

IX.

NOTICE OF A FIND OF SILVER ORNAMENTS, &c., AT CROY, INVERNESS-SHIRE, NOW PRESENTED TO THE MUSEUM. BY REV. THOMAS FRASER, MINISTER OF CROY. WITH NOTES, DESCRIPTIVE OF THE OBJECTS. BY JOSEPH ANDERSON, KEEPER OF THE MUSEUM.

In May 1875, the Rev. Mr Fraser called at the Museum and showed me a most interesting hoard of ornaments, &c., which had been found in his parish, and had come into his possession. At my request he generously presented the whole to the Museum, and sent me subsequently the following account of the circumstances in which they were found:—

“The following articles, which came into my possession and are now presented by me to the Museum, were found in this neighbourhood a short time ago. They are—

- “1. Silver Brooch, chased, with amber setting—broken (see fig. 1).
- “2. Part of a bronze Balance-beam (see fig. 2).
- “3. Silver knitted or Chain Ornament (see fig. 3).
- “4. Silver Coin, apparently Saxon (see fig. 4).
- “5. Two Glass Beads, inlaid with some composition, and two Amber Beads.

“On inquiry, I find that a few more beads, and at least one other coin, were found along with them, but these had been lost before the finder discovered the interest attached to the articles.

“The locality of the find is about half a mile from the parish church of Croy, Inverness-shire, near the northern extremity of the tableland or ridge forming Culloden Moor. The spot on which they were found is on the summit of a low gravelly ridge, in a ploughed field, which had been brought under cultivation for the first time about eight years ago. After examining the place, I find no appearance of a mound or grave, but there appears to have been a small cairn of stones, which had been removed during the improvement of the land.

“At the time of the discovery the land was being drilled for potatoes. The finder is a girl who was employed in planting the drills. She found all the articles in one place, within an area of a square yard, as she described

it. Noticing some of the articles on the surface, she began to work the soil around with her fingers, and found the rest.

“I have searched the place pointed out by the girl, who, however, does not seem to have been very precise in marking the spot, but I failed to find any additional articles. But I shall keep an eye on the place, and if any thing turns up I shall not fail to look after it.”

The find thus described by Mr Fraser is in some respects unusually interesting. The coin which accompanied the other articles gives a definite date to the deposit, and the bronze balance-beam is the first that has been noticed in Scotland.

The Brooch is of the penannular form, with disc-like ends, characteristic



Fig. 1. Silver Brooch found at Croy
(3 inches diameter).

of the early Christian period in Scotland and Ireland. These brooches are usually ornamented with the interlacing work common to the manuscripts of Ireland, the sculptured stones of Scotland, and the metal work not only of these countries, but also of Scandinavia and France. The ornamentation of this example is simpler (perhaps because it is earlier)

than the finer specimens in the Museum which have been previously figured in the Proceedings. (See Vol. VIII. pp. 305-308.) It possesses, however, one feature in common with most of them, the settings have been of amber. Though these are now almost entirely gone, enough remains to determine their character. Like most of these brooches, the metal seems to have been cast in an open mould, and the back of the brooch presents the natural surface of the casting cooled in contact with the atmosphere. The pin of the brooch is wanting.

The Balance-Beam (fig. 2) is specially interesting, as being the only Scottish specimen known to me. It is, unfortunately, broken, but enough remains to enable us to decide with certainty as to its original form, and to determine its nature and use.



Fig. 2. Bronze Balance-beam found at Croy ($4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length).

The balance-beam, and set of scales and weights,¹ are common accompaniments of interments of the Viking period in Norway and Sweden. They also occur frequently in Anglo-Saxon graves in England, and in Merovingian and Frankish graves in France and Switzerland. These portable balances, which appear to have been so common when currency was scarce and bullion the almost universal medium of exchange, are exceedingly well-made. Sometimes the beam was made to fold in the

middle, and the scales were made to fit one on the other, so as to form a little box in which the weights were carried. The Croy specimen is not a folding balance, but it is notched along the top on one arm, apparently for a sliding weight.

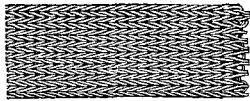


Fig. 3. Band of Knitted Silver-wire found at Croy (6 inches long).

The Band of Knitted work (fig. 3) of fine Silver-Wire, knitted with the ordinary knitting stitch, resembles the modern Trichinopoly work, and connects this find with those of Cuerdale and Largo, in both of which similarly knitted bands

¹ For figures of these curious relics, see Kruse's *Necro-Livonia Plates*, 53, 54.

of silver-wire occurred. The Beads, which are of coarse vitreous paste of different colours, resemble those frequently found in the crannogs. I am not aware of their occurrence in connection with interments of the earlier periods, but they are very common in Anglo-Saxon graves.

The Coin (fig. 4) is a silver Penny of Coenwulf, king of Mercia. Coenwulf's reign of twenty-two years (A.D. 795-818) presents a greater variety of coinage than that of any other king of Mercia except Offa. Ruding figures 28 varieties of the penny of Coenwulf, none of which agree with the Croy specimen.

Hawkins gives the type, however, though the style of execution and the moneyer's name are different. In the Croy specimen the obverse reads COENVVLF REX, round a circle of pellets enclosing an M with a sign of contraction for MERCIARVM; on the reverse a tribrach, and the moneyer's name EANMVND.

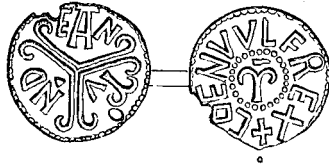


Fig. 4. Silver Penny of Coenwulf found at Croy.

Though this is the first time that a coin of Coenwulf has been found in Scotland, so far as I am aware, it is by no means the first time that his coins have occurred in connection with similar hoards of silver ornaments. In my paper on the Remains of the Viking Period, I have referred to the Anglo-Saxon coins found with the hoards of silver armlets, brooches, &c., at Skail in Orkney, and to similar hoards of the Viking time found in Scandinavia. It may not be out of place here to refer to some other and similar hoards in which the coins of Coenwulf have occurred.

At Trewiddle in Cornwall, in 1774, upwards of 100 Anglo-Saxon coins, ranging from Offa (757-796) to Alfred (872-901), and including two of Coenwulf's reign, were found along with the following ornaments. Two gold objects (since lost), one a circular pendent ornament, enriched

with filagree; a silver chalice-shaped cup; a cord of thin silver wire, of curious knitted workmanship, terminating in four knobbed lashes like a scourge at one end, whilst the other end is looped and rove through a dark mottled amulet of glass; a penannular brooch; the tip of a belt; buckles; richly chased bands, supposed to have been bracelets; a long curved pin, the head of which is curiously fashioned with fourteen facets, chased in various ornamental patterns and partly nielloed. This group of ornaments presents some peculiar features. They are figured in the "Archæologia," vol. ix. plate viii. The penannular brooch is of the same type as the one found at Croy, but the expanded ends are each ornamented by a small cross. The cord of knitted silver wires is evidently of the same style of workmanship as the one found at Croy, but circular instead of flat, and the amulet upon the loop at one end of the cord is a bead of dark-brown mottled glass, not dissimilar to the Croy beads. As to the use of this singular scourge-like object, the Rev. Dr Rock does not hesitate to confirm the conjecture that it was a "*disciplinariium*," or scourge for penitential inflictions. The presence of the cross as an ornament on the penannular brooch is another indication of the Christianity of the owner of the hoard.

A similar branched chain of twisted silver wire with knots and loops occurred in the Cuerdale hoard, along with a flat piece of knitted silver wire, almost exactly similar to that of the Croy find.

Among the articles in the Largo find there is a small portion of a similarly knitted chain of silver wire. In the two latter instances the fragments are so small that it is impossible to guess at their original form or purpose; but from their identity of workmanship with that of the perfect example found at Trewhiddle, and the general similarity of the hoards, there is a probability that they may all have been "*disciplinaria*" of an early type.