

## I.

## NOTICES OF TWO SCANDINAVIAN POWDER-HORNS, PRESENTED TO THE MUSEUM BY J. ROMILLY ALLEN, F.S.A. SCOT. (PLATE I.)

The two Scandinavian powder-horns, now presented to the Museum, were purchased from dealers in London, beyond which nothing is known of their history, except that there is a cast of the smaller one in the South Kensington Museum, the following description of it being given in Professor J. O. Westwood's *Descriptive Catalogue of Fictile Ivories in the South Kensington Museum* (p. 327).

'73-356.

Powder Flask—Indo-Portugese (?) 17th century—Original in the ——<sup>1</sup> Collection—L.  $4\frac{3}{4}$  ins.; W. at bottom 2 ins. Portion of the curved end of a tusk, with very rudely carved scenes of the Passion in very low relief. The kiss of Judas and the soldiers, one fallen on the ground in dismay. Christ bound, brought before Pilate; the Scourging; Christ reviled and crowned with thorns; Christ bearing his cross; St Veronica kneeling before him with the Vera-icon, and the Crucifixion; the faces of the sun and moon over the arms of the cross; the three Maries standing and kneeling at the foot of the cross.

Professor Westwood had evidently never seen the original, or he would have noticed that the material of which this powder-flask was made was horn, and not ivory. It is at present in a fragmentary condition, only the smaller end of the horn remaining, having a small mounting of brass at the tip, and the lower end closed up with a piece of wood. The diameter at the top is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches and at the bottom  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches, the length being  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches, differing slightly from the dimensions given by Professor Westwood. The style of the carving is so like that found on powder-flasks which are known to be Scandinavian that there can be little doubt this one can be traced to the same northern source.

The figures (see Plate I.) are rudely executed, but the artist's lack of technical skill is, to a certain extent, made up for by clever grouping and expressive attitudes, giving a force which is often lacking in more highly finished work. The conventional way in which the whole of the

<sup>1</sup> Name of collection not given in catalogue, because unknown to Prof. Westwood.

drapery is covered with wavy lines should be noticed. The background is cross-hatched all over. The subjects represented are six in number, arranged in two rows of three, one above the other, each enclosed within a margin, arched at the top and ornamented with a chevron. The scenes are all taken from the Passion of our Lord, being as follows:—

*Top Row.*—(1) Christ carrying the Cross. In front is St Veronica holding the veil with the impression of our Lord's face upon it. There are two other figures behind and one in front.

(2) The Crucifixion. Christ on cross, with head erect, body unbent and limbs straight along arms of cross; cloth girt round the waist, feet resting on suppedaneum, crown of thorns on the head, wounds in two hands and right side; top arm of cross inscribed with letters I. N.; Sol and Luna on each side of top arm of cross; three figures below, one on left shown in full face standing with arms folded across the breast, intended for the Virgin Mary (?), one on right shown in profile, intended for St John (?), and third figure kneeling at foot of cross, intended for one of the other Maries.

(3) Christ Buffeted. Christ in the centre naked, with hands crossed and bound, and crowned with thorns; a man on each side pulling his hair, and one on the left below striking him with a reed.

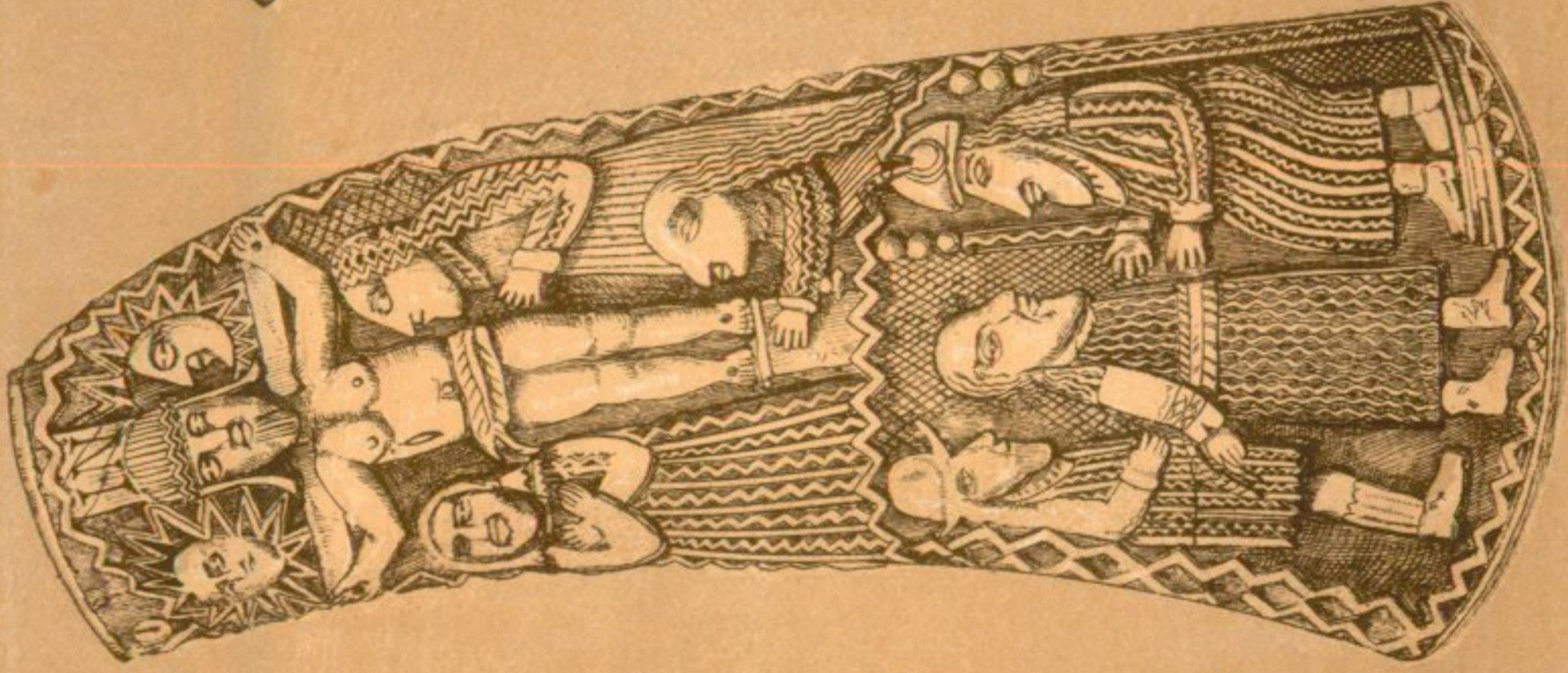
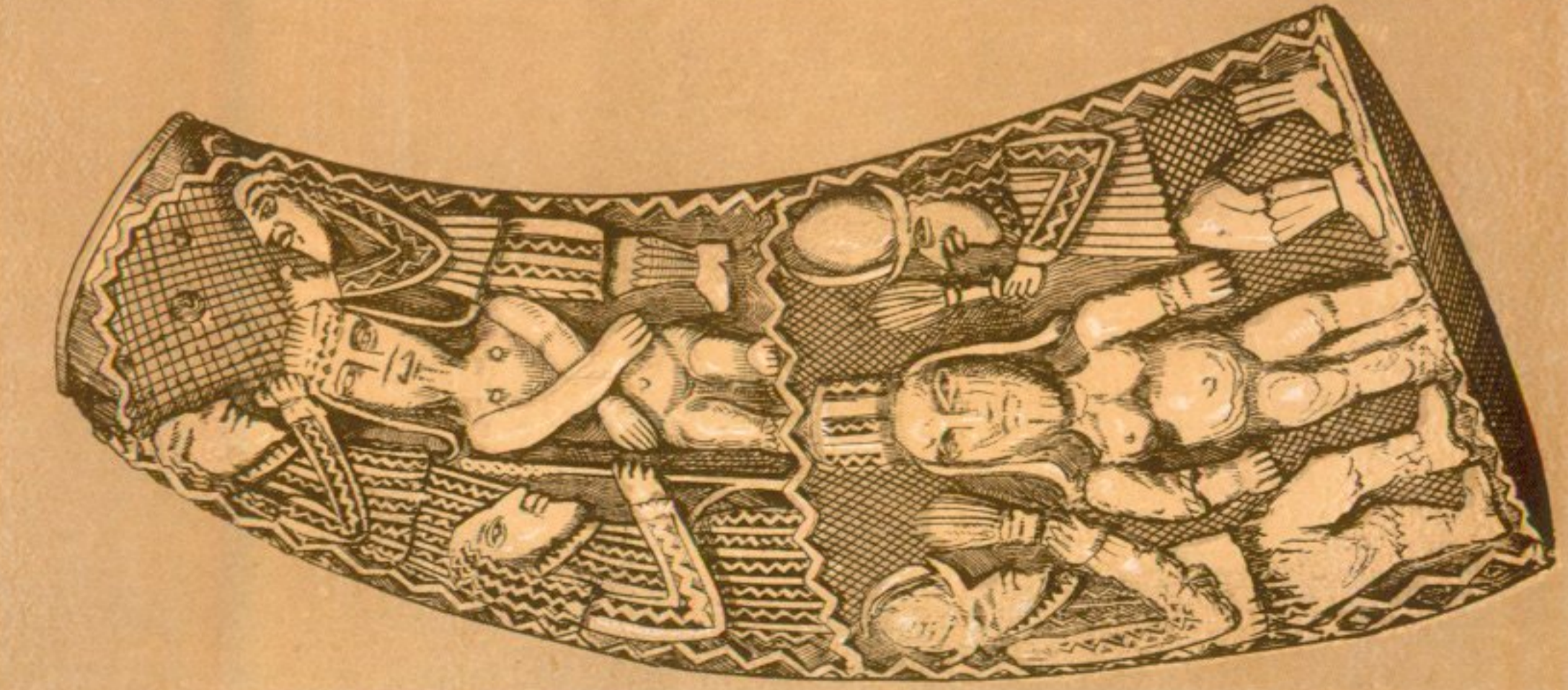
*Bottom Row.*—(1) The Betrayal. Judas kissing Christ, a soldier on the left carrying a lighted torch, and another with fasces, spear-heads appearing in the background; Peter cutting off the ear of Malchus, who lies prostrate on the ground.

(2) Christ before Pilate, clad in a long robe, with the hands tied behind, and attended by a guard.

(3) The Scourging. Christ in the centre naked, and a man on each side with a scourge.

From the style of the art of the carvings on this powder-horn and the way of treating the subjects represented, it is probably not older than the sixteenth or seventeenth century. The entire absence of the nimbus round the heads of the figures is a very remarkable feature, for although the nimbus is not found on the early paintings in the Catacombs at Rome before A.D. 400, after that time its use was universal throughout Christian art for the purpose of distinguishing saints from other persons





CARVED POWDER HORN.



with whom they were grouped in pictures and sculptures. The only exceptions to this rule are to be found in districts like Scotland and Ireland, which in pre-Norman times were so isolated from the rest of Christendom that their native sculptors either adhered to the traditional art of the first four centuries, after it had disappeared elsewhere, or were too remote from the centres of learning to be guided by hard and fast laws of any kind. Whatever may be the reason of the omission of the nimbus on most of early sculptured stones of Ireland and Scotland, the want of this distinguishing mark makes the interpretation of the different subjects infinitely more difficult than it would be otherwise.

The Crucifixion on the Scandinavian powder-horn is treated in a very archaic manner, the body of the Saviour being unbent and the limbs extended straight out on the arms of the cross, showing that He was alive, not dead, as is the case in the representations of the thirteenth and subsequent centuries. The conventional sun and moon above the arms of the cross are characteristic of the Byzantine, Carlovingian, and Saxon types of Crucifixion.

Scenes from the Passion of our Lord are not found at all in the paintings of the Catacombs at Rome, and it was only by degrees that anything like a complete series was formed. The earliest examples are found on the sculptured sarcophagi at Rome of the fourth and fifth centuries, the scenes chosen for representation being the denial of St Peter, Christ before Pilate, Christ crowned with thorns, and Christ carrying the cross.<sup>1</sup> In the sixth century the crucifixion and resurrection and ascension<sup>2</sup> were added, and in the Saxon MSS. of the eleventh century the betrayal occurs. The scourging and other scenes intended to attract attention to the sufferings and indignities which our Lord had to undergo belong to the period subsequent to the twelfth century. The regular series of scenes from the Passion begins with the entry into Jerusalem, and includes all the principal events described in the New Testament and Apocryphal Gospels between this and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, but as time went on the

<sup>1</sup> See Dr J. W. Appell's *Monuments of Early Christian Art*.

<sup>2</sup> On the holy oil vessels from Jerusalem. See Garrucci, *Storia del arte Cristiana*, vol. vi. pls. 433-435.

scenes immediately connected with the trial of our Lord by Pilate and the Crucifixion took precedence of all others, and just before the Reformation the representations of what actually took place were discarded in favour of that curious set of symbols known as the Emblems of the Passion.

One of the earliest series of scenes from the Passion, which includes the scourging, is to be found on the golden altar at Aix la Chapelle, attributed by Rohault de Fleury to the tenth century.<sup>1</sup> The Emblems of the Passion, as distinguished from the scenes from the Passion, were not fully developed until the fifteenth or sixteenth century, but an example of the Emblems being introduced into the subject of Christ in Glory occurs in the Saxon Psalter of King Athelstan in the British Museum (Galba A xviii.), illustrated in Professor Westwood's *Miniatures of the Anglo-Saxon MSS.* (pl. 32).

The scourging does not occur in Norman sculpture in this country, as far as I am aware, but there is a curious example of the scene sculptured on a fourteenth century font at Shilton, in Oxfordshire.

The introduction of St Veronica into the representations of Christ bearing the cross, is of late date, and the only instance of it amongst the fictile ivories in the South Kensington Museum, catalogued by Professor Westwood, is on a cast taken from the horn now under consideration.

In the time of Eusebius, St Veronica was indentified with ἡ αἰμορροῦσα, or the woman that our Lord cured of the bloody issue, and the historian describes two statues existing in his time at Cæserea Philippi—one of Christ and the other of the Hæmorissa. The Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus makes St Veronica one of the witnesses on behalf of Christ in this trial by Pilate. The later legend is well known, which relates that, when our Lord was carrying this cross to Calvary, St Veronica was amongst the spectators, and being moved with compassion on beholding His agony, stepped forward and wiped the blood and sweat from His face with her veil. The impression of the features of Christ was miraculously transferred to the veil, and the portrait thus produced was called the "Vera icon," or true image, which is still believed to exist amongst the other relics in St Peters at Rome.

<sup>1</sup> *La Messe*, vol. i, pl. 87.

Professor George Stephens recently read a paper before the Society of Antiquaries of London "on an ebony pax bearing the legend of St Veronica,"<sup>1</sup> which he purchased in Copenhagen in 1877. He mentions that "in an old Swedish legend, Abargus, in his zeal to see Christ, sent his own painter to Jerusalem to take the portrait of the healer. But the divine face was too bright for the eyes of the artist, and the Saviour pressed his own kerchief over his countenance, and gave it to the errander, stamped with the Heaven-King's image."

The name Veronica seems to be a corruption of vera icon, or perhaps the similarity of sound between the two suggested the legend. Many curious beliefs of this kind grew up, in the first place, from a desire to amplify the narrative of the Gospels by supplying details there omitted, tracing relationships between the different characters, and identifying anonymous persons with others whose names are given in some other passage, or giving entirely new names to them. These names were generally in Greek, and had some connection with the facts related about the individual, as when the soldier who struck our Lord with a spear at the crucifixion is called Longinus, from *λόγχη*, a spear. The original meaning of the word was afterwards forgotten, and it was thought of simply as a proper name. Protestants are accustomed to look upon all Christian legends with more or less contempt as being unworthy of notice, but there is much to be learnt as to the gradual growth of stories of this kind, and it will generally be found that they were not invented by ecclesiastical writers with the intent to deceive their readers, but are natural products of the human mind wishing to get a more complete idea of the Scripture narrative, and occasionally falling into error, or deceived by the sound of words whose meaning had been lost.

The larger of the two powder-horns presented to the Museum is carved with Scripture subjects and also with scenes from the romances of the Charlemagne cycle. It will not be necessary to refer in detail to the latter, as Mr G. F. Black will undertake to explain their meaning fully in a subsequent paper on the subject.

The horn is ornamented with three rows of scenes enclosed in panels

<sup>1</sup> *Archæologia*, vol. xlv. p. 266.

with inscriptions between each.<sup>1</sup> Part of the top row is subdivided on one side into two smaller rows. The subjects and inscriptions are as follows :—

*Top Row.*—Temptation of Adam and Eve, inscribed vertically on left ADAM I PARIDI, on right EVA HERHOS. Three warriors on horseback inscribed horizontally above OTEVEL DRAB DEMEBEGE. Smaller row below. Warrior on horseback, inscribed vertically on right TIDRIK : Lion and Dragon facing each other, and standing on a conical hill ; a crown above the head of the lion, inscribed in smaller letters horizontally KRONE, inscribed horizontally above these two scenes K : GARSIA K : KLARIS.

*Second Row.*—Inscribed above, horizontally right round the horn, L Ñ VEN OG DEN LEDELINDER ORMEN. Four panels of carving—(1) Two warriors on horseback facing each other, with a conical hill between them, inscribed vertically over the apex TAREN ; a bird above the heads of each of the horses, inscribed vertically on right ROLAND, and on left ALKAIN. (2) Two men facing each other, inscribed horizontally above FERAKVN, and vertically on right BOLDVIN. (3) Warrior on horseback, and bird above head of horse, inscribed vertically on right ABAS. (4) Similar to No. 3, but reversed.

*Bottom Row.*—Inscribed above horizontally right round the horn HER IVAAR BLAA GREVEN GONSELIN. Five panels of carving—(1) King holding sword, inscribed vertically on left in smaller letters KONG OLGER DANSK. (2) A similar figure, inscribed vertically on left K : BVRMAN. (3) King David playing on the harp, inscribed vertically on left KO : DAVE. (4) Samson and Delilah, inscribed vertically on left SAMSON, and horizontally in smaller letters above Delilah DALILADH. (5) Daniel feeding the dragon with balls of pitch, inscribed vertically on left DANIEL, and horizontally in smaller letters above the dragon DRAKE ; a human head appears just below Daniel's hand ; inscribed right round bottom of horn ANNO 1697 MAS MASSEN EGEN HAND.

The powder-horn has mountings at the top and bottom of brass.

The four Scripture subjects are all taken from the Old Testament. The Temptation of Adam and Eve occurs in the paintings of the Catacombs at Rome, and is common throughout all periods of Christian art.

<sup>1</sup> See the engraving of the horn on plate ii. in Mr Black's paper.

The symbolism is explained by the verse in St Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 21): "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all live."

Daniel feeding the dragon with balls of pitch is represented on sculptured sarcophagi found in the Vatican cemetery (*Bottari, tav. xix.*), Verona (Maffei's *Verona Illustrata*, pt. iii. p. 54), and at Arles. It also occurs on the gilded glass vessels from the Catacombs. The scene is not described in our version of the Scriptures, but in the Apocrypha. The delivery of Daniel from the lions was a common symbolic way of setting forth God's power to deliver Christians from evil, but the incident of Daniel feeding the dragon is comparatively rare in art.

David playing on the harp is not found in the Catacomb paintings, but belongs to the period when illuminated Psalters begun to be used, this subject generally forming the frontispiece to the volume. Numerous examples of the ninth and tenth centuries exist in the Irish and Anglo-Saxon MSS., and on the high crosses of Ireland. David was one of the favourite Old Testament types of Christ.

The event from the life of Samson, which is most frequently represented in Christian art, is his combat with the lion, but the story of his connection with Delilah is very seldom illustrated. The only instance I have come across in twelfth century sculpture is on the details of the cloisters of Zurich Cathedral,<sup>1</sup> where Delilah is shown cutting off Samson's hair, the source of his strength. On the Scandinavian powder-horn, Samson appears seated, with long hair reaching down to the ground, and Delilah stands in front presenting him with a cup of wine.

<sup>1</sup> "Der Kreuzgang beim Grossmünster in Zürich," Von S. Vögelin, *Mittheilungen der Antiquarischen Gesellschaft in Zürich*, Band i. Heft 6.