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Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 34/89

QUALITATIVE ANALYSES OF ROMAN FINDS
FROM VICTORIA ROAD, WINCHESTER,
HANTS.

Justine Bayley

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Summary

17 Roman brooches, 5 of them plate brooches with applied decoration, and 6 other objects were analysed. The results are compared with those already obtained for similar objects from other sites.

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QUALITATIVE ANALYSES OF ROMAN FINDS FROM VICTORIA ROAD,
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A total of 17 brooches and 6 other copper alloy objects were submitted for examination and analysis by energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence (XRF).

Table of analytical results

Finds No	Object	Alloy	Decoration
72	handle	leaded bronze/gunmetal	
148	strip	bronze	
223	brooch - plate	leaded bronze	EW
309	brooch - Colchester A	brass	
449	brooch - Nauheim deriv.	bronze	
555	strapping	brass	
701	handle	leaded bronze	
1013	brooch - Nauheim deriv.	bronze/gunmetal	
1018	brooch - Hod Hill	brass	
1030	brooch - Nauheim deriv.	bronze	
1043	brooch - Nauheim deriv.	bronze/gunmetal	
3176	brooch - Nauheim deriv.	gunmetal	
3245	brooch - Hod Hill	brass	
5263	brooch - knee	brass	
5381	brooch - plate	brass	GSW
5383	brooch - (bow/foot only)	leaded bronze	
5461	brooch - plate	leaded bronze	E
5577	brooch - plate	brass	GSW
9586	mirror fragment	bronze (speculum)	
9623	bracelet	brass	
9676	brooch - dolphin	bronze	
9700	brooch - plate	brass	EW
9912	brooch - T-shaped	bronze	W

Key: E = enamelled, G = gilded, W = tinned, S = glass 'stone'

The brooches

Each brooch type has a preferred alloy or range of alloys used to make it and the examples here generally conform to the expected pattern. The dolphin and T-shaped brooches are unusual but not unique in being of unleaded (rather than leaded) bronze.

There are five plate brooches, all with applied decoration of some sort. These include two oval, gilded brooches with conical glass 'stones' in a central mount which are tinned on the back. In the first (5381) the 'stone' is green rather than the more common dark olive/black and the gilding contains traces of mercury showing it was applied by fire gilding. The second (5577) is more unusual as it is smaller than most of these brooches and the 'stone' is made of two colours of glass, mostly olive/black but with a natural coloured (translucent turquoise)

area at one end. The gilding looks pinker in colour than that on 5381 and contains no detectable mercury and so was probably applied as leaf. These oval brooches are most commonly made of brass as here but the circular variants are normally bronzes.

The other three plate brooches are of a variety of types. Two (223 and 5461) are leaded bronzes which is the normal alloy for these types. The first has three reserved metal annuli which are tinned which contain and divide an outer ring of opaque turquoise enamel and an inner one which now appears green which is almost certainly not its original colour. The central metal cone was not tinned. The oval plate (5461) has a single band of enamel that was originally red surrounding a now empty field. The reserved metal annuli were probably originally tinned though no trace of this now survives. The final plate brooch (9700) is in the form of an axe with two fields of enamel on the head and one on the handle. The fields on the head contain single colours, blue and what now appears olive (but was probably originally red). The same two colours appear as diagonal stripes of juxtaposed enamel in the handle. The reserved metal surrounding and dividing the enamel fields is tinned though the small loop is not.

The non-brooches

The mirror fragment (9586) is of the normal high-tin, low-lead bronze which naturally has a grey colour and so provides a good reflective surface. The two openwork handles (72 and 701) are of similar, though not identical compositions; silver was also detectable on 701, probably a few percent accidentally mixed in with the bulk metal. The bracelet was of brass as are many others; 24 of the 43 analysed from Uley, Gloucs (Bayley 1987) but only three of the eight from Gorhambury, Herts (Bayley and Wilthew 1986). Insufficient numbers of bracelets have been analysed for possible correlations of alloy with typology to be discerned.

References

- J Bayley (1987) Qualitative analyses of bracelets and rings from Uley, Gloucs. AML Report 65/87
- J Bayley and S Wilthew (1986) Qualitative analyses of copper alloy objects from Gorhambury Villa, Herts. AML Report 37/86