

RECENT ARCHAEOLOGY

TWO NORFOLK FINDS OF IMPORTED CONTINENTAL BROOCHES

by Barry Ager, Steven Ashley, Andrew Rogerson

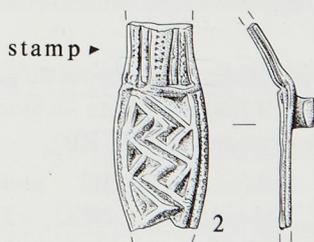
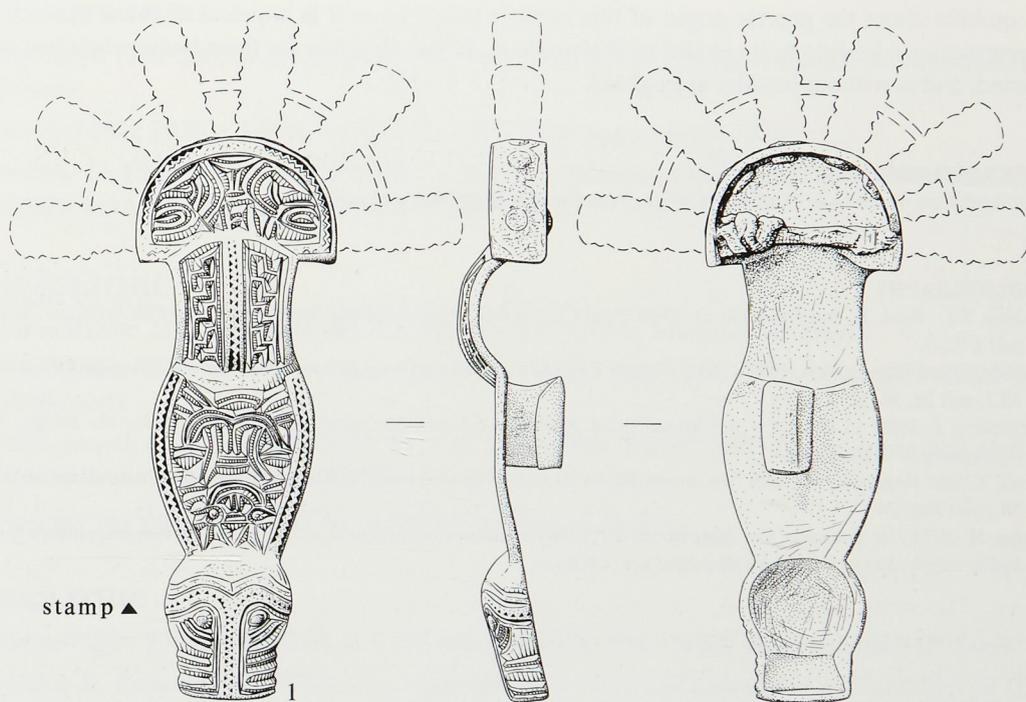
The recent recovery of two late sixth/early seventh-century silver brooches from two sites in Walsingham in the north-west of the county not only lengthens the list of imported brooches previously published in this journal (Ashley *et al.* 1990; Ashley and Rogerson 1992; Penn and Rogerson 1989), but also augments the number of silver examples from one to three. The detached knob from Beachamwell (Ashley *et al.* 1990, no. 3) is now joined by two larger pieces, one of which may have been made as far away as northern Italy.

1: Gilded silver radiate brooch. Four of the six missing knobs were held in place by tiny disc-headed iron pins which pass through the backward projecting rim of the headplate, and the outer two were attached to either end of the iron spring-bar. Part of the spring survives, but there is no trace of the pin, even within the fold of the well preserved and pronounced catchplate. The semicircular headplate consists of a panel of cast Style I ornament outlined by a raised border of inlaid decoration. This consists of a linear field of punched triangles inlaid with niello on either side. Similar inlay continues down the median rib of the bow between zones of cast stepped ornament, and is repeated along the outer edges of the foot on either side of a further zone of Style I motifs. The animal head terminal has arched eyebrows and a "nose" consisting of raised bands decorated with small triangles also inlaid with niello. On either side curved mouldings emphasise the eyes above horizontal grooves suggesting the nostrils. The base of the terminal is plain and the reverse is deeply concave. The brooch is in very fresh condition. Lustrous gilding, present on all the decorated panels, on parts of the sides, on the plain top and base of the bow, and on the base of the terminal, probably once covered all of the sides and front surface except for the linear niello-inlaid zones. There is a narrow transverse crack across the foot just below the catchplate, and in consequence the foot is slightly bent. A small piece is missing, and apparently has been for some time, from the reverse of the rim of the headplate where one end of the spring-bar passed through it.

2: Part of bow and foot of brooch in debased silver. The bow has three grooves, apparently with zig-zag edges on each side of a median rib which is decorated with pairs of minute triangles inlaid with niello. Similar grooves outline the foot which carries bold zig-zag interlace. A delicate catchplate sits slightly off-centre on the reverse. The break on the bow is rather recent and that on the foot less so. This piece is noticeably thinner and less robust than no. 1, and has a similar "feel" to that of the previously published copper alloy pieces.

Discussion

Although only a fragment, brooch no. 2 can be identified as an exotic of continental origin. Of the various brooch forms discussed and illustrated by Kühn, the closest comparison is his *in Zangenform* (pincer-shaped) type 19 (Kühn 1974, 827-40, Taf. 271-2). Find-spots of this form cluster in Thuringia (Central Germany) and Bohemia but also occur further to the west in Frankish areas. Kühn dated the type to the first half of the sixth century, but allowed it to last until *c.* 580 AD. Parallels can be also found in Kühn's later sixth-century Frankish rectangular-headed radiate *Mülhofen* and *Goethes Fibel* types 89 and 84 (Kühn 1974, 996-1016, Taf. 293-



Two silver brooches. Scale 1:1; stamps 2:1

5), but these appear to be more robust than no. 2.

Less uncertainty rests with brooch no. 1 which is certainly of Kühn's *Castel Trosino* Lombardic type 97 (Kühn 1974, 1239-48, Taf. 329-30), and of Jørgensen's (1992) Lombardic radiate-head type BF4a or b. The former dates the type to c. 600-650 AD and the latter to c. 570-610 AD. The majority of such brooches have been found in the Lombard regions of Italy, that is Umbria, Tuscany and the northern plain, with outliers in Southern Germany and Hungary. This led Kühn to suggest that this type was made in Italy, although it might be argued that it originated in areas to the north of Italy settled by the Lombards in the period immediately preceding their migration into the peninsula in 568 AD. It is perhaps as specious

to quibble about the precise origin of this remarkable piece as it is hopeless to muse upon the circumstances leading to its arrival in Walsingham. It was certainly far from home when lost or buried, and is without parallel in England.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS IN NORFOLK 1992

Edited by David Gurney

This is a selection of important finds, details of which have been entered onto the Sites and Monuments Record in 1992, maintained at the Norfolk Museums Service Landscape Archaeology Section at Gressenhall and at the Castle Museum, Norwich. This may be consulted by appointment.

The entries are arranged by period, and within each period by parish alphabetically. Grid references have been omitted at the request of finders. Where material of other periods is recorded but not described, this is shown by, for example, (+PAL, RB).

Period abbreviations are as follows: PREHIS prehistoric; PAL/UPAL/LPAL Palaeolithic/Upper/Lower; MESO Mesolithic; NEO Neolithic; BKR Beaker; BA/EBA/MBA/LBA Bronze Age/Early/Middle/Late; IA Iron Age; RB Romano-British; PS Pagan Saxon; MS Middle Saxon; LS Late Saxon; MED Medieval; PM post-Medieval; U undated. Metal artefacts are of copper alloy (bronze) and Iron Age, Saxon and Medieval coins are of silver unless otherwise stated.

Norfolk Landscape Archaeology and Castle Museum Archaeology Department are most grateful to all those who bring in finds for identification, thereby contributing to the Sites and Monuments Record and this annual list. The assistance of colleagues in other institutions, especially the British Museum and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, in the identification of finds is gratefully acknowledged. The majority of the finds listed have been found in the course of metal-detector survey, but the list also includes fieldwalking finds and new discoveries of sites either by field observation or by aerial photographic survey.

The illustrations are by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit (Fig. 1), Sue White (Fig. 2), Kenneth Penn (Fig. 3) and Steven Ashley (Fig. 4).