

INTRODUCTION

Apart from a few deteriorated samples of animal and vegetable fibre (see p.), textile evidence at Bergh Apton has been preserved entirely by the replacement of textile fibres by metallic oxides from copper alloy and iron objects, leaving a cast in which spinning and weaving details can be seen, often very distinctly, though the fragments clear enough to be identified are often very small.

The catalogue indicates the presence of what can by now be described as the usual range of Anglo-Saxon textiles, four-shed (2/2) twills, including chevron or lozenge weaves, three-shed (2/1) twills, tabby weaves, tablet-woven braids and probable warp-face tabby braids or borders, and two possible pile or pattern weaves. Only one selvage is preserved, but as in Anglo-Saxon textiles the warp normally has the higher thread count, this has as a rule been placed in the warp position when counts are given. The direction of spinning twist in the yarns is indicated by the letters S and Z.

CATALOGUE OF TEXTILES

All objects are of copper alloy unless otherwise stated.

GRAVE 3

A. Annular brooch

On top surface, patches of replaced textile, Z, Z, twill (see B) near one end of pin. Other end of pin, fragment 0.7 x 0.3 cm, Z, Z, close tabby, count 10/4 threads on 0.5/0.3, i.e. c. 20/14-16 threads per cm, appearance suggests flax. On iron from pin, lumps replaced with threads, some Z, some S.

B. Annular brooch

Lying over the ring and across the centre in double layer or fold, replaced textile, Z, Z, four-shed twill, surface deteriorated, count 5/5 on 5 mm.

Ei. Iron key

Area c. 2.3 x 1.5 cm on hook, replaced textile, Z, Z, 2/2 twill, count 13/11-12 per cm; other traces on shaft.

GRAVE 5

Clavicle fragment

Fragment replaced textile, 0.9 x 1.3 cm, Z, Z, tabby, count estimated 20/16 per cm. The piece may show part of a selvage, as at one side it has five paired threads; the ?wefts enter the tabby without crossing; in this edge are two knots of ?sewing thread, with holes between indicating a thread or knot missing (Fig. 102, No. 6).

B. Iron brooch spring

Area c. 0.9 x 0.9 cm, coarse replaced threads probably from a tablet-woven braid or border, possibly 2-hole tablet, yarn Z spun, twists Z.

C. Cruciform brooch

Behind brooch, clear area 1.3 x 1.2 cm, visible from front, replaced textile, Z, Z, 2/2 twill, count 10/8 per cm; thread in ?weft noticeably thicker and softer than in ?warp. From back, pierced by pin, folds and layers of Z, Z twill, probably the same.

GRAVE 6

C. Cruciform brooch

On back, round where pin lay, replaced textile, best area 1.2 x 0.8 cm, in folds, Z, Z, fine close tabby, count 18/12 (taken as 6 on 5 mm) per cm. On pin attachment, under a fragment of this tabby, deteriorated textile with longer coarser Z threads, probably twill.

6 (cont.)

Cruciform brooch

Tabby on back in folds round pin head and along catch plate, best area c. 2.5 x 2.5 cm, Z, Z, close and even tabby, counts estimated 14/12, 16/10 per cm. Tiny scrap same on E, tag-end and iron ring.

GRAVE 7

bone

Fragments textile, fibre very deteriorated, animal, i.e. wool, the best c. 0.5 x 1.2 and 1 x 0.7 cm, Z, S, twill, count 12 (6 on 6 mm)/11 per cm, probably the same as on H.

Ring

Threads lying across, probably wound or tied round ring.

Iron rings and rods

Fragment replaced textile 1.4 x 0.6 cm, twill, 2/2, spinning Z one system, probably S the other, count 5/5 on 5 mm.

Square-headed brooch

On back, areas textile and replaced patches on brooch and pin, the best 1.3 x 2.2 cm, Z, S, broken diamond (lozenge) twill, count 14/12 per cm (Fig. 102, No. 1).

GRAVE 8

B. Iron shield boss and grip

Fragments replaced textile, best area 1.3 x 1.5 cm, Z, Z, coarse regular 2/2 twill, count 8/7 per cm. On handgrip, remains leather and one patch replaced, 1.7 x 2.0 cm, same twill, count 7/7 per cm.

D. Iron spear

On socket, area 1.0 x 1.2 cm, replaced, similar twill to that on shield.

GRAVE 9

E. Ring

Mass of replaced fibres, probably from wool.

F/G. Wrist-clasps

Area 2.0 x 1.0 cm, deteriorated tablet-woven braid, presumably the cuff to the sleeve (see p.); thread Z spun, twists alternate Z and S, c. 8 per 5 mm, wefts invisible (Fig. 102, No. 4); surface confused by root fibres, but patches of Z threads passing across the twists may indicate a surface pattern, as they lie between the braid and the clasp and are unlikely to have come from the sleeve.

GRAVE 16

A. Iron spearhead

On socket, small patch coarse replaced textile, c. 0.8 x 0.5 cm, Z, Z, probably twill.

GRAVE 18

A. Annular Brooch

Underneath ring, area 1.5 x 1.0 cm, replaced textile, Z, Z, tabby, count 10/9 per cm. Loose fragment probably from brooch, replaced deteriorated twill, Z, S.

C. Florid cruciform brooch

Front, area 3.5 x 0.7 cm preserved along bottom of foot, Z, Z, twill, thread rather fine, count 7/5 per 5 mm, probably not a simple 2/2 but there is not enough preserved for certainty. Back, under pin, area 2.5 x 1.7 cm, solid Z, S twill, 2/2, count 10/10 per cm; deteriorated patches all over foot, behind pin attachment and on arms of cross.

GRAVE 19

B. Iron knife

Fragment replaced textile 1.3 x 1.5 cm, Z, Z, 2/2 twill, count 7 on 5 mm in one system.

GRAVE 19 (cont.)

Iron shield grip

Replaced textile, area 1.7 x 1.6 cm, Z, Z, probably twill, but with very coarse soft Z Sply threads protruding, 2 to 5 mm, suggesting pile ends or broken pattern threads.

Iron bucket bands

On ring, three fragments have replacements of textile; on one piece, scattered over area 3.3 x 1.0 cm, seem to be from the same fabric as on F, rather hard spun Z ?twill threads, mixed with soft coarse threads, Z, Sply ?reverse of pile. Middle ring, again covered in traces, Z threads c. 4 to 5 mm, and coarse soft Sply threads.

GRAVE 29

Ring

Traces all over of fairly coarse textile, Z, Z, twill, surface deteriorated, and same preserved on vegetable matter under the ring.

A. 'Chatelaine'

On copper alloy ring (Hxi), fragment of plait or cord, Z spun threads.

On some or all keys (Hviii-x), areas replaced textile on hook and ring, clear on latter area c. 4.0 x 1.0 cm, in a double fold, fine, Z, Z, 2/1 twill, count 10/8 on 5 mm, i.e. 20/16 per cm. Detached replaced fragments:-

(a) replaced by iron, area 1.6 x 1.2 overall, Z, Z, similar fine 2/1 twill, count 19-20/19 per cm; the fourth ?weft from one end of the piece is paired, could be decorative or a mistake (Fig. 102, No. 3).

(b) fragment from keys, 1.1 x 0.8 cm. similar 2/1 twill, ribbed look due to presence of occasional noticeably coarse threads.

(c) spiral fragments that have been twisted round, areas 2.0 x 0.6 and 0.5 x 0.6, same twill, one piece showing reverse weft-face side.

On copper alloy fragments (Hii and others), folds of same fine twill, and some coarse Z threads.

On copper alloy and iron from girdle hangers area 1.2 x 0.8 cm at one end, same 2/1 twill, replaced, weft-face side, thread again noticeably uneven, count 20 (10 on 5 mm)/17 per cm.

GRAVE 34

A. 'Chatelaine'

Two replaced patches on loop of keys (Avi), c. 1.0 x 0.6 cm each, Z, Z, 2/2 twill, fairly coarse and even, count 6/5 on 5 mm.

On iron knife (Avii), patch of deteriorated replaced similar textile.

E. Annular brooch

Underneath, at junction of pin, area 2.0 x 1.5 cm, replaced fine textile, Z, Z, 2/1 twill, weft-face side, count 13/8 on 5 mm; this is very like the twill from grave 29, again ribbing due to uneven thread.

F. Annular brooch

In folds on ring and all along pin position, replaced area 4.5 x 2.2 cm, at widest, same fine 2/1 twill, Z, Z, count 28 (14 on 5 mm)/17 per cm, showing weft face on pin, warp face on ring; warp face has layer of curled fibres on top, perhaps deterioration, but more likely teasing.

K. Iron strip

Area 1.7 x 1.0 cm, replaced medium weight textile, Z, Z, ?tabby, count 6/5 on 5 mm.

L. Iron buckle

Coarse replaced textile covering most of one end of ring, Z, Z, twill, deteriorated.

GRAVE 35

F. Wrist clasp

Back, area textile, very fragile and deteriorated, 1.1 x 0.9 cm, Z, Z, twill, probably

35 (cont.)

sample 2/2, but broken threads confuse it, and it might be 2/1; count estimated on 5 mm. Along one edge, tubular selvedge is preserved, 2.5 mm wide, probably on 10 threads (Fig. 102, No. 5).

GRAVE 37

Cruciform brooch

ant, (a) fine textile in folds on crossbar, ?flax, undyed, area c. 3.7 x 2.0 cm, Z, Z, tabby, count 22-24/18 per cm, thread finer in one system, weaving regular.
back, (b) replaced deteriorated folds of Z, S, twill, all over crossbar at back and under. Underneath this, (c) partially replaced, Z, Z, tabby, dark brown wool, clear area 1.0 x 0.7 cm, count 7/6 per 5 mm.

Under A, on part of iron brooch C, (d) replaced remains of fine tablet-woven band, area preserved c. 3.0 x 1.5 cm, three edge twists, Z, S, Z (width 0.5 cm) followed by remains of diagonally patterned centre.

E. Wrist clasp

Area 2.0 x 0.6 cm from back of clasp, tablet woven braid, twists S, but probably broken along parallel lines of diagonal pattern; at one end, two rows of S twining, perhaps at the end of the braid.

G. Iron knife

Replaced wisp of fine textile, 1.3 x 0.4 cm, probably tabby, ?a fine tape.

J. Iron buckle

Lying over pin, coarse replaced textile, area c. 3.0 x 1.8 cm, Z, Z, twill, surface damaged and threads broken.

GRAVE 40

A. Iron buckle

Traces replaced textile with one clear area showing close-packed Z threads hiding the other system, possibly from a warp-face belt (see p.) with coarse wefts 3 per 5 mm, but too badly preserved for certainty.

B. Iron knife

Patch replaced textile, 1.2 x 1.5 cm, Z threads; surface obscured by fibres, but whether deterioration or teasing uncertain.

GRAVE 42

Bi. Annular brooch

On pin (detached) area c. 2.5 x 2.0 cm replaced textile, Z, Z, twill, count 14/11 per cm, as far as can be seen simple 2/2, but surface obscured by loose fibres; good preservation of the twill suggests this may be a teased surface.

On brooch, at pin attachment, deteriorated tablet twists, Z, S, in chevrons; detached fragment, replaced, width preserved 1.2, length 2.1 cm, braid in regular 4-hole tablet weave, 12 twists in chevrons Z and S per cm (Fig. 102, No. 4), wefts c. 12 per cm; one edge is preserved, with a noticeably heavier twist, probably due to thicker threads; the other edge is missing. Loose fragments from under brooch from similar braid, the best 1.1 x 1.7 cm, indicate that the braid was wider than the clear fragment. On other copper alloy fragments (Bii) again replaced deteriorated twists.

H. 'Chatelaine'

Hiv-viii in strap end

Area 0.8 x 1.1 cm textile, i. e. braid strap, replaced, Z warp, weft ends protruding; the way the warps lie suggest a tablet weave, but the fibres are flattened and it may be a simple warp-face weave or 2-hole tablet weave (see grave 40. A).

Another strap end

Leather round rivets.

42 (cont.)

Copper alloy fragment

Scrap replaced Z, Z twill.

Iron ring

1.2 x 0.6 cm, replaced Z, Z twill, count 7/6 on 5 mm.

Iron pin

Coarse fibred Z thread wound round and round top of pin.

Keys

Similar similar Z, Z twill to that on ring over area 2.0 x 0.7 cm.

Wrist-clasp

Mass of deteriorated crushed textile, Z, Z; on one area 1.5 x 1.1 cm deteriorated tablet twists, all lying S, thread Z spun.

GRAVE 45

G. 'Chatelaine'

Area fine 7 wool (animal) textile, c. 1.5 x 1.0 cm, Z, S, surface crushed; deteriorated Z threads on other pieces of 'chatelaine'.

Copper alloy fragments (on wrist-clasp E or on G)

Scrap c. 1.2 x 1.2 cm, Z, Z, twill, crushed, fibre unidentifiable; the threads in one system seem to be fine paired Z threads, but the effect may be due to fibres parting under pressure; count 8 (?pairs)/6 on 5 mm.

GRAVE 50

D. Iron knife

Patch replaced textile, 1.0 x 0.8 cm, Z, Z, twill.

E. Iron buckle and copper alloy buckle plate

(a) replaced textile all round one edge in a lump of folds, c. 2.0 x 2.0 cm, rather coarse Z, Z twill, with soft S threads passing diagonally (Fig. 102, No. 2); these may be the reverse of a pile weave, or possibly a pattern weave (see p.); count 9/8 per cm on twill.

(b) small piece that has been against copper alloy, 0.6 x 0.7 cm, Z, Z, finer twill, 2/2, count 8/6-7 on 5 mm; deteriorated scrap of this is on underside of (a).

GRAVE 55

B. Annular brooch

Underneath, at pin attachment, c. 1.0 x 0.8 cm replaced textile, Z, Z, probably twill. On front, fragment of cord, three Z threads plied or loosely plaited.

GRAVE 64

D. Iron buckle

Patch replaced textile, c. 2.0 x 0.8 cm, Z, S, 2/2 twill, count 12 per cm in Z system.

F. Wrist-clasp

Tiny fragments deteriorated Z, S textile under copper alloy; some threads possibly from S tablet twists.

G. Wrist-clasp

Area 3.0 x 1.0 cm underneath, deteriorated textile, Sply threads of tablet twists clear in holes of pattern.

GRAVE 65

B and C. Annular brooches

(a) on bone and copper alloy, Z, Z, textile; under brooch Z, ?tablet weave; on top of ring, area 1.5 x 0.8, replaced Z, Z, probably tabby, count 6/6 on 5 mm, broken threads.

(b) replaced area 1.0 x 0.7 cm, Z, Z, possibly 2-hole tablet weave.

65 (cont.)

Iron pin

Patches replaced, Z, Z, one thread noticeably finer than other.

Wrist-clasp

pressed mass of deteriorated textile underneath; at one edge ? fine tablet twists, and Z spun, twists S.

Iron ring

replaced textile round ring in more than one fold or layer, Z, Z, twill, very regular 2/2 diagonal, count 15-16/14 per cm.

Iron knife

replaced textile, 1.3 x 1.0 cm, Z one system, probably S other, coarse weave, surface bad.

GRAVE 71

B. Iron knife

Patches replaced textile, Z, Z, deteriorated.

C. Buckle plate

Area underneath, 1.3 x 1.7 cm clear, Z, Z, twill, 2/2 diagonal as far as can be seen, very regular and even, count 16/15 per cm.

GRAVE 73

A. Iron shield boss and grip

Areas replaced textile on both sides of iron fragment, one fairly clear area 2.5 x 1.5 cm, Z, S, 2/2 twill, count 6/4 on 5 mm.

SF.11. Iron ring

Area 1.2 x 1.7 cm, replaced coarse textile, Z, Z, ?twill.

N. B. Many other objects from some of these graves, and from graves 12, 21, 22, 26, 35, 44, 47, 54, 60, 63, 69, 70 and 76, had remains of Z threads and traces of Z, Z textiles too small for further identification, also traces of leather on buckles, studs and knives.

DISCUSSION

Fibres and spinning

Even where actual textile is present at Bergh Apton, the fibres are too deteriorated to be identified further than 'animal' (graves 7, 37, 45) and 'vegetable' (grave 37), though it is unlikely that these are other than sheep's wool and flax. The appearance of the metal-replaced fibres, from which most of the textile evidence here is assembled, suggests wool for everything except perhaps some of the finer tabby weaves.

The spinning is mainly Z, though there is a small proportion of fabrics, unfortunately mostly deteriorated, with different spinning, Z and S, in the two thread systems of the weave. Study of excavated Anglo-Saxon textiles, particularly, in the last few years, the long series from the settlement at Mucking, Essex, has made it clear that Z spinning was certainly predominant from the sixth century onwards, and mixed spinning, Z warp and S weft, can usually be taken to indicate a more decorative type of weave, such as chevron or lozenge twill.

Twill weaves

(a) Four-shed twills The twills include both four- and three-shed constructions, six with mixed spinning being all four-shed (2/2) weaves, one of which is a clear lozenge (broken diamond) twill (grave 7, Fig.102, No.1). One other lozenge or chevron twill is among

seventeen four-shed twills employing Z spinning in warp and weft, but in this case not enough is present to show the whole plan of the diamond. All these pattern twills, whatever their spinning, are of medium quality, comparable with those from a number of other cemeteries, with counts ranging from 24/18 to 12/12 threads per cm (Crowfoot, G. M. 1951, 30-2; Crowfoot, E. 1967, 37-9; Crowfoot, E. 1969, 50-3; Bruce-Mitford 1975, 447, SH 9, 12; unpublished, Dover, Mucking, Fonaby, Worthy, Buckden, Sewerby, Horndean, Finglesham, Welbeck Hill (Irby)), and are among the coarser examples in this group; they do not approach the quality of the really fine, changes, with counts from 38/22 to 34/26 threads per cm, from Sutton Hoo and Broomfield Barrow (Bruce-Mitford 1975, 445), and there is no reason to suggest such weaves were anything but good local manufacture. The other four-shed twills catalogued here are all coarser, cloak and blanket fabrics.

b) Twills with ?pile or pattern Two coarse fragments have indications of pattern wefts. On grave goods from grave 19 are replacements of what is most probably a pile weave; on the rings of the bucket, the hard Z spun yarns of the twill are combined with soft coarse threads, Z spun, S ply, and on the hand grip of the shield these threads protrude broken from the weave, suggesting the under and upper surfaces of a pile cloak or blanket; alternatively they could indicate a weft float pattern, as in the fragments from a shield boss at Wakerley, Northants (grave 85), and a spear at Mucking (grave 939), but unfortunately the remains are too small and scattered for certainty.

The other fragments, on an iron buckle and copper alloy buckle plate from grave 50, has soft S threads passing diagonally across a rather coarse Z spun twill (Fig. 102, No. 2); again the fragment is small, and it is difficult to see the exact passage of the replaced S threads, but they do not appear to run continuously; i.e. they could be pile wefts passing across three warps and under one weft, seen from the underside of the twill, or perhaps a needle-inserted pattern. Pile weaves of different types and qualities have been found at Sutton Hoo, Broomfield Barrow and Banstead Down (Bruce-Mitford 1975, 445, 447, SH 3, 10; Crowfoot, E. 1976(b), 69-70); the reverse of the last named example, though far more widely spaced, would give an effect nearest to the Bergh Apton scrap.

The raised surface of a well-preserved twill in grave 42 suggests teasing.

(c) Three-shed twills Three possible examples of three-shed twill (Fig. 102, No. 3) (graves 29, 34 and probably 35) confirm the findings from other cemeteries that this weave was well known among the Anglo-Saxons, not only in royal circles, as at Sutton Hoo, where fine imported goods could be expected, but in ordinary settlements, and made in varying qualities (Crowfoot, G. M. 1952, 190; Crowfoot, E. 1966, 30; Bruce-Mitford 1975, 446, SH 7, 8; unpublished, Dover, Mucking, Welbeck Hill, Wakerley, Bifrons, Ozingell, Broomfield Barrow etc.).

Because of its lack of balance, this weave is considered unsuitable to the warp-weighted loom of the Anglo-Saxons (Hoffmann 1964, 202), and the presence of these twills on English sites, together with their absence in Scandinavia until the Viking period, may suggest that the Roman two-beamed loom continued in use among the local people, and was adopted, together with certain weaves, by the Anglo-Saxon settlers.

The fine 2/1 twill from grave 34 has a soft fibrous appearance that suggests it may have been teased, though surface deterioration may partly account for the raised fibres.

Tabby weaves

Seven Z spun tabby weaves are all simple without decoration. The position of two, coarse Z tabbies with a strongly warp (or weft) face, indicates that these were probably braids - the end of a belt in a buckle (grave 40. A), and a strap fragment from a 'chate-laine' (grave 42). On a knife from grave 37 a wisp of fine textile, probably tabby, suggests a tape.

...et weaves.
Six examples of tablet weave, the most popular Anglo-Saxon braid and border weave
Crowfoot, G. M. 1951, 26-30; Crowfoot, G. M. 1952, 189; Crowfoot, G. M. 1956,
9; Henshall 1959, 17-21; Crowfoot, E. 1958, 36-7; Crowfoot, E. 1967, 37-8;
Crowfoot, E. 1976(a), 31; and many unpublished examples), come from this cemetery.
Most of these are from the commonest four-hole type, where the twists lie in chevrons,
alternately Z and S (Fig. 102, No. 4), but two possibly have had pattern work, one (grave
with a woven diagonal design, the other (grave 9) possible remains of surface brocading.
Two braids (graves 5 and 65) are probably two-hole weaves.

These bands, used to decorate the necks and wrists of garments, to form borders
on cloaks and blankets, and to make belts and straps, are extremely strong, and must in
many cases have been highly coloured.

Selvages

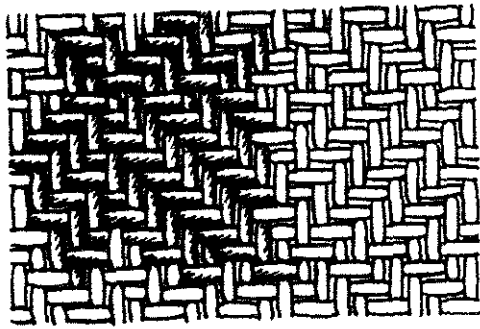
The only detail preserved apart from braids is a tubular selvedge (grave 35) on a
four-shed twill (Fig. 102, No. 5); other Anglo-Saxon examples have been found from
Barrington, Haslingfield, Wakerley, Sewerby and Broomfield Barrow. A fragment from
grave 5 shows remains of six paired threads which could be part of the selvedge on a
tabby weave, with the edge loops missing; remains of a sewing thread with two knots
suggest this might have been used in a seam (Fig. 102, No. 6).

TEXTILE REMAINS

BERGH APTON

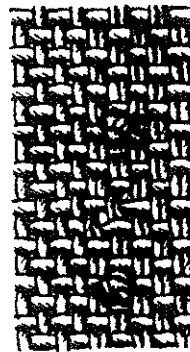
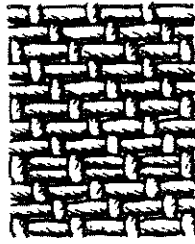
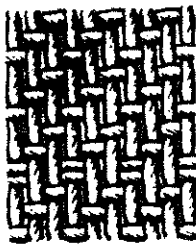
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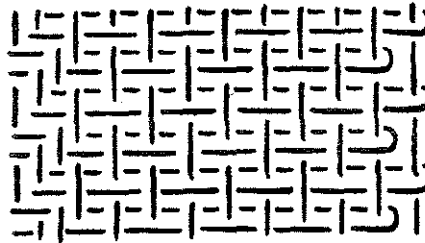
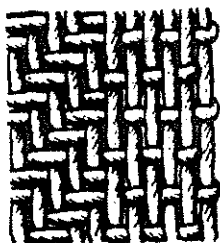
Fig. 1



3 (a)

3 (b)

6



5 (a)

5 (b)

Fig. 120. 1. Four-shed lozenge (broken diamond) twill, Z, S, spinning; shaded area preserved. Grave 7.

2. ?Pile weave, seen from back. Grave 50.

3. Three-shed twill, Z, Z, spinning; (a) warp face, 2/1 (b) weft face, 1/2. Drawn with one paired weft as in Grave 29.

4. Tablet weave, four-hole (see Mucking, etc.)

5. Tubular selvedge on four-shed 2/2 twill, Z, Z, spinning; (a) selvedge drawn into tube (b) diagram to show passage of wefts Drawn on ten warps, as in Grave 35.

6. Fragment of tabby weave, Z, Z, spinning, with paired warps and knots from sewing threads, Grave 5.