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NOTES ON A NECKLACE OF GLASS BEADS FOUND IN A CIST IN DALMENY PARK, SOUTH QUEENSFERRY. BY PROFESSOR G. BALDWIN BROWN, F.S.A.Scot.

On January 21, 1915, a despatch was forwarded from a portion of the military area on the shores of the Forth, announcing the discovery of an ancient burying-place. The operations which laid it bare were connected with the fortifications, and the Royal Engineer officer in charge at once reported the matter to his headquarters. Directions were promptly issued to have all the sand and soil from the grave carefully sifted and all objects punctiliously preserved—a course of action for which the military authorities should receive the cordial thanks of all who are interested in the national antiquities. Grateful acknowledgments are likewise due to the noble proprietor of the land where the discovery was made, the Earl of Rosebery, K.G., F.S.A.Scot., who, with ready generosity, presented the objects found in the grave to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland to be placed in the National Museum under their charge.

The despatch was sent by an old Edinburgh University student, and on January 28 Mr A. O. Curle and the present writer visited the spot, where they were shown the site and the relics of the grave. The following notes on the interment were drawn up by Mr Curle:—

“The grave was situated at the highest point of a boldly projecting promontory, at an elevation of about 110 feet above sea-level. It lay

east and west, and, as the relics along with several teeth came from the west end, it may be assumed that the head lay in that direction.

“The grave was formed of rough sandstone slabs which had evidently been removed from their bed in the rock. The length of the cist was some 5 feet; the longest single slab in the side being about 3 feet 6 inches. The breadth of the cist was not ascertained before its destruction, but the thin slab which formed the cover is about 2 feet broad. There was no regularly made floor, but much dark vegetable mould was noticed on the bottom. At the east end the cover lay only some 8 to 10 inches below the surface, and at the west end, in which direction the ground slopes upwards, the depth of the overlying material was about 2 feet.

“The soil in which the burial took place is pure sand.”

The relics mentioned above consisted in sufficient portions of a body to show that the interment was an inhumation one, and some objects of personal adornment; the former were a few teeth, the latter a dozen glass beads. The archæological question which at once presented itself was the following:—Does the character of the interment and of the beads give any colour to the hypothesis that the burial was that of an Anglian sea-rover or early Anglian settler? The complete absence from Scotland south of the Forth of relics of the pagan Anglo-Saxon period is a remarkable fact that has often excited comment; while an inhumation burial in a cist, on high ground, oriented east and west, with the head of the body to the west, accompanied by a string of glass beads, offers nothing at all inconsistent with an Anglian origin. As bearing on this, it may be mentioned that slabs of laminated sandstone covered some of the bodies in the Jutish cemeteries at Ozengell in Thanet and Goldston by Richborough, Kent, and at Chessell Down in the Isle of Wight; upright slabs lined some of the West Saxon graves at Frilford in Berkshire, while in the Anglian cemetery at Sleaford in Lincolnshire and the Anglo-Saxon one at Kempston, Beds, similar phenomena presented themselves. The appearance of an inhumed body with eastward orientation, that is, a body laid with head towards the west, is quite common in pagan as well as Christian Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, and there is no item of tomb-furniture found in such cemeteries more common than the string of glass beads.

The few sentences that follow are directed, first, to the question of the Angles in Southern Scotland, and, next, to that of the character of the beads as bearing on their possible or probable provenance.

It is not easy to reconcile the abundant notices drawn from British sources of the presence of Anglo-Saxon raiders in Northern Britain from the first period of the Teutonic incursions with the absence, not

only from Southern Scotland but from England north of the Tyne, of relics of the pagan Anglo-Saxon period. The chief British sources are Nennius and Geoffrey of Monmouth, and they tell us of long-continued and strenuous contests between native Briton and immigrant Teuton of which Northern Britain was the scene. Exactly how much historical worth these notices possess it is impossible to say, but at the present time the tendency is decidedly against that wholesale rejection of evidence of the kind that was in fashion a generation or so ago. Geoffrey of Monmouth is no doubt a romancer, but are we prepared in our present way of thinking to reject entirely the statement with which he opens and closes his *History of the Kings of Britain*, to the effect that a historical person of his time, Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, had given him "a very ancient book, written in the British tongue," the contents of which Geoffrey had incorporated in his own work? This shadowy volume has been much discussed and as a rule discredited, but a recent writer of high authority¹ is disposed to believe in it. If Geoffrey of Monmouth were really in possession of documents of British origin which embodied some genuine traditions of the age of Teutonic inroads his *History* may be used to corroborate and extend the slighter notices in the *Historia Britonum* of Nennius.

In connection with the first appearances of the Teutons, Nennius² and Geoffrey of Monmouth³ both make Hengist and Vortigern arrange to hand over the regions in Northern Britain near the Roman wall to the former's two kinsmen, who are represented as sailing round the country of the Picts and taking possession of extensive territories, in connection with which is mentioned the "Frisian Sea." This appears to be the Firth of Forth, for Joceline of Furness in his *Life of Kentigern*, chap. viii., refers to a place apparently near Culross on the Forth as "Fresicum litus," and this has been held as evidence of early Frisian settlements in this region. Later on, reinforced by a great Germanic fleet from across the North Sea, the Teutons "invaded the parts of Albania," that is Northern Britain, "where they destroyed both cities and inhabitants with fire and sword." The Britons contended against them with "varying success, being often repulsed by them and forced to retreat to the cities," while more often they routed their Teutonic assailants "and compelled them to flee sometimes into the woods, sometimes to their ships." The varying fortunes of the struggle as indicated in the British sources are in accordance with likelihood, and there is a touch of actuality in the notices that when the British

¹ Ernst Windisch, *Das Keltische Britannien bis zu Kaiser Arthur*, Leip., 1912.

² Nennius, *Hist. Brit.*, § 38.

³ *Hist. Reg. Brit.*, vi. xiii.

were defeated they fled to the cities while the worsted Saxons betook themselves to the woods or to their ships.

From about the middle third of the fifth century onwards we may accordingly represent to ourselves different bodies of the Angles entering the estuaries of the eastern coast of Northern Britain, and forcing their way inland up the streams. The Forth, the Tyne, the Tees may have been thus entered, as well as the Humber, the rivers debouching on the Wash, and the Thames. All would equally invite the access of the war-galleys and offer facilities for riparian settlements. As a fact, however, though all along the courses of the south-eastern rivers, such as the Trent and the Thames, numerous cemeteries of the pagan period indicate the sites of early Anglo-Saxon villages, in the northern portion of the old Northumbrian kingdom from the Tyne valley to the Forth no such evidence of settlement is known to exist. In no one of the numberless ancient graves opened in the Lothians, in Clydesdale, or on the Borders, has a fragment of an "Anglian" urn or a skull of Anglo-Saxon type, or a single weapon or ornament of Saxon character come to light. Indeed, no Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are known north of Darlington and Saltburn-on-Sea, and no examples of Anglian art or industry of the pagan period have been found farther north than Corbridge-on-Tyne.

It is obvious that this negative evidence from the side of archaeology almost wholly destroys the impression derived from literary sources of an early Anglian *settlement* of the regions in question. It would suggest that the Anglian attacks were rather in the nature of raids, and that the retirement to the ships may have been the rule even after a victory over the opposing Britons. Anything of the nature of established Anglian communities must have belonged to a later period, when the influence of Christianity had led to a discontinuance of burial in pagan cemeteries and with the accompaniment of tomb-furniture. In the latter half of the sixth century the northern Britons were still aggressive, and in the time of the sons of Ida, the first recorded Bernician king, they seem to have beleaguered the Northumbrian forces for a time in the island of Lindisfarne. The great victory of Ida's grandson Æthelfrith at Degaastane, perhaps Dawston in Liddesdale, was won in a defensive campaign against an invasion of the Scots and probably the Strathclyde Britons, and it was Æthelfrith's successor Edwin who first effected the conquest of the Lothians, consolidated later on in the seventh century into the empire of Oswy and Ecgfrith. By this time the practice of tomb-furniture was dying out, and we should not expect to find the sites of Anglian settlements marked by pagan cemeteries with furnished graves.

It is none the less a matter for surprise that isolated finds have not

come to light to attest the former presence in the north of Anglian raiders, and the interest of the recent discovery of the grave above the Forth resides in the fact that it may conceivably fall under this category. The site and the character of the interment would, we have seen, agree with the suggested hypothesis, and the question must now be asked whether the beads have anything definite to tell us.

All that can be said here with confidence is that all the beads found, with one possible exception, can be paralleled from known Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, but there is no one of them that can be regarded as specially characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon period. We cannot, of course, speak of "Anglo-Saxon beads" as if they were manufactured in England, for the general opinion is that these small, attractive, and practically indestructible objects were imported; nor can we call them "Anglo-Saxon" in a distinctive sense, for beads of the same kinds occur in abundance in continental cemeteries of the Germanic period in general. Beads of the epoch of the Teutonic migration, however, possess a certain character, so that any handful of them found in a Frankish, Alamannic, or Anglo-Saxon sepulchre would be clearly distinguishable in each case from a handful from a grave of the Hallstatt or La Tène or Provincial-Roman kind. At the same time in each handful a certain number of beads could be sorted out that might appear equally well at any other of the periods noted. Otto Tischler believed that certain forms of beads, such as the small blue glass ones, were made at all epochs, but that other forms were so special that they would serve for chronology almost as well as coins. Similar forms, he thought, wherever they appeared were synchronous. Fashions changed from age to age but changed, he thought, everywhere; so that it was not the case that a form might go out of fashion, say in the south, and later on make its appearance in the north. The objection that the objects were practically indestructible, and so would necessarily survive from age to age, he met by affirming that beads were buried with their owners and not kept as heirlooms. Tischler admitted at the same time that beads were so widely and evenly distributed that it was very difficult to sort them out into their proper periods and localities, and he made no systematic attempt to show how these somewhat questionable principles worked out in practice.

The subject is indeed one of enormous extent and complexity, demanding a survey extending over several thousands of years and penetrating into the most out-of-the-way corners of the earth, and no one has endeavoured to treat it as a whole. A communication by Mr M'Lellan Mann on pre-historic beads of early date is contained in the volume of our *Proceedings* for 1905-6, and this is referred to by Sir Arthur Evans in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of London*

for 1907-9. There is also the paper by our President in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* for 1905. These papers deal with beads of the pre-Teutonic period, from which period, however, certain forms survive to later times. Generally speaking, the earlier Teutonic graves contain small, solid beads, that is, solid save for the hole through which they are strung, of self-coloured glass pastes, shaped either flat like a wheel, or of a more or less globular or cylindrical form, made by rolling a strip of heated material spiral fashion round a mandrel, and smoothing and shaping the mass thus formed against the surface of a polished marble slab. This description applies to six of the Dalmeny Park beads



Fig. 1. Beads found in cist in Dalmeny Park, January 1915. †.

(fig. 1), which are roughly cylindrical, about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in diameter, and of opaque green, red, yellow, orange, and white vitreous pastes. Beads not unlike these were found at Corbridge-on-Tyne, with fibulae ascribed to a date of about 500 A.D. Two of the remaining six are smaller, light blue beads, fluted by pressing in at intervals the soft paste with a tool like a paper-knife; they are seen at the extremities of the string. There are four flutes, which give the pieces a cruciform shape. Sometimes such flutes are added on in separate pieces of glass. Another of the six, to the left of the long central object, of a dark blue-green that seems shot with purple, is nicely finished, and is shaped like two truncated cones joined at their bases so as to form in the middle a distinct arris. Such a shape may be found in Anglo-Saxon graves, but is not common. A thin, cylindrical bead of dark-green paste, nipped at intervals so as to look like three globular beads joined by a stem, bears a superficial resemblance to a

well-known form occurring in early Anglo-Saxon graves, but clearly of Roman origin. The resemblance, however, disappears when the technique is examined, for the Dalmeny triple bead is solid save for the central aperture, whereas the beads from the early Anglo-Saxon graves are of blown glass with walls as thin as paper. There remain two of the Dalmeny set. One, the long central object, is a great curiosity, and is, so far as at present appears, unique. It is a portion of the rim of a Roman cup of light grey-green glass, of which the edge has been folded over in such a way as to leave a hollow space, like the hem on the upper edge of a window curtain. This hollow has been exploited for the purpose of turning the fragment into a bead by stringing it with the rest. It is about 1 inch long, and has had the fractured edges carefully ground down upon a stone. It may have formed the central piece of the string. To employ an odd fragment of the kind in this way is quite in accordance with the practice of the Anglo-Saxons, who in a chalk country, like parts of Kent, introduce at times fossils into their necklaces. The last bead to be noticed is a wheel-shaped one of light sea-green glass rather more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch across and irregularly formed. It is just a blob of glass dropped in a semifluid state on to some flat striated surface, possibly of wood, and when it had spread out, as such a semifluid mass would do, it has been pierced with a central hole by which it was ultimately strung. One side remains flat, with the impression of the striated surface still upon it. It is impossible to say off-hand whether a fellow piece could be found among the extensive yields of the Anglo-Saxon cemeteries.

A comparison of the Dalmeny beads with others found in parts of Scotland where Anglian raiders can hardly have penetrated, is rather against the hypothesis of an Anglo-Saxon origin. Some beads now in the Museum, found a year ago in a broch near Dunvegan in Skye, though by no means duplicates of the recently discovered ones, bear to them a general resemblance that would have to be taken into account. The Dalmeny find is, however, quite of a sort to stimulate search in Southern Scotland for the hitherto missing evidence for the presence here of Anglian raiders in the earlier period of the Teutonic settlements.