

ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

REPORT

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Textiles; Morningthorpe, Norfolk.
TITLE Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries

May 18th., 1977

Morningthorpe, Norfolk
Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries

Textiles

Elisabeth Crowfoot

Introduction

The textiles from this cemetery were either too deteriorated, or had fibres too far replaced by metal oxides for fibre determination to be made, except in one case of vegetable fibre, Grave 393. From their appearance, and the evidence of other cemeteries, it is clear that the majority of the woven goods would have been of wool, though some other flax items are suggested by thread characteristics even in oxidisations. There is one case where colour is visible on surviving threads (Grave 358) but insufficient was present for dye analysis.

There are no selvages preserved (see Grave 337, p.). In Anglo-Saxon textiles, woven on the warp-weighted loom, the higher count is normally the warp, and this has therefore been placed in the warp position in thread counts in the catalogue; the direction of spin is indicated by the letters Z and S. The term "replaced" has been used as an abbreviation for "fibres replaced by metal oxides".

May 18th, 1977

Anglo-Saxon Cemetery

Morningthorpe

Textiles: Elisabeth Crowfoot

Grave 1C. Iron from shield

Binding strips on ?handle look more like leather than textile. Impressions of this binding are on replaced layers of fabric which must have lain in contact, clear area 1.7 X 2.0 cm in folds, Z,Z, twill, 2/2, count estimated c.14/12 per cm; similar twill on bone fragment.

Grave 18. Iron object

Replaced over area 1.5 X 2.5 cm, Z,Z, regular 2/2 twill, count 11/13 per cm.

Grave 22C.

Area 2.5 X 1.3 cm, replaced tabby weave, one system Z, other probably S, count 5/7 on 5 mm.

Grave 25A. Bronze wrist-clasp

Fragments over area 2.0 X 1.0 cm, very fine ?flax, Z,Z, tabby, count 8/8 on 5 mm.

Grave 30J. Cruciform brooch

Deteriorated fragment, replaced Z,Z, twill, count 14/12 per cm.

L. Annular brooch

Replaced area 1.2 X 1.0 cm, Z,Z, probably tabby, count 7/5 on 5 mm. Similar tabby on pin of Brooch K.

N. Cruciform brooch

Back of pin head, replaced over area 3.5 X 2.0 cm, Z,Z, twill, deteriorated; front, fragment Z,Z, tabby, count 6/7 on 5 mm, ?flax.

Grave 45F. Spear or knife

Replaced area 1.5 X 0.6 cm, Z,Z, twill, possibly with reverse, count 14/10 (5 on 5 mm) per cm. Replaced Z threads on Iron ring.E.

Grave 50E. Iron brooch pin

Area replaced 1.0 X 0.9 cm, Z,Z, twill, count c.5/6 per cm.

G.

Area c.1.0 X 1.0 cm, deteriorated replaced Z,S, tabby, count 5/5 on 5 mm.

Grave 52B. Shield boss

On rim, area 4.0 X 2.2 cm, replaced, Z,S, coarse twill, count 7/7 per cm, deteriorated.

Grave 53B. Iron buckle

Wrapping in folds all round buckle, replaced Z,Z, twill, very even spinning and weaving, count c.5/6 on 5 mm.

Grave 59

B. Iron buckle

Replaced area 1.5 X 1.3 cm, Z,Z, fine twill 2/2, count 12/12 per cm.

Grave 65

C. Tweezers

Area replaced 1.0 X 1.2 cm, Z,Z, twill, 2/2, fine, count 7/6 on 5 mm.

Grave 80

H. Annular brooch

Replaced area 3.0 X 1.2, possibly textile, Z,Z, twill in one place, but most of area probably tabby.

J. Cruciform brooch

Back of pinhead, replaced area tablet weave, L. present 1.5, W.0.9 cm, spinning Z, as far as can be seen regular chevrons, 9 on 0.9 cm, wefts possibly 5-6 on 5 mm; possibly border of fabric.

L. Annular brooch

Area, detached, tabby, Z,Z, replaced, c.1.0 X 1.0 cm, count 13/12 per cm; onetthread seems to be paired. Under this, layers of coarse Z threads, and Sply threads lying across, ?fringe.

C. Iron and M. Bronze

Deteriorated twill, Z,Z.

Grave 92

D. Pieces of pin

(a) Scrap 1.2 X 0.7 cm, replaced Z,Z, tabby, count 4/4 on 5 mm, and round pin (b) fragment 1.5 X 1.2 cm, Z,Z, deteriorated twill.

Grave 93

A. Iron buckle

Area clear replaced 2.0 X 1.5 cm, Z,Z, twill, 2/2, count 12/8 per cm.

Grave 96

B.

Two clear areas replaced, 2.8 X 1.2, 1.2 X 1.0 cm, Z,Z, medium fine twill, count 12/11 per cm, probably simple 2/2, but broken threads.

F. Cruciform brooch

On one knob, replaced area 1.0 X 0.6 cm, Z,Z, very open tabby, count 6/4 on 5 mm. Replaced areas of ?leather.

Grave 97

G. Buckle with bronze plate

Replaced fine area c.1.9 X 1.6 cm, Z,Z, twill 2/2, regular, count 8/7 on 5 mm (c.16/14).

Grave 106

E. Iron fragment

Lump replaced textile, deteriorated, twill next to iron, tabby above.

J. Bronze ring brooch

Replaced fragments on pin, 0.8 X 0.7 cm, Z,Z, twill, and similar on Iron object.K.

Grave 108

M. Annular brooch

Back, deteriorated fragment 1.3 X 0.9 cm, Z,Z, tabby, count 6/5 on 5 mm.

V, X. Iron girdle hangers

V, areas replaced, largest c.3.0 X 1.7 cm, Z,Z, open twill, regular 2/2, count 10/10 per cm; X, on loop and end, similar twill, count 12/10.

Grave 115H. Bronze buckle

Front, remains replaced Z,Z, twill. Back, area c.2.0 X 1.5 cm, replaced Z,Z, twill, twisted in fold, no count possible.

Grave 126. Handle (shield)

Strapping round handle probably of leather strips, not textile; lines running across look like strong Zply threads, but may be wires.

Grave 127F. Annular brooch

On ring, replaced patch, area c.1.6 X 1.7 cm, Z,Z, tabby, count 6/7 on 5 mm; detached fragment in folds of same.

Grave 129B. Annular brooch

Replaced textile in lump of several layers by pin head, above and under ring, 2.5 X 1.8 cm, Z,Z, twill, count 14/12 per cm.

Grave 134C. Iron pin

(a) Deteriorated lump, fine replaced Z,S, weave, unidentifiable;
(b) lump on pin, replaced, Z,Z, twill, coarse, similar on Ring E.
Leather from belt in Buckle.

Grave 140C. Iron piece largest

One side, replaced, (a) area 1.0 X 0.8 cm, Z,Z, tabby, count c.12/12 per cm. Other side, layers (b), 1.5 X 1.5 cm, Z,Z, twill 2/2, count c. 16/16 per cm, all diagonals the same way.

G. Pin

Back, replaced area 2.0 X 1.5 cm, Z,Z, twill, 2/2, count 5/4 on 5 mm.

J. Buckle

On pin, replacements all along, clear in two places Z, or possibly Z,Sply threads wound round.

Grave 146A. Round brooch

Replaced area c.2.0 X 2.0 cm, fine Z,Z, tabby in folds, count 16/8 on 5 mm/12 per cm, appearance suggests flax. Similar all along pin of pair, Brooch B.

Grave 153F. Small long brooch

Replaced lump, one side (a) c.2.0 X 1.5 cm, Z,Z, twill, 2/2, count 12/12 per cm. Other side (b) 2.0 X 2.5 cm, in folds, Z,Z, coarser probably tabby, count c.8/6 per cm.

Grave 154H.

Patches fibrous matter, replaced, 4.8 X 1.7 cm, which might be unspun pile threads, but are possibly very deteriorated wood fibres.

Grave 157. Buckle

Back, areas two textiles, replaced, (a) against bronze, Z,Z, twill (also on front), and under this, i.e. against skin, (b) Z,Z, tabby, area c.1.5 X 1.2 cm, count 16/16 per cm. Front, replaced twill (a) area 1.5 X 1.2, count 16/14 per cm, diagonals suggest probably broken diamond, (fig.).

Grave 173

B. Ring brooch

Replaced patch 1.3 X 1.0 cm, Z,Z, tabby, count 16/14 per cm, appearance suggests flax, one thread system irregular; lump with layers of same weave, and patches on Iron ring.G.

Grave 208

C. Annular brooch

Front, (a) replaced area 1.5 X 1.0 cm, in folds, Z,Z, tabby, count 16/14 per cm. Back, (b) area 2.5 X 1.5, where clear patterned tablet weave (fig.), twists all S, 11 per cm, wefts Z,Sply, 8-9 per cm; one scrap of edge loose, two twists, Z,S. Deteriorated fragments from same braid on back of Brooch.B.

D. Large cruciform brooch

All over back of cross-bar, area 6.0 X 5.0 cm, layers of two replaced textiles, (a) as on C, tabby, Z,Z, count 16/14; under this, nearer body, (c) Z,Z, twill, regular 2/2 as far as clear, surface "skinned", count c.12/12 per cm. Front, over arms, tabby (a); centre of cross-bar, fold of 2/2 twill, probably (c) but looks coarser, count 11/10 per cm. Similar twill, deteriorated, on Knife.G.

Grave 209

C. Annular brooch

Replaced Z,Z, textile, deteriorated.

B. Cruciform brooch

Back of pin-head, mass replaced deteriorated textile; against brooch, clear piece c.1.0 cm wide, 1.3 long, fragment tablet-weave, edge preserved one side, seven twists in chevrons, S,Z, regular 4-hole tablet weave, thread S spun; probably border to weave.

Grave 214

D. Iron buckle

Replaced area 3.0 X 1.5 cm, Z,Z, 2/2 twill, count 10/11; diagonals in opposite directions on two layers, i.e. chevron or broken diamond.

Grave 221

B. Annular brooch

Very deteriorated fragments, Z and S threads visible; one small replaced scrap, Z,Z, twill, count 6/5 on 5 mm.

C. Pin

Fragments replaced, probably same twill, Z,Z, count 7/5 on 5 mm, 2/2.

B. Girdle hanger

Fragments twill, best 1.2 X 1.2 cm, Z,Z, simple diagonal, count 12/11 per cm.

Grave 246

B. Knife

Replaced fragment, 1.2 X 0.9 cm, Z,S,twill, coarse threads, 2/2; count 5/5 on 5 mm.

Grave 249

D. Buckle

Two replaced textiles, (a) next to iron, best area 1.5 X 1.5 cm, Z,Z, twill, count 12/10 per cm, again chevron or broken diamond from different diagonals; over twill, area 2.5 X 1.5, (b) Z,Z, tabby, count 16/16 per cm, skinned over.

Replaced threads Z,Z, on K. Knife, L. Tweezers, and M. Key, probably from twill (a).

Grave 251

A. Annular brooch

Front, replaced area 0.9 X 0.7 cm, Z,Z, twill, 2/2, count 5/5 on 5 mm; also on pair, Brooch.F. Lumps of finer Z threads replaced.

Grave 253

G. Brooch, cruciform

Replaced areas, front, soft folds, Z,Z, tabby, also remains probably Z,Z, twill; back, mass of soft folds all over, Z,Z, tabby, count 16/16 per cm, ?probably veil tucked in under brooch.

J. Iron fragments

Replaced areas two textiles, (a) 1.5 X 2.0 cm, Z,Z, tabby, very coarse, count 6/5-6 per cm; (b) area 0.8 X 0.7 cm, Z,Z, finer tabby, count 6/7 on 5 mm; possibly that on brooch G, but does not look so soft. Scraps of (a) on Wristclasps.H.

Q. W. Stud and iron piece

Fragments replaced Z,Z, medium 2/2 twill.

Grave 255

B. Shield boss handle

Replaced area 3.5 X 2.5 cm, Z,Z, twill, coarse simple 2/2, count 7/7 per cm.

Grave 269

A. Buckle

Replaced areas, best 0.8 X 0.7 cm, Z,Z, twill, count estimated c.10/10 per cm, 2/2.

Grave 296

B. Spear handle

Replaced area, Z,S, twill, regular 2/2 diagonal, count 8/8 per cm.

Grave 312

E. Wristclasp

Front, small patch 0.9 X 0.6 cm, replaced Z,Z, twill, 2/2, count 7/6 on 5 mm; back, fragments probably from this, and leather fragments.

Grave 328

D. Bronze brooch

Front, replaced area 0.9 X 0.8 cm, Z,Z, twill 2/2, count 6/5 on 5 mm; back, deteriorated similar twill, and finer threads underneath.

On Brooch B, pair to D, fragments similar twill, and finer Z threads.

Grave 331

A. Annular brooch

Near pin, front and back both ends, replaced folds, Z,Z, twill 2/2, count c.5/4 on 5 mm.

Grave 334

B. Annular brooch

Replaced scrap, area 2.3 X 1.3 cm, Z,Z, twill 2/2, medium; lying across it, very deteriorated remains of fine tablet-woven band, thread Z spun, twists 4-hole, 2-3 on 2 mm, edge with one S, one Z twist, then rest S or possibly tabby-type tablet-weave; Z,Sply threads running across, possibly pattern as on Grave 208 C, but deteriorated.

Grave 337

D. Bronze plate

Mass of deteriorated textile, wool, Z spun, too crushed to tell weave.

E. Iron fragments

Replaced folds of textile round both pieces, largest area c.4.0 X 2.0 cm, fine Z,Z, twill, 2/2 with chevron or broken diamond, point of reverse not clear but diagonals go different directions, count 16/16 per cm, close and even.

M. Small long brooch

Deteriorated semi-replaced fragments from back, probably fine 4-hole tablet weave, regular S twists, c.9 on 5 mm, thread Z. Back of brooch

(Grave 337, M. con.)

head, replaced area very fine tabby, Z,Z, count c.24/7 on 5 mm, in best piece; other bits look more even, and it is possible this is part of a selvedge with the warps packed. Detached fragment with ?bone impression is very crushed, but seems to be tabby, fine Z one system, Sply the other, count 5/5 on 5 mm, but not very clear.

Grave 344

A. Knife

At tip, area replaced 2.5 X 1.0 cm, Z,Z, twill 2/2, count c.9/9 per cm.

Grave 346

C. Cruciform brooch

On back, across head over pin, ^(a) coarse Z,Z, twill, 2/2, count c.8/8 per cm; over this, in one place, Z,S, close tabby, much finer, count 5/6 on 5 mm. On front, mass replaced Z threads going across in several places, either a loose plait, or tangled fringe, longest threads clear 3.0 cm; also traces deteriorated Z,Z weave.

Grave 353

H. Buckle plate

Lumps of deteriorated textile against plate, with area c.2.0 X 1.8 cm, (a) fine replaced Z,Z, tabby, very regular, count 10/10 on 5 mm. Very deteriorated Z textile, coarser, and leather on bone and Buckle plate F. and fragment probably of (a) with Beads.M.

Q. Cruciform brooch

In folds all round one arm-piece, area 3.5 X 2.5 cm, replaced, fine regular Z,Z, tabby, count 9/8 on 5 mm, probably (a) on H. Underneath this, replaced, (b) fold of coarser Z,S, tabby, count c.6/6 on 5 mm. Layers from under brooch, deteriorated fine Z,Z, twill (c) crushed against brooch (see S), fragments of tabby (a) and one small replaced lump Z,S, (b).

S. Small long brooch

Deteriorated fragment (c) very even Z₂Z, twill 2/2, count 12/14 per cm, and pieces round pinhead, replaced. In among these coarse loosely spun Z thread, ?bead thread, possibly flax. Patches of (a) and (c) on back near pinhead of Small long brooch R.

Grave 358

B. Cruciform brooch

Across front of crossbar, (a) replaced area 2.0 X 1.2 cm, in folds, Z,Z, tabby, rather open, count 10/10 per cm; this lies slantwise on the lower part of the stem, and has obviously been pinned by the brooch. Over this (b) area 1.5 X 0.8 on front of cross, Z,Z, even twill, 2/2, count 15/14 per cm. Large deteriorated patch of twill probably this.

F. Buckle

On top, replaced area 2.0 X 1.0 cm clear (c) Z,Z, twill, 2/2, count 12-13/11 per cm; this looks definitely finer than (b).

H. Strap ends

Loose scraps (c) Z,Z, twill, 2/2, count 6/6 on 5 mm, two with traces of coloured threads from back of bronze. On one piece (d) tablet braid, very stained and deteriorated; on other deteriorated S and Z twists, blue, undyed and red-purple threads visible.

J. Strap ends

On back of both pieces, again deteriorated coloured twists, and on one a patch of twill (c). Detached scraps, braid, wefts Sply red-purple, twists 4-hole, probably two blue, two white, two blue, one blue/white, two blue/red-purple, possibly blue, white borders, red-purple and blue centre; the wefts look as if they come to the surface as brocading, (cf. Grave 208 B) but the whole is deteriorated.

M. Wristclasps

Over most of top surface twill (c) area 1.1 X 0.6 cm.

(Grave 358, con.)

R. Wristclasps (pair to M)

Front, deteriorated twill (c); back, remains of tablet-braid, cut end going across, remains of deteriorated twists, some S, some Z.

Q. Cruciform brooch

Fine Z threads behind pin.

Grave 359A. Square plated brooch

Front, (a) small traces fine replaced Z,Z, tabby, count c.8/8 on 5 mm. Back, round pin head and attachment, fragments, largest 3.5 X 1.8 cm, (b) Z,S, twill, 2/2 broken diamond, count 12/11 per cm (fig.).

Grave 389K. Iron object (Pl.)

On fragment, area 1.8 X 1.2 cm, replaced, also traces on both sides of pieces, all same weave, Z,Z, coarse; this appears to be very open tabby, count 6/5 threads per cm, with other threads visible underneath; these may be simply other layers showing through, but they may indicate that this is the under side of a weave with an extra weft system of pattern floats, Cf. Wakerley, Grave 85, shield boss, Mucking, Grave 939, spear.

Grave 393B. Girdle hanger; C. Loose fragments

Replaced threads on tip, 1.0 X 0.6, and scraps, one area clear, c.1.0 X 0.8 cm, (a) Z,Z, twill 2/2, count 6/6 on 5 mm, in several layers.

H. Iron buckle with bronze plate

Replaced area c.2.0 X 1.5 cm, (b) Z,Z, twill, 2/2, count 10/6 per cm, one system coarse; irregularities may be due to broken threads.

M. Bronze small long brooch

Back, on catch, partly replaced area 0.9 X 1.0 cm, (c) Z,Z, tabby, count c.12/12 per cm, probably undyed flax. H.M. Appleyard Fibre not animal; possibly bast fibre, in some fibres what appeared to be a very narrow lumen consistent with flax fibres.

Grave 396K. Annular brooch

Front, along pin, area c.2.0 X 1.8 cm, replaced, Z,Z, twill, 2/2 broken diamond, count 16/14 per cm (fig.), appearance suggests flax; fold in the middle. On back, leather. Replaced areas from same twill, deteriorated, on G. Annular brooch, L. Cruciform brooch.

Grave 397A. Small long brooch

Back, below pin, replaced area 4.8 X 1.7 cm, (a) Z,Z, coarse 2/2 twill, count 8/8 per cm, one thread finer than other.

B. Annular brooch

Front, replaced traces (b) Z,Z, tabby, fine. Back, area 2.0 X 2.2 cm, (c) replaced Z,Z, twill, 2/2, count 11/10 per cm, probably too fine for (a); deteriorated fragments same on F. Annular brooch.

E. Bead

Area c.1.5 X 1.5 cm, (c) close even Z,Z, 2/2 twill, count 12/10 per cm.

Grave 398B. Iron buckle

Crushed replaced textile, clear patches Z,S, 2/2 twill, Z count c.5-6 on 5 mm; leather from belt.

Grave 407C. Wristclasp

Top, patch 1.2 X 0.5 cm, replaced, probably Z,Z, close twill, see (a) on F. Among debris, fine plyed threads, ?tablet twists.

D. Bronze ring

Area 3.5 X 2.5 cm, (b) very deteriorated Z,S, twill, 2/2, count c.12/12 per cm, two layers or folds; grass or plant stems other side of ring.

F. Iron rods

Areas replaced (a) c.2.5 X 2.5 cm, close regular Z,Z, 2/2 twill, count 12/10 per cm. (c) Areas 3.0 X 2.3 and 1.2 X 1.1, (Pl.), Z,S, loosely woven twill; this seems to be a 3/3 twill, but is more probably a loose plait.

Grave 409A. Spearhead

On socket, replaced scraps (a) over area 7.7 X 5.0 cm, in fold, Z,Z, twill, regular 2/2, count 8/6 per cm, ?warp finer and harder spun than weft.

C. Iron buckle

Traces all over (b) one fragment clear 0.7 X 0.5 cm, Z,Z, twill, finer than (a).

Grave 410A. Iron buckle

On top, area replaced 1.7 X 0.8 cm (a) Z,Z, twill, distorted by pin, but diagonals indicate a broken diamond 2/2.

B. Bronze annular brooch

Back of ring, area several layers crushed replaced twill ?(a); on pieces of pin and attachment, (b) coarser Z,Z, textile, probably twill.

Grave 414A. Iron pin

On all pieces, replaced Z,S, twill 2/2, count c.12/12 per cm.

Grave 416B. Iron buckle and plate

On top, area 1.3 X 0.8 cm (a) replaced Z,Z, twill, 2/2, count c.12/12 per cm

D. Iron knife

Replaced on wood of sheath, (b) area 2.0 X 2.0 cm, coarse Z and S threads, confused, possibly from warp-face belt; underside insect pupae. On iron and leather, area 1.0 X 1.2 cm replaced of (a) Z,Z, 2/2 twill, count 12/12 per cm, in folds.

Deteriorated remains of replaced textiles too small or confused for more than spinning and occasionally weave to be identified came from the following objects:

Z,Z, spinning, probably twill

Graves 6.D; 40.B,C; 124.A; 133.E,F,J; 148.C,D,M; 218.C; 231.A; 242.B; 388.C; 392.K,N; 418.A.

Z,Z, spinning, probably tabby

Graves 100.C; 223.A; 342.A.

Z,Z, spinning, weave unidentifiable

Graves 37.B; 42.B; 44.E; 51.D; 90.B; 116.A; 212.F; 318.B; 333.D,G; 342.G,S; 356.A; 402.C.

Z,S, spinning

Graves 259.B (possibly tabby); 272.A.

The spinning from this cemetery is predominantly Z, as in most Anglo-Saxon textiles. Where mixed spinning is used it often indicates a more elaborate type of weave, or a coloured pattern, but the pieces of this type preserved here are very small.

The weaves follow the usual Anglo-Saxon range of tabby, twills (here all four-shed constructions), and tablet-weave borders or braids. In spite of the small areas surviving, it is clear that the standard of work here was good, and the majority of the pieces come from well-spun and well-woven textiles.

Twills

Of the twill weaves preserved, at least forty-five examples have Z spinning in both systems, and eleven other probable pieces have been noted (p.), while only seven have mixed spinning (commonly Z warp and S weft); all are four-shed (2/2) constructions. Eight twills show reverses in one or both thread systems, i.e. chevron or diamond patterns. Where sufficient has survived to be drawn (fig. a,b) the pattern is of the usual Anglo-Saxon broken diamond or lozenge weave (1), a construction particularly suited to the warp-weighted loom (2). Seven of the patterned twills are Z spun, and most of the Z,S fragments are too small to tell if they came from similar patterns or simple diagonal twills. Mixed spinning, or differently coloured threads in warp and weft, were both devices used to throw up the diamond pattern.

Tabby weaves

Twenty-four examples of tabby weave (and three other probables) have been preserved, of which four have mixed spinning. Tabbies have sometimes been found with the S and Z threads grouped in one or both systems to produce stripes or checks, the spinning directions probably indicating different colours (3), but insufficient is preserved in all four cases to show if this was done here. The quality of spinning and count in about seven Z spun pieces suggest that these, like the one example in which fibre could be identified (Grave 393), were probably of flax. In most cases these came from brooches, and would either have been from an undergarment, or from headveils of which the folds may have been tucked round the neck and pinned for burial; in two cases these fabrics lie lower than the neck, on a wrist-clasp in Grave 25, and on a buckle as well as the brooches in Grave 353. It is possible that the veil hung down to the waist; evidence from other cemeteries suggests that any shrouding, at least in men's burials, took the form of a heavy cloak or coverlet spread over the whole contents of the grave.

A piece of one of these flax fragments (Grave 337.M.) shows a

very high count in one system, 24/7 threads on 5 mm, most probably the packed warp threads of a selvedge, though no edge loops are preserved.

One tiny fragment (Grave 369) is of a very open coarse tabby, in which threads are visible passing beneath; this suggests a pattern or pile weave, though the threads may simply be those of a second layer of fabric lying beneath (4).

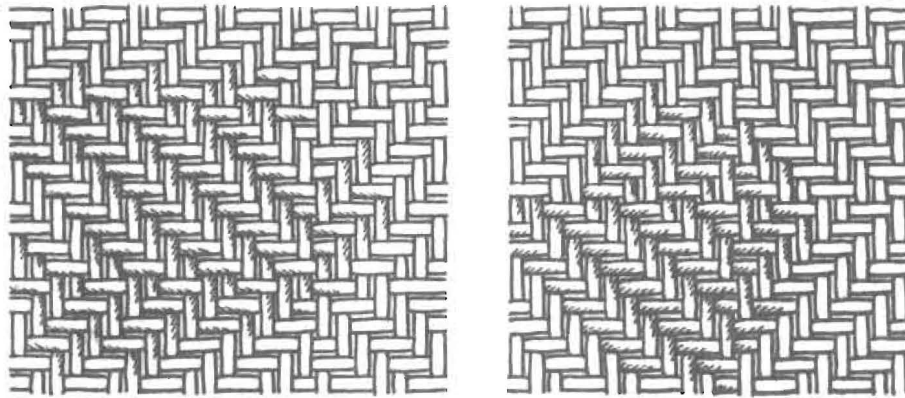
Tablet-weaves

In five graves (Graves 80.J, 208.B,C, 209.B, 334.B, 337.M) remains of fine tablet-weaves are preserved on brooches, indicating braids used as decoration to the neckline of the garment they fastened; others come from wrist-clasps (Grave 358), similar braids used as cuffs. These bands were obviously all highly decorative; one (fig.) has remains of a brocaded pattern (5), and in the wrist-clasp braids colours are still visible, blue, red-purple and undyed (or yellow) twists; the pattern here was made by the order of threading the different colours in the tablets, and the method by which these were turned to raise the necessary colours needed for the pattern to the surface of the braid - as far as can be seen here the borders may have been blue and undyed, while the centre pattern starts with two tablets each threaded with two blue and two red-purple yarns.

Tablet braids seem to be a favourite form of textile decoration on Anglo-Saxon garments (6), at the neck and wrists of women's dresses, as borders to cloaks, as belts or straps; examples have been recorded in various types of tablet-weave, with texture and colour patterns and surface brocading in fabric or metal threads. It seems likely that even fragments that now appear undecorated were patterned, or at any rate highly coloured.

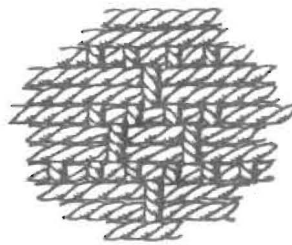
Leather

On one wrist-clasp (Grave 312) were leather fragments, suggesting that in this grave, as at Holywell, Cambridge, the wrists of the woman's dress were edged not with a braid but with soft leather (7). Leather on the back of a cruciform brooch in Grave 396 might suggest another leather edging to a garment. There were leather belt remains in Graves 353 and 398, and probable strips of leather wound round the shield-grips in Graves 1 and 126.



(a)

(b)



Morningthorpe

Fig. . (a) Grave 157, broken diamond twill, Z,Z spinning

(b) Grave 359.A, broken diamond twill, Z,S spinning

The areas shaded are those preserved

(c) Grave 208.C. Tablet weave with brocading.

Notes

- 1 G.M.Crowfoot "Textiles of the Saxon period in the Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology", Proc.Camb.Ant.Soc.XLIV,1951,30-32; E.Crowfoot in H.E.R.Davidson & L.Webster, "The Anglo-Saxon burial at Coombe, Kent", Med.Arch. XI,1967,37-39; E.Crowfoot in P.J.Tester, "Excavations at Fordcroft, Orpington", Arch.Cant. LXXXIV,1969,50-53; Rupert Bruce-Mitford, The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial I, 1975, 445,447, SH 1,9,12; and numerous unpublished fragments.
- 2 Marta Hoffmann, The warp-weighted loom, 1964, 187 ff.
- 3 Mucking, Essex, Graves 448,975; Worthy Park, Hants, Grave 75; Finglesham, Kent, Graves 8, 169.
- 4 Mucking, spearhead, Grave 939; Wakerley, shield boss, Grave 85; Bergh Apton, Norfolk, Grave 50.
- 5 Cf.Mucking, Graves 249, 814, and probably 767.
- 6 G.M.Crowfoot, op.cit. 26-30; G.M.Crowfoot, "Anglo-Saxon tablet-weaving" Ant.Journ. XXXII,1952,189ff; G.M.Crowfoot in F.H.Thompson, "Anglo-Saxon sites in Lincolnshire", Ant.Journ. XXXVI,1956,188-89; A.S.Henshall, "Textiles on the back of a brooch from Blewburton Hill, Berks", Berks.Arch.Journ.LVII,1959,17-21; E.Crowfoot in Sonia E.Chadwick, "The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Finglesham, Kent", Med.Arch.II,1958,36-37; E.Crowfoot in Davidson & Webster 1967,37-38.
- 7 T.C.Lethbridge, Recent Excavations in Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries in in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, Cambridge, 1931,14,42, Graves 17,20,98.