

Some Neglected Late Anglo-Saxon Swords

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THE purpose of this paper is to draw attention to a number of decorated swords of the late Anglo-Saxon period which are either unpublished, inadequately published, or published in obscure or not easily available periodicals. The need for this has become evident since the appearance of Mrs. Davidson's useful book, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England* (1962), which has shown clearly that archaeologists have been rather lax in recording certain of the more important swords and have neglected others. Although it has not been my intention to undertake any large discussion of swords as such, certain general points which have become evident to me are mentioned towards the end of the paper. While this catalogue cannot pretend to be exhaustive, I am not aware of any other unpublished examples.¹

The swords are listed in alphabetical order of find-places. In describing them I have given the fullest possible bibliography under each entry, although mostly the works referred to are uninformative—often, for instance, containing merely a casual reference or a mention in an inventory. I have tried to include a tentative dating for each sword in the *discussion* section which follows each entry.

CATALOGUE

1. *Near Battersea, London (R. Thames). (Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford: inv. no. P.R. 1555-2580 : PL. II, A, B.)* Iron two-edged sword, the guard and pommel of which are inlaid with brass and copper. The blade is much bent and, 16·4 cm. from the tip, it is partly broken through. The tip is encrusted with a cement-like concretion. On one face is the inscription:

+ N I E R I † †

on the other face is a pattern:

† † < > < † †

The blade develops into a narrow tang. This passes through the pommel and is riveted over its top. The pommel is roughly semicircular in outline and is decorated on both surfaces with a formalized acanthus pattern, constructed of a series of brass wires or strips, which have been hammered into the cross-scored surface of the iron. Interspaced with the tendrils of the main pattern is a series of inlaid wires

¹ Most of the late Anglo-Saxon decorated swords are listed in Wilson (1964), pp. 99-116.

which have a zig-zag appearance. The brass is contrasted with inlaid copper which forms a background to the main pattern. One of the two faces of the pommel is slightly corroded and damaged, revealing the scored hatching which keys the brass and copper into the surface. The edges of the pommel are plated with what appears to be a series of zig-zag wires (the zig-zag pattern is probably accidental—caused by the cross-scored surface of the iron).

The guard is curved and expands slightly at either tip: it has been plated by means of a series of brass wires hammered into the face longitudinally (there are eight of these wires on one face and nine on the other). The upper face of the guard (PL. II, B) has been decorated with a basket-work pattern of widely-spaced inlaid wires. The under side of the guard is plain and there appear to be no traces of copper on this portion of the weapon. The guard is pierced to allow for the passage of the tang, while a channel cut in the under side of the guard forms a seating for the heel of the blade.²

Length of the sword in its surviving bent condition: 87.2 cm.

Length of guard: 11.0 cm.

Circumstances of the find: According to the original publication of 1868 the sword was dredged up from the bed of the R. Thames at Battersea. The sword was apparently in the collection of Colonel Lane-Fox (later General Pitt-Rivers) at the time of its first publication; in 1882 it passed with his collection into the possession of the University of Oxford.

Bibliography: *Proc. Soc. Antiq. London*, 2 ser., IV (1868), 142–3. Davidson (1962), pp. 45, 56, 63, fig. 26. Wilson (1964), pp. 40, 107, pl. vii.

Discussion. The ornament of the sword fits into a well-defined group of brass inlaid objects, which include particularly a group of stirrup-irons which I have discussed in some detail elsewhere.³ They all seem to be of 10th- or even early 11th-century date—a date emphasized by the acanthus ornament of the pommel of this object, which is quite close to the similar designs in the Winchester School of painting. The ornament is not ‘Frankish’ as is suggested by Mrs. Davidson.⁴

The inscription of the blade is presumably a blundered version of the well-known maker’s name Ingelrii.⁵

2. *Fiskerton, Lincolnshire (R. Witham at Five Mile House).* (*Sheffield City Museum*: inv. no. J. 1954.3.: PLS. II, C, and III, A.) Iron two-edged sword with silver-mounted hilt. The blade has no fuller and is slightly broken at the tip. An X-ray photograph shows different designs of welding—a slightly watered effect at the hilt and a herring-bone pattern throughout the length of the blade.⁶ Towards the tip of the blade there are rusty fragments of what was possibly the wooden lining of the scabbard. The blade is slightly chamfered at each edge. The guard is curved and undecorated, as is the pommel-guard. The pommel is trilobate, each lobe

² The identification of the metal in the inlays was carried out in the Oxford University Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art.

³ Wilson (1964), p. 39 f., with cited references.

⁴ Davidson (1962), p. 56.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 45–58.

⁶ Cf. Anstee and Biek (1961), table 1.

being separated from the next by a narrow silver band inscribed with a number of patterns; on one face is a coarse band interlace and a series of triangles, while on the other is a very degenerate animal ornament and a series of billets and triangles. Each strip is bounded by a border and the ornament is nielloed and decorated with punch marks. A silver band follows the curve of the pommel-guard. It is bounded on either edge by a beaded border and divided into four roughly semi-circular fields separated from each other by a plain area and a nielloed border. On one face, against a nielloed background within these fields, is a series of contorted and very degenerate animals, their bodies decorated with small punch marks—the contour occasionally bearing a double nick. On the other face the fields are similarly arranged but only the two central fields bear animal ornament, the outer one (on the left) has an *oculi* motif, and the one on the right an interlaced pattern. Above the band on this face can be seen the traces of a central roundel (now missing) and above it is a lunate silver plate, roughly billeted and inlaid with niello. Below the pommel is another silver band decorated with a series of interlocking lozenges and triangles; the inner contour of the ornament is inlaid with niello. A similar motif occurs on both faces. At the middle of the tang of the sword is a silver band decorated with a running lozenge pattern, each lozenge of which contains a quatrefoil against a nielloed background. Above the guard is another silver band with a series of interlocking leaves set haphazardly against a nielloed background. Most of these silver bands bear traces of beaded borders.

The silver bands on the tang are now mounted on paraffin wax. The middle one measures 3.4 cm. \times 1.4 cm.

Surviving length of sword: 90.2 cm.

Length of guard: 8.5 cm.

Circumstances of the find: Found in 1954 in the bank of the R. Witham by a fisherman; there were no associated objects.

Bibliography: *Sheffield City Museum, Annual Report*, 1955–6, p. 9, pl. 2, *b*. Anstee and Biek (1961), table 1. Davidson (1962), pp. 31, 55, 60, 69, 70, fig. 66. Wilson (1960), pp. 109, 216, pl. 23. Wilson (1964), p. 114.

Discussion: This sword, which has never been properly published, falls into a well-defined group of 9th-century swords of which the most important example is that from Abingdon.⁷ The ornament is related to the style of a number of objects in the Trewhiddle hoard, which is the leading group of Anglo-Saxon metalwork of the 9th century.⁸ The ornament is a fairly poor representative of its type, although the animals are reasonably typical of the style, with their collared necks and nicked bodies.⁹ The leaf and lozenge patterns are fairly common in similar contexts and can be compared quite closely with the ornament of the Wensley sword (PL. VII, A). Swords decorated in this manner are the commonest of all late Anglo-Saxon swords and on the basis of the form of the hilt were grouped together into a single type (L) by Jan Petersen, who identified them as the typical Anglo-Saxon sword of the

⁷ Wilson (1964), pl. vi.

⁸ Wilson and Blunt (1961); Wilson (1964), pp. 21–35.

⁹ Cf., for example, the rather more surely executed mount from the Trewhiddle hoard: Wilson (1964), fig. 42.

Viking period.¹⁰ There seem to be no grounds for Mrs. Davidson's statement¹¹ that the hilt was originally covered with metal. The middle band on the grip presumably merely helped to retain a grip of more perishable material.

3. *Gooderstone, Norfolk.* (*Castle Museum, Norwich* : inv. no. 11. 958 : PL. IV, A.) Iron two-edged sword, of which the upper part of the tang and the pommel survive. The rounded tip of the blade survives and the edge of the sword has broken away from the middle pattern-welded element between two points (56.5 and 47.0 cm. from the tip).

The guard is curved and the heel of the blade engages with a slit-like seating below the guard. Three thin silver plates were applied on each face of the guard: one is now missing from each face. On one face the middle and right-hand plate survive, on the other the two terminal plates remain. These plates are apparently decorated with impressed patterns, but corrosion and damage prohibit a proper analysis of the ornament. On the first face the ornament appears to be based (on the middle plate) on a foliate design and (on the terminal plate) on a design of interlocking triangles.

Traces of the original grip of the sword can be seen in the corrosion on the tang. The silver oval band ornamenting the base of the hilt at the guard survives. In cross-section it forms the quadrant of a circle and is moulded with a series of double billets separating a series of faceted ovals. This band has a maximum diameter of 3.8 cm.; the internal diameter, which indicates the width of the grip at this point, is 3.4 cm.

Surviving length of the sword (reconstructed) : 83.7 cm.

Length of guard : 12.0 cm.

Circumstances of the find : Found in October, 1957, during ploughing, about a quarter of a mile east of Chalkrow cottages in Gooderstone.

Bibliography : *Med. Archaeol.*, II (1958), 188. Wilson (1964), pp. 39, 104.

Discussion : The blade of this sword has been bent. It is conceivable that this feature is ancient and that the blade had been killed in a manner common in Viking graves.¹² But the circumstances of the find preclude any positive statement, as it might have been bent by the plough.

The application of silver plaques to a sword hilt in this fashion is not very common. A close parallel to the inlaid plates (one, however, without any apparent significance) occurs on the guard of an 8th-century sword from Ultuna, Bondkyrka, Uppland, Sweden.¹³ Similar plates do, however, occur on an Anglo-Saxon pommel-guard from Knafhólar, Iceland¹⁴ and on no. 13 below (PL. VIII, A).¹⁵ The Knafhólar fragment is probably of 9th-century date, whereas the Gooderstone sword (like no. 13) is almost certainly of 10th-century date and may be later. The date is indicated by the foliate design on the surviving silver plate, which seems to be related to the Winchester style.

¹⁰ Petersen (1919), pp. 112-116.

¹¹ Davidson (1962), p. 60.

¹² Cf., for example, Petersen (1919), fig. 93.

¹³ Behmer (1939), pl. lxi, 1.

¹⁴ Wilson (1964), fig. 2.

¹⁵ See below p. 45 f.

The beaded band is an unusual feature on swords and may be compared to that on the sword, of indeterminate date, from Windsor, no. 11 below (PL. VIII, B).

4. *Hegge, Kvam sn., Stod pgd., Nordtrøndelag, Norway. (Norske Videnskabers Selskab Museum, Trondheim : inv. no. T.16054 : PL. III, B.)* Fragmentary iron two-edged sword with silver-mounted hilt and pommel. The blade is not complete but much of it survives. The guard is formed of a straight bar of rectangular cross-section and is undecorated. At the base of the grip (which is restored round the tang) is a silver band. Each edge of the band is beaded and the main ornament consists of a series of contiguous lozenges. In the centre of each lozenge is a minute foliate motif—usually quatrefoil but occasionally bifoliate. Each lozenge is divided from its neighbour by a vertical bar and, where the band turns round the narrow portion of the hilt, there is the upper part of an animal mask with prominent eyes. The ornament of the band is reserved against a nielloed background. The grip, which was fractured when found, is now restored and at its top is a band similar to that at the base. The curved pommel-guard, which is much damaged on the side, is plain and, seen in cross-section, has a convex face. A silver band above the pommel-guard follows its curved contour and is decorated in a similar fashion to the bands on the grip. Above this band the iron pommel is tripartite, divided by silver bands which are laid in channels in the moulded knop of the pommel. These bands are decorated by curved incisions inlaid with niello. The central portion of the knop, which has a rounded top, is embellished with a roundel divided up into eight segments, each being inlaid with niello. Below the roundel is a nielloed plate with two lozenges divided by a vertical line; the upper contour of this plate is curved to fit the roundel. The moulded side-elements of the knop are embellished with curved silver plates which are decorated with pairs of lozenges divided by a simple bar, all inlaid with niello. The ornament is the same on both faces, though certain small plates are missing on the other face.

Length of pommel: 7.9 cm.

Associated finds: An axe-head and a spear-head.

Circumstances of the find: The only publication of the find, which includes a photograph of the upper part of the hilt and the pommel (showing its original fragmentary condition), describes the finding circumstances as follows :

'The . . . find was made in a barrow . . . and represents a male inhumation-grave of the early Viking Age. Preserved for cataloguing were an axe-head, a spear-head and a large part of a two-edged sword . . .'¹⁶

Bibliography: *Det Kongelige Norske Videnskabers Selskab Museet, Årsberetning*, 1941, p. 24. Wilson, (1964), p. 105.

Discussion: This find has never been properly published. The sword has a number of odd features. It is the only one of this type with a straight guard. It would seem most probable that the pommel and the two silver mounts on the hilt do not belong with the blade and guard. The hilt has been reconstructed and, in

¹⁶ Translated from *Det Kongelige Norske Videnskabers Selskab Museet, Årsberetning*, 1941, p. 24.

the process, the two mounts which terminate the grip have been inserted upside-down. The curved lower edge of the mounts (now placed in the wrong position) were meant to engage with the curve of the pommel and the guard (as for example on the Kersey sword, no. 5 below, PL. IV, B). It would seem therefore that this sword either consists of two pieces accidentally found together and joined in the laboratory, or (more likely) that the pommel and two silver mounts were added to a new blade and guard in the Viking period. This is not unlikely, since swords were treasured possessions and must often have been repaired, the most remarkable reference to this being found in *Gisli Saga*:

‘... The bits of Greyflank [a sword of that name] are brought out—they had fallen to Thorkell’s lot when the brothers split up the property—and Thorgrim Neb makes a spear out of them, and the work was all done by evening; there was pattern-welding in the blade, and a short handle fitted to it, about eight inches long...’¹⁷

The sword is a typical 9th-century weapon and can be compared in its embellishment and in the form of its pommel to the Fiskerton sword, no. 2 above (PL. III, A), and, more closely, to two other Anglo-Saxon swords also found in Norway, those from Grønneberg and Dolven,¹⁸ particularly the latter which has lozenge and leaf patterns very similar to that on the Hegge sword, though on a larger scale.

5. *Kersey, Suffolk*. (*Ipswich Museum: inv. no. 980-85: PL. IV, B, C.*) Fragmentary iron two-edged sword with silver-mounted hilt. The tip, the pommel, the upper part of the hilt and parts of the edge of the blade are missing. The blade is pattern-welded and has a central fuller. The guard is curved and the tang is flat, narrowing towards the missing pommel. Above the guard is an ornamented silver band (3.9 cm. long) which presumably formed one of the terminals of the grip, its bottom edge fitting the curve of the guard. The sides of the mount are plain save for a double vertical nick on the upper edge. The straight top edge of the mount is beaded and each face is divided into three fields by a pair of oblique beaded lines. The central field on each face is triangular; on one face the triangle contains a ‘plant-in-pot’ motif, on the other a double leaf motif, both of which are embellished by speckling. Two of the other four fields, each of which is quadrangular with one sloping side, contain degenerate animal ornament, while the remaining two fields contain a leafy tendril of basically spiral design. The animals are crudely-executed, interlaced creatures, the bodies of which sometimes degenerate into leaf-like scrolls and are, in some cases, embellished with double nicks. All the ornament is nielloed.

Length of surviving fragment: 87.8 cm.

Circumstances of the find: The fragments were turned up by the plough in 1960. (*National Grid Ref.* TL/99304334). There was no associated find or structure.

Bibliography: *Med. Archaeol.*, v (1961), 310. Wilson (1964), p. 106.

Discussion: This sword is a typical English 9th-century type. It is closely paralleled by those from Fiskerton (no. 2; PL. III, A) and Hegge (no. 4; PL. III, B),

¹⁷ Translation based on that of Johnston and Foote (1963), p. 14.

¹⁸ Best illustrated in Bruce-Mitford (1956), pl. xxiii.

but its ornament is more closely related to that of the rather more elaborate sword-pommel from Scales Moor, Ingleton, Yorkshire,¹⁹ where both the leaf pattern and the animal ornament are very similar.

6. *Långtora, Långtora sn., Uppland, Sweden.* (*Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm: inv. no. 20348: PL. V, A, B.*) Two-edged iron sword, the hilt of which is embellished with silver plates. The pattern-welded blade is almost complete (the tip is broken away) but, like the rest of the sword, it is much corroded. Traces of textile on the blade of the sword may be the lining of a scabbard, but the presence of similar impressions on the pommel suggests that the textile was part of the winding-sheet. The curved guard is broken away from the sword, the middle of one face being missing: it is much corroded. Traces of the wooden hilt can be seen on the tang. The pommel-guard is curved and much damaged. Loosely associated with the sword, and originally attached to the hilt, were fourteen pieces of silver plate:

(a) Two silver rings cut out of a sheet of metal. Each is ornamented with a beaded pattern between plain borders. These were originally fixed in the centre of each face of the pommel.

(b) Fragment of longitudinally-curved sub-oval band of similar pattern, together with three fragments of the same mount which allow for three-quarters of it to survive. These fragments originally encircled the base of the pommel above the pommel-guard.

(c) Two pear-shaped pieces with lightly impressed border, each about 8 mm. long. One has three incised lines within the lightly incised border. The other has a more heavily impressed border.

(d) Two triangular pieces containing simple, faceted, foliate motifs within a plain border.

(e) Four (two are fragmentary) new-moon-shaped mounts. The two fragments contain a very coarse leaf ornament within a plain border, one complete example has a more elaborate foliate ornament, while the fourth has been covered with scratches which might be 5 *k*-runes, but might simply be accidental damage.

The fragments (c)–(e) presumably formed part of the ornament of the pommel, which has a curved base and rises to a point at the tip. It was presumably originally faceted, but the corrosion of the surface has caused any trace of faceting to disappear.

Length of sword: 82.9 cm.

Surviving length of guard: 9.3 cm.

Associated objects: Found in a man's grave of the Viking age, with the skeleton of a horse and a dog.²⁰ Other associated objects include a knife, a horse-bit and various harness-mounts, some gaming-pieces of glass, a box with two ring-handles and an arrow-head.

Circumstances of the find: Found in the spring of 1933 while ploughing 500 m. WNW. of Långtora farm in the parish of Långtora. The site had long been known

¹⁹ Wilson (1964), fig. 32.

²⁰ The whole find is well published by Arbman (1936).

as a rich Viking-age cemetery and this grave was investigated by Holger Arbman for the Swedish State Archaeological Service.

Bibliography: Arbman (1936). Wilson (1964), p. 107.

Discussion: The sword has been adequately published by Professor Arbman, but, apart from being listed once in an English context, it seems to be unfamiliar to English scholars.

The sword is the only undoubtedly Anglo-Saxon sword found in Sweden,²¹ but its decoration is rather unexciting and it is not easy to parallel. Beaded borders to the central ornament of the pommel are quite common on 9th-century swords,²² but I know of no sword which has a border separated in this fashion from a (now missing) central plaque. Similarly the other small plates can all be more or less paralleled in the sword series, but the applied and now fragmentary border of the lower face of the pommel-guard is unique. While the sword is undoubtedly of Anglo-Saxon origin, the ornamental detail is of no great chronological significance. On balance, in view of the degenerate state of the ornament, I would tend to ascribe the sword to the 10th century and compare its ornament with that of no. 13 below (PL. VIII, A).

7. *Mileham, Norfolk.* (*Castle Museum, Norwich : inv. no. 210.949 : PL. VI, A.*) Iron two-edged sword with brass pommel and guard. The point of the blade is damaged but the sword is otherwise almost complete and is in good condition. The blade has a fuller and is pattern-welded. The curved guard is of cast brass and has slightly expanded, rounded ends. In the middle of each face, and cast in one piece with the guard, is a scrolled and slightly faceted pendant acanthus motif, consisting of two out-turned scrolls flanking a central lobe. Each face bears incised ornament. On one face is a crudely-drawn tendril pattern with a billeted border above and a zig-zag border below. The other face is divided up into squares, each one of which contains a saltire, bordered above by billets and below by a linear band. At either end of the guard is a bifoliate motif. The incised patterns were perhaps nielloed.

The tang expands from the guard in an ogival curve and, having passed through the pommel, is riveted over the top. The pommel has a curved base-element and five lobes, separated from each other by beaded bands. The bands are cast in one with the rest of the pommel. The bands between the lobes imitate twisted wire, whilst a similar band separating the lobes from the base of the pommel is ornamented with interlocking triangles.

Length of sword: 85.8 cm.

Length of guard: 11.1 cm.

²¹ An example from Simtuna, Enåkers sn., Enåkersby, Uppland (*Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens Årsbok*, 1933-5, p. lxx), excavated in 1932 by Gustafsson and Drakenberg from a rich grave, may possibly be a 10th-century Anglo-Saxon sword with plated pommel and guard. It is not dissimilar in form to the sword from Battersea (no. 1; PL. II, A). On the other hand swords of similar form occur in other parts of Scandinavia, decorated with undoubtedly Viking ornament: cf., for example the sword from Marum-Sudigård, Tinn, Telemark, Norway (Universitetets Oldsaksamling, Oslo: inv. no. 28239) and a sword in the Århus Museum (no number). On account of these parallels, which are decorated with Viking ornament of the early 11th century, I have not included the Simtuna sword in this paper.

²² E.g. Brøgger (1920-21), fig. 7a.

Circumstances of the find: Found 18 August, 1945, in a '13th-century' moat in Great Wood, 600 m. NNW. of Mileham Castle. It was found two m. down in the silt below '13th-century' pottery.

Bibliography: Clarke (1960), p. 232, pl. 53. Wilson (1964), p. 109.

Discussion: There can be little doubt that this sword is of Anglo-Saxon date. The running lozenge pattern and the tendril motif are naturally undatable, but reasonably common in Anglo-Saxon contexts. The clinching feature which dates the sword to the 11th century is the pendant acanthus-bud below the guard, which has the typical exaggerated central element of the Ringerike style of the early 11th century.²³ It is also paralleled on the extraordinary sword-guard, which may well be of English manufacture, from Sherborne Lane, London.²⁴ This is of the same date and material as the Mileham guard and the projection presumably engaged with the mouth of the scabbard, as happens in the opposite direction on the Dybäck sword²⁵—an object clearly made under English influence.

8. *Norwich, Norfolk (R. Wensum)*. (*British Museum: inv. no. 54, 11-7, 12: PL. VI, B.*) Iron two-edged sword in fragmentary condition. The blade, which is pattern-welded, only survives for a few cm. (when it came to the British Museum in 1854 a separate fragment of the blade survived, some 23 in. long). The pattern-welding consists of a rather neat herring-bone design. The curved guard is broken on one side, but was originally about 8 cm. in length. The moulded pommel surmounts a plain, curved pommel-guard. The tripartite pommel is divided into flat lobes by vertical bands which are cast in the iron of the pommel-knop. Around the rather pointed tip of the central element of the pommel is a plain silver band. Above the pommel-guard a band of iron passes round the base of the knop: it is separate from the rest of this element and must have been sweated into position. This is bound and inlaid with a series of bands of copper wire, of which twenty-three survive on one side.

Surviving length of sword: 17.8 cm.

Circumstances of the find: Unknown. The object was presented to the British Museum by the Rev. Greville J. Chester.

Bibliography: *Victoria County History, Norfolk*, 1, 348-9. Wheeler (1927), p. 35.

Discussion: This sword was discovered to be decorated when an X-ray photograph was taken in 1964. It had been previously X-rayed, but the ornament of the band above the pommel-guard had not shown up, and the piece was not, therefore, included in my catalogue of the British Museum ornamental metalwork of this period.²⁶ It is unique in its decoration, but is very close in form to a sword from Hauxton Mill, Cambridgeshire,²⁷ found in 1907, which I have been unable to trace. This appears from the published photograph to have had a beaded iron band sweated on to the pommel in a similar fashion to the Norwich sword. It also

²³ Cf. Kendrick (1949), pl. lxviii.

²⁴ Wheeler (1935), fig. 43.

²⁵ Strömberg (1961), pl. 65, 2.

²⁶ Wilson (1964).

²⁷ *Victoria County History, Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*, 1, pl. xi, b.

has traces of a roundel on the central element of the trilobate pommel of a form similar to that on the Hegge sword (no. 4; PL. III, B).

On general grounds of form and by its kinship through the Hauxton Mill sword with that from Hegge (PL. III, B) I would tend to ascribe the Norwich sword to the 9th century.

9. *Wensley churchyard, Yorkshire. (British Museum : inv. no. 1965, 7-3, 1 : PL. VII, A.)* Iron two-edged sword with silver-mounted hilt and pommel. The blade is pattern-welded and much corroded, and the tip is missing. The guard is curved and protrudes slightly beyond the edge of the blade and is broken at one side. No traces remain of applied plates on the guard or at the bottom of the grip. Much of the grip survives, as part of the original perishable material has been impregnated by the oxidization of the iron, but it is impossible to identify the material which formed the grip. Below the pommel is a silver band which bears an incised decoration. Each face of this band is divided up into four panels; in the middle of each side is a pair of lozenge-shaped fields, each of which contains a formalized trilobate motif; the fields are defined by four triangles. The whole is inlaid with niello, and is much worn. There are traces of beading on the upper edge of the strip. This was presumably a feature which occurred at top and bottom of the band.

The pommel is trilobate above a curved band of silver (now torn), which is decorated with incised linear decoration. Each face of this band is divided up into five fields. The middle field consists of a lozenge defined by triangles to form a sub-rectangular panel. The lozenge is divided by a saltire and, in each of the four lozenge-shaped panels so produced, is a lozenge-shaped nick which is filled, as is all the incised ornament on the hilt, with niello. This field is flanked by fields similar to the large field on the band at the top of the hilt. At each end of the band is a field panelled with triangles. There are traces of at least four rivets on the band, presumably the traces of an ancient repair. The central lobe of the pommel-knop has a pear-shaped silver panel which is much worn, but which must originally have contained foliate decoration. The other two lobes, and the spaces between them, were decorated with silver strips which bear a running lozenge pattern, each lozenge being separated by a double line from the next. In the best preserved of these strips a lozenge-shaped indentation can be seen in the centre of each element of the design and the area outside each lozenge is lightly speckled with the corner of the chisel. The pattern is the same on each side of the object.

Length of sword: 81.3 cm.

Width of pommel: 6.8 cm.

Associated finds: *Iron spear-head;* the unsplit socket is pierced by four bronze rivets. Fragmentary and much corroded. A portion of the wooden shaft survives in the socket. The blade is not pattern-welded. Length (as reconstructed): 56 cm. *Iron fragment of the blade of a sickle;* curved and much corroded. Length: 15.3 cm. *Iron knife;* the blade and tang are of triangular cross-section. The edge of the blade towards the tip is curved. Length: 15.8 cm.

Circumstances and history of the find: The objects were found on 20 November,

1915, while digging a grave in Wensley churchyard, Yorkshire. They were associated with a skeleton, oriented E.-W. (the skull to the west). The sword was on the man's right and the other objects on the left, their points toward the feet of the skeleton. The objects were exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries in 1916 by the then Lord Bolton and a schematized drawing of the sword was published.²⁸ After an exhibition in the Birmingham Museum in 1963, the sword and its associated objects were cleaned and treated in the Research Laboratory of the British Museum. In July 1965 the sword was purchased at Christie's by the British Museum, from the collection of Lord Bolton (Christie's Sale, July 12, 1965, no. 78).

Bibliography: *Proc. Soc. Antiq. London*, 2 ser., xxviii (1915-16), 228 ff. Elgee (1933), p. 214, fig. 38. Davidson (1962), pp. 55, 70, fig. 71. Wilson (1964), p. 113.

Discussion: This little-known sword falls into the series to which the Fiskerton sword belongs (pp. 33 ff.). There are elements of formalized leaf ornament present in the ornament of the sword, which are similar to details of the larger of the two Beeston Tor brooches.²⁹ But the general design of these panels is a rather rough version of the much more accomplished ornament of the Hegge sword (no. 4; PL. III, B). The parallel to the Beeston Tor brooch provides a clue to the dating of the sword, for this brooch forms part of a hoard, the deposition of which may be dated c. 873-5.

This is the only sword of Anglo-Saxon manufacture on which decoration survives from a recorded Viking grave in the British Isles.

10. *Near Westminster (R. Thames)*. (*Collection of Sir Gavin Lyle : cat. no. 236 : PL. VII, B*.) Iron two-edged sword in extremely good condition ; the hilt is embellished with silver, copper and brass. The blade, which is complete, has a pointed tip and a central fuller. It is pattern-welded and towards the hilt this forms a pattern consisting of a pair of penannular loops with everted spiral ends and a central spiral motif set out in the manner shown in FIG. 13. The loop of the upper-



FIG. 13
SWORD FROM RIVER THAMES, NEAR WESTMINSTER (no. 10)
Inlaid pattern on blade

most hook is 2.4 cm. from the centre of the guard. The iron guard is curved and thin metal has been applied to each face by hammering wires into a surface prepared by cross-hatching. Set against a general background of silver is a series of lozenges which do not touch each other. Each lozenge is made up of two different coloured metals, a red brass frame round a copper centre. The curved pommel-guard is decorated in a similar manner; the tang is featureless. The pommel-knop

²⁸ *Proc. Soc. Antiq. London*, 2 ser., xxviii (1915-16), 228 ff.

²⁹ Wilson (1964), pl. xi, 3.

is attached to the pommel-guard. It is trilobate and the outer lobes have a moulded contour, each of which almost forms two extra lobes. The channels between the lobes were originally filled with a pressed copper sheet imitating three wires twisted together to form a herring-bone pattern: much of this sheet has now disappeared. Traces of the same pressed sheet can be seen in the channel between the pommel-guard and the pommel. The surface of the pommel was silvered (much of the silver inlay is now missing) in the same manner as the two guards, and the two central lobes are further embellished with elongated (and slightly irregular) lozenges which have a copper centre and are framed by a silver and a brass wire. At ss on PL. VII, B, can be seen the ends of the bar or the rivets which attach the pommel to the pommel-guard.³⁰ Each is 5 mm. in diameter and stands slightly proud above the under side of the pommel-guard.

Length of sword: 91.5 cm.

Length of guard: 11.2 cm.

Circumstances of the find: The sword was found just before 1897 'near Westminster, in the Thames, standing upright'. At that time it was in the possession of Morgan S. Williams. It is not known how or when it passed into the possession of the Lyle family.

Bibliography: *Proc. Soc. Antiq. London*, xvi (1897), 390. *Victoria County History, London*, I, 156, figs. 9 and 10. Laking (1920), p. 15. Wheeler (1927), p. 54. Davidson (1962), pp. 32, 55, 71, fig. 68. Wilson (1964), pp. 39, 108.

Discussion: The Westminster sword is almost exactly paralleled by the sword from the R. Witham in the British Museum.³¹ Mrs. Davidson associates this sword typologically with the Abingdon sword,³² and compares it with the sword from Wensley churchyard (no. 9; PL. VII, A). The form and the ornament of the Westminster and Wensley swords are indeed very similar. On both swords a series of lozenges and triangles decorate the hilt. This type of ornament is a strangely consistent feature of late Saxon swords, occurring, for example, on the Witham sword just cited and, though in a different technique, on a number of swords of the Abingdon group.³³

It is, however, the technique of the Westminster sword which is its most important stylistic element. The Westminster sword, with the Witham sword and one or two others (e.g. the sword from Shifford,³⁴ and the sword found in the Thames at Westminster in 1840 and now in the Tullie House Museum at Carlisle,³⁵ which, like a sword from Brentford, Middlesex,³⁶ is covered with plain sheeting on the guard), form a group in which the important distinctive feature is the inlaid lozenge pattern of pommel and guard. They are similar to the sword from Wareham, Dorset, which on balance is probably Anglo-Saxon,³⁷ and are obviously

³⁰ See p. 47.

³¹ Wilson (1964), pl. xx.

³² Davidson (1962), p. 55.

³³ Cf., for example, Dolven: Bruce-Mitford (1956), pl. xxiii, c, d.

³⁴ Grove (1938), fig. 4.

³⁵ Cowen (1934), pp. 181-2, pl. II, 4.

³⁶ Wheeler (1927), p. 37, fig. 16, no. 7.

³⁷ Acland (1928).

closely related to a group of Scandinavian swords of which the most familiar is that from the R. Dnjeper at Kiev, U.S.S.R.,³⁸ but which is also paralleled by a Norwegian example from Utgård, Seljord, Telemark.³⁹ These Scandinavian swords are also, like the Westminster sword, inlaid with lozenge patterns. They have, however, straight guards, a feature which differentiates them sharply from the English series. The only Viking sword of this type found in England comes from the R. Lea at Edmonton.⁴⁰ This is certainly an import.

The inlaid lozenges with which the Westminster sword is decorated are common in Viking metalwork. They occur, as I have shown above, on swords and are also to be seen on spear-heads.⁴¹ Whether this motif originated in Scandinavia or England, or whether it was independently introduced in each area, is impossible to resolve.

Although the swords of which that from Westminster is an example form a group by themselves, the lack of detail capable of art-historical analysis makes it difficult to place them in a secure chronological position. The popularity of inlaid metal techniques in the 10th century is well attested in England. Finds of inlaid metalwork of 8th- and 9th-century date are practically unknown and it might be suggested that this group of swords belongs to the late 9th or early 10th century, a supposition which may be supported by the typological comparison between the Westminster sword and that from Abingdon, which is undoubtedly of that date.

The penannular rings with everted terminals, which are inlaid in the blade of this sword, are encountered occasionally on the continent.^{42a}

11. *Windsor (R. Thames)*. (*British Museum : inv. no. 1929, 2-6, 1 : PL. VIII, B, C.*) Iron two-edged sword with pattern-welded blade. The pommel is missing. There is a suggestion of a fuller down the centre of the blade. The guard was originally coated with white metal—by what technique we do not know—and traces of this can be seen above and below the guard. The basal mount of the hilt survives. It is worked from a bronze plate, and has a beaded edge and expanded, flattened terminals. The centre of the plate is pierced to allow for the passage of the tang; the seating of the hilt can clearly be seen.

Surviving length of sword: 77·1 cm.

Length of guard: 12·3 cm.

Circumstances of the find: Unknown. The sword was purchased in 1929 from Mr. C. A. E. Dixon.

Discussion: The date of the sword is by no means clear; it could belong to any period from the 10th to the 12th century. For this reason I did not include it in my catalogue of the British Museum collection of Anglo-Saxon ornamental metalwork of the period from 700–1100. I feel that it is more permissible to fly a kite here and suggest that it may be of 10th- or 11th-century date. It is interesting

³⁸ Destroyed during the Second World War. Illustrated by Kirpitsnikov in *Sovetskaya Archaologiya*, 1961, p. 186, fig. 4, no. 4.

³⁹ Universitetets Oldsaksamling, Oslo, inv. no. 1648.

⁴⁰ *Proc. Soc. Antiq. London*, 2 ser., xxvii (1914-1915), 217; Davidson (1962), fig. 69.

⁴¹ E.g. Rygh (1885), fig. 531.

^{42a} E.g. Ypey (1960-61), figs. 15, 16, 17.

in having a beaded seating for the base of the hilt in the same manner as the rather earlier Gooderstone sword (PL. IV, A).

There is no dating feature in the ornament or form of the sword which would confine it within any reasonable chronological limits. The technique of tinning, although known in 10th-century contexts in this country, continued in unbroken succession down to relatively modern times,⁴² and is of little chronological importance.

12. *Fragment without provenance.* (Tullie House Museum, Carlisle : no inventory number : PL. V, C, D ; FIG. 14.) Fragment of iron sword. The blade is much corroded, as is the fragmentary guard, which was originally curved. Associated with the sword is a loose ring of silver, which was presumably one terminal of the grip. This forms a continuous band (now broken) of diminishing oval section, with beaded borders at both top and bottom. The ends of the band are plain, but each face is carved with foliate patterns which were originally inlaid with niello. In the centre of each face is an inverted triangle flanked by inverted T-shaped fields, which, in turn, are flanked by triangular fields. The interior of each field is nicked to give the effect of leaves, while the space between each field is fitted with a scrolled foliate pattern.

Length of fragment: 27.7 cm.

Length of silver mount: 3.5 cm.

Circumstances of the find: Not known.

Bibliography: Cowen (1934), pp. 170, 180-1, pls. II, 3, III, 4, fig. 3. Davidson (1962), p. 70, fig. 47. Wilson (1964), p. 116.

Discussion: This fragmentary sword is quite well known but the mount has, hitherto, been illustrated only in a line drawing which gives little indication of its quality. The closest parallel in the disposition and decoration of the fields on the mount is provided by the much more elaborate and finely-drawn pommel-guard from Scales Moor, Ingleton, Yorkshire.⁴³ It is clearly of 9th-century date.

13. *Without provenance.* (Collection of Mrs. How : PL. VIII, A.) Iron two-edged sword, much corroded, mounted with silver plates. The blade, which is complete, has a rounded tip and a central fuller. Much of the edge has gone and the blade has rusted to holes in a number of places. Traces of wood (presumably the remains of the scabbard) can be seen on the blade. The guard is curved and on one face can be seen a group of plates of silver, originally inlaid in the surface of the iron guard but now standing slightly proud from the metal as the result of corrosion. The plates are decorated simply, with an incised line which generally follows the contour. Six plates survive from left to right, an arrow-shaped plate pointing towards the middle, a T-shaped plate with its head towards the middle, two triangular plates with their bases parallel in the middle, an L-shaped plate (perhaps originally T-shaped) and a triangular plate with apex towards the middle (which was perhaps originally arrow-shaped). Each plate is decorated

⁴² Cf. Jope (1956).

⁴³ Wilson (1964), fig. 32, pl. xxix, 65.

with incised lines which follow the contour of the plate. The tang shows considerable traces of the original wooden grip and is capped by the pommel-guard, which is curved. The pommel-knop is missing.

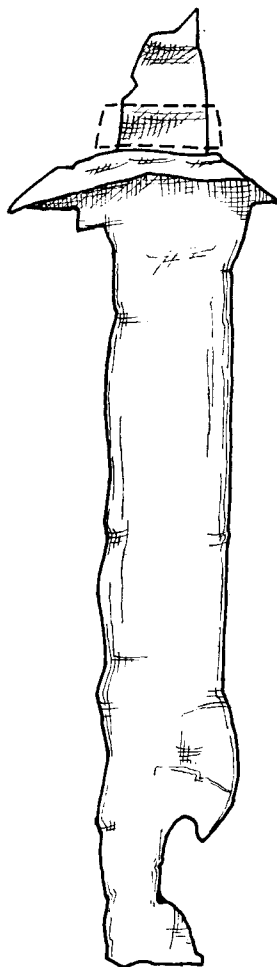


FIG. 14

FRAGMENT OF SWORD OF UNKNOWN PROVENANCE (no. 12, p. 45)

The position of the silver mount (PL. v, c, d) is indicated by the dotted line.

Length of sword: 89·9 cm.

Length of guard: 8·9 cm.

Circumstances of the find: From the collection formed by Sir William Strickland of Boynton Hall, Yorkshire, in the early years of the 19th century. It is reasonably safe to assume that the find comes from the north-east of England, but nothing is known concerning its exact provenance. The condition of the sword suggests that it was found in the earth and not in a river. It may, therefore, come from a grave.

Bibliography: Wilson (1964), p. 116.

Discussion: This sword, unpublished except in the inventory mentioned in the bibliography, is closest in the method of its decoration to the Gooderstone sword (no. 3; PL. IV, A). It is however much less elaborate and little can be said of its stylistic affinities. T-shaped fields interspaced with fields of triangular shape can be seen on the much more elaborate pommel-guard from Scales Moor, Ingleton, Yorkshire,⁴⁴ and on the mount from the Carlisle Museum (no. 12; PL. V, C, D), but these can hardly be called close parallels. The form of the guard is close to the rather pronounced curve of that on the Fiskerton sword (no. 2; PLS. II, C, III, A). The sword under discussion, then, is probably 9th or 10th century.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

THE POMMEL

There are a number of methods of attaching the pommel of a sword in the late Anglo-Saxon period. Most of them depend on sweating the bar of the pommel on to the tang and attaching the pommel-knop either (*a*) by riveting the end of the tang over the pommel-knop, or (*b*) by riveting the pommel and pommel-guard together, or (*c*) by passing an iron bar through the pommel-guard and the pommel-knop. The first method is common in swords of Petersen's type L and can be seen on the sword from the R. Wensum at Norwich (no. 8; PL. VI, B). The ugly riveted

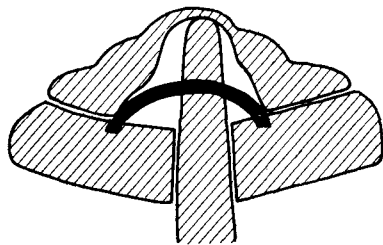


FIG. 15

DRAWING OF X-RAY OF SWORD WITHOUT PROVENANCE

(British Museum, inv. no. Tr. 173)

end of the tang is occasionally covered by a silver cap—a feature which can be seen, for example, on the Hoven sword.⁴⁵ Method *b* can be seen on the sword from Westminster (no. 10: the terminals of the rivets occur at *ss* on PL. VII, B). Method *c*, the technique of which was first satisfactorily discussed by Kossina (1929), is much more complicated. In the drawing (FIG. 15) from an X-ray photograph of a sword in the British Museum⁴⁶ such a bar can be seen in position, clamping the pommel-knop. This technique has also been observed by X-ray on unpublished Viking swords from Cronk Moar and Ballateare in the Isle of Man (in the Manx Museum, Douglas).

⁴⁴ Wilson (1964), pl. xxix, 65.

⁴⁵ Bruce-Mitford (1956), pl. xxi, A.

⁴⁶ The sword is without provenance: inv. no. Tr. 173.

Where there is no pommel-guard, the tang is riveted over the top of the pommel. This can clearly be seen both on the Mileham (no. 7) and the Battersea (no. 1) swords (PLS. VI, A, and II, A). In Scandinavian examples of similar form, however, there is little certain evidence of such a feature and the pommel appears to be merely sweated on.

THE GRIP

Although no grip survives on any of the swords catalogued in this paper, the normally oval section on the grip is indicated by the silver binding-strips on the sword from Fiskerton (no. 2; PL. III, A) and by the terminal silver binding-strips of the sword-grips from Hcgge (no. 4; PL. III, B), Kersey (no. 5; PL. IV, B), Wensley (no. 9; PL. VII, A) and the sword without provenance (no. 13; PL. VIII, A). In the pagan Anglo-Saxon period forerunners of these binding-strips occur on a number of swords (e.g. those from Cumberland⁴⁷ and from Sutton Hoo,⁴⁸ and especially on that from Crundale.⁴⁹)

There is no evidence in this country of the fine, patterned wire binding of the type found on the hilt of the sword from Sydow, Schlarve in Pomerania,⁵⁰ or of the composite structure of the grip of the sword of St. Stephen in Prague Cathedral treasury.⁵¹ The only example of a sword with a wire-bound grip found in this country is the so-called 'Earl of Pembroke's sword' from London,⁵² which is a Viking and not an Anglo-Saxon weapon.

Traces of wooden grips are frequently found on the tangs of swords, but it is impossible to say whether they were shaped in the manner of the pagan Anglo-Saxon sword-grip of horn from Cumberland⁵³ or the Germanic sword-grip, for example, from Burtshude, Stade, Germany.⁵⁴ The metal mounts which survive on many swords of the late Anglo-Saxon period presumably embellished wooden grips of moulded or unmoulded form. Only a single grip encased in metal in the manner found in central Europe⁵⁵ or in Scandinavia⁵⁶ is known in England. This comes from Fetter Lane, London.⁵⁷ Further, there is no evidence for small mounts on the grips of late Anglo-Saxon swords like those encountered on swords of the pagan Anglo-Saxon period, although they presumably existed.

THE GUARD

Anglo-Saxon swords of this later period have a curved guard—a feature which is obviously of functional significance, in that it protects the hand and arm better

⁴⁷ *British Museum, Guide to Anglo Saxon . . . Antiquities* (1923), pl. vii.

⁴⁸ Bruce-Mitford (1950) pl. xi.

⁴⁹ Kendrick (1938), pl. xxxiii, 4; Haseloff (1958), pl. viii, f.

⁵⁰ Kossina (1929), fig. 3.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, fig. 4. This may be a secondary addition.

⁵² Shetelig (1940), IV, fig. 45.

⁵³ *British Museum, Guide to Anglo Saxon . . . Antiquities* (1923), pl. vii.

⁵⁴ Kossina (1929), fig. 5.

⁵⁵ E.g. Hampel (1905), pl. 322.

⁵⁶ E.g. Arbman (1962), fig. 1.

⁵⁷ Wilson (1964), pl. xxiii, 41.

than a straight guard, by catching the blade of an enemy's weapon and not allowing it to slip over on to the grip. It is odd, therefore, that foreign swords rarely have this form of guard. The post-conquest sword both in this country and abroad has a straight guard,⁵⁸ which was considerably longer than that of the Anglo-Saxon sword; it was probably just as efficient as the curved guard and had the advantage that it was simpler to make.

The 8th-century sword fragment from Fetter Lane, London,⁵⁹ has a straight pommel-guard and this presupposes a straight guard. The straight guard of the pagan Anglo-Saxon period lasted, therefore, until well into the 8th century and possibly into the 9th, when the curved guard was introduced at about the time the Trehwiddle style of ornament was at its peak. The curved form appears to have continued, with certain modifications of length, until the late 11th or early 12th century—a date based on a sword carved in Ebberston Church, Yorkshire⁶⁰—when the long straight guard was introduced. The Scandinavians copied the curved form of the Anglo-Saxon guard and one particularly fine 11th-century group provides the best cohesive parallel to the Anglo-Saxon series; decorated swords of this group come from Marum-Sudigård, Tinn, and Sâheim, Dal, Tinn, both in Telemark, Norway,⁶¹ and from an unknown find-spot in Denmark.⁶² There are also a number of undecorated Scandinavian swords of similar form.⁶³

Two small general points should perhaps be mentioned. In most of the swords examined here, where it is possible to examine them closely, a small channel is cut below the guard as a seating for the heel of the blade. It should also be noted that the Mileham sword (no. 7; PL. VI, A) has two projections on its guard which presumably engaged with the mouth of the scabbard (p. 40).

THE BLADE

In almost every case the blade of the Anglo-Saxon sword is found to be pattern-welded—a technical feature giving the weapon strength and flexibility. This process has recently been examined in detail by Anstee and Biek (1961) and no further discussion is needed here.

A secondary feature of some blades is the inlaid maker's mark, sometimes a name, sometimes merely a pattern, on the upper part of the blade. The Battersea sword (no. 1) apparently bears a blundered version of the name of a maker (INGELRII), while both it and the Westminster sword (no. 10) have maker's

⁵⁸ Cf. Oakeshott (1951), pl. xxvii.

⁵⁹ *Loc. cit.* in note 57.

⁶⁰ Davidson (1962), fig. 115.

⁶¹ Universitetets Oldsaksamling, Oslo : inv. nos. 28239 and 21211 (for the latter cf. illustration in *Oltiden*, VI, 138).

⁶² Århus Museum.

⁶³ These include that from Simtuna cited above p. 39, note 21. Other swords with curved guards from Scandinavia include those from Dybäck, Skåne, Sweden (Strömberg (1961), pl. 65, 2); Oljonsbryn, Orsa, Dalarna, Sweden (Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm, inv. no. 11097); Dale, Noordal, Møre og Romsdal, Norway (Bergen Museum, inv. no. 6752); Ytre Arna, Haus, Hordaland, Norway (Bergen Museum, inv. no. 5800); Åsistølen, Eldfjord, Hordaland, Norway (Bergen Museum, inv. no. 7658a); Nes, Sogndal, Sogn and Fjordane, Norway (Bergen Museum, inv. no. 1243); Herlufmagle, Præstø, Denmark (Brøndsted (1936), fig. 97); as well as certain swords of Petersen type Y, e.g. those from Birka (Arbman (1940), pl. 3, nos. 1 and 2). Swords from the Viking eastern colonies include that from Valjala, Ösel, Estonia (Nerman (1942), fig. 164).

marks (pp. 32 and 42). The largest group of swords is that marked with the name Ulfberht.⁶⁴ Presumably these blades were not all made by the same smith and certainly one of them, the St. Stephen sword from Prague, bears a copy of an Ulfberht inscription etched (not inlaid) on the surface of the blade.⁶⁵ The inscriptions have been ably catalogued by Mrs. Davidson⁶⁶ and I shall not discuss them here, but one should perhaps emphasize the possibility that many of the abstract patterns (such as that found on the Westminster sword, FIG. 13) are maker's marks. They may be compared, for example, with the marks on certain contemporary Hungarian and Scandinavian blades,⁶⁷ as well as with the more exact parallels from Holland mentioned above (p. 44).

RIVER FINDS

Many swords of the late Anglo-Saxon period, found in England, come from rivers. In the course of a limited survey of secondary sources I have been able to trace thirty-four examples (Appendix A) and there are probably more, as compared with eight from Viking graves and churchyards. This preponderance of swords found in rivers prompts me to raise again a problem which has been much discussed on the continent: whether the swords from the rivers of western Europe are offerings or the result of loss in battle. The leaders of the recent discussion of this matter have been Jankuhn and Priedel.⁶⁸



Swords are not the only weapons found in rivers in this country; large numbers of spear-heads and scramasaxes have been found in similar circumstances. In dealing with the vast quantity of weapons found in the Thames at London—the river which has produced by far the largest number of such weapons—it has been customary to equate them with skirmishes and battles connected with the Viking invasions and, particularly, to associate the objects found during the demolition and rebuilding of London Bridge in the last century with the *Olaf Saga*⁶⁹ account of the partial destruction of the bridge by St. Olaf and Æthelred in 1043. Other weapons found at different places in the Thames are also interpreted as remains of this stormy period of London's history.⁷⁰

Nobody, however, is particularly happy about this interpretation and it might well be pointed out that, for the one or two swords that have been found in the immediate neighbourhood of London Bridge, there are many more axes. These have always been interpreted as battle-axes, but they are just as likely to be the tools of carpenters working on the bridge (which was under constant repair from the Roman period onwards) and accidentally dropped in the river. It must in fairness be stated that in this 'group' there are two objects, an axe and a spear-

⁶⁴ Jankuhn (1951).

⁶⁵ Information from Dr. R. Pleiner, Prague.

⁶⁶ Davidson (1962), pp. 42-50.

⁶⁷ These marks have not been published. I have noted two in the National Museum, Budapest: from Csomád, Pest (inv. no. F.359:HN 13/1913), and a sword without provenance (61,128.A), both of which have an incised saltire on the blade. A sword from Oljonsbryn, Orsa, Dalarna, Sweden (Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm, inv. no. 11097) has on one side of the blade the symbol , on the other the symbol .

⁶⁸ Jankuhn (1955), p. 38 f; Priedel (1959). The arguments are summarized by Arbman (1962), p. 337 n.

⁶⁹ The relevant passages are quoted in translation in Wheeler (1927), pp. 14-15.

⁷⁰ For a forcible expression of this view cf. Lethbridge (1948), pp. 25-30.

head, which are decorated with Ringerike decoration and which were undoubtedly manufactured in Scandinavia,⁷¹ while there is a surprisingly coherent group of six spear-heads of Viking type (Petersen type K) in the same 'find'.

Mrs. Davidson⁷² has obviously felt uneasy about the problem for she mentions it briefly in the following terms:

'It is generally assumed that these [swords] were lost in battle or dropped at a ford, but the possibility of deliberate sacrifice, as at Illerup, must be borne in mind.'

Her quotation of the Illerup find is apposite, for, although this great bog find is of a much earlier period (the first half of the first millennium A.D.⁷³) the large quantity of bent and broken ('killed') weapons found there reflects Tacitus's description of the heaps of weapons to be seen in the holy places of the Germanic tribes. There are no such finds from the Scandinavian Viking period, but it would not be surprising if the tradition of the weapon as an offering did not continue among the Scandinavian communities. It is interesting that there is a vast increase in the number of weapons found in rivers throughout Europe during the Viking period and that there is a distinct falling off in finds after this period.⁷⁴

It is surely odd to interpret all these weapons as casual losses.⁷⁵ They are present in such large numbers that it is difficult to see them in any other light than as offerings. Parallel phenomena in different periods would support this argument. For instance, in the later middle ages it is noticeable that many of the surviving pilgrims' badges come from rivers (e.g. at London and King's Lynn), and these cannot be interpreted in any other way than as 'offerings'. I would therefore agree with Jankuhn's arguments that these swords represent an unrecorded sacrificial custom.

CHRONOLOGY

The swords discussed here, with one possible exception (that from Windsor), belong to the period between 800 and 1100. The type-L swords from Fiskerton (no. 2), Gooderstone (no. 3), Hegge (no. 4), Kersey (no. 5), Långtora (no. 6), Norwich (no. 8) and Wensley (no. 9), and those without provenance (nos. 12 and 13) are of 9th- or early 10th-century date. Most of them are linked, to a greater or lesser degree, by their ornament to the Trewhiddle style, which flourished in the 9th century, while those that are not specifically ornamented in this style can be tied in with them on general typological grounds. The other swords are more difficult to date, but that from Mileham is almost certainly of early 11th-century date because of the Ringerike style overtones mentioned on p. 40. The sword from Battersea (no. 1), on grounds of its ornament and its form (p. 33), must be late 10th- or early 11th-century. The Westminster sword is more difficult to date, but

⁷¹ Wheeler (1927), figs. 3 and 5.

⁷² Davidson (1962), p. 8.

⁷³ Andersen (1951).

⁷⁴ It is interesting, but perhaps coincidental, that a similar phenomenon can be observed in the pre-historic period in England: 24 out of the 40 early-iron-age daggers known in Britain come from rivers: cf. Jope (1961). This is not, however, the case with the swords of the same period, cf. Piggott (1950).

⁷⁵ A competent swimmer could easily recover such a valuable object—even from the Thames, which was (one hopes) rather cleaner than it is to-day.

the form of the pommel, which is closely paralleled by the undoubtedly early 11th-century Prague sword,⁷⁶ is almost certainly of late 10th- or early 11th-century date. The Windsor sword is presumably 11th-century, but it would be difficult to be dogmatic about it on the basis of its form, which is the only dating criterion available.

APPENDIX A

SWORDS OF THE VIKING PERIOD FOUND IN ENGLISH RIVERS

Find-place	River	Publication
Abingdon, Berkshire	Thames	Wilson (1964), pl. vi.
Bray, Berkshire	Thames	<i>Proc. Soc. Antiq. London</i> , xvi, 392 and 391.
Brentford, Middlesex	Thames	Wheeler (1927), fig. 16, 7.
Clayhithe, Cambridgeshire	Cam	<i>Proc. Cambridge Antiquarian Soc.</i> , xxxiii, 167, pl. viii, b.
Cowey Stakes, near Shepperton, Middlesex	Thames	Lethbridge (1948), p. 27.
Edmonton, Essex	Lea	<i>Proc. Soc. Antiq. London</i> , xxvii, 215.
Enfield, Essex	Lea	Laking (1920), fig. 20.
Fiskerton, Lincolnshire	Witham	Here published (no. 2).
King's Dyke, Cambridgeshire	Junction of Nene and King's Dyke	<i>Victoria County History, Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely</i> , I, 326.
Lincoln	Witham	Wilson (1964), pl. xx.
London	Thames	Wheeler (1927), p. 54.
London (pommel only)	Thames	Wheeler (1927), p. 54.
London, Battersea	Thames	Here published (no. 1).
London, Palace of Westminster	Thames	Dunning and Evison (1961).
London, the Temple	Thames	<i>Victoria County History, London</i> , I, 186.
London, Vauxhall	Thames	Laking (1920), fig. 15, d.
London, Vauxhall	Thames	Laking (1920), fig. 19.
London, Vauxhall ⁷⁷	Thames	Wheeler (1927), p. 53.
London, Vauxhall	Thames	Wheeler (1927), fig. 17, 5.
London, Wandsworth	Thames	Wheeler (1927), fig. 16, 6.
London, Waterloo Bridge	Thames	Wheeler (1927), fig. 16, 3.
London, near	Thames	Wheeler (1927), fig. 16, 4.
Norwich	Wensum	Here published (no. 8).
Raven's Willow, Stanground, Cambridgeshire	Nene	Shetelig (1940), iv, fig. 30.
Reading, Berkshire	Kennet	Grove (1938), p. 250, fig. 1.
Shifford, Berkshire	Thames	Grove (1938), p. 254, fig. 4.
Staines, Middlesex	Thames	Wheeler (1927), fig. 16, 8.
Twyford, Berkshire	Thames	Grove (1938), fig. 2.
Walthamstow, Essex	Lea	Lethbridge (1948), p. 27.
Walthamstow, Essex	Lea	Lethbridge (1948), p. 27.
Wareham, Dorset	Frome	Acland (1928).
Windsor, Berkshire	Thames	Peake (1931), p. 152, fig. 28.
Windsor, Berkshire	Thames	Here published (no. 11).
Unprovenanced	Thames	Cowen (1934), pl. iii, 6.

⁷⁶ Paulsen (1933), pl. ix.⁷⁷ This is probably of Viking date.

APPENDIX B

SWORD-HILTS EXAMINED BY X-RAY

The following Anglo-Saxon swords have been examined during the course of this study by X-ray. Their hilts show no sign of any mounts or inlay, although most of them must originally have been ornamented. They are recorded here for the benefit of future workers in the field.

British Museum:

- Harbuck, Lanchester, co. Durham (inv. no. 1912, 7-23, 1).
 London (inv. no. 56, 7-1, 1405).
 Santon, Norfolk (inv. no. 83, 7-26, 1).
 Windsor, Berkshire (R. Thames) (inv. no. 1911, 6-17, 1).
 No provenance (inv. no. Tr. 173).
 No provenance (inv. no. Tr. 175).

Bergen Museum:

- Bø, Voss, Hordaland, Norway (inv. no. 7293d).
 Evebø, Gloppen, Sogn and Fjordane, Norway (inv. no. 4592).
 Indre Henden, Gloppen, Sogn and Fjordane, Norway (inv. no. 4732).

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