

# The Latest Objects from Silchester, Hants.

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SOME years ago, the late B. H. St. J. O'Neil contributed a valuable paper to *Antiquity*, in which he sought to show that sub-Roman life continued down to about 450 at Calleva (Silchester, Hants.) and down to the sixth century in the vicinity of the Roman town<sup>1</sup>. In the course of his search for material relics to support this theory, which was based in the first instance upon his interpretation of a linear earthwork known as Grim's Bank<sup>2</sup> about two miles north-west of the town, O'Neil was compelled to observe that the Silchester collection at Reading Museum had not then been closely enough examined for the full weight of evidence bearing upon the period to be apparent. The purpose of this paper is to draw attention to some objects<sup>3</sup> in the collection which are relevant to O'Neil's theory—to the first part of it, that is. It is hoped that the following remarks will not be found inapposite at the present time, when so much endeavour is being devoted to the problems of early dark-age archaeology.

The specimens fall into three groups. Group A consists of bronze-work and fragments of glass, of the latest Gallo-Roman 'Vermand' style; Group B, in many ways the most interesting, of western Celtic material; and Group C of purely Saxon objects. All were found in sorting what can only be described as the *debris* of the extensive and long-continued excavations, 1864-84 and 1890-1909, preserved mainly at Reading Museum, on loan from the Duke of Wellington, but also in part at Stratfield Saye House. Objects less certain or less characteristic than those chosen could have been included in Group A, but Groups B and C contain all certain specimens known to me, though not necessarily all that a further examination of the Silchester collection might bring to light. The search has covered all kinds of artefacts, mostly in a fragmentary, corroded or rubbed state, and this kind of material calls for a degree of specialized knowledge and wide experience perhaps unlikely to be at the disposal of one person.

O'Neil well stressed the fact that material of the type described is generally met in surface levels, which are precisely those open to disturbance and robbed of stratification. The objects from such upper levels have therefore to be accepted at their face-value, and that of the present material is in no way lessened by the

<sup>1</sup> B. H. St. J. O'Neil, 'The Silchester region in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D.,' *Antiquity*, xviii (1944), 133 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, 'Grim's Bank, Padworth, Berks.,' *Antiquity*, xvii (1943), 188 ff. See also B. H. St. J. O'Neil and H. J. E. Peake, 'A linear earthwork on Greenham Common, Berks.,' *Archaeol. J.*, c (1943), 177 ff. The dykes S.-W. of Calleva are in a different category and probably pre-Roman: see my 'From Belgic to Roman Silchester,' in *Antiquity & Survival* (forthcoming) and *Roman Silchester* (London, 1957), 61 f.

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lack of thorough documentation at the time of excavation. The present note, so much concerned with meagre scraps, is a plea for the careful conservation of such finds for a more careful and leisurely examination.

GROUP A (PLS. III and IV, A; FIG. 41)

A 1-4 *TABS*, bronze (extant lengths respectively 50, 62, 28, 43 mm.) A 1 is cast, the base bifurcated to admit the strap. The others are of normal double-strip construction, with a decorated front plate riveted through the strap to a plain back, missing in A 3-4. Except for A 3, they are of the 'nail-cleaner' type, the two complete specimens having the nicked tip characteristic of the supposed prototype. A 3 is of a type described by Pilloy as *ferrets*, but probably served on the rear cuirass-straps (G. Behrens in *Schumacher-Festschrift* (1930), pp. 285 ff.). The decoration depends on two main tools: a form of centre-bit, used for the dot-and-circle motifs, and a crescentic punch. The slight edge-nicking of A 3 is particularly characteristic of the Vermand style and so is the rather rude and harsh finish of the thin metal used on all except A 1. The sideloops of A 1-2 may be contrasted with the enclosed 'eyes' of A 4, and all three may be linked to the rudimentary *à-jour* ornamentation of A 12. The central motif of A 1 is present in a more developed form on A 11. Good parallels appear in J. P. Bushe-Fox, *Richborough*, II (Res. Rept. Soc. Antiq. Lond., VII, 1928) pl. xix, 35; *id.*, *Richborough*, IV (Res. Rept. xvi, 1949), pls. xxxvi, 125, and lii, 186.

A 5-10 *BUCKLES*, bronze (lengths: A 5—57 mm.; A 6—37 mm.; A 8—51 mm.; widths: A 7—34 mm.; A 9—32 mm.; A 10—45 mm.) All except A 7 and 9 have one-piece hoops. In A 9, the spindle was of iron. A 9-10 both show opposed zoomorphs (dolphins), in A 9 partly hand-worked, in A 10 wholly cast. The same decoration in rude form is visible in the filed chords and edge-nicks of A 6 (*cf.* E. T. Leeds, *Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology* (1936), pl. v). A 8 is paralleled by a Lydney specimen (R. E. M. & T. V. Wheeler, *Excav. at Lydney Park, Glos.* (Res. Rept. Soc. Antiq. Lond., IX, 1932), pl. xxviii, 132. The dot-and-circles may have been inlaid (*cf.* V. Evison, 'Early Anglo-Saxon inlaid metalwork,' *Antiq. J.*, xxxv (1955), 20 ff., pl. iii, etc., and 'Further Anglo-Saxon inlay,' *ib.*, xxxviii (1958), 240 ff., pl. xxvi, *c-d*, etc.). As a group, these buckles are very similar to the Vermand finds and parallels often occur in graves of the migration-period both in Britain and abroad.

A 11 *BUCKLE-PLATE*, bronze (length 31 mm.; enlarged view, PL. IV, A). A thin strip, front face only, imperfect, slotted and shouldered for the buckle, and with a rivet-hole at the base of the extant decoration, which is both punched and engraved, perhaps for inlay, the general appearance being very neat. The crescentic punch is again used, and circular punches for the small motifs in the roundels and at the corners of the 'hour-glass' shape. Other forms of punch are used for the *relievo* crosses in the margins and for the 'maggots' fringing the bases of the triangles composing the 'hour-glass'. This plate is in the same style as the small buckle with horse-*protomi* from the man's grave at Dorchester (Oxon.), J. R. Kirk and E. T. Leeds, 'Three early Saxon graves from Dorchester, Oxon.,' *Oxoniensia*, xvii-xviii (1952-3), 64, fig. 27, no. 16, pl. iv, B, and reproduces a similar circular motif. The 'hour-glass' appears on the bronze plate from Bishopstone (Bucks.), Leeds, *op. cit. s.v.* A 5-10, pl. iii, c. A further example from College Wood, near Winchester (Hants.) published by R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford in *Antiq. J.*, xxxiv (1954), 75 f., has hatched lozenges like the Dorchester specimen, and both have circular motifs at the angles as on A 11. It may be significant that

these specimens all come from the same region of central southern England. A list of analogous finds is given by Evison, *op. cit.* s.v. A 5-10, and what may be the last devolution of the style is seen on a barbarous scrap from Lagore crannog, Co. Meath, Eire, assigned to the seventh century. H. Hencken, 'Lagore crannog,' *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad.*, LIII, sect. c (1950-1), 84, fig. 22, 110.

- A 12 *BRACELET*, bronze (length as extant, 78 mm.): Cf. T. Eck, *Les deux cimetières . . . de Vermand et de Saint-Quentin* (Paris, 1891), last pl. (S. Quentin objects), no. 14.
- A 13-14 *GLASS RIMS* (144, 145 mm. diam.). Sharp-cut edge; transparent, green bubbly glass, with striations below the rims, the same-colour trails are only lightly attached. At first sight, these pieces recall the cone-beaker from High Down cemetery, Sussex (*Archaeologia*, LIV (1895), pl. xxvii, 1) but as the rim-diameter of that vessel is only about 75 mm., A 13-14 may have been of a different shape lower down.

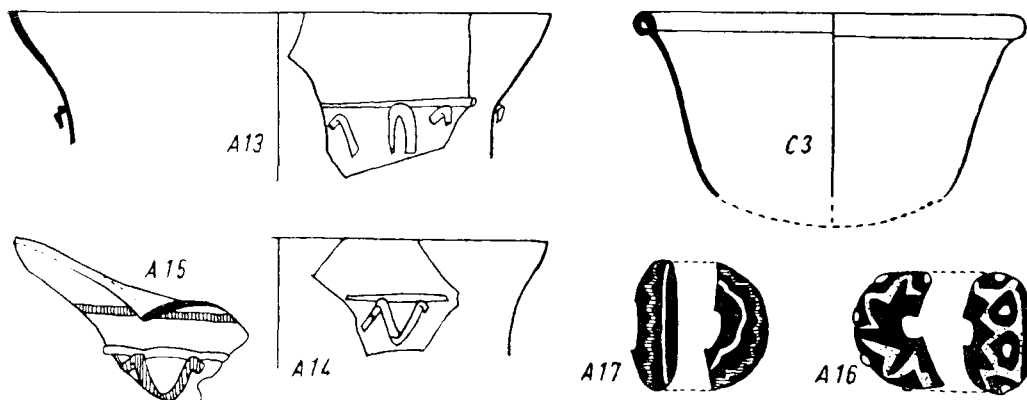


FIG. 41

GLASS FRAGMENTS AND BEADS FROM SILCHESTER, HANTS. (pp. 81, 83). Sc.  $\frac{1}{2}$

- A 15 *GLASS RIM*. Fire-rounded edge: yellow-green bubbly glass, with a turquoise trail next below the rim, then a pair of same-colour trails, between which is a zigzag of turquoise. The shape of the vessel has been deformed by heat, but it may be compared with, e.g., *Führer d. prov. Mus. Bonn* (1924 ed.), pl. xviii; F. Fremersdorf in *Wallraf-Richartz Jahrb.*, II-III (1933-4), figs. 5, 9-10; J. Nenquin, *La Nécropole de Furfooz* (1953), pl. iii, B 11.

Dr. D. B. Harden, who kindly examined these three pieces, suggests that they are not earlier than the fifth century, because of their bubbly metal and the imperfect bonding of their decorative trails. The flared rim is, however, also a Roman characteristic, seen for example in a glass from the forum of Calvea, Boon, *op. cit.* in note 8 *infra*, p. 97, pl. 20.

- A 16-17 *GLASS BEADS*. A 16 has a marvered lattice of opaque dull red on a very dark green—'black'—base. The lattice encloses white spots. A 17 has marvered white and turquoise zigzag threads on a base of similar colour to A 16. Both are of the latest Roman or migration-period type (cf. J. P. Bushe-Fox, *Richborough*, IV (Res. Rept. Soc. Antiq. Lond., xvi, 1949), 149, nos. 236-8.) Also in the Silchester collection are three smaller 'black' glass

beads, with marvered zigzags of white, opaque yellow and turquoise respectively. Of similar date is an oval crystal bead with the short-axis perforation often found in early Saxon, etc., contexts, as illustrated, e.g. by C. F. C. Hawkes in *Dark-age Britain* (ed. D. B. Harden, 1956), pl. xi, A. Three discoid amber beads may also be associated with the glass beads described here. The same may be true of two or three beads of amethystine quartz.

GROUP B (PL. III)

- B 1 *PIN*, bronze (length 75 mm.): from a large penannular brooch of the developed zoomorphic-terminal class, intended for a brooch about 60 mm. diameter. Barrel-shaped head with fine cross-hatching on the midrib, forced open at the back. One of the best class of zoomorphic penannulars, represented by the Caerwent, etc., specimens (see, e.g., H. N. Savory, 'Some sub-Romano-British brooches from south Wales,' in *Dark-age Britain* (ed. D. B. Harden, 1956), 40 ff., pl. v, *g*). The lozenge near the tip, where the pin rode over the hoop, appears on a Lagore find (Hencken, *op. cit. s.v.* A 11, p. 64, fig. 10, *b*) and the very faint incised cross, etc., repeated on the shaft of the pin two or three times, recalls similar decoration on A 5 and A 8.
- B 2 *PIN*, bronze (length 75 mm.): made from a flat strip. The proportionate thinness suggests that the pin is not from a penannular of normal style, although possibly from a penannular such as, it is suggested, B 3 formed part of. The essential feature is the crooked or recurved terminal of the head-loop. This seems to be a rare form in Britain, but perhaps only because ring-headed pins with loose rings are not often adequately illustrated with profile views. A fair parallel occurred at Harnham Hill (J. Y. Akerman, 'Note on further discoveries in the Anglo-Saxon burial-ground at Harnham Hill near Salisbury,' *Archaeologia*, xxxv (1853), pl. xix, 6). Some of the Irish pins which had loose rings are good parallels: cf. H. Hencken, 'Ballinderry Crannog No. I,' *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad.*, XLIII, sect. c (1935-7), 167, fig. 31, *d* (iron); S. P. Ó'Riordáin, 'Excav. at Cush, Co. Limerick,' *ibid.*, XLV, sect. c (1939-40), 147, fig. 35, no. 318 (bronze); Lagore, *op. cit. s.v.* A 11, p. 100, fig. 34, *a, c* (iron). The nicked edges of the head-loop and general roughness of execution recall Group A, and the spiral below the head-loop appears on the pin of the Caerwent brooch cited under B 1. From both of these B 2 cannot be far removed in date (B 2 is probably the pin illustrated by J. Ward, *The Roman Era in Britain* (London, 1911), p. 247, top row).
- B 3 *TERMINAL*, bronze (diam. 19 mm.). Flat, with a portion of the oval shank, rolled up from a flat strip, as B 2. The shank is curved, but this is not connected with the recent break. The object is therefore not likely to be a pin, and its decoration is far removed from that found on 'latchets' (e.g. E. T. Leeds, *Celtic Ornament* (Oxford, 1933), p. 142, fig. 36, *c*). H. N. Savory has suggested to me that B 3 may be the terminal of a penannular brooch about 50 or 60 mm. in diameter. Expanded flat terminals, in the same plane as the hoop, are a rare feature of the late penannular series, best shown by a small example from the Minchin Hole Cave, Gower (Glam.), illustrated here by kind permission of the excavator, but now lost (mentioned by Savory, *op. cit. s.v.* B 1, p. 42). The nicked edge is again apparent, and the linear ornament appears in different form on the brooch from Linney Burrows (Pemb.), illustrated by Savory (*ibid.*, fig. 11, no. 5).

## GROUP C (PL. III, FIG. 42)

- C 1 *BUTTON-BROOCH*, bronze (diam. 26 mm.) said to have been found at or near Silchester. From the Passmore collection now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (*Ashm. Mus. Rept. for 1955*, p. 31; originally published by A. D. Passmore in *Proc. Hants. Field Club*, xii (1934), 212). Seventh century.
- C 2 *DRESS-HOOK*, bronze (length 24 mm.). Thin sheet, with two small holes for attachment in two of the circular motifs. According to G. C. Dunning, *Trans. Bristol and Glos. Archaeol. Soc.*, LXXI (1952), 79 f.), these objects are seventh- to tenth-century in date. C 2 is like Dunning's fig. 13, no. 3; two fragmentary hooks in the Silchester collection are like his fig. 13, no. 2. Two bronze pins with polyhedral heads, comparable with pins found on later Saxon sites like Whitby (*Archaeologia*, LXXXIX (1943), 63, fig. 14), may also be noted here.
- C 3 *PALM-CUP*, glass (diam. about 100 mm.): clear bluish-green. The slight carination towards the base is paralleled on several Saxon palm-cups, e.g. Finglesham, Kent, grave AA4, *Med. Archaeol.*, II (1958), 27, pl. iv, D, fig. 5, *t*; Ash, Kent (now in Ashmolean Museum), J. Douglas, *Nenia Britannica* (1793), pl. xii, 13; and the handled piece from Peterborough Cathedral, D. B. Harden, 'Glass vessels in Britain and Ireland, A.D. 400-1000,' in *Dark-age Britain* (1956), p. 165, class x d 2, pl. xviii, *p*, fig. 25. Cf. also K. Böhner, *Die fränk. Altert. d. Trierer Landes* (Berlin, 1958), II, pl. LXV, no. 1, from Hohenfels cemetery; and, in general, Harden, *op. cit.*, p. 142. Probably seventh century. The piece has some affinities in shape with late Roman glass, but after study Dr. Harden is disposed to agree with the identification proposed here.

## INFERENCES

The bronze-work of Group A was submitted to the late E. T. Leeds, who commented:

'The Silchester group not only provides us with perfectly characteristic products of the Vermand Gallo-Roman style, but also offers pieces that corroborate dating-evidence supplied from other sources. To take the evidence in chronological order, as known to us, we have (a) the Dorchester (Oxon.) finds which (as can now be shown<sup>4</sup>) are to be dated *c.* 400; (b) the Vermand grave-finds,<sup>5</sup> on which French archaeologists give 407 as the limit (the town is said to have been devastated by the Vandals and Alans in that year), and many of which are therefore before 400; (c) chance finds from Roman towns and fortresses in Britain<sup>6</sup>, mostly found at high levels or in outer ditches. As such sites would be occupied up to at least 410, we have clear proof that the style represented by these pieces must cover the last years of the Roman occupation and at least two decades of the fifth century. On the evidence of the many pieces found in this country, it would seem that not only were objects of the Vermand style imported, but that some of them may actually have been fabricated here.'

<sup>4</sup> See J. R. Kirk and E. T. Leeds, *op. cit. s.v.* A 11.

<sup>5</sup> T. Eck, *op. cit. s.v.* A 12.

<sup>6</sup> See Evison's list, cited in A 5-10.

These objects thus fully confirm the testimony of the late Roman coins from Silchester mentioned by O'Neil.<sup>7</sup> Nearly 700 of the House of Theodosius I, etc., have now been recorded, to be compared with 1,250 of the preceding dynasty of Valentinian I and 1,250 of the House of Constantine after 337 (including about 530 copies). The Theodosian coins include one struck after 395 (bronze), as well as post-395 gold of Arcadius and a coin of Constantine III.<sup>8</sup> Hoards do not appear to enter into the total, as they do at Caerwent.<sup>9</sup> There are also numerous small copies of types associated by some with a continuance of coining into the dark ages. There is as yet no evidence that this was the case, and 'minimissimi' (of Lydney fame<sup>10</sup>) are now known to have been in use for some time within the confines of the fourth century.<sup>11</sup>

A *folles* of Justin I or Justinian I, struck 518-38, may be mentioned at this juncture. This coin, now lost, is carefully drawn on the last page of volume II of the Rev. J. G. Joyce's MS. 'Journal of Excavations at Silchester, 1864-78', at Reading Museum. The illustration in PL. III is a reproduction of this drawing. The coin was bought, as having come from Calleva, with some Roman coins and a few others, principally English, on behalf of the second Duke of Wellington. Joyce appears to have accepted the provenience, with doubts on the score of its late date and on that of its associations at the time of purchase.

The subject of Byzantine coppers found in Britain is complex. About ninety coins, from more than thirty sites, are known to me; the most famous group, of thirteen, comes from Caerwent (Mon.).<sup>12</sup> In general, they have a bias of distribution towards the western parts of Britain, which is particularly suggestive of pre-Saxon import when considered in the light of the evidence of dark-age import wares. Unfortunately, an element of doubt creeps into every single instance. The records are generally bad, and there are so many obviously modern losses and so many ways whereby Byzantine coppers may have entered this country, perhaps to be lost in very obscure places. With the possible exception of two *folles*, of Anastasius I and Justinian I, found at Ilchester (Som.)—a site which has also yielded a scrap of dark-age import-ware<sup>13</sup>—they are all in some way vitiated as evidence. Until a Byzantine coin is found in undeniable association with an object of comparable date, it is well to omit chance finds of such coins from account.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.* in note 1, p. 114 citing J. W. E. Pearce in *Nunism. Chron.*, ix (1929), 328 ff.

<sup>8</sup> G. C. Boon, *Roman Silchester* (1957), p. 80. A MS. list in vol. i of the Catalogue of the Silchester Collection at Reading Museum, prepared by myself, gives details. Arcadius: *Gents. Mag.*, 1792, p. 529; Constantine III: *Remarks & Collections of Thomas Hearne*, iv, ed. D. W. Rannie (Oxford Hist. Soc., xxxiv, 1898), 360.

<sup>9</sup> V. E. Nash-Williams, 'The Coins found at Caerwent and Caerleon,' *Bull. Board Celt. Stud.*, II (1925), 92 ff. (the 'Honorina' mentioned is really Honorius: J. P. C. Kent, 'The search for 5th century coins in Britain,' *Archaeol. News Letter*, v (Dec. 1954), 119, col. 1, note 7).

<sup>10</sup> R. E. M. and T. V. Wheeler, *op. cit. s.v.* A 5-10, pp. 116 ff.

<sup>11</sup> At Brean Down Roman temple they were certainly in use in the pre-Theodosian period. See A. M. ApSimon, 'The Roman temple at Brean Down, Som.,' *Proc. Univ. Bristol Spelaol. Soc.*, VIII (1957-8), 106 ff. for an interim report, and a forthcoming volume for the final report, which will include a note by myself on the coins.

<sup>12</sup> G. C. Boon, 'A note on the Byzantine Æ coins said to have been found at Caerwent,' *Bull. Board Celt. Stud.*, xvii (1958), 316 ff.

<sup>13</sup> J. S. Cox, *The Government of the Town* (Ilchester Hist. Monogr. no. 8, 1956), p. 170.

The relevance of the brooches<sup>14</sup> and pottery<sup>15</sup> cited by O'Neil is difficult (as he saw) to gauge correctly. The applied brooch with *triskele* design from the forum (1867) is one of seven or so certain examples of its type found in Britain,<sup>16</sup> and a date within the second or third centuries seems requisite for them. There is nothing in the numerous brooches of the Silchester collection which need be later than the fourth century, B 1 possibly excepted: the various penannulars, for example, are mostly of Lydney types.<sup>17</sup> A possible claimant to a place at the end of the series, however, is an oval, tinned brooch bearing a cross outlined in dark green enamel on an opaque dull red background—a colour, like turquoise, usually indicative of a late date. This brooch<sup>18</sup> has a raised centre containing a moulded opaque red intaglio of barbarous form, conceivably derived from an imperial profile-bust as seen on coins, and as is perhaps detectable on the shivered centre of a blue-and-white brooch of similar type, with raised central red boss, found at Lowbury Hill, Berks.<sup>19</sup> A third specimen comes from Wickham Bushes in the same county, and is blue-and-white and red, with an intaglio like that of the Silchester brooch.<sup>20</sup>

As to pottery, the Silchester vessels paralleled by the containers of the two Reading Theodosian hoards, buried *c.* 400, illustrate the best-authenticated of late classes.<sup>21</sup> It may be added that one of these vessels has a 'maggot'-pattern strongly reminiscent of A 11 and, to emphasize further the artistic trends of the time, the roundels with cruciform motif appearing on A 11 are reflected by a shard singled out by May.<sup>22</sup> The decoration of this piece is unlike that of most of the rosette-stamped, colour-coated material from Silchester, and akin to that found on Saxon cremation-urns. It deserves consideration in the light of Myres's researches.<sup>23</sup>

The Reading hoards attest the disturbed state of the district *c.* 400, and Calleva itself provides further signs of commotion somewhere about that date. The burial of the two large deposits of smith's stock<sup>24</sup> may be placed in evidence and also, although without a more certain chronological link than the occurrence

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.* in note 1, p. 115, citing E. T. Leeds.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114 f., citing T. May, *The Pottery Found at Silchester* (Reading, 1916), pls. li-lvii *passim*.

<sup>16</sup> See A. G. Hunter and J. R. Kirk, 'Excav. at Campsfield, Kidlington, Oxon.', *Oxoniensia*, xvii-xviii (1952-3), 57 (Brough, 1; Richb., 1; Corbridge, 1: the others, including the Kidlington brooch, are different in design); add though (as noted by Joyce) Settle Caves, 2: *Proc. Hist. Soc. Lancs. and Cheshire*, v (1865), opp. p. 217; and Colchester 1: M. R. Hull, *Roman Colchester* (Res. Rept. Soc. Antiq. Lond., xx, 1958), fig. 47, no. 7, p. 117. The Silchester brooch is figured in Boon, *op. cit.* in note 8, p. 113, fig. 17, no. 2 and in E. T. Leeds, *Celtic Ornament* (Oxford, 1933), fig. 36, a.

<sup>17</sup> R. E. M. & T. V. Wheeler, *op. cit. s.v.* A 5-10, fig. 14.

<sup>18</sup> Boon, *op. cit.* in note 8, fig. 17, no. 3.

<sup>19</sup> D. Atkinson, *Lowbury Hill* (Reading, 1915), pl. ix, 34.

<sup>20</sup> In the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge.

<sup>21</sup> T. May, *op. cit.* in note 15, pls. lii, 89 and lvi, 102; G. C. Boon, 'Hoards of Roman coins in the Reading Museum,' *Oxoniensia*, xix (1954), 41 ff.

<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.* in note 15, pl. lxxxii, b.

<sup>23</sup> J. N. L. Myres, 'Romano-Saxon pottery,' in *Dark-age Britain* (ed. D. B. Harden, 1956), pp. 34 ff. Cf. however a sherd from Bourton-on-the-Water, Glos. (*Trans. Bristol and Glouc. Archaeol. Soc.*, lvi (1934), 113), in grey ware, with somewhat similar roundels, dated to *c.* 370. The Silchester sherd is also illustrated, *ibid.* p. 114.

<sup>24</sup> Boon, *op. cit.* in note 8, pp. 79, 186

of Theodosian coins there, the final destruction of the basilica by fire.<sup>25</sup> Whether these events can be ascribed to restive *foederati*, placed at Dorchester-on-Thames by Kirk and Leeds,<sup>26</sup> can hardly be stated.

The main question in discussions of this nature is: what do we mean by survival? Calleva as a town depended for its existence upon agriculture,<sup>27</sup> for its further success upon the trade brought thither by seven roads. It also acted as the metropolis of the Atrebatas, however that term should be interpreted in the fourth century. Clearly trade would have vanished with the increase of unsettled conditions, and it may be no accident that the latest datable relics associated with ordinary provincial Roman life are no later than *c.* 400. It seems likely that most of the Theodosian coins arrived before this date, as the result of trade, however much longer they remained in local circulation. The reason for this statement is that only three coins are later than 395. Since Silchester is one of very few town-sites yielding a sizable proportion of late coins,<sup>28</sup> and since J. P. C. Kent has been able to trace a few coins struck as late as *c.* 440 in Britain,<sup>29</sup> it would seem that the absence of such coins at Silchester must be due at very least to a demise of trade along the road-network, and possibly also to the direct influence of the Teutonic nucleus in the Thames valley to the north, of which mention has already been made.

So far, therefore, it has been suggested that normal town-life continued its course until *c.* 400 and then suffered the loss of its external trade, no doubt as the culmination of a process beginning far back in the fourth century. It may also have suffered from local brigandage, Teutonic or other. It is in this sort of climate that the final devolution of occupation must be briefly considered. How, for example, do the objects of Group B fit into it?

The zoomorphic penannular brooch-pin is the only object about which very much can be said. Unfortunately objects of this class have been the subject of varying opinion.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, the most recent detailed study, Savory's, has shown beyond much doubt that the general pattern of zoomorphic penannulars, large and small, is a late one. This is underlined by the only impeccably dated excavated example.<sup>31</sup> It is also noteworthy that the non-zoomorphic type shows an extraordinary persistence, one being found at Silchester with a coin-hoard of *c.* 350<sup>32</sup>—a fact serving to reflect the Lydney evidence and, in its way, to underline Miss Burley's common-sense caution regarding the dating of the zoomorphic series. Of the large zoomorphic brooches, apart from the dubious 'second-century' associations at Porth Dafarch<sup>33</sup>, the only specimens at all reliably

<sup>25</sup> Boon, *op. cit.* in note 8, p. 83.

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit. s.v.* A 11, 74 ff.

<sup>27</sup> Boon, *op. cit.* in note 8, pp. 174 ff.

<sup>28</sup> O'Neil, *op. cit.* in note 1, p. 114.

<sup>29</sup> J. P. C. Kent, *op. cit.* in note 9, pp. 116 ff.

<sup>30</sup> R. A. Smith, 'Irish brooches of five centuries,' *Archaeologia*, LXV (1913-4); H. E. Kilbride-Jones, 'The evolution of penannular brooches with zoomorphic terminals,' *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad.*, XLIII, sect. C (1935-7); H. N. Savory, 'Some sub-Romano-British brooches from south Wales,' in *Dark-age Britain* (ed. D. B. Harden, 1956); E. Burley, 'Metalwork from Traprain,' *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*, LXXXIX (1955-6).

<sup>31</sup> Birdoswald fort, *c.* 369-83: *Trans. Cumb. and Westm. Archaeol. and Antiq. Soc.*, xxxi (1931), 131.

<sup>32</sup> *Archaeologia*, LXI (1909), 478 f.; G. C. Boon, 'Hoards of Roman coins found at Silchester,' *Numism. Chron.* (forthcoming), hoard VI.

<sup>33</sup> W. O. Stanley in *Archaeol. J.*, xxxiii (1876), 131 f.



associated with datable objects occur in migration-period graves.<sup>34</sup> To these may be added two fine Caerwent-type brooches from a Frisian *terp*,<sup>35</sup> the only foreign finds of their class of which I have record. Even if manufacture had ceased by *c.* 500 therefore—a suggestion hardly borne out by the finds—the large brooches were still widely popular then, either complete or, deprived of their pins (as the Silchester one was), as bracelets. Moreover, since the pin bears signs of long usage for its original purpose, its parent brooch must have been very old when the pin was torn off. On the whole, it seems reasonable to assign B 1 to some period in the fifth century, perhaps the later part, and with it possibly the other finds in Group B.

It is tempting, at this juncture, to link these objects with the Ogham stone as evidence of western Celtic contact with the dying Roman life of Calleva. This monument, the most easterly of its type by far, was found halfway down a Roman well in Insula IX (1893). The inscription (FIG. 42), on a (conically trimmed?) Roman column, reads EBICATO[S MAQ] I MUCO[ and has been romantically, if tentatively, connected by C. E. Stevens with Eochaid, the slayer of Niall of the Nine Hostages in the English Channel in 405.<sup>36</sup> A photograph of this stone (PL. IV, B) was, however, submitted to Prof. Kenneth Jackson for examination, and he is of the opinion that the form of the lettering probably precludes a date significantly earlier than the seventh century although the linguistic forms could suit rather better a somewhat earlier date.<sup>37</sup> The mystery of the Ogham stone is thus considerably deepened, for instead of providing a focus for the latest sub-Roman occupation of the site, it seems to be drawn into the chronological orbit of the few Saxon finds of Group C.

Professor H. L. Hawkins has kindly examined the Ogham stone, which he reports as being a fine-grained calcareous sandstone. An annelid boring suggests a marine sand, and the provenience is most likely the Calcareous Grit of the Corallian series as it occurs in north-west Berkshire. A good deal of the stone occurring in the walls of Silchester, he adds, seems certainly to have come from the source suggested. The stone has perished badly, probably owing to the partial removal of the calcareous cement, and with expert advice has been newly consolidated at Reading Museum.

Professor Jackson's dating must suggest that there was still, at that time, a certain amount of traffic between the Celtic west and the Saxon areas of Britain along the lines of Roman road, at a nodal point of which Calleva lay. One thinks of peaceable contact in the main: trade, or possibly embassies political, even

<sup>34</sup> Bifrons, nr. Canterbury, Kent: *Archaeol. Cantiana*, x (1876), 303; Nassington, Northants.: *Antiq. J.*, xxiv (1944), 105, pl. xxx, 11 A.

<sup>35</sup> P. C. J. A. Boeles, *Friesland tot de elfde Eeuw* (The Hague, 1951), p. 332, pl. xlvi, 4; Ferwerd, Burmania II *terp*; and information from Dr. A. Wassenbergh of the Fries Museum, Leeuwarden, who also kindly informs me that a third specimen from Mahndorf near Bremen (Bremen Mus.) exists: E. Grohne, *Mahndorf: Frühgeschichte d. Brem. Raums*, p. 324, fig. 91. This I have not been able to consult.

<sup>36</sup> *Archaeologia*, liv (1894), 223 ff. and J. Rhys *ad loc.*; R. A. S. Macalister, *Corpus Inscr. Ins. Celtic.*, 1 (1945), no. 496; O'Neil, *op. cit.* in note 1, p. 114 quoting Sir I. Williams for date *c.* 450 with reservations; C. E. Stevens, 'L'Irlande et la Bretagne romaine,' *Rev. Etudes anc.* (Ann. de la Faculté des lettres de Bordeaux), xlii (1940), 679 f.

<sup>37</sup> I am indebted to Prof. Jackson for his opinion. The photograph was kindly sent by Mr. J. Wymer of Reading Museum.

ecclesiastical. As has often been pointed out before, Ebicatus (Ebicatos is genitive) was no solitary traveller; he had companions, compatriots, to set up his monument before they left the coldharbourage which is all that we are entitled to suppose Calleva afforded by about 600.

Permanent Saxon occupation was already taking shape in the upper Thames valley a century earlier than this,<sup>38</sup> and it must remain extremely doubtful—at least with the evidence at present at our disposal, which seems unlikely

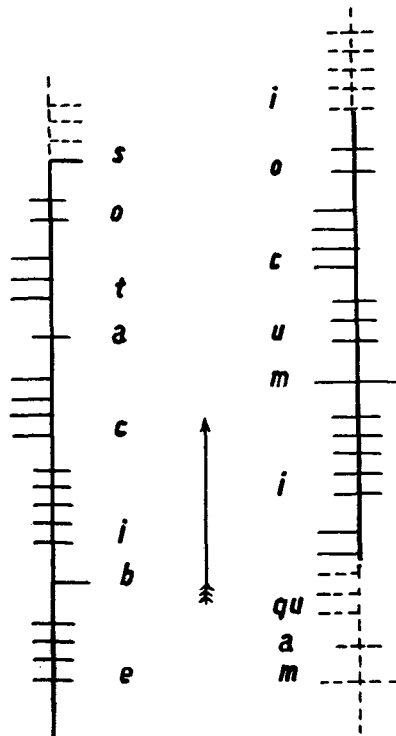


FIG. 42

Diagram of Ogham inscription on the stone from Silchester, Hants. (p. 87; PL. IV, B)

to be increased in any way—that the sub-Roman *enclave* postulated by O'Neil could long have survived the southward encroachment of Teutonic settlement, soon to be seen at Theale<sup>39</sup> and Reading.<sup>40</sup> In such cases, it is necessary to glance at the place-name evidence, and this clearly shows that any *enclave* was pushed to the southward and south-westward, the nearest British name to Calleva being, suggestively, that of *Pamber* forest, skirting the high ground of the north Hampshire downs with its *-clere* names.<sup>41</sup> There the subject must be left.

<sup>38</sup> E. T. Leeds, 'The growth of Wessex,' *Oxoniensia*, xix (1954), 45 ff.

<sup>39</sup> J. N. L. Myres, 'The Saxon Pottery from Theale,' *Trans. Newbury & Dist. Field Club*, viii (1938), 60-2.

<sup>40</sup> Jos. Stevens, 'The discovery of a Saxon burial-place near Reading,' *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.*, L (1894), 150 ff.

<sup>41</sup> G. J. Copley, *The Conquest of Wessex* (London, 1954), pp. 90, 125.