

This working document contains catalogue entries for three groups of finds; leather fragments from inside a Coptic bowl, the sheaths of nine knives and a pair of shears, and the scabbards of eleven swords. They have not yet been put into house style (but will be), and some notes which are the preserve of other specialists, such as descriptions of fittings on the grips of swords, can be removed.
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Catalogue of leather fragments from the bowl complex FN804, Grave 5

1. Degraded leather without grain pattern, one edge curved with a slightly scalloped seam, L.52, W.45, T.1mm.
2. Degraded leather without grain pattern, one edge curved with a slightly scalloped seam, L.50, W.20, T.1mm.
3. A triangular-shaped piece with a curved edge and scalloped seam; L.5.3, W.3.3, T.1mm.
4. A fragment without cut edge or stitching; L.10, W.5, T.1mm.

Catalogue of knife sheath remains

ARC SFB 99 (1792) sf.294

Iron knife with mineralised remains of a horn handle and of a plain leather sheath which survives in fragments on both sides of the blade. The sheath is smoothly curved over the back of the knife and seamed below the cutting edge in tunnel stitch. There is also a trace of leather over part of the handle. L. 165, W. 28, T. (of leather) >2mm.

ARC SFB 99 (1290) sf.25 (two items fused together)

Iron knife with mineralised remains of a leather sheath which has a moulded spine, slightly ridged on one face, and a suggestion of a suspension flap at the cutting edge. The flap was possibly compressed and has an embedded stitch or thong. Faint tooling on one face of the sheath consists of a transverse line near the base of the handle and another along the cutting edge. L. 130, W. (of blade) 20, W. (of sheath) 25, T. (of leather) 2mm.

A pair of iron shears in a case with a moulded spine but the other edge is lost and no evidence of a seam survives. The upper end (opening) of the case lies at the neck of the iron spring. Faint tooled decoration on one face consists of a bordered panel containing two parallel motifs, the detail unclear. L. 178, W. (extant) 25, T. (of leather) 3mm.

SLT 98, G.29, (1253) FN1104

Iron knife, incomplete (tip missing) with mineralised traces of a horn handle and plain leather sheath. Fragments of the sheath survive on both sides of the blade and extend a little way beyond the cutting edge to form an undulating seam line. No stitching survives. L. 126, W. (of blade) 21, W. (of sheath) 30, T. (of leather) >2mm.

SLT98C (1220) FN1125

Iron knife with mineralised remains of a horn handle and of a plain leather sheath which survives in a continuous layer on each face of the upper part of the blade. The sheath curves over the back of the knife and extends slightly beyond the cutting edge but is broken off and no seam survives. The lower end of the blade has a drop-nosed profile. L. 90, W. 18, T. (of leather) >2mm.

SLT98C (1295) FN1136

Iron knife with drop-nosed profile, the tip missing. Mineralised remains comprise a horn handle, parts of a plain leather sheath on both faces of the blade and traces of textile overlying the sheath. The sheath appears to curve over the back of the knife but is broken off at the cutting edge and there is no evidence of a seam. L. 127, W. 18, T. (of leather) 1mm.

SLT98C (1324) FN1162

Large iron knife with mineralised remains of a horn handle and plain leather sheath. The tip of the blade is gently drop-nosed. The sheath curves over the back of the blade and extends as a double thickness slightly beyond the cutting edge, but there is no evidence of stitching. The two faces of the sheath differ in that the back bulges to give room for the knife while the front is flat and this suggests that parts of it might have been moulded. L. 400, W. 42, T. (of leather) 2mm.

SLT99 (4501) FN2068

Iron knife with mineralised remains of a leather sheath on both faces of the blade. The sheath is curved over the back of the blade but although it is quite extensively preserved on one face it is very fragmentary on the other and there is no evidence of a seam. Possible decoration at the upper end of the blade consists on one face of the corner of a tooled frame (which might have contained a panel of decoration) and on the other of four transverse lines. L. 124, W. 24, T. (of leather) >2mm.

SLT98C (1355) FN1233

Iron knife (drop-nosed in profile) with mineralised remains of a plain leather sheath at the lower end of the blade. The sheath curves over the back of the blade and is preserved on both faces, meeting as a double thickness along the cutting edge in a sinuous seam. The stitched portion of the seam is lost except at the tip where the seam extends onto the back of the knife for a short distance and a single stitch is preserved. L. 161, W. 28, T. (of leather) >2mm

SLT99 (4681) FN2219

Iron knife with mineralised remains of a plain leather sheath on both faces of the blade and possible trace of a sinuous seam at the tip of the cutting edge. L. 94, W. 17, T. (of leather) >2mm.

Catalogue of sword scabbards

FN1091-3

Scabbard of birch wood, its grain aligned longitudinally, 1mm thick. A thin, fragmentary layer on the outer surface of the wood (initially thought to be a leather covering) consists of further decayed wood and this has a dimpled appearance which might be the result of textile pressing upon it during burial. A second feature of the wooden surface is a central raised longitudinal line, 2mm wide, 50mm in length, possibly a remnant of twisted yarn put there for a purpose (see discussion). The upper end of the scabbard is straight.

Remains of the grip, upper and lower guards are of horn with two tiny wedges of another substance (now voids) on the front and back of the tang, beneath the horn. Sword L.778, blade L.657, blade W.48mm.

FN2009

Scabbard of birch wood, its grain aligned longitudinally, 1mm thick. There is also an inner lining of skin >0.5mm thick with attached hair next to the blade (its condition prevents identification to species), the lining narrower than the blade by 4mm at each edge. A trace of leather on the back of the scabbard may be the remains of an outer covering. Also on the back, 95mm below the upper edge, a transverse strap 5mm wide, possibly of leather. The upper edge of the scabbard is straight with a metal fitting of base silver (?), partly gilt. It is in two parts, the front of which consists of a cast plate of transverse banded *light and shade*, gilt (L.58, W.24mm) while the back and sides consist of a thinner plate decorated across its upper edge with a line of punched marks. The two are soldered together.

Remains of the grip, upper and lower guards are of horn.

Sword L.914, blade L.784, blade W.55, scabbard W. 60mm.

FN2146

Scabbard of willow/poplar wood, grain aligned longitudinally, 1–1.5mm thick. A possible skin lining was sampled but found to be further decayed wood.

Remains of the grip, upper and lower guards are of horn.

Sword L.860, blade L.738, blade W.50, scabbard W. (extant) 55mm.

FN825

Scabbard of beech wood, grain aligned longitudinally, 1mm thick, with possible undulation at the upper end. This may be related to the shape of the blade, the cross-section of which is angular (rectangular centre core with triangular edges welded on). The wood is lined with sheepskin with hair next to the blade. The outer leather cover (which has not survived) is represented by a sinuous ridge of corrosion at the back of the scabbard, near the lower end, which marks the line of the seam.

A textile binding at the upper end of the scabbard involves two types of braid covering a total 200mm length of scabbard. The braid nearest the upper end is 8mm wide (measured from x-ray) and overlaps at 3mm intervals, but lower down this is replaced by a wider braid with an overlap of 5mm intervals (narrow braid woven at

20:12 threads per cm calculated from a 5mm square, system 1 has S-spun yarn; wider braid weave is blurred). Insect pupae cases are abundant on both faces of the scabbard.

Remains of the grip, upper and lower guards are of horn and a small peg (now a void) had been wedged beneath the horn at the upper end.

Sword L.928, blade L.800, blade W.51, scabbard W. (extant) 66mm.

FN2010

Scabbard of willow or poplar wood, grain aligned longitudinally, 1–1.5mm thick. A void layer beneath the wood is presumed to have been occupied by a skin/hair lining, removed by insects. Traces of an outer covering of leather (T.>1mm) with a central seam are preserved on the back of the scabbard. There are spreads of textile across both faces of the scabbard as though it had been a wrapped (thread diameter 0.5mm, system 1, 16 Z-spun; system 2, 12 S-spun per cm, calculated from 0.5cm square). However, traces of woven material at the upper end of the scabbard and of coarse threads, 2mm wide, positioned transversely in groups of 3 or 4 near the upper edge (at the side) and further down (120mm below the upper edge) suggest a binding of braid and cord.

A copper alloy band, fitted to the upper end of the scabbard, is made in one piece and joined at the back with a single rivet. Seven parallel grooves are scored across the front and continue onto the sides. W.18, T.1mm.

Organic remains of the grip, upper and lower guards are of horn and a thin metal plate riveted to the lower end of the grip immediately above the lower guard is of base silver, L.27, W.19mm.

Sword L.880, blade L.744, blade W.53, scabbard W. (extant) 61mm.

FN2524

A scabbard of willow or poplar wood, grain aligned longitudinally, 1–1.5mm thick. The lining of the scabbard is not well preserved but mineralised hairs are attached and lying next to the blade. Patches of degraded textile on the outer surface of the wood, a small lump of layered braids on the back of the scabbard and a trace of braid with the remains of three transverse, adjacent cords (D. 0.3mm) suggest a binding of braid and cord.

The grip, upper and lower guards are of horn with a tapering wedge/peg (L.60mm) inserted beneath the grip at the back and possibly another on the front. Sword L.923, blade L.797, blade W.56, scabbard W. (extant) 61mm.

FN310

A scabbard of willow or poplar wood, grain aligned longitudinally, 2mm thick. Hair fibres on the corroded surface of the blade suggest that the scabbard was lined with a thin pelt. Traces of an outer leather covering are preserved on the wood at the lower end of the scabbard.

The upper end of the scabbard is bound with a non-woven material, possibly bast fibre (inner tree-bark) in strips that are about 9mm wide and 0.2mm thick. The bindings overlap each other and seem to have been applied in two layers with the first moving up towards the upper end of the scabbard, the second moving down again. They were fastened 40mm from the upper end with a series of parallel cords (D. 0.3mm, S-twist).

A little below this, along one edge of the scabbard, traces of overlapping textile suggest another possible binding.

Visible parts of the grip and lower guard are of horn.

Sword L.933, blade L.803, blade W.55mm, scabbard W. (extant) 61mm.

FN1137

Scabbard of willow or poplar wood, grain aligned longitudinally, 1.5mm thick, undulated at the upper end. The scabbard was lined with a thin pelt. On the front of the scabbard and within the trough formed by its undulated shape is a wooden feature 12mm wide at its narrowest point and slightly splayed at each end. Its lower half is hidden beneath concretion but total length is estimated at 60mm. It is probably the crushed remains of a strap-slide.

The upper part of the scabbard is bound with woven braid or tape, 9mm wide with threads 20x18 per cm², overlapped at about 3mm intervals. The braid extends over the upper end of the strap-slide and finishes abruptly at that point.

Visible parts of the grip and guards are of horn and the lower guard has a copper-alloy plate fitted to its lower face, boat-shaped in plan, W.21, L.90mm, T.2mm. The *cocked-hat* style pommel is silver-gilt with niello. A central panel on one face contains loops and scrolls in relief, with a Roman vine-leaf scroll on the other face and panels of banded filigree on each shoulder.

Sword L.922, blade L.780, blade W.53, scabbard W.(extant) 72mm.

FN2256

A scabbard of beech wood, grain aligned longitudinally, 1mm thick. It is lined with pelt, the hairs running transversely. A trace of an outer leather covering, >1mm thick, protrudes from beneath a braid near the upper edge.

The upper end of the scabbard is bound with woven tapes but their condition is poor. Further layers of textile lie above the tapes and extend slightly onto the lower guard (14 Z-spun: 12 ?-spun per cm²).

Remains of the grip, upper and lower guards are possibly of horn.

Sword L.915, blade L.780, blade W.54mm, scabbard W.(extant) 60mm.

FN2060

Scabbard of wood, grain aligned longitudinally, 1mm thick. Its sheepskin lining is narrower than the blade by 4mm at each edge. On top of the wood, traces of possible leather suggest an outer cover.

The upper end of the scabbard is bound with cords lying parallel and touching each other (D.1mm, S-twist). There are 6 cords at the upper edge on the back of the scabbard, a few fragments on the front and other traces, such as cord impressions in the wood, for a further 30mm below the upper edge and other even fainter impressions of transverse banding on the wood 200mm below the upper edge.

The grip, upper and lower guards are made of horn with silver-gilt fittings comprising a ring-hilt *cocked-hat* pommel with upper and lower guard plates elliptical in plan (upper plate L. 64, W.29, T.5; lower plate L.72, W.22, T.5mm).

Sword L.910, blade L.767, blade W.51mm, scabbard W.(extant) 54mm.

FN1163

Scabbard of willow or poplar wood, grain aligned longitudinally, the full thickness of the wood is not preserved.

135mm from the lower end of the front of the scabbard, near one edge, are approximately 8 layers of textile within the space of about 15x10mm with all warps running in the same transverse direction, 20 per cm. It is unclear whether they belong to a larger textile complex or are part of a scabbard binding.

On the hilt, the upper guard is made of horn.

Sword L.698, blade L.575mm, blade W.54mm, scabbard W.(extant) 60mm.