

Butler, L.A.S., 1957 'Medieval Gravestones of Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and the Soke of Peterborough', *Proc. Cambridge Antiq. Soc.* 50, 89-100

Butler, L.A.S., 1964 'Minor medieval monumental sculpture in the East Midlands', *Archaeol. J.* 121, 111-153

A mirror-case from Bradwell

by Sue Margeson

A hinged copper alloy mirror-case has recently been found at Bradwell by Mr. J.G. Howell and brought to Norwich Castle Museum for recording. A mirror-case of similar form has just been published in the *Antiquaries Journal*, with a distribution list of 20 others found in England and Scotland (Bayley *et al* 1984). The Bradwell example is an important addition to the corpus as it is virtually complete.

Description

The mirror consists of a pair of identical shallow circular cases of cast copper alloy, hinged on one side (by means of a rivet passing through the projecting loops, now

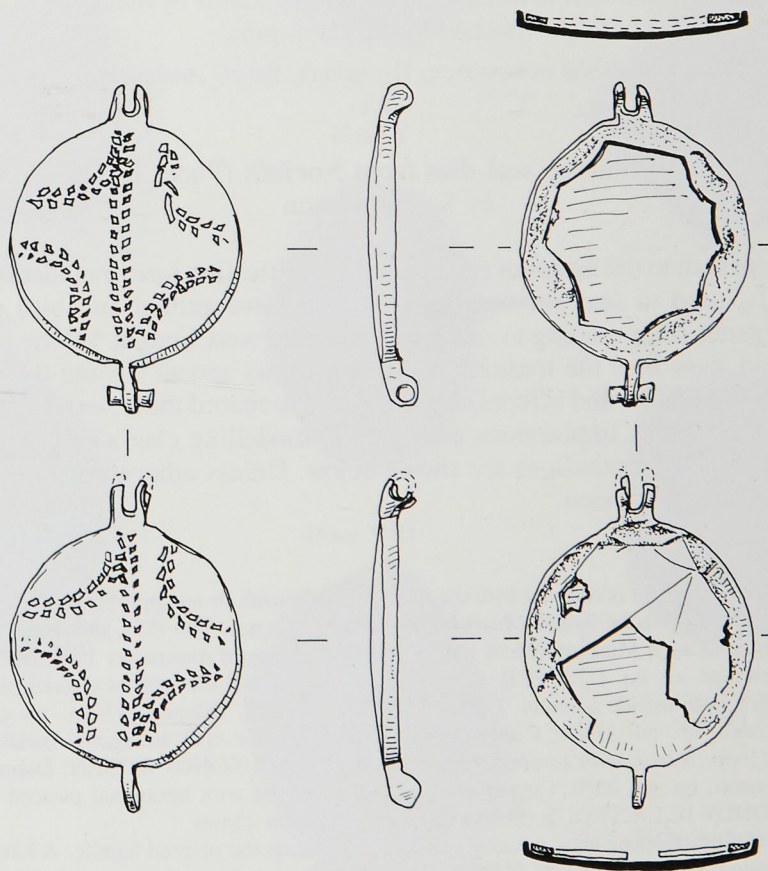


Fig. 2
A mirror-case from Bradwell.

broken). On the other side, a single lug on one case fits between two lugs on the other case (neither pierced). One case is fitted with a disc of glass (now broken) backed by a thin foil of lead. A white material around the inside edge of each case held the glass in place. Though this is not yet been analysed it is presumably a form of putty (Bayley *et al* 1984, 399). The 'putty' survives in both cases. The glass must have been cut to an irregular nine-sided shape as shown by the impressions in the 'putty'. The outside of the cases is decorated with a punched 'cruciform' motif. Diam. 30mm.

Discussion

The group of copper alloy mirrors are of remarkably similar form and decoration, usually about 30mm in diameter, with punched 'cruciform' motifs on each case. So close is the technique of manufacture that it has been suggested that the group derives from the same workshop, possibly in the south-east of England, or on the Continent, perhaps in the Low Countries, (Bayley *et al* 1984, 401). There are also several pewter mirrors with stamped, elaborate decoration, both hinged double cases like the copper alloy examples, and single cases with a handle (a miniature version of a larger, handled mirror; one such miniature example was excavated on the Pottergate site in Norwich). From those found in archaeological contexts, it seems likely that the mirrors date from the mid-13th century. Their purpose may have been amuletic as well as cosmetic, as some examples have magical inscription. Some were suspended as pendants by means of a chain passing through pierced lugs (perhaps attached to the catch-pin).

Bayley J. *et al* 1984 'A medieval mirror from Heybridge, Essex' *Antiquaries Journal* LXIV part II 1984 pp.399-402

14th-century seal-dies from Norfolk (Plates II-XI)

by Sue Margeson

Seal-dies brought in to the museum recently for identification have included several non-heraldic seals, used to seal personal letters. Most have animal and bird motifs, and whimsical legends often relating to secrecy. These dies were bought 'off the peg' (Rigold 1977, 324) and show how the tradition of sealing letters spread beyond the knights and clerks with their heraldic and official seals. In order to record these seal-dies for the sites and monuments record, impressions are taken in modelling clay which is then baked. Photographs of these impressions are shown below. Unless otherwise stated these seal-dies are in private possession.

A. 'Sohou' seal-dies

Sohou is a hunting-cry and is coupled with the name of the hound, or an appropriate phrase. These may be compared with a group in the British Museum (Tonnochy 1952, nos. 749-753), and with two in the Fitch Collection, Norwich Castle Museum (76.94 (176 & 197), *Catalogue of Antiquities* 1909, nos. 936 & 937).

1. From Attlebridge, co. no. 17217. Pl II. Copper alloy circular seal-die with hexagonal pierced handle. A hare with a horn astride a hound. Legend: SOHOV ROBEN. Diameter 17mm
2. From Bradwell, co. no. 17264, Copper alloy circular seal-die with hexagonal handle with trefoil suspension loop. A hare with a horn astride a hound. Legend: SOHOV ROBEN. Diameter 20mm
3. From Grimston, co. no. 3579. Copper alloy circular seal-die with hexagonal pierced handle. Hare Legend: SOHOV IE LA TROUE (Sohou I find it). Diameter 15mm
4. From (?)Horsford. Copper alloy circular seal-die with hexagonal pierced handle. A hare with a horn astride a hound. Legend: SOHOV ROBEN. Diameter 18mm
5. From Thetford. Copper alloy circular seal-die with hexagonal pierced handle. A hound. Legend: SOHOV PINOR. Diameter 18mm