

RESEARCHES RELATING TO EARLY SLAVONIC ANTIQUITIES,

WITH NOTICES OF GOLD BRACATEATE COINS AND RUNIC INSCRIPTIONS.

THE ancient remains and early records of the Slavonic races have not hitherto attracted that attention to which they are entitled. This may be attributable in part to the difficulty of obtaining information upon the subject, and partly to the unattractive form in which the materials that exist for the most part present themselves. It becomes the more desirable, therefore, that notice should be taken of such records of them as from time to time present themselves, and I hope that I shall not be regarded as occupying unprofitably the attention of our readers by bringing before their notice, "T. von Wolanski's Brief über Slavische Alterthumer. Erste Sammlung, mit 145 Abbildungen auf XII. Kupfer-tafeln." Gnesen, 1846, 4°.

The author informs us in his address that he had originally proposed to himself to arrange and publish, with critical and explanatory remarks, the materials he had collected, consisting of coins and other memorials of all the Slavonic nations. Fearing, however, that his advanced age and failing strength would render it impossible for him to carry this design properly into effect, he adopted the resolution of transferring separate portions of his collection to more active men, and to learned societies, in order that they might make what use of them they thought proper. The author determined at the same time to publish the letters he addressed to the various parties among whom he distributed his collection, in the hope that by so doing the accidents of miscarriage, or the chance of their being set aside or forgotten, amidst events of a more exciting nature, might be avoided.

With this view he published the "First Collection," comprising the letters addressed respectively to the Royal Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, to Herr Theodor von Narbutt, author of the Early History of the Lithuanians, to the Royal Danish Society for the investigation of Northern Antiquities at Copenhagen, and the Royal Bohemian Academy of Sciences at Prague.

The first letter is the most important of the series, sup-

posing the author's theory as therein explained to be correct. He says that not being satisfied with the opinion expressed by all, even Russian antiquarians, that the numismatic history of Russia commenced with Wladimir the Great (A. C. 980-1015), while heathen coins of the eighth and ninth centuries were found among the Chechs and the Lechs, he had persevered in his search after monuments of this description of an earlier date. The coins of the East being of too marked a character to afford any hope of discovering Russian elements among them, he turned his attention to the gold bracteates often discovered in the north, and to the so-called barbaric coins ascribed, without further proof than commonly received opinion, to the Celtic nations. He found (or fancied that he found) what he searched for among both, and thus, if correct, has not only made a most important addition to the numismatic history of Russia, but has thrown a light upon a numerous but hitherto unexplained class of coins, the bracteates.

The coins so discovered by him are eight in number—one is a silver medal in the Royal Museum of Berlin, and the remaining seven gold bracteates, which had been described and figured by Mr. Thomsen, the Director of the Royal Medallic Cabinet at Copenhagen, for an intended work upon all dubious and interesting gold amulets. This work, it appears, was discontinued after eight plates had been engraved, containing seventy-seven figured gold amulets, Mr. Thomsen having discovered at Stockholm a collection of the same kind, which doubled the amount of those he was previously acquainted with, and rendered a re-arrangement of the series necessary. The eight medals discovered by our author to be of Slavonic origin are respectively of the reigns of Rurik (868-879), Olech (879-913), Ihor I. (913-945), Olha (945), Svyatoslav (945-972), and Wladimir I. (980-1015).

The second letter, addressed to Herr Theodor von Narbutt, consists of remarks upon various objects figured in the illustrations to his (Narbutt's) History of Lithuania,—coins, seals, &c., illustrative of the antiquities and traditions of Lithuania. The author there declares his opinion that the greater number of these gold bracteates belong to Poland, Russia, Lithuania, and the Slavonians of the Baltic, and adds a description of several of them.

EARLY SLAVONIC ANTIQUITIES.



Gold Bracteates of the Eighth and Ninth Centuries

In the third letter, addressed also to Herr Narbutt, M. Wolanski discusses, among other things, the probability that Lithuania was known in ancient times under its proper name of Litavia, and supports his arguments by inscriptions on Roman coins.

The fourth letter, addressed to the Royal Danish Society for Northern Antiquities, is chiefly devoted to the examination and description of several gold bracteates, which the author shows to be of Slavonic origin, by reference to the system of idolatry prevailing among the Slavonic nations.

The fifth letter, which is addressed to the Royal Bohemian Academy of Sciences at Prague, comprises—

1. A description of some bracteates, disclosing the names Niemysl, Unislav, Hostiwit, and Mojslav, identifying them with the early periods of Bohemian history (the eighth and ninth centuries¹).

2. A description of the celebrated monument of the peace of Bohemia, anno 874, known as the Hünensäulen, which consists now of seven pillars, or large stones, and is situate in the Odenwald, in the grand duchy of Hesse Darmstadt, close to Main Bullau, near Miltenberg, and also near the spot where the Mudau falls into the Maine. The largest of these pillars is 27 feet long, $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in diameter at the bottom, and 2 feet at the top. The other six are of the respective lengths of 25, 24, and 20 feet. Four of these columns are inscribed with characters that have not yet been deciphered. On the largest they are continuous, on the second they are twice interrupted, and on the other two there are only some scattered letters, with a date in Arabic numerals, 5587, which, calculated by the Julian æra, would give 874 of the Christian æra. The author observes, “The Christian sculptor of the period ornamented each of the heathen runes of the first column with a cross. We must remove these cross-lines in order to be able to see the runes in their original form and to decipher them: unless, indeed, these cross-strokes were perchance the remains of some very ancient style of writing, where separate characters, joined together for the purpose of forming a word, were attached to a long line, as in the Sanscrit, &c. We find a somewhat similarly formed character in the Gnostic Talisman in J. A. Doederlin’s *Commentatio Historica*, &c. p. 104, fig. LIV.”

¹ See *Aeneas Sylvius*, Hist. Boh., cap. 9, p. 25, 1524; Schafarik, *Slawische Alterthümes*, vol. ii., p. 286, 422. 1843.

In the annexed illustrations, A. represents the inscription on the first column. B. c. those of the second, and D. the single letters of the third and fourth column ; E. the real size of the character ; F. the same inscription as A., the crosses being left out. Finally, under G. is given the alphabet as formed by the author, "as," he remarks, "I am inclined to consider this inscription as the oldest Alamannic rune, and one which has been hitherto unknown to antiquarians—for one of the most diligent inquirers, W. C. Grimm, says in his work, *Ueber deutsche Runen*, Gottingen, 1823, p. 163, that hitherto no undoubted monument with German runes has been discovered. I have nothing to say against that, provided the present inscriptions are allowed to be the oldest runic inscriptions of the Western Slavi."

Without giving the author credit for more than ingenious conjecture, his explanations may be considered sufficiently plausible to justify me in extracting them at length. After proposing to read the inscription from right to left, he proceeds as follows :

" 1. The first rune is an S, the upper part being crossed to make a T, and here represents TS, the Slavonic Czerw (cz), because in the German alphabet there was no rune corresponding to this, which for the names of the Chechs was absolutely necessary.

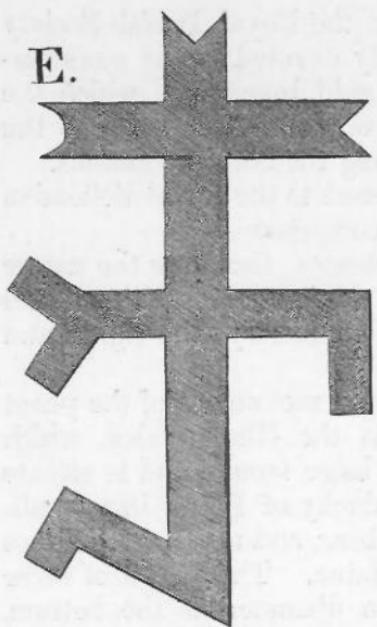
" 2. The second is a monogram formed from the runic E and the Latin Ch.

" 3. The third is the runic O, with S appended beneath, and concludes the word Czechos.

" 4. The fourth is a monogram formed of A, C, and gives the word Ac.

" 5. The fifth is a monogram of A, L.

" 6. The sixth is A.



EARLY SLAVONIC ANTIQUITIES. NINTH CENTURY.

A.

ᚠᚠᚠᚠᚠᚠᚠᚠᚠᚠᚠᚠ

B.

ᛖHᛖWYMWᛖWᛏᛖ

C.

CᛖK↑M I↑M

Runes on the Hunensaulen Duchy of Hesse Darmstadt.

EARLY SLAVONIC ANTIQUITIES.

D.

ウム HMK 緊 5587

F.

G_L

Runes inscribed on the Hunensaulen. Duchy of Hesse Darmstadt.

A

B

c.

D.

E

F.

G.
s.

H.

I.

K.

N

N.

0

Q.

R

S.

S S.

T.

V.

X. Y. Z.

Alphabet of Ancient Alamannic, or Slavonic, Runes, as proposed by Wolanski, in his Memoirs on
Slavonic Antiquities.

- " 7. Is M, and is repeated again under No. 15.
 " 8. Is a monogram formed of A, N.
 " 9. Is a final union of the usual ordinary rune S, with O, therefore Os, (as in the Greek) with which the word Alamanos closes.
 " 10. Is distinguished from the similar character under No. 8, by its slanting position, and by wanting the cross-stroke, and at the same time shows, by this position, that it forms a word by itself as a monogram. It comprises the four runes, U, N, I, T, and must be read unit.
 " 11. Is C and K united, and is consequently a hard German Ck.
 " 12. Is an A interwoven with R. See Grimm, Deutsche Runen, Tab. i. Cod. Vind. 64. Hickes, Gr. Anglosax. p. 136.
 " 13. A clear L, struck through, according to the Slavonic dialect, to express reduplication.
 " 14. Is an ordinary Slavonic O, after removing the cross.
 " 15. Is M, as we have seen under No. 7.
 " 16. Is the same A as under No. 6.
 " 17 and 18 are the common runic N, N, and form the conclusion of Karlomann. The contents of this inscription consequently are 'Czechos ac Alamanos unit Karlomann.'
- The plausibility of this interpretation will appear more clearly from the following history of this monument as given by M. Wolanski.
- Karlomann, the great-grandson of Charlemagne, had received from his father, the German King Louis, Bavaria and part of Bohemia. In the year 869, Ratislav, King of Moravia, joined with the Bohemians and Servians in an attack upon Karlomann. He was accompanied by his nephew Svatopluk. Karlomann marched to meet him, broke into Moravia, but found himself in great difficulties, and peace was concluded the same year. In the following year, 870, Svatopluk quarrelled with his uncle, went over to Karlomann, placed himself under his protection, and delivered up to him his uncle who had been made prisoner. Karlomann caused the King of Moravia to be condemned to death; but Louis, Karlomann's father, to whom he was obliged to refer the disposal of the unhappy Ratislav, with the barbarity peculiar to the middle ages, contented himself with putting out his eyes and shutting him up in a monastery, after which Svatopluk took possession of Moravia. In the following year,

however, Karlomann quarrelled with his protégé Svatopluk, made himself master of his person, and threw him into prison. The Moravians took up the cause of their prince, and under the command of the priest Slavomir drove the Germans out of Moravia. Karlomann set Svatopluk at liberty, and, in order to recompense him for the injustice he had done him, loaded him with presents. But this good understanding was only apparent—Svatopluk soon attacked the Germans, inflicted upon them immense losses, and delivered his native country. The Bohemians, who two years before had risen against Karlomann, were now the object of his attack, because they had taken part in the campaign of Ratislav. A German army under the command of the Archbishop Luitbrecht invaded Bohemia in the year 872, where he was opposed by five Lechs, viz., Svatoslav, Witislav, Heriman, Spitimir, and Mojislav, with their respective forces under the general guidance of Borzvays, the Duke of Bohemia. The Lechs were however beaten ; and the Germans retired after having, in the spirit of the period, laid waste the country. Their retreat, although conquerors, was caused by the circumstance that Svatopluk of Moravia had attacked Karlomann with his Saxons, Franks, and Bavarians, and beaten him. In the following year, 873, King Svatopluk of Moravia acted on the offensive against Karlomann, again supported as he had been three years before by the Bohemians and Lechs, who had to revenge themselves for what they had suffered in the preceding year. Karlomann, hardly pressed, begged his father, King Louis, to assist him, and received such aid that through his interference peace was concluded in the year 874, not only with Svatopluk, but also with all the other Slavonic princes who had taken part in this war.

"We now come to the other columns, the inscriptions on which are in two rows, and are here represented under B and C. They differ essentially from those of the first column already explained, inasmuch as they are mixed with Latin letters ; they must also be read from left to right in the ordinary manner, and not backwards.

"The first rune of this inscription (No. 19) belongs to the class of runes above mentioned, and forms a monogram composed of I and E, namely, the Slavonic Je. To this follows a Latin H, a runic O struck through twice ;

after which a Latin W, and runic A concludes the word Jehova.

"Then follows (No. 24) the Latin letter M to be read as ME. Then a Latin W, which must be read according to the pronunciation VE.² Then the rune No. 26, which according to my projected alphabet is a monogram composed of L and A. The Latin letter W (No. 27), which follows, and the monogram composed of I and T (No. 28), give the word velavit.

"The last two runes in this row, Q, M, (29, 30) are to be read 'quam,' as an ordinary Latin abbreviation of the period. In the next line we find, first under No. 38, a Latin C, then under No. 37, according to my alphabet, the runes A and E in a monogram. After these, under Nos. 36, 35, 34, a Latin K, the runic U, and a Latin M, by which the word Cœcum is completed. Lastly, there follows under 33, 32, and 31, a contracted word, commenced but not completed—namely, a Latin I, the runic U as already shown under No. 35, and a Latin M,—therefore IUM, which I venture to complete as Jumentum. The inscription consequently reads 'Jehova me velavit quam cœcum jumentum.' This therefore is a monument of the unfortunate King Ratislav of Moravia, who, as mentioned above, was condemned to death by Karlmann, but so far favoured by King Louis as only to have his eyes put out.

"From the separate characters under letter D, we can only collect the statement of the period *Aetate* (in the monogram No. 44) and the number 5587. The very clear Latin monogram H M R (41, 42, 43), if it do not comprise the names of the allied Bohemian princes, Heriman and Mojslav, who took part in this sanguinary war of freedom, is perhaps the cypher of the fabricator of this monument. As the runes which precede this monogram represent LA united, and an H, we may read Lach Heriman Kniaz."

I have now completed the task I proposed to myself of giving a general idea of the contents of these letters. They contain much curious matter, and a great deal of ingenious conjecture. The most practical portion of the author's labours is certainly that relating to the bracteates; but as his work displays evidence of considerable research and earnest-

² It must be borne in mind that the author writes in German, in which language the letter W has the sound of the English V.

ness of purpose, it may with propriety be recommended generally to such of our readers as may take an interest in Slavonic antiquities.

Since writing the above, I have seen the second collection, consisting of seven letters, printed at Gnesen in 1847, 4°. This collection is principally devoted to Slavonic mythology, and contains descriptions of the gods Perkun or Perun, Jessa, Dziedzilia, Ljadas or Krasopani, Pikollo, Swatowit, Nija, Lajma, Radegast, Tur or Thor, Triglaw, Czernibog, Weles or Wolos, Czur, Bystizyc, Sobot, Apia, Jezibaba, Ipabog, Sieba, &c., with explanatory remarks upon some other anti-quarian subjects of minor importance.

J. WINTER JONES.

THE CASTLE OF EXETER.

BY THE REV. GEORGE OLIVER, D.D.

ALL our Chronicles agree, as Bishop Grandisson observes in the letter he addressed to King Edward III. (Register, vol. i., fol. 286), that King Athelstan was the first of our monarchs who surrounded the city of Exeter with walls and erected a castle. “Si len regarde bien les cronicles, len trovera que le Roy Adelstan fist enclore la vylle D’Excestre, et fist le chastel.” (A.D. 925—941). Within seventy years later, the whole of these fortifications, with the city itself, were utterly demolished and levelled by the ruthless Sweyn; but, under the auspices of the Kings Canute and Edward the Confessor, Exeter arose like a phoenix from its ashes, and, at the period of the Conquest, was regarded as a city (*civitas*) of considerable importance for its population, its strength, and the riches of its inhabitants. William the Conqueror, provoked at the honourable reception which Githa, the mother of King Harold, and several noble ladies of her court, had experienced from the authorities there, and, in consequence, at their successful escape to Flanders from his insatiate rapacity; furious also at the ill-treatment which the citizens had dealt to a fleet of his mercenaries, driven by a tempest into the river Exe, and at their daring to refuse the admission of a garrison, or perform any other services to him than they had hitherto rendered to their Anglo-Saxon monarchs;