

ART. XVIII.—*A Catalogue of Objects of the Viking Period in the Tullie House Museum, Carlisle.* By J. D. COWEN, M.A., F.S.A.

THOUGH it was not till the middle of the ninth century that the great movement of the Scandinavian peoples which was to carry them to every corner of coastal Europe assumed serious proportions, there is documentary record of sporadic Viking raids on the south and east coasts of England towards the end of the eighth. In Scotland, however, the archaeological evidence proves the presence of pioneers earlier still. It was to the west, to the islands of the North Sea, Shetland and Orkney, that the sea-faring inhabitants of the Norwegian coasts first reached out. Touching here perhaps about 750 A.D., or even earlier, and pushing along the coast of the Scottish mainland, they turned Cape Wrath, and behind the shelter of the Outer Hebrides the island-studded waters and deeply indented outline of the west coast formed for them a highway to the green pastures and rich booty of Ireland.

In this sweeping movement the Isle of Man by virtue of its position held a pivotal place. And there, in later times, grew up a civilisation with a distinct character peculiar to itself. It was from this centre that, in part at least, the Norse colonists took possession of the land of Cumbria that lay opposite.

From Man, then, from Ireland, and from the Isles, the Norsemen, tinged now with Christianity, and affected by their contact with the Celts, flocked in to seize the coast of north-western England. Landing during the early years of the tenth century, first, probably, in Lancashire and around the shores of Morecambe Bay, and a little later on either side of the Solway Firth, they spread

outwards into Dumfries and down the Cumbrian coast. So much, at least, is indicated by the evidence of place-names. On the other hand, as we shall see, there is evidence for the presence of Vikings in Cumbria at a much earlier date. So that the Viking approach presents itself to us in two separate phases; first the initial infiltration down the Western Isles of Scotland, with the appearance of Norwegian raiders, and here and there, perhaps, a pioneer settler; followed by the serious land-taking of a numerous and mixed body of colonists drawn from the several areas of Viking activity in the west.

As to the cruel and bloodthirsty character of the Viking raiders where they came into contact with the monastic and civilian life of the later Carolingian civilisation there is general agreement; but where there was nothing to be gained by violence, and the character of the country suited him, the Norseman was quite content to wrest a living from the soil. In Scotland and in Cumbria, with the exception of a few outposts of monasticism, the land was occupied, in so far as it was occupied at all, by a sparsely distributed population on a low grade of material civilisation. Here there was room for all, and land lay for the taking. The Vikings were not slow to grasp their opportunity, and settled down to agricultural pursuits. If, in the beginning, there was raiding and bloodshed, the newcomers made reparation by their ready attention to the arts of peaceful industry. Nor did this betoken a lightning change of heart. It was simply a transplantation of an immemorial mode of life from the hills and fjords of western Norway to the hills and islands of western Britain.

How deep into the new soil the roots struck may be seen in later history. Over the greater part of France, Ireland, and even England, the Vikings have left few traces of their domination. In England, even in the Danelaw, there remains curiously little evidence of their presence; from

Ireland they were in the end expelled by force; in Normandy their very character was changed, and out of Norsemen the land made Normans. But the Northern Isles and Cumbria are marked for ever with the brand of their tongue. Almost within living memory has a variety of Norse ceased to be spoken in Shetland. Every place-name in the group is of Norse derivation. And if Norse has not been heard in Cumbria for long enough, the influence on place-names is almost as striking. Outside Cumbria the same Scandinavian elements persist only in the place-names of Cleveland and throughout the dales of the West Riding; and it is precisely in these areas, and in these alone in all eastern and southern England, that are to be found the essential physical characters corresponding to conditions in the lands adjoining the northern sea-route. If, indeed, the islands and inlets are wanting, this is all nevertheless a dale country, and along the coast the hills, as in Scandinavia, come right down to the sea. If it is true that in the Celt we may see a flock-master, by his nature and vocation tied to the open downs, and in the Saxon a farmer, tilling the heavy soils of lowland scenery, the Viking at home is the very type of the self-sufficient small-holder, the crofter, and the dalesman.

Compared with the abundant Scandinavian place-names in our district, and the many carved stones of the Viking age, the material remains of daily life are meagre and disappointing. The same disproportion is found in Scotland, and contrasts strongly with the wealth of contemporary material recovered in Norway and in southern Sweden. For this deficiency, in so far as that great mass of objects which is derived from graves is concerned, the influence of Christianity must be held accountable. The whole area had long since been converted, and was besides the stronghold of a branch of the Church renowned above all others for its emphasis on

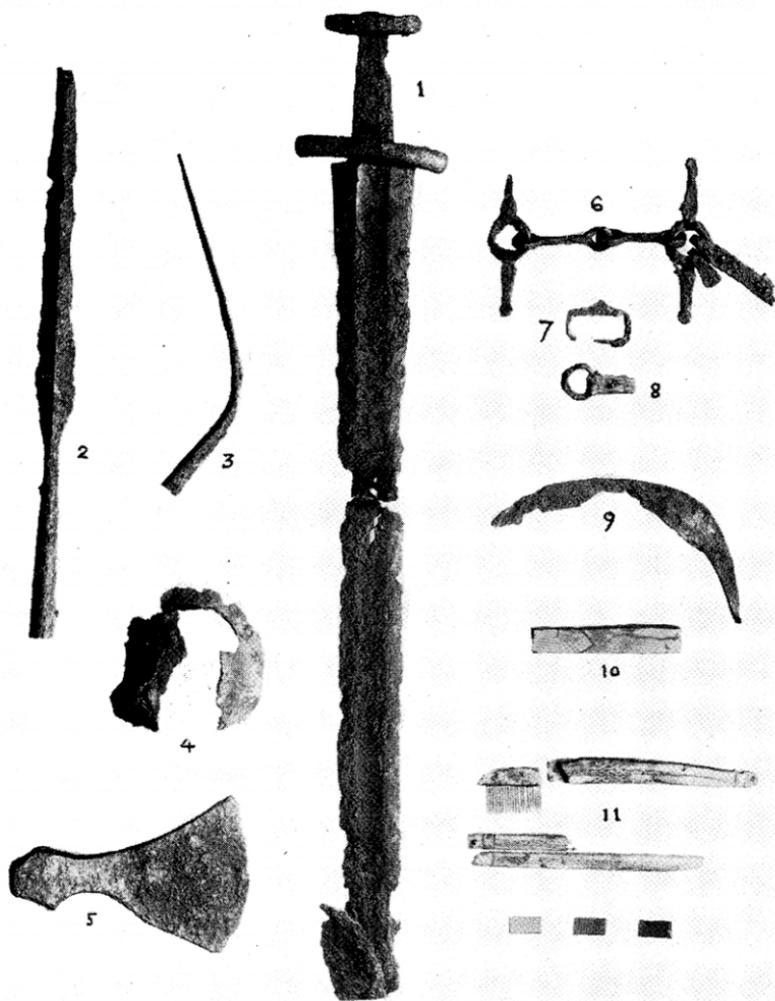


PLATE I. THE HESKETT BURIAL.

Facing p. 169.

missionary activity. Here, if anywhere, the invaders would be early weaned from the paganism which was to continue in their home countries for some time to come. And conversion, as a rule, meant an end to furnished graves.

It is, perhaps, on account of this scarcity, and of their sporadic distribution, that in Cumbria less attention has been paid to this kind of remains than they deserve. Within the last few years, however, detailed studies have appeared, especially in Norway, which put us in this country in a position to make deductions as to date and origin which could not previously have been contemplated.

Outstanding in the Tullie House collection are the two grave-groups from Ormside and Hesket, remarkable, the one for its early date, the other for the variety and condition of the associated objects. Inasmuch as there are on record from this country fewer than twenty Viking burials, of which the contents are in many cases wholly or partially lost, the interest of a collection which contains virtually intact two such burials as these will be apparent. They may be said to represent, respectively, the two distinct phases of the invasion, the early penetration by vagrant pioneers, and the full tide of the later colonisation.

Among Viking ornaments the great silver penannular thistle-brooches hold a distinguished and a striking position. They are characteristic of that Scoto-Norse civilisation which grew up as a result of the Norwegian colonisation of the Scottish Isles already mentioned. The type is, further, peculiarly connected with the Cumbrian area within which two of the largest known examples have been discovered. One original piece is shown here, and no apology is required for introducing into the catalogue the electrotype reproduction of the fine specimen from Penrith.

Besides the Ormside and Hesket swords, there are two

others; one, a fragmentary sword-hilt of Anglo-Saxon character, remarkable chiefly for the ornamental band of silver with which it is associated; the other a magnificent Danish, or Anglo-Danish, sword found in the Thames.

The four swords preserved here are an epitome not only of sword fashions in this country during the later Saxon period, but of the history of the times (plate II).* In the Ormside sword we see an early Norwegian weapon imported by some pioneer of the Viking expansion. The Heskett specimen represents a later phase, the period of serious colonisation in the Cumbrian area, showing the influence of a local school of design and essentially a Scoto-Norse hybrid. The fragmentary hilt of unknown provenance is shown both by what remains of its form, and by the character of its decoration, to be an English weapon, characteristic more particularly of the period falling between the earlier Viking invasions of the later ninth century, and the fresh onslaught at the end of the tenth, but a type used no doubt by the English defence against both the earlier and the later invaders. The sword from the Thames, though not characteristic, is of Danish fashion, a symbol and a reminder of the furious Danish attacks on southern England from the reign of Ethelred the Unready to the accession of their own king Cnut. It is an unexpected stroke of chance that has brought into one collection these four representative weapons, and nowhere else in the provinces can the types be studied together.

Sculptured stones are feebly represented in the collection. They are to be found, for the most part, scattered up and down the countryside about the precincts of the village churches, of whose grave-yards they are the most

* Swords of the Viking period in Britain have been well classified by Dr. R. E. M. Wheeler, *London Museum Catalogues* no 1, *London and the Vikings*, to which the present account owes much; see also Petersen, *De Norske Vikingsverd*.



Facing p. 170.

PLATE II. SWORD HILTS.
1, Ormside; 2, Hesket; 3, Locality unknown; 4, Thames.

venerable inhabitants. To remove them would be sacrilege, and in refraining from so doing the antiquaries of Cumberland and Westmorland have shown themselves alive to the limits of what it is fitting to collect for exhibition in a museum.

CATALOGUE.

I. THE ORMSIDE BURIAL.

Found in the churchyard at Ormside (or Ormshead), near Appleby, Westmorland, in the course of grave-digging, 5th February, 1898; the contents presented by the Rector, the Rev. J. Brunskill. Prior to 1823 the same site yielded the well-known Ormside Bowl, now in York Museum, and it may be observed that the church stands upon a large mound, though whether natural or partly artificial is not certain.*

The burial is that of a warrior, and as appears from certain peculiarities of form in the contents is of early date. The nature of the site precluded a full examination, but the grave does not seem to have been richly furnished. It contained a skeleton, which was not disturbed, accompanied by a sword and shield-boss in fair condition, besides a semi-tubular iron fitting of uncertain purpose, and a small knife now lost. (Plate III, figs. 1, 2, and 3).

The sword is a fine two-edged weapon, and in spite of some loss by corrosion, and of a break in the blade caused by the sexton in getting it out, is substantially complete. It has a suggestion of the broad central groove, or fuller, usual at this period, and commonly though incorrectly known as the 'blood channel.' This feature represents an advance on the flat blades of earlier times, and was adopted for the purpose of giving at once a stronger section and a deeper backing to the edges, combined with lightness in the hand and a certain degree of flexibility. It was keenly developed during the Viking period, and is indeed better illustrated on later examples in the collection. For a sword intended primarily as a slashing weapon this form of section cannot be improved upon, and was retained unchanged until the return to favour, about the beginning of the fourteenth century, of the stiff thrusting sword with lozenge section.

The excellent condition of the pommel entitles us to decide with virtual certainty that it preserves its original form. If that

* *Proc. Soc. Ant.*, xvii (1898), pp. 194-5; *Trans. o.s.* xv (1898), pp. 379-80 with plate.

is so the straight unornamented guard and knobless pommel-bar prove it to belong to a simple Norse type dated to the period 850-900 (Petersen type M; Wheeler type I). The type has, however, a long pedigree, and may have made its first appearance at an earlier date. In any event it belongs rather to the earlier part of the Viking period than to its full development.

The shield-boss is more distinctive, and is a most unusual piece. It consists of a plain conical iron cap with a flange at the base. The section is shown in fig. I. This boss is quite unlike those of squat bowl-shaped form in common use during the Viking period. It is characteristic rather of the preceding age, the Merovingian of western Europe, and its predecessors in this country may be seen in the tall sugar-loaf bosses of late pagan Saxon times, such as that found on the Surrey side of the Thames, opposite Twickenham,

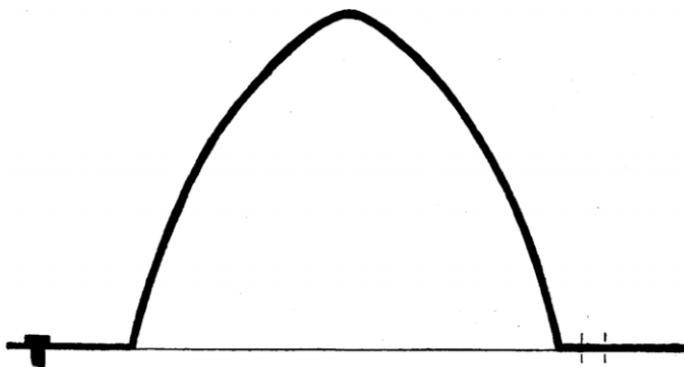


FIG. I. Ormside Shield-boss. ($\frac{1}{2}$).

with a jewelled pendant which can hardly be earlier than the seventh century.* The type though widely distributed is not common, and seems to have developed only a short time before the conversion of the Saxons. No doubt the exaggerated form which the type at first assumed was soon modified, but the steep conical profile persisted, and here re-appears in a very different setting. A characteristic feature recurring on the Ormside boss is the absence of a keel and of the hollow moulding next the rim.

Parallels amongst the Scandinavian material are rare, and the type is regarded as specifically Anglo-Saxon, but at least one comparable example with the characteristic high conical profile is

* *British Museum Guide, Anglo-Saxon Period*, figs. 69, 70. Examples are known from Kent, Wilts., and Derby.

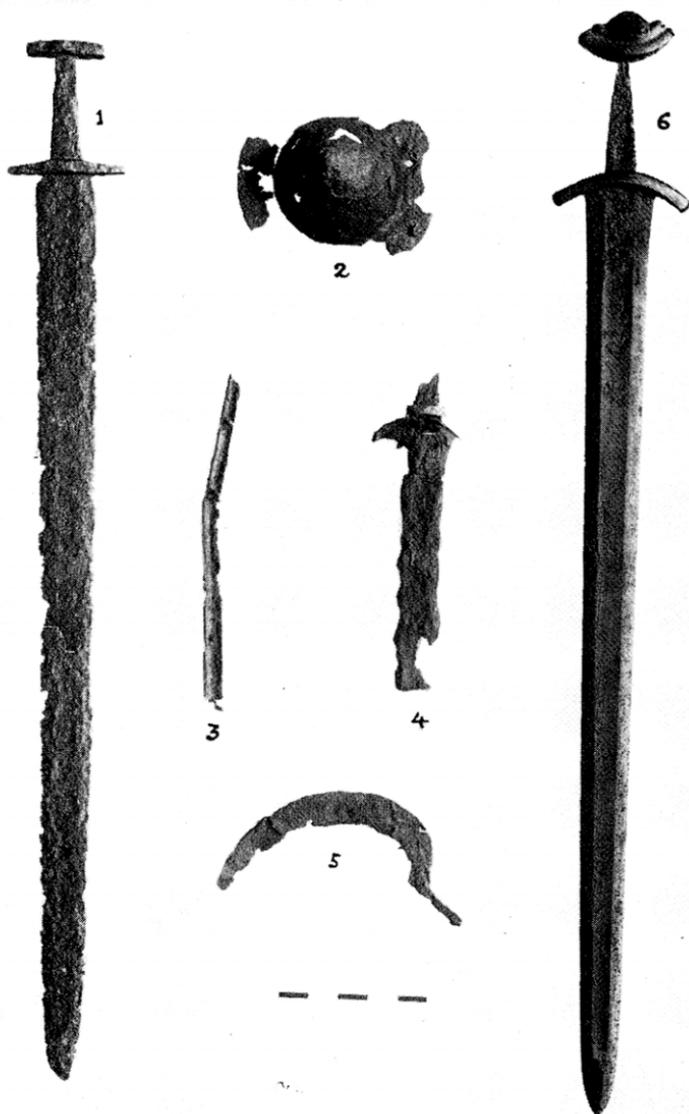


PLATE III. THE ORMSIDE BURIAL AND OTHER WEAPONS AND TOOLS.
1-3, Ormside; 4, 5, Locality unknown; 6, Thames.

Facing p. 172.

known from Scotland. This is a boss found near Lamlash, Arran, and attributed to a Norse invader of about 750, or possibly earlier.* The type of boss illustrated by these rare examples seems to have influenced the normal low-crowned Viking type, and must surely account for the appearance of the distinctive Scoto-Norse boss with high pointed centre and prominent shoulder surmounting a marked concave moulding.† If that is so the Ormside boss is entitled to a place in an evolutionary series of unusual interest.

The semi-tubular fragment of iron is set with rivets, or the traces of rivets, four in all, at regular intervals of $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This feature, as Chancellor Ferguson long ago pointed out, precludes its identification as the handle or grip of the shield, since the close setting of the rivets would not allow of more than two fingers being passed around the rod at any one place. This is supported by the fact that no other iron shield-grip of the period is known from this country, the only recorded example being of bronze and of different construction. It may have formed part of a strengthening rib such as is known from Saxon times, and earlier still on Celtic shields also, but its tubular section does not agree well with the suggestion. Had it been a binding for the edge of a shield we should have expected it to present a segmental profile, and as a scabbard binding it is too heavy. Though the form, which is well preserved, proves that it was intended to serve some distinctive purpose, what that purpose was we are unable to say.

A small knife, $4\frac{5}{8}$ inches long, of the single-edged variety which had a long life in the Dark Ages, is recorded as forming part of the find, but cannot now be traced. It is illustrated with the other objects in the plate referred to above.

The grave must be dated on the evidence furnished by the forms of the sword and the shield-boss. Taken simply by itself the sword should fall, as already indicated, within the period 850-900. But the boss takes us back to a period earlier still, and it is not easy to assign to it a date later than about 800. If the sword type in fact made its appearance during the first half of the ninth century the discrepancy could be reconciled. In Norway a single sword of the same type, which Petersen classes as by far the earliest in the group, has been discovered with a boss of this character.‡ This seems clearly to indicate a date prior to 850, and entitles us to date the burial to the period 800-850, while if we care to press the significance of the form of the shield-boss we shall be inclined to place it nearer 800 than at any later date.

* A. W. Brøgger, *Norske Bosetningen*, pp. 205-6.

† Brøgger, *ibid.*, figs. 115, 132.

‡ Petersen, *op. cit.*, p. 119 and fig. 98.

If that dating is correct then we have evidence for the presence in Cumbria of Norsemen at a period much earlier than has hitherto been suggested, and the Ormside grave-group would constitute also one of the earliest burials yet known along the north-western sea-route round Britain.

1. Sword (Plate II 1 and III 1), $35\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, with straight unornamented guard and knobless T-shaped pommel: Petersen M=Wheeler I. The blade, 31 inches, is two-edged, with a wide fuller; it is complete, but is broken across. 24-98-1.
2. Shield-boss (Plate III, 2), $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, of marked conical form rising directly from a plain flange, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide, irregularly pierced for attachment to the shield. (Fig. 1). Three nails remain. 24-98-2.
3. Fragment of an iron rod (Plate III, 3), $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, semi-tubular in section, and pierced with four rivets at regular intervals of $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. 24-98-3.

2. THE HESKET BURIAL.

This burial was uncovered on the 15th February, 1822, in the course of road widening operations on the main Carlisle-Penrith turnpike, within a mile of Hesketh-in-the-Forest. The precise point was about 70 yards south of a place called the Court Thorn, immediately on the east side of the road.*

The grave had been covered by a considerable cairn of stones, which at the time of discovery was reduced by robbing to below ground level. Local information, however, had it that when the turnpike was made, about 50 years previously, the cairn had consisted of a very large heap of stones, many of which had then been put into the new road, and many others taken later by farmers to repair their walls. By 1822 it appears that the only indication of its existence was a slight deviation of the road, which it was part of the object of the operations of that date to remove.

Excavation showed that the cairn had been about 22 feet in diameter, and among the stones uncovered by the roadmen were fragments of several querns, one at least being of Andernach grit a circumstance which caused the surveyor, Christopher Hodgson, to suggest a Roman date for the burial. He must also, however, be credited with the observation that other features indicated rather 'a Scandinavian or a Tartar' character for the interment.

* *Archaeologia Aeliana* 1, II (1832), pp. 106-109, plates I and II.

The cairn provided evidence of careful construction, the burial deposit being covered by large stones set close together and these in turn covered by smaller stones, regularly disposed.

The remains were found lying within a circle some 14 feet in diameter in a layer of burnt matter which contained charcoal, bones, and ashes, and which rested directly upon an apparently untouched bed of very fine dry sand. The precise disposition, however, of the several objects was not noticed. It is clear that some of the objects, the sword in particular, have passed through considerable heat, but that this does not apply to the whole group is suggested by the condition, for example, of the comb.

The burial is notable not only for the comparatively good condition of the associated objects, accounted for no doubt by their preservation in burnt matter on a peculiarly favourable subsoil, but also for the number and variety of the contents. It provides, indeed, a tolerably complete inventory of the personal possessions of a Norse warrior of the early tenth century, and comprises a sword, an axe, two spear-heads, and the boss of a shield; a bit and pair of spurs; a sickle and whetstone; and a comb complete with case, besides two buckles whose precise application cannot now be determined. (Plate I). With the exception of the spurs all of these objects came to the museum with the Ferguson collection.

The sword is now in two pieces, but when first recovered was unbroken and complete except for the extreme point. It had, however, been rendered unfit for further use by being bent nearly flat, once across the middle of the blade, and again near the point. This practice, one of a very high antiquity, was especially common among the Celtic peoples of continental Europe where it seems in some areas to have lingered on into Viking times. It has, at all events, been recorded from Scandinavia, and in a number of instances from the great Viking cemetery of Islandbridge outside Dublin. The custom served a double purpose, making the weapons useless to anyone who might be tempted to open the grave; but no doubt it was founded upon the deeply rooted idea that only by themselves being 'killed' could the weapons of a dead man follow their owner into the next world. One of the spear-heads has been treated in the same way.

Next the hilt the blade shows a strongly marked fuller, but the greater part of it is badly damaged by fire or corrosion. The guard is slightly curved, boat-shaped on plan, without bevel, and with rounded ends. It is encased in a covering of thin silver plating which carries an engraved interlacing pattern (fig. 2).

The silver has suffered considerably from the effects of heat. In places it has run into small pellets, and the design is not easy to make out. On the pommel-bar the silver has almost entirely disappeared, though enough remains to show that the treatment must have been the same. More unfortunate still, the pommel knob or cap, the distinguishing feature of most sword types, is missing. Two holes running perpendicularly through the pommel-bar show where it was attached. In spite of this mishap we believe that it is possible on the evidence of the guard alone to determine with virtual certainty the type to which the sword should be assigned.*



FIG. 2. Heskett Sword-Guard. (§).

The silver plated guard is not common among Viking swords. It is, in effect, confined to three groups (Petersen's types O, R, and S:†) but of these two (R and S) have the distinctive waisted guard with straight axis and strongly expanded ends. The Heskett guard is slightly but distinctly curved, and has a characteristic droop, accompanied by a scarcely perceptible swelling, at the extreme ends. Precisely the same profile is shown by one only among Petersen's types, that with the exaggerated radiate pommel knob (type O). The four guards with this profile illustrated in his work are all of this type (Petersen, *loc. cit.* figs. 5, 6, 104 and 105), and the only example recorded from Scotland, the Eriskay hilt, is again of this interesting and uncommon variety.‡ The Eriskay hilt is encased in bronze plating, and is not ornamented, but engraving of the same kind as that on the Heskett piece is again to be found on the guards of type O illustrated by Petersen.

The engraving on the guard is a variety of the well-known vertebral or chain-pattern used by the Viking stone-carvers of the

* Although an attribution to a specific type is here argued for, many hybrids between two or more types are known to exist, and in the absence of the only final criterion unqualified certainty can never be achieved.

† It appears also, but rarely, on types L and T. In each case both the form of the guard and the character of the design are quite distinctive.

‡ Brøgger, *loc. cit.* fig. 149; where however, the lower part of the hilt has been photographed upside down.

Isle of Man from the first half of the tenth century onwards. The pattern was a popular one, and soon travelled over all the Norse area.* Occurring in the present context it not only strengthens the bonds already closely linking Cumbria to Man at this time, but it implies also the existence of a local school of metal-workers skilled enough if not actually to make the most prized of all weapons, then at least to apply to the unfinished article the appropriate decoration.

It seems then, that on an examination of the guard of this sword the evidence furnished by its form, by its construction, and by its decorative design, combines unequivocally to point to Petersen's type O as that to which it should be assigned. The type is a Scandinavian development of a well-known Frankish variety, and is dated to the first half of the tenth century. The specific variation here represented is, on the ground of the distinctive pattern of its decoration, attributed to that Scoto-Norse culture we have already mentioned as the result of Viking contacts in the West.†

The two spears have suffered from the effects of fire, and one of them has also been purposely bent. They are both interesting pieces, and in their original condition must have been fine weapons. They have long narrow blades and closed sockets. Down the shank of the larger one are not less than seven, and in the smaller one not less than six pairs of rivet-holes. Several of the bronze rivets remain, and in one case where the rivet is still exactly centred its two ends can be seen projecting slightly on either side of the socket as in Petersen's type I. This attractive type is dated c. 900-950, but a link with an earlier variety is to be found on the socket of the smaller example, where groups of three or four close-set ribs spaced to coincide with the rivet-holes appear in low relief. This peculiarity is one of the distinguishing marks of Petersen's type F (c. 850-900), so that in the Heskett spearhead we have a hybrid between types F and I. The transitional form is not common, but single examples from Nordre Bergenhus, Norway and Södermanland, Sweden,‡ are dated to the first half of the tenth century.

The shield-boss is broken in two pieces, and has been so hardly used that the type is indistinguishable. It is, however, in a general sense of the flattened bowl-like form of semi-circular

* W. G. Collingwood, *Northumbrian Crosses of the Pre-Norman Age*, pp. 147-149, esp. figs. 158, 167, 171, 182 and 184.

† Shetelig, *Vikingeminner*, pp. 182-3.

‡ Petersen *op. cit.*, pp. 28-9, fig 16.

section which was the characteristic shape of the Viking period. Apart from a break which seems to have occurred since the date of discovery it has received a fierce dint before burial, whether in battle or for ritual purposes it is impossible to say. In addition it appears to have passed through considerable heat.

The axe is a typical weapon of the time, characteristic of the Viking invaders. It is of Petersen's type E, dated to the second half of the ninth century and the beginning of the tenth.

The bit is again a characteristic accompaniment for a Viking burial. It has been plated with bronze, a popular technique for this class of object, but whether or no as the result of great heat, in all but a few places the plating has disappeared. In addition, in the original account of the find a pair of spurs are recorded and illustrated. If we may rely on the engraving these were of the common Viking type with straight shank and rebated prick, but they are not now to be found, two spurs received with the remainder of the group from the Ferguson collection being clearly substitutions.* It is in any case unusual to find a *pair* of spurs recorded at this period, since it is generally believed that down to a later date only one spur was worn, and that on the left foot—so that the horse, edging away from the prick, would present to the enemy his rider's left side, the one on which he carried his shield.

Two iron buckles may have formed part of the harness or be connected with the spurs, but their use cannot now be exactly determined.

By way of contrast the sickle and whetstone represent the agricultural aspect of their owner's activities. The frequency with which they are found in Viking burials bears out what has been said above concerning the character of the Norseman as a farmer.

Finally there are the remains of a fine bone comb and comb-case. It has been liberally ornamented with a simple angular fret, and in parts with cross-hatching. In burials of the period combs are the regular accompaniment of men's, and not of women's graves. In Scotland a number of similar examples have been preserved, generally in a ninth century setting, but the type is not by itself a criterion of date, and may have remained in fashion over a long period. The 'long comb' as we see it here is a product of Norwegian, as distinct from Danish, taste, being peculiar to the Norse area of Britain, while in the more specifically

* They do not tally with the engraving, and both are clearly of later date; one grotesquely so.

Danish districts, especially on the rich sites of York, Lincoln and London, a shorter, stumper, variety shares the honours with the handled comb.

While the burial is clearly of the tenth century the combination of several distinctive motives invites a closer dating. Early items are the axe, the smaller spearhead, and perhaps the comb. On the other hand the vertebral pattern on the sword-guard warns us against too great an emphasis on early features. The motive seems to have made a first appearance in Man during the second quarter of the tenth century. That is a dating quite consistent with the remainder of the find, more especially if we place it towards the beginning of the period, say about 930 A.D.

1. Sword (Plate I, 1 and II, 2), $36\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, with wide fuller, the blade broken in two, and the point missing. The guard (fig. 2) is encased in silver plating engraved with an interlacing pattern; a similar casing appears to have melted from the pommel-bar. The pommel-knob is missing. Probably Petersen type O=Wheeler IV (variant). RF 389, 397.
2. Spearhead (Plate I, 2), $17\frac{5}{8}$ inches long, the tip missing. Down the socket, which is closed and unornamented, are at least seven pairs of rivet-holes. Several bronze rivets remain inside the socket. Petersen type I. RF 390.
3. Spearhead (Plate I, 3), 11 inches long, bent in the middle. Spaced at intervals along the closed socket are at least six groups of close-set rings in low relief, each group pierced by a pair of rivet-holes. A single bronze rivet correctly centred projects on each side of the socket. Hybrid form between Petersen's types F and I. RF 402.
4. Shield-boss (Plate I, 4), c. $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, broken in two and damaged by fire. RF 418.
5. Axe-head (Plate I, 5), $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, of 'transitional battle-axe' form. Petersen E=Wheeler V. RF 392.
6. Bit (Plate I, 6), $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches over all, of iron formerly plated with bronze, which has been melted by the action of fire. RF 391.
7. Buckle (Plate I, 7), 2 inches wide, rectangular, wanting the tongue, with a small angular projection from the centre of one of the longer sides. RF 406/2.
8. Buckle (Plate I, 8), $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches long over all, circular, wanting the tongue. The buckle-plate to hold the end of the strap is still attached. RF 403.

9. Sickle (Plate I, 9), $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches long. RF 414.
10. Whetstone (Plate I, 10), $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, with square section. RF 405.
11. Bone comb and comb-case (Plate I, 11), fragmentary, the largest piece $7\frac{1}{8}$ inches long, probably about 10 inches long when complete. The back and case carry bands of angular interlacing, and spandrels at the ends are filled with cross-hatching. RF 420.

3. OTHER WEAPONS AND TOOLS.

The general position of the two isolated swords in the collection has already been discussed, and it remains only to note one or two individual characteristics.



FIG. 3. Silver mounting with design in Niello. ($1\frac{1}{2}$).

The fragmentary hilt without provenance (Plate II, 3 and III, 4) is shown by the curve and by the flat strip-like form of the guard to be an English piece of a type dated c. 875-950, an attribution independently supported by the narrow silver band which accompanies it. When first it came under notice this band was fixed around the blade below the guard as though it had been a scabbard mounting. But this arrangement cannot have been original. The strip is too short, and the shape inappropriate, for use in this position. It must originally have been fixed at one end of the grip, or conceivably on the lost pommel. An exactly similar decorative band flanks the grip of an English sword found in Norway,* and hilts of this type are commonly ornamented with strips of enriched silver plating.

The character of the decoration (fig. 3), executed in niello, is related to the Trewhiddle style of southern England, but does not belong to an early phase. The lively animal and leaf designs of the best period have here given way to an uninspired repeat pattern of a formal geometric character, in which the animal element is reduced to a set of tenuous bodies with a head at each end. But the triangular panel settings and characteristic pointed

* Petersen, *loc. cit.*, fig. 94.

trefoil are features belonging to the full development of the style, and leave no doubt to what school the decoration is to be assigned. The style is found in its purest form c. 875, and the development shown on the Wallingford hilt is dated c. 900. The present fragment must fall later than this, perhaps c. 925-950, a date which agrees well with the form of the guard.

The sword has no recorded locality, but since it comes from the Ferguson collection there is a presumption, in a general sense, of local origin. Though Chancellor Ferguson made many purchases outside the district, it is not likely that a scrap like this would have come to his notice unless it had been a local find.

The sword from the Thames (Plate II, 4 and III, 6) carries a pommel which represents a late English or Danish development of the zoomorphic type widely current in northern Europe from an early date. On one face of the blade, which is finely preserved, as indeed is the whole weapon, is a blundered inscription of four letters, of which the two centre ones appear to be CN. Probably the lettering never was intelligible. It was a not uncommon practice during the tenth century for the maker thus to sign his work with the hall-mark of his name, and the names of several of these early weaponsmiths have been preserved to us in this way. But more common are the meaningless inscriptions due to illiterate craftsmen who, not knowing the meaning of what they wrote, were able to reproduce only the general effect by a jumble of genuine letters and senseless marks. The guard, which is curved, seems faced with bronze, but no pattern, as on other swords of the period, can be made out. It must date from the second half of the tenth century, probably nearer 1000 than in the earlier years of the period. Its condition makes it a notable piece.

An iron sickle (Plate III, 5) of which the history is unknown, is included partly on the attribution of an early labelling. It is similar to that from the Hesket burial and may well be a genuine Viking piece, but the type was developed in classical times and it may as easily derive from a local Roman site.

1. Sword hilt (Plate II, 3 and III, 4), fragmentary and much decayed, 11 inches long, with the guard sharply curved. Associated with it is a narrow silver band (fig. 3), decorated in niello with a design derived from the Trewiddle style. Petersen L=Wheeler V. Middle tenth century. History unknown. Ferguson collection: RF 413.
2. Sword (Plate II, 4 and III, 6), 37 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches long, with marked fuller and a blundered inscription on the blade. The guard is curved and seems faced with bronze; the lobed pommel

is a late version of the zoomorphic type. Petersen Z (variant)=Wheeler VI (variant). Late tenth century. Found in the Thames, 1840. Old Museum collection: OM 325.

3. Sickle (Plate III, 5), $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches long, of asymmetric outline, with short narrow tang. The blade is broken across. History unknown. Ferguson collection: RF 415.

4. ORNAMENTS AND JEWELLERY.

The origin of the 'thistle brooch' is not yet settled. It has on good authority been stated to be due probably to that influence from the east which at this time was having a marked effect both on design and technique in metalwork in the homelands of the Vikings.* A more recent view explains the peculiarities of the type rather by the proved Viking contacts between Ireland, and Spain under the Moors.† On the other hand there are grounds for believing the thistle brooch to have developed entirely within the British Isles, and for tracing its evolution step by step from a simple form of Celtic brooch. However that may be, in its developed form it is a characteristic product of the Scoto-Norse civilisation which grew up as a result of Viking contacts in western Britain. With Cumbria it has a special connection inasmuch as here it seems to have achieved its most fantastic dimensions.‡

The type is characterised by having for its ring a plain circle of heavy silver wire, and for terminals to the pin and ring a set of brambled knobs with splayed finials so like a thistle-head that the naming of the type presents no difficulties. The pin, as often in Celtic brooches, is of great length, and the whole brooch at times attains enormous dimensions. These large examples may seem too ungainly for use, but an Irish ordinance of the time is known expressly regulating the length of pin to be worn.§ Nevertheless in many cases the larger examples must represent rather a conventional form of portable wealth than objects valued for

* R. A. Smith, *Archaeologia*, LXV (1914), 241.

† Shetelig, *Vikingeminner*, 150.

‡ The largest known example was found in Ireland, but is represented only by a fragment from which the size of the whole has been calculated. *Proc. Soc. Ant.*, XXI (1906), 69. Cumberland may claim the two next largest, both of them virtually complete, and found within a short distance from each other; one near Fluskew Pike, between Dacre and Greystoke, in 1785; the other 'near Penrith', 1830, more fully described below. They are almost a pair, and may very possibly have formed part of a single board.

§ *Proc. Soc. Ant.*, *ibid.*, quoting Lord Dunraven, *Trans. Royal Irish Academy*, XXIV, 454.

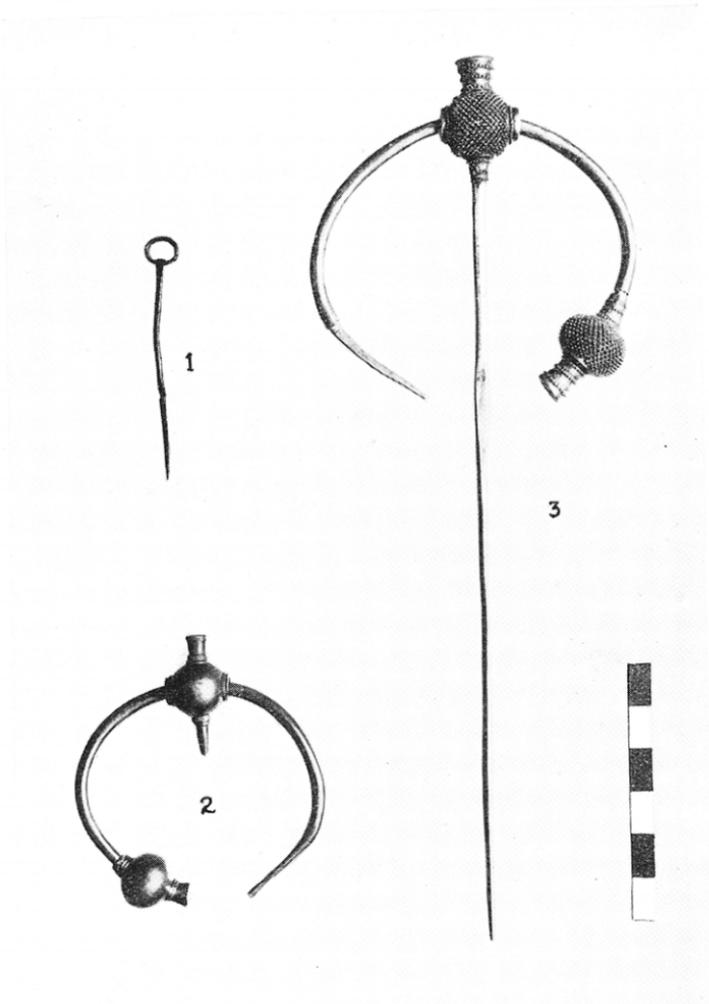


PLATE IV. ORNAMENTS AND JEWELLERY.
1, Brigham; 2, Casterton; 3, Near Penrith.

Facing p. 183.

their usefulness. Such a view is borne out by their discovery in hoards containing a considerable number, as at Skaill, Orkney, and in association with silver in bullion form. But the dividing line between cash and plate was to remain, for centuries yet, a thin one, and the possibility must not be overlooked that such finds may be no more than the stock of travelling silversmiths or merchants.

For the larger examples a religious purpose has also been suggested. Rings were used by the pagan Norse to swear by, and a case is recorded from St. Bees, Cumberland, where the custom was kept up till the thirteenth century.* A similar ring, known as 'The torque of St. Canauc,' mentioned by Giraldus Cambrensis must, by the description, have been the ring of a 'thistle' brooch or a closely related type.† But it must be owned that the evidence is not conclusive.

Of these large brooches that found near Penrith, represented here by an electro-type reproduction‡ is an outstanding example (Plate IV, 3). Here one of the terminals is missing, but the two remaining show on the back an engraved ornament of four interlaced triquetrae arranged quadrant-wise in a circular setting. On this face the brambling is interrupted, and this can only be due to a desire to spare the clothes of the wearer from the friction of so rough a surface. The engraving is a regular feature of the fully developed brooch, and is here seen in a stage clearly antecedent to the more florid and loosely knit patterns which appear on examples in the Skaill hoard dated c. 950-60. The Penrith brooch should thus fall within the second quarter of the tenth century.

The less complete original from Casterton (Westmorland),‡ is not so large, but still somewhat ungainly as an article of dress (Plate IV, 2). This brooch besides wanting one of the terminal thistles lacks the pin also, though its stump may still be seen. The bulb of the terminals is plain, and does not show the bram-

* The Holy Ring (the Norse for "ring" is *baugr*, Anglo-Saxon *bēag*) in medieval Latin form became *Sancta Bega*—the name of the patron saint whose life was earnestly compiled by a monastic biographer. See Canon Wilson, *St. Bees Register*, p. xxxiv.

† W. G. Collingwood, *Lake District History*, p. 53 and note; *Northumbrian Crosses*, pp. 122-3n.

‡ The original was found 'in a field near Penrith,' 1830; exhibited to the Archaeological Institute at Carlisle by Mr. J. Teather, of Alstonby, 1859 (at which date it was complete); and bequeathed to the British Museum by Mr. William Forster, of Carlisle, 1904. *Proc. Soc. Ant.*, loc. cit. 68; cf. *Victoria County History, Cumberland*, I, 283.

‡ *Arch. Journ.* VI (1849), 69 fig.; *Proc. Soc. Ant.*, XI (1886), 223.

ling which is the mark of the true thistle brooch. Such decoration as there is, is carried out in a simple punched technique, much less elaborate than the cast and chased ornament on the Penrith piece. Precisely similar examples were included in the Skaill hoard, which gives for the Casterton brooch a central date of c. 950-1000.

The little bronze ring-headed pin (Plate IV, 1) was found in the foundations of the tower of Brigham church* in the course of restorations, 1864-5. It is of a type well known in the Scottish finds, recorded from the Broch of Okstrow, Orkney, from Reay, Caithness (twice), and from Colonsay, in each of the last three cases in an early tenth century context; while on Barra it appeared in a ninth century burial. In Ireland the type was even more popular, and there it had a long life, passing through several developments. The Brigham example is, however, the only one of its kind yet recorded from Cumbria. Its appearance in this context may imply a Viking burial, though not necessarily a pagan one. It may conceivably have been used as a pall-pin, like the pin found in the early eleventh century tomb of Archbishop Wulstan at Ely. It has only recently been recognised for a Viking period find, and reclaimed from insignificance in the prehistoric collection.

1. Electrottype reproduction of a silver penannular ring-brooch of 'thistle' type (Plate IV, 3), $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter, the pin $20\frac{1}{4}$ inches long. The brambled terminals are engraved on the reverse side with a triquetra pattern, and one of them is missing. Second quarter of tenth century. Found near Penrith, 1830. 7-00-3.
2. Silver penannular ring-brooch of modified 'thistle' type (Plate IV, 2), $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter, the pin and one of the terminals missing. Later tenth century. Found in a field near Casterton Hall, Kirby Lonsdale, 1846; C. Carus-Wilson collection, 1849; exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries by R. S. Ferguson, 1886; presented to Tullie House by Mrs. Ware, of Grasmere, 1910. 14a-10-1.
3. Bronze ring-headed pin (Plate IV, 1), $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches long. The pin is plain, circular in section near the head, rectangular in the lower half, and is broken across. Ninth to early tenth century. Found in the foundations of Brigham church (Cumberland), 1864-5. Presented by Mrs. Fletcher, Stourbridge, 1903. 24-03.

* *Trans. N.S.*, iv (1904), 340.

5. SCULPTURED STONES.

The wealth of the district in the carved stone crosses raised by the Viking colonists in Cumbria after their conversion is represented by a single mutilated fragment. It was first noticed in the wall of a house at Glassonby, where it had possibly come from the early church at Addingham. Besides an animal motive of a kind popular with the Christianised Norse, it bears a key pattern not common in the district, and may represent the transition between the native Anglian and the immigrant Norse styles. It dates probably from the middle of the tenth century.*

A useful convention ends the Viking period with the Norman Conquest, but an interesting stone is included here, since, in spite of its date—it is a twelfth century carving—both in design and execution it is characteristically Norse. This is a cross base of which the history is unknown. It has been at Tullie House for many years, and formerly stood in the garden.

It seems to be a socket stone for the shaft of a cross, but it appears almost as though a certain amount of the original stone at the top were missing. The four sides are carved with figure subjects in low relief, but time has not dealt kindly with them. They have been described by W. G. Collingwood (*Trans.* N.S. iii, 380), to whose account a reference here will suffice; he suggested that the four figures represent (1) the Midgarth-worm or the Fenrir's Wolf (both of which we know on the Gosforth cross and others); (2) the wind-giant Hraesvelgr (corpse swallower) 'who sits at the end of the world in the likeness of an eagle, from under the wings of whom, when he taketh to flight, winds proceed,' Edda (younger) I, 80; (3) Thor, in the guise of a young man, tearing off the head of Ymir's finest ox, Himinbjrðtr (Heaven breaker), to bait his hook for the Midgarth-worm; (4) Loki undergoing punishment, or at the least restraint. It is in any case a variant of a very ancient type, the Devil Bound. This is a motive which came in with the Vikings, and it appears on several well known local crosses. Its longevity is attested by twelfth century sculptures in Norway and Denmark as well as by the present version. As an example of the persistence of Scandinavian traditions in the district centuries after the first settlement it provides a fitting tailpiece for our catalogue.

1. Split fragment of a cross shaft, red sandstone, 18 inches by 8 by 8, bearing on one face a deeply cut key pattern, and on another a much mutilated ribbon-like

* Calverley, *Sculptured Crosses*, p. 137, fig.

- creature of Scandinavian character. Middle tenth century. Found in the walls of a house at Glassonby. Presented by Mr. W. E. Rowley.
2. Block of red sandstone, 21 inches in height, 27 by 20 near the base, and 20 by 16 on the top surface, which contains a square hole, 12 by 10 inches, possibly the socket-hole of a cross shaft. The sides are carved with panels of figure sculpture in low relief. Twelfth century. History unknown.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

An excellent survey of the whole of the activities of the Vikings from the historical standpoint is given by T. D. Kendrick, *A History of the Vikings* (1930) with bibliography and full references. The approach by the north-western sea-route is described and fully illustrated, with emphasis on the archaeological evidence, by Dr. A. W. Brøgger, *Den Norske Bosetningen på Shetland-Orknøylene* (1930). The substance of this book is given in English in Dr. Brøgger's previous work *Ancient Emigrants* (1929), but with special reference to Shetland and Orkney, and omitting details of the important material from the Western Isles. The colonisation of Cumberland and Westmorland is outlined by W. G. Collingwood in *Northumbrian Crosses of the Pre-Norman Age* (1927), ch. XII; and in his *Lake District History* (1925), ch. III, the same author traces in closer detail the Norse penetration of the dale country, using with great effect the evidence of place-names. The value of this kind of evidence for the history of the main colonisation is brought out by Prof. Eilert Ekwall in *Scandinavians and Celts in North-West England* (1918).

For the archaeological material the *British Museum Guide, Anglo-Saxon Period* (1923), should be consulted, but is handicapped by severe compression enforced by the enormous number of objects handled. A comprehensive review of the remains from the British Isles is given by Dr. Haakon Shetelig, *Vikingeminner i Vest-Europa* (1933).

The only adequate discussion in English of any considerable group of metallic remains of the period is Dr. R. E. M. Wheeler's London Museum Catalogue, *London and the Vikings* (1927). To the author of this model catalogue the present writer desires to make the fullest possible acknowledgments. To all who know the London Museum Catalogue the extent of the indebtedness of the present essay will be apparent. Dr. Wheeler drew up the first classification of swords and axes to appear in this country, but

for all classes of weapons students will, nevertheless, find Jan Petersen's *De Norske Vikingesverd* (1919) indispensable. The same author's *Vikingetidens Smykker* (1928) deals with the contemporary jewellery, while 'thistle' brooches are specifically discussed by R. A. Smith in *Proc. Soc. Ant.*, XXI (1906), 63-71.

The nearest approach to a list of local Viking finds is in the *Victoria County History, Cumberland* (1901), but apart from the limitation of area, so far at least as metalwork is concerned the list is both out of date and misleading. For Westmorland nothing of the kind exists.

Thanks, however, to the work of W. G. Collingwood the carved stone crosses of the district have been fully published and adequately illustrated. His edition of W. S. Calverley's *Early Sculptured Crosses in the Diocese of Carlisle* (1899), handling the material on topographical lines, was followed by the more schematic treatment of the Cumberland crosses in the *Victoria County History*. In his *Northumbrian Crosses of the Pre-Norman Age* the local stones appear again, this time as part of a larger and more magnificent body of material, gaining thereby the advantages of appearing in a truer perspective, and against the background of this great scholar's final views.

To all the above named authors the present writer desires to acknowledge his indebtedness; and to Mr. Robert Hogg, of the museum staff, his warmest thanks are due for the many hours he has given to the preparation of the photographs and drawings with which this catalogue is illustrated.