A ‘WINCHESTER-STYLE’ MOUNT FROM NEAR WINCHESTER (Fig. 4)

The copper-alloy object illustrated was found by a metal detectorist, J. de Montfalcon, who reported to the Winchester Museums Service that he had found it on a public footpath at Three Maids Hill, Headbourne Worthy, Hampshire (SU 468 322), c. 3.5 km NNW. of the West Gate of the city.

The object is 34 mm long, cast so that its section is an arch with slightly flaring sides and out-turned ends. There is an attachment hole near each corner. A rectangular panel in the field is deeply cast with a central foliate stem and a pair of bird-like, back-to-back creatures. The stem springs from a central trefoil bulb, from which also spring two side stems which bifurcate, the upper fronds ending in simple scrolls. The main stem ends in a calyx from which two fronds end in scrolls in each corner. Interlaced with the plant, the two creatures have their heads raised upwards: both have slits for mouths. Each has a body which curves round and ends in a lobed leaf, and a leg which ends in the corner of the design in the form of a divided acanthus leaf.

Inhabited plant-stems with addorsed creatures are found on copper-alloy strap-ends, censer covers and other objects, and also occur in bone. Some can be dated to the first half of the 10th century: one of the finest examples is a strap-end from a mid 10th-century grave at the Old Minster, Winchester. The series may have continued into the early 11th century. The object was presumably a mount of some kind. Its slightly everted ends would help it to stand securely on a flat surface, and would be inappropriate if it had been intended as an ornament to be sewn on to a leather belt or the edge of a scabbard. It might therefore have been nailed on to some sort of raised strip. There are no wear patterns to indicate usage. The only other ‘open tubes’ with attachment-holes of the approximate period seem to be a pair of decorated red-deer bone objects from Thetford, Norfolk, appropriately

![Fig. 4](image_url)

‘Winchester-style’ mount. Scale 1:1
described as of ‘obscure’ function. As the inhabited plant-scroll is found on some ecclesiastical pieces, use on a liturgical object may be an appropriate suggestion for the Three Maids Hill mount, and the semicircular bosses in the centres of the sides of all four arms of the early 11th-century Brussels cross catch the attention.

Objects bearing ‘Winchester-style’ ornament are widely found, but the Three Maids Hill mount is not the first recent find from near the city which gave the style its name, and there are at least two from Dorset. The inhabited plant-stem was also used by manuscript illuminators, and is best known from the border of a picture showing a crowned figure offering a book to a priest, probably King Athelstan making a gift to St Cuthbert on or very soon after his visit to the shrine at Chester-le-Street in 934/5. This is a book which has been ascribed to Winchester, but inaccuracies in the list of Winchester bishops in its text are now argued to preclude production in a scriptorium in the city, and a south-western source seems indicated. It is one of several ornamented early 10th-century manuscripts that have been claimed for Winchester, largely on palaeographical grounds, the attributions of which have recently been challenged as uncertain or even unlikely. Such reconsideration also affects other works of art. One reason for ascribing the Cuthbert stole and maniple to Winchester is their use of display capitals arranged around the figures embroidered on them, in a manner also seen in paintings in a psalter-plus-calendar which may have been at the Old Minster later in the Middle Ages. That manuscript, however, is a composite, and no single part of it can be shown to have had an early connection specifically to Winchester. That the stole and maniple were made for Bishop Frithestan, who held the see from 909 to 931, does not necessarily mean either that they were embroidered for him locally, or that the Aelflæd who commissioned them was Æthelstan’s wife, so the similarity of their lettering to what seemed to be a Winchester manuscript was a useful plank in the construction of the argument that they did indeed originate in the city, specifically at the Nunnaminster on the assumption that it was there that such textiles would have been worked. The argument that Frithestan’s robes would not have been acquired by King Athelstan after the bishop’s death if they had not originally been a royal donation looks very tenuous in view of his eclectic collecting and dispersing of books and relics generally. Nevertheless, the excavated textile fragments show that similar work was known in Winchester, even if its production there cannot be demonstrated.

One work of art which must have been produced in Winchester is the wall-painting fragment excavated in footings of the New Minster. Its composition, and the heads, robes and hand gestures of its figures, are similar to those in the choir of martyrs shown in the psalter-cum-calendar already mentioned. That picture is an addition made at an uncertain date, and cannot be assumed from the text that it accompanies to be of the 920s or 930s. Even if the parallel is admitted, therefore — and others with the 8th-century Kentish series have been made — the manuscript does not provide a substantial reason for an early 10th-century dating of the wall-painting, and is not therefore an argument against the pre-903 date argued contextually by the excavators.

There seem, therefore, to be no paintings and no embroideries that can certainly be said to be Winchester products of the first half of the 10th century. What is the significance of this for metalwork? It removes the easy assumption that Winchester was a centre of the arts, and that bronzesmiths there would have had paintings and drawings to copy. Metal objects, like anything portable, can be lost or deposited far from where they are made. Moreover, metalworkers did not all work exclusively at one place; just as moneyers seem to have travelled, so too did some smiths. Nevertheless, despite the absence of moulds, there is plenty of metalworking debris in Winchester, a little of it from early 10th-century contexts, much in layers in which some material is earlier than the dates in which the layers formed. The wall-painting may pre-date the 10th century, but shows that the city had housed craftsmen capable in that medium. The excavated textiles show that demand for high-status work existed at least for burials in Winchester during the 9th and early 10th centuries.
The Three Maids Hill mount is more than just another example of the ‘Winchester style’. It is boldly and competently executed, and has the unusual but clearly deliberate feature of not being totally symmetrical, as one beast’s neck passes under a frownd, the other over; it is also original in that both legs and bodies end in foliate leaves. Qualitatively, the mount may not seem quite as fine as the large strap-end from the Cathedral Green, from a mid 10th-century context, but is equal to that from early/mid 10th-century Brook Street. An unfinished buckle frame may have been in use when lost — it was already fitted with a pin — so does not prove manufacture in Winchester; the unfinished state of the mount found in Mainz makes a better case for that object’s production within that Rhenish centre. Nevertheless, these pieces begin to provide an answer to the question recently put by Dumville, whether the ‘Winchester style’ was first developed in Winchester in non-manuscript art, for the number of locally found objects on which it appears, and the confidence with which it was handled, strongly suggest that the city was indeed a major centre of its production.

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NOTES

2 See D. A. Hinton, ‘Relief-decorated strap-ends’, 494–500 in M. Biddle (ed.), Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester (Oxford, 1990). The Old Minster strap-end is no. 1057 (see also C. Haith in Backhouse et al., op. cit. in note 1, no. 83).
5 L. Webster, in Backhouse et al., op. cit. in note 1, no. 75.
7 An openwork strap-end, inf. F. Green, Test Valley Archaeological Trust, from Ampfield Parish, c. 8 km SW. of Winchester.
10 Dumville, op. cit. in note 9.
11 MS. London, B. L. Galba, A. xviii: Backhouse et al., op. cit. in note 1, 20, 24; fol. 120v is illustrated in E. Temple, Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts 900–1066 (London, 1976), ill. 31.
12 Dumville, op. cit. in note 9, 74–77 and 88.
13 Ibid., 87; Dumville notes the view that the commissioner might have been the Aelflaed who was amieabilis femina in 286 (though her Wiltshire estate ought to have made her patronize Ramsbury). He also questions whether embroidery was practised in nunneries, or only in the secular world. The archaeological finds record from late Saxon nunneries is not helpful on this.
16 See note 11. The choir of martyrs is part of fol. 21r: Temple ill. 33.
17 Dumville, op. cit. in note 9, n. 93.
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21 That seems to be the implication of the working debris found at the manorial site at Faccombe Netherton, Hampshire, since a skilled smith would surely not have had permanent employment there: see Backhouse et al., op. cit. in note 1, 97–98, and J. Fairbrother, *Faccombe Netherton. Excavations of a Saxon and Medieval Manor Complex*, British Mus. Occ. Paper 74 (1990), 272.
22 D. A. Hinton, 'The medieval gold, silver and copper-alloy objects from Winchester', 29–35 in Biddle, op. cit. in note 2, 32.
23 J. Bayley and K. Barclay, 'The crucibles, heating trays, parting sherds, and related material', 175–97 in Biddle, op. cit. in note 2, 188.
24 Crowfoot, op. cit. in note 15, 480–81.
25 Hinton, op. cit. in note 2, no. 1057.
26 Ibid., no. 1056.
27 Ibid., no. 1101 and pp. 508–09.
28 Wamers, op. cit. in note 6.
29 Dumville, op. cit. in note 9, 88 n. 160.
30 I am grateful to Geoffrey Denford, Winchester Museums Service, for showing me the mount, and to Nick Griffiths for the drawing.

NORWICH CASTLE BRIDGE (Pl. IX, A, B; Figs. 5–9)

Norwich Castle Bridge is located on the southern side of Norwich Castle Mound (Fig. 5) which is itself situated within the heart of the medieval city. It connects the mound (TG 2318 0846) to the area of the S. bailey, much of which was excavated between 1989 and 1991 during the construction of a major retail development. The construction programme provided a rare opportunity to study the structure of the bridge when in 1990 a temporary bridge to the mound was erected.Closure of the stone bridge allowed Norwich City Council Engineers Department to examine its fabric, in order that an informed weight limit might be imposed. Three trial trenches along the top of the bridge (Fig. 6) were excavated by Norfolk Archaeological Unit and the results added to those of three other trenches, funded by Ove Arup Ltd and placed around the base of the southern abutment. Further excavation (by Norwich City Council Estates Department) has sought to locate the source of a water leak. Detailed results of all these excavations are available in the Norfolk Sites and Monuments record.

The early Castle at Norwich

A royal castle was established in Norwich shortly after the Norman Conquest, and was defensible by 1075 when it withstood a siege by Ralph de Guader. The precise layout of this timber castle is not fully understood but the preliminary results of the archaeological excavations S. of the mound suggest that it may have consisted of a motte, placed on a spur of high ground reaching into the city from the S., with a roughly square bailey to the E. This early castle, imposed at least in part upon the late Saxon town, sat centrally between two other Norman precincts — those of the French Borough to the W. (established before 1075) and the cathedral to the NE. (established in 1094).

The erection of a stone keep on the mound is thought to have been on the initiative of William Rufus, and certainly by 1101 stone masons working on the cathedral were also constructing windows for the basement of the keep. A stone keep was part of a re-design of the castle defences that enclosed a bailey to the S. and may have prompted an enlargement of the mound. A bridge to the S., if not already in existence, would have become necessary as the main focus of the castle swung away from the E. to the S.

The Stone Bridge

A stone bridge is first documented in 1173 when repairs were necessary. This bridge is substantially the one investigated between 1989 and 1993. It comprises four main