Beowulf, James Douglas, and the Sepulchral Body of the Anglo-Saxonist

Just a few years before Sharon Turner’s History of the Anglo Saxons appeared in print, James Douglas published Nenia Britannica: or, a sepulchral history of Great Britain; from the earliest period to its general conversion to Christianity.¹ Printed initially in twelve parts, then as a monograph in 1793,² Nenia Britannica is an archaeological report and a general history of pre-Christian funerary practices in Britain. Its material is not organized into chapters but into tumuli, or barrows, each of which contains

² Several different printings of Nenia were made in 1793, one of which is for Benjamin and John White: James Douglas, Nenia Britannica; or, A Sepulchral History of Great Britain (London: Printed by John Nichols; for Benjamin and John White, 1793). Another copy was made for George Nichol: Nenia Britannica; or, A sepulchral history of Great Britain (London: Printed by John Nichols; for George Nicol, in Pall-Mall, Bookseller to his Majesty, 1793). These two printings have different images on page 3. One (Benjamin and White) depicts a draped urn on page 3 while another (Nicol) depicts the Grim Reaper sitting on a tumulus. This chapter references the Nicol edition throughout.
an aquatint plate of numbered artifact illustrations followed by short artifact descriptions.

‘Tumulus I,’ the first of Nenia Britannica’s tumuli, opens with an illustration numbered ‘1,’ which depicts the cross-section of an excavated barrow. Inside a thickly inked circle, which represents the barrow’s ring ditch, a skeleton stands with one foot turned outward in a gentlemanly stance. One hand grasps a sword, the other holds the decayed shaft of a spear, and a knife and shield boss are positioned within easy reach. Although dead, the body inside Tumulus 1 seems to be alive, and its connection to the living is strengthened when Douglas explains that the barrow depicted in Figure 1 was opened by soldiers at work outside the naval town of Chatham, Kent. The identity of the skeleton, and its relationship to Chatham’s soldiers, comes into focus when Douglas cross-references the sword in the skeleton’s left hand with illustrations of ‘a Saxon foot-soldier’s dress’ that appear in a manuscript copy of Prudentius’s Psychomachia. Douglas’s assessment of the weapons in Tumulus 1 suggests that the skeleton in this barrow is a Saxon. Furthermore, Douglas’s visual and narrative accounts of the excavation suggest that Chatham’s soldier-excavators are also Saxons. The first tumulus and figure of Nenia Britannica underscore barrow digging as an activity that draws living bodies into the graves of the dead, creating physical, cultural, and racial connections between generations of ‘Saxon foot-soldiers.’

The previous chapter employed the psychoanalytic concepts of mourning, incorporation, and transgenerational haunting in order to consider the role of Sharon Turner as a father of Anglo-Saxon history. In tracing a genealogical relationship between Turner and contemporary historians, it uncovered a psychic

3 Douglas, Nenia Britannica, 128, 128n1, 128n3.
4 Briefly summarized, mourning is a process of coming to terms with the death of a loved one (whether a person, thing, or idea). This process involves constructing a new narrative of the future self that is no longer inclusive of the beloved. Incorporation is the fantasmatic act of taking into one’s body the dead love object as a mechanism for avoiding the pain of losing it. It is a prohibition against mourning that installs the love object
crypt of Empire located within Turner’s imperial unconscious, deposited within his *History*, and passed on to the minds of his ‘children’, the post-imperial generation of twentieth–century Anglo-Saxon historians. This chapter, which complements the previous one, examines James Douglas as a father of Anglo-Saxon archaeology. By tracking Douglas’s excavation of British barrows, it draws the psychic crypts and psychoanalytic theory of Chapter 2 into conversation with material crypts and two relational modes of embodied identity-making: the Deleuzoguattarian concept of territory and the rhetorical practice of ekphrasis. In so doing, this chapter examines the mental state of Anglo-Saxon historians alongside the bodily state of Anglo-Saxon archaeologists and, by extension, literary scholars. Together, Chapters 2 and 3 articulate the embodied psychic-social profile of the interdisciplinary Anglo-Saxon scholar.

*Nenia Britannica* has been acknowledged as a ‘notable milestone’ and a ‘turning point’ in Anglo-Saxon archaeology, and Douglas has been called a ‘pioneer in the field’ who established ‘standards of accuracy and observation’ in antiquarian excavation and analysis. Using the illustrations and descriptions of *Nenia Britannica*’s twenty-six *tumuli* as visual data, Douglas compares and distinguishes, for the first time, Anglo-Saxon burial mounds and funerary objects. *Nenia Britannica* and Figure 1 become critical references during the mid-nineteenth century. Victorian antiquarians consult *Nenia Britannica* when assessing Anglo-Saxon artifacts recovered from their own bar-

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row excavations, and they use Figure 1 as a template when drawing their own barrow illustrations. Yet Douglas’s report and his barrow sketch, especially, are not simply reference materials for the emerging field of Anglo-Saxon archaeology. As Douglas arranges Saxon bone and artifacts according to the postures and gestures of Chatham’s living soldiers, Figure 1 becomes ekphrastic. In other words, its visual rhetoric transforms Douglas’s two-dimensional Saxon skeleton into a performative figure that reaches out from its ink-drawn barrow and phenomenologically impacts the viewer. The ekphrastic performance of Figure 1 prompts antiquarians to respond affectively to this Saxon. They interpret barrow excavation as an act of mourning and construe bone-artifact collection as a mechanism for incorporating the dead within the self. As these Victorian antiquarians are drawn into the ekphrastic orbit of Figure 1, they imagine themselves to have psychically incorporated a Saxon soldier, and, consequently, they fantasize an embodied physical, cultural, and racial association with it. Douglas’s Victorians continue to use Figure 1 as a model for the barrow illustrations of other Saxon skeletons, and, in the process, they generate the archaeological portrait of an ‘Anglo-Saxon.’ As a figure that is positioned inside psychic and material crypts, the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ is simultaneously within and exterior to its antiquarian excavators. Consequently, its military artifacts, skeletal height, and cranial shape and size articulate a racial-cultural body that refracts the bodies of a growing community of professional Anglo-Saxon antiquarians. The skeletonized, undead, yet performatively embodied ‘Anglo-Saxon’ is characterized by an insatiable appetite for destruction, but possesses mental faculties that are marked by balance and reason.

Although James Douglas is a ‘father’ of Anglo-Saxon archaeology, he has been most influential among scholars specializing in the disciplinary sub-field of mortuary archaeology. In Death and Memory in Early Medieval Britain, Howard Williams explains that ‘early and mid-twentieth-century approaches’ to early Anglo-Saxon archaeology, which ‘develop[ed] upon… precedents’ set by Douglas and the Victorians, ‘took the form of “culture-history”: charting the history of tribes and ideas, and
their origins, movements and evolution through burial rites and the artefacts contained within graves."\(^6\) Over the past forty years, however, the field has moved away from these interests. Although archaeologists continue to recognize Douglas’s pioneering work and disciplinary milestones, mortuary archaeologists have replaced the term ‘Anglo-Saxon’ with ‘early medieval’ when referencing their scope of study. Likewise, Williams continues, ‘the influence of new theoretical paradigms employed throughout archaeology’ has led early medieval mortuary archaeologists to ‘adop[t] alternative perspectives from traditional culture-history.’\(^7\) Such changes within the field have had a consequential

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\(^{6}\) Howard Williams, *Death and Memory in Early Medieval Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6.

impact on the study of barrow burials. Howard Williams has employed the methods of comparative anthropology and ethnography. Sarah Semple and Andrew Reynolds have used charters, historical documents, early medieval poetry, boundary markers, and place names to reconfigure the barrow from a funereal site to a dynamic landscape of ritual, movement, community activity, and monument re-use.8 Heinrich Härke has assessed grave goods from multiple excavation sites in relation to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, reinterpreting the function of weapons burials from a reflection of warrior status to a strategy for constructing identity.9 Martin Carver has appropriated the language of metaphor and symbolism to reframe the grave’s funeral tableau from a material reality to a material poetics.10 These examples not only reflect the influence of theoretical approaches within mortuary archaeology but also evidence methodological changes to a field that was once tied exclusively to excavation and archaeological reports. Contemporary studies in early medieval mortuary archaeology have taken Saxon skeletons and artifacts from the hands of Douglas and his Victorian


antiquarians and thereby worked towards unknotting the racial and cultural ties between dead and living ‘Saxon’ bodies.

Despite these changes in the theories, methods, and perspectives of early medieval mortuary archaeology, one connection remains between James Douglas, barrow diggers of the nineteenth-century past, and archaeologists of the twenty-first-century present, a connection that persistently ties the larger field of Anglo-Saxon archaeology to Anglo-Saxon literature: *Beowulf*. In this chapter, I first argue that *Beowulf’s* formal architecture — specifically, its chiasmus and interlace — constructs a poetic barrow, and the circulation of Danes and Geats around this poetic barrow engages a conversation about how these early medieval funerary structures facilitate identity-making as an embodied and performative act. *Beowulf’s* association with early medieval barrows positions the poem in relation to sites excavated by Douglas and claimed by his Victorian acolytes to contain Anglo-Saxon graves. Likewise, *Beowulf’s* investment in expressing identity through physical performance anticipates the work of these antiquarians. When interest in the poem is rekindled in the nineteenth century (and early medieval barrows and bodies have been claimed as Anglo-Saxon), *Beowulf* enables archaeologists and literary scholars to construct and maintain an interdisciplinary relationship as Anglo-Saxonists.

**Digging *Beowulf’s* Grave: Mortuaries, Territory, Ekphrasis**

Early medieval barrow burial is one of the many ways that communities of eastern England commemorated their dead during the pre-Christian, or final-phase, period, which dates from the mid-fifth to the early eighth century. Some barrows are affiliated with a single grave, while others are part of a regional cemetery. Some contain inhumed bodies, and others contain cremated ones. While many of these barrows were built by Anglo-Saxons as a means of honoring their own dead, others — erected by neolithic, British, and Roman peoples — were re-used, enlarged, or supplemented with new mounds by Anglo-Saxon communities.
in what is known as secondary or associative burials. Whether a primary, secondary, or associative grave site, barrows are placed in meaningful proximity to other landscape features. Often near waterways, on hilltops or promontories, or adjacent to active or unused structures, barrows command a panoramic view of an area. Among the most visually distinct and prolific manmade landscape features of eastern England, barrows remained visible for over a thousand years until industrializing efforts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries razed many to the ground.

Although these earthworks were built for the dead, they were continuously reused by the communities that lived near them. For example, Howard Williams considers the early medieval cremation cemetery of Lovedon Hill, Lincolnshire, a prominent hill and ‘one of the most striking and easily recognized landmarks in the vicinity’ that ‘Anglo-Saxons may well have regarded…as an ancient burial mound.’ Given the size of Lovedon Hill (the second largest early medieval cemetery found in England, with 1,800 excavated graves), it is regarded as a ‘central burial plac[e] serving many settlements and farms and perhaps related to a defined “tribal” territory.’ Williams argues that its size and central location suggest Lovedon Hill as an assembly place where large numbers of people — not only the dead but also ‘close kin,’ ‘friends of the deceased,’ ‘other individuals owing allegiance,’ ‘as well as those with more specific duties, roles and obligations to enact’ — from small, dispersed communities met and interacted. Consequently, the funerals enacted here may have been large events where ‘a wide range of social activities’ took place, ‘including feasting, settling disputes and forming alliances through gift giving.’ When Williams assesses the topography, archaeological evidence, and geography of Lovedon Hill in relation to other Anglo-Saxon cremation sites, he hypothesizes that cremation cemeteries like Lovedon Hill were

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11 Williams, ‘Ancient Landscapes and the Dead.’
12 Williams, ‘Assembling the Dead,’ 123.
13 Ibid., 113.
14 Ibid., 115.
15 Ibid.
encircled by a network of places in which people lived, worked, and worshipped, making them sites of assembly or ‘central places’ for both the dead and the living.¹⁶ Even after barrows were abandoned as places for burying the dead, onomastic, historical, and archaeological evidence reveals their continued function throughout the Anglo-Saxon period as sites for community assembly, administration, judicial activities, and execution.¹⁷ Despite their central placement in early Anglo-Saxon geographies, barrows likewise are found along the boundaries of villas


and estates,\textsuperscript{18} hundreds,\textsuperscript{19} parishes,\textsuperscript{20} and wapentakes.\textsuperscript{21} As sites located at the outermost edges of these land divisions, barrows are borderlands. Their position on the margins of later medieval geographies is reflected in both Old English poetry, where they are depicted as evil, monstrous, and haunted ‘pagan’ spaces,

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\item Peter Sawyer, \textit{From Roman Britain to Norman England}, 2nd edn. (New York: Routledge, 1998), 147–48, and Martin Welch, ‘Rural Settlement Patterns in the Early and Middle Anglo-Saxon Periods,’ \textit{Landscape History} 7 (1985): 19–21. D.M. Hadley cites, as an example, the barrow burial at Caenby, which is close to the junction between Hemswell, Harpswell, Glentham, and Caenby vill boundaries, and she writes that ‘presumably such burials either were located on existing boundaries, or were used to mark out new boundaries; either way it suggests that such boundaries existed in the early Anglo-Saxon period’ (\textit{The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, c.800–1100} [London: Leicester University Press, Continuum, 2000], 98).
\item The Hundred is an administrative division of land. Dating to about the mid-tenth century, it subsumed a large amount of land under juridical and fiduciary control. Each Hundred, scholars assume, had an open-air meeting place, where trials, disputes, etc. would take place. Wenslow (Bedfordshire) and Thunderlow (Essex), for example, contain elements of the word hlæw, one of several Old English words that can mean ‘mound,’ ‘cairn,’ ‘hill,’ ‘mountain,’ ‘grave-yard,’ or ‘barrow’ (Audrey Meaney, ‘Pagan English Sanctuaries, Place-Names and Hundred Meeting-Places,’ \textit{Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History} 8 [1995]: 36).
\end{itemize}
and in real life, where they become gallows sites and staging grounds for battle.\textsuperscript{22}

As a topography that marks the center of a settlement or the borderlands of a region, barrows make territory, in the geopolitical sense, by parceling land into districts.\textsuperscript{24} In addition, their enduring material participation in a network of ever-shifting cultural practices points towards an engagement with a different kind of territory. Borrowing from the methodology of Deleuze and Guattari,\textsuperscript{25} territory is not simply a material place that is claimed (and reclaimed). It is a concept that sees identity as an ever-shifting process that is assembled, disassembled, and

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\item[	extsuperscript{22}] Semple, ‘A Fear of the Past,’ 123, and Andrew Reynolds, \textit{Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 248–50. Reynolds’s survey of \textit{cwealmstowe} (execution places) reveals that the great majority were located on barrows on boundaries, especially hundred boundaries (‘The Definition and Ideology of Anglo-Saxon Execution Sites and Cemeteries,’ 37). Martin Carver points out that Mound 5 of Sutton Hoo has around it the remains of hanged or beheaded bodies, and on the eastern periphery of the cemetery, another group of burials lies amid the postholes attributed to a gallows site (\textit{Sutton Hoo: Burial Ground of Kings?} [Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1998], 137–43). On the placement of gallows on barrows in the medieval period, more generally, see Nicola Whyte, ‘The Deviant Dead in the Norfolk Landscape,’ \textit{Landscapes} 4, no. 1 (2003): 33.
\item[	extsuperscript{23}] Recently, Sarah Semple and Alexandra Sanmark articulated an example that highlights both the ‘real significance’ and \textit{longue durée} of the barrow’s power when they discuss \textit{Cwichelmshlaew}, an Iron Age round barrow in Northumbria. Purportedly named to commemorate Edwin of Northumbria’s killing of Cwichelm of Wessex in 636 ce, the homicidal power of the ‘Mound of Cwichelm’ is invoked and challenged four hundred years later when a troop of Danes camped near the barrow and then marched around it, ‘boast[ing] threats, because it had often been said that if they sought out Cwichelm’s Barrow, they [the Danes] would never get to the sea’ (Sample and Sanmark, ‘Assembly in North West Europe,’ 1).
\item[	extsuperscript{24}] For a discussion of the role of barrows in the contested territorial frontier of Wessex-Mercia, see Sarah Semple, ‘Burials and Political Boundaries in the Avebury Region, North Wiltshire.’
\item[	extsuperscript{25}] While Deleuze and Guattari are discussed infrequently in relation to early medieval studies, Manish Sharma’s recent essay on Old English formulaic theory offers an exciting engagement with these philosophers (‘Beyond Nostalgia: Formula and Novelty in Old English Literature,’ \textit{Exemplaria} 26, no. 4 [2014]: 303–27).
\end{enumerate}
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reassembled by means of our affective performances. We make signs and sounds; we hold postures; we gesture, display, and advertise. We demonstrate via our bodies how we feel and who we are, in a given moment, at a given location. We communicate an identity that is assembled in performance. Consequently, it is always changing, never the same, and always attached to the place where we are standing. And we respond to these behaviors in others. To use the language of Deleuze and Guattari, our identities are de- and re-territorialized with each shift in sign, sound, and movement; and the ‘territory’ is the locus ‘where’ all these re-codings of identity take ‘place.’ Thus, geopolitical territory and expressive territory are intertwined, and when we stand in a particular place, we express an assemblage of identities that are always on the move.

As sites for celebrating alliances and making war, for managing community affairs and executing criminals, for mourning one’s dead and being terrified by them, barrows are, to reemphasize, geopolitical territories — they mark the most central and peripheral boundaries of a socio-cultural community. Here, people gather and display signs, sounds, and movements that are keyed to the barrow’s particular territorial function: Who belongs and who does not? How should we (and others) live and die? How can we account for others’ relationships to this place and, nonetheless, make it our own?

As communities assemble and performatively negotiate answers to these questions, over and over again, early medieval barrows come to function as liminal zones striated by vectors of deep power. They draw together,

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26 Alfred Siewer’s essay, ‘Guthlac’s Mound and Grendel’s Mere as Expressions of Anglo-Saxon Nation Building,’ Viator 34 (2003): 1–39, considers how early medieval poetry engages barrow landscapes and identity formation and as such is an important precursor to the arguments of this chapter.
by material means, human acts of intimacy and extimacy,\textsuperscript{27} ways of dying and living.\textsuperscript{28}

As burial sites, the surfaces, soil, geography, and climate of barrows make possible and prohibit certain kinds of funeral activities, mourning rituals, and monumental construction. Their abiotic features shape ‘dying practices’ that (re)assemble, or re-territorialize, a community’s sense of self while doing the same for the dead. Yet, once these dying practices are complete, the grave is covered up. A barrow is erected over its mortuary interior, and the exterior surface of this new landscape becomes the site of ever-expanding networks of ‘living practices’: how to call into being and confirm alliances, how to make and re-make culture, and how to distinguish self from other. Barrows shuttle death towards life by enjoining the force of the earth to that of human movement. With each new community re-use, post-holes are dug, surfaces are worn down, and materials are left standing or forgotten. These changes code and re-code, and re- and de-territorialize, barrows that record old and new identity assemblages and the relationship between them. As a recording, barrows broadcast this range of assemblages between and among communities over long stretches of time. Consequently, to extend our understanding of the barrow by invoking one other Deleuzoguattarian term, barrows are a geophilosophical


Diagram 6

Prologue

A. Panegyric for Scyld
B. Scyld’s funeral
C. History of Danes before Hrothgar
D. Hrothgar’s order to build Heorot

Grendel’s unexpected night attack
Sea voyage to Denmark

First fight

Greeting by hosts

- Hrothgar
- Unferth
- Wealththeow

Fight with Grendel (see Diagram 3)

Interlude (Great banquet, nightfall)

Second fight

Grendel’s dam’s unexpected night attack

Fight with Grendel’s Dam (see Diagram 4)

- Banquet, nightfall
- Farewell to hosts
- Sea voyage home
- Reception in Geatland

Third fight

Dragon’s unexpected night attack

Fight with Dragon (see Diagram 5)

- D. Beowulf’s order to build his barrow
- C. History of Geats after Beowulf
  (“messenger’s prophecy”)
B. Beowulf’s funeral
A. Eulogy for Beowulf.

Figure 1. John Niles’s ‘Diagram 6’ of the ‘chief correspondences that knit the poem [Beowulf] together.’ John D. Niles, ‘Ring Composition and the Structure of Beowulf,’ PMLA 94, no. 5 (1979): 930. Image courtesy of PMLA.
territory and moreover its Natal, the territory’s ‘intense center’ and the ‘extra-territorial convergence of different and distant territories.’

Put another way, barrows are homing sites. They point the way towards a forever-becoming entity that we currently call ‘Anglo-Saxon,’ a multiplicity of identity assemblages that are always in motion, never stable, and perpetually unmaking and remaking themselves.

*Beowulf* is a poem that is deeply concerned with practices of living and dying. The funerary rituals of Scyld Scefing and Beowulf, which bookend the poem, call into question and confirm what it means to be Danish or Geatish. Toward the poem’s narrative interior, the attacks of Grendelkin and the dragon upon Heorot and Daneland challenge these identity positions and prompt their reorientation. Amid these many and varied dying practices, the construction of Heorot and the celebrations that take place therein express living through performances, gestures, conversations, and stories that further adjust and reconfirm ‘Dane’ and ‘Geat’ as highly mobile assemblages. *Beowulf* is also a poem that constructs, by way of these dying and living practices, the three-dimensional outline of a barrow.

As John Niles argues,


Figure 2. Author’s visual remapping of John D. Niles’s diagram (see Fig. 1).

Figure 3. Stephen Plunkett, photograph of reconstructed Mound 2 at Sutton Hoo (S2007). Image courtesy of Dr. Stephen Plunkett.
narratively erects a three-dimensional barrow (see Figures 2 and 3).31

In the Prologue, Scyld’s boat funeral turns to Hrothgar’s hall building, and the boat’s wooden hull and funereal gold are transformed into Heorot’s wide-gabled roof and gilded lintels. As Niles’s diagram makes clear, these narrative activities and architectural spaces anticipate those of the Epilogue, and the Prologue opens a circuit that will be closed when Scyld’s death is revisited in Beowulf’s death. Yet, as an episode that likewise summons the activities of Hrothgar and the hall of Heorot, it interlaces the Prologue and the First Fight. Together, ring structure and interlace give the narrative material dimension. The poem fastens together two kingly deaths and their burial structures in order to assume an emergent sense of circular depth and width, and it also weaves together the passing of Scyld with the ascent of Hrothgar’s reign, and Heorot’s hall, to add height to these dimensions. From dying to living, from royal death to a bare life, Beowulf traces the outline of a barrow’s foundation.32

Beowulf’s First Fight with Grendel makes these outlines more materially present, as Hrothgar’s rule and Heorot’s hall are refigured into even more capacious ‘living structures,’ and in the subsequent Interlude, Danes and Geats feast in celebration of a community that does not merely survive, but now thrives. These two episodes, which pivot jointly upon chiasmus and interlace, plot the upward slope and outer curvature of a barrow as they angle towards modes of vibrant living — towards a more robust assemblage that articulates what it means to be a Dane or a Geat now that Grendel has been defeated. Moreover, as the Interlude that occurs after Beowulf’s fight with Grendel is circuited to the Interlude that follows his victory against Grendel’s mother, this ring structure doubles as a poetic and a material plateau, a

32 Note also that Robert Boenig argues that Scyld’s boat burial represents ‘a burial in a grave mound like those found in East Anglia and Scandinavia’ (‘Scyld’s Burial Mound,’ English Language Notes 40, no. 1 [2002]: 3).
'place' where Danes and Geats gather and feast, tell stories and give gifts. At the poem’s ‘highest’ point — as if sitting atop a barrow — these two communities meet and take part in an array of social activities that, as Howard Williams has explained, are associated with this funerary structure.

From these celebratory Interludes, the poem begins to calculate the downward slope and curve of a barrow. Upon Beowulf’s homecoming to Geatland, stories of intra- and inter-community hostility, warfare, and execution descend towards Beowulf’s Third Fight with the dragon. This episode closes the chiastic loop opened by his battle with Grendel even as it interlaces Heorot’s wooden hall, golden gift exchanges, and practices of sociability with the dragon’s *stan-beorh*, treasure hoard, and lost community. As ring structures that were opened in the first half of the poem are now closed, narratives of living give way to stories of dying even as architectures of hospitality are refigured as places of interment. Beowulf dies from wounds sustained in his Third Fight, and the Epilogue depicts his funeral rituals. This final episode returns the poem to its chiastic beginnings: the wealth brought from the dragon’s cave echoes Scyld’s golden treasure, the war-gear in which Beowulf is posthumously dressed is reminiscent of Scyld’s funerary battle-dress, and the Geatish woman who mourns during Beowulf’s cremation recalls the grieving community of the Danes who watch Scyld’s boat launch. Likewise, even as the wooden hull of Scyld’s boat returns as kindling for Beowulf’s funeral pyre, the architecture of the dragon’s barrow cave produces Beowulf’s barrow. In an energetic display of interlace and chiasmus, the Epilogue employs building materials from its earliest and most recent episodes in order to complete the double construction of *Beowulf*’s poetic barrow, an aesthetic form that has been materially finished.

*Beowulf*’s poetic barrow does not simply reflect historical engagements between land and people. To borrow the language of Aranye Fradenburg, it is a ‘representatio[n]’ that ‘show[s] us
where we might or might not live.’ It shows us who we might or might not (want to) be. It is a material territory and an expressive one. As a form that is continuously produced and refigured by means of chiasmus and interlace, Beowulf’s barrow is, as Fradenburg writes, ‘always, already multiply transformed,’ estranged, and ‘elsewhere.’ Like the material earthworks and the dying and living practices that it replicates, Beowulf is a territory that is open and forever becoming, ‘for the meaning of territory is mobility and expressivity.’ Its barrow does not direct ‘us’ towards a particular place or people in northern Europe but towards a ‘home’ that abides in its poetic form.

34 Ibid., 228.
35 Ibid., 229.
36 For recent attempts at locating the poem in the landscape and in specific geographies, see Sam Newton, The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1993); John D. Niles, Beowulf and Lejre (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007); and Leonard Niedorf, ed., The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment (Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 2014). Assigning a composition date and location to this poem has, historically, been one of the most contentious areas of Beowulf scholarship. While the motives and emotions that surround arguments about the poem’s provenance remain undiscussed by the scholarly community, a recent review of Leonard Niedorf’s The Transmission of Beowulf: Language, Culture, and Scribal Behavior (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017), suggests that identity politics underwrite these, at times uncivil, debates. Reviewer Craig Davis, for example, points to Niedorf’s ‘unusual devotion…for an early Beowulf’ that is written by ‘Anglian peoples’ who replicate the poetic forms and narratives of ‘Germanic-speaking migrants to Britain’ who come from ‘the ancestral homeland of the Angles in Schleswig’ (‘The Transmission of “Beowulf”’, The Medieval Review, September 30, 2018, https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/tmr/article/view/25665). Neidorf’s ‘devotion’ to and his arguments for a Migration-Era Beowulf sound very much like those of John Mitchell Kemble, whose racial ideologies, this chapter will argue much later, position Beowulf on the Anglo-Saxon branch of the Teutonic family tree.
For Beowulf, however, the poem’s barrow-shaped home becomes an increasingly complicated place in which to live. On the outer perimeters of Prologue and Epilogue, Danes and Geats point the rituals commemorating the deaths of Scyld and Beowulf in the direction of community survival. In other words, the dying practices that take place at the beginning and end of the poem are circuited to and woven into living strategies that take place during the poem’s Interludes. Danes and Geats circulate across the narrative surfaces of Beowulf’s barrow, moving always towards the post-war celebrations that take place atop its plateaued surfaces. Unlike the communities with which he is associated, Beowulf repeatedly finds himself engaged in combat within the poem’s architectures. As he fights to protect Danish and Geatish communities — to maintain living practices that not only negotiate relationships between these two peoples but also distinguish humans from monsters — he discovers the mortuary interior of Beowulf’s poetic barrow.

Nested within the poem’s Interlude ring structure is Beowulf’s Second Fight with Grendel’s mother. Described by Niles as the poem’s ‘single [chiastic] kernel,’ this episode takes Beowulf to the poem’s narrative epicenter and to the impossibly deep ‘grundwong,’ or ‘bottom [of the mere]’ of Grendelkin.38 Yet, archaeological assessments of this underwater cave and Beowulf’s fight inside it reframe this space as a barrow’s mortuary interior. The chiastic kernel of the poem, in association with the arguments of mortuary archaeology, reveals the home of Grendelkin as the deep, funerary center of Beowulf’s barrow territory.

As Patrick Geary and Howard Williams have remarked, the cave of Grendelkin is described like a barrow, a place that during the later Anglo-Saxon period was believed to be haunted by monsters and revenants.39 Beowulf enters, fights Grendel’s mother, and mutilates Grendel in a supernatural battle that ech-
oes the practice of early medieval ‘mound-breaking’, ‘dramatic, staged events’ in which individuals tunnel into and destroy the skeletons, grave goods, and burial tableau within a barrow. Mound-breaking can serve a variety of functions that range from ‘punishment/revenge, neutralization of the dead, humiliation of a defeated enemy, trophy hunting or destruction of memory,’ but upon killing Grendel’s mother and decapitating Grendel with a sword that he has found inside this barrow, Beowulf discovers that neither is its rightful occupant. As the sword’s blade melts in the monster’s hot blood, the poem remarks that Beowulf did not take from this underwater ‘wic’ ['habitation'], ‘many treasures, although he saw many there, except the head and hilt, together, shining treasures’ ['maðmæhta ma, þeh he þær monige geseah, / buton þone hafelan ond þa hilt somod / since fage,’ ll. 1558a, 1562b]. In calling this a wic in which Gren-delkin dwell, the poem casually marks this place as a temporary home and implicates these monsters as barrow squatters. Moreover, it suggests that the treasures sighted by Beowulf are funerary objects belonging to others. While no physical remains are mentioned that would identify the barrow’s rightful occupant, the ‘giant’s old sword… a work of giants’ ['ealdsweord eotensic… giganta geweorc,’ ll. 1558a, 1562b] that he has just used to kill and mutilate Grendelkin suggests that this is a giant’s burial chamber. Upon making this discovery, Beowulf takes Grendel’s head and the sword’s remaining hilt, then leaves the barrow. In these actions, his acts of mound-breaking become acts of grave-rob-


41 Christoph Kümmel, quoted in Bill and Daly, ‘The Plundering of the Ship Graves from Osenberg and Gokstad,’ 818.

42 In addition to its primary definition as ‘a dwelling-place, abode, habitation, residence, lodging, quarters,’ wic can also reference ‘a temporary abode, a camp, place where one stops,’ or more suggestively, ‘a place where a thing remains’ (Bosworth-Toller Dictionary).

43 All citations are by line number to R.D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles, eds., Klaeber’s Beowulf: Fourth Edition (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2008). All translations from Old English are my own.
bing, an early medieval practice in which the deceased’s body and grave goods were subject to intentional disturbance, mutilation, and looting.44

Whether an act of mound-breaking or of grave-robbing, archaeologists Hella Eckardt and Howard Williams point to this particular moment in Beowulf as one that ‘illustrate[s] the importance attached to entering into ancient tombs to retrieve old objects…usually swords,’ and they explain that although a trespass, this action was ‘an important social process by which [early medieval] communities physically reordered their histories and memories.’45 Eckardt and Williams’s comments ring true for the Danish and Geatish communities that celebrate during the poem’s Interludes. Beowulf’s triumphs over Grendel and his mother allow Heorot’s denizens to live without fear of future attack, to celebrate together in the hall, and subsequently to enable Hrothgar and Hygelac to reestablish a comitatus broken by Hrethel. Further still, Beowulf’s encounter with the giant’s sword enables him to eradicate and mutilate the monsters that have intruded upon Heorot’s peace and God’s cosmology. For Danes and Geats, Beowulf’s physical actions reorder community history and memory. In the process, they disassemble and reassemble what it means not only to be Danish and Geatish but, moreover, to be human.

Yet barrows are not made to be penetrated, disturbed, or looted. Their mortuary interiors, which harbor a decomposing body and grave goods, are intentionally arranged into a burial tableau.

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45 Hella Eckhardt and Howard Williams, ‘Objects Without a Past? The Use of Roman Objects in Anglo-Saxon Graves,’ in Archaeologies of Remembrance: Death and Memory in Past Societies, ed. Howard Williams (New York: Springer, 2003), 145, 144, my emphasis.
This ‘poetic’ scene, Martin Carver explains, is composed ritually and according to a particular temporal sequence by those who survive and mourn the deceased.\textsuperscript{46} Consequently, Carver, with Howard Williams, explains that it refracts the ‘emotive force’ of a funeral. It visualizes a dynamic network of death, loss, and grief; reverence, honor, and love; and anger, shame, and relief. The emotional constellation that is created by those who shape the funeral tableau is expressed by the choice, arrangement, and order in which grave goods are placed. Together, these material artifacts transform the barrow’s mortuary interior into a territory of dying, which is then covered up with dirt and screened from view so that it might become the invisible foundation upon which a barrow is built and living takes place. To enter a barrow is, consequently, to encounter a territory that, subsequent to the rituals of a funeral, is meant only for the dead because it expresses an identity assemblage that was organized in response to death. For the Danes and Geats, communities that benefit \textit{in absentia} from Beowulf’s Second Fight, mound-breaking and grave-robbing are productive strategies. To return to Eckardt and Williams’s language, the traumatic ‘histories and memories’ of Grendelkin’s predations upon Heorot are ‘physically re-ordered’ by another, whose violent acts make life more livable. For Beowulf, however, opening \textit{Beowulf}’s barrow and robbing the giant’s grave (performances enacted by descending into the underwater cave and grundwong of Grendelkin) draw him into its territory of dying. Here, he encounters a sword, part of a funeral tableau that materially broadcasts practices enacted long ago to commemorate an unknown deceased. He activates these identity-oriented practices when he uses the giant’s sword to kill and physically mutilate Grendel’s mother and her son. However, it is not until Beowulf brings the remaining hilt back to Heorot that these dying practices physically reorder — they disassemble and reassemble; they de- and re-territorialize — him.

\textsuperscript{46} As Carver writes, ‘A grave is not simply a text, but a text with attitude, a text inflated with emotion…like poetry it is a palimpsest of allusions, constructed within a certain time and place’ (‘Burial as Poetry,’ 37).
The physical effects of entering and exiting *Beowulf*’s barrow become apparent upon the hero’s return to Heorot. Specifically, they extend from a discussion of the sword hilt, the only piece of loot that Beowulf has brought back from the grave:

Hroðgar maðelode,  hylt sceawode,  
ealde lafe.  On  δαμ wæs or writen  
fyrgewinnes:  syðþan flod ofsloh,  
gifen geotende  giganta cyn,  
frecne geferdon;  ðæt wæs fremde þeod  
ecean dryhtne;  him  þæs endelean  
þurh wæteres wylm  waldend sealde.  
Swa wæs on  δαμ scennum  sciran goldes  
þurh runstafas  rihte gemearcod,  
geseted ond gesæd,  hwam  þæt sweord geworht,  
irena cyst  ærest wære,  
wreopenhilt  ond wyrmfah. (ll. 1687–98a)

[Hrothgar spoke, he looked at the hilt, the old heirloom, on which was written the origins of former strife, when the flood — the rushing ocean — destroyed the community of giants. They fared terribly. That was a people estranged from the eternal Lord; the Ruler gave them a final retribution for that by means of the surging of water. So it was on that metal plate of shining gold marked, set down, and said in runic [or secret] letters, correctly, for whom [or by whom] that sword was made, the best of swords [that] was first made with a twisted hilt and serpentine patterning.]

As he looks upon the hilt’s engraved surfaces, Hrothgar explains that, once upon a time, God sent a flood to destroy a community of giants. Despite their terrible suffering and estrangement from God, some of them seem to have survived. The inclusion of this hilt in a giant’s funeral tableau shapes a territory of dying according to expressions of emotional duress and physical survival in the face of total community destruction. Hrothgar’s narrative emerges from looking and touching the secret letters.
The Sepulchral Body of the Anglo-Saxonist

[runstafas], metal plate [ðæm scennum sciran goldes], twisted sides [wreopenhilt], and serpentine pattern [wyrmfah] of the hilt. His statements are prompted by an object that does not document the past but materially displays and gestures towards the identity assemblages of those who have been affected by it.

Hrothgar’s words and the hilt’s visual imagery collaborate to produce an ekphrasis that draws forth a previously unknown territory of dying from the mortuary wic of Grendelkin into Heorot. A term of literary criticism and art history, ekphrasis has been understood traditionally as the detailed description of an object. Over the past two decades, however, it has undergone extensive redefinition. No longer considered to be a mimetic form, and no longer defined in relation to the exclusive pairing of verbal text with visual image, ekphrasis can be understood simply as the imagistic ‘response’ in one medium to an image that is presented in another medium. As a response rather than as a representation, ekphrasis not only enacts a non-hierarchical intermingling between media but also functions as a performative agent. For some scholars, the performative agency

47 See Renate Brosch, ed., Contemporary Ekphrasis, a special issue of Poetics Today 39, no. 2 (2018), for a survey of past understandings of ekphrasis and current reconsiderations of the concept.

48 Beginning in the late 1990s, scholars began to challenge the twentieth-century definition of ekphrasis as a specifically verbal representation of a visual representation. See, especially, Claus Clüver, ‘Ekphrasis Reconsidered: On Verbal Representations of Non-Verbal Texts,’ in Interart Poetics: Essays on the Interrelations of the Arts and Media, eds. Ulla-Britta Lagerroth, Hans Lund, and Erik Hedling (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997), 19–33, and ‘Quotation, Enargeia, and the Function of Ekphrasis,’ in Pictures into Words: Theoretical and Descriptive Approaches to Ekphrasis, eds. Valerie Robillard and Els Jongeneel (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1998), 21–34. In 2000, Siglind Bruhn radically redefined the concept as ‘representation in one medium of a real or fictitious text composed in another medium’ (Musical Ekphrasis: Composers Responding to Poetry and Painting [Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2000], 8). Ekphrasis has since been used in discussions of theatricalization, film, tableau vivant, and digital works, to name a few, all of which rhetorically expound upon the text of a different medium.

of ekphrasis gives it material depth and dimensionality. Timothy Morton explains that vivid, often dramatic and imaginative, statements descriptively generate an object, the expressive ‘spaciousness’ and enduring ‘nowness’ of which exceed the borders of its narrative frame.\(^5^0\) Fradenburg refines this position when she explains that ‘the ekphrastic object is nearly always a relic, living on, undead.’\(^5^1\) Morton’s and Fradenburg’s thinking allows us to explore the hilt as a reliquary object of the barrow that gathers material ‘spaciousness,’ temporal ‘nowness,’ and ‘undead’ animation via Hrothgar’s description. Suspended in space, time, and movement as a thing undead, the hilt does not simply represent a diluvian story or the funerary world of giants. Via ekphrasis, its engravings of past war, flood, destruction, duress, and survival acquire dimensionality and performative agency. They objectively display and gesture, extending an assemblage of identity-making forces in space and in time. The hilt’s ekphrasis reaches out beyond the barrow’s mortuary interior and beyond the time of the giant’s funeral. In Heorot, *ekphrasis shows us a territory that once was lost and enables us to find it over and over.*

As an object that performs outside and beyond its spatiotemporal origins, the hilt’s ekphrastic displays seek interactions and generate a response. Unwittingly, when Beowulf uses the hilt to kill Grendel’s mother and decapitate Grendel, he activates the full force of the hilt’s dying practices and wipes out the suffering and estranged community of Grendelkin. Consequently, Hrothgar’s meditation upon the hilt proceeds to a meditation upon Beowulf’s fate, and the hilt’s territory of dying exacts its territorializing forces upon Beowulf’s living body. Hrothgar warns:

\[\text{Nu is þines mægnes blæd} \]
\[\text{ane hwile; eft sona bið,} \]
\[\text{þæt þec adl oððe ecg eafoþes getwæfeð,} \]

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51 Fradenburg, ‘Life’s Reach,’ 265.
[Now is the glory of your power but a little while; presently, in turn, it will be that disease or the sword will deprive you of strength, or the grip of the fire or the surging of a wave, or attack of a sword or the flight of a spear, or terrible old age; or the brightness of your eyes will fail and become dim. Suddenly, death will overpower you, warrior.]

Hostile enemies, sickness, and infirmity encroach upon the safe borders of Beowulf’s body, serially, simultaneously, and cross-modally. The fire’s grip, the wave’s surge, the sword’s attack, and the spear’s flight enact a catalogue of protracted physical traumas that are stretched across an unending temporal moment that is ‘now’ ['nu'], for ‘a little while’ ['ane while'], ‘presently, in turn’ ['eft sona'], and ‘all of a sudden’ ['semninga']. Like the material spaciousness of the hilt and the nowness of its temporality, Beowulf is caught up in the de- and re-territorializing forces that once physically reordered Grendelkin and now physically reorder him. Yet, unlike Grendel and his mother, who are killed by a blade, the hilt’s ekphrasis transforms Beowulf into a rhetorical canvas upon which disasters sequentially and simultaneously erupt. Amidst total ruin, he survives. Beowulf lives on, suspended between the forces of fire and wave, sword and spear, old age and infirmity. He acquires dimension with each poetic turn. The words ‘oððe…oððe…oððe’ become a delicate refrain that not only invites tragedy but also animates his form with descriptive texture and drama. Like the hilt, Beowulf is transformed into a reliquary object that has been totally ruined in its production process; his warrior’s body has been unforged and made undead. To return again to Fradenburg, Beowulf, like the
hilt, is a relic that has become ekphrastic: ‘embellish[ed]’ and ‘art[ful]’ restively alive, even in death.\(^{52}\)

As an ekphrastic object, Beowulf exceeds his status as a human participant in the world of the poem and is now a communicative form. He is a zone of contact between the living practices of Geats and Danes who circulate across the barrow’s exterior surfaces and the dying practices of an unnamed community of giants that has been buried and hidden within the barrow’s funerary interior. In drawing together Beowulf’s barrow territories of life and death, Beowulf functions as an undead, liminal zone that stretches across the poem’s territorial strata. Is he a monster or a hero? An adopted Dane or a Geat? Beowulf’s ekphrasis prompts us to ask not only who he is but, moreover, who we are. These communicative aspects are a crucial part of ekphrasis. As Liliane Louvel argues, ‘the performative aspect of visually imbued texts’ phenomenologically affects the reader, ‘work[ing] on our senses, on our percepts, emotions, and bodies.’\(^{53}\) While the readers of Beowulf (and the hilt) are communities within the poem, for Louvel, the reader is extra-textual — a point to which this chapter will return. As ‘word and image…time and space’ are ‘blend[ed]’ together, the reader’s body is ‘moved, “seized” by ekphrasis, she — the reader — “is activated”’\(^{54}\). She ‘reach[es] unheard-of or unspoken truths’ and links ‘memory and imagination’ across time and space.\(^{55}\) Ekphrasis prompts emotional and embodied responses that reassemble identity in relation to the territory from which it emerges.

It is important to note that this is not the first time that Beowulf has entered and emerged from a barrow. From Heorot to the Grendelkin’s mere, from the dragon’s beorg to his own biorh, Beowulf constantly enters and exits each of the poem’s increasingly barrow-shaped structures, the last of which circuits back, via chiasmus, to Scyld’s funeral. Indeed, as Niles’s

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 109.
\(^{54}\) Ibid., 259.
\(^{55}\) Ibid.
The Sepulchral Body of the Anglo-Saxonist diagram (see Figure 1 above) and his essay make clear, each of these episodes is organized according to its own internal ring structure (and interlace patterns). Beowulf therefore reveals itself to be internally populated with barrows. As Beowulf moves in and out of this virtual barrow cemetery, he becomes more like to the dead than to the living with each entrance and exit (see Figures 4 and 5), and he prompts ever more complex questions about Danes, Geats, and ourselves. Thus, Beowulf is not a single or a singular barrow territory that, all at once, transforms dying practices into living practices. Rather, it is an expanding network of mortuary ‘homes’ to which Beowulf returns ‘again and again’ in order to navigate the ever-becoming but never-the-same process of identity making that phenomenologically impacts the emotions and bodies of many different communities across many different times.56

Tumuli, Antiquarian Mourners, and Undead Saxons

Throughout the early modern period, barrows remained dynamic sites of community activity and continued to function as landscapes engaged with a variety of living practices.57 However, as Nicola Whyte explains, the rapid enclosure of open fields

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56 Fradenburg, ‘Life’s Reach,’ 265.
57 For example, as Nicola Whyte explains, early modern communities continued to recognize the boundary-making function of barrows. Barrows were ‘key focal points along customary routes’ that separated parishes and estates and were used by seigniorial lords to designate the boundaries of fold-course territories as late as the mid-eighteenth century. Likewise, the early medieval function of barrows as meeting places ‘continued to structure territorial jurisdictions into the post-medieval period,’ and Whyte cites examples from early modern court cases that evidence that the annual leet courts of Great Fransham, Great Dunham, Kempstone, and Beeston took place at barrows. In addition, Whyte suggests the ongoing connection between barrows and early modern gallows sites, and, as an example, she references an eighteenth-century map of South Acre, ‘which depicts a number of apparently extant barrows on “Gallow Hill Heath,” possibly the remains of the Anglo-Saxon cwealmstow’ (Inhabiting the Landscape: Place, Custom and Memory, 1500–1800 [Oxford: Windgather Press at Oxbow, 2009], 146–54).
Figure 4. Cliff Hoppitt, aerial photograph of Sutton Hoo. Image courtesy of Cliff Hoppitt.

Figure 5. Author’s diagram, inspired by Sutton Hoo aerial photo, which maps how the internal and overarching ring structures of the poem work together.
during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rendered them unavailable as area landmarks and for public use. No longer territories on the landscape or territorial expressions of local peoples, barrows were rapidly destroyed. For antiquarian James Douglas, however, barrows are exciting places that warehouse Britain’s ancestors, material culture, and history. When he excavates their mortuary interiors, Douglas engages early medieval barrows once again as geopolitical and expressive territories, arranging fragments of bone and artifacts into complete historical portraits that he describes and illustrates in his archaeological report, *Nenia Britannica*. In the process, Douglas is emotionally and physically reordered by their ekphrastic displays. His embodied emotions, affects, and performances are re-figured, and his identity assemblage is de- and re-territorialized. While Douglas is a respondent to the ekphrasis of grave goods and human remains, his embodied and emotional performances have a transformative effect on the medieval barrows from which they emerge. As Douglas interprets its funerary contents, the barrow becomes a new kind of territory—an antiquarian one—and Douglas comes to identify the early medieval peoples interred within these barrows as Saxons.

In his preface to *Nenia Britannica*, James Douglas touches upon changes in British barrows. According to Douglas, barrows have now become remote places. On ‘barren ground; on commons, moors…[and]…near villages, of no great name or importance in history…it is only by a casual discovery with the plow, or the accidental use of the spade and pick-axe, that the contents of these interments have been found.’

58 Ibid., 163.
59 Graeme Kirkham, “‘Rip it up, and spread it over the field’: Post-Medieval Agriculture and the Destruction of Monuments; A Case Study from Cornwall,” *Landscapes* 13, no. 2 (2012): 1–20.
Figure 6a. Aquatint of numbered artifacts from “Tumulus 1” at Chatham, Kent, in James Douglas, *Nenia Britannica; or, A sepulchral history of Great Britain* (London: Printed by John Nichols; for George Nicol, in Pall-Mall, Bookseller to his Majesty, 1793), 2. Image courtesy of The Newberry Library.
Figure 6b. Tumulus I in James Douglas, *Nenia Britannica; or, A sepulchral history of Great Britain* (London: Printed by John Nichols; for George Nicol, in Pall-Mall, Bookseller to his Majesty, 1793), 2. Image courtesy of The Newberry Library.
out their borders and do battle, Britain’s barrows are incompati-
ble with and incidental to contemporary agricultural and indus-
trial modes of living. For the antiquarian, however, the opening
up of a barrow with a ‘spade and pick-axe’ is not a ‘casual’ or
‘accidental…discovery’ but an intentional activity.

On the first page of Nenia Britannica’s archaeological report,
in the middle of a plate of artifact illustrations, is a figure num-
bered ‘1.’ Figure 1 presents the outline of a ring ditch, sedi-
mentary fill, and a rectangular coffin (see Figure 6a). In its center,
accompanied by a variety of weapons, stands a skeleton that is
remarkably intact and strangely vibrant. Its skull is in slight pro-
file, its right hand leans upon its spear and touches a seax, its
left hand reaches for its sword, and its right foot is out-turned
in a gentlemanly stance. Armed and at the ready, this skeleton
is stylized according to late-eighteenth century portraiture, im-
pressing upon the viewer that these bones need only a little flesh
on them in order for this long-dead ‘warrior’ to come alive. Fig-
ure 1 turns his head and casts his eyes across the page towards
‘TUMULUS I.,’ ‘Fig. 1’ (see Figure 6b).

The page-long description that accompanies and contextu-
alizes the illustration states that ‘Fig[ure] 1. represents the hori-
zontal section of a tumulus opened on the Chatham Lines*.’
The asterisk that marks the end of this clause draws the reader’s
eye towards a lengthy footnote, which explains that when ‘la-
bourers and soldiers…travers[ed] a range of these small tumuli’
in order to dig out the defensive earthworks — the Lines — that
surround the military town of Chatham, Kent, they dig up
‘some spear-heads, umbos of shields, and a few other fragments
of arms.’ For Douglas, ‘opening’ the barrows at Chatham is a
productive activity. In the physical motion of carving out earth,
new earthworks are built, and old ones are disturbed. Military
men of the present tense encounter military artifacts of the past.

Douglas seems to sense the de- and re-territorializing stakes
of excavation, and upon drawing together Chatham’s Lines and

61 Douglas, Nenia Britannica, 3.
62 Ibid., author’s emphasis.
barrows, its martial bodies and artifacts, he imagines a similar bridge between military and mortuary geographies. Positioned on ‘the western slope of the steep hill,’ which ‘descend[s]’ to the barrack gate’ of the Kentish militia, Douglas explains that Chatham’s barrows are ‘bounded’ and ‘enclose[d]’ on the ‘extremity’ and ‘interior’ by the militia’s barrack-wall and the Lines’s retaining wall. Douglas’s cartography redistricts the landscape. Clustered together on a hilltop slope and routed towards the entryway of a soldier’s living quarters, Douglas’s language transforms Chatham’s barrows into a military territory that ‘descends’ to and is surrounded by a military settlement. These geopolitical acts have a transformative effect on Chatham’s soldiers. When Douglas begins to recount their excavations a second time, the unnamed assemblage of ‘labourers and soldiers’ that once ‘traversed’ a ‘range of...tumuli’ is replaced by a ‘Hanoverian encampment’ that is ‘situated on them.’ This Germanic military body no longer freely crosses the landscapes of the dead but temporarily settles on them. As they dwell here, they sink into the grave, becoming secondary inhabitants that Douglas himself now claims to excavate. He identifies Chatham’s ‘Hanoverian encampment’ only by way of ‘the remains of the[ir]...kitchens,’ which ‘were to be seen on the centre of the burial ground.’

Although Douglas was a member of the Kentish militia, an engineer on the Chatham Lines, and a supervisor of its earthworks, he did not physically engage in the labor of barrow excavation. The artifacts dug up by soldiers and recovered from Chatham’s barrows found their way to Douglas’s office, where he collected and then examined, sketched, and engraved them, arranging his representations of bone and funerary objects onto lithographic plates. In his office, not in the field, Douglas excavates from his armchair. As he handles materials that have been

63 Douglas, Nenia Britannica, 3n*.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
67 Jessup, Man of Many Talents, 25.
brought out of Tumulus I, Douglas (re)arranges them. He positions bones and artifacts such that a dead Saxon and its funeral tableau suggest the posture and stance of Chatham’s living soldiers.

Within the first pages of *Nenia Britannica*, Douglas refigures Chatham’s barrows — remote places of little interest to nearby communities — into what appears to be a military territory. Then he fills this territory with soldier occupants. While Douglas identifies the soldiers who excavate Tumulus I as Hanoverian (an adjective that references the Germanic origins of Britain’s current monarch), he says nothing about the skeleton’s identity. Towards the end of *Nenia Britannica*, however, Douglas makes historical assessments about British *tumuli* and barrow artifacts that draw Chatham’s military territory and the living practices of its Hanoverian soldiers towards a Germanic past. In a lengthy ‘OBSERVATIONS’ section, Douglas rightly notes that Anglo-Saxon barrows are small, round, and often appear in clusters. Likewise, he dates them to the pre-Christian period, which extends from ‘the year 429 [when] the Saxons arrived’ to ‘the admission of cemeteries within the walls and near to churches anno 742.’ Douglas further connects these Saxon barrows by evaluating their grave goods. Specifically, he focuses on ‘the nature of the arms, the most convincing proof of a parity of custom,’ and he cross-references the illustration of a Saxon soldier in a manuscript copy of Prudentius’s *Psychomachia* with a sword from Tumulus I, the shield boss of Tumulus VII, and ‘[s]pears, knives, and axes,’ which Douglas claims to have ‘in great numbers.’ Douglas further surmises that these weapons burials identify Saxons who were either not ‘peasantry’ or ‘under military enrolment.’ Douglas’s observations bear heavily upon the grave plan of Tumulus I. The circular ditch, which is drawn tightly around a skeleton’s coffin, resembles Douglas’s statements regarding the size and shape of Saxon barrows. The

69 Ibid., 128, 128n1, 128n3.
70 Ibid., 128n4.
weaponry inside the grave suggests the identity of a pre-Christian, migration-period Saxon male who is either of high rank or enrolled as a foot soldier.

The barrows at Chatham seem to be a military territory shaped by its Lines and barracks and the activities of its soldiers. However, when Douglas makes assessments regarding the funerary aspects of these barrows, they become, first and foremost, an antiquarian territory. It is constructed from Douglas's office, rather than from the excavation site, and according to his semi-professional assessments of barrow landscape features and grave goods. Douglas directs the living places and practices of Chatham's Germanic (Hanoverian) community towards the dying places and practices of another Germanic (Saxon) community. He positions a military territory within an antiquarian one and, in so doing, reassembles — de- and re-territorializes — the identity assemblages of Britain's present and past Germanic soldiers.

Douglas presents this re- and de-territorialized Saxon soldier visually in Tumulus I. Its skeletal body and the military grave goods that surround it represent the bones and artifacts that were excavated from a Chatham barrow, sent to Douglas's militia office, then arranged according to Nenia Britannica's antiquarian assessments. As a consequence, this skeleton seems to move and to step out of its grave, such that Figure 1 becomes an object. Its physical body and material grave goods extend the intertwined identity-making performances of two different groups of Germanic soldiers from their spatiotemporal domains in Chatham's barrows towards the new domain of Tumulus I. As an object that not only provides access to barrow territories that have been destroyed through excavation but, moreover, enables the viewer to re-find these territories over and over, again, each time she looks at its illustrated grave plan, Figure 1 of Tumulus I reveals itself to be ekphrastic. It is a warrior-relic that ‘liv[es] on, undead’ in the eternal ‘nowness’ of Tumulus I.71 As ekph-

rasis, Figure 1 performs in order to seek a phenomenological response that, to recall Liliane Louvel, ‘works on our senses, on our percepts, emotions, and bodies.’ Therefore, when it looks across the page at ‘TUMULUS I’ (see Figure 6b), its gaze settles on the illustration located above this statement. In this illustration, an unnamed person sits on top of an unexcavated barrow. He clasps a scythe in one hand and an urn in another, materials of grief and collecting that suggest he is an antiquarian. In a lengthy footnote regarding a tumulus near Broom, Kent, Douglas clarifies not only the barrow-sitter’s antiquarian identity but also the antiquarian’s emotional and embodied responses to Figure 1’s ekphrastic gaze.

Before turning to Broom, it is important to note that Chatham’s barrows were the first that Douglas encountered. Subsequent to Chatham, Douglas becomes, arguably, obsessed with British barrows, overseeing the excavation of hundreds of mounds over the course of his lifetime. At Broom, a site he excavated long after Chatham, Douglas claims that his ‘restless’ ‘spirit’ has the all-consuming urge to ‘ransack’ graves. While Douglas’s excavations at Broom prompt in him reckless behav-

72 Louvel, ‘Types of Ekphrasis,’ 259, my emphasis.
73 See note 2 above.
74 While Nenia is a Latin word that references a funeral song, a song of lament, or a dirge, its meaning becomes a point of contention immediately after the book’s publication. In August 1793, an anonymous reviewer smugly writes that ‘the title itself is objectionable, and only applicable to a dissertation on the funeral songs of the ancient Britons’ (‘Douglas’s Nenia Britannica,’ The Critical Review: Or, Annals of Literature 8 [1793]: 415). The following month, in the October edition of the Gentleman’s Magazine, Douglas rebuts his reviewer, arguing, upon the authority of Festus, that ‘Nenia’ references a goddess, not a dirge, and claiming that before his death Samuel Johnson gave Douglas his personal blessing for the title (‘Mr. Douglas’s “Nenia Britannica,” Gentleman’s Magazine [October 1793]: 881).
75 According to Jessup, ‘[b]y 1782, something like 86 barrows or levelled graves [at Chatham] had been opened and their contents described and sometimes carefully drawn…In all, if we may depend on later topographers such as G.A. Cooke in the 1819 edition of his Pocket County Directory of Kent, Douglas opened no less than 100 graves’ (Man of Many Talents, 24).
iors, he cautions that ‘[t]ragical abominations’ can result from the antiquarian's protracted attachments to the dead.\textsuperscript{76} Douglas quotes from Sir Thomas Browne's *Hydriotaphia*, a report on urn-burial in Norfolk and a work that not only confuses excavating the dead with mourning them but also recognizes that there are psychic consequences for the antiquarian who desires to maintain these emotional ties once the excavation is over. As Browne and Douglas, who quotes him, explain, should the excavator be unable to set aside her mourning — should she desire to maintain her relationship with the dead — she may unconsciously incorporate them. In other words, she may position her affections for and memories of the dead within her unconscious such that they continue to live within her. She may build a psychic crypt for them so that they can inhabit her.\textsuperscript{77} Douglas, quoting Browne, describes the effects of incorporation when he writes that to excavate is ‘to be gnawed out of our graves,’ to have ‘our skulls’ and ‘our bones’ crafted into ‘drinking bowls’ and ‘tobacco pipes,’ instruments meant for imbibing and inhaling the spirits of the dead.\textsuperscript{78} In order to avoid attachments that lead to the formation of psychic crypts, Douglas, following Browne, re-

\textsuperscript{76} Douglas, *Nenia Britannica*, 39 (unnumbered note).

\textsuperscript{77} These psychoanalytic concepts are discussed and explained extensively in Chapter 2. As Maria Abraham and Nicholas Torok explain, this ‘sealed-off psychic space’ warehouses the ‘exquisite corps[e] of a loved one who we cannot bear to mourn’ (*The Shell and the Kernel*, ed. and trans. Nicholas T. Rand [Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994], 141).

\textsuperscript{78} Douglas, *Nenia Britannica*, 39n, quoting from Sir Thomas Browne's *Hydriotaphia, urne-buriall, or, a discourse of the sepulchrall urnes lately found in Norfolk* (London: Printed for Hen. Browne at the Signe of the Gun in Ivy-Lane, 1658), 48. Note that Douglas spells ‘knav’ d’ as ‘gnawed,’ and he amends ‘Pipes’ to ‘tobacco pipes.’ Recall from Chapter 2 that in the Old Norse poem *Krákumál*, Ragnar claims that in death he will drink beer from ‘the curved-tree of skulls,’ an elaborate kenning that references a drinking horn. *Krákumál*’s emphasis on orality engages a rigorous discussion about the psychopolitics of incorporation, and Abraham and Torok associate food and drink imagery which emphasizes illicit acts of swallowing whole with the enactment of incorporation (*The Shell and the Kernel*, 128–29).
vises his relationship to the Broom ‘antients’ as a post-mortem friendship, a shift in affections that keeps them at arm’s length.\textsuperscript{79}

Douglas further recalibrates his emotional attachments to the dead at Broom by transforming acts of archaeological grief into acts of professional collecting. Douglas explains that he removes human remains from a barrow and puts them into a curiosity ‘cabinet’ where ‘rotten bones’ become ‘\textit{everlasting treasures}’.\textsuperscript{80} As collectibles, however, another’s bone and ash press Douglas’s own body in the direction of the grave, for as he touches, arranges, and looks upon them, he imagines himself, in the third person, ‘mouldering in his own sepulchre’ until his decaying body is irreverently exhumed.\textsuperscript{81} Despite all of his cautionary words and measures, Douglas’s mourning is protracted through his collecting, and by means of these antiquarian activities, Douglas finds himself suspended in a state of living death. In order to breathe vitality into his own body, Douglas returns to his cabinet, where he discards the ‘everlasting treasures’ of his friend’s remains, replaces them with ‘a little superfluous treasure; then piously re-inters the body within its barrow.\textsuperscript{82}

If Douglas continues to mourn the dead at Broom, has he incorporated them? Has a psychic crypt formed within his unconscious? Regardless of whether or not Douglas physically dug up the graves at Broom, his narrative presents excavation as a physically — and emotionally — charged endeavor for the antiquarian. These highly dynamic performances of ransacking graves, mourning ancient friends, and collecting their bones result in physical and emotional transformations. To put it in Deleuzoguattarian terms, Douglas stages excavation as a de- and re-territorializing activity. His mind and body — his embodied mind — are subject to radical shifts in identity. Douglas says nothing else in \textit{Nenia Britannica} regarding excavation. However, when Douglas’s mourning and collecting are associated with the

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., author’s emphasis.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
image of the barrow-sitter, his antiquarian practices show themselves to be refracted in its scythe and urn. The barrow-sitter stands in, visually, for Douglas, who responds to the ekphrastic gaze of the Saxon foot-soldier: he collects bones and artifacts; he assesses their historical provenance and illustrates them; then, he arranges them in a cabinet. These semi-professional movements, which have become Douglas’s antiquarian living practices, are expressed in the barrow-sitter’s physical posture, affective stance, and proximity to the grave. In short, the Saxon of Figure 1 transforms Douglas’s mind and body as he excavates it, and Douglas visually records these de- and re-territorializing displays in his illustration of the barrow-sitter.

In the process of responding to Figure 1, this image of the antiquarian barrow-sitter likewise becomes ekphrastic. It looks across the page and gazes back at the skeletal soldier, whose ‘rotten bones’ are now vibrantly displayed as ‘everlasting treasures,’ and whose military grave goods are now ‘superfluous treasure.’ The barrow-sitter’s gaze transforms the Saxon foot-soldier of Figure 1 into the centerpiece of an aesthetically pleasing arrangement, numbered ‘1’ through ‘10.’ The entire collection of treasure is bordered by a thin sepia line, as if it is one virtual ‘drawer’ of a much larger curiosity cabinet. Suddenly, Tumulus I, along with the other tumuli of Nenia Britannica, reveal themselves to be artifact illustrations that Douglas has collected from his and others’ barrow excavations.

As both archaeological report and cabinet of antiquarian curiosities, Nenia Britannica acknowledges that the early medieval barrow has become a new kind of antiquarian territory by which, to adapt the language of Jean Baudrillard, Douglas ‘construct[s]’ his own ‘mourning’ even as the Saxon foot-soldier inside the excavated barrow ‘represents [his] own death.’ The solitary mourner that grieves on top of an unexcavated TUMULUS I and the excavated skeleton that lies within Tumulus I transform an unopened and forgotten barrow on the Chatham landscape

into a site where a Saxon soldier, in proximity to a Hanoverian one, awaits antiquarian recovery. From the materials of an old burial mound, a new territory has been erected. TUMULUS I / Tumulus I — constructed by de- and re-territorializing the living practices of Hanoverian soldiers as the dying practices of Saxons — makes a home out of a grave. Consequently, it is a ‘regressiv[e]’ territory where, as Baudrillard again might also say, Douglas ‘is dead, but he literally survives himself through his collection.’ Yet the Saxon soldier and barrow-sitter that occupy this tumulus are figures that have been removed from an actual barrow and positioned within Douglas’s Nenia Britannica. From the pages of this archaeological report (not from within an early medieval barrow) they broadcast the performative gestures of a soldier and an antiquarian. They operate as an ekphrastic pair. The undead, reliquary forms of an excavated body and its excavator yoke dying to living practices, and they enable all who view them to find this newly created antiquarian territory over and over each time they scan the pages of Nenia Britannica. Consequently, although this undead, reliquary pair gaze at one another, they nonetheless seek interactions and responses from others.

Despite the temporal distance, connections abound between the Old English Beowulf and James Douglas’s Nenia Britannica. Both are invested in discussing early medieval barrows, and both are concerned with converting their textual forms into a network of barrows. For Beowulf, chiasmus and interlace construct the poem into a barrow cemetery; for Nenia Britannica, chapters called tumuli transform the archaeological report into book of barrows. By positioning geopolitical territories within literary and archaeological forms, Beowulf and Nenia Britannica locate the expressive territory of the early medieval barrow. Further, when Beowulf and Douglas loot and excavate mortuary interiors, they encounter ekphrastic displays of weapons and bones that emotionally and physically reorder them. Consequently, Beowulf and Douglas become ekphrastic. Independent

84 Ibid., 104.
and unknown to one another, these literary and archaeological figures seek respondents across time and space and into the future.

The conceptual parallels between *Beowulf* and *Nenia Britannica* are extensive, yet these two texts are temporally and territorially distinct. While both are constructed in relation to the early medieval barrow, *Beowulf* and *Nenia Britannica* belong to different moments in time, and, consequently, they encounter very different communities who ‘live’ upon barrow surfaces and ‘die’ within barrow interiors. *Beowulf’s* Danes, Geats, Gendelkin, and giants are not the soldiers and antiquarians of *Nenia Britannica*. Likewise, Beowulf is not James Douglas. The identity assemblages — the territorializing expressions — that are brought into ekphrastic circulation on the pages of *Beowulf* and *Nenia Britannica* are fundamentally asynchronous. Yet their shared ekphrasis keeps them on the move, seeking interactions and soliciting responses by way of embodied poesis. Beowulf, the Saxon foot-soldier, and the antiquarian barrow-sitter of Tumulus I circulate in the protracted present, occupying a zone that extends from death to life, and from center to elsewhere, in a constant motion that travels ceaselessly between then and now.

As of yet, however, the reliquary body of Beowulf is unknown to the Saxon soldier and barrow-sitter, and this acquaintance will come much later.

*Nenia Britannica* was dismissed by reviewers upon its publication, and Douglas’s widow eventually sold her husband’s collection of barrow artifacts to Sir Richard Colt Hoare due to financial need. Yet, as England’s nineteenth-century political climate began to emphasize nationalist and imperialist discourses, Douglas and his *Nenia Britannica* begin to gather recognition. In 1819, Hoare gifted Douglas’s artifacts to Oxford’s Ashmolean Museum, thereby endowing it with the country’s most extensive and varied collection of Anglo-Saxon artifacts.85 In the follow-

ing years, *Nenia Britannica* gained in popularity among Victorian antiquarians interested in what Douglas had identified as the early Saxon period. These Victorians were motivated historically by a narrative of Saxon conquest of Britain, politically by ideologies of Empire, and genealogically by a belief that the martial character of their Saxon ancestors lived on in Britain’s present generation. The excavation, collection, and illustration of certain kinds of grave goods and burial assemblages became critical tools for generating a Saxon racial identity: an inheritable profile of traits that could be mapped onto the behaviors, desires, and physical characteristics of members of Britain’s highly militarized empire. As Victorian antiquarians began to oversee the excavation of small round barrows on the British landscape, they employed Douglas’s illustrated *tumuli* as an archaeological catalogue to compare and date the artifacts which they found. While a low percentage of these graves contained weapons, antiquarians were keen to recover the material culture of Saxon warrior elites because in their minds, weapons burials refracted the racial profile of imperial Britons. Victorian antiquarians used Douglas’s illustration of the Saxon foot-soldier as a template when sketching weapons burials, which they considered, in accordance with Douglas, to be exemplary of the pre-Christian, or early Saxon period.

As Victorian antiquarians assess their barrow excavations in relation to Douglas’s Tumulus I, the Saxon soldier and barrow-sitter exceed their function as reference materials. They show

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86 Although Douglas emphasizes the great number of arms that he has found in Saxon graves, he admits, in a footnote, that ‘it was not in the proportion of one in twenty [barrows] which produced arms of any kind’ (*Nenia Britannica*, 128n4).

87 Archaeologists discuss the ekphrasis of archaeological images, albeit using different terms. As Sam Smiles and Stephanie Moser write, ‘archaeological visualization[s]’ are ‘a coded system’ that functions as ‘both symbol and communication.’ They create what Smiles and Moser call a ‘constructed past’ that ‘produces some of its most long-lasting effects’ on the discipline (‘Introduction: The Image in Question,’ in *Envisioning the Past: Archaeology on the Image*, eds. Sam Smiles and Stephanie Moser [Oxford: Blackwell, 2005], 5, 6). See also Brian Leigh Molyneaux, ‘Introduction: The Cultural
these antiquarians a territory where Saxon foot-soldiers stand in their graves as if ready to fight again (and again), and antiquarians make this post-mortem animation possible by performatively mourning and physically collecting Saxon artifacts and bones. Antiquarians respond to the ekphrasis of Tumulus I in mind and in body. They play the role of the barrow-sitter, and, as Douglas predicted, their activities result in the formation of psychic crypts. These Victorian antiquarians are now inhabited by the dead—they are de- and re-territorialized by imaginary performances of excavation. Consequently, when they adapt Douglas’s grave plans in order to illustrate newly excavated barrows, Victorians evidence these changes to their own identities by reassembling the physical features and grave goods of Saxon foot-soldiers. As these Victorians re-create the ekphrastic gazes that emerge between the images in Tumulus I, they transform the early medieval barrow once again into an antiquarian territory that is now inhabited by Anglo-Saxons.

Sleeping Saxons, Post-mortem Tenancies, and the Encryption of Race

William Wylie is one of Douglas’s Victorian readers. He employs Nenia Britannica extensively as a reference that guides him in the writing of his highly influential Fairford Graves, an archaeological report on the barrow cemetery at Fairford, Gloucestershire. One grave, excavated on March 7th, becomes the touchstone for his entire excavation. Upon opening it, Wylie remarks, in words that sound as if they were voiced by Douglas’s barrow-sitter, that to the left of the skeleton’s head lies a ‘sadly decayed’ cup

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that ‘still hung together.’\textsuperscript{89} Although Wylie’s language identifies grief as the affective means by which the cup’s decaying pieces of wood and metal remain ‘together,’ he extends this assessment of the artifact’s fragile togetherness in the direction of the excavators who take it out of the ground. Wylie writes, ‘we were able to remove it,’ and the ‘we’ of Fairford’s excavators becomes the alliterative stave against which Wylie fashions the group’s emotional response to the act of physically excavating the cup from its burial site: ‘It is wonderful that a wooden vessel should have existed at all for so many centuries, in this wet soil.’\textsuperscript{90}

Like \textit{Nenia Britannica}, Wylie’s archaeological report underscores barrow digging as embodied acts of mourning and collecting. Note well that despite the language of hands-on excavation, Wylie, like Douglas, was not necessarily present at the Fairford excavation site.\textsuperscript{91} Nonetheless, embodied performance and physical movement are key to this scene. Unlike \textit{Nenia}, however, the excavations at Fairford are not solitary activities. An unidentified group reaches for the cup and responds, in unison, to its perpetual decay by mourning it.\textsuperscript{92} As this group’s excavation shifts from the artifacts at the grave’s outer perimeter towards its interior where a body lies, the cup’s ‘sad decay’ and the excavators’ collective mourning are amplified by their next find: a ‘corroded’ sword.\textsuperscript{93} This huge sword is tucked underneath an ossified collar bone and extends past radius, ulna, and pha-
langes. It holds together a skeleton’s fragmented form despite its own material corrosion. As Fairford’s excavators shift their attentions from artifact to bone, Wylie explains that ‘it’ — this self-same sword — has been found in multiple ‘Saxon barrows’ across England and ‘also in Livonian, Burgundian, and Frankish graves.’94 ‘It’ is ‘of the same type’ as those of Scandinavia.95 ‘It’ ‘answers to Plutarch’s account of the Cymbric weapon,’ and ‘it’ ‘exactly corresponds to the description of Suevi weapons.’96 Just as the sword’s materiality holds together the discrete bones of the skeleton, the sword’s material culture connects the graves of people from across northern Europe. On the one hand, the sword is mobilized as an anthropological tool that signals cultural connections between peoples. At the same time, the entanglement between sword and bone creates cultural-racial ties. Although corroded by the soil’s dampness, as Wylie’s narrative continues to describe this sword, its massive military form gathers together a kin group whose Saxon, Livonian, Burgundian, et alii members belong to one ‘great and noble Teutonic family’97 — a family that Wylie references on the first page of his Preface as ‘the Teutonic race.’98

As if responding to the ekphrastic gazes exchanged between Douglas’s solitary barrow-sitter and his Saxon soldier-skeleton, an unnamed group at Fairford mourns and collects the artifacts and bone from one grave in order to extend the scope of their grief and collecting across many graves in northern Europe. Do they, like (or unlike) Douglas, engage in a mourning that psychically encrypts the dead? Answers are, again, unclear. However, as this community of antiquarians stands, like Douglas, over material crypts and imagines living practices of excavation, its affective movements and gestures assemble the bodies of a Teutonic race.

94 Ibid., 21.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid., vi.
98 Ibid., v.
Fairford's antiquarians and its Teutonic family are assembled together in ‘The Saxon Chieftain: Written on Opening a Saxon Grave, March 7, 1851,’ a poem that reframes the March 7th excavation as an act that suspends the boundaries between death and life and exchanges body organs of the dead and the living. In his grave, this ‘Saxon Chieftain’ merely ‘sleeps,’ and when the wooden vessel and corroded sword are arranged around his body, they are no longer artifacts of decay and corrosion: ‘still at his head the festal goblet stands…Still seeks the trenchant blade those nerveless hands.’ These uncorrupted grave goods locate the uncorrupted head and hand of this sleeping Saxon, who materially, physically, and biologically endures. He lies ‘still.’ Yet, his stillness is made possible by the embodied emotional performances of the March 7th excavators. The unnamed ‘we’ of Wylie’s archaeological report are figured here as ‘kindred men,’ Saxon relatives who look upon their chieftain and ‘kindly breathe / A pious requiem to the noble dead.’

The mourning song of antiquarians establishes a relationship with this chieftain that is articulated along relational and racial lines. He is their leader and kinsman, and, consequently, all are Saxons. These connections allow for a confusion of temporalities and of physical bodies. As mourners, it is unclear whether these antiquarians exist in the present or the past. In the space of this confusion, their mourning sounds breathe life into the chieftain’s Saxon lungs, and his Saxon lungs animate the antiquarians’ other internal organs: ‘still sounds the Saxon tongue as erst of old, / In Saxon breast still beats the Saxon heart.’ From death to sleep, from skeletal fragments to a complete skeleton, this Saxon Chieftain still lives in the speaking tongues and beating hearts — in the bodies — of its excavator-kinsmen who still mourn him. This exchange of breath, spirit, and vitality articulates the racial profile of Saxon bodies, who, whether past or present, are characterized by their

99 Ibid., 38–40.
100 Ibid., 38.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
imperial impulses and the ‘God bless’d…empire-tree’ to which they belong.\footnote{Ibid., 39.}

The fantastic body crossings of ‘The Saxon Chieftain’ suggest the process of psychic incorporation, and the grave plan that accompanies this poem signals crypt formation. ‘Sketch of a Grave: Opened March 7th’\footnote{Ibid., n.p.} is a grave plan that ‘follows the examplar’ of Douglas’s Figure 1.\footnote{See Williams, ‘Anglo-Saxonism and Victorian Archaeology,’ 81.} Unlike Figure 1, which looks alive except for its skeletonized body, the warrior occupant of Wylie’s illustration is an entirely lifeless, anonymous, and fading fragment of bones (see Figure 7). Through the protracted and embodied performances of community mourning, the life force of this Saxon has been called to presence, animated, and deposited within the bodies of his imperial kin, who keep him ‘alive’ in psychic crypts that have been built for him. All that remains are the material leftovers, so to speak, of this Saxon. And as if to underscore this point, Wylie positions ‘Sketch of a Grave’ as the visual conclusion to Fairford Graves.

Around the time that Fairford Graves is published, Charles Roach Smith’s second and third volumes of Collectanea Antiqua extend and revise further Douglas’s grave plan now that psychic crypts have been built for its Saxon warrior. In Volume 2, Smith declares that Nenia Britannica is ‘one of the most useful, and has, in the department to which it is more specifically devoted, been more serviceable, as a work of reference, than any other we possess.’\footnote{Charles Roach Smith, Collectanea Antiqua, 7 vols. (London: J. Russell Smith, 1848–1880), 2:156.} By praising Douglas within a section called ‘Anglo-Saxon Remains,’ Smith refines the racial identity of Douglas’s Saxon foot-soldier and Wylie’s Saxon chieftain, who are now perceived as denizens of Britain rather than Migration-Era figures. Volume 3 opens with an excavation at Ozengell, Kent, in southeastern England, a site that marks this transition from Saxon to Anglo-Saxon identity. Smith’s ‘imagination…pictures the traditional advent of Hengist and Horsa, the supposed lead-
ers of the people, among the immediate descendants of whom were the tenants of the Ozingell graves. As the arrival point of Anglo-Saxon England’s mythical Saxon fathers and the burial site of their ‘immediate’ Anglo-Saxon ‘descendants,’ Ozengell is a landscape of romantic expectation and a place of post-mortem ‘tenancy.’ Secure in their psychic (and material) crypts, the Saxons and Anglo-Saxons buried at Ozengell are not entirely dead, and their undead presence calls into presence an antiquarian group. When area railroad workers stumble upon some of these graves, ‘about thirteen graves were laid open by order of Sir [William Henry] Rolfe, who kindly invited on the occasion Messrs. [Thomas] Wright, [James Orchard] Halliwell, [Frederick William] Fairholt, [Edwin?] Keet, and myself [Charles Roach Smith]’ to join him in the excavation. Framed by Smith’s introduction, this ‘kindly invited’ group of well-known antiquarians, scholars, and engravers sets out to re-discover the Anglo-Saxon relations of Hengest and Horsa and to create what might now be considered a professional community of antiquarians that finds the racialized image of its collective body in the skeletonized figure of a grave plan.

Smith does not document the excavation. There is no grief expressed for the dead and no funeral dirges sung. Nor does Smith mention the processes of collecting and assembling artifacts. As bodies that have already been enlivened through incorporation and positioned within the psychic crypts of an antiquarian group, there is no need to re-stage the embodied performances by which the dead were fantastically assembled within the living. After describing the location of Ozengell and the antiquarians who are present, Smith reproduces a sketch of one of Ozengell’s tenants (see Figure 8). This ‘annexed engraving, from a sketch made by Mr. Fairholt at the time of discovery, represents one of the most interesting of the deposits.’ In addition to its erect position and lifelike stance, this ‘perfect’

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107 Ibid., 3:2.
108 Ibid.
109 Ibid., 3:3.
easily discerned by the loose nature of the soil, the natural hard chalk forming the cists, the sides and bottoms of which had been smoothed. When the bodies and the weapons and other objects deposited with them had been arranged, the graves were filled in first with earth, and then with the small friable pieces of chalk dug out in making the graves; but in many instances, immediately over the bodies had been placed thin slabs of laminated sand-stone. Only a few of the skeletons were perfect; many were almost entirely decomposed, with the exception of the teeth, which were generally well preserved and free from disease.

The annexed engraving, from a sketch made by Mr. Fairholt, at the time of the discovery, represents one of the most interesting of the deposits. On the breast of the skeleton lay the iron umbo of a circular shield, (see pl. 11); on the right side lay a spear-head, the length of the entire weapon (about six feet) being indicated by the spiculum or iron point at the butt-end; at the left hip was an iron knife, and from the right hip across the left thigh a short sword, shewn in fig. 7, pl. 11, in an enlarged view. At the left shoulder was an earthen vessel, (see fig. 3, pl. iii.)

Figure 8. From Charles Roach Smith, Collectanea Antiqua, Vol. 3 (London: J. Russell Smith, 1854), 3. Image courtesy of University of Colorado–Boulder.
‘Anglo-Saxon’ skeleton appears to have tissue on him. A thousand years of tenancy in an Ozengell grave has left his arms and legs gaunt, his eyes hollow, and his cheeks sunken. Yet his spearhead is still sharp, his sword is curved like a pirate’s cutlass, and the decayed wooden parts of his weapons are drawn in with a dotted line, creating the illusion that they are still present and whole. In the psychic crypts of Smith’s antiquarians, this ‘Anglo-Saxon’ lives on, perfect, present, and complete. Consequently, when Smith’s grave plan illustrates the physical body of this Anglo-Saxon, it depicts a territory that is double — both a material grave that has been excavated and also a psychic vault that been built. This composite sketch draws the interest of Ozengell’s antiquarian group because, as Smith’s archaeological narrative explains, the weaponry is a ‘most interesting…deposi[t].’ His height is the length of his six-foot spear; his shield boss covers his heart; and the distance between ‘right hip’ and ‘left thigh’ are traced by his ‘short sword.’ Hengest and Horsa’s descendant stands at attention, and an entire group of gentleman archaeologists gazes upon the towering stature of an ‘Anglo-Saxon.’ While his weapons continue to display the imperial spirit of Wylie’s Saxon chieftain, these traits are now physically documented by Smith’s antiquarian measurements. As a figure that is simultaneously outside and inside the embodied minds of a professional antiquarian community, this ‘Anglo-Saxon’ is drawn, in part, according to their specifications. Consequently, as Rolfe, Wright, Haliwell, Fairholt, Keet, and Smith look, together, at this six-foot tall warrior, he nods in acknowledgement of their presence. Though one is barely living, and the others are entirely alive, this is meeting of friends, a salutary moment in which the ‘immediate’ and extended ‘descendants’ of Hengest and Horsa physically make one another’s acquaintance in the barrow.

110 Ibid.
111 Ibid. Smith alludes to the precise measurements of boss and sword elsewhere, noting that his drawing of the shield boss is ‘one-third of the size of the origina[l]’ and his drawing of the sword is ‘half the actual size’ (ibid., 3:5).
Figure 10. Plate XXVIII, in Charles Roach Smith, *Collectanea Antiqua*, Vol. 6 (1868), n.p. Image courtesy of University of Colorado–Boulder.
Wylie’s *Fairford Graves* and Smith’s *Collectanea Antiqua* credit *Nenia Britannica* as the most valuable reference tool for an emerging community of antiquarians, and they model their grave plans upon Douglas’s illustration of Figure 1. Several others were produced during the mid-nineteenth century, and they, too, bear striking resemblance to Douglas’s Figure 1 (see Figures 9 and 10).¹¹²

These adaptations of Douglas’s Tumulus I expand the antiquarian territory of the early medieval barrow such that the identity assemblages articulated in *Nenia Britannica* as Saxon are now considered to be Anglo-Saxon. As these antiquarians adapt and transform Douglas’s Figure 1, they, like Douglas’s barrow-sitter, respond, in mind and in body, to its ekphrasis. Douglas’s lone antiquarian and Wylie’s anonymous ‘we…kindred men’ are replaced by Smith’s list of notable gentlemen scholars. A solitary mourner and collector is joined, next to the grave, by a group of mourner-collectors, who summon the racialized body of an Anglo-Saxon through imaginary, but also embodied, movements and performances. Their antiquarian living practices are tuned to (what they believe to be) Saxon and Anglo-Saxon dying practices, and they (re)assemble their antiquarian identities according to assemblages of artifacts and bones. As this group professionalizes, its grief turns, firstly, into incorporation and encryption and, secondly, into studied interest. Barrow-sitting becomes a professional practice for those who are inhabited by the dead, and these barrow-sitters begin to live, so to speak, in the graves of others. The ekphrasis of Tumulus I has broadcasted the signals of its reliquary undeadness to its antiquarian readers, who have responded to these communiqués in mind and in body. Their professional living is attuned to others’ ways of dying, and, consequently, they imagine Anglo-Saxon identity as a skeletal form.

¹¹² Note that Figure 9 is a reproduction of Douglas’s Figure 1, and the ‘crystal ball’ between the leg bones of Figure 10 is referenced in relation to Douglas’s writings about this artifact (ibid., 6:150).
Anglo-Saxon Skulls, Craniology, and the “Essential Characteristics of Our Race”

While this chapter has noted the shifting racial profile of antiquarians who believe themselves to be the inheritors of martially spirited and physically enormous Anglo-Saxons, as Douglas admitted and these scholars well know, the racial typology sketched in the grave plans of Wylie, Smith, and others is neither the average physical form of an Anglo-Saxon nor of the antiquarians who direct barrow excavations. Yet this group, which is inhabited by the dead, desires to find a physical connection—a mark on the body that distinguishes biological race—between Anglo-Saxons of the past and present. Joseph Bernard Davis and John Thurnam’s *Crania Britannica* does just that.

A pseudoscience that, Chris Manias argues, ‘allows the living to be compared with the dead,’ craniology is the study of the shape and size of the skulls of different human races. Davis and Thurnam set out to distinguish between Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon, and Scandinavian crania in their two-volume reference guide, *Crania Britannica*. The first of Davis and Thurnam’s Anglo-Saxon crania comes from Ozengell, a site excavated not only by Smith but also by Thomas Wright, who, in *Wanderings of an Antiquary*, explains that its barrows offer the antiquarian ‘a melancholy way of making acquaintance with our forefathers of thirteen centuries ago, by raising from the grave

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114 Joseph Barnard Davis and John Thurnam, *Crania Britannica: Delineations and Descriptions of the Skulls of the Aboriginal and Early Inhabitants of the British Islands*, 2 vols (London: Printed for the Subscribers, 1865). In its initial subscription publication of six parts (1856–1865), plate-sized crania illustrations were interleaved with accompanying descriptions. Upon republication in 1865, its material was reorganized, and cranial descriptions and illustrations were split into two separate volumes. Volume 1 evaluates the size, proportion, and distinguishing features of hundreds of skulls. Volume 2 features a folio-sized illustration of each cranium.
ANGLO-SAXON(IST) PASTS, POSTSAXON FUTURES
the bones which are no longer able to tell us their history.”\textsuperscript{115} Smith’s grave plan and Wright’s words — in addition to Douglas’s Tumulus I\textsuperscript{116} — are not lost on Davis and Thurnam, who organize their cranial evaluation of the Ozengell skull around the archaeological illustrations of these antiquarians.

Unlike every other cranium from Volume 1 of \textit{Crania Britannica}, which is sketched from four different directions, Davis and Thurnam substitute cranial representations of Ozengell with an illustration from Wright’s \textit{Wanderings} (see Figures 11a, 11b, 12a, and 12b).

A gentleman’s estate lies in the background, and in the foreground are several graves in active excavation. To the left, a shovel is staked in the dirt, while a laborer leans over and into a hole. To the right, two gentlemen stand at the mouth of a pit, while another worker continues to dig. From the distance, a gentleman approaches the activity, arriving, perhaps, from the country house in the background. In the further distance — to the left of the house — boxy apparitions point towards the excavators. The mortuary landscape of Wright’s sketch, in which so many people stand in grave pits, signals a ‘making acquaintance’ that is melancholic, indeed. The movements from country manor to grave signal a transtemporal circulation between bodies of the past and present by which, it seems, the followers of Hengest and Horsa have been ‘rais[ed] from the grave.’ The substitution of Ozengell’s cranial images with Wright’s excavation scene articulates an entanglement between psychic and material crypts. Likewise, it suggests that the dead now literally inhabit the minds and bodies of their excavators, whose professional living practices are enacted in the territory of others’ dying practices. These connections are not lost on Davis and Thurnam. After listing all of Ozengell’s excavators — W.H. Rolfe, the company of Charles Roach Smith, and Thomas Wright — they claim that

\textsuperscript{115} Thomas Wright, \textit{Wanderings of an Antiquary: Chiefly Upon the Traces of the Romans in Britain} (London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1854), 83.

\textsuperscript{116} Davis and Thurnam note that Smith’s grave plan ‘reminds us forcibly of the fine delineation by the hand of Mr. Douglas. \textit{Nenia Britannica}, plate 1’ \textit{(Crania Britannica}, 1:452).
‘when our skull was discovered, in which of them [the graves] we are not able to say. It has since passed, with many of the Oz- ingell relics, into the hands of Mr. Joseph Mayer, F.S.A., to whose ready acquiescence in our wish, the readers of the “Crania Britannica” owe its representation here.’\textsuperscript{117} Although its origins are imprecise, the Ozengell skull has ‘passed’ through the ‘hands’ of a growing body of excavators, collectors, craniologists, and Cran ia Britannica’s gentlemen readership. It is ‘our skull.’ It belongs to all who desire to claim it. Consequently, even when Davis and Thurnam state that ‘its representation’ is ‘here,’ in an asterisked footnote below, instead of a skull, they include citations to Wright and Smith’s works and add the illustrator F.W. Fairholt (who made the sketch that Smith used for his grave plan) to a growing list of antiquaries affiliated with Ozengell.\textsuperscript{118} Where is this skull that is being handled? It is ‘here,’ and yet it is not here; it is dead, but it is living. It belongs to no single skeleton but to the entire cemetery. It is a skull that could fit any and all of the bodies — dead or living — at Ozengell.

On the next page, Davis and Thurnam provide no further clues as to the location of this skull. Instead, they summarize the Ozengell excavation. Beginning with the statement that most graves were occupied by men, Davis and Thurnam provide the average skeletal heights of Ozengell’s occupants: five feet, ten inches, to six feet tall, with one body that was estimated to be six feet, four- to six-inches tall. Then, they describe the weapons, which include 30-inch broad swords, 9-to-21-inch spear tips, 6-foot spear shafts, ‘iron knives; battle-axes, or franciscas; umbones and studs of shields, the circular wooden discs having perished.’\textsuperscript{119} The absence of this skull is substituted by a superabundance of bodies and weapons, which have been measured and collated. Placed in the middle of this accounting is an ‘Oz-

\textsuperscript{117} Davis and Thurnam, Crania Britannica, 1:451.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 1:452, author’s emphasis.
**Figure 13.** Anglo-Saxon skeleton from Charles Roach Smith’s *Collectana Antiqua*, reprinted in Joseph Barnard Davis and John Thurnam, *Crania Britannica: Delineations and Descriptions of the Skulls of the Aboriginal and Early Inhabitants of the British Islands* (London: Printed for the Subscribers, 1865), 452. Image courtesy of Library of Congress.
ingell Grave, with Skeleton and remains of Shield and Spear in situ.\(^\text{120}\) (see Figure 13).

Surrounded by all of Ozengell’s men and their arms, this Anglo-Saxon could be five feet, ten inches. Or he could be six feet, four inches. He could have a nine-inch spear tip. Or it could be twenty-one inches. One thing, however, is certain: he possesses ‘our’ Ozengell skull. As Davis and Thurnam’s excavation summary is read in relation to the ‘Skeleton’ in an ‘Ozingell Grave,’ it becomes ekphrastic. It organizes a message of racial inheritance that is located in multiple bone lengths and skeletal morphologies. Consequently, it asks antiquarians who view it to find their own skeleton in its anonymous and unremarkable form. Further, this skeleton associates its racialized, osteological features with an armory of weapons, thereby transforming the martial, imperial characteristics of Wylie’s Saxon chieftain and Smith’s six-foot Anglo-Saxon into an appetite for endless battle.

On the subsequent page, Davis and Thurnam continue their catalogue of Ozengell artifacts. Coins, glassware, weights, and scales communicate an archaeological rhetoric of ‘balance’ and ‘proportion.’\(^\text{121}\) As the list of Ozengell’s grave goods arcs from unusually large armaments to well-proportioned measurements, Davis and Thurnam begin to describe, for the first time, the craniological features of this Ozengell skull. Notwithstanding its post-mortem ‘deformations,’ ‘our skull’ is ‘well-proportioned and upright,’ ‘well-expressed,’ ‘full,’ ‘moderately lofty,’ ‘long, straight, or slightly elevated.’\(^\text{122}\) Though armed to the teeth, everything about this skull evidences a well-rounded and well-balanced mind of reason and intellect — just like the minds of Davis and Thurnam’s antiquarian readership. While the Ozengell skeleton communicates one set of racialized features in its skeletal morphology, the Ozengell skull and its associated artifacts communicate another. Davis and Thurnam organize the material culture of the entire Ozengell cemetery to imply

\(^{120}\) Ibid.
\(^{121}\) Ibid., p.453.
\(^{122}\) Ibid.
that, despite their physical brawn and racialized appetite for destruction, Anglo-Saxons are of a noble and rational disposition. Davis and Thurnam offer no opportunity to see what such a skull looks like in this section because it is located ‘here’: inside every living and dead Anglo-Saxon body. As summary proof that Anglo-Saxons of the past and present now inhabit the same racial body, Davis and Thurnam write in their ‘Conclusions’: ‘[t]he series of Anglo-Saxon skulls, in their great resemblance to those of modern Englishmen, vindicate the true derivation of the essential characteristics of our race from a Teutonic origin. The form and proportions of these crania probably evince more power than refinement.’

Raised from the grave and from the pages of multiple scholarly reports, Davis and Thurnam anticipate the arrival of the figure of the Anglo-Saxonist — a professional who not only studies Anglo-Saxon peoples but is Anglo-Saxon. In mind and in body — in embodied mind — the Anglo-Saxonist emerges from the territory of Douglas’s antiquarian barrow and from the joint ekphrasis of his Saxon foot-soldier and antiquarian barrow-sitter. Yet, the Anglo-Saxonist is an interdisciplinary figure. In order to locate ‘it,’ this chapter circles back to early medieval barrows, to Beowulf, and to Beowulf’s ekphrastic displays, discussing all in relation to one last nineteenth-century scholar: John Mitchell Kemble.

Coda: John Mitchell Kemble, ‘Anglo-Saxonist’

Although Kemble is noted primarily as a philologist and a historian who published the first edition of Beowulf in 1833 and a second edition and translation in 1837, Kemble was likewise deeply committed to archaeology. A long-time friend of William Wylie and a teacher of Thomas Wright, Kemble supervised the exca-

123 Note that in Volume 2, Davis and Thurnam provide a complete sketch of the Ozengell skull (see Figure 11a), enabling the reader to study its morphology in relation to Volume 1’s artifact descriptions, and find, in all of these anatomical and cultural features, his own Anglo-Saxon skull.

124 Ibid., 1:238.
vation of barrow cemeteries and urnfields in Hanover. Just as Kemble’s philological scholarship was invested in locating Anglo-Saxon language and history within the Continental orbit of Germanic tribes, his archaeology was similarly comparative. Moreover, as Howard Williams writes, Kemble’s interests in archaeology follow from his scholarship on Beowulf:

from his commentaries, it is clear that Kemble regarded this as a literary work, as a source of historical and philological information and as a cultural lynchpin that connected England to its Teutonic heritage….Even though he was not alone in seeing disparities between the spectacular cremations portrayed in the poem and the more modest cinerary urns commonly uncovered by archaeologists, he was keen to acknowledge, through the poems and texts, the importance of cremation as a pagan Germanic rite...hence the use of archaeology may have been not only inspired by Beowulf and philological models, but may have been directly aimed as compensating the limitations of the literary and linguistic evidence.

Whether conscious or not, in his excavations in Hanover, Kemble figures himself the Beowulfian hero. He not only ‘breaks into’ mounds and ‘loots’ treasure; moreover, in choosing to tar-

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get cremation barrows, he locates himself, over and over again, in what he believes to be the topography of Beowulf’s own Geat-ish grave. To return to the ekphrasis of Beowulf, whose reliquary form, this chapter argues, seeks a response from readers within and outside the poem’s narrative — in Kemble’s Hanover excavations, we can finally find a response to its ekphrastic displays.

For Kemble, however, the barrow territory from whence Beowulf emerges and is interred is shaped not by the identity assemblages of medieval communities but by James Douglas and the Victorian antiquarians who reference him. Therefore, while Beowulf may lead Kemble into barrows, the expressive territory — the dying practices — that Kemble encounters therein is shaped by the living practices of his fellow nineteenth-century antiquarians, who have reassembled artifact and bone into Anglo-Saxons and the Teutonic kin group to which they belong.

Through Kemble’s Beowulf-inspired barrow excavations, philology, history, and archaeology become entangled and interdisciplinary. Through Kemble, Beowulf is linked to Anglo-Saxon barrows, to the racialized skeletons that have been assembled within them, and to the antiquarian association between psychic crypts and material graves. Most importantly, through Kemble, cognitive-oriented methods of philology and historicism are linked to excavation, a method of embodied and performative identity-making which this chapter has discussed in relation to the concept of territory. As if to punctuate the critical role of Kemble’s body to his scholarship, William Stokes writes, Kemble ‘gave his life to the cause in which he had embarked with all the energies of a vigorous mind and a vigorous body.’

Indeed, Kemble is key not only to the interdisciplinary scope of Anglo-Saxon studies and Beowulf, its keystone text, but also to the use of the term, ‘Anglo-Saxonist,’ the first two attestations of which appear in reference to him. The first attestation appears in the November issue of the 1837 Gentleman’s Magazine, in the short article, ‘Retrospective Review. Anglo-Saxon Literature.’

This anonymous essay prints the word, ‘Anglo-Saxonist,’ in association with Benjamin Thorpe and John Mitchell Kemble, explaining that, by studying Thorpe’s translation of Erasmus Rask’s *Grammar of the Anglo-Saxon Tongue*, then Kemble’s edition of *Beowulf*, the ’student of Anglo-Saxon’ may join their ranks as an Anglo-Saxonist.\(^{128}\) Despite its use in the ‘Retrospective Review,’ if the term ‘Anglo-Saxonist’ was en vogue during the first half of the nineteenth century, it does not appear in print again until twenty years later and in association with Kemble. In an *ad hoc* obituary for Kemble in *Notes and Queries*, he is eulogized as ‘a man of undoubted and original genius, a thorough classical scholar, and profound Anglo-Saxonist, deeply read in the language and literature of Scandinavia and Germany, master of all, or nearly, the languages of Europe, and well versed in our national history.’\(^{129}\) The phrase ‘profound Anglo-Saxonist,’ which governs the following clause, says nothing of Kemble’s archaeological interests, even though, upon his return from Hanover, all of his scholarly energies became focused upon excavation, and, as Howard Williams writes, ‘during these final years, it is difficult to regard Kemble as anything other than an archaeologist.’\(^{130}\) Rather, in this instance, ‘Anglo-Saxonist’ posthumously limits the scope of Kemble’s interdisciplinary methods to his ‘dee[p] read[ing]’ in language, literature, and ‘our national history.’ As the last word on Kemble’s ‘Anglo-Saxonist’ identity, *Notes and Queries* denies the barrow-digging aspects of his scholarship in order to advocate a thoroughly cognitive profession that neither accounts for the affective movements nor shape of the physical body, assemblages that make and re-make identity in performance.


\(^{130}\) Williams, ‘Heathen Graves and Anglo-Saxonism,’ 4.
Barrows, *Beowulf*, and the real and imagined embodied practices of field excavation all participate in nineteenth-century processes that generate, from the grave, the Anglo-Saxon body—not a real body, but a cultural one that helped to found an academic discipline. Despite the critical role of barrow digging in the formation of an imagined, nineteenth-century community of Anglo-Saxon scholars, the professional appellative ‘Anglo-Saxonist’ has repeatedly denied the embodied, identity-making performances and practices associated with antiquarian archaeology in exchange for supposedly neutral and bloodlessly objective pedagogical and professional activities that do not consider the embodied practices and methods that underwrite the writings of Douglas, Wylie, Smith, Davis and Thurnam, and Kemble. Consequently, when we study and teach *Beowulf*, a gateway by which we become Anglo-Saxonists, we find ourselves unknowingly located within a poem that builds a barrow and engages in a virtual descent into its mortuary interior. We mentally play the parts of barrow builder and breaker—living, then dying, with *Beowulf*—and becoming, perhaps, like *Beowulf*, ekphrastic figures of perpetual mourning and heroic return. As we teach our students Old English, then read *Beowulf* with them, in order to shepherd them through the gates of Anglo-Saxon studies, we keep refashioning our embodied selves within the contours of an expanding, reliquary, and skeletonized body that was, in the nineteenth century, gendered, racialized, and standing with both feet in the grave. Such a past of professional disembodiment underscores not only the field’s fraught relationship with gender and sexuality but also its struggle to shutter the ethno-political categories that overtly define the field. Moreover, as the next chapter explains, it marks our profession

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131 It is worth noting here that Chapter 1 of this book discusses Michael Drout’s statements regarding Anglo-Saxon philology, which not only refuses the body but also forecloses philological Anglo-Saxonists from taking an embodied stance towards language. Likewise, Chapter 4 will discuss the process of becoming a nineteenth-century professional Anglo-Saxonist via pedagogies that emphasize cognitive mastery of Anglo-Saxon languages and texts at the expense of embodied ways of knowing.
as one that maintains an ontology of ‘being’ that is cognitive and static, continuing to struggle against elegaic, nostalgic, and most of all, melancholic psychological positions — affects of and from the continued return to and excavation of *Beowulf*’s barrows.