

IDENTITY AND THE CRUCIFORM BROOCH  
IN EARLY ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND:  
AN INVESTIGATION OF STYLE,  
MORTUARY CONTEXT, AND USE

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# Chapter 5: Gender, the Lifecycle, and the Cruciform Brooch

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 have established the broadest contexts of the cruciform brooch: stylistic, chronological, and spatial. However, the most meaningful archaeological information in terms of identifying social structure is provided by mortuary contexts. In the case of cruciform brooches these are both inhumation and cremation burials.<sup>1</sup> The analysis in this chapter will be concerned with the biological factors of sex and age, and how they relate to social structure in terms of gender and stage in the lifecycle. This chapter will isolate the demographic of the population who wore and were buried with cruciform brooches. The major purpose of this analysis is to identify whether or not the cruciform brooch was associated with a particular demographic. The answer here is found to be affirmative: cruciform brooches are most frequently found in the graves of older women. The interpretation of this finding will lead into a discussion of where these individuals were situated in the broader social structure, and what their identity, as communicated by the mortuary ritual, may have meant in ideological terms. The running concern throughout this discussion will be the active nature of the mortuary ritual in constructing an identity for the deceased and how this may have reflected their role in life.

The chapter will commence with the theoretical and methodological background to Anglo-Saxon burial and gender studies before going on to analyse the osteological data associated with cruciform brooches. This evidence will be interpreted in the light of the findings from Chapter 4 concerning ethnic identity. Therefore, these women will be seen to have possessed complex nested identities that took into account descent, stage in the lifecycle, and gender.

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<sup>1</sup> There is a single exception of a cruciform brooch from the fill of a sunken-featured building (**West Stow SFB 1**).

## Approaches to Mortuary Archaeology

The key paradigm shift in burial archaeology has been the recognition of burial data as not only representative of social structure, but also possessing a crucial role in its construction. The fact that the archaeology of burial reaches us only by the intentional structuring of a mortuary ritual makes the data problematic, and means it can only be indirectly representative of social structure. Part of this realisation for archaeologists originated in the diversity of experience discovered through ethnography, which offered an initially bewildering scope for interpretation (Ucko 1969). A key to the application of new ideas in mortuary archaeology was found in the 1980s with Ian Hodder's urging that the meaning of symbols depends entirely on their context (Hodder 1987, 1). Therefore if we accept that the objects carefully selected to accompany the deceased in the grave hold some semiotic function, the meaning of these symbols depends entirely on the context of the mortuary ritual, and can be related to their symbolism in life only through theoretical interpretation.

The former archaeological truism that the burial ritual of an individual directly reflected their role in life was consequently called into serious question (Parker Pearson 1982). The burial ritual may involve a transformation of the deceased's social role or identity, perhaps even representing an idealised social structure (Parker Pearson 1982, 112). It will become clear that this study believes cruciform brooches, in the vast majority of cases, to be the personal possessions of the individuals they accompanied in the grave. It was considered to be important to place them in the grave as they were part of the everyday clothing of the deceased, and as such had accumulated biographical meanings making them virtually inalienable from the deceased's corporeality (this idea will be explored in Chapter 7). It will also be shown (in Chapter 6) that these brooches and the garments they fastened were fundamental to the primary social perception of the deceased's corporeal and social identity. Removing or changing these garments in death may have occasionally occurred, but would seem to run counter to the very close relationships that are demonstrable between the clothes of these individuals and their persona. The inclusion of these items in the mortuary ritual was a powerful final expression of the identity of these individuals, and acted to create a lasting social memory of their social status, perhaps serving the function to elevate the status of the kinship group who carried out the funereal arrangements.

These points can also be suggested by more pragmatic data. As Chapter 7 will demonstrate, cruciform brooches were worn enough to merit a very high rate of repair, and were therefore likely to have been worn daily. As Chapter 3 has shown, their stylistic development occurs alongside changing fashions in other grave goods that are broadly measurable chronologically. Given the very tight 25-year phases that form the basis of the chronology, if these items were regularly handed down as heirlooms it is unlikely that any of this patterning would be visible. Nevertheless, this study contends that the importance of the cruciform brooch's presence in the grave may well have been to represent an idealised social structure, but one that was also matched by the cruciform brooch's meaning in life. A choice was still made to bury the deceased wearing this jewellery, and this is the fundamental point.

## Approaches to Anglo-Saxon Burial Evidence

The history of Anglo-Saxon burial studies is now a well-chronicled subject (Härke 1997a; Lucy 1998, 5-20; Richards 1987, 10-14) that tracks the changing interpretation of material culture found in graves. The intellectual study of Anglo-Saxon burial originates in the interpretations of grave goods as simple indicators of religious faith by John Mitchell Kemble, a 19th-century antiquarian (Richards 1987, 10; Williams 2005, 9). Kemble's archaeology also established methods for the foundation of the culture-historical approach to Anglo-Saxon burials that drew parallels between continental and insular material culture. The most prominent among these Anglo-Saxonists were Edward Thurlow Leeds (1877-1955) and John Nowell Linton Myres (1869-1954). Their assessment of the material found in inhumation and cremation graves very rarely even took the mortuary, let alone ritual, context into account at all. Notions such as burial wealth and warrior status, though present in their accounts, did not constitute their main thrust of argument. The structure of society in these terms was assumed but neither sought nor tested.

Processualism in Anglo-Saxon burial studies was a relatively short-lived episode, and was almost entirely limited to quantifications of grave-wealth. As Heinrich Härke has outlined, this was an approach largely derived from the culture-historical German intellectual tradition (Härke 1997a, 21). The traditional idea that the specific weaponry interred with men in the continental *Reihengräberfelder* directly represented their legal

status as free, semi-free, and unfree (as recorded in later legal tracts), was transformed by Christlein (1973) into a method of assessing grave-wealth, and hence the wealth of the interred individual (Härke 1997a, 19). The implicit assumption was that the deceased was consistently laid to rest with the same proportion of their material wealth (if not all of it). In the 6th-century Merovingian law tracts a warrior's weaponry constituted their *hergewaete*: possessions that could not be handed down to kin (Härke 1997a, 19). However, there is no equivalent sanctioning of specific grave goods in the Anglo-Saxon literature.

The processual theoretical basis of this approach lies in the idea that social and ideological subsystems worked together to create the mortuary ritual, and the material culture present in the grave was a reflection of these interactions. Social status as a sphere of interaction would therefore be present in the grave as a measureable quantity by assessment of the material culture. In many ways the mourners who prepared the body and chose the objects that should accompany it in the grave were seen to be passively reflecting what they judged to be a more complex status with a more complex burial rite.

The grave-wealth approach of Christlein was utilised by some British processual archaeologists. As has been already discussed in Chapter 4, Christopher Arnold (1988a) and Christopher Scull (1992; 1993; 1999) related changes in grave-wealth to the emergence of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in the late 6th century. More germane to the present chapter is John Shephard's (1979) in-depth approach to social structure as represented in two different types of Anglo-Saxon cemetery: isolated barrows and barrow cemeteries. Shephard's methods were perhaps extreme: at one point an algebraic equation is put forward to provide a measure of social organisation in each cemetery (Shephard 1979, 69). Shephard found differences in the range and scale of grave-wealth between isolated barrows and barrow cemeteries. The different regions in which they occurred could therefore be characterised as more highly ranked or egalitarian respectively. Though these kinds of studies are frequently criticised, the basic method is still used. Nick Stoodley's (1999) otherwise sensitively post-processual and symbolic study of grave goods also uses the quantity and perceived quality of grave goods as a relative measure of social status. Stoodley suggests that women (due to a greater range of grave-wealth) possessed more variable social status compared to men who formed a generally richer and more homogenous group (Stoodley 1999, 104). As mentioned above,

such methods should not be dismissed out of hand as outdated or unfashionable.<sup>2</sup> In essence, measures of grave-wealth provide a scale of differentiation that most likely reflects, in some less direct manner, the wealth of the deceased's kin. Self evidently, an individual, or their kin, without the means to obtain a cruciform brooch would not be able bury one in their mortuary ritual. However, although the difference is subtle, attempts to assess wealth and equate it with power are potentially asking the wrong questions in a non-monetary society who more likely obtained material culture through gift exchange. Certain questions as to how these items were obtained in the first place need to be answered, as was considered in Chapter 4 concerning the potential patronage from which these latest Phase C brooches originated. These matters will be considered once again in Chapter 7 where the high repair rates of cruciform brooches are suggested to reflect social sanctions on the replacement of these brooches.

## Contemporary Approaches to Anglo-Saxon Burial

In a 2002 review article, Tania Dickinson (2002a, 72) highlighted the diversity of theoretical approaches to early medieval burial archaeology, and reflected on its rapid acceleration since the early 1980s, a far cry from her programmatic writings twenty-two years earlier (Dickinson 1980). This diverse range of approaches and incorporation of various theory has provided us with the data to at least sketch out the basics of early Anglo-Saxon social structure in terms of age, sex and gender, social groups (family, household), social classes, and, as discussed in the previous chapter, ethnicity (Härke 1997b). If anything, this diversification has increased over the last decade with interest now going beyond social structure and exploring ideas such as the social memory (Devlin 2007a; Williams 2006) and the religious beliefs (Carver *et al* 2010) involved in the mortuary ritual. This section will focus on how burial data is currently employed in the investigation of social structure and identity.

The contemporary understanding of Anglo-Saxon burial archaeology has its origins in the belief that burial data are a product of ritual behaviour, and as such they are constituted by symbolic meaning. As mentioned above, these developments were inspired by post-processualism. Studies by Ellen-Jane Pader (1982) and Julian Richards (1987) were the

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<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Christlein's *qualitätsgruppen* are currently undergoing refinement as a tool for the descriptive assessment of graves by Constanze Döhrer at the University of Vienna.

first among these symbolic studies. Pader (1982, 79) saw social structure reflected in and constructed by all aspects of the ritual: the position of the body, placement of the grave goods, grave structures, and grave orientation among other variables. Richards (1987; 1988) took a more specific approach, considering only how the form and decoration of cremation urns related to the sex and age of the cremated individual and their grave goods, and how this sepulchral container came to reflect their social identity in the absence of (or at least their much transformed) corporeal remains.

These studies had begun to tackle the symbolic aspects of the data but did not really clarify any structural aspects of Anglo-Saxon society: they were explorations of how mortuary archaeology could be decoded. As Härke (1997a) later detailed, the interpretation of these data in social structural terms is problematic due to their taphonomically and culturally filtered nature. Not everything is preserved, recovered or recorded from a grave, and what *is* recovered only represents one phase of the burial ritual. In addition, the whole funerary ritual only represents a single event in a greater chain of rites of passage.

The work of Pader and Richards included other theoretical insights that were only brought to their full potential in subsequent studies. These insights were Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) and Anthony Giddens' (1984) closely related theories of *habitus* and structuration. These theories both emphasise the agency of individuals in forming and bringing about change in society through practice. As Richards (1992, 133) commented "artefacts are tools for thinking about the world", and their implementation in the mortuary ritual can be seen as a means of constructing social structure itself. The inclusion of items in graves, such as cruciform brooches, can therefore tell us a lot about their importance to the society, and their importance to dress not only in death, but also in life. Effective use of this theory can be seen in Heinrich Härke's (1990; 1992; 1997c) analyses of the Anglo-Saxon weapon burial rite, in which weaponry in the grave is seen not necessarily to communicate that the individual was an actual warrior, but that they should be seen as part of status group for whom martial identity was an ideal. This construction of an ideal can also be seen in the origin myths of the Anglo-Saxons, which appear to revel in a past characterised by violent conquest, when this was not necessarily the case (Härke 1997c).

Though Härke draws some comparisons between myth and weaponry in the grave, he also demonstrated that religion (the rise of Christianity) may not have impacted on the demise of 7th-century weapon burial at all (Härke 1992, 165). Helen Geake came to very similar conclusions about the use of all grave goods in the 7th and 8th centuries. Geake's suggestion was that the decline of grave goods in the 7th century was a result of change in the manner by which individuals symbolised their adapting identities in a changing power structure (Geake 1992, 89-93). The relatively new idea that the so-called Final Phase burials, which characterise this transitional period, for the most part may have had almost nothing to do with the Church, alongside the complex symbolism with all its attendant "rules" or choices that had to be made (such as grave goods, orientation, body position), led Geake to question who was actually organising and instructing these complex practices (Geake 2003), a question that remains unanswered. Of course, the choice of grave goods is perhaps the critical concern of the present analysis, and as Härke (1997c) suggests, there may be a mythico-religious explanation for this based quite directly in the symbolism of the material culture. Perhaps more convincingly, these items may also have been chosen for their mnemonic properties and ability to evoke collective and personal memories of the deceased (Devlin 2007b; Williams 2004). As a related alternative, the present thesis suggests that the inclusion of at least some items in the grave (particularly those associated with dress) was more to do with the intimate connections drawn between the corporeal body and its accompanying material culture. Stripping the body of such items in death would have denuded the individual of their social and physical persona which was constructed and displayed through such items.

Context can even extend beyond the immediate cemetery, and it is possible to examine the landscape context of cemeteries (Härke 1997d, 193). Richards draws some interesting distinctions between the types of artefacts found at cemeteries and settlements with their respective emphases on weaponry and tools (Richards 1992, 136). Because the settlement and cemetery were different symbolic realms, the meaning of a tool, such as the rare occurrence of a loom-weight in a grave, may be very different to its meaning if it were found in the fill of a sunken-featured building. It has also been shown that some deposits in settlements may have had a distinct ritual function (Hamerow 2006; Sofield 2011). The fact that, with only one exception (**West Stow SFB 1**), cruciform brooches are never found on settlements only goes to emphasise the importance of these items in the grave.



Sam Lucy's (1998) and Nick Stoodley's (1999) studies together formed the next step after Heinrich Härke's research into the connection between the material culture found in graves and the construction of identity. Both broadened the research agenda beyond a single type of (weapon) burial, and both focused on the active nature of material culture in the construction of gender through the burial rite. However, while Stoodley focused on the whole of early Anglo-Saxon England, with a principal focus in the south, Lucy was concerned only with East Yorkshire.

Stoodley identified certain groups of grave goods as requisite to specific gender- and age-related identities, and suggested that there was a high degree of intentionality in the provision and choice of grave goods (Stoodley 1999, 6). Predictably, weaponry was found to be male-linked, and dress-accessories and jewellery were female-linked. In addition, various other items such as personal equipment (tweezers, purse-mounts, tools) were less strongly male- or female-linked depending on their specific type, and the same applied to grave furnishings (e.g. vessels, Stoodley 1999, 48-49). Because biological sex is most frequently the basis of gender identity, the conclusion was reached that these grave goods were active in, and even critical to, its construction. Gender was also found to be just part of a series of nested identities, cut across by wealth and status, as well as by age (Stoodley 2000). Age is of course another critical aspect of social structure that has relatively recently come to the fore in early Anglo-Saxon burial studies (Crawford 1993; Härke 1989; Lucy 1994). This study takes just one identity, that which was indicated and constructed by wearing a cruciform brooch, to see just how these nested identities intersect on a more specific level, and will also insert the idea of ethnicity into the equation. Chapter 6 will take the progression a step further by demonstrating that perceptions of the body itself, and not just gender, can also be constructed through dress.

Sam Lucy's study of Anglo-Saxon burial in East Yorkshire (1997; 1998) assumed a more deconstructive stance. Lucy suggested that a bipolar (simplistic male/female) view of gender identity for the early Anglo-Saxon period is insufficient. In terms of locating this binary arrangement in burial data only a minority of graves both possess weaponry or jewellery *and* have been biologically sexed. In Lucy's admittedly limited (due to the low rate of bone survival) and regionally restricted sample from the West Heslerton and Sewerby cemeteries (Dickinson 2002a, 83), few graves were in fact identifiable as male and female, and fewer still possessed the traditional masculine and feminine grave goods. A number of biological males were interred with jewellery, and some apparently

biological females were accompanied by weaponry. It is also the case that weapon burials and furnished inhumation in general are less common in the north. Nonetheless, an important point was raised that equating the weaponry:jewellery dichotomy with male:female excludes about half of the buried population who were not interred with these assemblages or any grave goods at all. Such an approach also reduces gender relations to a binary arrangement that, as Stoodley demonstrates, is cut across by age and other statuses, but ultimately describes just two different groups of people: men and women, which is not the sum of social variation. Because this study only considers the very specific identity of a single group of women, there is little risk of generalising gender into a binary arrangement. In fact, the present research sets out to make distinctions between related feminine identities.

The current thesis and the present chapter in particular are a reaction to, and extension of, Lucy's and Stoodley's research. The breadth of Stoodley's study forced him to characterise all jewellery and dress-accessories as a single category, and thus it was too broad to consider the nuanced symbolism of different types of jewellery. Stoodley does, in fact, call for a study of precisely this nature (Stoodley 1999, 143):

The role individual artefacts may have played in the construction of gender needs to be explored ... Detailed investigations into other types and subtypes of, for example brooches, may pay dividends, especially if other variables such as age and social status are taken into account.

## Sex and Age, Gender and Life-Phase

This study takes sex and age to be the physical characteristics upon which the social categories of gender and perceptions of stage in the lifecycle are culturally inscribed. It is necessary to make this terminological distinction clear because the physically observed categories of sex and age are not necessarily determinative. They do, however, generally act as the empirical referents for these social categories. In an early (for this subject) social anthropological monograph, *Sex and Age as Principles of Social Differentiation*, Jean La Fontaine (1978, 1) commented:

Age differentiation is as much a cultural transformation of a process of human physiology, ageing, as sex differences<sup>3</sup> [genders] are a transformation of the physiological process of reproduction.

‘Gender’, can therefore be defined as the “cultural values inscribed on sex categories” (Hays-Gilpin and Whitley 1998, 3), while ‘stage in the lifecycle’ represents the cultural values inscribed on physiological ageing, perhaps through initiation rites such as the passage to adulthood, marriage or parenthood. The reason these two cultural constructions are the focus of the present chapter is methodological: estimates of their empirical biological basis are obtainable from the skeletal record. It is the variability of the relationship between supposed biological fact and cultural construction that makes this a particularly complex area of study. For La Fontaine (1978, 1) “differences in physiology (natural differences) are universally transformed into inequality”, and this is broadly true: it is difficult to talk about gender and life phases without also considering power. Age and sex can be seen as the origins of social differentiation and, ultimately, hierarchy (in the broadest sense of the term) and as such are of critical importance to our understanding of any society. Though the cultural interpretation of sex and age share some qualities, La Fontaine (1978, 18) also observed some fundamental differences:

[Age and sex] differ in that sexual differentiation is based on the unity of conjoined opposites, while differentiation by age creates a hierarchy out of ordered divisions of the human life-span.

This is an important distinction to make. However, it is also true that the hierarchy of stages in the lifecycle are central to defining developing gender identities. The more obvious stages in the lifecycle are marked by sexually dimorphic biological traits directly related to reproductive ability (i.e. puberty). Therefore, these identities are to some extent inseparable, and hence the importance of studying both. Gender in particular has a lengthy and complex history of scholarship, so some background is necessary both in archaeological theory and anthropology.

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<sup>3</sup> La Fontaine was writing before academic use of the terms “sex differences” and “gender” had become standardised.

## Gender, Archaeology and Anthropology

Gender studies in archaeology originated in the realisation that much of our knowledge of prehistory was androcentric. Margaret Conkey and Janet Spector (1984) were among the first to suggest that because archaeological theory did not possess the tools to investigate gender, this left a vacuum swiftly filled by contemporary understandings which were both stereotyped and androcentric. The solution was not just to add women into the equation but to “formulate ... an explicit framework for the archaeological study of gender” (Conkey and Spector 1984, 2). This led to what is known as the ‘engendering’ of social archaeology, and gender also became a valid subject of enquiry in its own right. Interest was not just in the identification of men and women in the past, but also the investigation of the relationship between genders, and how this relationship was formed by the construction of gender among other forms of identity. This thesis, for instance, looks at the intersection of gender, the lifecycle and ethnicity. The outcome of the engendering of archaeology was that instead of perceiving a past populated by gender-neutral actors, gender was seen to be active at all levels of social interaction. This critical observation required some remedial work and a re-ordering of archaeological understandings of the past (Conkey and Gero 1991), which was in some instances, such as for human evolution (e.g. Dahlberg 1981; Hager 1997), profound (Wylie 1991, 39).

With an unusually lengthy “paradigm lag” of about a decade (Conkey and Spector 1984, 5), these innovations in archaeological theory were inherited from social anthropology. The need to understand gender relations, and hence the social construction of gender itself rather than simply inserting, or gathering ethnographic data from, women, had been suggested in Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere’s *Woman, Culture and Society* (1974) and Shirley Ardener’s (1975) *Perceiving Women*. Both explored the behaviour, symbolism and ideology that constituted gender, and emphasised its cross-cultural versatility, eschewing almost any biological basis for behaviour. Rayna Reiter (1975) similarly established the cross-cultural value of studying women, and was largely interested in the power relationships that exist almost ubiquitously between genders. Perhaps the major underlying question in most of these volumes was how a culturally-constructed gender related to perceived biological sex, and how social understandings of biological or ‘natural’ sex affected perceptions of the differences between men and women. This was proposed by Sherry Ortner’s (1974) influential question “is female to male as nature is to culture?”, further developed by Carol MacCormack and Marilyn

Strathern (1980), and returned to again by Sherry Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (1981). The outcome of this was the idea that the nature:culture dichotomy was not a universal phenomenon, and that therefore promoting this distinction to be the basis of a whole frame of academic reference was a mistake. Rather, it is necessary to look to how the 'natural' is also socially constructed (this subject will be returned to in Chapter 6 when the dressed body is considered).

The idea of gender as a ubiquitously present social identity, and its intimate connection with hierarchy and power, make an understanding of gender a prerequisite to any understanding of social structure. Gender can be seen as a primary structure of difference (Barrett 1988, 13), not just sex-role determination. There is far more to studying gender than assigning specific objects, behaviours or spaces to males or females. Gender is constantly being acted out, and is perhaps most accurately seen as a process rather than a static bipolar relationship (Conkey and Gero 1991, 9). As John Barrett (1988, 13) succinctly puts it, gender "happens" in social discourse. This concept of gender is a product of feminist thought challenging the truisms of traditional concepts of gender as a fixed category. Especially in funerary archaeology, the differences between men and women have always been obvious and available for traditional (sex-role) research. It is only with the view that gender relations are in fact negotiated that gender became a topic for critical research (Wylie 1991, 37). Therefore, investigating the representation of gender in the Anglo-Saxon burial rite is to investigate one of the levels upon which gender was constructed.

Theoretical advances in engendered and post-processual archaeology have also led to a revision of the role of material culture in burial archaeology. Traditionally grave goods were seen to directly represent the gender-designated role of the deceased. The passive role of material culture in processual archaeology meant that grave goods could only be interpreted as representing a status, not a social relationship (Conkey and Spector 1984, 23). This is directly relevant to the above discussion of Anglo-Saxon burial archaeology. For instance, while Heinrich Härke draws certain conclusions about the status of men buried with weaponry, he does not examine this so much in relation to their gender, but to their ethnicity and the social hierarchy. This quite directly relates to the traditional archaeological androcentric bias of interest in warfare, leadership and inheritance critiqued by Conkey and Spector (1984, 4). As can be seen especially clearly in early

Anglo-Saxon graves, material culture is actively involved in the construction and negotiation of gendered social relationships (Stoodley 1999).

In sum, post-processual and gender archaeology have provided the tools with which gender can be investigated from burial evidence. The idea of individual social agents acting to constitute society as outlined in the theory of structuration is only possible if we understand the power relations between those agents. Gender is of central importance to such relationships (Engelstad 2007, 227). If we take the cemetery to be a field of social discourse (Barrett 1988), the manipulation of material culture in this sphere is of considerable significance to the creation of society and social relationships, and especially, to the negotiation of gendered identities.

## Gender and Anglo-Saxon Archaeology

Early Anglo-Saxon archaeology occupies an unusual position in relation to feminist revisions of prehistory because Anglo-Saxon women, along with their dress styles and jewellery, have always constituted, quite literally, the most visible archaeological remains of the period. The fact that it is only relatively recently that gender has become a topic of analysis for early Anglo-Saxon archaeologists makes Conkey and Gero's argument (1991, 11) that the lengthy absence of gender archaeology was more to do with epistemological issues than methodological ones all the stronger. It is not new methods that are important to locating gender in the archaeological evidence, but new ways of thinking about society. Therefore, as Sam Lucy (1997) has commented, traditional approaches to Anglo-Saxon gender did little more than to assign the sex-linked roles of "housewives, warriors and slaves" to Anglo-Saxon burials. As Linda Hurcombe (1995) has detailed, archaeology is always at risk of becoming coloured by our own gender stereotypes, and frequently this is the case. Due to Anglo-Saxon England's relative proximity to the contemporary English population, and the fact that it is often characterised as the cultural origins of the English people, this is a risk especially associated with the period.

The potential for exploring gender in the early Anglo-Saxon period is far greater than this. John Barrett suggests that gender discourse is essentially power-related and "structured by control over human and material resources" (Barrett 1988, 13). This kind

of behaviour is embodied in the provision of grave goods, and the community engagement central to the performance of a mortuary ritual. Therefore, it is precisely in something like the archaeological remains of the early Anglo-Saxon burial ritual that we can see gender “happening”.

The examination of gendered identities by Heinrich Härke, Sam Lucy and Nick Stoodley in respect to their treatment of burial data has been detailed above. Therefore it is only their approaches to gender that need to be highlighted here. Härke’s approach, as mentioned above, focused more on status and ethnic identity than gender in particular, let alone gender relations, but his conclusions are still important contributions toward a more holistic understanding of masculinity. Härke’s various studies (Härke 1990; 1992; 1997c) suggest that martial ideals related to age and perceived ethnic origins (or descent) were central to the construction of a particular masculinity in early Anglo-Saxon England. Nick Stoodley (1999) further explored the construction of gender but emphasised age as a critical component of gender identity. Stoodley’s understanding assumed that femininity and masculinity are cumulative qualities bestowed incrementally on individuals as they progress through various life stages. The notion of “stronger” and “weaker” gender was made quite explicit by their being expressed in the burial rite from the quantities and qualities of grave goods (Stoodley 199, 29). The more frequently or exclusively an object was associated with a single sex, the “stronger” the gender-signalling was, and the stronger the gender identity of the deceased was perceived to be. In addition, a small number of “cross-gender” individuals, such as biological males interred with grave goods usually associated with biological females, were identified. Thus Stoodley suggested that grave assemblages signalled normal male and female genders, weaker and stronger versions of each, a small number of cross-gendered individuals, and, implicitly, a large and gender-silent population of men and women without grave goods or with only gender-neutral grave goods (such as knives). This enthusiastic categorisation and valuation of gender identities, and especially the idea of a gender-neutral section of society, is obviously a result of the frame of analysis rather than any reality of the early Anglo-Saxon period. Of course these individuals possessed a gendered-identity, but fundamentally, not ones that were constructed through a material culture that referenced ethnicity, and hence lacked those obvious markers. The present thesis may be seen to isolate ‘cruciform brooch wearers’ too far, and therefore it is important to remember that the identity discussed here could only exist through distinction and association with other facets of identity in early Anglo-Saxon society

Considering gendered relations, as opposed to gender identity or roles, the limited range of weaponry used by men to symbolise their gender compared to the diverse spread of items used by women led Stoodley to suggest that Anglo-Saxon masculinity was more rigidly defined and less negotiable than femininity (Stoodley 1999, 118). It was also suggested that one explanation of this difference may lie in Härke's observation that masculine weapon burials were a mark of descent. Therefore, particular masculine burials were suggested to have been more crucially defined by descent than feminine ones. The heightened variability of feminine burial was suggested by Stoodley to be explained by the hybrid nature of a mixed native and immigrant group (Stoodley 1999, 140). If part of the masculine expression of gender was to do with ethnicity, descent and a martial lifestyle (idealised or real), then a large part of the strongest expression of femininity was associated with conceptions of the body (Stoodley 1999, 136) and its role in sexual reproduction in the context of the household rather than the community (Stoodley 1999, 138). These ideas are fundamentally challenged by the findings of Chapter 4 which posited some feminine dress (worn in life and in death) as communicating and constructing, in far more explicit terms than weaponry can, an ethnic identity that relied on the notion of descent. As was shown, some feminine identities drew connections that went far outside the household into the immediate region, and even overseas. One of the key arguments of the current chapter is that some feminine gender identities were articulated in explicitly ethnic terms, and that some women in particular were critical to the constitution of the Anglian ethnos.

Sam Lucy's approach was less rigid and set out to challenge the idea of binary and normalised genders. Though her findings were more deconstructive than illuminating, they are nonetheless of considerable theoretical interest. Lucy's study sits more comfortably with feminist gender theory than Stoodley's does and yet, it yielded few results that allow us to comment on gender relations or gender identity. With Stoodley's larger sample the notion of some kind of gendered identity related to biological sex being expressed in the grave is undeniable, and for the most part, this is binary. Lucy's main thrust of argument suggests that a bipolar model of a standard male and female gender for the early Anglo-Saxon period is not sufficient (Lucy 1998, 102). Alternatively, Lucy discovers four groupings of burial assemblages: weaponry, jewellery, other goods, and no goods at all. Within the first two groupings can be found proportionately larger groups of biological males and females respectively, but the second two groups are mixed.



Therefore, “standard” Anglo-Saxon gendered burial rituals only applied to a minority of the population, and even this group was subdivided by other facets of identity, such as age.

The current study takes from Stoodley the notion that gender identity was expressed in the burial rite, and for the most part this was a binary relationship between biological males and females. This was, however, how only just over half of the early Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemetery population were interred. Stoodley’s idea that gender identity may have been informed by descent or role in the household or community will also be explored. From Lucy’s research we can take the notion that gender is highly variable and is rarely as simple as a standard binary arrangement. Even if for the most part gender is a bipolar relationship, it does not mean there are not subdivisions within these genders (nested genders) nor does it deny that other gender identities existed externally, but in relation, to these standard forms. Therefore, this thesis identifies just one group of individuals all linked by just one aspect of their mortuary ritual (the cruciform brooch) in the knowledge that they exist only in relation to a greater system of variation. The question posed is whether or not this item represented an aspect of their identity related to gender. If it is possible to do this for one group, then the prospects of identifying multiple gendered identities in early Anglo-Saxon burial archaeology are very promising: there is a profusion of artefacts and other elements of burial ritual yet to be assessed in this fashion.

## The Lifecycle and Anglo-Saxon Archaeology

Much of the above discussion applies equally to our understanding of the stages of the lifecycle. As outlined above, both represent the cultural interpretations of a biological state and both can be linked to reproductive ability, though certainly not exclusively so. The major difference is that because age is cumulative, it produces a hierarchical order of life phases rather than states that are related, but essentially opposed. Up until recently, the archaeological study of the lifecycle focused largely on childhood (Gowland 2006, 145). This is a relatively new sub-discipline and perhaps the addition of children as subjects of study serves as a comparable corrective to the insertion of women into social anthropological accounts in the 1970s. However, just as a holistic consideration of women required a consideration of gender as a whole (including masculinity), the study

of children also has implications for our understanding of adulthood. As Rebecca Gowland (2006, 145) comments “an important principle of life course is that one life phase can only be understood in relation to the way that identities are played out over the entire life course”. Of course, we must still seek to understand children on their own terms, and not exclusively in the context of the adults they might become. Although this study will only treat childhood peripherally, age and perceptions of the lifecycle are critical to a holistic understanding of gender: the main focus of this chapter.

Cross-cultural attitudes to the lifecycle vary just as much as they do to gender, though both are most frequently based on the observation and interpretation of biological factors. Just as gender can be defined instead by sexuality or other social role, life phase is not universally linked directly to obvious biological developments, such as puberty. Though stage in the lifecycle frequently bears close relation to biological development, it is more accurately linked to socially defined stages of life such as ‘child’, ‘adult’, ‘married adult’, ‘parent’, or ‘grandparent’ (Gowland 2006, 144). With each phase of life come new socially sanctioned behaviours, new access to knowledge, new legal rights, and new moral obligations. None of these things, of course, have a basis in biology. The relationship between biology and cultural concepts of the lifecycle is something that requires just as much of a critical eye as the relationship between sex and gender (Sofaer Derevenski 1997, 194).

The importance of life phases to society was brought out in social anthropology at a very early stage, at least as early as Arnold van Gennep’s *Les Rites de Passage* (Van Gennep 2004, originally published 1909). Van Gennep’s, and later Victor Turner’s (1969), interest in the lifecycle was to do with the ritual control of social status through rites of initiation. Of course, the mortuary ritual represents the very last rite of passage of an individual, and as Stoodley (2000) suggested, the lifecycle stage of the individual at death appears to be represented by the grave good assemblage in early Anglo-Saxon England. The funeral also has a role in constructing notions of life phase. Just like gender, stages in the lifecycle can be given cultural meaning by material culture (Gilchrist 2000, 327). Most studies of early Anglo-Saxon age-related identities have focused on childhood (e.g. Crawford 1991; 1993; 1999; Lucy 1994). There are, however, some exceptions. The most notable are Nick Stoodley’s (1999; 2000) analyses, described at length above. Heinrich Härke (1989) also produced a short analysis that found a relation between the length of knives interred with individuals and their age. Rebecca Gowland (2006)

produced a very similar study to Stoodley's using a different sample of cemeteries which largely confirmed his results.

This study follows Rebecca Gowland's urgings that adult age categories are generally under-conceptualised, being taken for granted in much the same way that masculinity was in early feminist studies (Gowland 2006, 145). However, the major purpose of including age as an analytical category is that life phase is critical in the development of gender identities, and it will help to narrow down the social group that was apparently wearing cruciform brooches in the early Anglo-Saxon period.

## Inhumation and Cremation: Different Rituals, Different Meanings

This chapter focuses on the grave goods found in inhumation and cremation burials, and in particular the manner in which their inclusion with the remains of the deceased acted to re-articulate notions of their personhood and identity (Williams 2003, 93). However, as discussed above, the entire context of the ritual needs to be taken into account as fully as possible (Härke 1997d; Hodder 1987; Parker Pearson 1982; Ucko 1969). The inhumation and cremation rites that were practiced in this period were very different ritual processes (Williams 2004), even though they generally occurred, if in differing proportions, in the same cemeteries. Therefore, in the assessment of ritual context, cruciform brooches from inhumation and cremation will be treated separately. There is also a slight complication with chronology in that most of the earlier (Phase A) cruciform brooches are from cremation burials, while the later ones (Phases B and C) are from inhumations. There are some exceptions to this chronological bias, but it presents a difficulty to the assessment of continuous symbolic meaning between cruciform brooches of Phases A and B. This is sadly unavoidable but should in itself present some interesting implications about the use of cruciform brooches in different mortuary rituals.

## Methodology and Osteological Data

Because this analysis is based on biological sex and age data, the osteological analysis of human remains is of critical importance. For early Anglo-Saxon sites the sexing and ageing of the cemetery population is now an established and invaluable practice, but this

kind of analysis has only become standard relatively recently. Skeletal material can be designated male or female according to sexual dimorphisms expressed in the morphology of the bone, but this can only be done with any confidence after the age of about eighteen when these biological dimorphisms are fully evident. Broadly, most techniques rely on the generally gracile nature of female skeletons, and the relative robustness of male ones (for a summary of these characteristics see Schwartz 2007, 293-4). The most accurate sexing methods are based on measures of the cranium and the pelvis, and the size of the sciatic notch in the ilium bone of the pelvis is among the most reliable of these (McKinley 1994, 19). Also relatively reliable for sexing are measurements of the robustness of the skull, expressed in areas such as the mastoid processes, supra-orbital ridges and external occipital protuberance (McKinley 1994, 19). Ultimately, a mixture of these elements is desirable if not always possible due to archaeological survival.

The sexing of individuals is not an exact science. Human sexual dimorphism follows a bimodal distribution (Henderson 1989, 78). Most bodies fall into male or female categories, but some will inevitably be indeterminate or even cross over into the other sex category.<sup>4</sup> There are also degrees of confidence with which sex determination can be gained from each skeletal element, generally varying somewhere between 90-98% (Henderson 1989, 79). Accuracy, therefore, depends upon how much of the skeleton remains. For many East Anglian sites in this sample, for instance, acidic soils allow the preservation of only small amounts of skeletal material, if any at all. Certainty as to the sex of an individual is often expressed in osteological reports as categorical (e.g. “female”), probable (e.g. “?female”) and sometimes possible (e.g. “??female”). Though the use of this precise wording varies considerably, these measures of confidence will be retained in this analysis to produce a total of five sex categories: female, male, probable female, probable male, and indeterminate. No possible or “??females” are present in the sample.

Skeletons can be aged by measures of dental development, long bone length, and other skeletal maturity indicators such as epiphyseal closing (McKinley 1994, 11). Long bone length is now considered an inaccurate technique, but very broad estimates can still be made from the size of an individual. For younger individuals dental development is a

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<sup>4</sup> There has also been some debate as to the scientific basis of what social scientists (including archaeologists) often refer to indiscriminately as biological sex. There are different possibilities such as biological role in sexual reproduction, genetic (genotype) or hormonal profile, and the ultimate expression of the genotype in physical anatomy or phenotype (see Fausto Sterling 2000).

good indicator of age up to about eighteen years (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994, 51). Epiphyseal fusion takes place at a different rate for particular bones from birth to the age of about 40 (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994, 43). Therefore, once tooth development is complete, individuals around the age of 25/30 can be identified by epiphyseal closing on the sacrum and the medial clavicle (Scheuer and Black 2004, 225, 252). After this point, measures of cranium suture closing can be used with some degree of caution (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994, 32-38; McKinley 1994, 11). Other techniques for older individuals rely on degenerative processes such as dental attrition which can obviously be affected by physical lifestyle and diet (Hillson 1996, 239-242; Walker *et al* 1991).

With ageing techniques especially, there is a problem with a lack of standardisation in osteological methods. Most of the osteological analyses this study makes use of have been done by different osteologists, using subtly different techniques. Archaeological skeletal ageing is based on examples of individuals of a known age at death from relatively modern populations (e.g. Molleson and Cox 1993), and there is also some debate as to the accuracy of many of these techniques (e.g. Aykroyd *et al* 1999). There is not much that can be done about this: re-examination of the material for a sample of this size is simply not feasible. Therefore, it is hoped that the sample size is large enough to compensate for these variations.

Osteological reports are not always helpful in their categorisation of age groups. Rebecca Gowland draws important distinctions, for instance, between biological age (the only one that osteologists can directly assess, based on the physiological development of the body), chronological age (age in absolute years), and social age (such as 'child', 'adult') (Gowland 2006, 143). The majority of osteological analyses can be critiqued (from the perspective of a social analysis at least) for assuming all three of these categories are the same thing from the initial stages of analysis (Gowland 2006, 143). Therefore, an individual in the age range of thirteen to eighteen years old may be categorised as a 'subadult' in an osteological report which is firstly a determination of chronological age from biological age, and secondarily an ethnocentric assumption that individuals under the age of eighteen were not considered to be adults. The first step is perhaps unavoidable in an abbreviated report that does not list all the skeletal evidence that has led to this judgement of biological age, and would also make a report almost useless to a non-specialist. The second step, however, is entirely avoidable. Another problem is that there is not a standardisation of social age categories even between osteologists, which

means that there may be some discrepancy between age in years between reports and the judged social age. For example, the chronological age of what one analyst refers to as a ‘mature adult’ may in fact be different to the next.

This analysis has converted various osteological age categories into a standard system: that used by Jacqui McKinley for the Spong Hill material (McKinley 1994, 18-19). It offers sufficient resolution between its categories and is relatively capable of fitting around the categories used by other osteologists. However, the cultural labels of infant, juvenile, subadult, young adult, mature adult, and old adult have all been dispensed with in favour of neutral labels that do not make these ultimately social judgements. Table 5.1 presents a correspondence of these categories. In addition, the osteological social ages and chronological ages from all osteological reports can all be found in their originally published form in the accompanying digital database. Fitting these diverse data from multiple sources into standardised categories has involved combining the categories used by various osteologists into their best-fitting equivalent. This has often meant a disparity of one or two years (some specialists might refer to ‘adults’ as being over seventeen, eighteen or nineteen, for instance). For this kind of broad analysis such disparity does not affect the major findings, but it should be borne in mind when specific ages are mentioned in the following analysis that these are estimates, not known values.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Chronological Age</b>	<b>Social category</b>
A1	0-2	Infant (younger)
A2	3-4	Infant (older)
B1	5-8	Juvenile (younger)
B2	9-12	Juvenile (older)
C1	13-15	Subadult (younger)
C2	16-18	Subadult (older)
D	19-25	Young adult
E1	26-30	Mature adult (younger)
E2	31-40	Mature adult (older)
F	40+	Older adult

*Table 5.1: Correspondence table of age categories, chronological age, and social categories (as used by McKinley 1994, 19).*

Site name	Type of graves	Numbers of graves with cruciform brooches
Barrington A	Inhumation	2
Bergh Apton	Inhumation	4
Broughton Lodge	Inhumation	5
Brunel Way	Inhumation	1
Castledyke South	Inhumation	8
Cleatham	Cremation	5
Cleatham	Inhumation	7
Easington	Inhumation	2
Empingham II	Inhumation	12
Fonaby	Inhumation	1
Great Chesterford	Inhumation	1
Morning Thorpe	Cremation	1
Morning Thorpe	Inhumation	26
Mucking I	Inhumation	1
Mucking II	Inhumation	2
Norton	Inhumation	10
Oakington	Inhumation	3
Quarrington	Inhumation	1
Sewerby	Inhumation	7
Snape	Inhumation	3
Spong Hill	Cremation	29
Spong Hill	Inhumation	8
Springfield Lyons	Inhumation	3
Swaffham	Inhumation	1
Tallington	Inhumation	2
Wasperton	Inhumation	3
West Heslerton	Inhumation	11
Westgarth Gardens	Inhumation	3
<b>Total</b>	(Inhumation+cremation)	162

*Table 5.2: Sites included in the sex and age analysis.*

## The Sample

The sample is largely composed of relatively recently published osteological reports. The oldest publication<sup>5</sup> used will be that from the cemetery of Sewerby, East Yorkshire, which was published in 1985. The lack of osteological information from other cemeteries that yielded cruciform brooches excludes a very large number of cemeteries from the

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<sup>5</sup> The analysis of Swaffham was published earlier (Hills and Wade-Martins 1976), but consists of only twenty burials, one of which had a cruciform brooch.

current analysis that were excavated in the 19th and earlier 20th century.<sup>6</sup> There are also a large number of sites where individual graves were not recorded, and for which we even lack groups of associated grave goods.<sup>7</sup> Due to the vagaries of 19th and early 20th century archaeological methods, most of the unexamined skeletal material from these sites has since been discarded, making future analyses impossible.

Therefore, of the total 271 known grave contexts containing cruciform brooches that were recorded in the present corpus, only 162 (59.8%) have accompanying osteological information. The available osteological information is thus limited to 25 sites that have been examined to modern standards, eighteen of which have yielded more than one cruciform brooch, and nine of which have yielded more than five. These sites and their numbers of graves with cruciform brooches are listed in Table 5.2.

Figure 5.1 shows that these 25 sites and 162 grave contexts cover most of the regions in early Anglo-Saxon England where cruciform brooches were worn (see Chapter 4 for details). The only noticeable gap is Kent, which the findings of this analysis must regrettably exclude. It is also unfortunately the case that all cruciform brooch graves from some cemeteries did not preserve enough skeletal material for analysis. Bergh Apton (Norfolk), Easington (County Durham), Mucking (Essex), Springfield Lyons (Essex), and Snape (Suffolk) all have cruciform brooches associated with insufficient skeletal material suitable for analysis. They are nonetheless included in this analysis, and are recorded among those of ‘indeterminate’ age and sex as bone survival is a relevant topic for investigation and obviously impacts on this study’s findings. The absence of such associations at Mucking and Springfield Lyons, lying on the interface between Kentish and Anglian regions (both are in Essex) in particular make the findings of this study even further removed from the geographical region of Kent.

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<sup>6</sup> These include some large and significant sites: Bifrons (Patricbourne) in Kent; the Driffild cemeteries, Londesborough and Hornsea in East Yorkshire; Sleaford and Fonaby in Lincolnshire; Girton, St John’s College and Little Wilbraham in Cambridgeshire; Holywell Row and Lackford in Suffolk; and Nassington in Northhamptonshire

<sup>7</sup> Such sites include most of the graves from Newnham Croft, Haslingfield, St John’s College and the Barrington cemeteries in Cambridgeshire (known as Barrington “A” and “B”, as well as a number of finds whose provenance is not even specified between these sites); Brooke and Kenninghall in Norfolk; Darlington in County Durham; Mildenhall, Lakenheath, Icklingham, Ixworth, West Stow, Eriswell and Exning in Suffolk; Holme Pierrepont in Nottinghamshire; Laceby and Ruskington in Lincolnshire; and North Luffenham and Market Overton in Rutland. This, sadly, is a list that only includes sites that yielded more than about four cruciform brooches: there are many, many more. Of particular alarm is the very large number of sites in Suffolk (largely from the Lark Valley) that went entirely unrecorded and make up a significant number of the county’s corpus of cruciform brooches





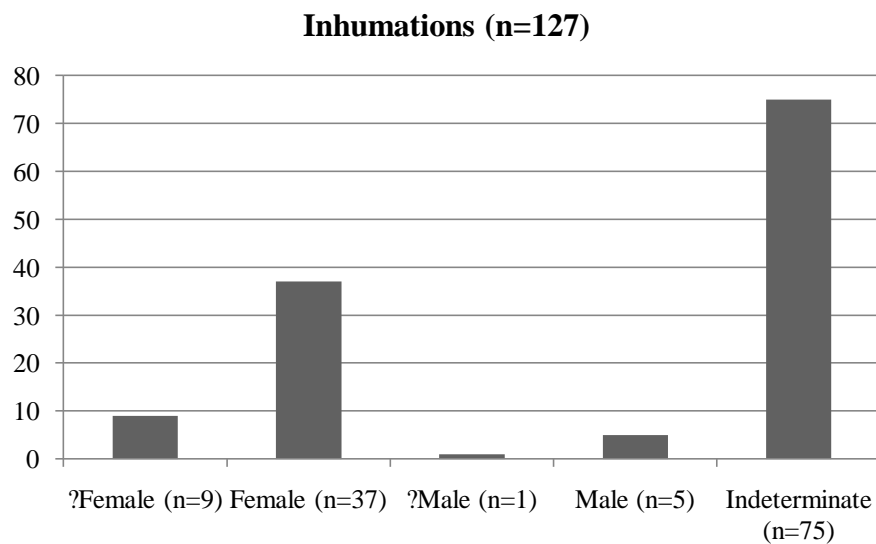
*Figure 5.1: Distribution of sites used for sex and age analysis.*

## Sex, Gender and the Cruciform Brooch

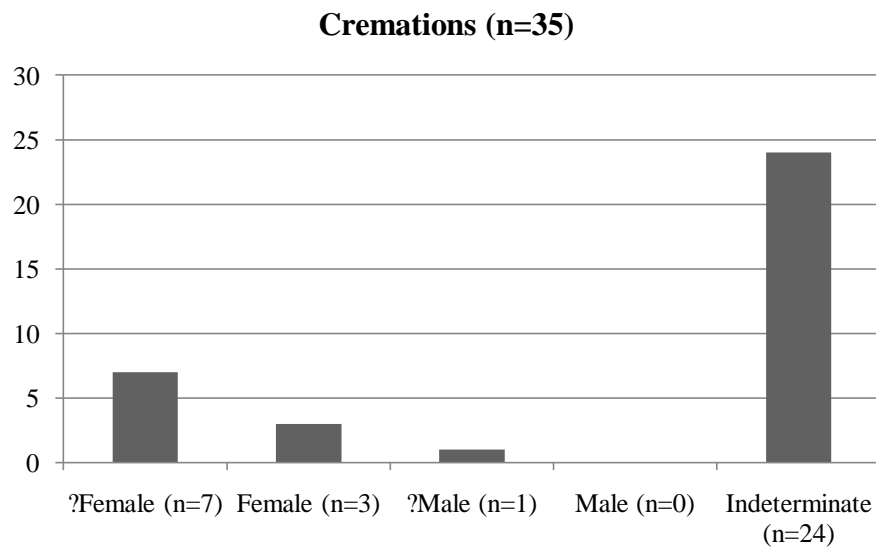
The data available for analysis consist of 162 contexts from 25 cemeteries. Figure 5.2 shows the sex of individuals inhumed with cruciform brooches, while Figure 5.3 shows the sex of cremated individuals interred with cruciform brooches. As can be seen, a very high number of individuals are of an indeterminate sex in both sets of data due to the low survival rate of bone.

The sample size for the cremations (35 individuals, Figure 5.3) is perhaps too small to make any comment with confidence. Nonetheless the results confirm our general thinking on the matter: there are no males, and three females. The seven questionable females and single questionable male can only be commented on tentatively, but when

added to the more definite males and females, make up a figure approaching the ratio for inhumations: (9% male, 91% female). For the inhumations, the results of this analysis are initially more surprising, with 37 females (88%) and five males (12%). The questionable males and females approximately replicate this ratio. Therefore, the surprisingly high number of biological males associated with cruciform brooches is matched both in cremation and inhumation.



*Figure 5.2: The sex of individuals inhumed with cruciform brooches.*



*Figure 5.3: The sex of individuals cremated with cruciform brooches.*

Traditionally, it has been assumed that biological males were never buried with jewellery (and biological females were never buried with weaponry). This paradigm has been so enduring and persistent, that even after osteological techniques were reliably established, if the grave good 'sexing' conflicted with the osteological sexing, the supposed gender of the grave goods was given preference (Henderson 1989), such as in Susan Hirst's report on Sewerby (Hirst 1985, 33), and Vera Evison's account of Dover, Buckland (Evison 1987, 123). In some instances, the margin of error for osteological sexing is called on to explain these otherwise 'cross-gendered' individuals. However, the rates of male association around 10% are at the extreme end of such margins of error (Henderson 1989, 79). Also, if this kind of doubt is thrown upon those individuals whose grave goods do not traditionally accord with their biological sex, then we must also cast the same critical eye over those individuals whose grave goods do (Lucy 1997, 161).

This conflict between long-held ideas of Anglo-Saxon gender and osteological analysis was enough for Sam Lucy to suggest that the traditional paradigm of polarised male and female Anglo-Saxon gender should be abandoned. Lucy believed it should be replaced by a nuanced understanding of gender that did not divide Anglo-Saxon society quite so fundamentally and inevitably by biological sex, but saw all forms of identity as fluid and interactive with other aspects of identity such as age and ethnicity (Lucy 1998, 34). However, the overwhelming majority of cruciform brooches are found with biological females, which strongly suggests that at least this group of individuals constructed their identity quite firmly upon their biological sex. In other words, their identity was clearly gendered.

Nick Stoodley's approach to these 'cross-gendered' individuals was more pragmatic. His study does, after all, suggest beyond doubt that a very large proportion of the population (approximately 50%) expressed a gendered identity (an identity based on biological sex) in death. When met with individuals that confounded this pattern (men buried with brooches, for instance), his first step was to re-evaluate the osteological analysis of these particular individuals, and in some cases, found them to be misidentified (Stoodley 1999, 29). The more interesting fact that Stoodley reveals is that the grave goods of these 'cross-gendered' individuals are not always the only unusual aspect of such graves. For instance, one biological female buried with a sword at Dover Buckland was also interred in the only double-burial at the site. At Empingham II a male with jewellery was only

nine years old. Stoodley (1999, 33) suggests that this individual may have been too young to actually own this kind of equipment, as interment with these kind of items at this age is unusual. A male at Norton was interred with a cruciform brooch (**Norton G57**, also present in the current corpus), but the nature of this individual's dress was unusual for including a pair of wrist-clasps worn at the shoulder. This is a very unusual position which suggests they either did not belong to the deceased individual, or were worn in a manner that did not evoke gender associations.<sup>8</sup> It is with these points in mind that those male associations with cruciform brooches demand assessment. The data must not be explained away, but explored. It is sometimes the exceptions to the general rule that can be most revealing of how that general rule was implemented.

The two questionable male burials seen in Figures 5.2 and 5.3 are perhaps of less concern, as their osteological sexing is already in doubt. They are from both an inhumation and a cremation context: **Cleatham G9**, and **Spong Hill C1743**. **Cleatham G9**<sup>9</sup> is unusual for being a potentially very early Phase A cruciform brooch found in an inhumation grave.<sup>10</sup> Five Phase A cruciform brooches have been found in inhumation graves, compared to eighteen from cremations. Another Phase A cruciform brooch is the only one known from a stratified context outside of a cemetery: it is from a sunken feature building at West Stow (**West Stow SFB 1**). Of the later (Phase B onward) *c.*250 cruciform brooch contexts, only about 20 are from cremation burials. Therefore, inhumation burial in Phase A was a relatively rare practice, and the cruciform brooch from **Cleatham G9** could conceivably have been an heirloom possession of a later individual, being interred, or worn at a time when cruciform brooch style had advanced significantly. **Spong Hill C1743** is a very unusual looking cruciform brooch fragment. It has no known parallels in England, and is therefore only identified as part of a cruciform brooch due to a lack of other possibilities as to its nature. It was accompanied by a very unusual iron bow brooch, more common to earlier periods in northern Germany. However, the only convincingly unusual aspects of these two possible males buried with cruciform brooches, if we accept that **Cleatham G9** is not an heirloom, is their likely very early date somewhere around 450-475 AD.

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<sup>8</sup> It is also true that in Scandinavia, though it was certainly a minority practice, males have been found in association with clasps (Hines 1984, 61-62).

<sup>9</sup> The mismatch between biological sex and grave goods, along with the poor condition of the skeletal material led the writer of the Cleatham report, Kevin Leahy, to believe the grave should be "counted as female" (Leahy 2007, 60).

<sup>10</sup> Although in Chapter 3 it was suggested that Type 1.1.1 may well have had a lengthy period of use extending into the early part of Phase B.

The five cruciform brooches interred with more definite males are all inhumations: **Norton G57**, **Norton G63**, **Empingham II G105**, **Empingham II G129**, and **Castledyke South G137**. All of these brooches are of Phases B and C, so there is nothing peculiar about their chronology. The most striking observation is that all five are only from three cemeteries. This raises two possibilities: (a) cruciform brooches being interred with biological males was a highly unusual practice specific to a small number of localised groups, or (b) the osteological analysis for these cemeteries (due to some localised factors) was incorrect. The latter possibility being the case at Norton has already been put forward by Stoodley (1999, 10) who drew attention to Mandy Marlow's (who examined the skeletal material from this site) remarks that the Norton male and female population were "generally taller and more gracile with less clear-cut sexual distinctions", with most females having unusually narrow hips with irregularly shaped sciatic notches (Sherlock and Welch 1992, 107). As these aspects of the skeleton are important sexing characteristics (see above), this may well have led to some incorrect identification of the skeletal material. At Empingham II nothing unusual is noted about skeleton morphology, but the very poor skeletal preservation, and potentially erroneous recording and archiving of the material is suggested as a potential source of some error (Timby 1996, 16). There are no such anomalies noted in the specialist's report for Castledyke South (Drinkall and Foreman 1998, 221).

Of the brooches from these five male burials, **Empingham II G105** can immediately be noted as highly unusual being from the grave of a nine to ten year old. Not only does this lie quite far outside the norm for the age at death for individuals interred with cruciform brooches (see below), but the correct sexing of any individual of this age can only be tentative (Mays 1998, 38). There is nothing particularly unusual about the assemblages from these five graves *per se*. As mentioned above and by Stoodley (1999, 33), **Norton G57** is highly unusual for being accompanied by wrist-clasps worn on the shoulders, but the cruciform brooch itself was worn at a normal position on the shoulder, and so was **Norton G63**. This was also the case for **Empingham II G105**, **Empingham II G129**, and **Castledyke South G137**. The grave this last brooch was found in is cut through by grave 138, but it does not appear that the upper chest area, where this cruciform brooch was found, was disturbed at all. None of the grave sizes are unusual, and there are no unusual structures in the graves. Neither does the orientations of any of these graves merit any attention. The individuals wearing the brooches **Norton G57** and **Empingham**

**II G105**, however, may be unusual for being turned onto their right-hand sides. Most cruciform brooch wearers were in fact laid supine (61.1%), or on their left-hand side (26.4%), but fewer were turned to their right (9.7%).<sup>11</sup>

Potentially, some of these biological males interred with cruciform brooches may have been incorrectly sexed, and this is likely to be the case for the Norton burials. However, we must not assume this to be the case for all of them. It may be true that those possible males found with Phase A cruciform brooches (**Cleatham G9** and **Spong Hill C1743**) were part of an earlier phenomenon. Just as the regional distribution of cruciform brooches becomes more restricted and defined after Phase A (Chapter 4), we might suppose that something similar applied to gendered dress-styles. For Phase A, only four sexed individuals are available. These include two probable males, one possible female, and only one more definite female. Therefore, it is fair to say that we really do not know what the most likely sex of the earliest individuals to wear cruciform brooches was. The very little evidence we have suggests that there may well have been no gendering of its use at all. This was of course the case for most Roman brooches (Foster 1993, 208), and the cruciform brooch's closest relative from this period, the crossbow brooch in its most elaborate forms, was even more closely associated with high status men (Janes 1996).

Some of those later graves might be marked out as slightly different whether it is the case that one has wrist-clasps worn on the shoulder (**Norton G57**), or that they are turned on a different side of their body (**Norton G57** and **Empingham II G105**). **Empingham II G106** is the only grave that is truly unusual due to the individual's young age at death. However, **Empingham II G129**, **Castledyke South G137** and **Norton G63** have nothing otherwise unusual about them at all. Neither is there anything unusual about their pathology or position in the cemetery. With such a small number of cases, reaching any firm conclusions is not possible, but we must at least be open to the possibility that biological males may have sometimes worn cruciform brooches both in life and in the grave for reasons presently unknown.

Some explanations for these so-called 'cross-gendered' burials have, however, been put forward. They are not an especially rare archaeological phenomenon and have been interpreted a number of ways, such as representing a third gender, whether this is to do

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<sup>11</sup> The sample size for known grave positions is 72 individuals, only 7 of which were turned on their right.

with an entirely cultural classification, or a variety of biological hermaphroditism (Knüsel and Ripley 2000, 162). This is an unlikely and somewhat fanciful explanation for these graves. A third gender, primarily, implies a named and culturally recognised social category for which we have no historical evidence. Such categories do exist in many societies, and with the rise of queer theory in the social sciences, archaeologists have occasionally sought to identify such individuals in the past (e.g. Knüsel and Ripley 2000; Taylor 1992, 84). However, the notion that a third gender would be a neat mixture of male biological sex with standardised feminine gendered items seems unlikely. Rather, we might expect something entirely different in their burial. They would perhaps be more likely to be among the silent population of the cemetery buried without grave goods rather than buried half-conforming to a very standardised gendered ideal.

For the most part the evidence overwhelmingly suggests that the cruciform brooch wearing fashion was one largely restricted by biological sex. The evidence therefore strongly implies that the identity of those people wearing cruciform brooches was gendered, and because of the association with female biological sex, we can say with some certainty that the gendered identity was feminine.

## Age, the Lifecycle and the Cruciform Brooch

If one aspect of social identity that the cruciform brooch reflected and acted to construct was a feminine gender, another (probably interrelated) aspect was a stage in the lifecycle. It has been demonstrated that although most feminine grave goods were included with even the youngest individuals, some grave goods were restricted (wrist-clasps, for instance, are generally only found with individuals over the age of 10-12 years old), and these gendered items peak in quantity between 20-40 years old (Stoodley 1999, 108). However, the gendered burial rite is said to be less likely for women over the age of about 40 (Stoodley 1999, 108). There is some disagreement with this last point, and it may be due to the sample that has been studied (Gowland 2006, 150). A key point is that a more standard feminine gendered burial rite, with at least two brooches (one on each shoulder, fastening a *peplos* dress, see Chapter 6), does not occur until the individual's age at death reaches about twelve years old (Gowland 2006, 148). Stoodley suggests that, for women, there were four lifecycle stages. After the age of five individuals were interred with some small amount of jewellery. After the age of twelve, a more standard gendered costume

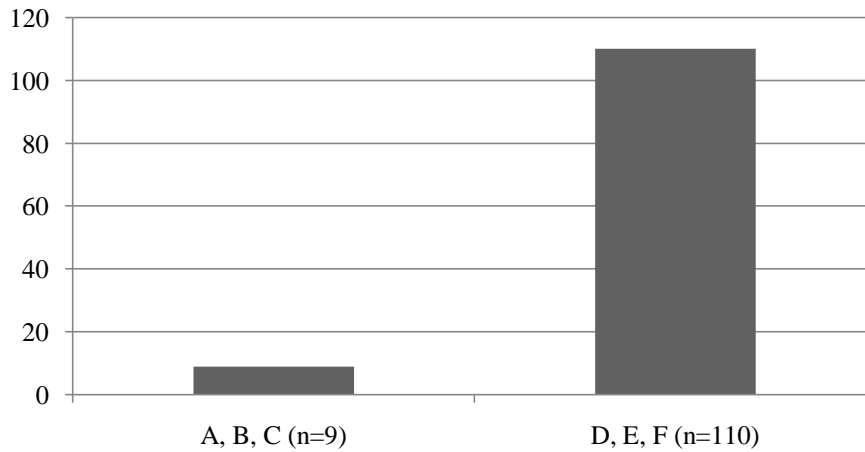
was permitted. The interpretation, therefore, is that adulthood was generally attained around this age (Stoodley 1999, 137). After some point in their late teens females received higher quantities of grave goods, especially beads. Once the age of about 40 was reached grave goods appear to decrease (Stoodley 1999, 117). For Stoodley, the age of about twelve years old signified the attainment of adulthood aligned approximately with reproductive potential, while the threshold of about eighteen years old represented the realisation of this with child-caring status. After the age of 40 the individual's offspring may have been married or possessed children themselves, thus decreasing the significance of the older woman's gender, and perhaps the end of their reproductive ability (Stoodley 1999, 137). Both Stoodley and Gowland, however, remark on one more piece of information: that saucer brooches were not interred with individuals under the age of eighteen, suggesting this may be a secondary adult life-phase, perhaps signifying marriage (Gowland 2006, 148; Stoodley 1999, 116). Saucer brooches might be seen as the analogues of cruciform brooches in Saxon areas (Wessex, the Upper Thames Valley), and this provides some slight evidence that these brooches had more specific meanings than simply ascribing a singular type of adulthood and feminine gender.

If specific types of brooch related to particular stages in the lifecycle, this is very much worthy of further investigation. Not only does it entirely justify the broad typological distinctions drawn between types of brooches, but it also provides a highly valuable insight into the specific meaning of brooch forms, the manner in which they were worn, their iconography, and their importance in the mortuary ritual as well as perhaps also in life

Of the 162 recorded contexts, 40 offered insufficient osteological material for analysis, and three were multiple cremations where the grave goods could not reliably be assigned to any particular individual. This leaves 119 successfully examined individuals, whose age was determinable with varying degrees of resolution. The analysis will begin at the very broadest level of age categories (Figure 5.4) to include as much the data as possible, and then proceed to subdivide the categories further.



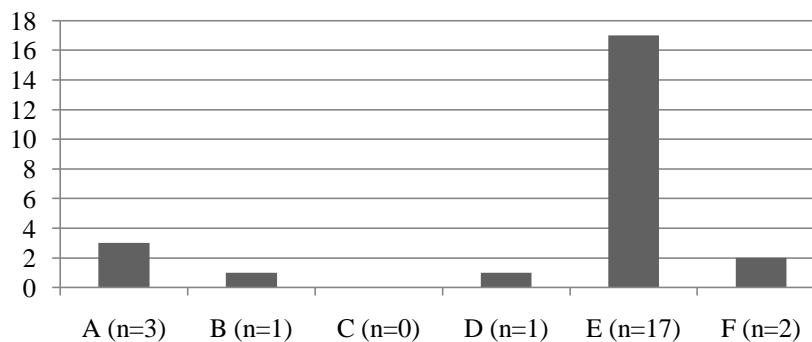
**Age at death of individuals with cruciform brooches  
from inhumations and cremations (n=119)**



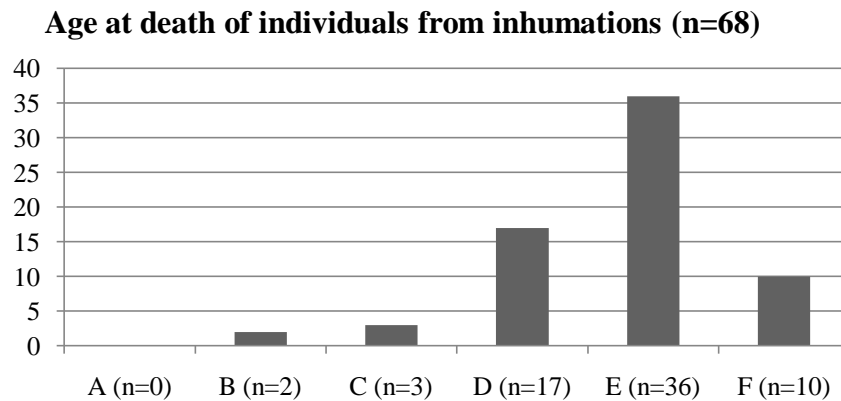
*Figure 5.4: Age at death of individuals from cremations and inhumations with cruciform brooches.*

In terms of cruciform brooch use, the most major break between age categories is seen between categories A, B and C (0-18), and D, E and F (19+). Because skeletal developments around the age of about 18 are especially obvious, drawing this division as an initial demonstration also allows the inclusion of all 119 individuals. These results are highly generalised, but mirror the point made above for the saucer brooch: it appears that the cruciform brooch was an item whose use was essentially restricted to individuals over the age of eighteen. When the inhumation and cremation burials are treated separately, and the age categories are broken down further into the six broadest categories, though the sample is reduced, a more detailed understanding is possible (Figures 5.5 and 5.6).

**Age at death of individuals from cremations (n=24)**



*Figure 5.5: Age at death for individuals cremated with cruciform brooches.*



*Figure 5.6: Age at death for individuals inhumed with cruciform brooches.*

As can be seen, the proportions of age at death categories for both mortuary rites are comparable. There are some interesting differences though. Both forms of mortuary rite have a clear peak in age category E which represents the chronological age range estimate of 26-40 (relatively old individuals). Cremation burials have considerable fewer individuals in category D (chronological age range 19-25), but proportionately more in the groups younger than category C (individuals younger than eighteen years old), particularly in the youngest age group A (individuals aged 0-4). Among the inhumations only 7.4% (five) of these individuals were younger than eighteen, while among the cremations this was 16.7%: more than twice the proportion, and also of a considerably younger age.

As Figure 5.4 demonstrates, interment for individuals under the age of eighteen with cruciform brooches was unusual regardless of the specific form of burial. Therefore, individuals in these categories must be explained, especially those in the very youngest categories. It may be the case that this is partly the result of different ritual practices (inhumation or cremation), especially for age categories A and B. The ritual of cremation offers a more transformative process that may have made the individual's social status in life of less relevance. However, as can be seen quite clearly from these data, for the most part the age categories represented are largely the same for both inhumation and cremation practices: there is not a dramatic difference. The difference may instead lie in chronological difference comparable to that outlined above for the relation between biological sex and cruciform brooches. The cruciform brooches associated with age

category A individuals are all from cremations: **Spong Hill C1176**, **Cleatham C140** and **Cleatham C459**. Two of these (**Cleatham C140** and **Cleatham C459**) are also both Phase A cruciform brooches. **Spong Hill C1176** is nominally a Phase B cruciform brooch, but it is only a foot fragment. It has been placed in Phase B solely on account of the brow above the eyes, an iconographic element found otherwise only on Group 2 cruciform brooches. However, the slim proportions of **Spong Hill C1176**, and the fact that the catch extends all the way down to the foot certainly place it at the earlier end of Phase B, if not in Phase A. All three of these age category A individuals are therefore early, and perhaps all belong to Phase A. The only cremated age category B individual has a cruciform brooch nominally of Type 2.2.3, Phase B2, and is therefore of a later period. However, the dating of this example in particular may also be cast in some doubt. Its spiral nostrils are relatively small and tight, a feature sometimes seen on the earlier Kentish Group 1 brooches (Phase A). It is therefore tentatively feasible at least that this is in fact a similarly early example.

The two younger individuals (age category B) from the inhumations should also be discussed. One of these has already been mentioned as being unusual: **Empingham G105** (age 9-10), the potential biological male. It is therefore already an anomalous burial. The other **Sewerby G28** (age 7-9) is an otherwise completely normal burial, with nothing remarkable to distinguish it. Both of these brooches are safely datable to Phase B, and are therefore exceptionally young individuals for this period to have been interred with cruciform brooches. Perhaps they represent the unusual circumstance of being interred with inherited jewellery, or had somehow assumed the identity of the normal cruciform brooch wearer at an exceptionally young age.

The individuals of age category C are all from inhumation graves. From the specialist reports, one of these is certainly outside the normal range: **Castledyke South G156**, which was aged 14-15 years old by the osteological examination. The other two, **Cleatham G46** and **Quarrington G15**, were aged 12-18, and 17-19 respectively, so these two at least do not necessarily lie outside the normal age range for cruciform brooch wearers. The cruciform brooch from **Castledyke South G156**, however, was certainly not worn in the normal fashion. It was found on the right shoulder, but is only a fragment. Not only is it, again, probably a Phase A brooch, but the excavators remark that it may have been perforated (Drinkall and Foreman 1998, 79), and therefore perhaps

it was reused and worn as a pendant (this exceptional brooch will be given further discussion in Chapter 7)

In summary, these unusually young individuals are partly explicable in chronological terms. Phase A cruciform brooches seem to have a less restricted geographical distribution, (see Chapter 4), less restricted forms (see Chapter 2) and may also have been less restricted by biological sex (see above). The analysis of age suggests something similar may apply to their associations with a stage in the lifecycle: four out of the six cruciform brooches interred with individuals certainly under the age of eighteen can be dated to Phase A (c.450-475), and only two are certainly later. However, due to the small numbers involved, it is very difficult to say anything with certainty. It does seem that interment with a cruciform brooch was not completely restricted by age group, and that there were some exceptions even in later phases, if a very small number of them. The apparently later more stringent restriction on the ages of cruciform brooch wearers will be returned to below in the interpretation of these results.

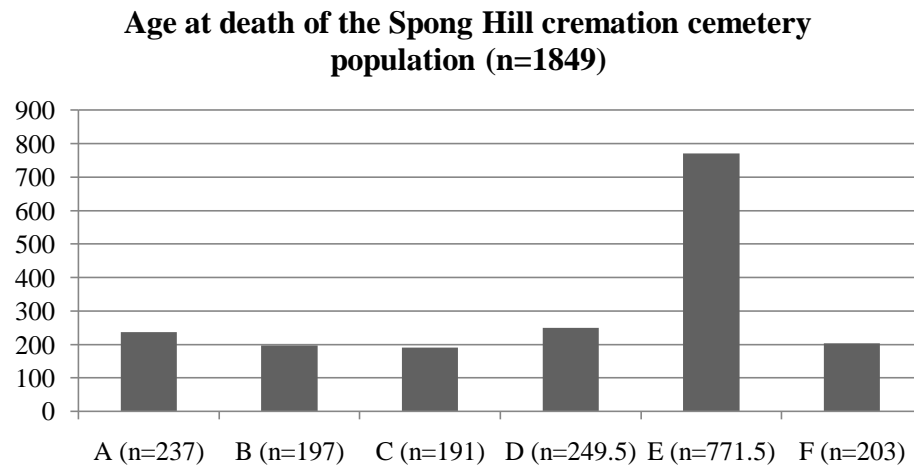
With the younger and anomalous examples discussed, the older individuals can be examined in more detail. In order to do this, these results should be compared with the age at death proportions among all early Anglo-Saxon graves. Average age at death in Anglo-Saxon cemeteries is in any case over the age of 18. Therefore, to see how real this pattern actually is, the age at death of cruciform brooch wearers needs to be contextualised within broader cemetery demography.

The only published demographic data currently available for cremations are from Spong Hill. Age data have been made available only partially for Cleatham, as their osteological examination is currently in progress.<sup>12</sup> Fortunately, Spong Hill contributes 20 out of the 24 accurately aged cremations (the remaining four are from Cleatham), so it is the demography of this cemetery that is the major concern. The age at death of the Spong Hill cremation cemetery is shown in Figure 5.7. Note that the original categories used by Jacqueline McKinley (1994) were specific enough to classify some individuals as possibly belonging to more than one class (for example A/B, B/C, C/D, D/E and E/F). For the purposes of comparison these less specific categories have been split equally

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<sup>12</sup> This research is currently (2008-2011) being undertaken as a PhD at the University of Sheffield by Kirsty Squires, who was kind enough to offer age and sex data for those individuals found with cruciform brooches.

between the age categories they could belong to, according to a methodology suggested by Andrew Chamberlain (1994, 20).



*Figure 5.7: Spong Hill cremations age at death (note: an additional 318 general 'adults' or age 19+ individuals are not included on this histogram).*

If Figure 5.7 is compared with Figure 5.5 (age at death of cremations interred with a cruciform brooch), there is the same broad trend, though the proportions differ. Both have a major peak in age category E individuals (26-40 years), and notably less in categories F (40+ years) and D (19-25). Both also have a small peak in category A (0-4 years). Proportionately, however, the peak in category E individuals is greater for individuals interred with cruciform brooches. Therefore, it is possible to say that at Spong Hill individuals between the ages 26-40 were preferentially interred with cruciform brooches. However, as will be demonstrated below, this is less dramatic than is seen in inhumation burial.

For inhumation burials only a selection of twelve well-published cemeteries (listed in Table 5.2) were used to assess age at death. These were: Barrington A (Edix Hill) (Malim and Hines 1998), Broughton Lodge (Kinsley 1993), Castledyke South (Drinkall and Foreman 1998), Empingham II (Timby 1996), Morning Thorpe (Green *et al* 1987), Norton (Sherlock and Welch 1992), Oakington (Taylor *et al* 1997), Quarrington (Dickinson 2004), Sewerby (Hirst 1985), Spong Hill (inhumation burials – Hills *et al* 1984), Swaffham (Hills and Wade-Martins 1976), and West Heslerton (Haughton and Powlesland 1999a). Some of these only offer very small samples (Oakington, Spong Hill inhumations, and Swaffham), but they still contribute cumulatively to the larger sample.

The problems with using the remaining twelve inhumation cemeteries were various. The skeletal remains of none of the graves containing cruciform brooches could be aged, and therefore these cemeteries should be excluded as, effectively, they exist outside the sample. These cemeteries are Bergh Apton (where no burials at all could be aged), Brunel Way, Easington, Mucking I and II, Snape, Springfield Lyons, and Wasperton. The Cleatham inhumations have not been published in sufficient detail for this analysis (“subadults”, those under around eighteen years old, were not aged any more specifically). The human remains available from Fonaby are a very incomplete sample of the originally excavated cemetery. Great Chesterford was not used due to its very unique cemetery population with exceptionally high numbers of children (Evison 1994, 59). In addition, there is only one cruciform brooch from this cemetery. Westgarth Gardens was not used as its age categories could not be fitted with the categories used in this analysis as they tended to cut across almost all of them. The osteological data from this cemetery has in any case been deemed insufficiently accurate (Penn and Brugmann 2007, 88). In addition, only two of the three graves that included cruciform brooches were osteologically aged, and even these were in such poor condition that they were only said to be “adult”, with no further specification. Most of these excluded cemeteries have only very small numbers of cruciform brooches, so the sample is not particularly affected. Those twelve cemeteries that are used allow a good geographical spread from Suffolk, through Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, Rutland, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, East Yorkshire and Northumberland. These are the core areas of cruciform brooch use excluding only Kent.

These twelve cemeteries can be shown to have varying demographic characteristics (Figure 5.8). This is partly to do with the fact that most are relatively small samples, and perhaps also due to local conditions. Since cruciform brooches were only generally interred with individuals within and above age category D (around eighteen years old and above), it is only categories D, E and F that are of interest. Most of these cemeteries have a greater number of individuals in category E (*c.*26-40 years old). The only exceptions are Quarrington, which is a very small sample (*n*=14), and Morning Thorpe, which has a greater number of individuals in category D (*c.*18-25). This means that in these cemeteries, or at least this broad region of Anglo-Saxon England, age category E was the most likely age at death.

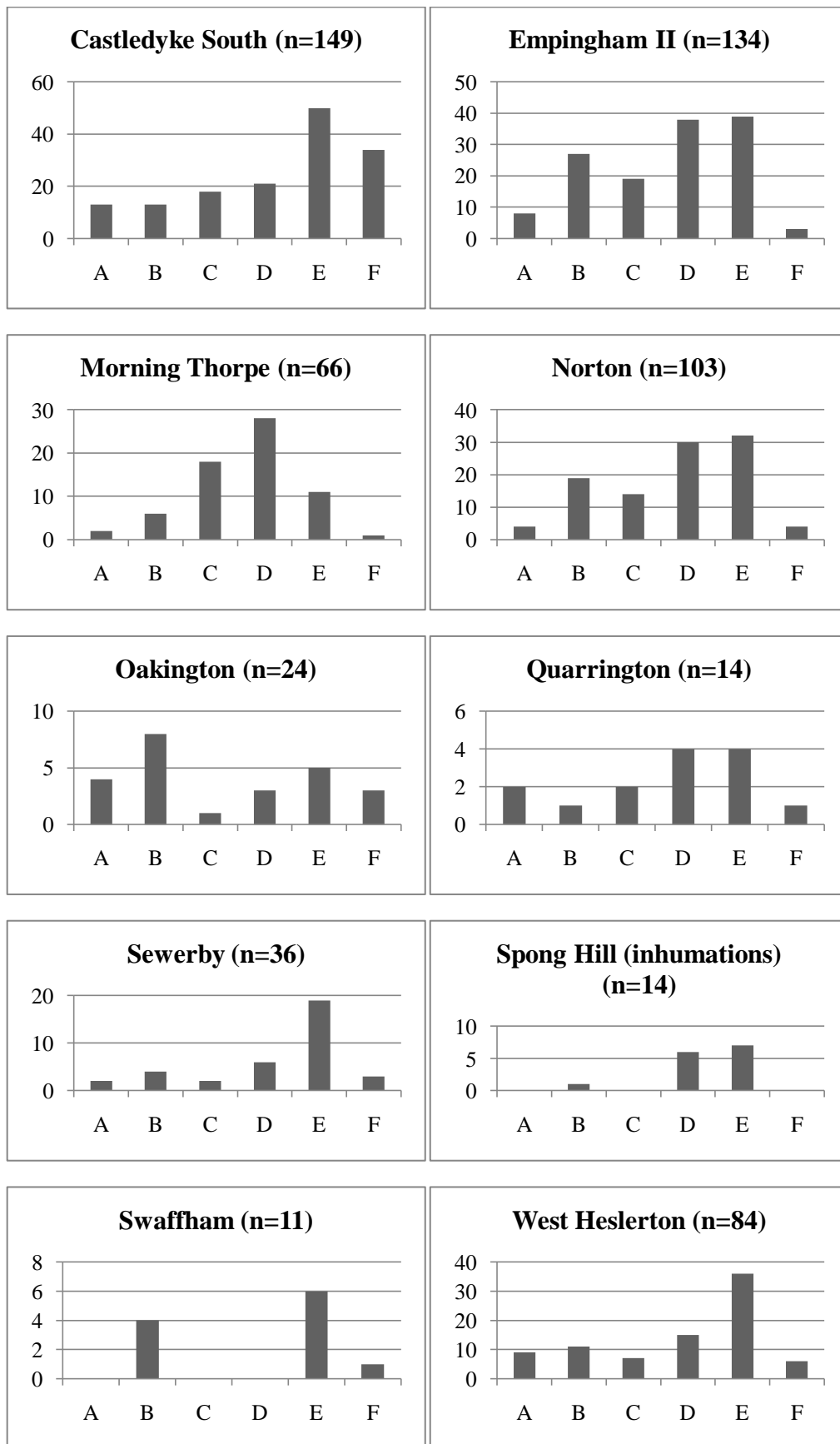
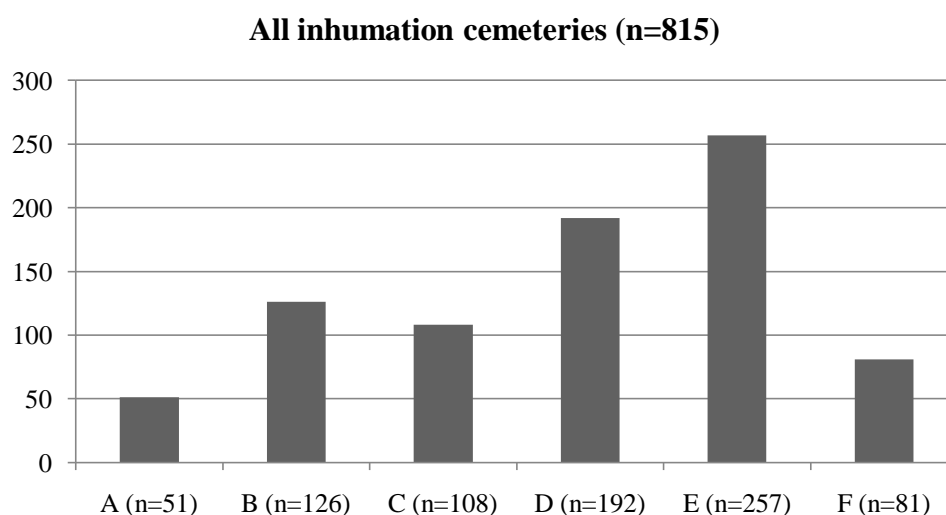


Figure 5.8: Age at death demography for early Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemeteries.

It is important to note that category E is the broadest as it spans fifteen years. Therefore, we might expect more individuals to fall into it. Older individuals, in category F (c.40+), are considerably fewer in almost all cemeteries with the exception of Castledyke South and Oakington. Again, this result for Oakington is probably due to its very small sample size (n=24), while Castledyke South's result may be due to a relatively healthy and long-lived population. The numbers of individuals who died in age category D varies considerably, largely from about half the quantity in age category E, to about the same number. Therefore, though local conditions at each site do have some effect, and a few small samples cause some anomalous variation, broad patterns are visible. Most individuals at these sites died in age category E, and slightly fewer in age category D. Considerably fewer died in age category F.

Because the individuals with cruciform brooches were drawn from a larger sample, and the purpose of this analysis is to draw some broad conclusions about cruciform brooch use, these individual cemetery demographics can be combined to produce the histogram in Figure 5.9, which summarises the broad trends shown in Figure 5.8.



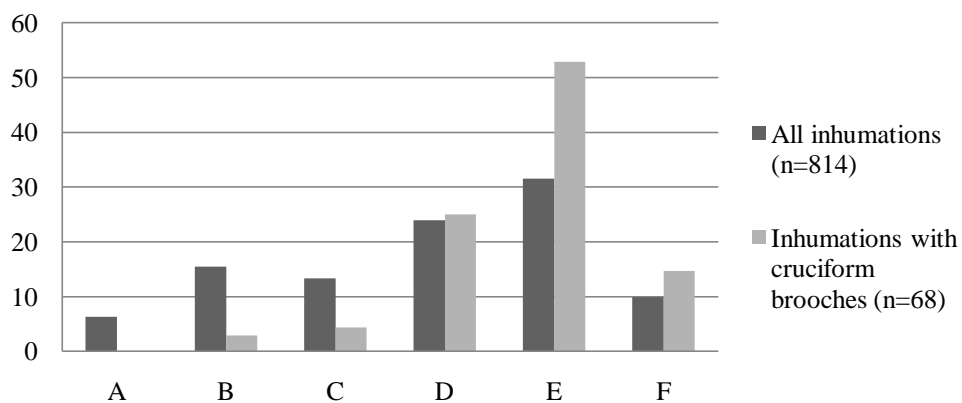
*Figure 5.9: Cumulative age at death profiles from the 12 cemeteries in Figure 5.8.*

Figure 5.9 (general age at death in early Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemeteries) can now be compared with Figure 5.6 (ages at death of cruciform brooch wearers) to see if the cruciform brooch was interred preferentially with age categories D, E or F. This is



expressed in Figure 5.10 which compares these values in percentages. As can be seen, there is a very clear preference for being interred with a cruciform brooch if the individual was in age category E. Over 50% of cruciform brooches were found with individuals of this category, while only about 30% of the general population died at this age. Similarly, though to a far lesser extent, there is a preference for cruciform brooch use for individuals in age category F. About 15% of cruciform brooches were found with individuals of this age, while this category counts for only 10% of individuals in the general cemetery demography. Preference for interment with a cruciform brooch in age category D is only very slight: 14% as opposed to 13%. The pattern is dramatically reversed for age categories below D, with 0% in category A. Approximately 3% and 4% of cruciform brooches were found with individuals of age categories B and C respectively, while these two categories make up 16% and 13% of the inhumed population.

**Comparing general inhumation demography with graves containing cruciform brooches (measured in %)**

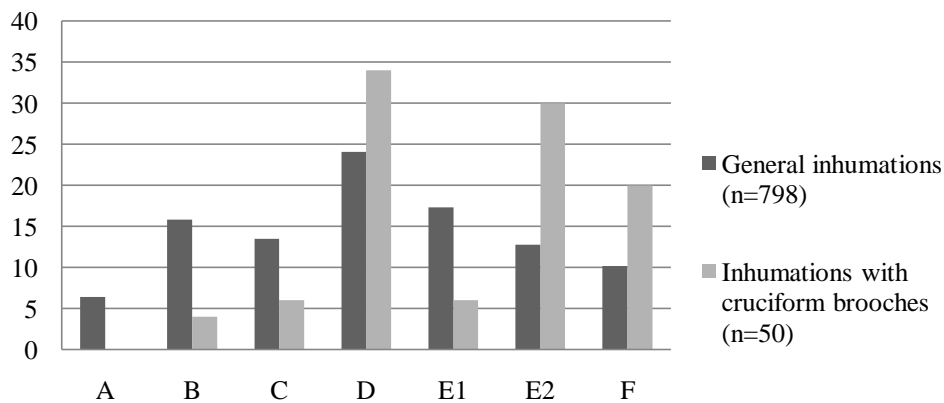


*Figure 5.10: Percentages of age categories in general inhumation practice, and in inhumations with cruciform brooches.*

For some inhumation graves, it was possible to sub-divide age category E into E1 (c.26-30) and E2 (c.31-40), and if these figures are then compared with this sub-division, the histogram in Figure 5.11 can be produced. This alters the picture somewhat. Because its span has effectively been broadened relative to category E1 and E2, age category D becomes the most likely age of death for inhumation burials in this general sample of cemeteries. From age category D onward, categories E1, E2 and F gradually fall off. When comparing this to cruciform brooch use it should be made clear that the numbers of

cruciform brooches in each category (especially E1) are smaller, so the sample in Figure 5.11 may not be quite as reliable as in Figure 5.10. However, a clear preference for cruciform brooch use is now seen in age category E2 (c.31-40 years), and the preference is clearer still for age category F. Relative preference for being interred with a cruciform brooch has also increased in age category D. Therefore, there is a clear preference for cruciform brooch use by individuals over the age of about eighteen years old, and an even greater one for individuals between the ages of 30 and 40, which continues to a lesser extent after this age. In sum, cruciform brooches were most frequently interred with, and presumably worn by, the older women in the community.

**Comparing general inhumation demography with graves containing cruciform brooches (measured in %)**



*Figure 5.11: Percentages of age categories in general inhumation practice, and in inhumations with cruciform brooches with age category E subdivided.*

## Discussion

This analysis has demonstrated a number of points. Firstly, in both cremation and inhumation cemeteries cruciform brooches were overwhelmingly interred with women. There are a small number of exceptions, some of which are apparently early (Phase A) burials, and some of the later graves of this anomalous nature have other unusual characteristics. Secondly, cruciform brooches were generally only interred with individuals over the age of about eighteen. Again, there are a small number of exceptions, most of which were also of an early date or are marked out by other unusual

features. These trends are broadly the same in both cremation and inhumation burials, though perhaps the often earlier date of cremation burial makes cruciform brooches appear slightly less restricted in this ritual practice. The real question here then is not so much about the nature of the burial rite, but about why interment with cruciform brooches became more stringently restricted at a later date. Because the trends are broadly true for both funerary rites, we may say with some confidence that at least this type of grave good (cruciform brooches) was not selected differently for inhumation and cremation. Rather, the similarity in data patterning suggests that these brooches were the possessions of the deceased in life, and this was their reason for inclusion in the burial rite, regardless of the specific ritual process.

Though cruciform brooches were interred with individuals generally over the age of eighteen, there was a preference for individuals over the age of 26 and perhaps even more so once they were over the age of 30. This analysis has therefore isolated two biological aspects, sex and age, that were restricting factors acting upon the appropriateness of wearing and being buried with cruciform brooches. A more detailed analysis of the saucer brooch may well reveal similar trends, and would make for an interesting analysis. It is the purpose of this discussion to explore how this biological patterning might be explained in social terms.

It would seem that we are dealing here with a cumulative process of identity formation in two senses. In the first sense, this practice seems to crystallize over the period in question. Just as with the distribution of the cruciform brooch, the broadest patterns are largely present from the earliest stages, but become more stringently restricted after about 475 AD (during Phase B). Unfortunately there are not enough well-recorded and osteologically examined graves with cruciform brooches from either Phase A or Phase C to perform a useful quantitative analysis, but there are some suggestions this may well be the case for Phase A at least. In the second sense, this identity seems to cumulate over the course of a single individual's life-span: the longer they lived the more likely they were to have obtained, and been interred with, a cruciform brooch. Discussion of why this may have been the case will be divided into a number of sections. Firstly, an estimation of how common cruciform brooch wearers were in each burial community will be made to obtain some idea of the scale of this practice. Secondly, the chronological variation in age and sex association with cruciform brooches will be discussed in more detail. Thirdly, the potential role of these individuals in the household and community

will be discussed. Finally, a broader social structural interpretation of these results will be offered.

### *Cruciform Brooches in the Cemetery Population*

It must be made clear that this analysis deals with a minority practice: cruciform brooches were not used to construct or display a standard femininity, or a standard age group. Table 5.3 shows the percentages of individuals interred with cruciform brooches in each cemetery. These proportions vary significantly. The very low proportions among the Spong Hill and Cleatham cremations compared with the very high percentages among the Spong Hill and Cleatham inhumations is a point that will be explored below. Cemeteries with very high frequencies of cruciform brooch use include Empingham II, Norton and Sewerby. Sites in Essex (Mucking and Springfield Lyons), and Wasperton in Warwickshire may have very low proportions of burials with cruciform brooches as they are on the fringe regions of cruciform brooch use (see Chapter 4). Calculations of all these frequencies provide a mean value of 4.87% (the median is 4.15%). Therefore just fewer than 5% of the cemetery population were interred with cruciform brooches in the Anglian region. Only a minority of all the burials from these cemeteries have been sexed, but we can assume by a very broad estimate that about half of them would have been biological males.<sup>13</sup> Given that cruciform brooches, by and large, were interred only with females, we can say that, on average, 9.74% of women wore cruciform brooches in the grave. Similarly, we can refine this figure further by age. As outlined above, individuals under the age of eighteen interred with cruciform brooches were very unusual. Using the numbers from Figure 5.8 we can calculate that 65% of the cemetery population were over the age of eighteen. A simple calculation demonstrates that approximately 16% of women over the age of eighteen were buried with cruciform brooches.

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<sup>13</sup> In Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemeteries the male to female ratio can vary significantly (Boyleston *et al* in Drinkall and Foreman 1998, 222), but will generally average-out at around half and half. This is a very basic calculation included here to give a rough idea of figures. The figure was not calculated only for definite female inhumations as this would have reduced the figures significantly as not all aged burials can also be sexed.

<b>Cemetery</b>	<b>Individuals with cruciform brooches</b>	<b>Number of individuals</b>	<b>% with cruciform brooch</b>
Barrington A	2	149	1.34
Bergh Apton	4	63	6.35
Broughton Lodge	5	121	4.13
Castledyke South	8	227	3.52
Cleatham (cremations)	5	1204*	0.42
Cleatham (inhumations)	7	62	11.29
Empingham II	12	135	8.89
Great Chesterford (mixed)	1	194	0.52
Morning Thorpe (mixed)	26	374	6.95
Mucking I	1	64	1.56
Mucking II (mixed)	2	745	0.27
Norton (mixed)	10	120	8.33
Sewerby	7	58	12.07
Snape (mixed)	3	72	4.17
Spong Hill (cremations)	29	2384	1.22
Spong Hill (inhumations)	8	57	14.04
Springfield Lyons (mixed)	3	250	1.2
Wasperton (mixed)	3	241	1.24
West Heselton (mixed)	11	201	5.47
Westgarth Gardens (mixed)	3	69	4.35

\*This figure represents the number of urns excavated at Cleatham, not all of which contained human remains. It therefore represents a maximum number. Research currently underway has established a minimum number of individuals of about 950 (Squires pers. comm. 2011),

*Table 5.3: Percentages of cruciform brooches at the large cemeteries in the sample.*

It is important to note that this represents only a small proportion of all women interred with jewellery or brooches. In Nick Stoodley's sample, 60% of biological females were interred with "gender signalling artefacts" such as brooches, jewellery, or spindle whorls (Stoodley 1999, 75). So aside from the fact they were biological females, were over the age of eighteen, and most likely somewhere between 26 and 40 years old, we also need to ask what else marked these women out from all other 84% of the population that also fitted this description. An explanation can be offered from the conclusions of Chapter 4: these women were distinguished ultimately by their perceived descent as the inheritors of the Anglian ethnos.

### *Chronological Variation*

Chronological development in the use of cruciform brooches is visible in these data (as has been discussed above) and most of what is analysed here applies to Phase B (c.475-550), as brooches of this period represent the overwhelming majority (see Chapter 3). Commentary on Phases A (c.450-475) and C (c.525-575) is harder to formulate given the smaller amount of data we have for these periods. However, there are some intriguing phenomena that are worth remarking upon.

Phase A cruciform brooches are constituted only by Group 1. These brooches are characterised as small, with simple iconography, and are the most similar to continental examples (see Chapter 2). Though in some ways they are the most individualistic in terms of style (no identical pairs are known), because they have a more limited stylistic vocabulary, they do not show the complex 'bricolage' type of variation seen among Phase B brooches. In other words, they are more generic in form, but appear to have been produced on a more individual basis.

Most of the known contexts of these Group 1 brooches are cremations, and this presents a problem in that they only reach us via a different ritual process to most other cruciform brooches. However, even in this early phase it seems that they were worn by, and interred with, a similar demographic as in Phases B and C, if with a higher number of exceptions (see above). Therefore, even at this stage there were broad trends in cruciform brooch use, but any age and sex-related restrictions were less rigorously applied, and perhaps less well developed. The only sites that allow us to compare, with sufficient numbers, the differences between cremated and inhumed individuals interred with cruciform brooches, (which to some extent also constitutes the differences between Phases A and B), are the very large mixed rite cemeteries of Spong Hill in Norfolk, and Cleatham in Lincolnshire. The key information for these cemeteries can be seen in Table 5.3. We recall that the average (mean) proportion of cruciform brooch wearers in Anglo-Saxon cemeteries is 4.87%. For the cremations from these two sites the proportion is considerably lower, 1.22% for Spong Hill, and 0.42% for Cleatham. In dramatic contrast, the proportion of inhumed individuals interred with cruciform brooches is exceptionally high: 14.04% and 11.29% respectively.

Archaeological survival must be taken into account for the very low scores among the cremations. Firstly, the remains of copper-alloy brooches were not necessarily always collected from the funeral pyre. Though it seems that in many cases special efforts were made to collect even the most amorphous lumps of copper-alloy and place them in the cinerary urn, there is no way we can be sure that this was always the case. Secondly, the present sample has only included fragments of brooch which can be positively identifiable as cruciform brooches either from the foot form, or from the head-plate form. This leaves a number of unidentifiable copper-alloy lumps, bow and catch-plate fragments that have been excluded.

Cleatham offers at least another eight copper-alloy fragments that could potentially represent cremated cruciform brooches. This would only bring the proportion up to 1.08%. Approximately a further 40 cruciform brooches would be required to bring this percentage up to the levels of the average inhumation cemetery, and about another 150 would be necessary to bring the figure up to the proportion of cruciform brooches from the Cleatham inhumations. For Spong Hill, however, there are at least a further 49 potential cruciform brooch fragments,<sup>14</sup> which would bring the proportion up to 3.28%, still a low figure, but within the bounds of an average value. Roughly another 300 would have to be found to bring the figure up to the proportion of cruciform brooches in the Spong Hill inhumations. Therefore, although proportions for cruciform brooches in cremation cemeteries are not necessarily exceptionally low, there is an enormous disparity between their relatively small numbers compared with the very high proportions of cruciform brooches from inhumation burials at the same sites.

To answer this kind of question it would be helpful to know exactly what mix of communities were using these very large cremation cemeteries,<sup>15</sup> and perhaps it was a particular (and slightly later) community whose members were choosing to inhume rather than cremate their dead, and this community possessed higher numbers of cruciform brooch wearers. Perhaps these were more comparable to the communities at Sewerby and Empingham II for instance: both these cemeteries have comparably high rates of

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<sup>14</sup> Regrettably the Spong Hill material was not available at the time of writing for personal examination of these objects. From the published illustrations it is sometimes very difficult to tell with any certainty whether these very much three-dimensionally distorted brooch fragments are positively identifiable or not.

<sup>15</sup> A project based on a petrographic analysis of ceramics from a sample of cemeteries and settlements in north Lincolnshire hopes to answer some of these questions and is currently part of a PhD project being undertaken by Gareth Perry at the University of Sheffield.

cruciform brooch interment. However, the fact that the same pattern is seen at both Cleatham and Spong Hill makes the idea that a single community (or the members of a particular settlement) were impinging on a traditionally communal cemetery unlikely, and should raise some suspicion. Rather, this would seem to be the work of certain individuals from a number of settlements acting among the very first representatives of a newly restricted identity, and demonstrating this conspicuously through their burial rite in terms of both their material culture (slightly later and larger forms of Phase B cruciform brooches) and their specific mortuary ritual.

Christopher Scull (1992, 19) has suggested, on the grounds of grave structures (a chamber grave and ring ditches) as opposed to grave goods, that the inhumations at Spong Hill may represent a “local elite lineage” seeking to distinguish themselves from the rest of the community. Whether or not they represent a specific lineage or not, Scull is correct to suggest that these new burial rituals were an effort to make a social distinction, and at both Cleatham and Spong Hill, the cruciform brooch is quite intimately linked with this new display. One interpretation may be that by the last quarter of the 5th century the cruciform brooch became associated with an emergent social status that claimed a new type of group identity more explicitly through dress, and who chose to display this conspicuously through their burial. This would explain the explosion in popularity of the cruciform brooch after about 475 when the myriad Group 2 and 3 cruciform brooches develop (Chapters 2 and 3). This is also when the distribution of cruciform brooches crystallises, and building on the arguments of Chapter 4, this point in time marks the creation of the Anglian ethnos. The fact that this status should be made even more obvious in inhumation, with the body laid out in funerary tableaux rather than transformed through fire and placed in an urn, might therefore also be an explanation for the concordant change in burial rite. This change in claims to group identity may also help to explain the typological differences between brooches of Group 1 and Groups 2 and 3. The fact that Group 1 cruciform brooches are more individualistic, but produced in accordance within a more generalised stylistic vocabulary, may suggest they were being produced before there was a need to signal any direct relationships with other social groups. Just as the distribution, age and sex patterns do not completely crystallise before Phase B, neither does cruciform brooch style.

If Phase B represents the zenith and ongoing maintenance of this new and politically expedient identity, then we also need to query what happens in Phase C. Again, the



numbers of osteologically identified individuals from Phase C are too few for analysis. However, the twelve osteologically aged individuals that were interred with Phase C brooches fit the same pattern as Phase B: there are no individuals under the age of eighteen, and age distribution above this is mixed (three category D individuals, five E2, three general E, and one general 18+). These numbers are too small, but one might, because of the complete lack of under-eighteen year olds, tentatively suggest that by this point into time (c.550) age restrictions on cruciform brooch use were even more stringently followed. Then again, one of these brooches was found with a biological male (**Empingham II G129**). From the typology (Chapter 2) and distribution (Chapter 4) it seems that these Sub-Group 4.4, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 cruciform brooches were stylistically complex, but mechanically copied (Chapter 2). They also lacked a strictly regionalised distribution (Chapter 4). The suggestion in Chapter 4 was that the production and exchange of these lavish brooches was more controlled, potentially by elite patronage, and that the cruciform brooch had at this point become a more trans-regional status symbol indicating affiliation with a specific elite group, perhaps one claiming an ancestral authority linked to the Anglian ethnoses. There is no further evidence from the osteology of these skeletons. There is no pathology, or lack of pathology to indicate an elite status. One individual with dental hypoplasia (Empingham II grave 81) which indicates an insufficient diet in childhood is not sufficient to demonstrate anything either way. There is, however, some interest in the distribution of these Phase C cruciform brooches within the cemetery, and this will be explored below.

#### *Cruciform brooches in the Anglo-Saxon Community and Household*

In terms of looking at cruciform brooch interments and their relation to the community in death, some broad figures as to their proportions have been established. Their burial location in the cemetery may also provide useful information. The cemetery plans seen on Plates CCCIX-CCCXXVI show eight of the major cemeteries with the graves that contained cruciform brooches highlighted. These cemeteries in particular have been chosen because they hold a large enough number of burials to contextualise any potential clustering or lack thereof. As can be clearly seen, for most of these cemeteries, there is no clear patterning. There are obviously problems with the relatively small size and incomplete nature of some of these excavations. Bergh Apton (Plate CCCIX) and Westgarth Gardens (Plate CCCXX), with 63 and 69 inhumations respectively, are

perhaps too small to show anything with much certainty. Neither shows any clustering, though if more of these cemeteries were excavated this point might deserve reconsideration. Broughton Lodge (Plate CCCXXI) and Castledyke South (CCCXXII) also do not show any convincing clustering of these cruciform brooch graves, which are spread relatively evenly. Norton (Plate CCCXXIII) and Sewerby (Plate CCCXXIV) both show potential clusters of graves with cruciform brooches. At Norton, graves 57, 63 and 78 are all clustered together, as are 84, 96 and 102. Grave 61 lies in isolation at the centre of the cemetery and graves 1, 22 and 30 do not appear to be part of any grouping. At Sewerby there is a potential cluster around the centre of the cemetery (graves 8, 12, 28 and 41), and graves 15 and 35 may be clustered. Grave 57, however, is not part of any group. Morning Thorpe (Plate CCCXXV) displays three or four groups of cruciform brooch containing graves, one just southeast of the centre, one just to the north, and a linear grouping, which might be seen as two separate clusters in the west of the cemetery. However, Empingham II (Plate CCCXXVI) certainly does display two convincing clusters of cruciform brooch interments, both clearly separated in the western and eastern halves of the (excavated) cemetery, and this exception will be explored below. On the whole, graves containing cruciform brooches were certainly not seen as distinct from the rest of the burial community. They do not form isolated clusters but are generally mixed with other graves. Where there are clusters of graves containing cruciform brooches, there is always more than one group, so they do not represent a single elite and completely isolated group of individuals in any settlement.

Current thinking on the matter suggests that, due to the very mixed distribution of sex and age groups, early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries were laid out in household plots (Stoodley 1999, 126). Space in the inhumation cemeteries does not appear to have been divided according to gender or stage in the lifecycle, and neither are graves with particularly high numbers of grave goods (or vice versa) generally clustered. Households (the unit of individuals resident in one house and perhaps ancillary buildings) are thought to have formed the basic economic unit of early Anglo-Saxon society and its members were most likely of mixed status, perhaps even including slaves (Woolf 1997, 69). Roles within the household were most likely divided along the lines of gender and life phase (Woolf 1997, 69). A distinction must be drawn between our notion of a nuclear family and an early Anglo-Saxon household. The latter most likely contained multiple descent groups. Though there were social distinctions within the household, households themselves were not noticeably differentiated (Wickham 2005, 502). Settlements contained the same

major structure types (post-built buildings and ancillary sunken-featured buildings), and generally do not have focal points or any possible status differentiation until the early kingdoms of the 7th century. At this point sites such as Yeavinger and Millfield in Northumbria and Cowdery's Down in Northamptonshire were constructed with obviously differentiated structures and enclosures. Therefore, the elite of the earlier period were not marking themselves out in settlement planning or architectural terms. Hierarchy was more clearly marked out within, rather than between, households.

With this view of cemetery layout, the mixed distribution of cruciform brooch graves in cemeteries may in fact offer a valuable interpretation. We can suggest that cruciform brooches were not worn by all female members of particular households, but, more likely, were worn by a very small number of women within each household. Though the dating resolution of individual graves (see above, Chapter 3) does not allow any accurate calculations, we can estimate for most communities that this was somewhere around the region of only one or two per household at the same time. Those cemeteries that show some potential clustering of cruciform brooches (Morning Thorpe, Norton, Sewerby), might in fact be better interpreted as showing some households that did not possess any cruciform brooch wearers, and some that did. Therefore, bearers of the Anglian tradition were not necessarily present in every household. The one exception is Empingham II, which shows some very clear and undisputable clustering at either end of the cemetery. The other unique aspect of the Empingham II cruciform brooches is that they offer a very large proportion of Phase C brooches (Types 4.4, 4.6.1, 4.6.2, and 4.7.1). It is therefore the only cemetery to contain both an exceptional quantity and this range of these large, late and relatively rare types, as well as obviously differentiated burial clusters. As was discussed in Chapter 4, the Phase C cruciform brooches may indicate a trans-regional high-status group based on an even further restricted identity. Though the numbers are too small to indicate further restriction by age and sex in Phase C, this single cemetery plan may indicate restriction instead by household or descent group. The marking out of particular households as claiming exclusive rights to a certain identities represents a significant change in this latest phase of Migration Period community organisation.

### *Explaining Social Variability*

For the most part (or for Phase B at least), cruciform brooches were worn only by one or two members of each household, and this requires an explanation. The traditional explanation focuses on wealth and status differences. Cruciform brooches, almost invariably, are found in grave groups with a large number and wide variety of object types including other brooches, high quantities of beads, girdle-hangers, iron knives, jewellery (rings, bracelets and pendants), and other less common material culture. With some theoretical reservations in mind, these graves possess among the highest so-called grave-wealth of the period. For the above-discussed processual accounts of early Anglo-Saxon burial, these graves represent an emergent high-status group of the 6th century, not as distinct and powerful as the princely graves of the 7th century (e.g. Sutton Hoo, Asthall), but a group of individuals with a superior control of resources gained through an authority invested in personal power (or identity) rather than land ownership. Land ownership appears to be a later development. These politically elevated individuals and their kin are thought to have provided the origins for the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms that arose by the end of the 6th century (Arnold 1988, 115; Scull 1992, 22; 1999, 22; *cf.* Shephard 1979). Work in this processual tradition would incorporate cruciform brooch interments with all other graves displaying this high quantity of grave goods, and thereby miss their specific social significance. There are also some theoretical difficulties with these largely processual approaches. Though we cannot necessarily imply that wealth in the grave is an accurate and direct representation of wealth in life, these quantities of grave goods inescapably represent, in the first instance, control over resources to obtain them, and in the second, sufficient economic resources to be able to inter them. Their presence in the burial ritual also indicates a desire (of themselves or their kin) to be conspicuously displayed with these objects, and to create a social memory of the funeral that reinforced such a status. Though we are not necessarily dealing with the wealthiest class of individuals, we are dealing with a group of women linked by their wish, or their mourners' desire, to associate them with ideas of wealth, among other symbolism, in the burial ritual.

However, when research began to include the notions of household mentioned above (following excavation and research on early Anglo-Saxon settlements) this traditional notion was made problematic. Though it may be the case for the obvious clusters of graves at Empingham II discussed above, for the most part these groups of abundantly

furnished graves do not represent wealthier households, but particular members of that household perhaps with a privileged command of material wealth, or whose mourners wished to make this association. Even if we accepted that this grave-wealth represented wealth in life, we would still be left to explain why it was represented among these women in particular, why in this ritual, and why in these specific material cultural forms. It must also be made clear that these grave goods all had individual symbolic meanings: they do not just represent a generic form of wealth, but may also symbolise specific facets of social identity. One purpose of the present thesis is to isolate any meanings that may be relevant to the cruciform brooch in order to add interpretative detail to traditional notions of generalised wealth, and the equation of this wealth with power. In doing so, it may be possible to expose some of the ideological basis of powerful identities. As was outlined above, burial archaeology has since moved away from the archaeology of rank, and is presently more focused on notions of social identity and symbolism. This discussion will contribute a more nuanced and interpretative return to the idea of hierarchy, politics, and hegemony, as expressed and constructed through a perceived ethnic identity.

One approach would be to focus on the social role these items may represent, and as this chapter has demonstrated, much of this revolves around gender and the lifecycle. Nick Stoodley (1999) suggests that grave goods associated with gender and life phase indicate elements of household division of labour and responsibility (see above). The suggestion is that certain grave goods were associated with biological sex as they were an active part of the construction of gender identity in the mortuary ritual. The associated symbolic meaning of these objects were therefore closely associated with masculinity or femininity, or at least idealised notions of what it was to be male or female, and their attendant roles (Stoodley 1999, 139). Some grave goods in particular (e.g. girdle-hangers) are seen to reflect quite explicitly that individual's role as a mother (Stoodley, 1999, 120), and this may well be the case. However, Stoodley's interpretation is explicitly couched in the notion that women's primary importance and social responsibilities lay in the household, as opposed to the community, and their most highly valued role was the biological reproduction of this structure (Stoodley 1999, 140). Masculine weapon burials, on the other hand, are seen to communicate a more standardised and trans-regional message with ethnic and status restrictions (Stoodley 1999, 140). The focus of the grave goods on the body (or the adornment of the body) is taken to represent the importance of female bodies in the reproduction of a kin group (this

notion in particular will be further explored in Chapter 6). With the reduction of the role of kinship as a basis of power in the 7th century, lavish female adornment consequently became redundant.

Stoodley's account has much to offer in terms of historical narrative and the potential role of women in Anglo-Saxon society. However, it draws an unnecessary division between public and private (i.e. household versus community) by suggesting that identity in these spheres was to some extent mutually exclusive. In the anthropological study of household and family structures, and most fundamentally kinship, there has been a tendency to see children as primarily dependent on their mothers, and mothers, in turn, on their husbands (Collier and Yanagisako 1987). These arguments are based upon the naturalising idea that women bear children, and this is something all societies must provide sufficient social mechanisms to deal with, mechanisms that always include some notion of family, and not just mothers. Perhaps the only universal principle we can rely on is that there is "a cross cultural social reality that, however varying the patterns, both women and men contribute to the rearing of dependent children" (Scheffler 1991, 376). However, as Silvia Yanagisako and Jane Collier comment, it is important to "question whether the particular biological difference in reproductive function that our culture defines as the basis of difference between males and females, and so treats as the basis of their relationship, is used by other societies to constitute the cultural categories of male and female" (Yanagisako and Collier 1987, 48). Neither should archaeologists make this assumption. It is important to note that while these Anglo-Saxon women obviously had critical roles in biological and social reproduction of the household, this was not necessarily their sole or even primary role in wider society.

Stoodley's account favours a pre-eminent focus on women's function as biological reproducers of the household. The evidence provided for this is interesting and largely convincing, but it does not do justice to women's role in the wider community and beyond. It is items such as the cruciform brooch that provide compelling evidence for women's role in the formation of much wider regional identity. These were groups that drew lines of connectivity over a very large portion of England, even further afield to north Germany and Scandinavia (considering the wider distribution of cruciform brooches), and perhaps even all the way to the Black Sea if we take into account the very

general practice of wearing large, decorative fibula.<sup>16</sup> These identities were ones of association as well as subtle distinction, especially if we compare the cruciform brooch wearing regions of Anglian England with the saucer brooch wearing regions of Saxon England. Though women's role in reproduction and their place in the kin group was most likely regarded as important, we need not stress this as their only role, and especially in a society where the slight evidence we have for descent mechanisms (from later texts and law tracts) suggests that "the kinship system was most likely bilateral, with a weak patrilineal bias" (Härke 1997b, 137, citing evidence from Lancaster 1958). Therefore, men's role in the reproduction of the household unit was also doubtlessly recognised and valued.

The present account is, therefore, far more to do with sex-linked roles in society, the perceived social function of certain women and how this may have been symbolically valued. It is likely that these kinds of ideas were linked to the meaning of cruciform brooches. After all, they are linked with gender and aspects of an adulthood that may well have been to do with sexuality or sexual reproduction. But a detailed study of a single artefact can contribute far more to our understanding than just this. A key piece of evidence that contributes a more nuanced understanding is the specific stages in the lifecycle the cruciform brooch is generally associated with: individuals over the age of eighteen, and more frequently, individuals over the age of about 26. This is a group of older women not frequently encountered in archaeological gender studies. If adulthood was reached somewhere around the age of twelve, then a good number of these older women had offspring that had already attained adulthood, and therefore we can perhaps shift focus away from these women's roles as mothers (or biological reproducers of kin and the household). These women's position in the kin group would surely been recognised and valued, but perhaps as the living ancestors of the contemporary reproducing members of household, and therefore the lynchpins in the ongoing creation of kinship groups. The kinship groups of these women were probably of particular importance given that they may have drawn claims to the Anglian ethnos through their relationship with a demonstrable bearer of the tradition – cruciform brooch wearers – and this will be explored below. We might suggest that it was also this role being emphasised in the burial rite, as these individuals underwent transition from living to deceased and remembered, even commemorated, ancestors.

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<sup>16</sup> Whether or not these identities shared similar age and sex profiles is an interesting question, and will require further, trans-regional research.

As has been demonstrated in Chapter 4, wearing the cruciform brooch, especially from the late 5th to the mid-6th century, was a highly regionalised phenomenon, and also represents a moment in time when cruciform brooches became more complex objects, but ones with a more highly defined range of semiotic messages (Chapter 2). As this chapter has shown, at this point the cruciform brooch also became more highly restricted on a tertiary level by sex and age. This implies a regional identity only represented, if not possessed, by a minority of individuals, and by specific members of a household. As some of the distributions within cemeteries tentatively suggest, this may well also have been restricted to specific descent groups within certain households. Returning to the notions of ethnicity explored in Chapter 4 may help to explain this phenomenon. If ethnicity (linked to claims of Anglian descent) was in fact restricted to certain members of society, rather than an identity shared by the masses, then these data fit very well. We can see that this kind of burial ritual, and perhaps specific manner of dressing (this will be explored in Chapter 6), developed on English soil, if under north-western European influence.<sup>17</sup> The Anglian ethnos was not directly transported. Therefore, in tracing the rise of cruciform brooch use through the 5th century and into the 6th, we are also charting the progress of a perceived ethnic identity. Its conferral may have been socially advantageous. It is not just the role of women in the household that is symbolised in wearing and being buried with cruciform brooches, but also their ideological place in wider Anglo-Saxon, and even Migration Period, society. These women can be seen as the bearers of a particular cultural tradition (the symbolic *content* of this will be explored in Chapter 8). This was an ideological identity that was not necessarily possessed at birth, but one that was obtained through life, perhaps within the restrictions of demonstrable descent from a particular group. Critically, however, this was an identity that, *en masse*, was displayed to a far wider audience in the whole of Anglo-Saxon England through everyday dress, as well as the more limited, but perhaps more ideologically powerful, forum of the funeral. As discussed above, it also drew comparisons with much further afield. These women's identities were therefore conceptualised in the household, in the community, and in the far wider region of what is now Europe.

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<sup>17</sup> In support of this notion John Hines (1984, 108) suggests that wrist-clasps (a common part of this dress) were worn slightly differently in England than in their place of geographical origin, Scandinavia.



In terms of gender theory, it may be helpful to understand this identity as a hegemonic femininity. The philosopher Judith Butler (1990) has suggested that it is not only gender that is a social construction, but our notion of biological sex, or male and female bodies, also does not exist *a priori*. Butler's argument might be compared with that set out by Jarl Nordbladh and Tim Yates (1990) regarding the questionable archaeological construction of sex as a pre-existing and scientifically identifiable phenomenon. Rather, it is only through the need for hegemonic political systems that a notion of essential binary categories becomes necessary. Therefore, it is not necessary to conceive that early Anglo-Saxon women consciously all shared a common sex upon which was inscribed, for the minority, some kind of gender through dress and the burial ritual. Rather, it was through an ethnic association that their gender, sex and sexuality were defined. After all, if we see biological sex as a description and interpretation of the body, these forms of bodily adornment constituted a way of dressing that may have acted to construct notions of the body itself. These women were quite literally the bearers of tradition. Women interred with these kinds of dress accessories, in this style of dress, perhaps had bodies conceived of in subtly different ways: ways that were without doubt emphasised in the burial ritual.

The social construction of feminine bodies through dress will be given more room for consideration in Chapter 6, but for now it is important to consider that a hegemonic femininity is a dominant form of female gender, a prescribed ideal to which other forms might be compared. A notion such as this does not just presuppose multiple forms of gender identity. In fact, it necessitates them by requiring a power relationship between varying forms and by being an idealised notion potentially only possessed by a minority. This may be why something like the cruciform brooch possessed a continually repeated iconography and style (see Chapter 8), and is continually found with very similar grave goods. These attributes represent a relatively coherent symbolic message. It may also explain the brooch's stylistic analogues seen in small long brooches and square-headed brooches (from England and further afield): they all conform to certain stylistic principles but differ in terms of size, lavishness and complexity of iconography. It is representative of a specific kind of femininity, one with regional or ethnic signification, as well as perhaps a symbolic ideology. Cruciform brooches were also restricted to specific females only present in some households, perhaps dependent on descent, the numbers of which seem to vary from community to community. It is also possible that the cruciform brooch

in particular symbolised other ideological realms, such as religion, cosmology and sexuality. These themes will be explored in Chapters 6 and 8.

In this kind of artefact-based mortuary study it is easy to lose sight of the individual and perceive only groups of artefacts and groups of individuals. However, the typological analysis in Chapter 2 should act to emphasise the individual agency that was present in all of these graves. It was an enthusiasm for individuality, within a restricted artefact form, which appears to have been the driving force behind the cruciform brooch's exceptionally rich typological development. This provides a reminder that each one of these women who acquired these brooches were acting as individual agents subtly negotiating and manipulating material culture as expressed in dress to communicate a specific notion of self in regard to hegemonic forms of adult femininity. We must not see these individuals as simply conforming to a pre-determined form of identity, but as engaging with and manipulating an overarching system of symbols that allowed them to communicate aspects of their individual identity in relation to the rest of the household or community (and hence the complex stylistic 'bricolage' of Phase B brooches). Some of this individuality can be accessed through the biographies of certain brooches that underwent repair and other modification. These aspects will be considered in Chapter 7.

## Conclusion

This chapter has provided an analysis of the archaeological contexts of cruciform brooches. A major focus has been an attempt to incorporate material cultural studies within the wider field of mortuary archaeology, and hence the context of this study in the historiography of Anglo-Saxon cemetery studies has been outlined in some detail. This was also necessary to outline the various theoretical and methodological approaches that have been incorporated, explicitly or otherwise, into this analysis. The analysis itself has made some important empirical observations regarding the sex and age of individuals interred with cruciform brooches, and their place in the cemetery population and hence in wider society.

The purpose of this chapter has been to test the hypothesis that specific brooch forms had particular meanings in terms of social structure. It has been shown that at least for the cruciform brooch, this was undoubtedly the case. These broad relationships between

typology and social meaning have been shown to have some correspondence with gender and stage in the lifecycle. A similar demographic of individuals may well be associated with the saucer brooch in relation to the Saxon region of Migration Period England, and there is some evidence already commented on by Nick Stoodley (1996, 116) and Rebecca Gowland (2006, 148) that this is the case. Gowland (2006, 148) also comments that the disc brooch may have associations with younger individuals. This kind of analysis provokes interesting questions to do with social identity, social structure, dress and the burial rite, and by relating structural changes in the form of material culture to its social use, also helps to validate typology as a valuable resource for social, as well as chronological, information.

It has been suggested here that the cruciform brooch grew to be an important marker of a specific identity at some point in the late 5th century. This identity was complex, nested, and included notions of ideological roles in the household and kin group. Perhaps more importantly for the cruciform brooch in particular, this material culture drew links with, and facilitated claims to membership of, a far wider social group that extended incrementally to other localities in Anglian England, further afield into north-west Europe where the cruciform brooch was also worn, and even tapped into a wider pan-European fashion of particular women wearing large bow brooches. By about the mid-6th century, for the cruciform brooch at least, the slight evidence that we have may suggest that its use became restricted to particular households, rather than specific individuals in some households. This restriction to even more specific kin groups fits with the typological and geographical evidence, both of which suggest a movement toward further restriction to a more limited group of individuals, no longer regionally defined, or at least less regionally distinguished. For the most part, however, these women's femininity was defined alongside other forms of identity, such as ethnicity and stages in the lifecycle. Whether or not their femininity related to specific roles in the biological reproduction of the kin group is difficult to say, but because their position at this stage in their lives was frequently beyond immediate motherhood, it may well have been their position as ancestors of the household or community that was emphasised at the funeral.

# Chapter 6: The Cruciform Brooch, Dress and the Body

The early Anglo-Saxon adult female costume was composed of layers of garments generally fastened by brooches as well as wrist-clasps, and festooned with bead-strings and pendants. Girdles and belts also fastened these otherwise loose-fitting clothes bestowing shape to the dress ensemble. Not only were belts sometimes elaborated with decorative buckles but these, as well as girdles, were also used to suspend items such as knives, purses, girdle-hangers and keys. The painstaking examination of fragmentary textile remains has allowed archaeologists to reconstruct the nature of a number of different garments made from a variety of fabrics. The cruciform brooch was just one element of this complex ensemble, albeit generally the most externally visible part. This chapter will consider the cruciform brooch as part of this overall costume, and identify the elements with which it was generally associated. Firstly, the types of garment and their textile varieties will be outlined. Secondly, consideration will be given to the sources of available evidence and their limitations. Thirdly, all cruciform brooches from secure contexts will be analysed, and the costume ensembles they formed part of will be reconstructed. This analysis will also identify whether different forms of cruciform brooch had different functions, and whether there were also regional or chronological patterns. This account will then be synthesised in a discussion of the general trends of cruciform brooch usage. The key theoretical and interpretative precept of this chapter is that the various dress ensembles quite directly produced different perceptions of the early Anglo-Saxon feminine body, through everyday attire, as well as the dressing of the corpse for interment. The discussion at the end of this chapter will therefore consider Anglo-Saxon dress not necessarily as a means of communicating a pre-formed gendered and sexual identity, but as being intimately involved in the perception of bodily sex.

Although the role of the cruciform brooch in the female costume has been considered before in synoptic accounts (Owen-Crocker 2004, 39; Walton Rogers 2007, 167, 171), as well as many times cursorily in specialist sections of cemetery reports (e.g. Crowfoot 1985, 54; Sherlock and Welch 1992, 39; Walton Rogers 1998, 278; 1999, 155; 2009a, 67), the data have never been collated in one place. Female dress assemblages are in fact rarely considered in terms of costume *per se*, but more frequently for the purposes of

chronological seriation (e.g. Hines 1999a), wealth scoring (e.g. Shephard 1979), or for seeking trends in its individual elements (e.g. Stoodley 1999).

Because grave assemblages have rarely been considered as representative of complete dress ensembles a number of misconceptions concerning how the cruciform brooch was used, and its chronological regional variation, have arisen in the literature. For example, Owen-Crocker (2004, 55) refers to *peplos* fasteners in the Anglian region as generally cruciform brooches. As we shall see below, this is not the case at all. Later in the same book cruciform brooches used as cloak fasteners are claimed to be mainly florid types, which is also not the case (Owen Crocker 2004, 71). Walton Rogers (2007, 145) implies that (the present) Groups 1 and 2 were *peplos* fasteners, while Groups 3 and 4 were cloak fasteners. As will be demonstrated, this is partly true, but the situation is more complex as most Group 2 brooches seem to have fastened cloaks, and most Group 1 brooches have a generally unknown function, but do not seem to have been *peplos* fasteners as they do not occur in pairs. Even the orientation of the cruciform brooch on the dress, and hence how it should be illustrated has been a matter of (unnecessary) concern to some. As will be demonstrated, cruciform brooches were oriented any way up on the costume, although there are some important trends that relate to function. It is the purpose of the current chapter to establish the parameters of the cruciform brooch's customary usage.

## Early Anglo-Saxon Textiles and Dress

This chapter will only address the nature of garments worn by women in the Anglian region of England during the Migration Period. Due to the lack of dress-fasteners in male graves, a lot less is known about what men wore. Variations in the regional distribution of dress-fasteners (Chapter 4) also represent regional styles of dress. Though much the same kinds of garments were worn throughout Anglo-Saxon England, Kentish dress appears to have been closer to continental Frankish apparel. The presence of wrist-clasps in Anglian England and their rarity in the Saxon areas suggests a more prominent use of the sleeved garment here, or at least one with a design requiring copper-alloy clasps. Because the cruciform brooch's core region of use was Anglian England, it can only be considered in the context of Anglian dress. Indeed, the cruciform brooch was a critical element of this region-defining dress-style.

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*Figure 6.1: The basic types of early Anglo-Saxon garment (a) Peplos over a sleeved garment; (b) Cloak over peplos over a sleeved garment; (c) Dual-fastened cloak over a peplos over a sleeved garment; (d) Mantle-dress over peplos over a sleeved garment; (e) One proposed type of head covering. All drawings from Walton Rogers 2007: (a) 151, fig.5.11; (b) 173, fig.5.33; (c) 173, fig.5.33; (d) 155, fig.5.14; (e) 168, fig.5.30.*

The most common element of female dress throughout north-western Migration Period Europe was the sleeveless *peplos* gown. *Peplos* dresses are known from much earlier classical Greek statuary, other pictorial sources and historical accounts, and were probably common throughout Europe (Owen-Crocker 2004, 43). They are also known from later Roman depictions of the Germanic barbarians (Owen Crocker 2004, 43). The *peplos* was a rectangular garment wrapped around the body, or a tubular garment pulled-up over it. In either case it was fastened on each shoulder with a brooch (Figure 6.1a). In early Anglo-Saxon cemetery populations the *peplos* was worn by 60-80% of adult females (Walton Rogers 2007, 144), and its presence is indicated by a pair of matching brooches, positioned either on the shoulders or slightly lower down on the upper chest. Of course, it may well be the case that the remaining 20-40% of women also wore *peplos* dresses that were either sewn at the shoulders, or pinned by a less durable fastener. The length of the garment in the majority of Greek and Roman depictions seems to go all the way down to the feet, though Gale Owen-Crocker has made an argument for a shorter knee-length *peplos* being worn in early Anglo-Saxon England (Owen-Crocker 2004, 50). A variant of the *peplos* is also known from early Anglo-Saxon England that was fastened on only one shoulder, with the other side passing underneath the opposite arm (Walton Rogers 2007, 152). The *peplos* could be drawn in around the waist with a girdle to lend the costume some shape. Buckled belts were apparently not used to do this, but instead

were used to gather a garment worn underneath the *peplos* (Walton Rogers 2007, 148; *contra* Owen-Crocker 2004, 49).

Beneath the *peplos* an undergarment could be worn (most clearly visible under the *peplos* in Figure 6.1a). This was not necessarily always the case, and it may have been a seasonally-dictated choice. Sometimes this garment can be indicated by the presence of more than one layer of fabric on the reverses of *peplos* brooches, or by the presence of a buckle lying underneath the *peplos*. In the Anglian region the most obvious and frequent evidence for an undergarment is the presence of copper-alloy wrist-clasps in the grave. The fact that textile evidence distinguishes the fabric clasped by these and *peplos* brooches demonstrates the presence of a separate internal sleeved garment. It would not necessarily have required wrist-clasps, so it may have also been present in graves without them (Walton Rogers 2007, 154). Again, the sleeved-undergarment could be ankle-length and girdled or belted at the waist (Walton Rogers 2007, 154). Very occasionally the neck opening of this sleeved gown required a small brooch to fasten it (Walton Rogers 2007, 155).

Other substantial garments were occasionally worn over the top of a *peplos*, and especially in the Anglian region. Such garments resembled cloaks of varying lengths, which could be drawn up over the head as a hood (Owen-Crocker 2004, 75). Such over garments were typically fastened by a brooch under the chin or centrally on the upper chest (Figure 6.1b, Walton Rogers 2007, 167). A more substantial type of cloak was sometimes worn that had each vertical edge fastened by a brooch somewhere around the mid-chest region (Figure 6.1c, Walton Rogers 2007, 171). This type of cloak does not have a name in the existing literature, and will be referred to here as a ‘dual-fastened cloak’. In addition there is something Penelope Walton Rogers refers to as a ‘mantle-dress’ (Figure 6.1d), a garment that seems to lie somewhere between a *peplos* and cloak, being a large square of material wrapped around the body and fastened on just one shoulder with a brooch, and which was sometimes worn over the top of a *peplos*, or directly over the sleeved undergarment (Walton Rogers 2007, 153-4)

Additional garments that were sometimes worn by women include veils, scarves and other headwear (Figure 6.1e). Evidence for these items is common, though little is known about their precise form as they generally did not require fastening with a brooch. A lightweight, sometimes gauzy, fabric is sometimes evident over the top of brooches

worn on the shoulder and the chest. This is taken to represent a head-covering that hung down over these brooches. Very occasionally this garment seems to have been fastened by a small pin on the upper chest (Walton Rogers 2007, 157).

The dress was complemented by beads, sometimes in very large numbers, either worn as a necklace or festooned between brooches. There are questions as to whether items hung from a girdle or belt (purses, girdle-hangers, keys) would have been visible and worn outside the *peplos*, or were more often concealed between the *peplos* and undergarment hanging from a girdle or belt. Because belts seem to have generally been worn underneath the *peplos*, the latter seems more likely. Nonetheless, fabric braided girdles are known to have also been worn over the top of the *peplos*, so both possibilities are feasible. From textile remains found over the top of girdle-items it seems to be the case that at least sometimes girdle-items were certainly worn underneath the *peplos* (Owen-Crocker 2004, 62).

Possessing this fuller understanding of the layered nature of early Anglo-Saxon dress is enormously important to an archaeological interpretation of the burial rite. The visual opulence of these occasions is frequently emphasised in accounts that see the mortuary ritual, above all, as an opportunity for mourners to conspicuously display the wealth and status of the deceased (Williams 2006, 46; 2009). An understanding informed by the textile evidence instead suggests a situation, especially if the individual was wearing a cloak, in which most decorative dress-fasteners would in fact have been hidden under layers of textiles. Even the outermost cloak-fastener may have been concealed within folds of fabric, or even covered by the veils discussed above. Of course a large part of these frequently over-sized and extraordinarily lavish brooches' purpose was visual display, but just because they are the most visible part of an archaeologically excavated grave, does not necessarily mean they were at the time of the funeral (Williams 2006, 51). As was suggested in the previous Chapter, the inclusion of such items in the grave may well have been more to do with both their inalienability from the body, as well as perhaps the more intimate ritual act of dressing the corpse for burial.



### *Early Anglo-Saxon Textiles*

Anglo-Saxon textiles are thought to have been made on the warp-weighted loom, a technology that replaced the tubular loom in the late Roman Period in northern Europe (Jørgensen 1987, 106). There is abundant evidence for the warp-weighted loom from early Anglo-Saxon England in the form of loom weights: a common find from settlements of the period. Textiles are classified by the spin of their warp (the weighted vertical yarns on a loom) and weft (the horizontal yarns which are passed left and right through the warp) threads. When these yarns are prepared from raw fibres they can be spun clockwise or anticlockwise. Clockwise-spun yarns, due to the direction of the diagonal fibres in the thread, are known as S-spun, and anticlockwise as Z-spun (Figure 6.2a).

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*Figure 6.2: (a) Z- and S-spun yarn; (b) Tabby weave (ZZ); (c) Twill weave (2/2 ZZ).  
(b and c after Walton Rogers 2007, 64, fig.3.5).*

There are two major types of early Anglo-Saxon weave: twills and tabbies. A tabby is a simple weave where the weft passes over and under individual warp threads (Figure 6.2b). It does not produce a patterned weave but a chequered or criss-cross surface. Twill weaves are achieved by passing the weft over or under more than one warp thread (Figure 6.2c). Each adjacent row is shifted laterally in one direction which creates the effect of diagonal ribs (known as ‘whales’). Twill weaves can be complex and intricately patterned, such as the diamond twills which have a pattern of running diamonds. A “ZZ 2/2 twill” is therefore constructed by Z-spun warp and weft threads where the warp is woven both over and under two warp threads at a time. Tablet weaves were narrow bands decorated with complex woven patterns often used for the edgings of garments. Their production was a highly skilled task involving a number of tablets that could be twisted to shift the position of the warp strings. These fabric types are common to

Migration Period northern Europe, though they are found in varying proportions in different regions (Jørgensen 1987; 1991; Walton Rogers 2007, 109).

In Anglo-Saxon England the most common fibre used for clothing was wool, though the amount of linen (from flax) seems to increase in the late 6th century, and because the most popular weave for linen was a ZZ tabby, this weave type also increases in frequency at this point in time (Walton Rogers 2007, 105). Different weaves and fibres were rarely unique to one specific use, but some types were preferentially used for different varieties of garment. ZZ twill made from wool, for instance, appears to be the favoured textile for the *peplos* dress (Owen-Crocker 2004, 293; Walton Rogers 2007, 70). ZZ tabby linen weaves may have been favoured for undergarments, being less coarse fabrics (Owen-Crocker 2004, 297), but this certainly was not exclusively the case. Cloaks and other over-garments were often of a coarser and heavier textile, though some lighter and fine textiles are known to have been put to this use (Walton Rogers 2007, 170).

## Evidence and Methodology for Costume Reconstruction

The reconstruction of mortuary costume is notoriously difficult. Only very rarely do actual textiles survive in early Anglo-Saxon graves (Figure 6.3a). Most evidence for textiles comes from the mineral salts that leach out of metallic grave goods into nearby organic fibres. When the textile decomposes it leaves a hollow cast composed of these minerals (Figure 6.3b). The imprint of a textile can also survive on the corrosion of a metal object (Figure 6.3c, Walton Rogers 2007, 58). Due to the high corrosion rate of iron, in female graves the remains of textiles are frequently identifiable on the corroded iron springs and pins of dress-fasteners. Less commonly this can also be seen in copper-alloy corrosion. Other grave goods such as keys, buckles, and even weaponry sometimes preserve traces of textiles. Because clothing was layered, the examination of different textiles found on different dress-fasteners or other items can help build up a picture of the whole costume. For instance, if a different textile was found on the front and reverse of a brooch, it is likely this brooch fastened an inner layer. If another brooch has on its reverse the textile from the front of the last, this brooch probably fastened an outer layer. Dress-fasteners tend to be found only on the torso of individuals, generally the upper torso, but the length of garments can also sometimes be indicated by other grave goods, such as iron keys if they bear a textile impression, found just below the waist.

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*Figure 6.3: Textile remains (a) Preserved textile (Sheffield's Hill G108); (b) Mineralised (replaced) textile (Buckland G351b); (c) Textile imprint on copper-alloy patina (Girton G39 (1)). Scale 1/2.*

There are some major difficulties with identifying garments from the archaeological remains of textiles. One major hindrance is that the textile the brooch was fastening can only be identified with certainty if the pin can be seen to be penetrating it. Textile remains anywhere else on the reverse of the brooch may well represent the garment it was fastening, but they might also represent an overlying textile that has become folded underneath. Similarly, the fabric a brooch fastened can quite easily enfold the brooch on its front. If the brooch was very large, or was only fastening a thinner strap of material, a layer from below may have been exposed to the back of the brooch. Evidence from textiles is therefore used here with some caution. All textile evidence considered in the analysis below is from published reports, and none of its has been gathered first-hand. Textile evidence is rarely treated more than summarily in excavation reports, and can often be found in heavily abbreviated tables whose meaning (especially concerning the *precise* location of textile on the brooch) is not always easily intelligible. Another useful source of evidence has been the online database of early Anglo-Saxon textile remains (the electronic accompaniment to Walton Rogers 2007), available on the Archaeological Data Service website.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This valuable resource is available online at: [http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/clothing\\_eh\\_2007/](http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/clothing_eh_2007/) (accessed November 2011).

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*Figure 6.4: Burial positions and costume reconstruction (a) Supine (Sewerby G35, after Hirst 1985, 157); (b) On side, flexed (Empingham II G91, after Timby 1996, 157, fig.79); (c) No bone survival (Spong Hill G57, after Hills et al 1984, 111, fig.66).*

The position of dress-fasteners on the body recorded from mortuary contexts is crucial to the reconstruction of a costume. Clasps are generally found at the wrists suggesting they fastened the cuff of a sleeved garment. Brooches are generally found at the shoulders or upper chest, which provide evidence for the garments discussed above. There are three limitations to this evidence. The first is the position of the body. If the corpse was supine and extended, the position of dress-fasteners tends to be far easier to reconstruct (Figure 6.4a). However, if the body was placed on its side, the dress-fasteners tend to bunch up or fall away from the body (Figure 6.4b). In these cases, although the costume can often be reconstructed, it is generally with less precision. The second problem is bone survival. At many sites, especially in East Anglia due to its acidic soils, bone survival tends to be very low, and often the only remains in the grave are those of dress-accessories and other grave goods. Again, sometimes the position of the body can be reconstructed from how these dress-fasteners are distributed (Figure 6.4c), but only tentatively, and some of the time this is not possible at all. The third problem includes taphonomic processes. As the body decays, material attached to it will tend to shift. Burrowing animals will also

sometimes cause items to be moved around after their burial. Occasionally the later insertion of another body in the same grave, or one that cuts through an older burial will cause material in the grave to be disturbed. These processes limit the size of a useful sample, but most costumes can still be reconstructed, with a reasonable degree of certainty.

A final question that requires consideration is to what extent funerary garb reflected what these individuals wore day-to-day. As we shall see in the next chapter, brooches often show extensive wear and were frequently repaired. This suggests these items were part of the interred individual's everyday dress (Hines 1997a, 293; *contra* King 2004, 222). They were not token items created just for burial, and neither were they reserved for special occasions. Although it is ultimately unknown, there is little reason to suppose that the manner of dressing differed much between life and death. The replication of most of these costumes in earlier depictions of barbarian and late Roman dress strongly suggest that these were very real ways of dressing, and not creations of the funerary ritual. Whether or not the entire costume represented in the grave was worn all at once is a more difficult question. Some graves (a small number with five or six brooches) contained individuals wearing at least four layers of clothing. It may be the case that these individuals happened to possess this amount of clothing, and custom dictated that their garments should not survive them (see Chapter 7) hence they were buried with more clothes than would have generally been worn simultaneously. In many cases it seems that individuals were interred wearing their 'maximum' amount of clothes. It is also likely that some of these costume combinations were seasonal, and more than two layers may not have been necessary for most of the year. If this was the case it seems likely that most of these individuals were buried with their entire complement of garments, which were sometimes all worn together, but not necessarily always. Differential dress according to the season of burial seems unlikely. If this was the case we would not see such strong correlations of cloaks with only older individuals (see below).

The current corpus is composed of 209 known grave assemblages. Of these only about 143 have the positions of dress-accessories in the grave recorded, of which a number appear to have come from disturbed burials and therefore may not represent the full assemblage (see accompanying digital database for full details). In order to ensure that all the grave assemblages considered represent whole costumes, only the most secure grave contexts that they have not been disturbed by any post-depositional processes have

been used in the following analysis. In addition, only those examples where grave position has been recorded and published have been included, which excludes all verbal reports of where a find may have been located. Removing all such potentially doubtful and disturbed contexts from the analysis leaves a sufficient 104 solidly reliable contexts with which to work. This sample can be used to construct a number of standard ways in which the cruciform brooch was worn. With this knowledge established, it is possible to tentatively extend these findings to 19th century excavations where only the artefacts were recorded but not their position in the grave. It will be shown that certain combinations of brooch types almost unfailingly demonstrate a specific costume.

## The Types of Dress Associated with the Cruciform Brooch

The cruciform brooch did not have a single use, but was utilised to fasten several different types of garment. These garments can be identified by the methods outlined above: position on the body in the grave and textile evidence. Cruciform brooches could be worn singly, in pairs, in trios, or even more (the highest number of cruciform brooches recorded from one grave is five, from Cleatham grave 30), and were most frequently combined with other types of brooch fastening different layers of garment. Although there were quite clearly no strict rules about the garments different types of brooch fastened, the cruciform brooch had customary uses that varied over time and therefore can be related broadly to its changing form. Its major uses were to fasten various types of cloak, and sometimes to fasten a *peplos* dress, creating a number of dress ensembles which were linked to particular feminine identities (see Chapter 5). The following analysis is organised by the types of garments the cruciform brooch was used to fasten. This is generally predicted by the combination of specific types of brooches and their numbers found in the grave. Considering combinations of brooches is therefore the easiest manner in which to deal with these otherwise complicated data and it also provides the most useful information. For instance, a cruciform brooch associated with a pair of annular brooches more than likely predicts that it was fastening a cloak worn over a *peplos* dress. The following analysis therefore permits, with a little caution, the application of this knowledge to assemblages where body position or textiles have not survived the excavation or conservation process.

The most common and easily interpreted combinations will be examined first, and secondly all those more unusual or ambiguous examples will be explored. All grave assemblages discussed here, along with textile information and their position on the body can be found as part of the accompanying digital database, as well as in a tabulated format in Appendix 1.

## The Single Cruciform Brooch as a Cloak Fastener

### *Single Cruciform Brooches with Pairs of Annular Brooches*

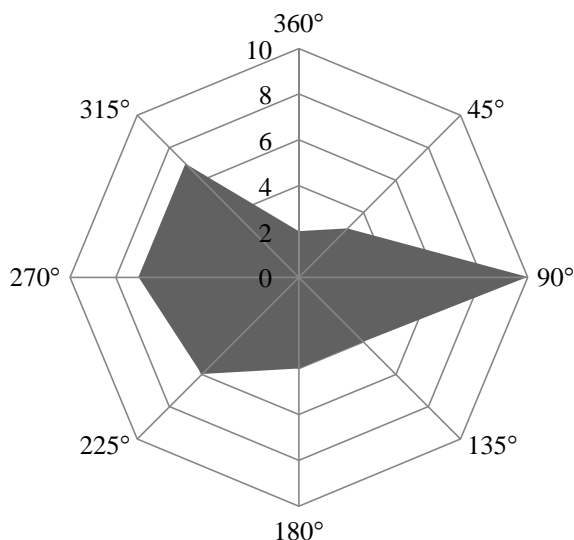
The most frequent combination in which the cruciform brooch is found in graves is with a pair of annular brooches (Figure 6.5, see Appendix 1, Table A1.1). There are 44 instances of this combination in the 104 secure contexts under analysis (42%). The annular brooches, where their position is unambiguous, are always situated on the shoulders, indicating they were fastening a *peplos* dress. The cruciform brooch is found either under the chin, or slightly lower down on the upper chest.

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*Figure 6.5: A cruciform brooch worn with a pair of annular brooches (Castledyke South G29, after Drinkall and Foreman 1998, 103, Fig.16).*

Being circular, the annular brooches obviously have no orientation, and the angle of their pin on the body is rarely (if ever) recorded. The orientation of cruciform brooches in this combination varies widely (Figure 6.6), yet it is obvious that horizontal positions were favoured over vertical ones. In addition, the most common orientation of the foot of the

brooch was to point toward the right-hand side of the wearer's body (225-315°). There is strong evidence for a sleeved under-garment lying underneath the *peplos* in 28 (64%) of these examples, as they possess wrist-clasps. Even in cases where wrist-clasps were not evident a sleeved undergarment may still have been worn which did not require sleeve fastenings.



*Figure 6.6: Orientations of single cruciform brooches (n=43) associated with pairs of annular brooches (measured by the direction in which the brooch foot was pointing in relation to a central vertical line down the body).*

A small number of these assemblages included extra brooches that require an explanation. Two individuals (Broughton Lodge grave 3, Sewerby grave 35, see Figure 6.4a and 6.7) possessed an additional annular brooch, lying in both cases in a central position on the torso but lower down than the cruciform brooch. Unfortunately neither of these examples yielded any useful textile evidence. It is possible that these extra brooches may have secured the *peplos* to the sleeved undergarment (evident in both graves from the presence of wrist-clasps), as has been observed elsewhere (Owen-Crocker 2004, 55), or they could be brooches that have slipped down from fastening the neck-opening of the sleeved garment (Walton Rogers 2007, 155). The only other possible use for this third annular brooch would be to fasten a lighter over-garment, such as a veil or other head-covering that hung down over the torso. That it would be fastened this low down on the body is unlikely, but still possible. Morning Thorpe grave 30 displays the only other more



elaborate costume. The interred individual was wearing a sleeved undergarment fastened by wrist-clasps, a *peplos* fastened by annular brooches, a cloak fastened by a centrally positioned single cruciform brooch, and then over the top of this a secondary cloak that was dual-fastened on the chest with a further pair of cruciform brooches. These dual-fastened cloaks will be discussed below.

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*Figure 6.7: Broughton Lodge G3 (after Kinsley 1993, 85, fig.14).*

The cruciform brooch used as a cloak fastener combined with two annular brooches fastening a *peplos* dress created a dress ensemble that was limited to the core regions of cruciform brooch use: East Anglia, the East Midlands, Lincolnshire and the north. It seems that this was the primary function of cruciform brooches of Sub-Groups 3.1 and 3.2. Of the 44 contexts, 30 are of these forms (68%), and a wide variety of Types within these Sub-Groups are represented (Types 3.1.1, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.4, 3.2.5, 3.2.6). A range of Group 4 cruciform brooches also served this purpose, from the early Type 4.1.2, to the later Types 4.4, 4.6.2, and 4.7.1, as well as the hybrid Sub-Group 3.5. This was a relatively rare use for Group 2 cruciform brooches. Type 2.1.2 appears twice, both times in what appears to be a relatively late style (**Westgarth Gardems G52** has uncharacteristically large trapezoid head-plate wings, **Bergh Apton G37** has a very unusual vertical brow ridge, and is not a standard Type 2.1.2 form).

The cruciform brooch from Morning Thorpe grave 362 is the only obviously early exception to what seems to have been a typically later Phase B practice. **Morning Thorpe G362** is fragmentary, but is almost certainly a Type 2.1.1 brooch, more akin to those used for fastening *peplos* dresses (see below), being relatively small and with separately cast, fully round side-knobs. Its zoomorphic foot is only partially present, but clearly lacks a brow. These characteristics and, especially its fully rounded top-knob place it in much closer relation to early Group 2 forms, and perhaps even Group 1. It was probably an old brooch by its time of deposition (its foot was most likely damaged before it was interred, having once been repaired). Nothing else is especially datable in this grave, and due to the lack of skeletal remains the age of the individual is not known.

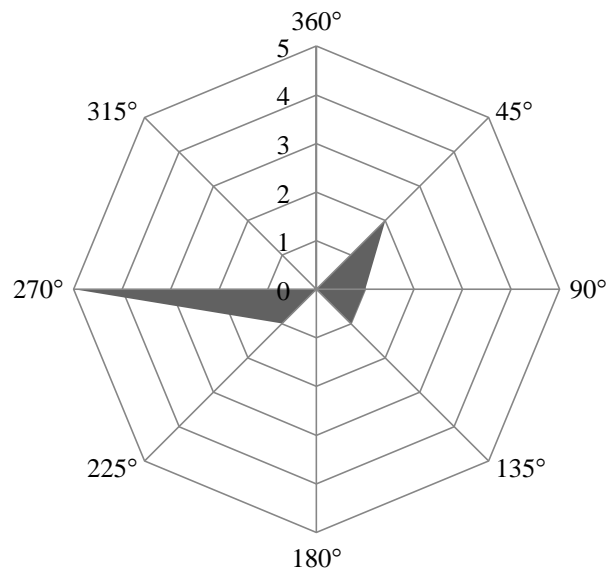
There are therefore two possible interpretations for this unusually early brooch fastening a generally later costume ensemble. The first is that this is simply an early appearance of a generally later fashion. The second possibility is that this was originally a cruciform brooch that fastened a *peplos* dress, and having lost its partner, was later promoted by its wearer to be a cloak fastener. Generally, this style of dress is therefore dated to Phase B2 (AD 500-550), with one Phase B1 (AD 475-500, Type 3.2.4) example, and the single earlier brooch from Morning Thorpe grave 362, most likely datable to a transitional period between Phases A and B.

#### *Single Cruciform Brooches with Pairs of Small Long Brooches*

Cruciform brooches found with a pair of small long brooches (Appendix 1, Table A1.2) represent the same costume as that discussed above: a cloak over the top of a *peplos* (Figure 6.8). It was also a relatively popular ensemble and is represented by thirteen examples. Small long brooches are very similar to cruciform brooches, but where their location in the grave could be ascertained with certainty, they were always situated on the shoulders, with a cruciform brooch located between them at the throat, or slightly lower down on the chest. All except two of these cases (Morning Thorpe grave 346 and Sewerby grave 49) had matching small long brooches. Nine of these examples (69%) also had wrist-clasps fastening a sleeved undergarment (about the same proportion as in those examples with a pair of annular brooches, above). Again, the orientation of these centrally placed cruciform brooches favoured horizontal alignments (Figure 6.9). Additionally the foot of the cruciform brooch most often pointed toward the left-hand-side of the body. It is important to note, however, that the orientation of the small long shoulder brooches is different. In all cases where the position could be clearly established, small long brooches worn in this manner had their feet pointing upward and generally away from the body (so brooches on the left shoulder had their feet pointing upward at about 45°, and 315° on the right shoulder).

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*Figure 6.8: A cruciform brooch worn with a pair of small long brooches (Empingham II G50, after Timby 1996, 145, fig.67).*



*Figure 6.9: Orientations of single cruciform brooches (n=10) associated with pairs of small long brooches (measured by the direction in which the brooch foot was pointing in relation to a central vertical line down the body).*

None of these examples feature the extra annular brooch discussed above. There is, however, another example of the elaborate dual-fastened cloak being worn over a standard cloak, over the top of a *peplos* (Cleatham grave 34), that was also met with above, and will be discussed below.

Again, this dress style had no particular regional distribution, and covers the core region of cruciform brooch use from East Anglia to Lincolnshire and the north. There is one

example from the periphery of this region, **Great Chesterford G20**, Essex. The jewellery from this cemetery suggests a very culturally mixed location with typically Anglian, Kentish and Saxon styles, but is thought to show strongest affinity with East Anglia and Cambridgeshire (Evison 1994, 46, 50).

The typological spread of cruciform brooches worn with pairs of small long brooches is exactly the same as those found with annular brooches: an array of larger Group 3 forms and a selection of both earlier and later Group 4 brooches. This particular dress style is therefore broadly of the same period. Again, there is one exceptionally early brooch, and intriguingly it is also from Morning Thorpe: **Morning Thorpe G346**. This brooch is remarkably similar to the one discussed above from grave 362 of the same cemetery: small with no brow on its zoomorphic foot, a fully round top-knob, and separately cast fully round side-knobs. Again, it is very heavily worn and by its time of deposition had lost its dress-fastening function being instead tied to the garment with yarn. As above, there is nothing else particularly datable in the grave: the small long brooches are fragmentary but appear to be also relatively early and simple forms. Once again, this example bears a striking resemblance to the forms generally used for fastening *peplos* dresses (discussed below), and so may represent the remaining partner of what used to be used for this purpose. Alternatively, it could be a very early appearance of this dress fashion.

#### *Cruciform Brooches with Pairs of Other Brooches*

In addition to being combined with pairs of annular and small long shoulder brooches, there are four secure examples of the cruciform brooch associated with openwork (swastika) brooches, Anglian equal arm brooches, and disc brooches worn on the shoulders (Figure 6.10, see Appendix 1, Table A1.3). Once again, these examples represent a cloak (fastened by the cruciform brooch) worn over the top of *peplos* fastened by a pair of brooches on the shoulders. There is little more to say about these examples, except that it seems to have been a rarer, but parallel fashion to wearing the cruciform brooch with annular or small long brooches. After all, in terms of style, Anglian equal arm brooches are not very far removed from small long brooches. Openwork and disc brooches are of about the same small size and of the same simple level of decoration as annular brooches. Therefore, these rarer brooch combinations do not make an

exceptionally different costume ensemble. Given that this thesis is concerned entirely with demonstrating the particular meanings of cruciform brooches, it seems likely that other brooches also had specific symbolic meanings. Precisely what these were would require more research, but the choices involved in acquiring brooches and assembling a dress ensemble are likely to have involved the careful structuring of particular and nuanced social messages. For instance, it is important to note that there is no record whatsoever (even among the less secure contexts) of a cruciform brooch being worn with the characteristic *peplos* shoulder brooches of the Saxon regions: cast saucer brooches.

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*Figure 6.10: A cruciform brooch worn with a pair of openwork (swastika) brooches (Empingham II G73, after Timby 1996, 151, fig.73).*

Broadly speaking, the same varieties of cruciform brooch were used in these combinations as with pairs of annular or small long brooches. Types 3.2.1 and 4.6.2 are associated with the openwork brooches from Empingham II (graves 73 and 95). However, there is something slightly different about the cruciform brooches worn with the Anglian equal arm brooches from Spong Hill (grave 46) and the disc brooches from Springfield Lyons (grave 4882): they are both of Type 2.2.2, not seen anywhere else worn centrally with matching shoulder brooches. These are of the same broad chronological period (Phase B2) as other cruciform brooches that pinned a centrally-fastened cloak. However, if this was a standard use for this relatively common form of cruciform brooch (Type 2.2.2), we might expect to see at least one example among those worn alongside pairs of annular and small long brooches. The use of such an example from Springfield Lyons, Essex is perhaps explained by its having slightly shifted meaning attributable to its occurrence outside the core region of cruciform brooch use. The wearer may not have been as aware of the typical uses of this variety of cruciform brooch. The example from Spong Hill is from a very central region of cruciform brooch use, but its combination with the rare Anglian equal arm brooches may suggest the signalling of a subtly nuanced identity.

### *Single Cruciform Brooches with Pairs of Cruciform Brooches*

A single cloak-fastening cruciform brooch could also be worn on top of a *peplos* gown pinned by an additional pair of cruciform brooches (Figure 6.11). This was not particularly unusual, and there are seven examples of this from secure contexts (Appendix 1, Table A1.4). These ensembles display similar tendencies to cruciform brooches found with pairs of small long brooches: a pair of matching and small cruciform brooches are found on the shoulders, oriented with their feet pointing upward and away from the body (fastening a *peplos*), and between them is found a single larger cruciform brooch, generally oriented horizontally, fastening a cloak that lay over the *peplos*.

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*Figure 6.11: A central cruciform brooch worn with a pair of cruciform brooches (Snape G10, after Filmer-Sankey and Pestell 2001, 40, fig.23).*

The Types of cruciform brooch used to fasten a cloak in this combination are the same as in all the above examples: large Group 3 and 4 forms, as well as one Type 2.1.2, and one Type 2.1.3 brooch, both probably relatively early and from Phase B1. Nothing in this is unusual, and neither are the regions they are found in, which are all well within the core regions of cruciform brooch use (Lincolnshire and East Anglia). There are some interesting points to observe about the typological combinations of cruciform brooches these costumes represent, but this will be discussed in full below.

### **Pairs of Cruciform Brooches Dual-Fastening an Outer Cloak**

The most elaborate dress ensemble that employed cruciform brooches involved a large outer cloak that was fastened on each side of the chest (Figure 6.1c, Walton Rogers 2007, 171). There are eight examples of this (Figure 6.12, and Appendix 1, Table A1.5), six of which had an opening down the centre that would reveal a second cloak fastened

centrally at the throat by a third brooch (in three examples this is also a cruciform brooch). Underneath this inner cloak was a *peplos* dress, occasionally fastened by a further pair of cruciform brooches (Cleatham grave 30, Tallington grave 8), but more often by an assortment of other possible *peplos* shoulder brooches, such as annular or small long brooches. A further layer underneath this is represented on some of these examples: a sleeved dress fastened at the wrists by clasps. All examples of these outer-cloak fastening cruciform brooches are large and oriented vertically, but with the foot pointing downward, and this, together with their location in the mid-chest region, distinguishes their function from pairs of cruciform brooches fastening the *peplos*.

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*Figure 6.12: A pair of cruciform brooches fastening a dual-fastened cloak, over a cloak (fastened by a further cruciform brooch), over a peplos (fastened by small long brooches) (Cleatham G34 after Leahy 2007, 45, fig.22).*

The forms of cruciform brooch used to do this (Types 2.1.2, 2.1.4, 3.2.1, 3.2.6, 3.2.7, 3.4.4, and 4.1.2) represent all the major large Group 2, 3 and 4 forms. Compared to cruciform brooches used singly as cloak-fasteners, there is no discernable typological or chronological distinction. Nor is there any regional patterning: they are all from the core regions of cruciform brooch use (East Anglia, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire). Critically, this dual-fastened cloak was the only garment that required a pair of large cruciform brooches (there is one exception to this – a pair of large Type 3.2.4 cruciform brooches used to fasten as *peplos* dress from Mucking I G92, see below). Therefore, where pairs of larger cruciform brooches occur when grave context has not been recorded, it can be said with a degree of certainty that they pinned a dual-fastened cloak.

## Pairs of Cruciform Brooches as *Peplos* Fasteners

Cruciform brooches have been interpreted as securing a *peplos* dress if they were matching and found at the shoulders of the interred individual (Figure 6.11). There are fifteen positively identified examples of cruciform brooches that were worn in this way (Appendix 1, Table A1.6), thirteen were identical pairs, and two were very close approximations of a pair (**Cleatham G30 (2) and (3)**, and **Stratford-on-Avon G70 (1) and (2)**). Where present, the textile remains confirm that all pairs were fastening the same garment.

There are several points of interest in these data. The first is that the wearing of just a *peplos* dress fastened by cruciform brooches with no substantial over-garments was a rare practice, and is only seen in six examples that are all outside the core region cruciform brooch use (Mucking in Essex, Stratford-on-Avon and Wasperton in Warwickshire). Further graves from Mucking (grave 878) and Springfield Lyons (grave 4988) may also be put into this group, as the only other dress-fastener in both graves was a small iron pin, perhaps used to fasten a lightweight veil, but not a substantial cloak. In all other examples where cruciform brooches were used to fasten a *peplos*, it was worn underneath a cloak (see above), and occasionally even underneath two cloaks such as in Cleatham grave 30. Individuals who wore a *peplos* fastened by cruciform brooches, underneath a cloak were all from the core regions of cruciform brooch use: East Anglia (Snape, Spong Hill, Morning Thorpe and Westgarth Gardens) and Lincolnshire (Cleatham). It is also important to note that where there was evidence of a cloak worn over these *peplos* dresses it was always also fastened by a cruciform brooch. The one exception to this might be the very complex costume worn by the individual in grave 8 at Tallington (Lincolnshire). This dress ensemble included a sleeved dress fastened by wrist-clasps worn underneath a *peplos* fastened by cruciform brooches. The outermost layer was a dual-fastened cloak fastened by cruciform brooches. However, between this outer cloak and the *peplos* a single and centrally placed small long brooch may indicate a cloak, and this could represent the one exception to the rule. Five of these costumes also included clasps worn at the wrist, which implies that there was a further sleeved undergarment worn underneath the *peplos*.

Nearly all cruciform brooches that fastened a *peplos* dress were very early examples of Sub-Group 2.1. They were small, broad, possessed separate side-knobs, and show a fair



amount of similarity to Type 1.2.2 brooches. Therefore, they most likely fall into Phase B1 (c.475-500), or perhaps even earlier. The only notable exceptions are the Type 3.2.4 brooches from Mucking I grave 92. Type 3.2.4, however, is one of very few Types that could be confidently placed in Phase B1 (and almost exceptionally so for Group 3 brooches). **Morning Thorpe G353 (2) and (3)** may be later exceptions: they are very typical members of Type 2.2.2, and as such are placed in Phase B2 (c.500-550). **Spong Hill G22 (1) and (2)**, though nominally of Type 2.2.3, and therefore possibly also of Phase B2, do in fact bear considerable resemblance in style and size to those very early Sub-Group 2.1 forms mentioned above. The Kentish Group 1 and 2 brooches have a fairly uncertain chronology (see Chapter 3), but have been placed broadly in Phases A and B respectively. Kentish Group 2 may well be in the earlier half of this phase (Phase B1), but this cannot be said with confidence. In sum, almost all cruciform brooches that were used as *peplos* fasteners were early, and were probably worn at some point around 475.

The other interesting chronological factor is that where a cruciform brooch fastened an additional over-garment, it was invariably of a noticeably later Type. In Cleatham grave 30 they are of Type 3.2.1, and in grave 41 from the same cemetery the third brooch is of Type 2.1.3. In Snape grave 10 it is of Type 3.2.7, in Spong Hill grave 22 it is of Type 3.2.4 and in Westgarth Gardens G61 it is Type 3.1.1. At Morning Thorpe in grave 90 the third brooch is a larger Type 2.1.2, while in grave 353 it is a very early florid cruciform brooch of Type 4.1.1. Though some of these are also relatively early (Types 3.2.4 and 3.2.7 are both Phase B1), they all appear to be later examples than the brooches they accompany that fastened a *peplos* dress. This very strongly suggests that these brooches were accumulated over the course of the individual's life, always beginning with a *peplos* dress, with the later addition of a cloak worn over the top of it.

If this were the case, we would expect individual's who wore just a *peplos* fastened by cruciform brooches, and no cloak, to have died at a relatively younger age. Sadly, age data for such individuals is lacking. Only one individual (Wasperton grave 167) with this particular dress ensemble has been aged and only as a general adult, which is not particularly helpful either way. Within the core area of cruciform brooch use, if an individual received cruciform brooches to fasten a *peplos* dress, without exception this was followed later in life by further cruciform brooches to fasten additional garments. This is an important observation as it suggests a mechanism and order by which particular

dress-fasteners were accumulated. It also provides some justification for the fairly rapidly developing chronology proposed in Chapter 3: the typological style of cruciform brooches can be seen to noticeably develop over the course of a single individual's lifetime. These examples therefore also capture a moment in time when the cruciform brooch generally ceased to be used as a *peplos* fastener, and became a cloak fastener. These individual's are testament to this development occurring relatively rapidly.

## Non-Matching Pairs of Brooches

Because a matching pair of brooches in the upper chest region, generally on the shoulders, invariably represents a *peplos* dress, individuals that possessed non-matching pairs of brooches require a more complex explanation, and one that is rarely clear. Walton Rogers suggests that non-matching shoulder brooches were occasionally employed in the event of loss or breakage of a brooch, but more commonly were used to fasten two different garments – a *peplos* fastened on one shoulder, and a mantle-dress (Figure 6.1d, see above) fastened on the other (Walton Rogers 2007, 153). Of course, if one of the brooches was found in a more central position under the chin, then it more likely represented the standard cloak discussed at length above, being worn over the top of a *peplos* fastened only on one shoulder.

There are a total of eighteen examples of the cruciform brooch being 'paired' with a different type of brooch. For the sake of clarity, and to briefly assess the potential uses of other types of brooch, the following analysis has been divided according to the type of brooch that accompanied the cruciform brooch.

### *Single Cruciform Brooches worn with Single Annular Brooches*

Of those examples where a cruciform brooch was apparently paired with an annular brooch (Appendix 1, Table A1.7) none can be shown to be shoulder pairings fastening a single *peplos* dress. Where there is some evidence from the associated textiles or from the position of the brooches on the body, it seems that these non-matching brooch pairs fastened two different garments, both generally worn over the top of a sleeved-garment secured by clasps. The most convincing evidence for this is that while the annular brooch

is always positioned on a shoulder (right or left), the cruciform brooch is most often closer to the centre of the body, underneath the chin or thereabouts (Figure 6.13). This is the case for Empingham II grave 81, as well as Norton graves 63 and 84. This could also be the case with Norton grave 22, though the crouched position of the body makes it difficult to tell, while at Easington grave 2 the lack of any skeletal material makes any conclusive statements impossible. Only in Spong Hill grave 58 and Empingham II grave 91 can the cruciform brooches be suggested to have been located on the shoulders. It is therefore possible, if unlikely considering the other examples, that the individuals in these two graves were wearing only a *peplos* dress, perhaps over the top of a sleeved garment. There is no textile evidence from Empingham II grave 91 (the finds were cleaned before any examination was possible – Timby 1996, 85), but the annular brooch from Spong Hill grave 58 had a different textile to the cruciform brooch in its surrounding area. This is not conclusive, as only textile remains on the pin can truly demonstrate what kind of material the brooch actually fastened, but it does at least suggest that more than one garment was being worn. Of course, the additional garment may have been from an inner sleeved garment. However, considering all the other evidence, it seems likely that these two individuals (Empingham II grave 91 and Spong Hill grave 58) were wearing a mantle-dress fastened by a cruciform brooch, worn over the top of a *peplos* fastened on only one shoulder.

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*Figure 6.13: A cruciform brooch worn with a single annular brooch (Empingham II grave 81, after Timby 1996, 154, fig.76).*

The remaining cruciform brooches almost certainly fastened a cloak. The textiles from the pin of the cruciform brooch in Norton grave 22 indicate that it was piercing two separate garments (Walton 1992, 59), and perhaps the inner one was also fastened by the annular brooch. The textiles from Easington grave 2 certainly suggest that the garments were more complex than a *peplos* dress worn over a sleeved garment. While the textile remains on the cruciform brooch only represented wool yarn (perhaps from a repair, see

Chapter 7), the annular brooch was associated with up to three fabrics: a ZS spun 2/2 twill woven wool, a Z/Z.S spun tabby woven wool, and a ZZ spun 2/2 twill woven wool, which again suggests more than just the presence of a *peplos* and a sleeved inner dress. The most likely explanation for the majority of these cruciform and annular brooch pairings is that a *peplos* dress was being worn, generally over a sleeved inner dress, fastened on one shoulder by an annular brooch, and perhaps with the edging passing under the opposite arm. Over the top of this, wrapped round both shoulders and fastened somewhere near the centre, was a cloak fastened by a cruciform brooch.

Four of these seven examples are from the north (Norton in Tees, and Easington in County Durham), while the two graves from Empingham, Rutland are also on the edge of the core area of cruciform brooch use. In other words, this may have been a regional dress style not found in East Anglia or Lincolnshire. It is of more interest that a relatively large number of these cruciform brooches are late examples: Types 4.6.1, 4.4 and 4.5 are all Phase C (c.525-575). The remaining Types 3.0.1, 3.2.10, 4.3.1 and Sub-Group 3.2 examples are a mixture of Phase B and Phase B2 brooches (c.475-550 and c.500-550), so it is possible to suggest that the wearing of a one-shouldered *peplos* underneath a cloak fastened by a cruciform brooch may have been a relatively late practice more common on the northern and western fringes of the core areas of cruciform brooch use.

#### *Single Cruciform Brooches worn with Single Small Long Brooches*

There are nine secure examples of cruciform brooches seemingly paired with small long brooches (Appendix 1, Table A1.8). Walton Rogers suggests that the orientation of non-matching bow brooches on the body can be used to tell whether they were fastening different garments or not (Walton Rogers 2007, 153). Bow brooches with the foot pointing upwards generally represent a *peplos* dress and those with the foot downward or to the side are more likely to represent a cloak or mantle-dress.

Those costumes where one of the brooches was clearly worn centrally can be isolated as representing a *peplos* dress worn only on one shoulder, over which a centrally fastened cloak was worn. There are insufficient textile remains from any of these graves, so the only useful information is the positioning of the brooches. Examples of this can be identified in grave 93 at Barrington A, grave 9 at Cleatham (Figure 6.14), and perhaps

grave 4 at Oakington (the torso is on its side, making the position of the brooch difficult to ascertain). Barrington A grave 93 is a significant exception as it appears that the small and simple cruciform brooch was used to fasten a one-shoulder *peplos* on the left shoulder, while the comparably large small long brooch fastened a cloak under the chin. This grave represents a very unusual costume that uses a small long rather than a cruciform brooch to fasten a cloak rather than the *peplos*. This may have something to do with the relatively large size of the small long brooch. For the other two graves it appears that the cruciform brooch was fastening the cloak, while the small long brooches fastened a one-shoulder *peplos* on the right or left shoulder.

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*Figure 6.14: A cruciform brooch (centre) worn with a small long brooch (left shoulder) from Cleatham grave 9 (after Leahy 2007, 36, fig.13).*

All the other examples represent shoulder pairings. Only one example, Wasperton grave 111, possesses enough textile evidence to be helpful (Figure 6.15). Both the cruciform brooch and the small long brooch fastened the same ZZ spun 2/2 twill woven textile. Both are clearly situated on the shoulders (despite the lack of bone in the grave, the distribution of other objects in the grave makes this clear), and both are also oriented with their feet pointing upwards and outwards from the body. This, therefore, is a convincing and unusual example of a *peplos* being fastened by non-matching brooches. Cleatham grave 36 is very similar; both the small long and cruciform brooches are on each shoulder, oriented foot upward. In grave 84 at West Heslerton, however, both brooches are oriented foot-downward. This is unusual position for shoulder-brooches, which makes its interpretation difficult. In the absence of any other evidence, however, we must assume that this is another non-matching pair of *peplos* fasteners worn in an unusual manner.

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*Figure 6.15: A cruciform brooch (right shoulder) worn with small long brooch (left shoulder) as peplos fasteners (Wasperton G111, after Carver et al 2009, 256).*

The graves from Sewerby (grave 12) and Bergh Apton (grave 6) offer a more complex arrangement. Both have a pair of large cruciform brooches that dual-fastened a cloak lower down on the chest. They both also have a cruciform brooch and a small long brooch paired on the shoulders. The textile evidence from Sewerby is ambiguous, as it suggests the cloak-fastening chest-brooches were securing the same fabric as the shoulder cruciform brooch. The only explanation for this is that the chest brooches were piercing both the cloak and the *peplos* worn underneath. These two graves therefore also represent examples of a *peplos* being fastened by non-matching shoulder brooches: cruciform brooches paired with small long brooches.

While convincing *peplos* pairings with cruciform and annular brooches could not be found, the pairing of a cruciform with a small long brooch on the shoulders to fasten a *peplos* dress seems to have been an accepted, if rare, arrangement. The most likely explanation for this is that small long and cruciform brooches are stylistically and formally very similar, and in some cases, they are of a comparable size. There is no regional bias to this phenomenon, as it covers most areas of cruciform brooch use both within and outside the core distributions. It appears, however, to be limited to the middle phase (Phase B) of cruciform brooch use, and includes only brooches of comparable size to small long brooches. No large and later cruciform brooches were paired with small long brooches. **Cleatham G9** (Type 1.1.1, nominally Phase A) is the only possible earlier exception to this, but the pairing of this brooch with a presumably later small long brooch has already been explained as a chronological anomaly in Chapter 3.

Typologically, aside from the unusual Type 1.1.1 brooch from Cleatham grave 9, these cruciform brooches that fastened cloaks fit the general pattern of the cloak-fastening cruciform brooches discussed above. However, those cruciform brooches that seem to be

fastening a *peplos* along with a small long brooch are a mixed group. Some certainly fit the pattern of the early Group 2 cruciform brooches used to fasten a *peplos* dress discussed above. **Cleatham G36** fits this early group especially well. However, the trapezoid head-plate wings of **West Heselton G84** suggest it is a later example. Though a relatively early Phase B1 brooch, **Bergh Apton G6 (1)**, still does not fit the *peplos*-fastening type very well, and neither do **Wasperton G111**, **Westgarth Gardens G55** and **Sewerby G12 (3)**, which are probably later Group 2 brooches. This presents a slight problem, and re-opens the possibility that at least some of these brooches may have fastened a separate cloak. However, it is also possible that, normally worn as cloak-fasteners, they have been substituted in the grave as *peplos* fasteners perhaps due to the loss of the matching small long brooch, or the lack of a cloak within which to dress the deceased.

#### *Single Cruciform Brooches worn with Single Other Brooches*

There are a very small number of cruciform brooches that were paired with more unusual brooches. There are only two secure examples of this practice: one with an applied saucer brooch, the other with a Roman brooch (Appendix 1, Table A1.9). Lacking good parallels, both of these are problematic. At Oakington grave 20, both brooches were situated in the grave toward the right shoulder, with the cruciform brooch under the chin, and an applied brooch closer to the shoulder. From this positioning it is likely that while the applied brooch held a *peplos* dress over one shoulder, the cruciform brooch fastened a cloak under the chin. The *peplos* dress was worn over a sleeved garment fastened at the wrists by clasps. Due to the lack of any skeletal material in Spong Hill grave 26 it is very difficult to define exactly where the cruciform brooch and Roman brooch lay on the body. The textiles on the pins of these brooches are different, and this, along with the fact that the cruciform brooch was worn horizontally, may lead to a suggestion that again, the Roman brooch fastened a *peplos* on one shoulder, while the cruciform fastened a cloak under the chin. The applied brooch and especially the Roman brooch were considerably older than the cruciform brooches with which they were worn. These unusual costumes therefore also represent unique assemblages of material.

### *Single Cruciform Brooches worn with Pairs of Non-Matching Brooches*

There are also a small number of instances where cruciform brooches were worn with combinations of non-matching brooches: small long and annular, annular and penannular, disc and small long, and small long and Roman brooches (Appendix 1, Table A1.10). Many of these, especially those with the more unusual types of brooch (penannular, disc and Roman brooches), appear to be unique and perhaps anomalous costumes.

Most of these examples have a cruciform brooch clearly situated in the centre of the body, with the two non-matching brooches flanking it on the shoulders. These most likely represent a cloak-fastening cruciform brooch being worn over a *peplos* fastened by non-matching shoulder brooches. Walton Rogers' interpretation of the textile evidence from West Heslerton graves 12 and 147 confirms this (Walton Rogers 1999, 159, 168). The textile evidence from Barrington A G13b neither confirms nor denies this possibility, while no textile was present on the Broughton Lodge grave 61 brooches.

This leaves two graves where the explanation is not clear: Sewerby grave 57 and Snape grave 14. Sewerby grave 57 is immediately striking as it seems to represent a prone burial (no bones survive, but all brooches were found face-down in the grave). Whether or not this may represent a potential "live burial" (as could be the case for the other prone burial from this cemetery, see Hirst 1985, 39), is another question, but the burial of an individual face-down may well have caused the brooches to have moved around more than usual. Therefore, the fact that both the cruciform brooch and annular brooch appear to have been positioned on the right shoulder, may just represent the cruciform brooch deviating during the process of interment from its more normal position under the chin, fastening a cloak over a *peplos* dress fastened by non-matching brooches. The textile evidence is not conclusive. A large number of different fabrics are represented, with all three brooches associated with different types. A further possibility is that the cruciform brooch fastened a cloak worn over a mantle-dress, *peplos* and a sleeved dress. This would be perfectly possible, but perhaps suggests an over-complicated dress ensemble for the evidence we actually possess.

The brooches from Snape grave 14 have an unusual arrangement. The small long and annular brooches look to be in the standard positions on the shoulders, but the cruciform brooch is located above one shoulder, somewhere around the individual's ear. It is



probably the case that the cruciform brooch has been moved by some post-depositional soil movement, but it may also be possible that it was fastening a mantle-dress over the left shoulder, worn over a *peplos* fastened by non-matching shoulder brooches. Therefore, in all the above cases, though few are certain, the strongest case is for a cloak (fastened by a cruciform brooch), worn over a *peplos* dress.

## The Cruciform Brooch Worn Alone

A single cruciform brooch was only very rarely worn entirely by itself with no other brooches. However, perhaps it is more accurate to say that single cruciform brooches accompanied by no other types are only very rarely seen in secure contexts (Figure 6.16). It is not quite so rare in graves excavated in the 19th century (which were, perhaps, unreliably recorded), or from disturbed contexts. This may raise the suspicion that those three supposedly secure contexts listed in Appendix 1, Table A1.11, were in fact disturbed in a way that the excavators were not able to recognise.

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*Figure 6.16: A cruciform brooch worn alone (Empingham II G129, after Timby 1996, 169, fig.91).*

All three examples were found on the left shoulder. Walton Rogers (2007, 152) suggests that this arrangement represents a *peplos* dress fastened on just one shoulder. However, these three examples all include later cruciform brooches (Types 3.2.2, 4.3.2 and 4.4), not seen in any other context fastening a *peplos*. They are typical of the cloak-fastening types of cruciform brooch. The alternative garment that Walton Rogers (2007, 184) suggests may be represented by a single brooch, though positioned centrally on the body, is a cloak that was worn in a period after the *peplos* ceased to be worn in the later 6th century. Only one of these brooches is likely to fall into this period (**Empingham II G129**, a Type 4.4 brooch), but the other two may well be slightly earlier examples of the same costume. In these cases a cloak was worn over another garment, indicated in two cases by sleeve-

clasps, and in the other by a buckle that may have secured a belt girdling this inner garment. The only other explanation is that these cloak-fasteners fastened an over-garment worn over a *peplos* that was not secured by brooches but by a method that left no archaeological trace, such as by permanently sewn shoulder-fastenings or pins made of a thin bone or wood.

## Summary and Chronological Development

The preceding analysis has identified the three main uses of the cruciform brooch: worn in pairs as *peplos* fasteners, worn singly as a cloak fastener, and worn in pairs as dual-cloak fasteners. In addition, it was also occasionally used to fasten a mantle-dress, or paired with a small long brooch to fasten a *peplos* dress. Its most frequent use, by a large margin, was as a cloak fastener (73.9%), second most frequent was the use of pairs as *peplos* fasteners (17.6%), then in pairs dual-fastening a cloak (6.7%), and finally as a mantle-dress fastener (1.7%).

There is very little evidence for the regionality of specific dress styles within the core Anglian area of cruciform brooch use. There appears to be a slight northern (Northumberland and County Durham) bias for use of the single-shoulder *peplos* fastened by an annular brooch worn underneath a cloak fastened by a cruciform brooch. However, this is demonstrated by too few examples to be entirely persuasive, especially considering that most of these were from one cemetery (Norton). The Kentish manner of wearing the cruciform brooch certainly shows some differences to its use in the Anglian region. This should not be surprising considering the typological differences between Kentish cruciform brooches and those from the rest of England (see Chapter 2). In addition, Kentish dress fashions are now well-established and differ in some quite major ways to the rest of England (Walton Rogers 2007, 189). Brooches in Kent often appear around the waist or down the centre line of the torso, and this is thought to represent a fashion for the continental coat or jacket, virtually unknown in the rest of England. Cruciform brooches, however, do not seem to have been employed for the fastening of this unique garment. Although there are too few well-recorded examples of cruciform brooches in Kentish regions to say anything with certainty, it would seem that cruciform brooches here were used far more commonly to fasten *peplos* dresses than elsewhere, and especially without another cloak over the top of them. This may be because the Anglian

cloak was not a garment regularly worn in Kent, but it might also be because a lot of these Kentish cruciform brooches could be slightly earlier and concurrent with the *peplos*-fastening phase of cruciform brooch use in Anglian England.

This analysis has provided for the first time solid empirical evidence for relating cruciform brooch form to function. There is an observable stylistic distinction evident for the use of the cruciform brooch as a *peplos* fastener, which was perhaps more of a chronological trend than a choice made by individuals according to brooch style. The cruciform brooches used for this purpose share a number of traits with Group 1 brooches (small size, fully-round head-plate knobs), and therefore were probably in use at some point around 475 which marks the transition between Phases A and B. This particular use of cruciform brooches seems to have been short-lived.

An unfortunate shortcoming of this analysis has been the almost complete absence of any Phase A (Group 1) cruciform brooches. No brooches typical of this early period are known from secure contexts in Anglian England.<sup>2</sup> The Kentish situation may be a little different. A pair of Phase A brooches from Bifrons grave 15 suggests their use as *peplos* fasteners. However, this site lacks plans of graves, so their position on the body cannot be known. A more secure context at Springfield Lyons grave 4988 also suggests their use as *peplos* fasteners. Then again, there is also a grave from each of these two cemeteries (Bifrons grave 15, Springfield Lyons grave 6096) containing Phase A cruciform brooches worn singly. Another example from an insecurely recorded grave from Sarre (Kent) was also probably worn singly. However, because these examples are from the Kentish region, they do not necessarily represent the contemporary situation in Anglian England. Nonetheless, they tentatively suggest use of cruciform brooches both as pairs and as singletons, fastening double-fastened *peplos* dresses, and perhaps a single-fastened *peplos* or cloak. In less securely recorded inhumation graves from outside Kent, Phase A brooches always occur singly: **Fonaby G28**, **Sleaford G66**, **Nassington G17** and the very early (sub-Roman) **Dorchester G2**. Though these graves may not have been reliably excavated, the fact that identical pairs of unquestionably Phase A brooches have never been found (a pair of Type 1.2.2 brooches are known from Rudston, Yorkshire, but they show a significant amount of similarity with those early Group 2 *peplos* fastening

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<sup>2</sup> The only Phase A brooches from Anglian England excavated from well-recorded and secure inhumation contexts are **Cleatham G9** and **Castledyke South G156**. **Cleatham G9** fastened a cloak over a *peplos* dress, but is either of a later period than Phase A (see Chapter 3), or was an old brooch by its time of deposition. **Castledyke South G156** was fragmentary before its interment, and therefore was not worn.

cruciform brooches) suggests strongly that in the main, Phase A cruciform brooches outside Kent were worn singly.

The evidence from cremations is ambiguous due to the destructive nature of the ritual process. Therefore, although cruciform brooches generally occur only singly in cremation urns, their pairs may have been destroyed or not collected from the pyre. One burial from Spong Hill, cremation 1468, included two cruciform brooches. However, they were not a pair, and may not have necessarily been worn by the individual on the pyre (though one is fragmentary, one looks to be entirely unmarked by fire).<sup>3</sup> The evidence from cremations therefore largely supports the early earliest use of cruciform brooches (outside Kent) as singletons.

The lack of secure Phase A inhumation contexts means that the kind of garment these very early single cruciform brooches fastened is not known. Therefore, it is only possible to outline the chronological use of cruciform brooches in basic terms. Most of the stylistically earliest Group 2 cruciform brooches, whether they are from a secure context or not, occur in pairs. The most likely historical progression is therefore from being worn singly (Phase A), to being worn in pairs as *peplos* fasteners (Phase A/B transition), to finally being used as cloak fasteners, either singly or in pairs (Phases B and C). The fact that these phases of use barely overlap, and were also linked closely with stylistic changes, is intriguing and for the first time draws a clear connection between the cruciform brooch's form and function.

Those few instances where this transition is captured on the same costume are even more intriguing, proposing as they do the order in which these garments and dress-fasteners were gained over the course of an individual's life-history. These seven graves (Appendix 1, Table A1.4) all represent the gradual accumulation of the Anglian adult female costume over the course of a lifetime that ran parallel to the typological development of cruciform brooches. One of these graves (Cleatham grave 30) may even record the gaining of a third over-garment – a dual-fastened cloak worn over a normal cloak, worn over a *peplos*, worn over the sleeved under-garment. Typologically the three cloak-fastening cruciform brooches are stylistically too similar to suggest that the dual-fastening cloak was gained at a yet later stage.

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<sup>3</sup> This conclusion has been reached only from the published illustrations as the finds themselves were not available for personal examination at the time of writing.

Both Nick Stoodley (2000, 463) and Rebecca Gowland (2006, 148) have observed that the adult feminine dress style, which they both describe as wearing a brooch on each shoulder (in other words, wearing a *peplos* dress), only occurs in the graves of individuals aged over about 10-12. This was discussed in Chapter 5, alongside the idea that this standard age-related dress only emerged at some point around 475, when the regional restriction of the cruciform brooch also crystallised (see Chapter 4). These seven instances that demonstrate two separate phases of cruciform brooch use in one dress ensemble represent a *peplos* dress gained almost precisely at this point in time, when cruciform brooches were still treated as a suitable fastener for this garment. Because they were obtained in an earlier or transitional phase, they may also have been gained before the cruciform brooch was restricted to individuals over the age of about 18. The cloak-fastening cruciform brooches worn over the top of these seven *peplos* dresses therefore represent the obtaining of a secondary garment, most likely at some point after they had reached the age of eighteen. None of these individuals were demonstrably under the age of about eighteen at death (the individuals in Morning Thorpe grave 90 and Snape grave 10 were of a completely unknown age, but all the others were certainly over eighteen). Three of them have reliable age estimates of 25-45 (Cleatham grave 30), 25-35 (Spong Hill grave 22), and 26-30 (Morning Thorpe G353). Thus the implication is that the typological development between those very early Group 2 *peplos*-fastening forms, and the larger and later cloak-fastening brooches took place within about 10-30 years, depending on what stage in life those additional cloaks were gained. If the findings of the age analysis in Chapter 5 are correct, then this is most likely at the shorter end of this range, which fits with, and reinforces the chronology proposed in Chapter 3.

In addition, we must also now recognise that this secondary age boundary may well be as much to do with wearing a cloak as it was to do with cruciform brooches. Cruciform brooches still remain significant as they were almost the only suitable cloak fasteners in this region. The only alternative cloak fasteners were great square-headed brooches (Hines 1997, 283), and occasionally small long brooches. However, instances of cloak-fastening great square-headed and small long brooches are rare compared to cruciform brooches performing the same function.

## (Ad)Dressing the Anglo-Saxon Body

The types of garment the cruciform brooch fastened can therefore be identified with a reasonable degree of certainty alongside their chronological, regional and typological trends. With this knowledge established, it is possible to discuss the meanings of these early Anglo-Saxon dress ensembles and their role in the perception of the feminine body. The archaeology of the body is a relatively new area to archaeological research, and one that is heavily theoretical, based as it is in the more philosophical areas of social theory. Though touched upon by both Roberta Gilchrist (1997, 47-50), and Jos Bazelmans (2002), who both discuss masculinity and weapons as grave goods, the relationship between early Anglo-Saxon feminine dress and the body has not yet been theorised. This seems something of an oversight given how central clothing is to the perception of bodies in general. However, in light of the abundance of gendered interpretations early Anglo-Saxon archaeologists are prepared to draw from dress assemblages, this seems less of an oversight and more of a fundamental theoretical deficit. The purpose here therefore is to fill this lacuna with at least a proposal of how archaeological theoretical approaches to the body might be applied to early Anglo-Saxon brooches and dress.

Much of the theory of the body, and especially that relating to gender and sexuality, is based on the philosophical work of Judith Butler (Perry and Joyce 2001). Judith Butler has emphasised the importance of reiterative performance in the construction of sex and gender, and rejected the fundamental division of sex into a simple male and female binary arrangement. Butler suggests instead that this duality is not so much a “natural” and universal phenomenon, but is the result of a regime of heterosexual hegemony entrenched in the power structures of society (Butler 1990). Butler later outlined the central role the physical human body plays in this: sexual identity can be seen as a cultural interpretation of physiology. In *Bodies That Matter* (Butler 1993) the primacy of the “natural” body is rejected. Instead, the body is seen to be the site upon which definitions of sexual identity are projected, and from which performances of gender are inescapably reiterated. The idea that there is a fundamental and pre-existing sexed body upon which culture inscribes gender is shown to be deficient, and sex and gender are theorised as parallel processes, both of which are based upon perceptions of the body. This philosophy therefore requires archaeologists, especially those interested in sex and gender, to investigate how the body may have been perceived in the past. Much of this relates closely to material culture

theory: rather than culture being constructed entirely by social discourse, there are very real and physical things that form an ineluctable part of human experience.

The study of gender, as opposed to sex, in early Anglo-Saxon archaeology is heavily predicated upon a constructivist paradigm. While gender is the culturally constructed edifice, sex is the essential and pre-cultural foundation it is built upon. Sex is therefore not considered to be a subject that is researchable by anyone except osteologists who establish the scientific facts upon which social archaeology can base its arguments. The body has virtually been removed from archaeological analysis. One demonstration of this failure is that any grave without gender-specific grave goods is frequently considered gender-neutral and just part of the formless and identity-less mass of makeweight, useful only for reconstructing scientific demographic information. Just as this chapter has tried to emphasise that brooches do not by themselves constitute dress, Anglo-Saxon archaeologists must recognise that skeletons do not constitute bodies.

There is a strong sense in a lot of writing on early Anglo-Saxon mortuary archaeology that the construction of gender is in some ways an artificial facade against the natural, indivisible ontological and sexed body (*cf.* Butler 1993, xi). It is a critical necessity to remember that the academic terminology that separates sex from gender is merely a useful way of investigating the differences between men and women in society; it has no necessary philosophical or empirical grounding. Gender cannot easily be removed or changed like clothing or brooches, but, like sex, is deeply rooted in the body. Gender cannot be found *in* the brooch, but rather in perceptions of the body that the brooch and costume help to inform. It must be recognised that the display and construction of sex and gender are parallel processes (Nordbladh and Yates 1990, 223). The idea that an individual possesses some essential identity which they then choose to display, for example, with brooches, therefore requires questioning (Butler 1993, x; Thomas 2002). If the idea that a sexed body exists *a priori* must be rejected (Thomas 2002, 33; Yates 1994, 48), then it is necessary to examine how early Anglo-Saxons thought about bodies.

The body, therefore, must become another variable for the archaeologist to investigate. There are several ways that archaeologists have found to do this. Firstly, the body is not necessarily where the self resides, but it is intimately connected to how people perceive themselves, and what the “self” is in the first place (Nordbladh and Yates 1990, 232; Yates 1994, 52-3). Secondly, the bodily experience of the past is an area open to

phenomenological investigation. The third area of possible analysis is the body as a cultural symbol – how it was reproduced in art or even decorated may be crucial to how members of society perceived themselves (Hamilakis *et al* 2002). The first of these questions is the most philosophical, and is beyond the means and purposes of the current investigation. It is nevertheless an important point to recognise. The second phenomenological question is investigable to some extent: it is possible to question the practicality of some of these dresses, and whether the individuals wearing them would have been in any way restricted in their movements, or perhaps even encouraged to assume a generally distinct manner of deportment. Of course, we must remember that the data we possess is constituted by mortuary costume, but as discussed above it seems that by and large these ensembles were worn similarly in life. The third area is the most germane to the present research, a large part its argument being (Chapters 4 and 5) that women who wore cruciform brooches were themselves gendered cultural symbols of the Anglian ethnos.

#### *The Body as a Cultural Symbol*

The idea that the body can extend beyond the skin and into objects closely associated with it, especially in a mortuary context, is the key concept that links dress, brooches and sexuality (Joyce 2005, 142). Julian Thomas (2002, 41) makes this argument for the embodiment of British Neolithic ceramics found mixed up with human remains in long barrows. An even more intimate link can surely be drawn between the bodies of Anglo-Saxon women and the garments that constituted their public interface in life and death. These textiles and fasteners were worn daily and therefore became inseparably linked to the perception of these women's bodies. Their regular use can be seen in the wear and repair these objects display (see Chapter 7), as well as their inalienability from the bodies they dressed: their only means of socially sanctioned disposal was in the graves of their wearers (*cf.* Joyce 2005, 145). Bodily ornamentation provides an additional skin that acts as an interface between physical, biological bodies, and their social perception. They elevate the body into something culturally intelligible. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that brooches were not only a display or signalling of gender and its attendant cultural roles, but were also fundamental to the perception of women's bodies themselves.



Nick Stoodley (1999, 74) has suggested a contrast between “the creation of a feminine gender in which the emphasis was squarely on the body” and a masculine gender which “was centred around the martial image expressed by weapons”. Yet, bodies, or rather their perceived sex, are critical to the perception of almost any definition of gender. Male clothing would doubtlessly also have been critical to the perception of masculine gender, only it leaves less of a mark in the early Anglo-Saxon grave. Masculine dress of this period can of course be reconstructed to some extent and seems to have largely consisted of simple tunics and trousers (Walton Rogers 2007, 206). However, the masculine body does not seem to have been the same focus for ornamentation that the feminine body provided.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the early Anglo-Saxon female torso, being the focal point for decorative metalwork, was clearly emphasised, and might be seen as the focus for the elaboration and therefore perception of the feminine body.

Wearing a *peplos* by itself would have accentuated the shoulders (marked with brooches), as well as perhaps the waist if it was girdled and had items (knives, purses, keys, girdle-hangers) suspended from it. The wearing of a cloak over this, however, would have considerably changed the shape of the body. It would have appeared larger, and perhaps more imposing. In addition, the previous focal point of the shoulders, where the decorative *peplos*-fastening brooches were located, would have become replaced by the upper middle torso, where the larger and more decorative cruciform brooch would be situated fastening a cloak that concealed the shoulder brooches beneath it. Wearing the dual-fastened cloak, perhaps over another cloak would have made the body appear even larger, with a focus slightly lower on the chest, around the breast. It is likely that these focal points on the body became sites of sexual identification, and thus their changing location may have signified a subtly differing perception of sex and gender. It is unlikely that the same complete costume would have been worn throughout the year, and it may have varied seasonally. Nonetheless, the owning and wearing of these larger garments with different bodily focuses, and especially the very intentional dressing of a corpse in this manner, would have marked some individuals out as possessing a slightly differently perceived body, perhaps one endowed with a more mature sexuality.

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<sup>4</sup> There may well be an argument to be made for the head and face providing a focal point for masculine bodies, being brought out most powerfully in the masking practices indicated by helmets of a slightly later period (e.g. Sutton Hoo mound 1). This will be given some consideration in Chapter 8 when the frequency of helmed male faces in iconography is discussed.

### *Embodied Experience and Dress*

It is also necessary to acknowledge that gendered dressing is not solely about display, but can also affect the way the wearer experiences bodily performance. For instance, being endowed with the clothes of a female adult would help the individual feel, act, and be treated as both feminine and mature. This is a simple but fundamental point. It is also possible to make a slightly more specific argument without digressing into speculation. The (im)practicality of Anglo-Saxon dress has been remarked on in the past. Gale Owen-Crocker reports from experimental archaeologists that although the *peplos* is a comfortable and practical garment, a sleeved undergarment by itself, as well as the wrist-clasps often used to fasten it, were not (Owen Crocker 2004, 59). They were found to be uncomfortable and when engaged in practical activities, such as weaving, they had to be removed for danger of their becoming caught in the loom threads. Then again, experimental archaeologists have of course learned specific manners of deportment, as well as actions, through their own bodily experience in modern society. John Hines has remarked on the unpractical nature of great square-headed brooches, suggesting that their size far exceeds that of need, remarking: “one can only reflect that ease and practicality have rarely been determinative factors in dominant fashions” (Hines 1997a, 293). Group 4 cruciform brooches were of about the same size as great square-headed brooches, and most cruciform brooches were not much smaller. As the next chapter will demonstrate, most of these brooches bear the marks of objects not treated with an inordinate amount of care and reverence. Some, however, were obviously quite fragile and they may have restricted the activities of their wearer to some extent. The fact that some individuals may have even worn five or more large brooches simultaneously immediately raises the suspicion that part of the purpose of these large brooches may have been to imply a lifestyle that required less physical toil. Although most evidence suggests these were also costumes worn in life, we must at least bear in mind the possibility that some of these costumes (most likely the largest, most elaborate, and therefore least practical) may have been worn only in the funeral ritual.

Osteological analysis on lifestyle stresses would be an interesting dataset to interrogate. However, there is currently insufficient skeletal evidence for a meaningful analysis of pathology between cruciform brooch wearers and other individuals. Of 144 osteologically examined individuals wearing cruciform brooches, only 15 display pathologies. However, that does not necessarily mean that the remaining 129 were in

prime health, many of these contexts have only minimal bone survival. The fact that nine of these cases are from Spong Hill perhaps suggests more about the capabilities and aims of the osteologist examining the material. The pathologies recorded offer nothing conclusive. Eight cases of osteoarthritis suggest that these were not individuals completely removed from the toils of everyday life. Three cases of dental attrition do not necessarily illuminate much aside from age, but one case of dental hypoplasia does suggest a non-privileged childhood with episodes of malnutrition. The most interesting pathology is from the individual from Quarrington grave 15 who appears to have suffered from tuberculosis over a long period of time (indicated by lesions on six vertebrae). More severely, atrophy of all the limbs was also evident, and especially on the legs, which indicates lengthy periods of bed-rest, if not actual paralysis (Dickinson 2004, 30). Although this evidence does not help us compare those who did and did not wear cruciform brooches, it does give an impression of the range of bodies associated with them, from the healthy to the acutely physically impaired.

A more phenomenological approach to the body considers the power of ways of moving, gestures and actions as socially structuring principles (Hamilakis *et al* 2002, 7-9). These ideas are based largely in Marcel Mauss' theory of the 'technology of the body' (Mauss 1979, originally published in 1935). Mauss suggested that the subtle manner in which individuals deport themselves, such as by walking, sitting or gesticulating, is culturally learned and therefore culturally specific. Cruciform brooches and cloaks are of interest here as it appears that they were used to cumulatively cover the body in layers, which, if anything, would have hindered gesticulation, and made the movements of the physical body increasingly screened from sight. Although cloaks fastened at the throat and upper chest would have had this effect, they could also easily have been cast back behind the shoulders, making the arms the more visible. The dual-fastened cloak, however, would have significantly restricted arm movement, allowing the visibility of only hands and forearms at the most. We must also consider that these larger cloaks may have covered the head, and in some instances the textile evidence suggests that head-coverings were very common on women (Walton Rogers 2007, 157). These cumulative layers of clothing, with which cruciform brooches were intimately connected, increasingly screened off the body, making its movements and gesticulations less and less obvious, or at least only visible under layers of textile. This also presents us with the juxtaposition of emphasising the feminine torso with decorative textiles and brooches, whilst at the same

time concealing it from public view, or perhaps transforming it into a social skin with far more complex accumulated meaning.

A social interpretation of these layered costumes is hard to determine. Nonetheless, given that this was in some ways the purpose of cruciform brooches, its consideration is unavoidable. If anything, these clothes and brooches indicate the construction of mature feminine sexual identity: they literally cover and eclipse the female biological body with a culturally appropriate display. By all accounts, this was the opposite of adult male dress which seems to have displayed far more of the physical body with trousers or leggings over which was worn a shorter sleeved tunic or jacket which allowed almost full visibility of the movements of all limbs (Owen Crocker 2004, 104-127; Walton Rogers 2007, 199-214). A number of figural representations of men from this period also depict men as bare-chested and wearing short cloaks over at least one shoulder (Owen-Crocker 2004, 107). It is possible that the concealment of the female physiology was to do with preserving modesty, as it was in later medieval periods. However, this idea is more likely to have come with later Christian ideals of feminine purity and chastity, and there is no evidence to support or detract from the idea, aside from the fact that it may be based on a stereotype of feminine sexuality. It would also not necessarily follow that the female body should become more covered as the individual became older. We are unlikely to be able to access any such specificity, requiring as it does some very specific knowledge of cultural understandings of sexuality. Therefore, a more general explanation must be offered.

In the broadest terms, it would seem that these women's physiologies became less public; in every sense anatomy became shrouded. However, the public body (which drew links with the Anglian ethnos and more general brooch-wearing fashions) became increasingly emphasised, to the point that it eclipsed physiology almost altogether. One reasonable hypothesis, considering the specificity of the cruciform brooch dress ensemble in terms of chronology (Chapter 3), regionality (Chapter 4), and age (Chapter 5), is that these women's bodies became cultural symbols: reified concepts of what it was to belong to their cultural group. These wearers of cruciform brooches have, in the previous chapters, been termed 'the bearers of tradition'. The present chapter indicates something more intimate and encompassing: these women literally embodied a tradition.

These costumes were cumulatively gained, first the *peplos*, secondly the cloak, and perhaps in some cases a third outer layer, the dual-fastened cloak. These garments may have acted as a decipherable biography of the individual by recording their passage through life. The fact that most of these women were probably also mothers may have contributed to their identity as the bearers and embodiment of a cultural tradition as they also may have been seen as the linchpins of existing descent groups. The linkage between an ethnic identity that was most likely articulated through descent (see Chapter 4) and the embodiment of the ethnos in physiology may not be coincidental. This may have been a particularly instrumental method of constructing and displaying a demonstrable claim to an authoritative cultural inheritance.

# Chapter 7: The Biographies of Cruciform Brooches

This chapter focuses on how cruciform brooches were treated by the people who produced, wore and maintained them. The most obvious aim is to demonstrate that cruciform brooches were not revered or venerated objects, but were worn and handled on an everyday basis. Yet, this does not imply that they were not treasured and highly valued. The extent to which some items were repaired and retained even when their battered forms were beyond effective repair demonstrates that these items were not easily replaced. However, this is interpreted to not necessarily represent a low availability of resources, but rather the authentic value embedded in each of these objects that could not be replicated in a substituted item. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 have suggested that cruciform brooches were used to construct, embody and display a complex identity based on perceptions of ethnicity, gender and stage in the lifecycle. In order to do this persuasively each brooch was required to possess a convincing authenticity. This authenticity is suggested here to have resided in the reiterative everyday performance of the dressed body, as well as perhaps the exchange of these objects during life-stage defining rites of passage.

The chapter will begin by providing some of the social implications mentioned above in a little more detail. It will be suggested that thinking about cruciform brooches in terms of economic wealth or resources is deficient, and that the value of these items is better understood in terms of the social identity that they constructed and conferred. The object biographies of cruciform brooches are partly accessible to archaeologists through their repair and other physical adaptations, and it is suggested that this information can be used to demonstrate how these items came to embody value. Following this there will be two main analyses. The first will examine the different rates of breakage and repair between brooch types, and identify cruciform brooches as among the most frequently repaired dress-fasteners. The second analysis will provide descriptions of the different types of repair seen on cruciform brooches as well as a quantitative analysis of the frequency of these practices. The various technologies and choices that were involved in conducting these repairs will then be explored followed by a brief survey of the parallel phenomena

of the customisation and use-adaptation of cruciform brooches. Finally, these behaviours will be interpreted in social terms in a consideration of their value and exchange.

## The Social Implications of Repair, Modification and Use-Adaptation

The physical modification of objects involves a complex network of choices and resources, but ultimately straddles the division between object agency and human intentionality. A broken object demands human action, but the most appropriate action depends on the meaning and use of the object, as well as the available resources and skills. The theory behind the social agency of objects recognises that the interaction between people and things is an active and socially affective process (Gell 1998). Nevertheless, the agency of objects ultimately originates in human social practice and therefore objects need not be attributed with sufficient agency to affect social action all by themselves (Morphy 2009). The critical question therefore becomes why it was these particular brooches that were deemed more suitable for repair, customisation and use-adaptation than others.

Because there is very little existing literature on the social implications of an archaeological study of repair, there is not a pre-existing framework within which to situate the present chapter. Unlike the previous chapters which have corresponded closely with broader topics such as typology, chronology and the archaeology of ethnicity, gender, and the body, the implications of the present analysis require some definition. This section will therefore address three of the major themes that will be relevant to this chapter: (a) the distinction between material wealth and cultural value, (b) the potential inalienable nature of material culture used to construct and display identity, and (c) the potential origins of this value in object biography.

### *Material Wealth and Value*

The value of cruciform brooches does not pose a question that that is answerable in absolute terms and hence this chapter will examine the aspects of these items that may have generated worth. Cruciform brooches, and especially the latest Group 4 types, were lavish, large and valuable objects in terms of the resources required for their manufacture,

and therefore most likely were seen as prestigious items. Most Group 4 cruciform brooches, as well as a smaller number of earlier examples were gilded. Gold was doubtlessly of considerable inherent value, and was to become an increasingly prevalent medium for displaying authority in the 7th century. The value of copper-alloy is not so easily measured. Its lustre when newly cast would have perhaps been associated with gold, but in addition the manufacturers of brooches obviously required some command over resources and specialist skills. These kinds of observations mean that cruciform brooches are often thought to have communicated a high status, but precisely what this kind of abstract status meant in more pragmatic terms is rarely clear. In sum, Anglo-Saxon archaeologists have had some difficulty in framing the worth of brooches in a meaningful sense.

An elaborate and often-criticised method for interpreting the value of such items has been through the scoring of graves according to an even more quantified concept of wealth (e.g. Arnold 1988a; Christlein 1973; Scull 1992; 1993; 1999, see Chapter 5 details). No doubt there is some value in interpretations based on wealth-scoring: political power would have allowed access to the resources required to obtain these lavish items. Such ideas were relevant in Chapter 4 when the switch to a de-regionalised distribution for cruciform brooches in the mid-6th century was explained as the result of the increasingly controlled patronage of jewellery producers and their products by an elite stratum of early Anglo-Saxon society. However, any concept of wealth is obviously problematic in a non-monetary society whose social reproduction is thought to have relied on gift exchange (Theuvs 2004, 124). Mary Helms has suggested that the exchange of objects, and particularly the individuals involved in production and exchange (in the case of cruciform brooches perhaps craftspeople and patrons) can create objects that impart power (Helms 1993, 9). Given the involvement of cruciform brooches in the creation of power-related, or perhaps even hegemonic, identities (see Chapter 4) this seems a more appropriate frame of reference for the present study. Hence, this chapter shifts attention from *wealth* to *value*. Here there is less of a concern for the worth of the resources that were required to produce these objects, and more focus on the value of the meaning with which these objects were invested. Rather than a top-down approach that considers these brooches primarily in a political context, the present level of analysis focuses on the very individual ways in which people interacted with cruciform brooches and extrapolates outward from this point. The implication is not that cruciform brooches were irrelevant to overt displays of prestige, or that the material they were made from had no inherent worth.



However, it would seem that the meaning of these objects at a micro-scale would benefit an interpretation of these objects on the wider political scale.

When the repair of a brooch is remarked upon in the existing literature it is generally with regard to its practical, chronological or economic implications. Wear and repair indicates that brooches were used for long periods of time (Hines 1997a, 237), and attempts have even been made to quantify this (Parfitt and Brugmann 1997, 48-9). Yet, the fact that some of these repairs may have been prompted by a fault during casting (Mortimer 1990, 111) renders at least some of these estimations questionable. Wear and repair can also be taken to demonstrate that brooches were regularly worn items not just reserved for “special occasions or rites of passage” (Hines 1997a, 293). Other comments refer to the retention of battered and heavily repaired brooches as reflecting the worth of these items to the individual (Sherlock and Welch 1992, 38), their limited availability or high value (Leeds 1941; *cf.* Magnus 1980), or the poor practicality of the more fragile examples that were obviously prone to breakage (Timby 1996, 39-40). One of the strangest remarks made concerning this topic is Edward Thurlow Leeds’ (1941, 236) somewhat flippant comment that high rates of breakage and repair suggest that brooches were “under greater violence than one would expect ... such as that pictured in the treatment of women recorded now and then in the saga-literature, or on the temperament of the women themselves”.

The emphasis in existing accounts, therefore, is that a broken or repaired brooch was a compromise: a new brooch was unobtainable due to limited economic resources. It could be true that these items, even in an extreme state of disrepair, were valuable in an economic sense, making their repair and re-use ‘cheaper’ than replacing them.<sup>1</sup> However, as has been discussed above, this is an insufficient explanation. Many were obviously prestigious items, but not necessarily in the sense that their raw materials and the metallurgical skills invested in them were too ‘expensive’ to ever replace. As has also been mentioned above, this may be the wrong kind of conclusion to draw from objects that existed in a non-monetary economy whose social reproduction is generally seen to have relied on gift-exchange rather than impersonal economic transaction. As Arjun Appadurai (1986) famously suggested, it can be the exchange of an object that creates value, and thus a fuller assessment of the worth of a brooch would take into account its

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<sup>1</sup> Such a suggestion would also have to assess the quality of a repair, and whether it had been done with skill or durable materials. The quality of repair will be subject to examination below.

method of exchange, and the idea that there was something special about their actual substance, or authenticity. Frans Theuws (2004) has explored this kind of approach in an investigation of the origins of value of the objects manufactured and exchanged from the later *emporia* sites. Theuws suggests that the value of these objects (and hence the very origins of these extremely important sites) is not self-explanatory, but depended on their authentication by the elites and the cosmological associations of the *emporia*. A more fruitful method of investigating the value of cruciform brooches may therefore be to consider their role in the construction of identity.

### *Material and Inalienable Aspects of Identity*

For archaeologists, the meanings of grave goods, and especially brooches, have always been inextricably bound up with the identities of the individuals with whom they were interred, and identity is also the major focus of this thesis. Yet, the relationships between producers, wearers and the physicality of dress-accessories are rarely explored. This is a remarkable oversight given the importance attributed to such items in the construction and negotiation of identity. It is suggested here that instances of repair and other physical modification help to illuminate how individuals interacted with cruciform brooches, and perhaps also the relationship between the wearer of the brooch and the craftsperson (given that some repairs were obviously done by specialists). By looking at the relationship between brooches and people, this chapter also hopes to contribute to an understanding of *why* these brooches were almost exclusively deposited in graves. As outlined above, it is argued here that the extent of many repairs and instances of re-use suggest that cruciform brooches were not easily discarded or recycled because they had an authentic value that was not substitutable by an alternative object. A secondary implication of this is that many of these brooches ultimately became inalienable from the body they dressed, and to which they bestowed an identity. As mentioned above, cruciform brooches were most likely obtained through gift exchange rather than economic transaction, and this is precisely the difference between alienable and inalienable wealth (Gregory 1982). Hence, the only socially sanctioned means of their disposal was in the grave, attached to the body of their wearer.

It is important to stress that the idea of material culture being inalienable should not be conceived as a necessarily conscious or legal rule. Social sanctions are regularly

transgressed and the difference between social sanction and law is that the former is apparent only from patterns of behaviour, and patterns that are not always consistent. The only suggestion here is that it is unlikely very high numbers of cruciform brooches were recycled as scrap, discarded, handed-down or regularly exchanged because of the intimate bonds which existed between the brooch and its wearer.

The idea that a small number of cruciform brooches became heirlooms has already been mentioned in Chapter 3, and this perhaps complicates the notion of inalienability. **Cleatham G9** and **Castledyke South G156** both represent older brooches interred with apparently later material (see Chapter 3). However, the concept of an heirloom itself strongly implies limitations to the ways in which objects can be exchanged, and heirlooms are generally seen to be inalienable to the kin group (Lillios 1999, 240). In any case, it appears that the vast majority of cruciform brooches were deposited in the graves of their original owner, and this is why there are such a high number of them in the archaeological record. The chronology suggested here (Chapter 3) and comparable seriations of other jewellery (e.g. Hines 1999a) supply relatively fine resolutions of approximate 25-year phases. Quite simply, this would not be possible at all if grave goods from more than one generation were habitually mixed in a grave. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, jewellery was frequently accumulated over the full course of an individual's life, which can account for disparities of up to about 30 years between the dates of objects. Of course some items may have occasionally been passed between generations, but these instances tend to stand out as exceptions, and often involve exceptional items.

#### *The Object Biographies of Cruciform Brooches*

If value can be interpreted through the social identity that cruciform brooches conferred, which also contributed inalienable qualities to these objects, a pragmatic method of studying this process may be through an exploration of object biography. The diverse and rapidly developing typology of cruciform brooches reveals a desire for individuality. Their customisation, repair and use-adaptation often underline this point: many were created as unique objects (within stylistic parameters) that were not readily replaceable. Indeed, this was the reason Bente Magnus (1980, 283) gave for the frequent repair of a specific type of Norwegian ceramic vessel of the same period. This may be part of the

case for brooches being repaired, but the argument can be taken further. The value of cruciform brooches may have not only stemmed from each one's uniqueness, but perhaps more crucially from an authenticity rooted in their biographies. Brooches and their owners may have been seen to progress along inseparable and parallel trajectories. This, of course, is largely hypothetical, but nonetheless provides further reasons for suggesting that many of these objects were seemingly inalienable from the bodies they dressed.

The biographies of cruciform brooches would have been accumulated through the reiterative performance of wearing the dress ensembles described in Chapter 6. The particular brooches worn by certain individuals are likely to have been part of a localised social memory. Repairs, customisations and use-adaptations would also have physically contributed to each brooch's biography, perhaps in many cases only known by the wearer. Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall (1999, 175) have outlined a comparable process in the treatment of 20th-century Native American masks from the northwest coast of Canada. Though the same is not necessarily true for cruciform brooches, these masks possessed no intrinsic value in their materials or from the skills of the artist who created them. Their worth and meaning came only from the remembered ritual performances in which they were worn. Such processes may be comparable to the gradual accumulation of value in cruciform brooches both in everyday as well as ritual performance, including of course the final chapter in its biography: the funeral.

Object biography can also be used to study the history of an artefact's exchange, and this (after Appadurai 1986, above) might also aid in the interpretation of the value of cruciform brooches. These items were somehow exchanged between craftspeople and their eventual owners, and perhaps the patrons of those craftspeople interceded. Whether or not this constituted a gift exchange network *per se* is currently not demonstrable, but in the absence of a monetary economy it seems likely to have been a related process that involved reciprocal relationships. This is precisely what complicates the idea of brooches representing a measurable degree of wealth. Their value may well also have rested upon the individuals involved in the exchange, as well as the subsequent biographies of these brooches. The physical marks left by instances of repair, customisation and use-adaptation obviously cannot reveal all of this biographical detail, but they do provide a small window onto the history of the brooch's use.

Although the repair of Anglo-Saxon objects has not previously been the subject of a dedicated study, there is some context to be found in other aspects of this period's archaeology that may aid in the biographical understanding of cruciform brooches. Following the original study of Roger White (1988), Hella Eckardt and Howard Williams (2003) have explored the re-use of Roman objects in early Anglo-Saxon graves, developing the idea that antique objects were attributed new meanings depending on their contemporary context (e.g. Moreland 1999). The meaning of these objects is seen to depend on their *unknown* biographies in the antique Roman past (Eckardt and Williams 2003, 155). This chapter complements the work of Eckardt and Williams by applying the idea of *known* biographies to Anglo-Saxon brooches, and suggests that their value and presence in the funerary ritual was at least partly based on their accumulated biographical meaning.

The present chapter also borrows ideas from the wider study of early Anglo-Saxon memory. Howard Williams (2006, 46-55) has discussed the important role of brooches in the production and evocation of memory at the funeral through the preparation of the cadaver for burial (Williams 2006, 51) and their visual presence in the funeral tableaux (Williams 2006, 54). As discussed in the previous chapter, the visual presence of brooches during the funeral is at times overrated, given that they were frequently either underneath layers of clothing, or wrapped up in the folds of external clothing. Knowledge of their presence on the body of the deceased was perhaps more critical than their actual display. Zoë Devlin suggests that the inclusion of certain objects in early Anglo-Saxon graves was due to the social memories these items could evoke or invoke as mnemonic instruments, as well as the biography they had accumulated (Devlin 2007b, 41). Devlin does in fact briefly mention repair, as opposed to the discarding or recycling of older items, as “suggesting a wish to remember the past” (Devlin 2007b, 40). This study is an investigation of precisely this idea and for the first time contributes quantified and empirical evidence.

As a common practice, the repair, customisation and use-adaptation of objects is a subject worthy of study in its own right. Material culture rarely just exists (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2003). Rather, it is used, consumed, or maintained by human curators, and can outlive them. The breakage of an object beyond repair may cause it to be requisitioned for a new purpose. This is an ongoing process and can reveal social attitudes towards objects. For the early Anglo-Saxons this may have been a prosaic if necessary activity, but for the

archaeologist it can reveal a whole sphere of human-object interactivity. As material culture progresses through its biography, even the most mundane objects can become palimpsests for human action.

## Quantifying Repair I: Types and Rates of Physical Modification between Brooch Types

Three types of physical modification of brooches can be defined: repair, customisation and use-adaptation. Repaired brooches are those that were broken and then restored to their original function (e.g. replacing a pin-catch). Customised brooches were physically altered in a manner that did not alter their primary function (e.g. runic inscription). Use-adaptation is much rarer and includes examples of brooches that were no longer being used to pin garments. It is evident where physical alterations had been made to enable an alternative usage, for example as pendants or strap-ends.

A sample of nineteen well-published cemeteries was taken to establish the frequency of these practices (Figure 7.1). These sites span the regions of early Anglo-Saxon furnished burial and yield over 1,000 examples of all major and most minor brooch types. Frequency of breakage with and without repair, and other forms of modification (largely comprising customisation with only one or two examples of potential use-adaptation) were assessed for all examples of major brooch types (minor types, such as Anglian equal arm brooches and bird brooches, accounted for only 27 examples and had no instances of physical modification). Rates of breakage, repair and other modification predictably revealed that brooches with a higher propensity to break (generally large bow brooches due to their size and sharp, fragile angles), had a higher rate of repair (Figure 7.2). There was, however, some difficulty in assessing what constituted pre-depositional breakage. Annular brooches were especially problematic: only a very small number could be identified as definitely broken before their interment, and these were all identified by an obvious repair. It is, however, more obvious when a significant portion of a bow brooch is missing that a breakage occurred prior to its deposition. Being made from considerably thinner castings of copper-alloy, annular brooches are often fragmented when excavated, and therefore it seems likely that they would have broken more frequently in their everyday use. The very low rate of repair for annular brooches does not match their likely high rate of breakage. These data (Figure 7.2) therefore show that repair partly

depended on rate of breakage, but more crucially depended on choice: not all types of brooch merited the effort and resources of a repair. Cruciform, great square-headed and Roman brooches in particular appear to have been preferentially selected for this treatment. Revealingly, it is also cruciform and great square-headed brooches that display the highest rates of other modification. These brooches in particular were less replaceable and presumably of greater worth to their owner. These are also the types traditionally perceived to be high status.



Figure 7.1: Sample of nineteen cemeteries used in the comparison of rates of repair.

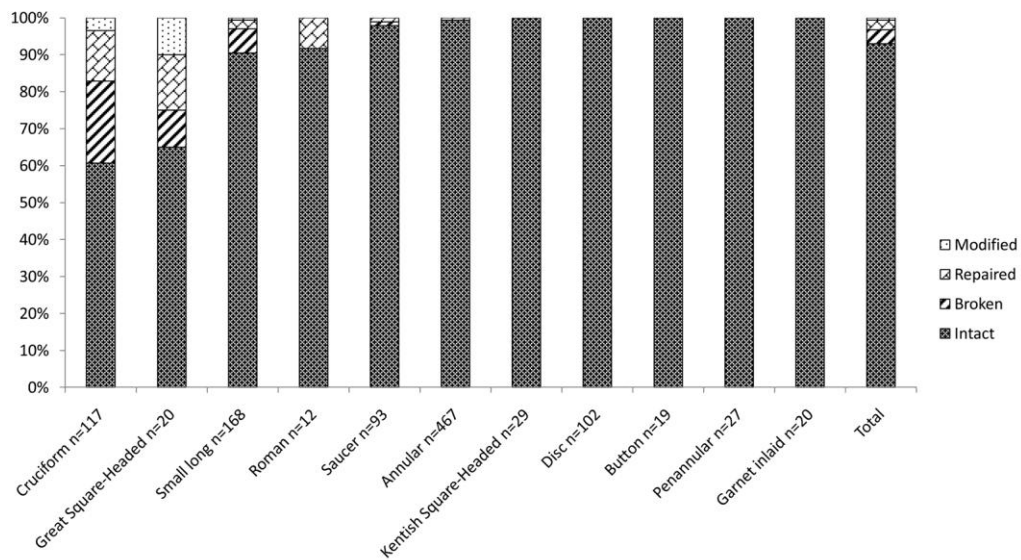


Figure 7.2: Rates of repair between different types of brooches in the sample of cemeteries displayed in Figure 7.1.

## Quantifying Repair II: The Frequency of Different Types of Repair

### *Types of Repair*

There were several different repair techniques in the early Anglo-Saxon repertoire, and the particular method used required a choice that was partly restricted by skills and resources. However, the consistency and repetition of most of these techniques suggest that they were also governed by an overall code of learned behaviour: a shared technology, or, if one likes, a practical example of Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977; cf. Blinkhorn 1997, 115). These behaviours therefore constituted a learned technology of physical alteration and repair. Similar processes have been studied for the transmission and initial production of material culture both archaeologically (Blinkhorn 1997; Stark *et al* 2008) and ethnographically (Day 2004) and may also be applied to its physical maintenance. Repairs occurred frequently enough to be considered as established social practices. It is possible to imagine these techniques being communicated along the same channels that spread the stylistic development of the cruciform brooch.



Riveting is a very common method of repair on cruciform brooches. Most frequently this was a technique used on substantial breaks, for example between the bow and catch-plate. Holes were drilled near the join on each severed half, a plate (iron or copper-alloy) was placed on the reverse, and rivets (generally iron, occasionally copper-alloy) were driven through the holes fixing the plate and two halves together in a solid and durable mend (Figure 7.3a). A plate was not necessarily always used, and occasionally the broken halves were fitted together so that the edges overlapped before rivets were driven through both (Figure 7.3b). As well as re-joining major elements of brooches back together, this technique was also sometimes used for attaching new pin-catches onto the fragmented stubs of old ones, and sometimes also to fasten a specially made replacement part, such as a side-knob (below, Figure 7.6c).

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*Figure 7.3: Repairs executed with rivets (a) A repair between the bow and head-plate using iron rivets and an iron plate (Norton G30); (b) A repair between the bow and catch-plate using only rivets (Eriswell G22). Scale 1/2.*

The other most common method of making a repair was to use an alloy with a low melting-point as an adhesive solder. This technique was occasionally used to rejoin substantial parts, but due to its less durable result it was more frequently used to attach replacement copper-alloy plates to broken pin-catches (Figure 7.4a) or pin-axis lugs (Figure 7.4b). If solder was used to rejoin two severed halves, a copper-alloy plate was used in the same manner as for riveting (Figure 7.4c), and in the case of attaching a new pin-catch sometimes a slot was cut for the new plate's insertion (Figure 7.4d).

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*Figure 7.4: Repairs with solder and plates (a) Repair to pin-catch (Brooke 6); (b) Repair to pin-axis lug (Howletts G1 (1)); (c) Solder and plate joining head-plate and bow (Girton 2); (d) Solder and slot repair to pin-catch (Fonaby 3). Scale 1/2.*

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*Figure 7.5: Repairs using a filed surface and solder for replacement surfaces on head-plate wings (a and b) and a terminus (c). (a) Haslingfield 2; (b) Little Wilbraham G32; (c) Lakenheath 12. Scale 1/2.*

A relatively common, if enigmatic, use for solder seems to have been to attach a new surface to a brooch, presumably to cover up a fault incurred during casting (Figure 7.5). Invariably this involved filing down the damaged surface, both to lower its height so that it could hold a new plate, but also to score the surface so that it would adhere to the solder more effectively.

The separately cast side-knobs of cruciform brooches were frequently lost. They are a very common find on the PAS database and many cruciform brooches were interred with missing side-knobs. Although technically these parts fastened either end of the pin-spring axis bar, ways were obviously found of fastening a spring without them, or perhaps the pin mechanism had been discarded altogether (see below). Occasionally cruciform brooches are found with non-matching side-knobs (Figure 7.6a), suggesting that replacement parts have been utilised. Whether these were specially cast or were found and kept as spare-parts is open to question. At least in some cases they were specially cast, as is suggested by the replacement side-knob on **Morning Thorpe G209** and its riveted attachment tab (Figure 7.6b).

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*Figure 7.6: Replaced side-knobs (a) Cleatham G30 (1); (b) Morning Thorpe G80; (c) Morning Thorpe G209. (b) after Green et al 1987, 224, fig. 321 (c) after Green et al 1987, 265, fig. 362. Scale 1/2.*

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*Figure 7.7: Plugging casting errors with a slightly different alloy (a) West Hendred 2; (b) Westgarth Gardens G61 (1). Scale 1/2.*

Less common techniques of repair include the plugging of air bubbles left by a poor-casting. This is very rare, and is only known from two examples. It is only visible on these examples because slightly different alloys have been used, resulting in two subtly different patinas on the surface of the brooches (Figure 7.7). Another rare mend was the drilling of a second perforation on a broken pin-axis lug (**Castledyke South G74**). A slightly more common repair, which perhaps is more accurately described as the lack of a repair, is the filing down of a broken edge. This was obviously only done when the broken part was not re-attached with rivets or solder. However, sometimes it was done with great care such as on **Castledyke South G43** where the broken edge was filed into a delicately executed stepped surface (Figure 7.8a). The intentional removal of parts followed by the filing down of broken edges also seems to have occasionally taken place. Rather than a possible ritual dismantling, it seems more likely that single breakages may have caused other elements to be broken off to achieve symmetry. This is possibly evident on **Morning Thorpe G393** and **Easington G2** (Figure 7.8b).

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*Figure 7.8: Filing down broken edges (a) Castledyke South G43; (b) Morning Thorpe G393; (c) Easington G2. (b) from Green et al 1987, 349, fig. 446, (c) from Hamerow and Pickin 1996, 48, fig. 5. Scale 1/2.*

When the pin mechanism of a brooch broke, a repair was occasionally made with yarn. This was sometimes done by tying a pin (which could still be held in a catch) to a pin-axis lug (Figure 7.9a). A more common option seems to have been to discard the pin mechanism altogether, after which brooches could be tied or sewn on to a garment permanently (Figure 7.9b). There are a number of examples of this practice, and due to the low survival rate of organic yarn (generally wool) it was probably a lot more common than can be demonstrated. Brooches are more frequently found in graves with a broken pin-catch and with no traces of iron corrosion on what might remain of it. This implies that an iron pin was not even present at its time of deposition. This ‘repair’ would of course render the brooch practically useless as a dress-fastener, and this point will be explored in the next section.

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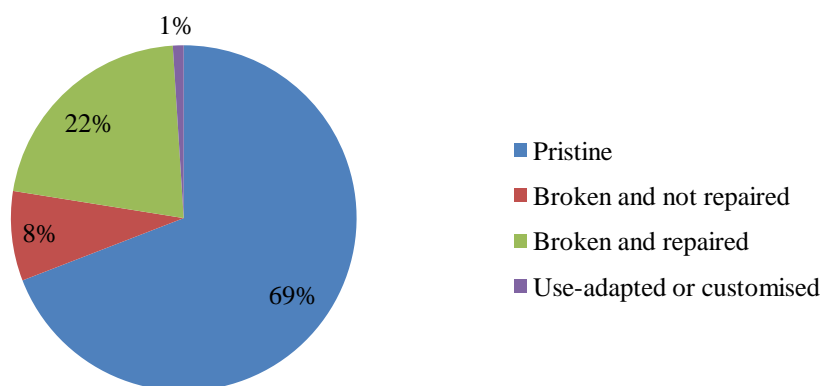
*Figure 7.9 Repairs with yarn (a) Norton G63; (b) Morning Thorpe G346. (b) from Green et al 1987, 314, fig.411.*

### *Considering the Functionality of Repairs*

This last example obviously brings into question the functionality of both repairs, and cruciform brooches themselves (*cf.* Willmott 2001). Some repairs, such as the re-attachment of a purely decorative element, or the soldering-on of a new surface served only an aesthetic function. In addition, once a brooch was sewn or tied on to a garment it no longer functioned as a dress-fastener: it became entirely ornamental. However, given the importance of these brooches in the perception of the body and construction of gender, ‘ornamental’ is not a term that should be underrated. Some repairs, however, were doubtlessly made to restore function, such as all those made to the reverse of brooches on pin-lugs and pin-catches. A high number of these repairs and especially those made with yarn suggest that dress-fastening was equal, or even secondary, to symbolic or decorative motivations for repair. However, we must also consider the possibility that brooches without a dress-fastening function, being practically useless, were used only for mortuary costumes, and were not worn in everyday life. This is certainly possible, but given the efforts of repair spent on some examples, it seems most likely that this was not the case. The primary function of cruciform brooches may well have been display rather than fastening clothes. Even fully functional brooches were not the most practical of items. For instance, entirely undamaged very large Group 4 cruciform brooches (and larger members of Group 3) might not have been secure on a garment without additional sewn fastenings (Hines 1997a, 293). It is even possible that this was part of the purpose of openwork decoration. Therefore, in terms of repair, it would seem that little or no distinction was made between symbolic or dress-fastening function: a broken brooch demanded repair regardless. There are even a small number of brooches that appear to have lost nearly all their decorative aspects, as well as dress-fastening function, and yet were still attached to the garment, at least in death, but likely in life as well. The importance of these repairs, and precisely this lack of distinction, is that they physically embody the biography of a brooch. The owners of these brooches would obviously have been aware and perhaps remembered the individual breakage and repairing events. This becomes even more germane when we consider brooches as markers of social identity, and ones that were intimately linked to the persona and physicality of their wearer. The pertinent fact for observers, however, was not necessarily the full history of the brooch, but that it was still the same brooch, and that it had not been replaced: wherein lay the authentic value of these items.

### *Rates of Different Types of Repair among Cruciform Brooches*

In order to accurately analyse the frequency of different repairs among cruciform brooches only those from known contexts have been included. The reason for this is that these brooches were probably deposited as they had last been used. So if a brooch was broken and still worn it would be interred in the same state. Brooches from the PAS have not been considered. Not only might some of them represent casual loss, very few represent full brooches as they were last used or worn in the grave. Those recorded on the PAS database are generally heavily fragmented due to plough damage. Cruciform brooches from cremations have also been excluded from this analysis for similar reasons of heavy fragmentation and distortion on the cremation pyre. This leaves a total of 298 cruciform brooches that can be assessed: an easily adequate sample.

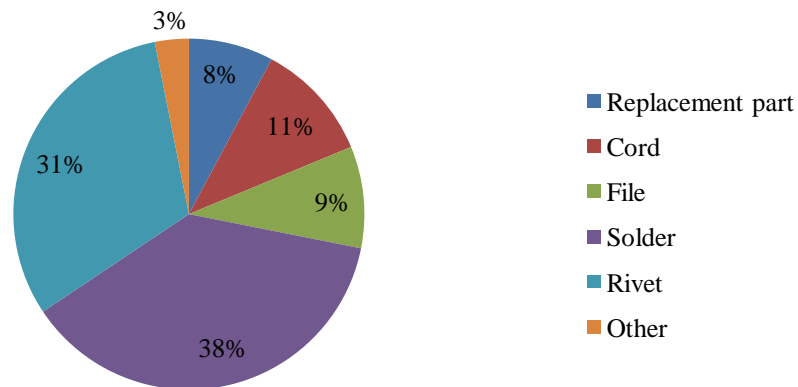


*Figure 7.10: Rates of breakage, repair and other modification among cruciform brooches (n=268).*

Figure 7.10 shows the overall rates of repair, breakage and other modifications for this sample. As can be seen, the rates are comparable, but noticeably changed from the slightly different (and smaller) sample used to produce Figure 7.2 (above). The lower number of broken and unrepaired brooches and the higher number of repaired brooches in Figure 7.10 is probably due to the fact that more of this sample was examined first-hand, and therefore repair was not extrapolated from published drawings. Being able to handle the brooches first-hand would have made more obvious some of the more subtle repairs. Soldering in particular is often only visible from a difference in patina colour or corrosion

over an area of the brooch. This is not always noticed, let alone recorded in illustrations. Figure 7.10 shows that only 69% of cruciform brooches were actually intact by their time of deposition, 22% were broken and repaired, while only 8% were broken and not repaired. A negligible quantity was customised or use-adapted. In summary, cruciform brooches broke frequently, and when they did most were repaired.

With these figures in mind, the rates of different varieties of repair can be analysed. For this investigation, all repaired cruciform brooches can be included, both from archaeological and metal-detected contexts. This gives a total number of 117 brooches. To check that this sample is unbiased, it can be compared with the 64 repaired brooches from inhumation contexts (Figures 7.11 and 7.12). As can be seen, both samples show almost identical rates of repair techniques. There are noticeably less repairs performed with cord in the sample including brooches from unknown contexts. This is because textile remains are far less likely to survive outside of a stratified and undisturbed grave context.



*Figure 7.11: Rates of different types of repair among cruciform brooches from known contexts (n=64).*



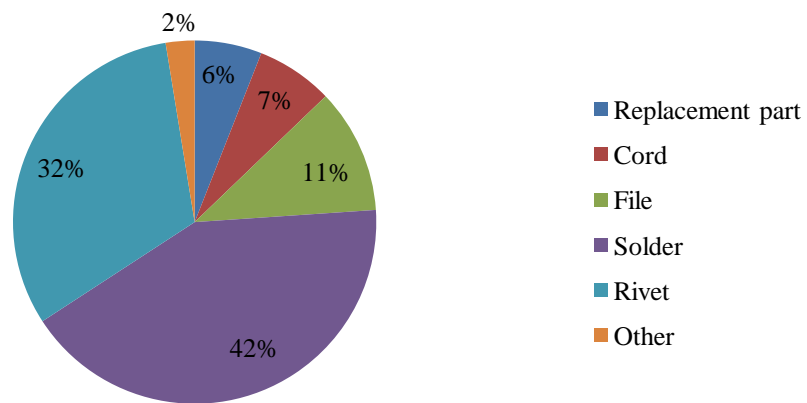


Figure 7.12: Rates of different types of repair among all cruciform brooches (n=117).

As can be very clearly seen, repairs with rivets and solder are the most common by far. The difference between these techniques is that rivet and plate mends were almost all used to join major elements, while solder and plate mends were generally used to attach a replacement pin-catch or pin-axis lug. The exceptions are solder mends that replaced a damaged surface, which are seen on head-plate wings, side-knobs, and foot termini. Filing abrasive surfaces was also relatively common, and was used on the severed edges of catch-plates and head-plates. A more unexpected use of a file seems to have been to smooth down a (presumably broken) pin-catch. This is identified only tentatively, but a small number of brooches seem to have had this area filed flat. Conceivably, this does not represent actual filing, but indicates gradual wear on an already broken catch. Either way, these brooches also probably represent examples that were attached to the garment by yarn instead of pins.

## A Survey of Customisation and Use-Adaptation

Given that customised and use-adapted cruciform brooches are relatively rare (they constitute only 1% of all examples from archaeological contexts) they cannot be examined quantitatively in any meaningful way. Though rare, these examples impart insights into how individuals thought about and treated cruciform brooches. Because few instances of customisation and use-adaptation are known, examples from outside the cruciform brooch type series will be brought into the discussion to allow a broader

consideration of these practices. It should also be emphasised that customisation and repeated instances of specific use-adaptations can also be considered to be learned technologies in the same way that most repairs were. These customisations and use-adaptations were not random acts of opportunity or inspiration. Neither were these necessarily acts of compromise or thrift. Most of these instances represent a pattern of repeated behaviour that recognised some customisations and use-adaptations as culturally appropriate.

### *Customisation*

The term ‘customisation’ is used here to identify instances of alterations made to brooches in the absence of breakage. These alterations would not have impacted on primary use, but, like repair, may have enhanced the cumulative biographical meanings of brooches. Customisations are interesting as they provide obvious instances of personalisation. They demonstrate the desire of an individual to remain part of a group of individuals associated by wearing the same type of brooch, yet also suggest a wish to express a sense of individuality. A similar desire for innovation was most likely the driving force behind the cruciform brooch’s rapid typological development. The concept of individuality is a complex one closely related to notions of personhood. It is largely foreign to most studies of Anglo-Saxon material culture that tend to emphasise (elite, ethnic, or gendered) group identities, but these few examples provide crucial reminders of the individual acts of agency that collectively constitute the broad patterns observed by archaeologists.

One of the most common examples of customisation is the drilling of holes in the termini of otherwise intact cruciform brooches (Figure 7.13). This imitates the intentionally cast attachment loops occasionally present on other brooches of the same type. These loops may have been used to attach the brooch more securely to the garment, but they were also used to suspend “spangles”<sup>2</sup> and, quite feasibly festoons of beads. **Cleatham G34** and **Trumpington 2** both have spangles or copper-alloy pendants attached to this loop. **Unprovenanced 2** and **Wanlip 2** have another copper-alloy wire ring set in the

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<sup>2</sup> “Spangles” (German ‘*Klapperschmuck*’) are small triangular pendants made from sheet copper-alloy. It is thought their movement on the garment would have sparkled and rattled, as is suggested by the English and German terms for them. Interestingly, this kind of spangle or pendant is also found attached to some copper-alloy bound stave built buckets (see Cook 2004, 40).

attachment loop; a customised and a cast example respectively. These loops clearly had a number of purposes, and their wearer might have employed them in a number of ways. This may have been their attraction: attachment loops allow the ‘accessorisation’ of an accessory.

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*Figure 7.13: Customised brooches with perforated termini (a) Unprovenanced 2; (b) Searby 1; (c) Barrington A (Edix Hill) 8. Scale 1/2.*

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*Figure 7.14: Engraved runes on the reverse of West Heslerton G177 (from Haughton and Powlesland 1999, 311). Scale 1/2.*

A more intriguing type of customisation is the very rare scratching of additional decoration on to a brooch, which always occurs on the reverse (Figure 7.14).

Occasionally this was in the form of a runic inscription (such as on **West Heslerton G177**, and this is known from other types of brooch from Boarley and Wakerley). There are at least two instances of added decoration from Norway on the reverses of relief brooches from Falkum (Hines 1997a, plate 104), and Hällan (Rundkvist 2004). On the Falkum brooch the engravings imitate the zoomorphic ornamentation seen on the front, while on the Hällan example a zoomorphic design had been copied from a D-bracteate. A garnet-inlaid disc brooch (of the 7th century) from Harford Farm<sup>3</sup> has both a runic inscription and scratched zoomorphic ornament on the back (Penn 2000, 45-9). It is highly intriguing to note that every one of these brooches had also been repaired. The Harford Farm brooch's runic inscription (transliterated as "*luda gibætæsigilae*" by Hines 2000, 81 and Bammesberger 2003, 133) has been translated to read "Luda repaired the brooch" (Hines 1991; 2000, 81). There is, however, some debate over this translation: an alternative suggestion is "May Luda make amends [or make compensation or atone] by means of the brooch" (Bammesberger 2003). If Hines' interpretation is correct, this is extraordinarily pertinent as it suggests that the identity of the repairer, and the act of repair, held some significant meaning.

It has been suggested that runic inscriptions may have possessed magical, amuletic or prognosticative powers (Hedeager 1999, 153) and it is possible, if speculative, that some zoomorphic decoration also held narrative mythical significance (Magnus 1999) and apotropaic function (Dickinson 2005). These ideas will be considered in Chapter 8. It could be the case that it was the presence of inscriptions that added value to the brooch, making it even less disposable upon breakage. That all of these very rare inscribed brooches have also been repaired should not be dismissed as coincidence. It is also possible, especially with the Harford Farm brooch, that the inscriptions were created at the same time as the repair.

It was suggested above that functionality was not necessarily a primary concern when it came to repair: aesthetic repairs were of equal importance. Some instances of customisation were incorporated into repairs, and therefore also transgress any possible functional/aesthetic distinction. A great square-headed brooch from Alveston Manor (Hines 1997a, plate 36b) was repaired with rivets and a plate bearing ring-and-dot decoration. Another possible decorative repair can be seen on the back of a great square-

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<sup>3</sup> This brooch is from the 7th century and therefore is a little later than the period in question. Due to its similarities to these other examples, however, it can be considered as part of the same cultural practice.

headed brooch from Ragley Park (Hines 1997a, plate 38), where the pin-catch was formed from a separate plate in the shape of a fish. This type of pin-catch is also seen on a cruciform brooch (**Empingham II G100**), although whether or not these were actually repairs or the intention from the outset is open to question.<sup>4</sup> In sum, many modifications were simultaneously repairs and customisations: the repairer took the opportunity to embellish the symbolic aspects of the brooch; perhaps in the same way that inscriptions were added.

### *Use-Adaptation*

Use-adaptation is signified when a brooch was no longer used as a dress-fastener, perhaps due to a breakage event, and was given an alternative use. A subtle use-adaptation has been considered above: repairs made with yarn convert brooches from ornamental dress-fasteners to just dress-ornaments. Nonetheless, they were still worn in the same way, in death as well as probably life, and may have ultimately retained the same symbolic meaning.

An ambiguous case of use-adaptation is the occurrence of apparently useless fragments of brooches in graves. One example of this is the cruciform brooch foot fragment **Castledyke South G156** (Figure 7.15a). Its occurrence in the grave of a sub-adult is very unusual (see Chapter 5) and immediately raises the suspicion that it was unlikely to have been worn as a normal cruciform brooch. In any case, the fact that it was only a fragment with no pin mechanism whatsoever meant that it could not have been worn in the normal manner. A small notch in surface of the severed edge suggests that it may have been perforated for use as a pendant, or as part of a riveted repair (perhaps even both at different stages). The fact that this early cruciform brooch was found in association with later openwork swastika brooches also suggests that the tiny fragment may have had a lengthy and known biography by the time of its deposition. **Lakenheath 8** (Figure 7.15b) represents another similarly functionless cruciform brooch fragment. Being an antiquarian find its context, and even its specific cemetery site, is not known. The fragment is not perforated but the broken edge appears to have been filed smooth making it an intentionally finished item, but not one with an obvious use. There is also a metal-

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<sup>4</sup> Catherine Mortimer suggests this may have been the intention from the outset rather than the result of a breakage (in Timby 1996, 42).

detected perforated cruciform brooch head-plate knob, **Northorpe II 4** (Figure 7.15c), which can only have served as a tiny pendant. A head-plate fragment, **Loveden Hill I** (Figure 7.15d), demonstrates use-adaptation as a strap-end or a mount. The bow, head-plate wings and pin-axis lug have all been filed off, and the object has been perforated to hold rivets that secure a rectangular plate that presumably once held leather or textile. Again, the context of this find is not known, but Loveden Hill was a large cremation cemetery site, so it is likely the item was originally from a mortuary context.

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*Figure 7.15: Use-adaption (a) Foot possibly worn as pendant (Castlesyke South G156); (b) Unusable brooch fragment (Lakenheath 8); (c) Side-knob possibly used as pendant (Northorpe I 4); (d) Head-plate used as a strap-end (Loveden Hill 1). (a) is from Drinkall and Foreman 1998, 187, fig.101. Scale 1/1.*

These examples together suggest that brooch fragments may have retained symbolic associations related to their former uses. These may also represent rare occurrences of brooches being exchanged between individuals, showing that even if most cruciform brooches were inalienable from the individual that wore them this was not necessarily a hard and fast rule with no exceptions. If this was the case, these could represent cruciform brooches inherited by male kin, and hence transformed into items more suitable for masculine attire. However, the sex of none of the individuals with whom these items were interred is known, so this suggestion must remain speculative although it would have important implications for the potential masculine inheritance of the Anglian ethnos discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

A more frequent use-adaptation of brooches was their conversion into pottery stamp dies (Figure 7.16a). These stamps are included in the M category of the classification (Figure

7.16b) used by The Archive of Anglo-Saxon Potter Stamps (Briscoe 2009), which includes impressions made by brooch spring coils (types M 3bi and M 3bii), wrist-clasps (M3 ay), cruciform brooch head-plate knobs (M 3cii) and cruciform brooch feet (M 3ci, M3 ciii through M 3cv). Pottery specifically stamped by cruciform brooches is currently known from a number of sites including Baston, Earsham, Loveden Hill, Markshall Farm, Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Snape, Spong Hill, Gateshead, Sancton, Shepperton, Cassington, Great Ellingham, Elsham and Castle Acre.<sup>5</sup> This, therefore, was a widespread practice and was not unique to any individual potter. It has also been noted (Briscoe 1985, 139) that to achieve their specific angle of impression, a number of these stamps were made using fragmentary brooches. Contrary to Myres' (1969, 137) assertions that the stamping of pots with brooch fragments could have "served no purpose except the purely ornamental", not only does use as a pottery die indicate a secondary stage in a brooch's biography, but it also may suggest the extension of a brooch's biographical meaning on to a second object. In doing this, the pot may have become imbued with meanings either connected to that particular brooch and its owner, or with more general meanings associated with brooches. This accumulates even more significance when we consider the close linkage of bodily meanings with cruciform brooches explored in the previous chapter (Chapter 6).

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*Figure 7.16: Brooch fragments used as pottery stamps (a) An urn from Elsham stamped with a knob (b) Examples of other stamps in the M category. (b) after Briscoe 1985, 137, fig. 1.*

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<sup>5</sup> Thanks are extended to Diana Briscoe at The Archive of Anglo-Saxon Pottery Stamps for providing and giving permission to use this unpublished information.

The use-adaptation of brooches has parallels among other items of Anglo-Saxon material culture. There are several examples of horse-bridle pieces that were re-used as brooches (from Mucking II grave 767, Lechlade grave 180) or strap-ends/pendants (from Mucking II grave 639, Bifrons grave 92, Easington grave 2). Use-adaptation of horse-gear does not seem to have been an uncommon practice (Dickinson *et al* 2006, 256). The cruciform brooch **Playford 1** (Figure 7.17) has perforated head-plate knobs as well as lappets. Tentatively this may indicate a secondary use as some form of strap-distributor, possibly horse-gear, but perhaps also might be explained as a chatelaine-related instrument. Perforated Roman coins re-used as pendants were also a fairly common phenomenon, especially in the graves of women and children (Eckardt and Williams 2003, 149). There is evidence that cinerary urns were use-adapted from domestic vessels used for brewing or dairying (Perry forthcoming). There are a number of instances of unusual items, often “old and fragmentary” (Dickinson 1993a, 52), appearing in graves, and especially in purse collections. It has been suggested that these items, through meanings gained by their known object biography, possessed amuletic or magical functions (Dickinson 1993a, 53; Meaney 1981). It is precisely an object’s inalienability that might make it suitable for use in sympathetic magic.

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*Figure 7.17: A fragmented brooch (Playford 1) with perforated knobs and lappets, a possible strap-distributor (from West 1998, 241, fig. 123). Scale 1/1.*

The use-adaptation of brooches is therefore part of a much wider world of material culture with accumulated meaning and mutable physical forms. The carrying of an object from one function to another sustains some of its original meanings. We know that many



of these items were of considerable importance to an individual's identity. It is important to note that these items did not just impart meaning and identity *to* their wearer, but were also embedded with an individuality received *from* them.

## Reconstructing Biography: The Place, Skill, and Timings of Physical Modification

All these instances of physical modification were the result of human intention: whether a brooch should be customised, how it might be customised, the manner in which a broken brooch should be repaired, and how a brooch could be use-adapted. The choices involved, however, were ultimately dependent on resources. Therefore the difference between repairs achieved with yarn, as opposed to soldering or riveting, depends on the availability of metal-working equipment, raw materials, and probably a specialist to perform the mend. It is reasonable to suggest that not everybody would have commanded access to all of these resources and made do with what they had to hand: yarn or thread. We possess no direct evidence of jewellery workshops in early Anglo-Saxon England, but given the large quantity of metalwork and its idiosyncratic typological development, it is likely that metalworking took place on a small scale in a large number of settlements. The little evidence we have for metal-working comes from such snippets as a fragmentary clay mould for a great square-headed brooch from a small *Grubenhaus* excavated at Mucking (Hamerow 1993, 62-3), an entirely ordinary and common building in settlements of this period. Therefore, even if most individuals did not have direct access to metalworking equipment, they may have known someone who did.

Yarn repairs, drilled perforations and filed edges could have been achieved with relative ease and would not necessarily have required a specialist. However, riveted and soldered repairs needed additional materials and skill. As the above data (Figures 7.11 and 7.12) demonstrate, these types constitute the vast majority of repairs. It is feasible that the responsibility of metalworkers to create brooches did not end there, but extended to their repair. With such a high rate of repair, the maintenance of material culture may have been among their major roles. It is also possible that these specialists were commissioned to make simple customisations. Runic inscription required a literate specialist, and potentially one with ritual knowledge (see above). The inscription on the Harford Farm brooch, if its initial translation was correct (Hines 2000, 81), suggests quite forcefully that

runic knowledge may have rested with metalworkers. Runes are very occasionally present on bracteates as part of the manufacturing process, so were certainly applied by metalworkers under other circumstances (see Hines and Odenstadt 1987 for an example found in Suffolk,<sup>6</sup> and Behr 2010, 57 for a more recently unearthed example). Runic inscription is also known from a small number of ceramic vessels (Hills 1974, 89), so potters, too, were sometimes familiar with runes.<sup>7</sup> The association of ritual knowledge with craftspeople is not necessarily a speculative suggestion: we may have quite direct evidence for it. This does not imply that runic knowledge was unique to craftspeople, merely that they were not unfamiliar with it.

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*Figure 7.18: Repairs probably done in the workshop (a) Holywell Row G99 (2); (b) Little Wilbraham G95 (1); (c) Little Wilbraham G95 (2). Scale 1/2.*

The majority of these repairs and use-adaptations took place after the brooch had been used for some time and had broken. Precisely how long it had been in use is, however, unknowable. It is also unlikely that customisations would have been made immediately after casting. If this was the intention from the outset it would be easier to cast the decoration on the reverse of brooches, or cast the brooch with a suspension loop. Such customisation was probably applied at some point along the brooch's historical trajectory, perhaps marking a transition from one stage of its biography to another, with accumulated and slightly adapted meaning. Some repairs, however, were quite obviously made

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<sup>6</sup> Whether or not this important bracteate was made in England or overseas is a matter of debate (Hills 1991). Nonetheless, even if it was manufactured in north Germany or Scandinavia it still draws an association between metalworking and runic knowledge.

<sup>7</sup> Potters were at least familiar with runic letters, but not necessarily with how to write with them. They are often in a seemingly unintelligible order.

immediately after casting in the workshop. A brooch repaired with iron rivets and an iron plate, **Norton G30** (see above, Figure 7.3a), was gilded and appears to have a trace of gilding on one rivet. Unless this was a particularly elaborate repair involving the individual gilding of rivets, the implication is that the brooch broke during its casting between its removal from the mould and gilding, all of which most likely took place in the same workshop. The filing down of a brooch's surface and soldering of a new plate was sometimes also performed after a casting error. Such repairs also required the manufacture of whole new replacement parts in exactly the same style as the rest of the brooch. There is an excellent example of this on **Holywell Row G99 (2)** where a completely new head-plate was soldered over the top of a major miscasting (Figure 7.18a). A pair of brooches, **Little Wilbraham G95 (1)** and **(2)**, both have the identical repair of a replaced pin-axis lug, presumably from a fault corrected in both brooches immediately after casting (Figure 7.18b and c). **West Hendred 2** and **Westgarth Gardens G61 (1)** both had voids due to casting errors that were plugged with copper-alloy (Figure 7.7, above), which was also presumably done immediately after casting. Why such examples with major casting errors were not recast is an interesting question. It may have been because of the lengthy process of making new moulds, or it may have been because the casting of a brooch, perhaps for a specific individual, was a ritualised and irreversible process. If this was the case, a brooch's biography began from its origin in the mould and would have been known to the metalworker as well as to its eventual owner.

It is therefore possible to track the biographies of these brooches in terms of time and place: from within the workshop or everyday use in the settlement to their deposition in a cemetery. Potential biographies of brooches can be summarised in a diagrammatic scheme (Figure 7.19). With this in mind it is possible to transcend static interpretations of the mortuary context and begin to address the meaning of these brooches to the individuals who interacted with them: craftspeople, owners, casual observers, and mourners.

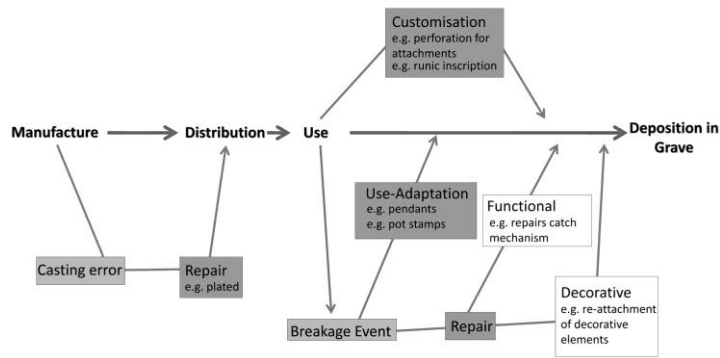


Figure 7.19: The potential biographies of cruciform brooches.

## Discussion: The Authentic Value of Cruciform Brooches

This chapter has contributed evidence toward the argument first raised in Chapter 6 that many of these brooches were inalienable possessions due to their intimate association with the bodies and identities of particular individuals. Their frequent presence in graves is suggested to have been due to the fact that their only sanctioned means of disposal was attached to the funerary garb and body of their deceased wearer. Though there may have been some exceptions, cruciform brooches do not seem to have been items that were regularly handed-down or recycled but were perceived as part and parcel of the individual with whom they were interred. There was, in fact, a later Germanic word for inalienable wealth: *hergewaete* for men and *gerade* for women, which specifically applied to possessions which could not become heirlooms according to 6th-century Merovingian law tracts (see above, Chapter 5 and Härke 1990, n.1). It was for some time presumed that this was what grave goods constituted until symbolic approaches to mortuary archaeology became more popular. It is not suggested here that cruciform brooches were part of a legally defined *gerade*, but merely that there were considerable social pressures that made the idea of recycling or handing-down some brooches unpalatable. The examples of *gerade* and *hergewaete* also suggest that the concept of inalienable possessions was not necessarily a foreign one in this part of the world and in this broad period.

Cruciform brooches were not only involved in the construction and display of a gendered identity, but were also related to specific age groups (Chapter 5), and were intimately involved in perceptions of a specific feminine body (Chapter 6). Perhaps part of these

brooches' inalienability was that they were central to the display and perception of bodily sex as well as gender. The formation of identity is also not entirely concerned with outward display. Even objects handled and observed privately by a single individual contribute significantly to an individual's sense of self (Smith 2007) and this may explain the significance of customisation on the reverse of brooches, and even brooches that were not worn in plain sight.

There is some potential chronological patterning to rates of physical modification. Only 1.5% of the Phase A brooches (two of 182, *c.*450-475) show signs of repair, compared with about 10% of the 1205 Phase B (*c.*475-550) brooches and around 15% of the 82 Phase C (*c.*525-575) examples. It is difficult to assess the significance of these figures, because over time the cruciform brooch also became larger and, therefore, more liable to break, which may explain the increased evidence for repair in the latest period. However, the earliest cruciform brooches were still fairly fragile and yet their rate of repair was very low indeed. This suggests that a high rate of physical modification only began when the cruciform brooch was incorporated into a more standard Anglian style of dress in the late 5th century and, by implication, at a time when feminine dress rose to a new level of prominence in representing regional, and potentially ethnic, identities (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6, as well as Hines 1995, 81; Moreland 2010, 174).

The restriction of cruciform brooches to individuals over the age of about eighteen (and the wearing of *peplos* brooches from the age of about twelve, see Chapters 5 and 6) strongly suggests the presence of age thresholds such as entrance to gendered adulthood, adult sexuality, betrothal, marriage, or parenthood. In social anthropology it is a generally accepted cross-cultural phenomenon that such age transitions involve rituals, or rites of passage (Turner 1969; Van Gennep 2004). This is where we can return to the idea that value can be produced from exchange (Appadurai 1986) discussed above. Early Anglo-Saxon society's social reproduction was probably based on gift-exchange. In addition, given that cruciform brooches were restricted to certain age groups, it may have been the case that they were bestowed at rites of passage (Dickinson 1993b, 39), and perhaps even as a central part of the ritual itself. Janet Hoskins (1998) has commented that peoples' lives are tied-up with objects. Clothing itself can become a "'map' of social memories and relationships" (Eckardt and Williams 2003, 161), and this was also suggested in the previous chapter with the observation that certain garments seem to have been accumulated gradually, alongside transitions in stages of the lifecycle (see Chapter

6). Material possessions, and especially inalienable ones, can tell the story of someone's life, as well as legitimise authority, rites, and access to knowledge (Lillios 1999).<sup>8</sup> The most inalienable gifts are ones that are critical to group identity (Weiner 1992), precisely because they legitimise it, or in the case of cruciform brooches, perhaps even embody a cultural tradition. Items like cruciform brooches, bestowed under ritual circumstances, may well have been imbued with meanings that bound these objects closely to the identity of the individual. A specific brooch, distinguishable by its unique style (bearing in mind especially the suggested bricolage structure of Phase B brooches, see Chapter 2) alongside the memory of its exchange, may have been incorporated into the social memory of the rite of passage, which acted to authenticate that particular item. Afterwards, these items evoked ideas of the ritual event and the very substance of that individual's identity. Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall (1999, 175) have shown how the biography of an object, and hence its meaning, can be gained through performance (see above). In the case of cruciform brooches this applies to the performance of rites of passage (for age thresholds as well as funerals), acts of everyday dressing and reiterative display, and perhaps even the process of its manufacture (repairs made immediately after casting are particularly relevant here, see above). Meaning gained through such performance authenticated the item with a value not lightly lost or easily replaced by a substitute, and this may explain the retention of old and broken brooches as well as their persistent repair.

It is also important to briefly draw attention to the fact that the maintenance and physical modification of material culture is an area of interest with implications for other spheres of archaeological and anthropological inquiry. Objects exist everywhere and only rarely are they not personalised (physically or in social memory) in some manner to foster idiosyncratic meaning. In the broadest sense, social life can be seen to revolve around the transformation of physical materials (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2003). As Caitlin DeSilvey (2006, 335) has elaborated, objects are in constant cycles, and there is a need "to accept that the artefact is not a discrete entity but a material form bound in continual cycles of articulation and disarticulation". These are the forces that early Anglo-Saxons interacted with on a daily basis, and it is important that archaeologists engage with these processes.

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<sup>8</sup> The link between cruciform brooches, stages of the lifecycle and knowledge will be a dominant subject in Chapter 8.

The previous chapters have outlined the archaeological contexts of cruciform brooches and suggested that cruciform brooches were critical to the construction and display of a particular feminine identity. Chapter 6 in particular looked at how cruciform brooches were used as dress-accessories and the present chapter sharpened this focus on utility even further to look at the use of individual examples and their object biographies. In doing so, the intention was to shed some light on the practical processes by which cruciform brooches became embodied with such powerful symbolic meaning, and where their perceived value stemmed from. These are relatively abstract ideas but some original proposals have been contributed that may begin to answer some of these questions. In sum, the value and meaning of cruciform brooches is suggested to have stemmed from their cumulative biographies known by their wearers and partly held in the social memory of the immediate community. The reiterative performance of everyday dress, as well as perhaps their significance in certain rites of passage (including their interment at the funeral), helped to associate cruciform brooches so strongly with certain individuals that they came to embody their identity and took on inalienable qualities.

# Chapter 8: Iconography, Meaning, and Knowledge

The previous chapters have defined the cruciform brooch as integral to an ethnic- (Chapter 4), gender- and lifecycle-related (Chapter 5) identity that developed in parallel with the cruciform brooch's stylistic evolution (Chapter 2). The cruciform brooch, and presumably also its iconographic content, was associated with a specific group of women whose dress ensemble constructed a particular perception of the feminine body (Chapter 6). Similarly, importance has been attributed to the socially constructed authenticity of cruciform brooches, whose meanings were accumulated by everyday wear and ritual performance, leading to these items gaining some inalienable qualities (Chapter 7). The present chapter suggests that the iconography of these brooches similarly authenticated these items as legitimate symbols of identity and authority. The account so far has implicitly suggested that cruciform brooches communicated specific messages that were relevant to the symbolic content of this identity. Hence, iconographic development has a major importance to our understanding of it. Underlying all of these interpretations is a question concerning the emblematic meaning of these brooches. This chapter looks at the symbolic *content* of cruciform brooches rather than the symbolism of their *contexts*. It is suggested here that the meaning of cruciform brooches can be at least partly ascertained through their iconography. This chapter therefore uses the contextual information gleaned from the previous chapters to construct a holistic argument, and in doing so brings the narrative of the thesis full-circle and back to the idea of structured design.

The present chapter will only consider the animal and human iconography. Other categories or decoration include incised linear ornament, faceting and notching, punched design, and a small number of geometric motifs. The meanings of these ornaments are obviously not only highly obscure, but also largely unspecific to cruciform brooches: they can be found on many items of early Anglo-Saxon non-ferrous metalwork. Of course, the animal and human iconography of cruciform brooches is also paralleled on other forms, but here it will be demonstrated that cruciform brooches displayed only a specific subset of Migration Period zoomorphic and anthropomorphic ornament. Punched, linear incisions, faceting, notching and geometric motifs have, however, been quantified, but



because the results of this analysis are not particularly germane to the major arguments of this thesis, a written account is supplied only in Appendix 2.

This chapter will commence by outlining the typical characteristics of Migration Period iconography and its historical development. This will be followed by an account of how this art has been interpreted by archaeologists in terms of its context and content. The main body of the chapter will consist of a detailed account of the variety of cruciform brooch iconography, locating and explaining the restricted range of motifs, and the multiple ways in which they could be 'read'. The meaning of these motifs will be explored by an examination of their symbolic content, as well as their context. The main line of argument that will be pursued lies in the hypothesis that this iconography was complex, cryptic and held mythico-religious meaning derived from an oral tradition. Critical to these meanings was the relationship between humans and animals, and therefore what "being in the world" meant to Migration Period societies. In this sense the iconography is seen to relate to cosmology, and in the grandest sense, metaphysics. The restricted range of iconography found on cruciform brooches is seen to be representative of a specific knowledge possessed by wearers of the cruciform brooch, and even stored pictorially on the surface of the brooch itself.

## The Characteristics of Migration Period Art

The dominant set of artistic motifs that characterise Migration Period art are known collectively as Style I, a description coined by Bernhard Salin in his magnum opus *Die Altergermanische Tierornamentik* (1904). The definition of Salin's Style I as "animal ornamentation" (German: *Tierornamentik*) is a slight misnomer: anthropomorphic elements are represented with almost equal frequency. Even referring to the cruciform brooch foot as zoomorphic is not accurate. As we shall see below, on all but its earliest examples it displays elements of anthropomorphism. Salin's original definition of Style I has remained fundamentally unchanged (Shepherd 1998, 8), and it is still thought to represent a formalised and repeated art style that can be found throughout the greater part of Europe during the 5th and 6th centuries. The majority of artefacts bearing Style I have been found in Scandinavia, Anglo-Saxon England, the Alamannic Rhineland and Lombard Italy.

Style I art is constituted by a restricted range of animal and human forms that are in some cases articulated as full creatures, but are more commonly broken up into individual elements such as heads, limbs and bodies. The full bodies of the creatures are either only partially represented or are fitted into decorative fields like puzzle pieces, sometimes in an intelligible order, often not. This compositional tendency of Style I can be described as *horror vacui*: any void in the ornamentation is filled with a suitably shaped decorative element from the repertoire, or the bodies of creatures contort in order to fill the shape of a decorative field. Empty space is rare. Style I can vary between depicting coherent and more broken up and ambiguous designs. Less coherent Style I is particularly characteristic of Anglo-Saxon England (Kendrick 1938, 81; Leigh 1984, 34).

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*Figure 8.1: Examples of early relief brooches. (a) Relief brooch from grave 41, Bifrons, Kent (from Hawkes 2000, 36, fig.19.4); (b) Relief brooch from Vedstrup, Denmark (from Sjøvold 1993, Pl.12). Scale 1/1.*

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*Figure 8.2: The development of Style I. (a) Late Roman belt fitting from Enns-Lauriacum (from Haseloff 1973, Plate IV); (b) Nydam Style relief brooch from Lunde, Norway (from Sjøvold 1993, Plate 32); (c) Fragmented early Style I relief brooch from Galsted, Jutland (from Haseloff 1974, Plate IVa; (d) Style I saucer brooch from Aston Remenham more typical of Anglo-Saxon England (from Dickinson 1993b, 25, Fig.34b). Scale 1/1.*

It is generally agreed that the origin of Style I can be found in a group of relief brooches (Figure 8.1) from Jutland, although they are also occasionally found in Kent (Dickinson 2009, 1; Haseloff 1974, 14; Shepherd 1998, 58). Compared to most other Anglo-Saxon objects bearing Style I, these relief brooches are highly coherent: the animals and human faces can be picked out relatively easily, and they are anatomically articulated. The antecedents of the Style I iconography seen on these early relief brooches can be found in late Roman chip-carved metalwork, predominantly the military belt-sets found throughout the imperial frontier in northwest and central Europe (Haseloff 1973). Style I originates (almost seamlessly) from figural late Roman art, and its development over time appears to be driven by an increasing enthusiasm for the abstraction of naturalistic forms. Figure 8.2 shows this development from late Roman art, through coherent Style I, and into the more abstract designs common to Anglo-Saxon England.

This process of abstraction is outlined in more detail by Günther Haseloff's (1981) comprehensive work. Haseloff characterised Style I as structured by addition, abbreviation, and re-assembly. Thus over time extra elements could be repeatedly added to a design, while at the same time the image was abbreviated into a minimal number of body parts, but presumably enough to represent the whole. Once the animal was reduced to constituent elements it was sometimes re-assembled into a complex and often inscrutable mass of anatomical attributes, leading to what Haseloff termed a *tiersalat*, or 'animal salad'. The kind of entities that these processes were gradually applied to seem to originate in a limited selection of late Roman motifs that were reinterpreted by Germanic artisans: crouching quadrupeds and a human mask between flanking animals. The reason for this particular selection is ultimately unknown, but may relate to the dominant forms of late Roman metalwork (e.g. military belt-sets) to which free Germania had been exposed. Presumably, this iconography, or its Germanic interpretation, had some cultural resonance.

In this manner the classical motif of Oceanus between dolphins became transformed into a more ambiguous Germanic visage flanked by monstrous beasts or predatory birds (see Figure 8.2c), while the crouching classical beast (though already a mythical hybrid of animals) became a hybrid human-animal form, one of Haseloff's *Tiermenschen* or 'animal-men' (Figure 8.3). The earliest Style I evolved from Nydam Style (see Figure 8.2b). Nydam Style is known only from southern Scandinavia and represents the short-lived transition from direct copies of Roman art to a reinterpretation of their major motifs

onto Germanic material culture (mainly relief brooches). Quoit Brooch Style is the sub-Romano-British approximate equivalent of Nydam Style, occurring at roughly the same time (the first half of the 5th century), and also apparently evolving directly from late Roman ornament (Suzuki 2000; *contra* Hawkes 1961). This late/sub-Roman milieu of art styles is thought to have crystallised into Style I in southern Scandinavia at some point around 475 AD (Haseloff 1974, 14). It continued until its gradual replacement by Style II in the later 6th century (Hines 1984, 40 after Haseloff 1981).

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*Figure 8.3: The Translation of a Late Roman mythical beast into a Germanic Style I 'animal-man' or 'Tiermensch'. (after Haseloff 1974, Pl.VII, and Shepherd 1998, 57). Not to scale.*

A fundamental element of Style I is the ambiguous identity of its subjects. David Leigh has called into question Haseloff's *Tiermensch* on this principle: they are not consistently a beast composed of animal and human parts, but rather elements of their designs can be seen as animal *or* human (Leigh 1984, 39). This kind of design is well-illustrated by the quadruped (horse?) on a relief brooch from Bifrons, Kent. As can be seen (Figure 8.4), the depiction makes complete sense as a single creature, but if the head is isolated and rotated, it becomes distinctly human. Such forms are more accurately seen as simultaneously animal *and* human forms. True hybridism *between* animal and human forms can also be represented, such as the animal-man seen in Figure 8.3b. This compositional tendency can also tell us something about the purpose of the art. Many compositions are remarkably complex and the ingenuity of some is striking. Style I was intended to be mentally engaged with and puzzled over, perhaps partly for the joy and satisfaction of solving these visual riddles. Indeed, there is a remarkable similarity in the mentality behind later Anglo-Saxon verbal riddles and Style I art that may indicate a predilection for these kinds of cryptic and revelatory modes of expression in Anglo-Saxon society. Alongside this, however, there may also have been a deeper ideological significance that questioned and explored the constitution of the human and animal worlds. Even the most rudimentary riddle draws unexpected lines of connection between

apparently discrete subjects, and perhaps allows objects, peoples and animals to be thought about in a slightly different way. This aspect will be explored further below.

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*Figure 8.4: 'Hidden' human head within an animal. From a brooch from Bifrons (grave 63, after Leigh 1984, 37, Fig.2). Not to scale.*

Psychological approaches to art (e.g. Gombrich 1960) have also been applied to Style I by Torill Christine Lindstrøm and Siv Kristoffersen (2001). Lindstrøm and Kristoffersen defined several types of hidden depiction, such as ambiguous figures that can be interpreted to represent several different entities. Ambiguous imagery is expressed in two major types: *reversible* figures that are formed from more than one object, and *embedded* figures that are images hidden within images (for example, Figure 8.4). The key principle behind all of this kind of decoration is “split representation”: an image may switch between interpretations depending on the knowledge of the observer, and perhaps in terms of what they may have been instructed to see (Lindstrøm and Kristoffersen 2001, 77). This kind of imagery is typical of cruciform brooches, and these themes will become important later when the link between iconography and knowledge will be explored. Not only does the imagery encode knowledge (perceptions of the constitution of animals and people), but it also requires knowledge to decode. Another important aspect of this ambiguity is what Lindstrøm and Kristoffersen (2001, 76) describe as “aesthetic arrest”, a psychological term that essentially describes a very light state of altered consciousness. This art is seen to cause fascination: the viewer is drawn toward active rather than passive observation.

Though Style I provides the means of synchronising themes across most of Migration Period Europe its constituent motifs and styles of execution varied significantly from region to region (Shepherd 1998). As mentioned above, Anglo-Saxon Style I art in particular is characterised by the fragmentation of its subjects and their heightened ambiguity. Thomas Kendrick (1938) regarded the prevalence of ambiguity and apparently ‘helmed’ animals in English Style I as especially characteristic and hence re-

named it “Helmet Style” (Kendrick 1938, 75). This definition has since been rejected in favour of Salin’s terminology. The ‘hidden’ human profile seen in Figure 8.4 is quite clearly wearing some kind of crested headgear. In many examples, and especially among cruciform brooches, this headgear is more clearly identifiable as a helm, and the meaning of this will be explored in detail below.

Thomas Kendrick’s (1938) account was valuable, but, due to the exceptional ambiguity of Anglo-Saxon Style I, his discussion is couched in inescapably negative terms. Derogatory accounts of Anglo-Saxon Style I have been relatively common. The major difficulty for art historians and archaeologists alike is that Style I, over the course of the 5th and 6th centuries, gradually moved away from a naturalistic classical ideal reintroduced during the Renaissance that we still uphold. Hence one of the key models for Style I, the Roman quadrupe, to Kendrick, became “victim” to the Anglo-Saxon tendency for fragmentation in art (Kendrick 1938, 75). When discussing the possible meanings of Style I, Kendrick (1938, 77) suggests that it evolved from ill-understood copies of Imperial portraits: “the Taplow Style [Kendrick’s earliest Anglo-Saxon Style I] is really an amalgamation of the emperor and his horse, and as a rough generalization it may be said that what we are now witnessing is the Anglo-Saxon absurdity of crowning the Teutonic animal with an Emperor’s hat”. Similarly, Haseloff’s later-defined *Tiersalat* is described by Kendrick (1938, 79, 81) as a “meaningless spread of details”, and a “meaningless litter of bits”. The purpose of these direct quotations is not to denigrate Kendrick’s work in its entirety. His descriptive account is detailed, scholarly and valuable. Rather, these quotations epitomise a persistent negative, or even derogatory, attitude to Anglo-Saxon Style I.

Tania Dickinson (2002b, 163) countered this attitude by suggesting that there was a high degree of intentionality in this form of representation. The *Tiersalat* cannot be meaningless, as it is an intentionally composed assortment of known motifs. Aarni Erä-Esko (1965) and Birgitt Arrhenius (1973) encountered similar attitudes to East Scandinavian (Finnish) Style I, which Salin considered to be degenerate (cited in Arrhenius 1973, 27). However, the apparently poor legibility of the design was later suggested to be due to its characteristic small fields with high ridges, which were easily broken with the processes of decay, leaving the false impression of an inexpertly cast decoration (Arrhenius 1973, 27). For those latest cruciform brooches whose decoration was in very low relief, and whose anthropomorphisms and zoomorphisms were simplified

almost to the point of becoming geometric (particularly among Type 4.7.1 brooches, see Figure 8.30e below), it is possible to suggest that by this point in time the forms of the brooch and its Style I had become so familiar that iconographic accuracy was no longer necessary to its interpretation.

One of the key problems with interpreting (and dating) Style I is the process by which it seems to have been copied ‘down-the-line’, and this also most likely has something to do with the simplification of iconography outlined above. While traditionally this has been characterised as a process of gradual mechanical copying with cumulative loss (of iconographic meaning, as well as skill), Tania Dickinson (2002b, 16) was correct to suggest this development must have been guided by intention. It seems that in instances where direct copying has been identified with a degree of certainty, the process seems to have taken place with minimal loss, and considerable expertise (e.g. Axboe 1987). Neither must we necessarily assume that this process was entirely linear. Though it seems relatively clear that broadly, this was a chronological development, Style I was apparently sustained by cumulative copying rather than referring back to ideal models, which means that, occasionally at least, an exact copy could be made of an earlier work.

The chronology of Style I is therefore still not resolved. Haseloff (1974) devised four phases (a-d) that essentially described the continuum between figural high-relief designs (closest to their late Roman models) and flatter ornamentation that emphasises contour lines only, which leads almost directly into the ribbon-like forms of Style II. Though Haseloff made it quite clear that this was not a strictly chronological scheme (Haseloff 1974, 8) it does essentially bridge the gap between late Roman art styles of the 4th century and Scandinavian Style II designs of the late 6th and 7th centuries, and therefore, at least to some approximate extent, must be chronological. Haseloff’s hesitation must surely have been due to the critical difficulties outlined above: the copying of motifs is unpredictable, and though they will result in a broad pattern, it is not necessarily entirely linear in every case.

There are of course other elements of Migration Period art that lie outside the Style I repertoire. An obvious, and rarely discussed, example is the cruciform brooch foot, which relates closely to Style I and in time even came to incorporate it. The art of bracteates is a more frequently discussed topic, and also demonstrates close links with Style I. Bracteates often depict more figural art which appears to illustrate narrative



tableaux (Figure 8.5). Characters reappear with similar attributes, performing similar actions. Like Style I, the dominant themes of bracteate art include humans and animals, and sometimes hybrids of the two. Because of the likely narrative nature of this art, it is generally thought that bracteates depicted specific scenes from a Migration Period mythology, and certainly there are parallels between the scenes on bracteates and later Norse myth (Hauck 1985-9; Hedeager 2011). In this way, Figure 8.5b supposedly depicts a related story to the loss of Tyr's hand to the Fenris wolf. Figure 8.6c shows some similarities to the death of Baldr, killed by an arrow fired by his blind brother Hodr guided by Loki. The potentially mythological content of Migration Period art is very important, and comparisons with Norse myth recorded much later in (from the 11th century onward) can be controversial. These issues will be discussed in depth below.

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*Figure 8.5: Bracteate art. (a) Kläggeröd, Sweden (from Axboe 2007, 38, fig.27.5); (b) Års, Denmark (from Axboe 2007, 40, fig.28.5); (c) Fuglsang, Bornholm (from Axboe 2007, 68, fig.55). Scale 1/1.*

## Interpretations of Migration Period Art

The majority of work on Migration Period art has focused on characterisation and chronology, the fundamental points of which are outlined above, and require no further elaboration. Secondary interpretations of Migration Period art have, however, been a fruitful area of research and comprise two major approaches: (a) accounts that interrogate the *structure* and *context* of design and its socio-political implications, and (b) analyses of the semantic *content* of the motifs and their mythico-religious symbolism. The present analysis of cruciform brooch iconography will combine both of these approaches, and therefore some background is necessary.

Socio-political arguments have primarily depended largely on the nature of the ornamented objects: most frequently high-status jewellery found in women's graves, and only very occasionally on objects associated with men (such as weaponry). A study by Tania Dickinson demonstrated that less than 1% of Style I art is found in male graves (Dickinson 2009, 10). The second important point in socio-political accounts is the origin of Style I in Scandinavia (southern Scandinavia in particular). Although its subsequent development depended on the region in which it was adopted, Style I in the rest of Europe may have been closely associated with far north. Broadly, south Scandinavia was also an area that a number of early medieval groups claimed genesis from, including Anglo-Saxons and Lombards (Christie 1995, 1; Høilund Nielsen 1997b; Wolfram 1994, 21). These two factors of context and perceived origins are central to most socio-political accounts.

Among the most ambitious of such studies is Colin Shepherd's (1998) attempt to connect the adoption and subsequent development of Style I to emerging Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Shepherd suggests Style I contained religious symbolism directly linked to Migration Period kingship. The implication was that early Anglo-Saxon ideas of kingship had a religious element. Hence the spread of Style I represented the diffusion of the idea that power could be obtained and authority legitimised on the basis of a religious ideology, directly linked to the man/beast motif (see above) and its associations with shamanic practice (Shepherd 1998, 84). The fundamental problem is that Shepherd eschews a chronological framework, and the generally accepted date for the origins of Style I in England (*c.*475) is exceptionally early for the emergence of kings in England, although as Chapter 4 suggested, this may have been approximately the date of the emergence of particularly important lineages associated by ethnic identity: the *gentes*. Viewing Style I as a set of symbols representing and linking power and religion in a broader sense, however, Shepherd's analysis is of some interest, and the present study reaches comparable conclusions. An additional point of interest in Shepherd's work is his identification of the bird motif as particularly dominant in the Anglian region.<sup>1</sup> Critically, however, this may be more due to the fact that the bird motif is especially prevalent on cruciform brooches than anything else, a point that Shepherd does recognise, but to which he does not perhaps afford enough significance (Shepherd 1998, 89). The heavy

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<sup>1</sup> Shepherd's study was based on a limited sample, and therefore he only locates this bird symbolism as far north as Norfolk and south Lincolnshire. Had the sample not been restricted to the most elaborate Style I, and had more examples been taken from further north in Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Northumberland, Shepherd would have found that the predominance of the bird motif also extended into these northerly regions (see distribution maps in Chapter 4).

concentration of bird symbolism in the Anglian region is important, as it implies a regional symbolism whose principal vehicle was the cruciform brooch.

Karen Høilund Nielsen has taken a very similar approach to later Style II art (Style II was the successor of Style I in north-western Europe), relating it directly to the early Medieval kingdoms of the 7th century. Style II is seen to express the political associations between the elites of 7th-century Europe (Høilund Nielsen 1997b; 1999). Høilund Nielsen convincingly demonstrates that close artistic influence may well translate to close political affiliation. To ask how far Høilund Nielsen's work on Style II is analogous to Style I is a difficult question. There are parallels, as both seem to be used by elites, and both are found on high-status jewellery. The major difference is that Style II is most frequently found with men, and is far less common than Style I, which implies it was used by a more restricted masculine status group. Nevertheless, both are closely related art forms, found over very similar regions, and probably had a similar role in creating trans-regional communication, and feelings of connectedness between certain status groups.

Saucer brooch iconography provides a very good parallel to the study of the cruciform brooch. Tania Dickinson suggests that the prolific copying of the late Roman running spiral motif on a large number of early saucer brooches demonstrates the political expediency of Roman affiliations in the Upper Thames region where a relatively large native British population remained (Dickinson 1991, 68). This is in contrast to the east of England where such motifs did not become fashionable and instead cruciform brooches were popular. The Style I ornamentation of other saucer brooches was lifted almost directly from Kentish square-headed brooches (Dickinson 1993b, 25), perhaps demonstrating the similar connection between Kent and Saxon areas identified by Høilund Nielsen (1999, 188) through later Style II ornament. Dickinson emphasises that the smaller number of motifs present on the saucer brooch (as opposed to Kentish square-headed brooches) indicates a process of intentional selection from a wider corpus by Saxon metalworkers (Dickinson 2002b, 164). Not only were specific motifs chosen for translation on saucer brooches, but they were also generally abbreviated, so that a single part came to stand for the whole creature, frequently to the point of single disembodied legs arranged in a chasing design, or even just blocks that represent bodies. As we shall see, a very similar process appears to have occurred with cruciform brooch iconography: intentional selection from a greater repertoire, and abbreviation. Dickinson rejects the

idea that abbreviation represents a loss of symbolic content, and rather emphasises the agency and ingenuity of (Saxon) craftspeople who adapted Style I into patterns that related to popular geometric designs (such as the running spiral ornament). The process of abbreviation was therefore the result of deliberate socio-political negotiation (Dickinson 2002b, 181). In addition, it is possible that hiding the symbolic message in increasingly cryptic designs was a strategy employed by the elite to further restrict knowledge and power (Dickinson 2002b, 180). This is another observation that will become relevant to an interpretation of cruciform brooch iconography.

The symbolic *content* of Migration Period iconography is a growing area of research, and there are direct iconographic parallels between Style I and the more narrative scenes depicted on bracteates, such as birds and the execution of human profiles (Dickinson 2002b, 178; 2005, 154, 158). As was mentioned above, it is generally agreed that bracteates held mythico-religious significance and perhaps even a ritual function. Karl Hauck has been the key advocate of this idea, but it has been taken up by many others (Axboe 2007, 153; Behr 2010; Hauck 1985-89; Hedeager 1999; 2011, 36; *contra* Hines 1997b, 392). Dickinson tends not to stray too far into the world of myth, cosmology and religion, but instead concentrates on the idea that items such as shields that reference mythical scenes or other-worldly creatures may have acted as apotropaic charms (Dickinson 2005). Avent and Evison (1982, 101) explored a similar amuletic interpretation for the human masks found on button brooches. Whether or not cruciform brooches can be seen to have had an apotropaic function will be discussed below.

The idea that Style I, bracteate art, and even the probably later Scandinavian *guldgubber*<sup>2</sup> reveal cosmological thought is important. The imagery can be taken to represent specific entities, as well as ways of thinking about these types of entities. Jane Hawkes (1997; *cf.* Gräslund 2006; Jesch 2002) thus explores the repeated iconography of various animals (boars, birds, serpents, fish, stags) and relates these to the historical literature to make some suggestions about their symbolic connotations. A similar approach is taken by Anna Gannon (2003) for the iconography of (later) Anglo-Saxon coinage who convincingly suggests that the Christian iconography on coins does not only allow a window into a symbolic realm, but also refers to particular narratives, many of which

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<sup>2</sup> *Guldgubber* are tiny sheet-gold plaques that depict one or more people in seemingly ritualised poses. They were deposited as votives in settlements, and especially central places (such as at Gudme), and occasionally in graves, and probably date from the 6th to 8th centuries (Back Danielsson 2002, 179; Holmqvist 1960, 111, 117; Watt 1999, 174).

carried specific messages of Christian salvation (Gannon 2003, 185). It is also true that the antecedent late Roman ornament, which provided the model for Migration Period art, was also fundamentally based on mythical narratives and creatures. Anglo-Saxon art intercedes between classical and Christian narrative art, and it is highly likely that it references a grander narrative or mythology specific to this transitional period.

As mentioned above, some scholars have taken the case to its logical extreme and have suggested that the mythology referenced in Migration Period art relates to the Norse mythology recorded in the Eddas, among other heroic literature, about half a millennium later (most recently Hedeager 2011). Certain scenes on bracteates are thematically very close to narrative events and characters in Norse mythology, such as the story of Baldr's death (Figure 8.5c), Tyr and the Fenris wolf, and Odin's spirit journeys (Figure 8.5a, Hauck 1985-89; Hedeager 1999; 2011). That such scenes can be related directly to specific myths can be a contentious point, but perhaps less arguable is the idea that both the art and the myths refer to a highly comparable symbolic realm with very similar thematic content which, in the broadest sense, deals with cosmology. Migration Period art represents just part of a longer and deeper record of a late Iron Age *mentalité* (Hedeager 2011, 9 and papers in André *et al* 2006).

It is also possible to draw out aspects of religious belief and ritual practice from Migration Period art. Much of this art depicts animal-human hybrids in a state of transformation or alternatively interpretable as ambiguous animal/human entities (Leigh 1984; Lindstrøm and Kristoffersen 2001). Central to Norse mythology, and especially the myths surrounding Odin, is the way in which the gods can transform and travel in an animal form. Fluidity of physical form is therefore emphasised in both art and later myth, which has led many to suggest that the religious beliefs of at least Migration Period Scandinavia included some idea of shamanism, whereby it was believed the soul and the body were separable, and that the ritual act of separating the two was something that could be controlled by a ritual specialist (Back Daniellson 2002; Biering 2006; Hedeager 1999; Lindstrøm and Kristoffersen 2001; Magnus 1999). Again, shamanic tendencies can be seen as part of the late Iron Age/Migration Period *mentalité* (Hedeager 2011, 81-85).

The idea of ritual specialists brings the argument back to socio-politics. That there was an elite control of religious knowledge and ritual practice has already been suggested above (Shepherd 1998), and this is a theme particularly prevalent in studies of the slightly

later 7th century, where central places with obviously ritual functions exist (e.g. Gudme in Denmark, Yeavinger in England) alongside a warrior elite (such as those buried at Vendel, Valsgärde, and Sutton Hoo). The depiction of apparently ritualistic postures or even dancers on the enigmatic (and ritually deposited) *guldgubber* of this period has made particularly fruitful research material (Back Danielsson 2002; Holmqvist 1960; Watt 1999). The power relationship between Migration Period art, the objects upon which it appeared, the individuals who possessed such objects, and the mythological and ritual knowledge the ornamentation may represent is a fascinating but complex field of research. The art found on cruciform brooches is by no means directly narrative, and is highly abstracted. Nonetheless, it references the same symbolic realm, and this will become central to the arguments presented here.

## Anglo-Saxon Iconography and the Bias of Artefacts

Style I, as a trans-regional and cross-artefactual set of motifs is dominant in the study of Migration Period art. One limitation caused by the preeminent role of Style I is that the range of objects under consideration has often been restricted to the largest, most opulent, and most coherently decorated pieces. In Anglo-Saxon England such examples comprise a very small number of objects dwarfed by the total amount of objects bearing less coherent or more highly abbreviated Style I. Items decorated with Style I can be broadly ranked in order of the coherency or total amount of Style I ornament. The finest examples of Style I are the large Scandinavian relief brooches, also found in Kent (see above, Figure 8.1). At a slightly lower level of coherence, but nonetheless large and opulent, are the Anglo-Saxon great square-headed brooches, and at a slightly lower level again a small number of Group 4 cruciform brooches (especially those of Phase C) and the most elaborate saucer brooches. Perhaps lastly, and therefore only very rarely considered, is the far more common highly abbreviated animal art to be found on a huge number cruciform and saucer brooches, and a myriad of other smaller items (e.g. pendants, buckets, wrist-clasps, horse-harness fittings). Because they can produce an easier 'narrative' interpretation, it is the rarer, larger objects bearing the most coherent Style I that have become the foci of discussion.

Therefore, much past work on Style I has focused on a limited range of objects that would not necessarily have even been seen by most of the population of early Anglo-Saxon

England. Cruciform brooches were not uncommon. It has been established (see Chapter 5) that cruciform brooches would have been worn by a one or two women per household (although they were not present in all households), in the settlements that utilised inhumation cemeteries in the core Anglian area. We cannot necessarily account for the quantity of art that undoubtedly embellished perishable materials, such as that woven or embroidered into textiles or carved and painted on wood. However, the most common metalwork bearing zoomorphic and anthropomorphic decoration, during the 6th century, was most likely saucer brooches and cruciform brooches. Though the nature of early Anglo-Saxon art demands a cross-artefactual approach, the current study's focus on a single artefact may be seen to redress the balance between the most prestigious items and the slightly less so. This chapter will consider the Style I found on cruciform brooches in the context of the wider repertoire seen on other objects.

## Cruciform Brooches, Animal and Human Imagery

The following analysis of cruciform brooch iconography will be divided into four sections:

1. A description of the motifs organised by their location on the brooch (lappets, top-knobs, head-plates/catch-plates, and feet)
2. An interpretation of the symbolic content of these motifs
3. An evaluation and interpretation of the context of these items on feminine jewellery, as well as their contexts in time and space
4. A synoptic discussion of the symbolic meaning of cruciform brooches.

In the account that immediately follows firstly the motif and its variations will be described, and secondly its visual interpretation will be discussed. The visual interpretation of each image will depend to a large degree on a specific reading of the ambiguous imagery described above. For the purposes of illustration the iconography has been traced from the surface of the brooch and rendered here in monochrome. This has been done in order to make the image as clear as possible. However, it should be remembered that in many cases the iconography on the object itself, due to corrosion or the reflective and three-dimensional surface, is a lot less clear. In a small number of cases the tracing of the iconography was an act of interpretation that relied on the

knowledge of parallels in order to reconstruct exactly what the original motif had been. For this reason the names of brooches are included alongside each illustration so that the original photography or illustration can be consulted in the accompanying digital database and illustrated plates. In addition, due to concerns of space, where lappets are illustrated, only the left lappet has been traced. Where the left lappet was damaged or missing the right-hand one has been traced and then reversed (this has been noted on the illustration). Occasionally there are slight differences between left and right lappets, but these are only minor, and will not affect the present account.

This account will focus on two types of image construction which will be termed ‘dual imagery’ and ‘split imagery’. Dual imagery describes an instance where a motif can be interpreted in one of two ways, such as in the example above (Figure 8.4) where the animal’s head can be either horse-like, or human-like. Split imagery describes an image that can be mirrored or bisected. In the same example (Figure 8.4) ‘additive split imagery’ allows two human profiles to be seen as a frontal human mask. ‘Reductive split imagery’ allows the mask to be seen as two human profiles.

## Lappets

Lappets are the most common element of cruciform brooches that were decorated with Style I, and therefore offer the highest number of examples. The decoration of lappets almost covers the full range of iconography seen on cruciform brooches (excepting the foot ornamentation, this will be considered last). Considering lappet designs first will therefore permit an introduction to most motifs. There are four major motifs: (a) helmed profiles, (b) crouching beasts, (c) biting beasts, and (d) spirals. The most numerous by far is the helmed profile, of which there are five major variations, four of which can be easily identified from the direction in which the profile is facing (outward, inward, up or down), and a fifth which consists of two helmed profiles on the same lappet. Although all five essentially express the same symbol, there are subtle iconographic elements that make each type different beyond just facing in a different direction. Differences internal to these five major types of helmed profile were generally achieved by the abbreviation of an original motif into fewer and fewer parts. Studying the full range of variation *within* one of these types therefore most likely tells us something about the chain by which these motifs were copied, more than the actual content of the symbolism *per se*. However,



variation *between* these types can be examined to show that the original prototypes for each helmed profile were quite different, and were therefore also abbreviated slightly differently.

#### *Helms Facing Outward (Helm A)*

Outward-facing helmed profiles are the most numerous type of decorated lappet (86 examples). The design consists of a few key elements, not all of which are always simultaneously present. Figure 8.6 summarises the variation seen within the Helm A type, with the bottom row showing slightly abbreviated versions of the examples above them. The nose guard of the helm forms the outer border, and the moustache of the visage forms the bottom edge of this. An outwardly curved crest can clearly be seen on both examples, and in Figure 8.6bi another helmet crest sweeps backwards over the cap of the helm. Around the lower and right edges of the eye there is a c-shaped curve constituting either a stylised cheek or the cheek-plate of the helm. Another element of these specific types of helmed profiles is the curled eyebrow seen most obviously in Figure 8.6bii.

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*Figure 8.6: Examples of Helm A type lappets. Scale 1/1.*

There are two main types of the most elaborate versions of Helm A types (Figures 8.6ai and 8.6bi). The variation of all other Helm A motifs can be traced in terms of elaboration or simplification, and this is true for almost all cruciform brooch decoration. The two

rows in Figure 8.6 show just two permutations of four closely related designs, and the entire sequence from Figure 8.6ai through to Figure 8.6dii represents the gradual simplification of these designs.

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*Figure 8.7: Dual imagery (ai and aii) and split images (b, c, d, and e) on Helm A type lappets. Scale 1/1.*

The dual imagery of this type of lappet resides in the idea that the identity of the individual within the helm can be seen as either human or avian. This hinges upon the interpretation of the lowermost curved element as either a moustache or a beak. This single theme was enthusiastically explored by the designers of cruciform brooches, and will be shown to be among the most dominant ideas in the whole iconographic assemblage. The idea that the wearers of these helms could alternatively be birds with hooked beaks (i.e. raptors) is reinforced by two points. The first is that some examples of this lappet emphasise an avian identity more than others. In the above examples this can be seen in Figure 8.6bi where the angle of the moustache or beak is more suggestive of the latter, and even more persuasively so in Figure 8.6di where the whole head has been reduced to a curved beak which at one end houses a tiny eye. However, this is even clearer in two additional examples seen in Figures 8.7ai and 8.7aai, which show the helmed bird profile

quite explicitly. The identity of the wearer of the helm was therefore intentionally ambiguous.

Like most imagery on cruciform brooches, these profiles also form split images: two profiles combine to form a frontal mask. When split imagery is considered, the fundamental difference between the two most elaborate varieties of Helm A lappets discussed above (Figures 8.6ai and 8.6bi) becomes clearer. In Figure 8.7 it can be seen quite clearly that the first type fit together inner-edge to inner-edge to make a mask (Figures 8.7b and 8.7d), while the second type fits together outer-edge to outer-edge (Figures 8.7c and 8.7e). The resulting composite images are quite different. The first depicts an individual with a straight moustache or open mouth, and most noticeably a horned helmet (curling either inward or outward), while the second has a prominent curled moustache and cheeks or eyelashes. Therefore, the difference between these two types is quite real, and not just to do with an iconographic subtlety. The major differences between these varieties are manifested in the split imagery. It is also worth mentioning that these lappets are also always arranged in mirrored pairs either side of the catch-plate, and therefore it is the task of the observer to cognitively manipulate what is already there to form a composite image. The split image is a very subtle and clever visual trick that demands the attention of the observer and rewards them with a small revelation.

#### *Helms Facing Upward (Helm B)*

Upward-facing helms are also numerous (34 examples), and are very closely related to the outward-facing type. There are, however, some key differences. There seems to be only one complex or complete, coherent version of this motif (Figure 8.8a), of which the rest seem to be derivative. The composition of the motif is similar to the Helm A lappets, but this is not quite the same motif turned on its side. On many examples there is an additional element consisting of two S-shaped lines, seen especially clearly in Figure 8.8a. The meaning of these curves is not clear, and they are probably intentionally ambiguous. They might be seen as the flowing hair of the helmed profile. Alternatively, however, they bear a fleeting resemblance to Style I limbs (this will become clearer later in the discussion). In this case the motif might represent an abbreviated avian creature, now facing outward, crouching on its hind and fore-limbs (or perhaps fore-limb and

curved tail). However, whether or not the individual is a bird or a human is not the only ambiguity. The subject is also seen from several different perspectives simultaneously, and the helmed profile works on several different rotations. This is particularly evident in Figures 8.8c, 8.8d, 8.8e where it is possible to see an individual facing upward as well as an individual facing inward toward the body of the brooch (to the right). This is why the moustache/beak of Figure 8.8c curls the opposite way around. Figure 8.8e even has three rotations: outward, inward and upward.

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*Figure 8.8: Examples of Helm B type lappets. Scale 1/1.*

Figure 8.9 illustrates the split imagery. There are alternative ways of creating a frontal image from some of these examples (Figure 8.9b): upper edge to upper edge or inner edge to inner edge. Again, the image that is created is a helmed and moustached human mask, although Figure 8.9biii takes on a slightly snouted aspect similar to the cruciform brooch feet which will be discussed below. If anything, this example in particular might be seen as bovine in character. Joining two of these profiles together also makes the two curious S-curves a little more interpretable. Figure 8.9aii shows them more clearly to be hair or perhaps even curled horns.

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*Figure 8.9: Split images on Helm B type lappets. Scale 1/1.*

*Upside-Down Helms Facing Outward (Helm C) Lappets*

This motif (29 examples) is composed of the same fundamental attributes as those two previously discussed, but there are some subtle differences that make it a distinctly separate motif. The most intriguing element can be found on a few examples where the upside-down helm is accompanied by some additional elements. Although it is not necessarily obvious, the uppermost part of Figure 8.10a shows an upside-down helm, facing outward with a tightly curled crest. The short rectangle beneath this stands for a body, while the curved (almost s-shape) element beneath the rectangle represents a hind-limb. The element that rises up in front of the helm, at the very top of the lappet, is not obviously a recognisable Style I element, and its execution is similarly abstruse on the few other examples upon which it occurs. However, it most likely represents a fore-limb, raised up in front of the helmed profile. Therefore, some of these Helm C lappets show a full creature, crouching with its belly toward the body of the brooch (to the left), and gazing upward. Another intriguing aspect of this type of lappet is that not all of them (only seven out of 29) feature a prominent moustache/beak. Importantly, the moustache/beak element is absent on all those examples which feature other body elements, so perhaps the identity of the represented creature here is subtly different to most other helmed lappet types. This makes it highly comparable to the crouched quadrupeds featured in Style I panels (see below).

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*Figure 8.10: Examples of Helm C type lappets. Scale 1/1.*

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*Figure 8.11: Split images on Helm C type lappets. Scale 1/1.*

Due to the infrequency of the moustache/beak element, the dual imagery on Helm C lappets is hard to find. Even on those that possess a moustache the alignment with the eye does not make it easy to see an avian profile. The nature of the split images hidden in these designs is also markedly different from those encountered above. When the most complete examples are joined inner edge to inner edge, a boar head becomes visible, complete with tusks, rounded ears and a flared snout (Figure 8.11aii). Joining the same

lappet upper edge to upper edge creates a less convincing, but still coherent, human face (Figure 8.11aiii). Once again, the more simple profile helms without bodies can be joined together to form simple human masks, as in Figure 8.11bii.

#### *Helms Facing Inward (Helm D) Lappets*

There are only four examples of this motif, one of which is barely comprehensible (Figure 8.12d). Once again, it is not a previously encountered design facing in a different direction. Helm D lappets are clearly quite different, and possess especially complex dual and split imagery. The complexity and highly ambiguous imagery of these few examples means that a dominant image cannot be located. The most convincing image is perhaps a helmed profile facing inward toward the body of the brooch (to the right on the examples in Figure 8.12). The most coherent example is seen in Figure 8.12a which shows firstly a helmed profile looking to the right, and secondly a smaller one within it looking to the left. It is not clear that this was necessarily the intention of the other three examples. Figures 8.12b and 8.12c include a hidden avian profile with a curved beak looking to the left.

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*Figure 8.12: All known examples of Helm D type lappets. Scale 1/1.*

The additive split imagery of Helm D lappets is highly accomplished, and helps to explain the ambiguity of the lappet seen alone. The composite image these lappets create when they are mirrored is more convincing than their single or dual imagery. While Figure 8.13aii represents a ram with curled horns, Figures 8.13bii and 8.13cii perhaps represent frontal boar faces, if of slightly different compositions. The composite image created from Figure 8.13di is confused, but may have been intended to represent another ram. Like the larger boar head encountered above among the Helm C lappets, and

although it is rare, this kind of imagery is entirely unique among cruciform brooches, and has not previously been identified in Style I.

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*Figure 8.13: Split images on Helm D type lappets. Scale 1/1.*

#### *Two Helmed Profile Lappets*

This is a relatively common motif and is represented by 18 examples. The obvious difference between this motif and the preceding helmed-profiles is that more than one individual is depicted on each lappet. They also generally lack the moustache/beak element. The motif varies: some have a helmet crest, others do not. The profiles can be facing toward or away from each other, and can be either way up. The design could also be simplified into the circles and arcs seen on Figure 8.14c. Because of the simplicity of each profile, the dual imagery is limited. It is difficult to see anything other than the helmed human profile in any of these examples. Figures 8.14b and 8.14d are exceptional for possessing helmet crests that may be taken to represent curved beaks. The split imagery is also very simple, and it is not especially convincing that it was intentional. As can be seen in Figure 8.15, the images they form are simply mirrored human masks.



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*Figure 8.14: Two helm lappet examples. Scale 1/1.*

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*Figure 8.15: Two helm lappet type split images. Scale 1/1.*

### *Crouching Beast Lappets*

Though distinctly different from all those forms discussed above, the crouching beast lappet still features a helmed profile, although its armoured nature is less obvious as the helms seem to lack nose-guards. It is relatively common (18 examples), but is only found on Sub-Group 4.3 brooches. The crouching beast lappet has some parallels with the crouching beasts briefly encountered among the Helm C type lappets (see above). However, the most obvious difference is that the profiles face outward rather than upward, and have their backs, rather than their bellies, resting against the body of the brooch. The lack of a nose-guard renders the moustache/beak element far more readily interpretable as a beak. The creature is clearest in Figures 8.16a and 8.16b where the head is easily made out and topped by either a sweeping crest or a flowing mane which extends down to the shoulder where it abuts a bent fore-limb. The body is made up of a short rectangular block constituted by two or three parallel lines. Finally a bent hind-limb is located at the very base of the design. As can be seen moving from left to right on Figure 8.16, this type of lappet has highly varying levels of coherency. Figure 8.16d is

only identified by its fore- and hind-limbs, while Figure 8.16e is barely recognisable at all.

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*Figure 8.16: Crouching beast type lappet examples. Scale 1/1.*

The dominant dual imagery of these lappets is that of a crouching and beaked quadruped, and only tentatively does the dual imagery suggest that the quadruped instead has a human moustached visage. Despite the markedly different composition of this crouching beast and that encountered above among the Helm C type lappets, the additive split imagery is remarkably similar. There are various possible arrangements. Figure 8.17aii likely represents another boar (with brow ridges, tusks, and even nostrils), while Figure 8.17bii displays a similar, if less detailed boar head.

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*Figure 8.17: Crouching beast type lappets split imagery. Scale 1/1.*

### *Limb Lappets*

This design is very rare and there are only three examples (see Figure 8.18). The motif comprises two Style I hind-limbs, generally found as part of quadrupeds in more coherent Style I. In some ways the design echoes the two helm lappet (above) representing as it does two creatures facing toward each other. There is no apparent dual or split imagery present. Rather, this may be considered to be a prime example of abbreviated Style I.

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*Figure 8.18: The three examples of limb lappets. Scale 1/1.*

### *Biting Beast Lappets*

The biting beast lappet is common (45 examples), but it clearly does not come from the same family of motifs discussed above. The motif features on the earliest Style I relief brooches (see the sides of the brooch in Figure 8.1b, above, and even the creatures that frame the head-plate on Figure 8.2c), as well as on most Anglo-Saxon great square-headed brooches. On Scandinavian cruciform brooches this is the dominant and almost the only lappet form. On Anglo-Saxon cruciform brooches, the motif is generally simplified to a sinuous neck branching into curved jaws. Occasionally an eye is present (Figure 8.19b), but most of the time detail is minimal, and most examples are closest to Figure 8.19f. The very elaborate design of Figure 8.19a is unique, and shows the intriguing detail of a human head disappearing into the jaws of the beast. This detail of the human head is occasionally residual in some examples in the form of a small circle (Figure 8.19c). Some rare examples take on the aspect of a hound with a curved front paw (Figure 8.19d). The biting beast on all of these examples is so highly abstracted that its identity is enigmatic, and this will be explored further below. The dual imagery of biting beast lappets is minimal, but can be seen in a few rare examples such as Figure 8.19e, where a dot between the lower jaw and the body brings the motif halfway between a biting beast and the helmed profiles seen among the Helm A lappets (see above): the dot becomes an eye, the lower jaw becomes a cheek, and the body becomes the helm. Split imagery appears to be completely absent from all of these designs. The identity of the creature and its general lack of dual and split imagery make this motif quite different from any other cruciform brooch lappet variety.

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*Figure 8.19: Biting beast type lappet examples. Scale 1/1.*

### *Spiral Lappets*

The spiral design is the simplest of all lappet types (Figure 8.20). It is also relatively common (29 examples), but can only be deemed zoomorphic or anthropomorphic if we consider it to be residual of some of those designs outlined above. This is probable, but then the question remains whether or not it retained any association with those more obviously figural motifs in the eyes of observers. The outline and curvilinear appearance of these motifs links them to the biting beast motif discussed above but a more likely heritage can be traced through the Helm A type lappets, which also feature a downward and inward curling spiral formed from the top of the helm, through the nose, then onward to the inward-curling moustache/beak. Figure 8.21 shows the mechanism by which this may have occurred. The simplicity of the spiral motif renders it devoid of dual or split imagery in the strictest sense. The only dual imagery that may have been present would depend on whether or not observers 'read' the spiral's heritage from Helm A type lappets.

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*Figure 8.20: Spiral type lappet examples. Scale 1/1.*

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*Figure 8.21: A hypothetical mechanism for the development of spiral lappets. Scale 1/1.*

### *Plain Lappets*

Although most lappets were decorated in the styles outlined above, a significant number were plain (around 124 examples or 17% of all lappets). However, the majority of these lappets possess the same silhouette as the motifs outlined above. For instance, P-shaped plain lappets recall the shape of the biting beast (Figure 8.22a) or the upward-looking helm (Helm B), while C-shape lappets echo a number of Helm A shapes (Figure 8.22b). Of course, addressing the chronology of these examples is difficult, and it is impossible to say with the current evidence whether the decoration evolved to fill the fields of these shapes, or if fields of these shapes were residual of earlier decoration. It would seem most likely that the latter is true. This is also reinforced by the fact that the plain lappets found on Scandinavian cruciform brooches are all generally B-shaped, and this is the silhouette of the Scandinavian biting beast lappet which makes up the vast majority of all lappet varieties in Scandinavia (see above). The transition from decorated to plain can be demonstrated without doubt on at least some English cases. Figure 8.22c shows an especially convincing transition from a decorated to a plain form whose specificity can only be explained in this manner. Though extrapolating outward to suggest this was the case for all Anglo-Saxon plain lappets is to some extent speculative, the implications would be important as it implies the ultimate act of Style I abbreviation, where the

gradual removal of decorative attributes resulted in the loss of all but the silhouette of the original motif.

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*Figure 8.22: Hypothetical transitions between plain and decorated lappets. Scale 1/1.*

## Head-Plate Knobs

For most of the cruciform brooch series (Groups 1, 2, and the vast majority of Group 3) head-plate knobs were among the most decoratively conservative elements. However, a number of Group 3 brooches (mostly in Sub-Group 3.3) were elaborated with a finial on the top-knob (never the side-knobs). This was sometimes a plain crescent shape, but could also take the form of a human mask flanked by two helmed profiles. Like the helmed profile lappets, the moustache element can also be read as a beak, and for the majority of head-plate knobs the avian imagery seems to have been the dominant reading. The original dome shape was discarded entirely by Group 4 cruciform brooches, and all three head-plate knobs were replaced by flat plates bearing very similar Style I designs. The chronology is difficult, as most of these Group 3 and 4 brooches were broadly contemporary (see Chapter 3) and it is not possible to say whether the Group 4 brooches ‘evolved’ from those Group 3 brooches with top-knob finials, or whether those Group 3 brooches were influenced by contemporary Group 4 designs. Either way, like the original head-plate knobs, once established, the Style I design proved remarkably conservative, and changed very little throughout the Group 4 series, with only a small number of

significant innovations. Therefore the iconographic repertoire of head-plate knobs is smaller than that of lappets.

*Human Masks with Moustaches/Bird Profiles*

Almost all Group 3 brooches that possess a decorated top-knob finial have one that assumes a very simple form. The iconographic variation consists largely of abbreviations or additions. The basic form is an (upside-down) human mask (Figures 8.23a and 8.23b) consisting of a brow and nose, two eyes, and two moustache elements. The whole design can also be read as two opposed avian profiles. The more complex forms include a mouth element (Figure 8.23c), or other finial (Figure 8.23d). The form shown in Figure 8.23e is exceptional in its complexity, but essentially shows the same motif.

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*Figure 8.23: Examples of the simple top-knob finials found on some Group 3 brooches. Scale 1/1.*

There is a very rare variant of this form, only known from a single complete brooch (**Lakenheath 10**), but which is also accounted for by several fragments recorded on the PAS database. This version is not just a finial, but takes over the whole form of the top-knob, which is strictly typical only of Group 4 brooches. All known examples of this are illustrated in Figure 8.24. The iconography, though differently composed, is the same as the more common designs seen in Figure 8.23.

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*Figure 8.24: All known examples of the smaller version of anthropo-zoomorphic top-knob. Scale 1/1.*

Among the Group 4 brooches, the motif is essentially the same, but rendered larger and in more detail. The moustaches in these examples are even more obviously also the beaks of birds, which can often be seen quite clearly to be wearing a helm, sometimes with a crest (Figures 8.25d, 8.25e, and 8.25f). Importantly, Figures 8.25d and 8.25e also feature a curved claw as part of the bird profile (and bears remarkable similarities with the bird-mount on the Sutton Hoo shield). Again, some of these examples feature a human mask with an open mouth.

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*Figure 8.25: Elaborate human mask/avian profile head-plate knob. Scale 1/1.*

The same motif has even more complex, and often larger, permutations. The most inscrutable of these is the border of those square-headed cruciform brooches of Sub-Group 4.3 (Figure 8.26a), which only on close examination can be seen as containing



exactly the same basic elements. The related versions of the motif in Figure 8.26b and 8.26c are abbreviated and enlarged, with the human mask on the latter reduced to a line for a nose and two curves for cheeks.

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*Figure 8.26: Complex human mask and avian profile head-plate knobs. Scale 1/1.*

The versions depicted in Figures 8.26d and 8.26e are important as they introduce the up-curved brow, which provides an additional level of dual imagery as this element can also be seen as a second pair of opposed avian profiles. The other pair of avian profiles remains visible in the moustaches of these examples.

The dual imagery of this broad category of head-plate knob motif is for the most part limited to interpreting the moustaches of the human mask as a pair of birds. In many examples there are more than two hidden avian profiles present. Figure 8.26e contains four, while Figure 8.26d may contain up to six. It is also possible that another layer of dual imagery is visible in Figure 8.26d. An upside-down human mask remains the dominant image, but the motif can also be read the other way up as a mammalian mask similar to those seen through the additive split imagery of the complex lappet forms described above (see Figures 8.11aai, 8.17aai, and 8.17bii). The split imagery of all these

motifs is reductive rather than additive, in that the full image can be bisected to form two helmed/avian profiles. Essentially, head-plate knob forms capture the split imagery that would be formed by joining lappets. The iconographic link between lappet and head-plate forms is therefore not only by content (helms, avian profiles), but also by composition (dual imagery and split imagery).

*Human Masks with Bird Profile 'Head-Dresses'*

A variation of the above imagery is visible on small number of cruciform brooches (Sub-Group 4.5). Though it is a subtle compositional difference, the identity of the depicted individual is changed significantly. By turning the human mask the other way up, the motif now depicts a human with avian profiles erupting from the *top* of its head, rather than from its moustaches, perhaps as a head-dress, or perhaps depicting a moment of transformation. The curving spiral of this head-dress recalls the masks created by joining some of the more elaborate helm-based lappets together (see Figures 8.7b and 8.7c). In terms of dual imagery this design makes an important point. This motif, strictly speaking, lacks dual imagery entirely (unless the bird profiles are read as hair), yet is made up of the same elements as all those discussed above. It demonstrates that although the iconography can be read as dual imagery (i.e. *both* a human with a moustache *and* avian profiles simultaneously), it can also be read literally (i.e. as a single entity, a human with moustaches *literally* formed by birds), as the bird profiles in this example (Figure 8.27ai) do not replace any likely anatomical element. Again, the split imagery is reductive, and Figure 8.27a<sup>ii</sup> shows the same individual, now in profile, formed by bisecting the motif. This motif in particular bears considerable resemblance to the character often seen on bracteates with a bird-like hair-do or head-piece (below, Figure 8.37a). This intriguing parallel between bracteates and cruciform brooches will be returned to below.

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*Figure 8.27: Human mask with bird profile head-dress, and its reductive split imagery. Scale 1/1.*

### *Opposed Helmed Profiles*

The opposed helm profiles motif is also based on the designs described above. These head-plate knobs (Figure 8.28) dispense with the central human mask altogether and retain only the opposed profiles. In these cases the individuals are quite obviously helmed, and their identity, as on all the helm-type lappets, could be either human or avian. By dispensing with the central human mask, these motifs have also discarded some of the dual imagery. Therefore, the identity of the helmed profiles as human or avian is the only possible ambiguity. Again, the profiles can be joined together to form a human mask, but it is difficult to say whether this was the intention or not, as it involves two stages of first splitting, then rejoining its outer edges.

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*Figure 8.28: Opposed helmed profile example head-plate knobs. Scale 1/1.*

### *Biting Beasts*

The biting-beast motif seen on lappets (see above) also occurs on head-plate knobs, where two biting beasts with curvilinear bodies grip a much-abbreviated central human mask. The motif varies very little indeed between examples, but as can be seen from Figures 8.29a and 8.29b its execution can vary significantly from beasts with clearly defined eyes and thick curved bodies, to thinner beasts with their relief highlighted by contour lines, and without eyes. There is one peculiarly unique example that betrays the identity of at least some of these beasts (Figure 8.29c) and depicts two creatures whose closest parallel would be seals or dogs, which also seem to be wearing collars. This example is highly unusual, and has no close parallel. The style of ornament, due to its coherence (and the fact that the head, body and limb are not broken up into sections) is

suggestive of a much earlier style of decoration (closer to Nydam Style than Quoit Brooch Style), and is not typical of Style I. Intriguingly, down to the detail of the collars on these beasts, this motif forms a strikingly similar parallel to the moustached man beset upon by two wolves on the purse lid from Sutton Hoo Mound 1. This is chronologically inexplicable (the Sutton Hoo purse is thought to have been much later) but it indicates without doubt a very strong artistic, and perhaps also ideological theme running through this whole period. The nature of this symbolism will be addressed below.

The split imagery of the biting beast motif is minimal. A bisected version of the design can work by itself, and this is essentially what can be found on lappets. The dual imagery, however, is slightly more complex. These designs demonstrate the reduction of the central human face into spirals, which strengthens the case for those spiral lappets discussed above also being considered as helmed profiles. In addition, just as the occasional biting beast lappet could approach the helmed profile design, some of these biting beast head-plate knobs can also take on the aspect of two opposed helm profiles. This is best seen in Figure 8.29b, where the dots form eyes topped by a curled brow (or the lower jaw of the beast) that curls round to form what could be a moustache (or the upper jaw). For the most part, however, the biting beast head-plate knob, like the biting beast lappet, possesses minimal split or dual imagery.

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*Figure 8.29: Biting beast head-plate knobs. Scale 1/1.*

## Style I Panels

Though generally only present on the latest (Phase C) cruciform brooches, Style I can also occur in rectangular (on head-plates and catch-plates, and very rarely on the apex of bows) or triangular (on foot termini) panels. While head-plate knob decoration is linked

to lappet decoration and some foot decoration (below) the Style I found in these panels is of a very different nature in terms of content and composition, and therefore probably represents a distinctively late innovation. The Style I encountered so far has been coherent, as the entity represented is (in most cases) identifiable. Style I panels, however, are frequently filled with Hasleoff's *Tiersalat*: a mixture of limbs, bodies, heads, eyes and claws, frequently in an incomprehensible order, or executed in a manner that makes even the identification of these elements difficult. In the more coherent examples it is also quite clear that the entities depicted in this decoration are also of a different identity to those seen on lappets and head-plate knobs. Though all of the creatures depicted in Style I panels are helmed quadrupeds they are of a distinctively different type from those briefly encountered above on lappets.

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*Figure 8.30: Examples of Style I panels from head-plates, catch-plates, and foot termini. Scale 1/1.*

Figures 8.30ai and 8.30aaii (from the same brooch) are among the most coherent of these designs and depict two crouching quadrupeds either side of a central circular field. They are wearing helms as in the above examples from lappets and head-plate knobs, but importantly, there is no sign of a moustache and therefore of avian dual imagery. The rear of the animal is made of several elements, but the most recognisable part is the bent hind-limb with tooth-like claws. These are the four critical attributes (head, body, fore-

limb, hind-limb) that are present in all these Style I panels, though they are rarely arranged in an order that is this coherent.

One very subtle (and almost hidden) detail in this decoration (Figure 8.30ai) is that while the beast on top is looking forward, the beast below is looking back over its shoulder. This is not noticeable at first, because the helm element works almost the same either way around. Therefore just as split imagery and dual imagery rewards the observant by revealing secondary interpretations, careful scrutiny of this tiny image reveals iconographic subtleties. This brings the argument back to the notion of revelatory art discussed above as a joyful and entertaining media, but also perhaps one with a deeper ideological significance. Lindstrøm and Kristoffersen (2001, 73) refer to this kind of visual trick as “broken symmetry”, and suggest that it contributes a further layer of ambiguity: the viewer expects symmetry but finds “something inbetween” that is neither entirely symmetrical nor asymmetrical.

Figure 8.30b is a less easily-read motif. It contains a single helmed quadruped but here it is crouched on the left hand side of the panel, and looking upward. It has also been slightly contorted to fit into this space, and the helm has been topped by a spiralled crest. The rest of the Style I panels seen in Figure 8.30 repeat these motifs (either one or two helmed quadrupeds), albeit less legibly. Figure 8.30c shows some further stages of abbreviation, contortion and dismemberment where a single quadruped is depicted in each case, but it is no longer in one coherent piece. Figure 8.30ci shows a helmed head in the bottom left corner which faces upward toward the top left corner. The bottom right corner is filled by a hind-limb, while stretching across the top edge what is probably a forelimb can be seen. Just below this is a curved element with what appear to be teeth or fingers at each end. This, in fact, represents the three bars that make up a body in the other examples, and has either been worn down or was not cast with sufficient clarity. When scrutinised, these basic elements can also be seen in Figures 8.30ciii and 8.30civ. Figure 8.30di is important because it shows the ultimate abbreviation of the pair of quadrupeds into just two limbs (also seen on lappets, above). Figure 8.30dii depicts two quadrupeds, each with its head forced into the bottom two corners of the triangle, which their bodies extending up each side and joining at the apex. The examples in Figure 8.30e show some of the least coherent Style I panels. As an example, Figure 8.30ei depicts a rectangular box in its top half, which may be read as the helmed profile, and beneath it can be found a limb and the parallel bars representative of a body.

The complexity of these images operates on quite a different principle from the motifs found on lappets and head-plate knobs. There is no dual or split imagery, but they still require cognitive manipulation. For the Style I panels the process is one of disarticulation and re-articulation: the elements as they are arranged in the panel must be pulled apart and put back together in a new order into an animal with two legs, a head and a body.

## The Cruciform Brooch Foot

The development of the cruciform brooch can be broadly summarised as moving initially from purely geometric forms (Type 1.1.1) to a simple zoomorphic head (other Group 1 brooches) which gradually accumulates anthropomorphic elements (Groups 2 and 3), incorporates Style I ornament (Type 3.2.3), and finally becomes an unmistakable human mask (some Group 3 brooches, and all Group 4). This development is outlined in Chapter 2, as it forms the basis of the typology.

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*Figure 8.31: Simple Group 1 and 2 foot designs. Scale 1/1.*

The first stage in the development of the cruciform brooch foot is from geometric ornament to a simple zoomorphism (marking the difference between Types 1.1.1 and 1.1.2). There is a distinct similarity between the faceting on those earliest brooches, and the earliest zoomorphic decoration (compare Figure 8.31a with Figure 8.31b), implying that the latter was inspired by the former. The early zoomorphic ornament incorporates only two pairs of attributes: eyes and nostrils (Figure 8.31b through to Figure 8.31f). Nostrils are either separated on each side of the base or joined together.

The identity of the animal that is represented is open to question. Cruciform brooches have perhaps become known as “horse-head brooches” more than they deserve. The equine nature of many of these early brooches is unmistakable. But it is a very simple design and it is also true that there are some very strong parallels between these early cruciform brooch feet (mid-5th century) and the much later (probably early 7th century) beasts on the Sutton Hoo helmet’s nose guard, which form the heads of what are generally interpreted to be dragons. It is also true that the dragon is a more popular interpretation of the cruciform brooch foot in Scandinavia. For most early examples of cruciform brooches the animal closest to this fairly basic and abstract design is a horse, but in some cases it is equally likely that it represents a cow (e.g. Figure 8.31c), or in fact any animal with a long snout. However, as we shall see, cruciform brooch feet embody more meaning than just representing a certain animal, and becoming distracted by its (ultimately unknowable) identity risks losing sight of its more interesting aspects. Nonetheless, given the potential significance of the horse in early Anglo-Saxon ideology (e.g. Fern 2010) the ideological implications of the equine associations of this motif will be explored below. The simplicity and ambiguity of the ornament may also suggest that the aim of the craftsperson was not to commit themselves to a specific type of animal, but was instead to evoke the idea of an animal or beast, as opposed to a person. This seems especially likely considering the importance of ambiguity in later cruciform brooch ornamentation, as well as in Migration Period art in general.

Though it has not been suggested previously, it is possible that a number of these earlier cruciform brooches also incorporate some phallic imagery. This is particularly noticeable in Types 2.1.1 and 2.1.2. Again, the ambiguity of the design means that this can only be suggested tentatively, and this seems more likely for some examples in particular. For instance, the example in Figure 8.31e, though unique, seems almost certainly to reference phallic imagery. Phallic imagery is very rare in Anglo-Saxon England, but it is better



accounted for in Migration Period Scandinavia (Price 2006; Solberg 1999). The possible significance of this will be returned to below.

For this most part, however, the development of the cruciform brooch foot can be seen to develop from zoomorphic to anthropomorphic imagery. A key development during the early stages of the foot is the addition of a brow (see Figures 8.31g and 8.31h). The importance of this subtle addition is that it imparts, for the first time, an element of anthropomorphism. Whatever subtle suggestions of a brow quadruped mammals may possess (which, incidentally, horses lack entirely), the use of the brow here lends the head a distinctly human aspect. This is not dual imagery of the kind that has been discussed above: the motif can hardly be seen as *either* an animal *or* a person. The effect is subtler, and we instead perceive a bestial visage with some human characteristics. This trend toward anthropomorphism continues, and will be further explored below.

The next important development is the substitution of the separate or joined nostrils (and along with this any possible phallic imagery) for spirals. Spirals could be either open and comma-like, tight and circular or anything in between (Figure 8.32). This development distances the foot ornament even further from figural depiction. Many brooches with spiralled nostrils (i.e. most examples of Group 3) also feature Style I lappets or top-knob finials. Therefore it is at around this point that dual imagery begins to become a key element in cruciform brooch design.

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*Figure 8.32: Cruciform brooch feet with spiralled nostrils. Scale 1/1.*

A curious characteristic of the spiralled nostrils is that they spiral in the opposite direction than they do on mammals that have this kind of crescent shaped or spiralled nostrils (such

as horses). While the thin spiral arm of the nostril on all cruciform brooches can be found closest to the centre of the head, the anatomically correct mode of representation would place the spiral arm on the outside. It may well be the case that this spiral is purely decorative, and bears no relation to anatomical representation whatsoever. However, the choice to represent a nostril as a spiral would seem a natural one given the similarity to this shape of the nostrils of animals such as horses, dogs, cows, and sheep (although not pigs or boars which have distinctively circular nostrils). If anatomical representation was a conscious part of the design, the only way of making sense of it is by suggesting instead that the cruciform brooch foot with spiral nostrils is in fact composed of two animal profiles joined together. This design, therefore, would echo the split imagery also seen on the lappets of many of these brooches. The spiral may also be a reference to the slitting of horses nostrils, an act of bodily modification apparently practiced by Anglo-Saxons with the intention of enhancing the performance of their steeds (Fern 2010, 138). However, it is still true that rendering these large quadruped animals in profile would be the only way to achieve this spiral design. Given the ubiquity of split imagery elsewhere in cruciform brooches, this does not seem unlikely.

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*Figure 8.33: Anthropomorphic cruciform brooch feet from Group 3. Scale 1/1.*

There are many examples of Group 3 brooches that accentuate the anthropomorphic characteristics that were first imparted by the brow. In most of these examples the critical addition is a triangular, and distinctly human, nose (see Figure 8.33). With this modification what were previously spiral nostrils may have become re-interpreted as curled moustaches. Once again, the depiction is highly abstract, and does not necessarily

represent an unambiguous human any more than those earlier examples represented unambiguous animals.

Cruciform brooch feet are not strictly part of the Style I repertoire, and have never previously been considered as such. Nevertheless, they have many parallels with Style I: namely dual imagery and human-animal ambiguity. This should not be surprising: many of these feet are found on brooches that also bear Style I decoration. This perceived similarity between the styles is confirmed by the eventual combination of Style I with the cruciform brooch foot, particularly in Type 3.2.3 and the whole of Group 4. All the Style I elements that can be found on cruciform brooch feet have already been encountered above. The simplest examples of the use of Style I on the cruciform brooch foot can be seen in Group 3, where helmed profiles seem to have been occasionally interchangeable with spiral nostrils (Figure 8.34). These helmed profiles obviously contain exactly the same dual imagery (moustaches/beaks) and split imagery (profiles/masks) as they did when they were used to decorate lappets (see above).

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*Figure 8.34: Style I nostrils on Group 3 brooches. Scale 1/1.*

Group 4 brooches are decorated similarly and their design is based on the same analogy between nostrils/moustaches and lappet designs (e.g. helmed profiles, biting beasts, crouching beasts). Figure 8.35a is among the most basic, but there are many variations and elaborations on this theme. The first is the explicit illustration of the additive split imagery of the helmed profiles. Thus in some examples (Figure 8.35b) these profiles have in fact become joined together, with an added mouth, to form what appears to be the traditional zoomorphic/anthropomorphic foot transforming into a full-face human mask.

A further level of complexity is contributed by the framing of this human mask between bird-headed crouching beasts (Figure 8.35b), perhaps also acting as moustaches or curled locks of hair. This is evidently a complex decoration, where dual imagery is couched within further dual imagery to produce a strange and highly hybridised image mixing parts of animal, human, and bird all within a single composite entity. Figure 8.35c features another highly elaborated (helmed) human mask whose moustaches are formed by crouching quadrupeds. Again, the quadrupeds could possess either human or avian heads. Figure 8.35d shows an anthropomorphic and zoomorphic mask terminating in helmed profiles, which in this case also terminate in a wide curving c-shape, which can only be explained as a very large helmet crest.

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*Figure 8.35: Examples of Group 4 showing anthropomorphic/zoomorphic masks with elaborated Style I nostrils/moustaches. Scale 1/1.*

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*Figure 8.36: Examples of the most complex Group 4 foot forms. Scale 1/1.*

Most other Group 4 forms follow the same basic template, and the most elaborate varieties can be seen in Figure 8.36. While Figures 8.36a, 8.36b, 8.36d and 8.36e continue to use helmed profiles as nostrils, Figure 8.36f replicates the biting beast lappet design in their place. Incidentally, Figure 8.36a also features crouched beasts with helmed profiles that can be read either way up, and can additionally be interpreted as the curled and entwined locks and moustaches of the central human mask. The up-curved locks encountered above among head-plate knob designs also recur on the foot in Figures 8.36a and 8.36d. Once again, the dual and split imagery of these motifs is multiple. A complex design such as Figure 8.36d contains a maximum possible two human masks, four helmed human profiles, and at least two bird profiles (plus four more if the helmed profiles are also counted as possible birds). Even more bird profiles are perceivable in

this design hidden in the locks and moustaches, bringing the total up to eight. The cruciform brooch foot, throughout the development of the brooch, remains the most complex iconographic element, and was clearly the focus of much iconographic elaboration.

## The Symbolic Content of Cruciform Brooch Iconography

Despite the many ways in which a particular motif could be used (the composition it was part of, as well as its dual and split imagery), the range of subjects displayed on cruciform brooches was limited. Cruciform brooches do not express the entire gamut of Migration Period, nor even Anglo-Saxon, motifs, but a subset of them. The content of the iconography can be summarised as follows (in order of frequency):

1. Horse/animal heads with anthropomorphic characteristics
2. Helmed men with moustaches
3. Birds with long, curved beaks, with or without helms
4. Biting beasts
5. Crouching quadrupeds with helmed heads
6. Tusked boar-heads and horned ram-heads

Although this represents a diverse range of entities, they are connected by a small number of themes. The most prominent theme is the interaction between human and animal forms. This takes three subtly different but closely related guises:

1. Animal-human hybrids (horse-heads with human characteristics, quadrupeds with human heads)
2. Animals hidden within human forms (moustaches or hair formed from bird-heads)
3. Ambiguous human or animal forms (helmed profiles with moustaches/beaks)

Fundamentally, the range of relationships between humans and animals are ones of *hybridity*, *transformativity* and *ambiguity*. Another very strong theme is *masculinity*. The majority of human representations have moustaches, and (although very rare) a ram is identifiable from curled horns, and boars are identified as male through their tusks. In

addition, there is some possible phallic imagery. There are also strong themes of *aggression*, either militaristic or feral. Biting beasts pose with open jaws that bite or even devour a human form. All avian profiles possess long, curved beaks, and some even have curved claws, and so can be safely defined as raptors. Aggression may also be implied by the tusks and horns on boars and rams. Most human forms can be positively identified as wearing a helmet, and therefore are symbolic of warrior identity, and inseparable from the context of warfare.

The meaning of these subjects and themes can be investigated in a number of ways. Three approaches will be explored here: an archaeological and historical understanding of the Anglo-Saxon perception of aggression and the animal kingdom; Migration Period mythology and its possible relationship to this art; and finally Anglo-Saxon ritual and religion.

#### *Early Anglo-Saxon Aggression, Warfare and Masculinity*

Martial aggression was a prominent hegemony in early Anglo-Saxon England and its ubiquity, at least as a concept, permeates the archaeological, historical and art-historical records. The obvious archaeological trace of the 5th and 6th centuries is the weapon burial, a rite that was virtually exclusively afforded to males (Härke 1990; 1992; Stoodley 1999, 29). Not only was a martial identity necessary to some aspects of masculinity, but it was a means of constructing, displaying and exercising power. Warrior identity and political authority seem closely linked both during and after this period. The later Sutton Hoo Mound I burial and the recently unearthed Staffordshire hoard are the obvious examples of the climax of this hegemony in the 7th century, associating as they do weaponry, armour, wealth, labour investment and likely princely, if not kingly, authority. Although the 7th century may see the maximum expression of this ideology, it is generally accepted that warfare, and the network of symbols that surrounded it, was a key “dominance strategy” during the political flux that characterises the 6th century (Scull 1992, 18). How real the warfare actually was is open to question, and although it is likely that there was a difference between warrior status and actually being a warrior (Härke 1990), the wear and damage that is occasionally observed on weaponry and shields indicates their actual use in combat (Dickinson and Härke 1992, 56). It is also true that the early histories of Bede, Gildas and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle are full of accounts of

victories and defeats, which to some extent may be seen as the predominant narratives of history as remembered and perceived by early Anglo-Saxons. Whether true, exaggerated, or entirely fictional, histories of military aggression were felt to be critical in explaining the contemporary world order, and perhaps also in constructing or justifying contemporary political arrangements.

The naturalistic accuracy of helm depictions on cruciform brooches can at times be striking. They often display details such as ridged nose-guards, cheek-guards and sometimes even a curved plate that would protect the nape of the neck. It is likely that this iconography was based on either real models, or was copied from Roman iconography. It may be significant that similar helms can be seen on some late Roman coinage. Perhaps, just as bracteates were originally based on imperial medallions, helmed profiles from Style I originate from copies of Roman coinage or other depictions of the emperor (Kendrick 1938, 77). Anglo-Saxon helmets are not known archaeologically from the 5th and 6th century, although the deposition of the Sutton Hoo helmet in the early 7th century may well imply that helmets of this sort were manufactured and worn during the preceding century. Similar helms from Sweden (Vendel and Valsgärde) have, however, been dated at least as early as the second quarter of the 6th century (Tweddle 1992 after Arrhenius 1983). It may also be the case that, for one reason or another, Anglo-Saxon helms of the 6th century have not found their way into the archaeological record. An alternative explanation for the similarities between the Sutton Hoo, Vendel and Valsgärde helmets and Style I helmed profiles is that life may have been imitating art. It is possible that the Anglo-Saxon elite of the 7th century based their image on pre-existing Style I iconography, which in turn was based on a Roman model. The Roman inheritance of Style I should perhaps not be underrated, early Anglo-Saxons were after all living in a landscape dominated by Romano-British cities and monuments, and their elite perhaps saw themselves as the inheritors of the late imperial world, perhaps even incorporating some of this ideology in their own power structures.

Therefore, there are multiple and specific connections between archaeologically recovered helms, helms in the historical literature, and cruciform brooch iconography. The helm itself, and especially elaborately crested ones (crests are often emphasised in the iconography of cruciform brooches), became very important objects in the 7th century. The late 6th- and 7th-century helms from Sutton Hoo, Vendel and Valsgärde are some of the most striking artefacts of the early medieval period, and are found only in the



most elaborate graves. In *Beowulf* there are multiple references to helmets. Cheek-guards (*hleoberg*), and helmet crests (*walu*) are mentioned specifically, and are particularly resonant as both are identifiable in cruciform brooch iconography. *Beowulf*'s helmet is said to be boar-decorated (*besette swin-licum*), and a 7th century boar-crested helmet is known archaeologically from Benty Grange in Derbyshire (Bruce-Mitford 1974, 223). In addition, boar and bird-crested helmets are seen repeatedly in the depiction of warriors in Scandinavia and England (e.g. on the decorative plates of these helmets themselves). The crest was therefore an important part of the display of martial identity and the nature of the animal that crested the helm (boars, birds, dragons) may also have been significant. The fact that in contemporary art this animal is often a bird executed in the same manner as those seen on cruciform brooches provides another link between the brooches and martial imagery. That a helm was also thought of as a mask is literally evident from the elaborate face-guards of the Sutton Hoo and Swedish finds, but is also referred to in *Beowulf* (*Heregrima*, or mask-helm).<sup>3</sup> Intriguingly it is partly the helmet that makes its wearer ambiguously human or avian in the cruciform brooch iconography. Masking practices provide a means of re-ordering the world: they transform identity and can temporarily make the unthinkable a reality (Back Danielsson 2002, 182). This is what makes these helms particularly potent objects in terms of power, and particularly aggressive and martial power, and some of this ideology may well be reflected in cruciform brooch iconography

The disjoint between late 5th- to mid-6th-century Style I helms and late 6th- and 7th-century or later archaeological and historical evidence somewhat frustrates a holistic understanding of these objects in the earlier period. Nonetheless, there are enough connections between the specificity of the early iconography and the later evidence to suggest that similar ideologies were being expressed. The helmed and moustached male was most likely a potent and complex symbol during this period in which cruciform brooches were used that made reference to a martial reality, as well as an ideology or political power structure. It was also important that this helmed individual could assume an avian appearance, and this will be discussed below. The association of helms with the performance of masking may well provide an analogue for the cumulative layers of *peplos* gowns, cloaks and veils that clothed and masked the bodies of the women who wore cruciform brooches (see Chapter 6).

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<sup>3</sup> Incidentally, one of Odin's alternative names is *Grimnir* or 'masked one'.

Aggression and masculinity therefore appear to have been important ideas and ideals, yet their depiction on otherwise feminine objects seems contradictory. It may have been the case that the martial ideal was a hegemony that encapsulated and embodied early Anglo-Saxon power structures, and was therefore relevant to the whole society whether they identified as warriors or not. If power was articulated through a dominant set of masculine symbols or concepts, it is not necessarily contradictory for other social groups in a society to express and negotiate their own power relationships through the prevailing hegemonic discourse, even if they themselves were female. The masculine iconography may in some ways be seen as an appropriation of this dominance strategy by women. Alternatively, it may have been the case that much of this iconography originated in the ideology of potentially male craftspeople or their patrons. The act of commissioning a brooch with specific iconography and then distributing these items through an exchange relationship (see Chapter 7) to specific women may have been a means of imprinting the value system of the male elite onto wider society. Of course, these two explanations are not mutually exclusive: women displaying this iconography may have also become invested with some of the power of the male elite by the association explicitly displayed in the iconography as well as implicitly by the exchange relationships in which they demonstrably participated by the ownership of these objects in the first place (*cf.* Helms 1993).

#### *Early Anglo-Saxon Attitudes to Animals*

The animal iconography of cruciform brooches can be divided into two categories: domesticated horses (or at least probable horses) and wild animals. Horses are the only domesticates (with the exception of the single ram, and very tentatively some bovine imagery, see above), and obviously played a quite different role in Anglo-Saxon society than animals bred for meat or milk. All other depicted animals (raptors, beasts, boars) are wild, and, as outlined above, aggressively so.

The role of horses in early Anglo-Saxon society was a very special one. They were an important status symbol (Fern 2005) and played a significant role in ideology and belief (Fern 2010). The rare burial of horses in inhumation cemeteries during the 6th century (such as at West Heslerton, Little Wilbraham and RAF Lakenheath, see Fern 2007 for more) indicates their prestige, as well as some of their ideological significance. Such

values are similarly represented in the cremation of horses alongside human remains (Williams 2001, 198). They were decorated with highly ornate harnesses (embellished with exactly the same iconography as Sub-Group 4.6 cruciform brooches), and would also have taken considerable resources to breed and train (Fern 2005, 67).

The horse's depiction in art and presence in myth indicates more profound and ideological qualities. Chris Fern sees cruciform brooch feet as well as much of Style I, and even punched ornament, as categorically representative of horses. However, it may be important that Fern only illustrates this with early Kentish examples of Style I (Fern 2010, 138). The convincing equine imagery of these early relief brooches is limited to this period and this region. This early Style I is approximately contemporary with the simple zoomorphic cruciform brooch feet with fewer anthropomorphisms (Group 1 and Type 2.1.1). Indeed, these early cruciform brooches were worn in Kent, but they are also represented (in higher numbers) across the whole Anglian region (see Chapter 4), so their meaning was unlikely to be specific to Kent. In addition, the depiction of the horse on cruciform brooches and in Style I is very different indeed. Cruciform brooch feet, if indeed they do represent horses, illustrate them far more ambiguously. Therefore, it seems that some of the iconographic significance of horse may have been from an earlier period, and may also have been especially important in Kent rather than the whole Anglian region. The horse also occupies a very special place in the Anglo-Saxon origin myths and it may not be coincidence that equine Style I was largely limited to Kent, whose mythical founders were named Hengist and Horsa (translating approximately to the masculine "gelding/stallion/steed/horse" and the neuter "horse", Fern 2010, 143). Fern also affords the horse a very special role in religious thought, ritual practice, and elite gift-giving (Fern 2010). There can be little doubt that the horse played a very important role in early Anglo-Saxon society as its persistence in archaeology, art, and historical literature shows, and especially in the case of Kent. Whether or not these meanings extended to what were to become Anglian regions is more difficult to ascertain, but horses would still have been important symbolic resources whether or not their significance extended into the mythico-religious realm.

It is difficult to equate the cruciform brooch foot with any specific myth or cosmological belief and there are two reasons for this: (a) the cruciform brooch foot is not demonstrably or irrefutably a horse, but rather encodes horse-like qualities that could also be considered generically animalistic, alongside some human-like qualities (see above),

and (b) the motif's exuberant artistic development and variety of representation does not have the consistency that one might expect from a fundamental cultural symbol (in the same way that Style I seemingly does). This does not make the ideological or cosmological components of the cruciform brooch foot completely inscrutable: the prevalence of the design and popularity of cruciform brooches suggests that it had some cultural resonance, especially during the 5th century. However, this means that such arguments should be expressed only tentatively. Although they provide plausible meanings for the cruciform brooch foot's iconographic meaning, its structure, development and context should also be taken into account, and these will be returned to below.

The archaeological evidence for the relationship between Anglo-Saxon society and wild animals is slighter than it is for horses. Wild animals are represented in faunal assemblages from settlements, but only in very small numbers (e.g. Crabtree 1989, 208). Bear pelts are also occasionally evidenced (from the presence of claws only) from cremation burials (McKinley 1994, 92). Similarly a very small number of other wild animals are occasionally evident among cremated remains, and presumably were burnt on the funeral pyre as part of the ritual process (Williams 2001, 197). It is therefore likely that some animals such as bears, deer, hare and rabbit were occasionally encountered and were exploited, presumably for their meat and fur, as well as perhaps had some more ideological significance. However, these are not the kinds of animals that are depicted on cruciform brooches. The dominant animal in the iconography is the raptor. The identity of the biting beast motif is difficult to ascertain, and in at least one example (see above), it appears to assume the shape of a seal, and in some others appears more canine. The depiction of a seal, as discussed above, is entirely unique, and may in any case be a stylised dog or wolf (its striking similarity to the Sutton Hoo mound 1 purse mounts may indicate this). The best contemporary parallels for most of the biting beast motifs, however, can be found among bracteates in the form of the head of a wolf, frequently biting the hand of a human individual (see below, Figure 8.37). Similarly, biting beasts on cruciform brooches are sometimes seen to be in the process of consuming a human head. The other animals depicted on cruciform brooches, though very rarely, are boars and a single ram.

As expressed above, these animals are linked by their aggressive tendencies, and irrevocably feral character (*cf.* Dickinson 2005). They are unlikely to have been regularly

exploited by Anglo-Saxons for meat or for their fur, and therefore unlikely to have been regularly hunted. Fittingly, these animals, and especially raptors and wolves, may have been perceived as hunters themselves, and to some extent perhaps, were personified, just as they were in later Old English poetry (Meaney 2000). Part of these animals' relevance may have been to do with ideas of aggressive masculinity, as expressed above, but their meaning would also have been determined by the Anglo-Saxon view of the wild and uncultivated world. Some of this cosmological viewpoint is obviously accessible from the art itself: it is wild, aggressive, dangerous, and (by definition) feral. This is the precisely the kind of imagery evoked by the later epic of Beowulf: the world outside Hrothgar's hall is mysterious, monstrous and potentially lethal. The encroachment of these wilds into the hall (by Grendel and his mother) represents a fundamental act of transgression, just as Beowulf's intrusion into Grendel's mother's realm must take place in a distinctly inhuman environment: in a cavern at the bottom of a lake. The triumph of the male warrior over a malignant wilderness sets the theme for the whole narrative. Although the poem was probably composed long after the period in question, it may well record a long-term Anglo-Saxon *mentalité* (Hedeager 2011) toward the inhabitants of the uncultivated and wild world, without which the themes of the story would not be intelligible. In this context Pam Crabtree's observation that the remains of wild animals depicted in Anglo-Saxon art are virtually absent from Anglo-Saxon settlements is extremely relevant (Crabtree 1995, 25).

Ravens and wolves are repeatedly identified in the later literature as 'beasts of battle': animals that prey on the fallen in the wake of combat and bloodshed (Meaney 2000, 95), and therefore parallels are possible or even predictable between the helmed warriors, wolves and birds. The major problem with the identification of ravens is that though they have a slight curve and hook to their beaks, they do not have the distinctive curve typified on cruciform brooches, which is more characteristic of predatory birds.

In summary, this brief exploration of the archaeology and historical literature has revealed some of the potential associations early Anglo-Saxons may have made with the motifs found on cruciform brooches: helmed male warriors, horses, raptors, wolves and boars. The concern has mainly been with the very general meanings these images may have evoked. However, Style I in particular may well have had some quite specific associations in Migration Period ideology, and this will be the subject of the following discussion.

### *Migration Period Mythology*

There is a growing school of thought that associates Migration Period iconography with a mythology which has been largely lost but is residually present in the later recorded Norse myth. Norse myth is primarily known from the Prose and Poetic Eddas recorded by Snorri Sturluson in the 13th century and other heroic poetry from the 11th century onward. The antiquity of the mythology, however, is far deeper, and is known to extend at least as far back as the Viking period. Demonstrating that these myths actually have origins in the Migration Period is contentious, but many feel that this has been sufficiently demonstrated (contributors in Andrén *et al* 2006; Hedeager 2011). Of course, the case for drawing this link is stronger in Scandinavia (where these myths originate) than it is in Anglo-Saxon England, yet the mode and themes of artistic representation, the primary source of these arguments, are almost identical.

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*Figure 8.37: Bracteates with parallels in Norse myth: (a) from Kitnæs, Denmark (Hedeager 2011, 87, fig.4.29, after Hauck 1985-89); (b) from Trollhättan, Sweden (Hedeager 2011, 206, fig.9.10 after Hauck 1985-89); (c) from Skrydstrup, Denmark (Hedeager 1999, 153, fig.1); (d) from Fakse, Denmark (Hedeager 2011, 206, fig.9.9 after Hauck 1985-89). Scale 1/1.*

As mentioned above, the argument for the mythological content in Migration Period art hinges on the apparently narrative scenes found on bracteates. However, this art is

paralleled, in an abbreviated form, on a much wider range of objects, including the Style I found on cruciform brooches. Among the most prominent motifs on bracteates is a figure riding a horse (Figure 8.37a), frequently accompanied by a bird. In addition, the elaborately curled head-dress of this individual sometimes assumes the form of a bird. The dominance of this scene over most other bracteate designs lends this figure primacy, and accordingly many have identified this individual as Odin, or at least a direct predecessor of this named god (Hauck 1985-89; Hedeager 2011, 55). In the Norse myths Odin travels on a horse (albeit one with eight legs – Sleipnir), and is assisted by two ravens (Huginn and Munnin). As outlined above, other parallels between Norse myth and bracteate imagery include the story of Tyr having his hand consumed by the Fenris wolf (Figures 8.37b and 8.37c), and the death of Baldr impaled by his blind brother Hodr assisted by Loki (Figure 8.37d).

The most direct parallel between bracteate and cruciform brooch iconography is the human mask accompanied by birds, variations of which are seen on a very large number of Group 3 and 4 cruciform brooches. The parallels between the wolves of the bracteates and the biting beast motif are also significant, and have been explored briefly above. The strongest parallel lies between the relatively rare human with a bird-shaped head-dress motif (Figure 8.27) and the bracteate imagery (e.g. Figure 8.37d). However, the problem with most cruciform brooch imagery is that it does not depict a warrior accompanied by ravens, but a warrior who is actually partially constituted by raptors, or, alternatively, is ambiguously identifiable them self as a predatory bird. A specific link between cruciform brooch iconography and the figure we know as Odin is therefore tenuous. That said, the prevalence and consistency of this recurring motif suggests it represented a culturally resonant idea, and one that was perhaps also found in the mythology of the time. Again, the biting beasts on cruciform brooches do not specifically consume the hands of any individual as in the story of Tyr. Rather, they attack the head. Nevertheless, both the cruciform brooch imagery, and the later Norse myths revolve around the same constellation of symbols. Cruciform brooch motifs are based on a subset of these.

Lotte Hedeager's approach (2011) takes a very literal view of the connection between Migration Period art and Norse myth, and one that makes sense in her long-term historical approach. Hedeager is interested in illuminating an Iron Age *mentalité*, or an underlying structure to early medieval Scandinavian cosmology expressed both in art, and in later mythologies. This is precisely what the content of cruciform brooch iconography

reveals. However, the human characters and animals do not literally represent figures such as Odin and his ravens, but stem from the same symbolic milieu apparently common to north-west Europe during the Migration Period. There is also a case for suggesting the prominence of a recurrent theme in the Germanic world that associates gods, heroes and birds throughout the 1st millennium AD (Kulakov and Markovets 2004). Gods of the Norse myths (Freya and Loki) repeatedly transform themselves into birds, as do the giants, while Tacitus records the use of birds by Germanic soothsayers (Kulakov and Markovets 2004, 180). Therefore cruciform brooch imagery may not be part of *the* Norse mythological canon, but it is likely these figures, as well as the hybrid quadruped *Tiermenschen*, stem from the mythico-religious beliefs and oral traditions of the time. As was expressed above, Roman art frequently depicted figures from mythology, while 8th-century art, such as coinage (Gannon 2003), featured miniaturised scenes or themes from Christian myth. The idea that Migration Period art did *not* represent a mythology is harder to prove. If such iconography had mythico-religious significance, the cruciform brooch's role in this ideology requires some consideration. If cruciform brooches somehow acted to embody such an ideology, it is necessary to ask how they may have been used in a mythico-religious context, and this will be explored further below.

#### *Migration Period Religious Practice and Cosmology*

A second assertion that is frequently made of Migration Period art is that it embodies elements of ritual practice or cosmological belief. This is where the above-mentioned themes of *hybridity*, *transformativity* and *ambiguity* are relevant, and it is these that unite the sum of cruciform brooch decoration regardless of its specific content. This includes the cruciform brooch foot, an element generally considered external to the Style I artistic repertoire, but which has been shown (above) to possess many similarities. Perhaps the purpose of the zoomorphic and anthropomorphic foot was that it could not be readily identified as a horse, a generic muzzled animal, a human, or even in some instances a phallus. Rather than being a simple (and passive) communication of an idea by its direct illustration, the cruciform brooch foot's power as a symbol lies in its ambiguity. Hence, it demands intellectual engagement and the contemplation of a whole realm of associated ideas. The same is true for the rest of cruciform brooch iconography. However, the ubiquitous entrenchment of all this human/animal-based art in ambiguous, hybrid and



transformative forms most likely has a significance beyond this, and perhaps one that was based on ritual practice and cosmological belief.

There have been many attempts to reconstruct elements of early Anglo-Saxon paganism from archaeology, including burial practices (e.g. Williams 2001; 2010), the identification of ritual specialists from their graves (Dickinson 1993a; Geake 2003), and even ritual sites (Blair 1995). Most accounts, however, are based on Migration Period iconography (most recently Hedeager 2011) and are often couched in the content of the mythology discussed above. The idea of animism, specifically shamanism, is of particular importance which might be referenced by both the transformative human-animal relationships in art and the cult of Odin (e.g. Hawkes 1997, 319). The mythology of Odin refers to the god as the master of “*Sejd*”, which was a type of practiced magic where the body of the shaman entered a state of ecstasy and the soul was free to travel, generally in animal form or with an animal guide, and act as an agent for gaining knowledge, causing harm and other important supernatural acts (Hedeager 1999, 151; Price 2004). It has been observed that figures in some Migration Period and later art (e.g. *goldgubber*) appear to be dancing (Holmqvist 1960), and perhaps represent shamans entering into this ecstatic state. The ritual context of *goldgubber* (generally found in votive deposits in settlements, especially central places, and sometimes graves), as well as its strange iconographic content, reinforces a religious meaning (Watt 1999). More convincing, however, is the sheer quantity of transformative art in the Migration Period (and later). The depiction of something as unambiguously animal or unambiguously human is so rare that it may even have the case that figural or naturalistic art was taboo. Even when humans are represented whole and entirely un-animal it is in a clearly unusual context (e.g. bracteates, *goldgubber*), which apparently directly represent scenes from a mythology or ritual acts. Objects such as bracteates perhaps represented powerful ritual objects precisely because of the figural art that they bore. It is possible that a large number of bracteates depicting a horse and rider accompanied by birds may well represent the spirit journey itself.

The iconography of cruciform brooches is similarly ambiguous, and it emphasises in particular a fascination with the relationship between humans and birds, and perhaps humans and horses. Humans and birds are depicted ambiguously, as hybrids, or perhaps even in a state of transformation where parts of the human mask (such as the moustache or hair) appears to be made up of birds. It may be significant that many of these men are

also identifiable as helmed warriors. Alternatively, it could be said that many of the birds are seen to be wearing armour. Perhaps both interpretations were simultaneously true. Strange though it seems, this has a later parallel in the Norse “berserkers”: warriors who wore bear pelts in battle and whose identity seems to have crossed over with that of the bear. Very similar themes are referenced earlier in Migration Period and 7th-century northwest European art. The Torslunda plates (dies for the manufacture of helmet panels) depict a warrior with a bear’s head, a sword sheath from Gutenstein depicts warriors with wolves’ heads, and a helmet plate from Vendel depicts warriors with boar tusks (Hedeager 2011, 76). Perhaps especially significantly to the present discussion, an example of textile embroidery from Oseberg shows a woman with a bird’s head. As mentioned above, items such as the Sutton Hoo or Vendel helmets acted as masks that transformed the identity of warriors, not necessarily into animals, but they bore iconography that depicted these themes.

The cruciform brooch foot iconography frequently combined horse and human characteristics in a similar manner, an idea that is echoed in the Anglo-Saxon origin myth of Hengist and Horsa, and in the early equine Style I relief brooch decoration from Kent (see above). Transformation is also visible *between* objects: a smooth transition can be seen from the earliest unambiguous animal heads in Group 1, through to the obvious human faces of Group 4. More crucially, transformation could be captured on a single brooch: Figure 8.35b (above) depicts the largely zoomorphic cruciform brooch foot whose snout has become a human face. In turn, the hair of this human face is transforming into birds.

The themes of human-animal transformation on cruciform brooches are too strong to dismiss as artistic flourishes. These ideas obviously held cosmological resonance for them to be repeated over different types of material culture, using different motifs. Whether or not we can identify specific shamanistic ritual in the archaeological record, or draw literal parallels between the Norse myths and Migration period ritual practice, the metaphysical relationship between humans and animals was given great consideration, and obsessively so, in the art of this period. It is even possible to regard these objects, existing as they did in a non-literate society, as the ‘texts’ by which these ideas were thought about. In the absence of literal texts, this artwork records early Anglo-Saxons thinking about the transformative relationship between humans and animals. Therefore it seems likely that animism, and possibly even shamanistic ritual, constituted fundamental

cosmological principles of the Migration Period world. The depiction of these ideas was a means of understanding the constitution of the world. It remains to be explained further why male human-animal warriors were depicted on female jewellery, and why this kind of cosmology was similarly associated with women. This is a key issue, and will be discussed below.

## The Multi-Dimensional Contexts of Cruciform Brooch Iconography

The above discussion focuses on the content of cruciform brooch iconography in terms of its restricted subset of motifs, and what these may have symbolised in a general Migration Period context. However, thanks to the preceding chapters on chronology, distribution, identity and use, it is possible to think about this iconography in a very specific context, and one that was unique to cruciform brooches. The critical principle is that this art did not just exist on generic material; it existed on specific items that were used in certain ways, by a particular group of people. The characteristics of the iconography also vary over time and space. All of these complexities contribute the detail that will allow a truly contextual understanding of a specific set of iconography, its development, and its purpose.

### *Chronological Iconographic Development*

Much of this thesis has been concerned with the typological development and chronology of the cruciform brooch (Chapters 2 and 3). Although this has proven to be complex, and many Types and motifs were in use simultaneously, some general trends can be identified. Recalling Phases A through to C (see Chapter 3), Style I ornamentation is only present in Phases B and C. That is, from around 475 AD at the earliest, and probably increasing in use over the rest of Phase B (c.475-550), and continuing into Phase C (c.525-575). Therefore, before c.475 (during Phase A), cruciform brooch iconography was limited entirely to the zoomorphic foot, which at this stage bore minimal anthropomorphic characteristics. The symbolism it held was purely to do with horses, and if not horses, a generic animal. Toward the end of Phase A and the start of Phase B (somewhere around or shortly after the time the cruciform brooch went through a brief phase of being a *peplos* fastener and became a standard cloak-fastener, see Chapter

6), the animal-head gained an anthropomorphic brow, and possibly some phallic significance as well. While the phallic imagery is at its most obvious during this phase, the anthropomorphic tendencies increase throughout the rest of the cruciform brooch's developmental trajectory, and alongside the newly incorporated Style I decoration.

It was also noted in Chapter 4 that around the time of the introduction of Style I (*c.*475), the distribution of the cruciform brooch crystallised and came to define the Anglian region: it became a more obvious marker of regional, and ethnic, identity. This was not concurrent with the large-scale migrations, but occurred shortly after them. Similarly, it is around this time that the cruciform brooch became restricted to a specific group of older women. Therefore, it is possible to hypothesise a causal connection between the complexity of the iconography, and the contextual meaning of the cruciform brooch.

Phase C (*c.*525-575) brought further developments, the most significant of which was the almost total loss of regional restriction, and lower production volumes (see Chapter 4). At the same time the cruciform brooch became ubiquitously decorated in bichrome, but more importantly it became almost entirely saturated in Style I decoration. Some of this Style I was very coherent and executed in high quality relief, but some is of the least coherent and lowest relief, even to the point where some became entirely geometric. This phase also introduced a new motif to the cruciform brooch repertoire: the quadruped (or pair of quadrupeds) with a helmed profile that can be found in Style I panels. This final phase, therefore, brought an enormously important change in meaning, which again seems to be related to the iconography: Style I reached its apex in terms of the variety and quantity of motifs used, whilst at the same time apparently lost some of its iconographic content, shortly before dropping out of use entirely. Again, a connection between iconography, meaning and context seems inescapable.

In sum, the major trend is the gradual increase of anthropomorphic imagery on all areas of the brooch. There is also a trend toward the diversification of this imagery. The gradual increase ends quite suddenly when the decoration becomes illegible and had perhaps changed slightly in its meaning. The key moments appear to be *c.*475 with the introduction of Style I and a host of social restrictions on the brooch's use, and then again at some point around 550 with the predominance of Style I, loss of regional restriction and subtle changes to the content of the iconography.

### *The Distribution of the Iconography*

The most obvious spatial context of the iconography, given that the cruciform brooch was its main vehicle, is that until about 525-550, it was restricted to the eastern Anglian region of England. The prominence of some motifs, such as the cruciform brooch foot, helmed avian profiles, and masks with avian moustaches/head-dresses, is therefore regional. The work of Colin Shepherd (1998) reinforces this observation. From a survey of Anglo-Saxon England, though he dealt with individual motifs rather than object types, Shepherd has shown that the beak was restricted largely to Anglian areas (Shepherd 1998, 89). Conversely, the crouching quadruped with a human head was far more dominant in the Saxon areas to the west. The introduction of this motif onto cruciform brooches at exactly the same time as the end of their strictly easterly regional distribution is therefore significant. It demonstrates that previous to this point in time (*c.*550) this was not an appropriate motif in Anglian England. Perhaps it lacked meaning, or perhaps it symbolised an opposed Saxon identity (seeing as it can be found predominantly on saucer brooches). From the above discussion of myth and cosmological meaning, it may be the case that it was not part of the localised Anglian set of myths or beliefs. The transgression of this motif into Anglian England at this point in time may demonstrate a disintegration of regionality in terms of myth or ritual practice, and perhaps the transformation or collecting of mythology into a more generally 'Anglo-Saxon' corpus of oral traditions. Tentatively, this may have something to do with the trans-regional connections that were being drawn between different the elites of this phase (see Chapter 4). Applying the term 'syncretism' would, at this stage, be tenuous as it is unlikely pagan religious practices were in any way standardised or even constituted a definable and bounded body of formal practices and belief. Further, it is likely that mythico-religious belief during this period was continuously in flux. This also helps to explain why and how the cruciform brooch expanded into the west, and lost its regional restrictions: the makers of cruciform brooches began to incorporate motifs more familiar and appropriate to a western audience.

There are also some very subtle regional variations in iconography within the Anglian region. Anthropomorphisms were more favoured in the north, as was the biting beast motif. It is important to note that this was more a matter of relative frequency than absolute regional restriction. Phase A cruciform brooches were far scarcer in the north, and occurred only in very small numbers north of the Humber. Although cruciform

brooches were still scarce in this region during Phases B and C, they were present in relatively higher numbers. It is after Phase A that cruciform brooches ceased to display solely horse/zoomorphic imagery and began to explore the human facial form. It may be the case that the earlier imagery only had relevance in East Anglia and Lincolnshire at this point in time. It is also the more anthropomorphised Group 3 foot forms that gained popularity in the north, and were presumably manufactured there. Type 3.2.2 was particularly prevalent in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, and was relatively scarce in East Anglia. Type 3.2.6 was also frequently anthropomorphised (both on its foot and head-plate knobs), and is not found south of Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. When it comes to Group 4 similar trends continue. Among the earlier 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 forms (the Phase B Group 4 forms, the rest are later Phase C ones), which were broadly contemporary with the Group 3 forms discussed above, it was only Sub-Group 4.3 that gained popularity in the north (and was probably produced there). Of these three Sub-Groups, 4.3 also featured the most obviously and consistently anthropomorphic foot form. Sub-Group 4.1 was largely split between Lincolnshire and East Anglia, while Type 4.2 appears not to have occurred any further north than south Lincolnshire. These Types generally retain the more zoomorphic traditional cruciform brooch foot. The biting beast motif is most commonly associated with Type 3.2.2 and 4.4 brooches. As is mentioned above, as one of the more anthropomorphic Group 3 brooches, Type 3.2.2 was more frequent in the north, while Type 4.4, though found in East Anglia and even beyond to the west, was concentrated largely in Lincolnshire.

It is difficult to explain this more subtle iconographic spatial patterning, but it may relate to localised mythologies. If we consider that mythology would have been constituted entirely by an oral tradition, its localisation, or at least the predominance of a particular oral tradition in certain regions, is highly likely. It is items such as cruciform brooches that may have acted as a medium by which these mythological or cosmological ideologies were spread. The role of cruciform brooches on a pragmatic level will be further explored below, but this provides a reason for the subtle localisation of certain motifs.

#### *Feminine Identity and Iconography*

As was mentioned above, by around 475 the cruciform brooch had become restricted to a particular group of individuals: women over the age of eighteen, often much older. This

is critical to understanding the iconography. As Tania Dickinson has shown, Style I in general occurs on very few male-related items, which are vastly outnumbered by occurrences on female items, and especially brooches (Dickinson 2009, 8). As cruciform brooches were the most common vehicle for Style I in Anglian England (albeit often in a minimal form compared to the rarer but more elaborate great square-headed brooches), women, and particularly older women, are a critical consideration in thinking about the meaning of both cruciform brooch iconography and Style I in general.

In Chapter 5 gender and age groups were considered, as was the role of the cruciform brooch in creating and displaying the identity of such a group. Chapter 4 provided one reason for the existence of such a group: they were the bearers of the Anglian tradition. A consideration of the iconography of these items, however, reveals a further dimension to the tradition that these women were bearing: one that was based in myth and cosmological belief. Considering that the Anglian tradition itself was at least partially an origin myth, this would seem axiomatic. Part of this tradition may be considered as a set of specialised knowledge. As has been discussed by Timothy Insoll (2007, 6), age- and gender-related identity groups frequently stake their claim to an identity by their access to a restricted set of knowledge. The association of a specific set of information-laden iconography with a particular identity-group is therefore critical, and especially if we consider that this group was considered a bearer of cultural tradition. The tradition was not only based on origin myths, but also perhaps a mythical, cosmological, and even metaphysical knowledge concerning the very constitution of humans and animals. As a power structure, this identity was part of the social system that emerged during the Migration Period in England, and was superseded in the later 6th and 7th centuries by the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Its importance to 5th- and 6th-century England, therefore, should not be underrated.

#### *The Location of the Iconography on a Dress-Fastener*

The final context to be considered is the location of this iconography on a particular type of material culture: a dress-fastener. Dress-fasteners during the early Anglo-Saxon period were made to be seen: they were large and became even larger over the course of their development. This, therefore, was at least partly an iconography of conspicuous display. The precise symbolism that the brooch signalled may not have been obvious to all

observers, much of it is small and requires close scrutiny to 'read', but it would have been abundantly clear that the individual was wearing a known type of iconography, with certain meanings, however opaque they may have been. Part of the power structure of this material culture and identity-group was precisely its display to those who shared the status, and those to whom the status was prohibited. Like saucer brooches, cruciform brooches acted to "segregate and integrate" (Dickinson 1991, 40).

Nonetheless, it is the inscrutability and concealment of meaning that characterises the iconography, and this may be part of the significance of ambiguity in the designs. As has been explored in some detail above, split imagery, dual imagery, and other cryptic compositional details are central to the iconography, and would not have been immediately evident to the casual observer. It is very important to remember the perspective that this account is based on: archaeologists have the advantage of being able to simultaneously compare literally hundreds of these brooches, and it is only by a careful examination, over the course of several months, if not years, that the images become clear. Early Anglo-Saxons would not have had this luxury. The specific iconographical detail would have been known only to makers of the jewellery, the wearers, and close observers to whom it was explained. Cruciform brooches were likely removed from clothing and handled, perhaps even passed around for examination, and almost certainly talked about. The mythological content of the images may have been orally recounted, and they may have even acted as mnemonics that accompanied these myths as a form of information storage. Indeed, possessing such memorised information may well have been an esteemed privilege that should not be underrated (Carruthers 1990). As Lindstrøm and Kristoffersen (2001) have suggested, the hidden iconography of Style I is likely to have been something that was explained, perhaps to initiates when they received such items, as it partly relies on pre-existing knowledge to understand in its entirety. That an explanation of the iconography's content would have been accompanied by an explanation of mythological or metaphysical significance seems likely. Perhaps this brings us closer to an understanding of what a rite of passage that legitimated a woman as an individual who could be endowed with a cruciform brooch may have entailed. Tania Dickinson (2002b, 180) came to same conclusion for the Style I found on saucer brooches:

In this sense it [Style I on saucer brooches] would have operated like a revelatory art, that is one which can be read on different levels, from a simple iconographic



sign, or trigger to a narrative story, to a complex series of metaphors relating reality and belief. Understanding would be acquired (revealed) cumulatively, in socially controlled situations, with the brooches themselves perhaps playing a specific role as a source of revelation through conversation and demonstration.

The fact that the true significance of the iconography was hidden in the detail is also important as it allows the casual observer, not necessarily privy to its secrets, to be aware that the object had some cryptic meaning, and it allows those who understand its true significance the advantage of possessing restricted knowledge, and hence access to power. It was not necessarily the art *per se* that literally contained the knowledge, but it may have implied that the individual wearing the brooch possessed privileged access to otherwise obscure knowledge. The intimate association between these brooches and the very bodies of the women who wore them made this knowledge inalienable from these individuals and all the more restricted (see Chapters 6 and 7).

However, we must also be aware that the amount of this kind of imagery on the majority of cruciform brooches is minimal, Group 3 brooches are unlikely to possess more than one motif, and many are only decorated on their feet. Hence, not all of these brooches were necessarily used and handled as elaborately or significantly as has been described above, but they all nonetheless referenced this system of knowledge, and hence provided links with a hegemony which was exercised by the few but was familiar to all. The fact that many highly elaborate Group 4 forms were produced and worn at the same time as the less complex Group 3 forms suggests that there may well have been a subtle hierarchy in the distribution of this knowledge within this group.

## Conclusion: Women, Knowledge and Power

The iconography of cruciform brooches represented a restricted knowledge and constituted an important element of the power structure of early Anglo-Saxon society. Of course, the skills and knowledge involved in the creation of these objects in the first place, as well as access to the exchange relationships that allowed their acquirement, was also restricted. In addition, there were several layers of restriction based on gender and age (see Chapter 5). Seemingly, ownership of cruciform brooches was confined to a very small number of women per household, perhaps representative of specific descent groups

(see Chapter 5). Crucially, it was also regionally restricted, and defines what we know as the Anglian region (which was presumably similarly defined at the time). Describing these women as the bearers of the Anglian tradition begs the question of the nature and content of this tradition.

The iconography of cruciform brooches allows a small window onto the symbolism of the Anglian cultural tradition, the dominant elements being birds of prey, helmed warriors, and possibly horses, with powerful themes of transformation, ambiguity and hybridism. Much of this iconography may have referenced hegemonic power structures such as the masculine martial identity, feral aggression, and perhaps even some references to earlier Roman iconography and the power that it engendered. A more dominant theme in the iconography may have been references to the mythology of an oral tradition. The themes of animal/human ambiguity, hybridism and transformation that can be found in the composition of this art may reveal something of early Anglo-Saxon metaphysical thought about the human and animal realms, and perhaps most fundamentally about how the worlds they lived and died in were constituted. Hence, the Anglian tradition not only involved origin myths, but also specific cosmological or metaphysical knowledge and belief, with a particular focus on the relationship between people and a particular type of bird (raptors). Obtaining any more detailed knowledge of this cosmology is difficult, and would rapidly become speculative. The suggestion here is that this cosmology was perhaps understood and recounted through the iconography itself.

A final question that remains only partially answered is that if this imagery depicts mythological and cosmological knowledge, why is it almost entirely masculine, aggressive and in some instances gruesome and macabre? As was discussed briefly above, early Anglo-Saxon society was highly militarised and its male elite seem to have existed in a power structure based on martial ideals, if not realities. That powerful women should express themselves through the dominant ideology is not necessarily surprising, especially if these items derived some of their authenticity and value from their method of acquirement through an exchange relationship involving male craftspeople and their elite patrons. The power relationship between men and women during the early Anglo-Saxon period has not yet been studied in detail, but there may well have been some negotiation of power between a trans-regional martial masculine identity (male graves show minimal regional variation) and regionalised, knowledge-based

feminine identity. Though this is likely a vast simplification, the negotiation of power seems to intersect specifically in this iconography.

The more macabre imagery is harder to explain. Bente Magnus (1999) suggested that the monsters, death and destruction that characterise Migration Period art were explicit references to Ragnarok: the Norse mythological apocalypse. Magnus suggested that their presence on women's clothing represented these women's role as soothsayers, who in some way controlled and communicated with the destinies of humankind, a role symbolised by the norms and sibyls in Norse mythology. The similarities between the art and Norse accounts of the end of the world are intriguing, but with cruciform brooches especially, this reading is too literal. It may be the case that as well as referencing an oral tradition concerning particular beasts, cruciform brooches served an apotropaic function of guarding against these monstrous forces, and perhaps to some extent offered a means of controlling their agency. It seems unlikely that this art was considered beautiful in all but the ingenuity of its composition. Although it is a highly subjective judgement, and should only be considered tentatively, the entities are not pleasant, but are deliberately menacing, and it was perhaps considered to be more of a necessity to bear this imagery for an apotropaic function.

The link this chapter has drawn between cruciform brooches, knowledge and power may also help to explain the demise of cruciform brooches toward the end of the 6th century. Of course, the next most significant linking of power and knowledge was the rise of Christianity in the 7th century. However, it seems there was a delay between this and the end of early Anglo-Saxon traditional jewellery forms and burial practices (Geake 1997). This space seems to have been filled by an upheaval in the way that power was structured in society, which not only replaced traditional forms, but facilitated the formation of the earliest Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Crucially, the most elaborate iconography (now Style II) was found to be in the hands of men. This transition therefore symbolises the ceasing of some women's roles as the bearers of tradition, and curators of traditional, cosmological knowledge. This role instead began to fall to royal lineages, headed by men, who traced their genealogies back into the mythological past. They therefore had no necessary need of a special and restricted mythological or cosmological knowledge, as they embodied this inheritance themselves. This was perhaps only a brief arrangement, as very soon the Church seized the role of possessing restricted and special knowledge. It is an historical truism that as one form of restricted knowledge (or knowledge storage, media) rises to

prominence, it becomes broken down by the next, and the curators of this knowledge find themselves disenfranchised. Parallels can be drawn from later English history such as a reformation driven partly by the invention of the printing press, an enlightenment motivated by a different kind of empirical knowledge, and a currently-developing world in which electronic forms of media are causing the re-structuring of power relationships. The role of cruciform brooches in this much earlier social upheaval might not have been so prominent, but they may well represent part of a related process.

# Chapter 9: Conclusion

Because the findings of each of the preceding chapters have been incorporated into the next, this concluding chapter will provide less of a synthesis and more of a summary and an outlook. The thesis has been structured around a gradual accumulation of contextual knowledge concerning typological structure and iconography, chronological and spatial information, as well as the archaeological contexts provided by the excavation of cemeteries. I have interpreted this information throughout the thesis largely in terms of the chronological development of social structures relating to gender, age, ethnicity and, most fundamentally, power. These identities were all at least partly constructed and signified by the cruciform brooch.

## Summary of Findings

Typological analysis provided a practical classification of cruciform brooches to be used throughout the subsequent investigation, but also crucially interrogated the differential structures of the varieties of cruciform brooches. The cruciform brooch can be divided into four major Groups, which can be subdivided into myriad Sub-Groups and Types with some specificity. The statistical techniques of Correspondence Analysis and Hierarchical Cluster Analysis allow the design structures of these four Groups to be interrogated, and prove that three major structuring principles were utilised at different stages of cruciform brooch production. Group 1 was populated by a relatively simple form of brooch, with a correspondingly simple structure. However, the variation within classes of attribute was maximal, which suggests that Group 1 brooches were idiosyncratic, and generally created as one-offs with little consistent effort to conform to specific forms. Groups 2 and 3 were a departure from this principle and had more complex combinations of quite specific attributes. Type definition within these classes was therefore more problematic, but I have suggested that the reason for this complexity lies in the different structuring principle of Groups 2 and 3, which can be thought of as a bricolage of symbols almost endlessly recombined into novel forms communicating specific but complex messages. Group 4 brooches conformed more consistently to particular combinations of attributes which meant that not only were Types easier to define and justify, but there was also less negotiation in their symbolism. Fundamentally, my interpretation of the typology hinged

upon the idea that material culture structured by different principles provides an analogue for the kinds of social identity that each communicated.

These three differential structuring principles can be arranged chronologically. Broadly speaking, and with some overlap, they represent three phases of brooch-use beginning at some point around or before 450, and ending in the later 6th century. This framework provides the most essential context for understanding the development of the cruciform brooch's social meaning. The chronological analysis of Chapter 3 suggested that the development of the cruciform brooch was in fact far more complex than is often thought, as many forms were in simultaneous use.

These three phases and structuring principles can also be spatially mapped. The first of these phases had a general distribution in the eastern part of England. However, this was not especially well-defined and there were a relatively high number of outliers outside this zone. The second phase was marked by a very high concentration and stringently observed distribution in the eastern part of England, and this was especially the case in East Anglia and Lincolnshire. In the final phase the picture changed quite dramatically to a distribution that represented minimal regionalisation in the use of cruciform brooches which was now spread almost indiscriminately across the central and northern regions of England.

I suggested that this changing distribution represented the crystallising and then fragmenting or spreading of a regional identity expressed and constructed through the use of the cruciform brooch. Critically, this identity can be interpreted in ethnic terms and defined as the same Anglian identity that was recorded in the later historical literature. This involves some critical reconsideration of the nature of ethnicity in Migration Period Europe, which hinged upon the identity of descent groups recorded in continental sources as the '*gentes*', or the people of a perceived heritage who were granted political authority. The women who wore cruciform brooches can be seen as the literal bearers of this cultural tradition, which was itself at least partly constructed, demonstrated and authenticated by the ownership and conspicuous display of these very objects. Thus the crystallisation of cruciform brooch distribution in the later 5th century represents the ethnogenesis of Anglian identity, and the dispersal of cruciform brooches in the mid-6th century indicates the assuming of Anglian identity by some elite individuals in the region that was to become Mercia.

Predictably, an analysis of the osteological profiles of those buried with cruciform brooches found them to have been largely women. Perhaps less predictably, these women were of a specific age group: the vast majority of those buried with cruciform brooches were over the age of 18. Burial with cruciform brooches was especially frequent with a slightly older group of individuals who were over the age of 25. It was also interesting to note that sex and age restrictions may have been less stringently followed during the early period. This relates remarkably well to the fact that the earliest phase of cruciform brooch distribution was relatively diffuse, and so were its typological structuring principles. For the middle and latest phases, however, an older demographic of individuals was clearly demonstrable and I suggested that because this age group were among the oldest members of communities (very few individuals seem to have died over the age of 40), wearing a cruciform brooch may have marked a stage in the lifecycle that was subsequent to marriage, and perhaps even childbearing. Therefore, accounts suggesting that the value of women in early Anglo-Saxon society lay in their ability to biologically reproduce and perpetuate the descent group were rejected. It seems that these women in particular were regarded as the bearers of a politically expedient cultural tradition which had a far greater significance outside the household. These women were constructing and displaying a complex identity which implied the existence of social networks across most of England, as well as even relating to parallel practices overseas. In addition, it seems that this ethnic identity was also based within perceptions of gender and life stage, associations that perhaps acted to naturalise and authenticate the power with which these individuals were invested. Crucially, these women's age also places them at the top of their living descent groups. Therefore claims to Anglian ancestry could be made through demonstrable descent from such individuals, and it is also the symbolic transition from a living to a deceased ancestor that was being expressed in the mortuary ritual.

It is also possible to demonstrate that a specific dress ensemble was almost unique to wearers of the cruciform brooch from about 475 onward. This costume was marked by the wearing of a substantial cloak over the top of the more standard *peplos* over-garment, and occasionally even two additional cloaks. Different kinds of dress resulted in subtly different perceptions of the feminine body, and therefore of sexual identity. Because the dress of women wearing cruciform brooches was especially substantial and acted to screen-off the physique under numerous layers of textile, these women's very physicality

had become partly replaced by a cultural tradition. I would therefore suggest that clothing was not only a critical indicator of social status, but was also a primary constructor of the social perception of the body. In addition, layers of garments were accumulated gradually through the lifecycle and helped to define the stages of this process. Hence, dress ensembles were the visual texts from which the biography of an individual could be read. This whole process may have led to some garments becoming inalienable from the body, which would help to explain the prominence of female dress-accessories in mortuary deposits.

If the cruciform brooch was used to construct and signify a particular identity with important political connotations, then it is also necessary to explore how items such as this might have gained the value and the authenticity they would have required to demonstrate membership of a group. High rates of object repair suggest the low rate of cruciform brooch replacement, even for items that had become unusable as dress-fasteners. In addition, a small number of items were invested with additional acts of personal modification. I suggested that this all implies that cruciform brooches possessed biographical meaning crucial to their value and authenticity. One explanation of this is that such items were received during rites of passage, and it was the social memory of this event, as well as the everyday reiterative performance of dressed display, that attributed these items with a value capable of authenticating the ethnic, gender, and age identities of individuals who wore them.

The cruciform brooch, however, can also be examined not only in terms of its context, but also its symbolic content. There are therefore important questions to be posed concerning the symbolic meaning of feminine Anglian identity. The animal and human iconography of cruciform brooches can be defined and interpreted in terms of its content as well as its composition. I suggested that the major themes of the iconography can be summarised by the ideas of ‘ambiguity’, ‘transformation’ and ‘hybridism’ between human and animal forms. Therefore, the ornamentation of cruciform brooches expresses contemplation and knowledge of what “being in the world” meant to the early Anglo-Saxons, and may well indicate ideas of animism as well as shamanism. In addition, the more specific themes of masculine martial aggression, as well as feral aggression, were particularly prominent. These latter themes were key ideological components of structures of authority during the Migration Period, while the whole corpus of decoration was likely to have been drawn from an oral mythological tradition. The iconography can



therefore be seen to communicate notions of power, as well as specific cosmological knowledge, both of which were central to these women's identities as the bearers of the Anglian tradition.

In sum, the contextual analysis of the cruciform brooch demonstrates just some of the particular social meanings early Anglo-Saxon material culture harboured. Specialist artefact studies of this period now have the contextual information, theory and methodology to move on from purely typological, chronological and technical approaches, and with these tools at our disposal it is possible to move toward more holistic understandings of material culture in its social context. The critical component that permits this is the idea that specific forms of material culture, as well as their guiding structuring principles, can be related to changing contextual information. Therefore, situating this study within the basic parameters of typology and chronology has been critical. I have demonstrated that the meanings of the cruciform brooch developed over time, and this can be shown with some specificity. Therefore, not only are synchronic studies missing half of the picture, but studies purely of typology and chronology are also shown to be no longer sufficient.

## Contributions to the Wider Field of Anglo-Saxon Studies

In addition to the above-mentioned contributions this contextual study makes to the analysis of early Anglo-Saxon material culture, this research also has implications for our understanding of the early Anglo-Saxon period in general. This thesis has tackled the perennial problems of Anglian, Saxon and Jutish identity, long observed in the distribution of different types of brooches, but still controversial and problematic. Further research will shed more light on the nature of such social groups during this period, but for now this thesis contributes some original evidence in support of the idea that these identities were largely a construction of the late 5th and 6th centuries. This, of course, has some significant implications both in terms of how we view the operation of social structure during this period, as well as how these people came to be known as Anglo-Saxons in the first place, and ultimately contributed to the very constitution of the 'English'. The last 30 years especially has seen a gradually increasing understanding of the constitution of social groups and ethnic identities during this period, and this research has been reflected in the present study. This thesis has taken a step forward in terms of

the social analysis of early Anglo-Saxon material culture, and this advance can be seen as part of a gradual progression from studying the cultural associations of objects toward the analysis of their social meaning. Nevertheless, this study owes an enormous debt to those studies that helped to elucidate those cultural associations in the first place. The key has been not to dismiss traditional models of culture history, but to show how some of their aspects are problematic, and attempt to explain the social processes behind these histories.

On a more pragmatic level, this study provides an enormous quantity of data that will be useful to future researchers. Not only does the comprehensive typological classification provide a future aid to the describing and cataloguing of existing and future finds, but the updated chronology also has considerable utility. Of course, time will tell if the typological and chronological frameworks suggested here are in fact useful to studies external to this one. After all, they were primarily designed to meet the specific needs of this thesis. The catalogue of cruciform brooches compiled over the course of this research is in itself a significant resource for future researchers, and is among the largest of its kind yet collated for the early Anglo-Saxon period. In addition, this study has involved the cataloguing of some 4000 early Anglo-Saxon sites and find-spots, and this resource may also be used to shed some light on the general distribution of furnished burial during this period. The compilation of relatively new find-spots from PAS data could be of particular use in locating new evidence for whole cemeteries as yet only partially unearthed.

While many aspects of this study have been successful and will contribute to wider Anglo-Saxon studies, there have also been a few shortcomings that were not satisfactorily addressed due to the confines of the present dataset. Perhaps the most frustrating of these is the relation between the Anglian and Kentish regions and their differential use of cruciform brooches. This may be seen to originate in the difficulties of incorporating Kentish cruciform brooches into the present typology. Perhaps because Kentish cruciform brooches had quite different meanings, they were differently structured and followed different styles. In any case, it seems that by the time Anglian identity truly crystallised in the later 5th and 6th centuries cruciform brooches had almost ceased to be used in Kent. Nonetheless, there are some pertinent questions concerning why this was the case, and whether or not cruciform brooches in Kent had always meant something slightly different.

This problem with the typology of Kentish cruciform brooches is related to some more general difficulties with the Group 1 typology. It may well be the case that these earliest cruciform brooches are better classified in the context of their continental and Scandinavian parallels. A useful exercise might be to revisit Joachim Reichstein's (1975) classification of these early brooches with the present typology in mind, and this may also benefit their chronology. Although the mid-5th century was suggested as a likely date for the more mainstream use of cruciform brooches in early Anglo-Saxon England, it may well be the case that this date can be set considerably earlier. Another problem with the chronology offered here is that although it can satisfactorily attribute broad phases to the main developments of the cruciform brooch, it is far less reliable when it comes to assigning specific dates to individual brooches or graves. This kind of dating is still probably more reliably obtained by chronological analyses based on combinations of grave goods internal to a cemetery.

There is also a general absence of the required contextual information for the earliest and latest cruciform brooches. Because these items are rarer, we have less available information for osteology and associated artefacts. This situation will hopefully improve in time, and the excavation of one or two more cemeteries with large numbers of Phase C cruciform brooches may well solve part of this problem. Empingham II is the only well-recorded cemetery that offers enough of these brooches. Market Overton was another, but sadly no contextual information was recorded due to the early date of its excavation. However, the existence of these two cemeteries strongly suggests there are more to be found. Advances in understanding the earliest Phase A cruciform brooches are not likely to be made so soon due to their extreme rarity. This thesis has suggested that Phase A brooches were less restricted in terms of age and sex, but this also requires more evidence to establish firmly. In addition, it was tentatively suggested that Phase C brooches may well be even more stringently restricted to a particular demographic than Phase B brooches. This, it should be emphasised, is a hypothesis in the truest sense of the term, and new evidence will hopefully soon be available to prove it one way or another.

## Further Research

As well as answering some questions concerning the social meanings of cruciform brooches, this thesis has also prompted several questions that can be addressed in the future. As outlined above, there is certainly some room to investigate the European context of cruciform brooches. This would not just be in typological and chronological terms, but more specifically their contexts need further analysis and interpretation in light of the findings of this thesis. For instance, it would be interesting to know whether Scandinavian cruciform brooches of the same period were worn by a similar demographic, and whether or not they may have had comparable ethnic connotations. It may also be interesting to cast the whole phenomenon of the Migration Period brooch-wearing habit in this light. Comparison between European regions, whether similarity or difference is found, would provide a highly valuable analysis, and one for which this research might provide a transferable framework.

Even within Anglo-Saxon England this research provokes further questions. The cruciform brooch was just one of many varieties of brooch that were in contemporary use. It is likely that each brooch form had a specific social meaning, but comparing what this may have been to the findings of this thesis would be of interest. Similarly, our understanding of the constitution of Anglian and Saxon identity in particular may well benefit from revisiting other material cultural, burial, settlement or landscape evidence to see if ethnic identity was reflected in any other aspect of life, or whether it was an identity that is only archaeologically visible through specific forms of feminine dress. It seems likely that many men also identified as belonging to a particular ethnic group, and it would be of some consequence to find out whether or not there was any masculine equivalent of the feminine Anglian identity. Superficially, it would seem that, at least as far as dress and grave provisions are concerned, this was not the case. It may well be the fact that men claimed ethnicity through their female kin-relations. However, more research is required to say this with certainty. Of course, much of the debate surrounding ethnicity and migration may well benefit substantially from future stable isotope analysis, but such scientific evidence will still require social interpretation, and we must provide a framework into which this future evidence might be fitted.

## Conclusions and Outlook

This thesis has demonstrated that cruciform brooches can be seen in both their historical and archaeological contexts simultaneously without any necessary conflict of concerns. This represents a relatively rare situation where the historical and archaeological records can be truly incorporated and provide a more interesting insight than either can provide alone. In this way, cruciform brooches can be seen as the material texts from which identity could be read, and with which it was written, in a period only historically recorded long after these events had passed. As long as our readings of the historical and archaeological evidence are sensitive to context, and our models of society are critically sound, there is no reason why historical interpretation should not be used in our understanding of a primarily archaeological past. Suggesting that the wearers of cruciform brooches were the bearers of a cultural tradition that we can call 'Anglian' is therefore not necessarily as controversial as it may have sounded 30 years ago at the height of revisionist cynicism in early Anglo-Saxon archaeology. This thesis therefore provides a positive outlook for the future of historical archaeological interpretation.

Early Anglo-Saxon archaeology, in terms of its theory and methodology, is in a healthy state. We can especially look forward to further reinvigoration from a host of artefact studies based on the masses of data that the PAS is currently generating, as well as the findings of a new generation of researchers currently working with this information. Artefact studies and especially those of brooches have, in the last few decades, seen something of a hiatus in terms of being at the centre of new social research. Of course, the evolving and increasing evidence from other sources of data (such as settlement and landscape archaeology, as well as osteology, metallurgy and petrography, for instance) have only been truly incorporated into early Anglo-Saxon archaeology in the last few decades, and this has been extremely beneficial. Although the study of brooches should not resume the cardinal position that it once occupied in analysis (e.g. Åberg 1926; Evison 1981; Leeds 1912), the social and cultural information these objects are capable of yielding has to some extent been neglected. This study hopes to be among the first of many to put brooches back on the map and, in doing so, incorporate such objects back into the social contexts to which they have always belonged.