XV

MUSEUM NOTES, 1974*

Stephen Hill and Roger Miket

1. A BEARDED LADY FROM CARLISLE.[1] FIGS. 1, 2; PL. XXIV

ON SEPTEMBER 29th 1829, in the course of improvements to the mailroad between Penrith and Carlisle, the tombstone of Aurelia Aureliana was discovered buried at a depth of four feet on Gallow Hill, Carlisle. "A rude Corinthian pillar, and numerous graves and urns were found near it, besides three rings of jet, four lacrymatores, many coins; and, which is singular, immediately below the stone, which had its face downwards, were mouldering remains apparently of oak boards, about six feet long. That the stone was intended to be set upright in the earth at the place where the remains of Aur. Aurelia were buried, is plain, from a foot or more of its lower end having been left rough as it came out of the quarry. A writer in the *Carlisle Patriot* thinks it may have been removed from its original site, and used to cover some modern interment: and as the Gallow-hill was anciently the place of public execution for Carlisle, some felon may have been interred here, whose friends covered his coffin with a neglected stone before they filled up his grave, to make it more difficult to disturb his remains."[2]

The find was first reported in a letter from Mr. C. Hodgson to John Adamson, then secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle, which was published in *Archaeologia Aeliana* with an illustration (Fig. 1).[3] By 1857 the stone was in the possession of the Society, and was accordingly included in the catalogue prepared by J. Collingwood Bruce[4] with a new drawing (Fig. 2). In 1872 came the publication of Part III of Collingwood Bruce's *Lapidarium Septentrionale*:[5] the stone appeared with yet another new illustration (Pl. XXIV, 1) and some romantic, if inaccurate, moralising:

> "The figure which occupies the shallow niche forming the greater part of the stone is no doubt intended to represent the person of the departed.

* Prepared for the press by Dr. D. J. Smith. Warmest thanks are accorded to Mr. Hill and Mr. Miket for their contributions.

[1] I am indebted to Dr. D. J. Smith for encouragement during the preparation of this note, to Dr. J. C. Mann for advice about the inscription, and to Mr. C. M. Daniels for allowing me to consult Lt.-Col. G. R. B. Spain's copy of Robert Blair's catalogue which is now in his possession.

[2] J. Hodgson, *History of Northumberland* Part II, Vol. III (1840), 222.

[3] C. Hodgson, *AA*[1] II (1832), 419-420.

[4] J. C. Collingwood Bruce, *AA*[2] I (1857), "A Catalogue of the Inscribed and Sculptured Stones of the Roman Period Belonging to the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne", 252, no. 106.

[5] Ibid., *Lapidarium Septentrionale* (1875; hereafter *LS*).

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

She appears in her final habiliments. A bunch of flowers is placed in her left hand. The conviction is deeply implanted in the human mind that that which is sown in dishonour will bloom hereafter."

The drawings of the last century form an interesting series, but one with little relation to the reality (Pl. XXIV, 2). The youth of 1832 develops logically into the old man of 1875, and, despite the text supplied with him, his masculinity is never really in question. If *Lapidarium Septentrionale* were our only witness we should have a considerable iconographical teaser, for without the evidence of the earlier drawings we might be led to suppose that the face

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TOMBSTONE OF AURELIA AURELIANA (See Museum Note 1)

Photos: University Library, Newcastle upon Tyne

had originally been bearded[6] but had suffered mutilation by an unknown hand. The completeness of the record allows us to draw a different conclusion: that there is no substitute for personal examination of these monuments when they have survived, and the need for great caution when dealing with records of stones which have subsequently disappeared.

The stone itself is of some interest both sculpturally and epigraphically. It measures 0·84 × 1·60 m. The inscription reads:[7]

D(is) M(anibus) Aur(elia) Aurelia(na) vixsit
annos XXXXI Ulpius
Apolinaris coniugi carissim(a)e
posuit

The name forms establish that this epitaph belongs at the earliest in the latter part of the second century A.D., and quite possibly after A.D. 212. The *nomen* Aurelia can hardly be earlier than A.D. 161. The absence of *praenomen* in the husband's name, Ulpius Apolinaris, suggests the third century rather than the second, for the disappearance of the *praenomen* is characteristic of that period. It seems unlikely that the stone will have been set up later than about the mid-third century, when the epigraphic evidence from the area of the Wall diminishes abruptly. The relief is carved in buff sandstone and shows signs of burning.

The deceased is wearing a calf-length Gallic coat,[8] and perhaps a fringed mantle, if that is what the sculptor intended to show held in the right hand.[9] It is possible that a scarf is worn round the neck and tucked inside the coat.[10] In her left hand Aurelia holds what is probably a bunch of three poppies. This motif had considerable currency in the funerary art of the Roman Empire,[11] but it is interesting to find it so far north and at such a late date. Parallels for this in Britain are lacking, but an anonymous figure in York holds a scroll and what is certainly a bunch of flowers, although it is difficult to decide whether poppies in particular are meant to be represented.[12] The poppy is a standard attribute of the god Hypnos and in a

[6] A new edition of Collingwood Bruce's catalogue (see note 4) was published in 1920 by Robert Blair. In a marginalium to his copy of this edition G. R. B. Spain recorded his opinion that the figure was "slightly bearded".

[7] *RIB* 959.

[8] J. P. Wild, "Clothing in the North-West Provinces of the Roman Empire," *Bonner Jahrbücher* 168 (1968), 194-199. A fragment of another tombstone from Carlisle shows the lower part of a standing figure in an ankle-length coat (*RIB* 958).

[9] The right arm is conceivably meant to be represented in a gesture common in Roman funerary art which possibly had its origins in the depiction of the deceased holding a veil or mantle across the face. This gesture soon became stylised; a clear example of it in its residual form can be seen in York on the tombstone of Caeresius and Flavia Augustina with their sons: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), *Eburacum* (1962), Pl. 54, fig. 83.

[10] This may have suggested the idea of the beard: see note 6.

[11] F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le Symbolisme funéraire des Romains* (1942), 396ff.

[12] RCHM (Eng.), *Eburacum*, Pl. 53, fig. 95. The accompanying text (p. 128) says that the figure holds a scroll and a centurion's vine-staff. The *vitis* was represented on tombstones, but it did not look like this—see the tombstone of the centurion Marcus Caelius in Bonn, illustrated e.g. in H. Schoppa, *Die Kunst der Römerzeit in Gallien, Germanien und Britannien* (1957), Pl. 40, and the tombstone of Marcus Favonius Facilis, *RIB* 200, Plate V.

funerary context presumably conveys the same message as modern gravestones which bear the legend "Not dead only sleeping". Figures holding vegetable matter of various kinds are quite common, and two examples found in the same region as the stone here considered may suffice to illustrate this. Also in Carlisle was found the tombstone of the three-year-old Vacia;[13] whether the figure on this stone is actually a representation of the dead child is doubtful,[14] but at any rate a female stands in an arcuate niche holding what may be a bunch of grapes[15] in her right hand. From Old Penrith comes the tombstone of a boy, Marcus Cocceius.[16] He holds a whip in his right hand and a palm-branch in his left. The ambiguous symbolism of the palm (victory in a chariot race, and victory over death) is another motif found elsewhere in Roman funerary art.[17]

Aurelia Aureliana is framed by a shallow arcuate niche, the arch of which is borne on debased Corinthian columns which also support pine-cone finials. The shape of the top is slightly unusual, although it perhaps reflects local tastes: gravestones of the Roman period often have a top forming three sides of a hexagon, or else have a flat top which would often have carried a further slab decorated with a sphinx between devouring lions.[18] There is nothing unusual about the appearance of pine-cones; indeed this must be one piece of symbolism which would have been immediately understood even by those to whom the significance of the poppies was obscure. The burnt remains of cones from the Mediterranean Stone Pine were found in the Mithraeum at Carrawburgh;[19] it is unnecessary to connect them with any particular ancient cult, but clear that pine-cones were acceptable sacrificial offerings. Richmond reports tests involving the combustion of samples from Carrawburgh:

> "It has a characteristic smell; not the perfume of incense, but a pungent aroma of pine, unmistakable for anything else. It might well be described as bracing and awakening rather than relaxing or soporific."

The presence of bracing pine-cones and soporific poppies on the one stone is characteristic of the confused treatment that Roman funerary symbolism can receive in provincial art. But it is clear that the pine-cone, as seed and

[13] Now in the Carlisle Museum's garden. F. Haverfield, *Catalogue of the Roman Inscribed and Sculptured Stones in the Carlisle Museum, Tullie House* (2nd ed., 1922), 33, no. 88. *RIB* 961.

[14] *RIB* 320: "The stone was presumably bought ready-made as the relief shows a person much older than the three-year-old mentioned in the text."

[15] This is the standard interpretation, but it is just possible that the object may be a pine-cone.

[16] Now at Lowther Castle. F. Haverfield, *CW*[2] XIII (1913), 191.

[17] Cumont, *op. cit.*, 429ff.

[18] Perhaps the rounded top was a regional speciality: the tombstone of Vacia (see note 13) shows the feature, and a relief of a seated woman holding a fan with a child at her feet which was found at Murrell Hill and is now in the Carlisle Museum has the rounded top on which is set, somewhat awkwardly, the sphinx between devouring lions: illustrated in J. M. C. Toynbee, *Art in Roman Britain* (2nd ed., 1963), Pl. 86.

[19] I. A. Richmond and J. P. Gillam, "The Temple of Mithras at Carrawburgh", *AA*[4] XXIX (1951), 1-93. Pine-cones have also been found in the Triangular Temple at Verulamium, and possibly at Silchester.

kindling-fuel, seems to have suggested the essential life-force and hence immortality. This explains its regular appearance in religious and funerary symbolism. Numerous stone representations of pine-cones have been found in Britain: these sometimes take the form of separate individual cones, occasionally with square bases, which probably marked the positions of graves[20] (these are often termed "finials", but there is no evidence to suggest that they invariably stood on columns). Pine-cones are also carved in relief on altars and gravestones. A small relief found with a cinerary urn in Carlisle[21] depicted Mercury standing in an arcuate niche with pine-cones set in the spandrels. A tombstone depicting a funerary banquet found at Kirkby Thore[22] had columns surmounted by pine-cone finials. Other examples are legion.[23]

It will be clear from the few parallel examples considered above that the sculptured stones of Carlisle and other nearby Roman sites display a considerable degree of homogeneity in the choice of motives and basic shapes. The same tendency is apparent in the treatment of drapery on other stones from the same area. Aurelia Aureliana's coat is distinguished by sharp, boldly-cut folds. This strongly linear technique is even more clear in the case of the tombstone of Vacia,[24] or that from Murrell Hill.[25] A fragment from Carlisle[26] is so like the last-mentioned as to raise the possibility that both pieces are by the same hand.

Such issues are beyond the scope of this note; the burden of my present argument is that we have here the gravestone of a lady who lived on the northern bound of the Roman Empire quite possibly in the third century. If this dating is true she has left us a monument from what is otherwise a slightly obscure episode in Roman provincial art.

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2. "UNDOUBTED ANGLIAN BURIALS" FROM HEPPLE, NORTHUMBERLAND. FIG. 3

Nearly a century ago, in 1877, Canon W. Greenwell devoted almost two lines of his book *British Barrows* to record "several undoubted Anglian burials" found in quarrying at Hepple.[27] The discovery appears to have eluded notice by the usually vigilant local press, and there has so far been no illustration of the finds or any treatment of the discovery other than A. Meaney's description.[28] The generosity of the British Museum in placing the

[20] Two have been noted at Chesterholm (*LS* 272), one at Kirkby Thore (*LS* 757) and one at Papcastle (*LS* 910). There is one in the museum at South Shields. There are five known at York—RCHM (Eng.), *Eburacum*, 132.

[21] R. G. Collingwood, "Roman Britain in 1936", *JRS* XXVII (1937), 246. *RIB* 952.

[22] *LS* 752.

[23] There are examples on tombstones from Bar Hill, Brougham, Overborough (two), and Wroxeter; on altars from Maryport and Risingham. The pine-cone is a commonplace in funerary and religious art throughout the Roman Empire.

[24] See note 13.

[25] See note 18.

[26] F. Haverfield, *Catalogue of the Roman Inscribed and Sculptured Stones in the Carlisle Museum, Tullie House* (2nd ed., 1922) 37, no. 102.

[27] W. Greenwell, *British Barrows* (1877), 432.

[28] A. Meaney, *A Gazetteer of Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites* (1964), 199.

grave goods on loan to the Museum of Antiquities prompts an attempt to right this deficiency despite the obvious difficulties involved.[29]

It is not entirely clear whether Greenwell himself was responsible for the discovery or whether the objects simply gravitated into his possession. The latter appears the more probable not only from his failure to claim a personal discovery, but also because other objects in his possession from Hepple are referred to in terms which imply that they were not obtained at first hand.[30] The 1899 edition of the Ordnance Survey 6″ series marks two quarries within a mile of Hepple village, one at Hetchester (NT 983025), the other at Harehaugh (NT 971998). However, as Greenwell is discussing antiquities from the parish of Hepple, and as Harehaugh is in the adjacent parish, it is perhaps Hetchester that is meant.[31] In December 1879 the grave goods passed to the British Museum (Reg. Nos. 2080-2089), and the skeletal material to the British Museum (Natural History).

Only an earscoop and bone comb are recorded as having come from one and the same grave, making it now impossible to reconstitute the individual grave contents, or assess with any degree of certainty the number of individuals encountered. Furthermore, as this isolated comment is the only record for the bone comb, which was not amongst the material presented to the British Museum, it perhaps urges a caveat when considering just how complete the surviving collection may be. Interpreting Greenwell's term "several" to mean more than two but less than ten, it is probable that the number of burials was somewhere between three and nine. There is no reason for thinking the surviving skeletal material to be any more comprehensive than is the collection of objects.

INVENTORY (FIG. 3).

1. Bone Comb. Lost sometime before 1879 but recorded as found with 2.
2. Bronze earscoop/(?) nailcleaner. Length 88 mm. B.M. Reg. 79 12.9 2080. The form is closer to a nailcleaner than to an earscoop and it is possible that object No. 3 (below) is meant despite its size. Not cast but fashioned from a bronze strip, the spatula has a triangular-sectioned head with chamfered sides. The broad flat face portrays the central nick characteristic of nailcleaners. The butt end is folded into a loop enclosing a thin bronze ring with intertwined terminals which carries in addition a small bronze clip.

[29] Thanks are due to the Trustees of the British Museum for generously placing the grave group on a five-year loan to this Museum. I would also like to record my personal gratitude to Mrs. Leslie Webster of the Dept. of Medieval and Later Antiquities, British Museum, for her kindness and enthusiastic interest.

[30] Cf. *supra*, p. 155.

[31] Quarrying of a quite different nature may be meant, i.e. stone robbing; if so it is worthwhile noting the discovery of marvered glass beads at Kirkhill in "quarrying" the dressed stone from the Chapel. *Supra*, p. 157.

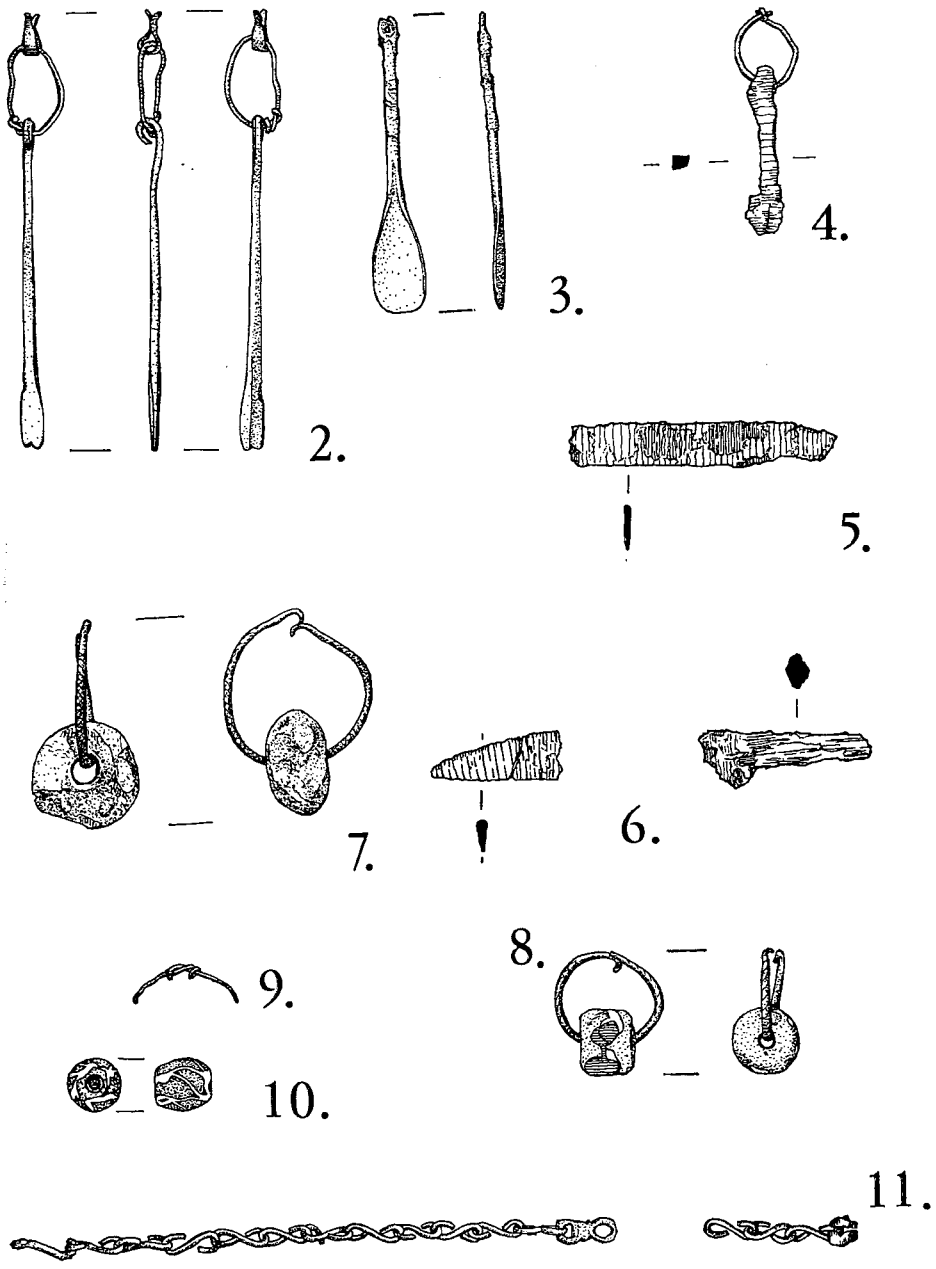

Fig. 3. Grave Furniture: Hepple, Northumberland. Scale 1:2
Drawn by Mary M. Hurrell

3. Bronze Spoon. Length 77 mm. Width of bowl 13 mm. B.M. Reg. No. 79 12.9 2081. Small bronze spoon fashioned from strip bronze. The bowl is markedly concave, the open stubby end indicating the edge of the original strip. The flattened expansion from the rectangular-sectioned shank is pierced for suspension; corrosion on the upper part of the shank may be from an iron ring, or perhaps only indicates proximity to an iron object in the grave.
4. Iron (?) tweezers. Length 49 mm. Thickness 5 mm. Diameter of ring 16 mm. B.M. Reg. 79 12.9 2082. Short rectangular-sectioned iron object. A loop at the butt-end links it to a thin bronze ring with single twisted terminal. In 1879, when perhaps more survived, it was identified as "iron tweezers ? on a bronze ring".
5. Iron knife. Length 69 mm (incomplete). Width 11 mm. Max. thickness 2 mm. B.M. Reg. 79 12.9 2083. One of two knives recovered, this is heavily corroded and both the point and part of the tang are missing. There is no evidence for attachment by rivets and it appears too slight to have seen heavy use.
6. Iron knife. B.M. Reg. 12.9 2084. As the 1879 entry records only two knives, these two fragments preserving the point and the tang must belong to the same knife. Traces of a wooden handle remain as rust impregnations but evidence for rivet attachment is absent. Sufficient of the point remains to identify the type as being of the bow-backed variety.
7. Cut rock-crystal. Diameter 22 mm. Width 17 mm. Diameter of bore 7 mm. Diameter of wire ring 400 mm. Thickness 1·55 mm. B.M. Reg. 79 12.9 2085. Discoidal cut rock-crystal with slightly flattened sides. Now fractured and quite opaque, the crystal has been of good quality and well fashioned. A bronze wire ring with cross-hatched decoration around its outer circumference passes through a rather large bore. Too heavy to be worn as an ear-ring, it may have been attached to an article of dress.
8. Bead ear-ring. Diameter 18 mm. Thickness 14 mm. Av. ring diameter 27 mm. B.M. Reg. 79 12.9 2086. The body is of a reddish-brown vitreous paste, in the face of which five linking depressions have been made and packed with white paste. Presumably held near a flame, the bead has been gently rotated while droplets of blue glass have been inset into five depressions made in the white paste. A continuous glass thread links all but the fifth and first glass "eyes". The bead is suspended from a solid bronze ring with cross-hatched decoration. It would seem to have had a long life as the ring has worn away part of the bore of the bead.
9. Bronze wire fragment. Incomplete. B.M. Reg. 79 12.9 2087. Small fragment of bronze wire ring with twisted terminals. Probably originally attached to 10 and forming a second ear-ring.
10. Bead. Diameter 15 mm. Height 17 mm. Diameter of bore 3·5 mm. B.M. Reg. 79 12.9 2088. A truncated convex bicone in a reddish brown paste

similar to 8. Thin yellow marvered lines run the length of the bead and traces of bronze wire remain in the bore. Probably attached to 9 as an ear-ring.

11. Bronze chain. Length 200 mm. Incomplete. Av. link length 15 mm. B.M. Reg. 79 12.9 2089. Formed of interconnecting S-shaped links, the chain survives as two separate pieces. At one end of each separate chain length is an iron loop; these preserve both extremities of the original chain. The chain probably had originally one or two further links at the most (otherwise the chain would survive in three lengths, not two), thereby giving a maximum length of 210 mm for the actual chain excluding its iron terminals. The British Museum Accession record describes this chain as coming from a workbox (see discussion below).

INTERPRETATION

Of the ten recorded objects, eight (the two bead ear-rings, cut rock-crystal, spoon, comb, "tweezers", nailcleaner and workbox chain) are objects normally associated with female burials; the two knives can occur in either male or female burials. While not implying that all the burials were of females (for all the objects could have come from as few as two graves), it does indicate that males were not being equipped with their distinctive grave-goods.[32] The quality and type of objects here seem slightly different from that encountered in other pagan Bernician graves. The cut rock-crystal, although now fractured, has been of good quality, as are the nailcleaner and spoon, and there is a noticeable absence of brooches. That one woman may have possessed a workbox marks that grave at least as above the commonplace.

No single object can be dated with certainty. The beads are of a ubiquitous type as at home in the 5th century as in the 7th century. Little can be deduced other than that number 8 had seen long use and that, because parellels for number 11 are found also in Germany, this type must have enjoyed widespread popularity.[33] Cut rock-crystals, often elaborately fashioned and faceted, infrequently occur in graves from the 5th century onwards. Appearing on a string with other beads, or occurring singly and clearly marked for individual treatment, it is difficult to account for all the examples as being purely decorative. For example, a faceted rock-crystal found in a purse at Petersfinger has been interpreted as a form of currency,[34] but it is more probable that this, along with many others, was primarily symbolic and more closely akin to

[32] Even if the collection is incomplete the proportion is heavily in favour of female associations.

[33] In the British Museum itself are five identical examples from Germany (Nos. 1908. 11.12 and 1905.5.20.1158.60), and three from Kenningham (1883.1) and Faversham.

[34] E. T. Leeds and H. de S. Shortt, *An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Petersfinger, near Salisbury, Wilts.* (1953), 44-5.

the animals' teeth and claw amulets discussed by Swanton.[35] As already noted, the point of one of the knives remains sufficiently complete to establish its form as being of the bow-backed variety. These, like the miniature scramasax, are a frequent occurrence in graves of the 7th century.[36] It is tempting to see the 1879 British Museum record that the chain was from a workbox as preserving information passed on from the original excavator. As seven of the nine objects appear to have accompanied female interments, and as over half of these are toilet articles, such a possibility is strengthened. While identical parallels for the chain may be cited from those attached to the range of bronze thread boxes[37] this is nevertheless the simplest method of chain construction and little reliance can be placed upon the apparent similarity. However, if this original interpretation is correct, and the chain was from a small wooden chest housing such personal toilet articles as are noted above, it is significant that outside Kent at least all such workboxes are associated with early Christian burials.[38]

A long recognised but only recently defined class of cemetery eases the transition from interment in pagan cemeteries, usually some distance from the settlement, to churchyard burial beginning in the 8th century. The unique characteristics of this group have been defined by Hyslop;[39] ostensibly Christian, yet with the old fears and insecurities frequently reflected in the rite and by the inclusion of grave goods, this intermediate class shares affinities of arrangement and content that step beyond the local cultural and geographic boundaries so distinctive in the true pagan cemetery. The characteristics of this group include a scarcity of brooches, and an absence of weapons accompanying males, who are now often provided with a knife at most. These knives are generally of the bow-backed or miniature scramasax type which was then coming into vogue. Amulets occur with more frequency, reflecting current insecurities, while wooden chests and thread boxes emulating Late Roman prototypes begin to make their first appearances. To see these objects from Hepple fulfilling in part the criteria of this class is an interpretation offered within the slight and subtle framework that the finds themselves admit.

ROGER MIKET

[35] M. Swanton, "An Anglian Cemetery at Londesborough in East Yorkshire", *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* CXLI (1966), 285.

[36] A. Meaney and S. C. Hawkes, *Two Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries at Winnal*: The Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series, No. 4 (1970), 43.

[37] E.g. J. R. Mortimer, *Forty Years Researches in Burial Mounds of East Yorkshire* (1906), Pl. LXXXIV, fig. 643. *British Museum Anglo-Saxon Guide* (1923), Fig. 83.

[38] M. Hyslop, "Two Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries at Chamberlains Barn, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire", *Arch. J.* CXX (1963), 196.

[39] Ibid., 190-191.