

11. THE MIGDALE HOARD BRONZE NECKLACE.

The main purpose of this note is to put forward a speculation on the original form of the necklace, which is one of the several rare features of the early Bronze Age hoard found near Loch Migdale in Sutherland, and described in our *Proceedings* for 1900-01.⁵ The hoard has recently been placed on loan in the Museum by Mrs Roswell Miller.

The bronze beads, of which there were at least 40, are very carefully finished and some, like other objects in the hoard, have an almost glass-like finish. They are made of sheet bronze folded into a smooth tube with one lengthwise joint, the overlapping edge rubbed down to a gentle bevel.⁶ The inside of each tube was filled with a hollow stick.

It follows from the careful and elaborate manufacture that the marked differences in length and diameter among the beads were, as Joseph Anderson noticed, adapted to a relatively complex arrangement. The surviving beads are of five main sizes: 0.7 × 0.15 in., 0.95 × 0.15 in., 0.85 × 0.2 in., 1 × 0.2 in. × 1.1(+) × 0.2 ins., c. 1.3 × 0.25(+) ins. Of these the 1 × 0.2 in. are the commonest and the three smallest are now represented by only one, two and two beads respectively. If the beads were arranged like those of the common crescentic jet necklaces of the period, which also have graduated beads, the largest tubes would find a convenient place round the outer circumference. The thinnest beads have in a tentative reconstruction (Pl. LXVIII, 2) been placed at the back of the neck; but instead they may have formed part of a miniature necklace—or rather a matching bracelet—like the jet example from Pitreuchie, Angus,⁷ of which other examples have recently been recognised—one from Balgay (also Angus) having probably very small-sized barrel beads as well as end-plates.⁸

It will be seen from the photograph that the unique decorated bronze strip hitherto called part of a flat bracelet⁹ is proposed as the covering of a wooden

¹ *Danske Oldsager*, II, 224.

² *Ibid.*, 339.

³ *Archæologia* (1924-5), 75, 79 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*: also Professor C. F. C. Hawkes in a letter.

⁵ Detailed drawings will be published in the set of cards of the *Inventaria Archaeologica*.

⁶ For other similar beads see *P.P.S.*, 1955, 169.

⁷ *P.S.A.S.*, xli, 65-66.

⁸ *Ibid.*, viii, 412, ill.

⁹ *Ibid.*, xxxv (1900-01), 270; *P.P.S.*, 1953, 170.

spacer-bead, equivalent to the common jet spacers and to the rarer spacers of amber¹ and of faience.²

The strip of thin sheet bronze of which it is formed has been decorated only in part: the decoration is similar to that of the Melfort armlet, but with a hatched background,³ and a row of dots punched from the back along the border. The plain part of the strip has been folded right back so as to run parallel leaving a space of 0.2 in. This arrangement must be deliberate and original, and not the result of crushing or maltreatment. The intervening space had been filled with some substance to which the bronze had been attached through two large pin-holes perforated (before the strip was folded) close to one end, 1.3 ins. from the fold; the other end can be assumed to have been similarly folded and pinned but is missing, along with part of the decoration, so that the length of the object is unknown. As the tubes have wooden cores, a wooden core for the strip seems possible and would fit the evidence of pinning.

Though even what is left is narrower in proportion to its breadth than most jet spacers, the supposed bronze and wood spacer is, like them, rather broader at one end than the other (0.05 in. difference at ? halfway) and its thickness, 0.2 in., is very similar. The illustration of the jet necklace from Balgay, already cited, has spacers nearly as narrow as a possible reconstruction, and shows barrel beads in a considerable range of size.

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1. Great Signet of James IV.



Bronze beads, and (?) spacer-plate (1/1), from the Migdale Hoard. (Note 11.)

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