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ON CERTAIN SWORDS INSCRIBED *EDWARDUS, PRINS ANGLIE.*

By J. P. EARWAKER, B.A., F.S.A. (of Merton College, Oxford).

INSCRIBED swords, or swords bearing on their blades inscriptions or dates, are of very rare occurrence, and have always commanded considerable attention. When, however, the inscriptions which they bear are in themselves curious and difficult to explain, it becomes a very interesting question to attempt to determine to what uses such swords were put, and for what purposes they were so engraved. If, in addition, it is found that not only one, but many swords still exist bearing the same inscription, the inquiry assumes a much more interesting form.

In the present memoir I have to notice five, or probably six, distinct swords, each of which bears the inscription *Edwardus Prins Anglie*, in some cases followed by the rude figure of some animal, probably a wolf, and in some cases without this wolf-mark. It will probably be best to describe these swords in the order of the earliest mention of them; then to describe each sword in detail, pointing out its peculiarities; and then to deal with them as a whole, with reference, first to the uses for which they were probably designed, and secondly, to the meaning of the inscription which they all bear.

To these swords I would give the following names:—

- (1) The Doddington Hall sword.
- (2) The Armethwaite sword.
- (3) Mr. Barritt's sword.
- (4) Mr. Whitehall Dod's sword.
- (5) Mr. Harford's sword.
- (6) Mr. Goldwise's sword.

Of the first three of these swords full-sized drawings were shown at the meeting of the Institute, in November, 1872, and

Mr. Whitehall Dod's and Mr. Harford's swords were exhibited. In the plate which accompanies this paper the Doddington Hall sword, and those of Mr. Dod and Mr. Harford are illustrated.

(1) *The Doddington Hall Sword*.—This sword is the one of which I find the earliest mention, and it was the peculiarities of it which first led me to inquire into the subject. In one of the volumes of the Ashmolean MSS. in the Bodleian Library, numbered MSS. 854, containing some very interesting Church notes for the county of Chester, I found a long and very valuable description of Doddington Hall, near Nantwich, Cheshire, giving the coats of arms, &c., existing there in 1663, and at the end of this description was a very careful drawing of a curious sword, with the following short account of it: "The figure of a sword now in the hands of Sir Thomas Delves, of Doddington, Baronett, heretofore the sword of Prince Edward." On this sword, of which fig. 1 is a very carefully executed drawing made from a tracing, is inscribed on the one side, *Edwardus*, and on the other, *Prins Anglie*, the letters being as depicted in the drawing. Nothing more is stated, no dimensions are given, but the sword is very carefully drawn, and there is also presented in the same volume of MSS. the rough sketch from which the finished drawing was made. From the handwriting of the volume, and from internal evidence, it is obvious that the drawing is by Ashmole himself, who was through his first wife intimate with many of the Cheshire families, and it is most probable that he saw the sword himself. The accuracy with which other objects in this volume are shown to be drawn, when compared with the objects now existing, obliges us to conclude that, however strange the sword may appear, it is a correct drawing of what Ashmole saw. Its peculiarities will at once strike any one at all accustomed to examine swords, its very peculiar shape resembling most of all an Eastern scymitar, the elaborate workmanship on the cross-guard and hilt, and the curious inscription which it bears. Very careful searches have been made at Doddington Hall for this sword, but without success, nor does any one now living remember ever to have seen or heard of it.¹

¹ In Gough's Sepulchral Monuments, vol. ii., in the plate opposite p. xciii.

fig. 6, is a very good engraving of the sword, taken from this volume of MSS.

(2) *The Armethwaite Sword*.—My attention was first called to this sword by Albert Way, Esq., F.S.A., who informed me that among the notes he had made of the many interesting facts contained in the private and unpublished minutes of the Society of Antiquaries was an account of this sword. It was exhibited on Nov. 15, 1764, to the Society of Antiquaries by the Bishop of Carlisle, who described it as then existing in Armethwaite Castle, on the river Eden, in Cumberland, then the seat of the Skeltons. Accompanying this description is a very careful drawing of the sword of which Mr. Way very kindly sent me a tracing, which was exhibited at the meeting referred to. On this sword is the same curious inscription as on the previous one, and there is a great resemblance between the two, the letters D and S being in both cases peculiar, and the same in each; but on this sword there is a figure of an animal, which does not exist on the former one. The description given of it states that the length is $28\frac{1}{2}$ in., the handle made of stag's horn, the iron pommel gilt, and the two round terminations of the cross-guard also of iron, and similarly gilt, and the point is probably damaged. The letters are also said to be "punched and filled in with gold wire."

Hutchinson, in his History of Cumberland, writing in 1794, says (vol. i. p. 493), "Armethwaite is a mesne manor within the Forest of Inglewood, held of the King in capite, and is the seat of the Skeltons, who first appear as holding the manor in 35th of Henry VIII. (1545)." He then adds, "Nicholson and Burn inform us 'that at Armethwaite Castle, in Mr. Machel's time, there was a broadsword with a basket hilt; on one side of the blade was this inscription, *Edwardus*, on the other, *Prins Anglie*. It was probably left there in Edward the First's time, at which place the Prince might lodge when his father's head-quarters were at Lanercost.' Probably," he adds, "it was removed by the Skeltons, and is now—January, 1794—in a repository of curiosities in Kingston-upon-Hull. It is of the scymeter form, and the inscription is in gold letters burnt in."

The only difference between these two descriptions is the mention of the "basket hilt," which may have been added in

and described on p. ccciv. Gough apparently believed it to have belonged to Edward I., and adds, "it has much the

appearance of an Eastern sword, perhaps a present to him by some Sultan during the crusades!"

the thirty years since 1764, when it was first described. The drawing of the sword exhibited by the Bishop of Carlisle, shows a plain stag-horn handle, with no basket hilt. Thanks to Mr. Thomas Walton, of the Royal Institution, Hull, I have been enabled to trace this interesting sword since 1794, when it was in Wallis's Museum at Hull. Here it remained till 1833, when the museum was dispersed on the death of Mr. Wallis, at which sale the sword was purchased by the late T. T. Owst, Esq., of Keyingham, at whose death it passed into the possession of his son-in-law, E. T. Oldfield, Esq., Mount Pleasant, Keyingham, in whose possession it now is, and who recently exhibited it before the Hull Literary and Philosophical Society. In a book recently published by Bell and Daldy, entitled "Weapons of War," there is, on p. 405, a small rough drawing of this sword, taken from the Machel MSS., which I understand are at present preserved in the Chapter House at Carlisle. In this book the inscription is wrongly quoted, being given as *Edwardus Prins Agile* (!), and it is stated in the same line that it belongs to the tenth century, and to Edward II. !—examples of inaccuracy difficult to exceed.²

(3) *Mr. Barritt's Sword*.—Mr. Thomas Barritt was a well-known antiquary of the latter half of the last century, who resided at Manchester. His MS. diary is preserved in the Cheetham Library, Manchester, and in it is a small coloured drawing of this sword, a tracing of which was exhibited at the Institute meeting. He believed it to be the sword of the Black Prince, which was stolen from the armour above his tomb at Canterbury, during the Civil Wars. There is no need to enter into this question now; the fact that the scabbard of the Black Prince's sword is quite straight, while Mr. Barritt's sword is curved, proves they cannot be in any way related to one another. He was deceived by the drawing in Dart's *Antiquities of Canterbury*, where the scabbard is drawn crooked. In my letter in the *Times* of Sept. 25, 1872, I repeated Mr. Barritt's suggestion, but was soon convinced there was not the slightest ground for ascribing the sword to the Black Prince. The following is

² In Gough's *Sepulchral Monuments*, in the plate facing p. cxlviii. is a good drawing of this sword, and the description as above, from Nicolson and Burn's *History of Cumberland*. It is further

stated that "it is mentioned in Mr. Machel's MSS. Collections for Cumberland, vi. 677. and in Dugdale's *Visitation of Cumberland*, 1665."

the description of the sword taken from Mr. Barritt's Diary :—³

"This sword, which came into my hands in 1778, is in length from pommel to point 28 in., though in all probability was once longer, as the point appears too thick and blunt ; the blade is 2 in. broad at the guard or cross, which is but small, and terminating at each end with a knob. The handle is stag-horn ; the cap of the pommel, guard, and ring in the middle of the handle is iron, and once gilt with gold, which is not yet thoroughly worn away. Upon one side of the blade is written in letters of gold, and in old character, '*Edwardus*,' with the imperfect figure of some animal. On the other side is inscribed, with the same metal and character, '*Prins Anglie*.' . . . I have made what inquiry I can concerning it, and find its being sixty or seventy years ago (*i.e.* circa 1708-1718) in the possession of a gamekeeper at Garswood Hall, the ancient seat of the Gerards, in our county (Lancashire), who made use of it to chop down his venison, and divide it into haunches. The sword was a present to me from a worthy friend, who, suspecting something extraordinary from its shape and inscription, bought it from a miller in the neighbourhood of Wigan, and gave it me, knowing I collect some few antiquities."

The great resemblance which this sword bears to the Armethwaite weapon will be at once perceived, and at one time, in common with Mr. Way, I thought these might be one and the same sword, which had changed hands.⁴ But as this sword can be shown to have been in Mr. Barritt's possession in 1793, when the Armethwaite sword was at Hull, it is obvious that, although so remarkably alike, they are not the same sword. On Feb. 8, 1781, the Rev. John Watson, F.S.A., Rector of Stockport, exhibited Mr. Barritt's sword before the Society of Antiquaries. Dr. Kendrick, of Warrington, informs me that in a large quarto MS. volume formerly belonging to Mr. Barritt, and now the property of a gentleman residing near Warrington, entitled "*Ancient Armour and Weapons in the possession of Thomas Barritt, 1793*,"

³ The Reliquary, vol. ix. (1868—9) p. 140—141, where there is an interesting account of Mr. Barritt. See also vol. xii. plate xxiv., where there is a further account of him, and a rough inaccurate drawing of this sword. The in-

scription is drawn too large, and reads the wrong way.

⁴ From a letter in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1789, this would also appear to have been at one time the idea of Mr. Barritt himself.

and containing some fifty pages of drawings of armour and weapons made by his own hands, is another drawing of this sword, of which he kindly sent me a tracing. Mr. Barritt died in 1820, and his collection was dispersed, and although I have made diligent inquiry, I have been unable to learn what has become of this interesting weapon, or in whose possession it now is. Gough, in his *Sepulchral Monuments*, refers to this sword, and gives its length as $28\frac{1}{2}$ in., the blade $22\frac{1}{4}$ in., and states that the letters are "puncht with a tool and filled with gold wire."

(4) *Mr. Whitehall Dod's Sword*.—In consequence of my letter in the *Times* of Sept. 25, 1872, calling attention to these inscribed swords, Mr. Whitehall Dod, of Llanerch, wrote to say that he had a similar one in his possession, and he kindly sent his sword for exhibition at the meeting of the Institute. He describes it as follows:—"The blade is 25 in. long, by $1\frac{5}{8}$ in. wide, and not varying more than $\frac{1}{8}$ in. in the whole length. It is slightly curved and sharp at the point; evidently at some time it has been ground down and pointed on a grindstone. The total length is 31 in., it has a buck-horn handle and an iron basket-guard. On one side is engraved in early characters *Edwardus*, and on the other side *Prins Anglie*. There are slight remains of gilding on the letters. What the history of the sword is, or how it came into the possession of my family, I know not."

Of this sword a drawing made from the original weapon is given in fig. 2; the iron basket-guard is comparatively modern, but the original stag-horn handle is still preserved. The absence of any figure of a wolf after the word *Edwardus*, and the different shape of the stag-horn handle, and the difference in length and width, show that this is not Mr. Barritt's sword, but is a distinct weapon.

(5) *Mr. Harford's Sword*.—This sword, now in the possession of the Rev. F. K. Harford, M.A., F.S.A., minor canon of Westminster, was exhibited at the meeting of the Institute, and is engraved in fig. 3. It has already been once or twice exhibited. In November, 1858, it was shown to the Society of Antiquaries, where it is described as a sword with a horn handle, mounted in silver (see fig. 3), the blade slightly curved, $23\frac{1}{2}$ in. long, and of earlier date than the handle. On *each* side is the following inscription, in comparatively modern letters, *Edwardus Prins Anglie*. It had

been supposed to have belonged to Edward VI. when Prince of Wales, but it was suggested that probably it might refer to the Pretender—a conjecture most untenable. This sword was also shown in the temporary Museum of the Royal Archæological Institute at the Bristol meeting in 1851, and is described in the printed catalogue as having been found in the North of France about 1760, and from the inscription repeated on each side of the blade, it was believed to have belonged to Edward I. or the Black Prince. Mr. Harford, however, has kindly sent me the following account of it:—
 “A certain first cousin of my great grandfather’s, Captain Adam Goldney, being ordered to America in 1774 or early in 1775, wished to have a sword he could depend on, and was recommended by a sword-smith in the Strand to have an old blade which he had in his shop mounted for use, as being particularly good steel. When it was sent to him, the Captain noticed the words on the blade. He used it through the war, and on his return gave it to my grandfather, Charles Joseph Harford, F.S.A. The present handle of black horn and mounted with silver is of course modern.”

It will be noticed that this sword differs from all the others in having the complete inscription repeated on *both sides of the blade*, and, as shown in the illustration, the letters are apparently much more modern than those of the others.

(6) *Mr. Goldwise’s Sword*.—Of this sword I regret to say I can learn nothing beyond the statement of Mr. Harford that he remembers a sword with the same inscription being in the possession of Mr. Goldwise, of Bristol, some years ago. I should be glad to learn where this sword is at present, or into whose possession it has passed.

Having thus described in detail the different swords, each bearing the same inscription, which have come under my notice, it only remains for me to attempt to determine the meaning of the inscription and the purposes for which the swords were probably made. Here, however, in the entire absence of historical evidence too great caution cannot be exercised, especially when reasoning from analogy. The figure of an animal which occurs on some of the swords described, and which is also found on many other swords,⁵ is,

⁵ There is a sword in the Ashmolean Museum with this wolf’s badge very plainly marked; the handle is stag-horn, and in many ways it much resembles the

I believe, correctly called the "wolf mark of Passau," being the badge granted, in the first instance, by the Archduke Albert, in 1349, to the armourer's guild at Passau, and afterwards extensively employed by the armourers of Solingen, in Westphalia. But there seems little reason to believe that any of these swords are earlier than the time of Henry VIII. or Edward VI., or the beginning of the sixteenth century. Their curved shape, most nearly resembling a naval cutlass of the present day—the back edge so much thicker than the cutting edge—the stag-horn handle, are all unmistakable evidence of late date, and are rarely, if at all, to be met with before the sixteenth century. In their general shape they most of all resemble swords used in the chase, or those commonly called "Couteaux de chasse," and the stag-horn handle favours this idea. They may very probably have been the insignia of some "forester" or "verderer," who had authority over the woods or forests belonging to the Prince of Wales in different parts of the country. This would do away with the difficulty of finding so many swords still existing, bearing the same inscription. Then, too, it has been suggested that not improbably these swords may have been worn in some pageant or ceremonial, or, again, that they may have been "tenure swords," or swords by the exhibition of which at certain times certain lands were held. Thus Blount, in his *Ancient Tenures* (1815), gives the following instances of this custom:—

(P. 349) "Bishops Aukland, co. Durham. In 1399 Dionisia, widow of John Pollard the elder, died seized of one piece of land held of the Lord Bishop in capite by the service of shewing to the Bishop *one fawchion or falchion* at his first coming to Aukland after his consecration. This tenure is still performed."

(P. 344) "Sockburn, co. Durham. In 1395 died Sir John Conyers, Kt., who held the Manor of Sockburn of the Lord Bishop in capite by the service of showing to the Lord Bishop *one falchion*, which, after having been seen by the Lord Bishop, was to be restored to him in lieu of all other services. It was so held in 1771, and is so held to this day."⁶

swords I am describing, but it has no inscription. Swords with this wolf or fox mark became common in the sixteenth century: thus Shakspeare, Henry V.,

Act iv. scene 4:—

"Thou diest on point of fox."

⁶ See *Archæologia*, vol. xv. plate 26.

(P. 318) "Plompton, co. Warwick. Temp. Hen. III. Walter de Plompton held lands in Plompton, &c., by a certain weapon called a *Danish axe*, which, being the very charter whereby the said land was given to one of his ancestors, hung up for a long time in the hall of the capital messuage in testimony of the said tenure."

These instances show that curved swords or falchions were employed as "tenure swords" to a comparatively late date.

Now, finally, a few words as to the inscription itself. For a long time it was believed that no such title as *Princeps Angliæ*, of which *Prins Anglie* would be the contracted form, was ever applied to any royal personage in England. Sir Edward Smirke has, however, examined very carefully into this question, and has very kindly placed the results of his researches at my service. It would appear that the heirs-apparent to the English throne were, as they are still, created Princes of Wales and Earls of Chester on attaining their majority. In the documents used at this creation the heir-apparent at the present day is styled "Prince of Great Britain and Ireland." Previous to the Union he was styled "Prince of Great Britain," and previous to the time of James I. he was styled simply "Prince of England."

Thus Judge Doddridge, in his book on the Titles of Princes of Wales (2nd edit. 1714), gives the following patent of the creation of the son of George I. as Prince of Wales:—"Sciatis quod filium nostrum (modo principem Magnæ Britanniæ) principem Walliæ facimus et creamus, &c." Sir Edward Smirke has also found in the Rolls of the Receiver General's accounts, called "Computus Ministrorum" of the Duchy of Cornwall, in the 30th and 31st Henry VIII., that the king's son Edward is there called "*Princeps Angliæ et Duæ Cornubiæ*." This does not occur in a single instance only, but in many places.

The title of *Prins Anglie*, which was believed to be without precedent, and never to have been an English title, is thus shown to be a correct designation, and the establishment of this by Sir Edward Smirke is one of the most interesting facts elicited by the discussion about these inscribed swords. Unfortunately, however, at present, in the absence of any historical evidence of any kind, we are unable to determine satisfactorily the purposes for which these curious swords were so inscribed.