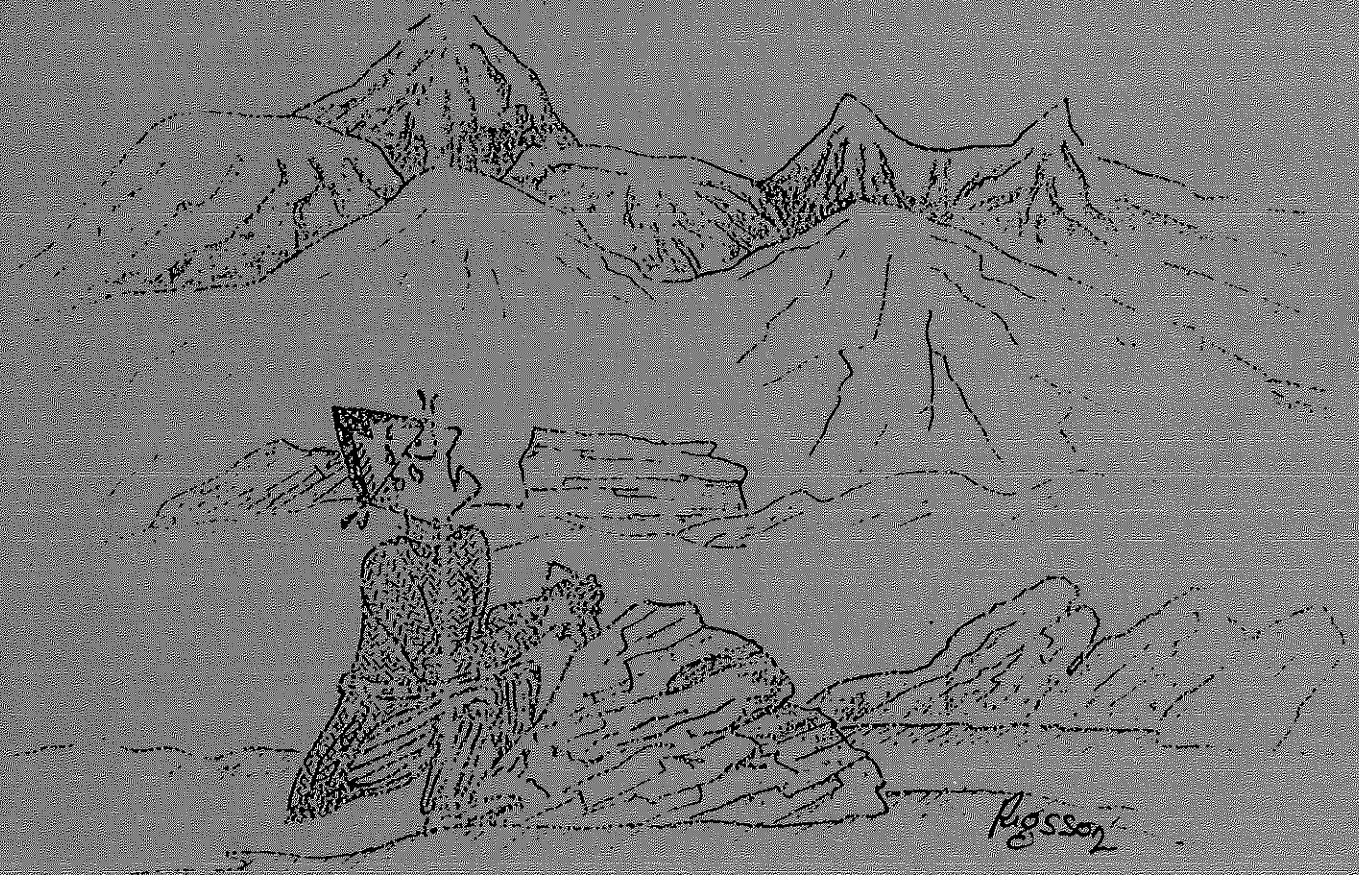
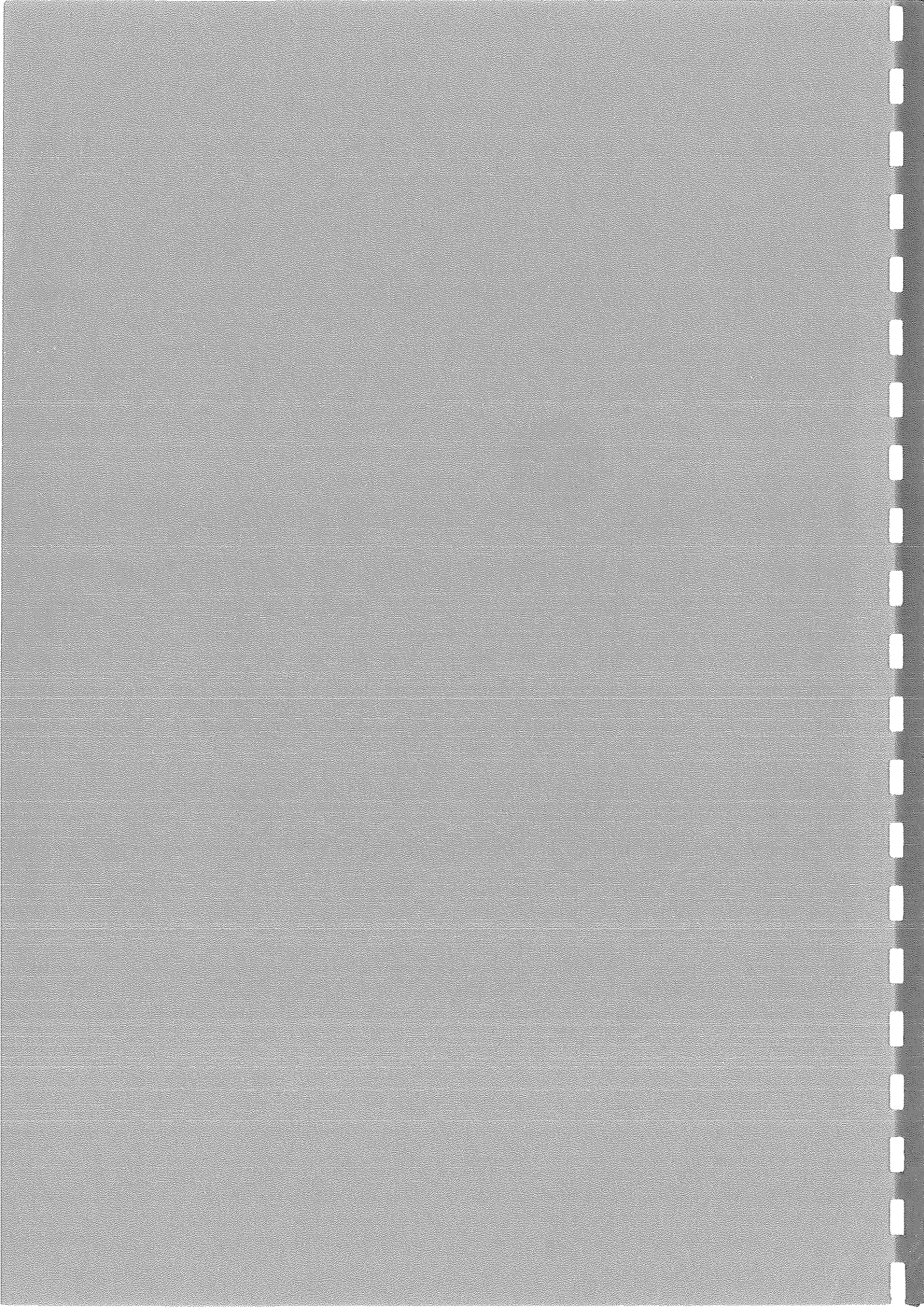


Unsheathing
the Dark Age
Scabbard.



The Medieval Scabbard
in Manuscript Art
and Archaeological Finds.
By Russell Scott.



UNSHEATHING THE DARK AGE SCABBARD

This article was primarily intended to answer the question: "what did the dark age scabbard look like?" and to enable re-enactors to construct such an authentic looking dark age scabbard.

There have been so many sword blades found from this period in history that a whole typology of swords has been devised. The same cannot be said for their scabbards, very few of which now exist. Assuming each sword had a scabbard (the viability of this is discussed below) we should be able to discover what they looked like. In fact, more scabbards are illustrated than has been previously given credit for. As a consequence, this article was to answer the question in the form of a picture gallery of different scabbards, some 50 or so, which have been collected to date.

It was soon realised that such an illustrative guide, would be meaningless without adding a section on the scabbard fittings found in the archaeological record. Further, the whole article would be rather pointless without some attempt to interpret these illustrations. For example, what elements in the artwork represented fittings and which was decorative.

Secondly, in what way then, was the scabbard hung from the body? Many of the illustrations are either vague, ambiguous or even the subject of artistic convention. In several manuscripts sword blades have their importance emphasized by scaling them up to be larger than their accompanying scabbard!

As a result of this enquiry, several different methods of hanging the scabbards have been experimentally manufactured. Thus, the feasibility of each manuscript interpretation has been assessed. At the end of the day however, we can only say for example; that a particular design, based on a certain manuscript, works in practice but that whether it was actually done that way, we will never know for certain.

A note on terminology.

Throughout this work the term 'scabbard' refers to the composite object designed for protecting sword blades. A scabbard usually comprises of two wooden laths of wood, lined with organic material such as wool, consolidated by a outer skin of leather and has some form of attachments to permit the scabbard to be hung from the body.

The term 'sheath' is used in this work only to describe the outer leather skin of the scabbard, or to describe the single leather protective outer associated with dark age knives or 'saxes'.

A note on sources.

The illustrations of scabbards in this work are taken from contemporary wall carvings in stone and wood, wall paintings, ivory chessmen, tapestries, manuscripts as well as other carvings in relief, and a few actual finds. They are mainly from England

and Carolingian Europe, with a few from the Byzantine. There is unfortunately very little illustrated from the Viking homelands. All the illustrations date to between the C9th. and C12th. with a couple of exceptions from the C13th. & C15th. Some 50 illustrations are referred to, from which a wealth of mostly previously unpublished material can be extracted.

Throughout this work, illustrations are always denoted within [square brackets], whilst references are always in (parenthesis).

A note on interpreting the source material

As well as a diversity of source material, we have to contend with artists interpretation and conventions within the illustrations. The artist may have been a cleric, rarely used to seeing scabbards and with no familiarity as to the technicalities of how they were slung. How far we can rely on each depiction is a matter for debate, that may never be resolved.

A good example of how these early artists can mislead us is found in the manuscript called 'Cotton Tiberius C. VI folio 9' (illustration [8D]). Here a warrior is depicted as wearing the sword on the left (as usual) but with the baldric under the right arm pit and therefore, presumably over the left shoulder. This arrangement does seem to work in practice, but it is totally against the convention of the day and therefore unlikely to have ever been done in reality.

The answer to this puzzle was eventually realised with the discovery of an earlier manuscript.....[] from which the author of the Cotton manuscript copied. Here the warrior is wearing the sword on the left side but the baldric is actually a belt going around the waist. The Cotton illustrator copied the Carolingian warrior of the earlier version, dressed him in Anglo saxon clothes of the period, but drew the sword belt a little higher up on the right hip, giving the impression that it was a baldric going under the arm pit!

A second problem encountered with source material is that is not always easy to get hold of the original manuscript. Modern copies are available, yet these too sometimes contain mistakes. Take for example the Cotton manuscript mentioned above, in the Osprey version (), the warrior has mysteriously gained braid around the shoulders that is absent in the original!

The point about source material has been slightly laboured, for good reason. Partly to caution anyone as to the inherent pitfalls of using this type of information, and partly to lead into the next issue; problems with interpreting what the artist has illustrated. Before we can decide what features were intended to be art, we have to decide what is functional, for example lines that represent fittings and features.

There are so many different illustrations of scabbards that it came as quite a surprise that there are illustrated almost as many different ways of hanging them! For this work to make any real sense a big assumption had to be made; that there are in fact only a few different ways of hanging the scabbard, but for reasons outlined above, many variations are illustrated.

Once this assumption was made a whole diffusionist table of scabbard types was sensibly reduced to a handful of varieties,

which now; at least in part, was able to be backed up with evidence from the archaeological record. Once all the functional aspects of the scabbard are eliminated, any other illustrated lines on the scabbard must represent art.

In the typology below, fittings are examined and therefore eliminated from the artistic spectrum. All variants of each type of scabbard are examined and the relative importance of each is discussed.

WHAT DECORATION WAS APPLIED TO THE SCABBARDS.

As noted before, there are more categories of sword than there are letters to represent them. Is it likely that each sword had its own scabbard? From a re-enactors point of view, the answer must be yes. Rust will appear on sword blades minutes after the lightest shower has fallen. The woollen lining of a scabbard, impregnated with natural oil such as lanolin; will keep rust at bay. A sharp cutting edge will quickly become notched and blunted if not protected from damage. A metal scabbard may cause dulling to a sharp blade edge and so wooden laths of hard wood, are the next obvious choice. One saga tells of a warrior standing on a sword to straighten a blade bent in combat, even the most basic sword was valuable; and so each blade would have had some type of protective reinforcement.

The archaeological record confirms this hypothesis. Where ever scabbards have survived, they have always been composite; wooden lathes encasing a woollen or organic lining, in turn encased by a leather sheath. Occasionally, an intermediary layer of material has been found between the laths and sheath. This material is probably linen and was used to bind the laths together before the application of the leather sheath. The leather would be applied wet, and as it dried it would contract and consolidate the item, bonding it together better than any glue.

Linen has often been found wrapped around the scabbard, this is thought to have been a piece cloth swaddling the sword and scabbard; in turn protecting the sword hilt and leather sheath from damage. Sword hilts were often highly decorated, with inlaid wires of silver and copper alloy. Some were gilded but most were essentially of iron and therefore prone to rust. The linen cloth, rich in linseed oil would protect the hilt and scabbard together.

The sheath itself may have been decorated, certainly the manuscript depictions would bear this out. What we have to decide is how much of the illustrations were composed of lines that were decoration and how much represented something functional.

Manuscripts are composed of lines that represent a three dimensional object on a two dementional medium. Any device featured on a scabbard may either be decorative in its own right, or may be trying to depict something functional, such as a chape. A pit fall here is that the archaeological record is full of objects that illustrate features that may have been a functional part of an earlier object, but is later reduced to an outline in art.

Such a feature is called a skeuomorph and a fairly modern example may be found on the back of some spoons. Here a horseshoe mark is all that exists of the join mark of handle and bowl from

earlier versions. Consequently, we have to consider whether any of the scabbard features were functional items or whether they had been reduced to skeuomorphs!

APPARENT DECORATION ON THE SCABBARDS

1) The lines running the scabbard length.

It would have been too easy in this work to merely describe a recurring distinctive feature of scabbard illustrations as decoration and to leave it at that. In reality, we have to ask the question is that feature actually part of the scabbard its self? A good example of such a feature is a series of parallel lines running centrally the length of the scabbard. These feature in C9th. Fresco in the Oratory of St. Benedict in Rome [2D], to the C10th. Reichenau: Gospel book of Otto III [4B], to C11th. Saxon carving from Ebberston [6B], to the C11th. Byzantine Sicilian chessman [11B], to the C12th. Lewis Chessmen [14C].

The feature is wide spread and diverse and yet may not be artistic at all. Experimental manufacture of scabbards has shown that the easiest way to fit the sheath is to wet it, wrap it round the scabbard and sew the edges together lengthways down the middle. As the scabbard tapers towards the tip, more of the leather is pulled in; this leaves a smooth exterior to the front. The excess leather is trimmed and the edges mushroomed over the stitches, which gives them extra protection. It is thought that scabbards historically, were made in this way, as well as scabbards from other cultures.

The visual effect of stitching the scabbard this way, is a series of parallel lines running the length of the scabbard. So perhaps these lines on the historical depictions are not artistic but actually the seams! This would mean that on some of the scabbards the seam is to the front (St. Benedict Fresco, Lewis Chesspiece) whilst others, the seam is to the rear (Ebberston carving) as can be deduced from the baldric bindings (see below). Perhaps it is just modern taste that relegates seams to the back?

Whatever the dark age taste, there is one scabbard to have survived with decoration. This is C9th./10th. from Cronk Moar in the Isle of Man [C2]. As well as a vertical seam down the back, it has a series of lines incorporated into the patterns at the front. So, bearing in mind the general lack of find evidence it would seem that these lines can be functional or artistic.

Whenever both categories appear together, we automatically get a third, skeuomorphic. The parallel scabbard lines may therefore be for the seam and functional or (as in the case of the Cronk Moar item) skeuomorphic and artistic.

2) The lines across the scabbard tip.

A second distinctive and recurring feature on scabbards, takes the form of a series of close parallel lines near the tip of the scabbard. These appear on the C9th. St. Benedict Fresco

[2D], in the C9th. North French Psalter; now in the Munich Bibliothek [2C], in the C10th. copy of the Carolingian manuscript *Leges Barbarorum* [3A & 3B], in the circa C10th. Utrecht Psalter [2B], to the C11th. Byzantine chesspiece from Sicily [11B].

These lines may be decorative, or they may be trying to illustrate some sort of reenforcement to the scabbard tip. 'Chapes' are the bronze fittings that commonly survive the scabbard in the archaeological record. Not all scabbards had chapes however (the two Manx examples, had none) so perhaps these lines are illustrating some form of reenforcement made out of a perishable material, such as wool, linen or leather. The material could have been bound around the tip and secured in place by nailing. We have seen however, how such features starting off functional end up as art. This feature may also be added to a scabbard (as with the lengthwise parallel lines) either functionally as reenforcement, or skeuomorphically as decoration. See [F1- F2].

Many scabbard chapes have survived, many having a 'Heater' shield shape [B1, B2 & B3]. This shape of chape, only appears in one illustration, the C9th. Carolingian Bible of count Vivian, see [2A] and [F3]. That this type of chape originated amongst the Franks of the Carolingian Empire is plausible, especially when it is remembered that the classic three lobed brooch of the viking women, is thought to have been copied from sword hangings of the Franks. A three lobed strap distributor is depicted in this bible, and a good archaeological example of a complete set of sword fittings, was found in Östra Paboda, Småland in Sweden, see [B6:B] and also [F5].

The other common shape of Chape is rather like a letter 'U'. Two are known in Byzantine art; the C11th. Triptych of the Forty Martyrs in Leningrad [10C], and the C10th. Ivory casket of Armenians in Byzantine employment [4C]. They would be scarcely worth more than a passing comment in this work if it was not for the appearance of a similar object in the C11th. Saxon Ebberston carving [6B], not to mention the appearance of several from grave finds in Birka in Sweden, see [B1:C] and also [F3].

This style of fitting has a long history amongst Germanic art of the pre Viking period. It is arguable that the epitome of this type of object was reached with the two exquisite examples from the St. Ninians Isle hoard in Shetland [B9:A- D]. Made of silver, these chapes are thought to be Pictish or Anglo Saxon, and dated to the C8th. These type of chape must have been known in scandinavia, as suggested by the contemporary gilt bronze fitting that was found in Norway [B9:E & 1A]. The Byzantine examples both suggest continuity and wide spread use, see [F3].

3) The lines at the scabbard mouth.

In many of the scabbard illustrations, a plain line is drawn near to the mouth. However, in some of these, the line probably represents part of the hanging straps; in others, the line may be decorative. Much more likely, is that this feature is illustrating the scabbard mouth piece. Such items are rare archaeologically, and occur numerically less often than chapes.

It is probably safe to assume that on some of the illustrations, the scabbard mouth piece is made from organic

material as suggested for the chapes, above. In the C9th. St. Benedicts Fresco [2D], the mouthpiece is represented by a simple line, as is that in the C11th. Anglo Saxon manuscript Cotton Cleopatra [9C]. The mouth piece in the C9th. North French Psalter [2C] is similar, but appears to have been nailed or riveted in place. The mouth pieces form C11th. Ebberston carving [6B] and that of the C11th. Norman Arras Bible [10B] are more elaborate and may have been cast in bronze, see [F4].

Of the surviving scabbard mouthpieces, none is identical to those in the illustrated drawings. However, the Anglo Danish mouthpiece from Dybeck in Skåne [B4:A], vaguely resembles that from the Arras Bible, as does an C11th. example from Foščerataja in the Ukraine [B4:B]. A second mouthpiece from C10th. Essen minster in Germany appears to be nailed or riveted in place [B4:C] (likewise with that in the North French Psalter) but more significantly; it appears to be identical to that illustrated in a C13th. Fresco in the church of Incoronati in Rome [15A], suggesting possible widespread use, see [F4].

Some of the scabbards in the illustrative record feature upwards curving lines near the scabbard mouth. These pose special problems of their own. For example is the artist trying to represent a scabbard with a rounded end [] or a scabbard with a flattened end drawn obliquely to show the hole for the sword blade? [] There were no universal rules for artistic conventions, in this period, also sword fittings changed shape and this was reflected in the shape of the scabbard mouth.

Up until the C8th. Saxon sword cross guards were usually straight [] but in the C9th. curved cross guards began to appear []. This was adopted by the vikings, about a century later. Sword fittings consist of a cross guard, a hand grip and a pommel. The latter is sometimes composed of two pieces, the lower part being called the upper cross guard. When cross guards were straight the upper cross guard nearly always followed suit. Like wise, when the cross guard was curved, the upper cross guard was curved, this was true even though one piece pommels were starting to creep in [].

In the C11th. the Norman style of sword started to appear. This had a straight cross guard, longer than before; with a variety of rounded one piece pommels. Scabbard mouths had thus gone from flat to rounded and back to flat. And even though the straight cross guard was to stay for several centuries, the next development to the scabbard mouth was to add curved plates (front and back) [] to cover part of the straight guard, giving the impression that the straight guarded sword was being housed in a curved mouth scabbard!

The evolution of scabbard mouths needs to be borne in mind as we try to unravel features in these illustrations. For example: [4A, 5B, 9A, 9C, & 12C] would appear to be straight mouthed scabbards, but drawn obliquely to show the mouth opening. However, [12A] and [12C] are presumably different views of the same scabbard, one having a curved mouth the other appearing flat. I suspect the answer is that the scabbard was curved but that in illustration [12C] the artist encountered difficulties in projecting a curved mouth obliquely.

Examples [6A] and [6B] pose more serious problems. The

former is from the Winchester Frieze which is damaged at the scabbard mouth. Considering the C11th. date, which cuts across many mouth piece developments, I think it is unwise to speculate too deeply about this piece.

The scabbard illustration from Eberston, whilst bearing passing similarities to that from Bishop Ætholwold's Benedictional [4A] is clearly enough represented, I think, to be of a unique shape from a round mouthed scabbard.

The scabbards [13 A to D] pose the most difficult problems of all. The first couple are from the C12th. Stave church in Hylestad, (the others from an un-named Norman manuscript.) The former scabbard is that of the legendary hero Sigurd, and presumably carved by the same craftsman.

The two depictions are quite different however, a similar treatment being vested upon Sigurd's helmet as again three different versions are shown. I do not think we should read too much into these differences as the craftsman to be exercising his artistic temperament to the full. This does not help us when trying to unravel what the scabbard looked like that the artist based his carvings on!

The first illustration renders the mouthpiece flat, with a rounded feature, the second has a rounded mouthpiece with no feature or is the mouthpiece flat drawn obliquely? The sword hilt is illustrated as being flat so a flat mouthpiece would be expected. However, the curved mouthpiece in [13B] may be a scabbard mouthpiece projection, or was the artist simply varying the scabbard detail as he did with the helmets?

I would be quite content to leave this problem here, but for the appearance of the scabbards in the norman manuscript. Both of these feature upward curving lines near the mouth piece. These cannot be skeuomorphs for cross guard projections as they were only just being introduced. There is nothing like them in the scabbard mouthpiece record, either archaeologically or illustrative (even though that in [13C] appears to be riveted or nailed). So we are left with the conclusion that they are probably an artistic feature, possibly akin to the 'X' feature, for example as found on [14B].

We must be very cautious when considering this feature in our corpus of art motifs, as it only appears three times, and then only in two sources; both of the C12th. For the purposes of this enquiry this is just outside the upper date limit.

4) The manuscript details that depict scabbard fittings.

A lot of the scabbards in the illustrative record, display features which are probably best interpreted as some means of fitting a supporting strap to the scabbard. Some depictions suggest that the strap was fitted around the waist and was therefore a kind of belt. Other straps went over the shoulder and therefore was a baldric. In most of the Byzantine illustrations, the sword is suspended from a baldric with an additional strap from the scabbard end to the belt. Belt hangings seem to outnumber baldric hangings but not much reliance can be placed on these observations as on 2/3 of illustrations, the method of hanging is not clear.

The main single reason for this is because; for a scabbard that is hung on a belt, both the Leading and Trailing straps are visible, and therefore depicted (see terminology, below). This has been proved experimentally, and if you want to anticipate my argument see page [A1]. However, when the scabbard is hung on a baldric, the Leading strap automatically folds itself round the back of the scabbard, and as a consequence it is never illustrated and may assumed to be missing.

This is especially clear in the Winchester Frieze [6A] and the Flemish miniature [15D], the Trailing straps are clearly shown, they must marry up to the scabbard somewhere, not on the trailing edge because that is clear of fittings, there are no straps there! The baldric must fasten up on the leading edge somewhere but in neither of these examples are they shown (and in fact in none of the relevant illustrations is it shown).

The reason suggested is that the leading edge folds round the scabbard back and is not seen. Again this has been shown experimentally, and if you want to anticipate my argument see [A2, A3 & A4]. It is fair to conclude, that in every instance of scabbard slinging's, the ends of the sling are always fixed one to either side of the scabbard, (expounded upon, below).

Before we can start to interpret which details on the scabbards, in the illustrative record, were intended to depict strap fittings, we first need to understand something about scabbard slinging mechanics. Experimentation has proved that the situation was a little more complicated than just tying a piece of string around the scabbard mouth and then throwing it over your shoulder.

The scabbard needs to be secured next to the left hand thigh, to enable it to be drawn right handedly. All warriors were right handed, any budding left-handers would have not succeeded as a warrior because, for the shield wall to be efficient, every veteran would have to hold the shield in the left hand and the sword in the right.

The scabbard would also have to secure the scabbard at a certain height above the thigh; too high and the sword would be impossible to draw, too low and the scabbard could trail on the ground and be slower to draw.

In its simplest form, the sling fitted to a scabbard has one end either side of the scabbard mouth; and although this method was used in many cultures the sophistication of warfare in viking times was at a level to recognise three problems with this system.

Firstly; Tilt []. In the simplex arrangement of a strap secured to either side of the scabbard mouth, the scabbard will always try to hang vertically making the sword slightly cumbersome to draw. An arrangement is required where the sword can hang tilted forwards making it much easier to draw. In the illustrative record the sword is invariably shown angled across the thigh suggesting several ingenious methods of achieving the tilt.

Secondly; Inclination []. This problem arises from the position on the scabbard that the straps are fitted. If the sling is secured to the front, the tip of the scabbard will incline away from the wearers legs. If the strap is fitted to the back of the scabbard, the tip will incline towards the wearers legs

and may trip him up! If the sling is affixed either side of the scabbard mouth, then it will hang vertically with no inclination.

Both these methods seem to have been used, a preference dictated both by the type of warfare engaged in and by tradition. As we shall see some fixing methods had been in use for hundreds of years!

Thirdly; Rigidity. Whilst a leather fixing strap is ideal for securing the scabbard rigidly to the side of the body, and also provides a medium to convey exquisite decoration; the system may be a little restrictive outside a 'parade' environment. Leather flexes easily in one direction, but not as much in the other. The strap has been known to slip off shoulders if loose; but cut into the body if too tight.

The swords of our period were lighter than their predecessors and so a pliable fabric to sling them could be considered. Wool and linen were still unsuitable however in those damp conditions, but one material was becoming more accessible (as finds from York show) and was both strong and resilient enough to support a sword. That material was silk. Impressive and valuable enough to replace any bronze hung baldric, there is evidence enough to suggest that silk slung scabbards were contemporary with conventional leather straps.

Another alternative was to 'tie' the baldric round the scabbard, utilising a 'slot' through which the strap passed. This would allow a little movement between scabbard and baldric making it more comfortable to carry than a system in which the strap was rigidly affixed to the scabbard. Such a 'slotted device' fitted to the front of a scabbard was called a slider.

To summarise, the way in which a sword is slung in its scabbard is subjected to many factors. The illustrative record suggests 6 methods by which traditional methods were used and inherent problems overcome. These are as follows:

- 1) Strap fixed under a plate on the front of the scabbard.
- 2) Strap routed through a back plate ring.
- 3) Strap routed through a front slider.
- 4) Strap routed through a double slider.
- 5) Split strap fitted to the side of the scabbard.
- 6) Strap system with a drop strap to the end of the scabbard.

Terminology.

- Strap: any ligature fitted to the scabbard for the purpose of suspending it from the body.
- Sling: the concept of scabbard suspension; a strap.
- Baldric: a shoulder sling; hopeless sidekick of Black Adder.
- Belt: a waist sling, as well as the conventional meaning.

- Tilt: the amount the scabbard is angled to the front or back of the body.
- Inclination: the amount the scabbard is angled into or away from the side of the body.
- Leading strap: strap fitted to the left of the scabbard (as you look at it).
- Trailing strap: strap fitted to the right of the scabbard (as you look at it).
- Leading Straps: the Leading strap and Trailing strap taken together.
- Split strap: a trailing strap that splits into two short straps that are fitted to the right of the scabbard. They are called the Upper and Lower split straps.
- Drop strap: A strap, which usually secures the scabbard tip to the waist independently of the baldric.
- Strap connector: Metal fittings to the ends of the split strap and trailing strap.
- Distributor Ring: Three Strap Connecters are secured to this distributor ring, which is usually a three pronged affair.
- Slider: Fitting of bone or antler which is secured to the front of the scabbard, to allow attachment of the baldric.
- Back Ring: Fitting probably of metal which is secured to the back of the scabbard, to allow attachment of a silk belt.

1) Strap fixed under a plate on the front of the scabbard.

In the Roman period and later, rings were fitted to the sides of the scabbard by means of a fitting positioned near to the scabbard mouth, or onto the scabbard mouthpiece itself []. There is no direct evidence either in the illustrative record, or archaeologically, that this system persisted into the viking period. What is suggested however, is that plates may have been fitted to the front of the scabbard securing the strap under a plate. Because the plate covered perhaps, the whole of the scabbard face, the strap protruded from the edge of the scabbard, acting as if it had been fitted to the scabbard side, as with the pre Viking rings mentioned above.

The significance of the strap fitting at the mouth piece of the scabbard has to do with 'inclination'. A strap that is fitted to the sides of the scabbard will cause it to hang vertically, this is suggested by the full front plates on the Bayeux Tapestry [7A-D]. A short front plate or slider (dealt with in section 3)

will cause the tip of the scabbard to incline away from the body. Whilst a strap fitted to the back of the scabbard mouth will cause the tip to hang into the body. This may cause problems to the wearer as outlined above. (This section deals with short and full width plates that let the scabbard incline vertically or let the tip point away from the legs.)

There are several methods of illustrating a fitted plate, whether simple, as on the Ballateare scabbard [C1]; or highly decorative, such as the Östra Påboda plates [B6:B]. The simplest involves the strap being fixed near to the mouth of the scabbard by a short plate as in our Manx example, the St. Demetrius Ikon [10D] or on the Paris Psalter [5C].

Several more elaborate examples are illustrated, numerous on the Bayeux tapestry, as mentioned above. On the Norman saga however, it is not clear whether the strap is fitted either side of the mouthpiece, to the front covered with a plate or fitting or even to the back. It would seem likely however that the fitting is via a wide plate on the front, variously graphically represented. These include: Concentric squares, Circle within a square, Cross within a square and so forth; see [F6].

Fixing plates are probably used in combination on other scabbard fixing types, the Ballateare plate is one example, others probably exist: concentric squares can be seen on the Plaque of St. Demetrius and on the Paris Psalter. X shaped fittings can be seen on the Winchester frieze [6A] and on the Arras bible [10B]. These too may be implicit depictions of fixing plates, but could be straps or artwork!

Such plates are known archaeologically, a plain one was found on the C9/10th. Ballateare scabbard from the Isle of Man, [C1] the C9th. Carolingian fittings from Östra Påboda, has been mentioned above. Another Carolingian plate with Acanthus artwork is known, sadly un-provenanced [B5:B]. Finally a beautiful pyramid plate inlaid with enamel was discovered amongst the C8/C9th. finds from the Oseberg ship [B5:D]. Although of Hiberno-Saxon, it may once have graced the scabbard of an Viking, Saxon or Celtic chieftain.

In conclusion, the rectangular boxes on the scabbards possibly represent a fixing plate for the suspension strap to the front of the scabbard [A5:B]. When experimentally recreated the scabbard was found to hang comfortably, in a vertical plane, lessening the likely hood of tripping up the owner. However the graphics that probably represent fixing plates are used elsewhere, both attaching straps to the scabbard and in a context where they have nothing to do with the straps themselves. In such instances these graphics (most notably crosses within squares) must represent decorative artwork of the scabbard.

2) Strap routed through a back-plate ring.

A second method of slinging the scabbard, would appear to have been achieved by passing the strap through a flat plate affixed to the back of the scabbard, in various different ways. Wherever this system is used the strap appears to have been made of silk. There are a few illustrations of this system, none very clear.

Perhaps the best is to be found in the manuscript Cotton

Tiberius [8C & D] where both sides of the scabbard are shown; although different routings of the belt are implied. As noted before the illustration is based on a Carolingian manuscript from the previous century, but the sword and fittings are contemporary.

In the first folio [8D], the belt appears to go to the back of the scabbard, across the front then presumably carries on round the waist from the scabbard back. A similar system appears to have been used in the manuscript Cotton Claudius [8A], where the edge of a ring like fitting is visible. This method has been reconstructed experimentally and is illustrated on page A1 [A1:A].

I believe the un-named manuscript [1D] to also belong to this category. No ring is shown, but the trailing strap is shown at the side of the scabbard, whilst another strap is shown across the front but at a lower level. Of the four variants achievable by the belt and ring method [A1], the one that most closely resembles this manuscript illustration is that in [A1:A].

On the next Cotton Tiberius folio [8C], the back of the scabbard is shown. Here we can see the ring like fitting on the back of the scabbard very clearly. The belt appears to go through a hole in one edge of the ring, round the front of the scabbard and back through a hole in the other edge of the ring. A similar arrangement appears to be employed on two of the scabbards on the Bayeux tapestry [8B & 9B]. This simplex form of slinging proved to be less rigid than [A1:A] when experimentally recreated. It is illustrated as [A1:C]

An inadequate system of slinging appears to be illustrated in the St. Gall manuscript, [1C]. The single fixing point on the trailing edge would mean that the wearer would have no control over the scabbards tilt and inclination. When moving, even at marching pace, the scabbard would flap about uncontrollably. It would trip the wearer up, and be prone to entanglement with other pieces of equipment. Finally the sword would be difficult to draw swiftly at need.

Though clearly drawn, I believe the illustration to be a poorly represented attempt at drawing the back plate system. In this manuscript, the back plate is shown protruding from the trailing edge of the scabbard only. The belt passes through the front of the plate, then carries on around the waist! Such a system has both been shown to be unique in the illustrative record and impractical experimentally.

A positive way to look at the problem, would be to suggest that the St. Gall manuscript illustration is incomplete, rather than dismiss it out of hand. If the plate projecting from the trailing scabbard edge, projected from the leading edge also; with the belt properly threaded we would have illustrated another version of the simplex system of the back plate ring [A1:B].

The final variant of threading the belt through the back plate ring, is to thread the belt through the back of the ring, across the front, round the back, across the front again and finally emerging through the other hole in the back plate ring.

This system appears to be illustrated in the "Invasion of England by Ivar the Boneless. Illuminated in an English Historical of the C11th." [12A- C] as well as on the C12th. Ivory Cover of Queen Messendes Psalter [14A]. (Although this feature

may equally represent artwork! See [F1,2,5 & 6]). An experimental reconstruction of this system worked very well, and is illustrated below. [A1:D]

In conclusion, of the four variants, none provided particularly good tilt however because none of the variants used a fixed belt, rigidity was not a problem, although in versions [A1:B] and [A1:C] the scabbard was found to be a little loose whilst running. Inclination was a problem in all variants with the scabbard tip hanging into the body. However, variants [A1:A] and [A1:B] were slightly better as the belts entered the plate from the front, shifting the centre of gravity and allowing the scabbard to hang more vertically.

What all this would have meant to the warriors of the day is debateable. Judging by modern standards any of the factors of; personal preference, practicality and tradition would affect the mentality of the day.

A second interesting feature associated with the scabbard illustrations in the Cotton manuscripts and on the Bayeux tapestry, is the widening of the straps at the belt ends. Initially these triangular extensions were thought to represent buckles [7C & 8C], or perhaps a buckle and strap end [7D]; as would seem to be the case with one of the belts on the Bayeux tapestry. However, whenever these triangular features on belts are illustrated elsewhere, they are always used for cloak (or other clothing) ties [-]; and it seems unlikely that cloaks would be belted together. Speculation is however, unnecessary. When ever cloak ties have been found, they do have the triangular extensions, and they are always made of silk. Illustrated are finds from-----

----[] and Mammen [].

We have thus another instance that scabbards were not simple cheap affairs, rather they could be highly decorated, ornate with gilt and silver fittings, perhaps even highly coloured scabbards? as such a silk belt would be in keeping with this idea, whilst being durable and flexible to be of practical use.

3) Strap routed through a front slider.

A third variant on this method involves the use of a 'slider'. This is a sort of bracket, - - shaped, which is fixed to the front of the scabbard near the top. It is called a slider because the carrying strap is not really secured to the scabbard, as we saw with the fixing plates; but the slider allows the strap to be reposition on the scabbard or even removed from it altogether. No archaeological examples have been found, but many are known from pre viking times [] and illustrations in contemporary manuscripts may represent sliders (although one of the latter is a double slider) [4A & 10A].

In practice the slider type hanging works the same as for the front plate fixed hanging; a vertical scabbard with the tip out from the body. However, the scabbard has a tenancy to try to turn around unless the straps are secured with a belt. This would suggest that the slider type scabbard was hung exclusively on a baldric .

Experimentation further showed that for the slider to work most efficiently, the slot under the slider should ideally be as

long as the strap is wide but twice as deep as the strap is thick []. This is because the baldric needs to be 'tied' to the scabbard in such a way that the scabbard does not swing around when the owner is running. If the scabbard is too loose against the body it becomes unmanageable in flight.

Further, this system suggests that a leather strap was used rather than silk or other material (as in the previous example) because only a simple hole would be needed to feed the silk through, rather than the precise slots incorporated into the sliders. Also, because a back fixed plate arrangement is not used with the slider, the scabbard has a tendency to try and turn around. This problem is overcome by passing a second belt around the waist and the baldric, keeping everything in place. A waist belt was in place anyway; to keep the kirtle tight and to suspend the sax and possibly pouch from.

It is not surprising that the sword was hung from the belt, especially by the Saxons and Carolingians as this dispensed with an otherwise complicated strap arrangement. However, the advantages of a baldric is that the sword can be removed separately from the other utilities and also that some of the load is taken on the shoulder instead of the hips taking all the weight. The system takes care of inclination problems, but does nothing for tilt. Technology had to advance another stage before the slider could take care of that!

This method of sword slinging is clearly depicted on short swords of the Vendel period [] as well as on the contemporary manuscript [4A]. Finds include many Roman and pre Viking examples and are illustrated on page [].

4) Strap routed through a front double slider.

The double slider is a logical development from the single slider because it preserves inclination and supplies tilt. The scabbard hangs comfortably angled forward, yet the simple baldric strap needs no modification (unlike the split strap- see below). The double slider preserves a degree of freeness that we found with the single variant. When manufactured experimentally, the system was found to work very well. Each slider slot is placed one in front of the other and needs to be in length, the same as the belts width; whilst in height, the same as the belts thickness []. Placing the two slots in front of each other made for a very long slider and to offset the possibility of the slider bowing outwards, a small strap was fitted round the middle.

There is only one possible illustration of a double slider, and that is to be found in the 'Benediction of Bishop Æthelwold' [4A]. The two slider slots are shown, reinforced with a short strap around the middle. It is difficult to see if the illustrated features could be anything but an attachment for a fitting. Art work seems unlikely as the feature extends beyond the edge of the scabbard. Also the double slider concept was probably too new for the illustration to be skeuomorphic. If the illustration does illustrate a fitting, a double slider is the best possibility especially when backed up by the experimental models. A possible find of a double slider was made in Wood key in Ireland.

5) Split strap fitted to the side of the Scabbard.

This system of slinging a sword would seem to have been fairly popular, see appendix 2. It needs no supplementary belts to keep the baldric in place (as we saw with the slider type), yet the scabbard will automatically tilt the sword forward with vertical inclination. The system does require a lot more in the way of craftsmanship and fittings, yet to prosperous Vikings, this would provide just one more excuse to show off their wealth.

This system may have been used by the Romans [], it was certainly used by the Carolingians, with examples coming to light as far away as Dolný Kubín in Czechoslovakia [B5:C]. The split strap affair was achieved by means of a tri-lobate plate. These were often made of silver (Östra Pâboda [B6:B], Huseby [B6:A]) and occasionally made of gold, like the magnificent example found in Hon, in Norway [B5:A].

Though the Vikings knew of this system, they did not use it, instead the tri-lobate plates were modified into pendants (Huseby) or brooches from whence female trefoil brooches originated. The rest of the Carolingian scabbard fittings, carried off as booty, suffered less well. Buckles and strap ends were sometimes chopped up for hack silver!

The most complete set found so far, was that from Östra Pâboda. We can reconstruct the way that they all fitted together from the contemporary manuscript: The Bible of Count Vivian [2A], where the tri-lobe plate, split straps and scabbard plates are shown.

The buckle and strap end presumably hung across the chest for ease of adjustment, this application is suggested by another contemporary manuscript: the Utrecht Psalter [2B], where the short leading strap and longer trailing strap are shown. This would place the buckle and strap end at approximately the centre of the chest.

In addition, the Utrecht Psalter depicts the Leading and Trailing straps fixed to the scabbard by means of two circles. These may fixing plates or perhaps dome headed rivets as found on the Gokstad ship []. The problem with these rivets however, is expounded upon in appendix 3. An alternative method was devised experimentally, though there are no finds extant; see accompanying illustrations [].

The Vikings and perhaps some Anglo Danes, used this system for slinging their scabbards but dispensed with the tri-lobe plate using a ring instead. Each of the straps were secured to this Distributor Ring by metal fittings, not unlike strap ends, called Strap Connectors; although simplified versions of this system have been found. (ie. the leather straps were simply sewn together, as is suggested for the Repton find []).

For our present enquiry, illustrations appear incomplete because for reasons outlined above, the Leading strap is omitted. However, if we accept that the leading strap is hidden round the back of the scabbard and therefore not illustrated, a whole series of illustrations become visible. When taken in context with contemporary finds, we find that there is very good evidence for this system of slinging.

Two Distributor Rings have been found associated with swords in the isle of Man [B7:A & B7:B], as has an example from Vaster

Götland in Sweden [B7:C]. Two isolated finds from Saxo- Norman London may also have been used as scabbard fittings, one is still connected to two strap lengths, London Temple [B7:D]; the other is from London New Fresh Wharf [B8:A]. Finally, an odd strap connector, found by metal detector in the South East of England, may have connected to a Distributor Ring [B8:B].

All these rings are roughly the same size, and with the exception of one of the Manx examples (Ballateare) all the rings have an internal three pronged separators.

The Rings and Connectors have other features in common. Borre style animal heads are found on the Cronk Moar example as well as on those from Vaster Götland and from Temple in London. Acanthus foliate decoration is found on the Temple Strap Connector and on metal plates fixed to the straps. This decoration is reminiscent of the decoration on the un-provenanced Strap Connector from the South/East of England. Finally, the cabochon setting of a piece of quartz into the centre of the Cronk Moar ring is reminiscent of the false cabochons cast into the centre and into the ends of the spokes on the Temple ring.

These archaeological finds need to be supplemented with documentary evidence if we are to be convinced that they could have been used for scabbard fittings, and secondly to establish how the various pieces fitted together. It is my contention from the outset, that the slinging procedure for all these finds is the same as the Carolingian system; with the exception that a ring and connectors was used instead of the more Rigid three lobed plate. For confirmation I have drawn upon contemporary illustrations as well as experimental evidence.

Bersu and Wilson postulated a system of slinging for the Manx scabbards, though conceivable, does not work very well in practice [B7:A]. The system is good for Tilt and Rigidity, but the former is achieved by looping the baldric through a loop on the trailing edge of the scabbard. The problem with the system is that the scabbard is now not rigid enough! Because the lower split strap is not fixed, and the leading strap is attached to the same side as the trailing strap, the sword hilt tilts forward until the scabbard is horizontal and tends to flail about. There is also a danger of the sword falling out when the owner is running! In conclusion, the experimental reconstruction showed that the sword settled horizontally, which meant that it was harder to draw than when it was vertical!

In no illustration have we seen both the trailing and leading straps fitted to the same side of the scabbard. To be practical, the split straps must be secured; and the Leading strap must be fixed to opposite edge of the scabbard.

Do the scabbards themselves provide clues as to how they were fitted up? Inside one of the Cronk Moar scabbard Strap Connectors, two pieces of leather strap were found, unjoined. Presumably they were the remnants of two straps, or the ends of the same strap. How can these pieces of straps fit in with the original reconstruction since only one strap leaves the Connector, travels through the lower loop, then becomes the trailing strap? Even if the second strap was for padding, you would expect the one piece to be folded over rather than a separate piece inserted.

A far better system would be to have the lower split strap

go from the Connector, through the lower loop, then back up to the Connector; thus failing in line with the Carolingian system. It is unlikely that the Connector in question was used for either the upper split strap or the trailing strap as this would put the adjustment buckle on the distributor ring, in a rather strange place for baldric length adjustment.

The Cronk Moar scabbard fittings suggests more evidence that the original reconstruction is wrong. The upper scabbard fitting is a plate, whilst the lower fitting is a ring on a band that goes around the scabbard. In the original version, one strap leaves the trailing edge each fitting, so why make the two fittings different? It is my contention that the two fittings are different because they were employed by two different arrangements!

The lower ring was connected to the lower split strap (as we have seen) whilst the upper plate secured the Leading and Trailing straps to it. If we accept this system we can see that we have duplicated the Carolingian technique [A5:A].

What contemporary illustrative evidence is there to support this hypothesis? The Utrecht Psalter has been mentioned, this is clear but a little early, and Frisian [2B & A4:C]. A Byzantine manuscript, Scylitzes is clear, but again a little remote [6D & A4:D]. A Flemish miniature of the C15th. is clear but very late [15D] Closer to home, the damaged Winchester carving must be depicting the Carolingian method, even though the Leading strap is missing, it must be fixed to the leading edge since its not shown on the trailing side and the trailing strap must connect somewhere! [6A & A3:A] The Ebberston carving too, makes more sense if fitted up with system [6B & A3:B].

If we accept the widespread use of this system, we may have continuity from the Romans to the C15th. that covers Northern Europe as far as the Byzantine Empire! Such speculation however is not central to this enquiry. The first priority is to decide the nature of the scabbard fittings so that they can be removed from the illustrative record, leaving us with only the art motifs. However the split strap technique is a reality, even though badly represented in some of the illustrations. Is it possible that there are still other, even poorer illustrations of this, or similar slinging technique? Remembering our criteria at the start, that our illustrators were not draughtsmen; I think the answer must be yes and nominate the following illustrations:

Hylestad stave church in Norway, dated to the C12th. is well known for the variety of detail of its helmets and scabbards. One in particular sits tilted forward at the middle, with a waist strap and other lines towards the scabbard mouth. This illustration fits in best with split strap system [13B & A4:A].

Similarly, an un-named Norman manuscript from the C12th. may also fit into this category. Two examples of sword fittings are shown, both fit well into the split strap scheme [13C & D]. The second one in particular, (the darker of the two) is very similar to Cronk Moar [C2], whilst the other looks like a variant of the Utrecht Psalter [2B]; see the accompanying suggested reconstruction [A4:B].

Finally, the manuscript; Sacramentary of Henrich II, is dated to between 1002- 1004 Ad, and has long puzzled scholars as to the slinging arrangements [6C]. Two small straps terminating

in rings, are fastened to one side of the scabbard; whilst a longer, single strap is fixed to the other. The description alone is enough to remind us of the split strap system except that two rings are used instead of one.

If we assume that the single strap is the Leading strap, then the scabbard must be lying on its front. If it was turned over, the leading strap can be led up over the chest and back, down to the split strap rings where it can be tied (if made of silk) or secured if made of leather [A3:C].

Securing the strap at the Distributor Ring is not too surprising, as the Cronk Moar example has a buckle fitted directly onto the ring for baldric adjustment [B7:A]. The Sword found at Repton in Derbyshire, did not have any grandiose Ring and Connector fittings, but a small buckle found in this area may have allowed baldric or perhaps split strap adjustment [].

The split strap arrangement does not unfortunately, account for all anomalous lines accounted for on baldric artwork. For example the Fresco in the Oratory of St. Benedict in Rome [2D], shows a row of diagonal stripes down the full length of the scabbard. Similar arrangements can be seen in the manuscript 'Leges Barbarorum' [3A & 3B], to some extent on the Lewis chessman [14C] and on the other Hylestad church scabbard [13A].

These lines may simply be where the owner has wrapped his baldric down the scabbard length (tried experimentally, the baldric was found to wind round the scabbard on average seven times; the same as in the Fresco). However the lines may yet be shown to be art motifs, and so will be dealt with below.

6) Strap system with a drop strap to the end of the scabbard.

We saw above, how a simple Leading/Trailing strap system of slinging will result in a vertically hanging sword with no tilt. We have seen many ways of countering this problem, perhaps the simplest way of all is to retain the traditional method but modified by dropping another strap down to the scabbard tip, and hitching it up to tilt forward. This method works well in practice, and there are many contemporary illustrations.

The C10/11 Saxon manuscripts 'Caedmon- History of Abraham' [5A] and 'Harley 2506- Orion' [5B], both show a strap fitted to the end of the scabbard, much too far down the scabbard length to be a lower split strap. The former seems to terminate the strap on a ring, so adjustment may have been carried out there; whilst on Orion's scabbard, the strap is terminated with a quatrefoil device, probably intended to represent the flower-like domed rivets from the Gokstad ship []. Adjustment of the strap must therefore have been conducted at the other end.

How did the rest of the slinging system work? Well a complete system is illustrated in Byzantine sources, with another source (a variant) closer to home. On an ivory plaque of St. Demetrius dated to C11th. the Leading Straps appear to be fitted one either side of the scabbard mouth and comprise a baldric, whilst the drop strap appears to be fixed to a ring or rivet on the scabbard tip, then tied to a separate waist belt [10D].

The second source, a C10th. Ivory casket depicting Armenians in Byzantine employment [4C]; is a little incomplete. However the upper strap is definitely a baldric trailing strap and the lower

one, a tip strap. If we assume the trailing strap connects to a leading strap (out of view) then the tip strap must connect with a belt [A2:C]. It is unlikely that the Trailing strap and tip strap connect together since this would provide a unique arrangement, and one which would tend to both flail around and sit horizontally.

A third illustration can be seen in the 'Paris Psalter' of David and Goliath in the National Bibliothek, in Paris [5C]. Here the Leading straps and the drop strap have been drawn almost together, at the balance point of the scabbard (rather than at each end). The system is otherwise the same, the leading straps make a baldric, whilst the drop strap is tied to belt at the waist [A2:D].

It is likely, that where a drop strap is tied, it is made of material. In light of what we have seen before, that material is likely to have been silk. On a manuscript which depicts the invasion of England by Ivar the Boneless (Illuminations of English history, C11th) the fittings are not clear, but the strap is neatly shown knotted at the back, again suggesting the use of a silk strap [12C].

This now concludes the section on art elements that we may dismiss as fittings. In the next section we will see from what is left, what decoration was applied to the scabbard. We should see that despite the diversity of sources and relative scarceness, a common theme was probably used by all.

Art motifs applied to the scabbards.

Once the scabbards have been stripped of their fittings, many of them remain bare of any art work. Fortunately this does not apply to all the scabbards, there is enough artwork (albeit skeuomorphic ?) for us to draw some tentative conclusions. Of the scabbards that sport art we can see that this takes the form of either single motif near the scabbard mouth, or motifs that carry on down the full length of the scabbard. Nowhere does a scabbard illustrate fully integrated artwork, I have therefore termed this category 'cellular division' since the scabbard face is divided up by a series of motifs into cells.

In the former category, the motif are nearly always rectilinear. Thus we find a diamond:◊ on an un-named Carolingian manuscript [1D] and two lozenges:⋄ on the St. Gall manuscript [1C]. Concentric rectangles are found on the Bayeux tapestry [7B], the Paris Psalter [5C], the Triptych of the Forty Martyrs [10C] and the Plaque of St. Demetrius [10D]. The Bayeux tapestry illustrates two further examples [7C & D], but this time with a circle inside a rectangle. As noted before, these may be illustrating fixing plates or even skeuomorphs for the same; see [F1.G-L]

A very popular motif, is the 'X' feature. This occurs, on the Bayeux Tapestry [7A], on the Arras Bible [10B], on a North French Psalter of the C9th. now in the Munich Bibliothek 2C], on the C13th. Incoronati Fresco [15A], in the (late C11th.) manuscript Lat 8846, folio 62v [14B], on the cover of Queen Messende's Psalter (early 12th.) [14A] and in the Invasion of England by Ivar the Boneless; see [12a] and [F1.E-F].

This feature as noted above, may possibly be illustrating

slinging straps or fixing plates. The X feature on the Winchester Frieze [6A], certainly seems to illustrate some sort of fixing point for the lower split strap. Otherwise the feature may be depicting the baldric wrapped around the scabbard and through a slider, which is possibly the case with the Arras Bible. The feature may have been added to a scabbard in lieu of a redundant fitting, and is therefore skeuomorphic.

That the motif is an art element in its own right, is suggested by the illustration in the Bible of count Vivian where the motif is repeated down to the scabbard tip. Queen Messende's Psalter may also repeat this motif (it is difficult to tell because of obscurity on the scabbard); whilst in one version of Ivar the Boneless' scabbard the X motif is accompanied by a line of circles; see [F2.G-H].

One or two other illustrations can be found with thin rectangles, or bars near the scabbard mouth, for example, In the Reichenau: Gospel Book of Otto III [4B], or on the C12th. Rhenish Paderborn Altar [14D]. Also, a couple of scabbards are illustrated with a solitary diagonal stripe half way down their lengths; for example, the manuscript Caedmon [5D] and an unspecified Saxon manuscript c1000. [11 A]. These, unfortunately are too fragmentary and inconclusive to categorise as either fittings or as art.

The rest of our art motifs, cover the full length of the scabbard. X motifs and diagonal stripes as we have mentioned above, rows of circles and dots are known, as are columns of reversed 'S' motifs; see [F2].

The diagonal stripes feature on several illustrations, they are too numerous to be slinging points and although they could represent a strap wrapped around the scabbard, the manuscript Leges Barbarorum clearly shows a baldric in addition to the diagonals. They must (at least for some instances) be considered as art motifs. The way that they divide the scabbard face up into cells has been noted before. Each cell may contain an art motif of its own such as can be seen on the Plaque of St. demetrius, see discussion below. But otherwise it is difficult to say for certain what the artist had in mind.

The brief corpus of 'X' motifs that run the scabbard length has been touched on before. These X's like the diagonal stripes divide the scabbard up into cells. Whether large X's or as actually appeared on the scabbard, or whether they were simplistic conventions for more detailed motifs is something I shall discuss shortly. For now it is enough to note how these features divide the scabbard face up into discrete components.

Circular features are to be found; on an un-specified Carolingian manuscript of the C9th. [1B], in the manuscript 'the Invasion of England by Ivar the Boneless'[12A] and a row of dots can be seen in the C10/11th. Saxon manuscript Caedmon [5D]. We should also add into this section the reversed 's' motifs from the Scylitzes manuscript [6D].

In the latter example, the scabbard face is consciously divided into cells, by the addition of horizontal bars, which contain the motifs. These bars are absent from the scabbards with the circular motifs, but never the less, they still (unconsciously) divide the scabbard face into cells, with or without borders. It is as if the rectilinear features divide the

scabbard up, and the circular features provide the motifs within the cells. The viability of this hypothesis is examined next, together with an investigation into how much actual detail each motif represented; see [F2].

The first questions we should ask ourselves are 'why is art work cellular rather than integrated?' and 'Is it possible that some continuous artwork designs existed but have never been recorded?' To the last question, of course we will never know the answer for certain, but in answering our first question we should see that the answer is unlikely.

Every scabbard (other than for burial only ref: Scar) has some sort of fittings attached to it. Not all had chapes, and even less had mouth pieces; yet all had slinging fittings. Whether these were attached to front, back, or sides; some, or all of the fitment was visible on the front, (even with some of the back plate rings, the belt was taken across the front).

The cumulative effect of these fittings, was to break up the flow of a plain scabbard from tip to mouth and render instead, one that could be broken up in one or several places. As we saw before, in scabbard manufacture, the sheath is applied wet, stretched into shape then sewn into place. There can be no question of decorating the leather before it was applied, decoration would have to be done last, after fitment, if the fitment was not going to encroach or obscure the artwork.

In effect this means that the artwork, applied by the 'tooling' process would be applied around the fittings. If we study the motifs on the Cronk Moar scabbard we can see that they are both cellular and simplistic, they are tooled into the leather between the fittings. Certainly then, with some scabbards it would have been impossible to create a continuous art work design.

Once the flow of the scabbard face had been disrupted by fittings, the mentality seems to have been to continue the idea down to the end of the scabbard. The two C11th. Byzantine examples: the Plaque of St. Demetrius and the Triptych of the Forty Martyrs [10 D & C], are particularly striking. When taken with the illustrations from: the Bible of Count Vivian [2A], the Scylitzes example [6D] and that of Ivar the Boneless [12A- C]; the case becomes even more convincing; see [F2]. However, archaeological evidence, apart from Cronk Moar is wanting, so we will have to draw upon examples from analogous finds such as Scramasax sheaths.

Unlike Sword scabbards, Sax sheaths have survived in profusion (the terms Scramasax, Seax and Sax, were seemingly interchangeable terms, and will be used as such here.) Especially good examples have survived from York, London, and Holland [D1 & D2].

Sax sheaths do feature knotwork, in short bursts, but we should not let this distract us from the fact that sax sheaths too, are subject to cellular division. The principal components of the artwork reflect the sax and its handle inside the sheath. Consequently, the artwork is divided into two cells, one for the handle and one for the blade.

The enclosed illustrations from York [D1.A] and London [D2.A] show this very clearly. The example from Holland [D1.B] takes the artwork one stage further, the sheath face is divided

up into six cells! Three of these overly the blade, and three short rows of knot work overly the hilt. This example shows us that sheaths can be divided up into cells above and beyond automatic divisions, as provided by the hilt/blade. If this is so for sheaths, it may be true for scabbards.

The Dutch example is a good example, but it is not the only one. The York and London sheaths are also divided into two on the back. This is then sub divided into cells which feature for the most part the ☒ motifs that we encountered on so many of the scabbards, particularly on the Bible of Count Vivian. Many sheaths feature this motif, however it is not confined to scabbards/ sheaths, we find a Norse 'Targe' (small shield) displaying the same symbols around the boss [].

We should mention here the cellular division of the London-Temple straps on the Distributor Ring [B7.D]. There is no reason why the strap should be divided up into neat squares (approximately 1.5cm²), rather than into longer rectangles for example; however that would seem to be the preferred artwork taste of the day. This was despite the fact that some of the cells were actually cast in blocks of two or three! Some of the belts from Birka in Sweden [] were similarly divided up by small plates. The ☒ like motif of the acanthus artwork on the plates from Temple, should be especially noted.

A fragment of a sheath from Gloucester [] displays identical interlace knotwork as on one of the York sheaths. It is possible that they came from the same workshop, but I think that it is more likely that they were using commonly known motifs, or copying from the same original. Either way, it suggests that the concept of cellular division was well known, and that a corpus of motifs was available for copying.

Some of the sax sheaths at Haithabu featured Runes as decoration (boldly emblazoned in an embellished form, down the length of the sheath face) and whilst there is some documentary evidence for Runes on sword scabbards, this belongs to the Vendel age. The topic will be dealt with in appendix 1.

In conclusion we could say that for sax's, the handle/blade provides the impetuous to start dividing the sheath into cells and for scabbards this impetuous is provided for by the fitting. However for both items, once the division has started it would seem to have continued (in some cases) until the scabbard face was covered.

The next question we should concern ourselves with is: to what extent do these motifs represent actual designs?

If the information provided by the sheaths is typical for scabbards, then a range of detail may be represented. The ☒ motif is simplistically represented on the back of the York sheath yet on the reverse of the London sheath the motifs are much more elaborate, looking more like 'snowflakes' than 'kisses'.

The cells of the sheath from Frisia, whilst standing independent of each other are filled with knotwork. This calls to mind the Scyltzes manuscript. Though the association is tenuous, could not the 'S' motifs be simplistic representations of blocks of artwork? Certainly this motif appears in its own right on some of the Gotland picture stones [].

The circular motifs on the manuscript in the Osterreichische National Bibliothek [1B] present another kind of problem. All

fitting details are omitted yet the artwork is boldly displayed. Very often in contemporary manuscripts incidental detail is omitted, for example in illustrations of helmets the fastening strap is not shown. Are the circular motifs in our Carolingian manuscript simple tooled circles or something much more elaborate?

The artwork on the sax sheaths and other articles of leather have few parallels with scabbards. We can only conclude that on all the sax sheaths the patterns were tooled into the wet leather. Scabbards as we have seen, may represent considerable wealth, the one in question belongs to a prince. We can speculate then, that the illustration could illustrate a whole plethora of art and craft work, every thing from intricately tooled designs, to repousse work in gold or silver foil, to applied gems of polished stone or glass. The possibilities are endless and in the absence of finds it is pointless speculating further.

We can apply the same thoughts to the lozenges and diamond motifs [F1.G-L]. These may be tooled in place or actual fittings. The ovoid shaped plates from Östra Påboda have been noted, as have the exquisite square plates of cast silver, or cloisonne inlay from an un-provenanced find and from the Oseberg ship burial respectively.

It is thought that apart from the scabbard fittings most of the art work features would have been achieved by tooling. This process is carried out by making the leather slightly damp, then pressing a blunt tipped object (such as the end of an antler tine) into the leather. When the leather is dry, the pattern is retained. Whether the artwork was coloured in different colours or had the key features highlighted or even left plain is not known for certain.

Given the Viking taste for the elaborate and even garish, the former option would not come as a surprise. The experimental reproduction of such a scabbard with natural dyes was found to fade and became discoloured whilst on 'campaign'. However, its worth noting that some of the sax sheaths have provided evidence of colouring. One of the York examples were found with traces of red and yellow pigment, whilst another was found with traces of white and green pigment.

In conclusion we can say that although there is little direct evidence for artwork on Viking scabbards, analogous illustrations and evidence drawn from sax sheaths would suggest that little integrated artwork was applied. Instead the motifs are relegated to independent cells, which contain anything from simplistic designs to elaborate interlace to the attachment of expensive fittings. These reflect, no doubt, the wealth and status of the owner.

ART ELEMENTS IN THE ILLUSTRATIVE RECORD.

The pictorial corpus for the artwork motifs on dark age scabbards, appears on pages [F1 & F2]. Bearing in mind our earlier discussion; the features on the first page may all be actual features or fittings or their skeuomorphs. The first row on the second page feature composite artwork, built up of combinations of the elements from the first page. Not all possible combinations are shown, of course. Only those that actually appear in the illustrative record. It is only the

scarcity of evidence that prohibits a wider picture from emerging.

The last row on page [F2]. depicts the cellular divisions of scabbards to the full. Mostly they are composed of the basic elements, or variants repeated or combined. The artwork may be simplistic as shown, or lines may be doubled or even tripled! Squares may represent simple geometric figures, fields of knotwork or even be an added fitting.

Fixtures and fittings are dealt with next. They are found combined with some of the aforementioned art elements, but the diversity of the extant illustrations would suggest that virtually any combination was possible.

A few ground rules have emerged, for example: where straps are fitted to the scabbard, the cells of art work tends to work around them. Secondly, a single element such as the \boxtimes feature is never overlaid with a fitting such as [B5.D]. The mark represents one or the other. Similar the spirally wrapped chape feature [F1.B] is never overlain with a chape fitting such as [B1.A], and so forth. A pictorial comparison between archaeological finds of scabbard fittings, and those in the illustrative record is found on pages [F3 to F6].

SCABBARD FITTINGS: ILLUSTRATIONS and the ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD.

In section [F3- F6], silhouettes of archaeological finds of scabbard fittings are compared with outlines of scabbard fittings from the illustrative record. Page [F3] compares the shapes of chapes, and there are good parallels for 'open' scabbard end fittings from the 8th. [1A/ B9.A-D] and their probable successors in the 10th. and 11th. centuries [4C,6B & 10C/ B1.C]. The 'lobed' or 'heater shield' chape, also has good parallels in a 9th. century manuscript and in many 10th. century finds [2A/ B1.A-B & D, B2.A-D & B3.A-D]. Surprisingly however, the simplest shape [B4.C] is unparalleled, unless we accept that some of the spirally wound scabbard ends are actually bronze casts with skeuomorphic artwork! See [2C & D, 3A & B].

The next page [F4] deals with the scabbard mouthpiece or Vettrim (see appendix 1). Both the 'lobed' type of fitting, and 'open' type of fitting are paralleled in manuscript and by finds; [10B/ B4.A-B] and [15A/ B4.C]. These all occur in the 10th. and 11th. centuries. The simplest is again absent [1A,2A,3A & 9C], but this time from the archaeological record. Likewise, a parallel for the most elaborate [6B] is also missing; once again emphasising the lack of find material.

The final section looks at fittings. Page [F5 & F6] illustrates tri-lobed strap distributors in finds and illustrations, all from the 9th. century; [2A/ B6.B] (amongst others). The successor to this form of slinging is illustrated in the form of Distributor Rings either simplex or fastened at the ring; from 10th and 15th. centuries; [6C,15D/ B7- B8].

Other comparative illustrations include Rivets, Double Sliders, Fixing Rings and Plates. There are unfortunately, no finds for the well illustrated Back Rings. On the final column there is illustrated the only find which includes a Chape and Vettrim (a German example [B4.C] from the C10th.) and the only

two from the illustrative record (a Carolingian example from the 9th. [2A] and a Saxon instance [6B] from the 11th.)

I cannot at this stage, remind the reader enough how much evidence must be missing, from both the illustrative and archaeological record. This absence denies us the ability of examining the possible criteria used in deciding the shape or type of scabbard fittings. Would this choice be out of practicality, availability, artistic or traditional convention or even conducted totally subconsciously? The scant evidence must lead the Dark age re-enactor (or inter-actor) to conjecture combinations of their own; especially if cloning is to be avoided. Several of the scabbard fittings suggest themselves in combination, as follows:

- 'Open' type Chape and Vettrim, [B1.C /B4.C]
- 'Lobed' type Chape and Vettrim, [B2,B3 /B4.A-B]
- 'Simple' type Chape and Vettrim, [B4.C / 1A,2A,3A & 9C]

One day sufficient evidence may be found to substantiate these associations. At the end of the day it is worth remembering that even in the light of several new finds the proportions of scabbard with chape, with vettrim and with chape and vettrim, is unlikely to change much from the present.

APPENDIX 1. RUNES AS ART MOTIFS ON SCABBARDS

Some of the sax sheaths from Haithabu can be seen to be decorated with runes []. Elsewhere runes are found on sax and sword hilts, and other sword fittings []. Could then, scabbards likewise be decorated with runes? Archaeological evidence is none existent, but there is some literary testimony. In the old Norse poem called there is the verse:

"Carve Runes on the VALBOST and on the VETTRIM
and twice the Rune Tyr"

Now the Tyr Rune is like an upward pointing arrow †, and by examining the archaeological discoveries, we can see if we can find whether the Valbost and Vettrim are parts of the scabbard. The corpus of finds supplies two candidates for the Valbost. The first has two clear Tyr Runes on the pommel cap, and was found in . The second was also found in the South East of the country, and features a variant of the rune , but again they are inscribed on the pommel cap. It seem possible then , that the Valbost was the pommel cap. However, these sword fittings belong to an age before the Vikings. The Saxons who ruled England in the seventh centuries were contemporaries with the Vendel and Valsgard dynasties in Sweden!

No such finds exist for the Vettrim however. Etymologically the word Rim is cognate with our word for 'rim' so the most likely candidate for the Vettrim in connection with swords, is the scabbard rim. In amongst the C7th. finds from the South East of England, we find a silver mouthpiece fitting for a scabbard inscribed with runes. It is possible then that the Vettrim, is a scabbard mouthpiece fitting, and will be used as such in this work.

The runes on the Vettrim are as follows:

Which transliterates to :

But has invited much speculation as to its meaning. Rune scholars have debated everything from "Wild thruster" to "Foe disembowler"!

If we were to pause for a moment and adopt the translation techniques as championed we Erik Moltke, we would see that "SORI" is most likely a misspelling for "S " - 'sword'. "AeCO" must then be the name of the donor or owner of the sword. Probably the latter, since AeCO is a female name.

These runes thus represent a simple Donors Formula and we find a analogue in our period with a strap end from Ireland, inscribed with the runes:

which transliterates to:

and means that: "Domnal Sealshead Owns this sword".

In conclusion, the passage from the Havamal and the related archaeological finds do not help us with our present enquiry since they probably relate to the pre Viking period. However, the discovery of Owners and Donors Formulas in the archaeological record, suggest a continuity of this practice. Runes were probably only used in association with scabbards as formulas then, rather than as art work for their own sake. New archaeological finds may of course, change all this!

APPENDIX 2. SCABBARD SLINGS, ILLUSTRATIONS and USERS.

Due to the fragmentary nature of the illustrations and dearth of archaeological finds this appendix reflects only the results of the researches in this dissertation, and should in no way be considered to be a complete state of affairs.

Category A Illustrations of each type of scabbard sling.

- 1) FRONT PLATE: 7A, 7B, 7C, 7D, 14B?, 15A?
- 2) BACK RING: 1C, 1D, 8A, 8B, 8C, 8D, 9B, 12A, 12B, 12C
- 3) SLIDER: 10A, 10B?
- 4) DOUBLE SLIDER: 4A
- 5) SPLIT STRAP: 2A, 2B, 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D,
10C? 13A, 13B, 13C, 13D, 15D
- 6) DROP STRAP: 4C, 5A, 5B, 5C, 10D
- 7) MISCELLANEOUS: 1A, 1B, 2C, 2D, 3A, 3B, 4B, 5D,
9A, 9C, 9D, 11A, 11B, 14A, 14C, 14D

Category B Which type of fitting was used by whom?

- 1) FRONT PLATE: Saxon, Norman, Hiberno-Saxon (Oseberg), Carolingian
- 2) BACK RING: Saxon, Norman, Carolingian
- 3) SLIDER: Norman, Hiberno-Norse? (Irish)
- 4) DOUBLE SLIDER: Saxon
- 5) SPLIT STRAP: Saxon, Saxo-Dane (Winchester), Carolingian, Frisian, Norse, Norman, Byzantine, Ottonian? Saxo-Norman (London), Hiberno-Norse (Manx), Swedish
- 6) DROP STRAP: Saxon, Byzantine, Ottonian

Category C Who used each type of fitting?

- 1) SAXON: Front plate, Back Ring, Double slider,
 Split strap, Drop Strap
- 2) NORMAN: Front plate, Back Ring, Slider, Split strap
- 3) VIKING: Front plate, Slider, split strap,
- 4) HIBERNO- NORSE: Front plate, Slider, Split strap
- 5) CAROLINGIAN: Front plate, Back ring, Split strap
- 6) OTTONIAN: Split strap, Drop strap
- 7) BYZANTINE: Split strap, Drop strap

Appendix 3 Scabbard Rivets

The Utrecht Psalter [2B] illustrates two circles near the top of the scabbard which appear to secure the sling to the scabbard. It was thought that these may be rivets fixing the baldric to the scabbard. Also because of their prominence, it was thought that the rivets may have been large and decorative. To test the feasibility of this hypothesis, the system was experimentally recreated with the following results. After all, there must be some way in which the sling is attached to the scabbard.

Initially, a small strap was placed on the back of the scabbard, mirroring the sling on the front. Two large rivets secured the two straps together, one either side of the scabbard, []. The technique was easy to achieve but when the scabbard was worn, problems were encountered. We have seen that when a scabbard is slung, the leading strap tends to wrap itself across the back of the scabbard. As the rivets are out board of the scabbard, it tended to hang awkwardly. Also, in the manuscript the rivets (if that is what they are) are shown to be inboard!

The next attempt at this system was to put the rivets inboard. Huge difficulties were encountered with this idea. Firstly, at the scabbard edge, the profile tends to curve. This means that rivets with curved stems have to be used see []. In reality it is almost impossible to rivet over a stem end that is not straight. This was confirmed with several abortive attempts!

The second problem that was encountered, was that riveting necessitates hammering, and hammering quickly damaged the scabbard sheath and internal laths. Even with a sword blade template fitted in side the scabbard for rigidity, irreparable damage was done to the scabbard. In conclusion then, these circles cannot be rivets.

These circles on the manuscript could however depict decorative caps (rather like the Valbost encountered in appendix 1). The stem is made curved as for the rivet, but a small hole is drilled and pegged with a small pin, see []. Thus the sling is easily attached to the scabbard with out riveting, but with a peg and hole technique known to the Viking craftsmen.

This system does not look too attractive from the front but the system could not be used the other way around as the stem and peg would foul and tear clothing. The circles could then represent a cap that simple fits over the stem and peg, and if decorated would like quite pleasant.

The system worked well when reconstructed, it is only a pity that none have been found in the archaeological record. This appendix then can only serve to supply one possible explanation of the circles drawn on the Utrecht Psalter.

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WOODRUFF, D. (19) Alfred the Great,

Osprey Elite 9.

Archaeologia Vol.24 (1832)

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Appendix 4 SCABBARD DIMENSIONS

In order to make this essay as complete as possible, a section is needed in which the dimensions of the scabbard and its fittings are provided. To this end, in the illustrative section [B1 -B9] and [C1 -C3], a full sized scale is used for all the fittings; the few exceptions are highlighted.

The scarcity of scabbard finds has already been noted, however scabbard fittings can provide additional information. The many chapes tend to be tapered so can tell us little about the width and thickness of the scabbards that they came from. Mouthpieces can tell us the maximum size of the scabbard at the top, but these are few in number.

Slings pose similar problems since they can taper up from a strap end, or down to a buckle plate. We can get a better idea from the buckle ring, since a strap that is too wide will not pass through. For comparison however, I have given the width of the strap ends and strap connectors as this will suggest minimum strap widths. The distributor ring diameters will give an idea of the general size, whilst the Manx scabbards give an idea of where on the scabbard the two split straps were fixed.

SCABBARD DIMENSIONS (all dimensions are approximate)

	BALLATEARE	CRONK MOAR	DYBECK	REPTON	SCAR	YORK
SCABBARD WIDTH	6.2cm.	6.3cm.	7.0cm.	6.8cm.	7.3cm.	6.4cm.
SCABBARD LENGTH	80.4cm.	79.2cm	/	77.3cm	84.2cm	/

FIXING PLATE DIMENSIONS

	BALLATEARE	ÖSTRA PÅBODA	OSEBERG	UNPROVENANCED
LENGTH	5.4cm.	6.4cm.	4.2cm.	3.0cm.
WIDTH	0.9cm.	3.3cm.	4.2cm.	3.0cm.

SCABBARD FITTINGS DIMENSIONS

	BALLA-TEARE	CRONK MOAR	LONDON N.F.W.	LONDON TEMPLE	REPTON	VASTER GOTLAND	S/E COAST FIND
DISTANCE BELOW RIM FOR:-FIRST SPLIT STRAP	11.0cm	9.0cm	/	/	/	/	/
:-SECOND SPLIT STRAP	20.0cm	13.5cm	/	/	/	/	/
STRAP WIDTHS AT:-BUCKLE	1.3cm.	1.3cm	/	/	2.5cm. & 2.0cm.	/	/
:- STRAP END	0.8cm.	0.5cm?	/	/	0.6cm.	/	/
:- STRAP CONNECTER	1.7cm.	0.5cm	/	1.3cm!	/	0.7cm/ 0.8cm?	1.6cm
:- FIXING RING	1.2cm.	1.1cm.	/	/	/	/	/
:- FIXING PLATE	0.9cm.	/	/	/	/	/	/
DIST-RIBUTER RING Ø	2.2cm.	2.3cm.	4.0cm.	2.66cm	/	1.8cm?	/

From the foregoing table, it is hoped that the reader will get some idea of the various dimensions of various scabbard fittings. It can be seen that distributor rings are all roughly the same size, at the 2cm. diameter mark. The exception to this is the example from London: New Fresh Wharf, which may therefore have had some other use.

The fixing points of the split straps vary for the two main scabbards; from 9 -11cm. and 13.5 -20cm respectively. A reconstruction of both systems showed that both tilted forward, though the Ballateare scabbard had the better balance.

The baldric width was preserved in only one example: that from London Temple at 1.3cm. Elsewhere the baldric width may vary even upon the same scabbard. On the Ballateare system, the baldric cannot be wider than 1.3cm if it is to pass through the buckle, and is unlikely to be narrower than 0.8cm. if it is to have the strap end fitted. The upper split strap is probably no narrower than at the plate of 0.9cm, yet can be up to 1.7cm. wide at the strap connector. The lower split strap can be no wider than at the fixing ring of 1.2cm. but could taper up to 1.7cm wide at the strap connector. To make all these dimensions easier to visualise, see the following illustrations: [E1 to E3] Ballateare, Cronk moar and Repton respectively.

1A



ANGLO-IRISH
GILT BRONZE
FITTING.
FOUND IN NORWAY.

Ⓒ?

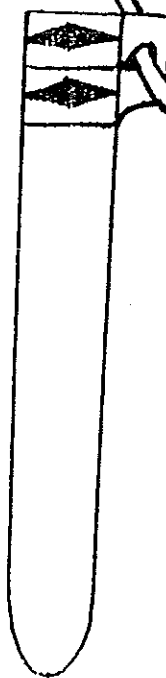
DU CHAILLŪ
THE VIKING AGE

1B



MANUSCRIPT IN
OSTERREICHISCHE
NATIONAL BIBLIOTHEK
CAROLINGIAN Ⓒ?

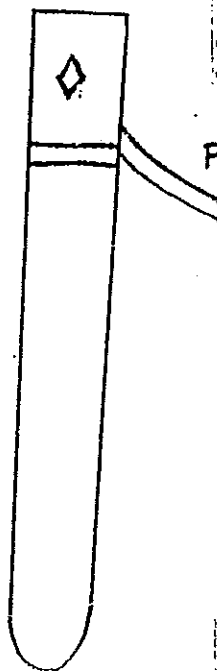
1C



MANUSCRIPT
SE. GALL IN
STIFTS BIBLIOTHEK
SE. GALLEN

CAROLINGIAN Ⓒ

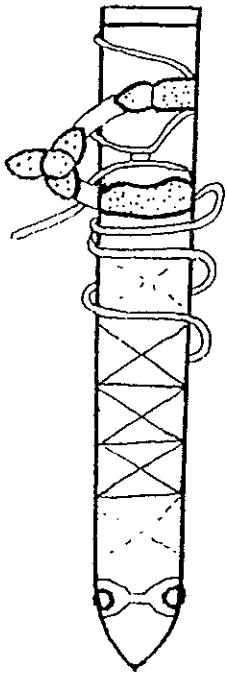
1D



UN-NAMED
MANUSCRIPT

PROBABLY
CAROLINGIAN Ⓒ.

2A

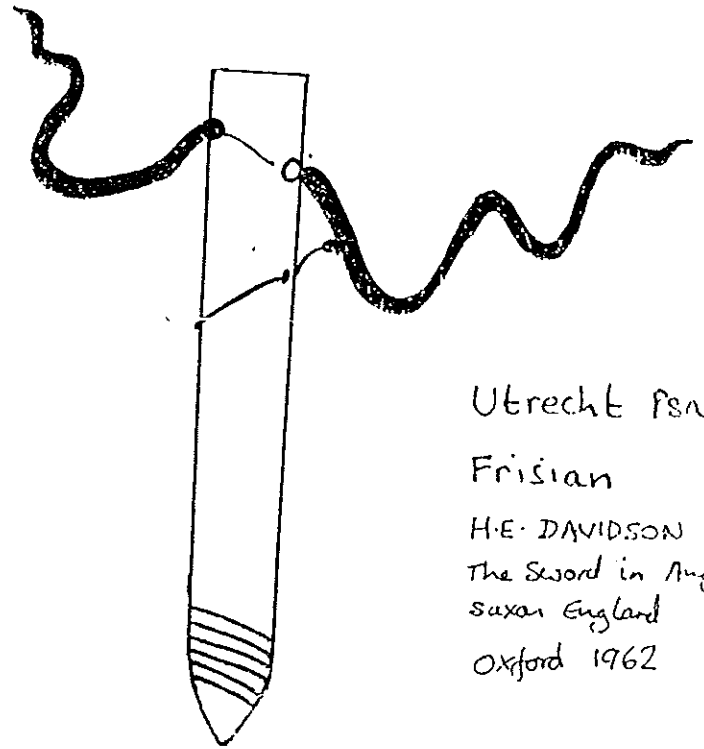


Bible of Count
Vivian

Caroglianian
©

The Dark Ages
D. Talbot - Rice ED
P. 281

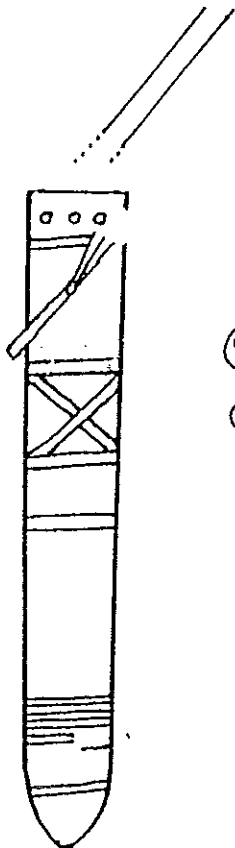
2B



Utrecht Psalt-

Frisian

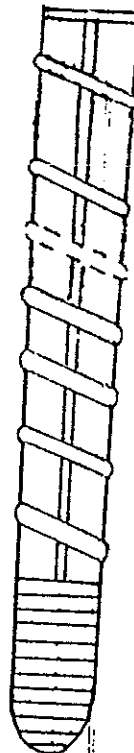
H.E. DAVIDSON
The Sword in Anglo
saxon England
Oxford 1962



Psalter, N. French
© Bib. Munic., Amiens
Osprey 150 p.23

Baldric hung?

2C



Fresco in the Oratory
of St. Benedict, Rome.
Caroglianian ©

2D

3A

Leges Barbarorum
Caroglinian . © copy
D. WOODRUFF
ALFRED THE GREAT

A "kings" sword

Probably Baldrick Hung

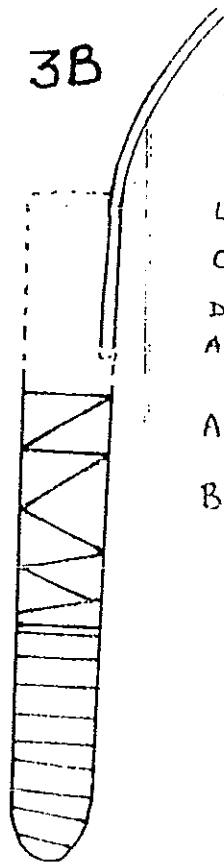


3B

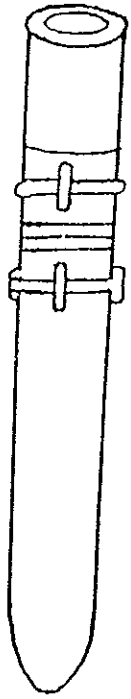
Leges Barbarorum
Caroglinian . © copy
D. WOODRUFF
ALFRED THE GREAT.

A "princes" sword.

Baldrick Hung



4 A

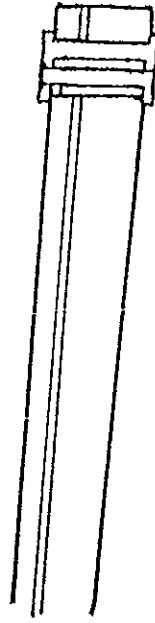


Benedictional of
Bishop Aethelwold

Archaeologia Vol. 21
1832.

Anglo Saxon (10.

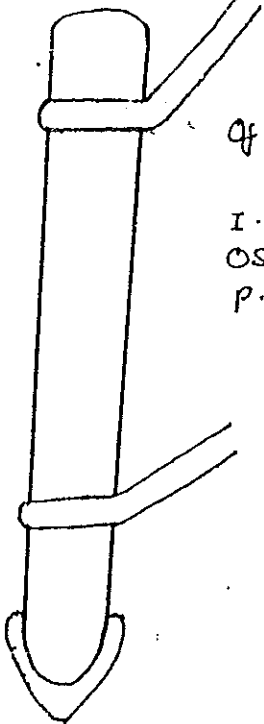
4 B



Reichenau:
Gospel Book of Otto III.
Ottonian (10

The Dark Ages
D. Talbot Rice: p. 305

Baldric

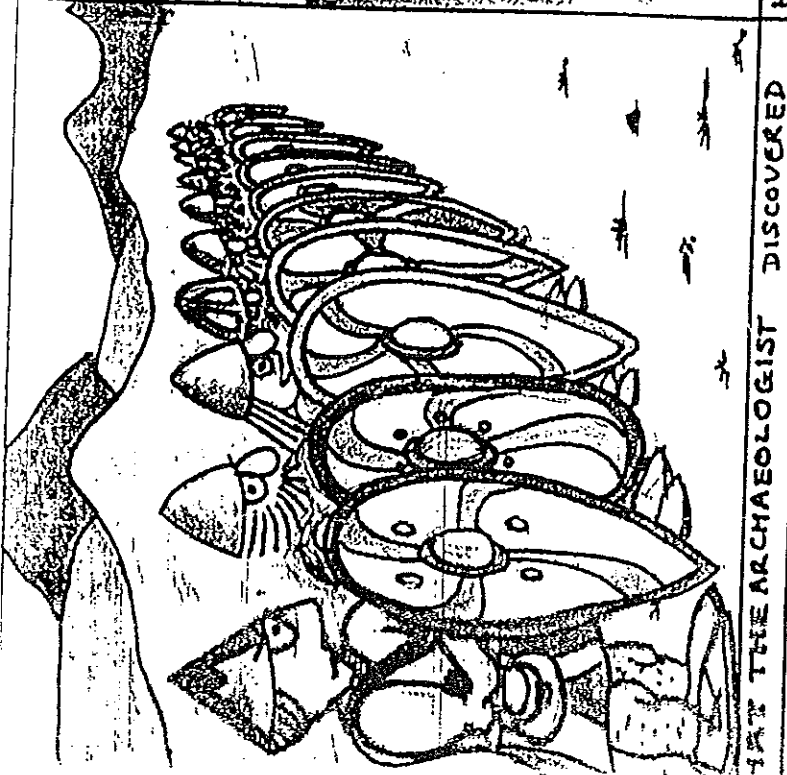


(10 Ivory Casket
of Armenians in Byzantine
employment.

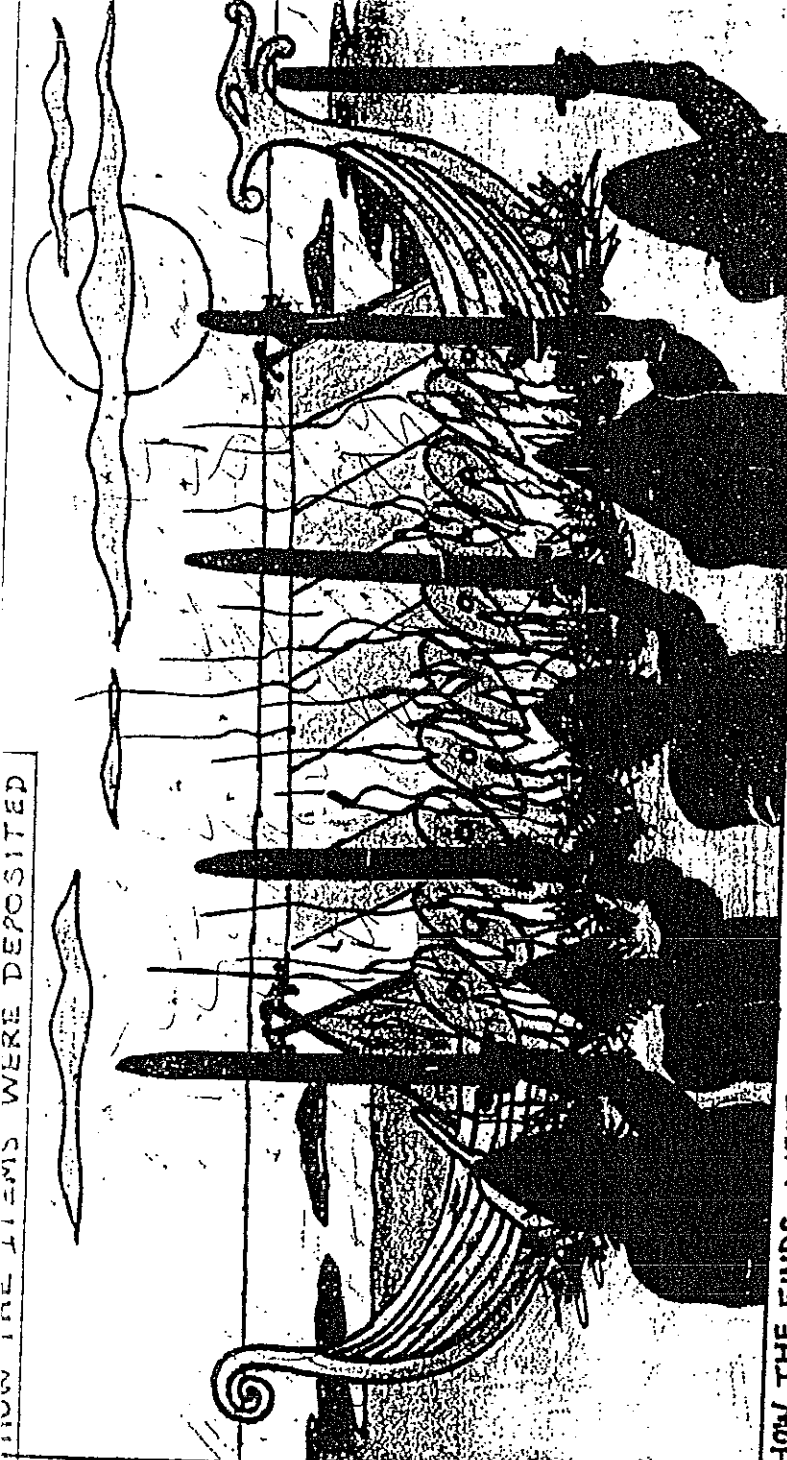
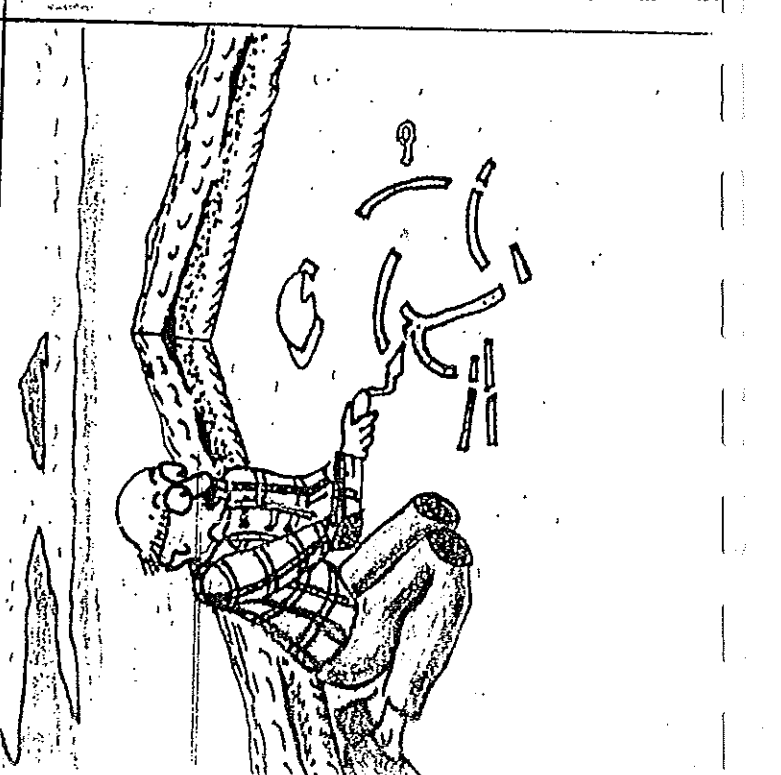
I. Heath
Osprey 89
p. 29.

4 C

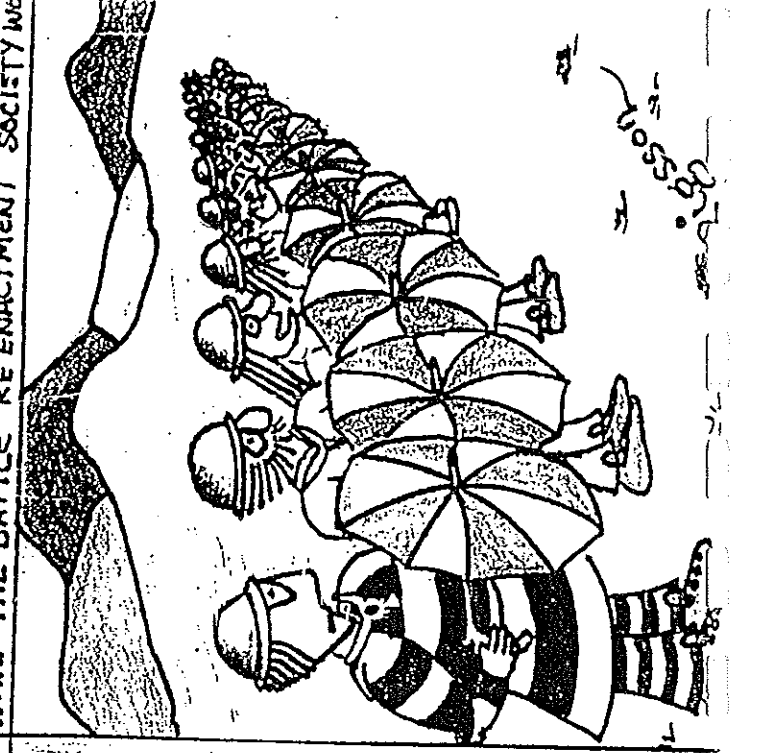
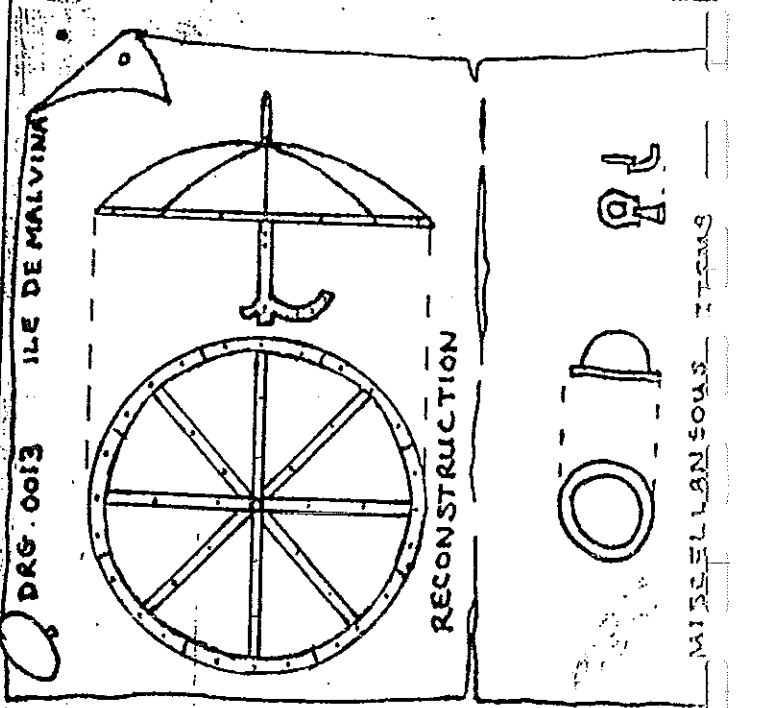
HOW THE ITEMS WERE DEPOSITED



HAT THE ARCHAEOLOGIST DISCOVERED



HOW THE FINDS WERE INTERPRETED

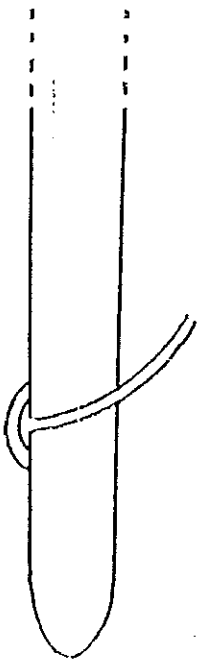


WHAT THE BATTLE RE ENACTMENT SOCIETY MADE

DRG. 0013

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

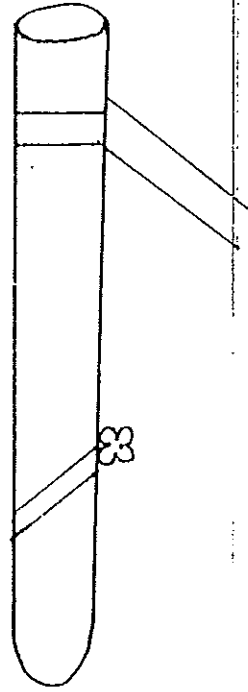
5A



History of Abraham
M.S. Caedmon
C10.~ C11. Anglo Saxon
Archaeologia Vol. 24
1832

Probably Belt Hung

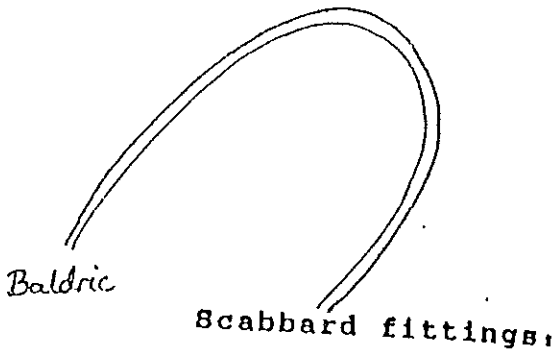
5B



M.S. Harley
2506
Anglo Saxon

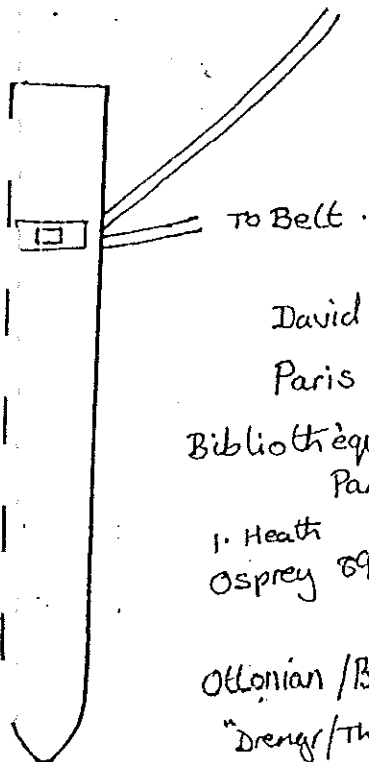
"Orion"

Belt Hung



Baldric

Scabbard fittings



to Belt

David + Goliath
Paris Psalter
Bibliothèque Nationale
Paris

J. Heath
Osprey 89 p. 27

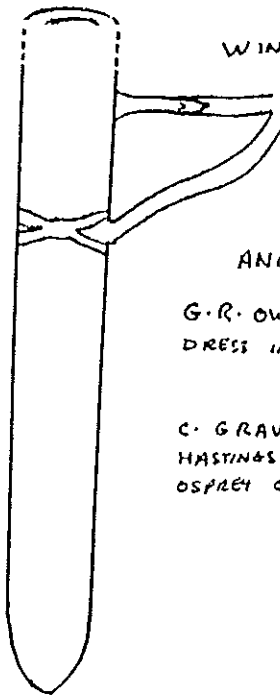
Oldonian / Byzantine
"Dreng / Dreng"

M.S. Caedmon
@ / @ Anglo Saxon
Archaeologia Vol. 24
1832



na
D

6A



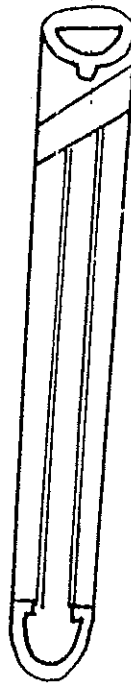
WINCHESTER FRIEZE

ANGLO SAXON (II)

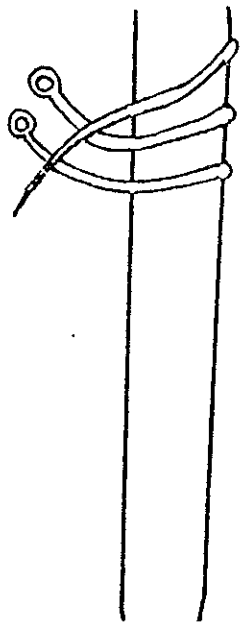
G. R. OWEN-CROCKER
DRESS IN ANGLO SAXON ENGLAND
k

C. GRAVETT
HASTINGS 1066
OSPREY CAMPAIGN 17

6B

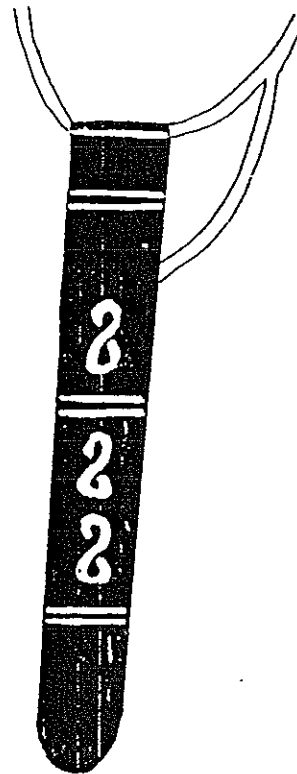


Ebberston Carving
Anglo Saxon Late (II)
H. E. DAVIDSON
SWORD IN ANGLO SAXON
ENGLAND.



Sacramentary of
Henrich II (II)
[1002 ~ 1004]

6C



scylitzes m/s
Now in Madrid
Byzantine based
on (II) originals

I. Heath p. 11
Osprey 89

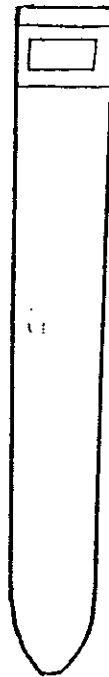
6D

7A

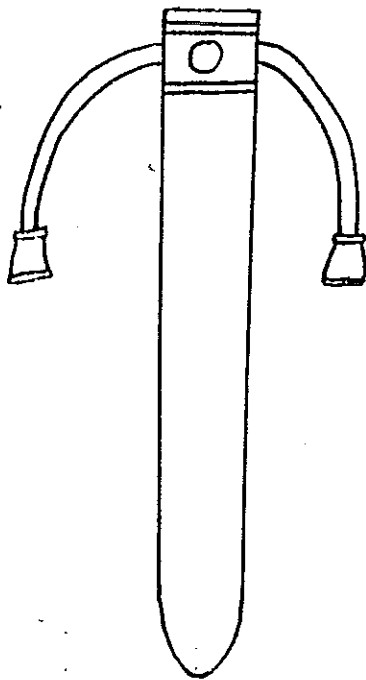


M. Rudd . p.54
 The Bayeux Tapestry
 Anglo/Norman (ii)
 'king Haralds sword'

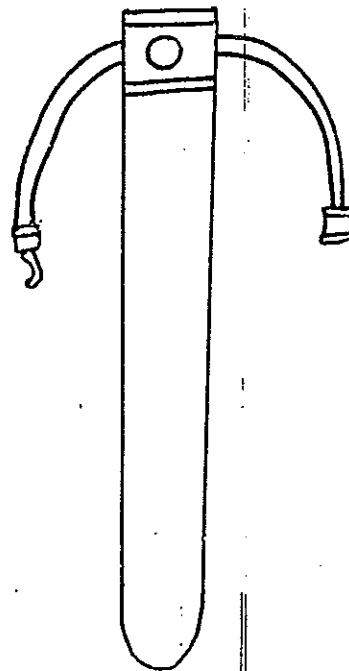
7B



M. Rudd p.62.
 The Bayeux Tapestry
 Anglo/Norman (ii)



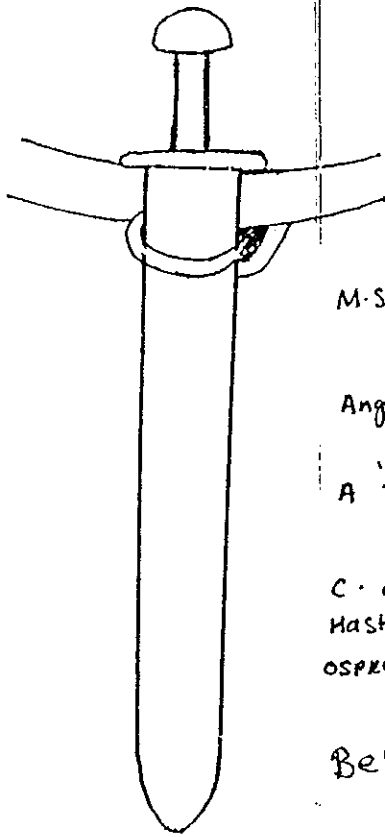
M. Rudd
 The Bayeux
 Tapestry
 p. 44



M. Rudd
 The Bayeux
 Tapestry
 p.44

7C.

7D



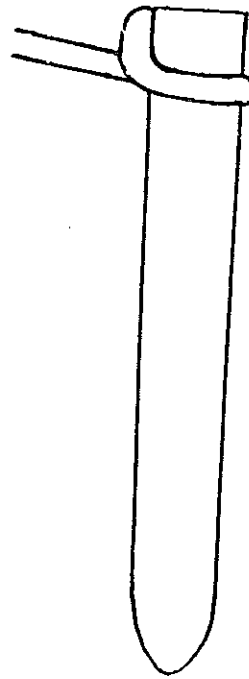
M.S. Cotton Claudius
B. iv f 24v

Anglo Saxon 1020-1050

A "Thegn's" sword.

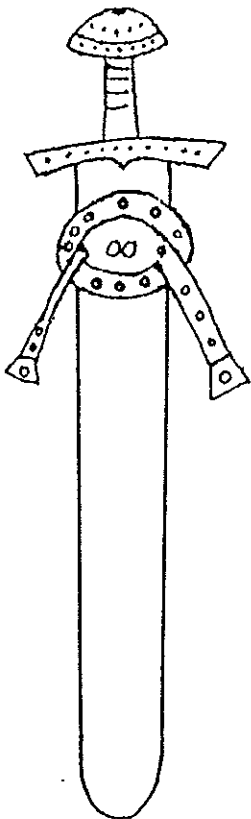
C. GRAVETT
HASTINGS 1066
OSPREY CAMPAIGN 17

Belt hung.



MOGENS RUD
The Bayeux
Tapestry p. 43

Belt hung

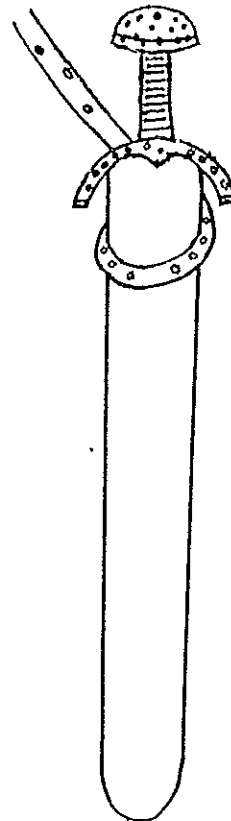


M.S. Cotton Tiberius
c. VI f 10v

Anglo Saxon c. 1050

C.R. Dodwell
Anglo Saxon Art -
a new perspective.

8C



M.S. Cotton Tiberius
c. vi f. 9

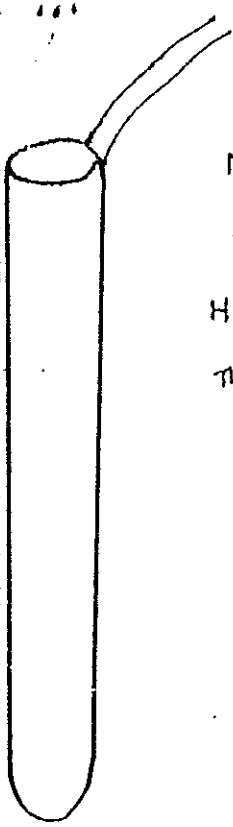
Anglo Saxon c. 1050

A "Thegn's" sword.

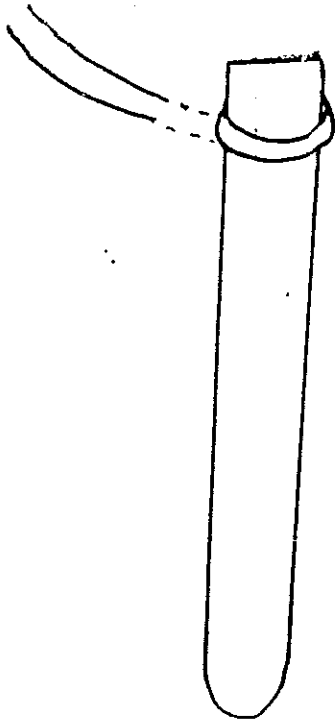
C. GRAVETT
HASTINGS 1066
OSPREY CAMPAIGN 17

Belt Hung

8D



M/S GOLIATH II
 ANGLO SAXON (II)
 H.R. Ellis Davidson
 The Sword in Anglo Saxon
 England.
 plate XVI Fig. 110.



9B

M. Ridd
 The Bayeux
 Tapestry p. 45
 Belt hung



MS Cotton Cleopatra
 C.viii f. 18v
 Anglo Saxon (II)
 A "Thegn's" sword.
 C. GRAVETT
 HASTINGS 1066
 OSPREY CAMPAIGN 13.

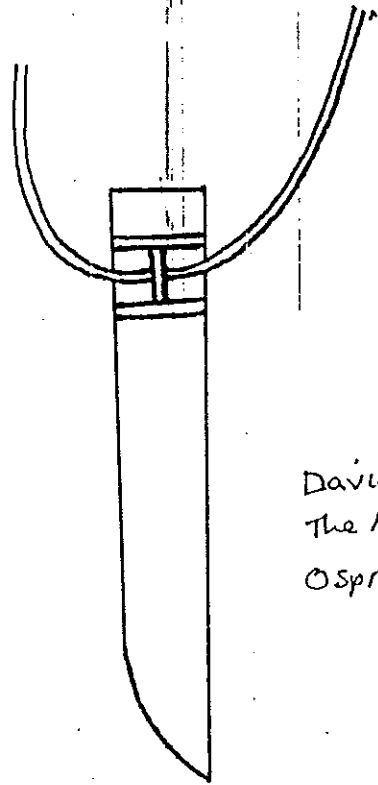


St. Demetrius Ikon.
 Byzantine (II).
 I. Heath.
 Osprey 89

.C

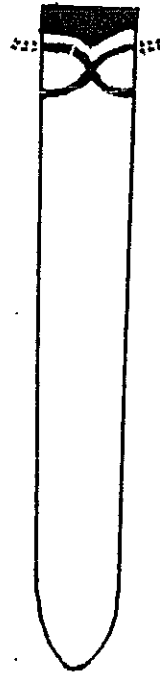
9D

10A

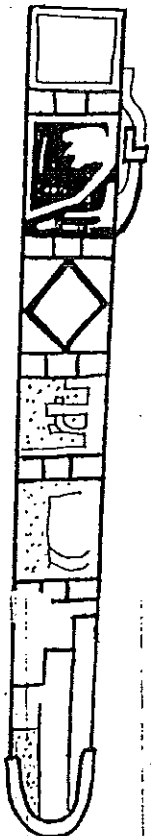


David Nicolle
The Age of Charlemagne
Osprey 150.

10B



Arras Bible
① Norman ?
Osprey 85 p.33



Triptych of the
Forty Martyrs.
Leningrad ①
Byzantine?
R. Fossier
The Middle Ages
(350 ~ 950)
Page 100.

10C



Baldric
Ivory Plaque of St. Demetrius
Byzantine ①
Medieval knight
D. Edge & J. Miles Paddock
P. 20
"Dreng / Thegn"

Waist
Belt

10D

11A



Unspecified M/S
Anglo Saxon C.1000
Osprey 85 p.17

11B



Ivory Chessman
S. Italy or Sicilian
Prob 11th
Byzantine styles
Osprey Elite 9 p.49

12 A

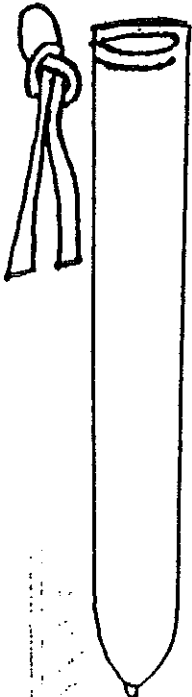


INVASION OF ENGLAND
 BY IVAR THE BONELESS
 886 ILLUMINATIONS FROM
 AN ENGLISH HISTORICAL
 OF THE (II)
 PIERPONT MORGAN
 LIBRARY

12 B



INVASION OF ENGLAND
 BY IVAR THE BONELESS
 886 ILLUMINATIONS FROM
 AN ENGLISH HISTORICAL
 (II)
 PIERPONT MORGAN
 LIBRARY NY.
 " Vikings Lords of
 the Seas -
 Yves Cohat.

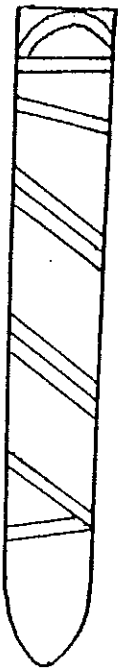


A, B + D
 Invasion of England
 by Ivar the Boneless
 886 Illuminations from
 an English history
 of the (II)
 Pierpont Morgan Library NY.
 From the book
 The Vikings Lords of
 the Seas
 by Yves Cohat.

Back of Scabbard.

12 C

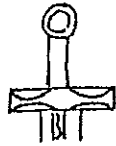
13A



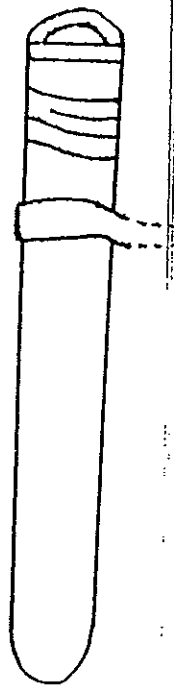
Hylestad Stave Church
Norway (12)

M. Magnusson
Viking: Hammer
of the North.

Note: sword has
straight cross guard:



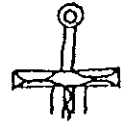
13B



Hylestad Stave
church, Norway
(12)

M. Magnusson
Viking: Hammer
of the North.

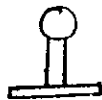
Note: sword has
straight cross guard:



Belt Hung



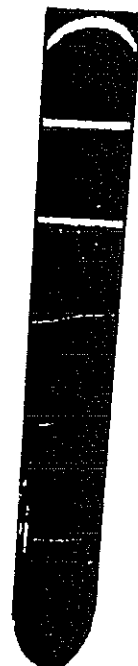
Unprovined
(12 M/S "Normans")



T. WISE
SAXON, VIKING
AND NORMAN

OSPREY 85

Probably sash tied
around the waist



Unprovined
(12 M/S "Normans")



T. WISE
SAXON, VIKING
AND NORMAN

OSPREY 85

Probably sash tied
around the waist.

13C

13D

14A

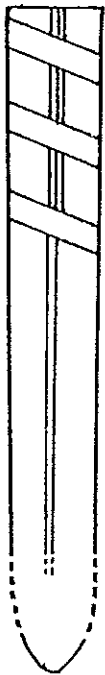


Queen Messende's
Psalter - Ivory Cover
Early 12
In European, Byzantine
and Islamic styles.
Osprey Elite 9 p.51
Baldric hung

14B



11/12
MS. Lat 8846, fol. 62
M. Bishop
Middle Ages
Page 36.
Cassell. London.



LEWIS CHESSMEN
NORWEGIAN? 12
M. TAYLOR
D.M. PUBLICATIONS LTD.
A "KING'S" SWORD

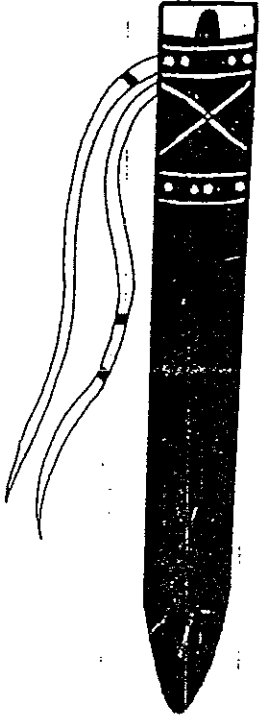
14C



Paderborn altar
12 Rhenish.

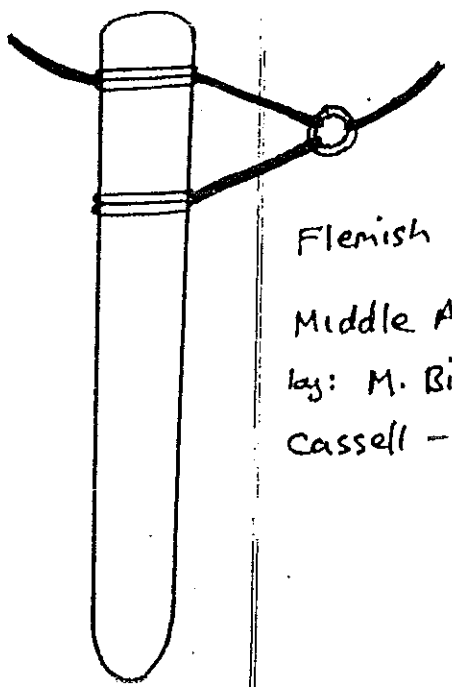
14D

15A



Fresco Church of
Incoronati, Rome (13)
Constantinian

The Dark Ages
ed: D. Talbot-Rice P. 371

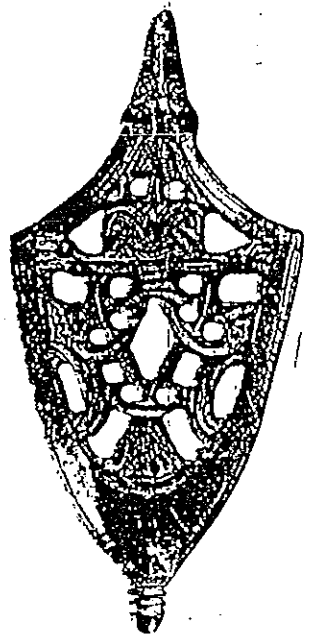
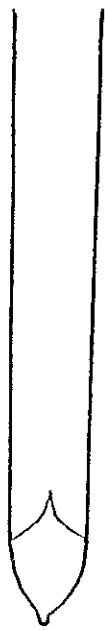


Flemish Miniature (15)

Middle Ages
by: M. Bishop
Cassell - London.

15B

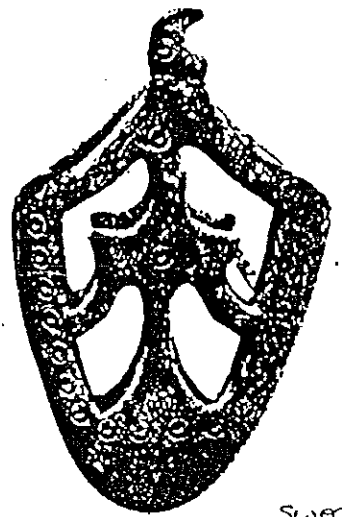
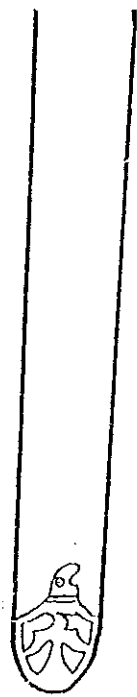
B1.A



Lund chape, Sweden.
Danish ©
Vikingarna
Giunti
Malmö Museer 1989
p.141
8.1cm long X 4cm wide

(Full size)

B1.B



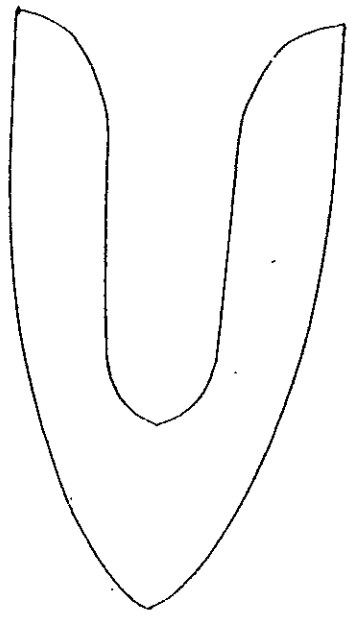
Swedish ©
Birka Chape.

- 1. Birka - Grave 750
- 2. Birka as a clay mould.
- 3. Årstad, Öland Sweden
- 4. Ile de Groix - Brittany

East Scandinavian and Eastern fashion
Viking Artefacts
J. Graham Campbell 1980.
Dimensions (3): H=6.5cm W=4.0cm
(Full size)

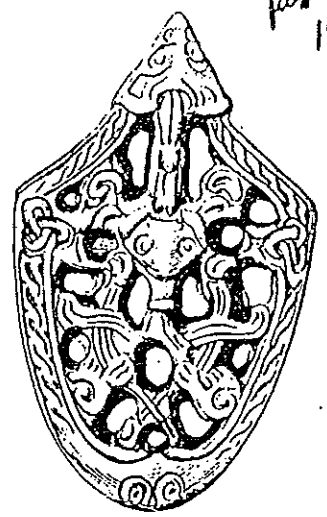
Parish 1992

B1.C



Birka Chape
Swedish ©
Slavic
The Northern World.
D. Wilson (ed). p.154
(Scale not known)

B1.D



Gotland Chape
Swedish ~ ©

A Guide to Anglo Saxon
and Foreign Teutonic
Antiquities
Trustees of the British Museum 1923
p.168.

Dimensions = H=6.5cm
W=4.0cm
(Full size)

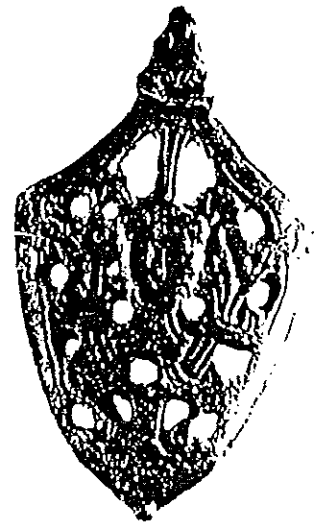
B2·A



York Chape (10)

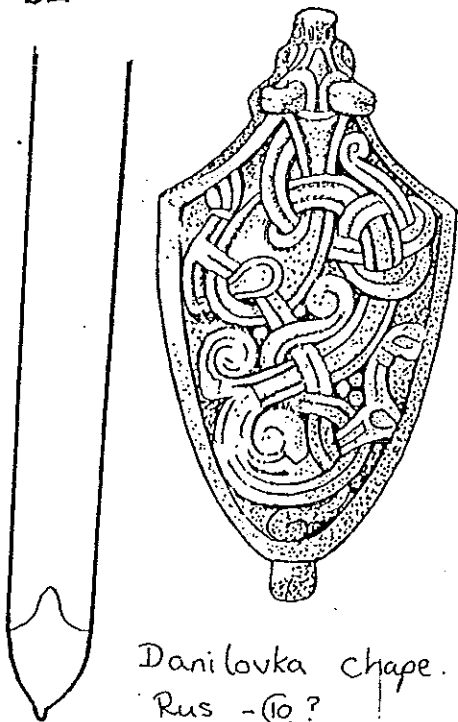
R. Hall p. 33
Viking Age Archaeology
(Full size)

B2·B



Bronze Chape
Nimschütz, Germany
(10 Scandinavian
Borre style
BFB p. 297.
scale 1:1.

B2·C

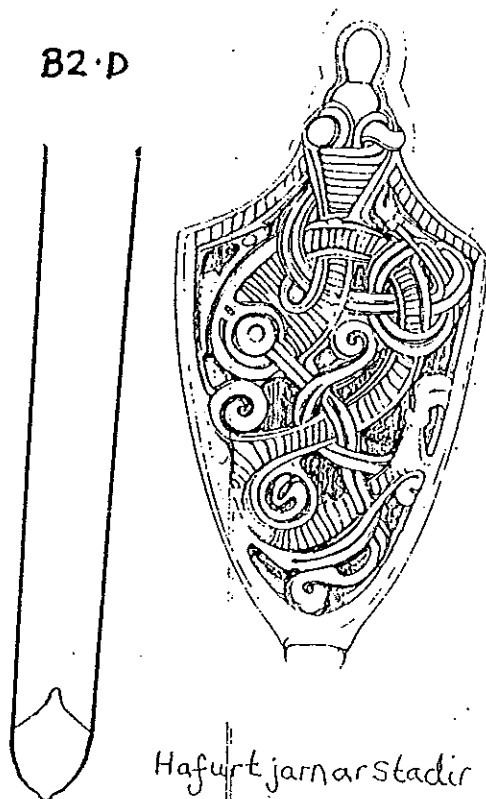


Danilovka Chape. Russia
Rus - (10?)

D. Wilson. ed.
The Northern World
p. 172.

(scale not known)

B2·D



Hafurtjarnarstadir
chape. Iceland (10?)

M. Magnusson
Viking Expansion Westwards
p. 94.

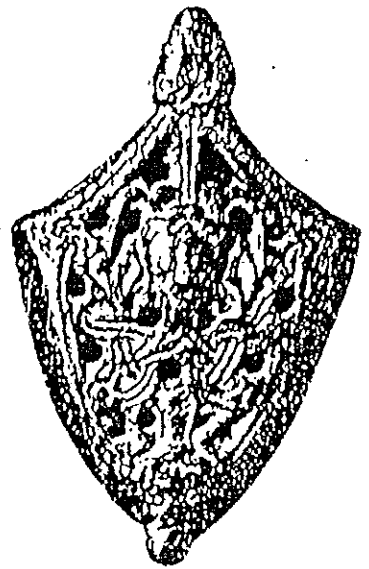
(scale not known)

B3.A



Bronze Chape
Astala - Finland
@ Jelling Style
from Scandinavia
BFB* p. 285

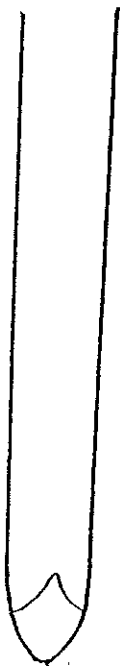
B3.B



Bronze chape
Korosten - Ukraine
Borre style - Scandinavian
circa 945 AD.
BFB p. 308.

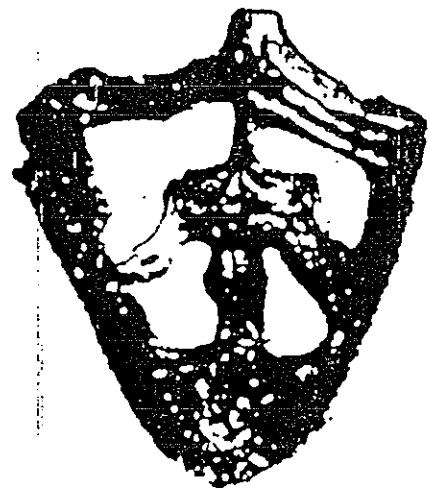
Russell
1992

B3.C



Bronze Chape
Lundur, N. Iceland.
@ ~ @ Scandinavian
BFB p. 313. Borre style

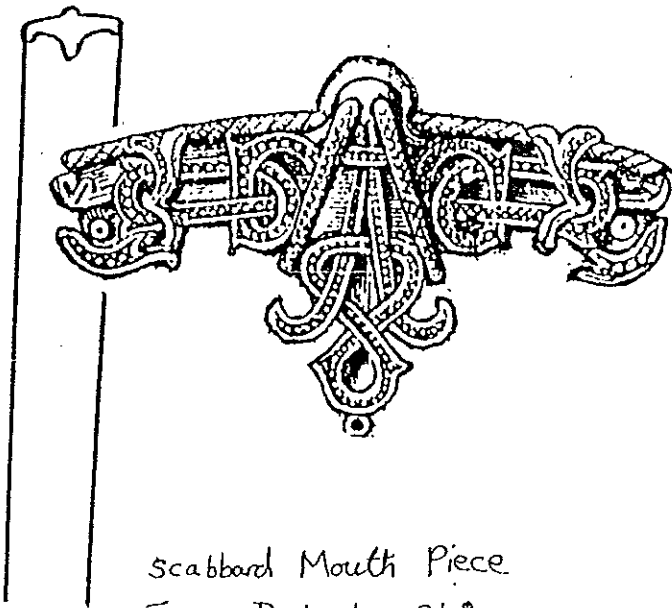
B3.D



Bronze Chape
Île de Groix, France
@ Scandinavian
Raven chape.
BFB p. 322.

Big Fuck off Viking Book
from Viking to Crusader

B4.A



Scabbard Mouth Piece

From : Dybeck ~ Skåne

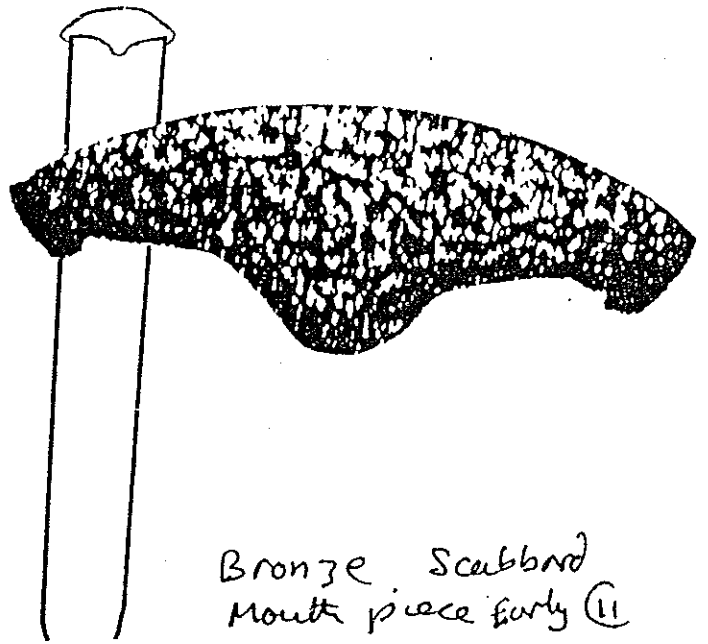
Anglo ~ Danish?

Late (10) (Full Size)

P. Dixon : Barbarian Europe. p.126.

P. DuChailly : The Viking Age. p.69

B4.B



Bronze Scabbard Mouth piece Early (11)

Foščerataja - Ukraine

(10) ringerike variation in style

BFB. p.309

(scale not given) .

David J. ...
1992

B4.C

Scabbard fittings:



ESSEN MINISTER

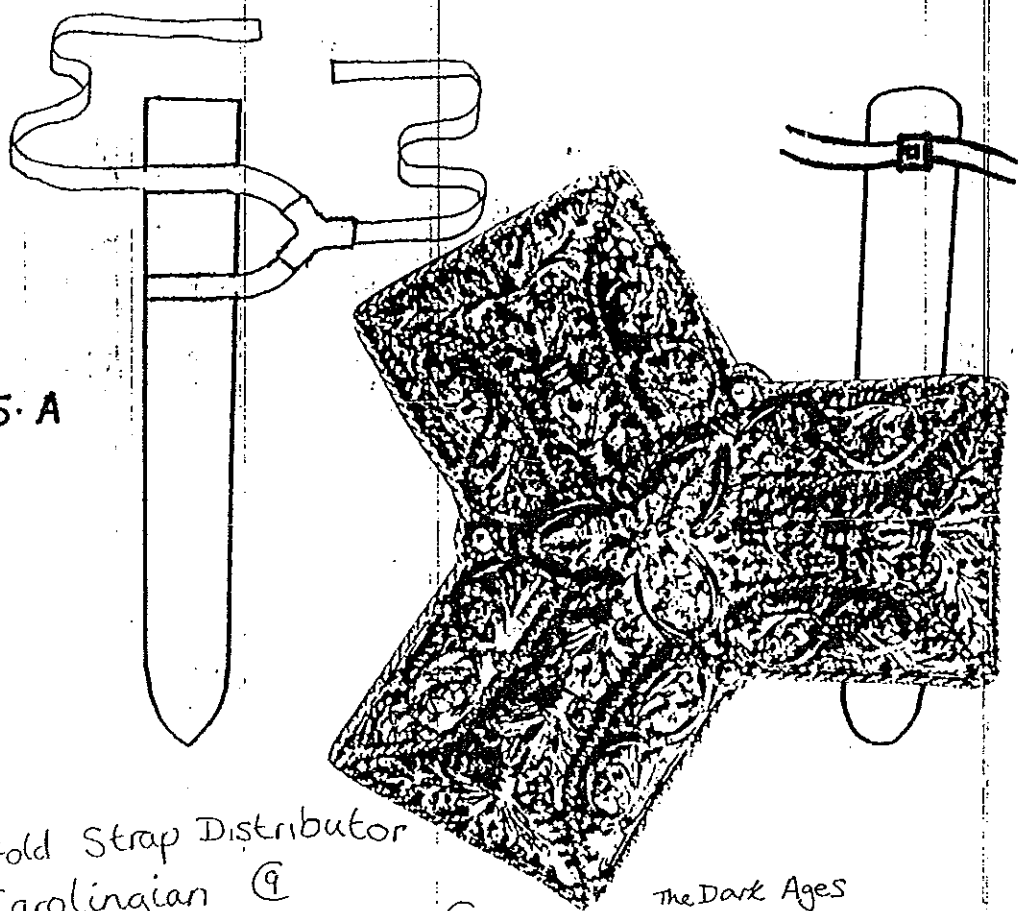
GERMAN LATE (10)

D. NICOLLE

OSPREY 150



Scabbard fittings:

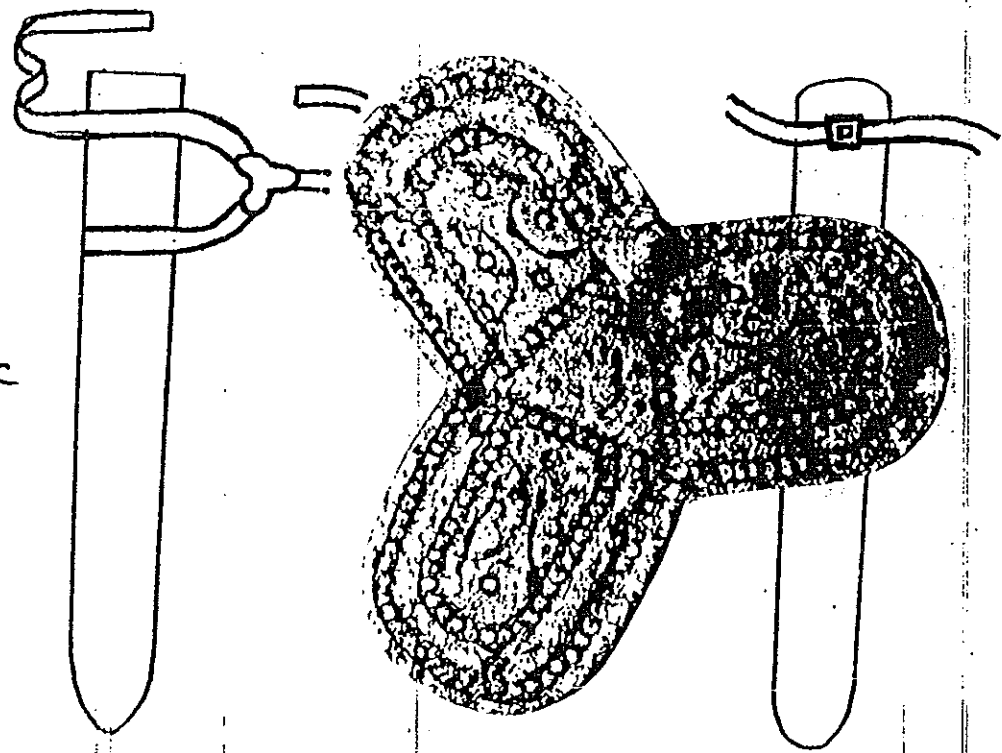


85-A

Gold Strap Distributor
Carolingian ©
Found in Hon in Norway ©
Reconstruction based upon the
Bible of Count Vivian & the
Utrecht Psalter

The Dark Ages
Ed: D. TALBOT RICE

Scabbard fittings:



85-C

Silver (?) Strap Distributor
From Moravia (© Czechoslovakia)

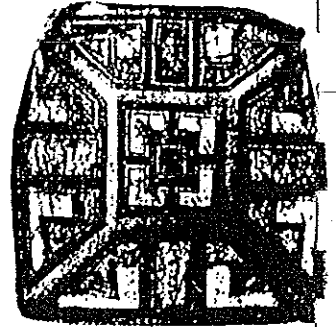
Three-armed mounts were evidently used for hanging a scabbard
of a sword to a belt. Dobný Kubín, Veľký Bysterec region.

85-B



Sword Strap Mount?

Sword strap mount?



85-D

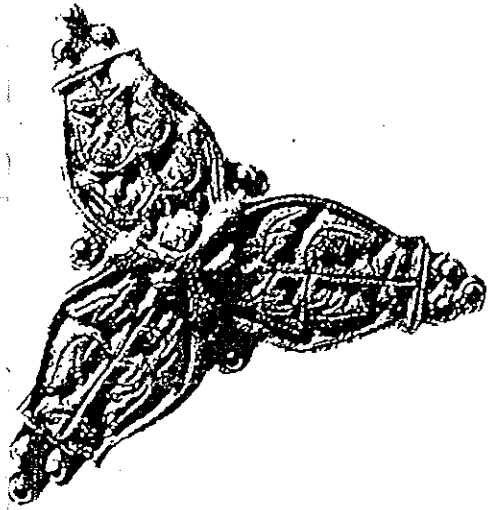
Gilt-bronze, enamel
L. 4.2cm
Oseberg, Sem, Vestfold, Norway
8th-9th cent. Hiberno-Saxon
Universitetets Oldsaksamling, Oslo, Oseberg

Enamelled mount

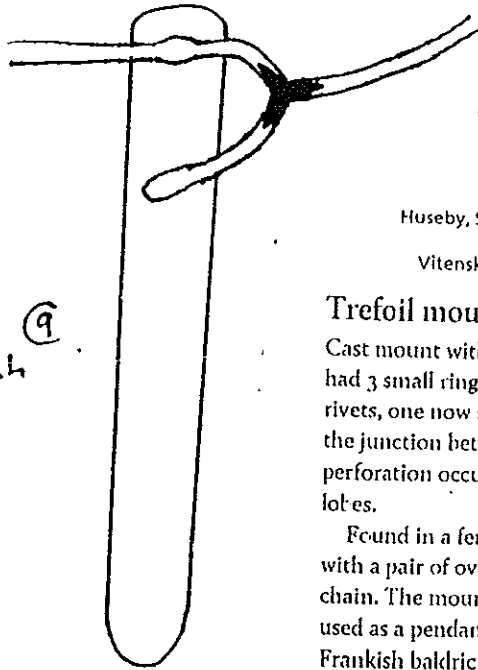
Mount in the shape of a truncated pyramid
Inlaid with red, yellow and blue cloisonné
enamel in cells between cast frames. Simple
geometric patterns. Broad borders define
top and the trapezoidal sides; subdivided
narrower borders.

From the Oseberg burial (cf. cat. no. 1)
Position in the ship unknown. Original use
unknown, possibly a belt mount. Made in
the British Isles in 8th cent.

B6.A



Huseby ⑨
Frankish



Silver
H. 5.8cm
Huseby, Skaun, Sør-Trøndelag, Norway.
9th cent. Frankish
Vitenskapsmuseet, Trondheim, T8526

Trefoil mount - ABOVE 1:1

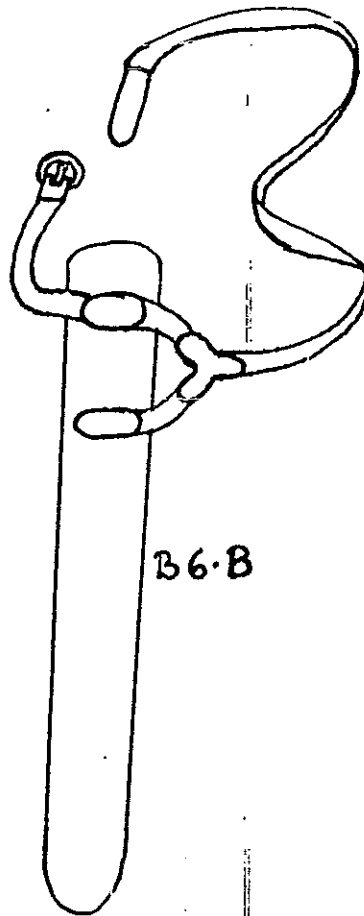
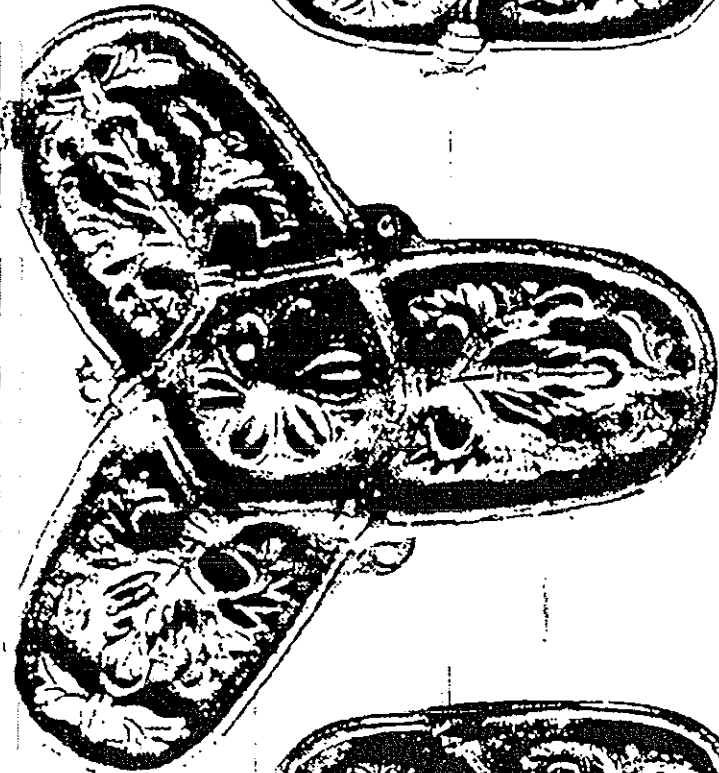
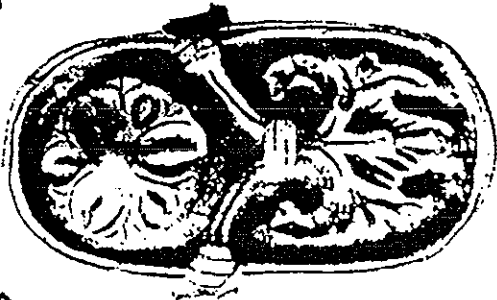
Cast mount with plant decoration. Each lobe had 3 small rings of sheet silver below the rivets, one now survives. Similar rivets are in the junction between the lobes. A secondary perforation occurs near the tip of one of the lobes.

Found in a female grave of early 9th cent., with a pair of oval brooches and a silver chain. The mount was probably secondarily used as a pendant but was originally part of a Frankish baldric (cf. cat. no. 135). This form inspired Norwegian trefoil brooches (cf. cat. no. 137).

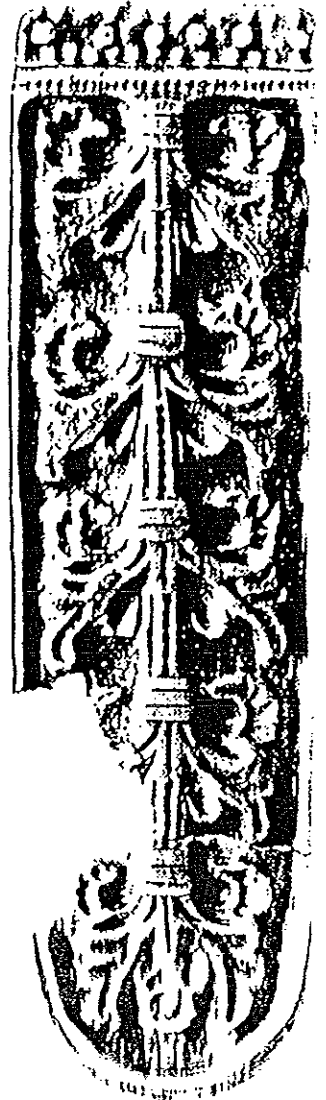
Bibl.: Schetelig 1917, 266, fig. 272; Graham-Campbell 1980, no. 328; Wamers 1981, passim, 466, 2.2

BFB. p.262.

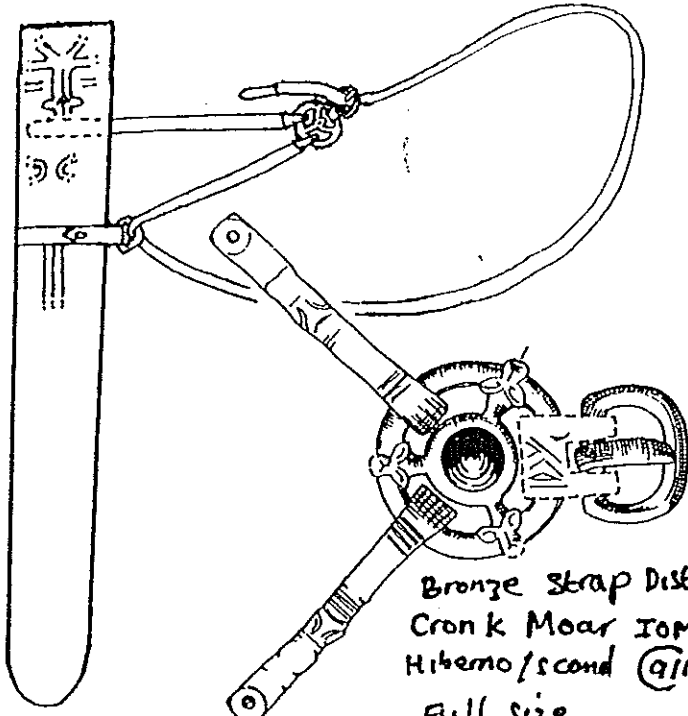
silver gilt + Niello
Påboda - Sweden
the oil mounts from sword
scabbard - below.
Frankish ⑨
BFB p.261



B6.B



R7-A



Bronze Strap Dist.
Cronk Moar IOM
Hiberno/scand @/10
Full size

Bersu's reconstruction
for the two max distributor rings.

Viking graves in
Isle of Man
56 + Pl. XIV :

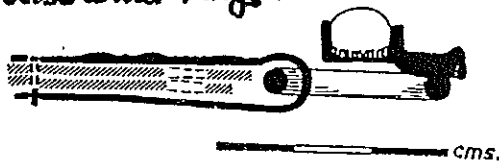
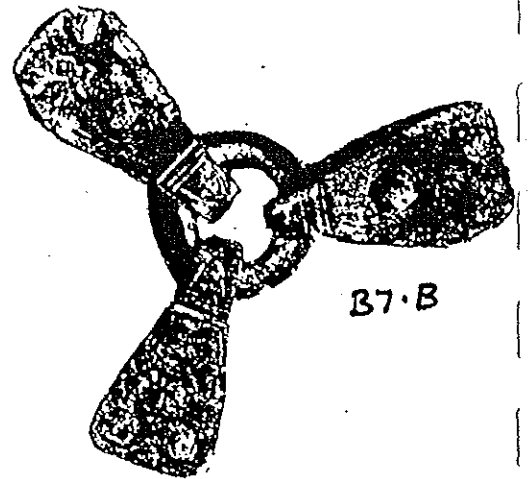


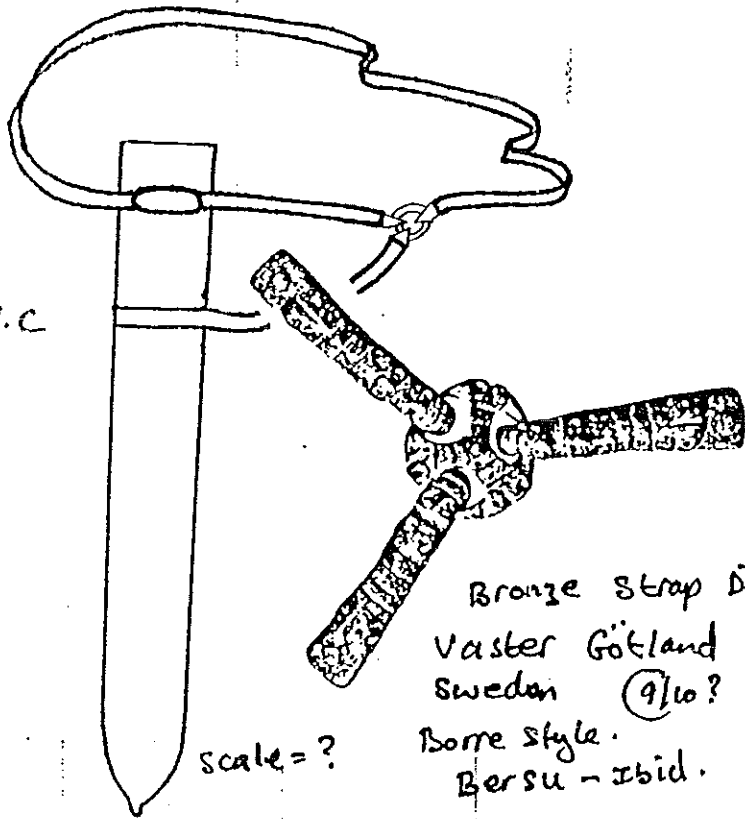
FIG. 43
Bronze strap-distributor from Cronk Moar.



B7-B

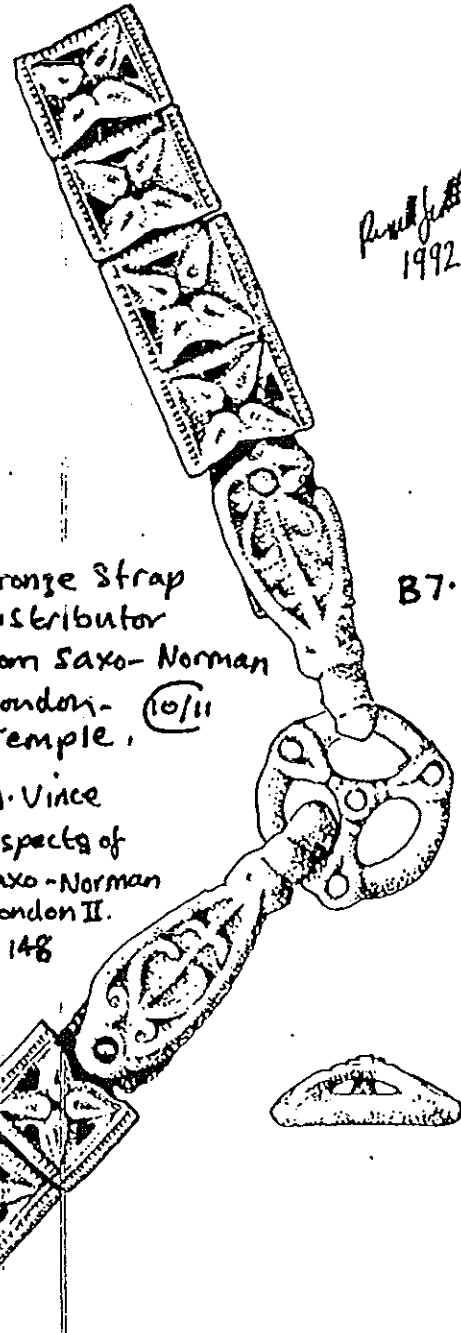
Bronze Strap Dist.
Ballateare, Isle of Man
Hiberno Scandinavian
C9/10 Full size
Bersu - Ibid

7.C



Bronze Strap Dist.
Vaster Gotland
Sweden @/10?
Borre style.
Bersu - Ibid.

Reconstruction based on finds from Östra Paboda
and from Utrech Psalter



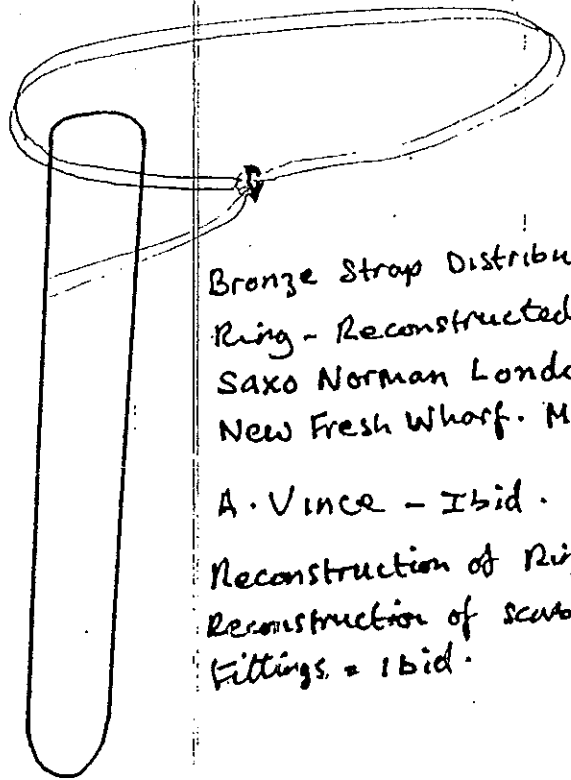
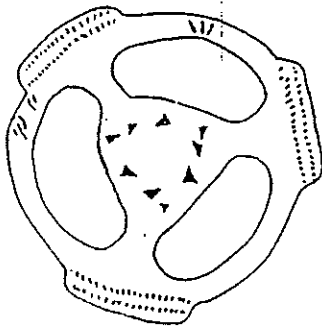
Parish 1992

B7-D

Bronze Strap
Distributor
from Saxo-Norman
London - Temple, @/11
A. Vince
Aspects of
Saxo-Norman
London II.
P. 148



28. Copper alloy strap distributor, Saxo Norm. drawing.

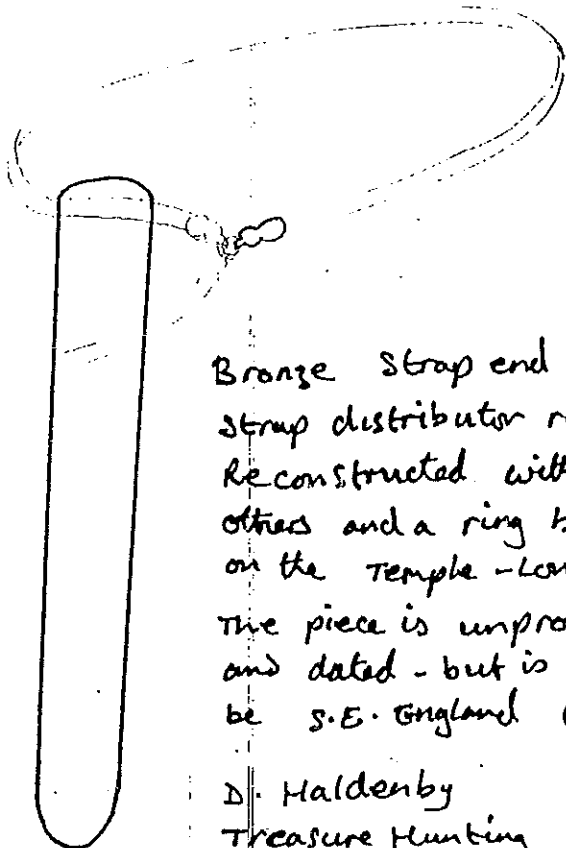
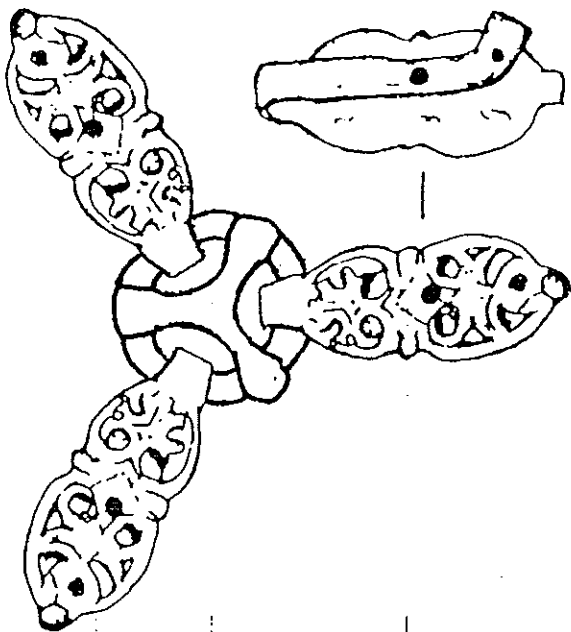


Bronze Strap Distributor
Ring - Reconstructed.
Saxo Norman London -
New Fresh Wharf. Mid 11

A. Vince - Ibid.

Reconstruction of Ring = Scott
Reconstruction of scabbard
fittings = Ibid.

B8.A



Bronze Strap end from
strap distributor ring -
Reconstructed with two
others and a ring based
on the Temple - London example
The piece is unprovenanced
and dated - but is likely to
be S.E. England 10.

D. Haldenby

Treasure Hunting Nov 1990

Reconstructions - Ibid.

B8.B



INNOMINEDS ('in the name of God'). On the back, a continuation of this reads RESADFILISPUSSCIO ('property of the son of the holy spirit').

St. Ninians Isle, Shetland.
Pictish? or Anglo Saxon (8)

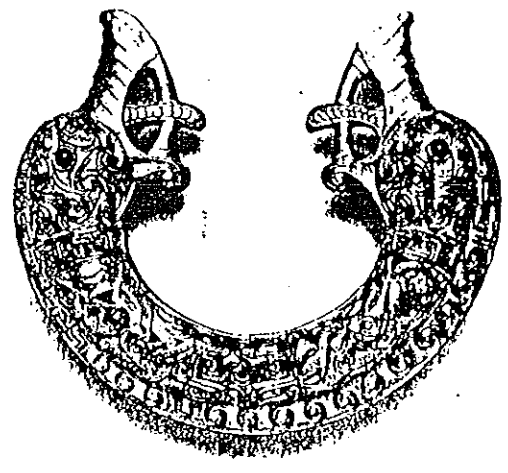
The Making of England
ed. L. Webster + J. Backhouse
B9-B

B9-A

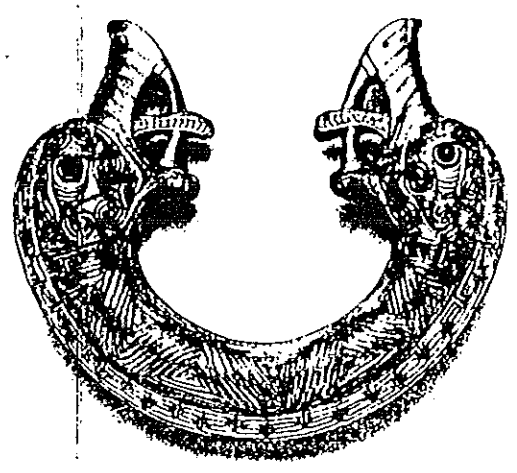


Ornament of gilt bronze, real size.—Norway.

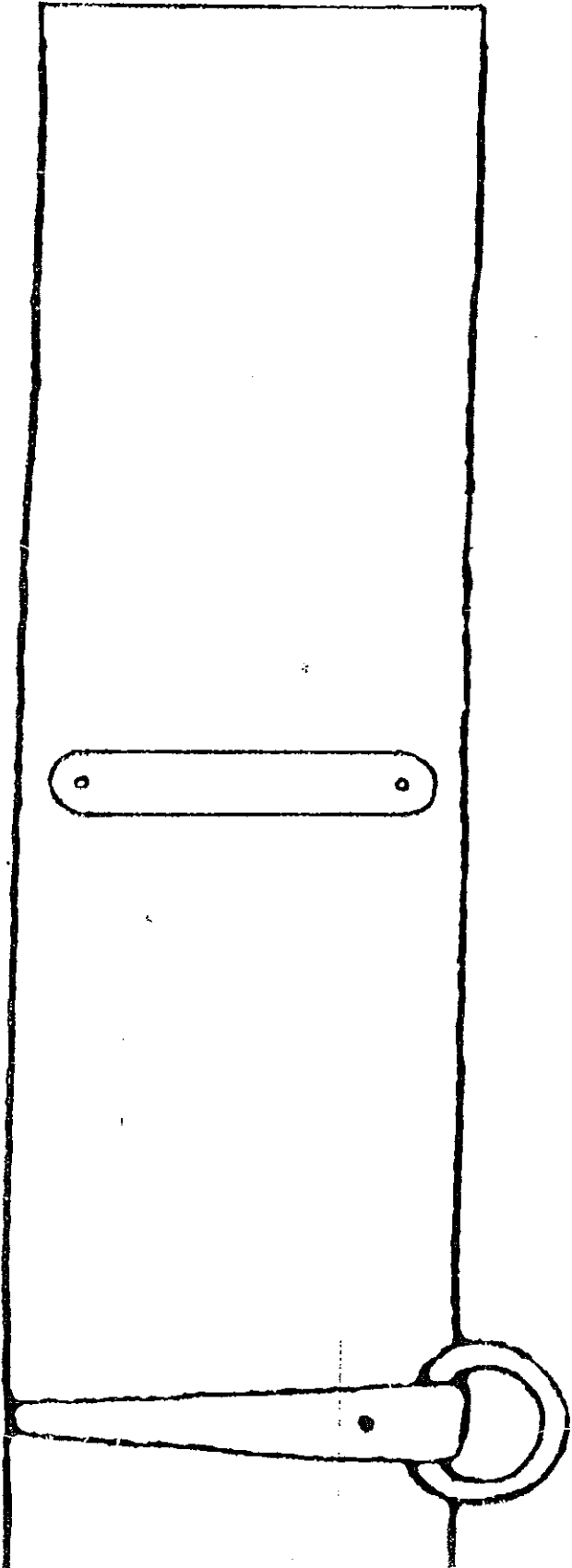
B9-E



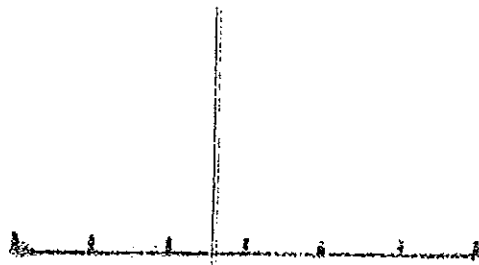
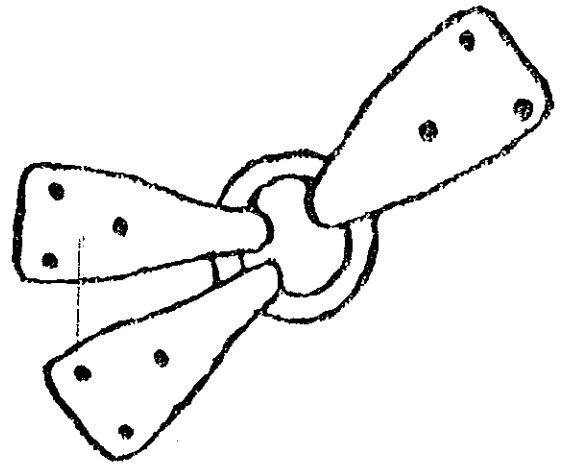
B9-C



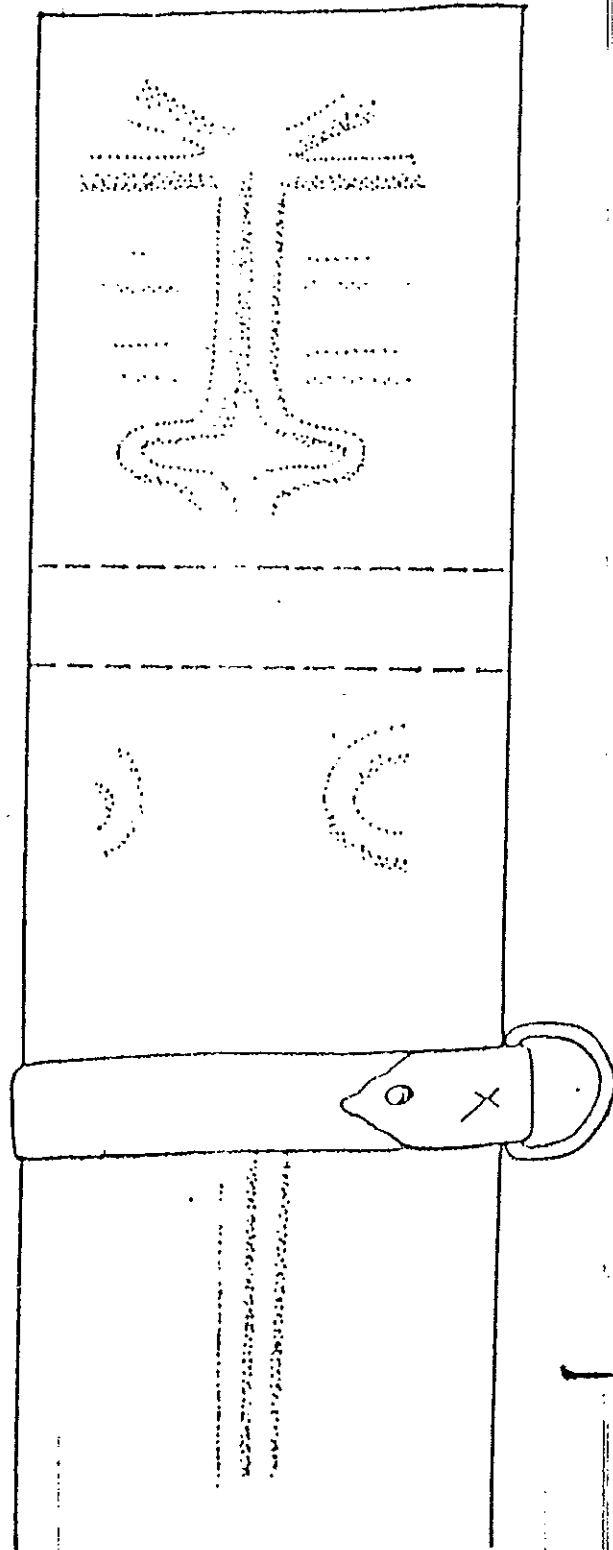
Ibid, from the same hoard. B9-D



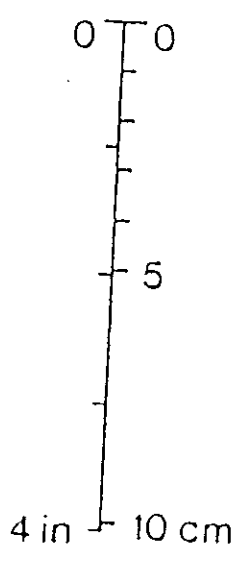
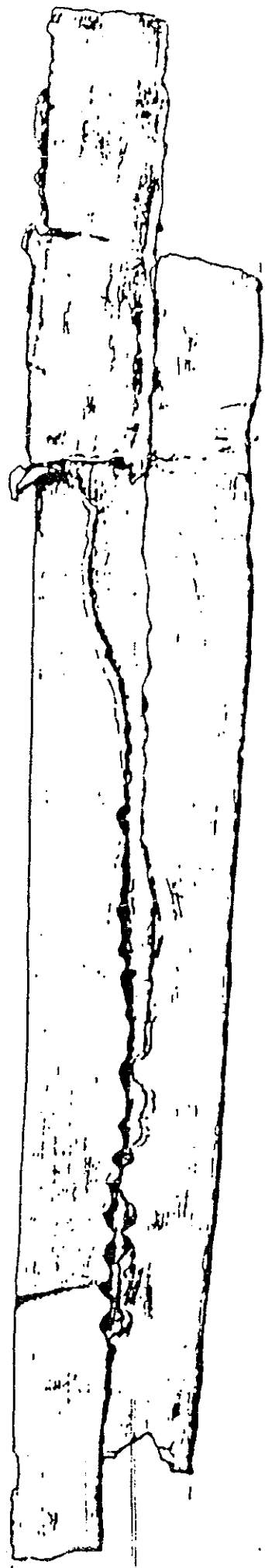
BALLATEARE



CMS

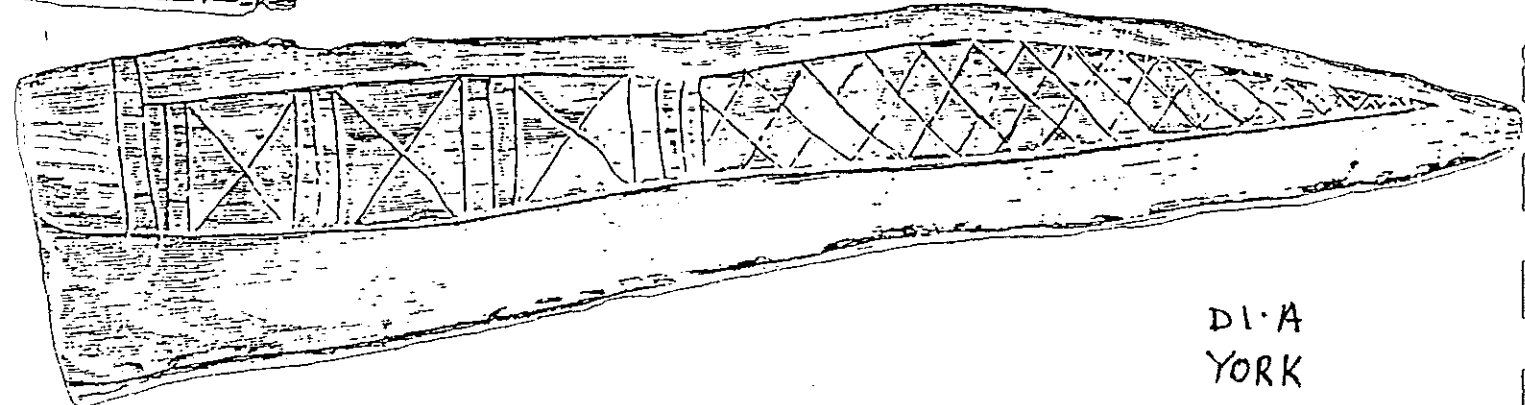
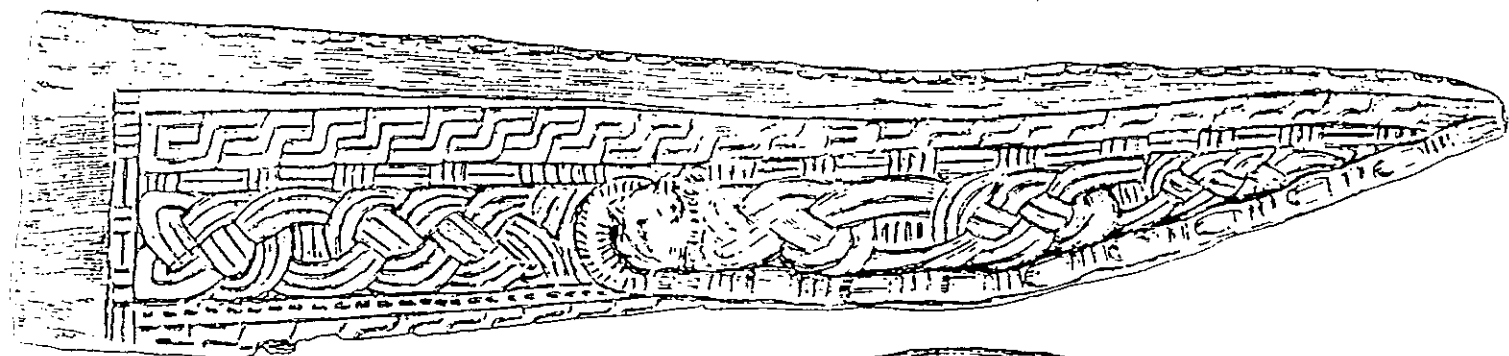


The ornament on the scabbard of the sword from Cronk Moor. Scale $\frac{1}{4}$

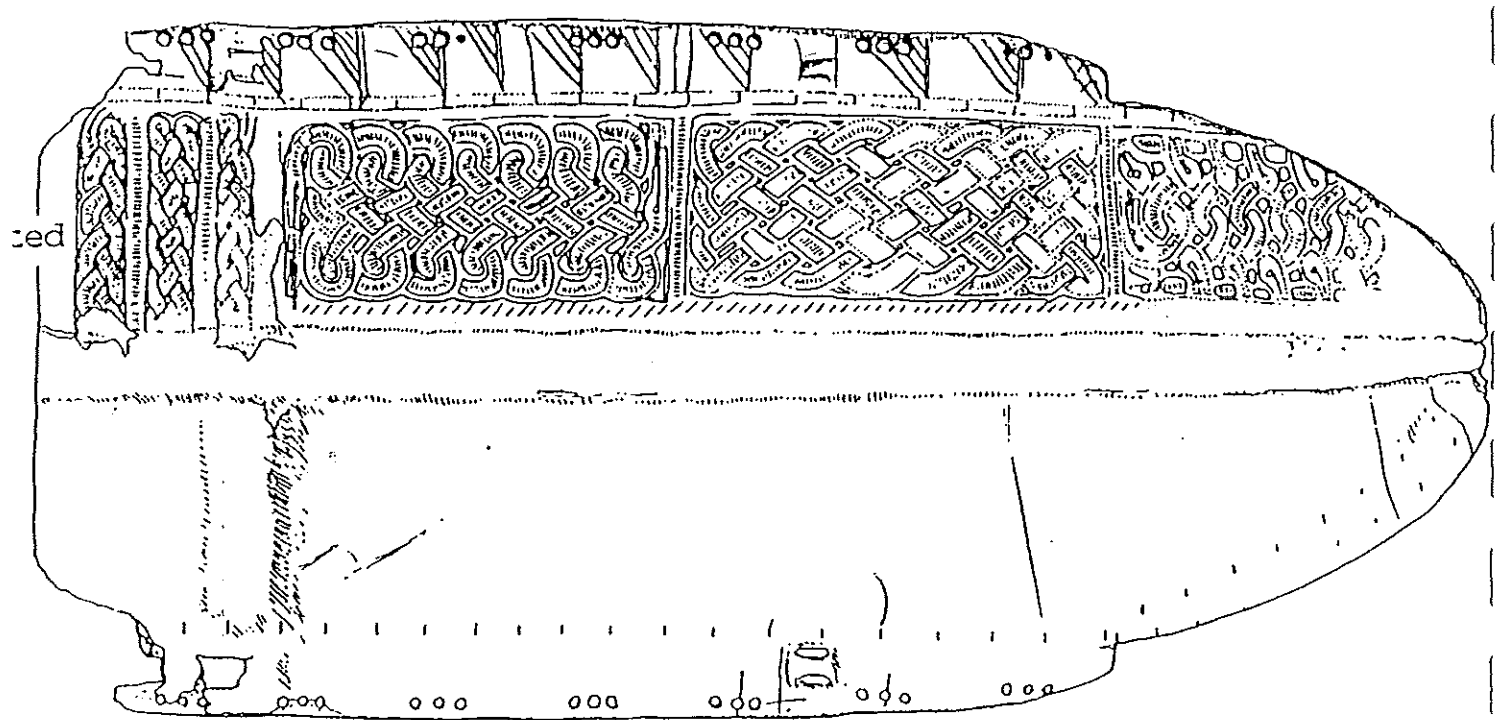


YORK SCABBARD.

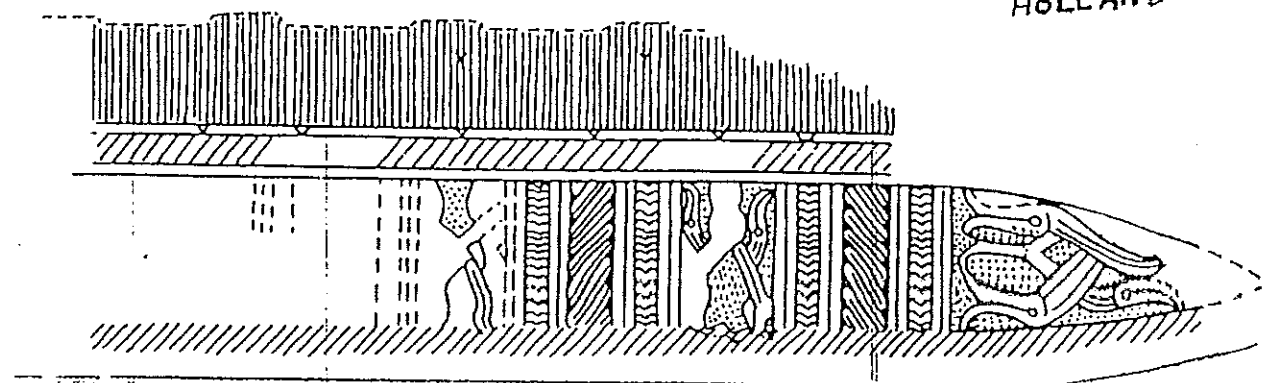
6.
11.2.20

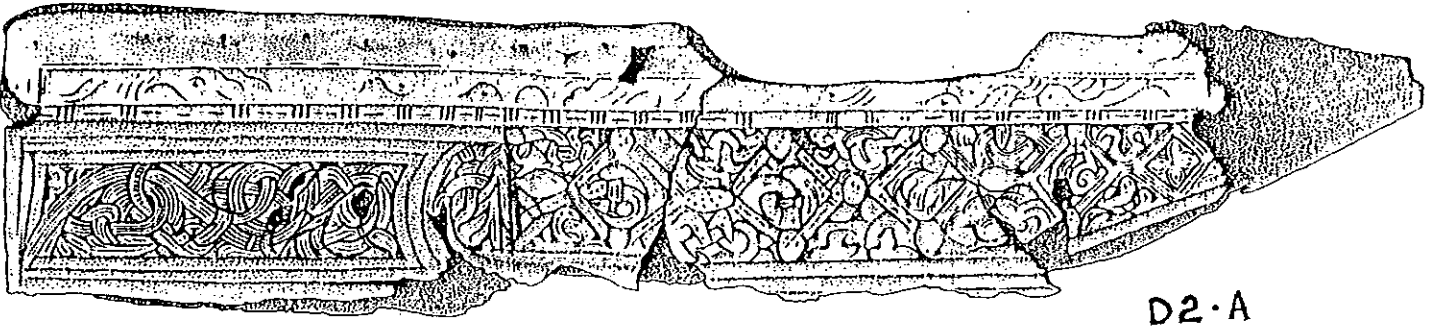
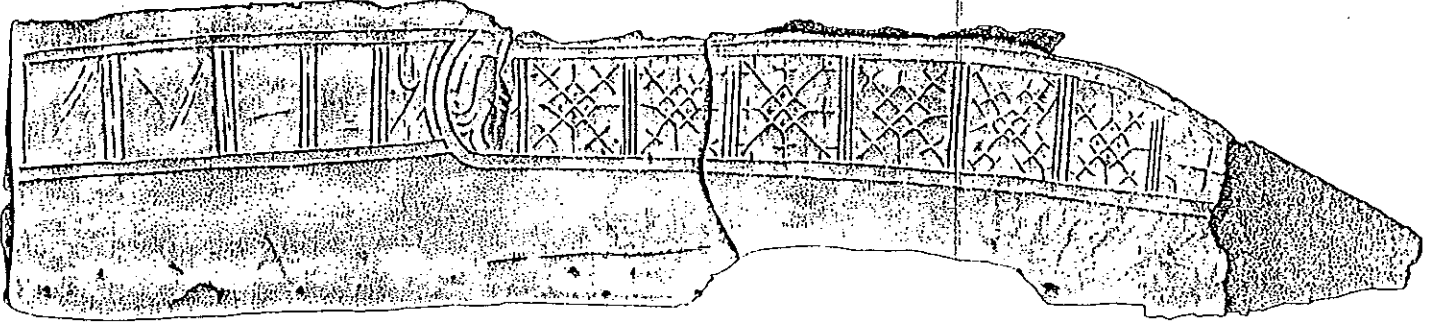


D1-A
YORK



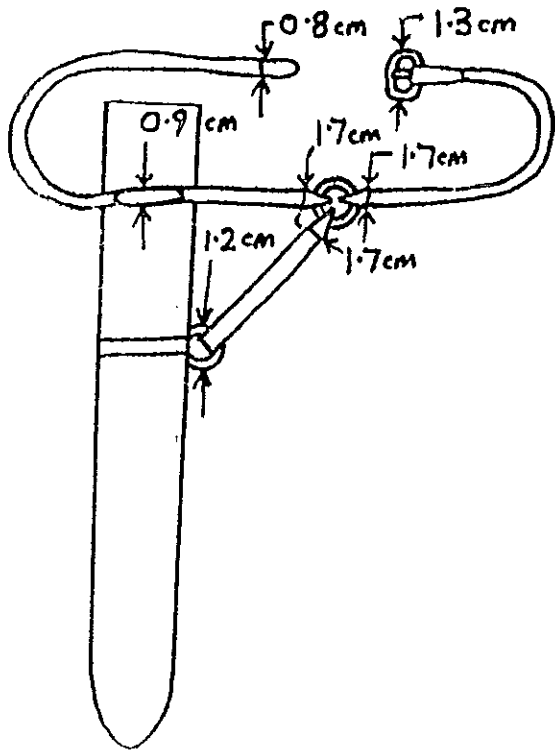
D1-B
HOLLAND



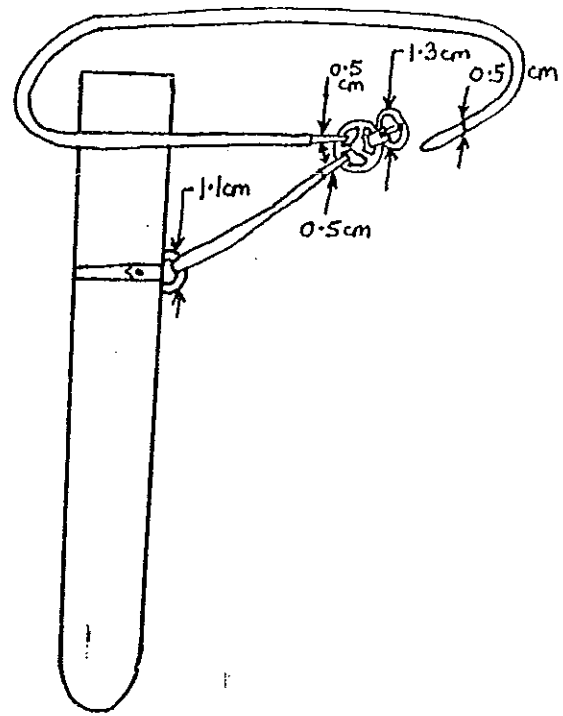


D2-A
LONDON

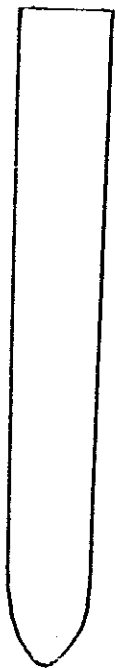
SLING DIMENSIONS

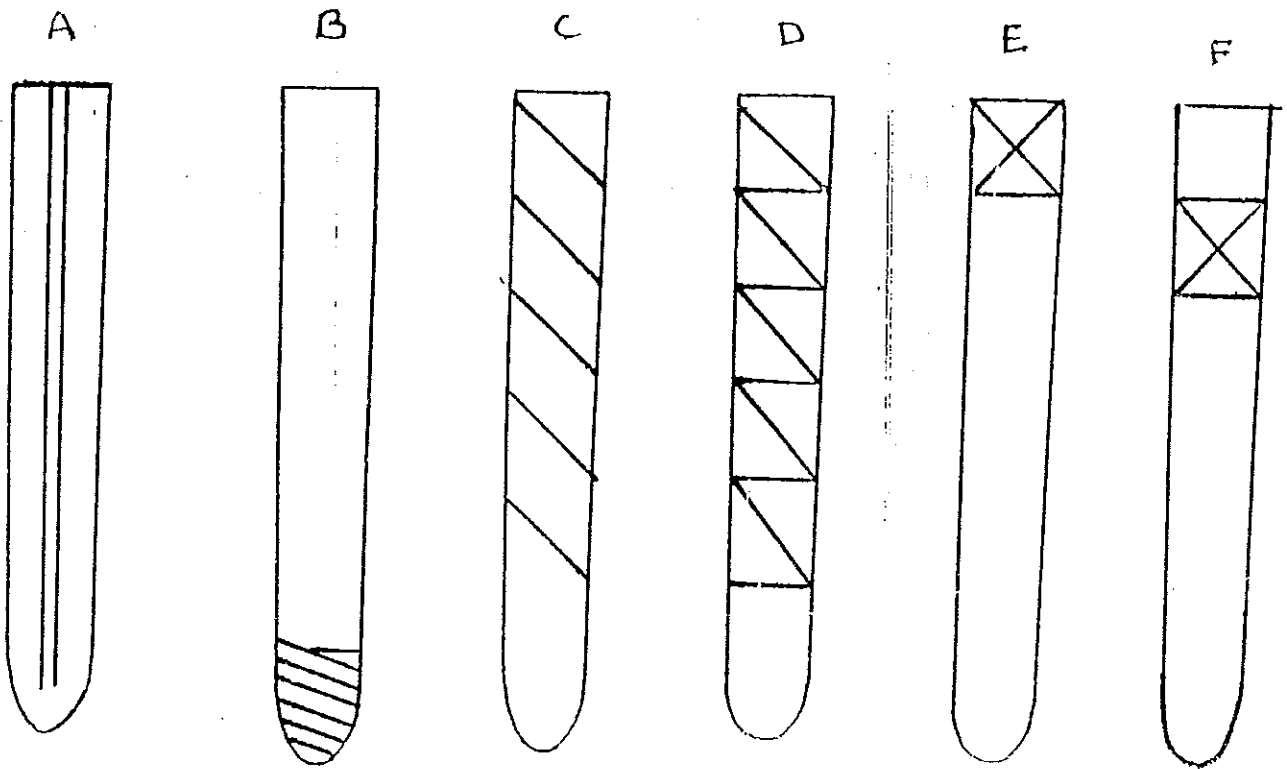


BALLATEARE



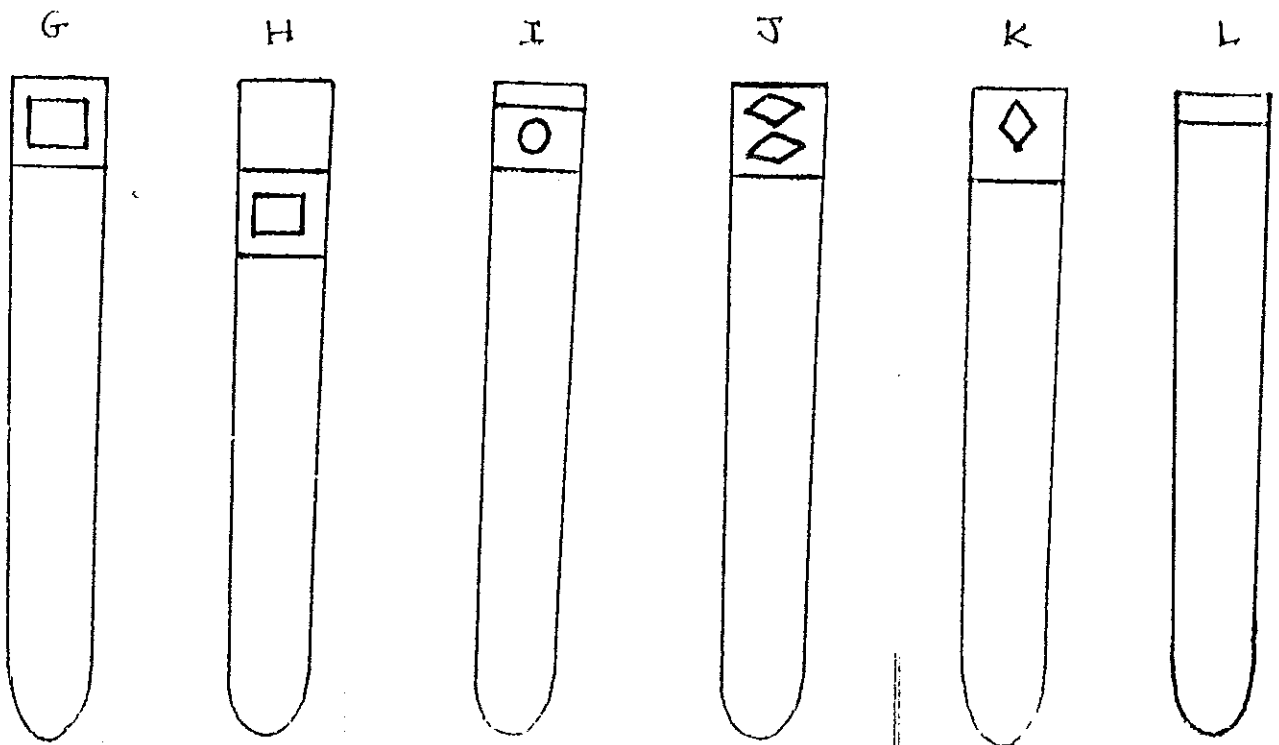
E2 CRONK MOAR

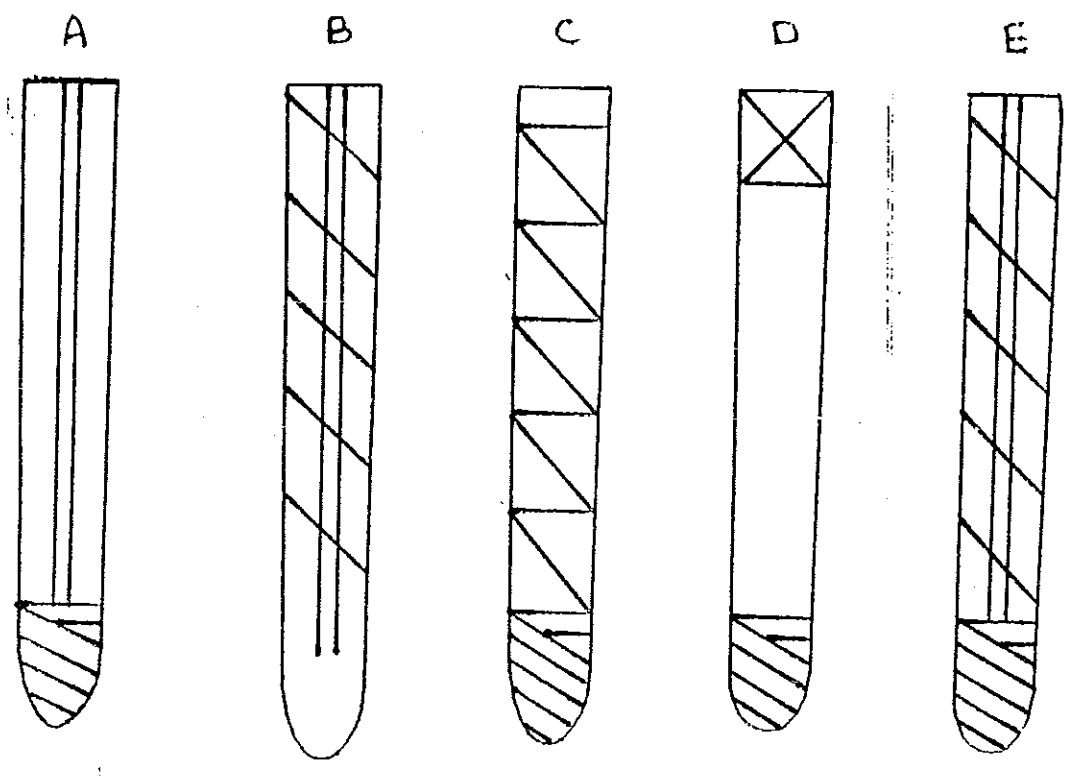




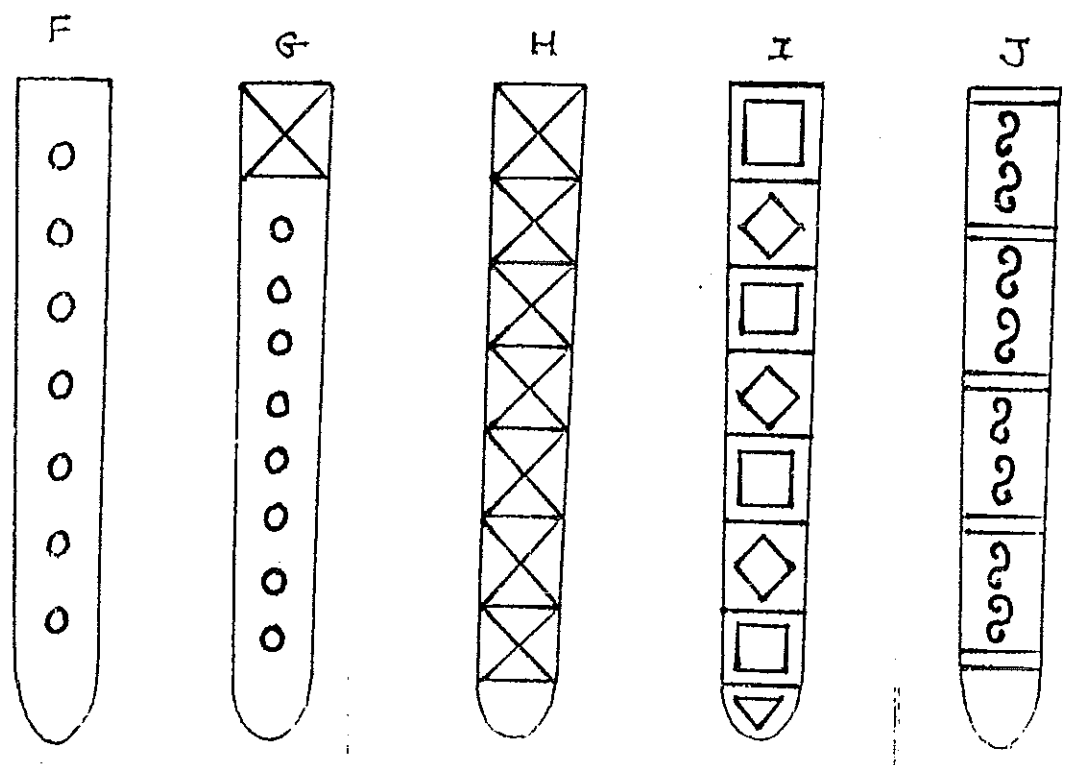
BASIC ART ELEMENTS IN SCABBARD DESIGNS

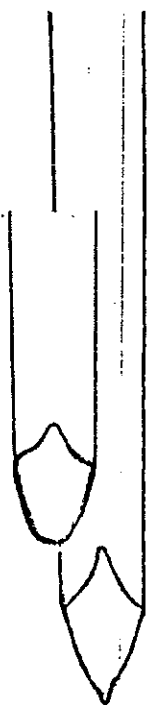
- A = SEAM OR ART
- B = FITTING OR ART
- C & D = WRAPPED BALDRIC OR ART.
- E ~ L = FITTINGS OR ART





ART ELEMENTS IN COMBINATION & REPETITION





B1·A, BC
B2·A~D
B3·A~D



B1·C



B9·A~D



B4·C

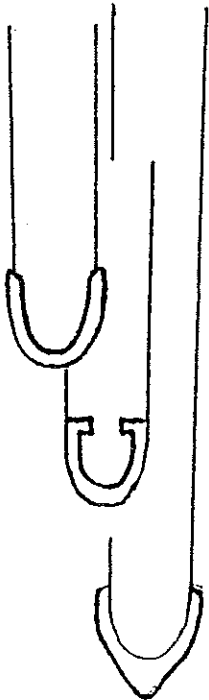
ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

CHAPES

MANUSCRIPT AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS



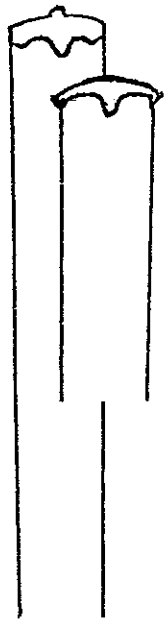
2A



10C
6B
4C



B9·E



B4A,B



B4C

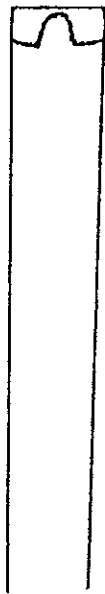
FINDS.

SCABBARD MOUTH PIECES

ILLUSTRATIONS



10B



15A



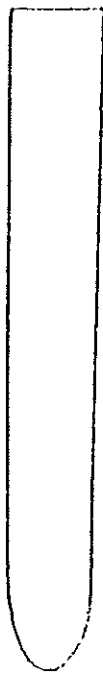
1A
2A
3A
9C



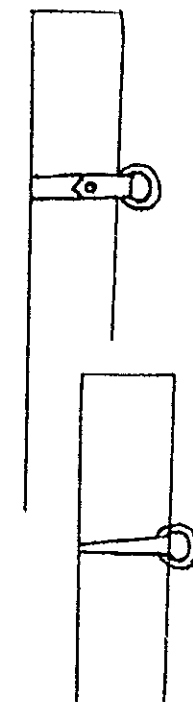
6B



B6-B



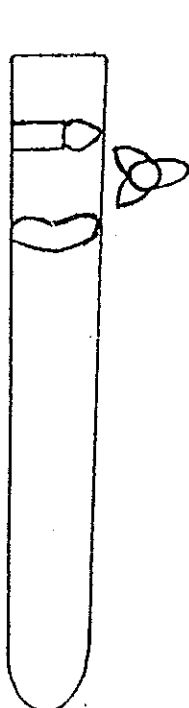
FINDS



C2, C1

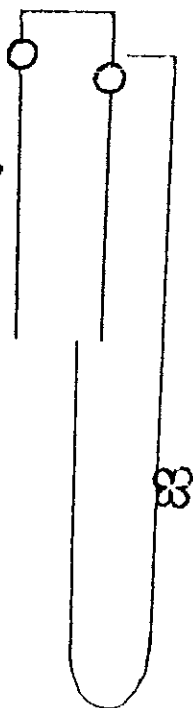
SCABBARD FITTINGS

ILLUSTRATIONS.



2A

TRILOBE
DISTRIBUTER



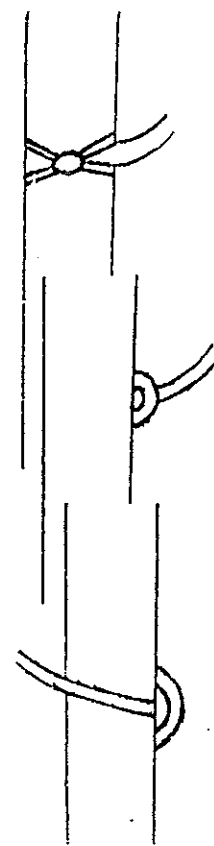
2B
5B

'RIVETS'



4A

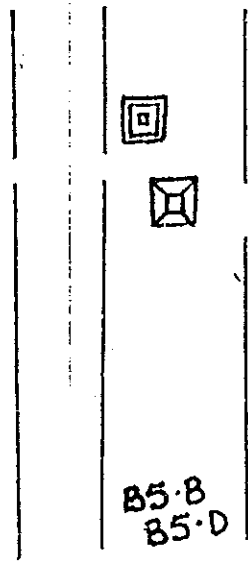
DOUBLE
SLIDER



6A
10D
5A

FIXING
RINGS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS.



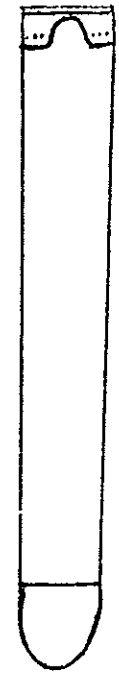
PLATES.

B5·B
B5·D



DISTRIBUTOR RINGS.

B7·A
B7·B



B4·C

SCABBARD FITTINGS.

COMPLETE SCABBARD MOUTH PIECE SETS

PLATES ?

DISTRIBUTOR RINGS.

BACK PLATE RINGS.

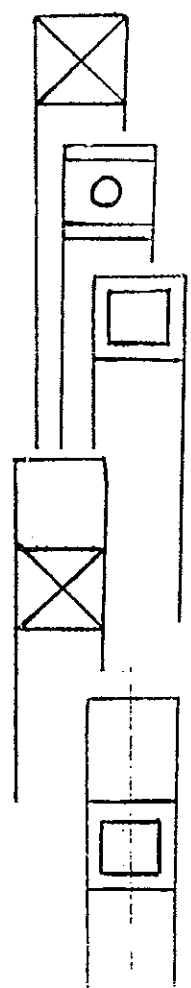
7A, 14A~B

7C~D

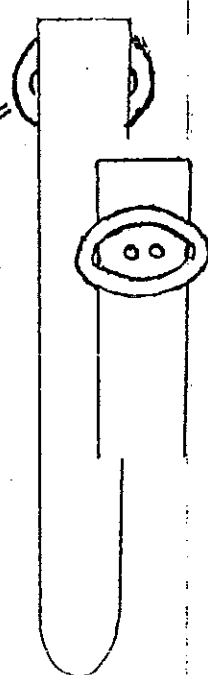
7B, 10C~D

3A, 6A?, 15A

5C



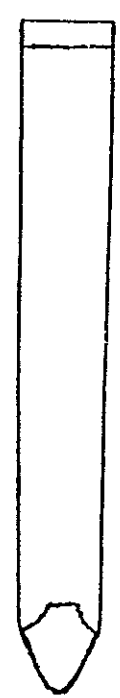
6C
15D



8A~B
8C

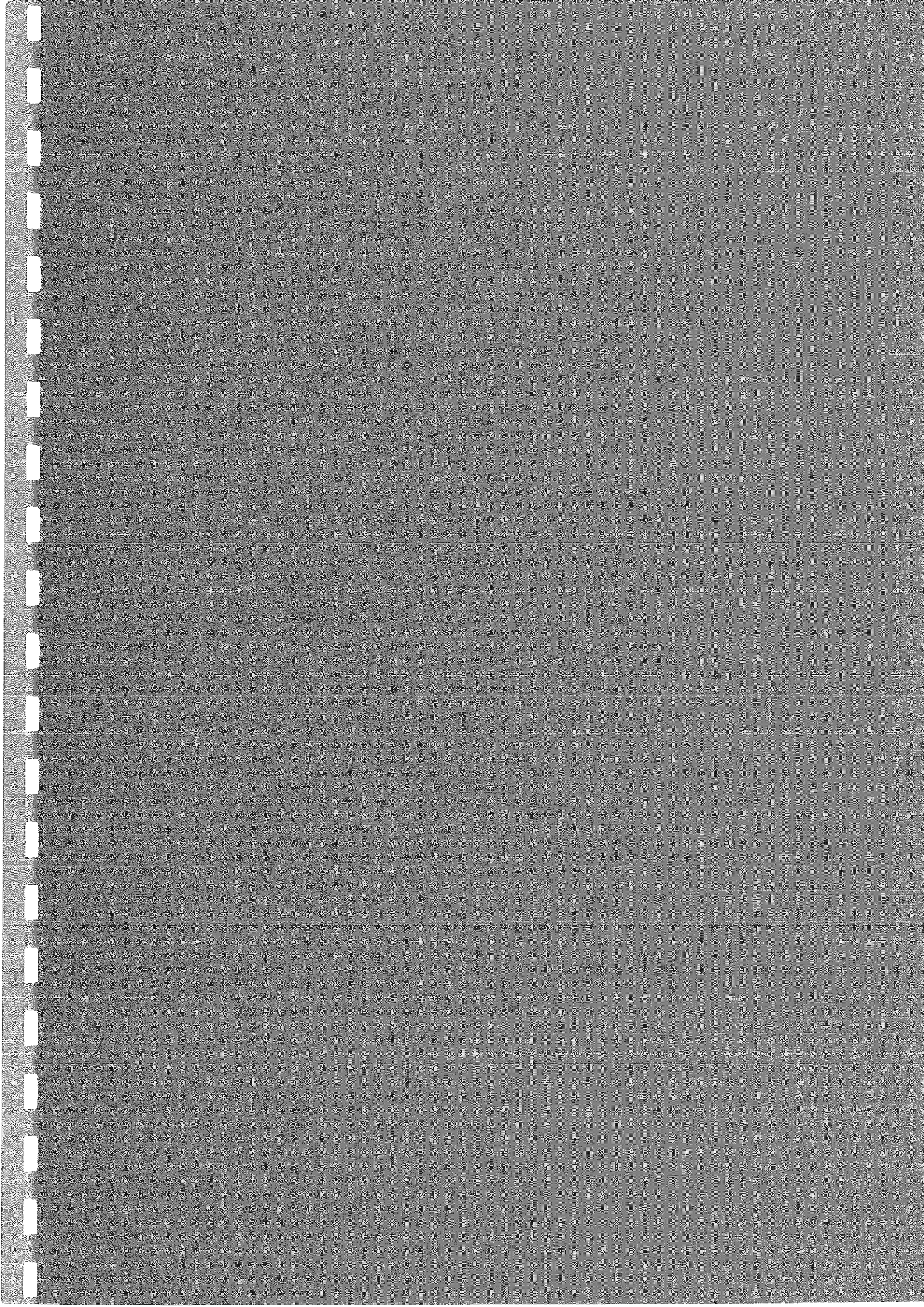


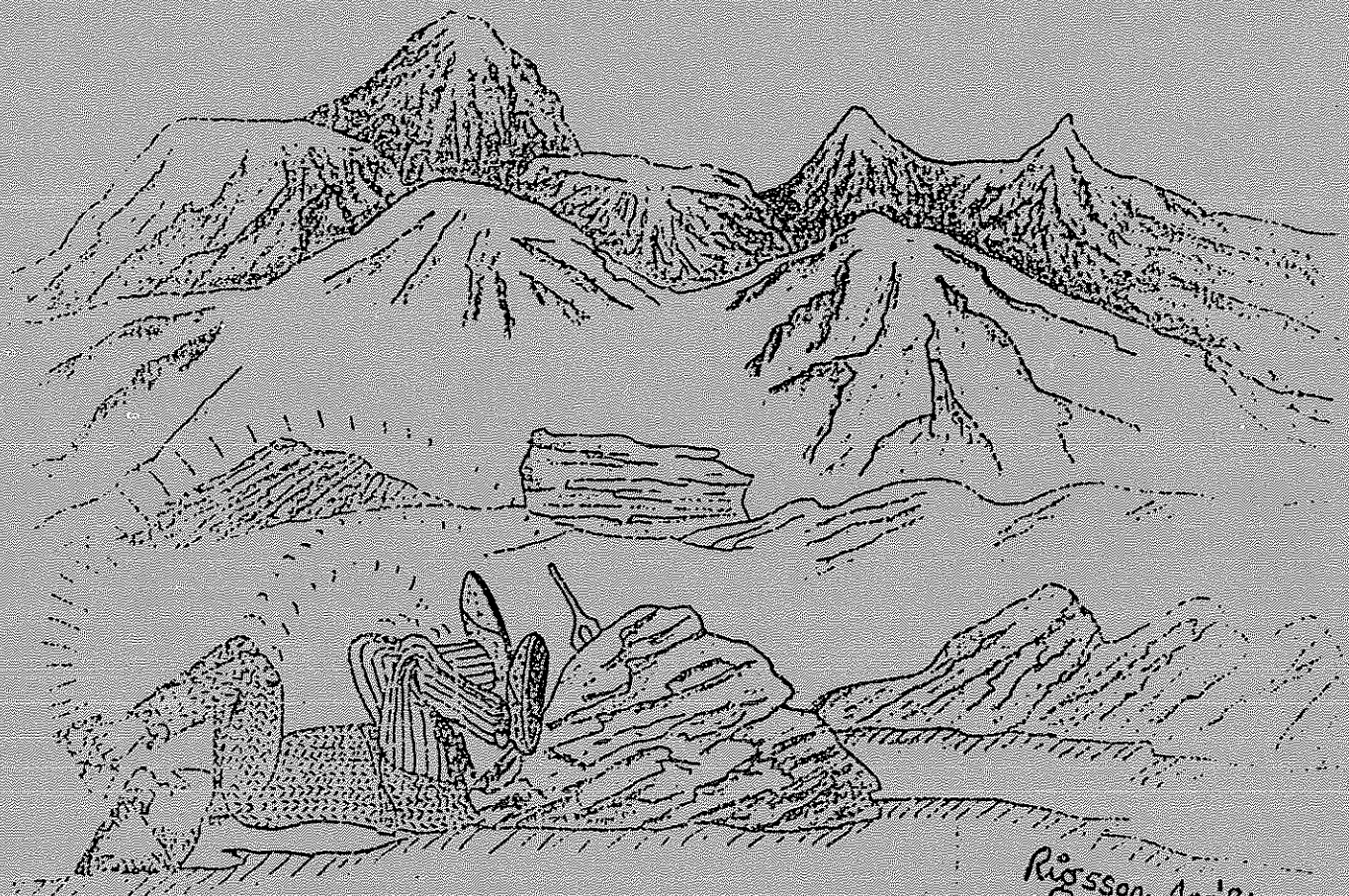
6B



2A

MANUSCRIPTS





Rigsson Apr '94