AN EARLY ANGLO-SAXON BRIDLE-FITTING FROM SOUTH LECKAWAY, FORFAR, ANGUS, SCOTLAND

In February 2003 the Kinnettles Heritage Group made a quite unexpected find during field-walking at South Leckaway farm near Forfar, Angus (NGR NO 4379 4810): the most northerly example in Britain — by about 150 miles — of an Anglo-Saxon object decorated in Salin's Style I. It lay isolated and face down on the surface. A follow-up field-walk at the end of the month confirmed, partly with the aid of a metal detector, that there were no readily apparent additional pieces of metalwork, associated structures or burial evidence.[17] The find was reported under the Scottish Treasure Trove legislation, duly claimed and allocated in June 2003 to the Meffan Institute, Forfar (part of Angus Cultural Services).[18]

DESCRIPTION (Figs. 3–4)

The copper-alloy fitting is cruciform-shaped, measuring 33.4 × 27.9 mm overall, with a thickness of 2.3–2.8 mm; it weighs 4.03 gms. It has a gilded, slightly concave-sided, lozengiform body, measuring 20 × 20 mm, and plain ovoid terminals to the arms, two surviving to their full length and the other two as stumps. The surface of the copper alloy has an even, green patina and is highly worn and abraded, which with the broken terminals is consistent with prolonged exposure to ploughed soil. To date there has been no X-radiography to see if any trace of rivets survives on the reverse.

The body carries a relief-cast zoomorphic design in Salin's Style I within a lozengiform frameline (Fig. 5a). It consists of two, not necessarily independent, motifs. The first (illustrated in black font) might be read as a single abbreviated quadruped, with a profile head, triple-strand body and leg with plain foot. The second (illustrated in grey font) is a pair of confronted legs with recurved and clawed feet. Some of the raised elements, such as the banded body, are less defined than they once were because of the effects of time spent in the plough-soil.

FUNCTION, ART-STYLE AND DATE

The South Leckaway find can be positively identified as an early Anglo-Saxon bridle-fitting, largely thanks to the excavation in 1997 at RAF Lakenheath, Eriswell

---

[17] The finder was Mr Archie Dick of Kirriemuir. The owner of the farm is Mr Peter Janoch, an enthusiastic supporter of the field-walking, which was led by John Sheriff and forms part of a wider parish project, including study of the South Leckaway farm buildings: J. Sherriff, 'South Leckaway: an early 18th century farmhouse in Kinnettles, Angus', *Tayside Fife Archaeol. J.*, 9 (2003), 112–23. To date no excavation has taken place at South Leckaway, but a programme of geophysical evaluation and trial-trenching is under consideration.

[18] Digital images were circulated widely by Sally Foster and Mark Hall. They were seen by Susan Youngs, Leslie Webster and others at the British Museum, Kevin Leahy at North Lincolnshire Museum, and thence Chris Fern and Tania Dickinson, who unanimously and independently agreed the identification.
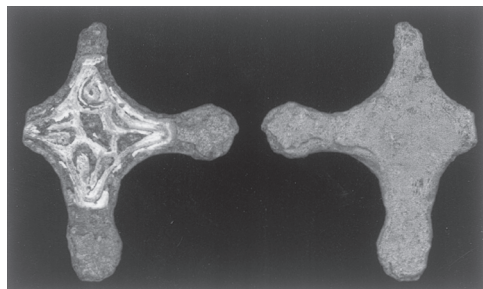
FIG. 3
SOUTH LECKAWAY BRIDLE-FITTING.
Scale 1:1. *Photograph: Paul Adair, courtesy of Perth Museum & Art Gallery.*
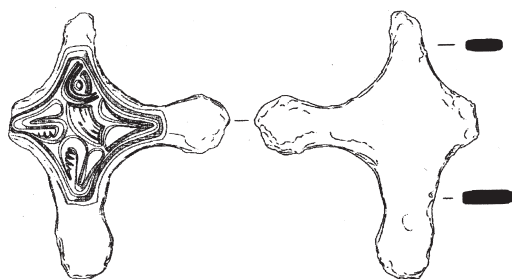

FIG. 4
SOUTH LECKAWAY BRIDLE-FITTING.
Scale 1:1. *Drawn by Chris Fern.*

(ERL104), Suffolk, of a horse with its head harness and snaffle bit still in position.[19] The harness was equipped with a suite of copper-alloy fittings in Bichrome Style, which combined gilded, relief-cast main fields, including Style I animal motifs, and silver-sheet appliqués on the terminals. The brow-band, nose-band and the two cheek-straps each bore a rectilinear mount which included a motif of a simple, crouching quadruped similar to the one that might be read on the South Leckaway fitting (cf. Fig. 6 for identification of harness-parts). A pair of discoid studs and strap-pendants ornamented a separate pendent strap, probably emanating from the brow-band/cheek-strap junction or possibly from a throat-lash. Four cruciform mounts (length c. 45 mm) secured the junctions of the cheek-straps with the nose-band and the brow-band. Except that their terminals are rectangular and their Style I decoration consists only of two running, clawed-foot legs (Fig. 5g), they are so like the South Leckaway fitting that the latter can confidently be identified as a strap-junction mount too. It must be assumed that originally it had cast-in rivets on the reverse of the four terminals and even centrally, though there is no indication of these to the naked eye; the ungilded terminals might also once have borne a white-metal surface. Presumably, too, the South Leckaway fitting originally formed one of a pair or quartet of more or less identical fittings, as in the reconstruction drawing (Fig. 6).

These fittings can be related to a growing number of comparable pieces found both in Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and as stray finds (Fig. 7).[20] Some of these, and the

[19] J. Caruth and S. Anderson, 'RAF Lakenheath Saxon cemetery', *Current Archaeol.*, 14(7) (no. 163, 1999), 244–50. A reconstruction of the harness will be presented in the forthcoming publication of the cemetery.
[20] The formalisation of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Britain in recent years has greatly increased the corpus of harness-mounts: C. Fern, 'The archaeological evidence for equestrianism in Early Anglo-Saxon England, c. 450–750', 43–71 in A. Pluskowski (ed.), *Just Skin and Bones? New Perspectives on Human-Animal Relations in the Historic Past* (BAR Internat. Ser. 1410, Oxford, 2005).
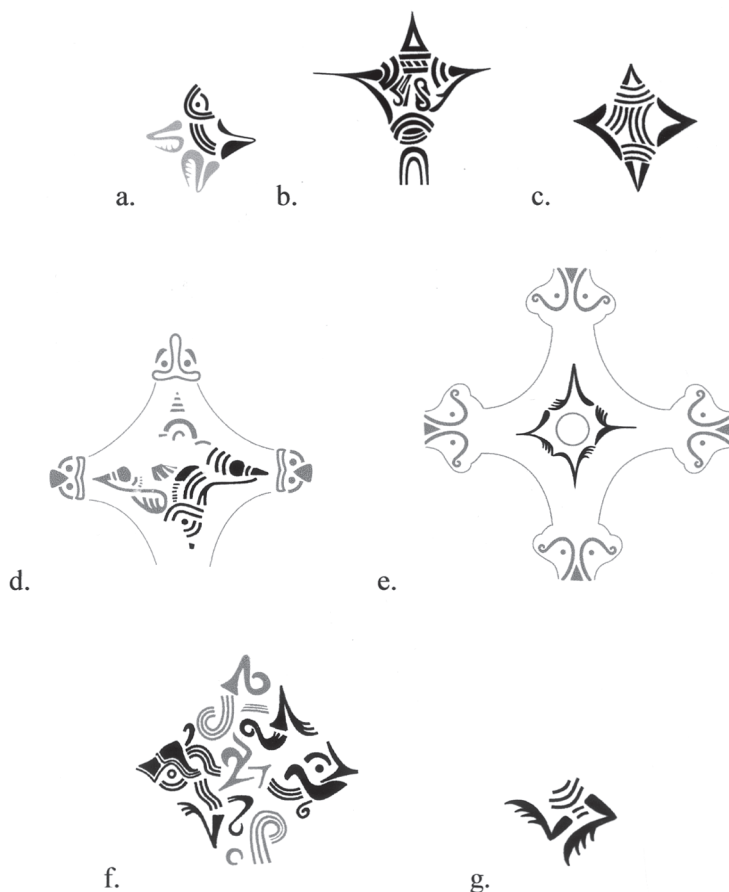
FIG. 5
STYLE I MOTIFS ON BRIDLE-FITTINGS AND COMPARANDA.
a: South Leckaway; b: Thornborough great square-headed brooch (Group XVII) inner footplate;
c: Bishop's Cleeve grave 13; d: Bifrons grave 63 square-headed brooch inner footplate; e: Easington;
f: Wakerley grave 31; g: Eriswell lozengiform mounts. Scale 1:1. *Drawn by Chris Fern.*

better-evidenced background for cruciform and square-shaped strap-junction fittings between the 5th and 7th centuries on the Continent and in Scandinavia, have been mentioned briefly in discussion of a recent stray find from Breamore, Hants, a mid-5th-to mid-6th-century, gilt copper-alloy, cruciform, cloisonné fitting of western Mediterranean origin.[21] In England, the best-known cross-shaped fittings are those found at Eastry I, Kent (length 30 mm), which were part of perhaps a complete suite of

[21] B. Eagles and B. Ager, 'A mid 5th to mid 6th-century bridle-fitting of Mediterranean origin from Breamore, Hampshire, England, with a discussion of its local context', 87–96 in M. Lodewijckx (ed.), *Bruc Ealles Well: Archaeological Essays Concerning the Peoples of North-west Europe in the First Millennium AD* (Leuven, 2004); for further examples of similar round-ended fittings, J. Oexle, *Studien zu merowingerzeitlichem Pferdegeschirr am Beispiel der Trensen* (Mainz, 1992).
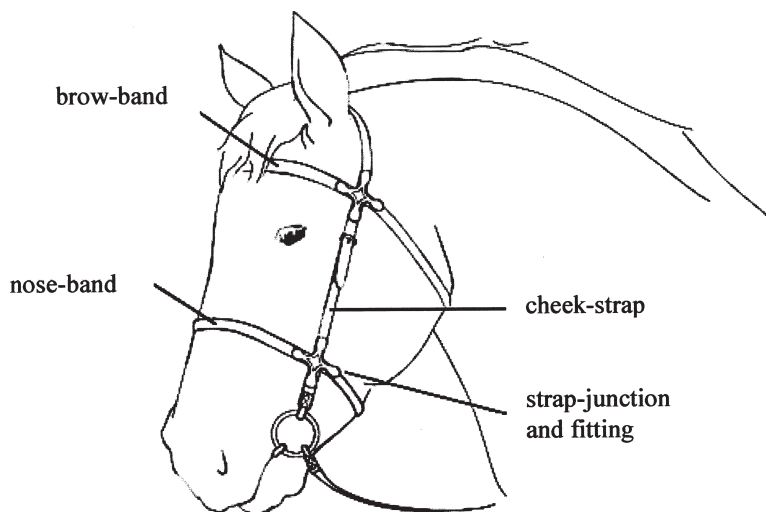
FIG. 6

RECONSTRUCTION OF SOUTH LECKAWAY FITTING ON BRIDLE.
Not to scale. *Drawn by Chris Fern, after A. Sundkvist*, Hästernas Land: Aristokratisk Hästhållning och
Ridkonst i Svealands Yngre Järnålder *(Uppsala, 2001)*.

horse-trappings decorated in Bichrome Style with a mixture of geometric and
zoomorphic motifs, including Style I.[22] Another possible example is a recent stray find
in the shape of two interlinked loops (length 37 mm) from the Lambourn valley at
Bockhampton, Berks.[23]

The closest — and most numerous — parallels for South Leckaway are, however,
a series of cruciform-lozengiform fittings with variously shaped terminals. Some are
merely gilded and punch-decorated, such as a pair with stepped, silver-plated trapezoi-
dal terminals and central rectilinear stud (imitating a garnet inlay?) from Cheesecake
Hill grave 4, Driffield, E. Yorks. (length 55 mm),[24] and a recent metal-detected find with
circular terminals and central, red enamel inlay surrounded by a starburst of triangular
stamps from Fring, Norfolk.[25] But the majority are decorated in Salin's Style I. From
Bishop's Cleeve grave 13, Glos., comes a piece with circular terminals (length 47 mm;
Fig. 5c): its central lozenge contains four sharply bent legs with triple-strand hips to the
middle and plain limbs to the outside.[26] A comparable motif, set round a central garnet
inlay, is compressed into the central lozenge of an unstratified pair of mounts from

[22] Maidstone Museum AS 146–147, the central device of which, two back-to-back, double 'c-strands', is scarcely zoomorphic: G. Baldwin Brown, *The Arts in Early England* (London, 1915), 204, pl. XXIV, 2; Fern, op. cit. in note 20, fig. 52.

[23] West Berkshire Museum, Newbury, 1992: 32.

[24] Yorkshire Museum, York, 238.47; J. R. Mortimer, *Forty Years Researches in British and Saxon Burial Mounds of East Yorkshire* (London, 1905), 288, fig. 843.

[25] Identified by the Portable Antiquities Scheme and illustrated on their website database at *http:// pas.toadhms.com/hms/pas_obj.php?type=finds&id=14963*

[26] N. Holbrook, 'The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Lower Farm, Bishop's Cleeve: excavations directed by Kenneth Brown, 1969', *Trans. Bristol Glos. Archaeol. Soc.*, 118 (2000), 61–92, at p. 70 and fig. 6.2.

Cruciform mounts

1. Bishop's Cleeve
2. Bockhampton
3. Breamore
4. Cheesecake Hill
5. Easington
6. Eastry
7. Eriswell
8. Fring
9. South Leckaway
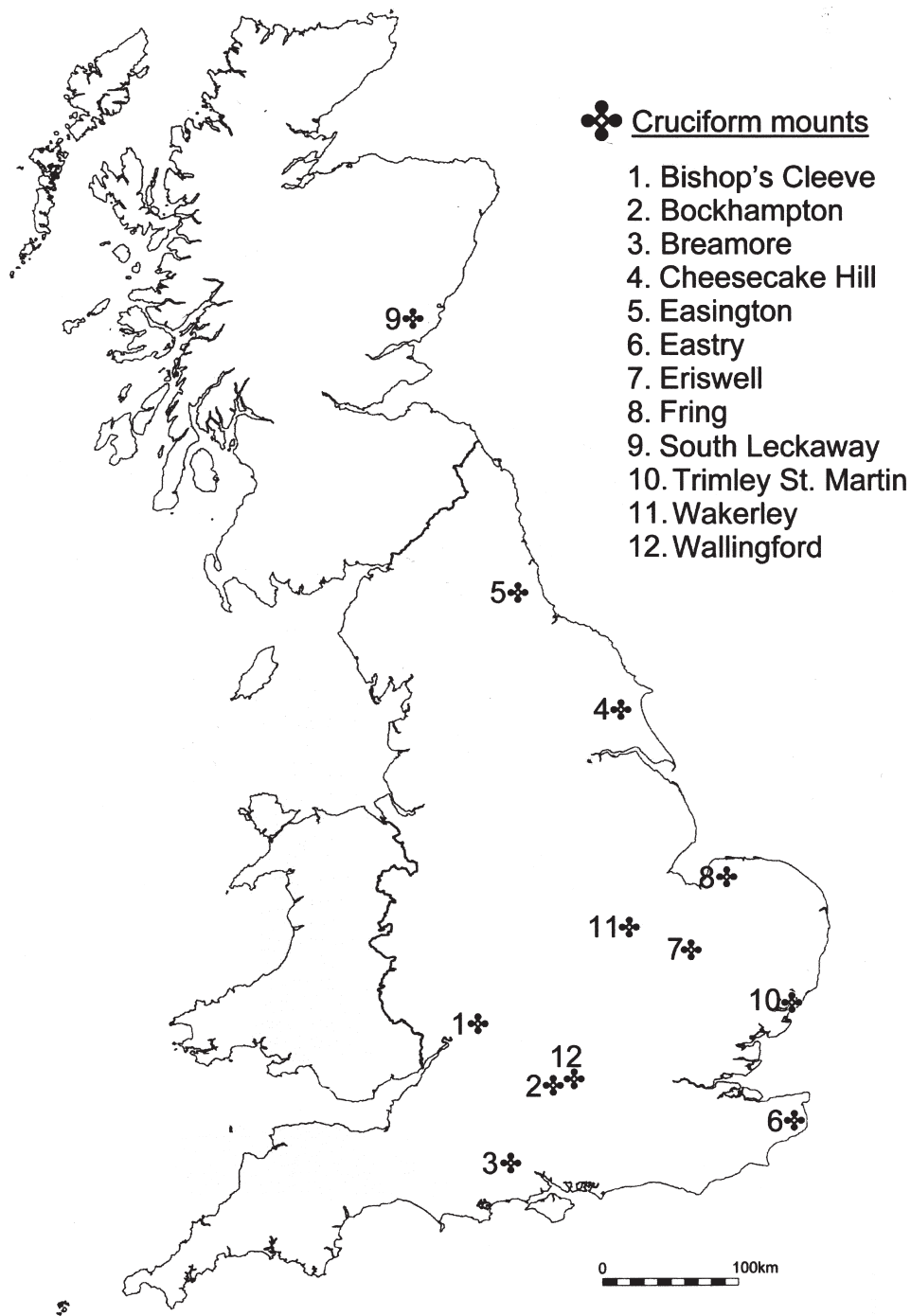10. Trimley St. Martin
11. Wakerley
12. Wallingford

FIG. 7

DISTRIBUTION OF 5TH- AND 6TH-CENTURY CRUCIFORM BRIDLE-FITTINGS IN BRITAIN.
Drawn by Chris Fern.

Andrew's Hill, Easington, Co. Durham (length >45 mm: Fig. 5e). The ends of the arms, one of which preserves a crescentic terminal, are further ornamented with full-face anthropomorphic masks.[27] Similar, but simpler, masks ornament arms with triangular terminals on a pair of small fittings from Wallingford grave 12, Oxon. (length 33 mm); their cramped centre carries only a quatrefoil, however.[28] Finally, two lozengiform, cast copper-alloy mounts, which formed central insets for larger, composite fittings, are distinguished by their decoration of two, more or less complete, quadrupeds. The example from Wakerley I, grave 31, Northants., was surrounded by a separate silver-sheet frame, and both pieces were mounted on an iron base-plate (length >60 mm).[29] Its re-use as a belt-mount had led to removal of the base-plate's terminals, but one of the cast-in rivets, which attached the inset to the base-plate is still *in situ*, though partially filed down. When intact, this piece would have been nearly twice the size of the South Leckaway mount. The well-modelled Style I quadrupeds are set back-to-back (Fig. 5f), their 'helmeted' heads in opposing corners of the field: while their heads, bodies and front legs are clear (in black font), their respective rear legs are less so (in grey font). A gilded lozengiform mount, arguably from a similar fitting, comes from Trimley St Martin, Suffolk. Its two quadrupeds, bent clockwise round a central quatrefoil, look simpler (cruder) than the Wakerley animals.[30]

Salin's Style I originated in southern Scandinavia in the later 5th century, though its ancestry ultimately lies in Late Antique art; it flourished in England primarily in the 6th century. To understand it, one must appreciate that it was an abstract art in which species and anatomical accuracy were disregarded in favour of fantastic and ambiguous zoomorphism or anthropomorphism. Emphasis was laid on individual body-elements, each of which was iconic and might represent more in the mind of a viewer educated in its symbolism than is actually visually represented.[31] For the group of lozengiform strap-junction fittings, two possible iconographic images, and routes of transmission, may be suggested, but both point to an origin in early 6th-century Kentish Style I. The two, more or less coherent, chasing quadrupeds of the insets from Wakerley (Fig. 5f) and Trimley St Martin recall the overall design, the quality of 'thick-and-thin' relief-casting and some, but not all, of the individual elements of high-rectangular garnet-inlaid belt plates. Found in southern counties, predominantly in male graves, these belt plates might have begun in production early in the 6th century, though lesser versions were copied in Anglian areas.[32] The same design appears in the headplates of two Kentish great square-headed brooches of Hines's early Group II and, in a head-to-head layout,

[27] H. Hamerow and J. Pickin, 'An Early Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Andrew's Hill, Easington, Co. Durham', *Durham Archaeol. J.*, 11 (1995), 35–66, at pp. 51 and 56.

[28] E. T. Leeds, 'An Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Wallingford, Berkshire', *Berks. Archaeol. J.*, 42 (1938), 93–101, at p. 97 and pl. 5; A. MacGregor and E. Bolick, *A Summary of Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon Collections (Non-Ferrous Metals)* (BAR Brit. Ser. 230, Oxford, 1993), 152.

[29] B. Adams and D. Jackson, 'The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Wakerley, Northamptonshire. Excavations by Mr D Jackson, 1968–9', *Northants. Archaeol. J.*, 22 (1989), 69–178, at p. 103 and fig. 31.6.

[30] E. Martin, C. Pendleton and J. Plouviez, 'Archaeology in Suffolk, 1995', *Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol. Hist.*, 48 (1996), 457–85, at p. 486 and fig. 99B.

[31] G. Haseloff, *Die germanische Tierornamentik der Völkerwanderungszeit* (Berlin, 1981); D. Leigh, 'Ambiguity in Anglo-Saxon Style I art', *Antiq. J.*, 54 (1984), 34–42; S. Kristoffersen, 'Transformation in Migration Period animal art', *Norwegian Archaeol. Rev.*, 28(1) (1995), 1–17; K. Høilund-Nielsen, 'Style II and the Anglo-Saxon elite', 185–202 in T. M. Dickinson and D. Griffiths (eds.) *The Making of Kingdoms* (Anglo-Saxon Stud. Archaeol. Hist., 10, Oxford, 1999).

[32] S. Marzinzik, *Early Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles (Late 5th to Early 8th Centuries A.D.): Their Classification and Context* (BAR. Brit. Ser., Oxford, 2003), 42–3.

on later Anglian-area brooches of his Group XV.[33] South Leckaway might then embody a further reduction of this design, one quadruped being retained intact, albeit highly simplified, the other reduced to two recurved legs. Alternatively, South Leckaway manifests a stage in the translation of a Scandinavian motif known as 'the Great Beast' (*Das Große Tier*), which can be traced on the lozengiform inner footplates of certain bow-brooches. The body and legs are viewed from above and the head either also from above (represented especially on Continental examples) or in profile (the format represented in England on great square-headed brooches of Hines's later Anglian Group XVII: Fig. 5b). In both, the number of legs can be reduced from four to three or two and the head can be lost.[34] The early 6th-century square-headed brooch from Bifrons grave 63, Kent, which itself is closely linked to production of the high-rectangular belt plates, has been identified by Günther Haseloff as a relatively early embodiment of the motif in England (Fig. 5d). Unfortunately, damage prevents certainty on the details, but they clearly comprise a downward-facing, profile head and neck in the lower angle with a recurved, claw-footed leg in the right-hand lateral angle (in black font), a comparable leg in the left-hand lateral angle, and a body-element in the upper angle (in grey font); there is space for a third leg where now there is a gaping hole. Sonia Hawkes read the design, however, as a completely profile creature, bent round in the available lozengiform space.[35] Either way, it or something similar is a likely model for the strap-junction fittings: South Leckaway (Fig. 5a) can be explained as a simplified single beast, whether conceived of as all in profile or with its body and legs *en face*; the terminal masks of the Easington (Fig. 5e) and Wallingford pairs could have been inspired by the *en face* anthropomorphic masks which terminate the angles of the inner footplate on Bifrons 63 (Fig. 5d); and the overall form might derive from the concave-sided lozengiform footplate itself. In turn, the four-leg motifs of Bishop's Cleeve 13 (Fig. 5c) and Easington can be understood as a further reduction of the 'Great Beast', now headless and perhaps bodyless, and exactly analogous to the form taken on a square-headed brooch from Niederbreisig, Germany.[36] Eriswell takes the reduction yet further — to just two legs (Fig. 5g).

A number of points arise from this discussion. First, there was an intimate relationship between the evolution of Style I motifs on, and even the artefact-form of, prestigious male-associated gear (horse-harness, belts) and female jewellery. Second, the evolution in this particular case began in the early 6th century, perhaps in Kent, but the analogies with great square-headed brooches of Hines's Phase 3 (Groups XV and XVII) and the use of Bichrome Style on at least Eriswell and Wakerley, and perhaps on South Leckaway too, suggest that its course, especially in Anglian eastern England, ran on into the middle or second half of the century.[37] The reticella bead in Wakerley 31 and the grave-goods with the man accompanying the Eriswell horse (a Swanton H2 spearhead, a Dickinson Group 2 shield boss and especially an iron-bound bucket) suggest burial

[33] J. Hines, *A New Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Great Square-headed Brooches* (Woodbridge, 1997), 40, 116 and 228.

[34] Hines, op. cit. in note 33, 138 and 140; Haseloff, op. cit. in note 31, esp. 363–417, 479–85 and 489–517.

[35] Haseloff, op. cit. in note 31, 273, 380, 484 and Abb. 184b, where, compared with Taf. 93, the right-hand foot is not drawn quite accurately; cf. S. C. Hawkes†, 'The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Bifrons, in the parish of Patrixbourne, East Kent', *Anglo-Saxon Stud. Archaeol. Hist.*, 11 (2000), 1–94, at pp. 43 and 48 and fig. 27, 5.

[36] Haseloff, op. cit. in note 31, 479–85, Taf. 59, 1.

[37] For the dating of Bichrome Style, see Hines, op. cit. in note 33, esp. 130, 133 and 231, where he raises slightly Vierck's dating of the second half of the 6th century: H. Vierck, 'Zur relativen und absoluten Chronologie der anglischen Grabfünde in England', 42–52 in G. Kossack and J. Reichstein (eds.), *Archäologische Beiträge zur Chronologie der Völkerwanderungszeit* (Bonn, 1977); cf. T. M. Dickinson, 'Symbols of protection: the significance of animal-ornamented shields in Early Anglo-Saxon England', *Medieval Archaeol.*, 49 (2005), 109–63.

in the mid- to later 6th century.[38] Third, a significant number of the strap-junction fittings cited were found in women's graves, adapted for use as either brooches (Bishop's Cleeve, Wallingford and perhaps Cheesecake Hill) or belt-plates (Wakerley) or had been otherwise re-fitted with secondary iron rivets and/or rivet holes (Bockhampton, Easington and Fring). This is a pattern repeated for other horse-harness fittings, notably strap-pendants of the type found at Eriswell,[39] and obviously complicates assessment of the date when the South Leckaway fitting reached its final destination, perhaps sometime in the second half of the 6th century or even in the 7th century, and the form and context in which it did so: as part of an elite male's horse-bridle or in a secondary, even tertiary, role, perhaps as a feminine object. Fourth, the distribution of horse-harness fittings in England, including those with Style I, is widespread (Fig. 7), though most examples come from eastern England, and those from Easington show that they could reach noticeably far north along the sea coast. Nonetheless, to find a piece as far north as Angus — the first piece of archaeologically attested horse-equipment from Pictland — is extraordinary.

CULTURAL CONTEXT, OR A JOURNEY TO PICTLAND

Pictish-Anglian relations are often most thought of in the context of the clash at Nechtansmere, approximately 5 miles (9 km) from Leckaway as the crow flies, in A.D. 685, in which King Bruide map Billi led the Picts in victory over the Northumbrian army of Ecgfrith. Despite their status now as icons of national enmity, Bruide and Ecgfrith were in fact kinsmen, cousins (or *fratrueles*) who shared an elite, warrior, royal life-style and who were blood-tied social peers in competition. Their blood-linkage stemmed from a long history of political interaction between Bernicia and Deira (later Northumbria) and her northern neighbours, including inter-marriage.[40] Traffic between Bernicia and Pictland in the 660s is further glimpsed in the journey of St Cuthbert, who travelled by boat from Melrose to Pictland but was stranded by winter storms with the Niduari, a Pictish people. The precise location of the Niduari is disputed, but

[38] For the dating of beads, see now: B. Brugmann, *Glass Beads from Anglo-Saxon Graves: A Study on the Provenance and Chronology of Glass Beads from Anglo-Saxon Graves based on Visual Examination* (Oxford, 2004); for weaponry: M. J. Swanton, *The Spearheads of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements* (London, 1973), 107–11; T. M. Dickinson and H. Härke, *Early Anglo-Saxon Shields* (*Archaeologia*, 110, London, 1992), 13–14; for buckets: K. East, 'The tubs and buckets', 554–94 in R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship-burial: Vol. 3ii* (London, 1983); J. Cook, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Buckets*, ed. B. Brugmann (Oxford, 2004). A radiocarbon dating on which information became available only after this paper went to press suggests an earlier 6th-century date for the Eriswell grave (John Newman, pers. comm.).

[39] Caruth and Anderson, op. cit. in note 19, 246; examples from women's graves include Mucking II, grave 767, Essex, and Lechlade grave 180, Glos., where the fittings were made into brooches: S. M. Hirst and D. Clark, *Excavations at Mucking: Vol. 3, The Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries* (London, 2004); A. Boyle, D. Jennings, D. Miles and S. Palmer, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Butler's Field, Lechlade, Gloucestershire vol. I* (Oxford, 1998), 130–1, fig. 5.102, 1; and Bifrons grave 92, Easington grave 2 and Mucking II, grave 639, where the pieces were re-used as strap-ends or pendants: Hawkes, op. cit. in note 35, 61, fig. 36, 4; Hamerow and Pickin, op. cit. in note 27, 47, fig. 5, 2; a possible pair from the Eastry I assemblage shows evidence of repair on at least two occasions: Maidstone Museum AS 129 and 140; Baldwin Brown, op. cit. in note 22.

[40] For a concise account of the possible genealogical links, A. Williams, A. P. Smyth and D. P. Kirby, *A Biographical Dictionary of Dark Age Britain c.500–c.1050* (London, 1991); for a more detailed analysis: A. P. Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men, Scotland AD 80–1000* (London, 1984), 61–3; S. Foster, *Picts, Gaels and Scots* (London, 1996), esp. 33–52; and esp. J. E. Fraser, *The Battle of Dunnichen 685* (Stroud, 2002), in which chapter 2, pp. 17–32, deals with the relationship between Bruide and Ecgfrith, including a possible family tree at p. 23; also A. Woolf, 'Pictish matriliny reconsidered', *Innes Review*, 49 (1998), 147–67, at p. 162. Readers should also note that as this paper went to press a significant new piece of scholarship was imminent on Dunnichen which persuasively locates it to the vicinity of Kingussie in the Highlands: A. Woolf, 'Dún Nectain, Fortriu and the geography of the Picts', *Scottish Historical Review* forthcoming.

St Cuthbert's journey, even though it went awry, helps to paint a picture of high-level cultural contacts between Pictland and the Anglo-Saxon south, predominantly using the eastern sea route.[41]

Archaeology suggests that interaction between Picts and Angles, and indeed across the whole of northern Britain, at least as it becomes evident in the 7th and 8th centuries, embraced not only military, political and religious relationships, but also economic and artistic ones. Arguably, these relations did not spring forth spontaneously, but evolved from pre-existing, but less visible, contacts. Admittedly, finds of Anglo-Saxon material culture in Scotland are few and largely lacking in provenance, and those of pre-7th-century date from north of the Forth are especially scarce; moreover, as with the South Leckaway bridle-fitting itself, secondary and further re-uses or appropriations might have delayed their date of arrival well beyond their conventional date of production or use. Mention can be made of a decorated fifth-century urn allegedly from Buchan, Aberdeenshire; spearheads of Swanton's type H1 or H2 (mid-5th–6th centuries) from Watten, Caithness, and of type D2 (later 6th–7th centuries) from the recent excavations at Scalloway Broch, Shetland; and a shield boss, now lost, but consistent with a Dickinson Group 6 (later 6th to earlier 7th centuries), from a burial at Ballindalloch, Banffs. (which also included horse-harness). D2 spearheads and Group 6 shield bosses are most characteristic of south-eastern England, especially Kent. Conventional wisdom has suggested that these finds represent the presence of individual Anglo-Saxons or mercenaries, perhaps the most reasonable explanation of difficult evidence.[42] They could also be interpreted, however, as the results of peer-group gift-exchange, especially in the light of more recent research.

Although limited, the excavations at Dunadd, Argyll, the sometime Dalriadic capital, illustrate the extent of late 6th- and 7th-century contacts between Dalriadic kings and their peers in Irish, British, Pictish and Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, and even beyond: evidence includes brooch-moulds, a rich crop of metalwork, including a 7th-century piece of copper-alloy foil stamped with an animal of Anglo-Saxon type, and a gold-and-garnet setting from a piece of 7th-century Anglo-Saxon jewellery, a Frankish bead and the largest collection of Gaulish E ware in the British Isles (though no horse-equipment).[43] Further, Andrea Smith has proposed from studies of material with archaeologically more reliable provenances (notably composite bone and antler combs, but also hipped pins, gaming pieces and items such as the Scalloway spearhead listed above) that contacts, including between Picts and Saxons, extended across the whole

[41] B. Colgrave, *Two Lives of St Cuthbert* (Cambridge 1940), 82–5 (*Vita Sancti Cuthberti Auctore Anonymo*, ch. IV) and 192–5 (*Vita Sancto Cuthberti Auctore Beda*, ch. XI); cf. A. Breeze, 'St Cuthbert, Bede and the Niduari of Pictland', *Northern Hist.*, 40 (2003), 365–8; for a recent detailed discussion of east-coast links in the 7th and 8th centuries: S. Plunkett, 'The Mercian perspective', in S. Foster (ed.), *The St Andrews Sarcophagus: A Pictish Masterpiece and its International Connections* (Dublin, 1998), 202–26.

[42] E. Proudfoot and C. Aliaga-Kelly, 'Towards an interpretation of anomalous finds and placenames of Anglo-Saxon origin in Scotland', *Anglo-Saxon Stud. Archaeol. Hist.*, 9 (1996), 1–13, catalogues and briefly discusses 4th- to 9th-century Anglo-Saxon finds known at the time, with the 5th- to 7th-century material listed here at pp. 2–3; following Ll. Laing, 'The Angles in Scotland and the Mote of Mark', *Trans. Dumfries Galloway Nat. Hist. Antiq. Soc.*, 50 (1975), 53–71, they also included a sword pommel from the Culbin Sands, Moray, as a south-eastern English piece of the later 6th or earlier 7th century, but it lacks expected diagnostic features, and may rather be slightly later and of Continental inspiration. For the spearheads and shield boss, Swanton, op. cit. in note 38, 67–71 and 103–111; Dickinson and Härke, op. cit. in note 38, 20; Ewan Campbell discusses the Scalloway spearhead in N. Sharples, *Scalloway: A Broch, Late Iron Age Settlement and Medieval Cemetery in Shetland* (Oxford, 1998), 159 and fig. 102, interpreting it as evidence of an Anglo-Saxon individual; he also discusses at pp. 166–7 a unique (for Scotland), locally-made brooch most readily paralleled by the rare, so-called safety-pin brooches of the (later) 7th century from eastern and southern England.

[43] A. Lane and E. Campbell, *Dunadd An Early Dalriadic Capital* (Oxford, 2000), 106–33 (moulds), 150–1 (gold and garnet setting), 152–4 (foil) and 233–62 (general discussion and conclusion).

North Sea region. While the case that these can be traced back to 'gifts exchanged between Pictish and Saxon warband leaders to cement raiding alliances in the late fourth and early fifth centuries' relies on circumstantial evidence (for the combs), it seems more secure from the 6th century, and by the 7th century a complex pattern of exchange, with perhaps a degree of trade facilitated by Frisian merchants, can be recognised.[44] A possible explanation for the presence of the high-status South Leckaway piece in Angus may therefore be seen in the context of later 6th- or early 7th-century exchange between the Pictish elite and peer-groups in Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, either their immediate neighbours in Northumbria or, at a longer distance, East Anglia or Kent.

The local situation in the Forfar area supports this model. South Leckaway farm lies 2.2 km north-east of the Kirkton of Kinnettles, the southern and eastern parish boundaries of which march with those of the parish of Forfar (Fig. 8). The name Leckaway occurs quite late in the documentary record, as 'Leckoway' in 1559, as 'Leckoquhat' in 1587 and as 'Leckavy' on Timothy Pont's map of the late 16th century.[45] The name probably derives from the Gaelic elements *leac*, meaning 'stone', 'slab' (with a secondary meaning of graveslab) and *magh* meaning, 'a plain, good level ground'. Given the tendency for Gaelic land-unit names to be in place by about A.D. 1000, the name is almost certainly pre-12th-century and may even have its roots in the Pictish period, supporting the possibility of a significant meeting place in this area.[46] Also important is the name 'Kinnettles', attested in documents from the mid-13th century, and possibly meaning 'the head or end of the place of cattle/cattle-wealth', which makes a lot of sense in the context of the topography of the Forfar area.[47] South Leckaway sits just above the 100 m contour with commanding views west, north and east, encompassing Glamis, Kirriemuir and Forfar. The flat, now fertile, valley bottom was much wetter in the early medieval period. The now rather small Forfar Loch, on the western edge of Forfar, was drained at the end of the 18th century by the earl of Strathmore, but before then it extended for several miles, reaching as far as the glebe land of Glamis Kirk. It was matched to the east of Forfar by another large body of water. Two main rivers, which drain this area eastward — the South Esk and the Lunan Water (both of which rise above Kirriemuir) — would have afforded water-borne access from the sea. The concentrations of Pictish sculpture at Kirriemuir, Glamis, Aberlemno and Cossans and their early church-dedications indicate that by the 7th–8th centuries these lands were certainly of importance. St Orland's Stone at Cossans is currently isolated on a dry eminence amidst farmland. In the period under consideration here it

[44] For detailed discussions of these contacts in the 5th–7th centuries, with a focus on the evidence in relation to the Northern Isles and its part in an axis of trading links with the Netherlands and the east coasts of Scotland and England, A. N. Smith, 'From the small green isles to the Low Countries: artefact evidence for contact around the North Sea basin in the later Iron Age', 111–16 in J. Downes and A. Ritchie (eds.), *Sea Change — Orkney and Northern Europe in the Later Iron Age AD 300–800* (Balgavies, 2003), esp. at pp. 113–14; eadem, 'Material culture and North Sea contacts in the fifth to seventh centuries AD', 181–8 in J. C. Henderson (ed.), *The Prehistory and Early History of Atlantic Europe* (BAR Internat. Ser. 861, Oxford, 2000); cf. N. Sharples 'From monuments to artefacts: changing social relationships in the later Iron Age', 151–68 in Downes and Ritchie, where the pattern elucidated by Smith is echoed and linked to theoretical considerations of exchange patterns.

[45] Sherriff, op. cit. in note 17, lists the documentary record: the Pont map is number 26; cf. the National Library of Scotland web-site *www.nls.uk/pont/*

[46] W. J. Watson, *The Celtic Placenames of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1926, repr. 1993), 502. There is a profusion of Leckaway names in the area, North, South, Upper, Lower, Mid and Backside of Leckaway, which may reflect Late-/post-medieval agricultural expansion; cf. the Coupar Angus granges in the Cargill area: Royal Commission for Archaeological and Historical Monuments Scotland, *South-East Perth, An Archaeological Landscape* (Edinburgh, 1993), 113–15.

[47] This is perhaps an overly summarised interpretation of a difficult name.
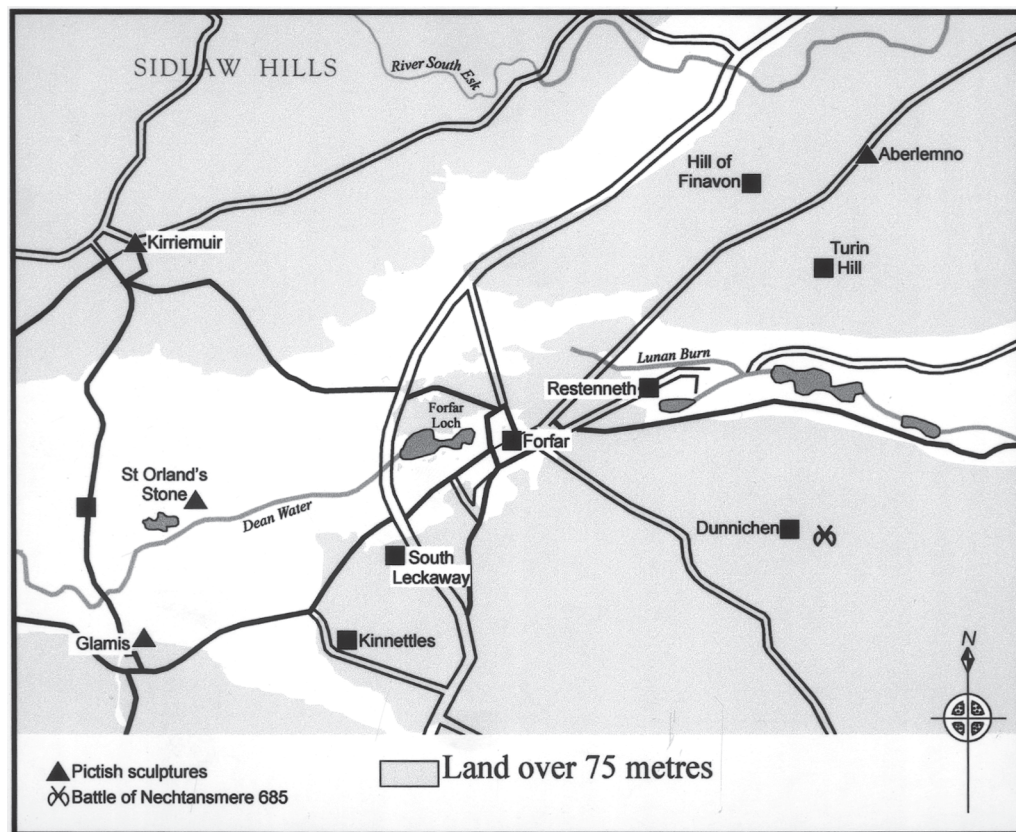
FIG. 8
Map of the Forfar Area.
Devised by Mark Hall, drawn by Dave Munro, courtesy of SUAT Ltd.

is likely that this eminence was part of an island in the much bigger Forfar Loch, which may help to explain the depiction, on the stone, of a boat.[48]

The discovery of the South Leckaway bridle-fitting provides an unanticipated link in arguments about the nature and usage of early Anglo-Saxon animal art, about the equipping of horses, and about the role which such items played in the construction of elite culture in the 6th and 7th centuries (a century or so before a horse-riding nobility

---

[48] The original, 1792, account for the parish of Forfar by the Revd. J. Bruce, which appeared in Volume 3 of the *Old Statistical Account*, is most readily accessible in the reprint: J. Sinclair (ed.), *The Statistical Account of Scotland 1791–99: Vol. 13, Angus* (Wakefield, 1976), 527–8; J. Stuart, 'Note of recent excavations at St Margaret's Inch, in the Loch of Forfar', *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*, 10 (1874), 31–4: among the finds were two silver objects described as being like ear-rings, but which may have been comparable to the 7th-century Norries Law plaques: cf. S. Youngs (ed.), *The Work of Angels: Masterpieces of Celtic Metalwork 6th–9th centuries AD* (London, 1989), 27, cat. 8b and c; for St Orland's Stone and some of the sculptures from Kirriemuir, Aberlemno and Glamis: R. Allen and J. Anderson, *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland*, 2 (Edinburgh, 1903; reprinted Balgavies, 1993), 217, 221, 226 and 258.

was manifested in Pictish sculpture). Although the precise mechanism by which the bridle-fitting reached Angus cannot be ascertained, it is a further piece of evidence that cultural and political connections between Anglo-Saxon eastern England and the territories of southern Pictland might have been more developed than has hitherto been envisaged, and that the social formations which characterise the post-Roman world were also developing in Pictland.[49]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

                          TANIA M. DICKINSON, CHRIS FERN AND MARK A. HALL

IMPLEMENTS AND UTENSILS IN *GEREFA* AND THE ORGANIZATION OF SEIGNEURIAL FARMSTEADS IN THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES

    The text known as *Gerefa* is a unique record dating to the 11th century which provides advice to the reeve on the efficient running of the lord's farm. It offers guidance on the management of labourers, the seasons in which agricultural and other work is to be undertaken, and has two lists of tools and implements required for the lord's farmstead. Although this work has immense promise for understanding the character of rural life in a period for which there are few other sources, it has been treated with very considerable caution by historians. Professor Harvey, in the most recent detailed study of the text, concluded that, 'all we can say for certain about *Gerefa* — and on this all are agreed — is that it was written as a literary work, not as a practical manual'.[50] The text does indeed seem to fail the most elementary of tests, for it appears to be ill-informed about even common agricultural matters. The description of the labours to be performed in each season shows excessive attention to lesser farming activities and passes over in a few words the essential tasks necessary for arable cultivation and stock raising.[51] Furthermore, critics have pointed to the use of alliteration, rhyme and of two-stress phrase, arguing that the author was striving at least as much for literary effect as practical instruction.[52] It seems that *Gerefa* is more the product of the scriptorium than of the farmyard.

    There is, however, a danger that we may dismiss *Gerefa* too readily as a potential historical source. As with all historical documents, it is necessary to understand the context in which it was written before we can seek to interpret it. The close critical reading given to some Old English texts has barely been applied to *Gerefa*, although a facsimile text and study have been promised by Professor R. I. Page. In the meantime, Harvey

---

[49] Cf. M. O. H. Carver (ed.), *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-West Europe* (Woodbridge, 1992); L. Webster and M. Brown (eds.), *The Transformation of the Roman World AD 400–900* (London, 1997); F. Theuws and J. L. Nelson, *Rituals of Power from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (Brill, 2000), esp. R. Le Jan, 'Frankish giving of arms and rituals of power: continuity and change in the Carolingian period', at pp. 281–309.

[50] P. D. A. Harvey, 'Rectitudines Singularum Personarum and Gerefa', *Engl. Hist. Rev.*, 126 (1993), 1–22 at p. 12. *Gerefa* is printed in F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze de Angelsachsen* i (Halle, 1898), 453–5. A useful, recent translation is given in M. Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Prose* (London, 1975), 25–7.

[51] Harvey, op. cit. in note 50, 8; R. I. Page, '*Gerefa:* some problems of meaning', 211–28 in A. Bammesberger (ed.), *Problems of Old English Lexicography: Studies in Memory of Angus Cameron* (Regensberg, 1985), at p. 217.

[52] Page, op. cit. in note 51, 222.