

II.

NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF PORTIONS OF TWO PENANNULAR BROOCHES OF SILVER WITH BEADS OF GLASS AND AMBER, AND A SILVER COIN OF COENWULF, KING OF MERCIA (A.D. 795-818), AT MAINS OF CROY, INVERNESS-SHIRE. BY ALEXANDER ROSS, ARCHITECT, INVERNESS, F.S.A. SCOT.

The articles which I have the pleasure of exhibiting, were found at Croy by Mr James Shearer of Mains of Croy. They were found in 1875, or the following year, in a light gravelly soil, 6 inches below the surface, and near the road leading from Croy to Dalcross Castle.



Fig. 1. Portion of Penannular Brooch of Silver, found at Croy, Inverness-shire (two-thirds of actual size).

No. 1.—A portion of a penannular brooch of silver. The ring or body of the brooch (fig. 1) is flat in section, with a raised edge forming a flat panel on the face, which has been filled with a thin plate of gold secured with pins, and riveted through to the back. The portion of the

gold plate fitted into the panel in the ring has disappeared. The other compartment is of a crescent shape, the outer rim of the crescent being considerably elevated, in a hooded form above the rest, and on the gold plate is a triangular interlaced ornament of filigree work. The end of the brooch expands to a breadth of nearly 1 inch at the extremity, and forms a triangular panel into which is fitted a gold plate secured by two pins at each angle. In the centre of the plate is a raised setting of a leaf-like form, divided into eleven small rectangular compartments by ridges of gold, each compartment being filled with a bright enamel. The space round this central ornament, between it and the outer rim, a breadth of $\frac{3}{16}$ th of an inch, is overlaid with an exquisitely wrought ornament in filigree work very similar to that on the



Fig. 2. Portion of a Penannular Brooch of Silver, found at Croy, Inverness-shire (two-thirds of actual size).

brooch found at Dunbeath in 1860, and figured in Dr Anderson's work, *Scotland in Early Christian Times*, p. 16. Altogether the Croy fragment bears a very striking resemblance, both in form and decoration, to the fragment of the slightly larger brooch found at Dunbeath.

No. 2.—The next specimen is larger, forming nearly half of a penannular brooch of silver (fig. 2), which would have measured 3 inches in diameter when complete. The ring is $\frac{3}{8}$ inch broad, flat on the under side, and rounded on the face. In the centre of the ring was an oval sunk panel with an interlaced pattern. The ends of the brooch expanded into a quatrefoil of characteristic shape, between the points of which is sunk a square panel, framed by ridges with a corded-like ornament between, the centre panel $\frac{7}{8}$ inch square, filled in with two intersecting vesica-shaped ridges. The four spaces left between the square panel and the expanding sides of the quatrefoil are filled with interlaced ornaments. At each angle of the quatrefoil are raised circular sockets which contained amber settings; only one of these now remains. The panels contain traces of gold, as if the ornamental parts had been plated with that metal.

No. 3.—The next article is an amber bead about $\frac{7}{8}$ inch diameter. The section is circular. The diameter of the outside of the ring is $\frac{7}{8}$ inch, and the internal diameter $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch.

No. 4.—The next article is a bead, $\frac{7}{8}$ inch diameter, of blue glass.

No. 5 is a fragment of a glass bead, the core of which is blue glass, and the outside of an opaque brown, ornamented with diverging spirals in black. The entire bead would have been $\frac{5}{8}$ inch diameter.¹

No. 6 is a silver coin of Coenwulf, king of Mercia (A.D. 785–818), bearing on obverse (fig. 3) a rude head in the centre, with the inscription round the margin COENVVLF



Fig. 3. Silver Coin of Coenwulf, found at Croy, Inverness-shire.

REX M, and on the reverse a cross potent in the centre, and round the margin an inscription partly illegible, probably the moneyer's name.

¹ Such beads are not uncommon in Scotland and Ireland. One found at Eddertoun, Ross-shire, is figured in the *Proceedings*, vol. v. pl. xxi., and two found in Nairnshire, are figured in vol. vii. (new series), p. 133. Their use as charms by superstitious people in recent times, and their fabulous origin as serpent stones, have been often referred to.

[There can be no doubt that these six articles formed part of the same hoard or deposit from which came the objects presented to the Museum in May 1875, by Rev. Thomas Fraser, minister of Croy. In a short paper (printed in the *Proceedings*, vol. xi. p. 588), the circumstances of the discovery were given by Rev. Mr Fraser, and a description of the objects by Dr Joseph Anderson: As the articles found by Mr Shearer have now been also acquired for the Museum, it may be desirable here to repeat the description of the objects previously found, in order to present a complete description of the whole of the objects recovered from this interesting hoard :—

The articles presented by Rev. Mr Fraser were found by a girl planting potatoes on the summit of a low gravelly ridge in the field where they had been turned up by the plough. They were all found within



Fig. 4. Silver Brooch, found at Croy, Inverness-shire
(two-thirds of actual size).

the area of a square yard, some being on the surface, and others obtained by searching in the loose earth. They consist of—

(1) A silver brooch, 3 inches diameter, of penannular form, with expanded circular ends. The ring forming the body of the brooch (fig. 4) has been cast in an open mould. It is convex in section, the

back being flat, and has in the centre an oval panel filled with an interlaced pattern on either side of a circular setting of amber. The endings of the penannular ring resemble beasts' heads, holding a circular disc in the widely expanded jaws. The eye is represented by a triangular setting of amber surrounded by a chased rope-like ornament plated with gold. The circular discs have round settings of amber in the centre, and a double circle of the chased rope-like ornament fills the interior of the surrounding space enclosed within the raised margin of the disc. The pin of the brooch is wanting.

(2) A hollow band of great beauty and perfect flexibility, formed of fine silver wire knitted with the ordinary knitting stitch, and resembling what is known as Trichinopoly work of modern times. The band is of the breadth shown in the woodcut (fig. 5), and 6 inches in length, but incomplete at both ends. Bands of silver wire knitted in a similar manner occurred with the hoard of silver ornaments found at Skail, Orkney,¹ and in the woman's grave of the Viking time at Ballinaby, Islay.²

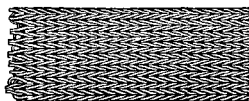


Fig. 5. Portion of Hollow Band of Knitted Silver Wire, found at Croy, Inverness-shire (actual size).

(3) A portion, about equal to four-fifths of the entire length of a small balance-beam of bronze (fig. 6), $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length. The balance has been poised by means of a small hole in the projecting upper side of the centre part of the beam, and the scales have been hung from small holes



Fig. 6. Portion of a small Balance Beam of Bronze, found at Croy, Inverness-shire (actual size).

pierced in the ends of the beam. The balance-beam, and sets of scales and weights are common accompaniments of interments of the Viking time in Scandinavia, and they also occur frequently in Anglo-

¹ *Proceedings*, vol. iii. p. 249.

² *Proceedings*, vol. ii. (New Series) p. 67.

Saxon graves in England, and in Merovingian and Frankish graves in France and Switzerland. Some of these portable balances, which seem to have been 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 to fit one upon the other, so as to form a little box in which the weights were carried.

- (4) A silver penny of Coenwulf, king of Mercia (fig. 7), bearing on obverse COENVVLF REX, round a circle of pellets enclosing an M of the old round-headed form, with a sign of contraction over it for MERCIARVM; on the reverse, a tribrach, and the moneyer's name EANMVND.

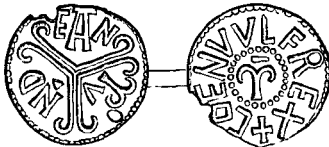


Fig. 7. Silver Coin of Coenwulf, found at Croy, Inverness-shire.

- (5) Two blue glass beads, enamelled with spots and stripes of red, green, yellow, and white; and two beads of amber.

It is interesting to have the whole of the objects found thus reunited, and not only placed on record, but placed beyond reach of separation from each other, or disappearance from the public view. At the same time, it is by no means certain that the whole of the hoard has been found, and there is every probability that a careful look-out, when the place is being ploughed or harrowed, might yet result at least in the finding of the missing portions of the brooches, and probably many more coins.

Along with the objects from this hoard there was also exhibited a curious object in bronze, found on the same farm, but not in the same place, and having no known connection with the hoard previously described. It is a portion of a flat ornament, formed not unlike the shape of a penannular brooch, but widening out in some places, and pierced with holes as if for studs or fastenings. It looks as if it might have been part of the mounting of some wooden article, or of the ornamentation of harness. Its decoration presents no distinctive features.]