

SOME RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS FROM NORFOLK

THE HILGAY HOARD (Figs. 1-3)

In c. 1965 two socketed axes were found by Mr. G. E. Osler (*penes*), a relative of one of the authors (S.J.A.), while recutting a dyke in Little West Fen, Hilgay (Co. No. 13891; TL 612969). Later, in July 1979, Mr. Osler found a palstave next to this spot after the field had been harrowed.

The objects (Fig. 1):

- A. Socketed axe (wt. 255gms) with rounded square mouth. Beneath the bulging collar is a single horizontal moulding from which springs a wide loop. The body gently expands laterally towards the blade which is splayed. External lateral casting flashes are still visible and a vertical ridge on the two inner faces of the socket are preserved.
- B. Socketed axe (wt. 270gms) with rounded square mouth. Below the slightly expanded collar is a single low horizontal moulding from which springs low broad loop. The body flares slightly towards the blade but this is not splayed. As in A. external flashes and internal ridges survive.
- C. Unlooped palstave (wt. 390gms) with low flanges which do not rise higher than the stop-ridge. The flanges are continued on the upper part of the broad flaring blade in part of a decorative trident motif below the stop-ridge.

Discussion:

Although not observed *in situ* it seems probable that the two socketed axes were originally deposited together and therefore constitute a hoard, or part of a hoard. In form they are local variants of the 'South Eastern Type', a type commonly found in Norfolk either as stray finds or in hoards, for example Eaton (Norfolk Museums Service 1977, fig. 59), Carleton Rode (*ibid* Pl. V, A1), West Caister (Lawson, 1979a), etc. In the Hilgay examples the normal heavy bulging collar is subdued. Hoard associations for this type are frequently of the 'Carp's Tongue Tradition' and consequently it is placed in the Ewart Park industrial phase of the Late Bronze Age, dating from the ninth and eighth centuries B.C. (Burgess 1974, 210; 1979, 269).

It is doubtful that the unlooped palstave was deposited contemporaneously with the socketed axes. This low-flanged palstave type (Burgess 1974, 203; Group III) belongs to the earlier part of the Taunton industrial phase of the Middle Bronze Age, dating from the fourteenth century B.C. (Burgess 1976, Lawson 1979b, 46, 60-1). The trident decoration is formed from a rounded shield motif which links the flanges of the haft and from the blade's central mid-rib which continues through the shield motif to the stop ridge. Rowlands (1976, 28-9) points out that the distribution of such 'developed shield pattern' palstaves (his Class 1, groups 2-4) shows the East Anglian monopoly of the type, a concentration in the fen area near Cambridge displaying a continuity from that of the simpler 'shield pattern' palstaves. However, the type is found throughout South East England (*ibid*, map 3) and the trident motif is common in north and

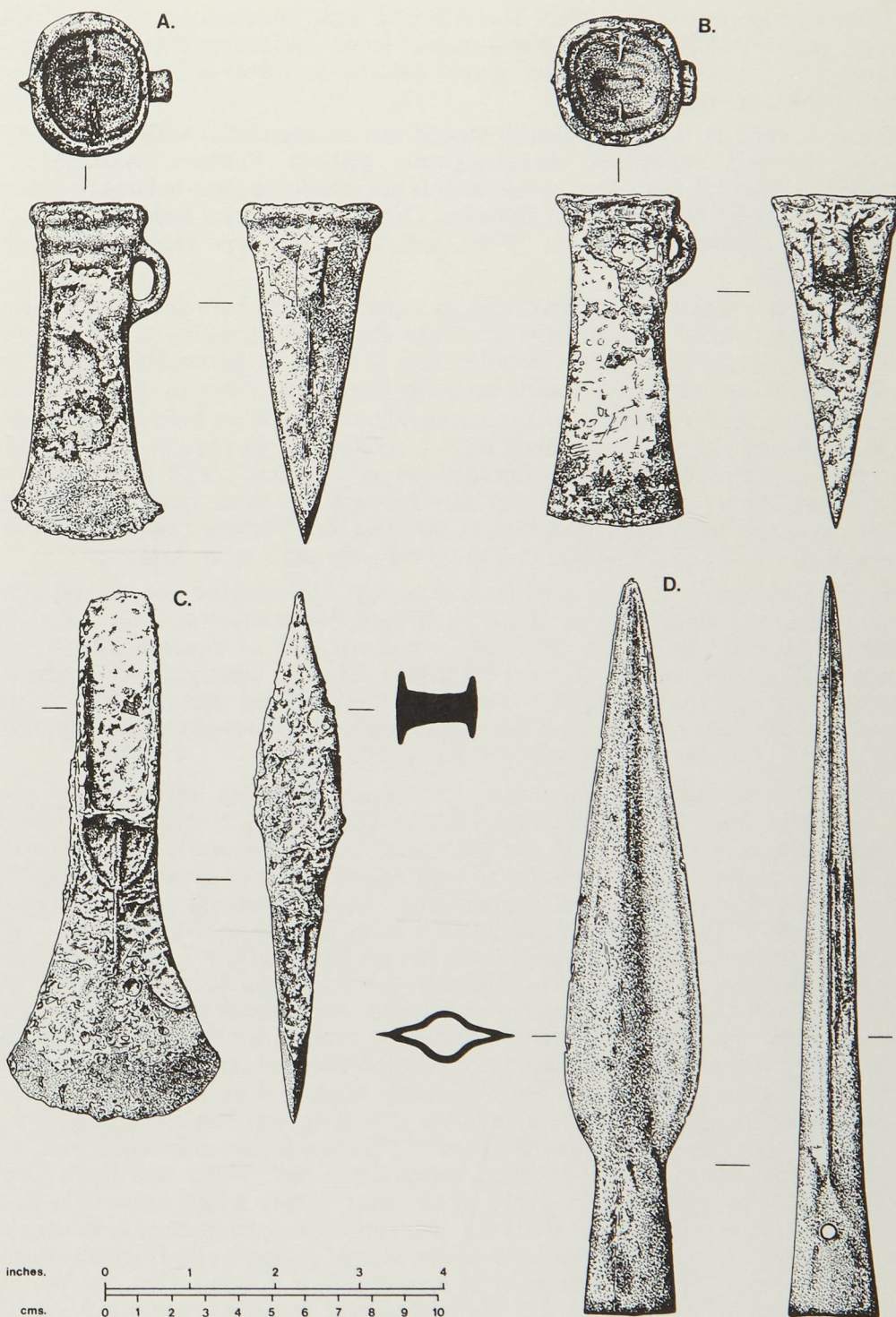


Fig. 1
 Finds from Hilgay (A, B and C) and Southery (D). Scale 1 : 2

west Europe (Butler, 1963, 55). The size and lack of side-loop of the Hilgay example place it in Rowlands' Class 1, group 2. An indication that this group is chronologically close to the earlier 'shield pattern' palstaves is the rounded outline of the trident motif.

Hence, it appears that the palstave should not be associated with the socketed axes as the two types are chronologically distinct. Palstave fragments are occasionally found in Late Bronze Age hoards but usually as scrap in large founders' hoards (e.g. Carleton Rode, East Dereham (Norfolk Museums Service 1977, 32) or Gorleston (Clough and Green 1978), sometimes the type represented being late (e.g. Eaton).

To many it might seem unjustifiable to separate finds from the same provenance. However, this find highlights the need for careful scrutiny of the circumstances of discovery of apparent hoards. Only if it can be demonstrated that the objects under discussion were almost certainly buried together can the assemblage be called a hoard. Proximity may be a coincidence and as we have seen need not necessarily justify calling those finds from a restricted area a hoard. Where doubt exists the assemblage should be referred to as an 'area find', or, if there is greater uncertainty, simply a 'group'. In this terminology the three finds from Hilgay should originally have been recorded as an 'area find' before the present study showed it to consist of a hoard of two socketed axes and a stray palstave.

Precision in the provenancing of finds is essential to establish the true relationship of separated finds. The need for such precision is illustrated by the distribution of Bronze Age metalwork in the southern fens of Norfolk, one of the richest areas in the country in such finds (Fig. 2). This clearly demonstrates an abundance of activity surrounding an as yet undiscovered metalworking centre throughout the Bronze Age, the existence of which was brought to our attention as early as 1923 in the work of Sir Cyril Fox (1923, 68).

A distribution map shows the concentration of metalwork in the shallow peat fen, especially from Hockwold-cum-Wilton to Stoke Ferry where the fen abutts the chalk scarp. It appears that the geological base significantly influences the distribution on the fen edge as the concentration is not as great where the fen abutts the Gault, Greensand and Kimmeridge Clay or overlying gravel westwards from Wretton to Fordham and northwards from Denver to Wimbotsham. Few finds come from the higher ground; there are no bronzes from Lynford, Foulden and Diddlington on the chalk, nor Fincham, Stradsett and Crimpleham on the Boulder Clay that covers the Greensand. Clearly, for some reason the deposition of hoards, the casual loss or votive offering of bronze implements was directly connected with the fens. In a number of parishes the find spots of bronzes which are not accurately provenanced are frequently described as situated in the fen which forms part of the parish; for example, the Boughton Fen hoard (2602) was found 'in digging peat'; the Feltwell hoard (5295) was found in Feltwell Fen, and the Oxborough hoard (2615) in 'Mrs. Warne's turf-fen', while that from Stoke Ferry (4725) was found on the banks of the river Wissey which crosses the fens. The distribution also shows that finds are not forthcoming from deep fen deposits; there are no finds recorded from the western side of Feltwell and Hockwold-cum-Wilton, nor from Welney, Nordelph or Upwell. It is possible that the present known distribution does not reflect the true picture as other bronzes may remain buried beneath deposits of the Upper Peat, this deposit having accumulated to a variable thickness since the Early Bronze Age (Churchill 1970). Previously the digging of peat for fuel has brought to light Bronze Age metalwork from some

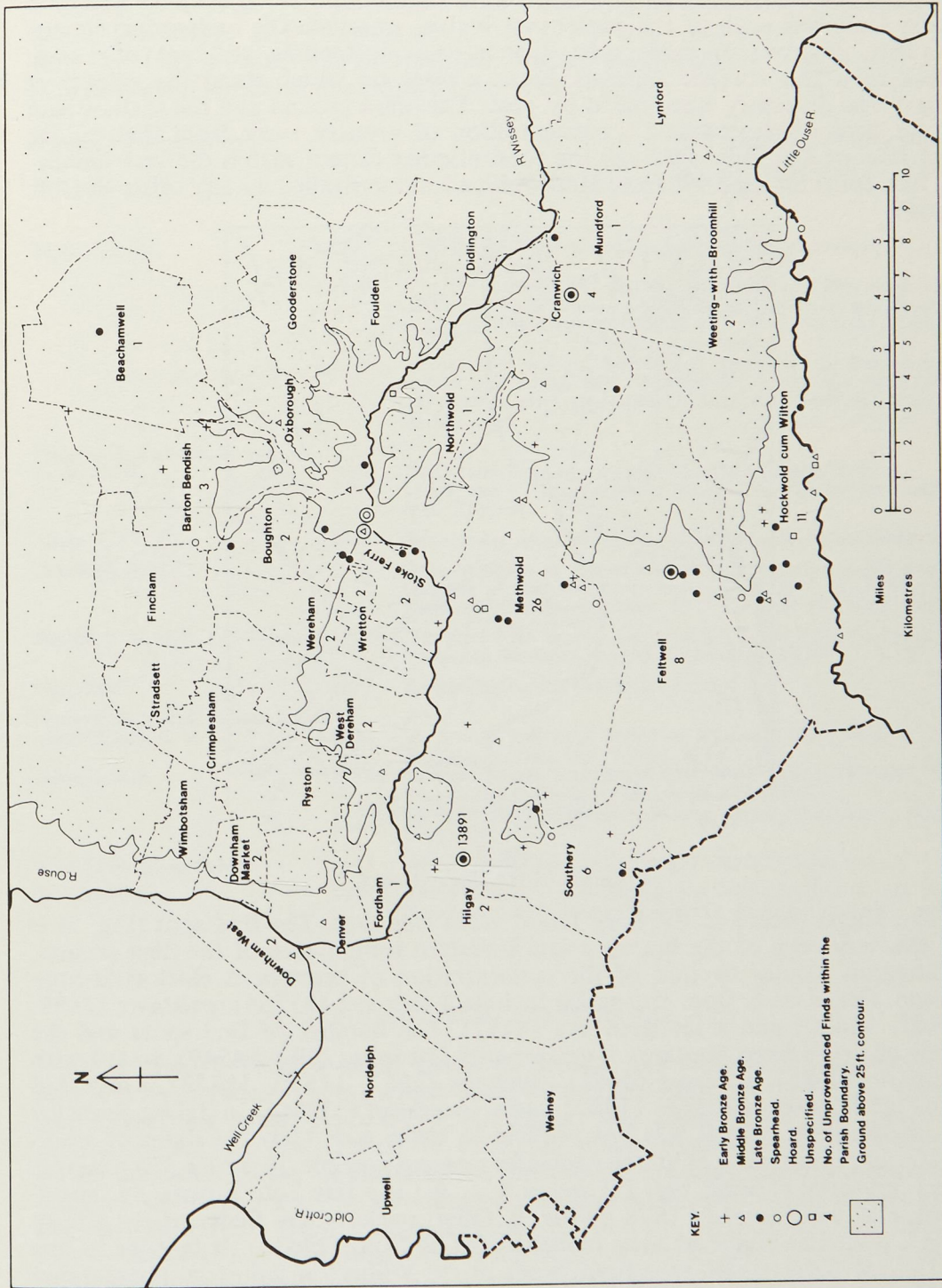


Fig. 2
Distribution of recorded Bronze Age metalwork from the southern fens of Norfolk

depth, for example, a basal-looped spearhead from the Queen's Ground, Methwold (Co. No. 5250; Godwin et al 1934). Most of the reported finds have probably come from areas where the peat cover is thin, or where the underlying mineral deposits protrude forming sand islands. An upstanding remnant of Lower Cretaceous and Jurassic deposits forms a ridge on which stand the villages of Hilgay and Southery surrounded by peat. This hard ground and the shallow peat on its flanks has produced a concentration of bronzes away from that on the east side of the fens, although the total number cannot match the vast number of find spots (at least 47) from Methwold; a total unrivalled by any other Norfolk parish.

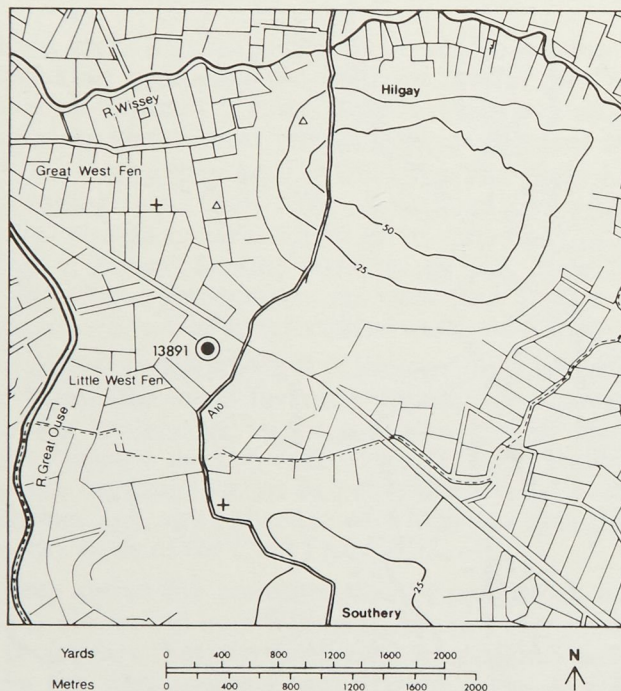


Fig. 3
Location of the Hilgay Hoard

The Hilgay hoard is the only hoard from this area. The find spot (Fig. 3) is on the very edge of the fen on a south-western prominence of the high ground, a situation similar to that of the concentration of bronzes at Hockwold-cum-Wilton. Other finds from the parish include a flax axe (15766), palstaves (2499, 11405, 14420) and a socketed axe (4452). The number of find spots and the range of types from Southery is greater with flat axes (2593, 14549), an awl with a burial (14685), a dagger (4458), palstaves (2567, 11950, 11949), a socketed axe (2569), swords (2566, 11949) and a spearhead (13890). In dating finds for the distribution map it was not possible to assess accurately the dates of spearheads, as examination of all the examples was not possible. However, the example from Southery (13890, Fig. 1D, *penes* S. J. A.) is a fine Late Bronze Age spearhead, and was found in 1978 by Mr. P. Osler, uncle of the finder of the Hilgay hoard, after the field had been ploughed (NGR TL61729435). It belongs to one of the most diagnostic spearhead types of the Wilburton industrial phase dated to the tenth century B.C. The hollow blade, generally of lozenge section, but sometimes of elliptical section, is characteristic and is evidence of the competence

of Late Bronze Age smiths in producing fine hollow castings. The type is not common in Norfolk, but an overall British distribution shows one concentration in the Cambridge area (Burgess et al. 1972, Fig. 1a), indicating the continuity into the Late Bronze Age of the East Anglian metalworking tradition demonstrated for the Middle Bronze Age by Rowlands (1976).

(Private Possession)

Andrew J. Lawson and
Steven J. Ashley

- | | | |
|---|-------|---|
| Burgess, C. B. | 1974 | 'The Bronze Age' in C. Renfrew (ed.) <i>British Prehistory: a new outline</i> , 165-232 |
| | 1976 | 'The Gwithian Mould and the forerunners of the south Welsh axes' in C. Burgess and R. Miket (eds.) <i>Settlement and Economy in the third and second Millennia B.C.</i> , Brit. Archaeol. Repts. 33, 69-79 |
| | 1979 | 'A find from Boyton, Suffolk; and the end of the Bronze Age in Britain and Ireland' in C. Burgess and D. Coombs (eds.) <i>Bronze Age Hoards; some finds old and new</i> , Brit. Archaeol. Repts. 67, 26-283 |
| Burgess, C., Coombs, D. and Davies, D. G. | 1972 | 'The Broadward Complex and Barbed Spearheads' in F. Lynch and C. Burgess (eds.) <i>Prehistoric Man in Wales and the West</i> , 211-284. |
| Butler, J. J. | 1963 | 'Bronze Age Connection across the North Sea', <i>Palaeohistoria</i> IX |
| Churchill, D. M. | 1970 | 'Post Neolithic to Romano-British sedimentation in the southern fenlands of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk' in C. W. Phillips (ed.) <i>The Fenland in Roman Times</i> , R. G. S. Research Series, 5, 132-142. |
| Clough, T. H. McK. and Green, C. | 1978 | 'The first Late Bronze Age founders hoard from Gorleston, Gt. Yarmouth, Norfolk', <i>Norfolk Archaeology</i> XXXVII, i, 1-18. |
| Fox, Sir C. | 1923 | <i>Archaeology of the Cambridge Region</i> . |
| Godwin, H. & M. E., Clark, J. G. D. and Clifford, H. M. | 1934 | 'A Bronze spearhead found in Methwold Fen, Norfolk', <i>Proc. Prehist. Soc. East Angl.</i> VII, iii, 395-8. |
| Lawson, A. J. | 1979a | 'A Late Bronze Age hoard from West Caister, Norfolk', in C. Burgess and D. Coombs (eds.) 1979, 173-180. |
| | 1979b | 'A Late Middle Bronze Age hoard from Hunstanton, Norfolk' <i>Ibid.</i> , 42-92. |
| Norfolk Museums Service | 1977 | <i>Bronze Age Metalwork in Norwich Castle Museum</i> 2nd ed. |
| Rowlands, M. J. | 1976 | <i>The Production and Distribution of Metalwork in the Middle Bronze Age in Southern Britain</i> , Brit. Archaeol. Repts. 31. |

THE HORNING HOARD (Figs. 4-5)

In February 1980 a small group of Bronze Age metalwork was found by Mrs. Wendy Brinded (*penes*) whilst using a metal-detector in a large field directly east of Horning parish church. (Fig. 4). Earlier Mrs. Brinded had been systematically searching the west side of the field, but while crossing from her parked car at the northeast corner of the field she fortuitously detected the first Bronze Age find, a socketed axe. Further searching on this, and subsequent occasions produced the remaining finds from a restricted area c. 10m. by 8m. (NGR TG35781653; Co. No. 8446/c3). All the finds were within 10cm of the surface of the plough-soil. Although many pieces of Medieval and Post-Medieval metalwork and coins, including fine enamelled horse pendants, have been found on the field, the only other prehistoric find has been a small flat axe. This was found c. 100m. west of

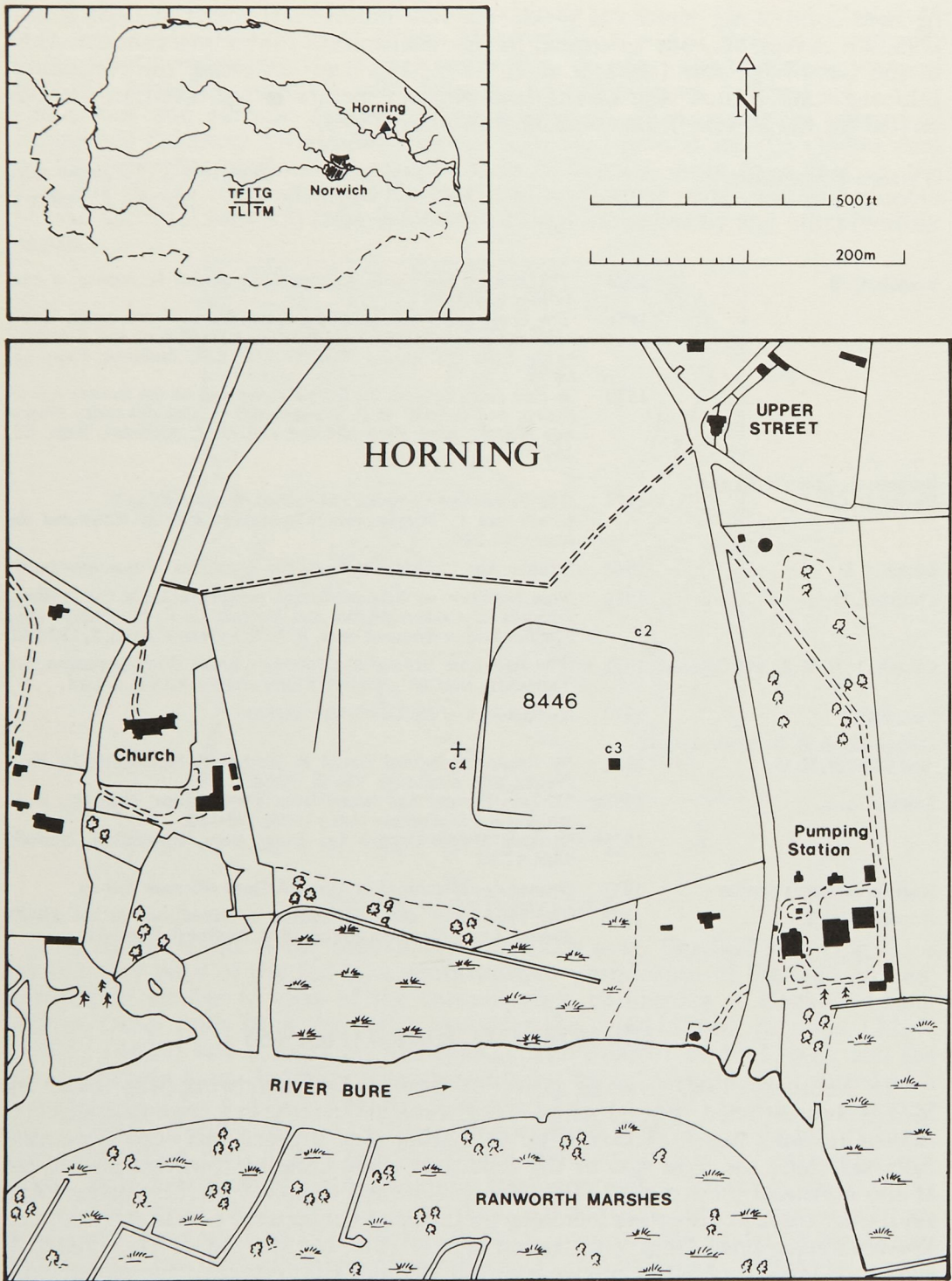


Fig. 4
Horning: location of Bronze Age finds

the other Bronze Age finds (8664/c4). The Bronze Age finds, with the exception of the flat axe, can easily be distinguished from the later metalwork due to their bright green, lustrous patina. It is probable that these pieces were buried together, and have since been disturbed by the plough.

Description (Fig. 5):

1. Socketed axe (wt. 233.8gm.) with rounded square mouth. Below the bulging collar is a single horizontal moulding from which springs a stout loop with rounded section. The body has flat faces and a flared cutting edge. Casting flashes and internal vertical ribs remain. The collar is poorly cast and the blade blunt.
2. Socketed axe (wt. 201.5gm.) similar to No. 1, but the body expands to the cutting edge which is not flared. The socket is crushed and the blade blunt.
3. Blade fragment of socketed axe with flaring blade similar to No. 1 (wt. 27.0gm.).
4. Fragmentary leaf-shaped socketed spearhead with slightly bevelled blade. The long socket bears peg-holes midway between its base and the base of the wings. The socket cavity extends slightly into the wings, but these are not hollow. Four fragments (total wt. 56.2gm.) have been recovered.
- 4a. Fragment (wt. 5.9gm.) of the base of the wing of a socketed spearhead with markedly bevelled blade. Although a similar fragment is missing from the spearhead (No. 4 above) this piece does not conjoin the fragments of that spearhead. This has a marked bevel and it is from an unfinished item, a pronounced casting flash remaining. It is, therefore, most doubtful that this forms part of No. 4, and it is the sole evidence of a second spearhead.
5. Fragment (wt. 3.2gm.) of an oval cast bronze bracelet with D-shaped section.
6. Small, squat flat axe (wt. 101.0gm.) with broad butt and simple curved blade.

Discussion:

The flat axe, No. 6, was found some distance from the other objects and, unlike them, is in a poor, corroded state. The axe is of the 'thick-butted type', a type relatively uncommon in Britain (Burgess 1974, note 171) and probably of Irish origin (cf Harbison 1969), being among the earliest metal objects imported into Southern Britain contemporaneously with, but possibly independently from the early Beaker traditions of the late third millennium B.C. (Case 1966: 1977). Although Ireland seems the most probable source for these axes, a continental origin for one thick-butted axe from Norfolk has been suggested (Needham 1979, 274). The Horning example is, however, diminutive and lacks the characteristics of the Lough Ravel and Ballybeg types of axe which are the earliest in Ireland. Its source therefore cannot be precisely traced. The poor, corroded state compared with the other bronzes from the field can be accounted for by the high, if not virtually pure, copper content of the axe, similar to other, analysed, examples from Norfolk (Norfolk Museums Service 1977, 19) and the British Isles (Coghlan and Case 1957). Due to its early date it is most unlikely that this axe should be associated with the other finds.

The socketed axes (Nos. 1, 2 and 3) are regional variants of the 'South Eastern type' similar to those of the Hilgay hoard (Lawson and Ashley above).

The spearhead is of a simple type also commonly found in hoards with Carp's Tongue tradition affinities, for example Aylsham (Clough 1971; Burgess,

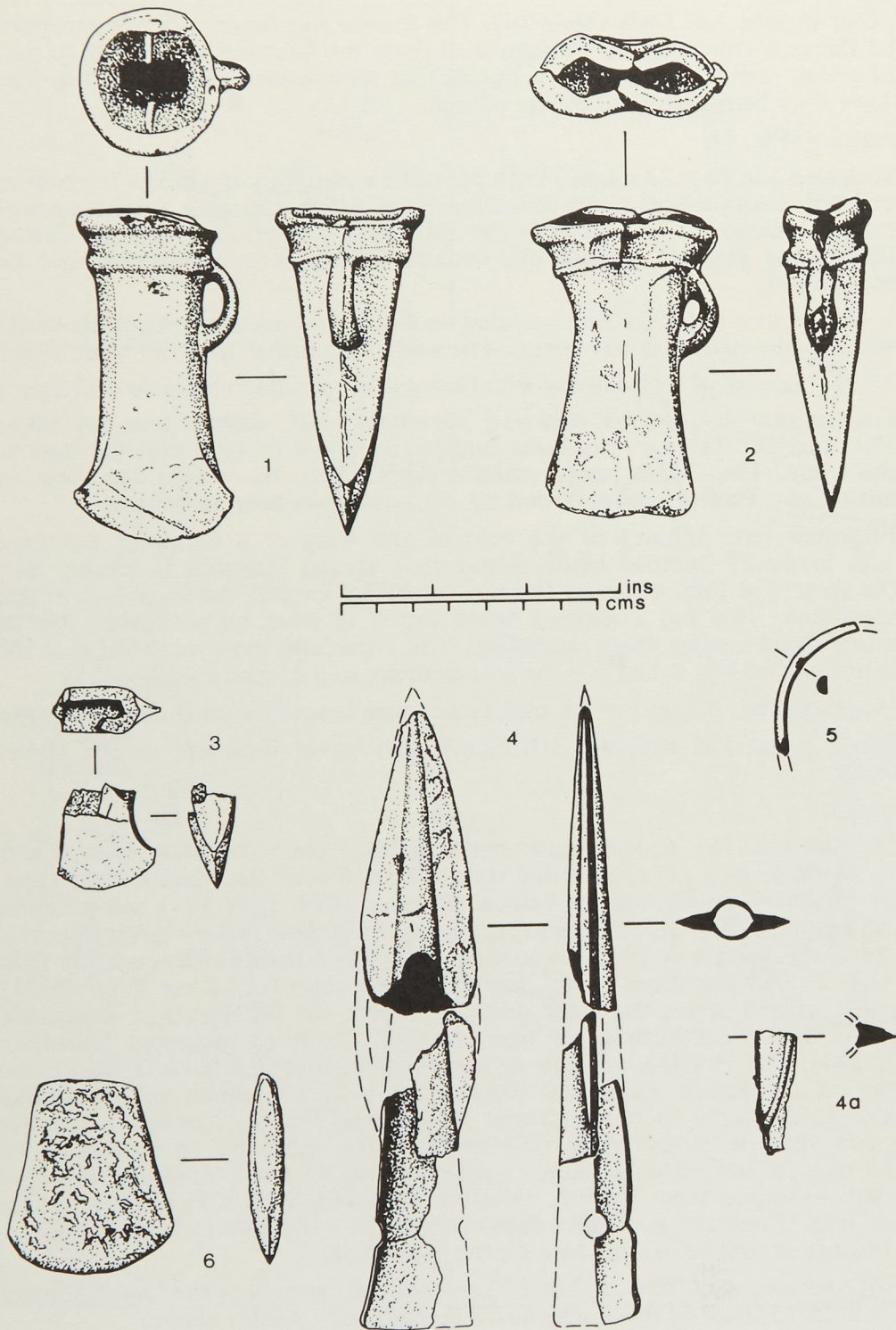


Fig. 5
 Horning: 1-5 Late Bronze Age; 6 Early Bronze Age

Coombs and Davies 1972, 232) and others of the Ewart Park phase (e.g. Gorleston I; Clough and Green 1978), dated approximately to the eighth century B.C. The type is, however, probably in use throughout the Late Bronze Age e.g. (Coombs 1975, 60; Powell 1948, 30).

The bracelet fragment is hard to parallel and is certainly unique among the hoards of Norfolk. Although personal ornaments are relatively common in hoards of the Middle Bronze Age (Rowlands 1976, Ch. II; 6) they are, with the exception of delicate pins, almost unknown from the Late Bronze Age. One site where ornaments, including bronze penannular bracelets are found is Heathery Burn Cave, Durham (*Inv. Arch.* G.B. 55). Spearheads from this site are also generally similar to that from Horning, and as the eponymous industrial tradition from Heathery Burn is also regarded as a regional facies of the Ewart Park phase (Burgess 1974, 210) it offers confirmation of the date of the Horning metalwork.

The Horning hoard contains a small number of objects and is comparable with that from Hilgay. The fact that the two hoards were deposited at either side of the county, 80kms. apart, demonstrates the extent of the regional metal-working tradition in the Late Bronze Age, although neither hoard is precisely dateable and hence may be only broadly contemporary. The Hilgay hoard is from the fens; the source of the tradition and an area rich in finds, whilst that from Horning is from Broadland; an area where such finds are scant. Horning parish itself forms a promontary between the rivers Ant and Bure and there is no other recorded Bronze Age metal work from either this parish or its neighbours, with the exception of a Middle Bronze Age palstave (Co. No. 8477) and a socketed axe (8478) from Woodbastwick, south of the river Bure and the marshes which flank it (Ranworth marshes). It has been pointed out that despite the concentration of metalwork in the southern fens no contemporary settlements are known. The evidence for these is almost non-existent from the rest of the county and only aerial photography has recorded a number of rectangular enclosures that may be suggested as the form of settlement at this time (Lawson forthcoming). It is therefore of great interest that the Horning metalwork has been found within a rectangular cropmark enclosure (Co. No. 8446/c2; Fig. 4) recorded by Prof. J. K. St. Joseph (Ref; VU 14-15) and plotted by Derek Edwards. This enclosure lies on flat land sloping gently southwards and overlooking the river Bure.

It would be foolhardy to state that the cropmark and metalwork are contemporary, especially as the majority of the finds from the surface of the field are of Medieval or later date. However, the enclosure is of a form which can be compared with more securely dated later Bronze Age enclosures in Southern Britain (cf Cunliffe 1974, 14-17). It is possible that the metalwork was bronze scrap collected for melting down and recasting into new objects within the confines of a settlement. Such industrial activity is further suggested by a number of small, amorphous pieces of melted bronze collected by Mrs. Brinded.

(Private Possession)

Andrew J. Lawson

- | | | |
|--|------|---|
| Burgess, C. | 1974 | 'The Bronze Age', in C. Renfrew (ed.) <i>British Prehistory; a new outline</i> , 165-232. |
| Burgess, C., Coombs, D., and Davies, D. G. | 1972 | 'The Broadward Complex and Barbed Spearheads' in F. Lynch and C. Burgess (eds.) <i>Prehistoric Man in Wales and the West</i> , 211-284. |
| Case, H. J. | 1966 | 'Were Beaker people the first metallurgists in Ireland?', <i>Palaeohistoria</i> XII, 141-77. |

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|------|---|
| | 1977 | 'The Beaker Culture in Britain and Ireland' in R. Mercer (ed.) <i>Beakers in Britain and Europe</i> , Brit. Archaeol. Repts. S26, 71-101. |
| Clough, T. H. McK. | 1971 | 'A Hoard of Late Bronze Age Metalwork from Aylsham, Norfolk', <i>Norfolk Archaeology</i> XXXV, ii, 159-69. |
| Clough, T. H. McK. and Green, C. | 1978 | 'The first Late Bronze Age founder's hoard from Gorleston, Gt. Yarmouth, Norfolk.' <i>Norfolk Archaeology</i> XXXVII, i, 1-18. |
| Coghlan, H. H. and Case, H. | 1957 | 'Early metallurgy of Copper in Ireland and Britain', <i>Proc. Prehist. Soc.</i> XXIII, 91-123. |
| Coombs, D. | 1975 | 'Bronze Age Weapon Hoards in Britain', <i>Archaeologia Atlantica</i> , I, 49-81. |
| Harbison, P. | 1969 | 'The Axes of the Early Bronze Age in Ireland', <i>Prähistorische Bronzefunde</i> , IX, Vol. I. |
| Lawson, A. J. forthcoming | | 'The Evidence for Settlement and Burial in Norfolk during the Later Bronze Age', <i>Brit. Archaeol. Rep.</i> |
| Needham, S. | 1979 | 'The Extent of Foreign Influence on Early Bronze Age Axe Development in Southern Britain', in Ryan, M. (ed.) <i>Proc. of the fifth Atlantic Colloquium</i> , Dublin 1979, 265-93. |
| Norfolk Museums Service | 1977 | <i>Bronze Age Metalwork in Norwich Castle Museum</i> , 2nd ed. |
| Powell, T. G. E. | 1948 | 'A Late Bronze Age Hoard from Welby, Leics.', <i>Archaeol. J.</i> CV, 27-40. |
| Rowlands, M. J. | 1967 | <i>The Production and Distribution of Metalwork in the Middle Bronze Age in Southern Britain</i> , Brit. Archaeol. Rep. 31. |

TWO IRON AGE LINCH-PINS FROM NORFOLK (Figs. 6-7)

In 1979 a linch-pin (Fig. 6) was found in the parish of Weeting-with-Broomhill (Site No. 16124). It consists of an iron bar of square section with one end embedded in a bronze cap. The cap is set slightly askew, although whether this is intentional or the result of pressure on the cap is uncertain. Above a sharply-moulded collar the cap expands to an almost spherical swelling pierced by a single transverse hole. Above this a second moulding, emphasized by a fine incised line close to its lower edge, is surmounted by a hemispherical boss. The boss is decorated with enamel-filled cells: a central circle of blue-green enamel is surrounded by three red *peltae*, which each culminate in yellow circles. The *peltae* and yellow circles are all surrounded by fine incised lines, except where they have been eroded by friction. The shank terminates in a squarely-finished lower end: comparison with other linch-pins of this type suggests that a bronze button-foot is missing.

The wear patterns on the Weeting linch-pin (indicated on Fig. 6 by stipple) are of considerable interest (but see below the *caveat* on interpreting such patterns); abrasion of the side of the upper moulding has considerably reduced the size of the head from being originally circular to a sub-triangular shape, while slighter wear on the sides of the boss corresponds exactly in position to that on the moulding below. The position of wear is, of course, of the greatest importance in assessing the function of objects. Fox's reconstruction of the Llyn Cerrig Bach chariot shows linch-pins of iron and bronze used to secure the wheel and nave-hoops to the axle. The wear on the edge of the upper moulding would thus have been caused by friction against the nave-hoop. The correspondence between this wear and that on the boss suggests that the two occurred at the same time on each

side of the pin. We are thus led to conclude that either the wheel was slightly loose, allowing the edge of the nave-hoop to overrun the boss, or that the boss rubbed against the edge of the nave-hoop while the upper moulding rubbed against a projection inside the nave-hoop. If the latter is the case, then the nave-hoops in question are clearly of a type different from those found at Llyn Cerrig Bach. (Fox 1946 Pl. XVIII). The presence of wear on two opposite sides of the pin suggests that it was in use in two different positions.

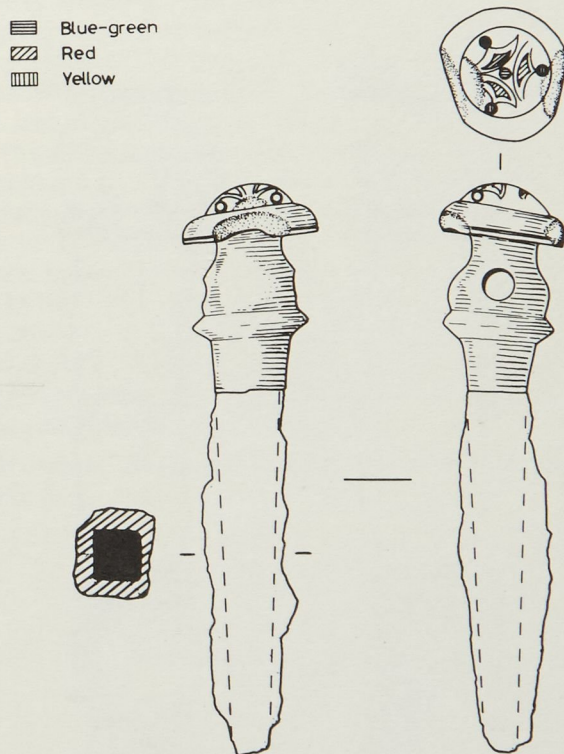


Fig. 6

Iron Age enamelled lynch-pin from Weeting; wear indicated by stipple (actual size)

The typology of Iron Age lynch-pins has been discussed in some detail: the Weeting example most closely resembles the Arras type (Fox 1946, 78) but these normally have a flat or recessed top which bears moulded rather than enamelled decoration. The domes and enamelled head set this piece apart from the rest of the type.

A more orthodox example (Fig. 7) of the type was found while hoeing carrots in July 1957 at Beechamwell in one of two fields close to the east-west Roman road (Site No. 4516 or 4517); it has for some time been incorrectly known as the 'Marham' lynch-pin. It consists of a square-sectioned iron shank capped by a flat-topped knob which is pierced by a transverse hole defined by circular mouldings. The top of the knob is slightly recessed and bears the remains of a wiry S-scroll with disc terminals. One side of the knob bears a pattern of intersecting arcs forming two leaf-motifs within a semicircle; this decoration is finely incised. The foot terminates in an out-turned flat knob which contains two circular but eccentric mouldings on a slightly recessed ground.

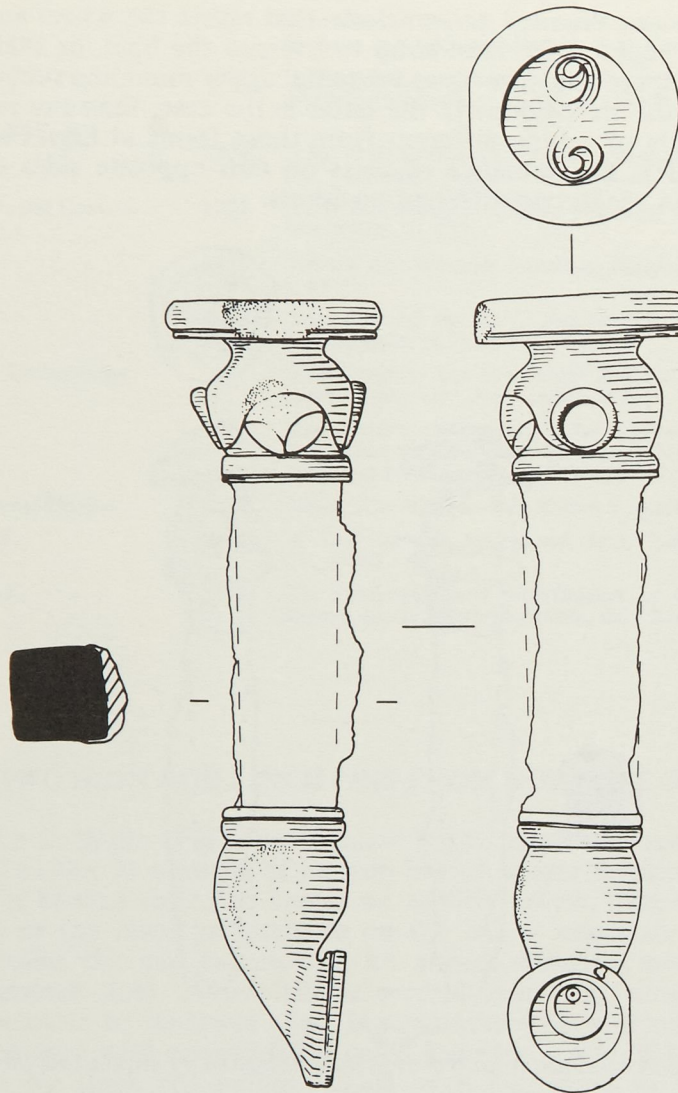


Fig. 7

Iron Age linch-pin from Beechamwell; wear indicated by stipple (actual size)

The wear on the Beechamwell linch-pin occurs on both sides, at right angles to the plane of the perforation. It is interesting, however, that in this piece the wear on the upper knob and on the main part of the foot is on one side, while wear on the other side is confined to the knob of the foot. Caution must be exercised in interpreting wear patterns, and in applying such interpretations to reconstructions of wheeled vehicles; such wear may only indicate that certain moving parts on a vehicle had become old and rickety, and it could be argued that on a vehicle in good condition friction between for example, the nave-hoop and linch-pin would be very restricted in distribution across the pin. Thus the disparity in wear between different parts of the Beechamwell example is probably the result of the idiosyncrasies of a single vehicle rather than diagnostic of structural features of Iron Age wheeled vehicles in general.

The Beechamwell linch-pin is a very good example of the Arras type, with its flat head and button foot. Amongst known specimens of the type it finds closest comparison with those from the Kings Barrow, Arras, Yorks. (Stead 1979 45-56) and from Owlesbury, Hants. (Collis 1968 Pl. XII). The former is plain while the latter bears *triskeles* in relief on head and foot. The Beechamwell example is unusual in its decoration, but this is clearly in keeping with the wide variety of decoration encountered in the Arras type.

Although clearly dated to the late Iron Age, linch-pins of this type, and indeed Iron Age horse-trappings and vehicle fittings in general, are notoriously difficult to date closely, because of the lack of associations with independently-dated objects or contexts. The Trevelgue linch-pin (Ward-Perkins 1941, 65) was found in the debris of a hut demolished in the second century A.D., while the Stanwick examples were found in a hoard dated on both historical and stylistic grounds to the mid first century A.D. A fragment of a mould for casting linch-pin parts similar to the Owlesbury example was found amongst the great deposit of metalworking debris at Gussage All Saints, Dorset (Spratling 1979 Fig. 101); the deposit has given radio-carbon determinations which have been recalibrated to 165 B.C. to A.D. 80, but Spratling considers the group to have been deposited during the first century B.C. Arras type linch pins may thus be dated to the first centuries B.C. and A.D., but the presence of polychrome enamel on the Weeting example probably indicates manufacture late in the series, possibly between about A.D. 40 and A.D. 60 (MacGregor 1976, 39).

(*Moyse's Hall Museum, Bury St. Edmunds 1979-213, and King's Lynn Museum A490 respectively.*)

Tony Gregory

- | | | |
|---------------------|------|---|
| Collis, J., | 1968 | 'Excavations at Owlesbury, Hants.', <i>Antiq. J.</i> XLVIII (1968), 18-31. |
| Fox, C. | 1946 | <i>A Find of the Early Iron Age from Llyn Cerrig Bach, Anglesey.</i> |
| MacGregor, M. | 1962 | 'The Early Iron Age Metalwork Hoard from Stanwick, N.R. Yorks.', <i>Proc. Prehist. Soc.</i> XXVIII (1962), 17-57. |
| MacGregor, M., | 1976 | <i>Early Celtic Art in Britain</i> |
| Spratling, M., | 1979 | 'The Debris of Metalworking' in G. J. Wainwright, <i>Gussage All Saints</i> , 125-149. |
| Ward-Perkins, J. B. | 1941 | 'An Iron Age linch-pin of Yorkshire type from Cornwall' <i>Antiq. J.</i> , XXI (1941) 64-67. |

THREE CAST PROTOTYPES OF IRON AGE POTIN COINS (Fig.8)

Three coins from two sites in Norfolk, all found in 1978, have added considerably to the known distribution of a coin-type which gave rise to the British potin coins of the first century B.C. They were all cast, rather than struck with dies, in a bronze alloy, markedly browner in colour than the distinctively grey alloy used for the potin coins proper (Allen 1971 and Dolley in Clarke 1954). The motifs on them are three-dimensional, in marked contrast to the linear style of the potin coins. All three coins are in private possession but casts of them are held at Norwich Castle Museum; the drawings (Fig. 8) were made from these casts.

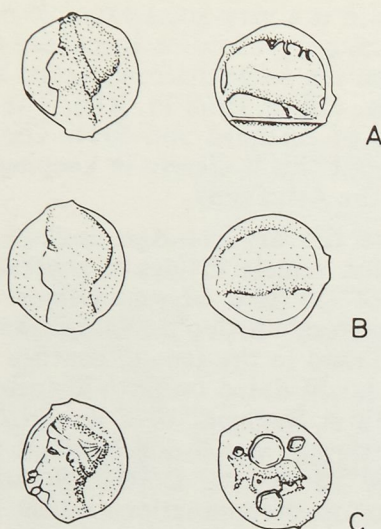


Fig. 8
Cast prototypes of Potin coins (actual size)

The coin in Fig. 8A was found in the parish of Bridgham (Site 15283) on the edge of the Romano-British occupation site of Brettenham which has also produced Iron Age coins of the 1st centuries B.C. and A.D. It is roughly circular and shows the tabs characteristic of coins cast in a continuous strip and then broken apart. The obverse bears a left-facing head with a sunken eye and a raised band along the hair-line. The reverse shows a bull charging to the right with lowered head, above an exergue line. Above the bull's back are three letters, apparently renderings of the Greek letters for U, C and L or A, which merge with the raised edge of the coin.

Coins B and C were both found on a site at Heacham which has also produced Roman and Early Saxon finds (site 13957). Coin B shows a head and bull like A, but apart from a sunken eye and a suggestion of a band at the hair-line all details are obscured by fine surface pitting. In contrast coin C is finely-detailed and well-preserved, with only a few large pits which fortunately obscure little of the detail. The left-facing head bears a well-defined band below which curls of hair protrude, and appear to run down the back of the neck. Curly hair is also suggested by the irregular top of the head, and by lines radiating from the back of the crown. The bull is shown in its entirety on the reverse with forelegs bent and with the head facing so that the left horn protrudes to the right of the body. Neither of the Heacham coins bear any trace of an inscription.

The evolution of the British potin series has been documented in some detail by Dolley and by Allen; bronze coins of Massalia, the Greek colony on the south coast of France which show a curly-haired Apollo left and a charging bull right were extensively copied, often with garbled reverse legends, and with the directions of the head and the bull often reversed. Such copies may either be cast or struck, and distinctive cast copies with a deeply-recessed eye and pointed chin and nose have been described as 'à tête diabolique' (Allen 1971. 130-1). Both struck and cast copies of the Massalia issues have been found in Britain, although not in sufficient numbers to suggest local production. The typologically earliest copies

are those from Canterbury, Kent, Richborough, Kent and Cirencester, Gloucestershire (Allen 1960 281), from St. Neots, Cambridgeshire, and South Ferriby, Lincs. (Allen 1971, 132), from Winchcombe, Gloucestershire (Hazelgrove 1978, 131) and the three coins from Norfolk. It is notable that this group, dating probably from the 2nd or possibly the early 1st century B.C. is more widely distributed than the British potin series which is ultimately derived from it (Allen 1971, 137 fig. 33 and 138 fig. 34). The British coins are clearly concentrated in north Kent and the lower Thames valley, with a few outliers which include the Snettisham hoard (Dolley in Clarke 1954). Further, well-provenanced examples of this type and of the 'tête diabolique' type from Britain may help to illustrate the parts which these coins play in the evolution of the British coinage. At least we may presume that when potin coins reached Norfolk in the mid 1st century B.C., albeit in the hands of refugees, their general type was not wholly unfamiliar to the Iceni.

(Private Possession)

Tony Gregory

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|--|
| Allen, D. F. | 1960 | 'The Origins of Coinage in Britain: A Reappraisal' in S. S. Frere (ed.) <i>Problems of the Iron Age in Southern Britain</i> . |
| Allen, D. F. | 1971 | 'British Potin Coins: A Review' in M. Jesson and D. Hill (eds.) <i>The Iron Age and its Hill-Forts</i> |
| Dolley, R. H. M., in
Clarke, R. R. | 1954 | Appendix in 'The Early Iron Age Treasure from Snettisham, Norfolk', <i>Proc. Prehist. Soc.</i> XX (1954), 27-86. |
| Hazelgrove, C. | 1978 | 'Supplementary Gazetteer of Find-spots of Celtic coins in Britain, 1977' Occasional Paper No. 11a of the Institute of Archaeology. |

AN INSCRIBED ROMAN BELT FROM BRETtenham (Fig.9)

In 1979 a series of linked copper alloy plates was found on the Romano-British site at Brettenham (Co. No. 5653). The site is a road-side settlement, concentrated on the NW side of the crossing of Peddars Way across the River Thet. Surface collections and small-scale excavations provide evidence for intensive occupation of the site in the third and fourth centuries A.D., with rather less early Roman material, although pottery of the mid first century A.D. suggests occupation during or soon after the Roman Conquest. While there is no evidence for an early military presence at Brettenham, its position on Peddars Way, a route of the greatest strategic importance, suggests that such a possibility should be borne in mind.

The object (Fig. 9) consists of five plates of copper alloy, roughly rectangular and about 3mm thick, ranging in size from 47mm x 33mm to 41mm x 29mm. Each was originally hinged to its neighbours by an iron pin passing through three hinge plates which were cast in one piece with the plates. The pins, of circular section about 3mm in diameter, project slightly above and below the plates: in some cases the pins are missing and are represented by rust stains. One face of each plate bears a carefully scribed letter; the best reconstruction of the inscription is SECVN, and it should be noted that the object is incomplete at both ends.

On the other side of each plate are remains of solder over a scratch-keyed surface with, in two cases, fragments of silver plate adhering. It seems that originally this face was ornamented with a series of circular silver discs.

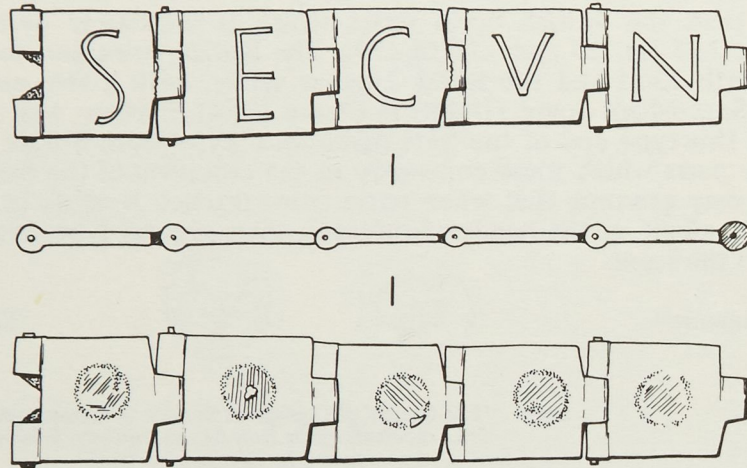


Fig. 9
Inscribed copper-alloy belt from Brettenham (half actual size)

In form this object is clearly related to the Roman military sword-belt, the *cingulum*, typified by the Rheingonheim example (Ulbert) and by pieces from Hod Hill, Dorset (Brailsford). There are, however, some striking differences between the latter and the Brettenham piece: the *cingulum* consists of a leather strap with plates of copper alloy riveted to it through a hole in each corner. The centre of these plates is usually raised to a conical boss pierced by a central hole through which a rivet originally passed. The plates average about 35mm x 50mm and are not attached to each other directly except at the end where the last plate is hinged onto the buckle by a large number of narrow hinge loops. In contrast the Brettenham example was a belt in itself without a leather backing, while the plates are flat and hinged to each other by three stout loops and are smaller than the *cingulum* plates. The applied silver discs suggested the bosses of the *cingulum* proper, and the skeuomorphic bars on the ends of the Rheingonheim plates and on Hod Hill A121 suggests that the *cingulum* itself is derived from a belt of linked plates with projecting hinge-pins very much like the Brettenham example.

So how should the Brettenham piece be interpreted? It is clearly related to, but distinct from, the military sword belt of the mid first century A.D., and in respect of the hinges is possibly more closely related to an ancestor of the *cingulum*. The most likely explanation is that suggested by Dr. Graham Webster (personal communication), that the belt was quasi-military, either a hunting belt or that of a civil official, given regalia of military type to establish his official position. In either case the owner had the belt inscribed SECVN[DI], 'belonging to Secundus'.

Post Scriptum: Mark Hassall, of the University of London's Institute of Archaeology, has most kindly drawn the author's attention to the remarkable grave-group discovered in 1950 at Lyon, France (P. Wuilleumier, 'La Bataille de 197', *Gallia* VIII, 1950, 146-148). A skeleton was found associated with

thirteen coins, terminating in an issue of Septimus Severus dated A.D. 194, an iron sword, and bronze fittings from a scabbard and sword-belt, reasonably attributed to the battle of Lyon between the armies of Albinus and Severus in A.D. 197. Amongst the fittings from a sword belt are a number of bronze letters, 25mm high, with rivets on the rear to affix them to a belt. Of the letters, an E bears a loop at its base, and an X is fixed to a rectangular buckle. They may be most reasonably reconstructed as FELIX, ERE, and a ligatured LAE. Wuilleumier suggested that the sword belt bore the legend 'Utere Felix' (use with luck), and that the ligatured LAE were the remains of the name of the cavalry unit (*ala*) to which the deceased soldier belonged. This is clearly an example of an alternative method of affixing an inscription to a sword-belt, and the discovery of the Brettenham example suggests the possibility that Felix on the Lyon example is similarly a personal name.

(*Private Possession*)

Tony Gregory

The Author would like to thank Miss C. Johns and Dr. Graham Webster for their valuable advice on this object.

Brailsford, J. W.

Hod Hill I, Fig. 5 A118 – A121.

Clarke, R. R.

'The Roman Villages at Brettenham and Needham and the Contemporary Road System', *Norfolk Archaeology* XXVI, 1937, 123-163.

Ulbert, G.

Das Frührömische Kastell Rheingonheim, 1969, Taf. 27.

AN UNUSUAL ROMAN RING FROM DERSINGHAM (Plate I)

In June 1979, a Roman gold ring was found near Great Bircham.¹ The finder, Mr. L. Griffin, submitted the object to King's Lynn Museum, who in turn passed it, as potential Treasure Trove, to the British Museum. At a subsequent inquest, the ring was declared not to be Treasure Trove. It has now been acquired for the collections of King's Lynn Museum.²

When found, the ring was badly crushed and distorted, so that its original form was barely recognizable. The hoop is formed of two thick, doubled gold wires about 1.5mm in diameter: they are linked at the back of the ring in a Knot of Hercules – a reef knot. At the shoulders they flare out and terminate in two inward-turning spirals, each surmounted in the centre by a globule of gold. Between the spirals, and running back nearly to the knot, between the wires, are long, slender lance-shaped leaves, the mid-rib and veins marked by incised lines. The bezel of the ring is oval and flat-backed, 13mm long and 10mm broad. It is surrounded by a separate frame which gives a bevelled contour to the front surface. The inner edge of this frame is lightly and rather irregularly milled. The oval plate is decorated with a pair of clasped hands, somewhat poorly modelled in relief.

The ring would have had a diameter of about 20mm when undamaged. The metal, analysed by X-ray fluorescence,³ is 94% gold, 3.5% silver and 2.5% copper.

Though it has not proved possible to find a parallel for the form of the ring as a whole, various features, in particular the clasped hands motif on the bezel, occur individually on other Roman rings. The clasped hands (*dextrarum iunctio*) appear to be more common in the third and fourth centuries, though there are

also earlier samples. Several are known from Britain, and illustrated by Henig;⁴ his No. 778, from Gloucestershire, is the closest parallel. The form of the hoop, with two wires developing into inward-turning spirals at the shoulder, is reminiscent of one of the late Roman rings from the New Grange hoard,⁵ but this ring has a gem setting and is of considerably rougher workmanship than ours.

The reef knot, or *nodus Herculeus*, had a symbolic significance in Egyptian art from the 2nd millennium B.C., and began to appear in Greek and Hellenistic jewellery from about the third century B.C. Knot-like motifs not infrequently occur in Roman rings, but the specific type used here is uncommon. Henkel⁶ illustrates a good example in silver from Pforzheim (No. 329), and discusses the apotropaic significance of the motif. His No. 1799, from Wiesbaden, is a further example. More complex knots are in many cases developments of the plain reef knot, but all occupy the main decorative focus of the ring. It has not yet proved possible to find another example in which the knot figures as a subsidiary ornament which would not even have been visible in wear. The main symbolic significance of the Dersingham ring would appear to have been the concord and friendship indicated by the clasped hands on the bezel, with the knot as a further apotropaic device to ensure protection and good luck for the wearer.

It is difficult to establish the date of this fine and unusual ring at all closely, but the evidence of the bezel ornament and the style of the hoop and shoulders may imply a date later rather than earlier in the Roman period, perhaps about the third century A.D. The piece is undoubtedly a most interesting addition to the range of rings known from Roman Britain.⁷

(King's Lynn Museum)

Catherine Johns

¹NGR 74723087.

²King's Lynn accession number KL. 51.980.

³The analysis was carried out by Mr. M. Cowell of the British Museum Research Laboratory, and thanks are due to him and to Dr. M. Tite, Keeper of the Laboratory.

⁴Martin Henig, *Corpus of Roman Engraved Gemstones from British Sites*, BAR 8 (1974), Nos. 773-778.

⁵J. P. C. Kent and K. S. Painter (editors), *Wealth of the Roman World*. (British Museum Publications, 1977), No. 231. British Museum registration number 1884.5-20.6.

⁶F. Henkel, *Die römischen Fingerringe der Rheinlande*, (Berlin, 1913), p.47.

⁷The writer would like to thank Mr. Robert Trett of King's Lynn Museum for bringing this ring to her attention.

AN INSCRIBED ROMAN SPOON FROM CAISTOR ST. EDMUND (Plate II)

In 1979 Mr. A. F. Westgate reported to Norwich Castle Museum his finding of the fragment of a Roman spoon at Caistor St. Edmunds (also Caistor-by-Norwich). The spoon bears a christian inscription and thus provides the earliest evidence for Christianity at Caistor and augments our scanty knowledge of the extent of Christianity in East Anglia in the Roman period.

The spoon was found with the aid of a metal detector in a ploughed field on the west bank of the River Tas opposite the Roman town of *Venta Icenorum* (TG 22680363) together with some mid-4th-century coins loosely associated with

it (county site No. 15790). Nothing much is known about this side of the river in the Roman period, though Roman finds have been made throughout the area of the later parish. The Roman town itself may once have extended in this direction, as it did to the north, east and south of the rectangular defences which were built in the 3rd century and which still survive as impressive banks and ditches (Wacher 1975, 230-234; pl. 41).

The spoon which is made of silver is fragmentary, part of the bowl and part of the handle being missing. The total length surviving is 74mm. The bowl measures 42 by 28mm and enough of it survives to show that it has been worn by right-handed use. Along the interior of the bowl is a Latin inscription: VIVAS IN DEO, 'May you live in God'. The bowl is joined to the handle with the curved piece which is so characteristic of late Roman spoons, on the upper part of which is cut the stylized head of a lion. The rest of the handle is twisted, which would have served for extra strength as well as for decoration. The whole spoon would have been made in one piece. For an idea of what the complete spoon was like we need look no further than the Mildenhall (Suffolk) treasure, in which one of the spoons is very similar (Painter 1977a, 31). This is object No. 28 which has a total length of 186mm and weighs 25g. The handle has a twisted section occupying about two-thirds of its length with a baluster moulding at each end of it, and the remainder of the handle tapers to a blunt point. Handle and bowl are joined with an open scroll attachment (without animal carving). The bowl is inscribed PAPITTEDO VIVAS, 'Papittedo may you live'. The inscriptions on these two spoons are also similar in that they are punched rather than engraved. But the letters on the Caistor spoon are punched not with one complete stamp for each letter but with tiny cuts, either straight like an apostrophe or curved like a cedilla. For example, the letter S in VIVAS is formed of two opposing cedillas with two apostrophes for serifs. The initial V is missing except for the right-hand serif. The final O presented the cutter with some difficulty and the general standard of the letter-cutting is not as high here as on the Papittedo spoon where the letters show the maker had a better range of stamps including larger strokes and curves each complete with serifs.

There are many examples of the join between bowl and handle being formed to represent an animal's head. It is usually a feline, but boar's, snake's, swan's and griffin's heads are also found. A 3rd-century bronze folding spoon from Hockwold (Norfolk) has a lion's head (Sherlock 1976, 250). Hoards of silver spoons from Canterbury, Dorchester (Dorset), Dorchester (Oxon) and Little Horwood (Bucks) also have birds or beasts. All these hoards, like the Mildenhall hoard, are late-4th-century and help to date the Caistor spoon. The style of some of these heads has been described as Teutonic and as the direct or indirect result of the presence of Germanic settlers in later Roman Britain. The Caistor lion's head is particularly stylized and, lacking the eyes, might have been considered as pure *Kerbeschnitz* decoration ('chip-carving') but for these other, more naturalistic examples. It is interesting that it should have been found at Caistor because there was a 4th to 5th-century Germanic cemetery on the east side of the town (Myres and Green 1973).

There are at least twenty-four surviving Roman spoons inscribed with the word VIVAS, of which nearly half come from Britain (Milojčić 1968; Sherlock 1973). The word, which is found on several other small objects, is sometimes found by itself but is more usually either preceded by a personal name (properly in the vocative case) or followed by IN DEO. In origin this word or phrase may be pre-Christian but it soon came to be used almost exclusively by Christians.

Two instances of what may be considered as a transitional period of its use can be cited from Britain (Toynbee 1953, 17 and 20). One is a fragment of decorated bone from a female burial at York which reads (SO)ROR AVE VIVAS IN DEO. The salutation AVE has more a pagan than a Christian connotation. The other is a gold finger ring from the town of Silchester with a crudely made female bust, around which are the letters VENVS. A secondary inscription has been cut around the ring SENICIANE VIVAS IN DEO. Three other finger rings with VIVAS, probably Christian, have been found in East Anglia. A gold finger ring from Brancaster Roman Saxon shore-fort, now in Norwich Castle Museum, has two confronting heads engraved in intaglio and VIVAS IN DEO (*CIL* VII, 1307). A second from the Gogmagog Hills (Cambs) has MISE VIVAS (*CIL* VII, 1303). A third from Stonham Aspal (Suffolk, now lost) had an inscription in Greek, 'Olympis, may you live' (*CIL* VII, p. 234). Finally returning to VIVAS on spoons, there is another from Mildenhall with PASCENTIA, one from Colchester with AETERNVS (Toynbee 1953, 21) and many others from Britain and abroad. There is only one example which is explicitly Christian. This comes from a Visigothic burial in Portugal and has in the bowl of the spoon AELIAS VIVAS IN XP, 'Elias, may you live in Christ' and an alpha and omega engraved on the handle (Sherlock 1973 210).

Late classical spoons (*cochlearia*) from hoards, burials or chance finds may be broadly divided into two categories depending on their use, namely communal and personal. In the former category are the larger and more elaborate types, usually of silver, over 300mm long, with decorated bowls and inscribed in niello with apostle or Christian names, numerals and decorative monograms. They usually occur in sets and come from treasures or hoards mostly in the central or eastern Mediterranean countries. Their use is most easily explained by references in early Christian literature to sets of a dozen or more belonging to churches or religious communities and being used on feast days as refectory tableware (Milojčić 1968). In the second category are the earlier spoons, often indistinguishable from pagan classical spoons. They include those which are intended purely as eating implements and are part of domestic tableware; those given as presents, those inscribed with individuals' names or initials and those found in graves amongst the personal possessions of the deceased; also those with VIVAS, GAUDEAS, ('rejoice') or some other expression; and those with Christian monograms and crosses. Spoons in neither of these categories were used in the Eucharist (Engemann 1972, 165); there is no evidence that they had any liturgical use and it is noteworthy that the Water Newton (Hunts) treasure which contains the earliest known Christian religious silver includes no spoons (Painter 1977b, 22-23). Nor were they used for baptising though we may assume that some were given as christening presents following baptism or conversion, the *Saulos* and *Paulos* spoons from Sutton Hoo (Suffolk) being the most famous examples (Sherlock 1972, 95). We may conclude that the Caistor spoon was the present of or to a Christian convert. Its signs of wear shows that it was used for eating on more than just special occasions.

This is not the appropriate place for a review of our knowledge of the extent of Christianity in Roman East Anglia, knowledge which is still mainly dependant on objects rather than structures. In addition to objects inscribed with VIVAS there are those with the chi-rho monogram. These include three more spoons in the Mildenhall treasure, which also have alpha and omega, and two gold signet rings, one from Brentwood (Essex; Toynbee 1953, 19) and one found recently somewhere in Suffolk (Sotheby sale 17.4.80, lot 14). Pewter plates with sacred

monograms here come from Sutton (Isle of Ely) and the River Welney (Cambs; Toynbee 1953, 22). Large leaden tanks with sacred monograms, which were probably used in connection with baptism, have come from Burwell and Great Wilbraham (Cambs) Ashton (Northants) and four from Icklingham (Suffolk; Guy 1978, West 1976). Icklingham is so far the only place in East Anglia where Christian structures have been discovered, interpreted as a baptisterium and a church within a Christian cemetery (West 1976, 121). The Water Newton treasure which came from within the walls of the Roman town of Durobrivae could imply the presence of an actual shrine (Painter 1977b, 23) but the site has not been excavated. At Caistor St. Edmund the three Romano-Celtic temples (Wacher 1975, 233) are the earliest religious structures but the late Saxon fabric in the parish church (Whittingham s.d., 4) is the earliest Christian building work. For Christianity at Caistor in the Roman period the spoon is the first definite evidence, though one building excavated in 1930 and never fully published might conceivably have been a church or shrine. This, the 'best house discovered in the town' (Hawkes 1949, 64), was built over disused pottery kilns in Insula VII. If its stratigraphy is correct then it is probably too early to have been Christian (Wacher 1977, 236-7) but it contained a fine set of rooms to which was added an eastern apse and a less important southern range also ending in an apse (*Jour. Rom. Studies* XI 1931, 232 and pl. 21). The function of the rooms is otherwise conjectural. They were still in use in the 5th century.

(Private Possession)

David Sherlock

Postscript

The above article was written before the finding of the spectacular Thetford hoard of imported Roman gold and silver, which included no less than thirty-three spoons, all inscribed, of which eight have VIVAS and fourteen have names of Gods.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------|---|
| C.I.L. | | <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> VII (1873). |
| Engemann | 1972 | Joseph Engemann, 'Anmerkungen zu spätantiken Geräten des Alltagslebens mit christlichen Bildern, Symbolen und Inschriften', <i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i> XV, 154-173. |
| Guy | 1978 | Christopher J. Guy, 'A Roman lead tank from Burwell', <i>Proc. Camb. Ant. Soc.</i> LXVIII, 1-3. |
| Hawkes | 1949 | C. F. C. Hawkes, 'The Roman Town of <i>Venta Icenorum</i> ' <i>Archaeological Journal</i> CVI, 62-65. |
| Milojčić | 1968 | Vladimir Milojčić, 'Zu den Spätkaiserzeitlichen und Merowingischen Silberlöffeln', <i>49 Bericht de Römisch-Germanischen Kommission</i> , 111-148 |
| Myres and Green | 1973 | J. N. L. Myres and Barbara Green, <i>The Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries of Caistor-by-Norwich and Markhall, Norfolk</i> , Society of Antiquaries Research Report XXX. |
| Painter | 1977a | K. S. Painter, <i>The Mildenhall Treasure</i> (British Museum). |
| Painter | 1977b | K. S. Painter, <i>The Water Newton Early Christian Silver</i> (British Museum). |
| Sherlock | 1972 | David Sherlock 'Zu einer Fundliste antike Silberlöffel' <i>54 Bericht der XLVII</i> , 91-95. |
| Sherlock | 1973 | David Sherlock 'Zu einer Fundliste antike Silberlöffel' <i>54 Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission</i> , 203-211. |
| Sherlock | 1976 | David Sherlock 'Roman Folding Spoon' <i>Trans. London and Middlesex Arch. Soc.</i> XXVII, 250-255. |
| Toynbee | 1953 | J. M. C. Toynbee, 'Christianity in Roman Britain' <i>Journal of the British Archaeological Association</i> CVI, 1-24. |

- | | | |
|------------------|------|--|
| Wacher | 1975 | John Wacher <i>The Towns of Roman Britain</i> . |
| West | 1976 | Stanley West with Judith Plouviez, 'The Roman site at Icklingham', <i>East Anglian Archaeology</i> III, 63-125. |
| Whittingham s.d. | | A. B. Whittingham, 'The Saxon Work in the Parish Church' in <i>The Parish Church of Caistor St. Edmund</i> p. 4. |

A GOLD PENDANT FROM NORTHWOLD (Plate III)

In December 1979 a gold coin pendant was found by metal detector near the River Wissey in the parish of Northwold.¹ It was brought into the King's Lynn Museum by the finder and reported to the Coroner for a possible treasure trove inquest. The pendant was sent to the British Museum for a report for the Coroner and it was eventually found not to be treasure trove and handed back to the finder.

The pendant (max L. including loop 2.9cm) consists of a gold coin set in a frame of beaded wire with a ribbed suspension loop soldered at the top. The entire accessible surface of the coin and its setting is heavily worn.

X-ray fluorescence analysis of the metal of the coin and its setting in the British Museum Research Laboratory show that both contain approximately 99% gold. Based on this analysis and the weight of the object, which is 5.18 grammes, the bullion value is £45.44.

The coin is a Byzantine gold solidus of Tiberius Constantine (578-582), minted at Constantinople. The simple beaded wire frame and ribbed loop are however characteristic of Anglo-Saxon workmanship. Such settings can be seen on a wide range of Anglo-Saxon pendants dating to the later 6th and 7th centuries. An example of a coin mounted in such a setting occurs in the so-called St. Martin's hoard from the churchyard of St. Martin's, Canterbury, which was probably deposited *c.* 580 A.D.² The solidus of Tiberius Constantine in the Northwold pendant must have reached Anglo-Saxon England like other Byzantine gold coins *via* the Frankish kingdoms who were the recipients of lavish Imperial gold subsidies in the later 6th and early 7th centuries. Its date of striking is thus only a *terminus post quem* for its arrival in England and subsequent conversion into a pendant. However, the high gold content of the frame and loop may indicate a relatively early date for its mounting, since it is an observed feature of Anglo-Saxon fine metalwork in the seventh century that the gold content declines fairly steadily after the first decades, once the Byzantine gold supplies to the West were exhausted. A date near the beginning of the 7th century would thus seem likely for the pendant's manufacture. The heavy wear on all the accessible surfaces of the piece clearly shows that it was worn for many years after that, probably until the last decades of that century.

(Private Possession)

Leslie Webster

¹County No. 15664.

²S. C. Hawkes, J. M. Merrick, D. M. Metcalf 'X-ray fluorescent analysis of some dark age coins and jewellery', *Archaeometry* IX (1966), fig. 1, L.6, pp. 104-105.

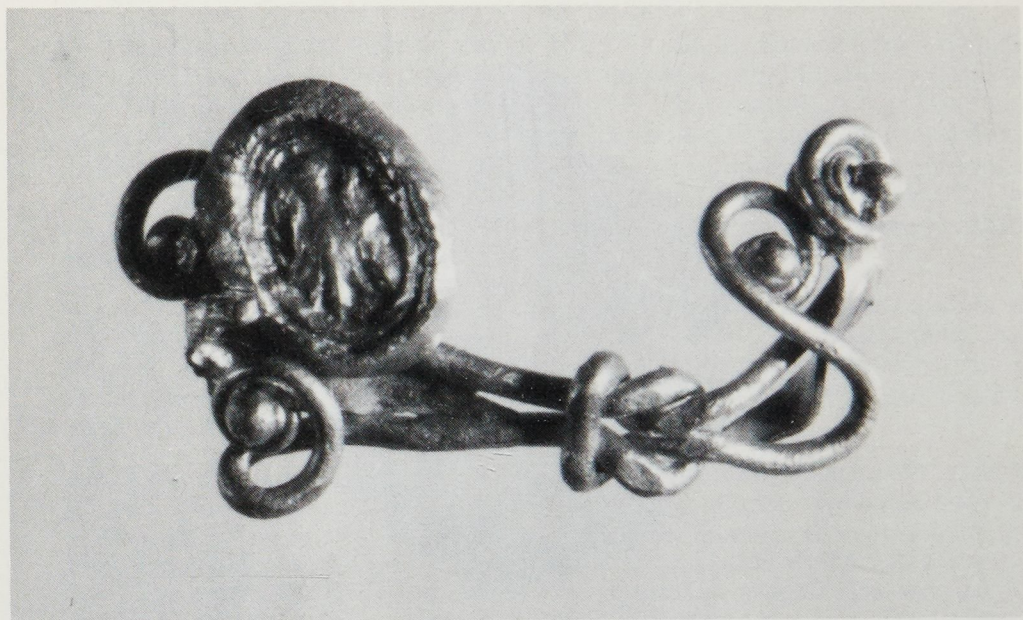


Plate I
Roman gold ring from Dersingham
(in damaged state)



Plate II
Inscribed Roman spoon from Caistor St. Edmund



Plate III
Anglo-Saxon coin pendant from Northwold

TWO 9TH CENTURY SILVER OBJECTS FROM COSTESSEY (Fig. 10)

These two objects were found in 1979 by Mr. R. Barnes with a metal detector on a building site in the Bowthorpe development area, Costessey (Grid reference TG 1800 0925 centred; County No. 15057). He found them not less than 30 feet apart in the churned and mixed topsoil and subsoil remaining after between six inches and a foot of top and subsoil had been bulldozed off an area roughly 300 feet by 300 feet. He examined the whole of the stripped area and the dump but found nothing else. Because of the lack of archaeological evidence the Coroner decided not to hold a Treasure Trove Inquest.¹

Sword-hilt mount Fig. 1a-c. Length 3.2cm. Silver with some niello inlay surviving. The band is slightly curved (to follow the line of the guard) with one border beaded. It is decorated with a series of arched panels containing, on one side, foliage and animals, on the other, foliage, an animal and a triquetra knot, and, at each end, a beaked head.

Strap hook Fig. 2a-b. Max. length 3.7cm. Silver with some niello inlay. A shield-shaped plate with beaded border, a central domed rivet and two holes for attachment; the top of the hook is missing. The shield is divided into three panels, each containing an animal with speckled body, square snout and a bump over the eye. The long tongue of the upper animal ends in a 'leaf'. The two back legs and tail of both lower animals are interlaced, each leg ending in a simple 'leaf' and the tail is a more elaborate 'leaf' (fig. 2b).

Strap hooks consisting of a plate and a simple hook range in date from the 7th century to the end of the Middle Ages. They vary in size, shape and elaboration; many are of bronze, some are of silver. Although many are said to be belt hooks, other uses have been suggested. Probably they were used for a variety of purposes on clothing and not only with belts or straps.

One of the key groups of Anglo-Saxon metalwork is the Trewhiddle Hoard found in 1774 in Cornwall.² The hoard was buried in about AD 875 but contained pieces made between about 800 and 875. It consisted of a number of silver, gold and bronze objects (some now lost) and about 115 coins. Many of the pieces were decorated and three groups of decoration have been distinguished. The majority of the decorated pieces belong to the 'classic' Trewhiddle style distinguished by animals with speckled bodies, square snouts and bumps over the eyes. The strap hook is a superb example of this first Trewhiddle style.

Characteristics of the third Trewhiddle decorative group include unspeckled ornament, collared animals which are more degenerate than in the 'classic' style, and double nicks in the contour of the animal bodies and in the leaf ornament. The hilt mount is clearly related to this third group; for instance, one animal and a pair of leaves show the double nick, while two of the animals are collared (fig. 1a). The beaked heads on this mount link it with another of the major pieces of the 9th century metalsmiths' art — the Strickland brooch. The heads on the brooch, with 'ears' and inlaid eyes are more elaborate than those on the hilt mount, but they are clearly related. Bruce-Mitford³ likens the heads on the Strickland brooch to moulded animal heads on the terminal of two of the mounts from the Trewhiddle hoard which are decorated also with animals in the 'classic' Trewhiddle style. The beaded border of this mount is characteristic of 9th century Anglo-Saxon metalwork.

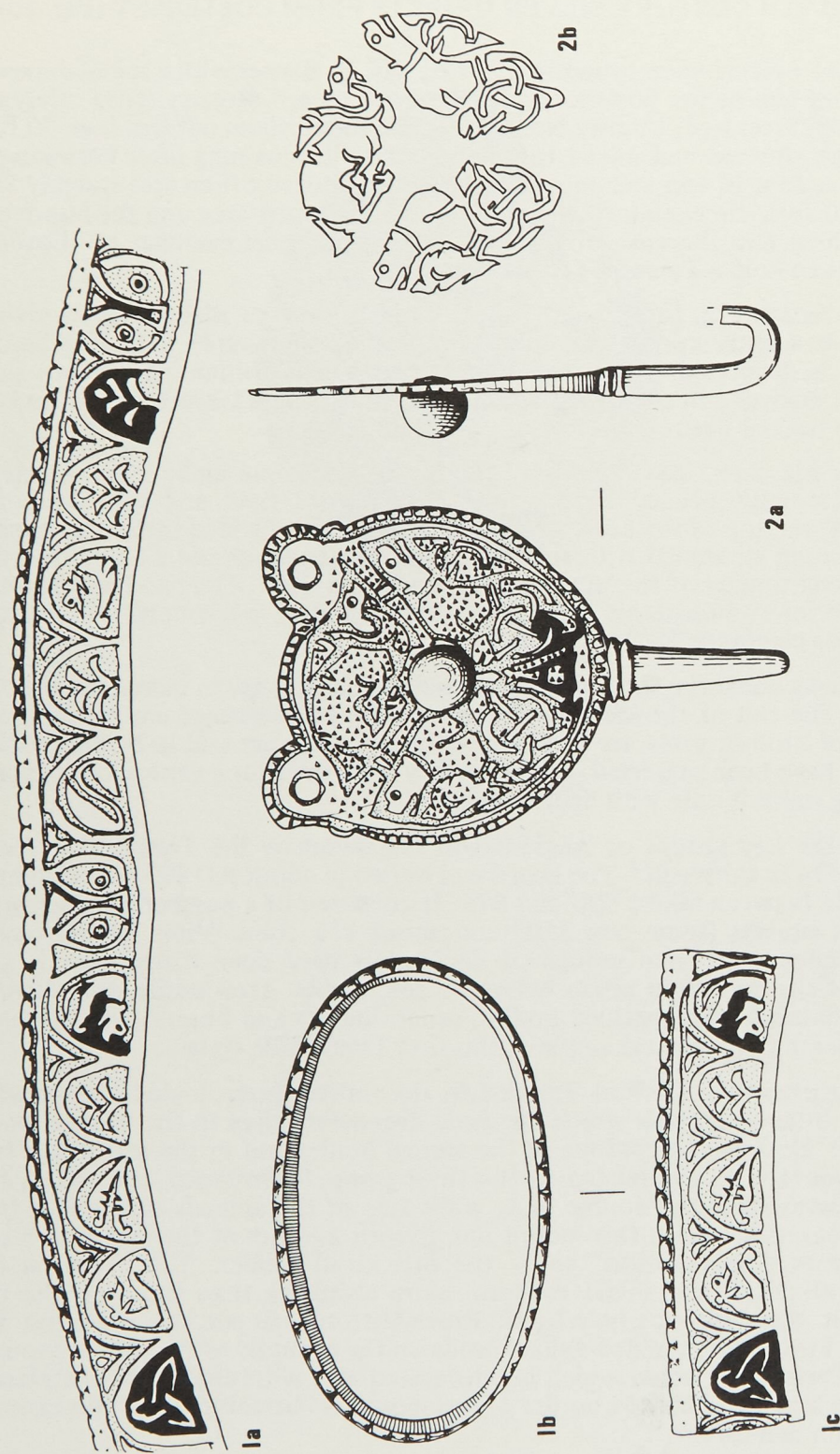


Fig. 10
 1a Unrolled decoration of hilt mount from Costessey. 1b Top view, 1c side view of hilt-mount.
 2a Front and side view of strap-hook from Costessey, 2b Animals from the strap-hook.
 Scale 2 : 1 Drawings by Sue White.

Ninth century pieces of such quality are rarely found in East Anglia, and these two are notable additions to the national corpus.

Barbara Green

¹Norwich Castle Museum 438.980.

²Wilson, D. M. and Blunt, C. E. (1961) 'The Trewiddle Hoard', *Archaeologia*, 98, 75-122.

³Bruce-Mitford, R.L.S. (1956) 'Late Saxon Disc-Brooches', *Dark-Age Britain*, (ed. D. B. Harden), 171-201.

A VIKING URNES STYLE MOUNT FROM SEDGEFORD (Plate IV)

In the autumn of 1977 a small bronze object was found by metal detector near the village of Sedgeford.¹ This was brought into King's Lynn Museum and identified by Barbara Green of Norwich Castle Museum as an openwork mount in the late Viking style known as the Urnes style, after decorative carving of this period on part of the church at Urnes in Norway. The mount is now in the collection of the King's Lynn Museum.²

The mount is 4.25cms long and depicts a quadruped with a snake-like body coiled in a loop and with a protruding head. The head has two small pointed ears, two large tear-shaped bulbous eyes, and a pointed nose with prominent nostrils. A pierced lug, now partly broken away, which juts out from beyond the nose acted as a fastening of some kind. Three equidistant holes formed by the creature's tendril-like legs on the outer edge of the mount also served to attach it to a base. The four legs are of different lengths. A short forelimb (partly damaged) is visible on top of the animal's body, and a loop possibly from the other forelimb, below the body can be seen to one side. The rear limbs are longer and form spiral loops around the body, the right rear limb being longer than the left. The back of the mount is plain and concave.

This mount belongs to a little known group of English Urnes style pieces to which it is a valuable addition.³

In the past, the sparsity and generally poor quality of the material evidence has led to the assumption that the Urnes style in England represents the vestiges of a fading Scandinavian tradition. However, recent discoveries of Urnes style objects, such as this one, have made it possible to see a distinctly English version of the style. Basically, the 'English Urnes' pieces occur in the North Danelaw area. Other English objects (which are closer to the Scandinavian Urnes style, or have a debased or probably earlier form of the ornament), tend to be found in the southern area of the Danelaw. The purest version of the English Urnes style is represented on seven known bronze mounts, including the Sedgeford object. Four of them are in the collections of the British Museum, and these four bear obvious stylistic affinities to each other and to the Sedgeford Mount. Three of these make use of a subtriangular frame, within which is a serpentine animal. The animal on a fourth, unprovenanced mount takes the same form, but is similar to the Sedgeford mount in that it is not contained in a frame.

A mount from Tynemouth is simpler than others in this group, but all six may be said to be decorated in the same overall style. Although there are no direct parallels for the ornamentation of these mounts in Scandinavia, nor for

the Urnes style occurring on this type of object, many of the attributes of the Scandinavian Urnes style also occur in their decoration. In particular the head of the Sedgeford mount is closer to the Scandinavian type than others in the group.

There is one other recently discovered mount from Lincoln which also manifests this style. It is larger, sub-rectangular in shape, and depicts five animals, four of which are engaged in a combat motif; but otherwise the style is exactly the same as on the Sedgeford mount and the others.

It seems probable that the Sedgeford mount may have been used as a book clasp, in which case it must have been riveted on to a flat surface to decorate the book covers. However, it could also have been attached to a box. There is no concrete dating evidence for any of the English Urnes style bronze mounts, although they are probably roughly contemporary on stylistic grounds alone. It is suggested that they may be dated to the latter part of the 11th century.

*List of known English Urnes style bronze mounts*⁴

1. Bronze mount from Peterborough
British Museum
Reg. No. 62, 3-21, 6
See Wilson D. M., *Anglo-Saxon ornamental metalwork (700-1100) in the British Museum*, London 1964, pl. xxvii (58)
2. Bronze Mount from Kemsley Downs, Kent
British Museum
Reg. No. 83, 12-13, 579
See Wilson 1964, pl xix (26)
3. Bronze mount from Lincoln
British Museum
Reg. No. 67, 3-20, 20
See Wilson 1964, pl xxi (33)
4. Bronze mount of unknown provenance
British Museum
Reg. No. 62, 3-21, 7
Wilson 1964, pl xlii (141)
5. Bronze mount from Sedgeford, Norfolk
6. Bronze mount from Tynemouth, Northumberland
Department of Archaeology, Newcastle University
Reg. No. 1979, 22
See Jobey, G. 'Excavations at Tynemouth Priory', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th Series, xiv, 1967, pp 33-104
7. Bronze mount from Lincoln
Lincoln Archaeological Trust
Small find No. DT 1 74 536 (SZ) Ae 108
See Graham-Campbell, James, *Viking Artefacts*, London 1980.

(King's Lynn Museum)

Olwyn Owen and Robert Trett

¹County number 14367.

²Museum Accession No. KL 171978.

³Olwyn Owen: A publication about the Urnes style in England is forthcoming.

⁴From Olwyn Owen: A Catalogue and Re-evaluation of the Urnes style in England. M.A. Thesis for the University of Durham, 1979 (Unpublished).



Plate IV
Viking bronze mount from Sedgeford



Plate V
Bronze mount decorated in Urnes style from Norwich.
Length c. 4.5cm.

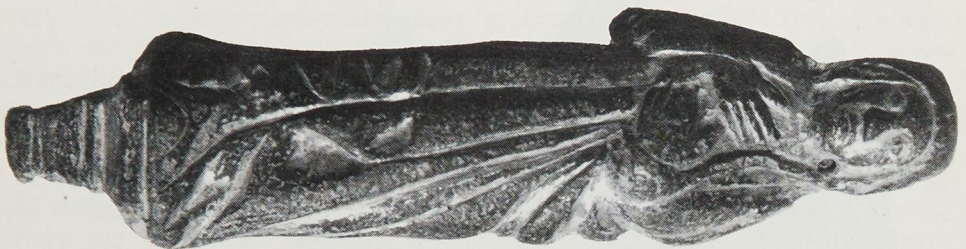


Plate VI
Gilt-bronze figure of
Virgin Mary from
Great Melton.
Height 11.3cm

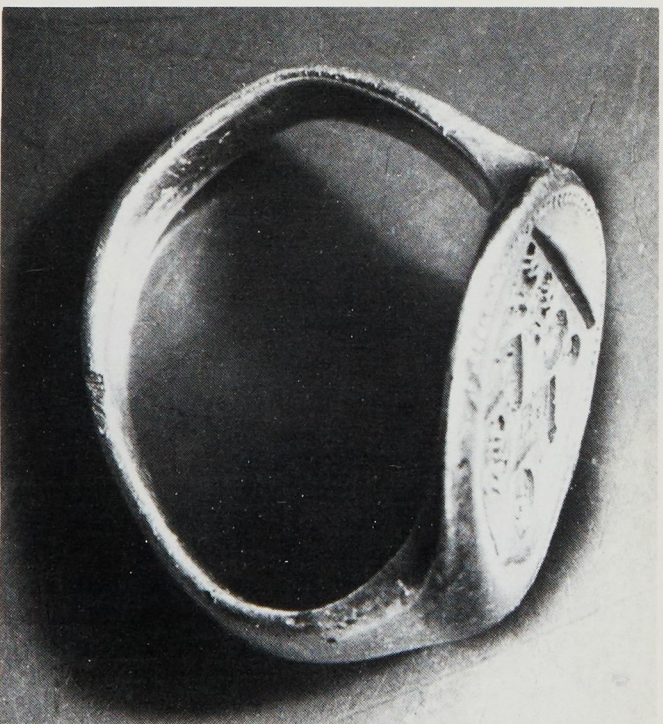


Plate VII
Gold signet ring from Terrington

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Barbara Green at Norwich Castle Museum, and Leslie Webster of the British Museum for their initial identifications and advice.

FURTHER NOTE

A bronze mount (in private ownership) was brought in to the Castle Museum in 1979 having been found by metal detector at the edge of the river Wensum near Mile Cross Bridge (Co. No. 433N). It should be added to the above list.

The mount (plate V) is sub-triangular (cf. Wilson catalogue Nos. 26, 33 and 58¹) with openwork decoration but is damaged so that the apex is missing. There is a rectangular flange at the base pierced by one circular rivet-hole. The surviving length is about 4.5cm.² The decoration consists of a sinuous biped in profile with a spiral hip, one limb ending in a leaf-like toe, and a long serpentine neck; the head is missing. The animal is interlaced with a ribbon. The back of the mount is plain and concave. Like the mounts mentioned above, it is most likely a book mount.

(*Private Possession*)

Sue M. Margeson

¹D. M. Wilson *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700-1100*, (1964).

²Unfortunately, the mount had been returned to the owner before this note was written, and details could not be checked.

15th CENTURY FIGURE OF VIRGIN MARY FROM GREAT MELTON (Plate VI)

A gilt-bronze figure of the Virgin Mary was found in 1979 by Mr. D. Woollestone while field-walking at Great Melton (NGR TG 1366 0658, Co. No. 16258). It has been generously placed on loan to Norwich Castle Museum by Mr. E. Evans-Lombe.

The figure is 11.3cm high (including the stepped pedestal on which it stands). Originally the pedestal would have extended into a branch to be inserted into a socket on the shaft or knop of the cross, or of the stand. Such a branch can be seen on the Virgin Mary figure from Quidenham already in the Norwich Castle Museum collections (172.976). A hole in the back of the Great Melton figure (approximately 2cm above the pedestal) may have been to give additional support.

The figure is shown draped in a mantle with hands clasped to the breast. The drapery folds are rather heavy and static. Considerable traces of gilding survive, especially in the drapery folds and on the facial features. There are several casting flaws.

The figure of the Virgin Mary is conventionally accompanied by St. John (similar to a figure of St. John in the Castle Museum collections, 305.976), flanking the crucified Christ. Such standardised figures must have been produced in bulk which explains the often rather crude casting (see the flaws on the Great Melton figure).

The cross itself with knop and socket may well have been dual purpose. It would have been fitted on to a foot, if an altar cross, or on to a processional staff.

Dual purpose crosses (both for carrying in procession and for setting on the altar¹) seem to have become increasingly common from the 14th century. Valuable evidence exists about the number of such crosses in 14th century Norfolk. We know from William Swynflete's 1368 register of church ornaments in his archdeaconry of Norwich² (some 350 churches) that 307 churches held processional (presumably dual purpose) crosses (119 of these having more than one). Of these only 7 were in silver and 12 in base metal (copper or brass). He notes further 7 painted wooden crosses. We must assume that most of the remainder were wood, which of course have not survived.

(Norwich Castle Museum)

Sue M. Margeson

¹C. Oman 'English Medieval Base Metal Church Plate', *Archaeological Journal*, CXIX, 1962, pp. 198-200, 207.

²Watkin, Dom. A. ed. 'Archdeaconry of Norwich, Inventory of Church Goods temp. Edward III', *Norfolk Record Society*, XIX parts I-II, 1947-48, pp. lxxxvi-lxxxvii.

A GOLD SIGNET RING FROM TERRINGTON ST. CLEMENT (Plate VII)

In September 1979 a gold finger ring containing a seal matrix was found in a garden in Terrington St. Clement¹ and reported to King's Lynn Museum. Apart from the oval bezel containing the matrix the ring was plain. It had an eccentric shape, with a maximum diameter of 2.3cms. The coat of arms on the ring was identified by J. P. Brooke-Little, Richmond Herald of Arms, who issued the following report:

'Obviously, on the matrix the arms are in reverse, the husband's being on the right as you look at it, the wife's on the left. I am fairly certain that this is the seal of Matthew Pratt of Tittleshall, co. Norfolk (will proved 11 February 1619/20). He married Catherine, daughter and co-heir of Robert Reymes of Aylsham, co. Norfolk. His arms were Argent on a Chevron Sable between three Ogresses each charged with a Martlet of the first three Mascles Or.

According to *The Visitation of Norfolk, 1664*² the arms of Reymes are given as Sable a Chevron Ermine between three lions rampant Argent, which, in outline, is what appears on the seal. The fact that the arms are impaled is not really significant at the beginning of the 17th century, although Matthew Pratt's wife was an heiress.'

Matthew Pratt was the son of Richard Pratt of Terrington and in his nuncupative will³ made the 29th November 1619 he willed his body to be buried in the church of Tittleshall, 10 shillings to the poor of Tittleshall, and the sum of £110 (from the sale of timber and land in Blickling) to the heirs of Alice Pinnes of Aylsham in order to fulfil an agreement made previously. From the rest of his estate he willed £100 to his son Richard when 'he came to the full age of twenty three years' and £100 to his daughter Elizabeth four years after his death. In addition Richard and Elizabeth received £4 yearly towards their maintenance until they received their portions. He also gave two lambs each to the five children of his son-in-law Samuel Leedes. He made his wife Catherine the sole executrix of his last will and testament.

Matthew Pratt is entered in Tittleshall Register as being buried December 1st 1619. According to the Visitation his son, Richard Pratt, died in 1669 aged 70.

The ring went to a Treasure Trove Inquest and was found not to be treasure trove and was awarded to the finder.

(Private Possession)

Robert Trett

¹County Number 15229.

²The Visitation of Norfolk Anno Domini 1664 Made by Sir Edward Bysshe, Knt. Clarenceaux King of Arms. An edited and annotated version is published by Norfolk Record Society, vols. 4-5, (1934).

³Norfolk Record Office, Norwich Archdeaconry wills 1916-20, no. 155.