

# ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

## REPORT

1866

SERIES/No

CONSULTANT

AUTHOR

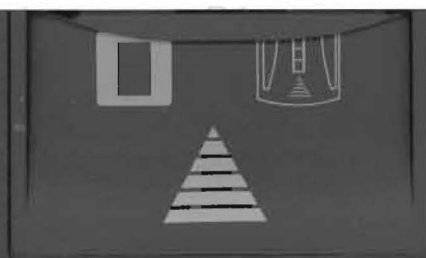
Miss E Crowfoot

Nov 1975

TITLE

ANDOVER  
Portway East

Textile



Portway East, Andover, Hants

Saxon Cemetery

6th century A.D.

Textiles

Grave 1. Female

1. Bronze disc brooch (r. Clavicle)

Front, curved replaced fibres, possibly deteriorated yarns, but could be lamb's wool fibres. Back, after removal of "skinning over" (see below, p. ), replaced textile clear above and under the pin over an area 4.0 X 2.5 cm, tablet-woven braid, probably wider than the 2.5 cm width cleared; the border, at least 1.2 cm wide one side, is in regular 4-hole tablet weave, showing 10 clear twists on 8 mm, replaced, under the pin, lying 3S, 2Z, 1S, 1Z, 1S, 1Z, 1S, after which the border surface is deteriorated; a clearer area 1.0 cm wide follows in 4-hole diagonal pattern weave; warps thread Z, wefts, exposed in parts but deteriorated, Z spun, probably Sply, 12 per cm; after this, traces of the other border.

2. Bronze disc brooch, pair to 1 (l., below chin)

Front, area 1.1 X 0.7 cm, textile, undyed, Z, Z, tabby, count 16(8 on 5 mm)/14 threads per cm, spinning fairly regular, yarn finer in ?warp and ?weft. HMA certainly a bast fibre, and it was possible to see sieve plates in parts; it agrees generally with flax. Deteriorated replaced lump at edge of brooch shows Z, Z, tabby, probably this textile. Back, on this lump, threads probably from tablet weave; around pin head, under skinned layer, area c. 1.2 X 0.7 cm very fragile replaced tablet twists, Z spun, lying S, Z, S, Z (0.4 cm) and further deteriorated area in which the lie of the threads suggests the diagonal pattern centre of braid on brooch 1.

Grave 3. Female

2. Iron belt buckle

On buckle and belt chape, replaced textile, best area (chape) 2.9 X 1.8 cm, good quality Z, Z, 2/2 twill, diagonal, both yarns and weaving even, count 12-13/12 per cm.

3. Iron buckle plate

Replaced tiny fragment 0.5 X 0.4 cm, probably from same twill.

4. Triangular belt fitting

Area 1.0 X 1.0 cm, replaced Z, Z, 2/2 twill, count 13-14/11-12 per cm; other traces, and deteriorated textile on underside, Z, Z, probably same, also detached lump, 1.3 X 1.0 cm.

Grave 5. ?Male

2. Iron buckle (Pl. )

Over top of chape and onto ring, area 3.0 X 2.2 cm at widest, replaced textile, Z, Z, fine tabby, count 18/18 per cm; weaving regular, spinning variable, giving ridged appearance to weave; ?flax.

Grave 6. Male

4. From shield boss stud

Replaced fragment, overall 1.0 X 1.2 cm, double layer on iron, Z, Z, 2/2 twill, fine, regular, count 14/12, yarn in first system finer than other.

Grave 11. Female

1. Iron pin

All over head and pin, replaced deteriorated textile, Z spun, probably twill.

Grave 16. Female child1. Bronze disc brooch

All over pin head and round pin, replaced textile, area c.2.5 X 2.5 cm, fairly coarse Z,Z, 2/2 twill, count 8/7-8 per cm.

14. Perforated Roman coin from necklace

One side, replacement ?skin, and fragments dark matter, probably decayed textile. On other, replaced fibres all over surface, clearly broken up in short pieces, with here and there suggestion of decaying tabby weave; piece of thread, coarse, lightly spun Z, lying across replacement, HMA

Grave 22. Female4. Iron pin

All over pin and head, replaced Z,Z, twill, too deteriorated for count.

Grave 25. Female1. Small long brooch

Deteriorated replaced textile back of pinhead, Z,Z, twill, surface poor; one area, c.0.7 X 1.3 cm, lying against plate under pin head, fine tablet twists, 5 per 5 mm, spinning Z, lying S,Z,S,Z,S,S, wefts 6 per 5 mm.

3. Brooch from waist

Tiny scrap probably from tablet braid, Z threads, Sply, round pin head.

4. Iron pin

All over, deteriorated replaced textile, Z,Z; small fragment 0.6 X 0.5 cm, clear, 2/2 twill, count 6/6 on 5 mm; replaced threads from this on chalk from round brooch.

7. Large iron buckle

On two pieces, replacement of similar textile, best area 2.0 X 0.9 cm, rather coarse Z,Z threads, seems to be open tabby, count 10(5 on 5 mm)/7 per cm.

Grave 31. Female1. Small long brooch

Z thread wound closely round the pin spring, and beside this tiny fragment Z,Z textile, both replaced.

Grave 33. Male11. Iron fragment

Replaced lump textile, clear c.5.0 X 4.0 mm, Z,Z, tabby, count 8/6 per 5 mm.

Grave 35. Female1. Bronze saucer brooch

On pinhead, area 2.2 X 1.7 cm at widest, replaced Z,Z, twill, surface deteriorated, count 6-7/6-7 on 5 mm; across this, one coarser S thread.

Grave 38. Female1. Disc brooch

Very deteriorated textile replaced round pinhead, including tiny fragments Z,Z twill; detached fragment from top of pin, replaced area 1.2 X 1.3 cm, clear tablet-weave, 4-hole, thread Z, 4 twists on 4 mm, wefts Z, 5 on 5 mm, twists lying in chevrons, S,Z,S,Z.

2. Pair to 1

Replaced textile back of brooch, pinhead and catch, c.2.0 X 1.4 cm overall, deteriorated twill, Z,Z, count 6/5 on 5 mm; one fragment pulled diagonally, probably same twill.

Grave 41. Female1. Saucer brooch

Back of pinhead, c.1.0 X 1.5 cm, replaced textile, Z,Z, twill, surface poor, count c.11/10 per cm. Under pin head, twist of Z spun threads (see 2); J.W.Hedges animal fibre.

2. Pair to 1

Back of pinhead, area Z,Z fabric, probably twill as on 1; protruding at end of pin head, finger knot 0.6-0.7 cm across, made with a bunch of fairly coarse Z spun threads as on 1, perhaps the fastening of bead thread.

Grave 42. Female1. Disc brooch

Mass of Z spun threads round pin and pinhead, and one bunch of 5-6 threads, twisted together S, going under pinhead, perhaps bead thread, though some of the other threads interlace loosely, with some ends plyed, suggesting fringe of garment pinned by brooch,

Grave 44. Female1-3. Toilet Set

Loose spun thread, white ?flax, round ring through ear pick. J.W.Hedges, vegetable, bast fibre.

Grave 48. Female1,2. Pair saucer brooches

On 1, Z,Z, replaced threads from weave. On 2, replaced fragments Z,Z, twill, with broken threads and pin piercing fabric.

6. Iron pin

Deteriorated textile on pinhead, some Z threads.

112. Needle case

Thread wound round end near loop, loosely Z spun Sply, preserved for distance of 2.0 cm, but marks show it originally covered c.4.5 cm. J.W.Hedges Animal fibre.

Grave 51. Female3. Buckle

On plate, two areas replaced textile, Z,Z, regular 2/2 twill, count estimated 14/12 per cm; areas 1.7 X 1.2 and 1.5 X 1.2 cm. on buckle, areas same twill, the best, in curved fold, 1.8 X 1.3 cm, count 12/12.

4. Chatelaine group

On one piece with loop, (a) area replaced twill over most of surface, fairly clear 1.5 X 1.2 cm, Z,Z, twill, regular, count estimated 12/12. On another loop piece, one side, remains of twill (a), on the other area 0.9 X 0.8 cm, (b) replaced tabby, Z,Z, count 6/5 on 5 mm. On large ring, areas of (b) best 1.3 X 1.5 and 1.5 X 0.8 cm, and remains of this tabby weave on other pieces.

Grave 52. Female1. Right disc brooch

All over pin head and pin, remains of what must have been a patterned tablet-woven braid, best area c.1.4 X 1.1 cm with pin going through it; some Z spun S twists clear. Area under pin again shows a twist.

2. Left disc brooch

Similar tablet weave across pin, deteriorated surface.

Grave 54. Female1. From handle of wooden bucket

Replaced on iron, area c.5.0 X 1.5 cm at widest, Z,Z, tabby, count 10 X 10 per cm; the yarns are both rather uneven, but some very thick threads are probably intentional, self-stripes or possibly coloured (Pl. ); appearance suggests flax.

Grave 59. Female1. Small long brooch

On pinhead, replaced textile, Z,Z, all layers deteriorated; some coarser Z threads may be from bead-thread.

Grave 61. Female19. From chatelaine

On bronze strip, scrap 0.8 X 0.5 cm, deteriorated Z,Z, twill.

Grave 67. Female8. Bronze fragments

Replaced scattered fibres, and three Z,Sply threads lying side by side which have been wound round below the loop.

It is clear that the textiles in this cemetery were of good quality, but unfortunately the remains are in a very deteriorated condition. Fibres could be identified in only three cases, probable flax in two (Graves 1,44) and animal fibre, certainly here wool, in one (Grave 41). Even when fibres have been replaced by metal oxides, the weave had often obviously started to decay before replacement was complete. The surfaces of some pieces are covered by a skin, which has to be removed before the weave can be clearly seen, a feature noted on other sites; sometimes this seems to have preserved the reticular marking of human skin, in others it suggests leather. The latter effect can be produced by the crushing of textile fibres by the weight of earth in the grave; fibrous fragments with a convincing leather-like appearance found under a bronze bowl at Snape, Suffolk, proved to be made up entirely of broken down flattened flax fibres from the tabby cloth wrapping the bowl (1).

The twills, as far as can be judged from small fragments found in nine graves, are all simple four-shed (2/2) diagonal weaves, with Z spinning throughout, of good even workmanship. The tabby weaves, five in number, are more variable. In two cases, where the appearance suggests flax, very uneven yarn has been used, in one so marked as to suggest a deliberate self-stripe, or perhaps a coloured coarser thread thrown occasionally.

An indication that the quality of textiles in the settlement was good is provided by the tablet-woven braids found in brooches from four women's graves (Graves 1,25,38,52), probably decorating the neckline of the overgown; in two cases these were certainly patterned (Pl. ). Evidence from other sites indicates that these decorative tablet-weaves were not made as borders on the dress-length, but as separate braids sewn to the

edge of the fabric afterwards (2); the type of diagonal pattern weave, recognisably preserved here in Grave 1, is similar to examples at Evebo described by Hans Dedekam (3). To make the pattern effective these braids must have been coloured, and traces of blue, purple or red, and possibly yellow, can still be seen in similar braids from Mucking (Grave 935) and Fonaby, Lincolnshire.

Elisabeth Crowfoot

#### Notes

1. E.Crowfoot, appendix, in
2. Cf. Mucking, Grave 814; Finglesham, Grave 203; Bjørn Hougen, Snartemofunnene, Oslo, 1935, pls. XII, XVI-XVIII.
3. Hans Dedekam, "To tekstilfund fra folkevandringstiden", Bergens Museums Aarbok 1924-25, p.6. ff, fig.4, Pl. II.