

Dokkum in Friesland; the comb is an old find made during removal of the *terp*, c. 1884–90, and without any stratigraphic or chronological context. The Whitby find includes a number of 7th- and 8th-century objects and a similar date can perhaps be ascribed to the comb, though this too was unstratified.

In writing up the Whitby finds I suggested that the comb might have been used ceremonially in the monastery,⁵ but in the absence of an avowedly religious context for the Frisian comb it would perhaps be safer to assume a lay and functional purpose for it.

To be certain, which, if either, was the import more findspots would be needed, but it would be unwise to presume that the British find was necessarily Frisian in origin, for there are a number of (pagan) Anglian items which show a similar use of openwork, such as girdle-hangers, though these do not survive into the suggested period of the combs. Keys with openwork handles are somewhat closer in date, though Wilson⁶ notes that these are not amenable to close dating or typology. Bone combs do not offer much help either — no doubt the differing technology gave rise to different forms.⁷ However it is interesting to note some attempt at openwork on bone combs from Frisian *terp* mounds, which may perhaps serve to show the type of ornament favoured there, and perhaps even to confirm the origin of the copper-alloy combs.⁸

At all events there is clear historical evidence for close contacts between Northumbrian monks and Frisia in the late 7th and early 8th century under Wilfrid, Willibrord and Boniface.⁹ Links in cultural material are therefore not surprising.

A. J. WHITE

NOTES

¹ *Yorkshire Archaeol. J.*, 29 (1927–29), 350; *Antiq. J.*, xi (1929), 158–59; H. P. Kendall, *History of the Abbey of Whitby* (Whitby, 1932), 11, and pl. opp. 20; H. B. Browne, *The Story of Whitby Museum* (Whitby, 1949), 34.

² A. J. White, 'Finds from the Anglian Monastery at Whitby', *Yorkshire Archaeol. J.*, 56 (1984), 33–40: the findspot was in Black Horse Yard, Church Street, Whitby. For finds from excavations in the 1920s see C. Peers and C. A. Raleigh Radford, 'The Saxon Monastery of Whitby', *Archaeologia*, 89 (1943), 27–88.

³ Information from Dr Heiko Steuer, Historische Museen, Cologne.

⁴ By Dr W. Tempel, District Archaeologist for Rotenburg, to whom I am most grateful for supplying information and photographs. The comb has the inventory number FM 33–360. I should also like to record my thanks to Dr R. Kramer of the Friesmuseum for further details of the find.

⁵ Cf. P. Lasko, 'The Comb', 336–55 in C. F. Battiscombe, *The Relics of St Cuthbert* (Oxford, 1956). Of course this comb is of unusual size.

⁶ D. M. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700–1100 in the British Museum: Catalogue of Antiquities of the Later Saxon Period Volume I* (London, 1964), 57, 147, 148, 153, 201, 203.

⁷ A. MacGregor, 'Barred Combs of Frisian Type in England', *Medieval Archaeol.*, xix (1975), 195–98; A. MacGregor, *Bone Antler Ivory and Horn: the Technology of Skeletal Materials Since the Roman Period* (London, 1985), 73–98.

⁸ A. Roes, *Bone and Antler Objects from the Frisian Terp-Mounds* (Haarlem, 1963), pl. XXIII, 2 (Province of Groningen), and also to a lesser degree, pl. XXIV, 5, pl. XXV, 1, 3, 5, 7, and pl. XXVI, 1–7.

⁹ F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1971), 165–71.

A VIKING-AGE BELL FROM FRESWICK LINKS, CAITHNESS (Fig. 3)

Work at Freswick Links, on the E. coast of Caithness, has been undertaken by Durham University since 1979. This note appears in advance of the publication of the final report on that work¹ because of the particular significance of this Viking-Age bell and its wider parallels.

Cast copper-alloy bell with hexagonal body, now slightly mis-shapen, and expanded suspension loop, of flattened metal, with circular perforation, small moulding around the neck. The body has a fluted lower edge and is decorated by ring-and-dot motifs, three on each of the six faces, forming two rows. The clapper is lacking and was originally affixed by an iron loop, the stub of which now remains. (Fig. 3).

Height: 34 mm; Diameter of mouth: 29 mm max; 15 mm min.

Site reference: FL82 UN, RF no. 2053.

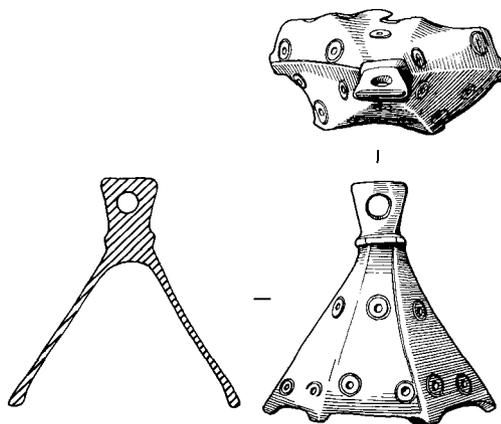


FIG. 3

Copper-alloy bell from Freswick Links, Caithness. Scale 1:1

The bell was found in an area of eroding sand at the cliff face (Zone L).² Several of the examples recorded elsewhere have been recovered from grave or grave-related contexts, although others are from potential settlement contexts, as at Freswick.

From graves or grave-related contexts there are a number of close parallels to the Freswick bell. Four small bells have been recorded in the recent excavations by the St Patrick's Isle Archaeological Trust at Peel Castle in the Isle of Man. Of these, a small conical copper-alloy example excavated from a pagan grave for a child, dated to the 9th/10th centuries,³ is nearer in form to the Freswick piece. Also from the Isle of Man, an example has been recovered from West Nappin, Jurby, by metal detecting. The original context for this is suggested as disturbed inhumations from St Patrick's Chapel nearby, which stands on the site of an Early Christian chapel.⁴

From Keoldale, Durness, in Sutherland there is a close parallel in a simple undecorated example with a suggested dating to the 7th/8th centuries. Little is known of the original find context,⁵ although it seems likely that it may have been a grave.

There can be no doubt that some of the closest parallels for the Freswick bell, in both form and size, come from Viking-Age pagan graves in Iceland. One is from a disturbed inhumation (possibly a double burial) from Brú, discovered in 1876.⁶ The bell is very closely related to the example from Freswick, having the same six-sided form and ring-and-dot motif on the faces. A second example was recovered from Kornsó, in Vatnsdal; this was recovered in 1879 in association with the disturbed inhumation of a middle-aged female.⁷ A further example has been recorded from Vatnsdal, in Patreksfjörður, also of the six-sided form but much cruder in execution and probably undecorated.⁸

A number of small bells of varying forms have been recovered from potential settlement contexts. Graham-Campbell has published an example from Iona,⁹ but none of the pieces mentioned by him, with the exception of the Icelandic examples, can be seen as close parallels for the Freswick bell.

However, a very close parallel has been recorded from the Wirral site of Meols.¹⁰ The bell lacks only the ring-and-dot motif, but is otherwise very similar; unfortunately it is essentially unstratified.¹¹ It does, however, seem likely that, considering other finds from Meols, a Viking-Age date may be appropriate for this find.

A close parallel for the Freswick bell has been recovered during excavations at Lincoln, at the site of Holmes Grainwarehouse. The site produced evidence of late Saxon, or conceivably Anglo-Scandinavian, occupation, chiefly in the form of rubbish-pits. A copper-alloy bell (HG 72 Ac 49) was recovered from one of these, and was associated with

11th-century pottery. It is almost identical in size and form to the Freswick piece, including two rows of ring-and-dot. It also has the remains of an iron clapper corroded to the interior.¹² Particularly interesting in relation to this find was the recovery of a small copper-alloy plated iron bell from a mid to late 10th-century context at Coppergate, York (1979.7). The surface is badly corroded and any decoration there may have been no longer survives.¹³

A probable small copper-alloy bell, apparently conical and with horizontal grooves, but otherwise undecorated, was recorded from Little Dunagoil, Bute. Unfortunately it is thought to have come from the turf.¹⁴ Excavations at Goltho produced a single example of the type in copper alloy from a context dated to the mid to late 10th century.¹⁵ From the Viking-Age farmstead at Ribbleshead, Yorkshire, a simple iron bell with clapper is recorded. It is slightly larger and apparently undecorated and has been suggested by the excavator to be a cow bell.¹⁶

Eldjárn has discussed the type of bell, and suggests that they were worn around the neck, probably along with beads.¹⁷ He remained undecided concerning the derivation of this type of bell and suggested that they were the result of cultural connections between Iceland and the parts of England where similar bells had been found.¹⁸ However, in general, he did not support an idea of extensive Irish influence in Iceland, and certainly not before the arrival of the Vikings.¹⁹ Earlier he had concluded that the lack of Irish parallels for the type of bell (discussed below), and the recovery of them in Viking graves in Iceland, indicated that such contact was unlikely.²⁰ Smyth cited Patreksfjörður as a grave with mixed pagan and Christian elements, suggesting clear connections with SW. Scotland and Cumbria, probably related to the Hebridean migrations to Iceland in the pre-Viking/Viking period.²¹

If, indeed, an Irish origin for this type of bell were to be proven, parallels should be available in Ireland itself. There is, however, little evidence for a close link between the forms of bell recovered from Ireland and those discussed above. Examples have recently been recovered from Christ Church Place, Dublin but they are not of the same form, and in the case of the former, its function had been changed by modification to a weight.²² Other Irish examples are likewise poor parallels, for example, Abbeylaois.²³ This lack of precise Irish parallel would seem to suggest an alternative origin for the Freswick type of bell. Since this is not immediately obvious, one suggestion may be that the type is a Norse hybrid type, possibly with an Irish inspiration.

An alternative possible association — with horse harness — cannot be ignored as some of the sealed contexts have had horse bones in association and hence the bells may have been part of the horse harness. There are, however, no precise Sandinavian parallels; examples of bells from Birka are of different form,²⁴ although the sizes are not dissimilar. The possibility must, however, remain that they could have been worn as charms, although whether they had a religious significance could be open to question.

Despite the association between some of the bells and inhumations of the Viking period, there is nothing to support this idea at Freswick at the present time; indeed it would seem more likely that it relates to the extensive settlement remains in the vicinity. Although a number of graves have been recorded in the past from the site, all were apparently lacking in grave goods; only one has been excavated in controlled circumstances.²⁵ The dating of the bell, which by analogy with finds from these other sites must fall in the 10th century, need not present a problem at Freswick. To date there have been very few finds at the site which could be dated this early in the Viking period, as most of the material which is characteristic (and supported by both carbon-14 and thermoluminescence dating), is generally of the 11th/13th centuries. There is, in fact, only limited material which is datable to the 9th and 10th centuries in Caithness as a whole; this is discussed elsewhere.²⁶ It is possible that the Freswick bell was not new when deposited, so a precise date of the context, if one were available, would only be of limited use.

The significance of the bell, however, lies in the fact that this southern part of the Norse Earldom of Orkney was clearly in cultural contact with the rest of the Viking World; this is supported by the quality of other elements in the overall artefact assemblage at the site.²⁷ Caithness demonstrably played an active role in the Norse earldom from the later 10th century onwards.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In addition to the acknowledgements cited in the text, I wish to thank Mr John McKinnell, Dept of English, University of Durham, and Vilhálmur Örn Vilhjálmsson who translated the Icelandic referred to. My thanks are also due to Dr James Graham-Campbell for his comments during the preparation of this text and information on additional material. The illustration is by Yvonne Beadnell. The excavations at Freswick Links have been funded by the Scottish Development Department (Ancient Monuments)

COLLEEN E. BATEY

Department of Adult and Continuing Education, University of Leeds

NOTES

¹ C. D. Morris, C. E. Batey and D. J. Rackham, 'Excavation and Survey of the Cliff Side Trenches and Eroding Deposits at Freswick Links, Caithness', *Glasgow Archaeol. J.*, forthcoming.

² The bell was found by Bryan Alvey in 1982.

³ D. Freke, *Peel Castle Excavations- Interim Report 1984* (St Patrick's Isle (Isle of Man) Archaeological Trust, 1984); David Freke pers. comm.

⁴ S. M. Youngs, J. Clark and T. Barry, 'Medieval Britain and Ireland in 1984', *Medieval Archaeol.*, xxix (1985), 209; L. Garrard, Manx Museum, pers. comm.

⁵ T. C. Lethbridge, *Merlin's Island. Essays on Britain in the Dark Ages* (London, 1948).

⁶ K. Eldjárn, *Kuml og Haugfé* (Akureyri, 1956), 62-63.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 95-97.

⁸ T. Magnússon, 'Bátkumlid í Vatnsdal í Patreksfirði', *Árbók hins íslenska fornleifafélags*, 19-20 (1966), 5-32: see fig. 12, 21.

⁹ R. Reece, *Excavations in Iona 1964-1974* (London, Inst. Archaeol. Occ. Pub. 5, 1981), 23-24.

¹⁰ J. D. Bu'Lock, 'The Celtic, Saxon and Scandinavian Settlement at Meols in Wirral', *Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancashire and Cheshire*, 112 (1960), 11, 14 and fig. 4m.

¹¹ The assemblage as a whole is currently under study by David Griffiths, Department of Archaeology, University of Durham.

¹² Pers. comm. Jenny Mann, Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology.

¹³ Pers. comm. Dominic Tweddle, York Archaeological Trust.

¹⁴ D. N. Marshall, 'Report on Excavations at Little Dunagoil', *Trans. Buteshire Nat. Hist. Soc.*, xvi (1964), 48, 52 and pl. 18.

¹⁵ A. R. Goodall, 'Objects of Copper Alloy and Lead', 171-76 in G. Beresford, *Goltho: the development of an early medieval manor c. 850-1150* (London, English Heritage Archaeol. Rep. 4, ed. J. Geddes).

¹⁶ A. King, 'Gauber High Pasture, Ribbleshead- an interim report', 21-25 in R. A. Hall (ed.), *Viking Age York and the North* (London, Counc. Brit. Archaeol. Rep. 27, 1978).

¹⁷ Eldjárn, op. cit. in note 6, 330-32.

¹⁸ K. Eldjárn, *Bjöllurnar frá Kornsá og Brú*, *Árbók hins Íslensk Fornleifafélags 1966* (Reykjavik, 1967), 70.

¹⁹ K. Eldjárn, 'Skriftlige og arkaeologiske vidnesbyrd om Islands ældste bebyggelse', *Nyt fra Odense Universitet, August 1974*, 11.

²⁰ Eldjárn, op. cit. in note 6, 332.

²¹ A. P. Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men. Scotland AD 80-1000* (London, 1984), 163.

²² E122: 12955 and E122: 15938, pers. comm. Pat Wallace, National Museum of Ireland.

²³ Pers. comm. E. P. Kelly, National Museum of Ireland.

²⁴ H. Arbman, *Birka I. Die Gräber*, 2 Vols. (Uppsala, 1940), 10-18 and Taf 93.

²⁵ C. E. Batey, *Freswick Links, Caithness: A Re-appraisal of the Late Norse Site in its Context* (Oxford, Brit. Archaeol. Rep. Brit. Ser. 179, 1987), 48-49.

²⁶ C. E. Batey, 'Viking and Late Norse Caithness: The Archaeological Evidence', *Tenth Viking Congress* (Oslo, 1987), 131-48.

²⁷ Batey, op. cit. in note 25, chapter 9.

AN INSCRIBED STONE FROM BURTON DASSETT, WARWICKSHIRE (Fig. 4; Pl. VI, A)

Among the finds from excavations in 1987 on the deserted settlement of Dasset Southend, Burton Dasset, Warwickshire (SP 387 520) was a section of ironstone door jamb inscribed with the name Gormand.¹

Dasset Southend was the largest medieval settlement in the parish of Burton Dasset (called Great Dasset in the Middle Ages). Southend grew rapidly in the later 13th century with the establishment there of a market in 1267, becoming known as Chipping Dasset.