

A Seventh-Century Coin-Pendant from Bacton, Norfolk, and its Ornament

By GEORGE SPEAKE

THE amazing discoveries at Sutton Hoo in 1939 have overshadowed all other Anglo-Saxon finds from East Anglia and understandably little attention has been paid to a damaged cloisonné coin-pendant from Bacton, Norfolk (FIG. 1). Although the Bacton pendant is displayed close to the Sutton Hoo treasures in the British Museum, no one has ever suggested any connexion between the two finds. As the definitive publication on Sutton Hoo is not yet ready, the purpose of this article is to suggest that the Bacton pendant is a product of the Sutton Hoo workshop, and that an interpretation of its ornament may supplement some of the interpretations and historical implications already drawn from the Sutton Hoo burial.

DISCOVERY

THE best account of the pendant's fortuitous discovery is that by William Seth Stevenson:¹

'On one of the last days of December 1845, a woman was walking along the beach from Bacton to Mundesley, when, on approaching the boundaries of the latter parish, she saw something, that glittered, lying on the shore near high-water mark. Having taken up and disengaged it from the branch of seaweed in which it was embedded, she carried it home unappreciating its worth beyond that of a small roundlet of brass, and of course totally unaware of its claim to peculiar regard. The object, however, thus accidentally brought to light, and rescued from its impending fate of being re-engulfed by the waves of the next returning tide, exhibited appearances which on further examination, led even the unskilled finder herself to think that it must be a "curiosity".'

The 'curiosity' then came into the possession of Mrs. Gurney of Norwich, who presented it in the same year, 1846, to the British Museum. Since then the pendant has only been briefly alluded to in the archaeological literature.²

The pendant is said to have been picked up near the Mundesley boundary, and therefore presumably in Paston parish (which lies between Bacton and Mundesley). In 1965 nine Anglo-Saxon cremation urns were recovered from sewer and electricity trenches of a building site near the edges of Mundesley cliffs at TG 31793621, a site close to the Mundesley/Paston boundary.³ Unfortunately it was impossible to excavate as the buildings were too far advanced, but the

¹ Stevenson (1847), pp. 194-208. For key to shortened references see Abbreviations, p. 16.

² *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Lond.* (1846), pp. 149-50; *Archaeologia*, xxxii (1846), 64; *Numis. Chron.* (1847), p. 131; Smith (1901), p. 341; Baldwin Brown (1915), iv, 539-40; Smith (1923), pl. iv, no. i; Åberg (1926), fig. 263; Jessup (1950), pl. xxvii; Rainbird Clark (1960), pl. 46; Ozanne (1962-63), pl. iv c.

³ I am grateful to Miss Barbara Green of the Castle Museum, Norwich, for this information.

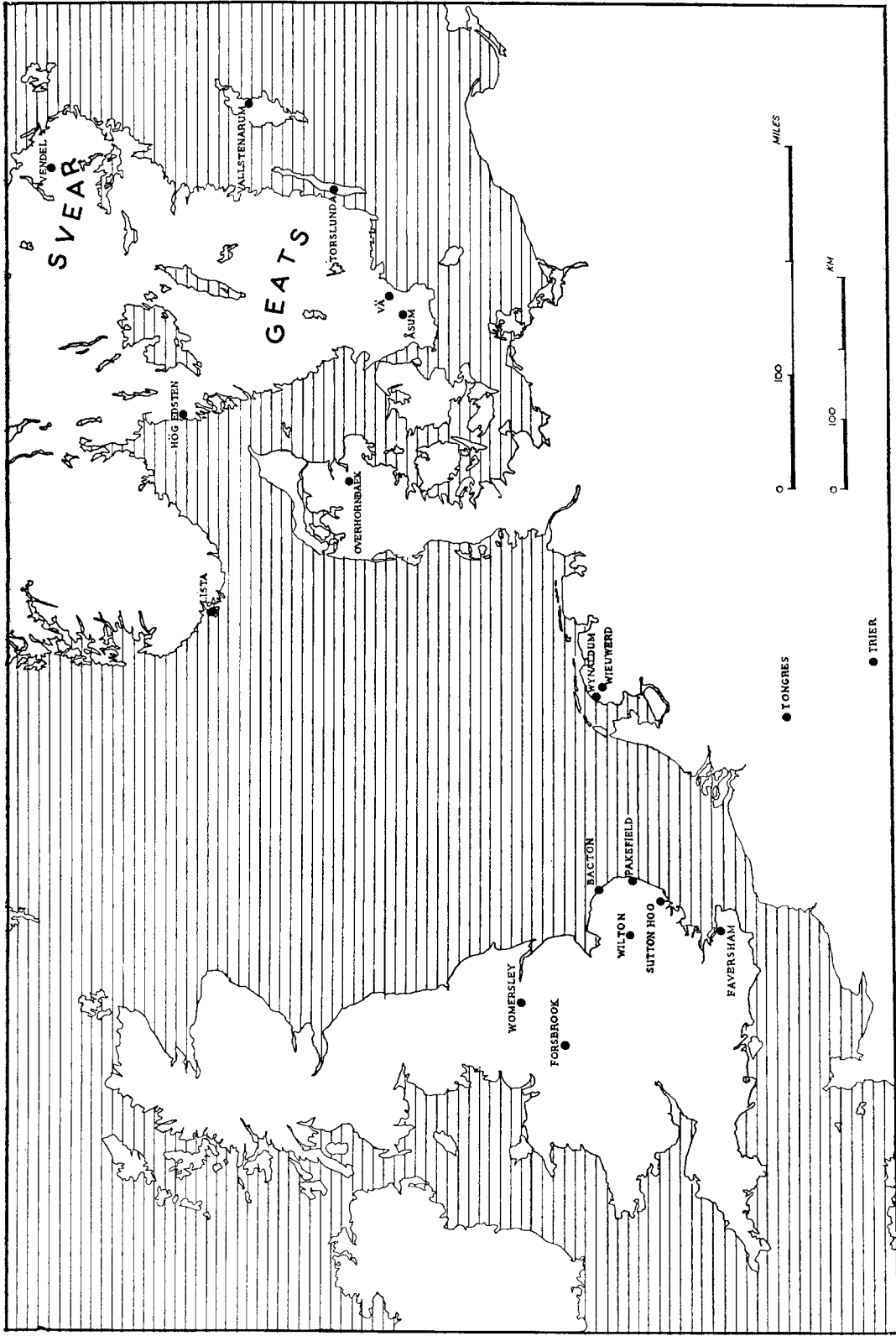


FIG. 1
 Distribution of Sutton Hoo cloisonné ornament and insular pendant and Scandinavian finds mentioned in text

workmen reported that they had found only cremated bones, pots, and grave-goods. Since at least the 13th century there has been tremendous erosion of the NE. Norfolk coast; it has been calculated that *c.* 100 yd. could have been eroded between Bacton and Paston since 1845. Presumably therefore any trace of a grave or inhumation associated with the Bacton pendant has long since disappeared; there is no record of human bones from the foreshore or the cliff on this stretch of the Norfolk coast.⁴

It is possible that something as light as a pendant could have been washed up from a site south of Bacton, for, although the main currents from Cromer southwards are southerly, strong SE. winds can drive material northwards up the coast.⁵ The condition of the pendant, however, suggests that it had not been in the sea for long.

In May 1758 a barrow was discovered farther south along the coast on Bloodmoor Hill at Pakefield, near Lowestoft, and is recorded by Douglas.⁶ Among the finds were a gold coin of the emperor AVITVS⁷ mounted as a pendant with a gold rim and loop, and an onyx with an intaglio of Castor and Pollux set in gold, both of which hung from a necklace of rough garnets. Coins of the lower empire are also mentioned. No drawing of the pendant and necklace exists, but Douglas illustrates a crystal with an engraved cross upon it, supposedly from the same barrow.⁸ The Pakefield barrow probably belongs to the 7th century, and it is tempting to assume that the Bacton pendant also accompanied a barrow-inhumation.

DESCRIPTION

The gold pendant, diameter 3.5 cm., consists of a pseudo-imperial solidus of Mauricius Tiberius (582–602) mounted within a cloisonné border of thirty-eight irregularly shaped cells, of which twenty still contain garnets backed by pointillé gold foil (PL. I, A). The solidus⁹ is deeply set within the cloisonné framework, which has somewhat protected the obverse from severe wear, whilst nearly all the cloison walls are badly distorted and in several cases completely missing. The twenty garnets that survive are roughly cut, approximating a kidney shape; the original state of the cell-work is only to be guessed at from the more snug-fitting cloisons in the upper half of the pendant. The spaces left by the cloison settings between the outer and inner borders of the mounting have been plugged

⁴ Since 1845 this stretch of beach has been particularly thoroughly combed for bones because it is the classic area for fossils from the Cromer Forest Bed.

⁵ Waste and sewage sent out to sea at Great Yarmouth come back on the beaches five miles north of the point of discharge.

⁶ Douglas (1793), pp. 8 note, 82–3 (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford); *Archaeologia* (1848), p. 65 note; *V.C.H., Suffolk*, pp. 347–8. I have been unable to trace the present whereabouts of the coin-pendant and the engraved onyx; the Ashmolean possesses the garnet necklace, a melon-shaped jet bead and a crystal with an engraved cross upon it, all supposedly from Bloodmoor Hill.

⁷ Recent opinions on the Pakefield coin-pendant, based on an illustration in Douglas (B. M. edition), question its attribution to AVITVS. It seems likely that it was a pseudo-imperial tremissis, imitated from a coin of the period Anastasius to Justin II, falling around 570, Visigothic in origin, and immediately preceding Visigothic pieces in the name of King LIUVIGILD. See D. M. Metcalf, *Numis. Chron.*, 6 ser., xvii (1957), 201, and J. P. C. Kent, 'From Roman Britain to Saxon England', in *Anglo-Saxon Coins: Studies presented to F. M. Stenton* (ed. R. H. M. Dolley, 1961), p. 21, note 8.

⁸ Douglas (1793), pl. xx, fig. 11.

⁹ Rigold (1953), p. 115.

by varying lengths of gold strip, of the same gauge as the cloison walls. The reverse of the pendant is quite plain, except where the solidus is let in (PL. I, B). Soldered into the cloisonné mounting is an elaborately decorated bi-conoid suspension loop, its line of juncture on the reverse being marked by two gold wires, the lower of which is twisted. The decoration of the loop consists of a thick central wire, much abraded but probably once beaded, bordered by two thinner beaded wires, on either side of which are rows of pseudo-plait filigree separated by an exquisitely worked triple-stranded plait. A braided gold wire encircles the outer rim of the cloisonné border up to the junction of the suspension loop. Whereas much of the damage to the cloisonné mounting and the indentations on the pendant's reverse were no doubt caused by the action of the sea, the excessive wear on the extremities of the loop must have been caused by long-term friction from the owner's suspension cord or chain. Although the gold used for the loop and mounting has not been analysed, it appears paler than that of the solidus.¹⁰

THE CLOISONNÉ BORDER: INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

According to Stevenson 'the outer rim is encircled with an interlaced pattern similar to that on the loop'.¹¹ Reginald Smith saw the design as a cloisonné representation of a laurel wreath such as actually occurs on the reverse of the coin, though somewhat obliterated on this particular specimen. Although claiming the superiority of Kentish workmanship over this piece, Smith did indeed recognize that 'the free and realistic treatment of the border contrasts with the usual geometrized design and has yet to find a parallel'.¹² Baldwin Brown followed Smith and described the cell shapes 'like those of leaves, so that the effect is that of a wreath'.¹³ Although both illustrate the pendant, neither Smith in 1923¹⁴ nor Åberg¹⁵ make any comment on the cloisonné border. Jessup¹⁶ saw it as 'clumsily made, with irregular cloisons in a pattern which seems to result from an unskilful attempt to render the plait in cell-work'. R. Rainbird Clark¹⁷ refrains from commenting on the ornament apart from describing it as 7th-century Kentish work. Finally, Ozanne¹⁸ follows Smith's identification of the ornament as a wreath.

No one has commented on the five irregular and empty cloisons immediately below the suspension loop, which are markedly different in form from the remaining thirty-three. What was their purpose in the scheme of ornament? Examination of the bases of the two larger cells shows that they had held another cloison wall, creating an extra compartment of lens-like form in each of the largest cells, just beneath the lower extremities of the suspension loop. With this extra clue the

¹⁰ But certainly not the 'reddish gold' described by Jessup (1950), p. 119.

¹¹ Stevenson (1847), p. 197.

¹² Smith (1901), p. 342.

¹³ Baldwin Brown (1915), iv, 539.

¹⁴ Smith (1923), pl. iv, no. 1.

¹⁵ Åberg (1926), fig. 263.

¹⁶ Jessup (1950), pl. xxvii.

¹⁷ Rainbird Clark (1960), note to pl. 46.

¹⁸ Ozanne (1962-63), p. 41.

whole border now takes on a rather different character. From an inanimate wreath the border transforms into an interlaced, doubled-headed snake-like creature, with lidless eyes and upper and lower jaws interlinked with each other (FIG. 2, *a*).

A parallel (geographically very close) is easy to find at Sutton Hoo. The two pairs of confronted cloisonné animals on the top central plaque of the purse-lid from the ship-burial clinch the identification of the heads on the Bacton pendant (FIG. 2, *b*). Here are the same unblinking lens-like eyes (which occur also on the interlinked boars from the ends of the shoulder-clasps (FIG. 2, *c*; PL. II, A)), the same protracted, interlinked jaws, though much more interlinked than the circular border zone of the Bacton pendant allows. It is evident that the cell in the angle between the upper and lower jaw of the animal head to the left of the suspension

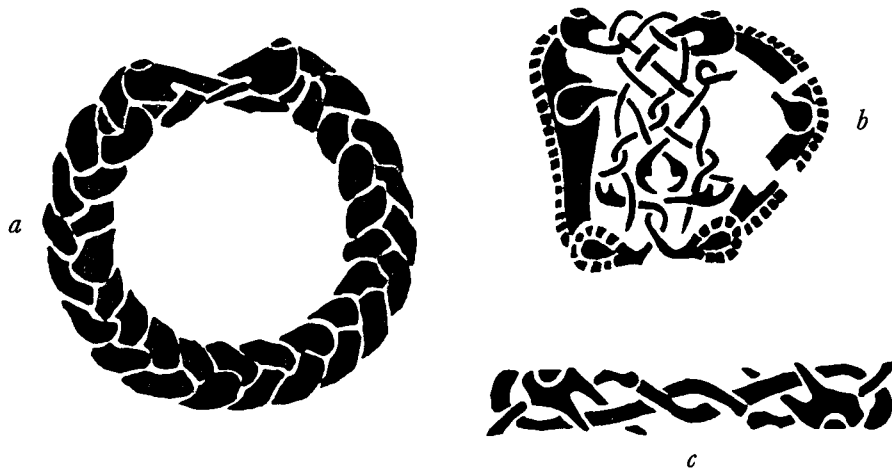


FIG. 2

ZOOMORPHIC CLOISONNÉ ORNAMENT (pp. 4 ff.). Sc. $\frac{3}{2}$

a, reconstruction of border of pendant, Bacton, Norfolk, compared with ornament *b*, on purse-lid, and *c*, on shoulder-clasps, Sutton Hoo, Suffolk

loop on the Bacton pendant is too small for a garnet, and was plugged with gold as elsewhere on the border, but most notably beneath the neck of the right-hand animal. Is this 'plugged cloison' a cruder version of the sophisticated 'lidded cloison' of the Sutton Hoo master jeweller, as practised on the purse-lid (the single plaque, top centre, and the two outer plaques below), and in the interlace borders around the rectangular panels of the shoulder-clasps?¹⁹ Certainly the Bacton jeweller and the master jeweller from Sutton Hoo, both concerned to heighten the design by providing a contrast to the garnets, used kindred ideas and techniques.

In 1933 Kendrick published a photograph of a composite disc-brooch from Faversham.²⁰ Like the Bacton pendant the brooch was mutilated, and all the

¹⁹ Bruce-Mitford (1968), pp. 63-4.

²⁰ Kendrick (1933), p. 448, pl. v.

garnets and inlays are missing (PL. II, B). In 1939, only a few months after the excavation of the Sutton Hoo ship-burial, Kendrick claimed that the Faversham brooch was made in the Sutton Hoo workshop because it achieved in cloisonné an interlacing linked-loop device also employed in cloisonné on a pair of rectangular mounts from Sutton Hoo.²¹ Kendrick called this device the 'beaded-elbow' cloison and said of it: 'There are no other examples of this cloison at all, and no other examples of a cloisonné imitation of interlace; so it is as certain as anything in this world can be that the Faversham brooch and the Sutton Hoo jewellery were made in the same workshop.' Kendrick's attribution has met with general acceptance, an additional reason being that Bruce-Mitford has identified zoomorphic details in the form of 'affronted boars' heads separated by a plain keystone cell' terminating the zones of geometric cloisonné work which encircle the central fields of the four smaller roundels (FIG. 4, c; PL. II, B).²² At that time the only other insular instances of zoomorphic cloisonné known to Bruce-Mitford occurred on the Sutton Hoo purse-lid and shoulder-clasps, and the only other occurrence of boars' heads in insular cloisonné work was in the interlinked boar figures at the ends of the Sutton Hoo shoulder-clasps (FIG. 4, a; PL. II, A).²³ Other objects are now classed as products emanating from or influenced by the Sutton Hoo 'school' or workshop, most notably the cross-pendant from Wilton (Norfolk);²⁴ the cloisonné disc on the Egbert shrine at Trier;²⁵ the sword-pommel from Hög Edsten, Bohuslän;²⁶ the garnet-set mount from the cathedral at Tongres;²⁷ and the cloisonné decorated foot-plate of the brooch from Wynaldum (Friesland).²⁸ Compared with the best garnet work from Sutton Hoo the Bacton pendant looks decidedly clumsy, even allowing for its damaged condition. But although the hand of the Sutton Hoo master himself is not recognizable, it may be another product of his school.

So far identification of the nature of the Bacton cloisonné ornament has only been discussed in relation to cloisonné work from Sutton Hoo. Having learnt from the Faversham disc-brooch and the Bacton pendant that all cloisonné ornament is not what it may at first seem, I propose to examine two more gold pendants, from Forsbrook (Staffs.), in the British Museum (PL. I, c), and from Womersley (Yorks.), in the Sheffield Museum (PL. I, d).²⁹

Like the Bacton pendant, that from Forsbrook is an isolated find. It consists of a solidus of Valentinian II (375-92) mounted within a border of cloisonné work (FIG. 3, a), diameter 2.8 cm., and suspended by a cylindrical cloisonné loop set with two rows of rectangular garnets separated by a central row of six L-stepped garnets. The cloisonné border of fifty-one cells is set with alternately opposed semicircular pieces of lapis lazuli separated by irregularly shaped garnets

²¹ Kendrick (1939), p. 133; Kendrick (1940), pp. 35-6, fig. 3.

²² Bruce-Mitford (1949), pp. 51-2, fig. 9, pl. xiv a.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

²⁷ Arbmman (1950), p. 160, fig. 17.

²⁸ Bruce-Mitford (1954), p. 17.

²⁹ Leeds (1936), pl. xxx a, d.

backed by gold foil. The rim of this pendant is ornamented with two strands of beaded wire with a central strand of plain wire, and Ozanne³⁰ has recognized that these wires together terminate in a pair of open-jawed animal heads, opposed one on either side of the suspension loop (FIG. 3, *b*). Her observation on the cloisonné border is not so acute, for here, even better camouflaged than on the Bacton pendant, is another double-headed creature whose stumpy, open-jawed heads are confronted jaw-to-jaw under the cloisonné suspension loop (FIG. 3, *c*). The creature's large eyes have lost their settings, but the two triangular cells between the open jaws are still filled with lapis lazuli. Although the motive is similar to that on the Bacton pendant, the 'species' of creature is evidently different. The closest geographical analogy for the Forsbrook creature, although not in

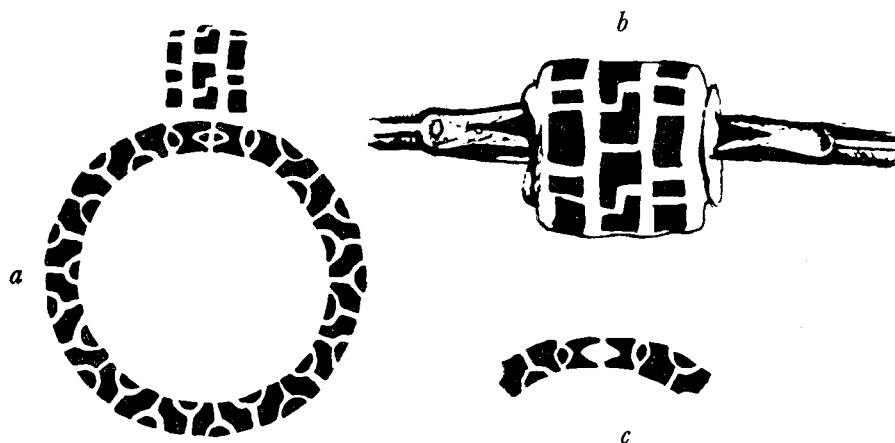


FIG. 3

PENDANT, FORSBROOK, STAFFS. (p. 6 f.)

a, cloisonné border ornament. Sc. $\frac{3}{8}$; *b*, detail of outer rim, greatly enlarged; *c*, cloisonné animal heads beneath suspension loop. Sc. $\frac{3}{8}$

cloisonné, occurs on certain annular brooches from the E. Riding of Yorkshire, e.g. the silver annular brooch with cabochon garnet eye-settings from grave 31 at Uncleby.³¹

The Womersley pendant³² was found in an inhumation-burial excavated in 1858. It is of gold, diameter 3.6 cm., and ornamented with fields of annular, C-scroll and S-scroll filigree, which are separated by a star-like arrangement of beaded gold wire radiating from a central hemispherical white paste boss, domed by a cabochon garnet with a beaded gold collar. Beneath the small cylindrical suspension loop in pseudo-plait filigree is a wedged-shaped setting of seven irregular cloisons, six of which contain garnets backed by hatched gold foil. Flanking this is a horse-shoe arrangement of ten gold granules bordered with

³⁰ Ozanne (1962-63), p. 41.

³¹ Leeds (1936), pl. xxvii.

³² Sheffield Mus. inv. no. J. 93.709.

filigree. Particularly interesting is the wedge of garnets, stated as being 'quite remarkable'.³³ It is more than remarkable, for here is a further unrecognized example of zoomorphic cloisonné, no double-headed creature this time, but a lowered boar's head (FIG. 4, *b*). The rendering is very clumsy, but the features—an eye, two jaws, and a tusk—are all there, to make such an identification sure; indeed, confirmation comes from a comparison with the lowered boars' heads, of far superior craftsmanship, on the shoulder-clasps from Sutton Hoo (FIG. 4, *a*; PL. II, A). It is surprising that the Womersley boar head should not have been recognized sooner, for displayed near by in the Sheffield Museum is the free-

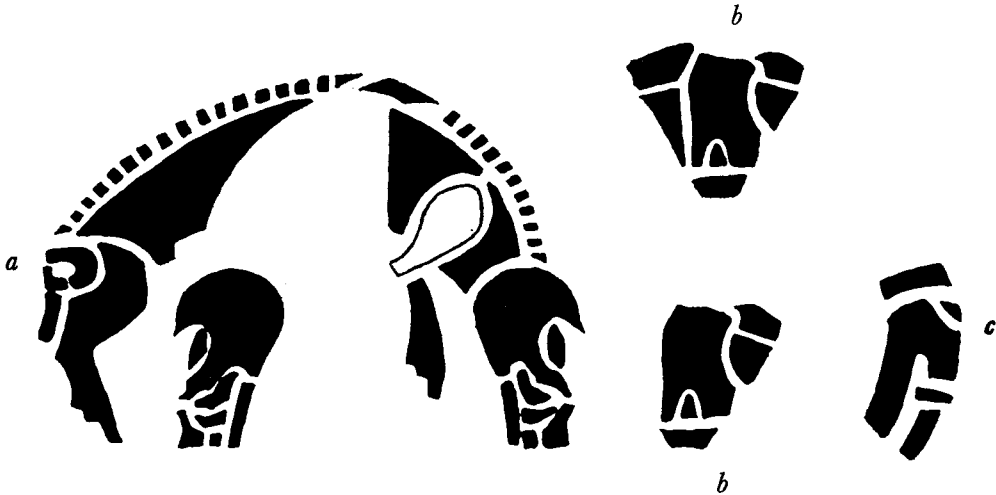


FIG. 4

BOAR MOTIVE IN INSULAR CLOISONNÉ WORK (pp. 6, 8)

a, shoulder-clasps, Sutton Hoo, Suffolk. Sc. $\frac{2}{3}$; *b*, pendant, Womersley, Yorks. Sc. $\frac{2}{3}$; *c*, composite disc-brooch, Faversham, Kent. Sc. $c \frac{1}{4}$

standing boar, constructed in bronze, silver and gold, cresting the Benty Grange helmet.³⁴ The Womersley pendant is of 7th-century date, and together with the boar heads on the Faversham disc-brooch (FIG. 4, *c*; PL. II, B) and the boars on the ends of the Sutton Hoo shoulder-clasps it represents the third and most northerly example yet discovered of the boar motive in insular cloisonné work.

ORIGIN

The Bacton pendant belongs to that class of jewel, a solidus encircled in a cloisonné frame with a loop for suspension, of which there are three more known examples in this country. All are displayed alongside the Bacton pendant in the British Museum, and are alike in being unassociated finds:

a. *Forsbrook, Staffs.* Described above, p. 6 f. (inv. no. 79.7-14.1).

³³ *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.* (1860), p. 289.

³⁴ Bateman (1861), p. 28; *Annual Report of Sheffield City Museum* (1955-56), p. 13.

- b. *Wilton, Norfolk* (inv. no. 59.5-12.1). Cross-pendant containing a coin of Heraclius and Constantine (c. 620),³⁵ the encircling border being of plain rectangular cells, with smaller and larger cells alternately set.
- c. *Unknown provenience* (inv. no. 35.8-3.1). Pendant containing a solidus of Valens (364-378) with a surrounding border of plain rectangular cells.

It is obvious that these pendants will be of little comparative use in the search for the origin of the Bacton zoomorphic interlace, for zoomorphic details occur only on the Forsbrook pendant.

It is a pity that no stylistic comparison can be made between the Bacton mounting and that on the missing Pakefield pendant (above, p. 3), but a close analogy to the Bacton pendant is afforded by a coin-pendant from the Wieuwerd hoard (Friesland),³⁶ the wreath-like interlace of which is not in cloisonné but in loops of filigree (PL III, A). In the centre is a barbarous imitation of a coin of Justinian (of unknown mint), whilst let into the top of the pendant in the same fashion as the Bacton loop is a bi-conoid suspension loop decorated with transverse panels of annular filigree. The analogy between the two pendants was first pointed out by Smith,³⁷ but the Wieuwerd pendant has no animal heads meeting under the suspension loop, and the suggested rendering of interlace in the lower zone of the border is inconsistent and confused. Although there is an undoubted similarity between the Bacton and Wieuwerd pendants, it is obvious that the filigree interlace on the latter could not have been the prototype for the zoomorphic version on the former.

In seeking an origin for the Bacton ornament, therefore, we must consider where the custom of wearing mounted coin-pendants originated, and the stage in the development at which a zoomorphic element was introduced into the border ornament.

It seems that the wearing of such mounted coins or medallions dates from the 4th century,³⁸ and that the obverse with the image of the emperor, who was worshipped as a god, was regarded with some veneration. Coin-pendants with native Germanic mountings are to be found in the well-known first treasure from Szilagy-Somlyo (Hungary),³⁹ and Lindqvist has argued it was such prototypes that prompted medallion imitations and the striking of bordered bracteates in Scandinavia during the 5th century.⁴⁰ Although there is no sharp stylistic dividing line between so-called barbarian medallions and the bracteates, the normal definition limits the term 'bracteate' to one-sided medallions and to those formed by attaching two one-sided specimens back to back.⁴¹

But in addition to the die-stamped central representation of the profile head there occur in the border ornamentation of certain bracteates several

³⁵ Grierson (1959), pp. 131 ff.

³⁶ L. J. F. Janssen, 'Das merowingische Goldschmuck aus Wieuwerd', *Bonner Jahrbücher*, XLIII (1867), 57-91; Lafaurie *et al.* (1961), pp. 78-107.

³⁷ Smith (1901), p. 342.

³⁸ N. L. Rasmussen, 'Were medals of merit used and worn in antiquity?', *Acta Archaeol.*, XVI (1945), 211.

³⁹ J. Hampel, *Altertümer des frühen Mittelalters in Ungarn*, I-II (Braunschweig, 1905).

⁴⁰ S. Lindqvist, *Vendelkulturens Alder och Ursprung* (Stockholm, 1926), pp. 20-1.

⁴¹ Mackeprang (1952), p. 21.

subsidiary figures which present remarkable and surprising parallels to the zoomorphic interlaced border of the Bacton pendant. Our immediate concern is with two gold C-bracteates from Vå, Skåne (Sweden)⁴² from a hoard of three discovered in 1674, which is the oldest known find of bracteates in Sweden (PL. III, B-C). Both exhibit border-zones of double-strand interlace, terminating above the central profile head and beneath the suspension loop (missing on one) in two open-jawed animal heads. Although one of the bracteates is engraved and the other die-stamped, the similarity of motive and design is so close that there can be no doubt they were produced by the same hand. Both creatures have lens-shaped eyes set in the distinctive round backed head, characteristic also of the creature from Bacton. Distinctly different, however, are the open jaws set with sharp saw-like teeth, which can be paralleled, however, on the wooden animal head from Vimose, Fyn (Denmark).⁴³ Undoubtedly the same motive, in variant form, occurs on the bracteate from Åsum, Skåne, where four plumed heads seem to hover against a V-field of scroll filigree, almost disassociated from two bands of spotted interlace within the complex border which may represent their bodies.⁴⁴ Although the Bacton border is in cloisonné work, dare I suggest that its zoomorphic motive originated in southern Sweden?

It would be difficult to adduce any prototype for bands of interlace with animal heads on any of the Roman solidi and medallions so far discovered in Scandinavia or elsewhere. Researches suggest that the possible prototype may have arisen from a zoomorphic rendering of a wreath or a garbled Latin legend such as occurs on certain medallion imitations.⁴⁵ A hypothetical development can be produced with certain bracteates playing key parts, although it is not to be suggested that the evolutionary process was simple and unaffected by regional variations.⁴⁶ Paulsen,⁴⁷ in discussing the symbolic significance of the double animal head on Scandinavian church-door rings, traces its forerunners from the intertwined snakes on the runic horn from Gallehus⁴⁸ and on the bracteate from Lyngby, Randers Amt., before the incorporation of the two animals into a single band as on two of the bracteates from Overhornbaek, Viborg (Jutland) (FIG. 5, c).⁴⁹ On certain Norwegian D-bracteates, however, the animal bodies in the border-zone never fuse into one, but retain their character as quadrupeds. The suggested prototype is the C-bracteate from Lista, Prestegård, Vest Agder.⁵⁰ It would seem that gradually the central image of the profile head is replaced by complete zoomorphization and the border-zone occupied by twin creatures, either boars, birds, or fantastic quadrupeds.⁵¹ No example can be found where the

⁴² *Ibid.*, pls. 12.2, 24.18. Statens Historiska Museum 67.

⁴³ C. Engelhardt, *Vimose Fundet* (København, 1867), fig. 10; Salin (1904), fig. 465.

⁴⁴ Mackeprang (1952), pl. 11.2.

⁴⁵ E.g. Mackeprang (1952), pl. 2.7.

⁴⁶ C. Moberg has listed those bracteates which have zones of either spotted or stranded interlace in their borders, but no mention is made of the zoomorphic elements in the Skåne bracteates: 'Über die Rahmenverzierung der Goldbrakteaten', *Acta Archaeol.*, xxiii (1952), 115-31.

⁴⁷ P. Paulsen, *Drachenkämpfer, Löwenritter und die Heinrichsage* (Köln, 1966), p. 225.

⁴⁸ E. Graf Oxenstierna, *Die Nordgermanen* (Stuttgart, 1957), pls. 44-5.

⁴⁹ Mackeprang (1952), pl. 3, 10 and 14.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pl. 12.4.

⁵¹ Boars, *ibid.*, pls. 18.32, 19.4; birds, *ibid.*, pl. 20.14; fantastic quadrupeds, *ibid.*, pl. 19.2, 8, 12, 13, 17 and 22.

jaws of the creatures interlink with one another as on the Bacton pendant. They usually oppose each other open-jawed, or are separated by a V-field of filigree decoration under the suspension loop.

SIGNIFICANCE

Assuming that the mystical power associated with the emperor portrait was transferred to the bracteate (groups A and C) and to the coin-pendant, the double-headed animal or snake presumably had more significance for Germanic peoples than a mere decorative element transformed from Roman art.⁵² H. Vierck believes the border ornament on one of the Vå bracteates served a protective purpose:

‘Die Darstellung eines doppelköpfigen Wurms um das Bild des Reiters auf den Brakteaten von Vå, beweist mit wünschenswerter Deutlichkeit seine Reittier (und Reiter) unmittelbar schützende Funktion.’⁵³

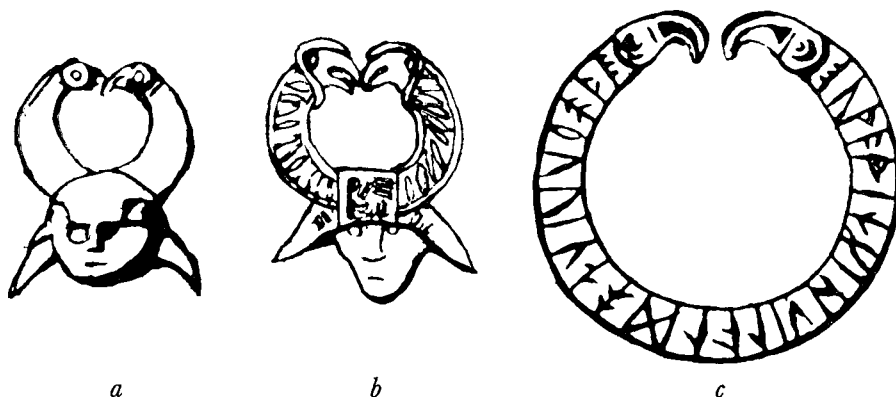


FIG. 5

BEAKED HEADS IN SCANDINAVIAN WORK (p. 11 f.). Sc. $\frac{2}{1}$

a, horned helmet from bronze mould, Torslunda, Öland, Sweden; *b*, horned helmet on repoussé panel of helmet, Sutton Hoo, Suffolk; *c*, border of A-bracteate, Overhornbaek, Viborg, Denmark

Indeed, there is an adaptation of this motive on the Sutton Hoo helmet⁵⁴ where the iron crest that runs from the eyebrows to the nape of the neck terminates at either end in a gilt-bronze animal head with long gnashing teeth and garnet eyes. In addition to the symbolic protection inherent in it, the motive serves a real protective purpose. A variant of this motive is seen on the so-called horned helmets of the dancing warriors in the repoussé panels on the Sutton Hoo helmet (FIG. 5, *b*). The general interpretation is that these have beaked heads and are to be paralleled by a similar headgear on one of the Torslunda dies (FIG. 5, *a*),⁵⁵

⁵² Although research into the origin of the Bacton zoomorph has concentrated attention on bordered pendants, the double-headed animal has a long history and appears also on Scandinavian neck-rings and armlets, e.g. the armlet from Tebbestrup (Denmark). See E. Munksgaard, ‘Collared gold necklets and armlets’, *Acta Archaeol.*, xxiv (1953), fig. 7.

⁵³ H. Vierck, *Bayerisches Vorgeschichtsblätter*, xxxii (1967), 116.

⁵⁴ H. Maryon, ‘The Sutton Hoo helmet’, *Antiquity*, xxi (1947), 137–44.

⁵⁵ H. Shetelig and H. Falk, *Scandinavian Archaeology* (1937), pl. 43; W. Holmqvist, *Germanic Art* (1955), pls. xxxii and xxxiii.

on a repoussé fragment from Uppsala,⁵⁶ and on a buckle-plate from Finglesham (Kent).⁵⁷ The fact that there are birds' heads on the horned helmets need not preclude a connexion with the pendant motives, for on one of the bracteates from Overhornbaek, Viborg, two beaked heads linked by a body of runic script confront one another under the suspension loop (FIG. 5, *c*). The Germanic god of the dead Wodan/Odin was connected with both the eagle and the serpent,⁵⁸ and, as Hauck⁵⁹ has produced well documented reasons for concluding that Wodan was worshipped by the royal house of East Anglia, it should come as no surprise to find the symbol of Wodan on a product of the Sutton Hoo workshop.⁶⁰

THE SCANDINAVIAN CONNEXION

If it is accepted that certain southern Swedish C-bracteates of the 5th and early 6th centuries show ancestral forms of the zoomorphic border ornament from Bacton, some attempt should be made to explain the adoption of such a motive in East Anglia. The close link between the Bacton creature and certain zoomorphic elements at Sutton Hoo must go undisputed, but, as Bruce-Mitford has argued,⁶¹ the probable archaeological link between Sutton Hoo and Sweden connects not with southern Sweden, but with the province of Uppland, where the royal mounds of Old Uppsala and the rich boat-graves of Vendel and Valsgårde lie. In contradiction, the genealogical and literary evidence for the East Anglian Wuffinga dynasty would seem to suggest some dynastic link not with the Svear royalty in Uppland but with their traditional enemies the royal house of the Geats in S. Sweden (FIG. 1).⁶² An answer to these contradictions drawn from the archaeological material and the documentary evidence is outlined in the historical framework suggested by J. L. N. O'Loughlin:⁶³

'A settlement of Wylfings from Östergötland had arisen in East Anglia not long before 470. Whether it was tribal or purely dynastic it is hard to say. It was reinforced by a second, perhaps limited, influx of important Geat exiles with Danish connexions who took refuge with their Wylfing kinsmen after the final overthrow of the already weakened Geat kingdom a decade or two before the middle of the 6th century by the barbarian Swedes The exiles were led by Wehhelm of the Wegmundings, who became the king of the East Angles, perhaps in Suffolk, by peaceful succession. The exiles brought with them the stories and legends of the Scandinavian dynasties, Geat and Danish, and their wars in the period 480-530, and trophies of their earlier battles against the Swedish kings. The literary sequel to this

⁵⁶ Bruce-Mitford (1949), pl. x *b*.

⁵⁷ S. C. Hawkes, 'The Finglesham man', *Antiquity*, xxxix (1965), pl. iv *a*.

⁵⁸ H. R. Ellis Davidson, *ibid.*, pp. 23-7.

⁵⁹ K. Hauck, *Jahrbuch f. frankische Landesforschung*, xiv (1954), 51.

⁶⁰ There is evidence for the survival of this pagan motive in East Anglia into the 8th century. The double-headed serpent occurs on the reverse of certain coins of Offa (757-796) encircling the name of the moneyer, ALHMUND (*Numis. Chron.*, 4 ser., xx (1920), pl. vii, 13L). I am grateful to Dr. D. M. Metcalf of the Ashmolean Museum for drawing my attention to these coins.

⁶¹ Bruce-Mitford (1949), p. 75.

⁶² The hero of the Anglian poem *Beowulf* is a Geat.

⁶³ O'Loughlin (1964), pp. 15-16.

is *Beowulf*. The archaeological sequel is Sutton Hoo with Scandinavian, but not purely Swedish, burial customs, Swedish objects, and an artistic tradition strongly reminiscent of that of Sweden.’

According to this interpretation those objects in the Sutton Hoo burial of demonstrably Swedish manufacture (the helmet, the shield, and the sword, excluding the scabbard, its bosses and the pyramids from the sword knot) represent Geatish war trophies which had become heirlooms of the Wuffinga dynasty. Certainly the shield was old and partly restored when buried, and Lindqvist’s opinion that the helmet is ‘not much later than the Anastasius dish’ (491–518)⁶⁴ agrees with Nerman’s dating of Odens Hög at Old Uppsala to c. 500. This contained a fragment from a helmet panel showing part of a dancing warrior, almost identical with a panel from the Sutton Hoo helmet.⁶⁵ There occur two specific references to Geatish ‘booty’ in *Beowulf*. In line 2,610 there is a mention of the helmet, sword and shield of Eanmund, prince of Sweden, which Onela, Eadmund’s uncle, had presented to Wihstan. In lines 2,985–98 there is a reference to the incident when two Geats, Eafor and Wulf, killed Ongentheow, king of the Swedes, and Eafor took his corslet, helmet and sword, and offered them to Hygelac. Indeed, the antiquity of the shield and helmet from Sutton Hoo and the death of Ongentheow within the 1st quarter of the 6th century has led O’Loughlin to suggest that ‘it is entirely within the realm of probability that the very objects in Sutton Hoo of Swedish workmanship are referred to in *Beowulf*’.⁶⁶

Besides war booty, less direct evidence of Geatish or southern Scandinavian influence in East Anglia should be expected; it appears to have been found in the border ornament of the Bacton pendant.⁶⁷ With its ultimate southern Swedish origin it offers support to the documentary evidence, which argues for a dynastic link between East Anglia and southern Sweden.

DATING

THE SUSPENSION LOOP

The bi-conoid suspension loop with a central ridge occurs on six of the pendants in the Wieuwerd hoard (above, p. 9), five being decorated with annular filigree and one with pseudo-plait. The assembly of the hoard is ascribed to c. 630,⁶⁸ but it is evident from the repairs on certain of the pendants that their date of manufacture must have been between 550 and 600. The broken foot-plate from a gold-covered bronze brooch in the same hoard exhibits a stranded interlace surrounding the filigree-decorated panels, which is very like the stranded inter-

⁶⁴ S. Lindqvist, ‘Sutton Hoo and *Beowulf*’, *Antiquity*, xxxii (1948), 136; *Fornvännen* (1948), p. 103.

⁶⁵ B. Nerman, *Sveriges rikets uppkomst* (Stockholm, 1941), fig. 34; Bruce-Mitford (1949), pl. x.

⁶⁶ O’Loughlin (1964), p. 15.

⁶⁷ The fact that the suggested southern Swedish ancestral forms for the Bacton ornament are not in cloisonné does not necessarily weaken the argument. The most impressive zoomorphic cloisonné occurs outside the province of Uppland, on the sword-pommel from Vallstenarum, Gotland (H. Falk and H. Shetelig, *Scandinavian Archaeology* (1947), pl. 42 a), and on the pommel from Hög Edsten, Bohuslän, which Bruce-Mitford has recognized as being ‘the most intimately related with the Sutton Hoo jewellery’ (Bruce-Mitford (1949), p. 54).

⁶⁸ Lafaurie *et al.* (1961), p. 105.

lace on the Bacton suspension loop. This feature is hardly a crucial dating factor, however, as it can be closely paralleled on a twin-tubular pendant from Lundeberg, Svendborg (Denmark), which is 5th century.⁶⁹ O. Voss seeks the origin for this interlace in SE. Europe and parallels it on a gold brooch from Hassleben of c. 300;⁷⁰ a brooch from the second hoard of Szilagy-Somlyo of late 4th- or early 5th-century date;⁷¹ a silver brooch from Kiev, probably of the 4th century;⁷² and the under side of the grip on Childeric's sword, buried in 482.⁷³ Again in Scandinavia, such interlace is to be seen on the recently discovered brooch from Kitnaes (Zealand), which E. Munksgaard ascribes to the 2nd half of the 5th century,⁷⁴ and it seems most likely that the interlace on the Wieuwerd brooch derives from a Scandinavian source, as there is a typological link between the development of such brooches in western Scandinavia and Holland.

Such stranded interlace does not appear at Sutton Hoo or on any other English pieces known to me, but pseudo-plait filigree does appear on the bi-conoid suspension loop of the Wilton cross-pendant, a product of the Sutton Hoo workshop and dated by coins c. 620–630.⁷⁵

THE CLOISONNÉ BORDER AND THE COIN

Provided it is accepted that the setting of the Maurician solidus is not a replacement for an earlier coin, now lost, the suggested date of 598 for the striking of the Bacton solidus in a mint at Arles⁷⁶ gives a *terminus post quem* for the cloisonné border and suspension loop. Although the suspension loop is much abraded and the cloisonné border battered, the obverse of the coin, allowing always for the action of the sea, does not show excessive signs of wear, and it is tempting to suggest that the coin was mounted as a pendant when in nearly mint condition, not long after 598. Such a suggestion, however, does not allow for the possible treasuring of the coin before being mounted. It is obvious from the example of the Forsbrook pendant, with its coin of Valentinian II (375–92), that such coins are not necessarily reliable date indicators for the pendants.

More significantly a tremissis in the purse from Sutton Hoo bears traces of the legend of Maurice Tiberius, also struck at Arles, and demonstrably by the same graver who struck the Bacton solidus.⁷⁷ The link between Sutton Hoo and Bacton is now doubly strengthened for not only is there an analogy between the Bacton cloisonné animal heads and the animal heads on the top central plaque of the purse-lid, but there is also an undeniable connexion between the Bacton coin and a coin from the contents of the Sutton Hoo purse. Since it is likely that Merovingian gold coin provided the raw material for the Sutton Hoo jewellery,

⁶⁹ O. Voss, 'Der Hesselagerfund', *Acta Archaeol.*, xxii (1951), 152–65.

⁷⁰ W. Schulz and R. Zahn, *Das Fürstengrab von Hassleben* (Leipzig, 1933), pl. 4, 1a.

⁷¹ N. Fettich, 'Der zweite Schatz von Szilagy-Somlyo', *Archaeol. Hungarica*, viii (1932), pl. xi.

⁷² Salin (1904), fig. 18.

⁷³ H. Arbman, 'Les épées du tombeau de Childeric', *Meddel. från Lunds Universitets Hist. Mus.* (1948),

fig. 3.

⁷⁴ E. Munksgaard, 'A gold hoard from Kitnaes, Zealand', *Acta Archaeol.*, xxxvii (1966), fig. 8.

⁷⁵ Grierson (1959), pp. 131 ff.; S. C. Hawkes, *Archaeol. Cantiana*, lxxviii (1963), 30.

⁷⁶ Rigold (1953), p. 115.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

the contents of the royal purse-hoard, which significantly includes no two coins from the same mint, was probably only a small selection from the total of such coins in the East Anglian royal treasury of the day. The Bretwalda Redwald, now again the most likely candidate for the ship-burial, must have dispensed to his followers many gifts of gold, and it is tempting to think that the Bacton solidus, mint-linked to a tremissis from the royal purse, once formed part of his royal treasure-hoard. This can only remain conjecture, but if Dr. Kent's verdict on the dates 620–630 being the most likely time for the burial of the Sutton Hoo hoard is accepted,⁷⁸ there is strong conjectural evidence that the Bacton pendant could have been made before or during this same period.

Such a date can be supported on other grounds. Having considered (above, p. 9) the close stylistic link between the Bacton pendant and a pendant from Wieuwerd, which has a confused and bungled border of filigree-looped interlace, it was concluded that the Wieuwerd ornament could hardly be the prototype for the Bacton ornament, with its regular plait of cloisons and its interlinked animal heads. Tentative researches would suggest that not only have four generations of archaeologists misinterpreted the Bacton ornament but that the filigree ornament on the Wieuwerd pendant is a misunderstood rendering by some craftsman of the Bacton motive.⁷⁹ If this is so, the Bacton pendant ought to be earlier than the Wieuwerd pendant. As the burial of the Wieuwerd hoard has been ascribed to *c.* 630,⁸⁰ the Bacton pendant ought to have been made before that date.

CONCLUSIONS

The Bacton pendant has justly fulfilled 'its claim to peculiar regard', for it is a stylistically and chronologically important piece of zoomorphic cloisonné work, previously unrecognized. Stylistically it has strong links with the animal heads on the top centre plaque of the Sutton Hoo purse-lid, and although the cutting and setting of the garnets is technically inferior the similarity of the animal heads, the use of the 'plugged cloison', and the comparative proximity of the finds in East Anglia, have led me to believe that it is an apprentice product of the Sutton Hoo workshop. Research has discovered two further unacknowledged examples of zoomorphic cloisonné on Anglo-Saxon pendants: on a coin-pendant from Forsbrook (Staffs.), and on a pendant from Womersley (Yorks.). The ultimate origin of the Bacton zoomorphic motive is most likely to have been in S. Scandinavia; historically the appearance of the motive in East Anglia may be linked with a southern Swedish Geatish origin for the Wuffinga dynasty. Independent dating suggested for the Bacton pendant, that is between 620 and 630, finds agreement in the recent redating of the Sutton Hoo burial to *c.* 625.

⁷⁸ Kent (1967), p. 29.

⁷⁹ Close artistic connexions between East Anglia and Frisia are evident. Bruce-Mitford's impression of the cloisonné decorated foot-plate of a brooch from Wynaldum (Lecuarden Museum) is that, though strongly influenced by insular sources, it was probably not made in England. Perhaps it was the work of a craftsman trained in Kent or Suffolk but working for a continental patron. See Bruce-Mitford (1954), p. 17.

⁸⁰ Lafaurie *et al.* (1961), p. 105.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Åberg, N. (1926)
 Arbman, H. (1950)
 Baldwin Brown, G. (1915)
 Bateman, T. (1861)
 Bruce-Mitford, R. L. S. (1949)
 ——— (1954)
 ——— (1968)
 Douglas, J. (1793)
 Grierson, P. (1959)
 Jessup, R. (1950)
 Kendrick, T. (1933)
 ——— (1939)
 ——— (1940)
 Kent, J. P. C. (1967)
 Lafaurie, J., *et al.* (1961)
 Leeds, E. T. (1936)
 Mackeprang, M. (1952)
 O'Loughlin, J. L. N. (1964)
 Ozanne, A. (1962-63)
 Rainbird Clark, R. (1960)
 Rigold, S. E. (1953)
 Salin, B. (1904)
 Smith, R. (1901)
 ——— (1923)
 Stevenson, W. S. (1847)
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 'Verroterie cloisonnée et filigrane', *Meddel. från Lunds Universitets Hist. Mus.*, pp. 136-72.
The Arts in Early England (London).
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 'Gold and silver cloisonné buckle from Wynaldum, Friesland', 126 ste. *Verlag van het Fries Genootschap van Gescheid, Oudheid en Taalkunde te Leeuwarden*, pp. 16-17.
The Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial. A Handbook (British Museum).
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 'Le Trésor de Wieuwerd', *Oudheidkundige Mededeelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden*, xlii, 78-107.
Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology (Oxford).
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East Anglia (London).
 'An imperial coinage in southern Gaul in the sixth and seventh centuries', *Numis. Chron.*, 6 ser., xiii-xiv, 93-133.
Die altgermanische Thierornamentik (Stockholm).
Victoria County History, Norfolk, 1. Anglo-Saxon remains, 325-51.
Guide to Anglo-Saxon and Foreign Teutonic Antiquities (British Museum).
 'Some account of an enchased gold coin found at Bacton, near Cromer', *Norfolk Archaeol.*, 1, 193-208.