

The Portable Antiquities Scheme's records of copper-alloy objects and their potential for research

(with an early-medieval focus)



The Portable Antiquities Scheme and the Treasure Act 1996

The Treasure Act 1996: c. 1000-1200 objects a year must be reported by law, and can be legally claimed by museums



HAMP-13F55E,
gilded silver

The Portable Antiquities Scheme:
c. 60,000 objects each year are
voluntarily reported, recorded
and returned to their finders



KENT-D90FBC.
copper alloy

When these objects are
returned, there is no legal
protection for them – they
can be sold, lost or even
melted down



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Portable Antiquities
Scheme database front
page, August 2023

1,661,024 objects within 1,078,520 records.

Welcome to our database!

The Portable Antiquities Scheme's database holds records of archaeological finds discovered by members of the public. These are found while carrying out a wide range of activities including metal-detecting. Our first record was made in 1998, the half-million mark was reached in March 2010, our millionth object, a Roman coin from the Seaton hoard, was recorded in September 2014, and we recorded our one and a half millionth object in July 2020.

Our database is easy to search, and your search results can be filtered to find just the data you want. [Tips on searching the database.](#)

Our records are available with differing levels of information, depending on your user account. The Scheme is very willing to give research access to researchers who [register with us](#) for higher-level access. An ever-increasing body of [research](#) is now being conducted on our collated data, enabling some very high-calibre work with great success in obtaining [AHRC](#) and other sources of funding.

We do not record details of objects found by professional archaeologists (details of these can be found by contacting your local Historic Environment Record) but we do occasionally incorporate data recorded by other institutions. In March 2010 we added the records of the Oxford University Celtic Coin Index ([CCI](#)- prefix) and Cardiff University's Iron Age and Roman coins of Wales project ([IARCW](#)- prefix). These records complement the data that the Scheme collects itself, but the information has been imported from a different data model, so images and inscriptions are not always available. We do not have access to the objects to improve this situation.

Our images are available under a [CC BY 3.0](#) licence. We encourage people to use our data and images as widely as possible. Enjoy!

Created on: Wednesday 9th August 2023
Last updated: Wednesday 9th August 2023

Spatial data recorded. 📍 This findspot is known as 'Pilham', grid reference and parish protected.

Record ID: [NLM-3506C5](#)
Object type: SEAL
Broad period: POST MEDIEVAL
County: Lincolnshire

Workflow stage: Awaiting validation 🚧

Lead bag seal. Cast disc with a slot in its edge and an opposed bifurcated slot, to function as a drawstring bag closure. A stamped legend appears on either side: OHLENDORFF'S [---] GUANO/EQUALIZED//CO[---]ANALYSIS.

Suggested date: Post-Medieval to Modern, 1880-1920 Diameter (long axis): 25.2mm, Thickness: 3.5mm, Weight: 11.43gms

Created on: Wednesday 9th August 2023
Last updated: Wednesday 9th August 2023

Spatial data recorded. 📍 This findspot is known as 'Wharton', grid reference and parish protected.

Record ID: [NLM-34E57E](#)
Object type: COIN
Broad period: MEDIEVAL
County: Lincolnshire

Workflow stage: Awaiting validation 🚧

Silver coin. Halfgroat of the second reign of Edward IV (1471-1483), Canterbury mint, Spink no. 2106, clipped to pennyweight. Obverse description: facing bust with tall bifoliate crown whose ornaments touch,



[Arelatum \(8,159\)](#)

All Mint options +

Material

- Copper alloy (619,718)
- Silver (179,757)
- Lead (40,576)
- Flint (38,780)
- Ceramic (27,342)
- Lead Alloy (27,196)
- Gold (21,775)
- Pottery (4,981)
- Iron (4,693)
- Base Silver (3,639)

All Material options +

Workflow

- Validation (739,441)
- Published (258,376)

Reece Period

- 17 (43,780)
- 13 (33,822)

All objects on the PAS database, by material

Record ID: [SUR-7A4475](#)

Object type: BROOCH

Broad period: EARLY MEDIEVAL

County: Hampshire

Workflow stage: Awaiting validation

An Early Medieval gilded copper alloy small radiate-headed brooch dating from the mid sixth century. The brooch has a semi-circular head plate decorated with chip-carved (Salin's Style I) geometric decoration comprising interlocking triangular cells. The head has a stump for a lost projection or knob at the end. The bow is short and arched with a carinated spine. The foot is triangular, tapering to a break at the end and has two long panels of zoomorphic decoration running along it, featuring small S-shaped beasts and less distinct elements. There are small flanking knobs ...

Created on: Wednesday 19th July 2023

Last updated: Wednesday 19th July 2023

Spatial data recorded.



Broad period

- ROMAN (327,634)
- MEDIEVAL (113,868)
- POST MEDIEVAL (111,049)
- EARLY MEDIEVAL (27,808)
- IRON AGE (21,153)
- BRONZE AGE (7,994)
- UNKNOWN (6,294)
- MODERN (2,973)
- GREEK AND ROMAN PROVINCIAL (234)
- BYZANTINE (97)

All Broad period options +

Record ID: [NLM-79996F](#)

Object type: BROOCH

Broad period: EARLY MEDIEVAL

County: Lincolnshire

Workflow stage: Awaiting validation

Copper alloy brooch. Cast circular plate brooch, Weetch Type 20.A.

A flat back plate included lobes around its edge, of which three survive along with the stub of a fourth. Each lobe incorporates a tiny annular cell, the remaining ones retain tiny pellets of white or sky blue enamel; an originally alternating scheme is presumed. A vertical rim projects from the back plate confining cloisonne cells. These define a central cross of cobalt blue enamel with a central round cell of the same tint. The arms of the cross are slightly concave, and a field approaching semi-circular form lies wit...



Institution

- NMS (66,416)
- SF (59,895)
- JARCW (48,580)
- NLM (32,356)
- WILT (25,899)
- SUR (25,732)
- YORYM (25,716)
- LIN (20,892)
- BH (19,860)
- HAMP (19,770)


All copper-alloy objects on the PAS database, by period

Record ID: [NLM-1016BE](#)

Object type: COIN

Broad period: ROMAN

County: North Lincolnshire

Workflow stage: Published 

Copper alloy coin. Nummus of Constans (AD 337-50), dating to AD 347-8

(Reece Period 17), VICTORIAE DD AVGGQ NN, Two Victories. Mint unclear.


Obverse description: []-Diademed, draped and cuirassed right

Obverse inscription: CONSTAN - S P F AVG Reverse description: possibly two Victories facing each other. Reverse

inscription: possibly [VICTORIAE DD AVGGQ NN] Diameter: 13.7mm, Weight: 1.23gms, die axis: probably 12

Created on: Monday 7th August 2023

Last updated: Monday 7th August 2023

Spatial data recorded.  This findspot is known as 'Epworth', grid reference and parish protected.




265,000 copper-
alloy Roman coins

Record ID: [WREX-119E72](#)

Object type: BROOCH

Broad period: ROMAN

County: Denbighshire

Workflow stage: Published 

An incomplete copper alloy Roman trumpet brooch dating to c.AD 75-175.

See Mackreth (2011) TR 1.3a1-1.4 Plate 82 no.5214 The head of the brooch has the typical oval shape of the trumpet brooch that splays quite widely.

Underneath, the head is flat with the remnants of a perforated lug. The probable sprung pin is completely


missing. The surface of the head is decorated with a band of relief decoration. Below the head is a triple

element moulded knob with a large circular disc in the centre that protrudes widely on all sides and is

decorated with a wavy line. This is&nbs...

Created on: Monday 7th August 2023

Last updated: Monday 7th August 2023

Spatial data recorded.  This findspot is known as 'Llandegla', grid reference and parish protected.



34,000 copper-
alloy Roman
brooches

Record ID: [SUR-B33E0C](#)

Object type: MOUNT

Broad period: ROMAN

County: Wiltshire

Workflow stage: Awaiting validation 

A Roman decorative cast copper alloy pelta-shaped mount. The plate is

flat and 22mm wide with one edge being curved and the other having a

projecting trefoil flanked by curled side terminals, one of which has

broken off. The reverse has a pair of integrally cast attachment rivets. Circa 1st-3rd century AD

Created on: Monday 21st November 2022

Last updated: Monday 21st November 2022

Spatial data recorded. 



28,000 other
copper-alloy
Roman objects

Record ID: [YORYM-118707](#)

Object type: BROOCH

Broad period: EARLY MEDIEVAL

County: North Yorkshire

Workflow stage: Awaiting validation 

An incomplete copper-alloy cruciform brooch of Early-Medieval date, c.AD

475 – 550. Martin Type 2. The head-plate is sub-square with narrow rectangular wings to either side and integral half-round, semi-circular

sectioned knobs to the top edge and the outer edge of one wing. The knobs have a narrowed waist and appear undecorated. The reverse of the plate retains an incomplete semi-circular lug coated in iron corrosion. An integral bow extends from the centre of the lower edge of the headplate. It is arched with a D-shaped section. A transverse ridge is present at the junction o...

Created on: Wednesday 26th July 2023

Last updated: Tuesday 8th August 2023

Spatial data recorded. 



6,000 copper-alloy
early-medieval
brooches (to 800 AD)

Record ID: [YORYM-CC77CC](#)

Object type: SLEEVE CLASP

Broad period: EARLY MEDIEVAL

County: North Yorkshire


Workflow stage: Awaiting validation 

A mostly complete copper-alloy wrist or sleeve clasp of Early-Medieval date, c.AD 450 -

570. Hines Form B18c, cast in one piece. The clasp consists of a rectangular plate with a raised bar along one long straight edge and one curvilinear edge forming six roundels, with five perforations, or sewing holes, for attachment between the bar and the roundels. The bar is decorated with broad transverse grooves alternating with double narrow grooves. The reverse of the clasp is flat and undecorated though the worn remains of a hook project from the centre of the straight edg...

Created on: Thursday 11th May 2023

Last updated: Thursday 1st June 2023

Spatial data recorded.  This findspot is known as 'Snainton', grid reference and parish protected.



750 copper-alloy
early-medieval wrist-
clasps (to 800 AD)

Record ID: [IOW-CC7405](#)

Object type: MOUNT

Broad period: EARLY MEDIEVAL

County: Isle of Wight

Workflow stage: Awaiting validation 

A fragment of an Early Medieval copper-alloy mount, dating to c.AD 500 - 600. The

mount is rectangular in plan with a raised boarder along three edges, the fourth end terminates in an old break. The front has a chip-carved zoomorphic motif of Salin style I, with remains of gilding in the recesses. The interlaced ornament appears to be an elongated beast, with a body indicated by two sinuous curves of triple-ridged ribbon and a possible clawed limb. No eye is apparent. The rear of the mount is undecorated with the remains of a stud that would have attached the mount...

Created on: Thursday 11th May 2023

Last updated: Wednesday 24th May 2023

Spatial data recorded.  This findspot is known as 'Isle of Wight', grid reference and parish protected.



3,200 other copper-
alloy early-medieval
objects (to 800 AD)



Lot 14 Celtic/Romano-British skirted terret ring. Circa 1st century...

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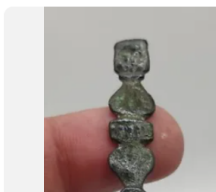
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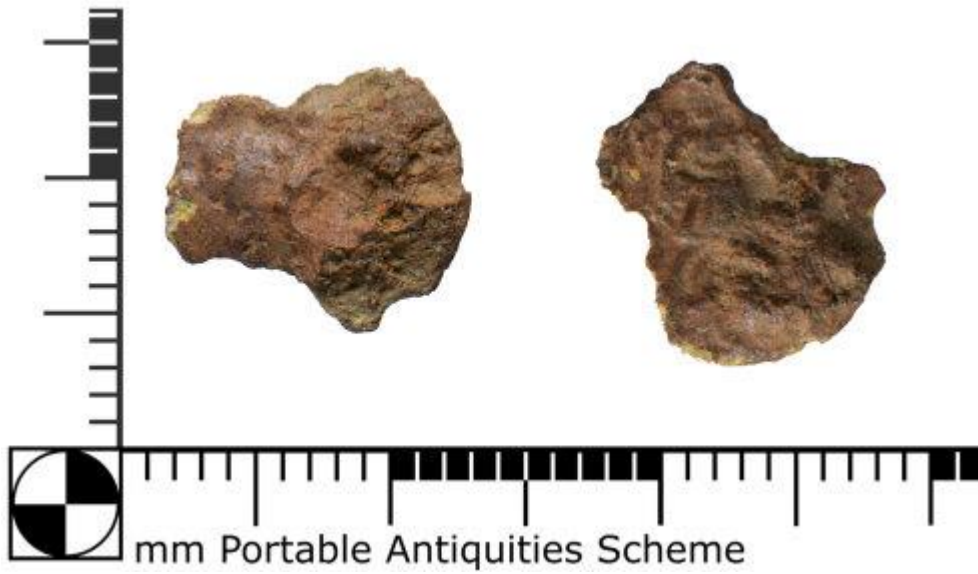
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Late 3rd- or 4th-century
copper alloy radiate or
nummus, OXON-0DDDB95

Unglamorous objects



6th-century copper-alloy
brooch fragment,
NLM-D4D7F6

The Staffordshire Moorlands Pan, acquired for the British Museum, Tullie House and the Potteries Museum with a Heritage Lottery Fund grant (WMID-3FE965)

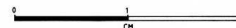


Copper-alloy mould for a Roman rear-hook brooch, donated to Norwich Castle Museum (NMS-E99B33)

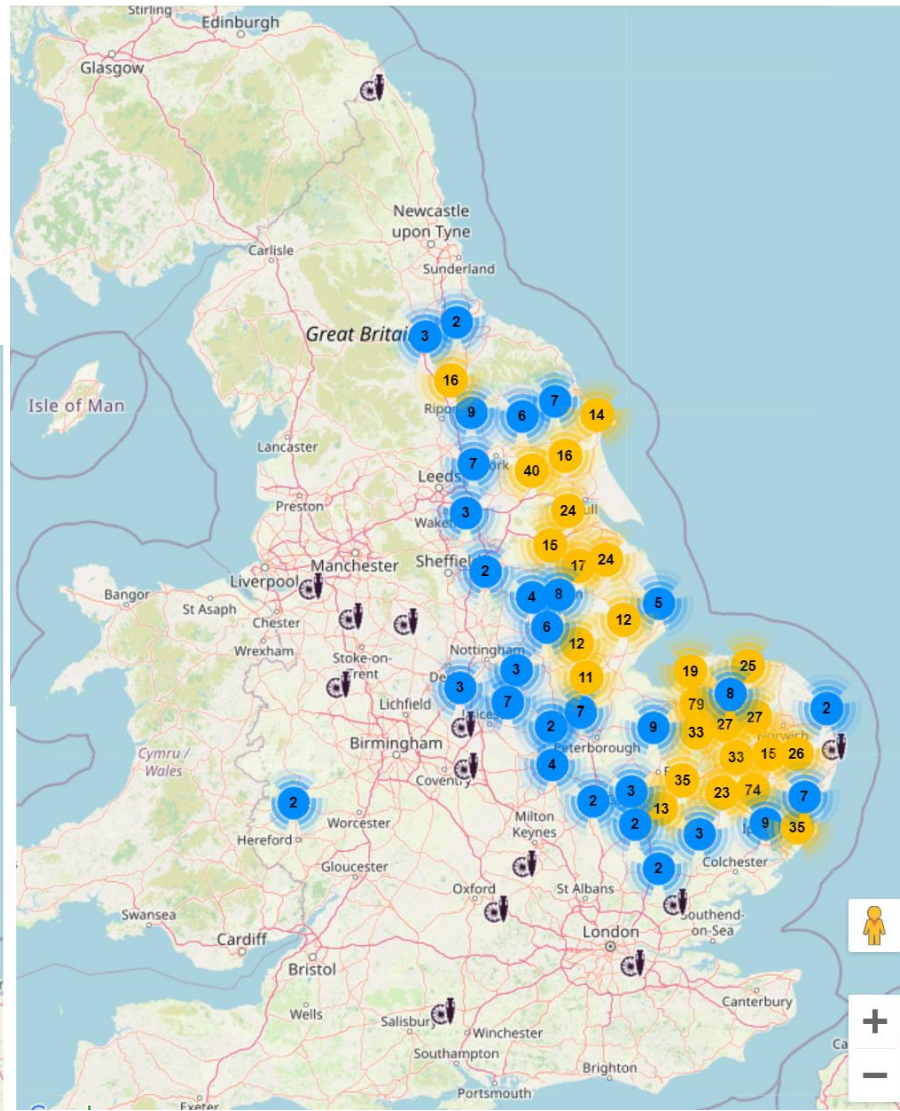
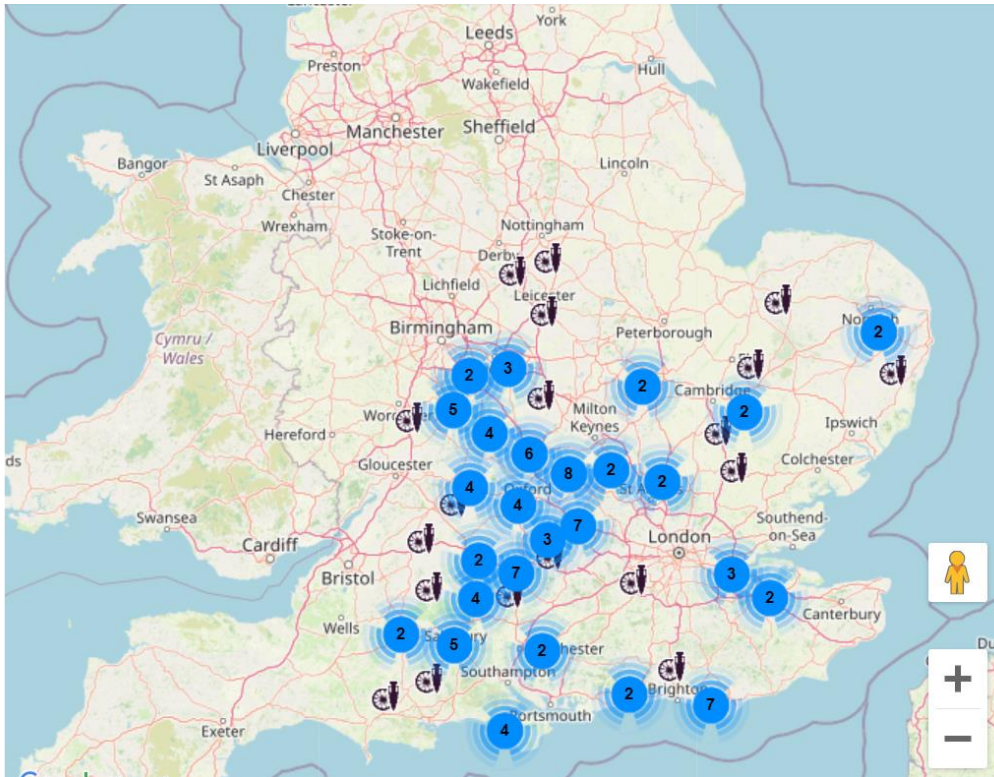
Museum acquisitions



Copper-alloy die for an early-medieval C-bracteate, acquired by Norwich Castle Museum (NMS-25CDD3)



Regional variation



Cast saucer brooches –
evidence for ‘Saxon’
dress fashions?

Wrist clasps– evidence
for ‘Anglian’ dress
fashions?



Curation vs. regular recasting of dress accessories



decorative grooves on the bow are worn away in the centre

NMS-4B76EA



replacement catchplate has been riveted on

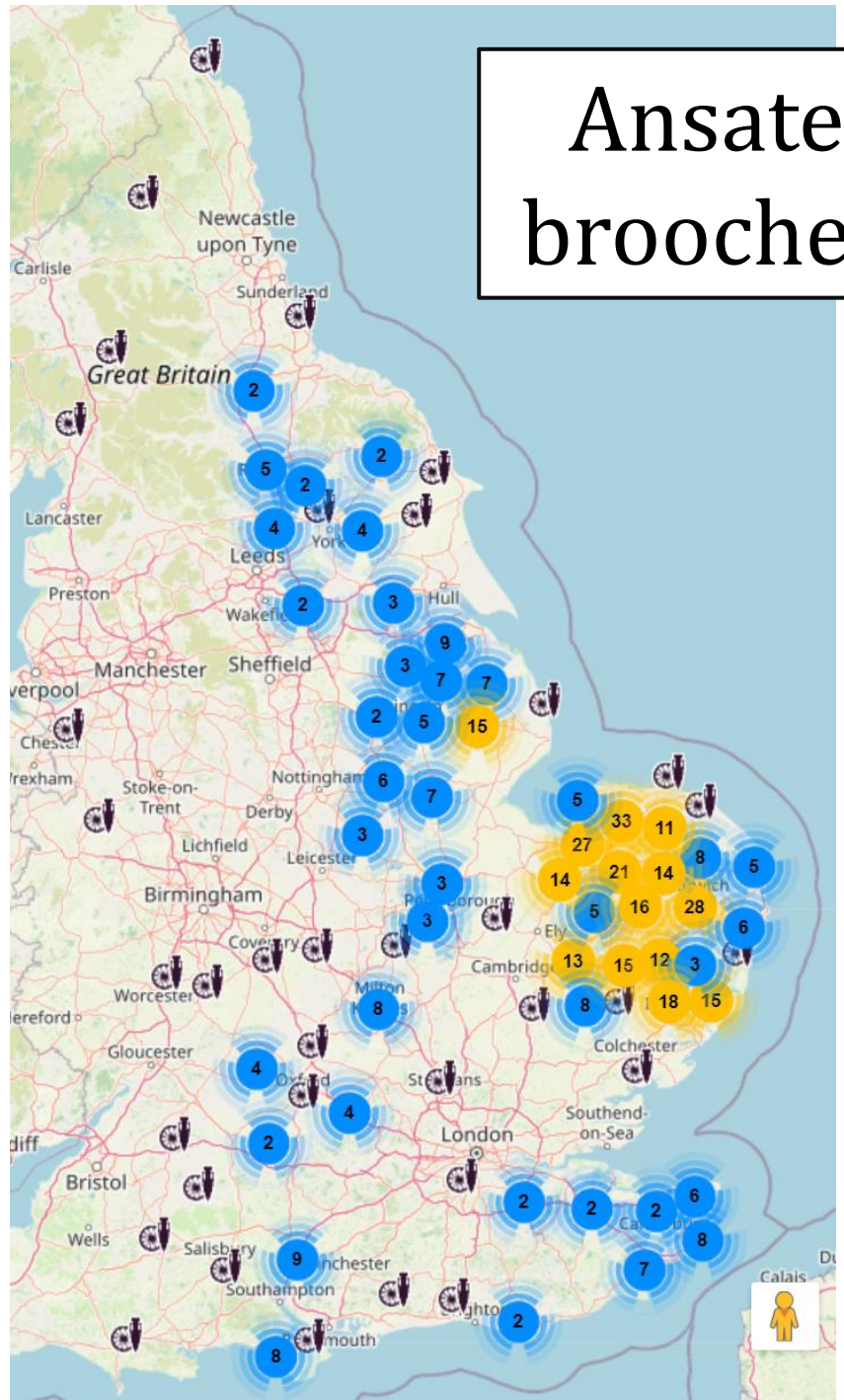
HAMP-30FOCC

NMS-BE02A5



KENT-C4CCE9

Ansate brooches

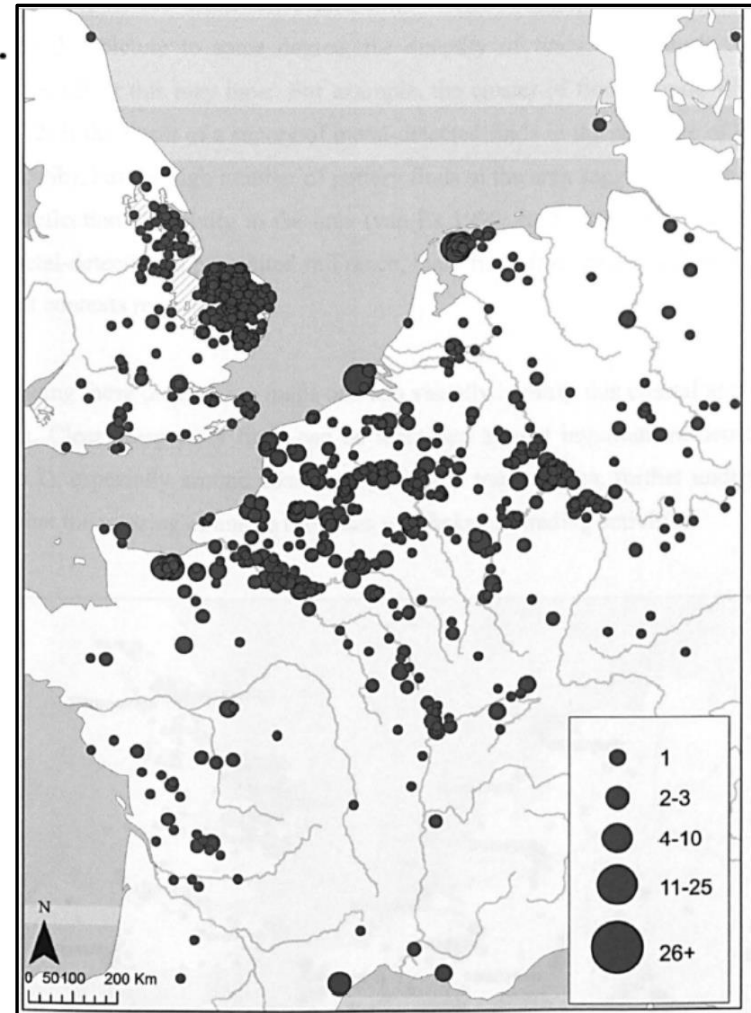


Weetch 2014, 236:

Determining exactly which ansate brooches were imports and which were produced in England is an impossible task due to the very close similarity of design and decoration found on either side of the southern North Sea. Testing the composition of the metals of these brooches, taking samples from both England and the Continent, may be able to shed further light on this issue, but such work was not possible as part of this thesis.

Determining exactly which ansate

Ansate
brooches from
western Europe
(Weetch 2014)



KENT-C4CCE9

Hanging bowls



LIN-75B9C3



YORYM-59523A



YORYM-73B821

YORYM-975799



SWYOR-9C315A



