

## A DRINKING HORN OF THE VIKING PERIOD

BY A. ROES

When in the spring of 1939 I visited the treasury of the Church of Our Lady at Maastricht, my attention was caught by a reliquary in the shape of a drinking horn the mounts of which showed an unusual decoration. I was told that it had been repaired a few months before by Mr. J. E. Brøm, a well-known silversmith at Utrecht. With a view to publishing the object I addressed myself to Mr. Brom for particulars about its construction. He told me that, when the horn was in his charge, he had sent photographs of it to the Oslo Museum, believing as he did that no Dutch archaeologist would be able to tell him much about it. As a matter of fact, none had so far paid any special attention to the object. The authorities of the Oslo Museum became at once very much interested in the horn and asked for permission to publish it, which was granted. The publication was entrusted to Dr. Bjørn Hougen and I have waited for the appearance of his paper before deciding whether to write about the subject or not. Recently Mr. Hougen's article appeared in *Viking*<sup>1)</sup>, and on comparing it with the material I had in the meantime gathered I thought there would still be place for a few remarks of my own; moreover I believe that the horn is remarkable enough to deserve publication in Holland, where the periodical of the Norsk

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<sup>1)</sup> B. Hougen, Et Anglo-nordisk Drikkehorn fra Holland, *Viking*, III, 1939, p. 115 ff. An English translation of the article has appeared as a supplement to *Viking* under the title: An Anglo-Nordic Drinking Horn from Holland. I shall refer to the translation, as it will be better known to non-Scandinavian scholars.

Arkeologisk Selskap, interesting though it is, is still very little known.

The horn is of large size; the diameter of the mouth is 9.5 cm., and from the rim to the tip it measures 33.5 cm. I will begin by recounting what I learnt about it from Mr. Brom, so that readers may know what is ancient and what is modern in this reliquary, whose present appearance is shown on pl. I<sup>2)</sup>. Mr. Brom was asked to make a new lid for it, as the old one, that dated from the 19th century, was thought to be ill adapted to the shape of the horn. This he did; at the same time he put in a number of new nails in the place of those that had fallen out, and he took off the thick layer of silver paint that disfigured the mounts. When this was taken off it appeared that they had originally been plated with silver, but that this silver, being only a very thin sheet, had flaked off in most places, leaving the dull and darkish colour of lead. He had therefore silvered it over anew, in order to improve its appearance. Two items of the mounts are modern, that is to say, they were added in the 19th century; these are the mouth-piece and the ferrule at the tip of the horn. Pl. II shows the horn with all the modern additions taken off. There is no opening in the tip<sup>3)</sup>.

Except that the original mouthpiece and the ferrule are lost the object has suffered little actual damage. The horn itself is in an excellent state of preservation; it has only suffered a little along the rim (on pl. II it will be seen that this has been mended with wax). The almost intact surface of the horn contrasts with the condition of many parts of its mountings, the surface of which is corroded (cf. pl. IV A). One might be inclined to suppose that the horn is younger than the metal

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<sup>2)</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Brom for all the photographs of the horn.

<sup>3)</sup> In the Catalogue of the Willibrord Exhibition of Early Mediaeval Art, Utrecht 1939, the object is described erroneously as a hunting horn; see p. 26, n<sup>o</sup>. 64.

plates, but as the latter show no trace of having been used twice, this can hardly be the case; we must therefore suppose that the reliquary was subject to influences which were bad for the metal but did no harm to the horn.

The previous history of the object is completely unknown. It was first published in 1872 by Bock and Willemsen, who wrote a book on the church treasures of Maastricht<sup>4)</sup>. The authors describe it as an oriental work of art, no doubt because of the relics from Palestine it contained. They knew of two documents in which the horn was mentioned, the first dating from the beginning of the 19th century, the second from the beginning of the 17th<sup>5)</sup>. Fr. Tilmans, assistant priest at the church, who is in charge of the treasury, made a thorough search for these papers, but as he was unable to find them they are probably lost.

A short time ago the horn was again published in the Limburg Monuments<sup>6)</sup>, but the author did not add anything new beyond stating that it probably dated from the 9th or from the 10th century, that it reminded one of the arrival of the Nordic people, that is to say of the migration, and that its ornament had analogies with early mediaeval works of art from northern Italy.

The only thing we can say with certainty about its history is that the horn must have been kept in safe custody during the many centuries of its existence, for an object like this could

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<sup>4)</sup> Fr. Bock und M. Willemsen, *Die mittelalterlichen Kunst- und Reliquienschatze zu Maestricht aufbewahrt in den ehemaligen Stiftskirchen des H. Servatius und Unserer Lieben Frau*, 1872. A French and a Dutch edition of the work appeared later.

<sup>5)</sup> They are mentioned in the Appendix of the French edition: *Antiquités sacrées dans les anciennes collégiales de St. Servais et de Notre-Dame à Maestricht*, p. LXXIX, 2 and p. LXXX.

<sup>6)</sup> Van Nispen tot Sevenaer, *Monumenten van Geschiedenis en Kunst in de Provincie Limburg*, I, 4, 1938, p. 554 and figs. 523, 524.

not be roughly or carelessly treated without suffering great damage.

The question we now come to is: how many centuries has it seen pass by? The sole indication we have in this matter must come from the ornament on the mountings, for as a work of art it stands more or less alone and we have very little to compare it with.

The decoration consists of three heterogeneous elements. Parts of the mounts show antithetical groups of fantastic animals (fig. 1). Other plates bear human masks surrounded

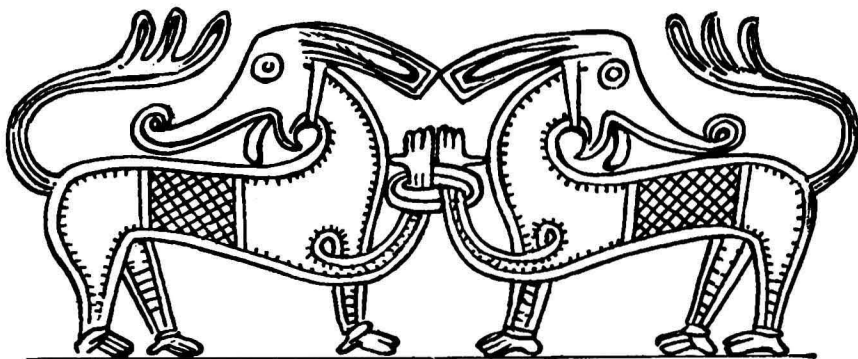


Fig. 1 (enlarged).

by interlacing work, while those towards the tip of the horn are decorated with simple plaits. The combination leaves us almost the whole of the Middle Ages to choose from, for animals, masks and plaits were already popular in Germanic art, and in Romanesque art we still find the same elements, although derived from a completely different source. The animals, however, show certain features which from the first rule out the Romanesque period: they are surrounded by a double contour line. This settles the date within the limits of the Germanic animal style, which on the continent ended before the Carolingian period, whereas in the Scandinavian countries

it survived until the very end of the Viking age<sup>6)</sup>. For a more exact dating we must look again at the animal motives. The creatures are, comparatively speaking, realistic, that is to say, they are not dismembered as they used to be in the first period of the Germanic animal style, the so-called Style I, nor are they reduced to a head and a ribbon-like body, as was the fashion during the later period of the continental style, which is referred to as Style II. Now for a short period there existed complete animals, and even antithetic groups of them, at the very beginning of Style I, but at that time inter-lacing work was still unknown to the art of the migration period. Therefore it is impossible to attribute the ornament to either period of the continental style of the early Middle Ages and we have to look towards the north. The fantastic animals show certain features which were only in fashion during a definite period of Scandinavian art history. In some places the inner contours show a fringe of little side lines, in others the space between them is filled with hatched lines, forming a pattern on the body. The first peculiarity is already known in the 8th century, when in Scandinavia the Vendel style (also called Style III) was flourishing, and it can still be seen on the early products of the Ringerike style of the 11th century<sup>7)</sup>. The latter trait, namely that the body of the animal is decorated with some pattern or other between the inner contour lines, was known to early Viking art<sup>8)</sup>, and it was especially

<sup>6)</sup> Towards the end of the Viking period the inner contour lines fell into disuse; in the Urnes style they have completely disappeared.

<sup>7)</sup> Salin, *Altgerm. Thierornamentik*, 1904, p. 279, figs. 609, 610; *Osebergfundet*, III, p. 251, fig. 259; p. 252, fig. 261; p. 286, fig. 292; *Archaeologia Hungarica*, XII, 1933, p. 11, fig. 1; p. 29, fig. 8; *Viking*, II, 1938, pl. XV; Gustafson, *Norges Oldtid*, p. 96, fig. 393; p. 129, fig. 502; *London Museum Catal. I, London and the Vikings*, 1927, p. 21, fig. 5 A, B; *Eurasia*, 1938, p. 221, fig. 7.

<sup>8)</sup> *Osebergfundet*, III, p. 14, fig. 6; p. 15, fig. 7; p. 17, fig. 12; pl. IX.

popular during the Jellinge period, which began in the latter half of the 9th century and died out towards the end of the 10th<sup>9)</sup>.

This leaves us a period beginning about the year 800 and ending about 1000 A.D. But the type of animal cannot possibly be attributed to early Viking art, for in the first half of the 9th century quadrupeds were far more fantastic and unreal than these are. So there remains only the period of the Jellinge style, during which, indeed, antithetic groups of animals were not uncommon. As this style ended in extremely complicated floral patterns and interlacing work, of which our designs are still almost free, it follows that the horn must fall in the early Jellinge period.

Of course one would like to be able to connect the object with the residence of the Vikings in the Low Countries. Geographically speaking this would be very easy. In the year 882 the Vikings settled at Elsloo on the river Maas, some six miles north of Maastricht. They remained there probably until 892, when the bulk of the Viking army left the continent on account of the famine that had broken out<sup>10)</sup>. At Utrecht, however, they stayed for at least another twenty years, and raids took place all the time.

Now could the horn have belonged to one of the Vikings of the fortified camp at Elsloo? That is to say, dare we put the horn, which, as we shall see, shows traces of use, before the year 890? Scandinavian scholars often believe that the Jellinge style started already in the latter half of the 9th century<sup>11)</sup>,

<sup>9)</sup> *Arch. Hung.*, XII, 1933, pl. II, 5; pl. III, 3; *Acta arch.*, 1932, p. 91, fig. 63; Kermode, *Manx Crosses*, p. 57, figs. 14—16; *Osebergfundet*, III, p. 305, fig. 316.

<sup>10)</sup> Vogel, *Die Normannen und das Fränkische Reich*, p. 281, p. 370 ff., p. 400.

<sup>11)</sup> Brøndsted, *Early English Ornament*, 1924, p. 185; *Aarbøger*, 1920, p. 214. There are others, however, who put the beginning of this style at about 900 A. D.; see for instance P. Paulsen, *Studien zur Wikingerkultur*, p. 75; Åberg, *Fornvännen*, 1921, p. 65.

but we must add that very little is known about the Jellinge art of the 9th century. Personally I should hesitate to place the horn before 890, for such parallels as we have for its features all date from the 10th century.

Before discussing some details in the ornament, I shall say a few words about the technique, which, with regard to the period, corroborates the evidence given by the motives. The decoration of the mounts has not been engraved: it has been punched into the metal by means of a die. Of some plates which form an exception I shall speak further on. The mounts are fastened to the horn by means of nails with big domed heads the points of which are bent back on the inside. The nails are placed in seven rows and they form an ornament in themselves. The holes through which the nails had to pass were made with a drill, as can be seen in one place where the craftsman made a false start.

The material of the mounts is, according to Mr. Brom, lead covered with thin silver foil. The Scandinavians seem to have been fond of silver, but apparently they had to be economical with it, for even on the helmets of rich chieftains we see that the bronze mounts were only covered with a very thin layer of this material<sup>12)</sup>. The special combination of lead and silver is known from the Jellinge period. Mr. Brøndsted describes some buttons found in a Danish Viking grave of about the middle of the 10th century: they consist of a leaden body on which thin sheet silver with an impressed ornament has been fixed<sup>13)</sup>. Mr. Brøndsted says that the silver and the lead or, in other cases, the iron, have been glued together with a kind of metal cement of unknown composition. In our case, however, the technique employed must have been different. Mr. Brom told me that in the many places where the silver had disappeared the pattern stood out in the lead, and there was

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<sup>12)</sup> *Acta arch.*, 1934, p. 246; *Fornvännen*, 1908, p. 211.

<sup>13)</sup> *Acta arch.*, 1936, p. 163, p. 162.

no trace of cement. Therefore he thinks it likely that strips of silver and of lead were put the one on the other and subsequently stamped with a die when heated, so as to become one plate in the process.

The plates that adorn the broad end of the horn are not of a length that is well adapted to its width. When we look at it from the side, it would seem as if this mounting consisted of a single strip of metal wound several times round the horn. As a matter of fact, the strips are not even long enough to cover half the circumference; they join on both the upper and the under side of the horn, and they join badly, so that odd pieces of the same material had to be inserted in order to fill the gaps (pl. III B).

With regard to the plates that show the human masks we can see clearly that they were of a fixed length: they show a narrow border not only along the long sides, but also at each end. The length of the only one that is entire is 12.3 cm. Those decorated with animals do not seem to have had any special finish at the ends; the corner animals, however, can be recognised by the fact that their tail is not slung through that of their neighbour (cf. pl. III B).

Because of their shortness Mr. Hougen thinks that the plates were originally made for "an object other than the horn", "an object quite different"<sup>14)</sup>. I agree with him that they were not made for this horn, but I do not believe that they were specially made for another object; they were simply the decorative material which the armourer or whoever it was used when he wanted to adorn his products and which he bought by the dozen from some other craftsman. This becomes clear when we look at other instances in which objects have been decorated with pressed sheet metal. In Scandinavia this decoration was already popular long before the Viking period, and the beautiful helmet from grave 6 of the famous Valsgärde

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<sup>14)</sup> Hougen, *An Anglo-Nordic Drinking Horn*, p. 6 f.



cemetery shows better than anything else how carelessly the artist sometimes worked with regard to the mounting of his ornamental plates, although the artist who cut the die seems always to have taken great pains with his work<sup>15)</sup>. The maker of the helmet had at his disposal only plates of a given length; in order to ornament the border of the helmet he had to use several pieces instead of one or two, as would have been much better. When he wanted a broad band of ornament across the crown of the head, he joined a narrow strip of metal to a somewhat broader one, instead of ordering one of the required width. Then there was the front part of the helmet he wished to decorate; it forms a half circle just above the brows. For this purpose the same rectangular plates had to serve, although their shape and size agreed badly with the available space. When afterwards the decoration had suffered some damage it was mended with a piece of quite a different width and design. Of another helmet from the same cemetery the nose-guard has been covered with pressed sheet bronze. We should expect a single plate made expressly for this conspicuous place. The helmet-maker, however, used three pieces, one above the other<sup>16)</sup>. It is true that some of the helmets from the Vendel cemetery were made with more care, but even then the scenes with human figures that surmount the eyeguards have been cut through by the metal brows<sup>17)</sup>. So evidently the pressed sheet material was not made to order; it was bought ready-made from special artists. As far as we know, the length of the strips varied between 8 and 14 cm.<sup>18)</sup>.

Of the mounts that encircle the horn at the narrow end there is not much to say. Those in the middle and that at the

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<sup>15)</sup> *Acta arch.*, 1933, p. 26 ff. and pl. VI, VII.

<sup>16)</sup> *Acta arch.*, 1934, pl. XI and p. 246.

<sup>17)</sup> *Fornvännen*, 1925, p. 191, fig. 93; p. 192, fig. 95; p. 193, fig. 96.

<sup>18)</sup> *Acta arch.*, 1934, p. 248, 252.

tip have the same pattern, namely a pair of parallel plaits. The mount just above the tip is in one piece; the band in the middle consists of four pieces, two of which represent a later repair.

Of the triangular plates I shall speak presently.

Decoration by means of pressed sheet metal was known throughout the migration period; its popularity even started before that time, as some pieces of armour from the 4th century testify<sup>18)</sup>. Probably the technique came from the Pontic regions<sup>19)</sup>, for already in Scythian art metal plates with stamped designs are frequent. It is curious to see that from the earliest period<sup>20)</sup> down to the Viking age big domed nail-heads accompany the pressed sheet technique; they probably had to protect the thin metal while serving at the same time as an ornament. At any rate they bear witness to the continuity of the tradition.

It is, as far as I know, only in the Scandinavian countries that plates with pressed designs were fixed on objects for which they were not expressly made, where they were used, so to speak, as raw material for decoration. This way of using them was, as we have seen, already known long before the Viking age, for the earliest helmets ornamented in this way date from the 6th century. It was still in fashion during the Jellinge period. So, for instance, in a Danish grave coming from the cemetery of Stengade, of the middle of the 10th century, strips of silver have been found that were decorated with four simple plaits side by side<sup>21)</sup>. They had been fastened on wood by means of nails with big heads. Two other such

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<sup>18)</sup> Fettich, *Der Schildbuckel von Herpály*, *Acta arch.*, 1930, p. 227, 236.

<sup>19)</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 249, 251; Kossina, *Mannus*, Erg. Band IV, 1925, p. 30.

<sup>20)</sup> Compare for instance Borovka, *Scythian Art*, pl. 20A; *Acta arch.*, 1930, p. 257, fig. 21.

<sup>21)</sup> *Acta arch.*, 1936, p. 163, fig. 72.

plaits are toothed on one edge, so that they resemble on a small scale the mounts plus the triangular plates that surround our horn in the middle.

In the Mammen cemetery of about the same date bronze mounts of the same type have been found. Some of these belonged to collar harnesses, others to a wooden casket<sup>22)</sup>. Of the latter Brøndsted says: "when the casket had to be ornamented they apparently were to hand in the form of large plates; these were cut as required without regard to the pattern". They are later in date than our mounts, for their designs are extremely complicated: they show a profusion of intertwined animals and ribbons, and part of the design is even executed in open work. The human mask is also among the motives. The key-hole plate of the casket has a triangular form, but its decoration is nothing but a very simple geometric pattern.

From these finds we see that the decoration with ready-made metal strips into which the ornament has been punched was very well known in the Jellinge period, and certain details remind us of the mounts of our drinking horn. I know of no instance that is later than the Jellinge period.

With regard to the mounts another point is to be noted. Their surface is corroded in many places; the strips with the animals have suffered the least, but only a certain number of the triangular mounts are completely intact. Besides the corrosion some of the plates also show traces of wear. When we look at pl. III B we see that on the left side of the joints the two strips with the masks have their pattern almost entirely rubbed off, while from those just underneath two fragments have entirely disappeared. One of the holes has been repaired by means of a small piece of metal that has been inserted underneath. Now when we examine the triangular pieces we see that those that look new are executed in a different

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<sup>22)</sup> Op cit., pl. I and p. 104 f.

technique from the rest of the mounts: their pattern seems to have been chased instead of stamped. Unfortunately all the others are very much corroded, so that their decoration is almost invisible, but to judge from the one that is best preserved we should say that their patterns had been pressed into the metal, and that they are executed in the same style as the plates that bear the human masks, while the others give a somewhat different impression. This would imply that the new ones are a later addition, not only executed in another technique, but also in another alloy that has better withstood the effects of time<sup>23</sup>). Apparently the horn has been used for quite a long time; when it had to be repaired the man who had to do it lacked the ready-made material and so he had to fashion the new mounts by hand. Besides six new triangles he also put in two new fragments in the circular band near the middle of the horn; in a very careless way he scratched some lines on them which from a distance might be taken for a plait.

All the places where either the design has been rubbed off or repairs have been made are with only one exception found on the under side of the horn. I have held the vessel with both hands as a man who drank from it would hold it and then I saw that all the places were those in which the drinker was most likely to touch the horn. He would support the heavy vessel with the palm of his right hand, and here it is that the pattern was worn away and that three triangles had evidently suffered beyond repair. His left hand, with which he would gradually lift the horn while drinking, would hold it in the identical place where two new triangles and two new strips of metal have been put on. The new triangle on the

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<sup>23</sup>) Mr Hougen speaks on p. 7 of the triangular plates as if they all belonged to the same group, but even on the photographs the difference between new and old can be seen; cf. pl. III A and pl. IV A.

opposite side could be accounted for by the pressure of the drinker's left thumb. As the numerous nail-heads prevented the horn from touching the surface on which it might be put, I think this is the only possible explanation of the repairs the horn had to undergo, and a perfectly natural one at that.

It is difficult to guess how long it must have been in use. Much depends on the drinking habits of its owner. If, for instance, this horn went from hand to hand at every meal, it would not take long before the soft metal got much worn. If, on the other hand, it was only the owner himself who used it on special occasions it would be many years before repairs were necessary.

Although various features of the horn can easily be paralleled on Scandinavian work of the Jellinge period, it none the less presents us with some problems. Hougen says that its details: "show the most striking harmony with the caskets from Bamberg and Cammin", two well-known works of art of which pl. V shows the first-named seen from above<sup>24</sup>). To the casual observer the resemblance will probably be less striking than to the scholar. He will, of course, not fail to see the human mask and the antithetic group of two backward-looking animals whose tails end in a trefoil. But he will not see much connection between the style of the caskets, every space of whose panels is occupied by interlacing and foliage, and that of our mounts, on which all these added motives are lacking. Even the animals themselves are very different in type, notwithstanding the points of resemblance referred to above. The curious thing is that those of other works in Jellinge style do not show a much stronger likeness to ours: they are indeed unusual. Let us first examine them more closely. They are looking back with open mouth; from their gaping jaws the tongue is seen protruding.

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<sup>24</sup>) Good photographs of different views of these caskets are to be found in Goldschmidt, *Elfenbeinskulpturen*, II, pl. 62 a, 63 c, 64 d, e, 66 c, 67 h, 68 k, 68 m.

The upper jaw is very long; it reaches over the greater part of the back, and it finishes in a little spiral. The other jaw occupies the small space that is left between the head and the neck of the animal. The eye is round and big, and from the back of the head hangs a kind of crest. The ears are not indicated, but just behind the head a collar has been placed vertically (fig. 2a). Now the crest and the protruding tongue can be paralleled by many other examples from the Jellinge style, although as a rule they are shaped differently. But the type of head is unusual: the Jellinge head is generally short and more lion-like. Mr. Hougen has also remarked upon this, saying: "(the heads) are shaped in a manner quite unknown to Nordic art".



Fig. 2a.



Fig. 2b.



Fig. 2c.

I do not completely agree with him: they remind me very strongly of the "biting heads" that occur on Scandinavian fibulae from the early migration period: they have the same long upper jaw that often ends in a little spiral, and the same short under jaw for which the design does not leave much space (fig. 2b)<sup>25</sup>). The fibulae with the biting heads, however, were by that time already a thing of the remote past, and therefore it might seem rash to draw a parallel between them and our queer creatures. There are, however,

<sup>25</sup>) Salin, *Altgerm. Thierornamentik*, p. 39, fig. 89-91; p. 48, fig. 105; p. 49, fig. 106; p. 54, fig. 118.

indications that this type of head did not completely disappear as an ornamental motive in the centuries that followed.

Among the Oseberg finds were wooden boards ending in animal heads that have the same long and upturned upper jaw, although already at that time animal heads were short and round <sup>26)</sup>. Shetelig concluded that the old tradition was still living in the days of the older Oseberg style, but that it was lost in the younger style, when beautiful lion heads had taken the place of the long-shaped heads <sup>27)</sup>. Who knows, however, what ancient forms may have lived on in certain districts, or in certain industries?

In this connection I should like to call attention to a type of animal head used on a couple of Scandinavian pins that have been published by Prof. Arne <sup>28)</sup>. Its snout, though not so long as that of our animals, has the same open jaws ending in spirals, it has the same protruding tongue and round eye. It has no crest, but it has a vertical collar placed just behind the ears (fig. 2c). The date of these pins is indicated by another element in their decoration, namely, the little animal heads seen from the front; these are also known from one of the Vendel graves which is dated by a coin to about the middle of the 10th century <sup>29)</sup>.

The legs of the animals are also rather unusual; those that stand on the ground are very stiff, while the one that is lifted up shows a rubber-like elasticity. The uplifted legs of two confronting animals are united by means of a circular band; their claws resemble a human hand, for they are provided with a thumb (this has erroneously been omitted in the drawing published by Mr. Hougen). The tails of the beasts are long and they end in a kind of trefoil; this is the only trait that

<sup>26)</sup> *Osebergfundet*, III, pl. VII.

<sup>27)</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 50, p. 211.

<sup>28)</sup> Arne, *La Suède et l'Orient*, Archives d'Etudes Orientales, vol. 8, 1914, p. 112, figs. 90, 91.

<sup>29)</sup> Stolpe och Arne, *Gräffältet vid Vendel*, pl. XXV, 8 and. p. 59.

goes in the direction of the Jellinge floral ornament<sup>30</sup>). The tail of each animal passes through that of its back neighbour.

All things considered, the border of antithetic groups shows several unusual particularities, but than it is one of the features of the Jellinge style that it shows so many different aspects.

There is one question we might ask with regard to the analogy between the Jellinge caskets and our animal design. Is perhaps the loop surrounded by a circle that can be seen between the antithetic animals at the bottom of pl. V a faint reminiscence of the two united forefeet of our animals? I should not wonder if this were the case.

There is one important thing about which we still have to speak. The mounting of the horn is very peculiar. First there is the big end, of which the larger part has been covered with metal. This part ends in a row of triangular plates that show human masks. Next comes a circle of metal round the horn from which the same triangles go out in both directions. The original end-piece is lost, but the strip of metal just above it is preserved; there are no triangles here.

Mr. Hougen knew of only one parallel for the mounts, namely the big horn from the Taplow grave, one of the most famous finds among Anglo-Saxon antiquities in England<sup>31</sup>). This horn has a highly ornamented silver mouthpiece from which triangles project in the direction of the tip; they are decorated with animals in Style I. The tip has a long ferrule that is cast in one piece. The only point of resemblance is the row of triangular projections along the mouthpiece, but

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<sup>30</sup>) Tails ending in a trefoil can also be seen in Irish art, from which the Jellinge style is said to have derived its animals; compare *Art in the Dark Ages in Europe*, Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1930, pl. XIII and p. 61.

<sup>31</sup>) *Victoria County History, Bucks*, I, p. 199 ff; Kendrick, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 1938, pl. XXXV. The barrow dates from the 6th century.



they are one with the rim, whereas on our horn they are separate pieces of metal.

Yet it is true that if one looks for an early mediaeval drinking horn in a tolerable state of preservation, the big Taplow horn is the only one that offers itself for comparison. If on the other hand we look out for triangular mounts of drinking vessels in general, we see that they are common enough and that several of them show the same device as the corresponding plates on our horn. Let us begin with the other finds from the Taplow grave. Among them are the remains of three smaller drinking horns; of each the mouthpiece and the ferrule has been preserved, together with a number of separate metal triangles. Of the latter, which show a nail hole at their point, and of which the opposite side must have been held in place by the edge of the mouthpiece, some sixteen bear the impression of a human face with the hair parted in the middle<sup>32</sup>). They must have belonged to two horns; the third had plates decorated in Style II. It is, therefore, not so much the well-preserved horn that offers the best analogies as two of the others of which only the mounts remain.

Other horns mounted with triangular plates have recently been found in the Sutton Hoo barrow; up to now only three pieces of their mounts have been published, of which two are triangles<sup>33</sup>).

Then there have been found similar mounts of which it is unknown what type of vessel they decorated. Fig. 3 shows one from Dover in the British Museum; it differs from the Taplow mounts in that the hair above the face is not parted in the middle but standing erect. Mr. Kendrick published another of these stray mounts; its muddled design must also have been

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<sup>32</sup>) Åberg, *The Anglo-Saxons in England*, 1926, p. 3, fig. 1, 4; *Ipek*, 1934, pl. 25, XIII.

<sup>33</sup>) *Brit. Mus. Quarterly*, 1939, p. 130, fig. 2; *Antiquity*, 1940, p. 73, fig. 6.

meant for a human face, for two hands are visible underneath<sup>34</sup>). The plates do not necessarily come from horns, for there was another type of vessel that used to be mounted with bronze, namely the wooden bucket. Throughout the migration period these were used frequently; often they are quite small, so that they can only be explained as drinking vessels. The



Fig. 3.

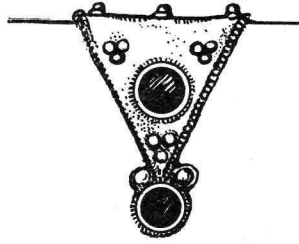


Fig. 4.

fact that they are provided with a handle has nothing to astonish us in this connection, for the early drinking horns are generally provided with a chain<sup>35</sup>); probably the guest had to bring his own cup when he went to a banquet and so there had to be something to carry it by. Now already in late classical days some of these buckets were mounted with a row of triangular plates just below the rim; sometimes these are in one piece with the rim but in most cases they are separate pieces of bronze<sup>36</sup>). Although the bronze-mounted wooden

<sup>34</sup>) *Ipek*, 1934, pl. 24, 3, iv; it was found at Caenby, Lincs.

<sup>35</sup>) See for instance Montelius, *Antiquités suédoises*, p. 114, fig. 381; *Präh. Ztschr.*, 1912, p. 144, fig. 11; *Fornvännen*, 1924, p. 94, fig. 5.

<sup>36</sup>) For early instances see Boulanger, *Mobilier funéraire gallo-romain et franc*, p. 106; Baldwin Brown, *Arts in Early England*, IV, 1915, pl. CXIII, 5 (p. 464).

bucket was known over a large area, it was apparently only in the Anglo-Saxon and the Frankish territory that they were decorated in this peculiar way. In some cases the bronze triangles are left plain, in others some design or other has been pressed into them<sup>37)</sup>. In the west of Germany two buckets have been found of which the triangles show human masks: the one comes from Wiesbaden<sup>38)</sup>, the other, which is dated from the end of the 6th century, was found at Soest<sup>39)</sup>. The type of face of the latter shows a distinct relation to that of fig. 3, though it is even more schematic.

In some instances the point of the triangle ends in a circle<sup>40)</sup>. If we look at the horn we see a possible explanation: on the more costly examples of the same vessel the point may have been fixed with a big semispherical nail-head, that served at the same time a practical and an ornamental purpose. In our case there are even three nails at the end of each triangle. Curiously enough we see the same feature on some drinking vessels from the very beginning of the migration period: the three gold cups that belong to the second treasure of Szilágy Somlyó are also embellished with triangular panels along the rim<sup>41)</sup>, and they all end in three small circles, two of which contain the rivets, while the third in the middle contains a precious stone (fig. 4). The treasure belongs to the end of the 4th century A.D. and according to Fettich the cups were manufactured in the south of Russia<sup>42)</sup>.

<sup>37)</sup> Abbé Cochet, *La Normandie souterraine*<sup>2</sup>, 1855, p. 395; Akerman, *Remains of Pagan Saxondom*, 1855, p. (2); W. Wylie, *Fairford Graves*, 1852, pl. XII, 6; Baron de Baye, *The Industrial Arts of the Anglo-Saxons*, 1893, pl. XIII.

<sup>38)</sup> Lindenschmit, *Altertümer unserer heidnischen Vorzeit*, III, II, pl. VI.

<sup>39)</sup> J. Werner, *Münzdatierte Austrasische Grabfunde*, 1935, pl. 18, 25.

<sup>40)</sup> *Archaeologia*, 38, 1860, p. 87, pl. XVIII, and p. 351.

<sup>41)</sup> *Arch. Hung.*, VIII, 1932, pl. XXVIII, XXXI.

<sup>42)</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 66.

The fashion of decorating a vessel by means of three-cornered plates that were attached just under the rim has persisted for many centuries. At Hexham in Northumberland a bucket has been found that contained thousands of 9th-century coins <sup>43</sup>). It is completely made of bronze; none the less just under the rim a series of small triangular panels has been applied, their points being riveted to the bronze. They are ornamented with a plait. Very curious also are a couple of lead cauldrons found in Cambridgeshire, and supposed to date from the 10th or from the 11th century <sup>44</sup>). On these the ornamental triangular panels round the mouth are cast in one piece with the vessel itself; each one shows a plait and ends in a big circle. The old tradition seems to have been extremely strong.

From the youngest examples one might conclude that the fashion survived in England longer than anywhere else. This is not true. In Russia, at Tschernigov, the remains of a drinking horn were found that was mounted with a silver mouthpiece and silver triangles <sup>45</sup>). The latter are decorated with a floral design, the former shows a curious mixture of oriental motives and Scandinavian influences from the Jellinge period.

It is perhaps possible to pursue the device back to its original source. I have already spoken about the cups found at Szilágy Somlyó. Fettich brought them into connection with the numerous Scythian gold plaques that are frequently explained as mounts of horns or wooden drinking vessels <sup>46</sup>). These are roughly triangular in shape and along the border they show a row of nail holes <sup>47</sup>). They are rather big, so that each horn would

<sup>43</sup>) *Archaeologia*, 25, 1834, pl. XXXIII, and p. 279 f.

<sup>44</sup>) C. Fox, *Archaeology of the Cambridge Region*, 1923, pl. XXXV, 3 and. p. 300.

<sup>45</sup>) *Arch. Ertésítő*, 1931, p. 62, fig. 39a, and p. 314.

<sup>46</sup>) *Arch. Hung.*, XXI, 1937, p. 163, 6.

<sup>47</sup>) Borovka, *Scythian Art*, pl. 20A; Minns, *Scythians and Greeks*, p. 209, fig. 108; p. 211, fig. 111, 112; p. 213, fig. 114; p. 219, fig. 123. Minns sometimes calls them 'quivertops'.

hardly have room for more than three or four of them; all the same they embody the same idea as our small triangles do, and they are ornamented in the same technique. So probably the device came from southern Russia, like so many other techniques, forms and motives that were current in the Germanic world.

Mr. Hougen, while considering the horn as a product of the Jellinge style, as we do, thinks it was made in England, for the following reasons. In the first place he had in mind the big Taplow horn, which was the only analogy he knew for the ornamental triangles among the mounts of the horn. In the second place he makes a point out of the absence of thigh spirals on the body of the animals, which, he argues, may be lacking in England but are always present on Scandinavian work of the period. We have seen that the first argument does not hold, for we have been able to point out various instances of the same decoration on the continent, of which the youngest was even roughly contemporary with our horn, and of semi-Scandinavian origin. As to the second argument, I think it is hardly true: Scandinavian animals of the Jellinge style sometimes had to do without thigh spirals as well <sup>48</sup>).

Therefore I see no reason for accepting an English origin for the object; a Danish origin would perhaps be more likely, as there are some analogies that point in that direction. The only Danish drinking horn mount in Jellinge style we know of is, however, completely different from ours and throws no light on the problem <sup>49</sup>).

We can see the horn as the last product of a very long tradition in drinking vessels, as a connection with a remote past from which it was separated by more than a thousand years. But there is also another way of looking at it. The

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<sup>48</sup>) For instance *Fornvännen*, 1921, p. 67, fig. 2; *Acta arch.* III, p. 273, fig. 15.

<sup>49</sup>) *Aarbøger for nordisk Oldkyndighed*, 1900, p. 196, 197.

tradition did not break off with the Jellinge period. It is true that the Church was for a long time opposed to the use of animal horns that reminded men of the old pagan feasts and ceremonies in which these vessels played a great part. At the same time fashions changed in accordance with continental customs. And so we hear that King Harald Hardrade († 1066) and his court were still accustomed to drink from horns, while his successor introduced cups<sup>50)</sup>. All the same, the horns cannot have fallen completely into disuse. On a 13th-century fresco in a Danish church we see one represented<sup>51)</sup>, and in the following centuries they even gained an immense popularity, especially in the Scandinavian countries. Of these later horns

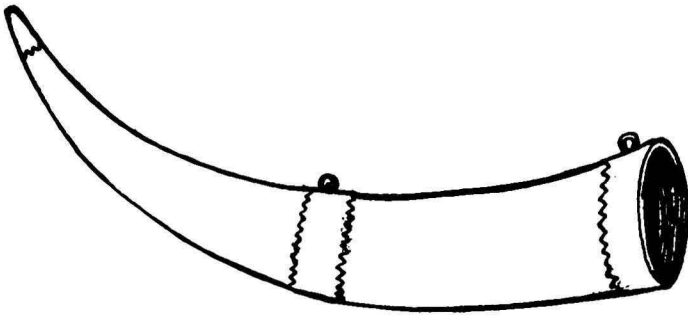


Fig. 5.

many remain. They are mounted with a mouthpiece and a ferrule, while in many cases a metal ring encircles them in the middle. It is true that this ring has often been used to fix a pair of legs on, so that the horn could be put down when required<sup>52)</sup>. But as this is not always the case<sup>53)</sup> I think the legs are secondary and the ring primary, that it was, in fact,

<sup>50)</sup> *Heimskringla*, Olaf Kyrres Saga, chap. 3.

<sup>51)</sup> J. Olrik, *Drikkehorn og Sølvtøj*, p. 2.

<sup>52)</sup> Op cit. p. 3, figs. 3, 4; p. 4 figs. 6, 7; p. 5, fig. 8, etc.

<sup>53)</sup> Op. cit., p. 20, figs. 13, 14; p. 24, fig. 21; p. 25, fig. 23.

part of a tradition of which our horn is the first known example: that of encircling the middle of the horn with a metal mount. Fig. 5 shows an English drinking horn of the 16th century <sup>54</sup>); the toothed edge of its mounts may still be a reminiscence of the triangular plates that adorned the ancient horns.

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<sup>54</sup>) *Archaeologia*, 3, 1775, fig. 1 (opposite p. 1).





PLATE I.



PLATE II.



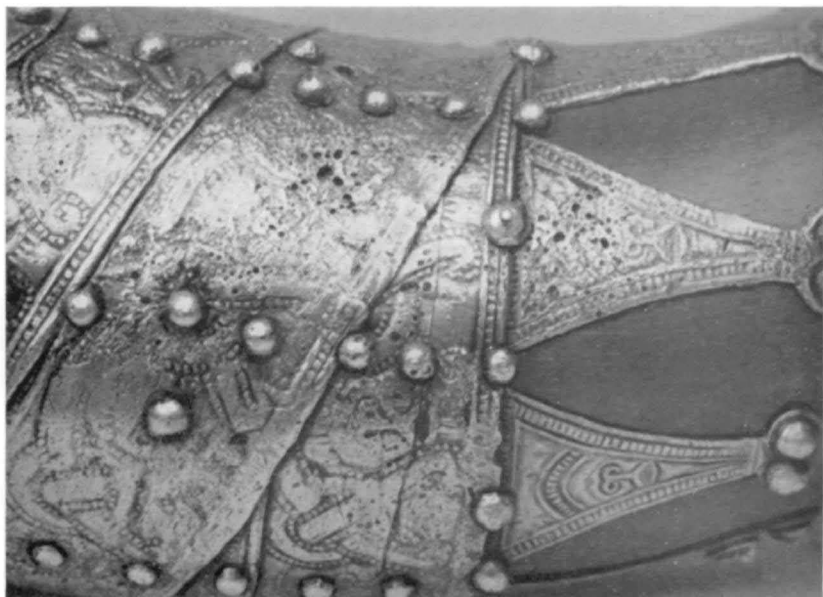


A



B

PLATE IV.



A



B

PLATE V.

