

BERHTWOLD'S LETTER TO FORTHERE AND ITS WIDER CONTEXT

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This paper takes as its principal subject matter the early eighth-century letter of Berhtwold, Archbishop of Canterbury, to Forthhere, Bishop of Sherborne, asking for his assistance in securing the release of a girl held in slavery by the Abbot of Glastonbury, Beorwold. Although the letter is relatively well-known, its background and context contain a number of interesting points of detail that deserve closer study, hinting as they do at a wider political background, yet underpinned by a tale of personal tragedy in the unquiet times of the period.

The letter itself is preserved in a collection of letters associated with Boniface and his circle.¹ Its text appears in Haddan and Stubbs,² and in translation in *English Historical Documents*:³

To his most reverend and holy fellow-bishop Forthhere, Berhtwold, servant of the servants of God, sends greeting in the Lord. Since my petition, which I made in your presence to the venerable Abbot Beorwold about the ransoming of a captive girl, who has kinsmen among us, has, contrary to my expectation, proved in vain, and I am importuned afresh by their entreaties, I have considered it best to send this letter to you by the brother of the girl, Eppa by name. By it I implore you to obtain from the aforesaid abbot that he will accept three hundred shillings for that girl by the hand of the bearer of these presents; and give her over to him to be conducted hither, that she can pass the remainder of her life with her relations, not in the sadness of servitude, but in the joy of liberty. When your kindness brings this about, you will have both a reward from God and thanks from me. Also, in my opinion, our brother Beorwold loses nothing of what rights he had in her. I beseech you, as I should have done before, that, when you are mindful of yourself in frequent prayers, you will deign none the less to remember me. May Jesus Christ our Lord preserve your Reverence unharmed to an advanced age.

As can readily be understood, the Archbishop is imploring Forthhere to intercede with Beorwold and to persuade him to accept a very substantial ransom in respect of the release of a captive girl (*unius captivae puellae*) offered by relatives of the girl living in Kent and evidently with the ear of the Archbishop.

The proposed ransom of three hundred shillings corresponds to the wergild prescribed by the Laws of Hlophere and Eadric⁴ for a nobleman, and this would suggest that the girl herself is of noble blood. Further illustration of the very substantial nature of the proposed ransom is given by the fact that some twenty years earlier, King Wihtrud of Kent had made composition on behalf of his people

with Ine of Wessex for the killing of Cædwalla's brother, Mul, in an amount of thirty thousand, presumably sceattas. This, at the Kentish reckoning of twenty sceattas to the shilling,⁵ represented in respect of the death of a royal prince, no less, only five times that offered by the girl's family here. With such substantial financial resources available to his family, it might be supposed that the girl's brother, Eppa, could perhaps have been identified in another context, but this appears not to be the case.⁶

Berhtwold's archiepiscopate is securely dated from 692⁷ to 731,⁸ whilst Forthhere is known to have been Bishop of Sherborne from 709⁹ until he undertook a journey to Rome in 737.¹⁰ The letter, plainly, cannot therefore be dated earlier than 709.

The latest date depends principally upon the reliability of a charter, S1253,¹¹ concerning a grant of land at Bleadney, Somerset, to Beorwold's successor, Ealdberht. As is not unusual with Glastonbury charters, the original has been lost, presumably at the time of the Reformation, but the charter is attested by two copies dating from the 1340s: Longleat 39, fo. 134v, and Bodleian, Wood empt. 1, fo. 150r, the latter cogently considered by Kelly to be either a direct copy of Longleat 39 or else of a common exemplar. Neither copy reproduces a witness list, and the extreme brevity of the charter makes it difficult to analyse.

The charter purports to date from 712, but this is inconsistent with the indiction, which would be consistent with a date of 718. As noted by Kelly, the discrepancy could arise from a miscopying of roman numerals, with a number of minims in an original *dccxiii* date being omitted, perhaps due to confusion with the beginning of the following word, *indictione*.

More positively, Kelly observes that the charter repeats the usage of the formula *famulus famulorum Dei* used in Berhtwold's letter above,¹² and that the phrase *in propriam substanciam* also appears in S44,¹³ a South Saxon diploma of the early eighth century which would appear to be authentic. Further, Kelly also identifies parallels in the wording of the statement of powers with a number of other early charters: S1164, S1179, S1799 and S1800.

Beorwold is also named as the beneficiary of S248, a charter of King Ine conveying estates in the Polden Hills, by the river Sheppey, and at Croscombe (all in Somerset), surviving as a non-contemporary single sheet of uncertain date. Kelly considers it likely to have a genuine basis,¹⁴ perhaps as one of the substantial benefactions said to have been received by Glastonbury following the substantial reorganisation of West Saxon episcopal lands on the death of Bishop Hæddi in 705, and the subsequent division of the former West Saxon see into the separate dioceses of Winchester and Sherborne. S247 is a tenth-century forgery of S248, embellishing the title deeds for one of the estates at Pilton (Somerset).

Finally, Kelly identifies a further reference to Beorwold in the *Life of Boniface* by Willibord,¹⁵ describing how Ine had convened a meeting of a number of monastic leaders which resulted in the young Boniface being sent as part of a delegation from Wessex to Kent. Two only of the monastic leaders are named:

... Wintra, who presided over the monastery which is called Tisbury, and Beorwold, who governed by the divine ordinance the monastery which is called by the name given of old, Glastonbury ...¹⁶

This reference, which must predate Boniface's journey overseas in 716, attests

to Beorwold's standing as one of the senior abbots in Wessex, puts into context his evident and disobliging lack of co-operation with Berhtwold's initial request. Wintra for his part is mentioned in S241, apparently a restoration by Ine dated 699 of land near Abingdon to Abbot Hean for the construction of a minster, but the charter contains a number of difficulties.¹⁷ Somewhat more securely, Wintra also appears as a witness to S245, a grant of exemptions from secular burdens to the churches and monasteries of Wessex by Ine apparently dated to 704. Although the grant itself has a number of questionable features, the witness list is considered to be authentic and consistent with a date of 705x9. Whilst it is of course difficult to draw too firm a set of conclusions from this rather disjointed material, such indications as do present themselves are consistent with Beorwold and his apparent contemporary Wintra being active in the first decade of the eighth century, such that we should probably be disinclined to push Berhtwold's letter too far back into the second decade. The traditional dating of Tangl, followed *inter alia* by Whitelock, of 709x712 is therefore on balance probably best left undisturbed.

This dating, however, casts doubt on some of the more obvious explanations as to how a girl with well-connected Kentish relatives of substantial means might have become a captive in Glastonbury. Although the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry for 695 records Ine as ravaging Kent in revenge for the death of Mul, thereafter no further hostilities between Wessex and Kent are mentioned by either the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* or Bede for a good quarter-century or so. This silence in the principal narrative sources has generally, and plausibly, been interpreted as indicating a period of relative tranquillity between the two kingdoms.¹⁸ Such military activity as is identified as having been undertaken by Ine was instead directed against Geraint of Dumnonia in 710.

The circumstances of Cædwalla's accession, his subsequent military adventurism and then abdication after a very brief reign of only two years or so would have presented Ine with a far from straightforward political inheritance. Kent, too, was seeking to emerge from a period of blood-letting amongst the native dynasty that had seen both Mercia and the east Saxons vie for political control, and Wihtréd's composition for the death of Mul is consistent with a wish to put his own reign on as secure a footing as possible. Both Wihtréd and Ine may well have been realistic enough to have apprehended that any further strife between their kingdoms might have weakened them both sufficiently to render them vulnerable to fresh Mercian interference.¹⁹ Instructively, both kings also promulgated a law-code at this time, by this period a not unfamiliar recourse for kings wishing to burnish their authority and prestige. Indeed, the similarity of certain of the provisions of these codes suggest at the very least a degree of borrowing, if not indeed more substantial collaboration.²⁰

In the absence, therefore, of any more obvious explanation of the background to Berhtwold's letter, earlier scholarship deduced a connection with Ine's raid on Kent in revenge for the death of Mul,²¹ but more recent commentary²² justifiably regards this as less secure. That Eppa's sister was still capable of being described as a *puella* in or around 710, even allowing for the possibility that Berhtwold may have been seeking to downplay her importance or significance in an attempt to secure her release, would seem to suggest that she could hardly have been very much more than an infant at the time of a supposed capture around 695. Even so,

a letter of Alcuin to an unidentified daughter of Charlemagne dated to *c.*799 leaves open the upper limit of the age range in respect of which *puella* might have been used by an eighth century writer. Alcuin addresses the recipient of the letter²³ as *nobilissima puella*, and whilst it would seem more natural to suppose that the letter was destined for either Bertha (b.779x80) or Gisela (b.781), the possibility that it may have been written to Rotunda (b.775) cannot be excluded on intrinsic evidence alone.

It is perhaps helpful to reflect, however, that it may not be necessary to link the girl's capture with military action by the West Saxons against Kent. Regard might instead be had to the common Jutish settlement of Kent, the Isle of Wight, and parts of Hampshire attested to by Bede in *H.E.* i.15.²⁴ Bede's account of the ruthlessness of Cædwalla's conquest of the Isle of Wight in 686 is more than sufficient to suggest that any members of the aristocracy on the island were dealt with decisively and conclusively at that point:

After Cædwalla had gained possession of the kingdom of the Gewisse he also captured the Isle of Wight, which until then had been given up entirely to idolatry, and endeavoured to wipe out all the natives by merciless slaughter and to replace them by inhabitants from his own kingdom.²⁵

Bede does not suggest, however, that any descendants of an originally Jutish aristocracy on the Hampshire mainland were dealt with quite so harshly at this time, such that some longer-established families of Jutish descent may have retained a degree of local prominence even into the eighth century. As is of course well-known, Bede writes of the inhabitants of part of Hampshire still retaining a Jutish identity even in his own time:²⁶

The people of Kent and the inhabitants of the Isle of Wight are of Jutish origin and also those opposite the Isle of Wight, that part of the kingdom of Wessex which is today called the nation of the Jutes.

One might readily suppose how early in the eighth century this ongoing Jutish presence might have given rise to small-scale local skirmishes too insignificant to mention in the principal narrative sources. Thus, the possibility that this unfortunate girl was captured in some isolated action against one of the remaining families in Hampshire of Jutish descent should also be considered. This need not by any means necessarily have been as a consequence of royal policy. Perhaps a local family of Jutish heritage with Kentish connections that had hitherto managed not to draw attention to itself, was possessed of land coveted by one of its ascendant or emerging West Saxon neighbours, or else was perceived to be exerting too much influence locally. In such a case their Jutish ancestry and Kentish connections, and their consequent political unreliability, real or imagined, may have provided a justification for their removal in the course of some small-scale local freebootery, leading to the girl's captivity.

A significant body of evidence speaks to a considerable degree of internal strife within Wessex. Willibord's *Life of Boniface*²⁷ records that the delegation sent to Canterbury of which Boniface was part was despatched in response to 'a new dissension' having "sprung up", *nova quadam seditione exorta*. The reference to this having been a *new* dissension clearly implies that there had been earlier

such instances. Ine is recorded²⁸ as having fought with Coelred of Mercia at *Wodnesbeorge* (Adam's Grave, Wilts.) and whilst this was no doubt in response to a substantial Mercian incursion, it remains for speculation whether Coelred had received any encouragement from elements within Wessex opposed to Ine. Finally, although probably falling too late in Ine's reign to bear directly upon the specific matters dealt with in this article, Kirby²⁹ has cogently analysed a number of elliptical entries in the narrative sources as speaking to a crisis within his own close family. Ine is recorded³⁰ as having killed the aetheling Cynewulf, whose precise relationship to Ine is unknown. Ine's queen, Aethelburh, is recorded³¹ as having destroyed Taunton, which Ine had caused to be built, apparently, following Henry of Huntingdon,³² in the course of besieging one Ealdberht, deduced by Kirby as being possibly Ine's own son, or else the son of his brother, Ingild, who died in 718, and who might be supposed to have been seeking recognition as Ine's heir. It is clear that Ealdberht had widely-spread adherents in Surrey and Sussex and continued to make trouble for some years, since in 725 Ine is recorded³³ as having fought against the South Saxons and having killed Ealdberht. Eppa and his unfortunate sister need not be linked directly with any of these events, still less as principal actors. The purpose here is merely to show that, against such a chaotic background as this, the events – whatever they were – leading to the enslavement of Eppa's sister might very readily have been undertaken as an act of private enterprise by a local potentate, with or without Ine's knowledge or approval.

Further support for this line of reasoning can perhaps be derived from a clause in Ine's *Laws*. A tersely-worded, under-studied and in consequence incompletely understood provision comprised in a series of clauses relating to the use and occupation of land confirms that this was a period of some turbulence, when even the nobly-born were at risk of displacement:³⁴

Ch. 68: If a nobleman is evicted, he may be expelled from his house, but not from the cultivated land.

As noted by Richardson and Sayles,³⁵ this 'laconic and obscure' provision concerned with land has no parallel in any of the surviving Kentish laws of broadly the same period. Indeed, the terseness of the syntax of the dozen or so clauses preceding and following it is such as to have led Richardson and Sayles to have contended for an amalgamation of two or more texts of different dates and perhaps of different origins. Certainly the matter admits of doubt, and their suggestion deserves fuller consideration. It is sufficient for the purposes of this paper, however, merely to note that this clause does on its face seem entirely consistent with a period of upheaval and insecurity within Wessex as could give rise to the circumstances of Berhtwold's letter in the manner postulated.

The final point to be developed concerns the extent to which Berhtwold's letter may perhaps speak to the willingness of senior members of the Church to intervene in matters of this sort on more than humanitarian grounds. As is well-known, Bede's principal source for the history of Wessex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight was Forthhere's colleague and contemporary, Bishop Daniel of Winchester. The abdication and death in Rome on pilgrimage of Cædwalla's successor, Ine, is dated to 726. Although the matter does not admit of certainty, it is somewhat more likely than not that Bishop Daniel supplied his information on the origins of Wessex

to Bede after, rather than before, Ine's abdication and death. This might perhaps have emboldened Daniel to give a more unvarnished account of these matters than might have been the case were Ine still alive and in his pomp.

Barbara Yorke has drawn attention to a number of instances where Bede's account of the conquest of the Isle of Wight, presumably reflecting at least Daniel's own opinions but perhaps those of Berhtwold and Forthhere as well, shows sympathy for the fate of the inhabitants and reservations about West Saxon claims over the island.³⁶ Thus, Bede asserts that the island came under alien rule, *externae subiunctionis*, when conquered by the West Saxons.³⁷

Similarly, in summarising the condition of the Church at the time at which he was writing, Bede takes some pains to explain that the bishopric of the Isle of Wight belongs to Daniel, Bishop of Winchester.³⁸ Yorke observes with some force that Bede's comments read as though he, again drawing on Daniel, implies that the connection between Wight and Wessex still required comment, as if one might have expected the island, like other former kingdoms, to have had its own bishop.

Finally, there is the account given by Bede of the ruthless murder by Cædwalla of the two young princes, *regii pueri*, in *H.E.* iv. 16. The two unfortunates were the brothers of Arwald, the defeated king of the Isle of Wight. Despite having sought sanctuary in Jutish territory in modern Hampshire, the two were betrayed to Cædwalla and executed. Bede's account of the episode is diluted by his unconvincing attempt to turn the episode into an edifying tale of the power of baptism. He recounts that through the intercession of a local abbot, Cyneberht, the execution of the boys was delayed until they were instructed in the Christian faith and baptised, such that the boys apparently submitted willingly to their fate, being assured of their entry into the eternal kingdom.

The account as it stands is plainly unsatisfactory, and Bede can justifiably be accused of not pressing sufficiently hard the ruthlessness of Cædwalla's actions.³⁹ E.W. Watson castigates Bede as 'telling the story without abhorrence, as though it were a normal incident'.⁴⁰ It may, perhaps, be nearer the nub of the matter to recall that the conquest of the pagan kingdom of the Isle of Wight was colluded in by Bishop Wilfrid, even to the extent of him receiving a quarter of the spoils:⁴¹

Cædwalla ... also captured the Isle of Wight ... binding himself, or so it is said, by a vow, though he was not yet Christian, that if he captured the island he would give a fourth part of it for the service of the Lord to Bishop Wilfrid, who happened to have come there from his own people at that time. The size of the island is 1,200 hides according to the English way of reckoning, so the bishop was given 300 hides.

One possible interpretation of this passage is that the close association between Cædwalla and Wilfrid may have inclined Bede somewhat to soft-pedal in his account of Cædwalla's more brutal exploits. Bede might well have been reluctant to imply too trenchant a criticism of so close an associate of the central figure of his account of the Synod of Whitby, being content merely to drop the attentive reader a hint at Wilfrid's opportunistic motives with the snide *superueniens*. Alternatively, or in addition, regard might plausibly be had to the well-known tensions⁴² between Wilfrid and both Berhtwold and his predecessor Theodore. Cædwalla's links to Wilfrid might well have provided another reason for Canterbury ecclesiastics, even a generation or so later, to take a critical view of his conquests.

Irrespective of precisely how these difficult matters are analysed, it is clear that the material supplied by Bishop Daniel to Bede did not seek to conceal a number of, not wholly creditable, aspects of the early history of Wessex. It is very possible that Daniel's sentiments on these matters were not his own alone, but were shared by a number of his episcopal colleagues, including Berhtwold. Berhtwold's letter might, therefore, fall to be seen as rather more than an isolated humanitarian response to the personal tragedy of a prominent family within his diocese. If it is right to suppose that a number of prominent ecclesiastics such as Berhtwold and Daniel retained very considerable misgivings concerning certain aspects of the early expansion of Wessex, very possibly extending to Wilfrid's opportunistic connivance in it, then such an outlook might well have reinforced their determination to intercede on behalf of Eppa and his sister in a way that has hitherto been overlooked.

ENDNOTES

¹ M. Tangl (ed.), *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (Berlin, 1916), no. 7.

² A.W. Haddan and W. Stubbs (eds), *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1869-78), vol. III p. 284.

³ *Reverentissimo atque sanctissimo Coepiscopo Forthereo Berhtwaldus famulorum Dei famulus salutem in Domino. Quoniam petitio mea – qua precatus sum coram te venerabilem abbatem Beorwaldum de concedenda unius captivae puellae, quae propinquos apud nos habere monstratur, redemptione – in irritum, contra quod credidi, cessit, et denuo eorumdem precibus inquietor, utillum duxi, ad te per ejusdem puellae germanum vocabulo Eppa has litteras destinare. Per quas obsecro: ut ipse omnino optineas a predicto abbate, quatenus pro eadem puella trecentos accipiat solidos de manu presentium geruli; et ei tradat illam, huc usque perducendam, quo possit reliquum vitae suae spatium cum consanguineis suis, non in servitutis tristitia, sed in libertatis transigere laetitia. Quam rem dum ad effectum tua perduxerit benivolentia, et a Deo mercedem et a me gratiarum actiones habebis. Frater quoque noster Beorwaldus nihil, ut aestimo, de eo, quod in ea juste possedit, amittit. Quod ante debui facere, obsecro: ut, cum tui memoriam in crebris orationibus feceris, mei nihilominus meminisse digneris. Incolumem reverentiam tuam aevo prolixiore Jesus Christus Dominus noster custodiat.* D. Whitelock (ed.), *English Historical Documents*, 2nd edn (London, 1979), no. 166 (pp. 794-5).

⁴ Lisi Oliver, *The Beginnings of English Law* (Toronto UP, 2002), pp. 126-7. For the original text, see Strood, Medway Archive and Local Studies Centre, MS DRc/R1, formerly Rochester Cathedral Library MS. A.3.5, fo. 3v, repr. in Peter Sawyer (ed.), *EEMF 7, Textus Roffensis Part I* (Copenhagen, 1957).

⁵ P. Grierson, 'La fonction Sociale de la monnaie en Angleterre aux VIIeme-VIIIeme Siecles', in *Dark Age Numismatics, Selected Studies* (London, Variorum, 1979) *passim*, concurred in by K.P. Witney, *The Kingdom of Kent* (Phillimore, London and Chichester, 1982), p. 164 and D.P. Kirby, *The Making of Early England* (London, Batsford, 1967), pp. 144-5. As originally noted by H.M. Chadwick, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (CUP, 1905), pp. 7-20, 51-63 and cited with approval by N.P. Brooks, 'The Laws of King Æthelberht of Kent', in Bruce O'Brien and Barbara Bondi (eds), *Textus Roffensis* (Turnhout, Brepols, 2015), p. 120 n.39, the number of *sceattas* to the *scilling* follows clearly from the compensations for thumbs, fingers and their nails being provided for at twice the rate for toes and toenails in the Laws of King Æthelberht.

⁶ An *Eoppa comes* does appear as a witness in S54, ostensibly dated to 706, and S79, ostensibly dated to 709. Whilst the identification is strengthened somewhat by Berhtwold also appearing in the same witness lists, the variation in the name and intrinsic difficulties with the charters make it impossible to contend for a firm identification. An *Eoppa* also appears as a witness in S97, ostensibly a grant by Æthelbald of 716x717 to the church of St Mary, Evesham, doubted by Haddan and Stubbs but which Finberg was minded to consider authentic. S91, S92 and S96, all dating from the very late 740s, also have an *Eoppa* as witness, and appear more reliable. PASE considers that the charter

witnesses of S91, S92, S96 and S97 are the same individual, but on sober reflection this must be thought a somewhat bold conclusion. The suggestion that a brother of a sister young enough still to be described as a *puella* c.710, but old enough to conduct substantial ransom negotiations for her release, and who might accordingly therefore then have been supposed to be aged about twenty or so at the least, might just about have lasted long enough to pop up as a grizzled near sixty-year old in a trio of charters of the very late 740s is obviously problematic, even before considering any intrinsic difficulties with the charters themselves.

⁷ *H.E.* v.8, including an acknowledgment from Bede of Berhtwold's learning, whilst grudgingly holding him unworthy to be compared with his great predecessor, Theodore.

⁸ *H.E.* v.23.

⁹ *H.E.* v.18.

¹⁰ *ASC*, s.a. 737.

¹¹ Susan Kelly (ed.), *Charters of Glastonbury Abbey*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 15 (Oxford, 2012), no. 9, pp. 255-7.

¹² Dr Kelly mistakenly refers (*ibid.*, p. 256) instead to a letter from Daniel of Winchester to Boniface given in Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, vol. III, pp. 304-6, *EHD* no. 167, but this is presumably no more than a muddling of references by her or her editors, since Dr Kelly clearly intends to refer to Berhtwold's letter and indeed quotes it elsewhere. Daniel's letter instead uses the formula *plebi Dei famulus*.

¹³ Susan Kelly (ed.), *Charters of Selsey*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 6 (London, 1988), no. 5.

¹⁴ *Ante*, note 11, p. 23.

¹⁵ Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, vol. III, pp. 295-6, *EHD* no. 158.

¹⁶ ...*Wintra qui monasterio quod dicitur Dysseburg praesedebat, et Beorwold qui divina coenobium gubernatione quod antiquorum nuncupatur vocabulo Glestingaburg regebat.*

¹⁷ Whitelock, commenting upon the document in *EHD* no. 65, notes that the witness list contains a number of names drawn from a Mercian charter of Æthelbald, whilst an alternative MS, British Museum Cotton Claud. C ix, fo. 105rv, gives Cædwalla as donor.

¹⁸ Thus, Simon Keynes has suggested that Wihtred and Ine 'entered into some kind of alliance which allowed the kingdoms to prosper independently of each other'. 'England, 700-900', *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. II, c.700-900, R. McKitterick (ed.) (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 18-42 at p. 26.

¹⁹ On this and the foregoing paragraph, see also D.P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings* (rev'd edn, London, Routledge, 2000), pp. 98-106.

²⁰ A suggestion originally made by Felix Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle, Niemeyer, 1897-1916) 3:30, followed by Oliver, *Beginnings*, p. 179.

²¹ H.P.R. Finberg, *Lucerna* (London, 1964), p. 65 n.1, and Barbara Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester UP, 1995), p. 262.

²² Kelly, *ante* note 11, p. 23.

²³ Alcuin, MGH, *Epp.*, iv, p. 266, ep. 164.

²⁴ As is well-known, Bede located the Angles in East Anglia and the north, the Saxons in the Thames valley and the south, and the Jutes in Kent, the Isle of Wight and part of modern Hampshire. Whilst this broad generalisation does seem to be reflected in the distribution of various types of artefacts such as pottery, jewellery and dress fasteners in ways that are consistent with distinct regional identities, the archaeological context is undoubtedly considerably more complex than Bede implies. See, for example, C.M. Hills, *Origins of the English* (London, Duckworth, 2003), *passim*. Nevertheless, evidence for close cultural links between Kent and the Isle of Wight, including at the elite level, can be identified within the archaeological record: C.J. Arnold, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of the Isle of Wight* (London, 1982), pp. 97-109 and, in the context of the aristocratic female burial grave at Chessell Down and its resemblance to burials at Sarre, pp. 26-8, 50-72 and 106-7. The discussion of Anglo-Saxon Style 1 brooches by L. Webster, 'Style: Influence, Chronology and Meaning', in H. Hamerow, D.A. Hilton and S. Crawford (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology* (Oxford, Clarendon, 2011), pp. 460-500 at 467-70 is also of value.

²⁵ *Postquam ergo Caedwalla regno potius est Geuissorum, cepit et insulam Uectam, quae eatenus erat tota idolatriae dedita, ac stragica caede omnes idigenas exterminare ac suae provinciae*

necdum. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (eds), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969), iv. 16, pp. 382/3.

²⁶ *De Iutarum origine sunt Cantuari et Uictuarii, hoc est gens quae Uectam tenet insulam, et ea quae usque hodie in prouincia Occidentalium Saxonum Iutarum natio nominator, posita contra ipsam insulam Uectam*. Colgrave and Mynors, *H.E.* i. 15, pp. 50/1.

²⁷ *Ante*, n. 15.

²⁸ *ASC* versions A and E, *s.a.* 715.

²⁹ *Earliest English Kings*, pp. 111-2.

³⁰ *ASC* versions A and D, *s.a.* 721.

³¹ *ASC* version A, *s.a.* 722.

³² D. Greenaway (ed. and trans.), *Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon*, *Historia Anglorum (History of the English People)* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 226-7.

³³ *ASC* version A, *s.a.* 725.

³⁴ Ch. 68: [*Be gesiþcundes mannes drafe of lande*] *Gif mon gesiþcunde monnan adrife, fordrife þy botle, næs þære setene*. F.L. Attenborough (ed. and trans.), *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 56-59.

³⁵ H.G. Richardson and G.O. Sayles, *Law and Legislation from Æthelberht to Magna Carta* (Edinburgh, 1966), pp. 14-5.

³⁶ Barbara Yorke, 'The Jutes of Hampshire and Wight and the origins of Wessex', in Stephen Bassett (ed.), *The Origin of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (Leicester, 1989), pp. 84-96 at 89.

³⁷ *H.E.* iv.16..

³⁸ *Episcopatus Uectae insulae ad Danihelem pertinent episcopum Uentae ciuitatis*, Colgrave and Mynors, *H.E.* v.23, pp. 558/9.

³⁹ Compare, for example, the account of a similar exercise in dynastic purging reported by Simeon of Durham in the *Historia de Regibus*, *s.a.* 791: 'The sons of King Ælfwald were taken by force from the city of York, being brought from the principal church by false promises, and were miserably killed by King Æthelred at *Wonwaldremere*; their names were Oelf and Oelfwine', Rev. Joseph Stevenson (trans.), *The Church Historians of England*, Vol. III, Part II (Seeleys, London, 1855), p. 30. *Anno DCC.XCI filii Elfvaldi regii ab Eburaca civitate vi abstracti, et de ecclesia principali per promissa fallaciae abducti, miserabiliter sunt perempti ab Ethelredo rege in Wonwaldremere, quorum nomina Oelf et Oelfwine fuere*. Hodgson Hinds (ed.), *Publications of the Surtees Society*, Vol. 51, *Symeonis Dunelmensis Opera et Collectanea*, Vol. I (Durham, London and Edinburgh, 1868). In contrast to Bede's sanitised account, note the trenchant *miserabiliter* and the evocative *perempti*, carrying implications for the soul, and reserved by Bede for his note in *H.E.* v. 24 of the death of the pagan Penda.

⁴⁰ Rev. E.W. Watson, 'The Age of Bede', in A.H. Thompson (ed.), *Bede: His Life, Times, and Writings* (Clarendon, 1935), pp. 39-59 at 43.

⁴¹ *Caedualla ... cepit et insulam Uectam ... uoto se obligans quamuis necdum regeneratus, ut ferunt, in Christo quia, si cepisset insulam, quartam partem eius simul et praedae Domino daret. Quod ita soluit, ut hanc Uilfrido episcopo, qui tunc forte de gente sua superueniens aderat, utendam pro Domino offeret. Est autem mensura eiusdem insulae iuxta aestimationem Anglorum mille ducentarum familiarum; unde data est episcopo possessio terrae trecentarum familiarum*, Colgrave and Mynors, *H.E.* iv.16, pp. 382/3.

⁴² Of which, and of their influence on Bede's narrative, probably the fullest discussion is contained in Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1988), pp. 235-328, *passim*, especially pp. 307-20.