

AN ENAMELLED SQUARE-HEADED BROOCH FROM EAST ANGLIA (Fig. 1)

The brooch fragment which is the subject of this note consists of merely the bow, and was found by metal detectorists in the 1980s in East Anglia, probably Norfolk. The fragment has a central roundel with a decayed vitreous inlay (now yellow, originally probably red), confirmed by X-ray emission spectrometry carried out in the Department of Archaeology at Nottingham University. Whether the inlay was of pre-formed glass, or enamel as seems more probable, cannot now be determined, due to the decay.

The bow bears a cruciform design with a central setting, the panels containing much abraded Style I decoration. At the top is an inverted human mask.

Square-headed brooches with enamel are comparatively rare. John Hines has recognized one possible source in south-eastern Cambridgeshire which may have been responsible for the production of four of the seven previously known examples (two each from Linton Heath and Wilbraham, Cambs).¹ All these belong to the latter part of Hines's phase 2. Three further brooches, from Lakenheath, Suffolk, from Sleaford, Lincs, and from Emscote, Warwicks, similarly bear enamelling on their bows, while one from Lackford may have had enamelling in the corners of the headplate.²

The design on this fragment compares closely with that on the bow of Linton Heath 32 and two other brooches of Hines's group XI;³ the comparisons are sufficiently close to suggest both could have been the products of the same workshop, strengthening the argument for a production centre in Cambridgeshire.

These brooches can be set alongside the growing list of enamelled objects from pagan Anglo-Saxon England,⁴ and perhaps reinforce the view that Romano-British enamelling

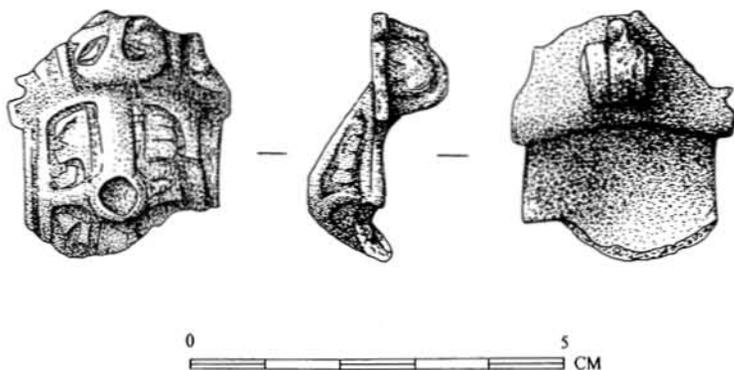


FIG. 1

Great square-headed brooch fragment from East Anglia. Scale 1:1. Drawn by David Taylor

¹ J. Hines, *A New Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Great Square-Headed Brooches*, (Soc. Ant. Res. Rep., 51, London, 1997), 220.

² Hines, loc. cit. in note 1.

³ Hines, op. cit. in note 1, 94-100.

⁴ V. I. Evison, 'An enamelled Disc from Great Saxham', *Proc. Suffolk Inst. Archaeol. Hist.*, xxxiv (1977), Pt. 1, 1-13; P. D. C. Brown, 'Swastika patterns', in V. I. Evison (ed.) *Angles, Saxons and Jutes: Essays presented to J. N. L. Myres*, (Oxford, 1981), 227-40; C. Scull, 'Enamelling on Early Anglo-Saxon Metalwork', *Anglo-Saxon Studs. Archaeol. Hist.*, 4 (1985), 117-22.

survived among the native population to be used on occasion to decorate artefacts in Anglo-Saxon style.

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