

RECENT METALWORK DISCOVERIES IN HAMPSHIRE

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ABSTRACT

This note consists of a selection of the artefacts reported to the Hampshire Portable Antiquities Scheme since its introduction in 1999.

BRONZE AGE

No. 1 (Fig. 1) is an unusual form of mid-Bronze Age annular bracelet/arm-ring of Rowland's Class D2 (1976 Part i, 91–95), found by Mr. P. Child in Petersfield, Hants. The bracelet is of the Liss-type, characterized by the form of the incised decoration. This example has at least three, but probably more zones of geometric decoration consisting of zig-zags made up of three or four lines with dotted borders divided by wide bands of cross-hatching. There is a cord motif on the lower edge with a row of dots above it. The bracelet, which has an internal diameter of 60 mm, an external diameter of 85 mm and a width of 18 mm has a sub-triangular section with a convex outer edge and a pointed apex inwards. It is complete, although the surface is heavily pitted and much of the decoration is missing.

Bracelets of this type and other mid-Bronze Age 'ornament horizon' artefacts are not common finds and this is an important regional and national addition. Finds of this form of bracelet concentrate in the southern counties of Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset and West Sussex and examples are also known from Suffolk and Norfolk. Incised decorated bracelets form part of a North European tradition following the Bignan type after the similar examples found in north-western France (Briard 1965, 123–35). This has led to the suggestion that the examples

from southern England may be imported from northern France (Rowlands 1976, 95), although this theory has been questioned (O'Connor 1980, 81–3) and Needham suggests that Liss-type bracelets should be considered as belonging to a broad North European tradition (Needham 1989, 36).

Whilst some of the known bracelets come from hoards containing items such as torcs, pins, axes, palstaves and other mid-Bronze Age artefacts, no other objects were found in association with this example. The ornament hoard from South Wonston, Hampshire contains two spiral twisted torcs, two penannular armrings, one of which has two pieces of twisted rod attached to it and one decorated annular armring (Hughes and Champion 1982) and four Liss-type bracelets were found with a ribbed bracelet, a ribbed and bossed bracelet, a plain bar bracelet, two palstaves and a socketed axe at Norton Fitzwarren, Somerset (Needham 1989, 29–39 figs. 15–17).

No. 2 (Fig. 2) is an unusual form of late Bronze Age penannular ring which was found in Bishop's Waltham by Mr. P. Schorn. It is cast solid in copper-alloy and has a triangular section with a very pronounced ridge at the apex, an outer diameter of 26 mm, an internal diameter of 13 mm and with a gap of 3 mm between the two terminals. The ring has a very dark green even patina and is preserved in an excellent condition. Large penannular rings of this form are rare finds and there is no known parallel from Hampshire, although a copper-alloy example was found at Runnymede Bridge, Berkshire (unpublished; pers. comm. S. Needham). Although only a small number of this form of penannular ring are known, they are predominantly produced in gold and examples are known from Scotland, Ireland and France. Three examples formed part of a

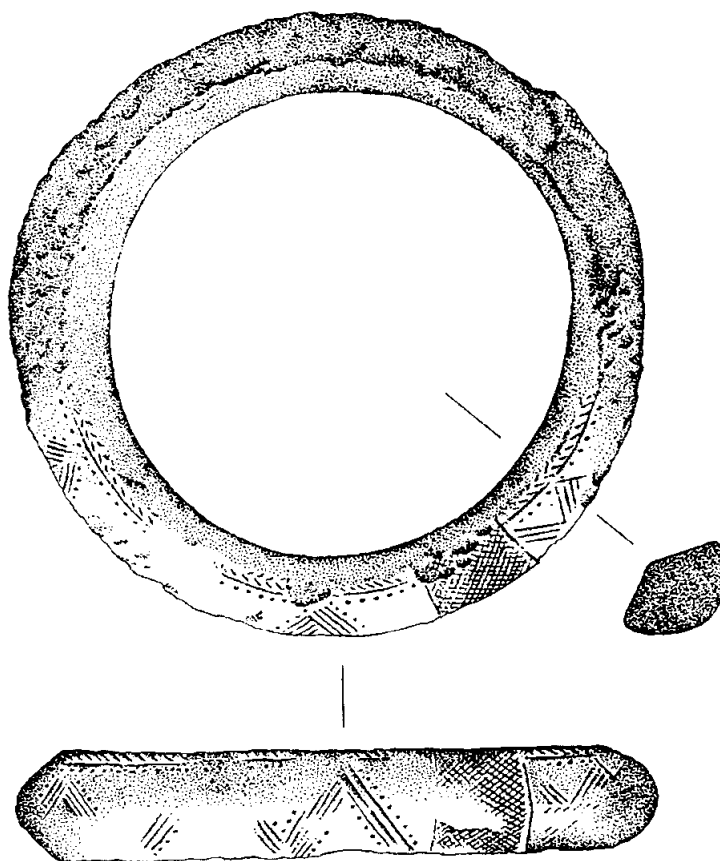


Fig. 1 Bronze Age annular bracelet/arm-ring (1:1)

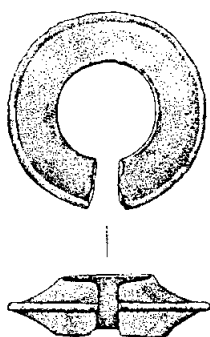


Fig. 2 Late Bronze Age penannular ring (1:1)

hoard from Balmashanner, Angus (Eogan 1994, Plate 14) and a large hollow example made of thin gold was found near Dunbarton, Scotland (Evans 1881, 391 fig. 489).

The large penannular rings with triangular-section were in contemporary use with the more common smaller gold and gold-plated composite or single, circular-sectioned penannular rings which date from 1300–750 BC. The more common form of penannular rings were produced in gold, which may be striped with alternate bands of yellow and whiter gold or alternatively they are formed by coating a base metal core with gold. The composite penannular rings have clear associations with twisted bar ornaments onto which they can be threaded. In the past they have erroneously been referred to as 'ring-money' or 'tress-rings'; there is no evidence that they were used as either a form

of currency or as hair ornaments, although it is fair to say that they served some sort of ornamental function (Varndell 2001, 515–16). A similar interpretation may be offered for the form of penannular ring represented by no. 2.

Two examples of the smaller penannular ring form produced in gold have recently been found in Hampshire. An example found in Exton, Hants by Mr. K. Hutchings, has two circular-sectioned penannular rings joined together, possibly with solder. It has a maximum diameter of 15 mm with a gap of 1 mm between the two ends. An example found in Braishfield by Mr. D. Palmer is an open ring of bipartite composite type with slightly C-sectioned components which have been soldered together, with a diameter of 15 mm. Both finds have been declared as treasure under the criteria of the Treasure Act 1996.

ROMAN

No. 3 (Fig. 3) is a Roman copper-alloy wax spatula handle in the form of a bust of Minerva, and was found by Mr. L. Bunyan in Micheldever, Hants. The handle is 51 mm in length and has a maximum width of 16 mm. The figure has waved hair and wears a high Corinthian helmet with a large crest of moulded plumes on a rod-like support. She is depicted draped, wearing the *aegis*, a protective garment covering her shoulders and upper body with an abraded Gorgon's mask on the chest and holds an object of unknown form in her left hand. The figure is set upon a triangular pedestal which has a slot to take the iron blade; no traces of which now survive. While not very common, a number of Minerva handles have been found at sites in Britain and in the north-western provinces; the Low Countries, France, Germany, Austria and Italy. The most complete example was found at Ospringe, Kent (Whiting 1923, 66; Boon 1991, 31 fig. 4g). It has a long, expanding blade with a straight edge, resembling a chisel. Interpretations of the function of these objects include their use as razors, or as religious offerings, but recent work has demonstrated that these handles are from spatulas used for spreading wax onto writing tablets (Feugère 1995; Crummy 2002).



Fig. 3 Roman razor or spatula handle (1:1)

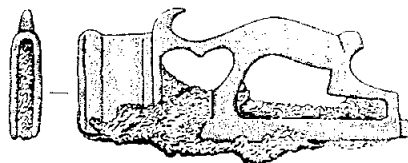


Fig. 4 Roman clasp knife/razor handle (1:1)

Another common form of copper-alloy clasp knife or razor handle is represented by no. 4. (Fig. 4), which was found by Mr. S. Boniface in Upham, Hants. The incomplete handle measures 42 mm in length and 19.5 mm in width. It is finely made and the figured motif depicts a hound running on a solid ground line. The hound is well-defined, with long fore and hind limbs, a long tail and part of one ear, although the rest of the head is now missing. Originally, the hound would have been chasing a hare and there would have been no division between the two animals. The flat rectangular butt has two incised vertical lines either side of a slight vertical ridge at both ends. The iron knife blade would have swivelled about in a rivet set in the lower portion and its corroded remains, c. 1 mm thick, are present along the length of the ground line.

This form of folding knife is relatively common and the subject of the figured motif in this case,

that of a hunting scene, is the most popular. This example is very similar to a more complete knife found in the Thames at Hammersmith, London (Wheeler 1930, 78 fig. 19 no. 4) and another example depicting a hound chasing a hare is known from Richborough (Bushe-Fox 1949, 129 no. 118 Pl. XXXVI). Two folding knives depicting hounds chasing hares were found in 4th century contexts in excavations of the Northern Suburbs, Winchester (Crummy *et al* forthcoming). The representation of the hunt is a common theme on a variety of other classes of Roman material culture, particularly in the late Roman period, including glass, pottery and metal vessels, items of personal adornment and mosaic pavements.

ANGLO-SAXON

The subject of this note, a copper-alloy strap-end (no. 5) (Fig. 5), was found by metal-detectorists, Mr. B. and Mrs. T. Jenner in Whitchurch, Hants. No other finds of a similar date were found in the vicinity of this find, which suggests that it is likely to represent a casual loss. The strap-end is 37.5 mm long and has a maximum width of 13.5 mm. It is an example of a common-type of convex-sided strap-end in use in the 9th century (Hinton 1996, Type C 40–43 fig. 16). The apex has a moulded animal mask in low relief, with the nostrils and eyes defined by curving incised lines. The other end is split to secure the textile or leather strap, although both rivets are now missing. The flat central panel has a convex-sided engraved linear border which contains a stylised Trewiddle-style animal. The animal is backward-biting with a gaping jaw and a contorted body formed of single-strand ribbon interlace. The animal has pointed ears, a prominent pointed snout with three short incised lines to imitate fur and the tongue and tail is interlaced around the body. This design is set against a background of niello, traces of which remain in the recessed areas. The back is plain. An interesting feature of this strap-end is that during antiquity one of the rivet holes was broken and the strap-end was repaired by drilling a circular rivet hole below the broken original and securing a separate rectangular sheet

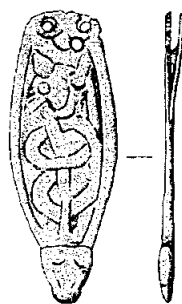


Fig. 5 Anglo-Saxon strap-end (1:1)

of copper-alloy to the reverse surface with two copper-alloy rivets, one of which was intentionally placed to represent the animal's eye.

Trewiddle-style ornaments, named after the famous Anglo-Saxon hoard in which it was first identified, are characterized by the form of the animal's head and ears, and the speckled body design and the use of niello (Wilson and Blunt 1961, 75–112). The design on the Whitchurch strap-end is a comparatively crudely-executed and simplified version of other Trewiddle-style strap-ends. An unprovenanced strap-end with an incised Trewiddle-style creature with an interlacing tail is very similar in decoration to the Whitchurch example (Webster 1991, 233 no. 191). More locally, other similar examples of this form of strap-end are known from Andover, Hants (Hinton 1977, 80–81 fig. 2) and two silver examples which qualify as potential treasure under the Treasure Act 1996 have recently been found at Dundridge and Crawley, Hants (unpublished).

No. 6 (Fig. 6) is a mid-11th century cast copper-alloy stirrup terminal, found by Mr. S. Boniface in Cheriton, Hants (no. 6). The terminal, which is 69 mm in length and has a maximum height of 14 mm, is zoomorphic in form, with well-defined features which include prominent tusks and a snubbed nose which form the lower end of the terminal. The mouth is visible from the profile only, there is a bulging and rounded forehead with the eyes depicted as horizontal lines and flat, closely-set elongated ears with rounded ends. A grooved collar behind the ears consists of two

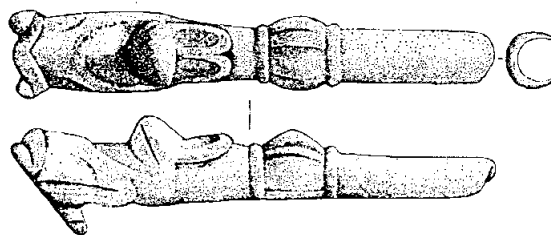


Fig. 6 Anglo-Saxon stirrup terminal (1:1)

raised horizontal mouldings enclosing a rounded element which is sub-divided into six segments of uneven length by vertical incised lines. There is a sub-rectangular projecting ledge on the underside of the terminal which is designed to attach to the corner section of the stirrup plate using solder, no trace of which survives on the inside edge. Beyond the rectangular housing, the terminal has a hollow, U-shaped section to enable its attachment to the end of the stirrup (see Williams 1997a, fig 2a-b for similar types).

Stirrup terminals are a relatively uncommon find and their function has only recently been fully recognised. A complete late Saxon sub-triangular iron stirrup from Chalgrove, Oxon demonstrates how stirrup attachments were used. The stirrup has copper-alloy collars at the shoulders and two copper-alloy terminals, one at either side at the lower ends of the stirrup (Williams 1997b, 7 fig. 4). Stirrup-strap mounts, which were placed at the junction of the stirrup and stirrup leathers have been the subject of a thorough classification and catalogue (Williams 1997b). Nine stirrup-strap mounts have been recorded in the first three years of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Hampshire, compared to only one stirrup terminal.

MEDIEVAL

No. 7 (Fig. 7) is an unusual form of cast copper-alloy annular brooch which dates from the mid 13th century and was found by Mr. G. Meredith at Abbot's Worthy. The frame is formed of a man fighting a monster, probably a dragon, although no wings are represented. The man holds the

monster's neck with his left hand and grasps its tail with his right hand and the body of the monster is curved. Little of the man's facial detail survives, although the hair is defined by vertical incised lines on the reverse surface. The man is wearing a knee-length tunic which is poorly defined on the upper surface, but is clearer on the reverse. The reverse surface of the monster is flat and no detail is shown. The intact copper-alloy pin is attached at the man's left arm and points vertically to the monster's tail, perhaps intending to represent a sword.

Brooches with this figural motif are rare finds. Two mid-13th century silver annular brooches were found together at Bennington, Herts; one depicts a man fighting a dragon and is very similar to the example from Abbot's Worthy, and the other is formed of two dragons face to face with their tails intertwined (Alexander & Binski 1987, 483 no. 641). Examples produced in copper-alloy are likely to be copies of those produced in precious metals.

Motifs depicting men slaying dragons and other monsters are likely to represent the power of good over evil and occur relatively frequently on other

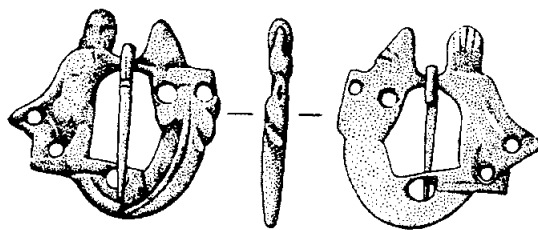


Fig. 7 Medieval annular brooch (1.5:1)

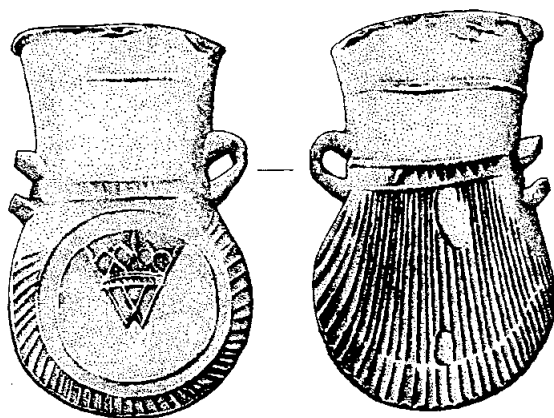


Fig. 8 Medieval ampulla (1:1)

13th–14th century artefact types. A series of misericords and other choir furniture carved with this motif are known from the cathedrals of Wells and Hereford and elsewhere (Alexander & Binski 1987, 404 nos. 470–71). Late 14th century iconographic finger rings depicting St. George and the dragon are known: an example was found at King's Langley, Herts (Alexander & Binski 1987, 487 no. 658).

A cast lead-alloy ampulla (Fig. 8) dating from the mid 14th–15th century was found by metal-detectorist, Mr. P. Radford in the parish of Soberton, Hants (no. 8). The ampulla is a well-preserved example, 53.5 mm long and 23–32 mm wide. The obverse of this example has a scallop-shell, of type II with fine grooves and smooth edges (Spencer 1990, 59) and the reverse has a crowned 'W' within two concentric circles. There are two horizontal ridges between the handles and one horizontal ridge close to the top on both sides. One looped handle is intact, the other is broken.

Ampullae were a form of pilgrim souvenir which contained miracle-working water that was dispensed to pilgrims at shrines and holy wells.

Many ampullae are decorated with a scallop-shell which, as the badge of St James of Compostela was the emblem of pilgrimage. Ampullae with the crowned W motif are widely distributed at sites throughout southern and eastern England and two similar examples are known from Salisbury (Spencer 1990, 59 no. 131 fig. 174; 60 no. 138 fig. 180). The crown represents the Virgin as Queen of Heaven and the W motif has been tentatively associated with the cult of Our Lady of Walsingham (Spencer 1971, 63–4), although there is a possibility that it may have had a more general meaning as double V or Virgo Virginium (Spencer 1990, 61). The manufacture and sale of pilgrim souvenirs was fairly strictly controlled and, sometimes, as at Walsingham, the church itself seems to have run a manufacturing workshop within its own walls.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank Alan Cracknell for preparing the illustrations.

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