

DRESSED TO IMPRESS?

WHO WAS WEARING PENANNULAR BROOCHES IN BRITAIN?

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What are penannular brooches?

Penannular brooches were used in Britain to fasten clothing for an exceptionally long period of time - from c.400 BC to AD c.900. During this period many different types developed or arrived from the continent.

Now they are regularly found during excavations of houses, public buildings, pits, shrines, burials and as stray finds. And yet there is still a lot that we do not know about who was using them and why some types became particularly popular in certain regions.



Hoop

Pin

Terminals
(these show
the most
variation)



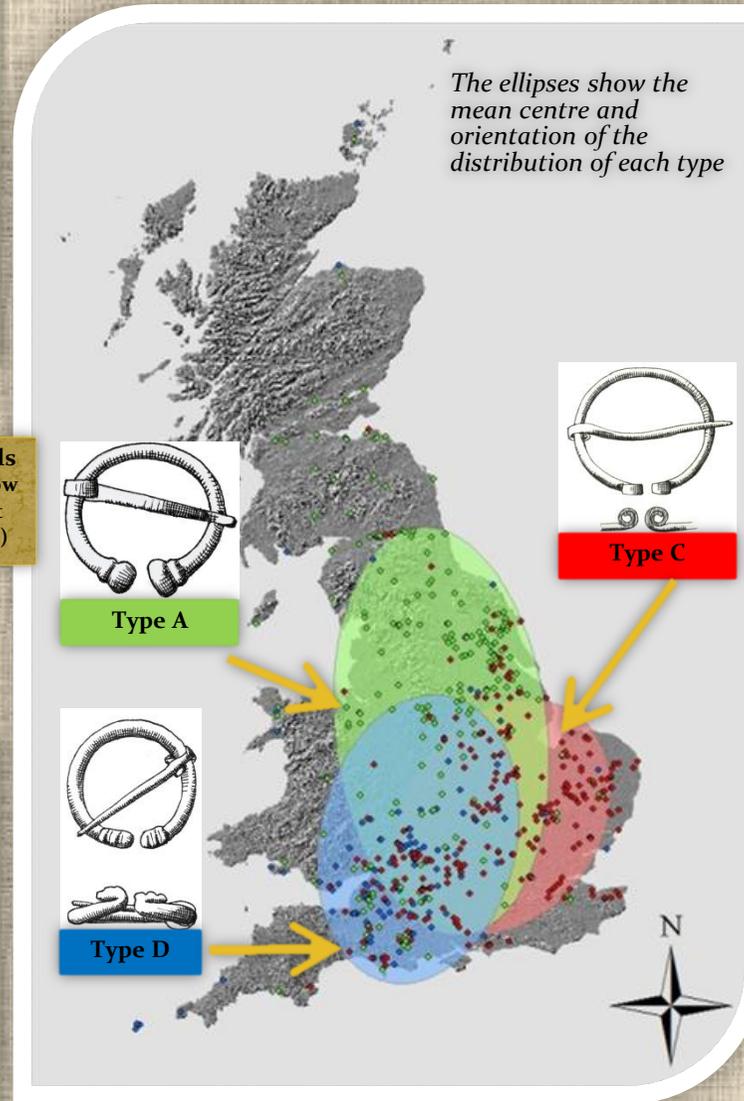
Type A



Type D



Type C



Results and conclusions so far

This data has been used to plot and compare the distributions of each type and investigate when they developed, how long they were in use and when they were most popular.

Several broad patterns have already emerged. For example three common types developed in the early Roman period. Type D became most popular in south-west England, Type C in the south-east and Type A in the north.

Although there are likely to be many practical reasons for these patterns they can also potentially tell us about the development of regional and sub-regional identities during this time of great social and cultural change.

What next?

Now these broad patterns will be investigated in more detail through two detailed regional case studies looking at south-west England and Yorkshire where concentrations of penannulars are found.

Drawing on work by sociologists (e.g. Woodward 2005) looking at the link between appearance and identity I will then bring this analysis together to build up a picture of how penannulars were used to establish different identities at different times and places.



Why study them?

The last detailed study of the British penannulars was carried out in the late 1950s (Fowler 1961), but since then thousands more have been found during excavations and through metal detecting.

One of the primary aims of this doctoral research, a collaborative project with the British Museum, is to compile a database of these new discoveries. This will then help us to understand the significance of future discoveries.