

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 75/91

TEXTILE: CARISBROOKE CASTLE,
ISLE OF WIGHT.

Elisabeth Crowfoot

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Summary

Fragments of textile, on grave-goods in one of a group of early Anglo-Saxon burials found during excavations in Carisbrooke Castle, are probably from fine linen cloth used to wrap or cover major vessels - a Cu alloy bowl, a drinking-horn, and a bucket with escutcheons.

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CARISBROCKE CASTLE, ISLE OF WIGHT

Textile

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(Fibre analysis: Glynis Edwards)

Grave 1626

3206. A.M.Lab.no. 81256. Copper alloy bowl.

- (a) On thin bronze fragment from bowl, areas c.10 X 10 and 5 X 6 mm, threads semi-mineralised, spinning Z in both systems, no selvedge preserved, weave tabby, thread lightly spun, count on 10 mm 18(taken as 9 on 5 mm)/14-15. Open weave, possibly due to deterioration of fibres. ?wrapped round bowl.
- (b) Fragments found in earth under the bowl, fibre vegetable, best area 10 X 8 mm, spinning Z both systems, even, loose, close even tabby, thread count 17/14-16(7-8 on 5 mm).

3212. A.M.Lab.no. 814194. Drinking horn.

On gilded mount, area 10 X 9 mm, textile, mineralised, Z/Z, loose twist, tabby weave, thread count 8/7-8 on 5 mm clear, even spin and weave.

3306. A.M.Lab.no. 812525. Bucket.

On handle fragments, mineralised textile, clearest on smaller piece, 23 X 13 mm, Z/Z, loose twist, tabby weave, thread count c.15/14(7 on 5 mm).

On escutcheon, areas very deteriorated textile, at angle Z/Z, tabby, c.14/14 per 10 mm; fine threads visible at edge.

All these fragments from Grave 1626 are mineralised, preserved by contact with the metal goods, with the exception of the scraps found in the earth under the bowl. All could come from the same, or similar, fine linen cloth. Their association with major grave-goods, the bowl (near the left foot), the gilded mount of the drinking-horn, and the bucket (near the head), suggest these items were perhaps separately wrapped. An all-over linen shroud or covering is very unlikely at this date. Vessels such as the bowl and bucket may have contained liquids, milk or wine, as has been suggested for other vessels in later Anglo-Saxon burials, found covered with linen cloths, Banstead Down, Surrey (Crowfoot 1976.71), Portway, Andover (Crowfoot 1965.102), Morning Thorpe, Norfolk (Crowfoot 1967.174), Finglesham and Mucking.

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