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A. Torques found at Foulsham. Oct^r 1846.
B. Armilla found at Downham. 1846.

NOTICE OF A GOLD TORQUES

FOUND IN THE PARISH OF FOULSHAM;

AND OF AN

ARMILLA DUG UP AT DOWNHAM.

COMMUNICATED BY

THE REV. JAMES BULWER.

1846.

At the last Quarterly Meeting of the Society, on October 22nd, a large gold Torques, found a few days before on Bittering Common, in the parish of Foulsham, was exhibited to the members. I have since been permitted, through the politeness of Lord Hastings, in whose collection at Melton this interesting relic is deposited, to examine and describe it for our Society.

Although the annexed drawing will convey to the reader a notion of its form and use, still he may not think the following preliminary observations out of place.

Ornaments for the neck, bracelets for the arms, and rings for the ears, are among the most ancient decorations of the person. They are all mentioned by the sacred historians, and by almost every author of remote antiquity whose writings have come down to us: but it was not until the history of nations, written by art in their monuments, was examined, that the particular forms of any of these ornaments became known to their descendants.

From a learned work of John Scheffer, published in the middle of the seventeenth century at Stockholm, "De antiquis Torquibus," may be gleaned almost all that is found

in the sacred and profane authors respecting this ornament of the neck; and the subject has been very ably revived by Mr. Birch, in the eighth and ninth numbers of the *Archæological Journal*, and our knowledge greatly enlarged by the notice of various specimens which have been found at a later period. To these two works I would refer those who wish for the best and most concise information respecting these very curious relics of antiquity.

By common consent, the word Torquis or Torques denotes an ornament of the twisted form; and Scheffer would limit its use to the neck alone. But according to Herodian, whom he quotes, the ancient Britons wore this ornament of iron round the neck and loins: and according to Polybius, the *μανιάκης*, or torc of the Celts, was worn round the hand as well as the neck;* and in his second book, he mentions among the spoils taken from the Gaulish prisoners, and hung up in the Capitol, “aureum brachiale quod circa *manus* et collum portabant Galatæ.” And from Isidorus we learn that an ornament for the arm was used as a girdle round the loins, and still retained, even when so used, its name of Bracile or Brachiale. And in the history of Thamar, Genesis xxxviii., the word translated bracelets, (Hil., Gr. *στρεπτον*, *tortum*,) may mean a twisted band,† either to adorn the head, as a turban, or to gird the vestment; so that there does not appear any strong reason why the term should be confined, as it certainly was not, to an ornament for the neck, or why an ornament originally intended for the neck should not be also employed as a girdle; and the loose robes of many of

* In Mr. Birch's remarks on Torques Brachialis, the specimen mentioned seems of the same type as the one since dug up in Grunty Fen, Haddenham, and described by Mr. Deck at a meeting of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, and which might have been worn either on the neck or the arm. See also Smith's *Dict.*, p. 87, lower fig.

† The LXX. translate it by *ὄρμισκον*; Rabbi David by *Pallium seu Fasciam*.

the ancient nations among whom it was found, would naturally suggest this application of it.

We are told that the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Hebrews, Persians, Medes, Arabians, Armenians, Parthians, Scythians, Goths, Danes, Germans, Gauls, and Romans, all adopted it; but Scheffer observes, that he can find no example of its use among the Greeks,* and assigns as a reason, that this was probably owing to their hatred of the Persians, with whom they were always at enmity: and Mr. Birch observes, that these latter were the first people who appear, from their monuments, to have used this twisted gold ornament for the neck. But the use of some such ornament may be traced as far back as twelve centuries † before Christ; and Scheffer is of opinion that they were worn, at least by royal personages, long before that, as mention is made of armlets at a much earlier period: and it is not probable that the arms should have been adorned and the neck left without ornament.

The funicular form would appear to have been the most ancient, at least amongst the Persians and Romans; for amongst other nations, as the Indians, Arabians, Swedes, and Danes, were found a variety of species. But to what æra the present specimen is to be referred, must be open to conjecture. It very nearly resembles the one figured p. 379 of No. VIII. of the *Archæological Journal*, which the author would refer to the fourth or fifth century. Prior to the date of Mr. Birch's papers, a Torques of the purest gold was found in the parish of Haddenham, Cambridgeshire, which, from Mr. Deck's description, I apprehend must have very nearly

* In looking through the work of Gronovius, the only two figures represented in the medallions with ornaments on the neck are Agragas, Agrigenti Conditor, with a necklace of *beads*; and Aspasia Periclis, Socratis Magistra, adorned with a necklace of two strings, and the lower one enriched with pendants.

† Anno Mundi 2759. Judges viii. 26.

resembled the subject of the present notice, both in construction, weight, and circumference. In that description, the writer states from authority that it is no uncommon occurrence to find gold ornaments, of precisely the same pattern, in Denmark; that two are in the Museum at Copenhagen, and a similar one at Kiel, considered to be undoubtedly of Danish origin: and he would suggest a similar origin to the one found at Haddenham. In this I am inclined to concur, and would assign the same date, namely, the ninth century, to the present specimen also, when the whole of East Anglia was incessantly harassed by the incursions of the piratical Danes; and the more frequent discovery of this rare antique in the bogs of Ireland, seems to confirm this conjecture, the visits of the Danes to that country being both more frequent than to England, and of longer continuance.

The specimens* that have been found are mostly of the purest gold, and in the present example, as in all, no trace of corrosion during the centuries of its deposit can be observed. With the exception of a bruise inflicted by the plough which turned it up, it possesses its original beauty. It weighs $5\frac{1}{2}$ ounces, and measures, in extreme length, 42 inches. The terminations, A, which are solid and cylindrical hooks, precisely like those figured at page 379 of the *Archæological Journal*, measure $2\frac{1}{4}$ and $2\frac{1}{3}$ inches respectively. The circle is clearly large enough to be worn round the loins of any ordinary-sized man as a girdle, or over the shoulder as a belt or phalera; and, the sulcations of the

* In 1692, one of gold was found at Harlech, North Wales, 48 inches long, and is mentioned by Camden, and in the fourteenth volume of the *Archæologia*. In 1700, another at Pattingham in Shropshire, also 48 inches, but of the extraordinary weight of 3 lbs. 2 oz. (*Archæol.* vol. xiv.) In the churchyard of this parish is an old cross, said to be Roman. The specimen found in 1787 at Ware, Hertfordshire, is terminated by cups, or hollow bell-shaped ends. See *Gentleman's Magazine*, September, 1800.

twist being remarkably deep and evenly wrought, it possesses great flexibility.

The mechanical skill exhibited in these relics, which may be thought too great for our rude ancestors of the fourth century, has been often remarked. It seems to be settled that the solid funicular Torques, of which the present is a beautiful example, was formed by bending two flat bars of gold lengthwise, each at a right angle, and joining the angles thus +; and these bars, when twisted, form a spiral of four threads, which may be usually traced by the eye.

The lower figure, B, of the annexed plate, is an example of the armlet, *Armilla*, of a very simple construction, being formed of two wires twisted together by the goldsmith, and wound into a ring. The drawing was made from a specimen found in a brick-ground in the parish of Downham, in Norfolk; but I cannot learn in whose collection it is at present, or even whether it has been preserved.* To one end is attached a flat triangular termination, in which is a hole, most probably to receive a hook or fibula fixed to the other end, so as to secure it upon the arm. † From the simplicity of its structure, it may perhaps be referred to an earlier period than I have suggested for the date of the Torques. It would carry us far beyond the space allotted to such a notice as the present, to follow the authors ‡ who have discussed these subjects through all the learning they have

* Mr. Goddard Johnson has since told me that some goldsmith, with less appreciation of the fine arts than the barbarians of the fourth century, melted it down!

† In the one figured in Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*, p. 87, preserved in the British Museum, the opening at the end is formed by a loup.

‡ The principal of these is Thomas Bartholinus, who wrote a tract called "De Armillis Veterum Scedion,"—"Amsterdam, 1676."

collected, and the nice distinctions they have drawn, respecting the various kinds of armlets, their material, the uses to which they were put, and the nations amongst whom they were found. But it may not be uninteresting to make some general remarks upon the class to which this specimen belongs.

The chief distinctions which it may be worth while to notice, were those made between the ornaments for the different portions of the arm. Those attached to the shoulder were termed *χλιδῶνες*, and were pendant and flowing. The *Armilla*, as the word imports, were worn on the upper arm, *armus*, above the elbow; the *ψελλια* and *περικαρπια* below and upon the wrist; and *Brachialia* was a general term including armlets and bracelets of any description. The *annuli* and *circuli* were properly rings for the fingers.

But the distinctions here mentioned were by no means respected by the ancient authors; for we find them using these terms indiscriminately whenever mention is made of decorations for the arm. *Armilla*, however, is the term by which they are mostly designated, and these, it seems, were worn in the earliest ages, both by men and women,* (*Exodus xxxv. 22*; *Pliny, xxxiii. c. 3.*) and on either arm; but if on one only, more frequently upon the right, as being more ornamental and more honourable, (*Ecclesiasticus xxi. 23*); though *Livy* (*lib. i.*) relates, that the *Sabines* commonly wore them upon the left.

Like the *Torques*, they were principally made of gold, and generally solid, either round or flat, sometimes of chain-work, and frequently, like the present specimen, of threads of gold twisted together; and, from the same authorities before quoted, this funicular form would seem to be of equal antiquity with the larger *Torcs*. They were likewise con-

* *Maximinus* is related to have had so large a thumb, that he wore his wife's bracelet as a ring.—*BARTHOLOMÆUS*.

structed of silver, and those for slaves and plebeians of brass: nobler Romans wore amber; the Indians and Persians, pearls; Æthiopian women, ivory: and mention is made of wooden ones; and on some, portraits were engraved.

The golden Armillæ were, among the Romans, given as rewards for military services, as also were those of silver. We read in Livy (lib. x.), that Papirius, at the termination of the Samnite war, presented the Equites with silver, and some few other officers with golden Armillæ. They were presented, however, only to citizens, and not to foreigners. (Pliny, xxxiii. c. 10.) Rolvo, the King of the Danes, because he had distributed golden Armillæ and other gifts, is called in the ancient ballads, *hreiter heddæ*, spargens aurum. (*Bartholinus*.)

The form of the Armilla, strictly so called, appears to have generally been a circle, the ends of the metal which composed it more or less overlapping each other, and these were variously ornamented, or wrought to resemble a serpent's head, or some such device, as represented in the plate of Grævius, *de Antiq. Rom.*, or were plain, as in the one found in the Polden Hills, Somersetshire, of which there is an engraving in the fourteenth volume of the *Archæologia*, fig. 4, plate 19. Many of the rings and bracelets of the modern time much resemble them; for instance, those in the form of a serpent* coiled up, the head and tail overlapping, which, from their pliancy, fit various sized wrists and fingers.

Before dismissing this subject, I would refer to a curious medical superstition connected with the Armillæ. It was supposed that gold had a beneficial effect upon the heart, and Psellia made of that metal were sometimes worn upon

* Bracelets of this description were worn by the Athenian women, and were called *Οφεις*—snakes.

the wrist, for the reason that thence there is a greater communion with the heart, as evidenced by the pulse, than from the finger. The possession of Annuli was also supposed to cause money laid by to increase, and they were specifics against poison from the bites of mad animals, and to abate the virulence of fever, and in cases of epilepsy. It remained however for modern science to discover that galvanic rings upon the fingers have a similar efficacy in gout and rheumatism; the inventors finding, no doubt, that the possession of these also "auget nummos in arcâ."

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AYLSHAM,

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