

ANGLO-SAXON URNS FROM FAREHAM

By SONIA CHADWICK HAWKES

INTRODUCTION

EARLY in 1963, Mr. (now Professor) B. W. Cunliffe kindly brought to my notice the fact that Cumberland House Museum, Portsmouth, had recently acquired on loan from Price's School, Fareham, two well-preserved, decorated urns of the early Anglo-Saxon period (fig. 24, 1-2).¹ Together with a prehistoric Bell Beaker, a 2nd-century Roman pot, and a small pottery bowl of Anglo-Saxon or Iron Age date (fig. 24, 3), they had belonged to the Rev. John Barney, who at the time of his death in 1960 was resident in Fareham. Most of his life had been spent in the north of England, however, and these five pots, with such information as had been handed down about their place of origin, had in fact descended to him from his father, who had lived in Winchester. The whole group was supposed to have been found 'at the Turnpike, Fareham', but as the Beaker has now been identified as one of a pair from St. James's Terrace, Winchester,² the attribution of the rest to Fareham has had to be regarded with caution. There is still no definite evidence about the find-place of the Roman pot and the small bowl, but, thanks to the exhaustive enquiries set on foot by Mr. A. Corney of Portsmouth City Museums,³ it has now been established beyond all reasonable doubt that the two Anglo-Saxon urns really did come from Fareham. Mrs. Barney remembers that her husband would refer to the larger of, if not both, these two vessels as coming from the Turnpike at Fareham. As we shall see, they are so similar that probably they were made by the same potter, and there is no reason to doubt that they were buried on the same site. That they were cremation urns from a cemetery could have been guessed from their appearance, but this also is confirmed by Mrs. Barney: she recalls that the larger had originally contained 'ashes, fragments of bone and teeth'; relics which she objected to having in the house and which were consequently thrown away.

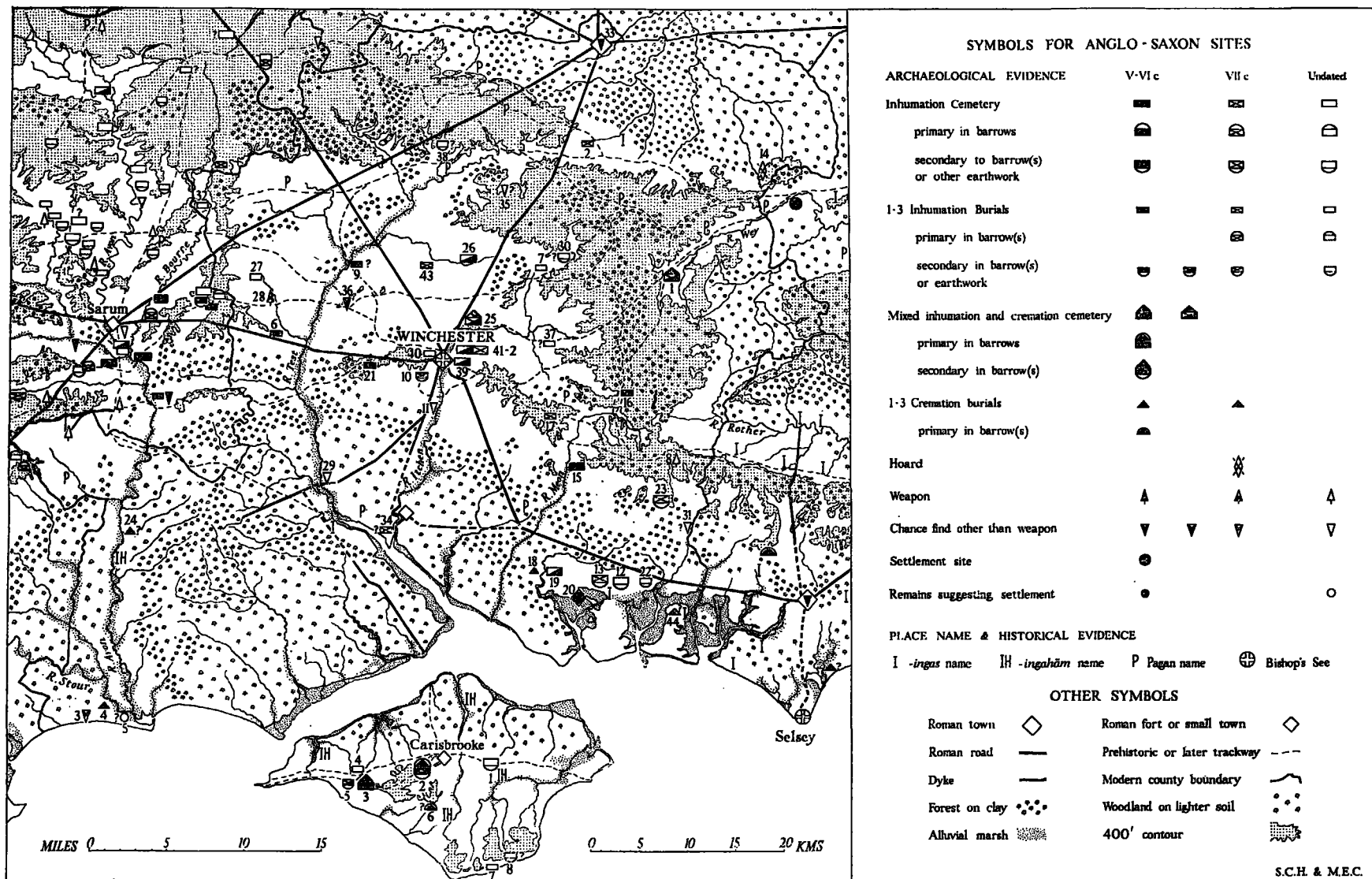
Enquiries amongst various Fareham people make it clear that 'the Turnpike', 'old Turnpike' and 'north Turnpike' are all terms used to refer to what is now 'Old Turnpike Road', which leaves the A32 Wickham Road at N.G.R. SU 580069 approx., at something over 50 feet O.D., and climbs for about 700 yards in a north-westerly direction to another road junction (North Hill, Park Lane and Kiln Road) at SU 575074 approx., 125 feet O.D. Until a few years ago there was a brick kiln near the Wickham Road junction and potteries on North Hill, both established for several generations, and it is possible that the pots were turned up in one or other of the old clay pits associated with these works. The sub-soils of the North Turnpike area consist of a mixture of Reading Beds and London Clay, both variable in their composition. Of

¹ By letter, 25.5, and 6.7.1963. I understand that the pots referred to in this note are to be placed on permanent deposit in Portsmouth City Museums, with the exception of the Bell Beaker which is to go to Winchester City Museums.

² It was found in or before 1892, and was once in the

possession of Councillor George Barter. It was identified by Dr. D. L. Clarke.

³ Most local information used here is derived with permission from letters from Mr. Corney, dated 12.9.1963, 10.1963, and 20.9.1968. He has my warmest thanks.



the two urns the larger is unwashed and still has traces of a reddish loam adhering to it, which, if geologically examined, might make possible a more precise determination of the find-spot. In the meantime we must be content with the knowledge that an Anglo-Saxon burial-place with cremations was found in a fairly closely delimited area of the hill-slope to the north of the old centre of Fareham (fig. 22, no. 18).

It is not really surprising to have found traces of early Anglo-Saxon settlement at Fareham: the name probably contains the OE element *-ham*, meaning 'homestead, village or manor', which is generally considered to have been obsolete by the end of the 7th century.⁴ Moreover, contemporary settlement of the land immediately opposite on the east side of the Wallington River has long been attested by chance finds of burials in an old chalk-pit on Clapper Hill, half-a-mile north-east of Wallington – another OE name (fig. 22, no. 19).⁵ Some iron objects, including a spearhead 10 inches long and an iron 'tyre' – perhaps the hoop of a bucket – found at this site before 1926, have apparently not survived, but another spearhead 13 inches long, which was discovered here in 1897 and presented to Winchester City Museums in 1936 (fig. 23), looks from its form to date from the second half of the 6th century. Finally, Professor Cunliffe's excavations at Portchester Castle have produced valuable settlement evidence⁶ which provides some archaeological confirmation of the historical record (*A.S.C.*, E, *sub anno* 501) that Portsmouth harbour, and hence the entry into the Wallington River, was in Saxon hands already by the early 6th century (fig. 22, no. 20).

CREMATION IN HAMPSHIRE

Evidence to show that cremation was a burial rite commonly practised amongst the Germanic settlers of Hampshire has been forthcoming only in the last decade. Previously, the few excavated cemeteries and burials of the period had suggested that the ill-recorded cremations from Bowcombe and Chessell Down on the Isle of Wight (fig. 22, nos. 2, 3) were exceptional,⁷ and that in mainland Hampshire, as in Wiltshire, inhumation was the rule. Recent excavation in Wiltshire has not altered the picture there: in Hampshire, on the other hand, cremation is now known from several mainland sites. In the east of the modern county, at Alton on the headwaters of the River Wey, a partially excavated cemetery of the 5th–7th centuries has yielded more cremations than inhumations (fig. 22, 1).⁸ It remains to be seen just how unusual such a proportion may be, and whether (the Wey being a tributary of the Thames) these Alton folk were more akin to the Saxons of Surrey than to the people from the south who had settled the central Hampshire basin. In this central region we now have a mixed cemetery in Worthy Park, Kingsworthy (fig. 22, 25),⁹ which is in the Itchen

⁴ A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements*, I: English Place-Name Society, XXV (1956).

⁵ J. H. Cooke, *Tales of Wessex* (1926), 116 f.; *Proc. Hants F.C.*, XIII (1937), 296 f.

⁶ *Antiq. Journ.*, XLIII (1963), 226, and XLVI (1966), 43 ff.; *The Times*, 8.10.1968. Further information by letter 11.10.1968.

⁷ Bowcombe: G. Hillier, *Excavations on Brighstone and Bowcombe Downs* (1854); *J.B.A.A.*, XI (1855), 34 ff.;

Chessell: G. Hillier, *History and Antiquities of the Isle of Wight* (1855), 28 and 37.

⁸ Excavated by Miss V. I. Evison for the Ministry of Public Building and Works, 1959–61. *Medieval Archaeol.*, IV (1960), 134, and V (1961), 309.

⁹ Excavated by the author for the Ministry of Public Building and Works, 1961–2, following excavations by the Hampshire Field Club in 1944. *Medieval Archaeol.* VI–VII (1962–3), 307 (false dating of cremations), and VIII (1964), 233.

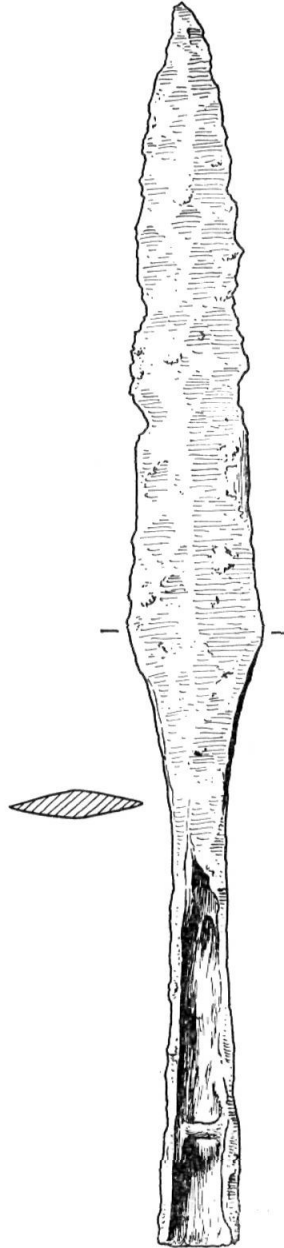


Fig. 23. Anglo-Saxon spearhead from Clapper Hill, Wallington (scale $\frac{1}{2}$).
(Drawing by Mrs. M. E. Cox.)

valley a few miles north of Winchester, and here, though again the site remains only incompletely explored, about a third (40+) of the burials excavated were cremations. The site as a whole seems to have been in use from the end of the 5th into the 7th century, but so far very few cremations have been found to antedate the middle of the 6th century. In the extreme south-west of the county, a single cremation urn was salvaged from gravel diggings near Iford Bridge in the Stour valley only a couple of miles above Christchurch harbour (fig. 22, 4).¹⁰ This find was made as long ago as 1938, but, possibly because the urn is plain and not closely dateable, it has not attracted the attention it deserves as the most westerly instance of Anglo-Saxon cremation burial in southern England. Just ten miles to the north of it, near Huckles Bridge, Ibsley, in the Avon valley midway between Christchurch and Salisbury, another single pot was found which is reputed to have been an urn (fig. 22, 24).¹¹ Finally, Mr. Corney has kindly drawn to my notice some unpublished sherds in Portsmouth City Museums which are said to have been found in the northern part of Hayling Island (fig. 22, no. 44). Several Anglo-Saxon pots are represented, one decorated and dateable to the 7th century: like the others mentioned here they were probably cremation urns. Like the Fareham urns, these are likely to have been survivors from larger cemeteries; most probably mixed-rite burial grounds like the ones from Alton and Kingsworthy. The preservation of these urns must be counted a piece of great good fortune. Experience at Worthy, where the pots had often been reduced by ploughing and root action to mere heaps of sherds, suggests that in the past urns as fragmentary as these must often have escaped notice on sites discovered by chance or excavated under less than ideal conditions. There may therefore have been many more mixed cemeteries in Hampshire than the records at present attest.

THE FAREHAM URNS

(Fig. 24, 1). Well-made biconical urn with outbent rim and pedestal foot, in clay with fine flint grits, fired dark grey-brown, smoothed and burnished on the exterior. Decorated between neck and shoulder by single lines of stamps between three groups of three horizontal grooves, and below shoulder by triple-outlined pendent triangles filled in each with five stamps in regular arrangement: only one stamp used – a simple cross-in-circle. Height 6 inches, rim diameter 4 inches, maximum diameter 6.7 inches.

(Fig. 24, 2). Well-made sub-biconical urn with outbent rim and flattened base, in fabric and finish similar to last except for reddened patches on exterior due to uneven firing; interior reddened especially at base. Decoration also similar, the chief differences being the smaller size of the pendent triangles and the reduced number and size of the stamps. Height 7.9 inches, rim diameter 5.1 inches, maximum diameter 8.2 inches.

These two urns, though different in form, have the appearance of being made in the same workshop: the fabric looks identical, and the arrangement and composition of the ornament differs only in small details. They are typical examples of what Dr. J. N. L. Myres has called the 'unbossed panel style', which can be dated by associated

¹⁰ T. Dayrell Reed, *The Rise of Wessex* (1947), 283.

¹¹ *Antiquity*, V (1931), 454.

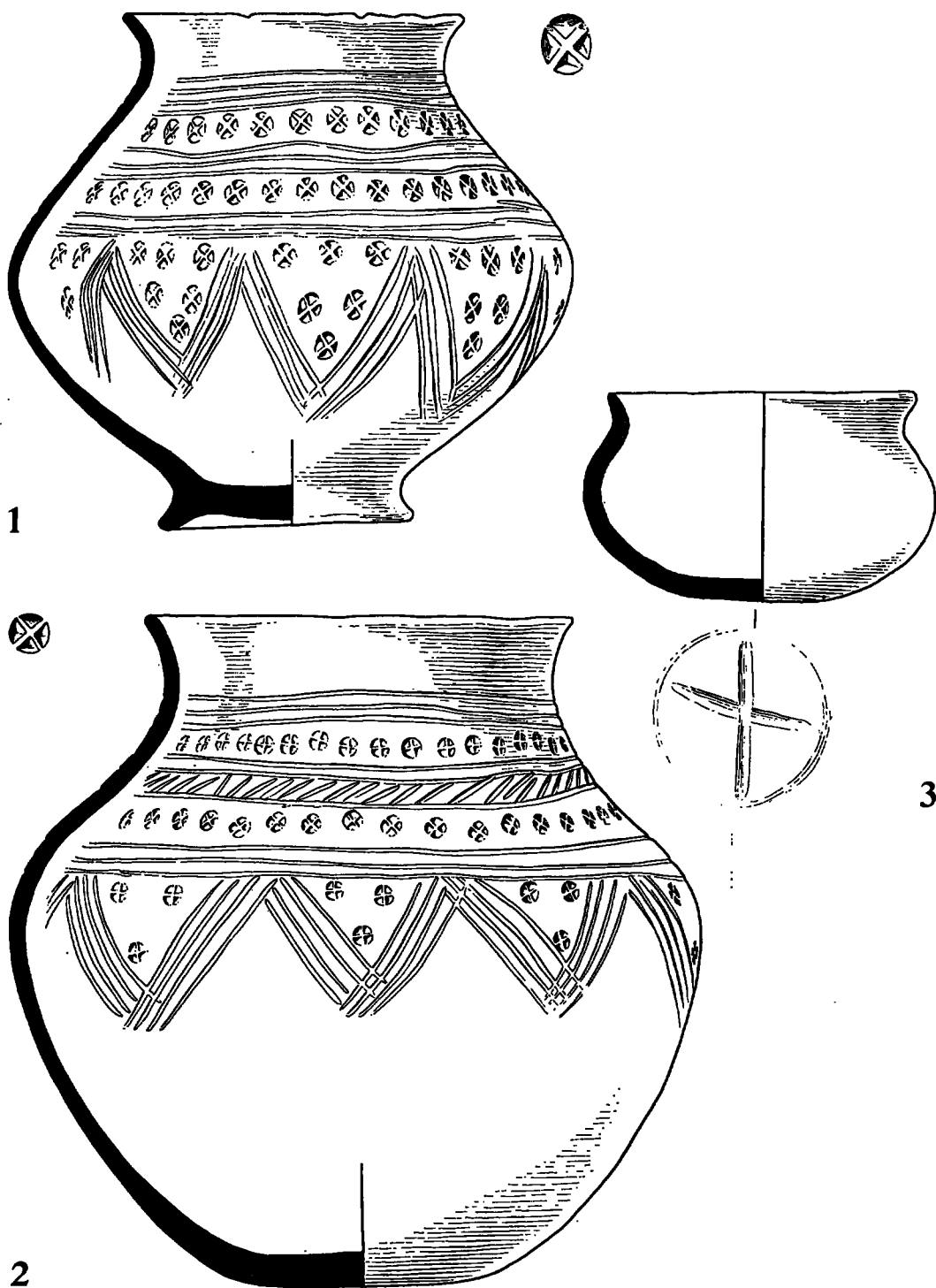


Fig. 24. Pottery from the Barney Collection: 1-2, Anglo-Saxon urns from Fareham;
3, cross-decorated bowl (scale $\frac{1}{2}$).
(Drawings by Mrs. M. E. Cox.)

finds elsewhere to the middle and second half of the 6th century.¹² Urns of this type are very numerous in Middle Anglia, their probable place of origin, whence they spread on the one hand into East Anglia and occasionally north into Lindsey and Deira, and on the other hand into the West Saxon territories along the Upper Thames. Here they are well represented in most of the major cemeteries from Reading westwards (e.g. at Long Wittenham, Abingdon, Frilford, Cassington, etc.). Their absence from the rest of the south coastal area, in Kent, Sussex, the Isle of Wight and south Wiltshire, makes their appearance in Hampshire a striking exception within the general distribution pattern. Lest anyone on this account begin to doubt whether these urns really did come from Fareham after all, it must be stressed that they are not the only examples of their kind from Hampshire. There are three in the unbossed panel style amongst the urns from Kingsworthy, C.16 with pedestal foot similar to Fareham 1, and C.13 and 38 which are variants of the more normal type without pedestal, such as we have in more elegant and perhaps earlier form in Fareham 2. Full discussion of the possible significance of these Hampshire urns must await the publication of Kingsworthy, which has a fuller series. But it will do no harm to anticipate a little here, and remind ourselves that we have not only to account for the appearance of an apparently 'foreign' ceramic fashion, but also to explain the survival or re-introduction of cremation as a burial rite in Hampshire at a time when most of the Anglo-Saxon peoples along the south coast were inhuming their dead.¹³

At Kingsworthy, the earliest burials in the late 5th century were inhumations with grave-goods of a type to suggest that the first comers were colonists from some already settled part of the south coastal area: they had strong cultural affinities both to Sussex and Kent, for example. We have seen that most of the cremation urns date from a rather later period, but there are a few which Dr. Myres ascribes to the first half of the 6th century, and some of them are distinctly puzzling. Southern Hampshire, like the Isle of Wight, is supposed to have contained a population of Juto-Kentish origin,¹⁴ but, whereas the few early urns from the Isle of Wight do in fact resemble some from Kent, the early urns from Kingsworthy are of quite another kind. Nor do they resemble the early Saxon urns from neighbouring Sussex.¹⁵ The most distinctive of them – a plain globular, a plain *buckelurn*, and an early bossed panel style urn – most nearly resemble examples from the Anglian east midlands, while two others may have come from the Upper Thames region. They are few, however, and not really closely dateable, so, though it is tempting to think that the *Gewissae*, the 'Confederates', of Hampshire may have been as mixed in origin as their name suggests, without further confirmation from

¹² For much of this discussion of the pottery I have drawn heavily on unpublished information from Dr. Myres, from his letters to me, his draft report on the Kingsworthy urns, and also his Rhind Lectures, *Anglo-Saxon Pottery and the Settlement of England*, forthcoming in 1969.

¹³ In Sussex, however, there was more cremation than has generally been realised. Unfortunately the urns are neither well preserved nor well published, and though Dr. Myres has been able to identify urns of the 5th and urns of the 7th centuries, there seems at present to be little or nothing for the 6th.

¹⁴ Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I, xv.

¹⁵ I am indebted to Mr. K. J. Barton, Portsmouth City Museums, for drawing to my attention the fact that a decorated *buckelurn* in Worthing Museum, Sussex, was reputed to have come from gravel workings at Lancing. Dr. Myres believes this pot to have been one of the finds from Girton College, Cambridge, which were dispersed during the late 19th century, but in view of the Worthing Park *buckelurn* the Worthing pot ought perhaps to be re-examined and its provenance checked.

other sites the evidence is at present too slight to bear any great weight of speculation. By the middle of the 6th century, however, the 'foreign' cremating element in the Kingsworthy cemetery is more pronounced, and is supported from outside by the two urns from Fareham. As we have seen, the unbossed panel-style urns without pedestal could have reached Hampshire from Anglia or the West Saxon province: the rarer form with pedestal foot, represented both at Kingsworthy and Fareham, is best paralleled not in the east Midlands, however, but in Berkshire (at Reading and E. Shefford). The problem is to decide whether this state of affairs in mid-6th-century Hampshire was brought about peacefully as the result of continuing contacts between certain of the early settlers and their kinsfolk in the Midlands, or whether at this time the region saw a less peaceful influx of new settlers. In this context it is worth noting that the confusion in the lay-out of the Kingsworthy cemetery, where sometimes up to four burials were superimposed, is most unusual. It betrays a total ignorance or lack of care about the position of earlier graves, which is sufficiently striking to suggest that the settlement had had a chequered history in the 6th century. So maybe the cremating people were 'invaders' in the district. If so it is hard to resist the conclusion that the Fareham urns and their counterparts from Kingsworthy may have been amongst the cultural consequences of the political history of the time when, under Ceawlin and just conceivably under his predecessor Cynric, the Gewissae of chalk Wessex and the West Saxons of the Upper Thames were being hammered together into a union that was to give birth to the greater kingdom of Wessex.

Postscript

(Fig. 24, 3). Shallow bowl with bulging body, slightly outbent rim and flattened base, in clay with fine flint grits, fired dark grey-brown, and, despite traces of burnish on the exterior, distinctly rough to the touch. Decorated on base before firing with a lightly 'wiped' cross. Height 2.45 inches, rim diameter 3.65 inches, maximum diameter 4.15 inches.

This, the third hand-made pot from the Barney Collection, has been left out of the main discussion because, though there is a real possibility that it is another Anglo-Saxon pot from Fareham, we have no positive information about its find-place, and even its date is uncertain. Cross-on-base ornament was used at various periods. Examples of several kinds, some very similar to ours, occur on pottery of the later pre-Roman Iron Age, for example, more especially in Sussex,¹⁶ but also in Hampshire,¹⁷ Kent,¹⁸ and the Upper Thames valley.¹⁹ In Hampshire and Sussex these crosses are generally to be found on the flat or foot-ring bases of pots larger and coarser than ours, but Iron Age bowls similar to ours in form are known from the Oxford region, and one of them, from Cassington (Ashmolean Museum), has a nearly identical 'wiped' cross

¹⁶ E. and E. C. Curwen (*Sussex Arch. Colls.*, LXVII, 34 ff., pl. xvi) published several examples from the Caburn, of which no. 169 most closely resembles ours, and there are others from Charleston Brow, near Fittle Broom (Sussex Arch. Colls., LXXIV, 176, 179, figs. 25-6).

¹⁷ e.g. two at Worthy Down (*Proc. Hants F.C.*, X (1929), 187, pl. iv, no. 61).

¹⁸ Professor C. F. C. Hawkes now regards as Iron Age an example from Worth which, in 1937, he published as sub-Roman (*Antiq. Journ.*, XVII, 312 ff., pl. lxxxiii, 2, fig. 8).

¹⁹ Information by courtesy of Dr. D. W. Harding, who has drawn these vessels in connection with his thesis on *The Iron Age of the Upper Thames Basin*.

on its base. Thus it is not impossible that this little bowl from the Barney Collection dates from the pre-Roman period. On the other hand, its complete state of preservation suggests that it is more likely to have come from a grave than a settlement site, and as Iron Age graves with hand-made pottery are extremely rare, this ought to favour an Anglo-Saxon date for it. If it is Anglo-Saxon it will have been an accessory vessel in an inhumation grave and not a receptacle for a cremation. In fabric it is similar to, though not identical with, the Fareham urns, and its form, while unusual, is not impossible for the Anglo-Saxon period. There are fragments of shallow bowls with smoothly rounded shoulders and outbent rims, with and without decoration, from settlement sites at Hanwell, Middlesex,²⁰ and Linford/Mucking, Essex,²¹ all of which probably date from the 5th century. Bowls of 6th- and 7th-century date tend not to have quite this smoothly curving line. That the cross-on-base motive persisted or was revived into immediately post-Roman times is attested by the appearance of just such another 'wiped' cross on a coarse pot from the last ?squatter occupation of the Roman villa at Wingham in east Kent.²² Recent excavations have yielded ample evidence to suggest that these last occupants of the villa site were 5th-century Anglo-Saxons, probably federates.²³ I am grateful to Dr. Myres for pointing out to me that the basal cross is of quite common occurrence on the Continent too, especially on late 4th- and 5th-century cremation urns from the Saxon areas of north Germany,²⁴ which had been the homeland of so many of our Anglo-Saxon settlers. The great majority of the pottery from Germanic graves and settlements in England is at present not well published, and further illustrations of cross-on-base decoration are hard to find. But Dr. Myres assures me that it occurs on quite a number of the pots he has drawn for his forthcoming Corpus, even though none is precisely like the little bowl under consideration here. In conclusion, then, though it is impossible to be quite sure, this pot may well be of Anglo-Saxon date, and may even belong in the 5th century.

²⁰ R. E. M. Wheeler, *London and the Saxons* (London Museum, 1935), figs. 20,2 and 21,5.

²¹ K. J. Barton, *Trans. Essex Archaeol. Soc.*, 3rd s., I, part II (1962), 34 ff., fig. v,5.

²² J. N. L. Myres, *Antiquity*, XVIII (1944), 52 ff., fig. 3.

²³ Frank Jenkins, *Arch. Cant.*, LXXX (1965), lix; LXXXI (1966), lxvi; and LXXXII (1967), lx. His findings confirm those of George Dowker, *Arch. Cant.*, XV (1883), 351 ff., and opinions expressed by A. G. Wells in *Antiquity*, XVII (1943), 210 ff.

²⁴ Karl Waller, *Das Graberfeld von Altenwalde* (5. Beiheft zum Atlas der Urgeschichte, 1959), pls. iv,26, v,35, vii,45, x,74, xiii,101; Karl Waller, *Die Gräberfelder von Hemmoor, Quelkhorn, Gudendorf und Duhnen-Wehrberg* (8. Beiheft zum Atlas der Urgeschichte, 1959), pls. xxiv,12-13, xxvi,33, xxvii,39; Karola Zimmer-Linnfeld, *Westerwanna I* (9. Beiheft zum Atlas der Urgeschichte, 1960), pls. clxxvi, 1367, and clxxx, 1388.