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What's so Special? A Reinterpretation of Anglo-Saxon 'Special Deposits'
By JAMES MORRIS¹ and BEN JERVIS²

BUILDING ON HAMEROW'S previous study in Medieval Archaeology 50, the interpretation of Anglo-Saxon 'special deposits', primarily of animal bone and pottery, from England are discussed. By examining their composition and the variable nature of depositional practices, we question why these deposits are considered 'special'. Such deposits are often interpreted within a ritual or functional dichotomy and we propose that the adoption of a biographical approach to individual remains can help elucidate the many and varied human actions and means behind their creation.

In *Medieval Archaeology* 50, Helena Hamerow presented a discussion of 'special deposits' in Anglo-Saxon settlements, arguing that ritual activities within them are under-studied.³ This is not a contention that we fundamentally disagree with, however we do feel that Hamerow's paper presented a dichotomy between ritual and functional depositional activity, which we aim to collapse.⁴ Hamerow presented a preliminary survey of early Anglo-Saxon settlements (4th-7th century) in England, focusing on the presence of animal, human and 'special' object burials.⁵ She proposes that such deposits are 'special' because they are associated either with the foundation or termination of structures.⁶ We question why such deposits should be identified as 'special', instead arguing that all depositional activity should be seen as multi-thematic rather than simply functional or 'ritual'. Instead of imposing an artificial dichotomy, belief systems and superstitions should be seen as integrated within everyday life and as being active in the constitution and reconstitution of a society.⁷

We will expand upon Hamerow's study by also considering the presence of similar deposits on later Anglo-Saxon sites and urban centres. We also wish to acknowledge and expand upon the strengths of Hamerow's original paper. In particular the consideration of faunal remains alongside that of other materials. This is achieved through considering different groups of artefact within a single study. We hope to expand upon this positive direction by better integrating the evidence from different finds types, in this case faunal remains and ceramics, which can be best achieved by collaboration between specialists.⁸ Although we concentrate upon British and, in particular, southern English examples, the study of such deposits is of international relevance as these types of deposits discussed are found on many early medieval sites in the North Sea zone.⁹

'WHY SO SPECIAL'? RITUAL, RUBBISH AND DEPOSITIONAL VARIABILITY

The animal deposits identified by Hamerow as 'special' follow the three types Grant defined for the Iron-Age Danebury (Hampshire) material:

- animal burials consisting of fully or partially articulated skeletons

- animal skulls and horse mandibles that are complete or near complete
- articulated limbs.¹⁰

Following Hill, we have adopted the term Associated Bone Group (ABG) when referring to animal remains, which removes any inherent bias towards ritual explanations.¹¹

Our work on ABG deposits draws upon evidence from Morris's recent study of these deposits on sites in southern England and Yorkshire, from the Neolithic to AD 1550.¹² Of the 2,062 ABG deposits identified in the study, 4.4% (92) came from contexts dating to the Anglo-Saxon period.¹³ In comparison, the Iron-Age and Romano-British assemblages consisted of 784 and 908 deposits respectively. This large difference compared to the Anglo-Saxon period may, in part, be due to archaeologist's failure to identify such deposits during excavation, or report their presence.¹⁴ However, the Anglo-Saxon period did produce more ABG deposits than the Neolithic (55) or Bronze Age (61). A clearer picture of the prevalence of these deposits comes when the percentage of sites is compared. In total, 34 Anglo-Saxon sites were examined, of which 59% (20) had ABG deposits present.¹⁵ This is comparable to the results from the Romano-British and Iron Age periods (Fig 1). Therefore, although present in smaller numbers, they appear to be relatively common on the sites studied.

As with the other periods investigated in Morris's study, the majority of the ABGs are from domestic mammals (Tab 1). However, there appears to be some diachronic variation in the species recovered with dog ABGs more common in the early parts of the Anglo-Saxon period, perhaps continuing a Romano-British trend, and the proportion of cattle ABGs increasing in the latter half of the period.¹⁶ In further examination, dog ABGs are more common from urban centres often as multiple deposits, with cattle ABGs common on rural sites. There is also a greater amount of species variability in the urban ABG assemblage compared with the rural sample, but this may be due to the larger sample size from the towns.

The majority of all species were deposited within pits. This evidence is in contrast to Hamerow's suggestion that there is a trend for the placement of 'termination deposits' in Anglo-Saxon ditches and particularly in *grubenhäuser*. Overall, of the 92 Anglo-Saxon deposits, 67 (72%) are from pits, whereas ten (11%) are recorded from ditches. If we just consider rural settlements, Morris's study recorded 15 ABGs from pits, six from ditches and five associated with the fill of *grubenhäuser*.

It therefore appears that ABG deposits are present in a number of different feature types. The majority of the deposits identified in Morris's study were viewed by their reporting authors simply as 'waste products', the main exceptions being those found in association with human remains. In contrast, following the arguments of authors working on prehistoric material, Hamerow views these deposits as 'special' because they are distinct from the 'normal' fragmented faunal material recovered.¹⁷ Hill viewed this difference to mean that such deposits might be structured, which does not necessarily mean they are special. However, he did suggest ABGs *were* ritual in nature, stating 'those archaeologists who accept that the treatment of human remains is ritual must extend this interpretation to animal remains, pottery or small finds treated in similar way'.¹⁸ However, Hill also notes human remains could be rubbish, an important point often lost, and went on to discuss how ritual would have been embedded in everyday life. It is therefore understandable that a general concept has filtered into Iron-Age archaeology that deposits such as ABGs are ritual in nature, and

in due course this has also influenced the interpretation of deposits from other periods.¹⁹ In Hamerow's interpretation, she also views some of these deposits as shedding light on the ritualisation of everyday Anglo-Saxon life, discussing them as foundation and termination deposits and, following prehistoric archaeologists, suggesting a possible association with grain storage and fertility.²⁰ Although overall trends in species exist, it is important to bear in mind the high variability in their composition and context. For example, should a complete dog ABG from a pit at Tidworth (Wiltshire) be given the same interpretation as a partial sheep/goat ABG from the fill of a *grubenhäus* at Collingbourne Ducis (Wiltshire)?²¹ Indeed, should complete and partial remains of the same species be subject to the same interpretation? Although we may label these finds as special deposits or ABGs, different human actions and motives created them.

Part of the problem with interpreting these deposits as ritual, or part of a ritualised act, is that although commonly used, our concept of 'ritual' is often unclear. Ian Hodder suggested that archaeologists use the term because what is observed is non-functional and therefore not understood.²² Functional is not utilised as an explanation on its own because it is understood, therefore a sub-category is used, such as butchery waste or a pottery waster. As ritual sub-categories are not understood, many archaeologists use it at a meta-level of meaning, using taxonomy as a metaphor, the family rather than the genus of explanation.²³ The problem we face is moving beyond purely 'ritual' as both a description and an explanation for these deposits. Tim Insoll comments that many archaeologists simply substitute the term ritual for religious. He suggests rituals need to be placed within their wider religious framework.²⁴ However, social anthropologists have shown there are many different types of rituals, which can be secular, religious, class-related, sex-related or personal.²⁵ Joanna Brück suggests a way forward is to jettison 'ritual' and instead look at rationality.²⁶ However, it is the use of ritual at a meta-level that is problematic; it does not mean that the explanation is wrong, rather uninformative. We feel that rather than imposing a ritual/rubbish dichotomy, the values held by a community at least guided all depositional practice. Therefore, any deposit has the potential to acquire meaning in a specific context. Neither ritual acts nor waste disposal is separable from the domestic sphere,²⁷ as well illustrated by the Anglo-Saxon settlement at Rowner (Hampshire) where it was difficult 'to distinguish between living areas and rubbish dumps'.²⁸ Decisions made in waste disposal were influenced by, and influenced those made in, other areas of domestic life.²⁹ What these 'special deposits' represent are specific activities, which may have both functional and ritual elements and to develop our understanding we must start looking at specific explanations regarding their creation.

To do this it is necessary to understand the nature of Anglo-Saxon depositional practices, which Hamerow rightly argues have been generalised. On Anglo-Saxon settlements, a large proportion of the 'waste' recovered archaeologically comes from the fills of *grubenhäuser*. Historically, the explanation for this is that material represents primary occupation deposits or redeposited waste. Jess Tipper's work has greatly advanced our understanding of deposition within *grubenhäuser*.³⁰ While Tipper acknowledges that we cannot disregard ideas of foundation or closing deposits, we need to be more rigorous in how we reach these conclusions. Tipper's study uses

evidence from the three most intensively excavated early to middle Anglo-Saxon settlements and concludes that most *grubenhäuser* display complex and varied formation and deformation processes, and that a range of depositional trajectories can be present within a single structure.³¹

There is a great deal of variation in the ways that *grubenhäuser* were filled, even at a single site (Tab 2). Close examination of the faunal and ceramic evidence in particular demonstrates that some *grubenhäuser* filled quickly with a mixture of secondary and tertiary material, while others were filled more slowly with just tertiary material.³² Primary material is rare and is generally only present as material trampled into floor surfaces.

As well as ABGs, Hamerow identified the presence of animal skulls and near-complete vessels within a *grubenhäus* as indicative of a special deposit.³³ We can question why such deposits may be any more special than one of redeposited midden material. In fact, Tipper found that the majority of complete or near complete vessels were found in association with redeposited material.³⁴ The vessels have often been used, as in the case study that Hamerow presents from Mucking (Essex), and are mixed in with other domestic waste. The deposition of ‘waste’ into any *grubenhäus* served to close the feature, marking what Thomas terms (in relation to a late Anglo-Saxon deposit) ‘a transition in the intertwined narratives of a settlement’s inhabitants and their built environment’.³⁵ At Pennyland (Buckinghamshire), for example, an ox skull identified as a ‘special’ deposit was associated with redeposited domestic ‘waste’.³⁶ The majority of the ABG deposits recorded in Morris’s study also came from contexts that included probable domestic waste.

In some cases, sherds of pottery that appear to have been curated or unusual miniature vessels are deposited in structures,³⁷ such as a small, lugged vessel associated with a burial at Eye Kettleby (Leicestershire).³⁸ In these cases a more lucid argument can be made for a deposit having some ‘ritual’ significance. Rather than needing to be classed as ‘ritual’ or ‘rubbish’, such deposits can simply be placed closer to the ‘ritual’ end of the spectrum, given that these are generally only one component of a much more complex mixed fill, consisting perhaps of objects that have generated specific meanings in a particular context, *which led to their deposition* in these structures, and objects which gain meaning *through deposition* in these structures.

Certainly, these depositional events do mark transitions in the life of a settlement, the closing of structures and possibly the movement of activity to other areas of a site. Such transition can also be marked through the deposition of midden material. Arguably, as positive features in the landscape, the destruction and redistribution of midden material could actually have been more active in marking transition than a deposit of secondary waste. The slow decay of an abandoned structure may also mark transitions and narratives. One such structure is the *grubenhäus* at Old Erringham (West Sussex), which filled slowly, based on weathering and stratigraphic evidence.³⁹ Perhaps such decaying structures marked a level of continuity in a landscape, rather than the transition marked through the closing of these features.

The filling of *grubenhäuser* clearly varied. When the processes behind these deposits are considered, it is difficult to isolate any deposit as ‘special’. Instead we

see different choices being made depending upon the circumstances. The condition of material recovered from *grubenhäuser* would suggest that it was primarily redeposited material. The presence of middens on Anglo-Saxon sites is a long contested issue. The interpretation appears to have been developed in the 1980s to explain a general lack of domestic waste at sites such as Cowdery's Down (Hampshire).⁴⁰ There is now increasing archaeological evidence for midden use.⁴¹ It is likely then that middens, rather than *grubenhäuser*, were the main foci of deposition. Material dumped in *grubenhäuser* represents an action designed to close a feature, rather than get rid of waste, although there may be exceptions. It is the closing of these features that is important, marking transition in a settlement, building memory and potentially bringing a community together. None of the material in a *grubenhäuser* is 'just rubbish', neither is *some* of it special. It is mostly waste that has gone through a transformation of meaning through its role in the closing of a feature, although clearly some objects were deliberately selected for deposition, perhaps in an attempt to consciously mark this event.

The study of deposition in pits is even more underdeveloped than the study of *grubenhäuser*. Two general stances prevail, firstly that pits 'did not form a significant part of early Anglo-Saxon culture', a view that seems increasingly generalised and uncertain based on some excavated evidence.⁴² The second is that pits were dug for rubbish.⁴³ The reasoning behind the second conclusion is that pits contain domestic 'waste'. In some cases functions have been assigned to pits, including quarrying, cess disposal and storage.⁴⁴

The view that pits were simply dug for rubbish has been critiqued in later medieval archaeology, where it has been demonstrated both that pits had a range of functions and that rubbish was deposited in a variety of ways.⁴⁵ The time is ripe for archaeologists to reconsider the role of pits on Anglo-Saxon settlements. At Godmanchester (Cambridgeshire), pits contained very little rubbish, contradicting the excavator's conclusion they were primarily used for waste disposal.⁴⁶ Similarly, at Abbots Worthy (Hampshire) and Yarnton (Oxfordshire), pits also contained little 'waste'.⁴⁷ As with *grubenhäuser*, there is a mixture of depositional processes behind the filling of pits (Tab 3). While some contain secondary deposits, others contain mixtures of secondary and tertiary materials in varying proportions. Anglo-Saxon pits appear to have varied depositional histories. They were not only used for 'rubbish' disposal and in some cases this may not have been their intended function at all. 'Special' deposits do not always stand out among a pattern of variability. Rather than being special because of the processes behind their deposition, they are special because they do not conform to archaeologists stereotyped notions of how these deposits should look.

Hamerow's study focuses on the early Anglo-Saxon period, but it is worth highlighting that the issues raised are also relevant to later Anglo-Saxon archaeology, including depositional practice in towns. In *Hamwic* (Southampton, Hampshire) the evidence suggests a pattern of redeposition from middens that closely cites rural practice, demonstrating how, although cosmopolitan in some respects, the lives of the occupants of this wic continued to be entangled in their rural hinterland. Gabor Thomas' recent discussion of hoards has also demonstrated the relevance of the debate to later Anglo-Saxon rural sites.⁴⁸ Thomas argues that the late Anglo-Saxon

hoard at Bishopstone (East Sussex) marks a deposit associated with the demolition of a structure, which, when related to the archaeological and historical context of late Anglo-Saxon England can be seen to mark transitions in the life of the settlement and its inhabitants. His approach is successful because not only has a deposit been identified as votive because of stratigraphic evidence, but the contents of the hoard as well as its context have promoted a detailed and well-thought-out interpretation. By taking such an approach, and considering the context, contents and depositional history of each deposit, we can begin to determine which are more deeply rooted in the superstitious or spiritual domain, and which are more functional. The point is that none of these deposits is special, instead they indicate variability in the relationship between the physical elements of everyday life and the spiritual or superstitious ones, two realms that influence one another and cannot be separated.

DEPOSIT BIOGRAPHIES

We can draw two conclusions concerning the problematic nature of ‘special deposits’ in the archaeological record. First, archaeologists often view them as ‘special’ because of a relative difference to a ‘normal’ deposit. However, such a normal baseline does not exist and these deposits could be simply part of a continuum of variability, rather than deviations from a static baseline. Second, the view of ‘different from the norm’ often results in meta-level ritual interpretations. While some deposits may have a ritualised component, others may have no superstitious or spiritual motivation behind them at all, hence many archaeologists fall into a trap of viewing these deposits within a ritual/rubbish dichotomy. What we need to do is contextualise and understand both the nature of the events that led to the deposit and the motivations behind them.

To do this we need to move beyond a monochronic view of these deposits, concerned with their final moment of deposition. For all objects this is merely the final event in their above-ground existence. An understanding of an object’s existence can be gained by adopting a biographical approach, and drawing on the work of Igor Kopytoff who suggested that ‘things’ could not be examined at just one moment in their existence, but rather at multiple points such as creation, exchange, consumption and death.⁴⁹ Normally, archaeology investigates material culture, particularly faunal and ceramic remains, in what could be described as the *supra-biographical*, looking beyond individual ‘life cycles’ at longer phase-based chronological trends.⁵⁰ We should consider that members of Anglo-Saxon society did not set out to create an ABG or other form of ‘special’ deposit; they undertook a series of actions resulting in its creation, but it is these actions that give agency and meaning. As archaeologists, it is the understanding of these above-ground actions that we ultimately strive towards.

An example of this process is our reconsideration of an early 7th century cow ABG from Cowdery’s Down (Fig 2).⁵¹ Hamerow interpreted this as an unambiguous example of a foundation deposit, associated with an entrance, possibly emphasizing the status of the building, following a NW European tradition.⁵² Pit 6, positioned next to the W entrance of structure C13, appears to have been deliberately in-filled in one event, with the ABG placed within the top fill, lying on its right side, curled around the edge of the pit.⁵³ The left lower back limb is missing, but this may be due to disturbance, as it would have been the body part closest to the top of the pit. The

excavators suggested that the whole feature seemed inconsistent with use as a rubbish pit and argued that the cow had been half butchered, but deposited before the butchery was finished, possibly for a 'ritual' function, although they do not expand the explanation further.

Cut into chalk, the pit's base is filled with clay, which contained only a fragment of pig maxilla. This was then covered with a layer of cobbles, with another fill of clay, including the ABG placed above. A number of events would have occurred to create this deposit. The lack of other material in the fill, except the pig maxilla fragment, suggests that the pit was not created as a 'rubbish' pit. The excavation report also indicated that the pit slightly cuts the edge of the building's wall trench, however it does respect the wall line, access to the W door and the post-hole outside the structure. This led the excavators to suggest the pit was constructed while the building was standing. The suitability of Hamerow's interpretation of the ABG as an unambiguous foundation deposit would therefore depend on how you interpret the term, with this deposit made after and not during the construction of a building. Regardless we would agree with Osborne's assertion that identifying something as a foundation offering should be the beginning rather than the end of the analysis.⁵⁴

The cow would have undergone a number of processes before deposition. Assuming it did not die naturally, it was chosen for slaughter. The butchery marks on the skull are suggestive of skinning and possibly evisceration taking place. Further knife marks on the left humerus and ulna are in areas normally associated with dismemberment of the limb. However, the ABG appears to have been found in articulation. Therefore, some of the meat from the left limb would have been removed, but connective tissue remained. It is possible other cuts of meat were removed without going deep enough to cut the bone. The deposition does not represent a complete cow, but a bloody, skinned carcass, with at least some of the meat taken from it. Pathological change was not noted on any of the elements, but we cannot discount that the animal was diseased and therefore further butchery did not take place. However, this would not explain the deposition of the carcass within a pit, which suggests a link between the deposit and the building.

The butchery resulted in the creation of three separate objects: skin, meat and carcass. The skin may have later been transformed into leather, the meat consumed and the carcass deposited. Each of these objects may have had separate meanings. The butchery of the cow does differ from what could be considered the 'norm' and therefore may have produced meat/food that was also different from the everyday. The meat taken from the animal may have been consumed in an event associated with the building, perhaps a feast. Because the cow had produced the meat for this event, it may therefore have been appropriate to deposit the carcass in close association with the building. If this was the case then we could perhaps consider the deposition of the carcass as being a single part of a larger scale activity, indeed we could speculate that the deposition of the carcass is of secondary importance to the actual consumption event it provided for, as it was during such activities that social relations were created and renewed.

In another example, Hamerow identifies the deposition of a number of partial or complete vessels and around 30 loomweights in *grubenhäus* 105 at Mucking as a special deposit (Fig 3).⁵⁵ This was then capped with sand and gravel, followed by a

final fill consisting of loam and gravel, some of which may have been deposited later to combat slumping. This and deposits from several other *grubenhäuser* at the site were identified as ‘special’ because the pottery appears to have been deliberately placed in the abandoned structures. Certainly, these deposits can be seen as part of a process of closing, but so can the ABGs present in *grubenhäus* 79 or the layers of gravel and loam in *grubenhäus* 65.

The vessels deposited in *grubenhäus* 105 had all been used and are typical of objects used across the site. Therefore, it can be argued that they do not fall into a class of curated or complete objects that were selected for deposition because of some existing meaning. Instead, they gained meaning through the process of deposition. This meaning is distributed through the structure, the objects and the people disposing of the objects.⁵⁶ It would appear that the closing of *grubenhäuser* in this way, with either secondary or tertiary waste, was a commonly repeated practice, meaning that this act of closing cited past events. Vessels came to be icons of memory, standing for this process of closure.⁵⁷ When a situation arose whereby people, objects and abandoned features were drawn together, the objects served to cue action, influenced by past events, but also informing future practice. The fact that these icons were ceramic vessels is inconsequential – they could just as easily have been animal bones, metalwork or midden material. It was the process of filling that was important, a process that could translate into any objects, as the variety of material present in *grubenhäus* fills demonstrates. Therefore, although it can be argued that meaning was created through the act of deposition, this does not make the presence of a secondary deposit special. Instead, it demonstrates that people partook in the process of closure, in which meaning was generated through the deposition of objects in abandoned structures, a citational process that brought an element of continuity to the process of closure, which was potentially linked to a range of changes to settlement life.

CONCLUSION

One of the most striking aspects of carrying out examinations of a ‘special’ deposit’s life history is the variety of human actions, thoughts and meanings that result in their creation. This specifically shows why the application of meta-level interpretations to such deposits is unhelpful. We would argue such deposits may be representative of feasting, changing structures, mnemonic devices, ‘rubbish’ and transformations of animals to items, to name but a few process we have identified in our continuing studies. What they are not is a single category of data that we can interpret in a singular way. Indeed, a distinction may emerge between materials that gained meaning through their deposition in features and those whose relationship with humans led to them being disposed of in this way.

We would argue that even within small areas and on individual sites, there is variability in those deposits identified as ‘special’. To our modern view, such deposits may be strange, but the choices made would have been deeply logical within the Anglo-Saxon cultural framework. Currently, the study of depositional practice has not received attention from this perspective and requires a programme of interdisciplinary study, drawing on contemporary literature, historical and archaeological evidence if we are to fully understand the motivations behind such deposits.

With this paper it was our intention to build upon the work of Hamerow and add to the debate regarding 'special' deposits. Although we may disagree with some of Hamerow's interpretations and conclusions, we share the opinion that their investigation has much to offer medieval archaeology. Special deposits should no longer be seen as the preserve of prehistorians, however, this is not to say that the interpretation of such deposits should follow those laid out for previous periods. Just because prehistoric archaeologists define and interpret deposits in a certain way, it does not mean those interpretations are correct or appropriate for medieval archaeology. The investigation of medieval special deposits is advantaged by not having a long history of interpretative tradition, in effect the canvas is relatively clean and we should take advantage of this, indeed with the wealth of archaeological and other data at our disposal, medieval archaeology can take a leading role.

We hope that this paper stimulates further debate on this matter. We believe we have laid the foundation argument for the adoption of a biographical life-history approach to these deposits. Such an approach needs to be further refined and tested on more examples than we are able to give here, but we believe it will enable a move away from the meta-level and dichotomic ritual or rubbish interpretation. Adopting a considered view of individual deposits, rather than treating them as a single category with a single interpretation, will allow us to embrace the variability in depositional practices. Indeed, the investigation of such deposits should not be seen as the preserve of a single specialist, and we hope we have shown the advantage of collaboration on this topic. With a biographical approach we can move towards a multi-level account of the human actions, motives and meanings behind such deposits.

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FIG 1

Summary of the percentage of sites recorded with ABGs present in each period, sample size in brackets. *Drawing by James Morris*

FIG 2

Plan of the Cowdery's Down cow ABG in pit 6. *Redrawn by James Morris from Millett and James 1983*.

FIG 3

Plan of *grubenhäus* 105 at Mucking. Redrawn by Ben Jervis from Hamerow 1993.

TABLE 1

Summary of Anglo-Saxon ABGs from southern England and Yorkshire, by species and feature type. The number in brackets indicates the number of complete ABGs present.

TABLE 2

Examples of depositional processes in *grubenhäuser*.

TABLE 3

Examples of depositional processes in pits.

¹ Museum of London Archaeology, Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London, N1 7ED, England, UK. jmorris@animalbones.org

² Archaeology, School of Humanities, University of Southampton, Highfield, Southampton, SO17 1BJ, England, UK. bpjervis@googlemail.com

³ Hamerow 2006

⁴ Ibid, 2 does observe that some ‘rubbish’ deposits can be symbolically structured.

⁵ Principally animal bones but the presence of human remains is also considered.

⁶ Hamerow 2006, 26.

⁷ Much of this work was carried out during the authors doctoral research on the interpretation of associated bone groups (Morris 2008; forthcoming) and the role of pottery in medieval society (Jervis forthcoming a).

⁸ Following, for example, Thomas 2008; Morris and Maltby 2010.

⁹ For example hoards at Uppåkra, Sweden (Martens 1988) and the deposition of complete ceramic vessels and animal remains at Heeten, Netherlands (Lauwerier et al 1999).

¹⁰ Grant 1984.

¹¹ Hill 1995, 27.

¹² Morris 2008; forthcoming.

¹³ For this study ABGs are defined as consisting of two or more elements from the same animal found in association (Morris 2008, 33-5).

¹⁴ Poole (forthcoming) suggests that ABG deposits are relatively common on Anglo-Saxon settlements. The articulation of partial animal remains may be easily missed during excavation and when discovered assumed to be part of the ‘normal’ faunal assemblage and therefore not noted.

¹⁵ 27 from southern England and 7 from Yorkshire.

¹⁶ In contrast to the Iron Age where sheep/goat are the most common species deposited, dog ABGs dominate the Romano-British assemblage (Morris 2010).

¹⁷ Grant 1984; Wait 1985.

¹⁸ Hill 1995, 100.

¹⁹ A comparison of Wilson 1992 with Wilson 1999 shows how the attitude of zooarchaeologists to these deposits changed. Clarke 1997, Clarke forthcoming, Fulford 2001, Maltby 2010 and Woodward and Woodward 2004 show how Iron-Age interpretations have been discussed in relation to Romano-British 'special' deposits.

²⁰ Hamerow 2006, 30. Cunliffe 1992 suggested Iron-Age deposits may be related to grain storage.

²¹ Gooden et al 2002; Hamilton-Dyer 2001.

²² Hodder 1992, 223.

²³ Handelman 2006 has pointed out there is a meta-level ritual that encompasses all ritual activities: feasting, sacrifice and offering deposits are all separate ritual acts, which are classified under the general term ritual.

²⁴ Insoll 2004, 11-12.

²⁵ For example Bell 1992; Bell 1997; Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994; Kreinath et al 2006.

²⁶ Brück 1999.

²⁷ Brück 1999 argued that many societies have a monist rather than a dualist mode of thought; ritual and functional are not separate concepts. Pluskowski 2002 has also noted that in the medieval period the conceptual and physical were interwoven.

²⁸ Lewis and Martin 1973, 45.

²⁹ Numerous ethnographic examples also attest to the situated nature of waste deposition within wider domestic life (Beck and Hill 2004; DeBoer and Lathrap 1979, 127-34; Douny 2007).

³⁰ Tipper 2004.

³¹ Mucking, West Stow, Suffolk and West Heslerton, Yorkshire; Tipper 2004, 159.

³² For the purposes of this paper, primary waste is defined as in-situ occupation debris, a secondary deposit as material deposited directly into a feature and a tertiary deposit as material redeposited from elsewhere, such as a midden.

³³ Hamerow 2006, 17.

³⁴ Tipper 2004, 142.

³⁵ Thomas 2008, 390.

³⁶ Williams 1993, 61.

³⁷ For example at Riverdene (Hampshire) curated sherds of bossed pottery were identified: Timby 2003.

³⁸ Hamerow 2006, 17. This vessel could perhaps be considered a grave good. The presence of small (perhaps miniature) vessels, particularly at West Stow (West 1985), in *grubenhäuser* is one avenue of research that could prove fruitful.

³⁹ Other *grubenhäuser*, for example at Godmanchester, Abbot's Worthy and Canterbury, have sterile or very unproductive fills. These can also be argued to be illustrative of the creation of memory through continuity in the settlement landscape.

⁴⁰ Millett and James 1983.

⁴¹ As at Trowbridge, Wiltshire (Graham and Davies 1983, 143) and Canterbury (Frere et al 1987, 139). For example those from Flixborough, Lincolnshire (Loveluck 2001, 91).

⁴² Williams 1993, 92; Abbots Worthy (Fasham and Whinney 1991), Pennington, Hampshire (Moore, Pine and Taylor 2008), Friars Oak, West Sussex (Butler 2000), Quarrington, Lincolnshire (Taylor 2003), Mucking (Hamerow 1993).

⁴³ Gibson and Murray 2003, 122; Gardiner 1993, 34.

⁴⁴ For example at Wraysbury, Berkshire (Astill and Lobb 1989, 78), Catholme, Staffordshire (Losco-Bradley and Kinsley 2002, 33), Thetford, Suffolk (Rogerson and Dallas 1984, 200), Maxey, Northamptonshire (Addyman 1964, 32-7).

⁴⁵ Buteux and Jackson 2000; Jervis forthcoming b.

⁴⁶ Gibson and Murray 2003, 210.

⁴⁷ Fasham and Whinney 1991, 36; Hey 2005, 71.

⁴⁸ Thomas (2008) focuses on the particularly well-stratified example from Bishopstone.

⁴⁹ Kopytoff 1986. Examples of such an approach include Gerritsen's (1999) examination of prehistoric houses, Hamilakis's (1999) discussion of the Elgin marbles and Joy's (2009) investigation of Iron-Age mirrors.

⁵⁰ See for example Vince's (1991) use of ceramic phases in relation to Saxo-Norman London.

⁵¹ In this case cow is used both as the singular and to indicate sex as the remains were from a female animal.

⁵² Hamerow 2006, 26 and 30.

⁵³ Millett and James 1983, 221.

⁵⁴ Osborne 2004.

⁵⁵ Hamerow 1993, 189.

⁵⁶ Jones and Boivin 2010. Such an approach is grounded in actor network theory (see Latour 2006).

⁵⁷ Jones 2007, 31.