

An Urn from Moggerhanger and Panel Style at Kempston

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SUMMARY

The publication of an isolated find of an Anglo-Saxon cremation urn with triangular panel style ornament from Moggerhanger allows a discussion of the style at Kempston. These vessels form a late sixth century link between the Cambridge region and the Upper Thames, where both styles are prolific. Other items showing the same links are briefly reviewed.

An Anglo-Saxon cremation urn was found in the village of Moggerhanger in 1934 and subsequently it was presented to the Pritchard Museum of Bedford Modern School. It is now in the collections of Bedford Museum, to which the former museum's collections were transferred in 1959. The exact site where it was found is not known: Morris reports it was found at TL 13854905, which is some way to the south-west of the centre of the village. Apart from inclusion in two recent gazetteers of Anglo-Saxon finds from Bedfordshire and a passing mention by Myres, the vessel has received little attention and has not previously been illustrated.¹

The vessel (fig 1), described in detail below, is an example of the triangular panel style found in England north of the Thames and suggested by Myres² as belonging to the second half of the sixth century. These pots are prolific at sites like Illington, Norfolk; Lackford and West Stow Heath, both Suffolk; and Girton, St Johns Cricket Field and Little Wilbraham, Cambs. East Shefford, Theale and Reading are all Berkshire sites where the style has been found as well as further north in the Thames Valley at Long Wittenham, Abingdon and Frilford. Scattered examples are found to the north of Bedfordshire at sites in Northamptonshire at Kettering, Brixworth, and Pitsford; and to the northwest in Warwickshire at Baginton, Stratford (Alveston) and Bidford-on-Avon.

Between these groups lies the Bedfordshire group which includes the Moggerhanger urn. There are

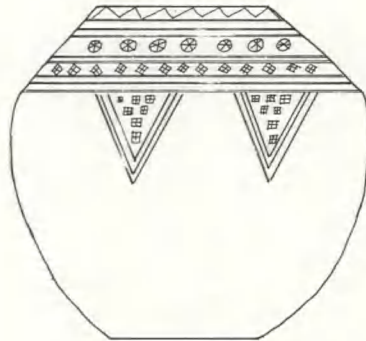


Fig. 1 Anglo Saxon urn from Moggerhanger.

also four examples of the type from among the finds at the Kempston cemetery. The latter are all illustrated and described herein (fig 2). Though the stamps used are different, the style of Kempston 28 is not dissimilar to that of the urn from Pitsford.³ The tiny pot from grave 16 of the 1912 excavations at East Shefford, Berks.,⁴ exhibits the same basic stylistic make-up of triangular panels divided from one another by a vertical element. On the Pitsford and East Shefford pots it is a row of stamps within grooves, while it is merely vertical grooves on the Kempston urn. Typologically earlier are pots such as those from St Johns⁵ and Baginton⁶ where the triangular panels fill the spaces between shoulder-bosses. More usually there is no vertical element as with Abingdon C47.⁷ The Moggerhanger urn and the three other vessels from Kempston (25, 26, 359) belong to a common group with no vertical element between the pendant triangles, which includes urns from Baginton,⁸ Little Wilbraham⁹ and West Stow Heath.¹⁰

A wide range of stamps appears on these urns. None is sufficiently idiosyncratic to be diagnostic of a potter working in Bedfordshire. The style was used by the Illington/Lackford potter in Cambridg-

shire, Suffolk and Norfolk.¹¹ One urn of this potter from Lackford contained the fused remains of a great square-headed brooch of Leeds' A3 class and a fragment of a silver bracelet.¹² Both of these are unlikely to date to before the middle years of the sixth century and more probably belong to the second half of that century.¹³ Another associated find in an urn with triangular panel style ornament comes from Baginton where an eleven coil spiral saucer brooch twisted by the fire was found as an inclusion.⁸ Again a late sixth century date is probable.

occurs on two other Northamptonshire pots, one from Barton Seagrave and the other a sherd from Islip. These have a triangular arrangement of 'wine glass' stamps with the lowest one set slightly off-centre.¹⁷

Other links of the second half of the sixth century may be discerned at Kempston and in other Bedfordshire cemeteries which connect the Upper Thames and the Cambridge region. Perhaps the most noticeable of these is the 'Kempston type' of applied saucer brooch, recently discussed and listed elsewhere.¹⁸ Other links south-westwards at

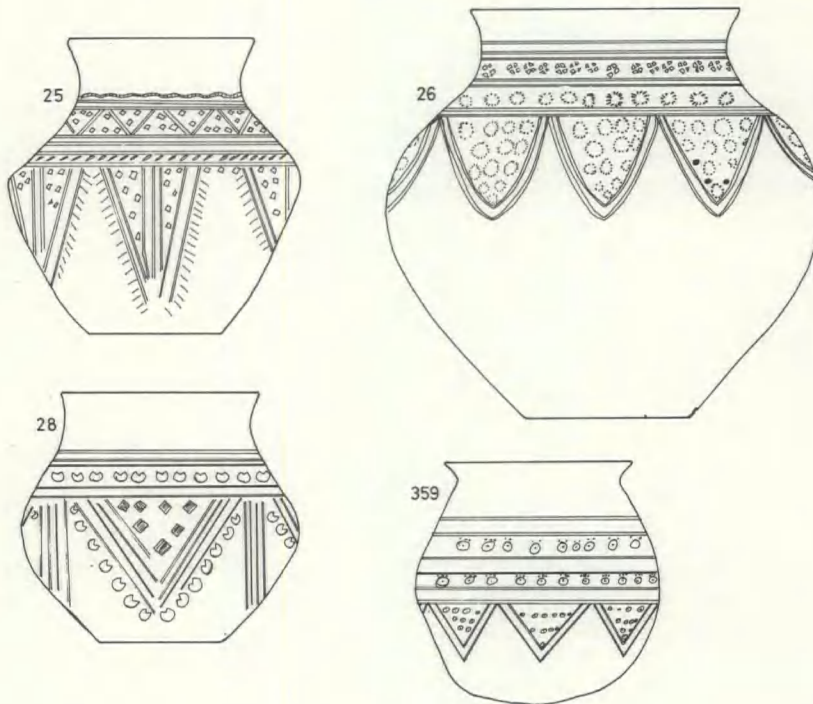


Fig. 2 Urns with triangular panel style from Kempston. Numbers refer to corpus of Kennett, *Kempston*.

These five pots from the Ouse valley form an important link between the Cambridgeshire/Suffolk group and the examples in the Thames valley. Three others from Dunstable, Beds.,¹⁴ Kingsey, Bucks.,¹⁵ and Brixworth, Northants., (fig 3) are stylistically linked and provide further spots on the map in the area. The first named, known only from a Roach Smith illustration, and the two others have similar ring stamps and are further linked by the trick of placing an impression of it at the lowest point of the triangular panels.¹⁶ A similar trick

Kempston include the use of a six-faces design to an applied saucer brooch plate,¹⁹ and saucer brooches with face centres. The pair from Kempston grave 37 (grave of 7 November 1863)²⁰ have very close links in their facial design with brooches from Long Wittenham, Berks.,²¹ and Brightampton grave 49²² and Broughton Poggs,²³ both Oxon. The Kempston pair have hatched borders and this feature is found on saucer brooches from East Shefford, Berks.,²⁴ and Bidford-on-Avon, Warks.²⁵ The same style of a hatched border is found also on

the great square-headed brooch with a triangular foot found at Haslingfield.²⁶ The last named has several points of contact with the great square-headed brooch with a triangular foot from Kempston.²⁷ Both are examples of the square-headed variety of florid East Midland brooches, whose other examples link Cambridgeshire with Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Leicestershire.²⁸ One further link found at Kempston may be discerned in the connections of the Cambridge region and the Upper Thames valley. This is the use of silver-headed rivets on shield bosses. Apart from two each at Kempston²⁹ and the small Newport Pagnell cemetery,³⁰ examples may be cited from Haslingfield, Little Wilbraham and Barrington,³¹ all in Cambridgeshire, and from Frilford, Fairford and Wheatley³² in the Upper Thames valley.

The only other large cemetery from Bedfordshire with late sixth century material is that from Argyll Avenue, Luton. The great square-headed brooch of Leeds' B6 class found in grave 41³⁴ find ready parallels at Abingdon³⁵ and Fairford³⁶ to the south-west and Haslingfield³⁷ and Market Overton³⁸ to the north-east. A brooch from 'Oxfordshire' and a pair from Market Overton³⁹ are parallels to the saucer brooches of Luton grave 41,⁴⁰ which have a local parallel at Shefford.⁴¹ The various sub-types of the weak five-pointed star occur over a wide area, but include one from Luton and others from sites in the Upper Thames valley and the Cambridge region.⁴²

The Luton and Kempston brooches have connections which underline the importance of Bedfordshire to students of Anglo-Saxon archaeology. This is reinforced by ceramic evidence, particularly the triangular panel style urns found at Moggerhanger, Kempston and Dunstable, which are a link between Mid Anglia and the Upper Thames in the late sixth century. They are also an indication of the uncharted, and therefore neglected riches, of the archaeology of Anglo-Saxon Bedfordshire.⁴³

DESCRIPTIONS OF POTTERY FIGURED

Fig 1

1 Moggerhanger

Globular urn, lacking rim, neck and much of one side, of a black gritty ware, reconstructed to give a complete profile and body of vessel to base of the neck. Very strong shoulder with decoration profuse above: chevrons at base of neck, above grooves surmounting a row of six-spoked wheel

stamps; below this are two grooves and a row of small quadripartite stamps. From three grooves on the shoulder hang four extant pendant triangles from probably six originally. These triple scored triangles enclose an arrangement of seven small quadripartite stamps.

Museum Bedford Museum, accession number 3734.
Literature: Not previously illustrated; cited Morris, 1962, 69; Meaney, 1964, 39; Myres, 1969, 117. Myres, *Corpus*, no 388.

Fig 2

25 Kempston, 25

Shouldered urn, almost complete, with chip from neck and rim restored, of a harsh black ware. Profusely decorated from the neck downwards. A line of roller stamping in discontinuous waves at the base of the neck, above grooves enclosing a series of continuous pendant triangles with three small square stamps above and four small square stamps below. Row of diagonal stabblings in the lowest pair of grooves. On and below the shoulder six pendant triangles, double scored, with external stabblings, enclosing three perpendicular grooves and sets of small square stamps in random fashion. Up to three small square stamps between each triangle. Flat base. Height 158mm; rim diameter 89mm; base diameter 70mm.

Museum British Museum, register number 1891, 6-24, 25.

Literature: Fitch, 1864, pl 6 top right; Fitch, 1868 pl 44 top right; Kennett, *Kempston*, object 25; Myres, *Corpus*, no 1980.

26 Kempston 26

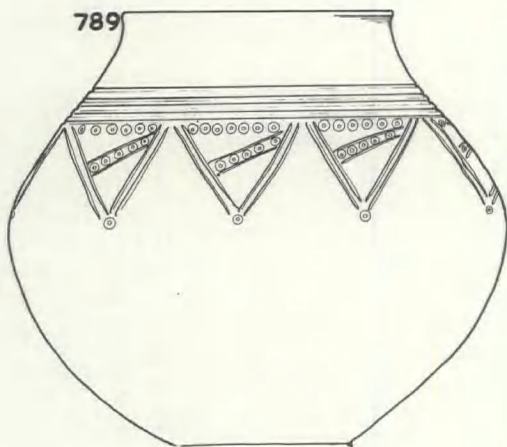
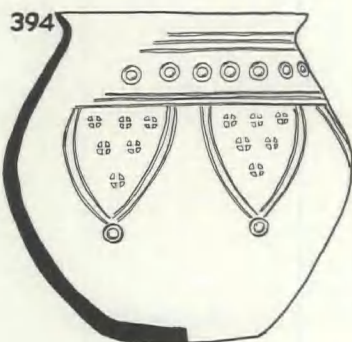
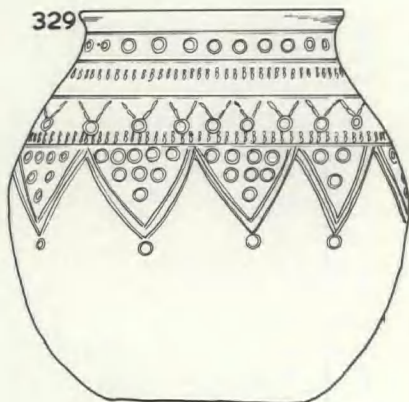
Globular urn, of black ware fired light brown to buff in places, with ornament confined to above the greatest diameter. Grooves on neck above row of quatrefoil stamps and below further grooves row of sun-ray stamps. Two grooves above group of pendant triangles enclose by two curving lines and filled with sun-ray stamps. Lower part plain. Height 218mm; rim diameter 140mm.

Museum British Museum, register number 1891, 6-24, 26.

Literature Fitch, 1864, pl 4 third row left; Fitch, 1868, pl 42 third row left; Kennett, *Kempston*, object 26; Myres, *Corpus*, no 1982.

28 Kempston 28, grave 126, found 3 April 1864

Small globular urn, complete of harsh surfaced



ware, fired light brown sandy colour, profusely decorated. Three wide encircling grooves at base of neck above row of crescent-shaped stamps and two further encircling grooves. Above and across shoulder of pot are four pendant triangles of four lines enclosing groups of diamond matt stamps: seven in two triangles and one each with four and six. The triangles are edged with crescent-shaped stamps and divided by blocks of four vertical grooves. Flat base.

Height 133mm; rim diameter 104mm.

Museum British Museum, register number 1891, 6-24, 28.

Literature Fitch, 1864, 298, pl 5 centre. Fitch, 1868, 216, pl 5 centre; Kennett, *Kempston*, object 28; Myres, *Corpus*, no 1971.

359 Kempston 359

Small ovoid pot, red brown, light brown and black surfaces. Grooves at base of neck and above shoulder enclose rows of stamps between second and third rows and between fifth and sixth rows. These stamps are dot-in-circle with two dots above. Six pendant triangles below shoulder filled with dot-in-circle stamps. Round base.

Height 131mm; rim diameter 98mm.

Museum Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, accession number, 1909, 515.

Literature Previously unpublished; Kennett, *Kempston*, object 359; Myres, *Corpus*, 2074.

Fig 3

329 Dunstable

Small urn, profusely decorated with neck grooves enclosing row of circle stamps and row of stamps like a squashed letter 'B', above a row of stamps made up of both stamps to form a rough face with the letter 'B' stamps as elongated ears and a row of letter 'B' stamps below. Below a single groove are pendant triangles filled with circle stamps and having a circle stamp at the point of the triangle.

Museum: not known to me, was once in the library of Clare Hall, Cambridge, but has not been traced in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge.

Literature: *Collectanea Antiqua*, 2, 1862, 233 and pl 54.2; Myres, *Corpus*, no 329.

394 Kingsey, Oxfordshire

Small jar, with row of circle stamps inside neck grooves and pendant triangles with curving sides

Fig. 3 Urns from Dunstable (329), Kingsey (394) and Brixworth (789). Numbers refer to Myres, *Corpus*. Figure drawn by Dr J.N.L. Myres.

on shoulder. These are filled with quadripartite stamps and terminate in a circle stamp.

Museum: not known to me; Dr J N L Myres kindly supplied information on this vessel.

Literature: Myres, *Corpus*, no 394.

789 Brixworth, Northamptonshire

Small urn, with five neck grooves and a row of pendant triangles below, with a row of dot-in-circle stamps below the horizontal grooves and another placed diagonally inside a pair of grooves. The triangles terminate in a dot-in-circle stamp.

Museum: Northampton Museum.

Literature: Myres, *Corpus*, no 789.

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S E Fitch, 1864: 'Discovery of Saxon Remains at Kempston', *A A S R* 7, 1863-64, 269-299.

SE Fitch, 1868: 'Anglo-Saxon Remains discovered in Bedfordshire', in C Roach Smith (ed) *Collectanea Antiqua* 6, 1868, 201-221.

DH Kennett, *Kempston*: 'The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Kempston, Bedfordshire: a reconsideration', 1968, unpublished; copies are available Department of Medieval and Later Antiquities, British Museum and Archaeological Liaison Officer, County Planning Department, County Hall, Bedford.

A L Meaney, 1964: *A Gazetteer of Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites* 1964.

J B Morris, 1962: 'The Anglo-Saxons in Bedfordshire', *Beds Arch J* 1, 1962, 58-76.

J N L Myres, 1969: *Anglo-Saxon Pottery and the Settlement of England*, 1969.

J N L Myres, *Corpus*: collections for a *Corpus Vasorum Anglo-Saxonicorum* forthcoming.

NOTES

- 1 See literature at end of description of the urn.
- 2 Myres, 1969, 115-119 with map 9; and 204 with fig 29, also pl 6, gives a fuller survey.
- 3 D H Kennett, 'Anglo-Saxon Northamptonshire: some minor sites', *J Northampton Mus* 6, 1969, 48, with fig 1.5.
- 4 H Peake and E A Hooton, 'Saxon Graveyard at East Shefford, Berks.', *J R Anth* 1 45, 1916, 116 and pl 3 top right.
- 5 Myres, 1969, 204 and fig 29, 288 and 290.
- 6 Myres, 1969, 204 and fig 29, 2452.
- 7 E T Leeds and D B Harden, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Abingdon, Berkshire*, 1936, 19 and fig 4. C47 and pl 1.47.
- 8 Myres, 1969, 204 and fig 29, 371a.
- 9 Myres, 1969, 242 and fig 48, 2625.

- 10 Myres, 1969, 242 and fig 48, 2060.
- 11 Myres, 1969, 132-136 with map 10, and 242 with fig 48.
- 12 T C Lethbridge, *A Cemetery at Lackford, Suffolk*, 1951, fig 17, 50. 178B.
- 13 For a discussion of silver bracelets see *Med Arch* 14, 1970, 27-28.
- 14 C Roach Smith, *Collectanea Antiqua* 2, 1862, 233 and pl 54.2. It has been reported that this pot is in the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge (Morris, 1962, 65) but an extensive search failed to find it. Myres, *Corpus*, no 394.
- 15 Myres, *Corpus*, no 394.
- 16 I owe this point to Dr Myres.
- 17 D H Kennett, 'An Anglo-Saxon Potter from Northamptonshire', *J Northampton Mus* 6, 1969, 37-41. This is seen most clearly in the published photographs of these pots: *ibid* photograph on 39 for Islip and Myres, 1969, pl 6 c for Barton Sea-grave.
- 18 D H Kennett, 'Applied Brooches of the Kempston Type at St Johns, Cambridge' *P Camb Ant Soc* 63, 1971, 27-29.
- 19 British Museum, register numbers 1891, 6-24, 254/255; Kennett, *Kempston*, objects 254 and 255.
- 20 British Museum, register numbers 1891, 6-24, 243/244; Fitch, 1864, 288 and pl 2, 6; Fitch, 1868, 205 and pl 40, 6; Kennett, *Kempston*, objects 243/244.
- 21 *Archaeologia* 38, 1860, 338 and pl 19.1.
- 22 *Archaeologia* 38, 1860, 89 and pl 3.7.
- 23 Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, accession number 1909.489.
- 24 British Museum, register number, 1893, 7-16, 45.
- 25 *Archaeologia* 63, 1912, pl 25.8.
- 26 E T Leeds, *A Corpus of Early Anglo-Saxon Great-square-headed Brooches*, 1949, number 139.
- 27 *ibid*, number 141: Kennett, *Kempston*, object 360
- 28 For these see Kennett, *Kempston*; E T Leeds, in *Med Arch* 15, 1971, forthcoming; and D H Kennett 'A Fragmentary Florid Cruciform Brooch from Brixworth' *J Northampton Mus* forthcoming and Anglo-Saxon Finds made at Brooke, Norfolk, 1867-1869', *P Camb Ant Soc* forthcoming.
- 29 British Museum, register numbers 1891, 6-24, 60/65; Kennett, *Kempston*, objects 60 and 65, see D H Kennett, 'A decorated shield from Kempston', *Beds Arch J* forthcoming.
- 30 Aylesbury Museum, unpublished.
- 31 All in Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge.
- 32 Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, accession numbers, 1886, 1434; 1961. 7/81; 1883.4.
- 33 W Austin *et al*, 'A Saxon cemetery at Luton', *Ant J* 8, 1928, 177-192.
- 34 *ibid* 182 and pl 29; the grave list does not give the grave recorded in summary fashion, loc cit. E T Leeds, *A Corpus of Early Anglo-Saxon Great square-headed Brooches*, 1949, number 95.
- 35 *ibid*, number 99.
- 36 *ibid*, number 97.
- 37 *ibid*, number 98.
- 38 *ibid*, number 96.
- 39 E T Leeds, 'The early Saxon Penetration of the Upper Thames Area', *Ant J* 13, 1933, 243.

- 40 *Ant J* 8, 1928, pl 27, 1, 1-2 (this is printed as a reversed negative).
- 41 *Beds Magazine* 12, 1969-71, photograph on 203.
- 42 Leeds, *loc cit* n39, which also gives details of other contacts of Mid Anglia and the Upper Thames which have no Bedfordshire intermediary.
- 43 Mr F W Kuhlicke provided access to the Moggerhanger urn in Bedford Museum and granted permission to publish it. At the British Museum, Mrs L E Webster facilitated my examination of the pots from Kempston. Dr J N L Myres kindly read this note in draft form and provided a concordance to his *Corpus*. To all I tender my grateful thanks.