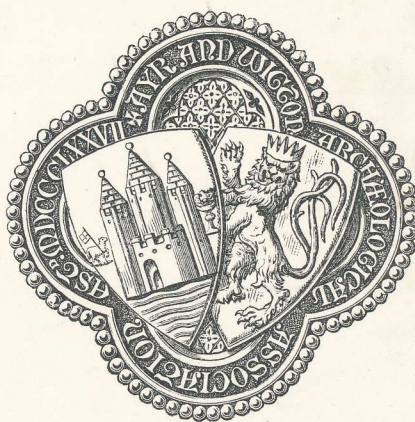


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VI.

NOTE ON TWO VESSELS OF BRASS FOUND IN
KILBIRNIE LOCH.

THE two vessels now described were found in a canoe in the Loch of Kilbirnie, and the circumstances of their discovery were detailed in a



FIG. 1.—Scale $\frac{1}{3}$.

communication to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland by Mr. Cochran-Patrick in 1872.¹ From this it appears that the Glengarnock Iron Company had been for some years depositing their refuse in the Loch of

¹ *Proc. Soc. of Ant. of Scot.*, vol. ix. p. 385.

Kilbirnie. The enormous weight of the mass thus deposited had the 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 have been from time to time discovered. One of these canoes, which was found about twenty feet distant from a Crannog in the loch was thus forced to the surface, and when the mud was being cleared out of it a three-legged pot and a brass lion ewer were found in it. The pot (Fig. 1) is of the usual well-known shape. It is 14 inches in height, 11 inches across the mouth, and weighs 28 lbs.



FIG. 2.

The lion ewer (Fig. 2) is of brass, 8 inches in length and $8\frac{1}{2}$ high. It is the property of W. J. Armstrong, Esq., factor to the Earl of Glasgow, to whom the Loch of Kilbirnie belongs.

It was exhibited at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, on December 9, 1878, when the opportunity was taken of bringing together most of the other specimens of these curious vessels known to exist in this country.¹

In the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* I have given a description of the various specimens of these curious lion-shaped ewers, exhibited at that meeting. From that paper I now take the following remarks on 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

¹ *Proc. Soc. of Ant. of Scot.*, vol. xiii. p. 50.

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 Moguntinum* the following passage:—"Erant pelves quatuor argenteæ, et urcei diversarum formarum, quos Manilia vocant, eo quod aqua Sacerdotum manibus affunderetur 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 *Epistola 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 abluuntur digiti 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 Prestre 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 sub-deacon 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 Germanicae* of Ursticius.¹ Quoting from an Inventory in the *Chronicon Conradi*, he says:—"Urcae argentee 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 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 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), 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

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

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 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 exhibited, 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 Vatnsfiord 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 Vatnsfiord 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 Vatnsfiord 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 Innslov 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* 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 1872.¹ 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 Ydre. 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.

Klüber describes three specimens of bronze ewers known in Norway before the publication of his book in 1823.² One of these is in the form of

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

² *Norske Mindesmaerker af Lorentz Diderich Klüber*, Christiania, 1823; pp. 46-48, Plate XI.

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, etc., 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 their date appears to me to favour that 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-Dumenil collection is figured and described by Mr. H. F. Holt in the *Proceedings of the Archaeological Association*, printed in their Journal, vol. xxvii. p. 260. Mr. Holt styles this vessel "Augsburg work, of the commencement of the fifteenth century." They are also referred to in Labarte's *Handbook 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

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. McKirdy 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 stop-cock 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.

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 a lion ewer 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 siliceous matter	9·38	9·46	9·42
	<hr/> 99·89	<hr/> 99·88	<hr/> 99·88

It is probable that the siliceous 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
	<hr/> 99.88	<hr/> 99.99	<hr/> 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., ETC.,
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.

J. ANDERSON.