

TWO ANGLO-SAXON METALWORK PIECES FROM SHAWFORD, COMPTON AND SHAWFORD PARISH, WINCHESTER

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ABSTRACT

A small-long brooch and an equal-arm brooch were recovered from two sites from the Itchen valley river terrace at Shawford (Compton and Shawford Parish). Both artefacts are rarely found in Hampshire, but their importance also lies in the fact that they may be indicative of the presence of rural settlement sites situated downstream of Winchester during the early to middle Anglo-Saxon period.

INTRODUCTION

In 1998 a local metal detectorist found a small-long brooch (WMS E87/22) and an equal-arm brooch (WMS E87/21) upon the terrace of the River Itchen at Shawford (Compton and Shawford Parish) (NGR 47002500), at two separate sites *c.* 250 metres from each other. They were added to the Hampshire County Council Sites and Monument Record and the database maintained by Portable Antiquities Scheme for the county. For an earlier report also see Iles (1999, 82).

SMALL-LONG BROOCH (WMS E87/22) (fig 1)

Cast all in one piece out of copper alloy and weighing a total of 10 g. The obverse had a worn and abraded carinated bow spine, whilst the catch-plate on the reverse was completely missing along with its iron pin. The incomplete brooch measures 37 mm in length from the head plate to the broken bow spine. The bow spine is 18 mm long × 8 mm wide. The raised head-plate is 19 mm in length. The three worn arms projecting from the head plate measure 9 mm × 5 mm.

The three arms are set around a central, raised, square head-plate though separated from it by a single scored line. The brooch has a curving, highly arched bow spine that is carinated in form and much worn. The bow spine has three horizontal mouldings, with the widest central one also demonstrating two faceted notches. Further down are two more moulded ribs, of which the lowest has two faceted notches. Below this the brooch is broken and the footplate is missing. The absence of a footplate and the worn nature of the head-plate have made the identification of exact parallels difficult. The arms may be much worn examples of trefoils which would identify the specimen as a Leeds' type I (trefoil headed) (Leeds 1913: Fig. 14: 77: 1945). However, if their outer edges were originally straight, and not semi-circular, this would indicate membership of Leeds' type II (cross-potent) (Leeds 1945: fig 8 c: Stoodley pers. comm.). It must be considered, however, that the brooch may have been a hybrid, blending both styles; a factor which may have marked it out as being 'exotic' or unusual, thus aiding the survival of this particular piece as an heirloom.

DISCUSSION

The small-long brooch has been dated to the late fifth and sixth-centuries AD (MacGregor and Bolick 1993, 125) and its production may have been influenced by the Cruciform and Square-Headed brooches of which it shares much in common. The small-long brooch is rarely found in southern Hampshire, although it is more plentiful within northern Hampshire, Wiltshire and Berkshire, though its densest distribution is in East Anglia (Leeds 1945: Fig. 12: Hinton 1996,

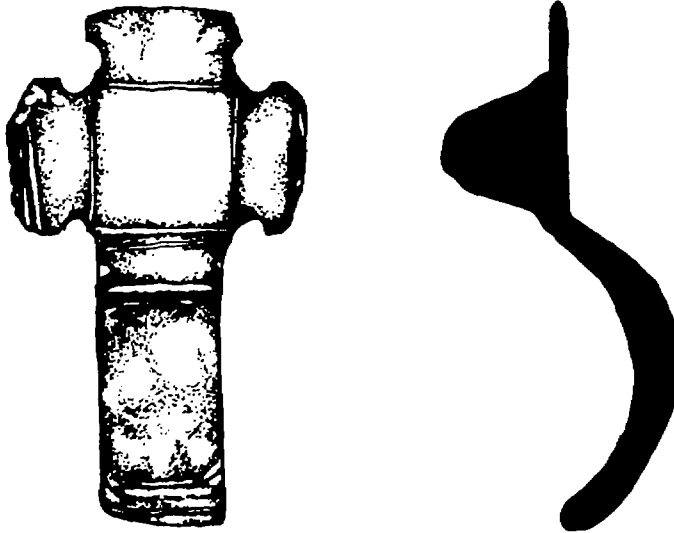


Fig. 1 The Small Long Brooch drawn to the scale of 2:1.

5). Interestingly, the trefoil cruciform head-plate brooch is an uncommon find within Wessex generally, but is much better represented in Kent (Davies *et al.* 1985, 139; Fig. 20; Leeds 1945, Fig. 4:C). It may serve as further archaeological proof of a link between southern Hampshire and Kent in the early Anglo-Saxon period (Stoodley 2002).

The absence of small-long brooches from secure grave-good type assemblages could indicate that the brooch type was unpopular with the rural southern Hampshire population (Hinton 1996, 4–5; Stedman and Stoodley 2000, 133). Two incomplete brooch fragments have, however, been recently retrieved from the Shavards Farm, Meonstoke environs (Stedman and Stoodley *in prep*), and further away in another area that has links with Kent, two fragments were found in the Bowcombe valley, Isle of Wight (Stedman forthcoming).

EQUAL-ARM BROOCH (WMS E87/21) (fig 2)

The equal-arm brooch was cast in one piece out of copper alloy, or leaded bronze, and weighs a total of

15 gm. The surface of the artefact displays localised areas of corrosion. The specimen measures 45 mm in length and has a maximum width of 12 mm at the centre. It has a raised bow that is decorated on the central outer edges by two prominent sub-rectangular bulbous eyes (each having a diameter of 3 mm), though it is unlikely that the brooch can be viewed as a zoomorphic piece (Hinton pers. comm.). The trefoil end terminals measure 5 mm in diameter and are divided internally by deeply incised single transverse lines. The reverse has two bronze lugs that formed the hinge bar and catch-plate lug. Iron corrosion deposits were also found on the sub rectangular iron hinge bar-lug whose perforation was 1 mm in diameter and would have originally taken the, now lost, pin.

DISCUSSION

The equal-arm brooch is of the Hübener Group 1 variant that was possibly manufactured within England, but was ultimately based upon Merovingian brooch types (Hinton 1996). Three further equal-arm brooches of this group were found during

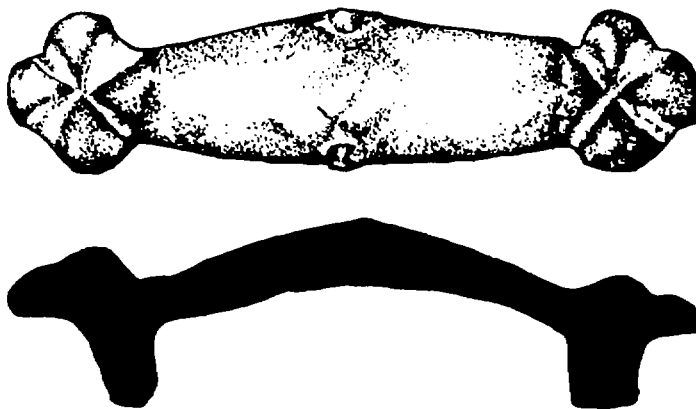


Fig. 2 The equal-arm Brooch drawn to the scale of 2:1.

the *Hamwic* excavations (SOU 25) (Southampton) (Addyman and Hill 1969, 71, Fig. 27.9: Hinton 1993, 56; 1996, 3, Fig. 1: 15/1, 32/134, 254/811), which suggest that the brooch type was a popular fastener within the middle Saxon mercantile settlement. Other equal-arm brooches have been found nearby at the Westgate (SOU 25) (Holdsworth 1984, 340: Hinton 1996), the West Quay shopping centre (Bradley and Gaimster 2001, 285) and at Old Erringham on the English Channel coastline (Sussex) (Evison 1966, 149).

The popularity that the brooch type enjoyed may have been a result of sustained trading contacts between the Solent region and the Continent. The (Hübener Group 6) variant, dating from 550–650 AD, for example is clustered within the Pas de Calais and the Argonne-Aisne-Yonne region (Hübener 1972, 255; Hamerow 1993, 61). And the Shawford artefact, alongside the Southampton pieces, suggests that the popularity of the brooch type may have spread from Hamwic to communities situated to the north of the Itchen valley (Davies 1991, 40: Hinton 1996, 98; Yorke 1995, 303).

This type of equal-arm brooch in England may date from the seventh/ early-eighth century AD (Hinton 1996, 3) although the discovery of further brooches of this variant over the last thirty years within England and on the continent suggest a wider English date range, perhaps

extending from the sixth to the eleventh-centuries AD (Hübener 1972: Karte 1–6: Capelle 1976: Hinton 1996, 3).

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