Emporia and their hinterlands in the 7th to 9th-century AD: some comments and observations from England

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To be published in *Revue du Nord-Archeologie* 2011

SUMMARY
Advances in our understanding of the nature of early medieval trade and the development of rural regions in the VIIth to IXth centuries in England have made it necessary to re-examine our perceptions of emporia-hinterland interactions during in this period. It is argued that previous attempts to reconstruct this relationship, concentrating on the analysis of patterns of traded items, can only ever provide a partial understanding with strong caveats for interpretation. A new thematic approach is suggested using evidence from within the emporium alongside that from the broader region in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of hinterlands and the changing relationships between these early urban sites and the countryside.

1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the town-like trading and artisan centres, often called emporia, in VIIth and VIIIth-century North-West Europe has long been held to herald the intensification of post-Roman economic systems around the North Sea.[1] These places mostly emerge in the VIIth century as small settlements, with evidence for regional and long-distance contacts before expansion and increasing activity during the first half of the VIIIth century into the classic trading ports of pre-Viking Europe. However, research over the last decade has seriously challenged the prevailing paradigms relating to the monopolisation of trade by elites and based upon substantivist economic anthropology.[2] Alongside this, rural archaeology, especially in England, has illustrated the complex internal networks of trade and high levels of economic activity taking place alongside the emergence of a tiered settlement hierarchy from the early VIIth century onwards.[3] Given such new findings and the shift in thinking among many medieval archaeologists and historians towards an acceptance of some levels of freelance trading within the early medieval economic systems, there is a growing need to explore anew the interactions and relationships between these large, urbanised trading ports and the rural regions around them, what may be broadly termed their hinterlands. This paper concentrates on the English evidence to draw out some broad themes related to the study of emporia and their hinterlands, although it is relevant to the European emporia in general. England forms a most useful area of study (Fig. 1) in this particular case owing to the levels of data now available from rural areas. The data from excavations, itself increased greatly in recent years through the funding of excavations by the private sector prior to development, has been greatly supplemented by the increased reporting of stray finds of coinage and metalwork, known as 'portable antiquities', to organisations such as the Portable Antiquities Scheme

[1] HODGES 1982
[2] NAYLOR 2004a ; HENNING 2007 ; LOVELUCK, TYS 2006 ; although see also HUTCHESON 2005 ; HODGES 2008 for examples of recent evidence interpreted within substantivist frameworks.
[3] For example MORELAND 2000 ; PESTELL, ULMSCHNEIDER 2003 ; NAYLOR 2004a ; LOVELUCK, TYS 2006.

or Early Medieval Corpus of Coin Finds.[4] These amount to thousands of finds and are now making a real contribution to research in England.[5]

2. PREVIOUS WORK: SETTLEMENT, ECONOMY AND HINTERLANDS

The body of literature on emporia-hinterland relations remains small. Much work has been undertaken in the last 15 years exploring regional and international economies, and our understanding of internal networks of trade in early medieval England are now much better informed.[6] However, attempts to trace hinterlands themselves are far more limited.[7] For example, Newman in his exploration of Ipswich and East Anglia, warned of the complexities of hinterland studies and argued that non-economic factors such as social or religious obligations needed to be taken into account, but through distributions of Ipswich Ware pottery and coins likely minted in Ipswich argued that the town must have had hinterlands stretching across East Anglia and beyond in the eastern Midlands.[8] However, he was unable to define anything more than Ipswich's possible zone of influence rather than the discussion of the nature of the town's hinterlands themselves. Palmer took these ideas further exploring traded items, likely to have originated in the emporia, such as imported pottery, in relation to communication networks and evidence for the evolution of settlement hierarchies. With these ideas in mind, he argued that concentrations of Ipswich Ware in north-west Norfolk, for example, could be reflected in archaeological evidence for specialist beef-rearing and salt production in this area which, in turn, may have been of importance for the population of Ipswich. He also noted the presence of imported wares west of London in the Thames Valley in relation to the evolution of estate centres and monastic settlements, most likely an important source of raw materials and provisions for London.[9] Work I undertook on material from an area centred on York, whilst focused towards regional economies, was also able to illustrate that York and some other settlements in the area had wide-ranging contacts across northern England and into southern Scotland and I argued that much of this no doubt went through York before reaching other settlements.[10]

However, in many respects all of these articles concentrate on the evolution of settlement hierarchy and economy in VIIth- to IXth-century England rather than on hinterlands per se and in this way fit in well with much of the contemporary literature and interpretative frameworks. There are problems with this in a number of ways which hinder the exploration of hinterlands. Firstly, there was a general assumption that imported material entered the country via an emporium, following Hodges's notion of emporia as monopolistic ports-of-trade, whereas it now appears that this is not necessarily the case and that there would have been numerous smaller entry points for goods and traders.[11] In

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[4] Portable Antiquities Scheme: www.finds.org.uk; Early Medieval Corpus of Coin Finds: www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/coins/emc/

[5] For example RICHARDS, NAYLOR 2009 ; PESTELL, ULMSCHNEIDER 2003.

[6] For example CRABTREE 1996 ; BLINKHORN 1999 ; ULMSCHNEIDER 2000 ; MORELAND 2000 ; NAYLOR 2004a.

[7] For example, NEWMAN 1999 ; NAYLOR 2001 ; WHYMAN 2002 ; PALMER 2003.

[8] NEWMAN 1999, p. 33-34.

[9] PALMER 2003.

[10] NAYLOR 2001.

[11] For example, NAYLOR 2004b ; LOVELUCK, TYS 2006.

addition, the perception that the emporia provided the driving force behind economic changes in the countryside has been seriously challenged to the extent that it seems more probable that changes in the organisation of rural settlement and economy began prior to the initial activity at the emporia and well before their most active phases in the VIIIth century.[12] Whilst these provide some serious caveats, the overall literature on the economy of early medieval England does illustrate the complexity of the economy and networks of trade, and the work tracing hinterlands through the analysis of traded goods has been extremely useful.

3. THE EMPORIA AND 'ARCHAEOLOGIES OF CHANGE'

Alongside our increasing understanding of the development and economy in VIIth to IXth-century England is the recognition that there can be continual change within settlements relating to their nature and function. These changes can bring about fundamental shifts in their identity during their evolution. McCormick has highlighted the potential for such a phenomenon at the emporia, constantly adapting to situations as they appear, their nature possibly changing at a fundamental level over their lifespan.[13] This idea of change is important when considering emporia and their hinterlands, as the interactions between the two may have been very different at different times.

In London, for example, the excavations at the Royal Opera House, in a central part of *Lundenwic*, provided one of the most complete sequences of occupation we have for any emporium.[14] The earliest levels, dated c.675-730, showed buildings within large yards. There was little indication of any alignment with routeways or each other, and it was not until the early VIIIth-century that the more 'classic' grid-like pattern emerged with buildings in small yards aligned to roads, and the most intense phase of activity did not take place until c.730-770 before a long period of decline exhibiting a steady decrease in building density and evidence for a major contraction in the overall size of the port until abandonment c.850. Although the settlement obviously had wide-ranging contacts, including internationally, these excavations and others within *Lundenwic* suggest that the overall early settlement was probably of quite small size, with little indication of planning or deliberate foundation. The late VII-century port at London was certainly known to kings and bishops, and we know that churchmen began to obtain land in the area, on both sides of the River Thames. We also know from early lawcodes that property in the port could be bought and sold.[15] Taken together, this evidence does suggest that VIIth-century London was an important place, and attracted the interest of a range of elites, including from relatively far-afield such as Mercia. However, it is also clear that the settlement in the later VIIth century was of a different nature to the VIIIth century town which, again, was different to that seen in the IXth century. These fluctuations will undoubtedly have had an effect on its interactions with the surrounding regions.

Ipswich is another useful example, where the evidence is of a different nature, providing for more regionally-based interpretations. Excavations in the town, albeit only available

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[12] MORELAND 2000 ; NAYLOR forthcoming.
[13] MCCORMICK 2007, p. 42-43.
[14] MALCOLM, BOWSHER 2003, p. 32-124.
[15] MADDICOTT 2005, p. 11-12.

in summary form, show that whilst the VIII and IX-century settlement covered a large area, probably about 50 hectares, its VII-century predecessor was much smaller, at only around 6 hectares in size.[16] Interestingly, this is about the same size as a number of nearby settlements, also with evidence for long-distance contacts and communication, including Barham, Coddenham and Rendlesham all within 16km of Ipswich the latter a documented royal palace in the period.[17] As such, this combined evidence does not indicate that early Ipswich was any different to contemporary, surrounding settlements. The coin evidence is also useful. Unlike in their VIIIth-century phases, the early phases at the emporia are not coin-rich with gold coins, the Merovingian tremisses and Anglo-Saxon thrymsas virtually unknown and the subsequent Primary phase of silver sceattas found only in small numbers, including two of 84 sceattas at Ipswich, 14 of 124 from Hamwic and 5 from 19 at *Lundenwic.*[18] Given that these are all from relatively limited excavations, unlike rural finds which now tend to be from large-scale metal-detector surveys, these numbers can, a little subjectively perhaps, be considered comparable with rural sites such as Coddenham or Rendlesham. As such, the overall evidence does not sit comfortably with the idea that one of these sites, Ipswich, was a royal entrepôt, founded to monopolise trade. Rather, early Ipswich may be best interpreted within the remits of a coastal zone and identity. They were well located to catch sea-borne trade, and its position in relation to internal networks of communication meant it was an ideal stopping point for merchants.

As a result I would argue that these VIIth-century sites would have had relatively simple hinterlands and interactions with local regions. For example, material imported via Ipswich may have found its way perhaps to Barham and Coddenham which are on a direct line of communication from Ipswich but it would seem more realistic that Rendlesham, 16km away and also at the head of an estuary, was as involved in international networks as Ipswich. Quite what the subsistence base of late VIIth-century was remains unclear, at least in the published literature, but it may well have procured what was required from near by. If Ipswich was the main entry point in this small area, foreign traders may have ventured inland and the local populations may have travelled to Ipswich. However, the overall evidence suggests relatively simple interactions and only a limited effect on the surrounding region. It seems that the emerging VIIth-century coastal identity will have allowed for much interaction in this zone with fluidity and high levels of communication up and down the sea lanes, and it is hard to know what, if any, control there may have been in some areas.[19] London was no doubt different in some ways, located slightly further inland albeit again at the head of an estuary. It obviously had an important role in providing Mercian elites with access to the North Sea, and this may be related to salt from Drotiwich, the main English brine springs, located in the heart of Mercia.[20] But it also appears that these elites were taking advantage of pre-existing conditions in London, not creating them.

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[16] SCULL 2002, p. 304.
[17] NAYLOR forthcoming.
[18] Ibid.
[19] LOVELUCK, TYS 2006 provides the best recent discussion of coastal identities in early medieval northern Europe.
[20] MADDICOTT 2005.

What does seem to set the emporia apart from other settlements is that all were well located at good portage sites, with good inland communications. London controlled access upstream into the River Thames, a gateway into Mercia. Ipswich was better located than Rendlesham, closer to the extant Roman road network, and at the head of the Gipping valley which runs north-west towards the fenland of Cambridgeshire and west Norfolk, with rich pasture and potential for salt production, and Hamwic was well located on the Solent, and for communication with the royal power base at Winchester. York is possibly slightly different being over 40km inland, even though along a navigable river but in many respects it does not fit with the geography of the other emporia, and may be more related to ecclesiastical power.[21]

Such notions that Ipswich, London and Hamwic were essentially in the right place at the right time echoes McCormick's suggestions for Venice and some of the other North Sea settlements in that these sites were simply in prime locations and existed in ideal local conditions.[22] Trading may have only been one part of their early function, but in the early VIIIth century these sites had started to expand and an economic life became their raison d'etre, highlighting the importance of the consideration of the archaeology of change.

What happens in the early VIIIth century is in fact extremely interesting regarding their regions. Based on the finds of coinage, I have argued elsewhere that the expansion of the emporia coincides with a curtailment of coin loss within about 15km of them, equivalent to about a day's return travel to market in pre-industrial societies.[23] This is at a time when coin use in general was expanding greatly, with levels of coin loss increasing markedly after c. 710.

Such regional evidence may be interpreted as a cessation of trade, perhaps due to controlled access to that trade, but the evidence can be read differently. Taking Ipswich as an example, the fact that this change appears to be confined to a small area equivalent to a days' return travel indicates that the change is perhaps related to the expansion of Ipswich, the beginnings of the Ipswich Ware industry and the expansion of international trade. This could have two effects locally. One is Ipswich's local economic dominance, becoming the main market place. The other is that such an expansion may also result in substantial population movement from the local region into Ipswich. Outside of this 15km zone there appears to be little difference to before- the pattern of coin loss is not markedly changed. Also, we are still finding imported material, especially ceramics, up and down the coastal zone indicating a high number of entry points. Essentially, these patterns do not sit comfortably with any authoritarian attempts to monopolise trade, although the evidence relating to tolls makes it clear that there was certainly royal interest in taking advantage of trade.[24]

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[21] NAYLOR forthcoming.
[22] MCCORMICK 2007, p. 43.
[23] NAYLOR forthcoming.
[24] NAYLOR 2004a, p. 130.

This period of expansion is important to briefly explore further as it will undoubtedly affect the nature of an emporium's hinterland and will represent fundamental change compared to that relating to the VIIth and early VIIIth-century phases. The expanded emporia were up to about ten times the area of the initial settlements, had substantially increased populations and their nature now appears to have included a substantial productive element. As a result, they required far bigger and more complex hinterlands than their VIIth-century predecessors. Alongside this is the expansion of international networks. The emporia all show high levels of imported pottery and large numbers of Frisian coins are known across the country indicating an increase in the levels of material being traded around the North Sea littoral. It may be that the expansion coincides with technological changes in boat design with the introduction of wider boats able to carry larger cargoes. This is, however, somewhat speculative given the lack of evidence regarding VIIIth-century vessels.[25] Regardless, we can assume more material or produce was leaving England during this period too which will also affect the size and nature of the hinterlands required by the emporia.

4. TRACING HINTERLANDS I: TRADED GOODS AND COINAGE

The simplest way to try to measure these hinterlands is to map traded material originating at the emporia as Palmer did,[26] although a few words of caution are warranted, especially relating to pottery distributions. As Newman points out this can be affected by various economic or social factors which remain invisible archaeologically.[27] Like any form of material culture, ceramics can covey notions of identity which may not be acceptable to some groups, or their form and function may simply not add anything to the repertoire already available in another area.[28] For instance, the distribution of Ipswich Ware is extremely useful in exhibiting *some* of the areas which may have been important hinterlands for Ipswich. However, virtually none has been found in Essex, just south-west of Ipswich, roughly equating to the East Saxon kingdom. Whether traders working from Ipswich were visitors here is unclear at present, but it may be that Ipswich Ware would not have been an acceptable commodity in this particular area, and so its use in identifying hinterland areas, whilst extremely useful cannot be used alone.

Instead of using these traded items on their own, an alternative method is to map the distributions of different types of coinage. The benefits of this is that they can be considered and index of trade rather than being a traded good.[29] Coinage was produced in Anglo-Saxon England from the early VIIth-century, and the silver *sceattas* of the later VIIth to mid-VIIIth centuries are now fairly common finds with over 3,000 stray finds now recorded in the UK and these provide a very useful example.[30] Although no mint places have been identified with complete certainty, and there are numerous different types, numismatists have identified a range of coins most likely produced in the emporia, notably Series R in Ipswich , Series H in Hamwic, Series L in London and Series Y in

[25] CRUMLIN-PEDERSEN 1999.
[26] PALMER 2003.
[27] NEWMAN 1999, 39-41.
[28] BLINKHORN 1997 ; BROWN 1997.
[29] NAYLOR 2004a, p. 18.
[30] NAYLOR forthcoming.

York.[31] The distributions of these (Fig. 2) illustrates their potential usefulness in determining the geographical extent of each emporia's economic zone of influence. Series R, like many coin types, is relatively widespread attesting to the general mixing of currency but has a broadly East Anglian distribution with a line of finds then spreading out into eastern central England around the edge of the fenland. Within East Anglia, there is a cluster of finds in the Ipswich area and another in north-west Norfolk with a line of finds along the Gipping Valley in-between. This provides an interesting juxtaposition against the Ipswich Ware distribution which shows a similar basic pattern. Series H is very tightly bound to Wessex, especially the area around Hamwic and Winchester and to the west. The gap in the distribution can be attributed to the presence of the New Forest where little metal-detecting or fieldwork takes place and is likely to be a modern constraint rather than an indication of ancient patterns in this case.[32] Like Series H, Series Y is very tightly bound to a defined area, the region from the River Humber to River Tees west of the Pennines, although there is a notable gap around York. Series L is the most widely distributed type examined here, perhaps unsurprising given London's pre-eminent role as the trading port for the Mercian kingdom. There is a distinct distribution of Series L along the Thames Valley and into the southern Midlands (the counties of Gloucestershire and Warwickshire), and also around the southern edge of the fenland, similar to that seen for Series R.

Such distributions and closer examination of those distributions are extremely useful, and certainly appear to show a definable zone of influence that the emporia held. The comparison of Ipswich Ware and Series R sceattas is an informative case. The concentration of both in a similar area (north-west Norfolk) illustrates that this was undoubtedly an important hinterland for traders from Ipswich, the archaeology of the area suggestive of valuable meat and salt economy.[33] Around London the distribution of Series L sceattas is also worth some attention. This indicates two important hinterlands, one involving communities to the north around the fenland of Cambridgeshire, the other westwards along the Thames Valley, the rich farmland no doubt being of importance. In addition, it also provides support for the documentary evidence of the importance of London and its control to the Mercian elites, both secular and ecclesiastical.

However, using these relatively simple distribution analyses are also not without their problems. They do, of course, provide an easy way of assessing the essence of aspects of an emporium's hinterland but there are some important caveats to be taken into account. Levels of monetization are an important consideration regarding the interpretation of any numismatic data, and the evolution of coin-use in Anglo-Saxon England shows a high degree of variability even in what would otherwise seem very similar areas.[34] For example, we are lucky to have the documentary sources which show London's importance to Mercia.[35] This illustrates that salt from Droitwich (Worcestershire) was an extremely important commodity, and two Series L coins are known from what appears to

[31] METCALF 1993-1994 provides the most complete discussion of sceattas available.
[32] RICHARDS, NAYLOR 2009, section 2.5.2.3.
[33] PALMER 2003, p. 54.
[34] NAYLOR forthcoming.
[35] See MADDICOTT 2005, p. 8-24.

be an important salt transhipment point at the village of Bidford-on-Avon (Warwickshire).[36] It appears also that elites from this area and adjacent parts of the central Midlands sought connections and property in London, yet the London-minted coins only reach the southern-most areas, the 'heartland' of Mercia having far less developed levels of monetization. Similarly, the concentration of Series Y sceattas, seemingly minted in York, partly reflected traditional locations for research and metal-detecting such as the Yorkshire Wolds, but it is also heavily constrained by levels of coin-use in the period. Very few VIIIth-century coins are known from west of the Pennines nor north of the River Tees either from excavations or other methods of recovery, and documentary sources for Northumbrian history alongside other archaeological sources are indicative of greater levels of connectedness than the numismatic data would imply.[37]

5. TRACING HINTERLANDS II: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Therefore, whilst they are a vital tool of analysis and some notions of hinterlands are definable through the examination of markers such as coinage or pottery they must be treated carefully otherwise we are at risk of drawing poorly constructed conclusions from the data, and misreading their meaning. There is a need for a more nuanced approach to the idea of hinterlands if we are to more fully understand the interactions between emporia and hinterland and assess how these changed through time. Key to such an approach is assessing the broad themes which may underlie the nature of any particular interaction. This alternative, thematic method allows for a range of potential hinterlands to be examined, from which broader discussions of the nature of settlement, trade and production may come. The following categories are potential hinterland types, all in some way inter-related, which distinguish different aspects of an emporium's nature and function, and could form a framework for the discussion of a range of factors. Each involves examination of a range of material found regionally and within the emporia themselves, as well as making use of any textual evidence. These are:

- the 'impact hinterland': the zone where the VIIIth- and IXth-century emporia had an immediate and profound impact in terms of patterns of settlement and the nature of its economy which may become more focused towards the local emporium. From the analysis of changes in patterns on coin loss this appears to extend around 15km, equivalent to one day's return travel by non-mechanised means.[38]
- 'productive hinterlands': the areas from where raw materials and other related products, such as fuel or sharpening stones, were procured to be used in production located within the emporia. The distributions of coins and pottery shown previously certainly form important aspects of assessing 'productive hinterlands', but tracing these would also be well served through exploring the provenance of materials found within emporia. For example, the Fishergate, York excavations showed that sharpening stones were procured from as far away as the Scottish Borders, and animal skins including pine martin were most likely from areas such as the North Yorkshire Moors, 40-50km away, and some of the stone

[36] NAYLOR, RICHARDS 2010, p. 195.
[37] RICHARDS, NAYLOR 2009, 3.3.1.2 ; HIGHAM 1993.
[38] NAYLOR forthcoming.

used in craftworking from Hamwic was from the Bristol area.[39] Likewise, sharpening stones found at the Royal Opera House (London) have provenance south of the Thames in Kent and Surrey, which may also be an area from where London was most likely to obtain iron, with major deposits in the Weald and contemporary evidence from smelting both there and at Canterbury.[40] The land around London was also known to have been heavily wooded at the time of Domesday in 1086,[41] which may indicate that Londoners were able to get much of their wood locally. Much of this would not be indicated through the distributions of coinage or non-local pottery.

- 'subsistence hinterlands': the areas from where foodstuffs were procured, which could obviously vary greatly by the nature of that produce, from meat and fish to cereals and other plants. It does seem likely that at least some would have come from farms in the region, some perhaps very locally produced given the appearance of neonates in some zooarchaeological assemblages implying farms close by to emporia, as at the Royal Opera House. Indeed, excavations on what is considered the edge of the London emporium at the National Gallery site are suggestive of a semi-rural environment.[42] There is also extensive evidence, especially from Hamwic, that animals arrived on-the-hoof or as processed cuts and so it is entirely possible these animal products originated at some distance.[43] As Hamerow has rightly argued, the subsistence relations between the emporia and the countryside remain poorly understood and work targeting these problems is needed.[44] In addition, the documentary evidence may be of use although it is difficult to know how representative sources citing food rent in the period are, or how they could be related to the emporia. Later sources, such as Domesday, may also be useful, as it may highlight trends in the evidence which could be followed, such as the extensive use of the saltmarsh for sheep pasture along the Thames estuary.[45] This, though, could only be used in conjunction with VIIth to IXth-century evidence. Alongside animal bone data, the evidence from fish and shellfish can be an important source of information. For both Hamwic and London the bulk of this indicates local sources, although oysters from the Royal Opera House excavations appear to have come from the coast north of the Thames as far up as Suffolk illustrating sources from further afield were utilised where appropriate.[46]
- 'social hinterlands': the effect that the emporia would have had upon different sections of society. These could take different forms, both geographical and virtual. For example, high status aspects of the nature and function of the emporia would no doubt have been more far-reaching than those relating to the peasantry. We also cannot ignore the changes that these large settlements would have had on local social dynamics, which could be many and varied, including the

[39] NAYLOR 2004a, p. 117 ; ANDREWS 1997, p. 241.
[40] GOFFIN 2003 ; NAYLOR 2004, p. 84-86.
[41] GALLOWAY, KEENE 1996, p. 450.
[42] MALCOLM, BOWSHER 2003, p. 185
[43] HAMEROW 2007, p. 221.
[44] Ibid., p. 229-230.
[45] NAYLOR 2004a, p. 120-121 ; RIPPON 2007, p. 152.
[46] WINDER 1997 ; MALCOLM, BOWSHER 2003, 186-188.

relationships between producers and consumers and the levels of access different actors would have had to the networks of international trade. The ownership of land and property by Mercian elites in London illustrates the latter's importance to a quite distant area.[47] Such evidence also highlights that it is only certain members of society who will be affected by these contacts.

These various hinterlands highlight the complexities of the emporia and the examples cited indicate the potential of the approach. Even just these few examples indicate that productive hinterlands are likely to have been complex, both through deliberately trying to procure the most suitable materials, such as sharpening stones, whilst still being constrained by the availability of some raw materials, such as metals which may have been at least partially recycled.[48] Subsistence hinterlands look to have been somewhat simpler with local produce used as much as possible, although provenancing here is difficult on current evidence. The potential of this approach to assess changing hinterlands is high but will require in-depth contextual analysis of evidence by phase, which remains outside the scope of this short study. Alongside this there is also a need for more provenance studies of clay and metal sources which are sadly lacking in the early medieval literature but such work would have great potential in the definition of the impact and productive hinterlands especially, although would be of use for all defined hinterland types.

One thing is for sure, that this multi-focal thematic approach outlined here has the potential to illustrate the variety in hinterland make-up not otherwise easily seen. For example, based on the distribution of traded items, Maddicott suggested that London's core hinterland was based around the River Thames from Oxfordshire to its estuary east of London.[49] Whilst this seems to be most likely true for its basic subsistence hinterland, and possibly some supplies of raw materials such as wool just a brief overview of some of the available data suggests that this core hinterland would also have much variety within it, but also that London's 'productive hinterland' and 'social hinterland' was much wider, drawing stone at the least from the Kent/Surrey area and from south-west England, and the coinage indicating important hinterlands lying further west and north.

6. CONCLUSION

This brief exploration of the methods we can use to explore hinterlands, and my suggestions for a range of hinterlands types may well have raised more questions than answers. Hinterlands are an extremely complex phenomenon and their study is dependant on how we perceive the emporia themselves, fundamentally affecting the nature of relationships they would have had with surrounding regions. In addition, they were not static entities but dynamic and fluid, changing and adapting to new situations and pressures as they arose. Certainly the nature of the hinterlands relating to the early phases of the emporia was very different to those seen 50 years later when they had become urbanised port towns, and it is likely that these may have changed again during the emporia's declining years of the IXth century.

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[47] MADDICOTT 2005, p. 18-19.
[48] MALCOLM, BOWSHER 2003, 176-190
[49] MADDICOTT 2005, p. 14.

Interdisciplinary approaches will, of course, be most instructive and the large datasets of portable antiquities are also now particularly useful for English sites and regions. This type of data provides an extremely powerful background picture into which sites can placed and regions interpreted. Undertaking comparative studies of both emporia and rural settlements at the contextual level will undoubtedly help to define the changing character of the hinterlands over time as will environmental/geographic assessments to define the various landscapes suited to different activities, including animal husbandry, arable farming, salt production and so on. In sum, the emporia of Anglo-Saxon England can be seen as a product of their time, each evolving in their own way alongside a whole range of contemporary regional and international developments in settlement and economy in the VIIth and VIIIth centuries. However, at their most active they provided a dynamic force with the ability to influence and shape their regions. Understanding these interactions and the nature of their various hinterlands will allow us to more fully appreciate how the emporia operated, at both the economic and social levels, and how the early medieval populations engaged with these far-reaching networks of trade and exchange.

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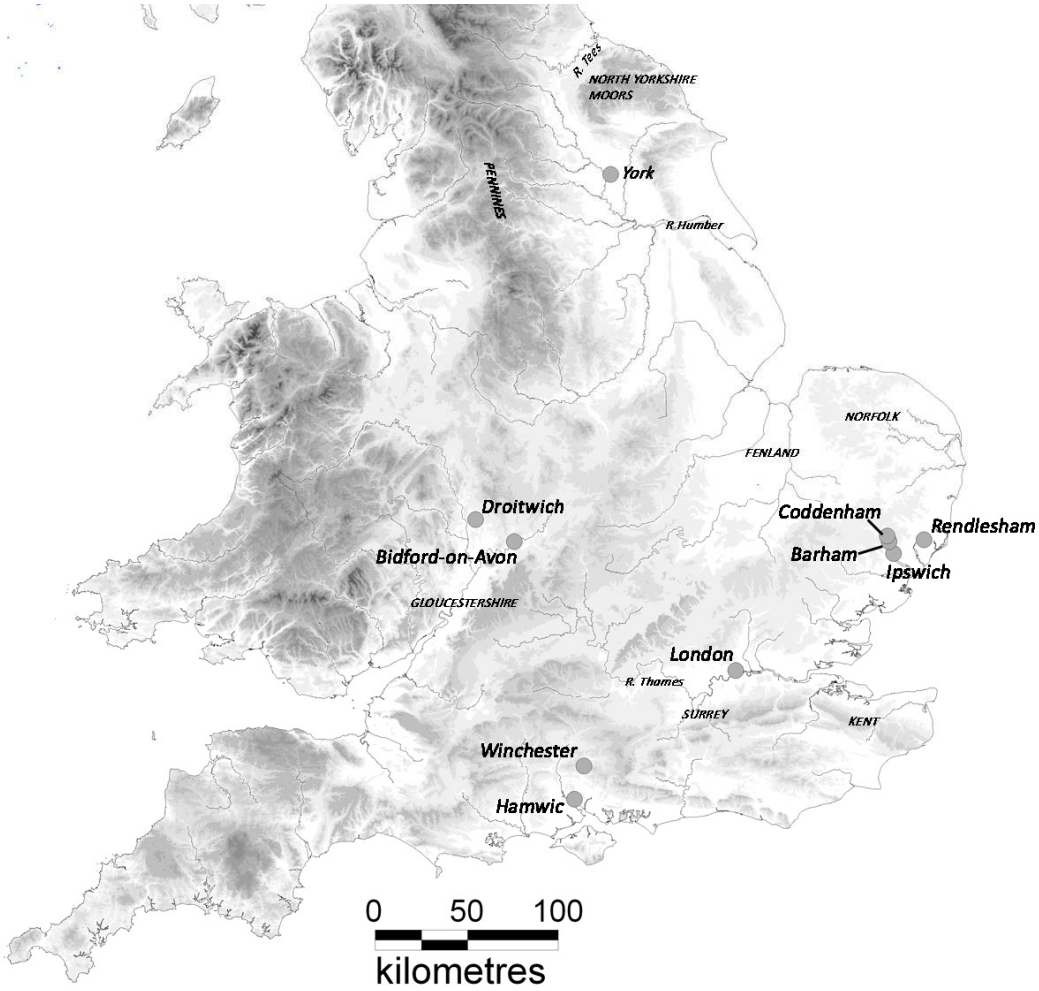

Fig. 1 Location map showing the main sites, rivers and regions discussed in the text.

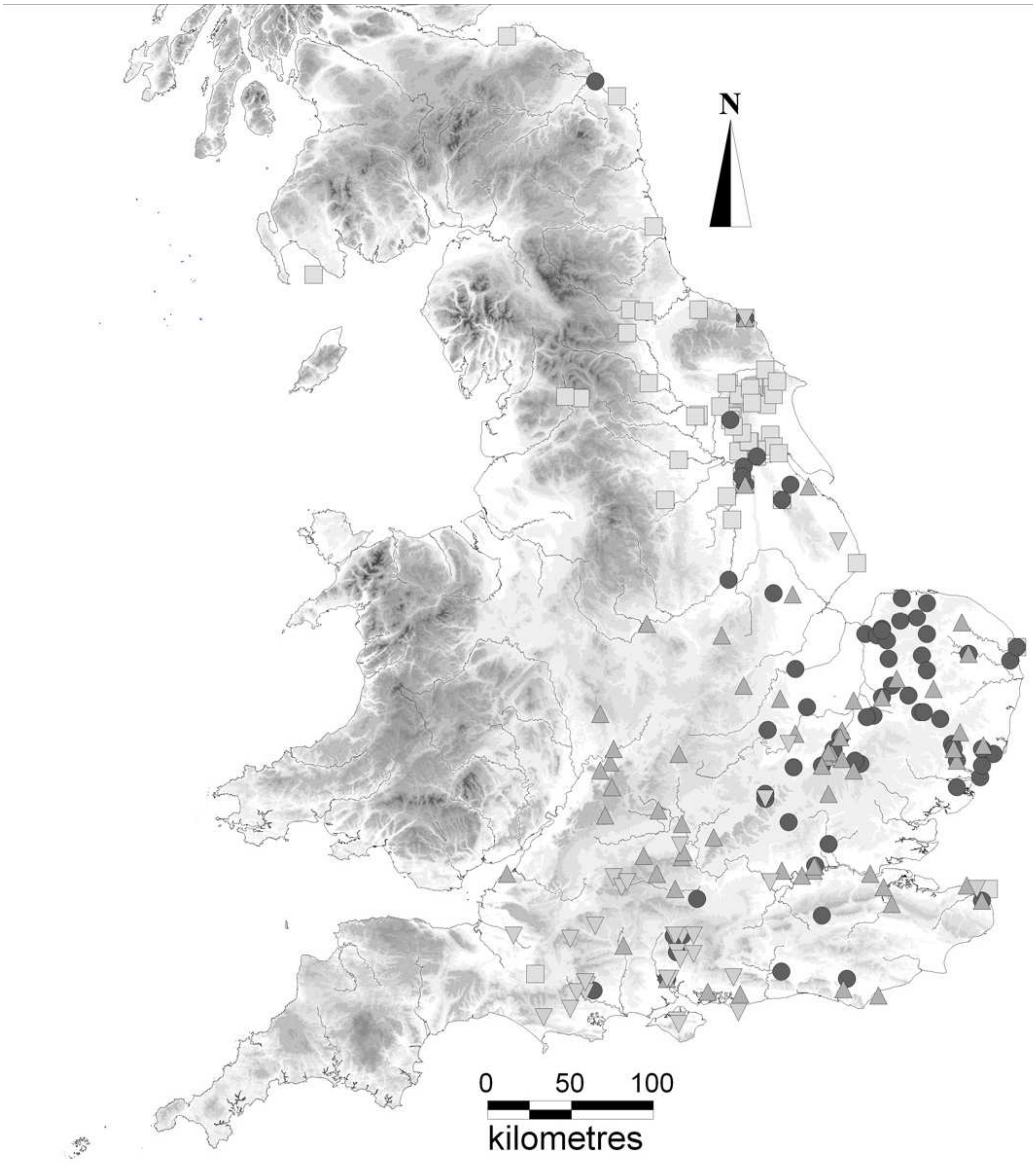

Fig. 2 The distributions of coinage minted at the emporia. Key: circles- Series R; triangles- Series H; squares- Series Y (coins minted under King Eadberht); inverted triangles- Series L.