

Miscellanea

POWDER HORN.

The powder horn (Plate I.a) reported by Mr. Justice Gleeson in J.R.S.A.I. LXXIII, and illustrated by Dr. Raftery in J.R.S.A.I. LXXIV, is one of a large and important class of such flasks, examples of which are contained in all the large public and private armouries and collections of Europe and America.

The cows-horn type is usually crude, being confined to examples of local manufacture or country make, but the deer's antler is more often used for the elaborate flasks made for the princes and nobility of the European courts(1). Elaborate examples, similar in shape to the Limerick museum specimen are in the Wallace Collection, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Tower Armoury and the British Museum. On the continent there are specimens in the Musée de l'Armée, the Zeughaus, etc.

While not comparing in elaboration of treatment with, for instance, the finely carved and gilded horn, No. 234-1854 in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Plate I.b), or with the French example in the same collection dated 1571, the horn in question has evidently been made for a well-to-do owner. The mounts are unfortunately missing which suggests that they may have been removed for their intrinsic value and were possibly of silver.(2)

The finely engraved linear decoration and the boldness and competence of the drawing and skill in adapting the design to the rather awkward space to be filled, all indicate that this flask is the production of a workshop well used to the manufacture of similar objects and suggests a locality with a tradition of wood and bone engraving based on wood-cut illustration, such as South Germany, where by far the greater number of this type of flask were produced, though some are French and a few North Italian.

They were usually part of the "jagdausstattung" forming part of a set together with the gun itself, a horn, a "wildmesser" or sheath containing a sword, and instruments for cutting up the deer, &c.

The costume confirms the suggestion of a South German place of production. It is typical of the German Landsknecht of the second half of the 16th century and would not be found worn by any English or Irish gentleman at that period. The figure wears a high crowned hat with a small brim and a feather, of a Spanish type, also seen in the portrait of Sir Edward Hoby, 1575.(3) The doublet is slashed and prucked, with small wings and pickadils at the shoulders, with the full banded sleeves of the shirt appearing over the arms. Note that the doublet has a straight waist with short skirt and has no trace of the later peascod belly. The breeches are long and very full and differ from the English "Venetians." They are formed as full drawers confined by slashed "panes," or longitudinal bands, caught up at the top in typical German fashion with "points" or laces, and having a large codpiece in front. They are of a type known as "pluderhose."

The Landsknecht is armed with a lance and a sword, the hilt of which can be seen at the left hip, hanging behind the body, the peculiar scabbard point appearing on the right.

In St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna an almost precisely similar costume is shown on the grave stone of the Standard Bearer, Leo Nothafft of Raab, who died in 1566 (Plate I.c). The details of the doublet, breeches with panes, and codpiece are almost exactly similar, though here there is a slight suggestion of the coming fashion of the peascod belly in the skirt of the doublet in front. The chape of the dagger sheath is also curiously like that on the Clare flask.

In view of the evidence of costume and by comparison with dated examples, a date of circa 1560-70 may be suggested.

The Limerick Museum is to be congratulated on the acquisition of this interesting piece, for it is important, not only as an object of Irish historical interest, but also when considered as an example of European art of the 16th century.

JOHN HUNT.

Notes:

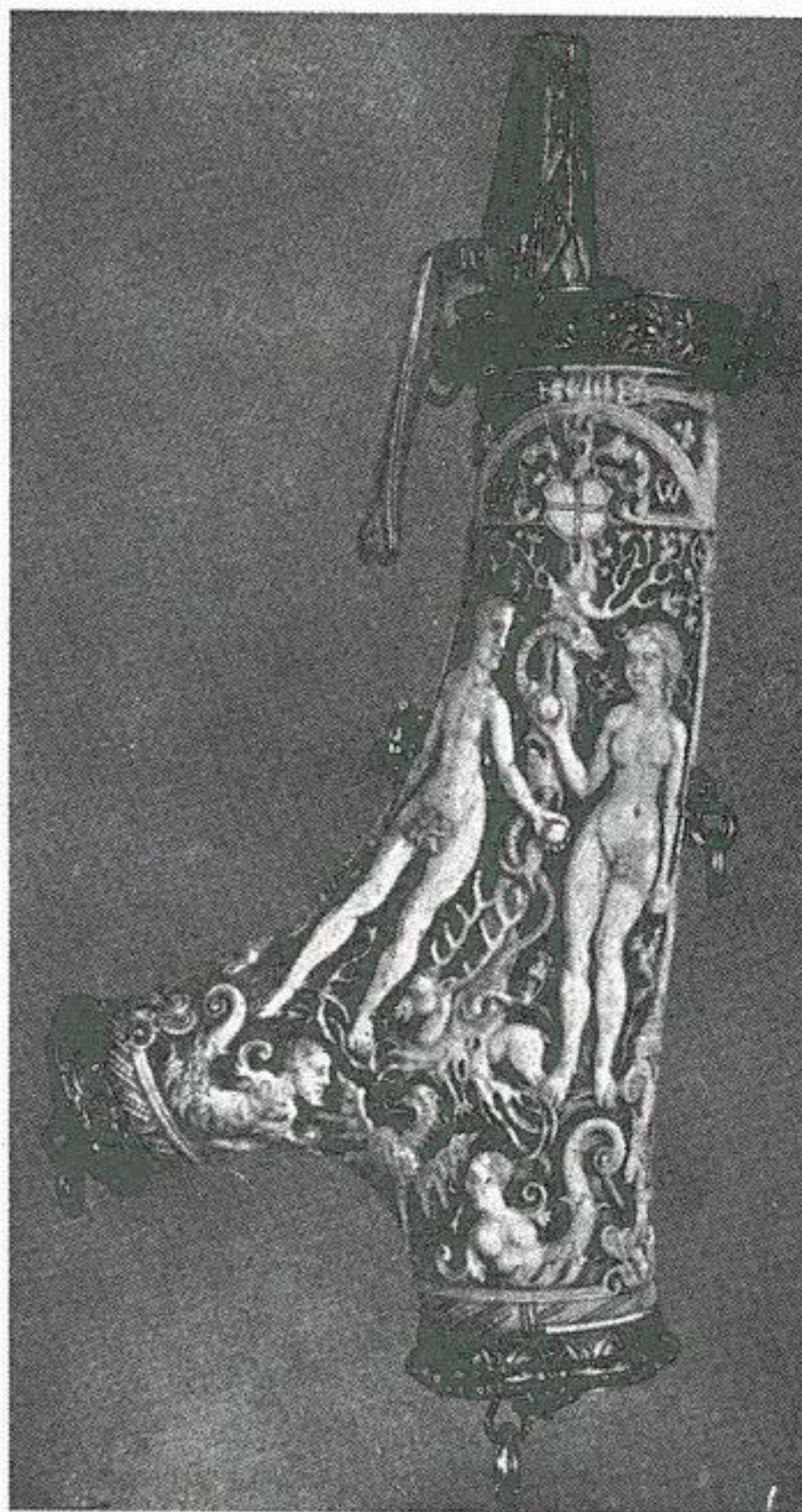
1. A flask of flattened cows-horn shape, but made of ebony and with etched steel mounts, also carved with a standing figure of a landsknecht is in the Windsor Castle Collection. No. 330. It has been dated as first quarter of the 17th century, but is more probably of a date in the second half of the 16th century.

2. They must have been similar to those of the Victoria and Albert Museum flask, illustrated here. (Plate I.b).

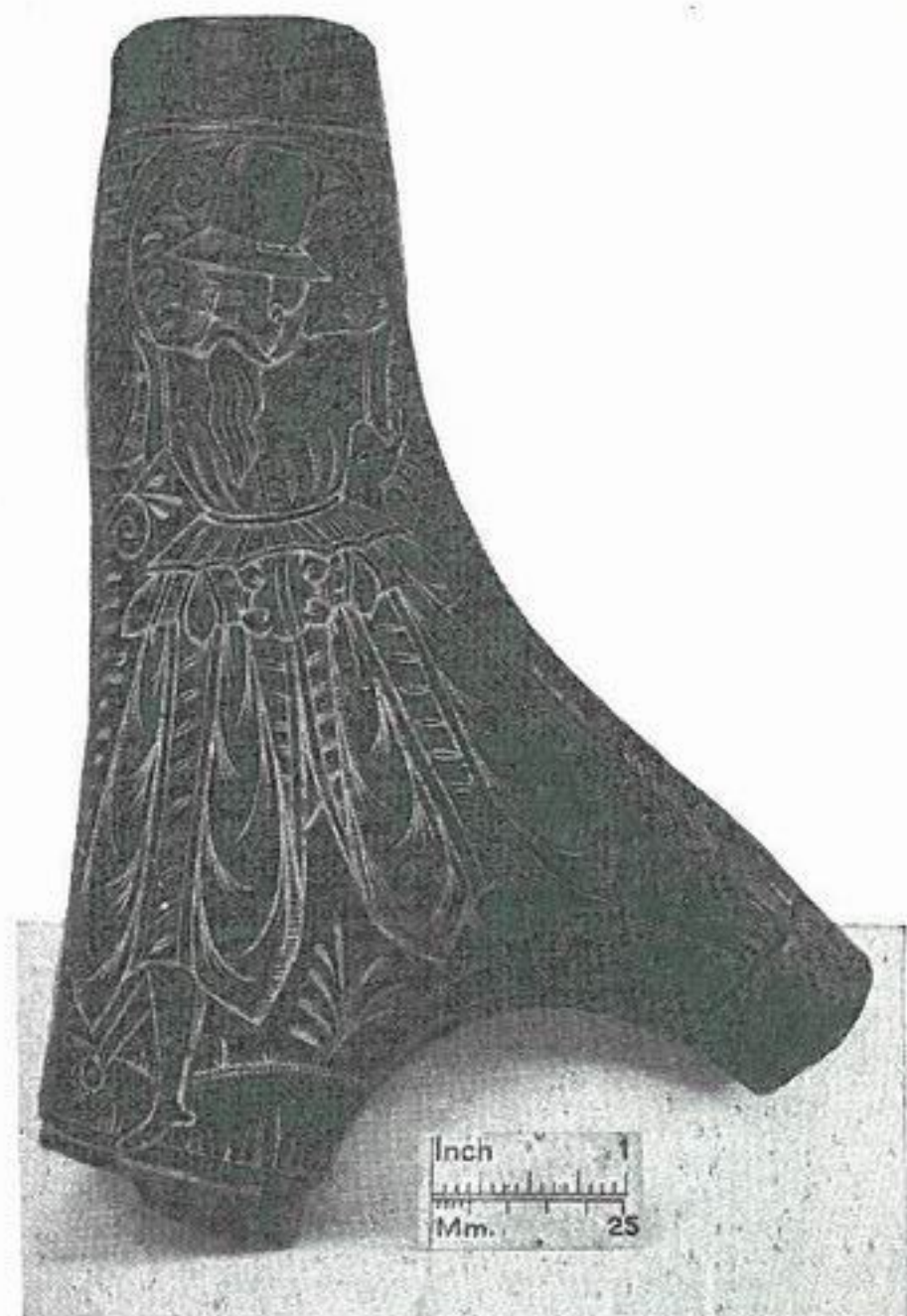
3. F. M. Kelly and R. Schwabe, *A Short History of Costume and Armour*. (Plate VII).



(c)



(b)



(a)