



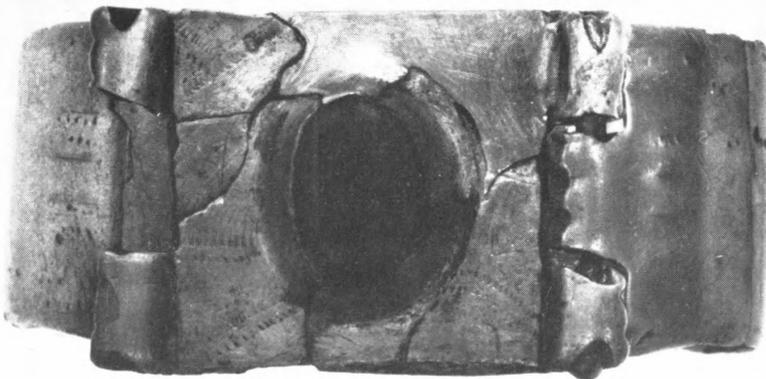
The Aesica Hoard: Gilt-bronze brooch and silver brooch. See Note 1



The Aesica Hoard: The silver brooch. See note 1



The Aesica Hoard: The silver brooch. See note 1



The Aesica Hoard: Silver necklace and bracelet. See note 1

## XVI

### MUSEUM NOTES, 1973\*

*Dorothy Charlesworth, Elizabeth Coatsworth, and C. D. Morris*

#### 1. THE AESICA HOARD. Pls. XXVII-XXXI

THE Aesica Hoard—comprising two brooches, three finger-rings, a necklace and a bracelet—was found in September 1894, in the excavation of the west guard-chamber of the south gate of the fort of Great Chesters on Hadrian's Wall. There was no archaeologist in charge of the work at the time of the discovery, and accounts published soon afterwards do not agree in detail. It is therefore thought worth repeating the contradictory details. The first accounts appeared in our Society's *Proceedings*, 2nd Series, VI (1895), pp. 241-3 and *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 2nd Series, XVII (1895), pp. xxvii-xxx. A discussion of the two brooches together, with some account of their discovery, was published in *Archaeologia* (Soc. Ants. Lond.) LV (1897), 179-98.

The hoard is said to have been found about 3 ft from the northern wall of the west guard-chamber at a height of about 2 or 3 ft above the original floor and 3 ft 6 ins beneath the surface. These measurements cannot be taken too seriously as "the discovery of the relics was due to an excavation below them and they were brought to light by some earth falling from the roof of the excavated hollow" (*Archaeologia* pp. 179-80, from our *Proceedings*). Haverfield remarked (*Archaeologia* p. 197), "it is uncertain whether they were found on or above the original floor level", but this seems an unnecessary element of doubt to introduce when the pieces fell from the top of the excavation.

Part of the hoard is illustrated in *Proceedings* and again in *Archaeologia Aeliana*. The photographs show "the Aesica brooch" (the gilt-bronze brooch; see below) with the gold ring caught on its head-loop and the silver necklace entangled in the pin at the back. The texts mention also the silver ring and scale-armor found with these three items; but there is no mention of the bracelet except in the list of finds exhibited by the Roman Wall Committee (per Mr. Hodgkin; *Proc.* VI, 241). Item (iv) of this list is a small gold ring with the stone missing. This ring was not with the other items recovered after the theft in 1951 (see below) and no description of it exists. Sir Arthur

\* Prepared for the press by Dr. D. J. Smith. Warmest thanks are accorded to the contributors, and also to Dr. A. E. Werner for arranging for Mrs. Hannah Lane to photograph

the Aesica hoard, and for Miss Mavis Bimson to identify the stone in the gold ring, at the Research Laboratory of the British Museum.

Evans in *Archaeologia* repeats this list, but omitting the bracelet *and* the small gold ring. He supposed, since brooches were normally worn in pairs with a connecting chain passing through the head-loop, that a brooch of each type must be missing from the find; but it is quite clear from the original record that only one brooch of each kind was concealed, and he quoted (p. 193) an account given to him by C. J. Spence, who took part in the excavation (although it is not apparent that he was on the site at the time of the discovery), stating that "the fibulae were found in one lump and there were (when I first saw them) no traces of others having been attached. There was a good covering of mud and the back of the gilt fibula bore on its mud a clear impression of the rim on the plate of the other. They had been lashed together with string to a piece of wood, the grain of which ran in the direction of the long way of the fibula." This is a little difficult to reconcile with the photograph described above, but it may be assumed that the large silver brooch had been separated from the rest, and mud removed, for photography. The text in *Archaeologia Aeliana* merely refers to "a small parcel of fibulae, rings, silver necklace and scale armour etc." Later, in *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 2nd Series, XXIV (1903) p. 22, this became "a rich hoard of fibulae, rings, chains and other articles of jewellery." Again there is no reference to the bracelet or to the small gold ring. The find is mentioned in the "*Catalogue of Jewellery*" in *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th Series, XXXIX (1961), except for the bracelet, the existence of which was then unknown. Except for the Aesica brooch, which was in a bank, the jewellery was stolen from the Black Gate Museum in 1951 and recovered in a damaged condition. The silver brooch, bracelet and necklace suffered most, but were skilfully restored in the British Museum Research Laboratory.

#### THE GILT-BRONZE BROOCH. PL. XXVII

Although both brooches have an equal claim to the title of "Aesica brooch" it is the gilded bow-and-fantail, "of its kind probably the most fantastically beautiful creation that has come to us from antiquity" in the opinion of Sir Arthur Evans, that is always so designated. It is listed in *A44 XXXIX* p. 35, 1.

The brooch is cast in two parts, one consisting of the curved bow and the square headplate with a loop and two hooks, the lower part of the headplate concealing the spring of the pin, the other part consisting of the disc and fantail foot. Its size is unusual, 10.3 cm in length, larger than the normal run of brooches, but not so gigantic in comparison with the related brooches as is the silver brooch. A thistle-brooch from Mainz (*Alttertumsmuseum* 55/70) is the same length, 10.3 cm. The decoration, a balanced design of trumpet-scrolls in relief and a beaded edging, is unusually elaborate and competent, with the centre line of this symmetrical pattern broken by an

S-shaped scroll below the bow to pull the design in to a central point. The disc is fully decorated, even where the decoration is hidden behind the bow.

The scroll-work has received much attention and its affinities with other late Celtic objects are so well known that they need not be repeated here in detail. There is general agreement that the brooch is a product of a north of England Celtic workshop c. A.D. 70/80, on the eve of the Roman conquest of the region. Comparable designs are used on the Elmswell panel and bronzes from Stanwick.<sup>1</sup> The gilt-bronze brooch fragment from Tre'r Ceiri, Carnarvonshire,<sup>2</sup> is the most closely related piece. It is thought to be of bow-and-fantail type (Collingwood's group X),<sup>3</sup> with a convex decorated head which conceals the spring and a semi-circular, broad bow with trumpet-scrolls and bosses (which are not used on the Aesica brooch). Only the bow and spring-cover remain.

Typologically the Aesica brooch is a development of the continental thistle-brooch, widely distributed in the Rhineland and Gaul and occasionally found in Pannonia.<sup>4</sup> These tend to be large brooches, generally with a circular disc with the lower end of the arched bow at its centre and a straight foot. Others have a triangular plate in place of the disc. All have a narrow, convex spring-cover, some a pierced catch-plate. The type was introduced into Britain by the Roman army and had no local Celtic forerunners. A brooch from Mandeure (Epomanduodorum) is of particular interest in this context. It is Lerat's no. 75 (see footnote 4) which has a square head decorated round the edge, covering the spring, a zigzag moulding on the raised centre of the bow, a circular disc with two concentric arcs of fine incisions and an expanding foot with three longitudinal ribs with incised decoration. The head-plate, the decoration and the fantail remove it from the true thistle-brooch. Lerat places it as an intermediate stage between a brooch with a small disc (resembling Collingwood's group T, from Braughing) and the thistle-brooch proper, but it can perhaps better be seen as a development from the thistle-brooch and its shape may be compared with that of the Aesica brooch. There is no date given for the Mandeure brooch. It may then be followed by two much damaged brooches from Besançon (Lerat 79, 80) each with a rectangular head-plate but the bow in the form of an animal, one with a fantail, no disc remaining, the other with a triangular plate but no foot remaining. This is a type found also in

<sup>1</sup> E. T. Leeds, *Celtic Ornament in the British Isles* (1933), xx; C. Fox, *Pattern and Purpose* (1958), particularly p. 108; R. G. Collingwood, "Romano-Celtic art in Northumbria", *Archaeologia* LXXX, 37-58; P. Corder and C. F. C. Hawkes, "A panel of Celtic ornament from Elmswell", *Ant. J.* XX, 338-57, particularly pp. 351-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Archaeologia Cambrensis*<sup>6</sup> IV, 9, Fig. 6; *Ant. J.* XX, 349.

<sup>3</sup> R. G. Collingwood and I. A. Richmond,

*The Archaeology of Roman Britain* (1969), Chap. XV.

<sup>4</sup> I. Kovrig, "Die Haupttypen der Kaiserzeitlichen Fibeln in Pannonien", *Dissertationes Pannonicae*<sup>2</sup> 4 (1937), 114; G. Behrens, "Zur Typologie und Technik der provincial römischen Fibeln", *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* I (1954), 223, Abb. 2, 1-4; L. Lerat, "Les fibules gallo-romaines", *Annales Littéraires de l'Université de Besançon* III, Fasc. 1-Arch. 3 (1956), 11f.

the Rhineland and not relevant here except as a successor to the thistle-brooch with a rectangular head, a feature which is sufficiently infrequent to merit attention. The date here must be mid or later first century; so Collingwood's theory<sup>5</sup> that the rectangular head-plate is a development of the collar which holds the neck of the wire-head loop on the ordinary trumpet-brooch (group R), although it may apply to the silver brooch from Great Chesters, cannot be universally applied, for these Gallic brooches have no prototype with a head-loop. This is a British feature.

A small brooch "found at a low level on site II" at Wroxeter<sup>6</sup> resembles the Aesica brooch, except for the head which is no more than a narrow spring-cover. The decoration on its bow and fantail seems to be a degenerate trumpet motif. The Hook Norton brooch<sup>7</sup> also has a repoussé design on its fantail, in which Leeds managed to discern an animal head, but its shape is more angular. Beading is used to outline the foot, the head and the centre line of the bow. Neither of these brooches has a square head nor a cast loop, and in this they conform to the normal run of bow-and-fantail type.

Collingwood<sup>8</sup> has pointed out the difficulty in any discussion of the dating of the Aesica brooch. While the high quality of its decoration associates it with the best of late Celtic art in the first century, the head of the brooch associates it with later northern types, the trumpet (group R) and the head-stud (group Q). On *decoration* the Tre'r Ceiri brooch would seem to be contemporary, although made in a different area, while the Wroxeter and Hook Norton brooches appear to be later; but on *typology* both the Tre'r Ceiri and Wroxeter brooches might be thought earlier. The Hook Norton brooch seems to be in a rather different line of development from the thistle-brooch and one would not try to put it in typological sequence with the Aesica. The Aesica brooch is unique and the most convincing arguments for its date are those based on its decoration. As has already been indicated, Collingwood's typological argument is not entirely accurate. The form of the head-plate could be earlier than he thought, but there is still the question of the fixed head-loop; on another northern brooch, the head-stud, this does not come in until c. 134.<sup>9</sup> M. R. Hull notes a cast head-loop on a brooch of this type from Thistleton, "found with 4 coins of Trajan, which were probably out of date, however, when discarded."<sup>10</sup> But, in spite of the cast head-loop and the late 3rd century date of deposit for the Thistleton hoard, Collingwood's compromise-date in the first half of the second century cannot be accepted. The Aesica brooch must have been made c. 70/80.

<sup>5</sup> *Arch.* LXXX, 40.

<sup>6</sup> J. P. Bushe-Fox, *Excavations ... at Wroxeter in 1912*, 23-4, Fig. 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Lond.* XXIII, 406-7. Recent undecorated example at Shakenoak (A. C. Brodribb, A. R. Hands, D. R. Walker, 4th report, 1973), 108, Fig. 73, 176, found in 3rd/4th-cent. deposit, discussed on p. 114 as "Aesica type" but it is pointed out that all strictly comparable with the Shakenoak brooch are in

the Midlands and south. Behrens (footnote 4), Abb. 2, 7, with small bow, triangular bossed plate and fantail a parallel development from the thistle.

<sup>8</sup> *Arch.* LXXX, 40.

<sup>9</sup> K. S. Painter, "The British Museum collection of head-stud brooches", *British Museum Quarterly* XXXIV, 173.

<sup>10</sup> M. R. Hull, "Notes on the Nor'Nour brooches", *Arch. J.* CXXXIV, 442.

## THE SILVER BROOCH. Pls. XXVII, XXVIII and XXIX

On this brooch Collingwood commented that "the purchaser was no doubt induced to buy it by being told that it was the largest brooch in the world."<sup>11</sup> Its length is 18.5 cm. It is listed in *AA4 XXXIX*, p. 36, 3. The square head-plate rises above a convex spring-cover with rounded lower edges, and the front of the head-loop, with a setting for a gem, or imitation,<sup>12</sup> is joined to a wire loop which passes down the back and links on to the spring of the pin. It is held in position by a decorated strip of silver. The edge of the head-plate has a similar decoration round its edge. The sharply curved bow has a heavy acanthus moulding on its front only and one of three decorated knobs remains attached. The others are missing but it is clear from the fittings that they existed. Below the moulding is a rectangular area edged with a dog-tooth incised pattern, and the lower part of the bow is E-shaped in horizontal section with a long catch-plate of two thicknesses of silver behind. The rilled foot-knob has an incised diamond pattern on its base. It seems strange that the acanthus moulding should be so perfunctory when the foot is in the round and when in two places, the underside of the foot and the back of the head, there is decoration which could not be seen when the brooch was worn.

Collingwood classified it with the trumpet-brooches (group R), for it may be compared in some points with the silver-gilt brooches from the Backworth hoard of coins and jewellery buried soon after A.D. 139.<sup>13</sup> The foot is similar, but the Backworth foot is undecorated. The Great Chesters head can be taken as a development of the Backworth, itself more widely spread than the normal trumpet, with an incised design and a small rectangular strip to hold its wire head-loop. The Backworth acanthus moulding is in the round. A square head occurs again on a small brooch from Poltross Burn, level 1 (period 1 seems intended but not specifically stated),<sup>14</sup> and on a brooch of untraced origin.<sup>15</sup> A flawed casting from Brough-under-Stainmore,<sup>16</sup> its head shaped like the lower part of the head of the Aesica trumpet, is evidence for manufacture in the north.

The origin of the brooch is continental, but the acanthus moulding is a British feature. The type is particularly common in Pannonia<sup>17</sup> in the first half of the first century and it is also found in the Rhineland. It has been suggested that it was introduced into Britain by the Ninth Legion, which

<sup>11</sup> *Arch.* LXXX, p. 51.

<sup>12</sup> M. Henig quotes *CIL* XIII 3162, "fibulam auream cum gemmis" sent by Claudius Paulinus *legatus Augusti pro praetore* of Britain to Sennius Sollemnis in Gaul. At a humbler level the head-stud brooch often has a setting for enamel or glass-paste.

<sup>13</sup> *Brit. Mus. Guide to the Antiquities of Roman Britain* (1958), 18, no. 17; *AA4 XXXIX*, 35, no. 2.

<sup>14</sup> *C.W. Trans.* XI, 440, Fig. 20, 2.

<sup>15</sup> R. G. Collingwood and I. A. Richmond, *The Archaeology of Roman Britain* (1969), Fig. 104, 60.

<sup>16</sup> *Arch.* LXXX, 52, Fig. 10.

<sup>17</sup> E. v. Patek, *Verbreitung und Herkunft der Römischen Fibeltypen von Pannonien* (1942).

served, and no doubt also recruited, in Pannonia.<sup>18</sup> The trumpet brooch with a plain knob on its bow is found in southern and eastern Britain. There were Pannonian auxiliaries serving in Britain and one, Dagvalda of the first cohort, was buried near Great Chesters: his tombstone was found re-used in Milecastle 42 (Cawfields; *RIB* 1667). There seems no doubt that this brooch was made in the north of England, but its size marks it out from the other trumpet-brooches and it is probable that it was a special order to suit the more flamboyant taste of a soldier from east Europe, where massive personal ornaments were appreciated.

The date is difficult to determine, but does not seem likely to be earlier than c. 140, later than but not too far removed from the Backworth brooches. The problem of using the fixed head-loop as a means of dating has already been discussed. Since this brooch is certainly later than the gilt-bronze Aesica brooch, it is no help here. Collingwood concluded that "at any time about 150-175 someone might have indulged in an orgy of bad taste with this kind of result." His upper dating limit seems rather too late; and the necklace, which is probably late first century or early second century, also the silver ring, which is third century, show a preference for quantity rather than quality, so taste is no criterion.

#### THE NECKLACE OR COLLAR. PL. XXX

The silver collar is formed of two lengths of three chains, both of double-strand loops with a silver cross-band at the back to keep them spaced and at either end a narrow rectangular plate lightly incised, two of the plates having a loop linked with the central ornament; this is a silver oval bezel with a cabochon cornelian in the centre and a cable moulding at the edge. Its total length is 35 cm. It was seriously damaged and is much restored. It is listed in *AA4 XXXIX*, p. 35, 4.

This is a rather cumbersome piece of jewellery of uncommon type. It seems to be the poor relation of the gold collar, set with emeralds and pearls with a central bezel holding a square emerald at its centre, found at Pompeii.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps the closest parallel is the gold necklace, also of three chains of double-strand figure-of-eight loops with a central cross-piece as a spacer, but fastened at the back with a hook-and-eye, found at Newton (Cumberland)<sup>20</sup> on Hadrian's Wall. The fashionable necklace of the first and second centuries was either, like that from Backworth, a much finer chain with a wheel ornament or a lunate pendant, or a jewelled necklace, which may be of beads linked with wire, or precious and semi-precious stones (sometimes glass paste) set in metal bezels and linked together, a more elegant ornament, frequently

<sup>18</sup> *Ant. J.* XX, 495, and XXV, 154-7.

<sup>19</sup> R. Siviero, *Gli Ori e le Ambre del Museo Nazionale di Napoli* (1954), no. 164, T 133.

<sup>20</sup> F. H. Marshall, *Cat. of Jewellery, Greek, Etruscan and Roman* (British Museum, 1911), no. 2716.

gold settings and wire. These necklaces are known throughout the western provinces, ranging from gold necklaces at Pompeii to a glass bead and bronze wire example from Waternewton. Such copying indicates the popularity of the type. In the eastern provinces, where greater ostentation was preferred, two or three necklaces could be worn. Two Hawara portraits<sup>21</sup> show Greek or Egyptian women, each wearing a necklace similar to the Aesica example but in gold. One wears three other "choker" necklaces, two with coloured stones set in bezels and linked with gold, one chain with a pendant and also a longer, thicker (probably double) chain with a central oval bezel holding a green stone. The other wears a thick, also apparently double, chain "choker", with a pendant holding a green stone and a longer necklace of coloured stones. The portraits are dated 130 and 140, but judged on the jewellery they could be a generation earlier.

The life of a piece of jewellery in any case tends to span more than one generation. The Aesica necklace could have been made at any time from the mid-first to early second century. Its origin seems impossible to establish. Like the brooches it may be taken as a fusion of Roman and native styles, a heavy imitation of the finer necklace of the Mediterranean world, or it could have been made for the provincial market. Very little is known about the manufacture of jewellery (other than brooches, if indeed these count as jewellery). One indication of local manufacture is the discovery of a mould for small items on the line of the Wall.<sup>22</sup> It could have been used by an itinerant jeweller making pieces to customers' demands.

#### THE SILVER BRACELET. Pl. XXX

This could only have been worn by a child. Its diameter is 5.2 cm from back to front and 5.8 cm side to side, its width 2.2. The bracelet is a rigid one in two parts, a curved section for the back and sides which is joined by a hinge to the flat front in the centre of which is set an imitation stone of glass paste. Faint traces of punched pattern can be seen radiating from the bezel. The bracelet appears to be very worn but it is difficult to judge as it was seriously damaged and much restored.

The imitation cornelian and the incised decoration seem to link it with the necklace, but they can hardly be part of the same set of jewellery as the necklace is far too large for a child to wear.

The bracelet is not a type common in Hellenistic and Roman jewellery in the central Mediterranean area, but there are a few highly ornate examples of such rigid, two-piece articulated bracelets. The typical bracelet of these parts has a narrow hoop, whether in the form of a coiled serpent, twisted

<sup>21</sup> W. F. Petrie, *Hawara Portraits* (1913), Pl. XVII and XVIII.

<sup>22</sup> A.44 XXXIX, 7-8, quoting *Ant. J.* II, 99-100.

wires with serpent's or other animal's heads as terminals, or chains.<sup>23</sup> The bracelet is generally in one piece and when a fastening is required it is a hook-and-eye.

Highly ornate examples of the two-piece hinged broad bracelet are found in Egypt from the XVIIIth dynasty, and there is one surviving Ptolemaic gold bracelet, decorated only with two cable mouldings at either edge.<sup>24</sup> The hinges of the latter are partly broken and its front is missing, but in type it resembles the Aesica bracelet. The closest parallel noted is from a child's grave at Armazis-Khevi (Georgia),<sup>25</sup> a pair of gold bracelets with a narrower hoop with some facets and a stone set in the centre of the shorter segment of one and of the longer segment of the other. Each is of two pieces hinged together. Decorated examples of the same type were found at Taxila in the Indus valley, thought to be second century A.D. Bracelets depicted on the statues of Palmyrene women are also quoted as parallels but are not necessarily relevant for it cannot be seen whether or not they are hinged.<sup>26</sup> They may be one-piece flexible bracelets, although their elaborate decoration is against this. There is from Rhayader (Radnor) a gold bracelet with Celtic decoration, a small front plate hinged on to the main part of the hoop,<sup>27</sup> and two bronze strips from Verulamium may be parts of bracelets but neither has a hinge remaining.<sup>28</sup> However, it seems to be in the Near East that this articulated bracelet is most common and persists into the Byzantine period, when indeed there are more known examples than in the earlier periods, all with elaborate openwork decoration.

The date of the Aesica bracelet is probably mid-first to early second century. Its slight connection with the necklace suggests this, as does the probable dating of the pair from Georgia, where the latest grave contained a coin of Commodus.

#### THE LARGER GOLD RING. Pl. XXXI

This has a thin angular ribbon hoop, expanding at the shoulders on which are incised volutes and at the front a raised box-bezel, containing a plain stone, of chalcedony; it is upside down, obviously a replacement in antiquity for the original. Diameter 2.1-2.2 cm. Listed in *AA4 XXXIX*, p. 31, 90.

The type is a well-known third century one, common throughout the western provinces (Marshall, *E xxxi*).<sup>29</sup> A similar gold ring was found with a hoard

<sup>23</sup> R. A. Higgins, *Greek and Roman Jewellery* (1961), 188.

<sup>24</sup> E. Vernier, *Cat. Gén. des Antiquités Egyptiennes du Musée de Caire: Bijoux et Orfèvreries*, nos. 52069, 52575, 52576, 52586.

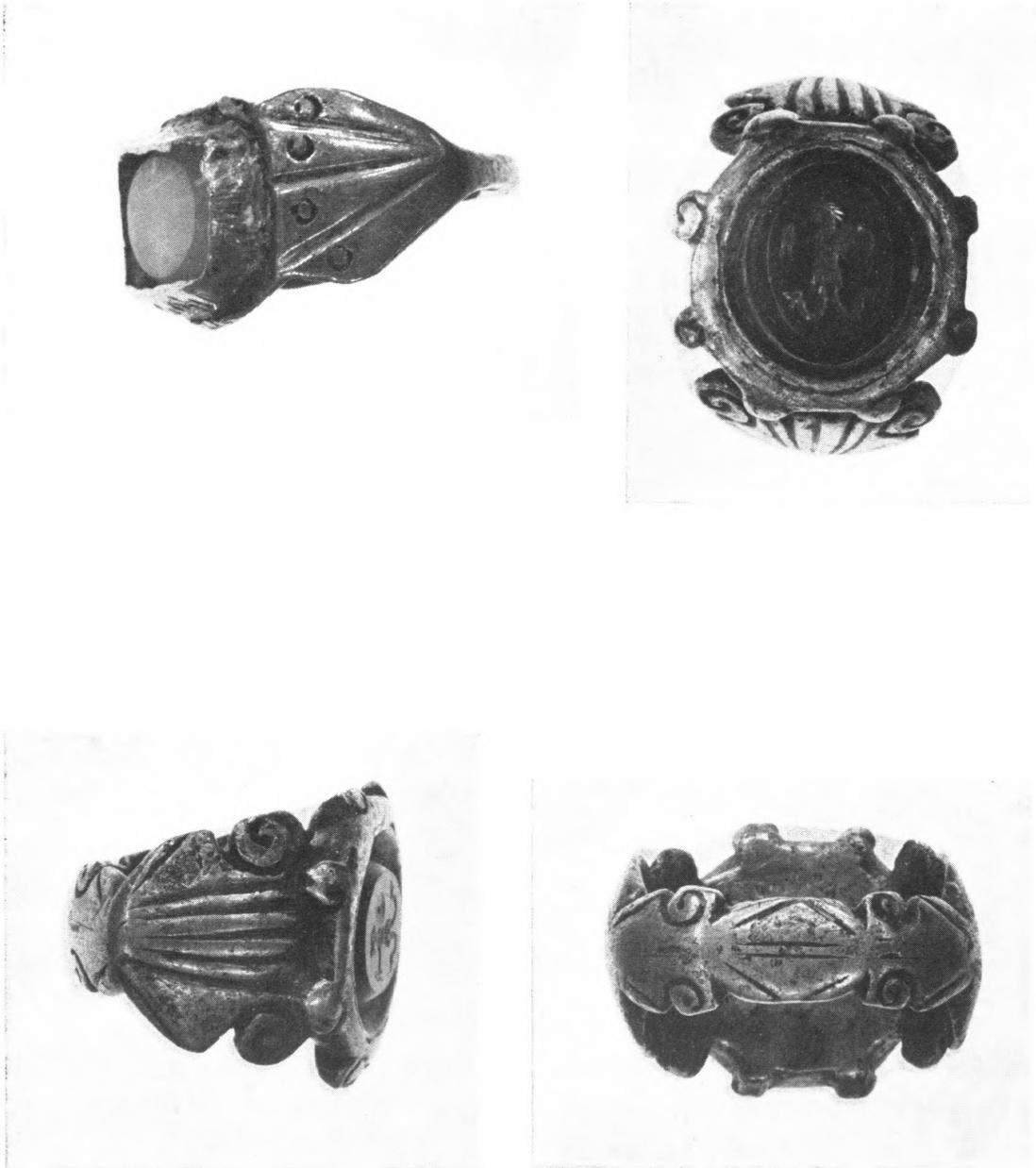
<sup>25</sup> B. Pfeiler, *Römischer Goldschmuck* (1971), 80, T 23.

<sup>26</sup> C. Lepage, "Les bracelets de luxe romains et byzantins du II-IV<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Cahiers Archéologiques XXI* (1971).

<sup>27</sup> *Brit. Mus. Guide ... Roman Britain* (1958), 14, 9, Pl. III.

<sup>28</sup> S. S. Frere, *Verulamium Excavations I* (1972), 120, Figs. 32, 30, 31.

<sup>29</sup> F. H. Marshall, *Cat. of Finger-rings ... in the British Museum* (1907). Type discussed in *AA4 XXXIX*, 12-13, also p. 5 (Housesteads ring with a coin of Commodus).



The Aesica Hoard: Gold ring (upper left)  
and silver ring. See note 1



Carved stones from Bothal, Northumberland  
See note 2

*Photos. University Library, Newcastle upon Tyne*

of coins, the latest A.D. 306, on Sully Moors near Cardiff (Marshall, 544). It resembles the Aesica ring in shape and in the rather sketchy decoration of the shoulders, but has a more elaborate front, a raised oval bezel with an impressed foliage border which recalls the decoration round the bezel of the Aesica silver ring described below. Two other gold rings, from Odiham (Hants.; Marshall, 545) and near Oxford (Marshall, 540) also resemble this ring, but again there is a decorated border to the bezel. Silver rings from Colchester (Marshall, 1186), Chesterton Camp (Marshall, 1188) and London (Marshall, 1187) with incised shoulder decoration and a plain bezel are of the same type. Henkel illustrates a similar gold ring from Mainz<sup>30</sup> and others with more heavily cut shoulders (258, 259). Marshall<sup>31</sup> remarks on the popularity of rings in the third century, judged by the large number of surviving examples, but it is evident from his quotations from authors of the first century onwards that rings were quite commonly worn even to excess. Any finger, or the thumb, and any joint, not merely the lower joint, could carry a ring, though preference was for the fourth finger and except in Gaul and Britain (according to Pliny) the middle finger was generally avoided.

#### THE SILVER RING. PL. XXXI

The intaglio has been fully discussed by Mr. Martin Henig in *A44 L*, p. 282f. The ring is listed in *A44 XXXIX*, p. 31, 91.

This is a more massive ring than the gold (diam. 2.4-2.8 cm) and more ornate but not unlike it in shape (Marshall, E xxxii) and obviously of much the same date in the third century. The hoop and bezel are fully decorated with volutes and this is unusual. Normally the back is left plain. There are two rings in the British Museum with fully decorated hoops but a plain bezel (Marshall, 534, 537). A bronze ring with traces of gilding is decorated all round (1440). Henkel illustrates two fully ornamented rings, both gold, from Sendling and Baden in Aargau (258, 259) and there are, probably of fourth century date, rings resembling these but with the decoration carried a stage further, the volutes being pierced and not merely incised.

These two rings are about a century later than the silver brooch, which seems to be the latest piece of the earlier jewellery, and by contrast with these pieces can be placed in the general context of western jewellery with no particular provincial associations. The two rings may have been bought by the last owner, the other pieces inherited.

#### THE SMALLER GOLD RING

As noted above (p. 225), no description exists of this ring with its stone lost

<sup>30</sup> F. Henkel, *Die Römischen Fingerringe des Rheinlandes* (1913), 241.

<sup>31</sup> *Op. cit.* (footnote 29), xxv-xxvii.

in antiquity, and it was not with the other items recovered after the theft in 1951.

#### THE DATE OF THE HOARD

This cannot be as early as Sir Arthur Evans suggested, the end of the second century.<sup>32</sup> The period of the two rings makes this plain. It is probable that the hoard was concealed at the end of the third century, a conclusion reached long ago by J. P. Gibson, for quite a different reason. In 1897, three years after the jewellery was found, a hoard of 120 coins was dug up in an extra-mural building at Great Chesters, the bath-house.<sup>33</sup> All were of the second half of the third century, and Gibson very reasonably argued that the same occasion had also caused the burial of the hoard of jewellery.<sup>34</sup> The guard-chamber would not have been a suitable hiding place, unless the fort were about to be abandoned temporarily, but it would be easy to locate again. The character of the rings and the discovery of scale-armour with the jewellery imply that the last owner was one of the garrison. The obvious context would seem to be A.D. 296, when Allectus gathered troops to oppose Constantius Chlorus.

DOROTHY CHARLESWORTH

#### 2. TWO REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CRUCIFIXION ON LATE PRE-CONQUEST CARVED STONES FROM BOTHAL, NORTHUMBERLAND. Pl. XXXII

Two iconographically distinct types of crucifixion are represented on the carved stones from Bothal, found in the restoration of the church c. 1887, since 1888 in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne,<sup>35</sup> and now in the Museum of Antiquities.

A simple type of crucifixion is on a fragment of a sandstone shaft, accession no. 1956.204.A (Pl. XXXII left). It is apparently set low on one broad face, though the shaft is manifestly incomplete at the bottom, where the stone is broken, and the design on all four faces is unfinished. The meander, step and irregular interlace patterns which form the rest of the decoration suggest a date late in the pre-Conquest period.

The crucifixion face is framed vertically by heavy and crudely carved roll mouldings. The crucifixion itself has only the figure of Christ, cut off at about knee-level, and without cross or attendant figures. The carving is very worn, but clearly the body is depicted frontally, the head, trunk and legs, and arms.

<sup>32</sup> *Arch.* LV, 194.

<sup>33</sup> *AA2* XXIV, 63.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>35</sup> Only one was identified by Hodges in his note on the presentation of the stones to the Society, 28 Jan. 1888, *P.S.A.N.2* III, 234. The stones have received very little attention since their discovery.

themselves forming the shape of the cross. Christ is portrayed in a short skirted dress, but it is impossible now to determine whether it was a loincloth or a tunic. The most distinctive feature of the carving is the manner in which the background has been cut away around the figure, especially above, where the cutting follows the line of the arms and head and by a very simple technique suggests a halo or canopy. It is impossible to say whether the area above was meant to be left blank, and the apparent simplicity of this face may be rather misleading.

Parallels to such a simple type need be no more than fortuitous, but two points arise which may be worth making. The placing of a crucifixion on the shaft of the cross reflects a conservative Hiberno-Saxon tradition which persisted in Northumbria and Mercia side by side with the newer fashion of placing it in a more prominent position on the head of the cross itself, which means that position is not so clearly a criterion of date in England as it is in Ireland.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, the absence of the cross in the crucifixion scene is very rare anywhere, and in England occurs only at Bothal and, on both a hogback and a cross, at Gosforth in Cumberland.<sup>37</sup> I do not suggest a direct connection here, but only a possible explanation of the type: that is, that while the positioning of the scene reflects a conservative taste, the depiction may have been influenced by the cross-head type, where in most instances a cross directly behind the figure of Christ is omitted as redundant.

The second crucifixion, on stone no. 1956.205.A, may not have been identified initially<sup>38</sup> partly because of the crude picked technique of the carving and partly because only the lower part of the figure of Christ survives. He is depicted frontally without sagging of body or legs, with His feet turned out and on the ground, and dressed in a short-skirted garment dipping at the sides: again it is impossible to tell whether the garment is a loincloth or a tunic. As in the first example there is no cross behind the figure. On the left are the legs and turned out feet of a figure depicted frontally, and the end of a vertical strip, possibly the shaft of the spear. On the right is a figure lacking only his head; and it is his stance, that of the spear- or sponge-bearer, with his weapon or rod grasped in both hands and in the act of piercing Christ's side or holding up the sponge with the bitter drink, which makes the identification of the scene certain. Outside Ireland it is more likely to be the sponge-bearer on Christ's left, but as the end of the implement is missing it is impossible to be certain.

Two features of the right-hand figure suggest that the carver had some familiarity with the iconography of the crucifixion as it was portrayed in Carolingian and Ottonian ivories and manuscripts from the ninth to the

<sup>36</sup> The cross-head type first appears in the ninth century. The Crucifixion is found on the shafts of crosses of the ninth and later centuries at e.g. Alnmouth (Northumberland), Aycliffe (Co. Durham), Nassington (Northants.), Halton (Lancs.) and Gosforth (Cumberland), and there-

fore in areas which had strong Irish influence as well as in more Anglian areas.

<sup>37</sup> W. G. Collingwood, *Northumbrian Crosses of the Pre-Norman Age* (1927), Figs. 184 and 212.

<sup>38</sup> See footnote 35.

eleventh centuries. The first is the conventionalised rocky ground on which He stands. Early crucifixion scenes, as in the sixth century Rabula Gospels,<sup>39</sup> sometimes had a full scenic background. In the West, from the ninth century onwards, this was very widely adopted in the form of a strip of ground beneath the feet of the attendant figures, even when these are shown placed one above the head of another.<sup>40</sup> The second feature is the stance of the sponge-bearer. This is based on a type also found as early as the Rabula Gospels; but it is a fact that, from the ninth century, there was a tendency in some schools of Western art to render the spear- and sponge-bearers as slightly, or sometimes as very, grotesque figures, by exaggerating the pose, which in any case is not a natural one. In some schools this takes the form of showing a frontal or half-turned figure with the legs and hips swinging in an exaggerated curve towards the cross, while the upper half of the body leans away. This is the type of figure represented at Bothal: the model might well have been one of the Liuthard group of ivories.<sup>41</sup> Northumbria in the late pre-Conquest period was in many ways a conservative area, but there are signs that outside influences were present, even if not generally popular.

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3. AN ANGLO-SAXON GRAVE-SLAB FROM HURWORTH, CO. DURHAM.  
Pl. XXXIII Figs. 1-3

In the Museum of Antiquities are three fragments of what appears to be an Anglo-Saxon grave-slab. Their accession is noted in a previous volume,<sup>42</sup> and they were given to the Museum by Dr. A. MacDonald who discovered them. Dr. MacDonald's letters in the Records (Accessions) File record that the stone was lying in three pieces amongst a pile of stones in a corner of a lane at Hurworth, having been removed there from a garden rockery where it had lain intact for about half a century. Before that there is no certain knowledge of its history. Dr. MacDonald felt that the stone came from the neighbourhood of the church—either the present one or possibly an earlier one. Another Anglo-Saxon stone is already known from Hurworth, at present in the Monks' Dormitory, Durham (no. XXX). Greenwell stated that it had been "found in some repairs made in the church at Hurworth and presented by Miss Scurfield"<sup>43</sup> and it is not impossible that the present stone was found

<sup>39</sup> Illustrated in P. Thoby, *Le Crucifix des Origines au Concile de Trente* (Nantes, 1959), Pl. V, Fig. 11.

<sup>40</sup> See for example A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen der Karolingischen und Sächsischen Kaiser VII-XI Jahrhundert I* (Berlin, 1914), Pl. XXXVI, no. 85.

<sup>41</sup> See Goldschmidt, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXXVI, no. 85, XXIII, no. 56, LVIII, no. 136, for examples of the Liuthard type.

<sup>42</sup> *Arch. Ael.* 4 XLI (1963), 223 (no. 1962.7)—also noted in *Medieval Archaeology* VIII (1964), 232.

<sup>43</sup> F. Haverfield and W. Greenwell, *A Catalogue of the Sculptured and Inscribed Stones in the Monks' Dormitory, Durham* (1899), 97.



a



b

The Hurworth grave-slab. See note 3  
a (upper), face 1; b face 2

*Photos. University Library, Newcastle upon Tyne*



on the same occasion and made its way into a local rockery (itself not far from the Rectory) rather than the Durham Collection.

The stone is of gritty sandstone, and now measures 3 ft 0 in (91.4 cm) long, c. 1 ft 9 $\frac{3}{4}$  in (55.3 cm) wide, and c. 7 $\frac{1}{4}$  in (18.5 cm) high.<sup>44</sup> There is no sign of a socket such as one would find on a base-stone for a cross,<sup>45</sup> and the dimensions and design are such that I think it highly unlikely that this could be part of a cross-shaft. The fact that ornament is to be found on three edges indicates that it was a recumbent grave-slab and not an upright slab (for then the decoration of the top edge would not have been visible). Both the top and bottom of the slab have been removed and the original width is not ascertainable, but some ornament does remain on three of the original edges.

From a detailed examination of the ornament of Face I, which is best preserved, it seems clear that the interlace design was essentially that listed by J. Romilley Allen as no. 638.<sup>46</sup> This is a design based on a pair of loops facing each other—an element which appears in similar design in local sculpture at Croft (no. 636), Melsonby (no. 635), and Ripon (no. 638).<sup>47</sup> The Ripon example is particularly notable as it is identical with the Hurworth design except in the terminations. The terminations as shown in Fig. 1 are fairly obvious ones, being based on the Stafford Knott (J.R.A. 214), and what one might term the "Butterfly Knot" (J.R.A. 378/666A). Alternative terminations to the left-hand end of the design are given in Fig. 2, which would fit the remains as visible (see Pl. XXXIII), but in my view they are less probable as they would affect the balance and open nature of the design as a whole. It is not without significance that the three local parallels noted above for this design are themselves executed in an open manner, and, indeed, in discussing the Croft stone Professor Cramp has referred to "plait-work with widely-spaced knots in the Easby/Otley manner."<sup>48</sup>

The designs on the other two faces were also executed in an open manner. Unfortunately that on the left-hand edge (Face 3) has been so damaged that no attempt can be made at reconstructing the design, although it is clear that it was an interlace pattern. Face 2 (Pl. XXXIII), although very damaged, can be tentatively reconstructed in part. Although the design of interlace strands and loops is at first sight unintelligible, it may be resolved into an eight-cord plait with a vertical break to give the inner loops, and then terminated with outer loops—the whole put sideways (see Fig. 3). J. Romilley Allen does

<sup>44</sup> All measurements maximum. It is not possible to determine whether the longest surviving side is in fact the length or width of this stone.

<sup>45</sup> See for instance the Hurworth base-stone, loc. cit.

<sup>46</sup> *Early Christian Monuments of Scotland* (1893), 246.

<sup>47</sup> W. G. Collingwood, "Anglian and Anglo-Danish Sculpture in the North Riding of Yorkshire", *Yorks. Arch. Journal* XIX (1907), Croft a, Melsonby c; and "Anglian and Anglo-Danish

Sculpture in the West Riding of Yorkshire", *ibid.* XXIII (1914), Ripon e.

<sup>48</sup> R. J. Cramp, *The Monastic Arts of Northumbria* (Arts Council Exhibition Catalogue, 1967), 28. For illustrations see Collingwood, loc. cit. (1907), Easby b, c; *ibid.* (1914), Otley p; also R. J. Cramp, "The Position of the Otley Crosses in English Sculpture of the Eighth to Ninth Centuries", *Kolloquium über Spätantike und Frühmittelalterliche Skulptur*, II. (1970), Pl. 46-4.

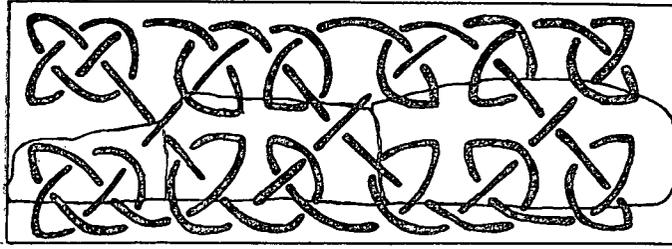


FIG 1

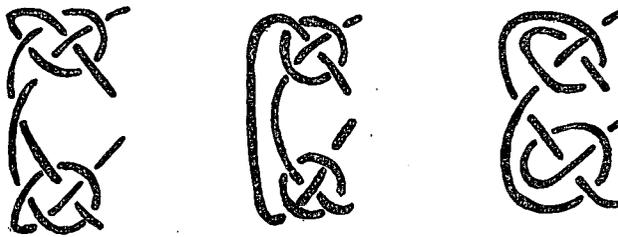


FIG 2

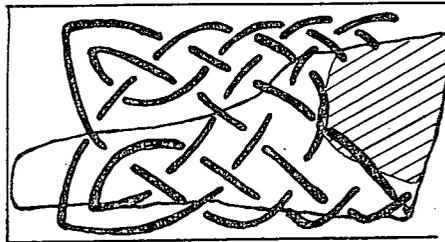


FIG 3



The Hurworth Grave-slab. See note 3.

Drawn by C. D. Morris.

not list this terminated pattern as such, and I can find no exact parallel, although similar ones may be seen at sites such as Ilkley and Melsonby.<sup>49</sup> With so little decoration remaining it seems futile to build anything on this. A point of interest is that the proposed reconstruction suggests that the stone was broken on the bottom at an angle, and at least the suggested gap at the left-hand end agrees with that on Face I.

The height of the slab with the design as reconstructed would be about 1 ft 1 in (33.0 cm) as calculated from the dimensions of the remaining fragments of the designs. This is unusually large and contrasts, for instance, with the height of the Melsonby slabs which are 6 in (15.2 cm) and  $7\frac{1}{4}$  in (18.4 cm) maximum height as seen at present.<sup>50</sup> Indeed the dimensions of the stone overall are interesting because the present "length" and "width" (as I have taken them) indicate proportions of c. 3 ft 0 in  $\times$  2 ft 0 in (the Melsonby slabs are, as remaining, c. 2 ft 9 in  $\times$  1 ft 0 in and 2 ft 6 in  $\times$   $11\frac{3}{4}$  in maximum). However it is possible that the 3 ft 0 in measurement is really the width, and this might be taken to indicate a double grave, but there is no evidence to make this point more than speculative. Similarly one could not suggest a length for such a grave-slab.

The decoration of the slab, particularly Face I, as shown above, links the slab with the work of the Yorkshire schools of carving in the late Anglian period at places such as Ripon, Melsonby, and Croft. The openness of the design has already been commented upon, and is a feature of sites such as Otley and Melsonby with carving demonstrably of the late eighth and ninth centuries.<sup>51</sup> It would apparently thus seem to fit best into, say, a ninth century context—particularly as there are no obvious signs of Viking influence in the design. However with so much of the total surface area damaged it is difficult to dogmatise, and absence of specifically Viking motifs is no guarantee against a late date. A font at Bingley, and a cross-base at Rastrick, for instance, with open plaits of a debased nature, are dated by Collingwood to the eleventh century.<sup>52</sup> But, although the carving is not delicate (mainly because such a coarse stone was used), I would not argue that it was particularly debased, and would see this slab as being a product of the end of the ninth century or early tenth century—a period before the onset of the wide close straps of the Viking period in Teesdale and North Yorkshire. It comes at the end of the Anglian period of monumental art, when the old designs were being repeated, but in an uninspired way.<sup>53</sup> There is a strong contrast with the work of the sculptor of the cross-base who has executed neat interlace and key-patterns in a manner very similar to the work at Croft, and which would perhaps be

<sup>49</sup> Loc. cit. (note 47), Melsonby a; Ilkley Museum i. This is in fact an alternative termination for Face I: see Fig. 2c.

<sup>50</sup> Loc. cit. It is quite possible that they were larger: Melsonby b, for example, has a vine-scroll design which has clearly been cut through.

<sup>51</sup> Refs. in note 48 above. T. D. Kendrick, *Anglo-Saxon Art to A.D. 900* (1938), 197.

<sup>52</sup> W. G. Collingwood, *Northumbrian Crosses of the Pre-Norman Age* (1927), 68, Fig. 86, 174-5, Fig. 214.

<sup>53</sup> A similar design can be seen on the top of one of the Kirkdale slabs, put into this date-bracket by Collingwood, *ibid.*, 16-17 and Fig. 21.

dated to an earlier part of the ninth century. It is significant that this more aesthetically pleasing design is executed on softer stone, and so it is possible that the contrast is between the work of a man who knew the appropriate stone for carving interlace designs, and a man who did not. The Viking influx into Northumbria is generally seen as marking a return to barbaric forms of ornament and design, but stones such as the Hurworth slab would indicate that monumental stone-carving had already lost its vitality by that time.

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