *emporia* remains difficult to interpret confidently, especially when taken within the broader regional framework. Alongside this is the lack of clarity over the 7th-century settlement at Hamwic for which we have virtually no evidence, but regardless it must have been much smaller than the 8th-century town.

In York, the foundation of the settlement is less well-defined, as is its overall size, which appears smaller than the southern *emporia*⁸⁵. York does, however, appear to have its origins later than the others, after the precedent of communications to the Humber had already been established⁸⁶. A passage in Altfrið's *Life of St. Liudger* suggests the presence of a Frisian community in York, which seems difficult to equate with a royally-founded and controlled port. There is also strong evidence from York that the city itself had very little royal presence, being rather an ecclesiastical location⁸⁷. Numismatically, York does not seem to be set up within a system of royal control, showing a distinct decline in coin-use at the time of Eadberht's reforms of coinage, when the rate of loss increases greatly across the region⁸⁸. That said, could the *emporium* at York be considered a settlement aimed at fulfilling the requirements of the early 8th-century church? The decline in coin loss along the Humber (fig. 7) is remarkable, and given that many finds are downstream of York, traffic would have passed by on its way to the city. In such a scenario, if controls on trade were lax, surely we would see continued coin loss as the local population and traders caught traffic passing along the river. However, this is not the case and we must consider the possible explanations for these patterns. It may be that we are seeing the controlled organisation of trade, or at least monetised trade, in the region from the Humber to York, with traffic funneled along the river and trade curtailed along its route. Alternatively, an examination of the broader regional evidence may suggest that such a decline at around the

⁸⁴ D. Hinton, *Gilt and Gold*, p. 75-77.

⁸⁵ R. L. Kemp, *Anglian Settlement*; C.A. Spall, N.J. Toop, *Blue Bridge Lane*.

⁸⁶ It is important to remember that the levels of excavation of the trading settlement are low and there is no reason why future excavations may not find a 7th century antecedent to the currently known settlement.

⁸⁷ D. Rollason, «Historical evidence for Anglian York», in *Anglian York: a survey of the evidence*, eds D. Tweddle, J. Moulden, E. Logan, York, 1999, p. 117-140, see p.138-139 for reference to Frisian merchants.

⁸⁸ J. Naylor, «The circulation of early medieval European coinage», p. 52-58.

start of the Secondary phase could be equated to the consolidation of Mercian power south of the Humber, resulting in more trade moving south from the Humber and fewer trading stops by merchants on their way to York⁸⁹. The evidence is not conclusive for either possible scenario but, regardless, there was a major change in the organisation of monetised trade along the Humber and Ouse in the early 8th century just as settlement at Fishergate was beginning.

But where does this leave other early 8th-century *emporia*? If, as it seems, we are looking at a situation where the evidence for a royal foundation of the *emporia* is ambivalent at best, and goes against the evidence in some areas at least, one of the central tenets of the traditional models of *emporia* becomes highly questionable. However, the 8th-century changes seen around Ipswich and York are marked but remain difficult to interpret. The changes at these sites could be seen as the domination of the area by the market at the newly expanding port, but it cannot be denied that the evidence may be interpreted within the remits of royal control in the vicinity of the *emporia*. The broader evidence, though, remains somewhat unresponsive of such overt royal control, especially with the discovery of other imported material along the coastal zone⁹⁰. This implies a more complex situation with variation both between and within regions, alongside which the prevailing paradigms sit uncomfortably⁹¹. It certainly seems that royal interest did not extend a great deal further than gaining

⁸⁹ J. Naylor, «Mercian hegemony», p. 166-169.

⁹⁰ C. Loveluck, D. Tys, «Coastal societies», p. 149-154; C. Loveluck, «The settlement within the East Midlands, Humber estuary and Continental exchange networks, AD 650-1000», in C. Loveluck, ed. *Rural Settlement, Lifestyles and Social Change in the Later First Millennium AD. Anglo-Saxon Flixborough in its wider context*, Excavations at Flixborough 4, Oxford, 2008, p. 112-121; J. Naylor, «Access to international trade in Middle Saxon England: a case of urban over-emphasis?», in *Close Encounters: sea- and riverborne trade, ports and hinterlands, ship construction and navigation in antiquity, the middle ages and in modern time*, eds M. Pasquinucci, T. Weski, British Archaeological Report International Series 1283, 2004, p. 139-148.

⁹¹ A range of recent work has seriously questioned the nature of control of the *emporia* and the organisation of early medieval trade. See J. Henning, «Early medieval European towns»; M. McCormick, «Where do trading towns come from?»; and H. Hamerow, «Agrarian production», for discussion of a wide variety of evidence. In addition, much of the extant documentary evidence for the English *emporia* does not support overt royal control. See J.R. Maddicott, «London and Droitwich, c.650-750: trade, industry and the rise of Mercia», *Anglo-Saxon England*, 34 (2005), p. 12 for the buying and selling of property in London, and S. Kelly, «Trading privileges», for the discussion of tolls and the king's right for the first choice of goods on the boats in port.

revenue from the taxation of trade through tolls, but its implementation was not always possible⁹².

This period is in many ways where the focal point of our research is required. It seems increasingly reasonable to accept that there is no reason why the *emporia* would have been royal foundations and indeed there is plenty of evidence that they were not, but the mechanisms behind the expansion remain unclear. We cannot deny a royal interest in trade, nor that there was an aspect of the economy involving taxation and renders through payment of *feorm*⁹³, but alongside this was undoubtedly a complex, commercialised economy working both regionally and internationally. The major nodes of the networks of long-distance trade must be seen in the *emporia* of northern Europe, not as 'ports-of-trade' but rather as proper port towns functioning within their regions and societies, not divorced from them, and it is within such a framework that our understanding can move forward.

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⁹² J. Naylor, *An Archaeology of Trade*, p. 129-133; also see C. Loveluck, D. Tys, «Coastal Societies», p.151-153 and R. Hodges, «Fifty-years after Dunning», p. 116-117 for a discussion of the lack of ability to police the economy.

⁹³ J. Naylor, *An Archaeology of Trade*, p. 119-122.