

### A LINKED PIN FROM THORPE SALVIN, SOUTH YORKSHIRE (Fig. 4; Pl. IX, A)

A disc-headed linked pin was discovered near to Thorpe Salvin, S. Yorkshire (SK 517 807) by Mr J. Rickett with a metal detector. The find was reported to Sheffield City Museum in August 1984, and the pin was subsequently donated to the museum (SHEFM 1985.669). The discovery area has been extensively worked by metal detector users, although only two of the finds reported to Sheffield Museum from the immediate locality are of Anglo-Saxon date, these being two strap-ends dated to the 9th and 10th century.<sup>1</sup>

The pin is cast in one piece from copper alloy and is parcel gilt on the head. There are traces of gilding on the collar, at the junction of head and shank, suggesting it was gilt to at least this level, but most of the gold is now worn away, leaving deposits in the recessed parts of the design. The shank has no traces of gilding and shows considerable wear. The pin is 123 mm long with a head diameter of 34 mm. The head is flat and discoidal with an attachment loop projecting beyond the outer edge of the border on the left-hand side; the perforation is 2 mm wide. At the lower end of the head is a stepped collar of flattish, ovoid section from which emerges the circular-sectioned shank which tapers to the point. The cast, 'chip-carved' decoration on the disc is composed of regular, sinuous curves of V-shaped section. The reverse is flat and undecorated. There is a plain circumferential border around the head within which is an elegant pattern of four interlocking double spirals and a centre roundel (Fig. 4a). In between the running spirals are fan-shaped panels, each containing a single-leaf motif. These four panels, taken in conjunction with the centre, created by four arcs around a circle, form a cross motif, the fan-shaped panels being the expanded terminals of an equal-armed cross centred on the roundel.

The Thorpe Salvin pin would undoubtedly have been the right-hand pin in a set of two (or possibly three) joined by a decorative link or chain, and appears to be an example of a series of dress pins several of which have been found in 8th-century Mercian contexts. These linked pins range from simply decorated examples such as those from Flixborough<sup>2</sup> and Pontefract,<sup>3</sup> to the spectacularly ornate triple pin set from the R. Witham.<sup>4</sup> Despite similarities in size and construction the Thorpe Salvin example has a decorative style unparalleled in the linked pins mentioned above. Tight interlocking double spirals initially

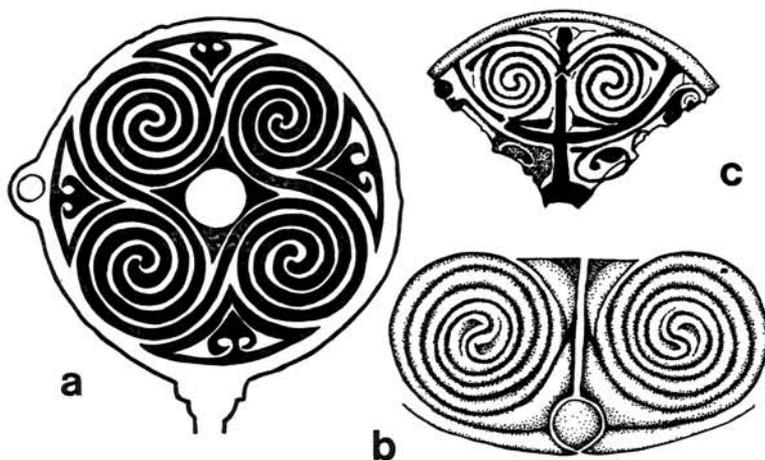


FIG. 4

(a) Detail of Thorpe Salvin pinhead; (b) Detail from Rinnagon crucifixion plaque; (c) Ixworth fragment (after Hinton). Not to scale

suggest Celtic derivation, such as the spiral ornament on the 8th-century crucifixion plaque from Rinnagan, Co. Westmeath (Fig. 4b).<sup>5</sup> Spiral ornament on Celtic metalwork, however, usually has expanded ends of almost zoomorphic form, often with trumpet scrolls arranged in confronted pairs or sometimes with a central pelta (composed of three arcs). In contrast the Thorpe Salvin pin has interlocking spirals of virtually constant width and a central concave-sided square containing a circle.

Closer parallels for the spiral motifs appear on the two decorative links from the Witham pin set,<sup>6</sup> although much simpler in design, and more particularly a fragment probably from Ixworth.<sup>7</sup> This discoidal object, possibly the head of a linked pin, has spiral decoration (Fig. 4c) and fan-shaped terminals to the cross-arm, but it is poorly provenanced so dating is difficult. A 9th-century date is proposed because of the lobed leaves, which are however quite different in style to the leaf motif in the Thorpe Salvin cross terminals.

The linked pin discovered in S. Yorkshire is a high-quality piece with a well-executed spiral design, a motif which originally derives from native British Celtic ornament. It is, however, more likely that the spiralforn ornament on the Thorpe Salvin pin is an expression of mid 8th-century Mercian art such as the Vespasian Psalter and Stockholm Codex Aureus<sup>8</sup> which drew inspiration from a wide spectrum of Celtic and Mediterranean artistic sources. It is to this eclectic stylistic tradition that the Thorpe Salvin pin belongs. The lack of any strong parallels make this linked pin an enigmatic example of middle Anglo-Saxon metalwork.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> C. R. Hart, 'Two Late Anglo-Saxon Strap-Ends from South Yorkshire', *Yorkshire Archaeol. J.* 61 (1989), 189–90.

<sup>2</sup> L. Webster and J. Backhouse (eds.), *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture A.D. 600–900* (London, 1991), 97–98, cat. no. 69i.

<sup>3</sup> R. N. Bailey, 'An Anglo-Saxon Pin-head from Pontefract', *Yorkshire Archaeol. J.* 42 (1970), 405–06.

<sup>4</sup> D. M. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700–1100 in the British Museum* (London, 1964), 132–34, cat. no. 19.

<sup>5</sup> S. M. Youngs (ed.), *'The Work of Angels': Masterpieces of Celtic Metalwork, 6th–9th Centuries A.D.* (London, 1989), 140–41, cat. no. 133.

<sup>6</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.* in note 4.

<sup>7</sup> D. A. Hinton, *Catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700–1100 in the Department of Antiquities* (Ashmolean Museum Oxford, 1974), 24, cat. no. 18.

<sup>8</sup> For summary and references see Webster and Backhouse, *op. cit.* in note 2, 197–201, cat. nos. 153–54.

### A RE-ASSESSMENT OF THE 'GREAT SEPULCHRAL MOUND' CONTAINING A VIKING BURIAL AT DONNYBROOK, DUBLIN (Fig. 5)

Attention was first drawn to the mound at Donnybrook in 1879 in a paper read by William Frazer to the Royal Irish Academy.<sup>1</sup> It has since been commented on by R. A. Hall and H. B. Clarke.<sup>2</sup> Far from being the site of a mass slaughter accompanying a Viking burial as represented by Frazer, and accepted by later commentators, the site can be reinterpreted as a native Irish cemetery of the Early Christian period, into which a Viking burial has been inserted.

Frazer's paper describes the site as a 'circular ... flattened elevation ... approx. 100' diameter' (c. 30 m). The sketched section scale showed an overall depth of three feet from the ground surface to the yellow sub-soil (or boulder clay) at the base of the 'mound'. Therefore the site actually consisted not of a 'great' mound, but of a low circular platform. This same section sketch indicates that there were eight inches of 'soil', twelve inches of 'covering' and