



Bronze Mirror, found *circa* 1833 at Trelan, St. Keverne, Cornwall, in a stone grave, with beads, armlets, and other personal ornaments.

Scale, Two-thirds of Original.

ROMANO-BRITISH, OR LATE CELTIC, REMAINS AT TRELAN
BAHOW, ST. KEVERNE, CORNWALL.¹

By J. JOPE ROGERS, ESQ.

By the kindness of Mr. Edwards, of Helston, I am enabled to record a small but interesting discovery made on the estate of Trelan Bahow, in the parish of St. Keverne, in this county, about forty years ago, but unpublished until now.

So long ago as the year 1833 Mr. Samuel James, the then freeholder of the estate of Trelan, had occasion to cut a new road, in extension of one already existing, through a large field called the Bahow.² In the course of the work he came upon several graves, situated in a sheltered place on a northern slope of the land, near the southern margin of Goonhilly Down. Mr. James died in America in 1865, but Mr. Edwards, who was employed by him professionally in selling the estate subsequently to the discovery of the graves, relates that he was informed by Mr. James that they were two or three feet below the surface of the ground, and lay in a group together. Each grave was formed of six stones set on edge, two at each side, and one at each end, besides the covering stones, and they lay in a direction nearly east and west. In one of them was found a very perfect mirror of bronze, together with several beads of vitreous substance, and some rings of brass strongly gilded, some in a perfect state, others fragmentary, with other bronze articles, such as parts of fibulæ, &c., all apparently personal ornaments, and probably indicating the interment of a female. There were also several implements of hard iron-stone. Several of these relics were dispersed at the time for want of knowledge of their value, and they cannot now be traced, nor can I learn that any record of them was published even in the newspapers of the time. Those which survived were given to Mr. Edwards, who generously placed

¹ This memoir has been obligingly contributed by the writer, by whom it was prepared for the Royal Institution of Cornwall.—[Ed. A. J.]

² Bahow, according to Dr. Borlase Pryce, and Rev. Robert Williams, is a plural noun, signifying door—or gate—hinges. Trelan, in Cornish, is furzy place.

them at my disposal ; and I have since, with his sanction, added them to the national collection of antiquities in the British Museum.

The mirror is an object of great rarity. It is circular in form, six inches in diameter, with a well-formed handle, which projects $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches from its edge. Mr. Edwards informs me that when it was found one side was quite brightly polished. The whole mirror is now richly covered with *æruugo*, but a portion of the polished surface is still discernible. Both front and back are perfectly flat, and although the plate is very thin it has no appearance, as some such objects have, of having been furnished with a strengthening rim. Around the margin of the back an ornament is delicately punched. It consists of the repetition of a small triangular figure, a quarter of an inch in height, whose united bases form one circle, and whose apices touch another circle close to the outer edge. The effect is that of frilled vandyke ornament around the entire circle of the mirror. The central space within this frilling is partially occupied by two circles placed side by side, as the mirror is held in the hand, leaving the spandrils above and below quite plain. These two circles are irregularly filled with discs and curves of various diameters, the spaces between them being occasionally hatched with the impression of a punch, somewhat similar to that used in the marginal frilling. Some of these punch marks precisely resemble those represented as occurring on the back of a bronze mirror found in 1863 at Stamford Hill, near Plymouth, and figured in *Archæologia*, vol. xl. 502, plate, fig. 1. The handle is cast in the form of a loop, whose expanded ends are grooved for the insertion of the edge of the mirror. The workmanship is excellent, and its condition nearly perfect (*See* the accompanying woodcut).

A comparison of this Trelogan mirror with others found elsewhere may be interesting. Five other similar discoveries are recorded, four in England, and one in Scotland ; and although none of the examples resemble this in every respect, it can scarcely be doubted that the Trelogan mirror belongs to the same period of art to which the rest are assigned by the best authorities.

1. The earliest in point of date is that which was found in the year 1763 by the Rev. Bryan Faussett at Gilton, a Saxon cemetery near Sandwich, in Kent. It is figured in

Plate xiii. of Mr. Roach Smith's "*Inventorium Sepulchrale*,"³ and described as having been found in a confined grave about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep, together with remains of unburnt bones, glass beads, and remains of articles of personal use and ornament, both of brass and iron, from which it was concluded that the grave was that of a female. The mirror is thus described by Mr. Faussett, the finder: "It is of mixed metal, flat and circular; it is very highly polished on one side; it is near five inches diameter, and somewhat convex on the polished side. It is much injured by rust, but not so much but that one may plainly see one's face in it." He then describes the handle, which was found near it, but detached by a recent blow, and was the same length as the diameter of the mirror. The handle of the Gilton mirror is straight, and was either ornamentally turned in a lathe, or cast from a turned mould, and was grooved at its upper end for the reception of the edge of the mirror plate. It appears to have had no surface ornament and no rim. This and the following specimen are now in the museum, munificently presented by Mr. Joseph Mayer to the town of Liverpool.

2. This specimen was purchased in Paris by Mr. J. C. Robinson, as a Celtic or Gallo-Roman mirror: the place of discovery unknown, but Mr. Albert Way and Mr. Franks agree in considering it Celtic from the ornamentation of its back. It is $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, and has an ornamental handle (*See* *Archæological Journal*, vol. xxvi. p. 72, *note* 4.).

3. This specimen is in the museum of the Archæological Society of Bedford, and was found in the excavations for the Warden tunnel of the Midland railway, about six miles from Bedford. Mr. James Wyatt of that place informs me that when found it was broken into two parts, is $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter, has a looped handle, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches long; one side was polished, the other "presents," as Mr. Albert Way says in his elaborate paper on "*Bronze Relics of the Late Celtic Period*" (*Archæological Journal*, xxvi. p. 71), "one of the most typical examples of the trumpet-shaped decorations hitherto obtained. It is wholly produced by delicate zigzag work, executed with much delicacy and precision. . . . The disk . . . is slightly kidney-shaped. The handle may have been enriched with enamel." The site of its deposit is near

³ Privately printed, 4to, 1856. London.

places where various Roman relics have been found. Mr. Franks adds, in the note to Mr. Spence Bate's memoir, referred to below, that it resembles in several respects the most perfect of the three mirrors next to be noticed, viz. :

4. A bronze mirror, and the handles of two other mirrors, found in the spring of 1863, in a cemetery at Stamford Hill, near Plymouth, and fully described and figured by Mr. C. Spence Bate, F.R.S., in vol. xl. of the "*Archæologia*," pp. 500-510. The graves, which are considered as Romano-British, were dug about four feet deep in the soil and slaty rock, and contained, besides the fragments of mirrors, some bronze fibulæ, armlets, and other ornaments, with glass and pottery, chiefly fragmentary, remains of unburnt human bones, and some iron implements, too much decomposed to be capable of identification. A solitary Roman coin appears to have been subsequently found near the site of the cemetery, but not sufficiently near the graves to justify any conclusion as to their date. The coin is a defaced second brass of Vespasian, A.D. 69-79 (*Ibid.*, p. 510). Mr. Franks adds in his note that in 1832 a considerable number of British coins were also found on Mount Batten, near the cemetery, but the mirrors were probably unconnected with them (*See Numismatic Journal*, vol. i.).

I extract from Mr. Spence Bate's description of the more perfect of the Plymouth mirrors enough to illustrate its strong resemblance to that of Trehan and others : "It was found lying flat at the bottom of the eastern extremity of a grave. It was nearly circular in form, rather wide than deep (pl. xxx. fig. 1). The front or polished surface was placed downwards. The back was ornamented with engraved scroll-work, as may be seen in the plate. In order to bring out more strongly the design, some portions of the engraving were filled in with numerous short striations, somewhat like basket-work. The mirror was surrounded by a narrow border or rim, formed of a separate piece and folded over the margin."

This mirror had no handle remaining, but a second mirror, apparently similar, had a handle attached to it (fig. 3), very closely resembling the handle of that from Trehan, whilst the striated filling up of some of the interstices of the curves of ornament on the back are so like those of the Trehan specimen that they might have been punched

by the same tool. The Plymouth looped handle is four inches long. Another handle was also found of a more finished character, being ornamentally turned, as the Gilton specimen is, but terminating in a strong oval ring.

5. The only remaining specimen to be noticed is that which is preserved in the Museum of Scottish Antiquities. It was discovered with other bronze relics in a moss in the parish of Balmaclellan, Kirkcudbrightshire, and is figured by Dr. Wilson in his *Prehistoric Annals*, (vol. ii., ed. 1863, p. 228), and is thus described by Mr. Franks in his note on Mr. Spence Bate's memoir, already cited :

"A mirror of slightly elliptical form (greatest width $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches), with plain back, a marginal rim, and a broad handle. The portion of this handle joining the mirror is ornamented with scrolls in relief. The lower end is decorated with pierced work."—(*Proceedings of the Soc. Ant., Scotland*, vol. iv. p. 294, and "*Sculptured Stones of Scotland*," vol. ii. p. 10.) Mr. Franks adds : "I should be therefore disposed to attribute the mirrors from Plymouth, and the others which I have described, to a late Celtic origin. The only other mirrors with ornamented backs are Etruscan. In their elliptical form the specimens under consideration are not altogether unlike Egyptian mirrors."

With respect to the probable date of this and similar relics, Mr. Albert Way agrees with Mr. Franks in the belief expressed by the latter in the "*Horæ Ferales*," that they "are probably not more ancient than the introduction of coinage into Britain, from 200 to 100 B. C., and not much later than the close of the first century after Christ, when the Roman dominion in this country was firmly established. This date would account for the occasional discovery of such remains with, or in close proximity to, Roman antiquities, and also for that influence that their designs seem to have exercised over certain phases of Roman colonial art, in which, however, their wild and studied irregularity of design are brought into subjection, though at the same time the patterns lose much of their charm and originality."

A few words will suffice to mention the only other relics found with the TreIan mirror.

1. Glass beads. Two only of these remain, each about seven-eighths of an inch in diameter, the perforation three-eighths of an inch. One is of the deep blue paste similar to

that of which the celebrated Portland vase is made ; the other is striated, black and grey.

2. Rings of brass. Two of these remain entire, and are of $1\frac{7}{16}$ and $2\frac{1}{16}$ inches external diameter respectively. The latter is made of metal of the uniform thickness of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch on the plane of its diameter ; the other rather stouter, and of unequal thickness. Fragments of similar rings were also discovered.

3. Various bronze articles of personal use or ornament, of which nothing remains but two portions of fibulæ.

4. Stone implements. These have unfortunately been lost, but Mr. Edwards remembers that several were found, and he had more than one of them in his possession for some years. His recollection of them is that they were of the form of the wedge and hammer ; the former of these may have been mutilated stone axes, such as frequently occur in West Cornwall.

It may be asked what bearing have these Trelogan relics upon the argument lately raised by Mr. W. C. Borlase, in his "Nænia Cornubiæ," in favour of the Roman date of many of our early Cornish interments. It seems impossible to conceive that specimens so skilfully and artistically wrought and finished as these from Trelogan could have been produced at a period anterior in date to that of the usual stone and bronze implements, or of the rude pottery found at Morvah Hill. The most recent date, however, which the best authorities assign to these late Celtic relics corresponds with the establishment of the Roman occupation of England ; whilst, therefore, there is abundant evidence of Roman and even Saxon interments within tumuli and other burial places of acknowledged earlier British date, affording frequent opportunity for the mingling of Roman and Saxon coins and other relics with those of undoubted earlier periods, it seems to be quite contrary to all archæological experience that the art manufacture of a nation should suddenly, and within the limits of historical records, be found to become so deteriorated as the change from the quality and beauty of the Trelogan relics to the rude simplicity of the most perfect palstave or funeral urn. Yet nothing less than this seems to be involved in the argument referred to.