

John Hines, Clasps – Hetesperner – Agraffen. Anglo-Scandinavian Clasps of Classes A–C of the 3rd to 6th centuries A. D. Typology, Diffusion and Function. Kungl Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien. Almqvist & Wiksell International, Stockholm 1993. ISBN 91-7402-225-3. 126 Seiten mit 152 Abbildungen und 5 Fototafeln.

This book contains a catalogue and typological analysis of clasps used to fasten sleeves and, less often, trousers, a small but interesting class of metalwork found in Scandinavia and England. The earliest examples date to the Roman Iron Age and are found in southern Scandinavia, but the majority belong to the migration period and are found in greatest numbers in Norway, Sweden and eastern England. In an earlier work (J. Hines, *The Scandinavian Character of Anglian England in the pre-Viking period*. BAR Brit. Ser. 124 [Oxford 1984]) Hines discussed clasps as one of several categories of material which he sees as evidence of contact between England and Scandinavia, especially Norway, in the sixth century A. D. He argues that the transfer of clasps and other types of metalwork across the North Sea can be explained most easily in terms of a migration, otherwise unrecorded, from Norway and/or neighbouring parts of Scandinavia to England at this time. This is an interesting proposition, which has however not gone unchallenged. Here the clasps are treated alone, in more detail than was possible in the earlier work, which makes it possible to reassess their contribution to the argument. The text has been rewritten and expanded to take account of new finds, and also as a result of further research in Scandinavia. Some finds from eastern Baltic regions also appear in this version. Many more illustrations, of better quality and reproduced far better, are included than was possible in the previous publication, which makes the book more attractive and much easier to use.

A book like this serves two functions (as Hines points out, p. 87), and needs to be assessed separately for each. Firstly, and probably most durably, it presents a “set of factual data” and then, secondly, a discussion of “the more difficult, yet more enticing, questions of their significance”. As a well-illustrated catalogue of a specific artefact type it is welcome to all those writing reports on migration period sites, especially Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. Simply as a descriptive device the typology is valuable and allows an instant identification of parallels, suggestions as to date, distribution etc. All of this saves considerable time for others and allows a base-line for comparison to be achieved simply by recording “clasps Hines type x”. The typology is also mostly convincing. The division into the major groups A, B and C is straightforward, and most of the sub-divisions of B are also easily recognizable. The basis for the identification of each type is clearly stated, and I have found in practice that it was not difficult to assign newly excavated clasps to a category in Hines’ scheme. There are some very small groups which consist of one or two unusual and sometimes fragmentary artefacts, perhaps not really enough for a “type”. A miscellaneous category might have been more justifiable. This would not matter but for the fact that it is precisely some of these small groups which Hines uses in his arguments about the date and nature of the transmission of the clasp-wearing habit to England.

This book serves well what I regard as its primary function, and is a valuable addition to the literature on that basis alone. But what about the “more enticing” questions? The sections on production and utilitarian use seem straightforward, though further research could well take both further. The chronological arguments depend mostly on existing schemes, and in those terms seem consistent. This reviewer is more sceptical about the possibility of using metalwork typology as a precise dating tool than Hines, but in fact he does not arrive at very precise dates for most of the clasp types. Elsewhere he has said that they do not seem to be a very chronologically sensitive type, perhaps because they form part of a traditional and conservative regional dress. The account of the early development of the clasps may yet need modification in the light of further finds: it is noticeable that the Jutland site, Sejlflod, has already brought a slight shift in perspective, and a few more such sites in Denmark might support the case for southern Scandinavia as the source for the B series as well as the A.

The transfer of clasps across the North Sea to eastern England is very clearly attested, as is their distribution within England. However, I am less convinced that the links between Norway,

specifically, and England are so close as is argued. The spiral-wire variety, Hines type A, seems to begin in southern Denmark and then to spread north and still later west to England. The density of the findspots in western Norway might support derivation of the English examples from this area rather than Denmark, and this certainly can be plausibly argued for the B series. However, distribution maps reflect patterns of deposition and recovery, rather than use. The past ten years have shown that Denmark may have played a more important role in the Migration period than its meagre burial record used to suggest. Western Norway is a possible source for the English clasps, but other parts of Scandinavia may have played an equally important role.

The A-type clasps do seem very similar in form on both sides of the North Sea, and their more elaborate, probably later, variations occur in England, which is consistent with Hines' thesis. But it is less clear that the B type clasps form a "single connected series" (p. 12), or that they must have arrived in England with a substantial group of owners, wearers, and makers, rather than as isolated artefacts through trade or exchange. The differences between the English and Scandinavian examples seem at least as striking as the similarities. Scandinavian clasps were fastened to clothing with disc-headed rivets, whereas English clasps were sewn on through holes in the plate. The main surviving feature of the Scandinavian clasps are the separately cast button rivets: Few of the metal base plates remain, and some buttons may have been fastened directly to clothing. English clasps are cast or sheet plates or bars, with only occasional small discs instead of buttons. In Scandinavia men and women wore clasps, in England only women (did only women migrate? – the idea of an Amazonian expedition is rather attractive).

Within the B series most types occur on one side of the North Sea and hardly, or not at all, on the other. B1 is predominantly Scandinavian, while B7 includes only two Scandinavian examples as against about 275 English ones, and B8–20 so far have exclusively English findspots. Between B1 and B7 are B2, consisting of two Norwegian finds; B4, represented at Sancton and Castle Acre in England, and possibly once in Norway; B5, one Danish find, and B6, one Norwegian find. Other groups regarded as important in tracing the development of the series are B10, so far represented by a single clasp from Sancton, and B11, one pair from Burgh Castle. Regardless of how securely these different types have been defined, the small numbers involved must make it difficult to be sure how their distribution should be interpreted. It is arguable that group B could have been divided into a Scandinavian and an English series, differentiated on both technical and decorative grounds, and that this break might be used to argue against migration as an explanation for the adoption of this type of clasps in England.

The various sources of different features of early Anglo-Saxon material culture in eastern England have been partly plotted by Hines himself (*ibid.* 376 map 6,1). It is possible to construct coherent sources for different selections of this material all around the North Sea, not just in one region. The implications of this have not yet been fully worked out, but the existence of at least one Roman Iron Age/Migration period trading place in Denmark, at Lundborg, suggests trade may have been underestimated as a mechanism for movement of goods and ideas in the Migration period.

The area of eastern England defined by the distribution of clasps is that previously identified by Vierck as the Anglian culture region, subsequently confirmed by other researchers, including Hines himself, in relation to various artefact types and most recently, in a Cambridge thesis by Karen Brush. This shows that particular brooch types, notably annulars, cruciforms and square-headed brooches, different proportions of brooch types within cemeteries and also specific combinations of brooches in individual graves occur in the same areas as clasps, that is, East Anglia, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. In the Thames valley and south of the Thames dress fasteners and their usage were different. This differentiation of early Anglo-Saxon England into two broad zones is not confined to metalwork from female inhumations. It is also reflected in cremation cemeteries. Both the dominance of cremation in the fifth century, and its survival into the sixth, are a feature of the "Anglian" area and not of the south. There are close connections between pottery and grave-goods found in cremations throughout this area, mirroring someti-

mes precisely the links Hines detects in clasps from East Anglia and Humberside. The region defined by women's costume, including clasps, which Hines prefers to derive from Norway, is also that defined by cremations which seem to have their source in Schleswig-Holstein and neighbouring areas. Other features of this English "Anglian" culture zone may have other sources again, such as the ubiquitous annular brooches, whereas oddities like girdle-hangers seem to be native inventions. There is a large region, which cuts across many smaller political boundaries, where many aspects of burial practice and women's dress fasteners are very similar. It is not clear how much of this conformity can be traced to conservatism amongst groups of immigrants – who do not all seem to have come from the same place at the same time – and how much represents a new identity created in England by peoples of mixed ancestry including native Britons.

A pattern was created in England during the fifth century, involving contact, whether through migration alone or involving other mechanisms, between eastern England and northern Germany and possibly neighbouring areas such as Frisia and Jutland. This pattern recurs in subsequent generations, both in later cremation pottery and in dress-fasteners which, as Hines has shown, have a Scandinavian origin. Why this happens is not yet entirely clear: both internal and external sources, and various different mechanisms may have been involved.

But whether or not Hines has proved his case for migration as the chief explanation his work has stimulated considerable discussion of these issues, and has provided a clear statement of one approach to the subject. This book is, also, an important work of reference.

GB–Cambridge CB2 3DZ
Downing Street

Catherine Hills
Department of Archaeology
University of Cambridge

Margarete Klein-Pfeuffer, Merowingerzeitliche Fibeln und Anhänger aus Preßblech. Marburger Studien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Band 14. Hitzeroth-Verlag, Marburg/Lahn 1993. ISBN 3-89398-026-1. 503 Seiten mit 81 Abbildungen und 92 Tafeln, davon 8 Fototafeln.

Die Studie von Margarete Klein-Pfeuffer über die Preßblecharbeiten entstand unter der Betreuung von Günther Haseloff als Würzburger Dissertation, die 1986 abgeschlossen wurde und hier weitgehend unverändert zum Druck kommt. Ihr zentrales Thema sind die Preßblechscheibenfibeln, ansonsten meist Brakteatenfibeln genannt, von denen sie 345 Exemplare aufgenommen hat, dazu 39 Anhänger und drei Preßmodel. Den regionalen Schwerpunkt bilden West- und Süddeutschland; Mitteldeutschland, die Nordschweiz und das Elsaß sind berücksichtigt, die westlich angrenzenden Regionen nicht. In Baden-Württemberg und am Mittelrhein wurden insgesamt 25 Museen besucht, um Funde im Original erfassen zu können (Liste der bereisten Museen: S. 226 f. Anm. 18).

Nach einer knappen Einleitung, in der die Quellenlage, die Forschungsgeschichte und die Zielsetzung der Arbeit skizziert werden, folgt der erste Hauptteil der Studie, in dem die Fibeln in sieben Hauptgruppen gegliedert werden. In einem etwas ungewöhnlichen Ansatz, der nicht näher begründet wird, strukturiert M. Klein-Pfeuffer das Material nach technischen Kriterien, wobei das wichtigste die Ausprägung des Randes ist, wo das Preßblech mit der Unterkonstruktion der Fibel verbunden wurde. Diese Gruppen seien hier kurz aufgelistet: Form I: Preßblechfibeln mit Randschiene – Form II: Preßblechfibeln mit bündig abschließendem Rand – Form III: dosenförmige Preßblechfibeln – Form IV: Preßblechfibeln mit einfachem Klemmband – Form V: Preßblechfibeln mit Perl-Klemmband – Form VI: Preßblechfibeln mit umgebördeltem Rand – Form VII: Sonderformen. Angeschlossen werden als achte Gruppe die Preßblechanhänger. In angenehm klarer Systematik werden zu jeder Gruppe die zugehörigen Objekte aufgelistet, die Formenkunde erläutert, die Datierungen diskutiert und anschließend das Verbreitungsbild ana-