

Early Anglo-Saxon Gold Braids

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GOLD threads have been found in many Anglo-Saxon and continental Germanic graves of the period from the 5th to the 8th century A.D. (see catalogue, pp. 66 ff.). Early recognized as the remains of costly woven decorations to headdresses and the borders of garments, during the 19th century particularly they attracted much interest and discussion, some of it very pertinent.¹ Technical attention, however, of the kind required by their fragmentary state, was not then available, and it is only comparatively lately that the discovery of fresh examples in some newly excavated Frankish graves has caused a revival of interest in the subject, with the hopeful prospect of detailed technical studies to come from the continent in the future.

INTRODUCTION

MORE than twenty years ago the late Mrs. Grace M. Crowfoot began to work on the fragments of gold strip from a number of early Anglo-Saxon graves. Her notes, expanded and brought up to date, have provided the foundation and the inspiration for the present paper. Mrs. Crowfoot herself had been prompted to this research by the publication, immediately before the last war, of the textiles from Birka, a Viking trading-settlement in Sweden,² where many graves contained the remains of tablet-woven braids brocaded with gold and silver threads. Agnes Geijer had proved that it was often possible, even where the textile had decayed, to work out the brocaded patterns from the pressure-marks left by the fabric threads on the metal.

When Mrs. Crowfoot examined the fragments of gold strip from the rich barrow-burial at Taplow in Buckinghamshire (no. 1), which include the only two pieces from an Anglo-Saxon grave with any identifiable textile surviving, she found that here, too, the fabric was a tablet-woven braid decorated with surface-brocading in gold (PL. IX, A-C). These pieces both came from a single wide braid, but from some other gold strips with no textile adhering, but showing marks and folds from the weave, it proved possible to reconstruct the brocaded pattern of a second and narrower band from this important grave (FIG. 12, no. 2). Mrs. Crowfoot was thus enabled to weave the reproductions of the two braids now on show in the British Museum (PL. IX, D).

¹ Cochet (1859), pp. 173 ff.; Roach Smith (1868), pp. 142 ff.; Lindenschmidt (1880-9), I, 381 ff.; Baldwin Brown (1915), III, 385 ff.; *et alia*. For key to shortened references, see the Abbreviations, p. 86.

² Geijer (1938).

Since then, the gold threads from a further twenty Anglo-Saxon graves have been studied, and their patterns, wherever possible, reconstructed on paper (FIGS. 13-14). All appear to be the remains of similar surface-brocading, and the nature of the patterns suggests that most probably the bands they ornamented were, like the Taplow examples, tablet-woven. This is hardly surprising, for the technique was popular at this period for making fabric edgings, belts, and plain or decorative braids which could be sewn on to the borders of garments.³

Tablet-weaving, practised in the north regularly since the later Roman iron age, produces a very firm and neat fabric which can be varied according to the skill and taste of the weaver. Tablets can be threaded and manipulated to produce patterns in colour, and various surface-textures, plain (tabby) weave, corded ridges, and elaborate diagonal patterns; but, whatever the background, the method used when brocading is the same. The tablet-braid is complete in itself, held together by its own internal weft, while the brocading weft is an additional surface decoration, a gold, silver or coloured thread that passes to and fro on the face of the weave, concealing it except where held down by warp twists at the intervals necessary to make the pattern required.⁴ The brocading thread is passed across by finger or needle, and it has been suggested that the ornament might have been embroidered after the basic braid had been completed. With a textile or 'spun-gold' thread this might have been possible, particularly on narrow braids, but it would have been difficult with a flat metal strip, and a skilled weaver would have found it less trouble to put in the brocading weft during the course of the weaving.

The metal threads used on these early Anglo-Saxon braids were narrow strips cut from gold foil, sheet metal which had probably been prepared by a long process of heating, stretching, hammering and burnishing, to bring it to the paper-thin pliability and brilliance of finish required by the weaver.⁵ The cut strips vary in width from less than 0.5 mm. (Taplow) up to 2 mm. (Faversham). It has not been possible to test their quality by analysis, but superficial appearances

³ Examples have now been identified in the finds from many Anglo-Saxon cemeteries: in Lincolnshire at Laceby (Grace M. Crowfoot in F. H. Thompson, 'Anglo-Saxon sites in Lincolnshire: unpublished material and recent discoveries', *Antiq. J.*, xxxvi (1956), 188 f.), and Fonaby (unpub.); in East Anglia at St. John's College (Cambridge), Hadleigh Road (Ipswich), Mitchell's Hill (Icklingham), and Mildenhall (Grace M. Crowfoot, 'Textiles of the Anglo-Saxon period', *Proc. Cambr. Antiq. Soc.*, xliiv (1951), 26 ff., and 'Anglo-Saxon tablet-weaving', *Antiq. J.*, xxxii (1952), 189 ff.), at Eriswell (Elisabeth Crowfoot in Patricia Hutchinson, 'The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Little Eriswell', *Proc. Cambr. Antiq. Soc.*, lxx (1966), 32), and Sutton Hoo (unpub.); in Essex at Broomfield (unpub.); in Berkshire at Blewburton Hill (Audrey Henshall in A.E.P. and F. J. Collins, 'Excavations on Blewburton Hill, 1953', *Berks. Archaeol. J.*, lvii (1959), 17 ff.); in Kent at Finglesham (Elisabeth Crowfoot in Sonia E. Chadwick, 'The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Finglesham, Kent: a reconsideration', *Med. Archaeol.*, ii (1958), 36 ff.), at Coombe (see Hilda R. Ellis Davidson and Leslie Webster, 'The Anglo-Saxon burial at Coombe (Woodnesborough), Kent', above, pp. 1 ff.), at Bekebourne, at Sibbertswold Down, and at one of the cemeteries represented in the Mayer collection at Liverpool (unpub.).

⁴ On the girdle among the early 10th-century vestments of St. Cuthbert at Durham, an elaborate diagonal weave in shades of red silk is so concealed by the gold that the intricacy of its floral patterns can be seen clearly only on the back of the braid. Crowfoot (1939), p. 60 f., pls. xix-xxi, and (1956), p. 437, pl. xli and fig. 3.

The patterns sometimes described as 'brocaded' on the woollen tablet-braids from Snartemo and Evebø are not woven but embroidered; the tablets are turned for the plain edges of the braids, and the patterns worked by needle on the untwisted tablet-warps in the centre. Hougen (1935), pp. 72-3; H. Dedekam, 'To Tekstifund fra folkevandringstiden', *Bergens Museums Aarbok*, 1924-5, pp. 22 ff.

⁵ Geijer (1938), p. 69 f.

suggest that most of them were made of good gold, not too heavily alloyed with baser metals.⁶ Those from Taplow, certainly, and indeed many of the others, have survived over twelve centuries underground, and anything up to a century and a half in a museum case, without losing either their bright colour or their pristine suppleness and strength. The few examples where the gold is now more brittle and dull in colour probably contain a higher percentage of silver, with maybe some copper added to restore the desired depth of colour.

THE BRAIDS FROM THE TAPLOW BARROW (no. A, 1, p. 66 f.)

Until 1939, when excavations at Sutton Hoo in Suffolk uncovered the great wealth of an East Anglian royal ship-cenotaph, the burial under the Taplow barrow was the richest single grave-find known from early Anglo-Saxon England. The dead man had been laid to rest amidst a panoply of weapons, lavishly decorated drinking-horns and cups, glass beakers, a Coptic bronze bowl, bronze- and iron-mounted wooden vessels, a harp and a set of game-pieces. He had been buried in his clothes and accoutrements, wearing on them gold-covered belt-clasps and a buckle of solid gold.

Of the clothing itself only a few small fragments of cloth and a great mass of gold threads have survived. As we have already seen, the flat gold strips had formed part of two decorative braids, one of which was brocaded to a width of 3 cm., the other to a width of 1.4 cm. In the pieces of textile from the wider braid a basic 4-hole tablet-weave was used, with the tablets turned normally in $\frac{1}{4}$ -turns to produce an even fabric. The thread, now dark brown in colour, is a very fine, well-spun wool, which has left such slight pressure-marks on the gold strips that it is extremely difficult to make out the brocading pattern where the gold alone survives. The cut lengths of this gold rarely exceed 26–27 cm. and are frequently shorter, and they are also very narrow, so that each of them accounted for less than 5 mm. of pattern on the wider braid. Tangled and out of sequence, the majority of them are hopelessly difficult to use in determining the pattern. The only piece on which the design is at all clear is the better preserved of the two fragments of textile, barely 1 cm. long, still woven with two brocading threads (PL. IX, A, B; FIG. 12, no. 1).⁷ This shows a section of main pattern, based on lozenge-, rectangle- and, probably, cross-motifs, with a diagonal strap-pattern in a narrow border along one side. The less well-preserved textile fragment, which probably joined the first (PL. IX, c), appears to show a continuation of the cross-pattern, but it should be noted that Mrs. Crowfoot's woven version of this braid (PL. IX, D) is only a reconstruction of the type of pattern the remains suggest, and not an actual reproduction. With the narrower braid, however, she was on safer ground. The gold strips are of the same length as those on the wide braid, and therefore made up about twice the length of pattern. From the more intact of

⁶ Analyses of similar threads from Saint-Denis, Paris, proved that the gold was generally very pure, rarely containing more than 25 per cent. of other metals. Salin (1958), p. 48.

⁷ The old photograph in Baldwin Brown (1915), III, pl. lxxxiv, 1, reproduced here as PL. IX, A, was of great assistance because many of the tablet-twists have since decayed. Compare the modern British Museum photograph, PL. IX, B.

these fragments, mostly about 1 cm. long, the design could be made out as a continuous band of running chevrons interspaced with rectangles similar to those on the wide braid (FIG. 12, no. 2).⁸ Finally, in addition to the regular gold strips, there are four (originally perhaps five) pieces woven into triangular units, which show patterns related to those on the two braids. With modern gold thread, as Mrs. Crowfoot found, it is difficult to reproduce the original appearance of this brocading. The bright gold was passed to and fro so that the flat strips lay nearly edge to edge, with the patterns picked out as though in dots, dark or coloured,

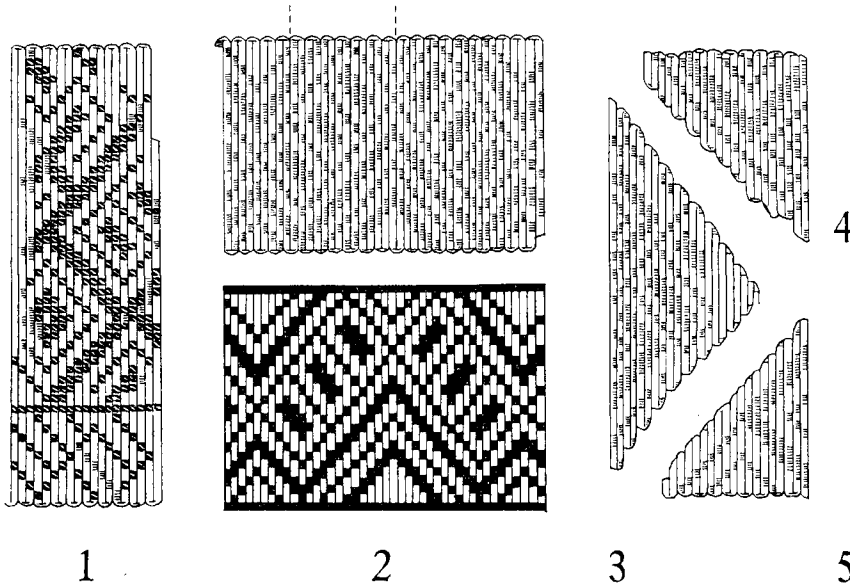


FIG. 12

GOLD BRAIDS FROM BARROW AT TAPLOW, BUCKS.: PATTERN DETERMINATION
(pp. 44 f., 66). Sc. $\frac{2}{1}$

1, the wide braid showing surviving tablet-twists; 2, the narrow braid; 3-5, the triangular units showing pressure-marks on gold strip

where the twists of thread cross over them. The resulting braids must have resembled bands of solid gold inlaid with niello or coloured stones, or sheet gold cut out in openwork to permit the colour of an underlying fabric to show through from behind.

From the number of metal threads still preserved it is clear that there must have been an unusually large amount of gold braid in the Taplow grave. All told there are fragments of folded strip equivalent to at least 40 cm. of the wide braid and 30 cm. of the narrow. In addition there are also 230 strips of varying length, which were unravelled by the excavators, who thought them part of a fringe, and these would have made up the decoration on some 80 cm. of the wide braid or 184 cm. of the narrow. The total length of this costly stuff was, therefore, some-

⁸ For photographs of the gold strips from the narrow braid and the triangles see Baldwin Brown (1915), III, pl. lxxxiv, 2.

where between a minimum of 150 cm. (c. 5 ft.) and a maximum of 254 cm. (c. 8½ ft.)—an estimate which is on the conservative side, since some threads are likely to have been lost in the course of the excavation. Confirmation of these calculations is provided by the original excavators, who not only noted the two widths of gold 'fringe' and the surviving 'slip of braid', but recorded that 'in the grave it extended for about 2 yards'.⁹ If anywhere near correct, their estimate suggests that most of the unravelled threads came from the wider of the two braids.

Contemporary observers, and subsequent writers following them, have tended to assume that the Taplow braids formed the borders of a cloak which was fastened at neck or shoulder by the large gold buckle. This attractive theory is not certainly borne out by the surviving documentary evidence. In reassessing the matter it has to be admitted at the outset that, even by Victorian standards, the excavation of the Taplow barrow was a tragically inept performance. The gold threads were the first things met with in a grave approached by a 20-foot-deep cutting below the roots of a vast yew stump on the summit of the mound. Shortly after the funerary deposit had been exposed, and before it had been completely removed, the stump collapsed into the trench, causing a delay of days before the grave could be re-excavated and cleared. In the circumstances it is scarcely surprising that the records are confused. No full excavation report ever appeared; only a number of accounts by various assistants and observers, including Dr. Joseph Stevens and the Rev. B. Burgess, which were not meant to be more than interim publications. The British Museum possesses a manuscript by James Rutland, the chief excavator, which was unfortunately inaccessible to us, but Reginald Smith used it as a basis for his account in the *Victoria County History*, and from this it would appear to add little to what is known from published sources. Also in the British Museum are three contemporary grave-plans. The various documents give conflicting information about the gold braid and the other objects which lay in direct contact with the body. No doubt it was the sparsity of skeletal remains (only pieces of jaw, vertebrae and femur) which caused the confusion in orientating these relics in relation to the corpse.

Published information about the gold braid is not very detailed, and is mainly presumptive in character. According to Stevens the gold buckle lay in the general area of the left shoulder, and the 'gold fringe . . . extended in a wavy manner' from it, 'looking as if it had been left after the decay of some garment to which it had formed a trimming'.¹⁰ According to Burgess, 'In the dark earth were uncovered lines of gold . . . the remains of gold fringe, about an inch wide. They lay as if forming the edge of a garment extending diagonally downward from the shoulder across the body'.¹¹ In a third report it is merely remarked that 'As the gold fringe was spread in strips about the grave it is pretty clear that it formed the frilling to the mantle of the deceased'.¹² The most finished of the three plans,¹³ a coloured

⁹ Stevens (1884), p. 65; also J. Rutland, quoted in *The Antiq. Magazine and Bibliographer*, v (Jan., 1884), 19.

¹⁰ Stevens (1884), pp. 66–7.

¹¹ Burgess (1878), p. 332; *Illust. London News*, 17 Nov., 1883, p. 476 f.

¹² *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.*, xxxix (1883), 432.

¹³ Published in R. L. S. Bruce Mitford, 'The Sutton Hoo ship burial', *Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol.*, xxv (1949), pl. xv.

version drawn out to a large scale on cardboard, was probably a fair copy prepared by the official illustrator, Major Cooper King, after the excavation. It shows the gold buckle on the left shoulder at the junction of two gold bands which extend, the one diagonally across the chest to beyond the right hip, the other straight down the left side to the top of the femur, passing at right angles to the pairs of gold-covered clasps, neatly parallel to each other, at the left side of the waist. The picture is unmistakably of two broad gold braids edging the straight front openings of a short cloak, which had been worn and carefully draped on the corpse. But is it authentic? The other two plans suggest not. These, hardly more than sketches, must almost certainly be two of the original plans made in the field prior to the collapse of the yew stump,¹⁴ and as such they command respect. On Stevens's sketch the gold buckle is again near the left shoulder, and one strip of braid again lies diagonally across the body to the region of the right hip, but the second strip of braid is shown not at the left side but across the waist. It joins the diagonal braid at the right and lies under or over the paired clasps, here shown disarranged, at the left. The third plan, probably Rutland's, agrees fairly closely in this disposal of the braids in relation to the clasps and what was left of the skeleton, but depicts the gold buckle close to the junction of the two braids at the waist. The fact that the two field plans, while differing about the position of the buckle, and (as we shall see) of the sword, are nevertheless in agreement about the position of the braids, suggests most strongly that this is how they actually were found. If so, it follows that, in this respect at least, the finished fair copy is misleading. In all probability the lines of gold threads as found were puzzling to the excavators, and the official artist rearranged them to accord better with the preconceived view that they must have bordered the edge of a cloak.

If the braids really did come from a cloak, then Stevens's and Rutland's plans make it clear that it was not worn by the corpse in any conventional manner. But it is far from certain that the braids ever belonged either to a cloak, or to any kind of coverlet. It can scarcely be coincidence that both plans show the waist braid in what appears to be a significant relationship with the two pairs of golden clasps, and these, obviously belt-fasteners, are furnished on the back with little loops of a type to suggest they had been attached by sewing. On leather belts, such metal fittings are normally secured by riveting; sewing suggests a woven fabric. As we have seen, tablet-braids make a firm fabric as strong as fine webbing, and the metal decoration would have added to their thickness and strength. So perhaps the clasps and gold threads at the waist should be taken together, representing some kind of costly belt. If so it was probably a broad belt made from two brocaded braids fastened together, or a single wide braid with brocaded borders, each with its own pair of clasps, worn side by side as in Rutland's and Cooper King's plans.¹⁵

The braid lying diagonally on the chest, then, may have decorated a baldric

¹⁴ Stevens (1884), p. 66.

¹⁵ Against this interpretation is the possibility that 'a fragment of stamped leather' was found in association with one of the clasps (Burgess (1884), p. 333; Rutland, *loc. cit.* in note 9). It would be crucial to know whether this really was leather, and not a mistaken identification for a piece of braid or textile of some other kind.

worn for the suspension of the sword. The various plans and descriptions leave one in doubt whether the sword was found on the right or the left of the body,¹⁶ but it is worth remarking that Rutland's plan places it at what must have been the dead man's right side, with the upper part of the blade under the junction of the two braids. It thus supports the baldric idea. This view of the diagonal braid, moreover, can explain the position of the large gold buckle, which all the accounts and two of the plans put at the man's left shoulder. Such a buckle has never been easy to imagine fastening a cloak, but would be just right here for such a resplendent baldric—which only a buckle could adjust to the wearer's chest-size. The buckle-plate, at maximum 3.6 cm. broad, would have accommodated a single width of the wider braid, allowing for plain borders about 3 mm. wide on either side of the brocaded central strip.¹⁷ This would make the baldric narrower than the belt. Baldrics, with or without waist belts, are well-attested in Scandinavian and Frankish figural art of this period,¹⁸ and remains of them have been found in one or two Frankish graves. That from Saint-Denis 1957/grave 16 (no. 34, p. 75) is particularly interesting in the present context: the combination it shows, of narrow baldric and much wider belt, is a close parallel in leather to that here suggested for the Taplow braids.

None of the grave-plans distinguishes between the two widths of braid found in the Taplow grave, nor can we be sure that all of it was in fact shown. The smaller braid, if not part of the belt, may perhaps have been the border of a garment, such as the tunic over which belt and baldric, or cloak, will have been worn. The little woven triangles, which can have belonged to either braid, look to have come from parts worked to a point, perhaps to pass through a buckle, or to turn the end on, for example, the neck-opening of a tunic. But of course the confused and inadequate state of the records makes any attempt to determine the function of the Taplow braids a rather speculative matter, and the only real certainty that emerges from the similarity of the gold strip and the pattern on all the pieces, is that the braids must have been woven together to be worn, presumably, as a matching set.

Such a quantity of gold braid must have been a symbol of status, and it is surely significant that no other Anglo-Saxon man's grave has been found to contain such an expensive luxury.¹⁹ The weight of the gold used in the work is itself not inconsiderable: the unravelled gold strip in the British Museum weighs

¹⁶ Stevens shows it on the left shoulder, Cooper King on the right. In the written accounts there is no real precision, and no indication of whether it is the observer's right and left, or the skeleton's, that is in question.

¹⁷ Mrs. Crowfoot's reconstruction, with only two tablet-twists for each border, would have been marginally too narrow, but wider borders were used at all periods, as, for example, on braid 10 from the St. Cuthbert vestments, and on several Norwegian braids of the 5th and 6th centuries. Crowfoot (1956), fig. 12, pls. xlii, f, and xliii, a; Hougen (1935), pl. xvii, 1 and 4.

¹⁸ See, for example, figures on the helmets from graves 1 and 14 at Vendel, Uppland, Sweden (H. Stolpe and T. J. Arne, *La Nécropole de Vendel* (Stockholm, 1927), pls. v, 1-2, and xli, 3-4); the figure on a die from Torslunda, Öland, Sweden (Holmqvist (1955), pl. xxxiii, 82; *Antiquity*, xxxix (1965), pl. iii, a); and the figure on a pottery plaque from Gresin, Puy-de-Dôme, France (E. Salin, *La Civilisation mérovingienne*, iv (1959), pl. xi, 1).

¹⁹ It is unfortunate for comparative purposes that no clothing seems to have been buried in the royal ship-barrow at Sutton Hoo.

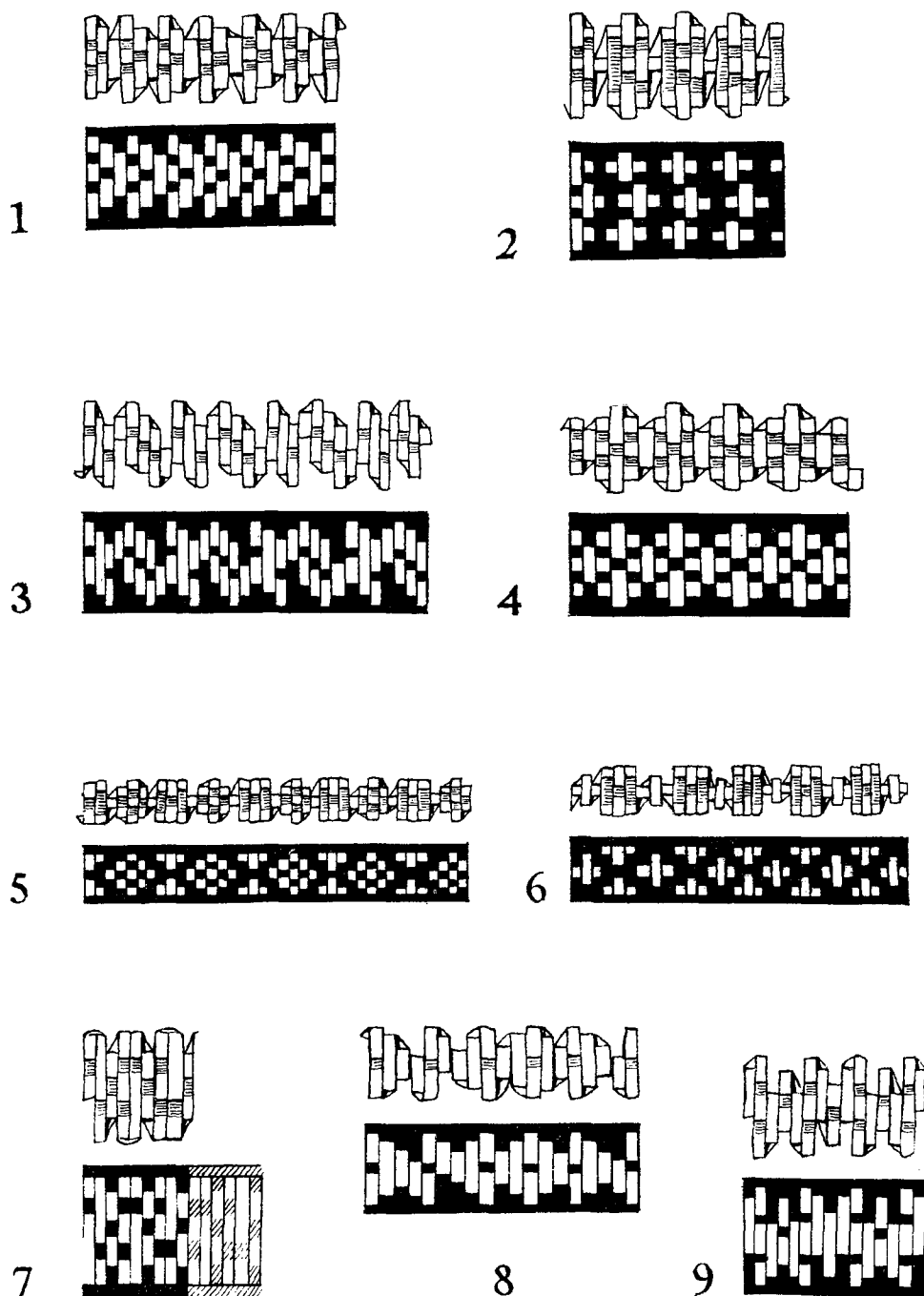


FIG. 13

KENTISH GOLD BRAIDS: PATTERN DETERMINATION (pp. 51, 67 ff.). Sc. $\frac{2}{1}$
 1, Bifrons, grave 21 (no. 2); 2, Bifrons, grave 29 (no. 3); 3-6, Bifrons, graves 41, 51 and 64 (nos. 4-5, 6A, 6B); 7, Chatham Lines, tumulus XVIII (no. 7); 8-9, Howletts (nos. 13-14)

19.5 grammes,²⁰ and, calculating from this, the weight of all the strip preserved must be close to 33 grammes—equal to 22 full-weight Byzantine gold tremisses, or more than half the value of the coins in the Sutton Hoo purse-hoard. If we add this to the testimony of the solid gold buckle (a thing of rare occurrence in Anglo-Saxon graves), the gold-covered clasps, the unusual quality and quantity of the other grave-goods, and the aristocratic style of the burial under its large barrow, it reinforces the impression that here was a man of exceptional wealth and high social rank.

The date of the Taplow burial is still a matter for discussion, but probably it took place within the first quarter of the 7th century.

THE BRAIDS FROM ANGLO-SAXON WOMEN'S GRAVES (nos. A, 2-21, pp. 67 ff.)

All the other known remains of early Anglo-Saxon gold braids come certainly or probably from women's graves. In the great majority the gold strip was found on or by the skull, indicating a gold decoration on the coif, or fillet for the hair. The length of these brocaded bands seems to have varied considerably, but none of them was sufficient to encircle the head completely. That from Lyminge grave 44 (no. 15, p. 70), the most recently excavated and probably the best preserved, measured about 34 cm.; others from older excavations, which may or may not be complete, survive to the calculable lengths of about 25 cm. (nos. 3, 6 and 18, pp. 67, 68, 71), 20 cm. (no. 5, p. 68), 18 cm. (no. 2, p. 67), and 12 cm. (no. 19, p. 71); but the few tiny scraps from Holywell Row grave 11 (no. 21, p. 72), also a recent and well-recorded find, show that the brocaded length could be very short indeed. The obvious inference is that the gold-work was worn as an ornament on the forehead, and that, in some cases at least, it formed part of a longer braid which continued undecorated around the back of the head, where it may have been wholly or partly concealed by the hair or the draperies of the headdress. Alternatively, as the gold rings associated with two of the Faversham braids (nos. 8-12, i and iv, p. 69) suggest, some of the gold bands may have been complete in themselves and, either as a separate frontal or as part of a coif or veil, have been sewn, pinned, or hooked in place at the sides of the head. The possible uses and significance of these head ornaments are discussed more fully below, pp. 61 ff. In two other graves (Sarre 4, no. 16, p. 70, and Chatham Lines XVIII, no. 7, p. 68) the gold strips were found at the wrist. The fact that in each the braid occurred on one wrist only, makes it likely that they formed, not a sleeve border, but some kind of woven gold bracelet.

The gold-work is narrower than that on the Taplow braids, varying from a mere 2.9 mm. (Sarre grave 94, no. 18, p. 71) to 9 mm. (Chessell Down, no. 20, p. 71), but the complete braids would probably have had a plain border on either side of the brocaded strip, as on the narrower braids from the St. Cuthbert vest-

²⁰ Weights obtained through the kindness of Mrs. Leslie Webster and the officials of the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum.

ments.²¹ Since no identifiable textile has survived, there is no knowing whether the fabric of these women's braids was wool, linen, or silk, but the pressure-points on the gold strip indicate a thicker thread than that used at Taplow, with 8-10 twists per centimetre. The impressions are very sharp, suggesting that the gold surface had been flattened by hammering or burnishing.²² The patterns used are mostly geometric, and for the most part simple combinations of crosses, steps and chevrons (FIG. 13, nos. 2, 4-6; FIG. 14, nos. 10-11, 13-14), though one or two are more ambitious (FIG. 13, nos. 1, 3, 7-9; FIG. 14, nos. 12, 15-16). Of these the most complex is the interlacing design on the relatively wide braid from Chessell Down (FIG. 14, no. 15), which comes closest to the type of pattern seen on the Taplow braids and on the much later braids from Birka.²³ In some the patterns show irregularities (Bifrons, no. 6, p. 68; Howletts, no. 13, p. 69; Chessell Down, no. 20, p. 71) which are obviously deliberate, but in this kind of hand-brocading the weaver could try out variants and reject or continue them at will. The similarity of patterns from different sites—two, from Bifrons (no. 5, p. 68) and Faversham (nos. 8-12, iv, p. 69) are indeed identical—suggests that the gold braids may have been the work of a restricted number of professional workshops.

That they were luxury goods and doubtless costly is certain from the contexts in which they have been found. The lists of associated finds included in the catalogue (pp. 66 ff.) should make it clear that most of the women who wore these woven gold ornaments were buried with a rich array of personal jewellery and other possessions. Almost invariably they were the richest female burials in their respective cemeteries, and there can be little doubt that, whether from economic or social considerations, or both, the gold braids were an aristocratic prerogative. They also seem to have been a fashion restricted to quite a short period. The burials with which they occur belong exclusively to the middle and 2nd half of the 6th century, and it is very noticeable that no gold braids have ever been found in any of the equally rich women's graves of the 7th century. This may be coincidence, but on the whole is more likely to be genuinely significant. A further important point is the geographical distribution of the braids (FIG. 15): no less than 18 of them come from east Kentish cemeteries, and only two from elsewhere. That from Chessell Down, Isle of Wight, was found in a grave-group including much jewellery of Kentish type, in the general context of a cemetery whose grave-goods as a whole reflect Kentish influence to such a marked degree that they imply a population either wholly Kentish in origin, or at least with very strong Kentish cultural connexions. The gold strip from Holywell Row in Suffolk (no. 21, p. 72) came from a grave with unmistakably Anglian jewellery, but even here there are slight indications, notably in the presence of one of those rare iron weaving-swords, that the influence of Kent was not totally absent. Finally, a great many of the finds from Taplow, the gold buckle and clasps, the large silver-mounted horns, and the glass vessels, may well have been of Kentish origin.

²¹ Crowfoot (1956), braids 4, 5 and 6, pp. 439 ff., figs. 4-6.

²² The St. Cuthbert embroideries and braids had been flattened, probably by a burnishing tool. Crowfoot (1956), p. 433, and also p. 378 in the same publication.

²³ Geijer (1938), figs. 19-20.

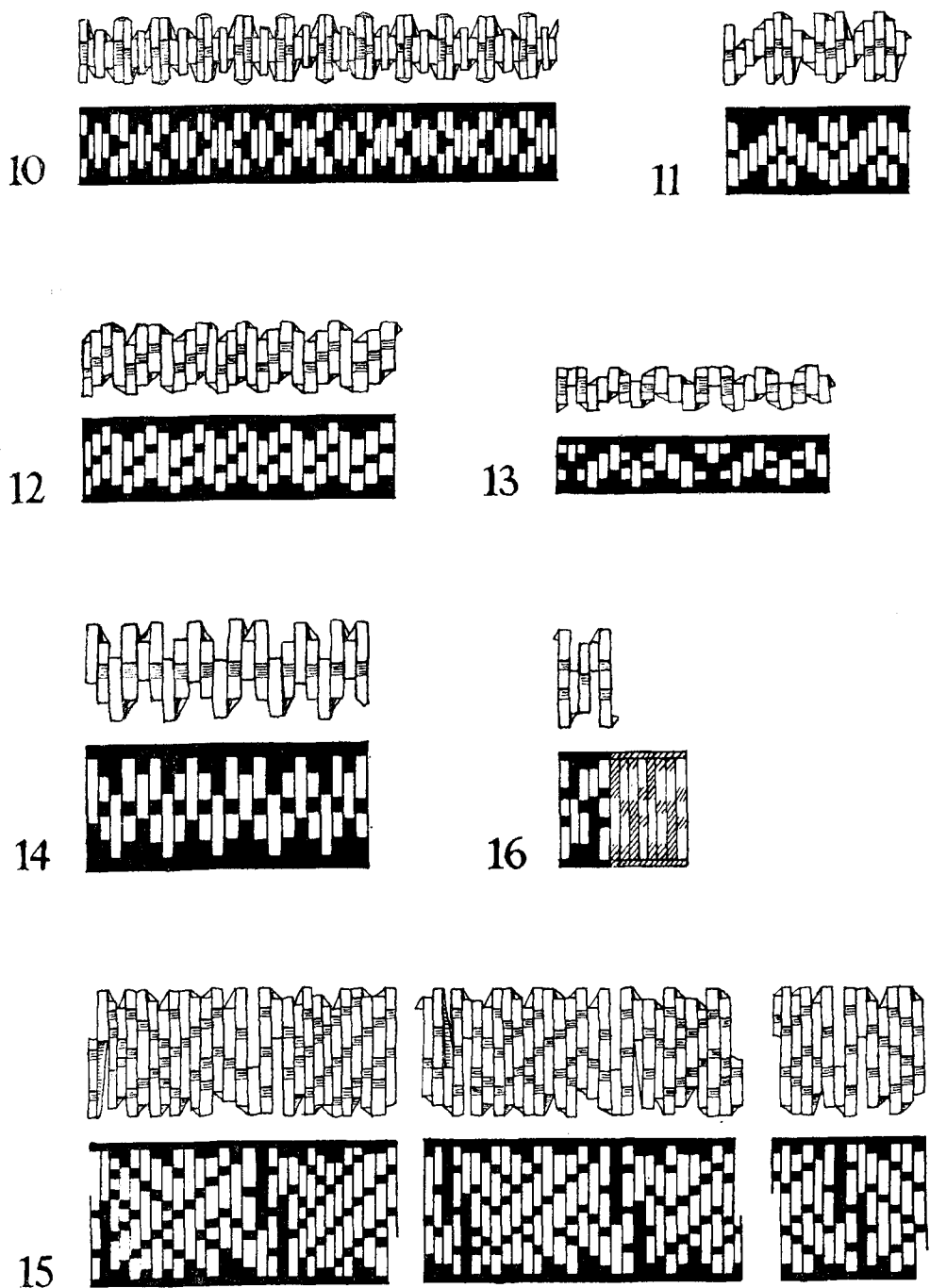


FIG. 14

KENTISH AND OTHER GOLD BRAIDS: PATTERN DETERMINATION (pp. 51, 70 ff.). Sc. $\frac{2}{1}$
 10, Lyminge, grave 44 (no. 15); 11, Sarre, grave 4 (no. 16); 12, Sarre, grave 90 (no. 17); 13, Sarre, grave 94 (no. 18); 14, Stowting, grave 9 (no. 19); 15, Chessell Down, Isle of Wight, 1855/grave 1 (no. 20); 16, Holywell Row, Suffolk, grave 11 (no. 21)

In the present state of the evidence, therefore, it seems that the kingdom of Kent must have played a key part in either the manufacture or the distribution of the Anglo-Saxon gold braids, and that they were predominantly a Kentish fashion. Archaeological evidence in general tells us that Kent, during the 6th and early 7th centuries, was the richest of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, and the one in closest contact with the kingdoms of the Merovingian kings across the Channel. Kent was at the receiving end of much continental trade, and in the light of this we must now consider whether the gold braids were imported goods, or whether they were made in England.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BRAIDS

The catalogue (nos. B, 22–90, pp. 72 ff.) contains a summary of such information as it has been possible to assemble about the remains of gold-brocaded (and embroidered) textiles from nearly 70 continental Germanic graves of the 5th, 6th and 7th centuries. It is possible that there are others. Certainly there are some from 8th-century graves, mainly in southern Germany, which have been excluded deliberately, partly because they lie outside the main interest of this survey, and partly because they are about to be published elsewhere.²⁴

We have not been able to make first-hand studies of any of these continental finds, and this is regrettable since, in the absence of any expert technical examination, the published accounts are not always as helpful as could be desired. It is particularly frustrating that, although the gold threads have received some attention, no detailed information is available about the fabric which they decorated, except that, where it has survived, it is said to be silk. Thus, while it has sometimes been possible to determine what kinds of gold threads were found, to tell that they had mostly been used for the brocading of bands not dissimilar to those from Anglo-Saxon England, and even occasionally to get a hint of the types of pattern employed, only once do we have any information about the weave of the bands themselves (Köln, St. Severinus grave 100, no. 54, p. 78). Yet even with these limitations, the catalogue has produced some useful comparative information which may serve as the basis for future research.

Gold-brocading threads have a wide continental distribution, from some apparently isolated finds in Sweden in the north and Czechoslovakia in the east, down to Italy and Spain in the south (FIG. 15). The main focus of the distribution, however, is in Francia, in northern Gaul and the lower and middle Rhine valley. It is here, and in Frankish Thuringia, that the earliest examples have been found in graves of the later 5th and earlier 6th centuries (nos. 24, 29, 51, 56, 59–61, pp. 72 ff.). With the exception of that from Žuráň (no. 67, p. 81), those from other areas, mostly from Alamannic and Bavarian graves in southern Germany and Lombard graves in Yugoslavia and northern Italy, date from the later 6th and 7th centuries. On this showing it seems that, in seeking the background to the appearance of gold braids in Kent by the middle of the 6th century, we are right to look to the kingdoms of the Merovingian Franks.

²⁴ Frauke Stein, *Adelsgräber des achten Jahrhunderts in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 111 ff.

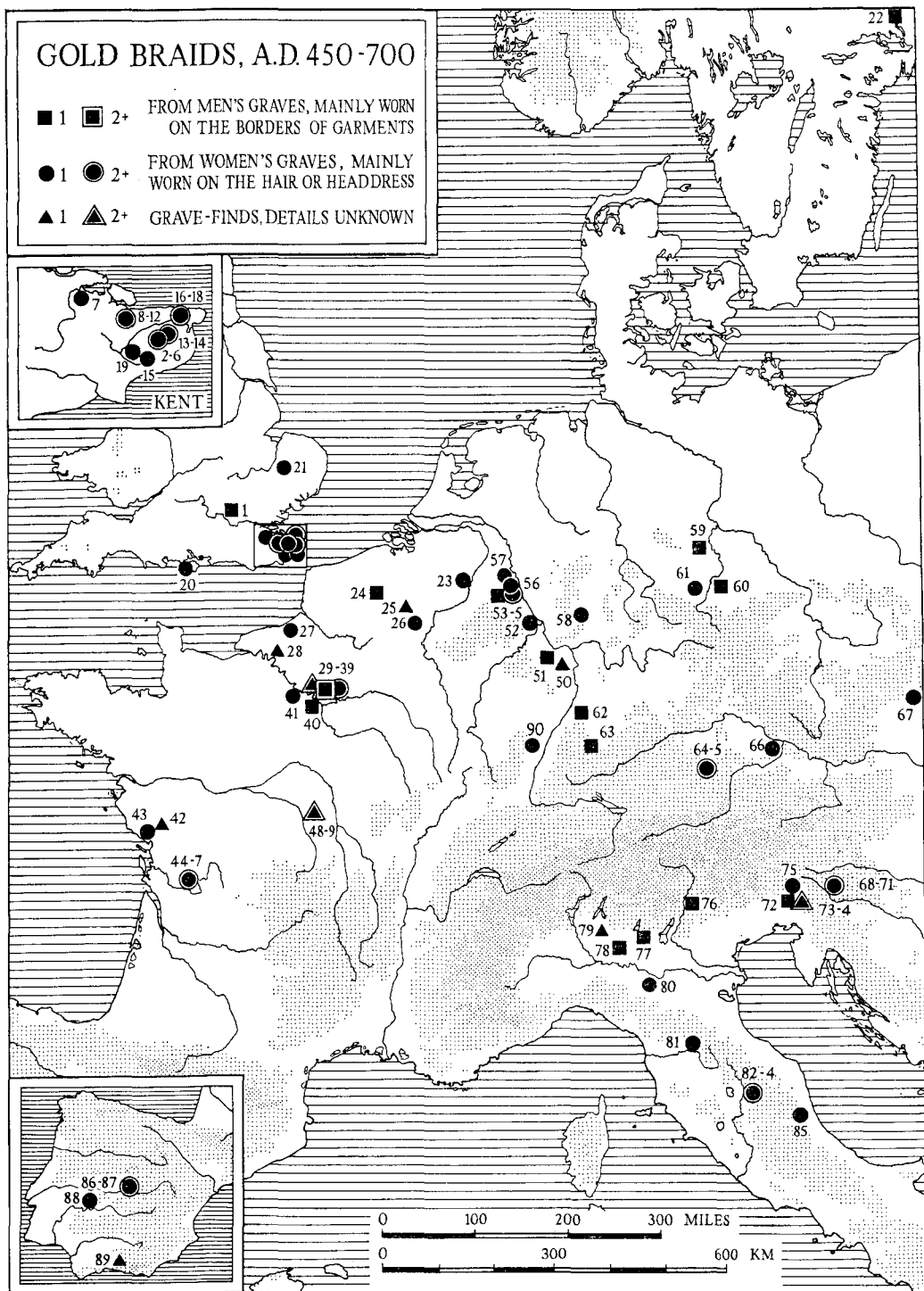


FIG. 15
 DISTRIBUTION OF GOLD BRAIDS FROM EARLY GERMANIC GRAVES
 Numbers refer to catalogue (pp. 66 ff.)

In the present state of the evidence concerning the continental gold braids we cannot make any authoritative statement about their origin. Gold-worked textiles had of course been introduced into western Europe from the eastern Mediterranean during the Roman imperial period, and Roman and Byzantine sumptuary laws make it clear that gold-brocaded garments were fashionable among the wealthier classes inside the empire at least from the 4th century into the 6th. These laws make specific mention of gold-woven borders for tunics and other clothing, the making and wearing of which were officially under strict imperial control, and illegal for private persons.²⁵ That they were worn by the Byzantine emperors and their court, in the period which most concerns us, is clear from the illustrations of them on 6th-century mosaics at Ravenna. It is possible that some of the gold-brocaded and embroidered silks found in Frankish graves were imported ready-made from Byzantium, along with the imperial gold coin, for example, which made its appearance in increasing quantities in the west from the end of the 5th down to the beginning of the 7th century. During this period, the emperors at Constantinople had political reasons for securing the friendship and allegiance of the Merovingian kings, and their diplomatic gifts may well have included examples of the sumptuous textiles for which Byzantine craftsmen were renowned. The violet and red silk garments buried in Saint-Denis grave 49 (no. 37, p. 75 f.) on the body of a woman who was probably Queen Arnegunde, wife of Chlotar I, which include a veil and cuffs of 'satin' and couched gold embroideries in oriental style, could have been such a royal gift. Alternatively they could have been trade goods, imported by the Syrian or Jewish merchants who are known to have been established in western Europe at this time. Queen Arnegunde's embroideries, however, are exotic, and have been included here mainly for comparative purposes: they are technically and stylistically quite different from the brocaded bands more usually found in western Germanic graves. Much more research will be needed to tell whether any or all of these were imports in the fullest sense. Those made of rare and precious silk probably were imported, though there remains the possibility that only the raw silk was imported while the manufacture of the braids was carried out in the west, perhaps by oriental craftsmen.

It should not be forgotten that the remains of clothing with gold-brocaded borders have been found in late Roman graves, not only in Mediterranean Italy and Spain, but also in Gaul,²⁶ the Rhineland,²⁷ and the Trier district.²⁸ It is thus conceivable that the early appearance of gold brocades in Frankish graves is to be explained by the existence of a trade or industry established in the Gallo-Roman period, and continuing uninterrupted by the change of political overlordship. That such continuity through the Germanic invasions was possible is well attested by the history of other crafts, such as glass- and pottery-making. It is well to

²⁵ *Codex Theodosianus*, x, 21, 1-2; *Codex Justinianus*, xi, 9, 1-2.

²⁶ Cochet (1859), p. 174.

²⁷ See for example finds from Bingen (*Mainzer Zeitschrift*, L (1955), 108); Dorweiler (*Bonner Jahrbücher*, CXLIX (1949), 88); Mainz (*Germania*, ix (1925), 131, fig. 2, 5); Mainz-Essenheim (*Mainzer Zeitschrift*, xxx (1935), 84); St. Aldegund (*Germania*, xxxix (1961), 131).

²⁸ Trier, St. Paulinus (*Bonner Jahrbücher*, LXXVII (1884), 238 ff.); Trittenheim (*Bonner Jahrbücher*, CXXVII (1922), 310).

remember also that Sidonius Apollinaris, writing in the 3rd quarter of the 5th century, complimented the wives and daughters of his friends on their skill in spinning, weaving and embroidering with silk and gold threads.²⁹ If these arts persisted among the womenfolk of the surviving Gallo-Roman aristocracy, they can have been acquired by their Germanic neighbours. In fact, the production of the gold braids may not have been wholly an oriental or even a professional business at all; imported braids may have been imitated by skilful weavers among the Germanic womenfolk, perhaps in silk if they could get it, perhaps in other fabrics. Only silk is known from the continent, but as more gold threads are preserved without textile than with, some may have been brocaded on wool or linen.

Surface-brocading with flat gold strip, which was used on all the early Anglo-Saxon braids, was apparently equally usual on the contemporary continental examples. Present evidence suggests that it was almost universal in the 5th and 6th centuries, and still popular in the 7th. The oriental embroideries buried with Queen Arnegunde in the 2nd half of the 6th century, however, were worked with threads of 'spun gold'; that is, gold strip wound spirally around a core of silken thread. Gold thread of this type had been used centuries earlier in the near east,³⁰ but it does not appear on brocaded bands from Germanic graves in western Europe much, if at all, before the 7th century (cf. examples from Rouen, no. 28, p. 74; Saint-Denis, nos. 31-2, 34, 36-7, pp. 74 ff.; and Köln, nos. 54-5, p. 78). This supple 'spun gold' gradually ousted the less manageable gold strip, until, by the 9th and 10th centuries, it had become the normal kind of metal thread both for brocading and embroidery.³¹ At Birka, however, threads of drawn wire were more common,³² and it is interesting to find similar gold wire in use as early as the 1st half of the 6th century on the brocaded bands from Köln Cathedral (no. 56, p. 78 f.). These are also unusual in that they seem to have been worked in a combination of surface-brocading with the much rarer 'soumak', or wrapped, weave, which was used to emphasize or raise some details in the pattern. Other gold threads showing unmistakable traces of use in soumak weave have been found in graves of the later 6th and earlier 7th centuries at Kärlich (no. 52, p. 78) and Saint-Denis (no. 34, p. 75); pattern work in this technique, though not in gold thread, is known from Taplow, the roughly contemporary Sutton Hoo ship-burial, and a later burial at Valsgärde, Uppland, Sweden.³³

For the most part, the continental gold braids are not sufficiently well published for the patterns to be visible in detail. Only in one or two examples of the gold strip, which normally holds its pattern better than either 'spun gold' or gold wire, is it possible to see anything of the type of design employed. Obviously

²⁹ Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina*, xv, 126 ff.; xxii, 195 ff.

³⁰ As for example on a Syrian tapestry found in a 3rd-century grave in Hungary. Agnes Geijer and B. Thomas, 'The Viminacium gold tapestry', *Meddel. från Lunds Universitets Historiska Museum* (1964-5), pp. 223 ff.

³¹ The gold threads on the 8th- or 9th-century 'veil' of St. Herelindis at Maaseyck, the 9th-century girdle of Bishop Witgaris of Augsburg, a 9th-century brocade from the Gokstad ship in Norway, the 10th-century St. Cuthbert relics, and many later medieval tablet-braids, are all of this type. Crowfoot (1956), pp. 449 ff., and pp. 377 ff. in the same publication.

³² Geijer (1938), pp. 68 ff.

³³ Greta Arwidsson, *Valsgärde 6* (Uppsala, 1942), p. 87, fig. 66, and pl. xl, A.

much more research is required on this material before we can make serious comparisons with the English braids, but preliminary impressions suggest considerable similarity, both in the general character and dimensions of the brocaded bands, and in what can be seen of their patterns. The headband from Köln, St. Severinus grave 73 (no. 53, p. 78, PL. IX, E) is a very close parallel indeed to the one from Chessell Down (no. 20, p. 71, FIG. 14, no. 15), and others such as those from Saint-Denis grave 9 (no. 33, p. 75) and Planig (no. 51, p. 77) show marked general similarities to the Kentish braids.

These particular continental brocades were all made of silk, and this raises the question whether the Kentish braids may also have been made of this costly fabric. It is not impossible: the size of the pressure-marks on their gold strip matches that on the continental silk braids very closely. If they were silk, then they must have been a great rarity, for no early Anglo-Saxon grave, not even one of the really rich ones, has yet yielded a single identifiable fragment of a silk textile. This suggests that in England, even among the aristocracy, silk was not generally available, or was considered too precious for burial with the dead. Probably St. Aldhelm gives us a hint of the true state of affairs towards the end of the 7th century, when, condemning the luxurious and worldly costume affected by men and women in religious orders, he makes specific mention of garments with silken borders (p. 63 f.). What he is describing, clearly, is the normal aristocratic dress of the day, and silk does not figure except as a trimming to brightly-coloured clothes made of other materials. These silk borders would doubtless have been braids like those from Frankish graves, though without the gold brocading, and would probably have been imported ready made, like lengths of ribbon.³⁴

Similarly if the Kentish gold braids, a full century earlier, were made of silk, they are most likely to have been imported in the course of trade with the Frankish kingdoms. Yet they need not have been made of silk at all. As we have seen, the much more elaborately decorated braids from Taplow barrow were made of fine wool in a tablet-weave, a technique well established in England at least as early as the 6th century, and, at present, nothing compels us to think of these as imports. If, as seems most likely, they were insular work, they would indicate that by the early 7th century Anglo-Saxon weavers had grown expert in the art of gold brocading. The simpler gold braids from 6th-century Kentish cemeteries may have been earlier Anglo-Saxon essays in the art. This notion may be supported from another 6th-century Kentish grave, where a piece of replaced tablet-braid with step-pattern brocading in threads, possibly of wool,³⁵ suggests that similar work may have been carried out locally in other materials. But the final answer to the problem, where the gold braids from Anglo-Saxon graves originated, must await the publication of technical research on the continental material.

³⁴ The threads from a woman's work-box found during the 18th century in grave 60 on Sibertswold Down, Kent, which were described by the excavator as silk (Bryan Faussett, *Inventorium Sepulchrale* (ed. C. Roach Smith, 1856), p. 112), have now been examined by Dr. M. L. Ryder and identified as of wool, some dyed green, some naturally pigmented brown. They probably come from a fragment of patterned tablet-braid preserved with them.

³⁵ On the back of a brooch from Bokesbourne. Mentioned here by kind permission of the excavator, Mr. Frank Jenkins.

THE WEARING OF THE BRAIDS AND THE *VITTA AURO EXORNATA*

The use of tablet-woven braids to decorate cloaks and tunics in the migration period is attested for northern Europe by the well-preserved textiles from Scandinavian graves and bog-finds.³⁶ They are represented also in Scandinavian figural art by the exaggerated portrayal of plain or decorated bands around the hems of the long tunics worn by women, as well as on the hems and sleeves of the short tunics worn by men.³⁷ The surviving fragments of these tablet-braids are sometimes decorated with brocaded patterns in wool, but gold brocading is rare in the north before the Viking period. We are less well informed about native Anglo-Saxon dress, but presumably it was similar: the fragments of tablet-braids preserved with wrist-clasps must have formed the cuffs to the tight-fitting sleeves of the Anglian women's dress, while those adhering to brooches may have formed borders to the neck of the dress or the mantle. Yet, unless the Taplow braids were used as a cloak border, none of the English gold braids so far found was employed in this fashion: they seem to have had a more exotic and specialized use, most commonly as a head ornament. Since, on distributional and technical grounds, we have reason to believe the gold braids were primarily a continental fashion introduced into southern England through Kent's Frankish connexion, it is necessary now to examine the evidence from the Merovingian kingdoms.

A distressingly high proportion of continental graves containing the remains of gold-worked textiles were either robbed in antiquity, or were wrecked by chance discovery or bad excavation in more recent times. Detailed information about how the braids were worn is thus much smaller in volume than the number of finds would lead one to hope. Mercifully, the Gallo-Roman historians of Merovingian Gaul have been kinder to us than our own early Anglo-Saxon writers in giving eye-witness descriptions of the luxurious dress of the royalties and aristocracies of their day. For the 6th century, in particular, we can draw on Gregory of Tours, and, with due allowance for possible poetical conceits and exaggeration, on Venantius Fortunatus, for invaluable supplementary information about gold-brocaded or gold-embroidered adjuncts to contemporary costume.

In seeking parallels for the suggested use of the Taplow gold braids, it should be noticed that both these authors mention golden belts on several occasions. Fortunatus recounts that Queen Radegunde, when received into religious life, 'gave her golden girdle to be weighed and divided up for the need of the poor'.³⁸ Presumably her belt was not made of solid gold, though it could of course have had a gold buckle and fittings. On the other hand it may well have been a woven girdle with gold brocading, similar to the ornate silk girdle in the Vatican,

³⁶ E.g., at Snartemo and Evebø, Hougen (1935), pp. 58 ff., 113 ff., pls. xii-xviii, and H. Dedekam, *op. cit.* in note 4; at Thorsberg, K. Schladow, 'Der Thorsberger Prachtmantel', *Festschrift Gustav Schwantes* (Neumünster, 1952), pp. 1-9; at Vehnemoor, Schladow, 'Der Prachtmantel Nr. II aus dem Vehnemoor in Oldenburg', *Oldenburger Jahrbuch*, LII-LIII (1952-3), 170, 180-97; and Hald (1950), pp. 228-42.

³⁷ See the male figures on one of the Torslunda dies, and on the square-headed brooch from Gummersmark, Denmark (Holmqvist (1955), pls. xxxiii, 81, and iii, 6), etc., and some of the female figures among the 'gold foyeys' (Ole Klindt-Jensen, *Bornholm i Folkevandringstiden* (København, 1957), fig. 72, nos. 1, 3, 5, 10 and 11).

³⁸ *De Vita S. Radegundis*, I, 13 (*Monum. Germ. Hist. Script. rer. Merov.*, II, 1888): 'Cingulum auri ponderatum fractum dat opus in pauperum.'

considered by some to have been the 'cingulum' of her near contemporary St. Gregory the Great, and the later girdles of St. Cuthbert at Durham and Bishop Witgarius of Augsburg.³⁹ It is worth recalling that the two latter were both gifts from Germanic queens. That such brocaded bands could be cut up, and still make valuable gifts, is clear from a passage in Gregory, recording the dispute at the Council of Paris in 577 between King Chilperic and Bishop Praetextatus of Rouen. Queen Brunhilde had left some valuables in the safe-keeping of the bishop, and the king accused him of cutting up one of them, 'a band woven with gold threads', and distributing the pieces as bribes.⁴⁰

The golden belts referred to by Gregory were all articles of male attire: he uses the term 'balteus' in the sense of a sword-belt, but whether they were worn around the hips, or across the chest as baldrics, is not clear. Nor is the nature of the gold decoration at all certain. The belts of imitation gold given by King Clovis as bribes to the companions of Ragnachar⁴¹ are unlikely to have been brocaded, since threads of gilded copper are unknown from Germanic graves of this period;⁴² thus the description probably refers to the metal fittings. This may also be the case with the other gold belts mentioned—that belonging to King Chilperic's chamberlain, Eberulf, which, from part of its gold decoration, afforded its owner the purchase price of a piece of land;⁴³ the golden belt lent to Gundovald by Mummolus, count of Auxerre;⁴⁴ and the 'great belt enriched with gold and precious stones' offered, together with a magnificent sword, as a bribe to Chilperic.⁴⁵ Probably all of them were fitted with gilded or solid gold buckles and plates inset with garnets, comparable with the gold belt-suites from Childeric's grave at Tournai (no. 24, p. 72 f.), from the East Anglian king's at Sutton Hoo, or the unknown lord's at Taplow. In the case of Gundovald, however, Gregory's description suggests that the belt itself was golden. This should remind us that the gold belt-ornaments from the partly despoiled royal grave 1957/16 at Saint-Denis (no. 34, p. 75) were found with a belt and baldric of leather which showed traces of gilding. Queen Arnegunde's girdle was similarly gilded (no. 37, p. 75 f.). Clearly the intended effect was that the belts should appear to be entirely of gold. As we have already seen under Taplow (p. 45), a belt of braid with gold brocading would have looked very like solid gold too, and it is probable that its surface of gold strip would have proved more durable than mere gilding. On the other hand, it would undoubtedly have been more expensive, and it is scarcely surprising that so few brocaded belts have been found. On the continent the only certain example comes from Hailfingen (no. 63, p. 80), where a few gold strips were recovered with the remains of a belt. The only other possibility is from Civezzano

³⁹ Crowfoot (1956), p. 434.

⁴⁰ Gregory, *Historia Francorum*, v, xii (xviii) (*Monum. Germ. Hist., Script. rer. Merov.*, I, 2 ed. 1951; transl. O. M. Dalton, Oxford, 1927): 'cur . . . limbum aureis contextum filis in partibus desecasti . . .'

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, II, xxxi (xlii): 'datis aureis . . . baltheis, Chlodovechus, sed totum adsimilatum auro—erat enim aereum deauratum sub dolo factum.'

⁴² Except for a few silver threads from Grues (no. 43, p. 76 f.), the rest are all of gold.

⁴³ *Op. cit.* in note 40, VII, xxii: 'datam ipsi homini partem aureum baltei sui.'

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, VII, xxxviii: 'depone balteum meum aureum quo cingeris.'

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, X, xxi: 'offerentes balteum magnum ex auro lapidibusque pretiosis ornatum.'

(no. 76, p. 82), where an exceptionally richly-equipped male skeleton had gold-brocading threads under the hips.

The great majority of gold braids from men's graves on the continent, however, are likely to have been worn, like the woollen or linen braids in the north, as ornamental borders to the edges of tunics and cloaks. This, after all, was also the late Roman and Byzantine fashion. For the Carolingian period we have literary evidence for such gold-decorated apparel, notably the purple cloak with gold border presented by the emperor Lothar I to the Danish exile Harald,⁴⁶ and the gold-woven clothing worn on feast days by Charlemagne himself.⁴⁷ For the 5th, 6th and 7th centuries, however, the archaeological evidence is the clearest testimony, though it is disappointing to find that only two examples of gold dress-borders have been properly recorded *in situ*. These, from Saint-Denis grave 1957/4 (no. 32, p. 74) and Köln, St. Severinus grave 100 (no. 54, p. 78), both of the late 7th century at earliest, were found in very similar position and arrangement, having certainly formed the edging to neck and front openings on tunics or robes. Others, from Saint-Denis grave 1957/1 (no. 31, p. 74) and Planig (no. 51, p. 77), described as lying over the body, and from Stössen (no. 60, p. 80), lying under the body from neck to pelvis, were presumably similarly employed. In Saint-Denis grave 1957/1, however, there were other gold threads which had made embroidered motifs, probably on the body of the garment to which the brocade formed the edging.

That similar dress-borders were also worn by women is clear from the literature. Fortunatus, describing Radegunde in the 6th century, refers to the 'threads of metal foil' which border (literally 'bind') her jewelled robe,⁴⁸ and in the 8th century Angilbert uses very similar terms for the mantle worn by Charlemagne's queen Liutgard.⁴⁹ Finds of these dress-borders from women's graves, however, are not numerous. The Köln princess (no. 56, p. 78 f.) had gold threads by her feet, possibly from the hem of her gown or the edge of a long head-veil, and remains of another border from a cloth or garment buried with her in a casket. The woman in grave 10 at München-Giesing (no. 64, p. 80) had gold-brocading strips under her hips, which might have formed a girdle or the hem of a head-veil. Finally, the lady of Turuñuelo (no. 88, p. 84), buried with no less than 49 grammes of gold thread (considerably more than at Taplow), must be presumed to have had sumptuously decorated garments, but unfortunately nothing of them was left *in situ*. We have already noticed that Queen Arnegunde (no. 37, p. 75 f.) had gold-embroidered cuffs on the wide sleeves of her long red silk robe, but there is no contemporary continental parallel for the brocaded 'bracelets' worn on one wrist by two of the Kentish ladies (nos. 7, p. 68, and 16, p. 70).

⁴⁶ Ermoldus Nigellus, *In Honorem Hludowici*, IV, 375 (*Monum. Germ. Hist., Poet. Lat. Med. Aevi*, II):

'Consertam clamidem gemmis seu murice rubro,
Aureus in gyro quam quoque limbus arat.'

⁴⁷ Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni Imperatoris*, XXIII: 'In festivitibus veste auro texta . . . ornatus incedebat.'

⁴⁸ Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina*, VIII, 271 (*Monum. Germ. Hist., Auct. Antiq.*, IV, 1881): 'Brattea gemmatam cycladem fila catenant.'

⁴⁹ *Carmen de Carolo Magno*, 188 (*Monum. Germ. Hist., Poet. Lat. Med. Aevi*, I, 1880): 'aurea fila ligant clamidem.'

Their nearest counterparts at present known are the padded silk arm- or wrist-bands, decorated with a gold-brocaded tablet-braid, which were found with the fillet from Mammen in Denmark, and are dated about 1000.⁵⁰

On the continent, as in England, by far the most common form of gold-woven ornament found in women's graves is the brocaded fillet worn on the head. There are no less than 13 certain and a number of other possible or probable examples from Frankish, Baiuvarian and Lombard graves. Unfortunately, only two of them have been at all adequately published. Of these the grandest, buried with the Köln princess (no. 56, p. 78 f.), was decorated with gold wire in a mixture of surface-brocading and soumak weave 2 cm. wide. Fully 45 cm. long, it seems to have encircled the head and to have been fastened at the back with silver wire hooks. On the front of the band, in a triangle left plain to receive it, was fixed a circular gold jewel with a garnet in a granulated setting. The other, from Köln, St. Severinus grave 73 (no. 53, p. 78, PL. IX, E), we have already seen to be an extremely close parallel to one from Chessell Down, Isle of Wight (no. 20, p. 71, FIG. 14, no. 15). It was made of silk, with gold strip-brocading only 7 mm. wide, and 25.7 cm. long, so that, like the English examples, it was too short to encircle the head completely. Of the others, at least some appear to have been very like the Kentish braids in general character and dimensions, and in at least one case (Envermeu, no. 27, p. 73 f.) this was noticed by the original excavator. A similar brocaded band, worked with 'spun gold' threads, was found on the forehead of a woman buried in a 3rd-century grave at Mainz:⁵¹ it was 6 mm. wide, and 30 cm. long. This suggests that, like the gold dress-borders, these headbands were a late Roman fashion, adopted by the Franks when they settled Roman Gaul and the Rhineland.

It is probable that these ornaments are what writers in the Merovingian and Carolingian periods refer to as *vittae*. Poetical descriptions of a high-born Frankish lady arrayed for festive or ceremonial occasions nearly always mention the *vitta* which she wears around her hair. In its original form the *vitta* was the arrangement of undyed woollen cords used in the ancient Roman marriage ceremonial to bind up the hair of the bride under her veil: it was worn as a symbol of purity also by the Vestal Virgins.⁵² Despite the transformation wrought on it by time, changing fashion, and the luxuriousness of the later Roman and Byzantine world, some scholars have suggested that the *vitta* worn in the Merovingian kingdoms remained primarily the symbol of the bride.⁵³ Behind this belief lies the well-known passage concerning the *vitta auro exornata* which figured so prominently in Gregory of Tours's report on the judicial hearing of the scandal in the convent at Poitiers in 590.⁵⁴ The abbess, who seems to have assumed the guardianship of her orphan niece and to have been in charge of certain arrangements for her betrothal, had received from the count of Poitiers, on behalf of the girl's intended

⁵⁰ Hald (1950), figs. 100 and 101. The 'fillet' is wider and more elaborate than the hair-bands under consideration here, and the braids run across the centre width, not lengthwise.

⁵¹ *Germania*, ix (1925), 131; *Mainzer Zeitschrift*, xx-xxi (1925-6), 96.

⁵² Lillian M. Wilson, *The Clothing of the Ancient Romans* (1938), pp. 139 ff.

⁵³ Doppelfeld (1960), p. 109.

⁵⁴ *Op. cit.* in note 40, x, xvi.

husband, the sum of 20 gold solidi with which to purchase a *vitta* decorated with gold. The details about this ornament, derived partly from the accusation of one of the nuns and partly from the abbess's defence, suggest that the gold decoration took the form of gold-foil threads (*foliola aurea*). This *vitta* was clearly the bridegroom's gift for the girl to wear on her betrothal or wedding day. Another passage which might be taken to support the idea of the *vitta* as bridal wear is Venantius Fortunatus's description of Saint Radegunde, decked out as a maiden betrothed to God, wearing a purple *vitta* to bind her shining hair.⁵⁵ Unfortunately for this theory, the large number of gold *vittae* found in Anglo-Saxon and continental women's graves argues in favour of a less restricted function for them.

Though there is insufficient evidence at present to tell whether they were worn by young unmarried or unbetrothed girls,⁵⁶ it seems likely that women continued to wear their *vittae* after marriage. For royal ladies of the late 8th century this is certainly true, because Angilbert mentions them as worn not only by Charlemagne's eldest daughter Rhodrud, betrothed to the Byzantine emperor, but also by his queen Liutgard and by his second daughter Bertha, who was married to Angilbert himself.⁵⁷

Though the passages in question are poetical and probably largely conventional, Angilbert's descriptions of these ladies throw some light on the method of wearing the *vitta* in the Carolingian period, and they are, therefore, worth quoting. Of Liutgard he writes, 'Her hair outshines the superlative purple that binds it; her gleaming white temples are encircled by purple *vittae* . . . a beryl is mounted on her head, a diadem shines resplendent with bright metal . . .';⁵⁸ of Rhodrud, 'A purple *vitta* is twined in her golden hair, glittering with the sparkle of varied rows of gems; for a coronet of gold set with precious stones encircles her head . . .';⁵⁹ and of Bertha, 'Her charming head is girt around with a golden diadem. Gold threads intermingle with her blonde locks.'⁶⁰ Liutgard and Rhodrud would seem to have been wearing a *diadema* or *corona* in addition to the *vitta*, unless indeed the words are synonymous, and the *vitta* itself was decorated with gold and gems, like the brocaded circlet from Köln Cathedral. This is possible, for Bertha's diadem seems to have been worked with gold threads. On the other hand it is interesting to note that on late 8th-century coins struck in the name of Cynethryth, the queen of Offa of Mercia, the profile view of the queen's head shows her wearing a narrow band that encircles her head around the forehead, with, above it, another ornament resembling a tiara.⁶¹ If, as seems likely, the English queen was wearing fashions similar to those of the contemporary Carolingian court, this may be the *vitta* surmounted by a royal diadem. Like the Frankish ladies, Cynethryth is wearing these ornaments directly on her hair, which is drawn

⁵⁵ *Op. cit.* in note 48, p. 265 f.

⁵⁶ There is very little information about the age of the girls and women buried with these gold hair-bands. The skeleton in Holywell Row grave 11 (no. 21, p. 72) is said to have been a child, but the bones were poorly preserved.

⁵⁷ Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne* (transl. S. E. Turner, Michigan, 1960), notes 54 and 98.

⁵⁸ *Op. cit.* in note 49, pp. 186 ff.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 215 ff.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 221 f.

⁶¹ *Anglo-Saxon Coins: studies presented to F. M. Stenton* (ed. R. H. M. Dolley, 1961), pl. vii, nos. 116-18.

back behind the neck and fastened at the nape in what appear to be braids or curls. This should remind us that at this period only young girls wore their hair loose and flowing: married women were required by custom and law to put their hair up.⁶² An 8th-century sculpture at Milan, showing a woman in full face with her hair drawn back and a narrow band across the brow, would seem to be another, this time Lombard, illustration of the *vitta* as worn by a married woman.

No doubt the fashion of wearing the *vitta* was not greatly different in the 6th and 7th centuries. The example from Köln Cathedral will have looked very like a complete gold circlet. The majority, with only a short gold-brocaded section across the forehead, may as seen already have had the plain continuation of the braid twined into, and thus hidden by, the knot of hair at the back of the head, though if they were made of purple or red silk, of course, no concealment would have been necessary. There is the further possibility that the unbrocaded sections of some of the *vittae* were longer than was required to encircle the head, and were knotted and allowed to fall behind the head as ribbons. The description of Radegunde's purple *vitta* could be read to mean that its ends curled down over her bosom.⁶³ Such a *vitta* with falling ends, brocaded entirely with gold, was found in one of the Viking graves at Birka.⁶⁴

It is also possible that some of the headbands from early Germanic graves may have formed parts of headdresses. It is not clear how soon it became customary for married women to wear a coif or head-veil, and certainly in our period it does not seem to have been obligatory. Queen Arnegunde, however, was buried at Saint-Denis in a hip-length red 'satin' head-veil, which suggests that this type of head-covering was fashionable in the 6th century. Remembering that the Merovingian courts at this period were subject to influence from the Byzantine world, it is perhaps not irrelevant to notice that the female saints in court dress depicted on one of the mosaics in St. Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna are shown each one wearing a jewelled circlet or *vitta* on her curled top-knot, from which a thin white veil with fringed borders hangs down to her heels behind.⁶⁵ In the light of this it is not impossible that the remains of gold-brocaded borders found in the grave in Köln Cathedral (no. 56, p. 78 f.) and in München-Giesing grave 10 (no. 64, p. 80) had belonged to long head-veils held in place by the gold *vittae*. The only literary confirmation for this fashion of wearing the *vitta* comes from England, in the description of aristocratic Anglo-Saxon dress referred to above (p. 57). Written by St. Aldhelm around the end of the 7th century, it is of such interest that we quote it here in full:

'In both sexes this kind of costume consists of a fine linen undergarment, a red or blue tunic, a headdress and sleeves with silk borders; their shoes are covered with red dyed leather; the locks on their foreheads and temples are crimped by the curling iron; instead of dark

⁶² The *Lex Salica*, Tit. LXXV, and the *Lex Baiuvariorum*, Tit. VIII, 5, both impose stiff fines on married women who let their hair down in public.

⁶³ *Op. cit.* in note 48, p. 265 f.: 'et nitidos amethystina vitta capillos, margaritato flexilis arte sinu.'

⁶⁴ Geijer (1938), p. 146.

⁶⁵ Jean Ebersolt, *Les Arts somptuaires de Byzance* (Paris, 1923), p. 42, fig. 12; D. Talbot Rice, *The Byzantines* (Ancient Peoples and Places series, London, 1962), pl. xlii; etc.

head coverings they wear white and coloured veils which hang down luxuriantly to the feet and are held in place by *vittae* sewn on to them.’⁶⁶

It is not altogether fanciful to recognize, in this manner of dressing and covering the hair, a striking similarity to the late antique fashion just mentioned above as depicted at Ravenna. There are other indications, notably in the character of 7th-century Anglo-Saxon jewellery, to suggest that one of the side-effects of the conversion by a mission from Rome was the adoption by the English aristocracy after 600 of an insular version of Byzantine dress.

The gold-brocaded *vittae*, however, which primarily concern us here appear in England to antedate the conversion and any directly-attested connexion with the Mediterranean world. They belong, as we have seen, peculiarly to Kentish culture in the 6th century, and we have suggested that they were introduced into Kent not from the Mediterranean directly, but by way of the Merovingian kingdoms. The explanation of this is to be found in Kent’s unique situation at this period. We know from historical sources that, sometime in the early 560s, Ethelbert of Kent married the Merovingian princess Bertha, daughter of Charibert of Paris.⁶⁷ The evidence from archaeology tells us that this was not an isolated event, but the political confirmation of a pre-existing cross-Channel connexion, mercantile if not already dynastic in character, that had begun at latest by the early 6th century, and had made the kingdom of Kent both rich and Frankophile in its material culture. The numerous Frankish imports—ornaments, weapons, glass and metal vessels—buried as grave-goods in the Kentish cemeteries indicate contacts both with the kingdom of Neustria in north-west France, and with that of the Austrasian Franks in the Rhineland, the very regions, with their capitals at Paris and Köln, that have shown us the closest and earliest parallels for the Kentish gold *vittae*. In view of this it can scarcely be doubted that these brocaded head-ornaments, whether actually imported or not, indicate that the aristocracy of Kent in the 6th century had adopted at least something of the dress fashion in vogue among their Frankish counterparts across the Channel.

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the late Roman and Byzantine world, as we have seen, garments with gold-woven borders were forbidden to the ordinary citizen, being the prerogative of the imperial family, and, presumably, the nobility and high officials. There are no sumptuary laws to tell us whether class distinction in this respect operated in the Germanic world too, but probably it did. In any case, the high cost of these brocaded bands, especially when made of silk, must have restricted their ownership to royalty and aristocracy, except sometimes, perhaps, when transferred as gifts. Of their high value there can be no doubt at all. This is implied clearly by

⁶⁶ Aldhelm, *De Virginitate*, LVIII (*Monum. Germ. Hist., Auct. Antiq.*, xv: *Aldhelmi Opera*, 1919): ‘Nam cultus gemini sexus huiuscemodi constat subucula bissina, tonica, coccinea sive iacintina, capitium et manicæ sericis clavatae; galliculae rubricatis pellibus ambiuntur; antiae frontis et temporum cincinni calamistro crispantur; pulla capitis velamina candidis et coloratis mafortibus cedunt, quae vittarum nexibus assutae talotenus prolixius dependunt.’

⁶⁷ *Op. cit.* in note 40, IV, xix (xxvi), and IX, xxvi; Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I, xxv.

the use to which Bishop Praetextatus put the pieces of the gold braid entrusted to him by Queen Brunhilde (p. 59), and it is stated for us in absolute terms by Gregory, when he cites the amount paid for the gold *vitta* made for the niece of the abbess Leubovera (pp. 61 f.). It cost the bridegroom fully 20 gold solidi, a sum equal to the price of a nobleman's war-gear of helmet, mail hauberk, and sheathed long sword.⁶⁸ It was a lordly gift indeed, and one indicative of the donor's social status.

All this is fully reflected in the archaeological evidence. It will scarcely have escaped notice that, on the continent as well as in England, the graves containing the remains of gold-bordered garments and gold *vittae*, when not robbed in antiquity, were generally very richly furnished indeed. Several contained the bodies of known royalties (nos. 22, 24, 37, 40 and 79, pp. 72 f., 75 f., 82 f.), and the very rich burials in the royal mausoleum at Saint-Denis (e.g. no. 34, p. 75), at Köln Cathedral (no. 56, pp. 78 f.), at Köln, St. Severinus (nos. 53-5, p. 78), and elsewhere (e.g. nos. 43, 51, 59, 60, 80, 84 and 88, pp. 76 f., 79 f., 83 f.), must represent others of royal, or next-to-royal, rank.

These circumstances should cause us in England to take a long and thoughtful look at the social implications of our own gold braids. If among the Franks they were virtually a symbol of status, how much greater must their significance have been in England, where they were truly exotic; if in Francia we have to think of their wearers as royalties and near-royalties, their English possessors are unlikely to have been of any lesser degree. The situation in Kent is therefore extremely interesting. Who were all these ladies who wore the gold *vittae*? Admittedly their grave-goods are not so rich as those of many of their Frankish counterparts, but this comparison is scarcely fair, since the evidence of archaeology in general indicates that even Kent, the wealthiest of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, was much less rich in gold than were the Merovingians. In their Kentish context most of these women's graves are quite exceptional. The fact that many of them come from the same cemeteries—unusually rich ones like Bifrons, Faversham, Howletts and Sarre—presents an arresting picture. One is tempted to ask whether these may not have been burial-places associated with royal manors, and whether the women in question may not have been the wives of high court officials, royal concubines, or even queens and princesses. The kings of Kent can have had many daughters, who, in this period before Christianity provided them with alternative destinies in religious houses, will often have had to marry into the great households of their own kingdom. Such royal princesses might provide an explanation of the abundance of gold *vittae* in Kent.

Finally we must return to Taplow. The second richest single grave-find from the whole of Anglo-Saxon England; sited exceptionally under a noble tumulus; outstanding for the quantity and superlative quality of its grave-goods; was this merely the burial of some rich thegn or 'chieftain'—that conveniently vague term—or was it something more? Though there are no explicitly royal symbols, such as have been suggested for Sutton Hoo, the solid gold buckle and the magnificent silver-mounted horns stand out as great rarities, while the gold braids,

⁶⁸ Gregory, *The History of the Franks* (transl. O. M. Dalton, Oxford, 1927), I, Introduction, p. 208.

at present unique, from harness or cloak, appear in a quantity which is exceptional even by Merovingian standards. It seems very possible, therefore, that the dead man may have been of royal rank. The location of the mound precludes him from being the ruler of any of the major kingdoms, but he could well have been one of those lesser kings or princes without doubt numerous in early Anglo-Saxon society, perhaps a regional ruler, as of the Chilternsaetan or the Middle Saxons, or even one of the West Saxon *sub-reguli*, historically known as members of the kingly house. This is of course speculation. But the study of archaeology in an historical period ought surely not to shrink from it.

CATALOGUE AND KEY TO MAP (FIG. 15)

A. REMAINS OF GOLD-BROCADED BRAIDS FROM ANGLO-SAXON GRAVES

I. TAPLOW, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

Male burial in (?) wooden chamber under large barrow. Gold threads, found lying across waist and chest, probably decorated belt, baldric and border of tunic, or else borders of cloak. See pp. 44 ff. Flat strips of thin sheet-gold foil found in great numbers, together with 2 fragments of tablet-woven braid. The gold had formed the brocading weft of 2 different braids.

i. Wide braid (PL. IX, A-C.; FIG. 12, no. 1). W. of gold strip 0.25 mm., T. less than 0.1 mm.; W. of brocading on braid 3.0-3.2 cm.; 21-22 returns of gold strip per cm. 98 pieces of gold strip folded as in the weave, pattern so far indecipherable, and a further 4 pieces still woven into 2 fragments of braid each 1 cm. long. Cut strips vary in L., but majority make up to less than 5 mm. L. of pattern. Total L. of braid represented *c.* 41 cm. The braid itself is tablet-woven in fine wool, now dark brown, Z-spun, S-ply, count *c.* 16 S-twists per cm.; it must have been made with 49 4-hole tablets in regular $\frac{1}{4}$ -turns.⁶⁹ In Mrs. Crowfoot's reconstruction (PL. IX, D) 2 tablets were added for each edge, making 53 in all, i.e. 212 warps. On the original, the edge-twists outside the brocading are missing.

This braid had a wide geometric design of triangles, diamonds, rectangles and (?) crosses, and, separated by a line along one edge, a narrow strap-pattern border.

ii. Narrow braid (FIG. 12, no. 2). No textile. Gold strip similar to that from wide braid; W. of brocading 1.4 cm.; gold 19-22 returns per cm. 42 pieces of gold strip folded as in weave (an earlier count of 37 suggests some may have broken up); L. of best piece 1.1 cm. Total L. of braid represented *c.* 30 cm. Mrs. Crowfoot's reproduction was woven on 25 4-hole tablets, i.e. 100 warps. Pattern of rectangles and triangles similar to those on wide braid.

iii. Triangular units. No textile. 4 gold strips preserved, woven into triangular shapes: on Baldwin Brown's photograph there seem to be 5. Gold strip as before. Largest unit (FIG. 12, no. 3) 2.5 cm. at widest, 20-21 folds of gold remaining, only 15 of which are more or less decipherable. FIG. 12, no. 4: 1.25 cm. wide, 22 folds of gold. FIG. 12, no. 5: 1.1 cm. wide, 19 folds. There is also a small fragment, probably the top section of a triangle.

Pattern of triangles and rectangles similar to those on the 2 main braids.

⁶⁹ Some coarse Z-spun threads adhered to the back of the braid fragments, but these formed no part of the tablet-weave, and probably came from a garment on the body, or a blanket underlying or overlying it.

iv. 226 gold strips straightened out, in L. varying from *c.* 2 cm. to 28.5 cm. 36 are 26 cm., 23 are 27 cm. and 11 are 28 cm.; the rest are distributed fairly evenly over the range of L., though most of the short ones must be broken fragments. These threads would have made up *c.* 77 cm. of pattern-length on the wide braid, or 182 cm. on the narrow.

READING MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

A few fragments of gold strip preserved at Reading consist of 1 folded fragment from each of the wide and narrow braids, and 4 unravelled pieces.

Associated finds. Gold buckle and plate with filigree and garnet cloisoné decoration; 2 pairs of gilded clasps; sword; angon; spear; 2 shields; knife; musical instrument, probably a harp, with decorated metal mount; 30 game-pieces; 2 large drinking-horns with solid silver-gilt mounts and terminals; 2-3 smaller horns with decorated sheet-metal mounts; decorated rims of 2 drinking-cups; 4 glass claw-beakers; 2 wooden buckets with iron and bronze fittings; wooden tub with bronze lining; bronze Coptic bowl with tall pedestal. Probably early 7th century.

Literature. Burgess (1878); *Illustrated London News*, 17 Nov., 1883, p. 476 f., and 24 Nov., 1883, p. 507 f.; *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.*, xxxix (1883), 431 ff.; *Antiquarian Magazine and Bibliographer*, v (June, 1884), 14 ff.; Stevens (1884); *V.C.H. Bucks.*, i, 199 ff.; Baldwin Brown (1915), iii, 385 ff., and iv, 638 ff.; British Museum, *Guide to Anglo-Saxon Antiquities* (1923), pp. 63 ff.

2-6. BIFRONS, PATRIXBOURNE, KENT

MAIDSTONE MUSEUM

2. *Grave 21.* Female burial. Gold threads found on top of skull, so presumably worn on hair or headdress (PL. x, A; FIG. 13, no. 1). No textile. 13 fragments and 2 small scraps of bright gold strip, cut from thin sheet-metal, still folded from weave. W. of strips very regular, *c.* 0.8 mm.; W. of brocading 6 mm.; L. of best piece 1.8 cm.; total L. represented *c.* 18 cm. Pattern on 7 warps.⁷⁰ Design of interlocking darts.

Associated finds. 2 silver-gilt radiate brooches; necklace of glass and amber beads; bronze belt-studs; knife; iron keys; bronze bossed-rim bowl. Probably mid 6th century or a little later.

Literature. Godfrey-Faussett (1876), p. 306 f.

3. *Grave 29.* Female burial. Gold threads found on the skull (FIG. 13, no. 2). No textile. 44 pieces of dull, brittle gold strip, cut from thin sheet-metal, partly still folded from weave, partly unravelled. W. of strips 0.75-0.8 mm.; W. of brocading 7-7.5 mm.; L. of best piece 1.5 cm., but many very short; total L. represented *c.* 25 cm. Pattern on 9 warps. Design, three rows of crosses, displaced.

Associated finds. 2 silver-gilt radiate brooches; 2 silver-gilt circular brooches set with garnets; 4 gold bracteates; necklace of glass and amber beads; bronze buckle; bronze bracelet; Roman bronze coin pierced for use as ornament; 2 silver finger-rings; iron knife; 3 iron keys, rings and other objects. Probably mid 6th century.

Literature. Godfrey-Faussett (1876), p. 309 f.; Bakka (1958), p. 73, fig. 53.

- 4-6. *Graves 41, 51, and 64.* Female burials. In all cases gold threads were found on or by the skull. These survive, but as they are unnumbered it is impossible to tell from which of the three graves each came.

⁷⁰ Lack of knowledge of the fabric of this and succeeding braids makes it necessary to use 'warps' to signify complete threads. If they were tablet-woven, each 'warp' would have consisted of a twist of 4 threads if worked with 4-hole tablets, or 2 threads if 2-hole tablets were used.

4. (PL. X, B; FIG. 13, no. 3.) No textile. 20 fragments of dull yellow gold strip, much unravell'd. W. of strips *c.* 0.6 mm.; W. of brocading 6 mm.; L. of best decipherable piece *c.* 2.4 cm.; total L. incalculable. Pattern on 7 warps. Design, angular version of running scroll with spurs or leaves.
5. (PL. X, E; FIG. 13, no. 4.) No textile. 9 pieces and 2 scraps of dull yellow gold strip, still folded from weave.⁷¹ W. of strip uneven, 0.6-1 mm.; W. of brocading 6.6-5 mm.; L. of best piece 2.1 cm.; total L. represented *c.* 20.5 cm. Pattern on 7 warps. Design, three rows of regularly alternating crosses.
6. 21 pieces of bright reddish gold strip, still folded from weave. Strips 0.6-0.75 mm. wide, brocaded on 5 warps, with two variations of pattern. A. (PL. X, C; FIG. 13, no. 5). W. of brocading 3 mm. 11 pieces still folded as from weave, an unravell'd piece and 2 scraps; best L. preserved 2.7 cm. Pattern, chequered diamonds between stepped border motifs. B. (PL. X, D; FIG. 13, no. 6). 3 pieces folded as from weave. W. of brocading 3.3-7.5 mm.; best L. preserved 2.3 cm. Pattern, crosses with stepped edge motifs. A/B. (PL. X, C/D). One fragment, 1.7 cm. long, shows both patterns; in some loops of this piece were traces of brownish threads, too brittle to stand determination. Total L. of braid represented *c.* 24.5 cm. Possibly pattern B, L. only 6 cm., formed a centre-piece to this braid.

Grave 41

Associated finds. Silver-gilt great square-headed brooch; 2 smaller silver-gilt square-headed brooches; silver-gilt bird-brooch; silver finger-ring; bronze finger-ring; bronze buckle, strap-tag and belt-rivet; 4 Roman bronze coins; necklace of glass and amber beads; iron knife; key; 2 rings; buckle; glass bell-beaker. Mid 6th century or a little earlier.

Literature. Godfrey-Faussett (1876), pp. 313 ff.; Bakka (1958), p. 71 f., fig. 53.

Grave 51

Associated finds. 2 silver-gilt square-headed brooches; 2 silver-gilt bird-brooches; garnet-set silver spoon; crystal ball in silver sling; 2 silver toilet instruments; necklace of glass and amber beads; iron knife. Probably mid 6th century.

Literature. Godfrey-Faussett (1880), p. 552.

Grave 64

Associated finds. 2 silver-gilt square-headed brooches; garnet-set silver-gilt circular brooch; crystal ball in silver sling; bronze chain; gold bracteate; necklace of glass and amber beads; iron knife. Probably mid 6th century or a little later.

Literature. Godfrey-Faussett (1880), p. 553; Bakka (1958), p. 73, fig. 54.

7. CHATHAM LINES, KENT

ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD

Tumulus XVIII. Female burial. Gold threads on wrist, presumably from cuff of sleeve or some form of woven bracelet (FIG. 13, no. 7). 11 flat strips of bright yellow gold foil, mostly unravell'd. Longest *c.* 10 cm.; best distinguishable L. of woven pattern only 7.5 mm. Gold strip variable, 0.6-0.8 mm. wide; W. of brocading 7.5-8 mm. Pattern on 5 warps. Traces of whitish fibre inside some loops of gold, but too delicate to stand determination.

⁷¹ The fragments from this braid were originally labelled as coming from Sarre, grave 4, but see under no. 16 below.

Associated finds. Silver-gilt radiate brooch; silver-gilt square-headed brooch; silver and bronze finger-rings; 2 bronze belt-studs; necklace of amber and glass beads; ivory ring; fragments of glass and sheet silver; antler ring; lead spindle-whorl. Probably mid 6th century or a little later.

Literature. J. Douglas, *Nenia Britannica* (1793), pp. 63 ff., pl. xv, 10.

8-12. FAVERSHAM (KING'S FIELD), KENT

BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

The rich King's Field cemetery was destroyed by railway building and brick-earth digging. For the collection and preservation of the gold threads, as of so many of the other finds, we are indebted to William Gibbs of Faversham. The catalogue of his collection refers to 'Fillets (five). Gold in wavy bands, two of which have loops, probably woven into, or otherwise decorating a lady's headdress. L. of longest 12 in.'. Whether the entry is completely trustworthy is not certain, for 19th-century writers tended to assume that all such gold braids came from women's headdresses, but the information may have been based on observation or first-hand reports of workmen. The size and character of the remains suggests that they are likely to have been what the catalogue suggests, but only 4 lots of strip can now be identified, and it is doubtful whether the fifth ever existed. None of the fragments preserved has any textile.

i. A quantity of very variable gold strip, W. 1-1.5 mm., arranged as for brocading, W. c. 5-5.5 mm., but flattened so that no pressure-points can be deciphered. A small gold ring that may have been sewn to this braid exists.

ii. Perhaps part of the same gold as i, but the strip is narrower, c. 0.75 mm. wide; pressure-points flattened out.

iii. Fragments of finer and yellower gold strip, W. c. 0.5-0.75 mm. arranged as for brocading, W. c. 6 mm., but again flattened.

iv. Fragments arranged in a curving band with a gold ring placed at either end. Bright gold strip, unusually wide, c. 1-2 mm.; W. of brocading 8-9 mm., mostly flattened out, but pattern on 7 warps distinguishable in places. Design, three rows of regularly alternating crosses, as in no. 5 above (FIG. 13, no. 4).

Literature. C. Roach Smith, *A Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon and other Antiquities, discovered at Faversham, in Kent, and bequeathed by William Gibbs, Esq., of that town, to the South Kensington Museum* (1873), p. 14; Roach Smith (1868), p. 142.

13-14. HOWLETT, LITTLEBOURNE, KENT

BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

This cemetery, destroyed by gravel-digging, was not properly recorded, and the grave-groups are open to question. The gold threads are all supposed to have come from grave 8, but they include woven lengths from two different braids, which, though they may conceivably have been found with the one burial, are more likely to have come from two graves. If any reliance can be placed on the list of objects from grave 8, this was certainly a woman's burial; the other is, of course, unknown. But there are enough threads present to have made up the brocading on two women's hair-bands. 14 threads are unravelled and may have come from either braid; the rest show enough pattern to be divided as follows:

i. (FIG. 13, no. 8.) No textile. 6 decipherable fragments of rather dull yellow gold strip, W. 0.75-1.5 mm.; W. of brocading c. 5 mm.; L. of illustrated piece 1.9 cm. Pattern on 7 warps. Design of diagonal lines and steps, perhaps an attempt at a scroll; one fragment, L. 3.3 cm., is irregular.

ii. (FIG. 13, no. 9.) No textile. 7 fragments of bright yellow gold strip, W. varies, c. 0.75 mm.; W. of brocading c. 7 mm.; best L. 1.2 cm. Pattern on 8 warps.

Associated finds from grave 8. Garnet-set circular brooch; 3 bronze rings; 8 polychrome glass beads; Roman bronze coin. Probably mid 6th century or later.

15. LYMINGE, KENT (NORTH CEMETERY)

MAIDSTONE MUSEUM

Grave 44. Female burial in coffin in large grave. Gold threads at sides of and under skull (FIG. 14, no. 10). No textile. 12 pieces and 7 small scraps of gold strip; W. 0.5-0.8 mm., but mostly 0.7 mm.; W. of brocading 4.4-5 mm.; best L. 3.4 cm.; total L. c. 34 cm. Pattern on 7 warps. Regular design of elongated crosses and steps, perhaps a floral pattern?

Associated finds. 2 silver-gilt garnet-set circular brooches with linking chain threaded with melon bead; 2 silver-gilt square-headed brooches with garnet-set cloisonné work; silver-gilt perforated spoon; crystal ball in silver sling. Probably mid 6th century.

Literature. A. Warhurst, 'The Jutish cemetery at Lyminge', *Archaeol. Cantiana*, LXIX (1955), 28 ff., pls. xii-xiii, fig. 11.

16-18. SARRE, KENT

MAIDSTONE MUSEUM

16. *Grave 4.* Female burial in exceptionally large grave. Gold thread found on right wrist (PL. X, G; FIG. 14, no. 11). 1 fragment only, no textile. Sheet-gold strip, W. 0.6 mm.; brocading W. 5 mm.; best L. 1.3 cm. Pattern on 8 warps. Continuous zig-zag design with alternating stepped motifs.⁷²

Associated finds. Silver-wire finger-ring; necklace of 6 gold bracteates and many beads, probably suspended on a wire between 2 silver-gilt garnet-set circular brooches; 2 square-headed brooches of silver-gilt, one set with garnets; perforated silver-gilt spoon with garnet cloisonné work; crystal ball in silver-gilt sling; silver framework of a purse; silver needle; 2 Roman bronze coins; fossil echinus; fragments of bone comb; bronze buckle and 2 belt-rivets; 2 iron keys; iron knife; iron shears; iron weaving-sword or beater; glass bell-beaker. Probably 3rd quarter of 6th century.

Literature. John Brent, 'Account of the Society's researches in the Saxon cemetery at Sarr', *Archaeol. Cantiana*, v (1863), 310 ff., pls. i-iii; Bakka (1958), p. 73, fig. 54.

17. *Grave 90.* Female burial. Gold threads found around skull (PL. X, F; FIG. 14, no. 12). No textile. 14 fragments of woven gold strip, many very much un-

⁷² In 1957, when one of the authors began preparing the finds from the Sarre and Bifrons cemeteries for publication, the 'Sarre 4' label was then attached to the box containing the fragments of braid which are now attributed to Bifrons (no. 5, p. 68). There were good reasons for doubting the accuracy of the label. In Brent's original report, whereas in describing the headbands from graves 90 and 94 he wrote in the plural of 'a quantity of gold braid' and 'a few small pieces of gold braid' respectively, in the case of the Sarre grave-4 cuff or wristlet his reference was unequivocally in the singular: 'a small piece of gold braid, or flat wire, folded as if it had been woven into the dress, or worked into some ornament on the arm' (our italics). From this it seemed clear that, however much gold braid had been buried in the grave, only one piece had been recovered by the excavators. The box contained 11 fragments which, making a total L. of over 20 cm., not only did not fit Brent's description, but looked more like the remains of a headband. Since one of the five headbands from Bifrons was missing, we felt some confidence in effecting the transfer from one cemetery to the other. Drastic measures of this sort were in any case necessary, for the gold threads from the two sites had for many years been stored together, mostly in a single compartmented box, and a good deal of mixing had taken place. Often the braid fragments could be restored to their proper graves only after prolonged study of brocading patterns or, where the threads were unravelled, of the colour and size of the gold strips. The identification of the Sarre grave-4 fragment remains somewhat uncertain. The piece described above was found in the same compartment as the gold strip from grave 94, and the patterns are sufficiently alike, perhaps, for it to have formed the centre-piece of that band (cf. the variant patterns on braids from Bifrons no. 6, and Stowting, no. 19). On the other hand, this is the only singleton in the entire collection; it could have got displaced in the box; and it is the only surviving candidate for consideration as the Sarre grave-4 fragment.

ravelled. Bright yellow gold strips, W. 0.6 mm.; brocading W. 4.75-5 mm.; L. of best decipherable piece 2.2 cm.; total L. incalculable. Pattern on 7 warps. Diagonal pattern with stepped edge.

Associated finds. Gold bracteate; amber and polychrome glass beads; silver-plated buckle; iron ring. Probably 2nd quarter of 6th century.

Literature. Brent (1866), p. 172 f.

18. *Grave 94.* Female burial. Position of gold braid not stated, but probably a head-band (PL. x, H; FIG. 14, no. 13). No textile. 28 pieces of woven bright yellow gold strip, some very small. W. of gold strips, 0.6-0.8 mm.; W. of brocading 2.9-3 mm.; best L. c. 1.9 cm.; total L. represented c. 25 cm. Pattern on 5 warps. Design, a discontinuous zig-zag with alternating cross and stepped motifs.⁷³

Associated finds. Silver-gilt circular brooch set with garnet; necklace of many amber and some glass beads; a worn and damaged late Roman buckle-plate, and other bronze objects, one tubular with pendants; iron knife; key; fossil belemnite. Probably mid 6th century.

Literature. Brent (1866), p. 174.

19. STOWTING, KENT

MAIDSTONE MUSEUM.

Grave 9. Female burial in rather large grave. Gold threads found around skull (FIG. 14, no. 14). No textile. 15 fragments of bright gold strip, W. c. 0.9-1 mm.; brocading W. c. 7 mm.; best preserved, L. 2 cm.; total L. represented c. 12 cm. Pattern on 5 warps. Design of crosses and stepped motifs; variable; on one piece it may be two rows of regular crosses; on another it seems to narrow down to a single row of crosses, perhaps indicating a wider brocading pattern in the centre of the band.

Associated finds. Silver-gilt square-headed brooch set with garnets; bronze-gilt button-brooch; 2 garnet-set circular brooches; Romano-British circular brooch; bronze pin; beads, some of amber; 2 Roman coins; decorated stud; 5 belt-tags or rivets; bronze rings probably belonging to iron keys; knife; 2 iron handles of wooden casket; bronze-bound wooden bucket. Probably 2nd quarter or middle of 6th century.

Literature. John Brent, 'An account of researches in an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Stowting, in Kent, during the autumn of 1866', *Archaeologia*, xli (1867), 411 f.

20. CHESSELL DOWN, SHALFLEET, ISLE OF WIGHT

BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

1855/*grave 1.* Female burial in unusually large grave. Gold threads found round lower part of skull (FIG. 14, no. 15). No textile. 7 decipherable fragments of gold strip, and several others too tangled. W. of strip 0.6-0.75 mm.; W. of brocading c. 9 mm.; L. of best piece 2.2 cm. Pattern on 13 warps. Discontinuous design of interlacing straps.

Associated finds. 3 silver-gilt garnet-set square-headed brooches; silver-gilt circular brooch with garnets; silver-gilt equal-armed brooch with garnets; beads in great numbers; gold finger-ring; spiral silver finger-ring; silver-gilt perforated spoon; crystal ball in silver sling; inlaid iron buckle; iron key; knife; iron weaving-sword; Coptic bronze pail; 2 silver cup-rims. Probably mid 6th century.

Literature. G. Hillier, *History and Antiquities of the Isle of Wight* (1855), pp. 29 ff.; Roach Smith (1868), pp. 142 and 147 ff., pl. xxviii.

⁷³ For possible centre-piece to this braid see previous note.

21. HOLYWELL ROW, SUFFOLK

UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND
ETHNOLOGY, CAMBRIDGE

Grave 11. Coffined burial, apparently of young girl. Gold threads near skull (FIG. 14, no. 16). No textile. Several tiny scraps of bright reddish gold strip, the best only 5 brocading-folds in length. W. of strip 0.4-0.6 mm.; W. of brocading 7 mm. Pattern on 7 warps. As far as can be seen on such tiny pieces, the pattern illustrated recurred on all of them.

Associated finds. Bronze-gilt square-headed brooch; 2 bronze annular brooches; 2 spiral silver bracelets; spiral silver finger-ring; necklace of amber, jet, crystal and glass beads; 3 silver pendants; 2 bronze girdle-hangers; buckle, 2 strap-tags and belt-slide of bronze; iron knife, strike-a-light and weaving-sword; bronze bossed-rim bowl; bronze cauldron with triangular lugs. Probably mid 6th century or later.

Literature. T. C. Lethbridge, *Recent Excavations in Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries in Cambridge and Suffolk* (Cambr. Antiq. Soc. 4to pub., n.s. III, 1931), pp. 4 ff., figs. 2-3, and plan 3.

B. REMAINS OF GOLD BRAIDS FROM CONTINENTAL GERMANIC

GRAVES, c. 450-700.⁷⁴

22. OLD UPPSALA, UPPLAND, SWEDEN

Royal barrow cemetery: West Mound. Cremated male burial under large barrow. Gold threads found in scraped-up ashes from pyre. Numerous flat strips of gold foil, W. c. 0.5 mm. bearing pressure-marks from weave, but unravelled.

Associated finds. Burnt remains of: gold sheet; gold filigree on gold foil; garnet cloisonné gold fragments including a (?) buckle-loop and pyramidal sword-knot; sheet bronze; Style-II-decorated carved bone cylinder; 2 bone combs; 3 ivory draughtsmen; glass cameos on bone plates; glass vessel. Probably late 6th or early 7th century.

Literature. S. Lindqvist, *Uppsala Höggar och Ottarshögen* (Stockholm, 1936), pp. 177 ff. and 341, figs. 97-107, esp. fig. 99.

23. MAASTRICHT (ST. SERVAASKERK), LIMBURG, HOLLAND

Grave 418. Female burial. Flat gold-foil threads found near skull.

Associated finds. 2 silver-gilt square-headed bow-brooches; 2 silver-gilt rosette-brooches with garnet cloisonné work; crystal ball in silver sling; gold earring; gold pendant with garnet cloisonné work; 2 necklaces of amber and glass beads; gold chain; silver buckle. 2nd half of 6th century.

Literature. J. Ypey and P. Glazema, *Kunst en Schoonheid uit de Vroege Middeleeuwen* (Amersfoort, 1955), fig. 47 for the jewellery. For information about the unpublished gold threads, we are indebted to Mr. J. Ypey.

24. TOURNAI (SAINT-BRICE), BELGIUM

Grave of King Childeric I (d. 481/2). The tomb, containing the body of the king and the severed head of his war-horse, was discovered by workmen in

⁷⁴ We have not been able to examine personally any of the continental braids, but have confined ourselves to collecting such information as has been made available through published sources and the kindness of colleagues. Often this information is very summary, and it is difficult to tell precisely what technique was used, whether brocading or embroidery. For this reason, as well as for completeness, known cases of embroidery are included, together with all types of brocading, and all references to finds of metal threads.

1653, and its rich contents pillaged and scattered. Much was lost, both at the time and by later robbery, but much has also been preserved to us through the industry and intelligence of the contemporary historian of the find. From him we learn that great numbers of gold threads were found in the débris from the grave-chamber—'filamentis aureis paludamenti regii undequaque colucentibus'—and that these, carried away by souvenir-hunters, were only in part recovered. None now survives. Presumably they had been brocaded or embroidered on to the royal mantle, with its gold cicadas, and perhaps also on to other garments, belts and baldrics.

Associated finds. About 300 gold and garnet cicadas and a gold bull's head apparently sewn, as symbols of eternal life and royal majesty, on to the king's cloak; a gold cross-bow brooch as cloak-fastener. Weapons included a spear, a francisca, and the elaborate gold and garnet cloisonné mountings of a sword and probably, a scramasax. Of the numerous belt- and strap-fittings—at least 9 gold buckles, at least 20 gold studs, gold strap-tag and belt-hook, gold belt-plate, and silver-gilt double-clasp—some may have belonged to the horse harness, but many, decorated in cloisonné work to match the sword- and scramasax-mountings, must have fastened and adorned the king's belts and baldrics. Personal ornaments included the royal gold signet ring; a plain gold finger-ring and bracelet; a gold pin; crystal ball; and the gold and garnet cloisonné mounting of a purse which contained at least 100 gold solidi (mainly of Leo I, 457-74, the latest of Zeno, 476-92). About 200 Roman silver coins seem to have been placed in a gold-mounted casket at the feet. Agate drinking-cup.

Literature. J. J. Chifflet, *Anastasis Childerici I Francorum regis sive Thesaurus sepulchralis Tornaci Nerviorum effossus et commentario illustratus* (Antwerp, 1655). The other early literature is conveniently summarized, and the find reviewed, in Cochet (1859). For references to more recent publications see Wallace-Hadrill (1960), pp. 181 ff., and Werner (1964), p. 202.

25. TRIVIÈRES, HAINAUT, BELGIUM

Grave number and details unknown. Flat gold-foil strips amongst unassociated finds from the Merovingian cemetery.

Unpublished. Information by the kindness of Mme. G. Faider-Feytmans, Mariemont Museum, Morlanwelz.

26. PRY, NAMUR, BELGIUM

Grave 285. Burial of female with child in stone chamber. Pillaged in antiquity. Gold threads in débris. Flat gold-foil strips of varying width up to c. 1.75 mm., still folded and marked from the weave of a band or bands with brocading pattern, W. c. 1-2.7 cm.

Associated finds. Gold pin-head decorated with filigree and glass settings; amber and glass beads. Probably 6th century.

Literature. A. Bequet, 'Le Cimetière franc de Pry', *Annales de la Société Archéologique de Namur*, xxi (1895), 334 ff. For further information about the threads we are indebted to M. A. Dasnoy, Musée de la Société Archéologique de Namur.

27. ENVERMEU, SEINE MARITIME, FRANCE

6-9-1855/grave 1. Female burial in large grave. Gold threads found by earrings, so presumably from a headband. 24-30 flat gold-foil strips found folded as from the weave of a braid similar to those from our Anglo-Saxon women's

graves. W. of strip *c.* 1 mm.; unravelled L. up to 15–18 cm. Pattern indistinguishable.

Associated finds. 2 bronze-wire earrings with gold drops; 2 gold filigree bird-brooches; chequered glass bead; bronze buckle and studs; iron chain; iron shears in leather case; knife; iron keys on ring; iron mountings of wooden casket; glass flask. Probably 2nd half of 6th century.

Literature. L'Abbé J. B. Cochet, *Sépultures Gauloises, Romaines, Franques et Normandes* (Paris, 1857), pp. 180 ff. and 241 ff.; Cochet (1859), p. 175.

28. ROUEN (SAINT-OUEN), SEINE MARITIME, FRANCE

Numerous gold threads among the unassociated finds from the Merovingian cemetery; apparently 'spun-gold', cf. under Saint-Denis, no. 31, below.

Literature. Salin (1958), p. 49.

29-39. PARIS (SAINT-DENIS), FRANCE

29. 1953-4/grave 6. Female burial in stone coffin. Part destroyed. Flat gold thread found with gold tubes and textile remains at bottom of coffin.

Associated finds. Gold finger-ring; lobed bronze ring; gilt-bronze buckle with cloisonné plate; wooden object with iron point; textile and leather remains. Probably 1st half of 6th century.

Literature. Salin (1954), pp. 104 f. and 113 ff., figs. 12-15.

30. 1953-4/grave 7. Pillaged by workmen. Among the finds recovered, some flat gold threads, a silver radiate brooch, a silver chain, amber, glass and crystal beads, and 2 bronze buckles probably all came from this grave. Probably 2nd half of 6th century.

Literature. Salin (1954), pp. 104 f. and 115 ff., figs. 16-22.

31. 1957/grave 1. Burial of child in stone coffin. Gold threads distributed mostly around the head but extending down to feet; probably disturbed (as were the bones) by transportation of coffin after body had decomposed. The gold threads are formed from thin strips of gold foil wound spirally, probably round a silk or linen thread now decomposed, thus forming a kind of 'spun gold'. On some the spiral twists are clearly visible, on others not, suggesting that in these latter the threads had been straightened and smoothed—'rectifiés'—by being pulled through a wire-drawing plate. The smoothed threads had been brocaded on to a narrow silk braid, the others, which form a series of separate fancy cross-motifs, had probably been embroidered on to the garment, again of silk, to which the braid was sewn.

Associated finds. None. Probably 7th century (from stratigraphy).

Literature. Salin (1958), pp. 49 ff. and 70, pl. xvi.

32. 1957/grave 4. Male burial in stone coffin. Gold threads found *in situ* on neck and chest. 'Spun-gold' threads, 'non rectifiés', still folded from the weave, had been brocaded on to silk braids, encircling the neck and depending in two bands down the chest, which had clearly formed the borders of a vestment, tunic or mantle. W. of brocaded part of band 2 cm.; threads broader on the neck braid. A few smoothed 'spun-gold' threads from another brocaded or embroidered textile.

Associated finds. Glass fragment. Probably late 7th century at earliest.

Literature. Salin (1958), pp. 51 and 71, pl. xvii.

33. 1957/*grave* 9. Male burial in stone coffin. Pillaged in antiquity. Gold threads found in disturbed filling. Flat gold-foil threads, in two widths, brocaded on to two silk braids, still show clearly distinguishable patterns of chevron type, very similar to those from our Anglo-Saxon women's graves. W. of brocaded strip of braid *c.* 3.5–4.5 mm.
Associated finds. 2 iron spurs; 2 white metal buckles; fragments of pottery and glass. Probably 7th century.
Literature. Salin (1958), pp. 51 and 73 f., pls. xi, 3*a*, and xviii, 1–2.
34. 1957/*grave* 16. Male burial in stone coffin. Part pillaged. Gold threads in débris. Numerous smoothed 'spun-gold' threads, D. *c.* 0.3 mm., some from a braid with surface-brocading, W. *c.* 3 cm., others apparently used on a band in soumak, or wrapped, technique, which had been flattened by burnishing (see also no. 56, p. 78 f.).
Associated finds. 3 gold finger-rings set with gems; remains of leather belt W. over 6 cm., and baldric W. 2 cm., both decorated with moulded, punched and openwork patterns, and gilded; 2 buckle-plates and a strap-tag of gold with chip-carved and nielloed zoomorphic ornament; plain gold strap-tag; on the belt the impression of a large (?) gold buckle and plate; broken bronze pin; garnet from stolen cloisonné ornament; pottery fragment. Probably 1st half of 7th century.
Literature. Salin (1958), pp. 35 ff., esp. pp. 43 and 76 f., pls. i, xii–xiv.
35. 1957/*grave* 18. Male burial in plaster coffin. Pillaged. In the débris, flat gold-foil strips still folded from the weave of a braid with surface-brocading, W. 1.5–1.8 cm.
Associated finds. Bronze buckle; broken bronze pin; iron knife and shears; 2 iron spurs. Probably 7th century.
Literature. Salin (1958), pp. 51 and 77, pls. xi, 3*b*, xviii, 4, and xxiv, 1*a-c*.
36. 1957/*grave* 32. Female burial in plaster coffin. Pillaged. Gold threads in débris. Smoothed 'spun-gold' threads still folded from the weave of a narrow braid with surface-brocading, Max. W. *c.* 4.5 mm. Pattern apparently a repeating chevron design.
Associated finds. Glass and amber beads; broken bronze pin; bone spindle-whorl. Probably 7th century.
Literature. Salin (1958), pp. 51 and 82, pls. xviii, 4, and xxii, 1.
37. 1959/*grave* 49. Burial of 'Queen Arnegunde' in stone coffin. Gold embroidery on cuffs. 'Spun-gold' threads, made from thin strips of gold foil, W. 0.8 mm., wound spirally, with 13–14 twists per cm., around a silk-thread core; D. *c.* 0.45 mm.; Max. L. 15 cm. These threads were laid on the surface and sewn into place by means of silk threads, to form a series of rosette patterns with zig-zag border, on the silk band, W. 3 cm., edging the 'queen's' red 'satin' cuffs. This couching technique is of course *embroidery*, not brocading, and would have been done after the weaving of the braid.
Associated finds. The queen wore a fine linen shift under a knee-length tunic of violet silk, girded at the hips with a broad gilded leather belt with punched and openwork decoration, the ends of which probably hung down under the weight of large animal-ornamented silver tags. An ankle-length red silk over-dress with wide sleeves, finished off with the gold-embroidered cuffs, was fastened

together at neck and waist by gold and garnet cloisonné disc-brooches, and pinned on the left breast by a huge silver pin with garnet-set gold knobs. It fell open below the waist to show off the lower legs in white linen stockings, cross-gartered with leather straps joined to leather slippers, and the array of silver-gilt buckles and tags which fastened and adorned them. On her head she wore gold earrings, and gold hairpins which secured a hip-length red 'satin' veil. A large silver and gold jewelled buckle, with its decorated leather belt, was laid between tunic and over-dress. At her feet was a glass bottle, and on her left hand a gold finger-ring inscribed ARNEGVNDIS around a monogram of the word REGINE. *c.* 565–70.

Literature. Albert France-Lanord and Michel Fleury, 'Das Grab der Arnegundis in Saint-Denis', *Germania*, XL (1962), 341–59, esp. p. 352 f., pl. xxxi, 7, and fig. 5; see also Werner (1964), fig. 13.

38. 1959/grave 50. Female burial. Remains of gold brocaded braid.

Associated finds. 2 gold earrings with garnet and pearl settings; gold finger-ring with antique intaglio; openwork bronze disc; remains of leather shoes and garters with bronze fastenings; cylindrical wooden box.

Literature. *Gallia*, XIX (1961), 287; *id.*, XXI (1963), 349.

39. 1957(2)/unknown no. Robbed grave. Gold threads, flats and 'tortillés'—probably 'spun'—found with gold tubes in débris.

Literature. M. Fleury, 'Nouvelle campagne de fouilles des sépultures de la basilique de Saint-Denis', *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres; Comptes Rendus* (1958), p. 143.

40. PARIS (SAINT-GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS), FRANCE

Stone coffin containing burials of King Childeric II, Queen Belechildis and the infant Dagobert (inscribed inside CHILDR. REX), discovered and pillaged in 1645 and 1656. Eye witnesses on the last occasion reported seeing 'un grand passement d'or (gold braid) en forme de couronne' on what they took to be the king's head, 'un morceau de toile d'or qui lui couvrait le visage', his spurs, and his leather belt enriched with buckles and ornaments of silver. Burial in coffin, originally at Saint-Vincent in 675; later translated to Saint-Germain.

Literature. B. Montfaucon, *Les Monumens de la monarchie françoise*, I (1729), 173–5; Wallace-Hadrill (1960), p. 184 f.

41. ROSNY-SUR-SEINE, MANTES, SEINE ET OISE, FRANCE

Cemetery associated with the old church. Burial with gold threads (no details), glass and amber beads, bone box and iron blade.

Literature. Zeiss (1941), p. 132, with refs.

42. PAREDS, SAINTE-HERMINE, VENDÉE, FRANCE

Gold threads found in one of stone coffins in a large late Merovingian cemetery, 7th to 8th century. No details.

Literature. Zeiss (1941), pp. 139 ff., and refs.

43. GRUES, LUÇON, VENDÉE, FRANCE

Female burial in stone coffin. A quantity of gold and silver threads, apparently flat strips, found together with fragments of wool textile. Position unknown.

Associated finds. 2 gold and crystal earrings; jewelled gold disc-brooch; 3 silver-gilt bow-brooches; silver hairpin with gold and garnet cloisonné bird on head; gold hairpin; 64 gold beads; jewelled gold plate and pendant; 2 gold finger-rings; silver-gilt buckle and belt-fastener; silver ear-pick, needle and pierced spoon; bone needle; knife with jewelled gold handle; silver-plated casket; 4 glass vessels. Probably early 6th century.

Literature. Zeiss (1941), pp. 137 ff., pls. ix, A-B, and x, esp. pl. ix, A, 24, and refs.

44-47. HERPES, ROUILLAC, CHARENTE, FRANCE

3 or 4 graves contained gold threads on the skull, looking as if they had been woven into some perished textile. Compared by excavator to those found at Chessell Down and Envermeu, so presumably flat strips of gold foil. No details.

Literature. Philippe Delamain, *Le Cimetière d'Herpes* (Angoulême, 1892), p. 15.

48-49. BOURGES (PLACE SAINT-JEAN-DES-CHAMPS), CHER, FRANCE

2 stone coffin-burials yielded gold threads. No details except that one also produced a buckle of 6th-century type.

Literature. Zeiss (1941), p. 42, and refs.

50. WONSHEIM, ALZEY, RHEINHESSEN, GERMANY

Gold threads, character not clear from published sources, still folded from the weave of a band with surface-brocading, L. 37 cm., W. 1 cm. W. of threads 0.4 mm.

Associated finds. Unknown. Recent research has shown that this example, hitherto thought to have come from the well-known 7th-century woman's grave, probably came from some other grave in the cemetery.

Literature. J. Werner, 'Der Münzdatierte fränkische Grabfund von Wonsheim (Rheinhausen)', *Varia Archaeologica: Wilhelm Unverzagt zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht* (ed. P. Grimm, Berlin, 1964), pp. 214 ff.; Werner (1935), p. 103, pl. xxxiv, 4.

51. PLANIG, RHEINHESSEN, GERMANY

Fürstengrab. Male burial in stone chamber. Gold brocading strips found lying over body as if they had decorated clothing or coverlet. Numerous gold-foil strips still folded from weave of a braid, said to be silk, with gold decoration, W. c. 5-6 mm. Most show the same pattern, suggesting a repeating design of chevron with steps.

Associated finds. Ostrogothic iron helmet plated with gilt-bronze; iron chain-mail; shield-boss and grip with silver-plated rivets; long-sword with garnet-set gold cloisonné hilt- and scabbard-fittings; glass bead sword-knot; iron francisca; angon; spear-head; 3 arrow-heads; long iron scramasax with gold scabbard-chape and mouthpiece; 2 knives with gold handles and scabbard-fittings; iron shears; gold belt-buckle; 2 silver buckles and 4 strap-tags; purse with garnet- and glass-set gold cloisonné purse-mount and silver buckles, containing bronze tweezers and steelyard, silver needle, and strike-a-light; clothing of wool and linen; glass bowl; bronze bossed-rim bowl; pottery cup; gold solidus of Leo I (457-74). Late 5th to early 6th century.

Literature. P. T. Kessler, 'Merowingisches Fürstengrab von Planig in Rheinhausen', *Mainzer Zeitschrift*, xxxv (1940), 1 ff., pls. i-iv, figs. 1-10, esp. fig. 9, no. 1; also Schmidt (1964), pls. xxxiii, a (gold strips), and xxxix-xl.

52. KÄRLICH, KOBLENZ (OR ? KEHRLICH, MAYEN), RHEINLAND, GERMANY

Gold threads probably from a female burial. From the published photograph at least some of these threads would appear to have been used in a soumak, or wrapped, technique.

Associated finds. 2 silver-gilt bow-brooches; gold bead; Roman bronze coin. Probably c. 600.

Literature. H. Kühn, *Die Bügelfibeln der Völkerwanderungszeit in der Rheinprovinz* (Bonn, 1940), p. 411 f., pl. cxix, 1-3.

53-55. KÖLN (ST. SEVERINUS), RHEINLAND, GERMANY

53. *Grave 73.* Female burial in iron-bound wooden coffin inside stone chamber. Gold braid found lying across forehead. A silk band with surface-brocading of gold-foil strips, L. 25.7 cm., W. 7 mm. (PL. IX, E). The pattern appears to resemble that from Chessell Down, no. 20, p. 71.

Associated finds. 2 gold and garnet earrings; bronze hairpin; 2 necklaces consisting of 160 glass and amber beads, 2 circular gold pendants, 3 gold and garnet cross-pendants; 2 garnet-set cloisonné disc-brooches; large crystal bead; bronze belt-buckle; gold finger-ring; 2 silver-gilt bow-brooches; openwork bronze disc; iron knife and shears; 4 buckles, 2 tags and 2 studs from the fastenings of shoes and garters; glass flask and bell-beaker; bronze bowl; bronze-bound wooden casket. Probably late 6th century.

Literature. Fremersdorf (1941-2), pp. 124 ff., esp. 130 ff., pls. xlviii-liv, esp. xlix, A, and liv, 11, and figs. 1-6.

54. *Grave 100.* Male burial in stone coffin. Gold brocading threads found in position for decorating the front and neck opening of some garment. 'Spun-gold' threads with silken core, reported as having formed the brocading weft of silk band(s) in diamond twill. Three bands were represented: *a.* L. 34.7 cm., W. 3.3 cm., gold threads dull reddish in colour; *b.* L. 7.8 cm. W. 8 mm., threads bright yellow; *c.* L. 1.9 cm., W. 2.5 mm., yellow gold.

Associated finds. Remains of woollen and linen clothing, gauntleted leather gloves, linen hose, leather shoes and garters with silver-gilt buckles and tags; iron knife; shears; flint and steel; iron razor; bone comb; wooden flask; 6-string lyre. c. 700 ? or later.

Literature. Fremersdorf (1941-2), pp. 133 ff., esp. 138, pls. xlix, B, lv-lvii, figs. 7-9.

55. *Grave 217.* Female burial in wooden coffin. 'Spun-gold' threads (unravelling) from a band on the forehead.

Associated finds. 2 silver-wire and bead earrings; 2 garnet cloisonné bird-brooches; 2 silver-gilt radiate brooches; silver bracelet; silver belt-buckle; gold finger-ring; iron knife with gold hilt and scabbard-chape; gold and garnet ornament; pierced silver spoon; meteorite in silver sling; silver toilet article; silver hairpin; beads; pair of silver shoe-buckles and tags; iron remains; 2 pottery vessels; glass bowl; bronze bowl with foot-ring; bronze-plated wooden casket. Probably middle or 3rd quarter of 6th century.

Literature. Doppelfeld (1960), p. 108, pls. xxvi-xxvii.

56. KÖLN (DOM), RHEINLAND, GERMANY

'Princess' grave. Female burial in wooden coffin inside stone chamber. Gold threads found lying *in situ*, i. across forehead, as from a fillet decorating hair or headdress; ii. by feet, as from garter, or hem of dress or long veil; and iii. from border of cloth or garment inside the casket.

a. Gold-wire threads still folded from the weave of a band with gold-decorated section, L. c. 45 cm., W. 2 cm. Surface-brocading alternates with soumak, or wrapped, weave. At the centre, a space without brocading was occupied by a gold ornament set with a *cabochon* garnet, and the fillet seems to have been fixed at the back of the head by means of silver-wire hooks. No textile survives; *b.* Remains of 2 different bands brocaded with gold wires, W. 1.4 and 2 cm. respectively; surface-brocading with no contrasting soumak weave; *c.* Similar 'massive' wire threads from a brocaded band, W. 2.3 cm.

Associated finds. 2 gold and garnet earrings; gold bracelet; 2 gold finger-rings; 2 silver and garnet-set gold cloisonné bow-brooches; 2 garnet-set gold cloisonné disc-brooches; 2 gold chains, one with pendant coin of Theodosius II (408-450); necklace consisting of 7 looped gold solidi, the latest of Justin I (518-527), 5 gold filigree-decorated pendants, 3 gold and garnet cloisonné pendants, 3 similar beads, 7 gold beads, 9 glass beads; glass toggle-bead and crystal bead; iron shears; iron knife with gold handle and scabbard-chape, with suspension-strap ornamented with gold buckle and tag, gold rivets, and 21 gold filigree plates; crystal ball in gold sling; silver-gilt amulet-capsule; silver belt-buckle; 2 garnet-set silver-gilt cloisonné strap-tags; 2 silver-gilt shoe-buckles and 2 tags; 3 glass bottles, 2 glass bowls and glass bell-beaker; bronze bowl with stand; gilt-bronze mounted wooden bucket; bronze-plated wooden casket; in the casket a leather slipper, crystal bead, spindle-whorl, and some nuts; drinking-horn of leather with silver rim; leather flask; leather glove; remains of a woollen coverlet, and other textile fragments. Unmounted, probably current, coinage from the grave: gold solidus of Anastasius I (491-518), siliqua and half-siliqua of Theodoric the Great (493-526), half-siliqua of Athalaric (526-34). Probably 2nd quarter of 6th century.

Literature. O. Doppelfeld, 'Die Domgrabung. XI. Das fränkische Frauengrab', *Kölner Domblatt*, iv (1959), 41 ff., pls. xxv-xlvi, esp. xxvi and xxviii, figs. 1-11, esp. fig. 2; Doppelfeld (1960), pp. 94, 102 and 105, pl. xiv, 5; Werner (1964), pl. xxx, 5; O. Doppelfeld and R. Pirling, *Fränkische Fürsten im Rheinland* (1966), p. 11.

57. KÖLN-MÜNGERSDORF, RHEINLAND, GERMANY

Grave 60. Female burial. Pillaged in antiquity. Gold threads in débris, described as 'twisted gold wires' probably from a headband.

Associated finds. 2 broken pottery vessels; amber and glass beads; bone comb; iron buckle; fragment of sheet bronze. Probably mid 6th century.

Literature. F. Fremersdorf, *Das fränkische Gräberfeld Köln-Müngersdorf* (1955), p. 72, pl. xxvi, 60, 3.

58. NAUNHEIM, WETZLAR, HESSEN-NASSAU, GERMANY

Female burial. Gold threads, described as wire, but perhaps 'spun gold', still folded from the weave of a narrow band.

Associated finds. Silver-gilt clasps with linking chain and pin; bronze ring; textile fragments; gold tremissis of Mainz mint. Probably 2nd half of 7th century.

Literature. Werner (1935), p. 105, pl. xxxiii, B, 2.

59. GROSSÖRNER, HETTSTEDT, SACHSEN-ANHALT, E. GERMANY

Grave 1. Very large grave-chamber containing 4 skeletons, over one of which were found gold threads. The weapons laid near by suggest this principal

burial was of a man. Adjacent graves contained 4 horse and 3 dog skeletons, no doubt associated sacrificial deposits. Main grave partly pillaged. *c.* 15–20 gold strips (now unravelling), W. 0·5 mm., L. up to 5·5 cm.

Associated finds. Garnet-set gold cloisonné pyramidal mount, probably for missing sword; spear-head; angon; gold knife-handle; bronze ring; bronze-mounted wooden bucket; pottery vessel. Probably early 6th century.

Literature. Schmidt (1964), pp. 197 ff., pl. xxxiii.

60. STÖSSEN, HOHENMÖLSEN, SACHSEN-ANHALT, E. GERMANY

Grave 35. Male burial in large wooden grave-chamber. Part pillaged. Under the skeleton were found gold threads extending for about 20 cm. between neck and pelvis. Flat gold-foil strips, Wt. 5·74 grammes. Tangled, but some still folded and marked from weave of a narrow band with brocaded pattern. W. of threads 0·7 mm.

Associated finds. Ostrogothic iron helmet plated with gilt-bronze; 3 iron spear-heads; 2 pairs of iron shears; spindle-whorl; iron buckle; silver strap-tag and stud; pottery vessel. Probably 2nd quarter of 6th century.

Literature. Schmidt (1964), pp. 202 ff., pls. xxxvi–xxxviii, esp. xxxviii, *b–c*.

61. WEIMAR, THURINGIA, E. GERMANY

North cemetery, grave 84. Female burial. Remains of gold brocading.

Associated finds. 2 silver-gilt bird-head bow-brooches; miniature gold and garnet bow-brooch; glass- and garnet-set gold cloisonné disc-brooch; 2 gold beads; large crystal bead; 2 earrings; silver hairpin; silver-wire ring; pierced Celtic silver coin; looped gold tremissis of Zeno (474–91); inlaid iron buckle; 2 gilt-bronze shoe-buckles; steel; glass game-pieces; bronze bossed-rim bowl; pottery vessel. Early 6th century.

Literature. Werner (1935), pp. 34 ff. and 80 f., pl. i, A; B. Schmidt, *Die späte Völkerwanderungszeit in Mitteldeutschland* (1961), p. 10, fig. 3, A.

62. MÜNZESHEIM (CHURCH), BRETEN, NORDBADEN, GERMANY

Male burial in stone coffin. Gold brocading strips, W. *c.* 1 mm., found on breast.

Associated finds. Shield-boss with gilded ornaments; glass cup; 2 pottery vessels. 2nd half of 7th century.

Literature. E. Wagner, *Fundstätten und Funde im Grossherzogtum Baden*, II (1911), 110, fig. 105, *a–d*.

63. HAILFINGEN, WÜRTTEMBERG, GERMANY

Grave 54. Male burial. Gold strips decorated the belt.

Associated finds. Sword; 4 arrow-heads; silver buckle, plate and counterplate. 7th century.

Literature. H. Stoll, *Die Alamannengräber von Hailfingen in Württemberg* (Berlin, 1939), p. 22.

64–65. MÜNCHEN-GIESING, OBERBAYERN, GERMANY

64. *Grave 10.* Female burial. Gold brocading strips found on head and under hips.

65. *Grave 66.* Female burial. Similar but fewer gold strips probably from headband.

Associated finds. 2 inlaid iron strap-tags; openwork disc; bronze ring. 7th century.

Literature. H. Bott, 'Der Bajuwarenfriedhof auf dem Riegeranger in München-Giesing', *Bayerische Vorgeschichtsblätter*, XIII (1936), 41 ff. and 66, pl. viii, 10.

66. INZING, NIEDERBAYERN, GERMANY

Grave 50/3. Female burial. Gold strips, probably from headband.

Associated finds. Silver-foil cross; amethyst beads; gold filigree-decorated pendant; repoussé bronze strip. Probably early 7th century.

Literature. H. Bott, *Bajuwarischer Schmuck der Agilolfingerzeit* (1952), p. 123, pl. ix, 6.

67. ŽURÁŇ, PODOLÍ, NEAR BRNO, CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Grave 2. Female burial in large stone chamber under large barrow. Part pillaged. Gold brocading strips in debris, now unravelled.

Associated finds. Gold mount; 2 glass beads; fragments of carved ivory from an Hellenistic pyxis; sherds of two glass vessels and a 'Prague'-type hand-made pottery vessel. c. 500.

Literature. J. Poulik, 'Záhadná Mohyla Žuráň', *Archeologické Rozhledy*, 1 (1949), 10 ff. and 98 f., fig. 3; J. Werner, *Die Langobarden in Pannonien* (1962), pp. 105 ff.

68-71. KRANJ-KRAINBURG, JUGOSLAVIA

68. *Grave 5.* Female burial. Gold threads on and under skull.

Associated finds. 2 silver hairpins; 2 silver buckles, plate and strap-tag.

Literature. Schmid (1907), p. 58.

69. *Grave 7.* Female burial. Gold threads on and under skull.

Associated finds. Silver hairpin; potsherds.

Literature. Schmid (1907), p. 58.

70. *Grave 43.* Female burial. Gold threads on skull.

Associated finds. Gold hairpin; 2 silver hairpins; 2 gold earrings; beads of amber and glass; pierced barbarous tremissis of Justinian I (527-65); 4 silver-gilt circular brooches; silver-plated belt; gold and garnet finger-ring; bone comb; glass game-piece. 6th century.

Literature. Schmid (1907), p. 62.

71. 1898 *grave.* Female burial. Details not checked.

Literature. Mitt. *Zentralkomm.*, xxvi (1900), 141, fig. 4.

72. CIVIDALE, ITALY

Grave of Gisulfo. Male burial. Gold threads probably from border of garment.

Associated finds. Gold-foil cross; bronze cross; gold finger-ring; worn gold coin of Tiberius; gold mount with enamelled bird; silver buckle; 2 spurs; sword; decorated shield-boss; glass flask. 7th century.

Literature. Åberg (1923), p. 152 f.

73-74. CIVIDALE (S. STEFANO), ITALY

73. *Grave 2.* Child's burial in stone chamber. Position of gold threads not recorded, but probably a dress-border. Gold-foil strips still folded from the weave of a band with brocaded area, W. 7 mm., L. c. 20 cm. Wt. of strip 12 grammes.

Associated finds. Gold-foil cross; white-metal buckle and tag; iron knife. Probably early 7th century.

Literature. Mutinelli (1961), p. 148, pl. lvi, 2.

74. *Grave 11*. Child's burial in stone chamber. Position of gold threads not recorded, but probably a dress-border. Gold-foil strips still folded from the weave of a band with brocaded pattern of repeating lozenges. Wt. of gold strip 18.4 grammes.
Associated finds. Gold-foil cross; bone comb; iron knife and shears; Coptic bronze bowl with openwork foot-ring. Probably early 7th century.
Literature. Mutinelli (1961), p. 150 f., pl. lx.
75. CIVIDALE (S. GIOVANNI), ITALY
Grave 158. Female burial. Gold threads from embroidery or brocading, position not recorded.
Associated finds. 2 silver garnet-set 'S' brooches; 2 earrings; silver hairpin; bronze ring; necklace of polychrome glass beads. Probably late 6th century.
Literature. S. Fuchs, 'La Suppellettile rinvenuta nelle tombe della necropoli di San Giovanni a Cividale', *Memorie storiche Forogiulese*, xxxix (1943), 5, pl. x.
76. CIVEZZANO, NEAR TRENTO, ITALY
'Prince's' grave. Male burial in elaborate iron-bound and ornamented wooden coffin. Gold threads found under hips, hence probably from belt or border of tunic. Gold-foil strips, W. c. 1 mm., still partly folded from weave of a band with brocading pattern, W. varies, max. c. 1 cm.
Associated finds. Sword; spear-head; arrow-heads; decorated shield-boss; knife; gold-foil cross; buckles; inlaid iron strap-tags; shears; bronze hanging-bowl; iron-bound wooden bucket; pyramidal mount. Probably 2nd half of 7th century.
Literature. F. Wieser, 'Das langobardische Fürstengrab und Reihengräberfeld von Civezzano bei Trient', *Zeitschrift des Ferdinandeums*, III (1887), 303, fig. 7.
77. BRESCIA (S. EUSTACHIO), ITALY
Male burial. Gold threads, probably from dress-border.
Associated finds. Sword; spear-head; arrow-heads; decorated shield-boss; knife; 2 buckles; glass vessel; Coptic bronze bowl with openwork foot-ring. 7th century.
Literature. Åberg (1923), p. 157.
78. OFFANENGO, CREMA, ITALY
Grave 2. Male burial. Gold strip probably from dress-border, but position unrecorded. Gold-foil strips still folded from the weave of a band with brocaded area, W. c. 1.3 cm.
Associated finds. Not absolutely certain. 2 spurs, 2 buckles and 2 strap-tags, all of iron with silver inlay; iron knife and shears; bone comb. 2nd half of 7th century.
Literature. Otto von Hessen, 'I rinvenimenti di Offanengo e la loro esegesi', *Insula Fulcheria: Rivista del Museo Civico di Crema*, IV (1965), 56 and 71, pl. xvi.
79. MONZA (CATTEDRALE), ITALY
Tomb of Queen Theodelinda. Burials of the queen (d. 626), her son Adaloald (d. 626-8) and possibly King Agilulf (d. 615-16). Disturbed and pillaged. Gold threads in débris.
Associated finds. Spear-head; 7 disc-headed gold rivets; 2 gold rivets with decorated plates; gold stud; decorated gold belt-mount; gold right-angled mount; double gold bead; miniature pottery vessel. c. 615-28.

Literature. G. Haseloff, 'Die Funde aus dem Sarkophag der Königin Theodelinda in Monza', *Germania*, xxx (1952), 368 f., pl. xxviii.

80. PARMA, ITALY

'Princess' grave. Female burial in tile chamber. Gold-foil strips, Wt. 4·50 grammes, probably from a brocaded headband.

Associated finds. Composite gold and garnet cloisonné disc-brooch; plain gold-foil cross; 5 repoussé gold ornaments from a (?) purse; 2 gold finger-rings; 30 glass and amethyst beads; 2 gold pendants; gilt-bronze buckle; Coptic bronze bowl. Probably 1st quarter of 7th century.

Literature. G. Monaco, *Oreficerie Longobarde a Parma* (Parma, 1955), p. 18, pl. xii.

81. FIESOLE, FIRENZE (VIA RIORBICO), ITALY

Grave 21. Female burial in stone coffin. Probably pillaged. Position of gold threads not recorded. These came from a band, W. c. 2 cm., apparently with a single 'spun-gold' thread at either edge, and gold-foil strips brocaded or embroidered across between them in a very variable pattern.

Associated finds. 3 gold mounts or spacers for necklace; iron object. Probably 7th century.

Literature. Otto von Hessen, *Die Langobardenzeitlichen Grabfunde aus Fiesole bei Florenz* (München, 1966), pp. 9 f. and 17, pl. ix, 2.

82-84. NOCERA UMBRA, ITALY

82. Grave 2. Female burial. 'Fringe' of gold-foil strips found under neck.

Associated finds. Plain gold-foil cross; gold button; 2 silver-gilt semicircular-headed bow-brooches. Probably late 6th or early 7th century.

Literature. Pasqui and Paribeni (1918), p. 164 f.

83. Grave 3. Female burial. 'Fringe' of gold-foil strips found under skull.

Associated finds. Gold-foil cross; gold button; small bronze buckle; silver semicircular-headed brooch. Probably late 6th or early 7th century.

Literature. Pasqui and Paribeni (1918), p. 165 f.

84. Grave 17. Female burial in stone chamber. 'Fringe' of gold threads found under neck.

Associated finds. Necklace of 18 amethyst beads, 7 gold filigree pendants and 3 hollow gold drops; necklace of glass beads with 7 looped gold solidi of Justinian I (barbarous); bronze-wire collar; gold-foil cross; composite gold brooch; 2 square-headed bow-brooches of silver; bronze buckle; bone comb; cowry shell; iron knife with silver mountings; silver flagon; 2 glass drinking-horns; iron folding-stool; bronze skillet. Probably late 6th or early 7th century.

Literature. Pasqui and Paribeni (1918), pp. 194 ff., pl. ii.

85. CASTEL TROSINO, ASCOLI PICENO, ITALY

Grave 87. Female burial. Position of gold threads not recorded.

Associated finds. Gold-foil cross; gold disc-brooch; necklace of glass beads; iron knife with silver-mounted sheath; pottery jug. 7th century.

Literature. R. Mengarelli, 'La necropoli barbarica di Castel Trosino', *Monumenti Antichi della Accademia dei Lincei*, xii (1902), 256 f.

86-87. CARPIO DE TAJO, TOLEDO, SPAIN

86. *Grave 128*. Female burial. Position of gold threads not recorded.

Associated finds. 2 gold earrings; iron buckle.

87. *Grave 136*. Female burial. Position of gold threads not recorded.

Associated finds. Chain and pendants.

Literature. *Guía de Museo Arquelógico Nacional* (Madrid, 1954), p. 135.

88. EL TURUÑUELO, MEDELLIN (BADAJOZ), SPAIN

Female burial in stone coffin. Pillaged by labourers. Position of gold threads unknown. The majority of circular section, perhaps 'spun gold'; the rest flat strips of gold foil, W. c. 0.5 mm. Total Wt. 49 grammes.

Associated finds. 2 gold earrings; gold disc-brooch; gold finger-ring; gold rim of (?) purse; 15 repoussé gold plaques which had been sewn on to a garment. Probably late 6th or early 7th century.

Literature. Maria Jesus Perez Martin, *Una Tumba Hispano-Visigoda excepcional hallada en el Turuñuelo. Medellín (Badajoz)* (Madrid, 1961), p. 13, pl. iii, 5.

89. BRÁCAN, ILLORA, GRANADA, SPAIN

Gold threads, associations unknown, but from large Visigothic cemetery.

Literature. H. Zeiss, *Die Grabfunde aus dem spanischen Westgotenreich* (1934), pp. 62 and 151, pl. xxv, 8.

ADDENDUM

90. ODILIENBERG ST. ODILE, ALSACE, FRANCE

Girl's burial in stone chamber. Gold threads from a brocaded band, position not recorded.

Associated finds. 2 silver earrings; silver ansate brooch. Late 7th century.

Literature. R. Forrer, *Die Heidenmauer von St. Odilien, ihre prähistorische Steinbrüche und Besiedlungsreste* (Strasbourg, 1899), p. 40, figs. 55-7.

POSTSCRIPT

Since this paper was submitted for publication it has been brought to our notice, partly through personal observation but mainly through the kindness of Professor Wilhelm Holmqvist, that gold brocading threads were more numerous than we at first realized in migration- and Vendel-period Sweden. This now appears as a distribution-area of importance and, though it is too late to amend the map, we take the opportunity of making good the deficiencies in the catalogue.

91. LOVÖ, UPPLAND, SWEDEN

Grave 1. Plundered male burial. 2 'spun-gold' threads remained.

Associated finds. 4 large, 3 small gilt-bronze clasp-buttons; spiral gold ring; 2 rectangular bronze belt-plates with suspension-rings; rectangular silver mount with channelled decoration; fragments of horn comb and glass vessel. Probably c. 500.

Literature. Greta Arwidsson, 'Lovö-bor med kontinental förbindelser på 400-talet', *Proxima Thule* (Stockholm, 1962), pp. 113 ff., pl. ii, a.

92. SÖDRA-HUSBY, TROSA-VAGNHÄRAD, SÖDERMANLAND, SWEDEN

Grave 177/1. Female cremation burial. 17 gold threads, total L. c. 175 cm.

Associated finds. Gold pin; 2 gold finger-rings; gold cloisons; gold bead and glass beads; fragments of bone comb; bone game-pieces; fragments of 2 glass vessels, a fluted squat jar and a claw-beaker. Early 7th century.

Literature. Ingegerd Särilvik, 'Tva Sörmländska Stormangravar', *Fornvännen*, LVII (1962), 45 ff.

93. NORSBORG, BOTKYRKA, SÖDERMANLAND, SWEDEN

Grave 10/6. Male cremation grave, primary under large mound. 'Spun-gold' threads, unravelled.

Associated finds. Fragments of gold sword-hilt and silver and gilt-bronze scabbard-fittings. Late 7th century.

Literature. Birger Nerman, 'Till vilken ätt ha de stora gravhögarna vid Norsborg i Botkyrka socken hört', *Fornvännen*, LVI (1961), 97 ff. The gold threads are unpublished and we are grateful to Professor Holmqvist for photographs and a copy of the typescript by Nils Åberg, an interim excavation report, which mentions them.

94. DJURGÅRDSÄNG, SKARA, VÄSTERGÖTLAND, SWEDEN

Goldsmith's hoard. A considerable quantity of gold and silver threads, apparently flat strips unpicked from textiles and rolled up into balls.

Associated finds. Ingots of gold (344 grammes) and silver (1664 grammes); spiral gold arm-ring and broken fragments of similar rings; many silver-wire rings and fragments; gold cloisonné sword-knot (stones removed); 2 silver-gilt sleeve-clasps decorated in Nydam style; several spiral sleeve-clasps; 2 gold D-bracteates; fragments of 2 gilded bracteates. 6th century.

Unpublished. Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm, no. 6563.

95. ÖKNE, GILBERGA, VÄRMLAND, SWEDEN

Gold hoard. Includes gold threads wound into ring. 6th century.

Unpublished. Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm, no. 17718. Information from Professor Holmqvist.

These Swedish finds, coming from hoards and cremation graves, add nothing to our knowledge of the wearing of gold braids, nor of brocading patterns and techniques. But there are some points of interest which are worth commenting on specially, as for example the occurrence of 'spun gold' at Lovö as early as c. 500. The evidence from Djurgårdsäng, showing that metal strip from textiles was unpicked and hoarded for remelting, though not unexpected, nevertheless provides a nice indication of the fate of Queen Brunhilde's belt (p. 59), by stressing the value of the precious metals used in brocading work. All the grave-finds were rich ones, and it has been suggested that the man buried in Norsborg 10/6 was a member of one of the royal families of Södermanland.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Åberg, N. (1923)
 Bakka, E. (1958)
 Baldwin Brown, G. (1915)
 Brent, J. (1866)
 Burgess, B. (1878)
 Cochet, l'Abbé J. B. (1859)
 Crowfoot, Grace M. (1939)
 ——— (1956)
 Doppelfeld, O. (1960)
 Fremersdorf, F. (1941-2)
 Geijer, Agnes (1938)
 Godfrey-Faussett, T. G. (1876)
 ——— (1880)
 Hald, M. (1950)
 Holmqvist, W. (1955)
 Hougen, B. (1935)
 Lindenschmidt, L. (1880-9)
 Mutinelli, C. (1961)
 Pasqui, A., and Paribeni, R. (1918)
 Roach Smith, C. (1868)
 Salin, E. (1954)
 ——— (1958)
 Schmid, W. (1907)
 Schmidt, B. (1964)
 Stevens, J. (1884)
 Wallace-Hadrill, J. M. (1960)
 Werner, J. (1935)
 ——— (1964)
 Zeiss, H. (1941)
- Die Goten und Langobarden in Italien* (Uppsala).
On the Beginning of Salin's Style I in England (Universitetet i Bergen Årbok, Historisk-antikvarisk rekke, III).
The Arts in Early England (London).
 'Account of the Society's researches in the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Sarr', *Archaeol. Cantiana*, vi, 157-85.
 'Opening of a tumulus at Taplow', *Records of Bucks.*, v, 331-7.
Le Tombeau de Childéric I^{er}, roi des Francs (Paris).
 'The tablet-woven braids from the vestments of St. Cuthbert at Durham', *Antiq. J.*, xix, 57-80.
 'The braids', *The Relics of St. Cuthbert* (ed. C. F. Battiscombe, Oxford), pp. 433-63.
 'Das fränkische Frauengrab unter dem Chor des Kölner Domes', *Germania*, xxxviii, 89-113.
 'Zwei wichtige Frankengräber aus Köln', *Ipek*, xv-xvi, 124-139.
Birka III: Die Textilfunde aus den Gräbern (Uppsala).
 'The Saxon cemetery at Bifrons', *Archaeol. Cantiana*, x, 298-315.
 'The Saxon cemetery at Bifrons', *Archaeol. Cantiana*, xiii, 552-6.
Olddanske Tekstiler (Copenhagen).
Germanic Art during the First Millennium A.D. (Stockholm).
Snartemofunnene (Norske Oldfunn, vii, Oslo).
Handbuch der deutschen Altertumskunde (Brunswick).
 'Das langobardische Gräberfeld von S. Stefano in Pertica in Cividale', *Jahrb. des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz*, viii, 139-163.
 'La necropoli barbarica di Nocera Umbra', *Monumenti Antichi della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*, xxv, 137-352.
Collectanea Antiqua, vi.
 'Sépultures gallo-romaines et mérovingiennes dans la basilique de Saint-Denis', *Monuments et Mémoires (Fondation Piot)*, xlviii, 93-128.
 'Les tombes gallo-romaines et mérovingiennes de la basilique de Saint-Denis (fouilles de Janvier-Février 1957)', *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, xlv.
 'Die Reihengräber von Krainburg', *Jahrb. für Altertumskunde*, i, 55-77.
 'Thüringische Hochadelsgräber der späten Völkerwanderungszeit', *Varia Archaeologica: Wilhelm Unverzagt zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht* (ed. Paul Grimm, Berlin), pp. 195-213.
 'On the remains found in an Anglo-Saxon tumulus at Taplow, Bucks.', *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.*, xl, 61-71.
 'The graves of kings: an historical note on some archaeological evidence', *Studi medievali*, 3 ser., i, 1 (Spoleto), 177-94.
Münzdatierte Austrasische Grabfunde (Germanische Denkmäler der Völkerwanderungszeit, III, Berlin).
 'Frankish royal tombs in the cathedrals of Cologne and Saint-Denis', *Antiquity*, xxxviii, 201-16.
 'Die germanischen Grabfunde des frühen Mittelalters zwischen mittlere Seine und Loiremündig', 31. *Bericht der Römisch Germanischen Kommission*, pp. 5-173.

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