

II.

NOTICES OF A MORTAR AND LION-FIGURE OF BRASS DUG UP IN BELL STREET, GLASGOW, AND OF SIX LION-SHAPED EWERS OF BRASS (THE MANILIA OF THE MIDDLE AGES), EXHIBITED TO THE MEETING. BY JOSEPH ANDERSON, ASSISTANT-SECRETARY AND KEEPER OF THE MUSEUM.

The mortar and lion-figure now exhibited by Mr John A. Stewart, of Messrs Stewart & Sons, Glasgow Paper Mills, were dug up in Bell Street in August last, in the course of some excavations there by the City Improvement Trust. Mr Stewart states that when the mortar was found it was lying bottom upwards in forced earth at a depth of $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet below the level of the street. It lay on what was taken to be an iron lid, which

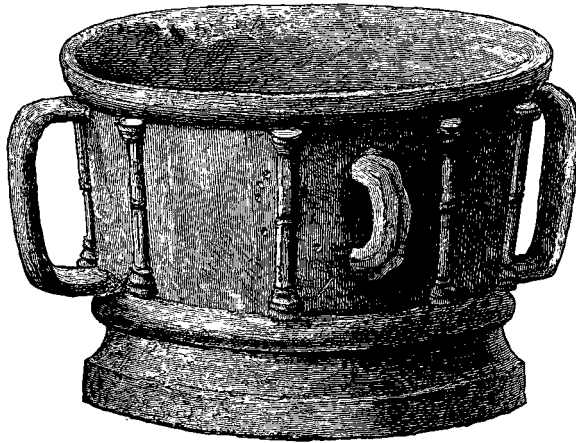


Fig. 1. Mortar of Brass dug up in Bell Street, Glasgow ($7\frac{1}{4}$ inches high).

was thin, and so much decayed, that it crumbled entirely away. Inside the mortar was a curious lion-figure, and along with it a square article, formed apparently of plates of iron outside and brass within, and

ornamented on the exterior with a species of filagree-work of twisted wire. A monastery is said to have stood in the neighbourhood of the site on which these relics were found.

The mortar (fig. 1) is a casting, probably of brass, or some similar alloy of copper. It is of great weight and solidity, standing $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, with a diameter of $10\frac{1}{4}$ inches and weighing $41\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. It is ornamented externally by pilasters rising from the moulding near the bottom to the rim, which is considerably bevelled outwards. These pilasters, though peculiarly formed, present no decided characteristics by which a more definite period might be assigned to the style of ornament than that it partakes of the early Gothic. The mortar has two large oblong loops, alternating with two smaller circular loops of great strength, by which it might be lifted or swung, and the smaller loops seem to have been in contact with iron bolts or pins. The inside of the mortar, especially round the shelving part of the sides towards the bottom, exhibits distinctly the marks of the pestle, so that, judging both from its shape and solidity, and from these unequivocal marks of use, there can be no doubt as to its being a mortar.

The lion-figure (fig. 2) which was found within it, stands about 6 inches high. It represents a lion *couchant*; one of the fore feet and both of the hind legs are gone. The mane is boldly rendered, and the head is encircled by a crown. The figure has been cast upon a core of clay, which still remains within it. Part of this core has been extracted by Mr Stewart,

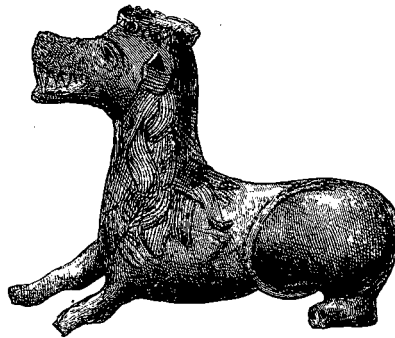


Fig. 2. Lion-Figure of Brass, found with the Mortar in Bell Street, Glasgow (6 inches high).

and is now exhibited. The lower end of a standard rod of the same metal as the figure itself passes perpendicularly through the

back, and is riveted under the belly. In all likelihood, this standard rod supported a candleholder. Candelabra, supported by crouching lions, were not uncommon articles of church furniture in the Middle Ages; and they may not have been exclusively ecclesiastical. I saw, in Christiania, two such candelabra, said to have belonged to a Norwegian church. They were supported by small lion-figures, of much the same size and style of execution as this one. Large Paschal candlesticks of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries were often supported on animal figures such as lions, dragons, &c.

This small lion-figure, though meant for a different purpose, and executed in a more archaic style of art, bears a striking resemblance to the group of hollow lion-shaped vessels or water-ewers now exhibited. In fact, it was this striking resemblance (coupled with the coincidence that on my visit to the Messrs Stewart's place in Glasgow, I was introduced by Mr Kirsop to Mr Harvey, the possessor of one of these ewers), that suggested to my mind the idea of getting together all the lion-ewers in Scotland for exhibition at one of the meetings of the Society. Mr Harvey very courteously complied with my request to be allowed to take his fine specimen with me, and I then wrote to the possessors of the others. The result is a larger collection of these vessels than has ever before been seen in this country, including all the specimens known in Scotland except one.

I shall describe them in the order in which they were received.

No. 1, the property of Mr Alexander Harvey (fig. 3), stands $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and measures 14 inches in length. The head is turned so as to show the full face to the spectator on the animal's left, the mane is largely developed, and represented in the casting by tufts, which are chased, though the marks of the chasing tool are now nearly obliterated. The head is surmounted by a crown composed of a simple open circlet, with trefoil ornaments. A rudimentary form of the same ornament is seen on the crown encircling the head of the small lion found at Bell Street, and a crown almost exactly similar to the one on this lion-ewer, but with a well-marked *fleur-de-lis* in front, is on a ewer shaped like a siren, in

St John's Church, Herford.¹ There is a square opening in the head of the lion to admit the water. It has been closed by a lid hinged on one side, as seen in others of the ewers exhibited, but the lid is now gone.



Fig. 3. Lion Ewer, the property of Alexander Harvey, Esq., Glasgow
(13½ inches high).

The spout, which is shaped like the head of a small lacertine creature, is placed beside the right ear, which, from the position of the head, is turned to the front of the animal. The handle, as is the case with most of these ewers, is formed in imitation of a lacertine or dragonesque creature, planting its feet and its fangs into the back of the lion's neck. In some cases this animal is distinct, in others it is treated as if it were united to the terminal portion of the lion's tail, and recalls the serpent-

¹ Lubke's Ecclesiastical Art, p. 153.

headed or dragonesque tails of the interlaced creatures so commonly used for decorative purposes in earlier times. In this case the creature has a head at both ends, and the lion's tail is carried upwards to join it, so as to form a double loop, the junction being concealed by a leaf-like ornament. The earliest chalices have also dragonesque handles.

No. 2, the property of John White, Esq., of Netherurd, a Fellow of the Society, originally belonged to Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, and



Fig. 4. Lion Ewer, the property of John White, Esq. of Netherurd, F.S.A. Scot.
(14½ inches high).

passed subsequently into the possession of Adam Sim, Esq. of Coulter. It was said by Mr Sharpe that it was found at Hoddam, but Dr Daniel

Wilson states that information obtained by him since Mr Sharpe's death proves this to be a mistake. Whatever may have been the source from which Mr Sharpe obtained it, this ewer (fig. 4) is certainly the most remarkable of any hitherto known in Scotland. It stands $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and is 12 inches in length. The head is erect, the aspect directed to the animal's front, the mouth open, and the tongue protruded. The mane is boldly rendered in tufts, which are deeply chased. In front of the chest a stag's head protrudes, between the horns of which is a round opening, which does not seem to penetrate into the body of the lion. An animal form on the lion's back serves for a handle, but this ewer differs from the others in having no distinct spout.

No. 3, also the property of Mr White, is smaller, standing $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches

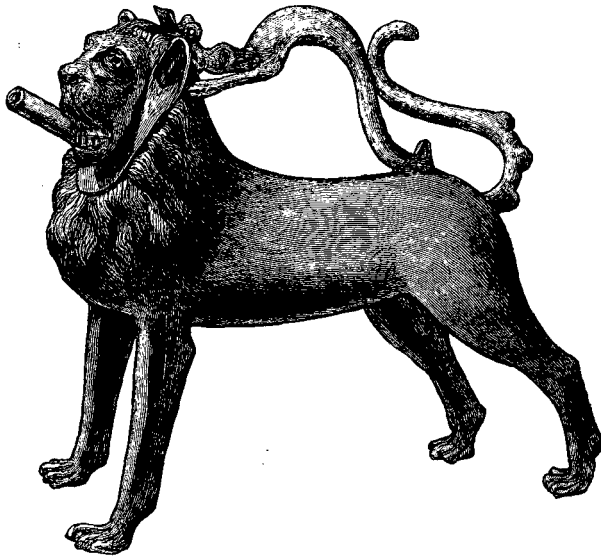


Fig. 5. Lion Ewer, the property of John White, Esq. of Netherurd, F.S.A. Scot.
($11\frac{1}{2}$ inches high).

high, and measuring 11 inches in length. In this ewer (fig. 5) the lion's

features are treated more conventionally, and the face has almost a human aspect. The spout protrudes from the mouth, and the handle is formed of a lizard-like creature affixed to the lion's back as before, the tail of the lion being curved up to form a double loop as in the former case. It was procured by the late Mr Adam Sim from a dealer in Wardour Street, London, in 1851, and is probably German.

No. 4, the property of W. J. Armstrong, Esq., Fairlie, is interesting, because its history is partly known. It was found in Ayrshire in 1868 or 1869 under the following circumstances, which have been previously detailed in the "Proceedings" of the Society:¹—The Glengarnock Iron Company had been for some years depositing their refuse in the Loch of Kilbirnie. The enormous weight of the mass thus deposited had the



Fig. 6. Lion Ewer, the property of W. J. Armstrong, Esq., found in a Canoe in the bottom of the Loch of Kilbirnie, Ayrshire (8½ inches high).

effect of pushing up the mud from the margin, and among the mud thus pressed up from the bottom of the loch several ancient canoes were from time to time discovered. One of these canoes, which lay about twenty feet distant from a small artificial island (probably a crannog) in the loch, was thus forced to the surface, and when the mud was being cleaned out of the bottom of the canoe, this lion-ewer and a three-legged pot of brass, 28 lbs. in weight, measuring 14 inches in height and 11 inches across the mouth, were found in the bottom of the canoe, along with a thin plate of metal, which is not now preserved. The canoe was of the usual Scottish form, broadest

¹ "Notice of Antiquities recently discovered in North Ayrshire." By R. W. Cochran Patrick. Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot. vol. ix. p. 385.

at the stern, which was square, and tapering towards the bow. It was hollowed out of a single tree, and measured 18 feet in length, 3 feet in breadth, and about 2 feet in depth.

The lion-ewer (fig. 6), thus singularly found, stands $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and measures 8 inches in length. It is apparently of brass (as I presume they all are), and is so inartistically modelled that there is no danger of its being claimed as of Continental manufacture. The circumstances in which it was found at least suggest the probability of its being of native

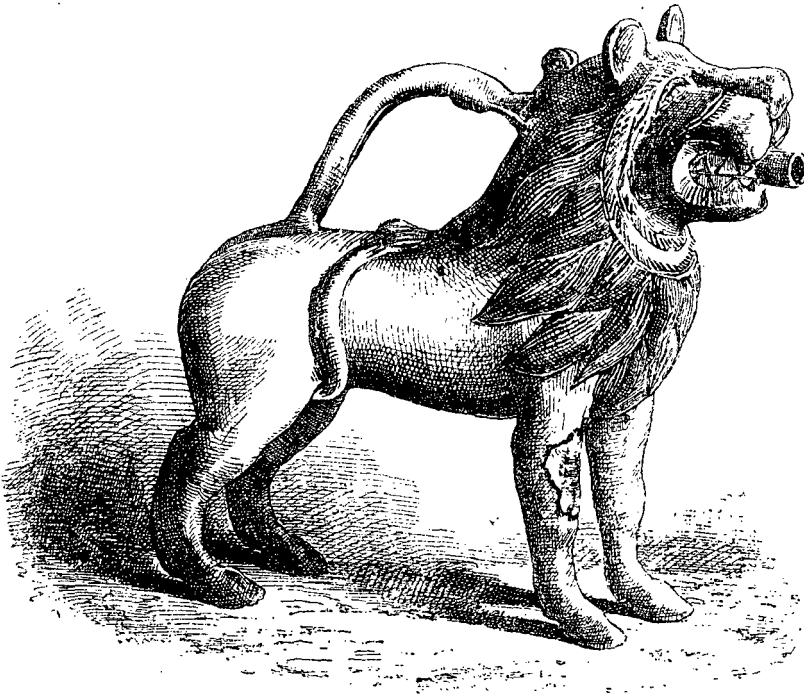


Fig. 7. Lion Ewer, dug up near Mearns Castle, Renfrewshire.

manufacture. If this be admitted, the likeness to all the others is very strong, though the art is poor. The handle presents the same animal

form, though greatly degraded, and in the squatness of the haunches and the arrangement of the tail it closely resembles the small lion-figure from Glasgow.

The only other lion ewer which is known to have been recovered from the soil in Scotland is the one preserved at Pollok (fig. 7), which was dug up in a meadow at Mearns Castle, Renfrewshire, about forty years ago. It is figured in the "Memoirs of the Maxwells of Pollok" by Mr W. Fraser, F.S.A. Scot. In its style of art it closely resembles the lion-figure dug up in Glasgow, especially in the renderings of the mane and teeth, and the arrangement of the tail.

No. 5, the property of Messrs Mackay & Cunningham (fig. 8), exhibited



Fig. 8. Lion Ewer, the property of Messrs Mackay & Cunningham, Princes Street (10 inches high).

by Mr J. J. Muirhead, a Fellow of the Society, stands 10 inches high and measures 10 inches in length. It seems the most recent of those now exhibited. The handle shows no trace of the zoo-morphic feeling which

is conspicuous in the others. The general form of the lion, as well as the details of what may be termed specific features, are more carefully attended to, and the conventional mane is reduced to a simple border of tufts round the neck and breast. This arrangement, along with the plain border round the neck, is also seen on the smaller lion (No. 3) belonging to Mr White. This lion was obtained in Nuremberg, and is, therefore, probably German; and from its similarity I think it probable that Mr White's smaller lion (fig. 5) is German too.

No. 6, the property of the Marquis of Bute, is also German in style. It has been recently gilt. The figure is that of a lioness (fig. 9), standing 10

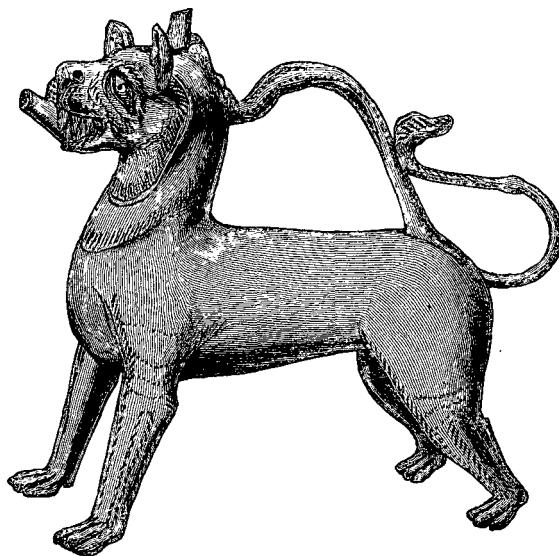


Fig. 9. Lion Ewer, the property of the Most Honourable the Marquis of Bute, F.S.A. Scot. (10 inches high).

inches high and measuring $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length. There is a short spout in the mouth, and the tail curls upwards to join the handle in a double loop. The legs are chased with markings bearing a singular resemblance

to those on the specimen in the Museum at Stockholm figured in the Royal Swedish Academy's *Manadsblad*.

We now come to the question of the purpose of these singular vessels. That they are intended for pouring vessels or hand-ewers is suggested at once by their form and by the presence of the opening in the top of the head and the small spout in front. I can neither affirm that they were vessels for domestic use nor can I deny the probability of their having been so, because I have no evidence bearing on this aspect of the question. I can only say that, looking at the group of vessels as a whole, there is a certain air of dignity about them which suggests rather that they were intended for a ceremonial object than as ordinary utensils for household purposes. Their capacity is so small that they are not fitted for holding liquids in any quantity, but the ceremonial use only required a vessel of small capacity.

Pursuing the investigation in this direction, I find that under the word *Manile* Du Cange has, "Urceus, urceolus, quo aqua manibus infunditur"—a ewer or small pitcher from which water is poured on the hands; and he cites from the "*Chronicon Moguntium*" the following passage:—"Erant pelves quatuor argenteæ, et urcei diversarum formarum quos manilia vocant, eo quod aqua Sacerdotum manibus funderetur ex eis"—there were four basins of silver and ewers of various forms, which are called manilia, because the water is poured on the priest's hands from them. He also cites the following passage:—"Urceum ad aquam benedictam, et urceum ad manus sacerdotum abluendas, Manile etiam, et labrum ad aquas de manibus abluentium suscipiendas"—a ewer for the holy water, and a ewer for the washing of the priest's hands, a manile also and a basin for the water from the hands of those that are washed. In the "*Epistolæ a Lanfranco Archiepisc. Cantuar.*," the use of this vessel is clearly defined:—"Vas inferius, in quod manibus infusa aqua delabitur; Urceolus vero, vas superius unde lavandis manibus aqua infunditur"—the inferior vessel in which the water falls when it is poured upon the hands, the superior vessel or ewer from which the water

is poured on the hands to be washed. The "Ordo Romanus" gives the name of the basin or inferior vessel :—"Aquamanile, hoc est vas manuale quo scilicet manus lavantur;" or as it is more distinctly given by Joannes de Janua :—"Aquimanile dicitur res super quod cadit aqua qua abluntur digito sacerdotum post sumptionem corporis Christi"—aquamanile is the name of the thing into which the water falls that washes the fingers of the priests after the taking of the sacrament. The "Catholicon Armoricum" has :—"Aquamanilla, Piscine en quoi, le Pretre lave les mains"—Aquamanilla, the piscina in which the priest washes his hands. In the Canons of the Fourth Council of Carthage, it is enjoined that the subdeacon should receive at his ordination from the hands of the archdeacon an aquamanile as one of the emblems of his office, and in the "Ordo Romanus" the acolytes are directed to carry an aquamanus in the procession after the Pope on Easter Day. Aquamanilia of great splendour are more frequently mentioned than the Urceoli or ewers. They were large basins, often of silver, chased and sometimes enamelled. Brunhild, Queen of the Franks, gave to the Church of St Germanus an aquamanile weighing 3 lbs. 9 oz., showing in the middle of it a figure of Neptune with his trident.

It is established from these passages that the celebrant of the mass had his hands washed before and after taking consecrated bread; that they were washed by water poured over them from a ewer called manile; and that the water so used fell into a basin called aquamanile or piscina.

The next question that arises is what was the form and material of these *manilia*. This question is answered by a passage which occurs in the "Res Germanicæ" of Ursticius.¹ Quoting from an Inventory in the "Chronicon Conradi," he says :—"Urcaei argentei diversarum formarum quos manilia vocant, eo quod ex eis aqua sacerdotum manibus funderetur, habentes formam leonum, dragonum, avium et griphorum, vel aliorum animalium quorumcunque"—Silver ewers of diverse forms which are called manilia because out of them water is poured on the hands of the

¹ Cited in Troyon's "Monuments de l'antiquité dans l'Europe barbare," 8vo. Lausanne, 1868, p. 435.

priests ; they have the form of lions, dragons, birds, and griffins, or of any other animal whatsoever.

In his work on Ecclesiastical Art in Germany during the Middle Ages, Dr Wilhelm Lubke, Professor of Art History in Stuttgart includes, among the altar furniture, "Lastly, the *pouring vessels (manilia)* for the washing of hands, which in the Middle Ages they used to form like an animal, or in some other fantastic shape. These vessels often occur as a lion, a

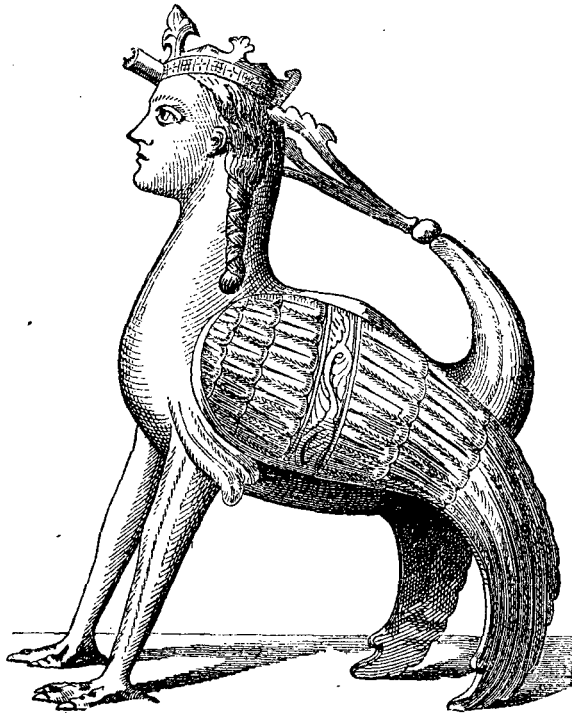


Fig. 10. Manile formed as a Siren. (From Lubke's "Ecclesiastical Art in the Middle Ages.")

horse, a dove, a hen, and in many other forms. A *manile* formed as a siren is to be seen in St. John's Church at Herford (of which Dr Lubke

gives an engraved representation), which I have here reproduced (fig. 10), and one as a lion in the church at Berghausen in the district of Arnsberg, Westphalia."

I find in my note-book an entry made at the time that I visited the museum in Copenhagen to the effect that there are in that collection twenty-three ewers of brass or bronze, many of which are in the form of lions, and several in the form of knights on horseback. I have no distinct recollection of the number that are lion-shaped, but among them there is one bearing an inscription in Runes on a shield in front of the animal's chest as follows:—"This lion is given to God's service, and to St Olaf of Vatnsfiord, by Thorvalti and Thordisa." This specimen is of

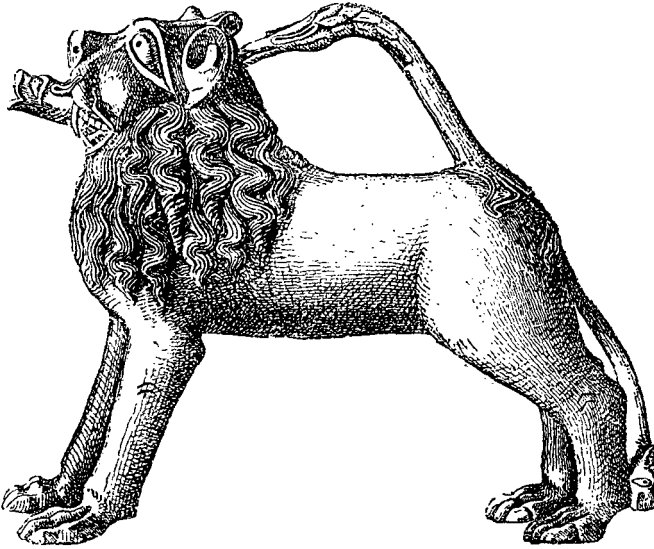


Fig. 11. Lion Ewer in the Museum of Copenhagen. (From Worsaae's "Oldsager.")

beautiful workmanship, 14 inches long and 12 inches high. It has a square hole with a hinged cover to it on the top of the head, exactly like some of those now on the table, and in the mouth of the animal is a

small double spout. The handle, which was affixed to the back, is broken off. The church of Vatnsfjord to which it belonged is in Iceland. The persons mentioned in the inscription on the lion's breast as giving it to God and St Olaf are well known. Thorwald Snorrason of Vatnsfjord is mentioned in the Iceland Annals in 1224 as having then married Thordisa, the daughter of the great historian Snorro Sturleson. Thorwald's death took place in 1229, so that the lion must have been gifted to the church of Vatnsfjord between the years 1224 and 1229. In the same collection there is another lion-ewer bearing a shield on a collar round the neck of the animal on which is engraved a bishop holding a crosier. This ewer formerly belonged to the church of Indslov in Denmark. No particular description of the others is accessible, but these two instances will suffice to show their ecclesiastical character, and the figure of one engraved in Worsaae's "Oldsager," which is here reproduced (fig. 11), will show their exact correspondence with the specimens now exhibited.

I saw some specimens in the museum at Stockholm, but I have no note of their number, and the published catalogue merely includes them as a group among the class of ecclesiastical relics dating from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. One of these, however, is figured in the Swedish Royal Academy's monthly Journal for 1872, and I have reproduced the figure here for comparison (fig. 12).¹ The description in the Journal referred to states that this ewer was presented to the National Historical Museum by Alfred Carleson in 1870, and that it formerly belonged to a church in the province of Ojdre. The article also refers to the ancient rule of the church by which the officiating priest was enjoined to lave his hands before touching the host. It is added that the Stockholm Museum possesses two other bronze ewers of similar lion form, one of which came from Gothland, and that from the twelfth to the fourteenth century such water-ewers were formed like lions, horses, basilisks, griffins, doves, or hens.

I saw two of these lion ewers for sale in an old curiosity shop in

¹ Kongl. Vitterhet's Historie och Antiquitets Akademiens. Manadsblad, 1872, p. 12.

Christiania, and left an order for them failing their acquisition by the Christiania Museum, to which my action in the matter was the means of sending them. The shopkeeper also showed me two altar candlesticks

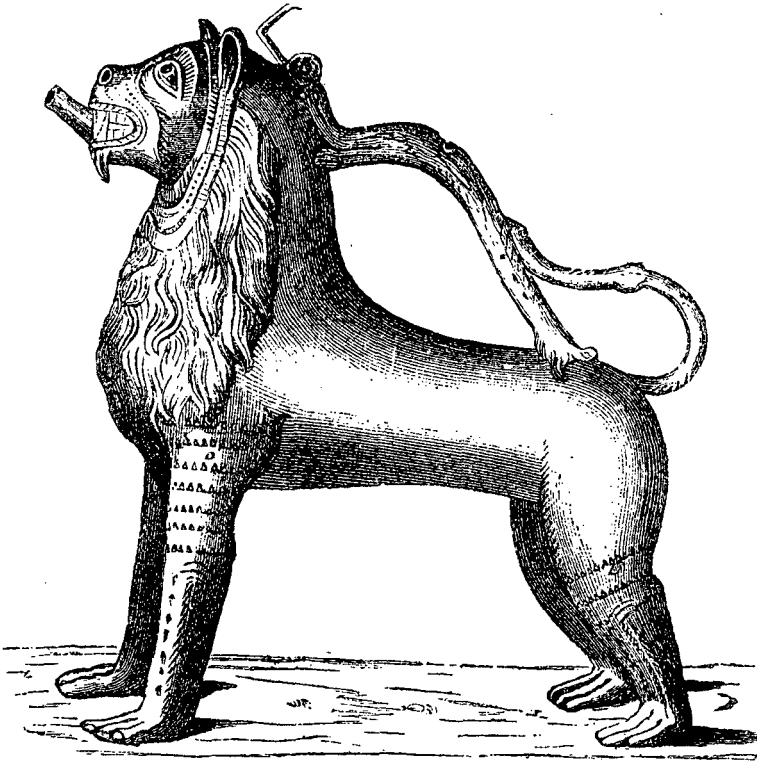


Fig. 12. Lion Ewer in the Museum at Stockholm.

borne on the backs of small lions exactly like the one dug up in Glasgow. Kluver describes three specimens of bronze ewers known in Norway before the publication of his book in 1823.¹ One of these is in the form

¹ Norske Mindesmaerker af Lorentz Diderich Klüver Christiania, 1823, pp. 46-48, Plate XI.

of a griffin bearing a man in its mouth, the second is in the form of a unicorn, and the third shaped like a knight on horseback. Kluver was inclined to look for the origin of these fantastic forms in the heathen mythology, and to conclude that they belonged to the Pagan times, though some were used in the rites of the Christian church. On the other hand Professor Munch, referring to the Norwegian specimens, says, "Notwithstanding these fantastic shapes of four-footed beasts, &c., they were used upon the altar as vessels containing the water which the deacon poured upon the hands of the officiating priest before his touching the consecrated bread." He adds, "I understand from Mr Thomsen, who learned it from a Frenchman brought up at Smyrna, that such vessels are still used for the same purpose in the Romish churches of the Levant." He therefore concludes that those found in Norway may be Byzantine, or made after Byzantine models—and the date assigned to them appears to favour this supposition.

In Wagner's "Handbook of the Principal Antiquities of Pagan Times discovered in Germany," published at Weimar in 1842, four of these vessels are figured and described. The first of these, which is in the shape of a lion, was found at Brunswick; the second, also lion-shaped, was found at Konningen Graetz; the third, shaped like a horse, was found at Prague; and the fourth, shaped like a lioness, at Scherbitz. There is another German example in the museum at Sigmaringen. There is one in the British Museum, but I am not aware that its history is known. Two are mentioned as being in the possession of the Earl of Shrewsbury, and Dr Wilson mentions one in the collection of Mr Drummond Hay.¹ An example of the same form of lion ewer from the Debruge-Dumevil collection is figured and described by Mr H. F. Holt in the "Proceedings of the Archæological Association," printed in their Journal, vol. xxvii. p.

¹ Since this paper was written Mr Cochran Patrick has favoured me with a photograph of a ewer of this class in the possession of Mr J. G. M'Kirdy of Birkwood, Lanarkshire. It is in the form of a goat (or possibly a chamois), has a handle of the same zoomorphic type as the others, and is provided with a spout and stopcock in front of the breast. An allied class of vessels in the form of knights on horseback was produced both in metal and in pottery.

260. Mr Holt styles this vessel "Augsburg work of the commencement of the fifteenth century." They are also referred to in Labarte's "Hand-book of the Arts of the Middle Ages" as dating from the eleventh to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Thus the mystery so long connected with these vessels when they were only known through isolated specimens disappears, and instead of it we find a well-established class of ecclesiastical utensils, with a well-defined use. We find them still existing in sufficient numbers to substantiate their place and function, and to show by their general similarity, that whether they are found in Germany, England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, or Norway, or even in Iceland, they are objects whose conventional form was fixed by the common custom of Christendom, and but slightly differentiated by national or local feeling.

They are spread over all Europe, says Troyon, and their dates vary "from the tenth to the sixteenth century." Yet by a singular hankering after the mysterious, he suggests that they pertain to an ancient form of worship, and that though in some cases used in the Christian church, in others they have been deposited by pagans in their tombs. Some have been unquestionably dug up from the ground, but that they were obtained from "tombs" there is no evidence, and, of course, the suggestion of "paganism" is entirely groundless. That one of the Scottish examples was found in a canoe hollowed out of a single trunk is suggestive of a certain antiquity, but that the antiquity of such a canoe must necessarily be greater than the twelfth or even greater than the fifteenth century remains open to question. The period of the class being fixed by the known dedication of one of them, and the historical description of others in inventories of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, their range in date is perhaps not too widely stated by M. Troyon as between the tenth and sixteenth centuries, although I have to add that no specimen has come under my notice which I could refer to a period so very early as the tenth century.

These vessels have been usually styled "bronze lion ewers," and it was, therefore, of some importance that the actual composition of the metal should be determined. This was kindly undertaken by Mr W. Ivison

Macadam, and the following are the results of his careful analysis of the lion ewer No. 1 belonging to Mr Harvey :—

	No. 1 Analysis.	No. 2 Analysis.	Average of Two Analyses.
Copper	78·36	78·38	78·37
Zinc	12·15	12·04	12·09
Insoluble silicious matter	9·38	9·46	9·42
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	99·89	99·88	99·88

It is probable that the silicious matter has been derived from the soil. Deducting this sand matter, the composition of the alloy is as follows :—

	No. 1 Analysis.	No. 2 Analysis.	Average of Two Analyses.
Copper	86·57	86·68	86·62
Zinc	13·31	13·31	13·31
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	99·88	99·99	99·93

The above analyses show about 13 parts of copper to every 2 parts of zinc by weight.

W. IVISON MACADAM, F.C.S., &c.,
Lecturer on Chemistry.

ANALYTICAL LABORATORY, SURGEONS' HALL,
May 17th, 1879.

The metal is therefore brass and not bronze, though differing considerably in the proportion of zinc from the modern brass. The appearance of the oxidised surface differs also from the *patina* of bronze, and as the rest of the ewers present much the same character, I have no hesitation in describing them all as of brass.

[Since the foregoing was in type, I have been informed by Mr D. Douglas, the Society's Treasurer, that when at Hildesheim in June 1879, he saw a lion-figure precisely similar to that dug up at Bell Street, Glasgow (fig. 2 of the present paper). It formed a pricket candlestick (which is the use I had suggested for them), and was chained to the table on which it stood before the altar in the crypt. Mr Douglas was informed that it had been presented to the church by one of the Dukes of Brunswick in the twelfth century, and it is still in daily use.]