The Nature of Merovingian hegemony in Anglo-Saxon Kent

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ABSTRACT

This project investigates the extent and character of 'Frankish hegemony' in Anglo-Saxon Kent during the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries A.D. It explores both the literary and archaeological evidence and assesses the relationship which existed between the Merovingian Franks and Anglo-Saxon Kent. The proposed study reveals new perspectives on this relationship. These include political, social, culture and economic ties. Based on this evidence, the study also considers the way these ties have been contextualised in major works of modern scholarship, as they are linked to this hegemonic conception. This examination provides greater insight into contextualising contemporary events including the Gregorian mission and the general development of North-West Europe during this period. It considers the various implications raised by economic, cultural, diplomatic and religious exchange systems. It addresses whether this affiliation should be reconstructed as 'hegemony' in any form. It considers if the assumed Frankish or Merovingian 'hegemony' can be reconstructed and justified through other theoretical frameworks. These include approaches such as post-colonialism.

STATEMENT

The following study is completely original and has not been previously submitted for any assessment or previous higher degree study at Macquarie University or any other institution. All sources and concepts of other scholars have been referenced and utilised throughout.

Signed: *DWeeler*

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ABBREVIATIONS

AA   MGH, Auctores Antiquissimi

Alc. Epp. Alcuin, *Alcuini Epistolae*, E. Dummler (ed.), *MGH, Epp.*, Vol.4, *Epistolae Karolini Aevi II* (Berlin, 1895).

ASE   Anglo-Saxon England

BAR   British Archaeological Reports

Bede, *HE.*   Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, C. Plummer (ed.), *Baedae Opera Historica*, Vol.1-2 (Oxford, 1896).

Ep. Epistolae

Epist. Aust.   Epistolae Austrasicae, W. Gundlach (ed.), *MGH, Epp.*, Vol.3, *Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini Aevi I* (Berlin, 1892).

Epp. MGH, Epistolae

Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.* Gregory of Tours, *Decem Liber Historiae*, B. Krusch and W. Levison (eds.), *MGH, SRM*, Vol.1,1 (Hannover, 1951).

Gregory the Great, *Reg.* Gregory the Great, *Register epistolarum*, P. Ewald and L.M. Hartmann (eds.), *MGH, Epp.*, Vol.1-2 (Berlin, 1891-1899).

JMA Journal of Marine Archaeology

JMEMS Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies

LCL   Loeb Classical Library

LL Leges

MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historcia

OJA Oxford Journal of Archaeology

Pac. Pactus Legis Salicae, K.A. Eckhardt (ed.), *MGH, LL*, Vol.4, 1 (Hannover, 1962).

Procopius, *Wars.* Procopius, *History of the Wars*, trans. H. B. Dewing, *History of the Wars, Books VII (continued) and VIII, LCL*, Vol.5 (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

SRM   MGH, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum

Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.* Venantius Fortunatus, *Carminia, Venanti Honori Clementiani Fortunati presbyteri Italici Opera poetica*, F. Leo (ed.), *MGH, AA*, Vol.4.1 (Berlin, 1881).

Vita. Balth. Vita Balthildis, B. Krusch (ed.), *MGH, SRM*, Vol.2 (Hannover, 1951).

Chapter One: Introduction

There is a fascination within society with the creation and manifestation of hierarchies. The understanding and desire for orderly structure is a fundamental part of numerous relationships. These concepts are intricate and incorporate parts of everyday life to broader and more comprehensive structures. These systems include the social, economic and military frameworks. They encompass political models and connections. It is not surprising then that these ties have been defined and classified into hierarchies that exist between different political entities. Amongst the range of terminology used for the purpose naming these relationships, one word is particularly significant - 'hegemony'.

Hegemony is the phenomenon in which one group is subordinate to another through a leadership role, which is typically maintained through coercive agency and means. Based on this description it is unsurprising that it appears in multiple contexts. They range from political theory and international relations to sociological thought. The term hegemony itself appears frequently in historical study. It is used in periods including modern, early modern and ancient world studies. One area which is generally ignored for these models is the convoluted and transitionary historical era of the Middle Ages. This becomes apparent when examining the early medieval period.

The early medieval period, traditionally referred to as the 'Dark Ages' contains multiple political constructs which have been interpreted with emphasis on dominance and subordination between states. These include the Byzantine Empire, the kingdom of Visigothic Spain and Ostrogothic Italy. Another major polity was the state modern scholarship refers to as Francia, which is divided in two major sub-periods based on two ruling dynasties, the Carolingians and the

earlier Merovingians. Although the Carolingians' claims of overlordship and hegemony have been attested by both ancient and modern commentators, the Merovingians' hegemonic declarations have only been explored in the last century. The major advocate of this interpretation, Ian Wood, introduced his work on the subject in the second half of the twentieth century. Wood provided an overview for the Merovingians' dominance over Western Europe and more significantly, debatable assertions of hegemony over southern parts of Anglo-Saxon England.

Although not emphasised by Wood, the majority of references that he adduces for Merovingian influence in England relate to the south-eastern kingdom in Anglo-Saxon England, Kent, in the fifth to seventh centuries A.D. Claims of hegemony over this particularly Anglo-Saxon kingdom are especially significant. Anglo-Saxon England provides a unique case study of this overlordship paradigm as it is the only overseas entity that was influenced by the Merovingians. There is some evidence of diplomatic ties with Francia in various sources. These ties aid in contextualising one of the most important historical events of the period and a landmark moment in English history, the introduction of Christianity to England through the Gregorian mission led by Saint Augustine. The kingdom of Kent played a crucial role in this event which is substantiated through literary material.

This 'Merovingian hegemony' has been explored from an archaeological viewpoint. Numerous items have been found within Kent which have been attributed to Francia or have a 'Frankish' origin. There is also the wider present of items from the European Continent in general. Furthermore, there is some literary evidence which supports the movement of items and people between Francia and Kent. This attests to organised links between these two areas and states, which may have been a feature of 'Merovingian hegemony'.

However, although there is some evidence to support this 'hegemony', this paradigm has rarely been critiqued in detail, and substantiated or disproven both in terms of literary and archaeological evidence. The whole concept has floated around modern historical thought. This is further complicated when one considers that the major promoter of 'Merovingian hegemony' ties his scholarship to a major structural socio-economic framework hypothesised by the archaeologist Richard Hodges. This is not only problematic in terms of methodologies but is also reflective of the processual era of modern historical scholarship, in which both theories were introduced.

This raises a whole range of complications to 'Merovingian hegemony'. Not only was this socio-economic theory intimately linked with 'Merovingian hegemony', but the model itself was the inspiration for other publications on the social, political and economic systems which existed in the early medieval period. Therefore, not only does this original work have to be examined but also the major subsequent scholarship. A related issue is the fact that Wood's hypothesis originates out of a certain period of scholarship, and yet has not been explored through other frameworks and perspectives. This will be addressed in the following study.

In summary, this study will reassess and examine all factors related to this concept of 'Merovingian hegemony'. It will take into the account the literary and archaeological material. Based on this evidence and the published frameworks related to the period, it will determine if the hypothetical connection between Anglo-Saxon Kent and Merovingian Francia can be considered as a 'hegemony'. Furthermore, it will judge what this 'hegemony' entailed to both parties. It was also take into consideration other models which can justify these relationships.

Literature Review

The Merovingian Franks were a domineering force within Western Europe during Late Antiquity. Their influence encompassed all aspects of Late Antique Europe and the Early Middle Ages. It is unsurprising that modern scholars have attempted to contextualise the relationships which existed between the Merovingian Franks and surrounding peoples. Ian Wood, has promoted the idea of an overlordship or hegemonic relationship exercised by the Merovingian Franks, with their neighbouring states. This encompasses most of North-West Europe and the British Isles, including the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Kent in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries A.D. Yet, few have examined the paradigm which Wood and other scholars have explored or considered alternative structures to frame this relationship. Furthermore, Wood's approach has a wide scope of study, and does not examine in detail the specific case studies.

The fact that the Merovingian Franks had some kind of indirect control over Anglo-Saxon England including Kent, has been present in scholarship for considerable time. Frank Stenton, in his canonical work *Anglo-Saxon England* which was first published in 1943, briefly mentions these early ties dating back to the Migration Era.[1] More importantly, he mentions the possible political subordination of Kent due to a royal marriage.[2] This was also addressed by another scholar, Margaret Deansley, a few years earlier.[3] A similar theme was explored by John Michael Wallace-Hadrill in 1975, when addressing the early communication

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[1] F.M.,Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edition, (Oxford, 1989), pp.4-10, 59-62.

[2] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 59-62.

[3] M. Deansley, "Canterbury and Paris in the reign of Aethelberht", *History* 26, (1941), pp.97-104. M. Deansley, "The Court of Aethelberht of Kent", *Cambridge Historical Journal* 7(2), (1942), pp.101-114.

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and interaction between the English and Roman Church.[4] He digresses on the Merovingian Church within this context and notes the evidence types relating to Frankish and Kentish contact in the fifth and sixth centuries.[5] In these earlier studies Merovingian hegemony is not the focus. They are merely overviews of this subject matter. Stenton's work, functions as the comprehensive textbook for Anglo-Saxon studies while Wallace-Hadrill's is an overview of church and missionary history. Deansley considers this foreign marriage within an Anglo-Saxon political context. Therefore, although being present in scholarship for the last century, the concept was not explored in depth.

One can see how Ian Wood has become a comprehensive authority in this niche area of Late Antiquity. His numerous articles and studies presented on the subject of Merovingian - Anglo-Saxon relations. Wood's approach, delivered in a 1983 paper was extensive in temporal and geographical scale and content, as well as in the terms of the methodological and theoretical frameworks he employed in his study.[6] He asserted that Merovingian hegemony was prevalent in most of Western Europe in this time period and had many implications.[7] In following publications, Wood undertook specific case studies of evidence for Merovingian hegemony. One is solely focussed on the diplomatic relationship the Merovingian dynasty had with the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.[8] Another is a study detailing how this hegemonic relationship possibly impacted on the Gregorian mission to

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[4] J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Rome and the early English Church: some questions of transmission', in his *Early Medieval History* (Oxford, 1975), pp.115-137.

[5] Wallace-Hadrill, 'Rome and the early English Church', pp.118-129.

[6] I. Wood, *The Merovingian North Sea* (Alingsas, 1983), pp.3-19.

[7] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.11-19.

[8] I. Wood, 'Frankish Hegemony in England', in M.O.H. Carver (ed.), *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe* (Suffolk, 1992), pp. 235-242.

England and Gregory the Great's conception of the Church.[9] Wood has also discussed the celebrated archaeological finds at Sutton Hoo and their connections to the Franks across the English Channel.[10] The underlying theme in these articles is that the Anglo-Saxons are placed within a wider Merovingian hegemonic relationship.

Although comprehensive and ambitious, several issues affect Wood's interpretation. Wood states quite clearly the problems presented in his area of study with the use of archaeology as a source type.[11] Although he does not say it is useless, he largely ignores this crucial type of evidence as "… [archaeological artefacts] can never illuminate political reality".[12] Furthermore, another problem arises due to the particular terminology he uses throughout his work; 'hegemony' and its synonyms. Although a crucial concept throughout his studies, Wood is ambiguous with the exact definition of these terms. In one article he notes that he uses 'hegemony' to describe the convoluted nature of the political relationships in the Early Middle Ages and nothing more.[13] However as Wood uses vocabulary such as 'hegemony' and 'overlordship', terms with specific connotations in various disciplines and approaches, there is need for greater clarification of these terms and relationships.

Wood's scholarship has informed aspects of this discipline in a number of different ways. Robert Markus for instance, expanded in 1997 upon the work of Wallace-Hadrill and Wood within this view of the Merovingian Franks' overriding influence and hegemony. Like Wallace-Hadrill's, his focus is the analysis and

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[9] I. Wood, "The Mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English", *Speculum* 69 (1994), pp.1-17.

[10] I. Wood, 'The Franks and Sutton Hoo', in I. Wood and N. Lunds (eds.), *People and Places in Northern Europe, 500-1600: Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer* (Woodbridge, 1991), pp.1-15.

[11] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.3-4.

[12] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, p.3.

[13] Wood, 'Frankish Hegemony in England', p. 236.

perception of the Gregorian church and missionary agenda.[14] He proposes that the Gregorian mission to England established a pattern for missionary work which would be emulated throughout the Middle Ages.[15] Furthermore, he believes that the Gregorian mission aided in creating and influencing the unity between the Church in Francia and the new Church in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.[16] A similar approach is shown in various essays written by James Campbell in 1986, although he argues that not all influences came from Frankish sources.[17] Campbell takes account of the Scandinavian presence in England and Kent in this time period.[18] So, Merovingian hegemony has provided new insight into these studies but does not directly deal with the concept.

Other scholars merely explore certain individual source types which mention this Frankish hegemony over England and by extension, Kent. Paul Fouracre and Richard Gerberding in their 1996 commentary of the seventh century hagiographic text, the *Vita Sanctae Bathildis*, reaffirm these religious and political connections between Anglo-Saxon England and Merovingian Francia.[19] They demonstrated how these connections were further expanded into the eighth century.[20] Likewise, Edward Arthur Thompson assessed in his 1980 article the historiographical problems presented in Procopius' *Wars*, one of the earliest sources to hint at Merovingian hegemony over the British Isles.[21] Both writers are

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[14] R.A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his world* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 168-187.

[15] Markus, *Gregory the Great,* pp. 177-187.

[16] Markus, *Gregory the Great,* pp. 177-187.

[17] J. Campbell, 'The First Century of Christianity in England', in his *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London, 1986) pp.49-68.

[18] Campbell, 'The First Century of Christianity', pp.49-68.

[19] P. Fouracre & R.A. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France* (Manchester, 1996), pp.100-105.

[20] Fouracre & Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, pp.100-105.

[21] E.A. Thompson, "Procopius on Brittia and Britannia", *The Classical Quarterly* 30, (1980), pp.498-507.

purely invested in these sources as opposed to the whole issue of Frankish hegemony. Yet, their insights cast new light into the area. For example, Thompson's analysis disputes this early claim for overlordship in the British Isles due to linguistic and transmission issues.[22] A similar case is presented by Patrick Sims-Williams in 1983 when he discusses the nature of the Anglo-Saxon settlement or migration in two major literary sources, the writings of the Venerable Bede and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. [23] He demonstrates that these sources and others cannot be used to accurately plot the Germanic migrations and occupation of England in the late fifth century.[24] In this capacity, he addresses the possibility of shared Frankish ancestry with the inhabitants of Kent and that the area may have been considered a Frankish cultural zone.[25] Therefore, although there is indirect critique of this hegemonic model through these articles, they are largely concerned with specific historiographic problems.

While Wood and a number of other scholars have focused primarily on the literary material, the theory of Merovingian influence has impacted on various archaeological approaches. One of the earliest and most significant contributions is shown in the work of Vera Evison who wrote before Wood in 1965. She shows that this Frankish element in Kent can be traced back to the fifth century.[26] There is also the suggestion that in areas in southern England, especially Kent, were initially settled by Franks and there is continuity of Frankish material culture in the region.[27] Although aspects of Evison's methodology are problematic, her overall thesis does suggest that the Franks in the Merovingian period interacted,

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[22] Thompson, "Procopius on Brittia and Britannia", pp.502, 507.

[23] P. Sims-Williams, "The settlement of England in Bede and the *Chronicle*", *ASE* 12, (1983), pp. 1-41.

[24] Sims-Williams, "The settlement of England", p. 42.

[25] Sims-Williams, "The settlement of England", pp.25, 28.

[26] V.I. Evison, *The Fifth-Century Invasions South of the Thames* (London, 1965), pp. 9-45.

[27] Evison, *The Fifth-Century Invasions,* pp.33-36.

influenced or settled in the southern parts of England.[28] Another study, by Chris Arnold within his 1988 publication notes items which have links with the Merovingian Franks and suggest that artefacts from other areas of the North Sea Basin and from the Mediterranean found in England were likely funnelled through Francia.[29] This is used to enforce the claims of overlordship established by the Franks. A similar argument is proposed by Lotte Hedeager's 1992 article surveying Dark Age Denmark.[30] She points out that the relationship Denmark had with the Merovingian Franks in this period is comparable to that of the southern parts of England and the Frankish states.[31] This is further explored by noting the distribution of 'Scandinavian' artefacts.

Besides examining broad patterns and connections, archaeologists have focused on groups or single artefacts which may provide support for Wood's hypothesis. There are a number of enquiries which illustrate connections through various items including pottery, beads, jewellery and weaponry to name a few.[32] Evison illustrates this in a 1982 study which focuses on the typology, manufacture and distribution of glass beakers between late 4th to sixth centuries.[33] These 'claw-beakers' are a possible indication for long standing movement and interchange between England and Francia.[34] Although it may not directly provide evidence for a hegemonic relationship, it does show economic and cultural interaction in some capacity.

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[28] Evison, *The Fifth-Century Invasions,* pp. 9-45.

[29] C.J. Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms* (London, 1988), pp.51-71.

[30] L. Hedeager, 'Kingdoms, Ethnicity and Material Culture: Denmark in a European perspective', in M.O.H. Carver (ed.), *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe* (Suffolk, 1992), pp. 279-300.

[31] Hedeager, 'Kingdoms, Ethnicity and Material Culture', pp. 292-295.

[32] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, pp.51-73.

[33] V.I. Evison, "Anglo-Saxon Glass Claw-beakers", *Archaeologia* 107, (1982), pp. 43-76.

[34] Evison, "Anglo-Saxon Glass Claw-beakers", p.59.

This can be further illustrated through the various articles discussing the 'Liudhard medalet' a medallion found within a larger hoard which references a figure related to this possible Merovingian hegemony. Phillip Grierson describes this item in a 1953 journal article within the context of the larger artefact assemblage, the Canterbury Hoard.[35] He notes the item's implications for pre-Augustine Christianity, its numismatic details and speculates on its purpose and origin.[36] In doing so he clearly suggests a political agenda behind the creation and use of the artefact.[37] Martin Werner in 1991 expanded upon this theme.[38] Werner's focus is specifically on the 'Liudhard medalet', not the whole hoard. He revises and explores in depth Grierson's initially observations. However, the majority of the article is focused on the religious and diplomatic connections which can be extrapolated from this specific item.[39] This is a reassessment of imagery on both obverse and reverse of the medalet. [40] Werner promotes the idea that this item has comparable elements with items found in certain parts of Francia during this era. He further testifies that it aided in bolstering a Christian ideology as well as a political agenda.[41]

Yet, with all these literary and archaeological approaches, few scholars have reviewed in detail the framework established by Wood. Although some of the above individuals have critiqued single source types, the model itself is somewhat ambiguous. All of the works discussed have specifically mentioned overlordship,

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[35] P. Grierson, "The Canterbury (St. Martin's) hoard of Frankish and Anglo-Saxon coin-ornaments", *British Numismatic Journal* 27, (1952), pp.39-51.

[36] Grierson, "The Canterbury (St. Martin's)", pp.41-42.

[37] Grierson, "The Canterbury (St. Martin's)", pp.42-43.

[38] M. Werner, "The Liudhard medalet", *ASE* 20, (1991), pp.27-41.

[39] Werner, "Liudhard medalet", pp.27-30.

[40] Werner, "Liudhard medalet", pp.27-28.

[41] Werner, "Liudhard medalet", pp.30-41.

hegemony, political dominance or cultural influence when addressing this issue in their various studies. There are few critiques bar the work of Collins and McClure published in 2008.[42] As already mentioned, Wood's 'hegemony' is a vague concept in this area and time period. However, it also implies subordination. This assumed hierarchical relationship affects various political, social, economic and cultural structures. As Wood wrote from a Cold War perspective and ties his scholarship to processual archaeological approaches, his sense of 'hegemony' is not necessarily the single way to construe all of this interaction. Furthermore Wood's approach coincides with a change in Ancient and Late Antique world studies, a move towards horizontal structures as opposed to vertical, hierarchical models.

For the most part, these horizontal structures are well established in this area, mostly in the context of socio-economic surveys of this time period. They encompass issues such as travel, trade, communication and taxation. As one of Wood's conclusions suggest that economic growth in the North Sea region was one of the legacies of Merovingian hegemony, this is highly relevant.[43]   The earliest and most established of these paradigms is the thesis presented by Henri Pirenne in his landmark work, *Mohammed and Charlemagne,* which was first published in English in 1939. It argues that the classical world was not crushed by the 'barbarian invasions' but was preserved along the Mediterranean and European coastal areas.[44] It was with the rise of Islam and subsequent conquests which caused a fundamental shift towards feudalistic models.[45] Although Frankish – Anglo-Saxon connections were not his focus, Pirenne does show evidence for

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[42] R. Collins & J. McClure, 'Rome, Canterbury and Wearmouth-Jarrow: Three viewpoints on Augustine's mission', in S. Barton & P.Lineham (eds.), *Cross, Crescent and Conversion: studies on Medieval Spain and Christendom in memory of Richard Fletcher* (Leiden, 2008), pp.17-42.

[43] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp. 17-19.

[44] H. Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, trans. B. Miall (New York, 1957), pp.17-140.

[45] Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, pp.147-236.

ancient preservation and continuation of economic and communication networks in these areas.

Though parts of Pirenne's arguments have been disproven, similar approaches have expanded upon his literature. One is *Dark Age Economics: The origins of towns and trade A.D. 600-1000* written by Richard Hodges in 1982. Although Hodges has a smaller geographic focus than Pirenne, it is still applicable to this study. Hodges identifies the development and the creation of trade routes, piracy and the market towns in the North Sea basin.[46] These towns known as *emporia* or *wics* are subdivided for greater classification and development purposes.[47] Hodges highlights the political and administration factors which played a role in all of these relationships.[48] All aspects of this study have implications for this Merovingian hegemony debate.

Furthermore, Hodges has incorporated his study on North Sea *emporia* and *wics* into a study of the development of Anglo-Saxon England including Kent itself in 1989.[49] The larger aspect of this work involves a detailed archaeological examination relating to settlement growth and distribution, in addition to economic activity.[50] This includes trade as well as creation and exportation of commodities.[51] These made a huge impact on the development of English society. Hodges further contrasts these developments with occurrences on the European

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[46] R. Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The origins of towns and trade A.D. 600-1000* (London, 1982), pp.6-47.

[47] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, pp.47-129.

[48] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics,* pp.29-129.

[49] R. Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement: Archaeology & the beginnings of English society* (New York, 1989), pp.1-68.

[50] Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, pp.69-114.

[51] Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, pp.69-114.

Continent.[52] Therefore, Hodges clearly has indirectly commented on features of Merovingian hegemony over Kent.

The majority of these frameworks and discussions are broad examinations. One of the most recent of these works is the 2001 study by Michael McCormick. It is a wide ranging study in both a temporal and geographic sense.[53] It examines the commercial and communication routes which continued from the end of antiquity into the early Middle Ages.[54] Various forms of contact, communication and exchange between Anglo-Saxon Kent and Merovingian Gaul are phrased and placed within a dense framework of extended cultural and economic contact.[55] Yet, these observations are brief and the study tends to focus towards the Carolingian period as opposed to the Merovingian era.[56] As such there is less focus on this hegemonic claim and on the time period in general.

There is a certain similarity between the work of Michael McCormick and another scholar, Chris Wickham who introduced his study in 2005. Both writers employ detailed models, which span large geographic scope and multiple historical time periods. However there are some differences between the two. Although Wickham does have some focus on exchange networks and economic activity, it is largely dedicated to the construction and maintenance of states as well as society in general.[57] It should be noted that Wickham's temporal span is slightly narrower

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[52] Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, pp.69-149.

[53] M. McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300-900*(Cambridge, 2001), pp. 1-20.

[54] McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, pp. 562-565.

[55] McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, pp.639-670.

[56] McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy,* pp.639-738.

[57] C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean 400-800* (Oxford, 2005), pp.56-382.

that McCormick's.[58] Merovingian hegemony is briefly addressed in this work, mostly under examples of archaeological evidence for cultural contact, as well as attested diplomatic ties and economic exchange. [59]

Besides the paradigms which are constructed specifically for Late Antique or early medieval studies, the world of ancient studies has similar frameworks which can be transferred across to this area of study. A critical example is the 2005 work *Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, diversity and empire* by Richard Hingley. The focus of this work is mainly a reaction to the modern concept of Romanisation and cultural domination in the Roman Imperial period.[60] It stresses the synthesis of new identity during this era which had flowing effects to other aspects of ancient life including socio-economic interaction.[61] Furthermore, it also has strong focus on peripheral areas such as Roman Britain, Gaul and Germany which allows a wide variety of applications, particularly in this area of scholarship.[62]However, there are other examples, as postcolonial studies are a growing area in medieval scholarship. For instance, the 2005 essay of Nicholas Howe specifically discusses centre and periphery relationships in regard to Anglo-Saxon studies.[63] His various works and perspective will prove invaluable in this area of study and this proposed project.

This literature has failed to completely handle or address my own thesis question in the fullest possible capacity. Although some scholars have used,

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[58] Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, pp.1-14.

[59] Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, pp.1-14.

[60] R. Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, diversity and empire* (London, 2005), pp.1-13.

[61] Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture*, pp.49-116.

[62] Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture*, pp.49-116.

[63] N. Howe, 'Anglo-Saxon England and the postcolonial void', in A.J. Kabir and D. Williams (eds.), *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures* (Cambridge, 2005), pp.25-47.

considered or critiqued this paradigm in their individual studies, few have considered the problematic aspects prompted by the implications of Merovingian hegemony. Although some newer frameworks have aided in clarifying these relationships in a social, economic or cultural terms, there are still problematic aspects raised by these approaches. Therefore, my own study will aid in confirming this issue presented in scholarship.

Methodology

This study employs a range of methodological and theoretical techniques. These approaches form the basis to support its hypothesis. As the material is diverse, the concepts in this project need to be addressed in specific ways. These will involve various frameworks as well as the analysis of literary, non-literary and archaeological material. Furthermore, the research project will undertake a rigorous assessment and critique of the modern scholarship in this area, which introduces the historiographic problem.

This examination focuses on the concept of 'Merovingian hegemony' over a specific Anglo-Saxon kingdom, Kent. This differentiates it from previous investigations. In earlier studies, Wood's 'Merovingian hegemony' has been proposed within a wider framework, a concept which has inadvertently spread into various parts of scholarship and academic thought. It encompasses multiple political entities and geographic zones which existed in Western Europe.[64] Even when this concept was previously examined with Anglo-Saxon England as a case study, it overlooked the fact that Anglo-Saxon England consisted of multiple kingdoms.[65] Kent was one of these kingdoms; it was in close proximity to Francia and has been attested as one of the earliest areas of contact between Anglo-Saxon

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[64] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.3-17.

[65] Wood, 'Frankish Hegemony in England', pp. 235-242.

England and the European Continent.[66] Therefore, Kent provides a detailed case study to test and critically examine this 'Merovingian hegemony' construction.

It is apparent that there is a range of historical materials which need to be addressed when studying this area. This can be shown in the assortment of literary sources which are being considered. These sources include historical accounts, legal documents, poetic sources, hagiographies and epistolary material.[67] All of these sources are composed by contemporary individuals who recorded events in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries A.D. These sources are used by Ian Wood and other scholars, as indicators for Merovingian hegemony in Anglo-Saxon England and Kent.[68] This study engages directly with the crucial ancient material yet emphasises, how the modern scholarship has examined this area.

These sources are not concerned with the concept of Merovingian overlordship over Anglo-Saxon Kent. These references across these literary accounts are fragmentary and brief, within larger sections of text.[69] These sections raise historiographic problems within the broader content. This leads to liberal interpretation. One example is a short Latin phrase, *trans mare*, within the *Pactus Legis Salicae*.[70] These two words are situated within a passage which has been modified and edited multiple times. Therefore, this particular reference may not be applicable for this time period. Yet, it still considered as evidence for Wood's hypothesis, despite these transmission difficulties. One becomes critical towards scholarship in the area, which rarely mentions these issues. Recently some

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[66] Evison, *The Fifth-Century Invasions*, pp. 33-36. Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, pp.51-73.

[67] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.3-19.

[68] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.3-19. Markus, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 168-187. Sims-Williams, "The settlement of England", pp. 25, 28.

[69] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.3, 6-17.

[70] *Pac.* 39, 2.

scholars have reviewed these concerns with specific sources, but they have not directly tied it back to the Merovingian hegemony in the North Sea region.[71] This correlation will be emphasised in this study.

An excellent example of all these issues is presented by one of the larger written sources. This is the Venerable Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum.* Despite being one of the substantial literary sources for this study, Bede has only a few passages in his first two books, which are relevant for this enquiry.[72] Furthermore, Bede is obviously relying on other material as he was not a contemporary of the period, living a few centuries later.[73] The material for Bede's work is provided by earlier writers and chronicles, such as Gildas and Kentish chronicles.[74] It should be noted that as a writer, he had his own bias, conception and audience for his work. It is crucial that all of these factors play a role in assessing and using this material. This prompts enquiry into modern scholarship concerning the interpretations of these works including the research of Walter Goffart and Nicholas Higham.[75] These range from specific analyses of certain passages and language to perceptions of the work as a whole. This illustrates the problematic aspects with the literary material. These do not include wider issues such as differentiated manuscript traditions or translation variations, which have similar difficulties. Consequently, these issues need to be covered in detail.

Other forms of evidence used in this study are onomastics and toponomastics. Although a modest corpus, this evidence can indicate Frankish

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[71] Fouracre & Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, pp.100-105. Sims-Williams, "The settlement of England", pp. 1- 41.Thompson, "Procopius on Brittia and Britannia", pp.498-507.

[72] Bede, *HE.*, 1. 23-2.20.

[73] N. Higham, *(Re-) Reading Bede: The Ecclesiastical History in Context* (New York, 2006), pp. 6-49.

[74] Higham, *(Re-) Reading Bede*, pp. 6-49.

[75] Higham, *(Re-) Reading Bede*, pp. 6-49. W. Goffart, *The narrators of barbarian history (A.D. 550-800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 235-328.

influence in Kent predating the literary accounts.[76] Although these techniques for studying proper names and place-names are useful, they have to be exercised with caution. In the case of onomastics, many names can be considered Frankish in origin; they largely can be defined within a larger corpus of 'Germanic' names.[77] Likewise, toponymys stress certain settlement elements or features which cannot demonstrate the reality, such as the assumed centres of Christianity in Kent, such as Eccles.[78] These factors show that despite their usefulness, there are certain constraints with the above material.

Therefore, when conducting this study the material mentioned above will be utilised. However, it will be aware of wider literary contexts in the area. Only reliable editions of these texts, which are acknowledged within scholarship, will be used. Within these the relevant ancient text whether it will be Latin, Ancient Greek or Old English will be referred to directly, in order to minimise translation problems. Furthermore, there will be a consideration of the broad historiographic trends and perspectives employed by recent scholars on the different literary material being discussed. These insights will be incorporated in the thesis when they are relevant. In terms of the onomastic and toponomastic evidence, a critical examination of linguistic problems will be used, concerning the parallels and similarities between certain names. The project will ultimately judge the evidence presented on the presence of 'hegemony' or any other influence the Merovingian Frank's had over Anglo-Saxon Kent.

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[76] N. Brooks, 'The creation and early structure of the kingdom of Kent', in S. Bassett (ed.), *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (London, 1989), pp.64-66.

[77] See throughout W.G. Searle, *Onomasticon anglo-saxonicum: a list of Anglo-Saxon proper names from the time of Beda to that of King John* (London, 1897).

[78] K. Cameron, 'Eccles in English Place-Names', in M.W. Barley and R.P.C. Hanson (eds.), *Christianity in Britain 300-700, papers presented to the Conference on Christianity in Roman and Sub-Roman Britain, held at the University of Nottingham, 17-20 April 1967* (Leicester, 1968),pp.87-95.

Besides the literary sources, there are a range of problematic aspects when considering the other major corpus of material, archaeology. These problematic aspects are one of the major reasons why Wood generally avoids the archaeological side of this subject area.[79] However, it should not be dismissed. A range of archaeological material found in Anglo-Saxon Kent can be traced back to the European Continent and Francia.[80] Furthermore, this material has been dated through both absolute and relative techniques. The types of artefacts which have been examined are diverse. These include pottery, weaponry, armour, glassware, jewellery and coinage.[81] Although the material being examined will be indications of commercial interchange or other forms of exchange, there are numerous individual considerations and paradigms that can be contemplated.[82] Consequently, each artefact has numerous techniques and approaches for examination and interpretation. These factors will have a significant role in the research task for the claims of Merovingian hegemony in Anglo-Saxon Kent.

An example of artefacts for this study is pottery, a staple evidence type in ancient world studies. There are numerous types of pottery in this area. They can be subdivided in terms of artistic style, manufacture type, date and area of origin.[83] As this study involves a large temporal scope, which spans three centuries all of these factors must be considered. Pottery has a wide distribution in both Europe and Anglo-Saxon England.[84] Although some are crudely manufactured, they may have had prestige or aesthetic quality based on the context in which it was found as

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[79] As stated in Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, p.3.

[80] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon,* pp.51-73.

[81] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, pp.51-73.

[82] C. Renfrew & P. Bahn, *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice* (London, 1991), pp.357-390.

[83] J.N.L. Myres, *Anglo-Saxon Pottery and the Settlement of England* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 1-61, 120-140.

[84] J.G. Hurst, 'The pottery', in D. Wilson (ed.), *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1976), pp.283-348.

well as their condition. Subsequently, this shows that the particular perspective which one employs, will impact upon the results concerning commercial or even cultural interaction within this sphere of Merovingian influence.

The nature of typologies and groupings of artefacts presents another issue. Due to influence of earlier archaeological approaches, the majority of archaeological material have been grouped and named in ethnic terms.[85] As a result one finds groupings of artefacts called 'Romano-Celtic', 'Frankish', 'Saxon', 'Frisian', 'Jutish' and 'Kentish'.[86] This is problematic for archaeological practice. However, it is relevant in this area of scholarship as 'ethnicity' in this era is a fluid, indistinct and debated concept.[87] As such, despite the fact that many aspects of this archaeological paradigm are abandoned, the ethnic titles of these artefacts remain. This terminology impacts directly on how these items have been traditionally considered by historians and this inquiry.

Furthermore, the context in which these items are discovered impacts on the way they are conceived by modern scholarship and this study. The majority of these items are largely found within funerary contexts. These include numerous burial types including inhumations, ship burials, in cemeteries and tombs within churches.[88] As such, the circumstances in which these items were found creates methodological problems which need to be considered. For instance, a group of coins found within a larger hoard, have to be interpreted differently compared to a single coin which is found within grave goods and modified into a piece of

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[85] Hurst, 'The pottery', pp.283-348.

[86] Hurst, 'The pottery', pp.283-348.

[87] For an introduction to these discussions see A. Gillett (ed.), *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2002).

[88] See R. Noort, *North Sea Archaeologies: A maritime Biography, 10,000 BC – AD 1500* (Oxford, 2011), pp.205-215. D. Wilson, 'Introduction', in D. Wilson (ed.), *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1976), pp.1-22.

jewellery. Other problems include dealing with the maritime and coastal contexts of artefacts and the implications they have for political and commercial relations.[89] Thus, in this study the evidence for Merovingian overlordship in Anglo-Saxon Kent is impacted by the interpretation of funerary practices as well as the landscape in assessing related artefacts and their overall purpose.

All of these issues are further complicated when artefacts have few or no comparisons amongst the corpus of material. One example is the 'Liudhard medalet'. This item was founded within a hoard in a funerary context. Yet, this item has no exact parallels as no other 'medalet' like this has been found.[90] Although it is possible to compare this item to similar coins and medallions through numismatics, there are numerous difficulties which arise due to the nature of interpretation regarding origin, manufacturing processes and the stylistic features which appear on the 'medalet'.[91] Amongst scholarship these specific features have been greatly debated as they have cultural and economic implications in the archaeological record, which predate the literary evidence. Therefore, there is a degree of critical thought when using both data and interpretative theories in this investigation.

This inquiry, will address these issues. This project will note the distribution, abundance of certain artefacts in both Kent and the Continent. Emphasis will be placed on certain items for comparative stylistic purposes. Distribution of these items and consideration of artistic features between Kent and the Continent will be considered. Furthermore, a degree of interpretation will have to be used. Although some quantitative methods will be used, these alone do not

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[89] Noort, *North Sea Archaeologies*, pp.146-199.

[90] Werner, "The Liudhard medalet", pp.27-29.

[91] Werner, "The Liudhard medalet", pp.28-29.

indicate any social or political relations between the two areas. It has to be subjected to more qualitative, interpretative methodologies, which can be debated.

The nature of distribution between the British Isles and the European Continent demonstrates another aspect of this thesis, determining the nature of Merovingian hegemony in Anglo-Saxon Kent. As this is a critique of this paradigm, it will involve the examination and application of multiple theoretical frameworks and theories. One such consideration is the examination of political or international relation models.[92] As the key vocabulary in this study is 'hegemony' or 'overlordship', this is hardly surprising. Examinations in imperialistic and colonial societies are widely used in historical studies and numerous applications including this research project.[93] Examples may come from recent models such as the Great Powers of Europe or British colonial relationships with India and South-East Asia.[94]

Besides considering socio-political paradigms, anthropological studies are able to contextualise these relations. Although these practices were well established in classical studies they are fairly recent editions to Late Antique and Early Medieval scholarship. Hodges, for instance, based his discussions around previous studies in Papuan economics and Polynesian world systems.[95] Despite their basic formula, anthropological as well as other processional and post-processional perspectives such as colonial archaeology are very adaptable.[96] These concepts can be used to create new models for this area which can critique or challenge Wood's Merovingian hegemony in the North Sea.

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[92] An example being I. Clark, *Hegemony in international society* (Oxford, 2011).

[93] M. Johnson, *Archaeological Theory: An introduction* (Oxford, 2010), pp.68-121.

[94] Clark, *Hegemony*, pp. 100-224.

[95] An example of these previous studies is C.A. Gregory, *Gifts and commodities* (London, 1982).

[96] Johnson, *Archaeological Theory*, pp.68-121.

Critical theory and cultural studies have implications for this area of study. One parallel which can be employed is Marxist concepts. The theories of Marx but others such as Antonio Gramsci can be used to create perspectives of hegemonic relationships as well as political and cultural hierarchies.[97] As the focus of this paper will be to analyse hegemony and its implications on society, the economy and culture, this is relevant. Gramsci and similar writers will likely form an important aspect of this study.

A particularly branch of study which provides alternative explanations is postcolonial theory. This branch of critical theories allows new insights into the examination of various areas of academia, particularly historical enquiry. Postcolonial studies have been effectively used in ancient world studies, and more recently, medieval studies. Concepts of centre and periphery, and fall and withdrawal of foreign, imperialist powers are very applicable in Late Antique scholarship, particularly in the Early Medieval West. An example is the works of Nicholas Howe, which contextualise the literature and the landscape of Anglo-Saxon England as a postcolonial experience.[98] These approaches offer innovative considerations for this study.

In summary, this study will involve a detailed but critical evaluation of the ancient material, both literary and archaeological. It will attempt to note all the relevant historiographic, methodological and interpretative problems presented by this material. Through these aspects, the thesis will create an accurate representation and critique on the capacity of Merovingian hegemony in Anglo-Saxon Kent. Modern approaches including socio-economic, political and

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[97] A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Q. Hoare & G.N. Smith (London, 1971), pp. 210-267.

[98] Howe, 'Anglo-Saxon England', pp.25-47.

anthropological will aid in making sound judgement in defining this contact, whether it be 'hegemony' or otherwise. These processes will aid in reconstructing early Anglo-Saxon Kent and their relationship to their Continental neighbours.

Chapter Two: The literary material

The basis for the hypothesis of Merovingian hegemony over Anglo-Saxon England rests on literary accounts. This paradigm incorporates numerous texts and writers. However the majority of the content is lamentable. These sources are hindered by individual historiographic problems, which are characteristic of their literary types. The geographic proximity of these writers and their concerns to the material has to be taken into account. The distance or proximity of these writers affects their work as evidence for Wood's thesis. However, they are not useless. It is through these sources that allows a critique of this framework. Furthermore this extends to an analysis of Merovingian relations and possible hegemony over Anglo-Saxon Kent and by extension all of England.

Despite the lack of detail concerning Kent or even England from the Continental sources, Late Antique authors had an admirable grasp and understanding of concerns in North-West Europe and beyond. A range of writers had a superficial understanding on Romano-British affairs. Ammianus Marcellinus notes specific groups that plagued and raided Roman Britain at this time.[99] This theme was continued in the *Chronicle of 452* which notes the numerous Saxon raids and eventual conquest and settlement of Britain.[100] Sidonius Apollinarius briefly describes the Saxons in his letters, while Zosimus provides a superficial explanation and recollection of the rise of the Romano-British tyrants and the

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[99] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum*, trans. J.C. Rolfe, *LCL*, Vol.2. (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), 20.1.-3.

[100] *Chronica Gallica ad annum CCCCLII*, T. Mommsen, (ed.) *Chronica Minora I, MGH, AA*, Vol.9, (Berlin, 1892), 660 (c.126). See also I. Wood, 'The end of Roman Britain: Continental evidence and parallels', in M. Lapidge and D. Dumville (eds.), *Gildas: New Approaches* (Woodbridge, 1984), pp. 23-24.

creation of the administrative *civiates*.[101] Although some licence is used in these sources, these authors clearly demonstrate Continental concerns and the piratical nature of North Sea at this time. There are other hagiographical texts which also detail the events of fifth century Britain such as the actions of Germanus of Auxerre and missionary activity of Saint Patrick. [102]

In the sixth century there is an absence of detail throughout the literary material. This forms part of scholars' frustration with this era and the sources themselves, a fact Wood himself expresses.[103] Furthermore, it is clear that the authors had an equal if not greater grasp of the issues in the North Sea region. Yet, as already mentioned, this is hardly a hindrance but one has to be critical and aware of the material.

The earliest Frankish claim of hegemony over Kent and England

The earliest reference to possible Frankish hegemony is found not in any historical account but in a phrase found in a piece of legislation; section thirty nine of the *Pactus Legis Salicae*. This collection of *leges* was copied on multiple manuscripts from the Merovingian to Carolingian period. It was traditionally attributed to the Merovingian king Clovis. This particularly group of laws relates to the reparation paid to an owner of a slave who finds the individual who entices or

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[101] Zosimus,*Historia Nova*, trans. J.J. Buchanan & H.T.Davis (San Antonio,1967), 6.5.2-3. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Ep.*, A. Loyen, (ed.), *Sidoine Apollinaire, Lettres* (Paris, 1960-1970), 8, 6, 13-15.

[102] A summary of these sources can be found in H. Wolfram, *The Roman Empire and its Germanic Peoples*, trans. T. Dunlap (Berkeley, 1997), pp.240-244. M. Jones, *End of Roman Britain* (London, 1996). E.A. Thompson, *Saint Germanus of Auxerre and the end of Roman Britain* (Woodbridge, 1984).

[103] Wood. *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.3-4.

kidnaps them.[104] The most fascinating aspect of this *lex* is the terminology used. It is most apparent in the law referring to the kidnapping and enticement of slaves. The Latin expression *trans mare* is particularly revealing[105].

The Latin phrase of *trans mare* clearly implies that this particular law is concerned with the movement of owned slaves to foreign lands, specifically overseas.[106] Furthermore it notes the importance of slaves been recalled and the involvement of a *mallus publicus* in the proceedings.[107] This piece of legislation has the implication of *trans mare* referring to British Isles, other islands within the North Sea.[108] It also infers any coastal region within the influence of the Merovingians. It has been perceived this way by Wood and consequently is interpreted as an indication of the early Frankish relations and perhaps overlordship over the southern parts of Britain including Anglo-Saxon Kent.[109] Indeed, in one article, Wood believes that the best way to interpret *trans mare* is Kent itself.[110]

The other pieces of legislation point to a similar theme. A number of parts refer to the importance of the freemen and their movement between nations and overseas.[111] Although it does not directly note Merovingian hegemony, the

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[104] *Pac.* 39.2.

[105] *Pac.* 39.2.

[106] *Pac* 39.2.

[107] *Pac* 39.2.

[108] *Pac* 39.2.

[109] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.5-6, 12-13. See also G. Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur: facts and fictions of the Dark Ages* (Oxford, 2013), p.283.

[110] Wood, 'The end of Roman Britain', pp. 23-24.

[111] *Pac.* 39.1-3.

legislation notes a wider concern and movement of peoples between Francia and neighbouring countries.[112] Furthermore, it stresses the importance and severity related to slave traffic and trade in this economic zone.[113] This movement is considered by some to be a by-product of Merovingian naval dominance and overlordship in the North Sea region.[114] This concern with the sale of freeman into the slave trade is a relevant issue in this codex.

The *Pactus Legis Salicae* is traditionally associated with the first Merovingian king, Clovis. This is an assumption due to his power base supposedly concentrated around the Salian Franks. It can be further argued that the Salian Franks, as an early maritime people situated around the Rhine delta, may have had a concern for naval traffic.[115] The date for the *Pactus Legis Salicae* is ascribed to the early sixth century, approximately 507-511 A.D. This date corresponds towards the end of Clovis' reign and death. This codex was supposedly enforced and used by the Salian and Ripuarian Franks. By the context of the legislation itself it appears that Clovis, his immediate successors and local aristocrats enforced the law in some way.[116] This is despite the fact that there were some basic judicial or legislative bodies in these overseas areas which would have further complicated this process.

There are problematic features associated with the *Pactus Legis Salicae.* Although as a whole document, it can be traced to Clovis and the Merovingians,

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[112] *Pac.* 39.1-3.

[113] *Pac.* 39.1-3.

[114] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.17-18. G. Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, pp.282-283.

[115] K. F. Drew, *The Laws of the Salian Franks* (Philadelphia, 1991), pp.28-38.

[116] Basic outline of all these issues can be found in I. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450-751* (London, 1994), pp. 108-117. Another summary can be found in Drew, *Laws*, pp.28-38.

multiple versions and manuscripts of the *Pactus Legis Salicae* exist. The majority of these manuscripts have been altered, expanded and contextualised in later periods. Indeed most of the copies of the law code originate from the Carolingian period in the eighth and ninth centuries.[117] The premise that the code was founded by Clovis is an assumption by the Carolingians period.[118] The most important is the additions which are found within variant manuscripts, which note the retrieval of slaves from "...*in quamlibet regionem*" and similar phrases.[119] Wood's interpretation is argued simply because it is the most obvious solution to the phrase *trans mare*.[120] Wood himself acknowledges that there are precedents in Late Antique legal codices; some elements of which are preserved in the *Pactus Legis Salicae*.[121] Therefore with these documents, a degree of caution must be used. It is a shame that this particular law is fraught with these issues, for it superficially provides a strong claim for Merovingian hegemony in south-east England and Kent. [122]

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[117] For transmission issues of the *Pactus Legis Salicae* and the *Lex Salica* see J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The long-haired kings and other studies in Frankish history* (London, 1962),pp.95-120.

[118] Wallace-Hadrill, *The long-haired kings*, pp.95-120.

[119] See manuscripts variations such as MSS, G10, K all found in K.A. Eckhardt (ed.), *MGH*, *LL*, Vol.4, 1 (Hannover, 1962). *Pac*. 39.2.

[120] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.12-13. Wood, 'The end of Roman Britain', pp. 23-24. Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur,* p.283.

[121] See similarities and parallels to *Pac* 39.2. in *Novella Valenentiniani III*, 33. 1, & *Codex Theodosius*, 5.6.3 both in T. Mommsen and P.M. Meyer (eds.), *Theodosiani libri xvi cum constitutionibus sirmondianis et leges novella ad theodosianum pertinentes:consilio et auctoritate academiae litterarum regiae borvissicae*, Vol.1-2. (Dublin, 1971). For similar pieces of legislation see T. Anderson, "Roman military colonies in Gaul, Salian ethnogensis and the forgotten meaning of *Pactus Legis Salicae* 59.5.", *Early Medieval Europe* 4(2), (1995), pp.129-144. & A.C. Murray, *Germanic Kinship Structure ;studies in Law and Society in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Toronto,1983),pp.67-88

[122] Drew, *Laws*, pp.28-38.

The actions of Theodebert and Chilperic

It is only in the reigns of Theodebert I (500-547/548) and Chilperic I (561-584) where any inclination for the possible overlordship the Franks had over Anglo-Saxon England and Kent can be found. Fortunately it contains a number of sources, the largest group of references to England and Britain amongst this literary material. It includes the twentieth letter in the *Epistolae Austrasicae*, various panegyrics of Venantius Fortunatus and an account of an embassy to Justinian found in the eighth book of Procopius' *Wars*. Each one of these sources has an aspect which hints at the prospect of political domination over Anglo-Saxon England and Kent at this time.

This theme of overlordship pervades the range of literature which concerns Theodebert. It is not surprising as he is portrayed as a military expansionist.[123] The need to bolster these claims would have reflected in the historical record.[124] This is further illustrated in an account found in book eight of Procopius' *History of the Wars*. It describes a Frankish embassy to Justinian. The Frankish king mentioned in the text is assumed to be Theodebert. Yet this is still debatable. It is mentioned that the embassy included the Ἀγγίλοι, which were involved primarily to show that Theodebert ruled their lands, *Βριττία*. What follows is a much denser description of this *Βριττία* and incorporates an account concerning the migration of the *Οὐάρνοι*. One section even states that *Βριττία* was ruled over by the Franks due to some ancient wrong, but the inhabitants never pay tribute or were directly

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[123]See R. Collins, 'Theodebert I, 'Rex Magnus Francorum', in P. Wormald, D. Bullough and R. Collins (eds.), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 1983), pp.7-33.

[124] Collins, 'Theodebert I', pp.7-33.

subordinate to the Franks in any way. It is also explained that there was some kind of settlement and migration which aided this influence.[125]

Even to the untrained scholar there are clear problematic aspects with this account. The most obvious is the geography of the area. Procopius describes this Βριττία as a separate island, located near both Britain and Thule.[126] Βριττία clearly has similar features to Britain. Indeed other studies have been conducted to say that Procopius' Βριττία is actually misrepresented or a twisted version of Britain itself.[127] This can be shown by references to Hadrian's Wall, the Isle of Thanet, the multiple kingdoms across the island as well as the Germanic ethnic groups that are settled in Βριττία.[128] Procopius clearly has a basic understanding of the nature of Britain as he refers to it in this account and other sources.[129]

In regard to Procopius' writings, there is an amount of superfluous aspects which cannot be taken seriously. Details associated with absence of horses in Βριττία, the Isle of Thanet as a realm of dead souls and the above geographic errors distort the aspects of Theodebert's embassy.[130] Procopius is obviously compensating for issues such as translation and misunderstanding the

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[125] This description is found in Procopius, *Wars*, 8.20.1-10, 8.20.42-58.

[126] Procopius, *Wars*, 8.20.1-10.

[127] Thompson, "Procopius on Brittia and Britannia", pp.498-507. A. Cameron, *Procopius and the sixth century* (Berkeley, 1985), pp.214-215.   Possible references or confusion with other areas. Brittany is the most likely candidate or *Brittia* is reference to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms as opposed to *Britannia*, the remanets of Roman-Britain.

[128] Procopius, *Wars*, 8.20.6-10, 42-50.

[129] Procopius, *Wars*, 8.20.4-6., Procopius, *Anecdota*. trans. H. B. Dewing, *The Anecdota or Secret History*, *LCL*, Vol.6 (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), 19.

[130] Procopius, *Wars*, 8.20.10-58.

ambassadors.[131] Furthermore, the supplements and spectacular features of the account are sourced and inspired by earlier Greek and Roman historians and geographers, Strabo and Herodotus being foremost among them.[132] This is not taking into account, the fact that Theodebert is posturing to the Byzantines, which raises its own methodological problems.[133]

This is shown within the *Epistolae Austrasicae*, with two instances of communication between Theodebert and Byzantine emperor Justinian. However, only one is relevant to Merovingian overlordship in England. In *Epistolae Austrasicae* 20, Theodebert briefly outlines the various peoples who are under his influence and rule. Amongst these he notes the *Saxones* and *Eucii*.[134] Significantly, these two groups according to the text were not conquered but willingly surrendered themselves to Frankish power and rule. The reference to *Saxones* can be assumed as either the Continental Saxons under Merovingian rule or could be interpreted as Saxons in England.[135] The letter also distinguishes the Saxons from

[131] Collins & McClure, 'Rome, Canterbury and Wearmouth-Jarrow', pp.34-35. Sims-Williams, "The settlement of England", p, 28.Thompson, "Procopius on Brittia and Britannia", pp.498-507. A similar case is shown in Jordanes, *Getica*, T. Mommsen (ed.), *MGH*, *AA*, Vol.5 (Berlin, 1882), 1.9-15.

[132] Thompson, "Procopius on Brittia and Britannia", pp.498-507.

[133] M. McCormick, *Eternal victory: Triumphal rulership in late antiquity, Byzantium, and the early medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 338-339.

[134] *Epist. Aust.,* 20.2.

[135] The problematic nature of barbarian *ethnos* and similar terminology is found throughout this discipline. The issue of 'Saxon' identification is briefly explored in B. Yorke, 'Gregory of Tours and Sixth Century Anglo-Saxon England', in K. Mitchell, and I. Wood (eds.), *The World of Gregory of Tours*, (Leiden, 2002),pp.118-120.

the *Norsaui,* another group of Germanic peoples who inhabited territory in Francia and are traditionally associated with Continental Saxons.[136]

The *Eucii* mentioned in the text, are thought to be a reference to Jutes.[137] Like the above example, many other barbarian tribal names are quagmires in this area. There is no indication of what specific Jutes are referenced in this *epistula*. It is equally likely that the *Eucii* can be Continental Jutes based in Frisia, the Jutes who settled around the Isle of Wight or the Jutes of Kent.[138] As it stands there is still confusion as to whether this document is implicit proof of Frankish hegemony in Kent or elsewhere in the British Isles.

However, multiple scholars have interpreted this letter in the context of Merovingian overlordship. Not only Ian Wood but other Anglo-Saxonists such as Barbara Yorke have considered these claims an assertion of Merovingian influence in Anglo-Saxon affairs.[139] There are other considerations to be made concerning this document. The parallels between listing traditional Roman names and ethnic tribal names draws to mind triumphal and victory lists in post-Roman systems.[140] The fact that this piece was written closely after the Theodebert's conquest of Italy demonstrates this context.[141] So, Theodebert's assertion of military might to rival the power of the Byzantines raises number of complications.

[136] *Epist. Aust.,* 20.2. See 'traditional' opinion in H.M. Chadwick , *The origin of the English nation* (London, 1907), pp.91-92. Yet *Norsaui* likely a transmission error.

[137] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp.14-15.

[138] A. Russchen, *New Light on Dark Age Frisia* (Drachten, 1967), pp.34-35.

[139] B. Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of early Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1990), pp.28-42. Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.17-18.

[140]McCormick, *Eternal victory,* pp. 338-339.

[141]McCormick, *Eternal victory* p. 338. Collins, 'Theodebert I', pp.7-33.

Yet this letter reports that despite Theodebert's conquests and successes, he clearly defines his borders. It states that his realm extends to the shores of the Ocean.[142] In this case, the body Theodebert is referring to is the Atlantic. Such an explicit statement concerning the limits of his territory and influence in a document of this context cannot be simply disregarded.[143] Consequently one can see how it casts doubt on the possible existence of Frankish hegemony in Kent or England, at a least at this period of time.

Venantius Fortunatus presents similar problems. The panegyric in question concerns the Frankish ruler Chilperic. Through his works of Fortunatus mentions numerous peoples of North-West Europe.[144] One poem states Chilperic's military conquests suppressed brigandry and rebellion in Gaul and surrounding territories.[145] Fortunatus names a few of these peoples which include not only Goths and Basques but also lists the Danes, the Jutes, the Franks, the Saxons and Britons.[146] The poem implies that Chilperic faced these peoples in military action. Whether this occurred on his own time as a king or with his father, Lothar, is debatable.[147]   It also notes that other people are directly subject to him.[148]

This poem is laden with panegyric, similar to the above sources concerning Theodebert. The claims are clearly exaggerated to some degree. There is no clear

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[142] *Epist. Aust.*, 20.2.

[143] *Epist. Aust.*, 20.2. Collins & McClure, 'Rome, Canterbury and Wearmouth-Jarrow', pp.33-34.

[144] Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.*, 7.7.v.49-60, 7.16.v.47 ,9.1.v.70-76.

[145] Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.*, 9.1.v.70.

[146] Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.*, 7.7.v.49-60, 7.16.v.47 ,9.1.v.70-76.

[147] B. Brennan, "The image of the Frankish kings in the poetry of Venantius Fortunatus", *Journal of Medieval History*, 10(1), (1984), p.2-9.

[148] Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.*, 9.1.v.70-76.

record that Chilperic ever accompanied Lothar in any military action. Furthermore this aspect of conquest and subjugation of peoples ties back to the aspect of universal rule repeated earlier in this same poem.[149]   These flourishes are consistent with other poems which deal with similar themes and issues. Indeed it appears that references to Britain and the Britons as a people are rhetorical flourishes in the poetry to emphasise distance and vast extent throughout his work.[150] Therefore, the validity and any claims of Frankish domination over Saxons, Jutes or the Britons cannot be taken seriously.

It can be seen that each piece of evidence which suggests some kind of influence or control over Anglo-Saxon Kent or even any part of Britain is problematic. It leaves one to assume that even at this early stage, there is clear confusion over the kingdoms and inhabitants of Britain. Although these sources imply that the Franks had rulership over England, they are obscured and they do not in detail provide adequate weight to this argument. They fail to be completely reflective of other relevant issues such as maritime power and communication between these states. This problem seems commonplace with these types of material and sources.   More accurate representations of possible Frankish hegemony in Anglo-Saxon England and specifically Kent are found in other texts.

The bishop, the pope and the monk: The two Gregory's and Bede

The next group of sources clearly have a more direct indication for Frankish hegemony in Kent during the fifth and sixth centuries. Amongst these we have one of the most prolific historians of Merovingian period: Gregory of Tours. Gregory provides a reference to military action against Hygelac, also known as

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[149] Venantius Fortunatus, *Carm.*, 9.1.v.10-15, 70-76. Brennan, "The image of the Frankish kings", p.3.

[150] Brennan, "The image of the Frankish kings", p.3. Equally likely is that Britons are a reference to the Bretons i.e. Brittany.

Chlochilaich, and the Danes.[151]   However this is not the only reference in Gregory's writings for possible Frankish overlordship in the North Sea region. There are two other references found in the *Historiae* in relation to Kent.

The first of these references is in relation to the royal family of Neustria and is part of Gregory's commentary on these individuals. This commentary states that Charibert married Ingoberga. As a result they had a daughter who eventually "…*quae postea in Ganthia uirum accipiens est deducta*".[152] The chapter then goes into detail concerning Charibert's various unions, Ingoberga's retirement to a nunnery, Charibert's schism with the Church and death.   The whole chapter concludes with an anecdote concerning his other consort, Theudechild.[153]

The second reference appears later in the *Historiae*, in a separate book. However it is contextualised in a similar way. This account appears in the work as commentary on Ingoberga. It contains an event which Gregory was involved in himself. It describes that Ingoberga nearing death contacted Gregory personally to aid her in the making of her notaries and will. Furthermore, it notes the substantial gifts she has left to certain cathedrals and orders to free serfs.[154] The chapter concludes mentioning that her daughter "…*quam in Canthia regis cuiusdam filius matrimonio copulauit*".[155]

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[151] Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 3.2. See Storms, G. "The Significance of Hygelac's Raid", *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 14, (1970), pp.12-26.

[152] Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 4.26.

[153] Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 4.26.

[154] Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 9.26.

[155] Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 9.26.

Although the actual description of a possible relationship between Anglo-Saxon England and Merovingian Francia is brief, this reference has one advantage over previous descriptions and evidence for hegemony. That is the fact that in Gregory of Tours mentioned a specific kingdom, Kent. This daughter of Charibert is known as Adelberg or Bertha; in the Anglo-Saxon sources.[156] The son of a king or the man from Kent depending on the specific chapter is implied to be Ethelbert, the future king of Kent.[157] As such these particular sections, despite amounting only to two sentences provide a clear political and diplomatic tie with an eminent Merovingian family of this period and Anglo-Saxon Kent.

Yet, curiously it should be noted that the language and terminology between these two accounts slightly differs between these two critical sentences. The earlier chapter clearly stresses that Adelburg married a *uir* from Kent. [158] Yet, somehow this man, known to be Ethelbert, becomes a son of king who rules Kent in this later chapter.[159] These two brief references are in themselves striking considering Gregory has great interest in other Merovingian princesses who marry into foreign royal families.[160] Furthermore, the term certain man or person is used in specific ways throughout Gregory's account, usually for moralistic purposes.[161] Gregory makes explicit references in the *Historiae*, when royal marriages, coronations, liaison and other relationships transpire in his history, particularly when

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[156] Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 4.26.Bede, *HE.*, 1.25.

[157] Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 9.26.Bede, *HE.*, 1.25.

[158] Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 4.26.

[159] Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 9.26.

[160] See example of Clotild in Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 3.1,3.10.

[161] Goffart, *Narrators of barbarian history*, pp.179-181.

concerning diplomatic and foreign marriages.[162] This prompts greater curiosity into these two chapters of his work.

Although Gregory of Tours had an excellent understanding of contemporary affairs and concerns, this marriage seems to be of little interest for him. Indeed the narrative is tied directly with Gregory's focus on Ingoberga, Charibert's lechery, and later death.[163] There have been attempts to tie Gregory's interest in Kent through a Saint Martin connection, yet this speculation is dubious at best.[164] As such, Gregory provides a contemporary account of this early diplomatic communication and action between these political entities. However, any hegemonic implication of this relationship is sadly not preserved by Gregory who likely had a greater understanding of the details regarding this connection.

Another Gregory impinges on our examination of Merovingian hegemony. That is the Gregory the Great and his mission to England and consequently, all the material and personalities which the Gregorian mission entails. There are numerous letters, hagiographic material and historical accounts which detail Gregory the Great's and Augustine's interest, actions and achievements concerning Anglo-Saxon England and Kent in full.[165] In this case, the evidence for Merovingian hegemony in Kent or England is found in Gregory the Great's letters. There are a number of letters which exhort different Frankish monarchs and officials to aid Augustine and his retinue. One of these letters addressed to Theodebert II and Theuderic II imply that the Angles, likely referring to the

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[162] See Walter Goffart, 'Foreigners in the *Histories* of Gregory of Tours', in his *Rome's Fall and After* (London, 1989), pp.275-286. Goffart, *Narrators of barbarian history,* pp.214-215.

[163] Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 4.26, 9.26.

[164] Deanesly, M. "Canterbury and Paris", pp.98-99.

[165] For a summary see Markus, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 177-187.

inhabitants of Kent, are in some way within their influence. This is shown by the use of *subiectos uestros* which possibly refers back to *Anglii* in the previous sentence.[166]

This letter within the *Register* can be considered as evidence for Frankish overlordship. Indeed the Gregorian mission can be conceived as part of this broader context and consequence of this rapport. Yet, based on the same broader material, problems are present. Gregory, despite his interest in Anglian affairs and peoples, he initially has little conception concerning the realities of North-West Europe and this mission. Although this can be partly attributed to misunderstanding terminology, Gregory still had a preconceived notion of not only the English mission but the structure of the Church in Western Europe. In particular, the unity between the Frankish Church, the newly established Anglian Church and possibly elements of British Christianity still present on the isles.[167] This religious and pastoral unity might reflect the language use ascribed in these letters, addressed to these two Frankish kings as opposed to political domination, especially since their grandmother was greatly influential in their early reigns. [168]

It is unsurprising that similar Gregorian material is found in the works of Bede. Consequently through these sources, Bede's history contains accounts of the diplomatic and political ties between Anglo-Saxon Kent and Merovingian Francia, which is critical for this study. It notes features already mentioned by Gregory of Tours. In short, the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gens Anglorum* describes both Ethelbert's marriage to Bertha as well as the reception of the Gregorian mission in

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[166] Gregory the Great, *Reg.*, 6. 49.

[167] Markus, *Gregory the Great*, pp.184-187.

[168] See Brunhild's involvement in Gregory the Great, *Reg.*, 6.57. Markus, *Gregory the Great*, pp.173-176. Wood, "Mission of Augustine", pp.8-9.

Kent. However, it provides a few more details which both Gregory of Tours and Gregory the Great fail to mention, namely the details surrounding Bertha's entourage and the specific conditions in which she married Ethelbert. The primary piece of evidence is the appearance of Bertha's chaplain, Liudhard in the narrative.[169] He is described as only a Frankish bishop who acted as a chaplain for Bertha, the other members of her entourage and debatably other Christians in the area. Bede implies that Liudhard had already passed away before Augustine's arrival in Britain.[170]

These marriage connections in Kent are further emphasised through Bede's account of Ethelbert's son, Eadbald. Bede presents this account in relation to Kent's brief apostasy after Ethelbert's death. Apparently Eadbald wished to marry his father's wife; it is unclear if this was Bertha or another paramour.[171] However, after being admonished for his actions he apparently marries another woman named Emma who is of Frankish extraction. Although it was speculated that she was a princess from Austrasia, it is more likely that Emma was the daughter of a *maior domo* of Neustria, one Erchinoald.[172] Although this account has been viewed with some suspicion, this Erchinoald has further ties with England. He was

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[169] Bede, *HE.*, 1.25.

[170] Bede, *HE.*, 1.25. However it should be noted that the extent of pre-Augustine Christian in Britain is still debated. See R. Meens, "A background to Augustine's mission to Anglo-Saxon England", *ASE* 23, (1994), pp.14-17 and C.M. Cusack, *Conversion among the Germanic Peoples* (London, 1998), pp.88-118 for a general introduction.

[171] Bede, *HE.*, 2.5.

[172] K.F. Werner, 'Les rouages de l' administarion', in P. Perin & L.C. Feffer (eds.), *La Neustrie* (Creteil, 1985), pp.41-46. Yet the source material is a charter thought to be forged.

involved with the rise of Bathlid, a 'Saxon' slave women from the British Isles, who eventually became a Frankish queen and later saint.[173]

These marriages, the presence of Liudhard in Kent and Erchinoald fascination with Kent and Anglo-Saxons in general show some kind of institutional action between Kent and Frankish Neustria. Indeed the fact that Bede records the specific details concerning Bertha's marriage to Ethelbert as a diplomatic process with certain conditions is very significant.[174] However, these marriages alone do not suggest Kent's political subordination to any polity in Francia. Liudhard also presents complications. Although described as a Frankish bishop there is debatable evidence to substantiate this claim. A long established tradition does suggest that his original bishopric was at Senlis.[175] This seems logical as it is firmly placed within Neustrian territory. However this tradition is debatable. Furthermore, Liudhard himself does not appear in documentary material such as the *Gallia Christiana*, though it is a fragmented text.[176] This causes further problems. Although he was present, these facts obscure the intricate Merovingian policies which may have been present in Kent at this time.

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[173] See *Vita Balth*.1-9. Fouracre & Gerberding *Late Merovingian*, pp.100-105.

[174] Bede, *HE*., 1.25.

[175] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, trans. M. Winterbottom, Vol.1 (Oxford, 2007), 1.1. For a general summation of this author see, R.M. Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, 2nd edition, (Woodbridge,2003),pp. 3-136. This local tradition goes back even further see M.A.F Borrie, "The Thorne Chronicle", *The British Museum Quarterly* 31(3), (1967),pp.87-90.

[176] A. Butler, *The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and Other Principal Saints*, Vol.2 (Dublin, 1886), p.231.

The indistinct material: Names, a poem and practicalities

All of these sources show some indication of possibly Frankish influence in Anglo-Saxon Kent. However, it is rather a sporadic, vague and indistinct concept, which through the literary material may not completely reflect the reality. Yet if one considers what is not mentioned or passed over in these accounts, a greater sense of complexity of relations between Kent and Francia emerges. The foremost and likely most revealing is Ethelbert's father.[177] He is one of the first historically referenced kings in the literary material, as he is mentioned in passing by Gregory of Tours.[178] His name, Eormenric appears in both the work of Bede and a number of genealogical lists of the rulers of Kent.[179] As such it is really in this generation of Kentish aristocracy when diplomatic communication was established for Ethelbert's marriage, although there are concerns with dating his reign.[180]

Eormenric's fascination with Francia is further shown through his own name. It has been pointed out that the prefix and suffix of Eormenric's name has Continental parallels.[181] Although the name appears comparable to one used by a Visigothic warrior king, who admittedly appears in Anglo-Saxon poetry, there are numerous examples of these features within the names of Frankish nobles.[182] These Continental prefixes and suffixes become a characteristic part of the Kentish

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[177] Bede, *HE.*, 2.5.

[178] Gregory of Tours, *Lib. Hist.*, 9.26.

[179] Bede, *HE.*, 2.5. Brooks, 'The creation and early structure', pp.63-65.

[180] Brooks, 'The creation and early structure', pp.64-65.

[181] W.Searle, *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum*, p.320. M. Morlet, *Les noms de personne sur la territoire de l' ancienne Gaule des vi au xii siecle*, Vol.1 (Paris, 1968), pp.82-83. E. Forstemann, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch, i Personennamen* (Nordhausen, 1856), p. 479-482.

[182] Brooks, 'The creation and early structure', pp.64-65.

royal line as demonstrated by Ethelbert himself and others.[183] Therefore, it can be considered part of a broader form of interaction and dates the earliest aspects of this Kentish-Frankish relationship to the reign of Eormenric's supposed own father, an individual known as Octha or Oese in the sources.[184]

This once again presents problems. Bede's source material is primarily the Kentish genealogical lists, which are clearly eight century inventions and elaborations.[185] The mythic or legendary additions are common in these types of documents, especially in well-documented Kentish king lists.[186] Octha, his predecessor and even to some extent, Eormenric himself can be contextualised in this manner.[187]

Bede's account and the information provide by Gregory the Great's letters glosses over other aspects related to Frankish involvement in Kent. Bede's account clearly implies that there were numerous Frankish officials aiding Augustine's missionary activity, notably interpreters and supporting clergy.[188] Although it can be argued that the Germanic languages bear similarities to each other, it would unreasonable to think that these individuals had a complete grasp of the language without being in contact with these peoples.[189] Furthermore, the practicalities of

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[183] Brooks, 'The creation and early structure', pp.64-65. The suffix of –bert has numerous Continental parallels, in Francia and elsewhere.

[184] Bede, *HE.*, 2.5.

[185] Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms,* pp. 25-27.

[186] Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, pp. 25-39.

[187] M.J. Whittock, *Origins of England 410-600* (Sydney, 1986), pp.46-48. Brooks, 'The creation and early structure', pp.64-65.

[188] Bede, *HE.*, 1.25. Gregory the Great, *Reg.*, 6.57.

[189] J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: a historical commentary* (Oxford, 1988), pp.33-34.

the mission specifically transportation and logistics are consequently ignored. Augustine and these other officials, amounting to more that forty, had to charter a ship, captain and crew to cross the English Channel.[190] One has to consider the inspiration behind the Gregorian mission itself. There is documentation from the *Vita Gregorii Magni* demonstrating that the reason behind the mission was due to the presence of Anglian slave boys in the markets at Rome and towns like Marseilles.[191] This was further emphasised in Gregory's letters, with specific instructions to purchase and equip Anglian slaves as layman in the Church.[192]

A fragment of Frankish relationships with Anglo-Saxon England is also shown in the canonical Old English text, *Beowulf*. Granted this text does not directly indicate rulership over Anglo-Saxon Kent, England or even Britain explicitly.[193] However the poem provides indications of wider Frankish influence over the North Sea region.[194] This is clearly illustrated in the description and failure of Hygelac's raid in *Beowulf*, an event preserved in the writings of Gregory of Tours as previously mentioned.[195]

However, a fact which is relevant for this study is the vocabulary used throughout the poem relating to the Franks. Besides Hygleac's raid which is dated and involved Theodebert, there seems to be preserved a generic fear and

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[190] Bede, *HE.*, 1.25. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971), p.29.

[191] *Vita Gregorii Magni,* B. Colgrave (ed.), *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great, by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby* (Cambridge, 1968), 9-13. Gregory the Great, *Reg.*, 6, 10. Bede, *HE.*, 2.1.

[192] Gregory the Great, *Reg.*, 6, 10.

[193] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.17-18.

[194] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.17-18.

[195] Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 3.2. Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.17-18.

apprehension over the Frank's military power.[196] Although the text does mention aspects of the aid of the Frisians, the Franks and the Hugones receive the most attention. Indeed, the most important worries after Beowulf's death are the retribution and encouragement by the Franks to wage wars with the Geats. There is a direct reference to the *Merewīoingas* as opposed to a generic Frankish king in this same passage.[197]

Now despite giving no reference to Saxons, Jutes, Angles or Britons in this text, it can be argued that these concerns were intended for some kind of Anglo-Saxon audience. Besides the obvious reasons such as that the poem survives in Old English, the worries over Merovingian conquest could be just as applicable to the earlier Saxon, Jute or Angle communities and kingdoms in the British Isles.[198] The fact that this threat was perceived by the Geats, inhabitants of an island nation is easily transferrable and clearly implies that the Franks had the ability to invade or engage in conflict overseas.[199] Therefore, the collective apprehension expressed towards the Franks would be logical, since Kent was a coastal nation and in close proximity to Merovingian Francia. [200]

Yet, all of these issues impinge on the dating of *Beowulf*. There is a whole range of scholarship and debate concerning the exact date and transmission of this text. Although, it is a diverse and complicated issue, a generous date of around the

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[196] Storms, "Significance of Hygelac's Raid", pp.12-26.

[197] *Beowulf*, F. Klaeber (ed.), *Beowulf and the Fight and Finnsburg,* 3rd edition, (London, 1922), v.1210, 2910-2915.

[198] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.17-18.

[199] Storms, "Significance of Hygelac's Raid", pp.12-26.

[200] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea,* pp.17-18.

670s to at least the late eight century is often given by different individuals.[201] It leaves one to the question, which type of Franks is described or conceived of in this poem. It is without a doubt that this poem describes events which took place in the fifth century.[202] It is possible that on the whole *Beowulf* is preserved in original telling. Yet, when it was finally put to manuscript the copyist could have considered a Carolingian or Pippinid conception of Frankish overlordship.[203] Indeed, the presence of the term *Merewīoingas* does not necessarily testify to an earlier date of composition.[204] This a key issue which needs to be kept in mind when visualising Merovingian hegemony in the North Sea and in Anglo-Saxon Kent.

All of this evidence suggests a concept of intense exchange networks and contact in this region. These processes can be viewed as a consequence of this relationship between Kent, Francia and Anglo-Saxon England as a whole. However one is still left with a sense of uncertainty concerning this economic material as like the political relationship, the literary sources are wanting.[205] Indeed these economic claims are important as they span beyond this time period and this single diplomatic relationship. This economic focus is used as further justification for Frankish hegemonic claims over Anglo-Saxon England or as a result of this

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[201] See C. Chase (ed.), *The Dating of Beowulf* (London, 1981).

[202] Storms, "Significance of Hygelac's Raid", pp.12-26.

[203] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.10-11.

[204] W. Goffart, "The Name 'Merovingian' and the Dating of Beowulf", *ASE* 36, (2007), pp. 93-101.
[205] Collins & McClure, 'Rome, Canterbury and Wearmouth-Jarrow', pp.32-33.

relationship.[206] However these issues can only be resolved through another corpus of ancient material: the archaeological evidence.

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[206] S.C. Hawkes, 'Anglo-Saxon Kent c 425-725', in P.E.Leach (ed.), *Archaeology in Kent to AD 1500*, The Council for British Archaeology, Research Report 48, (London, 1982), pp.72-79.

Chapter Three: The archaeological evidence

The archaeological material dated to this period within Kent is a diverse corpus. There are numerous categories of particular finds and a substantial amount of material. A large percentage of 'Frankish' items are among them. Archaeologists classify a subcategory of material and strata in Kent as 'Frankish'. Through these sources, it is possible to gleam a broader view of the context and interaction which occurred between the inhabitants of Kent and Merovingian Francia. These include the movement of people between these regions, the item's use and the economic and cultural implications for these finds. All of these factors shed light on a world system of Frankish-Kentish connections which operated within Wood's hypothesis.

Shipbuilding and transportation

A brief statement concerning the nature of shipbuilding is pertinent to this discussion. The exchange of items between Kent and parts of the European Continent is determined by the extent of naval technology of the period. There are no extant ships from the Merovingian period preserved in the Kent region.[207] Therefore comparable evidence must be used. There are numerous examples of general 'Anglo-Saxon', 'Frisian', 'Frankish' ships and parts dated to this period.[208] They all have similar design features such as clinker hulls and have similar means of movement, either propulsion by oars or sailing techniques.[209] These designs

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[207] One exception is the Graveney Boat; however it is dated between the 890-950 A.D. See V. Fenwick, *The Graveney Boat*, *BAR* 53, (Oxford, 1979).

[208] R.W. Unger, *The Ship in the Medieval Economy 600-1600* (London, 1980), pp.56-67.

[209] Noort, *North Sea Archaeologies*, pp.169-175.

demonstrate that the technology for the act of transporting people is attested in the archaeological record and literary evidence.

Although in existence, there is little documentation regarding the survival of actual ports, docks and harbour side infrastructure in Kent. The preservation of wooden docks and other buildings cannot be used to substantiate the presence of ports in the various settlements in Kent. The one exception is the possibility of the continued occupation of abandoned Roman fortifications near coastal regions.[210] Most of the assumptions regarding areas of exchange in England are based on other types of evidence. These include geographic considerations, abundance and types of other artefacts and place-names.[211] These settlements will be examined later in this study.[212]

Coinage and Weights: Means of exchange

An abundant group of artefacts dated to this period is the numismatic evidence. The presence of coins within Kent is demonstrative of the economic contact which occurs between England and the Continent. Assumedly they are mediums of exchange, which emphasises their commercial relevance. There are coins in this era - just no Anglo-Saxon ones. The corpus of coinage is primarily of 'Frankish' manufacture and origin.[213] There are other examples: Byzantine, Late

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[210] T. Tatton-Brown, 'The Towns of Kent', in J. Haslam (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon towns in Southern England* (Chichester, 1984), p.23

[211] Tatton-Brown, 'The Towns of Kent', pp.16-23, 28-30.

[212] See Chapter Four for a more detailed discussion.

[213] M. Dolley, 'The Coins', in D.Wilson (ed.), *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1976), pp.350-351.

Roman, and barbarous radiates as well as imitations of all these coins.[214]   It is likely that these examples came from Frankish markets in mainland Europe, or counterfeits based on Continental dies.[215]

The first dated Anglo-Saxon coins, known as *thyrmas*, were minted in the reign of Kentish king Eadbald (616-640). Although crude, these examples were inspired by contemporary coins from the Continent. The most comparable, in terms of style, were from 'Frankish' and 'Frisian' models.[216] Both of these models highlight the trends between Francia and Kent. This is particularly relevant as Frisia was under the possible overlordship of the Merovingian kings.[217] Therefore, it can be argued that the presence and development of coinage in Anglo-Saxon Kent was inspired by trends from North-West Europe. It testifies to the movement and traffic of people between these areas.

This is not the only example of 'Frankish' coinage in Kent. There are numerous examples which were minted in the reign of the Merovingian kings. The distribution of gold coins minted prior 625 A.D. were concentrated around Kent and the Thames valley region.[218] These originated from southern mints including Arles, Marseilles, Vienna and Lyon.[219] It is only after 625 A.D. that gold coinage

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[214] Dolley, 'The Coins', pp.350-351. C.H.V.Sutherland, *Anglo-Saxon Gold Coinage in the light of the Crondall Hoard* (London, 1948), pp.22-30.

[215] P.Sawyer, *The wealth of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 39-40. Sutherland, *Anglo-Saxon Gold Coinage*, pp.22-30, 46-50.

[216] P. Seaby, *The Story of British Coinage* (London, 1985), pp.20-22.

[217] Seaby, *Story of British Coinage*, pp.20-22. Russchen, *New Light on Dark Age*, pp.34-37.

[218] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, pp. 56-59.

[219] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, p. 56.

spread to wider areas of the British Isles as well as originating from other Frankish mints.[220]

Besides the presence of coinage within Kent, there are individual medallions which highlight broader concerns. One is the 'Liudhard medalet'. This item was found amongst a group of coins and jewellery known as the Canterbury Hoard.[221] This object, as its name implies, is a medal which has been converted into a pendant. It bears an inscription on the observe side, *LEUDARDU. EPS*, and displays a bust of a figure in regalia.[222] These features have been interpreted to represent the Frankish bishop and chaplain of Bertha, Liudhard.[223] It aids in confirming the literary evidence and the existence of Frankish religious and diplomatic contact within Kent.

The reverse side of the coin is dominated by a depiction of a patriarchal cross attached to a base. [224] This design had no direct precedent in any numismatic pieces at this time. It has been argued that due to the late-sixth century dating of the coin, the imagery is inspired by the piece of the True Cross within a Poitiers covenant, founded by the Merovingian queen, Radegund.[225]   Radegund is

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[220] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, pp. 56-59.

[221] Grierson, "The Canterbury (St.Martin's) Hoard", pp.39-51.

[222] Grierson, "Canterbury (St.Martin's) Hoard", pp.41.

[223] Grierson, "Canterbury (St.Martin's) Hoard", pp.41-43. Bede, *HE*, 1.25.

[224] A Christian cross with an additional horizontal crossbar. It is associated with Byzantine iconography and coins in the 7th century. See A. Gannon, *The Iconography of early Anglo-Saxon Coinage: Sixth to Eighth Centuries* (Oxford, 2003), pp.157-160.

[225] Werner, "Liudhard medalet", pp.31-32. See C. Hahn, "Collector and saint: Queen Radegund and devotion to the relic of the True Cross", *Word & Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry* 22(3), (2006), pp.270-272.

associated with this item due to her patronage of the Church and missions.[226] This woman had direct family ties to Bertha. It can be argued that Bertha attempted to emulate Radegund and other pious women such as Augusta Helena.[227]

As the Liudhard medalet is unique and has no parallels, it can be assumed that it was not intended for wider circulation and used for ideological purposes.[228] Numerous features have been incorporated into this piece including Anglo-Saxon, Byzantine, Visigothic and Frankish designs. This 'medalet' reinforces the knowledge of metallurgy, the movement of peoples and the cultural interaction with Francia and Europe.

The role of this coinage is debatable. As mentioned, the modified examples, like the Liudhard medalet, seem to have a decorative purpose. They can be interpreted as a way of displaying wealth. There is some speculation that this coinage was used as primitive money. It is believed that the shillings referred to within Ethelbert's law code are Merovingian *solidi*.[229] If the coins were used commercially, it was likely as bullion; a means to store wealth and to be used in large financial transactions. This accounts for the presence of Late Roman and Byzantine examples, which were exchanged through the Merovingian kingdoms.[230] It can be seen that the presence of coinage discovered within Anglo-Saxon Kent is strong evidence for the existence of large networks of exchange. These systems are

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[226] Werner, "Liudhard medalet", pp.31-32, 40-41.

[227] Werner, "Liudhard medalet", pp.31-32, 40-41.

[228] Gannon, *Iconography of early Anglo-Saxon Coinage,* pp. 8-10. Grierson, "Canterbury (St.Martin's) Hoard", pp.42-43.

[229] See throughout *The Laws of Æthelbert,* trans. F.L. Attenborough, *The Laws of the earliest English kings* (New York, 1963).   Sawyer, 'From Solidi to Scettas', pp.47-50.

[230] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, pp. 56-60.

intertwined with the rest of the Continent, with Francia acting as hub for this trade.

Related to the coinage are the sets of weights and balances found throughout Anglo-Saxon England. The majority of finds are located within either Kent or the Thames region. However, Kent is the only area in which full and complete sets have been found.[231] They are all roughly dated to the second half of the sixth century and the seventh century. This coincides when coinage was in greater circulation and when the first examples of minted Anglo-Saxon coinage appeared in the archaeological record.[232] The size suggests they were primarily used for coinage and other small precious materials and items.[233] The dating of the material, their distribution and hypothesised use does suggest they were an integral part of economic life within Kent. This as well as the presence of coinage, suggests economic sophistication in this area.

Weaponry

Other grave goods such as abundance of 'Frankish' weaponry further attest to these connections. Most of the material relating to weaponry and armour are understood and proven to be manufactured locally. Yet, there are a few examples of these artefacts which can be considered 'Frankish'. These items are found amongst graves in Kent and other coastal regions of England. These include daggers, swords, shields and various pieces of armour.[234] The use of these weapons and larger selection of armoury as status symbols within a funerary context

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[231] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, p .61.

[232] Sawyer, 'From Solidi to Scettas', p.53,

[233] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, p.36.

[234] Wilson, 'Introduction', pp.1-16.

emphasises their exotic nature, their prestige and the higher social status of the burials' occupants.[235] This small group of artefacts demonstrate the perception these items had on the warrior class of Kent as well as differences between social structures in other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

However one is left with numerous concerns in identifying 'Frankish' armoury. Scholarship is quite extensive regarding typologies and the development of weaponry, yet most of items can only be attested as Continental, with some exceptions.[236] Certain types of spear heads are considered to be of 'Frankish' origin while seaxes were imported from Francia until the end of the seventh century.[237] Swords on the other hand are the most problematic. Sword similarities between multiple peoples of Western and Central Europe make classification in the sixth and seventh centuries extremely difficult, especially considering the ring hilted swords found in Kent and on the Continent.[238] In fact, in some cases there is complete uniformity.[239] Therefore, although there are some insights into exchange networks, movement of peoples, the evidence provided can mostly test to contact with the Continent at large as opposed to Francia alone.

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[235] Harke, H. 'Early Saxon Weapon Burials: frequencies, distributions and weapon combinations', in S.C. Hawkes (ed.), *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1989), pp.55-59.

[236] D.A. Gale, 'The Seax', in S.C. Hawkes (ed.), *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1989), pp.71-72.

[237] Gale, 'The Seax', pp.71-73.

[238] H.R.E. Davidson, *The sword in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1962), pp.66-68.

[239] P. Bone, 'The Development of Anglo-Saxon Swords from the Fifth to the Eleventh Century', in S.C. Hawkes (ed.), *Weapons and Warfare in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1989), pp.63-65. S. Pollington, *The English Warrior from earliest times to 1066* (Hockwold-cum Wilton, 1996), pp.104-105.

Jewellery and Precious materials

Another group of items found in Kent was jewellery. The most common examples are the different types of brooches found within Kent. A number have been found within graves and as single finds. The majority of these brooches have similar stylistic features to types found on the Continent, including Francia.[240] Other finds include buckles and bracelets.[241] They are constructed from simple shapes and designs, and divided typologically based on their shape and the material from which they were manufactured.[242]

The materials used in the creation of these items allow an examination of relations with Kent and Merovingian Francia. Gold was scarce throughout Anglo-Saxon England and the British Isles. The gold artefacts found are therefore, of Continental origin. There is a shift in terms of manufacturing, economic and numismatic dynamics during this period. However, jewellery is intertwined with the use of other semi-precious materials. This includes garnet, a common feature

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[240] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, pp. 56-60. See wider distribution in E. Bakka, 'Scandinavian-type gold bracteates in Kentish and continental grave finds' & H. Hassler, 'Inlaid metalwork of the Migration period and the Merovingian period from Lower Saxony', both in V.I. Evison (ed.), *Angles, Saxons and Jutes: essays presented to J.N.L. Myres* (Oxford, 1981), pp.11-38, 72-95.

[241]Evison, *The Fifth-Century invasions*, pp.27-29, 33-36.

[242]A survey of Anglo-Saxon Brooches can be found in D. Leigh, 'Aspects of early Brooch Design and production', in E. Southworth (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries: A reappraisal proceedings of a conference held at Liverpool museum 1986* (Stroud, 1990), pp.107-125. General dating techniques are discussed briefly in G. Halsall, *Early Medieval Cemeteries: An introduction to Burial Archaeology in the post-Roman west* (Glasgow, 1997), pp.48-51. A detailed explanation is found in A. Bayliss, *et al.*, 'Dating Methods and their Modelling', in A. Bayliss and J.Hines (eds.), *Anglo-Saxon graves and grave goods of the 6th and 7th centuries AD: A chronological framework* (London, 2013), pp.33-88.

used in both Merovingian jewellery and 'Kentish' archaeological finds.[243] Based on examination the garnet used by 'Kentish' craftsmen and Merovingian artisans is similar. It was part of a larger exchange network which originally began in Francia but due to diminishing supply, extended to the Black Sea region.[244] This highlights the way in which the Anglo-Saxons could access certain 'exotic' goods and benefits of economic ties with Francia.

A similar case is presented by another semi-precious substance, amber. Amber beads in are found in numerous female graves throughout Anglo-Saxon England. The largest concentrations are usually found in central and eastern Anglo-Saxon cemeteries.[245] It is assumed that they were sourced from the Baltic Sea. However, Kent differs from this trend. In terms of southern regionalisation and number of examples, Kent seems to have a monopoly over the movement of amber beads, despite the items scarcity in Kent, when compared to other areas.[246] This has led one scholar to suggest that the amber from Kent was traded from elsewhere; then, funnelled through Frankish or Frisian intermediaries.[247] This demonstrates that the links established between Francia and Kent allowed economic superiority and control over foreign substances and goods. This sets

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[243] See H. Roosens & D. Thomas-Goorieckx, "Die Merowingische Goldscheibenfibel von Rosmeer", *Archaeologica Belgica* 123, (1970), pp.5-18.

[244] B. Arrhenius, *Merovingian Garnet Jewellery: emergence and social implications* (Stockholm, 1992), pp.154-155,188-198.

[245] C. J. Arnold, 'Wealth and Social Structure: a matter of life and death', in P.Rahtz, T. Dickinson & L.Watts (eds.), *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries 1979, The fourth Anglo-Saxon Symposium at Oxford*, *BAR* 82 (Oxford, 1979), pp. 96-99.

[246] Arnold, 'Wealth and Social Structure', pp. 96-99.

[247] D. Ellmers, 'The Frisian monopoly on coastal transport in the 6th -8th centuries AD', in S. McGrail (ed.), *Maritime Celts, Frisians and Saxons* (London, 1990), pp.91-93.

another dimension for the possible overlordship expressed by Kentish kings during the sixth century in England.

Other semi-precious artefacts have demonstrated comparable issues. Rock crystal was manufactured into crystal balls and beads. There are numerous examples found in graves throughout central and eastern England. Yet the largest concentration of crystal found in a single grave site in Kent was at Chatham Lines.[248] Like amber, there is a discrepancy between the distribution at a regional and local level. Rock crystal was predominately found in Kent and the Isle of Wight.[249] There is some indication that this mineral was sourced from different areas. There is strong evidence which suggests that this material originated from Europe, specifically Switzerland and Germany.[250] They are typically found in numerous Alammanic and Frankish contexts.[251] The scarcity for these items can be indicative of the way goods were funnelled through Kent from the Continent in this period.

This pattern is shared with other items such as amethyst and ivory. Amethyst was localised to Kent and used in a range of different products, the most common being jewellery. This material was not mined within the British Isles.[252] This indicates that the items were either imported from traders on the Continent or sourced directly from the eastern Mediterranean. This uncertainty is reflected with the exchange and harvesting of ivory. Although the material was used to

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[248] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon,* pp.53-56.

[249] K. Parfitt and B. Brugmann, *The Anglo-Saxon cemetery on Mill Hill, Deal, Kent* (London, 1997), pp.51-66.

[250] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon,* pp.53-56.

[251] Parfitt and Brugmann, *The Anglo-Saxon cemetery*, pp.51-66.

[252] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon,* pp.61-62.

manufacture 'prestige' goods, the exact source of ivory cannot be resolved. It is probable that the ivory was originally from Africa.[253] Another likely source of ivory is Scandinavia and other North Sea regions.[254] As such, these items highlight the difficulties of constructing these extensive exchange networks.

Pottery and Glassware

There are other items can be traced relatively easily in the archaeological record. An excellent example is pottery. The techniques associated with manufacture of pottery are relevant. Initially within Kent, the pottery found was predominately crude.[255] It lacked decoration and was hand-made.[256] However, there is a gradual change which is not only shown through Kent but other southern Anglo-Saxon states. There is greater use of decorative and stylistic features as well as the use of wheel thrown pottery techniques.[257] Taking into account the existence and knowledge of British and local craftsmen, there is still a strong possibility that these techniques originated from Continental and Frankish tradesmen.

Other examples of pottery are equally as relevant in demonstrating connections between Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent. One factor is that pottery and ceramics were connected to another flourishing trade between Francia

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[253] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon,* pp.52-54.

[254] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon,* pp.52-54.

[255] Myres, *Anglo-Saxon Pottery*, pp.87-88.

[256]Although there is some exceptions as shown in V.I. Evison, 'The Asthall type of bottle', in V.I. Evison, H. Hodges and J.G. Hurst (eds.), *Medieval Pottery from Excavations: studies presented to Gerald Clough Dunning, with a bibliography of his works* (London,1974),pp.77-82.

[257] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, pp.62-63.

and Anglo-Saxon England; the wine trade, a popular and luxury export.[258] Based on the sample size and distribution, wine was consumed in large quantities in Kent.[259] This combined with other evidence, suggests the use and consumption of luxury items within Kent was reserved for individuals of higher economic income and social strata. Therefore, the market for these goods was intended for the local aristocracy of Kent.

There are different subtypes of pottery which emphasise other relationships. Wheel thrown imported pottery is divided into five basic classifications, which are all dated to the early seventh or late sixth century. These include bottles, jugs, shouldered jars, biconical bowls and globular vessels. [260] The bottles outnumber the other pottery types. The majority of these bottles were discovered in Kent itself, making up over half of the total pottery examples found.[261] There is an indication that these vessels were used for packaging and storage. This is confirmed by the manufacture between some examples, which are generally cruder in design than others in the corpus. This may indicate that they were designed to carry oils and goods from Frankish and Mediterranean markets.[262] The presence of this utilitarian pottery used to transport these liquids and items does confirm the importance of these wares within Anglo-Saxon Kent.

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[258] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, p.62. V.I. Evison, *A Corpus of Wheel-thrown pottery in Anglo-Saxon Graves* (London, 1979) p.49.

[259] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, p.62. Evison, *A Corpus of Wheel-thrown pottery,* p.49

[260] See throughout Evison, *A Corpus of Wheel-thrown pottery*.

[261] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, pp.62-63.

[262] Evison, *A Corpus of Wheel-thrown pottery*, p.49. Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, p.62.

A group of items related to both pottery and jewellery, glassware, was both imported and exported from Anglo-Saxon Kent. It is highly significant to discuss as there were numerous types of glassware vessels found within Anglo-Saxon England. However without a doubt the market concentration was based around Anglo-Saxon Kent. The various types of glassware generally show strong similarities both in terms of composition and style to glassware throughout Germany, Belgium and northern Francia.[263] This becomes more pertinent when considering that these areas become centres for glass production in the Carolingian era.[264] The chemical and stylistic element found between 'Kentish' and Continental glassware may suggest the movement of tradesmen between these areas as well as the sharing of manufacturing techniques and stylistic elements. It assists in confirming the market for 'Frankish' luxury items within Anglo-Saxon Kent.

There is indication that this glassware was manufactured within Kent. There are some examples of glassware in Kent which have few or no parallels on the European Continent. These include some types of jars, bottles and 'claw-shaped' beakers.[265] However there are similar examples which have been founded in areas on the Continent including the Loire valley, an area ruled by the Franks, in this period.[266] Although isolated, these examples are indicative of one of the few exports of Kent to Francia. This demonstrates the some possible benefits for Merovingian overlordship and economic interest in Kent.

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[263]E. James, *The Franks* (Oxford, 1988), pp.202-203. D. Jellma, "Frisian Trade in the Dark Ages", *Speculum* 30(1), (1955), p.20. Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, p.64.

[264] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, pp.62-63.

[265] Evison, "Anglo-Saxon Glass Claw-beakers", pp.43-45.

[266] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, p.64.

The fact that these products were manufactured within Kent, possibly Faversham, is indicative of these ties.[267] Although these vessels and artefacts were manufactured locally, the raw material and the techniques used to create them were direct from Europe. Due to the compositional analysis of various vessels, the percentage of the silica shows strong similarities to the Frankish and Mediterranean varieties of glassware and their chemical makeup.[268] This combined with the knowledge of the stylistic attributes as well as the movement of craftsmen and technological knowledge between Kent and the Francia.

Agricultural development & Household wares

The abundance of evidence for luxury and prestige products exchanged between these areas, the market and knowledge of goods for lower social classes is non-existent. There had to be exports and imports of products such as foodstuffs, raw materials, livestock and utilitarian items. The one major exception within the archaeological material is importation of quern stones from Francia into Anglo-Saxon England.[269] These items have been discovered throughout Anglo-Saxon England. Yet, they have been traced back to various major trading centres on the European Continent, including the Neustrian port Quentovic.[270] The quern stones were used for grinding flour, wheat and corn. The use of these stones catered to small land-owners, communities, businesses and households. This represents a

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[267] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon*, p.64, Evison, "Anglo-Saxon Glass Claw-beakers", p.58.

[268] I.C. Freestone, M.J. Hughes and C.P. Stapleton, 'The Composition and Production of Anglo-Saxon Glass', in S.Marzinzik (ed.), *Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Glass in the British Museum* (London, 2008), pp.32-40.

[269] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, p.124.

[270] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, pp.36, 122-126.

large fraction of the community and different social strata.[271] These stones highlight other goods which have not been preserved in the archaeological record. This stresses the importance that these artefacts and unpreserved items from the Continent had on the agricultural and economic sophistication of Anglo-Saxon Kent.

Textiles

It is worth examining the textile trade between Francia and Kent. Although well documented in later historical contexts, archaeological examples are few and there are numerous difficulties when considering issues such as manufacturing.[272] The best comparable types for this study are shown through stylistic trends such as the braided edging of different garments. This is found in numerous garments and, as grave goods for wealthy individuals in Kent.[273] They appear in various Continental burials in Francia and other areas of Germany. Although made from different materials, there are a number of similarities between weaving and patterns. This can indicate connections in terms of fashion and cultural trends between Kent and Francia.

Slave Traffic

There is an absence of archaeological material related to the prestige market of the slave trade.[274] This trade is well attested in the literary record.[275] There is

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[271] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, pp.122-126.

[272] Arnold, *An Archaeology of the early Anglo-Saxon,* pp.72-73.

[273] E. Crowfoot & S.C.Hawkes, "Early Anglo-Saxon gold braids", *Medieval Archaeology* 11, (1967), pp.50-53.

[274] D. Pelteret, "Slave raiding and slave trading in early England", *ASE* 9, (1980), pp.99-100.

little evidence for this trade in the archaeological record for numerous reasons.[275] There is no epigraphic evidence suggesting that they were part of these markets for this context. However based on the literary evidence, it can be at least said that trade existed and was quite expansive in the British Isles and Merovingian Francia. There is other literary material which connects this trade in North-West Europe to a larger Mediterranean market.

However, based on the various pieces of literary evidence, the extent and regulation of this market cannot be measured. Although the trade was passed through Francia and various settlements the only attested slave traders in the material are either referred to as Frisians and Jews.[277] Whether Franks were included under the term 'Frisian' is debatable.[278] However, it can be definitely said the movement of slave traffics between the British Isles and Francia was regular and extant.

Interpretation of Evidence

All of these various artefacts have demonstrated clear and established links between Kent and Francia as part of much wider networks with Anglo-Saxon England, the British Isles and the European Continent. These frameworks and the archaeological evidence supporting these theories have been discussed by multiple

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[275] Examples are shown in Gregory the Great, *Reg.*, 6.10, 6.19, 9.203, 9.215. *Pact.* 39.2., *Vita Gregorii Magni*, 9-13. & *Vita Balth.*1-6.

[276] Yet there have been attempts see J. Henning, 'Strong Rulers - Weak Economy? Rome, the Carolingians and the Archaeology of Slavery in the First Millennium AD', in J.R. Davis, and M. McCormick (eds.), *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe: new directions in Early Medieval Studies* (Aldershot, 2008), pp.33-54.

[277] McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy,* pp.738-740.

[278] S.Lebecq, 'On the use of the word 'Frisian' in the 6th -10th centuries written sources: some interpretations', in S. McGrail (ed.), *Maritime Celts, Frisians and Saxons* (London.1990), pp.85-90.

scholars.[279] However, there are complications with this material which impact on the interpretations of these relationships and the question of Merovingian hegemony in Anglo-Saxon Kent.

One of the foremost problems is that these items were not necessarily part of economic exchange between these two regions. This includes the artefacts found both in Kent, Francia and, by extension, England and Europe as a whole. As piracy was lucrative and commonplace in the North Sea, these objects could have easily been taken during raids by brigands and brought back to Kent or Francia for profit.[280] They can be attributed as a form of tribute from other political entities in the British Isles and other types of diplomatic exchange. This is related to the broader social trend of gift-giving which is well documented amongst the Merovingian Franks.[281] The evidence suggests that the question of how these various artefacts were brought into Kent is debatable and cannot be simply part of a one economic framework or conformation of Kent's political subordination.

The contexts of these finds need to be addressed. A common practice amongst Anglo-Saxon burials was hoarding heirlooms within burial assemblages.[282] An example of one such find is the Liudhard medalet found within the Canterbury Hoard. Despite having this medal which is dated to the late sixth or early seventh century, a number of other artefacts found with this item have been

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[279]Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, pp.808-812.

[280] J. Haywood, *Dark Age naval power: A re-assessment of Frankish and Anglo-Saxon seafaring activity* (London, 1991), pp.56-61, 72. B. Yorke, 'The *Bretwaldas* and the origins of overlordship in Anglo-Saxon England', in S. Baxter, *et.al.* (eds.), *Early Medieval Studies in memory of Patrick Wormald* (Farnham, 2009), pp.87-88.

[281] F. Curta, "Merovingian and Carolingian gift giving", *Speculum* 81(3), (2006), pp.677-679.

[282]H. Harke, 'The Circulation of Weapons in Anglo-Saxon society', in F. Theuws, and J.L. Nelson (eds.), *Rituals of power: from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2000), p.378.

dated to earlier time periods.[283] This provides difficulties in assessing the material as the assemblage was not indicative of the owner's conditions or how these items were acquired. As such, there is some unreliability when considering these artefacts are evidence for a political relationship between Kent and Francia.

The distribution of items within Kent itself is equally problematic. Despite the finds which are attested to Kent, these items cannot be purely interpreted as part of a single exchange process. Francia acted as a central hub for numerous markets and commercial networks. It is common to find amongst this Kentish material, artefacts attributed to the Romano-British kingdoms, Gothic cultures of Spain and Italy, Scandinavia, the Mediterranean and Byzantium.[284] Items found in Kent could have passed through a Frankish intermediary before arriving to a Kentish owner. Therefore, this has to be taken into consideration when constructing these hypothetical and politically sanctioned trade routes. The fact that these artefacts could have been directly exchanged or funnelled through Francia is equally likely.

This problem can be expanded if one assumes these connections and interactions were considered an integral part of a hegemonic relationship. Archaeological evidence is used to suggest that trade was not an outcome of Wood's relationship, but could be considered as one of its major purposes, as described in the work of Hawkes and Arnold.[285] Yet, if one compares other markets which the Merovingian Franks had access to on the Continent, Anglo-Saxon England is a smaller market in terms of the consumption of imports from Francia

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[283] Grierson, "The Canterbury (St.Martin's) Hoard", pp.40-41.

[284] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics,* pp.30-46.

[285] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.17-20. Hawkes, 'Anglo-Saxon Kent c.425-725', pp.72-74. Arnold, *An Archaeology of early Anglo-Saxon,* pp.71-73.

and number of exports to Europe.[286] These market segments become smaller when considering the fact that individual Anglo-Saxon kingdoms had exclusive trade agreements with Frankish states such as Austrasia and Neustria.[287]

All of these complications parallel the literary material in numerous ways. Although there are clearly various types of interchange and exchange of items between Anglo-Saxon Kent and Francia, there is no supporting indication that it was directly associated with foreign trade or diplomatic policy. This combined evidence when considered in conjunction with each other reveals a rather patchwork claim for Merovingian hegemony over Kent and the British Isles. If such a relationship existed at all, it would have been irregular; based on the various policies of different Merovingian kingdoms and individual rulers. Yet, these policies are not reflected implicitly in literary and archaeological record. The presence of the material culture as well the various references within Frankish sources attest to this unknown quandary.

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[286] Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, pp.281-285.

[287] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics,* p.36.

Chapter Four: The Interpretative Frameworks

The combined evidence of literary sources and archaeological material reveal a fragmented picture of Merovingian interaction with Anglo-Saxon Kent. Wood's examples of Merovingian hegemony on mainland Europe are inapplicable and can be only used for comparative purposes. The example of Frankish Bavaria as a neutral zone which Wood suggests fits within this mould.[288] Yet, Wood's conclusions impact on the interpretation of this paradigm.[289] Wood ties his framework to the socio-economic theories which note the systems of exchange and connections in post-Roman Europe and the Mediterranean. So, it is worth examining these relevant items in detail.

These various works include the major studies conducted by Pirenne, Hodges, McCormick, and Wickham. A number of other relevant scholars will be considered in this overview. The possibility of other theoretical perspectives for the adoption and intense communication between Kent and Francia will also be considered which may provide new perspectives on this relationship, particularly the postcolonial discourse.

Exchange Networks

The work of Henri Pirenne overshadows this scholarship. Pirenne's work and dominates the early 20th century provided a basis for the material and theories discussed by these recent contributors.[290] Pirenne examined archaeological and

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[288] Wood, 'Frankish Hegemony in England', pp. 236,241.

[289] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.17-19.

[290] Besides Pirenne's original thesis, there are numerous summations and reviews of his work. One such example is E. Scott, *Mohammed & Charlemagne Revisited: the history of a controversy* (Nashville, 2012).

literary types of evidence relating to communication and trade in North-West Europe. He highlighted the distribution of various artefacts and discusses the spread of ideological concerns.[291] He noted the extent of continuity of Late Roman systems which affected Merovingian Francia.[292] Pirenne stressed the development and gradual dependence on this system in the sixth and seventh centuries.[293] These factors affected the economic, political and ideological relationships established between the Merovingian Franks and Kent. Pirenne's study dictated the major concerns in the area, which have been explored in further scholarship.[294]

The next logical point of reference is the work which Wood's cites in his first article on Merovingian hegemony; the work of Richard Hodges. Wood links Merovingian hegemony in Western Europe to the stable economic growth of the region until the rise of the Viking age.[295] This theme pervades other writings on the early medieval economy and the exchange networks which existed with Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent as a whole. It is a crucial and applicable aspect of his paradigm and fits within the different aspects of Merovingian hegemony which affect Kent.

Hodges delves into a number of issues relating to Anglo-Saxon England and Kent throughout his thesis. Kent is mentioned in the distribution of certain

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[291] Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, pp.118-130.

[292] Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, pp.17-75.

[293] Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, pp.17-117.

[294] See P. Grierson, "Commerce in the Dark Ages: A critique of the evidence", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 9, (1959), pp. 123-125.

[295] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, p.18.

artefacts as well as specific sites and references to the literary material.[296] Hodges notes the numerous commodities which were exchanged between the European Continent, Francia and Kent.[297] Through these sources Hodges attempts to describe the preservation and continuity of these relationships. One of the most relevant is Kent's connection with Neustria.[298]

This Neustrian connection has huge implications. As discussed in the literary material, a diplomatic relationship between Kent and the kingdom of Neustria was attested by Bede and Gregory of Tours.[299] Hodges notes the access to bullion, the direction of trade from Paris and the Frankish pottery identified within Kent, around Canterbury and throughout South-East England.[300] He highlights other features like the wealthy burials of males, the presence of a merchant class and the use of Merovingian coins.[301] Hodges shows the redistribution of various items from the Continent to Kent. From these conclusions, Hodges proposes that the Kentish royal line distributed and controlled trade or used these goods in diplomatic processes with neighbours and local aristocracy.[302] Hodges' hypothesis states that the Neustrian court traded exclusively with Kent, which may reflect policy and Merovingian overlordship in the area.

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[296] Kent is referenced in Hodges, *Dark Age Economics,* on pp.4, 33-44, 55, 66-69,108-114.

[297] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics,* pp. 108-114,117-126.

[298] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics,* pp.32-36.

[299] Bede, *HE.*, 1.25. Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 4.26, 9.26.

[300] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics,* pp.31-36.

[301] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics,* pp.32-45.

[302] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics,* pp.185-88.

Within this individual system, it is worth exploring major sites which dictated and were hubs for the movement of people and material. The *emporia* are fundamental to Hodges' theories. One mentioned by Hodges is the town of Sarre on Thanet.[303] This *emporium* was the major trading port for Canterbury. The site has an abundance of burials which contain numerous 'prestige' items.[304] The area allowed access to a major river system, provided a safe harbour and had strong ties to other trade centres in the region. There is some documentation that this site was in use between the sixth and eighth centuries.[305]

A number of other sites within Kent are just as relevant. The most obvious examples are Dover and Fordwich. Dover interacted with the European Continent and was situated within an area safe to harbour and in close proximity to Francia. The artefacts found in various burials illustrate the various imports from Francia popular with both the Kentish elite classes and lower social strata.[306] Fordwich is located in the similar area to Sarre but situated on a river system near Canterbury rather on Thanet. There is little evidence for other *emporia*, yet the abundance of items may suggest *emporia* were linked to a number of smaller towns and villages which were scattered throughout the region.[307]

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[303] Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, pp.55-56, 92-93.

[304] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, p.69.

[305] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, p.69.

[306] Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, pp.69, 124-129.

[307] S. Lebecq, 'The new *wiks* and *emporia* and the development of a maritime economy in the North Sea (7th -9th centuries)', in S. Gelichi & R. Hodges (eds.), *From one sea to another. Trading places in the European and Mediterranean Early Middle Ages*: *proceedings of the International Conference Comacchio, 27th -29th March 2009* (Turnhout, 2012), pp.13, 16.   Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, pp.69-70.

Another relevant *emporium* is the trading area of Quentovic. Its exact location was debatable but was based on the northern coast of Francia.[308] It was probably the major trading point between Neustria and other *emporia* established in Anglo-Saxon England. Quentovic's was established as a trading port at approximately the same time as Sarre and was also founded in a Neustrian context.[309] Quentovic became one of the economic hubs throughout the Merovingian and Carolingian periods and had a fundamental role in the movement of goods and peoples' cross-Channel and in the North Sea.

One has to consider the problematic aspects of these various ports and commercial centres. The *wics* or *emporia* hypothesised in Kent raise a number of issues. The first and foremost is the lack of evidence. Compared to the other emporia discussed by Hodges, Kent is scant in material evidence.[310] Sarre is considered an *emporium* based on extensive inhumation evidence and one literary piece dated to the eighth century.[311] This literary evidence concedes when Sarre was likely being superseded in its role by Dover and London.[312] Although it can be considered an *emporium* in the sixth and seventh centuries, its role dramatically changed at the end of the eighth. Hodges considers the possibility of multiple *emporia* in Kent, a feature unique amongst the other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The evidence for the presence of other *emporia* is small.[313] They are reliant on the

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[308] S. Coupland, "Trading places: Quentovic and Dorestad reassessed", *Early Medieval Europe* 11(3), (2002), pp.209-213.

[309] Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, p.55.

[310] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, p.69.

[311] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, p.69.

[312] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, p.69.

distribution of certain items including pottery, numismatic evidence and burial sites.[314]

Another problem with this evidence is the construction of these relationships. Hodges' work is focused primarily on the well attested models and evidence provided by the Carolingians and Pippinids from the late seventh century onwards.[315] Hodges revised and expanded the time period examined for his original publication as well as exploring agricultural and technological sophistication to take this into account. [316] This is understandable due to the nature of the material available. However, for this study the Carolingian focus raises issues. The extent and sophistication of these sites and the exchange systems within the Merovingian period has to be determined. It needs to be considered whether they are a part of hegemonic relationship established by the Franks in Anglo-Saxon Kent.

The work of McCormick has similar complications. The study is primarily contained to the eighth to tenth centuries. It references Carolingian, Byzantine and Arabic material both literary and archaeological.[317] However, it does a reveal a number of insights into specific pottery types and goods. The slave market is most

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[313] This is a problem which Hodges notes for all Type A *emporia* see R. Hodges, 'Dream Cities: Emporia and the end of the Dark Ages', in N. Christie and S. T. Loseby (eds.), *Towns in Transition: Urban evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 1996),pp.294-295. R. Samson, 'Illusory emporia and mad economic theories', in M. Anderton (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon trading centres; beyond the emporia* (Glasgow, 1999), pp.76-88.

[314] Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, p.69.

[315] Hodges, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, pp.151-185.

[316] See R. Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: The origins of towns and trade A.D. 500-1000 a reprisal*, 2nd edition, (London, 1989).

[317] See McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, pp.1-23.

revealing by identifying major slave-market centres. It charts the movement of the slave trade from England, Francia, Italy, Spain, Africa and the Near East.[318] It accounts for the practicalities of the movement of goods and peoples, such as weather, tides and the seasons, which pertain to this discussion due to the unique conditions of the Channel.[319]

McCormick's position regarding the control of trade is relatively similar to Hodges. However, he is sceptical concerning the exact nature of royal control and moderation of trade. He explicitly states that in terms of the *emporia* in the Merovingian and Carolingian periods, Frankish kings had little interest in various market settlements.[320] McCormick highlights Francia's overall role in communication and trade networks within Europe. Francia was the economic hub of multiple world-systems, Mediterranean and the North Sea.[321] This advantage allowed various Frankish kingdoms such as Neustria to exploit and eventually dominate these nascent networks.[322] Neustria had easy access to the North Sea systems including the Kentish market.[323] However, it would likely bring Neustria's interests in conflict with neighbouring Austrasia. Austrasia had a role in influencing the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms politically and is speculated in Hodges'

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[318] McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, pp. 249-252.

[319] McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, pp. 402-428.

[320] McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, p.580. See also C. Loveluck & D. Tys, "Coastal societies, exchange and identity along the Channel and southern North Sea shores of Europe, AD 600-1000", *JMA* 1, (2006), p.142.

[321] A.R. Lewis, *The Northern Seas: shipping and Commerce in Northern Europe A.D. 300-1100* (Princeton, 1958), pp.112-113.

[322] McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, pp.671-672.

[323] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics,* p.36.

hypothesis to be the major importer into England via East Anglia through an exclusive trade agreement.[324]

The work of Chris Wickham is related. Wickham's work primarily examines the links between aristocrats, land ownership, state creation and exchange systems. He stresses the variability and to some extent, the individuality of these various systems and structures through Late Antique and Early Medieval states. Merovingian Francia and Anglo-Saxon England feature throughout the work. Parallels and variations are noted through all aspects of his thesis. Kent features in this discussion related to its *emporia*, unique aspects of kingship and economic enterprises.[325] Francia's role as a superpower in the region is well defined and the implication of control over parts of England is considered a possibility.[326]

The problems of Merovingian 'hegemony'

The summation of these arguments reveal that there are clear lines of diplomatic communication, continual movement of people and the existence of economic activity between Kent and Francia. There was the possibility that the Merovingian kingdoms had influenced the establishment of various secular and non-secular cultural practices and institutions within Kent. Ultimately, the most problematic aspect is the definition and exact implications of the term 'hegemony'.[327] The major failing of this term in regards to this period, is the lack of

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[324] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, p.36.

[325] See Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, pp.48, 305-352, 428, 685, 808-817.

[326] Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, pp.808-814.

[327] Complications of this term are numerous like many modern concepts applied to ancient or medieval power structures and relationships. See similar examples presented in D.J. Bederman, *International Law in Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2001) and A. Gillett, *Envoys and political communication in the late antique west ,411-533* (Cambridge, 2003).

supporting documentation and the equivalent ancient terminology. Merovingian

hegemony within Europe itself is comparably easier to determine, as there are

multiple examples of states subordinate to the Merovingians dictated in the

literary record.[328] The formation of treaties, marriage alliances, military conquests

and other bilateral agreements are amongst this material. Yet, individually these

features do not constitute the establishment of such a relationship. This is

apparent when comparing Wood's Merovingian 'hegemony' in mainland Europe

with England. It also leaves any form of hegemonic discourse and parallels largely

irrelevant in attempting to evaluate this relationship.[329]

Even if this criterion was sufficient, the purposes and details regarding this

relationship are scant. The diplomatic marriages between Kentish kings and

Frankish nobility are lacking in detail amounting to only a few literary references

with no indication amongst English sources that this implied overlordship.[330] One

of these sources involved a case of mistaken identity within modern scholarship.[331]

The argument that Liudhard is seen as a Frankish ambassador has little

grounding.[332] Most claims of various Frankish kings of control over Britain,

England or Kent can largely be considered as a form of diplomatic exaggeration,

misunderstanding and panegyric on the part of various literary sources.

In terms of the archaeological material and the trading frameworks, one still

gains a fragmented picture. In archaeological terms Kent is clearly a mass

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[328] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.3-12.

[329] See Clark, *Hegemony* & Gramsci, *Selections*.

[330] Bede, *HE.*, 1.25, 2.5. , Gregory of Tours, *Lib.Hist.*, 4.26, 9.26., *Vita Balth.*1-6.

[331] Bede, *HE.*, 2.5. Werner, 'Les rouages de l' administarion', pp.41-46.

[332] N. Higham, *The convert kings: Power and religious affiliations in early Anglo-Saxon England* (New York, 1997), pp.87-88.

consumer of 'Frankish' goods, especially amongst the high social strata.[333] Yet, uniform and bilateral trade agreements with any Frankish polity are apparently hard to substantiate due to the small knowledge and extent of Kentish exports to Francia and the Continent as a whole. This relationship would have also been affected by the development and sophistication of *emporia* in Francia and in Kent. So, the basis for Merovingian hegemony in a completely economic capacity seems fairly unlikely.

This point raises the fact that these studies are largely based on Carolingian perspectives and material. Hodges, McCormick and Wickham draw mainly upon sources from the Carolingian period due to the abundance material, which the Merovingian period generally lacks. It leaves an observer to question if some anachronism is imposed on these Merovingian relationships. For instance Charlemagne's concern with Anglo-Saxon England seems to be similar to the Merovingians and is based on economic ties.[334] Whether this is anachronistic or an example of a diplomatic precedent established by Merovingian rulers is debatable. The archaeological material which is used through this study has a temporal overlap as shown by the quern stones described by Hodges.[335] McCormick's study as whole is largely grounded on the Carolingian economy as opposed to the Merovingian market.[336] Wickham's work should be considered in a broader 'Romanist' perspective, as opposed to a Frankish viewpoint which raises its own set of issues.[337] In short, the various perspectives do not give a complete outlook of

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[333] Sims-Williams, "The settlement of England", p. 25.Hawkes, 'Anglo-Saxon Kent c.425-725', pp.72-74

[334]See examples in *Alc. Epp.*, 7, 100,101.

[335] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, pp.124-125.

[336] McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, pp.2-12.

[337] Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, p.11.

the Merovingian economy, but a broader 'Frankish' or 'post-Roman' view of these exchange systems.

The cultural capacity of the argument also raises similar complications. The presence of a 'Frankophilic' culture within Kent is documented and supported by the above material and sources. This includes the adoption of Frankish dress, socio-political institutions and the use of 'Frankish' names. These features are entangled amongst multiple systems. Whether the various social and political institutions established in Kent are by-products of Late Roman or 'Germanic' frameworks, remains contested. Assessing the extent of these socio-cultural phenomena can only be examined through an archaeological basis, which is not without complications.

This does not necessarily mean Merovingian overriding influence in the region did not exist. In terms of the literary sources, there are various interactions between Kent and Francia recorded by Bede, Gregory of Tours and Gregory the Great which note some form of relations. Ethelbert's claims of *imperium* over southern England for instance arguably demonstrate when ties to the Merovingian kingdoms could be at its strongest or weakest.[338] Ethelbert's marriage to a Frankish princess could be viewed as part of his power and prestige in England but yet he could have been recognised as a Frankish dependent on the Continent.[339] Yet his claims for *imperium* fall within a period where all Frankish royal power is

[338] Higham, *The convert kings,* pp.88-89,114-116.

[339] P. Drewett, D. Rudling and M. Gardiner, *The South East to AD 1000* (London, 1988), p.258.

centred on youths such as Theodebert II and Theuderic II, a perfect time for Ethelbert to exercise independence and political autonomy from Francia.[340]

The *Pactus Legis Salicae* is another example. The presence and reference to a *mallus publicus* within the text and proceedings points to a range of convoluted legal and diplomatic complications. It would have required nuanced understanding of concepts such as jurisdiction, enforcement and active participation from individuals and communities on both sides of the Channel.[341] The extent of the slave exchange within Kent and North Sea region, demonstrates the seriousness placed on this enterprise.[342] The assumption that a Frankish overlordship in Kent would be logical, as it would resolve these problematic concepts while reflecting Francia's economic concerns in the North Sea periphery.

Yet these sources and the practical considerations of this interaction show that Merovingian hegemony in Kent must have been relatively sporadic, if it existed at all. Merovingian Francia had the resources and manpower to consider the possibility of such a role, due to Francia being the superpower of the region.[343] Yet, the practicalities of Merovingian hegemony as a relative constant has to be considered, especially in light of the intermediate struggles that dominate the Merovingian royal dynasty.[344] The overlordship context of Francia was likely fairly brief, intense political contact and the semi-regular movement of goods, peoples and ideas between Kent and Francia. These interactions were part of much broader

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[340] Higham, *The convert kings*, pp.85-90. M. Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons c.597-c.700: Discourses of Life, Death and Afterlife* (London, 2009), pp.52-54.

[341] Wood, 'The end of Roman Britain', pp. 23-24.

[342] Pelteret, "Slave raiding", pp.99-106.

[343] McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, .612-613.

[344] Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-haired kings*, pp.121-147.

systems within Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval West. However, to define these connections as part of segregation and dominance of power between two Early Medieval states can be considered an overstep.

This allows an evaluation of other viable models. One scholar thrusts the issue of Merovingian hegemony in England into the ethnogenesis debate presented by the abundance of 'Frankish' archaeological material in Kent.[345] The claim to Frankish political identity based on these various items amongst rich burials could be seen as demonstrations and recognition of a foreign power, but potentially advantageous due to Frankish trends present in Kentish elite contexts. This makes these burials in Kent comparable to burials in similar contexts on the European Continent in the late-Roman imperial period.[346]

However, what is significant is how these various interactions are often phrased. Amongst the scholarship of Wickham, Hodges and McCormick there are numerous references to centre and periphery relationships which could have possibly existed between Francia and different polities of the North Sea.[347] There is a great deal of validity to this line of thinking not only to the North Sea region but Western Europe as a whole. This is explored further as Wickham directly references that parts of Anglo-Saxon England were possibly treated as colonial outposts by the Franks.[348] This consideration therefore allows a more viable possibility and moves the topic into postcolonial discourse. This notion is of some

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[345] Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, p.283.

[346] See G. Halsall, 'Beyond the northern frontiers', in P. Rousseau and J. Raithel (eds.), *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2009), pp.409-425.

[347] Hodges, *Dark Age Economics*, pp.108-114,124.McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, pp.612-613. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, pp.48, 305-352,428,685,808-817.

[348] Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, pp.817-818.

import as Kent could be considered 'colonial' due to Frankish interaction, but also as postcolonial polity through the situation that arose in post-Roman Britain.

The Roman Past, Present and the Post-Colonial Agenda

Post-Roman Britain from the fifth century was undoubtedly experiencing some fallout from the Roman evacuation. Yet, this did not halt Roman continuity in the region. Early Anglo-Saxon England lies in the world of *Romanitas*. Although arguably reflected in literature, *Romanitas* also permeated the Anglo-Saxon landscape –surviving in its material culture and particularly its architecture.[349] This aspect is reinforced in various Anglo-Saxon and British literary accounts. Roman imperial power in post-Roman Britain was emphasised by its physicality.[350] This is well reflected in Roman Britain through its architectural works. Despite the erosion and overall dilapidated state of these buildings, they would have presented an impressionable message to the new populace and their descendants.

Within Kent this concept had firm grounding. The major centre of Kent, Canterbury, was in effect, - a Roman town in urban decline. Literary sources testify to the existence and presence of some Roman buildings throughout the city.[351] This is confirmed by archaeological surveys of the site, although there is the possibility

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[349] Howe, 'Anglo-Saxon England', pp.27-33. G. Halsall, 'Examining the Christianization of the region of Metz from archaeological sources (5th- 7th centuries): problems, possibilities and implications for Anglo-Saxon England', in his *Cemeteries and Society in Merovingian Gaul: Selected Studies in History and Archaeology, 1992-2009* (Leiden, 2010), pp.278-284.

[350] Howe, N. 'Anglo-Saxon England', pp.27, 38-43.

[351] N. Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury; Christ Church 597 to 1066*(Leicester, 1984), pp.16-22. Tatton-Brown, 'Towns of Kent', p.5.

of a small break in occupation.[352] These buildings include the surviving chapels and churches as well as urban infrastructure such as Roman theatres and baths.[353] Though there is argument to whether these various buildings were actually used, they were part of Canterbury's urban landscape in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries.[354]

This is worth considering in conjunction with other evidence for post-Roman continuity in the region. The name of the area and kingdom itself is strong testimony. The name Kent - is derived from the original Latin term for the Celtic tribe which inhabited the region, before Roman conquest.[355] This term was preserved in Roman administrative terminology, as Canterbury and surrounds were once known as the *civitas* capital *Durovernum Cantiacorum*.[356] The names *Cantware* and the kingdom of the *Cantuarii* are derived from this. This sparks an automatic contrast with all other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Although terminology originates at local levels in terms of place names, no other polity had such an obvious connection with Roman administrative practices.[357]

[352] Tatton-Brown, 'Towns of Kent', p.5.

[353] D.G. Russo, *Town origins and development in early England, c.400-950 A.D.* (London, 1998), p.101.

[354] D. A. Brooks, "The case for continuity in fifth-century Canterbury re-examined", *OJA* 7, (1988), pp.99-111.

[355] Brooks, 'The creation and early structure', pp.64-65. Collins, & McClure, 'Rome, Canterbury and Wearmouth-Jarrow', pp.36-38.

[356] Brooks, 'The creation and early structure', pp.64-65.

[357] B. Yorke, 'Political and Ethnic Identity: A Case Study of Anglo-Saxon Practice', in W.O. Frazer and A. Tyrrell (eds.), *Social identity in early Medieval Britain* (London, 2000), pp.85-86 & N. Higham, *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1992), pp.194-196. For local examples see A. Everitt, *Continuity and Colonization: the evolution of Kentish settlements* (Leicester, 1986), pp.75-76.

Kent's social, economic and political sophistication can be considered as part of this Romanisation phenomena and acculturation process. The Kentish law codes are excellent examples, the most significant being the one attributed to Ethelbert. The code itself although published and preserved in later dates, had a number of features which are considered both Roman and Frankish. The use of Frankish terminology and language patterns as well as late-Roman parallels in form and structure are valid.[358] The use of the Anglo-Saxon *leode* for instance is similar and used in the same sense as the Latin *leudes* in Frankish legislation.[359] Yet the structure of Ethelbert's code still bears marks of Continental forms and language, debate still surrounds Roman influence and inspiration for Ethelbert's laws.[360] Although the code was likely inspired by contemporary Continental examples, the possibility of a cultural fusion might have occurred in Kent, when these institutions were adopted.

However, one cannot assume that Rome was the heart of Anglo-Saxon Kent or even England or at least in this context. Roman power in the Anglo-Saxon perception changed to a secular authority, deviating from its early militarism and 'work of giants' facade.[361] This is largely due to the reintroduction of Christianity by the Gregorian mission. Thus, although considered a living memory within this framework, Rome's role as a major political and economic centre was downgraded

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[358] S.A. Jurasinski, "The Continental origins of Aethelbert's Code", *Philological Quarterly* 80(1), (2001), pp.2-3, 5-12. Brown, P. *The Rise of Western Christendom: triumph and diversity AD 200-1000* (Cambridge, 1996), pp.209-210.

[359] *The Laws of Æthelbert,* 2.   Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.17-19.

[360] See Bede *HE.*, 2.5. Jurasinski, "The Continental origin", pp.2-3, 5-12. P. Wormald, 'Bede,the *Bretwaldas* and the *Gens Anglorum*', in S. Baxter, (ed.), *The Times of Bede: studies in early English Christian society and its historian* (Malden,2006),p.108.

[361] Howe, 'Anglo-Saxon England', pp.30-33.

in significance. Yet, this link of Rome as a secular authority and 'capital' was only established through the actions of St. Augustine and Gregory the Great.[362] So, it is surprising that the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, particularly Kent, were areas drenched in post-Roman survival and continuation.[363] Yet, Kent's coastal context in particular would cause a natural gravitation towards the closest polities on the European Continent.[364] The Merovingian kingdoms were not only major economic and cultural hubs but were regions with far stronger claims of classical continuity.[365] This is worth considering due to the possibility of 'isolation' experienced by Kent with its insular neighbours as well as a direct contemporary or past Roman experience.[366]

In conjunction with this 'isolation', the post-Roman collapse that Britain experienced led to the formation of new concerns. One of the most important was formation of new identities and cultural traditions as well as the preservation of older and vivid concepts.[367] In the case of Britain this would include the adoption of Continental ideals and values while attempting post-Roman continuation. This would have affected all political constructions across the island in different capacities. Kent was no exception. In fact, the impact on Kent would be highly

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[362] See Howe, 'Anglo-Saxon England', pp.30-33. J.T. Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish world, 690-900*(Turnhout, 2009), pp.222-224.

[363] Collins, & McClure, 'Rome, Canterbury and Wearmouth-Jarrow', pp.36-37.

[364]C. Loveluck, 'Central-places, exchange and maritime-oriented identity around the North Sea and western Baltic, AD 600-1100', in S. Gelichi, & R. Hodges, (eds.), *From one sea to another. Trading places in the European and Mediterranean Early Middle Ages*: *proceedings of the International Conference Comacchio, 27th -29th March 2009* (Turnhout, 2012), pp.128-131. Higham, *The convert kings,* pp.82-85.

[365] Higham, *The convert kings*, pp.82-85.

[366] Hawkes, 'Anglo-Saxon Kent c 425-725', p.72.

[367] See a similar paradigm throughout Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture*.

influential as it was a relatively new social and political construction.[368] The influences from other polities would have formed a basis and influence of their own actions, polices and culture. This accounts for the presence and emulation of 'Frankophilic' culture in Kent, which could have been viewed as part of the cultural and political continuity of the Roman province of *Gallia*.[369] It also provides an explanation for the other post-Roman characteristics present in other Anglo-Saxon material cultures. One example is the influence of Romano-British metalwork across the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, which may be viewed as means of the appropriation and continuation of Late Roman material culture by the Anglo-Saxons.[370]

Merovingian Francia's new role as this non-secular centre was reinforced by the Gregorian mission. It is well attested and argued that the Franks initially had no interest in missionary or conversion activity for their neighbours across the English Channel. Although, once the mission of Augustine had been set in place, there was some kind of Frankish support. Willingly or otherwise, the Franks provided men secular and non-secular, transportation of both men and later items including the *pallium* to Augustine and his growing entourage of converts.[371] This combined with the Frankish presence at the Kentish court would provide a link between Rome and Francia in some capacity, the most obvious being lines of

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[368] Brooks, 'The creation and early structure', pp.64-65.

[369] Higham, *The convert kings*, pp. 81-85.

[370] L. Laing, 'Romano-British Metalworking and the Anglo-Saxons', in N. J. Higham (ed.), *Britons in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester, 2008), pp.44-56. For a general exploration of Roman artefacts in Anglo-Saxon graves see R. White, 'Scarp or substitute: Roman material in Anglo-Saxon Graves', in E. Southworth (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries; a reappraisal proceeding of a conference held at Liverpool museum 1986* (Stroud, 1990), pp.125-151.

[371] Summary in Wood, "Mission of Augustine", pp.1-17.

communication and exchange of ideas and material which stretched to the Mediterranean and Rome itself.[372]

This perspective of Francia being a link to past and contemporary Roman power, culture and to some extent identity was not unique to Kent. Similar phenomena can be argued for other British political entities. East Anglia was another example, a kingdom which had numerous Frankish parallels with the social, economic and political situation in Kent.[373] A few Romano-British kingdoms present similar issues such as the presence of 'Frankish' pottery, which attests to trading relationships with the Merovingians.[374] It also suggests a desire to recapture 'Roman' identity and continuity by forming networks with the Mediterranean.[375] Therefore, this postcolonial paradigm and feeling for Anglo-Saxon Kent was likely applicably to various political constructions that existed throughout post-Roman Britain.

In light of these revelations, one must consider that Francia for most of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, especially Kent, became a major centre for Anglo-Saxon England. However, Kent benefited from this arrangement. Kent was best situated to exploit the desire for post-colonial presence of Rome. This ultimately gives greater grounding besides ethnogenesis for 'Frankophilic' trends amongst the elites of Kent. It also substantiates the establishment of diplomatic ties with the Merovingians, the adopting their institutions and on the possibility of being

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[372] See McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*.pp.670-674. An example of ideas is shown in J. Crook, 'The Enshrinement of Local Saints in Francia and England', in A. Thacker and R. Sharpe (eds.), *Local saints and local churches in the early medieval west* (Oxford, 2002), pp.193-210.

[373]See Wood, "The Franks and Sutton Hoo", pp.1-15.

[374] K.R. Dark, *Civitas to Kingdom: British Political Continuity 300-800* (Leicester, 1994), pp.210-212.

[375] Dark, *Civitas to Kingdom*, pp.210-212.

subject to them. However, Francia's role as an economic power, cultural centre and hub of communication deviated due to Gregorian mission which cemented Rome as the secular nexus of Anglo-Saxon England.[376] Yet, Merovingian Francia channelled this connection and was crucial to its continuation and development.

Through these different paradigms Kent was exposed to a range of systems which developed out of the North Sea region and its focal point, Merovingian Francia. Kent gravitated to one of these kingdoms as a means to integrate with these networks and overcome this 'isolation' from surrounding insular states. The appropriation of certain customs, peoples and concepts were inevitable part of this process. This transitional Continental focus presented further ties with Roman imperial power that affected the landscape and transcended all bonds of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The relationship established through the Gregorian mission, caused some deviation, but on the whole, cemented these connections between Kent and Francia.

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[376] N. Howe, "Rome: Capital of Anglo-Saxon England", *JMEMS* 34(1), (2004), pp. 151-157, 161-168.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The nature of Frankish hegemony over Anglo-Saxon Kent has been expressed in multiple ways by modern scholarship. The literary material used by Wood and other scholars to contextualise Merovingian hegemony are problematic. They require a nuanced understanding of their context, their authors and transmission of the text. These sources reveal a fragmented view and perception of the convoluted political, social, economic and cultural relationships between Kent and Francia. Some items require a more critical reading and other pieces can be dismissed or attributed to wider phenomena.

The archaeological evidence demonstrates clear communication and exchange occurring between Kent and Francia. The use of this material suggests a large level of consumption of predominately higher - end goods by the elite classes of Kent. Although there was the possibility of lower end goods and commodities as well as some 'prestige' goods originating from Kent being present in Francia, Kent had few exports. This attests trade, yet it provides an insufficient indication for a 'hegemony'. The validity of this is confirmed when considering the problematic origins, movement and manufacture of these numerous 'prestige' items.

The presence and movement of archaeological material is further established by the exploration of the various paradigms used to reconstruct these systems of exchange and communication. These various perspectives reveal a depth of insight regarding the interchange of items. Discussions on these concepts incorporate the establishment of *emporia*, communication networks, policies regarding trade embargoes and agreements. These studies assess the sophistication and exact nature of how exchange systems were managed, manifested and enforced in the Early Medieval West. Merovingian Francia is

amongst the forefront of these societies and networks. These economic issues do not directly shed light on the possibility of formal political relations of the Merovingian kingdoms with Anglo-Saxon Kent.

The perspective provided by a postcolonial experience in Anglo-Saxon Kent nullifies the stress on Merovingian overlordship model provided by Wood. Francia allowed the Kentish population to access resources, assert itself as a new polity and provided an access point to post-Roman continuity and later secular influence from Rome itself. This allowed for the occasional Frankish claims of overlordship in Kent and similar areas which if they ever were historical reality, must have been sporadic throughout this time period.

Wood's conclusion that Frankish connections with Kent and Anglo-Saxon England as a whole allowed stable economic growth in the North Sea region still remains valid.[377] However, Merovingian interaction with Anglo-Saxon Kent as well as other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms allowed models which in later periods may have dictated certain concerns and diplomatic protocol with regards to England. This is clearly shown through the Carolingian material. The various literary accounts note the appropriation of Frankish artisans and regular commercial and ideological exchange. Furthermore, there is also the expansion on these policies and concerns such as the use of trade embargoes as a means of coercion and direct communication between Frankish kings and Anglo-Saxon rulers and overlords.[378] These revelations show a degree of continuity in Frankish foreign relations towards England as a whole.

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[377] Wood, *Merovingian North Sea*, pp.16-17

[378] *Alc.Epp.*, 7, 100,101.

The Carolingian perspective on their relations with England and Kent allows a review on the structures provided by McCormick, Wickham and Hodges. This case study presented the problematic issue of economic sophistication being present within Kent, which was a relatively new socio-political entity at the time. The various systems and developments described by these scholars primarily are focused on Carolingian material. Merovingian material concerning these same networks is less detailed and obscure. In light of this, it does leave one to consider the inventible anachronisms that occur throughout this examination and estimation of comparable Merovingian systems based on these frameworks.

Yet, that is not to say that these systems were not in existence or that Kent and Francia lacked socio-economic sophistication. Indeed, the evidence which we can gleam from the above sources and modern structures testify to this reality. However, the primary focus on the Carolingian period has dominated the discourse since Pirenne's thesis. The difficulties in constructing the hypothetical relationships and power structures of the Merovingian Franks are even further complicated by this trend in the scholarship. As such, contextualising Kent, a relatively unremarked and underrepresented area is problematic.

Postcolonial discourse allows an alternative perspective on this content and historiographic issue. By setting the Early Medieval West including Anglo-Saxon England into this concept, some of the complications presented by the material are removed. Yet, the connections and relations which are discussed by Pirenne, Hodges, McCormick and Wickham can be framed by the movements and dynamics of centre and periphery. The connections and interactions between Kent, Francia and by extension Rome show these ties.

The question of Merovingians Franks' 'hegemony' over the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Kent is ambiguous. If Merovingian overlordship did exist it was likely intermittent and never officially recognised in Kent itself. The complexities of all of the historical material present numerous issues which allow some liberties in terms of the perspective and elucidation of this paradigm. This study has attempted to shed more light on these sources as well as Wood's hypothesis. It has shown a depth of complexity not only to Wood's theory but the nuanced economic and cultural relations which existed between Kent and Merovingian Francia. These relations also dictated the terms by which Franks communicated with Anglo-Saxon England in the following centuries. The impact of these ties affected the Kentish populace in numerous ways. Through a postcolonial perspective a new understanding can be reached of the adoption and presence of these multiple social, economic and political ties and appropriation of cultural material. This viewpoint provided a fundamental link to antique Britain and the world of *Romanitas*.

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