

Late Saxon and later items

Trewhiddle style strap-end

The following report on **2611** was written by David Wilson.

The split end is scalloped and pierced by two rivets of bronze. At the terminal is a formalised animal head, seen from above, its oval ears have lunate openings. The snout is much worn but a double V-shaped incisions joining the ears and eyes is identifiable. Above the head the strap-end is flanked by worn beaded borders. In a semi-circular field below the rivets is a pelta. In the main panel is an animal with its head nearest the slit end and its chin along one of the borders. The neck curves into an S-shaped body, with a single front leg and splayed hind-legs. The tail develops into an interlace pattern which fills nearly half the field. The animal is collared and has two incised lines across the lower jaw and three nicks in the contour at the back. Traces of gilding remain in the central panel. The back is plain. Length 40mm.

This object is a classic English strap-end of the ninth century. Its most useful parallel is an example from the Sevington, Wiltshire hoard which is dated by the coins deposited with it to *c.* 850 (Wilson 1964, 71). This date is doubly useful in that it is jeweller's hoard which contains a number of half-finished objects; the complete strap-end, therefore, was probably made within a few years of deposition. The nearest parallel (of any significance) to the animal ornament is provided by the smallest horn mount from the Trewhiddle hoard (Wilson 1964, no. 96). The position of the animal and the nicks in its contour are strikingly similar on both objects. The only unusual feature of the animal on the Wroxeter strap end is the splayed rear legs. This normally occurs only on Anglo-Carolingian metalwork (Haseloff 1951, fig. 2).

Medieval Buckle

There is one medieval buckle (**2633**). The loop and hinge bar are cast in one and take the form of a calligraphic capital D. The hinge bar is continued by extensions which project backwards and outwards. The loop is flat-sectioned and decorated on one side with an irregular arrangement of short lines. The hinge bar and extensions are round-sectioned. The buckle measures 27mm in width and 20mm in length, and has an inner width of about 22mm. Bliss described this as 'lombardic strap end buckle following Higgins (1976, 115).

Dressmakers' pins

A total of 57 dressmakers' pins are recorded in the database (**2824-80**). They consist of wire coiled around one end of a wire shaft to create a wound wire spherical head or flat disc. The shaft tapers and is at most 1.5mm in diameter. Most are less than 40mm long. These were discussed in the final report (Barker *et al* 1997, 194, fig. 296) as possibly being late Roman. It should be noted that Bliss correctly identified them as a medieval to post medieval artefact and pointed out that those from Roman sites lacked secure contexts¹.

¹ For a more recent consideration of the type see Egan and Pritchard 2002, 297-304. HEMC

Bliss followed the classification of Warren and Capel (1983) which divides the pins according to the way in which the head was attached to the shaft. She introduced intermediate classes where it was not possible to see the head cross-section.

Class A – spiral head stuck to shaft

There are nine examples (**2824, 2831-2, 2836, 2841, 2851, 2863, 2870, 2875**) including five with a single coil of wire giving a nail head. In some cases the shaft protrudes from the top of the head, for example **2875**. The class is defined by having a black substance between the shaft and the head. None of the Wroxeter examples shows this, and they are included in Class A by virtue of their intact wire heads showing no deformation or other evidence of being stamped, a process used to define Classes Band C.

Class B – head slightly worked to hold it to shaft and often stuck to shaft

Fourteen pins were assigned here. (**2825-8, 2830, 2833, 2838, 2842, 2845-6, 2860, 2866, 2868, 2874, 2880**). This was done on the basis of a roughly spherical head with distorted wires which have oval or hemispherical cross sections. The separate coils are visible but to different degrees.

Class B/C

Six pins are recorded as being between the two groups (**2859, 2862, 2867, 2872-2, 2876**). Circumferential shallow grooves are visible around the head and the very top of the shaft, although the head is smooth and spherical. The heads of some shafts protrude from the top of the head. No glue was observed.

Class C – Stamped head

Here the spiralled head is stamped to the shaft, deforming the wire and producing a circular head. There are 18 examples (**2829, 2834-5, 2837, 2839-40, 2843-4, 2848-9, 2853-5, 2857-8, 2861, 2864, 2869, 2871, 2878-9**). In each case the circumferential lines are just visible on the head. The heads are of a more truly spherical shape than the other classes. Some pins have grooved shafts below the heads, as in **2835, 2839, 2854, 2871** and **2879**. Some pins are decorated by silvering (**2835, 2878**).

Class C/B

Four pins are placed here because the head is essentially spherical but distinct lines exist around it, although the coils are distorted and flat (**2847, 2850, 2865, 2877**).

Lace tags

A total of 20 items were described as narrow cylinders or bootlace tags (**2677-95, 4175**). All consist of a narrow, hollow cylinder made by rolling a small sheet of alloy. In the cases of **2682, 2692** and **2695** a gap is left between the edges, while in others the edges overlap or are abutted. In one case, **2691**, the edges are folded over and then they are squeezed together. They are on average about 2mm in diameter and are a constant diameter throughout their length, none tapers markedly. Most commonly they are 22-24mm long. Four examples (**2683-4, 2692-3**) have one or two opposed perforations at one end. One, **2683**, is decorated with stamped diamonds in relief on one side only. Two examples (**2678-9**) have transverse grooves on one side to give a segmented appearance. It was suggested that they may have been used as bootlace tags and one (**2690**) still has leather adhering to the metal.

Bliss noted that parallels were hard to find and questioned whether these were Roman objects at all².

² From the descriptions it would indeed appear that these are examples of lace chapes or points that became very common from the 14th century (Egan and Pritchard 2002, 281). HEMC

Thimbles

Bliss discussed two thimbles. From the list at the end of the discussion it would appear that **3509** and **3511** were joining fragments from the same piece. Both thimbles are similar and are decorated with sub-circular pits set in diagonal lines on the side and with sub-square pits on the top surface. Around the base of **3510** there is an undecorated band of about 5mm in width. Both have collars around the base. **3509** is larger being 22mm high and 18mm in diameter.

Bliss noted that the Wroxeter examples were best paralleled by post-medieval examples. Their contexts did not make post-Roman contexts impossible.