

English  Heritage

# A SAXON BED BURIAL ON SWALLOWCLIFFE DOWN


Excavations by F de M Vatcher

George Speake



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Archaeological Report no 10

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with contributions by J Bayley, E Crowfoot, M Guido, and J Henderson

**Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England**

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## Preface

The barrow on Swallowcliffe Down, Wiltshire, (NGR ST 967255) was excavated between 1 August and 19 October 1966, by Major Lance Vatcher and his wife Mrs Faith de Mallet Vatcher, on behalf of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works.

Beneath the mound of an early Bronze Age barrow, a complex, partially-robbled, secondary Anglo-Saxon interment was discovered. Brief notes have appeared in several periodicals outlining the nature of the discovery (*Medieval Archaeol* 11, 1967, 271; *Wiltshire Archaeol Natur Hist Mag* 63, 1968, 115). The importance of this seventh century grave was recognised by the excavators, but there can be no doubt that it was an unexpected discovery, and perhaps it was their unfamiliarity with Anglo-Saxon archaeology which made the prospect of preparing a full excavation report a daunting and challenging proposition. Correspondence makes it clear, however, that a report was planned. In the meantime the finds remained in store at Avebury Museum in their uncleaned and unconserved condition. Additional programmes of excavation, and Faith Vatcher's duties as Curator of the Alexander Keiller Museum at Avebury, further delayed any start being made on the planned Swallowcliffe report.

Access to the Swallowcliffe finds for research and study purposes by student and specialist was never denied, although the fragile and fragmentary nature of much of the excavated material made laboratory treatment of the finds an urgent priority. Conservation of the finds was eventually started in 1975, under the direction of Mike Corfield at Trowbridge (Wiltshire County Council, Library and Museum Service) and completed in 1978.

The tragic death of Faith Vatcher on 26 July 1978, after a long illness, finally forestalled any hope that a report on the Swallowcliffe excavation by the joint excavators would be forthcoming. This report is being published, therefore, some 20 years after the excavation and written by someone who had no involvement in the actual excavation. It is all the more to be regretted that Major Lance Vatcher felt unable to participate in the preparation of this report. Nevertheless, in the task of preparing for publication the excavation records I have attempted to present and clarify all the information that was available to me. No trace of an excavation diary or notebook could be found and I am unsure whether one was kept.

The information that was stored at Avebury Museum consisted of plans, sections, sketches, photographs, and correspondence. The skeletal material from the barrow was eventually uncovered in the store rooms (October 1981) of the Museum still in their post-excavation wrappings – pages from the *Daily Telegraph* dated 30 August, 1966, which

certainly provides a *terminus post quem* for the excavation of the grave! Some useful elucidation on the excavation strategy is contained in correspondence between the excavators and the MPBW, and where relevant I have quoted from it. All annotations on plans, sections, and sketches have been fully transcribed and accompany the redrawn plans and sections. The excavation was recorded using imperial measurements and, for the sake of consistency with the records, this has been retained in the annotations. In my descriptions and discussion of the grave goods, however, metric measurements are given.

In completing this report I am grateful to many individuals for their help, encouragement, and advice. Within the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments I wish to thank Alison Cook, Elizabeth Nichols, Stephen Johnson and Miranda Schofield for their aid and initiative with its publication. I owe a special debt of gratitude to James Thorn, both for his perceptive comments on many of the artefacts and for his skill in drawing them. To the staff of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory, I express my thanks and appreciation: Janet Henderson for her detailed examination of the skeletal remains, Justine Bayley for her qualitative analyses of the metalwork, Jacqui Watson for identifying and scrutinising the wood remains, Dr Helen Keeley and P Taylor for reporting on soil samples from the barrow mound, C A Sullivan for the macro-analysis of the capsule contents.

Thanks are also due to Mrs Elisabeth Crowfoot for her catalogue and commentary on the textile remains and Mrs Margaret Guido for her comments on Anglo-Saxon beads.

The photographs of the Swallowcliffe artefacts are the work of Robert Wilkins FSA of the Institute of Archaeology, Oxford. Photographs of the excavation are printed from negatives taken by Major Lance Vatcher and Mrs Vatcher.

To the museum staff in this country and abroad who allowed me to study material in their collections, or provided me with photographs of comparative material I express my appreciation and gratitude, in particular to Leslie Webster at the British Museum, Mary Cra'ster at Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Pauline Beswick, Sheffield City Museum, David Brown of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

In response to my many queries the following have offered me their help and expertise: Professor Stuart Piggott, Professor John Dodgson, Margaret Gelling, Sonia Hawkes, Mike Corfield, Guy Grainger, Christopher Houlder, Stephen Jenkins, Carole Biggam, Ian Riddler, Hugh Matthews – and to them all I express my thanks.

My final debt of gratitude must be to Dr Marc Fitch and the Secretary of the Marc Fitch Trust, Mr Roy Stephens, who aided the preparation of this report by providing me with a peaceful study in which it could be written.

George Speake



## Dedication

To  
the memory of  
Faith de Mallet Vatcher FSA

'The great plan I have in view will be, to draw a line between all speculative fancies in antiquities and an hypothesis founded on reason and practical observations.'

Letter from James Douglas to H G Faussett,  
June 18, 1782

## 1 The site

One must lament too, the destruction of the ancient earth-works, especially of the barrows, which is going on all over the downs, most rapidly where the land is broken up by the plough. One wonders if the ever-increasing curiosity of our day with regard to the history of the human race in the land continues to grow, what our descendants of the next half of the century, to go no further, will say of us and our incredible carelessness in the matter! So small a matter to us, but one which will, perhaps, be immensely important to them!

(W H Hudson *A Shepherd's Life*, 1910)

The barrow, (National Grid Reference ST 9671 2548, is situated on Swallowcliffe Down, south Wiltshire, and lies on the boundary of the parishes of Swallowcliffe and Ansty, close to the south-west corner of the parish of Swallowcliffe (Fig 1). From its dominant position (221m (730ft) OD) the barrow looks south to the Cranbourne Chase Ridge, west to White Sheet Hill, and to Chiselbury on the east. To the north, north-west and north-east, a steep escarpment of the downs overlooks the wooded villages of Ansty and Swallowcliffe nestling in the Nadder Valley, and the A30 road between Salisbury and Shaftesbury.

Along a ridge of the down, approximately 200m south of the barrow, runs the Upper Herepath, a broad trackway which in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries served as the coaching road between Salisbury and Shaftesbury. Skirting the south-west corner of Swallowcliffe parish, and providing the northern boundary of Alvediston parish, the Herepath cuts through the earthworks associated with the Iron Age habitation site on Swallowcliffe Down excavated by Dr R C C Clay (1925a). From here to the south and south-east, the ground slopes away into a steep-sided valley or coombe, flanked by Middle Down in Alvediston parish.

The barrow is one of several that have been recorded on Swallowcliffe Down and Middle Down. The significance of its position, at the highest point on Swallowcliffe Down and at a place where the boundary line between Ansty and Swallowcliffe parishes changes direction, is discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this report (see p 120–2).

A presumed prehistoric barrow, referred to as *Ansty 4* (VCH Wilts) and described as 10 paces in diameter, 9in high and gorse covered, is situated c 100m due south of the Swallowcliffe barrow in Ansty parish (grid ref 967254). Records do not indicate whether it has been excavated. Although marked on the 6in Ordnance Survey map, adjacent to the western end of the Iron Age circular ditch, this barrow is no longer visible. What has been claimed as a Saxon primary barrow, however, was excavated in 1926 by Dr R C C Clay (1926, 435–9). This barrow, referred to as Barrow 1c, lies in Alvediston parish approximately 130m from the south-west corner of the corner of Swallowcliffe parish boundary and c 250m south of the Swallowcliffe barrow (grid ref ST

967252). Beneath this ditched barrow, recorded as 0.91m (3ft) high and 8.23m (27ft) in diameter, and contained within an off-centre grave 7ft×3ft 6in and 2ft deep (2.13×1.06m and 0.61m deep) lay an extended Saxon warrior, orientated S–N. Accompanying grave goods, which included an iron spearhead and ferrule, a sugar-loaf shield boss, and an iron knife, would confirm a seventh-century date for this burial.

### *Recognition of the site on maps*

There is no reference to the barrow on John Andrews and Andrew Dury's map of Wiltshire (2in to 1 mile), published in 1773. The first cartographic recognition of the barrow is on P Crocker's map of 1812 shown in Figure 2 (Colt Hoare 1812, Fovant Station 8). There is no mention, however, by Colt Hoare of the barrow. We must be grateful that it escaped his notice and that he contented himself exploring the Iron Age habitation site on Swallowcliffe Down.

Pursuing the old trackway (the former Salisbury–Shaftesbury turnpike) I traversed two other banks and ditches, which lose themselves in the precipitous valleys on the right, and a little beyond the last of these, I perceived the *indicia* of a British village encompassed by a slight earth *agger*, and in front of it the segment of an earthen circle. On digging into the excavation of this village, I found animal bones, and a great deal of pottery of the very rudest and coarsest texture, but none of that made by the Romanised Britons; so that in all probability this was one of the primitive settlements of our *aborigines*.

(Colt Hoare 1812, 249)

Curiously the barrow is omitted on the Tithe Survey of 1873 (not illustrated), the first Ordnance Survey to show parish boundaries (indicated by dotted lines). The map nevertheless accurately depicts the more westerly change of direction of the boundary fence which occurs at the barrow site, as the boundary drops over the escarpment towards the now obsolete quarry and the fields below. Although two barrows are depicted on Buxbury Hill, the Iron Age earthworks are not included. A feature noted on this map which deserves comment is the pronounced change in direction of the Herepath at the most southerly meeting point of the boundary between Ansty and Swallowcliffe, as the trackway evidently loops northwards to bypass the Iron Age earthworks.

The barrow is clearly marked on the OS 6in map Wilts LXIX NE (Fig 3) by the conventional symbol and the word *Tumulus* in Gothic script. In addition a triangulation point is shown. This presumably was a bench mark carved on either a boundary stone or on a wooden fence post.

### *Ownership of site finds*

The barrow is crossed by a fence separating the land of Mr L A Green, Waterloo Farm, Ansty (the west



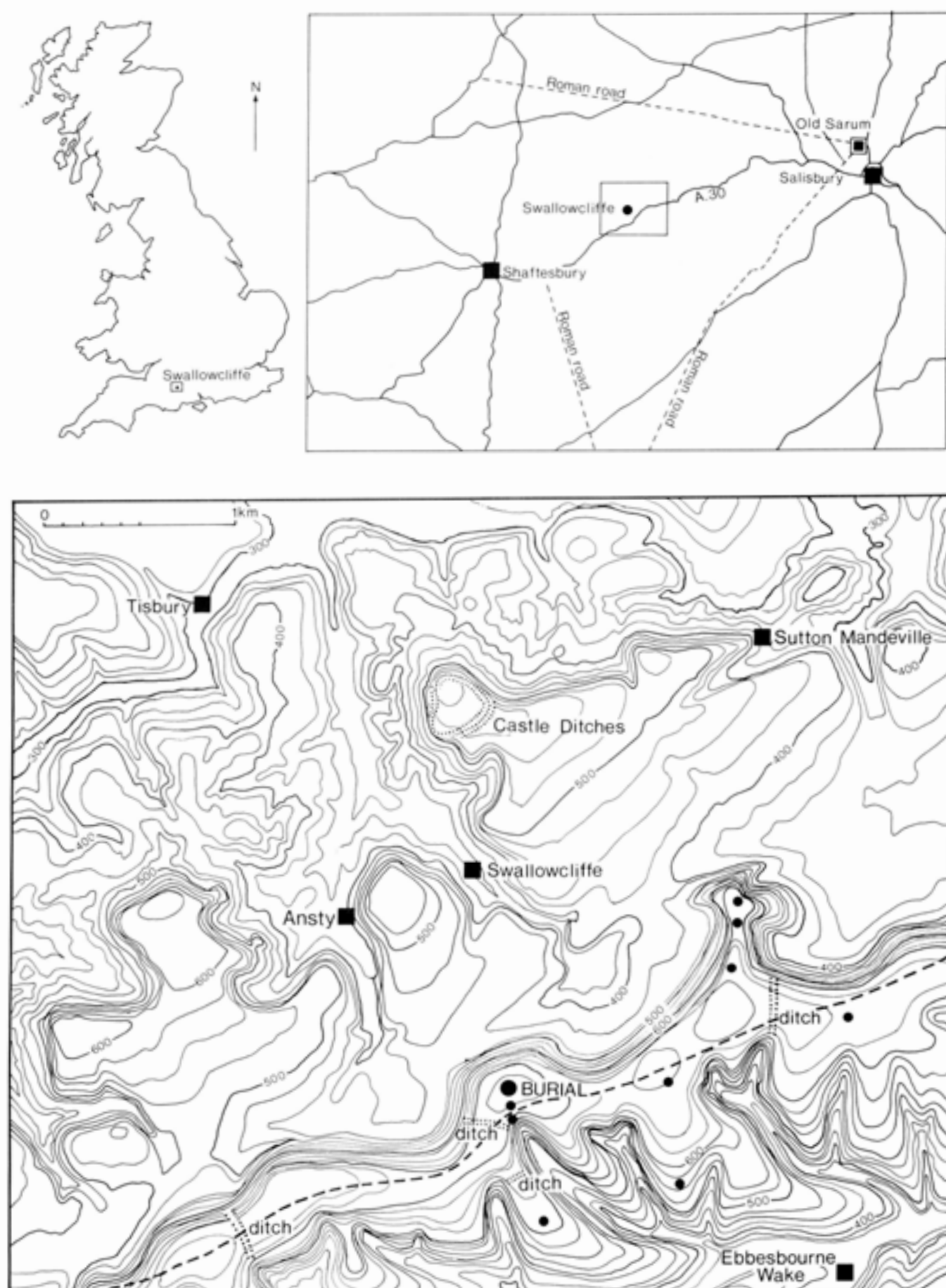


Fig 1 Location map



Fig 2 Detail of Crocker's map (Fovant Station 8) in Colt Hoare 1812. The barrow is shown marked by a circle west of the Iron Age village on Swallowcliffe Down



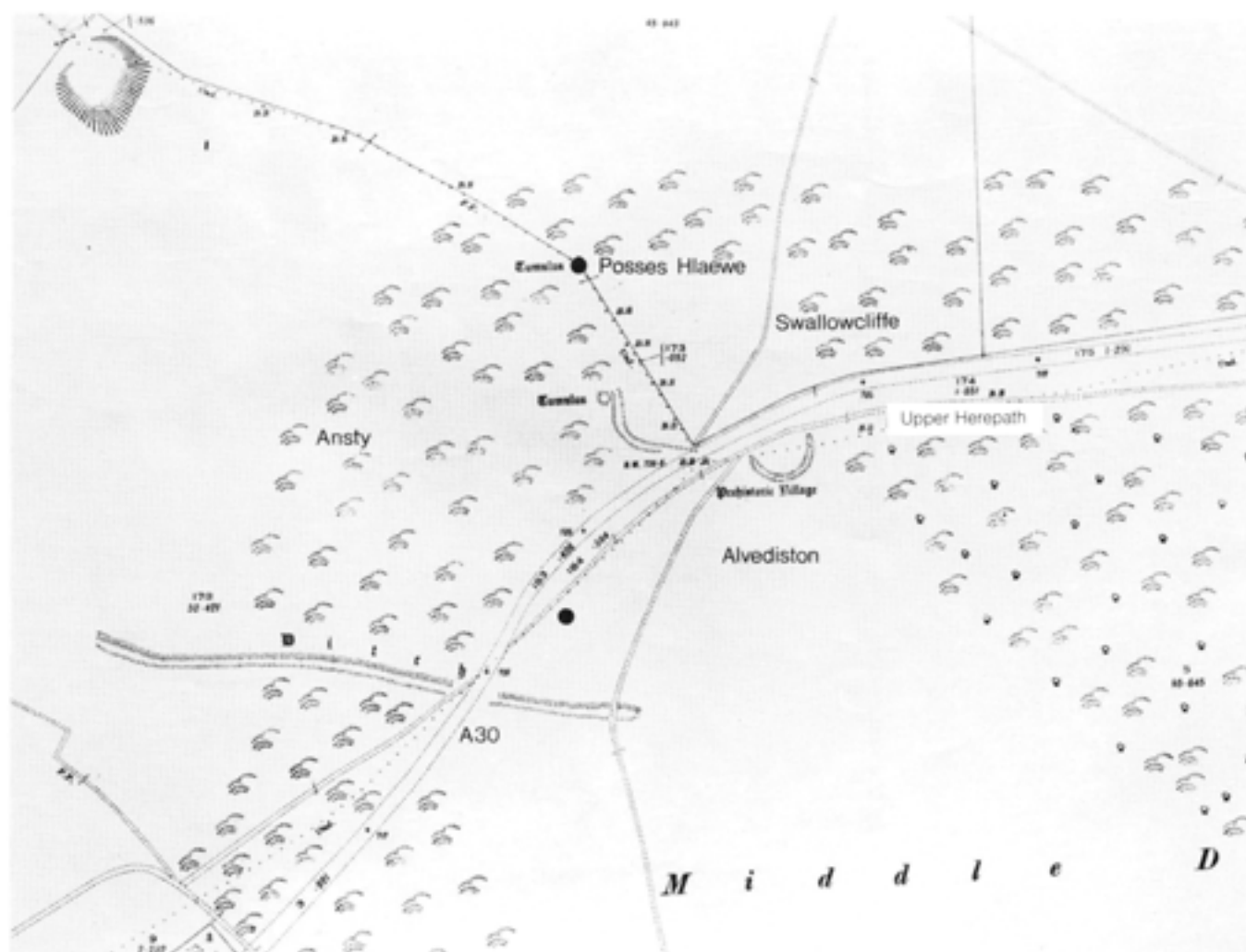


Fig 3 Detail of Ordnance Survey map Wiltshire Sheet LXIX8 1925 edition (Scale 1:2500)

side) and Mr H R L Matthews, Red House Farm, Swallowcliffe (the east side). During the excavation, between 1 August and 19 October 1966, this fence was removed. All the finds from the intrusive Saxon grave, with the exception of the Saxon spearhead, were discovered in Mr Matthews's land. Mr Matthews has generously deposited the finds with Salisbury Museum.

### Swallowcliffe Down

Notes about the Saxon grave were published following its discovery.

A large Saxon grave, which had destroyed the primary burial of an early Bronze Age barrow excavated for Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, contained iron bed fittings, two glass palm cups, a bronze-mounted wooden bucket, a tinned bronze diadem, ring-and-strip satchel or box fittings, a comb, a spoon and bronze and other metal objects. It was covered by a turf mound.

(*Medieval Archaeol* 11, (1967), 271)

A Wessex barrow had a small chalk mound, a single causewayed ditch, and an outer bank. The primary grave had been destroyed by a large Saxon grave filled with gault clay and containing the remains of bed furniture, a bucket, a barrel, a wooden container, broken enamelled ironwork, and an extended inhumation half-removed by a disturbance. Also found were two palm cups, a buckle, belt-sliders, disc and strips, and a diadem, two brooches, a spoon, incense burner, glass beads, and a comb. A spearhead was found in the final (Saxon) phase of turf mounding.

(*Wiltshire Archaeol Natur Hist Mag* 63 (1968) 115)

Brief comments by D J Bonney in the Victoria County History for Wiltshire list the barrow as *Biii Ansty* 3 and lying on the boundary with Swallowcliffe.

It contained a large, apparently intrusive, grave in which lay an inhumation accompanied by a variety of objects including a diadem, two palm cups, an incense burner, enamelled ironwork, and the remains of bed furniture. A date in the seventh century is indicated.

(1973, 476)

## Excavation

Following a request from the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works on 13 May 1966 to excavate a round barrow damaged by ploughing on Swallowcliffe Down, the site was visited by Major and Mrs H L Vatcher on 12 June 1966 to make an initial site inspection and to estimate the labour required. Their appraisal of the site was that eight contract labourers would be required for six weeks. They recorded in a letter of 15 June 1966 that 'the barrow would appear to be a bowl with a ditch and outer bank, but it is possible that it could be a two phase barrow with a double ditch, measurement across outside to outside of outer bank is 75ft [22.75m]'. As the barrow was sited on the boundary between two farms and on the boundary between the parishes of Ansty and Swallowcliffe, permission to excavate was obtained from the joint owners. The excavation was scheduled to begin on 1 August 1966 and to end on 9 September 1966. Major H L Vatcher was the nominal supervisor with his wife Faith Vatcher as assistant site supervisor. In addition to the eight contract labourers, the excavation team had two site assistants and six volunteers.

### *Plan and procedure*

Documentation of the excavation procedure is recorded in a sequence of 131 black and white (35mm negatives) photographs and in the annotated plans and sections (Figs 4-21). No diary or written commentary by the Vatchers of the excavation survives other than a finds notebook, and pencil notes of a contour survey of the barrow conducted prior to the excavation. A small notebook, however, discovered in Avebury Museum stores in 1981, does have three pages of pencil notes in Lance Vatcher's handwriting, and two pencil sketches, which briefly record the marking out procedure of the Swallowcliffe barrow.

As about half of the barrow mound on the Swallowcliffe side of the boundary fence had been removed by ploughing and bulldozing, establishing a central datum point on the surviving barrow mound was of prime importance. Lance Vatcher's brief notations describe the simple trigonometry by which the centre point of the barrow was established.

- 1 Two points, A and B, were selected in the ditch either side of the barrow mound on the line of the imaginary centre of the barrow.
- 2 A line at right-angles from the centre of line A-B was taken down to the bank on the west, point C.
- 3 Two equal lines at 45° were plotted from point C through points A and B to the north and south banks (not visible) of the barrow.
- 4 Where the line joining these cut the extended centre line from point C is taken as the centre of the barrow.
- 5 From this central datum point a N-S line and an E-W line of grid pegs were fixed at intervals of 10ft (3.05m).

(It should be noted that True North does not correspond with the grid north axis used by the excavators to plan the barrow.)

Having established a N-S axis and an E-W axis, a contour survey of the barrow mound was then carried out before excavation began. The barrow was excavated using the quadrant method. Initially cuttings 6ft wide at right angles were marked out in the north-east and south-west quadrants. These cuttings butted against baulks 2ft wide which were slightly offset. Between the designated south and east baulks, the south-east quadrant was then marked out with four pegs at 40ft radius from the central datum peg. This quadrant was stripped of its topsoil and the line of the ditch exposed. A feature commented on by Lance Vatcher was 'at the inner corner what appeared as part of a chalk ring, lying on the original land surface'. This is recorded on the plan (Fig 4, feature 13). The notebook records that 'small sections cut out next to baulk to give section; then scraped down to natural chalk. Causewayed entrance across ditch became apparent'. The next stage records that the north-west quadrant was marked out, with a narrow dividing baulk retained, to give sections of the barrow mound. In stripping the north-west quadrant, the limit of earlier bulldozer disturbance (Fig 4, feature 9) was clearly evident when the top soil was removed. Figures 5 and 6 show the barrow under excavation.

In the west cutting (where the spearhead was found) the surface was carefully scraped in a sequence of steps from the inner lip of the ditch towards the top of the mound. The spearhead (see below, p 8) was found in the mound material, 0.33m (13in) below the surface. The south-west quadrant was marked out, but no further baulks were thought necessary adjacent to existing cuttings.

### *Dimensions*

The causewayed ditch enclosed an area 42ft (12.75m) in diameter. The undisturbed strata of the barrow mound, in the north-west and south-west quadrants, show that the mound was 3ft (0.9m) high. Sections of the ditch indicate that it was originally 3ft (0.9m) deep, and 6ft (1.83m) wide at its upper edge, narrowing to 2ft 6in (0.91m) at its flat base. Traces of a low outer bank (9ft (2.75m) wide) made of chalk nodules and flints (Fig 7, features 3, 31, 34) can be detected, as well as being indirectly confirmed by the silting stratification of the ditch. The total diameter of the barrow, including ditch and outer bank was, therefore, c 72ft (22.75m).

### *Structure of barrow*

The Swallowcliffe barrow was considered by the excavators to be a two phase structure, and an interpretation of the stratigraphy would support this viewpoint. The evidence as recorded on the south-north section (Fig 10) is more ambiguous than on the west-east section (Fig 11) given that half the mound had been removed by ploughing. On the S-N

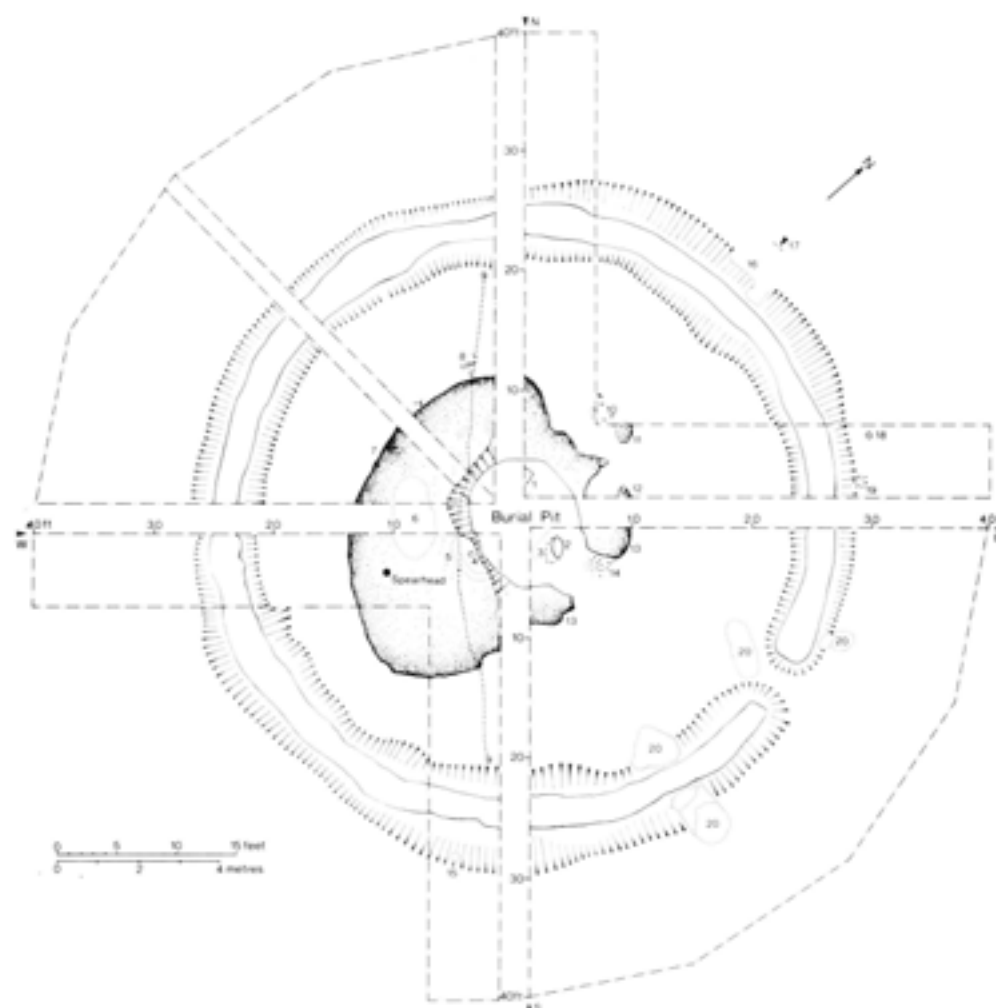


Fig 4 Plan of barrow (August 1966); features listed on the plan:

1 Lump of chalk, 6in above other areas of chalk; 2 Possible stain in filling, 3ft 7in from string datum at centre; darker at east; 3 Limit of flints; 4 Posthole of fence?; 5 Rabbit run; 6 Soil throughout on original land surface; 7 Edge of mound; 8 Chalk lumps; 9 Limit of bulldozer disturbance; 10 Scattered chalk nodules on original land surface; 11 Chalk on original land surface; 12 Chalk on original land surface; 13 Chalk on original land surface; 14 Chalk scatter; 15 Modern fence post; 16 Clay with flint pocket (tree root damage); 17 Edge of quadrant 31ft 6in from centre; 18 Depression 8in deep from natural chalk; 19 Posthole? 1ft 3in deep; 20 Root holes (Scale 1:200)

section, however, features 13 and 24 are identified as part of mound 2. The earlier mound consisted of chalk lumps (features 28 and 20) covered with turves. Given the berm between the ditch and the mound, the earlier barrow should be identified as a bell barrow rather than a round barrow. On the W-E section, more of mound 1 is apparent (feature 47). This core of chalk lumps is covered with turves and flints (feature 44). During phase 2 the barrow was considerably enlarged with the mound being extended to the edge of the ditch.

The digging of the secondary Saxon grave had destroyed the primary Bronze Age burial. The finds notebook records five sherds of pottery being found (finds notebook, small finds nos 37, 38, 46, 47, 52) one of which is bracketed (BA). This was found in

the central fill on the N-S line at a depth of 3ft 1in (listed as small finds nos 38, 46, 47 in the finds notebook). These sherds have not been located since the excavation and further comment on their fabric has not been possible. Charcoal is recorded six times in the finds notebook (finds nos 19, 20, 30, 33, 45, 53). It occurred both in the mound and in the ditch silting of the north-east quadrant. It was also noted as a scatter in the turf line over the chalk of mound 1 and in the grave fill. We may infer that these finds are all that remained of a cremated burial. In addition several Iron Age sherds, potboilers and charcoal fragments, presumably material associated with the Iron Age settlement site in Swallowcliffe Down, were found within the ditch filling and in the disturbed layers of the mound.





*Fig 5 View of barrow under excavation from the south-east quadrant*



*Fig 6 View of barrow under excavation from the south-west quadrant*

*Iron spearhead*

(Fig 8)

The spearhead was not found in the grave, but in the top of the mound material, 0.32m (1ft) beneath the surface, on the southern side of the barrow.

It is 178mm long and 32mm wide at its broadest section. The base of the spearhead is folded with a haft diameter of 11mm. A central median ridge can be detected on both sides of the rounded blade. The surface of the blade is very badly corroded.

**Discussion**

The spearhead has been classified by Swanton (1973, 161) as belonging to his type C2 and included in his *Corpus of Pagan Anglo-Saxon Spear-Types*. It is shorter in length than the majority of spearheads within this group, which vary for the most part between 200mm and 350mm in length. Although some C2 spearheads have been found in early contexts, Swanton has observed that 'there is abundant evidence to indicate a clearly seventh-century date for many others, found with low-cone shield bosses and broad seaxes'. Indeed, spearheads of this type seem often to accompany the more elaborate seventh-century burials. And continuing the general late pagan trend towards increasing size, this type apparently persisted to form an attestedly later Anglo-Saxon type.



Fig 8 Spearhead found during excavation of the barrow (Scale 1:2)

**The Anglo-Saxon grave**

Excavation of the disturbed central area of the barrow was not begun until late August 1966. A period of two weeks was allocated to this work, which was initially considered to have been a sufficient period of time to investigate it thoroughly, before the official closure of the excavation on 9 September 1966. It was only in the few days before the proposed end of the excavation however that its importance was realised and its Anglo-Saxon features recognised.

In a letter to the MPBW (1 November 1966) the excavators outlined their dilemma:

Although the value of the contents of the grave only appeared a few days before the official close of the excavation, it was apparent to us that the importance of the grave exceeded anything of Saxon origin which had been found in a barrow for a long time. It was for this reason that we felt it would be criminal from the archaeological and financial point of view not to complete the most vital part of the excavation. As you know, it is unfortunate that unlike sites containing stone or continuous or repetitive structures, in a barrow either long or round one cannot tell what one is going to uncover, and having started to uncover it, it must be completed in one operation.

The view of the MPBW was that if the central features had not been left till the end, the time allocated should have been sufficient, 'then in the light of the ascertained importance of the burial, the ditch and barrow structure could have been safely left over for full and separate treatment next year' [1967].

This response prompted the excavators to explain their excavation strategy:

As you know, in the excavation of a barrow it is necessary to follow a systematic sequence in order to obtain the maximum evidence before destruction. Unfortunately this sequence does not allow for the centre grave to be taken out first because one's interpretation of the structure of the barrow depends on the complete transverse sections. These sections are sited to run across, and give information about, the barrow structure and its relationship with the primary and any secondary graves. The ditch section of course also contributes information essential to the interpretation and the ditch itself is valuable for finds in a primary context. It is only too unfortunate that at the moment it is not possible to ascertain the contents of a grave without excavation, and in the case of Swallowcliffe we only realised its importance when we reached the deep level of the finds.

Normally the two weeks which we allowed for the grave would have been quite sufficient if it had not contained the large volume of gault clay which made the removal and conservation of the many delicate objects a very tricky and lengthy operation. If the grave had been filled,

as normally in this part of the world, with chalk rubble, it would have been much easier and would probably still have been completed in time.

It looks as if it is basically a question of good archaeological practice versus financial policy – but please believe us, it just would *not* have been possible to divide that dig into two season's work.

In fact the Vatchers continued the excavation of the grave throughout the month of September on a private basis and it was not until 19 October that the excavation was unofficially completed. The site was backfilled by the owner, on or about 21 October 1966 and the boundary fencing was reinstated by the MPBW on 25 October.

The investigation of the grave is documented in a sequence of annotated plans and sketches. These have been redrawn with all annotations transcribed and are presented in this report as a series of stages, 1–7 (Figs 9–15). In the absence of any site notebook these constitute along with the site photographs the prime documentary record of the excavation of the grave.

#### *Stage 1 (features 1–24)* (Fig 9)

This is the record of the features in the grave between 1ft 8in (0.51m) and 5ft 10in (1.78m) below central datum at intersection of the baulks. The rectangular end of a grave has begun to emerge at the eastern edge. Elsewhere a roughly circular opening has destroyed the upper edges of the grave. The centre of the opening coincides almost exactly with the centre of the barrow, marked by the central datum peg. The eastern edge of this circular opening is marked by feature 21, at a depth of 2ft (0.61m) below datum across baulks. The possible edge of another opening marked by a line of flints (feature 12) is recorded at the depth of 1ft 8in (0.51m). Traces of timber (features 18, 20) are recorded at a depth of 5ft 7in (1.7m).

#### *Stage 2 (features 25–44)* (Fig 10)

This plan records those features between 6ft (1.83m) and 6ft 6in (1.99m) in depth. It is based on the plan drawn on tracing paper dated 23 September 1966 by Faith Vatcher. Stage 1 must have been planned and recorded before 19 September, the date of a card from the excavators to the MPBW which records, 'we are still struggling to get to the bottom of the grave. We have nails at regular intervals along sides of this timber 'bed', also iron fittings, all of which are exceedingly difficult to excavate in compacted gault clay (imported from valley below Ansty).'

It is most likely on this day that a probe was used to gauge the depth of the grave, causing damage to some of the contents of the casket (see below p 30). The complete shape of the grave is clearly visible cut into the chalk subsoil. The listed features and

artefacts are located at depths between 6ft (1.83m) and 6ft 6in (1.99m). Some human bone fragments, including the cranium were uncovered at the west end of the grave, associated with ironwork. The area of disturbance is now more localised in the central section of the grave.

#### *Stage 3 (features 45–112)* (Fig 11)

Figure 11 shows the grave plan incorporating features shown in stage 2 but excluding the plan of the satchel area and the plan of the casket and its contents, which are shown as stages 4 and 5. Figure 12 is the most detailed record of the remains located down to the base of the grave, and was drawn on graph paper at the scale of 1:12. The positions of the majority of the artefacts are located, as well as the skeletal remains, and traces of organic material detected by the excavators. Not shown on this plan are the complex remains of the satchel by the right femur, referred to as 'purse and diadem' (feature 61), and the casket and its contents by the left femur both of which were planned separately in stages 4 and 5.

In addition, observations on the nature of the grave fill (features 65, 67, 78, 86) are recorded. Where the excavator has recorded 'grain' (54, 57), this undoubtedly refers to traces of wood with the direction of wood grain clearly evident. All annotations on this plan are in Faith Vatcher's hand. Figure 12 shows the field plan of the excavation.

#### *Stage 4 (features 113–22)* (Fig 13)

Stage 4 shows the plan of the satchel complex, which was located between the right femur and the iron bar of bed. It is based on plan drawn in pencil on graph paper by Professor Stuart Piggott who visited the site on 22 September 1966. (Scale 1:4)

#### *Stage 5 (features 123–44)* (Fig 14)

Stage 5 is the plan of the casket and its contents found adjacent to left femur. It is based on the field drawing made by Professor Stuart Piggott which was on graph paper. (Scale 1:4)

#### *Stage 6 (features 145–8) and Stage 7 (features 149–50)* (Fig 15)

The pencil sketches, executed in a blunt soft pencil on scrap paper and annotated in Faith Vatcher's handwriting, record the relative positions of the ironwork fragments located at the west end of the grave. Stage 6 (Fig 15a) shows the positions of some of the iron pan/skillet(?) fragments, which had been obscured by the skull at the west end of the grave in the stage 3 plan of the grave (Fig 11). Feature 148 which records 'ironwork at north end of burial' refers to grid north only. The meaning of 'soft' (145) and 'clear' (147) is uncertain.



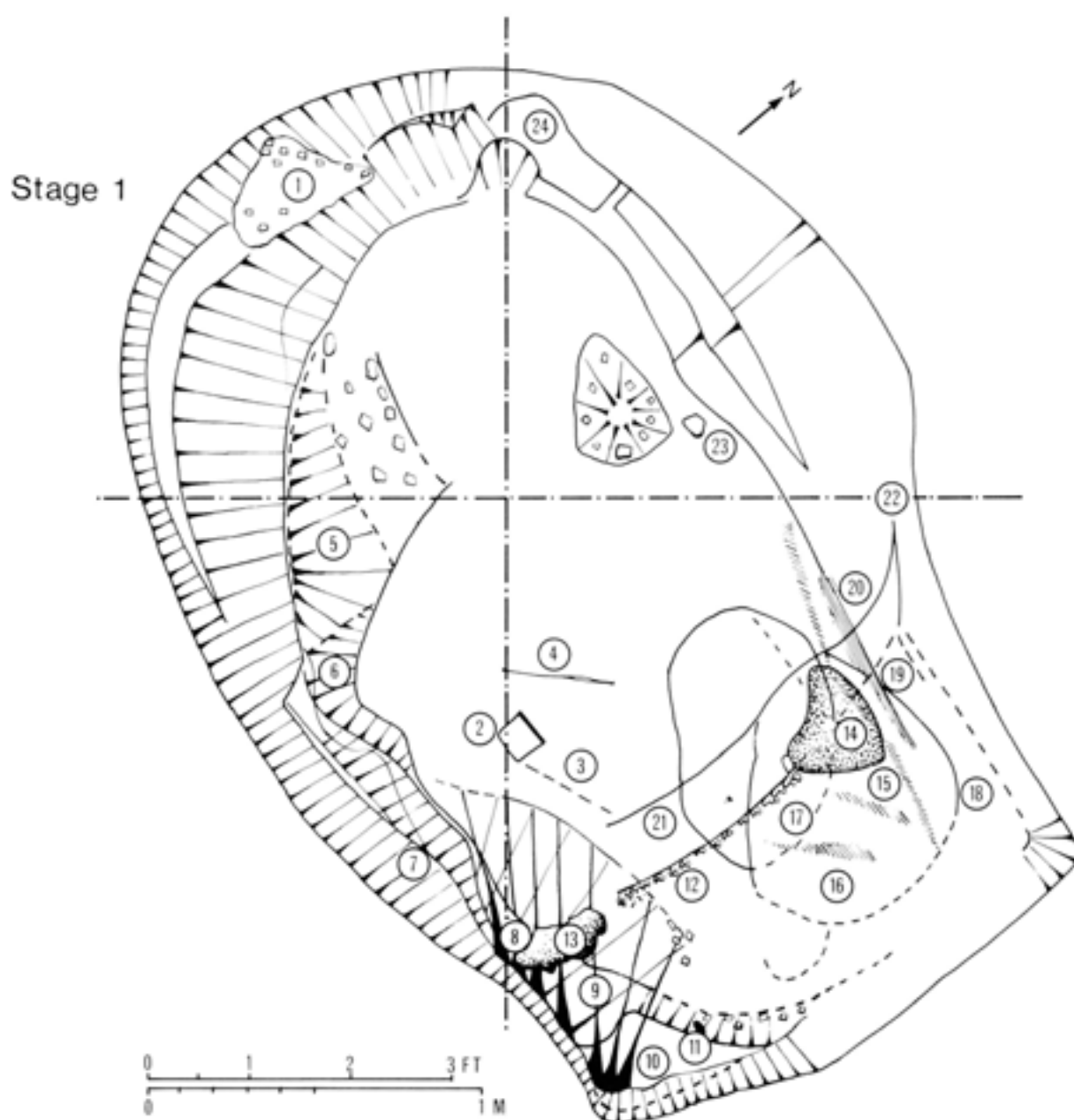


Fig 9 Excavation of the grave; stage 1 grave plan recording features 1-24 between 1ft 8in and 5ft 10in below central datum at intersection of the baulks; features shown on plan:

1 Chalk spilling into hole; 2 3ft 7in section square patch with dark line; 3 Stain not uniform 5ft 4in on west side of baulk; 4 Edge of hole; 5 Spill or collapse; 6 Chalk packing?; 7 4ft 4in natural chalk; 8 Chalk scatter at 5ft 10in level in hole; 9 (Shown bold on drawing and overlying 8) spill/collapse over dark soil sloping down to 5ft 7½in; 10 (Flat) undercuts natural; 11 Charcoal; 12 Edge of flints 1ft 8in; 13 14in from chalk ... flint; 14 1ft 11in stain; 15 Line of ...; 16 Dark clay stain 5ft 7½in from datum ...; 17 Edge unmarked; 18 Bark?; 19 Dark organic flecks; 20 Timber 5ft 7in; 21 Edge of hole 2 at 2ft from top of baulks; 22 Natural chalk edge of hole at 1ft 11in; 23 Chalk nodule at 5ft; 24 (Flat) 5ft 3in (Scale 1:20) (after Faith Vatcher)

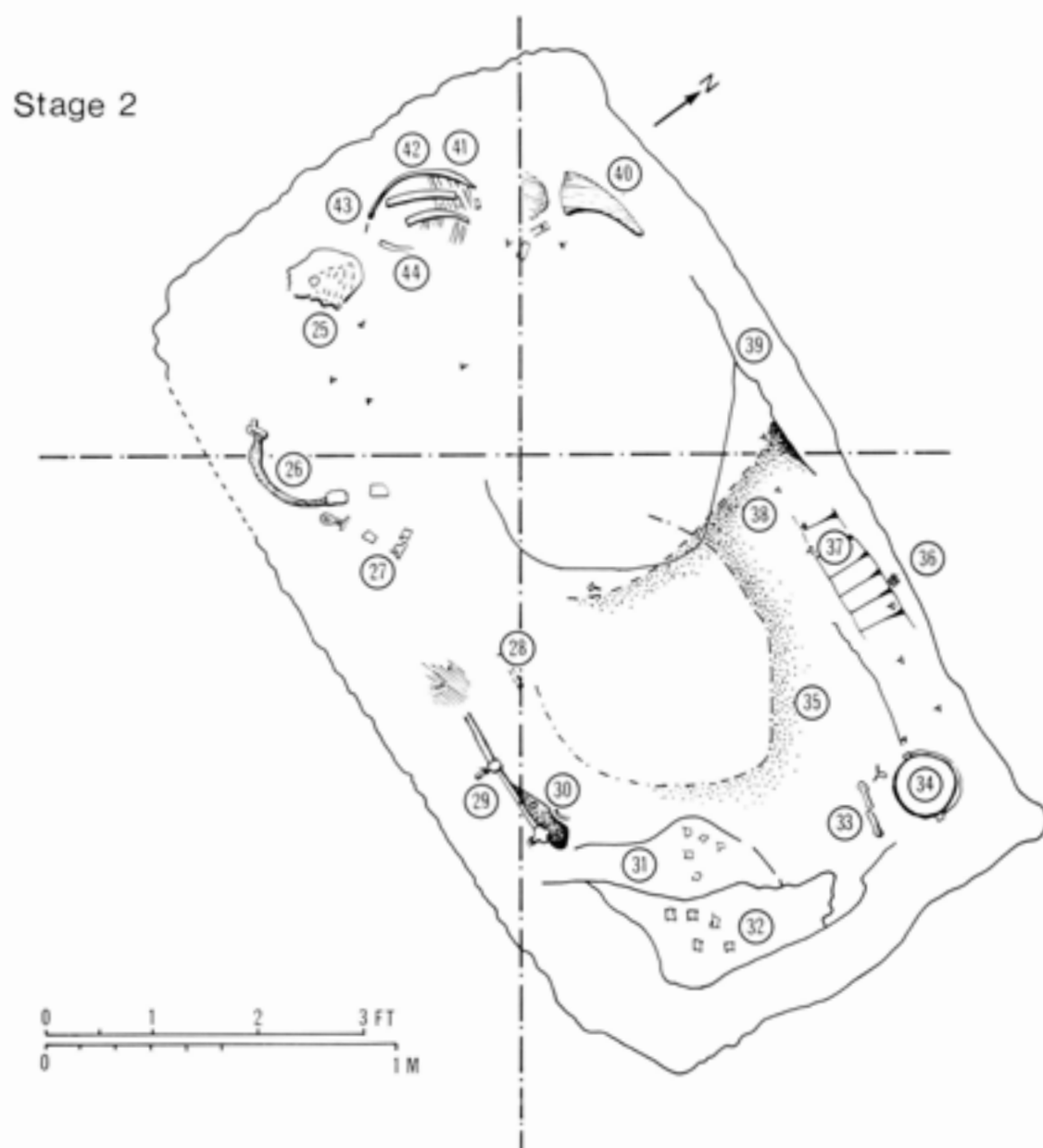


Fig 10 Excavation of the grave; stage 2 grave plan recording features 25–44, (depth) between 6ft and 6ft 6in; features shown on plan:

25 Flat iron object under skull; 26 Part of bed angle bracket; 27 Iron components; 28 Wood grain direction; 29 Round iron bar with projections; 30 Tinned bronze? or silver buckles in black stain; 31 Chalk and clay at 6ft 6in; 32 Loose chalk blocks against edge at 6ft 2in; 33 Iron cleats; 34 Bucket; 35 Dark clay (cf Stage 3 no 78); 36 Yellowish fibrous material; 37 Wood sloping; 38 Line of stain at 6ft; 39 Inner edge of chalk ledge 6ft 1in; 40 Stain at depth of 6ft; 41 Remains of wooden staves; 42 Iron hoops; 43 Bronze needlecase; 44 Human bone (Scale 1:20) (based on plan dated 23 September 1966 drawn by Faith Vatcher)

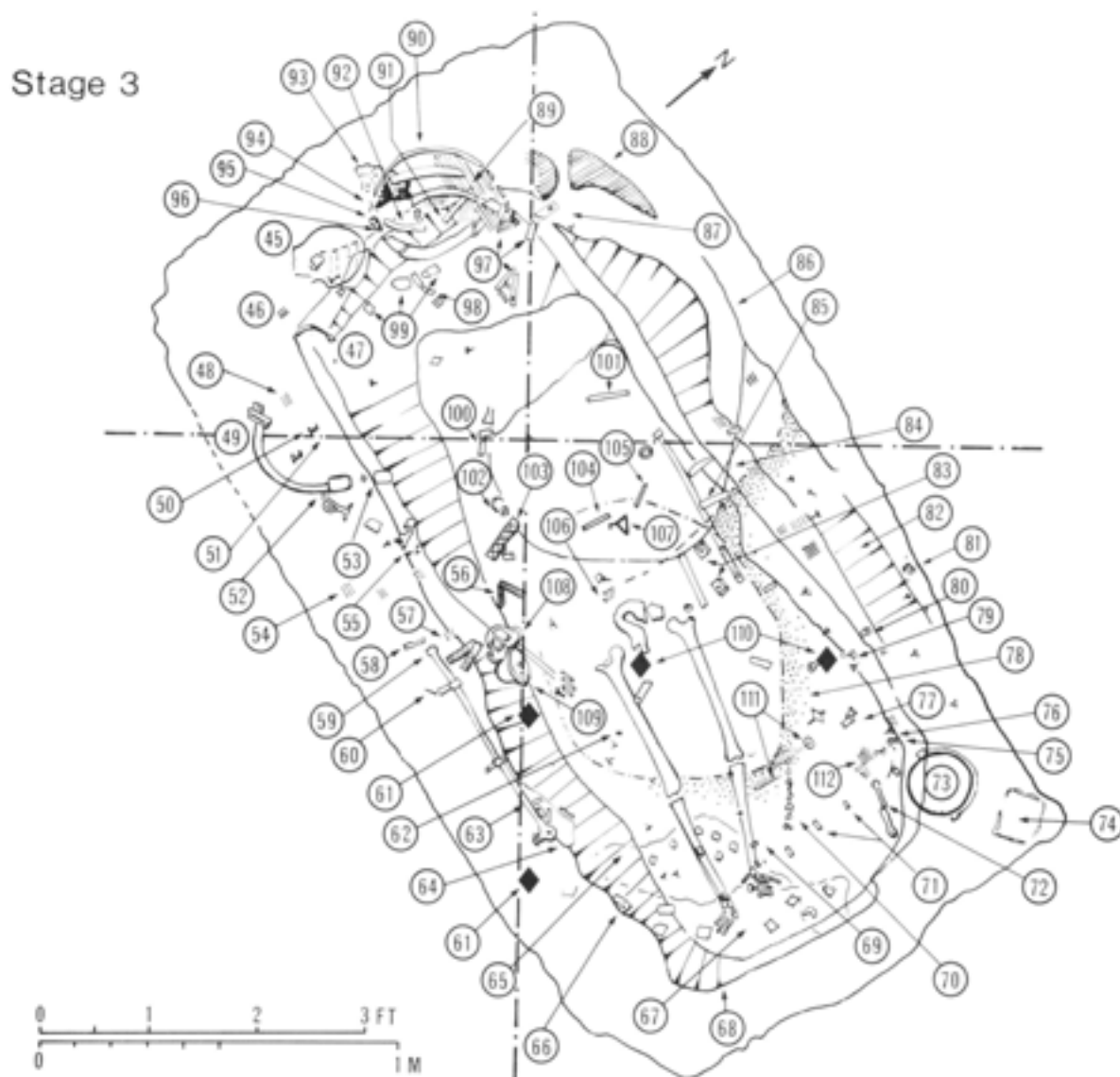


Fig 11 Excavation of the grave; stage 3 grave plan recording features 45–112, and incorporating features shown in the stage 2 grave plan, but excluding the plan of the satchel area and the area of the casket and its contents; features shown on the plan:

45 Flat iron object under skull  $1\frac{1}{2}$ in from chalk surface; 46 Woodgrain 6ft 4in; 47 Bone, rib, human, possibly from grave; 48 Woodgrain 6ft 4in; 49 (Unarrowed) iron, bed angle bracket above chalk shelf; 50  $\frac{1}{4}$ in eye position in vertical with eye pointing outwards 6ft  $4\frac{1}{2}$ in; 51 Nails with turn over upwards (assumption clenched); 52 Woodgrain 6ft 4in; 53 Part of bracket; erratum – iron straps 6ft 3in shown near 55; 54 Grain; 55 Staple; 56 Two straps; 57 Two iron straps on slope. Grain with iron object; 58  $\frac{1}{4}$ in eye 6ft  $3\frac{1}{2}$ in; 59 Vertical toggle (part of 63); 60 Stain 5ft 11in; 61 (Lozenge) denotes datum for purse and diadem, see separate plan; 62 Bronze/leather strap end 6ft 9in; 63 Round iron bar with projections (cf 59); addendum bar  $\frac{1}{2}$ in diam; 64 Tinned bronze? Silver buckles in black stain; 65 Chalk and clay at 6ft 6in; 66 Part of iron strap with nail on slope at 6ft 8in; 67 Loose chalk blocks against edge 6ft  $2\frac{1}{2}$ in; 68 Upper edge of ledge; 69 Iron strap with nail, half of it under tibia; 70 Bones, food? on base; 71 Iron eyelets upright  $\frac{1}{2}$ in above base (three in number); 72 Unannotated, but appears on stage 2, number 33; 73 Bucket; 74 Impression  $4\frac{1}{2}$ in square (indent of post); 75 Eye  $\frac{1}{4}$ in metal 6ft 6in; 76 Nails; 77 Straps 6ft 6in,  $3\frac{1}{2}$ in long lying almost vertically, made of iron,  $1\frac{1}{2}$ in above chalk; 78 Dark clay edge at 6ft 6in (cf stage 2 no 35); 79 Nail point outwards turned over upwards 6ft  $7\frac{1}{2}$ in; 80 Eyelet  $\frac{1}{4}$ in 6ft  $7\frac{1}{2}$ in; entry removed by HLV states nails 5in up from chalk shelf; 81 Yellowish fibrous material in clay 3–4in above chalk shelf; 82 Behind wood on top of shelf some loose small chalk blocks (area shaded at point of hatches) wood sloping; 83 Wood between metal plates on floor of grave; 84 Edge of stratum 6ft 2in; 85 Pair of metal straps; erratum – small eyelet 6ft 4in just north of 85; 86 Inner edge of chalk filling 6ft 1in; 87 Nail; 88 Stain 6ft; 89 Wood; 90 Iron hoops; 91 Enamelled iron object; 92 Iron on slope down into grave under skull; 93 Flint 4ft 4in; 94 Bronze needlecase; 95 Bone 6ft 5in; 96 Iron, flat on chalk (stain) forming ...; 97 Pair of iron straps with nails 6ft 6in and 6ft 8in; 98 Corner strap; 99 Iron; 100 Metal strips 2in from base; 101 Iron rod; 102 Bone broken vertebra; 103 Decayed bone 6ft 10in ?shoulder blade; 104 Human rib in situ?; 105 Iron rod 6ft  $8\frac{1}{2}$ in; 106 Wood; 107 Iron triangle with hook 6ft 10in; 108 Two glass palm cups 6ft  $2\frac{1}{2}$ in; 109 6ft 3in wood (grain ...); 110 Datum for objects by left leg; 111 Bronze; 112 Corner strap with grain 6ft  $6\frac{1}{2}$ in (Scale 1:20); (after Faith Vatcher)

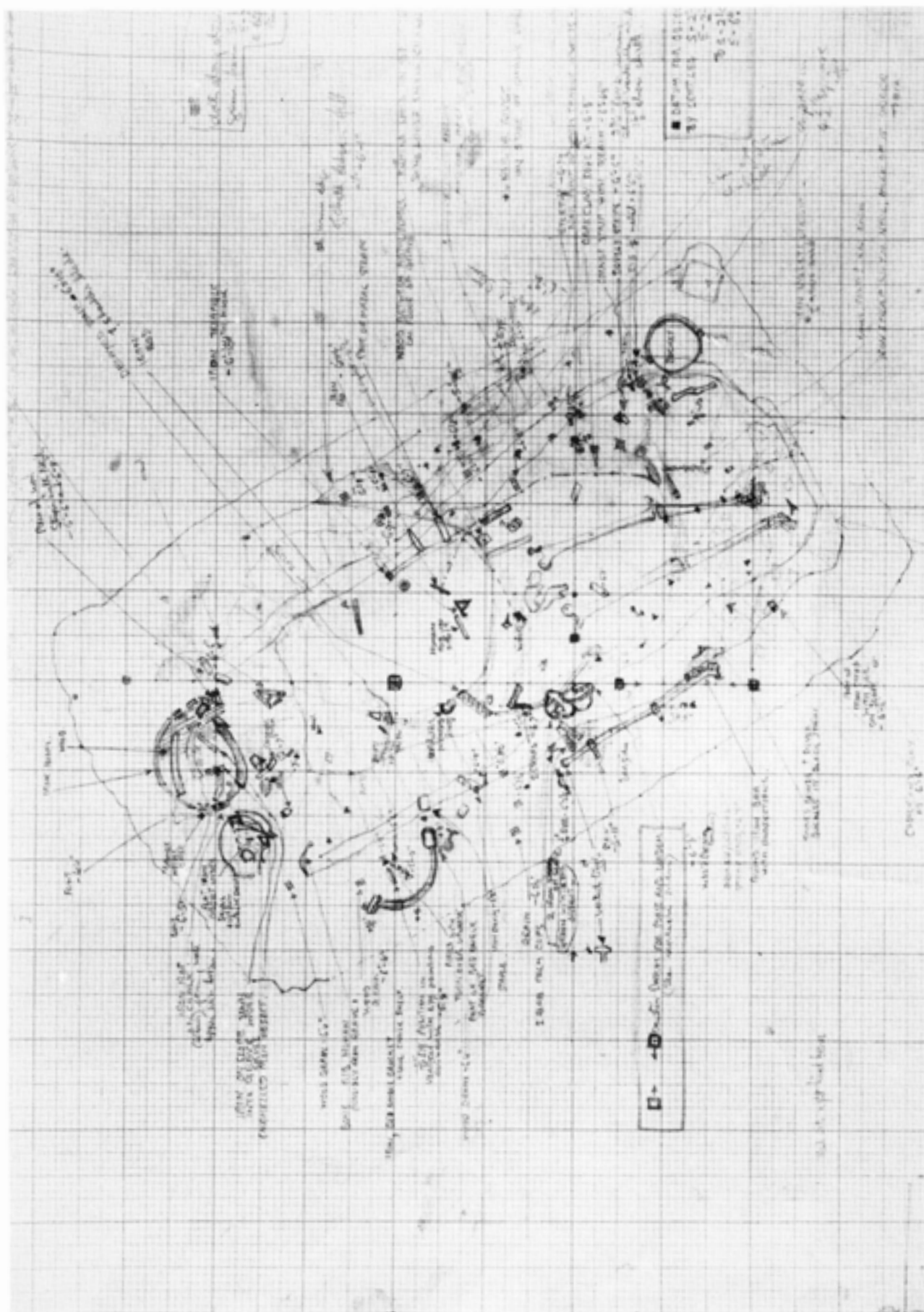


Fig 12 Annotated field plan of excavated grave by Faith Vatcher



## Stage 4

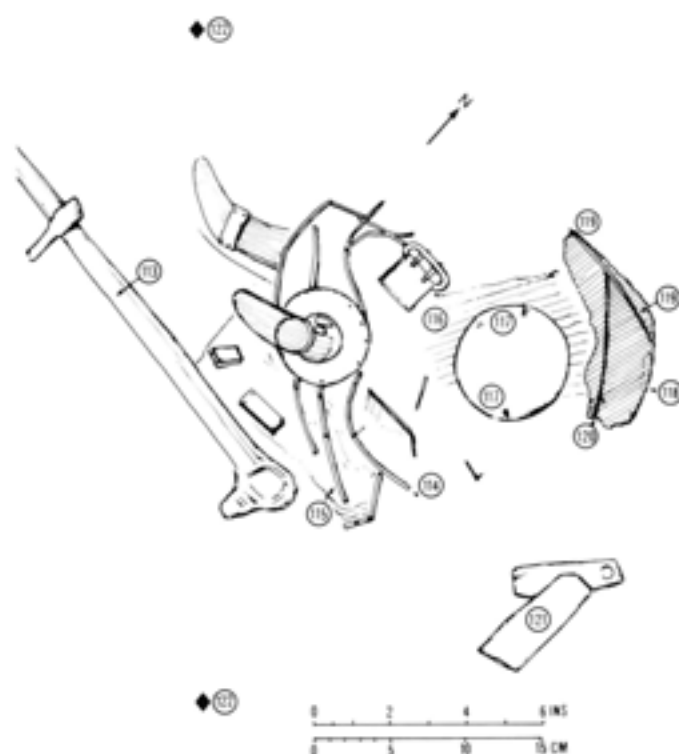


Fig 13 Excavation of the grave; stage 4 grave plan of the satchel area (features 113–22), adjacent to right hand bed-rail; features shown on the plan:

113 Iron (cf no 63); 114 'This strip, move to here' (ie 114 should be 115, a correction on the drawing); 115 (cf 114 above); 116 Cords; 117 Gold (mentioned twice); 118 Traces of leather or cloth; 119 Line of powdery brown cloth inside, plain gault outside; 120 Red brown line, leather inside?; 121 Iron Straps on side of chalk; 122 Denotes datum on stage 3 plan of 61 (Scale 1:4); (After Stuart Piggott)

Stage 7 (Fig 15b) shows the position of some of the iron hoop fragments and traces of wood staves from the iron-bound bucket.

### Sections of the grave

The nature of the grave fill is identified in the two sections across the grave (Fig 16), which were drawn when the baulks were still in position (see Fig 17), and before the base of the grave had been reached.

The section looking south (Fig 16a) shows two disturbances within the original grave fill, sealed by the top layers 1 and 2. The deeper disturbance at the western end of the grave cuts through the dark clay soil of layers 4 and 5. This clearly belongs to the robber trench which destroyed the skeletal remains from the head to the pelvic region. In the section looking west (Fig 16b), the robber trench edge runs parallel to the northern side of the grave, cutting through the clay of layer 17.

### Nature of the grave fill

Faith Vatcher believed that the compacted gault clay filling of the grave, which so impeded the excavation, had been brought from the 'valley below Ansty' (card

to MPBW 19 September 1966). This need not have been the case. In a personal communication with Mr H R L Matthews of Red House Farm, Swallowcliffe, on whose land the barrow and grave were partly sited, I was informed that the only true clay soil in the vicinity are the yellow clays of the London Series and unlike the 'thick dark clay' referred to in the excavation record.

Mr Matthews continues:

However, the soil at the base of the escarpment on my land, to the north and in patches at the base of the Broad Chalke valley, is a silt loam, I think of the Lower Chalk series, which has a high clay content. When damp this is quite dark in colour and distinctly plastic, typical of calcareous clays which are naturally alkaline and greasy when wet. They are known locally as 'clay soils', although I think this is not strictly correct.

I guess Mrs Vatcher probably described the soil of my land at the base of the escarpment as 'thick dark clay', and, owing to its proximity to the Barrow I would suspect could have been used for the infill.

It is interesting to compare the Swallowcliffe grave fill with that of the Saxon grave containing the male warrior on Middle Down, Alvediston c 250m south of the Swallowcliffe barrow (grid ref ST 967252). Dr R C C Clay, who excavated this barrow (listed as barrow 1c), records:

the barrow earth consisted for the most part of the ordinary flinty top soil. Above the skeleton and in the upper filling of the cist, the soil was very compact and free of flint and chalk. It had apparently been dug from the upper mould over the ditch of the neighbouring cattleway (the so-called 'covered way') which has been proved by excavation to date from the Early Iron Age and to be contemporary with the Swallowcliffe Down village. In this fine mould and immediately above the skeleton were five or six very large blocks of flint intentionally placed there. They had crushed the skull. In the barrow earth and on the old turf line were several pieces of sandstone and early Iron Age pottery which had without doubt come from the adjoining village site. (1926, 437)

### Grave profiles

The grave is 9ft 3ins long and its width is 5ft (2.74×1.52m). Its depth is 4ft (1.22m).

The post-excavation profiles of the grave (Fig 18) show it to be irregularly shaped with an uneven base cut into the natural chalk. At the western and eastern ends there is a stepped shelf 8in (0.2m) above the base.

The grave profile looking east would suggest that the northern side of the grave was enlarged when the grave was robbed, removing the sharp lip of the edge, such as exists on the south side. (This would be consistent with the information of stage 1, which shows the limits of the robber trench relative to the

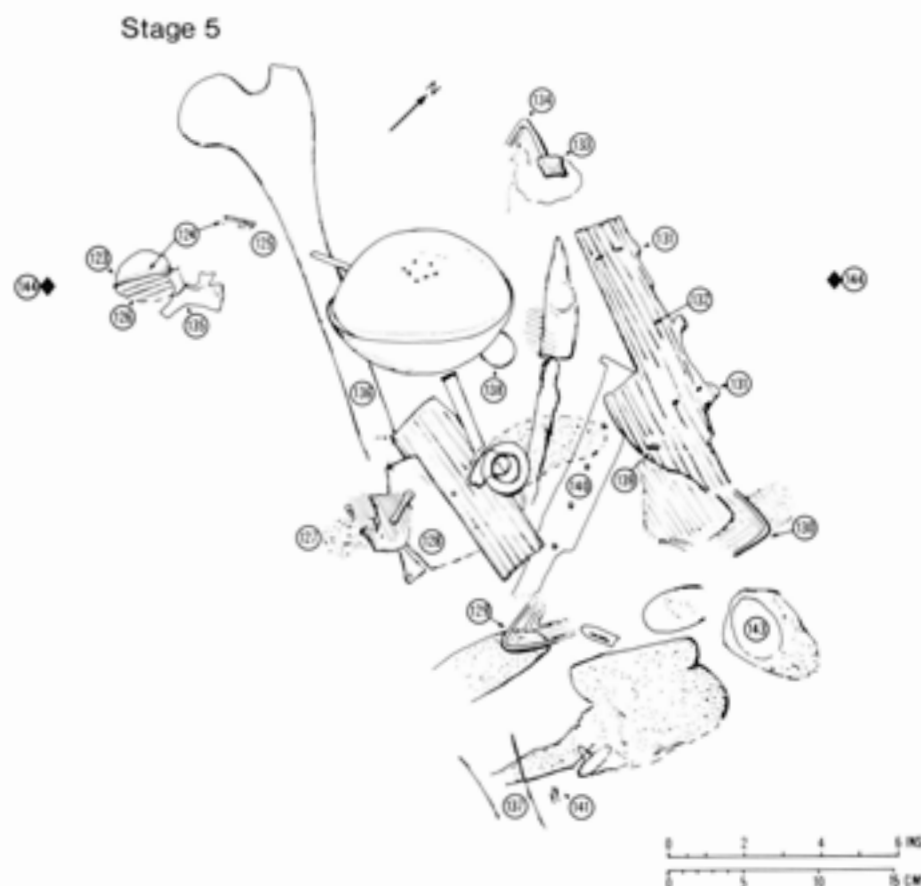


Fig 14 Excavation of the grave; stage 5 plan of the casket and its contents (features 123–44), adjacent to left femur; features shown on the plan:

123 Bronze; 124 Corner binding; 125 Bronze rod; 126 Wood; 127 Wood; 128 Lock (lock plate?); 129 Corner binding; 130 Corner binding; 131 Hinge; 132 Thickness of wood of box  $\frac{1}{4}$  in lid, sides thicker below hinges; 133 Wood; 134 Bronze corner piece; 135 Bone vertebra; 136 Femur; 137 Tib; 138 Spoon; 139 Amber and painted glass beads, 2, below wood of box; 140 Comb; 141 Bone comb (teeth); 142 Leather, 1 in up from chalk base (other stippled areas shown on drawing are probably leather also); 143 Bronze; 144 Denotes datum on stage 3 plan of 110 (Scale 1:4); (After Stuart Piggott)

rectangular edges at the eastern end of the grave.) The chalk shelf on the southern side is also noticeable.

#### Grave plan, orientation 275°

(Fig 19)

The large plan was drawn by James Thorn (Ancient Monuments Drawing Office) and combines most of the information contained in stages 2–7.

The distribution of the artefact assemblages relative to the skeletal remains can be more readily comprehended. Apart from the ironwork bed fittings (Assemblage F), five assemblages identified as A, B, C, D, and E can be located. The positions of the items of ironwork belonging to the bed are shown in more detail in Figure 72. Assemblage B, the casket and contents, and assemblage D, the satchel complex, neither of which was indicated on the stage 3 grave plan (Fig 11), are now shown in position as found.

#### Disturbance to the grave

Evidence of disturbance to the grave was clearly recorded by the excavators. The stratigraphy of the grave fill could be interpreted as showing two intrusions, the second of which penetrated the central area of the grave and disturbed and destroyed the skeleton from the skull to the pelvis. The robber trench can be seen cutting layers 4 and 5 on Figure 16a, and can be clearly seen on Figure 19. The jaw is lying in the pelvic region, with the rest of the skull dissociated from it and covering the iron pan fragments of Assemblage A at the west end of the grave. One can surmise that any personal jewellery worn in the thoracic region may have been removed by grave robbers. Figures 11 and 19–21 show the excavated grave.

Circumstantial evidence, such as the fragmentary nature of some of the ironwork fittings from the bed within the area of disturbance, might indicate that the robbing occurred some considerable time after the burial, when the ironwork was badly corroded and friable. No intrusive artefact was recorded within the

Stage 6

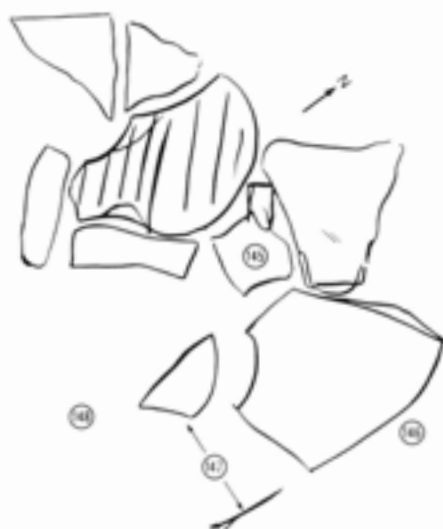


Fig 15a Excavation of the grave; stage 6 sketch plan of the iron pan fragments (features 145-8) beneath cranium at west end of grave; features shown on plan:

145 Soft; 146 Chalk nuts etc; 147 Clear; 148 Ironwork at north end of burial (After Faith Vatcher)

Stage 7

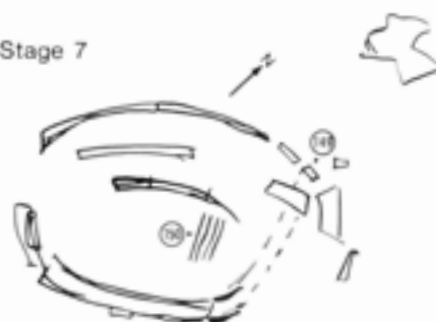


Fig 15b Excavation of the grave; stage 7 sketch plan of the iron-bound bucket (features 149-50); features shown on plan:

149 Iron hoop fragments (part of hoop has slipped down slope); 150 Wooden staves (After Faith Vatcher)

disturbed grave fill which might give a *terminus post quem* date for the robbing.

It is worth putting on record, however, a local story brought to my attention by Commander Stephen Jenkins, Vine Cottage, Swallowcliffe. I quote from his letter of 1 October 1981:

You ask about the local story about the barrow's post medieval disturbance. Before giving you the story I will try to describe its source, or rather its resurgence into the present.

This was through the late Mrs Hilda Annie Biggs (1892-1972), who was a daughter of a Mr Arthur Thomas Tanner (1860-1937), who was proprietor of the London Elm Inn in the 1890s.

The London Elm Inn was the old coaching inn on the lower road, which road supplanted the old coaching road along the ridge of the Downs, which ridge road passed a short distance from the barrow which we have in question. During her childhood at the London Elm Inn Hilda Tanner acquired the story.

It was not, however, till after the Vatchers had started their excavation and Hilda Tanner had been told that it was being done that Hilda produced the story to her neighbour, Mrs K M Plumb, of Pond Close, Swallowcliffe. But this was before any human remains had been encountered.

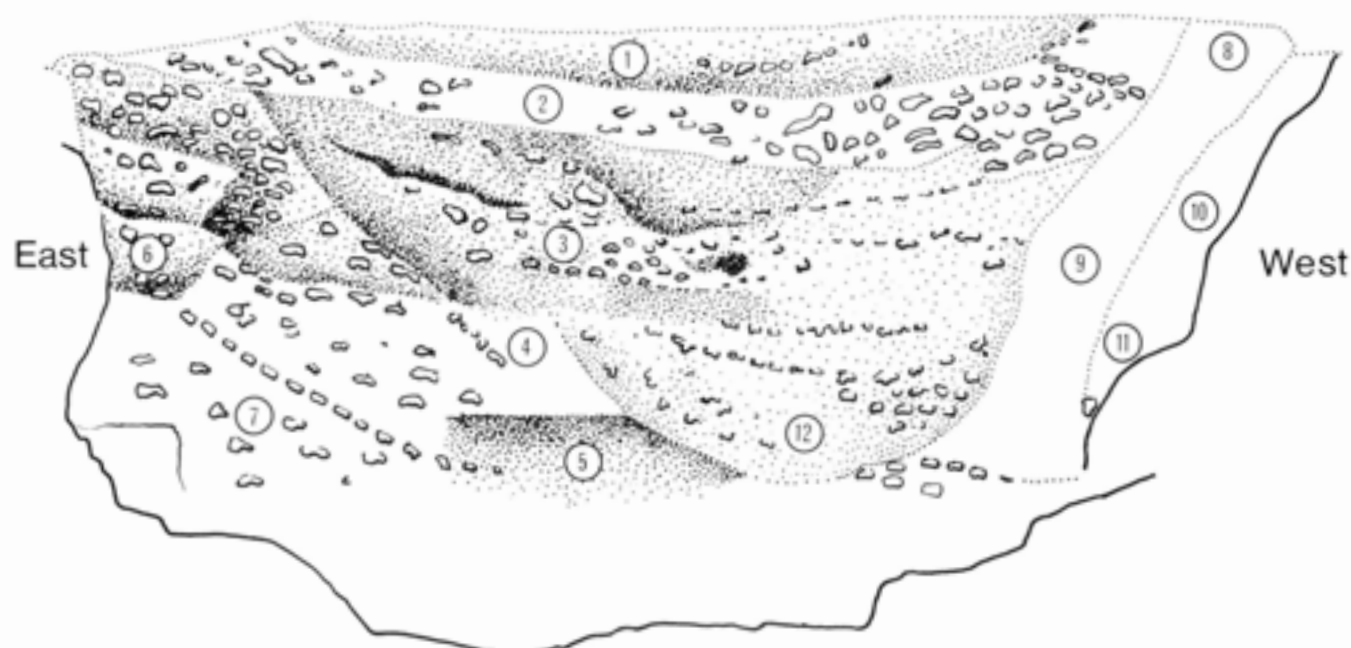
The story was simply that 'in the past some men came by coach from Shaftesbury along the old road on the ridge of the Downs. They dug a hole in the barrow and robbed it and said that a French princess had been buried in it'. That is all.

I hope that the story of an old lady of 80 which I have given you is not too bizarre, but you have asked for it and it is the truth as given to me, and it is all I can do. I would not be

surprised if it is unacceptable in archaeological circles.

In spite of the reservations by Stephen Jenkins that the story may appear too bizarre, it is worthy of respect. There seems to be no reason why 74 year old Mrs Hilda Biggs should invent a story in August 1966 to tell to her neighbour when she learned that the barrow was being excavated. As a child living at the local inn the young Hilda Tanner would have been in an environment where such an incident as the finding of 'treasure' in a local barrow could have persisted beyond that of a 'seven day wonder' being retold countless times in the parlours of the London Elm Inn.

There are several points in the story that demand some comment. The grave was identified as being that of a female (a French princess), prior to the grave being excavated by the Vatchers and any skeletal remains uncovered. The reference to the grave as being that of a French princess may well indirectly suggest that some exotic and rich items of personal jewellery, brooches, or necklace were discovered by the grave robbers. It is tempting to speculate that the jewellery consisted of gold and garnet work, which to the eyes of the barrow diggers could have had affinities with Frankish jewellery. Possibly the term 'Frankish' was misheard by the locals, or considered to be synonymous with 'French'. But whether such finds (if any) were suppressed, or found their way into a private collection, we shall never know. The upper coaching road referred to as the 'old road' may well have become obsolete as such before the end of the eighteenth century. According to the late Dr R C C Clay in his booklet *A Short History of Fovant*, the lower coach road (the present A30) was made in 1702. It was not till 1787 that the new lower turnpike was legalised by act of Parliament. In the Swallowcliffe



Section looking South

Section looking West

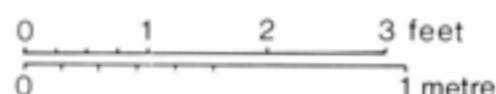


Fig 16a East-west section of the grave:

1 Clay soil; 2 Flints; 3 Flints in clay soil; 4 Dark clay, flint free; 5 Stain in soil; 6 Chalk from sides plus flints in clay throughout; 7 Flints in dark clay soil; 8 Soil; 9 Clay, fairly flint free; 10 Flinty soil, similar to subsoil; 11 Flinty soil with chalk nodules; 12 Fragment of iron, plus bronze wire (only artefact mentioned) (Scale 1:20)

Fig 16b South-north section of the grave:

13 No description (presumably as 1 above; clay soil with flints); 14 Soil in upper part but clay below; 15 Flints; 16 Brown soil, clay; 17 Clay with stone pebbles; 18 Dark soil, less clay content; 19 Thick dark clay, few flints; 20 Mixture of flints in clay; 21 Loose chalk plus soil; 22 Blocks of chalk; 23 Loose chalk plus soil (Scale 1:20)



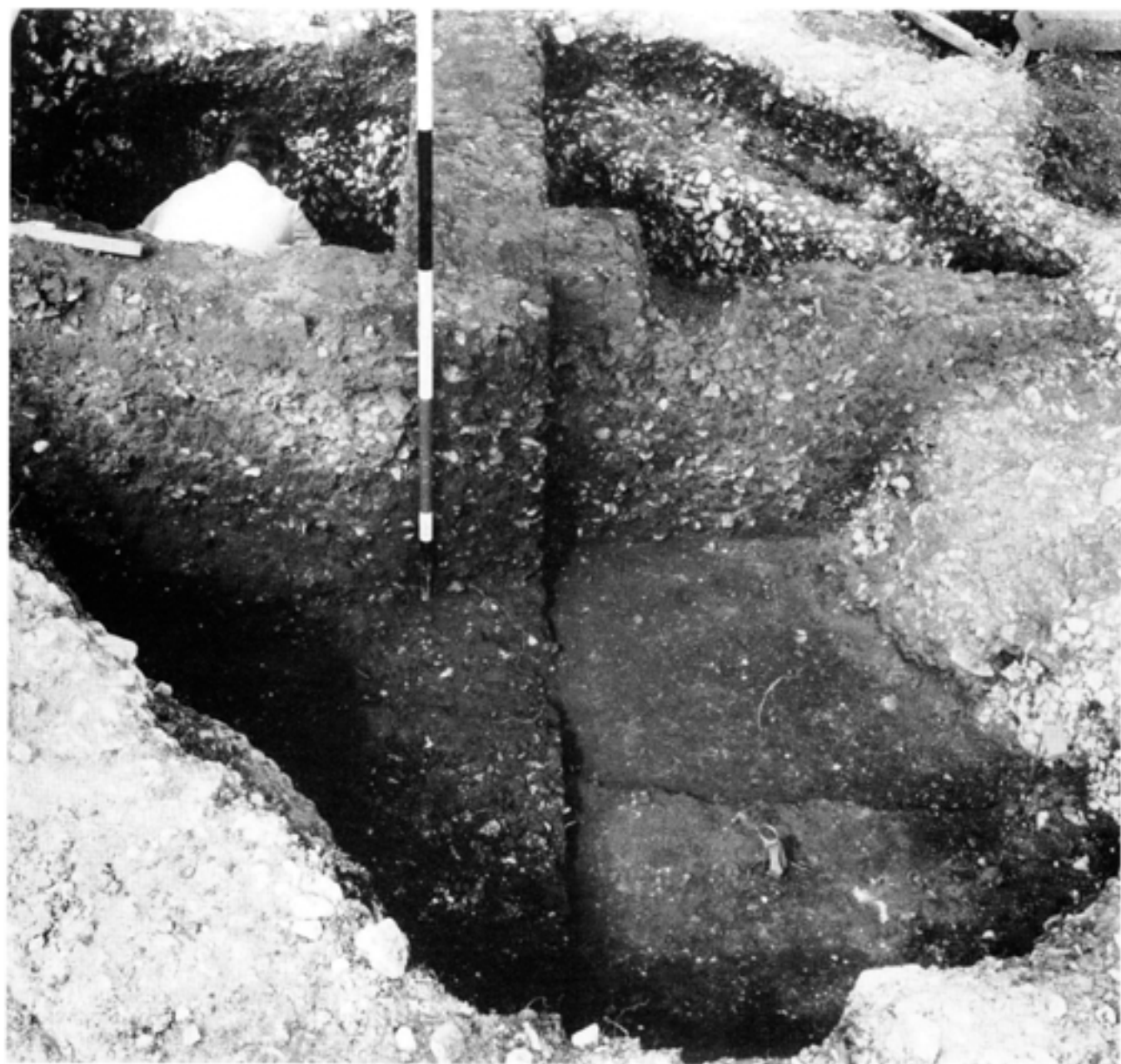


Fig 17 The central grave under excavation

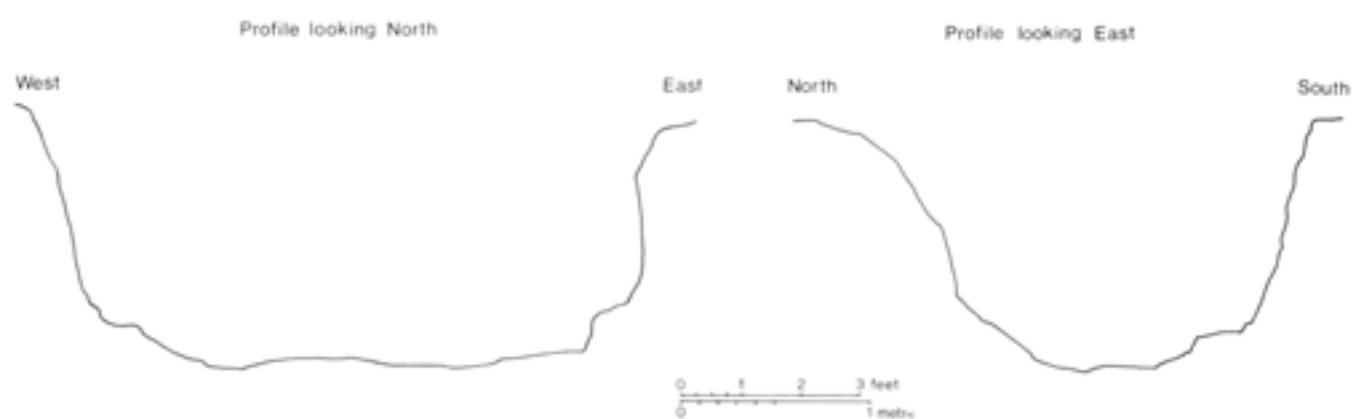


Fig 18 Post-excitation profiles of the grave (Scale 1:40)

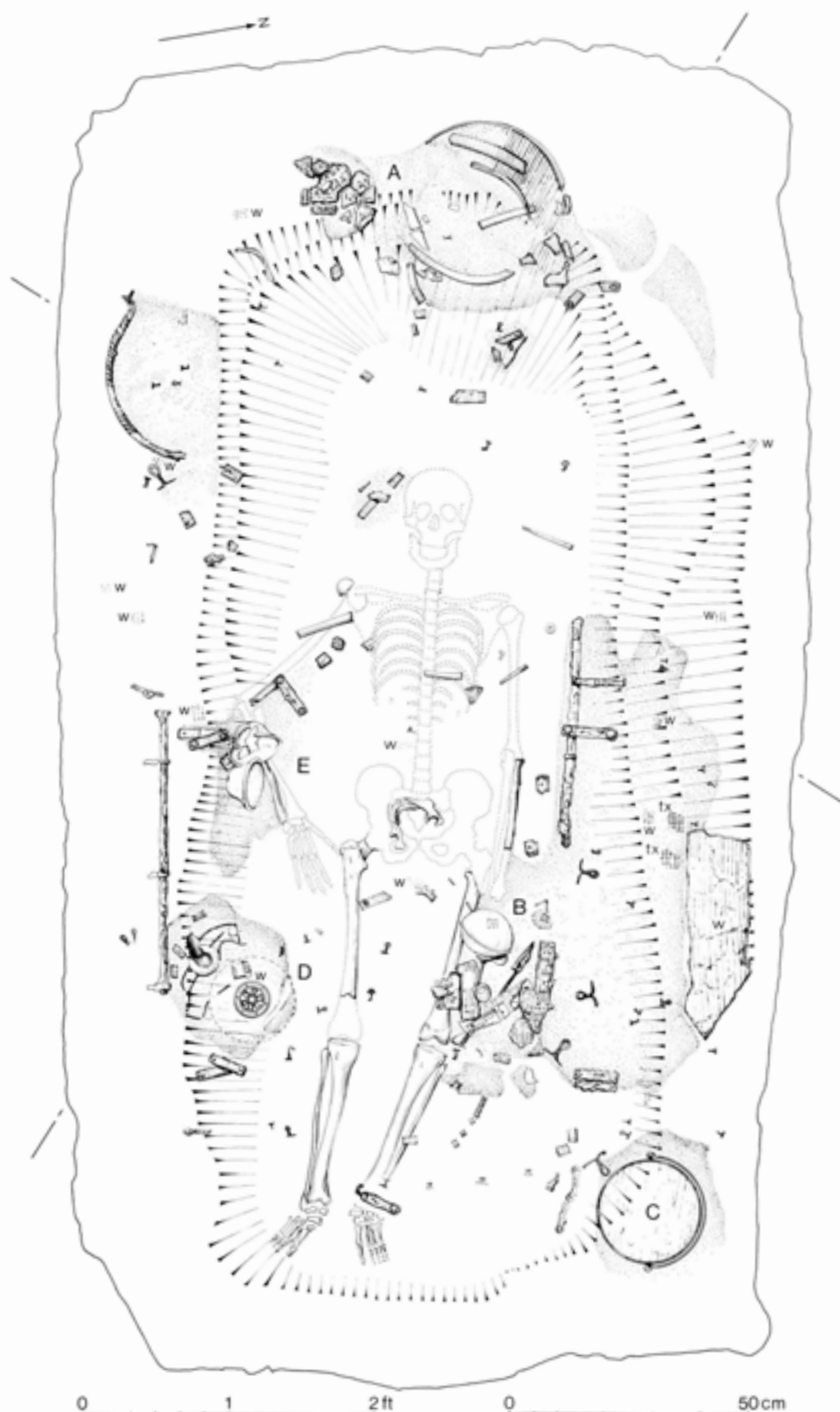
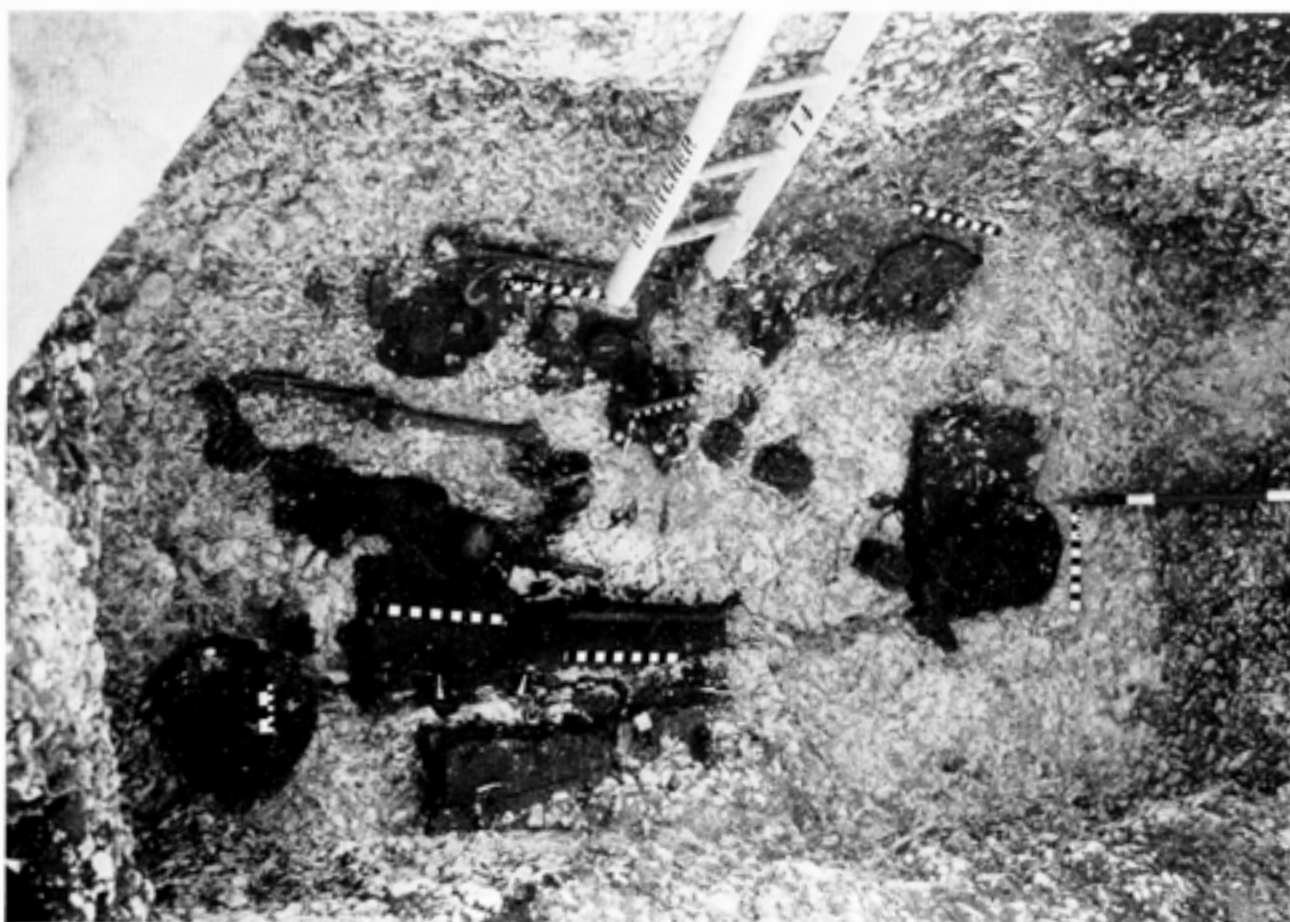


Fig 19 Plan of the grave showing the positions of assemblages A-E and the ironwork of the bed (Assemblage F); w = wood, tx = textile (Scale 1:12)

Fig 20 The excavated grave from its east end



Fig 21 The excavated grave from its west end



enclosure award, drafted in 1785, the Upper Herepath is described as part of the *late* turnpike road leading from Shaftesbury to Salisbury. The Lower Herepath is described as 'part of the *new* turnpike road leading Salisbury to Shaftesbury'. Both roads are described as 'public carriageways and driftways of the breadth of forty feet'.

The use of the upper road by the earlier investigators of the Swallowcliffe barrow could well have taken place after the road had become obsolete as the official coaching road. Beyond suggesting that the opening of the barrow could have taken place in the late eighteenth century or sometime in the nineteenth century by persons with dubious antiquarian inter-

ests, we cannot be more precise.

### *The human bone*

The surviving human bone was examined by Janet Henderson of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory. Her full report can be seen below in Appendix 1. She concluded that the skeletal remains were probably those of an adult female aged between 18 and 25 years. Her height was c 1.59m (5ft 3in). Some evidence for bone pathology was found on the skull and on the right femur, but there was insufficient evidence available for a diagnosis to be made.



## 2 The finds

Six assemblages of finds (A–F) have been identified in the Swallowcliffe Down burial. Figure 19 shows the locations of groups A–E, as well as the positions of the iron bed fittings (Assemblage F). Qualitative analysis of the alloys of the finds by energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence (XRF) was carried out by Justine Bayley (JB) of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory. The copper alloys are as follows: bronze – copper and tin, brass – copper and zinc, quaternary alloy – copper, tin, zinc, and lead; tinning means that a tin or tin-lead alloy was applied to the surface of the object. The organic remains were identified by Jacqui Watson (JW) of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory. Elizabeth Crowfoot reported on the textiles.

### Assemblage A

Assemblage A was located at the west end of the grave, and consisted of an iron pan or skillet and a large iron-bound bucket.

#### 1 Iron pan/skillet (Fig 22)

Fragments of ironwork belonging to a pan or skillet were recorded by Faith Vatcher in a pencil sketch (Fig 15a). Further pieces of iron of a similar gauge and corrosion pattern have been subsequently identified from the disturbed grave fill as belonging to the same artefact. An everted rim is evident on three adjacent

fragments giving a suggested diameter of approximately 330mm. The largest surviving fragment abuts the rim fragments but has no indication of an angled base. The height or depth of the pan/skillet is therefore unknown, but it was certainly over 150mm. All the identifiable fragments are heavily concreted and corroded, with no trace of a handle or chain attachment, or riveting in evidence.

#### 2 Iron-bound bucket (Fig 23)

Iron hoops and wooden staves were apparent and were recorded on plans by the excavators. These are shown in Figures 10 (stage 2, nos 41 and 42), 11 (stage 3, nos 89 and 90) and in the sketch plan of stage 7 (Fig 15b, nos 149 and 150). The wood attached to the fragmentary iron hoops has been identified as yew, *Taxus* sp (JW). The reconstruction (Fig 23) proposes an estimated height of 280mm and a diameter of 300mm. A tapered iron bar (a) of rectangular section, 95mm long and 20mm wide at its maximum, has been identified as a section of the bucket handle. A slight curvature on the longitudinal axis is apparent but its forged terminal and method of attachment is uncertain. The rim of the bucket (b) was reinforced by an inverted U-sectioned iron strip 15mm deep, five fragments of which have been identified containing wood fragments from the tops of the yew bucket staves. This iron rim was further secured to the staves by tinned bronze strips (c) 11mm wide, folded over and attached to the staves beneath the rim mount by a small iron rivet. Two of these tinned bronze strips survived and were located near the

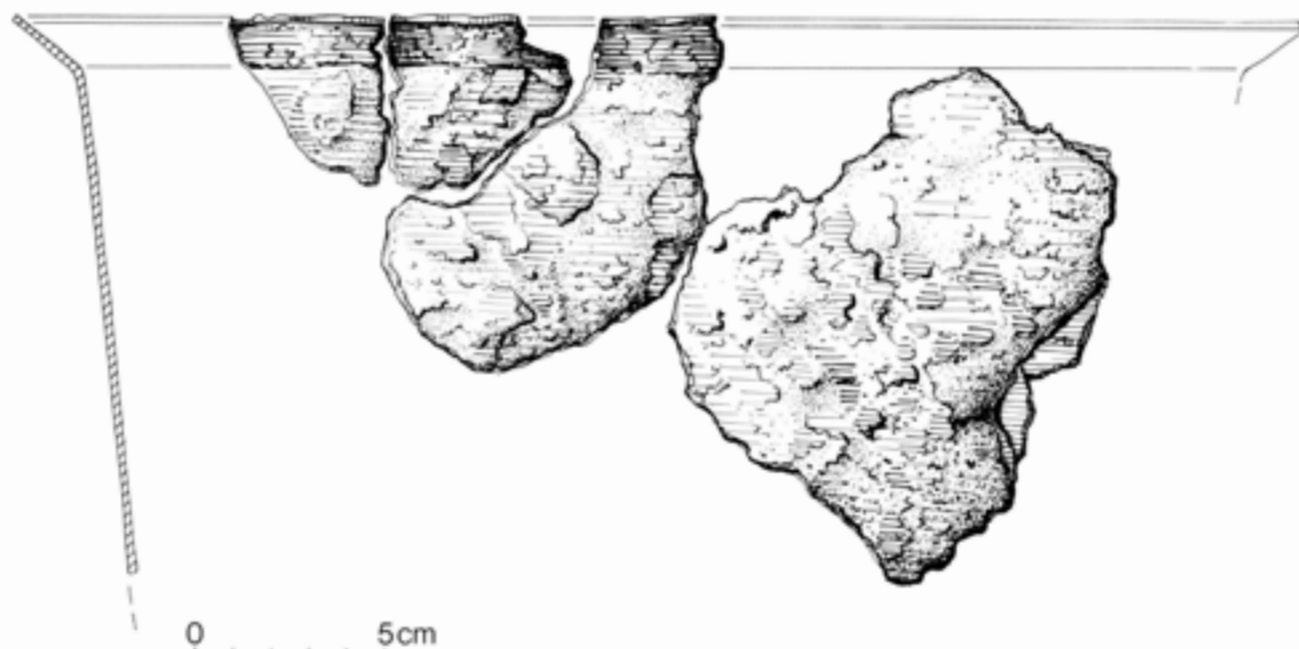


Fig 22 Fragments of pan/skillet (Scale 1:2)

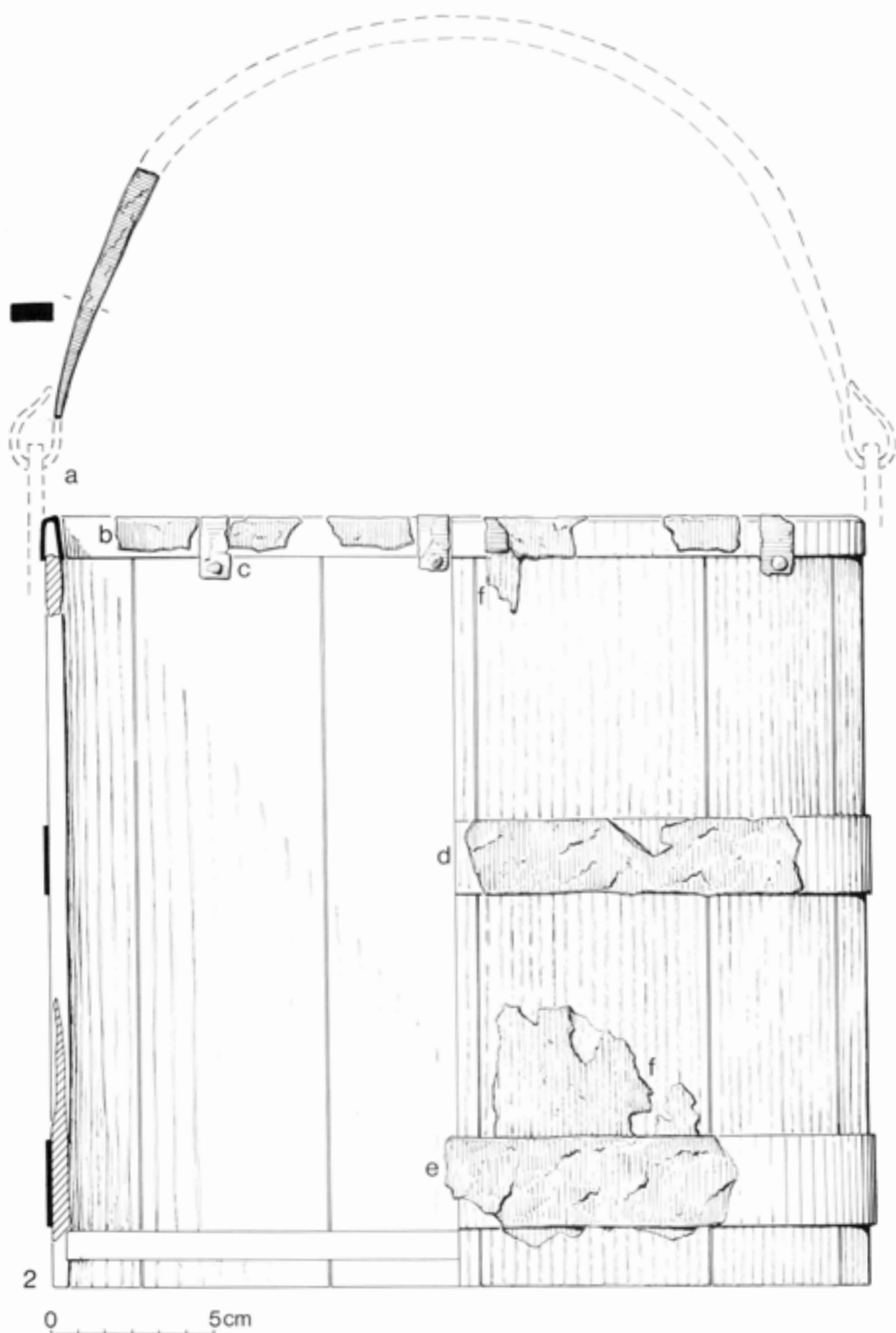


Fig 23 Reconstruction of iron-bound bucket (Scale 1:2)

bottom of the grave in the disturbed area of the head and thoracic region. Confirmation that they were part of the bucket fixtures is proved by the fact that one was still attached to a fragment of the iron rim and contained traces of wood. Iron hoops bound together the bucket staves. The central hoop (d) was 25mm broad and the lower hoop (e) was 31mm broad. Signs of two rivets could be detected on a section of the central iron hoop. Traces of preserved wood (f), showing a transverse wood grain, were evident on the inner surfaces of the hoops, with a substantial piece in a very fragile condition surviving against a portion of the lower hoop. Hairlike corrosion formations cover many of the outer surfaces. The surviving portion of yew preserved against the lower hoop would indicate a minimum width of 80mm for the staves.

## Assemblage B

Assemblage B consisted of the maple-wood casket and its contents; it was located by the left femur. The plan of Assemblage B is shown in Figure 14, which is based upon the field plan drawn by Professor Stuart Piggott. This, together with excavation photographs, has provided the prime evidence for the distribution of the casket fittings and contents.

### 3 Casket

Figs 24–6

#### Casket fittings (a–s)

a (Fig 24) Undecorated bronze ring handle. Diameter 40mm. It is attached to an iron eye ring which extends to pass through the wood, c 10mm thick; the preserved wood grain is clearly visible.

X-ray fluorescence analysis of the ring handle (JB) shows it to be of leaded bronze with no trace of tinning detectable. The ring was made by annealing and bending a circular-sectioned rod of bronze into an almost complete circle. It is likely that traces of wear from the iron fixture account for the thinning of the section of the bronze at the ring joint.

b (Fig 24) Hinged bronze hasp. Length 101mm. The shorter section is locked at an angle of 60° by the badly corroded iron hinge pin. The lower section which engaged the lock-plate terminates in an eye through which fragments of an iron ring 21mm in diameter pass.

The front of the hasp is bevelled and tapers towards the end, each face being decorated with two pairs of diagonal grooves above a pair of horizontal grooves. The width of the hasp at the hinge is 14mm. Above the grooved decoration are two indentations at each edge. The underside is hollowed out, the concavity extending to the perforated projecting catchment which engages with the lock-plate. The upper section of the hasp is 48mm long and was secured to the lid of the casket with three different sized dome-headed bronze nails. Traces of wood are attached to the two lower nails, the longer of which indicates that the thickness of wood of the casket lid

was 15mm. Decoration on the upper section is confined to two bands of transverse grooving, immediately below the head of the uppermost nail and the second 10mm distant at the midway point. A fracture just beneath this point had been repaired in antiquity by applying a thin bronze plate to the underside, cut to the exact shape of the lid fixture.

Traces of silvering were recorded in the conservation notebooks (Wiltshire County Museum Service) when cleaning of the finds were undertaken, but this has not been subsequently confirmed by X-ray fluorescence, which indicated the hasp and repair plate were 'bronze alloys containing small but variable amounts of lead and, in most cases, a small proportion of zinc too. A small area of white metal near the old break, possibly traces of solder from the repair' (JB).

c (Fig 24) Bronze rectangular lock-plate in fragile and damaged condition, but with parts of the lock mechanism surviving on the inner face. Length 79mm, width 49mm. The plate is pierced by two rectangular apertures. The one on the left side of the plate (8×5mm) engaged the projecting tang of the hasp, whilst the centrally-placed aperture (10×4mm) was the keyhole. The plate was secured to the casket by small bronze nails, one at each corner, the heads of two surviving, and was intermediately fastened with smaller nails or pins. Traces of preserved wood are attached to the sliding catch-bar of the lock mechanism. XRF analysis of the lock-plate indicated a leaded bronze without any detectable zinc (JB).

d–g (Fig 24) Corner brackets. The curvature of the four angled brackets would indicate that the corners of the casket were rounded. Only one bracket, (f), is now complete, although brackets (d) and (g) could be joined for the purpose of drawing. Bracket (f) is distinct from the others in being a solid strip of D-sectioned bronze. The fractured brackets are not as strong, being made from strips of sheet metal of variable composition rolled lengthwise. One was brass, and the pin through it was a quaternary alloy; another was bronze containing some lead and zinc (JB). Each bracket was secured to the casket by two nails, one at either flattened terminal. The shank of the longest nail is 15mm.

h, i (Fig 24) Pair of hinges. Hinge (h) is 61mm long; hinge (i) is 63mm long. Each comprises two subtriangular plates, undecorated except for a single transverse groove either side of the hinge pin. On both examples the shorter leaf is curved, indicating that the casket had a curved or domed lid. Fragments of wood attached to the underside of hinge (h) have been identified as maple, *Acer* sp (JW). Each hinge was secured to the casket with five dome-headed bronze nails, with an iron nail at the apex of the curved leaf, the shank of which does not survive. The two bronze nails on the smaller half of the hinge are distinctive in having clenches made of bronze on each, the ends of the nails being hammered like rivets to secure the clench plates. In contrast, the lower leaf of each hinge was secured to the casket with nails of longer length. On hinge (h) the lower pin with its

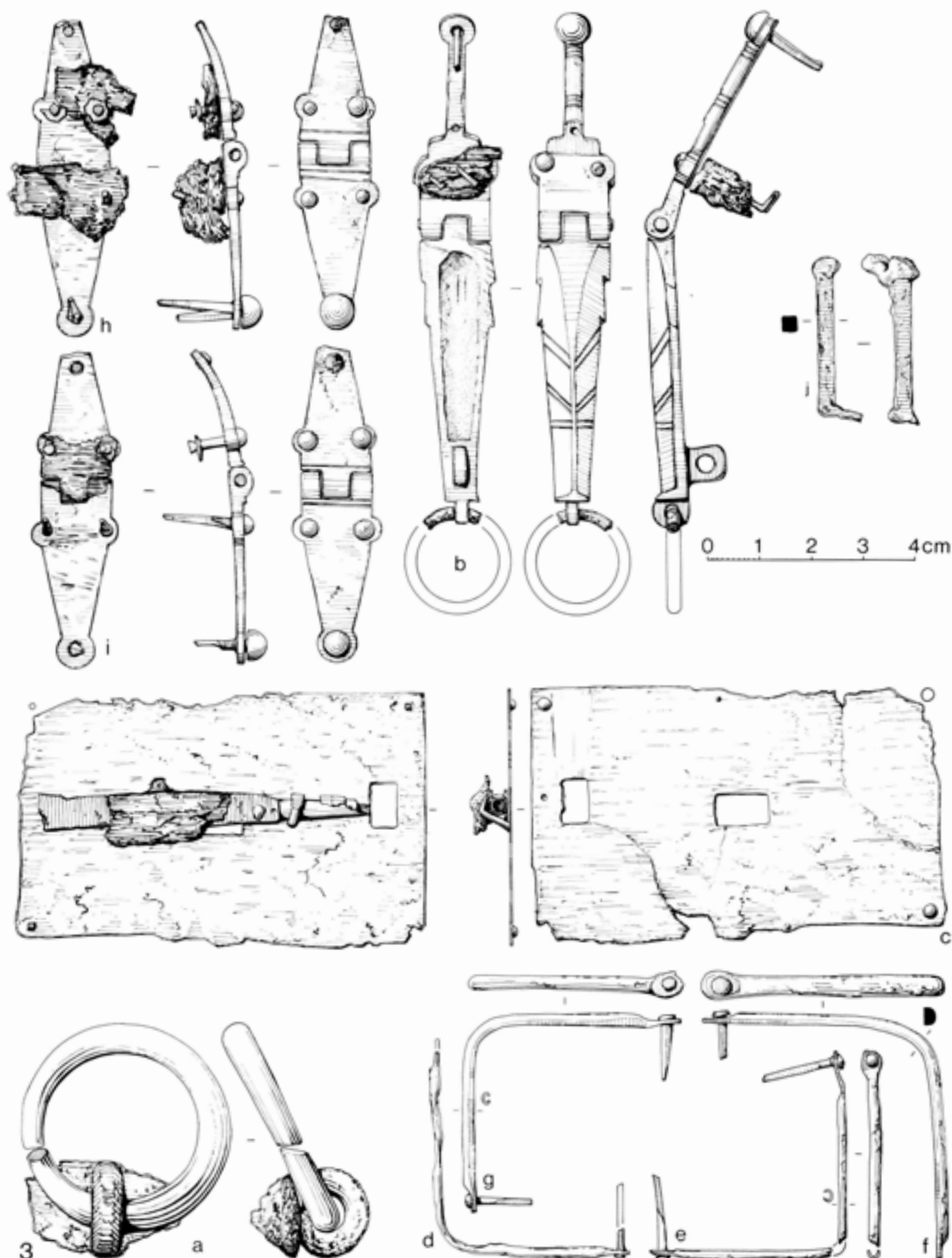


Fig 24 Metalwork fittings of casket: *a* ring handle; *b* hasp; *c* lock-plate; *d*–*g* corner brackets; *h*, *i* hinges; *j* iron key; (Scale 1:1, except *j* 1:2)



large domed head is 21mm long and was evidently a replacement made after the original nail, the shank of which is preserved adjacent to the replacement, fractured. From the evidence of the relative lengths of the nails it is possible that the walls of the casket were of thicker wood than the lid. The longest of the lower nails has a shank length of 15mm in contrast to the clenched nails of the lid which have a shank length of c 8mm. It is possible, however, that the clenched nails could have been recessed into the wood of the lid.

Analysis of the hinges by XRF has shown them to be of leaded bronze containing a small amount of zinc (JB).

j (Fig 24) Square sectioned rod of iron. Length 64mm. It was found within the casket underlying the ring of the casket lid, and is tentatively identified as a fragment of a key. It has protuberances at either end and is in a corroded condition. No additional information was revealed by X-radiography.

k (Fig 25) Fragment of maple. Length 15mm, width 15mm. It is shown as no 133 on Figure 14. It was found lying above one end of corner bracket (g). The grain runs in the same direction as that of the wood attached to the hinges, suggesting that it belongs to the hinged side of the casket.

l (Fig 26) Strip of bronze, folded at 90° at its lower end and used to repair the casket. The length of the strip on its longer face is 60mm, the length of the folded section being 9mm, width 19mm. It was found adjacent to the lower leg at the eastern end of the casket complex. It was originally secured to the casket by six thin, sharply pointed bronze nails, 12mm long and of different thickness and character to those used for securing the hinges and hasp. The folded underside was secured by two nails and four nails were used along the curved edge of the longer strip. XRF analysis of the sheet metal and nails has shown they were made of lead-free bronze which may also have contained a trace of arsenic (JB). Traces of leather were observed attached to the nails during initial conservation work, but this observation was not tested by analysis. It is possible therefore that the casket was covered in leather. It is likely that the repair strip was attached to the lid section of the casket, possibly as a result of a split along the grain from the hasp fixtures.

m (Fig 26) Bronze strip angled at one end. Length 36mm, width 12mm. It was found in the pelvic area above the head of the left femur. The strip is incomplete, having been fractured and corroded at the angled end. A flattened iron nail head 7mm in diameter survives at the other end. The strip was most likely to have been used as a supplementary angled corner support at the left corner of the casket. The evidence for this repair is not conclusive, as no traces of maple were identified on the underside of the strip. XRF analysis of the strip has shown it to be made of sheet bronze containing some lead (JB).

n (Fig 26) Fragment of maple. Length 25mm. It was found within the casket complex and contains sections of two bronze pins. It was possibly part of a mitred corner joint.

o (Fig 26) Small fragment of maple with two sections of bronze pins embedded within. Width 10mm.

p (Fig 26) Section of bronze strip. Length 12mm, width 5mm. It is decorated on one surface with a border of two closely-spaced parallel longitudinal grooves on one edge and a single grooved line on the other, set either side of a small perforation with traces of another perforation at the fractured end.

q (Fig 26) Section of bronze strip. Length 10mm, width 4mm. It is undecorated apart from a single small circular hole. It was found within the lock mechanism.

r (Fig 26) Circular-sectioned small bronze nail with a slightly flattened head. Length 10mm. It was found adjacent to the lock-plate.

s (Fig 26) Section of iron chain consisting of a single S-link with parts of the adjoining links. Diameter of links 3mm. It was found on the middle of the left femur. It is uncertain whether this belongs to the casket contents or was used as a casket fixture attached to the key and the lock-plate (see the casket reconstruction from Finglesham grave 95, Fig 26).

## Casket reconstruction

### *Dimensions and structure*

The casket has been reconstructed based on the evidence of the fittings and their relationship to each other (Figs 25, 26), the casket contents as recorded in excavation photographs (Fig 27) and the field plan (Fig 14).

The total length of the casket is estimated to have been 310mm, based on the distance recorded between the corner brackets (g) and (f). In turn each of these brackets is 100mm distant from a hinge. The positions of the two hinges were fortunately fixed by their attachment to a section of the wood of the casket, the interval between the mid point of each hinge being 110mm as recorded from the excavation photographs (see Fig 25). The width of the casket is estimated to have been c 180mm – the measurement between the angled corners of brackets (f) and (e).

The height of the casket is more difficult to determine. The walls of the casket cannot have been less than 76mm, that is the measurement from the hinge of the hasp to the lower edge of the lock-plate. We can only speculate on how far the wall of the casket extended below the edge of the lock-plate. Similarly, there is no information available as to how the base of the casket was attached (jointed, pegged, or nailed, though the latter is unlikely as no nails relating to the casket, other than the small bronze pins and nails, Fig 26 n, o, r, were found) to the walls

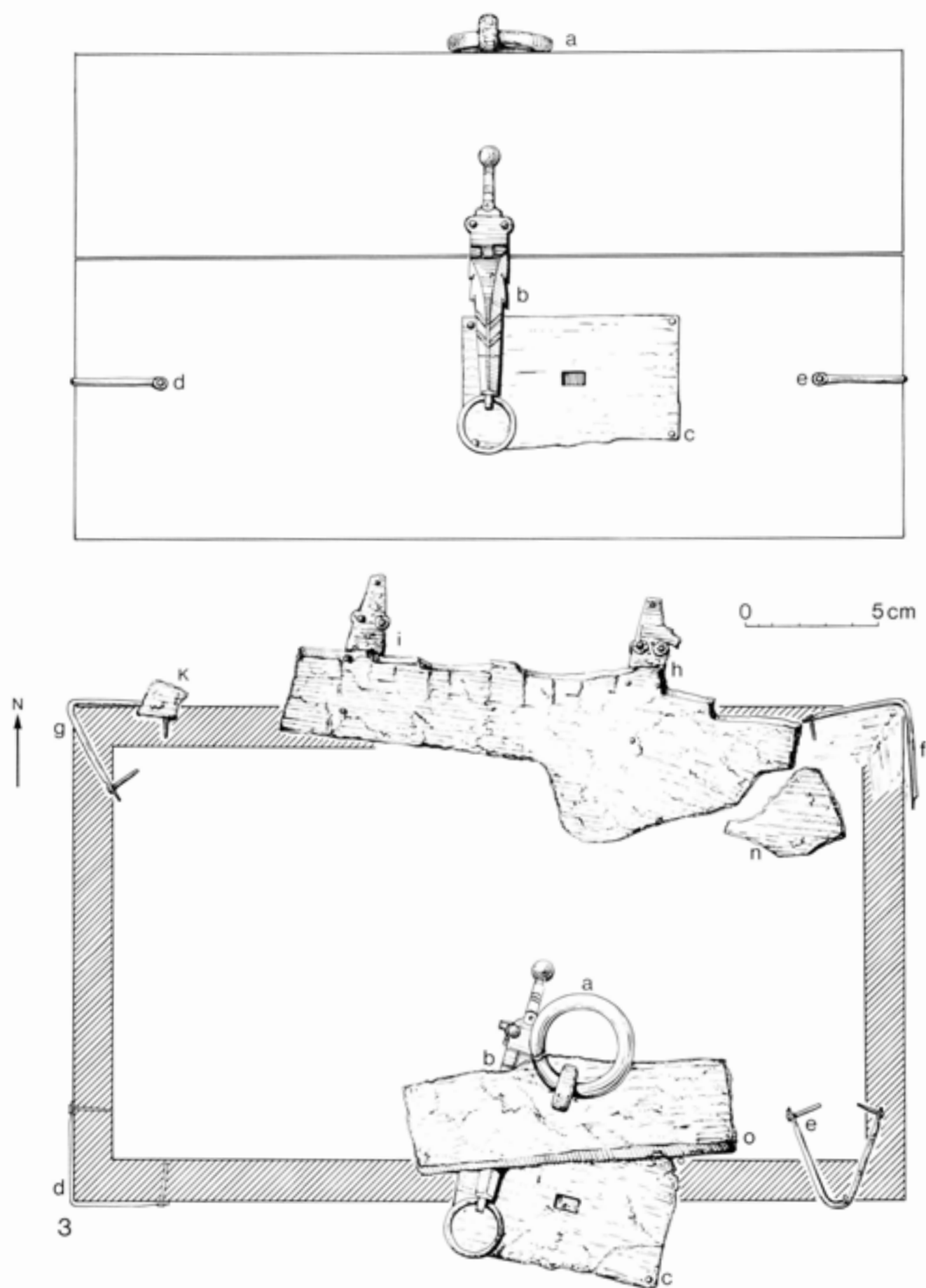
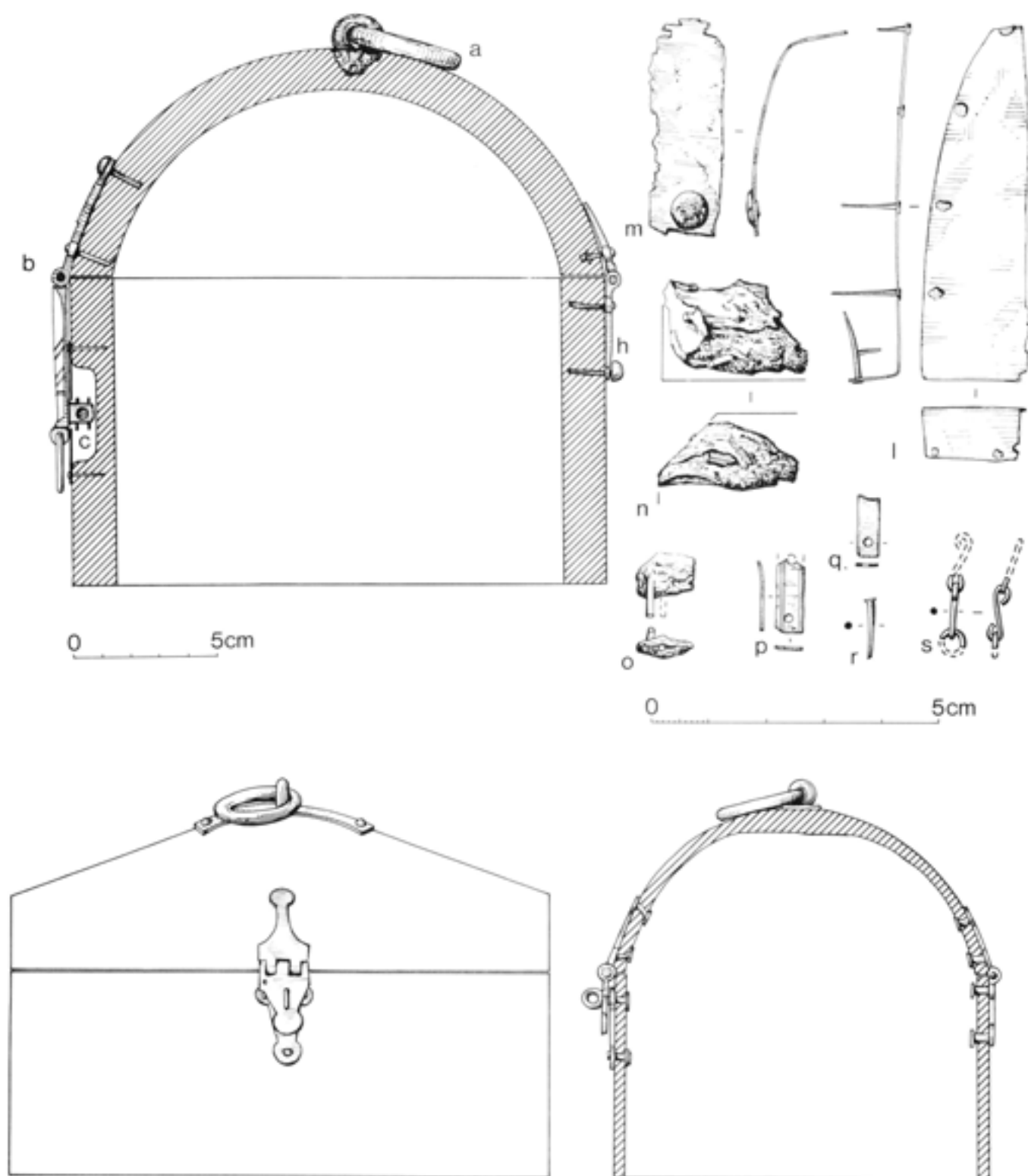


Fig 25 Reconstruction of casket and plan of casket fittings as excavated (Scale 1:2)



Finglesham Grave 95

Fig 26 Side section of casket (Scale 1:2) Reconstruction of casket Finglesham grave 95 (Scale 1:2) Finds m-s, casket fragments (Scale 1:1)

of the casket. (The reconstruction drawing shows a distance of 30mm below the lock-plate, giving a height for the walls of the casket of c 105mm.)

It is assumed from the curvature of the hinges that the lid of the casket was either semicircular in section or barrel-shaped. The positions of both the upper sections of the hinges and the lid section of the hasp attest the fact that the lid could not have been flat. It has been drawn with the ring handle in the centre of the lid, giving a maximum height of c 180mm.

The thickness of the maple used in its construction has been calculated by measuring the shanks of the nails used to secure the hasp, hinges, and corner brackets. The maximum thickness, determined by the lengths of the longest nails, was 15mm. The thickness of wood attached to the iron eyelet of the ring handle was only 10mm, but it is possible that this fixture only partially penetrated the wood of the lid. More puzzling, however, is the discrepancy in length between the nails on the upper and lower halves of the hinges. If the clenched nails of the lid section represent the thickness of the lid at the hinges, there is, in turn, a discrepancy between this and the wood thickness at the hasp. Unfortunately the shanks of the iron nails at the apex of each hinge do not survive, but the dilemma over the disparate lengths of the clenched nails and the other nails of the hasp and hinges could be resolved if the clenched nails are interpreted as being recessed within the lid. Further-

more, clenched nails would prevent the lid from being pulled off the hinge, when it was fully opened.

Examination of the fittings does provide other information about the appearance of the casket. The form of the angled corner brackets indicates that the corners were rounded and not sharply angled. Some evidence of repair and replacement can also be inferred, suggesting that the casket was well used and of some age before its deposition in the grave. Reinforcement to one end of the lid was carried out by securing the curved bronze strip (l). Additional strengthening and repair was undertaken on the upper section of the hasp, after it had fractured. The angled corner support (f) is possibly a stronger replacement, being made of a different alloy and of solid section, in contrast to the rolled sheet construction of the remainder. In addition it has been suggested that the fragmentary bronze strip (m) was a secondary repair strip attached to a corner of the casket.

### Discussion

With few exceptions caskets are not known in Anglo-Saxon graves until the seventh century, although they are found in sixth-century Frankish graves. In nearly all cases they accompany female burials, and in general contained treasured personal



Fig 27 Casket and contents as uncovered in the ground

possessions, amulets, trinkets, and items used in domestic tasks.

Both in its scale and form the Swallowcliffe casket is one of the most impressive examples yet found in an Anglo-Saxon grave. The majority, which are fairly common in the so-called late or proto-Christian cemeteries of Kent and Cambridgeshire, would appear, in contrast, to be flat-lidded rectangular boxes with relatively simple iron or bronze fittings. With its curved lid and elaborate bronze hasp and lock-plate the Swallowcliffe casket is highly distinctive. The woods favoured by the Anglo-Saxon craftsman for the construction of boxes and caskets have not been examined in any systematic manner. It is not possible, therefore, to comment on whether the use of maple, as in the Swallowcliffe example, was common or rare. At Cow Lowe, Derbyshire, Bateman uncovered an inhumation burial, secondary within a barrow and recorded 'the remains of a wooden box of ash planks, half an inch thick, with two bronze hinges, a hasp and an iron padlock, wrapped in a woollen cloth' (1848, 91-95). This is also worthy of note as typologically there are some similarities between the triangular hinges on the Cow Low casket and those from Swallowcliffe. In a sample of fourteen caskets or boxes from the cemetery at Finglesham, Kent, recently studied by Jacqui Watson, the woods used on twelve examples could be identified. The majority, ten examples, proved to be beech, *Fagus* sp. The two exceptions were Gr 62B with a fruitwood casket of the *Pomoideae* family such as *Pirus* sp (pear), *Malus* sp (apple), or *Crataegus* sp (hawthorn), and a casket from Gr 95 which like the Swallowcliffe casket proved to be *Acer* sp (maple). It should not be overlooked that caskets were undoubtedly made from other organic materials, bone or ivory for example. The Franks Casket (Northumbrian, c 700) was made of whalebone and the Gandersheim Casket, dating from the mid or late eighth century, a combination of bone plaques and bronze mounts (Beckwith 1972, nos 1, 2). Both these caskets are covered in relief carving and the possibility therefore that carved or incised decoration enhanced the less spectacular wooden caskets from seventh-century graves must be considered.

A diminutive parallel for the Swallowcliffe casket can be cited from Finglesham, Kent, grave 95 – curiously a rich male grave. It was found at the left shoulder, with no trace of any contents. The dimensions of the Finglesham casket have been estimated to be 190×130mm with a total height of at least 90mm (Fig 26). Examination of the hinges, hasp, and handle fixture of the Finglesham casket indicate that this too had a curved lid. However, it seems likely that it was curved in both long and cross sections. The evidence for a curve in the long section of the lid was determined by the form of the handle plate, a feature that was missing on the Swallowcliffe lid. The thickness of the wood at the hinges and hasp was 5-6mm. At the central point of the lid, the wood was slightly thicker, being 11mm thick. The species of wood utilised, as stated above, has interestingly also proved to be maple (JW).

Comparable features between the two caskets are therefore identical wood species, the similar sets of

fittings, bronze triangular hinges, and hasp, although the ring handle of the Finglesham casket is of iron, not bronze. However, the Finglesham casket does not have angled corner fixtures.

It is possible that some of the shared characteristics of the caskets from Swallowcliffe and Finglesham grave 95 may derive from Frankish exemplars. A casket from St Severin grave 73 at Cologne, although smaller in scale than the Swallowcliffe example, nevertheless possesses a raised trapezoidal lid and a hasp and lock-plate not unlike those at Swallowcliffe (Fremersdorf 1941, fig 2). As such, it is the closest continental parallel to the form of the Swallowcliffe casket, but is closer in size to the Finglesham example.

### *The casket contents*

(Figs 27-47)

The casket contained fourteen identifiable finds:

- 4 Bronze spherical container with ring-ended handle
- 5 Silver spoon
- 6 Silver safety pin
- 7 Silver safety pin, incomplete
- 8 Silver safety pin, fragment
- 9 Silver safety pin
- 10 Silver safety pin
- 11 Tinned bronze strap-mount
- 13 Amber bead
- 14 Clear glass bead with applied decoration of opaque yellow glass
- 16 Tapered iron rod (spindle?)
- 17, 18 Pair of iron knives
- 19 Bone comb

No 12, the bronze tube or lace tag, and No 15, the large glass bead were found in the disturbed area of the grave.

Traces of textile were detectable on the knives and spindle, and it is possible therefore that the group had been contained in a textile bag. The plan of the casket contents (Fig 28) shows the diagonal disposition of the comb (No 19), iron spindle (No 16), and knives (Nos 17 and 18), with the large capsule (No 4) overlying the silver spoon (No 5). Finds lying outside the confines of the casket, part of the bone comb and the tinned bronze strap mount, would appear to have been displaced in the collapse of the grave fill.

### *4 Bronze sprinkler*

(Figs 29-32)

This was the largest object in the casket and lay on top of the silver spoon (No 5). It was damaged during excavation when a probe was used to gauge the depth of the grave. This caused a bullet-like perforation 16mm wide on both the upper and lower sections, showing the points of entry and exit of the probe (Fig 30).

The object is constructed in three parts: two



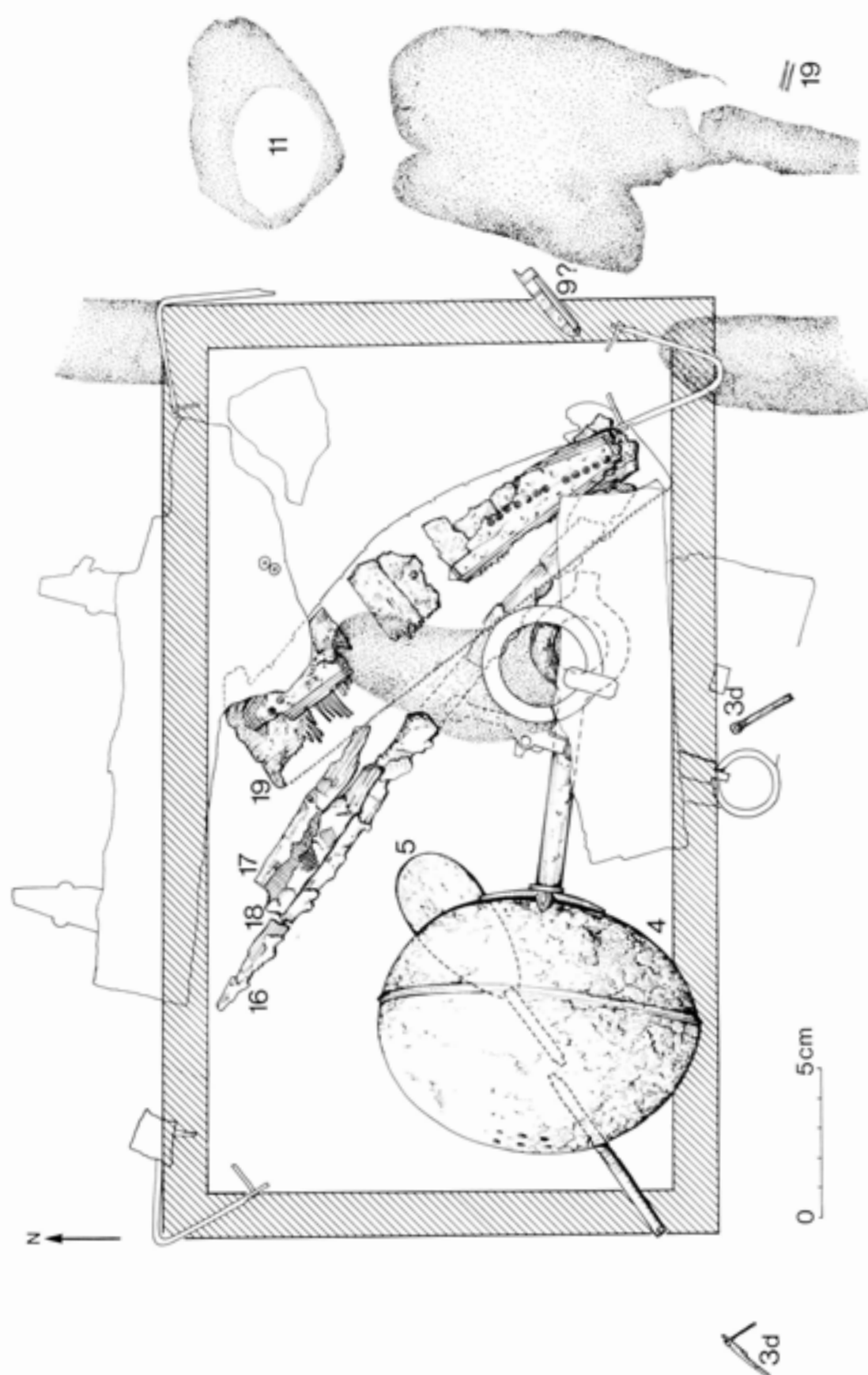


Fig 28 Plan of casket contents (Scale 1:2)

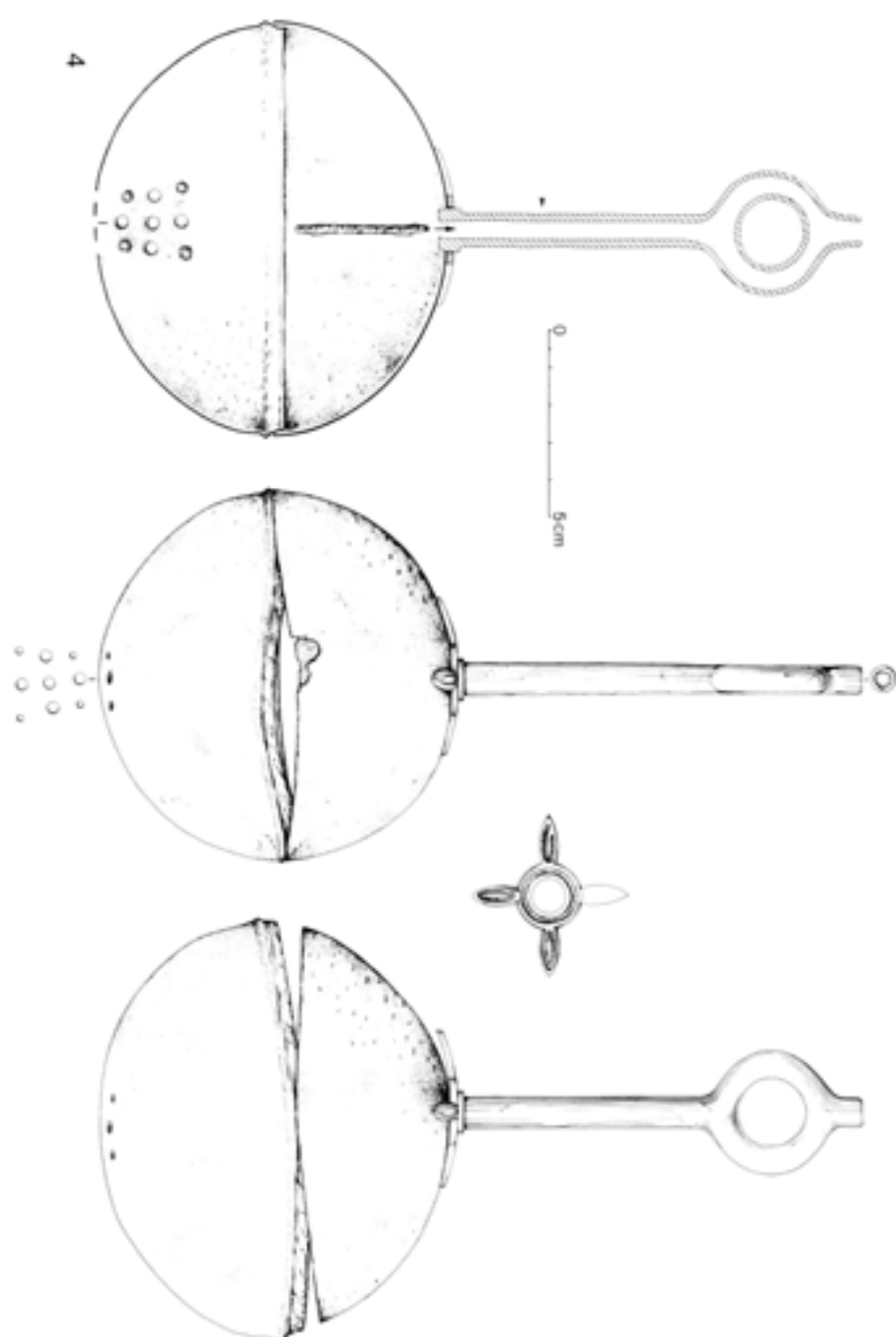


Fig 29 Sprinkler (Scale 1:2)

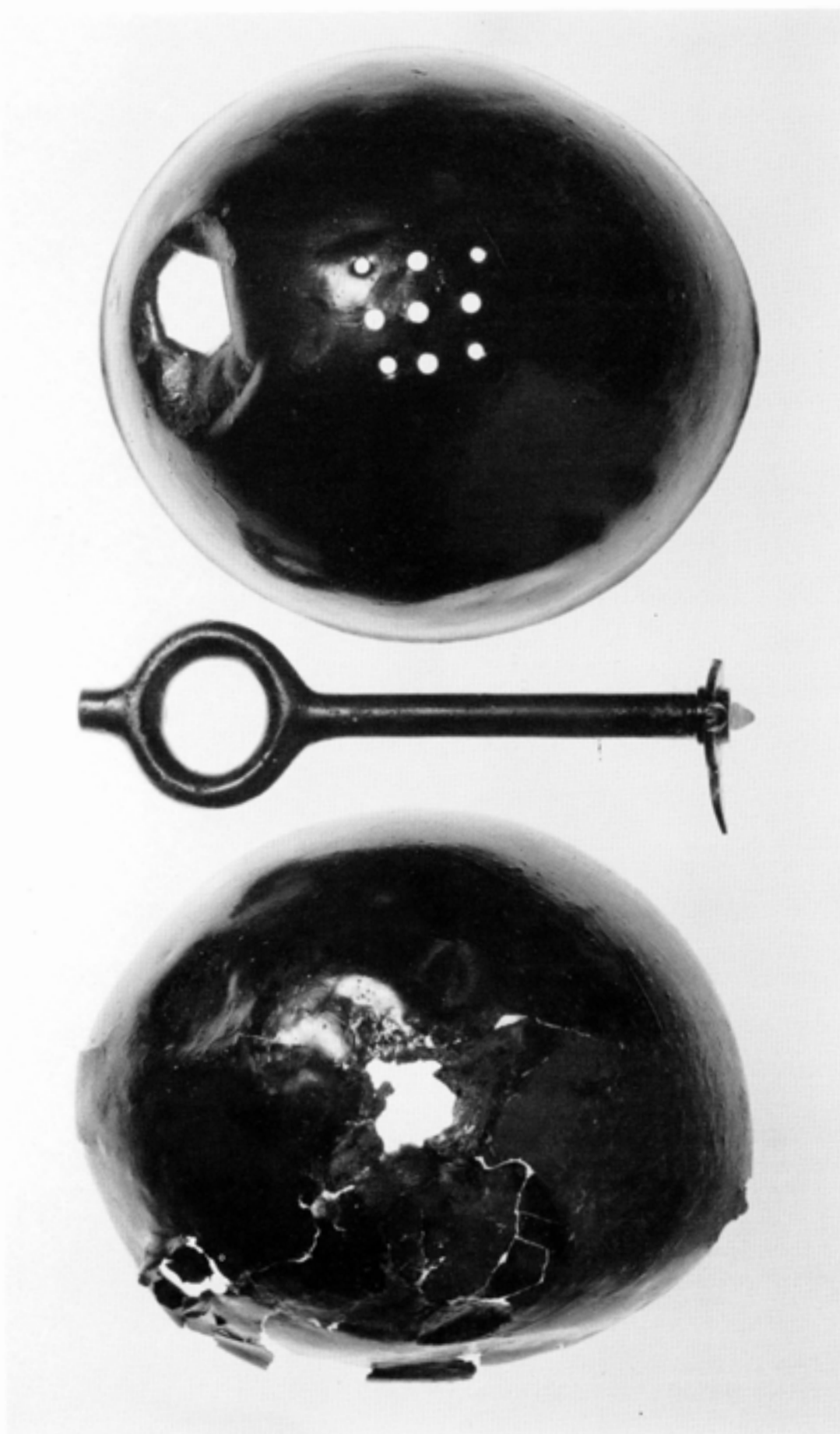


Fig 30 Constituent parts of sprinkler, showing damage to upper and lower sections (Scale 1:1)



*Fig 31 Sprinkler assembled (scale 1:1)*

hemispheres of thin silvered bronze soldered together, and a hollow cast bronze ring-ended handle, which was soldered to the pole of the upper hemisphere (Figs 29, 31). When excavated all were detached. In its assembled state the total length of the object, including the handle, is 200mm. The container has a maximum diameter of 116mm, but in form it is an ellipsoid rather than a true sphere with a height of c 95mm.

When the object was cleaned and conserved in May 1975 under the direction of Mike Corfield (Wiltshire County Council Library and Museum Service), the observations of the conservation staff confirmed that both hemispheres were originally covered, internally and externally, with a thin layer of silver, which now survives almost entirely as a thin layer of silver patinate. The handle was also observed to be silvered, traces of silver corrosion being detected on its surface. Certainly coloured photographs taken of the parts shortly after excavation and prior to cleaning show matt grey areas of metal contrasting with small sections of green bronze corrosion.

The present surface of the object after conservation has a black, glassy appearance with no visible trace of silvering. XRF analysis detected no silver but identified the composition of the handle and two hemispheres as leaded bronze (JB). Traces of zinc, however, were detected in the hemisphere attached to the handle. The two halves were joined with a lead-tin solder.

At the base of the lower hemisphere are nine holes. Five of the holes, each being 3mm in diameter, are arranged in a regular quincunx. Four further holes, 2mm in diameter, not so evenly placed around the quincunx, are evidently a subsequent addition punched from the outside after the two hemispheres had been soldered together. Each of these additional holes has a surrounding ragged burr of metal on the inner surface.

The handle, 112mm long, is an ingenious piece of bronze casting, a hollow tube with an inset hollow ring 34mm in diameter. The tube handle has a thickness of 9mm and an internal diameter of c 5mm. At the base of the handle, where it was soldered to the upper hemisphere, is an integral thickening of the tube, 5-6mm in length and 11mm in diameter. Attached to this is a circular bronze plate, incised with a concentric groove, and containing traces of a highly deteriorated enamel. Radiating from this base, and curved to fit the contours of the upper hemisphere, were four diametrically placed petal-shaped plates of bronze, of which only three now survive, the fourth being fractured and lost in antiquity (Fig 32). These three surviving plates have ovate grooves containing traces of deteriorated enamel which, as on the circular plate, now looks dark olive in colour and has a gritty rather than glassy texture. A small patch of undeteriorated red enamel suggests that this was the original colour.

When the handle was being examined by the excavator, prior to conservation, a small iron rod 38mm long and 2mm thick, fell out of the lower end. This is shown on Figure 29. This object is now missing and its function remains uncertain. A



Fig 32 Detail of handle base showing enamelled decoration (Scale 3:2)

constriction in the shaft of the handle is detectable on the X-radiograph c 40mm from the base and it is possible that this blockage is iron corrosion from the presence of the rod within the handle.

Traces of iron corrosion on the outer face of the handle can be accounted for by its juxtaposition to the long iron rod (No 16) and the iron key (No 3j) found lying against the ring handle. A fragment of textile was detected during cleaning on the surface of the tube beneath the inset ring.

During conservation of the object samples of the clay fill were taken from the spherical container. These were subsequently analysed to discover the original contents (if any). No organic remains were recovered from the sample. There was very little pollen present in the sample, with only two taxa present – Gramineae (grass) and *Plantago lanceolata* (ribwort plantain) (identified by N D Balaam of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory). These pollen types are completely undiagnostic in this context and no functional or ecological conclusions can be drawn.

### Form and function

Previous published references to the Swallowcliffe grave inventory have referred to this find as an incense burner. The object is, as yet, a unique find in an Anglo-Saxon context, but it can be paralleled by an object of similar form, from Vinjum, Aurland, Norway, found within a rich Viking female boat-grave inhumation, deposited c AD 850 (Fig 33).

Bøe (1924, 3) suggested that the Vinjum object was Celtic in origin, ecclesiastical in use, and was probably to be identified as a thurible or censer. Bakka has been more cautious in his assessment of the Vinjum object, commenting:

in form, construction, arrangement of ornament and even in function it must stand in some





Fig 33 *Vinjum find (Scale 1:1) (Bergen Museum)*

relation to continental "amulet-capsules" of sixth- and seventh-century date, discussed by Joachim Werner (1950, 38–52). These small, spherical silver or bronze boxes have been found in Germanic women's graves – mostly in the middle Rhine area, but scattered examples have been found in south Germany, Switzerland, France, Spain. They are made up of two hemispheres, the edges of which, like the *Vinjum* object, fit into each other, but the halves are hinged together and have a closing mechanism.

(1963, 33–4)

It is clear that, in identifying the function of the Swallowcliffe object, comparative consideration must be given to the form of the *Vinjum* object and to the differing assessments of its function, as discussed by Bøe and Bakka.

When discovered in spring 1923, the *Vinjum* find was partly crushed and the metal badly oxidised but it has been reconstructed with absolute certainty. As

restored it has a diameter of 120mm and a height of 100mm (excluding the tube handle). The length of the tube handle is 31mm, giving a total height of 131mm. The internal diameter of the tube handle is 8.5mm and the length of the surviving cross arm is 40mm. The two hemispheres are made of thinly hammered bronze, the upper section being tinned and decorated with concentric panels of engraved ornament. The upper hemisphere overlaps the lower to form a snug, soldered fit and is further prevented from sliding down by a protruding fold. At the pole of the lower hemisphere are seven holes, each 3mm in diameter. The arrangement of six holes in an approximate circle around a central hole is further embellished on the outer surface by a circular arrangement of lightly engraved loops, spirals, and arcs (Fig 33). The short hollow tube handle of cast bronze is let into the pole of the upper hemisphere, terminating immediately on the inner surface, but prevented from penetrating further by a beaded bronze collar. On the stem of the tube are seven unevenly spaced grooves. The tube ends at an oblique angle with a projecting side arm,

which terminates in an animal's head, the hole marking the creature's eye. Bøe has commented that:

it does not seem very likely that this unsymmetrical form should be the original. It must be supposed that a wing is cut off corresponding to the one that is left. Possibly the whole arrangement has been cruciform but in this case the vertical stem must have been a little thinner than the tube beneath the wings!

(1924, 4)

Distinctive to the Vinjum object is its engraved ornament on the upper hemisphere (Fig 34). A zone of Celtic spirals and trumpet patterns surrounds the base of the tube handle. Some rudimentary interlace and clumsy cross-hatching is placed directly under the spirals. At one point the outlines of three overlapping birds are positioned beneath a triquetra knot. An undecorated narrow band separates this polar decoration from a more complex band of broken but, in parts, more rhythmic interlaced lines. This band of interlacing in turn lies above a broad lower register of interlinked zoomorphs. The design is composed of seven pairs of zoomorphs, interlaced symmetrically, with their opposed heads bent backwards to face each other. The body or tail of each creature is coiled in a springlike spiral around the front quarters of the other animal. One foreleg passes downwards and backwards and the other is coiled into a tight spiral. Double contours are used to outline the front part of each body, but never the tail section. The profile head of each creature is distinguished by a rounded eye, a projecting eye surround, and closed but protracted, looped jaws. These details vary from creature to creature as the engraving is

confused in places, sketchy in quality and inconsistent. Triquetra knots are used in two places as infills between the pairs of creatures. The zoomorphic frieze has a lower containing zigzag border of triple lines above the protruding lip of the central joint. The rim of each hemisphere is decorated with opposed bands of diagonal hatching.

It can be observed from a photograph of the Vinjum object (Fig 33) that its decoration is not fluent, the engraving having a sketchy and spiky quality that is best paralleled on the so-called bone or stone trial-pieces of the seventh and eighth centuries (O'Meadhra 1979). Indeed the imperfections in the design have led Bøe to suggest that 'the ornamentation is a secondhand work and has been copied more or less directly from another object of the same form, or perhaps from the design in an illuminated manuscript' (1924, 5).

The problem with Bøe's hypothesis that the ornament has been copied more or less directly from another object of the same form is that the hypothetical original has not been found and that its only parallel is the undecorated object from the Swallowcliffe grave. Certainly the ornament on the Vinjum find, if primary, and there seem to be no convincing reasons to consider it as secondary, would identify it as insular Celtic work. The best parallels for the ornament, in spite of the spiky quality of the lines produced by the engraver's burin, lie in the penwork of Hiberno-Saxon manuscript decoration and in particular details of the carpet pages from the Book of Durrow.

Whilst Bøe has seen analogies for the zoomorphic frieze in the Book of Kells, it is the less tight and more open schemes of interlace in the Book of Durrow for example fol 1v and fol 3v with its central panels of

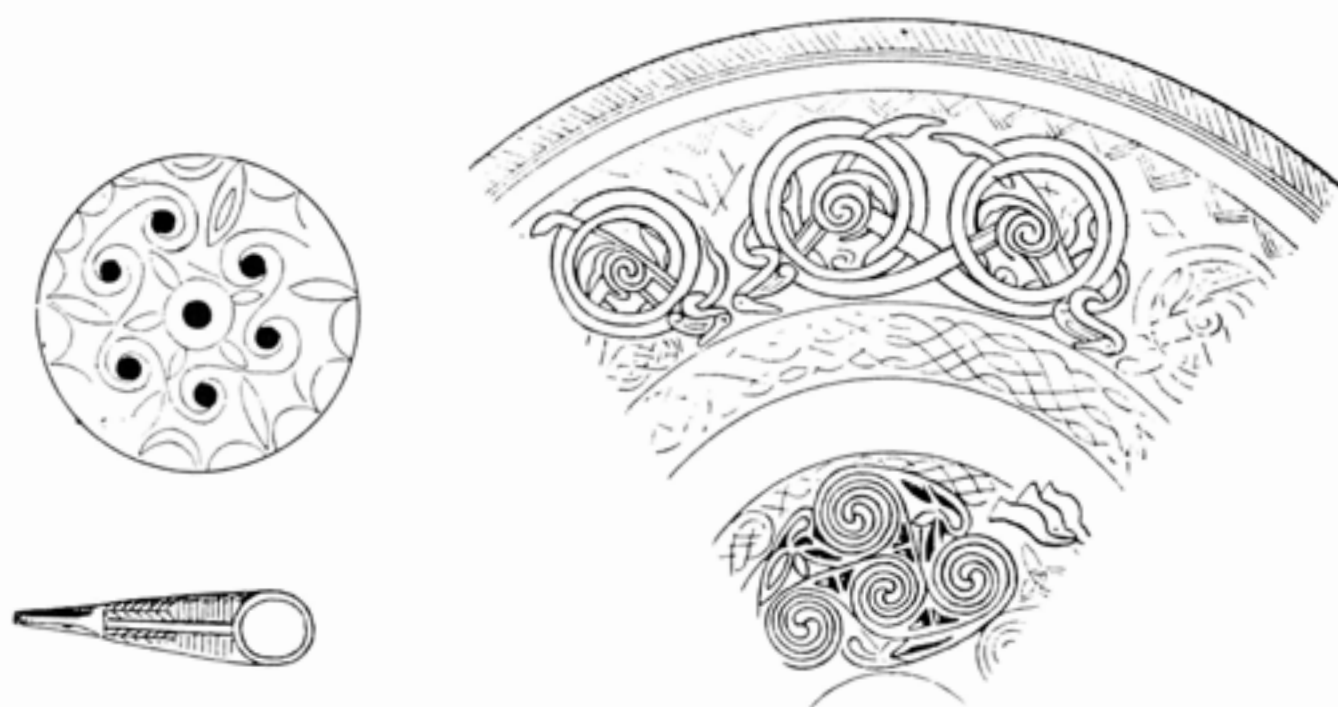


Fig 34 Details of decoration on the Vinjum find

spirals and trumpet patterns, that more closely parallel aspects of the Vinjum ornamentation. These parallels may therefore suggest a date closer to c 680 for the execution of the Vinjum ornament rather than Bøe's suggested date of c 750.

The possibility, however, that the engraving may be secondary and not contemporary with the manufacture of the Vinjum object must be borne in mind. Conclusive proof of the primary nature of the engraving would be the presence of 'silvering' or tinning covering the engraving, but, whilst allowing for the possibility, there are no convincing reasons for believing the ornament to be secondary. The lines, though lightly engraved, do stand out clearly against the 'silvered' surface and, in their compositional arrangement, respect the spherical form. With the exception of the minimal engraved decoration on the lower hemisphere around the seven holes, the decoration would suggest that the upper hemisphere is intended to be seen from above. Clearly, therefore, the tube handle is at the top of the object and was in some way held or suspended.

To summarise our observations on the ornament of the Vinjum find there can be no doubt that it is firmly linked to native Celtic art styles and was probably engraved in the late seventh century. Suggestive links with Hiberno-Saxon ornament, as in the Book of Durrow, have been noted and perhaps locate its execution within a Northumbrian milieu.

In its absence of ornamental motifs the Swallowcliffe object stands apart, but the presence of red enamel at the base of the tube handle, in the three surviving petal-shaped bronze plates, would indicate also a link with Celtic craft tradition. Indeed, the original arrangement of the four enamel-filled petals is reminiscent of the quadrant arrangement of the champlevé enamels on the three rectangular plaques decorating the large hanging bowl from Sutton Hoo (Henry 1965, pl A; Bruce-Mitford 1983, 264-5, fig 168). Here, enamel-filled petals, of pale green and red, radiate from a central square panel filled with slices of millefiori set within red enamel. Furthermore, the skills utilised by Celtic craftsmen in the production of bronze hanging bowls require the manipulation of thin sheet bronze and casting processes, both of which are fluently demonstrated in the manufacture of the Swallowcliffe find.

Bøe's identification of the Vinjum object as an ecclesiastical thurible or censer is based on his assumption that it had been the practice to place fire within the container, the hollow tube handle and the seven holes in the base allowing air to circulate. Bøe also assumed that there must have been a mounting round the lower hemisphere to hold the chains in which the thurible swung, noting that it is just this part of the object that is free of decoration (1924, 9).

A consideration of the evidence provided by both the Vinjum and Swallowcliffe finds highlights several flaws in Bøe's identification. Neither object bears any Christian motif or symbol to confirm its ecclesiastical use. Whilst ecclesiastical plunder from Britain did find its way into Viking graves in Scandinavia in the ninth and tenth centuries it is more difficult to account for the presence of a supposedly Christian liturgical vessel in such an ostensibly secular and

pagan context as the seventh-century female grave at Swallowcliffe Down.

Neither object can be closely paralleled by any known censer. In general all known early Christian and Byzantine examples are of heavy cast bronze. The sixth-century mosaics of San Vitale at Ravenna show cylindrical censers with feet, but without covers, suspended by three chains. In the west, down to the tenth or eleventh centuries, the censer was of heavy cast metal, sometimes spherical, but with the lid or upper section pierced to allow the escape of smoke. The lids or covers are always detachable, the late Saxon and Romanesque examples being of architectural form. In contrast, the Swallowcliffe and Vinjum finds are flimsy in construction, made of thin hammered and spun sheet bronze, with no piercings or apertures in the upper section, apart from the attachment of the hollow tube handle.

It is clear that both the Swallowcliffe and Vinjum containers were sealed and not intended to be opened. Analysis of the rims of the two halves of the Swallowcliffe object confirms that they were joined with a lead-tin solder. It is therefore difficult to see how fire was created within the container, other than by forcing small pieces of glowing charcoal through the tube handle. The ring-handle of the Swallowcliffe object would have created an awkward obstacle and great difficulty in removing any constriction or blockage within the stem of the handle. Furthermore no traces of carbon, resin, or charcoal were discovered in the Swallowcliffe capsule. It would also appear to be illogical to have silvered the inner surfaces of the Swallowcliffe object if they were to have contained fire.

The difficulties in accepting the identification of both the Vinjum and Swallowcliffe finds as censers are clear. In terms of their design and construction they are not linked to the known ecclesiastical censers from Byzantine or early Medieval periods. Similarly we must reject, for the same reasons as those enumerated, their possible secular or ecclesiastical use as hand warmers, known from the later medieval period, and sometimes referred to as *pilae calefactoriae* or *chaufferettes*. These artefacts could be opened and glowing charcoal or a red-hot ball of metal could be placed in them. Often mentioned in medieval inventories, these openwork spheres of metal were typologically developed from earlier forms of incense burners and cannot be related to the Swallowcliffe or Vinjum objects.

In considering alternative functions it is appropriate to examine Bakka's suggestion that the Vinjum object (and likewise the Swallowcliffe find) must be related to continental Germanic 'amulet-capsules' of sixth- and seventh-century date (1963, 33). The majority of the capsules, about twenty in number, are decorated and about fourteen are plain or decorated only with a cross. They range in diameter from c 30mm to 117mm and all have been found in female graves. Closest in scale to the Swallowcliffe and Vinjum finds is the magnificent silver-gilt example (117mm in diameter, 85mm in height, and 140g in weight) from Cologne Cathedral, which is decorated with vine scrolls and stylised palmettes in a cruciform

arrangement (Fig 35). Its non-Germanic ornamental motifs, with gilding on the raised parts of the design, would indicate that it originated in the Mediterranean region. In its sixth-century grave the capsule was found by the left leg, and had evidently been suspended from a belt on the left side of the body.

As Werner has discussed (1950, 38–52), the Germanic amulet-capsules are smaller than their Mediterranean prototypes, with diameters on average half the scale of the Cologne capsule. Two Visigothic capsules are decorated with non-Germanic ornament, but the decorated capsules from Frankish and Alemmanic graves have horizontal zones of ornament, some with Style II motifs (Wittislingen, Arlon, Wonsheim) and many with a cross motif. Two are inscribed with runic texts, but their dedications are Christian. That the owner of the Wittislingen capsule was Christian is attested by the wearing of a gold foil cross, and indeed Werner has claimed that the capsules were worn as personal Christian amulets.

In form, however, all the continental amulet-capsules are distinct from the Vinjum and Swallowcliffe 'capsules', in that they are hinged and could be opened. None have perforations, nor do any possess a hollow tube handle. Whatever magical or religious associations they had for their owner, it is clear that they also functioned as containers. Several contained plant remains, *umbellifers* and camomile, others

resins, seeds, and spices such as cloves. How and when such aromatic substances were used is open to speculation, but undoubtedly it would be misleading to think of them as cosmetic perfumes, or the capsule as a prototype 'pomander'.

The absence of detectable traces of such aromatic substances within the Swallowcliffe 'capsule' may well be significant. Similarly the fact the object had been placed in a casket rather than worn, as well as its greater scale, may all indicate a difference in function from the continental capsules.

Whilst Bakka considered that the functional relation of the Vinjum object to the continental capsules is evident he also finds it difficult to explain its function other than that of a censer or thurible:

As the Vinjum object is later than the continental capsules, the spherical box, as a container for incense, may have come to Britain from the middle Rhine area, where boxes with a related decoration were produced, and its introduction in Britain may be as a result of the Northumbrian missionary activity in Germany. The greater size, the holes and the tube of the Vinjum object may be innovations, dictated by a difference in function from the continental capsules.

(1963, 36)

In rejecting the opinions of both Bøe and Bakka, I

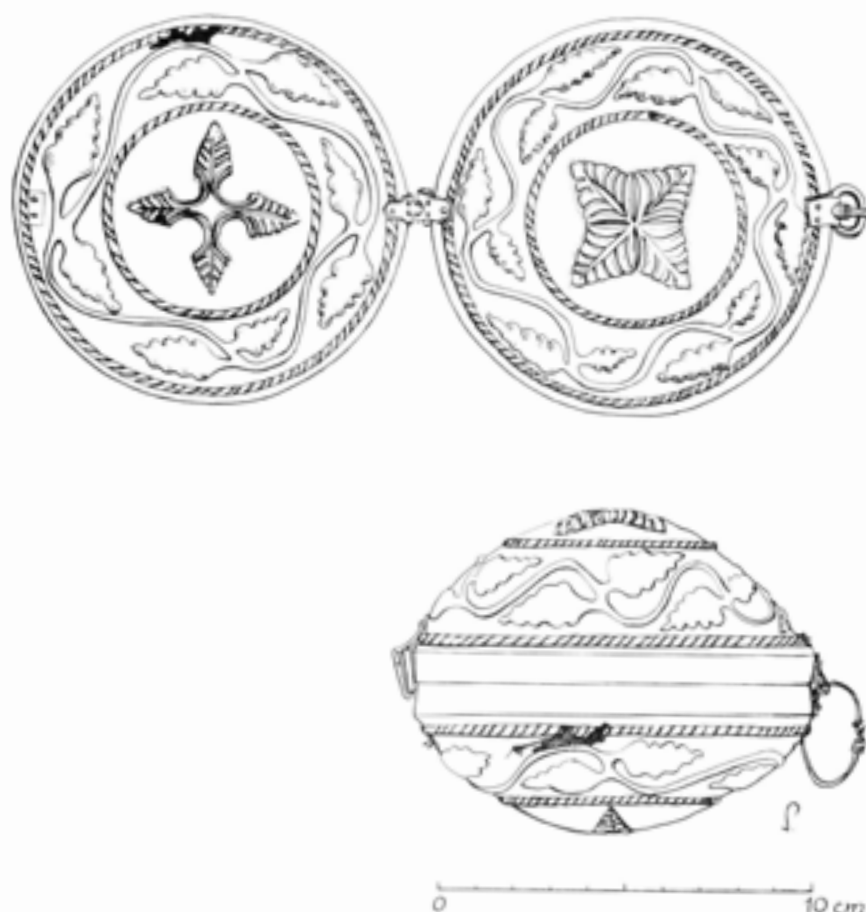


Fig 35 Cologne Cathedral amulet capsule (Scale 1:2) (after Döppelfeld 1959)



believe a convincing case can be made for considering both the Vinjum and Swallowcliffe finds as objects designed to function with liquids rather than fire. As type objects, I believe they have a closer relationship to the perforated spoons and their often associated mounted spheres of rock crystal. Indeed both objects in their original state, as shining spherical forms with a suspension handle and perforated base, encapsulate features of both the spoon and mounted crystal ball.

In England crystal spherical balls and perforated spoons have always been found in women's graves. The graves are usually rich and generally sixth-century in date. They are found associated together seven times, with a concentration in east Kent, and once on the Isle of Wight: Bifrons graves 42, 51, 64, Lyminge II grave 44, Sarre grave 4, Bekesbourne grave 22, and Chessell Down grave 45 (Fig 36). Perforated spoons were found by themselves at Chatham Lines (II), Kent, Stodmarsh, Kent, Alfriston, grave 62, Sussex, and Winterbourne Gunner, grave 7, Wiltshire.

Although it is generally agreed that their association together is significant, their precise function has never been satisfactorily explained.

The crystal spheres are mounted in silver or silver-gilt slings, with a silver wire loop for suspension. Similarly the material of the spoons is usually silver or silver parcel-gilt with pierced or looped handles for a suspension ring. The spoon from Winterbourne Gunner is an exception, cruder in workmanship and made of bronze. Their position in the graves, usually between the knees or thighs, would suggest that they hung from a girdle or chatelaine. The crystal spheres, where associated, are frequently found resting in or lying beside the bowl of the perforated spoon.

Jessup (1950, 126-7) has commented on 'the slender stem of the spoons often ornamented at the base with a triangle of garnet cell-work and the fact that the bowls are perforated with a series of round holes and frequently gilded, seems to rule out any ordinary use, such as skimming.' Furthermore, Jessup has observed:

[some of the spoons] show considerable wear from friction on the outer surface of the bowl, as would be expected if they were worn on the girdle as a symbol of domestic authority, and are almost paper thin; others again were carefully repaired in antiquity. It seems unlikely that the perforations in cross form in the bowl of the spoon have anything to do with Christianity, but at the same time some remote connection with the strainer through which the wine was passed at Eucharist is possible.

The placing, therefore, of the Swallowcliffe container on top of a silver spoon within the casket, may not be accidental, but a deliberate and significant association and a parallel to the placing of the mounted rock crystal spheres within (or adjacent to) the bowls of the perforated spoons. In pursuing the analogy between the Swallowcliffe object and the spoons and

rock crystal spheres, the position of the Swallowcliffe 'capsule' resting on top of a silver spoon within the casket complex is a significant coincidence, and worthy of note.

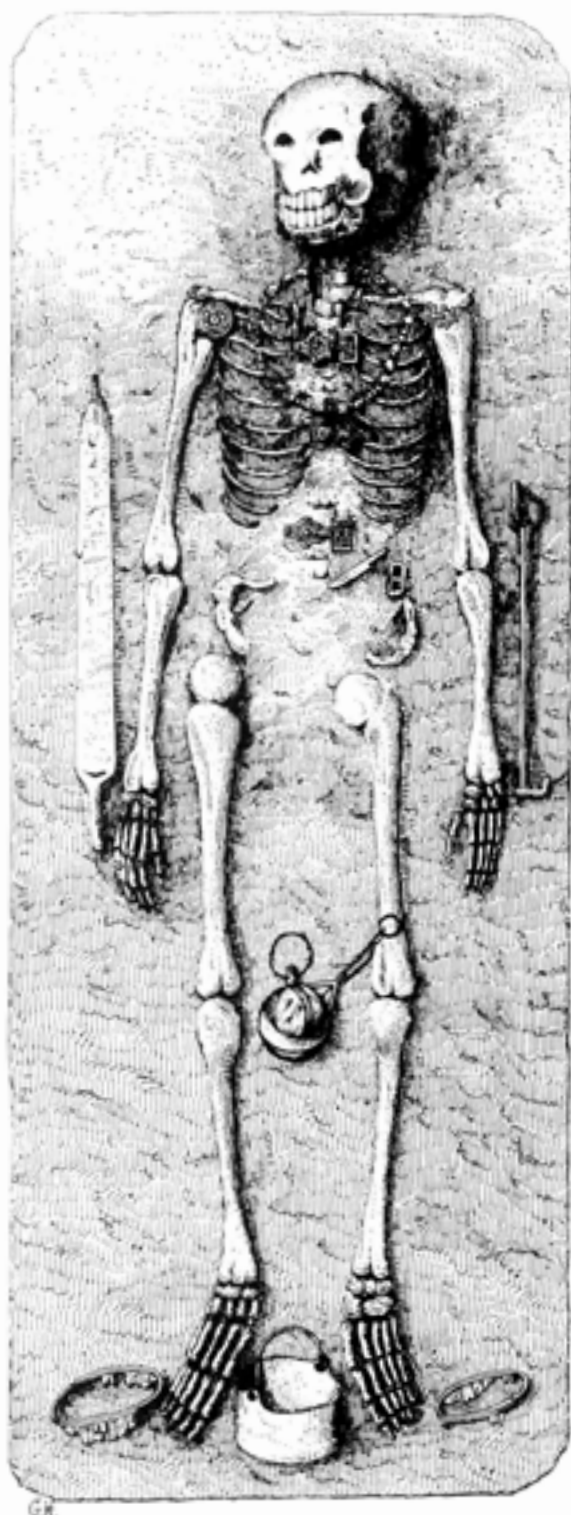


Fig 36 Plan of Chessell Down Grave 45 showing position of crystal sphere and perforated spoon (from Smith 1868, pl 28)



Audrey Meaney has described the perforated spoons as 'sieve-spoons' linking their use to the consumption and straining of imported wine:

Perhaps only the lady of an important household, rich enough to afford the important luxury drink, would wear a sieve spoon. In Rome it was more probably a slave's task to strain the wine – but the picture we have of early Germanic society, for example in *Beowulf*, clearly shows that serving the drink, whether it were beer, mead, or wine, was not only the duty, but the honoured privilege of the lady of the house. What more natural, then, that such a lady would wish to advertise that she well knew what was required of one who served wine. Hence the extreme delicacy, beauty and expensiveness of the sieve-spoons, which were intended mainly as status symbols and used, if at all, only on ceremonial occasions.

(1981, 88)

Meaney's surmised use of the spoons does not stand up to critical analysis. In form they are quite unlike the capacious domestic wine strainers with their multitude of fine perforations from the Roman period, several of which were imported into Denmark in the Roman Iron Age, nor does such a function explain their frequent association with the mounted crystal spheres. The bowls in the Saxon spoons are very shallow, and the relatively few perforations are too large to prevent wine sediment passing through. Their context in sixth-century graves would also rule out their use as strainers for Eucharistic wine, which undoubtedly was the use of strainer spoons, decorated with the Chi-Rho monogram, in the late Roman silver hoards from Traprain Law and Water Newton (BMP 1975, 10-2.9). The use of the spoons and the crystal spheres, if not with wine, must be with some other liquid.

Legend, myth, and superstition all imbue the crystal sphere with magical properties and it may not be unreasonable therefore to assume that the Anglo-Saxons also ascribed magical or prophylactic properties to the mounted crystal spheres. From a later period the use of a crystal sphere is recorded for the preparation of a healing or protective potion which was subsequently *sprinkled* on cattle, 'On Mayday in Scotland cattle were sprinkled with water in which a crystal ball had been washed or boiled' (Pitt Rivers Collection, Oxford 1573). Whether the 'sprinkling' was done by hand or with some other device is not made clear.

The relevance of the above to any explanation of how the Swallowcliffe capsule functioned needs clarification. It has already been mentioned that aspects of the suspended crystal sphere and the perforated spoon are, so to speak, inherent in the larger form of both the Vinjum and Swallowcliffe capsules. That each capsule functioned with liquids, rather than dry heat, is totally consistent with their design.

In suggesting how both the Swallowcliffe and Vinjum capsules could have been utilised, experiments have been carried out with a replica of similar

scale to the Swallowcliffe capsule. Two possible functions have been deduced, as a sprinkler or as an infusing device.

Neither function excludes the other. With the capsule partially immersed in a liquid (contained within a hanging bowl?) the perforations in the base of the capsule allow liquid to enter, the displaced air being evacuated through the hollow tubular handle. The design of the hollow tube acts as both a handle and as a means of controlling the amount of liquid within the capsule. By placing a finger or thumb over the open end of the handle, the simple law of atmospheric physics prevents any liquid within the capsule from escaping when the capsule is withdrawn from the container of liquid. The flow or sprinkling of the liquid through the nine holes at the base of the capsule could be controlled through the simple action of releasing the contact of the finger or thumb from the aperture at the top of the handle. In the experiments conducted it was found that the most convenient method was to hold the capsule through the circular opening of the handle with two forefingers and using the thumb for controlling the flow of air into the body of the capsule (Fig 37). With this method liquid could easily be transferred elsewhere and sprinkled into other containers without spillage, and with a comfortable degree of control.

The use of the Swallowcliffe capsule as a sprinkling device could be both domestic and prophylactic. We can surmise that even the most aristocratic Anglo-Saxon hall or house was at times smelly and that a device for sprinkling aromatic liquids to counter offensive smells must have been beneficial. Its additional use possibly as an infuser must also be considered. Aromatic substances, such as those found in some of the Frankish amulet capsules, could have been introduced in small quantities through the handle aperture, the capsule being subsequently steeped in liquid. The danger of the handle becoming blocked, however, must have been a possibility. This event may indeed have happened with the Swallowcliffe capsule. It is otherwise difficult to explain the presence of the small iron rod, 38mm long, which was discovered in the stem of the handle (now lost). Possibly it had been used to attempt to clear a blockage in the tube, and was part of a longer iron rod that had been pushed through a hole in the base of the capsule and had subsequently fractured. Such a blockage must have made the use of the capsule as a sprinkler only partly efficient.

## Conclusion

Our appraisal of the Swallowcliffe capsule and its parallel from Vinjum, Norway, would indicate that they are not incense burners but were used with liquids as sprinklers or infusers. In form they are altogether distinctive, without any close parallel in the archaeological record. A possible derivation from an amalgam of the continental amulet capsules together with the rock crystal spheres and perforated spoons found in sixth-century rich female graves from Kent and the Frankish kingdom has been suggested. Although the use of perforated spoons



Fig 37 Method of using sprinkler

and crystal spheres would also appear to have been connected with liquids, in terms of their chronology they are separated by almost a century from the Swallowcliffe sprinkler with no apparent continuity of use. In terms of technique of manufacture and decoration, however, both the Swallowcliffe and Vinjum objects betray closer affinities with Celtic metalwork rather than Germanic forms. That the Swallowcliffe sprinkler is Celtic in origin, or made by an Anglo-Saxon craftsman conversant with Celtic metalwork, is strongly suggested by the technique of its manufacture and the use of red enamel in the three surviving lentoid fixtures at the base of the tubular handle. Indeed the sophisticated metalworking skills shown in the casting of the hollow handle and in the spinning of the thin silvered-bronze hemispheres soldered together link its craftsmanship to similar abilities demonstrated in the Celtic hanging bowls. Certainly the more diagnostic ornament on the Vinjum object confirms its close relationship to both an insular Celtic tradition and Hiberno-Saxon art. Just as the decorated hanging bowls were acquired and treasured by the Anglo-Saxons, so too we must assume were other artefacts of Celtic manufacture, of which the Swallowcliffe sprinkler would appear to be the unique survivor in an Anglo-Saxon context. That others existed is proved by the Vinjum sprinkler which undoubtedly was taken, along with other plunder from northern Britain, by the Vikings to Norway to be eventually buried, along with other items of Celtic origin, as the treasured possessions of a Viking woman in a ninth-century boat-grave. Chronologically the Vinjum sprinkler was something of an antique, certainly more than a century old, for its decoration, which arguably might be secondary, indicates stylistic links with late seventh- or early eighth-century ornament. The decorative details of the handle fixtures of the Swallowcliffe sprinkler, however, are hardly diagnostic in terms of close dating. Arguably the Vinjum sprinkler, if its decoration is not secondary, might be later. Clearly the two finds were not made in the same workshop. (Comparative metallurgical analysis has not been undertaken to prove this point.) Yet there are good grounds for believing that both share common cultural, primary contexts. We are left to speculate whether, in their primary Celtic contexts, they were utilized for ritual or domestic purposes as adjuncts to the liquid-filled hanging bowls. In their secondary contexts, their use and ownership, like the rock crystal spheres and perforated spoons of the sixth century, would appear to have been the prerogative of aristocratic women.

## 5 Silver spoon (Figs 38–40)

The spoon was found beneath the perforated capsule, lying diagonally underneath with the handle tip resting on the shaft of the left femur. It is in two sections, a bowl section 87mm long with animal head decoration at the junction of bowl and stem, and a round-sectioned stem-handle 62.5mm long (Figs 38a–c, 39). Both sections are parcel gilded. It is clear

from examination that the spoon was damaged in antiquity, and it is likely that some perishable material, possibly, bone, ivory, or wood had been utilised to join the two sections. Measurements taken from photographs of the spoon *in situ* during excavation show that its total length did not extend beyond 150mm.

The shallow egg-shaped bowl is 56.5mm long and 31mm wide. Its inner surface is badly scratched with slight scratches evident on the tip at the back. The bowl, seen from the side, depicts the body of a bird, its head and neck forming the junction with the handle. The head is gilded and from its open beaked mouth a short square-sectioned stem extends (Fig 40). This section of stem is 12mm long and decorated on three of its surfaces with six small ring stamps, the under surface being left undecorated. The same ring stamp is used to form the eyes of the creature, an extra pair being placed on the underside of the head. Protruding from the square section is a circular-sectioned length, 3mm in diameter and 3mm long.

A section of the same diameter and 3mm long protrudes from the circular sectioned stem handle, which has a total length of 62.5mm. Decoration on the handle consists of a row of 26 ring stamps, with a central band of eight closely spaced grooved rings further embellished with a zone of gilding (Fig 40). The end of the handle is apparently broken and terminates in a cut or cast half-section, with two ring grooves evident on the underside. The edge of a drilled hole (c 1.5mm), possibly for a suspension loop, is detectable at the fractured end.

Analysis by X-ray fluorescence (JB) confirms that the spoon and separate handle were of similar composition. Enhanced levels of gold and mercury were detected on the bird's head where the handle joined the bowl of the spoon and also in the central grooving on the separate handle, indicating that these areas were mercury gilded.

## Discussion

The close juxtaposition of the spoon and capsule within the casket complex is suggestive and it should not be ruled out that they may have been utilised together, paralleling the function of the perforated silver spoons and mounted rock crystal spheres already referred to (p 40) in Frankish and rich Kentish women's graves. In design and form, however, the Swallowcliffe spoon is quite distinct from the silver strainer spoons.

Certain elements of the spoon could be matched without too much difficulty in Roman silver spoons of the fourth century – size of bowl, shape of bowl, bird's head decoration, bands of decoration on the handle – but I know of no example in which the handle springs from the mouth of a bird. Birds' heads are more commonly used as terminations of the handle in a type of spoon with a markedly larger bowl. Animal head decoration at the junction of bowl and handle does occur quite commonly; but the animal head is always both stylised and facing the bowl, with the bowl, not the handle, springing from its mouth.



Fig 38 Swallowcliffe spoon (a-c) and comparison with Broome Park spoon (Scale 1:1)

The closest parallel known is a spoon from Broome Park estate near Barham, Kent (Figs 38, 41), now in the National Museum of Wales (Acc no 23.112a). First published by Baldwin Brown (*Burl Mag* XXIV, 1913, 99-100; *ibid* 1915, 406), the Broome Park spoon was dug up or ploughed up in the 1850s in a field adjoining the Roman road between Dover and Canterbury. There appears to be no record of any objects found with it which might indicate a burial.

The Broome Park spoon is silver, with considerable traces of gilding surviving, but a good deal has obviously been worn off by use, which has also obliterated some details and rounded and softened

the forms. In contrast to the Swallowcliffe spoon, it is complete, with a total length of 180mm. The bowl dimensions are 48mm long with a maximum width of 29mm, slightly smaller than the bowl of the Swallowcliffe spoon. There is a dip from the plane of the handle to that of the bowl of 10mm which closely corresponds to the drop on the Swallowcliffe spoon. The handle stem is not a perfect cylinder, but is, in section, a square with rounded corners. It is banded at intervals with ringed grooving and baluster moulding, terminating in a recumbent, profiled quadruped. The creature has a body decorated with vertical striations, a small open-jawed head and



Fig 39 Swallowcliffe spoon (Scale 1:1)

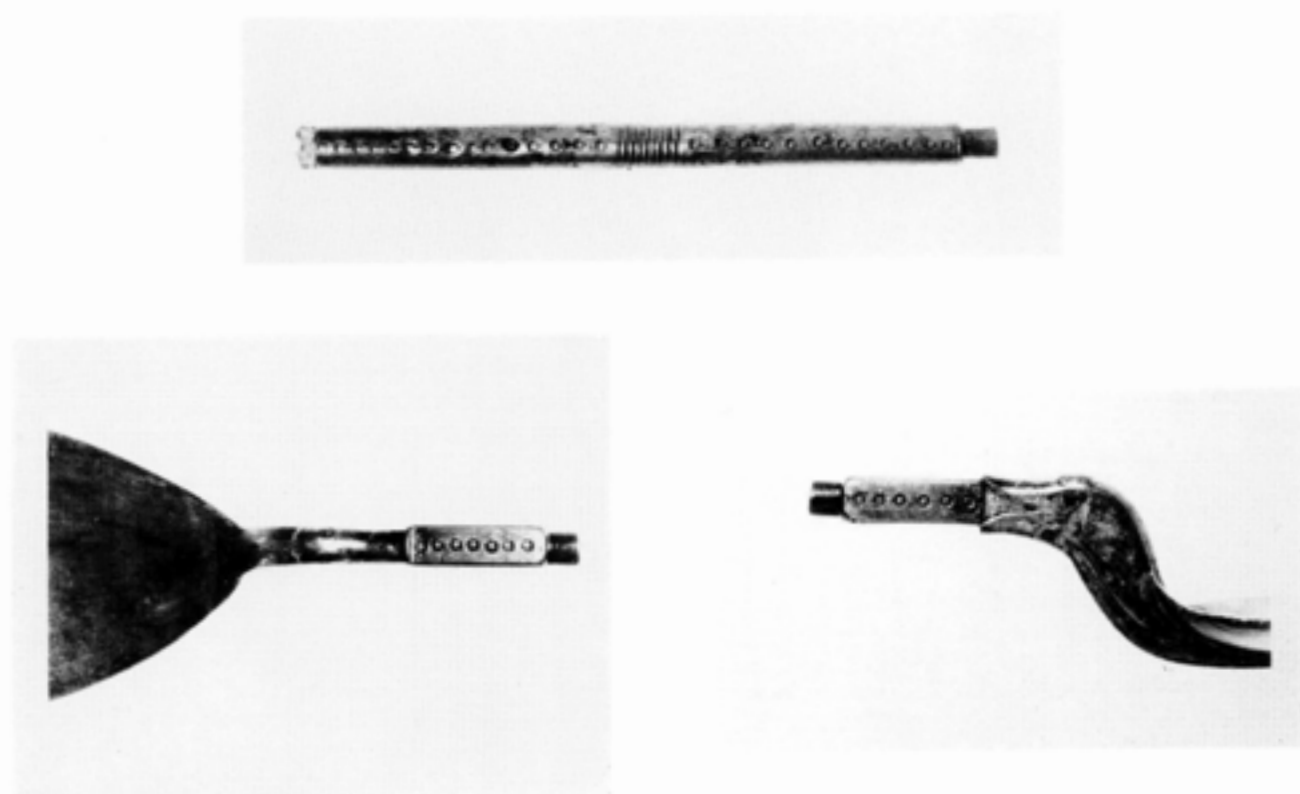


Fig 40 Decorative details on Swallowcliffe spoon (Scale 3:2)



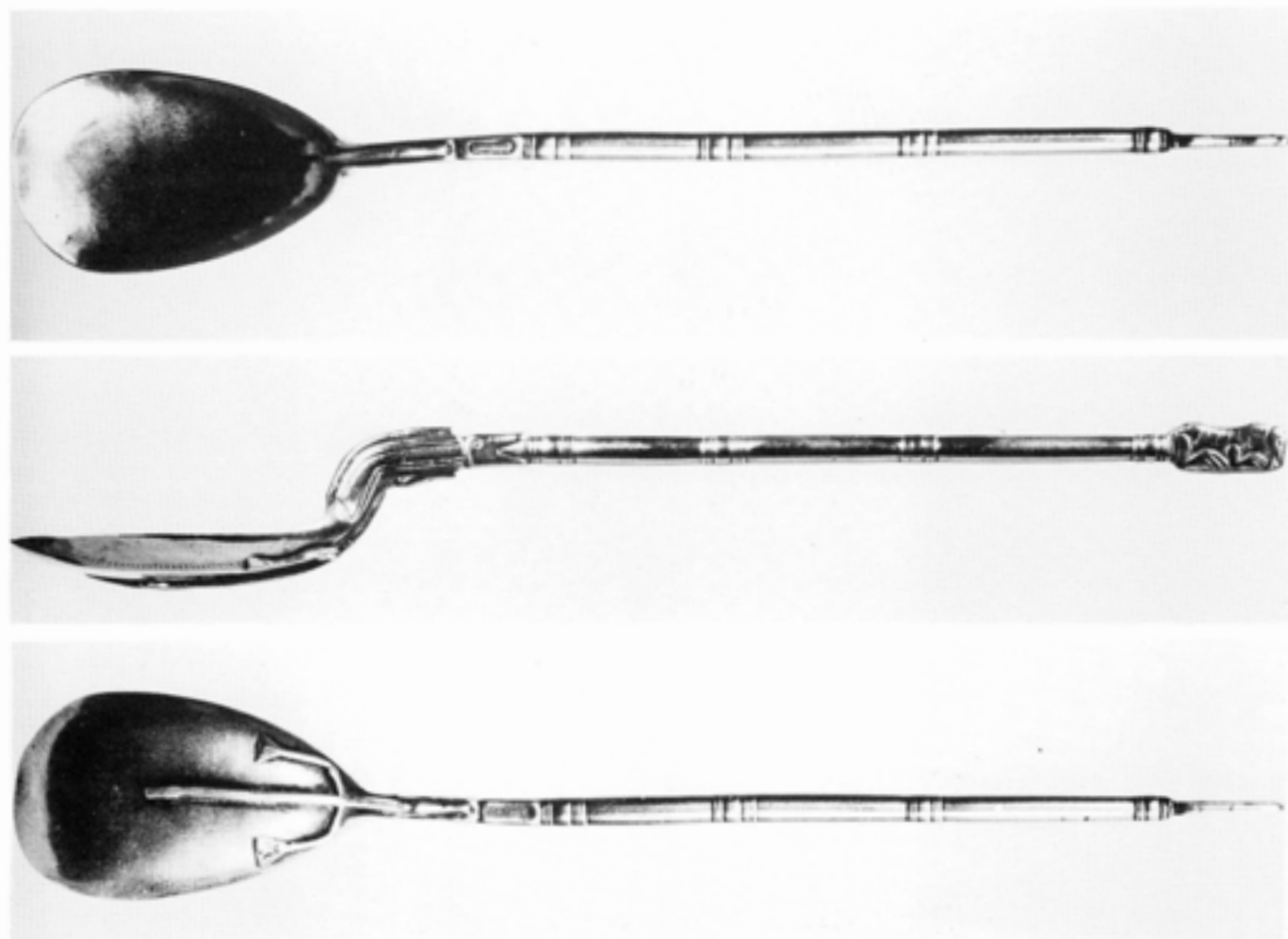


Fig 41 Broome Park spoon (Scale 1:1) (National Museum of Wales)

distinctive three-clawed feet. The junction of the bowl and handle is formed by the body of a creature, from whose open-jawed head the handle stem is disgorged. Further creatures, one on the underside of the bowl of the spoon and a shorter bodied one above, cling like parasites to the neck of the handle-biting animal. Whatever their symbolic function, they have a very practical purpose in acting as strengthening pieces at the junction of the bowl and handle. The limbs and body of the underside creature form a trident shape, the two side limbs having fan-shaped feet and the elongated body terminating in a smaller second head.

Baldwin Brown considered the spoon to be 'a genuine piece of Teutonic art, probably but not certainly of Anglo-Saxon origin, and of a date somewhere about 500 AD.' These conclusions are based on his observations that

the obviously Roman derivation of the shape of the piece is in favour of an early date and so too is the naturalistically treated quadruped that is of Germanic rather than Roman character and possesses in compact form the anatomical structure which in late ornament is broken up into wildest disarray. (1915, 408)

There seems little reason to doubt that both the Broome Park and Swallowcliffe spoons derive ultimately from late Roman models. Furthermore their zoomorphic details attest their Anglo-Saxon origin, but I disagree with Baldwin Brown's that the zoomorphs on the Broome Park spoon are consistent with a date 'somewhere about 500 AD.' I believe that the animal details more probably confirm a seventh-century date for the manufacture of the spoon. Indeed similar quadrupeds to that of the Broome Park spoon exist on the toe of the great gold buckle from Sutton Hoo and on a silver mount from Caenby, Lincs, both objects being of incontrovertible seventh-century manufacture. Similarly, the open-jawed animal heads gripping the handles of each spoon can be paralleled in seventh-century metalwork, on several bracelets and annular brooches (Speake 1980, fig 11j, 1, m, n), where we also find ring grooved decoration.

Ring grooved decoration occurs on the handle of the seventh-century Saxon spoon from Desborough, Northants (Fig 42), decorated at its terminal with two profiled Style II bird heads. It is likely but not certain that the circular perforation created by the junction of the two predatory beaks was utilised for suspension of the spoon. The spoon, however, does not



Fig 42 Desborough spoon (Scale 1:1) (British Museum)

have an animal head connecting bowl with handle, nor is there the drop from handle to bowl, which is shallower and more spatular in form. Typologically the Desborough spoon is not, therefore, closely related to the Swallowcliffe spoon, although both are suggested as being Anglo-Saxon in manufacture and seventh century in date.

#### 6–10 Silver brooches

(Figs 43–4)

Four safety-pin type brooches and the fragment of a fifth were found within the casket complex.

6 Silver brooch, found near the silver spoon. With the exception of the missing point of the pin, the brooch survives in its entirety. Length 31mm, width 4mm. The thickness of the silver is 1mm. The pin is 29mm long, including the spring, and 1.3mm thick. The catch-plate and the pin are fabricated as a unit from base silver. XRF analysis also detected traces of copper, gold, zinc, and lead (JB). (XRF analysis of brooches 7 and 8 gave virtually identical spectra. Brooches 9 and 10 were not analysed).

Decoration on the body of the brooch is confined to three groups of three transverse engraved incisions at regular intervals from the spring to the catch-plate. A further single transverse incision borders the pin end of the catch-plate. The engraving of these incisions shows variation in both depth and spacing. Traces of wear are also detectable.

When excavated the brooch was fractured both on the pin and body.

7 Silver brooch, found in same position as the tinned bronze strap-mount (No 11) at the eastern end of the casket, together with fragments of wood or leather. The brooch is incomplete, with the spring end missing. The surviving length of the body and catch-plate is 21mm. The surviving length of pin is also 21mm. Ten engraved incisions of varying depth adorn the catch-plate and point with three further lines decorating the body of the brooch at its fractured section.

8 Silver brooch fragment. Length 14mm, width 4mm. It is decorated with four transverse grooves in its mid section and two further grooved incisions at

one of its fractured ends. The find spot coordinates given are identical to that of brooch 7 and it was first assumed that the fragments belonged to one brooch. Examination of the two brooch fragments 7 and 8 show that they cannot be joined; their fractures and ornament cannot be aligned, nor would a brooch with such a long body relate in length and scale to the surviving complete brooches from within the casket.

9 Silver brooch which although found fractured is complete. Length 31mm, with a pin length (including spring) of 28mm. No precise co-ordinates were given by the excavators to locate its exact position within the casket, but it is almost certainly the brooch plotted on the stage 5 plan (Fig 14) at the east end of the casket, close to a corner bracket, and visible also on the photograph of the casket complex (Fig 27). In scale it is an almost identical twin to brooch 6, but its catch-plate is slightly smaller and its pin fractionally shorter. Differences also exist in the decorative details. The transverse incisions are more numerous, with three zones of parallel banding on the body in addition to the lines on the catch-plate, but the engraving is lighter.

10 Silver brooch. Although there is no reason to doubt that this brooch was contained within the casket, like No 9 its precise location has not been recorded. Apart from the missing projection from the catch-plate the brooch is complete. It is smaller than brooches 6 and 9, being 25mm long and 3.5mm wide. The pin with its single looped spring is 24.5mm long.

The decoration consists of three transversely engraved lines at the spring end, four in the centre, and two pairs of engraved lines in parallel, bordering the edges of the catch-plate.

When discovered the brooch was fractured at the catch-plate and on the pin.

#### Discussion

These five brooches belong to a rare and distinctive type of Anglo-Saxon brooch. Parallels to the Swallowcliffe brooches are few, but all the examples known to me come from seventh-century female graves. Two silver examples were discovered by Faussett in grave 205 at Kingston, east Kent, associated with the

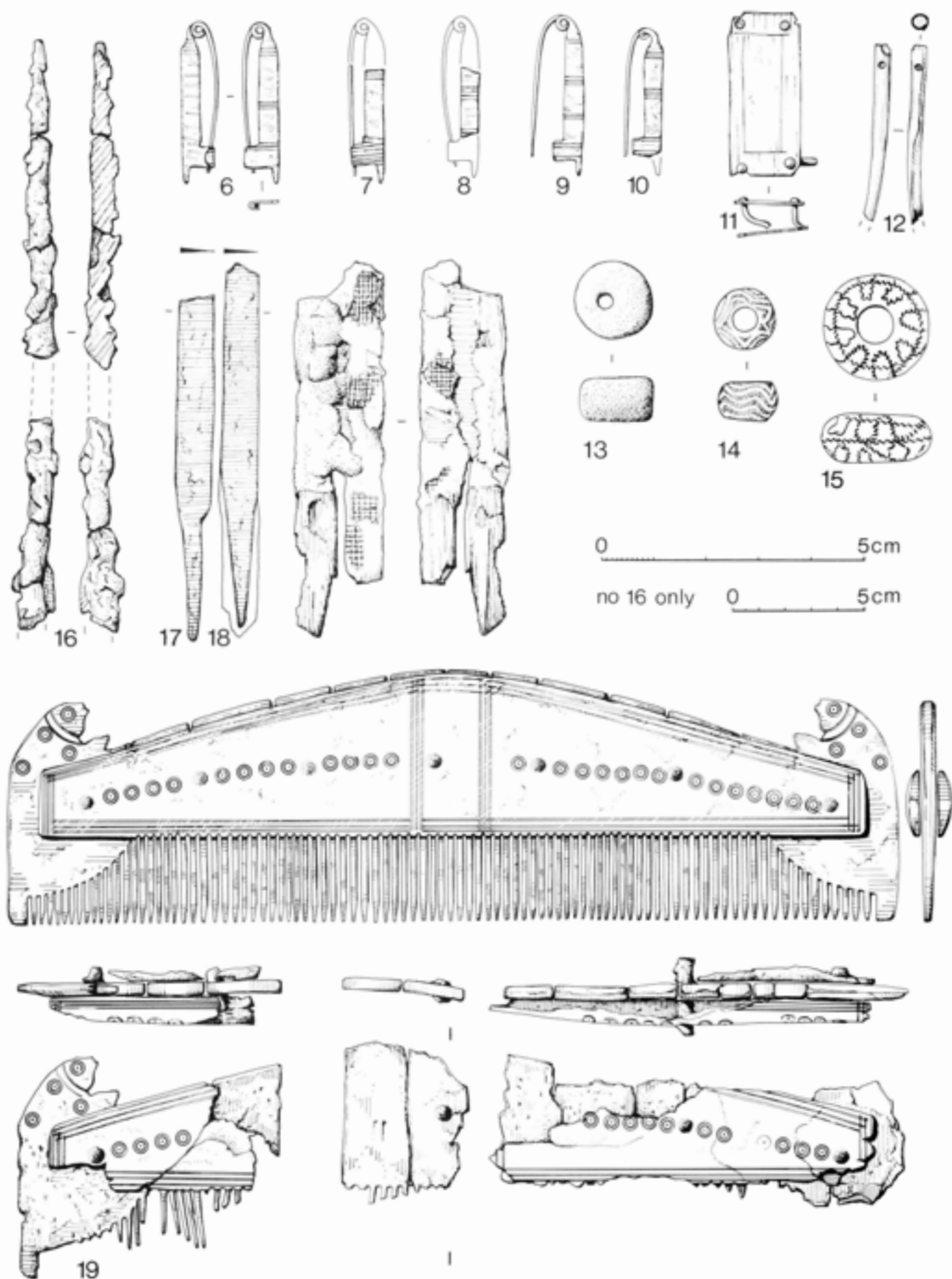


Fig 43 Finds 6-19. 6-10 silver brooches; 11 belt-mount; 12 lace-tag; 13-15 beads; 16 iron spindle; 17-18 iron knives; 19 bone comb; (Scale 1:1, except 16 1:2)



Fig 44 Complete and fragmentary silver brooches (Scale 1:1)

sumptuous composite brooch (Faussett 1856, pl 1) and found 'near the bone of the left thigh'. In length they are 35mm, slightly larger than those from Swallowcliffe, with variation also in their constructional details – the catch-plate being larger and conical in form and the body is rounded, not flattened. Common to both the Swallowcliffe and Kingston examples is the transverse engraved banded decoration.

A single silver brooch was found in grave 43 at Uncleby, Yorkshire excavated by Canon Greenwell in 1868 (Smith 1912, 156, fig 7; Leeds 1936, pl XXVII). In form and shape it is closer to the Swallowcliffe examples, but it is smaller in scale, 18mm long, and decorated on its outer face with a distinctive small ring punch in a single perimeter row on the body and catch-plate, rather than with transverse engraved lines.

The only other parallel, typologically similar but in bronze, is the brooch excavated by Lethbridge, Shudy Camps grave 19, which was found at the left hip of a female, apparently contained in a ring pouch (Lethbridge 1936, 6–7, fig 2). Lethbridge's comments on this brooch are of interest for 'if it had been found in isolation, would without hesitation have been described as an Early Iron Age specimen related to the Certosa type. It has the unilateral spring and turned up foot of these north Italian brooches' (1936, 8). The brooch is undecorated and does not possess the flattened body common to the Swallowcliffe and Uncleby examples. The form of the catch-plate with its proboscis-like extremity is, however, reminiscent of the pointing extensions which survive on three of the Swallowcliffe brooches.

It seems likely that the five Swallowcliffe brooches were all made in the same workshop, since each brooch or fragment is very similar in details of ornament, in character, and in the technique of execution. Furthermore, XRF analysis of Nos 6, 7, and 8 gave virtually identical spectra (JB). It should be stressed that such a number of brooches of this type within a single grave is unique, and more than doubles the previously known corpus of this brooch type. Although the brooch type might be considered as a revival of an Iron Age type, the Swallowcliffe

and Kingston examples would seem to confirm that they are Anglo-Saxon in manufacture, and distinctive to the dress and fashion of aristocratic seventh-century females.

### 11 Strap mount

(Fig 43, 45)

This was found in same position as the silver brooch (No 7) at the eastern end of the casket. The mount comprises two tinned bronze plates, length 31.5mm, and width 13.5mm. The upper plate is 1 mm thick and the lower plate has a thinner gauge of 0.9mm. Traces of leather, detected during conservation, were sandwiched between, the original thickness of the leather being 5mm. The upper and lower plates were secured to each other by four rivets, one at each corner, the ends being belled out. No tinning existed on the heads of the rivets. Corrosion has occurred on the outer edges of both plates, and distortion has bent the rivets, causing fractures at each corner of the lower plate. The only decoration consists of a rectangular inset panel on the outer face of the upper plate comprised of four unevenly engraved lines. This incised decoration was applied after the tinning. XRF analysis has shown that both plates were of

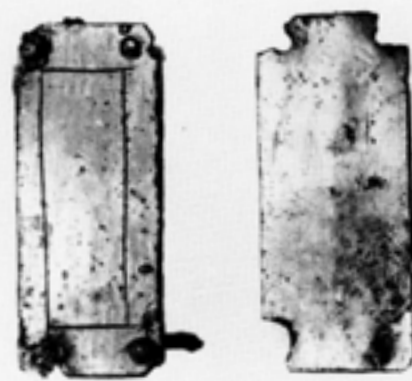


Fig 45 Strap mount found in casket (Scale 1:1)

similar composition, tinning overlying a quaternary alloy consisting of bronze with traces of zinc and lead (JB).

Some comparison will be made with the three strap-mounts associated with the satchel, by the right thigh, No 21n, o, and p (see p 62–5).

### 12 *Tapered bronze tube*

(Fig 43)

This object does not belong to the casket complex. It was found at the west end of the grave near the skull and adjacent to the iron barrel hoops and was recorded on the grave excavation plan of stage 3 (Fig 11, no 94) as a bronze needle case. As this area of the grave had been disturbed by robbing the original position of this artefact in relation to the body is uncertain.

The object is made from a strip of sheet bronze rolled over to form a tapered tube 34mm long. The tapered end has a slight curvature and is possibly incomplete. At the opposing end the maximum diameter of the tube is 3mm. At the upper end, 4mm from the top the tube was pierced by a hole 1mm in diameter. This is now blocked by traces of corrosion. XRF analysis confirms that the tube was made of bronze containing some lead and rather less zinc (JB).

### Discussion

It is fairly certain that the excavator's identification of this object as a needlecase is incorrect. David Brown in an interesting note has argued that tapering tubes of sheet bronze, often described as 'needlecases' are not at all well adapted for such a purpose (Brown 1974, 151–4). A convincing case is made for considering some of these tubes to have been filled with hair or bristles and to have functioned as cosmetic brushes. No traces of hair were evident in the Swallowcliffe find. In scale, too, it is smaller than examples cited by Brown. Furthermore, it is the tapered end which is perforated for attachment to a suspension loop in the case of cosmetic brushes, whereas the opposite is the case with the Swallowcliffe example.

In form the Swallowcliffe object can more convincingly be identified as a lace tag for which seventh-century parallels can readily be found (Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 39; Dickinson 1974, 7–8).

### 13 *Amber bead*

(Fig 43)

This was found adjacent to glass bead No 14, beneath the hinged side of the wooden casket. Diameter 15mm, height 10mm, with a 3mm hole drilled off centre. Its surface condition is flaky.

### 14 *Glass bead*

(Figs 43, 46)

Translucent and colourless glass bead with an applied decoration of multiple opaque yellow chevrons. It has a diameter of 12mm and a height of 8mm.

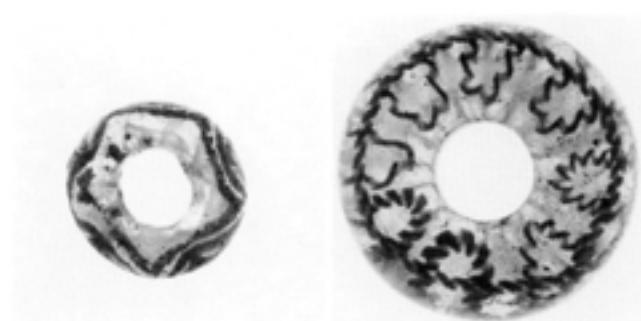


Fig 46 Glass beads nos 14 and 15 (Scale 2:1)

The central hole is 5mm in diameter.

XRF analysis detected the elements lead, antimony, and iron (JB). (Light elements were not detectable under the analytical conditions used). The antimony would appear to have two roles, both decolourising the bulk glass and producing the opaque yellow pigment (lead antimonate). Antimony is not usually found in post-Roman glass though there are exceptions, mainly in material of Mediterranean or southern European origin. Beads of this composition and colours are known from Iron Age contexts in Britain and some from Meare and Glastonbury Lake Villages have recently been analysed (Henderson and Warren 1981).

Examination of this bead by Margaret Guido has confirmed that it is not Anglo-Saxon. This is a typical example of Guido's Class II Type (a) dating from the last quarter of the first millennium BC (Guido 1978). These were made at Meare in Somerset.

It is possible that its Saxon owner picked up the bead from the contemporary Iron Age site at Swallowcliffe Down (Clay 1925a).

### 15 *Glass bead*

(Figs 43, 46)

This was not associated with the two beads in the casket, but was discovered in the disturbed area of the grave between the left shoulder and left-hand bed rail. It was carefully drawn and plotted on the stage 3 grave plan (Fig 11).

The bead is 20mm in diameter with a central hole 9mm wide. There is some lateral variance in height; ranging from a maximum of 10mm to a minimum of 8mm. It is made of a translucent pale turquoise glass with applied opaque white decoration. A 2-ply spiral had been made by twisting together one thread of turquoise glass with one thread of white. This composite rod was then laid on the surface of a plain turquoise bead and marvered into it.

Meaney is convinced that:

the large glass beads found in Anglo-Saxon's women's graves, otherwise indistinguishable from sword beads, and usually with spindle-size holes, were almost certainly regarded as amulets. They have been found in the right kinds of context: for example, separately, apart from any other beads that may have been with the burial.

(1981, 200–5)



It is possible that this bead is all that survives of personal adornment after the presumed robbing of the grave, but its original position in relation to the body must remain speculation. The possibility that the bead had a practical as well as amuletic function should not be overlooked. Lethbridge (1931) has suggested that an annular green glass bead, just over 20mm in diameter, found at the top of a girdle-hanger complex in Burwell grave 42, was used as a toggle to fasten the girdle.

### Comment

by Margaret Guido

Amulet beads probably originally hung round the neck. This is a type not previously discussed and its discovery offers the opportunity to do so.

All the analogous examples, which are rare (see below), are characterised by their similar size (about 25mm in diameter), annular shape, and finely twisted decoration. They are carefully made of translucent glass and the opaque twist is in two contrasting colours, or one of the strands may be the same glass as the ground colour. The glass strands of the decoration were skilfully pulled out little by little, then twisted and laid on the surface of the bead in such a way that two lines of swags meet with a high degree of precision, the tips of the swags nearly touching.

Despite a very wide search on the continent and in Scandinavia, these amulets seem to be confined to Britain, where, with a few outliers their distribution points to two main concentrations, one in Kent and the other in East Anglia. Where did they originate? Although there are cable-decorated beads around the time of the Roman conquest, these are both much larger and more roughly made, with a looser and wider cable rather than a fine twist (Guido 1978, Class 9). Being some 600 or more years earlier and with no hint of their survival, any connection between the two groups can be discounted.

As far as the origin of this amulet is concerned the evidence points towards Kent. Annular beads of this type (but without the decoration) are fairly common there from pre-Roman and Romano-British times. Of Celtic origin they evidently continued as a British element in the Romano-British period. In East Anglia, less in early contact with the continent, this was not so. Such beads owe nothing either to the pure Roman or Frankish tradition. Interestingly Lethbridge (1926 and 1936) emphasised with conviction that two cemeteries which have amulets of Swallowcliffe type, Shudy Camps and Burwell, are different from the partially contemporary Anglian ones of the area, and he suggested that the strong Kentish traditions they reveal may have been due to people of different, (Christian rather than pagan) backgrounds, in touch with Kentish converts.

The method and technical skill with which these amulets were made suggest that all of them may have come from one glassworking site or been the product of one small group of craftsmen. All must be suspected of being approximately contemporary. As far as the decoration is concerned, I suggest that it

was a skeuomorph in glass of delicate wire filigree containers once suspended from a wire loop such as was found, for example, at Shudy Camps. At the time Kentish metalwork was highly inventive and technically very skilled. A lingering Celtic tradition combined with vitalising Frankish glass and metal-working influences may have led (as it seems to have also been so in Ireland not much earlier) to a combination of the two techniques. This is not altogether surprising for in some respects metal and glass can be handled in comparable ways.

Since it has previously been suggested that Anglo-Saxon beads were all imported into Britain, this is the first variety so far held to have been made in this country, and others are suspected.

### Fine twist-decorated beads

Burwell, Cambridgeshire, grave 26 (Cambridge University Museum). Twist also round hole. Wire suspension loop. Green head with blue and white and yellow and green twists (Lethbridge 1931, 51).

Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire, grave 104. No colour details (Lethbridge 1936, 25 and fig 4.1).

Hartlip Roman villa, Kent (Maidstone Museum). Light green with opaque yellow twist (Smith 1848).

Kingston or Gilton, Kent (Faussett 1856 35-94, pl vi and v).

Sibertswold, Kent, inhumation cemetery by Barfriston (Faussett 1856, 101-43).

Sittingbourne, Kent. 2 examples (Smith 1848, 97-106, pl xxxvii).

Brafield-on-the-Green, Northants (Northampton Museum acc no D272 1957-8.3). Half dark bottle glass with red and yellow twist.

Fetcham, Leatherhead, Surrey. Blue green with yellow and same blue twist (Smith 1907, 124, fig 3).

Salisbury, Wiltshire, (Salisbury Museum card 17a). Dark ground. One twist opaque green and yellow, and one turquoise blue and white.

Swallowcliffe, Wilts, (Salisbury Museum).

Holywell, Mildenhall, Suffolk, grave 26 (Cambridge Museum). Green with blue and white twist (Lethbridge 1931, 1-46).

Denholm Hill, Cavers, Roxburghshire, Scotland (Nat Mus Ant Edinburgh F J 120 purchased 1928, now in the Hunterian Museum Glasgow). A number of Dark Age beads have been found in this area. Translucent yellow with opaque dark and red twist.

Since this contribution by Margaret Guido was written Professor Vera Evison in discussion of so-called reticella-inlaid beads from the Dover cemetery has argued:

Judging from the way in which identical elements of millefiori and reticella are used in varying combinations on different forms of bead, it would appear that millefiori and reticella rods were manufactured at centres where the special techniques were practised, the finished rods then being exported to other districts where operators with less expertise were nevertheless able to make them malleable by heating and to work them up into beads.

(1987, 65)

## 16 *Iron rod (spindle?)*

(Fig 43)

Five pieces of iron, badly corroded, which fit together to make a long tapering rod, 10mm wide at the base, 5mm at the tip and approximately 220mm in length. On one side are fragments of replaced wood, the grain pattern going in a diagonal direction and sandwiched in between the wood traces and the iron rod is a thin layer of soil which clearly demonstrates that the iron rod was not an attachment to the casket but lay diagonally within the casket. X-radiography also revealed a small bronze nail concealed by wood replacement corrosion on the lower section of the rod. It is more likely that this was a nail fixture from the casket, rather than part of a handle attachment for the rod.

Traces of textile can clearly be seen on three of the pieces of iron, and Elisabeth Crowfoot has reported (see p 116):

The textile traces when first seen suggested a very close warp-face tabby weave, with paired or plyed wefts, lying in layers or folds; after later cleaning this suggested more probably a tablet-weave...again perhaps a braid.

## Discussion

The exact function or purpose of this item within the casket is uncertain. The possibility that it was some form of steel or sharpening tool is worthy of consideration in view of its close proximity within the casket to the pair of knives (Nos 17 and 18). Certainly, parallel-sided, blunt-edged iron tools with a tang for attaching a wooden handle occur very frequently in seventh-century graves (Polhill graves 38, 66, 102, 56, Winnall grave 49, Shudy Camps grave 57, Uncleby, and Garton) and have been briefly discussed by Meaney and Hawkes (1970, 44) and Hawkes (1973, 199).

In comparison to these tools, however, the tapered rod from the Swallowcliffe casket is longer in length and possesses no identifiable tang. As an implement specific to a female, a more likely interpretation would be as a spindle for hand spinning. The contents of a casket from grave 299 Kingston Down, Kent included two iron spindles, two spindle whorls, a key, comb, cowrie shell, disc brooch, buckle, silver and glass pendant, limpet shell, pebble, ivory disc, bell, and strike-a-light (Faussett 1856, 66-9). A further

example was found at Wingham, Kent (Akerman 1855, 74).

The apparent absence of a spindle whorl from the Swallowcliffe casket does not necessarily conflict with the identification of a spindle. Whorls could have been made of organic material such as wood and therefore may not have been detected. Certainly the weight of an iron spindle would make a heavy spindle whorl unnecessary. Spindle whorls within boxes or caskets, without accompanying spindles are more common, being found at Burwell, Cambs, graves 42, 76, 121 (3), Kingston Down, Kent, grave 142, and Finglesham, Kent graves 8, 163, 202 (Lethbridge 1931; Faussett 1856).

## 17 and 18 *Pair of iron knives*

(Fig 43)

Discovered on the underside of the ring handle of the casket and adjacent to the tubular stem of the handle of the capsule, the knives were initially identified by the excavator as a 'pair of wood(?) bars with textile impressions', and believed to be part of the casket. During conservation X-radiography showed the object to be two separate pieces held together by a mass of corrosion, but clearly distinguishable as the blades and tangs of two small knives.

Knife no 17 is 65mm long with a pronounced shoulder between tang and blade. The blade, triangular in section, is incomplete, measuring 42mm in length and 7mm in width. The pointed tang is 23mm in length. Its pair knife no 18 is slightly longer, having a surviving length of 69mm but without the pronounced shoulder between blade and tang. The width of the blade is identical, 7mm, and like its pair triangular in section.

Examination of the tangs by Jacqui Watson has shown that the handles were probably horn or bone rather than wood. Traces of textiles were clearly visible on both sides of the knives and have been briefly commented on by Elisabeth Crowfoot (see p 116), who has suggested that they may have been kept in a bag or wrapped in a cloth of fine tabby weave. Traces of coarse plyed threads lying over it could have been the string tied round.

## Discussion

The occurrence of a pair of knives, either in a twin sheath or, as here, wrapped or bagged together, is uncommon enough to merit a brief discussion. Although iron knives occur in both male and female burials, as well as those of children, generally they are found singly. Evison in her publication of the Dover (Buckland) cemetery has noted:

the position of the knife in the graves shows that it was usually worn at the waist by both male and female about three-quarters of these being found on the left side. Eight females carried their knife in a bag, pocket, or other container at the left hip.

(1987, 115)

In this respect, although not worn, the position of the Swallowcliffe knives in a container by the left side does not differ from the norm. What is unusual is their small size. Two pairs of iron knives with horn handles were found within the fluted silver bowl of the Sutton Hoo ship burial (nos 162-5, Bruce-Mitford 1983, 881-7) and ranging in length from 145mm to 204mm, the largest being almost three times the length of the Swallowcliffe knives. Differences in scale may well indicate differences of use but no systematic classification of Anglo-Saxon knives has yet been undertaken, other than a broad grouping of types distinguished by differences in the development of blade and tang (Böhner 1958, 214f) comparable to continental forms. The fragmentary condition of the two Swallowcliffe knives does not show whether they possessed incurved or sloping tips. In form, their parallel sides make them more closely comparable to the tanged, blunt-edged, parallel-sided tools which occur frequently in seventh-century graves, as at Polhill, Kent (Hawkes 1973, 199).

### 19 Bone comb

(Figs 43, 47)

The fragmentary long hump-backed comb lay diagonally within the casket adjacent to the tapered iron rod and iron knives (see Fig 14, no 140, and Fig 28).

Its original length is estimated to be c 170mm. The centre section is broken and partly missing, but its height at its mid-point is estimated to be c 46mm, with a thickness of c 12mm.

The comb is composite in structure, being made of three pieces of bone secured and sandwiched together by iron rivets, of which five survive. Although corroded the diameter of the rivets is 3mm, with the length of the longest being 15mm. It is clear that the teeth were cut after assembly of the comb as the saw-cut gaps between the comb teeth extend fractionally into the lower edges of the outer reinforcing bars of the comb's body. Most of the teeth have broken off, the longest of those that now survive attached being 13mm long. The length of the teeth was not uniform. At each end the first ten teeth gradually extend in length from c 5mm to 13mm, leaving an approximate quadrant of uncut bone.

The central toothed portion terminated at each upper end in the profiled head and body of a squat creature, each with an extended forelimb, gazing inwards along the humped ridge of the comb. As shown in the drawing, the creature on the left side survives almost in its entirety, but most of the upper part of the right-hand creature is missing. Two curved parallel incisions separate the head from the body, the eye of the creature consisting of ring-and-dot ornament arranged in a triangular format adorning the shoulder and body.

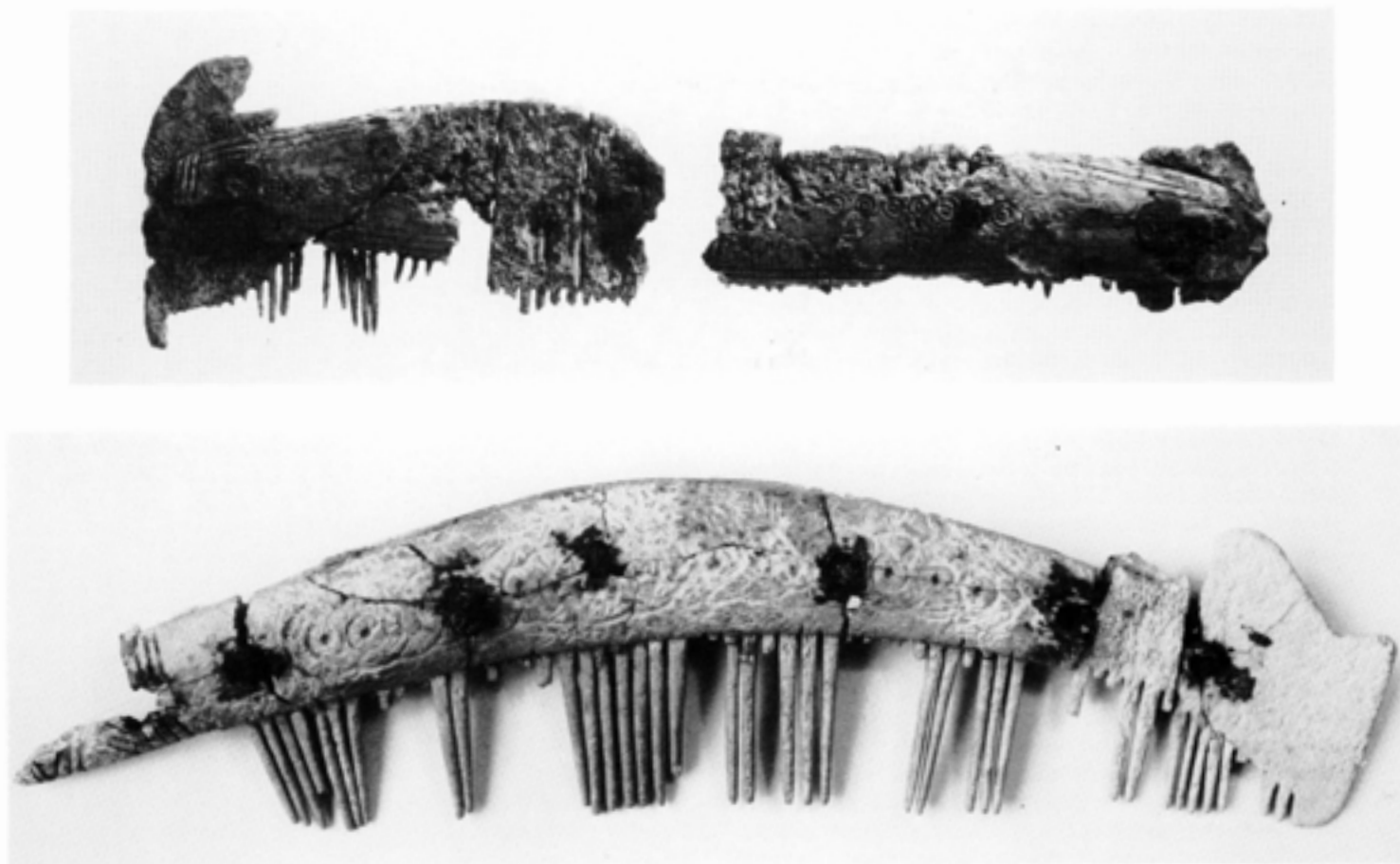


Fig 47 Combs: Swallowcliffe and Cherry Hinton (Scale 1:1)

Decorating the outer reinforcing bars of the comb but surviving on one face only is the same ring-and-dot decoration placed in line between the securing rivets. The perimeter of the body of the comb is further decorated with three parallel engraved incisions, which also centrally divide the comb to form a vertical panel.

No analysis of the bone has been undertaken to identify its source.

## Discussion

The Swallowcliffe comb, though fragmentary, clearly belongs to the hump-backed type which becomes more common after the middle of the seventh century both on the continent and in England, gradually replacing the parallel-sided, double-edged, composite comb which had survived from the Roman period. In Anglo-Saxon graves the type is found at Garton grave 12 (Mortimer 1905, fig 671), Marina Drive B3, 4, Burwell, graves 32, 83, 121 (Lethbridge 1931), Kingston Down, graves 142, 299 (Faussett 1856, 66, pl xiii, 2; 91), Cherry Hinton grave 5 (Fig 47) (unpublished), and Polhill, grave 53, but with no significant associations (Hawkes 1973, 198).

All these examples come from female graves, several richly-furnished.

In form the Swallowcliffe comb is most closely paralleled by the example from Burwell grave 83 (Lethbridge 1931, 65), which has similar zoomorphic terminals and elaborate incised decoration of parallel groovings and ring-and-dot ornament. Similarly the teeth of the comb are shortened in a gradual curve at both ends of the comb. In discussion of the comb from Polhill and its parallels, Sonia Hawkes has suggested that the small simple comb from Kingston grave 299 may be typologically the earliest, the burial perhaps taking place in the second quarter of the seventh century. Characteristic of the later types is an increase in length as well as elaboration in decoration. Certainly the necklace of amethyst beads, silver crosses, and garnet-set gold pendant associated with the comb from Kingston grave 142 suggest a burial date in the second half of the seventh century. Likewise the silver bulla-pendants and the bronze work box from Burwell grave 121 and the gold-mounted lignite pendant associated with the comb from Garton grave 12 have been argued as distinctively late seventh-century objects (Hawkes 1973, 198).

The position of these combs within the grave is interesting. Arguably the closest parallel to the Swallowcliffe comb, the comb from Burwell grave 83 was found on the chest of the skeleton and interpreted by Lethbridge as having been suspended from the neck. The 200mm long comb from Burwell grave 121 was placed in a box at the foot of the skeleton, as was the comb from Kingston grave 299. The comb from Garton grave 12 was apparently contained within an iron-framed purse or satchel placed above the feet. The curved comb from Burwell grave 32 (similar in form and curvature to the example from Cherry Hinton grave 5) lay under the right forearm of the skeleton. Worthy of comment is

the fact that the ornamentation on the comb from Burwell grave 32 is confined to one face only, suggesting that the decayed face of the Swallowcliffe comb may also have been undecorated.

In conclusion the Swallowcliffe comb reinforces the affinity of the Swallowcliffe burial with some distinctive late seventh-century graves.

## Assemblage C

Assemblage C was deposited on the ledge within the grave at its north-east corner at the foot end of the bed, and consisted of the fittings of a bronze-mounted bucket.

No metallurgical analysis has been undertaken to determine the elements contained in the alloy. The fittings are therefore referred to as copper alloy.

### 20 Bronze-mounted bucket

(Figs 48–50)

The bucket had been crushed and was in a very fragmentary condition when excavated, but had been undisturbed by grave robbing. A reconstruction has been ably undertaken by Mike Corfield of Wiltshire Museum Service, after conservation of the constituent parts (Fig 48).

It was constructed of yew staves, *Taxus* sp. (JW), and was secured by two iron hoops (d and e), the mouth of the bucket being enhanced by a U-sectioned strip (f) and eighteen pendent triangular copper alloy mounts (k). A square-sectioned iron handle of semi-circular form (a) was secured to the bucket by two iron ring-headed fixtures (b and c) which projected above the bucket rim (Fig 49).

As reconstructed the height of the bucket from base to rim was estimated to be c 210mm. With the iron handle raised the total height was estimated to be c 320mm. There was no evidence to indicate that the bucket tapered and the diameter at both base and rim was c 210mm, with an internal diameter of c 190mm. The liquid capacity of the bucket is calculated, therefore, to be approximately 6 litres.

The width of the yew staves appears to have varied, to judge from the surviving fragments attached to the triangular mounts and rim. One fragment of stave is 50mm in width and 72mm in length. It should be stressed, therefore, that the height of the bucket is estimated not from the length of any surviving staves but an approximate estimation between the iron hoops and the copper alloy rim. Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that the bucket was not straight-sided or cylindrical, measurements taken from the fragmentary and fragile iron hoops show that the central placed iron hoop (d) is 15mm wide and 2mm thick, while the lower hoop (e) is slightly broader and thicker, being 19mm wide and 3mm thick.

No traces of nails or rivets were detectable on either of the iron hoops, perhaps suggesting that the hoops had been heated and 'shrunk on', tightly securing the staves, in the manner of a cooper or wheelwright.

The U-shaped copper alloy rim mount (f), though fractured, survives in its entirety. It was secured to





*Fig 48 Bucket found at east end of grave (Scale 1:2)*

the rim of the staves by a series of six looped clips (g and h) which extend below the rim mount and were attached to the staves by small bronze rivets. The shanks of the rivets indicate that the thickness of the staves near the rim was between 5mm and 6mm. Five of the clips (g) are simple U-strips of varied sizes between 8mm and 15mm in width, the remaining clip (h) being a more elaborate double version (see Fig 50).

A fragmentary copper alloy strip (j) (Fig 49), 140mm long and 15mm at its maximum width, decorated with a zigzag of repoussé dots, is all that survives of a decorative band that overlay the upper most edge of the triangular mounts. It is possible that

this is a secondary addition, but it is more likely to be the remains of an original band around the rim, which underlay the U-sectioned rim mount.

The eighteen pendent triangular mounts (k) were secured to the staves by a single nail at the apex of each mount, the short side being tucked under the decorative strip (j), which was in turn clipped under the U-sectioned rim mount. Where the triangular mounts have been protected by this strip they are untarnished. There is some variance in the dimensions and proportions of these mounts, the average length is 49mm, the width at the top being 25mm. The repoussé decoration is composed of three rows



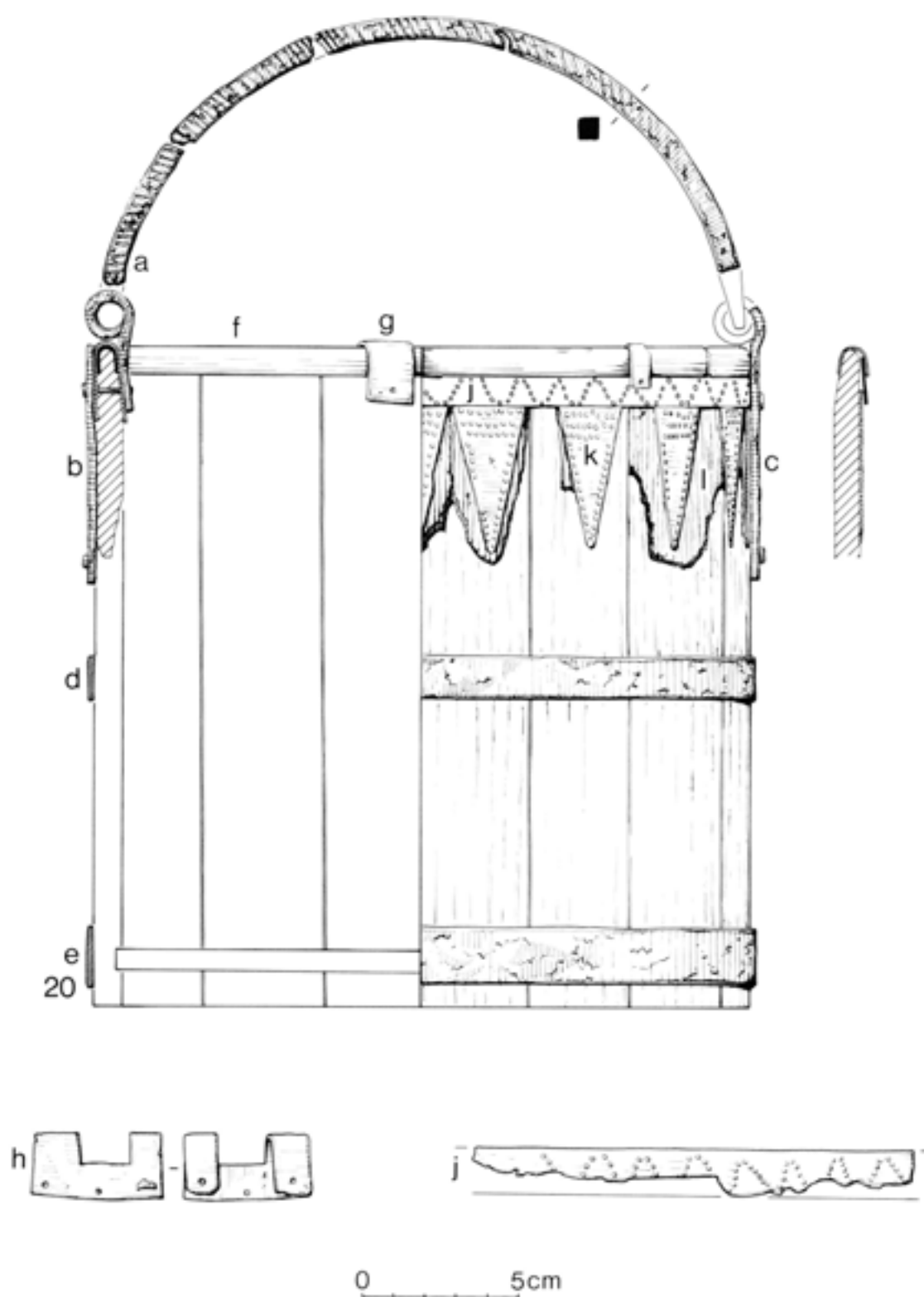


Fig 49 Bucket, reconstruction and section (Scale 1:2)

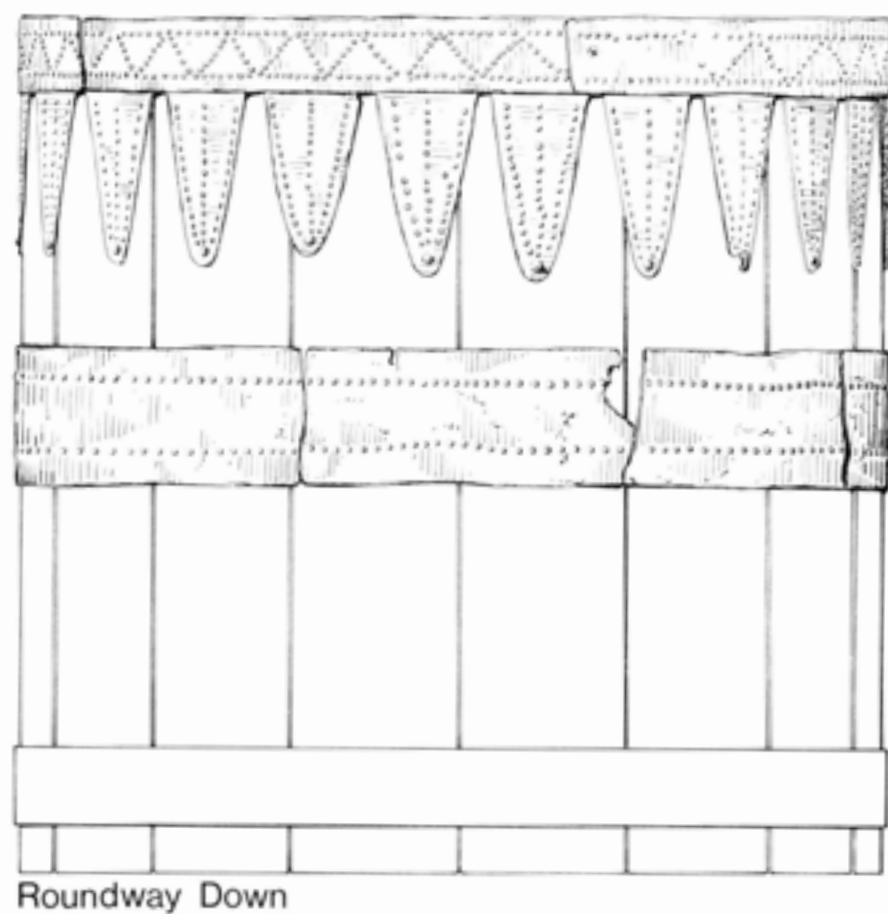
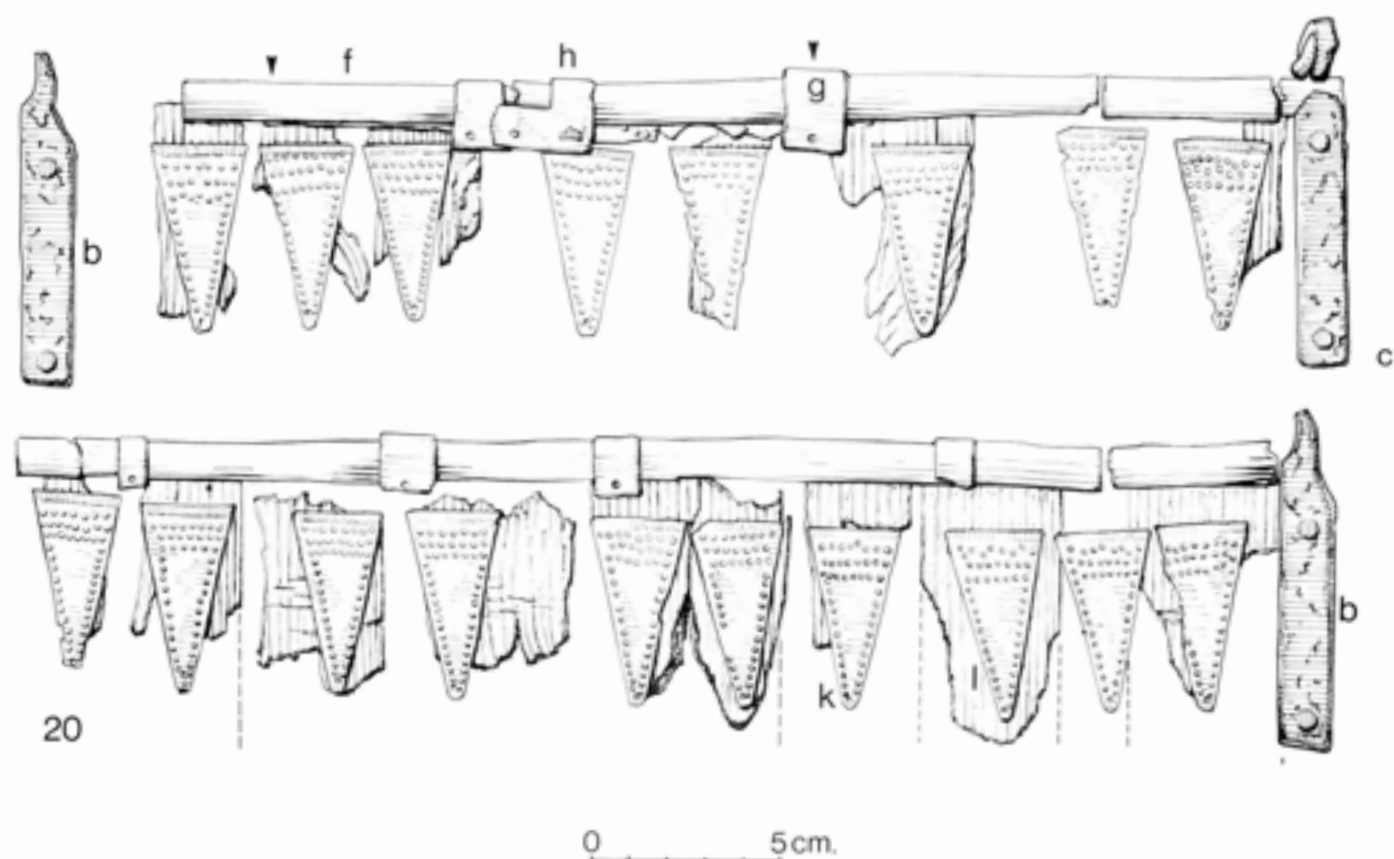


Fig 50 Bucket fittings: Swallowcliffe Down and Roundway Down (Scale 1:2)

of unevenly spaced dots, with a single row of dots on each side descending to the nail hole at the apex of each mount. The dot punch appears to be the same as used on the fragmentary strip.

The two iron handle fixtures (b and c) (Fig 50) were anchored to the bucket staves by a pair of iron rivets. Although both are highly corroded, differences in construction are detectable. The ring loop terminal for attachment to the handle on fixture (b) rises from the inner face of the bucket. The more fragmentary fixture (c) has the loop apparently curving inwards. The terminals for the handle are missing, the handle itself surviving in four pieces. Observations of the handle fragments by the conservator suggest that the square-sectioned handle was originally twisted, but this has not been confirmed by X-radiography.

## Discussion

This prestige item placed at the foot end of the bed perhaps contained drink or food. Like the larger and more utilitarian iron-bound bucket at the head end of the grave (No 2), it would have been intended to help sustain the owner in her afterlife. It should be noted that both buckets were made from yew, its tight, close grain making it a favoured wood amongst Saxon bucket makers, although buckets of oak and pine have also been recorded in other graves. As a type object the bronze-mounted buckets, or pails, have a wide distribution but are more concentrated in the central parts of the country. There is a wide variation, however, in the sizes of these buckets, which suggests that they may have had different functions. Although the majority are of cylindrical form, with vertical sides, some are a little wider at the base than the rim. The rim diameter of the smallest can be as little as 100mm, which makes it less like a bucket and closer in size to a beaker or stoup. At the other end of the scale the bucket from Glen Parva, Leics, has a diameter of c 540mm. The Swallowcliffe bucket, with its diameter of c 210mm, fits in between the extremes as being of average size.

A noteworthy parallel to the Swallowcliffe bucket is the example from the rich, late seventh-century barrow from Roundway Down, north Wiltshire, the remains of which are now in Devizes Museum. It too is of yew and was found at the foot end of the grave. A new reconstruction has been attempted in Figure 50, for the catalogue description (Cunnington and Godard 1911, 117, pl LIV) of its earlier reconstruction shows the triangular mounts 'arranged round the vessel in two rows, the upper row with the points upwards, the lower row with the points downwards,' an arrangement which is clearly incorrect. A more convincing rearrangement not only has the mounts with their short edges tucked under the narrower of the two repoussé bands with their apexes pointing downwards but also increases the diameter of the vessel from c 180mm to c 220mm, which brings it closer to the estimated diameter of the Swallowcliffe example. As at Swallowcliffe the triangular mounts were secured to the staves by a single iron nail at the apex of each, but also of interest is the 20mm wide

bronze band with the dotted zigzag ornament which closely parallels both in function and design the Swallowcliffe band, of which only the fragment (j) now survives. That a band did once exist is confirmed by the tarnishing patterns on the mounts, evident as a narrow strip 3mm deep, where the band covered the upper edges. Eighteen triangular mounts survive at Roundway but it is recorded that originally 'about 20' were found and Akerman records 'unfortunately several of the ornaments were lost a short time after the discovery' (1855, 2). Their dimensions accord closely to those from Swallowcliffe, but distinctive to each of the Roundway mounts is the central row of punched dots, and the absence of the horizontal dots.

No ironwork survives or was recorded as being part of the Roundway bucket, so there is no information on the handle, fixtures or whether any iron securing hoops existed in addition to the decorative bronze strips. Certainly the absence of iron hoops would make a bucket more prone to leakage, as a bronze strip cannot be heated and shrunk to secure the staves as is possible with iron hoops used in traditional cooperage. Furthermore, the absence of the U-sectioned mouth-strip, as exists at Swallowcliffe would make a bucket of a size such as that from Roundway relatively weak. But the absence of such a strip is not conclusive. We can be reasonably sure that some form of handle must have existed on the Roundway bucket.

Enough points of comparison exist between the Roundway and Swallowcliffe buckets, however, to see them as typologically close seventh-century exemplars in the bucket series.

## Assemblage D

Assemblage D was found lying between the right femur and the iron rail of the bed frame, and comprised the metal fittings and decorative mount of an elaborate satchel. The complex was drawn and planned on site by Stuart Piggott (see Fig 13, the stage 4 plan). Annotations on the field plan are in Faith Vatcher's handwriting. The brief, published references to the excavation make it clear that the relationship of the finds within the complex was only partly understood by the excavator. The note in *Medieval Archaeol* (11, 271) refers to 'a tinned-bronze diadem, ring-and-strip satchel or box-fittings', whilst in *Wiltshire Archaeol Natur Hist Mag* (63, 115) reference is made to 'a buckle, belt-sliders, disc-and-strips, and a diadem'.

Figure 51 shows the satchel complex during excavation and the array of metal fittings and organic remains, which at first sight must have been bewildering.

Professor Piggott in a written communication of 3 August 1982 recalls:

I remember joking with Faith and saying it was almost as bad as Sutton Hoo, having once again to plan highly important Saxon objects that I couldn't understand!

It is evident, however, that after conservation and analysis of the constituent parts, we are concerned here with a single item, a decorated satchel and its suspension belt. Its position in relation to the skeletal remains would indicate that it was not being worn, but had been placed by the side of the body on the bed. The item referred to as 'a diadem', for which there are no Saxon parallels, is in fact the decorative mount attached to the bag of the satchel. The 'disc-and-strips' are the decorative reinforcements and securing device for the satchel lid. The double-tongued buckle and the three rectangular mounts are the fittings for a leather suspension strap.

## 21 Satchel

(Figs 52-64)

### Satchel lid fittings (a-k)

(Figs 52-6)

a U-sectioned ring of tinned bronze 30mm in diameter, now fractured and fragmentary. Traces of leather were found attached to the underside. The width of the U-section is 3mm. Securing the ring to the presumed underlying support of leather are three tinned bronze clips, two fragmentary and one complete, the measurements of the complete clip being 13mm long and 4mm wide. A thin bronze nail

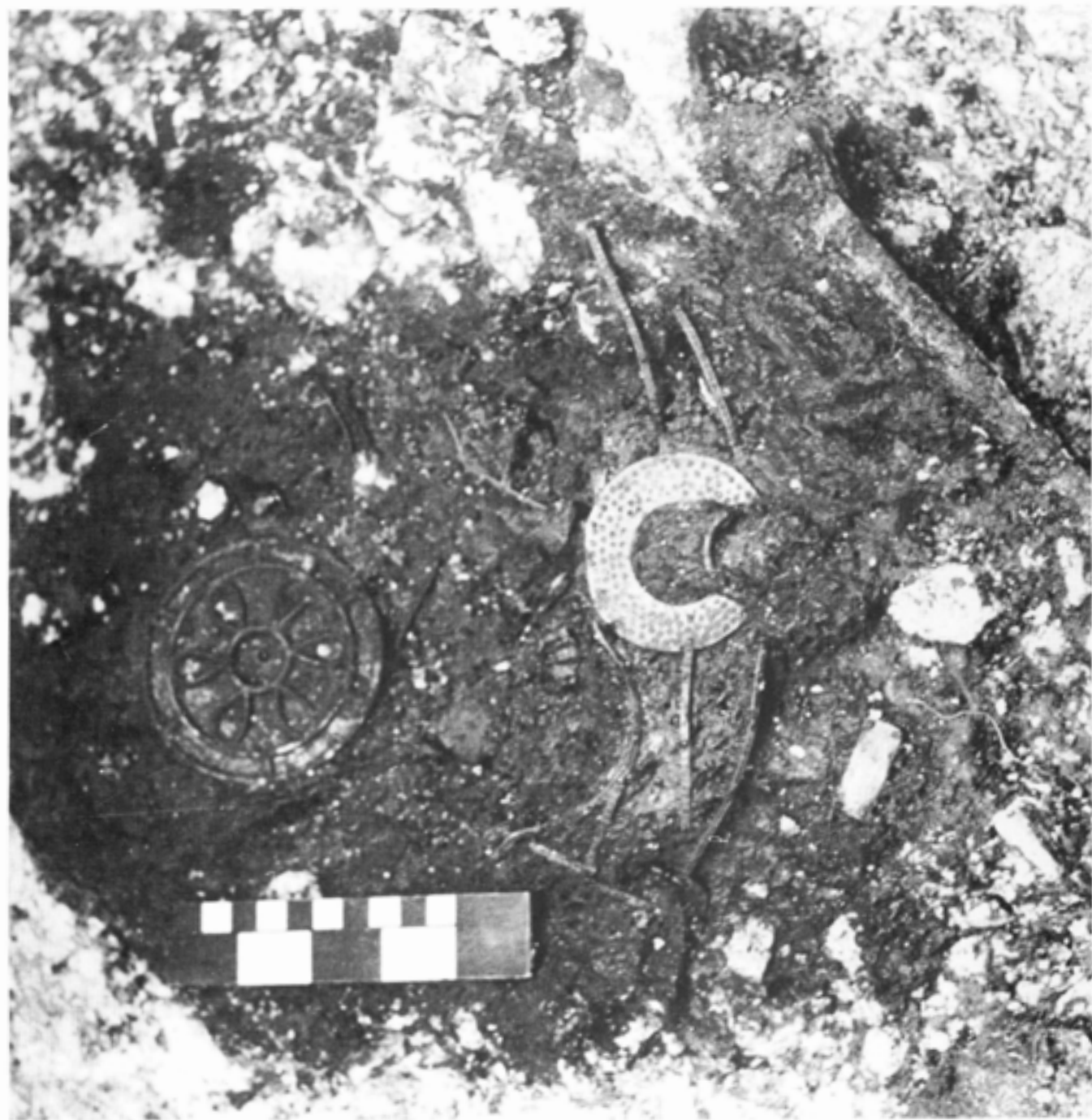


Fig 51 Remains of the satchel and side rail of the bed in situ

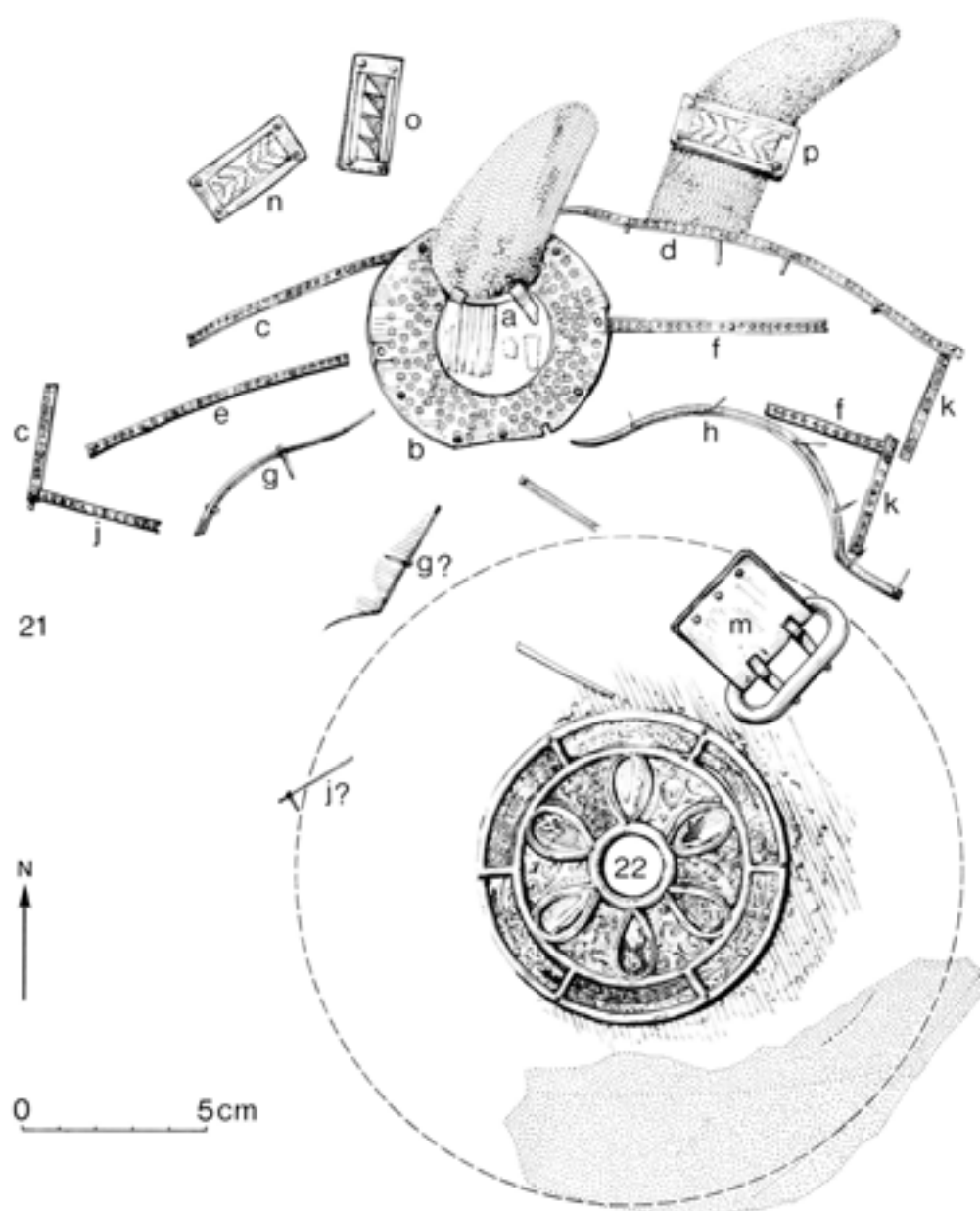


Fig 52 Plan of satchel fittings, based on drawing by Stuart Piggott and site photographs

4mm long survives on one clip. It is possible that there were four clips found when excavated. Three seem to be apparent on the photograph taken at the time of excavation (Fig 51), when examined under magnification, and a fourth may be hidden by the remains of a leather strap which emerges from the mouth of the ring, obscuring the far side. The conservation notebook (Salisbury Museum no 750173) contains a sketch of the ring with the fragment of a fourth clip attached. The reconstruction drawing may, therefore, be incorrect in showing only three clips.

b Partly obscured by the ring (a) lay an annular disc of tinned bronze decorated with ring-and-dot ornamentation. The disc is not exactly circular, the upper and lower edges having been clipped, giving a vertical diameter of 59mm and horizontal diameter of 62mm. The diameter of the central opening is 32mm,

fractionally larger than the U-sectioned ring which it would have snugly enclosed. Traces of wear are clearly evident on the inner edge, with some of the ring-and-dot punch marks being partly abraded. Viewed from the side (Fig 53) the disc is concave, and whilst allowing for some distortion, this feature would appear to be deliberate and functionally related to the design of the satchel. Twelve small holes 2mm in diameter have been drilled at intervals around the outer edge. Ten contain dome-headed bronze nails, varying in length between 8mm and 12mm. Six of these nails were utilised to secure the attached reinforcement strips (c, d, e, f) of the satchel lid frame to an underlying support of leather covered wood. At the junction of the two central strips (e, f) with the disc, the outer edge is slightly raised and folded to make a flush fitting. Microscopic examination has revealed traces of leather: a large lump of material was attached to the underside of the disc and



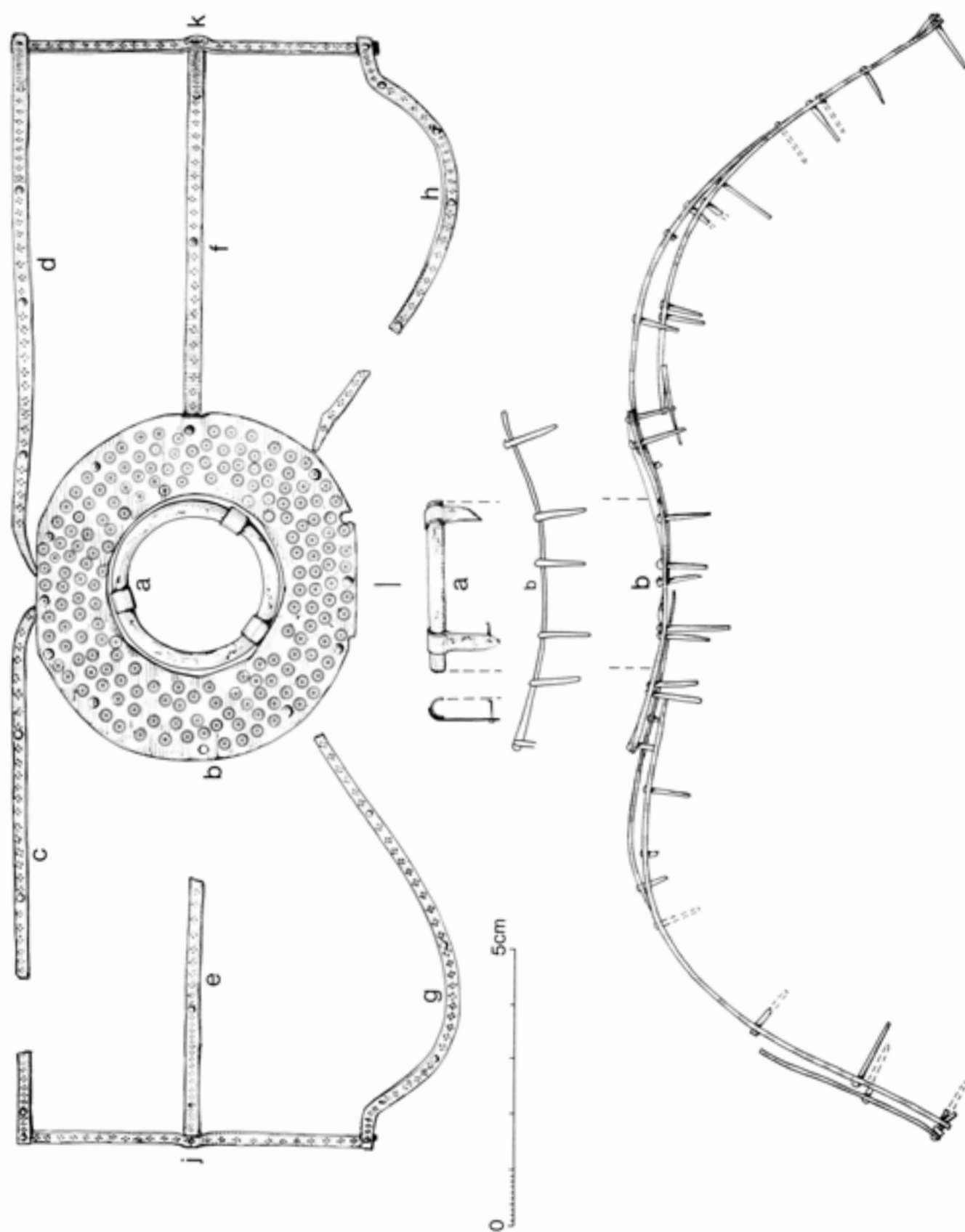


Fig 53 Metal fittings of satchel lid (Scale 1:1)

to one of the nails of the reinforcement strips. Examination has showed this to be mainly leather, but with inclusions of wood. It would be difficult to see how nails 12mm long could secure the metal fittings on to a soft leather base without an underlying additional support of wood. Certainly the curvature of both the disc and the strips would indicate that the underlying support was rigid.

Examination of the ring-and-dot stamped ornament shows that it was applied to the disc after the nail holes had been made. The stamping clearly skirts each hole, and must have been executed before the disc was attached to the support. Otherwise the ornament, though dense, is lacking in systematic arrangement.

c-k Eight tinned bronze reinforcement strips for the satchel lid, fractured in places and distorted by the collapse of the bed and the pressure of the grave fill. The width of each strip is 3mm with a thickness of 1mm. Punched ornamentation covers the upper face of each strip, the design of the punch showing a lozenge arrangement of four small squares. All the strips with the exception of (j) and (k) are curved and were secured to the satchel by a total of 26 bronze nails, the maximum length of the nails being 12mm. A cross-section view of the strips as reconstructed (Fig 53) reveals a satchel lid with deep sloping sides and a concave centre. Viewed from the front the satchel frame would have a width of 200mm and a maximum height (measured from strip (d) to the base of the curve of strip (h)) of 80mm. The depth of the satchel framework, viewed from the side is c 60mm.

XRF analysis of the fittings of the satchel lid (JB) confirm that they had been tinned. All the fittings were bronze, none containing more than a possible trace of zinc. The annular disc was a leaded bronze while the strips, ring (a), and clips were of bronze containing only a small percentage of lead.

#### Buckle (m)

(Figs 52, 54, 56)

m Tinned bronze, double tongued, rectangular plate buckle. The total length of the buckle is 39mm. It has a narrow oval buckle loop 39mm wide and 15mm long, its faceted section being 4mm in

diameter. The buckle plate is 29mm wide made of sheet tinned bronze and folded round the thinned section of the buckle loop, the leather being sandwiched between the upper and lower sides and secured by three rivets, each flattened over at the underside. Traces of leather remain sandwiched between the plates. Two rectangular incisions at the fold allow the double tongues to swivel in the buckle loop. Each tongue is 18mm long and 3mm wide. Each is thin and tapered, rounded at the tip, the section over the buckle loop being enhanced by two rounded facets, produced by filing the central squared section. At the swivel, the section of each tongue is flattened to 1mm to fold around the buckle loop. There is no ornamentation, incised or stamped. Examination of the tinned surface of the buckle showed that it was much thinner on the underside, probably due to wear.

XRF analysis has confirmed that the surface metal was tin, but it was not possible to properly analyse the bulk metal. However, spectra for both buckle loop and plate showed only copper, tin, and lead present so that the bulk metal was probably bronze with or without a little lead (JB). As found, the buckle lay face down between the satchel mount (No 22) and the framed lid, with the buckle tongues aligned towards the femur.

#### Belt mounts (n-p)

(Figs 52, 54, 56)

Lying beyond the lid of the satchel, and angled in different directions were three belt mounts, identical in proportions to the single belt-mount (No 11) discovered in the casket.

n This was the most southerly in position. The upper and lower rectangular plates are 32mm long and 14mm wide. They are secured to each other by four rivets, one at each corner, 8mm long and 2mm wide. Sandwiched between the plates are fragments of leather. The securing rivets have domed heads and are not tinned. They have been bent, presumably in the collapse of the grave, and are now fragile and badly corroded.

The upper plate is decorated with poorly executed engraved ornament consisting of an inset rectangular

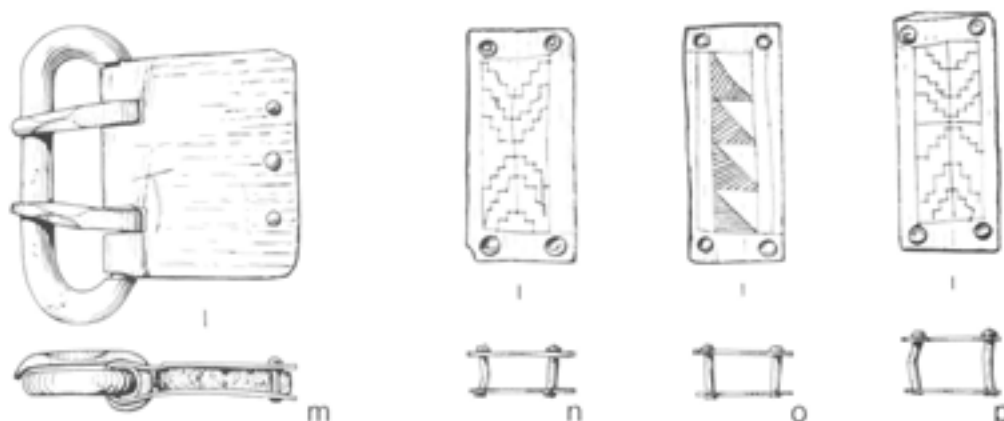


Fig 54 Double tongued buckle and belt-mounts of satchel (Scale 1:1)



Fig 55 Annular disc and support strips of satchel lid (Scale 1:1)



Fig 56 Double-tongued buckle (m) and belt-mounts (n-p) showing incised decoration (Scale 3:2)

panel containing a centrally divided symmetrical step pattern. The engraving is uneven and careless with clear indications that it has been hastily done, as the burin has slipped in several places. It seems likely that the stepped motif is derived from the cell patterns in earlier Kentish gold and garnet cloisonné jewellery. The lower plate is undecorated. There are obvious signs of wear, with many scratches, especially one deep V-shaped scratch which was certainly made in antiquity. One corner has been completely broken off around the shank of a rivet.

o The top-plate of this mount measures 32×13mm, with four rivets 7mm long and 2mm in diameter securing it to a lower undecorated plate. It lay close to mount (n), 20mm from the annular disc of the satchel.

The decoration on the outer face of the top-plate shows a design of four squares, 6×6mm, diagonally divided, contained within a larger, loosely engraved rectangle. Four pairs of congruent triangles have thus been produced, and a corresponding triangle in each square has been filled with closely engraved lines. There is sequential change in the slope of these lines from horizontal to diagonal. It is uncertain whether this was an intentional feature of the design or haphazard engraving. The lower plate shows traces of wear and damage. There is some pitted corrosion and scratch marks. One corner is bent with a fragment missing near a corner.

p This mount lay 80mm north of the previous mount. Its dimensions are 32mm long and 14mm wide. The four bronze rivets securing the top-plate to the lower are 9mm long and 2mm wide, slightly longer in length than the rivets of the previously described mounts. The thickness of leather enclosed would be 6mm.

The top-plate has a symmetrical pseudo-cloisonné step design, closely similar to the design of mount (n). There is an extra line, however, which divides the design within the rectangle horizontally, producing a central cross, although the random and almost inconsequential nature of the engraving (on all three mounts) make it highly unlikely that there is an explicit, intentional Christian reference.

The surface tinning on both the upper and lower plates has been pitted by corrosion, especially at the edges and where the engraving tool has cut through the tinning. The lower plate exhibits distinct signs of wear and damage. As on plate (n) there is a deep V-shaped scratch.

A substantial fragment of leather 20×9mm was sandwiched between the two plates. When this was removed and examined it was evident that the leather had been decorated with diagonal scoring or tooling (not illustrated).

One of the plates was examined by XRF, as all three appeared visually similar. The outer surfaces of the plates had been tinned and the decoration then



Fig 57 Satchel mount (Scale 3:2)

incised. The rivet heads were not tinned. The bulk metal could not be analysed as the exposed areas were insufficiently large. The spectrum obtained did, however, show the presence of copper, zinc, tin, and lead so the bulk metal was probably a quaternary alloy, though zinc was only present at a low level (JB).

## 22 *Decorated mount*

(Figs 57–63)

The decorated mount consists of an openwork disc, with 19 gold and silver repoussé foils mounted behind the openings. Figures 57 and 58 show the complete mount, whilst Figure 59 illustrates the disposition and shape of the foils under the openwork disc. Figure 60 shows the openwork mount, has a key to the foils, and shows their composition. Figure 61 details the decoration on the foils.

### Openwork disc (a)

(Fig 60)

The openwork tinned copper alloy disc is 81mm in diameter. It is slightly convex and was secured to an underlying support with six bronze nails, 10mm long, which sat in holes placed at equidistant intervals on the perimeter ring. Four of these nails survive. They are distinctive in that they all possess a concave depression in the nail head, a feature which does not exist on the nails used to secure the strips and disc of the sachel lid. Furthermore the nail heads do not protrude above the openwork frame, but are countersunk.

The openwork frame had been cast. File marks are clearly evident on the underside. The visible surfaces, top and sides, were tinned with a tin-lead alloy. XRF analysis of the underlying metal has shown it to be bronze which also contained small amounts (of the order of a percent) of zinc and lead. The nails used to secure the frame are of a similar composition, but contained less lead (JB).

The openwork design consists of three radiating zones: a central circular panel 18mm in diameter, a middle circular band, 18mm in width, and an outer perimeter band 7mm wide.

The outer perimeter band is divided into six curved segments. The middle band contains a more complex symmetrical arrangement of a six-petalled 'marigold', the six 'petals' interspersed with six 'axe-blade' shapes.

The circular walls and the dividing bars of the outer perimeter band all have a cross section which shows a top surface and inward sloping sides. In contrast the cross section of the 'marigold' shows sharply ridged containing walls.

### The repoussé foils

(Figs 59–61)

The openwork cover overlies a total of 19 repoussé gold and silver foils shown on Figure 59, which have

been created from seven different dies. The key on Figure 60 shows the different foils, which are illustrated in greater detail on Figure 61.



Fig 58 Drawing of openwork mount and backing foils



Fig 59 Distribution of silver and gold foils with openwork mount removed



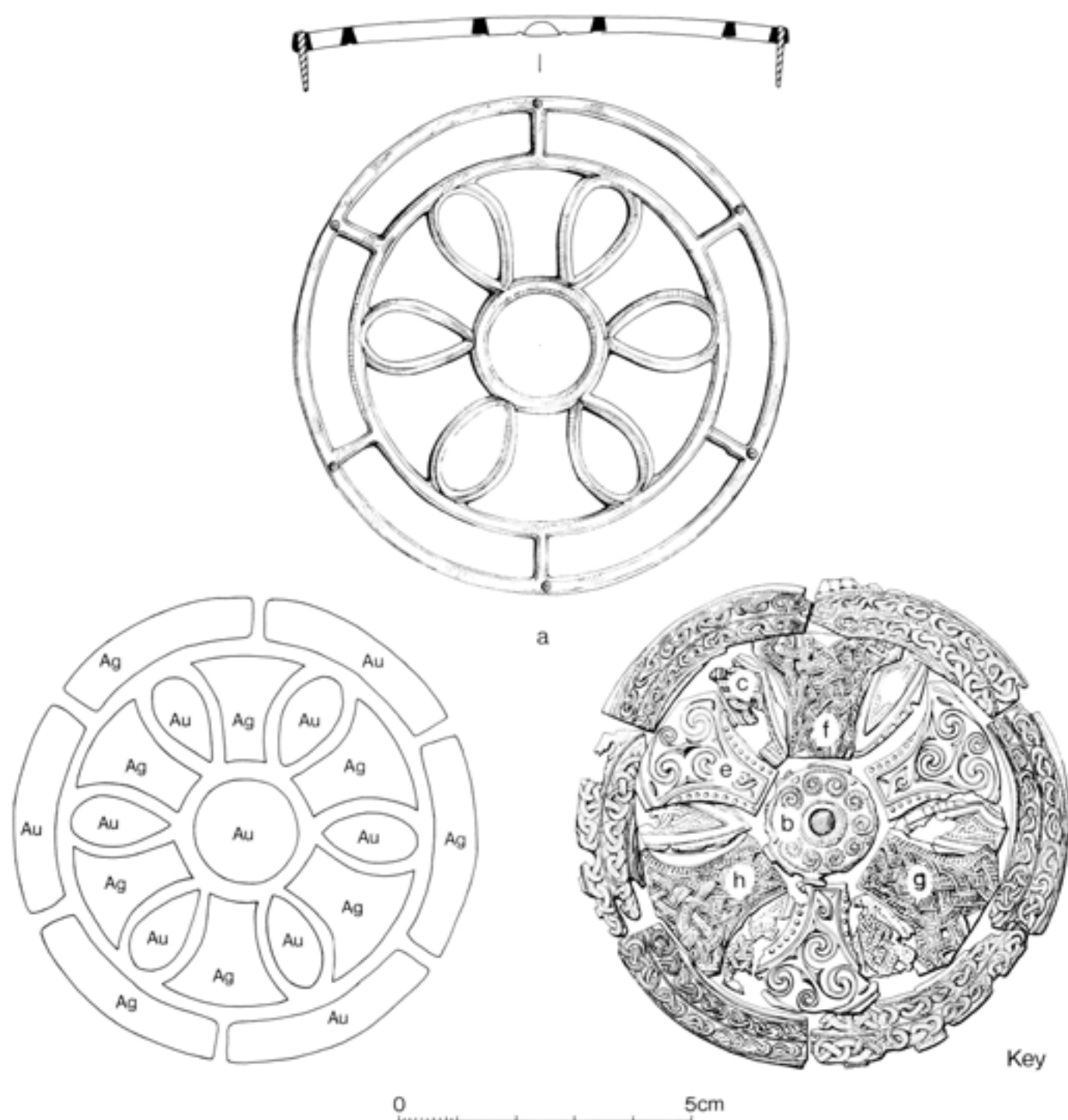


Fig 60 Key to gold and silver foils and drawing of openwork mount and section (Scale 1:1)

#### Foil b

The central gold foil (Fig 61) has C-scroll pseudo-filigree which provides the setting for a colourless glass cabochon. Because of the underlying foil backing this appears as a dark yellow. The foil has suffered some damage to its outer edges, several sections of which are missing. Its diameter is 21mm. Its composition is complete and self-contained, however, and seems purposefully designed for its

position on the mount, in contrast to the several clipped foils which surround it (see below p 75–7). The five pseudo-filigree C-scrolls are evenly and snugly spaced in a ring around the central cabochon, and bordered by an inner beaded wire and on the perimeter by opposed twined strands, both repoussé versions of filigree technique.

Between the C-scrolls and adjacent to the perimeter are five small raised bosses, repoussé imitations of either granulation or nail heads.

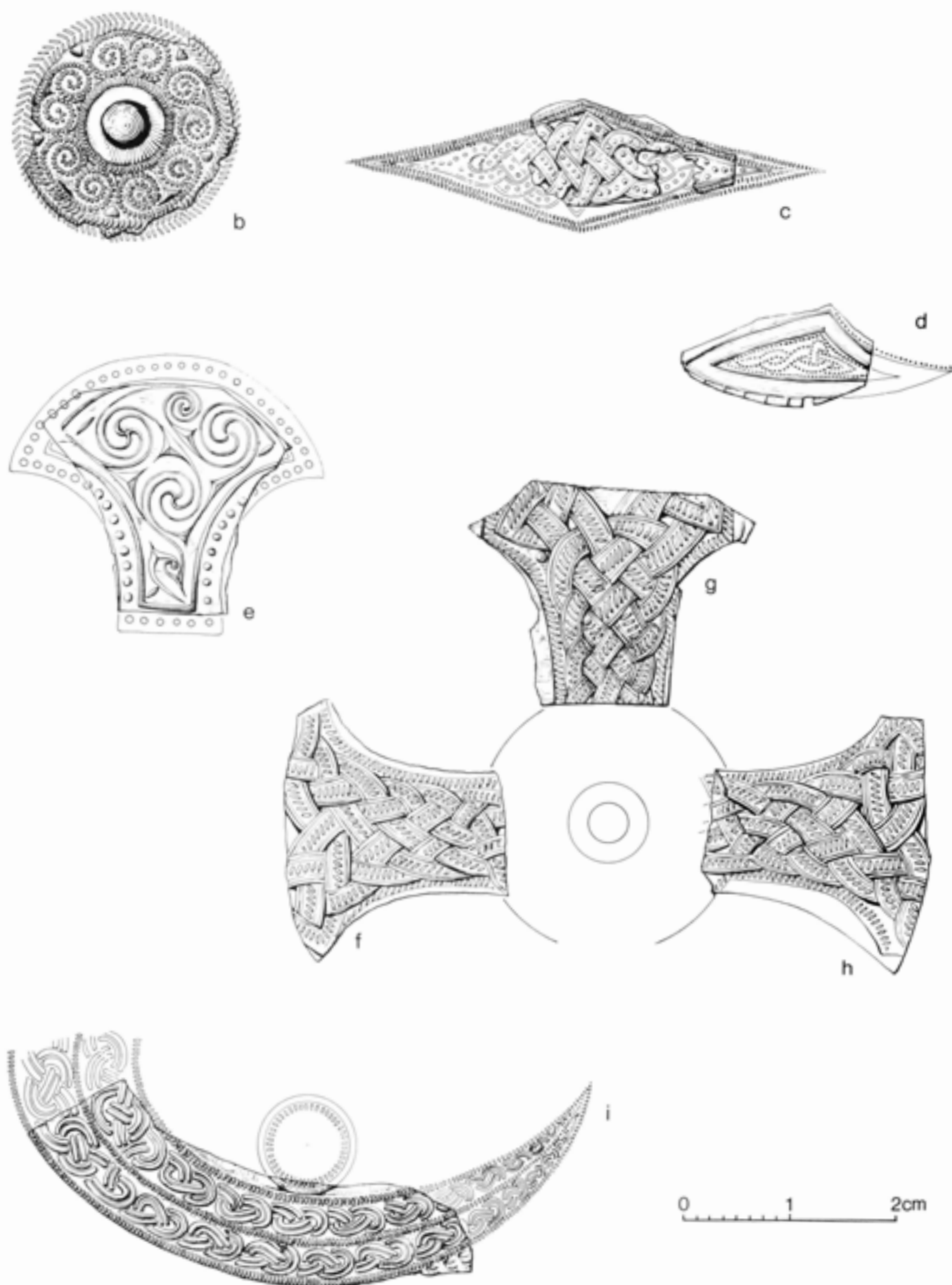


Fig 61 Decorative details of individual foils (Scale 2:1)

### Foils c and d

Two dies have been used to create the six pale gold foils contained within the 'petals' of the marigold.

Foil (c) is a gold foil, one of three placed behind the 'petal' openings, between the silver axe-blade foils. All are very damaged and fragmentary. The largest fragment is kite-shaped with traces of spotted band interlace visible. There are no apparent zoomorphic details and the design is not readily decipherable. The edge of the foil is decorated with a double row of pseudo-filigree.

A tentative reconstruction of complete design shows a symmetrical scheme of interlace (non-zoomorphic) contained within a tapered lozenge (Fig 61).

Foil (d) is a gold foil from a die of sub-triangular form. Two are in very fragmentary condition. The foils have been clipped so that the borders are varied. Figure 61 shows, therefore, a combination of the designs visible on two foils. Within an undecorated ridged border is an irregular panel containing an interlinked motif composed of two lines of fine dots, which although faintly zoomorphic in character, does not possess any identifiable elements such as eyes, claws, or limbs. Outside this panel, on the edges of the foil, traces of another impression composed of five ridged strips are just apparent. Clearly the design of the foil was not originally intended for a petal-shaped opening. One of the three sides of the panel of ornament is pronouncedly concave, suggesting that foils from this die were intended for an irregularly shaped recess.

### Foils e-h

Three distinct designs can be identified on the six silver 'axe-blade' shaped foils which alternate with the gold foils mounted behind the 'petals'.

Foil (e) is a silver 'axe-blade' foil, one of three decorated with Celtic scroll work and trumpet pattern.

Whilst there has been some damage, all three foils have crisp impressions, the design standing proud in pronounced relief. Contained within the ridged border of the axe-blade shape is an asymmetric design of three embossed spirals, linked scroll work and trumpet motifs. Outside the border, at either side, is a row of dots, which it seems, from traces on one of the foils, continued round at the expanded end. It is possible that the dots may have existed at the narrow ends as well, but as all the foils have been clipped almost to the border, no evidence for this is visible. The clipping of the foils is ragged and inaccurately executed.

The three other axe-blade foils (f, g, and h) bear a dense interlace design, in contrast to the relief of the Celtic foils. Although the general character of the interlace appears very close two dies have been used; foils (f) and (h) have a common die whilst foil (g) bears a different interlace scheme (Fig 60). The foils exhibit a flat, dense, irregular plaitwork made of a cabled band contained within double strand borders. The plaitwork is non-zoomorphic. Foils (f) and (h) are identical in design. Foil g shows some variance in the

plaitwork scheme with a ringed loop beneath the expanded end. The plaitwork is enclosed, on all three foils, with a plain cabled border. All three foils show incomplete designs with the plaitwork clearly extending beyond the clipped ends. As on the other foils the edges have been crudely trimmed. Clearly the die that was utilised was not intended to make foils of axe-blade shape. The foils have been cut from a larger design, such as a repoussé equal-armed cross, three of the arms being crudely trimmed into axe-blades.

One element in the design which could also have some bearing on the complete layout, is the V-shaped break in the plaitwork at the top of each foil. Bands of the plaitwork are continued, however, as they do around the circular devices in two suggestive parallels illustrated from Mundford and Lullingstone (see below p 76-7 and Fig 68).

### Foil i

The foils in the six perimeter panels bear the same design (Fig 60) impressed on both gold and silver and positioned alternately. The gold foils are much thinner than the silver foils and more fragmentary.

Foil (i) is one of the six foils from the perimeter band. It has two rows of linked 'Stafford-knots' contained within dotted borders. No zoomorphic details are detectable. The knots are double stranded, but are not all of constant size. There is a variation in scale at either end as well as a taper in width of the rows. The design on the foil is clearly only part of a larger design from which the foil has been cut. The possibility that the foil could be a section of a crescentic design is tentatively suggested. Tantalising fragments of a circle with a dotted border can be detected on the inner edge of one gold foil, and traces of another design, three rows of repoussé dots, butt against the outer edge of the narrower end of another gold foil.

Whilst these two tantalising details are illustrated in Figure 61 as belonging to the same impression, it must be considered that the craftsman has utilised sheet metal bearing remnant impressions of very different dies and stamps. The six perimeter foils do in fact vary in length, with not always the same section of interlace included, suggesting that they have been carelessly clipped. To some extent these discrepancies would be masked by the superimposition of the openwork mount. What is clearly apparent, however, is that the curvature of the foils does not coincide with the curvature of the mount. The curvature of the foils is more pronounced, with a smaller radius (see Figs 58 and 59).

### XRF analysis

by Justine Bayley

The silver foils contained detectable but minor amounts of copper and probably zinc in addition to the silver.

The gold foils gave strong signals for gold and weaker ones for mercury. Copper and silver were also detectable but only in minor amounts. These results, when taken together with careful visual

examination, suggested that the gold foils were in fact mercury gilding on a copper (or copper alloy) base. The gold would have been applied as a mercury-gold amalgam or by pressing gold leaf on to the amalgamated surface of the copper sheet. In either case the sheet would then have been heated to drive off most of the mercury leaving a gilded surface (Lins and Oddy 1975). The uncertainty in the composition of the underlying copper (alloy) is due to the overlapping of peaks in the XRF spectrum (gold masks zinc and silver tin). If the backs of the foils had been available for analysis this ambiguity could have been settled but as the foils are mounted on a resin base this was not possible.

The mounting of the foils on a resin base was undertaken during conservation of the finds, as the gold foils in particular were extremely fragile. Visual examination of the undersides of the gold foils, by Mike Corfield during conservation, did reveal green copper salt incrustations, which would seem to confirm that the gold had been amalgamated to a copper alloy base sheet. The undersides of the thicker silver foils, however, showed traces of a thick black substance, which was interpreted as some bitumen-like compound utilised to secure the foils to the underlying support of the mount (verbal communication from Mike Corfield). This has not, however, been confirmed or checked by analysis. It should also be noted that a large section of the interlace decorated axe-blade foil (f), which is damaged and fragmentary, has been inadvertently mounted upside down, and with one of its expanded corners mispositioned. This error has been rectified in the line drawing of foil (f) (Fig 61), which shows an interlace design identical to that of foil (h). (The error is evident in the photograph of the mount (Fig 57), the foil with its central fragment missing being incorrectly positioned.)

#### Organic remains beneath the decorated mount (Figs 62, 63)

The stage 4 excavation plan (Fig 13) mentions 'cords' extending from the mount (116) and 'traces of leather or cloth' (118) which are sharply demarcated from the gault clay by a 'line of powdery brown cloth' (119). These are clearly the organic remains of the sachel.

What was not visible to the excavators, until the mount was lifted, was an underlying distorted disc, c 45mm in diameter and 3mm thick, encrusted on its upper surface with whitish material, possibly metal salts. Adjacent to the mount and clearly related were the 'cords' (so referred to by Faith Vatcher), the friable organic remains of a similar material to the underlying disc, of the same thickness 3mm, but brownish yellow in colour and far less encrusted with whitish material.

The size of this underlying disc and fragments of the related material are shown in relation to the openwork mount (a) on Figure 63.

During conservation of the finds a sample of this mounting material was sent by Mike Corfield to Dr R Reed (University of Leeds) for analysis, who reported in a letter of 14 September 1979:

I have looked at the sample you sent me in your

letter of May 18 1979. I fully expected the mounting material was some kind of leather but surprisingly I have found nothing to indicate that animal skin was involved. Physically the material in no way looks like a skin product. Even though it is now in a weakened, friable condition I find no traces of collagen fibres, whilst under the microscope no signs of an animal grain pattern are visible on its surfaces. This indication that we are not dealing with a leather skin product is also strengthened by the absence of tanning agents, for I could detect no vegetable tanning or aluminium salts in the sample.

Under the microscope, the material is made up of small flattish flakes and my feeling is that it is some form of plant gum or resin. Maybe originally the foils were glued with this plant adhesive to a leather surface, but I am fairly confident that nothing leather-like now remains in your sample.

I hope these findings will be of position help to you in sorting out a very remarkable find.

The expectation of leather as the assumed backing material for the mount was no doubt a reasonable assumption, although the mount as an adjunct to the sachel was not yet realised or stated.

The observations of Dr Reed detailing his findings following examination of the assumed leather sample, whilst raising more questions, did dispel one uncertainty, as recorded in a letter of 21 September 1979 from Mike Corfield:

I am rather relieved as I had not felt that the nails were suitable for holding such an important object to a leather backing. I hope to arrange for further analysis to be made to the material.

Further analysis was undertaken by Jacqui Watson in July 1982, whose observations using an electron microscope identified the organic material from under the sachel mount as 'wood in a very degraded condition'. It is probably one of the Rosaceae family, such as *Prunus* sp (cherry).

In view of the identification of the material being probably cherry it is apparent that the disc, which now measures only c 45mm in diameter, must have undergone post-excavation shrinkage of approximately half. The organic remains described by Faith Vatcher as 'cords' are clearly the friable and shrunken fragments of the same supporting base, which, to judge from the traces evident adjacent to the mount on the excavation photographs, appear to extend in a circle with a diameter of approximately 180mm within which the wood grain runs longitudinally. A section of the perimeter of this wooden disc is preserved in three linked fragments of wood.

It is possible, but not confirmed by analysis, that the brownish substance attached to some of these fragments could be leather. Dr Reed's examination of one sample, which evidently did not bear leather traces, does not preclude its existence elsewhere. Indeed his suggestion that the foils were glued with some plant gum or resin to a leather surface is only



Fig 62 *Organic remains surviving underneath and adjacent to the satchel mount (Scale 3:2)*



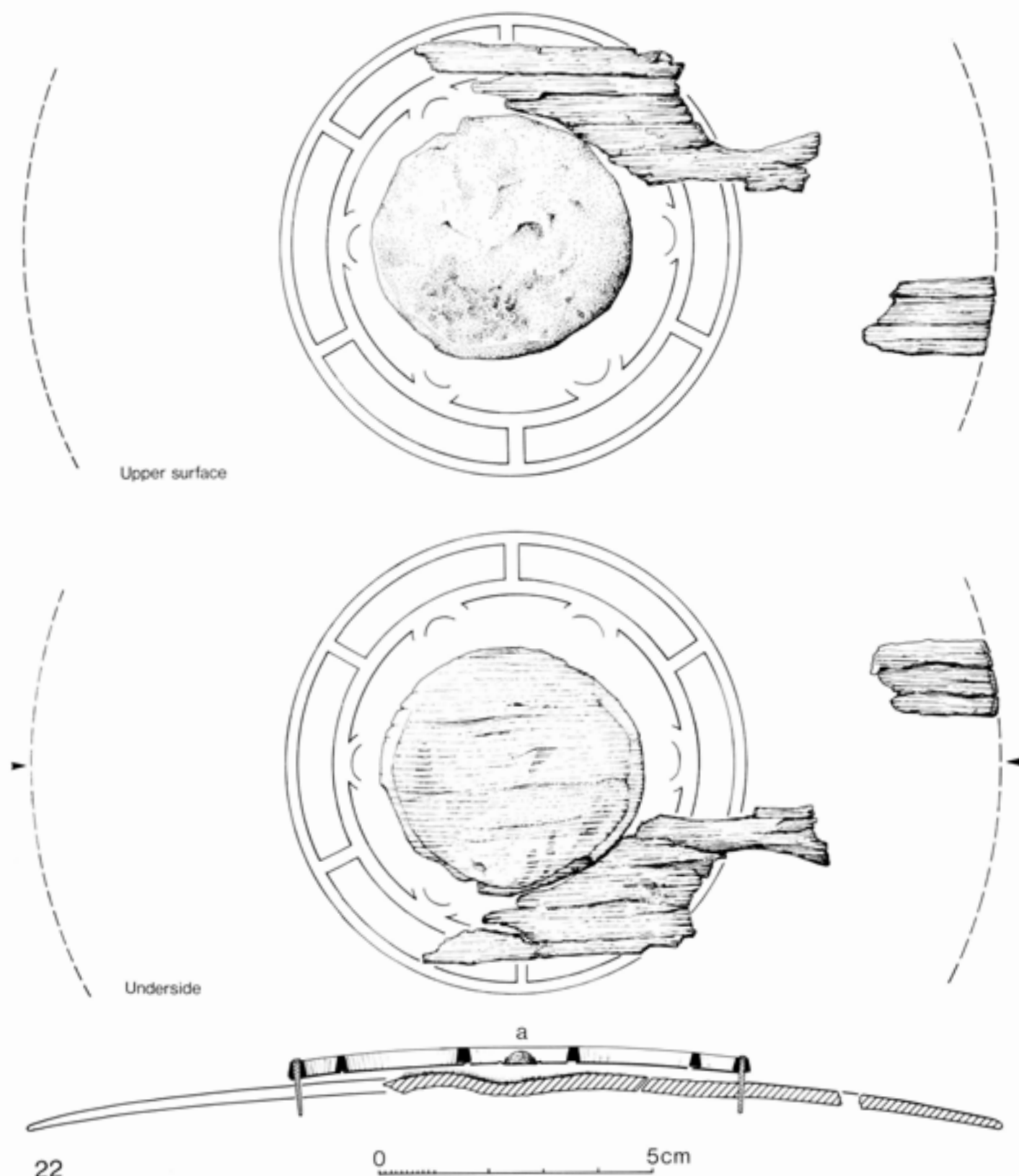


Fig 63 Relationship of shrunken organic support to mount (Scale 1:1)

one possible interpretation of the evidence. The fact that the support behind the mount was subsequently identified as wood, probably cherry, gives rise to the

interpretation that the gum or resin identified could have been a natural secretion of the cherry and not necessarily an adhesive.

### The satchel: reconstruction and discussion

A tentative reconstruction of the satchel has been attempted based on an appraisal of the evidence (Fig 64). Its measurements have been estimated to be c 280mm in length and c 200mm in width. In form it resembles a sporran. Its size and the curvature of the lid section would suggest that it was worn by the hip, attached to a midriff belt. However its position in the grave in relation to the body, together with the arrangement of belt mounts and the double-tongued buckle, all clearly indicate that the satchel was not being worn, although its position at the right side might indicate that it was originally worn at the right hip.

In construction the lid and the front lower section of the satchel must have been rigid. The reinforcing framework of the lid and the tinned bronze annular disc were attached by nails to an underlying leather-faced wooden support which was elaborately shaped and curved. It is uncertain whether the cherry disc on to which the decorative mount was nailed had been covered with leather. Leather was not detected in analysis of the shrunken support that lay immediately behind the mount, but it is possible that outside the mount the front of the satchel had been totally faced with leather. The observations of the excavators, who mention 'traces of leather or cloth' in the vicinity of the mount, cannot be ignored. As no traces of textiles have been recorded or subsequently observed on the metal fittings for the satchel, it is assumed that the major constituent material in addition to wood must have been leather.

No traces of personal possessions have been identified as being contained in the satchel, in contrast to the contents of the maple casket, which lay on the other side of the body. Yet as a container it is a substantial item, elaborately shaped and highly ornamented, with no close parallel in the Anglo-Saxon archaeological record. Various elements of the satchel, however, can be paralleled elsewhere and these parallels would reinforce the chronological notion that the grave dates to the second half of the seventh century.

Superficially, the shape of the lid, when viewed frontally, is reminiscent of the kidney-shaped framework of the sumptuous Sutton Hoo purse, a shape which can be traced back to the sixth century in a purse frame of humbler construction from München-Aubing grave 812 (Bruce-Mitford 1978, fig 382a). Closer in quality to the Sutton Hoo purse, being also of gold, and with an all-over encrustation of garnets, is the example from the second princely grave found at Apahida, Romania in 1968, and dated to the second half of the fifth century (Bruce-Mitford 1978, 517, fig 381). Distinctive to Swallowcliffe, however, is the curvature in depth of the strips and their central attachment to the ring-and-dot decorated, tinned bronze annular disc. The disc functioned as a fastener embracing the hollow ring-topped tube which projected through the annular disc from the bag of the satchel. Not shown on the reconstruction drawing, but certainly observed and recorded on the stage 4 plan (Fig 13), is a leather strap, the traces of which were recorded as emerging from the tube and

overlying the annular disc. This strap must have been attached to the inner wall of the satchel and would have provided an additional means of engaging and securing the lid to the satchel.

Parallels can be found for the annular disc on the Swallowcliffe satchel from late seventh-century female graves. Indeed, it is tempting to view several bone or antler annular discs, also decorated with ring-and-dot ornament, as being purse or satchel fixtures or part of a chatelaine bag (Standlake grave 8, Yelford grave 16, Oxon; Eccles grave 23, Kent; Burwell graves 76 and 83, Cambs; Polhill, Kent grave 43).

The bone annular disc from Standlake grave 8 (see Fig 65) comes from the richest grave in the cemetery and was found at the waist of the skeleton along with an iron key, a tinned bronze openwork mount with zoomorphic decoration, and a fragmentary iron cross covered with silver foil interlaced decoration (Dickinson 1973, 249). In scale the dimensions of the Standlake disc are almost identical with the discs from Eccles grave 23 and Polhill grave 43, briefly described and discussed by Sonia Hawkes (1973, 281-3: 1, 196).

All have a central hole with a diameter of c 30mm which closely compares with the 32mm of the hole in the Swallowcliffe annular disc. In addition all have perforations around their outer edges, suggesting that they were linked or stitched to something else. Whilst the Eccles example had perforations 'all but one encrusted with iron' neither disc has the reinforcing strips associated with the Swallowcliffe disc. Both the Standlake and Eccles discs are associated with circular openwork mounts, the example from Standlake being tinned bronze and zoomorphic, whilst that from Eccles is smaller in scale and like a simple spoked wheel. It is tempting to see these openwork mounts as decorative features on a bag, pouch, or satchel, and the annular discs as fastening adjuncts, echoing the more elaborate fixtures on the Swallowcliffe satchel. A further parallel comes from a few miles south of Swallowcliffe Down in grave 9 of the cemetery on Winkelbury Hill excavated by Pitt Rivers. Two openwork silver-plated bronze discs were discovered, found on the waist but attached 'to some circular and apparently wooden substance' (Fig 88). Traces of textiles preserved on the mounts suggest that the wooden disc, which was c 110mm in diameter, had been covered with cloth. Portions of iron links were also attached to the wooden disc. In the light of the evidence from the Swallowcliffe satchel, the wooden disc from Winkelbury, with its associated ironwork and two openwork mounts, suggests that here too are the remains of another satchel. The small size of both the openwork mounts, and the smaller diameter of the wooden disc, plus the absence of any annular fitting, would all indicate that this satchel is smaller and differs in constructional details from the Swallowcliffe example.

That annular bone rings need not be necessarily associated with a satchel or bag, but could be suspension devices on a chatelaine as well, can be attested in the archaeological evidence. The bone discs from Burwell graves 76 and 83 (Lethbridge 1931,

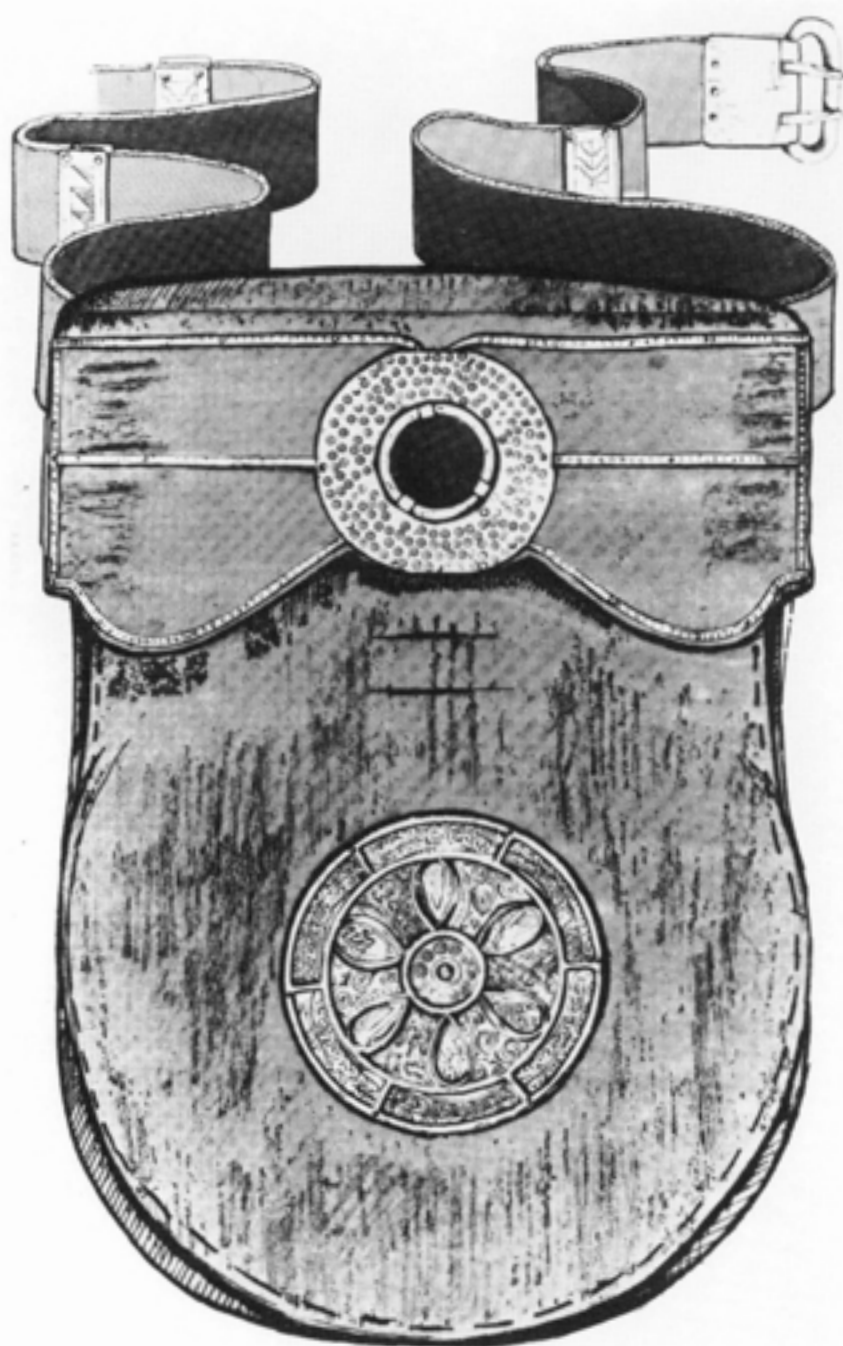


Fig 64 Reconstruction of satchel and belt

63-5) and Yelford grave 16 can more readily be explained as girdle hangers, swinging loose among keys, spoons, etc, to which items might be attached with loops or strips of bronze wire. Furthermore, the use of circular openwork mounts as purse or satchel fittings is also undoubtedly related to their use as fixtures on a chatelaine, where they are well attested in both Frankish and Alemannic female graves of the sixth and seventh centuries (Renner 1970). It is clear that the Anglo-Saxon exemplars must ultimately be derived from these continental versions. The pouch or satchel from Finglesham grave 203 with its openwork bronze mount which was stitched or possibly freely suspended can be dated by its

associated finds to the sixth century. It seems, therefore, that by the late seventh century the custom of wearing an openwork mount still continued, but, as evidenced by the Swallowcliffe satchel, such mounts had become permanent fixtures, being nailed or rivetted to an underlying support.

Although it has been suggested that the Swallowcliffe satchel was worn at the hip, attached to a leather waist belt, it could be argued that there is no conclusive evidence for this and that equally such a satchel could be worn suspended from the shoulder. Whilst it is possible to calculate the width and thickness of the belt, its length is conjectural. The evidence from the buckle and belt mounts informs us

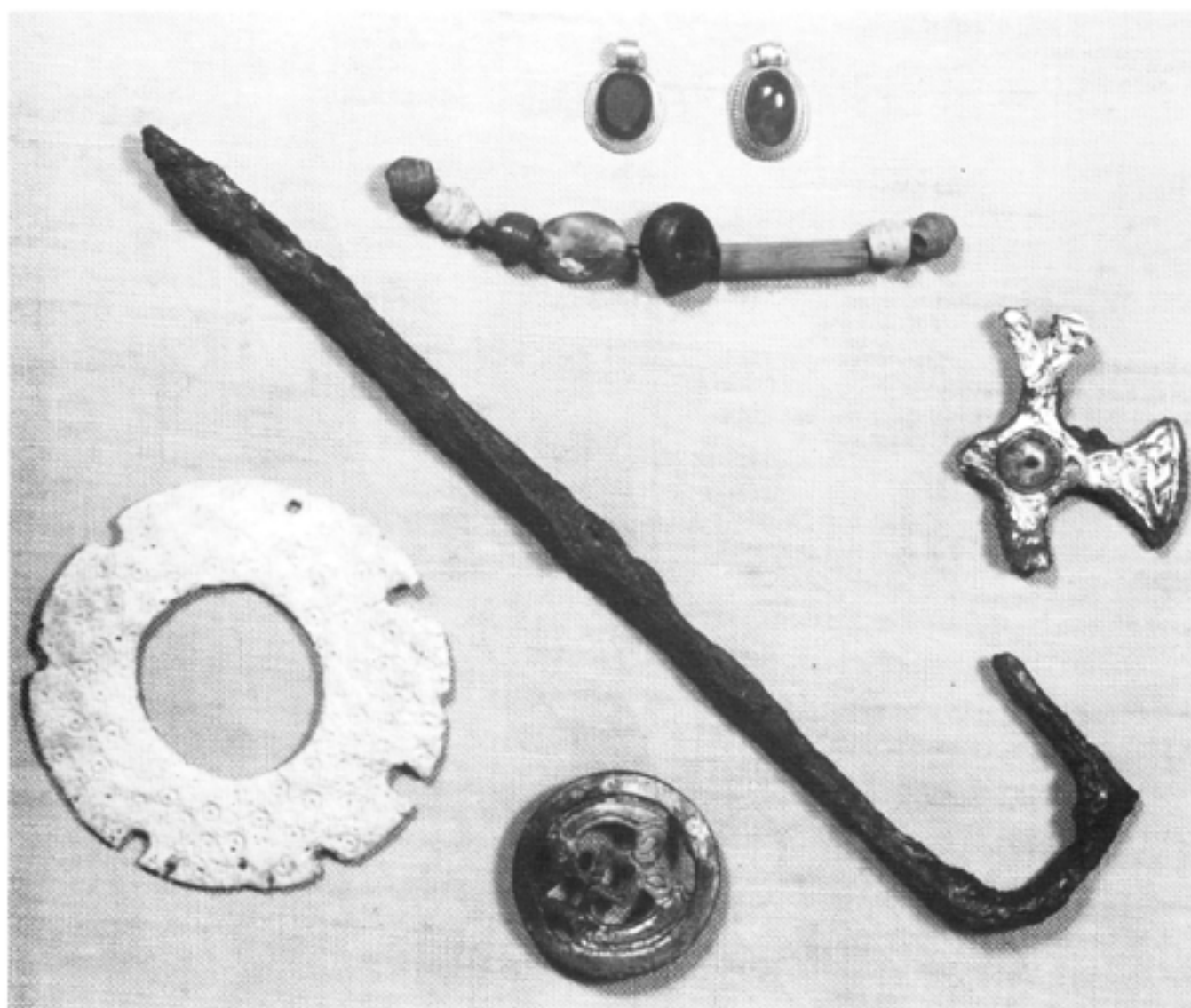


Fig 65 Finds from Standlake, grave 8, Oxfordshire. The suggested use of the bone annular disc and the zoomorphic openwork mount are as fixtures to a chatelaine bag or satchel (Scale 1:1; Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)

that the belt was *c.* 30mm wide and of uneven thickness, narrowing to 3mm at the fixture with the buckle and increasing to a thickness of 6mm at belt mount (p). From the evidence of a leather fragment sandwiched in this mount, it is also clear that the belt was decorated with diagonal scoring.

The satchel strap buckle is distinctive because such double-tongued buckles are rare. A tinned-bronze example but with a rounded plate was discovered in a barrow in Breach Down, Kent (illustrated in Akerman 1855, pl XXVIII.5). An iron buckle from Polhill grave 42 may have had a double tongue (Hawkes 1973, fig 54). Geographically closer, from the late seventh-century barrow burial at Ford, Wilts, is a buckle with a rounded plate found on the lower left rib and possibly part of a seax harness (Evison 1969, 114–16, pl xxvii.b).

Certainly all these parallels belong to late seventh-century contexts. None is associated with belt mounts, nor do any have a proven relationship with satchel fittings.

The belt mounts from Swallowcliffe deserve some comment, for they are without close parallels. Clearly the undecorated mount from within the casket complex belongs to the set. It has the same dimensions and is roughly engraved with an inset rectangle but is without further infill engraving. Ultimately such belt mounts can be traced back to such sixth-century exemplars as the set of three from Bifrons grave 39, which were found with a ring-sword, a buckle loop, and four shield-shaped studs (Åberg 1926, fig 232; Faussett 1876, 312). These are decorated with niello infill ornament of step-patterns, swastikas, and zigzag borders. The Bifrons mounts are more square in proportion and, in addition to having securing rivets at each corner, have decorative dummy rivet heads on each short side.

In the design and execution of ornament the Swallowcliffe mounts can be considered as both careless and lacking in skill. It is debatable, however, whether the engraved step-patterns are to be regarded as crude copies of earlier niello and



cloisonné work, or as the rudimentary but almost contemporary versions of some of the decorative ingredients of Hiberno-Saxon art, such as the Book of Durrow (fol 125v) where we find rectangular panels of steps and diagonal grid patterns, but of much greater sophistication and calligraphic precision.

#### *Ornament of mount*

Connections with Hiberno-Saxon art are readily discernible, in the ornament of the repoussé foils of the circular mount. In art historical terms the Swallowcliffe satchel mount is the most notable find in the grave, providing a combined assemblage of ornamental schemes, motifs more readily paralleled in manuscript art rather than metalwork. In terms of craftsmanship the mount leaves a lot to be desired. Some allowance must be made for the decay of the copper alloy sheet underlying the gold foils and their subsequent damage, in addition to the shrinkage and decay of the cherry base. Nevertheless, the foils with their roughly clipped edges have the appearance of being a cannibalised assemblage of repoussé work from several sources, both Celtic and Saxon. A considered appraisal of the foils can no longer support an earlier stated view that the mount is of 'probable Irish workmanship' (Speake 1980, 93). Suggestive parallels for the Celtic scroll work and trumpet pattern of foil (e) can be found in Irish metalwork, for example on the Moylough belt-reliquary (Fig 66), also in repoussé silver (Henry 1965, pls 34, 35). Some similarity also exists with the silver repoussé base-plate escutcheon from the St Ninian's Isle silver hanging bowl, arguably of seventh- or early eighth-century Northumbrian workmanship, in contrast to the Pictish origin for the remainder of this hoard (Wilson 1973, 137). The interlace-ornamented axe-blade foils of the Swallowcliffe mount, however, point more convincingly to an Anglo-Saxon origin.

In addition, the linked running knot or 'Stafford-knot' foils in the outer perimeter panels find their closest parallels in the decoration on several pieces of seventh-century Anglo-Saxon metalwork; the buckles from Eccles grave 19 and Crundale Kent, a gilt-bronze disc from Standlake, Oxfordshire, a bronze die from Rochester, Kent (all illustrated in Speake 1979, 390). Unlike the foils from Swallowcliffe which are non-zoomorphic, all the cited parallels have animal heads attached to the interlace.

The zoomorphic interlace on the Crundale buckle is executed in filigree. The panels of ornament on the Eccles buckle are engraved and on the Standlake disc the ornament is cast. The cast bronze die from Rochester, with its decoration of a Style II headed zoomorph with interlaced jaws and beaded, knotted body, was arguably used to create repoussé foils for the mounts of small drinking cups. Indeed it is possible that the original purpose of the die used for the Swallowcliffe perimeter foils, was for the decoration of repoussé mounts for the flared or sloping walls of drinking vessels, and that in their complete unclipped form the foils may have possessed zoomorphic details. The curvature of the designs of the foils could be consistent with their use for both a circular mount and possibly for drinking vessel mounts. As I have pointed out elsewhere:

if the repoussé foil were made in an exact rectangular form, it would fit snugly without any horizontal distortion only against a drinking vessel with cylindrical neck, such as the maplewood cup from the Sutton Hoo ship burial. A curved foil, however, could be arranged to fit a drinking cup with sloping walls and yet appear as part of a horizontal band of ornament. It can thus be seen that the greater the flare or slope of the walls of the drinking vessel, the greater the longitudinal curve required of the repoussé foil.

(Speake, in Hawkes *et al* 1979, 387-91)

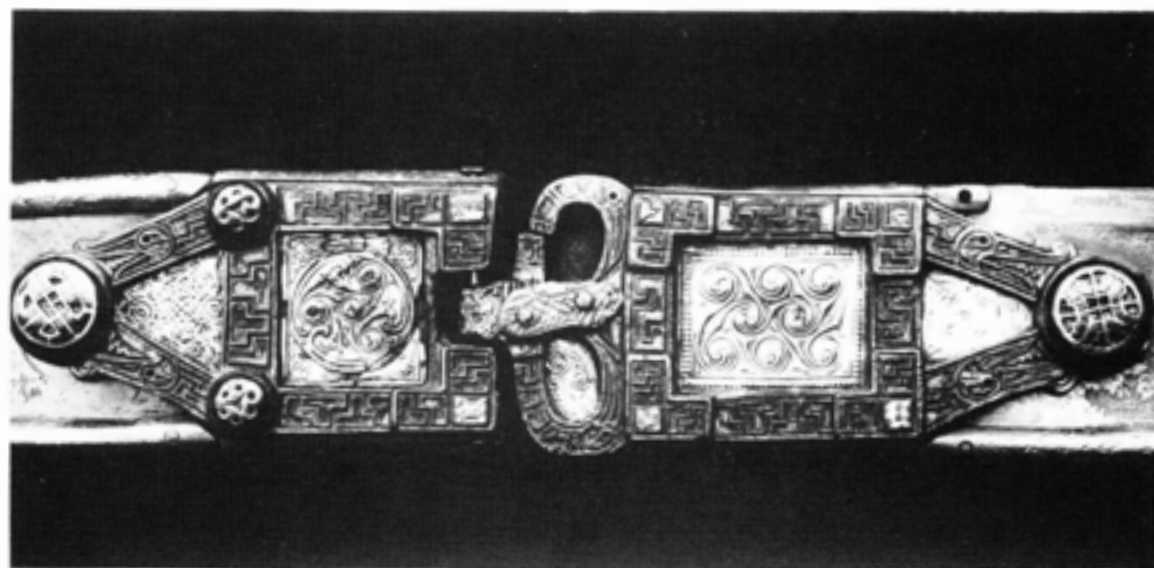


Fig 66 Belt reliquary found at Moylough, Sligo, detail (Scale 1:1; National Museum of Antiquities, Dublin)



An inconsistency in this interpretation for the Swallowcliffe perimeter foils would be the taper of the two rows of knots, which in the reconstruction drawing (Fig 61, i) could have ended in a sickle-like point. Indeed such curved and sharply tapered foils, but with zoomorphic decoration, do exist on the pendent animal heads of the ornamental grip-extension from the back of the Sutton Hoo shield (Bruce-Mitford 1978, 76-7, figs 60, 61).

Of parallel interest in its combination of Saxon and Celtic elements is the medium hanging bowl (bowl 2) from the Sutton Hoo ship burial (Bruce-Mitford 1983, figs 194, 195). The base of the bowl has a fragmentary openwork bronze ring enhanced with ring-and-dot ornament and containing four irregularly shaped panels attached to it. Beneath these openings are four repoussé foils, two of tinned bronze and two of plain bronze, decorated with interlaced schemes, and considered by Bruce-Mitford as Germanic in both style and technique. The possibility that the Swallowcliffe perimeter foils could have featured behind openwork mounts on a variety of objects should not, therefore, be excluded from our consideration.

The observation that some of the dies for the other foils on the Swallowcliffe mount must have been designed for the decoration of other objects is self evident. The one possible exception is the central gold foil with the cabochon glass setting (b). None of the other foils accurately fit or relate to the petal or axe-blade spaces of the openwork mount.

The derivation of the central foil from Anglo-Saxon, and not Celtic, filigree is clear. Good examples of C-scroll filigree can be found on the back of the composite brooch from Kingston grave 205, decorating the pin fixtures, and also on the equal-armed pendant gold cross from White Lowe barrow, Winster Moor, Derbyshire (Jessup 1974, pl 21.2).

The more fragmentary gold foils, (c) and (d), positioned beneath the petal-shaped openings of the mount have designs which are different in style and composition and obviously had been created for other contexts. The sub-triangular foil (c) is reminiscent of the secondary repoussé foils attached to the larger drinking horns from Taplow barrow (Speake 1980, fig 7b). Perhaps closer in character, because the zoomorphic details are less apparent, are the triangular foils attached to the smaller drinking horns (*ibid*, fig 7k) and the silver triangular foils from the Caenby barrow (*ibid*, fig 10k). More difficult, however, is finding a parallel for foil (d) with its fine dot interlace. The concave curve on one of its three sides may suggest that the design was an infill shape adjacent to a boss. In Hiberno-Saxon manuscript art such infill panels occur around decorated initials, for example Lindisfarne Gospels fol 211. Close in character is the fine, punched dot interlace employed along with the geometric and zoomorphic ornament on several of the seven silver bowls from the St Ninian's Isle treasure (Wilson 1973, pls 20, 22, 23) attesting probable Northumbrian influence on eighth-century Pictish metalwork.

The silver axe-blade foils, as already briefly mentioned, provide an amalgam of Celto-Saxon ornament motifs, trumpet patterns, scrollwork, and dense, broad-strand interlacing, but without zoo-

morphic details. The separating gold foils within the petal-shaped divisions have spotted interlace motifs, which are different in scale and character, but which nevertheless suggest an awareness of Saxon filigree schemes. The affinities of the Celtic scrolls and trumpet patterns of the axe-blade foils to the silver repoussé foils on the Moylough belt-reliquary are readily apparent. Although there are differences in detail and composition, as well as shape, the Moylough foils are the closest parallels in terms of technique and style (Fig 66). But, to see the craftsman who made the Swallowcliffe satchel mount as a recipient of Irish influence is not necessarily the case. The mutual influences between Anglo-Saxon England, with its native Celtic elements, and Celtic Ireland are complex and difficult to disentangle.

A case can be made for seeing the Swallowcliffe mount as one of the many 'missing links' in seventh-century metalwork, providing inspiration for Irish metalworkers, as evidenced in the Moylough repoussé foils. Support for the view of native British and Anglo-Saxon influences on Irish metalwork is further attested in the Moylough belt, not only in its shape and form but also in the red and blue enamel studs which are clear imitations of Anglo-Saxon cloisonné jewellery. Furthermore, the openwork cover for the foils with its distinctive marigold pattern has some affinity with the later openwork roundels, in layout and section, which adorn the Ardagh chalice and enclose filigree decorated gold plaques (Fig 67). As Francois Henry has commented:

The omnipresent influence of Saxon objects so manifest in these works can easily be explained by the contacts which existed in the seventh century between England and Ireland. Some Saxon objects may have reached Ireland by trade or through travellers whilst England was still pagan. Later the Irish missions in England were an obvious means of transmission of patterns and objects. Those princes and their retinue and all those hundreds of students who came to Ireland must have worn belt-buckles and brooches which drew the attention of native craftsmen. (Henry 1965, 96-7)

Parallels in repoussé for the silver interlace foils with their dense six strand plaitwork are difficult to find in an Anglo-Saxon context. Nevertheless that such broad, spotted-band interlace as in the Swallowcliffe foils could also be a later inspiration to Irish craftsmen is evidenced by the gilt-silver repoussé panels on the upstanding border of the eighth-century Derrynaflan paten (Ryan 1983, 26-8, pls 35, 64-9), which in stylistic terms must be closely related in date to the Ardagh chalice.

Yet there are in the Anglo-Saxon archaeological record some antecedents and undoubtedly contemporary parallels for the Swallowcliffe interlace foils. These parallels, though not in repoussé, show that dense, non-zoomorphic interlacing contained within an axe-blade form, existed on a miscellaneous group of seventh-century Anglo-Saxon metalwork.

Of particular interest for our discussion on the origin and source of this type of interlace is a find,

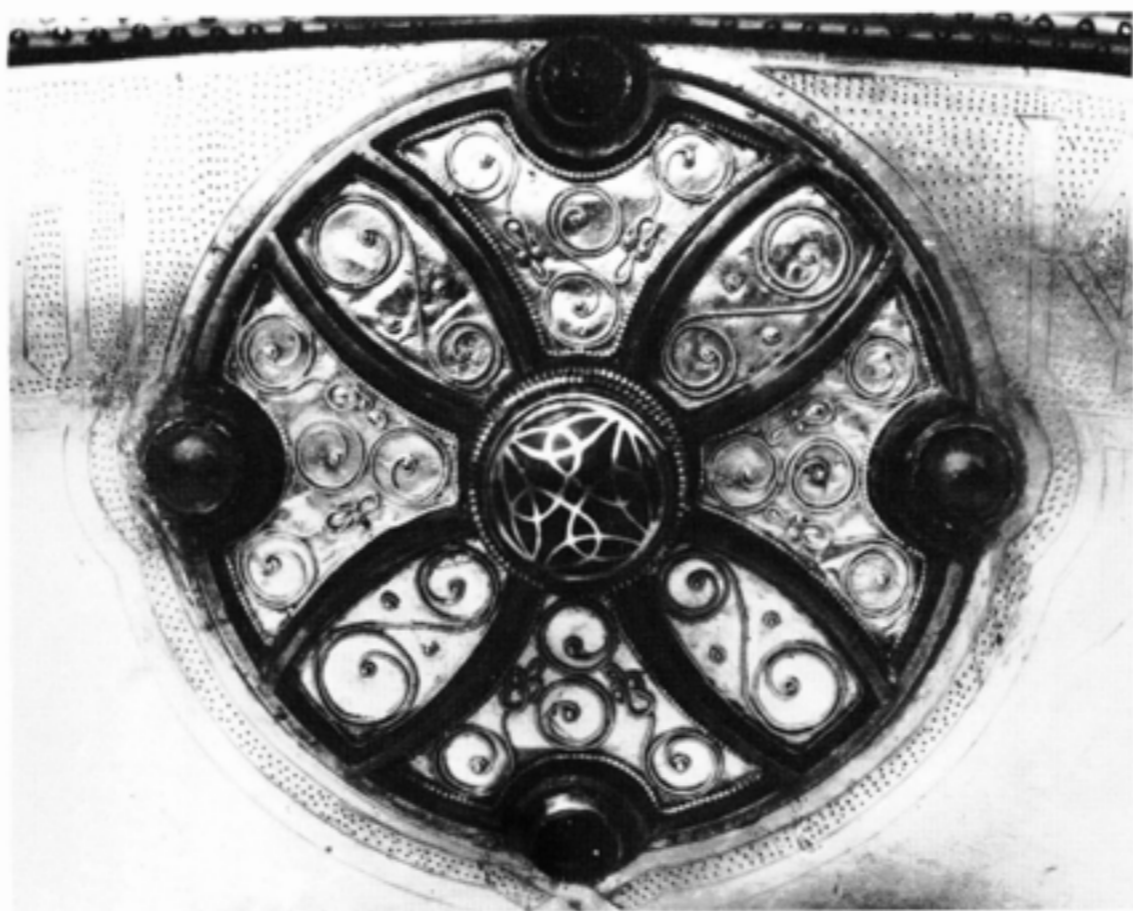


Fig 67 *Ardagh Chalice. Detail showing silver openwork fixture (National Museum of Antiquities, Dublin)*

possibly from Mundford, Norfolk, which consists of a gilt-bronze axe-blade pendant, decorated with stranded interlace (Fig 68). Confirmation for the Anglo-Saxon rather than Celtic origin of this object are the two pendent Style II animal heads which spring from below the suspension loop. The circumstances and find context of this important, unpublished object are uncertain, but it is worth briefly outlining what is known. Barbara Green, Keeper of Archaeology, Norfolk Museums Service was informed of its discovery in 1978. It was reported to have been found in West Norfolk, then later more specifically at Mundford. Subsequently the Museum staff had reason to believe that it might have come from south-east Suffolk. The pendant was to have been purchased for Norwich Castle Museum, but was sold instead at Christies (Lot 275, sale 21 November 1978). Fortunately a cast had been made of the object, whilst in the temporary care of the Norfolk Museums Service, and it is from a study of photographs and a resin cast that my observations are made.

Certainly the Mundford pendant is an object of art historical interest, being a crucial link between a disparate but stylistically related group of fittings and the Swallowcliffe interlace foils. How chronologically close to each other these objects are is a matter of debate, but it is not unreasonable to see the Swallowcliffe foils and the Mundford pendant as belonging to the same style horizon as the mounts

from Caenby (Speake 1980, pl 15.1), the gilt-bronze mount from Hardingstone, Northants, the Faversham, so-called 'phalerae', the axe-blade fixtures to the Lullingstone hanging bowl (Henry 1965, pls 26, 27; see Fig 68), and also some of the mould fragments from the Mote of Mark (Fig 69; Curle 1913-14; Laing 1975, pl XI).

The similarities of the axe-blade form of the Mundford interlace pendant and the fixtures on the Lullingstone hanging bowl are worthy of note. Common to both is stranded interlace which is composed around a circular field of dots on the Mundford pendant, and on the Lullingstone fixtures the interlace, which is cruder in quality, surrounds a circle divided into five segments. The dotted border frame of the Mundford pendant also echoes the sections of the borders visible on the Swallowcliffe foils. The border on the Lullingstone fixture is confined only to the 'cutting edge' of the axe-blade, and like the interlace is generalised and rather crude. No trace of animal details is detectable in Lullingstone interlace, but the Mundford interlace is more zoomorphic in character being a continuous snake-like band terminating and starting directly beneath the suspension loop with tail-like terminals. Vestigial animal details are also detectable on the Faversham phalerae, the Hardingstone mount, and at Caenby too.

The relationship of the non-zoomorphic interlace and interlace with vestigial animal details is a

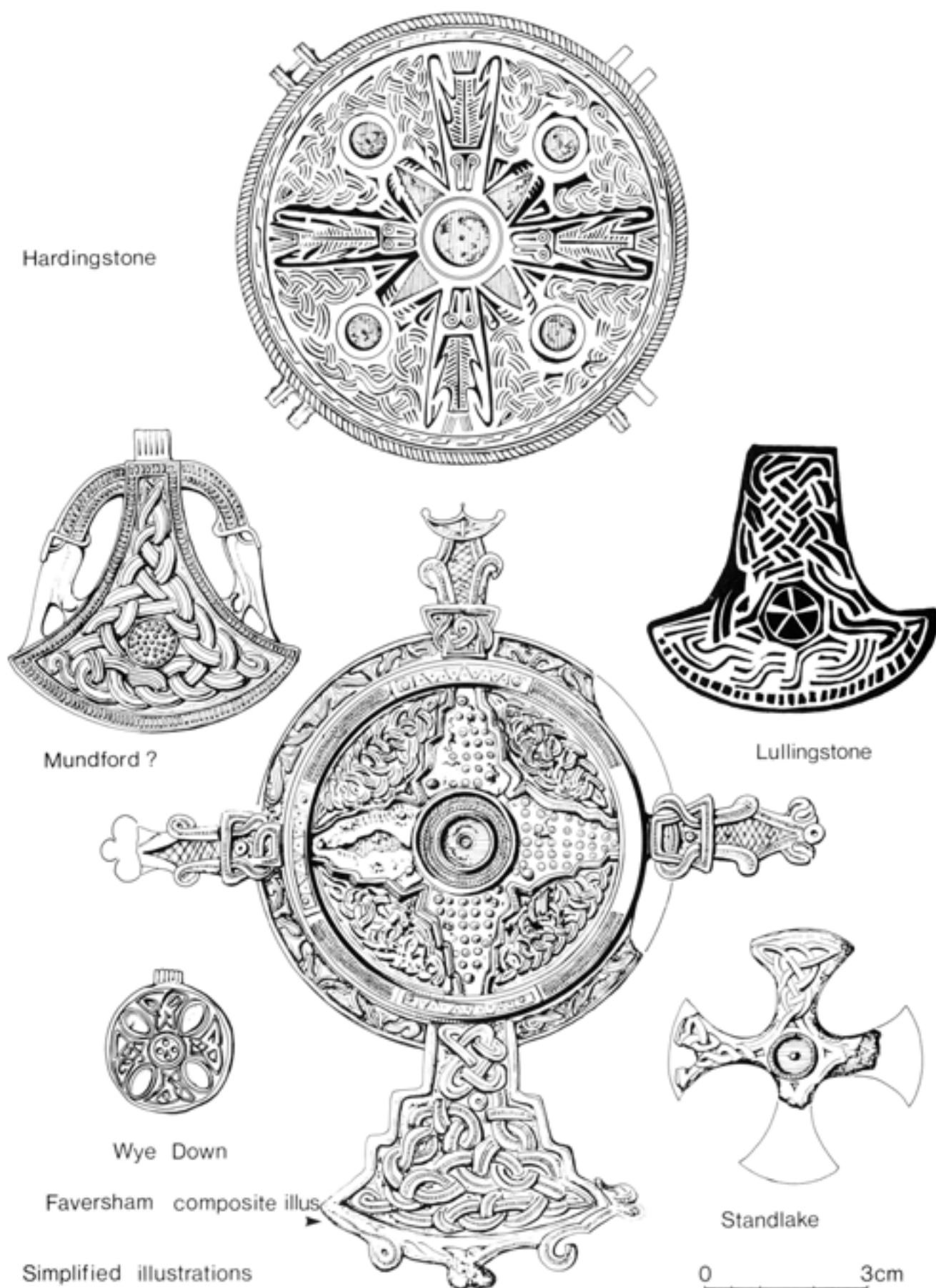


Fig 68 Zoomorphic and non-zoomorphic schemes of interlace on comparative seventh-century metalwork (Scale 1:1)



Fig 69 Mould fragments from the Mote of Mark found in 1913, together with wax impressions from them (Scale 1:1; National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh)

question of debate which has been discussed by Haseloff (1958, 72–103) and more recently by Laing (1975, 98–108).

The suggested origins of non-zoomorphic interlace have been varied. Romano-British mosaics, the Mediterranean, and Coptic textiles have all been considered as possible sources. Indeed Laing has surmised in his discussion on the moulds from the Mote of Mark and the origins of Celtic interlace that their inspiration 'should then be seen as coming directly from the Mediterranean in the period around 550...through the medium of Coptic and other textiles' (Laing 1975, 107). An objective scrutiny of the evidence cannot support this viewpoint.

James Graham-Campbell gives in my opinion a more sensible assessment of the Mote of Mark mould fragments (1976, 48–50) dating them to mid to late seventh century. He sees the interlace patterns as the result of Anglo-Saxon stylistic influences, explicable as a result of the Anglian advance into south-west Scotland around 638. Curle in 1913 had in fact suggested that the most elaborate of the moulds was for a roundel and had a stylistic similarity with the

Faversham phalerae. Of special note, however, are several mould fragments postulated by Laing as being terminals for penannular brooches, but which Miss Joanna Close-Brooks has re-examined and more convincingly identified as moulds for 'axe-blade' mounts. Miss Close-Brooks writes:

If these two mould fragments are accepted as being for an axe-blade mount and a roundel respectively, then much of their Celtic flavour is lost. Instead, the decorated moulds seem to be for a series of objects whose shape and decoration are both best paralleled in late Anglo-Saxon contexts.

(1976, 51)

In a rejoinder to the arguments and observations put forward by Graham-Campbell and Close-Brooks, Laing asks 'where are the Anglian objects cast from similar moulds?'. I suggest that the Mundford pendant, or objects very similar, provides both an answer and a missing link. Both the Style II heads and the interlacing confirm its Anglian origin.



Another missing link in seventh-century metalwork is provided by the Swallowcliffe foils. Although the comparative material just discussed is characterised by stranded interlace, the spotted band interlace of the axe-blade foils ultimately derived from filigree ornament nevertheless does share the same non-geometric, irregular, dense quality. What we have not commented upon, however, is the derivation of the axe-blade shape, and the prevalence of this shape in a variety of forms and fixtures.

To regard the six axe-blade shapes on the Swallowcliffe mount merely as the 'negative' of the marigold form of the six petal shapes conveniently avoids the problem and overlooks the possible interpretation of the axe-blades as the constituent parts of a double cross, comparable to a simplified Chi-Rho monogram. Such explicit symbolism, if intentional, would confirm that the owner of the satchel was a Christian. Certainly it cannot be accidental or coincidental that four 'axe-blade' shapes assembled together create a Maltese cross, examples of which can be found in seventh-century Anglo-Saxon jewellery in pendant form. Illustrated is the silver inlaid iron cross from Standlake grave 8, Oxon (already briefly mentioned as a chatelaine or purse fitting) with the two surviving expanded arms decorated with continuous interlacing (Figs 65, 68). Smaller in scale is the circular gold pendant from Wye Down, Kent (Fig 68), the arms of the contained cross being decorated with simple but confused interlace schemes. Not illustrated here are the garnet and gold cloisonné decorated pendant crosses from Ixworth, Suffolk and Wilton, Norfolk. The pendant from Wilton has as its central feature a gold *solidus* of Heraclius I (610–41), mounted to show its reverse, a cross potent standing on a four-step base. Of special relevance, however, is the cross from Ixworth, for this was found in a demonstrably female grave which also contained a bed, the fittings of which can be paralleled in the Swallowcliffe grave. There can be little or no doubt that the above-mentioned pendants are explicit Christian symbols, confirming their owners as embracing the new faith. Sonia Hawkes (Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 48) has commented on the pin suite from the barrow grave at Roundway Down, Wilts, suggesting that the central gold roundel set with a blue glass stud moulded in a cruciform pattern clearly implied that the Roundway Down lady was a Christian convert. We are left to speculate whether the Swallowcliffe female may also have once worn a Christian pendant cross or a linked pin suite along with other items of jewellery which were robbed when the grave was disturbed. But the possibility that the satchel mount bears the design of the Chi-Rho (albeit with the curve of the Rho missing) is not, therefore, unexpected, and is worthy of consideration (Stevenson 1981, 1–27).

Similarly, it is feasible that several other examples of late seventh-century Anglo-Saxon metalwork, the Hardingstone mount and the Faversham fittings (Fig 68) have Christian iconography in the arrangement of their ornamental elements. The stylised depiction of four fish arranged in a cruciform pattern on the Hardingstone mount can be interpreted as having a twofold Christian significance. Likewise the Faver-

sham mount (one of five such plates, BM 1243.70) has a cruciform arrangement of three very formalised fish projecting from the mount, their heads attached at the perimeter to three quadrant points, and from the fourth projects a stepped axe-blade containing interlace with vestigial animal details.

### Conclusion

The Swallowcliffe satchel with its metalwork attachments is to be regarded as an important, prestige item in the grave inventory. Chronologically the parallels cited for the buckle, the annular disc, and the ornament of the mount all indicate that the satchel is Anglo-Saxon and was made within the second half of the seventh century. The paleness of the gold foils and the probable Christian symbolism in the design of the mount would give additional support for a late seventh-century date.

Whether all the fittings of the satchel are contemporary is uncertain. In details of technique, construction, and ornament, the decorative mount is quite distinct from the framework and annular disc of the satchel lid. In contrast to the nails securing the strips and disc to the lid, the nails of the decorative mount are countersunk and also have a concave depression in each head. No such nails occur elsewhere on the satchel. It is possible therefore that the decorative mount may have been a secondary addition or had been re-fixed.

## Assemblage E

Assemblage E consisted of two palm cups, which were found close to the right forearm of the skeleton, and near the satchel complex (Fig 70). One cup (No 23) had been broken and cracked, presumably in the collapse of the bed structure.

### 23 Palm cup (Figs 71, 72)

Height 65mm with a maximum rim diameter of 123mm. The rim thickness is 8mm. Brim full the cup could contain 290ml of liquid. The liquid capacity up to the rim is 220ml (experiment conducted using distilled water, after lining the cup with clingfilm). The translucent glass is green-blue in colour, but the strength of colour is dependent on the thickness of the glass which is varied. At the rim, which is solid, the colour is an opaque dark green-blue. At their thinnest section the walls are 3mm thick, the glass here being much paler than at the base of the cup, which has a thickness of 8mm.

Traces of the manufacturing process are clearly evident both on the surface and in the body of the glass. A broken C-twirl of glass at the base of the cup marks the point of severance from a pontil after being blown. Twirls and twists are frozen into the walls of the glass in the shaping process and evidence of smoothing and grinding can be seen as traces on the solid rim of the cup.





Fig 70 Palm cups in situ, west of the satchel fittings

#### 24 Palm cup (Figs 71, 72)

This is in perfect condition. It is fractionally smaller than its pair, being 59mm in height with a maximum rim diameter of 121mm. The rim thickness is 9mm. Brim full the cup could contain 250ml of liquid. The liquid capacity to the rim is 190ml.

The cup is made of the same green-blue glass as before, and of almost identical design, but has a smaller capacity. Small air bubbles are trapped in the glass, being visible both in the walls and the rim. Circular striations from the turning of the molten glass are also detectable. The base of the cup bears a fused C-twirl of glass where it was disconnected from the pontil.

#### Discussion

The Swallowcliffe palm cups belong to a type of glass vessel that can be clearly attributed to the seventh century (Harden 1956, 142). They belong to a very specific group (Harden Class Xd, chronological group Biii) of which there is only one insular parallel, the palm cup from Cow Lowe, near Buxton, Derbyshire. Harden considered the Cow Lowe example to be an 'aberrant type' of the more common plain palm cup with an outward-folded rim class Xb of which Harden lists 24 examples (*ibid*, 164-5).

What the pair from Swallowcliffe and the single example from Cow Lowe have in common are the rounded solid rims, the thickness of glass, and the blue-green colour. They also closely correspond in scale, the Cow Lowe palm cup having a diameter of 118mm and a height of 58mm. The associated finds of the Cow Lowe example and their context are of interest also, coming as they do from a female inhumation burial, secondary within a barrow.

Meaney summarises the discovery as follows:

1846 Bateman excavated Cow Lowe near Buxton, then c 4ft high. In the centre of the barrow, halfway down, was a secondary burial, only the teeth and part of the skull remaining. Near the head were two gold union pins, the heads containing garnet settings. Close by was a blue glass bead. The earth around about seemed to have puddled at the time of the burial and was very solid. About 18in distant from the pins were the remains of a wooden box of ash planks half an inch thick, with two bronze hinges, a hasp, and an iron padlock, wrapped in a woollen cloth. It contained a small vessel of thick green glass, an ivory comb, much decayed, some iron instruments, a piece of perforated bone, 'encircled by a bronze hoop' – perhaps the head of a needle – and eleven pendant ornaments for a necklace (one of blue

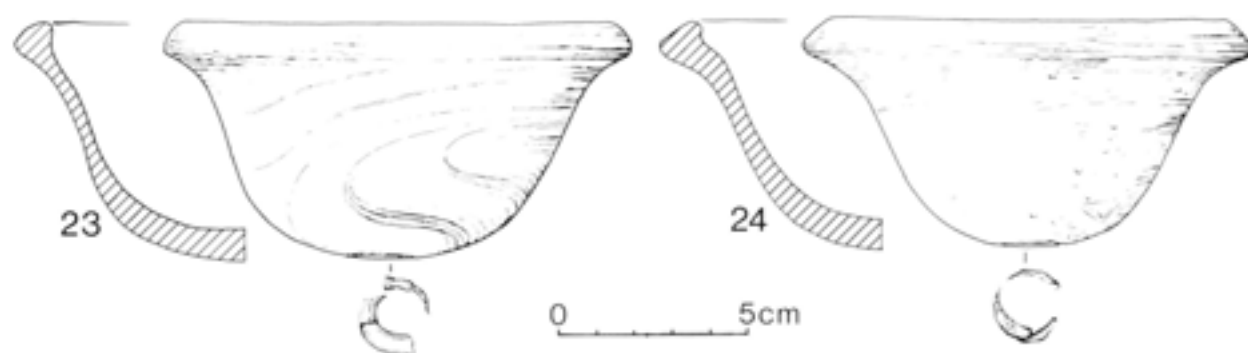


Fig 71 Palm cups (Scale 1:2)

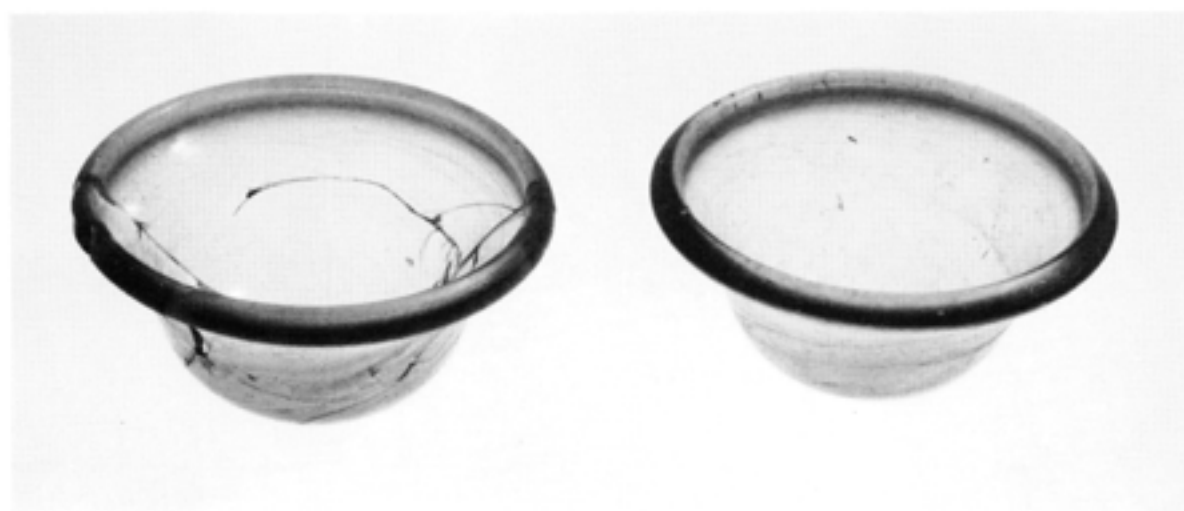


Fig 72 Palm cups, fractured and complete (Scale 1:2)

glass with white spirals, two of spiral electrum wire, eight small, thin circular silver pendants with flat backs and convex fronts, and a dog's or fox's tooth). A little above the body, in the same tempered earth, was part of the horn of a red deer.

(1964, 74-5)

Llewellyn Jewitt's watercolour (Fig 73), here illustrated half-scale, shows a selection of these finds (Sheffield Museum S7B).

The linked pins, the biconical beads and the silver bullae all confirm that this is a late seventh-century grave (Lethbridge 1936, 3-5; Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 47-9). Furthermore in addition to the palm cup, the blue glass bead and the casket all have their parallels in the Swallowcliffe grave. There can be little doubt, therefore, that the Swallowcliffe and the Cow Lowe graves are chronologically closely linked.

We may associate the power and prestige of high-ranking Anglo-Saxon families with the number and costliness of their drinking cups and vessels. As Harden has pointed out, 'that glass has been found mainly in richer cemeteries or in rich barrow burials is an indication - if such were needed - that it was rarer and costly' (Harden 1956, 148). Certainly two glass vessels in the Swallowcliffe grave are sufficient to confirm the high status of the Swallowcliffe

woman. Indeed a pair of glass vessels, of any type, is rare in a single grave, but a pair of palm cups exceedingly so. Kingston Down grave 146 contained a pair of palm cups (Type X ai) (Faussett 1856, pl xviii.4), but Kingston Down grave 205 along with the Kingston brooch produced a single example (Type Xb). It is not known whether the four palm cups (Type Xb) from the Faversham cemetery were found singly or in pairs.

With the discovery of the Swallowcliffe palm cups, we have tripled the size of the sub-group into which they have been classified. It is now perhaps inappropriate to regard them along with the example from Cow Lowe as 'aberrant' types, but as belonging to a confirmed sub-group. All three glasses are most likely the products of the same glass workshop.

### Assemblage F (Nos 25-83)

Assemblage F comprised the ironwork of the bed. The components have been divided into the following groups: double cleats (Nos 25-30), single cleats (Nos 31-45), stays, side rails, and miscellaneous fragments (Nos 46-52), large eyelets (Nos 53-9), small eyelets (Nos 60-71), and nails (Nos 72-83). Figure 74 shows the relative positions of the groups of ironwork of the bed.



Fig 73 Grave group from Cow Loe, Derbyshire; watercolour by L Jewitt (Scale 1:2; Sheffield Museum)

*Double cleats (Nos 25–30)*  
(Figs 74.1, 75)

25 Pair of rectangular iron cleats secured by nails, shanks now broken, but extending and hammered over on the outer external face of the inner internal plate and used to secure two planks of varied thickness. They were found on the south side of the grave, below the edge of the chalk shelf, resting in a vertical position c 0.2m distant from the lower right leg of the skeleton.

*External cleat* Length 95mm, width 25mm, thickness 4mm. Round nail heads, 18mm in diameter,

2mm thick. Shank section squarish. Wood grain pattern in both transverse and diagonal directions clearly visible on inner face.

*Inner cleat* Length 89mm, width 24mm, thickness 4mm. End broken off. Plate kinked at junction of planks. Preserved wood grain patterns of diagonal and transverse directions visible on inner face. Iron concretions with textile traces cover most of external face, concealing the folded shank of one nail. Point of other nail missing.

The evidence of the cleats indicates that the planking varied in thickness from 18mm to 22mm. It would appear that one plank had a pronounced taper.

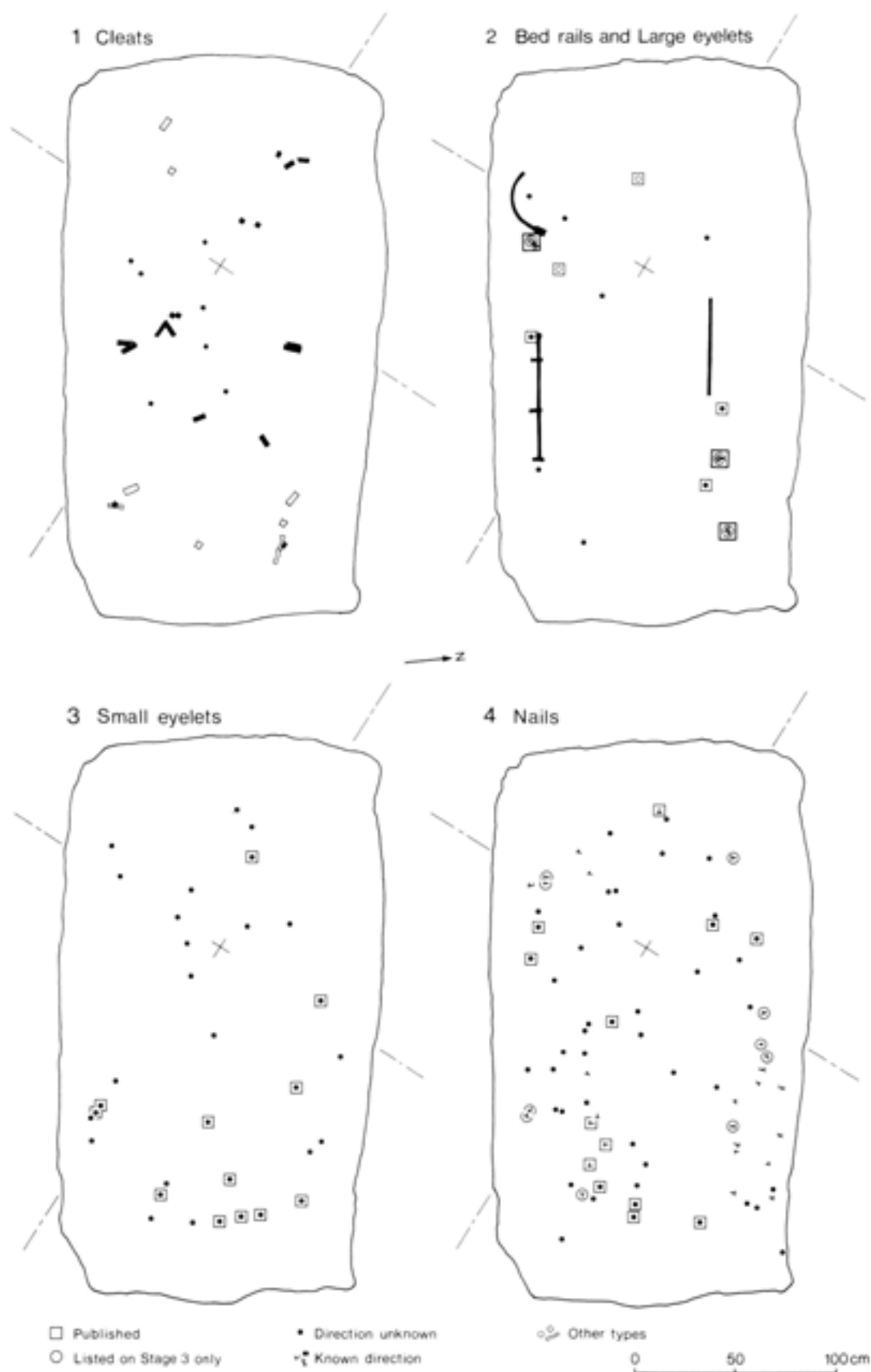


Fig 74 Iron components of the bed as found within the grave: 1 Cleats nos 25–39; 2 Bed rails and headboard stay nos 46–52 large eyelets nos 53–59; 3 Small eyelets nos 60–71; 4 Nails nos 72–83

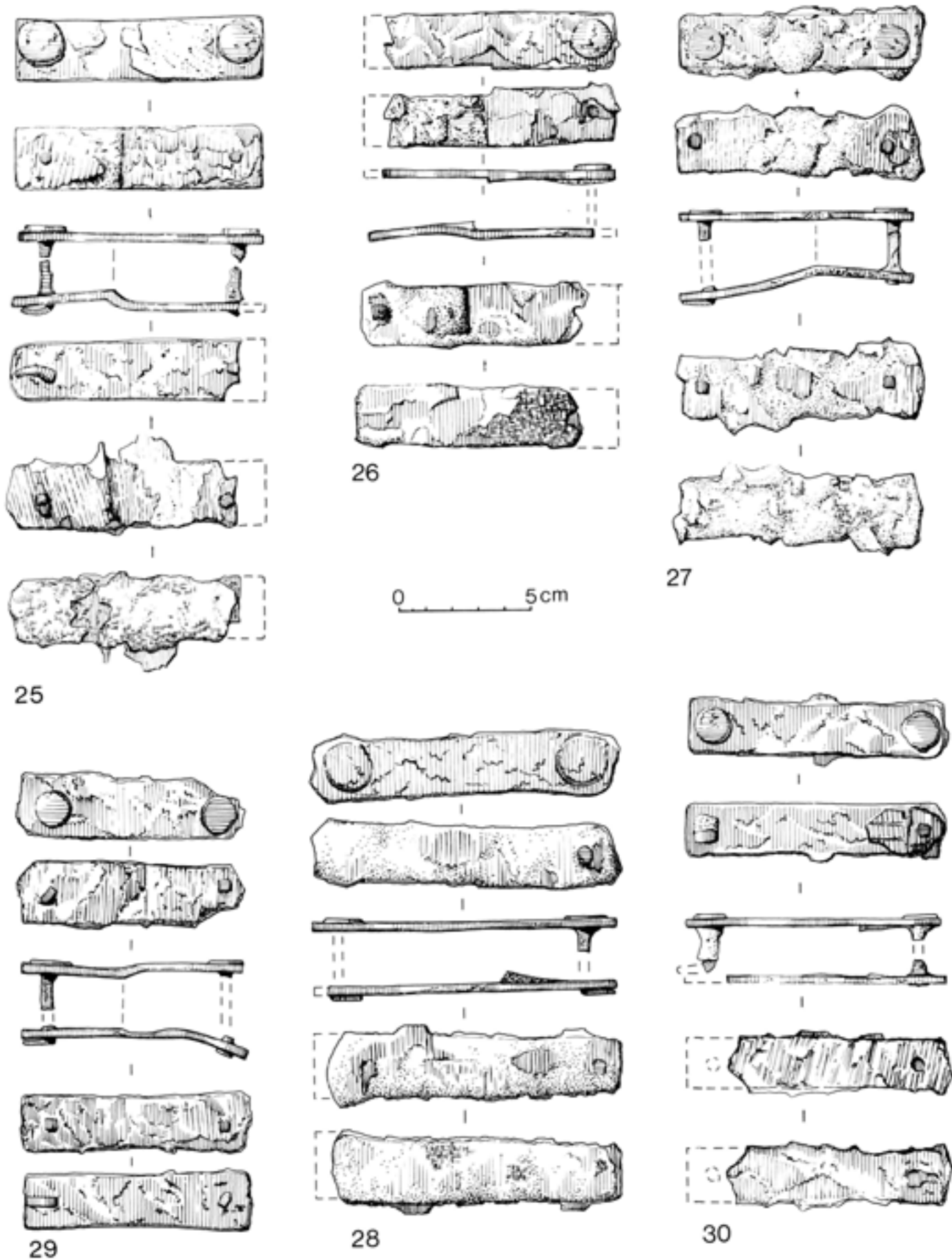


Fig 75 Double cleats nos 25-30 (Scale 1:2)



26 Pair of rectangular iron cleats, now separated, the nail shanks are missing. They were found together with the nail head uppermost, on the south side of the grave on the edge of the chalk shelf, close to the palm cups.

*External cleat* Length 90mm, width 22mm, thickness 3mm. Fractured end. Outer face shows one surviving round nail head 16mm in diameter close to the end of the cleat. The inner face has transverse wood grain well preserved on one half, with a square-sectioned nail visible at one end.

*Internal cleat* Length 88mm, width 23mm, thickness 3mm. The cleat is not horizontal: there is a slight kink where two planks butted against each other. The inner face shows a transverse wood grain pattern. There is a square-sectioned nail shank at one end amidst wood grain and iron concretion. Textile traces are visible on one third of the outer face.

27 Pair of rectangular iron cleats found on the north side of the grave, with the nail heads uppermost, and lying between the bronze-bound bucket (No 20) and the casket complex (Assemblage B). They correspond in position with the pair of cleats (No 25) on the south side of the skeleton.

*External cleat* Length 95mm, width 22mm, thickness 4mm. There are single round nail heads at either end 13mm in diameter, and iron concretions. The inner face has transverse wood grain patterns separated by a central area of corrosion. The nail shanks, where they emerge, are more round in section than square.

*Internal cleat* Length 96mm, width 23mm, thickness 4mm. This is not horizontal as one half is splayed out. The inner surface shows transverse wood grain patterns and corrosion products over much of the surface. The nail shanks have square sections. The outer face of the cleat has traces of textile patterns. The surviving length of the nail shank between the two cleats indicates that the thickness of the planking at this point was 20mm.

28 Pair of rectangular iron cleats found on the north side of the grave, with the nail heads uppermost, and resting on an iron bar. In position, they correspond with the pair of cleats (No 26) on the south side of the grave.

*External cleat* Length 120mm, width 23mm, thickness 4mm. There are round nail heads, 20mm in diameter, one at either end. The heads have bevelled edges. The inner face has traces of transverse wood grain impressions.

*Internal cleat* Length 115mm, width 23mm, thickness 4mm. Corrosion and traces of mineralised wood cover its inner face and extend beyond the edges. A fragment of the nail shank, 9mm long, projects at one end. The shank of the other nail is missing. The outer face is covered in general corrosion with three small sections of textile traces visible. The folded shank of the nail is visible on the X-radiograph underlying the corrosion.

29 Pair of rectangular iron cleats. These are not shown on the general grave plan, but their co-ordinates give their position as being very close to the

iron pan fragments at the west end of the grave and 130mm up from the base of the grave. No information is given as to how the cleats were positioned in relation to each other.

*External cleat* Length 89mm, width 25mm at its widest point. Fragments of the cleat are missing. Two round nail heads, 15mm in diameter, one with a square-sectioned shank and the other with a rectangular-sectioned shank, are positioned one at either end. The shanks protrude through to the other side. Most of one shank is completely missing, the other survives for 15mm. On the outer surface there is organic corrosion. On the inner surface there are traces of transverse wood grain. The cleat is not flat, but has a kink in the middle.

*Internal cleat* Length 88mm, width 21mm, thickness 4mm, but only 2mm in central section. The inner face has transverse wood grain patterns over much of its length. General corrosion with organic remains coat the outer surface, under which the folded points of the two nails have been detected by X-radiography. The cleat has been distorted, presumably when the planking collapsed. There are indications that the butt-jointed planks were of different thicknesses, which would account for the kink in the external cleat.

30 Pair of rectangular iron cleats found at right-angles to each other, with the nail heads uppermost. They were approximately 50mm west of the palm cups, and lay on the edge of the disturbed area of the grave, so it is possible that this was not their original position.

*External cleat* Length 102mm, width 20mm, thickness 4mm. Two round nail heads, 15mm in diameter, can be seen under the surface corrosion. There are organic traces preserved. The inner surface has one nail shank, 19mm long, with a preserved wood fragment with transverse wood grain attached. The other nail shank is broken but also has a flattened section of wood with a transverse wood grain attached.

*Internal cleat* Length 88mm, width 20mm, thickness 4mm. Organic remains are preserved on the outer face. The folded end of one nail is visible. There is transverse wood grain preserved on most of the inner face.

### *Single cleats (nos 31–45)*

(Figs 74.1, 76)

31 Single cleat of rectangular shape. Length 100mm, width 20mm, thickness 3mm. It was found in the north-west corner of the grave on the edge of the chalk shelf close to the iron-bound bucket (No 2). The form is distorted, being folded at an angle of 135°. It has two round nail heads, one 15mm in diameter, the other 13mm. On the inner surface the shank of one nail has a preserved wood fragment attached with a diagonal grain pattern.

32 Single cleat of rectangular shape. Length 122mm, width 21mm, thickness 3mm. It has a fold over a third of its length of c 135°. No find coordinates were

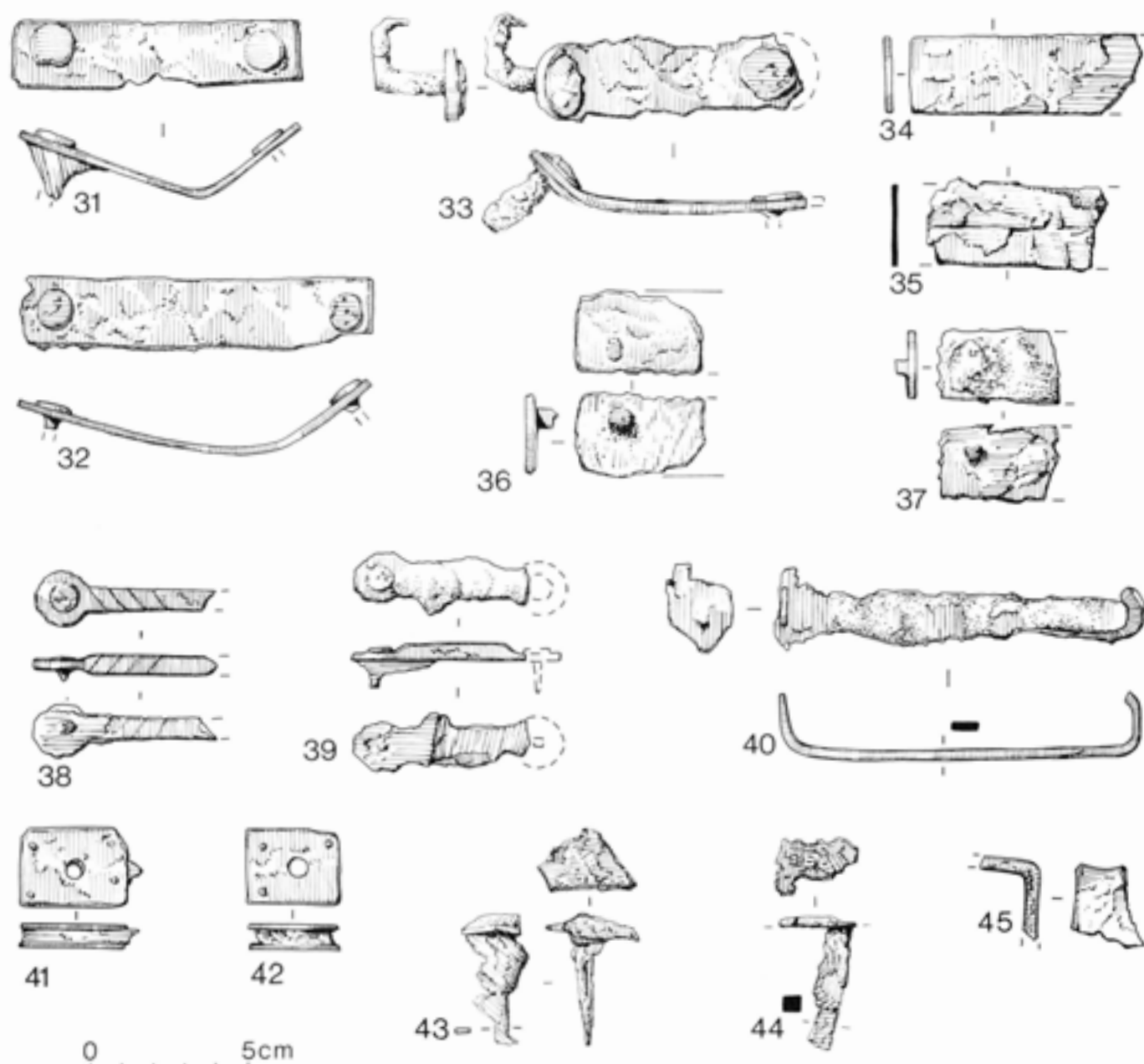


Fig 76 Single cleats and miscellaneous fixtures nos 31-45 (Scale 1:2)

given, but it is possible that it is a cleat drawn on the stage 3 plan (Fig 11, also transcribed to the grave plan, Fig 19), but otherwise not recorded. It is also possible that it was found with the iron-bound bucket and that its identity as a cleat was not recognised until conservation. There are two round nail heads on one face, each 13mm in diameter. There are organic traces with corrosion on the outer surface.

33 Single iron cleat found by the left foot of the skeleton. Length 93mm, width 25mm, thickness 4mm. The cleat has rounded ends with a fragment missing from one end; one end is bent outwards. The outer face has two round nail heads 20mm in diameter positioned at either end. One shank of one nail is bent over and encased in traces of preserved wood on the inner face. The length of its straight section is 22mm. There are two wood grain patterns

visible on the cleat – one of tangential longitudinal section, and the other of radial longitudinal section.

34 Section of a rectangular iron strip with one straight end. It is made from thinner iron than that utilised for the cleats. Length 75mm, width 25mm, thickness 2mm. It was found at the north-west corner of the grave between the remains of the iron-bound bucket and single cleat No 31.

The strip has the remains of three small rivets or nails. Wood grain patterns are preserved on the inner face, with fragments of textile on the outer surface. Two distinct wood grain patterns are detectable – a radial longitudinal section and a tangential longitudinal section. These are separated by a 1mm gap along the length of the strip. The axis for this strip in relation to the butt-positioned ash planks is therefore quite unlike that of the double and single iron cleats.

35 Fragment of an iron strip with the same gauge as No 34. Length 58mm, width 25mm, thickness 2mm. It was found in the disturbed section on the edge of the chalk shelf on the south side of the grave, east of the bed end bracket (see below, No 46). A portion of a small rivet or nail can be seen 5mm from one edge. Wood, identified as ash, *Fraxinus* sp, is preserved on the inner face. As on the above strip (No 34) this is of tangential longitudinal section and radial longitudinal section, separated along the length of the strip by a 1mm gap.

36 Fragment of an iron strip. Length 41mm, width 26mm, thickness 4mm. It is possibly a fragment of a cleat, or a fixture plate for the bracket (No 46). It was found on the south side of the grave 120mm from the lower end of the bed bracket. It has traces of a nail or rivet 5mm from one edge. There is transverse wood grain preserved on the inner surface, where a small section of a nail shank projects 6mm.

37 Fragment of an iron strip. Length 39mm, width 24mm, thickness 3mm. It was found on the chalk shelf in the south-east corner of the grave. It is recorded as feature 66 on the stage 3 grave plan (Fig 11). It has the remains of a rivet or nail shank on its inner surface, together with replaced wood with wood grain running in a longitudinal direction. There are organic traces with textile remains on the outer surface.

38 Incomplete round-headed iron cleat. Length 58mm. It was found in close proximity to No 39 (see below), 80mm south of the bronze-bound bucket (No 20) at the foot end of the grave. It has a flattened round terminal 18mm in diameter containing a circular nail head. A fragment of the nail shank projects on the underside of the cleat.

The underside of the terminal has wood grain with a tangential section running longitudinally for 25mm. The remainder of the section has a tangential wood grain running in a transverse direction.

39 Round-headed iron cleat. Length 57mm, width of terminal 16mm, thickness of central section 6mm. This cleat is incomplete, with the terminal at one end missing. It was found either partly overlying or underlying No 38.

There is wood grain pattern of two different directions preserved on the underside of the cleat. The part of the cleat with the nail attached has a 25mm section of longitudinally orientated tangential wood grain; the remainder has an oblique directioned tangential wood grain.

This type of cleat is further represented by one other fragment (not illustrated) found lying on the chalk shelf in the south-east corner of the grave, 100mm east of double cleat No 25. It is marked on the grave plan (Fig 19).

40 Rectangular-sectioned iron staple with intumed ends driven into ash. Length 115mm, width 9mm, thickness 4mm. It was found lying on top of the iron bed rail (No 52) parallel to a double cleat (No 28).

Extensive mineralised wood grain showing an

oblique radial surface has been preserved along the inner face. The wood preserved on one of the intumed ends shows an oblique tangential surface.

41 Rectangular iron plates. Length 33mm, width 24mm, thickness 8mm. They were found between the left forearm of the skeleton and the iron side rail of the bed. The two iron rectangular plates have a central hole 6mm in diameter, and were secured together by four small rivets, one at each corner. Sandwiched between the two plates is a 6mm thick section of preserved ash. The plates are attached to radial surfaces, and have remains of grass, or similar fibres, preserved in the surface corrosion.

42 Rectangular iron plates. Length 29mm, width 23mm, thickness 8mm. These were found lying 110mm east of No 41, level with the end of the bed side rail. They are similar to No 41, but are slightly smaller, with a rivet apparently missing from one corner. The surface corrosion shows traces of wood fragments.

43 Plate and nail fragment. Length 40mm, width of plate 30mm. They were found adjacent to the east end of the casket complex (Assemblage B). The iron fragments join to form what could be the end of a plate or cleat. The tapering nail shank has an oblique radial section of wood grain preserved on it. There are textile traces in evidence on top of the plate, including the remains of a twisted cord.

44 Plate and nail fragment. Length 42mm, width 26mm. They were found on the chalk shelf on the south side of the grave, between the right-hand bed rail and the curved headboard stay. Similar in form to No 43, there are textile traces on top of the plate. Transverse wood grain runs across the square-sectioned nail shank.

45 Iron L-shaped object, possibly part of an iron staple similar to No 40. Length 25mm, maximum width 24mm. It was found in the disturbed fill c 0.45m from the base of the grave, in the thoracic region of the skeleton.

It is in a flaky condition with bronze corrosion evident in three places. The conservation notes record that three bronze fragments 1mm thick were observed. A small bronze hook, 16mm long and 6mm wide (now missing) with a small iron ring through the eye was attached by corrosion to this object. It seems that the bronze hook, with its possible chain link, had come into contact with the object in the disturbed fill, and may not have been otherwise associated.

#### *Stays, side rails and miscellaneous fragments* (Figs 74.2, 77)

46 Curved, twisted iron headboard stay, located on the ledge of the south-west region of the grave. Linear length 421mm, distance of span 362mm, thickness 15mm. It was made from a rectangular-sectioned iron bar, irregularly twisted with up to five twists per 20mm in the central section.

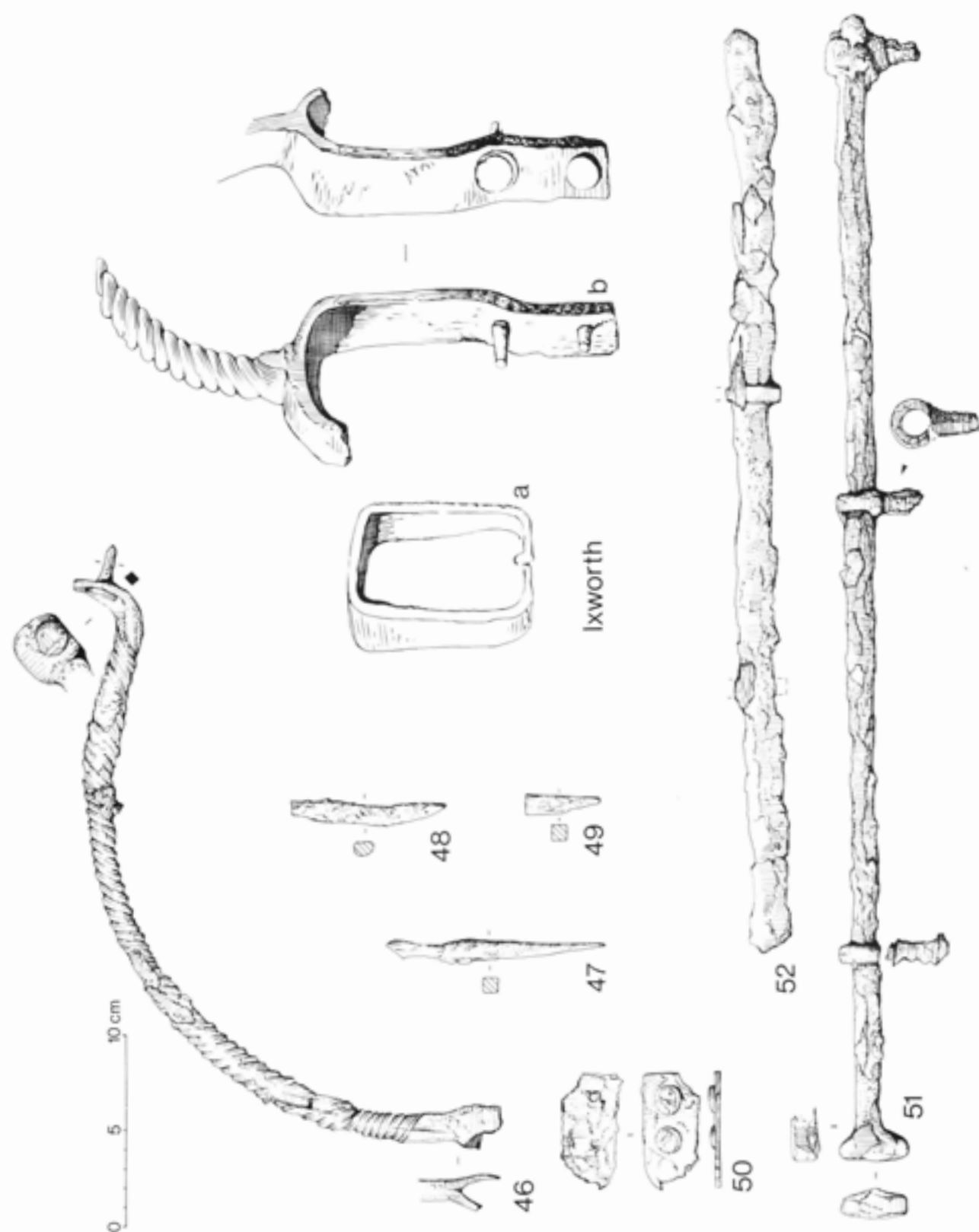


Fig 77 Headboard stay 46; side-rails 51-2; fragments of headboard stay 47-50; remains of bed fixtures from Ixworth, Suffolk a, b

The stay was attached to the bed structure by two different types of terminals. One is shaped to fit over the top of a plank with a smooth curved surface. This terminal is broken and the maximum width of plank it can be attached to, in this condition, is 12mm. The rectangular fixture plate with two nail heads (No 50) was undoubtedly part of this terminal and was located 90mm distant from the splayed and broken end of the stay.

The wood preserved on the inner surface of this broken terminal has a tangential section. The other terminal is a flat plate, 30mm wide, which was secured to the bed structure with a large iron nail. The diameter of the nail head is 18mm, and 20mm of the nail shank projects from the underside. Here the preserved wood remains only on the plate and can be seen as a narrow strip, 14mm thick, lying at right-angles to the main axis of the headboard stay. The preserved wood has a tangential section.

The stay has suffered extensive corrosion and parts have flaked away.

47 Fragment of an iron bar. Length 116mm, width 13mm. It was found in the disturbed area of the grave c 120mm north of the original position of the skull (see Fig 19). It is badly corroded, but appears to be of square section at its centre. It tapers at one end. It has wood grain preserved along a section of its length.

48 Fragment of iron bar. Length 80mm, width (at thickest) 11mm. It was found adjacent to No 47. It is rounded in section, and a break is observable at one end. The other end tapers to a point. There are organic corrosion products attached.

49 Fragment of iron bar. Length 40mm, width 11mm. It was found c 200mm east of the iron-bound bucket (No 2), lying in a position corresponding with the complete headboard stay. It appears to be square-sectioned, but it is badly corroded. There is wood grain with a longitudinal section attached.

Nos 47, 48, and 49 are all tentatively identified as the broken and corroded fragments of the assumed headboard stay from the northern side of the grave, which was shattered when the grave was robbed. The slight curve detectable on No 48 as well as their positions in the grave gives support for this identification.

50 Rectangular iron plate with nail heads. Length 61mm, width 30mm, thickness 3mm. It was found 90mm north of the broken terminal of the right-hand bed stay. There are two nail heads on the outer surface 14mm and 15mm in diameter. On the inner surface the shanks are broken off. The space between the nails is 20mm. There is wood grain on the inner surface, with an oblique radial section.

51 Iron bar. Length 610mm, diameter of bar 14mm. It was found on the south side of the grave. The bar has an expanded knob at one end, 36mm in height. The other end is broken. The bar passes through three iron eye-rings with an external diameter of 26mm and shanks which were evidently let into

wood. The preserved wood on the shanks of the eye-rings runs parallel with the bar and has a tangential section. There is wood grain preserved in contact with the underside of the bar, either side of the shanks of the eye-rings, with a radial section. The three ring fixtures are approximately evenly spaced, being 220mm and 230mm apart. There is a slight variance in the lengths of the shanks. The depth of wood preserved on the surviving lengths is between 25mm and 30mm.

The bar is heavily corroded, but a small section of textile is preserved adjacent to the central eye-ring.

Examination of the preserved wood on the shanks and the bar has led Jacqui Watson to deduce that the bar must have been attached to the narrow edge of a plank that had been flat sawn, therefore exhibiting faces of mainly tangential section. According to Morgan (1975) ash timbers are usually sawn flat as the wood tends to split along the annual rings.

52 Iron bar. Length 480mm, diameter of bar c 15mm. It was found on the north side of the skeleton, diagonally opposed to No 51.

It is in a heavily corroded condition and incomplete. Traces of an eye-ring can be seen 140mm from one end and a complete eye-ring, minus the shank, is positioned 190mm from the other broken end. Wood grain running parallel to the bar is detectable in several places, both at the positions of the eye-rings and close to them. In addition, traces of textiles are also preserved in the corrosion products.

Both iron bars Nos 50 and 51 can be identified as bed rails.

### *Large eyelets*

(Figs 74.2, 78)

Fourteen large eyelets were found, seven of which have been illustrated (Nos 53–9). The large eyelets are split spiked loops that have been put through ash planking and their ends folded over to secure them. The eyelets could have been either hammered through the plank, or put through ready-made holes. The latter seems more likely as on the X-radiograph there are no traces of wood between the spikes, and the loops do not show the signs of distortion that would have occurred if they had been forced through the wood.

53 Iron eyelet. Height 53mm, width of splayed ends 76mm, width of eye 21mm. It was found close to the terminal of the right-hand bed rail, c 50mm above the chalk shelf. It is semicircular in section.

The shank of the eyelet has a 21mm depth of wood preserved. The inner surface of the splayed ends has wood preserved with a tangential surface. The sides of the shank show wood with a radial surface. Traces of leather or cord are detectable passing through the eyelet (see p 116).

54 Iron eyelet, found on the north side of the grave, eye pointing inwards. It was located between the left-hand bed rail and the bronze-bound bucket, c 70mm north of the casket complex.



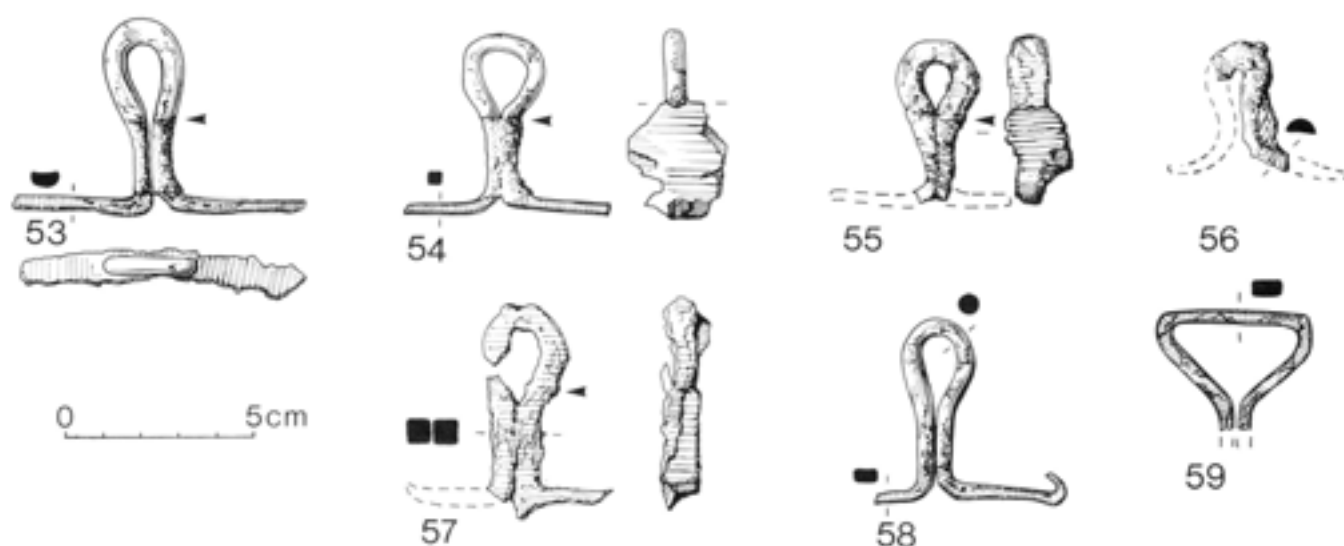


Fig 78 Large eyelets nos 53-9 (Scale 1:2)

Height 46mm, width of square-sectioned splayed ends 58mm, width of eye 22mm. There is a section of wood preserved against the shank of the eyelet, 26mm wide, and showing a radial surface. The depth of wood preserved on the shank is 22mm. There is wood grain with a tangential surface preserved on the inner surface of the splayed ends.

55 Iron eyelet. Height 42mm, width of eye 23mm. It was found on the north side of the grave, c 50mm east of the lower end of the left-hand bed rail, eye pointing downwards. The splayed ends are broken off and missing. There is a section of wood 22mm deep and 18mm wide preserved on the shank, showing a radial surface. Corrosion products on the loop of the eye show traces of organic material.

56 Iron eyelet fragment. Height 36mm and of semi-circular section at the shank end. It was found in the disturbed area of the grave at its western end, east of the iron-bound bucket. The form of the eye is distorted. Traces of textiles are evident on one face, together with mineralised wood fragments.

57 Incomplete iron eyelet, with a section missing from the eye, and one splayed end missing. Height 56mm, width of eye 23mm. It was found adjacent to the lower terminal of the curved iron headboard stay, on the chalk shelf.

The shank of the eyelet shows that it was embedded in an ash plank, 21mm thick. An oblique tangential section of wood grain is preserved and there are possible traces of organic material evident on the eyelet.

58 Iron eyelet, with one splayed end broken. Height 50mm, width of eye 20mm. It was found on the chalk slope in the north-east corner of the grave, close to the bronze-bound bucket. The position and direction of the eye is recorded on the grave plan.

The remaining shank is folded back at right-angles, with the terminal pointing inwards. The shank is

rectangular in section, but the eye is of circular-sectioned iron. The sides of the shank have traces of wood showing a radial surface. The depth of wood preserved on the shank is 21mm. The inner surfaces of the splayed ends have a tangential surface of wood grain preserved.

59 Iron eyelet with the shank and splayed ends missing. Height 32mm, width 42mm. It was found on the south side of the grave, between the side rail and the headboard stay.

In dimensions and form this eyelet differs from Nos 53-8. It has a larger sub-triangular aperture and is therefore different in design. It is possible that such a form could have been accidentally produced when the bed structure collapsed, distorting the eyelet aperture.

### Small eyelets (Nos 60-71)

(Figs 74.3, 79)

Thirty-two small iron eyelets were found scattered near the base of the grave, their positions being recorded on Figure 74.3. Twelve of these have been drawn and described.

60 Small iron eyelet made from a circular-sectioned iron rod. Height 25mm, thickness 3mm, eye 11mm wide. It was found at the east end of the bed structure, and was one of a row of four such eyelets found in a line between the feet and the bronze-bound bucket.

One splayed end, 7mm long, survives, folded at right-angles to the shank, with the terminal pointed back inwards. Wood, with a thickness of 13mm survives as traces on the shank, with a radial surface visible at the sides.

61 Small eyelet. Height 27mm, diameter of eye is 13mm. It was found close to the left ankle. Wood grain preserved on the sides of the shank shows a central section, 6mm thick, with a tangential surface

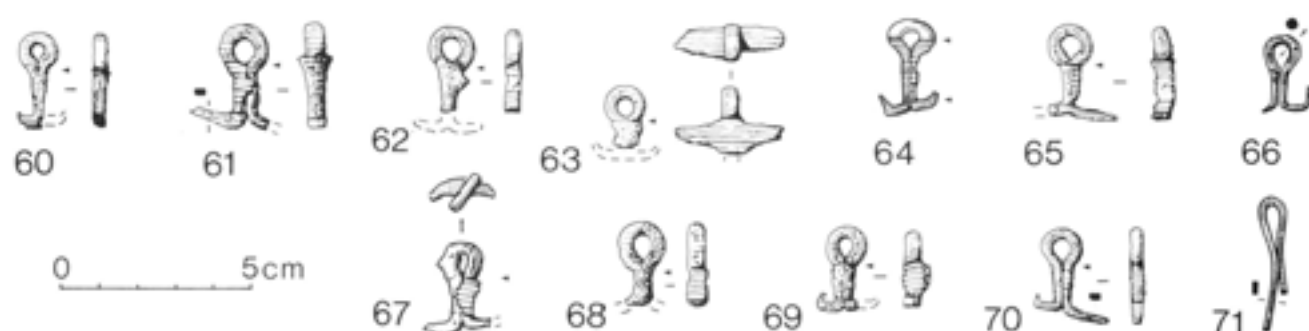


Fig 79 Small eyelets nos 60-71 (Scale 1:2)

sandwiched between an upper radial section, 3mm thick, and a lower radial section, 6mm thick.

62 Small eyelet. Height 23mm, diameter of eye 13mm. It was found in line with Nos 60 and 61 at the east end of the bed, and all were at the same depth within the grave.

The eyelet is incomplete, the folded ends are missing. Wood grain is preserved on the shank to a depth of 15mm, with a central section sandwiched between two layers with a contrasting wood grain direction. Tangential and radial surfaces have not been identified.

63 Incomplete small eyelet. Height 15mm, diameter of eye 11mm. It was found 25mm from the base of the grave. The eyelet has a section of preserved wood showing tangential and radial surfaces attached to the shank. There is a trace of a thin cord preserved passing through the eyelet, with a textile fragment on its upper surface.

64 Small eyelet. Height 24mm, diameter of eye 13mm. It was found 10mm above the base of the grave between the knees of the skeleton. It is complete, and has wood traces 14mm deep, showing a radial section extending above the shank on to the eye. There is degraded textile in evidence on the eye, with a trace of a thin cord passing through the eyelet.

65 Small eyelet. Height 24mm, width of eye 13mm. It was found close to the right-hand bed rail. There is wood preserved on the shank to a depth of 13mm, which when viewed from the side shows a radial section. There are threads of textile preserved on the eyelet, in addition to traces of a thin cord passing through the eyelet.

66 Small eyelet. Height 20mm, width of eye 10mm. It was found in the disturbed area of the grave near the iron-bound bucket. There is wood preserved on the shank, its depth measures 9mm. There are two thin layers of wood with radial sections, which sandwich a middle portion with a tangential section. There are degraded textile traces evident on the eye, with a mineralised section of thin cord preserved within the eyelet.

67 Small eyelet. Height 23mm, width of eye 12mm.

It was found close to the west side of the bronze-bound bucket. There is wood preserved on the shank to a depth of 12mm; one side shows a tangential surface, the other a radial section. There are textile traces on the eye, and evidence of a thin cord passing through the eyelet.

68 Small eyelet. Height 22mm, width of eye 13mm. It was found near the east end of the left-hand bed rail. The splayed ends are broken off. There is wood preserved on the shank to a depth of 9mm, with a radial section showing at the side. There are traces of an organic material, straw(?), evident at the base, and degraded traces of textile on the eye.

69 Small eyelet. Height 22mm, diameter of eye 11mm. It was found close to the west end of the left-hand bed rail. One splayed end is turned and folded back into the wood. There are traces of wood preserved on the shank, 9mm in depth, with a radial section visible. The mineralised remains of a thin cord are preserved passing through the eyelet.

70 Small eyelet. Height 23mm, diameter of eye 11mm. It was found adjacent to the lower right leg on the bottom of the grave, with the eye pointing towards the foot. The splayed ends of the eyelet are rectangular in section. There are two directions of wood preserved on the shank to a depth of 11mm: the upper section is 4mm deep and shows, from the side, a radial longitudinal section. Traces of plant material follow the curve of one side of the shank.

71 Small eyelet, of a slightly different form to those described above. Height 34mm, diameter of eye 8mm. Unlike the others, which have folded terminals, the ends are almost straight, and are made of thin rectangular-sectioned iron rod. It was found close to the right-hand bed rail, lying on the chalk slope.

The small eyelets were made as split spiked loops, which were put through the wood and their ends folded over to secure them. Their points were sometimes forced back into the wood. The complete examples vary between 23 and 34mm in height. The wood associated with all the eyelets has been identified as ash, *Fraxinus* sp. (JW). All the eyelets were put through tangential surfaces, with the eye in line with the main axis of the wood. The wood

preserved falls into three categories: 11–14mm deep (6 examples), 9mm deep (4 examples), and examples with jointing.

The eyelets with examples of jointing have shanks with three sections of preserved wood, the middle section always has a grain direction at right-angles to the other two sections (eg No 61). This could be the result of the eyelet passing through a piece of wood 3mm and 6mm thick, lying at right-angles to it, or an off-centre tongue-and-groove joint, where two pieces of wood approximately 15mm thick meet at a right-angle. All three types were scattered over the grave, and it is difficult to interpret their relationship to one another (this is discussed elsewhere, see below p 96–7). The thicknesses of wood preserved on the small eyelets, together with the evidence of jointing, suggests that they belong to a structure other than the main planking of the bed.

In many examples traces of cord passing through the eye were observed, along with traces of textile covering the looped end (see below p 116–7). It is possible that these small eyelets were used to secure a fabric lining of some kind to the bed structure.

### *Iron nails (Nos 72–83)*

(Figs 74.4, 80)

A total of 74 complete and fragmentary nails has been recorded. Their distribution within the grave is plotted on Figure 74.4. A sample of 12 nails has been selected for illustration and description.

72 Round-headed iron nail. Length 26mm, diameter of head 12mm, thickness of head 2mm. It was found adjacent to the lower end of the right femur. The point of the shank is folded over. Wood is preserved on the shank to a depth of 20mm; an upper section of wood 9mm thick is at right-angles to the wood grain of a lower section 11mm thick.

73 Iron nail. Length 23mm, head of irregular shape, maximum diameter 14mm, thickness of head 3mm.

It was found between the right forearm and one of the palm cups. The point of the shank is folded over, and wood grain is preserved on the shank to a depth of 17mm. Two distinct wood grain directions are visible: an upper section with a radial surface 6mm thick overlies a tangential surface 11mm thick.

74 Round-headed iron nail. Height 24mm, diameter of head 15mm, thickness of head 2mm. It was found by the left ankle. The point of the shank is folded over. Wood 20mm thick is preserved on the shank: a central section 9mm thick with a radial surface is sandwiched between an upper section 6mm thick and a lower section 5mm thick, both with tangential surfaces. There is replaced textile on the nail head.

75 Iron nail. Height 22mm, diameter of head 15mm, thickness of head 2mm. It was found 50mm west of nail No 74, adjacent to the lower left leg. There are wood traces preserved on the shank to a depth of 17mm: a central section 8mm thick with a radial longitudinal surface is sandwiched between an upper layer 5mm thick and a lower layer 4mm thick, both with tangential surfaces visible. The shank of the nail is folded back, penetrating the lower layer of wood. Traces of degraded textile can be seen on the head of the nail.

76 Round-headed iron nail. Length 27mm, diameter of head 14mm, thickness of head 2mm. It was found adjacent to the right tibia. The nail has a square-sectioned shank 3mm thick, with its end broken off. It secured two pieces of wood, each 11mm thick; the grain of the wood shows them to be running at right-angles to each other.

77 Round-headed iron nail. Length 24mm, diameter of head 13mm, thickness of head 2mm. It was found in the disturbed area of the grave. A section of wood 9mm deep with a radial longitudinal section is preserved on the shank, which is folded back. There are traces of textile on the nail head.

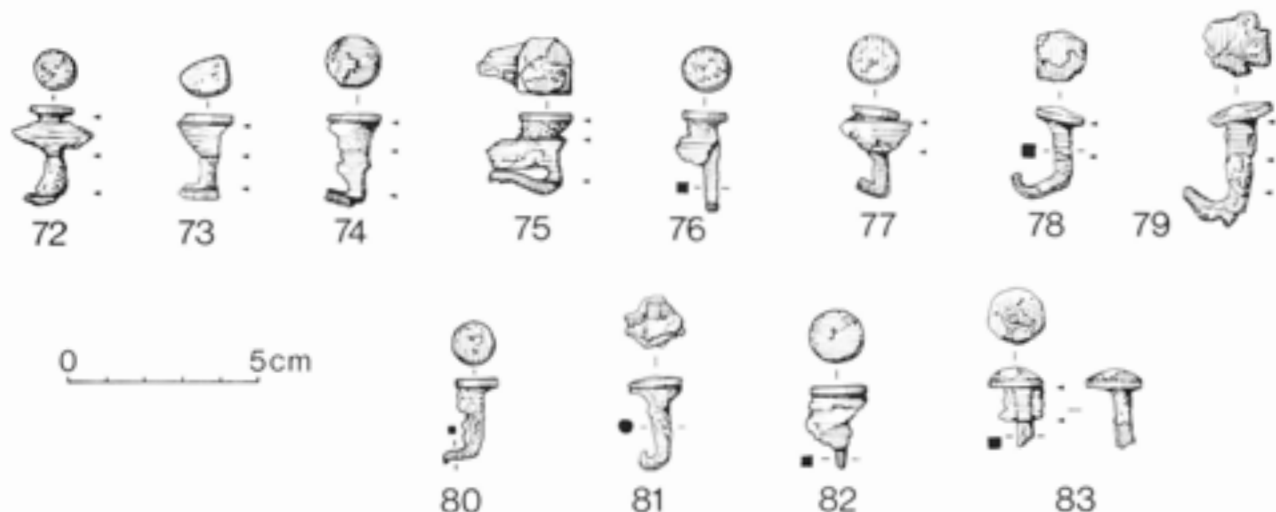


Fig 80 Nails nos 72–83 (Scale 1:2)

78 Round-headed iron nail with its head set slightly obliquely to its square-sectioned shank. Length 24mm, diameter of head 14mm, thickness of head 2mm. Wood traces are preserved on the shank to a depth of 19mm. There are two distinct wood grain sections at right-angles to each other: an upper section 10mm thick with a tangential surface overlies a section 9mm thick, with a radial longitudinal surface. The point of the nail shank is folded back, and was embedded in the wood.

79 Iron nail. Length 32mm, irregularly-shaped head, maximum width 17mm, thickness 2mm. It was found 100mm south of the right knee. The head is angled in relation to the shank, which is longer than others in this group. There are wood traces preserved to a depth of 21mm on the shank. An upper section 9mm thick, with a radial section, is at right-angles to an underlying section 12mm thick, with a tangential surface. The point of the shank is folded back and was embedded in the wood.

80 Round-headed iron nail with square-sectioned shank. Length 21mm, head 12mm in diameter, thickness 2mm. It was found at the west end of the bed structure amongst the fragments of the iron-bound bucket. The point of the shank is folded over. There are three sections of wood preserved on the shank. The central section is 5mm thick with a radial surface and was sandwiched between an upper section 6mm thick and a lower section 5mm thick, both with tangential surfaces.

81 Iron nail with an irregularly-shaped head and round-sectioned shank. Length 24mm, maximum width of head 15mm, thickness 2mm. It was found on the chalk shelf on the south side of the grave close to the bifurcated terminal of the headboard stay. Wood with a thickness of 20mm and two distinct grain directions is visible on the shank. The upper section has a radial longitudinal surface 11mm deep, the lower section is 9mm deep and has a tangential surface. The point of the nail has been folded back and was embedded in the wood.

82 Round-headed iron nail with square-sectioned shank. Length 22mm, diameter of head 15mm, thickness 2mm. It was found on the chalk slope on the north side of the grave within the disturbed area. Wood fragments adhere to the shank with a radial longitudinal surface 12mm deep. The nail head is covered with mineralised traces of textile.

83 Round-headed nail with a square-sectioned shank. Length 20mm, diameter of head 15mm, thickness 2mm. It was found c 100mm south of the right femur on the bottom of the grave. The tip of the nail shank is missing. Preserved wood with a thickness of 15mm and two directions of grain is evident on the shank. The upper layer of wood is 8mm deep and has a radial longitudinal surface; the lower layer is 7mm thick with the wood grain running at right-angles to the upper layer, and with a tangential surface. A dome-like concretion of textile remains covers the nail head.

A selection of the iron nails was examined by Jacqui Watson, who reported that all had traces of ash, *Fraxinus* sp., and had been forced through tangential wood surfaces, with their points hammered back into the wood. All had traces of jointing, with two distinct types of joints represented: rebated or lap joints, where two pieces of wood have their grain lying at right-angles to each other, eg No 70 (Hodges 1964, 112–22), and a joint where three sections of wood are preserved on all sides of the shank, with the middle section always lying at right-angles to the other two, eg on No 75. This is the same jointing as seen on the small eyelet (No 60).

Many of the nails have mineral replaced textiles on their heads (see p 117).

### *Bed reconstruction*

Approximately 50 miscellaneous iron fragments in addition to 36 complete and fragmentary rectangular and round-headed cleats, 14 large eyelets, 2 side rails, one complete headboard stay, 32 small eyelets, 74 nails, one staple and several indeterminate fittings (Nos 41–5) have been identified as comprising part of the bed structure. This large quantity of ironwork fittings and fixtures associated with the ash timbering of the Swallowcliffe bed confirm that it was a substantial and complex item of furniture. The conjectural reconstruction of the bed has been based on a scrutiny of the wood-grain patterns surviving as mineral replacements on the ironwork. This demanded an appraisal of the purpose of the ironwork and its functional relationship with the original ash carpentry. The position of much of this metalwork within the grave has been plotted on the four grave plans (Fig 74) and should be seen in relation to the overall grave plan (Fig 19).

### *Dimensions*

The collapse of the bed structure and the subsequent disturbance at the west end of the grave have complicated any accurate reconstruction of the dimensions of the bed, which can only be surmised from the positions of the ironwork in relation to the skeleton and the stepped base of the grave. The estimated length of the bed is c 1.83m (6ft), the distance measured between the complete and surviving curved iron headboard stay and the position of the feet of the skeleton, which were aligned with the round-headed cleats of the footboard. It is clear that the large iron-bound bucket (No 2) and the iron pan or skillet (No 1) lay beyond the headboard at the west end of the grave, with the bronze-bound bucket (No 20) at the north-east corner of the bed, but positioned on the chalk shelf.

The width of the bed is estimated to have been c 0.84m (2ft 9in), which represents the interval between the two side rails and four pairs of rectangular cleats following the same alignment as the side rails. Furthermore the irregular base of the grave would indicate that to fit within the shelf structure the planked bed frame could not exceed a maximum width of 0.84m.

The height of the bed is less certain and more speculative than the estimation of its length and width. At the head end of the bed the dimensions of the surviving headboard stay indicate that a sloping headboard extended a minimum of 0.2m above the planked sides of the bed.

The evidence of substantial remains of wood 0.4m long and 0.13m wide, together with traces of textiles, on the shelved north side of the grave, and sloping downwards, is recorded on the excavation plan (Fig 19 - w = wood, tx = textiles). It is likely that this represents the remains of the collapsed planking of the sides of the bed. (These remains do not survive and are only recorded on the plan). Whilst one might infer that this evidence indicates that the minimum height of one of the side planks was c 0.13m, such uncertainties as probable shrinkage of the wood

traces do not permit any firm conclusions to be reached. The estimated height of 0.4m for the bed sides, as shown in the reconstruction drawing (Fig 81), is based on the distance between the north edge of the wood traces and the position of the left-hand bed rail. It could be argued that these wood traces may not have been part of the bed structure, but are evidence for some other grave furniture such as a wooden cover or lid placed over the bed and body prior to the grave being filled in. However, against this argument is the evidence of the small eyelets and nails lying on and around the wood traces, which are undoubtedly associated with the bed structure (see below).

It is plausible that the planked sides and ends of the bed were jointed or pegged to supporting legs at each corner, but this cannot be confirmed and any

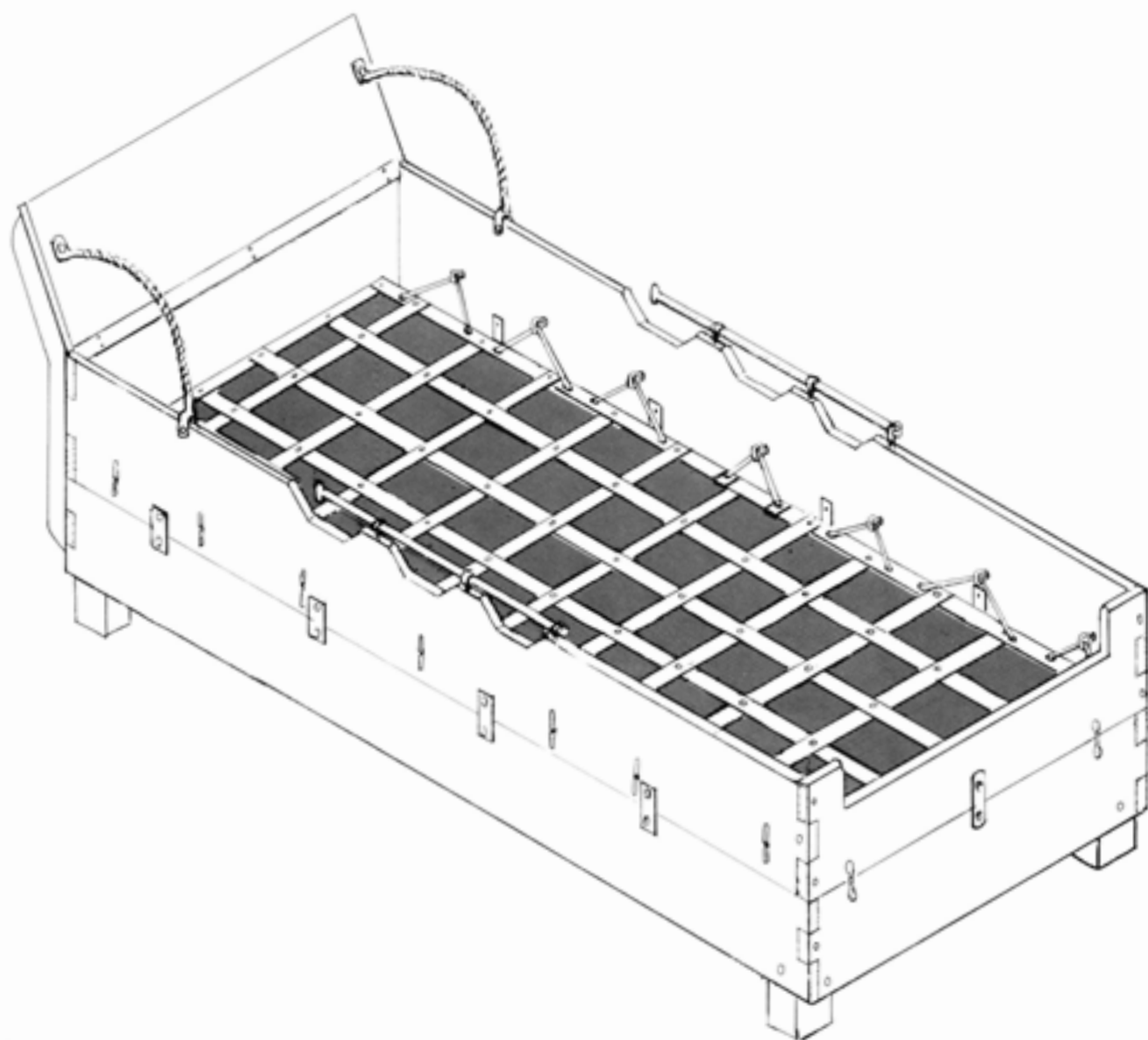


Fig 81 Reconstruction of Swallowcliffe bed



estimation of the height of corner supports both below and above the bed-sides can only be guessed.

The thickness of the ash timbers used for the side of the bed can be accurately ascertained by measuring the rivet shanks on the surviving pairs of cleats. These were symmetrically aligned, and more or less equidistant from each other. They accord with the suggested alignment of the bed sides. (It is possible that the pair of cleats (No 30) found 50mm west of the palm cups may originally have been part of the north-west corner of the bed. Likewise disturbance to the grave must account for the scatter of fragmentary cleats in the head and body area.) None of the pairs of cleats joins together any longer, but cleats Nos 25 and 27, where the shanks of the rivets, though fractured, are complete, indicate a minimum thickness of 20mm for the planking at the join. Some of the cleats are stepped as if they had been hammered over the join of two pieces of wood of different thicknesses or having tapering sections. Variation in the thickness of the planking, as shown by cleats Nos 25, 26, and 29 would be expected if the cleats secured riven timbers, rather than straight sawn ash planking.

Examination of the wood grain preserved on the inner faces of the cleats showed surfaces varying from tangential to radial, and in the majority of cases the main axis of the wood lies at right-angles to the length of the cleats.

Not all the rectangular cleats found were necessarily paired. Some could have been used singly, although such a jointing device would not be as strong. Cleat No 33, found by the left foot of the skeleton and secured to a footboard planking 22mm thick, seems to have been such an example. This cleat is also distinctive in having rounded ends.

The staple-like object (No 40) found lying on the left-hand bed rail may structurally have served the same function as the cleats, but in design it is quite different. The direction of the wood grain clearly indicates that it was mounted vertically on the planking, with its ends hammered in. Possibly this single staple may indicate a secondary repair to the bed or subsequent strengthening to the jointed planking.

A second type of cleat (Nos 38 and 39) was found associated with the footboard of the bed. This type of cleat is smaller in scale, with expanded round terminals and a twisted central section. They were paired and undoubtedly used to join two pieces of wood together, as traces of jointing are preserved on the inner faces. However, their smaller scale suggests that they were either decorative features or had been utilised for joining thinner pieces of ash than the planking, 22mm thick, secured by the larger rectangular cleats. The exact alignment of these cleats, and therefore their position on the footboard in relation to the larger sub-rectangular cleat (No 33), is difficult to interpret. As drawn, the bed reconstruction at the foot end may be an oversimplification, the bed possibly having more elaborate carpentry than shown.

It is clear that the four fragmentary thin iron plates (Nos 34-7), originally listed in the conservation

notebooks as cleat fragments and found scattered in the disturbed western end of the grave, would appear to be part of an iron strip. This strip, attached to the wood by small rivets or nails, is thought to be associated with the headboard. All the fragments show two pieces of wood longitudinally joined together with a gap of 1mm between the sections, in contrast to the transverse joints of the cleats. The upper half appears to have a tangential section with a depth varying between 10-14mm, the lower half a radial section between 12-13mm deep. The different wood sections presented by the two planks may be a result either of one plank being butt-jointed to the edge of another, or of two planks being joined together, one having been sawn from the edge of the trunk and the other from across the centre.

The exact relationship of the headboard strip to the curved and twisted-sectioned iron headboard stay (No 46) is somewhat conjectural. There is good evidence, however, based on an examination of the terminals of the surviving stay, to suggest that the headboard was not vertical, but sloped backwards at an angle of c 120°. The destruction of the other stay (Nos 47-9) in the partial robbing of the grave unfortunately cannot confirm this observation. The bifurcated terminal (now broken) was attached to part of the side planking which was evidently shaped, narrowing almost to a thin rounded edge at the junction with the terminal. At the splayed end of the stay the length of the projecting nail shank indicates that the headboard planking was at least 20mm thick.

The round-sectioned iron bars (Nos 51 and 52) found lying parallel to each other on opposite sides of the bed are the most substantial items of ironwork to survive. They have been interpreted as hand rails, the wood grain direction preserved on the fixing spikes indicating that they were attached to the narrow edge of the side planking.

From the position of the large eyelets in the grave in relation to the side rails and rectangular cleats and the evidence of the grain of the mineral replaced wood, it can be inferred that the 14 large eyelets were positioned only on the upper side planking, seven on each side, with the eyelet on the inner face and the folded ends on the outer face. Two of the eyelets (Nos 53 and 57) have traces of leather or cord passing through the loop. Clearly the eyelets functioned as anchor points for some system of thonging connected with the support for the body.

An attempt to reconstruct the design of this support, which undoubtedly included the c 74 nails and 32 small eyelets is shown in Figure 82. The mineral replaced wood found on the nails and small eyelets has been identified as ash, *Fraxinus* sp., but was very different in scale and thickness from the wood used for the planked sides of the bed. An appraisal of the evidence of the wood grain on both the nails and small eyelets indicates that they comprised part of a latticework structure of thin ash planks or laths. A detail of the proposed method of construction and suspension of this lattice structure is shown in Figure 82. Such a structure would provide a strong yet resilient support for the body; Aldred (1957) refers to ash being used for beds in the

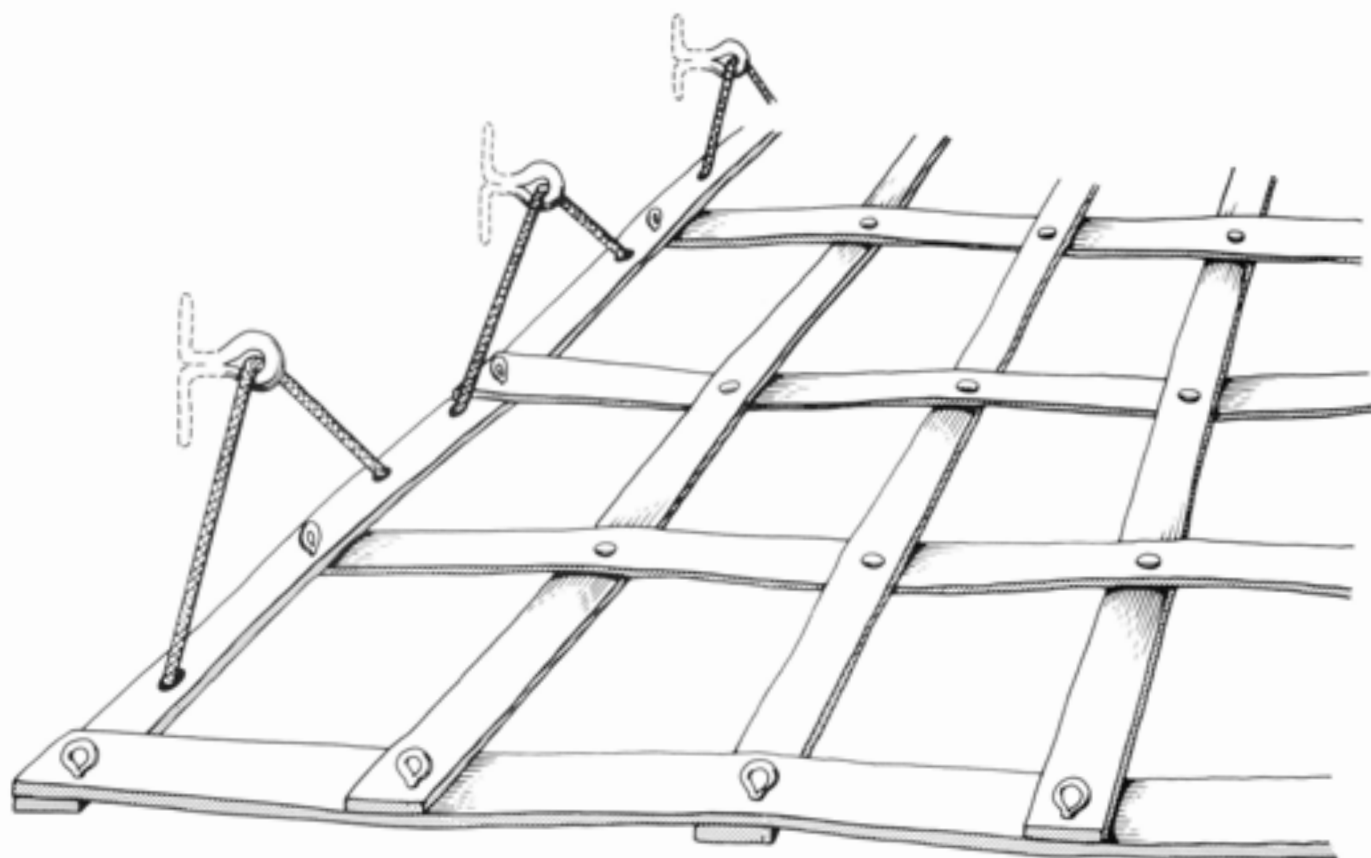


Fig 82 Reconstruction of lattice framework showing use of large and small eyelets and nails

Roman period because of the natural springiness of this wood. Some slight variance in the thickness of the laths can be deduced from the replaced wood found on the shanks of the eyelets and nails and is not unexpected given the likelihood that the laths would have been riven. The overlapping and interweaving of the laths, some of which could have been split, were secured at the crossing points by the small nails, their points hammered back into the wood. As already described, the depth of wood on the nails falls into two categories: two pieces of wood with their grain lying at right-angles to each other, both sections of wood usually 9–12mm thick; and three sections of wood preserved on all sides of the shank, with the middle section always lying at right-angles to the other two, the thickness of wood of the middle section ranging between 5 and 9mm.

The complete examples of the small eyelets vary between 23 and 34mm in length. All have been put through tangential surfaces with the eye in line with the main axis of the wood. As already mentioned, the depth of wood preserved on the sample of the twelve illustrated can be divided into three groups: 11–14mm (6 examples), 9mm (4 examples), and ones with jointing (2 examples). The last group of eyelets has a piece of wood 6mm thick sandwiched between two pieces of wood 3mm and 6mm thick lying at right-angles to it. This corresponds with the sections

of wood preserved on the second category of nails.

Whilst it can be inferred from this observation that several of the eyelets were correspondingly positioned at crossing points, the smaller number of eyelets clearly indicates that their position on the lattice support was more restricted. A definite alignment of six small eyelets at the foot end of the grave indeed demonstrates that their position was restricted to the perimeter of the lattice support. On ten of the examples traces of thin cord passing through the eyelet hole were observed with traces of textile covering the looped end. The cord is too slender to act as a means of supporting the lattice but could be more convincingly explained if the eyelets' function was connected with securing a fabric lining of some kind to the bed structure (see below, p 116). The identification of leather traces on one of the eyelets could indicate however that the thin string was used to fasten leather upholstery, in the manner of a button-backed sofa, the lattice of ash laths being the springy support. It must be admitted that the evidence for leather upholstery is not conclusive, the traces of leather on this particular eyelet from its position in the grave could have come from the satchel or possibly a strap or leather thonging which secured the lattice support to the large eyelets anchored in the bed-frame.

Elisabeth Crowfoot's identification of the textile

remains on many of the nail heads and on some of the small eyelets suggests that the Z-spun twill was either a coverlet for the bed or an underlay which rested on top of the lattice support and possibly was the base of a straw or grass mattress. A padded mattress of straw or grass is deduced from the organic traces identified as grass or straw adhering to some of the nail heads and small eyelets and to one of the two rectangular iron pierced mounts (No 41).

The possible function of the two sets of rectangular iron plates, Nos 41 and 42, deserves some comment. They could be all that remains of a wooden object not in any way related to the bed structure. However, the 6mm thickness of ash sandwiched between the plates corresponds with the depth of wood of some of the ash laths as identified on the shanks of several nails and small eyelets and probably, therefore, the plates did comprise part of the lattice support. The width of the plates would indicate that the laths were c 24mm wide. Possibly they are repairs and reinforcements to a split and fractured lath, the central perforations being where the leather thongs or cording were attached, securing the lattice support to the large eyelets of the side planking. Certainly the most likely place for a lath to fracture would be in the central area of the bed and the position of the plates between the left-hand bed rail and the pelvis would support such a hypothesis.

Examination of the right-hand bed rail, which is more complete, shows that the rail may have been movable, and the absence of a terminal at one end could have permitted the withdrawal of the rail from the ringed securing spikes. As the wood grain is preserved close to the securing spikes, but does not extend along the whole length, it has been deduced that the side planking must have been cut away between the securing rings to afford a hand grip. The purpose of the two side rails, however, could have served several functions. For the occupant of the bed they would have been an aid for sitting upright, comparable in some respects to the side grips on some modern day baths. Equally practical, they could have been used as handles for carrying the bed. The skeletal evidence does not indicate whether the young Swallowcliffe lady was an invalid, but the possibility that the Swallowcliffe bed was a portable litter is worthy of consideration. Indeed the bed must have been transported by some means to Swallowcliffe Down before being buried and whether it was placed on a cart or carried by hand the side rails must have been useful appurtenances.

In considering the function of some of the remaining ironwork, the evidence of the wood preserved on the shanks of the 14 large eyelets indicates that they had been put through the tangential surface of the side planking, with the 'eye' of each eyelet arranged vertically. The depth of wood that can be measured on the shanks of the eyelets is between 21–3mm. This measurement, which gives the thickness of the planking, concurs with the evidence of the rectangular cleats (Nos 25 and 27) which indicate planking c 18–22mm thick. As already mentioned, the eyelets would appear to have been put through made holes in the ash planks, as

on X-ray examination no trace of wood which would have been detectable if they had been hammered through the wood is preserved between the shanks.

### *Parallels and discussion*

The identification of the Swallowcliffe ironwork as the constituent parts of a bed may be contested by those who argue that the case for an elaborate coffin rather than a bed has not been refuted. What cannot be contested is the fact that no other Anglo-Saxon grave has produced such a varied assemblage of ironwork as that from Swallowcliffe. Parallels can be found for certain items of the ironwork in other Anglo-Saxon graves and it will be argued that the custom of bed burial was a phenomenon in the seventh century that has not been given due recognition in archaeological literature.

The identification by T C Lethbridge of a bed in grave 29 at Shudy Camps, Cambridgeshire provides a close comparison for some of the Swallowcliffe ironwork, in particular the curved, twisted head board stay (No 46) and the smaller round ended cleats with twisted central section (Nos 38 and 39).

Lethbridge describes grave 29 as follows:

Head south-west. The grave was 7ft 6in long [2.28m], 3ft 3in [1.0m] wide and 2ft 10in [0.86m] deep. A fragmentary skeleton rested in this cavity with the knees slightly bent to the right and the arms apparently crossed at the middle. Fragments of skull and pelvis suggested that this was a male; teeth much worn, none missing; alveolus absorbed. The face had been turned to its right. The skull was 1ft 9in [0.53m] from the head of the grave and between the two rested an iron band [Fig 83, no 6]. This strip of metal has been worked, as may be seen from the figures, into eight lozenges each pierced by two nails and separated from the next by straight parallel-sided lengths of iron. At each end it has been slightly curved to accommodate a quadrant of twisted ironwork. Each of these curved pieces of iron has a hooped projection at the further end with the evident purpose of securing it to a piece of wood 1in [25mm] thick. At the top end are two projections evidently intended to fasten it to a board or plank to which the first-mentioned iron plate was also secured. At the back of the first plate and with nails projecting inwards like it towards the foot of the grave, but arranged vertically, whereas the plate was horizontal, were four pieces of twisted ironwork with a nail at either end, also four iron staples (one missing but position conjectured). It is thought that the whole contraption, which is extremely difficult to describe, was used to join together the woodwork at the head of a primitive wooden bedstead. At regular intervals along the sides of the grave and some 9in [230mm] from the floor of it were six iron staples, three on each side, while at the foot were two more straps of twisted iron like those found at the head. At the neck were the remains of a tiny bronze pin.

Lethbridge's comments on the reconstruction of the bed are also worth quoting:

Although at first the uses of the pieces of iron seemed quite incomprehensible, yet after a little thought it became clear that this was certainly not a coffin or bier burial. When a wooden frame is reconstructed which would comply with the clues given by the ironwork and the positions in which the iron objects were found it seems certain that we have to deal with some kind of a wooden bedstead. This must have had two or more planks on edge at its head, was 2ft 9in [0.84m] wide and some 6ft [1.83m] long, and had three planks or perhaps leather straps across the middle to hold the mattress. The mattress is thought to have been made of straw covered with coarse cloth, for traces of both these materials could be observed on the rust of the twisted iron side pieces... The size of some of the graves at Burwell could only, in my opinion, be accounted for by the assumption that the persons there buried had been placed on a mattress, notably grave No 57 (Recent Excavations). The present burial confirms observations made when the Burwell site was explored.

(Lethbridge 1936, 10–12)

The illustrated plan of grave 29 (Fig 83) shows that Lethbridge's appraisal of the scale of the bed coincides with the dimensions of the Swallowcliffe bed, but the greater quantity of metalwork within the Swallowcliffe grave suggests that its structure was more complex. At Shudy Camps there are no eyelets, small nails, or side rails and comparison between the twisted iron head stays show that the surviving example from Swallowcliffe is more substantial, at least twice as thick as the pair from Shudy Camps. The metalwork which survives from the Shudy Camps bed was examined by the writer in August 1981, in the University Museum, Cambridge, the fittings for the head end being mounted on a timber reconstruction. Both Lethbridge's drawn reconstructions and the museum display deserve comment. As reconstructed in Figure 84, the headboard is vertical and not sloping backwards, as inferred at Swallowcliffe. The headboard was made of at least two planks, secured on the inner faces by the sixteen iron nails in the iron strip (Fig 83, no 6) and on the joins on the outer faces by four round-headed cleats with twisted stems (Fig 83, no 4). Such cleats are not found at the head end of the Swallowcliffe grave, but at the feet, and the jointing metal strip is a more elaborate feature than the fragmentary strips at Swallowcliffe would indicate. From the evidence of the terminals of the curved headboard stays the side planking was c 25mm thick. Distinctively different from anything at Swallowcliffe are the staples, three planned and the position of a fourth conjectured at the head end, (nos 7 and 8) and the six iron staples, three on each side found 230mm (9in) from the base of the grave.

The function of the staples clearly puzzled Lethbridge. His drawn reconstruction of the bed shows the side staples securing cross planking to the

planked bed sides, but given their form and shape they cannot possibly function as Lethbridge's drawing indicates. If they joined planking their positions and axes in the grave would suggest that the planking was vertical, but vertical side planking is unlikely and my own interpretation of these staples is different. Examination of the staples has led me to believe that they did not function as cleats but that they are the equivalent of large eyelets (such as Nos 53–9 at Swallowcliffe), projecting through the thickness of the side planking to secure or act as anchor points on the inner sides for crisscross webbing or leather straps supporting the mattress and body. It should be observed, however, that no staples/eyelets were found at the foot end of the grave and their absence might therefore imply that the webbing/strapping was attached to holes in the end planking or was only attached to the surviving staples at the sides and head end of the bed. Furthermore, it cannot be ruled out that, given the evidence of the Swallowcliffe bed, an interwoven wooden lattice, assembled without nails or small eyelets, was attached by thonging to the staple-like anchor points. The evidence of traces of straw/grass and coarse textile on the curved iron stays suggests that in addition to any underlying support there was a straw/grass filled mattress or pillow.

Within the same cemetery at Shudy Camps there is the probability of another bed. In grave 24 Lethbridge discovered the skeleton of a young woman, head to the north-west who 'had been buried in or on some form of wooden contraption of which iron plates remained. In a hollow beneath the skull were four straight plates of iron looking like nothing so much as rusted bar magnets. At the throat a large glass bead bound in gold' (Lethbridge 1936, 8). The 'iron plates' are in fact double cleats, of which seven pairs were found. They are sub-rectangular in form, with a waisted centre as shown in Figure 85, having a length of c 80mm and joined by two rivets originally sandwiching wooden planking 27mm thick. Unfortunately no mineralised wood remains now survive for identification on the ironwork from Shudy Camps graves 24 and 29.

Lethbridge records their positions in the grave: 'They rested horizontally, two at the head end of the grave and three down the left side. Two were in place on the right side, but the third could not be found.' As to their function Lethbridge decided to keep his options open: 'It is uncertain whether they formed part of the binding of a coffin, bier or even a bedstead.' Mineralised traces of a coarse textile and grass stems are observable on several of the cleats, however, suggesting evidence for the existence of a grass-filled mattress. At the head end of the grave, the four strips of iron [Fig 85, nos 3–6] found in a hollow beneath the skull might have been component parts of a headboard, but in view of the absence of head-stays and eyelets it must be admitted that the evidence for a bed rather than a coffin is not conclusive.

In Figure 77 a comparison is made between the Swallowcliffe headboard stay and the ironwork fittings found in a large and rich female grave from Ixworth (Stanton) Suffolk. Here unmistakably was a



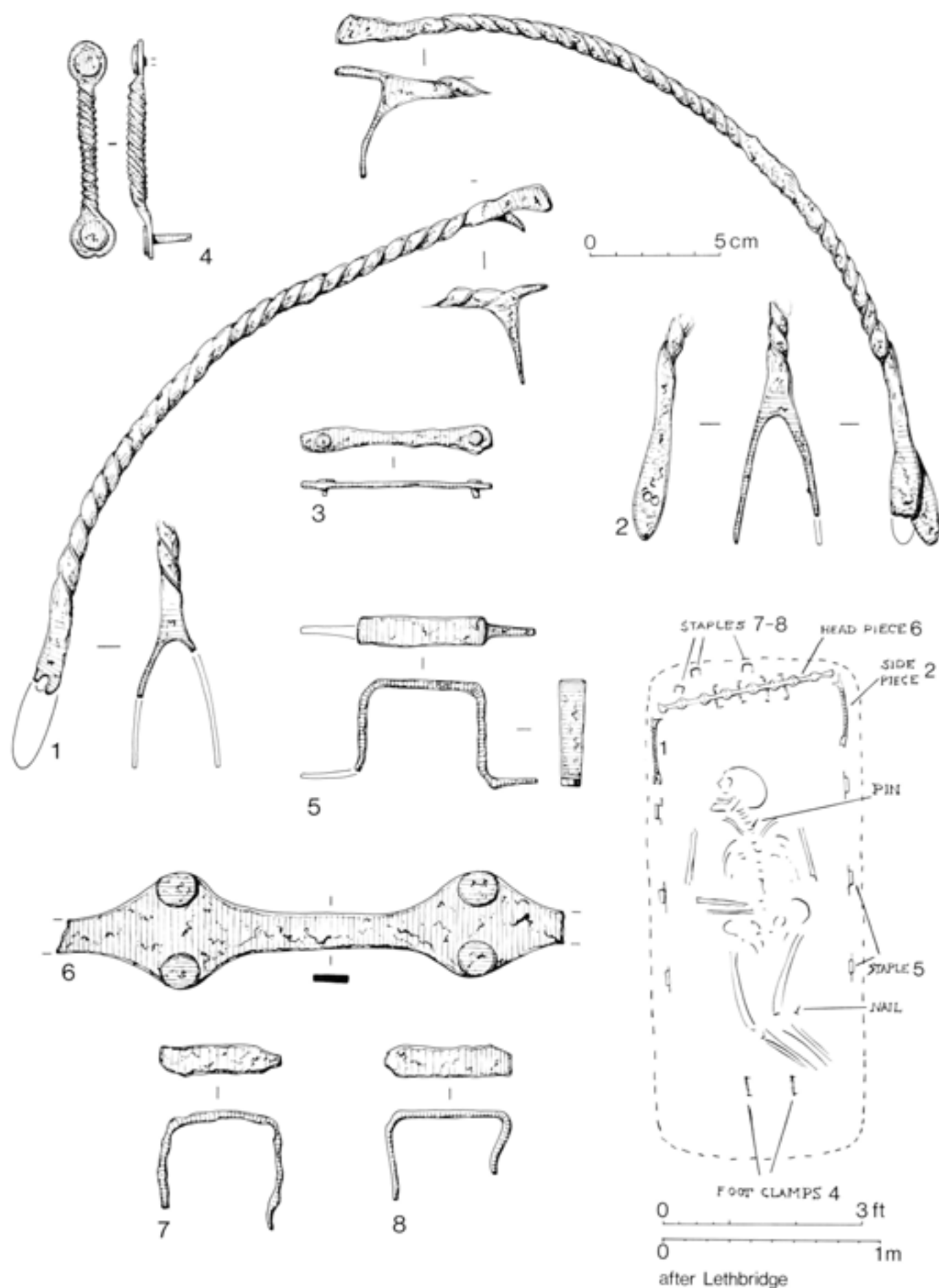


Fig 83 Iron bed fittings, Shudy Camps grave 29 (Scale 1:2)



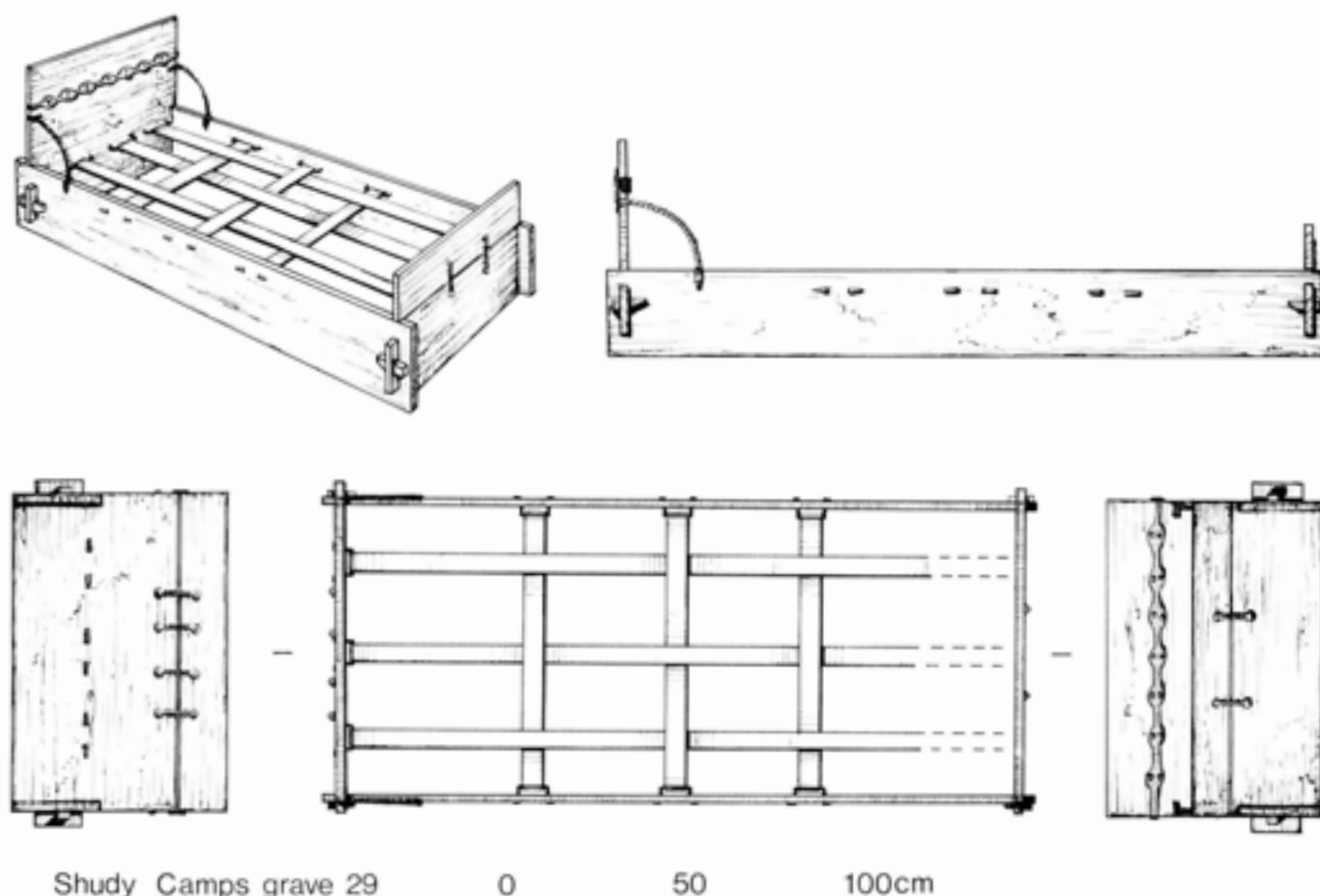


Fig 84 Reconstruction of bed from Shudy Camps grave 29

bed grave, the bed having features in common with both the Swallowcliffe and Shudy Camps beds. As the Ixworth ironwork fittings no longer survive, my observations are based solely on the evidence of the nineteenth century line engravings (Smith 1857, 162). The manner of excavation c 1840 was certainly less systematic than at either Swallowcliffe or Shudy Camps.

In addition to quantities of mouldering wood, accidentally dug up by labourers, were four twisted iron terminals and 24 clenched staples, the more precious finds being a gold and garnet cloisonné pendant cross and the upper plate of a gold and garnet disc brooch, confirming that here was a high status grave of a Christian female. Of the ironwork only one terminal fragment and one staple are illustrated. No measurements are given other than that they are illustrated at a quarter of their actual dimensions. There seems little doubt that the twisted iron headboard stays had been broken (possibly during 'excavation') and that the four terminals recorded were in actuality the parts of two stays. If the scale of the illustration is to be trusted the curved stays of the Ixworth bed were substantially larger than the similar fittings from Swallowcliffe and Shudy Camps. The terminal of the stay illustrated, with its tightly twisted stem, was evidently fixed to a shaped side rail and secured by two round-headed nails. The illustrated staple is similar in form to those

that survive from Shudy Camps grave 29, but instead of having outplayed ends they are folded inwards to form a rectangular enclosure. The greater number of staples, 24 as opposed to the 9 at Shudy Camps perhaps implies a more elaborate bed and method of thonging for an assumed mattress support, although any attempted reconstruction is inevitably hindered by the inadequacies of the excavation record.

A further parallel for the Swallowcliffe bed, again in the Anglian area, comes from an unpublished excavation carried out in 1949 by Christopher Houlder and the Cambridge Archaeological Field Club at a site known as War Ditches, Cherry Hinton, Cambridgeshire (TL 484555). Within an area bounded by a ditch of the North Barrow, nine Anglo Saxon inhumation burials were found. The graves had all evidently been dug at a time when the surface of the barrow had been considerably flattened, since those near the edge were only slightly more deeply cut than those near the centre. The area outside the barrow was not investigated, but clearly there had been a larger cemetery for quarrymen remembered finding similar burials before 1939, and had preserved a crystal ball of about 25mm diameter, bound with two crossed bronze bands bearing ring-and-dot ornament and with small pendant rods (University Museum Acc no 53 124). Of particular interest is grave 4, which lay south-east of the centre of the barrow, aligned north-south. In this poorly defined grave,

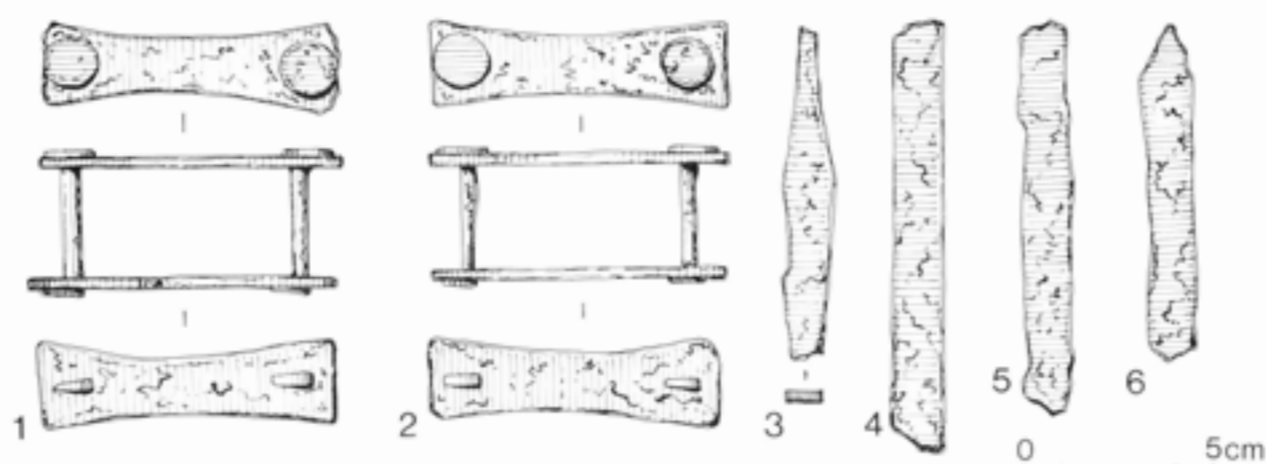


Fig 85 Cleats and fittings from Shudy Camps grave 24 (Scale 1:2)

measuring 8ft by 5ft and 6in deep (2.44m by 1.52m and 0.15m), lay the skeleton of a juvenile with its head to the south. Notes on the skeletal evidence, now preserved in the Duckworth Laboratory, Cambridge, state that 'the remains consist of a distorted skull, which cannot be measured. The second molars, premolars, and one canine are in the process of eruption – both upper and lower jaws – and this suggests that the age of death was between 10 and 12 years. It is impossible to sex this specimen from anatomical evidence as it is too young.'

A plan of the grave is illustrated (Fig 86) showing the ironwork fixtures, rectangular cleats, eyelets and headboard stays of the bed, although the presence of a bed was not initially realised by the excavators. The excavation diary of Tuesday, 19 July 1949 records that 'the supposed sword with this skeleton is in Mr Lethbridge's opinion a "bedstead" of a type found elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon late cemeteries'. Sketches of the ironwork fittings were made by Lethbridge who evidently participated to some extent in the excavation as plans of other graves at Cherry Hinton are initialled TCL.

Preserved in the University Museum of Archaeology, Cambridge (Acc 53 177–224) are two headboard stays (Fig 86, nos 1, 2) eleven large eyelets (Fig 86, nos 5–15), eleven rectangular cleats, two nails, and seven fragments of an iron strip with traces of straw(?) and textile remains adhering, apparently part of a U-shaped object located near the feet of the skeleton. A section of this strip is illustrated in Figure 86 no 4. The rectangular cleats and large eyelets, in form and scale almost identical to those from Swallowcliffe, lay either side of the body. The cleats, an example of which is shown in Figure 86 no 3, are all single, and all have two nails. They range in length from 52mm to 80mm, with a width range of 21–30mm. The excavation record makes it clear that the cleats tended to lean outwards from the body, whereas the majority of the eyelets (referred to as staples) leaned inwards.

The two square-sectioned headboard stays (Fig 86, nos 1, 2) are unlike the quadrant-curved and twisted stays from Shudy Camps grave 29 and Swallowcliffe, but are comparable in having bifurcated terminals

where they were attached to the side planking. Some distortion of the form of stay 2 has evidently taken place in the collapse of the wooden planking, but the shape and angle of the headboard terminal of the companion stay could well provide confirmatory evidence that the headboard was not vertical but angled at  $c 120^\circ$  as has been suggested in the reconstruction of the Swallowcliffe bed. The thickness of the side planking as measured within the bifurcated terminals was  $c 23\text{mm}$ , and, like the side planking of the Swallowcliffe bed, had a rounded upper edge.

The broken strips of iron, which formed a U-shaped metal band and were found near the lower end of the bed, were presumed by the excavator to have been a device used to secure a cross pole for carrying. Spot depths of all the iron remains recorded by the excavators show that the highest items in the grave were the headboard supports, with the cleats at the foot end of the grave being the deepest. No other grave goods were found except an iron pin 115mm long and an iron bar 150mm long (both found near the left shoulder).

Indistinct traces of fragile bones of another individual, however, were observed above the pelvis and, although the sex of the main burial could not be determined, it is possible that this is the burial of a young mother who died in childbirth with the infant.

The fact that bed burial was not just a female prerogative is demonstrated by the evidence recorded by Bateman (1861, 68–70) at Lapwing Hill, Brushfield, Derbyshire (SK 168723).

On the 3rd of August, 1850, we opened a finely shaped barrow near Brushfield, upon Lapwing Hill, overlooking Cressbrook Valley, measuring seventeen yards [15.5m] across and four feet [1.22m] high in the centre, composed of earth with a few stones in the middle, where a shallow grave, about a foot [ $c 0.3\text{m}$ ] deep was sunk in the rock. In it lay extended the remains of a human body, so very much decayed as to be almost indistinguishable, but which we ascertained to have been deposited with the head to the west. Beneath the remnants of bone

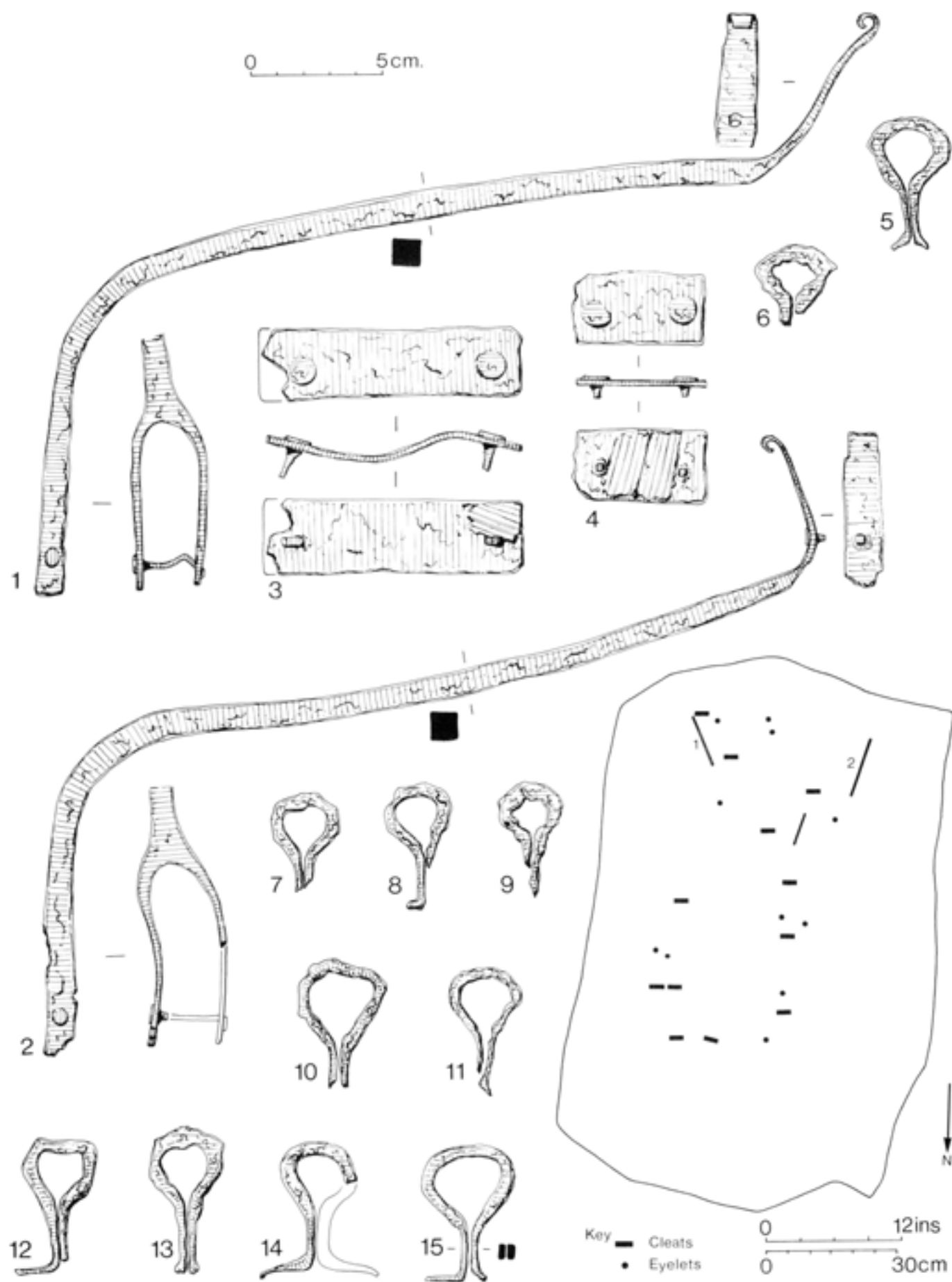


Fig 86 Iron bed fittings from Cherry Hinton grave 4 and plan of the grave (Scale 1:2)

were many traces of light coloured hair, as if from a hide, resting upon a considerable quantity of decayed wood indicating a plank of some thickness, or the bottom of a coffin. At the left of the body was a long and broad iron sword, enclosed in a sheath made of thin wood covered with ornamented leather. Under the hilt of the sword, which like most of ancient date is very small, was a short iron knife; and a little way above the right shoulder were two small javelin heads,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, of the same metal, which had lain so near each other as to become united by corrosion.

Among the stones which filled the grave, and about a foot from the bottom, were many objects of corroded iron, including nine loops of hoop iron about an inch broad, which had been fixed to thick wood by long nails; eight staples or eyes, which had been driven through plank and clenched; and one or two other objects of more uncertain application, all which were dispersed at intervals round the corpse throughout the length of the grave, and which may therefore have been attached to a bier or coffin in which the deceased was conveyed to the grave, possibly from some distant place.

Bateman's description of the grave contents identifies that here are elaborate items of grave furniture, but his suggestion that the Lapwing Hill warrior had been placed in a bier or coffin is not supported by an examination of the ironwork fittings, which clearly demonstrate closer affinities to bed fixtures. The 'eight staples or eyes' are large eyelets comparable in form and scale to the fourteen from Swallowcliffe Down and the eleven from Cherry Hinton. Examination of wood traces on the shanks shows that they had been secured in planking 22-3mm thick. Very possibly the hair covered hide from beneath the body was attached to the eyelets. Whether it was freely slung or rested on an additional slatted or planked support is uncertain. Bateman's comment that the hide rested on a considerable quantity of decayed wood indicating a plank of some thickness, could be interpreted as evidence for a planked base but could equally be the collapsed remains of the supporting side planking.

A plan of the Lapwing Hill grave based on a watercolour drawing was published by L. Jewitt (1870, 209). A photograph of this watercolour and two further watercolours of the ironwork also by Jewitt are illustrated in Figure 87. The sophistication and accuracy of the drawings of the ironwork contrasts with the naive simplicity of the grave plan which attempts to show the positions of some nine eyelet-like fixtures relative to the skeleton and weapons, but with little sense of scale or proportion. Indeed it is clear from a scrutiny of the surviving ironwork in Sheffield Museum (J 93-1188 H.95) that in addition to the already mentioned eight large eyelets, there are only two such iron loops (as illustrated) with fragments of possibly two more. In no sense, therefore, can the plan of the grave be treated as an accurate record of the positions and items of ironwork listed in Bateman's excavation

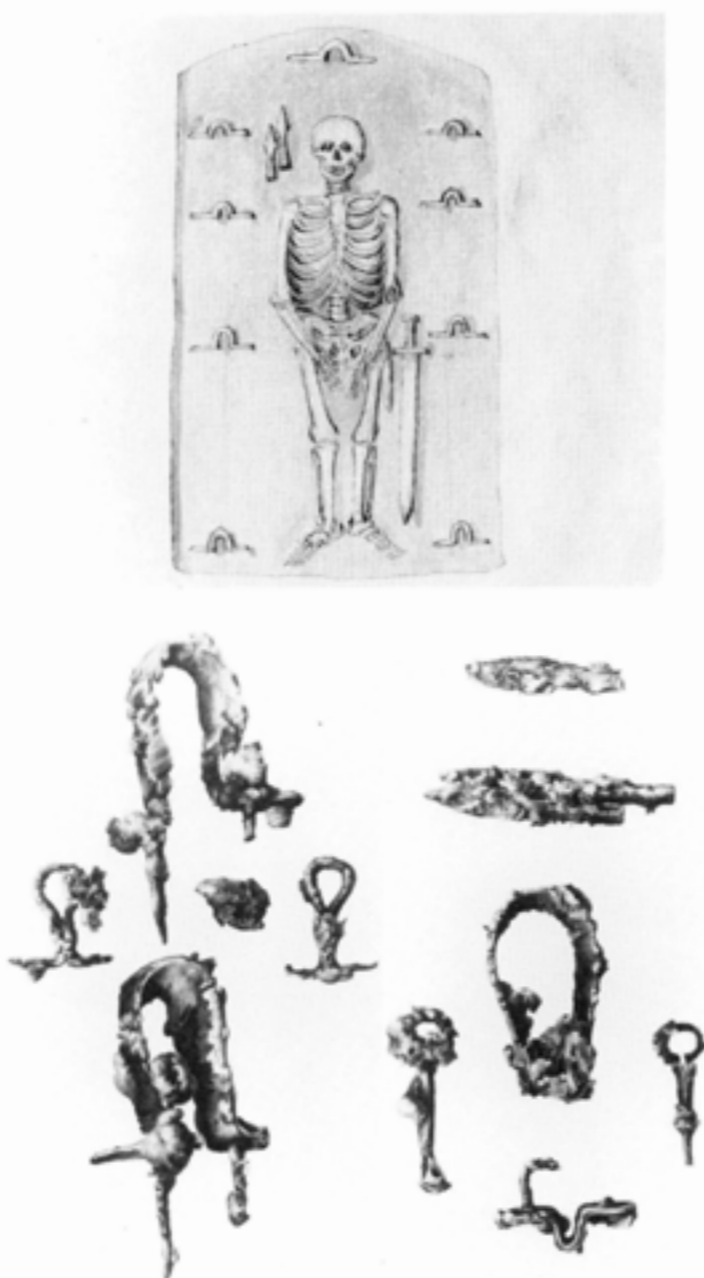


Fig 87 Iron bed fittings and grave plan, Lapwing Hill Derbyshire. Watercolour L. Jewitt (Sheffield Museum); scale of ironwork 1:4

account. It is also worthy of note that other features of the surviving ironwork would indicate that the Lapwing Hill bed was of a variant construction from the Swallowcliffe example. There are no obvious head stays or side rails, comparable to the surviving examples from Swallowcliffe. Two of the eyelets (illustrated Fig 87) penetrated wood to a depth of c 55mm and must have been fixed in a different relationship from the other eyelets with splayed out terminals, which show a depth of wood on the shanks of 22-3mm. Possibly they had been mounted vertically into a side plank and may therefore be comparable in function to the fixtures on the Swallowcliffe bed which held the iron side-rails.

Unlike any of the ironwork at Swallowcliffe are the three large, ovoid brackets covered in rust con-

cretions and traces of mineralised wood and illustrated as found in Jewitt's watercolour (Fig 87). Several cleat-like fragments, c 26mm wide with looped over ends could be the remains of a fourth bracket (not illustrated). Their function and relationship to each other is uncertain.

Possibly they were positioned at the corners of the bed and used to secure the headboards and footboards to the side planking. They could also be construed as fixtures to contain carrying poles. The shape of the brackets, with an opening of c 40mm, tapering down to c 24mm leaves both interpretations of their function as possibilities. Portions of mineralised wood attached to one of the brackets were examined by Anne Crone of the Department of Prehistory and Archaeology, University of Sheffield and tentatively identified as willow, *Salix* sp. This identification was confirmed by Jacqui Watson. It is just possible that as the sample examined was on the exterior of one of the brackets it may represent binding material or have been associated with some other item, the hafts of the spears for example rather than the main structural timbers of the bed. Willow is very light and the timber is straight grained and resilient. Certainly a bed made of this wood would therefore be much easier to carry than one made of oak.

The iron fittings from Lapwing Hill prompt comparison with the ironwork from a barrow grave on Winkelbury Hill, Wilts (in the parish of Berwick St John ST 950212), which it could be argued also contained a bed and which geographically is tantalisingly sited only 4.5km south-west of Swallowcliffe Down. The barrow with a causewayed ditch and outer bank was excavated on 2 December 1881 by General Pitt Rivers and recorded with exemplary thoroughness and exactitude (Pitt Rivers 1888, II, 257, 258, 264–7, 281).

The barrow was the northernmost and the largest of a group of barrows and sited about 334m (367 yards) south-west of the hillfort on Winkelbury Hill. An oblong grave, 8ft 6in (2.59m) long and 6ft 10in (2.08m) wide was found in the centre and within the grave at each of the four corners stakeholes 2½in (60mm) square and 10in (254mm) deep, were found cleanly cut in the chalk. In the grave were several iron bands. A depression in the top of the barrow showed that it had been disturbed. *The coffin irons, if such they were, (my italics) were at the east end of the grave, in a part of the fill which appeared not to have been dug out by the explorers, and I assume therefore that they were in the position in which they originally lay. The bones of the skeleton had been heaped together by the explorers, and were replaced in the grave on the south side. The sides of the grave were true east and west, and the bottom was 3ft 6in (1.05m) beneath the surface of the depression at the top.*

Pitt Rivers observed that the Saxon grave was a secondary interment: 'That it was a British barrow originally is shown by the quality of the pottery found in it, by its form, and by a bronze awl found in the side of the barrow in the silting.'

No Anglo-Saxon artefacts, other than the ironwork, were recovered. Some of the pieces of ironwork which were found at the undisturbed east

end of the grave and which, in all probability, derived from a bed rather than a coffin are illustrated on Figure 88, nos 1–13. There is every reason to believe that this was the foot end of the grave. Certainly the adjoining Anglo-Saxon cemetery of c 30 graves and also the secondary interment in Barrow II had skeletons orientated east-west, with their heads at the west end. In both its orientation and its large size, the Winkelbury Hill grave is comparable to the Swallowcliffe grave. Furthermore, parallels do exist at Swallowcliffe for the two kinds of cleat discovered at Winkelbury Hill (Fig 88, nos 1, 2) – the round-ended cleat with the twisted central section and the double rectangular cleat, although there are differences in scale and proportion. The round-ended cleat as described and illustrated by Pitt Rivers is 200mm long, more than twice the length of the parallels from both Swallowcliffe Nos 38, 39 and Shudy Camps grave 29 (Fig 83).<sup>1</sup> The double rectangular cleat, no 2, is 120mm long, with a width between the plates of 12mm. Other fixtures in the grave which can be compared to fittings from a bed are the eyelets (Fig 88 nos 11, 12, 13), their straight unopened shanks suggesting that they were driven into, rather than through, a piece of timber, like two of the eyelets from Lapwing Hill. Again more akin to the brackets from Lapwing Hill than any of the ironwork at Swallowcliffe are fixture nos 3–7 (Fig 88) with their stepped and sloping sides. The fragments of nos 9 and 10 appear to be the long nail shanks from some of these fixtures. No examination of the mineralised wood remains has been undertaken, so the species of wood utilised has not been identified. Replaced grass stems and traces of textile, a very fine twill of which the diagonals are visible, lying Z and S, ie either diamond or chevron (Elisabeth Crowfoot) are evident on several of the fittings. No close parallel, however, can be found at Swallowcliffe or elsewhere for the fragment of iron band with a hook at one end (Fig 88, no 8).

Pitt Rivers's observations that the grave had been disturbed, apart from the east end where the ironwork was found, lead one to speculate on the original furnishings of the grave. That there was a probable bed has been deduced from the affinities with ironwork from other bed graves. What kind of fixtures lay at the west end of the grave and what other artefacts (if any) had been placed with the body must remain speculation. What is more certain is that here was clearly the most important grave of the Winkelbury cemetery, a large grave beneath a causewayed barrow, set apart from the other graves. There are close affinities with the Swallowcliffe barrow, other than its relatively close geographical proximity. In dimensions the grave is closely comparable, and its position and orientation in relation to the causewayed entrance is identical to that at Swallowcliffe.

The four 'stakeholes' found at each corner of the grave, dimensions 'about 2½ inches [60mm] square at the top, tapering to 1 inch [25mm] at the bottom and 10 inches [254mm] deep', are unlikely to be connected with the probable bed. More likely they might be interpreted as the positions of marker posts or possibly the support of some canopy connected



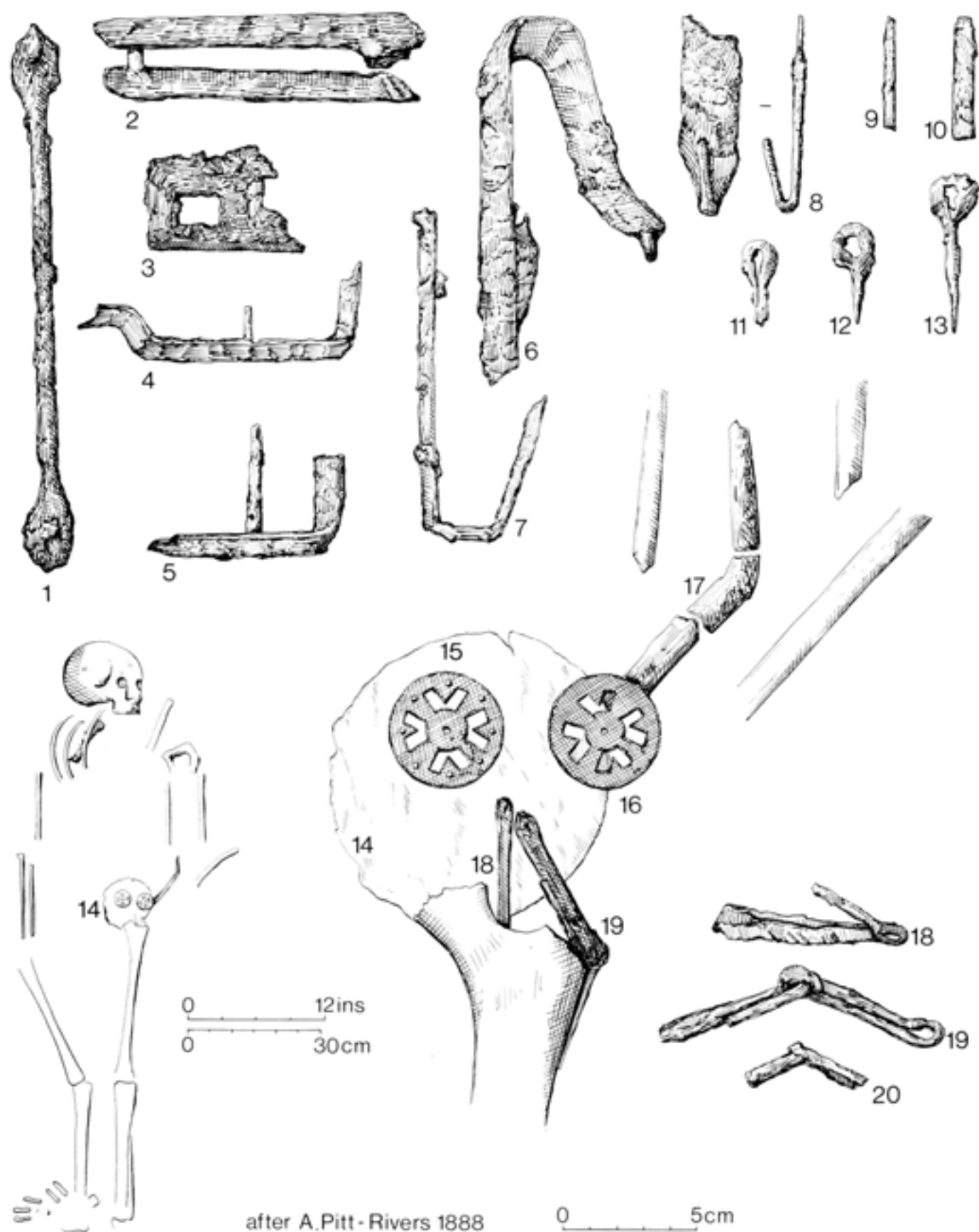


Fig 88 Iron fittings from Winklbury Hill, Wiltshire, barrow grave 1 nos 1-13; satchel fixtures from Winklbury Hill, grave 9 nos 14-20 (Scale 1:2)

with grave ritual. At Swallowcliffe Down evidence of a stakehole or marker post was noted only at the north-east corner of the grave.

Two further seventh-century barrow burials, both female, from Woodyates, Pentridge, Dorset (SU 039195) and Roundway Down, Wilts (SU 000650) invite comparison with the Swallowcliffe barrow. Both burials had been placed in or on an iron and wood construction, which, in view of the evidence outlined above, could be considered to have been beds or coffins. Regrettably both barrows were 'excavated' in a perfunctory manner in the first half of the nineteenth century and no plans were made showing the positions and number of the ironwork fittings. From the nature of the surviving grave goods both are clearly high status graves. Material from both burials is housed at Devizes Museum, but none of the ironwork from either Woodyates or Roundway Down now survives.

An account of the excavation of the Woodyates barrow was published by Colt Hoare:

We opened also another barrow on the same side of the ditch (west side of Bokerly Dyke) but nearer to Woodyates Inn, which contained many new and curious articles.

On making our section, we found the tumulus surrounded with large sarsen stones, and perceived several articles of iron intermixed with the chalk and a circular armilla or bracelet of ivory.

Beneath them was a skeleton, apparently of a female, extended at full length, every tooth was perfect and near the head were two beads of blue glass, one of jet and a beautiful ornament set in gold, enamelled and chequered like a chess-board. Through one of the glass beads was a wire loop of gold, and through the other an elegant gold chain very nicely worked.

(1812, 235)

Knowledge of some of the ironwork, a double rectangular cleat, two fragmentary eyelets, and an iron buckle is based on P Crocker's drawings, actual size, which were engraved by J Basire in Colt Hoare's publication of 1812 (pl 31, nos 3, 4, 5, 6) together with the millefiori pendant, the two beads, and the ivory ring, from a bag or pouch (Colt Hoare 1812, pl 32). Also illustrated, although not mentioned or described by Colt Hoare, is a gold biconical bead. All these finds are shown in Figure 89. The rectangular cleat is c 80mm long with a distance between the two plates of c 25mm. The more complete eyelet is 36mm long with a diameter across the eye of 14mm. It is uncertain whether the eyelets once had splayed out terminals, indicating fixing through a plank, or functioned in some other way. Colt Hoare mentions that two more pairs of cleats were found near the head of the skeleton, but were appropriated, presumably by the labourers. In view of the lack of archaeological method, it seems a fair deduction that other items of ironwork could have been 'appropriated' or were overlooked by Colt Hoare's labourers. The observation that the skeleton was 'extended at full length' would suggest that the grave deposit had not been previously disturbed. It is nevertheless curious that

the items of personal jewellery, certainly a necklace, consisted of such a tantalising and fragmentary group. The biconical gold bead can be paralleled by four at Roundway Down. Similarly the gold chain with its pendant gold and millefiori plaque seems incomplete. It may have been part of a linked pin suite, as can also be paralleled at Roundway Down or Cow Lowe, Derbyshire. Hence, the possibility should not be overlooked that items of jewellery, in addition to the more mundane iron cleats, were also appropriated. In our search for parallels to the Swallowcliffe bed, the loss of the Woodyates ironwork is to be regretted, and though the existence of a bed in the Woodyates barrow might be deduced, it must remain an uncertainty.

The evidence for a bed in the barrow on Roundway Down is perhaps even more circumstantial, as no illustrations of the ironwork were ever made, and inferences about the possible existence of a bed are based solely on close reading of the original reports of the excavation, which was clearly unscientific and haphazard. I must agree with the sentiments expressed by John Yonge Akerman:

It is much to be regretted that the excavation of this tumulus was not superintended by some persons accustomed to such researches, as the details which have reached us are not so satisfying as could be desired.

Akerman continues:

We are informed that the labourers, after cutting through a stratum of peculiarly fine and dark mould, at the depth of seven feet from the apex of the tumulus, reached the chalk level, upon which the interment had been made. The skeleton, much decomposed, had apparently been deposited in a wooden cist or coffin, *bound round and clamped together with strong iron plates or hoops* [my italics]. Several portions of the ironwork had fibres of wood still adhering to them.

(1855, 2)

The report by J Merewether (1851, 47-8) gives the additional information that the ironwork 'remained precisely as originally placed. The skeleton lay east and west, the head towards the latter point.' The orientation of the skeleton, however, is contradicted in a communication by the Rev J B Hughes of Marlborough read at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries on 7 December 1843 (*Proc Soc Antiq* 1st ser 1843, 12-13) who states that the skeleton lay north-south, the head to the north.

If I am justified in making a comparison between the Swallowcliffe burial and that at Roundway Down (similarity of bronze-bound bucket plus the affinity of suggested bed) the inference must be that an east-west orientation, with the head to the west, is more likely.

Further information about the burial is contained in a letter from the Revd Richard Symes published by Paul Robinson who mentions 'in the four corners of the space prepared in the bed of the chalk for the



Fig 89 Grave finds from Woodyates, Dorset (Scale 1:1) (after Colt Hoare 1812)

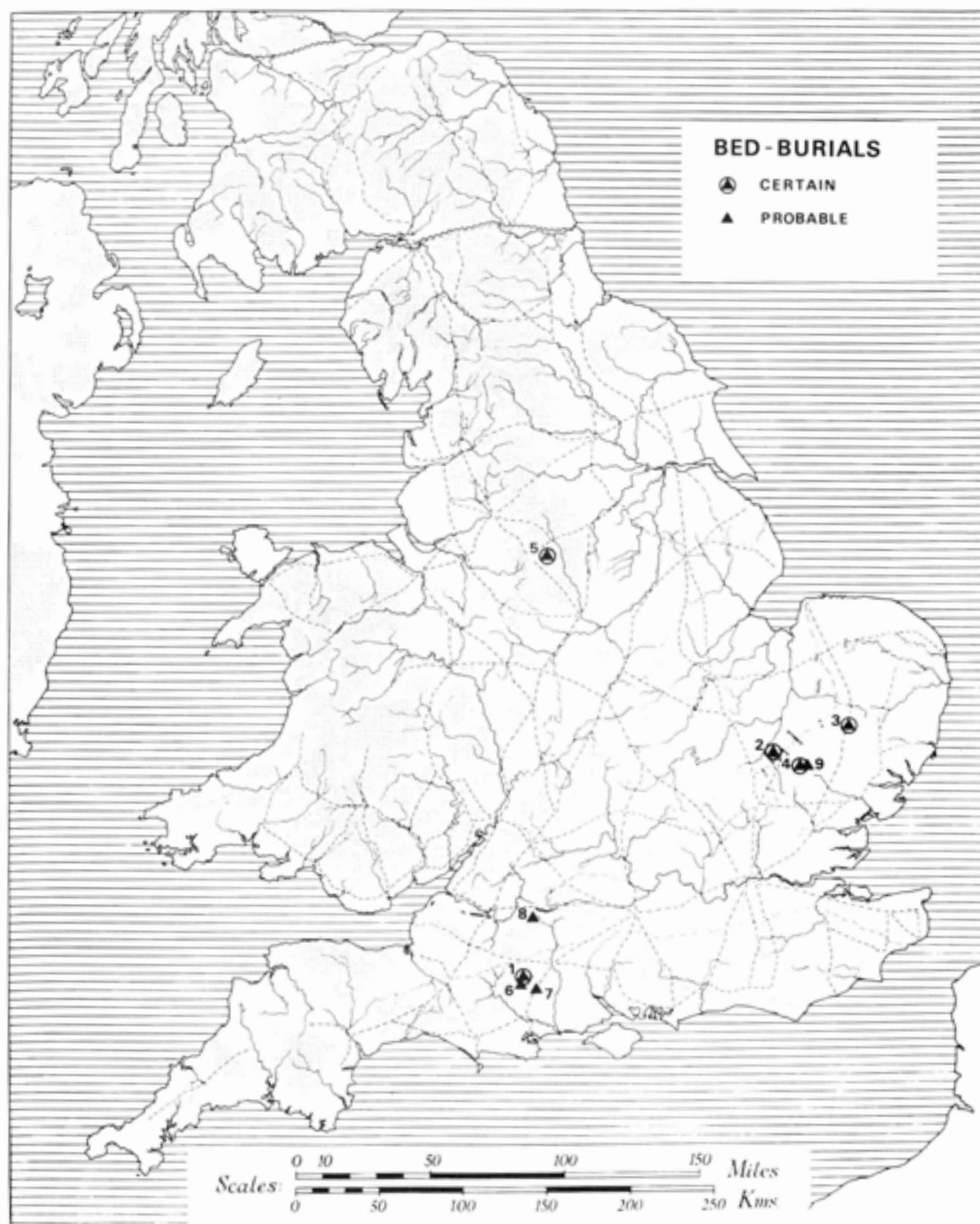


Fig 90 Distribution of certain and probable bed burials: 1 Swallowcliffe Down; 2 Cherry Hinton Gr 4; 3 Ixteworth; 4 Shudy Camps Gr 29; 5 Lapwing Hill; 6 Winkelbury Hill Barrow 1; 7 Woodyates; 8 Roundway Down; 9 Shudy Camps Gr 24

reception of the body, there were shallow basins (sic) cut in the natural chalk, containing burnt bones of animals, as we thought, of the dog, fox and deer' (1978, 194).

How reliable this evidence is remains debatable. Merewether (1851, 48) says that the animal bones were of dog, cat, horse and boar. It is possible, but there are no means of verification, that the four depressions in the chalk were Bronze Age cremations and not contemporary with the Anglo-Saxon inhumation.

In spite of the lack of positive evidence for the existence of a bed in the Roundway barrow the references to some kind of wooden container 'bound round and clamped together with strong iron plates or hoops' do suggest, in the light of the more tangible evidence from Swallowcliffe Down or Lapwing Hill that this could have been a bed burial. All the bed burials identified so far, both certain and probable (see Fig 90) would seem to share a similar chronological horizon within the later seventh century. Sonia Hawkes (Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 48-9) has argued that the Roundway Down jewellery belongs to the last quarter of the seventh century (for a discussion of the chronology of the Swallowcliffe and Roundway Down burials see above, p 58). The associated grave goods show this to have been a rich, high status burial. From near the neck of the body were seven gold pendants from a necklace, *en cabochon* garnet or glass paste settings, interspaced with four biconical beads of gold wire. Not found *in situ*, but subsequently found during the sifting of the excavated grave fill, were a pair of gold linked pins attached by a gold chain to a central, gold mounted, blue glass paste stud with a moulded cruciform design, probably of Irish workmanship. Like the pectoral cross in the Ixworth bed burial, the cross motif on this stud could indicate that its owner was Christian. By the feet of the burial were the remains of a bronze-bound bucket (see above, Fig 50) described above (p 58). In addition it is possible that the 'minor objects of bronze...apparently parts of a fastening or padlock' recorded in *Archaeol J* (1851, 177) and *Wilts Archaeol Mag* 1 (1854, 198n) could imply that as at Swallowcliffe there was also a casket. New research by Paul Robinson has also suggested that at least one important coin, a Merovingian gold tremissis, struck by Gratus of Sion (c 605-15), was found in the burial in 1840 and subsequently concealed (1978, 195). Although the evidence is circumstantial, as is that for the bed, Robinson has argued that this chronological evidence does not necessarily affect the dating of the burial to between 650 and 675 or possibly as late as 700 as proposed by Sonia Hawkes:

For dating the burial this is solely a *terminus post quem* and there is not justification for arguing from it that the burial is from about the time of the first quarter of the seventh century. In particular, as it appears to be a single coin find, there is no way of determining whether it was a coin taken from circulation to be placed with the burial, an heirloom or keepsake of the

Roundway Down lady, or an older Merovingian coin acquired from the stock of a later seventh-century jeweller to go into the grave.

(Robinson 1978, 195)

To sum up the foregoing evidence, I have identified a number of graves, containing distinctive iron fixtures, which have been postulated as bed burials. From a total of nine, five have been identified as 'certain' and four as 'probable' (Fig 90). With the exception of the graves from Shudy Camps and Ixworth all the graves were located within barrows. Table 1 shows the size of each grave. The chronological evidence would suggest that all are seventh-century, the majority belonging to the second half of the century. Four of the graves, Swallowcliffe, Ixworth, Woodyates, and Roundway Down are certainly female. The skeleton in Shudy Camps grave 24 was apparently that of a young woman, whereas Lethbridge tentatively identified the skull and pelvis in Shudy Camps grave 29 as masculine. The grave goods in the Lapwing Hill barrow conclusively identify this as a male burial. The sex of the Winkelbury Hill Barrow 1 grave and the Cherry Hinton grave have not been determined. Clearly bed burial was neither an exclusively female nor male prerogative.

To date, the custom of bed burial amongst the Anglo-Saxons would appear to be a seventh-century phenomenon, associated with high status burials. Certainly as a result of the Swallowcliffe discovery and the listed parallels it must be admitted that the geographical distribution of bed burials shows the custom to be more widespread than has previously been recognised in the archaeological literature. The distribution of bed burials recognised so far deserves some comment. Their concentration is focused in two areas, the Anglian territory east of Cambridge and a westerly group of Wessex burials, with the Lapwing Hill burial as a single northerly outlier in the Anglian Peak District. They are noticeably absent in any of the Kentish cemeteries, where only coffined burials have been identified.

The function of rectangular cleats was to secure butt-jointed planking and their use could be applicable to a number of artefacts: beds, coffins, biers, chests, carts, and so on. Thus the presence of cleats alone with no other iron fittings or nails (as at

**Table 1: Comparative sizes of bed burials**

Bed burials	Head	Length	Width	Depth
Swallowcliffe	W	9ft	5ft 3in	4ft
Shudy Camps grave 29*	SW	7ft 6in	3ft 3in	2ft 10in
Cherry Hinton grave 4	S	8ft	5ft	6in
Shudy Camps grave 24	NW	—	—	—
Winkelbury Hill Barrow 1	W?	8ft 6in	6ft 10in	3ft 6in
Lapwing Hill (male)	—	—	—	1ft
Ixworth	—	—	—	—
Woodyates, Pentridge	—	—	—	—

Note\* Depth is from ground level, not from the top of the barrow.



Shudy Camps grave 24) could belong to some planked, boxed structure to be interpreted as either bed or coffin. It is only the close proximity of this grave to the other bed grave at Shudy Camps, grave 29, and the traces of textiles and grasses on the cleats, possibly from a mattress, that makes the interpretation of a bed more probable.

Indeed in the Sutton Hoo ship burial the existence of two roughly parallel rows of iron cleats has been the focus of recent debate and speculation (Evison 1979, 121–38; *ibid* 1980, 357–61; East 1984, 79–84). In the opinion of Professor Evison, the remains of 19 cleats (of which the exact positions of only twelve are known) confirm the existence of a coffin within the burial chamber. The Sutton Hoo cleats are single and larger in scale than those from the Swallowcliffe grave, the largest complete example measuring 163×31mm. Mrs Katherine East has disputed Professor Evison's interpretation suggesting instead that they may have formed part of a flooring reinforcement or movable bier and that the position of the cleats is not consistent with their having been used to join the side planks of a coffin. She has noted that 'similar large cleats come from the Taplow and Broomfield barrows and can be found amongst the miscellaneous metalwork from the Sarre cemetery' (East 1984, 82). This is not the place to enter into a detailed analysis of the Sutton Hoo debate but it must be stated that the size of coffin (3.27×1.21m) proposed by Professor Evison does seem excessive in scale and redundant, given that the body and grave goods were already contained within a burial chamber. Neither Professor Evison nor Katherine East have suggested that the Sutton Hoo cleats could have been part of a bed. Vierck (1980, 346–9) has suggested, however, 'that the cleats from the royal ship-grave at Sutton Hoo formed neither part of the ship itself nor part of a coffin, but represent an oversized bed-like piece of furniture or podium.' The theory of a bed within the burial chamber is one of a number of possibilities although, on the evidence of

the cleats alone, it is hardly conclusive. The inventory of ironwork from the Sutton Hoo burial has not produced fixtures like any of the ironwork from Swallowcliffe or Shudy Camps to give support to the bed suggestion, but Professor Evison in a later article claimed to have identified the fragments of four large iron eyelets (or 'looped staples' as she refers to them) associated with the cleats which she has suggested secured ring handles anchored to the side walls of a large open coffin, to aid carrying (1986, 207–13). Parallels for such carrying fixtures are cited by Evison on the iron and cedar wood coffin of St Paulinus who died in AD 358, an elaborate Langobardic coffin from Civezzano, and in an Anglo-Saxon context on a coffin found in a late seventh-century burial at Lowbury Hill, Berkshire. The use of such rings and securing eyelets, however, is not exclusive to coffins. In a series of chamber graves of the Viking period in Jutland and Schleswig they occur as fixtures along with other iron fittings, nails and angled brackets, on the sides of rectangular wagon bodies with curved bases, which now functioned in the secondary usage as large, open coffins (Müller-Wille 1976, 13ff, Abb 1, 2; Roesdahl 1982, 165, fig 44). The possibility should be considered, therefore, that the body and personal grave goods in the Sutton Hoo burial were contained not in a coffin or bed-like piece of furniture, but in the planked framework of a cart or wagon. Possibly like the Viking age carts it may have had a curved base. Certainly this would explain the convex curvature noted on the Sutton Hoo cleats. (Professor Evison's opinion that the curvature of the cleats was caused by the shrinkage of the planking across the grain is not convincing.) Also such an item makes more sense in view of the proposed dimensions (3.27×1.21m) rather than the outsize coffin proposed by Professor Evison. Such a structure has also been suggested by Arwidsson in Valsgärde grave 7 (1977, 99–103, Abb 101, Taf 42).

For the Bretwalda Redwald it would be appropriate in his afterlife to have, in addition to his regalia and

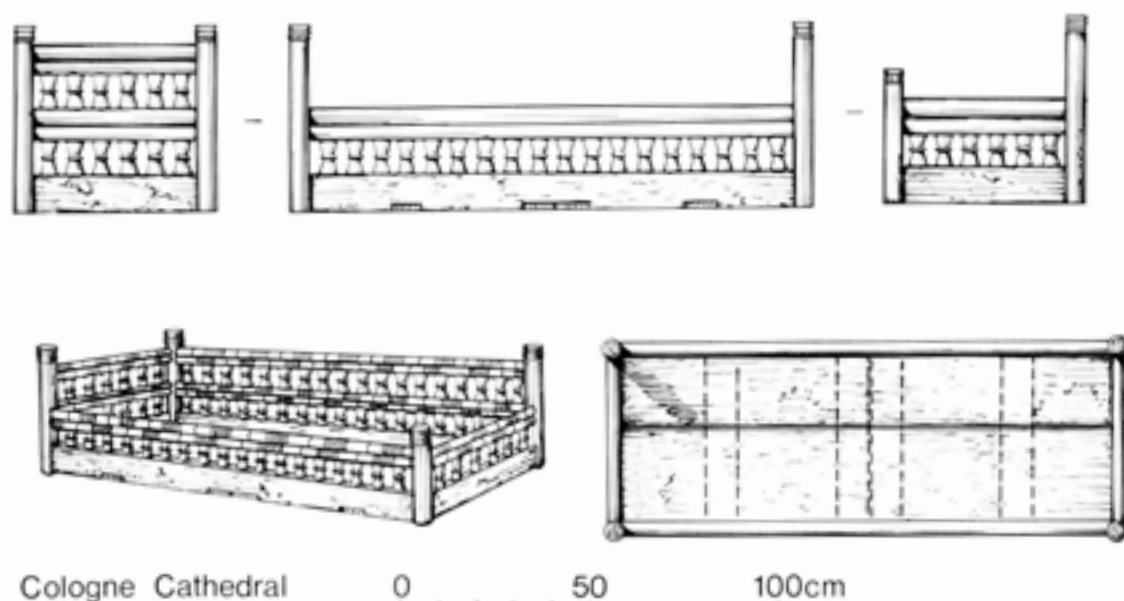


Fig 91 Reconstruction of wooden bed from burial of a princeling at Cologne Cathedral (after Doppelfeld 1960b)

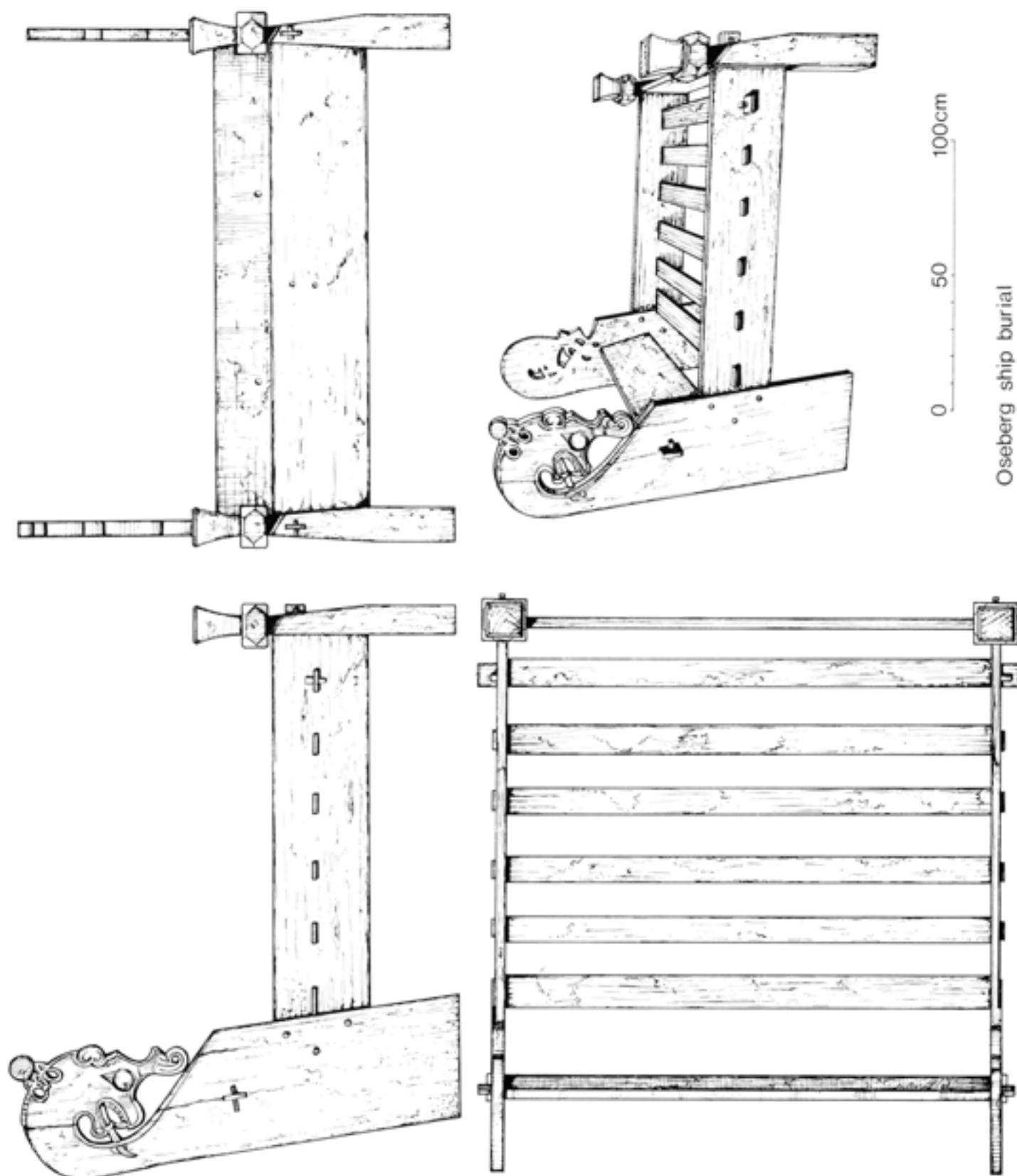
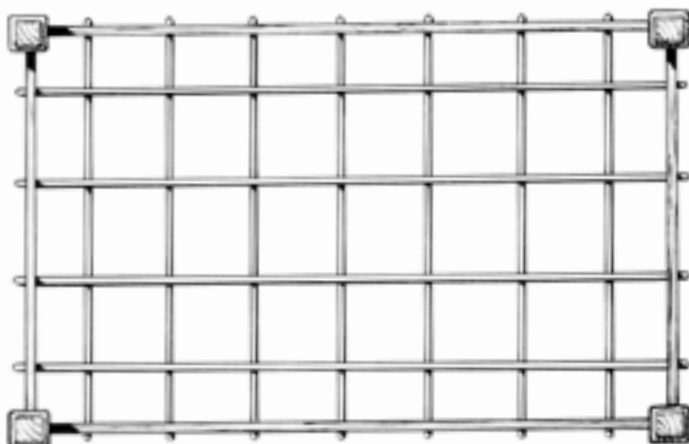
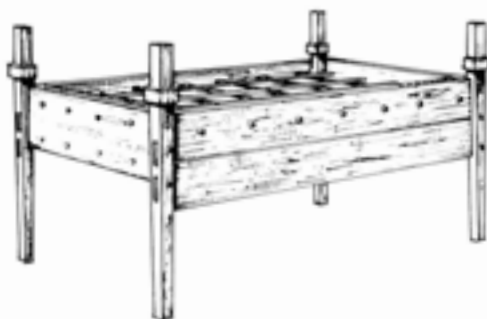
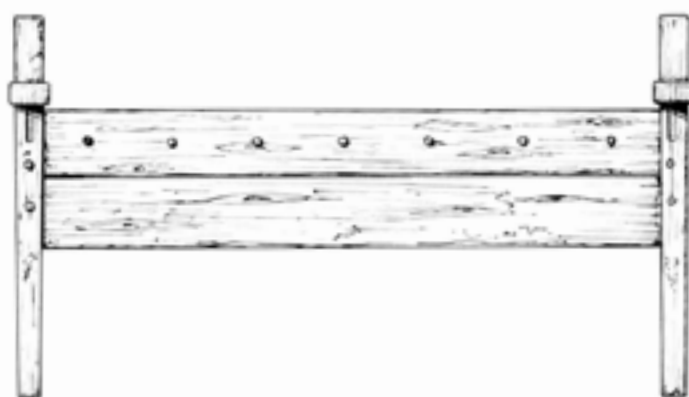
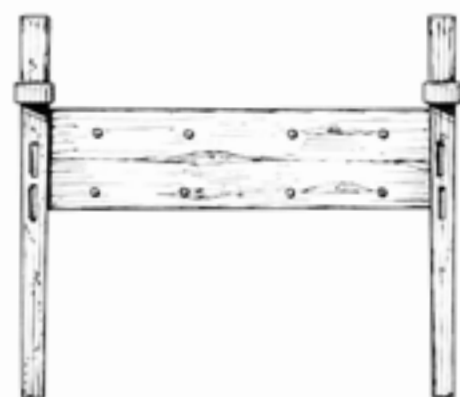
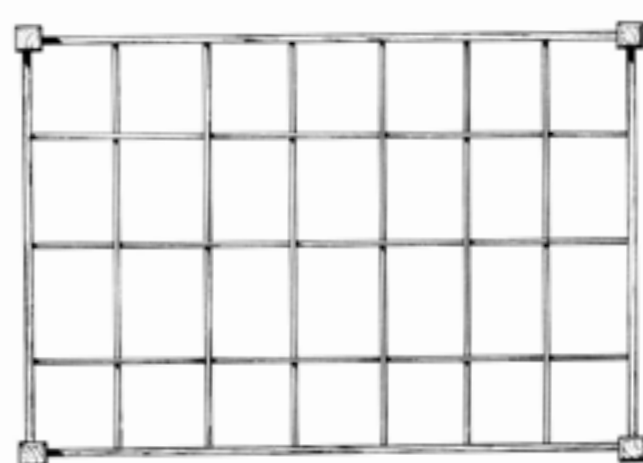
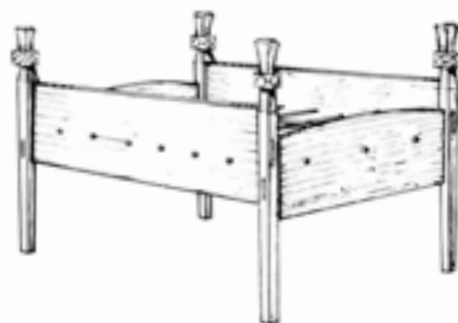
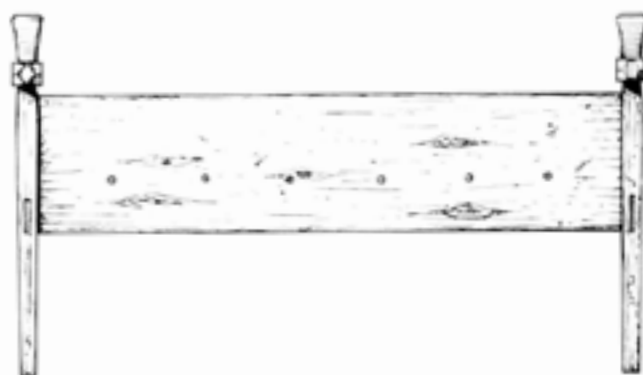
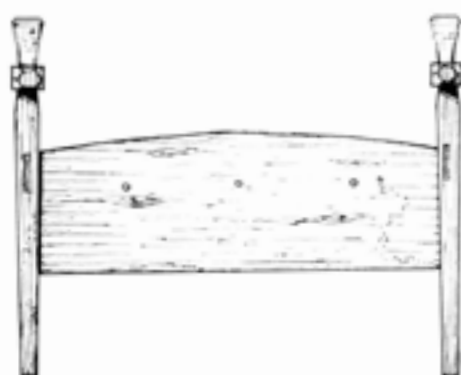


Fig 92 Reconstruction of large wooden bed from Oseberg (after Grieg 1928)



Oseberg ship burial, no 192



0 50 100 cm

Oseberg ship burial, no 234

Fig 93 Reconstruction of two smaller wooden beds from Oseberg (after Grieg 1928)



Fig 94 Folding metal campaign bed

personal provisions, the means of transport for both land and sea journeys. The ship was provided, but whether a cart or wagon, in which he was laid, was placed within the burial chamber of the ship may well remain a matter for debate.

It is important to recognise that during the seventh century variations in burial ritual did exist with structures other than coffins serving as body containers. What such variations signified is uncertain. A body in a bed or cart would, at the grave and on the journey to the grave, be on display, whereas a body in a lidded coffin would be concealed. A bed also suggests a greater concern for the comfort of the body, in its final resting place within the grave. There is no evidence to suggest that the beds identified in Anglo-Saxon graves were not household objects of the wealthy families to whom they belonged. The complexity of the Swallowcliffe bed refutes the notion that such an elaborate item of carpentry with its lattice base was made only as a funeral item. Like the satchel and the maple casket it must have been considered a prized possession.

Elsewhere in the Germanic world beds have been placed in graves. Figure 91 shows the wooden bed of the Frankish princeling found in a sixth-century grave under Cologne cathedral (Werner 1964, 209, fig 6), along with another item of furniture, a chair. The bed is made of oak and plum; the bed frame corner post and planked base being of oak, the turned and

bobbined sides being of plum. In form and construction it is quite unlike the proposed reconstruction of the Swallowcliffe bed, having no ironwork fittings, being of a pegged construction, and with one long side and head end twice the height of the opposing side and foot end. It is assumed that the legs at each corner had been removed prior to burial. In both form and scale the bed is more like a substantial cot. Its dimensions as reconstructed are: length 1.37m, width 0.53m, height 0.5m (at least, without legs). Found with the bed was a chair of similar turned and pegged construction with a leather seat.

Whilst parallels for the forms of carpentry shown in the Cologne bed can be found in beds from several Alamannic graves, for example at Oberflacht (Veeck 1931, Taf 2, 5a, 5b) it is clear that such beds could hardly be the prototypes or have influenced the design and construction of the Anglo-Saxon beds as exemplified at Swallowcliffe, which evidently belong to a different tradition.

Beds of planked construction are known from the Viking period in Scandinavia. Examples were found in both the Oseberg and Gokstad ship burials from Norway, but none have ironwork fittings, being constructed only of wood, with peg and dowel jointing. Three complete beds were found in the Oseberg ship as well as four carved vertical end planks (so called bed-horses) from possibly two

further beds. Reconstructions of the three complete beds are illustrated in Figures 92 and 93. The largest and most elaborate of the three beds, which was made of beech, is 2.20m long and 1.90m wide. Its vertical end planks with the profiled open-jawed animal head carving are 1.59m high. Jointed to the planked sides were six smaller planks which would have supported the mattress. The internal dimensions of the bed, 1.85m wide and 1.75m long clearly suggest that this was a double bed, unlike the narrow width of the Swallowcliffe bed which must have been single. One feature to be noted is the fact that the headboard, like that of the Swallowcliffe bed, is not vertical, but slopes backwards, a feature which is also found on a bed in the Gokstad ship.

The two other beds (Fig 93) from the Oseberg ship lack the carved head boards, and are of a simpler construction, comparable in many respects to Norwegian peasant beds from later periods. Both are made of beech and are of plank and post construction, but are of special interest because of the intersecting grid-structure of horizontal poles used to support a mattress. This mode of construction is also found on beds in the Gokstad find, and provides a suggestive parallel for the more closely spaced laths of ash which comprised the lattice support of the Swallowcliffe bed. Such a support would be resilient but more flexible than rigid planking. The lack of ironwork in the form of cleats, eyelets, or nails on the Scandinavian beds however could be interpreted as evidence of greater carpentry skills by the Viking craftsmen over their seventh-century Anglo-Saxon counterparts. The bed in Figure 93 (no 192 in the Oseberg inventory) is 1.78m long and 1.12m wide. On each long side a row of seven round holes secured seven poles, which underlay a row of four poles. The third bed (no 234 in the Oseberg inventory) is 1.72m long and 1.20m wide, with much deeper side planking with a grid structure of poles, six on the long sides and four on the shorter sides, which are interwoven. Comment should be made about the height of the Oseberg beds. Bed no 192 shows that the mattress was 0.65m off the ground. The height of the mattress on bed no 234 was about 0.50m above the ground. Whether the Swallowcliffe bed had corner posts of similar height to the Oseberg beds is

unknown: the evidence from the excavation is ambiguous. Some disarray of the grave goods and iron fixtures as did happen would be caused by just the collapse of the planked sides. If the Swallowcliffe bed did have corner posts, it could be deduced that they had been sawn off prior to the deposition within the grave.

To conclude this appraisal of the Swallowcliffe bed and its Anglo-Saxon and Germanic parallels, some brief comments on its affinities with the beds of the medieval period and later seem justified. Although the surviving evidence for the Swallowcliffe bed is fragmentary and incomplete it represents, nevertheless, a significant and important addition to the history of furniture. It would appear to be the most elaborate of the Anglo-Saxon beds, so far recognised, given the quantity and variety of the associated ironwork.

Yet there are features in its design and construction which are shared by other beds widely separated in time. We can deduce from the evidence of the two side-rails, that the bed was portable and had been deliberately designed to be carried. Certainly in the medieval period, the practice of moving from one place to another, from one hall to another, would have prompted the design of special beds, which could be dismantled easily, packed for carriage and quickly set up again. As such points of comparison can be made with the so called 'field bed' noted in medieval inventories, and also the 'campaign bed' of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which had a lattice base, made of wood in the earlier versions and replaced by metal strips in later exemplars (Fig 94). What may have become a more spartan and functional design in the metal version of the bed illustrated must be seen nevertheless as part of a design continuum, of which the Swallowcliffe bed is but an early exemplar.

## Notes

1 As this cleat is in two pieces in Salisbury Museum it is possible that Pitt Rivers was mistaken in thinking that they were united. The comparisons from Swallowcliffe and Shudy Camps suggest that here were two cleats with a terminal missing from each.



### 3 The textiles

by Elisabeth Crowfoot

The textile remains from the Swallowcliffe Down barrow (Table 2) are very small fragments, but of unusual interest. With so disturbed a burial it is not surprising that there is nothing identifiable as from the woman's clothing, and, with the exception of the scraps present in the casket area, much of the textile evidence seems to be concerned with the furnishing and construction of the bed.

The different types of cleats, eyelets, and nails employed are associated with different fabric traces, but in all the fibres have been completely replaced by oxides from the metal they were in contact with, though in some cases wool or flax can be suggested by the spin and appearance of the weaves.

The largest areas of textile naturally come from the larger pieces of metal: the pairs of rectangular cleats on the outer edge of the bed area that may have been part of the main bedframe. Here there are clear oxidised fragments from two twill weaves. The coarser, with mixed spinning (Z warp, S weft) would have been of wool; as far as can be seen it is a simple diagonal 2/2 (four-shed) weave, a suitable fabric for a cloak or blanket. The appearance of the finer weave lying underneath suggests flax, with uneven yarns, Z spun in both systems, a twill with a chevron reverse (Fig 95a), though insufficient survives to show if this was a broken diamond, ie with a reverse also in the other system. A finer flax piece from Kempston, Bedfordshire, shows very widely spaced diamonds, which might have been the case here. These flax twills do not usually appear to have been used for clothing, though there is a possible example on brooches from a woman's grave at Spong Hill, Norfolk; a broken diamond twill in the Sutton Hoo ship burial seems to have been the cover of a down pillow (Bruce-Mitford 1975, SH 12, figs 337, 447), another was associated with a cremation bowl in the 1938 Sutton Hoo excavations (Crowfoot 1967, 38, 39), and at Mucking, Essex (grave 553) and Finglesham, Kent (grave 203) fine flax twills were used to cover the mouths of bowls or buckets. Perhaps the two glass palm cups (near cleat No 26) may have been so wrapped or covered; but a possible fragment of a similar weave at the opposite side of the bed (near cleat No 28) may suggest the fabric was used over a larger area.

The tabby (plain) weave on some of the twisted round-headed cleats which may also be associated with the bed frame had obviously deteriorated before oxidisation of the fibres began; its structure, with one system (?warp) close and fine, almost hiding a coarser ?weft, again suggests flax. A near warp-face weave is often found in tapes or bands, as in the Sutton Hoo shoe tape, and bindings on scabbards (Bruce-Mitford 1975, 450, 465, figs 348, 356, 357) though its proximity (on cleat No 38) to the bucket may perhaps indicate that here it was a larger piece of cloth used to cover the top.

The fragments that seem most obviously of use in some part of the bed construction come from the small eyelets. On some there are very decayed traces of textile, probably twill, and on ten a thin string, Z-spun, S-plyed, can be seen to pass through the eyelet hole. The string is not very thick, but was evidently held firmly in place within the ring of each eyelet. On one eyelet (Lab no 780468) not described or illustrated in the catalogue are traces probably of leather, and it seems possible that the string was used to fasten leather upholstery, perhaps to the wooden slats which have been suggested as forming a supporting lattice, and possibly a raised edge to the bed. The twill traces are small and doubtful, in one case the spinning appears to be mixed, Z/S, in another all Z, as in the twill fabrics on the large rectangular cleats.

On the small nails close to the small eyelets there are again fragments of Z-spun twill, and on four, traces of a simple 4-hole tablet-weave (Fig 95b) of a type used for braids and the borders of woven pieces. It is possible that these could have been used in some form of upholstery of the bed edge, but the fact that the textile remains are on the flat heads of the nails, not beneath them on the wood, probably indicates a bordered cloth thrown over the bed.

One of the textiles of the casket area is associated only with the remains of two small knives (Nos 17, 18), a fine tabby weave, again perhaps of flax, which might come from a bag, or cloth in which they were kept; coarse plyed threads lying over it could have been the string tied round. The other remains are confused. On the long iron rod (No 16) probably lying on the base of the casket, the textile traces when first seen suggested a very close warp-face tabby weave, with paired or plyed wefts, lying in layers or folds, perhaps again a tape wound round the metal; after later cleaning this suggested more probably a tablet-weave, again perhaps a braid; a clearer ?tablet-weave on the key (No 3k) might be a similar braid used to tie it to the casket.

Traces of twill with mixed (Z/S) spinning on both these metal pieces could come from the woman's skirt, the only possible clothing remains preserved;

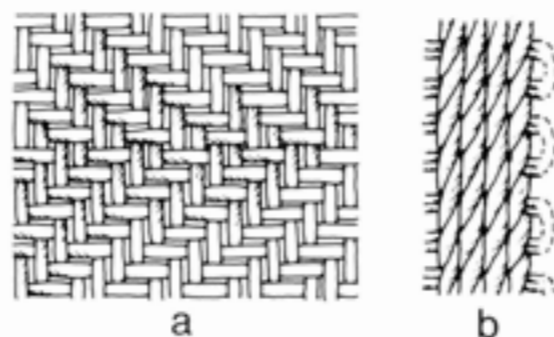


Fig 95 Textiles, Swallowcliffe Down: *a* Fragment of chevron or broken diamond twill (750170) no 26; the shaded area shows the clear surviving threads; *b* 4-hole tablet-weave, border or braid as on small nails and casket key (750205) no 3k. With a deteriorated surface the difficulty of distinguishing this from a warp-face tabby is obvious

Table 2: Catalogue of textile remains

In all the textile remains in this burial the fibres were replaced with metal oxides from objects with which they had been in contact. Weave counts are given in threads per cm, except where otherwise stated, the probable warp count being placed first, and overall measurements in centimetres. The letters Z and S indicate the spinning direction of the yarns.

Cat Object no	AM Lab no	Spinning	Weave	Count	Measure-ment	Position	Remarks
26 Double cleat	750170	(a) Z/Z	2/2 twill, chevron or broken diamond	17/16	3.5×2.0	R edge of bed, waist level	?Main bed structure. Appearance suggests flax (Fig 95a)
		(b) Z/S	Twill	—	—	Lying over (a)	Fragments, surface damaged
28 Double cleat	750177	(a) Z/Z	As above	10/9 on 5mm	0.6×0.5	L edge of bed frame	
		(b) Z/S	Twill	—	2.5×0.5	Lying over (a)	Scraps, deteriorated
25 Double cleat	750178	(b) Z/S	2/2 twill	c 12/12	4.5×2.7	Side of metal away from wood	Surface damaged
44 Cleat nail	750183	Z/Z	Tabby	est 24/12	2.0×1.6	R side between hand rail and head-board stay	Near large rectangular cleats. ?Warp fine, even, ?weft coarse; all over flat edges
38 Round-headed cleat	750192	Z/?	?Tabby	—	0.5×0.7	L corner, foot of bed, near bucket	One system fine, close; textile lying above ?leather
43 Round-headed cleat	780379	Z/Z	?Tabby	—	3.0×2.0	L corner near cleat	Similar traces
— Round-headed cleat	780390	Z/Z	?Tabby	—	—	R end bed, near foot	On this and No 43 fabric had begun to deteriorate before replacement of fibre round ring
57 Large eyelet	780491	Z	Thread	—	—	R side near head-board stay	
65 Small eyelet	750189	Z, S ply	String	—	—	Round frame of bed?	In inner ring, with small nails through eyelet hole
60 Small eyelet	780331	Z, S ply	String	—	—		On rings of eyelet holes
68 Small eyelet	780376	Z/?	Threads	—	—		On cleat ring
69 Small eyelet	780399	Z, S ply	String	—	—		On ring of eyelet
		Z/?	?Twill	—	0.5×0.3		Parallel threads on ring
63 Small eyelet	780403	Z/?	Threads	—	—		Deteriorated, across ring
— Small eyelet	780407	Z/S ply	String	—	—		Through eyelet hole
66 Small eyelet	780419	Z, S ply	String	—	—		Through eyelet and across ring
		Z/?	?Twill	—	—		On ring of eyelet
— Small eyelet	780468	Z, S ply	String	—	—		Through eyelet hole
		Z/Z	?Twill	—	—		On ring; traces of ?leather
64 Small eyelet	780470	Z/?	Threads	—	—		Through eyelet, ?damaged string
		Z/S	?Woven	—	—		Against edge of ring
67 Small eyelet	780486	Z/S ply	String	—	—		Through eyelet hole
		Z/Z	?Twill	—	—		On eyelet ring, deteriorated
81 Small nail	750182	Z/Z, S ply	Tablet weave, 4-hole	7 twists, 6 wefts on 5mm	0.8×0.6	On ?inner edge round bed R, chest level	On nail heads, ?braid or border of cloth
77 Small nail	780355	Z/Z	2/2 twill	Est 6/5 on 5mm	0.8×0.8		
82 Small nail	780367	Z/?Z, S ply	?Twill or tablet	—	—		Threads seen in section
— Small nail	780430	Z/Z	2/2 twill	c 8/8 on 5mm	0.6×0.5		Threads seen in section
79 Small nail	780449	Z/?	Tablet weave border	—	1.5×0.4	R, lower leg level	Deteriorated; border seems to go into more open weave
83 Small nail	780453	Z/Z, S ply	Tablet weave	6 twists, 5-6 wefts on 5mm	1.6×1.6	R, knee level	Surface deteriorated
74 Small nail	780473	Z/Z	2/2 twill	c 8/8 on 5mm	1.4×1.4		
75 Small nail	780474	Z/?	?Twill	—	—		Very deteriorated
— Small nail	780497	Z/?	?Twill	—	—		Very deteriorated
17, Knives	750205	(a) Z/Z	Tabby	22/19, 12/9-10 on 5mm (24/19)	0.8×0.8	?Inside casket	One side of iron blades. ?bag, ?flax, uneven spinning
18					0.9×0.6		
					1.5×1.0		
		Z, S ply	Threads	—	—		Coarse; lying over (a), ?tied round
16 Iron rod	750174(3)	(b) Z/S	?Twill, with	—	0.7×0.7	?Lying under casket	Traces textile all over, layers, ?tape
	750174 (4)	(c) Z/S ply	tablet weave	7-8 twists			7 wefts, 5mm
		(d) Z/S prs	Tabby	c 10 (2.5mm), c40/14			7 (5mm), c40/14
3k Key	750205	(c) Z/Z?	Tablet, 4-hole	7 twists 5mm	—		79 twists preserved, all Z (as in Fig 95b)
		(b) Z/S	?Twill	—	—		wefts protruding traces

in this position they seem unlikely to be from the twill which touched the large metal cleats.

Apart from the casket contents and the constructional feature of the strings in the small eyelets, there seem to be traces of three textiles associated with the bed: the chevron or diamond twill, probably linen and perhaps with a tablet-woven border, a covering or furnishing in the middle area; a tabby

fabric towards the lower end, covering the bucket, and perhaps the feet; and a large woollen twill cloak or blanket with mixed spinning, whose widespread remains suggest an upper coverlet thrown over the body and bed, whose outer edge may have been responsible for the traces of textile the excavators thought could be seen on earth to the left of the burial, on the north side of the grave (see Fig 19).

## 4 *Posses Hlaewe*, the Swallowcliffe Charter

The case for considering the Swallowcliffe barrow as *Posses Hlaewe*, as indicated in the title of this chapter, needs to be stated. Reference to *Posses Hlaewe* is first recorded in the boundary clause of an Anglo-Saxon charter of AD 940, known from a fourteenth-century copy in the British Library (BL Harley 436, fos 71–2v, S 468, BCS 756, KCD 387 and vol iii, 415–16). As with many other charters, the original text of the land grant was in Latin and the description of the boundary perambulation was in Old English. A translation of part of the Latin conveyance states:

Wherefore I, Edmund, King of England by the help of divine grace, freely give by perpetual donation, a certain part of land in my jurisdiction to a certain minister of mine called Garulf, 9 *mansae* of land in that place which the country people jokingly call the 'cliff of the swallow' that is Swealewan clif.

Comments on the charter have been made by Grundy (1919, 259–61), Drögereit (1935, 372–7), Darlington (1955, 91), Finberg (1964, no 253), and Sawyer (1968, no 468) where it has been considered authentic.

This is the earliest written mention of the place-name Swallowcliffe. Without too much digression into the place-name evidence of the present day parish it is perhaps worth noting that Gover and Stenton 1939 says that the name probably does refer to the bird 'swallow', but the name of a stream is also possible. As an example of the latter it quotes 'Swalecliffe' in Kent which is on the river Swale.

Commander Stephen Jenkins of Vine Cottage, Swallowcliffe, who has prepared notes on the parish of Swallowcliffe (which had been communicated to the Vatchers and are now in the excavation archive) has commented:

I have seen no record of our stream ever having been called 'Swale', and I am told this word implies a rushing stream which ours is not. Nor do I know of anywhere in the parish where a stream in its natural course could have been 'swallowed' by the disappearance into the ground, as some have suggested. I think that the words in the charter preamble which the country people jokingly call 'the cliff of the swallow' might be construed as suggesting that the name was a countryman's pun on an earlier name of somewhat similar sound. There was an early personal name 'Swelu' (*Notes on Wiltshire Names* J C Longstaff Vol 1, 107). There is also the name 'Swell Hill Wood' on the 6in map for the wood on the hillside going down to Sutton Row just over our northern boundary. The 'clif' could mean a steep hill or dune and could be applied to many features in the parish.

Professor John Dodgson is convinced that the placename Swallowcliffe must be an allusion to the bird, perhaps more specifically referring to sand

martins or something like, living in a bankside (pers comm).

## The Swallowcliffe Charter bounds

(Fig 96)

In quoting the boundary clauses I have cited the text which is given in Birch 1899 (BCS 756). Translation and comments are based on Grundy (1919, 251–61), with additional linguistic commentary provided by Professor John Mc N Dodgson.

*aerest on thane hwitan weg* – 'First to the White Way'. The White Way ran up the slope of the down at the south end of the eastern boundary towards the Row Ditch on Sutton Down.

*thonon on tha readan hane* – 'Then to the red stone'. The red stone was almost certainly at the south-east corner of the parish, up in the ridge close to the Row Ditch.

*of thaere hane on thone herpath to Posses hlaewe* – 'From the stone on the highway to Poss's Low (or Tumulus)'. This is the great ridgeway which forms the whole of the southern boundary of the parish, with the tumulus positioned one furlong north-west of the south-west corner of the parish, close to the British village on Middle Down.

*of thaem hlaewe to lytlan crundelle* – 'From the low to little quarry'. This is the old chalk pit at the bottom of the hill, a quarter of a mile north-west of the last tumulus.

*of thaem crundele on tha lytla hwitan gerythra beneathan yfre on thane thorn* – 'From the quarry to the little white gerythra beneath the escarpment and to the thorn tree'. The meaning of the word *gerythra* is unknown to Grundy. He states that it occurs several times in the Wiltshire charters, and is always associated with the foot of the slope of an escarpment (*yfre*). Professor Dodgson has commented that the word *gerythra* is not mysterious, meaning 'cleared place or ground' (See the *Revised Addenda and Corrigenda to the Supplement of Bosworth & Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*; see also Smith 1956, see also the place-name Ryther, West Riding of Yorks, *ibid* 1961, 65). The clause may therefore be translated 'from the quarry to the little white cleared ground (ie chalky soil?) beneath the escarpment as far as the thorn'.

*thonne of tham thorne tham herepathe on Hoddes stocc to uncer Wulfrices eald gemaere* – 'Then from the thorn tree to the highway to Hod's stake at the old (former) boundary of us two, Wulfic and me'. The highway is the main road to Wilton. The language of the survey leaves it uncertain whether the stake was by the road. It was no doubt the boundary stake of a ploughland. The boundary runs along the herepath for about one furlong. It is probable that the stake was at the point where the boundary leaves the road to pass north. Dodgson translates 'stocc' as tree stump, and has commented that there is an interesting speculation to be made as to who 'I' was, and who Wulfic was, and what altered their boundary.



Fig 96 Swallowcliffe Charter bounds and positions of recorded prehistoric and Saxon barrows

*thone andlang chealfa dune to tham holan pathe* – 'Then along Calves' Down to the hollow path'. This down is the isolated hill which stands a short half mile west of the village. Over the east edge of it runs Choulden lane (PN Wilts, 193). Grundy suspects that the name of the lane is that of the old down in a corrupted form. The hollow path was along the short stretch of boundary which runs west from the north side of *Chealfa Dun*. Probably the road coming west from the village took this line in former days.

*of tham holan pathe on wida ford andlang broces oth mythford* – 'From the hollow path to the ford of the wood and along the brook to the ford at the meeting of the streams'. Wida ford is mentioned in the Tisbury Charter K 641. It was at, or close to, the place where the road running west from the village crosses a stream at the extreme west angle of the parish. The brook at Woodford runs north-north-east along the boundary to meet, at a point three furlongs up the boundary, another brook which comes from the south-east of the village. Here was the Mythford. It is also mentioned in the Tisbury Charter.

*of tham forde on Waermundes treow* – 'From the ford to Waermund's tree'. This tree is also mentioned in the Tisbury Charter. Comparison of the two charters places it about at the west point of Swallowcliffe wood on the northern boundary.

*of tham treowe andang weges oth Wilburge mere* – 'From the tree along the way to Wilburg's pool'. This way is called the 'Green Way' in the Tisbury Charter. It is the way which runs all along the northern edge of the Swallowcliffe wood. The pool is also mentioned in the Tisbury Charter. It must have been on the northern boundary near the east end of that wood.

A note is appended to the survey: *and tvegen aecras mealcng mæde* – 'And two strips of dairy mead' – but nothing is said as to where this mead lay.

Grundy adds a further comment:

But far more noticeable omissions are the landmarks on the eastern part of the northern and on the whole of the eastern boundary. Either the manuscript has been mutilated or the copyist has been extraordinarily careless.

## Discussion

It should be apparent that three of the listed features on the eastern edge of the boundary of Figure 96 are not mentioned in the Swallowcliffe Charter. Grundy assumes that there have been omissions. Several of these features, however, had been listed in the year AD 901, when the land to the east of Swallowcliffe was given by charter by King Edward, the second son of King Alfred, to a thegn called Wihtbrord. This estate combined the lands that are now Fovant and Sutton Mandeville and was called *Fobbanfanta* (S 364, B 588, fourteenth century copy B L Harley 436, fol 42v-45). The boundary features of its western boundary coincide for the most part with the Swallowcliffe eastern boundary.

A third description of the eastern boundary of Swallowcliffe occurs in a second charter of Fovant (here spelt *Fobbefunta*) in AD 994 in which it was then given by King Aethelred to the church of St Mary at Wilton (S 881, K 687). A second description of the northern boundary of Swallowcliffe is contained in the Tisbury Charter of AD 984, dated 44 years after the Swallowcliffe Charter by King Aethelred to the Shaftesbury Monastery (S 850, a fifteenth-century copy and recording its renewal of a grant B L Harley 61 fos 2v-3v, k 641).

It must be stated that there are some difficulties in the interpretation of parts of the boundaries described in the Saxon charters owing to the possibility that some of the wording may have been lost and the certainty that some of the actual landmarks have been lost. This is especially the case with the three descriptions of the Swallowcliffe eastern boundary with intervals of 39 and 54 years between them, where manifestly different surveyors chose different landmarks and part of the described boundary seems to have changed.

For our purposes it is a pity that no charter for Ansty (originally *Anestige* meaning 'narrow path, generally up a steep place') exists which might elucidate and confirm features from the south-west corner of the Swallowcliffe boundary. Grundy's interpretation of the Swallowcliffe boundary perambulation confidently states that *Posses Hlaewe* is sited 'one furlong north-west of the south-west corner of the parish, close by the British village in Middle Down'. It should be pointed out that Grundy has slightly overestimated the distance but it is quite clear that he is not referring to the small prehistoric barrow in Ansty parish which lies approximately 90m (100 yards) south of the Swallowcliffe Saxon barrow.

The position of the Swallowcliffe barrow at the highest point on Middle Down and the fact that it lies on a boundary point between the parishes of Swallowcliffe and Ansty is doubly significant. It is at a crucial point on the boundary where there is a marked change in its direction as it swings more to the north-west towards the small chalk quarry (one of several) beneath the escarpment. Certainly this accords with the wording of the charter. What perhaps needs clarification is the reason for the absence of any boundary features in the survey on the southern edge, along the upper *Herepath*, the

ridgeway along the Downs. It is important to note that there were two *Herepaths* each going from east to west. The upper *Herepath* ran along the ridge, later the old turnpike road leading from Shaftesbury to Salisbury; the lower *Herepath* coincided with the present A30 (see Figure 96).

The selection of the Swallowcliffe barrow as a prominent boundary feature and the reason for the absence of any features along the southern edge in the charter perambulation becomes self evident in walking along the upper *Herepath* from east to west. As it is sited at the highest point on Middle Down the barrow is visible from any point along the *Herepath*. Of the three barrows situated on Middle Down, two of which have proved to contain seventh-century Anglo-Saxon interments, the Swallowcliffe barrow is the only one barrow actually on the boundary. With its highly prominent position the Swallowcliffe barrow best fits the wording of the charter and is therefore the most likely of the three to be equated with *Posses Hlaewe*.

An earlier suggestion (Clay 1924, 598) that a prehistoric barrow (grid ref ST 979256) (Figure 96, a) situated in the field on the south side of the ridge *Herepath* and c 1200m east of the Swallowcliffe barrow, was the *Posses Hlaewe* of the Swallowcliffe charter must now be seen to be wrong. This barrow was excavated by Dr Clay in 1923. Signs of disturbance were noticed but an intact Bronze Age cremation was discovered. The barrow's position, however, 90m south of the *Herepath*, in Ebbesbourne Wake is inconsistent with the wording of the charter. It could be argued that another possibility and an alternative to the Swallowcliffe barrow is the Saxon barrow in Alvediston parish (grid ref ST 967252) (Figure 96, b). This barrow, which is not shown on the 6in Ordnance Survey map, lies c 250m due south of the Swallowcliffe barrow and c 130m to the south-west of the present corner of Swallowcliffe parish boundary. Dr Clay who excavated this barrow in 1926 (Clay 1926, 435-9) believed this to be a primary Saxon barrow, but the evidence is not conclusive. Certainly this male burial with a sword and sugar-loaf shield boss is seventh century, and the relative proximity of this barrow to the *Herepath* may reinforce the notion that such a position is consistent with the wording of the charter. Against this notion would be the fact that at some time after AD 940 the boundary has been changed to the present one. Furthermore the barrow is sited on a lower contour than the Swallowcliffe barrow close by a ditch associated with the Iron Age settlement. As such it would be less visible than the Swallowcliffe barrow from distant sections of the *Herepath* being concealed by the banks and ditches of the Iron Age village, and therefore to an Anglo-Saxon surveyor perhaps not an appropriate boundary feature. Indeed it could be argued that if the south-west corner of the present day parish was included in Garulf's land unit the Iron Age earthworks would have been the more obvious boundary features.

As has already been mentioned, the position of the prehistoric barrow referred to by Clay (Figure 96, c) which lies c 100m south of the Swallowcliffe barrow in Ansty parish and c 40m from the boundary (grid



ref ST 967254) at the west end of the semicircular ditch on the west side of the Iron Age settlement, cannot be considered a strong contender for the nomenclature *Posses Hlaewe*. The VCH Wilts (152) lists this barrow as Ansty 4 and describes it as 10 paces in diameter, 9ins high and gorse covered.

Bonney (1966, 25–30) has shown that in Wiltshire 29% of pagan Anglo-Saxon burial sites lie on boundaries and a further 13% lie very near them, that is within 500ft (152m), a total of 42% on or near boundaries. Bonney argues that such a proportion of sites on or near parish boundaries is too high for mere coincidence. They surely indicate, Bonney infers, 'that those boundaries, as boundaries, were in being as early as the pagan Saxon period and they imply the existence of a settled landscape clearly divided among the settlements at a time prior to any documentary evidence for such.' In Bonney's survey 70 sites are listed, the Swallowcliffe barrow being included as an addendum (Bonney 1966, 30 no II) and referred to as the Ansty Barrow. The list comprises 13 cemetery sites, 9 primary burials in barrows, 30 secondary burials in barrows, and 18 burials in flat graves, either singly or in very small groups. All are inhumations.

Dr Martin Welch (1985, 19) provides a more detailed analysis of the Wiltshire evidence listed by Bonney. Welch has observed that 'totalled together, the thirty sites on or very near boundaries are dominated by barrows, five with primary burials (16.7%) and sixteen with second burials (53.3%), as opposed to just two cemeteries (6.7%) and seven burial sites (23.3%).' Thus, although barrow burials represent 55.8% of Wiltshire sites, they form 70% of burial sites on or very near boundaries (ie 65% of those on boundaries and 80% of those very near).

The existence of burial sites on or near parish boundaries is by no means peculiar to Wiltshire. Dr Della Hooke (1980, 22) has pointed out that in the West Midland counties of Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire the proportion is only slightly smaller, with 41% on or near boundaries although the percentage of barrow burials is much lower. More recently Ann Goodier (1984, 1–21) has provided a broader statistical survey based on 754 sites of which 135 (17.9%) do occur on boundaries, and of these approximately one third are barrow burials. Goodier concludes:

'the results strongly suggest that the Anglo-Saxons buried a significant proportion of their dead on the boundaries of their land-units and that some of these boundaries were incorporated in later estate boundaries, which in turn influenced the formation of ecclesiastical parish boundaries and those of civil parishes.'

(1984, 14)

The conclusions reached by Goodier could be challenged and have been done so by Welch (1985, 20). The presence of early Anglo-Saxon barrows on late Anglo-Saxon estate (later parish) boundaries may well imply that those boundaries were established after the period in which the barrows were constructed or last used for burials. They were

chosen as convenient prominent landmarks in the Late Anglo-Saxon landscape, and the estates of the seventh century in this region may have been laid out on different lines. Indeed tentative support for the view that boundaries or their parts did change is implicit in the reading of the clause *to uncer Wulfrices eald gemaere* 'to the old (former) boundary of us two, Wulfric and me' contained in the Swallowcliffe charter.

The evidence of Anglo-Saxon charters in the use of the terms *beorh* and *hlaew* for barrow/tumulus has been discussed in detail, but the interpretation of the terms as they relate to boundary features has been a matter of speculation. It has been suggested (Grinsell 1959, 60–3) that the Christian Saxons used the term *beorh* in southern England for prehistoric barrows, and the term *hlaew* for barrows of the pagan Saxon period. Grinsell adds that 'it is naturally uncertain what term they would have used for a prehistoric barrow into which pagan Saxon intrusive interments had been inserted' (1959, 63). Perhaps the Swallowcliffe barrow partly provides the answer to Grinsell's question. Excavation has shown that although there was an earlier prehistoric barrow, the mound had been enlarged after the grave had been dug and as such it would be recognised and referred to as *hlaew* rather than *beorh*. In the Wiltshire charters there are 66 references to *beorh* and only ten references to *hlaew*. In the charters of Dorset there are 34 references to *beorh* with no references to *hlaew*. In Hampshire and the Isle of Wight there are 36 references to *beorh* and five references to *hlaew*. All this information, together with the additional references to 'heathen burials', has been plotted by Desmond Bonney (1976, fig 7.4), and is shown in Figure 97.

Dr Margaret Gelling's discussion of the term *hlaew/hlaw* in place name evidence does however introduce a word of caution in that there are occasions when it is used of natural hills as well as artificial ones. Her appraisal of the evidence has led her to conclude that in the south such usage was rare 'but when one reaches Northumberland, where it is one of the commonest terms for a natural hill, archaeological significance becomes very difficult to isolate' (Gelling 1978, 134). The evidence for Derbyshire has been neatly summarised by Professor Cameron (1959, 705) and is worth quoting:

*Hlaw* is very common, though most of the examples are confined to High Peak and Wirksworth hundreds. The lack of modern archaeological research in Anglo-Saxon Derbyshire, and the great difficulties encountered, both in identifying burial mounds investigated by Bateman and others during the nineteenth century, and in interpreting the evidence presented, makes it almost impossible to determine how many of these are names of tumuli. Out of over seventy examples for which reasonably early forms are available, some thirty are certainly burial-mounds, and it is likely enough that with additional field research this number will be much higher. In point of fact a large number of examples for which only late forms have been found are known to be

## Pagan Saxon Burials in Wessex



Fig 97 Pagan Saxon burials in Wessex (after Bonney 1976).

tumuli. It is perhaps significant that almost one-sixth of the early names in *hlaew* have an OE monothematic personal name as first element.

In view of the above, the equating of the Swallowcliffe barrow with the *Posses Hlaewe* of the Swallowcliffe Charter is significant, but several questions demand consideration. Does the prefix *Poss* refer to the name of the occupant of the barrow, the owner of the land unit on which the barrow was situated or bounded, the person who erected the barrow, or some other person?

The charter boundary mark is cited as the only evidence we have for an Old English personal name *Poss*, genitive singular *Posses*. On this basis Ekwall (1960, 372) invokes derivative personal names *Possa*, *Possel*, *Possede* in English place names and other sources to explain the place names *Possingworth*, *Posingford*, Sussex; *Posbury*, Derbyshire; *Poslingford*, Suffolk; *Postford*, Surrey; *Postwick*, Norfolk; *Postling*, Kent; *Poston*, Shropshire; *Postcombe* Oxfordshire; and *Puzzlingham* or *Puslingham* (lost, near Eastbourne) Sussex.

The only personal name resembling these which is on record other than in place-names is *Pusa*, and Redin derives this tentatively from the Old English

*pusa*, 'a bag, or scrip' (1919, 78). Holthausen, (*Altenglisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 248) clearly regards *posa* as an acceptable variant of the word *pusa*.

Professor Dodgson has commented (pers comm):

If *pusa* 'bag' was used as a personal name, there could be a form *Posa*. The sense would be 'a bladder, a bag, a pustule: something swollen up or distended' as a nickname probably for a fat man or a man with a belly or swelling. The consonant can be doubled in a monothematic personal name to make a pet name of it, so *Possa* is acceptable. From a weak inflexion masculine personal name like *Possa*, the analogical strong inflexion masculine personal name *Poss* would be derived. The person referred to in *Posses Hlaewe* has to be masculine, because *-es* is the ending for the strong masculine genitive singular inflexion. As the occupant of the Swallowcliffe barrow is a young female (c 18–24 years) it is therefore unlikely that *Poss* was her name. One could extrapolate, of course... Was the original name of the barrow *Possan-hlaew* from a female personal name *Posse*? But it is difficult to see why the name should have been changed.

The suggested derivation of *Poss* from *pusa* 'a bag, or scrip' is however of interest, given that one of the more notable items in the grave was a bag or satchel. It must remain speculation, but was the mound named from one *Poss*, a man who owned/made, carried ceremonially a bag/satchel and buried it/or one with his wife/daughter?

Margaret Gelling has commented:

I do not think it too far out to suggest that he understood his name to refer to a bag or satchel, so used one as a sort of personal emblem, and buried it with one of his womenfolk.'

(pers comm, 11 December 1981)

The evidence is indirect, but it seems that a personal name combined with *hlaw* does not necessarily identify the person buried in the barrow, but may well indicate individuals with associations in the locality. It has been assumed for example that the burial mound in Taplow churchyard, Bucks, a rich early seventh-century primary barrow burial, is *Taeppa's Hlaw*, and that *Taeppa* was the name of the man buried there (Gelling 1978, 155). Indeed, if the body in the Swallowcliffe barrow had been male, perhaps a similar assumption would have been made for *Posses Hlaewe*. But caution is required. Dr Della Hooke has observed that *Oswaldeslow* in Worcestershire on the boundary of Stoulton seems to have acquired its name after AD 964 when Low Hill, a prominent hill on a major routeway between

Droitwich and the Avon valley, was said to have been chosen as the meeting place of the new triple hundred of Oswaldeslow, its name chosen to honour Bishop Oswald (Hooke 1980, 24).

It is a possibility, therefore, that the link between the name *Poss* and the barrow could be many years later than the date of the burial (but before AD 940) and linked to a male personage who had local territorial association.

Briefly, in summarising the combination of evidence and conjecture what interpretation can be deduced? It has been suggested that the masculine name *Poss* does not refer to the female occupant of the barrow. A possible link between an artefact in the grave, the bag/satchel OE 'pusa', and the personal name *Poss* has been commented upon, although the evidence is hardly conclusive. Whether such an item could have been regarded as a sort of personal emblem by one *Poss* who buried it with one of his womenfolk, must remain speculation. But such a personage could have raised the barrow and be owner of the land unit on which the barrow was situated or bounded.

It must be admitted, however, that the personage 'Poss' may have had no contemporary association with the burial and therefore it would be more prudent to suggest that the name *Poss* more probably represents the name of a landowner on whose boundary the barrow is sited at some date between the late seventh and early tenth centuries rather than the name of the person thought to have been buried there, or an allusion to the satchel with which she was buried.

## 5 Chronology and context

The importance and high status of *Posses Hlaewe* is confirmed by both the grave goods and the nature of the burial rite. It is clear from the discussion of the grave goods that this is a seventh-century grave and one of the richest Anglo-Saxon graves yet discovered from Wessex. However, its chronological and cultural affinities with graves in Wessex and further afield do demand additional comment.

The phenomenon of bed burial and the appraisal of the distinctive elements of the Swallowcliffe bed have provided relevant parallels and chronological links between the Swallowcliffe grave and a group of graves in the Anglian area, all of which are certainly seventh century in date. The rich female of the Ixworth grave, with her gold and garnet pendant cross of obvious Christian significance, could have been buried within the second quarter of the seventh century, but the fact that the cross had been broken in antiquity and subsequently repaired could imply that it was of some age at the time of burial, and therefore a date for the burial c 650 or later is more likely. Although the bed graves from Shudy Camps grave 29 and Cherry Hinton grave 4 do not contain closely datable grave goods, nevertheless they belong to cemeteries, together with Burwell, which were considered by Lethbridge to be 'late' (Lethbridge 1936, 27–31).

Confirmation for Lethbridge's views, which would see such cemeteries as Burwell, Shudy Camps, and Cherry Hinton as 'proto-Christian', has been given in some detail by Hyslop (1963, 189) and Hawkes (Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 45–55) in their broader discussion of the features and grave goods of the late seventh century inhumation cemeteries. As Sonia Hawkes has commented:

Indeed, these late cemeteries are so closely interrelated that the discussion of one of them is barely possible without constant reference to the rest.

(1970, 45)

The west-east orientation of the Swallowcliffe grave is consistent with the alignment of graves of many of the 'proto-Christian' or 'Final Phase' cemeteries.

Within the Swallowcliffe grave such type objects as the long hump-backed comb, the annular bead, the bronze-mounted bucket and wooden casket can be paralleled by finds from graves in the late cemeteries, but the assemblage within the Swallowcliffe grave is certainly richer and more lavish than any single grave in these cemeteries. Notwithstanding the speculation as to the nature of those personal items of jewellery which are presumed robbed, the elaborate display of wealth within the Swallowcliffe grave is more appropriately compared with other seventh-century barrow graves.

The presence of a rich grave assemblage within a barrow can be seen as the survival of a pagan custom, but it does not preclude the fact that its occupant and those who raised the barrow or reused an earlier barrow held Christian beliefs. The male warrior in the

rich barrow grave from Benty Grange, Derbyshire, clearly attests his belief in the new Christian faith by the fixture of a silver cross to the nose guard of his helmet. Also relevant is another rich Mercian burial, that of a female, discovered in c 1767 in White Low barrow, Winstan Moor, Derbyshire. The excavation records are confused, but apparently contained within a bronze-bound casket, along with other items, were a silver-gilt circular mount (possibly a brooch, though no pin attachment survives) with garnet and filigree decoration, and a pendant sheet gold cross decorated with a filigree scroll pattern around a central setting of a faceted garnet. Two glass vessels of light greenish colour were also found, but no longer survive. From the dimensions given they could be pouch-bottles. The aristocratic woman buried on a bed from Ixworth, Suffolk and wearing a gold and garnet pendant cross has already been mentioned. A bronze pin, its head in the form of a cross, from a barrow on Breach Down is less elaborate than these other finds, but is undoubtedly also a Christian emblem (Jessup 1974, pl 1.6).

Whilst the Swallowcliffe grave does not contain such unambiguous Christian emblems or artefacts as pendant crosses, it has been suggested nevertheless that the arrangement of the axe-blade repoussé foils of the circular satchel mount could be interpreted as a double-armed cross, similar to a Chi-Rho monogram. Although the iconographic evidence is not conclusive, it remains a strong possibility that in spite of the pagan manner of burial the Swallowcliffe female was Christian. Certainly both the orientation of the grave, west-east, and the direct and indirect parallels with other seventh-century burials with Christian artefacts such as the bed burial at Ixworth, Suffolk, would give strong support to this viewpoint.

In discussing the relative chronology of the Swallowcliffe grave goods the absence of precise dating evidence such as associated coins must be acknowledged. Cross-referencing with other seventh-century barrow graves and the finds from some of the proto-Christian cemeteries, however, has established a chronological framework into which the Swallowcliffe grave can be placed with reasonable certainty. As discussed by Meaney and Hawkes (1970, 50–5) the beginnings of the Christian cemeteries outside Kent do not seem to have occurred before c 650, and an appraisal of the evidence of the Swallowcliffe grave indicates that it too can hardly be before this date. The abandonment of the custom of depositing grave goods with the dead as a result of Christian teaching did not, it seems, become established until the eighth century, although it was clearly declining during the seventh century.

Support for the dating of the Swallowcliffe grave is provided by the grave goods although the antiquity of several of the finds is debatable. Evidence of the fixtures and mounts of the maple casket shows it to have been a prestige item, but also reveals that it had been repaired and was, therefore, of some age when deposited within the grave. With very few exceptions caskets are found in seventh-century graves, buried with women, and containing such items as combs, amulets, weaving and spinning

equipment, and occasional pieces of jewellery. The assemblage within the Swallowcliffe casket is highly distinctive.

A unique find in Anglo-Saxon archaeology is the handled capsule, initially identified as a censer, but now suggested as an infuser or sprinkler for use with liquids. It is undoubtedly Celtic in manufacture, showing the same skilful craftsmanship as demonstrated in the series of hanging bowls. Its affinity with the find from a Norwegian Viking grave in Vinjum has been discussed in detail and provides its only parallel. The decoration on the Vinjum example suggests that it may have been Northumbrian or Pictish in origin. The Vinjum find is likely to be late seventh or early eighth century in date on art historical grounds; similar decorative motifs can be seen in Hiberno-Saxon manuscript art. Although the Swallowcliffe find does not possess such distinctive engraved decoration, the use of red enamel at the base of the handle and the technique of spun metalwork, as in the series of hanging bowls, confirm its Celtic ancestry. The evidence is not conclusive but similarities in form and function strongly indicate that both artefacts share the same chronological horizon. Variations in detail and decoration, however, would suggest that they were produced in different workshops.

The acquisition and use by high status Anglo-Saxons of prestige Celtic artefacts, for example hanging bowls, is clearly attested in seventh-century archaeology. The Sutton Hoo ship burial contained the most elaborate of all the known hanging bowls and two others from a corpus of more than 70 known examples were deposited. The Swallowcliffe grave has provided the only insular example of another Celtic object, which in function has been suggested to parallel the crystal spheres and perforated silver spoons found in sixth-century Germanic graves. The juxtaposition of this infuser/sprinkler next to the silver-gilt spoon within the casket would tend to reinforce this parallel.

Other notable items within the casket are the four silver, safety-pin type brooches found with the fragment of a fifth. The few parallels confirm that these brooches (apparently a type-fossil from the La Tène period) are rare in Anglo-Saxon graves, but all are from seventh-century female graves: Kingston grave 205, Uncleby grave 43, and a bronze example from Shudy Camps grave 19. The number of brooches in the Swallowcliffe casket would preclude the fact that they were treasured survivors from the Iron Age, but were Anglo-Saxon in origin and were utilised by the Swallowcliffe female. Where they were worn and what they secured is uncertain, but the two silver brooches from Kingston grave 205 were found by the left thigh, suggesting that they may have comprised part of a chatelaine or secured a dress. It is also significant that they were found in one of the richest and certainly the largest of the graves in the Kingston cemetery recorded by Faussett. This grave provides further affinities with the Swallowcliffe barrow, for it contained, apart from the sumptuous Kingston brooch and other items, a green glass palm cup (Harden Type Xb) and a casket.

Chronologically we must see influences in fashion

emanating from Kent to Wessex rather than vice versa, with Kingston Down grave 205 earlier in date than the Swallowcliffe barrow. Sonia Hawkes has argued that the barrow cemetery at Kingston, perhaps the cemetery of the royal manor, began during the first quarter of the seventh century (Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 55) and that 'the establishment of a Christian cemetery at Kingston will thus have been a matter of royal concern, and is likely to have been enforced there more promptly than in other places'. Hyslop has also argued (1963, 193) that the progress of the conversion was an important factor in the dissemination of secular fashion in the seventh century, when missionaries from Italy brought with them gifts for high-ranking converts and 'concentrated their attentions on the leaders of fashion'. Thus the models for seventh-century fashions became objects from southern Europe, when hitherto they had been from the North. As Kent took the first step towards Christianity, it naturally received such influences over a longer period, and led in the change of fashion throughout England.

That Wessex was, in the later seventh century, the recipient of influences from Kent would appear to be detectable in the Swallowcliffe grave. The use of the silver safety pin brooch, worn as a pair by the aristocratic female in Kingston grave 205, is rare and exclusive, but was also practised by the Swallowcliffe female, as evidenced by the five contained in her casket. The engraved step-pattern decoration on the tinned bronze strap mounts associated with the satchel are almost certainly imitations of patterns utilised in Kentish cloisonné jewellery. The concentration of glass forms in Kent has led Harden to suggest that Faversham may have been a production centre for seventh-century glass. The two glass palm cups from the Swallowcliffe grave are distinctive in their form, their closest parallel being from the secondary barrow burial at Cow Lowe Derbyshire. Whether all three glasses are the product of a Kentish workshop is as yet unproven, but the discovery of the Swallowcliffe pair does reinforce the notion of an insular workshop for their manufacture.

The link between the Cow Lowe barrow and the Swallowcliffe barrow, as has already been mentioned, is of chronological importance. There are indeed good reasons for believing both graves to be contemporary. The palm cup in the Cow Lowe barrow was contained, along with other items, in an ash casket with triangular bronze hinges and hasp which, typologically, is linked to the Swallowcliffe casket. However the personal items of jewellery at Cow Lowe, the gold linked pins and a necklace made up of biconical wire beads and eight silver 'bullae' pendants, are more crucial for dating. As Sonia Hawkes has discussed elsewhere:

Silver pendants of this type, and with them further examples of coiled gold wire beads, have been found at Finglesham (Kent) on a child's necklace, where they were strung together with coin-pendants made from a solidus of the Merovingian king Sigebert II/III (634-56) and an early example of the Kentish



'pada' coinage, both coins in very pale gold, and both slightly worn. This burial is dated by the Kentish coin to c 665-75 at earliest.

(Hawkes, Merrick, and Metcalf 1966, 115;  
Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 48)

Elsewhere, at Desborough, Northants, biconoid beads and gold 'bullae' pendants interspaced with cabochon garnet pendants comprise a sumptuous necklace which has as its centrepiece a gold pectoral cross. This necklace, found in the grave of a high-ranking woman, would appear to fit into a similar chronological bracket (Baker 1876, 466-71). Sonia Hawkes suggests:

It is surely right to assume that the lady who wore it was a convert, and that, since Desborough was in the southern part of Anglo-Saxon Mercia, a kingdom which remained obstinately heathen until after the middle of the seventh century, she did not acquire her Christian cross before the arrival of the first missionaries in her district, some time after 655. If so, her burial can scarcely have taken place until well within the third quarter of the century at the earliest. The rightness of this dating is confirmed by appearance in grave 172 at Sibertswold, Kent, of very similar gold pendants, with garnets and amethysts set *en cabochon*, in association with two Merovingian tremisses: these are now known to have been struck towards the middle of the seventh century, but they were worn as pendants for some time before burial, so the grave probably dates from well after 650.

(Meaney and Hawkes 1970, 47)

Gold wire biconical beads, linked pin suites, and 'bullae' pendants, along with garnet pendants set *en cabochon*, all appear, therefore, to have a close chronological inter-relationship, which by cross reference to coin-dated Kentish graves would place their use within the latter part of the seventh century (Leeds 1936, 108). Thus, on the basis of their jewellery and necklaces, a wide geographical spread of rich female graves, for example Sibertswold grave 172, Kent, Brassington Moor, Derbyshire, Cow Lowe, Derbyshire, Desborough, Northants, Wood-yates, Dorset, and Roundway Down, Wiltshire, can with some confidence be bracketed into the same late period of the seventh century. If a surmise were made as to what may have adorned the neck of the Swallowcliffe woman, the above-mentioned graves perhaps could provide the answer.

It has been mentioned that two of these barrow graves, Woodyates and Roundway Down, also contained iron and wood containers for the body, possibly beds as at Swallowcliffe. The evidence, however, is not conclusive as none of the ironwork survives and the excavation records are incomplete. The woman in the Roundway barrow was provided, nevertheless, with a bronze-bound bucket which closely parallels the example from Swallowcliffe.

Whether in addition the Roundway Down jewellery echoed the presumed robbed items from Swallowcliffe remains speculation.

Of all the finds within the grave, the leather and wood satchel, with its elaborate lid and openwork mount overlying the repoussé silver and gold foils; provides the best stylistic evidence in support of a late seventh-century context for the burial. Whilst the kidney form of the lid is suggestive of the elaborate early seventh-century purse frame in the Sutton Hoo ship burial, in constructional details the tinned bronze annular disc and the narrow metal strip framework indicate both a lower level of craftsmanship and features which can be paralleled on chatelaine fittings or satchel mounts from final phase cemeteries. The double-tongued buckle belonging to the satchel strap is a rare type which has only been found in late seventh-century graves. In art historical terms the decorative mount, with its celtic and saxon ingredients, can be considered as a missing link in the style development of seventh-century metalwork, even anticipating the more complex and refined manifestations of trumpet scroll patterns and inter-lacing of Hiberno-Saxon manuscript illumination.

In summarising the evidence outlined above it becomes clear that although the Swallowcliffe barrow, which has been equated with *Poses Hlaewe*, is distinctive, it does share features possessed by a number of barrow burials and richly furnished graves, all datable to the latter part of the seventh century. Several, if not all, are arguably Christian. The distribution of these high status graves, from Kent to Wessex, East Anglia to Derbyshire, suggests a widespread common culture, perhaps unified by the impact of Christianity, which is quite different from the regional variations apparent in sixth-century Anglo-Saxon England.

Almost totally overlooked in an Anglo-Saxon context is the custom of bed burial which, on the present evidence, would appear to be restricted to the late seventh century. Given the fact that an all wood bed might not be recognised, or could be mistaken for a coffin, the custom of bed burial could be more widespread than the present distribution shows. Not all the bed burials, however, are richly furnished. In marked contrast to the Swallowcliffe grave, the Anglian bed burials from Shudy Camps grave 29 and Cherry Hinton grave 4 are devoid of personal possessions. It cannot be stated, therefore, that all bed burials are aristocratic, but the custom must be seen as a variation of coffined burial, where display of the body was an important part of the burial ritual. Seen in relation to the earlier seventh-century occurrence of boat burial under a barrow, localised to the royal cemetery at Sutton Hoo and an example close by at Snape, bed burial is a less spectacular rite. But the significance of the Swallowcliffe discovery should not be underestimated. Its relevance for Anglo-Saxon studies is considerable. Identified as the *Poses Hlaewe* mentioned in the Swallowcliffe Charter, this late seventh-century burial must be seen as an important piece in the archaeological jigsaw of Anglo-Saxon England.

## Appendix 1

### The human bone from Swallowcliffe Down, Wilts

by Janet D Henderson

The skeletal remains from an inhumation burial were examined. The bones were in a very poor condition with less than one-third of the skeleton present. There was no evidence for the presence of more than one individual. The material was assessed for details of age at death, sex, stature, and any abnormality or pathology.

Age was estimated at 18–25 years (with a maximum of 30 years) using Miles' method (1963). This method was considered appropriate since Miles' original data came from an Anglo-Saxon site at Breedon-on-the-Hill, Leics. Further information was available from radiography of the femur which also suggested that the individual was a young adult. The femoral head and the fibular facet of the tibia showed some slight osteoarthritic lipping, which may be correlated with increasing age, but in this case it was felt that the lipping was not sufficiently severe to throw doubt upon the estimate based upon the teeth. Further in the absence of the rest of the skeleton the presence of osteoarthritic lipping on a single limb cannot be taken as diagnostic of age by itself since environmental facts, such as stress (eg hard work, exercise, etc) may also be causative (Jurmain 1977).

Attribution of sex was based on the vertical diameter of the right femoral head (42.0mm). Using comparative data (EJ-Najjar and McWilliams 1978) it was concluded that the remains were probably those of a female.

Stature was estimated using Steele's method (1970) to assess maximum femoral length (right) and Trotter's regression equations (1970) to calculate height. This gave a result of 1.59m  $\pm$  0.584 (approximately 5ft 3in). The high standard deviation (.584) was caused by using a two-step process – unavoidable since no long bones were sufficiently complete for measurement of maximum length.

Data concerning the health of an individual may be obtained from the dentition or the bones. However such data are necessarily limited by the fact that few illnesses affect the skeletal system, thus although a skeleton may demonstrate an apparent absence of pathology it cannot be concluded that the living being was actually healthy.

The dentition of the individual from Swallowcliffe Down showed little evidence for abnormality. Dental wear was symmetrical and there were no carious lesions or abscesses present. There was some slight evidence for calculus (tartar) but this was insufficient for any comment on dental hygiene or diet.

On the skeleton bone changes were found on the skull and the right femur. Observations on the skull were confined to the cranium since the face was mostly missing. There was bilateral endocranial thickening of the frontal bone such that the inner surface of the bone had a 'knobbed' surface. This

was also present to a slight extent on the parietal and petrous-temporal bones but on the largest fragment of cranium (with parts of both frontal and parietal bones) the affection appeared to end abruptly at the coronal suture. Radiography of the cranium showed a great increase in density of the bone in those areas described so that the bone appeared as an area of solid white with no distinction remaining between the inner and outer tables and the diploe. The outer surface of the cranium was badly eroded (post-mortem) therefore it was impossible to say to what extent, if any, the outer table had been involved. Radiographs were also taken of the right femur and the metatarsals (the most complete bones present) to establish whether the condition was generalised (occurred throughout the skeleton) or localised (confined to the skull). There was no evidence for other increase in bone density therefore it was concluded that the skull alone was involved. It is highly unlikely that the skull condition was the cause of death.

A localised increase in the density of a single bone may be due to a local developmental defect, a vascular lesion, a local osteoblastic response to a neoplasm or infection, an alteration in the bone architecture (for example as in Paget's disease or hyperparathyroidism) or a localised increase in width due to added periosteal new bone (Simon 1973). In this case the lack of evidence prevented a diagnosis but it was feasible to suggest a number of possible causes. Further a vascular lesion or added periosteal new bone could both be eliminated since the skull was the area involved. There are many conditions in which part of the cranium shows an increased density but in a large number the appearance is characteristic (Du Boulay 1980).

On the frontal bone hyperostosis of the inner table has been observed in hyperostosis frontalis interna, meningioma, acromegaly and neurofibromatosis. However in both acromegaly and neurofibromatosis there are further bone changes which might have been expected to have occurred in this material but in fact had not. The evidence was too slight for positive diagnosis between a meningioma or hyperostosis frontalis interna; however, the inclusion of both sides of the frontal bone would tend to favour the latter.

Hyperostosis frontalis interna is a condition in which the inner table of both halves of the frontal bone is irregularly thickened to produce a surface 'resembling a choppy sea' (Du Boulay 1980). It has sometimes been associated with slight mental retardation but has usually been observed in patients over the age of 40 years, more frequently affecting women than men, many of the women being post-menopausal. The condition has been suggested to be common but most individuals fail to reveal system manifestations (Resnick and Niwayama 1981).

A meningioma is a benign tumour occurring in the intracranium which may produce bone changes similar to those found in hyperostosis frontalis interna with which it is often confused (Du Boulay 1980, Resnick and Niwayama 1981).

The right femur of this individual showed slight evidence for increase in thickness of the mid-shaft

with decrease in density of the cortical bone, particularly on the lateral border. With so little evidence available it was impossible to diagnose a

cause for this since a large number of factors may cause a decrease in bone density including dietary deficiency, illness, age, or in a woman, pregnancy.

## Summary

The excavation in 1966 of a Bronze Age barrow on Swallowcliffe Down, Wiltshire, revealed that it had been reused in the seventh century for a richly furnished Anglo-Saxon inhumation. Examination of the skeletal evidence confirmed that the burial was of a young female aged between 18-25 years. The large grave which measured 2.74 x 1.52m was orientated at 275 degrees, with the head at the west end. Although the burial had been subsequently disturbed and partially robbed, most probably in the nineteenth century, the character of the surviving grave goods clearly indicates that this was a high status burial.

Placed at the head end of the grave were an iron-bound yew-wood bucket and an iron pan (Assemblage A). Adjacent to the left thigh was a maple-wood casket with bronze hinges and lock-plate (Assemblage B). Contained within the casket were a Celtic bronze sprinkler, a parcel-gilt silver spoon, four silver brooches and the fragment of a fifth, a tinned bronze strap mount, an iron spindle, a pair of knives, two beads and a humped-back comb. At the foot end of the grave were the fittings of a bronze-mounted bucket (Assemblage C). By the right side of the body had been placed an ornately decorated satchel and its suspension belt (Assemblage D) of which its decorative metalwork fittings survive. Of art historical importance is the circular openwork mount with its underlying gold and silver foils ornamented with interlace schemes, Celtic trumpet patterns and scrollwork. Parallels cited for the metalwork fittings of the satchel and the ornament of the mount would indicate that the satchel is Anglo-Saxon and was made within the second half of the seventh century. Close to the right forearm were two glass palm cups of green-blue colour (Assemblage E).

Within the grave the largest and most elaborate item was an ash-wood bed with ironwork fittings, on which the body and a covering of textiles had been laid. Approximately 50 miscellaneous iron fragments in addition to 36 complete and fragmentary rectangular and round-headed cleats, 14 large eyelets, 2 side-rails, one complete headboard stay, 32 small eyelets, 74 nails, one staple and several indeterminate fittings have been identified as comprising part of the bed structure. The form and construction of the bed have been deduced from a consideration of the function of this ironwork and from a scrutiny of the attached mineralised wood remains.

From comparative discussion of this ironwork, a number of graves, mostly under barrows, have been postulated as bed-burials. Five have been identified as 'certain' and four as 'probable'. The chronological evidence would suggest that all are seventh-century, the majority belonging to the second half of the century. The distribution of bed-burials is concentrated in two areas, the Anglian territory east of Cambridge and a westerly group in Wessex: with a single northerly outlier in the Anglian Peak District of Derbyshire. They are noticeably absent in any of the Kentish cemeteries, where only coffined burials

have been identified. The custom of bed-burial, whilst not exclusively aristocratic, must be seen as a variation of coffined burial, where display of the body was an important part of the burial ritual.

The prominent position of the Swallowcliffe barrow, sited on the boundary between the parishes of Ansty and Swallowcliffe is discussed. There are strong reasons for identifying the barrow as the *Posses Hlaewe* recorded in the boundary clause of an Anglo-Saxon charter of AD 940. It is deduced that the masculine name *Posse* may have no contemporary association with the burial, but more likely represents the name of the landowner on whose land the barrow was sited between the seventh and early tenth centuries.

## Résumé

La mise au jour, en 1966, d'une sépulture sous tumulus de l'âge de bronze à Swallowcliffe Down, dans le comté de Wiltshire, a révélé qu'elle avait été réutilisée au septième siècle pour une inhumation anglo-saxonne riche en mobilier. L'examen des restes du squelette confirma qu'il s'agissait de la tombe d'une jeune femme âgée de 18 à 25 ans. La spacieuse tombe, qui mesurait 2.74m sur 1.52m, était orientée à 275 degrés, la tête se trouvant à l'extrémité ouest. Bien que la sépulture ait été ultérieurement dérangée et partiellement pillée, très probablement au dix-neuvième siècle, la nature du mobilier funéraire qui avait survécu ne laissait pas de doute qu'il s'agissait de la sépulture d'une personne de haut rang.

On a découvert, placé à l'extrémité de la tombe où se trouvait la tête, un seau en bois d'if cerclé de fer et un plat en fer (Collection A). Près de la cuisse gauche, on avait déposé un coffret en bois d'érable à gonds et palastre de bronze (Collection B). À l'intérieur de ce coffret se trouvaient un goupillon celte en bronze, une cuiller en argent dorée à l'intérieur, quatre broches en argent et un fragment d'une cinquième, une ferrure de lanière en bronze étamé, un fuseau en fer, une paire de couteaux, deux perles et un peigne en os à dos arrondi. À l'extrémité opposée, du côté des pieds, on a trouvé des éléments d'un seau en bois d'if ornementé par des montures en bronze (Collection C). On a découvert, près du flanc droit du corps, une sacoche richement décorée, accompagnée d'une courroie pour la suspendre (Collection D) dont les montures en métal ouvragé ont survécu. Particulièrement importante sur le plan de l'histoire de l'art est la monture circulaire, en métal ajouré sur feuilles d'or et d'argent, enjolivée d'un entrelacs de formes, de motifs de trompettes et de volutes celtes. Après avoir établi des parallèles en ce qui concerne les ferrures en métal de la sacoche et la décoration de la monture, il semblerait qu'elle soit d'origine anglo-saxonne et qu'elle ait été fabriquée au cours de la seconde moitié du septième siècle. Près de l'avant-bras droit se trouvaient deux bols apodes en verre de couleur bleu-vert (Collection E).

À l'intérieur de la tombe, la pièce la plus importante et la plus ouvragée consistait en un lit en



bois de frêne, avec montures en ferronnerie, sur lequel on avait déposé le corps recouvert d'étoffes. Environ 50 fragments divers en fer, auxquels il faut ajouter 36 taquets, à tête ronde ou rectangulaire, entiers ou brisés, 14 gros oeilleux, à barres latérales, un montant de tête de lit complet, 32 petits oeilleux, 74 clous, un crampon et plusieurs éléments d'assemblage indéterminés ont été retrouvés, on les a identifiés comme faisant tous partie intégrante du cadre de lit. L'étude de l'utilisation de ces ferrures et l'examen des restes de bois minéralisé qui y étaient attachés ont permis de retracer la forme et la construction du lit.

Des études comparatives de ces ferrures ont permis de parvenir à la conclusion qu'un certain nombre de sépultures, la plupart sous tumulus, étaient susceptibles de receler des inhumations à lit. Cinq nous sont apparues comme 'certaines' et quatre comme 'probables'. D'après l'analyse chronologique il semblerait qu'elles soient toutes du septième siècle, la plupart d'entre elles dateraient de la seconde moitié du siècle. Les inhumations à lit sont presque exclusivement réparties dans deux régions: le territoire des Angles à l'est de Cambridge et à l'ouest un groupe dans le comté de Wessex, on constate un seul exemple d'avancée vers le nord, dans le comté de Derbyshire, dans la région du Peak District occupée par les Angles. On doit remarquer que ce type d'inhumation est totalement absent des cimetières du Kent, où on n'a retrouvé que des tombes à cercueil. La coutume des inhumations à lit, bien qu'elle ne soit pas exclusivement réservée à l'aristocratie, doit être considérée comme une variante des inhumations à cercueil lorsque l'exposition du corps constituait une part importante du rite funéraire.

On a considéré la position préminente de la sépulture de Swallowcliffe, située à la limite entre les paroisses d'Ansty et de Swallowcliffe. On a de bonnes raisons de croire que cette tombe est le *posses Hlaetwe* mentionné dans les actes de propriété d'une charte anglo-saxonne de l'an 940 après J.-C. On en a conclu que le nom masculin *poss* n'avait probablement aucune association temporelle avec l'inhumation mais qu'il désignait plus vraisemblablement le propriétaire de la terre sur laquelle se trouve la tombe entre la fin du septième siècle et le début du dixième siècle.

## Zusammenfassung

Die in 1966 durchgeführte Ausgrabung eines bronzezeitlichen Grabhügels auf dem Swallowcliffe Down in Wiltshire zeigte, daß dieser im 7. Jahrhundert mit einem reich ausgestatteten angelsächsischen Körpergrab neubelegt worden war. Die Untersuchung des Skelettbefundes bestätigte, daß es sich hier um die Grablegung einer 18–25 jährigen Frau handelte. Das geräumige Grab, dessen Ausmaße  $2.74 \times 1.52$  m betragen, war auf 275 Grad und mit dem Kopfende im Westen ausgerichtet. Obwohl das Grab später gestört und teilweise ausgeraubt worden war – höchstwahrscheinlich während des 19. Jahrhunderts – machte die Art der erhaltenen Grabbeigaben deutlich, daß es sich hier um eine

Grablegung von hoher sozialer Stellung gehandelt hat.

Am Kopfende hatte man einen eisenbeschlagenen Eimer aus Eichenholz und eine Eisenpfanne plaziert (Fundgruppierung A). Neben dem linken Oberschenkel lag ein Kästchen aus Ahorn mit Bronzescharnieren und Schloßbeschlag (Fundgruppierung B). Dies Holzkästchen enthielt eine aus Bronze gefertigte, perforierte und mit einem Griff versehene Hohlkugel keltisch-piktischen Ursprungs, die vielleicht als Aufgußsieb benutzt worden war, einen Silberlöffel mit teilweiser Vergoldung, vier silberne Fibeln und die Überreste einer fünften, einen verzinnten Bandbeschlag aus Bronze, eine eiserne Spindel, zwei Messer, zwei Perlen und einen Buckelkamm aus Knochen. Am Fußende des Grabes lagen die Reste eines bronzebeschlagenen Eimers (Fundgruppierung C). Rechts neben dem Körper hatte man eine reichverzierte Tasche und das man eine reichverzierte Tasche und das dazugehörige Gürtelgehänge, von dem die Zierbeschläge aus Metall (Fundgruppierung D) erhalten sind, niedergelegt. Von kunstgeschichtlicher Bedeutung ist die runde Zierscheibe. Sie zeigt reiche Ornamentierung in Durchbruchtechnik mit Gold und Silber unterlegt und in verschlungenen Mustern aus keltischen Trompeten und Schnörkeln. Die Vergleichsstücke, die für die Metallbeschläge auf der Tasche angeführt werden, und die Ornamentierung der Zierscheibe weisen darauf hin, daß die Tasche angelsächsischen Ursprungs ist und in der zweiten Hälfte des 7. Jahrhunderts angefertigt wurde. Dicht neben dem rechten Unterarm lagen zwei blaue Glasbecher (Fundgruppierung E).

Der größte und am sorgfältigsten verarbeitete Gegenstand unter den Grabbeigaben war ein Bett aus Eschenholz zusammen mit seinem Zubehör aus Eisen. Auf diesem Bett hatte man die Leiche mit Textilien zugedeckt aufgebahrt. Ungefähr 50 verschiedenartige Eisenreste wurden neben 36 kompletten und fragmentarischen Klampen mit rechteckigen oder runden Köpfen, 14 große Ösen, zwei Seitenstangen, einer vollständigen Kopfbrettstütze, 32 kleinen Ösen, 74 Nägeln, einer Krampe und mehreren nichtbestimmbaren Beschlägen als Teile des Bettes identifiziert. Die Form und Konstruktionsweise des Bettes ist durch die eingehende Analyse der Funktion dieses eisernen Zubehörs und durch die genaue Untersuchung der anhaftenden, mineralisierten Holzreste erarbeitet worden.

Auf Grund einer vergleichenden Betrachtung dieses Eisenzubehörs wird angenommen, daß eine Reihe von anderen Gräbern, größtenteils unter Grabhügeln, ebenfalls 'Bettgräber' sind. Fünf davon werden als 'gewiß' und vier als 'möglich' angesehen. Der chronologische Befund würde alle in das 7. Jahrhundert verweisen, wobei die Mehrzahl in die zweite Hälfte des Jahrhunderts datiert. Das Auftreten der 'Bettgräber' ist auf zwei Gebiete konzentriert, das anglische Stammesgebiet östlich von Cambridge und eine westliche Gruppe in Wessex mit einem nördlichen Ausläufer im englischen Peak District in Derbyshire. Sie fehlen auffallend in den Gräberfeldern in Kent, wo nur Gräber mit Sarg-



bestattungen festgestellt werden konnten. Die Sitte des 'Bettgrabes', obwohl nicht ausschließlich dem Adel zuzuschreiben, muß als eine Spielart des Kammergrabes angesehen werden, wo die Schau-stellung des Leichnams einen besonders wichtigen Teil des Begräbnisrituals darstellte.

Der auffallende Standort des Swallowcliffe Grabhügels auf der Grenze zwischen den Kirch-spielen von Ansty und Swallowcliffe wird erörtert. Es bestehen gute Gründe, den Grabhügel mit dem

*Posses Hlaewe* gleichzusetzen, der in der Grenzklausel einer angelsächsischen Charta aus dem Jahre 940 erwähnt wird. Die Schlußfolgerung ist, daß der männliche Name Poss keinen zeitlichen Zusammen-hang mit der Grablegung habe, sondern daß es sich hier vielmehr um den Namen des Grundbesitzers handle, auf dessen Land sich der Grabhügel in der Zeit zwischen dem ausgehenden 7 und dem frühen 10 Jahrhundert befunden habe.

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compiled by Lyn Greenwood

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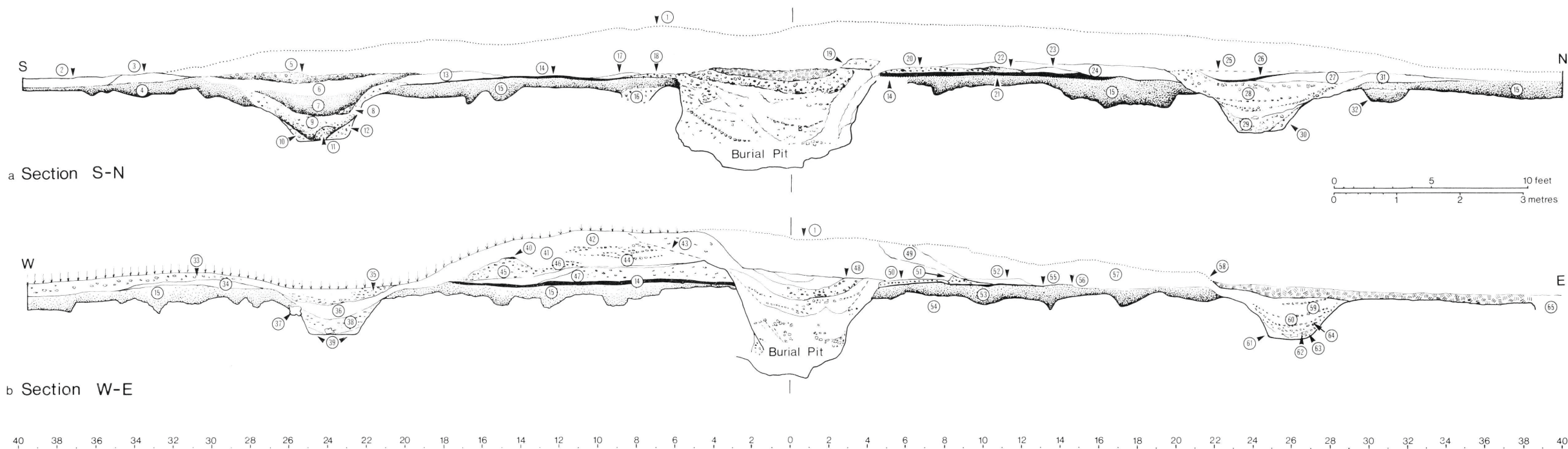


Fig 7a South-north barrow section; features listed on section:

1 Moved by bulldozer; 2 Blackish soil and flints; 3 Soil, chalk nodules and flints; 4 Subsoil; 5 Brown soil and flints; 6 Flints; 7 Brown soil; 8 Soil and flints; 9 Flints; 10 Soil, chalk, and flint; 11 Small chalk nodules; 12 Soil and fine chalk; 13 Traces of mound under bulldozed area; 14 Original land surface; 15 Subsoil; 16 Second turf line; 18 Chalk lumps; 19 Chalk disturbed by bulldozer; 20 Chalk mound; 21 Odd chalk blocks to here; 22 Turf; 23 Flint; 24 Mound 2; 25 Slight line of difference; 26 Blackish, disturbed (not turf); 27 Chalk rubble; 28 Layers of stone-free soil; 29 Flints and soil; 30 Small chalk pieces and soil; 31 Bank remains (flint and soil); 32 Coombe rock (Scale 1:50)

Fig 7b West-east barrow section; features listed on section:

33 Chalk nodules and flint in black soil; remains of bank; 34 Flints of bank; 35 Flints from mound in black soil; 36 Brown soil; 37 Large flint; 38 Layers of small flints plus soil; 39 Chalk plus soil; primary silting; 40 Small turf line on flints?; 41 Root traces; 42 Soil plus flints; 43 Line of cut; 44 Turves and flints; 45 Small flints; 46 Flints plus a few small chalk; nodules (some initial spoil from Saxon grave); 47 Chalk lumps; Mound 1; 48 Limit of material disturbed by bulldozer; 49 Red clay; 50 Chalk mound on original land surface; 51 Bulldozer cut; 52 Second turf line; 53 Compact flints and subsoil; 54 Natural chalk; 55 End of original land surface; 56 Possible mound material; 57 Dark soil, many flints; moved by bulldozer; 58 Edge of ploughed area; 59 Lines of small flints; 60 Brown soil; stone free; 61 Fine chalk and clay beneath chalk nodules; 62 Tabular flint; 63 Fine soil; 64 Flints and soil; 65 Unexcavated; clay with flints (Scale 1:50)

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*Front cover*

*The circular openwork mount, dating from the second half of the seventh century, from the Swallowcliffe satchel.*