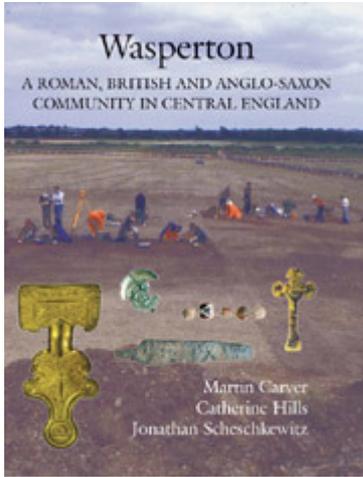


Wasperton

A Roman, British and Anglo-Saxon Community in Central England

Martin Carver & Catherine Hills, Jonathan Scheschkewitz



[Edited by Martin Carver] For decades scholars have puzzled over the true story of settlement in Britain between the fifth and eighth centuries. Did the Romans leave? Did the Anglo-Saxons invade? What happened to the British? New light on these questions comes unexpectedly from Wasperton, a small village on the Warwickshire Avon, where archaeologists had the good fortune to excavate a complete cemetery and its prehistoric setting. The community reused an old Romano-British agricultural enclosure, and built burial mounds beside it. There was a score of cremations in Anglo-Saxon pots; but there were also unfurnished graves lined with stones and planks in the manner of western Britain.

In a pioneering analysis, including radiocarbon and stable isotopes, the authors of this book have put this variety of burial practice into a credible sequence, and built up a picture of life at the time. Here there were people who were culturally Roman, British and Anglo-Saxon, pagan and Christian in continuous use of the same graveyard and drawing on a common inheritance. Here we can see the beginnings of England and the people who made it happen - not the kings, warriors and preachers, but the ordinary folk obliged to make their own choices: choices about what nation to build and which religion to follow.

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Reviews

This is not just an Anglo-Saxon cemetery report; it could be one of the most interesting and important yet published. [...] Careful arguments result in the beautifully written story of a community going through massive cultural changes. This is groundbreaking stuff: a new way to study the physical remains of these small communities should change the way we look at the end of Roman Britain and the start of the medieval world. BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY

DETAILS

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