The Coat of Arms

Annual Journal of the Heraldry Society

Series 4 Volume 8 Number 242 2025

The Heraldry Society is an educational charity. Its purpose is to promote greater understanding and appreciation of heraldry and its related subjects. The society organises lectures, study days, congresses, dinners and other social activities. It offers a course in heraldry leading to examination for a diploma. It publishes a range of source material at modest cost. Members receive the *Coat of Arms* and the quarterly *Heraldry Gazette*.

Help to support our work and participate in our social activities by joining today via our website www.theheraldrysociety.com

Registered office
53 Hitchin Street, Baldock, Hertfordshire SG7 6AQ
The Society was registered in England in 1956 as registered charity no. 241456.

The Coat of Arms is a non commercial, non profit making academic journal. Advertising space is sold in order to subsidise the cost of printing. The contents of this journal will be made freely available to all online via the Heraldry Society website one year following distribution of paper copy to members. Images may be subject to copyright, and should not be reproduced without permission of the originator.

President
His Grace The Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal

Honorary Secretary
John Tunesi of Liongam
e-mail: honsecheraldrysociety@googlemail.com

Membership Secretary
Jane Tunesi of Liongam
e-mail: memsec@theheraldrysociety.com

Material appearing in *The Coat of Arms* does not necessarily represent the views of the Honorary Editor, of the Editorial Panel, or of the Society.

coatofarms@theheraldrysociety.com

Printed in Exeter by Short Run Press Ltd..

©The Heraldry Society
ISSN 0010-003X

Cover illustration: submission drawing from the Maharajah of Rewah 1876, source *Taylor* supplement f. 15v, courtesy of the Kings, Heralds and Pursuivants of Arms, see pp. 160-1.

Founding Editor
† John P.B. Brooke-Little, C.V.O, M.A., F.H.S.

Honorary Editor
Dr Paul A Fox, M.A., F.S.A, F.H.S., F.H.G., F.R.C.P., A.I.H.

Reviews Editor
Dr Philip Allfrey, D.Phil., M.Litt., a.i.h.

Editorial Panel
Dr Adrian Ailes, M.A., D.Phil., F.S.A., F.H.S., A.I.H.
Steven Ashley, F.S.A, F.H.S., Dip.H.S., a.i.h.
Prof D'Arcy J.D. Boulton, M.A., Ph.D., D.Phil., F.S.A., F.H.S., A.I.H.
Richard Byford, M.A., Dip.R.S.A., F.R.A.S.
Dr Clive E.A. Cheesman, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., F.H.S., Norroy and Ulster King of Arms
Dr Steen Clemmensen, Dr Phil., F.S.A., A.I.H.
Prof Anne E. Curry, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S., F.H.A., Arundel Herald Extraordinary
M.Peter D. O'Donoghue, M.A., F.S.A., F.H.S., York Herald
Dr Andrew Gray, Ph.D., F.H.S., a.i.h.
Prof Dr Torsten Hiltmann, Ph.D., a.i.h.
Prof Peter Kurrild-Klitgaard, Ph.D., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S., A.I.H.
Elizabeth Roads, L.V.O., LL.B., F.S.A., F.H.S., A.I.H.
Prof Fiona Robertson, M.A., M.Phil., D.Phil., F.S.A.

Advertising Manager
John J. Tunesi of Liongam, M.Sc., FSA Scot., Hon.F.H.S., Q.G.

Guidance for authors will be found online at
www.theheraldrysociety.com

LIONS AND PINECONES: PROTO-ARMORIAL ORIENTALISING MOTIFS ON TWO EXCEPTIONAL PIECES OF TWELFTH-CENTURY HORSE FURNITURE FROM NORFOLK

STEVEN ASHLEY, F.S.A., F.H.S.

Was man nicht definieren kann,
Spricht man als orientalisch an[1]

Abstract
The two incomplete probable harness fittings described below, found in Norfolk by metal-detectorists, are of comparable size and form, but uncertain signification. Both are copper alloy, with engraved and gilded decoration. Although not mould identical, and of different construction, they are likely to have served the same original function as decorative horse furniture and display the same combination of proto-armorial Orientalising motifs- Two addorsed demi lions passant regardant springing from a central column[2] *(one with a surviving pinecone finial)- and must share a common exemplar.*

Pinecone and column flanked by demi-lions

The mounts comprise:

1. Gilt flat-fronted cast copper alloy fitting in the form of *Two addorsed demi lions passant regardant springing from a central column with a pinecone finial*. A separate open-ended vertical rectangular tube of sub-rectangular section is attached, probably by solder, to the centre of the reverse. Details of the lions' coats (V-shaped and flame-like) and paws are picked out with engraved lines as is the central knop, which is obliquely cross hatched, collared, and projects from the upper end of a rectangular panel, probably representing a column or pilaster. The panel is decorated with a triple-line saltire and the base projects slightly below the underside of the lions. The head of one lion is missing. Width 42mm. Height 31mm. Interior of socket 5.5 x 4.5mm. Found in Edgefield, Norfolk (**Figure 1a**).[3]

1 'Whatever defies definition is called Oriental influence' German art historians' rule of thumb. Quoted by Helmut Nickel in 'The Mutual Influence of Europe and Asia in the Field of Arms and Armour' in D. Nicolle (ed.) *Companion to Medieval Arms and Armour* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 106 – 125, at p. 106.

2 Here and in the descriptions, I have used heraldic terminology to describe (blazon) the form of the mounts to emphasise their proto-armorial nature and context. However, the charges and devices employed here do not appear on shields and the language of blazon was not fully formalised at the time these mounts were made, that is at the dawn of armory in the twelfth century. Regarding the charges, Gerard Brault (*Early Blazon* (2nd ed., Woodbridge, 1997)) assumes that demi-lions can only be rampant and dismisses the one thirteenth-century reference to a demi-leopard (*liepart*) as being 'doubtless rampant' (p. 167) although the term leopard is often interpreted as representing a lion passant (p. 226). That addorsed lions (*lions adossés*) were derived from Oriental art was accepted by Brault (p. 235).

3 Norfolk Historic and Environment Record (hereafter NHER) 50293.

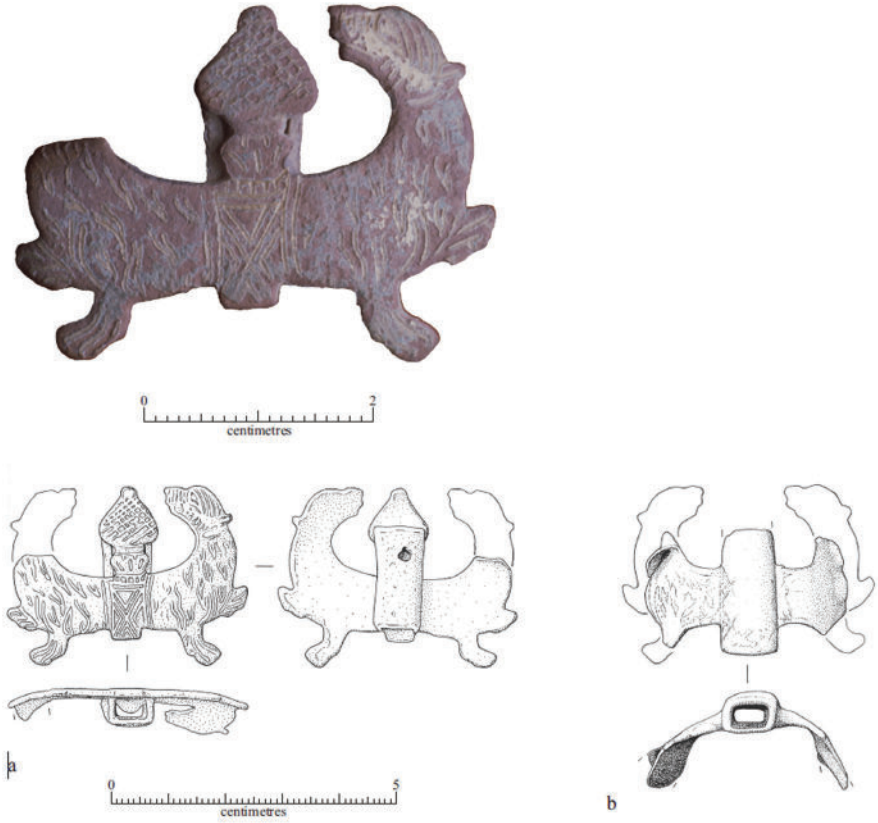

Figure 1: (a) Gilt copper alloy mount from Edgefield, Norfolk NHER 50293. Drawn by S. Ashley; Photo: D. Wicks; (b) Gilt copper alloy mount from Whissonsett, Norfolk NHER 41715, Drawn by J. Gibbons.

2. Incomplete gilt copper alloy fitting, broken, bent, and corroded. The surviving body comprises a cast open-ended vertical rectangular tube of sub-rectangular section, narrowing slightly towards the broken upper end. The slightly convex face has traces of engraved cross hatched lozengy decoration, and integral remains of *Two addorsed demi lions passant regardant springing from a central column.* The projecting lions curve backwards from the sides of the tube, and both have traces of V-shaped and flame-like engraved wavy lines representing their coats. Width >35.5mm. Height 22mm. Interior of socket 6 x 4mm. Found in Whissonsett, Norfolk (**Figure 1b**).[4]

Banners and elaborate harness fittings

The two decorative fittings were originally fixed in an upright position, with the central vertical tube providing the method of attachment. Such vertically arranged harness fittings were often part of elaborate arrangements for display on the headstock of a

4 NHER 41715.

horse or elsewhere on the harness of dray horses.[5] The most familiar of such socketed fittings takes the form of a swivelling 'banner' (the 'flying' banner element being either rectangular, square, or occasionally circular or lozengiform) mounted on a vertical rod.[6] The integral vertical tubes (or loops) for such are circular sectioned to enable the banner to rotate. However, the tubes on the two fittings with which this note is concerned are of sub-rectangular section and both fittings, therefore, would have been displayed in a fixed forward (or outward) facing manner.

Pinecones: myth, meaning, and context

A pinecone is present on one of the mounts and likely to be missing from the other. The pinecone is an ancient motif, associated with Eastern gods: the Phrygian God Attis, and the Greek God Dionysos with his pinecone tipped thyrsus.[7] It is a symbol of regeneration and resurrection. Most pinecone sculptures from Roman Britain are from tombs.[8]

Remains of pinecones were found on excavations of a Mithraeum (a temple of Mithras) on the Roman wall at Carrawburgh, Northumberland. One pinecone was discovered near the altar, and another from the site had been carbonised to make it burn slowly to provide incense and a low, glowing light. Also found on the Wall are two sculptures of a snake coiled around a pinecone. One is a red sandstone finial from a pillar from the Roman fort and vicus at Kirkby Thore, Northumberland,[9] and the other comes from the west end of the Wall, at Carlisle, and is now in the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery.[10] The snake, which undergoes a transformation on shedding its skin, represents the survival of the soul, and the pinecone, rebirth.[11]

Natural pinecones from Roman contexts have been found elsewhere in Britain; on excavations at Silchester, Hampshire,[12] and at Verulamium, Hertfordshire, in the hearth of a *Cella* (the inner area) of a probable temple of *c*. AD 100-400.[13] An earthenware model of a pinecone was discovered in association with a fragment of an altar in a room acting as a possible temple in a villa at Whitcombe, Dorset,[14] and five stylised 'clay' pinecones were found on a villa site at Ewhurst, Rapsley, Surrey.[15]

A particularly pertinent item of Roman religious iconography, combining lions and pinecones, is present on a cast bronze fitting from Fanum Martis, in Corseul,

5 J.B. Ward-Perkins, 'A medieval harness-mount at Termoli' *Antiquaries Journal* 29 (1949), pp. 1-7 and plates I and II.

6 N. Griffiths, 'Horse Harness Pendants' *Finds Research Group 700-1700, Datasheet 5*, (1986) p. 4, figs. 22-4.; S. Ashley *Medieval Armorial Horse Furniture in Norfolk* East Anglian Archaeology 101, (Gressenhall, 2002), pp. 23, 25, fig. 24, nos. 238-43. Other forms include a vertical rod with separate hollow globular terminal from which are suspended multiple small pendants, see W. de C. Prideaux 'Notes on Medieval Enamelled Horse Trappings, With especial Reference to a Weymouth find' *Proceedings of the Dorset Field Club* 32, (1911), pp. 226-38, figs. 11-12; Ward-Perkins op. cit. figs. 2 and 3, and Griffiths op. cit. fig. 24.

7 A staff or wand of giant fennel symbolising hedonism and fertility, carried in religious rituals.

8 See *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani* Great Britain 1, fascicules 1-11 (London), i.10, nos. 124 and 125. (*CSIR* hereafter).

9 *CSIR* 1.11 no.148, now in the British Museum (Registration number 1970,0701.6).

10 *CSIR* 1.6 no. 504. There are at least two more carved stone examples of pinecones in Chesters Museum.

11 In a funerary or chthonic context.

12 M.J. Green *A Corpus of Religious Material from the Civilian Areas of Roman Britain* (Oxford, 1976), p. 196.

13 Green op. cit. p. 206. Not Mithraic as stated by Green (pers. com. Martin Henig).

14 Green op. cit. p. 172.

15 Green op. cit. p. 220.

Figure 2: Roman cast bronze fitting from Fanum Martis, in Corseul, France. Not to scale.

France. Here the Phrygian mother goddess Cybele forms the central element on a broad U-shaped openwork bracket with addorsed flanking lions standing on gadrooned and curled terminals which end in the Phrygian-capped head and shoulders of her consort, Attis, springing from a pinecone as he is reborn (**Figure 2**).[16] Cybele is usually shown flanked by lions.

A Norfolk find relating to the cult of Attis comprises a finely cast hand holding a pine branch, part of a figurine of a youth- a *dendropheros* or tree-bearer, it was discovered at Hockwold-cum-Wilton, suggesting the existence of a shrine close by.[17]

Carved flowering pinecones are present on the corners of a sixth or seventh-century marble capital from Constantinople, flanking crossed cornucopia;[18] alternating with palmettes on a silk panel from a tunic of *c*. AD 700, from Egypt;[19] and two pinecone-headed sceptres are carried in the hands of a personification of Earth (or Gaia) on a Byzantine silk found in the Tomb of St Cuthbert, in Durham Cathedral.[20] There is also a large[21] and enigmatic architectural cast bronze pinecone at Aachen, which may be either Roman or Carolingian.[22] The uncertainty regarding the date of the latter illustrating nicely the overlap of Ancient and Early Medieval iconography.

16 www.inrap.fr/en/fanum-martis-northern-city-eastern-rites-12167. The Phrygian goddess Kybele (Cybele) was popular during the reign of the Emperor Claudius, but it was in Late Antiquity that Oriental cults flourished before the conversion of the Empire to Christianity. The goddess Cybele loved and was deceived by Attis, so made him mad and pushed him to self-castration beneath a pine tree. See M.J. Vermaseren *Cybele and Attis. The myth and the Cult* (London, 1977).

17 A. Marsden 'Satyrs, Leopards, Riders and Ravens. Anthropomorphic and Zoomorphic objects from Roman Norfolk; a safari through the county's religious landscape' in S. Ashley and A. Marsden *Landscapes and Artefacts: Studies in East Anglian Archaeology presented to Andrew Rogerson* (Oxford 2014), pp. 45-72, at p. 54.

18 D. Buxton (ed.) *Byzantium: Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture* (London, 1994), p. 91, no. 93.

19 Buxton op. cit. pp. 122-3, no. 136.

20 Buxton op. cit. pp. 126-8, no. 139.

21 91cms high.

22 E.G. Grimme 'Der Aachener Domschatz' *Aachener kunstblatter* 42/1972, p. 7 and pl. 2, cat. no. 2.

Figure 3: Romanesque sculpture from (a) St Clement, Fiskerton, Lincolnshire; (b) St Luke, Hodnet, Shropshire; (c) St Michael, Dalston, Cumberland; (d) St Peter, Northampton, Northamptonshire. Photos: The Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture. Not to scale.

Romanesque pinecones and addorsed lions

Depictions of 'fruit' with oblique criss-crossed lines representing either pinecones or bunches of grapes can be found in Romanesque sculpture.[23] Those examples likely to be pinecones include a reset capital at St Clement, Fiskerton, Lincolnshire; a font at St Luke, Hodnet, Shropshire; a capital at St Michael, Dalston, Cumberland; and capitals at St Peter, Northampton, Northamptonshire, where a pinecone emerges from the mouth of an inverted head of a lion (**Figure 3, a-d**).[24]

Lions, addorsed and confronted, feature in the Bayeux Tapestry, that most informative

23 Alongside other Classical derived motifs such as acanthus leaf, vine scroll, etc.

24 www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/projects/academy-research-projects-corpus-romanesque-sculpture-britain-ireland/.

of artefacts surviving from the end of the eleventh century. The proto-armorial form in which lions and other beasts and birds are depicted in the borders of the Tapestry, and in the other contemporary applied arts such as sculpture and metalwork (**Figure 4**)[25] (often flanking the Tree of Life), are ultimately derived from motifs transmitted via Byzantine and Central Asian silks traded with western Europe.[26] Examples of such textiles have been found in royal and ecclesiastical tombs, for instance, that of Edward the Confessor,[27] and can also be seen cut-down and re-used as seal bags at Canterbury Cathedral.[28] Lions employed as symbols of nobility and kingship are numerous, and notably include the three lions on the royal arms of England from late 1197/1198.[29]

Putting aside echoes of both Classical antiquity and Eastern textiles, another, Biblical, interpretation of the decorative scheme can also be considered, in which the two addorsed lions may be seen as referring to the pair of lions flanking the Throne of Solomon.[30] These lions have been identified with the fathers of the Old and New Testaments, and with the Angel Gabriel and St John the Evangelist.[31] They may also stand for sternness and judgement, or be apotropaic and seen as defenders or guardians of the throne.[32] A further twelve lions (or lion heads) are placed flanking the steps which

25 Such as a pair of confronted lion heads on a buckle frame from Riseley, Bedfordshire (Portable Antiquities Scheme database number (hereafter PAS) NMS-8EA264). Similar buckles have been found at Bromholme Priory, Bacton (NHER 1073) and elsewhere, and are discussed and illustrated in S. Ashley (2016) 'Anglo-Norman Elite Objects from Castle and Countryside' in J. Davies and A. Riley (eds) *Castles in the Anglo-Norman World* (Oxford), pp. 281–98, see fig. 18.6, nos. 29–32.

26 Central Asian Animal Art had considerable bearing of the way in which lions are depicted and involved a complex blend of influences- Scythian art for example incorporated ideas and imagery from neighbouring Asian, Iranian, and Greek cultures (see B. Burkhardt 'Some Considerations on the Symbolism of the Lion Motif in Scythian Art' *Marisia* 32 (2012, Târgu Mureş), pp. 59-69.

27 H. Granger-Taylor 'Silk from the tomb of Edward the Confessor' in D. Buckton, *Byzantium; Treasures of Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections* (London, 1994), pp. 151-3.

28 G. Robinson and H. Urquhart, and A. Hindson 'Seal Bags in the Treasury of the Cathedral Church of Canterbury' *Archaeologia* vol. 84, (1935), pp. 163-211.

29 S. Ashley, 'Lions Confronted on Bigod's Tower: Proto-armorial decoration on the forebuilding of Norwich Castle keep and elsewhere' in Ailes, M., Cunningham, S., Curry. A., and Dryburgh, P. *Status, Identity and Authority: studies in Medieval and Early Modern Archives presented to Adrian Ailes* CoA Supplementary Volume no. 2 (2021), pp. 12-28, at pp. 21-2; A. Ailes, The Origins of the Royal Arms of England; Their Development to 1199 (Reading, 1982), and A. Ailes, 'The Governmental Seals of Richard I' in P.R. Schofeld (ed.), *Seals and Their Context in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 101–110, at p. 107.

30 The central column might also be an oblique reference to the columns from the Temple of Solomon, see J.B. Ward-Perkins 'The Shrine of St. Peter and Its Twelve Spiral Columns' *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 42, Parts 1 and 2 (1952), pp. 21-33. The specific, and now eponymous, spiral form of 'Solomonic' column was not associated with the Temple of Solomon before the fourteenth century and became widespread in the sixteenth century E. Fernie 'Spiral Columns and the Temple of Solomon' in R. Griffith-Jones and E. Fernie *Tomb and Temple: Re-imagining the Sacred Buildings of Jerusalem* (Woodbridge, 2018), pp. 159-63. If the lions and column do refer to the Temple of Solomon then the pinecone may need to be reinterpreted as a pomegranate: 'And the capitals upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network; and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about upon the other capital.' (1 Kings 7:20).

31 F. Wormald 'The Throne of Solomon and St. Edward's Chair' in J.J. Alexander, T.J. Brown, and J. Gibbs *Francis Wormald Collected Writings, vol. II, Studies in English and Continental Art of the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1988), pp. 61-9, 159-60, and plates 52-60, at p. 63.

32 With the Throne representing The Church, see I. Ragusa 'Terror Demonum and Terror Inimicorum: The Two Lions of the Throne of Solomon and the Open Door of Paradise' *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 40. Bd., H. 2 (1977), pp. 93-114, at p. 106.

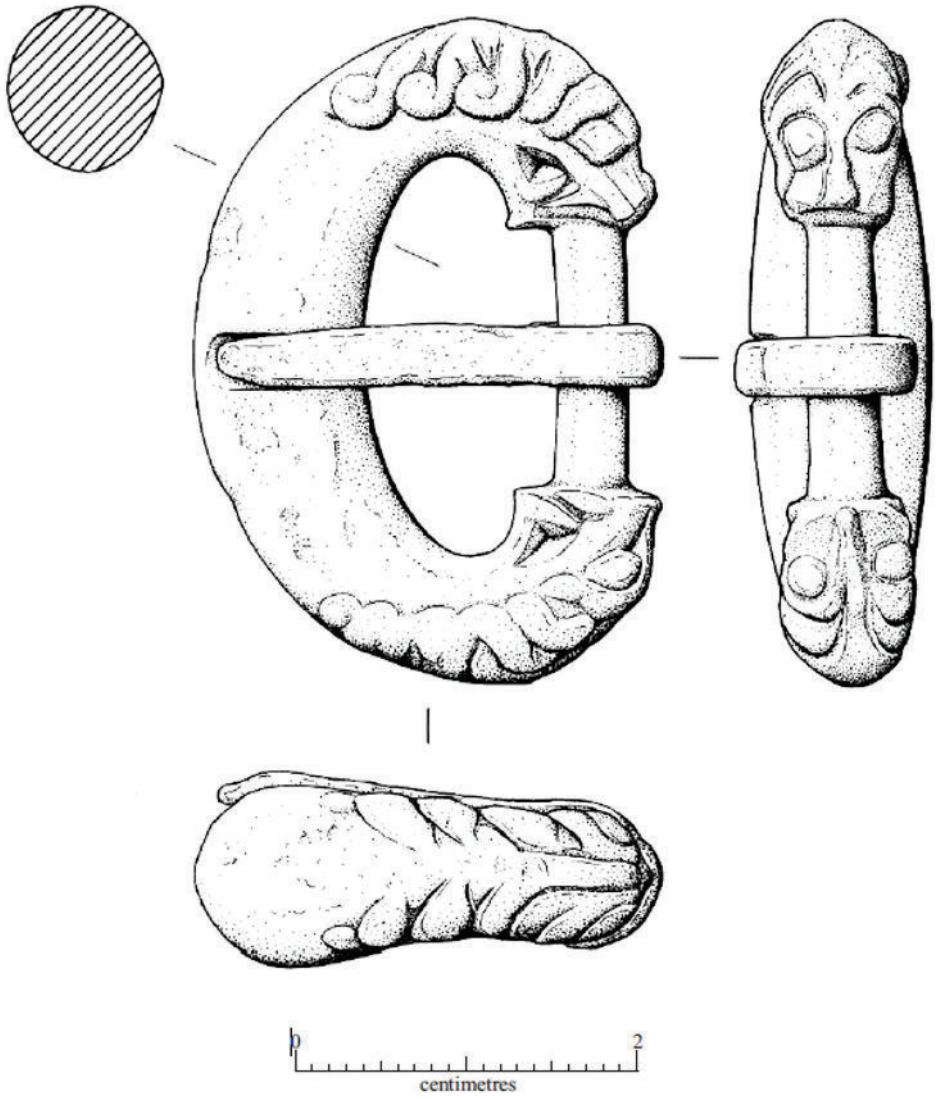

Figure 4: Copper alloy buckle frame from Riseley, Bedfordshire PAS NMS-8EA264. Drawn by J. Gibbons.

lead up to the throne, and perhaps represent the Apostles.[33] The Throne of Solomon is the likely inspiration and exemplar for St. Edward's Chair (the Coronation Chair),[34] which was constructed *c*. 1298-9.[35]

The vertical form of the Norfolk mounts with their horizontal flanking decorative elements employing lions, is also reminiscent of the Heribert crosier, which was carved from walrus ivory sometime in the first half of the eleventh century and is now in the Hohe Domkirche in Cologne. Here, on the tau cross-shaped terminal, two horizontally addorsed lion heads spring from acanthus leaf collars and flank the central image of the Crucifixion.[36]

Conclusions

The two unusual fittings from Norfolk remain enigmatic. Although their method of manufacture differs, their near identical size, form and decoration demonstrates that they undoubtably share a common exemplar.[37] The exact meaning of the combination of the demi-lions, pinecone and columns in this context remains uncertain. However, these motifs represent familiar (and probably apotropaic) tropes relating to nobility and kingship which were current in the twelfth century, when the mounts were made, and which utilised imagery derived from Classical antiquity and Central Asian and Byzantine textiles.[38] Although twelfth-century lions are often found in pairs, confronted and addorsed, flanking the Tree of Life or floriate staff,[39] or guarding doorways and entrances in a proto-armorial manner,[40] the configuration of conjoined demi-lions springing from a central column found on these two battered and corroded copper alloy harness fittings is exceptional.[41]

33 Wormald, op. cit., pp. 65-6.

34 Ibid., pp. 66-7; W. Rodwell *The Coronation Chair and Stone of Scone: History, Archaeology and Conservation* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 20, 100-1, 124.

35 Rodwell, op. cit., p. 38. For some indication of the wider influence of the Throne of Solomon on the depiction of lions and lion heads on medieval thrones see S. Drechsler 'Cultural Syncretism and Interpicturality: the Iconography of Throne Benches in Medieval Icelandic Book Painting' *Open Cultural Studies* 2023; 7: 20220166 (De Gruyter, Berlin).

36 P. Lasko 'The Heribert crosier' in G. Zarnecki, J. Holt, and T. Holland *English Romanesque Art* 1066-1200 (London, 1984), p. 213, no. 179.

37 The distance between the two findspots is 12.6 miles (20.29 kilometres).

38 Ashley 2016, op. cit., p. 296.

39 Ashley 2016, op. cit., fig. 18.7, nos. 38–40.

40 Ashley 2021, op. cit.

41 No other similar piece is present in the writers published survey of *c*. 250 examples of medieval armorial horse furniture from Norfolk (Ashley 2002, op. cit.), or in a further 1000 or so recorded in a separate database (pers. com. Sir John Baker), nor in Sir John Baker's collection of *c*. 2000 examples of similar armorial equestrian fittings, and none was found in a recent search of pendants and other fittings recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme online https://finds.org.uk/database, nor on the Netherlands portable antiquities scheme database https://portable-antiquities.nl/pan/#/public (both consulted May 2024). I would like to thank Martin Henig, Sandy Heslop, Andrew Rogerson, and Melanie Rolfe for their helpful comments on this note and Andrew Hall who kindly prepared the scanned illustrations in Figures 1 and 4 for publication.

ARMS FOR WODEN:
A LATE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPT FOLIO IN THE COLLEGE OF ARMS — AN ERRATUM AND AN ADDENDUM.

Steven Ashley writes:

Contrary to the assertion in my note in the *Coat of Arms* (4th ser. 6 (2023), no. 240 pp. 180–188, at 180-81, footnote 7) that no arms are listed for Woden in the *DBA*, a shield bearing *Azure three crowns, 2 & 1 Or* appears on p. 243 under: [BRITAIN], K Woden. KB (p. 40) 137. These attributed arms are recorded in the Kings of Britain Roll [lost Roll] temp. Hen VI [copy Coll. Arm. MS Vincent 170, ff 29–57], and are part of the group of crown-based arms derived from those first given to Edmund king and martyr, the earliest record for which appears in the Herald's Roll, dating to *c*. 1270-80 (P. Fox, *Great Cloister: A Lost Canterbury Tale* (Oxford, 2020), pp. 85-6, 588). As arms attributed to Woden, they are at variance with the arms discussed in the original note, which display *A cross patonce*, a charge derived from the attributed shield of Edward the Confessor, carved in in *c*. 1260-3 in the choir of Westminster Abbey (R. Turner, *Medieval Arms of Westminster Abbey* (NP, 2018), pp. 13, 15).

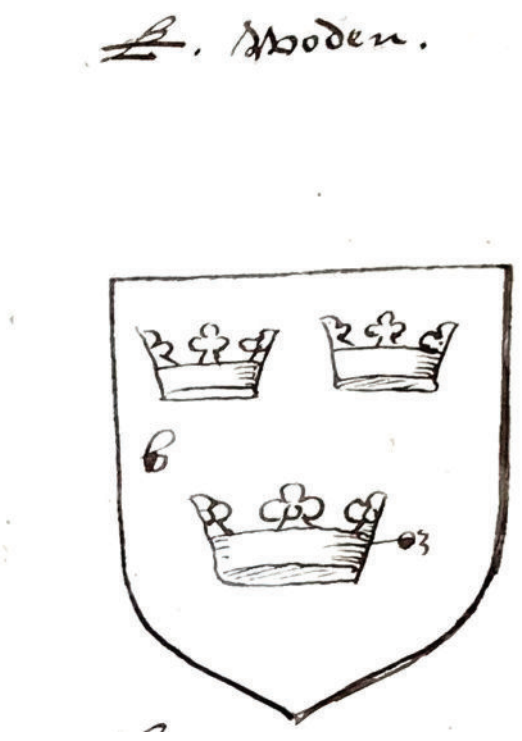

Figure 1: Arms of Woden as shown in College of Arms MS Vincent 170, ff 29–57 (Kings of Britain Roll). Reproduced by permission of the Kings, Heralds and Pursuivants of Arms.