

4. SOME NOTABLE WEAPONS AND ACCESSORIES, INCLUDING INSCRIBED POWDER-HORNS.

At the sale of the late Major J. Milne-Davidson's collection in London, the Museum purchased nine basket-hilted swords, two targes, eight powder-horns, a hunting-horn, two sporrans and three plaid brooches. Half the cost was borne by the National Art Collections Fund and half by the R. I. Cochrane Bequest.

Three of the swords were published by C. E. Whitelaw, F.S.A.Scot., in *T. Glasgow A.S., N.S., VIII, Part IV (1934, Supplement)*; all are signed hilts, two by Walter Allan of Stirling (pl. iii, fig. 5, now LA 126, and pl. iv, figs. 2 and 3, now LA 125), and one by "T. Gemmill, K.(ing's) Armourer" (pl. i, fig. 6, now LA 127). LA 128 is described in the catalogue of the 1939 London (Royal Academy) Exhibition of Scottish Art (No. 1103) and illustrated in the 1931 London (Grosvenor Square—Scottish Antiquities) Exhibition catalogue (pl. 20); its blade is decorated as that of LA 124 (see below). LA 129, a backsword captured at Culloden, is described in the 1939 catalogue (No. 1104) and has a Jacobite inscription on the blade. LA 124 (Pl. XLII, 3) is a silversmith's version of the contemporary small sword, with its shells and single quillon, allied with a half-basket and a broadsword blade. The silver hilt is stamped twice "HB," for Harry Beathune, admitted to the Edinburgh Incorporation of Goldsmiths in 1704 (Sir C. J. Jackson, *English Goldsmiths and their Marks*, 2nd edition, 501). The two vertical guards screw into the large globular pommel, and the grip is of wood. The elaborately decorated and gilt blade has, on one side, the figure of St Andrew and "Prosperity to Schotland and no union," and on the other a Crown and crossed sceptres and "For God my Country and King James the 8." Total length 40.25 ins., blade 33 x 1.35 ins.

One of the targes (LN 52, Pl. XLI, 1; London 1939 Ex. cat. No. 1038) is believed to have been carried by the Marquis of Huntly (later 2nd Duke of Gordon) at the battle of Sheriffmuir in 1715. The studs outlining the tooled leather decoration are of silver. The other targe (LA 53; 1931 London Ex. cat. No. 274, pl. 10) has brass studs and pierced and engraved discs, a hole for a missing centre spike, and the back retains the original grip and armloop tooled with a scroll design.

¹ *P.P.S.*, xviii (1952), 191.

One of the sporrans, NE 44 (illustrated pl. 16, No. 2, 1931 London Ex. cat.— wrongly numbered on the plate, 424 instead of 422), is of the rare 17th century, gathered doeskin bag type, without a brass frame. There is one other in the Museum, NE 2.

The hunting-horn, LT 47, is 23 ins. long, 4.1 × 3.4 ins. and 1 in. in end diameters. Its decorations include a band of interlacing, semicircular "scales" to a depth of 2.5 ins. from the mouth, a deeply cut seven-petalled rose 2 ins. in diameter and a running wolf as found on sword blades. The earliest date on it is 1688.

Three of the flat powder-horns have 17th-century dates. LK 76 is dated 1677, and LK 75, 1690. The latter, which is illustrated in the 1931 London Ex. catalogue (No. 278, pl. 16, No. 4), is inscribed on the inner side "A man his mynd should never sett upon the thing hee cane nott gett".

The third 17th-century horn, LK 74, Pl. XLII, 2, has an inscription in Aberdeenshire dialect, which has been wrongly translated in both London Exhibition catalogues (1931 No. 290; 1939 No. 1036). Length 11.1 ins., butt width 3.2 ins. The horn came originally from Mill of Cullan, Tarland, Aberdeenshire. The inscription, on an inner edge, reads "ILL . MOT . THOE . SECK . MYN . FAT . LESS AND BOY EAWE", and, in larger letters on the inner side "♡ 1693 FIMIS." For correcting the first part of the inscription I am indebted to Mr D. D. Murison, M.A., B.A., Editor of the *Scottish National Dictionary*, who writes, "The crux of the interpretation is in *ill*, which may mean either (1) an imprecation, or (2) with difficulty, so that the sentence would imply either 'confound you for seeking (*i.e.* asking the loan of) my one,' or 'you won't get my one easily (*i.e.* I am not willing to lend it to you.)' The first preserves the joke and seems to be the preferable interpretation. For *mot* = may, see Oxford English Dictionary under *mote*, v.¹ The phrase *ill mot* or *mar* is common enough, but generally with verbs like fare, thrive or the like. Seek is unusual."

The full translation, therefore, is "Ill may thou seek mine, eat less and buy one."

A horn already in the Museum, LK 1 (illustrated in *P.S.A.S.*, ix, 534), is almost certainly by the same maker as LK 74. The ornament is similar, the date a year later (1694), and the inscription is "SECK . ME . MOT . I . PRAY . THE . MY . MESTER . VIL . DEWEY . THE . FAT . LEZ//AND . BOOY FEAR GOD IN HEAT IC." The "IC" is repeated on one face, along with "BB." The "Ns" in both are back to front, and there is the same "F" in place of "E" in "eat." The "e" and "a" are run together, and it may be that the serifs of the two letters have become one. The London catalogues make "AND BOY EAWE" into a signature, "Andrew Boye of Oyne," but Mr George Davidson of Aberdeen, to whom I am also indebted for help with the whole inscription, originally suggested that the F of FAT is meant for an E, and in proof quotes the inscription on a brass tobacco-box in Peterhead Museum, dated 1756:

"No common beggar here shall be a taster
but let him buy as do my honest mast(er, covered by hinge)
Take chac and take no mor
And to my master me restore
Ask me not for shame but drink less and buy on"

Also, from a powder-horn "dated 1676, William Mitchell," likewise in the 1931 catalogue (No. 292): "Ther is mon be boughtd drink less and mak me not forsham when . . ."

Finally, to illustrate the longevity of such sayings, he recalls the 1914-8 war retort to a would-be borrower, "Drink less and buy matches!"

Since the above was written, Mr C. Blair, B.A., Assistant Keeper in the Tower of London Armouries, has kindly drawn my attention to the inscription on a "dudgeon" dagger dated 1605: "Ask me not for schame Drink lis and by ane". The dagger is in the collection of Mr R. W. Symonds and is illustrated in an article by C. R. Beard in *The Connoisseur*, vol. CVII, pp. 210-11.

STUART MAXWELL, *Assistant Keeper of Museum.*