

I.

ON A SILVER BROOCH FROM MULL. BY PROFESSOR DUNS, D.D., F.S.A.
SCOT.

I am indebted to Mr John Maclean, farmer, Kengharair, Kilmore, Mull, for permission to show this brooch to the Society. It is highly prized by its owner for its own sake, but chiefly because it belonged

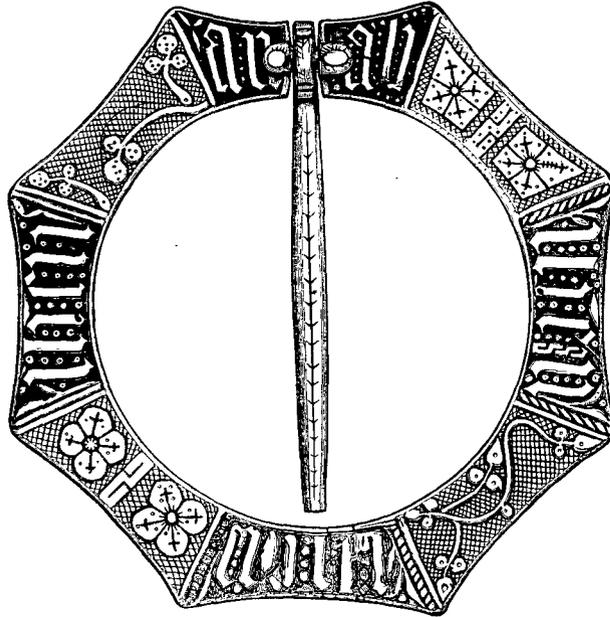


Fig. 1. Silver Brooch found in Mull—Obverse (actual size).

to a deceased brother by whom it was found about fifty years ago. On a former occasion, I described several brooches from this island, but the present is altogether unlike these, both in shape and ornamentation, and seems to point to a type of which we have as yet no other example.

As regards shape, so far as I am aware there is nothing like it in the Museum, except a small form in the Culbin Sands' collection. In the ornamentation there are instances of zoomorphic, undulating, foliaceous, floral, twisted rope, interlaced ribbon, nail-head, lozenge, fret, and geometric patterns, while the employment of niello to bring out the figures introduces another interesting feature. It points to a designer who fully

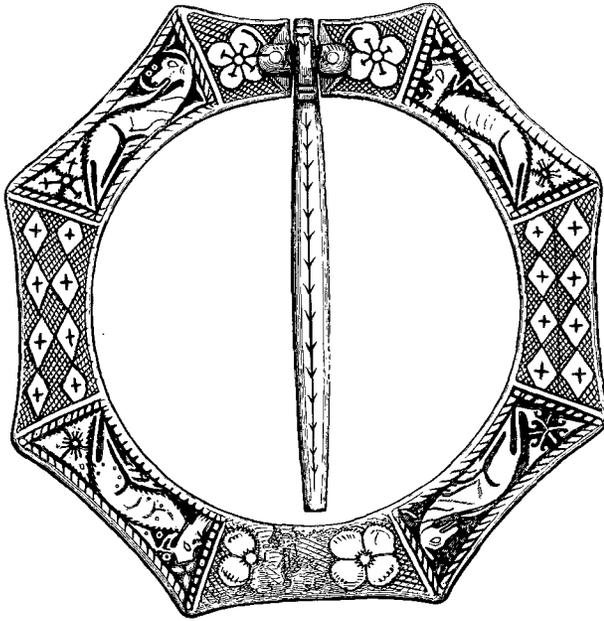


Fig. 2. Silver Brooch found in Mull—Reverse (actual size).

apprehended the value both of early and later Celtic ornamentation. There are, moreover, slight changes introduced into compartments whose general features correspond, which show that the workman was not a mere copyist, but one who had confidence in his own powers and taste. The brooch consists of a flattened ring of silver, $\frac{9}{8}$ ths of an inch at its broadest,

and $\frac{3}{8}$ ths at its narrowest parts. The outside rim is octagonal, the inside rim is a circle with a diameter of $2\frac{2}{8}$ inches. It is divided into compartments, each compartment having its characteristic ornament, and being separated from the adjoining one by a line or lines. The arcs introduced to indicate the octagon on the outside edge are segments of a larger circle. Taking the side (fig. 1) bearing the ribbon, or letter-like ornament, as the obverse, and the compartment to which the pin is attached as 1, numbering left to right, we find that compartments 1 and 5, 3 and 7, bear the letter like figures; 4 and 8, branching trefoils, nearly correspond; 2 and 6, quatre-foils, but different. In the same way on the reverse (fig. 2) we have 1 and 5, quatrefoils; 2 and 6, human-headed zoomorphs; 3 and 7, lozenge on geometric pattern; and 4 and 8, corresponding dragonsque forms. The pin is kept in position by a strongly rivetted bar, having a clip at each end into which the rim is fitted, a slight ornamentation of slanting strokes passing round the rivets. A simple herring-bone like pattern runs the whole length of the pin, which bulges a little in the middle, like a highly elongated oval, or, in botanical phrase, ovate-lanceolate. The head consists of a strong flattened part with a round hole in the centre, open at the top, set at right angles to the shaft, projecting well on both sides beyond the bar, and ornamented on each side by four horizontal furrows. The clasp-like head has been slipped on to the bar after it was rivetted to the rim. In closing this brief notice, I cannot help expressing my earnest hope that Mr Maclean may see his way to present this very interesting specimen to the Society. Meanwhile I leave it in Dr Anderson's hands.