

August 9th, 1985

Alton, Hampshire
Anglo-Saxon Cemetery

Textiles
Elisabeth Crowfoot

The identifiable textile remains from the Alton cemetery are small fragments on grave-goods of iron and bronze, in which most of the fibres have been replaced by metal oxides; a few surviving fibres were identified as probably flax (Graves 7, 16, 37).

The spinning, wherever clear, is Z in both systems on all fragments examined. The weaves present are tabby (plain weave), four-shed twills, and tablet-weave. Of the tabby weaves eleven recognisable examples are all medium grade; one (Grave 27.117) has a scrap of simple unreinforced selvedge, another from the same grave (27.114) shows a paired 2weft thread, perhaps a mistake or repair rather than a decorative feature such as the paired throws at regular intervals on a weave from Finglesham (Grave 203). The twill weaves are all four-shed constructions; seven, as far as can be seen from such small pieces, are simple 2/2 diagonal weaves, while one (Grave 12.33,34, fig.) is a broken diamond weave of the most popular Anglo-Saxon pattern (Crowfoot E. 1983, 418-422).

Its position on the girdle-hangers suggests that it comes from the woman's gown, though with its fairly fine near-even count (17-18/16-17 threads per cm) and Z spinning it could be of flax (cf. Crowfoot E. 1983, SH 12, 422, Sutton Hoo 1938, 466). One coarser twill, again from girdle-hangers (Grave 41.166), is a loose uneven weave, with traces of broken thread ends and loops; while these may be simply the result of damage before oxidisation, they appear to be spaced regularly, and to lie in rows c.5 mm apart, which suggest the spaced pile of a cloak or coverlet, as at Banstead Down and Sutton Hoo (Crowfoot E. 1976, 69-70; Crowfoot E. 1983, 426-8). Traces of tablet-weave on one of a pair of brooches (Grave 23.97), the only example preserved here of this technique, probably come from a decorative braid at the neck of the woman's gown.

Threads wound round the rings of buckles (Grave 11.25) have been noted in other cemeteries (for example Finglesham, Graves 35, 144; Portway East, Andover, Grave 67) and could be decorative, though perhaps repair, or covering rough edges, is more likely.

Crowfoot E. 1976. Appendix 1, "The textiles and leather" in J.F. Barfoot and D. Price Williams, "The Saxon Barrow at Gally Hills, Banstead Down, Surrey", Research Volume of the Surrey Archaeological Society, no. 3.

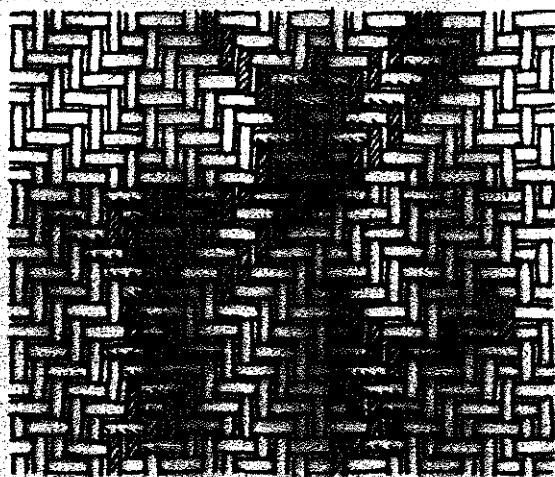
Crowfoot E. 1983. IV. "The Textiles" in R. Bruce-Mitford, The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial v. 3.1, 409-479.

Alton, Hampshire. Textile Catalogue.

Note: The abbreviation "replaced" is used to indicate "fibres replaced by metal oxides". The spinning direction of yarns is indicated by the letters Z and S, the probable warp thread being placed first. Overall measurements of best fragments are given in cms, and weave counts in threads per 1 cm, except where otherwise stated.

Grave	SF no.	Lab.no.	Object	Position on object	Fibre	Spin	Weave	Count	Measurement	Comments
7 ()	9.	841396	buckle	on chape	?flax	Z/Z	tabby	6/6 on 5mm	2.2 X 0.8	layers or folds; even spin
9 ()	16.	684506	knife	near edge	replaced	Z/Z	tabby	-	-	traces
	17,18.	684577	purse mount, ring		replaced	Z	-	-	-	deteriorated
11 ()	25.	684509	Fe buckle?	on ring	replaced	Z	threads	-	-	wound round ring
				loose scrap (a)	replaced	Z/Z	2/2 twill	7/6 on 5mm	0.5 X 0.5	
	26a.	684510	Fe ring	on fragments (a)	replaced	Z/Z	2/2 twill	6/6 on 5mm	0.6 X 0.7	on five pieces
				tied round scrap	replaced	Z	threads	-	-	2, wound 3 times
	26b.	684511	Fe fragments	(b)	replaced	Z/Z	tabby	10/8-9	2.5 X 1.1	even spin, open weave
				? (a)	replaced	Z/Z	?twill	c.15/12-13	c.2.0 X 1.4	fine threads
12 (F)	29.	841401	saucer brooch	pin attachment	replaced	Z	threads	-	-	round; ?bead string
				on pin	replaced	Z/Z	?	-	-	fine close weave, surface damaged
	30.	841402	saucer brooch	pin attachment	replaced	S, Z	threads	-	-	fine
	33,34.	684512	girdle hanger	one side (a)	replaced	Z/Z	broken diamond	-	-	
				other side (b)	replaced	Z/Z	2/2 twill	17-18/16-17	1.4 X 2.5	(fig.) fine even spin
								10-12/10	-	deteriorated; traces leather lying above
14 (F)	47.	684516	Fe pin	all along (a)	replaced	Z/Z	2/2 twill	-	-	scraps, surface poor
	49.	684517	Fe knife	on blade (b)	replaced	Z/Z	?tabby	-	-	traces; leather scrap
16 (M)	13.	851045	Fe sword	from hilt	?flax	Z/Z	tabby	16/13-14	1.3 X 1.1	uneven spin, giving strong weft lines; we loose, diagonal pull
23 (F)	97 ¹ / ₂	841403	saucer brooch R.	on pin (a)	replaced	Z/Z, Sply	?tablet	c.7 twists (on 5mm)	1.0 X 1.2	fine weft end protruding from twists
	98.	841404	saucer brooch L.	pin attachment	replaced	Z, Sply 2ply Z	?plait	-	L.c.2.5 cm	soft threads round, crossing at end.
	108.	684528	girdle hangers	one shaft (b)	replaced	Z/Z	2/2 twill	8/6 on 5mm	-	small areas all along
24 ()	110.	684530	Fe buckle	on loop	replaced	Z or S, Zply	-	-	-	traces weave; leather
27 ()	114.	841392	Fe buckle	one side ring	replaced	Z/Z	tabby	6/7 on 5mm	1.5 X 0.7	even spin, weave; one paired thread weft
	117.	684533	Fe rings	complete ring	replaced	Z/Z	?tabby	6/7 on 5mm	0.5 X 0.5	simple selvedge
				another ring	replaced	Zply	string	-	-	fragments
		684535	Fe knife	one side	replaced	Z/Z	tabby	10/10	3.3 X 1.0	rather open weave
				other side	replaced	Z/Z	tabby	6/5 on 5mm	0.5 X 0.5	probably same weave

Grave	SF.no.	Lab.no.	Object	Position on object	Fibre	Spin	Weave	Count	Measurement	Comments
33 (F)	129.	684539	girdle hanger	near end loop	(a) replaced	Z/Z	?twill	6/6 on 5mm	0.6 X 0.7	impressions
	130.	684540	Fe loop		replaced	Z/Z	?twill	-	-	damaged surface
	131.	684541	Fe plate?		(b) replaced	Z/Z	tabby	12/8(4 on 5mm)	1.8 X 2.0	loose open weave, impressions
35 (F)	140.	841405	button brooch	pin attachment	replaced	Z	threads	-	-	coarse, ?bead thread
				at pin end	replaced	Z/Z	?twill	-	0.7 X 1.0	fine, surface damage
36 (M)	145.	684546	spearhead	on shaft	replaced	-	tabby	-	-	tiny scraps, spin not clear
37 (F)	147.	841406	button brooch	fibres only	? flax	-	-	-	-	no textile preserved.
	152.	684549	Fe buckle	pin	replaced	Z/Z	2/2 twill	4/4 on 3mm	0.3 X 0.3	tiny area clear; traces
40 (M)	157.	684553	spearhead	on blade	replaced	?Z/Z	tabby	c.4/4 on 5mm	0.5 X 0.5	and traces
				on socket	replaced	Z/?	-	-	-	weave, coarse thread
41 (F)	166b.	648558b	girdle hanger	two pieces	replaced	-	-	-	-	traces ? leather
	166c.	684558c	Fe strips		(a) replaced	Z/Z	2/2 twill, ?pile	6/6 on 5mm 3-4 tufts per cm, rows 5 mm apart	2.3 X 0.8	uneven, loose weave; in places ?loops, broken threads (p.
	166d.	684558d	Fe fragments	on all pieces	? (a) replaced	Z/Z	2/2 twill	7/6 on 5mm	1.0 X 1.1	open weave; one coarse thread at one edge
	168.	684560	bucket	on edge strip	(b) replaced	Z/Z	tabby	11/12(6 5mm)	1.0 X 0.5	loose weave
45 (M)	1	684565B	shield	Fe from guard	replaced	Z/?	?	-	-	coarse threads, weave
47 (F)	184.	841407	saucer brooch	from pin	replaced	Z/Z	tabby	c.7/6 on 5mm	0.5 X 0.8	small areas
	185.	841408	saucer brooch	from pin	replaced	Z, Sply	string	-	-	? bead string
49 (M)	192.	684570	spearhead	flaked-off pieces	replaced	Z	-	-	-	traces textile



Alton. Fig.

Broken diamond twill (Grave 12.33,34)
(shaded areas clearly preserved)