SWORD-BLADE IN THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD.
A SWORD-BLADE AND A CINQUEDEA IN THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD.

By CHARLES FFOULKES.

A SWORD-BLADE IN THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM.

The sword-blade illustrated in plate 1 is part of the Tradescant collection of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. It appears in the catalogue of 1685, b. 113, "Gladius Scoticus, aniceps; in vaginam reconditur, hocque juxta manubrium inscriptum Jocobvs Rex Qvintvs Scotorvm 1542.

All trace of the scabbard and also of the hilt are lost. The latter appears to have existed in 1685, at least this seems to be suggested by "manubrium" in the catalogue above quoted. The inscriptions on the blade run as follows:

On one side IOCOBVS REX QVINTVS SCOTORVM, 1542, surmounted by a crown. At the sides of this inscription are JVDGE AND REVENG MY CAVS O LORD. In a label higher up the blade are the letters I.H.S. M.A.

On the other side are the arms of Scotland, a lion rampant within a double treisure supported by unicorns who bear standards with a St. Andrew's cross. The arms are surmounted by the royal crown with a crest, a naked demi-man, crowned, holding a sword and sceptre. On each side of the crest are the letters I.R.S 5, and above, on a scroll the motto IN DEFENCE. The demi-man is obviously meant to represent the lion sejant erect affronté which was the crest used by James V.

Higher up the blade is the swordsman's mark, a royal orb surmounted by a cross.

This mark closely resembles the mark of Henriq Col, a swordsman who seems to have been in high favour in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A blade (J. 182) in the Musée d'Artillerie in Paris bears his mark with the inscription ENRIQUE COL, ESPADERO DEL REY EIN
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Allemanha. At Madrid a sword (c. 86) bears the same inscription, but without the mark of the orb. In Brussels (Porte de Hal, v. 62) is the same inscription with the motto ML SINNALS (sic) SANTISMO CRUCIFICIO. There is a slight difference between the two marks, the horizontal line on the globe of the Paris mark curving upwards, and that on the Oxford blade curving in the reverse direction.

M. Van Vinkeroy in the 1885 catalogue of the Porte de Hal collection states that Col or Coll was a Solingen swordsmith who went to Spain to study the different methods of forging. The late Dr. Wendelin Boeheim also inclines to this view, though he admits that it is strange that a foreigner should have been appointed "Espadero del Rey." It should be here noted that Boeheim gives the probable date of Col’s work as 1590–1610.2

The date of the sword before us is 1542, three years before the death of James and, if we refer that date to Spanish history we shall find that Charles V was emperor of Germany and king of Spain till 1555, so that it is quite within the bounds of probability that a German settled in Spain should hold a royal appointment: in fact the mark of the orb found with Col’s name on the Paris sword rather suggests royal patronage. The name and mark are only found together on this sword, for in the other examples of Col’s work he merely signed his name. On this Oxford blade, however, there is no trace of a name and the mark alone is given. James assisted Francis I in his war against Charles V, but that fact need not necessarily have precluded him from obtaining a Spanish blade, either by gift during a truce or from captured spoil. A glance at the illustration will show that the swordsmith’s mark is more rudely stamped than the inscription, but that is perhaps natural, for the former would be done roughly, possibly to many blades at once, and the other would be more carefully carried out. As far as I have been able to discover, this mark of the orb used alone is not found in any European armouries except the Musée d’Artillerie as above stated. The family of Col seems

1 Meister der Waffenschmiedkunst, 37. Tagen, Solingen Kreis Intelligenzblatt, 1894, 301.
2 See also Weyersberg, Alb. aus vergangen
PLATE II.

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to have returned to Germany, where we find the name spelt variously Gol, Goel, Koll, and Kohl. They practised the family craft of swordmaking up to the year 1765. The pedigree of the sword, as forming part of the Tradescant collection, is unimpeachable, for it has a clear record from 1685, a period when it was quite unlikely that a blade of this kind would be copied or imitated.

**A CINQUEDEA IN THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM.**

The earliest notice of this cinquedea (plates II, III and IV) appears in the 1685 catalogue of the Ashmolean Museum under b. 113, and runs as follows:

“*Pugio Indicus ferreus, anceps, sensim ita gracelescit, ut in mucronem desinit tandem valde acutum. Manubrium eleganter ex argento ac concha argentea elaboratum.*”

It is almost superfluous to point out the error of giving this dagger an oriental origin, but the mistake probably arose from its similarity to weapons of the *katar* type. Cinquedeas are by no means uncommon in national armouries and private collections, but, like other weapons, their authenticity is often open to question, especially if they are, like the example before us, elaborately decorated and engraved. At the beginning of the nineteenth century many forgeries, either in part or in whole, were perpetrated by a Venetian named San-Quirino who seems to have devoted special attention to the cinquedea, often adding a hilt to a genuine blade, or engraving an unornamented blade, or even counterfeiting the entire weapon.

Happily there is no fear of such forgery in this example, for it forms part of the original Tradescant collection, which is one of the earliest collections of antiquities of which we have any definite records, and was made at a time when "collectors'" forgeries were unknown.

The majority of these cinquedeas are about four and a half inches wide at the base of the blade, from which they are said to have received the name *cinque doigts* which has been corrupted into cinquedea and sangdedez.

The Oxford weapon is however narrower, and in most of its details less pronounced than most examples
of the same type, though the main characteristics of form are the same. It does not appear to have been cut down from a longer weapon.

The length over all from the point to the tip of the pommel is 20\(\frac{1}{4}\) inches, of which the blade is 15\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches, and the hilt, including the quillons, 4\(\frac{3}{8}\) inches. The width of the blade at base is 2\(\frac{7}{8}\) inches, and the quillons measured from tip to tip 4\(\frac{3}{8}\) inches.

The section of the blade shows, at the base, three shallow grooves (plate iv, c), the central one of which is narrower than the two outside. The grooving becomes lost at a point not quite halfway down the blade where the section takes the form of a flattened diamond, continued to a somewhat rounded point. The edges of the blade are much notched as though it has been used for cutting against a sword blade. This is probably due to rough usage in the early part of the nineteenth century when the objects in the museum were less respectfully treated than is the case at the present day. A dagger of this size could never have been used in earnest as a cutting weapon even if this were the case with the larger cinqueđeas. The surface is much worn and most of the delicate engraving has been lost, apparently by the use of sand or possibly emery paper used for cleaning in the dark ages. At the base of the blade are traces of gilding in the incised lines, but this does not appear higher up the blade.

Each side is divided laterally into six compartments, twelve in all, three panels coming one above the other on each side of the central groove. Each pair of panels is divided from those above it by a band which in three instances is ornamented while the fourth is plain.

For convenience of reference I have named the two sides of the blade A and B. The engraving on the blade is so faint that it will not show in a photograph, and the accompanying drawings (plate iv) are intended to show the positions the figures occupy. They can in no way be considered to reproduce the masterly technique of the originals.

Side A. The central groove is engraved with an upright design of flowers and foliage in which the acanthus leaf figures frequently. The left hand panel nearest the base has a slight suggestion of architecture with an arch
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at the top and trophies of arms on the side nearest to the centre of the blade. The main portion of the design seems to consist of a raised throne or altar on which is a seated nude figure of which, however, only the left leg is visible. At the base of the throne are a Roman cuirass and a quiver of arrows. The right hand lower panel has more detail and exhibits a semi-nude mounted man who, with a lance, pierces a man who has fallen with his horse. The same traces of an archway at the top appear in this panel also.

Above these two panels is a decorated border, and above this on the left is a nude figure with upraised hands holding a club pursuing a running figure, also nude. The right hand panel is much worn, but seems to bear traces of a nude figure seated with the hands behind the body.

Above these two the border is plain, or at any rate its design has been completely obliterated. The topmost panel on the left shows a male figure, round whose waist is a lion-skin with the tail falling between his legs. He clasps another figure, of which only the right leg is visible, in his arms. The swordsmith’s mark, a solid six-pointed star, is stamped above this near the centre.\(^1\) The right hand upper panel has the remains of a standing figure of a nude man with a club in the left hand, the right arm on which appears to be a lion skin is stretched out pointing downwards.

Side B. Along the central groove runs an inscription, partially lost, which appears to be **OMNE CIVI T PATRIA EST.**

The left hand lower panel is the only one which is clear as to its subject, and represents the Judgment of Solomon. On the left of the composition, nearest the edge of the blade a draped figure of a woman stands with outstretched arm in front of a throne, apparently of similar design to that shown on side A. To the right of the throne is the back view of a nude man who holds an infant in his left hand, head downwards. Traces of an arch are visible in this panel. The right hand compartment bears the faint outline of a nude woman standing on an altar or pedestal in front of which is clearly shown a lamp or censer with flame issuing from it. To the right of the

\(^1\) This mark is found on a cinquedea blade in the Tsarkoe Selo, St. Petersburg, c. 528.
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censer is an outstretched left hand, some drapery and a foot, all the rest of the engraving being lost.

Above these two panels is a decorated border, and above this on the left is a draped figure seated. The traces of the design on the right hand panel are very imperfect. Above is another decorated band and above again on the left are two nude figures. That on the left seems to be full face with a lance or pole in the right hand, while that on the right has the left leg advanced and the left arm raised. Above this is repeated the armourer's mark as on the other side. The right hand compartment shows no signs of engraving.

Before proceeding to notice the hilt it may be well to examine carefully the traces that remain of the engraving on the blade, for in these lie the chief interest of the weapon.

On side A the central design is in many respects similar to that engraved on a cinquedea n. 7 in the Armeria Reale, Turin, though not by any means an exact reproduction. The trophy of arms and the quiver, however, shown in the lower left hand panel are almost line for line the same as a similar trophy on the Turin blade (plate iv, p).

The border above this and also the second border on side B are of precisely the same design as that shown on a cinquedea in the Museo Stibbert at Florence; on one (vi. 23) at the Porte de Hall Museum, Brussels; on no. 94 in the Wallace collection, and on ix. 130 in the Tower.

On side B the lettering down the centre is of the same character as that which appears on all the above weapons. In the lower right hand compartment the lamp or censer is so like that shown on the Turin blade that they must have been drawn by the same hand, and the same may be said of the border which appears over this panel, which also resembles that on no. 99 in the Wallace collection.

The right hand topmost figure on side A, the trophies of arms, and the censer are all very suggestive of some designs in the Cabinet of Engravings at Berlin attributed to Ercole di Fideli. And it is the strong resemblance of the dagger before us to those engraved by Fideli which makes this investigation of some importance. It will be needless to go into the discussion in which M. Charles Yriarte and Major Angellucci engaged over the "Borgia" cinquedea in the collection of the Duke of Sermonetta,
SIDE VIEW OF HILT OF OXFORD CINQUEDEA.
for this example does not resemble the Oxford weapon in detail.¹  

M. Charles Buttin, whose work on the proving of armour² has been such a valuable addition to the literature on this subject, has written two notices on cinquefoils in private collections and has also noticed the cinquefoil in the collection of the Museo Stibbert.³  

He states that he has examined 120 cinquefoils either actually or by photographs, and is strongly of opinion that both the Brussels and Stibbert examples are from the hand of Fideli.

The characteristics of Fideli's work are as follows. He almost invariably depicted nude figures, and generally in violent action, with what draperies there are blown by the wind. He also affected certain curves in the knee and lower leg, which give a grace to the figure, conspicuous in the engravings by him in the Berlin Cabinet. Whenever he portrayed armour it was of the Roman type, nearly always arranged as trophies, and seldom worn by his figures. His architecture was severe and simple, and was not embarrassed by curtains or draperies as is the case with some engravings on daggers of this type. His compositions are never crowded and there is plenty of space unencumbered by detail.

As a rule the grip of the cinquefoil, in the majority of instances, is of ivory or of metal, but in the example before us it is formed of two plaques of mother of pearl bound with silver plates (plate iii). The face of the pearl is deeply grooved at the edge, following the fiddle-shaped lines of the grip and pommel, which are in one piece. On each face are circular designs of filigree work let in flush, similar to those on ix. 130 in the Tower.

On the silver bands which bind the pearl are the following inscriptions:

On the one side

\[
\text{NON VIDI} \quad \text{ NON VIÇIR \textasciitilde{AS}}
\]

and on the other

\[
\text{IVSTVM DERELICTV} \quad \text{POST TEMPESTA}
\]

¹ The two sides of the argument may be found in full in the Gazette Archéologique, 1888, and in the Catalogue of the Turin Armoury, 1890.  
² Revue Savoisienne, 1901, fos. 2 and 3.  
³ Annales de la Soc. Arch. de Bruxelles, xviii, 1 and 2, xx, 1 and 2. Les Arts, 1910, Sept.
These are probably intended to be read across the grip and would run thus: Non vidi justum derelictum (Psalm xxxvii, 25) and Spero lucem post tenebras.

Between the silver bands, and forming what may be termed the edge of the grip, is a sunk band of gilt copper on which the following inscription appears in raised letters on a hatched ground:

+OSNONCOMINVETISEX +EO. THETRAGRAMATION. +

This, when taken together reads as follows: os non cominuetis ex eo. thetragramaton, the first part being from St. John, xix, 36, in the Vulgate (Ye shall not break a bone of him). The "Thetragramaton" is of course the Cabalistic rendering of the four letters of Jehovah, Yod £ Keth œ Vav £ He œ. Lettering of the same type and placed in the same position is found on nos. 93, 94, 98, of the Wallace collection.

The Rev. George Horner has given me an interesting reference in connection with the first part of the inscription from the Mémoires de l'Institute, Academie des Inscriptions, Paris, 1898, xxxvi, 130:

"L'une des marques les plus nettes de la valeur surnaturelle que les fideles attachaient a ces souvenirs de preservation est la legende d'un petit camée du vié siècle

OS NON C
OMINVE
TIS ES EO

... On les croyait puissants à garantir de certains maux. Ils gardaient, disait-on les accusés des souffrances de la torture."

The references given in this article which also mentions the Tetragramaton are Martinus Antonius del Rio, Disquis rerum magicarum, iii, pars ii, quaest. iv, sect. 3; and Thiers, Traite de Superstition, 1704, i, 410.

The quillons, which do not slope towards the point as sharply as is usually the case in weapons of this type, show a face on both sides thickly inlaid with filagree of gilt copper in circles and lines. Like the grip they are bound with silver plates, at the edge of which, nearest the blade, is the name, presumably of the maker of the hilt, ALEXAN COITEL BONOM ME F. The workmanship
DETAIL OF THE OXFORD CINQUEDEA.
BORDERS ON THE OXFORD CINQUEDEA
(about twice size of original).

DETAIL OF THE TURIN CINQUEDEA
(after an engraving in the 1890 catalogue).
is the same as that found on the hilts of the weapons above mentioned both at the Wallace collection and also at the Tower, but neither of these bear inscriptions on the silver bands, nor the maker’s name. The blades of these weapons are forged by different swordsmiths, for they all bear different marks and none of them bears the six-pointed star found on the Oxford weapon. At the base of the blade, above the quillons, the "ears" are in the form of winged cupids’ heads of copper or brass gilt in high relief.

Fideli has never been credited with the making of swords; he was merely the engraver of the designs upon the blade. He was a goldsmith by trade, and, according to Yriate, was a converted Jew originally known as Solomone di Sesso.

Whether both sides portrayed biblical subjects or not it is impossible to say, certainly side A suggests this from the fact that the Judgment of Solomon is one of the designs. On the other side the two topmost panels appear to be incidents in the life of Hercules or possibly of Samson, and other figures on the same side, as I have already noticed, seem to be in violent action. I think there can be no question but that the engraving on this blade is either the actual work of Fideli or at any rate produced in his studios, for the masterly work and the exact similarity of the borders to those at Turin and Brussels and the Tower proves without a doubt that they all came from the same studio. The provenance of the weapon puts the idea of modern forgery quite outside the bounds of possibility.

The examples which show the peculiar style of Fideli and in which this similarity of border occur are those in the Museo Sibbert; h. 7 at Turin; vi, 23 at Brussels; 94, 99 Wallace collection; and ix, 130, Tower, all of which have been referred to above. There are also weapons of the same style at Paris (j. 774, 775), and also a leather sheath for a cinquedea on which are metal enrichments engraved and signed “Opus Herculis.”