The social significance of late medieval dress accessories

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Abstract

This thesis uses belt fittings excavated from fifteen of the major towns and cities of late medieval England and is the first national survey of dress accessories from the urban centres of this period. This research moves beyond the identification and categorisation of these objects, which have been the traditional foci of studies of this type, to examine the wider social significance of dress accessories within contemporary late medieval society. The themes explored include the regional variation between the assemblages and the significance of this in terms of the expression of regional identities; the changes in production techniques and technology for the manufacture of dress accessories and the related changes in dress and its social perception from the mid-thirteenth century; the significance of dress accessories within a funerary context; the use of the acorn as a repeated decorative motif and the significance of this within the construction, maintenance and manipulation of personal identities; and the use of text on belts and belt fittings and importance of this in the construction of the symbolism of the belt within late medieval society. An interdisciplinary approach is used throughout which combines the material evidence with other forms of archaeological, literary, historical, and art historical evidence in order to place the dress accessories within their wider social context.

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"The plain buckle, consisting of a single loop and pin, is an obvious and universal object, about which little can profitably be said." (Ward Perkins 1954: 277)

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1: Introduction

Late medieval dress accessories, dating from the twelfth to early sixteenth centuries, have received some academic attention, particularly since the introduction of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in 1997. However, these previous treatments have often failed to respond to the changes within theoretical and methodological thought that have affected archaeological studies in general and material culture studies in particular. The primary aim of this research is to redress this imbalance by taking a specific aspect of the archaeological evidence, namely belt fittings from the major urban centres of late medieval England (see Fig 1.1). Through the application of current theoretical and methodological approaches a greater understanding of the nature of this material and its role within the contemporary society which produced and used them will be achieved.

1.2: Aims

This research has four key aims. The first is to undertake the first truly national survey of belt fittings from the urban settlements of late medieval England. In order to achieve this, collections of dress accessories from thirteen towns and cities have been identified and catalogued. This data has then been used to complete the second principal aim, which is to examine potential patterns of regional variation in the use of dress accessories across late medieval England. Through the examination of the relative proportions of differing forms of dress accessories it is possible to identify any differences in the use of these artefacts by the populations of each city. The third objective is to use an interdisciplinary approach in order to understand the ways in which belts and belt fittings were viewed within late medieval society, and use this to place the excavated dress accessories from urban sites into their wider social context. Therefore, historical sources, contemporary literature, and artistic representations are all used to aid and support the interpretation of the artefacts themselves. Finally,

although the subject of this research is firmly focused on English urban material, it is important to remember that the populations of these cities were not set apart from the rest of the country or indeed the rest of Northern Europe. Consequently, this study starts to place English dress accessories into their wider European context. Published examples from Ireland, Scandinavia and northern continental Europe are used as comparisons for the English material here in order to demonstrate the similarities in the ways dress accessories were used and interpreted by the people who made up contemporary late medieval society.

1.3: The significance of late medieval dress

Clothing is one of the most visual media for the construction, maintenance and subversion of identity, and must be seen as taking on an active role within this process rather than acting as a passive signifier of identity (Miller 2005: 2). Recent studies of modern clothing have started to focus on the materiality and layering of clothing and how this is built into the concepts of 'what goes together' and why. Integral to this is the construction of the self through clothing and how this can vary within differing social contexts (Woodward 2005). This approach to the modern concept and use of clothing has applications for how archaeologists can view the use of clothing, dress and dress accessories in the past.

It should therefore come as no surprise that within late medieval society dress was an important and occasionally contentious issue. For example, for the compilers of the *Grand Chronique de St Denis*, the adoption and celebration of new forms of dress could be seen to be directly responsible for the French defeat at the battle of Crécy in 1346.

> "We must believe that God has permitted this as a just judgement on us for our sins, although it is not for us to judge. But what we see we testify to; for pride was very great in France, and especially amongst the nobles and others, that is to say, pride of nobility, and covetousness. There was also much impropriety in dress, and this extended throughout the whole of France. Some had their clothes so short and so tight that it required the help of two persons to dress and undress them, and whilst they were being undressed they appeared as if they were being skinned. Others wore dresses plaited over their loins like women; some had chaperons cut out in points all round;

> some had tippets of one cloth, other of another; and some had their head-dresses and sleeves reaching the ground, looking more like mountebanks than anything else. Considering all this, it is not surprising if God employed the King of England as a scourge to correct the excesses of the French people." (Lacroix 1874: 537)

Similarly, Margery Kempe in 1436 outlined her manner of dressing before she chose to live her spiritual life:

> "Nevertheless, she would not leave her pride or her showy manner of dressing, which she had previously been used to, either for her husband, or for any other person's advice. And yet she knew full well that people made many adverse comments about her, because she wore gold pipes on her head, and her hoods with the tippets were fashionably slashed. Her cloaks were also modishly slashed and underlaid with various colours between the slashes, so that she would be all the more stared at, and all the more esteemed." (Windeatt 1985: 43)

This depiction of how Margery Kempe used to dress is vital, along with other examples from her life, in portraying her previous frivolous lifestyle, and it is significant that detailed descriptions of her clothing are provided in order to show to the reader her previous manner of living. Both of these examples demonstrate the moralising culture that surrounded late medieval dress and this combined with the established social hierarchy of dress led directly to the sumptuary legislations from the fourteenth century which actively attempted to control who could wear what (Hunt 1996).

Dress is also utilised by Chaucer (Coghill 1977: 20) within the prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* to define the social position and character of each of the pilgrims. Through the use of descriptive contemporary terminology of cloth and clothing the socio-economic status of each of the pilgrims can be determined and fitted into the established and recognisable social hierarchy of late medieval society (Hodges 2000: 231). Critically, the use of detailed descriptions of clothing to symbolise the character of the individual must be seen as being a reflection of real late medieval perceptions for their full effect to have been understood by the reader. Individual items of clothing as well as entire outfits can therefore be seen as socially significant and part of the construction of contemporary identities.

Dress evolved significantly during the late medieval period, although the rate of change varied considerably and should be seen as significant. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries developments in tailoring led to experimentation with close-fitting clothing (Scott 2011: 23), however these changes were mainly restricted to the elite levels of society and the rate of change was relatively slow. By the end of the thirteenth century, clothing for the majority of the population was much the same as it had been during the preceding centuries (Piponnier and Mane 1997: 39). The fourteenth century saw dramatic developments within costume, and this included the introduction of new fastening and tightening accessories, such as aglets and buttons, which allowed clothing to become much more fitted to the body (Staniland 1997: 239). The developments in clothing from the late thirteenth century offered a wider choice to individuals in what to wear and allowed them to compete with their social peers. This, alongside the moralising culture surrounding dress, can also be linked to the introduction of secular sumptuary legislation across Europe during this period (Hunt 1996).

Throughout the late medieval period the belt remained a prominent feature of both male and female costume, although there were significant variations in the materials, widths and lengths chosen. For example, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries girdles were often worn almost down to the feet, whilst in the fifteenth century belts worn by women became wider due to the fashion for wearing the belt above the natural waistline (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 35). The belt was a functional, and occasionally highly decorative, aspect of everyday clothing during this period but to treat it as such ignores the social role that these items of clothing could play within contemporary society. Belts were involved in a variety of social interactions and their part in these exchanges allowed the belt to become symbolically significant. For example, the late medieval period saw an increase in the writing of wills and belts were often left to beneficiaries (Howell 1996). Within this context belts could simultaneously act as *memento mori*, reminding the beneficiary of death, whilst actively acting as a physical reminder of the benefactor (see Chapter 6.4). Belts were also given as love gifts during late medieval courting (Camille 1998: 53), they played a role within marriage ceremonies (Stürzebecher 2009), and in these contexts the belt could again be imbued with significance as both a reminder of the giver and as a symbolic item of clothing binding two individuals together (see Chapter 6.6).

1.4: Dress accessories

Dress accessories are defined as the accoutrements used to accessorise items of clothing. They can take many forms, from simple aglets or pins to more complex accessories such as brooches. However, this study concentrates on forms that can be more tightly defined as belt fittings such as buckles, clasps, strap-ends, mounts and strap loops (see Fig. 1.2). Late medieval belt fittings were selected for this study as, not only do they represent the most commonly found artefacts of decorative metalwork from excavations of this period, but also because they are stylistically variable, and are potentially sensitive to displays of cultural markers. The major reason for the ubiquitous nature of these artefacts is the fact that they, and the belts to which they would have been attached, would have been worn by all levels of society, regardless of possible differences in dress associated with gender, age, or status. This is also the principal reason why these artefacts have been selected, as by concentrating on forms of material culture that were worn by all levels of society it is possible to identify any expressed differences within dress as shown through belt fittings. The quantity and variation in these forms of artefact means that they are ideally suited for the type of research undertaken.

Archaeological examples of these fittings are invariably in base metals: copper alloys, iron, or lead/tin alloys, as those of precious metal were both less readily available and more likely to have been recycled. Copper alloys have been grouped together due to the fact that there does not appear to have been any discrimination in the use of any particular copper alloy for the production of any given form of belt fitting (Heyworth 1991: 394), whilst lead and tin alloys have been defined together due to the difficulty, without chemical analysis, of separating the two. Indeed where analysis has been undertaken, lead/tin alloy artefacts would appear to be produced from various different mixtures of the two elements rather than specifically one metal or the other (Egan 1996: 83).

1.5: The urban assemblages

Urban assemblages of dress accessories have been selected for this research for three reasons. First, due to the proliferation of urban excavations in England since the end of the Second World War, there now exists for the majority of towns of the

late medieval period significant collections of dress accessories from archaeological contexts that far exceed the numbers of artefacts that have been found on any typical rural site. This is significant as it is possible to identify the frequency and variation within specific forms of dress accessory at an inter- and intra-site level due to the quantity of artefacts recovered from these urban centres, and, London, York and Winchester in particular (see chapter 4). The fact that these collections have been recovered using modern excavation techniques is also significant as this provides invaluable dating evidence that can be used to identify when specific forms of belt fitting were in use.

The second reason for basing this study upon urban assemblages is that towns were manufacturing centres for dress accessories, and waste material from the production of these types of artefact has been recovered from Coventry (Wright 1987), London (Egan 1996; Bowsher *et al.* 2007) and York (Richards 1993; Finlayson 2004; Reeves 2006). This, combined with the evidence that late medieval towns and cities would have acted as distribution centres for their rural hinterlands and on occasion further (Dyer 1994: 259), can be used to argue that dress accessories recovered from urban contexts are representative, to a significant degree, of the forms of dress accessory that would have been used by contemporary rural populations. This position is supported by the similarities between rural and urban assemblages of dress accessories. The finds from village sites indicate that identical forms of dress accessories were available to both rural and urban populations (Egan 2004: 201), as can be seen in excavated assemblages from villages such as Westbury, Buckinghamshire (Mills 1995b see Fig. 1.3), and Goltho, Lincolnshire (Beresford 1975 see Fig. 1.4).

The final reason this study is based on urban assemblages is that the variation in the social groups represented within the populations of late medieval towns means that the artefacts recovered can potentially be attributed, when used with other forms of archaeological evidence, to different social groups. For example, excavations in York have produced assemblages of late medieval dress accessories from Aldwark, Bedern, Coppergate, Fishergate, St Andrewgate and Swinegate. Each of these assemblages can be combined with other forms of archaeological and historical evidence to link the belt fittings with the people who were occupying these six sites. For example, excavations at Fishergate uncovered the remains of the priory of St Andrew's which can be directly linked to the late medieval Gilbertine monks who

occupied the site. This approach cannot currently be applied to every city studied here due to the variable frequency and nature of excavation across the country. However, assemblages of sufficient size have been identified from each of the urban sites within these studies which include Chester, Coventry, Exeter, Gloucester, Hereford, Leicester, Lincoln, London, Northampton, Oxford, Plymouth, Southampton, Winchester, Worcester and York (see Fig. 1.5).

Unfortunately some urban assemblages were not available for study. Permission for access was not obtained from Bristol and Norwich both of which were significant urban centres within late medieval England, whilst refurbishments to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter meant that only part of their collection was available. Therefore, although the survey of dress accessories from the towns of late medieval England is extensive it is not comprehensive. Despite this, a total of 2,576 artefacts were recorded from the 15 urban assemblages which is a large enough sample to achieve the aims of this thesis whilst the belt fittings which were unavailable from Exeter (Allan 1984) and Norwich (Atkin *et al.* 1985; Margeson 1993) are published.

Finds from the PAS have not been used as, although this resource has undeniable value, the artefacts themselves cannot be definitively linked to any one type of site due to the nature of their recovery. In addition, given the nature of metal detecting the dress accessories are predominantly from rural rather than urban settings. However, due to the quantity of belt fittings contained within the database, the PAS cannot be completely ignored and therefore PAS data, as well as artefacts from rural excavations and European examples, are utilised where necessary as a comparison to the belt fittings from the urban assemblages.

From the eleventh to the beginning of the fourteenth century, England underwent significant urban growth and development. Despite the fact that London, with a population of approximately 80,000 (Schofield 2011: 8), was the only English city comparable to the largest in Europe, the other towns and cities of England played an important role within their hinterlands, and contributed to the overall increasing levels of urbanism during this period. Assessments based on the Domesday records estimate that in 1086 10% of the population were living in urban communities whilst by 1300 this had risen to 20% (Holt 2000: 104). By 1340, the population of England is estimated at between 5 and 6 million, a height not reached since the third century, and a figure that would not be surpassed until the eighteenth century (Schofield and Vince 1994: 18). However, the urbanisation of England was not a linear process and

the 'urban crisis' of the fourteenth century saw a general stagnation in urban growth brought about by economic difficulties due to fluctuations in the wool trade (Platt 1976: 86), high taxation to fund wars with Scotland and France, a series of poor harvests between 1315 and 1325, and the Black Death (Schofield and Vince 1994: 21). Despite this, England's urban population appears to have remained stable at 20% throughout this period and into the sixteenth century (Holt 2000: 104).

The increased level of urbanisation during the late medieval period can, in part, be attributed to their role as economic and trading centres. Formalised marketplaces increased markedly during this period, and during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries 2,800 market charters were granted, half of these between 1200 and 1275 (Schofield and Vince 1994: 18). The presence of marketplaces also allowed a greater number of specialist crafts to develop in even relatively provincial towns (Platt 1976: 75). However, late medieval marketplaces were not only significant for acting as focal points for economic exchange within the local landscape but also as social gathering places (Masschaele 2002). Towns and cities would also have acted as regional power centres for both secular and ecclesiastical elites. Political power was not just confined to the aristocratic elite as from the late thirteenth century the historical record indicates that a growing number of craft guilds were being recognised. These new institutions gave their members the power to regulate their chosen profession and the more powerful guilds went on to play an active political role in towns (Platt 1976: 113). Guilds also played a significant social role as members, and their families, were looked after for life (Schofield and Vince 1994: 133). The urban cathedrals and churches of late medieval England are the most obvious remnants of the late medieval ecclesiastic presence within towns and cities, but the religious presence would have also extended to foundations of monasteries and hospitals.

Although the economic and political role of towns is important, it is also their social makeup that characterises them. Urban communities would have been made up of a wide variety of social groups all of which would have been expressing conflicting and contested identities (Astill 2009: 267). Significantly, the thirteenth century saw the rise of a new mercantile class, as evidenced in the historical record and at excavated sites such as Victoria Road, Winchester (Rees *et al.* 2007) and Coppergate, York (Hall and Hunter-Mann 2002), and this new social group can be seen to have used dress as a means of constructing and mediating their new found identity. Given the importance of dress in negotiating and signalling social position and identity within late medieval

society, the role of dress and dress accessories within such a diverse population would have taken on even greater significance and indeed this can be shown through specific site assemblages from late medieval England (see Chapter 6.2).

1.6: Previous studies on late medieval dress accessories

Previous studies into late medieval dress accessories can be generally divided into two groups. First are traditional catalogues and finds reports which make up the vast majority of literature on belt fittings of this period. Second, and more recently, are the theoretical developments in material culture studies that have begun to be applied to late medieval material culture more generally and dress accessories in particular. The following review begins with a critique of traditional approaches to the study of late medieval dress accessories in order to demonstrate why a change in approach is necessary for a greater understanding of how these artefacts were used within contemporary society. The following two sections exemplify how a more theoretically aware methodology has been shown to be of use in the study of late medieval ceramics and dress accessories in other periods whilst the final section examines the contextualised study of late medieval dress accessories.

The underlying premise of contextualised approaches to the study of artefacts is that material culture plays an active role in the construction and manipulation of social structures, and that through an investigation of the processes involved it is possible to gain a greater understanding of the role and use of material culture within the society that produced it; material culture should not be seen as simply functional and passive objects. It is therefore necessary to avoid using artefacts outside of their wider archaeological context and recognise the benefits of viewing material culture as a form of archaeological evidence that is to complement and be complemented by other forms of archaeological, and indeed socio-historical, evidence. As Yentsch and Beaudry (2001: 226) have said, "Through careful analysis one should be able to observe and read the network of relationships embodied within the archaeological assemblages of specific sites and to use this 'context' to educe meaning." The analogy of material culture as text is often used and is relevant in this case. Through an application of post-structuralist theory it is possible to view artefacts as a text, the reading of which allows an interpretation of the social significance of the artefact

(Layton 2006). However, it is also of paramount importance to recognise that there is no one meaning to be 'read' from a specific artefact or assemblage but instead a range of possibilities that are dependent on context and that need to be explored. There is no inherent meaning imbued within an artefact, or in other words, "One reads meaning *into* a text not *out* of it" (Austin and Thomas 1990: 45).

This position may seem counter-intuitive but is borne out by Saussure's theories within semiotics, concerning the relationship between the 'signifier' and the 'signified', and more importantly the post-structuralist movement which developed from them. Through this it is possible to build up a framework within which it is possible to infer meaning from material culture in general and in this case dress accessories in particular. Saussure's (1960) sign theory is based on the premise that there is a distinct relationship between the signifier, the verbal sound uttered, and the signified, the concept that is being referred to. Post-structuralists have theorised that this union is in fact entirely arbitrary (Tilley 1989: 185), and therefore that there is no inherent relationship between the signifier and the signified except that which is placed upon it by those who use it. Therefore, as Derrida (1986: 404) has stated, "The signified concept is never present in and of itself." The interpretation of language is therefore a social construct. When this notion is applied to the study and interpretation of material culture the conclusion that must be reached is that, although artefacts themselves have no inherent meaning, it is still possible for meaning to be placed upon an object by the people who made and used it, just as it is the case that written words are no more than a series of combinations of letters until an agent is able to decipher and glean a socially constructed meaning from them. The highly visible and decorative nature of belt fittings within dress as a whole would have provided a perfect medium for the imbuement and interpretation of meaning by the members of contemporary society. With this being the case it must also be recognised that the meaning inferred from material culture is not static and that a single artefact is capable of conveying multiple differing meanings both simultaneously and through time. The interpretation of material culture is therefore not a passive process; archaeologists cannot call themselves passive observers of the past. The recognition of this combined with the fact that there is no essential truth imbued within an artefact brings with it the conclusion that the meaning interpreted from material culture is a series of possibilities that are weighed against the wider available evidence and social context.

It is therefore essential to understand the processes through which it is possible for material culture to acquire meaning within the society that used and produced it. Due to the ways in which members of society infer meaning from objects it is true to say that material culture should not be seen as a passive reflection of the society that produced it (Austin and Thomas 1990: 45) but as integral to the construction, maintenance and manipulation of social structures. Through the application of Bourdieu's (1977) concept of the *habitus* it is possible to explain the processes through which material culture is able to be imbued with the meanings that members of past societies attributed to specific artefacts. Within this model it is argued that agents of society act in accordance to a subconscious set of values and practices that are internalised at an early age. The *habitus* is shaped through early experience and enables the transmission of traditions and identities from one generation to the next. As Jones (1997: 90) has argued for ethnic identities, "The inter-subjective construction of identity is grounded in the shared subliminal dispositions of the *habitus* which shaped, and are shaped by, objective commonalities of practice." Crucially, the fact that transmitted traditions and identities are able to be manipulated between one generation and the next allows for change within society, thus avoiding the accusation that the concept of the *habitus* is deterministic. This draws extensively on Gidden's (1984) theory of the duality of structure within which social structures simultaneously effect and are affected by agents of society. The *habitus* is therefore able to act as both a constrainer on human action whilst simultaneously enabling it.

A useful analogy for this concept is to return to a textual metaphor, as employed by Barrett (2001: 150) where language is used as a representation of social structures whilst the act of talking is used as a representation of human action. It is clear that language restricts what can be said whilst concurrently enabling the ability of agents to talk to those who share and understand that same language. The act of communication not only reproduces the language used but also, and most importantly, has the ability to modify it. As Barrett (2001: 150) succinctly summarises, "Language is both the medium and outcome of the practice of talk." By accepting the role of agency within the concept of the *habitus* it is clear that it not only allows tradition and identity to be passed from one generation to the next, but also allows that same next generation to adopt and adapt these traditions and identities. At the centre of the reproduction of the *habitus* is the repetition of everyday activities and the use of material culture (Austin and Thomas 1990: 46). This use of material culture within

social discourse is central to how artefacts are able to acquire meaning from members of society whilst simultaneously conveying and renegotiating meanings to these same members. There is a dichotomy between the theoretical and methodological processes through which objects are encoded with meaning (Appadurai 1986: 5). Archaeologists have to take as their theoretical starting point the premise that there is no inherent meaning to an object but it is the act of using and moving the same object and the analysis of these processes that allows archaeologists to "Illuminate their human and social context" (*ibid*). It has already been shown that dress in the late medieval period was a significant and occasionally contentious issue. Within this methodology it is the practice of wearing certain items of clothing which conformed to or subverted the social norms of the *habitus* that allowed this to become the case. Dress accessories were not always simply bought and used, but their ownership could be transferred as gifts or bequests (see chapter 6.4; 6.6). This act within the contemporary late medieval social structure of gift exchange allowed the object to become more than it was, for example to embody an individual or sentiment. It is therefore possible, through an understanding and application of this theoretical methodology, to examine the social significance of late medieval dress accessories.

1.6.1: Traditional catalogues and site reports

Previous research into late medieval dress accessories has, until recently, been relatively limited in terms of the theoretical framework employed. Urban redevelopment following the Second World War provided a unique opportunity for the archaeological investigation of city centre sites in the United Kingdom, and the expansion of urban archaeology since attests to the manner in which archaeologists have grasped that opportunity. Large-scale excavations in the major urban centres of late medieval England have produced a significant amount of material culture and this has led to the publication of a large number of catalogues[1] and major site reports[2].

[1] Exeter (Allan 1984), Hereford (Shoesmith 1985), London (Egan and Pritchard 1991; Egan 2005), Norwich (Atkin *et al.* 1985; Margeson 1993), Plymouth (Gaskell-Brown 1986), Southampton (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975), Winchester (Biddle 1990; Rees *et al.* 2008), York (Tweddle 1986; Ottaway and Rodgers 2002)

[2] Chester (Garner 2008), Gloucester (Heighway and Bryant 1999) Leicester (Mellor and Pearce 1981), Northampton (Williams 1979), Oxford (Hassall 1974; Durham 1977; Halpin 1983; Lambrick 1985; Hassall *et al.* 1989; Inskeep 1998; Walker and King 2000), Plymouth (Fairclough 1979), Worcester (Dalwood and Edwards 2004)

These catalogues and reports are of undoubted value and provide an important starting point for any new research into late medieval dress accessories due to the sheer volume of material contained within their pages (see Fig. 1.6). However, they are often limited through constraints of time, money, and outlook which have provided significant problems in the development of studies into late medieval material culture.

The first problem that these studies have in common is that out of necessity they divorce the material from other forms of archaeological evidence. This is particularly the case with material culture catalogues, which often group artefacts from a large number of sites in order to present them together. Given this, often it is impractical to draw on the associated archaeological evidence and the focus is exclusively on the material culture. It is perhaps easier to associate artefactual evidence with stratigraphic sequences in reports concentrating solely on a single site. However, traditionally material culture has been banished to specialist reports at the back of the site narrative where the associated archaeological context is again rarely explored in any detail. Related to this is the fact that the artefacts are divorced from their own and each other's context. Thus, whilst contextual information is often listed within the individual description of specific items it is a difficult, although not impossible, process to re-establish the contextual, stratigraphic relationship between artefacts. These problems are understandable given the ultimate goal of these publications is to present the variations and frequencies of differing forms of artefacts from any given site or settlement.

Nonetheless, the major problem with these catalogues and site reports is that they deal with the artefacts exclusively in descriptive terms with no real attempt to analyse the significance of the assemblage in question either in terms of itself, or indeed in its wider social context. This is potentially understandable due to the restrictions listed above, but it is still a deeply unsatisfactory situation and serves to illustrate the need for the application of more rigorous theoretical methodologies to the study of late medieval dress accessories.

1.6.2: Comparative studies of late medieval material culture

Other forms of material culture from this period, in particular ceramics, have received a more nuanced approach to their study. For example, both Cumberpatch (1997) and Brown *et al.* (1997) have applied what can be defined as a

phenomenological approach to the study of late medieval ceramics, specifically the use and development of coloured glazed wares. Phenomenology within archaeology is usually associated with the interpretation of how past people interacted with the landscapes in which they lived. However, as Tilley (1994: 12) has said, "Phenomenology involves the understanding and description of things as they are experienced by a subject." This has clear implications for material culture studies and therefore this methodology attempts to gain an appreciation of the ways and means that agents of contemporary society sensually experienced the artefacts that they used in everyday life (Thomas 2006: 57). Cumberpatch (1997) has argued that an appreciation of the symbolic meaning associated with colours during this period by members of society can lead to a fuller understanding of the reasons why glazed wares were developed and became commonly used, and why certain vessel forms were deemed appropriate to glaze. This argument gains weight through the means in which colours were used more generally within late medieval society to express specific meanings. For example, the colours used for actors' costumes within contemporary theatre were used to convey specific messages associated with the character being portrayed to the audience (Harris 1992: 146). However, this approach is not without its flaws as only certain specific colours would have been available for use by producers due to technological restraints, and certain forms of vessel, such as cooking pots, would have been unsuitable for glazing due to the functions that such forms were expected to perform.

Brown, Chalmers, and MacNamara (1997) have applied this phenomenological approach in a slightly different manner. Through the use of computing simulations they attempted to recreate the domestic environs in order to, "Understand what sort of environment past people created for themselves" (Brown *et al.* 1997: 145) and in so doing investigate the use of light in the appreciation of how members of late medieval society experienced the ceramics they used. Windows in contemporary housing were relatively small, due to the necessity of conserving heat, and, therefore the presence of natural light within the domestic environment was severely limited. Light provided by fires was an obvious solution to this problem. It was found, through the creation of the simulation, that the flickering light from the flames would have transformed the lustre of the glaze, which under modern static lighting conditions appears unremarkable, into something much more attractive. This can potentially be used to explain why late medieval consumers chose to purchase

these glazed wares once they became available, as well as explaining why certain vessel forms which Cumberpatch (1997) argued were deemed unsuitable for glazing remained unglazed. The more highly decorated wares tend to be tablewares, and in this instance they can be seen as items of material culture that were designed to be viewed as well as used within the public, domestic arena, whilst unglazed cooking vessels would have been used in a more private setting.

Despite the subject matter of these studies, it is clear that the theoretical approach adopted within them has borne significant results which have enhanced the archaeological understanding of the role apparently mundane objects could potentially have played within the society that used them. Such an application of theoretical methodologies to the study of late medieval dress accessories can be used to gain a greater understanding of how these artefacts were used within society. For example, it has already been noted that belt fittings, when new, would have been highly visible aspects of late medieval costume. It is therefore necessary to consider how the design, decoration or complete artefact was viewed by a contemporary audience (see chapter 6.5) and how belt fittings could embody ideas and ideals (see chapter 6.6).

1.6.3: The study of dress accessories in other periods

Although the application of a more developed theoretical methodology has not been implemented within most studies into late medieval dress accessories, this has not been the case for studies into dress accessories from other periods. A good example of this is the study of potential political and military links between Britain and Continental Europe as interpreted and expressed through late Roman buckles dating to the late fourth and fifth centuries (Laycock 2009). Similarly the renegotiation of an Anglo-Scandinavian identity in the ninth and tenth centuries has been explored specifically through the use of dress accessories with regards to "The nature and process of cultural assimilation between the Scandinavian immigrants and local British populations" (Thomas 2000: 257). Through the study of both excavated and metal detected examples of strap-ends and brooches it was observed that specifically Scandinavian forms and decorative motifs appear to have been abandoned relatively quickly by Scandinavian immigrants and a new complex merging of decorative motifs incorporating both Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon elements was developed (see Fig. 1.7). By acknowledging the active role that material culture can play in the formation

and manipulation of group identities (Jones 1997: 126), it has proved possible to examine this emergence of a new decorative style in terms of the wider expression of identity within the contemporary population. This position is supported by the presence of assemblages within which both Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon dress accessories were represented, indicating the possibility that personal choice played an important role in which forms, and by extension, which identities, were worn and displayed (Thomas 2000: 240).

This study concentrates solely on the interaction and merging of Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian cultural identities which ignores the possibility of other outside influences on dress and dress accessories within England in the ninth and tenth centuries. Recent finds identified by the PAS have offered the opportunity to examine the role that stereotypically Carolingian belt fittings played within this cultural dialogue (Thomas 2012). Within Carolingian society the creation and maintenance of the 'warrior-elite' identity was crucial to the cohesion of the Frankish elites, and this is visible within dress accessories especially those associated with military belts and equestrian harnesses. These Carolingian forms and decorative styles were adopted and adapted by both Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian society and manipulated into local Winchester and Aspatria styles of decoration respectively (Thomas 2012: 508-509; see Fig. 1.8). Through the appropriation of these forms of dress accessories both of these groups were actively manipulating and constructing identities heavily influenced by the ideals of the Carolingian warrior elite as expressed through dress and this highlights the complexity of the signalling of identity through dress accessories during this period. Here identities involving masculinity and status are the focus instead of a solely ethnic identity. Taken together these two studies show the differing roles that dress accessories played in the construction of ethnic, gender, and status identities within ninth- and tenth-century England. In addition, the importance of outside influences is also highlighted with the recognition of the significance of Carolingian influences adding an extra dimension to the dialogue between Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian material culture (Thomas 2012: 511).

These studies have direct applications for the approach undertaken within this research. Although explicitly ethnic identities are absent from the late medieval English dress accessories, the possibility of regional identities is explored (see chapter 6.2). However, of more use here is the recognition that dress accessories have the ability to express varying identities within different contexts. This is demonstrated by

the examination of clothing in ecclesiastical burials (see chapter 6.4) and the discussion of the acorn as a decorative motif (see chapter 6.5). In both of these cases the expression of gender, status and religious identities are bound together, and an appreciation of this fact allows a fuller understanding of how these artefacts were used within the construction of contemporary identities.

1.6.4: The contextualised study of late medieval dress accessories

Despite the fact that much of the research into late medieval dress accessories has been restricted to the descriptive rather than the analytical, that is not to say that all studies have refrained from exploring the social significance of these forms of artefact. For example, Hinton (2005) has investigated the implications for displays of social position within dress accessories from the thirteenth century to the fifteenth century, which is the dating timeframe for the vast majority of belt fittings under consideration in this study. Of particular interest is the use of sumptuary legislation of the fourteenth century as an indication of the use of dress within wider society as a means of social display (Hinton 2005: 217-218). These laws were both implicitly and, in the case of the 1363 act (Hunt 1996), explicitly designed to maintain the social status quo and it can therefore be inferred that attempts were being made within society to subvert the established social hierarchy through the medium of dress. Despite this, it can be argued that Hinton's work on this period concentrates too much on a very small proportion of elite society. The use of historical sources such as inventories, although providing valuable information on individual possessions and the importance placed on them, is nevertheless restrictive in that only the upper echelons of society would have warranted or demanded such a record to be made. Even when specific artefacts are used to illustrate a specific point, those chosen again tend to be restricted to the exceptional rather than more representative examples which again would have been used by a tiny proportion of society. Although urban and rural assemblages are touched upon, the full significance of these collections of artefacts in explaining the role of social display lower down the social order is not fully investigated by Hinton.

Perhaps a more applicable study of late medieval dress accessories which does investigate the role of these artefacts within the lower levels of society, is Smith's (2009) research into dress accessories from rural contexts in the north of England (see Fig. 1.9). Again historical sources from the fourteenth century are used within this

research, ranging from the sumptuary laws and guild regulations of the London Girdlers' Guild, to works of contemporary literature such as *Piers the Ploughman* (Goodridge 1959). However, the emphasis here is in what these sources can reveal about attitudes towards the lower social orders, and in particular the rural peasantry, and how these attitudes informed and helped determine how the peasantry chose to portray themselves through dress. The assertion is that, for the late medieval peasantry, the choice of copper alloy dress accessories is representative of a resistant identity against the elite, through a rejection of the ethos of the simplistic peasant lifestyle idealised and portrayed by the same elites to them (Smith 2009: 327-328).

However, there are some problems with this research. Firstly, due to the smaller nature of rural assemblages, especially when compared to urban collections, the number of artefacts used to draw these conclusions is relatively small. Furthermore, no consideration of relevant local urban assemblages, specifically from Lincoln and York, is made. A comparison between these two differing forms of assemblage could again reveal the differences between what inhabitants of towns were choosing to wear compared to their rural counterparts. This is especially important when the similarities between rural and urban dress accessories of this period are considered (Egan 2004). Finally, the relevant production evidence, again from York (see chapter 5), and the ramifications this may have had concerning the forms of dress accessories available to the late medieval peasantry is not considered. The argument that the peasantry were actively choosing to wear artefacts made of copper alloys rather than other materials may have strength, but a consideration of the options that would have been available to them in the marketplace should be considered in order to explore the relationship between active consumer choice and the restrictions placed upon that choice through availability of form and material. Despite these reservations, the study as a whole is an important step forward in the application of a theoretical consideration and the potential of an interdisciplinary approach to the interpretation of late medieval dress accessories.

The contextualised study of dress accessories in the late medieval period has not been limited to the United Kingdom. For example, in 2006 and 2009 two large collections of belt mounts were acquired by the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden. These assemblages of dress accessories, known as the Leiden collection of late-medieval belt decoration, consists of over 1,400 metal-detected mounts from the Drowned Land in Zeeland and urban excavations in Dordrecht (Willemsen 2009; 2012;

see Fig. 1.10). The large quantity of artefacts within this collection not only offers an opportunity to examine the forms present but also, and more importantly, the ways in which belt mounts were used within the late medieval society of the Low Countries. At least 70 different forms of mount, including various letters, foliate, polygonal, bar and figurative designs were identified (Willemsen 2009: 79-82), but the work on this assemblage has also gone beyond classification and used the decorative design of the mounts to examine the social significance of belts and their decoration within contemporary society. The approach used here utilises both historical and art-historical sources in combination with the artefacts themselves in order to place these objects within their wider social context (Willemsen 2012: 172). This study therefore shows the benefits of using an interdisciplinary approach to the study of late medieval dress accessories.

The forms of mount within the assemblage have been used to identify several themes that are explored, and three of these have a direct impact on this research. For example, a mount depicting two facing heads, one in life and a skull in death, is an example of a *memento mori* (Willemsen 2009: 86). This artefact would therefore have acted as a physical, personal reminder to the wearer of the inevitability of death. The use and presence of this form of artefact can therefore be intrinsically linked to the late medieval concern with the preparation for death (see chapter 6.4). Similarly, identified examples of heart-shaped mounts can be linked to late medieval courtship, where belts could be given as love gifts (Willemsen 2012: 193), whilst the presence of mounts in the shape of letters can be demonstrated to have both secular and religious connotations which directly influenced the use of both the belt and belt fittings (see chapter 6.6).

The work undertaken on the Leiden assemblage of belt mounts is relevant to this research for three reasons. First, the interdisciplinary methodology used exemplifies the benefits of utilising additional sources for the interpretation of late medieval dress accessories. Second, the themes identified from the study of these mounts have direct parallels within the English assemblage of dress accessories. Finally, as the use of dress accessories in the late medieval Low Countries have direct comparisons with English examples, this Dutch assemblage can be utilised as a broadly contemporary comparison to the English materials. In doing so, this assemblage and other published collections from Northern Europe (e.g. Fingerlin 1971; Theune 2009; Stürzebecher 2010) can be used both as comparative material for the

English dress accessories and as a means of beginning to place the English material into its wider European context.

Finally, a recent thesis by Standley (2010) has been completed on dress accessories from the two border regions of England: with Scotland in the north and Wales in the west. Through the use of artefacts from urban and rural excavations, combined with PAS data from both of these regions, this project aimed to investigate the possibility of the expression of regional identities in the borders whilst simultaneously examining the social context of the artefacts (Standley 2010: 1-2). Although the expression of regional identities in this sample is relevant to this study, given one of the aims of it is to examine the possibility of regional variation in belt fittings, of more immediate interest is the approach used to explore the social context of the dress accessories. The theoretical methodology employed by Standley can be defined as a biographical approach to material culture. The use of such a biographical approach allows the consideration of the full social life and context of an object as it is produced, used, transferred and finally discarded (see Hoskins 2006). For Kopytoff (1986: 66-67) the emphasis is on asking similar questions of an object that would be used for an individual personal biography and in doing so place the object back into its wider social discourse.

The potential of such an approach within the study of late medieval dress accessories is exemplified by the study of a mirror case from Shapwick, Somerset (Standley 2008; see Fig. 1.11). Here, the artefact itself, combined with its decoration and an examination of its social context is used to build a narrative around and for the mirror case. For example, the decoration of the mirror case has been interpreted as most likely being a lady hawking on horseback (Standley 2008: 200). The choice to depict this scene enables an investigation of the wider social connotations associated with hawking and this in turn allows an examination of the implicit symbolism that this image potentially carried within contemporary society. The mirror itself is an object which was often given to women (Camille 1998), and this combined with the content of the decoration, the wider social context of mirrors given as love gifts and the location of the find allows a full interrogation of the potential biography of the object whilst simultaneously acting as a starting point for the placing of the mirror back into its late medieval context. Such an approach allows Standley to take individual examples of artefacts and, through a consideration of their archaeological and historical context, expand on the social significance and use of the object. This is

provided through an examination of the late medieval and early post-medieval life cycle as shown by and interpreted through dress accessories.

Recent critiques of material culture theory have begun to question the role that objects have been assigned within human society. Olsen (2011) has argued that the anthropocentric view of society as a purely human creation significantly underplays the role that material culture plays within social interaction. Archaeological implementations of post-structural and phenomenological theories have side-lined the material world in favour of human agency and although claiming that objects have an active role in society, artefacts are vessels onto which individuals project significance. Instead, the clear dichotomy between the human and material worlds should be eschewed and the means that objects and materials can influence and determine human action should be recognised. Society is not just a human construct; nature, objects, and landscapes do not exist outside of society. As Olsen (2011: 138) has argued, "a society is rather a complex fabric of intimate relations that link and associate people and things – in short, a collective in which humans and nonhumans cohabitate and collaborate."

Therefore, within this approach the material world is not seen as subservient to the human world but as an integral part of it. This is illustrated by Latour (2005: 40) through a discussion of the perceived cultural differences between silk and nylon stockings as highbrow and lowbrow products. The social ranking of these two products can be expressed as a human preference for on product over another based on cost and history and becomes a means of representing the economic differences between those well-off and those not so well–off (Olsen 2011: 146). However, Latour (2005: 40) argues that, "*without* the many indefinite material nuances between the feel, the touch, the colour, the sparkling of silk and nylon, *this* social difference might not exist at all." The social preference for silk over nylon is, at least in part, defined by the material qualities of these two materials. Acknowledging that objects have a role in producing society allows archaeologists to investigate how artefacts affected habitual behaviour in the past. Dress and dress accessories offer this opportunity as they are uniquely placed between the individual and the rest of society. Individual items of clothing have the ability to hide or accentuate aspects of the body, change the body's ability to move, and mediate embodied practice (Gilchrist 2012: 68). This can be shown through the description in the *Grand Chronique de St Denis* (Lacroix 1874: 537) of two people being needed to help to undress members of the nobility. This can

be seen as a power relation between members of society but it is one that is enabled by the material qualities of the clothing.

The art anthropologist Alfred Gell (1998) has argued that this theory can be taken another step further to state that objects themselves can be said to have agency. His contention is that interpretations of art as a system of signification that can be explored through textual or linguistic analogies is inadequate and instead interpretations should explore the domain in which objects merge with people (Gell 1998: 12). By redefining agency as relational and context dependent it then follows that agency is an interactive relationship between agents and patients. Olsen (2011: 135) describes this relationship through the example of a car, in which he is simultaneously the agent driving the car, and the patient of the car as his bodily actions are determined by the car. This has obvious connotations for archaeology as the material remains, the objects, structures, settlements, and landscapes of the past make up the vast majority of archaeological evidence recovered from sites of all periods.

However, there are some limitations to this theory. Morphy (2009) has issued a caution to the application of this theory within material culture studies as it distracts from the investigation of how people use objects. Similarly, Gilchrist (2011: 216-217) points out that accepting that objects have agency does not explain the circumstances under which this comes about nor does it explain if objects can ever be considered to have intentional agency. These are valid concerns but are still grounded within the theoretical framework that has led to the material world being side-lined and seen as subservient to the human world. By recognising the significant role that objects play in the construction and continuation of human society, the study of material culture within this theory allows a greater insight into past society than under previous theoretical approaches as we are not simply looking at the reflections of past society but at part of its founders.

Despite these counter-arguments, an interesting crossover is provided by late medieval views on the image as an active agent as explored by Camille (1996). He argues that vision in the late medieval period worked differently from our modern passive perception of seeing but was a much more active process and that images were far more powerful (Camille 1996: 19). This is perhaps best illustrated by the doctrine of transubstantiation where the communion bread and wine are not simply believed to be the symbolic representation of the body and blood of Christ but to actually become them. This can be taken forward to late medieval perceptions of images. The figural

depiction of saints were not simply just representations within late medieval thought but actually became the figure depicted. Under this belief the depicted saint could then be communed with in their role as intercessors in heaven within late medieval Catholicism. This has direct connotations for the interpretation of late medieval dress accessories, as a small number of strap-ends have been identified with figural depictions of saints engraved on them. The talismanic use of objects is well documented for the late medieval period and this theoretical standpoint provides an intriguing possibility for the interpretation of these strap-ends (see Chapter 6.6)

Material culture studies have had a tendency to focus on the exceptional objects and analyse them for their significance within past cultures. The main theme running through concepts of material entanglement and the agency of objects is that all material culture should, in some way, be seen as significant in producing human society. The vast majority of dress accessories are not exceptional artefacts; they are mundane everyday objects that would have been instantly recognisable within late medieval society. This is, in part, their significance. These dress accessories were used on a daily basis by individuals during the late medieval period and their material qualities, their type, form and occasional decoration, were a part of late medieval costume which itself was hugely significant within contemporary society. Returning to Ward Perkins' quote at the beginning of this chapter, plain buckles are an obvious and universal object. These artefacts were everyday objects that were in constant use by late medieval people. Belt fittings were enmeshed in the habitual day to day existence of these people and their society, and this fact needs to be recognised and explored.

1.7: Structure of the thesis

This thesis presents the results of the analysis of the urban assemblages of dress accessories whilst simultaneously highlighting and demonstrating the social significance of these objects within late medieval society. Chapter 2 provides a new typology for late medieval dress accessories. Although previous typologies do exist for specific assemblages, to date there has not been a single classification that can be easily applied across England as a whole. Therefore, this chapter presents a new one that is easily applicable to all the dress accessories identified within this study, and

one that also allows an inter-city comparison of belt fittings. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 present the results of the analysis of the city assemblages. Chapter 3 presents the quantities and proportions of each form characterised within the typology, to give an overview of the dress accessories found within the urban assemblages. Chapter 4 focuses on specific city assemblages to identify the trends in the forms of dress accessory within each urban centre, whilst identifying the geographical variation between these assemblages. Individual sites from the larger assemblages from London, Winchester and York are then compared to analyse the social variation within the use of dress accessories within these three cities. Chapter 5 presents the evidence for the production of dress accessories and outlines the changes in and development of this industry during the late medieval period. Chapter 6 provides the discussion and interpretation of the themes identified in the preceding three chapters covering issues of regionality, production and consumption, death and burial, and the symbolism of belts, belt fittings, and their decoration within late medieval society. Chapter 7 presents the major conclusions whilst also providing potential future directions of research into late medieval dress accessories. The second volume of this thesis contains the figures and tables as well as Appendix A which contains a tabulated catalogue of the dress accessories used in this study.

Chapter 2: A Typology for Late Medieval Dress Accessories

2.1: Introduction

This chapter presents the typology for late medieval belt fittings that has been used to identify and classify the artefacts from the urban assemblages studied. In generating this typology the aim was to create a usable and replicable typology that allows for a straightforward comparison and identification of belt fittings, both for the artefacts contained within the urban assemblages and future research into late medieval dress accessories. Previous catalogues have used a variety of different classifications, despite the fact that these typologies tend to use similar characteristics as their defining variables there has been no consistent typology adopted which can hinder the comparison of objects across catalogues from different sites.

Traditionally, catalogues have tended to first categorise artefacts by the material that was used to produce them (e.g. Harvey 1975; Ottaway and Rogers 2002). This is an unsatisfactory approach as artefacts of differing materials but identical functions are separated by this arbitrary decision meaning that, for example, iron and copper alloy buckles are not listed together. For a typology to be informative of the society that produced the material culture it must be at least reflective of relevant characteristics that defined the use of meaning of the objects within that society (Read 1987: 159). More recently, this has led to classification systems for late medieval dress accessories that take as their primary defining feature the function of the artefact (e.g. Egan and Pritchard 1991; Rees *et al.* 2008). The typology presented here aims to build on this work and due to the quantity of artefacts contained within the urban assemblage is in an ideal position to present the most inclusive and extensive typology for late medieval dress accessories.

This classification can be defined as an intuitive typology rather than a statistically based one, as the dress accessories are identified by visible characteristics within the classification methodology utilised. Although statistical approaches are preferable for certain types of artefact, particularly those where minor variations in form can reveal specific artefact types (Spaulding 1953: 306), the classification system

used here is based on function, form, decoration and production methodology all of which are more readily identifiable visually than through statistical interrogation.

The typology presented within this chapter builds on the framework use by Egan and Pritchard (1991) in *Dress Accessories*, in that the artefacts are initially defined by function which results in the five top level categories of belt fittings: buckles, clasps, strap-ends, mounts and strap loops. Each of these five types of dress accessory would have performed a separate function when attached to a belt. Detached buckle, clasp, and strap-end plates are included as a separate subcategory within the top level category to which they would originally have been attached when in use. This follows the preferred terminology used by the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), which, due to the quantity of finds recorded on their database, has become the standard for recording finds.

The five top level categories are then split into further groups, for buckles, mounts and strap loops these are determined by shape, for strap-ends by production method, and for clasps by fastening mechanism. This categorisation method again builds on Egan and Pritchard's (1991) methodology for classifying the London dress accessories, where buckle frames and mounts were classified by the shape of the objects and strap-ends were classified by their production method. However, in this typology strap loops have been given their own separate categories determined by the shape of the frame. Each of these subcategories is then split according to the variation in design or decoration. This is inspired by Egan's (2007a) typology of oval and rectangular buckle frames from Meols and the crossover between his typology and this one is acknowledged for each example. The principle employed by this typology is that if these groups can be defined for oval and rectangular buckles then further groups can also be defined for other forms of dress accessory.

A chronological framework is provided for each form of belt fitting, and these dates have been defined by well-dated and published examples from late medieval England. Where possible, the chronology of each form has been compared across differing publications including the catalogues from London (Egan and Pritchard 1991), Winchester (Biddle 1990; Rees *et al.* 2008), and York (Ottaway and Rogers 2002), as well as individual site reports such as Deansway (Dalwood and Edwards 2004)... In addition to the published artefacts, other sources such as grave effigies have also been used to date certain forms of dress accessories, such as the large decorative strap-ends (3.6). However, it is important to remember that typological chronologies

are subject to change, and that the dating of the archaeological contexts of new discoveries must also be considered. The parameters set for this research means that only artefacts in use up to the early sixteenth century are considered. However, this does not mean that all forms of dress accessories in use at this point were abandoned. For example, D-shaped buckle frames with a central bar were a fifteenth-century introduction but similar forms were still in use up to at least the seventeenth century (Egan 2005: 36).

Finally, although this typology is comprehensive for the dress accessories from the urban assemblages of late medieval England, it does not cover forms of belt fittings that are known from elsewhere in the country but were unrepresented within the assemblages. For example, recent finds recorded on the PAS include a number of unusual 'beast head' buckles from East Anglia dating from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries (Rogerson and Ashley 2011; see Fig. 2.1), but there were no examples of this form of buckle within any of the urban assemblages studied. The distinct possibility that new forms of late medieval belt fitting, particularly with the quantity of finds being recorded through the PAS, is recognised here but the decision has been made here to concentrate solely on the forms represented within the urban assemblages.

2.2: Buckles

The first functional category is belt buckles, which are most easily identified through the survival of a buckle pin on the frame. Where the pin is absent there are several other indications that the artefact was used as a buckle. For example, several forms of buckle frame have a notch on the outside edge of the frame for the tip of the buckle pin whilst buckle plates, where these survive attached, have a slot cut into the outside edge for the pin. Late medieval buckles were not only used to fasten belts but also a wide range of other straps and items of clothing. It is occasionally extremely difficult to determine whether some forms of buckle was used on a belt or on horse harnesses, for example, and it is probable that some larger forms of buckle were used on both (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 50). However, buckles that were clearly used on other forms of material culture have been excluded, and some belt buckles could equally have been used on shoes or harnesses. The principal buckle categories are classified by the shape of the frame following the categorisation system implemented

by Egan and Pritchard (1991), whilst the subcategories are determined by variations within these general categories. A total of eleven general late medieval buckle frame forms (1.1-11) are identified and defined here, whilst detached buckle plates are categorised as a twelfth category.

2.2.1: Circular buckle frames (see Fig. 2.2)

This general form of buckle consists of a cast circular frame onto which a buckle pin was attached. Circular buckle frames are distinguishable from annular brooches due to the lack of a constriction on the frame to hold the pin in place; on circular buckles the pin would have been held in place by the strap. Egan and Pritchard (1991: 45) have also noted that the blunt tip of the buckle pins that remain *in situ* on buckles of this form would have been unsuitable for piercing textiles but would have been perfectly appropriate for use with a leather strap which would already have holes provided. This form of buckle is further split into four separate subcategories (1.1A-D) based on the diameter of the frame and the presence of any moulded decoration.

- 1.1A: Plain circular frame with a diameter of less than 30mm (13^{th} – 16^{th} century).
- 1.1B: Circular frame with a diameter of less than 30mm with moulded decoration (mid-14^{th} – 15^{th} century).
- 1.1C: Plain circular buckle frame with a diameter of over 30mm. Where the pin survives, it is usually cast with decorative moulding on the shaft towards the inside edge (12^{th} – 16^{th} century).
- 1.1D: Circular buckle frame with a diameter over 30mm with moulded decoration and an integral cast buckle plate (15^{th} century)

2.2.2: Circular buckle frame with a central bar (see Fig. 2.3)

This general form of buckle frame consists of a cast circular frame with an integral central bar. The four subcategories of this form (1.2A-D) are classified by the diameter of the frame and the presence of moulded decoration on the frame.

- 1.2A: Plain circular frame with a central bar and a diameter of less than 30mm (15^{th} – 16^{th} century)
- 1.2B: Circular frame with a central bar and a diameter of less than 30mm with moulded decoration. (15^{th} – 16^{th} century)
- 1.2C: Plain circular frame with a central bar and a diameter of more than 30mm (15^{th} – 16^{th} century)

1.2D: Circular frame with a central bar and a diameter of more than 30mm with moulded decoration (15th – 16th century)

2.2.3: Oval buckle frames (see Fig. 2.4)

Oval buckle frames are split into sixteen separate subcategories (1.3A-P). The first twelve of these follow Geoff Egan's typology developed for categorising the assemblage of dress accessories from Meols (Egan 2007a: 84). Further additions have been made to this typology due to additional variations of oval buckle frames that have been identified from the urban assemblages. The subcategories for this form of buckle frame are determined by the presence of an offset bar, the variations in moulded decoration, and the width of the buckle frame.

1.3A: Plain oval buckle frame with no embellishments (Meols type 1, 13th – 16th century)

1.3B: Plain oval buckle frame with an offset bar (Meols type 2, 12th – 16th century)

1.3C: Oval buckle frame with a notch for the buckle pin on the outside edge (Meols type 3, 13th – 15th century)

1.3D: Oval buckle frame with an offset bar and a notch for the buckle pin on the outside edge (Meols type 4, mid-12th – 16th century)

1.3E: Oval buckle frame with a projection at both ends of the inside edge (Meols type 5, mid-14th – early 15th century)

1.3F: Oval buckle frame with an offset bar and a thick outside edge. This is usually decorated with moulded transverse lines on the outside edge one of which can act as notch for the buckle pin (Meols type 6, mid-12th – 16th century)

1.3G: Oval buckle frame with a thick outside edge and a narrowed and offset bar (Meols type 7, 13th century)

1.3H: Oval buckle frame with an offset bar and moulded multiple knops on the outside edge. The number of knops on the outside edge can vary but there are usually four (Meols type 8, mid-13th – 16th century)

1.3I: Oval buckle frame with an offset bar and moulded decoration on outside edge. The moulded decoration takes the form of a thick outside edge with two small flanking projections (Meols type 9, 13th – 15th century)

1.3J: Oval buckle frame with an offset bar and large outward-angled projections on the outside edge. Between these two knops the outside edge may have moulded transverse lines which can act as a notch for the buckle pin (Meols type 10, 13th – 14th century)

1.3K: Oval buckle frame with an offset bar and a narrow sheet metal roller (Meols type 11, mid-12th – 14th century)

1.3L: Oval buckle frame with an offset bar and a wide sheet metal roller. This form of oval buckle frame could also be used as a clasp frame (see 2.1B) with the sheet roller replaced with the folding end of the clasp (Meols type 12, mid-13th – 15th century)

1.3M: Oval buckle frame formed from a folded strip of sheet metal for the outside edge. The ends of this strip are folded over into loops through which a separate strip is added to form the inside edge(16th century)

1.3N: Large oval buckle frame with an inside edge with a width of over 30mm (12th – 16th century)

1.3O: Large oval buckle frame with an inside edge with a width of over 30mm and decoration (12th – 16th century)

1.3P: Oval buckle frame with an integral small rectangular loop on the inside edge (15th – 16th century)

2.2.4: Double oval buckle frames (see Fig. 2.5)

The first four subcategories of double oval buckles consist of a frame which has been cast in one piece. These categories (1.4A-D) are classified according to the location of any moulded decoration on the frame. The final category (1.4E) differs from the others through the production methods in manufacturing this form of buckle. The central bar of this form has been added whilst in the other categories it is integral to the rest of the frame.

1.4A: Plain double oval buckle frame with no embellishment (late 12th – 16th century)

1.4B: Double oval buckle frame with moulded decoration at the ends of the central bar (early 14th – 16th century)

1.4C: Double oval buckle frame with moulded decoration on the outside and inside edges of the frame (late 12th – 16th century)

1.4D: Double oval buckle frame with moulded decoration at the ends of the central bar and on the outside and inside edges of the frame (14th – 16th century)

1.4E: Double oval buckle frame with an added iron central bar. This form of buckle is made from two separate loops of cast metal with a loop at either end. These are then joined with a central bar of iron to complete the finished artefact (late 13th – 16th century)

2.2.5: D-shaped buckle frames (see Fig. 2.6)

The D-shaped buckle frames are categorised by the width of the inside edge (1.5A, D and E) which is an indication of the size of the strap that the buckle would

originally have been attached to. The two further subcategories are identified by the form of the moulded decoration that appears on the frame (1.5B-C).

1.5A: Small D-shaped buckle frame with an inside edge with a width of up to 15mm and no decoration (12^{th} – 16^{th} century)

1.5B: Small D-shaped buckle frame with an inside edge with a width of up to 15mm and moulded decoration around the frame (12^{th} – 16^{th} century)

1.5C: D-shaped buckle frame with a moulded knop on the centre of the outside edge. This form of buckle usually has an inside edge with a width of up to 15mm (late 13^{th} – 15^{th} century)

1.5D: Medium D-shaped buckle frame with an inside edge with a width between 16mm and 30mm and no decoration (12^{th} – 16^{th} century)

1.5E: Large D-shaped buckle frame with an inside edge with a width of over 30mm and no decoration (12^{th} – 16^{th} century)

2.2.6: D-shaped buckle frames with a central bar (see Fig. 2.7)

D-shaped buckle frames with a central bar become much more common in assemblages of dress accessories from the post-medieval period both in England (Egan 2005:36) and on the continent such as from Amsterdam (unpublished; see Fig. 2.8). Despite this based on finds from well-dated contexts in London it is clear that this form of buckle was introduced during the fifteenth century. This form of buckle frame is split into four different subcategories (1.6A-D) which are determined by the presence and location of any moulded decoration.

1.6A: Plain D-shaped buckle frame with a central bar and no embellishment (15^{th} – 16^{th} century)

1.6B: D-shaped buckle frame with a central bar and moulded decoration at the ends of the central bar (15^{th} – 16^{th} century)

1.6C: D-shaped buckle frame with a central bar and moulded decoration on the inside and outside edges of the frame (15^{th} – 16^{th} century)

1.6D: D-shaped buckle frame with a central bar with moulded decoration at the ends of the central bar and on the inside and outside edges of the frame (15^{th} – 16^{th} century)

2.2.7: Rectangular buckle frames (see Fig. 2.9)

There are nine separate subcategories of rectangular buckle frames (1.7A-I). The first four of these were developed for the Meols assemblage of dress accessories (Egan 2007a: 84), whilst additions to this typology are due to the additional variations of rectangular buckle frames identified from the urban assemblages. The subcategories

are determined by the size of the buckle frame, the presence of any moulded decoration, and the presence of a sheet roller on the outside edge of the frame.

- 1.7A: Plain rectangular buckle frame. In some examples there may be a notch for the buckle pin on the outside edge (Meols type A, 12th – 16th century)
- 1.7B: Plain rectangular buckle frame with a prominent projection on the outside edge that acts as a notch for the buckle pin (Meols type B, 12th – 13th century)
- 1.7C: Rectangular buckle frame with moulded decoration. The moulded decoration usually takes the form of small projection along both sides and transverse grooves on a thick outside edge (Meols type C, early 13th – 15th century)
- 1.7D: Rectangular buckle frame with a sheet metal roller on the outside edge. As with form 1.3L there is an overlap here with rectangular clasp frames where the sheet roller could be replaced with the folding end of the clasp (Meols type D, late 13th – mid-15th century)
- 1.7E: Rectangular buckle frame with moulded decoration on corners of frame and moulded lines along the edges (12th – 15th century)
- 1.7F: Plain rectangular buckle frame with a width of over 30mm (12th – 16th century)
- 1.7G: Rectangular buckle frame with a width of over 30mm and moulded decoration (mid-12th century)
- 1.7H: Plain rectangular buckle frame formed from a folded bar (late 13th – mid-14th century)
- 1.7I: Rectangular buckle frame with two moulded projections on the inside of the outside edge. The outside edge itself is rounded and the overall buckle resembles a crown shape (15th – 16th century)

2.2.8: Rectangular buckle frames with a central bar (see Fig. 2.10)

This form of buckle frame consists of a cast rectangular buckle frame with an integral or added central bar. The first four subcategories of rectangular buckle frames with a central bar follow the same classification system for double oval buckles (1.4A-D) with each subcategory determined by the presence and location of any moulded decoration.

- 1.8A: Plain rectangular buckle frame with a central bar and no embellishments (late 13th – 16th century)
- 1.8B: Rectangular buckle frame with a central bar with moulded decoration at the ends of the central bar (15th – 16th century)
- 1.8C: Rectangular buckle frame with a central bar with moulded decoration on the sides and edges of the frame (late 13th – 16th century)

1.8D: Rectangular buckle frame with a central bar with moulded decoration at the ends of the central bar and on the sides and edges of the frame (15th - 16th century)

1.8E: Rectangular buckle frame with an added central bar (late 14th – mid-15th century)

1.8F: Rectangular buckle frame with a central bar and a rectangular loop on the lower side of the frame (mid-14th – 16th century)

1.8G: Rectangular buckle frame with a central bar and moulded decoration on the inside and outside edges. The decoration of this form of buckle resembles two towers at either end of the buckle (late 13th – mid-14th century)

2.2.9: Trapezoidal buckle frames (see Fig. 2.11)

Trapezoidal buckles are a relatively unusual form of buckle frame and therefore both trapezoidal and trapezoidal frames with a central bar are included under this general category. The five subcategories are determined by the presence of any decoration, the production method and the presence of a central bar.

1.9A: Pain trapezoidal buckle frame with no embellishment (mid-13th – 16th century)

1.9B: Plain trapezoidal buckle frame made from a folded strip of metal (mid-15th – 16th century)

1.9C: Large decorated trapezoidal buckle frame with an inside edge with a width of over 30mm (13th century)

1.9D: Plain trapezoidal buckle frame with a central bar and no embellishment (early 14th – 16th century)

1.9E: Trapezoidal buckle frame with a central bar and moulded decoration (15th century)

2.2.10: Forked spacer buckle frames (see Fig. 2.12)

This form of buckle is notable for the uniformity that is shown across all the assemblages. The frame is oval with a notch for the buckle pin on the outside edge. On the inside edge there is a bar around which the pin would be fitted and this is then reinforced with an integral strip of metal between the frame and the forked spacer.

1.10A: Forked spacer buckle (late 13th – early 16th century)

2.2.11: Other buckle frames (see Fig. 2.13)

The buckle frames in this category are represented by single examples from the urban assemblages. The subcategories are therefore determined by the overall shape of the frame.

1.11A: Pentagonal buckle frame (mid-13th – late 13th century)
1.11B: Heart shaped buckle frame (15th century)
1.11C: Kidney shaped buckle frame (early 13th century)

2.2.12: Buckle plates (see Fig. 2.25)

Buckle plates are formed of a single sheet of metal that is folded around the end of the belt and the inside edge of the buckle frame before being riveted into place. The defining feature of this form of dress accessory is the rectangular slot that is cut into the outside edge of the plate for the attachment of the buckle pin to the inside edge of the buckle frame. This accounts for the first seven subcategories identified here (1.12A-H) which are classified primarily according to the shape of the plate and then by the presence of any decoration. The only exception to this is the final category (1.12I) which are the only cast examples of buckle plates. These plates all have deeply engraved designs for the application of enamel and date to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries.

1.12A: Plain rectangular buckle plate (12th – 16th century)
1.12B: Decorated rectangular buckle plate (12th – 16th century)
1.12C: Plain tongue shaped buckle plate (16th century)
1.12D: Decorated tongue shaped buckle plate (16th century)
1.12E: Plain trapezoidal buckle plate (12th – 16th century)
1.12F: Plain triangular buckle plate (mid-13th century)
1.12G: Plain circular buckle plate (mid-13th – late 13th century)
1.12H: Buckle plate with non-figurative decoration (15th – 16th century)
1.12I: Buckle plate with enamelled decoration. This form of buckle plate is usually cast and therefore much thicker than the other forms of buckle plate. (12th – 13th century)

2.3: *Clasps*

Clasps were an alternative form of dress accessory to the buckle and were used to fasten straps. Typologically, the principal difference between clasps and buckles is the method of fastening used on each form of dress accessory, with buckles using a

pin whilst clasps used a variety of fastening mechanisms which are outlined below. Inevitably, however there are still some crossovers between certain buckle frame and clasp frame forms especially in fragmentary examples. This is most common with the folding end clasps (2.1), where clasp frames are differentiated from buckle frames by the replacement of the buckle pin and sheet roller with a sheet metal folding end. On artefacts where both of these are missing clasp frames can still be identified by the lack of a slot in the attached plate for a buckle pin. The three categories of clasp frames are defined by the method of fastening the clasp; these are folding end clasps (2.1), clasps without folding ends (2.2), and locking clasps (2.3), whilst the final category (2.4) is made up of detached clasp plates.

2.3.1: Folding end clasps (see Fig. 2.14)

This form of clasp is identified by the addition of a folding end that is attached to the outside of the frame. This folding end is formed of a strip of sheet metal which was folded round the clasp frame in a similar fashion to the sheet roller on buckle frames. This strip extends outwards and has a small plain rectangular bar mount attached to the end. The other end of the belt was fitted with a shield shaped mount (4.16) which slotted through the clasp frame and was held in place by the folding end. The subcategories of this form of clasp are determined by the shape of the clasp frame.

- 2.1A: Rectangular clasp frame with a folding end attached to the outside edge of the frame (late 13th – 16th century)
- 2.1B: Oval clasp frame with a folding end attached to the outside edge of the frame (mid-14th – mid-15th century)
- 2.1C: Forked spacer clasp frame with a folding end attached to the outside edge of the frame (15th – 16th century)
- 2.1D: Trapezoidal clasp frame with a folding end attached to the outside edge of the frame (14th – 16th century)
- 2.1E: Clasp frame formed from folded strip of metal with a folding end attached to the outside edge of the frame (early 15th – mid-15th century)

2.3.2: Clasps without a folding end (see Fig. 2.15)

This form of clasp has an uncertain fastening method. Due to the elaborate moulded decoration on the outside edge of the frame a folding end could not have been attached and therefore there must have been a fastening mechanism attached to

the other end of the belt. Only one clasp is included in this category and was identified as a clasp due to there being no slot for a pin on the clasp plate attached to the frame.

2.2A: Cast clasp frame with moulded decoration on the outside edge. The decoration takes the form of a crowned head (mid-14th – early 15th century)

2.3.3: Locking clasps (see Fig. 2.16)

Only one form of locking clasp was identified (2.3A). This form of clasp consists of two parts used to fasten the strap. The first part consists of a rectangular plate with an added swivelling tab which has an expanded terminal. The second is another rectangular plate with a slot cut into the centre with an added keyhole shaped swivelling plate. The expanded terminal of the tab passes through the slot in the second plate before being turned and the keyhole shaped plate is moved into position and holds the tab in place. There is an example of this form of clasp *in situ* on a strap in a private collection from London (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 121)

2.3A: Locking clasp (late 13th – 15th century)

2.3.4: Clasp plates (see Fig. 2.27)

Clasp plates would have served an identical function to buckle plates (1.12) and are only distinguishable through the lack of a slot on the outside edge of the plate as clasp frames had no need for the addition of a buckle pin and therefore fragmentary detached clasp plates are only identifiable if the outside edge of the plate is present. The subcategories are determined by the shape of the plate and the presence of any decoration.

2.4A: Rectangular clasp plate with no decoration (late 13th – 16th century)
2.4B: Rectangular clasp plate with decoration (late 13th – 16th century)

2.4: Strap-ends

Strap-ends were attached to the end of belts to prevent the leather or textile strap from fraying and could also aid the passing of the strap through a buckle loop. Comparatively few strap-ends can be dated from the twelfth century to mid thirteenth century archaeologically, although this is potentially a result of the relative lack of dress accessories from this period in general (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 126). Despite

this, by the beginning of the fourteenth century there is a diversification in the forms of strap-ends that were in use. The definition of the seven categories of strap-end in this typology follows the classification methodology employed by Egan and Pritchard (1991) where each category is defined by the production methods used to manufacture the strap-ends. Further subcategories are defined by variations in these production methods and the shape of the completed artefact. The flat sheet metal plates and cast terminals of strap-ends provided a surface which was frequently decorated. Consequently further subcategories are defined by the form of decoration found on the strap-end.

2.4.1: Single sheet strap-ends (see Fig. 2.17)

Single sheet strap-ends consist of a single plate which has been folded either transversely or longitudinally across the plate and riveted together at the inside edge of the strap-end. This form of production accounts for the first four categories of this form of strap-end (3.1A-D) whilst the final two categories are produced from a single cast piece of metal (3.1E-F).

- 3.1A: Single sheet strap-end folded transversely along outside edge with no decoration (mid-13th – 16th century)
- 3.1B: Single sheet strap-end folded transversely along outside edge with decoration (mid-13th – 16th century)
- 3.1C: Single sheet strap-end folded longitudinally along one side with no decoration (14th century)
- 3.1D: Single sheet strap-end folded longitudinally along one side with decoration (14th century)
- 3.1E: Cast strap-end with a split at the inside edge for attachment to a strap and no decoration (mid-14th – mid-15th century)
- 3.1F: Cast strap-end with a split at the inside edge for attachment to a strip and decorated with an acorn (mid-14th century – mid-15th century)

2.4.2: Double sheet strap-ends (see Fig. 2.18)

Double sheet strap-ends are made from two plates of sheet metal that are riveted together on either side of a strap. The subcategories defined here are identified by the overall shape of the strap-end with further subcategories defined by the form of any terminal and the presence of decoration on the sheet metal plates.

3.2A: Rectangular double sheet strap-end with no decoration and no terminal (mid-13th century – 16th century)
3.2B: Rectangular double sheet strap-end with a terminal and no decoration (late 13th – 16th century)
3.2C: Rectangular double sheet strap-end with decoration and no terminal (mid-13th – 16th century)
3.2D: Rectangular double sheet strap-end with decoration and a terminal (late 13th – 16th century)
3.2E: Tongue shaped double sheet strap-end with no decoration (late 13th – 15th century)
3.2F: Tongue shaped double sheet strap-end with decoration (late 13th – 15th century)
3.2G: Trapezoidal shaped double sheet strap-end with no decoration (13th – 15th century)
3.2H: Trapezoidal shaped double sheet strap-end with decoration (13th – 15th century)
3.2I: Pentagonal shaped double sheet strap-end with no decoration (mid-14th – early 15th century)
3.2J: Circular double sheet strap-end with no decoration (14th – 15th century)

2.4.3: Forked spacer strap-ends (see Fig. 2.19)

This form of strap-end consists of a cast forked spacer onto which a front and back plate of sheet metal were added. The addition of a forked spacer would have given added rigidity to the completed strap-end and offered greater protection to the end of the belt. The subcategories are primarily defined by the shape of the forked spacer. As these parts of the strap-end were cast the opportunity to develop embellished terminals presented itself to the producer. Further subcategories are therefore defined by the various forms of these terminals and by the presence of any engraved or punched decoration.

3.3A: Straight forked spacer strap-end with no terminal and no decoration on the sheet plate (late 13th – 16th century)
3.3B: Straight forked spacer strap-end with a tab terminal and no decoration on the sheet plates (late 13th – 16th century)
3.3C: Straight forked spacer strap-end with an acorn terminal and no decoration on the sheet plates (late 13th – 16th century)
3.3D: Straight forked spacer strap-end with a lozenge terminal and no decoration on the sheet plates (15th – 16th century)
3.3E: Straight forked spacer strap-end with no terminal and decoration on the sheet plates (mid-14th – mid-15th century)

3.3F: Straight forked spacer strap-end with a tab terminal and decoration on the sheet plates (late 13th – 16th century)

3.3G: Straight forked spacer strap-end with an acorn terminal and decoration on the sheet plates (late 13th – 16th century)

3.3H: Straight forked spacer strap-end with a cruciform terminal and decoration on the sheet plates (late 13th – 14th century)

3.3I: Straight forked spacer strap-end with a head terminal and decoration on the sheet plates (mid-14th – early 15th century)

3.3J: Forked spacer strap-end with a circular expansion towards the terminal with an acorn terminal and no decoration on the sheet plates (late 13th – 16th century)

3.3K: Forked spacer strap-end with a circular expansion towards the terminal with an acorn terminal and decoration on the sheet plates (late 13th – 16th century)

3.3L: Semi-circular forked spacer strap-end with no terminal and no decoration on the sheet plates (early 14th – late 14th century)

2.4.4: Composite strap-ends with side strips (see Fig. 2.20)

Composite strap-ends with side strips consist of either a folded single sheet or a front and back plate and have then had strips of sheet metal attached to the sides of the strap-end. This would have meant that the entire end of the strap would have been enclosed by the artefact in a similar manner to the forked spacer strap-ends (3.3). The categories in this general form are again initially classified by the overall shape of the artefact with further categories added for the presence of any decoration or terminal.

3.4A: Rectangular composite strap-end with added side strips with no decoration (late 13th – mid-15th century)

3.4B: Rectangular composite strap-end with added side strips with decoration (late 13th – mid-15th century)

3.4C: Rectangular composite strap-end with an angled outside edge with no decoration (early 14th – mid-15th century)

3.4D: Tongue shaped composite strap-end with added side strips with no decoration (late 13th – early 15th century)

3.4E: Tongue shaped composite strap-end with added side strips and a tab terminal with no decoration (late 13th – early 15th century)

3.4F: Tongue shaped composite strap-end with added side strips with decoration (late 13th – early 15th century)

3.4G: Trapezoidal composite strap-end with added side strips with no decoration (late 13th – early 15th century)

3.4H: Trapezoidal composite strap-end with added side strips with decoration (late 13th – early 15th century)

3.4I: Semicircular composite strap-end with added side strips with decoration (15th century)

2.4.5: Composite strap-ends with a sheet metal spacer (see Fig. 2.21)

This form of strap-end consists of a front and back sheet metal plate between which is a third sheet that acts as a spacer to create an aperture for the end of the belt. Composite strap-ends with a sheet metal spacer can therefore be said to be a less robust version of the forked spacer form (3.3). Again this overall form has been initially classified by the shape of the artefact with further categories added for the presence of any decoration or terminal.

3.5A: Rectangular composite strap end with a sheet metal spacer and no decoration (late 13th – 15th century)

3.5B: Rectangular composite strap-end with a sheet metal spacer and decoration (late 13th – 15th century)

3.5C: Rectangular composite strap-end with a sheet metal spacer with a tab terminal and no decoration (late 13th – 15th century)

3.5D: Rectangular composite strap-end with a sheet metal spacer with a square terminal and no decoration (late 13th – 15th century)

3.5E: Rectangular composite strap-end with a sheet metal spacer with an acorn terminal and decoration (late 13th – 15th century)

3.5F: Rectangular composite strap-end with a sheet metal spacer and an angled outside edge with no decoration (early 14th – 15th century)

3.5G: Rectangular composite strap-end with a sheet metal spacer with an angled outside edge and a tab terminal with no decoration (early 14th – 15th century)

3.5H: Rectangular composite strap-end with a sheet metal spacer with an angled outside edge and an acorn terminal with openwork decoration (early 14th – 15th century)

3.5I: Tongue shaped composite strap-end with a sheet metal spacer with no decoration (late 13th – 15th century)

2.4.6: Large decorative strap-ends (see Fig. 2.22)

This form of strap-end consists of a single cast piece of metal. It is elaborately decorated with moulded openwork, and engraved decoration. Due to the small numbers of this form identified from the urban assemblages only a single category has been assigned within this typology although it is likely that this form of artefact would have been extremely variable as can be seen in Ward Perkin's (1954: 266 see Fig. 2.23)

survey of representations of this form of dress accessory on contemporary grave effigies.

3.6A: Cast large decorative strap-end (late 13th – 14th century)

2.4.7: Cast strap-ends with openwork decoration (see Fig. 2.24)

This form of strap-end was cast as a complete artefact in a similar way to the larger and more decorative form above (3.6). The categories have been defined by the overall form of the artefact. Therefore 3.7A is a single cast plate that was attached to the end of the strap whilst 3.7B has a hollow aperture on the inside edge for the belt.

3.7A: Cast single plate strap-end with openwork decoration (late 13th – mid-14th century)

3.7B: Cast hollow strap-end with openwork decoration (early 15th – mid-15th century)

2.4.8: Strap-end plates (see Fig. 2.26)

The strap-end plates represent all forms of strap-ends classified above. In general it is not possible to definitively identify which form of strap-end the plates were from although certain forms are only represented in certain forms of strap-end. For example, categories 3.8P-Q are from forked spacer strap-ends (3.3J-K) as this is the only general form of strap-end which has a rectangular plate with a circular expansion towards the outside edge. The subcategories classified here are determined by the shape of the plate, the presence of any terminal, and the presence of any decoration.

3.8A: Rectangular strap-end plate with no decoration (mid-13th – 16th century)

3.8B: Rectangular strap-end plate with decoration (mid-13th – 16th century)

3.8C: Rectangular strap-end plate with openwork decoration (mid-14th – 15th century)

3.8D: Rectangular strap-end plate with a tab terminal and no decoration (late 13th – 16th century)

3.8E: Rectangular strap-end plate with a tab terminal and decoration (late 13th – 16th century)

3.8F: Rectangular strap-end plate with a trefoil terminal and no decoration (late 13th – 15th century)

3.8G: Rectangular strap-end plate with an angled outside edge and no decoration (early 14th – 15th century

3.8H: Rectangular strap-end plate with an angled outside edge and openwork decoration (early 14th – 15th century)
3.8I: Rectangular strap-end plate with an angled outside edge with a tab terminal and no decoration (early 14th – 15th century)
3.8J: Rectangular strap-end plate with an angled outside edge with a tab terminal and decoration (early 14th – 15th century)
3.8K: Rectangular strap-end plate with an angled outside edge with a trefoil terminal and no decoration (early 14th – 15th century)
3.8L: Tongue shaped strap-end plate with no decoration (late 13th – 15th century)
3.8M: Tongue shaped strap-end plate with decoration (late 13th – 15th century)
3.8N: Trapezoidal strap-end plate with no decoration (13th – 15th century)
3.8O: Trapezoidal strap-end plate with decoration (13th – 15th century)
3.8P: Rectangular strap-end plate with a circular expansion towards the outside edge with no decoration (late 13th – 16th century)
3.8Q: Rectangular strap-end plate with a circular expansion towards the outside edge with decoration (late 13th – 16th century)
3.8R: Circular strap-end plate with no decoration (14th – 15th century)

2.5: Mounts

Dress mounts were primarily used to decorate belts although some examples with a central hole would have been used to protect the strap from the buckle pin piercing the strap. Mounts were attached to a wide variety of late medieval material culture such as book bindings, boxes, horse harnesses and animal collars and it is likely that some forms of mount could have been used on more than one form of material culture. However, the mounts classified within this typology have, at the very least, the potential to have functioned as dress accessories. The initial categorisation of mounts is determined by their shape which follows the methodology employed by Egan and Pritchard (1991). The subcategories are defined through the production method used to manufacture the mounts and the presence of any additional decoration. The only form of mount with a definitive function is the shield shaped mount (4.16) which acted as the other half of the fastening mechanism used on folding end clasps (2.1).

2.5.1: Circular mounts (see Fig. 2.28)

This category of mount is formed from a single circular piece of cast or sheet metal. The subcategories have been defined by the form of manufacture (cast or sheet), the presence of any decoration and whether the mount is domed or not.

- 4.1A: Plain sheet metal circular mount (late 13th – 16th century)
- 4.1B: Sheet metal circular mount with stamped decoration (late 13th – 16th century)
- 4.1C: Sheet metal circular mount with engraved decoration (late 13th – 16th century)
- 4.1D: Plain cast circular mount (mid-12th – mid-15th century)
- 4.1E: Cast circular mount with moulded decoration (mid-14th – 16th century)
- 4.1F: Domed circular mount (mid-12th – 16th century)
- 4.1G: Circular mount in the shape of a ring (mid-14th – early 15th century)

2.5.2: Bar mounts (see Fig. 2.29)

Bar mounts differ from rectangular mounts (4.11) as the longest side of this form of mount would have been placed across the strap. Again a distinction has been made between sheet metal examples (4.2A-H) and cast examples (4.2I-O). Further subcategories have been defined by the presence of decoration, suspension loops for pendants, terminals and central expansions.

- 4.2A: Plain simple rectangular sheet metal bar mount (12th – 16th century)
- 4.2B: Decorated simple rectangular sheet metal bar mount (12th – 16th century)
- 4.2C: Plain sheet metal bar mount with suspension loop for pendant (mid-14th – early 15th century)
- 4.2D: Decorated sheet metal bar mount with suspension loop for pendant (mid-14th – early 15th century)
- 4.2E: Plain sheet metal mount with expanded central lobe (mid-15th – late 15th century)
- 4.2F: Decorated sheet metal mount with expanded central lobe (mid-15th – late 15th century)
- 4.2G: Sheet metal bar mount with expanded terminal lobes (12th – 16th century)
- 4.2H: Sheet metal bar mount with expanded terminal lobes and central lobe (12th – 16th century)
- 4.2I: Plain simple rectangular cast bar mount (mid-13th – early 15th century)
- 4.2J: Decorated simple rectangular cast bar mount (mid-14th – early 15th century)
- 4.2K: Cast bar mount with suspension loop for pendant (mid-12th – 15th century)

4.2L: Plain cast bar mount with expanded central lobe (mid-14th – early 15th century)
4.2M: Decorated cast bar mount with expanded central lobe (mid-14th – early 15th century)
4.2N: Cast bar mount with expanded terminal lobes (12th – 16th century)
4.2O: Cast bar mount with expanded terminal lobes and central lobe. The central lobe is usually wider than the terminal lobes and has a large central hole. (mid-12th – 15th century)

2.5.3: Trefoil mounts (see Fig. 2.30)

Trefoil mounts have three projections around the circumference of the mount. The subcategories are defined by production method and the presence of any decoration or doming. The only exception is 5.3E which is a formed of several individual pieces to complete the artefact and this is potentially a book mount.

4.3A: Sheet metal trefoil mount with stamped decoration (mid-14th – early 15th century)
4.3B: Sheet metal trefoil mount with domed centre (mid-14th – early 15th century)
4.3C: Plain cast trefoil mount (early 15th – mid-15th century)
4.3D: Cast trefoil mount with domed centre (early 13th century)
4.3E: Composite trefoil mount (early 13th – 16th century)

2.5.4: Quatrefoil mounts (see Fig. 2.31)

This form of mount has four projections around the artefact. The subcategories are defined by manufacture method, decoration techniques used and whether the mount is domed or not.

4.4A: Plain sheet metal quatrefoil mount (13th – 16th century)
4.4B: Sheet metal quatrefoil mount with stamped decoration (14th – 16th century)
4.4C: Sheet metal quatrefoil mount with engraved decoration (late 13th – mid-14th century)
4.4D: Sheet metal quatrefoil mount with domed centre (mid-14th – early 15th century)
4.4E: Plain cast quatrefoil mount (13th – 15th century)

2.5.5: Cinquefoil mounts (see Fig. 2.32)

Unlike the previous two categories cinquefoil mounts start to resemble rosettes or flowers with five projections around the artefact.

4.5A: Sheet metal cinquefoil mount with stamped decoration (mid-14th – mid-15th century)
4.5B: Domed sheet metal cinquefoil mount (mid-14th – mid-15th century)

2.5.6: Sexfoil mounts (see Fig. 2.33)

Sexfoil mounts are the single most common form of foil mount and in a similar fashion to cinquefoil mounts resemble rosettes or flowers. The subcategories are initially defined by whether the mount is cast or of sheet metal and then further categorised by decoration technique and the presence of any doming.

4.6A: Plain sheet metal sexfoil mount (late 13th – 16th century)
4.6B: Sheet metal sexfoil mount with stamped decoration (late 13th – early 15th century)
4.6C: Domed sheet metal sexfoil mount (late 13th – 16th century)
4.6D: Sheet metal sexfoil mount with domed centre (late 13th – 16th century)
4.6E: Plain cast sexfoil mount (late 13th – mid-15th century)

2.5.7: Septfoil mounts (see Fig. 2.34)

Septfoils have seven projections around the circumference of the mount and resemble a rosette or flower. Only one form was identified from the urban assemblages (5.7A).

4.7A: Plain sheet metal septfoil mount

2.5.8: Octofoil mounts (see Fig. 2.35)

Mount with eight projections around the circumference. The forms of this mount are defined by production method with further subcategories defined by the presence of any decoration or doming.

4.8A: Plain sheet metal octofoil mount (late 13th – mid-15th century)
4.8B: Sheet metal octofoil mount with stamped decoration (late 13th – mid-15th century
4.8C: Domed sheet metal octofoil mount (late 13th – early 15th century)
4.8D: Plain cast octofoil mount (late 13th – mid-14th century)

4.8E: Domed cast octofoil mount (late 13th – mid-14th century)

4.8F: Composite octofoil mount with openwork decoration. This form of mount consists of a cast octofoil frame which is riveted to a sheet metal backing plate. (early 15th – mid-15th century)

2.5.9: Multifoil mounts (see Fig. 2.36)

Multifoil mounts have over eight projections round the circumference of the artefact. The total number is usually even and these are grouped together due to their relative scarcity within the urban assemblages and the terminology follows Egan and Pritchard (1991: 195). All subcategories are made from sheet metal and have been defined by the presence of decoration and doming.

4.9A: Plain sheet metal multifoil mount (mid-14th – mid-15th century)

4.9B: Sheet metal multifoil mount with stamped decoration (mid-14th – mid-15th century)

4.9C: Domed sheet metal multifoil mount (mid-14th – mid-15th century)

4.9D: Sheet metal multifoil mount with domed centre (mid-14th – mid-15th century)

2.5.10: Lozenge shaped mounts (see Fig. 2.37)

Lozenge, or diamond, shaped mounts are all made from sheet metal. The subcategories of this form of mount are defined by the presence of any decoration, central hole or terminals at the ends of the mount.

4.10A: Lozenge shaped mount with no decoration (late 13th – mid-15th century)

4.10B: Lozenge shaped mount with decoration (late 13th – mid-15th century)

4.10C: Lozenge shaped mount with a central hole and no decoration (mid-13th – 16th century)

4.10D: Lozenge shaped mount with expanded terminals at either end (late 13th – 16th century)

2.5.11: Rectangular mounts (see Fig. 2.38)

Rectangular mounts have their longest sides along the length of the strap as opposed to bar mounts which are set across the belt. The rectangular mounts are primarily categorised by the production method. Further subcategories are identified by the decoration methods used and the presence of any doming.

4.11A: Sheet metal rectangular mount with no decoration (early 13th – 16th century)
4.11B: Sheet metal rectangular mount with stamped decoration (early 13th – mid-15th century)
4.11C: Sheet metal rectangular mount with engraved decoration (early 13th – mid-15th century)
4.11D: Domed sheet metal rectangular mount with no decoration (mid-13th – mid-15th century)
4.11E: Sheet metal rectangular mount with a domed centre and no decoration (early 15th – mid-15th century)
4.11F: Sheet metal rectangular mount with a domed centre and decoration (early 15th – mid-15th century)
4.11G: Cast rectangular mount with no decoration (mid-13th – mid-15th century)
4.11H: Cast rectangular mount with decoration (mid-13th century – mid-15th century)
4.11I: Domed cast rectangular mount with no decoration (late 13th – early 15th century)
4.11J: Domed cast rectangular mount with decoration (late 13th – early 15th century)
4.11K: Cast rectangular frame mount (early 13th – mid-13th century)

2.5.12: Hexagonal mounts (see Fig. 2.39)

Only one form of hexagonal mount was identified from the urban assemblages and this is produced from sheet metal.

4.12A: Domed hexagonal mount (late 13th – mid-15th century)

2.5.13: Octagonal mounts (see Fig. 2.40)

All of the mounts of this general form are produced from sheet metal. The octagonal mount categories have been classified by the presence of any doming.

4.13A: Sheet metal octagonal mount with no decoration (late 13th – mid-15th century)
4.13B: Domed sheet metal octagonal mount with no decoration (late 13th – mid-15th century)

2.5.14: Tri-lobed mounts (see Fig. 2.41)

Tri-lobed mounts were produced from sheet metal which was then stamped. Although this form of mount is relatively uncommon, when this form of dress

accessory has been identified they all conform to the same shape and decorative motifs. The mount consists of three lobes in a line each with a beaded border and repoussé decoration.

4.14A: Tri-lobed mount (15th – 16th century)

2.5.15: Figurative and non-figurative mounts (see Fig. 2.42)

These forms of mount have been defined by the overall shape of the artefact. They are all explicit depictions of the shape that defines them.

4.15A: Acorn shaped mount (late 13th – 16th century)
4.15B: Arrow shaped mount (late 13th – 16th century)
4.15C: Cross shaped mount (late 13th – 16th century)
4.15D: Crown shaped mount (late 13th – 16th century)
4.15E: Fleur-de-lis shaped mount (late 13th – 16th century)
4.15F: Leaf shaped mount (late 13th – 16th century)
4.15G: Letter shaped mount (late 13th – 16th century)
4.15H: Pinecone shaped mount (late 13th – 16th century)
4.15I: Shell shaped mount (late 13th – 16th century)
4.15J: Shield shaped mount (late 13th – 16th century)
4.15K: Star shaped mount (late 13th – 16th century)
4.15L: Non-figurative mount (late 13th – 16th century)

2.5.16: Shield shaped mounts (see Fig. 2.43)

This form of mount would have been attached to the end of a belt and acts as the other half of the fastening mechanism for folding end clasps. The shield shaped mount itself is made of sheet metal and has a rectangular expansion at the outside edge of the artefact. A cast, usually plain, bar mount was then riveted into place and the end of the strap would be passed through the clasp frame. The bar mount on the shield shaped mount would be held in place by an identical bar mount attached to the folding end of the clasp.

4.16A: Shield shaped mount for use with a folding end clasp (2.1) (late 13th – 16th century)

2.6: Strap loops

Strap loops would have been used to hold down the belt end which had passed through the buckle loop in the same way that modern belts have a loop of fabric. This

form of artefact has often been misidentified as a buckle frame in published catalogues (for example Harvey 1975: 255 1725). However, there are several indicators that can be used to identify an artefact as a strap loop rather than a buckle. First, the frame of a strap loop is significantly thicker than that of buckle frames, particularly at the base of the strap loop compared to the inside edge of a buckle frame. More easily identifiable, however, are the indications that this form of artefact was attached to a strap. This can take the form of either two opposed cast projections on the inside of the frame or a rivet on the base of the frame which can be integral or indicated by a hole in the centre of the base. As with the buckle and clasp frames the general strap loop categories are determined by the shape of the frame (6.1-4). Further subcategories are determined by the variation within the general frame form and in the production methods used to manufacture the artefact.

2.6.1: Trapezoidal strap loop frames (see Fig. 2.44)

This form of strap loop is divided into six different subcategories (5.1A-F).

- 5.1A: Plain cast trapezoidal strap loop frame (late 13th – early 15th century)
- 5.1B: Cast trapezoidal strap loop frame with moulded decoration on top of frame (13th – 15th century)
- 5.1C: Cast trapezoidal strap loop frame with cast opposed internal projections (mid-12th – early 15th century)
- 5.1D: Cast trapezoidal strap loop frame with both moulded decoration on top of frame and opposed internal projections (mid-12th – early 15th century)
- 5.1E: Cast trapezoidal strap loop frame with integral rivet on base of frame (mid-14th – early 15th century)
- 5.1F: Trapezoidal strap loop frame formed from folded strip of sheet metal (mid-14th – early 15th century)

2.6.2: Rectangular strap loop frames (see Fig. 2.45)

This form of strap loop has been divided into six separate subcategories (5.2A-F).

- 5.2A: Plain cast rectangular strap loop frame (late 13th – early 15th century)
- 5.2B: Cast rectangular strap loop frame with moulded decoration on top of frame (13th – 15th century)
- 5.2C: Cast rectangular strap loop frame with cast opposed internal projections (mid-12th – early 15th century)

5.2D: Cast rectangular strap loop frame with both moulded decoration on top of frame and opposed internal projections (mid-13th – mid-15th century)
5.2E: Cast rectangular strap loop frame with integral rivet on base of frame (mid-14th – 16th century)
5.2F: Rectangular strap loop frame formed from folded strip of sheet metal (late 13th – early 15th century)

2.6.3: Oval strap loop frames (see Fig. 2.46)

This form of strap loop has been divided into six separate subcategories (5.3A-F)

5.3A: Plain cast oval strap loop frame (late 13th – early 15th century)
5.3B: Cast oval strap loop frame with cast opposed internal projections (13th – 15th century)
5.3C: Cast oval strap loop frame with cast opposed internal projections and moulded decoration on top of frame (mid-12th – early 15th century)
5.3D: Cast oval strap loop frame with integral rivet on base of frame (late 13th – early 14th century)
5.3E: Cast oval strap loop frame with central bar (late 13th – 16th century)
5.3F: Cast oval strap loop frame with collared knop on top of frame similar to D-shaped buckle frame 1.5C (14th – 15th century)

2.6.4: Pentagonal strap loop frames (see Fig. 2.47)

This form of strap loop has been divided into three separate subcategories (5.4A-C)

5.4A: Plain cast pentagonal strap loop frame (14th – 15th century)
5.4B: Cast pentagonal strap loop frame with integral rivet on base of frame (14th – 15th century)
5.4C: Pentagonal strap loop frame formed from folded strip of sheet metal. (mid-14th – early 15th century)
5.4D: onal strap loop frame formed from folded strip of sheet metal.

Chapter 3: The Assemblages

3.1: Introduction

This chapter presents the 2,576 identified dress accessories from the 15 city assemblages and these have been categorised using the typology defined in Chapter 2. In total there are 1,194 buckles, 55 clasps, 397 strap-ends, 753 mounts, and 177 strap loops (see Table 3.1). These figures should not be treated as exact numbers from each city as, although the undertaken survey was extensive, it was not exhaustive. In the majority of cases this was due to access issues as, for example, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAAM) in Exeter was undergoing renovation work during the museum visit meaning that some artefacts included in the published catalogue for this city (Allan 1984) were not available. Similarly the small assemblages of dress accessories from St Peter's Street, Northampton (Williams 1979) and 25 Bridge Street, Chester (Garner 2008) were not available for examination. In other cases, such as at Leicester, only the copper alloy belt fittings were examined due to access restraints and this will undoubtedly have resulted in some iron and lead/tin alloy dress accessories being overlooked. However, where full comparable assemblages were available (at Coventry, Lincoln, and Oxford for example) it is clear that the vast majority of dress accessories were made from copper alloy, and the numbers of iron and lead/tin alloy belt fittings are likely to be very small. Finally, small quantities of objects on display were unavailable due to problems accessing the cases.

Table 3.1 shows that copper alloy was the principal material used to produce late medieval dress accessories, with 87.50% of all belt fittings made from this metal. These numbers will have been slightly skewed due to the access issues outlined above but this alone does not explain the overall trend. Both iron and lead/tin alloy dress accessories were identified in similar smaller quantities, but the differences in the distribution of these artefacts amongst the 15 towns and cities is significant. These figures are likely to be reduced due to preservation and identification issues; iron preservation in the ground is generally poor across all the cities covered and this will undoubtedly have resulted in some artefacts disintegrating or not being identified. Similarly lead/tin alloy belt fittings tend to be restricted to small mounts and these can easily be missed during excavation. Generally, it is easier to identify fragments of

copper alloy belt fittings as dress accessories due to the variety of distinctive aspects for specific forms, and although fragments of iron and lead/tin artefacts have been identified, it is probable that some artefacts went unrecorded.

Relatively large assemblages of iron dress accessories were recorded at London, Southampton, Winchester and York whilst almost all the lead/tin examples were from London. The London Girdlers' Guild regulations of 1323 and 1344 sought to outlaw dress accessories produced from lead, pewter, and tin as these were regarded as inferior products to those made from copper alloy and iron or steel (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 18). These regulations were designed to apply not only to London but across the country and the significant number of lead/tin mounts from Meols (Egan 2007: 81) seems to suggest that this was a nationwide issue. However, the numbers of lead/tin alloy artefacts identified during data collection suggests that on the whole this was a situation that only applied to the capital. The number of lead/tin dress accessories in use in London increases steadily from the late thirteenth century onwards and this demonstrates that the efforts to restrict the use of lead/tin were unsuccessful. This is supported by the fact that these regulations had to be reissued several times and indeed by the early fifteenth century there appears to be a wider acceptance of lead/tin alloy belt fittings, as shown by a case brought in London in 1417 (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 18-19).

The catalogue is presented here in order to demonstrate the variety in form of late medieval dress accessories and the frequency with which these occur within the urban assemblages. Each section covers a single category of dress accessory as defined by the typology and this allows a comparison of the quantities of each subcategory. It is important to remember that some of the artefacts identified as dress accessories could have been used on other forms of material culture and it is possible that certain forms of artefact performed more than one function. Where there is uncertainty over the functionality of a category of dress accessory the possible other uses are identified. Finally, the geographical distribution of each category of dress accessory is outlined and this begins to identify the regional variations in the uses of belt fittings. The trends identified here are then discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

3.2.: The Buckles

Table 3.2 shows the general types and the distribution of each form within the individual assemblage. As with the catalogue as a whole, copper alloy is the dominant material from which buckle frames were manufactured, with 836 examples of the total of 1051. There are also 154 iron buckle frames and these account for the vast majority of the total of 193 iron dress accessories. Inevitably, London has produced the largest assemblage of buckles from any one city, with 356 examples, although there are also significant assemblages from Coventry, Leicester, Southampton, Winchester and York. Each sub-section in this chapter will cover a single overall form although the sub-categories in the typology are explored further.

3.2.1: Circular buckle frames – 1.1 (see Fig. 3.1)

A total of 109 circular buckle frames were identified from 10 of the urban assemblages (see Table 3.3). The majority of these were plain large frames (1.1C) which account for 89 of this total. In addition, 18 1.1A were identified with the decorated subcategories 1.1B and 1.1D represented by a single example apiece. The majority of the 18 1.1A buckles are of copper alloy although there are 4 examples in iron and 2 of lead/tin alloy and it is possible that this subcategory could have been used on shoes as well as on belts. 7 of the 15 city assemblages contain at least a single example of this form although only London and York produced more than a single example. The 9 individual examples from London represent the largest group and also included the only decorated example 1.1B, LON0042. This frame is unique within this catalogue both in terms of its decoration, with added connected roundels, and in terms of its manufacture, being formed from a folded thick bar.

1.1C is a much more prevalent form of circular buckle than 1.1A, with 89 individual examples from 10 of the towns and cities studied. Again copper alloy is the most common material, there being 84 individual examples, whilst the remaining 5 were made from iron. The most striking aspect of this form is how uniform these artefacts are in their appearance with even the iron examples being very similar to their copper alloy counterparts (see Fig. 3.2). London is again well represented with 52 examples, although there are smaller but significant assemblages from Coventry, Gloucester, Leicester, Southampton, Winchester, and York. This form of buckle is

particularly significant due to the context in which it is often found; examples within this catalogue have been excavated from burials in Gloucester (St Oswald's, (Heighway and Bryant 1999), Leicester (St Austin Friars, Mellor and Pearce 1981), Coventry (St Mary's, Rylatt and Mason 2003), and London (East Smithfield, Grainger *et al*. 2008; St Mary Graces, Grainger and Phillpotts 2011; St Mary Merton, Miller and Saxby: 2007).

The final form of circular buckle, 1.1D, is only represented by a single example, LON0849. Although this is unique within the current catalogue, further examples are known from the Museum of London unprovenanced reference collection and a stone mould from Salisbury (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 104-5). It has been suggested that this form of buckle was produced as a cheap copy of more sturdy and decorative forms in copper alloy and silver (*ibid*) which are known from the continent (Fingerlin 1971: 169; see Fig. 3.3)

3.2.2: Circular buckle frames with a central bar – 1.2 (see Fig. 3.4)

Circular buckles with a central bar are much less common than those without, with only 21 individuals examples identified during data collection (see Table 3.4). It is clear that the larger subcategories of this type of frame (1.2C and 1.2D) are more prevalent than their smaller equivalents (1.2A and 1.2B). Copper alloy is again the dominant material used to manufacture this general form of buckle, with only 3 examples produced from other metals. The geographical spread of this category is relatively even with no single assemblage producing a significantly higher proportion than any other. However, it is noticeable that 2 of the largest assemblages of dress accessories from Winchester and York contained no circular buckles with a central bar. This could be seen as insignificant as the numbers from any one town are relatively low. However, given that these 2 cities provided the second and third highest number of buckles in total, the absence of any examples of this general form is noteworthy. In contrast, the Midlands are relatively well represented with Coventry providing the largest assemblage with a total of 5, and smaller assemblages from Leicester and Oxford.

3.2.3: Oval buckle frames – 1.3 (see Fig. 3.5)

Oval buckle frames are the single most prevalent form of buckle frame with 306 coming from all 15 of the towns and cities studied (see Table 3.5). The largest assemblage of oval buckle frames was from London, where 122 individual examples were identified. Significant assemblages were also recorded at Winchester and York, whilst Coventry, Leicester, Lincoln, Oxford, and Southampton all had over 10 examples. The overwhelming majority of this form of buckle was produced from copper alloy with 295 examples manufactured from this material. Only 8 iron examples, 4 from London and 2 apiece from Winchester and York, and 3 lead/tin alloy examples, all from London, were identified. 20 further artefacts could be classified as oval buckle frames, due to diagnostic features such as the offset bar, but due to their fragmentary nature further classification using the current typology could not be made as certain features are shared by more than one type of oval buckle.

The simpler subcategories of oval buckle frame (1.3A, 1.3B, and 1.3D) were the most common forms identified with 30, 51 and 41 individual examples respectively. It is noticeable, however, that it is not the simplest form (1.3A) that is the most common. The offset bars present on both 1.3B and 1.3D would, at a functional level, have made the attachment of a buckle plate and belt easier as the straight line of the bar facilitates the addition of the most common form of plate which is formed of a single sheet of copper alloy that is folded round the inside edge of the frame. These two forms are found across the whole country, especially when the smallest assemblages of a single oval buckle from Chester, Gloucester, and Plymouth are discounted.

Several of the more decorative forms are also noteworthy. Significant numbers of subcategories 1.3F (33 examples), 1.3H (30 examples), and 1.3I (22 examples) were also identified. The cast decoration on these frames would have been relatively easily achieved during production using the moulds available to the manufacturers, especially compared to the more extravagant knops on form 1.3J. The geographical spread of these four subcategories of buckle is worthy of note. 1.3F, despite the relatively large numbers of this form, is mainly restricted to the larger assemblages from London, Winchester and York. Type 1.3H, although it also appears in larger numbers in London and Winchester, is much more evenly spread with ten of the fifteen cities represented. 1.3G is represented by 15 individual examples but unusually the

largest single assemblage is from York and the use of this form of oval buckle seems to be principally outside London.

1.3K and 1.3L both share the defining feature of a sheet roller added to the outside edge of the frame. However, there is a large discrepancy between the prevalence of these two forms. A total of 22 individual examples of form 1.3K were identified, with the majority being excavated in London and smaller assemblages from Winchester, York, Leicester, Hereford, and Lincoln. 1.3L, on the other hand is represented by a single example from Deansway in Worcester. The prevalence of 1.3K over 1.3L can potentially be explained by use. The width of the recess on the outside edge of the frame means that 1.3K can only be fitted with a sheet roller for a buckle whilst the wider recess of 1.3L can be fitted with the folding end of a folding strap clasp.

1.3M is a subcategory of buckle that is restricted to 3 finds from Winchester in the present survey. This form of oval buckle is significantly different to the other forms represented here due to the production methods employed. The buckle frame is formed from a single bar of copper alloy which is folded into shape. Although no other buckles of this form were identified during data collection other published examples are known from sites such as Castletown, Isle of Man (Egan 1996a). There is also a large assemblage of production waste from the manufacture dating to the early sixteenth century from London which contains examples of every stage of production for this form of buckle (Egan and Watson 2011; see Fig. 3.6)

The 2 decorated oval frames (1.3O) were both identified within the assemblage from Coventry. COV004 (see Fig. 3.5) consists of a similar decorative scheme used on form 1.1D with cast concave roundels around the frame and on the cast pin. The roundel on the pin and one on the frame retain a setting of glass and it can be assumed that the remaining roundels would have also been used to hold inserts. COV066 (see Fig. 3.7) is decorated with a cast twisted rope motif which is similar to decorative motifs used on brooches during the late medieval period (see Egan and Pritchard 1991: 249).

Finally, subcategory 1.3P is represented by 10 copper alloy examples. One of these artefacts was recovered from a burial at St Mary Merton (Egan 2007b: 228-9, LON0931 see Fig. 3.8), the wearer has been identified as a male during the skeletal analysis. This form of buckle is mainly restricted to the larger assemblages from

London, York and Winchester although single examples were identified within the assemblages from Leicester and Plymouth.

3.2.4: Double oval buckle frames – 1.4 (see Fig. 3.9)

Double oval buckles represent the second largest category of buckle frame, after the oval buckle. The majority of double oval buckle frames are made of copper alloy (see Table 3.6) with 171 of the total of 188 being manufactured from this material. Only 11 iron examples were identified and these were all plain frames (1.4A), whilst 6 lead/tin alloy frames were identified, and these are more evenly split across subcategories 1.4A, 1.4C and 1.4E. This general form of buckle has a distribution bias towards the assemblages in the Midlands, particularly Coventry and Leicester. Although London has produced more examples and Winchester an identical number of double oval frames, when these numbers are turned into percentages of the overall numbers of dress accessories and buckles it is clear that the assemblage of double oval buckles from Coventry represent a larger proportion of the collection. This is particularly significant when the production evidence from the Much Park Street excavations is taken into account, where a ceramic mould fragment from the late twelfth century has been excavated (Bayley 1982). This demonstrates that this form of buckle was being produced and worn significantly earlier in Coventry than in London, where it only starts to appear in the late thirteenth century.

1.4A is the simplest and most prevalent subcategory of double oval buckle frame with 104 individual examples. 1.4C is the second largest group with 48 artefacts, the number of this form being significantly higher than for either of the other two decorated subcategories 1.4B with 16 examples, and 1.4D with 10. These figures show that the bows of the double oval frame were most likely to have been embellished with moulded decoration, whilst the ends of the central bar were more often undecorated. The geographical distribution for forms 1.4A, 1.4B, 1.4C, and 1.4D are very similar, especially when the smallest assemblages are excluded from consideration. In each instance the plain form (1.4A) represents the most numerous of these four forms whilst 1.4C is the most common form of decorated example.

Finally, 1.4E is represented by 10 individual examples within the current catalogue. They are present particularly in the south from London, Plymouth, Southampton, and Winchester and in the west with examples from Hereford and

Worcester. However, the largest assemblage is the 3 examples recovered from York. The unusual production methods used in the manufacture of this form of buckle suggests that these had a particular, if currently uncertain, function.

3.2.5: D-shaped buckle frames – 1.5 (see Fig. 3.10)

A total of 119 D-shaped buckles were identified (see Table 3.7). The medium sized frame (1.5C) with a width of between 16mm and 30mm, was the most prevalent form of this category of buckle with 57 individual examples with smaller examples (1.5A, 1.5B, and 1.5E) and larger examples (1.5D) less well represented with 36 examples each. D-shaped frames are the only form of buckle frame where iron examples outnumber copper alloy examples with the proportion of iron frames increasing with the width of the frame. This preference towards iron in the production of D-shaped frames is therefore real and the prevalence of iron frames over their copper alloy equivalents is worth exploring. The manufacturing methods used to produce iron and copper alloy frames were very different as the majority of copper alloy buckle frames were cast as opposed to the forging techniques used to produce iron frames. This explains the fact that more complex frame shapes could be produced in copper alloy and the simple D-shape would have been better suited to the techniques used in producing iron buckle frames.

The geographical spread and relative proportions of D-shaped buckle frames is also worthy of note. The 119 examples of this form represent 11.78% of the total number of buckle frames and of the 5 largest assemblages of buckles London, Southampton and Winchester all broadly conform to this proportion. However, only 3.16% of the buckles from Coventry were D-shaped and as all ironwork was available for study this cannot be adequately explained through a lack of data. In contrast, D-shaped frames from York make up 25.00% of the total assemblage of buckles from the city. Again, with the third largest assemblage in the country this cannot be seen as chance. This can partly be explained by the distribution of subcategory 1.5C. Although only 13 examples of this form of frame were identified, almost half of these were from York and this represents twice the number of the next largest assemblage from any single town or city.

3.2.6: D-shaped buckle frames with a central bar – 1.6 (see Fig. 3.11)

There were only 8 examples of this form of frame recorded during data collection (see Table 3.8) and therefore very little can be usefully said. Despite this, it appears that the distribution between the sub-categories is very similar to those detailed for double oval buckle frames. The plainest form of this buckle frame (1.6A) was the most common with four examples distributed around the country. Form 1.6C was the most prevalent of the decorated forms and this again follows the pattern observed within double oval frames where decoration on the inside and outside edges of the frame was most common. The geographical distribution of this form of buckle is not significant given the low numbers although it is interesting to note that the south of England is relatively well represented with examples from Exeter, Southampton and Winchester. These examples must be seen as the earliest examples of a form of buckle frame which became much more common in the post-medieval period, as can be seen in London (Egan 2005: 36).

3.2.7: Rectangular buckle frames – 1.7 (see Fig. 3.12)

A total of 97 rectangular buckle frames have been identified (see Table 3.9). Although this form represents the second most common iron form after the D-shaped frame (1.5), copper alloy examples are still more usual with 58 individual buckles compared to 38 made of iron. The plainest subcategory (1.7A) is the most common, with 42 individual examples from the 15 towns under consideration. This is in contrast to the second most common small framed subcategory 1.7D where only 14 examples were identified. The second largest group of rectangular buckle frames is subcategory 1.7F with 21 examples all of which were produced from iron. This is similar to the largest forms of D-shaped buckle frames which were mainly, if not exclusively, manufactured from iron. It is important to remember that not all of these were necessarily dress accessories as buckles would also have been needed for harnesses for horses or other functions (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 95, Clark 1995).

Overall there is no apparent geographical bias with London, Winchester and York producing the largest assemblages. Southampton is the only city with slightly more than expected; with 12 examples although this includes 6 examples of type 1.7F which could have been used for functions other than dress. The more unusual frame

form 1.7I is represented by one example from Exeter and Leicester respectively and cannot be readily attributed to any specific region.

3.2.8: Rectangular buckle frames with a central bar – 1.8 (see Fig. 3.13)

Rectangular frames with a central bar are less common than those without, in total 66 examples were recorded (see Table 3.10). Copper alloy is again the most common material and it is noticeable that there are a much higher proportion of copper alloy examples of rectangular buckle frames with a central bar than for those without. The plainest subcategory of this frame, type 1.8A, is by far the most prevalent with 37 individual examples, or over half of the total number for this general category. The majority are made from copper alloy, 25 examples, whilst there are also 8 in iron and 4 made from lead/tin alloy. Following the trend shown within the double oval frames (1.4) and D-shaped with a central bar (1.6), it is the sides and edges of the frame which are most likely to have any elaboration. 1.8C consists of 17 decorated examples whilst 1.8B and 1.8D only have 4 and 2 identified examples respectively.

Generally, the geographical spread of this category of frame follows that shown for the rectangular buckle frames (1.7) and thus there are marginally fewer examples of rectangular buckle frames with a central bar from each individual city assemblage than for 1.7. The only real exception to this is Coventry where a total of 9 examples were identified. This again follows the distribution of double oval frames, which sees Coventry with a significantly higher proportion of this form of buckle than any other city. The most decorative form, 1.8G is not restricted to any one geographical area, there being just 3 examples from Coventry, London and Southampton.

3.2.9: Trapezoidal buckle frames – 1.9 (see Fig. 3.14)

Only 17 trapezoidal buckle frames, both with and without a central bar, were identified during data collection (see Table 3.11). All but one of these was produced in copper alloy, the other being a single iron example of 1.9A. As with general forms 1.4, 1.6 and 1.8, trapezoidal frames with a central bar were much less common than those without, with only three examples for forms 1.9D and 1.9E. The most common frame form was 1.9A with a total of 12, and this again follows the trend set by the

majority of other buckle forms where the plainest subcategories occur with the greatest frequency. The largest groups of trapezoidal buckles come from the three biggest assemblages of dress accessories in total with London and Winchester producing 5 examples and York 4.

3.2.10: Forked spacer buckles – 1.10 (see Fig. 3.15)

A total of 75 forked spacer buckles were identified with 11 assemblages producing at least a single example (see Table 3.12). The uniformity of this form of buckle is striking with the only variation being in the width of the frame and the presence of any decoration on the sheet plates, where they survive. Although London produced the second largest assemblage of forked spacer buckles it is noticeable that these 16 examples only represent 4.49% of the total assemblage of buckles from the capital. This is a very small proportion when the other major groups of buckles are taken into account with only Southampton, where forked spacer buckles make up 2.70% of the total buckle assemblage, having a smaller proportion of this form of buckle frame.

The proportion of forked spacer buckles from Oxford is the highest at 15.79% but this can be partly explained by the relatively small sample size especially when compared with the size of the assemblages from Coventry, London, Winchester and York. The 17 forked spacer buckles from York represent the largest assemblage from any one city, a proportion of 13.71% of the total assemblage of buckles. Unlike Oxford this cannot simply be explained by the size of the assemblage. With the manufacture of forked spacer artefacts continuing into the mid-late fifteenth century at production sites such as St Andrewgate in York (Rogers 2004: 920-921 see Fig. 3.16) it would appear that the use of forked spacer buckles was more long lasting in this city. Indeed, the low proportion of 1.10 in London suggests that this was a relatively short lived form in London whilst the higher percentages from elsewhere in the country suggest that forked spacer buckles continued in use and popularity.

3.2.11: Other buckle frames – 1.11 (see Fig. 3.17)

The 4 remaining buckles are classified within this general category (see Table 3.13). Only the pentagonal buckle frame (1.11A) was represented by more than a

single example. All of these artefacts were made in copper alloy. 2 of the buckle frames were identified within the assemblage from Coventry with 1 each from Southampton and Winchester. The small numbers of these forms of frames limits what can usefully be inferred from this, but does allow a fuller picture of the forms of buckle being used within late medieval England.

3.2.12: Buckle plates – 1.12 (see Fig. 3.31)

Buckle plates are by far the most common category of detached plate with a total of 184 examples from 13 of the city assemblages (see Table 3.24). Copper alloy is again the most frequent material used to manufacture them although there are 9 iron and 2 lead/tin alloy examples. The rectangular subcategories 1.12A and 1.12B make up the vast majority of buckle plates with 99 and 71 individual artefacts respectively. No other plate shape has more than 5 examples and this shows the consistency in producing rectangular buckle plates throughout the late medieval period. A relatively high proportion of buckle plates, 73 in total, are decorated with stamped, punched or engraved designs (mostly 1.12B but also 1.12D and 1.12H) although the majority are undecorated.

1.12I represents a different form of buckle plate to the folded sheet plate used to produce the other forms. The plate in this form is much thicker and the decoration was produced by paring metal away from the face of the plate to outline the desired image and the lower areas would have been enamelled (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 114). Although only 5 examples are present within the current samples other examples dating to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are known from King's Lynn (Geddes and Carter 1977: 287-8) and across Northern Europe (Fingerlin 1971: 37, 39).

The largest assemblage of detached buckle plates is from London where a total of 78 individual artefacts were identified. Other significant collections were identified from Winchester and York with 38 and 27 buckle plates respectively. The assemblage from York is notable due to the lack of decorated examples. 22 of the 27 plates in this assemblage were undecorated (21 1.12A and a single 1.12F) with only 5 displaying any punched or engraved decoration. This is in stark contrast to the other large assemblages where decorated examples make up a much larger proportion of the total assemblage. However, this is consistent with the pattern observed within the single sheet strap-ends (3.1) where York failed to produce a single decorated example.

3.3: The clasps

Clasps would have served a similar function to buckles as they would also have been used to fasten a belt. Table 3.14 shows the general categories and the quantity of clasps recovered from each of the fifteen cities studied. It is clear that this form of belt fastener was much less common than the buckle, with only 41 clasps being identified during the survey. They are almost exclusively produced from copper alloy with only 1 lead/tin alloy example identified from London. London also produced the largest single assemblage of clasp frames with 29 individual examples. In general, clasps were only identified in the larger collections from Coventry, London, Southampton, Winchester, and York although 2 frames were identified in the small assemblage from Plymouth. The relatively small number of clasp frames could potentially be explained by the similarity in form between clasps and buckles. Where there has been no indicator, such as a folding end or the attachment of a plate with no slot for a buckle pin, frames may have been erroneously identified as buckles. However, the numbers of any misidentified clasp frames can only be small, and the pattern indicated by the discrepancy between the numbers of clasp and buckle frames must represent the ratio of frames worn in late medieval England.

3.3.1: Folding end clasps – 2.1 (see Fig. 3.18)

Folding end clasps are by far the most common general clasp type within the current study, with 36 of the total of 41 clasps falling into this category (see Table 3.15). Most of the frames are made from cast copper alloy although there are two folded clasps of copper alloy (2.1E) and a cast lead/tin alloy example from London. The rectangular form of this type (2.1A) is the most numerous with 28 individual examples within the entire catalogue. The oval form 2.1B constitutes the second largest group with 4 individual examples, whilst 2.1C and 2.1D are represented by a single artefact each.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of folding end clasps (26) were identified from London. This is a much higher total than any other individual city, with the next largest group coming from York which only produced 4 examples. York also produced the only forked spacer folding end clasp and this is probably testament to the popularity of forked spacer dress accessories in general in late medieval York (see 3.2.10, 3.4.3).

3.3.2: Clasps without a folding end – 2.2 (see Fig. 3.19)

Clasps without a folding end are represented by a single artefact LON0391. This example could not have had a folding end due to the moulded decoration on the outside edge of the frame which in this case takes the form of a crowned head, and is not a buckle as the attached plate has no slot for a buckle pin on the inside edge of the frame. LON0391 is unique within this study but, although the form is unusual, other examples do exist. For example, a similar frame from Meols (Egan 2007: 100) depicts a monstrous face with eyes, teeth and possible ears and other examples have been recorded on the PAS database. Some of these examples including the one from Meols can be classified as buckles due to either the attachment of a buckle pin of a slot on the plate for the attachment of one.

3.3.3: Locking clasps – 2.3 (see Fig. 3.20)

This form of clasp is the only category that does not have a direct parallel within the buckle typology as the method of fastening the strap is completely different to the folding end clasp. A total of 4 examples were identified, these being from London and York (see Table 3.16). These artefacts would have been attached to straps but it is as yet uncertain whether they were definitively dress accessories, although a strap held within a private collection does seem remarkably similar to belts used as items of clothing (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 121; see Fig. 3.21). London and York produced 2 examples of this form of clasp each but due to the small numbers it is not possible to determine whether or not there is a geographical bias to the distribution of this form of artefact.

3.3.4: Clasp plates – 2.4 (see Fig. 3.33)

Clasp plates represent the smallest group of detached plates with only 14 copper alloy examples identified (see Table 3.26). The small numbers of plates within this category are in keeping with the low number of clasp frames that these plates would have been attached to. The only plate shape represented within the urban assemblages is the rectangular clasp plate. Plain examples (2.4A) are slightly more common than their decorated counterparts (2.4B). However the small size of the

sample means that no solid conclusions over the frequency of decoration on clasp plates can be reached. The geographical spread of clasp plates is in keeping with the distribution observed for clasp frames, with clasp plates only being found in cities where clasp frames have also been excavated. The only exceptions are Oxford, where a single clasp plate was identified and Coventry, where clasp frames were present but detached plates were not.

3.4: The strap-ends

Strap-ends were, as their name suggests, attached to the end of a belt to protect it from fraying and to ease the use of a strap with a buckle. The flat surface of metal on the strap-end provided an ideal place for decoration and accordingly the following subcategories have been split to differentiate between plain and decorated examples. A total of 312 strap-ends were identified from 14 of the cities studied with only Chester failing to provide a single example (see Table 3.17). The vast majority of these artefacts, 285 in total, were again made from copper alloy, and the remainder were manufactured from iron and lead/tin alloy in roughly equal numbers although the quantity of lead/tin alloy strap-ends is boosted by type 3.7B which is an exclusively lead/tin category.

London provided the largest assemblage of strap-ends, including all the lead/tin examples and the majority of the iron strap-ends. The proportion of strap-ends in the catalogue as a whole is 12.11% and this fits with the majority of the larger assemblages of dress accessories where the proportion of strap-ends is generally between 11-13%. The major exceptions to this are Lincoln, Southampton and Winchester. The 14 strap-ends from Lincoln represent 19.72% of the total of 71 and this is a higher proportion than would have been expected. It is important to note however, that although Lincoln provided the seventh highest total of dress accessories in the country, 71 is still a relatively small sample size and this high proportion may just be coincidental. Southampton and Winchester have proportions of 8.16% and 7.67% respectively and these are slightly smaller than would be expected.

3.4.1: Single sheet strap-ends – 3.1 (see Fig. 3.22)

Single sheet strap-ends are the second most common general form of this type of artefact with 86 individual examples recorded from 13 of the city assemblages studied (see Table 3.18). 76 of these were made from copper alloy with 6 iron and 4 lead/tin alloy examples all from London. Although the sheet metal was occasionally folded longitudinally along one side (forms 3.1C and 3.1D), it is much more common for the sheet metal plate to be folded horizontally along the end of the strap. The plain subcategory of this type (3.1A) has the most examples with 56, whilst decoration is not uncommon with form 3.1B accounting for 23 of the total number of single sheet strap-ends. 3.1E and 3.1F are all cast and are largely restricted to London, with only one example from Southampton. 3.1F is the decorated form of this type of strap-end and it is noticeable that where decoration is present it is in the form of an acorn which is a common motif within late medieval strap-ends.

London produced the largest single assemblage of single sheet strap-ends with 52 (29.38% of all strap-ends) although this represents a consistent percentage of the total number of strap-ends with the national average of 27.56%. The 10 strap-ends from Winchester is the only major exception as this accounts for 43.48% of all strap-ends from the city. However, the relatively small numbers of strap-ends in general mean that this does not conclusively show that this form of strap-end was any more popular in Winchester than any other city. The third largest assemblage is the 7 from York and these are all undecorated.

3.4.2: Double sheet strap-ends – 3.2 (see Fig. 3.23)

This category of strap-end is less common than the single sheet strap-end (see Table 3.19) with a total of 46 artefacts of this form identified during data collection. However, the method of joining two plates on the end of a strap allowed a much greater variation in the shape of the finished artefact than was possible by simply folding a sheet metal plate over the strap. Again this form of strap-end was mainly produced from copper alloy, although there are 7 iron double sheet strap-ends. The rectangular subcategories (3.2A-D) represent the most common shape with 28 examples between the 4 forms. Tongue-shaped double sheet strap-ends (3.2E and 3.2F) are the second largest group with 8 and 2 examples respectively whilst there are smaller groups for

the trapezoidal (3.2G and 3.2H), circular (3.2J) and pentagonal subcategories (3.2I). The proportion of plain to decorated examples is similar to that shown by the single sheet strap-ends, although double sheet strap-ends also have some terminals which are absent from the single sheet forms. In the current study these take the form of a simple tab, a lozenge or an acorn.

These forms of strap-end are much less widespread than the single sheet forms and have only been found in the cities with the larger assemblages of dress accessories as a whole. This can partially be explained by the likelihood of this composite strap-end coming apart either before or after deposition. Furthermore, as the 2 plates are usually only held together by 2 rivets the front and back plate could easily come apart from each other and the separate plates will have been identified as strap-end plates (4.2) rather than a double sheet strap-end. This is less likely with a single sheet strap-end, as even an incomplete artefact can usually be identified due to the fold of the sheet metal plate. However, this does not adequately explain the distribution of this form of strap-end. The largest assemblage is from London where 19 strap-ends of this category were identified, with York providing 12 examples including 3 decorated artefacts which differ from the pattern observed within single sheet strap-ends from the city.

3.4.3: Forked spacer strap-ends – 3.3 (see Fig. 3.24)

Forked spacer strap-ends are the most common category of identified strap-end with 111 copper alloy examples from 12 of the cities studied (see Table 3.20). The distinctive form of the forked spacer does aid identification even when fragmentary. However this alone cannot explain the quantity of this form of strap-end and the popularity of forked spacer strap-ends within England from the late thirteenth to the early sixteenth century. The straight sided forked spacers (3.3A-I) are the most common subcategories, accounting for 96 of the total number of strap-ends of this type. This is then followed by the forked spacer with a circular expansion towards the terminal (3.3J and 3.3K) with 14 examples, and a single semi-circular forked spacer (3.3L).

Although engraving and punching are present on a small number of forked spacer strap-ends the most common form of decoration is the presence of an integral terminal on the forked spacer itself. Indeed only 21 forked spacers have no terminal

present. The most frequent form of terminal is the acorn which appears on 56 individual artefacts including every single example of 3.3J and 3.3K. Within the straight forked spacer forms the figures are less pronounced due to the presence of other forms of terminal. However, the acorn terminal subcategories (3.3C and 3.3G) still provide the largest single groups with 42 examples between them. This shows the popularity of the acorn as a motif within late medieval England, particularly upon forked spacer strap-ends but also within dress accessories as a whole. Nonetheless, other terminal forms are present within the assemblage. These included the simplest form, the tab terminal, which is represented by 31 examples split between subcategories 3.3B and 3.3F. Other forms of terminal are much less common with only a single example of a lozenge (3.3D), a cruciform (3.3H), and a head (3.3I). Forked spacer strap-ends are one of the only categories of dress accessory where the simplest form of the artefact is not also the most numerous. This can be partly explained by the production method of the forked spacer, which was cast in stack moulds, meaning that the terminal provided a point for each forked spacer to be joined to the next. However, this does not explain why the acorn terminal outnumbers the simpler tab terminal so comprehensively.

The distribution of this category of strap-end across the country is significant. Only 3 of the 15 city assemblages failed to provide a single example of a forked spacer strap-end. Within the larger assemblages, only London has a proportion of forked spacer strap-ends lower than a third (30.51%), and, despite the small sample sizes from some of the other urban collections, this shows the popularity of this form of strap-end within late medieval England. The acorn terminal is not restricted to any one area of the country and this is attested to by the fact that every single assemblage that contained a forked spacer strap-end had an example with an acorn terminal. This includes the smaller assemblages from Hereford, Northampton, and Plymouth which only produced a single forked spacer strap-end each. Finally, the expanded forms 3.3J and 3.3K have a slightly different distribution pattern to the straight forked spacer forms. Although there are 5 examples from London and a single example from York, the remaining 9 are split between the assemblages from the Midlands from Lincoln in the east to Hereford and Worcester in the west and Coventry and Leicester in between. This pattern is supported by the loose plates from this form of strap-end (4.2P and 4.2Q) which were identified from Hereford, Northampton, and Oxford.

3.4.4: Composite strap-ends with side strips – 3.4 (see Fig. 3.25)

34 copper alloy composite strap-ends with side strips were identified during data collection (see Table 3.21). The rectangular forms 3.4A and 3.4B are the most common plate shape with 18 individual examples whilst the tongue forms (3.4D-F) account for 11. This category of strap-end is almost exclusive to London which provided 31 of the total number of composite strap-ends with side strips, with single examples found within the assemblages from Lincoln, Oxford, and Winchester. Plain examples are much more common than their decorated counterparts with only 5 decorated examples being recorded. However, the decoration on this category of strap-end can be much more ornate than on other forms of dress accessory as can be seen on the examples from Oxford (OXF052 see Fig. 3.26) and Winchester (WIN297 see Fig. 3.27) which have engraved saints on their front plates.

3.4.5: Composite strap-ends with a sheet spacer – 3.5 (see Fig. 3.28)

Composite strap-ends with a sheet spacer are less common than those with side strips, with only 21 individual examples. However, geographically this form of strap-end is much more widespread (see Table 3.22). This category of strap-end is almost exclusively produced from copper alloy, the exception being a single iron example from Oxford. The shapes of the plates used in manufacturing composite strap-ends with a sheet spacer are much more diverse than for 3.4. Rectangular plates (3.5A-E) are still the most frequent with 13 individual examples; however plates with an angled end are also present, with 7 whilst there is a single tongue-shaped example. Decoration is common on this form of strap-end with only 5 being unembellished. Usually this takes the form of a terminal cut into the ends of the plates and a simple tab terminal is the most frequent form (3.5C and 3.5G). Acorn terminals are also present within this category of strap-end and the plates they are found on are, at least within the present study, always decorated with engraved or openwork decoration (3.5E and 3.5H).

The distribution of this form of strap-end is in stark contrast to composite strap-ends with side strips which are almost exclusively found in London. London still provides the largest single assemblage, with 11 individual artefacts, however a further 6 city assemblages provided at least a single example. Coventry and York provided 3 examples apiece whilst there were single examples identified within the assemblages

from Lincoln, Southampton and Worcester. There are further published examples from Norwich including an example with an acorn terminal (Margeson 1993: 40).

3.4.6: Large decorative strap-ends – 3.6 (see Fig. 3.29)

Only one example of this strap-end, from Oxford, was identified. Despite being unique within the current study there are other published examples. This large decorative form is represented on several tomb effigies dating to the end of the fourteenth century and a comparable depiction was published in the London Museum Medieval Catalogue (LMMC Ward Perkins 1954: 266, 270; see Fig. 2.23) and further examples from England and Wales have also been published (Fingerlin 1971: 165). The small numbers of this category of strap-end can potentially be explained by a number of factors. Firstly, in comparison to other categories of strap-ends, a large amount of copper alloy would have been needed in order to produce this form and therefore these large decorative strap-ends would have been more expensive than other types. The amount of copper alloy would also have meant that these items would have had a higher scrap value even after use and are therefore more likely to have been recycled.

3.4.7: Cast strap-ends with openwork decoration – 3.7 (see Fig. 3.30)

Cast strap-ends with openwork decoration account for 10 individual artefacts. 3.7A is represented by a single example, whilst 3.7B accounts for the remaining 9 artefacts. All these particular strap-ends were identified from London and therefore no comparison from outside the capital is possible. The 9 strap-ends classified as 3.7B are all produced from lead/tin alloy and date to the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 151). It is noticeable that these artefacts date to the period where new forms were being developed and the London Girdlers' Guild were attempting to legislate against the use of lead/tin alloys for the production of dress accessories as they were thought to be of a much lower quality (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 19).

3.4.8: Strap-end plates – 3.8 (see Fig. 3.32)

A total of 85 strap-end plates were identified during data collection all of which were produced from copper alloy (see Table 3.25). The number of different forms present within this category of plate is partly due to the variation in the shape of strap-ends in general but also due to the different forms of terminal and decorative techniques used. Rectangular plates are again the most frequently identified shape (3.8A-F) with 41 individual examples. Smaller assemblages for plates with an angled end (3.8G-K, 11 artefacts), tongue-shaped plates (3.8L and 3.8M, 17 artefacts) and trapezoidal plates (3.8N and 3.8O, 11 artefacts) were also noted. Undecorated plates make up a slight majority of the strap-end plates as a whole with 45 plain examples compared to 40 decorated, possessing a terminal, decoration or both. It must be remembered that some of these plain plates could also have been attached to forked spacer strap-ends with terminals which means that some plain plates would have been attached to decorated strap-ends.

The distribution of strap-end plates is generally even around the country with the larger assemblages of detached plates coming from the larger assemblages as a whole. This is particularly the case with the two largest collections of strap-end plates from London, 44 artefacts, and Winchester, 21 artefacts. The exception to this is York, where only 4 strap-end plates were identified during data collection and these were all undecorated examples. This again mirrors the pattern for York shown through the detached buckle plates (1.12) and single sheet strap-ends (3.1).

3.5 The Mounts

In general, mounts were used as purely decorative artefacts although they also had some functional uses. For example, mounts with central holes could be placed on a belt around a buckle pin hole to protect the strap, and some rectangular mounts were used as strap connectors or stiffeners. Mounts were not only used as dress accessories; many other forms of material culture would have been adorned with mounts and it is possible that some of the mounts within the current study could have been attached to items other than belts. For example, mounts survive *in situ* on medieval books (Egan 1998: 279) and two circular mounts were excavated attached to a piece of wood from

All Saints Pavement in York (Tweddle 1986: 271; see Fig. 3.34), suggesting boxes, caskets and even furniture could have been decorated with them.

A total of 753 mounts were identified during data collection from 14 of the 15 city assemblages (see Table 3.27). As with the other forms of dress accessory the majority were produced from copper alloy. However, there are 92 lead/tin alloy and 15 iron mounts. The number of lead/tin artefacts is noticeable as these mounts account for a large proportion of the total number of lead/tin alloy dress accessories. The small numbers of iron examples and the large number of lead/tin alloy examples can be explained due to the function of mounts and the methods used to produce them. A stone mould from the Thames Exchange site would have been capable of producing at least 12 mounts in a single casting (TEX88 Egan and Pritchard 1991: 241), and lead/tin alloys provided a cheap, practical and decorative material for their manufacture. The iron mounts are all punched from sheet metal and there are no cast examples of iron dress accessories within the current study.

The 753 mounts identified make this type of dress accessory the second largest single form after buckle frames. However, this number is heavily skewed by the assemblage from London which provided 555 individual examples or 40.69% of the city's collection. The next largest assemblage, from York, consists of only 86 artefacts or 27.74% of the whole assemblage from the city. Of the remaining large assemblages Coventry, Lincoln, Oxford, and Winchester have a proportion of mounts between 10% and 20%. There is an obvious discrepancy here which needs explanation.

Where mounts survive *in situ* on straps (e.g. Egan and Pritchard 1991: 193) there are usually several mounts, either identical or of differing designs, riveted in place along the length of the belt. This would imply that mounts should be the largest group of dress accessories as, although a belt could only have one buckle and one strap-end, it could have many more mounts. The fact that this is not the case is intriguing. One possible explanation is that mounts simply have not been recovered from the archaeological record. Mounts are generally the smallest forms of dress accessory and it is possible that they frequently go unnoticed during excavation; whilst an alternative explanation is that they have been more systematically recycled and therefore never entered the ground in the first place. Neither of these explanations seems adequate on their own, and it is possible that the lack of mounts within the assemblage is a reflection of the use of mounts within late medieval England. Given the number of mounts that theoretically could have been attached to a single belt even

the assemblage of mounts from London is small. This is particularly true when evidence from the continent is considered. An assemblage of 83 belts and over 1,500 mounts collected through metal detecting in Zeeland in the south-west of the Netherlands and Dordrecht has recently been published (Willemsen 2009; 2012) and although the provenance of this material cannot be guaranteed due to the collection methods the size of the assemblage is larger than the total number of mounts used in this study. It is therefore possible that mounts were not used on as regular a basis within late medieval England as on the continent, and it must be remembered that other forms of decoration could have been used on belts.

3.5.1: Circular mounts – 4.1 (see Fig. 3.35)

Circular mounts are the most common category with a total of 251 examples (see Table 3.28), and 189 of these were produced from copper alloy. There are also 50 lead/tin alloy examples which account for over half of the mounts manufactured from this material. 2 of these were identified from the Lincoln assemblage and these are the only lead/tin alloy mounts within this study identified from outside of London. Sheet metal circular mounts are more common than their cast counterparts with 4.1A-C accounting for 125 artefacts whilst 4.1D and 4.1E consist of 44 examples. The lead/tin alloy circular mounts are all cast and are split between three subcategories (4.1D-F). Decoration is more likely to be found on sheet metal circular mounts and stamping is almost exclusively the technique used, with only a single example of engraved decoration being identified. This can be accounted for by the amount of time that it would take to produce stamped decoration compared to engraved decoration.

London produced the single largest assemblage of circular mounts with 196 individual examples representing every subcategory of this form of artefact. Although the assemblages from York, Coventry and Lincoln are much smaller each has a proportion of circular mounts comparable to the London assemblage. This form of mount has a wide distribution with examples coming from 8 different city collections spread around the country. However, apart from London and York the assemblages from the remaining 6 cities are all very small.

3.5.2: Bar Mounts – 4.2 (see Fig. 3.36)

Bar mounts are the second most common category of mount with 175 copper alloy examples (see Table 3.29). The sheet subcategories 4.2A-H are more numerous than their cast counterparts (4.2I-O) with a total of 104 sheet bar mounts compared to 71 cast examples. The simplest plain subcategories 4.2A and 4.2I are the largest group with 68 examples of the former and 20 of the latter. Decoration of any kind is relatively uncommon and bar mounts are certainly less frequently decorated than circular mounts.

Although there are fewer examples of this form of mount, bar mounts are the most widespread category of mount with examples identified in 13 of the city assemblages. The 114 bar mounts from London represent the largest single assemblage from any one city and this is a proportion of 20.54% of the total number of mounts form the capital. 31 bar mounts were identified from the collection of dress accessories from Winchester and this is the highest proportion of bar mounts from any of the larger assemblages (64.58%). All of the bar mounts from Winchester were made from sheet metal and this reflects the distribution of sheet metal bar mounts compared to cast examples. Sheet metal bar mounts are more widespread with 12 cities producing examples as opposed to 6 cities which contained cast bar mounts within their assemblage.

3.5.3: Foliate mounts – 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 (see Figs. 3.37-3.43)

These mounts are grouped together due to the small numbers of some categories of foliate mounts and to allow a comparison of the frequency with which these forms of mounts appear within the urban assemblages. In total 6 trefoil (see Table 3.30), 21 quatrefoil (see Table 3.31), 2 cinquefoil, 126 sexfoil (see Table 3.32), 1 septfoil, 16 octofoil (see Table 3.33), and 6 multifoil mounts were identified from 10 of the 15 city assemblages. Sexfoil mounts are by far the most numerous of these categories of mounts and, of the cities that contained at least a single foliate mount, only the small Plymouth assemblage did not contain a sexfoil mount. The numbers of each category of foliate mount also demonstrate that there was a preference for an even number of lobes, with 4. 6 and 8 lobed mounts outnumbering those with 3, 5, or 7.

The total of 6 trefoil mounts identified makes this category of mount the most common form of foliate mount with an odd number of lobes. Despite this, the small numbers of trefoil mounts means that there are no obvious patterns within the 5 different subcategories with only 4.3B containing more than a single example. 5 of these mounts, including the only lead/tin example, were from London and the only subcategory not represented within the assemblage from the capital is 4.3E which was identified within the Coventry collection. The large size and construction of this mount suggests that this may not have been used as a dress accessory and could potentially have been attached to another form of material culture. The other two categories of foliate mounts with an odd number of lobes were only represented by 2 cinquefoil mounts and a single septfoil, all of which were identified from the London assemblage of dress accessories. All of these were made from sheet copper alloy and there are single examples of each subcategory 4.5A, 4.5B, and 4.7A.

The 21 copper alloy quatrefoil mounts were identified from 6 different city assemblages. The sheet metal subcategories 4.4A-D account for 19 of these whilst there are only 2 cast examples (4.4E). There are very few decorated examples with stamped decoration (4.4B) slightly more common than engraved (4.4C) although both these subcategories are significantly outnumbered by the 12 undecorated examples (4.4A). London produced nearly half of the total of quatrefoil mounts with 10 individual artefacts. York and Coventry also had more than a single example with 5 and 3 respectively whilst there were further single examples from Oxford, Plymouth and Winchester.

Sexfoil mounts are by far the most numerous of the foliate mounts with 126 individual examples divided among the 5 subcategories 4.6A-E. The majority of these are made from copper alloy, although the London assemblage contained a single iron example and 11 cast lead/tin alloy mounts (4.6E). Sheet metal is much more commonly used for the production of copper alloy sexfoil mounts than casting, with 107 sheet metal examples compared to 7 cast mounts. The domed (4.6C) and domed centre (4.6D) subcategories account for the majority of this category of mount with 64 and 20 individual examples, whilst in comparison the plain subcategory (4.6A) is represented by 22 artefacts. Additional decoration to the sexfoil mounts is unusual with only 2 examples of stamped decoration (4.6B) from the urban assemblages. Sexfoil mounts have the widest distribution of any of the foliate mounts with examples provided by 9 of the city assemblages. The 97 mounts from London are the biggest

group from anywhere in the country and these include examples for every subcategory. The only cast subcategory, 4.6E, is less widespread than the sheet metal forms with examples from Coventry, Gloucester, London and York. 4.6C and 4.6D were identified from 6 of the city assemblages and these subcategories are slightly more widespread than the plainer 4.6A which is found in 4 of the urban assemblages.

16 octofoil mounts were identified for the six subcategories of this type of mount, with the single 4.8B from York providing the only example from outside of the London assemblage. In a similar fashion to the sexfoil mounts, the sheet metal subcategories 4.8A-C again outnumber the cast forms 4.8D-F with 11 and 5 examples respectively. 4.8D and 4.8E are only represented by a single lead/tin alloy mount each and these are the only octofoil mounts produced from a material other than copper alloy. Additional decoration on octofoil mounts is much more common than on the sexfoils, on the sheet metal examples this takes the form of stamped decoration (4.8B) and this subcategory contains 5 artefacts. On the cast mounts, decoration is only found on the composite form 4.8F. All 3 examples of this subcategory were excavated from the same context from Swan Lane, London (SWA81) and it is possible that these were all from the same strap.

The final category of foliate mounts is multifoil mounts and all 6 examples of this category were identified from the London assemblage, and all of these were manufactured from sheet copper alloy. The decorated subcategory 4.9B is the most common of the 4 forms with 3 individual examples whilst the remaining 3 subcategories (4.9A, 4.9C, and 4.9D) are represented by a single artefact apiece. As with the other foliate mounts those with an even number of lobes are more common than those with an odd number with only a single example within this group having 13 lobes whilst the remaining mounts have 10 or 12.

3.5.4: Lozenge-shaped mounts – 4.10 (see Fig. 3.44)

A total of 16 lozenge shaped mounts were identified from the cities of London and York (see Table 3.34). Lead/tin alloy examples are the most numerous with eight individual examples, all from London. The rest of this group were produced from copper alloy and iron of which there is a single example from York. The decorated subcategory 4.10B is the most common, with 11 individual examples. This includes 7 lead/tin examples which usually have a cast beaded border around the outside of the

mount. All four subcategories of this type of mount are found in the London assemblage, although only 4.10C is present within the York collection of dress accessories. The central hole in this form of lozenge shaped mount could have been used on a belt as the protection for a buckle pin hole although none of the examples contained within this subcategory show definitive wear patterns to confirm this.

3.5.5: Rectangular mounts – 4.11 (see Fig. 3.45)

7 of the city assemblages contained rectangular mounts with a total of 71 examples (see Table 3.35). The majority of these were produced from copper alloy although from London there is a single iron one and 9 cast in lead/tin alloy. Sheet metal rectangular mounts are more common than cast examples; of the 12 cast mounts only 3 are made from copper alloy, and this again shows the prominence of lead/tin alloy artefacts within the cast forms of mount as a whole. The plainest subcategory of sheet mount, 4.11A, is the largest group with 35 individual examples. This subcategory was not only used on belts as a dress accessory as there are examples used as fasteners on extant late medieval book bindings. However, a rectangular mount excavated from a grave at St Mary Merton (LON0932; Egan 2007: 208-9) was part of a suite of dress accessories, including a buckle, strap loop and other mounts, from a belt and this demonstrates that this form of mount could be used on a range of material culture within late medieval England. Decoration on sheet metal rectangular mounts is uncommon, although unusually within this assemblage engraved artefacts (4.11C) are more common than stamped examples (4.11B). This is the opposite of the pattern observed amongst the majority of mounts where stamping is the predominant method of decoration.

The largest group, 4.11A, is also the most widely distributed with examples within each assemblage that contained a rectangular mount. As with the sexfoil mounts, the cast forms of rectangular mounts (4.11H-K) have a much narrower distribution than the sheet metal forms, there being only a single cast example from outside London. London again provided the largest assemblage of rectangular mounts, 49 in total and of the other cities, York provided the second largest collection with 9 artefacts and there are smaller assemblages from Coventry, Lincoln, Southampton, Winchester and Worcester.

3.5.6: Polygonal mounts – 4.12, 4.13 (see Figs. 3.46, 3.47)

The hexagonal and octagonal categories of mount are grouped together due to the small number of examples and the similarities in form. Only 1 hexagonal mount and 3 octagonal mounts were identified, all of which were contained within the London assemblage. 4.13A is represented by 2 examples whilst only a single artefact was identified as 4.13B. Taken together, the hexagonal and octagonal mounts indicate that polygons in general were a relatively uncommon form for late medieval mounts.

3.5.7: Tri-lobed mounts – 4.14 (see Fig. 3.48)

A total of 4 tri-lobed mounts were identified from the urban assemblages (see Table 3.36). This is the only category of mount that is not found within the London assemblage with the artefacts within this group coming from Winchester, 1 example, and York, 3 examples. Further published examples are also known from Norwich (Margeson 1993: 40). It is noticeable that this form of mount is very consistent in both construction method and design. All the examples within the catalogue are produced from a thin sheet of copper alloy with the same stamped decoration.

3.5.8: Figurative mounts – 4.15 (see Fig. 3.49)

A total of 29 figurative mounts were identified from 5 cities (see Table 3.37). Both copper alloy and lead/tin were used for their manufacture, although all of the 11 lead/tin examples came from London. The most widespread subcategory of figurative mount is 4.15I. This shell-shaped form is also the largest group, with 6 individual examples from 3 of the cities studied. The second largest group, 4.15G, contains 5 examples of mounts in the form of letters. This is in stark contrast from evidence in the Netherlands where 107 letter-shaped mounts, representing 12 of the letters of the alphabet have been identified within the assemblage of material from Zeeland (Willemsen 2009: 79).

3.5.9: Shield-shaped mounts – 4.16 (see Fig. 3.50)

This form of mount performed a specific function on the end of straps with a folding end clasp (2.1) attached. 23 individual examples of shield-shaped mounts were identified from 3 separate city assemblages (see Table 3.38). All of these mounts (4.16A) were produced from sheet copper alloy and have, or would have had, a plain bar mount attached for use with the folding end clasp. London produced the largest assemblage with 20 mounts, whilst there was a single example from York and 2 from Worcester. These examples from Worcester demonstrate that folding end clasps were used by the population of the late medieval city despite there being no clasp frames or plates within the city assemblage.

3.6: The Strap Loops

A total of 177 strap loop frames were identified from 11 of the cities studied (see Table 3.39). Strap loops would have been attached at a right angle to the strap and would have been used to hold the loose end of the belt against the strap after it had been fastened by a buckle. Although this form of dress accessory could be used on girdles, strap loops have been found *in situ* on other forms of strap, for example on an archer's wrist guard from London (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 229; see Fig. 3.51). The vast majority of the frames were produced from copper alloy with only a single example of an iron frame and a lead/tin alloy frame, both from York. The trapezoidal frame form (5.1) is the most common, with decreasing numbers for the rectangular (5.2), oval (5.3), and pentagonal (5.4) frame forms.

Strap loops are only found in relatively small numbers in each single city assemblage, and this form of dress accessory represents 7.28% of the total number of artefacts within the current study. However, this figure is distorted slightly by the assemblage from London where a total of 116 strap loops were identified. Of the other larger assemblages only York (7.42%) and Lincoln (7.04%) have a proportion of strap loop frames comparable to the total figure. In the remaining major assemblages strap loops account for between 3% and 5% of the total number of artefacts.

3.6.1: Trapezoidal strap loop frames – 5.1 (see Fig. 3.52)

A total of 86 copper alloy trapezoidal strap loop frames were identified (see Table 3.40). The forms with internal lugs 5.1C and 5.1D make up the majority of these frames with a total of 57 individual artefacts between the two groups. The internal lugs would have been used to hold the strap loop on the belt and it is thus clear that for the trapezoidal strap loops this method was more common than attachment by either an added (5.1A, 5.1B and 5.1F) or integral (5.1E) rivet. Cast decoration is present on 26 individual artefacts and this is usually located on the top of the frame making it visible when the strap loop was attached to the strap.

Geographically the distribution of trapezoidal strap loop frames is relatively limited. London produced by far the largest single assemblage with 62 individual examples, the next largest groups coming from Winchester and York with 7 artefacts apiece. 5.1A, 5.1B, 5.1E and 5.1F are restricted to London, with only a single example of 5.1B from Winchester, and a single example of 5.1E from York. This means that the most common forms 5.1C and 5.1D are much more widespread in comparison with the other forms of trapezoidal strap loops. Examples of these 2 forms of artefact were identified in 10 of the 15 cities.

3.6.2: Rectangular strap loop frames – 5.2 (see Fig. 3.53)

A total of 45 rectangular strap loop frames were identified from 9 of the city assemblages (see Table 3.41). Most of these were produced from copper alloy, although this general category contains the only iron and lead/tin alloy examples both of which were identified from York. Unlike the trapezoidal strap loops, the rectangular form tends to have been attached to the strap using a rivet, either added (5.2A, 5.2B, 5.2F) or integral (5.2E). These subcategories account for 36 of the total of 45 artefacts. Internal lugs (5.2C and 5.2D) are present within the rectangular forms but, unlike their trapezoidal counterparts, these forms only account for 9 individual examples. Decoration is also much less common within the assemblage of rectangular strap loop frames with only 5 examples between forms 5.2B and 5.2D.

Although the total number of rectangular strap loop frames is lower than for the trapezoidal forms this can be explained by the numbers from London. The total of 24 rectangular examples from London is much lower than the 62 trapezoidal strap

loops from the capital. If there had been an equivalent number of rectangular strap loop frames the total numbers for these two general forms would have been more or less equal. Outside the capital the numbers of rectangular strap loop frames are similar to those for the trapezoidal strap loops; for example both Winchester and York produced 6 examples. The forms of rectangular strap loops are much more widely distributed across the country with the exception of 5.2F which is only present within the assemblage from York.

3.6.3: Oval strap loop frames – 5.3 (see Fig. 3.54)

Only 4 of the city assemblages produced the total of 29 oval strap loop frames (see Table 3.42). The integral rivet subcategory (5.3D) is the most common with 12 individual examples. Internal lugs are less common with 4 of 5.3B and 2 of 5.3C. The two major groups of oval strap loop frames come from London with 19 examples and York with 8 individual artefacts. The only other examples of this category of frame were identified from Exeter and Southampton, which had a single example apiece. 5.3F is identifiable by the cast knop on the outside edge of the frame, and a total of 6 were identified, of which 5 were found in York. This subcategory of oval strap loop frame is stylistically very similar to D-shaped buckle form 1.5E. York also produced the single largest assemblage of this form of buckle with six individual examples of the total of thirteen. The similarity between 1.5E and 5.3F cannot simply be coincidental and the prominence of both forms within the York collection of dress accessories, combined with the production evidence for this form of dress accessory from St Andrewsgate (Rogers 2007: 920; see Fig. 3.55) points to the possibility that this is a local form which has spread to other areas of the country.

3.6.4: Pentagonal strap loop frames – 5.4 (see Fig. 3.56)

This form of strap loop frame is the least common with only 17 individual examples identified from 5 of the cities studied (see Table 3.43). The plain subcategory with an added rivet (5.4A) is the most common, with 12 individual examples, whilst 5.4B and 5.4C are represented by 1 and 4 artefacts respectively. Unsurprisingly therefore, 5.4A is the most widely distributed form with examples from 4 of the 5 assemblages containing pentagonal strap loop frames. London again produced the

largest collection of this category of frame with 11 individual examples. Elsewhere both Lincoln and York had 2 pentagonal strap loop frames, and there were single examples from Coventry and Southampton.

Chapter 4: The Cities

4.1: The city assemblages

The previous chapter outlined the quantity and distribution of the different forms of dress accessories identified from late medieval England. They give a general overview of the assemblage as a whole but in doing so the character of each of the city assemblages is lost. Therefore, by concentrating on individual assemblages of dress accessories from each city studied a more nuanced understanding of the use of dress accessories across late medieval England can be reached. This offers the opportunity to outline the differing forms identified within the larger city assemblages and compare and contrast these collections in order to identify the differences in use across late medieval England.

Each of the eight larger city assemblages is examined in detail here. The types and forms represented within each collection are outlined and compared to the national proportions of dress accessories. The materials used are also considered, and in particular the quantities of iron and lead/tin alloys in the assemblage as a whole, as well as the specific forms of artefact that these materials were used to produce. London is considered apart from the other city assemblages due to the disproportionate numbers of dress accessories found there; the fact that over half the artefacts identified during data collection came from London means that the proportions of each artefact within the assemblage as a whole are skewed by the numbers from London.

The eight cities chosen for this analysis are Coventry, Leicester, Lincoln, London, Oxford, Southampton, Winchester, and York. These cities produced the largest assemblages and thus offer the best opportunity to examine the forms of dress accessory that are most prevalent. The smallest assemblage considered is that of Oxford, from which a total of 69 dress accessories were identified. After this the next largest assemblage is from Worcester where only 37 individual artefacts can be identified, and given the large variation in the forms of each type of dress accessory this assemblage is considered too small for any meaningful comparative analysis. The eight cities also give a good geographical spread across the country (see Fig. 4.1) with Southampton and Winchester in the south, York in the north, and Coventry, Leicester, Lincoln and Oxford in the midlands.

4.1.1: London

The 1,364 dress accessories from London is by far the largest single assemblage from anywhere in the country and represents over half of the total 2,576 artefacts considered in this research. This is partly a testament to the amount of archaeology undertaken within London since the middle of the twentieth century, but more significantly a product of the size and importance of the city within late medieval England. By the beginning of the fourteenth century the population of London is estimated to be at least 80,000 (Campbell *et al.* 1993: 24), a significantly larger population than any other city in late medieval England. For example, in 1304 the second largest city, York, paid in tallage (land tax) 32% of London's total (Nightingale 2010: 4) and although this cannot necessarily be seen as indicative of the population of York (see Rigby 2010 for the problems associated with estimating population from tax rolls), it does indicate the dominance of London within late medieval England. Indeed, the scale of London is comparable to the largest cities in Europe (Schofield 2011: 10), and is the only English city that can be said to be truly significant on a continental scale.

The archaeological investigation of late medieval London, undertaken by the Museum of London Archaeological Service (MoLAS) has been focused, although not limited to, the Thames waterfront and the monastic foundations of the city. Other significant excavations have also been undertaken at the London Guildhall (Bowsher *et al.*: 2007) and the Smithfield Black Death cemetery (Grainger *et al.* 2008). The majority of the belt fittings from London have been recovered from the waterfront excavations along the north bank of the Thames and this presents a problem as these artefacts cannot be definitively linked with any one social group as they are the result of a series of dumps of material into the river. However, the quantity of dress accessories recovered from these excavations, the deposition of household waste that formed the deposits, and the fact that *in situ* medieval deposits within London contain relatively few finds (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 1) means that these artefacts are vital for understanding the forms of belt fittings worn within late medieval London. Additionally, the relatively tight dating sequence provided by the dumping deposits (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 3) allows the chronological developments within type and form during this period to be analysed. The majority of the rest of the belt fittings from London have been recovered from monastic or funerary contexts and these artefacts

can be compared to the waterfront examples in order to highlight the different use patterns within these differing social contexts.

The most striking aspect of the materials used to manufacture the dress accessories from London is the proportion made from lead/tin alloys; there are 120 examples within the current study from London out of a total of 129 lead/tin alloy dress accessories nationally. This is in contrast to the numerous efforts made by the London Girdlers' Guild to restrict the use of lead/tin alloys for the manufacturing of dress accessories during the fourteenth century (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 18-19). Lead/tin alloys were perceived to be an inferior material to copper alloys and iron but the efforts of the London Girdlers' Guild can be seen to have been unsuccessful, as the numbers of lead/tin alloy dress accessories increases steadily from the beginning of the fourteenth century onwards. This is comparable to the situation in the Netherlands where lead/tin alloy mounts make up over half the assemblage of 1,500 mounts from Zeeland (Willemsen 2009: 88). Given the small numbers of lead/tin alloy dress accessories from outside London it is possible that the use of this material for the production of dress accessories in the capital follows continental fashions rather than those from the rest of England.

Mounts are the most numerous general form of dress accessory from London with 555 individual artefacts or 40.69% of the total assemblage (see Table 4.1). This is in stark contrast to the other city assemblages with York producing the next largest proportion of mounts in a single assemblage with 27.74%. Correspondingly, the proportion of buckles within the London assemblage is significantly smaller than from any other of the larger collections with 356 individual examples or 26.10% of the total assemblage. The remaining three general categories of dress accessories (clasps, strap-ends, and strap loops) are broadly comparable with the other city assemblages in terms of the proportion of the total number of dress accessories from the city.

The high proportion of large circular buckles (1.1; see Table 4.2) within the London assemblage can be explained by the sites and contexts from which this form of buckle has generally been recovered. Although small numbers of 1.1C have been recovered from the waterfront sites (BC72, BWB83, and TEX88), the vast majority have come from the medieval monastic and ecclesiastical burial sites excavated within London. These include 25 examples from the Smithfield sites (MIN86, SRP98) of the Black Death cemetery (Grainger *et al.* 2008) and the associated Cistercian abbey of St Mary Graces (Grainger and Phillpotts 2011), and 9 examples from the Augustinian

priory of St Mary Merton (MPY86, Miller and Saxby 2007). Double oval buckles (1.4) are noticeably less well represented within the London assemblage with only 12.64% of the buckles from London falling into this category. Of the examples of double oval buckles published by Egan and Pritchard (1991: 82-89) none date before ceramic phase 9 which begins in the mid to late thirteenth century. The production evidence from the Much Park Street sites in Coventry (Wright 1987) demonstrate that this form of buckle was being produced, at least in Coventry, from the late twelfth century. This apparent delay in the use of double oval buckles in London can begin to explain the relatively small numbers of this form of buckle frame within the London assemblage.

The collection of strap-ends from London is noteworthy for the forms that are represented within the assemblage (see Table 4.3). For example, both 3.7A and 3.7B are forms of strap-end that are only found in London within the current study. Equally the 31 composite strap-ends with added side strips (3.4) make up a disproportionate number of the national total of 34 and thus these forms of strap-end must be seen as types that were much more widespread in London than anywhere else in the country as no other city assemblage contained more than a single artefact identified as 3.4. The presence of these other forms of strap-end within the London assemblage can also help to explain the relatively small numbers of forked spacer strap-ends (3.3) from London. The 54 forked spacer strap-ends still represent the single most common form of strap-end from the capital, but the proportion of 30.51% of strap-ends is the lowest of the eight largest city assemblages of dress accessories. However, this proportion is inevitably going to be lowered when a greater number of forms are represented.

The most striking aspect of the assemblage of mounts from London is the quantity and the materials used. The 555 mounts here represent not only 40.69% of the total assemblage of dress accessories from the city but also 73.71% of the total number of mounts identified from all fifteen of the cities. Copper alloy is still the principal material used for their manufacture but there are also 90 lead/tin and 14 iron mounts from London. From the other fourteen cities combined there are only 2 lead/tin mounts and a single iron example. Five general categories of mount (4.5, 4.7, 4.9, 4.12, and 4.13) are only represented by examples from the London assemblage and this exemplifies the sheer quantity and variety of mounts from the capital compared to the other cities studied. Despite this, the most common forms within the London assemblage are circular, bar, and sexfoil mounts which, although much rarer elsewhere in the country, are the most common forms of mount found outside of London (see

Table 4.4). The only form of mount that is potentially underrepresented is the rectangular mount (4.11). The 49 examples from London still make up the largest single group of this form of mount, but the proportion of rectangular mounts (8.83%) is lower than the proportion of 4.11 from outside the capital. This can be partially explained through the proportions of other forms of mount within the London assemblage. As with the strap-ends from London, the number of mount categories represented within the collection of dress accessories from the capital will bring the proportion of some forms of mount down.

Overall, the assemblage of artefacts from London can be seen as the best representation of the forms and styles of dress accessory in use from any late medieval town in England. However, it is important to realise that this assemblage can only be said to be representative of late medieval London and not necessarily applicable to any other city. To take London's assemblage as typical is to ignore the potential for other city assemblages to demonstrate other local and regional trends in the use of dress accessories.

4.1.2: York

A total of 310 dress accessories were recorded from York and this is the second largest assemblage from any late medieval city. Although economic fluctuations affected York, as with any other contemporary urban centre, it can be recognised as the second largest city in England in the late medieval period and the most important in the north of the country (Nightingale 2010: 3). York's prosperity came from the wool and cloth trade, the city acted as a collection centre for Yorkshire before export through Hull to the continent, and from the mid-fourteenth-century York had a growing cloth industry (Nightingale 2010: 19). The reliance on this trade meant that the fluctuations in the continental demand for English wool had a major effect on the prosperity of York and other towns and cities that relied on it (Platt 1976: 85). Given the regional and national importance of York during the late medieval period and the frequent excavations within the medieval city the relatively large assemblage of dress accessories should come as no surprise.

Similarly to London, the archaeology of late medieval York has received a significant amount of attention, particularly since the mid-1970s and the excavations at 16-22 Coppergate by the York Archaeological Trust (YAT). However, the

archaeology differs in that the majority of the dress accessories under analysis here have come from sites that can be definitively linked to specific social groups rather than the finds from the waterfront sites which dominate the London assemblage of belt fittings. In addition, in each of the reports both the archaeological and historical evidence for each site has received full consideration and this can be used alongside the well dated assemblages of dress accessories to put the belt fittings into their social context.

With 124 examples, buckle frames are the single most common form of dress accessory found in York although the 40.00% of the assemblage that this represents is significantly lower than the national average, excluding London which is 53.96%. This can be explained by the larger proportion of clasps, strap-ends, mounts and strap loops which are all above the proportions represented within the city assemblages as a whole (see Table 4.5). The most significant of these general categories are mounts, as the 86 artefacts represent 27.74% of the total York assemblage, making it by far the largest proportion of mounts from a single city outside of London. As with every assemblage under consideration, copper alloy is the most common material used for the manufacture of dress accessories found in York. However, the 46 iron artefacts present is a much higher proportion than would necessarily be expected. This represents 14.84% of the York group which is significantly larger than the 7.49% national average or 9.41% if London is excluded.

The buckles from York account for the majority of iron dress accessories from the city, being 42 of the 46 total. This also means that the proportion of copper alloy buckles from York is much less than for any other of the larger city assemblages. The majority of the iron buckles are D-shaped (1.5) or rectangular (1.7) frames. Although it is possible that some forms of D-shaped buckle may not have been used exclusively for dress, only 9 of the 22 iron D-shaped frames were of the largest form 1.5D which would have been more likely to have been used for other forms of strap, whilst there were 12 examples of the smaller 1.5C. This also explains the high proportion of D-shaped frames within the York assemblage, which makes up 25.00% of the total assemblage of buckles. This general form is the only buckle frame type that is more commonly made of iron than any other material.

Forked spacer buckles (1.10) are another form of buckle that is well represented within the York assemblage, with the 17 individual examples accounting for 13.71% of the total number of buckles from the city. The production evidence for

this form of buckle at St Andrewgate (Rogers 2004: 920-921; see Fig. 4.2) and Swinegate (see Fig. 4.3) attests to its local manufacture, and this combined with the numbers of forked spacer buckles from York demonstrates the popularity of the form within the local population. In contrast, double oval buckles (1.4) are much less common within the York assemblage than the national average would predict. The 10 examples from York represent 8.06% of the total number of buckles compared to the national average of 18.61% (21.87% if London is excluded). It is also noticeable that the decorated subcategories of this type of buckle frame (1.4B-D) are almost absent, with only a single example of 1.4C identified during data collection. This pattern is also present within the oval buckle frames (1.3) where the plainer forms are noticeably more common (see Table 4.6) and this is a trend that runs through the assemblage of dress accessories from York. For example, of the 25 rectangular buckle plates (1.12A and 1.12B) 21 are undecorated compared to 4 decorated examples and this is in stark contrast to the ratio between these two forms of plate as a whole (99 1.12A compared to 71 1.12B).

This trend is also visible in the strap-ends from York where both single sheet strap-ends (3.1) and forked spacer strap-ends (3.3) very rarely display either engraved or stamped decoration. Indeed, there is only a single example for each of these forms of strap-end. Decoration is slightly more common on double sheet strap-ends (3.2) with 3 individual examples, although again this is a lower proportion than for the national assemblage of dress accessories. The number of double sheet strap-ends as a proportion of the total number of strap-ends from York (30.77%) is significantly higher than for any of the largest eight assemblages and comes at the expense of single sheet strap-ends which only make up 17.95% of the total (see Table 4.7). Forked spacer strap-ends are the largest general category with 14 individual examples and the proportion of this type of dress accessory is comparable with the national average.

The assemblage of mounts from York is the second largest collection of this form from the fifteen city assemblages. As with London, the three most common forms are circular (4.1), bar (4.2) and sexfoil (4.6) mounts (see Table 4.8). Despite this the 11 bar mounts represent a smaller proportion of the assemblage than would be expected, whilst the 37 circular mounts (or 43.02% of the total) represent the single largest proportionate assemblage of mounts of this form. In general, the mounts from York are dominated by the simpler and plainer forms; however, there are more

decorative forms represented within the assemblage such as the 3 tri-lobed mounts (4.14) and the 2 figurative mounts (4.15).

As with the city assemblages as a whole, although undecorated artefacts are the norm, there are some more elaborate examples within the collection. This is perhaps most noticeable with the numbers of two forms of dress accessory: 1.5E and 5.3F. The York assemblage contains 6 examples of 1.5E and 5 examples of 5.3F; nationally there are 13 1.5E and 6 5.3F in total. These forms of dress accessory are stylistically very similar, as both have a prominent cast knop on the outside edge of the frame. The fact that the overwhelming majority of the examples of these forms have been identified from York, combined with the production wasters identified by Rogers (2004: 920-921) from St Andrewgate indicate that this was potentially a local form of dress accessory used in and around York.

4.1.3: Winchester

The city of Winchester is best known for its role as capital of late Anglo-Saxon Wessex and England. Although London was an increasingly important city throughout this period it was not until the twelfth century that it was established as the Anglo-Norman capital. Winchester continued to attract significant, if declining royal patronage through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries before its role as a regional market town and hub for the local wool and cloth trade took over for the rest of the late medieval period (Rees *et al.* 2008: 9). The series of excavations undertaken within the city walls throughout the 1960s (Biddle 1990) and commercial excavations in the late medieval suburbs (Rees *et al.* 2008) have produced the third largest assemblage of dress accessories within the current study with a total of 300 individual artefacts.

The archaeological investigation of the centre of Winchester has been dominated by the Biddle excavations between 1961 and 1971, whilst a similar number of sites have been subsequently excavated in the suburban areas of the city. The dress accessories from these excavations have been published within the two major catalogues of finds from Winchester (Biddle 1990; Rees *et al.* 2007). However, despite these two publications the sites themselves are yet to be fully published although site summaries are provided for the suburban excavations (Rees *et al.* 2007) and a consideration of the metalworking evidence is provided for the intra-mural sites (Biddle 1990). The dress accessories are well dated within the catalogues and, due to

the site summaries, it is possible to link the belt fittings with the social groups who occupied each site. However, further useful information for interpreting the Winchester assemblage may be contained within any future site publications.

It is striking that the Winchester assemblage contains a significant number of detached plates, which make up 20.33% of the entire collection (see Table 4.9). This is larger than the national average (excepting London), which stands at 12.54%. This overrepresentation of plates might explain the slightly lower proportions of the top level dress accessory categories. 21 of the 61 plates have been identified as detached strap-end plates and this helps to boost the relatively low numbers of complete strap-ends which are underrepresented. The 23 strap-ends account for only 7.67% of the total assemblage. The materials used for the manufacture of the dress accessories from Winchester are found in the proportions that correspond with the other major assemblages outside London. The 31 iron artefacts account for 10.33% of the dress accessories and this is broadly comparable with the proportion of iron artefacts in the city assemblages as a whole, if London is excluded. Only 2 lead/tin alloy dress accessories were identified and this is comparable to the other city assemblages outside London where artefacts of lead/tin alloy are remarkably scarce.

The 153 buckles from Winchester fall into ten of the eleven different categories of buckle frame and in general are spread amongst these forms according to the proportions in the catalogue as a whole (see Table 4.10). The first significant exception to this is the 3 circular buckle frames (1.1) which are underrepresented within the Winchester assemblage. This in part can be explained by the lack of a major late medieval burial site amongst the sites excavated in Winchester. The most common form of this buckle 1.1C is a relatively frequent find within late medieval burials (see 3.2.1), and therefore it is likely that if a cemetery site had been excavated the numbers of this form of buckle from Winchester would be greater. In contrast, the 55 oval buckle frames (1.3) make up a larger proportion of the total number of buckles than would necessarily be expected as this represents 35.95% of the assemblage of buckle frames from the city. Oval buckle frames are the most common form of buckle in the national assemblage as a whole, but this proportion is still higher than the 30.30% of the total collection or 28.13% if London is excluded.

The oval buckles from Winchester have a clear split between simple and ornate forms. 1.3B is the most common form from Winchester with 18 individual examples and this is a relatively simple form with a plain outside edge and an offset bar. Forms

1.3F, 1.3H, and 1.3I have 5, 9 and 5 examples respectively and these forms of oval buckle frame have an elaborate cast outside edge. The intermediary forms such as 1.3D are much less well represented (there are only 2 examples of this form for instance) and the consumers of late medieval Winchester appear to be making a distinct choice to use either the simplest or most elaborate forms available. Furthermore, the popularity of this form of buckle can also help to explain the large number of detached buckle plates identified within the Winchester assemblage. Although buckle plates (1.12) were certainly used on other forms of buckle, the offset bar found in the majority of oval buckle forms was designed specifically for the attachment of a buckle plate. Buckle plates are overrepresented in the Winchester collection as a whole and the popularity of the oval buckle forms goes some way to explaining this.

The 23 complete strap-ends from Winchester mean that in general this form of dress accessory is underrepresented within the city assemblage. However, these artefacts combined with the 21 strap-end plates identified can show the trends in strap-end use and decoration from the city. Winchester is the only one of the eight largest city assemblages where forked spacer strap-ends (3.3) are not the most numerous form of strap-end. Instead it is the single sheet form (3.1) that is the most common type from the city. Of more significance, however, is the use of decoration on strap-ends and detached strap-end plates from the city. 5 of the 10 single sheet strap-ends are decorated and 4 of the 9 forked spacer strap-ends have either stamped or engraved decoration. In total 11 of the strap-ends are decorated and this is a much larger proportion of decorated plates than would necessarily be expected. Although, less pronounced there are also 9 decorated strap-end plates and there are 17 decorated buckle plates (compared to 21 undecorated). The flat surfaces offered by sheet metal plates did present an ideal place for decoration, but the proportion of decorated plates from Winchester is unusual especially when compared to the York assemblage of dress accessories.

Although the 48 mounts from Winchester represent the third largest single assemblage of this form, mounts are slightly underrepresented proportionally within the city assemblage as a whole. All examples of mounts from within the current study of Winchester were made from sheet metal, and although additional decoration is not as common as on the sheet metal plates, examples of stamped decoration are present. Despite the usual four forms (4.1, 4.2, 4.6, and 4.11) again being the most common

forms identified in Winchester, the distribution between these forms is significantly different to the norm (see Table 4.11). Circular, sexfoil and rectangular mounts all have similar numbers of artefacts with 3, 5, and 6 examples respectively. However, there are also 31 bar mounts within the assemblage and proportionally this is by far the largest assemblage of bar mounts from any town. The domination of this form of mount over any other must reflect the past use of mounts in general within the society of late medieval Winchester.

4.1.4: Coventry

In contrast to the three preceding cities, Coventry has received remarkably little consideration from archaeologists especially given the city's size and prominence within late medieval England, and the midlands specifically. By the beginning of the sixteenth century the population of Coventry is estimated to have been over 6,000, making the city the largest in the midlands and one of the larger in England as a whole (Phythian-Adams 1979: 12). Situated at the confluence of several important trade routes, Coventry's prosperity was, like so many other towns and cities of the period, built on the wool and cloth trades as is demonstrated by the proportion of trades relating to this industry recorded from the thirteenth century (Platt 1976: 75).

Archaeologically, Coventry has not received the quantity of published excavations that London, York and Winchester have. Indeed, a significant proportion of the assemblage of 138 dress accessories from the city is part of the collection formed by the early twentieth-century archaeologist J.B. Shelton. He was responsible for the surface collection of material culture, including dress accessories, from construction sites in Coventry during the 1930s and 1940s and accounts for a total of 66 individual artefacts that are included within the current study. The methods used to collect these belt fittings present a significant obstacle when analysing the social context of the finds, as they have no archaeological context to form a frame of reference. However, there are published examples of late medieval dress accessories from Coventry, most notably from the Much Park Street sites (Wright 1982) and St Mary's Priory (Rylatt and Mason 2003), and these can be used to help to place the Shelton collection into its context. Despite the lack of archaeological context, the presence of the finds themselves is significant and should not be ignored when considering the dress

accessories from Coventry as they are all of late medieval form and can be used as a comparison to other, archaeologically recovered, examples.

The 95 buckles identified within the Coventry assemblage make up a large majority of the total collection representing 68.84% of all artefacts (see Table 4.12). The result is that buckles are overrepresented within the Coventry assemblage compared to the average of the national survey. In contrast, the 6 detached plates and 15 mounts identified mean that both of these forms of dress accessory are underrepresented within the assemblage. This can, in part, be explained by the collection methods used to form the Coventry assemblage. Due to the nature of the Shelton collection it is not possible to determine the types of smaller artefact that may have been missed, and it is noticeable that all of the mounts identified during data collection came from later archaeological excavations.

The most striking aspect of the assemblage of buckles from Coventry is the proportion of double oval frames (1.4) that are present (see Table 4.13). The 32 buckles of this form represent 33.68% of the total number of buckle frames and this is the single largest proportional assemblage of double oval frames from any of the larger city assemblages. This, combined with the production evidence for this form of buckle from a late twelfth-century workshop at Much Park Street (Bayley 1987: 87), indicates that this form of buckle was in much more widespread use in Coventry throughout the late medieval period than elsewhere in the country. For example, double oval frames do not appear in London in significant numbers until the late thirteenth or fourteenth century (Egan and Pritchard 1991). Although this category of buckle is relatively well represented across the city assemblages, the high proportion of double oval buckles in Coventry is a reflection of the popularity of this form within the city's late medieval population. In contrast, oval buckle frames (1.3) are much less common within the Coventry assemblage, with the 15 frames of this form representing just 15.79% of the buckles from the city in contrast to the 30.30% of the national average as a whole or 28.13% if London is excluded. The lack of oval frames helps to explain the absence of detached buckle plates (1.12) at Coventry. This is a reversal of the pattern from Winchester where a high proportion of oval frames was complimented by a high proportion of detached buckle plates. However, in Coventry, where consumer choice seems to have moved away from oval frames, the need for buckle plates and therefore the likelihood of finding these artefacts is much lower.

Although the 16 strap-ends from Coventry form a relatively small assemblage some patterns can still be observed. The composite forms of strap-end, 3.3 (forked spacer strap-end) and 3.5 (composite strap-end with a sheet spacer), make up the majority of strap-ends from Coventry, with 8 and 3 examples respectively. Within the assemblage as a whole forked spacer strap-ends form a proportion consistent with the national average whilst the composite strap-ends with a sheet spacer are slightly overrepresented. Therefore, it is the simpler forms of strap-end 3.1 and 3.2 which are underrepresented. This bias towards the composite forms can again be seen as a reflection of the use of strap-ends within late medieval Coventry. The assemblage of strap-ends from Coventry is also notable as it includes the largest number of 3.3J from anywhere outside London. This form of forked spacer strap-end, its decorated counterpart 3.3K and associated detached strap-end plates 3.8P and 3.8Q form a distinct distribution across the country. Examples were identified from the city assemblages of Coventry, Gloucester, Hereford, Leicester, Lincoln, Northampton, Oxford, and Worcester. Although there are 5 examples from London and a single example from York, the other eight cities are all situated across the midlands and it seems likely that the forked spacer with a circular expansion towards the terminal is predominately a midlands form.

The 15 mounts from Coventry represent a significantly lower proportion of the total assemblage of dress accessories than would be expected. It is possible that this is a reflection of collection methods rather than past use and it is noticeable that all the mounts identified were from more recent excavations rather than part of the Shelton collection. However, the small number of mounts is consistent with the distribution of mounts across the country in general as, given the quantity of mounts that would have been used on a single strap, the small numbers of this form of dress accessory mean that they are severely underrepresented if in general use. Circular mounts (4.1) are the single most common form from Coventry whilst there are also 3 examples each of quatrefoil (4.4) and rectangular (4.11) mounts. Unusually both bar (4.2) and sexfoil (4.6) mounts, which are the second and third most common form of mount respectively in the assemblage as a whole, are only represented by a single example each.

The assemblage of dress accessories from Coventry, when taken as a whole, is very different from the three larger assemblages from London, York and Winchester. Certain forms of dress accessory, in particular the double oval buckle frames, are much

better represented and it is possible to start to recreate the differing regional use of certain forms of dress accessory.

4.1.5: Southampton

Southampton was one of the most important ports of late medieval England. The city prospered during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries through the export of wool and cloth and the import of continental goods, in particular French wine. The fourteenth century saw a reversal of Southampton's fortunes with the trade with France becoming disrupted by the Hundred Years War (Platt 1973: 75). This is seen archaeologically with the greatly reduced amounts of imported French pottery, such as Saintonge wares, whilst the recovery and shift in trade is indicated by the increase in imported pottery from Spain and Portugal by the early fifteenth century (Brown 2002: 156-7).

Although aspects of the archaeology of late medieval Southampton have received some attention, in particular the assemblages of pottery from the city (Brown 2002), there are still relatively few well published sites from the city, although the French Quarter excavations (Brown and Hardy 2011) are a notable exception. The result is that the majority of sites that have produced dress accessories are yet to be published and the discoveries of the majority of the belt fittings under consideration here postdate the early catalogue for the city (Platt and Coleman-Smith 1975). Although there are site summaries, and the social groups who occupied each site can be inferred, it is also noticeable that no single excavation has produced a large assemblage of dress accessories and, although the total assemblage allows a comparison with other cities, there are not enough examples to compare the Southampton belt fittings on a site by site basis.

The 98 dress accessories identified from Southampton represents the fifth largest assemblage from the country and offers a local comparison to the larger assemblage from Winchester. The 74 buckles represent a proportion of 75.51% of the total collection and this is by far the largest proportion of buckles in a single assemblage from any of the eight largest city groups. Consequently the majority of the remaining forms of dress accessory are underrepresented within the Southampton assemblage (see Table 4.14). Only clasps and strap loops are found in the proportions that conform to the national average. The materials used to produce the Southampton

dress accessories are also noteworthy. Copper alloy is still the most common material used but the Southampton assemblage contains the highest proportion of iron dress accessories from anywhere in the country, with the 23 iron examples forming 23.47% of the total assemblage, compared to 9.41% nationally excluding London or 7.49% including London.

Both D-shaped (1.5) and rectangular (1.7) buckle frames are well represented among the Southampton buckles with 11 and 12 examples respectively (see Table 4.15). As these two forms are the most common forms for iron buckle frames this is unsurprising and indeed 15 of the 22 iron buckles are of these types (seven D-shaped buckles and eight rectangular buckles). Large iron buckles may not necessarily have been used as dress accessories, and buckles would have been needed for other forms of strap such as horse harnesses. However, this alone does not explain the high proportion of iron buckles. For example, the most common D-shaped frame from Southampton is the medium form 1.5C which has an inside edge width of between 16 and 30mm, and it is not inconceivable that this form of buckle could have been used on a dress belt.

Oval buckles (1.3) are underrepresented within the Southampton assemblage and the percentage of buckle frames of this form is the second lowest of the eight city assemblages under consideration, after Coventry. All of the 13 examples are of copper alloy and the simpler subcategories 1.3A-D outnumbers the more elaborate forms 1.3F, 1.3H and 1.3I. This is in contrast to the assemblage from Winchester where both simple and elaborate forms were both well represented. The low proportion of oval buckles within the Southampton assemblage also helps to explain the low numbers of detached buckle plates (1.12), which mirrors the pattern from Coventry where the proportion of oval buckle frames and buckle plates appears to be linked.

The dominance of buckles within the Southampton assemblage means that there are only small numbers of the other forms of dress accessory and it is therefore difficult to identify any firm patterns. For example, the second largest group of dress accessories, the strap-ends, only has 8 examples. Forked spacer strap-ends (3.3) make up half of these and are the single most common form within the Southampton assemblage. This is in contrast to the forked spacer buckle form (1.10) which contains only 2 individual examples and the proportion of this form of buckle is much lower from Southampton than the national average. The assemblage of strap-ends as a whole contains some unusually decorated forms. This includes examples of a composite

strap-end with a sheet spacer (3.5) and double sheet strap-end (3.2) with an acorn terminal whilst half of the forked spacer strap-ends have engraved decoration.

Taken as a whole the Southampton assemblage of dress accessories appears to be a relatively functional one with the high proportion of iron buckles and the small proportions of more decorative forms of dress accessories such as strap-ends and mounts. Despite this, there are notable exceptions to the general trend from the city. For example, a burial from the Southampton Friary (SOU 199) produced a decorated forked spacer strap-end and three associated sexfoil mounts (see Fig. 4.4). Initially the Southampton group appears to be very different from the assemblage from Winchester. There are nonetheless some similarities, the most noticeable being the small proportion of strap-ends in both assemblages. Winchester and Southampton are the only two of the larger assemblages to have proportions of strap-ends under 10%. The proximity of these two cities could indicate that this is a reflection of the past use of this form of dress accessory in the region.

4.1.6: Leicester

The assemblage of dress accessories from Leicester is the second largest from the midlands after the 138 artefacts from Coventry. The proximity of these two cities offers the opportunity to compare and contrast the assemblages of dress accessories and identify patterns of use over a relatively small area. Late medieval Leicester was not as large as Coventry with an estimated population of between 2,000 and 3,000 by the beginning of the sixteenth century (Phythian-Adams 1979: 12). As with the majority of the other cities under consideration here the cloth trade was important for the development of Leicester, with the late medieval town being a major cloth producer by the beginning of the thirteenth century (Platt 1976: 86).

In the first half of the twentieth century, excavations in Leicester, such as at Jewry Wall, tended to focus on the Roman phases of the city meaning that the archaeology of late medieval Leicester received little attention. Despite this, dress accessories were collected from these sites and they are included within this study. Since then, the late medieval phases of the city have investigated more fully, with the most notable published site being the Austin Friars (Mellor and Pearce 1981) which produced belt fittings from both monastic and mortuary contexts. Further examples have been discovered during more recent excavations at Vine Street (Morris *et al* 2009)

and Freeschool Lane (Buckley 2009) and thus there are well-dated and published dress accessories from Leicester. However, the small number of dress accessories from the city as a whole means that intra-site analysis is not yet feasible.

All 82 of the dress accessories from Leicester included in this study were produced from copper alloy. However, other materials were used, such as 3 examples of iron buckles from the Austin Friars (Clay 1981:137-8), but these iron and lead/tin alloy artefacts were unavailable during data collection due to access restrictions. The prominence of dress accessories in materials other than copper alloy cannot therefore be examined. However, although the proportion of iron artefacts does vary from assemblage to assemblage, the small numbers of lead/tin alloy dress accessories outside of London means that it is unlikely that this material would appear in any great numbers from Leicester. This is supported by the fact that no lead/tin alloy dress accessories appear in the published assemblages from the Austin Friars (Clay 1981) or Highcross sites (Cooper 2007, Cool 2009a, Cool 2009b, Cool 2009c).

Buckles are the largest group of dress accessories from Leicester with 54 individual examples making up 65.85% of the total assemblage (see Table 4.16). The proportion of each form of buckle frame is generally reflective of the national average for each type although there are some exceptions (see Table 4.17). For example, there are no D-shaped buckle frames (1.5) within the current assemblage from Leicester. The lack of this form can probably be attributed to the fact that iron artefacts were not examined, as this category of buckle is most commonly produced from that material.

The overrepresentation of double oval buckles (1.4) and rectangular buckle frames with a central bar (1.8) is of more significance, especially when the evidence from Coventry is considered. Double oval frames are the most common form of frame from Leicester, with 15 individual examples and this represents a proportion of 18.29% of the total assemblage of dress accessories or 27.78% of the total number of buckles from Leicester. Proportionally, this is the second largest assemblage of double oval buckle frames from the eight city assemblages after Coventry. Similarly the eight rectangular buckle frames with a central bar represents the largest proportional assemblage of this form of buckle, with Coventry providing the second. The proximity of these two cities to each other suggests that this may not simply be coincidental but a reflection of the regional preference of these forms of buckle, especially when the smaller assemblage from Northampton is taken into account; 9 of the 19 buckles from

this latter assemblage were identified as double oval buckles and, given the proximity of both Coventry and Leicester, this is perhaps no surprise.

The 9 strap-ends from Leicester represent a proportion of 10.98% of the whole assemblage and this is in keeping with the national average if London is excluded. Forked spacer strap-ends (3.3) are the most common form with 5 examples all of which have an acorn terminal, although other forms of terminal (in particular trefoil terminals) are known from excavations on Little Lane (A39.1988 Cooper 2007: 375). 2 of the forked spacer strap-ends were identified as 3.3J with a circular expansion towards the terminal. This follows the pattern observed within the Coventry assemblage, and this form of forked spacer strap-end appears to be distributed across the midlands.

Mounts are underrepresented at Leicester, with only 5 examples identified. This forms a proportion of 6.10% and thus is the second smallest collection of mounts from the eight city assemblages after Southampton. Only bar mounts (4.2) and sexfoil mounts (4.6) are known from Leicester and this is in contrast to the forms represented within the Coventry assemblage where circular (4.1) and quatrefoil (4.4) mounts are more common. Although in some respects the assemblages from both Coventry and Leicester are very similar, this highlights the fact that there are differences between the two.

4.1.7: Lincoln

Lincoln is the major representative of the east of England within the current study, although this is due to the unavailability of material from Norwich. The importance of the cloth and wool trades for the prosperity of the urban centres of late medieval England is again evident within the development of Lincoln, as shown by the royal protection offered to the cloth industry in the mid-twelfth-century (Platt 1976: 85-6). This in part enabled Lincoln to become one of the larger late medieval cities with a population of between 5,000 and 6,000 by the early sixteenth century (Pythian-Adams 1979: 12).

The majority of archaeological publications concerned with the archaeology of Lincoln have tended to focus on the Roman and early medieval phases of occupation, and this has meant that the late medieval archaeology of the city has received comparatively little attention (see Stocker 2003; Steane 2006). The material

culture of late medieval Lincoln has also been largely overlooked, with the exception of the pottery from the city (Young *et al.* 2005). For example, the largest assemblage of dress accessories from the city was recovered from Flaxengate but the published report for the site (Jones 1980) does not include any discussion of the finds. The one exception is the report for the West Parade and The Park excavations (Colyer *et al.* 1999) which does include a finds catalogue for both excavations. This means that the majority of the belt fittings from Lincoln remain unpublished and are dated through comparisons with examples from elsewhere in the country.

67 of the 71 dress accessories from Lincoln were made from copper alloy, whilst there are also two iron buckles and two lead/tin alloy mounts. Within the current study these are the only examples of lead/tin mounts outside London, although other published examples are known in small quantities from Meols (Egan 2007a) and Great Linford (Zeepvat 1992). Buckles are underrepresented, with the 28 examples accounting for the smallest proportionate assemblage outside of London (see Table 4.18). In contrast, the 14 strap-ends from Lincoln are the largest proportionate collection of this form from the eight larger city assemblages. Similarly the 14 mounts from Lincoln mean that this form is also well represented within the Lincoln assemblage as a whole. It is important to remember however, that due to the size of the assemblage these proportions are not necessarily a true reflection of the past use of dress accessories in late medieval Lincoln.

Oval buckles (1.3) are the most common category of buckle frame from Lincoln with 16 individual examples. There is a relatively even split between the simpler subcategories, (1.3A-D) with 8 artefacts across the four forms, and the more ornate subcategories (1.3G-K) which accounted for 7 examples. A further fragmentary example was unidentifiable as a specific oval buckle form. More decorative types of oval buckle are generally less common than simpler ones. However, the proportion of simple to decorative frames from Lincoln is closer to the larger assemblages from London (55:54), Winchester (26:22) and York (15:12) than any of the other smaller city assemblages. In contrast there are only single examples of double oval (1.4), D-shaped (1.5) and rectangular with a central bar (1.8) buckle frames, and these forms are therefore all underrepresented within the Lincoln assemblage.

Strap-ends are well represented within the assemblage, and this is in part due to the examples of composite strap-ends (3.3, 3.4 and 3.5). Forked spacer strap-ends (3.3) are the most common category, with 6 individual artefacts whilst there are single

examples of composite strap-ends with a sheet spacer (3.5) and side strips (3.4). The latter is significant as it is one of only 3 examples from outside London. The 4 detached strap-end plates (3.8) add to this figure as there are plain and decorated examples of rectangular plates with an angled end which are only represented within the complete strap-ends by composite forms 3.4 and 3.5. The appearance of a single example of 3.3J with a circular expansion towards the terminal is in keeping with the geographical distribution of this form of forked spacer strap-end, but the underrepresentation of both double oval and rectangular buckle frames with a central bar indicates that the local preference for these forms of buckle evident from Coventry and Leicester did not spread as far east as Lincoln.

Although proportionally the assemblage of mounts from Lincoln is the third largest from any of the city assemblages, due to the smaller size of the Lincoln collection this amounts to just 14 objects. Circular (4.1) and bar mounts (4.2) are the most common categories with 5 individual examples for each of these types. This is in keeping with the evidence from the rest of the country where these two forms are also the most numerous. If London is removed from consideration, the contrast between these forms and sexfoil mounts is even more pronounced with 55 circular mounts and 61 bar mounts as opposed to 29 sexfoil mounts. Both of the lead/tin alloy mounts are circular and were cast. The method of production is consistent with the London examples of lead/tin alloy mounts, the vast majority of which were manufactured in this way.

4.1.8: Oxford

The growth and prosperity of Oxford in the late medieval period was again built on the cloth and wool trade in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. By 1227 the town was paying more in tallage than any urban settlement other than London and York (Dodd 2003: 62), and the prominence of the town led to the establishment of the university by the end of the twelfth century. From the middle of the thirteenth century the national significance of Oxford seems to have declined, although it remained the county town (Dodd 2003: 63) and a specialist source for medicines (Dyer 1994: 260). Despite this, by the beginning of the sixteenth century Oxford was still one of the larger urban settlements in England with an estimated population of between 5,000 and 6,000 (Phythian-Adams 1979: 12).

The archaeology of late medieval Oxford was primarily investigated between the 1960s and 1990s, and the excavated sites each have fully published reports. This means that the majority of the dress accessories from Oxford included in this study have been published and dated according to their archaeological context. The sites from Oxford have investigated a range of late medieval occupation, including tenement housing (Hassall *et al.* 1989; Walker and King 2000) and the Franciscan (Hassall *et al.* 1989) and Dominican (Lambrick 1985) monastic institutions of the city. Despite the good publication record of late medieval archaeology in Oxford there has not been an overview of the evidence from the city as there has been for the earlier Anglo-Saxon and immediate post-Conquest period (Dodd 2003).

The assemblage of dress accessories from Oxford consists of 69 individual artefacts making it the smallest of the city assemblages considered here. As with the other assemblages copper alloy is again the material used to produce the vast majority of the dress accessories accounting for 64 artefacts. The remaining 5 items were produced from iron, and there were no examples of lead/tin alloy dress accessories from Oxford. Although lead/tin artefacts are uncommon outside of London there are usually some examples, with only the assemblage from Southampton (as lead/tin objects were unavailable from Leicester) also not producing a single example. The proportions of each type of dress accessory are broadly in keeping with the national averages without London (see Table 4.19), especially when the size of the assemblage is taken into account. Despite this, the 11 strap-ends, accounting for 15.94% of the total number of dress accessories, is slightly higher than would necessarily be expected.

The 38 buckles are relatively evenly spread between the eleven different general forms of buckle frame although there are some exceptions. For example, the 6 double oval buckles (1.4) represent a proportion of 15.79% of the buckles and, as with the Lincoln assemblage, this suggests that this form of buckle was not in as widespread use in late medieval Oxford as it was in Coventry and Leicester to the north. The underrepresentation of D-shaped buckles (1.5) can be explained by the low numbers of iron artefacts in the assemblage as a whole, although 3 of the 5 examples of this category of frame from Oxford were produced from iron. The only form of buckle that is perhaps overrepresented is the forked spacer (1.10), with the 6 examples accounting for 8.70% of the total assemblage. This is the highest proportion of this form as part of the whole assemblage and it is noticeable that the next highest proportions are from Coventry and Leicester. The fact that this form of buckle is found

across the entire country precludes any interpretation of this form as a specifically midlands type especially given the assemblage and production evidence from York.

Forked spacer strap-ends (3.3) are also well represented within the Oxford assemblage as are composite forms in general, with single examples of both side strips (3.4) and sheet spacers (3.5). This bias towards composite forms is supported by the 4 detached strap-end plates (3.8) which would also have been used on these forms of strap-end. The assemblage of 7 mounts is slightly unusual as the two best represented forms are the bar mount (4.2) and sexfoil mount (4.6) with 3 examples each. Although both these forms are relatively common elsewhere in the country the absence of circular mounts (4.1) is noticeable.

4.2: Inter-site analysis

Comparison of the city assemblages can identify both the most common forms of dress accessory used within the late medieval city, and the broader regional trends that exist between cities across the country. However, these assemblages are a result of collection from a variety of different sites which represent differing social groups that made up the urban population of this period. Therefore, by comparing the largest site assemblages, a more nuanced understanding of the use of dress accessories by differing social groups can be reached. These sites offer an opportunity to compare assemblages from sites within the same city and identify the differing trends in material, form and design and associate these aspects with the people who used these artefacts.

Individual sites chosen for this level of analysis are from London, Winchester, and York. These three cities have produced the largest assemblages of dress accessories and thus it is no surprise that each includes individual sites with assemblages that are sufficiently large for comparison. Furthermore, each of these cities offers differing opportunities due to the nature of the archaeology undertaken and the types of sites excavated. For example, the monastic and burial sites in London offer a comparison with the waterfront dump sites; York contains monastic, domestic and production sites, whilst Winchester offers the chance to compare urban and suburban occupation. During the analysis the expected number of artefacts has been calculated using the percentage of each general type of dress accessory (buckle, strap-

end, etc.) in the city assemblage as a whole multiplied by the number of dress accessories from each site. This has the effect of flattening out the numbers of artefacts from each site and therefore easing the comparison of larger and smaller site assemblages.

4.2.1: London

The sites in London can be divided between the waterfront dump sites which account for the vast majority of the dress accessories thus far identified and the monastic and burial sites. Medieval occupation layers within the city of London have often been removed as part of later activity, and deep Victorian cellaring in particular (Egan and Pritchard 1991:1, Schofield 2011:2-3), and no secular domestic site has produced a large enough assemblage of dress accessories to be considered here. The waterfront sites (see Fig. 4.5) are represented by the two Billingsgate Lorry Park sites (BIG82, BWB83), Swan Lane (SWA81), the Thames Exchange (TEX88), and Trig Lane (TL74). These sites were formed as part of the land reclamation along the north bank of the Thames, and represent a series of deliberate dumps of material. This was an on-going process from before the twelfth century and one that is well documented during this period at other waterfront excavations in London (Schofield 2011: 35), and throughout Europe such as at Bergen from the twelfth century (Herteig 1981). Whilst it is impossible to say for certain exactly where the material from these dumps originated from within the medieval city (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 3), it is likely that these artefacts reflect a variety of differing social groups from the local vicinity and are therefore much more reflective of general past use in London than the monastic and burial sites. The two Augustinian sites of St Mary Merton (MPY86, MPY88; Miller and Saxby 2007) and St Mary Spital (NRT 85, NRF88, SRP98; Thomas *et al.* 1997), the Cluniac foundation Bermondsey Abbey (BA84; Dyson *et al.* 2011) and the Smithfields Black Death cemetery and later Cistercian abbey of St Mary Graces (MIN86; Grainger *et al.* 2008; Grainger and Phillpotts 2011) have all produced dress accessories that can be explicitly linked to monastic life and burial practice. Therefore, there is a clear opportunity to use the above sites to compare ecclesiastical and secular use of dress accessories and to explore the use of these artefacts within a funerary context.

The most significant difference between the two types of site is in the representation of the different types of dress accessory (see Table 4.20). The monastic assemblages are dominated by buckles which account for over half the dress accessories at St Mary Merton (63.89%), St Mary Spital (72.73%) and Smithfields (91.43%), whereas only the waterfront dump sites of BIG82 (36.96%) and TL74 (58.54%) have proportions of buckles higher than the average for London as a whole (26.10%). Conversely, all four monastic sites have a significantly lower proportion of mounts especially compared to the major dump sites BWB83, SWA81 and TEX88. The materials used to produce the artefacts are also different; of the 104 dress accessories from the monastic sites there are only 6 examples of iron artefacts and a single lead/tin alloy dress accessory. The dump sites are more varied and at BWB83 and SWA81 there are significant assemblages of lead/tin alloy dress accessories with 61 and 51 examples respectively. Finally, of the 104 examples of decorative metalwork only a single example (LON0944 see Fig.4.6) was found on a monastic site and can be seen to be an indication that highly decorated dress accessories were not in widespread use within the monastic population of London.

The two Billingsgate Lorry Park sites, BIG82 and BWB83 offer an opportunity to demonstrate the chronological changes in form, design and material within London dress accessories. The smaller excavation BIG82 uncovered dumps dating between the mid-twelfth and mid-thirteenth centuries whilst the contexts at BWB83 dated to the mid-thirteenth to mid-fifteenth centuries (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 4-6). The use of lead/tin alloy for the manufacture of dress accessories can be dated to after the mid-thirteenth century as no examples were recovered from BIG82, whilst 61 lead/tin artefacts were recovered from BWB83. The increased use of mounts in this later period is also evident as mounts make up 47.48% of the BWB83 assemblage compared with 21.74% from BIG82. The forms of dress accessories also underwent significant changes from the mid-thirteenth century. Only oval (1.3) and D-shaped (1.5) buckle frames were present within the BIG82 assemblage, whilst eight general frame shapes (1.1, 1.3-5, 1.7-10) were identified from BWB83. Within the oval buckle frames, previous forms continued in use but new forms were introduced presenting a wider choice to the contemporary consumer. This trend is replicated within the mount forms where the four forms present at BIG82 (4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.11) were again supplemented by a wider range of styles including the foliate mounts (4.4-10) and figurative mounts (4.15). Forked spacer buckles (1.10) are only present within the

BWB83 assemblage whilst there is only a single forked spacer strap-end (3.3) at BIG82, as opposed to the 36 from the admittedly larger assemblage from BWB83. Forked spacer artefacts can therefore be dated from the mid-thirteenth century onwards with the BIG82 example representing the earliest known example of these forms of dress accessory.

The waterfront dump assemblages from SWA81 and TEX88 consist of similar proportions of dress accessories to BWB83. At all three sites mounts are the best represented and this is at the expense of buckles which are found less frequently when compared with the London average as a whole. There are some differences, for example at TEX88 strap loops make up 15.04% of the total number of dress accessories, making this the largest proportional assemblage from the capital. This can be explained by the presence of production wasters with 13 of the total of 57 strap loops from the site. Therefore, it is likely that a nearby manufacturing site producing strap loops, as well as other dress accessories, was dumping waste at the site. SWA81 is noteworthy for the assemblage of 9 cast strap-ends with openwork decoration (3.7 see Fig. 4.7). Strap-ends of this form have almost exclusively been recovered from this site, with the only other example coming from BWB83. These distinctive strap-ends must have been made within the vicinity of the Swan Lane site.

Trig Lane (TL74) stands out as an exception amongst the waterfront dump sites. The assemblage from this site contains a higher than average proportion of buckles and a lower than average proportion of mounts, and this suggests at first glance that it is an early assemblage comparable with BIG82. However, the dumps at the site date from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fifteenth century (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 11) and the wide range of dress accessory forms present at the site support this dating. The proximity of the site to St Paul's Cathedral may indicate that this assemblage is, at least in part, made up of ecclesiastical material, and thus the presence of 3 strap-ends (LON0815, LON0823, LON0847) with at least potential religious symbolism is significant in this context. LON0847 (see Fig. 4.8) is an unfinished cast lead/tin alloy strap-end depicting a female figure. Lead/tin pilgrim badges are known to have been produced on site for sale to pilgrims and it is possible that this strap-end is evidence for a similar production workshop in the vicinity of St Paul's. However, without further evidence this suggestion must remain conjectural.

The most striking aspect of the monastic and burial assemblages from London is the number of large circular buckles (1.1C) recovered from these sites, with 37

examples from the total of 75 buckles. This also accounts for 71.15% of the 52 buckles of this form recovered from London as a whole. This should come as no surprise as large circular buckles are by far the most common belt fitting found in both monastic and ecclesiastical burials of this period in late medieval burials with further examples within this study identified from Coventry (St Mary's Priory Rylatt and Mason 2003), Gloucester (St Oswald's Priory, Heighway and Bryant 1999), Leicester (Austin Friars, Mellor and Pearce 1981), and Southampton (Southampton Friary).

Most other forms of dress accessory are much less common within burial contexts, although one exception is the suite of belt fittings from a late fourteenth- or fifteenth-century burial from St Mary Merton (Egan 2007a: 229; see Fig. 4.9), which demonstrates the range that could be attached to a single individual's belt. The artefacts consist of an oval buckle (1.3P), 3 sexfoil (4.6A) and a single rectangular (4.11A) mount, and an oval strap loop (5.3G). This example is very unusual and where dress accessories are present within graves it is usually only one or two artefacts that are recovered. If the circular buckles are disregarded, the most common form of dress accessory found are buckle frames, most usually oval or D-shaped. A small number of strap-ends, strap loops and mounts have also been excavated from the London burials (see Table 4.21). Furthermore, there is a difference between the burial sites. Whilst Smithfield, St Mary Spital and St Mary Merton all have examples of burials with dress accessories, there are no examples from the Cluniac priory at Bermondsey. Belt fittings were certainly in use at the site, as the 11 recorded examples demonstrate, and although dress accessories are rare in late medieval burials the 202 excavated individuals from both the chapel and graveyard at Bermondsey is a large enough sample to give an indication of general burial practices at the site (Connell and White 2011: 264). It is therefore possible that the lack of belt fittings in the burials of this site is a reflection of the past choices made by the inhabitants of the priory when burying the dead.

In summary, although the waterfront dump sites cannot conclusively be linked to any specific activities within late medieval London, they can be used to track the chronology of the types and forms of dress accessories worn by the population of the city. This is particularly evident with the Billingsgate Lorry Park sites which have produced a complete sequence from the mid-twelfth to the mid-fifteenth century. The burial sites from London also provide a useful sample, although again the dress accessories from these contexts cannot be definitively linked to any specific social

group as both lay and ecclesiastical members of society were buried at these sites. Despite this, the dress accessories from burial contexts can be used to examine the ways in which these artefacts were used in a mortuary setting and can be connected to the prevailing social attitudes towards dress in death.

4.2.2: Winchester

The sites from Winchester offer a different opportunity to those excavated in London. The individual sites of Winchester have not been as extensively published as those from London or York, with the majority of the site information only available as short summaries in the two major catalogues from the city (Biddle 1990; Rees *et al.* 2008). However, there is a clear separation between the excavated urban and suburban areas of late medieval Winchester (see Fig. 4.10) and it is the intramural and extramural differences that can be studied here. Late medieval suburbs were built up outside the enclosed city and were often the preferred location for institutions such as leper hospitals which housed the excluded members of contemporary society. Suburbs were not simply for the poor, but the fourteenth-century tax records from Winchester demonstrate that although the suburbs were home to over a third of the total population, their share of the city's wealth was much lower, and this situation continued into at least the early sixteenth century (Platt 1976: 38). Consequently, an analysis of the dress accessories from the urban and suburban sites of Winchester can identify any differences in the expression of status through dress between these two communities. This has been briefly examined by Rees *et al.* (2008: 396), although only as an aspect of the suburban small finds in general. However, other than to note the functional similarities between the urban and suburban assemblages, no further detail is given in this summary.

The urban sites produced a greater number than their suburban counterparts with 196 examples compared to 87 from the suburban excavations representing 65.33% and 29.00% of the total assemblage of dress accessories from Winchester. The Brook Street sites (BS, BSSC) produced the largest individual site assemblage with 138 dress accessories. Copper alloy artefacts were proportionally more common within the city walls (91.32% urban, 80.46% suburban) whilst although iron and lead/tin alloy were represented by similar numbers, given the relative sizes of the assemblages, dress accessories of these materials were more prevalent within the suburbs (iron: 7.14%

urban, 18.39% suburban, lead/0.51% urban, 1.15% suburban). The functional makeup of the urban and suburban collections is similar in terms of the proportional figures of each major type of belt fitting (see Table 4.22). Buckles are by far the most common form (46.43% urban, 54.02% suburban), whilst plates are more prevalent from the urban sites and mounts are more prevalent in a suburban context.

Despite the similar proportions of buckles in both the urban and suburban assemblages, there are significant differences in the categories of buckle frames represented in each group (see Table 4.23). For example, 47.25% of the frames from urban sites are oval buckles compared to just 17.02% from the suburban sites. Both the urban and suburban assemblages contained examples of oval buckle frame subcategories 1.3B, 1.3D, 1.3F, 1.3H and 1.3I, whilst 1.3A and 1.3K were only identified from the urban sites and 1.3C in the suburban. Therefore, although similar forms of oval buckle were used in both an urban and suburban context they were much more popular within the intramural population. In contrast, both the urban and suburban assemblages contained 11 examples of double oval buckle frames, this represents 23.40% of the suburban buckles, meaning that this category of buckle is much more prevalent from the suburban sites. Similarly, 8 forked spacer buckles were excavated from sites outside the city walls compared to 5 from within representing 17.02% and 5.49% of the total number of urban and suburban buckles respectively.

Although numerically there are more examples of mounts (29 artefacts) from the urban sites, this represents 14.80% of the dress accessories and therefore, proportionally, mounts are better represented within the suburban assemblages, with the 19 mounts accounting for 21.84% of the suburban dress accessories. Furthermore, there is a much greater variation in the categories of mounts from the suburban sites compared to the urban sites (see Table 4.24). Only bar and rectangular mounts were identified from the urban site assemblages with 26 of the 29 being bar mounts. In contrast, the suburban assemblages produced seven different categories of mounts including circular, bar, sexfoil, rectangular, tri-lobed and figurative. Mounts were more popular, and a greater range of styles were being worn by members of the late medieval suburban population than their inner city contemporaries.

There are also differences in the quantity and form of decoration on dress accessories between the urban and suburban sites. Proportionally, belt fittings from within the city walls are more likely to have decoration with 78.26%, or 36 examples from the total of 46 from the whole of the Winchester assemblage. However, despite

there being fewer examples from the suburban sites, 5 of the 10 decorated belt fittings display more than one decorative technique (see Fig. 4.11) as opposed to 4 from the urban sites. Therefore, although decoration in general is much less common on dress accessories from outside the city walls, those that are embellished are more likely to be much more elaborately decorated. It is significant that four of these suburban examples are from the Victoria Road excavations, which is an area of the suburbs associated with an emerging mercantile class from the late thirteenth century (Rees *et al.* 2008: 400). Given the extra investment in time and the greater level of skill needed to produce these it is possible that these more highly decorated belt fittings can be associated with displays of social position among this group.

Rees *et al.* (2008: 396) are broadly correct in their assessment of the differences between the urban and suburban assemblages of dress accessories from Winchester as the functional makeup of each group is comparable. However, there are some subtle variations between the two. For example, although similar categories of buckle frames are present within each assemblage it is the proportions of these forms that show a much greater variation. The urban assemblages are dominated by oval frames whilst the suburban sites produced a much more even spread of forms and therefore there were some variations in the types and forms of dress accessories being used in differing areas of the late medieval city. This is again clear with the distribution of mounts across the urban and suburban assemblages as a much greater variety of forms has been recovered from sites outside the city walls. The decoration of the dress accessories also slows a slight difference in use patterns as although embellishment is more common in the urban assemblages some of the most elaborate examples from the city as a whole were recovered from suburban sites. The Victoria Road assemblage is significant as it demonstrates that despite the fact that contemporary tax records imply a general paucity of wealth within the suburbs during this period, this was not necessarily universally the case. The highly decorated dress accessories from this site do not prove that the merchants living at the site were wealthy but do suggest that they were employing dress as a means of portraying their social position.

4.2.3: York

Recent archaeological excavations in York offer a third option for the comparison of dress accessories in a single city. Unlike London, where dump sites

could be compared with monastic and burial sites, and Winchester with the comparison between urban and suburban assemblages, York contains seven different published sites which have produced significant numbers of belt fittings. Three general types of site are represented within the city; domestic, ecclesiastical and manufactory (see Fig. 4.12). Domestic sites are represented by Coppergate (Bayley 1992, Hall and Hunter-Mann 2002) and 2 Aldwark (Hall *et al.* 1988), ecclesiastical by the College of the Vicars Choral at Bedern (Richards 2001) and the Gilbertine priory at Fishergate (Kemp 1996), whilst the production sites are the Bedern Foundry (Richards 1993), Low Petergate (Reeves 2006), St Andrewgate (Finlayson 2004) and Swinegate (unpublished). The manufacturing evidence from these production sites is considered more fully in the following chapter.

The proportions of iron dress accessories are very similar across all the York sites (see Table 4.25) with 4.96% from Bedern, 9.30% from the Bedern Foundry, 4.55% from Fishergate and 3.03% from Swinegate. The only exception is Coppergate where 31 of the total of 45 belt fittings were produced from iron representing 68.9% of the assemblage, whilst for every other the proportion is smaller than 10%. This very high proportion of iron belt fittings at Coppergate cannot simply be explained by preservation conditions in the ground, as conservation analysis has shown that iron preservation at the site was no better than elsewhere in York (Jones 2002: 2700), and therefore should be seen as a reflection of the past use of dress accessories amongst the inhabitants of that particular late medieval street. The assemblage from Coppergate is dominated by buckles which account for 75.56% (34 of 45) of the total number of dress accessories and this is significantly different from the York assemblage as a whole which contains 40.00% buckles. The two most common categories of buckle at the site were D-shaped (1.5) and rectangular (1.7) frames which represented 47.06% and 29.41% of the buckles respectively, and these two categories contain the highest proportions of iron frames within the urban assemblages as a whole. This is also the case at Coppergate where all 16 of the D-shaped buckles and 9 of the 10 rectangular buckles were manufactured from iron.

The two ecclesiastical sites have an almost identical proportion of iron dress accessories (Bedern 5.6%, Fishergate 4.5%) and this suggests that similar choices, with regards to material, were being made by the inhabitants of both the college and priory. Despite the similarities in the materials used for the manufacture of the dress accessories, there are significant differences in the forms of belt fittings represented at

the two ecclesiastical institutions. For example, although oval buckle frames are the most numerous type of buckle recovered from both sites, the subcategories differ. At Fishergate there are only 2 decorative frames (1.3F) with the remaining 3 being simple forms (1.3A, 1.3G, 1.3N) whilst the oval frames from Bedern show a lot more variation including more decorative forms such as 1.3H and 1.3J. In addition there are other decorative forms of fastener from Bedern, such as forked spacer buckles and folding end clasps, which are absent from the Fishergate assemblage. Although it is important to remember that all of these accessories would have been relatively affordable it is noticeable that there are significantly more elaborate forms from the Bedern College and this, in part, can be explained by the relative affluence of each institution (see 6.2.2).

In summary, there are differences between the assemblages of dress accessories from the sites in York that can be attributed to the late medieval occupation of each site. Ottaway and Rogers (2002: 2987-8) have suggested that dress accessories may have been more important as indicators of status on the ecclesiastical sites due to the higher percentage of non-ferrous metalwork from both Bedern and Fishergate. However, this does not explain the differences between the two. Furthermore, this ignores the differences between the two ecclesiastical communities at each site. Coppergate is an anomaly due to the much higher proportion of iron belt fittings from the site. However, this site also produced 4 decorated dress accessories (see Fig. 4.13); this is the most from any one site in the late medieval city which only produced 11 embellished examples in total. Some of the wealthiest and most influential members of late medieval York society had their homes on or around Coppergate (Rees Jones 2002: 684) and the high proportion of decorated metalwork is reminiscent of the assemblage of dress accessories from Victoria Road in Winchester. These decorated examples from Coppergate could therefore have been used as visual indicators of social status although this does not explain the functional appearance of the ferrous dress accessories which dominate this assemblage. Belt fittings could be made from precious metals, in particular silver as can be seen on continental examples (Fingerlin 1971; Stürzebecher 2010), and it is therefore possible that items such as these were worn and systematically recycled leaving only the cheaper iron examples to be recovered archaeologically.

4.3: Summary

The larger city assemblages examined here provide the best evidence for the past use of dress accessories by their contemporary late medieval urban populations. At the most general level the forms and styles represented within these collections are very similar. However, a closer examination of the proportions of each form reveals that there are some subtle variations which cannot simply be explained as an accident of recovery. For example, the high proportion of double oval buckle frames from Coventry, and to a lesser extent Leicester, compared to the rest of the country is significant. This is especially true when the geographical proximity of these two cities is taken into account and this must be a reflection of the late medieval consumer habits of the populations of these two cities. However, the most striking example is provided by London where the 555 identified mounts dominate the city's assemblage providing 40.69% of the total number of dress accessories. No other city in this sample has a proportion of mounts anywhere near this figure and, again, this must be seen as a genuine preference for the use of mounts in London compared to the rest of the country.

It is also important to remember that the residents of these cities were not homogenous in their composition and that a wide variety of differing social groups coexisted within the late medieval city. Given this, the distinct possibility that these social groups were using dress accessories in a variety of different ways must be considered. Therefore, it has been necessary to compare sites from a single city to explicitly link the dress accessories to the individuals who occupied the sites and wore these items of material culture. Dress was vital within late medieval society for the construction of identity and it is therefore unsurprising that during this period differing social groups were using dress accessories in a variety of ways. For example, the urban and suburban sites excavated in Winchester demonstrate that, although in general the same forms of dress accessory were in use by both intra and extramural social groups, the proportions of these forms vary markedly between the two. The assemblage from Victoria Road is significant as it provides evidence that the mercantile occupants of the site were choosing to wear more highly decorated dress accessories than other members of the contemporary population. This is also visible within the assemblage from Coppergate in York where, although there is a high proportion of iron belt fittings, there is also the largest assemblage of decorated dress accessories from anywhere in the city. The ecclesiastical sites at Bedern and Fishergate have offered the opportunity

to examine the differences in dress accessories between these two communities. The Fishergate assemblage contains fewer decorative forms and this was directly influenced by the monastic rules under which the Gilbertine monks lived. The secular priests of the Vicar's Choral were under no such restrictions and therefore a much wider and more decorative range of dress accessories was available to them. These examples demonstrate that the use of belt fittings within late medieval cities was varied across the differing social groups within late medieval cities and that they could be used for the expression of both status and religious identities.

Chapter 5: Production

5.1: Introduction

Evidence of waste from the production of late medieval dress accessories is relatively rare, and definitively proven production sites are scarcer still. However, despite this, the assemblages studied during data collection contain 112 artefacts from nine of the towns under consideration that show direct evidence for the production, or repair, of late medieval dress accessories. It should come as no surprise that London, with its prominence within England during this period and the size of the collection studied, consisting of 1,381 artefacts, provides the best evidence for production. Despite this, other towns, Coventry and York in particular, have also provided evidence for manufacture that offers a chance for a comparison of production techniques and processes within late medieval England. The four, broadly contemporary, excavated workshops in York also give an opportunity to compare the assemblages from each site to show the forms and styles produced at this time. Furthermore, outside the data set that forms the base for this thesis, there is comparable manufacturing evidence from Northern Europe which begins to place England within its Northern European context.

The identified production waste derives from the manufacture of copper alloy artefacts rather than iron or lead/tin alloy. This imbalance is a result of the dominance of copper alloys within the catalogue and the relative lack of production evidence for dress accessories of other materials from excavated contexts (Egan 1996: 83). Indeed, the processes and techniques involved with the manufacture of copper alloy belt fittings are relatively well represented within the assemblages, whilst the production of lead/tin and iron artefacts can only be inferred from complete, finished objects. Previous work on the manufacturing evidence from London (*ibid*) supports these findings as, although copper alloy metalworking techniques are relatively well demonstrated, those for the production of lead/tin are less clear and despite the ubiquitous nature of iron slag on late medieval sites, archaeological evidence for the processes involved in the manufacture of iron belt fittings remains archaeologically intangible.

Egan's (1996) study of London manufacturing waste is the only detailed overview of production evidence from any late medieval city whilst the only national summary (Goodall 1981) is restricted to identifying the production techniques used to manufacture late medieval dress accessories. More detailed analysis has been undertaken on a site-by-site basis, for example, at Much Park Street, Coventry (Wright 1982), the London Guildhall (Bowsher *et al.* 2007) and St Andrewgate, York (Finlayson 2004). Aspects of the production waste have also been the subject of specialist reports, which have focused on specific forms of evidence such as moulds (e.g. Bayley 1982) or crucibles (e.g. Pearce 2007). By studying production on a site-by-site basis or by focusing on a particular aspect of the metallurgical evidence, the wider trends within the dress accessory manufacturing industry can be overlooked. Therefore, here all aspects of the manufacturing evidence are considered to demonstrate both the current evidence for production from late medieval England and the changes that this industry underwent during this period.

Despite the relative scarcity of evidence, the assemblages under consideration here do contain enough direct and indirect evidence of production methods to identify the processes that must have been involved in their manufacture. Even for the less well-represented materials of iron and lead/tin, it is possible to infer the techniques used in the production of these forms of belt fittings through an examination of the finished artefact, combined with the limited metalworking evidence. Completed artefacts are also of use when considering the manufacturing techniques required in producing the decoration that appears on a significant proportion of the objects. From these artefacts, it is clear that three major forms of decorative technique were in use: moulding, engraving, and stamping. There is also limited evidence for enamelling on a small proportion of the artefacts, although this is entirely restricted to buckle plates that stylistically and contextually go out of use during the thirteenth century (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 114). One complicating factor is that limited amounts of enamelling appear to survive on the artefacts in question, although microscopic analysis may begin to reveal further residual traces.

A small proportion of the artefacts within the catalogue show some evidence for repair. Most typically this takes the form copper alloy buckles which have replacement iron pins for their copper alloy originals, although the possibility of this being a result of stylistic or functional choice rather than the replacement of an original pin needs to be considered. Despite this, instances of repair, such as the replacement

of buckle pins, and the re-riveting of buckle plates and strap-ends, are evident on objects examined here. The presence of such evidence is significant beyond just simply terms of functionality as it begins to indicate the value that was placed on late medieval dress accessories by the contemporary society that used them.

This chapter provides the first detailed national overview of the production of late medieval copper alloy dress accessories. The focus is not only on the artefactual evidence but also on the structures, crucibles and moulds which provide evidence for the processes involved in making these artefacts. Only 3 of the cities, Coventry, London and York, have provided definitive manufacturing sites, but these demonstrate the changes which took place within this industry during the late medieval period. Despite the lack of demonstrable production sites from elsewhere in the country it is hypothesised that the majority of urban settlements would have acted as production centres for the manufacture and distribution of dress accessories to the surrounding area. Evidence for the repair of belt fittings is more widespread, with nine of the fifteen urban assemblages containing examples of repaired dress accessories.

5.2: Production methods and techniques

Production waste forms the principal method for identifying the manufacturing techniques for late medieval dress accessories. The source of the copper used is unclear although occasional mining for copper in England, specifically the West Country, is evident within the documentary record (Blair and Blair 1991: 84). This mining would only have been practiced on a relatively small scale, and continental copper imports, particularly from the Low Countries and Germany, should be seen as a more likely source for much of this raw material. Due to the distance that the copper would have had to travel, it is likely that a significant amount of recycling of copper alloy artefacts would have taken place. This is supported by the production waste recovered from workshop sites. Given the scale of production being undertaken at these manufacturing sites, as evidenced through the structural remains, crucibles, and mould fragments, the quantity of dress accessory wasters from the sites is surprisingly low. The reuse of copper alloy from failed castings explains this disparity in the evidence, and functionally would have seen the metalworkers salvaging their relatively valuable raw materials.

It appears that late medieval metalworkers attempted to differentiate between separate copper alloys prior to manufacture (Bayley 1991: 13). However, it is debateable, given the reuse of material and their inability to identify specific alloy compositions, how successful dress accessory manufacturers would have been at performing this task. Modern analysis of copper alloy artefacts can reveal a detailed alloy composition of individual objects, and previous studies on assemblages from London (Heyworth 1991: 391) have shown that a diverse range of alloys were used for the production of late medieval dress accessories such as brass (copper and zinc), bronze (copper and tin) and gunmetal (copper, zinc and tin). More recent analysis on the crucible residues and copper alloy wasters from the London Guildhall workshops has potentially identified slight differences in the composition of alloys used at the Guildhall Yard and St Lawrence Jewry sites with brass more common at the former and gunmetal at the latter. However as Bowsher *et al.* (2007: 347) have pointed out, this may simply be a product of different batches of metal. Although it is tempting to think that products from individual workshops could potentially be identified through analysis of their alloy composition this is extremely unlikely, as the composition of the alloy used is more likely to have been influenced by what was available. Despite this, further analysis using X-ray fluorescence (XRF) has the potential to reveal any changes in composition through time, or indeed between assemblages from different towns.

The vast majority of copper alloy buckles, clasps, and strap loops present within the assemblages from all fourteen towns would have been cast (Goodall 1981: 67). Additionally the forked spacers required for forked spacer strap-ends, and very occasionally buckle plates, of copper alloy would need to be cast. The casting process would firstly have required the copper alloy to have been melted. This would have taken the form of ingots when using fresh metal, examples of which are present within the assemblage from the Thames Exchange (TEX88), although unwanted artefacts could easily have been melted down and recycled at this point. This step would have taken place in a crucible which had been placed in a hearth or furnace, examples of which are known from excavated sites such as the London Guildhall (Bowsher *et al.* 2007) and Low Petergate, York (Reeves 2006). After melting, the molten metal would have been poured into moulds which were usually made of clay, although stone moulds have also been recovered, for instance at Coventry (Telford 1956; see Fig. 5.1). These would have been left to cool before the moulds were broken open to retrieve

the cast artefacts, thus explaining the fragmentary nature of the majority of mould finds from production sites. The artefacts would then have needed to be sawn apart before the final casting flushes were removed by filing or fettling. Any additional parts needed to finish the artefact (such as buckle pins, buckle plates, or, in the cast of forked spacer strap-ends, front and back plates) could be attached at this point. These processes had the potential to go wrong at any stage and it is through mistakes or misfortune that the copper alloy wasters used to identify these steps have entered the archaeological record.

Other forms of copper alloy dress accessory such as mounts, strap-ends, and buckle plates are more commonly made from sheet metal. The production of single sheet strap-ends and buckle plates is relatively straight-forward, as only a single piece of metal is required. This would then simply need to be cut to size, folded, and riveted onto a strap. The manufacture of sheet metal mounts is slightly more complex. Firstly, a copper alloy sheet would have been fixed on to a workbench before the desired shapes were stamped out. These would then need to be trimmed before being attached to a belt. This process is best shown through the examples of left over sheets from the production of circular and bar mounts recovered as part of the assemblage from the TEX88 site (see Fig. 5.2).

5.3: The production sites

Due to the quantity of archaeological excavations undertaken in the cities of London and York over the previous fifty years, it is no surprise that these two cities provide the best excavated examples of production sites and the largest assemblages of dress accessory wasters. Four sites from each of these cities are given more attention here due to their importance in establishing the methodology involved in manufacturing these artefacts and establishing a chronology for the change in the scale of production. In addition, the Much Park Street excavations from Coventry also revealed a production workshop which is considered here.

5.3.1: London

The four sites from London (see Fig. 5.3) are the Thames Exchange (TEX88), the Billingsgate Lorry Park (BWB83), 2-3 Copthall Avenue (OPT81) and the London

Guildhall sites (GYE92, GAG92). TEX88 is a waterfront site on the north bank of the Thames and with 58 individual copper alloy wasters represents the largest assemblage of production waste from anywhere in the country. BWB83 is another waterfront site to the east of TEX88 and has produced 4 wasters. Although the fact that these sites are a result of dumping, and therefore the artefacts have no real structural context, is problematic, the sequence of the sites can be relatively securely dated through dendrochronology on the wooden revetments, coinage, and by using the ceramic sequence developed for London. This has been shown for BIG82 and BWB83 where two main phases of dumping have been identified, dating initially to the late twelfth century and a second longer phase dating from the mid thirteenth through to the mid fifteenth century (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 7). Unfortunately TEX88 remains undated; however the forms represented within the assemblage are consistent with a date from the mid-thirteenth century.

The remaining sites are located in the north of the medieval city. OPT81 is included due to the recovery of a stack mould fragment and a strip of five rectangular framed strap loops from early fourteenth century contexts (Armitage *et al.* 1981). Excavations at the London Guildhall (GAG87, GYE92) in 1987 and 1992 uncovered the most extensive structural remains for the production of late medieval dress accessories in England. Manufacturing of these artefacts on the site had been occurring on at least an intermittent basis since the tenth or early eleventh century as is shown through a ceramic mould fragment and a Winchester style strap-end waster (Bowsher *et al.* 2007: 344; see Fig. 5.4). Further evidence for dress accessory production dates from the late eleventh to twelfth century although later disturbance has removed any structural remains. A lead ‘cushion’ (see Fig. 5.5) for the production of sheet metal plates was recovered from these contexts. This artefact displays a trace of a design showing an unidentified stylised animal which was a common motif on buckle plates of this period (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 113). From the mid- to late thirteenth century production at the Guildhall sites can be seen to undergo a huge reorganisation. Three phases of activity between the late thirteenth century and mid-fourteenth century were identified and it is clear that this represents a major shift in the scale of production at this point. This period is also the best represented in the assemblage from the site, with crucible and mould fragments and 31 copper alloy wasters among the finds.

Taken as a whole these sites have provided the largest quantity of dress accessory wasters from any single town or city within late medieval England with 94

individual objects in total. Although only the London Guildhall workshops can be identified as definite production sites, and therefore provides the only structural evidence from London, the wasters taken as a whole can be used to identify the large range of dress accessory styles and forms in production in London from the mid thirteenth to late fifteenth centuries.

5.3.2: York

The production evidence from any one of the York sites cannot be said to match the scale evident at the London Guildhall. However, the four sites represent broadly contemporary workshops all producing late medieval dress accessories. These can therefore be used to identify the products being produced in York, establish the scale of production from the mid- to late thirteenth century, and identify the organisation of the urban landscape through the relative proximity of the sites to one another (see Fig. 5.6). Excavations at the Bedern Foundry site between 1973 and 1980 found substantial evidence for metalworking between the mid twelfth and sixteenth centuries (Richards 1993: 151). The workshop's main products were cast copper alloy vessels, as evidenced by analysis of the mould fragments from the site (Bayley and Richards 1993: 189-190). However, a small assemblage of four copper alloy dress accessory wasters, which were not recognised at the time, indicates that dress accessory production was occurring there on at least an occasional basis.

More conclusive production evidence comes from the two excavations undertaken at Low Petergate. The first of these between 1957 and 1958 was principally concerned with the investigation of the Roman deposits (Wenham 1972). However, the late medieval activity on the site was excavated and recorded and revealed small amounts of metalworking evidence. This consisted of two hearths, a crucible used for melting bronze (Wright 1972: 92), and two unidentified copper alloy wasters. Further excavations were undertaken in 2002, and these have revealed much more extensive evidence for dress accessory manufacture. Three phases of activity between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were identified (Reeves 2006) and the evidence consists of furnace and hearth structures, crucible and mould fragments, and two further dress accessory wasters.

A further production site was identified during excavations in 1993 and 1995 at St Andrewgate (Finlayson 2004). Structural evidence uncovered included a series

of buildings, floor deposits and hearths, and showed a continual period of metalworking on the site between the fourteenth and early sixteenth century. Further evidence was provided by crucible and mould fragments and six copper alloy dress accessory wasters. As with the Bedern and Low Petergate sites, the evidence from St Andrewgate demonstrates that dress accessories were not the only form of copper alloy product from the workshop as copper alloy vessel moulds have also been identified at the site (Mortimer 2004: 916). Furthermore, iron smithing also took place on this site, as evidenced by the large quantities of iron slag recovered, although no potential products were identified.

Finally, unpublished excavations at Swinegate in 1989 and 1990 have also provided substantial production evidence and this site should be seen as yet another workshop. Four copper alloy wasters have been identified along with a significant number of ceramic mould fragments, which are representative of at least 6 different forms of dress accessory. As these excavations are unpublished the absolute dating of the site is not possible. However, stylistically the products being manufactured on the site can be dated from between the late thirteenth and fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries. This dating is also supported by the presence of stack moulds within the assemblage, which came into use at some point in the mid- to late thirteenth century.

None of the workshop sites in York can rival the quantity of evidence for dress accessory manufacture provided by the London Guildhall sites. However, when taken together these sites are hugely informative about the method and practice of late medieval dress accessory production. Excavations at Bedern, Low Petergate and St Andrewgate all provided substantial structural evidence for copper alloy metalworking and can all be seen as broadly contemporary, the earlier production at Bedern continued into the fourteenth century at which point the workshops at Low Petergate and St Andrewgate were starting up. Although Swinegate remains unpublished and undated, stylistically the products from this site can also be dated to the fourteenth century. It is notable that the assemblages of wasters from these four sites are all small. However, the quantity of mould fragments associated with dress accessory manufacture, particularly from Swinegate and St Andrewgate, are indicative of a relatively large-scale industry. This discrepancy in the evidence can be explained by the systematic recycling of copper alloy wasters by these workshops.

5.3.3: Coventry

Excavations at three sites on Much Park Street between 1970 and 1974 (122-3 Much Park Street, Stone House, Much Park Street, 7-10 Much Park Street) uncovered evidence for a small scale workshop producing copper alloy dress accessories (Wright 1982). The earliest evidence, from 122-3 Much Park Street dates to between the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries and consists of a possible building foundation and hearth (see Fig. 5.7) and clay moulds for the casting of buckles. The subsequent phase, from the early thirteenth to mid fourteenth centuries, of these sites was much better preserved and demonstrates that metalworking, including the manufacture of dress accessories, continued at the site in a workshop with hearths and a quenching pit (Wright 1987: 24; see Fig. 5.8). The evidence from these three sites indicates a small-scale industry set up in the late twelfth century which continued until the mid-fourteenth century (Bayley 1982: 88). In addition, the urban assemblage from Coventry has produced the third largest collection of dress accessory wasters, with a total of 10 examples. These can be used to identify the forms of belt fittings that were produced in late medieval Coventry. These are oval (1.3), rectangular (1.7), and double oval buckles (1.4), forked spacer strap-ends (3.3), and trapezoidal strap loops (6.1, see Fig. 5.9). The evidence from Coventry is much more limited than from either London or York but is significant as it demonstrates that dress accessory manufacture was undertaken outside of these two cities and this supports the hypothesis that the production of these artefacts was occurring on a local scale.

5.4: The excavated evidence for workshops

The excavated structural remains on their own are not necessarily indicative of the production of late medieval dress accessories. This is certainly the case with the evidence from York as other copper alloy products, particularly cauldrons and vessels, were being produced at the sites. However, when the associated copper alloy wasters and mould fragment evidence is taken into account it is clear that these furnaces and hearths must have been used as part of the manufacturing process. What follows is a description of the excavated structural evidence from the workshops in both London and York.

5.4.1: The London Guildhall sites

The London Guildhall is the only from London with any surviving structural evidence, the other sites in the capital, such as TEX88 and BWB83 being waterfront dump sites, and given the relatively sparse evidence from OPT81. Although dress accessory production had been undertaken at the London Guildhall, from probably the late tenth century on an occasional basis, it was not until the late thirteenth century that the two workshops there saw a significant increase in the scale of production. The excavators of the site uncovered three uninterrupted phases of activity dating between the late thirteenth and mid fourteenth centuries, as evidenced stratigraphically by the rebuilding of hearths (Bowsher *et al.* 2007: 348). A total of thirteen hearths were recorded, although, due to pressures on excavation only one of these was excavated by hand (see Fig. 5.10). This hearth from the St Lawrence Jewry workshop consisted of a shallow pit into which was built a brickearth wall on three sides with a bellows hole in one side. The back wall was missing but a spread of stone rubble has been interpreted as the dismantled remains of this wall. The hearth was lined with stone and tile. Adjacent to the hearth were two kerb stones and these have been interpreted as the footing for a stone 'table' where the molten copper alloy could be poured and moulds left to cool (Bowsher *et al.* 2007: 348). The scale of production at this site is evidenced by the fact that three or four hearths may have been in use at any one time.

5.4.2: York

The structural evidence from York comes from the excavations at Bedern, Low Petergate and St Andrewgate. This evidence cannot only be used to compare and contrast the evidence from the London Guildhall sites but also to demonstrate the differences and similarities between the sites in York. Excavations at the Bedern Foundry have recovered the largest metalworking site known in late medieval York. The structural evidence consists of a series of hearths, furnaces, and associated buildings dating between the mid-twelfth and sixteenth centuries. Manufacturing during the early phases of the foundry appear to have been on a relatively small scale. The scale of production changes from the start of Period 2, dating to the late thirteenth century. At this point the structures previously in use were abandoned and a reorganisation of the site occurred which can be seen as an extension and consolidation

of the previous metalworking activities (Richards 1993: 163). The excavated features consist of a stone-built furnace with an adjacent open tile-lined hearth. Associated with these structures was a timber-lined trench that has been interpreted as a casting pit for large copper alloy vessels, which made up the majority of the products from this site. Manufacturing continued on this site until the mid-sixteenth century with several reorganisations and the construction of further buildings, hearths and furnaces.

The excavations at Low Petergate have provided evidence for another workshop and its associated structures. In particular, Tenement 3 was shown to contain three phases of structures for the production of copper alloy artefacts dating to between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Reeves 2006). The first phase consists of a furnace, an external tile lined hearth, and a feature made of fragments of tiles set on edge. In a similar fashion to the kerb stone base at the London Guildhall, this last feature has been interpreted as an area where the molten copper alloy could be poured into moulds before being left to cool. This phase was succeeded by a large tile hearth with a connected brick-based furnace built into one side (see Fig. 5.11). The furnace was subsequently replaced by a larger furnace demonstrating an increase in the scale of production on the site. The final metalworking phase at Low Petergate was the base of a truncated furnace that was again brick based as were its predecessors.

St Andrewgate is the final site from York to have produced structural evidence for a workshop. Due to the limits of excavation (the trench on the site was only 1.4m wide) the full extent of this workshop is unknown. However, despite this a series of buildings, floor deposits, and hearths have all indicated continuous working of both ferrous and non-ferrous metals on the site. This activity commenced in the fourteenth century and is represented structurally by a tile hearth built on a foundation of sand and mould fragments (Finlayson 2004: 899). The final phase of metalworking is represented by another tile hearth (see Fig. 5.12), which continued in use after metalworking appears to have ceased at the site.

5.4.3: Summary

In general, the excavated structural remains can be used to demonstrate the change in use or a change in the scale of production at an individual site over time. More useful, however, is the comparison between the sites and it is clear that from the mid- to late thirteenth century a major shift in the scale of production occurred. This

is shown at the London Guildhall where small-scale production is replaced by the late medieval equivalent of mass production through the introduction of the stack mould and the overall level of activity at the site. The Bedern foundry also shows this change, with the reorganisation of the site occurring in the late thirteenth century. These findings can be supported from the smaller production sites at Low Petergate and St Andrewgate as both of these workshops were set up in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

Unsurprisingly the structural remains differ slightly from site to site. However, there does appear to be a consistent pattern of construction technique in the evidence from York. Tile is used extensively at all three sites and is a continuation of contemporary local hearth construction traditions (Reeves 2006: 40). This differs slightly from the evidence from the London Guildhall as, although tile was used in the construction of the furnaces, stone is much more prevalent within the structural remains. Although only four sites are considered here, the evidence suggests that there was regional variation in the construction of the workshops. This should not come as a surprise as local traditions and perhaps more importantly accessible building materials would have influenced the construction of the structures necessary for the production of late medieval dress accessories.

5.5: Crucibles and moulds

Both crucible and mould fragments are common finds on the workshop sites under consideration here. Additionally there are mould fragments from OPT81, the Much Park Street sites, Coventry (Wright, SM 1982) and an antiquarian find from Salisbury (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 105). Crucible fragments are ubiquitous across the workshop sites in both London and York. However, as crucibles were simply used for the melting of copper alloys they cannot be interpreted as being solely used for the production of dress accessories as the manufacture of other copper alloy artefacts would also have required the use of crucibles. Despite this, the analysis of both the ceramic fabric type used and the metal residues is significant to the study of the production of late medieval dress accessories.

5.5.1: Crucibles

Chemical analysis has been undertaken on the assemblages of crucible fragments at the London Guildhall and St Andrewgate sites and these have shown the variety of copper alloy compositions being used at each site. For example, at St Andrewgate, XRF analysis of the crucible residues revealed a wide range of alloys with large amounts of zinc, lead, and tin with occasional traces of arsenic (Mortimer 2004: 918). This demonstrates the wide range of alloys that were being used for the various products being manufactured at the workshop. It was also noted that there were no obvious patterns within the range of alloys used either chronologically or spatially across the site (*ibid*: 919). More detailed analysis using energy dispersive spectroscopy (EDS) was undertaken on the assemblage from the London Guildhall. The results show a similar situation to that from St Andrewgate, with the copper alloys containing varying amounts of lead tin and zinc (Dungworth 2007: 473). Additionally, this technique was also able to demonstrate that differing alloy compositions were present in the same crucibles. Taken together, these results show that a variety of copper alloys were being used at each of these sites and that the range of alloy composition does not appear to have changed through time. This should not come as a surprise as a range of copper alloys were used for the production of dress accessories in the late medieval period (Egan and Pritchard 1991) and, even if this was not the case, the crucibles would undoubtedly have been used to melt the copper for the entire range of cast copper alloy products from each workshop.

The assemblage of crucibles from the London Guildhall was also considered as part of the ceramic report for the sites (Pearce 2007). This analysis confirms the presence of metalworking on the sites before reorganisation and expansion in the late thirteenth century, as 106 sherds, representing a minimum of 70 small rounded crucibles in EMCW[3] and MWCR[4], were identified from the mid-twelfth to the early thirteenth centuries. The composition of the assemblage alters from the late thirteenth century with a change in abundance, fabric type and form. A total of 430 sherds from at least 111 crucibles were identified from the late thirteenth to mid-fourteenth centuries and the majority of these were made from LMCR[5], which had largely

[3] Early medieval coarse whiteware
[4] Medieval whiteware crucible fabric
[5] Late medieval/early post-medieval crucible fabric

replaced the earlier fabrics. The small rounded crucibles of the earlier period had also been replaced by larger, thick straight walled crucibles (see Fig. 5.13). The significance of these observations lies in the timing of these changes. The shift from small crucibles to larger ones occurs from the late thirteenth century onwards which is broadly contemporary with the expansion of metalworking at the workshops and this should not be seen as a coincidence. The larger crucibles would obviously have been able to hold a greater volume of copper alloy and this demonstrates a shift in the scale of production at the workshops, which is mirrored in the rest of the evidence from the site. For the London Guildhall, the use of larger crucibles and new fabric types can be directly related to the change in the production of dress accessories at the site as these were the principal products manufactured, and the timing of this change in the mid- to late thirteenth century ties in chronologically with the expansion of established production sites, such as the London Guildhall and the Bedern Foundry, the foundation of new workshops, and innovations in other metalworking technologies; specifically clay stack moulds.

5.5.2: Moulds

Prior to the late thirteenth century the majority of cast copper alloy dress accessories were made in a clay mould. These moulds were only able to produce a small number of artefacts in a single casting before being broken up to recover the products. The introduction of the stack mould in the mid- to late thirteenth century allowed a much greater number of objects to be produced in a single casting and should be seen as a major contributor to the shift in the scale of dress accessory production that has already been suggested by the structural remains and crucible fragments. Other forms of mould continued to be used at smaller workshops such as the stone moulds for the production of lead/tin buckles from Coventry (Telford 1956), and a fifteenth century mould from Salisbury (Spencer 1990: 136 see Fig. 5.14).

The clay mould fragments recovered from the Much Park Street sites in Coventry provide an interesting contrast to the stack moulds recovered from sites in London and York. All of the mould fragments are single stack moulds meaning that only a small number of artefacts could be produced from a single casting. 3 mould fragments date to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century (Bayley 1982: 87) and thus predate the introduction of the stack mould into England. Consequently, these

sites provide the earliest evidence for late medieval dress accessory production workshops and should be seen as indicative of the scale of manufacture that would have been prevalent within England before the introduction of the stack mould in the mid- to late thirteenth century. One of these mould fragments was for the production of double oval buckles (see Fig. 5.15), and was recovered from a late twelfth century context. This is significant as Egan and Pritchard (1991: 82) dated this form of buckle as becoming more prevalent in London from the mid-fourteenth century onwards, and due to their academic influence subsequent finds catalogues have adopted this date (e.g. Rees *et al.* 2008: 225). This highlights the importance of using the local context to help date different finds from individual sites in order to identify precisely when and where specific forms were in use. Despite this earlier evidence from Coventry, the majority of mould fragments from the excavated workshop sites can be identified as being from stack moulds. Stack moulds were constructed from a series of slabs of tempered clay. Each slab had the impression of the desired object repeated in a series of rows before being joined together as can be seen in an example from OPT81 (see Fig. 5.16). Once completed, copper alloy could be poured into a single aperture at the top that would allow the metal to flow into each series of impressions.

As with other forms of ceramic mould, the stack moulds would need to be broken up to recover the cast artefacts, and this explains the fragmentary nature of the vast majority of their fragments that are found. However, through mistakes or misfortune, miscasting did occur and this has led to the survival of some more complete examples. These can be used to estimate the number of artefacts being cast in a single pouring. For example, the stack mould fragment from OPT81 could have produced between sixty and eighty rectangular buckle and strap loop frames. Similarly, the most complete mould from the Swinegate assemblage could have feasibly produced a comparable number of forked spacer strap-ends and buckles (see Fig. 4.03). The most complete example of a stack mould was recovered from the London Guildhall and this could have produced a total of 144 identical oval buckles in a single casting (see Fig. 5.17). It is clear from these and other more fragmentary examples that the use of stack moulds dramatically increased the number of artefacts that could be manufactured at any one time. Yet again this change happens in the mid- to late thirteenth century and is indicative of the move towards mass production, at least by late medieval standards.

Ceramic mould fragments, where enough remains for identification, can be directly attributed to a specific form of artefacts and this can act as a complimentary form of evidence to the copper alloy wasters. These two forms of evidence combined allow a fuller catalogue of the variety of forms of dress accessories in production at any one workshop.

5.6: The production wasters

Production wasters are defined as the artefacts that have not been finished, often for a variety of reasons. This means that they are the most direct evidence for the production of late medieval dress accessories and their presence has been used to identify the production sites from London and York. Although these two cities have produced the majority of the evidence, there are small assemblages from other towns and cities in late medieval England. These cannot be used to identify specific workshops but should be seen as a strong indicator that late medieval dress accessory production was occurring on a wider scale. The wasters from the production sites can be used with the evidence provided by the stack moulds to determine the products from each specific workshop, and these can then be compared to form an overview of the variety of forms and styles in production at these sites between the late thirteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

5.6.1: Waster indicators

The wasters have been identified as such due to the presence of one or more indicators that would have meant that the artefact was not finished. These include: miscasting, mould fragments being attached, artefacts still attached to each other after removal from the mould, and artefacts that have not been fettled or filed. Miscast artefacts can be further categorised as being either being deficient in, or having excess amounts of, metal. Both of these would have been caused by the mould failing to a degree so that either the metal did not flow into the recess in the mould, or a gap allowed excess metal to flow around the intended impression. A deficiency of metal is shown by LON1162 (see Fig. 5.18) a fragment of an oval buckle (1.3F) which has not been fully cast. As both ends of this artefact are rounded the fact that this buckle is incomplete is not through use or post-depositional processes but from the metal

having cooled too quickly to flow into the recess in the mould. LON1282 (see Fig. 5.19) on the other hand shows an artefact that has been cast with an excess of metal. This forked spacer for a strap-end has a thin film of metal that has filled in the centre of the artefact probably caused by the two sides of the mould not being pressed together firmly enough. Similarly, LON0855 (see Fig. 5.20) from the London Guildhall shows an excess of metal around the terminal of the artefact and this is a relatively common defect on the cast decorative elements; a result of the more complex form that was being attempted.

Occasionally after casting, fragments of the ceramic mould would remain bonded to the artefact after the mould had been broken apart. This is shown by LON1001 (see Fig. 5.21) where two oval buckles (1.3I) are joined from the mould. The decorative features on the buckle frame on top have not been cast correctly and the metalworker has therefore not bothered to remove the ceramic mould fragment from the centre of the frame. Artefacts conjoined from the mould are more frequently found and these can be used to identify both the products being manufactured and the layout of the impressions within the original mould. For example, LON1305 (see Fig. 5.22) is two oval buckles (1.3D) conjoined from the mould by the runner attached to the side of each frame. In this case the sprue is thicker than desired, especially when compared to the fragment of the sprue running off the top frame. YOR313 (see Fig. 4.02) is two forked spacer buckles which again are conjoined from the mould. Here, the two prongs of the forked spacer are attached to the frame of the buckle above and in this instance these prongs act as the runners down which the molten copper alloy would have flowed.

The final indicator of wasters is the remains of casting flushes that have not been fettled from the cast artefact. In some instances, such as LON1040 (see Fig. 5.23), this can be quite clear. This trapezoidal strap loop retains a fragment of the sprue that would have connected it to other artefacts being cast in the same mould. Other examples have much more ephemeral traces. This can be seen on clasp frame LON1123 (see Fig. 5.24), which has traces of excess metal around the outside and inside of the frame. Although this indicator can be quite difficult to identify from simply looking at an object, as the traces of casting flushes tend to be sharp to the touch, so they can be relatively easily identified by handling the artefact. The good preservation of the dress accessories in the ground is very important for identifying these indicators as any corrosion can obscure the more faint traces used to identify

wasters. This partly explains why dress accessory wasters were not first identified at the Bedern Foundry (Richards 1993), as it was only with the discovery of the Thames Exchange assemblage and its superb preservation that some of the more ephemeral indications of waster material were observed (Egan 1996: 88). It is only through the identification of definite dress accessory wasters that the products from each production site can be identified as finished and used examples can potentially be seen as chance losses on the site rather than finished artefacts that had not been sold.

5.6.2: London wasters

The two largest assemblages of wasters come from the production site at the London Guildhall and the waterfront dump site at the Thames Exchange, with 31 and 44 individual examples respectively. From these it is possible to identify the products that were being produced at the London Guildhall and the unidentified workshop from which the TEX88 assemblage must have come from. The wasters from the London Guildhall represent a minimum of ten different forms of dress accessory. These are at least three subcategories of oval buckle frames (1.3F, 1.3H, 1.3I), rectangular buckles (1.7), forked spacer buckles (1.10) and strap-ends (3.3), trapezoidal (6.1), oval (6.3), and pentagonal (6.4) strap loops, and bar mounts (5.2 see Fig. 5.25). These can all be dated to the late thirteenth to mid-fourteenth centuries and are therefore associated with the initial expansion and subsequent use of the dress accessory manufacturing workshops at the site. Although this period covers around seventy years, there is no discernable difference in the products being manufactured over this time. This can be attributed to the fact that tighter dating of the specific wasters would require exceptional stratigraphic sequencing on the site, and although changes in the products manufactured would probably have occurred over the lifetime of the workshop, these changes cannot be identified archaeologically. The quantity of wasters from the site is also worth noting. It has been shown through the stack mould evidence that hundreds of artefacts were capable of being produced in a single casting. Yet, despite this, only 31 wasters have been identified. This attests to either an almost faultless casting process or, far more likely, a systematic recycling of miscast artefacts.

Although the Thames Exchange cannot be identified as a production site, it has produced the largest assemblage of copper alloy dress accessory wasters, although the 44 individual artefacts identified as such (due to the indicators outlined above) only

make up a small proportion of the total 386 dress accessories from the site. The products within the TEX88 assemblage represent a total of 18 different dress accessory forms. These are five different subcategories of oval buckle frames (1.3B, 1.3D, 1.3F, 1.3I, 1.3P), oval clasp frames (2.1B), double oval (1.4), rectangular with central bar (1.8), and D-shaped buckle frames (1.5), forked spacer buckles (1.10) and strap-ends (3.3), trapezoidal (6.1), rectangular (6.2), and oval 6.3) strap loops, cast and sheet bar mounts (5.2), and circular mounts (5.1 see Fig. 5.26). As the sequencing of the site has not yet been finalised, the absolute dating of these finds cannot be commented upon. However, the presence of forked spacer buckles and strap-ends, and the oval buckle frame with an inside rectangular loop, strongly indicates a probable date ranging from the early fourteenth to the fifteenth centuries although some dress accessory forms were certainly in use prior to this date.

The London Guildhall and TEX88 assemblages make up the vast majority of the waster evidence from London. However, excavations at OPT81 did recover LON0148; a strip of 5 rectangular strap loops still attached from the mould (see Fig. 5.27). The products represented within this assemblage can be increased by taking into account the evidence provided from the stack mould fragment recovered from the site. This mould contained impressions that would have produced at least four different forms of rectangular buckles and strap loops. The evidence from OPT81 is contemporary to that from the London Guildhall as all these finds were recovered from a phase of the site dating to the early fourteenth century. Finally an excavation at the waterfront site of the Billingsgate Lorry Park (BWB83) has provided 4 potential wasters. These are all sheet sexfoil mounts which could have been used, but have not been completely trimmed after being stamped from the sheet copper alloy, and 3 of which have not got the necessary rivet holes that would have been needed to attach the mount to the strap (see Fig. 5.28). 3 of these artefacts were found in stratified contexts and all date to London ceramic phase 11, belonging to the mid to late fourteenth century. As BWB83 is another waterfront site the production waste must have originated at an unknown workshop in the city before being dumped on the Thames foreshore.

The four assemblages of copper alloy dress accessory wasters from London are broadly contemporary, dating between the late thirteenth and late fourteenth centuries. The evidence from OPT81 and BWB83 is useful for identifying the presence of small assemblages of wasters elsewhere in London, but it is the evidence from the

London Guildhall workshops and TEX88 that allow for a more detailed comparison due to the size of the assemblages from these sites. In general, the forms represented within the two assemblages are very similar. However, the greater number of forms present within the TEX88 assemblage cannot simply be seen as a result of the slightly larger number of wasters recovered from the site. The style and forms of dress accessories being produced and worn undergoes a significant change during the late medieval period beginning in the mid- to late thirteenth century with a much broader range of belt fittings being used from this point. Again, due to the lack of absolute dating from TEX88, the precise date of the assemblage cannot be given. However, the greater variety in the dress accessories from the site compared to the London Guildhall sites is a strong indication that TEX88 can be dated to the second half of the fourteenth century and may therefore indicate the dumping ground of a production workshop being used after the London Guildhall workshops go out of use.

5.6.3: York wasters

None of the production sites in York have produced assemblages of dress accessory wasters on the scale of those from the London Guildhall or TEX88, with the Bedern Foundry and St Andrewgate producing 6 individual artefacts each, and Swinegate and Low Petergate 4 examples each. Despite this, as all four sites were broadly contemporary during the fourteenth century even the limited numbers of dress accessory wasters combined with the evidence from mould fragments from the sites can be used to identify the styles and forms that were being produced within York during this period.

The identified products from the Bedern Foundry include oval buckles (1.3), forked spacer buckles (1.10) and strap-ends (3.3), and cast sexfoil mounts (5.6, see Fig. 5.29). The oval buckle frame waster was recovered from a fourteenth-century context and represents the earliest evidence for dress accessory production from the site. One of the forked spacer strap-end wasters was recovered from a mid-fourteenth to early fifteenth-century context and can be used to date the other forked spacer artefacts which must be residual finds in mid-sixteenth to early seventeenth-century contexts, as the foundry had gone out of use by this point. At Low Petergate there is waster evidence for the production of oval buckles (1.3) and oval strap loops (6.3, see Fig. 5.30) and again these can be dated to the fourteenth century.

The St Andrewgate workshop has produced waster evidence for rectangular buckle frames (1.7), forked spacer buckles (1.10), and oval strap loops (6.3, see Fig. 5.31). The earliest waster was recovered from a fourteenth-century context and this complements the evidence from the structural remains of the workshop. The forked spacer buckles were being produced at a slightly later phase of the workshop. 2 wasters from the same context can be dated to the late fourteenth to early fifteenth century whilst the final example is a residual find in a late fifteenth to early sixteenth-century context. Although there are only 6 individual wasters from the St Andrewgate site, the forked spacer buckles, which make up half of these, were all recovered from later contexts and this can tentatively be interpreted as evidence for the introduction of new products at the site during the late fourteenth century.

Even though only 4 copper alloy dress accessory wasters were identified from the assemblage from Swinegate, more products can be identified from this site due to the evidence from the moulds, and due to the good preservation of these, it is possible to identify a larger range of products than for any other site in York. The products from Swinegate include oval, D-shaped (1.5) and rectangular buckle frames (1.7), forked spacer buckles (1.10) and strap-ends (3.3), trapezoidal strap loops (6.1), and bar mounts (5.2, see Fig. 5.32). Although purse hangers are not included in this study it is worth mentioning the presence of a purse hanger mould and an associated waster (see Fig. 5.33) as the product fits exactly into the mould. Unfortunately, as this site is still to be phased, the dating of the moulds must remain tentative; however, the forms represented are contemporary to the other production sites in York and it is likely that these examples date to between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The limited numbers of dress accessory wasters from the York production sites means that it is very difficult to identify definite chronological trends amongst the products from these workshops. Despite this, the forked spacer buckles and strap-ends were only recovered from contexts dating from the latter half of the fourteenth century onwards, and it is therefore possible to hypothesise that this is evidence for the introduction of the production of this form of dress accessory in York from the mid- to late fourteenth century. The identified products from all four sites are all very similar and there was therefore no specialisation in a specific form of dress accessory at any one workshop. These production sites were consequently in direct competition to each other and the forms being produced must be seen as the prevailing forms and styles of dress accessory in demand from the population of York. Finally, the small

number of dress accessory wasters from Swinegate can be supplemented by the evidence from moulds to identify a wider range of products. Much restricted numbers must be seen as evidence for a systematic reuse of miscast and unfinished artefacts at all of the workshop sites in York. If a similar assemblage of moulds to that from Swinegate were available for the other sites, it is extremely likely that a wider range of products would be identifiable for these sites. It is therefore essential when examining production sites to take into account all forms of evidence available.

5.7: Other production evidence from England

Although the majority of the evidence for dress accessory production and manufacturing sites is limited to Coventry, London and York, there is a small but significant quantity of copper alloy wasters recovered from other towns and cities in England. Only one other potential production site for late medieval dress accessories is currently known, with excavations at Deansway in Worcester uncovering a large bronze foundry dating between the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Taylor 1996; Dalwood and Edwards 2004). The principal products from this site were large cast vessels, although substantial evidence for occasional bell-founding was also recovered. Additionally, there is some evidence for at least occasional small artefact casting. In particular, the crucible fragments recovered from Deansway are all indicative for the production of small copper alloy objects (Taylor 2004: 386) as the manufacture of large vessels and bells would require a much greater volume of molten copper alloy than the capacity of the crucibles found. Unfortunately, the preservation of the copper alloy artefacts at the site is particularly poor and the artefacts would need to be X-rayed in order to confirm whether any of the dress accessories from the site can be definitively identified as wasters. However, WOR025 (see Fig. 5.34) has been tentatively identified as a possible oval buckle waster, and the possibility that dress accessories were being produced at the Deansway foundry must be considered.

The Bedern Foundry in York offers a potential parallel to the evidence from Deansway. The principal products from Bedern were also identified as large copper alloy domestic vessels; although manufacturing evidence demonstrated that other products including dress accessories were being made. The crucibles and small ceramic mould fragments found at Deansway show that small castings were also being

made at the site. Sheet metal offcuts were also found and could possibly have been waste from the production of sheet copper alloy dress accessories such as buckle plates, although of course copper alloy sheet was used to produce a great variety of different artefacts. However, combined with the potential dress accessory wasters from Deansway, and the example set by the Bedern Foundry site, it is at the very least possible to hypothesise that dress accessory production was occurring on or near to the foundry in Worcester.

From the rest of the towns and cities under consideration here there are only 4 individual copper alloy wasters. These can only be described as one-off chance finds and the sites that they were recovered from were not workshops producing dress accessories. Single examples of miscast oval buckle frames (1.3) were found in Lincoln and Oxford (see Figs. 5.35, 5.36) whilst examples of miscast double oval frames (1.4) were excavated in Chester and Exeter (see Figs. 5.37, 5.38). Although it may have been possible that these artefacts were picked up elsewhere and brought to the towns in question it is more probable that these artefacts are indications that dress accessory production was occurring in these towns albeit perhaps on a small, occasional scale.

5.8: Repair

Repair represents the next step of alteration that an individual artefact might undergo after its initial production, sale and use. The mass production of late medieval dress accessories, as exemplified by the manufacturing methods described above, means that these forms of artefact would have been affordable to a large proportion of society. This is supported by the types of belt fitting found within contemporary rural assemblages such as at Great Linford, Buckinghamshire (Zeepvat 1992), Warram Percy, North Yorkshire (Andrews and Milne 1979), Goltho, Lincolnshire (Goodall, I 1975: 92) and Shapwick, Somerset (Viner 2007: 744). The vast majority of artefacts under consideration here can therefore be described as cheap utilitarian products which, when broken, could have been easily replaced. Despite this, 50, or 1.94% of the artefacts studied during data collection have been identified as having, or at least potentially having, been repaired. 38 of these are buckles that have had replacement

pins attached whilst the remaining 12 are strap-ends and buckle/clasp plates that have been repaired after losing their original rivets.

A total of 35 individual copper alloy buckles had iron pins or fragments of iron pins indicated by rust staining on the bar (see Fig. 5.39). The majority of these examples were from London and Winchester, the two largest assemblages of dress accessories in England, with 12 artefacts from each. The remaining 11 buckles are spread between the assemblages from Coventry, Exeter, Leicester, Oxford, Southampton and York meaning that all the larger collections of dress accessories are represented apart from Lincoln. 22 of the 35 buckles were double oval frames, and this form of buckle was therefore the most likely form to have been fixed with an iron pin. Four other forms of frame were represented with 6 oval frames, 5 rectangular frames with central bars, and single examples of a D-shaped frame and circular frame with iron pins. These buckles can only tentatively interpreted as instances of repair as the attachment of an iron pin could potentially have been a stylistic or functional choice made during production rather than a later necessary addition to repair the artefact. However, the majority of buckles that retain their pin *in situ* have pins made from the same material as the buckle frame. The small proportion of copper alloy buckles with iron pins can therefore, at the very least, be interpreted as having replacement pins, as has been observed by Egan and Pritchard (1991: 54).

Other instances of replacement pins can be more positively identified. For example, GLO004 (see Fig. 5.40) is a circular framed buckle that has been repaired after its original pin was lost. This form of buckle typically has a distinctive large cast copper alloy pin whereas this example has a crude sheet metal replacement. Similarly, LON227 (see Fig. 5.41) is the only example of a circular buckle with an iron pin and this can relatively safely be identified as a repair. The last two examples from London and Winchester, are buckles that have had a crude wire pin added to the frame to replace the original pin (see Figs. 5.42, 5.43).

The remaining 12 repairs are found on buckle and strap-end plates, and are recognisable with the incongruous nature of the rivets found on them. For example, LON0603 (see Fig. 5.44) is a buckle plate with four rivets remaining *in situ*. The two copper alloy rivets at the end of the plate are formed of a different composition to those on the outside edge of the plate. In addition these rivets are larger and more crudely applied and must be replacements for the original rivets. The highly decorated strap-end WIN297 (see Fig. 5.45) also shows evidence of repair as the replacement

rivet has been punched through the intricately engraved decoration. Crude iron rivets are also used for repairs as is the case with LON0173 (see Fig. 5.46), where the rivet at the end of the plate is made from this metal. There are two examples of plates that have been repaired with copper wire. LON0442 (see Fig. 5.47) is a strap-end that has lost both original rivets at the end of the artefact and these have been replaced with wire that has been threaded through the original rivet holes as is the case with the broken forked spacer buckle WIN228 (see Fig. 5.48). Finally, LON0481 (see Fig. 5.49) is a clasp plate that had been broken along the outside edge of the plate. This has been repaired with the addition of a second strip of copper alloy of a different composition that has been folded over the break and riveted into place.

In general, the iron and copper alloy repairs made to late medieval dress accessories are relatively crudely and amateurishly done. However, the presence of such repairs, even on such a small proportion of the total assemblage studied, must be seen as significant. The manufacture of late medieval belt fittings was on a relatively large scale and these repaired artefacts could have been discarded and replaced relatively cheaply. Egan and Pritchard (1991: 34) have suggested that the replacement of rivets could have been the result of moving buckle plates and strap-ends from their original belts to a new replacement and financially the replacement of lost buckle pins and rivets on a plate would have been cheaper than the purchase of a new dress accessory. However, economic factors alone cannot adequately explain the phenomenon of repair as has been shown in studies of repairs to early Anglo-Saxon cruciform brooches (Martin 2012) and seventeenth-century glass goblets (Willmott 2001), which highlight the importance of considering social factors within explanations of instances of repair.

This is particularly the case for the repaired composite strap-end WIN297. This artefact is extensively decorated on both the front and back plates and this decoration must have been specially commissioned by the customer as a surname, “Charnok” has been elaborately engraved on one plate. The repair to this strap-end is clear due to the decoration being partially obscured and could be a result of the artefact becoming detached from its strap or from being moved from its original belt to a new one. In either case this artefact could not have been as easily replaced as a more ordinary and less personalised dress accessory, and an aspect of personal engagement or attachment to the strap-end must be considered, especially when the explicitly religious iconography of the depiction of St Catherine is taken into account.

5.9: Summary of the production evidence

The production sites and copper alloy wasters detailed here demonstrate the forms and types of artefacts being manufactured, the production methods employed, and the scale of the dress accessory production industry in late medieval England. The more extensive evidence from London and York shows the changes that this industry underwent during this period. This change can be dated to the mid- to late thirteenth century and is characterised by the setting up of new workshops, such as St Andrewgate, or the enlargement of existing ones, as at the London Guildhall, and the employment of new technologies. The introduction of the stack mould and larger crucibles made from more durable fabrics allowed the production of dress accessories to move from the relatively small-scale manufacture that was revealed at Much Park Street to the late medieval equivalent of mass production evident at workshops dating from the late thirteenth century onwards.

Part of the reason why London and York have provided such good evidence for the manufacture of late medieval dress accessories is due to the quantity and quality of excavation that has been undertaken in these cities over the past few decades. Other towns and cities have received much less archaeological attention and the focus of excavation is still too often centred on specific periods meaning that late medieval contexts do not necessarily receive the consideration needed to fully understand them. However, the copper alloy wasters identified during data collection represent a good geographical spread around the country (see Fig. 5.50) and this can be used to identify how dress accessory production was organised on a national scale. It is clear that the major towns and cities would have acted as local manufacturing centres producing goods not just for consumers within the towns themselves but also the local rural hinterlands. This is shown by the similarity between the forms present within rural assemblages such as that from Wharram Percy (Andrews and Milne 1979) and their relevant local urban assemblage, in this case York (Ottaway and Rogers 2002).

Although the focus of this work is firmly on dress accessories from late medieval England, the wider European context of the production methods and techniques should not be ignored. For example, excavations at Cornmarket in Dublin produced a large assemblage of dress accessory wasters from a late thirteenth-century context (Hayden 2000: 107). The forms represented and the production methods used for manufacturing are identical to similar assemblages from England (see Fig. 5.51).

Given the influence of England upon medieval Dublin, it is perhaps no surprise that similar forms were being produced and consumed. However, copper alloy wasters recovered from sites in Lund and Amsterdam are also of a remarkably similar form to dress accessories found in England. A single copper alloy waster consisting of three buckle frames joined from the mould was excavated in Lund from a thirteenth-century context (Bergman and Billberg 1976: 206). These oval buckle frames (see Fig. 5.52) are identical to 1.3F and have direct parallels to examples from assemblages in England. Similarly, 2 double oval buckle frame wasters were excavated in Amsterdam (unpublished NL4-1, NL4-2; see Fig. 5.53) and again these artefacts have direct comparisons from contemporary English towns and cities. These two examples emphasise the importance of considering the European context and wider social and economic implications within discussions of English late medieval dress accessories.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1: Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to determine the social implications of dress accessories within late medieval society. From the preceding analysis, five themes have emerged that need to be fully explored in order to investigate the role that belt fittings played within contemporary dress and society. The first of these is regionality and how the use of dress accessories varied across the country. This can be focused at a variety of levels such as the regional similarities and differences between the individual city assemblages, the variation between social groups evident in the larger assemblages from London, Winchester and York, and finally the wider European context of the English material.

Secondly, the evidence for production and its relationship to changes in consumer habits and choices will be examined. From the mid-thirteenth century there were dramatic changes in the technology used to manufacture dress accessories. This not only had an effect on the scale and social organisation of production, but also a major influence on the types and forms of belt fittings available to the consumer. This is intrinsically linked to changes in dress and the development of fashion which in turn provoked attempts at social control by elites in the form of guild regulations and sumptuary laws. An understanding of the inter-relationship between producer and consumer is integral to a broader explanation of this process and again highlights how dress accessories can be used to identify broader social trends.

The next theme is death and burial. Large scale excavations of late medieval cemeteries in England have illustrated that although dress accessories are relatively uncommon finds, they are far from unusual. These finds can be combined with what is known of burial practices in this period in order to examine the role dress could play during funerary rituals. This in turn can be used to understand the social perception of dress and its associated accessories within a religious and mortuary context.

Decoration and symbolism is the fourth theme to be explored. Certain decorative motifs, such as the acorn, are commonly found on specific forms of dress accessory, and the possibility that these motifs contained a symbolic meaning to the wearer and viewer must be considered. By combining the evidence from dress

accessories with contemporary literature and depictions it is possible to explore some of the values that these held in their late medieval context. The significance and interpretation of material culture is not static, and this section takes into account the potential multiplicity of meanings that these decorative motifs could portray to different social groups.

The final section examines the use of text and phrases on belts and dress accessories. This practice can be split into two distinct themes: religious inscriptions and love tokens. The use of text represents a significant choice by the wearer to display this motif in a public domain and this therefore is closely related to the iconographic symbolism in the previous section. However, the symbolism of text can be further explored in a different way through its relations to the wider themes of literacy, the power of the word and the practice of gift giving. In undertaking this approach, the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that the study of late medieval material culture in general, and dress accessories in particular, has a crucial role to play in developing a deeper understanding of the contemporary society that made and used these artefacts.

6.2: Regionality

In his introduction to the catalogue of non-ferrous metalwork from the North Wirral coastal settlement of Meols, Merseyside, Geoff Egan (2007a: 79-80) proposed that, "Its unique survivals permit the tentative, radical suggestion that in England from *c.*1050 to *c.* 1500, everyday material culture... was very similar right across the country, from the rural north-west England to the urban south-east." The implications of this hypothesis are clear, that given any two large unspecific assemblages of material culture from late medieval England there should not be any discernible differences between the forms and functions represented within them.

The aim of this section is to test the validity of this claim and in order to do so the city assemblages will be examined to determine any variation in the use patterns evident from the represented forms from each location, and any expression of regional identities through belt fittings can be identified. Secondly, the largest assemblages of dress accessories from London, Winchester and York will be examined to determine whether any distinctions can be drawn from differing types of sites and social groups who would have occupied them during the late medieval period. This recognises that

urban populations of this period were not a homogenous group and could express their differences through dress. Finally, the evidence from England will be compared to the published material from Northern Europe in order to examine how the types and forms of belt fittings from late medieval England sit in their wider European context. Studies of dress accessories have tended to focus on specific sites or regions and therefore the similarities and differences beyond these areas have tended to be overlooked. Therefore, this section also aims to move beyond simply testing Egan's hypothesis by explaining how and why similarities and differences in form are visible within assemblages across England, as well as further afield. This involves an examination of the social groups present within late medieval urban settlements, the local, national and international trade networks, and the movement of people and ideas across Northern Europe all of which had an effect on the forms of dress accessory available within each region.

6.2.1: Inter-city regionality

At the most superficial level, dress accessories do appear to be very similar across all the urban assemblages examined. This is evident from the fact that for each separate type and form of dress accessory identified examples can be provided from at least two separate urban collections. There are a few exceptions to this, for example all ten of the cast strap-ends with openwork decoration (3.7) and all cinquefoil (5.5), septfoil (5.7), hexagonal (5.12) and octagonal (5.13) mounts were found in London, whilst the only example of a large decorative strap-end (3.6) was identified at Oxford. However, there are other published examples which would fit into these categories. For example, large decorative strap-ends are known from published catalogues from London (Ward Perkins 1939, Fingerlin 1971: 129) whilst they are depicted on several grave effigies from around England dating to the turn of the fifteenth century (Ward Perkins 1954: 266-7). This shows that although the data collection was extensive it was not exhaustive, and certain forms will be under or unrepresented due to the quality or quantity of archaeology undertaken within any given city. Therefore, in terms of the types and forms of dress accessories within each assemblage as a whole, the evidence supports Egan's hypothesis. However, when a more nuanced approach is taken, and the quantity and proportions are taken into account there is significant evidence for differing regional use patterns.

The most striking of these is the number and proportion of mounts within the London assemblage compared to the rest of the country as a whole with the 55 mounts representing 40.69% of the London material and 73.70% of the total of 753 mounts recorded from all fifteen city assemblages. Furthermore, belt fittings from London also differ in the material chosen to manufacture them. Whilst, as with the other assemblages copper alloy was the most prevalent metal used, there are 120 examples of lead/tin dress accessories or 93.02% of the 129 belt fittings of this material. Consequently, it can be concluded that the population of late medieval London differed in their dress significantly from the rest of the country both through more regular use of mounts and their choice to wear lead/tin belt fittings.

There are other examples of similar patterns from elsewhere in the country, such as the high proportion of double oval (1.4) buckles from Coventry and Leicester with the geographical proximity of these two cities suggesting that this form of buckle was more popular in this part of the country. Similarly, the distribution of D-shaped buckle 1.5C and oval strap loop 6.3F, both decorated with a moulded collared knop, demonstrate that these forms were most popularly used by the inhabitants of York. Conversely, the city assemblages also demonstrate that certain forms of dress accessory were in less widespread use in certain regions compared to the rest of the country such as the small proportions of strap-ends from Winchester and Southampton. As with the double oval buckles from Coventry and Leicester, the proximity of Winchester and Southampton suggest that this is a reflection of the relative lack of use of strap-ends within the contemporary late medieval population of Hampshire.

These examples all demonstrate that certain forms of dress accessory were more popularly used in specific regions of the country than others. However, it is noticeable that although these types of dress accessory are more prevalent within some cities, they are not totally absent from the rest of the country. Therefore, although it is certainly possible that regional identities could be displayed through dress, the excavated dress accessories do show a level of homogeneity in form, if not necessarily in relative proportions. This mirrors the findings of Standley (2010: 187) in her study of material along the Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-Welsh borders. Here the types of dress accessory were not only similar in both English regions but also in the accompanying Scottish and Welsh regions. If no regional identity is visible in these contested areas then it would be unusual to see clear regional variations across the English urban assemblages. This is certainly the case; double oval buckles are more common in the

Coventry and Leicester assemblages, strap-ends are less common in the Southampton and Winchester collections, but in both these cases it is more of a trend than a clear distinction.

The fact that there are no major regional variations between the city assemblages should not necessarily come as surprise. The Gough map, dating to the latter half of the fourteenth century and depicting the contemporary road network, and contemporary travel accounts illustrate the fact that by this date the roads of late medieval England had developed to the point where nowhere in the country was more than a fortnight's ride from London (Stenton 1936; see Fig. 6.1). In part this was a result of the development of trade along these routes (Lopez 1956: 23), whilst water travel continued to provide a cheaper and quicker means of transporting goods around the country (Dyer 1994: 262). Consequently, both the population and marketable goods of late medieval England were, at least given the means and opportunity, potentially extremely mobile.

This point is further illustrated by the historical evidence for where consumers made their purchases. For example the household accounts of Richard Mitford, bishop of Salisbury, for 1406-7 show the distance that some goods could travel. Wax, jewellery and spices were brought to his estates from London, wine from the ports of Bristol and Southampton, whilst only cheaper purchases were made within towns in the immediate vicinity such as Salisbury and Devizes (Dyer 1994: 260; see Fig. 6.2). This case can, in some ways, be seen as exceptional as the vast majority of the late medieval population would not have had the same means as Mitford for the purchase and transport of these goods. However, the accounts for the more modest Eyre family from Hessop, Derbyshire, show a similar situation, with most goods being purchased in the larger local market towns of Sheffield and Chesterfield (Dyer 1994: 269-270). This pattern can be followed down the social scale, where the peasantry were most likely to purchase the goods and services from their most local market (Britnell 1981). This did not necessarily restrict these consumers to locally manufactured goods as the pottery from the peasant crofts at Goltho, Lincolnshire, shows. Although the majority of the vessels would have been produced in Lincoln there are also sherds of Humber ware produced to the north and even a Saintonge ware jug base from France (Beresford 1975: 69). Thus, whilst the majority of purchases were locally produced, goods manufactured further afield could be brought to these local markets for peasant consumers.

All of this shows the interconnection of the different regions of late medieval England through both the transport and trade networks, and into which the purchase and use of dress accessories needs to be placed. The upper echelons of society could afford to find the best place for their purchases and this included clothing and jewellery, as shown through Richard Mitford's household accounts. At this level of society dress accessories could potentially travel significant distances from their place of manufacture. However the dress accessories under consideration here would have been mass produced and locally manufactured for the lower levels of the neighbouring populace. The local trade within the wider national network can explain the slight variations visible between some of the city assemblages. Local consumers would have been influenced by their peers, meaning that certain forms, such as the double oval buckle in Coventry and Leicester, were more popular in some parts of the country compared to others. However, the wider national trade network and population movement would have acted as an additional influence, as forms and styles of dress accessory were able to move round the country and therefore be taken up on a national (or even international) scale.

6.2.2: Intra-city patterns

The problem with examining dress accessories from an urban assemblage as a single entity is the potential for viewing the inhabitants of the late medieval city as a homogenous group. This is clearly incorrect as the population of towns and cities are made up of a range of differing social groups with their own range of expressed identities including status, gender, age, religion and ethnicity (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005: 1). The archaeological remains of a site can be directly related to its past occupants and the recovered dress accessories can be used examine the consumer choices and the expressed identities of the people who used and wore them. To make any meaningful observations only the largest site assemblages, from London, Winchester and York can be used as they provide the most accurate guide to the forms and styles which were chosen by the past inhabitants of each site.

The waterfront excavations on the Thames in London have provided the largest assemblages of belt fittings from anywhere in the country. However, as has been discussed previously, the formation of these sites through a succession of dumps means that the context of the social groups who used them before discard is not known.

Despite this, the material from Trig Lane (TL74) offers the possibility of an insight into the forms of dress accessory worn in and around the late medieval cathedral of St Paul's. Here the proportion of mounts within the assemblage is much smaller than for the other contemporaneous waterfront sites at, for example, the Billingsgate Lorry Park (BWB83) and the Thames Exchange (TEX88). There are also examples of highly decorated lead/tin strap-ends (see Fig. 4.8) which have explicitly religious figures which are absent from the other waterfront sites, with the closest parallel from London being a strap-end plate with an engraved *agnus dei* (LON0944 see Fig. 4.6) from the Augustinian priory of St Mary, Merton.

The excavations in Winchester offer the chance to compare the use of dress accessories in both urban and suburban contexts. The assemblages from both urban and suburban sites are, in terms of the forms represented, very similar. However, as with the inter-city regionality, a closer examination of the proportions of each form reveals differences in the use patterns of dress accessories between the extra- and intra-mural populations. For example, oval buckles (1.3) are more prevalent within the collections from the central urban sites whilst double oval (1.4) and D-shaped buckles (1.5) are proportionally more common within the suburban assemblages. There are differences in the proportion of materials used as well; as although copper alloy is the dominant metal used for both urban and suburban dress accessories, there is a much larger proportion of iron belt fittings from the suburban sites. Decoration is much more common within the walls but some of the most decorative examples (see Fig. 4.11) are from suburban sites. Indeed, dress accessories that combine two decorative techniques are almost exclusively found outside the city walls. Finally, there are differences within the distribution of mounts within late medieval Winchester. Bar mounts are the most common form, but are almost exclusively urban finds whilst mounts in general are more prevalent and display a much greater variation in form within the suburban sites.

All of this shows that the population of late medieval Winchester were using dress accessories in slightly different ways in differing parts of the city as a whole. This evidence mirrors the findings from the inter-city regionality as a whole, where local tastes can be seen to determine the prevalence of certain forms of dress accessory over another. The finds from Winchester show that this can be seen at a more micro level with differing social groups, living in differing areas of the city, choosing to use dress accessories in different ways. The clearest distinction is shown by the Victoria

Road assemblage. From the late thirteenth century, an emerging mercantile class was occupying the site and their choice of dress accessories set them apart from the rest of the late medieval city. For example, this assemblage contained some of the more elaborate dress accessories that combine two decorative techniques and a variety of different forms of mount. These fittings would have been highly visible elements of the owners costume and this can be seen as a negotiation of their emerging position within contemporary Winchester society

Excavations in York have provided dress accessories from a number of different sites that, through a combination of the archaeological and historical records, can be linked to a range of social groups. For example, the residents of 16-22 Coppergate were members of the city's mercantile elite (Rees Jones 2002: 692), whilst the archaeological remains of two of York's ecclesiastical institutions, the College of the Vicars Choral and the Gilbertine priory of St Andrew, were excavated at Bedern and Fishergate respectively. The difference between these two ecclesiastical assemblages of belt fittings can be used to examine the variety of forms used at each site and, more importantly, illustrate the importance of dress within a late medieval ecclesiastical setting. The forms and decoration of the belt fittings show a significant difference between the two sites (see 4.2.3), with the Fishergate dress accessories representing the simpler forms (see Fig. 6.3), whilst the Bedern assemblage contains a much greater variation in forms including more elaborate examples.

The differences between these two sites can be explained in a number of ways. For example, the assemblages could perhaps be seen as a reflection of the relative social status of members of each institution. The Gilbertine priory at Fishergate was situated outside of the city walls and both the archaeological and historical evidence state that it was not a wealthy monastery, with the monastic buildings contracting in the fourteenth century (Kemp 1996: 323) and by the dissolution it was classed as a 'lesser monastery' (Burton 1996: 63). In contrast the Bedern College was expanding throughout the fourteenth century, with the addition of a second courtyard (Richards 2001: 539), due to the prosperity of the Vicars Choral, although they did experience financial difficulties during the fifteenth century (Rees Jones 2001: 383-4). The Bedern College housed the vicars whose position was to support the canons of York Minster and take responsibility for the chantries for the dead (Rees Jones 2001: 382). Financially, at least, the Vicars Choral were in a much better position to purchase the more decorative dress accessories that were recovered from the Bedern excavations.

However, a more persuasive argument is provided by the restrictions placed on the dress of the inhabitants of St Andrew's Fishergate. The Gilbertine order lived by the rule of St Benedict which governed every aspect of their day to day existence, and dress was no exception. Clothing, including belts, was to be communally owned and handed out to the members of their order according to their needs (White 2008: 81). The members of the Vicars Choral were under no restrictions as they were not monastic and therefore not bound by the rules of any one order. This in turn allowed the vicars to use more elaborate dress accessories than would have been deemed acceptable under monastic orders which extolled simplicity in all aspects of life.

Finally, a consideration of the social role that dress accessories could play in an ecclesiastical context is needed. Although dress was actively encouraged to be simple in a monastic setting this was not the case within the late medieval church as a whole, where display through dress reinforced the power and authority of members of the clergy. As St Thomas Aquinas (Gilby 1972: 233) said in his *Summa Theologiae*, "Those constituted in positions of dignity and the ministers of the altar more than others are decked in costly robes, not for their own glory, but to signify the nobility of their office and of divine worship; therefore for them it is not wrongful." Perhaps the most extreme example of this is the papal Triple Crown which symbolised and legitimised the power of the papacy as was evident for example at the coronation of Felix V in 1440 where a contemporary report "Dwelt on the visual and emotional effect of his crown with an abundance of precious stones" (Rublack 2010: 85). In this context then, elaborate and decorative dress accessories were not seen as an ostentatious and vainglorious display of wealth but a legitimate tool to signify the social position of the wearer.

Members of the Vicars Choral would have played a prominent and public role during worship at York Minster (Rees Jones 2001: 382), both during services and in the performance of their chantry duties. Their dress and dress accessories would have been a prominent and visible reminder to viewers of their position within the minster, and in this context the more elaborate forms from Bedern would have been deemed more appropriate than plainer, simpler forms. This stands in opposition to the inhabitants of the Gilbertine priory at Fishergate. Bound by their monastic order and shut away from public display, dress would have played a different role. Their communal life and, theoretical, equality would have made displays of social position

through dress accessories unnecessary whilst simultaneously breaking the rules set down for the community by St Benedict.

These three case studies illustrate the fact that urban populations cannot be seen as homogenous groups and that the local trends observed in the city assemblages are mirrored in differing use patterns within cities, as for example, the suburban inhabitants of Victoria Road in Winchester can be seen as members of the city's emerging mercantile class (Rees *et al.* 2008 400). This is a visible indication of what in later centuries would be described as consumption clusters (de Vries 2008: 25), where the use of dress accessories is driven, in part, by the consumption choices of an individual's neighbours. In York, the Bedern and Fishergate assemblages provide an apparent paradox where both simple and elaborate forms of dress accessory can be seen as expressions of religious piety. The Gilbertines, bound by their monastic order, shunned the material trappings of the outside world whilst the Vicars Choral legitimised their role within York Minster through visible displays of their position through dress. In turn, this may help to explain the Trig Lane assemblage and its apparent differences to the other waterfront dump sites in London. A strap-end found at the site (LON0847) is decorated with a representation of a female saint and this explicitly religious iconography, the location of the site and the presence of another College of the Vicars Choral serving late medieval St Pauls suggests, at least the possibility, of similar use patterns occurring in London.

6.2.3: The European context

Late medieval England did not stand alone in Europe during this period and therefore a consideration of how English dress accessories compared to their immediate neighbours within Northern Europe as a whole is needed. The pattern observed in the Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-Welsh border regions by Standley (2010: 187), where similar forms of dress accessory were being used on either side of the borders, appears to continue further afield. Certain forms of dress accessory common within the English urban assemblages are well known within collections from late medieval Europe, specifically Ireland, Sweden, the Netherlands, France, Germany and Austria. However, this is not to say that dress accessories were identical or were used homogenously across the continent. Willemsen's (2009, 2012) recent study of an assemblage of mounts form Zeeland and Dordrecht at first reinforces the similarities

between English and, in this case, Dutch dress accessories. Yet a closer comparison of this material with the English urban assemblages reveals differences in the use patterns of this form of belt fitting. This case study both highlights the similarities and differences in dress accessory use as opposed to form.

Excavations on Cornmarket in Dublin (Hayden 2000) uncovered manufacturing waste from a dress accessory production workshop. Among the forms of belt fitting recovered were varieties of oval, double oval and rectangular buckle frames (Hayden 2000: 107; see Fig. 5.52). All of these forms have direct parallels within the English city assemblages examined here. The presence of identical dress accessories in a city under direct English control since the Anglo-Norman capture of Dublin in 1171 to those found in England should perhaps come as no surprise. However, the trend does not end here. Fingerlin's (1971) study of belt fittings in Northern Europe remains unique in its scope with examples drawn from museum collections across the continent. The form and distribution of oval buckle frames is remarkably similar across the study area with examples from England in the west to Poland and Hungary in the east (Fingerlin 1971: 82; see Fig. 6.4). To this can be added thirteenth-century examples from Lund (Bergman and Billberg 1976: 206; see Fig 5.53) and Austria (Theune *et al.* 2009: 89; see Fig 6.5) and thirteenth- and fourteenth-century examples from Perth (Goodall 2012: 96), thus extending this pattern into Scandinavia and further into Central Europe. Consequently, it is clear that for certain forms of dress accessory the idea of what, for example, an oval buckle frame should look like was widespread across Europe. However, this does not necessarily mean that dress accessories were used and viewed similarly across the continent.

The recent acquisition of an assemblage of late medieval mounts from Zeeland and Dordrecht by the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden illustrates this. The assemblage contains over 1,500 individual examples and dates from between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries (Willemsen 2012: 171), making it broadly contemporary with the waterfront dump sites in London which have provided the bulk of the comparative evidence from England. Indeed there are direct parallels between the Leiden collection and forms identified from London such as circular, bar, and sexfoil mounts (Willemsen 2009: 79-82; see Fig 6.6). Despite the similarities, there are two major differences between the Dutch and English material. Firstly, the quantity of artefacts from this assemblage far outnumbers the 753 mounts from the English urban assemblages. Even with the addition of PAS data, there is a clear discrepancy

in terms of numbers. As of September 2012 the PAS database contains 4,072 base metal mounts bringing the national total thus far identified to 4,825. This is an impressive figure but given the size of Zeeland, at 1,788 km^2 the equivalent of East Sussex, the implication is that mounts were far more commonly used in late medieval Zeeland than in England. This can be extended into France, where a mount production workshop from Paris is estimated to have been able to produce 10,000 mounts a month (Thomas and Bourgarit 2006).

The material used to produce the mounts is also significantly different. Over half of the mounts in the Leiden collection were produced from lead/tin alloy (Willemsen 2009: 88), and this contrasts with the English city assemblages which only contain 92 lead/tin alloy mounts, with 90 of them being from London. Again the PAS data supports this as only 150 of the 4,072 mounts identified were produced from this material. The explanation for this can perhaps be found in the contemporary social perception of lead/tin in late medieval England, especially in association with dress accessories. During the fourteenth century, in 1321, 1344, and 1391, the London Girdler's Guild attempts to outlaw the use of lead/tin alloys in the production of dress accessories (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 18) can, in part, be seen as an attempt to protect their profession and self-interests, but these alloys were also perceived to be unsuitable and the products manufactured deemed to be inferior. The regularity with which these charters and statutes were issued combined with the increase in the use of lead/tin alloy dress accessories during the fourteenth century indicated by the artefacts themselves from London suggests that such ordinances were eventually unsuccessful. However, the dress accessories from the other city assemblages in England indicate that this prevailing attitude regarding the inferiority of lead/tin alloy still held elsewhere whilst London's European contact allowed its population to be influenced by and adopt continental fashion trends.

The quantity of mounts from late medieval England as a whole raises the possibility that the continental fashion of embellishing belts with mounts was not as widespread within England. Although contemporary depictions in manuscript illuminations and funerary effigies do show decorated girdles, it is also noticeable that many depictions from texts such as the early fourteenth-century Luttrell Psalter illustrates individuals wearing unembellished belts (see Fig. 6.7). Depictions such as these cannot necessarily be taken at face value, and it has already been shown how the elaboration of dress was used to display social position for example. Depictions of the

peasantry would have reflected this, but the elites depicted in the feast scene are also shown wearing relatively unembellished belts. London is an exception compared to the rest of the country, as the size of the capital and its wider continental links would have provided an opportunity for contemporary European fashion to have an impact on London society. Equally, it is important to remember that the attachment of mounts is only one way in which late medieval belts could be decorated. The material itself could be decorative as for example on a silk tablet-weave girdle from London in pink and yellow (Crowfoot *et al.* 1992: 133; see Fig. 6.8), which provides a comparison for Chaucer's sergeant at law who is described as, "girt with a silken belt of pin-stripe" (Coghill 1977: 28). Other decorative techniques such as punching, incising, and painting could also be used on leather to embellish belts without the need for the attachment of mounts (Mould *et al.* 2003: 3393; see Fig. 6.9).

Using the evidence for European dress accessories helps place the English material into its wider international context and shows that, in terms of form at least, there are clear parallels, at least as Egan (2007: 80) observed, "The similarities are potentially more impressive than any differences." This serves as a reminder that the ways in which belt fittings were being used by the population of late medieval England cannot be said to stand alone but fit into the use of dress accessories within contemporary Europe as a whole. However, as with the regional and intra-city examples, a closer examination of the evidence does reveal clear differences in use patterns, particularly with mounts. This section has shown the importance of looking beyond just form whilst re-contextualising dress accessories into contemporary society.

6.3: Production and the dress accessory revolution

From the mid-thirteenth century, the production evidence for copper alloy belt fittings demonstrates that there was a revolution in the ways that these artefacts were produced and consumed. This revolution, which is certainly well established by the fourteenth century, permeates every aspect of dress accessory manufacture, and is visible through the increased scale of production, the introduction of new technologies, the organisation of the urban landscape and society, and the changes in style and form produced. However, more important are the implications this evidence provides for

the changes in consumer habits, and the inter-relationship between consumer and producer within late medieval society that drove this development.

Dress accessories are not the only form of material culture undergoing a significant change at this time. For example, the production and use of glass becomes much more widespread within England from the thirteenth century (Willmott 2005: 41). Similarly, ceramics show a marked change at this time, as assemblages shift from Anglo-Norman coursewares dominated by jars and cooking vessels to a greater presence of glazed wares and the introduction of new forms such as the jug (Brown 2002: 137). It is clear, therefore, that material culture as a whole, and not just dress accessories, was undergoing a significant change during this period. Consequently, through achieving an understanding of the changes in the dress accessory industry, it is possible to gain a greater understanding of developments taking place in society as a whole.

6.3.1: Production

Dress accessory production is known prior to the mid-thirteenth century through excavations at Much Park Street, Coventry (Wright 1982) and the earliest phases of the London Guildhall (Bowsher *et al*. 2007). At the Guildhall the greater abundance of evidence, in the form of structures, wasters, crucibles, and mould fragments, from the late thirteenth century highlights that the scale of production being undertaken at the site had increased significantly. The evidence from York shows a similar situation with the largest metalworking site, the Bedern Foundry (Bayley and Richards 1993), providing evidence for a major industrial complex from the early thirteenth century. Further excavations at St Andrewgate (Finlayson 2004), Low Petergate (Reeves 2006) and Swinegate have also produced evidence for the production of dress accessories in small workshops dating from the late thirteenth century onwards. Therefore, by the beginning of the fourteenth century there were four contemporary workshops, all manufacturing belt fittings, within the city of York. As with the evidence from the London Guildhall, it is clear that this represents a major increase in the scale of production of dress accessories in these two cities.

The technology used in the manufacturing of belt fittings also changed significantly in the late thirteenth century and this can be seen as a major driving force in the changes in dress accessories in general during this period. Prior to this period,

the majority of copper alloy buckles were cast in small clay or stone moulds, as demonstrated by the mould fragments from the Much Park Street sites (Bayley 1982: 88), and this indicates a relatively small scale industry up to the end of the thirteenth century. Therefore, the most significant technological innovation was the introduction of the stack mould (see Fig. 6.10), probably in the mid-thirteenth century, but which had become widespread by the beginning of the fourteenth, and allowed a much greater number of belt fittings to be produced from a single casting. The introduction of the stack mould can be seen to have had an enormous impact on the scale at which dress accessories could be produced (see 5.5.2), however, they are not the only technological innovation that had an impact on the dress accessory manufacturing industry during this period.

The increased capacity of the moulds would have needed a greater volume of copper alloy to fill them and this is reflected in changes to the form and fabric of crucibles during this period. The best evidence for this change is provided by the findings from the London Guildhall which provides a fuller sequence of crucibles than any of the other identified manufacturing workshops. Changes can be seen in quantity, form and fabric (Pearce 2007; see 5.5.1), with small rounded base forms being replaced by larger thicker walled forms from the late thirteenth century. Similar crucible forms in local wares have also been identified from St Andrewgate (Mortimer 2004: 916) and the Bedern Foundry (Mortimer 2002: 2710) in York. Taken together the evidence for the technological changes in both crucibles and moulds support the structural evidence from the workshops, and demonstrate that the industrial manufacturing of dress accessories started to undergo significant changes from the mid-thirteenth century, which were certainly implemented in London and York by the fourteenth. By this point, dress accessories were being mass produced, at least by late medieval standards, and certainly compared to the period immediately beforehand.

The excavated evidence also provides significant implications for the organisation of the urban landscape and society. The locations of the four workshops in York, at Bedern, St Andrewgate, Swinegate and Low Petergate, show a distinct clustering of these sites to the immediate south of York Minster (see Fig. 5.6). The quantity and quality of the archaeology undertaken across the whole city of York strongly suggests that this cannot simply be a coincidence, or the result of excavation biases. For example, other types of metalworking evidence are known from elsewhere in the late medieval city, most notably at Coppergate (Bayley 1992) and Walmgate

(Macnab 2003). However, neither of these sites has produced any evidence, indicative of the manufacture of dress accessories, such as mould fragments or wasters. It is therefore possible to suggest the presence of a dress accessory production quarter in the northeast of the fourteenth-century city. In London the evidence for any organisation of workshops is not possible due to the fact that only the Guildhall workshops can be demonstrably shown to be manufacturing centres; waste material from Copthall Avenue was not associated with any workshop structures, whilst waste from the Thames Exchange represent the dumping of material and cannot be linked to a specific site. However, the London Girdlers' Guild was certainly established by the early fourteenth century, with its first documented mention dating to 1321 (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 18), and it became formally recognised in 1327, although many guilds had been operating before this formal recognition (Platt 1976: 113). In the historical record the Girdlers' Guild are heavily associated with the area of London in the vicinity of the Guildhall (Bowsher *et al.* 2007: 351) and it is therefore no coincidence that the expansion of production in London can be directly linked with the area of the city in which the Girdlers' Guild are known to have operated.

London was not the only English late medieval city to have a girdlers' guild as there is also evidence for a York guild (Kowaleski 2006: 297). The first historical documentation of the York Girdlers' Guild actually predates that of London's, first appearing in 1307 (Prestwich 1976: 8). The formation of girdlers' guilds in both London and York, and elsewhere such as Canterbury, Coventry and Norwich (Rosser 1997; Hoffman 2011) imply three main points. First, there must have been enough senior individuals practicing any given trade to make it worth their while to formally organise themselves and form a guild. The four workshops in York provide at least circumstantial evidence for this. Each of these sites were certainly producing dress accessories by the beginning of the fourteenth century and it is perhaps therefore unsurprising that formal guild ordinances can be traced back to this period. At the London Guildhall the scale of the activity, and its increase from what had been taking place previously from the end of the thirteenth century, again suggests a much more organized industry that fits with the formation of a formal guild during this period.

Second, the presence of the guilds enabled their members to become involved within the politics of their respective towns. On the whole the principal concern of the girdlers' guilds appears to have been self-interest and regulation of their industry. This has already been shown through the London Girdlers' Guilds attempts to outlaw the

use of lead/tin alloy for dress accessory manufacture during the fourteenth century. That these regulations did not appear to have been particularly successful, lead/tin alloy belt fittings steadily increase in number during this period, is not necessarily important. The fact remains that the guilds were able to attempt to place these regulations in the first place. Meanwhile, the 1307 ordinances of the York Girdlers' Guild shows similar concerns, as they "Controlled the admission of outsiders to the craft, limited all purchases of raw materials to suppliers within the city, forbade night work and the farming-out of surplus work to others, restricted master craftsmen to the employment of a single apprentice, and laid down a minimum term of apprenticeship at four years" (Platt 1976: 116).

Finally, the presence of girdlers' guilds indicates that there was a strong dress accessory manufacturing industry within a town. The archaeological evidence supports this for London and York where the excavated production workshops indicate a flourishing industry by the beginning of the fourteenth century, the period when the respective girdlers' guilds for each city begin to appear within the documentary evidence. Equally, the historical evidence for a Coventry Girdlers' Guild is supported by the manufacturing evidence from the Much Park Street sites. To date, no production sites have been identified in either Canterbury or Norwich but the presence of girdlers' guilds strongly implies that some level of dress accessory industry must have been present within these late medieval cities. This reinforces the hypothesis that this was a local industry producing dress accessories for a local market and it would come as no surprise if future excavations revealed evidence for workshops in the other major urban centres of late medieval England.

These three strands of evidence, structural, technological and historical, all show a major change in the way that the dress accessory production industry was undertaken and organised from the mid- to late thirteenth century. New production workshops were set up or expanded, and technological innovations allowed a greater number of belt fittings to be cast at any one time, thus allowing mass production of these artefacts. The senior figures of this trade were able to come together and form guilds to protect and regulate their industry. All of this suggests an industry that was flourishing by the beginning of the fourteenth century and the presence of guilds in other cities such as Coventry, Canterbury and Norwich indicates that this was the case across the country, and not just in London and York where the archaeological evidence has been discovered.

6.3.2: Consumption

The production evidence clearly demonstrates that significant changes were occurring within the dress accessory manufacturing industry from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, but on its own cannot show the wider social significance behind these developments. Consequently, an examination of the evolution of new forms and styles, as well as wider changes in dress in general, is needed. These alterations in the way people were dressed can be seen to have had an effect on the established social norms of recognisability and status display, and these in turn provoked a reaction from the elites in the form of sumptuary laws and guild ordinances. When both the production and consumption evidence is combined it is clear that both went under significant changes from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, and this highlights the integral relationship between both producer and consumer in driving social change.

Buckles, strap-ends and mounts can all be seen to have undergone a major diversification of form from the mid-thirteenth century. For strap-ends and mounts this took place from the mid- to late thirteenth century onwards and for buckles slightly later in the mid-fourteenth century. As will be shown, it is perhaps no surprise that it is the more decorative forms of dress accessory such as strap-ends and mounts, which underwent this change first. The Thames waterfront site of Billingsgate Lorry Park provides a useful demonstration of this as the two sites excavated here, BIG82 and BWB83, provide a full sequence of late medieval dress accessories from the mid-twelfth century through to the mid-fifteenth and it is the later assemblage from BWB83 which contains the greater variety of belt fittings (see Figs. 6.11-6.13).

The diversification in form during this period can be seen in every type of dress accessory. For example, buckles from the earlier BIG82 site (mid-twelfth – mid-thirteenth century) are dominated by oval buckles (1.3) with the only other form being D-shaped buckle frames (1.5). In contrast the later BWB83 assemblage (mid-thirteenth – mid-fifteenth century) contains examples of 8 of the 11 general forms of buckle frame categorised within the typology. There is also a greater variation in the forms of oval buckle frame represented in the BWB83 assemblage than in the collection from BIG82. This pattern is also repeated with clasps, which appear to be introduced from the late thirteenth century, strap-ends, including the establishment of the forked spacer form (3.3), strap loops, and mounts. The difference between the two assemblages of mounts is particularly significant as this type of dress accessory

accounts for 47.48% of the belt fittings from BWB83 as opposed to 21.74% from BIG82. Only 4 forms of mount were identified from BIG82 compared to 14 from BWB83.

The introduction of new forms of dress accessory during this period is not restricted to London. For example, forked spacer strap-ends start to appear in the assemblages of dress accessories from York during the fourteenth century (Ottaway and Rogers 2002: 2900) and during a similar period from Winchester (Rees *et al.* 2008: 226). It is clear that by the beginning of the fourteenth century, a much greater variety of dress accessories, consisting of continuing and newly introduced forms, were available for purchase to the consumer. The effect of the production revolution from the mid-thirteenth century was this diversification of form and, through the development of mass production techniques, a greater availability of these new and established forms to all levels of society.

Alongside these changes in belt fittings, the fourteenth century also saw significant changes in dress resulting in the development of new shapes in clothing (Staniland 1997: 239). Female dress consisted of a long kirtle which covered the body and was secured by a belt or girdle. This was worn under a long over-tunic which, during the fourteenth century, became side-less allowing the shaped kirtle underneath to be seen (Standley 2010: 8). Male dress consisted of an under-dress under a close-fitting tunic which was secured by a buckled belt, whilst hose were worn on the legs. A trend within both male and female dress of this period was the ability to reveal or hide the body in new ways through the use of tight or loose fitting garments. The tightening effect of these new styles were created through the use of buttons and laces, with the most visible archaeological form of evidence for these being the lace end or aglet (Tiramani 2010: 90). This fashion was popular within England, as evidenced by widespread finds of aglets on sites of all levels of status, and they must have been used to create new and provocative shapes through clothing (Standley 2010: 96-97).

By the fourteenth century it is clear that, through these developments in fashion and the diversification of dress accessories, there were new ways for individuals to express themselves through dress. In doing so they could both conform to and subvert the established social hierarchy of dress, which was integral to the signalling of identity. This can be seen to have had a profound effect within contemporary thought with moralising texts condemning these developments. For example, the fifteenth-

century moralising text *Spiegel der Sonden* (Mirror of Sins) expounds on the custom of decorating belts with mounts.

> "All common people wear their belts mounted with silver. This can be seen well in public, and it is very bad, because the belly is a dirty sack, that has more filth in it than other body parts, and yet it is most honoured. A barrel that has good beer or wine in it, shall be bound with wood. And a sack, that is filled with cinnamon or ginger, is tied with a cord. But man, who is filled with sins, should be girded with silver!" (Willemsen 2012: 171)

Similarly, the chroniclers of the *Grande Chronique de St. Denis* blame the French defeat at the Battle of Crecy in 1346 on the adoption of the fashion of tightened clothing (Lacroix 1874: 537). Changes in dress and dress accessories caused concern that the established means of displaying the social hierarchy through what an individual wore were under threat. Therefore it is no surprise that legislative attempts to control fashion, and who could be seen to be wearing what, through the introduction of sumptuary laws start to appear across Europe during the late thirteenth century.

Although not specifically aimed at dress, the preamble to the first sumptuary law passed in England in 1336 highlights this concern; "The lesser people who only endeavour to imitate the great ones" (Hunt 1996: 299). However, as Hunt points out, it is dangerous to takes such claims of imitation at face value. Imitation can work both ways, as shown within the *Codex Manesse* where Dietmar von Aist disguises himself as a peddler in order to court his lady (see Fig. 6.14). The first sumptuary legislation dealing specifically with dress dates to 1337 and forbade anyone under the rank of knight or lady from using any fur in their clothing. The more detailed statute of 1363 split English society into groups depending on their social standing and imposed restrictions on dress accordingly, although it was repealed the next year. It is too simplistic to see these laws as simply panicked responses of a threatened elite, rather they act as reflections of a moralising climate that insisted that dress needed to be controlled and that an individual's social standing should be immediately recognisable from their clothing.

Although belts are not specifically mentioned within English sumptuary legislation until 1553, when girdles are prohibited from being produced from silk, this does not mean that the development of dress accessories during this period is irrelevant to this discussion. The guild ordinances from the London Girdlers' Guild in the

fourteenth century can be seen to mirror these concerns regarding what people wore. Although the condemning of lead/tin alloy dress accessories can certainly be seen as a protectionist measure by an industry working mainly with copper alloy, the effect of this would have been, if implemented, a restriction on the availability of lead/tin belt fittings to the consumer.

Dress accessories would have been highly visible elements within wider late medieval costume, and given this the timing of changes taking place within the industry coinciding with wider changes in clothing should not be seen as coincidental. Together changes in dress and dress accessories from the late thirteenth century can be seen to have had a profound effect on the expression of established and new identities and this is reflected in both the moralising texts of the time and the contemporary sumptuary laws. It is from the mid-fourteenth century that the modern idea of fashion, of continually evolving and emulated styles, in clothing begins to develop (Laver 1969: 62; Braudel 1973: 317) and therefore the development of dress and dress accessories during this period is crucial to our understanding of this concept. This also highlights the interrelationship between producer and consumer. Through the introduction of new technologies and the expansion of the scale of production, new and established forms of dress accessory were more readily available to all levels of society. Individually each aspect of the evidence here cannot be said to characterise a revolution in dress and dress accessories, however when taken as a whole each strand supports the characterisation of a revolution starting in the mid- to late thirteenth century and continuing to develop during the fourteenth.

6.4: Death and burial

Although dress accessories are not commonly found within late medieval graves, a small quantity of examples from this study have been found in burials, and these can be directly related to the specific individuals with whom they were buried. These artefacts can be combined with the contemporary rituals surrounding death and burial to examine the role that dress could play within a mortuary context. The rituals of late medieval death can be broken into five distinct stages: preparatory, preliminary, liminal, processional and reincorporation (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005: 19). The preparatory phase was marked by the gathering of family and friends around the

deathbed but could also be extended to the ways in which late medieval people were encouraged to prepare their own soul for death during life. Preliminary rituals were marked by the issuing of the last rites, comprising of communion, confession and if appropriate the writing of the will (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005: 22). Following death, liminal rites such as the washing and preparation of the body for the funeral were performed. The processional phase was marked by the transport of the body to the funeral, the funeral itself and the burial of the corpse. The final stage, reincorporation, is comprised of a variety of commemorative acts that took place either in the church or by the grave (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005: 19). It will be argued here that such events could be extended to other means of commemoration in which dress accessories certainly play their part. Due to the transient nature of these rituals, archaeological evidence for them is broadly circumstantial. However, knowledge of these stages alongside an interdisciplinary approach can inform the interpretation of the archaeological and material remains. This discussion therefore follows these stages of death to examine the significance of dress and dress accessories within the rituals of death and contextualise the belt fittings found within late medieval burials.

6.4.1: Preparation

The idealised late medieval Christian death consisted of a lifelong preparation for both the moment of death and the preparation for the soul after death. Texts such as the *Ars moriendi* and Books of Hours gave detailed depictions for this preparation through the instruction of how to achieve the 'Good Death'. For example, the *Ars Moriendi* presented death as a series of temptations that the dying had to overcome in order to reach the state of readiness for death (Binski 1996: 40-41). The 'Good Death' was partly attained through acts in life as set out by the acts of corporeal mercy. These included feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, bringing them drink, housing the wayfarer, visiting prisoners, nursing the sick and burying the dead (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005: 19). The most relevant of these in the context of dress is the act of clothing the naked. Surviving wills from the fourteenth century onwards are significant here as occasionally they provide very detailed information about the types of goods that were bequeathed after death. Cloth and clothing were common items and the receivers of these goods can be seen to fit into the act of clothing the naked. For example, the will of Marie Narrette written in 1405 in Douai specifically and

methodically outlined who was to receive her worldly goods. One beneficiary is named as a poor woman named Cede Dartois who was to be given, "Her best cloth of coarse, undyed wool" (Howell 1996: 5). Bequests of cloth and clothing would have acted as a continuation of the obligations of the good Christian during life in death.

Dress accessories could also be used as material reminders of the inevitability of death through the use of *memento mori* and therefore as aide memoire for the acts expected for the preparation of the soul. Among the mounts in the Leiden collection of late-medieval belt decoration is a quatrefoil mount in the shape of two facing heads. One is a depiction of a head in life, the other a skull (Willemsen 2009: 86; see Fig. 6.15) Despite the fact that these items would have been worn in public, the decorative details were too small to have been easily identifiable by a viewer and must therefore have acted as personal, private reminders of death. Accessories such as the bequest of a gold ring with a death's head by John Dunn of Claypath (Durham) in 1586/7 (Standley 2012: 180) and the small gold pendant in the shape of a coffin bearing the inscription "through the resurrection of Christ we be all sanctified" (Litten 1991: 89-90) from Torre Abbey (Devon) would also have been used as *memento mori*. The bequest of such artefacts adds another dimension to the use of *memento mori*, when viewed they would have acted as reminders for the survivors of their own mortality and as commemorative keepsakes for the remembrance of the deceased, and this commemoration of the deceased played a crucial role within the rituals of late medieval death.

6.4.2: Death

Clothing also played a role in the preliminary and liminal stages of death. On occasion, it appears that individuals chose to dress in sackcloth (Daniell 1997: 31) as the moment of their death approached. This could be seen as a final penitent act on the behalf of the individual. However, there was a more symbolic act represented in the eschewing of the clothing worn in life. It has been shown above how vital dress was in the negotiation and signalling of the established social hierarchy of late medieval England, and thus through the discard of their everyday dress and the wearing of sackcloth an individual was able to display their preparation for death by giving up their worldly possessions and position. This was further reinforced through the liminal rituals after death. To prepare the body for the funeral the individual was undressed

and washed (Wieck 1999: 437) before being prepared for burial in a shroud, a coffin or both. This was the point where the corpse would be dressed in any clothing for interment, and the best archaeological evidence for the use of dress and dress accessories within these rituals of late medieval burial remains the finds from the excavated graves of this period.

Belt fittings are an uncommon, if not unusual, find from late medieval burials and the artefacts themselves combined with other forms of artefactual and osteological evidence allows for a discussion of the social groups who were buried in clothing. The most common form of belt fitting associated with burial in this study is the circular buckle (1.3C). This is the case across the assemblages that came from burials with examples identified from St Mary's Priory, Coventry (Rylatt and Mason 2003), St Oswald's Priory, Gloucester (Heighway and Bryant 1999), the Austin Friary, Leicester (Mellor and Pearce 1981) and at St Mary Spital, Smithfields, and St Mary Merton in London. It is also possible that the two examples (WIN164 and WIN165 see Fig. 6.16) from the Cathedral Green site in Winchester may have originally been associated with burials.

The function of this form of buckle has been disputed and even in the most recent site reports they are referred to as "buckle/brooch" (for example in the Smithfields excavations, Stevenson 2008: 37). Egan and Pritchard (1991: 64-65) identified these artefacts as buckles due to the lack of a constriction for the pin on the frame, as brooches would need this to hold the pin in place whereas buckle pins would be held in place by the attached strap. Interpretations of the function of this buckle have also varied and it has been tentatively suggested that these circular buckles were possibly used as fasteners for shrouds (Grainger *et al.* 2008: 22). This is unlikely, as this form of buckle is also known from non-burial sites such as Coppergate and Bedern in York and the sheer number of burials that must have taken place in shrouds is not matched by the frequency of circular buckle frames found, suggesting instead a use on everyday clothing (*ibid*). Indeed, one example from a grave excavated at St Oswald's, Gloucester (GLO004 see Fig. 5.41) has a replacement pin made from copper alloy sheet rather than cast metal, demonstrating that it must have been produced for use before burial. The presence of this form of buckle in the graves from the battle of Visby (Thordeman 2001: 126) and the fact that when recovered *in situ* these buckles are often found in pairs raises the possibility that they were not used as conventional belt buckles. Standley (2010: 166) has suggested that this form of buckle

was worn below the waist to secure the hose to the breeches or used to fasten around a monk's habit, although a purely monastic use is again brought into doubt due to finds from secular sites. However, a grave at St Mary Merton containing two circular buckles also contained an iron rectangular buckle (LON0916 Egan 2007: 229) thus supporting Standley's first interpretation.

Other forms of belt fittings have been identified from burials, perhaps most notably from St Mary Merton where a suite of dress accessories were recovered from a single grave (Egan 2007: 228-229; LON0929-LON0934 see Fig. 4.09), and these can give a better indication of how the original belt would have been decorated. A small number of other belt fittings have been recovered from burials in London, 5 from St Mary Merton, 7 from the East Smithfield Black Death cemetery and 1 from St Mary Graces (see Table 4.21). It is important to not examine these finds from burials in isolation, but compare them to dress accessories that were recovered from the occupation areas of these ecclesiastical sites. For example, no dress accessories were recovered from any of the burials excavated at Bermondsey Abbey yet other areas of the site as a whole produced 11 belt fittings and, overall, a wider variety and larger quantity of belt fittings are found outside of burial contexts at monastic sites.

It is clear that there are a much more restricted range of dress accessories found in late medieval graves than elsewhere on monastic sites. Equally, belt fittings found within burial contexts represent exceptions rather than the norm. Gilchrist and Sloane (2005: 80) estimate that only 2-3% of the burials in their survey can be confirmed as clothed through the recovered finds from graves. They go on to suggest that clothed burial was more likely in times of catastrophe, citing the 24 instances from the Smithfield Black Death cemetery. However, this still only represents 2.5% of the total number of burials excavated at the site. The status of the deceased at East Smithfield is likely to have been at the poorer end of the social spectrum (Grainger *et al.* 2008: 34) and the percentage of clothed burials is the equal to the instance of clothed burials in the burial population as a whole of the period immediately beforehand. Despite this, clothed burial is still very much the exception rather than the rule and fits into the developing picture of death and burial during the Black Death as a whole. The Smithfield cemetery itself was methodically organised and the burial trenches regularly arranged (Grainger *et al.* 2008: 27-28) whilst the bodies were carefully laid out, indicating that, despite the large scale nature of the site, care was still taken over the interment of the corpse. This is not to say that variations on the established rituals

surrounding death were not affected to some degree, but the evidence from the dress accessories and the graves themselves indicate a continuation of late medieval burial practice, only on a much bigger scale.

The clergy represent one social group who appear to have been more frequently dressed within late medieval burials than other social groups (Standley 2010: 182). The dressed burials of abbots, bishops, and archbishops all indicate that, at the highest levels of the clergy, these individuals were buried in full regalia and this has been interpreted as evidence for a period of lying-in-state (Gilchrist and Sloane 2005: 225). In addition to the evidence for the dressed burial of the clergy, there are priestly burials which have been identified at both St Andrew's, Fishergate (Kemp 1996: 159) and St Mary, Merton (Miller and Saxby 2007: 155) through the inclusion of chalices and patens within the grave as burial goods. These artefacts can be seen to act as symbols for the individual's position during life in death. Taken together, the implication is that the funeral of a member of the clergy was a visual spectacle and that, "These rites eased the passage of the priest's soul while at the same time consolidating his social and religious identity" (Gilchrist 2009: 248). The presence of clothing within these burials can be seen as an extension of this. It has already been suggested that clothing played a vital role in the construction of ecclesiastical identity during the late medieval period. Indeed, this intrinsic link between the clergy and their clothing in establishing their power was explicitly satirised during the reformation by Martin Luther in *The Papacy* of 1521 (Rublack 2010: 86-94). By being buried in the visual embodiment and with the material symbols of their role in life the clergy were able to hold on to their position in death.

During the thirteenth century, lay burial began to follow this trend, with a greater number of dress accessories being found in the graves of the laity (Standley 2010: 182). With the increased importance placed by elites on displaying social position through dress during this period, it is possible that similar processes were occurring within society as a whole. Dressed burial here can potentially be seen as evidence for a greater display during the funerary ritual and an attempt to continue the established social hierarchy into death. However, it is vital to remember that these graves still represent the minority of late medieval burials as a whole, and that the vast majority continued to not be buried in their everyday clothing. The lack of dress accessories and clothing in these cases can be seen as discarding worldly goods in preparation for life after death.

6.4.3: Commemoration

This continuation of social position in death is indicative of late medieval thought about the ability of the living to affect the fate of the dead, and this is best shown through the late medieval doctrine of purgatory. The soul in purgatory was believed to be in an intermediary state, neither in heaven nor hell, where it would remain for an indeterminate period of time during which the sinful soul would be cleansed and deemed worthy to enter heaven (Daniell 1997: 10). Crucially, the time spent in purgatory could be shortened through prayers and masses for the dead, and it was vital for the dead to be remembered by the living in order to ease the passage of the soul through purgatory. This could be achieved through the donation of money or property to the church in return for chantry masses to be performed for the dead (Burgess 2000: 57). These provided a daily celebration of mass during which the soul of the donor would be prayed for and in so doing ease the soul's passage through purgatory. This also left a material record through the construction of chantry chapels in churches from the late twelfth century (Roffey 2007).

Similarly, grave markers would have acted as physical reminders of the deceased for the living. For the elites within society these could be elaborate effigies built within the building of the church although this was not possible for everyone. Despite this, there is evidence for the marking of graves through wooden crosses (Daniell 1997: 147-148) which would have been more readily available to a greater proportion of contemporary society. Although these would not have been long term monuments, while they were present they would have acted as commemorative markers reminding the living of their obligations to the dead.

It is clear the there was a desire by the living to be remembered after their death. This could be achieved within the church, through chantries and grave markers, but was also attempted within secular society. The will developed as both a religious and legal document during the late medieval period and offered the opportunity to the dying to divide their property, money, and material possessions between their chosen beneficiaries and the church. Cloth and clothing, as has already been shown, made up a significant proportion of the goods listed and belts and girdles, along with other forms of dress accessories such as rings and brooches are commonly listed within wills of this period as bequests (Howell 1996: 8; Kermode 1999: 8). The passing on of clothing and dress accessories can be seen as having two effects. First, the wills often

state that the gift is made with the understanding that the beneficiary will remember who has made the gift and pray for them (Howell 1996: 5). In bequeathing the clothes, an obligation has been created for the beneficiaries to pray for the benefactor's soul in their passage through purgatory. Second, by leaving material goods in a will an individual was also attempting to guarantee that there was a material reminder of this obligation. When viewed, these objects would have acted as a physical prompt to the recipient and ensured that the memory of the deceased was perpetuated. Therefore, the bequest of clothing in wills can be seen to celebrate the emotional ties that bound the dead to their communities in life and past the moment of death (Helt 2000: 198).

This material symbol could also potentially work in the opposite direction through the inclusion of specific items within a burial. For example, a grave excavated at the Southampton Friary contained a forked spacer strap-end and five sexfoil mounts (SOU079, SOU080 see Fig. 4.04) and, similarly to the previously discussed suite of fittings from St Mary Merton, these artefacts represent a belt. It was not worn by the individual within the grave, but it does appear to have been coiled and carefully placed above the right hand shoulder (see Fig. 6.17). It is argued later in this thesis that this may represent a love gift given in life (see 6.6.2) that was deliberately placed in the grave as a memorial of the relationship shared in life and as a material symbol of the commemoration of the deceased. This example highlights the interconnectivity of the communities of the living and the dead within late medieval society. In this case it is the living symbolising their responsibility to the dead rather than the efforts of the deceased to be memorialised by the living.

The evidence from wills shows the material link that existed between the living and the dead. This interrelationship was integral to contemporary thought and deed (Gordon and Marshall 2000: 3) and was particularly important within the context of death and purgatory. Clothing and dress accessories can be seen to have played an important symbolic role throughout the rituals and processes of late medieval death. It is important to remember that the stages laid out by Gilchrist and Sloane (2005:19) represent the idealised and often unattainable view of late medieval death and it should therefore unsurprising that occasional glimpses of other practices are identified archaeologically. For example, the rise in clothed secular burial can be related to broader contemporary social trends whilst the Southampton Friary burial, despite being a single occurrence, can be seen as a personal act on behalf of the bereaved. The increase in the writing of wills from the thirteenth century (Daniell 1997: 32-34)

provide an opportunity to identify the types of clothing that were deemed appropriate to bequeath and examine the social consequences of these bequests. In this context, dress and dress accessories can be seen as personal reminders to the living to both commemorate the dead and, especially in the case of *memento mori*, be mindful of their own mortality.

6.5: Ideology, Iconography, and Identity

This section examines the symbolic meaning of the decorative elements found on late medieval decoration relating them to the religious ideology and iconography of the period and how this led to the construction of identity through dress. In order to achieve this, a multidisciplinary approach is needed in order to place the interpretation of decorative elements into their wider contemporary social context. Therefore, as well as the archaeological evidence from the dress accessories themselves, late medieval literature, funerary monuments and manuscript illuminations are examined to develop the understanding of how these artefacts were used by the late medieval people who wore them.

The principal focus in this section is the use of the acorn as a decorative motif, as this was by far the most common form of added figurative decoration on the dress accessories within this study. The repeated depiction of the acorn raises the distinct possibility that this was not simply an aesthetic choice but an opportunity to use the depiction of the acorn as a visual signifier for wider social ideals. It is important to remember that the 'reading' of symbolism within material culture is a complex process. Meaning is not a static attribute of decoration and the interpretation of any meaning would have been determined by context. Therefore, the multiplicity of potential meanings and their contexts within the depiction of acorns is explored and related to other forms of decoration, such as female saints.

The sheet metal plates that were used to produce strap-ends and buckle plates provided a flat visible surface for decoration, and the two main methods used were punching and engraving. The first of these methods required the sheet to be placed on a hard flat surface, such as the lead 'cushion' recovered from the London Guildhall (Egan 2007c: 463), whilst a punching tool was hammered against it to produce the desired design. Engraving required the free-hand use of a graver to produce the design

(Egan and Pritchard 1991: 30). In a steady skilled hand this would have been a relatively quick process that would have been suitable for the mass production dress accessory industry from the late thirteenth century. Generally, both these forms of decoration were used to create decorative borders on the finished products (see Fig. 6.18). However, more elaborate decoration was possible as can be seen on LON0047 (see Fig. 6.19) which shows an octofoil within two interlocking squares, and NHN007 (see Fig. 6.20) depicting a stylised heraldic crest. Sheet metal plates were not the only location on which decoration could be added. The moulds used to cast dress accessories could also be designed to produce moulded decorative features. This can be seen on buckle frames, such as oval buckle form 1.3J (see Fig. 6.21) which has two cast angled projections on the outside edge of the frame. More figurative designs can be found on other forms of frame such as LON0391 (see Fig. 6.22), a clasp without a folding end (2.2A), the outside edge of which is decorated with a crowned head. However, the most consistently decorated cast dress accessory is the terminal of the forked spacer strap-end.

A total of 111 forked spacer strap-ends were identified from the urban assemblages, with only the small city collections from Chester, Exeter and Gloucester failing to produce a single example. Despite this, published examples are known from Chester (Cool 2008: 312) and Exeter (Goodall 1984: 339) which were unavailable during data collection. 21 of the forked spacer strap-ends had no decoration on the terminal; whilst of the remaining 90 five different forms of decorated terminal were identified. Single examples of lozenge (YOR251 see Fig. 6.23), cruciform (WIN010 see Fig. 6.24) and head (LON0204 see Fig. 6.25) terminals were identified and the simplest form, the tab terminal, accounted for 31 examples (see Fig. 6.26). The remaining 56 forked spacer strap-ends were cast with an acorn terminal, and this represents over half of all of the forked spacer strap-ends recorded. Furthermore, forked spacer strap-ends with an acorn terminal are present in every single urban assemblage which produced any forked spacer strap-ends. The terminal of the strap-end is the most convenient location for any decoration and it could therefore be argued that these decorative motifs are insignificant. However, the casting of any decoration would have used more metal than any unembellished forked spacer and would have posed a significant risk to the success of the casting process as the impressions in the mould would have needed to be more elaborate in order to produce an acorn terminal. More significant, however, is the fact that a deliberate choice has been made by the

metalworkers to decorate the terminal, and they repeatedly and consistently chose to depict an acorn over any other form of decoration.

The engendering of dress accessories has always proved to be notoriously difficult (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 50) and it is certainly possible that many forms of dress accessory could have been worn by both sexes. Forked spacer strap-ends are no different, however there is a mid-fourteenth century depiction of a forked spacer strap-end with an acorn terminal on a female effigy from Clehonger, Herefordshire (Ward Perkins 1954: 267; Egan and Pritchard 1991: 36; see Fig. 6.29). Traditionally in studies of dress accessories, funerary monuments such as this have been simply used as a means of identifying and dating different forms of dress accessories. However, this is an overly simplistic use of these monuments and by viewing the effigies in a more theoretically aware manner the social significance of what is depicted on them can be reached. Sculptures such as this should be interpreted in the same way as any other form of material culture and, at the very least, the possibility that they too were used to express symbolic meanings must be considered. These effigies should therefore not simply be seen as accurate depictions of the figure as they would have appeared in life but as idealised versions and the choice of position, dress, and dress accessories should be seen as potentially significant. The Clehonger effigy depicts a woman at prayer and simply dressed, and the monument as a whole emphasises simple piety. Therefore, the inclusion of a forked spacer strap-end with an acorn terminal can, along with these attributes, potentially be read as a statement of the qualities of the individual depicted. Monuments of this type cannot be necessarily said to reflect the views and ideals of society as a whole, representing as they do the memorials of the very small proportion of society that would have been able to afford such effigies for their dead. However, the potential significance of female dress accessories depicting implicit symbols of religious virtues should not be underestimated.

The acorn is a common motif on material culture of the late medieval period with examples on painted window glass, ceramic floor tiles, book clasps, mounts (HER008 see Fig. 6.27), pendants (Descatoire 2009: 94) and spoons. The earliest reference to spoons with acorn knops is contained within a will of 1351 which refers to, "twelve silver spoons with akernes" (Hilton Price 1908: 22) and this is contemporary with the depiction of acorns on forked spacer strap-ends. It is clear that a deliberate choice to employ the acorn as a motif has been made by both the producer of these artefacts and the consumer who bought and used them. This widespread and

repeated depiction of acorns must be seen as significant, and the possibility that the acorn held a symbolic meaning within late medieval society must be explored.

When discussing the meaning and interpretation of material culture a caveat must be added. The basis of this approach to interpreting material culture is that archaeologists can recognise and read the symbolism that is being depicted through form, design or decoration (see Tilley 1989). This methodology has its roots in sign theory and the relationship between the signifier and the signified (Saussure 1960). Post-structuralist work in the second half of the twentieth century called into question the rigid understanding of this relationship and instead stressed that there was no inherent relationship between the signifier and the signified (Derrida 1986). In archaeological terms, this means that the meaning of an artefact is fluid and shaped according to context and through time. Any interpretation of material culture must recognise this and, in addition, acknowledge that the act of interpretation is in itself an active process. Therefore, what follows is an attempt to infer the symbolism of the use of acorns as a decorative motif on dress accessories within late medieval society.

The acorn can be interpreted in a number of ways. It is representative of the oak tree for example, itself a national emblem of England. It is perhaps no surprise that the future Charles II is said to have hidden in an oak tree following the Royalist defeat at the Battle of Worcester in 1651. The potential employment of a national emblem within dress during the Hundred Years War, between 1337 and 1453, is intriguing. However, a more compelling connotation for the symbolism of the acorn is perhaps found in the proverb 'Great oaks from little acorns grow,' the use of which is first found in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* of 1385 (Coghill 1971). The meaning of this proverb is that small and humble beginnings may lead to great and significant results. In essence, the acorn can be seen as a symbol of patience. However, within *Troilus and Criseyde* the context of the phase 'great oaks from little acorns grow' offers an alternative connotation. The phase is used after Troilus receives and reads a letter from his love.

> "But, as we all can notice every day, the more the wood and coal, the more the fire; increase of hope, be it for what it may, will very often bring increased desire, or, as an oak springs from a little spire, so this same letter that she had returned him served to increase the passion that so burned him." (Coghill 1971: 92)

The acorn is here heavily associated with the feelings that Troilus has for Criseyde and can be read as a metaphor for sexual desire. This symbolism for acorns is further supported by other late medieval depictions. A late fifteenth-century stove tile from the bishop's palace in Esztergom, Hungary, depicts a fool with acorns. The figure of the fool is depicted above two oversized acorns growing from a phallic branch whilst his right hand is over his groin (Gruia 2008: 133). The Latin for acorn is *glans* and this forms the basis for a pun on the male penis.

Knowledge of Latin is a prerequisite to understanding this connection as contemporary sources, such as the will of 1351 quoted above, show that this was not the primary descriptor for acorns within late medieval England. Although a working knowledge of Latin could be achieved outside of the formalised education system of the church (Clanchy 1979: 191), it is unlikely that there was a widespread knowledge of Latin among the late medieval laity, and especially among the lower levels of society who would have worn and used the vast majority of base metal dress accessories. However, this does not necessarily rule out a sexual or fertility symbolism for acorns within contemporary society.

In late medieval art, depictions of women were often used to portray specific aspects of womanhood, but also warn of the dangers of succumbing to earthly desires (Sekules 1987: 46). Furthermore, these images could be used to directly satirise aspects of female virtues. For example, a corbel in St Andrew's, Heckington, Lincolnshire, depicts a woman feeding acorns to a squirrel and this can be interpreted as a depiction of false charity (*ibid*; see Fig. 6.32).. The depiction of a woman feeding acorns to a squirrel has another symbolic reading as a sly reference to licentiousness (Sekules 1987: 46). The squirrel can be interpreted as representing infidelity (Werness 2006: 390) and the woman feeding acorns as a representation of the prevailing misogynistic attitudes towards women and sex. Similarly, a French wedding ring is inscribed on the inside with a woman holding a leashed squirrel in one hand and a bunch of acorns in the other. This too contains an innuendo with the squirrel here a symbolic euphemism for the penis (Camille 1998: 104; see Fig. 6.33). In the French *fabliau L'esquiriel* Robin is asked to explain what the bulge in his clothes is, he replies that it is the squirrel coming out of its hole (*ibid*).

From these examples it is clear that the acorn could be used as a symbol to satirise women and to accuse them of false charity and licentiousness. Given the

evidence form the Clehonger effigy it is certainly possible that forked spacer strap-ends with an acorn terminal were worn by women and thus for these satirical misappropriations to work to a wider audience a further interpretation is needed to explain what was being satirised. An explanation is potentially provided by returning to the proverb 'great oaks from little acorns grow' and its association with patience and other religious virtues. The visible wearing of an acorn as a decorative motif on a dress accessory could be viewed as a symbol of false modesty; by wearing a symbolic depiction of religious virtue, an individual could make a statement of their own spiritual qualities and this in turn could be interpreted by the viewer as the individual succumbing to vainglory.

Within late medieval Christian society, the virtue of patience is of vital importance. It is one of the seven heavenly virtues which oppose the seven deadly sins. Those who have patience are able to accept their place and endure suffering and the faults of others. In doing so, patience laid the foundation for the spiritual life. As St Thomas Aquinas (Ross and Welch 1966: 195) wrote, "Patience is said to be the root and guardian of all the virtues not in the sense of directly producing and preserving them, but only by removing what hinders them." Although here patience is not listed as the highest virtue, it is through the endurance of suffering that the higher theological virtues of faith, hope and charity can be obtained.

Late medieval literature is an invaluable source for examining the role that patience was seen to play within contemporary society. For example, Margery Kempe in her book of 1436 regularly asks for, and is granted, patience to accept the trials and tribulations that her faith and actions provoke in those around her. For her, it is a keystone in the pursuit of virtue going so far as to say, "Patience is more worthy than miracle-working" (Windeatt 1985: 159). Within the late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century writings of Julian of Norwich (Spearing 1998), patience is portrayed as an attribute of the divine. "I am not saying that any evil is to be praised, but I am saying that our Lord God's willingness to endure evil is praiseworthy, and through this his goodness will be recognized for ever in his wonderful compassion and kindness, through the operation of mercy and grace" (Spearing 1998:90). It is through patience that God is able to endure the sin and evil of the world whilst maintaining his love for humanity.

Yet another example is provided by the late fourteenth-century Pearl Poet's (Moorman 1976) poem *Patience* which again extols the virtue by retelling the biblical

tale of Jonah and portraying him as the antithesis of patience. By accepting the role ordained for him by God, Jonah would have avoided the suffering that his actions, and impatience, led to. In the fourteenth-century work *Piers the Ploughman* (Goodridge 1959) it is the words spoken by the figure of patience that inspires the narrator's final pilgrimage. In the dinner scene in book XIII, the dreamer and Patience are placed at a side table and fed scraps from the main table. Patience, along with Conscience enables the narrator to endure the hypocrisy of the Doctor before the riddle of Patience persuades the pilgrimage (Goodridge 1959: 151-158). It is only through an acceptance of patience that the first essential step towards the spiritual life can be taken. In Chaucer's *The Parson's Tale* (Coghill 1977: 506) patience is stated as being the remedy for unrighteous anger, again emphasising the need for patience for the endurance of the hardships of the mortal life.

Finally, the allegorical poem *The Owl and the Nightingale* dating to the mid-thirteenth century provides another reference to the importance of patience as a virtue. Within the poem, the owl is admonished by the nightingale for being an ill-omen, a charge the owl admits to but also emphasises his wisdom and the fact that he is not to blame for any advance knowledge of the evils that will befall mankind. As a counter-argument the nightingale is accused by the owl that despite the loveliness of her song she is guilty of leading men and women into wantonness. The owl patiently endures his lot and should be seen as a comfort to good women in their time of need (Klingender 1971: 365-366). This scene is also depicted in a mid-fourteenth century East Anglian Book of Hours (see Fig. 6.28). The owl is perched in an oak tree with acorns which grows from the head of Christ, surrounded with four representations of the Evangelists, whilst being mobbed by magpies and other songbirds. The oak tree in this illustration can be interpreted as a depiction of the Tree of Life (Klingender 1971: 413). It therefore follows that the acorn could have been interpreted as a symbol of fertility, of new life and growth, and not necessarily just an explicitly sexual connotation as implied by the fifteenth-century stove tile above. As will be shown in the following section, belts and girdles were often given as love tokens both within the courting process and during the marriage ritual. The strap-ends, which were vehicles for these acorn motifs would have been attached to belts whilst in use and in this context could be seen as symbols for the hopefully fruitful marriage.

From these examples the religious connotations of patience within late medieval society are made clear. Through the virtue of patience, an individual is able

to accept the role given to them in life, forms the basis for the other principal virtues, and endure the suffering of this life with the promise of salvation after death. The role of the church and importance of Christianity within late medieval life cannot be underplayed. It has already been shown how religious doctrine surrounding purgatory could influence everyday life for example. It should come as no surprise therefore that this could be expressed through dress. However, the sexualised satirising of the acorn also needs to be considered in this context. Patience, as one of the seven heavenly virtues can be associated with other critical contemporary Catholic virtues such as chasteness and it is here that the symbolism of the acorn can be interpreted. As will be shown in the following section, the belt was used within the marriage ceremony as a symbolic and physical separation between the upper and lower halves of the body said to represent the animal, lustful lower half and the human, reasoned upper. Acorns can therefore be regarded as implicit symbols of patience, modesty and chasteness and their appearance on dress accessories, and particularly forked spacer strap-ends, can begin to identify the role that these artefacts played within contemporary society.

The interpretation of acorns within a religious framework is supported by other forms of material culture. Although pilgrim badges are not included within this study, they were often worn on the body as shown by a fifteenth century altarpiece which depicts a woman with three pilgrim badges attached to her hat (Bredehoft 2006: 433). Pilgrim badges are not an uncommon archaeological find from the late medieval period (Spencer 1990; 1998) and regularly feature figurative decoration. This decoration can either take the form of a figural representation of the desired saint, as for example within the depictions of Thomas Becket (Spencer 1998: 104) or symbolic representations of the intended saint such as the scallop shell used to represent St James of Compostela (Spencer 1998: 244). Pilgrim badges were often purchased specifically to commemorate a pilgrimage and were used by all levels of society (Bredehoft 2006: 434) and this means that the display of religious symbolism would have been instantly recognisable within other forms of dress accessory.

The attribution of religious symbolism to acorns on forked spacer strap-ends is further supported by decorative images on other forms of strap-end. Two composite strap-ends, from Oxford (OXF052 see Fig. 6.30) and Winchester (WIN297 see Fig. 6.31) do not have a terminal and therefore lack a depiction of an acorn but both have explicitly religious figures depicted on them. OXF052 depicts a crowned Mary with

the Christ child in arms. The Virgin Mary was very significant within the late medieval Church as the mother of Christ, but also as the most powerful intercessor in Heaven. WIN297 depicts another crowned figure, this time identifiable as St Catherine primarily due to the inclusion of the spiked wheel at her feet, although both book and crown are also identifying symbols (Winstead 1997: 3). St Catherine was also seen as a powerful intercessor within late medieval Christian belief but also as a paragon of female virtue and behaviour. This was due to the story of her life and martyrdom which became increasingly important during the late medieval period and she is a member of the virgin martyrs who endured tortures in life to preserve their bodies for their spiritual husband Jesus. These saints were held up as inspirational and spiritual contemporary feminine role models and can be seen to have directly influenced figures such as Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich (Winstead 1997: 17). The choice to depict these two religious female figures is important due to the status of the individuals within the late medieval church but of more significance is the fact that they are both exemplars of contemporary ideals for the behaviour of women.

It is clear that the interpretation of the acorn as a decorative motif on forked spacer strap-ends and other forms of late medieval dress accessories is a complex process. Acorns along with other forms of decoration on strap-ends, in particular female saints, can be seen as an attempt to negotiate female identity within wider religious beliefs surrounding the power of these saints and the virtues of the ideal Christian. A second level of meaning is provided by the satirising of this process. In this reading, the display of an implicit symbol of virtue is undermined by this very display. The acorn therefore becomes a symbol of false modesty and charity and instead a representation of the vainglorious pride that an individual took in their good life. A third reading is provided by the Latin translation of acorn (*glans*). This, in turn, can be read as either an explicitly sexual reference or a more general and implicit symbol of fertility. All or none of these interpretations of the depiction of an acorn may be correct. Meaning and symbolism are transient and therefore the reading of meaning from the acorns depicted on late medieval dress accessories would have been entirely dependent on the wearer and the viewer. This in turn would have been dependent on context and their knowledge of the possible interpretations of the acorn as a symbol.

6.6: Text on belts

This final section is closely related to the previous discussion on the symbolism of decoration on late medieval dress accessories, and explores the use of letters, words and phrases as decorative motifs on belts and belt fittings of this period. The evidence fits into three main themes: secular, religious and personal. Within the current study there is only limited evidence for the first of these, which is the display of secular allegiances and patronage through the use of text on belts. Religious text is obviously closely linked to the previous discussion and the further significance of the depiction of saints on belts is related to the use of words with religious connotations and the significance of this. The third theme examines the customs and significance of belts within courtship, both symbolically as objects and through the practice of gift giving.

The presence of text on belts and dress accessories raises two main points. The first of these concerns how widespread an understanding of the text itself would have been within late medieval society and secondly how significant the words themselves were as opposed to the presence of text itself. The concept of literacy was slightly more complex during the late medieval period than it is today. The literate or *literati* were not just able to read, but more significantly able to read Latin, therefore meaning that even those who would have been literate in the modern sense of the word would still have been excluded by this exclusive, and mainly ecclesiastical, section of society. Nevertheless, the use of writing was increasing within England during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as a secular and administrative tool (Clanchy 1979: 60). This still left a significant proportion of late medieval society without the ability to read but did not exclude them from the influence of the rising importance of text. The power of the word was not lost on the illiterate as can be shown through the presentation of the demands of the Peasant's Revolt as a text in 1381 even if the leaders themselves were not members of the peasantry (Moreland 2001: 89). Therefore, in this context the presence of words and text gives the potential for displays of contemporary power through the public display of the ability to understand writing. However, this underestimates the symbolic power of text outside of issues surrounding social status. The illiterate would still have been exposed to the world of text in everyday life through public images such as wall paintings in church (Moreland 2001: 51) and would therefore have been familiar with the image of text if not necessarily the specific meaning. The ability to actually read and understand the depicted words themselves

could, in some contexts, be less important than the presence of the text itself. This is particularly the case with the religious tracts.

Letters and words on dress accessories could be used within secular society for the identification of political and familial allegiance and patronage. Signet rings were increasingly used from the thirteenth century (Hinton 2005: 213) and these could be engraved with letters, initials or heraldic devices in order to identify an individual with a specific family (Standley 2010: 55). During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, livery robes were regularly used to visually symbolise the contract between lords and their retainers and would have acted as immediate identifiers of the familial patronage enjoyed and the contractual obligations of an individual. Although the number of retainers was targeted, livery clothing itself was never the subject of sumptuary legislation in England during this period (Hunt 1996), emphasising the importance of livery as a visual tool for the expression of a lord's social position and the acceptance of this within contemporary society. Text could be incorporated into these liveries, for example royal messengers had an embroidered 'R' on their collars (Hinton 2005: 201) and this developed into the use of secular badges which could use text in a wider context to signify an individual's political allegiances outside of immediate familial patronage.

The Leiden collection of late medieval belt decoration contains 180 mounts that incorporate either individual or a combination of several letters including, 12 different individual single letters (Willemsen 2009: 79). Among these letter mounts are several examples of a crowned 'M', which might refer to a ruler such as Maximilian or Mary of Burgundy, although it could also be associated with the Virgin Mary (Willemsen 2012: 197). These letter mounts are much less common in England, as only three examples from London and one apiece from Lincoln and York have been identified in this current study. However, two of these (LON0779 and YOR176 see Fig. 6.34) are in the shape of a letter 'S' and this imagery might be similar in origin to two belts excavated from London which are both decorated with a series of stamped Ss (Ward Perkins 1954: 195; Egan and Pritchard 1991: 40; see Fig. 6.35) whilst a further published example is known from Norwich (Margeson 1993: 40). These can be directly linked to the livery of the House of Lancaster which employed the letter S as a motif during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Spencer 1985). Therefore such artefacts must be seen as signifiers of political allegiance during a period which was leading up to the Wars of the Roses between 1455 and 1485.

6.6.1: Religious text

The first group of letters, words, and phrases examined in detail here all have an explicitly religious context. Although only one artefact from the urban assemblages contains such a phrase, several belts excavated from London have been shown to carry such inscriptions and through the analysis of these examples it is possible to link more implicit textual and visual decoration into this context. The London examples are inscribed with phrases such as 'IHC', '*Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judaeorum*', '*Ave Maria plena gracia*' and 'Amen' (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 43, 46; see Fig. 6.36) and the content of these are all explicitly religious. As with the use of acorns, the repeated use of religious text must be seen as significant and reflective of the use of these artefacts within contemporary late medieval society.

The employment of religious text on dress accessories is not just restricted to belts and belt fittings. For example, from the beginning of the fourteenth century, phrases invoking Christ, the Virgin Mary or individual saints become increasingly common on brooches (Campbell 2009: 58). Similarly, a finger ring excavated from a grave at St Mary Spital in London is inscribed with the names of the Magi and Jesus (Gilchrist 2008: 126), as are two rings identified by Standley (2010: 127). Perhaps the best known example is the Coventry Ring the exterior of which is decorated with text and images of the Christ of Pity and the five wounds of Christ, whilst the interior has a continuous Latin inscription translated as, "the five wounds of Christ are my medicine, the holy cross and passion of Christ are my medicine" followed again be the names of the Magi and two charm words (Cherry 2001: 169).

As signified by the inscription on the interior of the Coventry Ring, these artefacts and the London belts would have been decorated and used for their associated amuletic and talismanic properties. The most common amulets of this period would have consisted of folded sheets or small rolls of parchment (Skemer 2006: 125), which could be worn on the body and specifically over an area afflicted by a particular malady. Dress accessory talismans could not have been as specific, as they are limited by the functionality of the artefact itself. However, the same general principle, of artefacts that aided the healing process, still applies. Amulets could also be used to ward off illness and protect against sudden death (Gilchrist 2008: 126), and individual Christian figures were used for specific purposes. For example, between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, the names of the Magi were often invoked to ward off epilepsy,

then known as 'the falling sickness' (Skemer 2006: 62). In this context, amulets can therefore also be seen as working within the lifelong late medieval preparatory rituals of death by guarding against sudden death. As has already been shown, the idealised Christian death of this period was partly defined as a peaceful and expected passing (Binski 1996: 44) and therefore these amulets fit into this structure by protecting the wearer from a sudden and more importantly unexpected death.

The language used on these belts and dress accessories must also be seen as potentially significant, as they are all exclusively written in Latin. It may seem understandable for Latin to be used for religious phrases in a Catholic society which would have been exposed to the use of this language during services even if the majority of society did not have a good working knowledge of Latin itself. However, this ignores the possibility that the language chosen had a symbolic purpose in itself. Latin as the language of the Church was a sacralised dialect, the use of which was thought to add additional power to the desired charm (Skemer 2006: 113).

In addition a real connection could be drawn between text and God: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1.1). This meant that in the right context, and in a very real sense, the Word of God could become God and therefore religious text was imbued with immense power (Moreland 2001: 44-45). For example, a buckle plate inscribed with '*Ave Maria*' was recovered from the deserted medieval village of Tattenhoe, Buckinghamshire (Mills 1995a: 336; see Fig. 6.37). The symmetrical arrangement of the letters either side of the plate (AVEM/ARIA) suggests that this was not necessarily meant to be read and the presence of the text was more significant. Similarly, potential illiterate copies of this inscription are known, as from Westbury-by-Shenley, Buckinghamshire where the engraved decoration on a strap-end (Mills 1995b: 352; see Fig. 6.38) imitates letters but these are not fully formed, again demonstrating that the ability to read the text was less significant than the presence of the text itself. This posed a significant theological problem for the hierarchy of the Church which was explored by Thomas Aquinas, in whose opinion the use of textual amulets could be seen as a legitimate emblem of faith symbolising the hope of protection rather than an active defence against evil. However, as Skemer (2006: 73) points out, "Subtle scholastic arguments were beyond the comprehension of most Christians, who turned to textual amulets and other sources of divine protection in a dangerous but increasingly literate world and expected divine protection in a fairly mechanical way." Consequently, the choice to use Latin text on

amuletic dress accessories is therefore significant due to both the presence of Latin and text.

Only one dress accessory from the urban assemblages has an explicitly religious inscription. LON0944 (see Fig. 4.6) from St Mary Merton has an engraved 'IHS' below an image of a lamb and cross, the *Agnus dei*. This serves as a reminder that text was not the only medium through which the talismanic properties of religious imagery and text could be expressed. Image could work in a similar way to text and depictions of religious figures would have been familiar to the laity through wall paintings. Although these were meant to be an indirect link to the divine, the images themselves were venerated and therefore took on the ability to access the supernatural meaning that "images ceased to be simply mediators between Man and God" (Moreland 2001: 50). As a result it is possible to directly link the textual amulets discussed to explicitly religious visual depictions. The strap-ends from Oxford (OXF052) and Winchester (WIN297) depicting the Virgin Mary and St Catherine can also be discussed for their talismanic potential. Further examples are provided by LON0847 (see Fig. 6.39), a strap-end decorated with an unidentifiable female saint and a buckle plate from Lincoln (LIN048 see Fig. 6.40) which depicts a seated Christ on a throne flanked by two figures.

The significance of the depictions of the Virgin Mary and St Catherine has already been discussed in their social context. Mary and the virgin martyrs were held up as role models for women within late medieval society. However, the imagery of these figures can also be seen as significant in an amuletic context. For late medieval women pregnancy and especially childbirth itself were particularly dangerous episodes during their lives. Medieval women used birth girdles or relics associated with the Virgin Mary or virgin martyrs as amulets to protect themselves during childbirth (Skemer 2006: 236). The depictions of Mary and St Catherine on strap-ends can, in this context, be seen to combine both of these practices. Similarly the belt fittings from the rural settlements of Tattenhoe and Westbury, which both contain literate inscriptions and illiterate imitations of '*Ave Maria*' could both have been worn during childbirth as amulets.

Hence, religious text and images on dress accessories can be seen to be more than simply outward displays of religious devotion and piety, although these were certainly considerations. Within a society that believed in the literal existence of evil in the world around them, the talismanic properties of these artefacts would have

provided comfort and protection during everyday life. The examples here could all have been used to protect the wearer from an early and unexpected death through accident, illness or during childbirth. In other circumstances amulets were used to aid healing, ward off evil spirits and protect against demonic possession (Skemer 1996: 280; Gilchrist 2008: 123). Image and text had a complicated interrelationship during this period but in the right context both could be believed to embody the divine and in so doing, transubstantiate an object into a powerful protective amulet.

6.6.2: Love gifts

This final section examines the other predominant use of text on dress accessories, as expressions of love on items gifted during courtship and marriage rituals. This practice is exemplified by a belt excavated from London which features a repeated stamped phrase which reads '*tout monn coer*' meaning 'all my heart' (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 45; see Fig. 6.41). The language used for the inscriptions on these artefacts is again significant. Although Latin is present in some cases, it is by no means exclusive, with examples in the vernacular much more common than on the amuletic dress accessories. This serves to emphasise both the importance of Latin within an amuletic context, as a choice has been made to use Latin rather than any other language, and the fact that these gifts were part of a much more intimate and personal process. Again, these textual inscriptions would only have been able to be read by a minority of late medieval society but, by written in English or French, the intended message of the text would have been understood by a wider section of society. This is shown through silver belt mounts found in the hoards from Colmar, France and Erfurt, Germany. Although both of these assemblages contain examples inscribed in Latin with '*Amor*' there are also mounts with text in the vernacular German which reads '*Lieb*' both of which mean 'love' (Fingerlin 1971: 422; Descatoire 2009: 92; see Fig. 6.42).

For those who were unable to read, image again played a major role. However the act of the gift giving itself would also have been understood as a symbolic act within late medieval society and thus imbued the artefact with a significance that transcended the object itself. The exchange of gifts to outwardly symbolise the feelings of the giver played a vital role within late medieval courting, and a great variety of artefacts could be gifted for this purpose. For example, mirrors, combs, caskets, and

dress accessories including girdles, purses, rings, brooches and chaplets could all be given as love tokens (Camille 1998). This is illustrated by an illumination in the *Codex Manesse* in which Dietmar von Aist disguises himself as a pedlar in order to woo the target of his affections (see Fig. 6.14). He is depicted holding out a brooch whilst behind him his wares, belts, purses and mirrors, are displayed. All of these could be given as gifts and also carry the potential for symbolic significance (Camille 1998: 53). These items are not exclusively feminine as women were culturally allowed to reciprocate with similar gifts of dress accessories. However, it was deemed socially inappropriate for women to initiate the giving of gifts with their role primarily defined as a passive recipient (O'Hara 2000: 65).

A general theme shared by many of these gifts of clothing and dress accessories is their circular nature, whether functional as in the case of belts, rings and garlands or through design such as annular brooches. This is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it symbolises the joining of the hands during the marriage ceremony and this is represented in decorative motifs from artefacts across Northern Europe as with, a silver finger ring from Tattenhoe (Mills 1995a: 336; see Fig. 6.43), annular brooches from Denmark (Jensen 2005: 143-14), and the gold Jewish wedding ring from Erfurt, Germany (Stürzebecher 2009: 52-53; see Fig. 6.44) The joining of hands can definitively be seen to be between two people rather than the clasped hands of an individual. Where two hands are depicted they are almost exclusively identifiable as two right hands and silver mounts from Erfurt also depict this (Stürzebecher 2009: 64; see Fig. 6.45), as well as details of the differing masculine and feminine sleeves of the individuals. The theme of the joining of two people is reinforced by a silver gilt possible belt loop from Weissenfels, Germany which depicts a man and a woman joining hands (Descatoire 2009: 87; see Fig. 6.46).

The second significance of the circular attributes of artefacts such as rings is that they encircle the individual, a property shared by belts when they were fastened around the body. This idea is shown on another excavated example from London which bears the inscription 'love me, bind fast, love me truly' (Ward Perkins 1954: 195). In this case the belt acts as a symbol of the binding of two people together through love. The green girdle given to Gawain by Lady Bertilak in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Pearl Poet 2007: 85-86) is an example of a love gift in contemporary late medieval literature. The properties of the belt are talismanic; it protects Gawain from the blows of the Green Knight but it is also symbolically gifted to Gawain as a

sign of affection. This can be seen as an example of feminine power as the belt binds Gawain under the control of Lady Bertilak (Camille 1998: 63) but it is also a subversion of the established gender roles of gift exchange as the lady initiates the giving of gifts. In this context the gift of a belt can be seen not only as a symbol of the binding power of love but also as the binding of an individual under the control of another.

Within late medieval society, belts could take on a third symbolic meaning as a physical and metaphorical separation between the upper and lower halves of the body. In medieval thought the upper body represented the rational human whilst the lower was dominated by animal lust (Camille 1998: 61). This idea is again represented on belt fittings (Camille 1998: 62). A German example depicts mythical half-women, half-beasts on a buckle plate and strap-end (Fingerlin 1971: 310; see Fig. 6.47) whilst an Italian example depicts scenes of courtly love including a woman with suitor (Fingerlin 1971: 334; see Fig. 6.48). This time it is the suitor who is depicted as half-human. The belt here acts as a moral reminder to the individual wearing it to control their lust through the victory of the upper half of the body over the lower.

Within late medieval courtship the belt could convey a variety of meanings such as the joining of two individuals, the binding power of love, and control over animal lust. It is within this context of love tokens that the strap-end and mounts (SOU079, SOU080) recovered from a grave excavated at the Southampton Friary must be considered. The male individual in the grave was not wearing this belt but it was *in situ*, coiled and placed above his right shoulder. The strap-end itself is narrow (with a width of 12mm) and this suggests that it was a female dress accessory as women tended to wear narrower belts, as shown by the buckles found with female and male skeletons at the Austin Friars in Leicester (Clay 1981: 133). Given the symbolism of the belt explored here it is possible that this represents a love gift given in life and returned as a symbol of commemoration in death. This interpretation is speculative but is based on the evidence of how these objects were used in the past by their contemporary society. The placing of this belt in the grave was a deliberate act and at some level must have a rationale behind it. The giving of a gift imbues an object with significance beyond that of the object itself and can become the embodiment of the act and of the giver. By placing the belt in the grave the mourner was placing a symbol of the life spent together whilst simultaneously signifying the commemorative acts expected by the bereaved (see 6.4.3).

Although there are numerous examples of visual and textual imagery on dress accessories from across Northern Europe that attest to the exchange of gifts between couples there are no definitive examples from the urban assemblages examined here. However, it is important to remember that the gift itself would have acted as a sign and in so doing would have imbued the gifted artefact with a symbolic meaning that would not necessarily have needed to be expressed in the decoration of the artefact. The Southampton belt serves as a reminder that the context of a find can be as significant as its decoration. Archaeologically, the context of a belt not on the body raises the possibility that the artefact was deliberately placed in the grave. However, it is only through an examination of the social and symbolic context of belts that a possible explanation can be reached. It has been shown that in the context of courtship the belt could be a highly symbolic item of clothing which is reflected in the image and text inscribed on the dress accessories used to decorate them.

6.7: Summary

This chapter has explored the social significance of late medieval belt fittings. Whilst this study has shown that there is not a major variation in form across the urban assemblages, there are some significant differences in proportions that may reflect the consumer choices of the local market. Indeed, the similarities in dress accessories stretch further than these English urban populations, rural inhabitants were also using very similar forms and there are clear parallels for dress accessories found in England across Northern Europe. These similarities mean that it is therefore more important to focus on the social significance of these artefacts, and it is notable that there is a much greater variety in the types and forms of belt fittings between sites which were occupied by differing social groups.

The expression of social hierarchy through the medium of dress was integrally important within late medieval society. Historically, this can be seen through the development of a moralising culture surrounding dress which reached its peak during the fourteenth century with the introduction of sumptuary legislation. Archaeologically, this process can be seen by the expansion of the dress accessory manufacturing industry from the mid-thirteenth century. This resulted in a much greater variety of forms being produced at a mass production level, which would have

been readily available to a much wider proportion of society. This combined with the changes in dress in general and the development of a fashion culture to allow individuals to renegotiate their social position through dress and conform to, or subvert, the social norms.

This expression of social position, or at least the visual aspiration of it, can be seen through the differing uses of dress accessories at the College of the Vicars Choral and St Andrew's Fishergate in York. The monks of the Gilbertine order were restricted by their monastic orders and their choice of simpler dress accessories symbolised their retreat from ordinary secular society. Meanwhile the members of the Vicars Choral were able to use much more elaborate forms. This symbolised their position in society, as dress was vital to the establishment and maintenance of ecclesiastical power and this can be seen even after death. Identifiable priestly burials have been identified through symbols of their office such as chalices and patens but in a society where unclothed shrouded burial was the norm the greater proportion of dressed priest burials should be seen as significant given the importance placed on dress in life.

Dress and dress accessories were also used within the rituals surrounding death. This can be seen before death through the use of *memento mori* to remind the individual of the certainty of death and the need to prepare the soul for this eventuality. This personal preparation could be expressed in other ways such as through the depiction of acorns on dress accessories when the symbol of the acorn is read as signifying patience. Patience was vital within late medieval Christian thought as the basis for the achievement of the higher theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. Through the endurance of suffering and acceptance of one's place within the world the first essential steps to the spiritual life could be taken. Dress accessories could be used in other ways in a religious context. For example, a sudden death could be warded off through the use of textual and visual amulets. These amulets were used in a variety of ways and in different circumstances. The artefacts themselves can be seen to have taken on a supernatural quality through the inclusion of both text and image. Certain saints were used for specific concerns; the Magi to ward off epilepsy and the Virgin Mary and Virgin Martyrs to protect women during childbirth.

Dress accessories were also used in the rituals after death. The belief of purgatory within late medieval society meant that it was essential for the dead to be remembered and commemorated by the living to ease the soul's passage through to heaven. The evidence from wills shows that dress accessories, including belts and belt

fittings were relatively commonly passed down. This act of giving created a social contract between the deceased and the beneficiary and the object itself would have acted as a physical reminder of the requirement of the living to pray for the dead.

Dress accessories were also exchanged as love tokens, and the objects in this context would also have acted as physical reminders of the individual who had given the gift. The girdle was a highly symbolic object in this context which could represent the everlasting love of the couple, the joining and binding of the couple together but also as a moral metaphor for control and abstinence. Text and image on belt fittings could portray all of these readings through the depiction of clasped hands, the description of love as a binding force, or the half-human beasts. The reading of the acorn as a symbol of fertility or a phallic image is also important in this context either through the hope of offspring through the union or as a satire and subversion of female virtue and values.

It is therefore clear that dress accessories were not simply functional artefacts but could be used in a variety of ways within late medieval society. The objects themselves need to be reintegrated with other forms of evidence in order to recognise the importance they could have within contemporary society.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

7.1: Results

This research was undertaken to address four key aims. The first was to develop the first comprehensive typology for late medieval belt fittings that can be easily applied to such material nationally in England. The typology provided in Chapter 2 successfully categorised all belt fittings found within the selected English urban groups but does exclude certain forms of accessories, such as the beast-head buckle frames (Rogerson and Ashley 2011) which have yet to be found within these assemblages. However, the categorisation system employed does allow for the addition of new forms if, and when, these are identified whilst enabling the comparison of the belt fittings from each city. This in turn has aided the completion of the other principal aims of this research.

The theoretical and methodological approach used here has built on the premise that material culture plays an active role within society and that this allows archaeologists the opportunity to identify the wider social significance artefacts could convey to their contemporary audiences. This approach formed the rationale behind the second and third aims of this project which were to examine the potential for regional variation within the use of dress accessories and place these items within their wider social and cultural context. Contemporary literature, historical and art-historical sources all demonstrate that dress and dress accessories played an integral role within late medieval life and could be used for the construction, maintenance and manipulation of identities during this period. The final aim was to begin to place the English material into its wider European setting, and parallels to English dress accessories have been shown from across Northern Europe.

7.1.1: Regionality

The geographical spread of the cities used in this study offered the opportunity to examine the possibility of regional identities through a comparison of the variations in the proportions of belt fittings from each urban assemblage. At a superficial level, all the forms of dress accessories appear to be very similar across late medieval

England. However, when a more nuanced approach is taken, and the various proportions are examined, significant differences can be seen. A clear demonstration of this is the very significant proportion of mounts found in London, which is far higher than from anywhere else in the country, and suggests that the use of mounts on late medieval belts was a much more common practice here than elsewhere. Other forms of dress accessory are also more common in certain areas than others. For example, the double oval buckle frame is more prominent within the assemblage from Coventry, and to a lesser extent Leicester, and the proximity of these two towns combined with the production evidence for these forms (Wright 1982) imply that this form was in greater demand in this area of the country. Similarly, the high proportion of D-shaped frames, and oval strap loops, with a moulded knob (1.5C, 6.3F) within the York assemblage combined with the production evidence for these forms (Finlayson 2004) imply that this was a decorative style in much more widespread use amongst the populace of York than anywhere else in the country.

Despite these examples, the evidence for regional variation is limited and there is no conclusive proof for the expression of regional identities through dress accessories. This corresponds with Standley's (2010) findings in her study of the Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-Welsh borders, where the forms of dress accessories on either side of these contested border regions were strikingly similar. Therefore, an alternative explanation is needed for the observed regional variations. By the late fourteenth century, the road network of England had developed to the point where nowhere was more than a fortnight's ride from London (Stenton 1936) and it has been shown that the elites were able to exploit this to purchase goods from around the country (Dyer 1994: 260). This movement of people and goods highlight the interconnectivity of the regions of England during this period. Although dress accessories were produced for local markets, the style and form of these artefacts would still have been influenced by examples from further afield and this is further supported by evidence from elsewhere in Europe where direct parallels for English belt fittings can be identified. Local trade within wider trade networks can explain why certain forms were more popular in some parts of the country.

7.1.2: Dress and social identities

Despite the lack of any evidence for the expression of regional identities, dress does have the potential to illuminate other forms of social practice and identity. That dress and social status were intrinsically linked during this period is demonstrated through the content of the sumptuary laws (Hunt 1996: 299) and guild regulations (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 18) of the fourteenth century. The significant growth of dress accessory manufacturing, and the development of new forms that this enabled, provided the opportunity for all levels of society to negotiate their social position by conforming to, or subverting, social norms through the visible wearing of dress. It is significant that the most notable differences between assemblages of dress accessories in this study are between those sites which were occupied by different social groups. This is most clearly illustrated by the assemblages from Bedern (Richards 2001) and Fishergate (Kemp 1996) in York. Whilst these two sites were similar, as they housed ecclesiastical communities, the assemblages show significant differences, and this can be directly attributed to the differing role dress played in the expression of identity between these two groups. For the Gilbertine monks, who lived under the rule of St Benedict, simplicity in dress was an expression of their withdrawal from 'normal' society, and therefore signalled their otherness. Conversely, the members of the Vicars Choral were actively choosing to use more elaborate forms of dress accessory as a visual display of their social position within late medieval York society. Likewise, the elaborately decorated dress accessories from the Victoria Road site in the suburbs of Winchester can be associated with the growth of the mercantile class in this area and the display of their social position through dress. This assemblage stands out from the other suburban sites from Winchester due to these more decorative fittings and is more comparable to the inner city assemblages where elaborate dress accessories are proportionally more prevalent.

Social status was not the only form of identity that could be expressed through dress. The negotiation of gender identities through dress accessories is hampered by the difficulty in associating particular forms of belt fittings with any one sex, and it is likely that most forms could be worn by both men and women. However, the depiction of a forked spacer strap-end with an acorn terminal on female grave effigies (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 36) allows an interpretation of this decorative motif within a gendered context. One interpretation of the acorn is as an implicit symbol of patience and late

medieval literature contains numerous references to patience as a key virtue (Schiffhorst 1978) within contemporary Christian society. It is in this religious context that patience was crucial to both Margery Kempe (Windeatt 1985) and Julian of Norwich (Spearing 1998) in their pursuit of the spiritual life and acorns can be seen as an outward display of the acceptance of this virtue and piety. Therefore, in this context, the acorn can be seen as a means for the expression and negotiation of female religious identity within late medieval dress. This interpretation is supported by the attempts to subvert this symbolism. Other depictions of acorns and female figures from the late medieval period can be read as satirical critiques of this display with interpretations ranging from accusations of false charity to overtly sexual metaphors (Sekules 1987: 46).

Dress and dress accessories were also used within late medieval mortuary rituals and in this context can be associated with the expression of contemporary religious identities. For example, with the imminent approach of death an individual could choose to dress in sackcloth (Daniell 1997: 31) as a symbol both of their preparation for death and of their piety. Evidence for clothed burial during this period is relatively uncommon, with Gilchrist and Sloane (2005: 80) estimating that only 2-3% of excavated late medieval graves contain dressed individuals. This can be seen as the deceased giving up their worldly goods and is again an act of piety. Due to the importance of dress as an expression of social status in life, the choice to bury the dead unclothed is significant as it is a further indication of an individual giving up their social position. Priests are one social group who were more commonly buried clothed (Gilchrist 2008), and it has been shown that the members of the College of the Vicars Choral at Bedern used dress as an expression of their social status built upon their religious identity and ecclesiastical position within York Minster. Taken together, it is possible to see the clothed burial of priests as a continuation of their social and religious status beyond the moment of death.

7.1.3: The symbolism of late medieval belts

This research has also identified ways that belts could become imbued with significance through their use, decoration and movement between individuals. The use of text on excavated belts and dress accessories from London and elsewhere reveals two ways that these items of clothing could be viewed as more than simply functional

objects. The first is the amuletic properties that belts could be imbued with. This is based upon the religious phraseology and religious iconography inscribed on these artefacts, and their connection with the late medieval preoccupation for the preparation for the idealised 'good death'. Within this context belts inscribed with religious text could act as amulets to protect the wearer from illness or sudden death, and the use of text was significant due to the religious power that was associated with the word, and especially Latin, within late medieval society. However, an ability to read was not a prerequisite for the use of belts as amulets, as evidenced by the examples of dress accessories bearing illiterate letters. Likewise, the use of specific religious imagery on belt fittings can be viewed as imbuing these artefacts, and the belts they would have been attached to, with similar properties. Certain religious figures were associated with protective or healing properties, such as the Magi and epilepsy. The Virgin Mary and Virgin Martyrs were associated with the protection of women during pregnancy and childbirth and this is could explain the presence of Virgin Mary and St Catherine as figurative decoration on strap-ends from Oxford and Winchester respectively.

Dress accessories also passed between individuals in the form of gifts or bequests. Through the action of giving, the artefacts could take on specific meanings within the context of the gift exchange. Towards the end of the late medieval period the frequency of will writing increased and this offers the opportunity to examine which forms of material culture were seen as appropriate to pass on after death. Clothing and dress accessories were frequently included and would have acted as reminders of the benefactor to the beneficiaries. Within the context of the late medieval belief in purgatory, and more importantly the belief that the living could influence the passage of the deceased through purgatory, these articles of clothing played a vital role within the relationship between the living and the dead. Bequests commonly came with the proviso that the living would pray for the benefactor and therefore the clothing and dress accessories passed down through wills would have acted not only as a memento of the deceased but also as a physical reminder of the obligation of the beneficiaries to remember and pray for the dead. These artefacts could occasionally take the form of *memento mori* which would also have acted as physical reminders of the beneficiary's own mortality and the need to prepare for their own death.

The use of text on belts also suggests the use of these articles of clothing within the context of courtship. Similar to bequests, in this role the belts would have taken on

significance through the act of gift giving, and acted as physical reminders of the donor and the relationship between the giver and receiver. However, belts as love tokens were also symbolic of aspects of late medieval relationships. When worn, they encircled the body and acted as symbols of never-ending love and the binding, or joining, of two individuals together. A related decorative motif is the depiction of two joined hands on belt mounts from Erfurt, and similar motifs were employed in other forms of material culture given as love gifts, such as rings and brooches. The belt would also have acted as a physical and metaphorical separation between the upper and lower halves of the body which within late medieval thought represented human rationality and animal lust. Here, the belt would have acted as a moral reminder for individuals to control their lust.

7.1.4: The European context

The final aim of this research was to start to place the dress accessories from England into their wider European context. Given the necessary parameters of this research, and its focus on English urban assemblages, there is still much more work to be undertaken on this aspect of the research (see 7.2). However, aspects of this current study have successfully used European parallels to help contextualise the English material. Stylistically, many parallels exist between the forms of belt fittings found in England and other Northern European centres and this helps to further explain the lack of distinct regional variations within the English material. Despite this, there are some significant differences between England and the Continent. The clearest example of this is provided by the Leiden collection of late-medieval belt decoration. This assemblage of over 1,400 mounts demonstrates the popularity of this type of dress accessory within the contemporary population of the Low Countries. Outside of London, mounts are relatively scarce within the urban assemblages of England, and this is further supported by the quantity of mounts compared to buckles within the PAS database. It is also significant that it is London, with its international trade and contact, that has provided the largest group of mounts from anywhere in the country. Consequently, it is argued here that a closer examination of dress accessories from across Northern Europe would reveal similar differences in the consumer choices of differing populations if not the forms they were choosing to wear. The symbolic meaning of belts was also similar across Europe, as demonstrated by the wedding belts

from Erfurt (Stürzebecher 2010) and the bequest of dress accessories in the wills from fifteenth century Douai (Howell 1996). This commonality in both practice and style demonstrates that late medieval dress accessories from England do not stand alone but must be seen in their wider European context.

7.2: Directions for future research

Although this PhD has demonstrated that the contextualised study of late medieval dress accessories can provide insights into their past social use, there are still areas of research which need further consideration. For example, this study has concentrated solely on belt fittings such as buckles, clasps, strap-ends, mounts and strap loops but this is only a portion of the forms of dress accessories as a whole which were available during the late medieval period. Brooches and finger rings are obvious examples which have received some attention (e.g. Campbell 2009; Standley 2010), but other metal accessories such as buttons, aglets and purse hangers are also potential avenues for future research. The use of buttons and aglets are significant as they are indicative of the new forms of dress that were introduced from the fourteenth century. These forms of accessories allowed the transformation of the body through clothing by enabling tighter fitting clothes that were able to display or hide the body in new ways. A contextualised study of these would potentially begin to identify the social groups who were employing these modes of dress and the social ramifications of the introduction of these forms of clothing. Purse hangers (see Fig. 7.1) are another type of dress accessory that has received relatively little attention. However, purses are another item of clothing, like the belt, which can be shown to have had emblematic significance within late medieval society. Similar to the belt, the symbolism of purses was variable according to context with meanings ranging from symbols of avarice (Hodges 2000: 146-147) to sexual euphemisms within the context of love gifts (Camille 1998: 64).

This research has focused on assemblages of dress accessories from urban excavations but this has meant that evidence from other sources has, out of necessity, largely had to be excluded. Given this, another possible direction for new research to take would be a further study on similar material but from different sources. Superficially at least, rural assemblages appear to be very similar to their urban

equivalents (Egan 2004) but these groups are often studied on a site by site basis, each of which tends to have a small number of dress accessories. Therefore, this offers the opportunity for a broader study on the dress accessories of rural settlements. Smith (2007) has shown that the potential exists for the peasantry to express resistant identities through dress but this work needs reconsideration in light of the other forms of evidence such as urban examples and production material. With all of these strands of evidence taken together it would be possible to fully investigate the involvement of the peasantry within local trade networks and their employment of dress within their social context. Similarly, monastic sites such as Battle Abbey, East Sussex (Hare 1985), Eynsham Abbey, Oxfordshire (Hardy *et al.* 2003) and Hulton Abbey, Staffordshire (Klemperer and Boothroyd 2004), amongst many others have all produced assemblages of late medieval belt fittings. The assemblages from Bedern and Fishergate in York have demonstrated that dress and dress accessories could play a vital role in the construction of ecclesiastical identities within late medieval society. This expression of identity through dress could be further explored through a focused study on monastic assemblages, although the wider social significance of dress within lay society would need to be considered in this case.

One further source of evidence that needs to be fully considered is the artefacts recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme. As of August 2013 the PAS database returns 15,524 late medieval buckles, 3,298 strap-ends and 4,617 mounts of base metal, a number that will only increase over time. Even once consideration of occasional misidentifications and the use of buckles and mounts on other forms of material culture such as horse harnesses and book bindings is taken into account, this is a vast quantity of evidence. Thomas (2012) has shown that, for the tenth and eleventh centuries, the PAS has been able to demonstrate that previously unknown or rare artefact types were actually much more common than formerly thought. Even with the problems of distribution bias, the use of PAS data could definitively reveal any patterns of regionality in the use of late medieval dress accessories in England, especially in areas such as East Anglia which are unrepresented within this study.

All of these forms of evidence provide the potential for a wider contextualised study of late medieval dress accessories in England. However, a more significant development would be to place the material in its wider international setting. This thesis has shown that many forms of belt fittings which were common within the urban English assemblages have direct parallels with those found from across Northern

Europe. Individual studies of dress accessories are understandably focused on specific sites, regions or countries, but with the notable exception of Fingerlin's (1971) research there is no broad overview of base metal late medieval dress accessories from across Europe. In addition to these similarities in form, the symbolic use and meaning of dress accessories is comparable in England and the continent. The belt fittings identified within the fourteenth century hoards from Colmar (Descatoire 2009) and Erfurt (Stürzebecher 2010), along with other documentary evidence, demonstrate the practice of giving belts as love tokens was not restricted to England whilst the letter mounts, in particular the 'A' and 'M', identified in the Leiden collection of late medieval belt decoration (Willemsen and Ernst 2012: 120) can be associated with the use of textual amulets. This similarity in form and use is worthy of further attention to both highlight any differences and examine the reasons for the similarities in dress accessories across Northern Europe during the late medieval period.

This study has demonstrated that dress accessories played a vital role in the construction of late medieval identities. However, it is important to remember that these items only made up a small proportion of contemporary costume as a whole. Archaeological textiles and clothing are rarely found during excavations due to the preservation conditions necessary for their survival. However, examples are known, particularly from London (Crowfoot *et al.* 1992), and these offer the opportunity for a contextualised archaeological study of dress and its social significance. Moving forward, it is necessary to combine both textile and dress accessories to show both the documented changes in dress through the late medieval period and the opportunities these changes had for the expression and construction of contemporary identities.

Finally, this research along with many others has an arbitrary cut-off date at the beginning of the sixteenth century. This has meant that the dress accessories used during the transition between the late medieval and post-medieval periods have been understudied, especially in comparison to those dating between the thirteenth and early sixteenth centuries, only occasionally being included in more general finds catalogues in any detail (e.g. Baart 1977; Allan 1984; Egan 2005). Yet dress during this period continued to play a major role within the construction and negotiation of identity (Rublack 2010), whilst new forms of dress accessory such as shoe buckles (Swann 1981; see Fig. 7.2) were in widespread use at this transitional time. The concept of fashion which began in the fourteenth century became even more important and variable through time, and the archaeology of post-medieval dress would offer an

opportunity to place these themes in their wider social context. Recent metro excavations in Amsterdam and Copenhagen, both of which rose to international significance during the seventeenth century, have produced vast quantities of all forms of material culture including dress accessories. The rising prominence of these cities and London, which has also produced very large quantities of dress accessories of this date (e.g. Bowsher and Miller 2009), offers the opportunity to examine costume on a Northern European scale to demonstrate the significance of dress within a rapidly changing world.

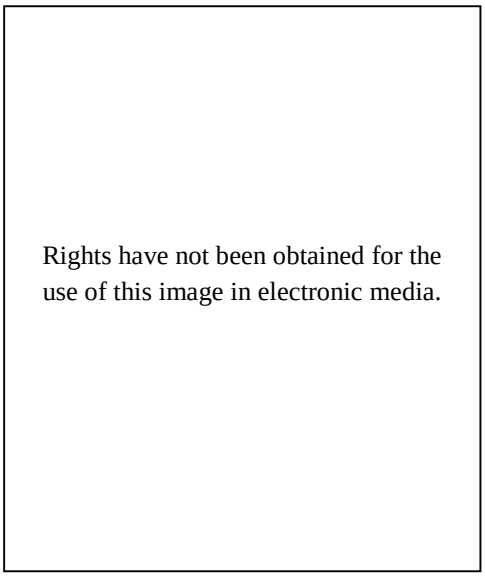

Figure 1.1: Untarnished strap-end LON0065 from Billingsgate Lorry Park (BWB83), London

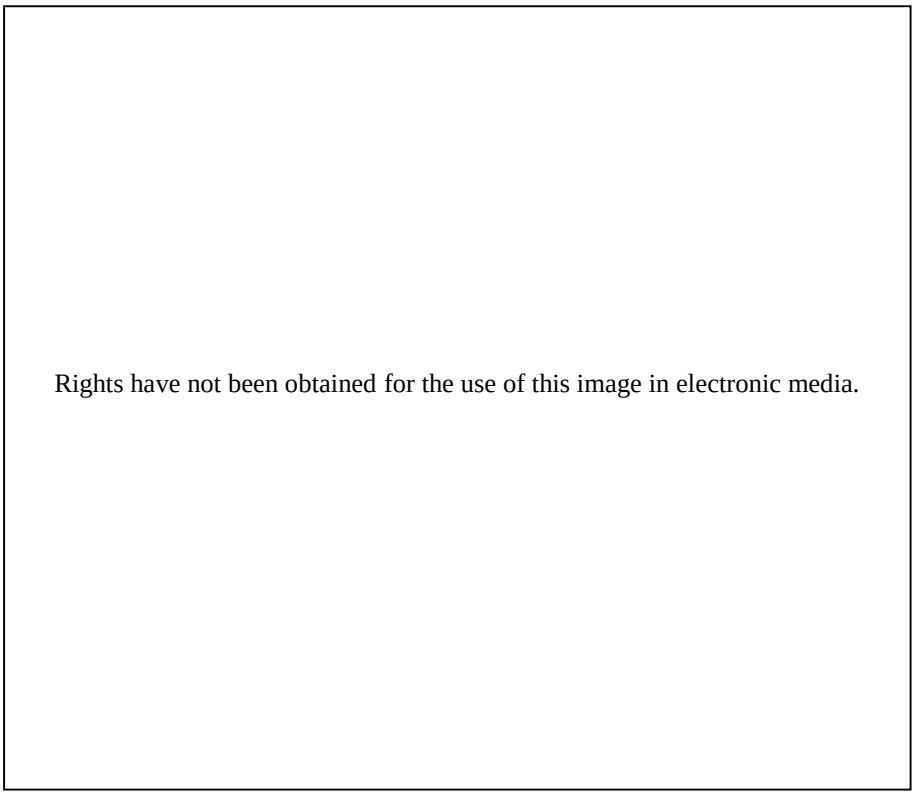

Figure 1.2: Forms of belt fitting from Thames Exchange, London (TEX88) Clockwise from top left: buckle (LON1270), clasp (LON1339), strap-end (LON1344), plate (LON1160), mount (LON1108), strap loop (LON1092)

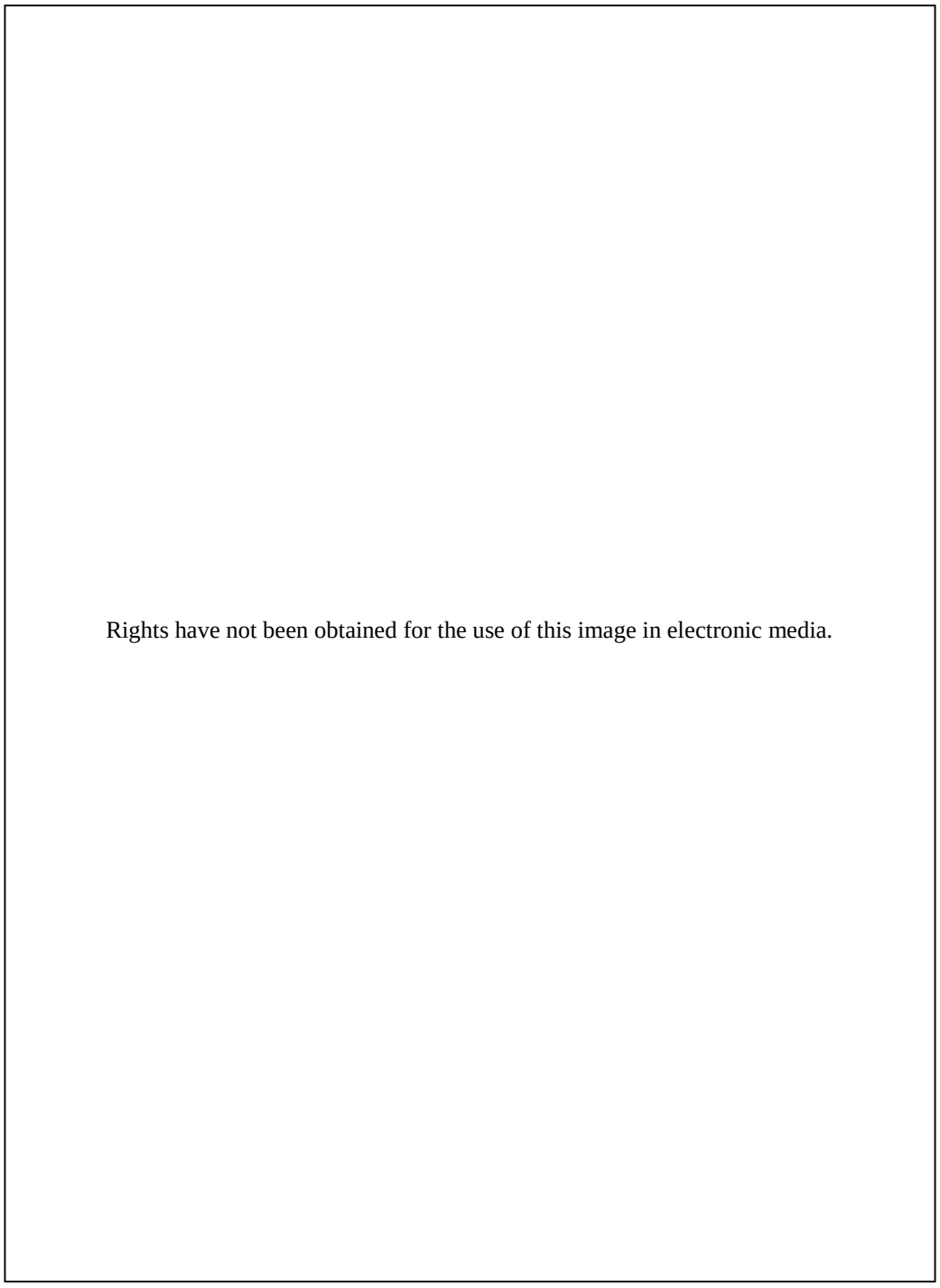

Figure 1.3: Dress accessories from Westbury, Buckinghamshire (after Mills 1995b: 353)

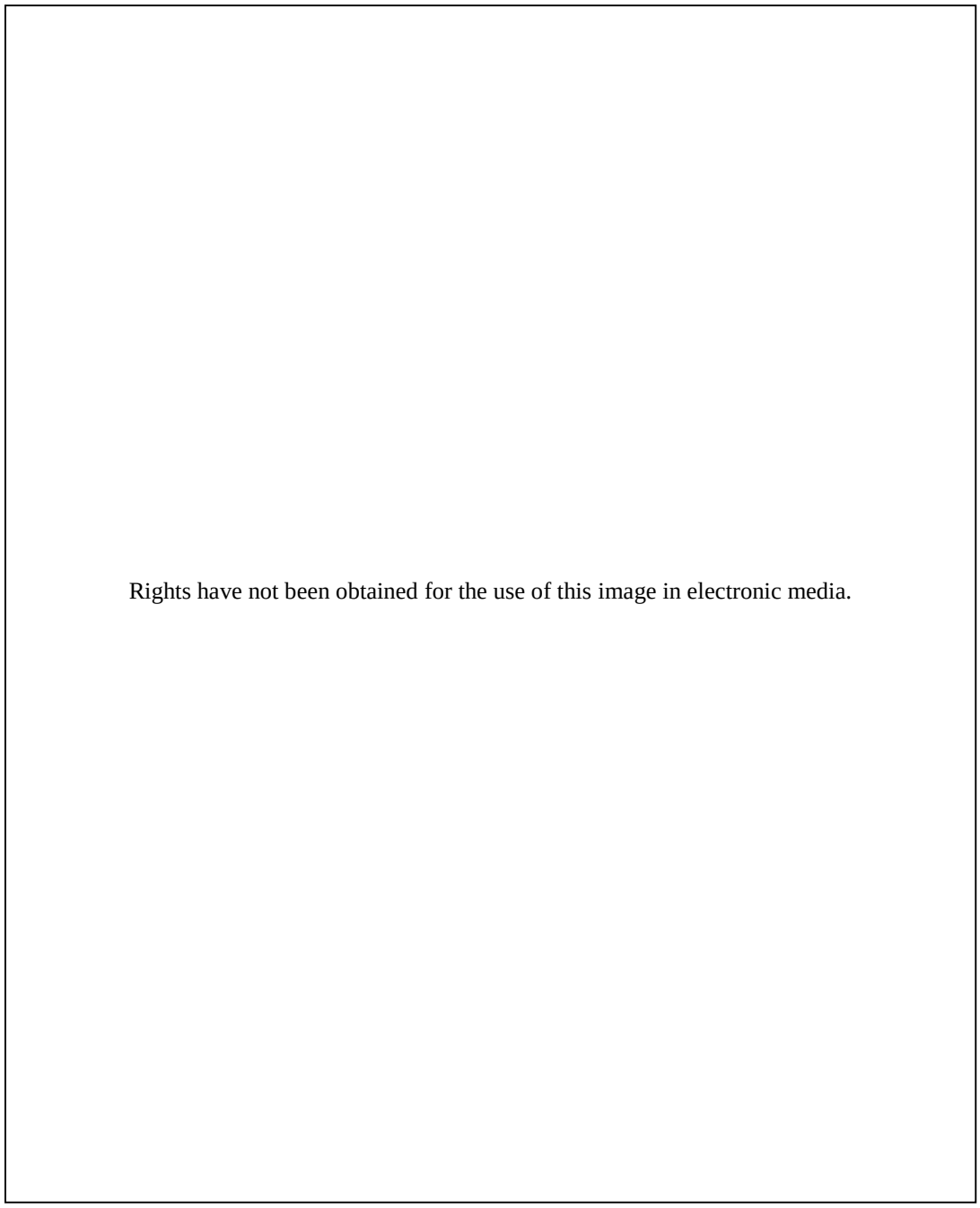

Figure 1.4: Dress accessories from Goltho, Lincolnshire (after Goodall 1975: 92)

Figure 1.5: Map showing the location of the towns and cities used in this study

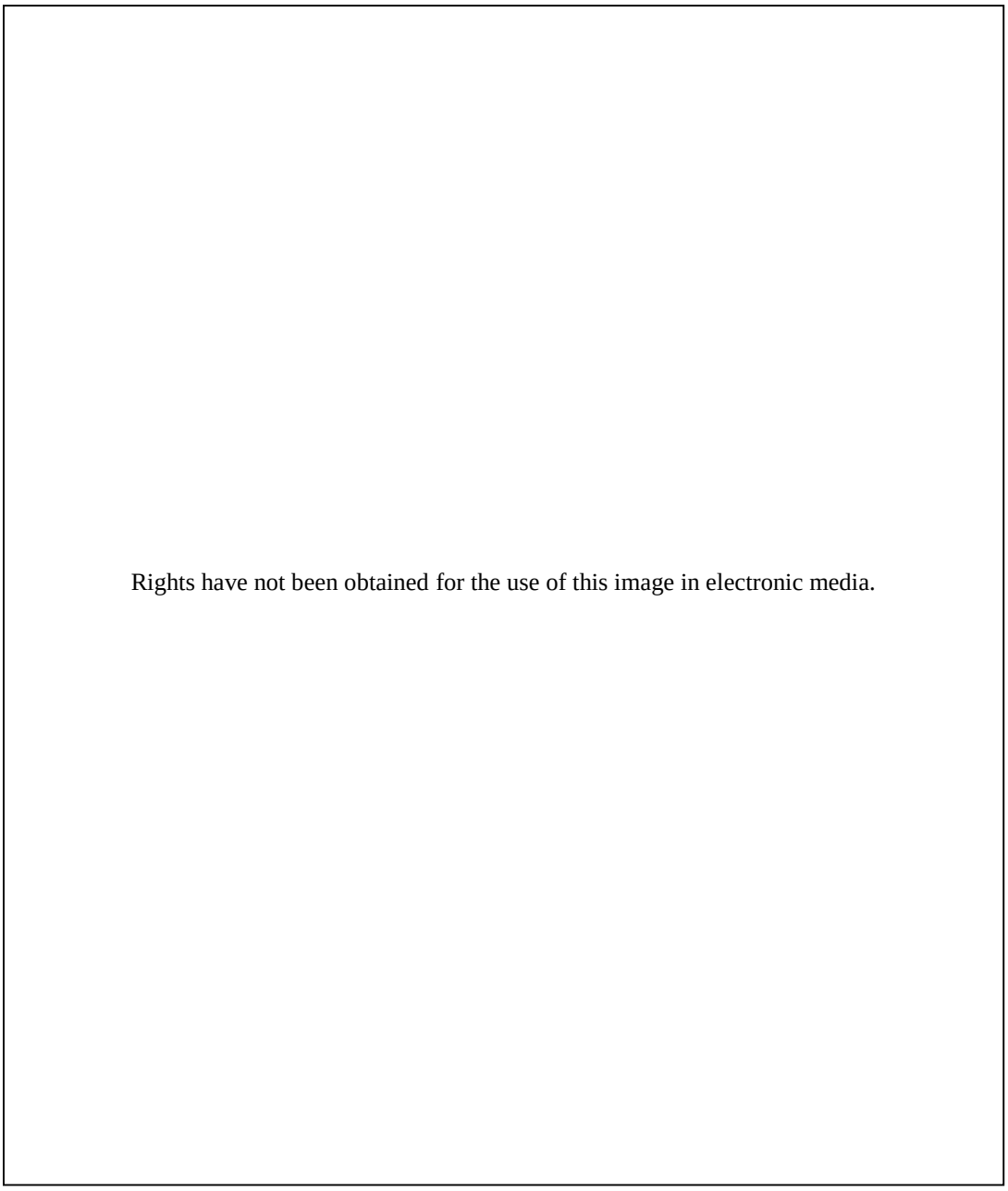

Figure 1.6: Sample page from a catalogue (Rees *et al* 2008: 221)

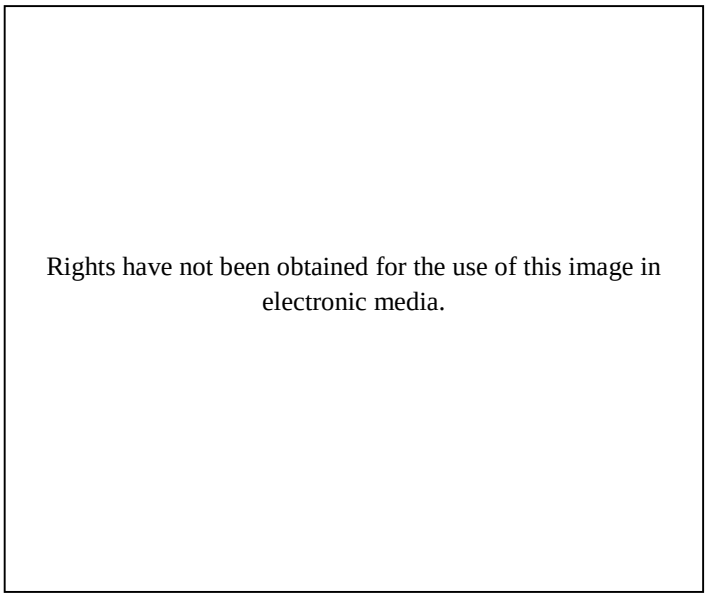

Figure 1.7: Anglo-Scandinavian strap-ends depicting Borre-style decoration from the PAS (Left: LANCUM-BAEE56, Lincolnshire Right: LANCUM-BAC646, Lincolnshire)

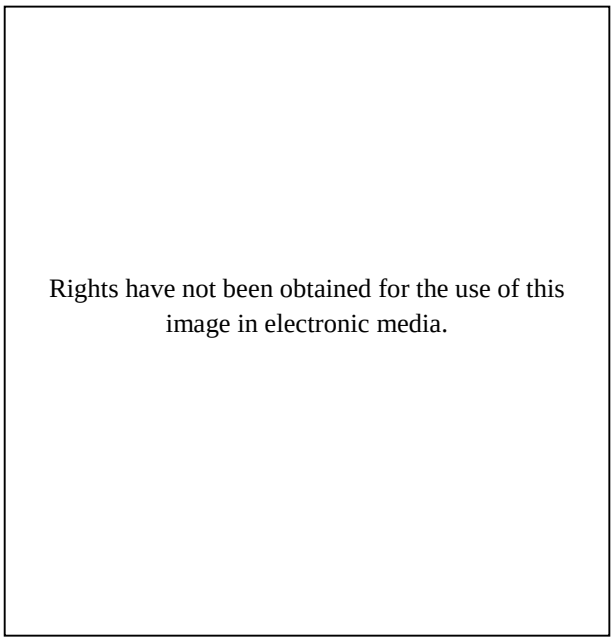

Figure 1.8: Strap-ends from the PAS depicting Winchester (left: WMID-A4D7E1, Staffordshire) and Aspatria (right: LANCUM-789A57, Cumbria) styles of decoration

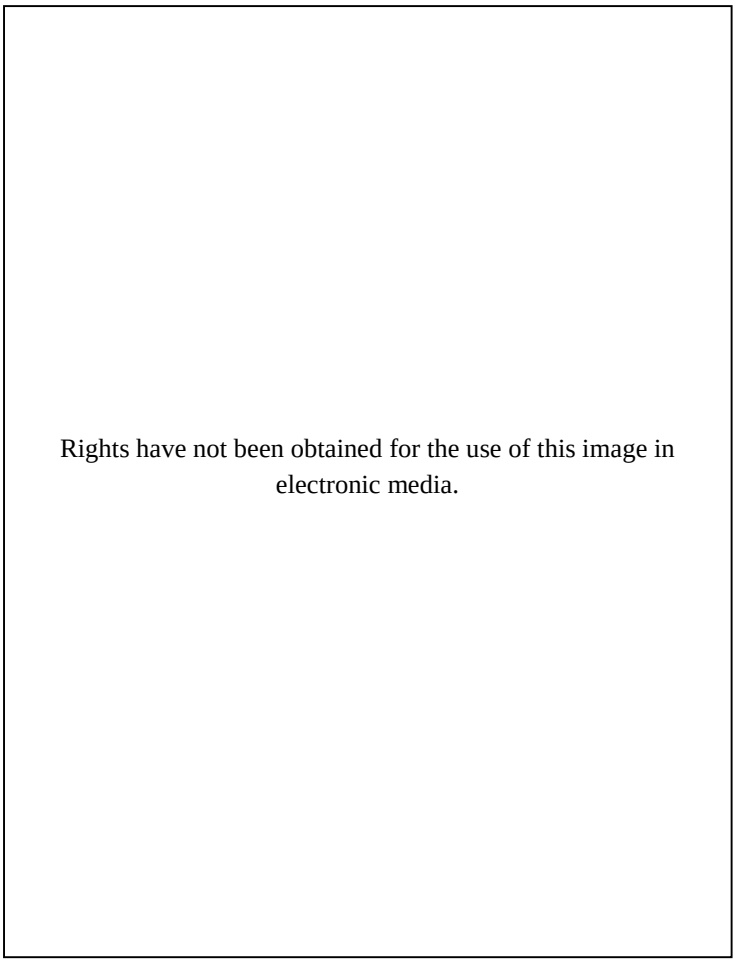

Figure 1.9: Location of rural sites used by Smith (2009: 319)

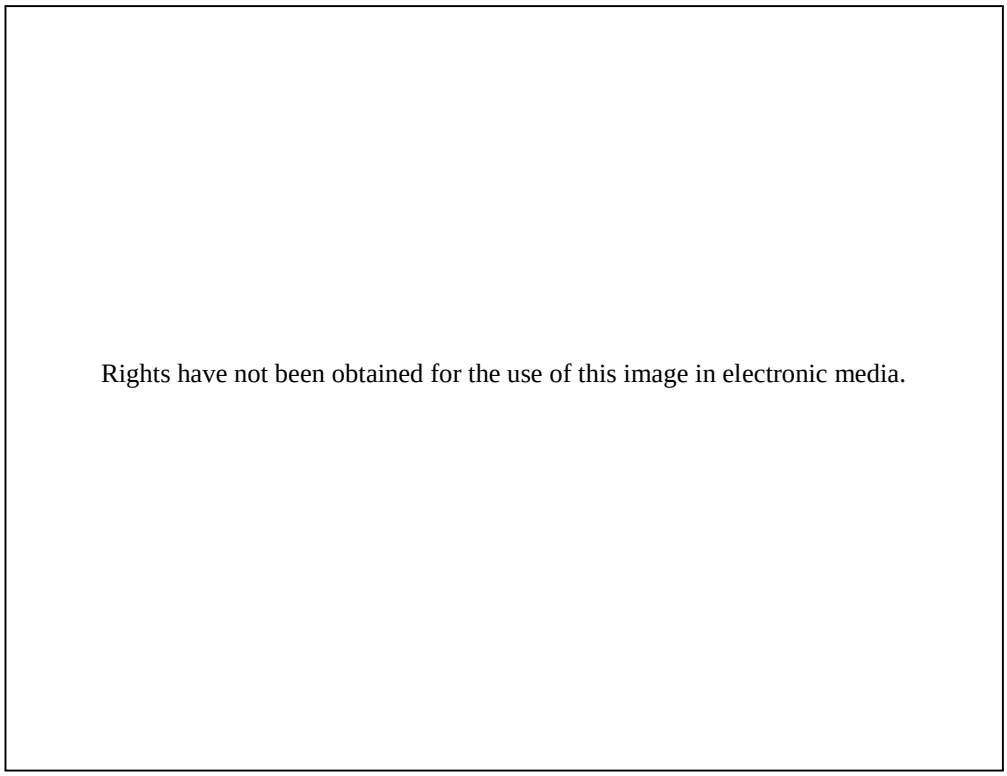

Figure 1.10: Selection of mounts from the Leiden collection of late-medieval belt decoration (Willemsen 2012: 174)

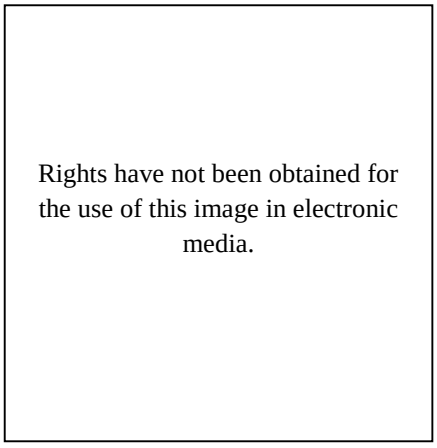

Figure 1.11: Incomplete mirror case from Shapwick, Somerset (after Viner 2007: 748)

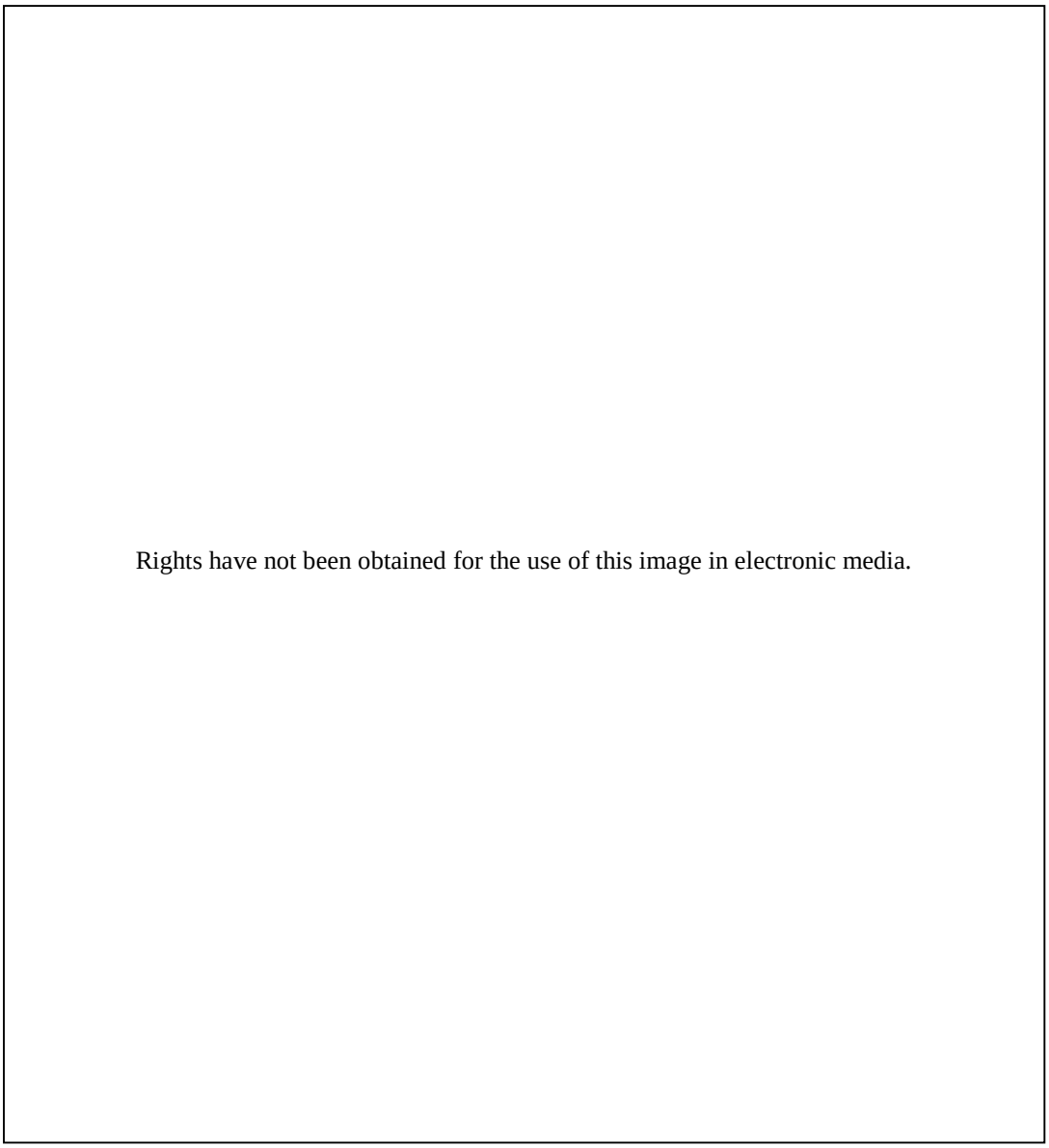

Figure 2.1: Gaping mouth beast head buckles from Norfolk (Rogerson and Ashley 2011: 301)

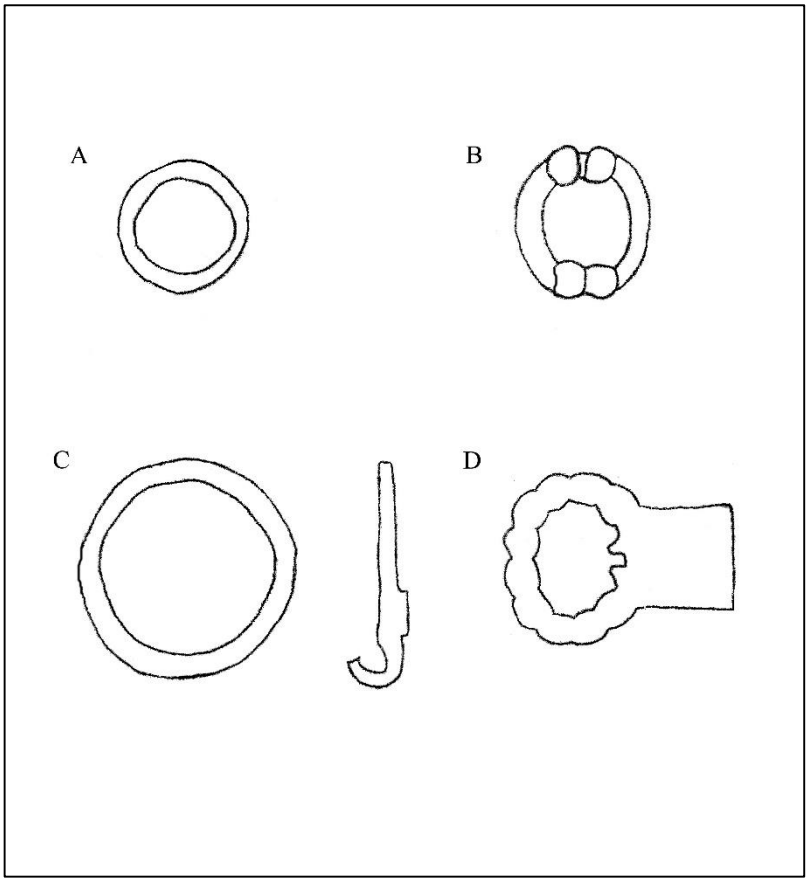

Figure 2.2: Forms of circular buckle frames (1.1A-D)

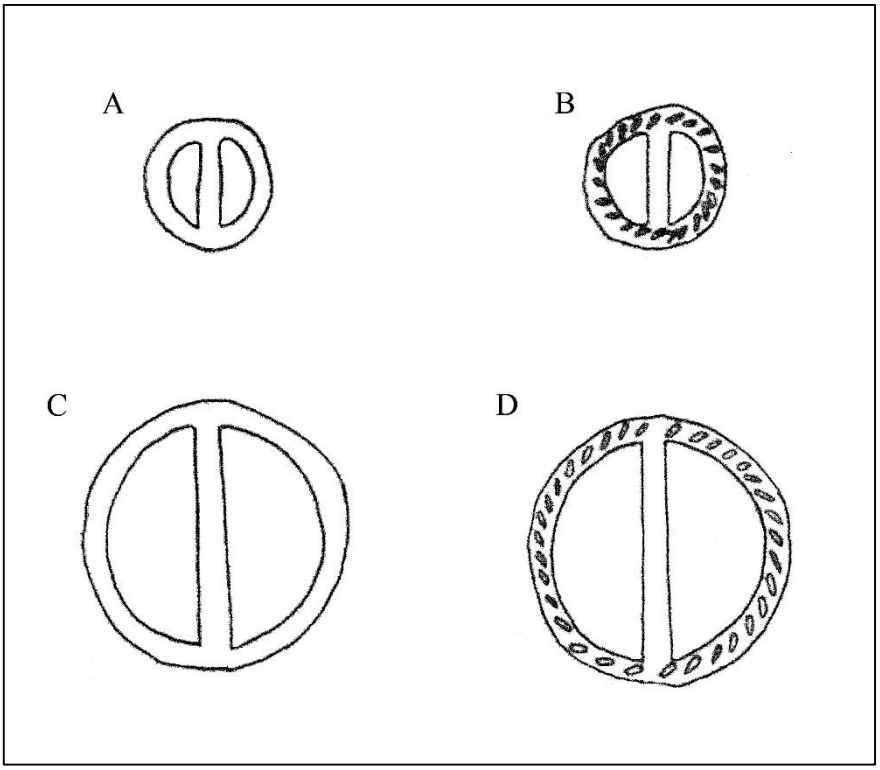

Figure 2.3: Forms of circular buckle frames with a central bar (1.2A-D)

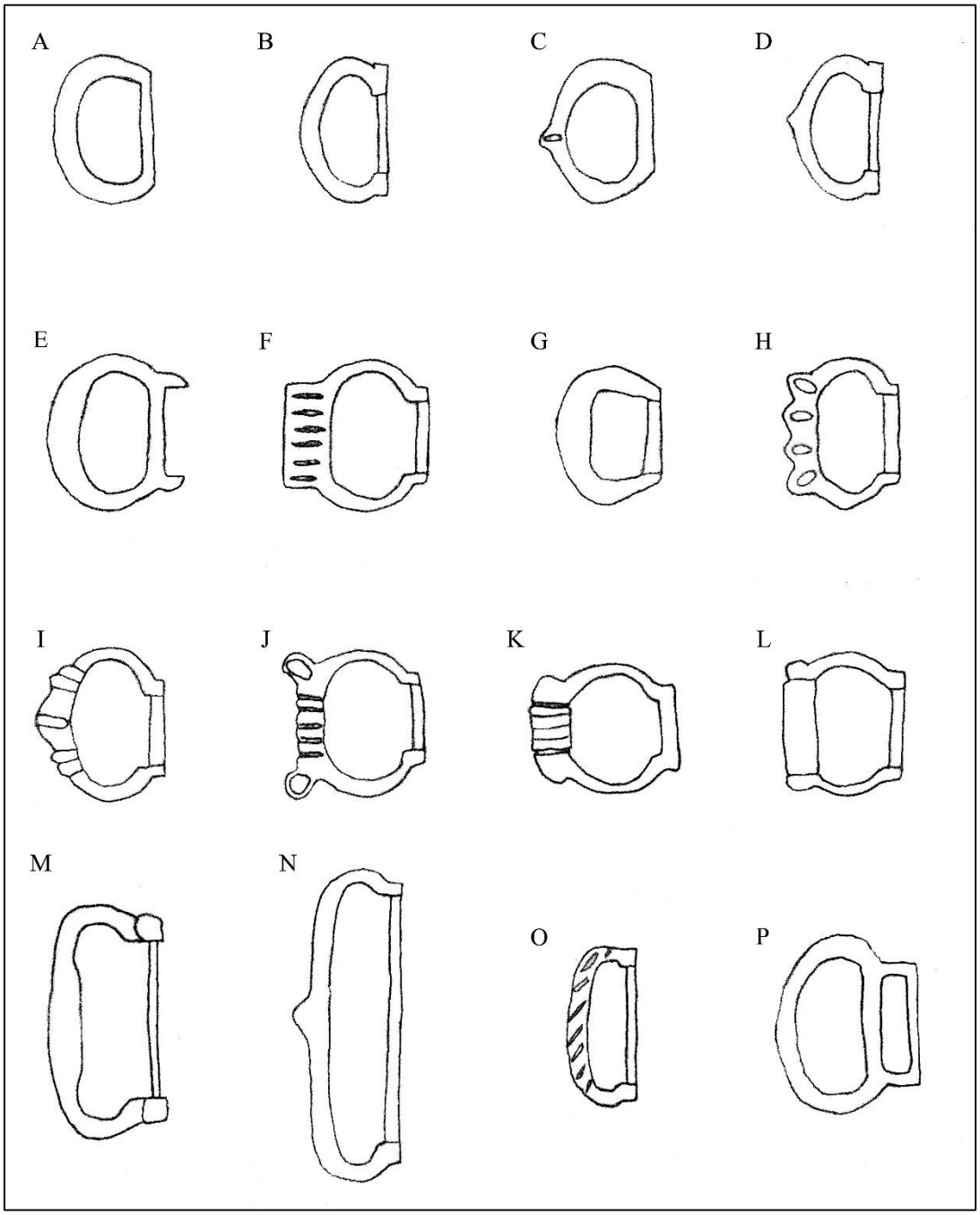

Figure 2.4: Forms of oval buckle frames (1.3A-P)

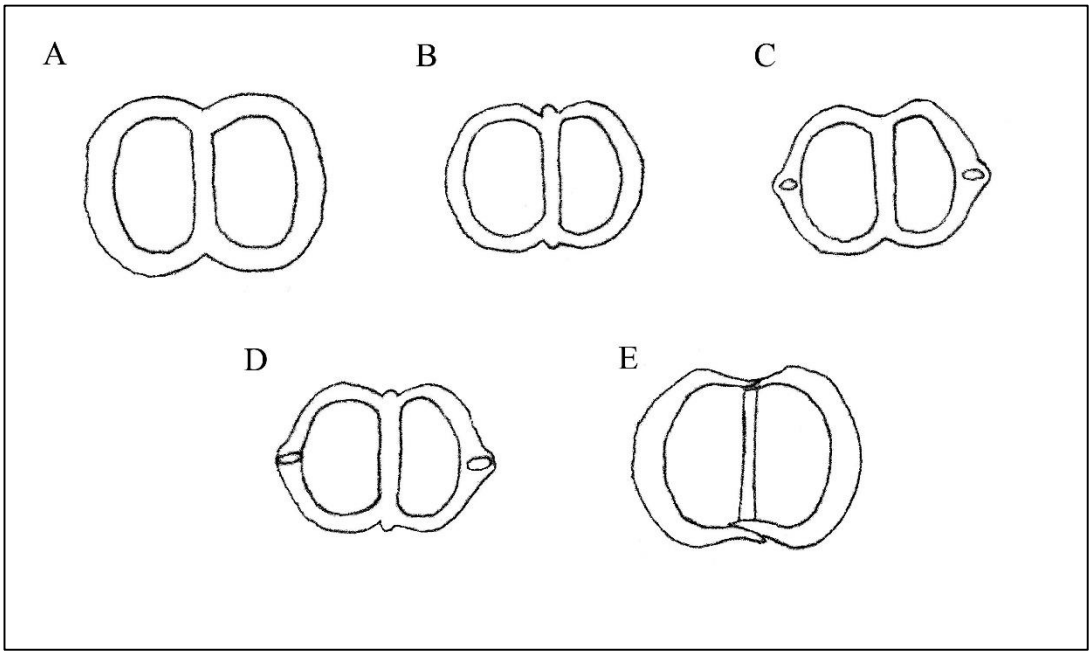

Figure 2.5: Forms of double oval buckle frames (1.4A-E)

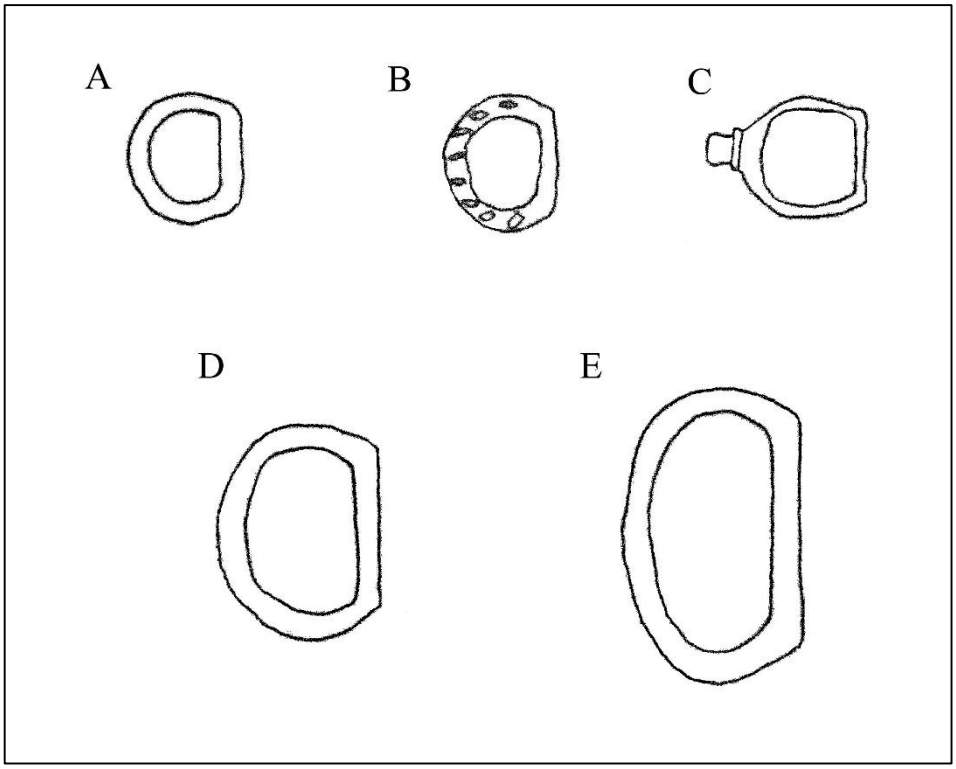

Figure 2.6: Forms of D-shaped buckle frames (1.5A-E)

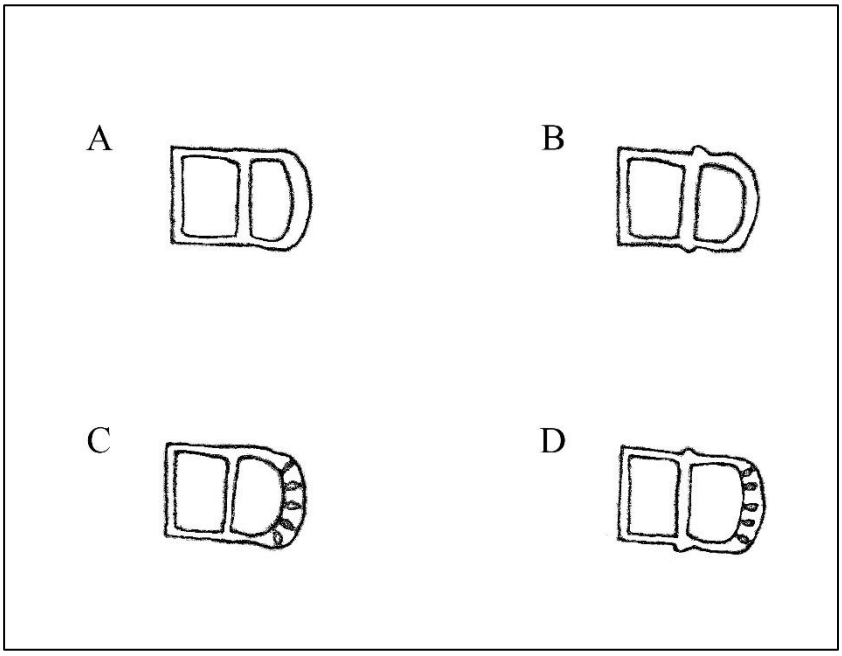

Figure 2.7: Forms of D-shaped buckle frames with a central bar (1.6A-D)

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Figure 2.8: D-shaped buckle frame with a central bar from Amsterdam (MH3-121)

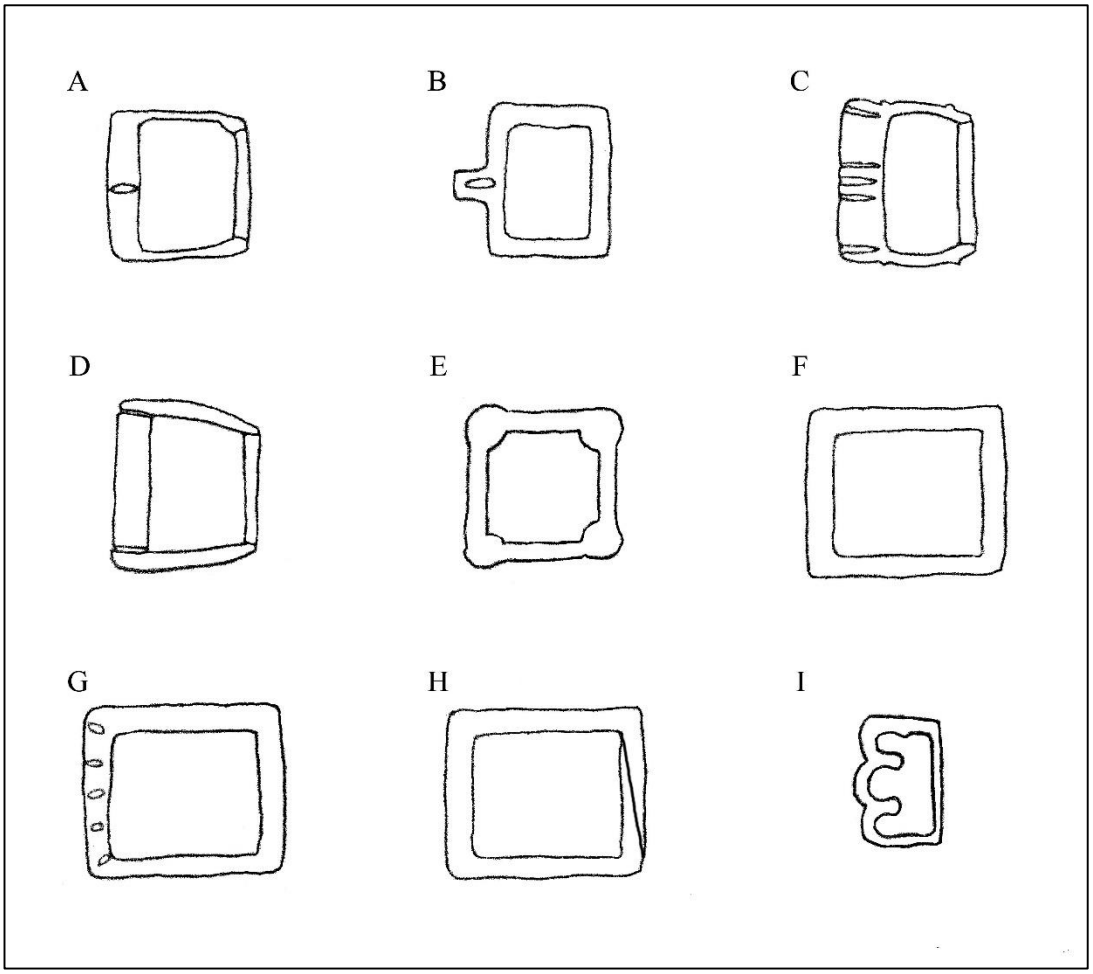


Figure 2.9: Forms of rectangular buckle frames (1.7A-I)

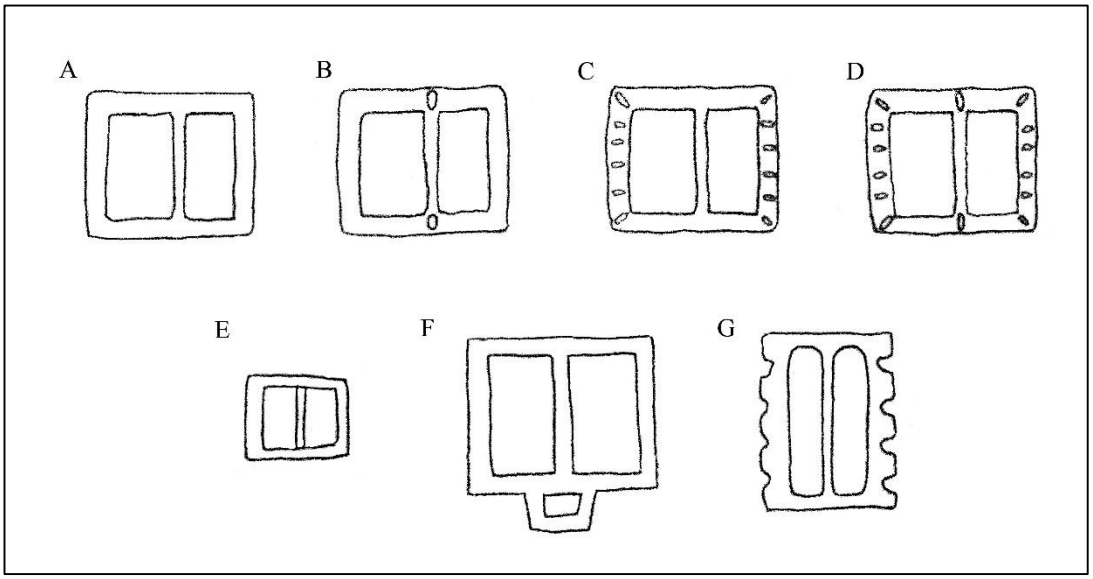


Figure 2.10: Forms of rectangular buckle frames with a central bar (1.8A-G)

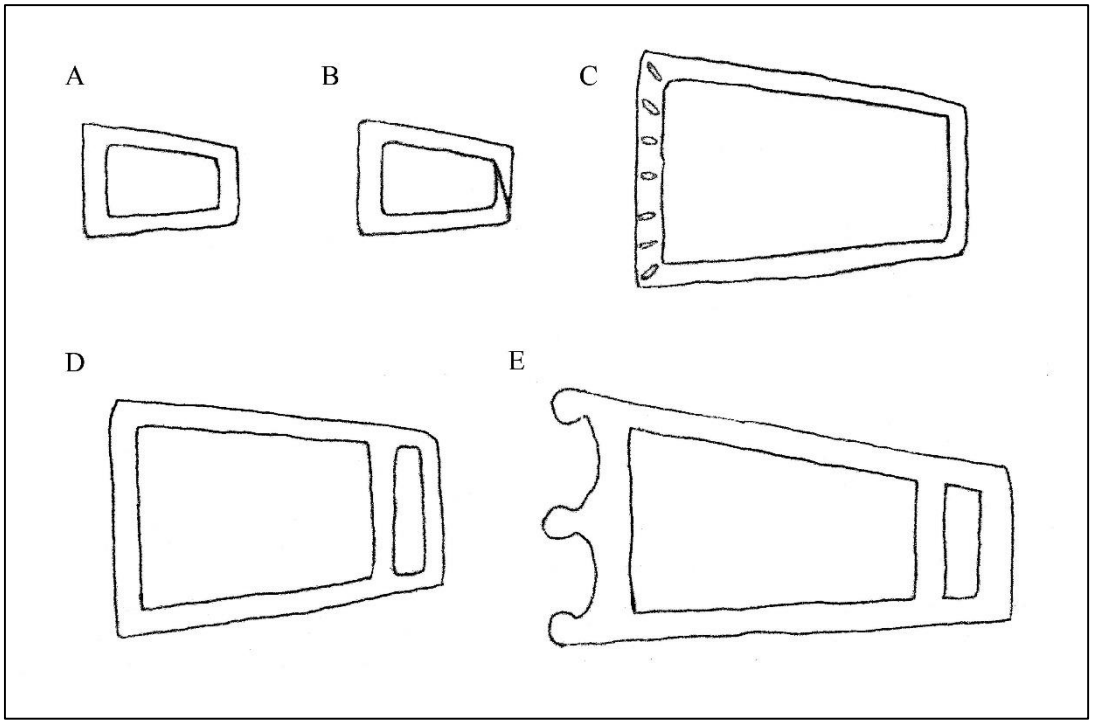


Figure 2.11: Forms of trapezoidal buckle frames (1.9A-E)

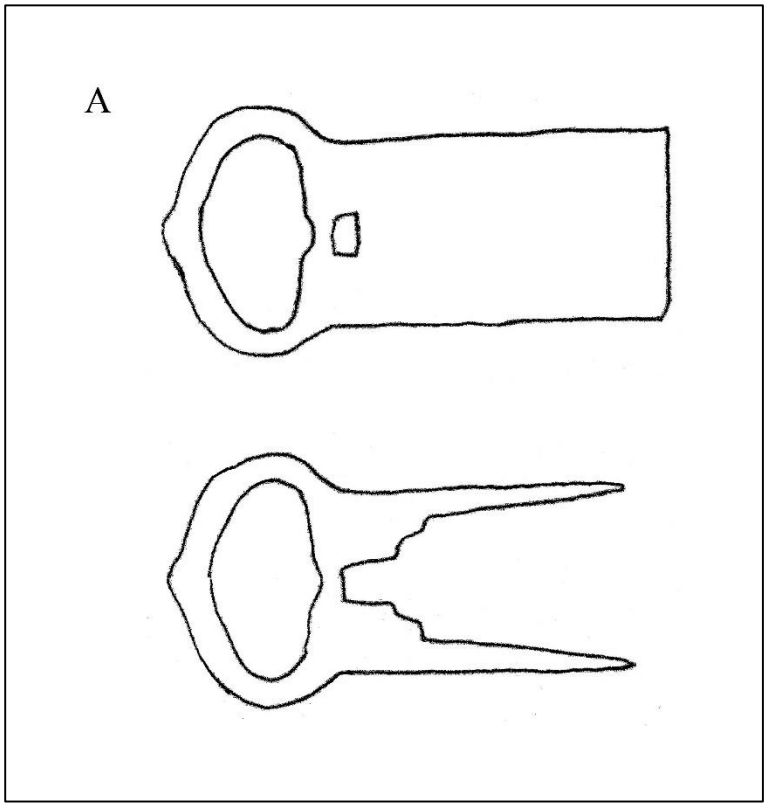


Figure 2.12: Form of forked spacer buckle frames (1.10A)

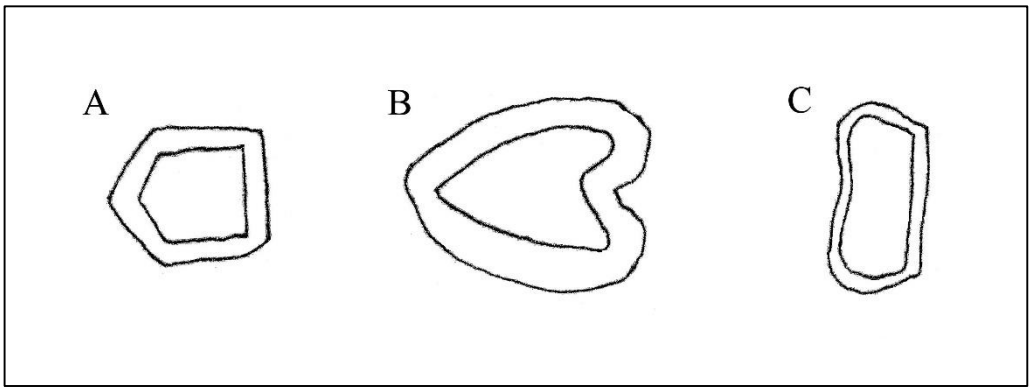


Figure 2.13: Forms of other buckle frames (1.11A-C)

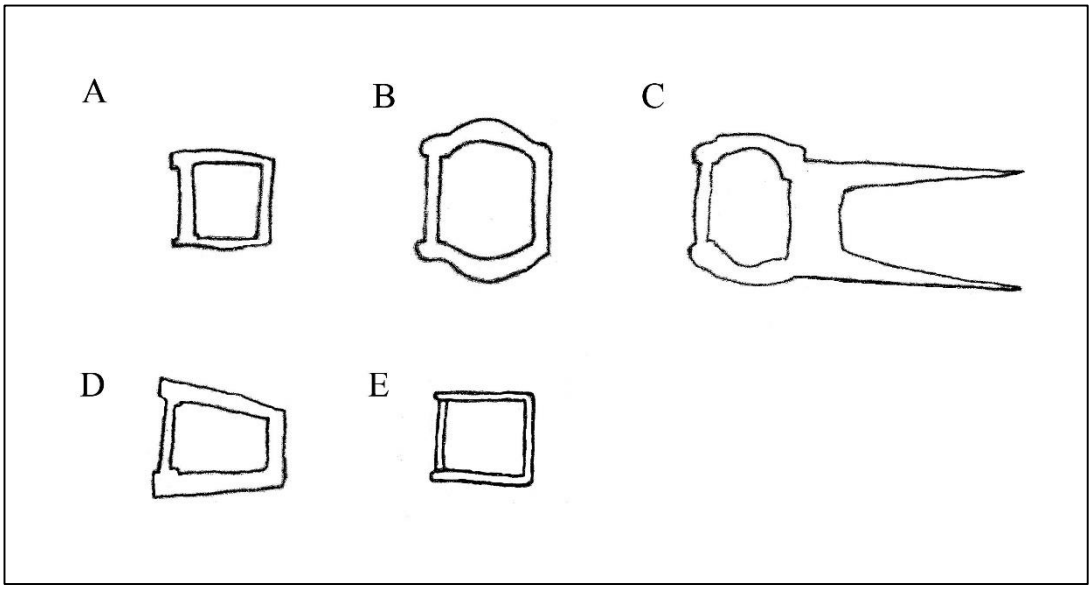


Figure 2.14: Forms of folding end clasps (2.1A-E)

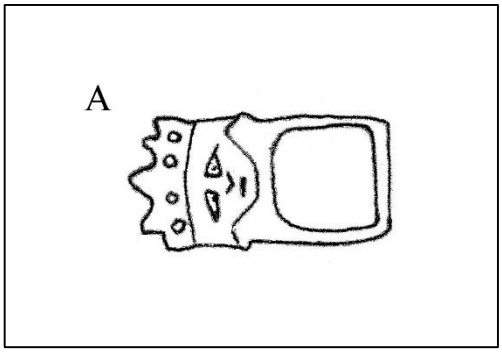


Figure 2.15: Form of clasps without a folding end (2.2A)

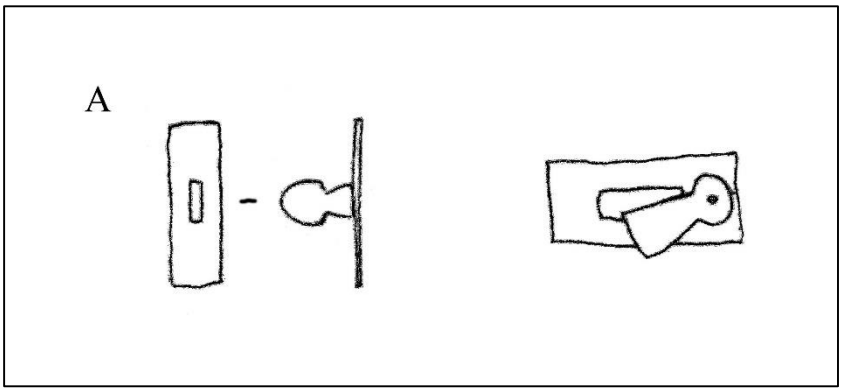


Figure 2.16: Form of locking clasps (2.3A)

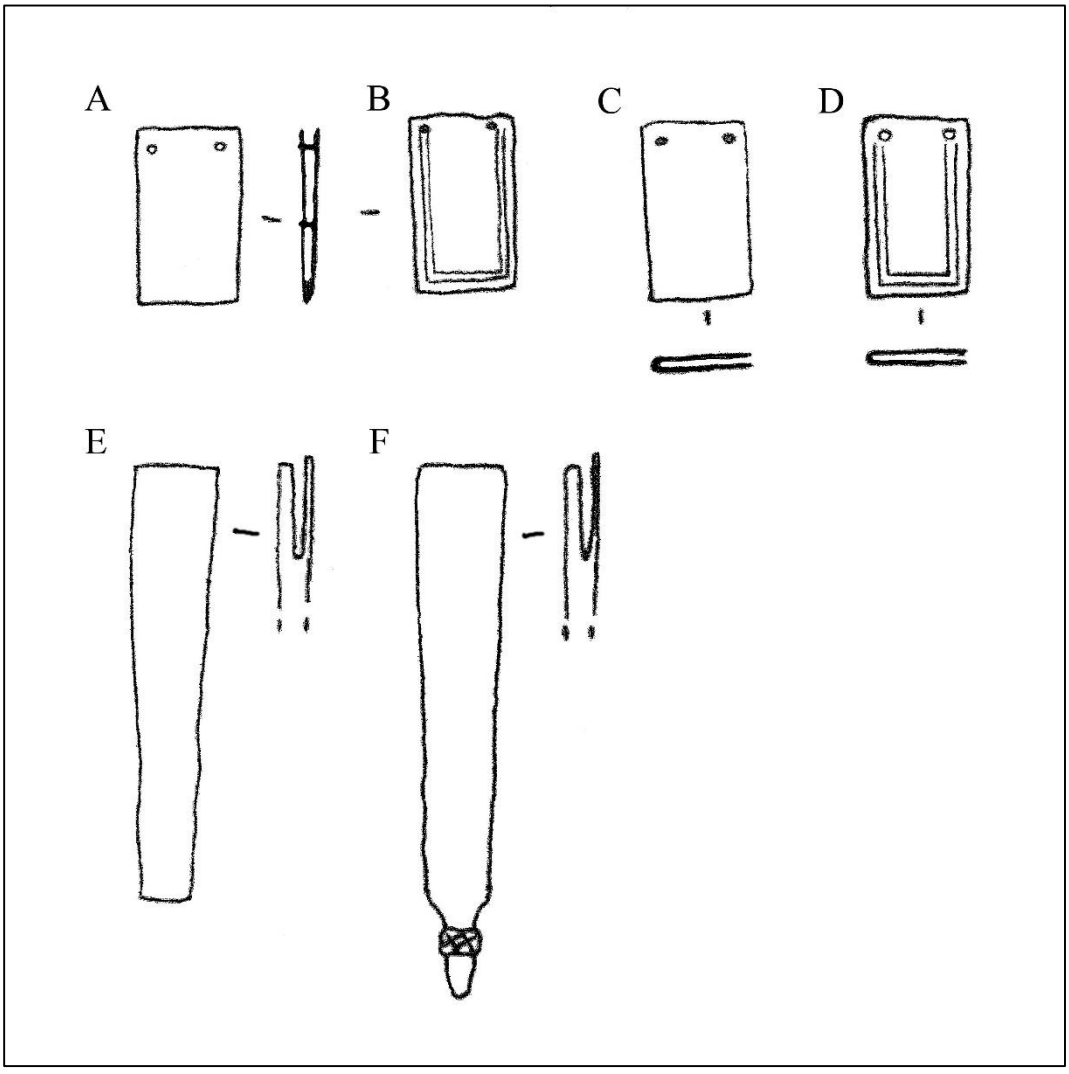


Figure 2.17: Forms of single sheet strap-ends (3.1A-F)

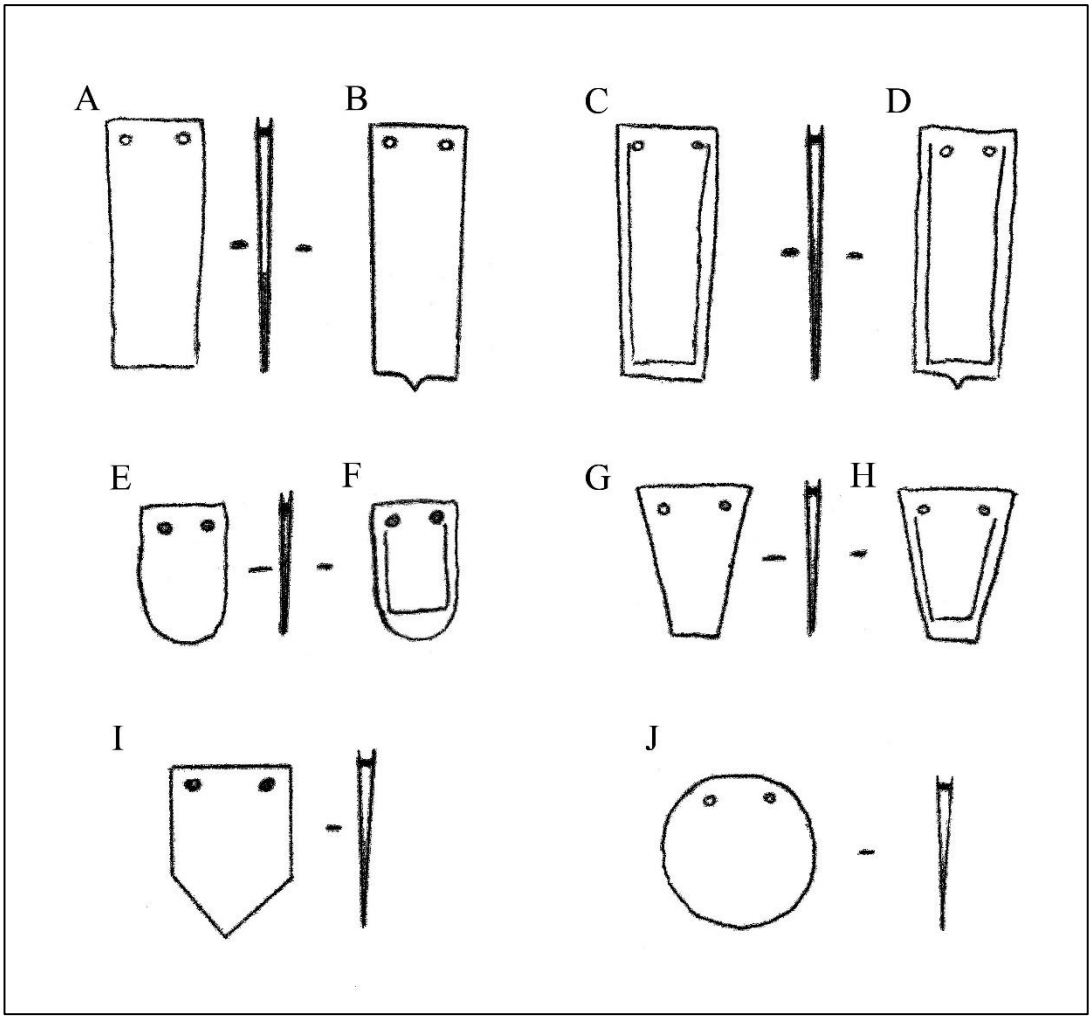


Figure 2.18: Forms of double sheet strap-ends (3.2A-J)

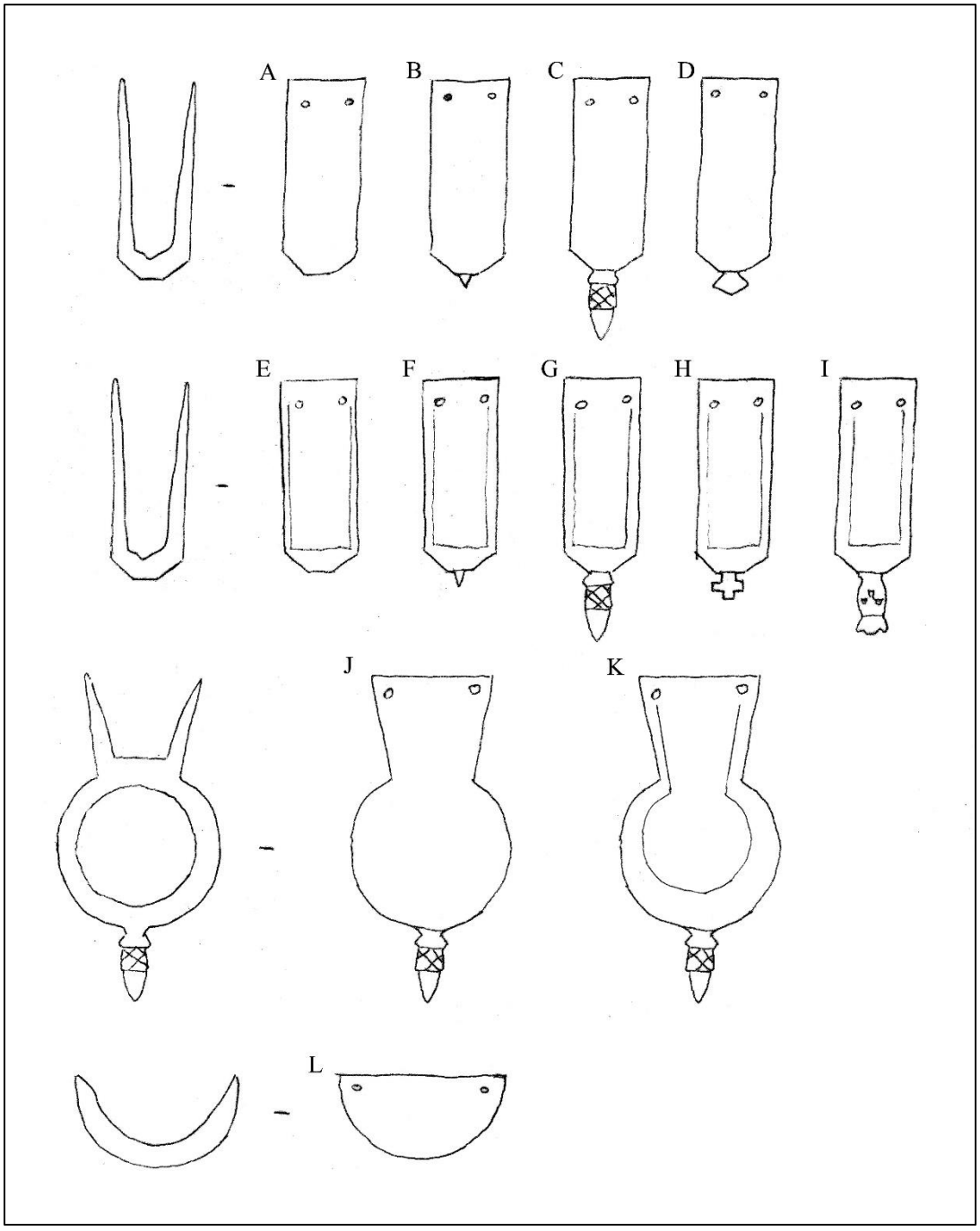
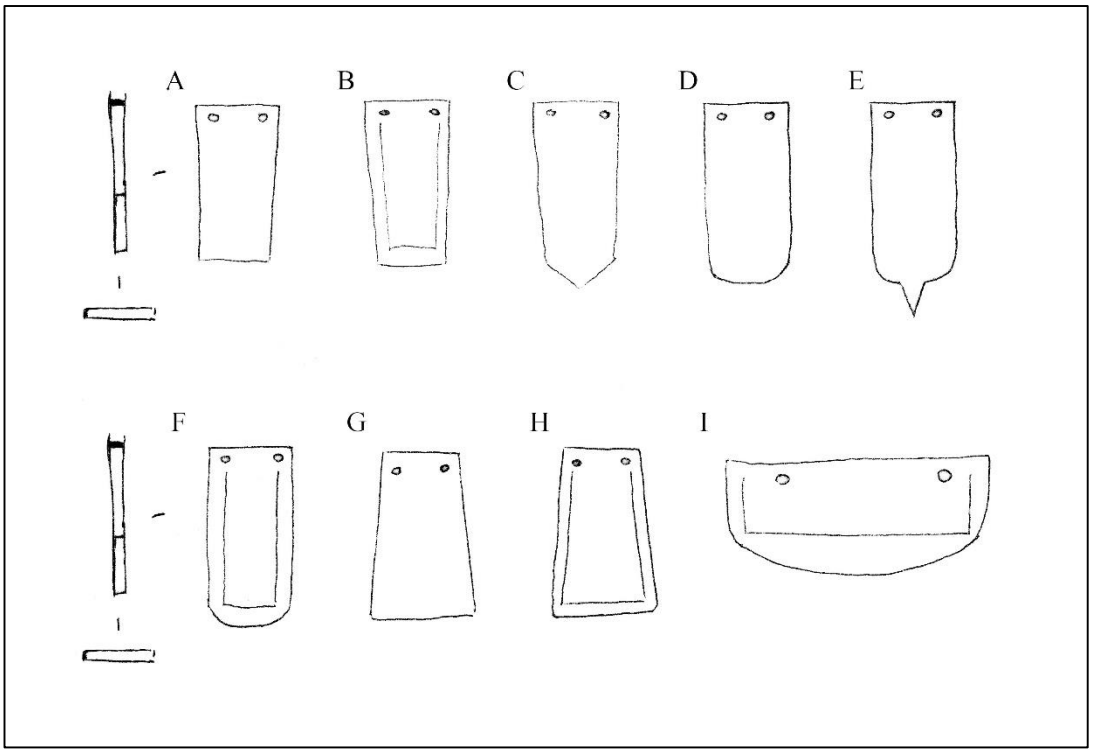
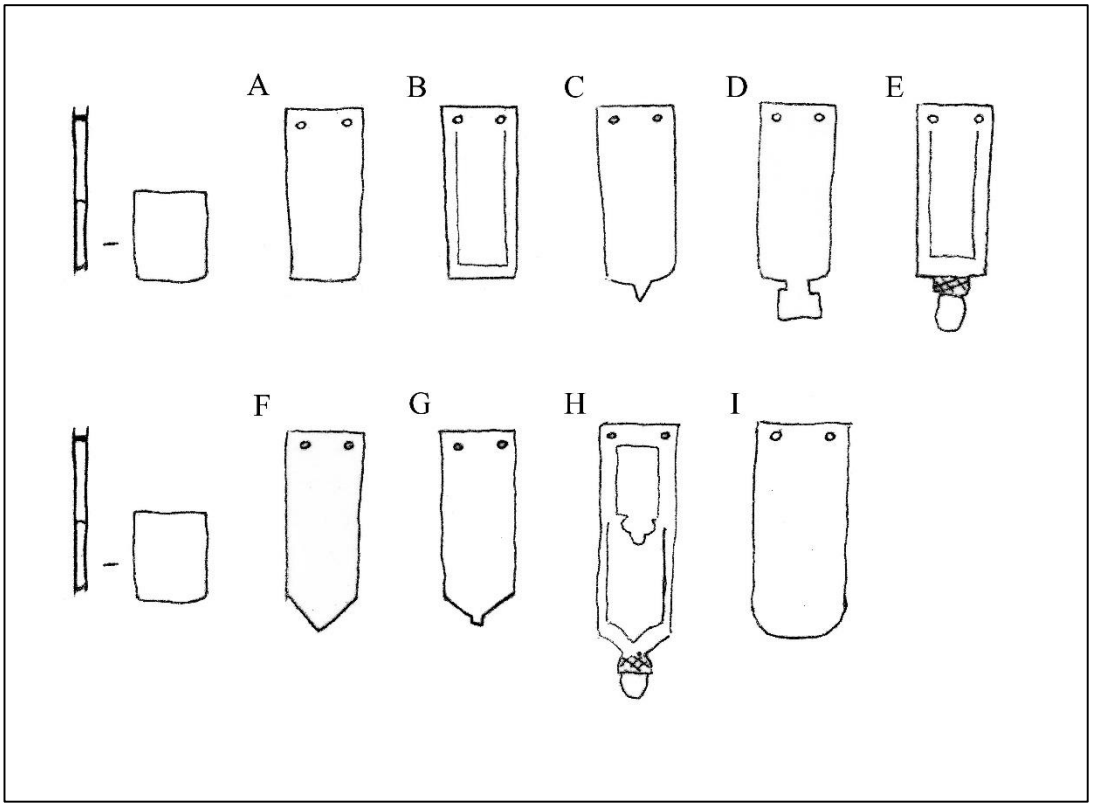


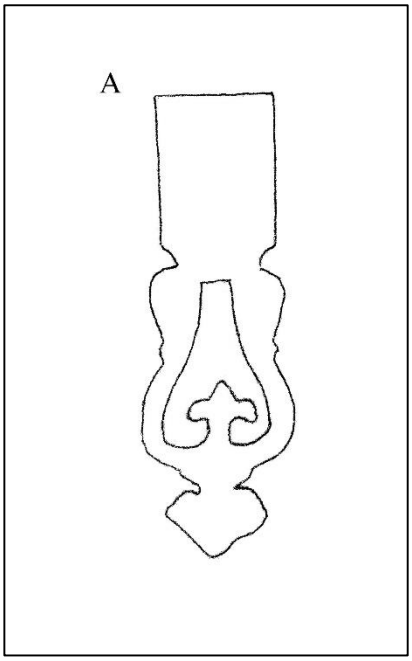
Figure 2.19: Forms of forked spacer strap-ends (3.3A-L)



Above: Figure 2.20: Forms of composite strap-ends with side strips (3.4A-I)
Below: Figure 2.21: forms of composite strap-ends with a sheet metal spacer (3.5A-I)



Figures



Left: Figure 2.22: Form of large decorative strap-ends (3.6A)
Below: Figure 2.23: Large decorative strap-ends from late medieval grave effigies (Ward Perkins 1954: 266)

Rights have not been obtained for the use of this image in electronic media.

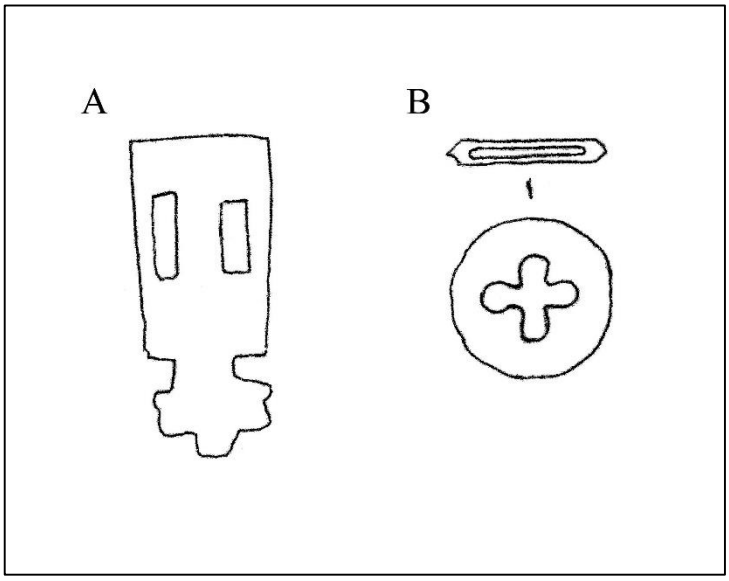


Figure 2.24: Forms of cast strap-ends with openwork decoration (3.7A-B)

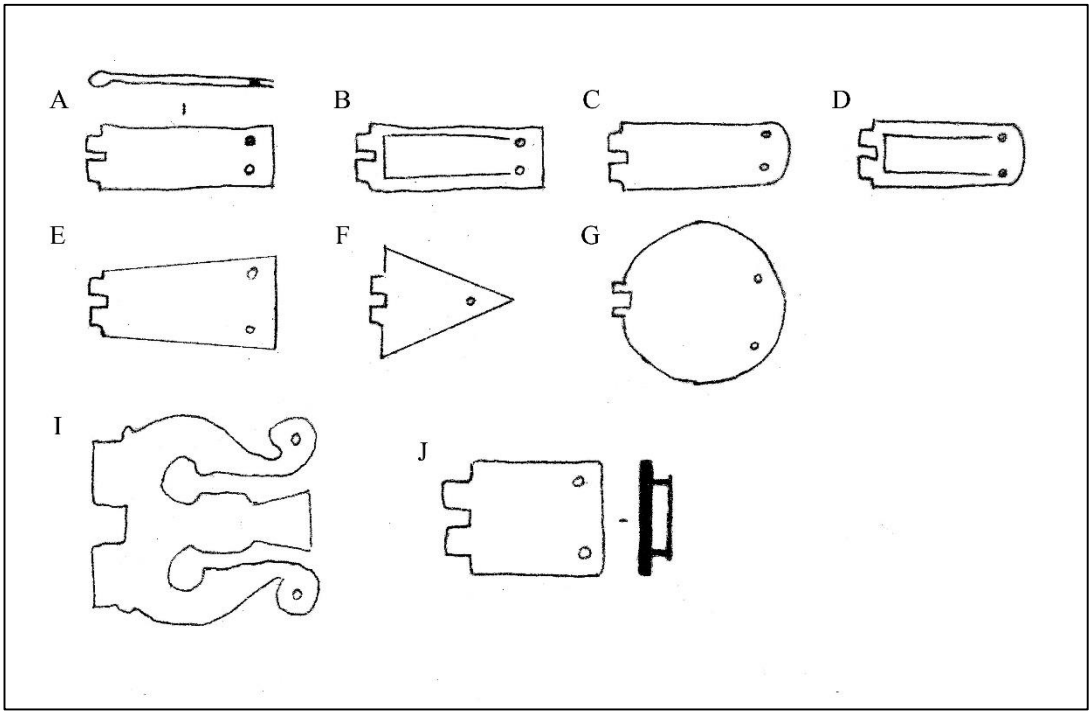


Figure 2.25: Forms of buckle plates (1.12A-J)

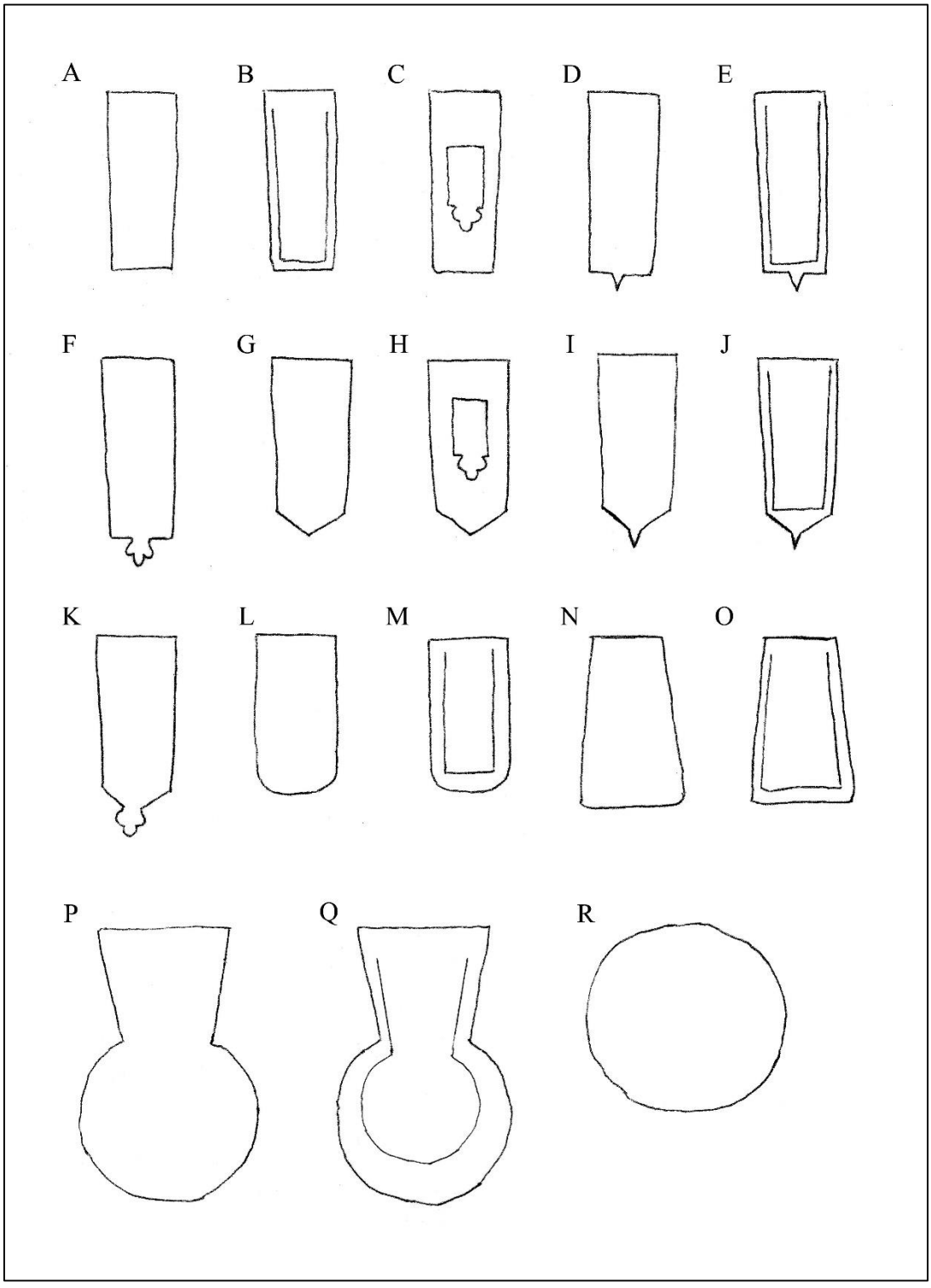


Figure 2.26: Forms of strap-end plates (3.7A-R)

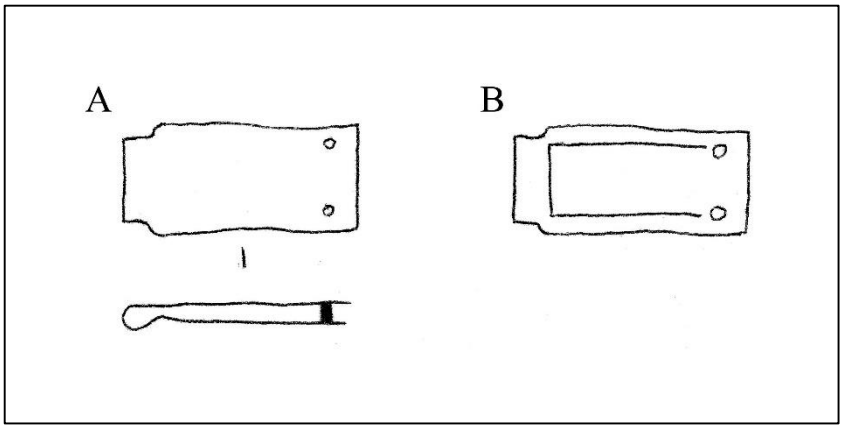


Figure 2.27: Forms of clasp plates (2.4A-B)

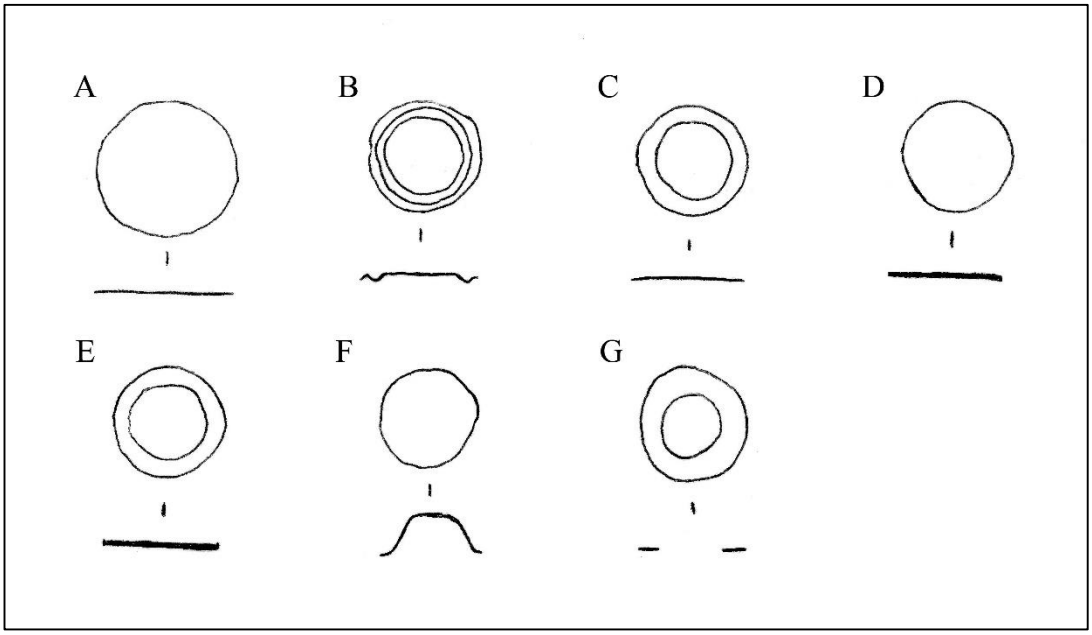


Figure 2.28: Forms of circular mounts (4.1A-G)

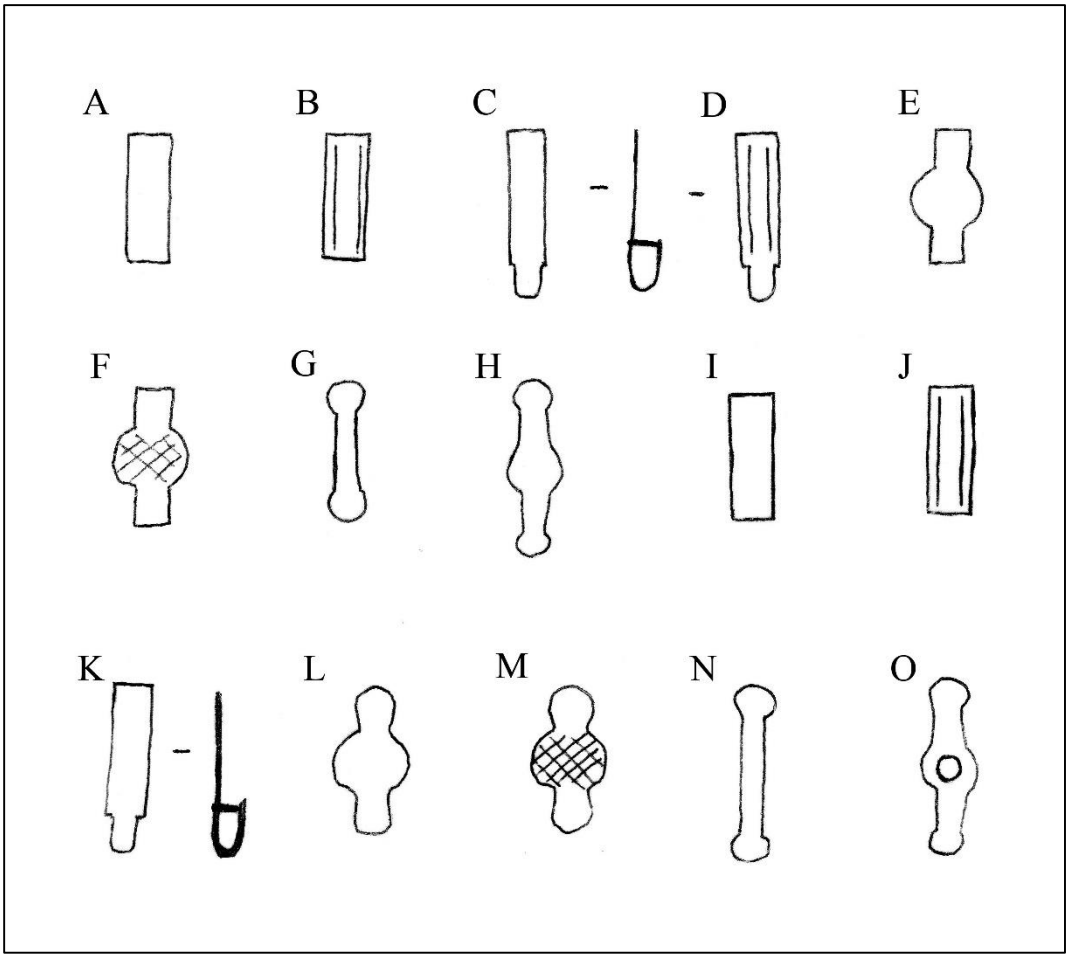


Figure 2.29: Forms of bar mounts (4.2A-O)

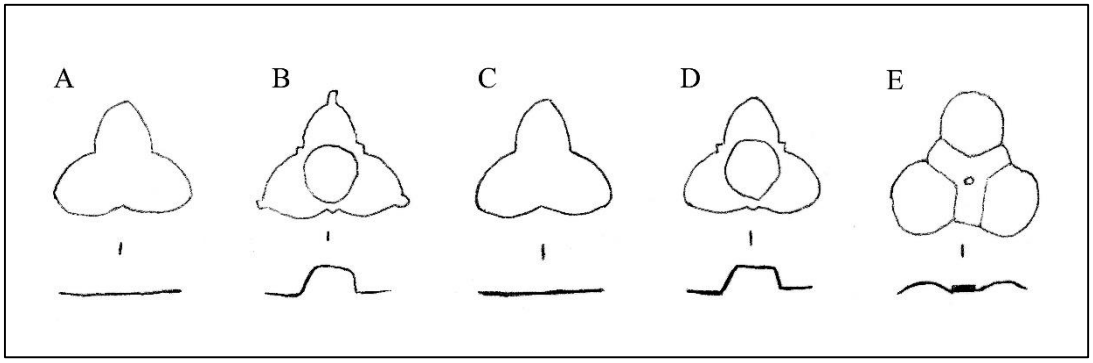


Figure 2.30: Forms of trefoil mounts (4.3A-E)

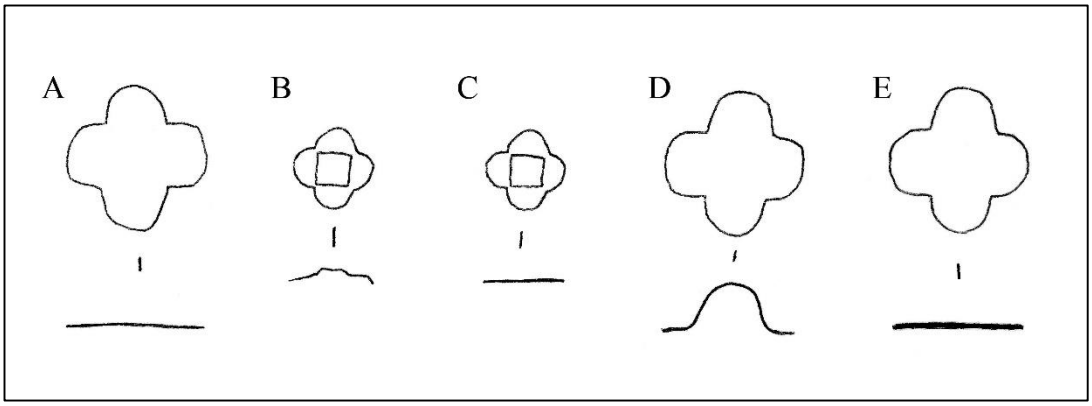


Figure 2.31: Forms of quatrefoil mounts (4.4A-E)

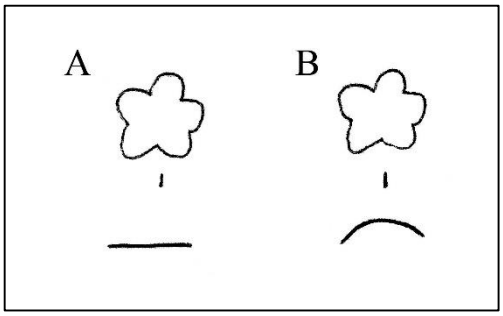


Figure 2.32: Forms of cinquefoil mounts (4.5A-B)

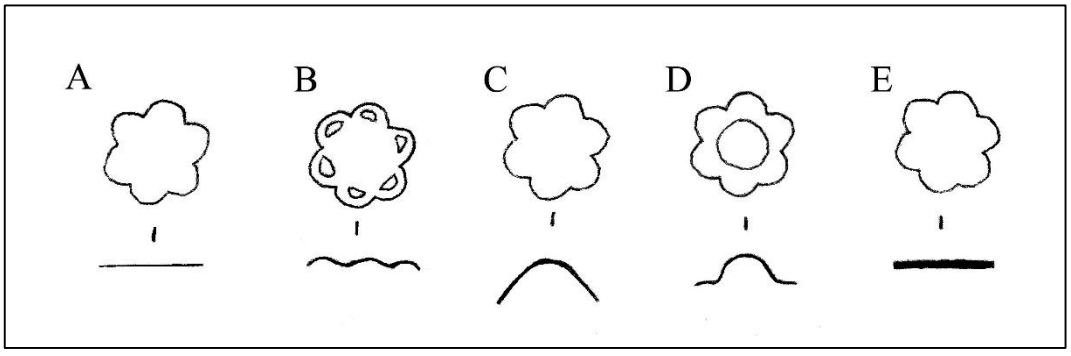


Figure 2.33: Forms of sexfoil mounts (4.6A-E)

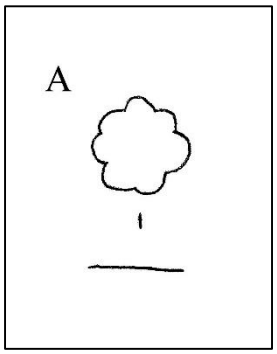


Figure 2.34: Form of septfoil mounts (4.7A)

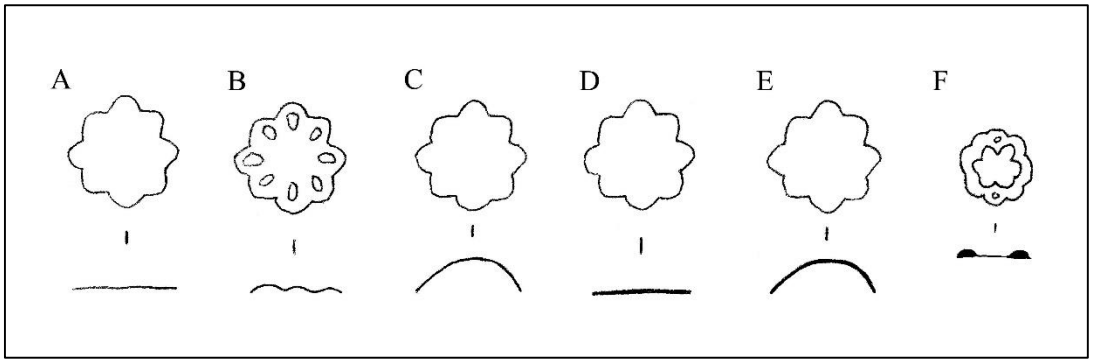


Figure 2.35: Forms of octofoil mounts (4.8A-F)

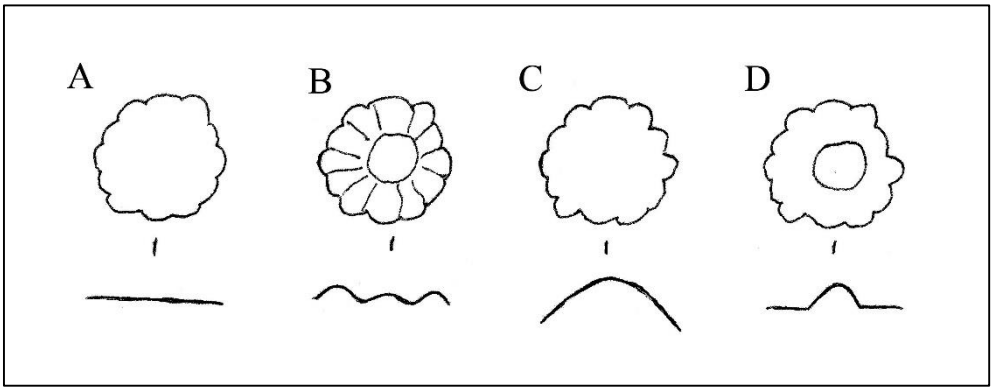


Figure 2.36: Forms of multifoil mounts (4.9A-D)

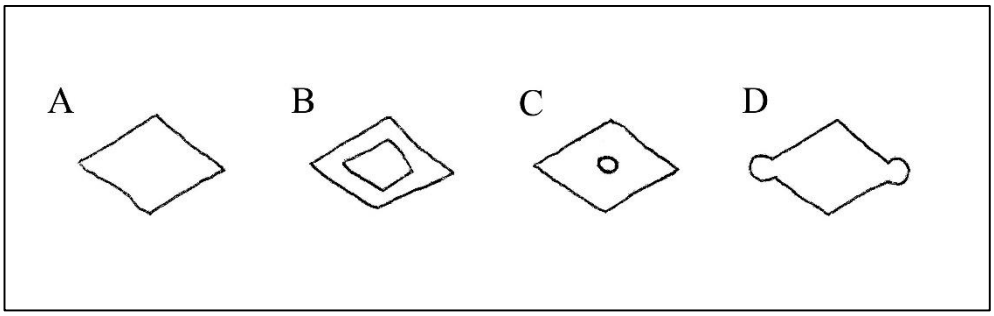


Figure 2.37: Forms of lozenge shaped mounts (4.10A-D)

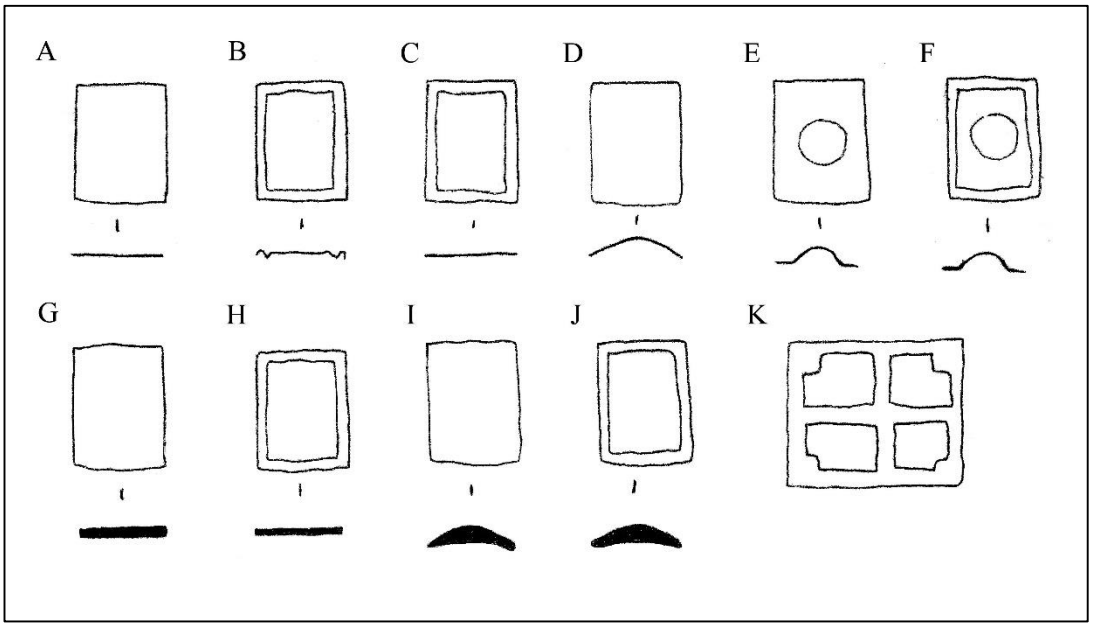
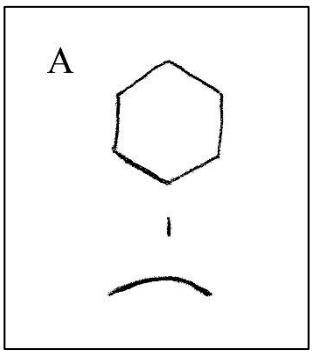
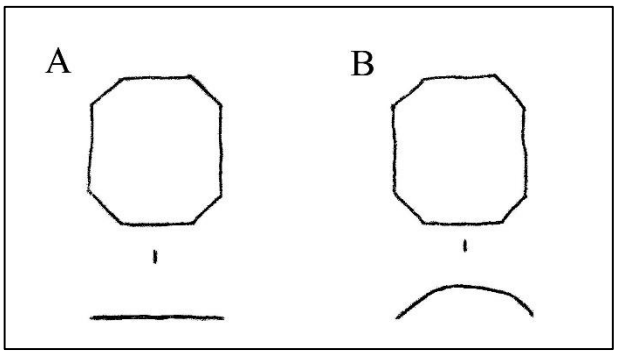


Figure 2.38: Forms of rectangular mounts (4.11A-K)





Left: Figure 2.39: Form of hexagonal mounts (4.12A)
Right: Figure 2.40: Forms of octagonal mounts (4.13A-B)

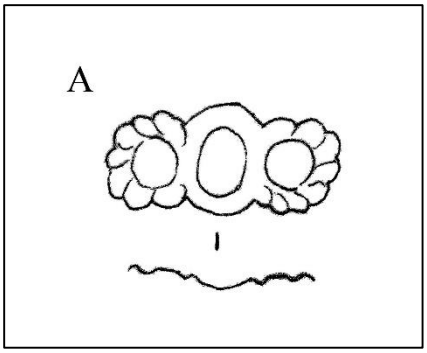


Figure 2.41: Form of tri-lobed mounts (4.14A)

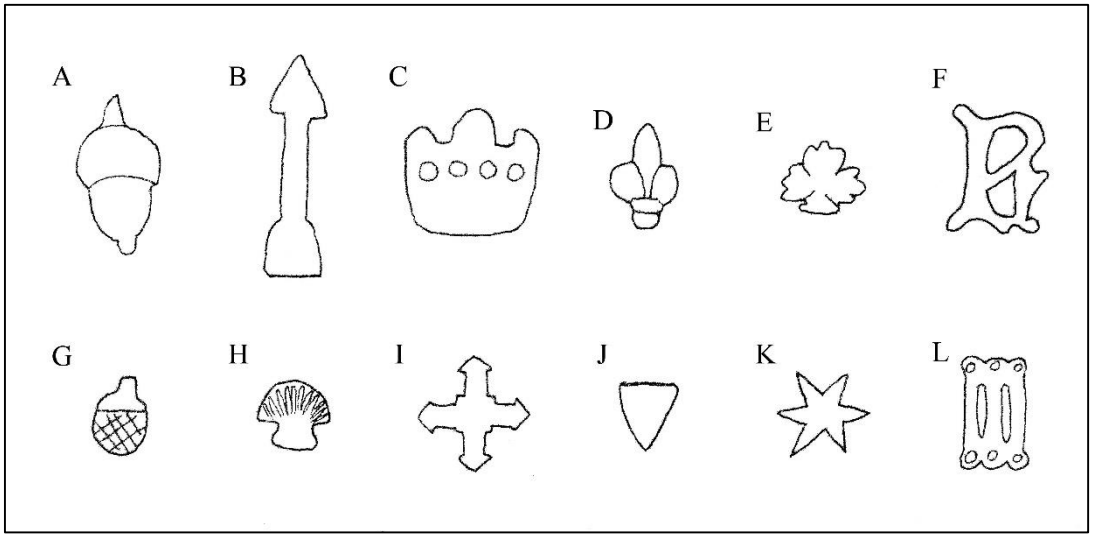


Figure 2.42: Forms of figurative mounts (4.15A-L)

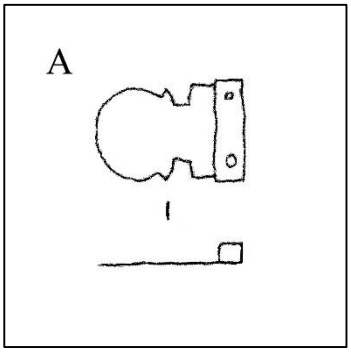


Figure 2.43: Form of shield shaped mounts (4.16A)

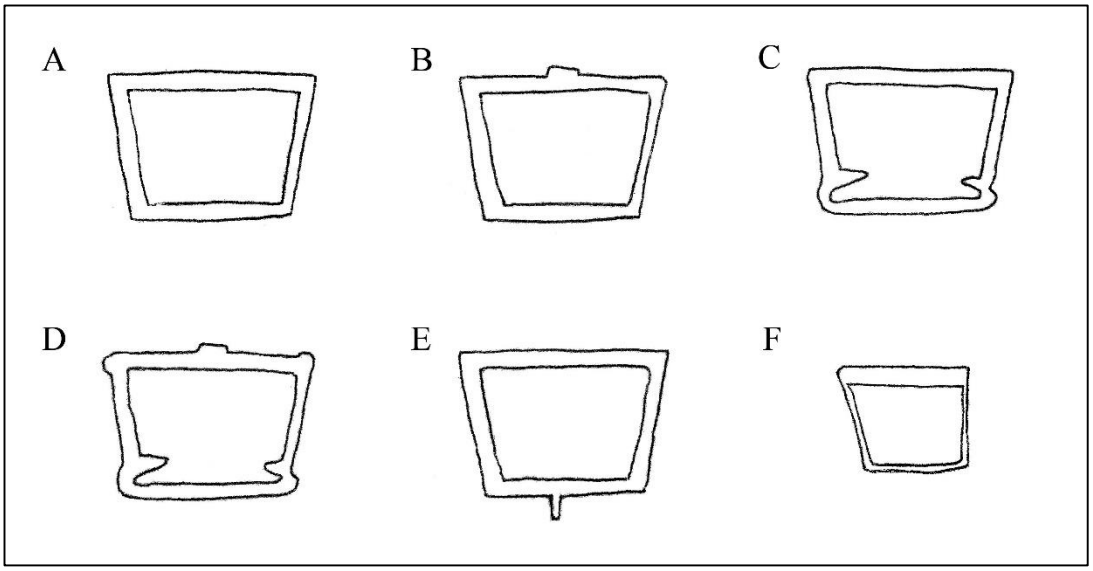


Figure 2.44: Forms of trapezoidal strap loops (5.1A-F)

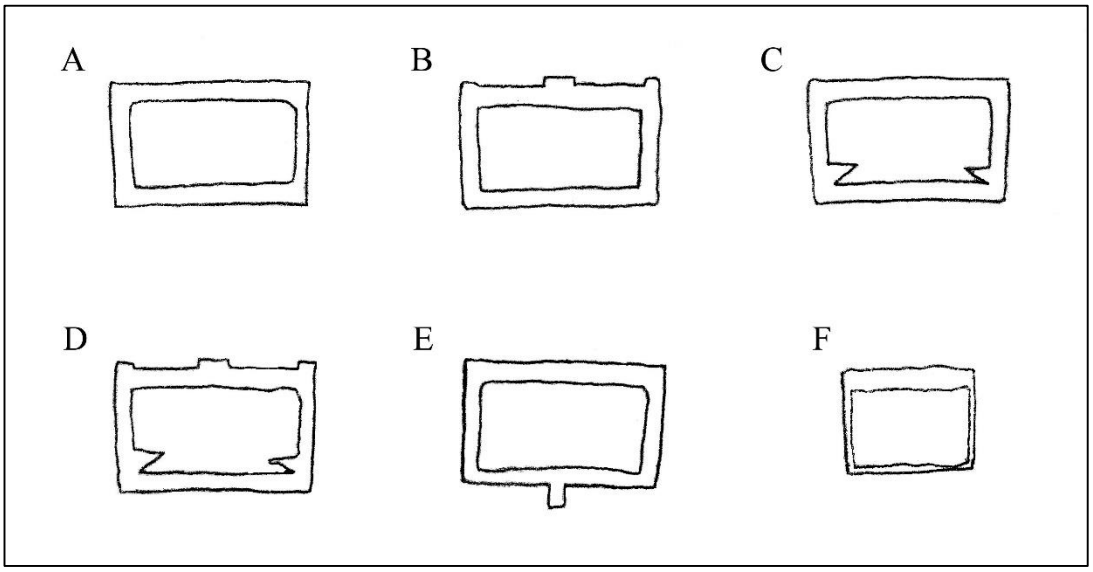


Figure 2.45: Forms of rectangular strap loops (5.2A-F)

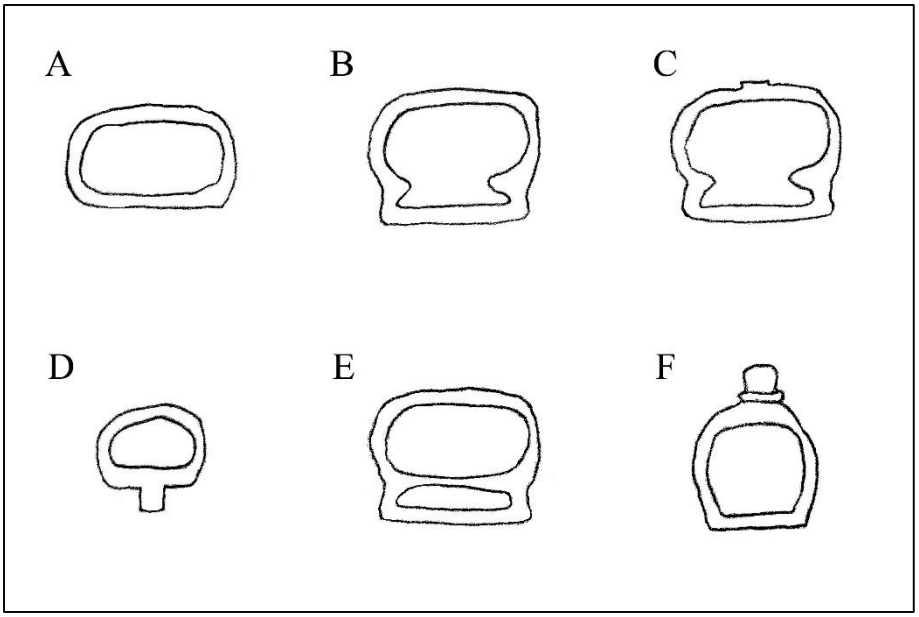


Figure 2.46: Forms of oval strap loops (5.3A-F)

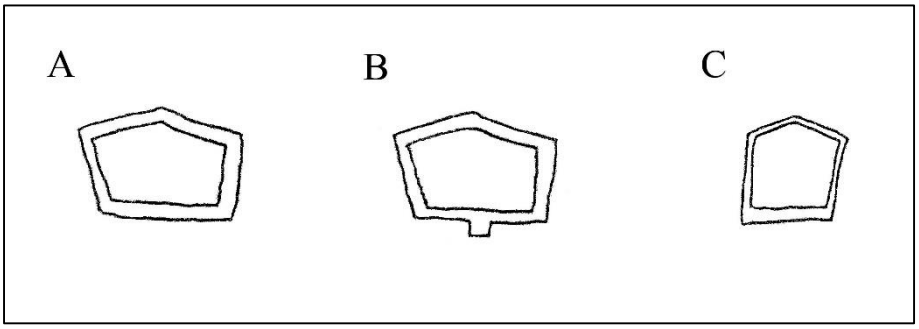


Figure 2.47: Forms of pentagonal strap loops (5.4A-C)

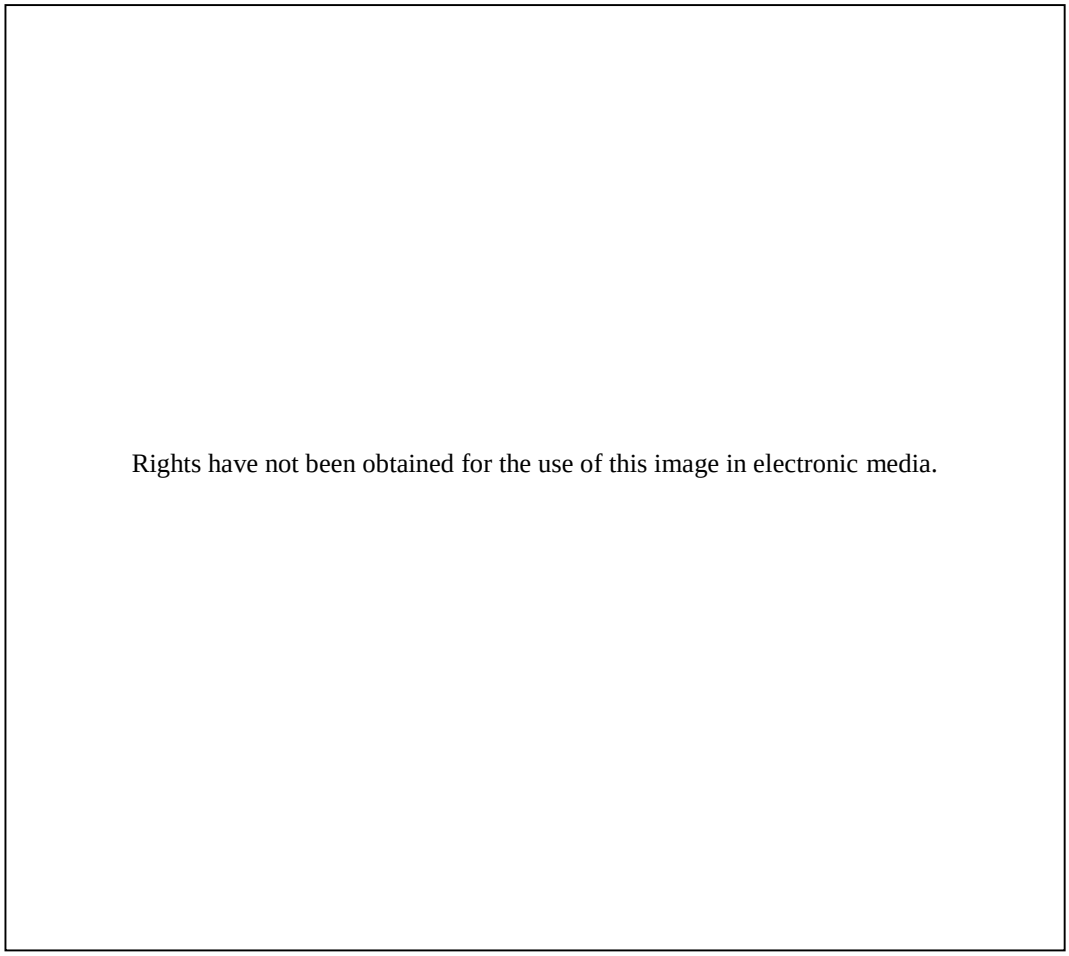


Figure 3.1: Circular buckle frames. A: 1.1A (LON0327), B: 1.1B (LON0042), C: 1.1C (HER012), D: 1.1D (LON0849)

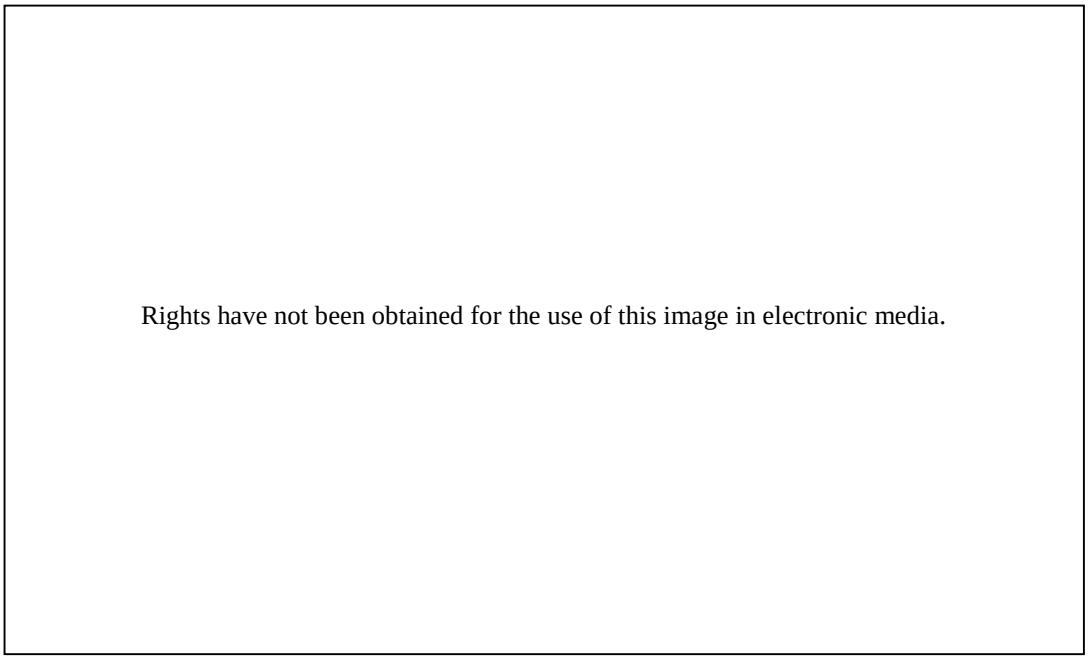


Figure 3.2: Copper alloy and iron examples of 1.1C. A: LON0873, B: LON0562

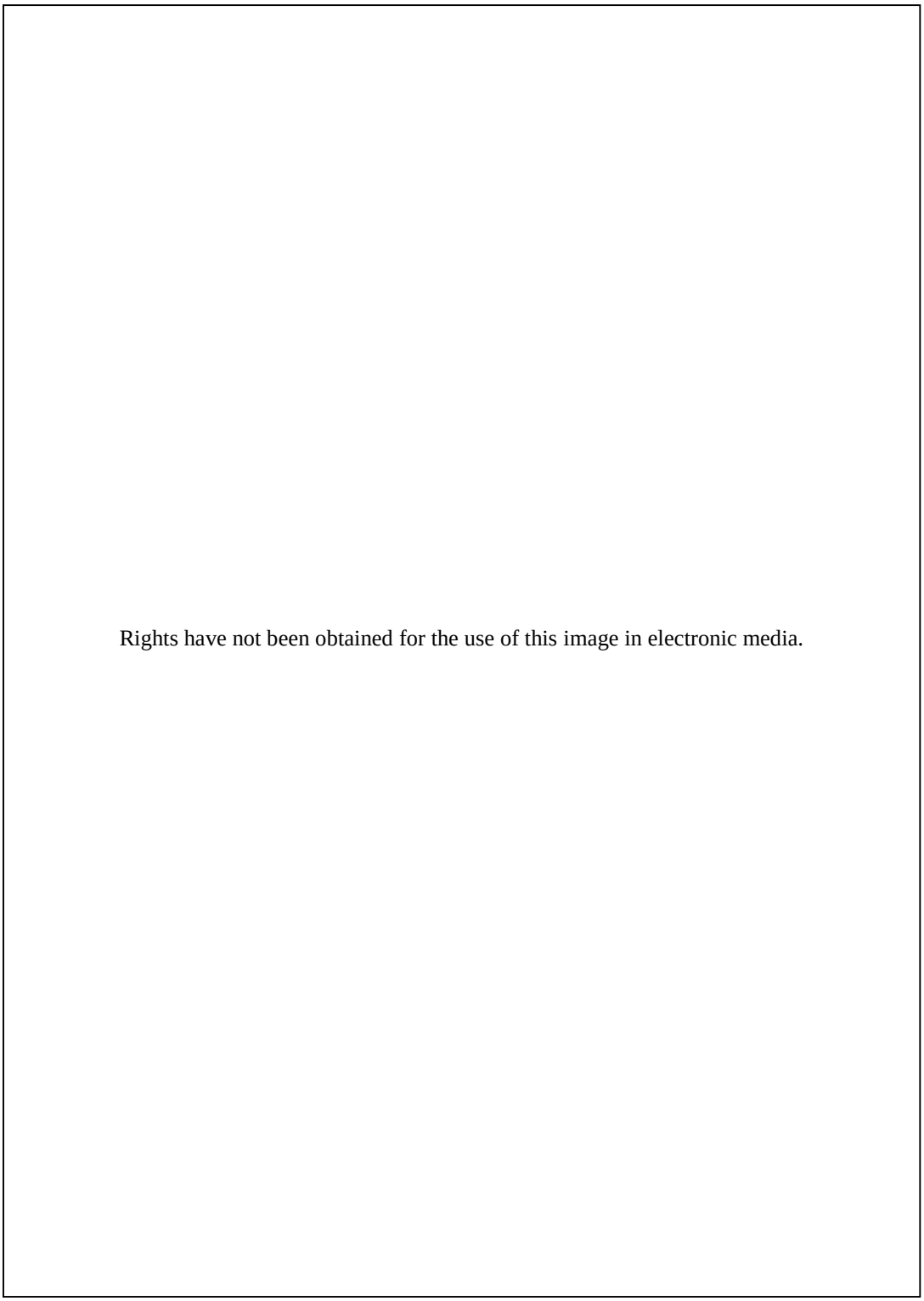


Figure 3.3: Ornate buckles with an integral plate from Northern Europe (Fingerlin 1971: 169)

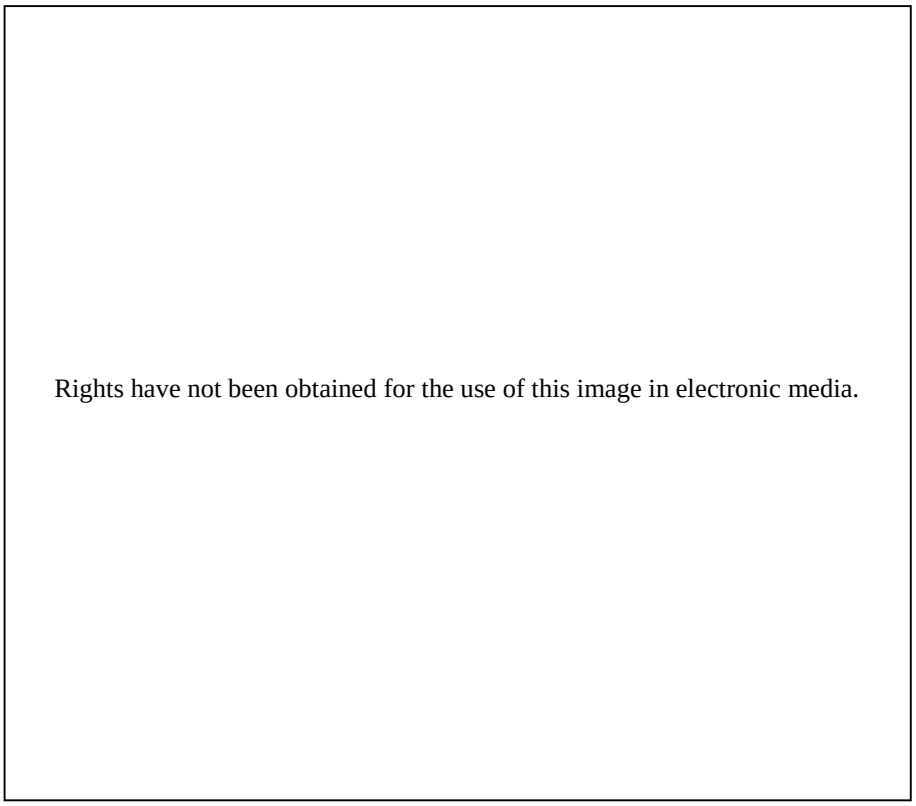


Figure 3.4: Circular buckle frames with a central bar. A: 1.2A (PLY011), B: 1.2B (SOU040), C: 1.2C (OXF047), D: 1.2D (NHN014)

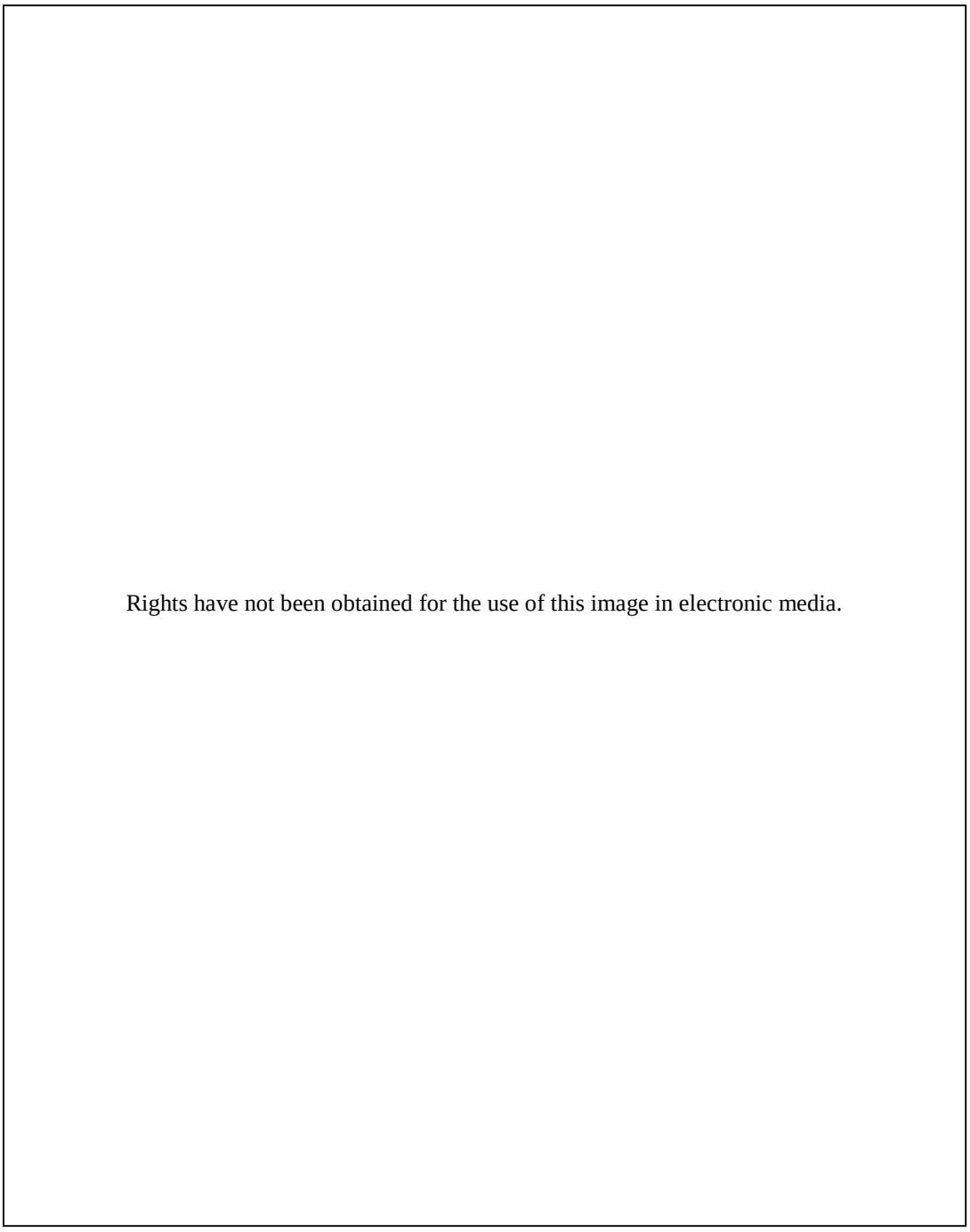


Figure 3.5: Oval buckle frames. A: 1.3A (WIN0198), B: 1.3B (OXF075), C: 1.3C (COV088), D: 1.3D (LON0837), E: 1.3E (LON0814), F: 1.3F (NHN002), G: 1.3G (COV002), H: 1.3H (WIN067), I: 1.3I (CHE001), J: 1.3J (OXF050), K: 1.3K (LON1196), L: 1.3L (WOR003), M: 1.3M (WIN041), N: 1.3N (HER015), O: 1.3O (COV004), P: 1.3P (PLY003)

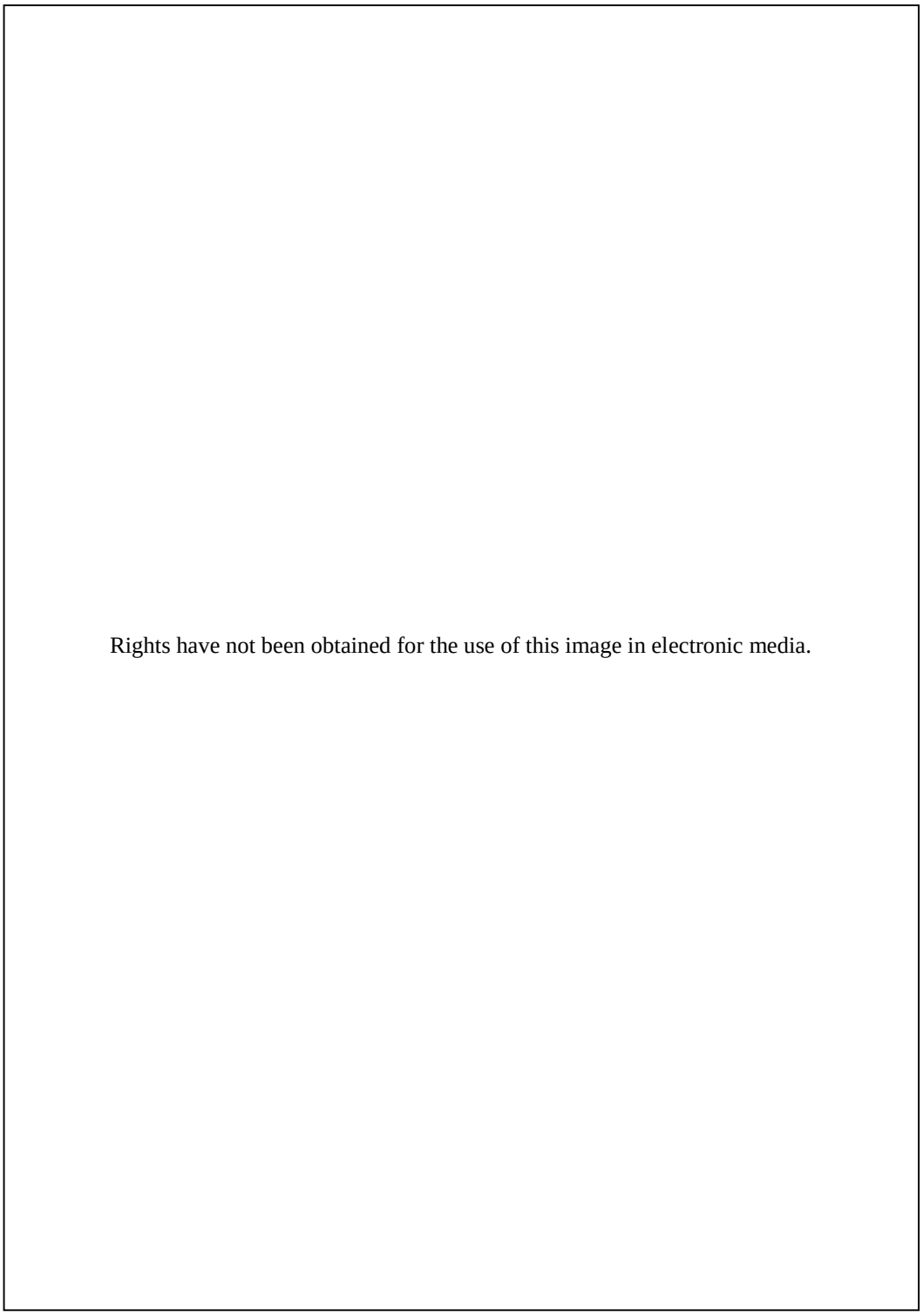
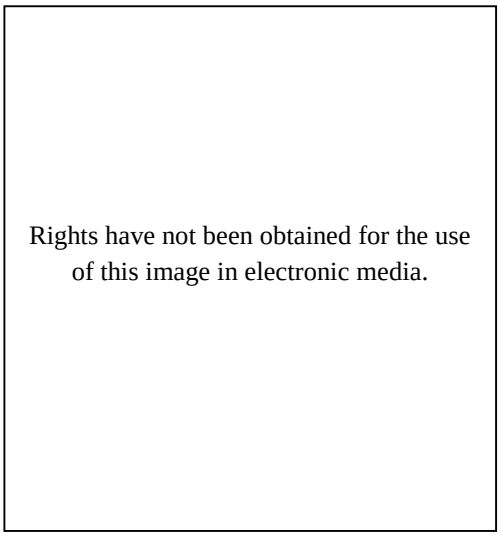
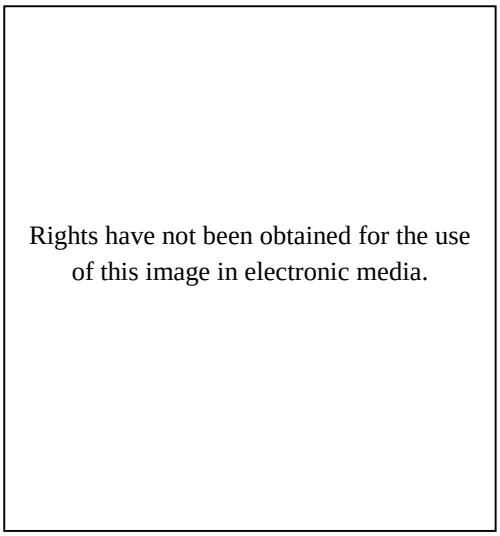


Figure 3.6: Suggested manufacture sequence for oval buckle form 1.3M from Trump Lane, London (Egan and Watson 2011: 154)





Left: Figure 3.7: COV066
Right: Figure 3.8: LON0931

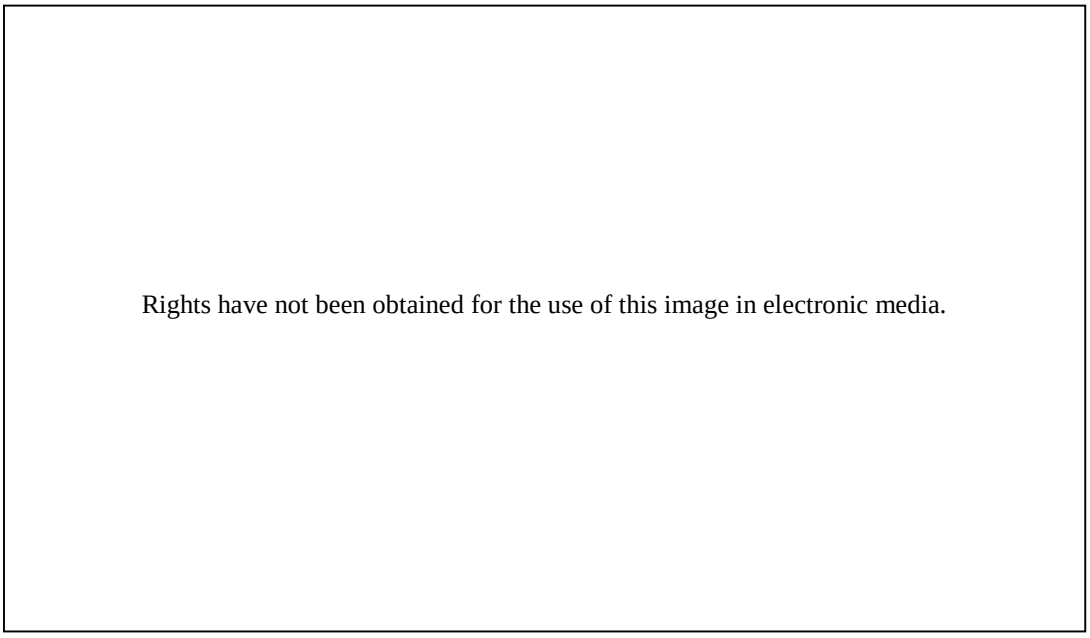


Figure 3.9: Double oval buckle frames. A: 1.4A (COV053), B: 1.4B (SOU092), C: 1.4C (PLY004), D: 1.4D (NHN023), E: 1.4E (HER020)

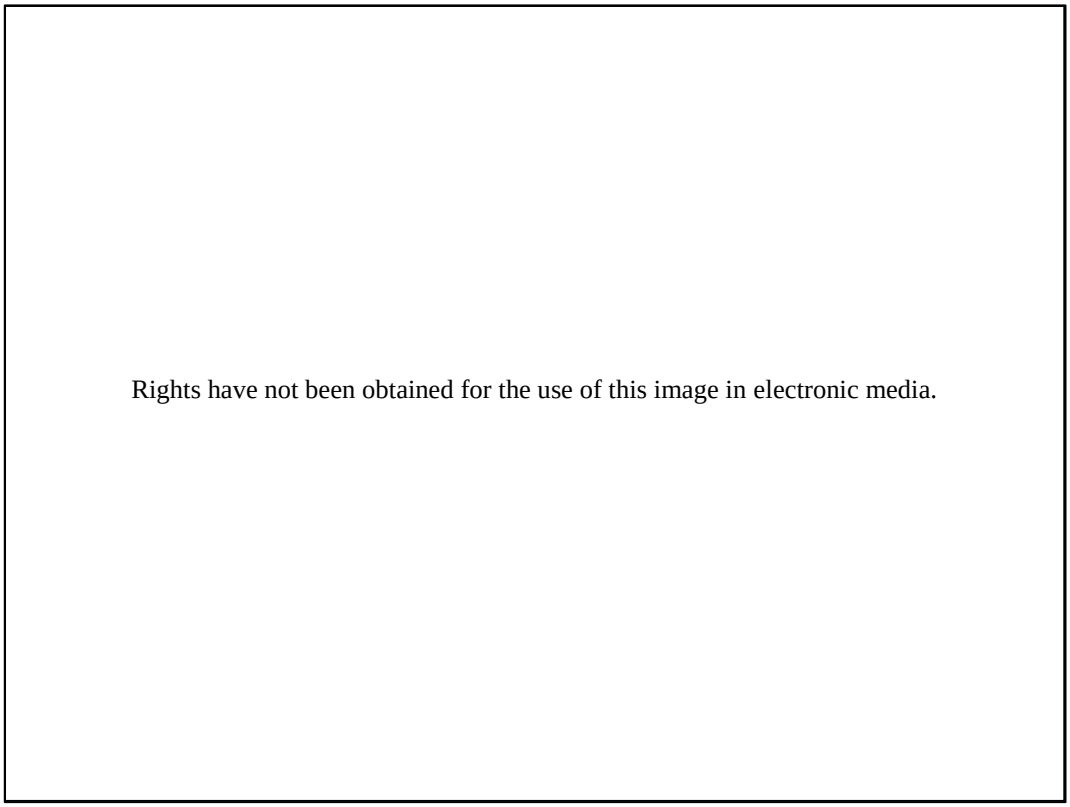


Figure 3.10: D-shaped buckle frames. A: 1.5A (LON1139), B: 1.5B (EXE010), C: 1.5C (WIN257), D: 1.5D (SOU075), E: 1.5E (COV095), F: 1.5F (OXF065)

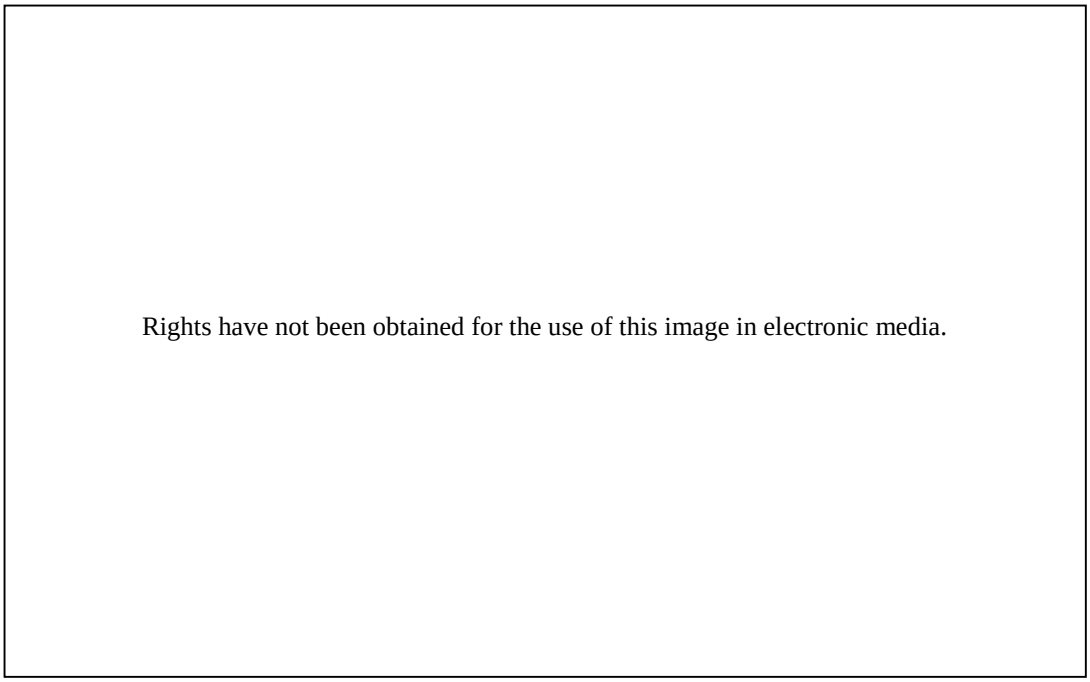


Figure 3.11: D-shaped buckle frames with a central bar. A: 1.6A (COV080), B: 1.6B (EXE020), C: 1.6C (SOU057), D: 1.6D (NHN009)

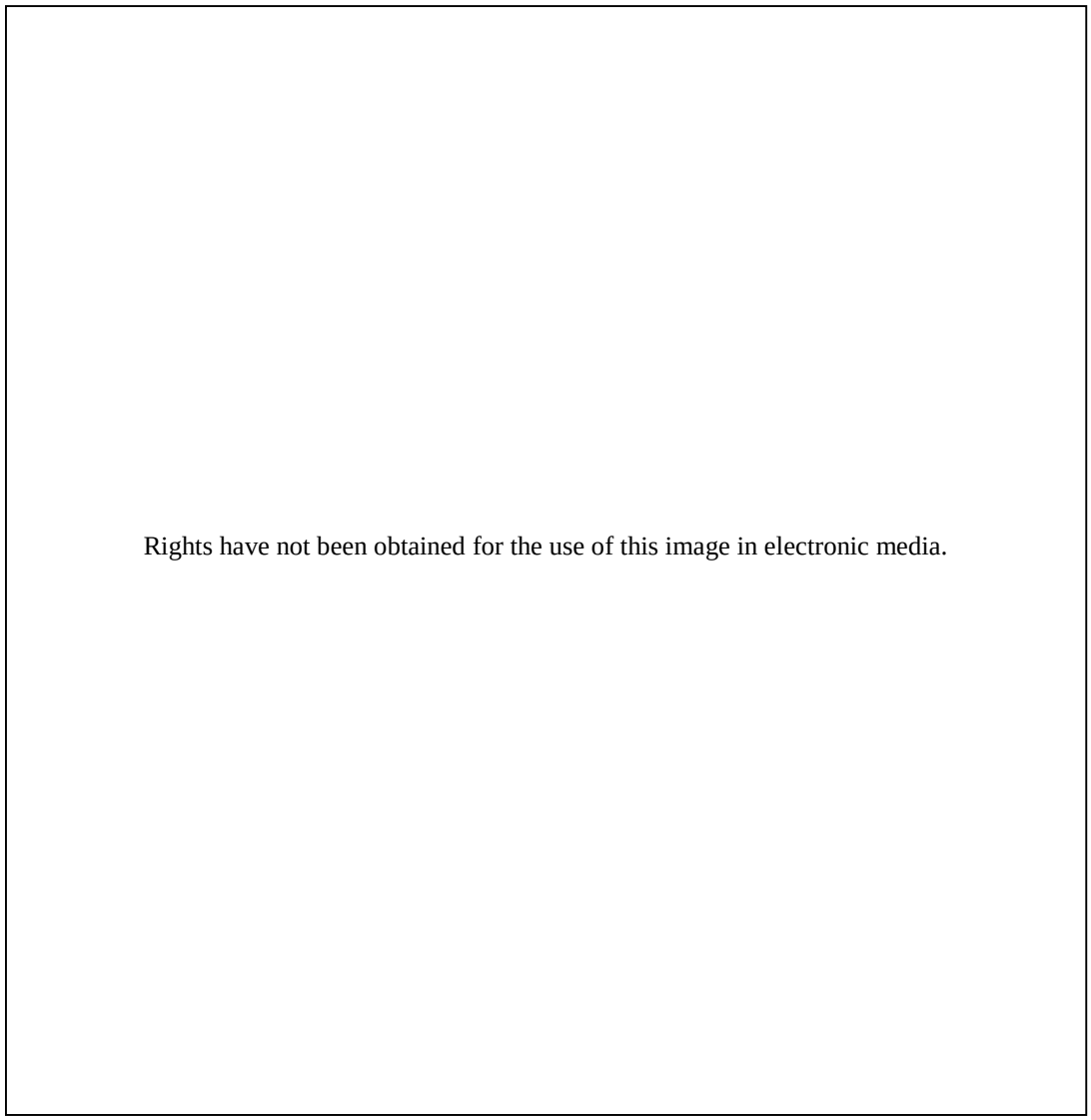


Figure 3.12: Rectangular buckle frames. A: 1.7A (LON0200), B: 1.7B (WIN109), C: 1.7C (LON1097), D: 1.7D (WIN047), E: 1.7E (LIN004), F: 1.7F (LON0153), G: 1.7G (YOR041), H: 1.7H (LON0744), I: 1.7I (LEI064)

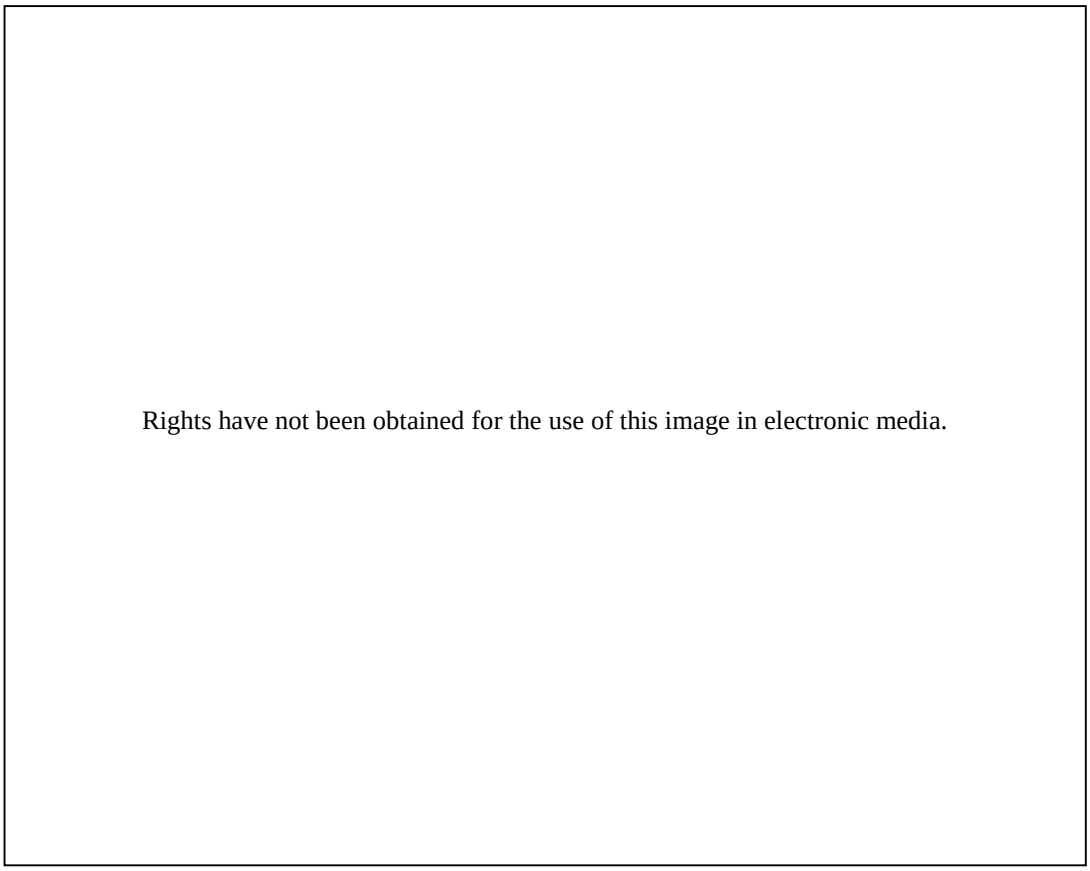


Figure 3.13: Rectangular buckle frames with a central bar. A: 1.8A (LON0834), B: 1.8B (WIN220), C: 1.8C (COV032), D: 1.8D (LEI039), E: 1.8E (LON0053), F: 1.8F (LON0004), G: 1.8G (SOU097)

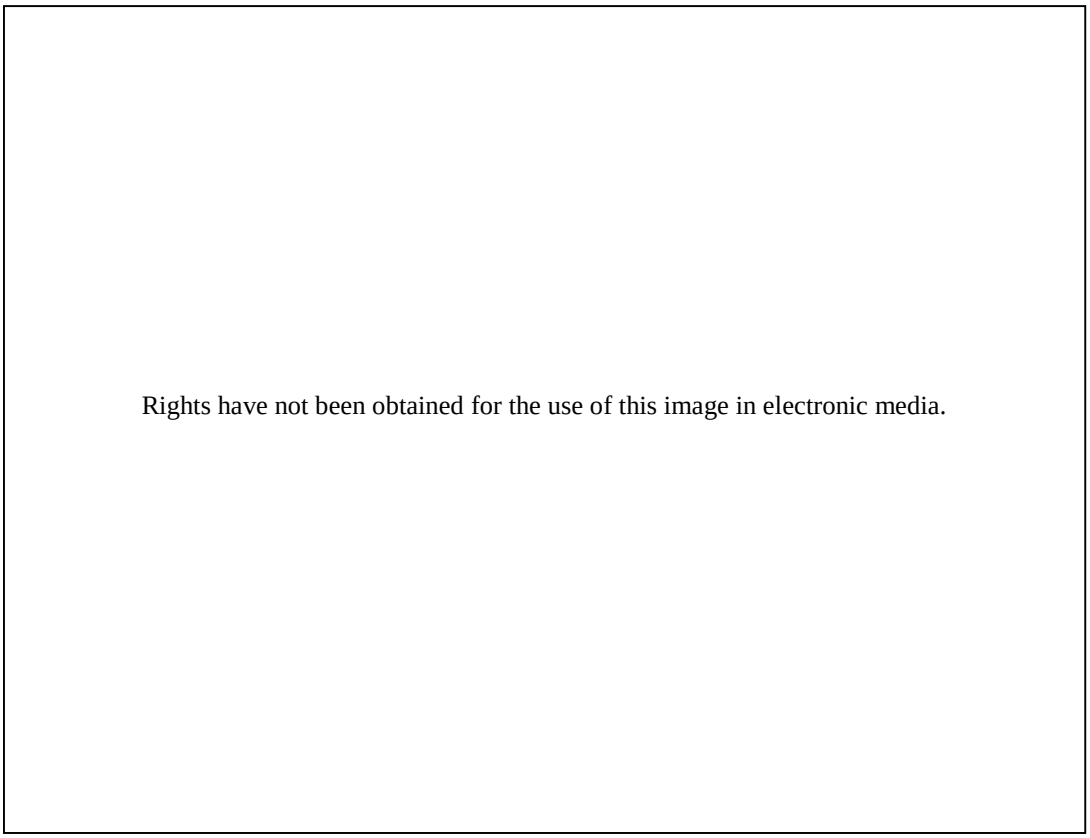


Figure 3.14: Trapezoidal buckle frames. A: 1.9A (LON0131), B: 1.9B (YOR099), C: 1.9C (YOR062), D: 1.9D (LON0007), E: 1.9E (LON0826)

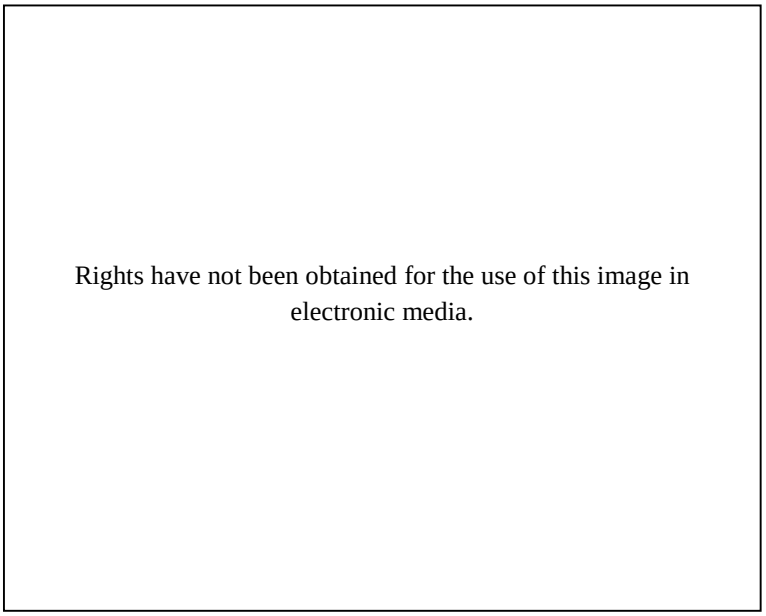


Figure 3.15: Forked spacer buckle frame. A: 1.10A (OXF063)

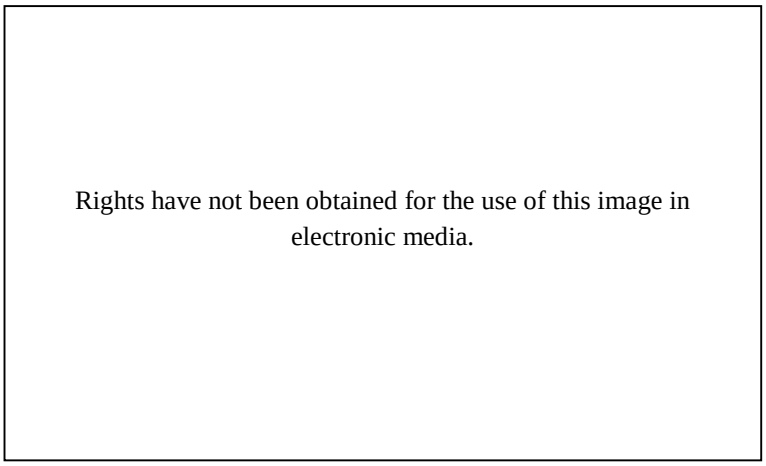


Figure 3.16: Forked spacer buckle frame waster from St Andrewgate, York (YOR313)

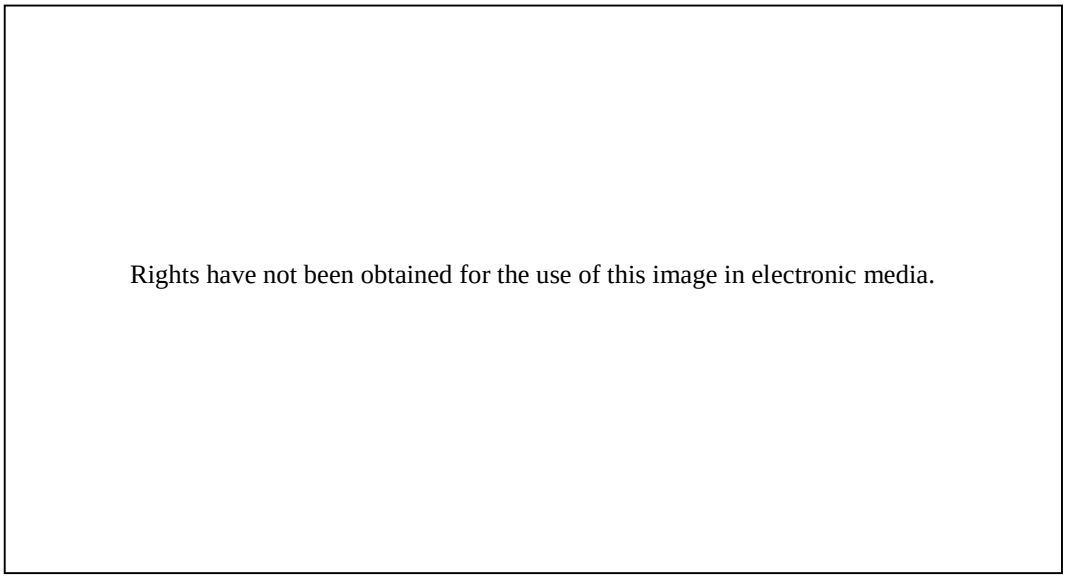


Figure 3.17: Other buckle frames. A: 1.11A (SOU062), B: 1.11B (COV025), C: 1.11C (WIN127)

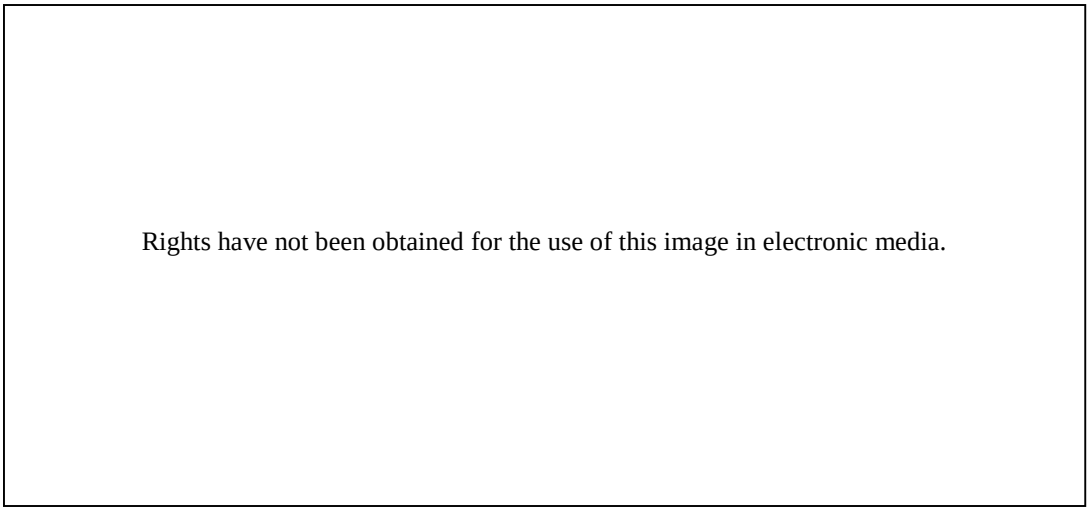


Figure 3.18: Folding end clasps. A: 2.1A (SOU076), B: 2.1B (PLY008), C: 2.1C (YOR110), D: 2.1D (LON1123), E: 2.1E (WIN181)

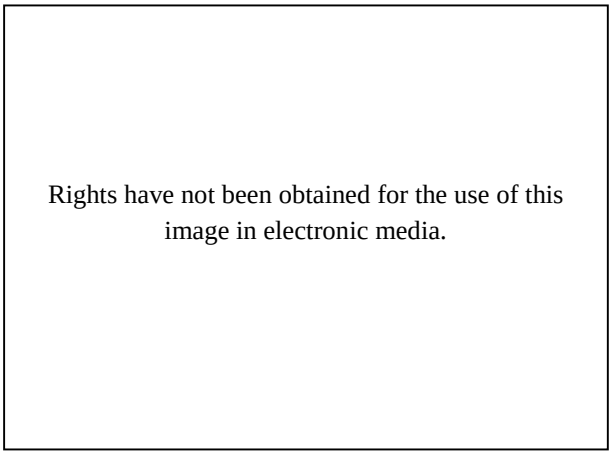


Figure 3.19: Clasp without a folding end. A: 2.2A (LON0391)

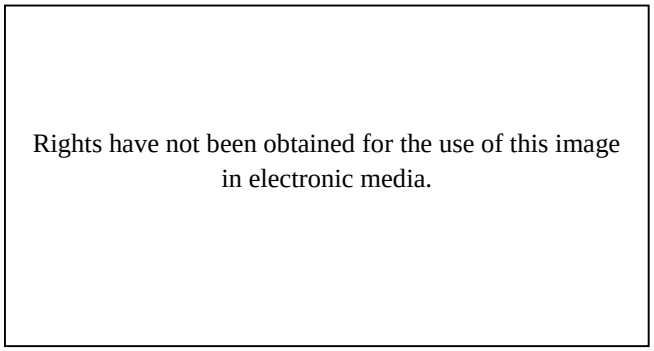


Figure 3.20: Locking clasp. A: 2.3A (YOR254), B: 2.3A (LON0690)

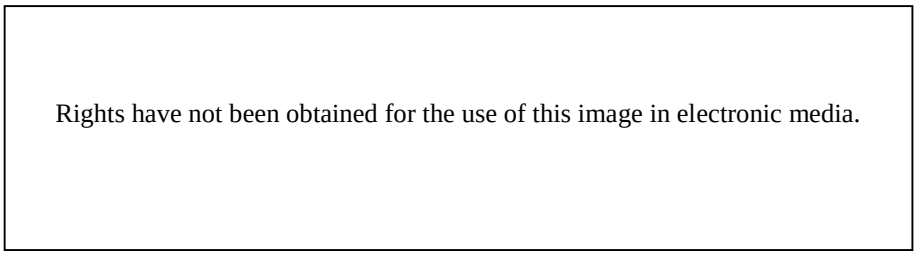


Figure 3.21: Strap retaining locking clasp (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 121)

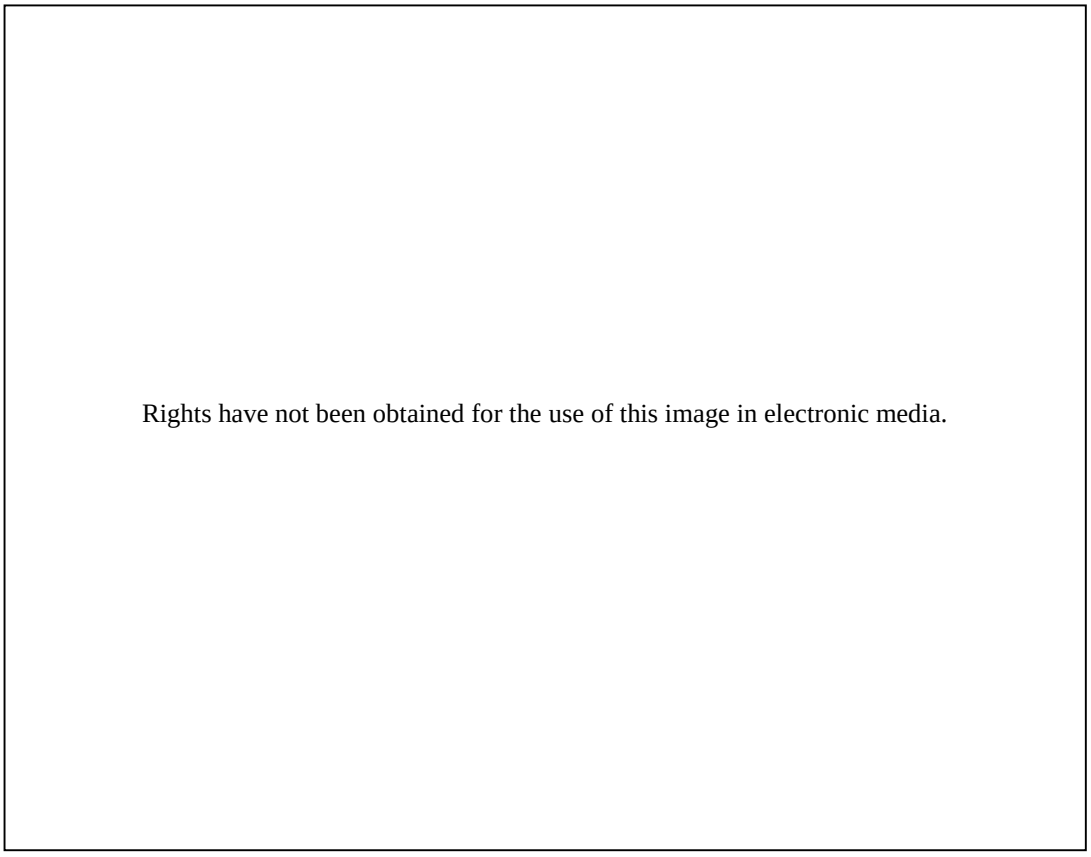


Figure 3.22: Single sheet strap-ends. A: 3.1A (WIN190), B: 3.1B (COV076), C: 3.1C (YOR265), D: 3.1D (LON1045), E: 3.1E (SOU050), F: 3.1F (LON0157)

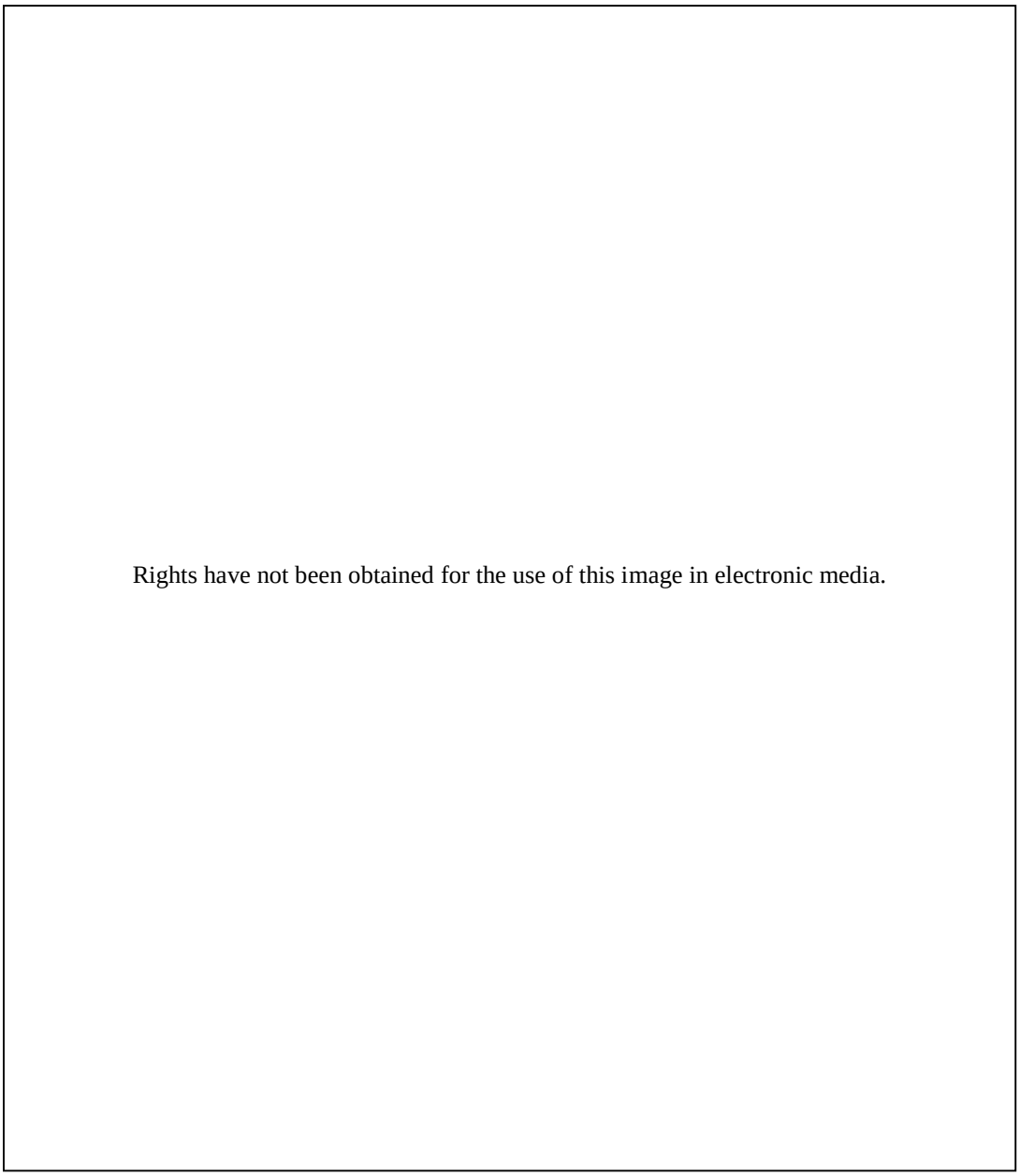


Figure 3.23: Double sheet strap-ends. A: 3.2A (LIN041), B: 3.2B (LON0069), C: 3.2C (COV123), D: 3.2D (LON0483), E: 3.2E (LON0445), F: 3.2F (OXF059), G: 3.2G (SOU071), H: 3.2H (WIN057), I: 3.2I (YOR085), J: 3.2J (OXF025)

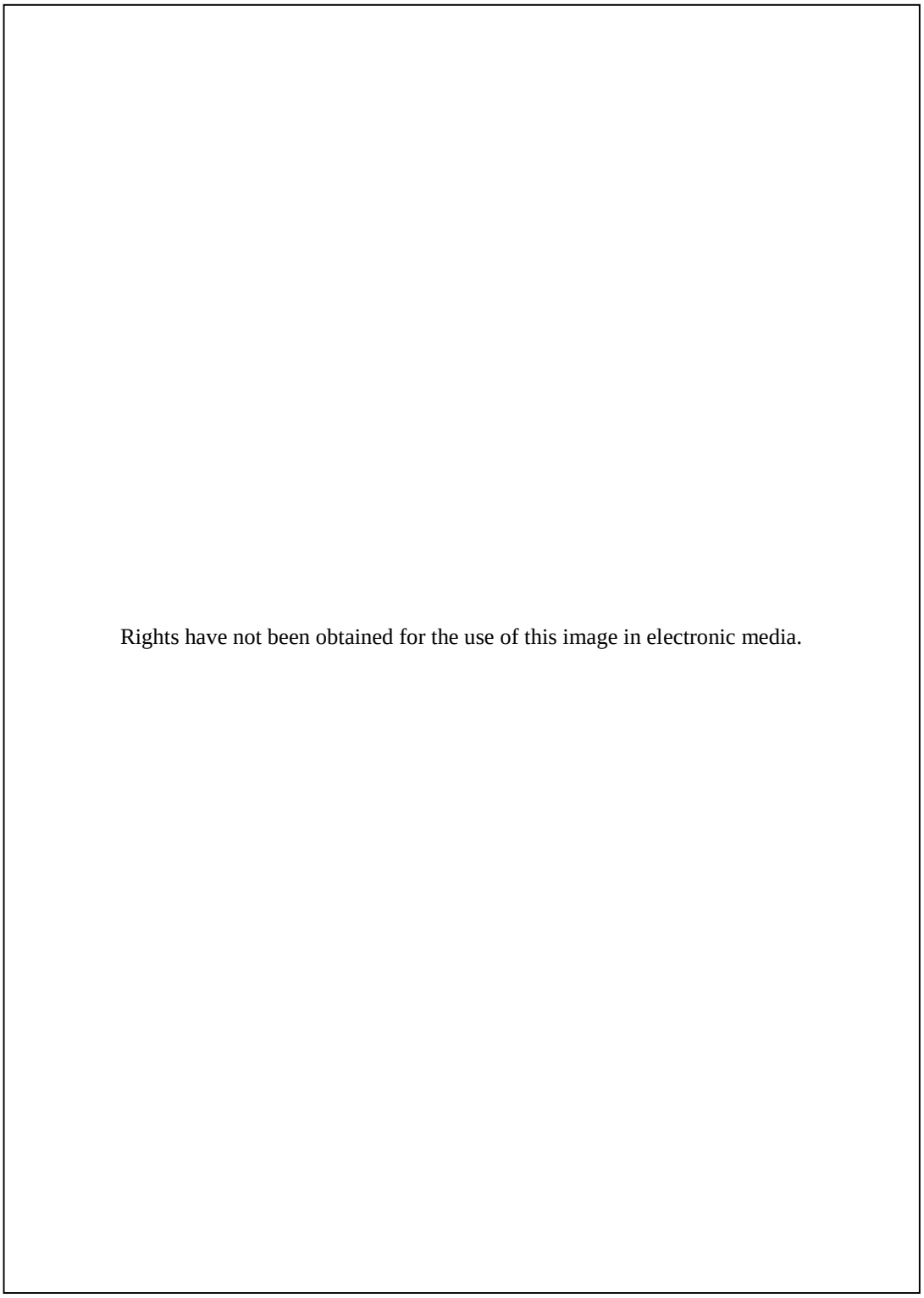


Figure 3.24: Forked spacer strap-ends. A: 3.3A (WIN004), B: 3.3B (OXF016), C: 3.3C (LON0055), D: 3.3D (YOR251), E: 3.3E (SOU028), F: 3.3F (COV009), G: 3.3G (COV125), H: 3.3H (WIN010), I: 3.3I (LON0204), J: 3.3J (LIN038), K: 3.3K (LON0047), L: 3.3L (LON0084)

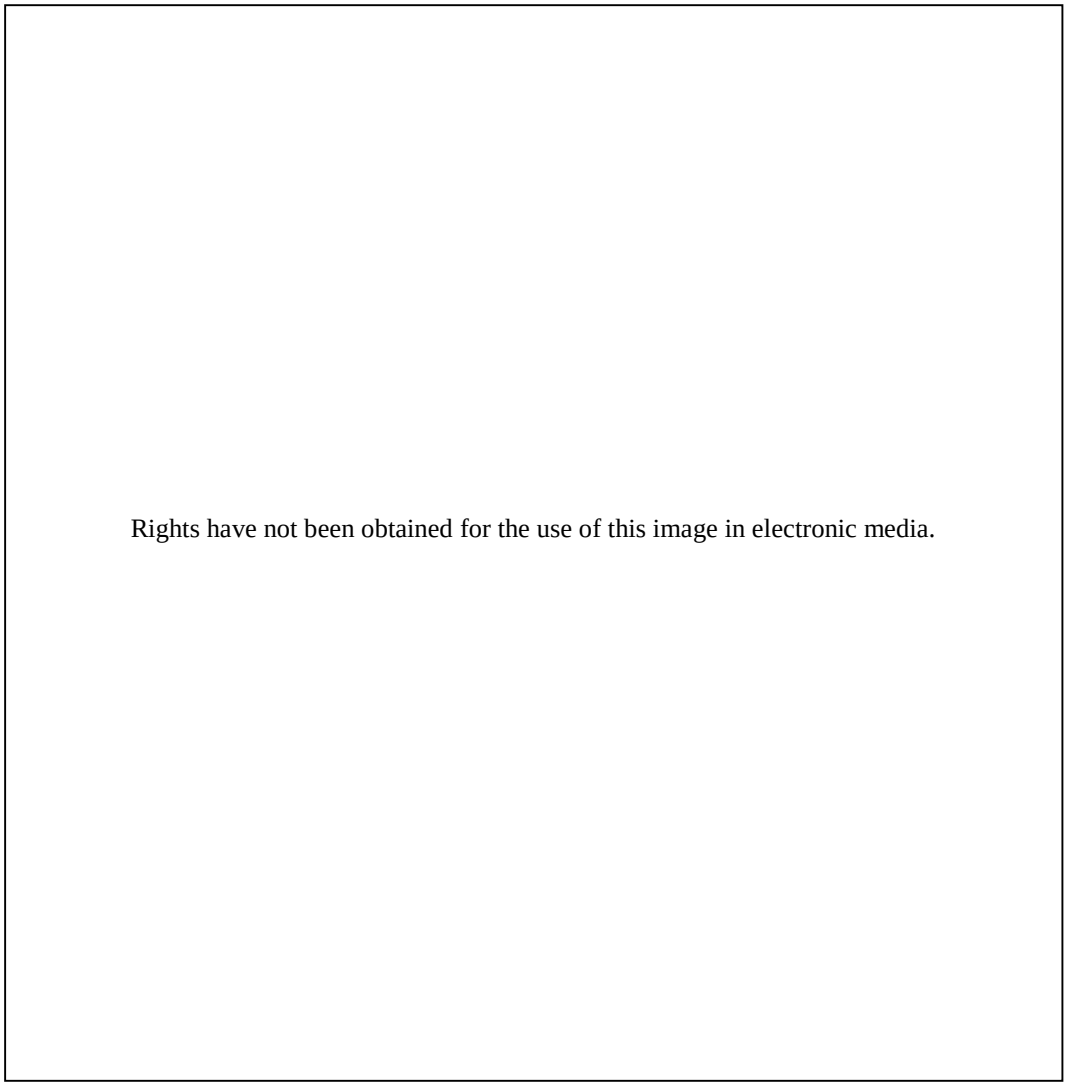


Figure 3.25: Composite strap-ends with side strips. A: 3.4A (LON0288), B: 3.4B (LON0581), C: 3.4C (LON0290), D: 3.4D (LON1346), E: 3.4E (LON0936), F: 3.4F (WIN297), G: 3.4G (LON0328), H: 3.4H (LON0444), I: 3.4I (OXF070)

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Left: Figure 3.26: OXF052
Right: Figure 3.27: WIN297

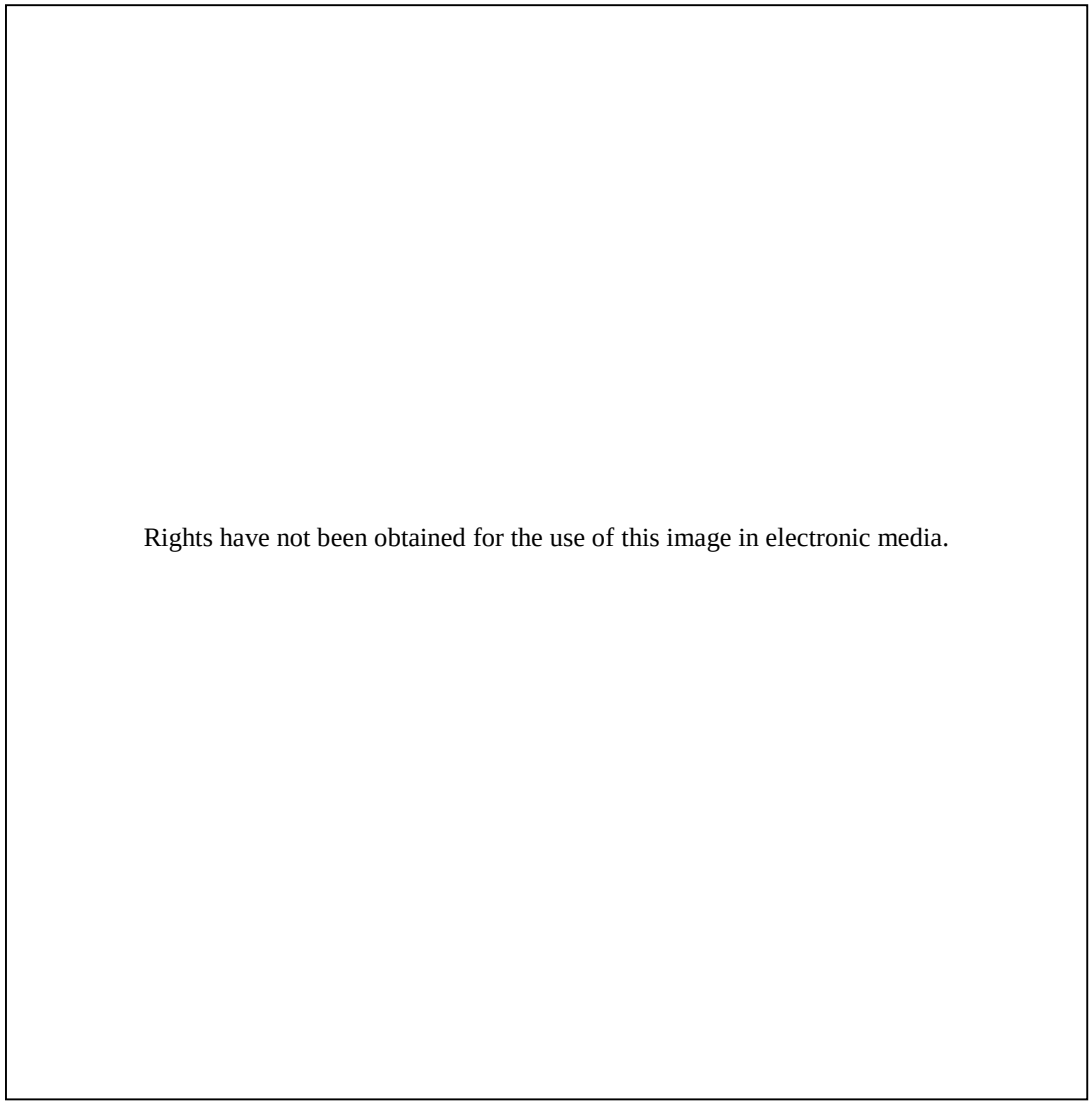


Figure 3.28: Composite strap-ends with a sheet metal spacer. A: 3.5A (OXF030), B: 3.5B (COV085), C: 3.5C (LIN030), D: 3.5D (LON0265), E: 3.5E (SOU045), F: 3.5F (YOR175), G: 3.5G (LON0051), H: 3.5H (LON0823), I: 3.5I (COV122)

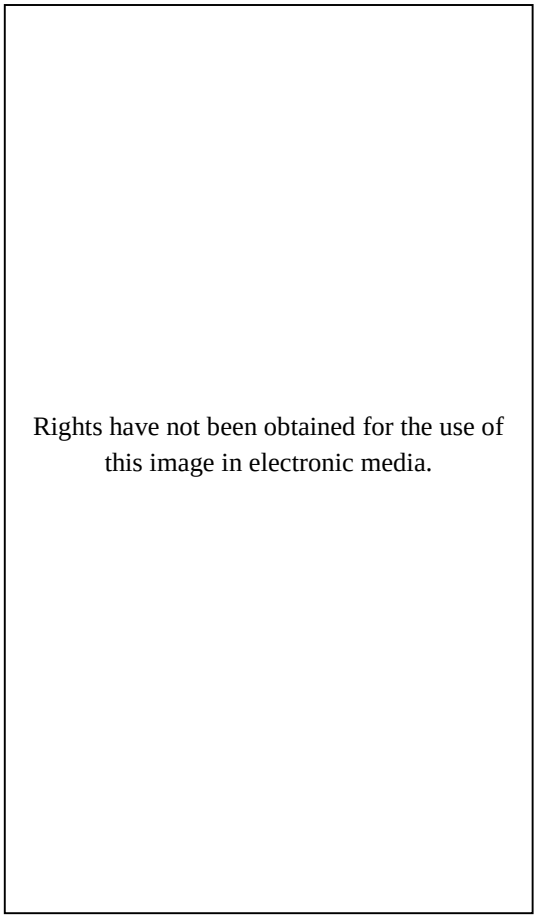


Figure 3.29: Large decorative strap-end. A: 3.6A (OXF062)

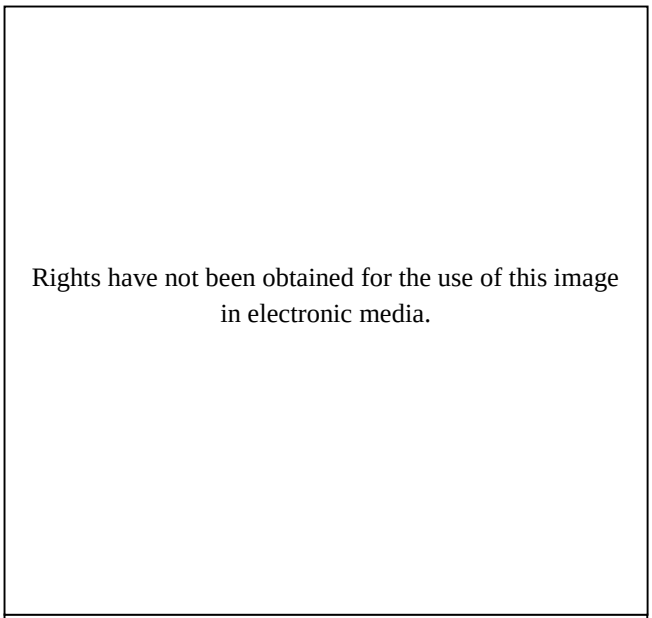


Figure 3.30: Cast strap-ends with openwork decoration. A: 3.7A (LON0617), B: 3.7B (LON0804)

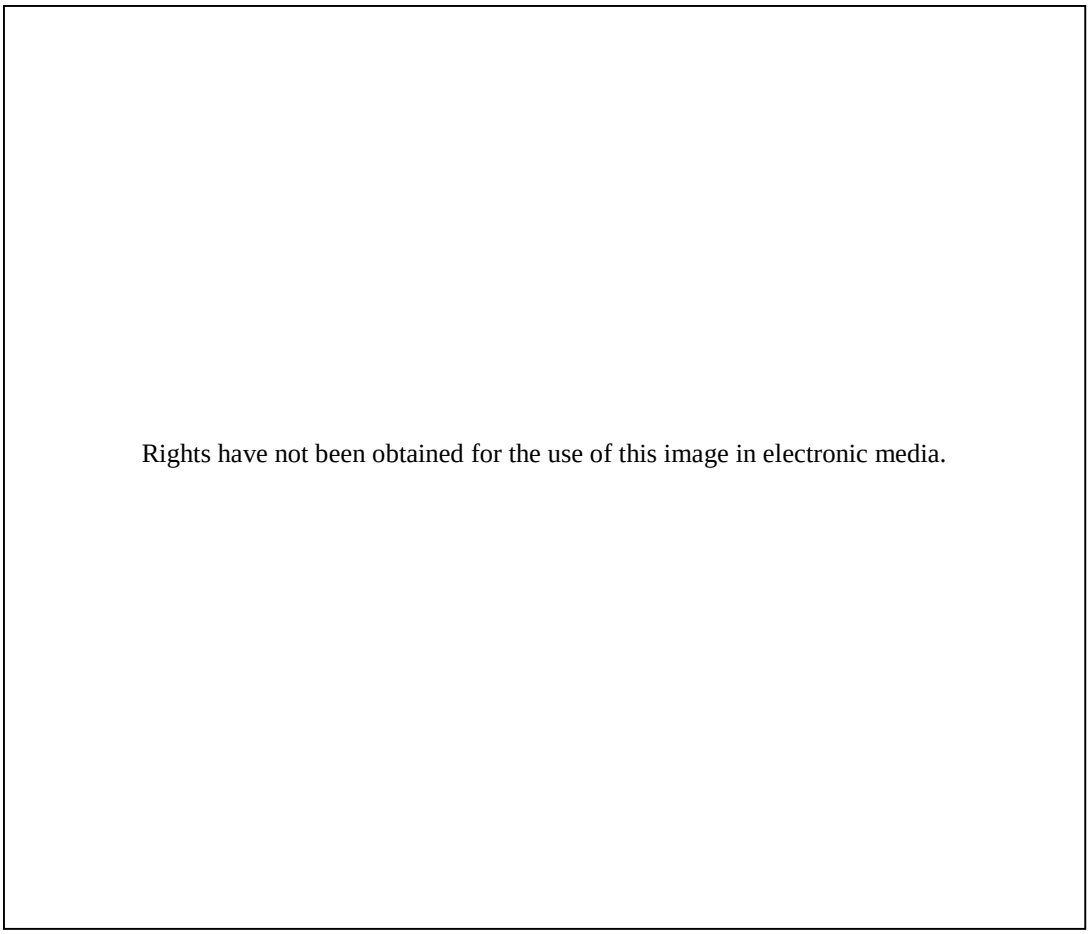


Figure 3.31: Detached buckle plates. A: 1.12A (NHN019), B: 1.12B (LIN062), C: 1.12C (LON1333), D: 1.12D (YOR231), E: 1.12E (GLO009), F: 1.12F (YOR040), G: 1.12G (WIN093), H: 1.12H (LEI058), I: 1.12I (SOU098)

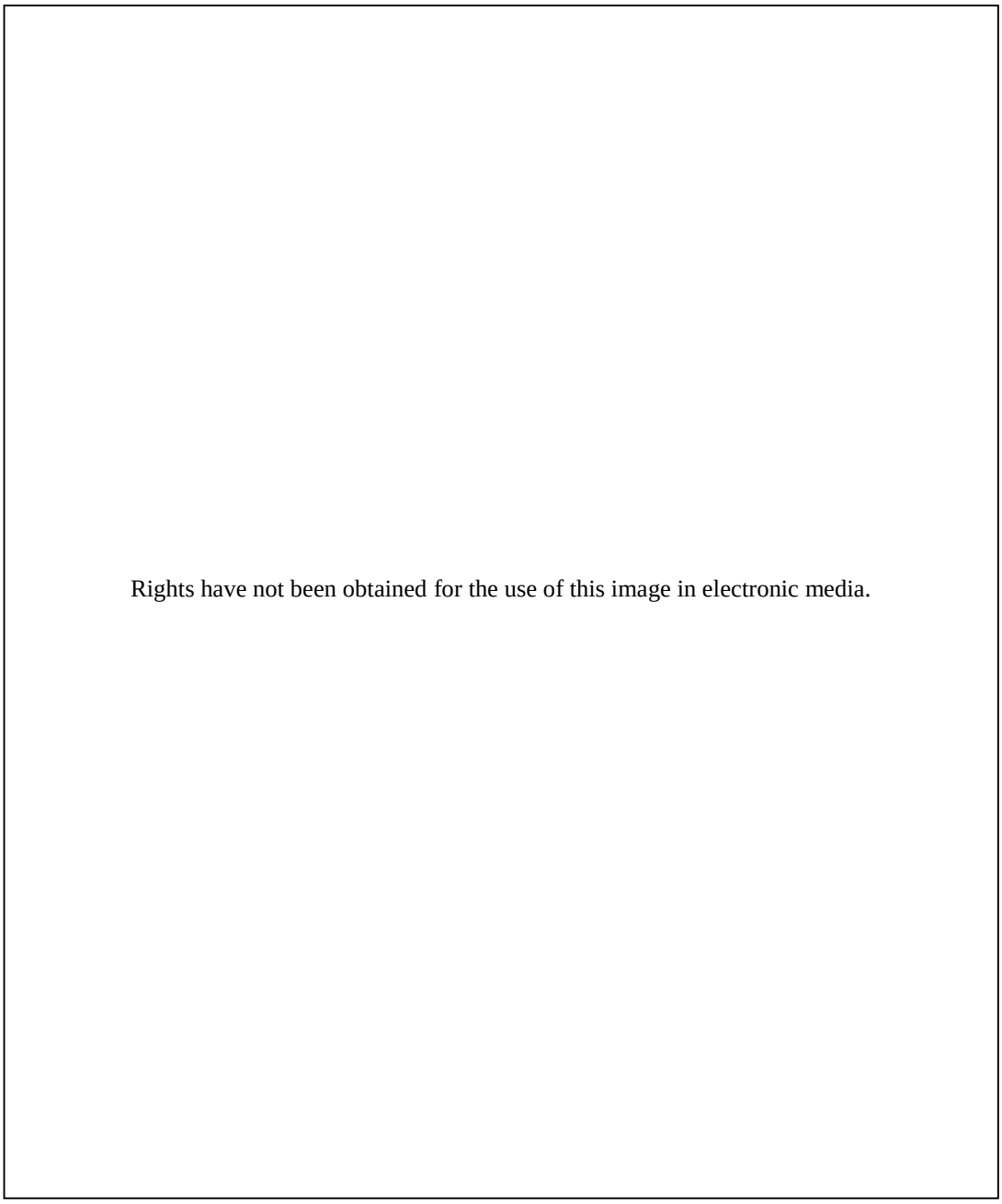


Figure 3.32: Detached strap-end plates. A: 3.7A (WIN278), B: 3.7B (WIN245), C: 3.7C (WIN110), D: 3.7D (LON0466), E: 3.7E (OXF074), F: 3.7F (LON0927), G: 3.7G (LON0440), H: 3.7H (LIN012), I: 3.7I (WIN296), J: 3.7J (LON1167), K: 3.7K (WOR030), L: 3.7L (WIN177), M: 3.7M (COV124), N: 3.7N (LON0217), O: 3.7O (WIN162), P: 3.7P (HER021), Q: 3.7Q (NHN007), R: 3.7R (LON0013)

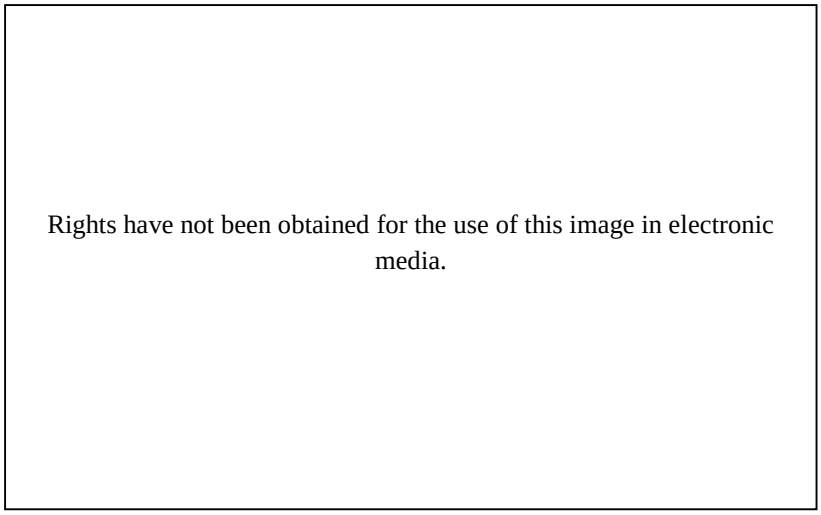


Figure 3.33: Clasp plates. A: 2.4A (LON0251), B: 2.4B (SOU087)

Figure 3.34: Circular mounts attached to wood from All Saints Pavement, York (YOR088)

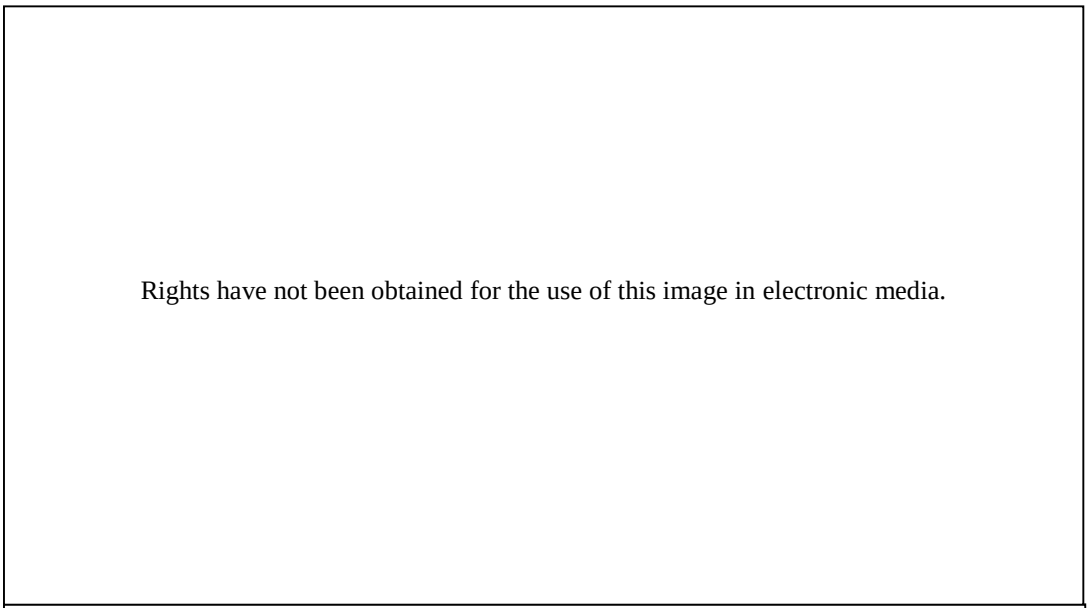


Figure 3.35: Circular mounts. A: 4.1A (COV139), B: 4.1B (WIN248), C: 4.1C (LON0205), D: 4.1D (COV094), E: 4.1E (LON0661), F: 4.1F (LON0870), G: 4.1G (LON0354)

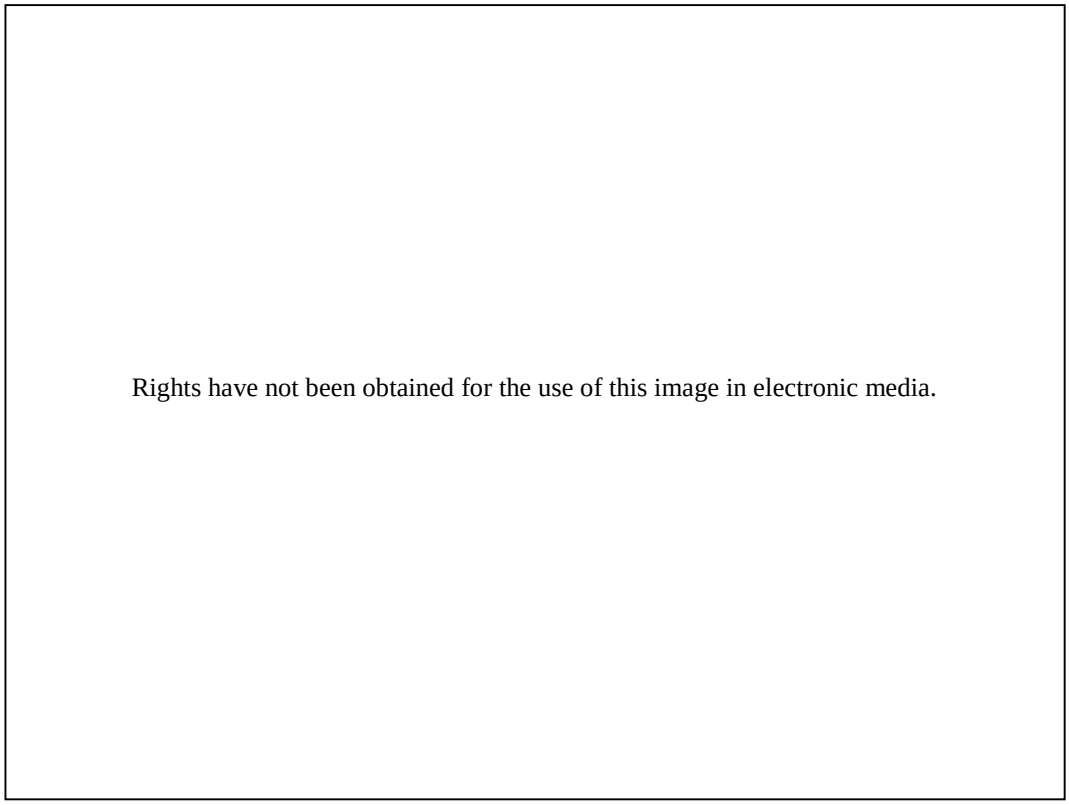


Figure 3.36: Bar mounts. A: 4.2A (OXF022), B: 4.2B (LON1239), C: 4.2C (LON0185), D: 4.2D (LON0351), E: 4.2E (COV136), F: 4.2F (LON1156), G: 4.2G (SOU053), H: 4.2H (OXF031), I: 4.2I (LON0635), J: 4.2J (LON0307), K: 4.2K (LON1337), L 4.2L (LON1362), M 4.2M (LON0990), N: 4.2N (LON1262), O: 4.2O (WIN227)

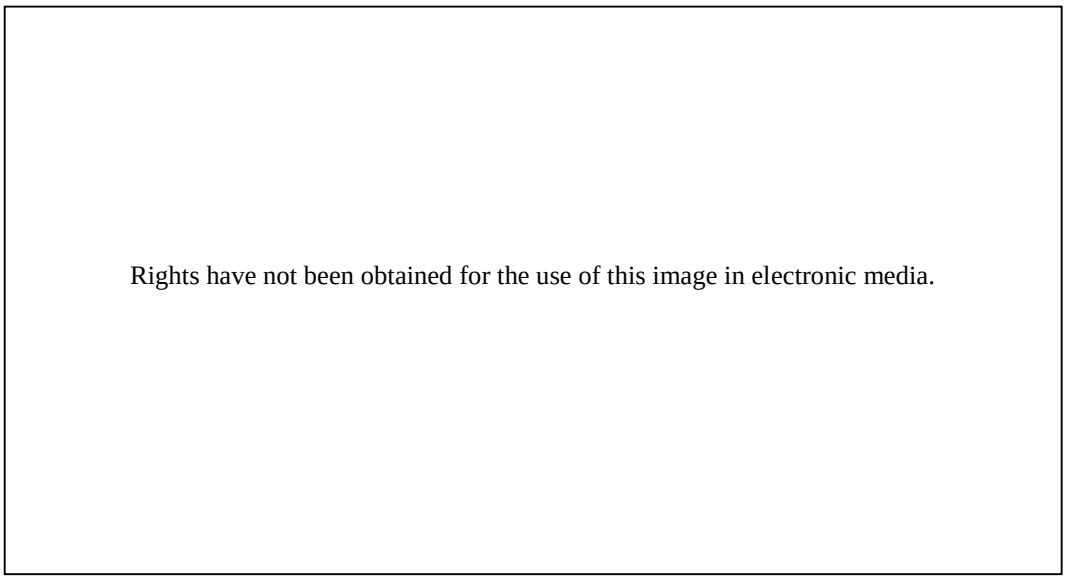


Figure 3.37: Trefoil mounts. A: 5.3A (LON0329), B: 5.3B (LON0470), C: 5.3C (LON0796), D: 5.3D (LON0615), E: 5.3E (COV010)

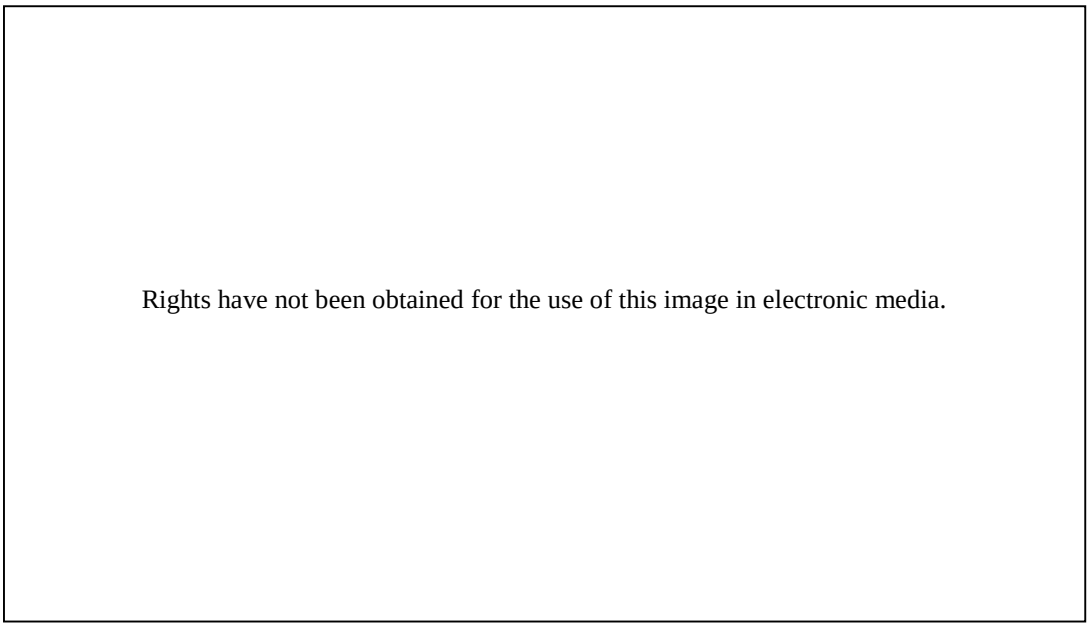


Figure 3.38: Quatrefoil mounts. A: 4.4A (OXF021), B: 4.4B (PLY009), C: 4.4C (LON0701), D: 4.4D (LON0078), E: 4.4E (WIN231)

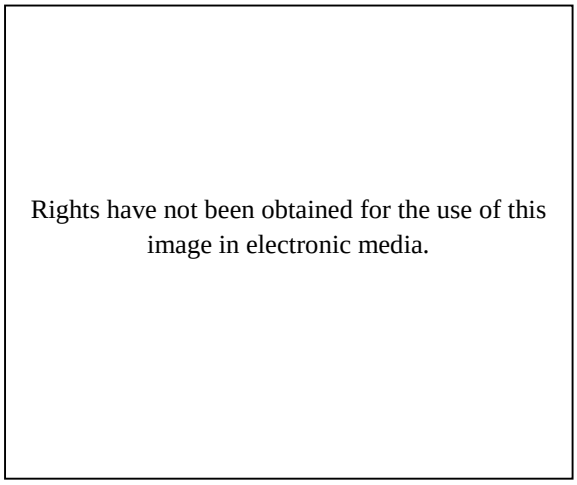


Figure 3.39: Cinquefoil mounts. A: 4.5A (LON0830), B: 4.5B (LON0138)

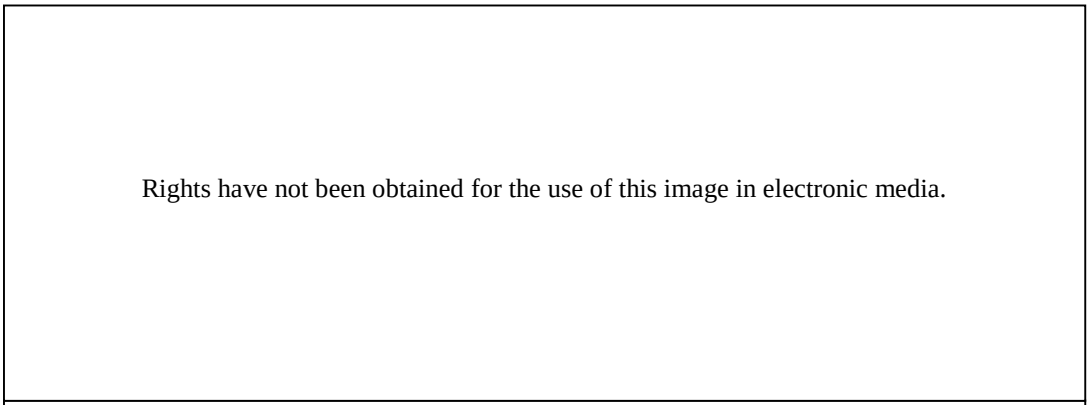


Figure 3.40: Sexfoil mounts. A: 4.6A (OXF046), B: 4.6B (LON0067), C: 4.6C (WIN113), D: 4.6D (LON0083), E: 4.6E (LON1161)

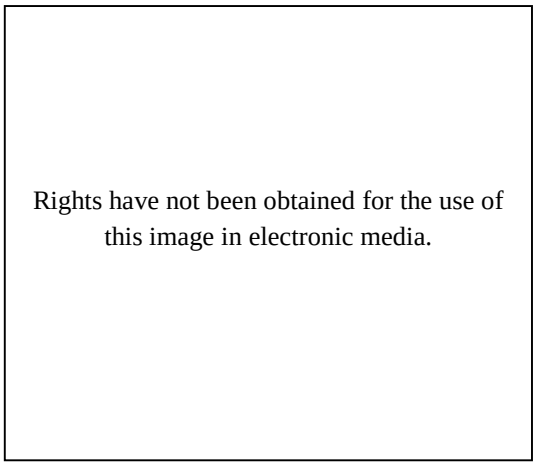


Figure 3.41: Septfoil mount. A: 4.7A (LON0399)

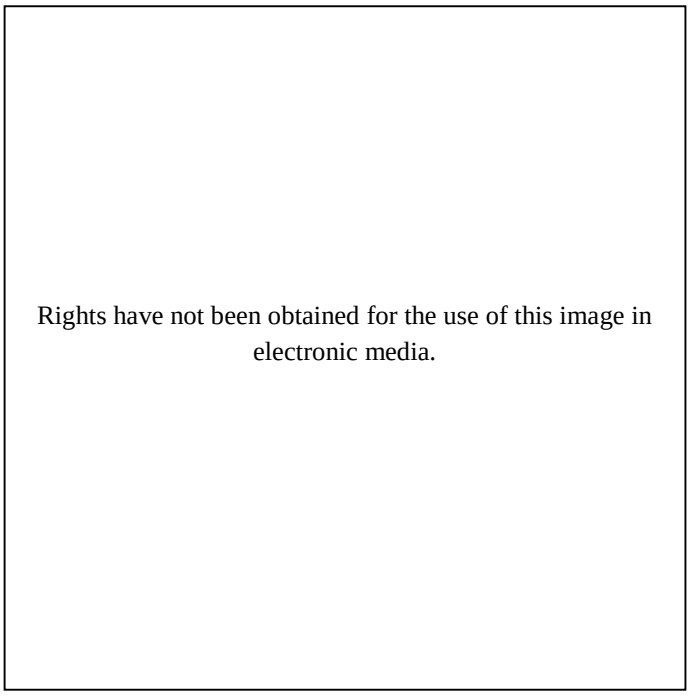


Figure 3.42: Octofoil mounts. A: 4.8A (LON0270), B: 4.8B (LON0218), C: 4.8C (LON0192), D: 4.8D (LON0513), E: 4.8E (LON0519), F: 4.8F (LON0673)

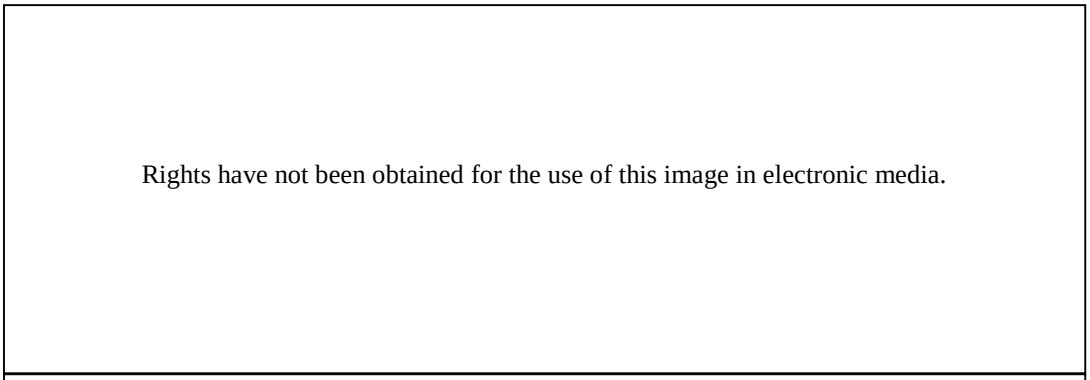


Figure 3.43: Multifoil mounts. A: 4.9A (LON0099), B: 4.9B (LON0129), C: 4.9C (LON0398), D: 4.9D (LON0670)

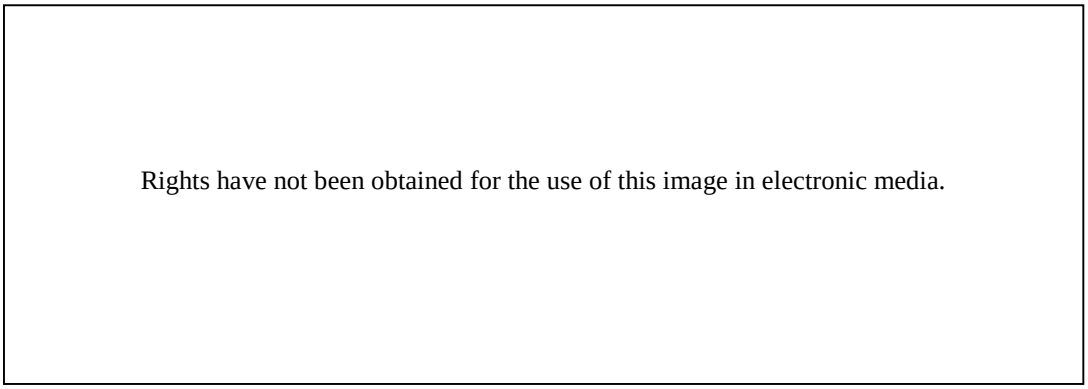


Figure 3.44: Lozenge shaped mounts. A: 4.10A (LON0793), B: 4.10B (LON0533), C: 4.10C (LON0995), D: 4.10D (LON1069)

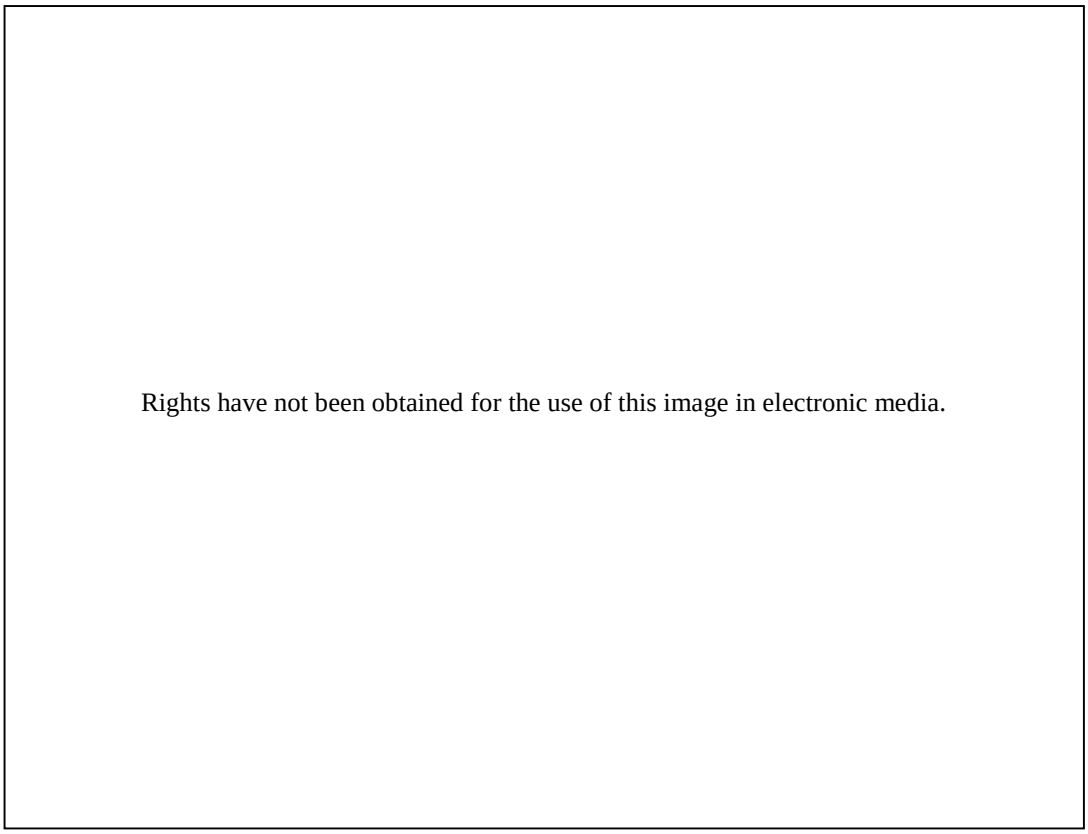
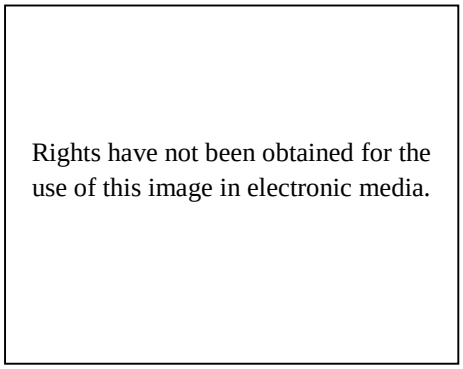
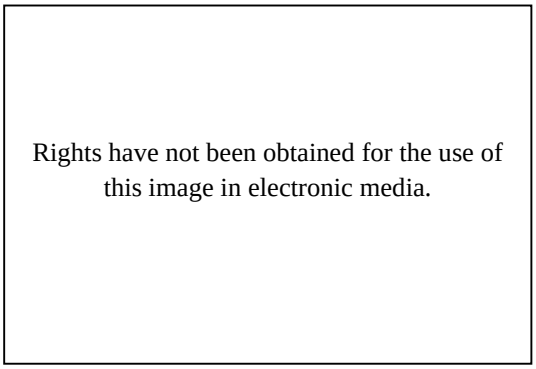


Figure 3.45: Rectangular mounts. A: 4.11A (COV113), B: 4.11B (WIN260), C: 4.11C (YOR001), D: 4.11D (LON0704), E: 4.11E (COV108), F: 4.11F (LON0269), G: 4.11G (LON0798), H: 4.11H (LON0574), I: 4.11I (LON0486), J: 4.11J (LON0765), K: 4.11K (LON0588)





Left: Figure 3.46: Hexagonal mount. A: 4.12A (LON1361)
Right: Figure 3.47: Octagonal mounts. A: 4.13A (LON0366), B: 4.13B (LON0464)

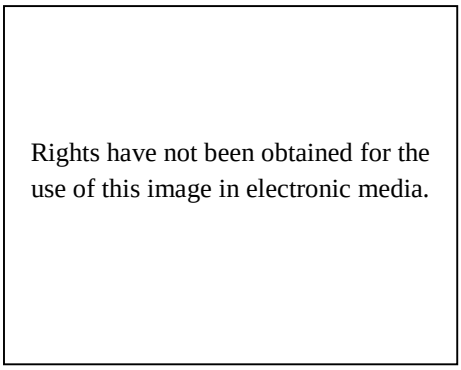


Figure 3.48: Tri-lobed mount. A: 4.14A (WIN275)

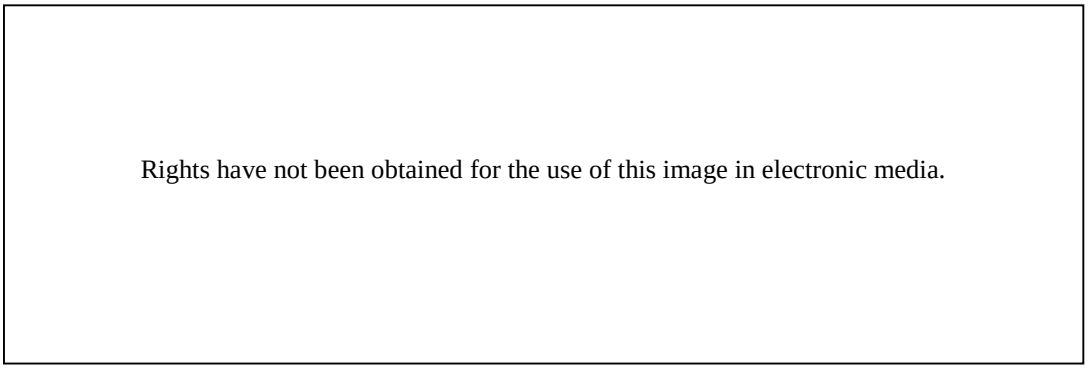
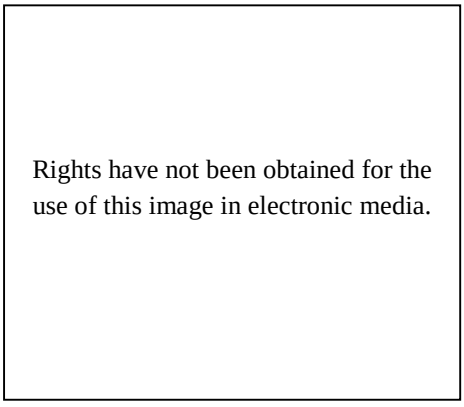


Figure 3.49: Figurative mounts. A: 4.15A (HER008), B: 4.15B (LON0194), C: 4.15C (LON1076), D: 4.15D (LON0655), E: 4.15E (LON1286), F: 4.15F (LON0776), G: 4.15G (LON0779), H: 4.15H (LON1012), I: 4.15I (LON0674), J: 4.15J (HER003), K: 4.15K (LON0492), L: 4.15L (LON0791)



.Figure 3.50: Shield shaped mount. A: 4.16A (LON0356)

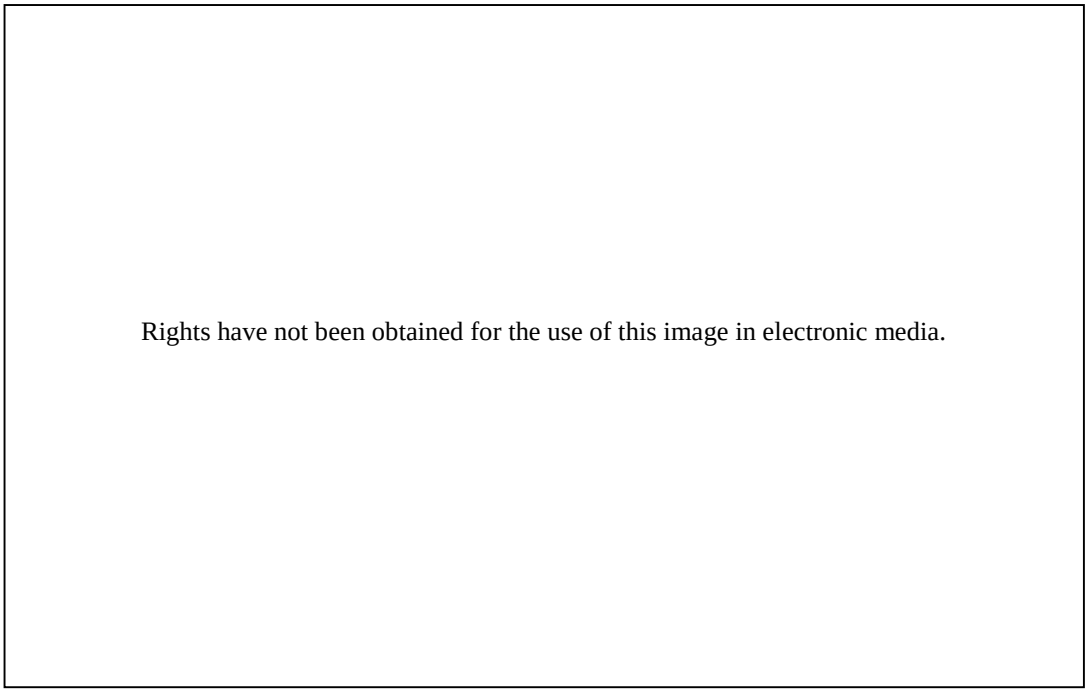


Figure 3.51: Archer's wrist guard with strap loop from London (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 229)

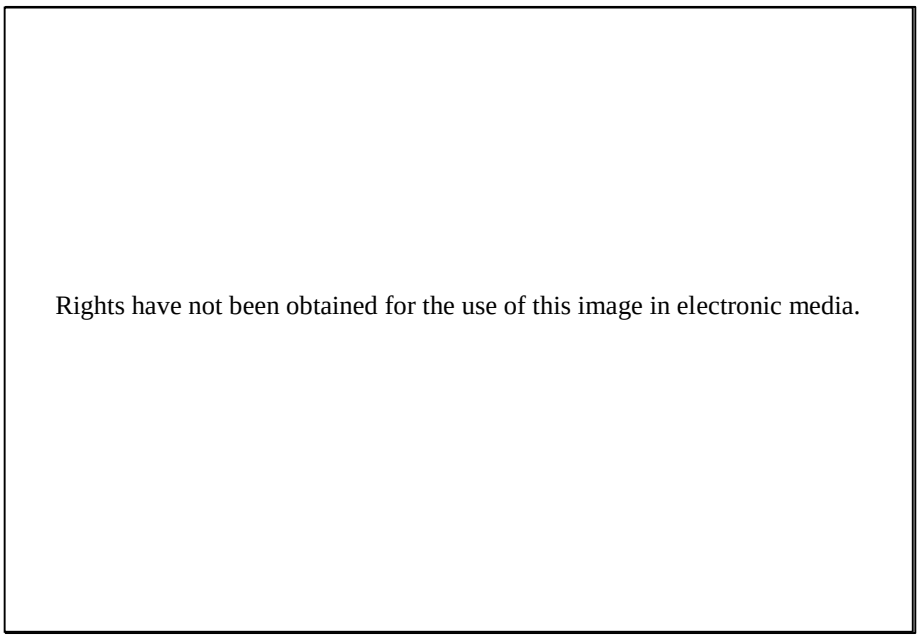


Figure 3.52: Trapezoidal strap loops. A: 5.1A (LON1207), B: 5.1B (LON1084), C: 5.1C (OXF005), D: 5.1D (SOU070), E: 5.1E (LON1349), F: 5.1F (LON0484)

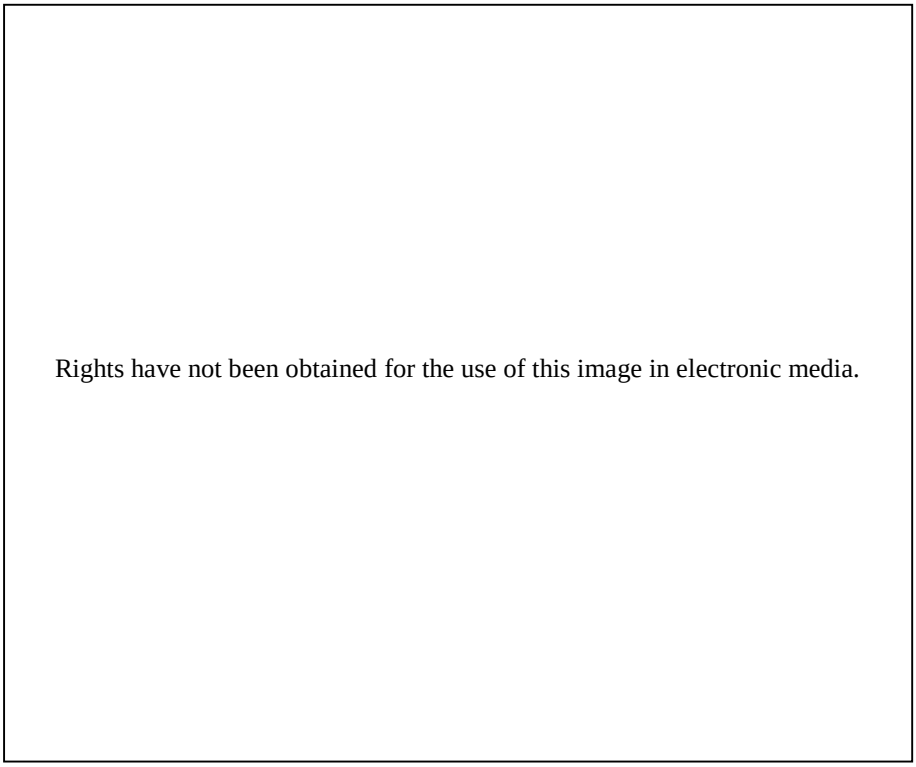


Figure 3.53: Rectangular strap loops. A: 5.2A (EXE002), B: 5.2B (YOR045), C: 5.2C (SOU094), D: 5.2D (WIN188), E: 5.2E (LON1106), F: 5.2F (YOR203)

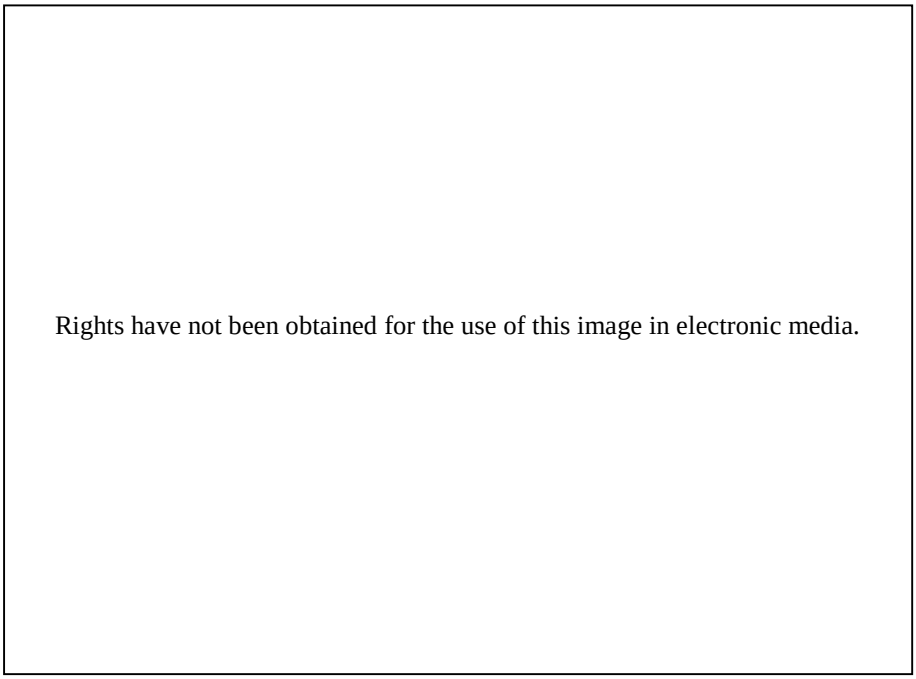


Figure 3.54: Oval strap loops. A: 5.3A (SOU033), B: 5.3B (EXE012), C: 5.3C (LON1137), D: 5.3D (LON1048), E: 5.2E (LON1252), F: 5.3F (LON1351)

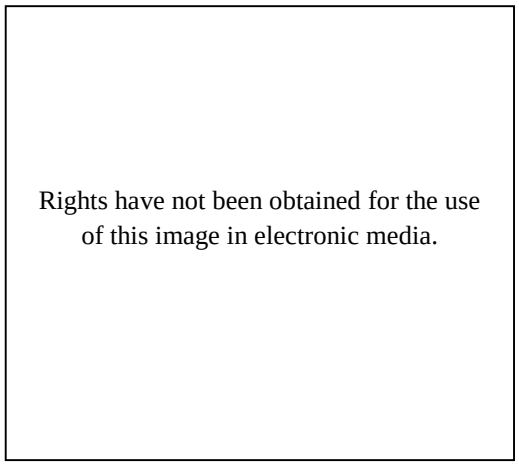


Figure 3.55: Oval strap loop (5.3F) waster from St Andrewgate, York. (YOR308 and Rogers 2004: 921)

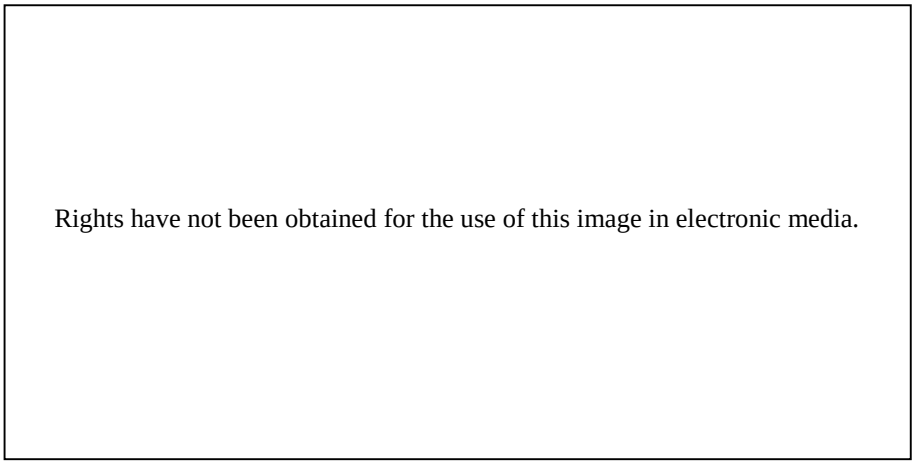


Figure 3.56: Pentagonal strap loops. A: 5.4A (SOU074), B: 5.4B (LON1086), C: 5.4C (LON0451)

Figure 4.1: Map showing the location of the towns and cities used within Chapter 4

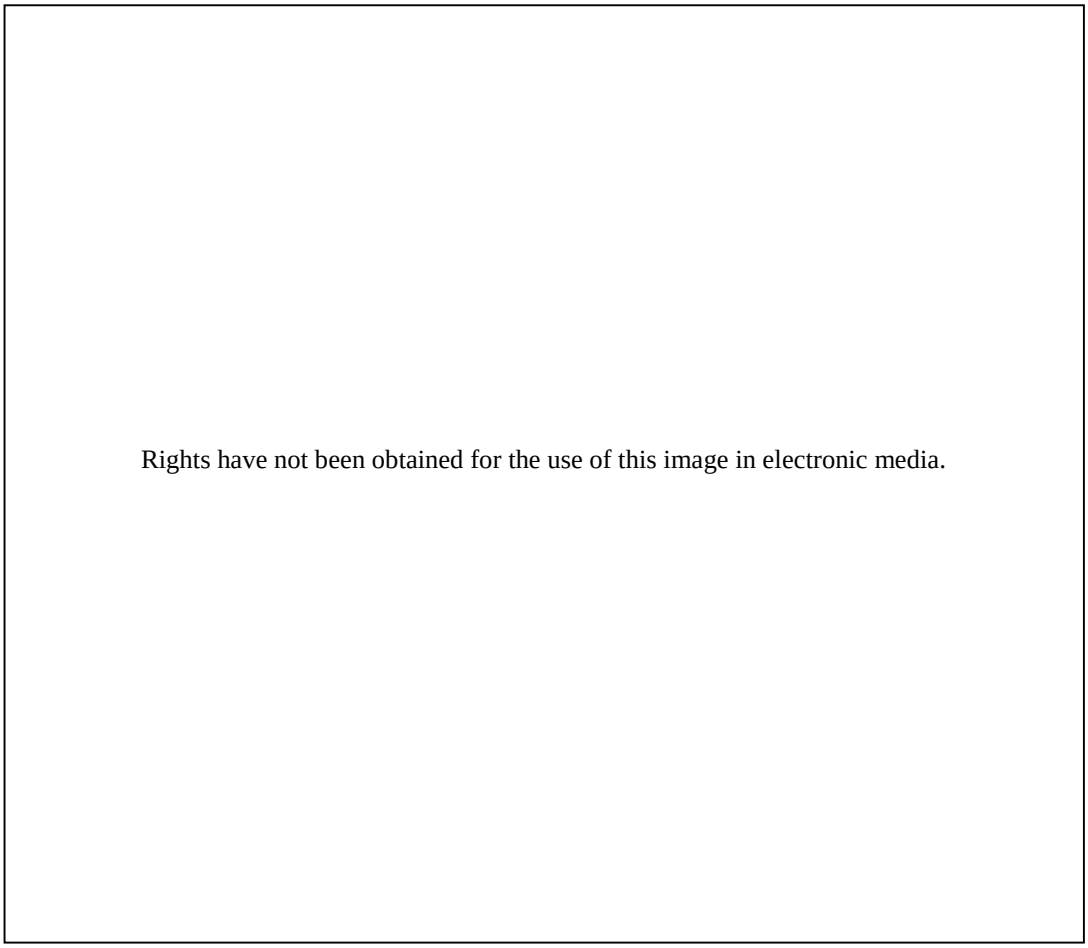


Figure 4.2: Forked spacer buckle wasters from St Andrewgate, York. A: YOR314, B: YOR305, C: YOR313

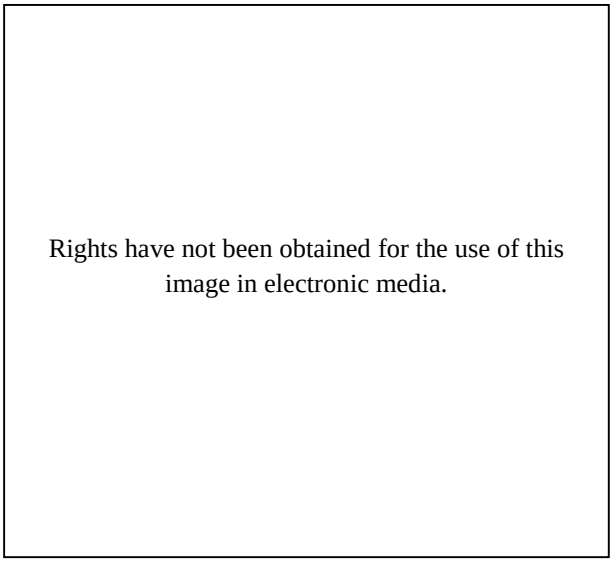


Figure 4.3: Stack mould for forked spacer buckles from Swinegate, York

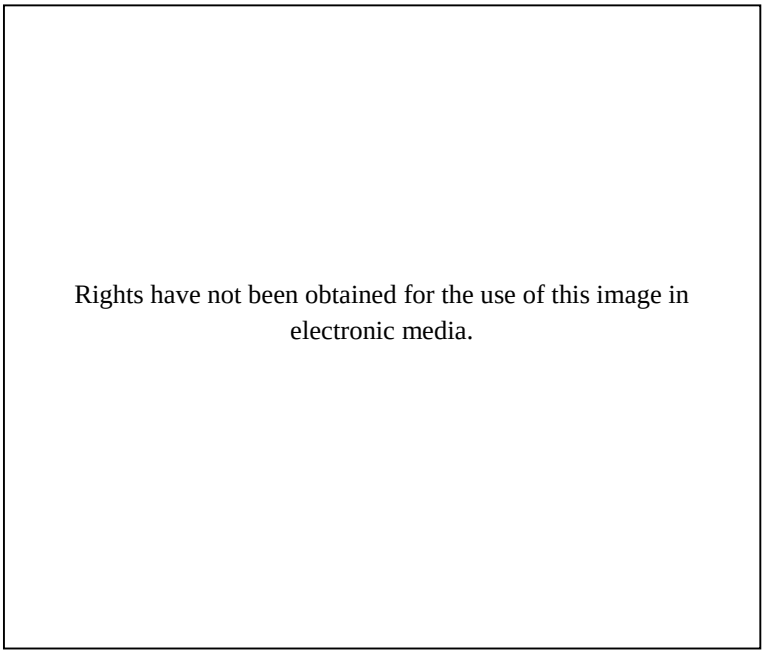


Figure 4.4: Suite of belt fittings from a grave excavated at the Southampton Friary. A: SOU079, B: SOU080

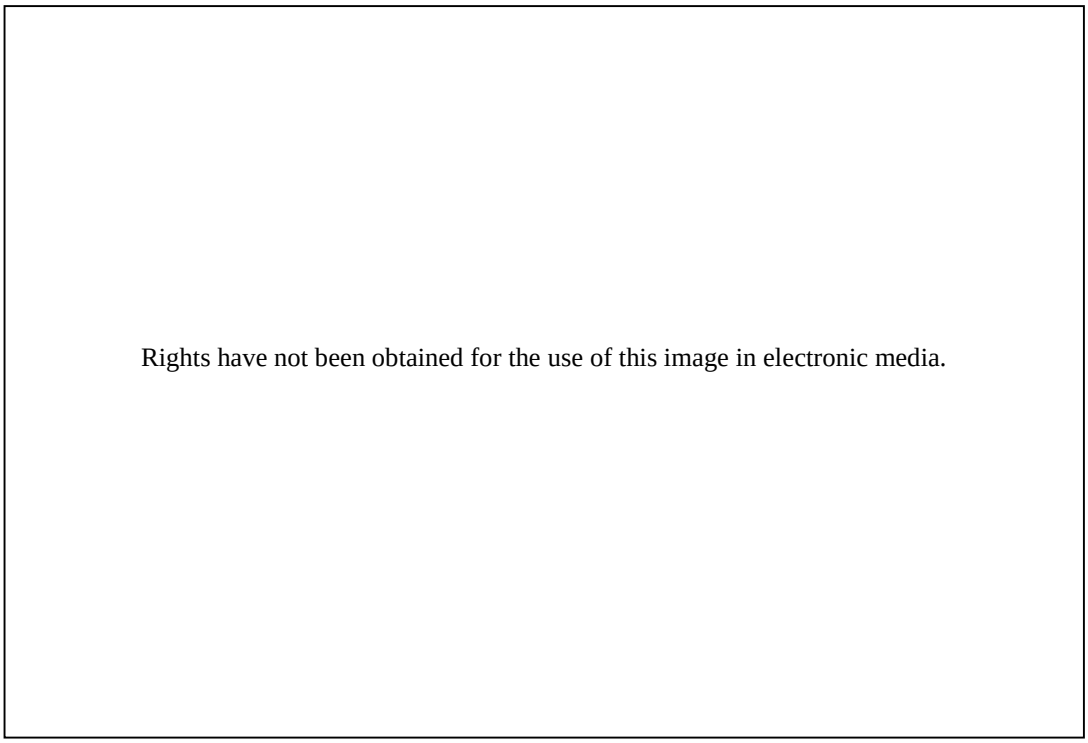


Figure 4.5: Location of excavated waterfront sites in London (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 2)

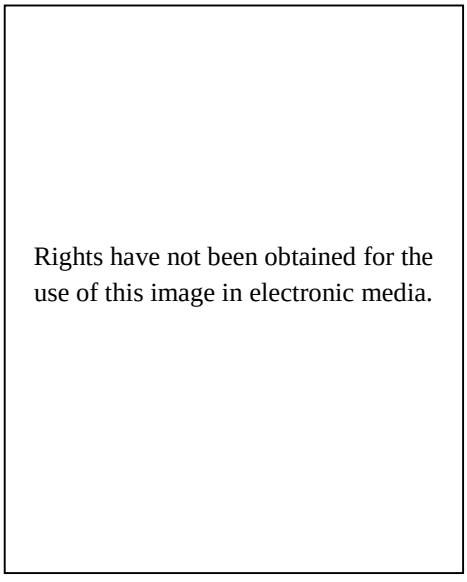


Figure 4.6: LON0944 – decorated strap-end plate from St Mary Merton, London depicting an *Agnus Dei*

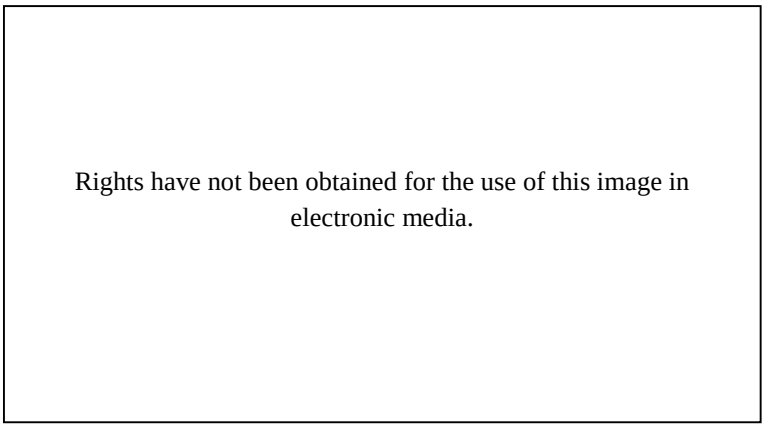


Figure 4.7: Examples of strap-end form 3.7B from Swan Lane, London. A: LON0782, B: LON803, C: LON808

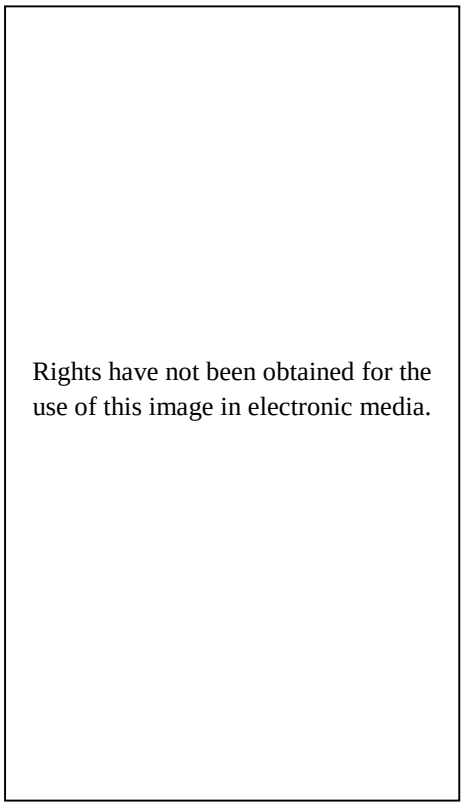


Figure 4.8: LON0847 – strap-end depicting a female saint from Trig Lane, London

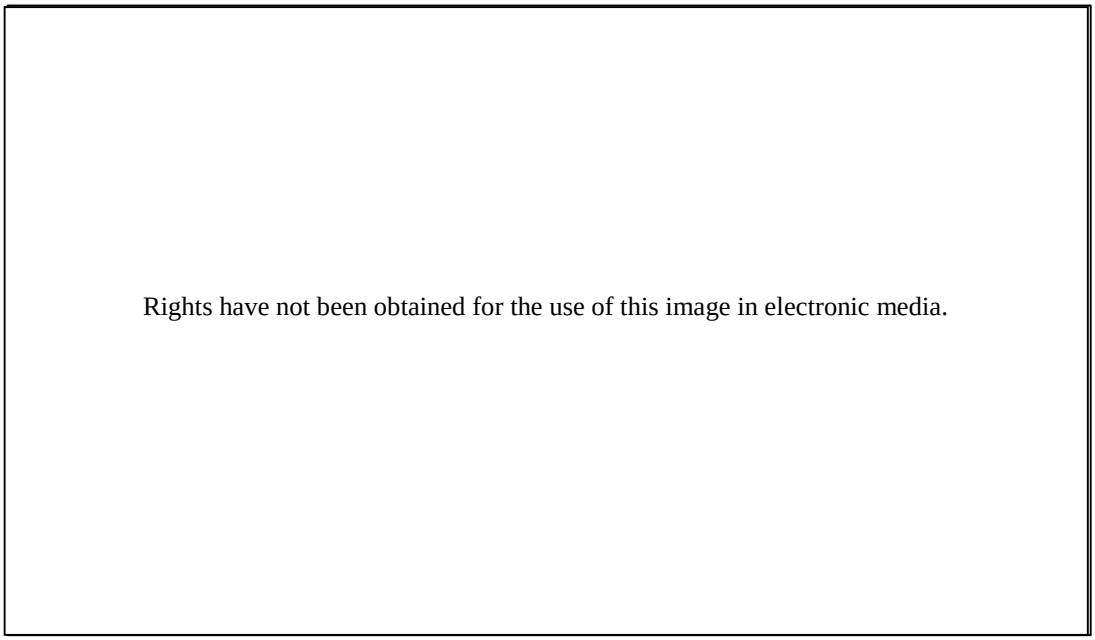


Figure 4.9: Suite of belt fittings from a grave excavated from St Mary Merton, London. A: LON0931, B: LON0930, C: LON0933, D: LON0934, E: LON0932, F: LON0929

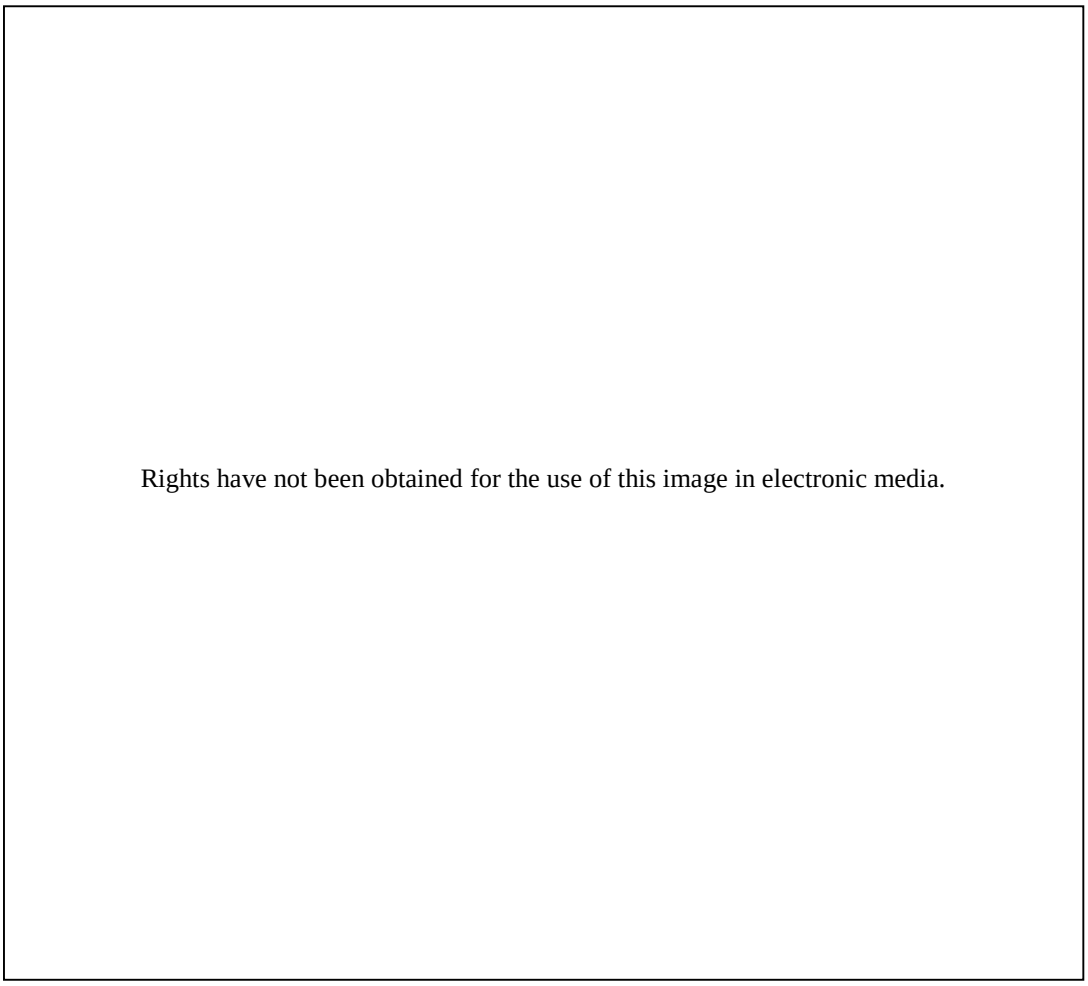


Figure 4.10: Location of excavated sites in Winchester (after Biddle 1990: 2; Rees *et al.* 2008:11)

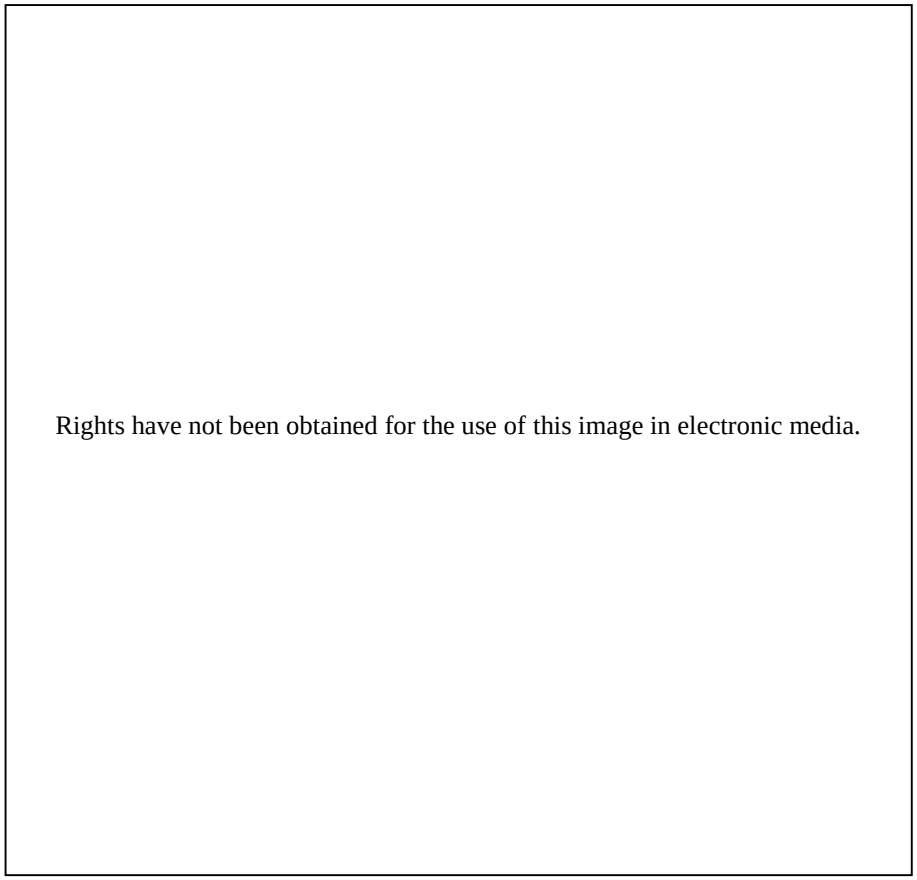


Figure 4.11: Belt fittings showing two decorative techniques from Victoria Road, Winchester. A: WIN240, B: WIN245, C: WIN246

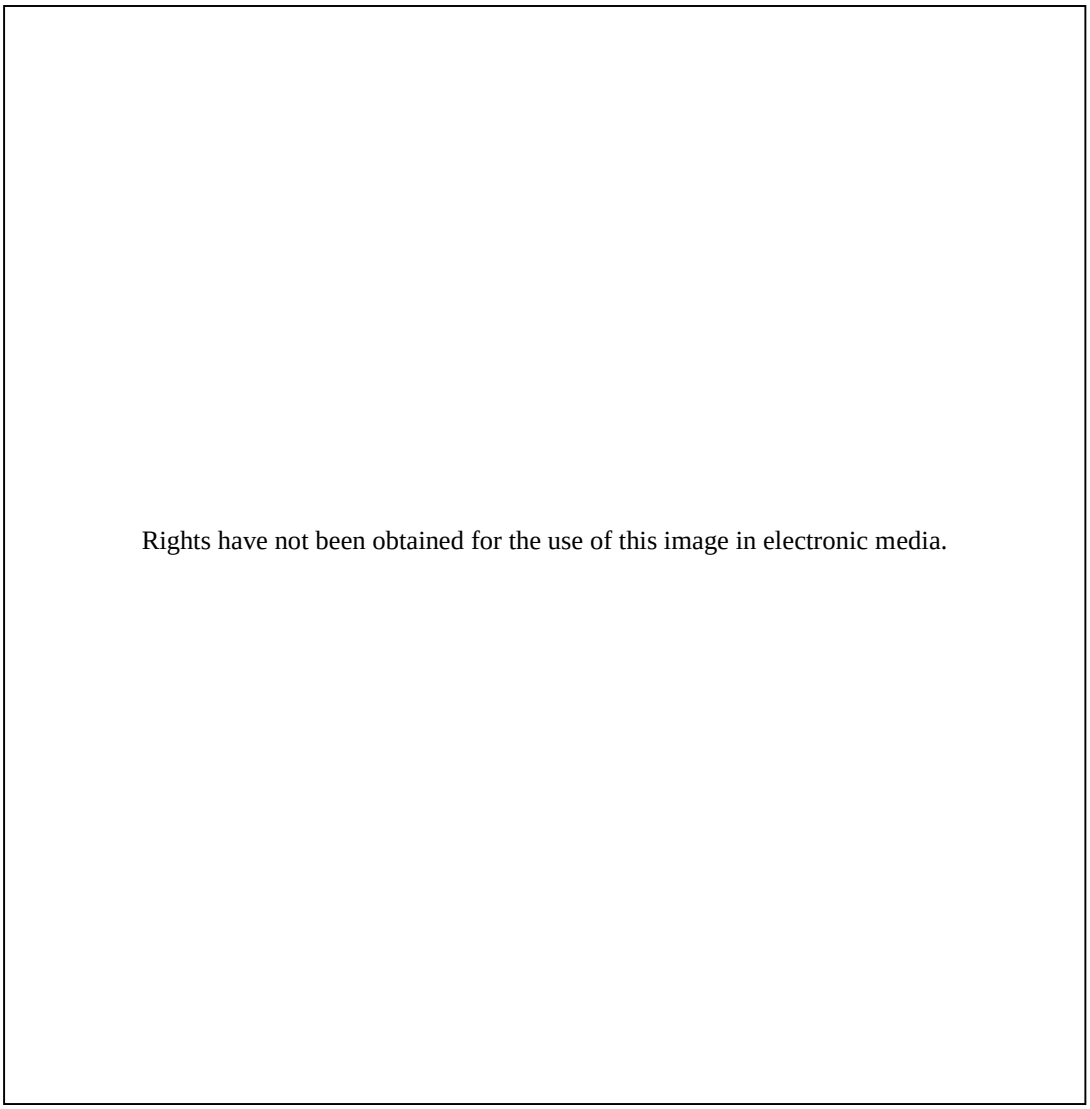


Figure 4.12: Location of excavated sites in York. A: Bedern Chapel, B: 2 Aldwark, C: Bedern, D: Bedern Foundry, E: St Andrewgate, F: Low Petergate, G: Swinegate, H: Shambles, I: Parliament Street, J: Coppergate, K: Fishergate

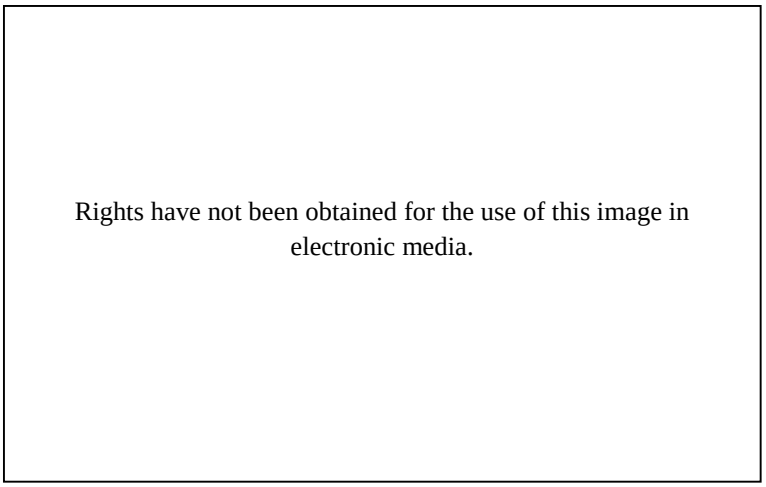


Figure 4.13: Decorated dress accessories from Coppergate, York. A: YOR003, B: YOR012.

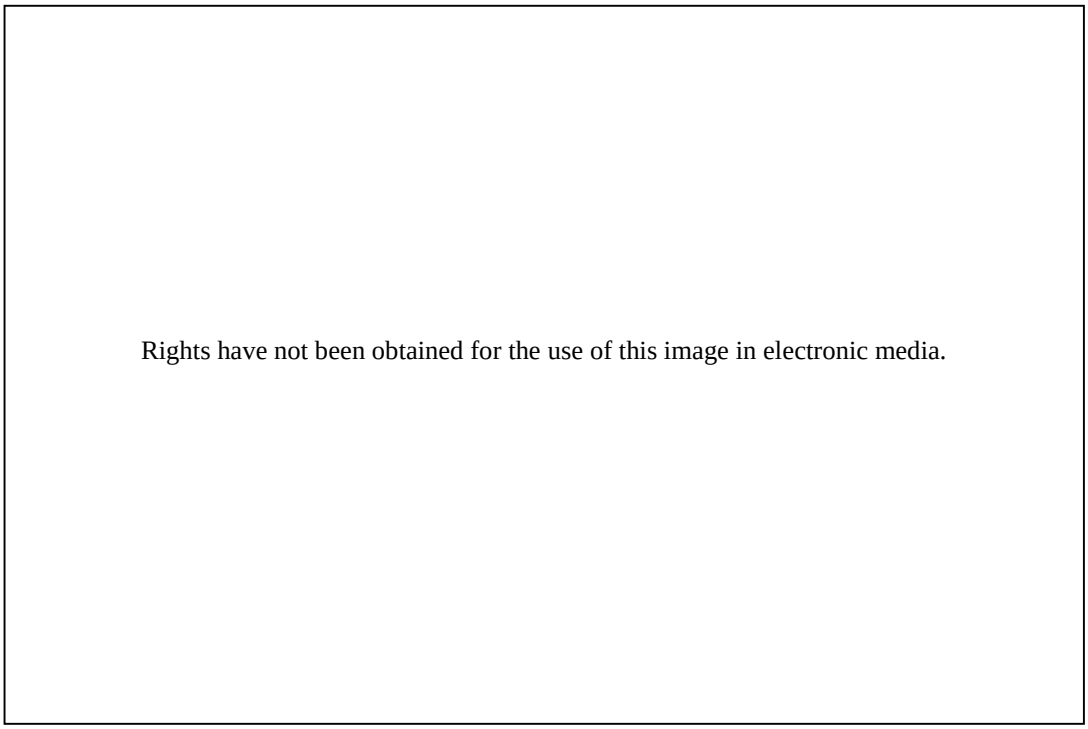


Figure 5.1: Stone mould for the production of buckles from Coventry

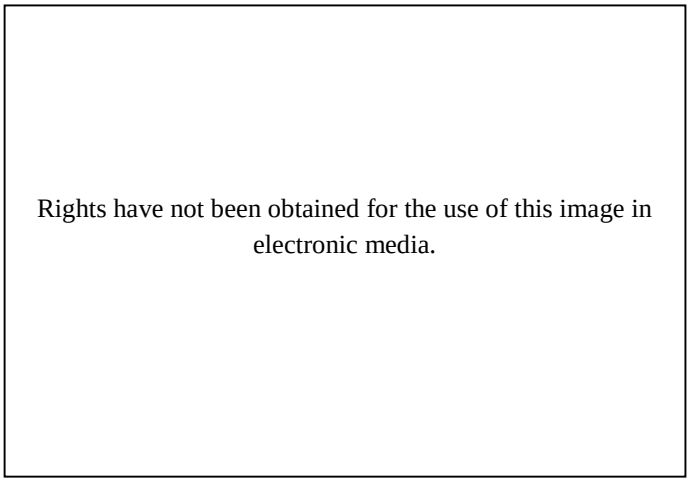


Figure 5.2: Sheet metal waste for the production of mounts from the Thames Exchange, London. A: LON1222, B: LON1276

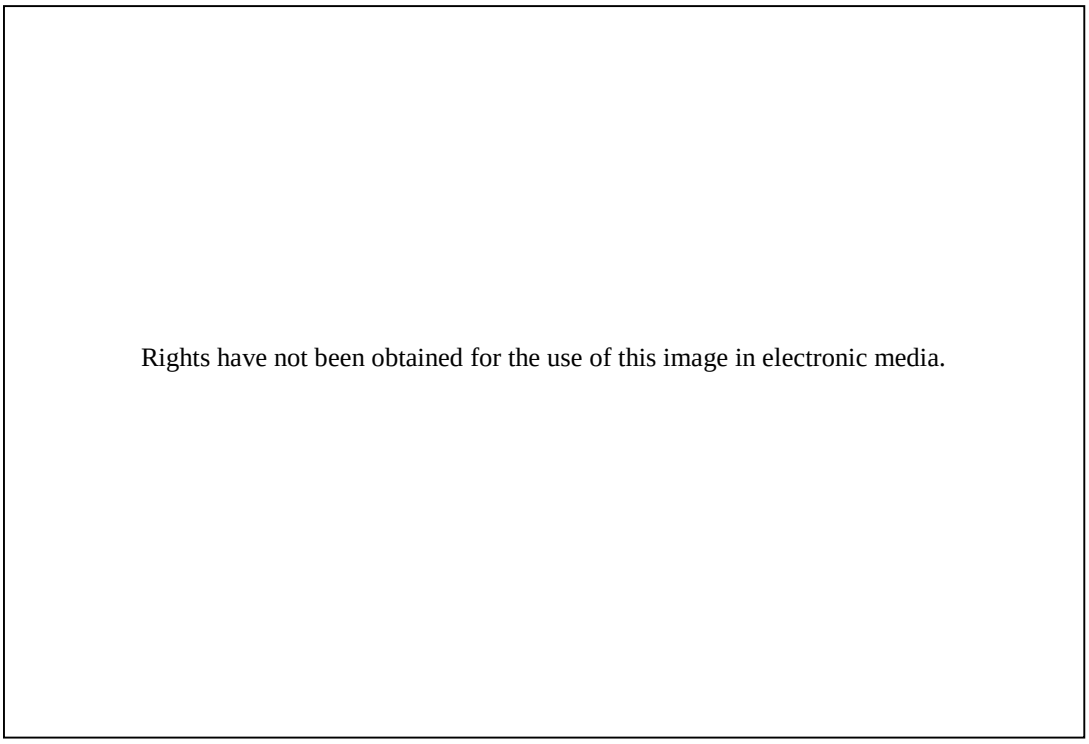
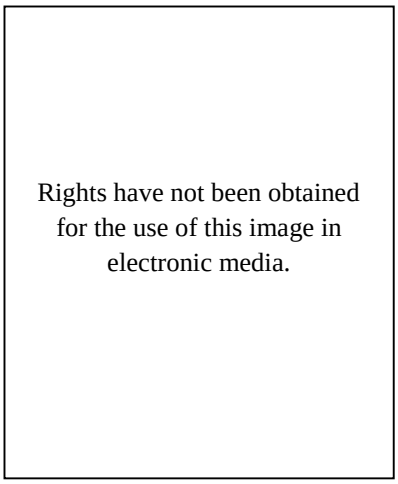
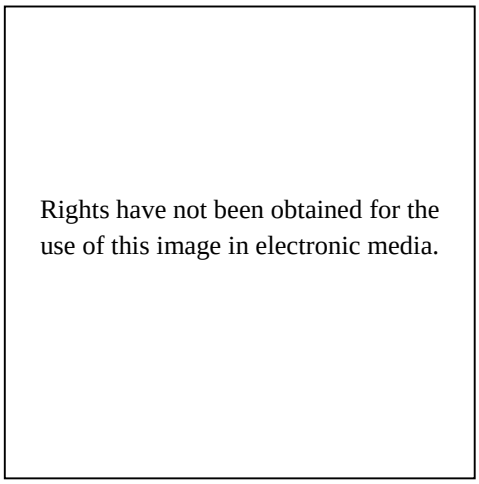


Figure 5.3: Location of sites that have produced production waste from London





Left: Figure 5.4 Winchester style strap-end waster from the London Guildhall (Bowsher *et al*. 2007: 344)
Right: Figure 5.5: Lead 'cushion' for the decoration of sheet metal plates from the London Guildhall (Bowsher *et al*. 2007: 346)

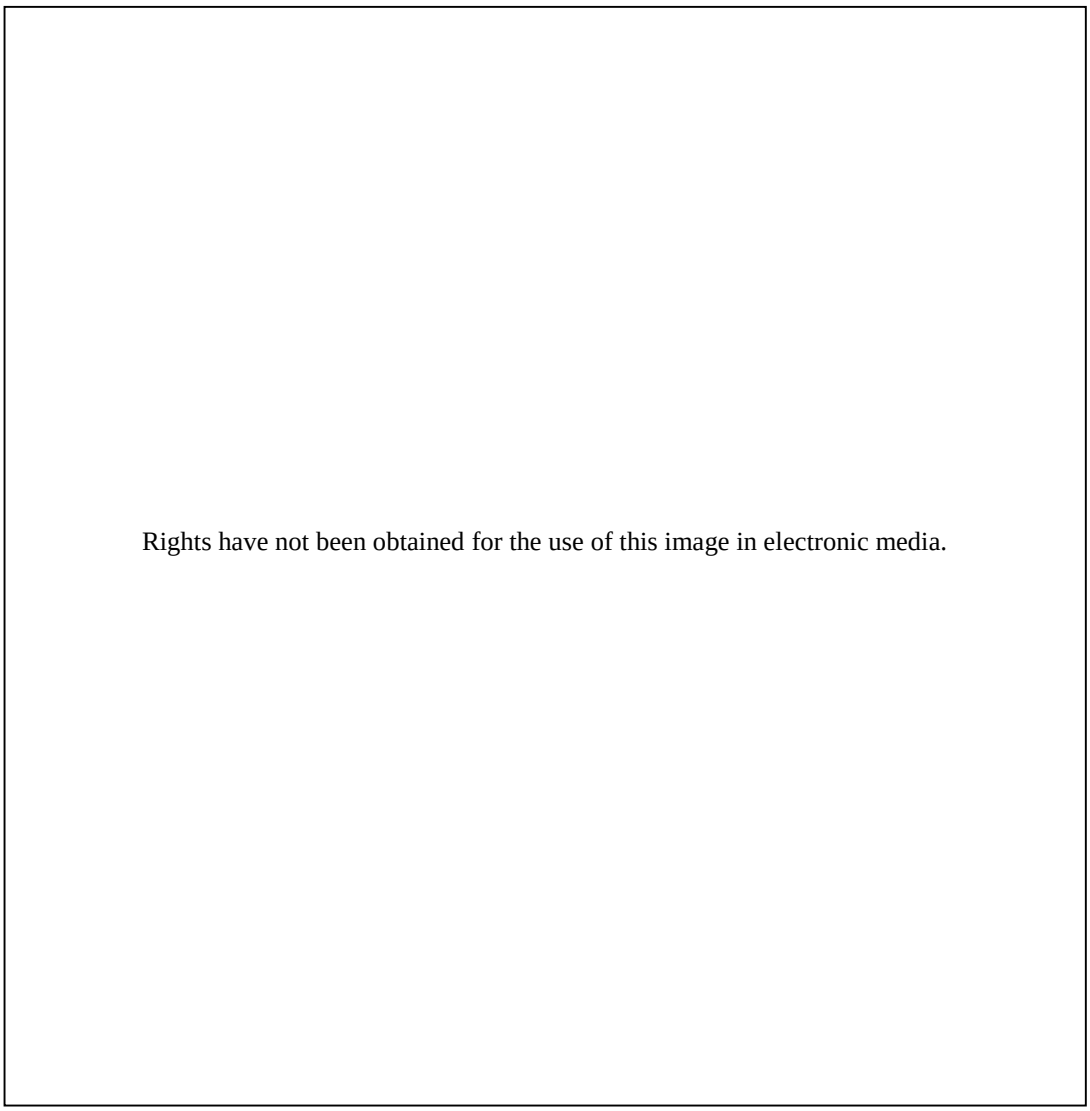


Figure 5.6: Location of production sites in York. A: Swinegate, B: Low Petergate, C: Bedern Foundry, D: St Andrewgate

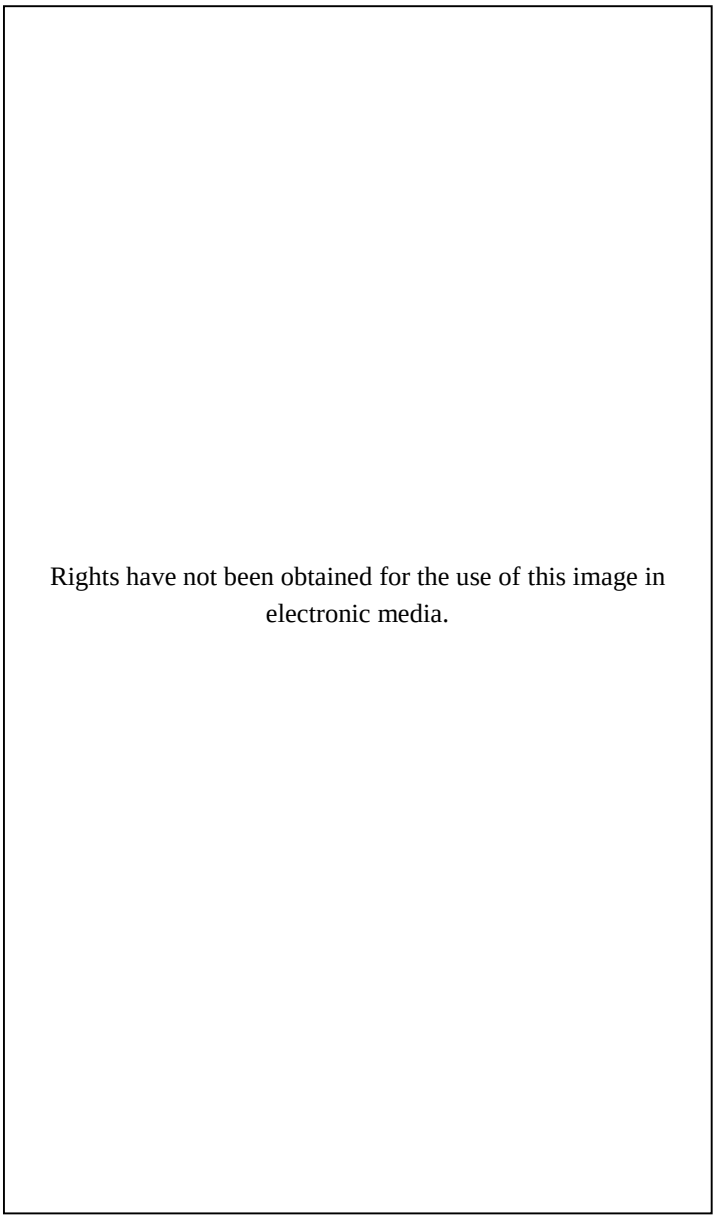


Figure 5.7: Plan of Periods 2 and 3 from 122-3 Much Park Street, Coventry (Wright 1982: 53)

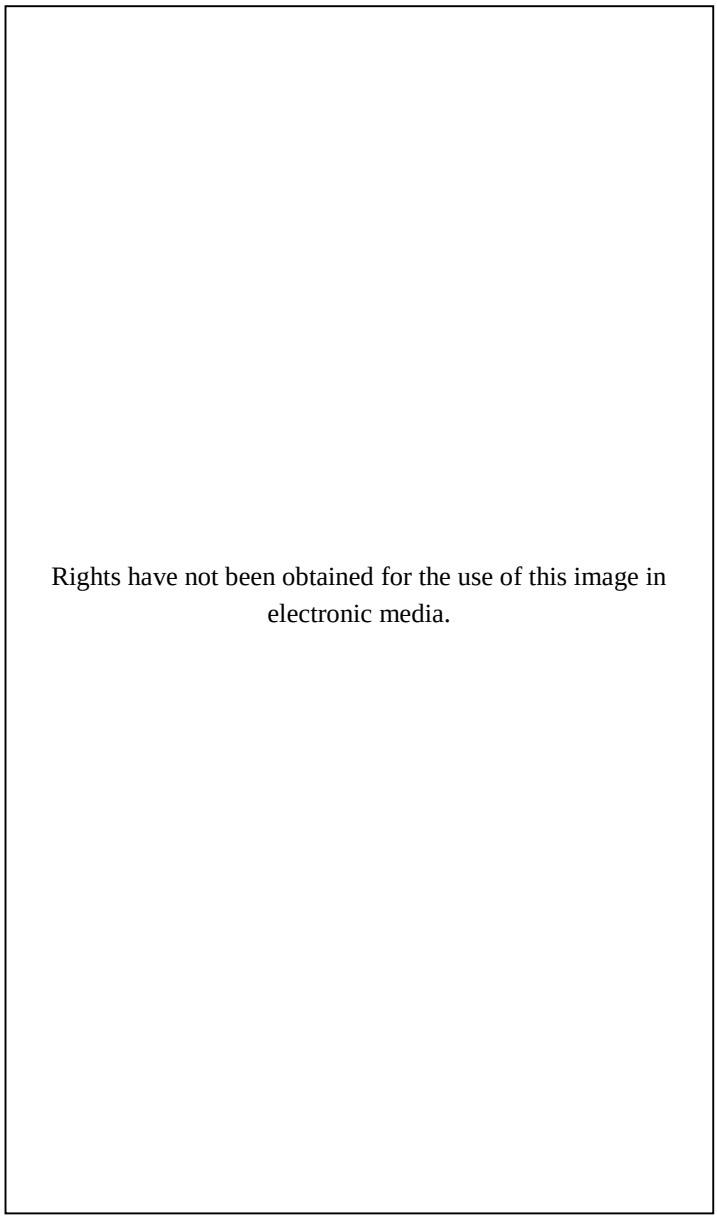


Figure 5.8: Plan of Periods 4 and 5A from 122-3 Much Park Street, Coventry (Wright 1982: 54)

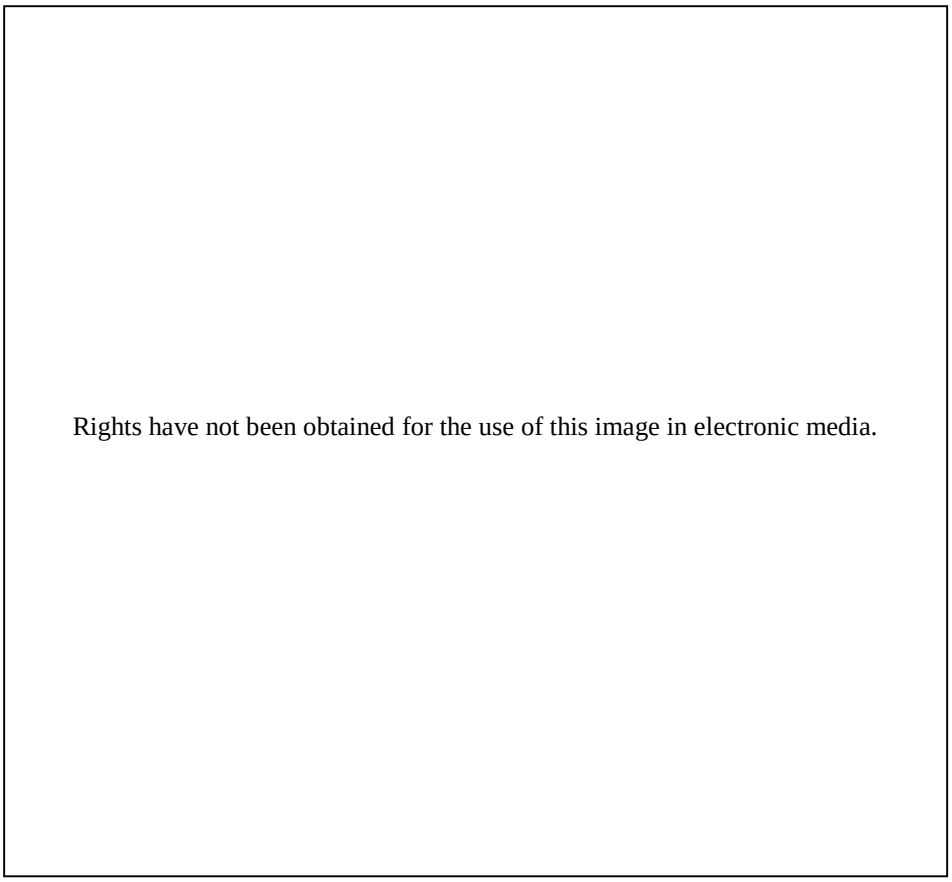


Figure 5.9: Dress accessory wasters from Coventry. A: COV023, B: COV055, C: COV060, D: COV062, E: COV116

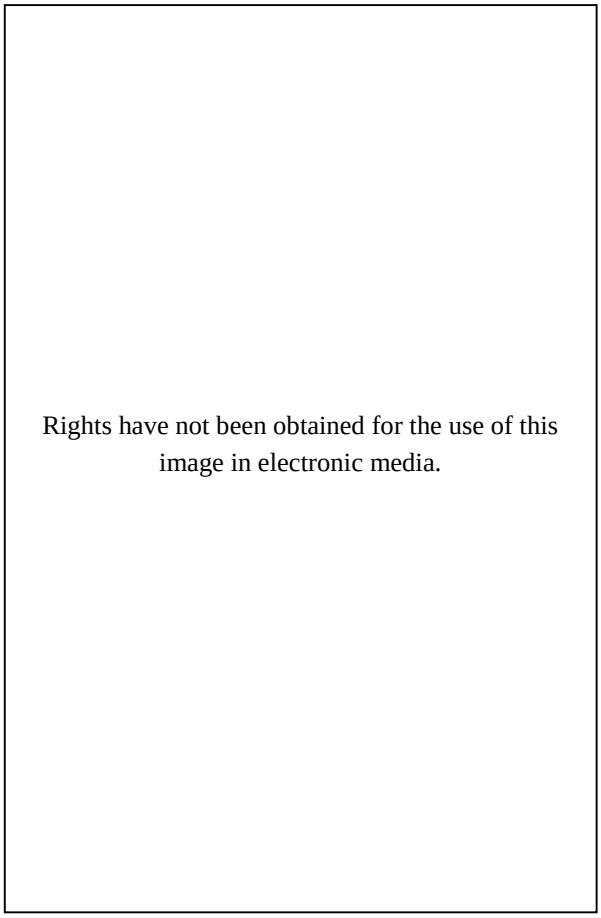


Figure 5.10: Plan of metalworking structures from the London Guildhall (Bowsher *et al*. 2007: 348)

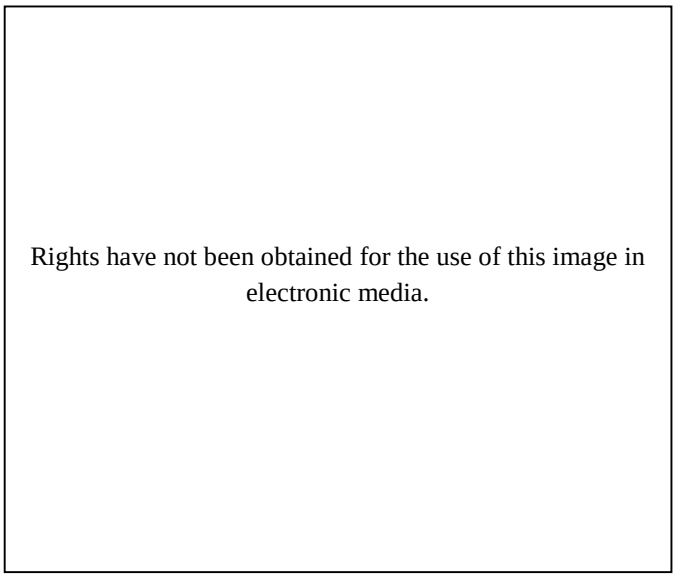


Figure 5.11: Tile hearth from Low Petergate, York (Reeves 2006)

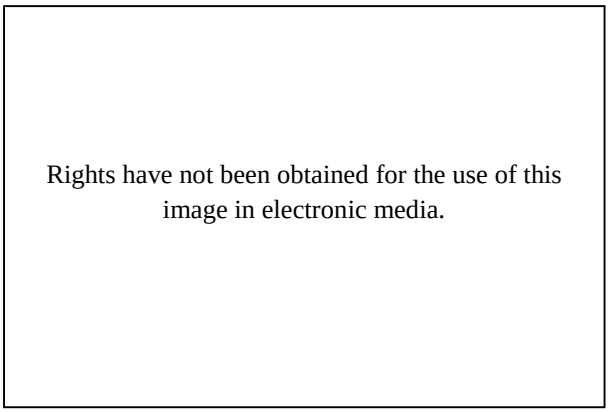


Figure 5.12: Tile hearth from St Andrewgate, York (Finlayson 2004: 906)

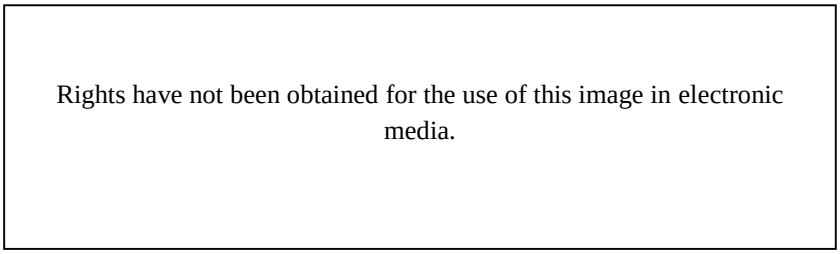


Figure 5.13: Early and late crucible forms from the London Guildhall (Bowsher *et al*. 2007: 349)

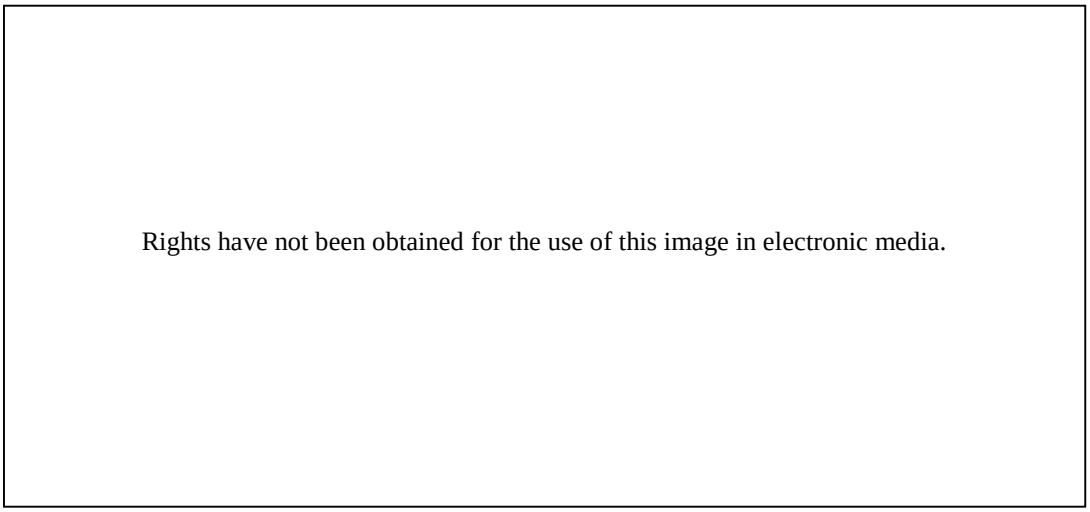


Figure 5.14: Stone mould for the production of buckles from Salisbury (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 105)

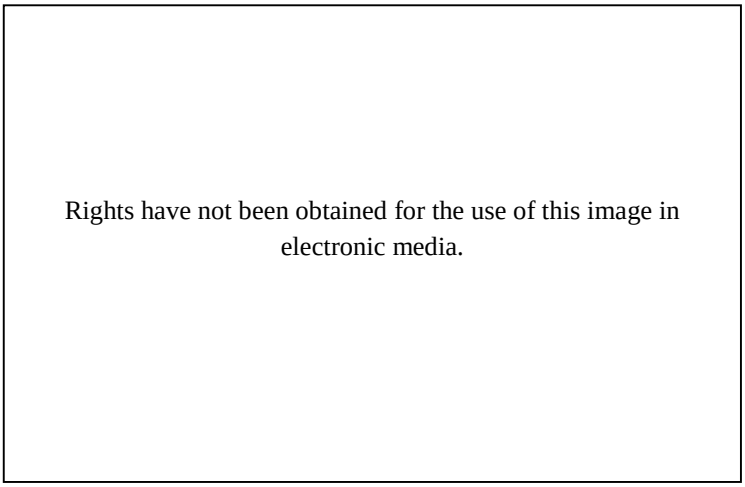


Figure 5.15: Ceramic mould fragments for the production of dress accessories from the Much Park Street sites, Coventry (Bayley 1982: 86)

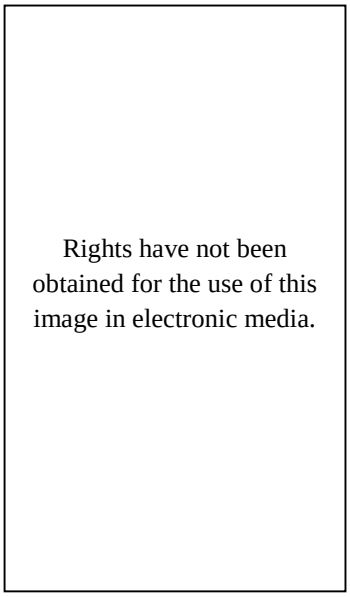


Figure 5.16: Stack mould fragment from Copthall Avenue, London (Armitage 1981: 363)

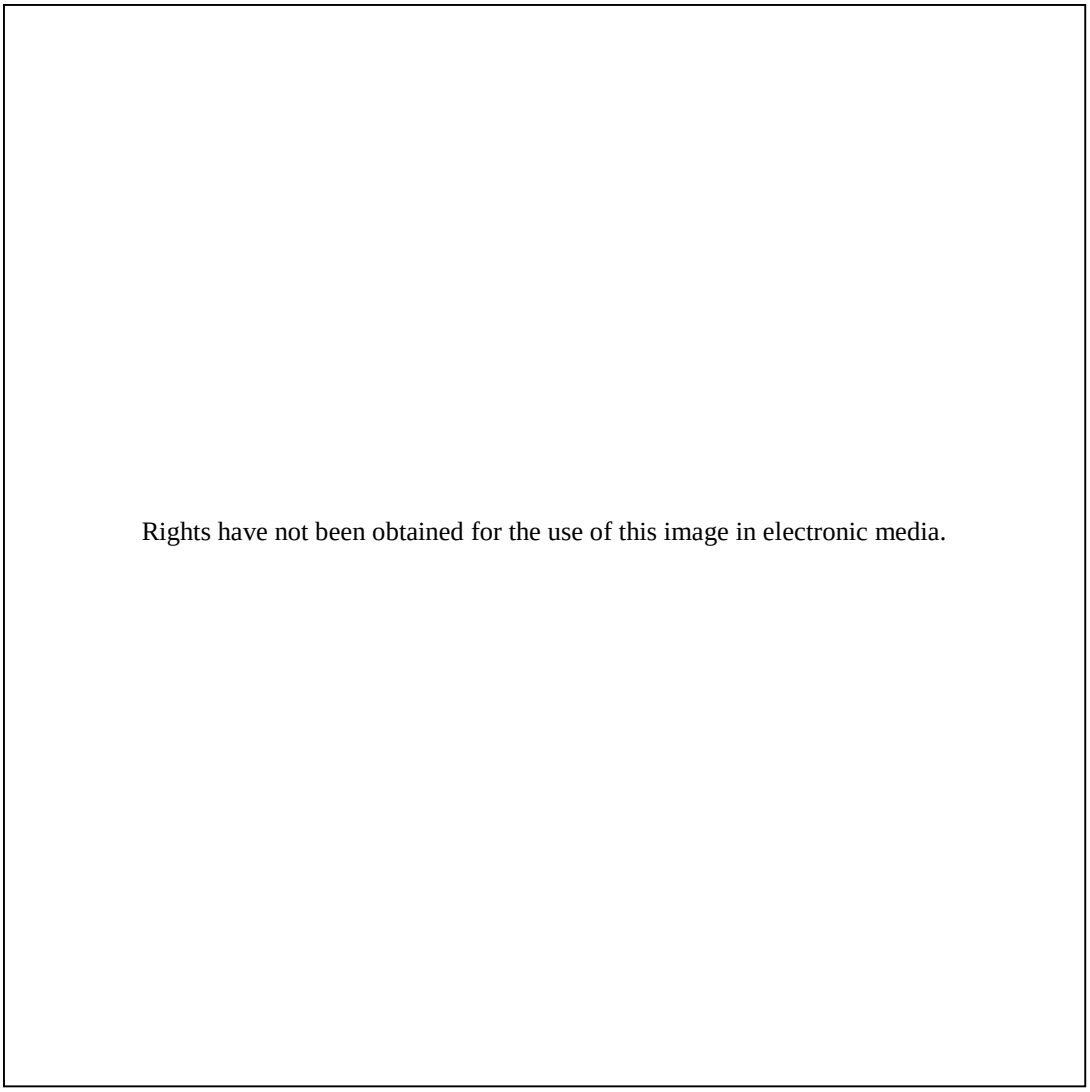
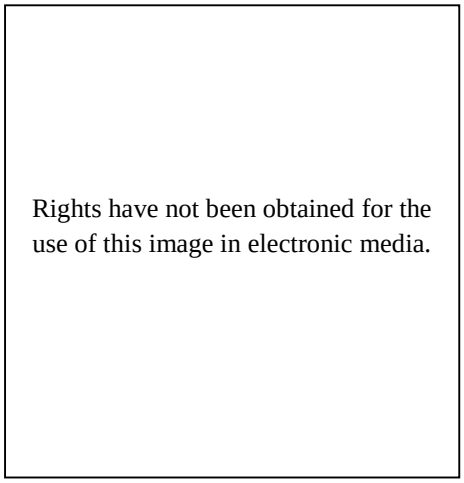
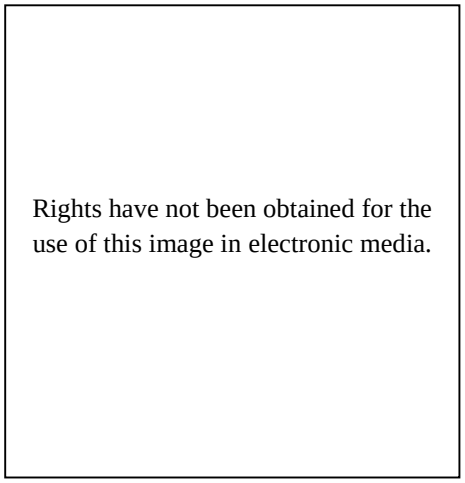
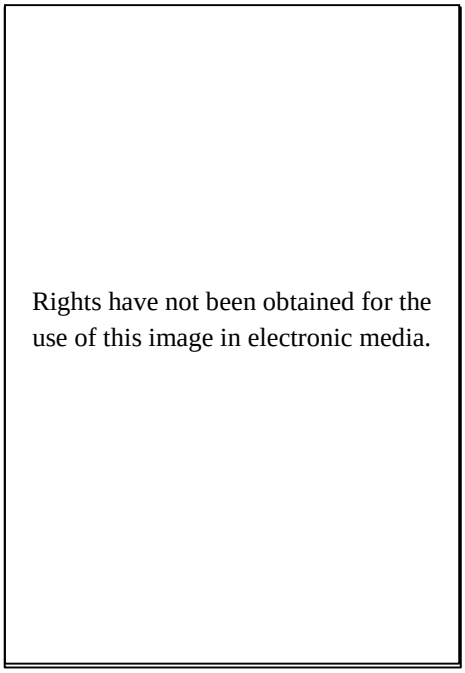


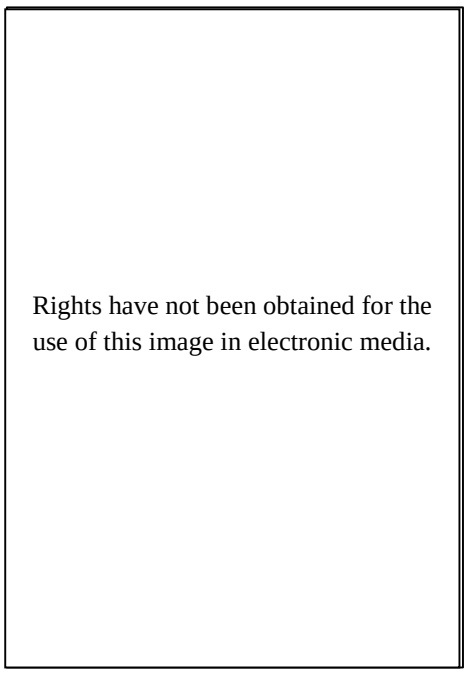
Figure 5.17: Stack mould for the production of oval buckles from the London Guildhall (Bowsher *et al*. 2007: 349)





Left: Figure 5.18: LON1162 – oval buckle frame waster
Right: Figure 5.19: LON1282 – forked spacer strap-end waster





Left: Figure 5.20: LON0855 – forked spacer strap-end waster
Right: Figure 5.21: LON1001 – oval buckle frame wasters

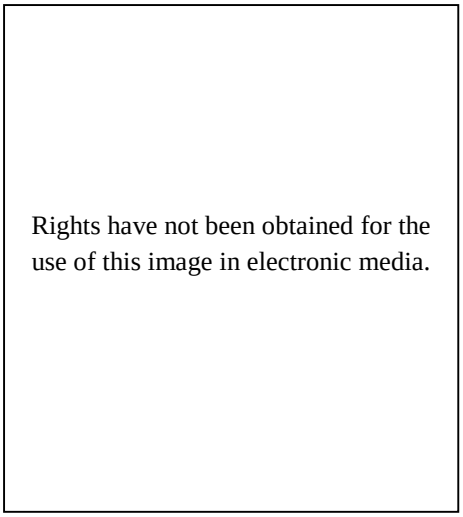
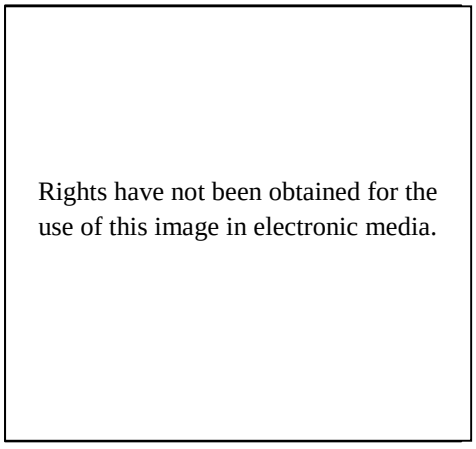
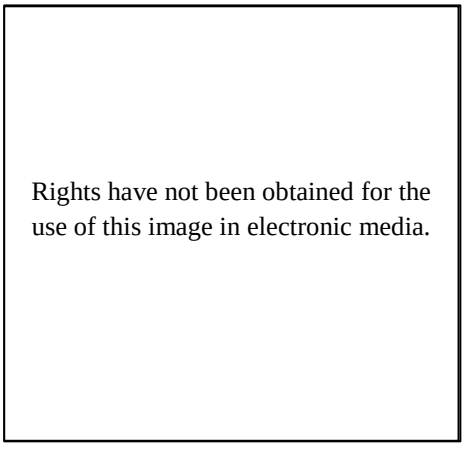


Figure 5.22: LON1305 – oval buckle frame wasters





Left: Figure 5.23: LON1040 – Trapezoidal strap loop waster
Right: Figure 5.24: LON1123 – Oval clasp frame waster

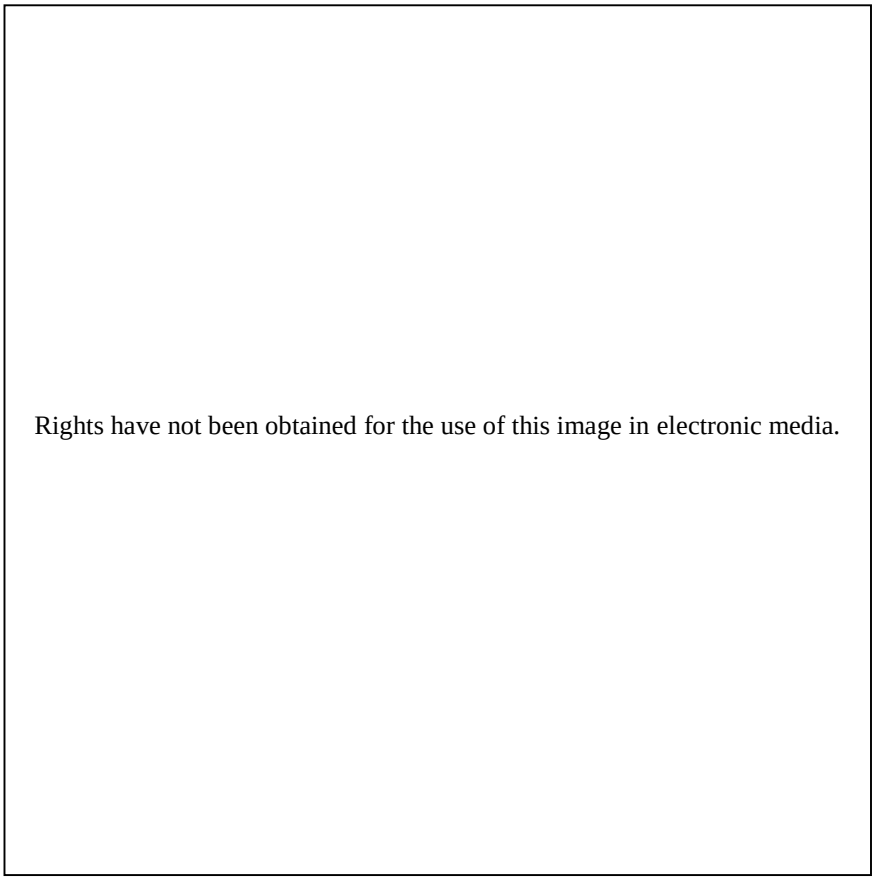


Figure 5.25: Dress accessory wasters from the London Guildhall. A: LON0852, B: LON0853, C: LON0855, D: LON0861, E: LON0865, F: LON0956, G: LON0957

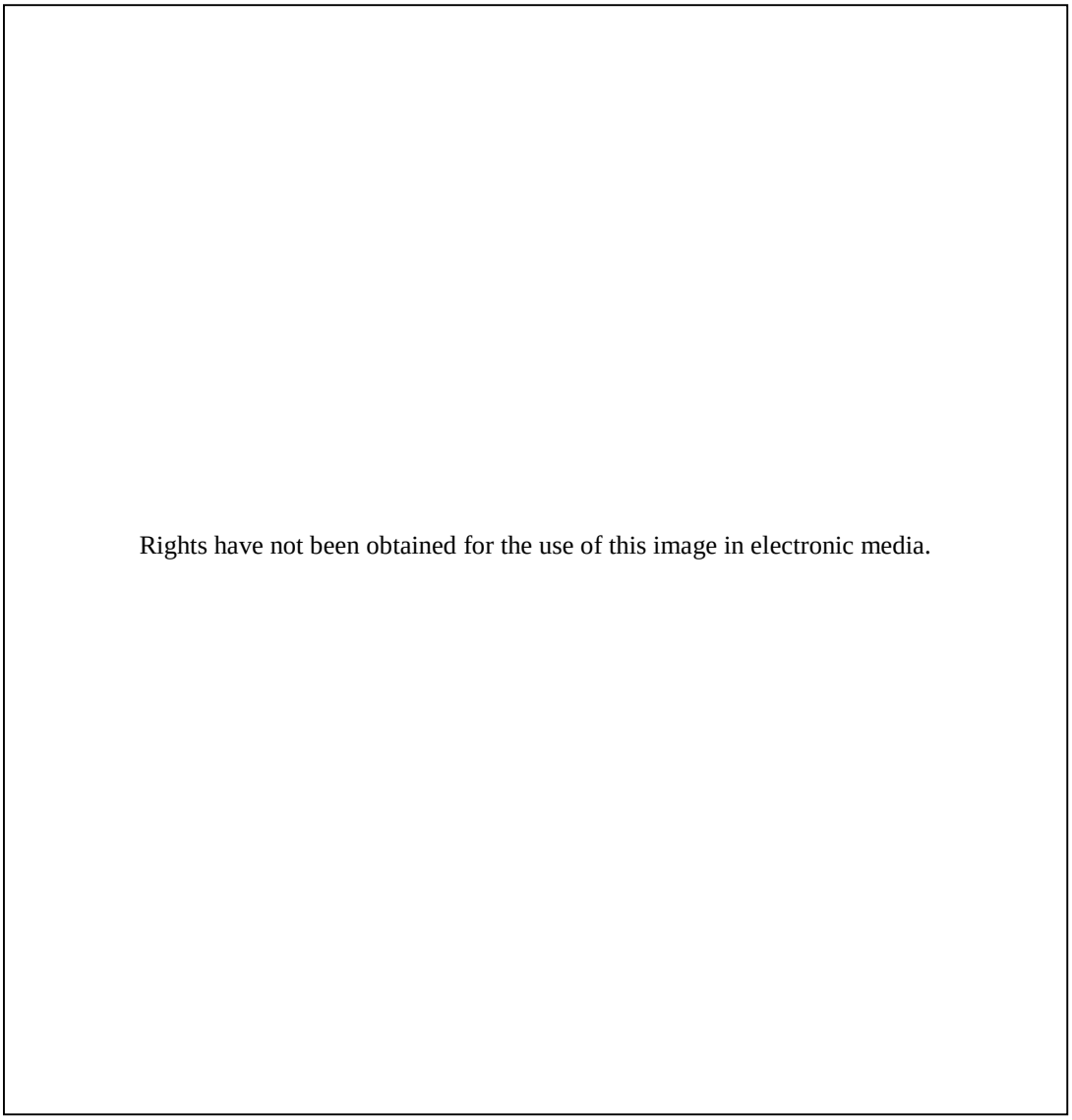


Figure 5.26: Dress accessory wasters from the Thames Exchange, London. A: LON1144, B: LON1017, C: LON1309, D: LON1240, E: LON1247, F: LON1293, G: LON1280, H: LON1050, I: LON1304, J: LON1252, K: LON1163

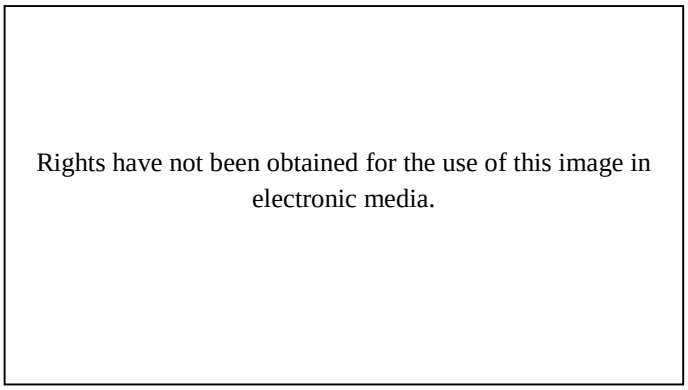


Figure 5.27: LON0148 – Rectangular strap loop wasters from Copthall Avenue, London

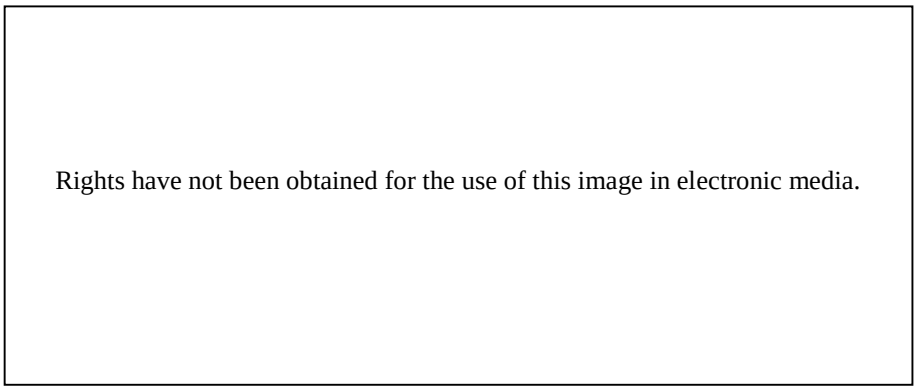
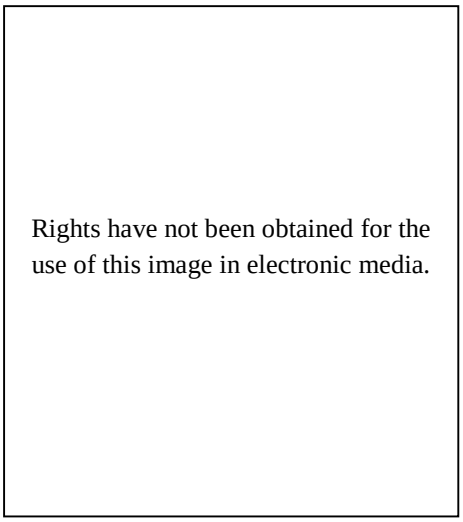
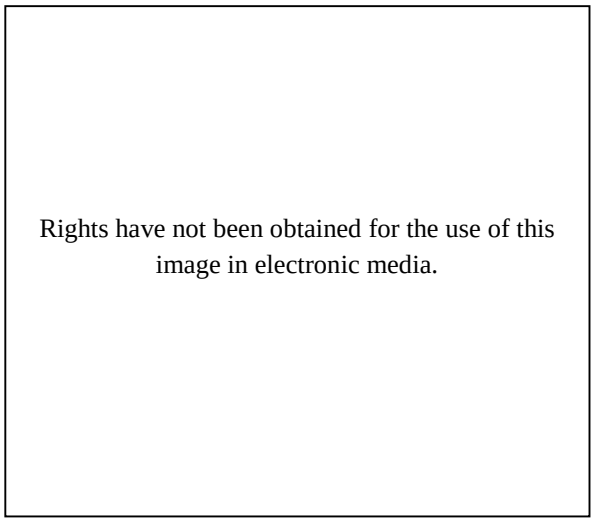


Figure 5.28: Sexfoil mount wasters from Billingsgate Lorry Park (BWB83), London. A: LON0276, B: LON0281, C: LON0107, D: LON0359





Left: Figure 5.29: YOR244 – forked spacer buckle waster from the Bedern Foundry, York
Right: Figure 5.30: Dress accessory wasters from Low Petergate, York. A: YOR315, B: YOR319

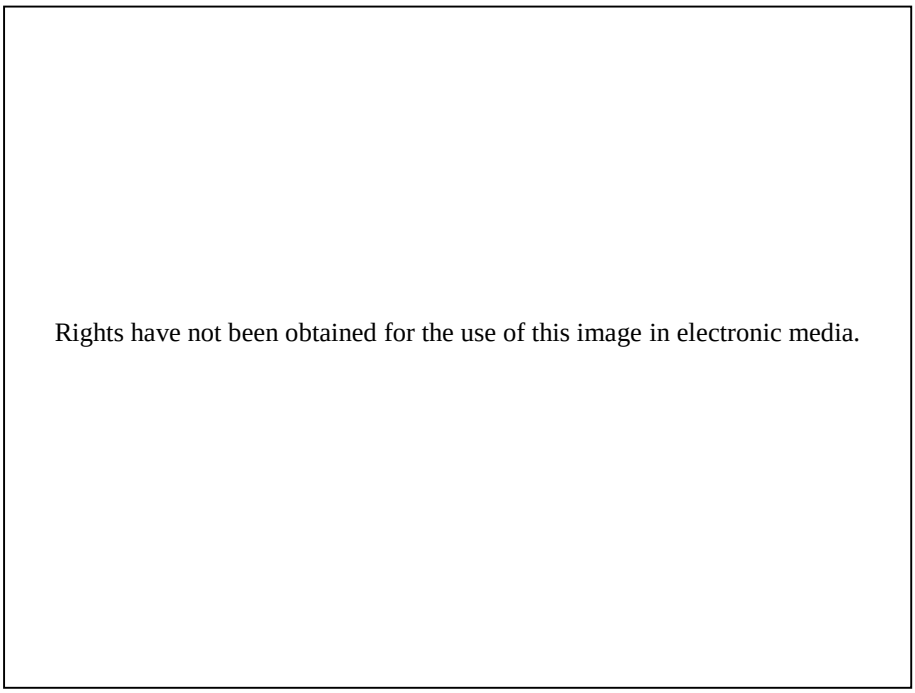


Figure 5.31: Dress accessory wasters from St Andrewgate, York. A: YOR313, B: YOR308, C: YOR305, D: YOR314, E: YOR309

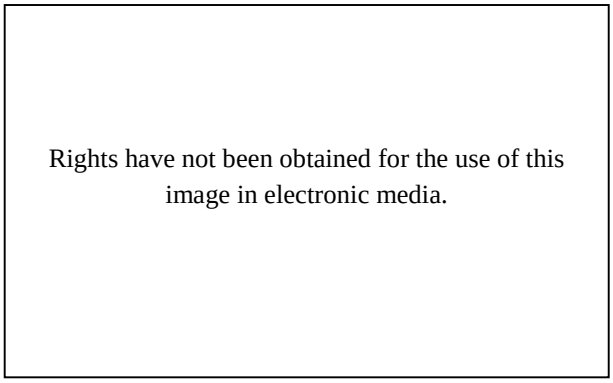


Figure 5.32: Stack mould for the production of rectangular buckles from Swinegate, York

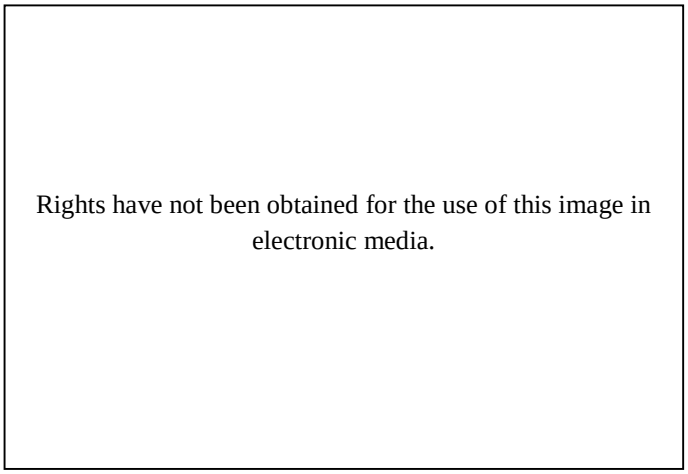


Figure 5.33: Stack mould for the production of purse hangers and associated waster from Swinegate, York

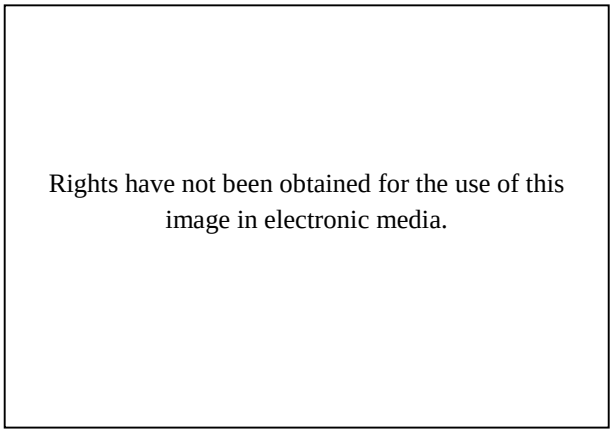
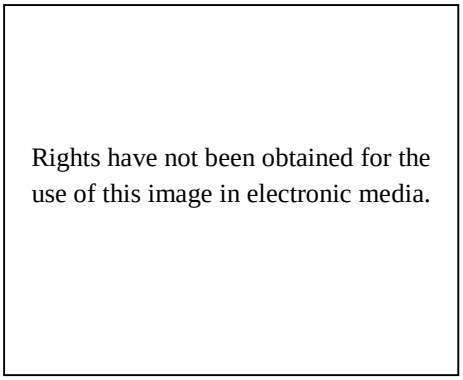
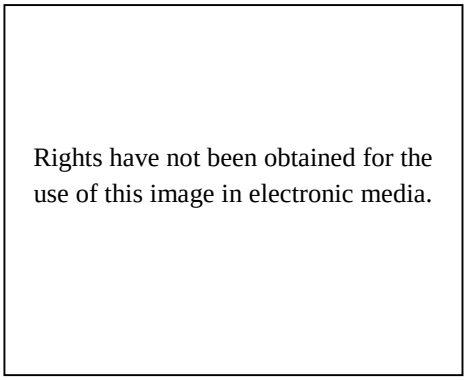
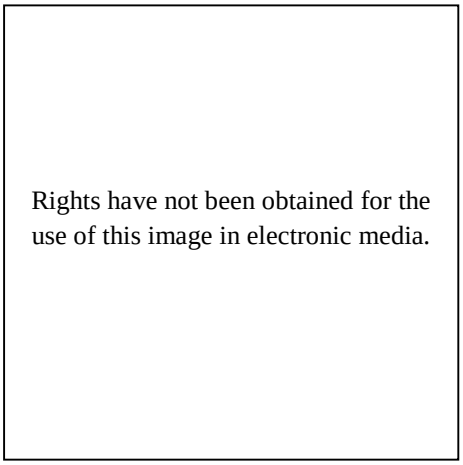


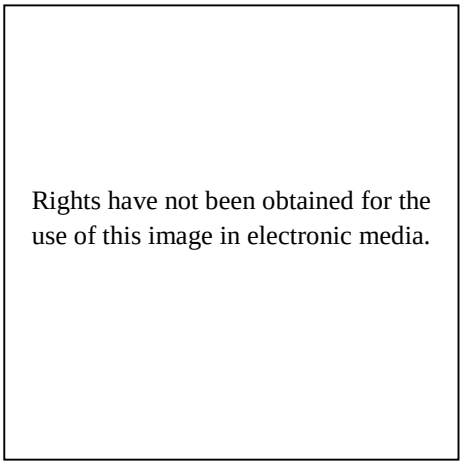
Figure 5.34:WOR025 – oval buckle frame waster





Left: Figure 5.35: LIN067 – oval buckle frame waster
Right: Figure 5.36: OXF002 – oval buckle frame waster





Left: Figure 5.37: CHE002 – double oval buckle frame waster
Right: Figure 5.38: EXE006 – double oval buckle frame waster

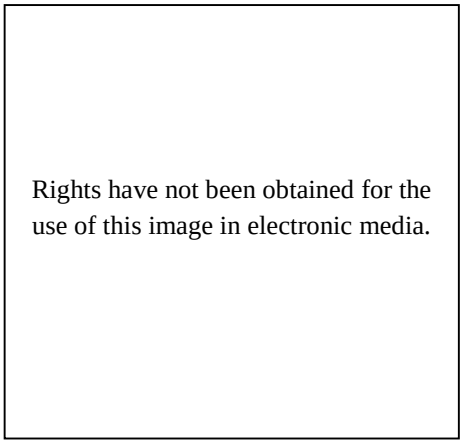
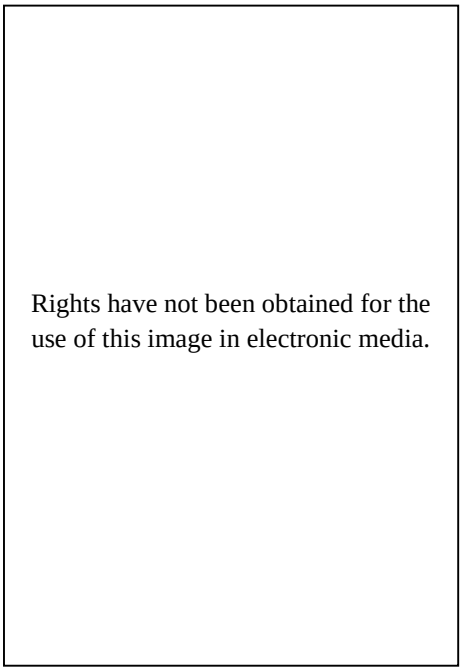
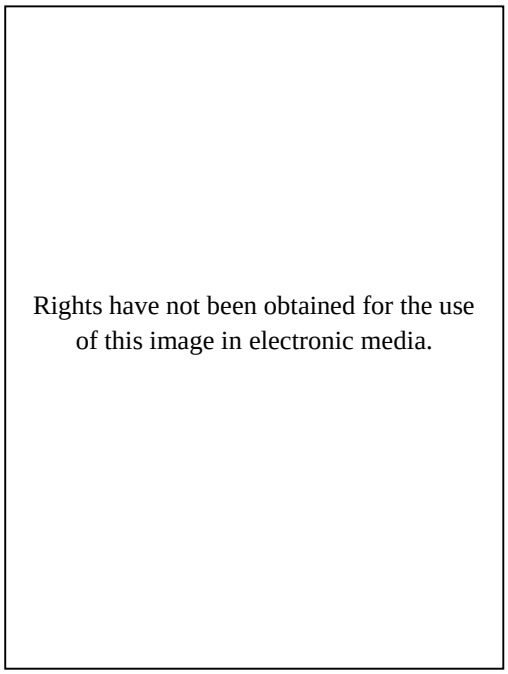
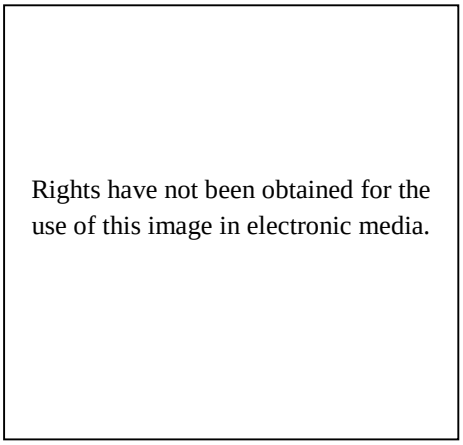


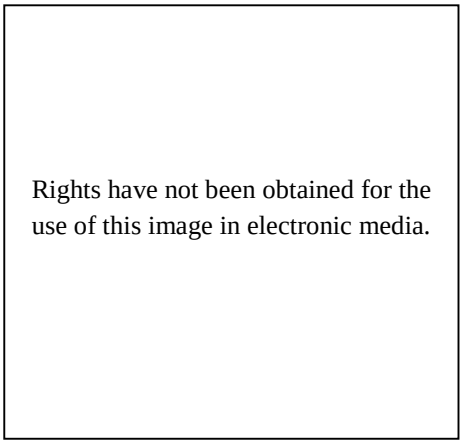
Figure 5.39: LON0026 – copper alloy double oval buckle frame with an iron pin



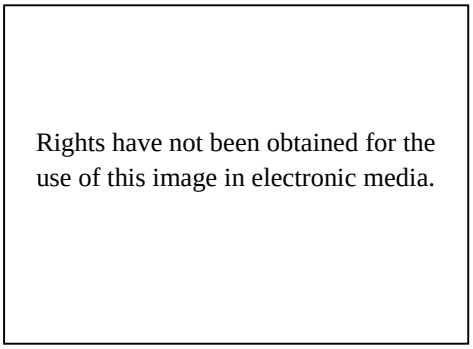


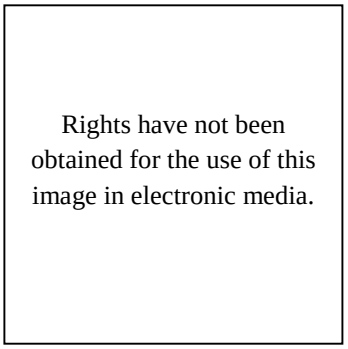
Left: Figure 5.40: GLO004 – circular buckle frame with a replacement pin
Right: Figure 5.41: LON227 – copper alloy circular buckle frame with an iron pin



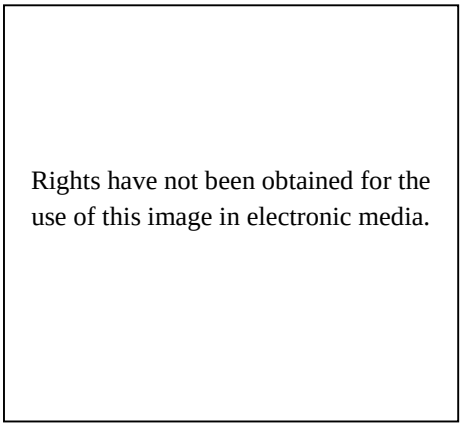


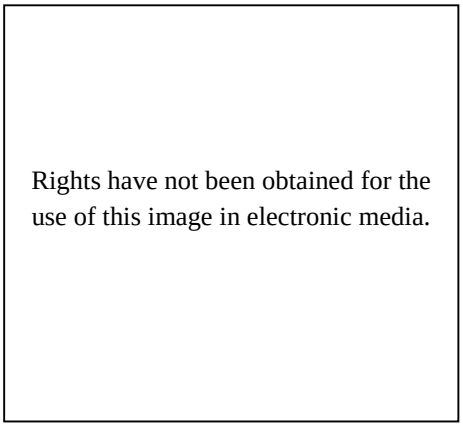
Left: Figure 5.42: LON0188 – oval buckle frame with a replacement pin
Right: Figure 5.43: WIN291 – forked spacer buckle frame with a replacement wire pin





Left: Figure 5.44: LON0603 – repaired buckle plate with replacement rivets
Right: Figure 5.45: Detail of WIN297 – replacement rivet obscuring original decoration





Left: Figure 5.46: LON0173 – repaired buckle plate
Right: Figure 5.47: LON0442 – strap-end repaired with copper alloy wire

Left: Figure 5.48: WIN228 – forked spacer buckle with copper alloy wire repair on sheet plates
Right: Figure 5.49: LON0481 – copper alloy repair of a different alloy to original clasp plate

Figure 5.50: Map of the towns and cities that have produced dress accessory production evidence

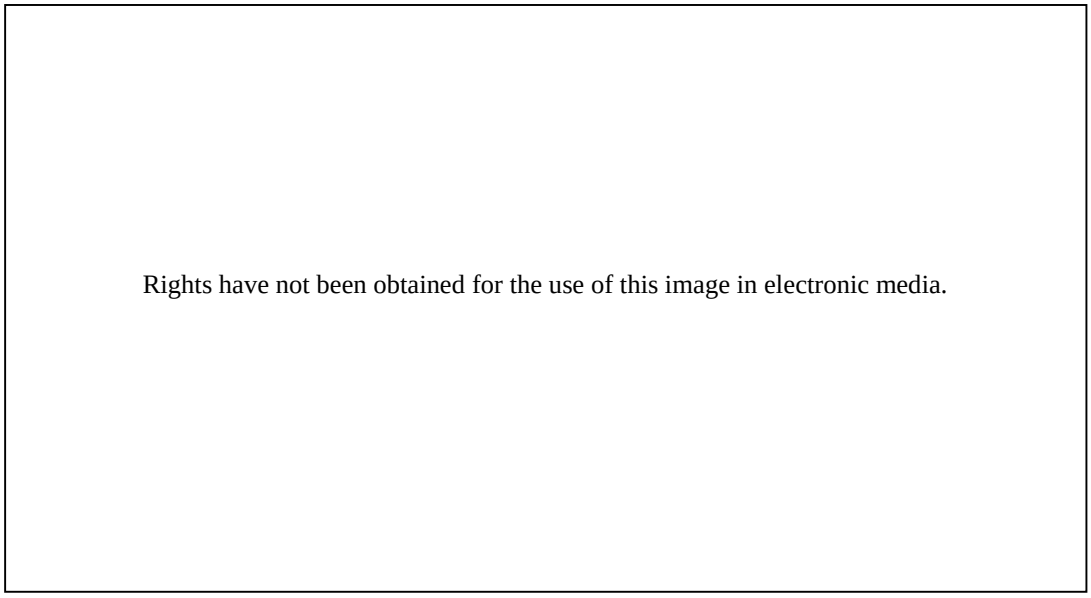


Figure 5.51: Dress accessory wasters from Cornmarket, Dublin (Hayden 2000: 107)

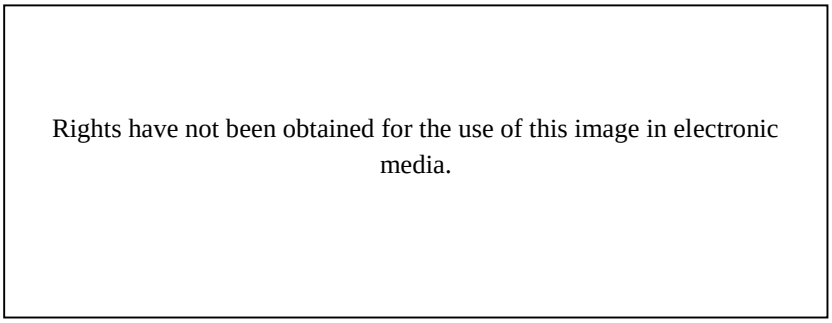


Figure 5.52: Oval buckle frame wasters from Lund (Bergman and Billberg 1976: 206)

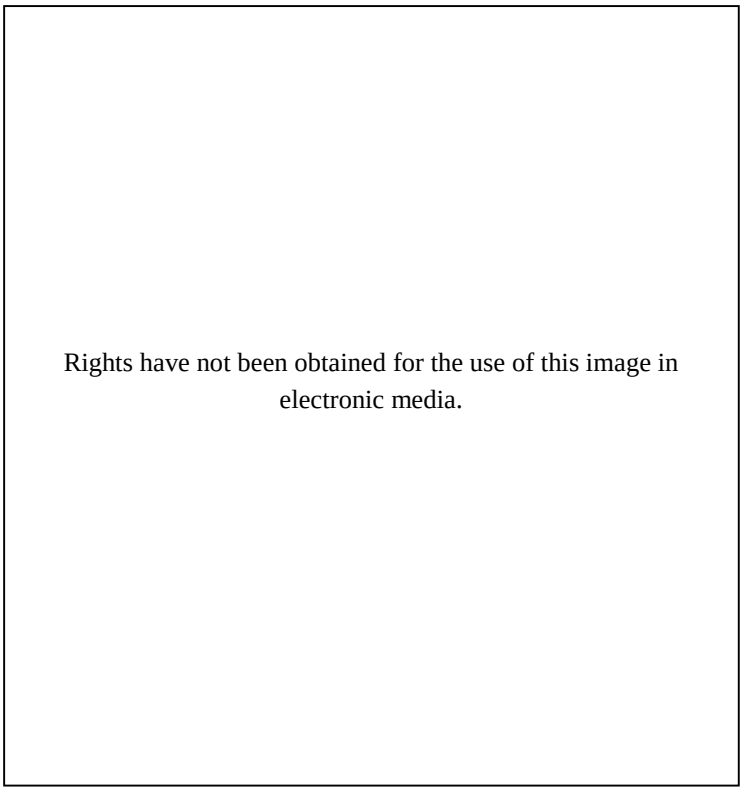


Figure 5.53: Double oval buckle frame wasters from Amsterdam. A: NL4-1, B: NL4-2

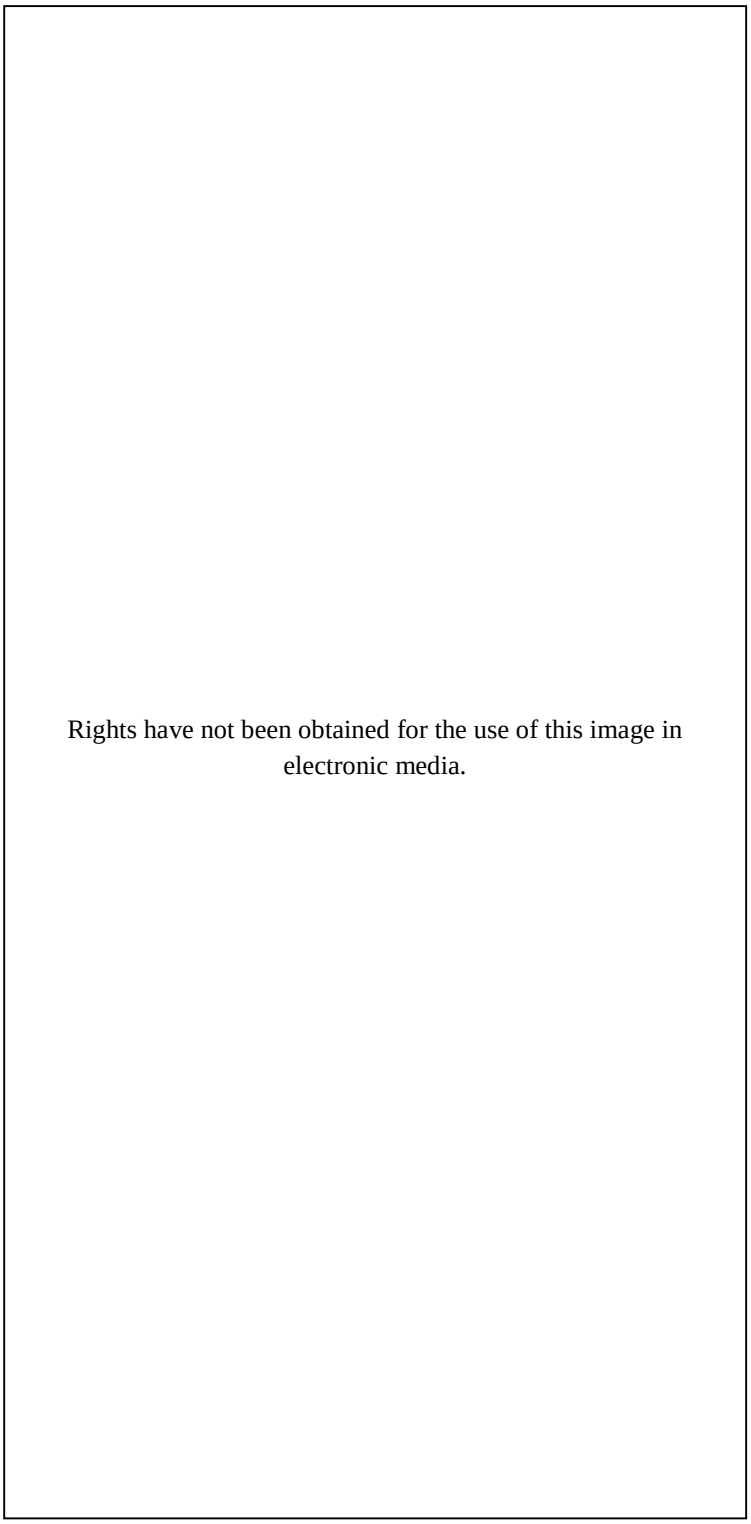


Figure 6.1: The Gough Map showing the road network of late medieval England

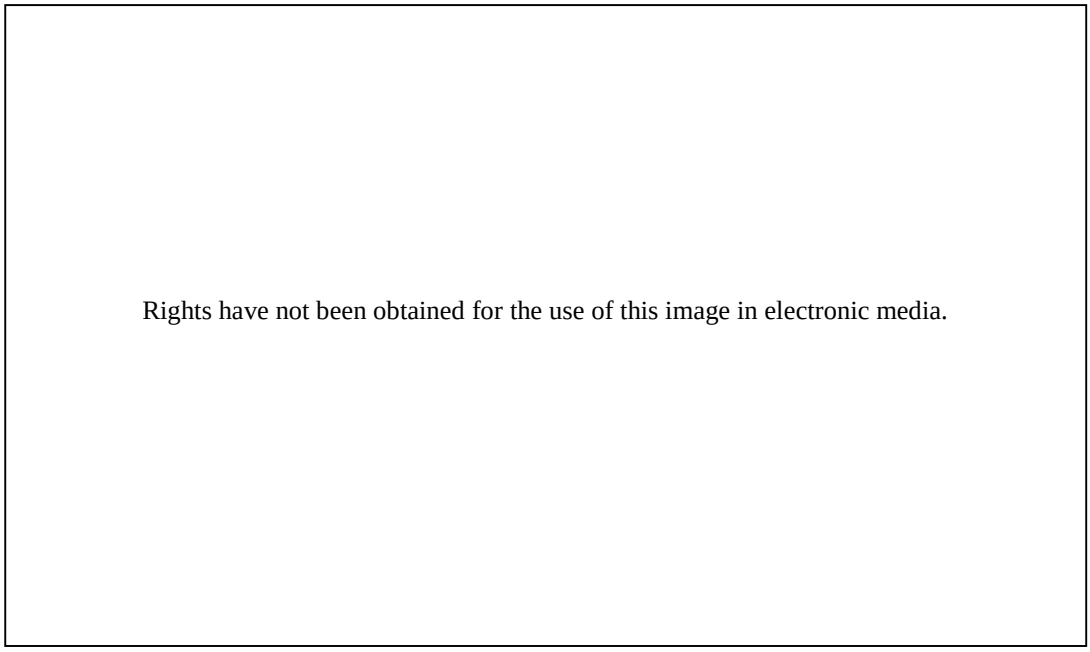


Figure 6.2: Map showing the origin of purchases made by Richard Mitford, bishop of Salisbury, 1406-7 (Dyer 1994: 259)

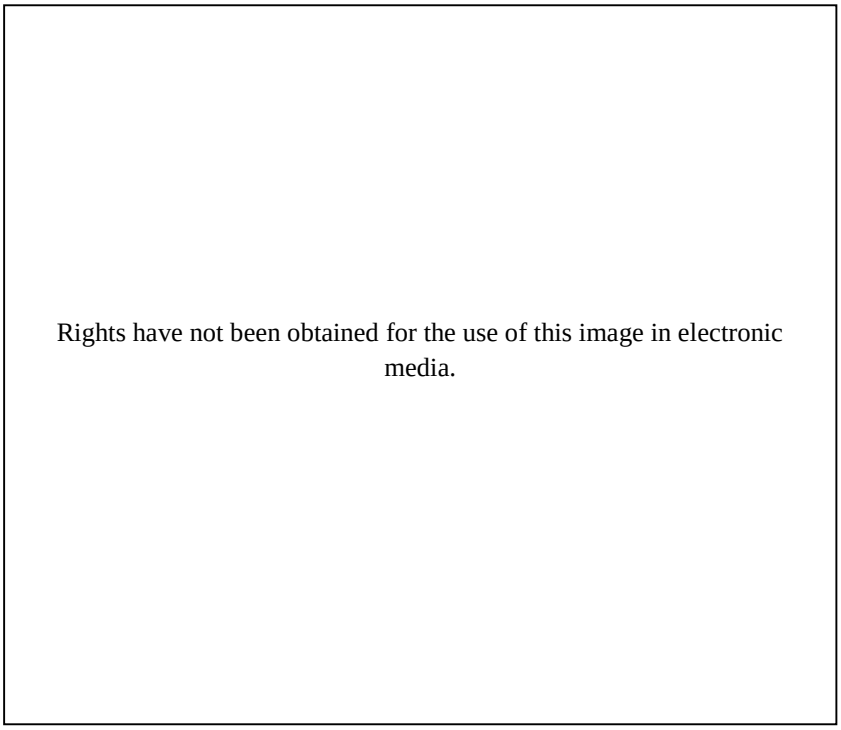


Figure 6.3: Buckles from Fishergate, York. A: YOR054, B: YOR052, C: YOR069, D: YOR060

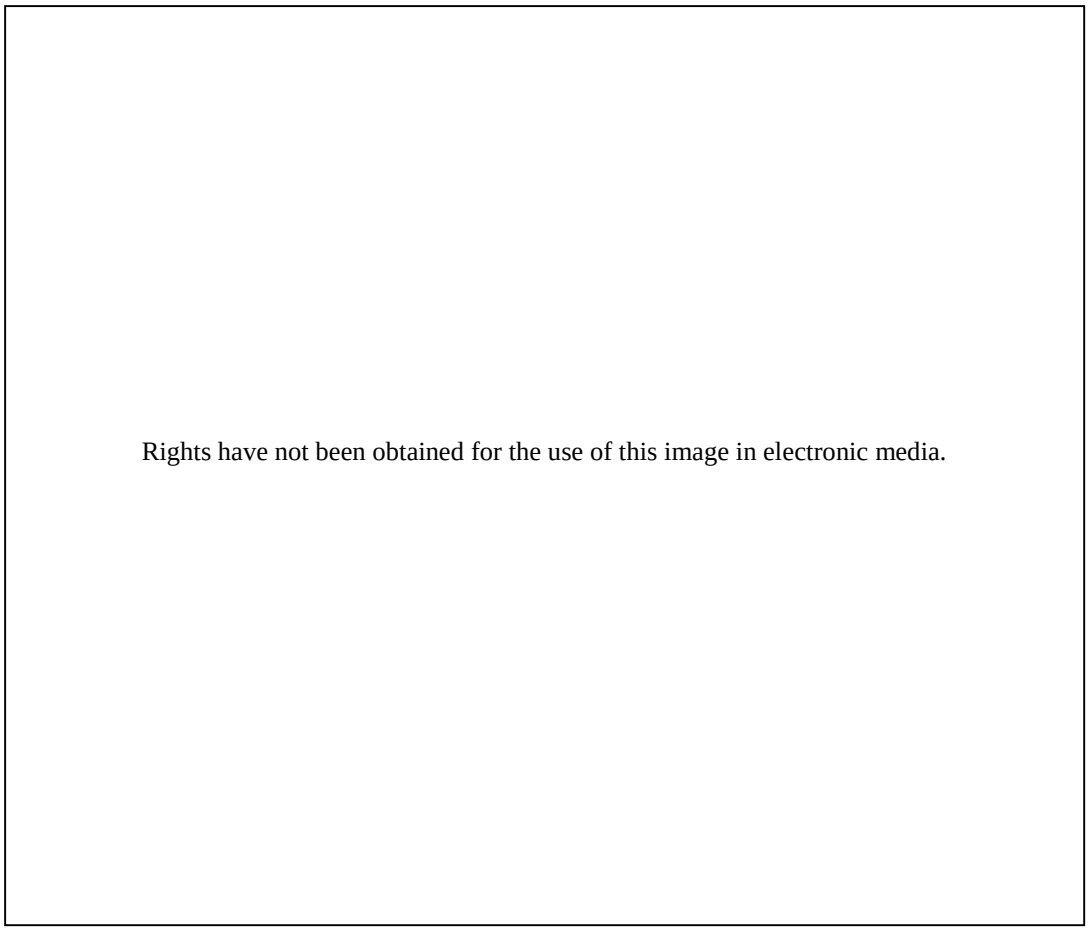


Figure 6.4: Location of examples of oval buckles from across Northern Europe (Fingerlin 1971: 82)

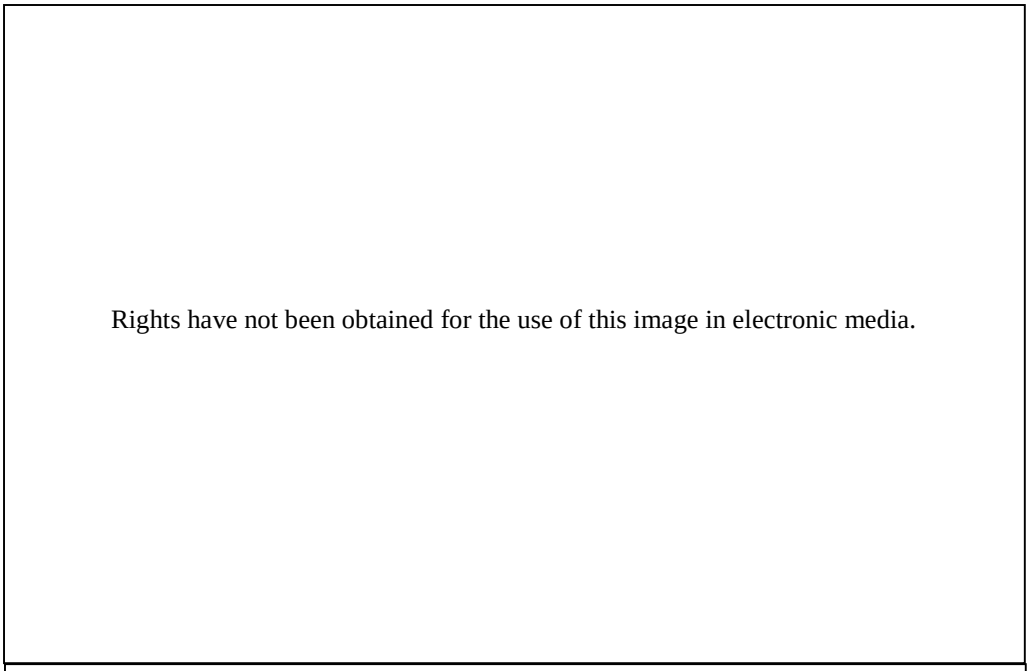


Figure 6.5: Oval buckles from settlements along the River Morava, Austria (Theune *et al*. 2009:89)

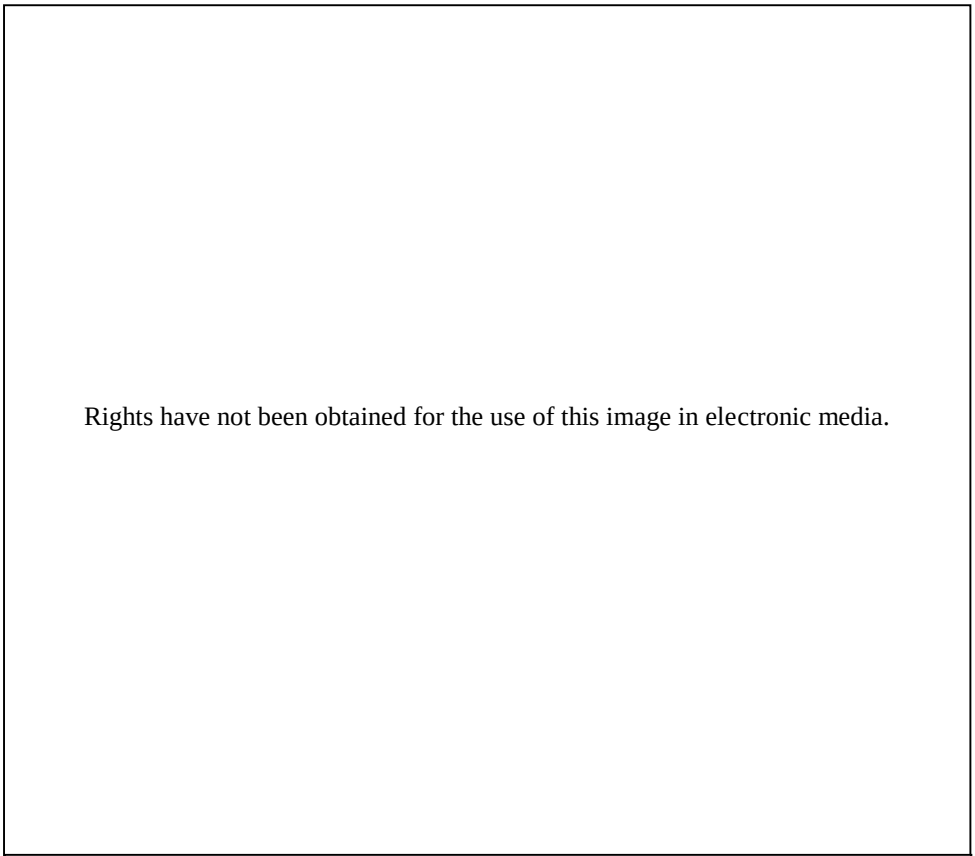


Figure 6.6: Parallels between mounts from London and Leiden (after Willemsen 2009: 80-82). A: LON0700, B: LON1336, C: LON0793, D: LON0652, E: LON0996, F: LON0138, G: LON1161, H: LON1286

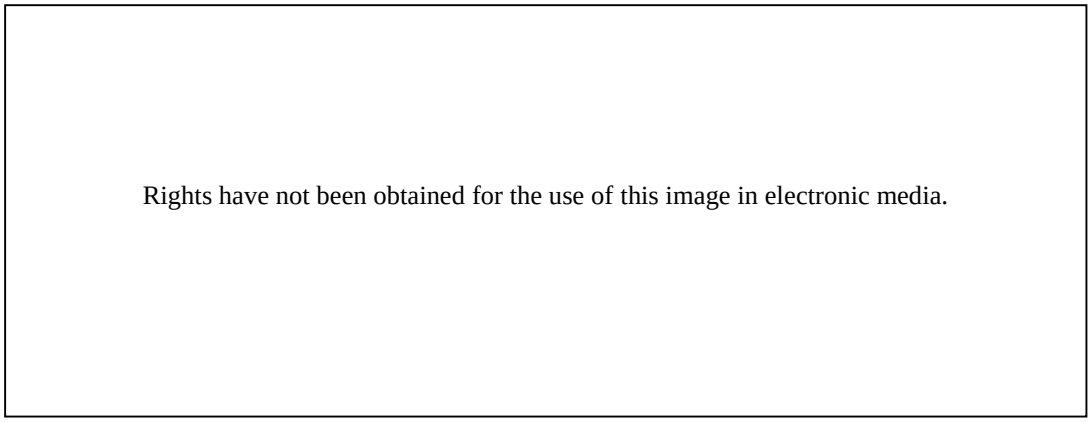


Figure 6.7: Bas-de-page depicting peasants taking in the harvest from the *Luttrell Psalter*

Figure 6.8: Pin-stripe silk tablet weave belt from London (Crowfoot *et al.* 1992: 133)

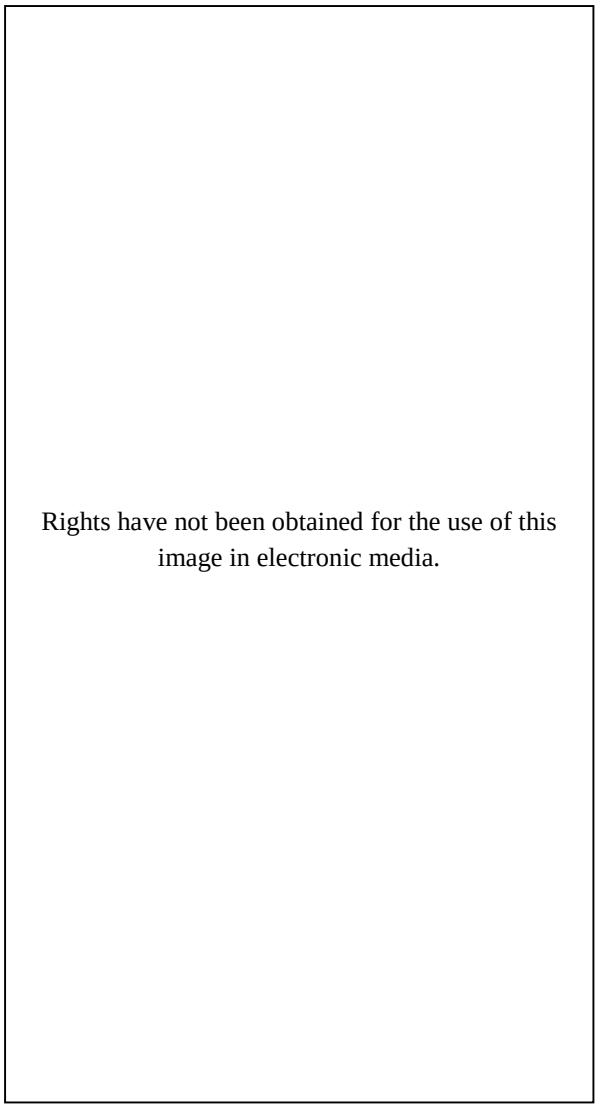


Figure 6.9: Painted belt from York (Mould *et al*.2003: 3393)

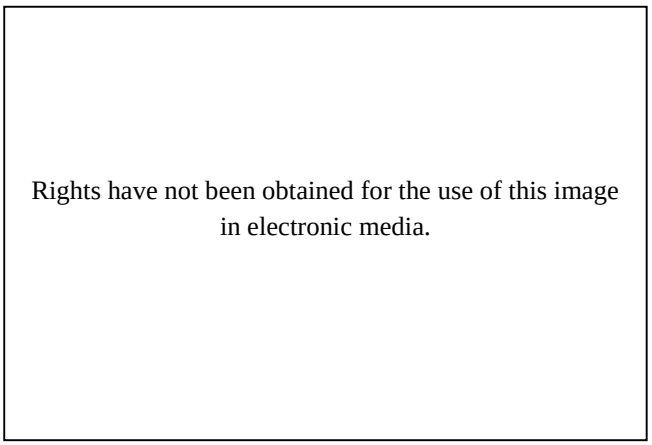


Figure 6.10: Stack mould from Swinegate, York

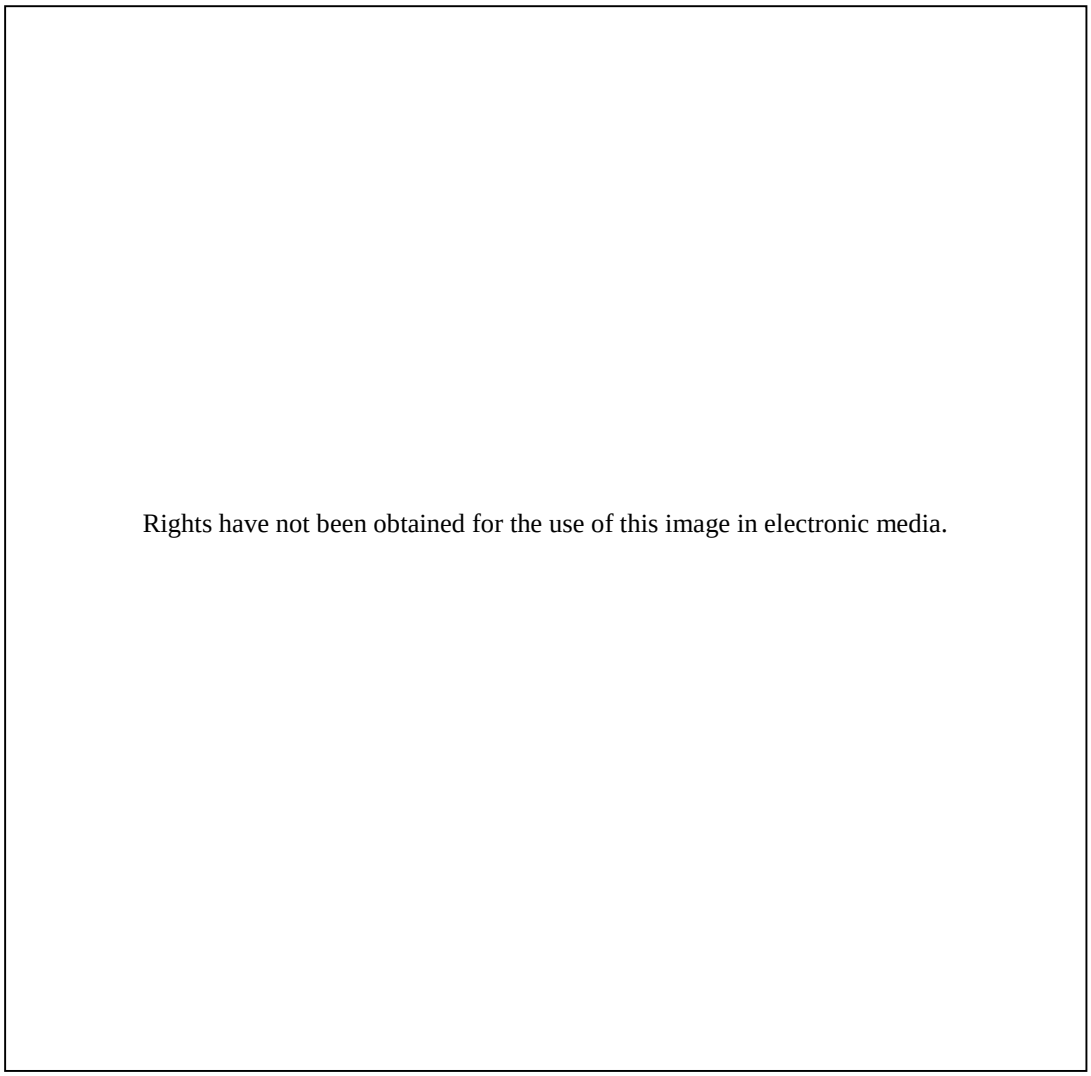


Figure 6.11: Chronological trend in buckles from London (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 22)

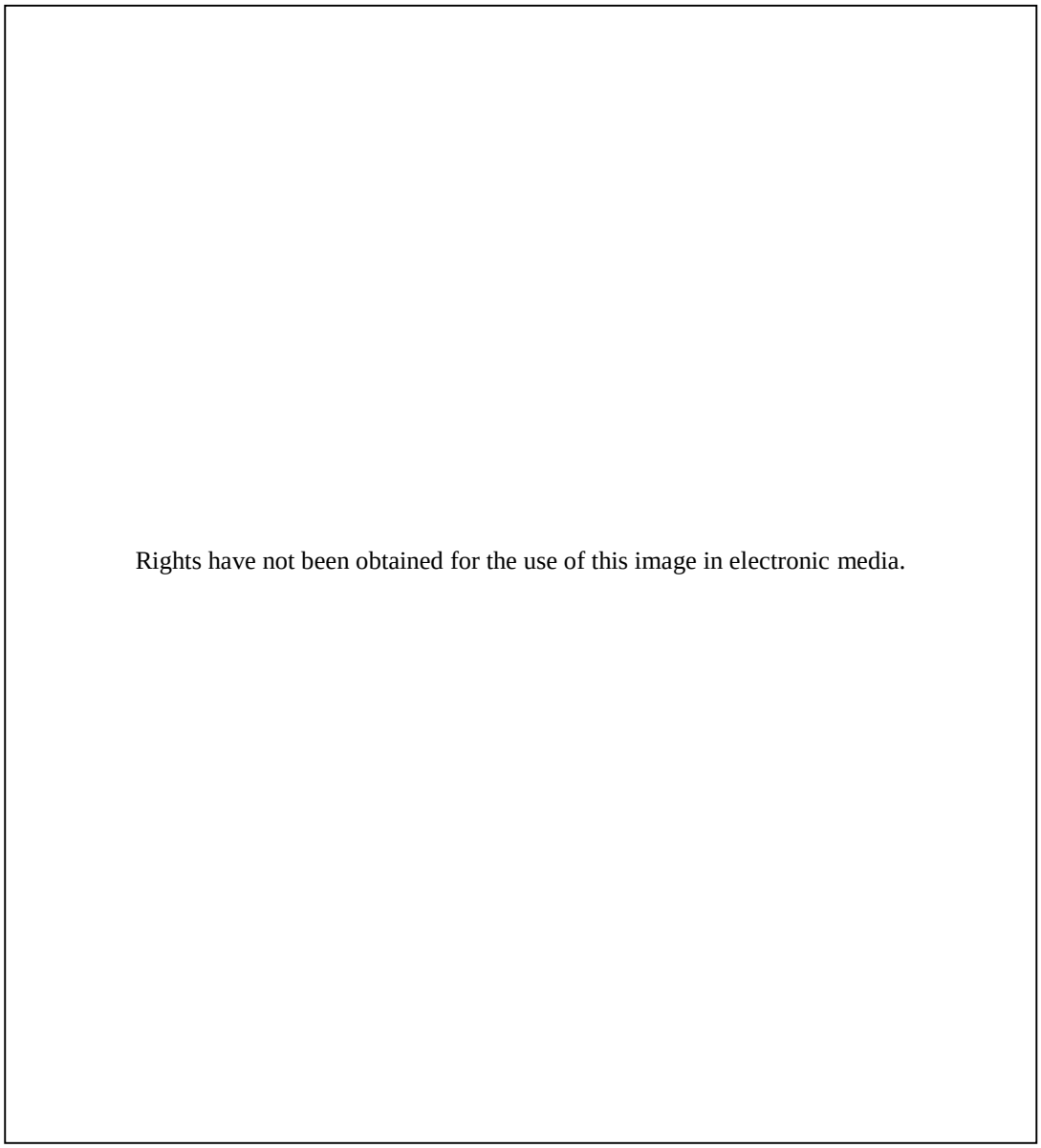


Figure 6.12: Chronological trends in strap-ends from London (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 24)

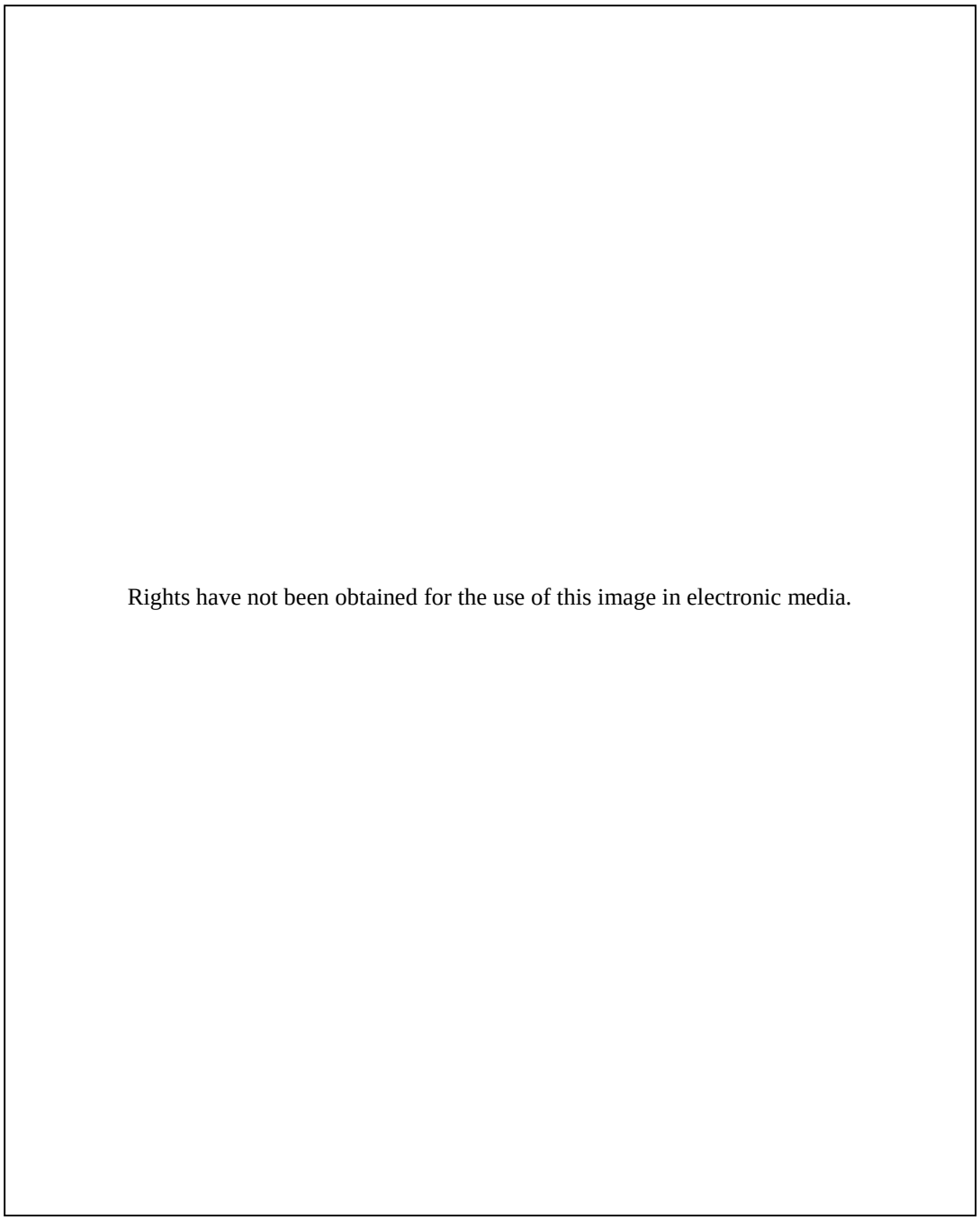


Figure 6.13: Chronological trends in mounts from London (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 26)

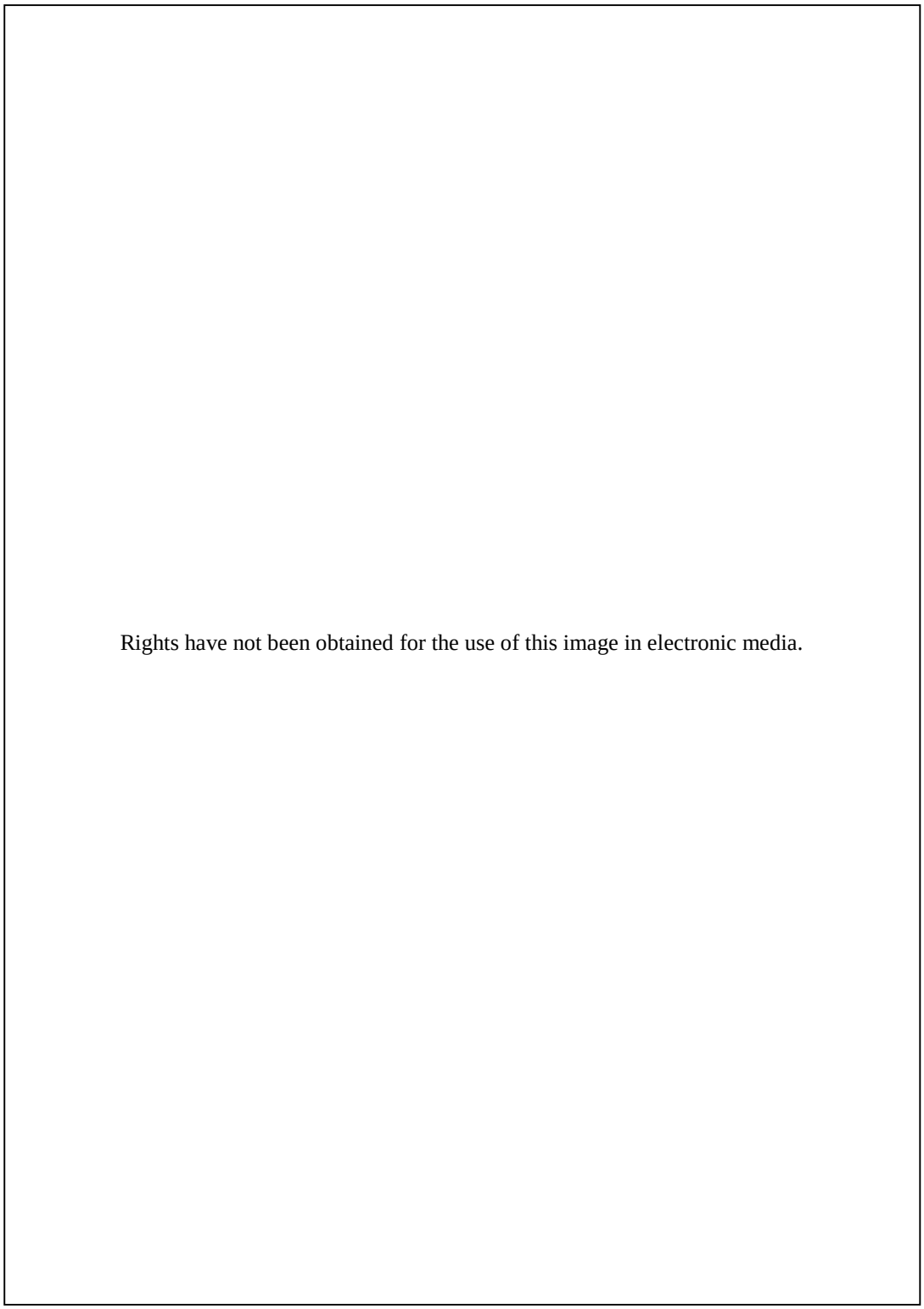


Figure 6.14: Illustration of Dietmar von Aist disguised as a pedlar from the *Codex Manesse*

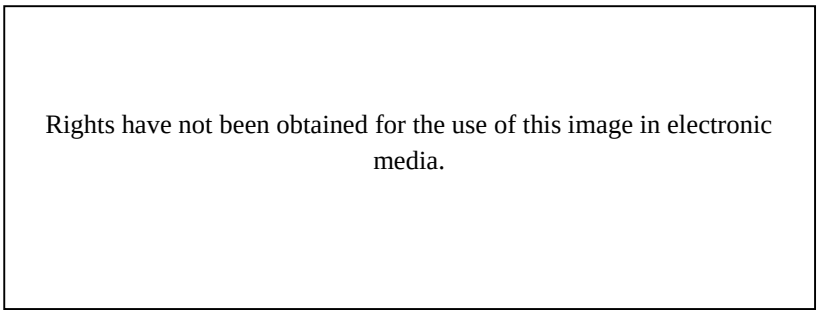


Figure 6.15: *Memento mori* mount from Leiden (Willemsen 2009: 86)

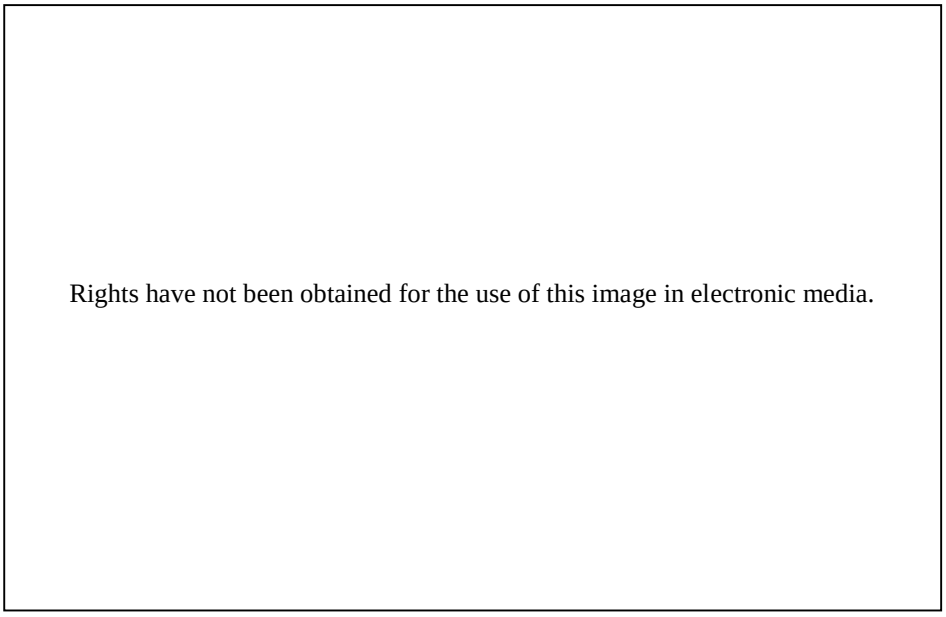


Figure 6.16: Large circular buckle frames (1.1C) from the Cathedral Green, Winchester. A: WIN164, B: WIN165

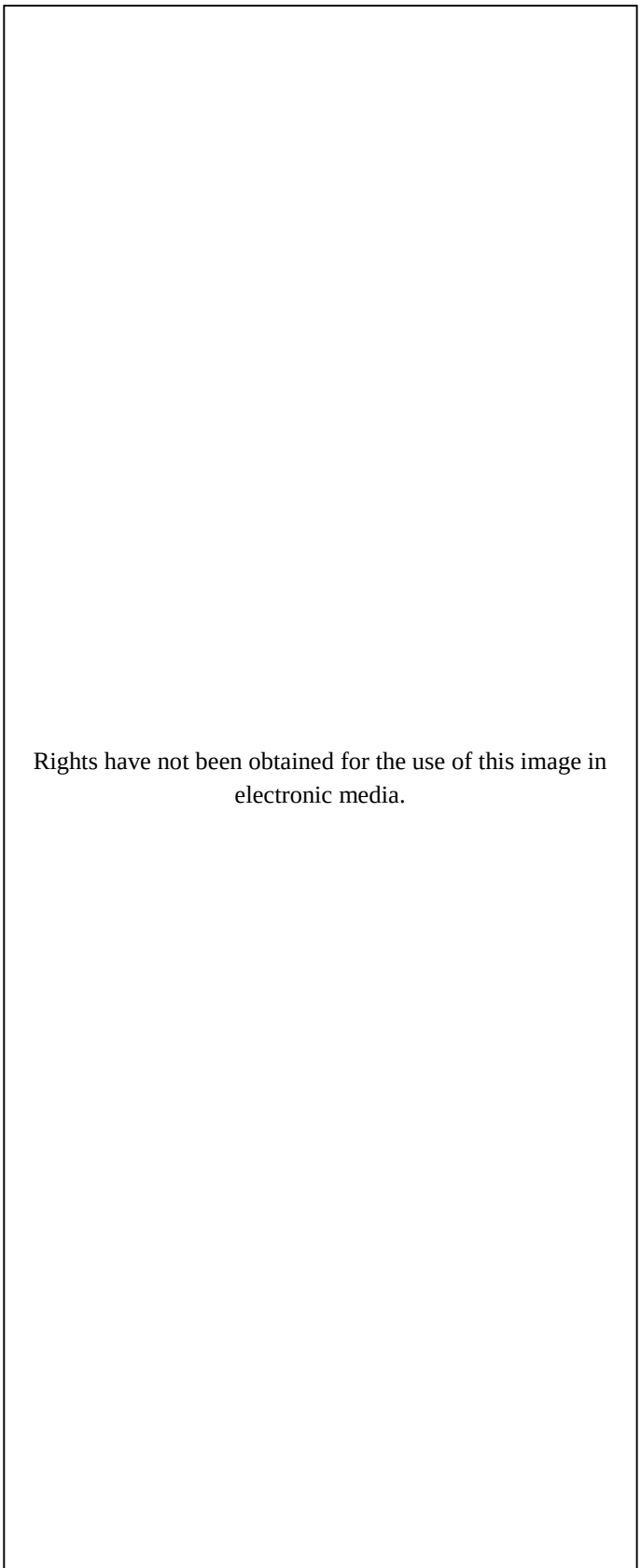
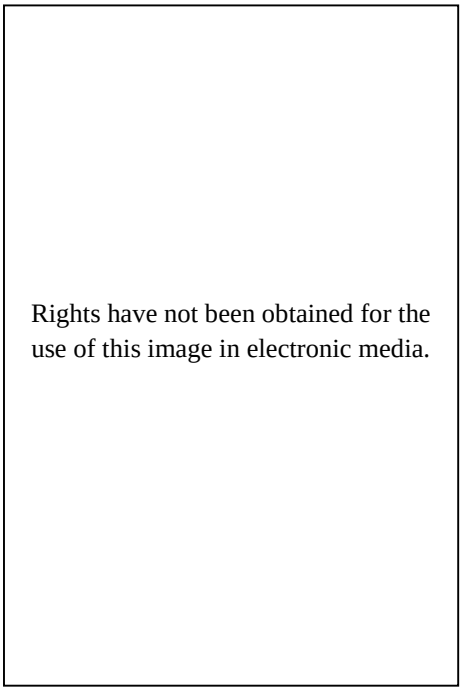
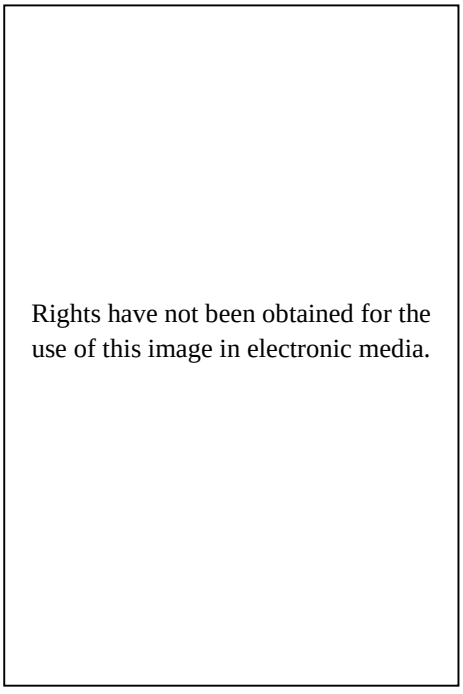


Figure 6.17: Plan of burial from Southampton Friary with strap-end (SOU080) and mounts (SOU079) above right shoulder

Figure 6.18: WIN133 – oval buckle frame with attached decorated buckle plate





Left: Figure 6.19: LON0047 – forked spacer strap-end with front plate decorated with interlocking squares and octofoil
Right: Figure 6.20: NHN007 – strap-end plate decorated with heraldic crest

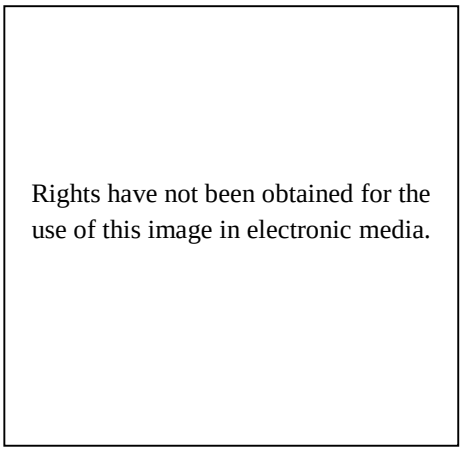


Figure 6.21: LON0835 – example of oval buckle frame form 1.3J

Figure 6.22: LON0391 – Clasp without a folding end (2.2A) decorated with a crowned head

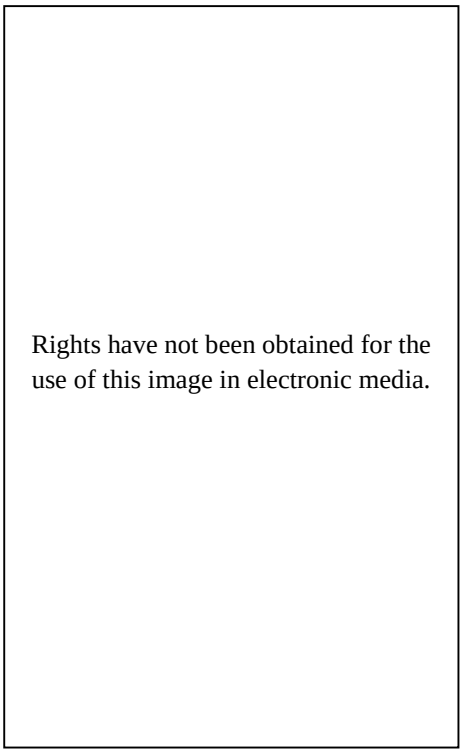
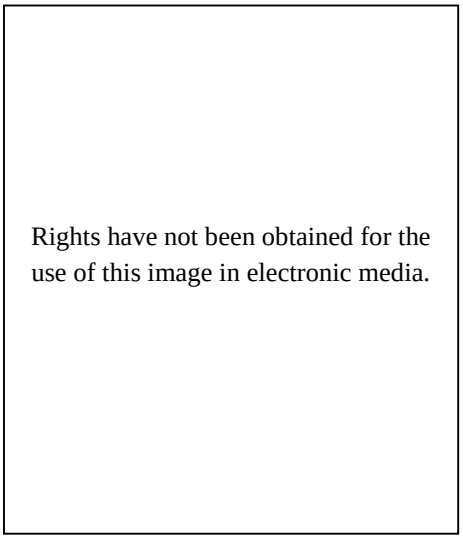
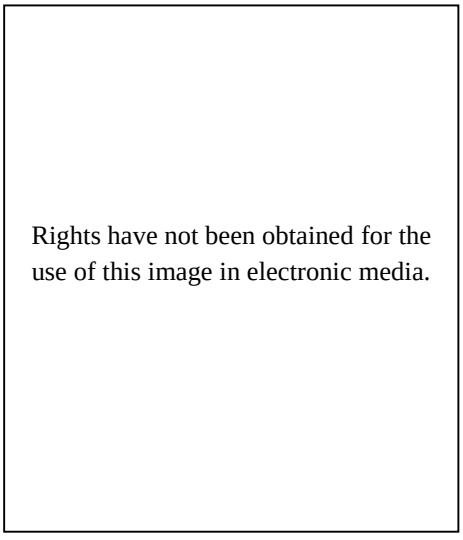


Figure 6.23: YOR251 – forked spacer strap-end with a lozenge shaped terminal





Left: Figure 6.24: WIN010 – forked spacer strap-end with a trefoil terminal
Right: Figure 6.25: LON0204 – forked spacer strap-end with a head terminal

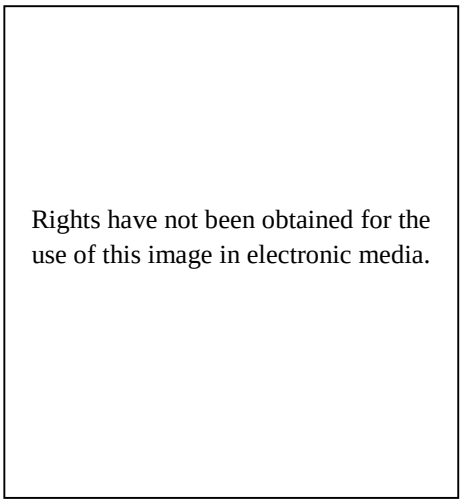


Figure 6.26: LON0412 – forked spacer strap-end with a tab terminal

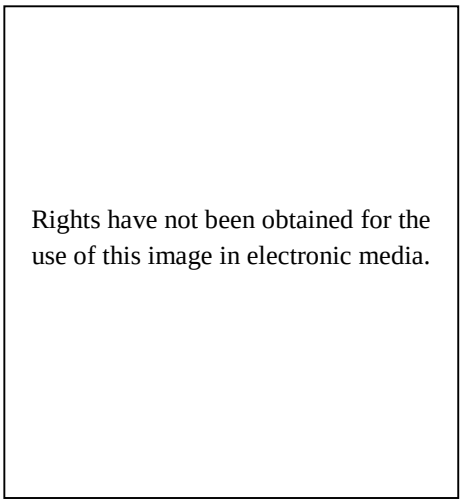


Figure 6.27: HER008 – acorn shaped mount

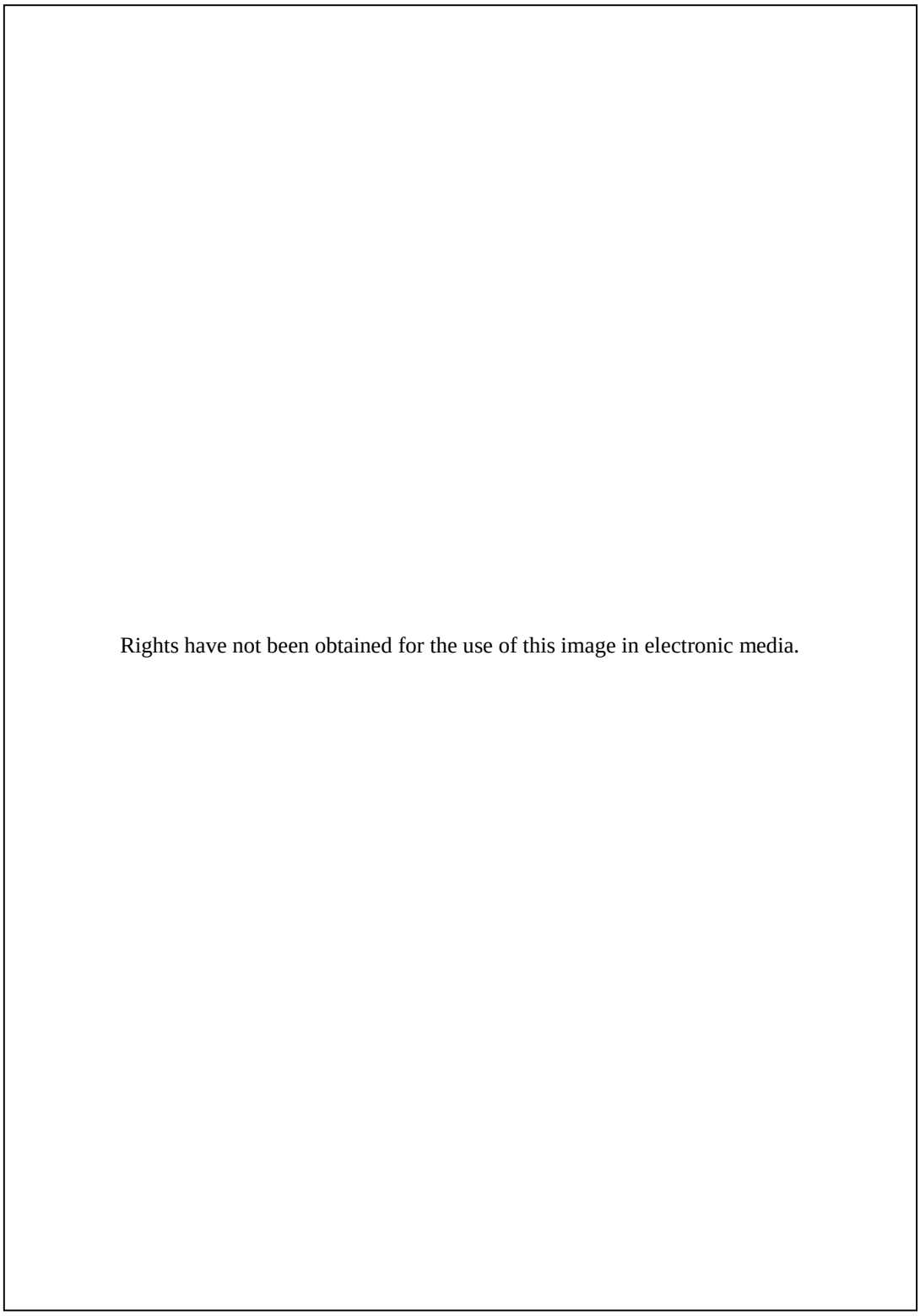


Figure 6.28: Illustration of an owl being mobbed by song birds from a mid-fourteenth century East Anglian Book of Hours

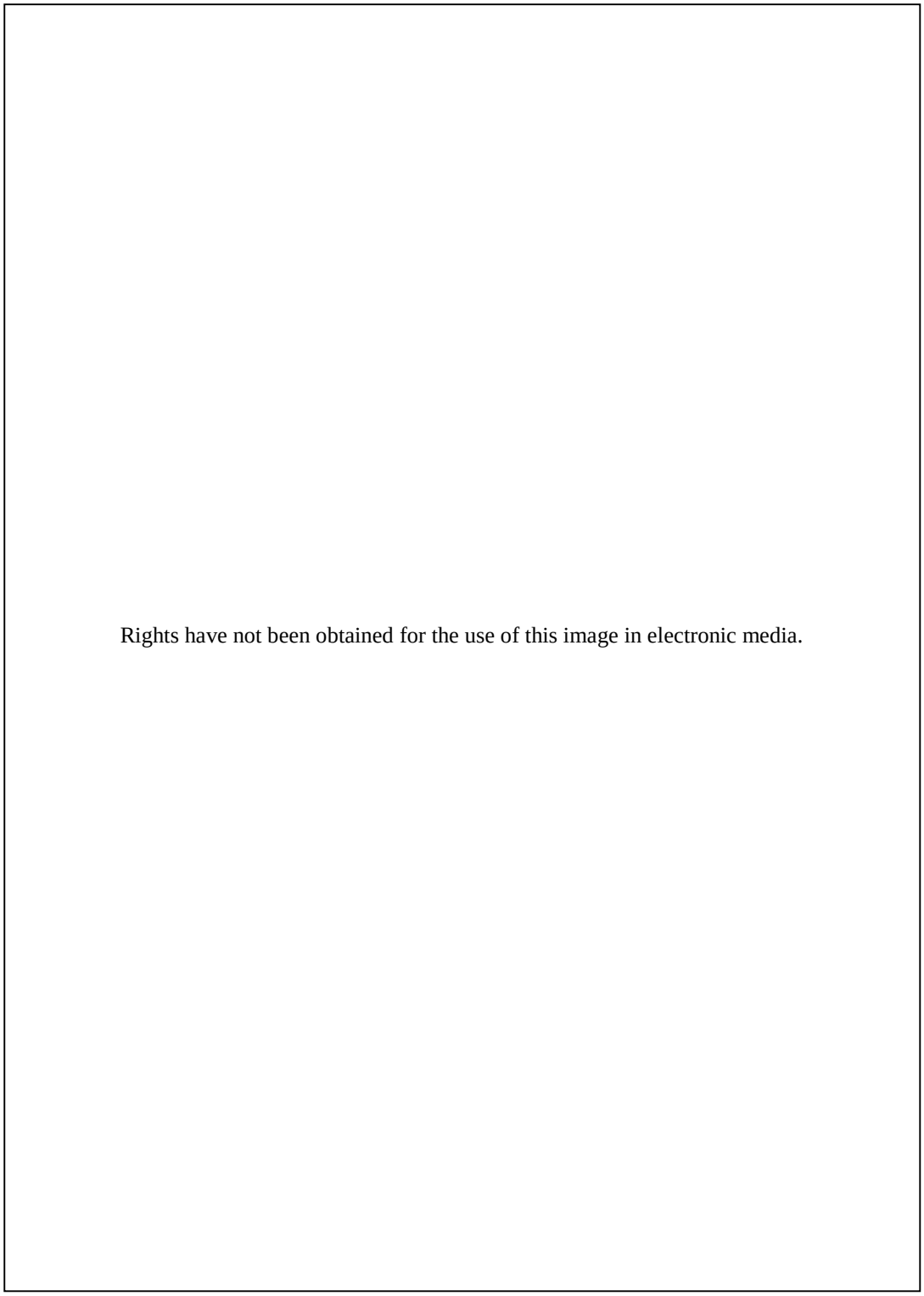
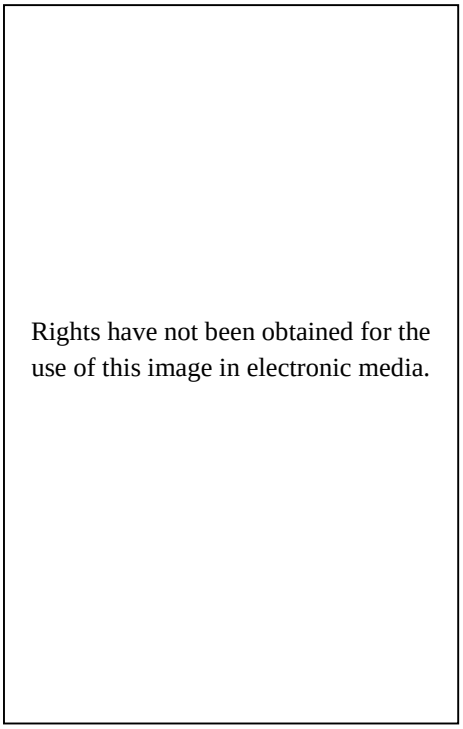
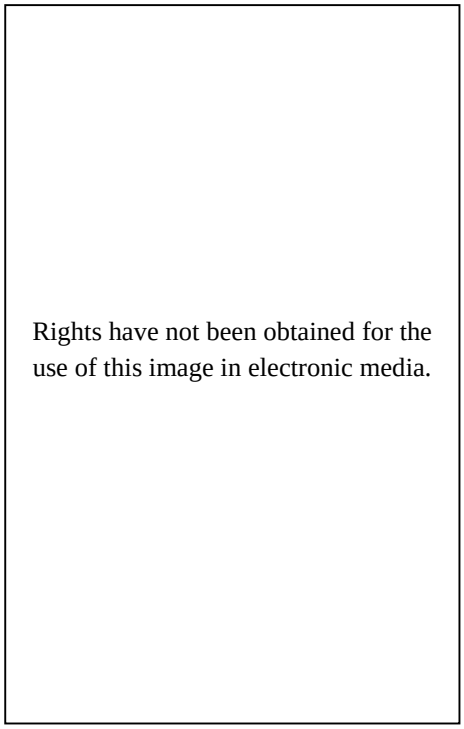


Figure 6.29: Grave effigy of an unkown woman wearing a forked spacer strap-end with an acorn terminal from Clehonger, Herefordshire (after Ward Perkins 1954: 266; Egan and Pritchard 1991: 36)





Left: Figure 6.30: OXF052 – strap-end decorated with the Virgin Mary with Christ child in arms
Right: Figure 6.31: WIN297 – strap-end decorated with St Catherine

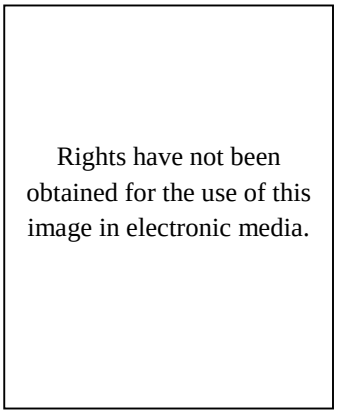


Figure 6.32: Corbel depicting a woman feeding acorns to a squirrel from Heckington, Lincolnshire (Sekules 1987: 46)

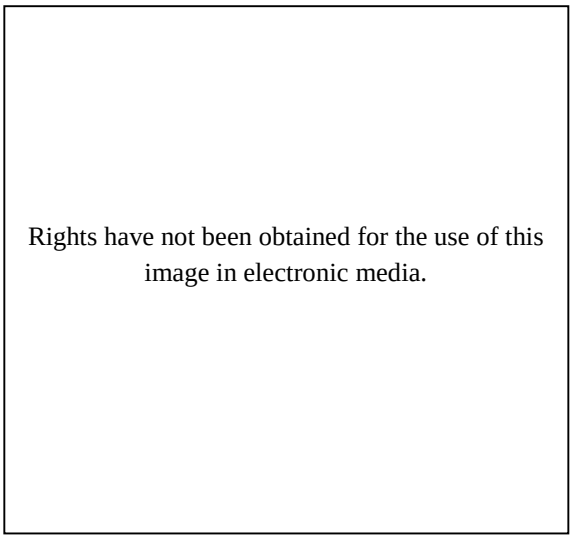


Figure 6.33: French wedding ring decorated with a squirrel on the inside (Camille 1998: 103)

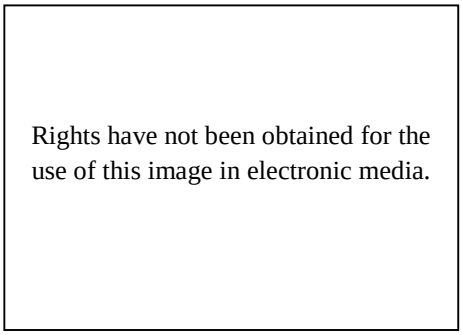


Figure 6.34: LON0779 – Letter shaped mount depicting a ‘S’

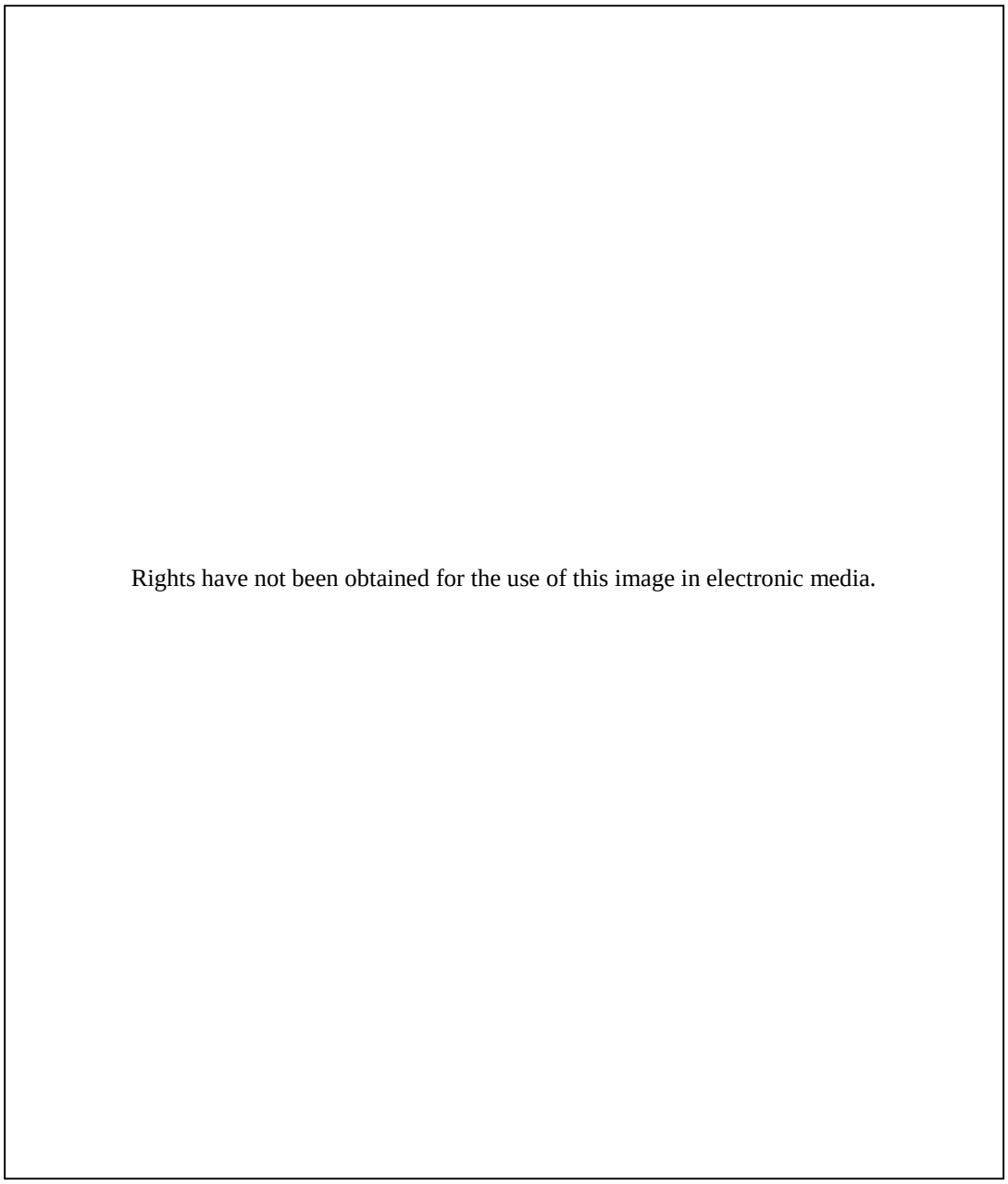


Figure 6.35: Belt decorated with stamped ‘S’s from London (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 40)

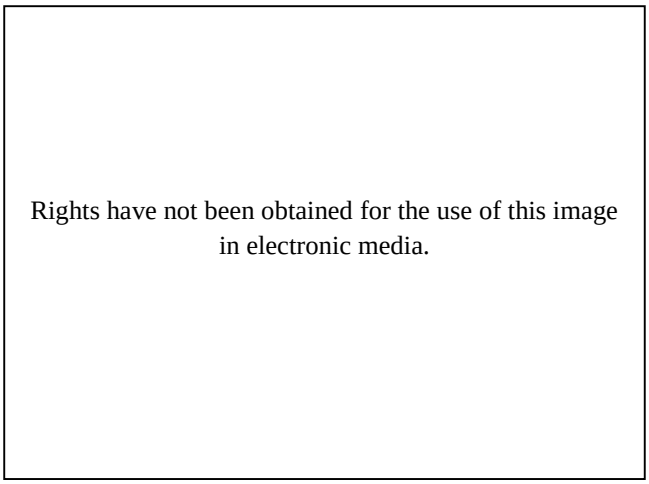


Figure 6.36: Two belts decorated with (top) '*Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judaeorum'* and (bottom) '*amen*' from London (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 46)

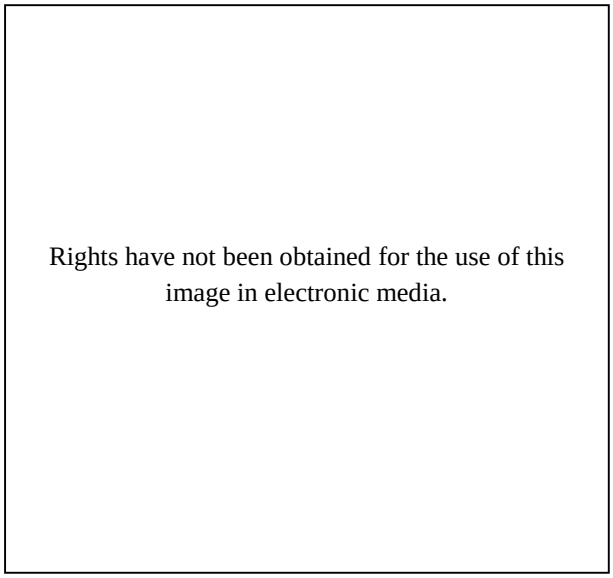


Figure 6.37: Oval buckle with attached buckle plate engraved with '*Ave Maria*' from Tattenhoe, Buckinghamshire (Mills 1995b: 353)

Figure 6.38: Forked spacer strap-end decorated with unformed letters from Westbury, Buckinghamshire (Mills 1995b: 356)

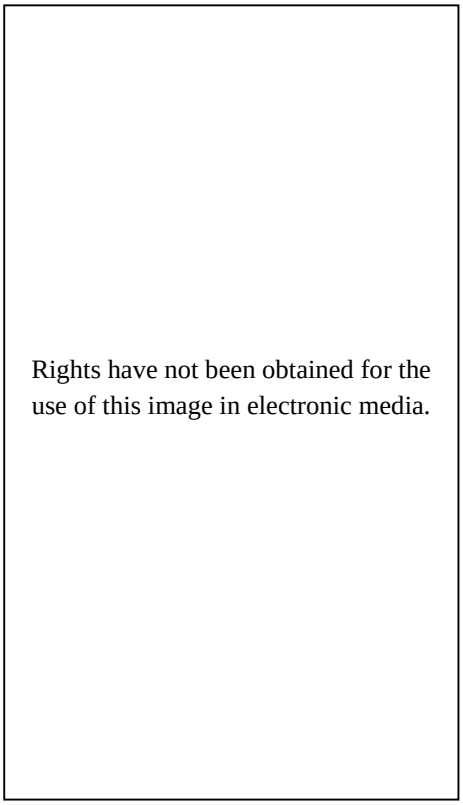


Figure 6.39: LON0847 – Strap-end decorated with an unidentified female saint

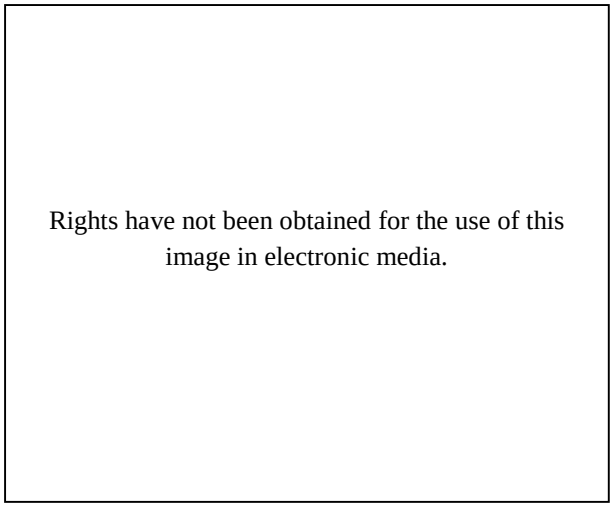


Figure 6.40: LIN048 – buckle plate decorated with a throned Christ flanked by two figures

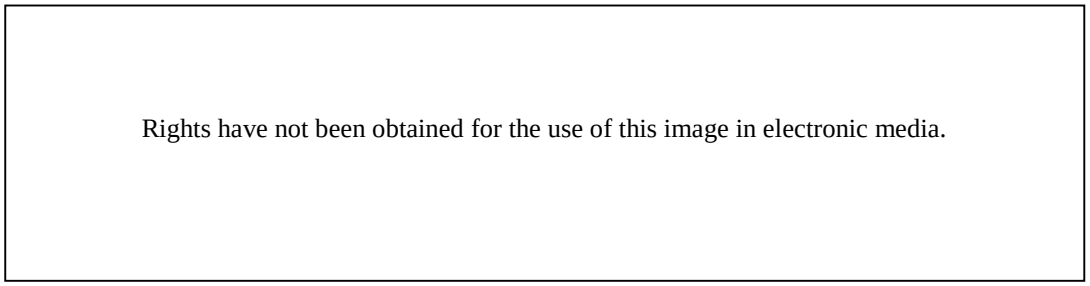


Figure 6.41: Belt with inscribed '*Tout monn coer*' from London (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 46)

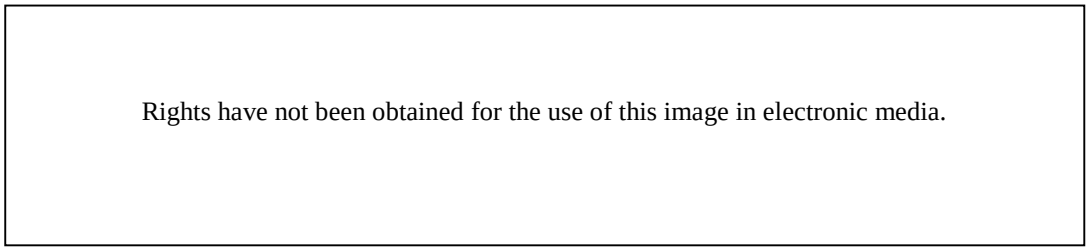


Figure 6.42: Belt mount inscribed with '*Amor*' from Colmar, France (Descatoire 2009: 92)

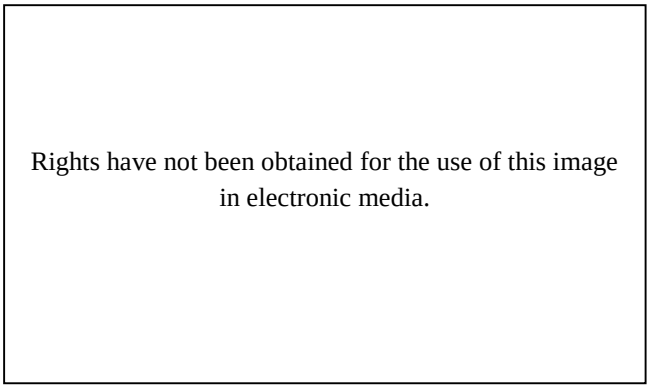


Figure 6.43: Finger ring with hoop depicting two clasped hands from Tattenhoe, Buckinghamshire (Mills 1995b: 347)

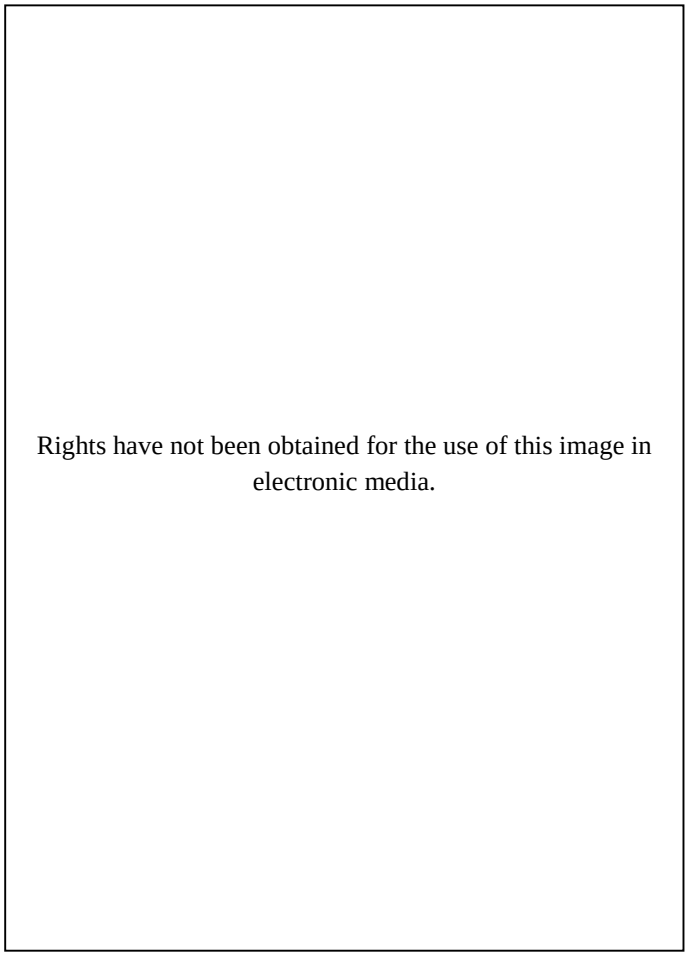


Figure 6.44: Jewish wedding ring from Erfurt, Germany (Sturzebecher 2009: 52)

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Figure 6.45: Belt mount depicting two clasped hands from Erfurt, Germany (Sturzebecher 2009: 64)

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Figure 6.46: Belt loop depicting two figures holding hands from Weissenfels, Germany (Descatoire 2009: 87)

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Figure 6.47: Buckle plate and strap-end depicting half-woman half- beasts from Germany (Fingerlin 1971: 310)

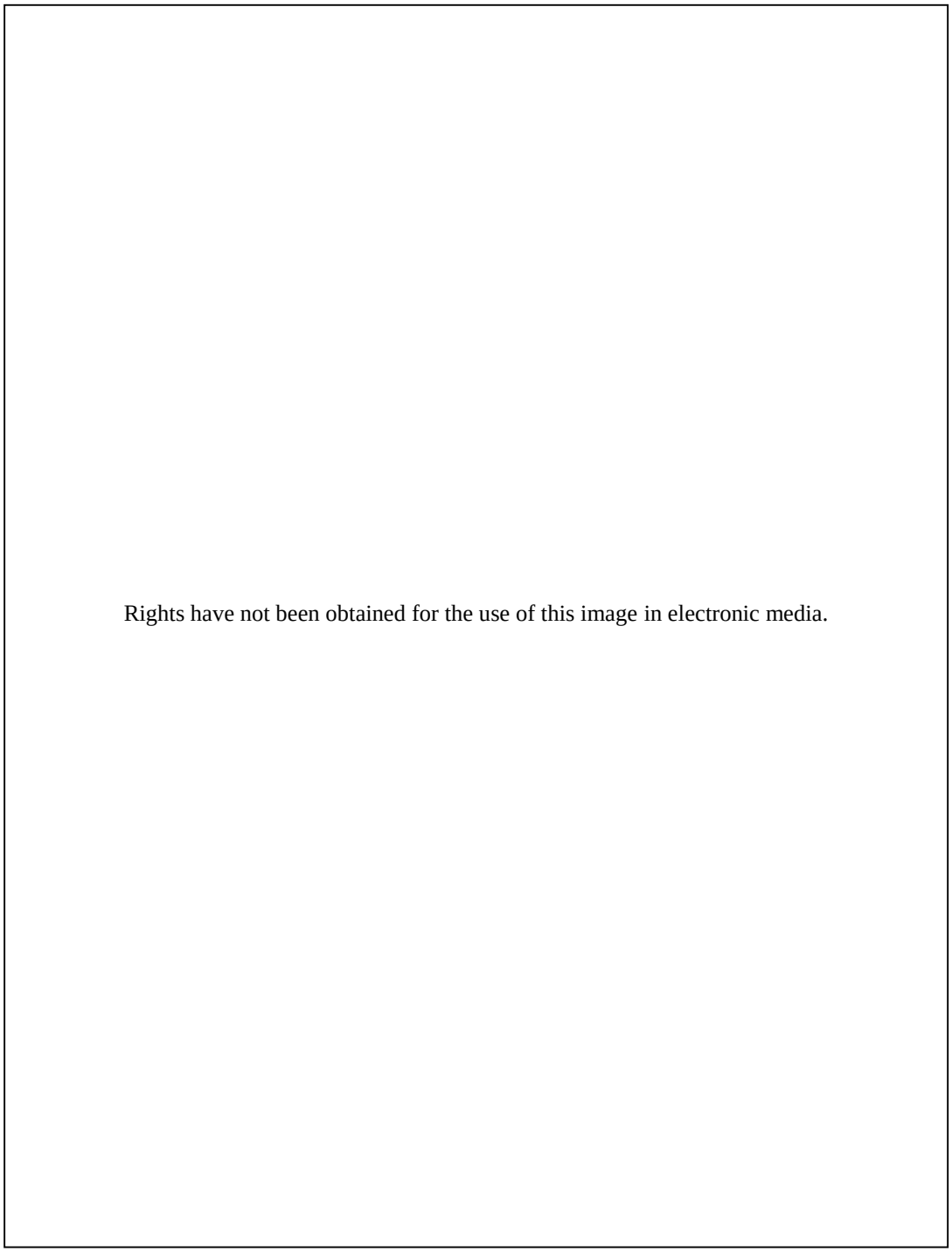

Figure 6.48: Italian belt depicting scenes of courtly love (Fingerlin 1971: 354)

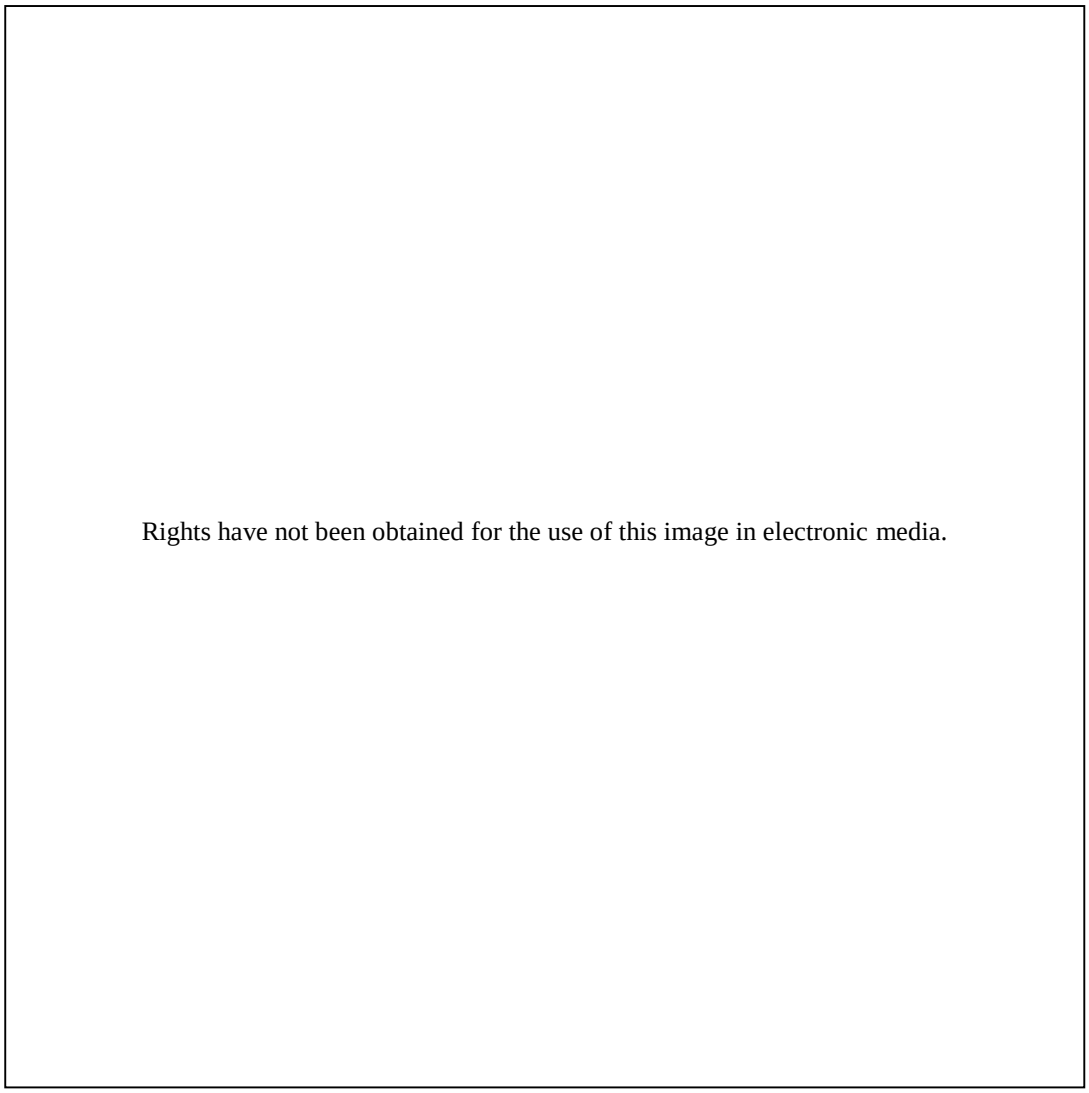

Figure 7.1: Purse hangers from London (Egan and Pritchard 1991: 223)

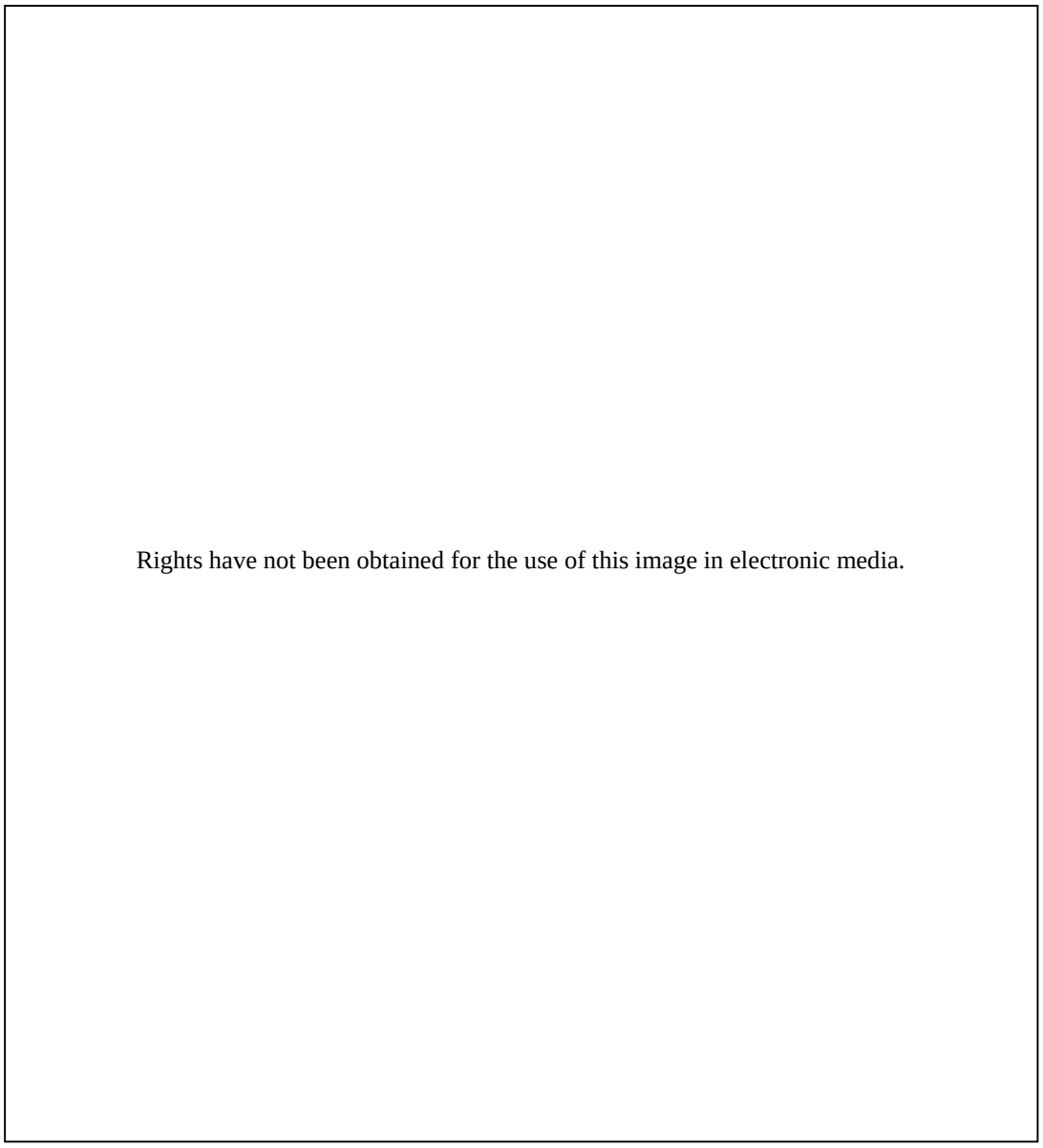

Figure 7.2: Shoe buckles (Swann 1981: 4)