

Three Early Saxon Graves from Dorchester, Oxon.

By JOAN R. KIRK and E. T. LEEDS

THE environs of the modern village of Dorchester, which lies about eight miles south of Oxford at the confluence of the rivers Thame and Thames, have yielded three important inhumation-burials, which, from their accompanying grave-goods, clearly belong to the late fourth or earliest fifth century A.D., and represent some of the earliest Germanic people to come to this country at the end of the Roman occupation.

None of these graves is a new discovery. The first two have, since they came to light in 1874, been repeatedly cited as providing some of the earliest material evidence for the presence of the Saxons in this country, but no account with a complete catalogue of the relics preserved has ever been published. A fresh survey has suggested that such a catalogue is required, if they are to be properly understood and their interest fully appreciated, the more so as the new survey has thrown some light on the purpose of the contents of the principal grave (Grave I). These hitherto have appeared to comprise a mass of *disjecta membra* for which no obvious explanation had been offered.

The first two graves (Ashmolean Museum, 1886. 1448) from which this archaeological material came, according to information given to E.T.L. in December 1914 by Mr. A. H. Cocks of Yewdon, near Henley,¹ were found in the top of the Dyke Hill, which, according to the Rev. W. C. MacFarlane, vicar of Dorchester, was 'the end barrow nearest the Thame stream at the Dyke Hills'. They came to light in the course of levelling the eastern end of the Dyke Hills, and the objects found passed into the possession of the Department of Comparative Anatomy, whence they were transferred to the Ashmolean in 1886. They were not the only burials discovered there, since, among the Rolleston MSS. in the Department of Comparative Anatomy are 'Notes on the A. H. Cocks Collection from Dorchester Dykes', dated between 4 March and 24 April 1871, and mentioning other inhumations. Two of these were found at depths of 4 and 8 ft. in gravel-silt, the second of them in a sitting posture—apparently a Bronze Age burial like those from Cassington and Eynsham. All others (number not stated) were found in 'vegetable soil' and 'very shallow'.

¹ Mr. Cocks was an undergraduate at the date of the demolition, and not only was actively concerned in the recovery of the relics, but was also instrumental in securing the remainder of the dykes from destruction.

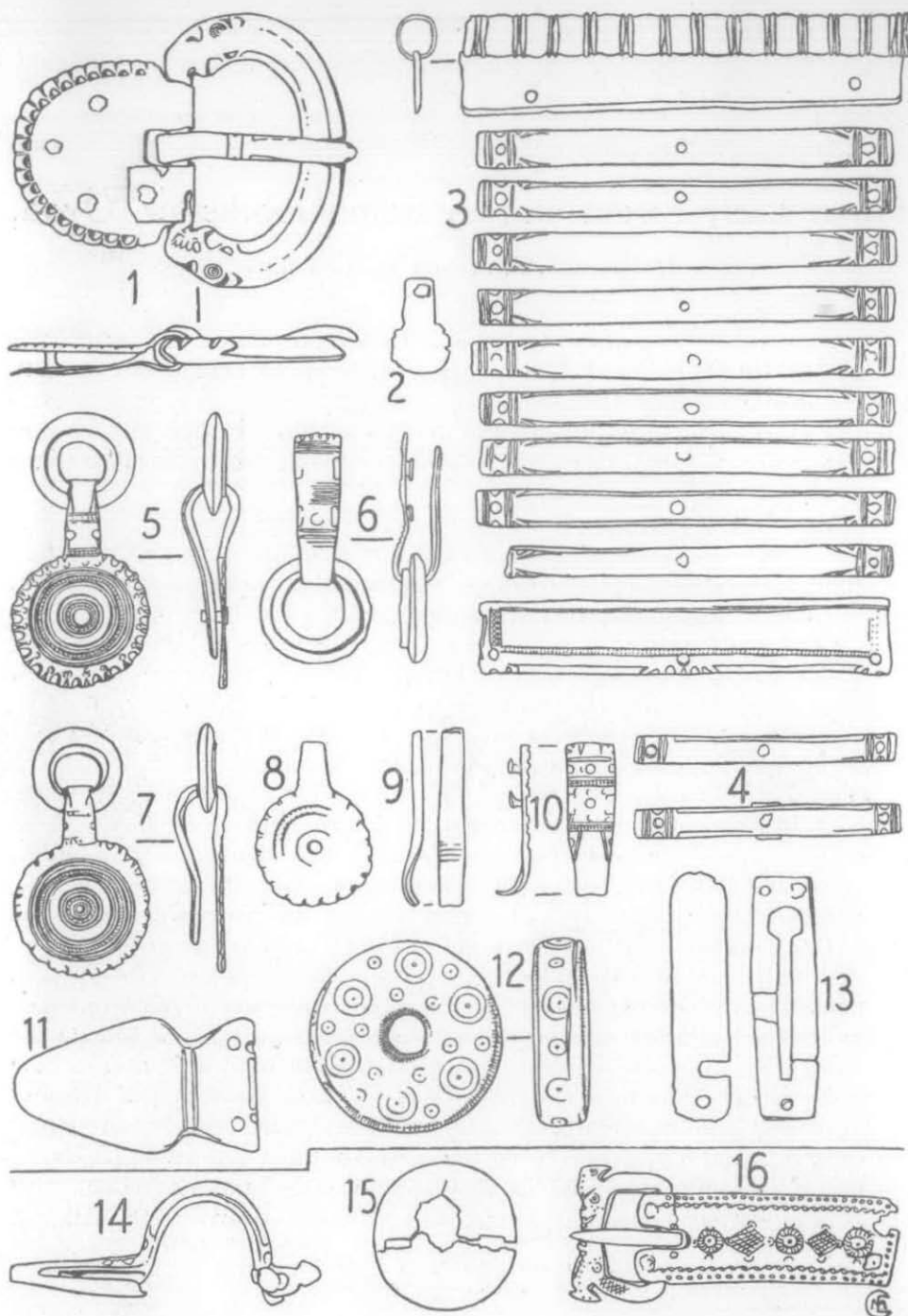


FIG. 27
DORCHESTER, OXON.
1-13, objects from Grave I, (pp. 65 ff., 70 ff.)
14-16, brooches and buckle from Grave II (pp. 67 ff., 72 f.)
Scale : $\frac{1}{2}$

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Except for the presence of coffin-nails with a 'powerful man' in the 4 ft. deep burial, no relics were available for determining the date.

The third grave dealt with in the present article was found in the Minchin recreation ground, at the northern end of the village, immediately east of the main road to Oxford. Its furniture was originally acquired for the Pitt Rivers Museum in 1914, whence the relics were transferred by exchange to the Ashmolean Museum in 1940.

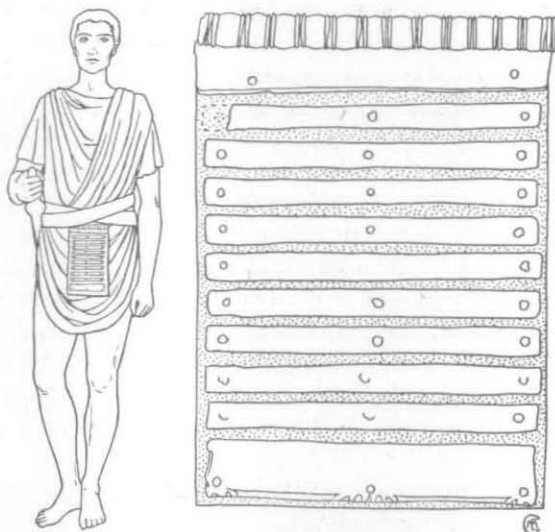


FIG. 28
DORCHESTER, OXON.

Suggested reconstruction of apron from Grave I (p. 71)

THE CONTENTS OF THE GRAVES

GRAVE I

The Rolleston notes dated 29.3.74 supply particulars of this grave. Orientated 'SSE.-NNW., head at SE. end, knees apparently bent; skeleton of enormous size', estimated in a later note, from a tibia 16 in. long, as 6 ft. The relics recovered from the grave were:

(a) *Buckle*, bronze, L. $2\frac{8}{16}$ in., W. $2\frac{3}{16}$ in. 'found by shoulder' (PL. IV, A, FIG. 27,1)²; the ring, which shows considerable signs of wear, is D-shaped, terminating in heads of animals with open jaws; the tab is semicircular, with

² This and all the other drawings which illustrate this article are by Mrs. M. E. Cox of the Ashmolean Museum: the photographs were taken in the Ashmolean Museum studio.

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stamped circles and incised lines round the edge, and three rivets still in position; it has been broken and mended in antiquity, a new piece having been added between the tongue and the right end of the ring. On the tongue are two horizontal incised lines.

(b) *Strap-tag*, bronze, L. 2 in., W. $1\frac{1}{10}$ in. (PL. IV, A, FIG. 27, 11); the butt is sub-triangular, with two notches on the top edge, which is slightly bevelled, and has two rivets still in position; the butt is divided by two incised lines from the pear-shaped end.

(c) *Three disk-ended attachments*, bronze, 'found by the thighs' (PL. IV, A, FIG. 27, 5-10^{2a}), each consisting of: (i) a central ring, quoit-shaped, with a lip at the inner edge on one side, D. $\frac{9}{10}$ in., $\frac{8}{10}$ in. and $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (ii) a flat piece of bronze looped round the ring; only two of these remain; the front of one of them is decorated with groups of incised lines, between which the edges are bevelled; the end is notched; the front of the other is decorated with four notches at the edge, followed by one single and two sets of double transverse lines. There are two rivets attached to the underside of the front, which do not pass through the back:³ L. $1\frac{2}{10}$ in., $1\frac{5}{10}$ in. (iii) a flat disk, decorated with a scalloped edge and concentric circles, two of which are corded. Each had had a loop, which passed through the ring (i), doubled back and was attached to the disk by a rivet, which was driven through the centre. The fronts of the loops are decorated with two corded horizontal lines and two diagonal lines. The smallest disk is very much worn, and has lost most of its loop. D. 1 in., $1\frac{1}{10}$ in., $1\frac{1}{10}$ in.

(d) *Garniture of a sporran-like equipment*, bronze, 'found among the ribs', (PL. IV, A, FIG. 27, 3), and consisting of:

- (i) a flat bar attached to a ribbed tube; the bar has a rivet-hole at each end. L. $3\frac{7}{10}$ in., W. of bar $\frac{3}{10}$ in., D. of tube $\frac{3}{10}$ in.
- (ii) nine bars of thin, flat bronze, L. $3\frac{5}{10}$ in., W. $\frac{3}{10}$ in.; each has a rivet at either end, and another in the centre; on either side of the end rivets are two horizontal incised lines, and inside the inner of these are two diagonal ones. One of the bars is broken at one end and has lost its central rivet, and a third seems never to have had a central rivet.
- (iii) a bar of flat bronze, L. $3\frac{4}{10}$ in., W. $\frac{6}{10}$ in.; along the top is a single incised line, and round the other three sides are two dotted lines; there are three rivet-holes at the bottom, one rivet still remaining, The bottom edge is slightly bevelled, and has been notched beneath

^{2a} In the drawing on FIG. 27 nos. 6 and 8 go together to form the right-hand example on PL. IV, A, nos. 5, 9 and 10 form the centre example, and no. 7 is the left-hand one.

³ The figure in Åberg, fig. 13, after Salin in *Månadsblad*, 1894, p. 13, is incorrect in suggesting that the rivets pierced the hinder half of the loop.

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each rivet-hole, the notches beneath the central hole being spread out in a fan-like motif.

For a suggested reconstruction of the object to which these pieces belonged see FIG. 28 and p. 71 below.

(e) *Two bars* of exactly similar design and decoration to those described under (d) (ii) above, but only $2\frac{2}{10}$ in. long and $\frac{2}{10}$ in. wide (PL. IV, A, FIG. 27, 4); each has lost one end rivet, and the central rivet of one still has a square piece of bronze attached to the end.

(f) *Disk or bead*, bone, D. $1\frac{6}{10}$ in., T. $\frac{4}{10}$ in. (PL. IV, A, FIG. 27, 12), decorated on top with six double-ringed bull's-eyes circles alternating with six pairs of small single-ring bull's eyes, and round the edge with six double-ringed alternating with six single-ringed.

(g) *Double plate of thin bronze*, L. 2 in., W. $\frac{5}{10}$ in., originally riveted together at one end, so as to swivel (PL. IV, A, FIG. 27, 13); the upper plate is oblong, rounded at the free end, and with a rectangular notch $\frac{3}{20}$ in. wide, $\frac{5}{10}$ in. long cut into the edge towards the riveted end; the lower plate is rectangular, with two rivet-holes at the free end (one rivet remaining); down the centre is a narrow slit $\frac{1}{10}$ in. wide, widening out into a circle $\frac{3}{10}$ in. in diameter at the free end. It appears that some object could have been inserted in this circular hole, slid down the slit, and clipped firm by the notch in the upper plate. On a diminutive scale the whole object closely resembles an army buttonstick.

(h) *Thin plate*, bronze, L. $\frac{8}{10}$ in., circular at one end D. $\frac{9}{20}$ in., and rectangular at the other, with a rivet at the rectangular end (PL. IV, A, FIG. 27, 2).

From notes in the Rolleston MS. the grave seems also to have contained weapons. The Rev. W. C. Macfarlane, in a letter dated 23 March 1874, writes 'several pieces of iron, I believe, were thrown into the river', and Rolleston himself lists 'pieces of iron' and adds 'I should ascribe to the man an iron knife $5\frac{7}{10}$ in. long.

GRAVE II

'Skeleton of moderate size', of 'a woman, the skull showing her to have been big.' The recorded contents of the grave are:

(a) *Brooch*, bronze, L. $2\frac{6}{10}$ in., of early cruciform type, with faceted foot with no animal decoration (PL. IV, B, FIG. 27, 14); a ridge running down the centre of the bow, a knob at the back of the head and a spring for the pin.

(b) *Back-plate*, bronze, of an applied brooch (Roeder's *komponierte Fibel*, cf. those found in Grave III), D. $1\frac{2}{10}$ in. (PL. IV, B, FIG. 27, 15), with two rectangular slots for insertion of the catch-plate and spring; on the upper side can be seen traces of the cement with which the decorative plate was originally fixed.

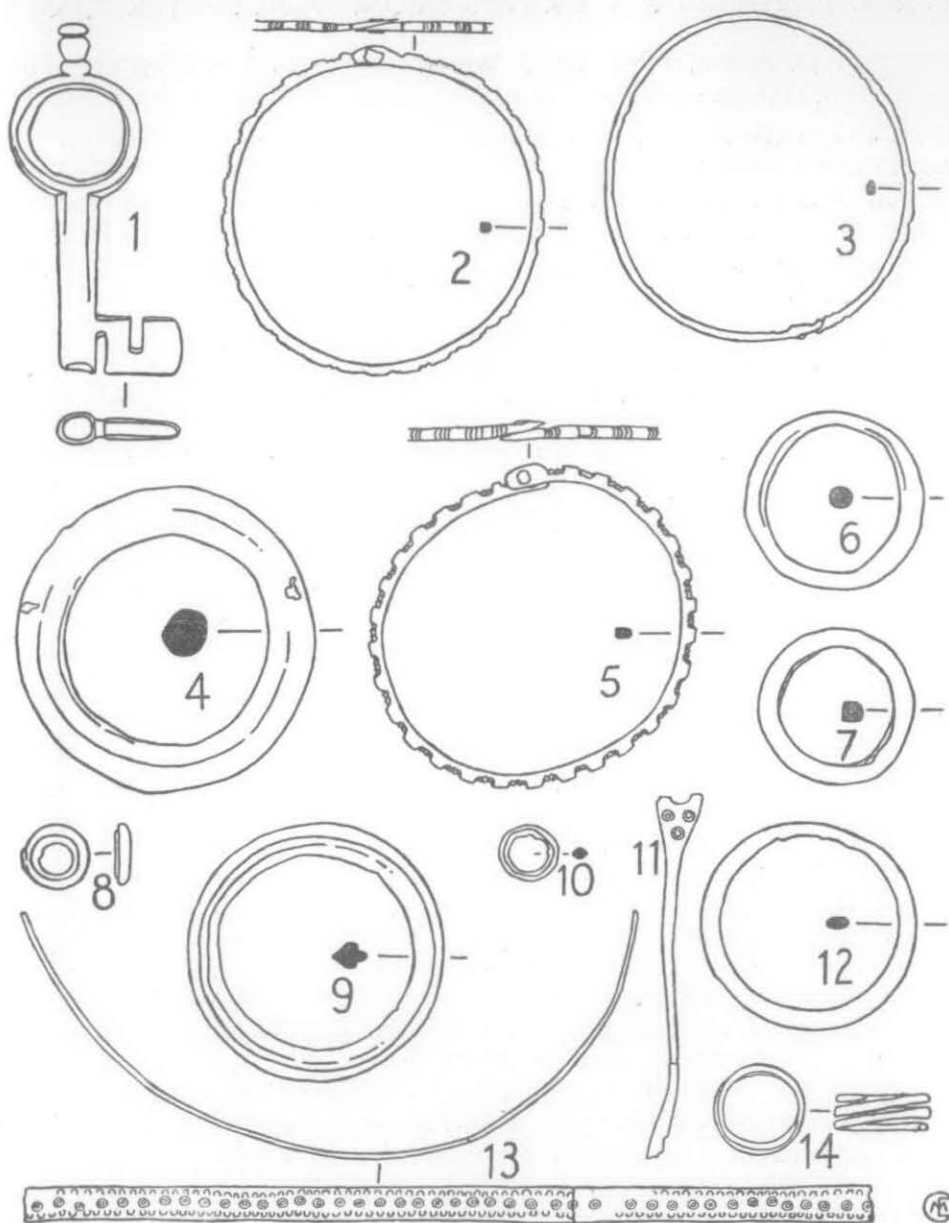


FIG. 29
DORCHESTER, OXON.
Objects from Grave III (p. 69 f.)
Scale : 1/32

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(c) *Buckle*, bronze, L. $2\frac{7}{10}$ in., W. of plate $\frac{7}{10}$ in. (PL. IV, B, FIG. 27, 16) ; the ring is D-shaped and has, at the top, two stylized animal heads confronting each other with open jaws, and two projecting horse *protomi* facing outwards. The plate is rectangular and composed of two thin plates of bronze with a deep notch at the upper end to take the tongue, the two shoulders thus formed being riveted together to hold the ring. One has been broken and repaired in antiquity. At the other end are two rivets. The upper plate is decorated with a border of dots, inside which, down the two long sides, is a running scroll; down the centre of the plate are three flaming circles alternating with two hatched lozenges.

GRAVE III

(a) *Pair of brooches*, bronze, of applied type, D. $1\frac{1}{2}\frac{3}{10}$ in. (PL. V, B, FIG. 30, 1 and 3) ; one has pin and catch complete, except for half the spring, the other has only the spring-holder remaining. On the latter the applied disk is very nearly complete, on the former nearly half is missing. In both cases the outer edge has disappeared. The decoration on the applied disk consists of two rings of dots, within which is a whirligig design of five arms, each ending in a ball and having an open triangle at the top ; in the centre of the whirligig is a plain circle, surrounding a circle of dots within which is a central boss with a spot in the middle.

(b) *Back-plate*, bronze, of a similar brooch, D. $1\frac{4}{10}$ in. (PL., V, B, FIG. 30, 2) ; the catch is missing, but the holder for the hinged pin remains ; through the centre is a small hole.

(c) *Pair of bracelets*, bronze, D. $2\frac{6}{10}$ in., with overlapping ends fastened by a loop and stud (PL. V, A, FIG. 29, 2 and 5). The outer edges are divided into square sections by groups of three incised, horizontal lines.

(d) *Bracelet*, bronze, D. $2\frac{4}{10}$ in., plain, thin wire, in a complete ring (PL. V, A, FIG. 29, 3.)

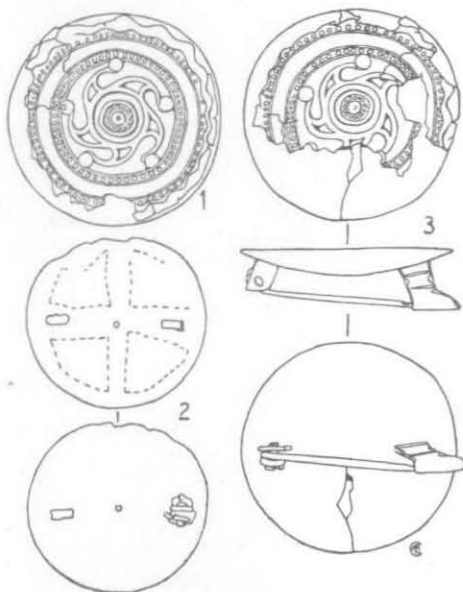


FIG. 30

DORCHESTER, OXON.

Applied brooches from Grave III (pp. 69, 73 f.)

Scale : $\frac{1}{2}$

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(e) *Key*, bronze, L. $2\frac{7}{10}$ in., for lever lock (PL. V, A, FIG. 29, 1); at the top of the shank is a large ring, D. $1\frac{1}{10}$ in., surmounted by a moulded knob.

(f) *Seven rings*, bronze, D. varying from $2\frac{7}{20}$ in. to $\frac{5}{10}$ in. (PL. V, A, FIG. 29, nos. 4, 6-10, 12); the largest circular in section, the next lozenge-shaped with a ridge on each side (cf. the rings on the attachments, no. (c) (i) in Grave I); the smallest ring but one is more similar to those from Grave I in that it only has the ridge on one side. The remaining rings are lozenge-shaped or flattened in section.

(g) *Fragment of pricker*, bronze, L. $2\frac{17}{20}$ in., with splayed and perforated head broken off at the perforation (PL. V, A, FIG. 29, 11); the point is also broken. Beneath the perforation are three stamped bull's-eye circlets.

(h) *Finger-ring*, bronze, D. $\frac{7}{10}$ in., flat band in three spiral coils, the ends being pointed (PL. V, A, FIG. 29, 14).

(i) *Fragment of flat band*, bronze, L. $6\frac{8}{10}$ in., curved, and decorated with a succession of bull's-eye circlets between borders of small crescents (PL. V, A, FIG. 29, 13).

(j) *Coin of Valens* (A.D. 364-378). Rev. *Securitas Reipublicae* (PL. V, A). Very worn.

NOTES ON THE GRAVE-GOODS AND COMPARISONS WITH OTHER FINDS

GRAVE I

(a) Parallels to the *bronze buckle* are figured by Pilloy, *Cimetières dans l'Aisne*, I, pl. v, from Abbeville, and II, col^d. pl. 2, from Vermand. More common, possibly rather later, are buckles with rectangular plates, which also have hoops with confronted lion-heads.

(b) *Strap-tag*, cp. Vermand, Pilloy, II, col^d. pl. 3; Belleray, Meuse, *ibid.*, I, 244 fig. Examples have also been noted from Éprave, Samson, Seraing (Belgium), and in a longer form from Borgstedt and Quelhorn (N. Germany). English parallels come from Milton-next-Sittingbourne, Kent (Maidstone Museum) and Croydon, Surrey (*V.C.H. Surrey*, I, pl. facing p. 257, fig. 7).

(c) *Disk-attachments*, cp. Vermand, Pilloy, II, 235, pl. 16, 5a, 6a, 7a and 26b (three examples as at Dorchester); Belleray, *ibid.*, I, 243, fig. III, pl. IV, 11. They are known from Furfooz (J. A. E. Nenquin, *La Nécropole de Furfooz*, Bruges, 1953, pl. XI), Herstal, Spontin and Tongres (Belgium); in N. Germany from Ritzbüttel, Perlberg, and also Galgenberg near Nesse (Fr. Roeder, *Neue Funde auf Kontinental-sächsischen Friedhöfen der Völkerwanderungszeit* (Anglia, Bd. 57), Taf. VI, 4, from burial 8 with cremation). In this country they have been found at Richborough, Kent (Bushe Fox, *Richborough*, IV, pl. XXXII, 7a, pl. LI,

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187-8), and Croydon, Surrey (*V.C.H. Surrey*, I, pl. facing p. 257, fig. 9). Their purpose is discussed by G. Baldwin Brown, *Arts in Early England*, IV, 558-9, where he associates them with the disk-armoured apron worn by Roman soldiers, well represented on stelae (e.g. Lindenschmit, *Alterthümer u.h. Vorzeit*, I, pt. x, pl. 5). He rightly, however, observes that the disks figured on the aprons (German *Riemenschurzen*) are always portrayed in large numbers. In fact they are no more than plain or decorated disk-headed rivets, affixed to a series of pendent straps (see pieces of straps so fortified from Vermand (Pilloy, *op. cit.*, II, pl. 16, 9a, 23b, and 24b)), the straps being finished off by a set of pendent ornaments of various forms.⁴ The disk-attachments here under consideration are apparently found singly, or at most in three examples as at Dorchester and at Vermand, and could not, as Pilloy maintained, be directly connected with the apron. Their purpose can be more fittingly described after discussion of the next item, (d).

(d) *Bronze oblong riveted plates*. It has already been noted that all these are said to have been found among the ribs of the skeleton, and there can be little doubt that they constitute the fortifying components of an apron. Eleven of them are identical in length, and, when placed together with $\frac{1}{16}$ in. space between them to allow for flexibility of the leather to which they were riveted, they formed a bronze-armoured apron or sporran, approximately 5 in. long (FIG. 28). The term sporran is preferable because the plates thus arranged, that is transversely, instead of vertically, as in the normal *Riemenschurz* of the monuments, would necessarily be more rigid than the pendent straps of the other type. The irregularity of the rivets suggests that the bars were attached to a leather apron, rather than to three separate, vertical leather straps. We have found no parallel to the proposed reconstruction, which seems the only possible explanation of the material. The two short, narrower plates can easily be brought into the make-up of such an equipment, and are here left unexplained, though their form and decoration agrees with that of the longer plates. Parallels to the upper bar with its ribbed cylindrical element are numerous. Pilloy (*op. cit.*, I, 240) writes of their occurrence at Samson 'en assez grand quantité'. On those found at Vermand (*op. cit.*, II, pl. 16, 1a, 2a, 21b and 22b) Pilloy remarks 'Vermand a donné quatre de ces plaques . . . qui se trouvaient par paires sur le même sujet'. In that case the *Riemenschurz* of the monuments could be worn both at front and back, though perhaps more normally only in front, since one cylinder-plate seems to be usual. Several are known also from Furfooz, Tongres and other sites. We have noted one from Ritzebüttel (Kiel Mus.) and in this country from Milton-next-Sitting-

⁴ It may be suggested that such were the objects illustrated in *Richborough*, II, pl. XXI, 47-9, and IV, pl. LVI, 263.

bourne (Maidstone Mus.), and Richborough (C. Roach Smith, *Antiquities of Reculver*, pl. v, 2).

Here we can return to the disk-attachments, examples of which have also been found at Richborough. There can hardly be any doubt that they were used on baldrics or shoulder-straps, as portrayed, usually singly, on the stelae. That more than one could be necessary seems certain. No belt unsupported by shoulder-straps could have borne the weight of sword, dagger and apron; a third might be required to carry a shield.

(e) *Bone bead*. Rolleston, as appears from his notes, evidently insisted that it was a spindle-whirl and should be assigned to Grave II; indeed he so lists it. But in the face of the testimony, not only of the vicar of Dorchester, but of the men working on the site, it certainly came from Grave I. It must thus have served as a toggle for some purpose or other or as a sword-knot, as seems to have been the purpose of such large beads in Anglo-Saxon graves, e.g. W. M. Wylie, *Fairford Graves*, pl. iv.

For the other objects figured no parallels appear to be available. The little object (f) may have been affixed to the belt or even to a baldric (*balteus*) to secure some small item of equipment, like a whistle, which it was desirable to have easily detachable.

GRAVE II

(a) *Fibula*. This specimen has been widely recognized as the earliest of its class so far found in England. The pin-catch extending the whole length of the foot is compared by Åberg with that from Beetgum, Friesland (*Anglo-Saxons in England*, fig. 43), but in fact it represents an earlier stage, since it bears no trace, as does the Beetgum brooch, of any development of the animal-head terminal, which later becomes a most marked feature. The date assigned to it lies in the last quarter of the fourth century or around 400 (Salin, *Månadsblad*, 1894, p. 4; Shetelig, *Cruciform Brooches of Norway*, 99; Åberg, *op. cit.*, 13). The brooch stands in fact almost apart from Åberg's Group I. Its closest kin are those from Kempston, Beds. (*Antiq. Journ.*, xiii, 240, pl. xxxv), one from Grave 122 at Abingdon, Berks. (*Oxoniensia*, vii, 102, pl. viii, A; found after the main exploration), and one from Grave 17 at Nassington, Northants. (*Antiq. Journ.*, xxiv, 107 and 117, pl. xxv, a). The fibula is purely a north-Germanic type.

(b) For the *back-plate of the composite brooch*, see remarks on the material from Grave III.

(c) *Buckle*. The nearest parallel known from this country is the specimen found at Stanwick, Yorks. N.R. (*B.M. Anglo-Saxon Guide*, fig. 108; Leeds, *Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology*, 19, fig. 6). The Stanwick buckle even more than the Dorchester piece declares its origin in the pair of confronted birds, as

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represented on many Christian sarcophagi, etc., of the latest Roman days in Gaul. The style, as has been shown, is well represented in other ways in cemeteries of north-eastern France and Belgium. That this type of buckle had a widish vogue in Britain is indicated by the find-spots of other examples with similar hoops, but lacking the plate. Such are known from Castor, Northants. (Artis collection, Peterborough Mus.), Bifrons, Kent (Baldwin Brown, III, pl. LXX, 6; Leeds, *op. cit.*, pl. XIII), and from a grave at Alveston, Warwicks. The two latter can certainly be regarded as collected from natives or native sites by Anglo-Saxon invaders.

GRAVE III

The pair of composite brooches belong—as do the backplate from this grave and another from Grave II, to a type which is to be found coming into fashion in the later days of the Western Empire, and as shown by Roeder (*Die sächsische Schalenfibel der Völkerwanderungszeit*, Göttinger Beiträge zur deutschen Kulturgeschichte, 1927, p. 39) was widely accepted by the north German tribes. The form is unquestionably the forerunner of the Anglo-Saxon 'applied' brooch, in which protection was given to the fragile embossed disk by the addition of a vertical rim brazed on to the back-plate, a development apparently unknown in north Germany.

There the normal decorative design is the five-fold spiral, common on later English saucer-brooches, the north German prototype of which is known from Caister by Norwich (Leeds, *op. cit.*, 39, pl. XI, b). The 'komponierte Fibel' of north Germany is possibly represented also in England by the brooch with spiral decoration from grave 106 at Abingdon, where it was associated with a damaged *tutulus*-brooch, also ornamented with spiral-coils, probably of earlier date than previously suggested.

The design employed on the Dorchester pair is again five-fold in character, but seems to be in no way related to the spiral. Roeder (*op. cit.*, 8, pl. II, 1) cites at the head of his remarks on this type a brooch from Friesland (PL. IV, c), found in a terp at Jouswier, near Dokkum (P. C. J. A. Boeles, *Friesland tot de elfde Eeuw*, 174, pl. XXXII, 11). Roeder was almost at a loss to interpret the decorative design, which, curiously, he compared to that of the disk-attachments described under Grave I. Actually close examination of Boeles's and Roeder's figures places beyond cavil its identity with that on the Dorchester pair. The origin of the design is not evident, but in it we may possibly see the inspiration which, when the passion for zoomorphic ornament had obtained a firm hold on north Germanic art, produced that essentially Anglo-Saxon design of a whirl of legs, which moreover frequently appears in a five-fold arrangement.

Apart from these, the back-plate of a third composite brooch, possibly the finger-ring and the pricker, all the remaining relics from the grave are of Roman origin. The heavier rings are never normally associated with Anglo-Saxon grave-furniture. The same applies to the bracelets with notched edges. They have been found in Saxon graves ; as at Chatham Lines.

The brooches from Grave III alone are insufficient to establish a Friesian origin for the occupants of the graves. The foreign (non-Roman) material can derive from any point between the Elbe and the Zuider Zee. At the same time there are certain phenomena in the archaeology of Anglo-Saxondom that offer a strong presumption in favour of a considerable part of the early settlers having come from north Holland rather than from farther east, e.g. the close affinity between much of the Anglo-Saxon pottery in Kent with that from Dutch sites.

CONCLUSIONS

In the matter of the date of these graves and the origin of their occupants, the above comparisons render self-evident the existence of a very perceptible gap between the contents of these three burials and the general mass of material normally assigned to the early invasion settlements. On the one hand we have objects markedly Romanized in character, some of which, like the sporran-top, have been frequently found in north-western Europe in a Germanic association, or objects purely Roman producing the impression that they had been collected by the deceased in his or her lifetime (Grave III), or a predominance of Germanic along with a slighter sub-Germanic element (Grave II). There is nothing that conforms to the pattern of the true invasion period ; there is no typical Anglo-Saxon cemetery material, as at Long Wittenham or Abingdon. The non-appearance of such a cemetery at Dorchester is one of the puzzles of upper Thames archaeology. These burials are reminiscent of what have been termed ' fighting ' burials in Wiltshire and elsewhere, or, to take an example nearer home, like those in Stanton Harcourt barrow (*Oxoniensia*, x, 33 ff.), where an ancient tumulus was selected as a pagan Saxon graveyard. In all these persists the tradition of the *beorh* picture in the Beowulf poem. It seems to have been the early practice adopted in the case of individuals or quite small groups as distinct from the communal practice of the settlement period. For the pioneers, whether singly or in small numbers, cremation would be excluded. Precautionary reasons against announcing their presence would deny them the blaze of a funerary pyre.

The Dorchester graves are, however, not conditioned by any such precautions, since they can with full confidence be assigned to the pre-settlement

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times, by which date Roman cremation was a dead letter. We have thus to seek another explanation. During the decline of Roman power in the west—and indeed for long before that—natives living close to the *limes* and even from beyond it were quite commonly enrolled or recruited into the Roman army, so that it is only natural that in north-eastern France and Belgium there should have developed a Romano-Germanic culture, tending to become more and more Germanic as Roman power declined and the Frankish influx increased. It is these enlisted persons who can be held responsible for the frequent appearance of romanizing trappings and jewellery in north German burials or Germanic types in semi-Roman cemeteries. In short, both the date of the romanizing as of the unquestionably Germanic objects in the Dorchester graves point not to invaders pure and simple, but to *foederati* in some Roman detachment stationed at Dorchester.⁵

Was part of their duty protection of the camp or refuge-area between the Dyke Hills and the junction of the two rivers, Thames and Thame, overlooked by the older camp on Wittenham Clumps? Were the burials made in the banks before the withdrawal of the legions? And had these *foederati* intermarried with British natives or had they brought their women-folk with them? The generally accepted dating of the relics makes either explanation possible. For the fibula in Grave II the last quarter of the fourth century is agreed, and the continental cemeteries from which so many parallels have been drawn are assigned to a period between A.D. 350 and 450. Roeder also dates the development of his *komponierte Fibel* as beginning in the last half of the fourth century. He points out that the cast saucer-brooch in Germany is a regional type, confined to the eastern moorland (*Geest*) of the governmental district of Stade. Strangely no example occurs from cemeteries like Wester-Wanna, Loxstedt, etc. By the time of the great descent on Britain the saucer-brooch, as illustrated by the material from Sussex graves, was in full production. The circular brooches from Dorchester are two generations earlier.

The alternative identification of the persons buried in the Dyke Hills suggested by Collingwood and Myres (*Roman Britain and the English Settlements*, pp. 394-5), is not very convincing. It is hardly probable either that a raiding-party or a nest of river-pirates would, in the closing year of Roman occupation, have brought womenfolk with them. But *foederati* transferred from the Continent to supplement or replace the steadily diminishing legionary forces could well have been stationed at Dorchester to stem any southward thrust of invaders, and these *foederati* could have been accompanied by their women. The warrior had clearly been in contact with the late fourth century culture of the Vermand type, but the women must have been natives of north Germany

⁵ We are indebted to Professor I. A. Richmond for information about the *foederati*.

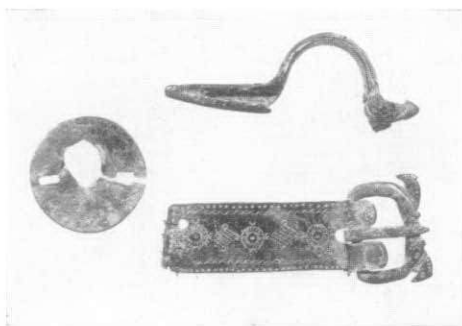
JOAN R. KIRK AND E. T. LEEDS

or Friesland ; they could hardly otherwise have acquired the brooches they wore.

Probably light could be thrown on the whole question by a thorough investigation both of what still remains of the Dyke Hills and of the area they were designed to protect. A mine-detector run along the tops of the banks might well reveal more burials. Actually one, unfortunately without relics was found in 1940 in the top of the northern mound close to its middle point (*Oxoniensia*, v (1940), p. 163); another, also without relics was detected in 1943 by members of a nearby American camp in the bottom of a slit-trench in the top of the western end of the northern bank at a depth of 3 feet, and orientated, like those found in 1874, SSE. and so directly in the line with the axis of the bank itself.

[illegible]

A



B



C

A. Objects from Grave I (pp. 65 ff., 70 ff.). Scale : $\frac{1}{2}$
B. Brooches and buckle from Grave II (pp. 67 ff., 72 f.). Scale $\frac{1}{2}$

A. Objects from Grave I (pp. 65 ff., 70 ff.). Scale : $\frac{1}{2}$
B. Brooches and buckle from Grave II (pp. 67 ff., 72 f.). Scale $\frac{1}{2}$

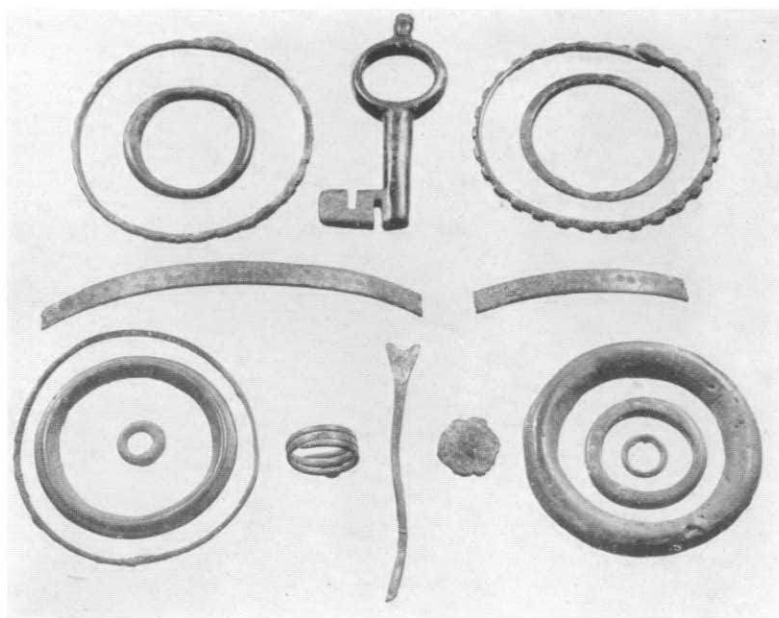
Applied brooch from Jouswier, near Dokkum (p. 73). Scale : $\frac{1}{2}$

Applied brooch from Jouswier, near Dokkum (p. 73). Scale : $\frac{1}{2}$

C. Friesch Museum, Leeuwarden

KIRK AND LEEDS, THREE SAXON GRAVES

PLATE V



A



B

DORCHESTER, OXON.

A. Objects from Grave III (pp. 69 f.). Scale : $\frac{1}{2}$

B. Applied brooches from Grave III (pp. 69, 73 f.). Scale : $\frac{1}{4}$