

VI.

NOTICE OF GERMANIC ANTIQUITIES AND ROMAN COINS DISCOVERED IN THE CHALYBEATE SPRING AT PYRMONT IN HANOVER. BY ADOLF DAMMANN, D.D., HAMELN, HANOVER, CORR. MEM. S.A. SCOT. COMMUNICATED BY THE SECRETARY.

Under the superintendence of Professor Rudolph Ludwig, a gentleman of Darmstadt, the mineral springs at Pyrmont were to be repaired, and for that purpose one was obliged to drain them off to the depth of 12 feet. This was effected by digging a drain, about 40 feet in length, in the direction of the crevice out of which the mineral water gushes. The excavation not only laid bare the old brick-work of the spring, but also uncovered some very ancient soil. The former casing of the well consisted of a heavy oaken framework surmounted by stone-work, and beneath this was a kind of box made of planks a foot and a half long and 14 feet wide. This box rested upon brushwood lying 6 feet below the level of the earth. Round about the faggots of brushwood is peat intermixed with yellow ochre, yellow clay, and porous chalk. This last and the ochre are deposits of the spring, whilst the clay, in which the peat grows, has been washed down by the rain. In the peat or turf, leaves of reeds were found, as well as stones of cherries and sloes; leaves of hazel trees, of oaks, alders, and of limes, were also discovered, and here and there were stumps of alder and lime trees.

At the depth of 12 feet below the actual surface the soil of an old forest was found; roots some three feet in thickness were still sticking in the mossy soil. In this spot three principal springs were laid bare: the first lying most to the north is the principal vapour-spring, whilst the other two flow forth 12 feet further off. These two last had been covered with lime trees, and filled up with boughs, slime, and moss, till the excavations were commenced.

Ages ago, before the "migration of nations," these two last-mentioned springs were known to the ancient inhabitants, and held sacred by them; but on account of the disturbances in the country at the time of the "migration of nations" they were totally neglected, and thus the first-mentioned spring was the only one known till now. Between the first and the second spring a number of antiquities were discovered under the roots of a lime tree, the wood of which was covered with a coating of sulphureous matter. The remains of human industry were lying in a stratum, 3 feet thick, under the roots of the above-mentioned tree, and not in the well or the yellow ochre and clay. All the objects found in this spot had to be fished out, because it was impossible to drain the spring any more. Here is a list of the articles found:—

1. A jug of gold-coloured bronze with short wide handles, and capable of containing about half-a-pint. This is covered with six five-cornered panels resting on a garland of pearls, and six triangular panels which bear the somewhat narrow edge of the jug or vase. All this is engraved in the most scientific manner, and is covered with blue and green enamel. The five-cornered panels are framed with tracery work, whilst the triangular ones and the handles are adorned with foliage and tendrils. This highly elegant piece of workmanship appears to be of oriental origin. The pitcher seems to have been long in use, because the lower part of it has been worn away. Many pieces of enamel have also fallen out.

2. A small round spoon, of the size of a table-spoon, with a bent handle in the form of a bunch of grapes. Inside the spoon is a round stamp, probably the manufactory mark. It is evident that these two objects, namely, the vase and the spoon, are of oriental or even Indian workmanship, and thus one perceives that the ancient Germans came from Hindostan.

3. A very roughly-cut wooden pitcher.

4. A better and thinner wooden vessel lay near the present vapour-spring.

5. About two hundred pins, and more than a dozen buckles, for girdles, shawls, etc. Some of these are of copper wire and the rest of bronze. Several of them are plated, and others gilt. Amongst the buckles some plum stones were found, which is very remarkable, as such things were not found anywhere else.

6. Two Roman coins. The first, of pure silver, is very much worn away, and proves thus that it has been much circulated in commerce before it was buried near the springs. The impression is, however, still visible, and bears the bust of Domitian crowned with a laurel garland. The inscription, IMP CAES DOMITIANUS AUG PM is still legible, and on the reverse side of the coin is a Minerva holding a small figure in the outstretched right hand, and the inscription TR . P . COS . VIII DES . PP . The second coin is of bronze, less used, but not so well stamped as the first, with the bust of a young curly-headed man in a tunic, but without a laurel crown. The inscription on the obverse side consists of the letters M . . AVR ANTON . . PIVS AVG . . (MARCVS AVRELIVS ANTONINVS PIVS AVGVSTVS). On the reverse side is a cuirassed man with a helmet on his head, and two spears, one of which he extends whilst he carries the other on his left shoulder. The inscription is— . . MARTI . . VLTORI . . In consequence the silver coin has been stamped between 81 and 96 after Christ; and the bronze one, with Marcus Aurelius' ¹ bust, was coined between 167 and 174 after Christ. Both of them have come into the hands of German people by trade, and have not been buried here by Romans.

It is the opinion that the Pymont mineral springs were considered holy in the heathen ages, and what contributes to show the age of the surrounding objects is that one of the lime trees, covered with sulphur, has no less than 200 rings. The spot where the springs spout forth is still called the "holy meadow."

The mineral spring at Pymont was mentioned by Seipp in the 17th century as the "Hyllige Born" (the holy spring). The present village

¹ This appears to be a coin of Caracalla and not of Aurelius. Their titles are the same, but their portraits are very unlike. The above-mentioned coin appears rather to have been struck about A.D. 201.

of Oesdorf was called formerly Odisdorf, according to Seipp, and the hill close by it Odisberg. Both these denominations announce that this spot was consecrated to Odin or Wodin, and that here his worship took place. Some masonry was also discovered on the Odisberg. It is thought that this was the altar for sacrificing to Odin, as the priests always chose the summits of hills as the spots for offering sacrifices to their gods. All this tends to show that Pymont was one of the seats of the ancient German worship. It is supposed that the priest or priestess gave the people, who had brought offerings, to drink out of the ornamental pitcher, and then laid the offerings at the foot of the lime tree. The coins are highly important, as they show that the surrounding objects are at least 1500 years old.

Faithful imitations of the drinking vessels and of the pins are being finished by the gold and silver smiths at Pymont. (If I should be able to obtain some of the antiquities, it would give me much pleasure to forward them to Edinburgh; but I am afraid I shall not be successful.)

Since the first part of this account was written a third Roman coin has been found. It is of silver, and bears the bust of Trajan with a laurel garland, and the inscription—IMP . TRAIANO . AUG . GER . DAC . PM . TR . P . COS . VII P.P. On the reverse is a reclining figure dressed in rich garments, holding a laurel branch in the left and a wheel in the right hand. Under this is inscribed VIA TRAIANA, and over it S . P . Q . R . OPTIMO PRINCIPI.

Baron Stietenron found some coins near Welade. The first has Hadrian's bust on the obverse side, with the inscription—CAES . AUG . TRAIAN . HADRIANUS P.M. On the reverse is a figure dressed in a toga sitting in a chair, with the inscription TR . P . . . COS III above it. Another, whose inverse is obliterated, bears the form of a woman on the reverse, with PIETAS below it and TR . P . COS . III above it. The third has one side obliterated, but on the other is a woman holding a spear, and the words TR . P . COS . II. The fourth has only one side in good condition. The impression is a Minerva, with a shield and Victory on the right hand, but no words are legible. Lastly, the fifth bears Trajan's bust, and on the reverse a warrior with a sword and spear, and the inscription—S . P . Q . R . OPTIMO PRINCIPI. It is remarkable that these latter coins are of the same period as the first, and were stamped at the time that the Romans had no colonies in the land of the "Cheruskers."