

Notes and News

LIEBENAU INHUMATION GRAVE II/196 AND THE DATING OF THE ANGLO-SAXON CEMETERY AT MITCHAM (FIG. 45; PL. XII, A)¹

Dr A. Genrich of the Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum in Hanover has been excavating since 1953 an extremely important mixed inhumation and cremation cemetery of the migration period near Liebenau, Kr. Nienburg in NW. Germany. The cemetery is located on a tributary valley of the R. Weser and is on a sandy subsoil. Only the first volume of the report has yet appeared, but a number of the more important finds have been published also in interim notes and papers by Genrich and members of his staff, and it was in one of these papers that an applied brooch decorated with a star-of-David design from grave II/196 was first illustrated.² The companion brooch worn by the woman buried in this S. to N. orientated grave has not been illustrated previously and I am extremely grateful to Genrich for permission to publish photographs of both brooches here (PL. XII, A).

These brooches were worn on the shoulders; the star-of-David design with a rosette or star motif in its centre being on the left shoulder, and on the right a smaller applied brooch with only a fragment of the decorated upper plate surviving. Sufficient of this plate remains, however, for two heart-shaped motifs of a floriate cross design (originally comprising four such motifs) to be recognized. Half an iron ring was located above this smaller brooch and three large and four small beads were strung between the brooches (FIG. 45).³

The association of two brooches of such fragile construction in a closed find means that the two designs must have been contemporary. As demonstrated elsewhere by the writer,⁴ this assertion is reinforced by the occurrence of pairs of brooches with these designs at Galgenberg (Sahlenburg) in the neighbouring and apparently contemporary graves 18 and 19. The combined associations of all applied brooches with stars of David and floriate crosses known on the continent suggest a date range covering the first half of the 5th century. Some of these probably belong to the first quarter of the 5th, but none have been found in a 4th-century context.

It is almost certain that the English examples of floriate cross applied brooches were of insular manufacture. Most of them were the product of a single workshop and none of the others is matched by a continental example. Though neither their manufacture nor their deposition in graves can be closely dated by grave associations, the glass cone beaker in Mitcham (Surrey), grave 201, and the associations of Wallingford (Berks.), grave 15, suggest burial in the second half of the 5th century. They are clearly derived from, and so cannot predate the continental brooches; while some, moreover, exhibit developments which do not occur outside England. A date range extending from c. 430 to c. 470 has therefore been proposed by the writer for the English brooches.

¹ I am extremely grateful to Mrs S. C. Hawkes and David Brown who read and commented on the manuscript and to Mrs P. Baines for typing it.

² A. Genrich, 'Der gemischt-belegte Friedhof bei Liebenau, Kr. Nienburg (Weser)', *Nachrichten aus Niedersachsens Urgeschichte*, xxxviii (1969), Abb. 5, 2.

³ The grave plan in FIG. 45 has been redrawn by Mrs P. Clarke from a tracing of the excavation plan.

⁴ M. G. Welch, 'Mitcham grave 205 and the chronology of applied brooches with floriate cross decoration', *Antiq. Jnl.*, LV (1975), 86-93.

Dr J. N. L. Myres has reaffirmed his belief that a pedestal-based vase in Mitcham, grave 205, was manufactured in the late 4th century, or possibly in the earliest part of the 5th.⁵ It was associated with a pair of applied brooches, one of which was decorated in a derivative version of the floriate cross design. Myres has also commented that the Mitcham cemetery contained "other very early objects", sufficiently early indeed to begin the cemetery in his "period of overlap and controlled settlement", to which he gave the dates *c.* 360-410.⁶ These objects are presumably the bronze buckle loop and finger ring of grave 38, the bronze buckle with a fixed open-work plate in grave 133, the iron buckle with silver inlay from grave 61, the Roman glass amphora of grave 199 and the glass bowl in grave 200.⁷

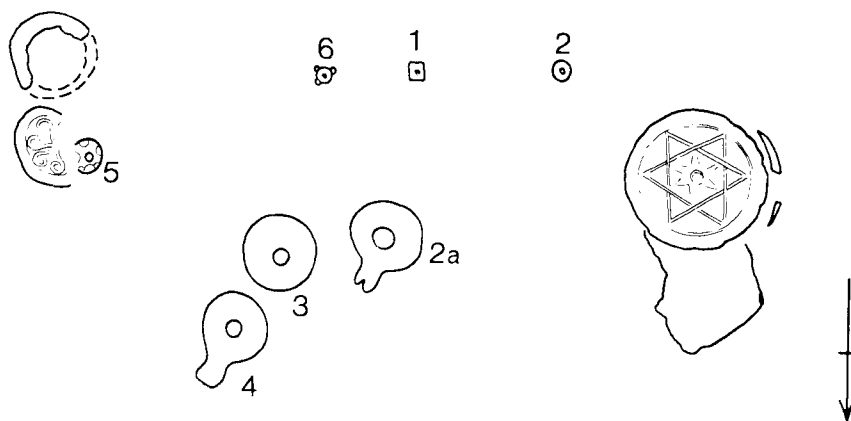


FIG. 45

INHUMATION GRAVE II/196, LIEBENAU, NW. GERMANY

Plan showing distribution of applied brooches and beads (1-6) in the grave. Sc. 1:2

The buckle of Hawkes type II A in grave 38 was probably manufactured in the later 4th or early 5th century by a Romano-British workshop.⁸ Its tongue is missing, suggesting it was old when buried; and it was associated with a late Roman bronze finger ring — the stone setting of which is missing — and a knife. Such an assemblage might conceivably be deposited in the first half of the 5th century, but buckles of this type and Roman finger rings are also buried in the late 5th and even in the 6th century: for example, at Buckland, Dover (Kent), grave 48; Sarre (Kent), grave 94;⁹ and Alfriston (W. Sussex), grave 28.¹⁰ Miss V. Evison has demonstrated that the buckle from grave 133 has claims to be regarded as a product of the quoit brooch style workshops.¹¹ The fine belt set from Mucking (Essex), grave 117, has provided conclusive evidence that these workshops were operating in the first half of the 5th century, but no evidence has yet been forthcoming to enable us to decide by what date their production

⁵ J. N. L. Myres, 'The Anglo-Saxon vase from Mitcham grave 205', *ibid.*, 93-5.

⁶ J. N. L. Myres, *Anglo-Saxon Pottery and the Settlement of England* (Oxford, 1969), 78.

⁷ H. F. Bidder and J. Morris, 'The Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Mitcham', *Surrey Archaeol. Coll.*, LVI (1959), 51-131.

⁸ S. C. Hawkes and G. C. Dunning, 'Soldiers and settlers in Britain, fourth to fifth century', *Medieval Archaeol.*, v (1961), 55, fig. 18.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

¹⁰ A. F. Griffith and L. F. Salzmann, 'An Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Alfriston, Sussex', *Sussex Archaeol. Collect.*, LVI (1914), 35-6.

¹¹ V. I. Evison, 'Quoit brooch style buckles', *Antiq. Jnl.*, XLVIII (1968), 235-6.

ceased. Many of the finest products in this style were buried in graves in the 6th century, and a date in the second half of the 5th century would be quite possible for Mitcham, grave 133; particularly in view of the heavy wear evident on this buckle. The iron buckle with silver inlay in grave 61 was associated with a pair of applied brooch bases, and possibly also with a saucer brooch decorated with ten spiral coils, and part of a bronze binding for a bucket.¹² The large size of the applied brooches here suggests a 6th-century context. The glass vessels in graves 199 and 200 lack associations and, though they were probably buried within the 5th century, their date cannot be more closely defined.

If for the sake of argument, we place the floriate cross applied brooches from Mitcham in the first half of the 5th century, we still have only six such potentially early graves in a cemetery of over 250. Without these six graves the later 5th century is poorly represented. While it is of course dangerous to argue from a cemetery as badly and as incompletely excavated as Mitcham, the fact remains that positive evidence for the cemetery's existence in the first half of the 5th century is lacking. Whereas at the cemeteries of Mucking,¹³ Berinsfield (Oxon.),¹⁴ and Dyke Hills, Dorchester (Oxon.),¹⁵ we find military belt fittings and brooches of undoubtedly early 5th-century types — for example Böhme's Perlberg type (the Luton brooch)¹⁶ —, these are absent at Mitcham. In fact the Mitcham cemetery is little different in character from Sussex cemeteries such as High Down¹⁷ and Alfriston¹⁸ and no one has yet suggested that these begin before the middle of the 5th century. It is probable then that graves 205 and 201 should be dated at the earliest around the middle of the 5th century.

M. G. WELCH

THE ANGLO-SAXON PENDANT CROSS FROM WINSTER MOOR, DERBYSHIRE

The Winster Moor cross is thus described in the *Catalogue of the Bateman Collection of Antiquities in the Sheffield Public Museum*:¹⁹

"Looped cross, of pure gold, ornamented with filigree work, and having a garnet cut in facets set in the centre. 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches long, 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ inches wide. Found in a barrow on Winster moor, Derbyshire, in 1776. From the collections of the Rev. John Mason, Adam Woolley, and White Watson. J. 93-706."

This description, which reproduces almost word-for-word the entry in Bateman's own catalogue of 1855,²⁰ is probably the source of the continuing belief that the faceted central garnet is an integral part of the original jewel. For instance, Audrey Ozanne has written:²¹ "The cross is made up of a solid gold plate with a central setting containing a single faceted garnet . . .", and more recently R. F. Jessup has remarked with

¹² Ibid., 237.

¹³ M. U. Jones and W. T. Jones, 'An early Saxon landscape at Mucking, Essex' in T. Rowley (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Settlement and Landscape* (Oxford, 1974), 31.

¹⁴ The Berinsfield cemetery excavated in 1974 is unpublished. I am extremely grateful to David Miles and David Brown for allowing me to examine this material.

¹⁵ J. R. Kirk and E. T. Leeds, 'Three early Saxon graves from Dorchester, Oxon.', *Oxoniensia*, xvii-xviii (1952-3), 63-76.

¹⁶ H. W. Böhme, *Germanische Grabfunde des 4. bis 5. Jahrhunderts zwischen unterer Elbe und Loire* (München, 1974), 13-14, Karte 4.

¹⁷ C. H. Read, 'On excavations in a cemetery of South Saxons on High Down, Sussex', *Archaeologia*, lrv (1895), 369-82; id., 'Further excavations in an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at High Down, Sussex', *ibid.*, lv (1896), 203-14.

¹⁸ Op. cit. in note 10, and A. F. Griffith, 'An Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Alfriston, Sussex', *Sussex Archaeol. Collect.*, lvii (1915), 197-208.

¹⁹ E. Howarth (London, 1899), 222.

²⁰ *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Antiquities and Miscellaneous Objects preserved in the Museum of Thomas Bateman at Lomerdale House, Derbyshire* (Bakewell, 1855), 153.

²¹ *Medieval Archaeol.*, vi (1962), 26.