

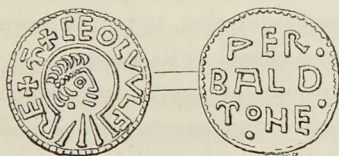
Notice of a Saxon Silver Coin

FOUND AT BURGH CASTLE.

COMMUNICATED BY

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President.



ON a former occasion I had the pleasure to bring before the Society the discovery of a Saxon Sceatta within the walls of Burgh Castle, and to deduce from it a corroboration of the historical statements made by Bede and Florence of Worcester, that this stronghold of the Romans had been subsequently occupied by the Saxons, and to point out in consequence the utility of archæological pursuits.

I have now the satisfaction of communicating to the Society another circumstance of a somewhat similar character, connected also with Burgh Castle; it was announced to me by an intelligent fellow-labourer in archæology, Mr. Francis Worship of Yarmouth, in a letter dated the 14th February, 1859. In this letter he says, alluding to the finding of the sceatta, "Many years back, when quite a boy, I found a silver coin within the walls of Burgh Castle, which was not Roman, and was quite beyond my books and guessings. I

laid it by, and some years ago, while looking at the treasures of old days, I met with it again, and yet, though the coin was in excellent preservation, and the inscription clear enough, I was still unable to come to a satisfactory conclusion about it; I sent it, therefore, to Mr. Hawkins of the British Museum, and he replied that the coin was a penny of Ceolwulf, king of the Mercians, and unique."

It passed from the hands of Mr. F. Worship in 1845 to the British Museum.

Pleased with this authenticated discovery and additional corroboration of the Saxon occupation of Burgh Castle, I took an early opportunity to profit by Mr. Hawkins' kindness, and see the coin at the British Museum. It is in excellent preservation, and as I have had it engraved, and specimens are now on the table, the members will be able to judge of it for themselves.

Everything tending to elucidate and corroborate the early history of this county is so particularly the province of our Archæological Society; and we are so eminently on our right track when pursuing local and provincial enquiries, that I should have desired on this ground alone to have brought this coin to your notice. I am, however, further induced to do so, as it establishes another and interesting corroboration of the accuracy of our early annals, and of the plain and useful manner in which archæology supports and proves them.

This coin has, as you will perceive, on its obverse, the head and name of Ceolwulf, and on the reverse, the words FERBALD MONE: viz., Ferbald the Moneyer, or Mint-master.

Now, in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles (*Monumenta Historica Britannica*, p. 343) you will find the following entries:

Under the year

- A. 819. This year Cenwulf, King of the Mercians, died, and *Ceolwulf* succeeded to the kingdom.

- A. 821. This year *Ceolwulf* was deprived of his kingdom.
- A. 823. This year Egbert, King of the *West* Saxons, and Beornwulf, King of the Mercians, fought at Ellendune, and Egbert got the victory, and there was great slaughter made, and the same year the *East* Angles (Norfolk, &c.) who had formed a league with Egbert, slew Beornwulf, King of Mercia.

Thus making the reign of *Ceolwulf* to be from 819 to 821, and in 823 Beornwulf to have succeeded him, who was conquered and killed by the East Saxons.

Now, there is no date upon the coin before us, but the name of the Moneyer is there, as well as that of the King *Ceolwulf*; and in the British Museum, next in the series of coins, is that of Beornwulf, also with the same reverse and name of Ferbald, Moneyer, showing that these two kings had the same coiner, and, consequently, must have followed each other very closely (especially as they are of the same style and type), and, therefore, strongly supports the statement of the Saxon Chronicles, that the one was reigning in 821, and the other in 823.

Another circumstance also deserves our notice, viz., the finding of this Mercian coin in our *East Anglian Castle of Cnobersberg* (Burgh Castle); because, as we have just seen, Beornwulf, King of the Mercians, was conquered and killed by these East Anglians; and, therefore, a coin of his immediate predecessor, struck certainly not more than two years previous to his reign, and issued by the same mint-master as then was serving him, would very probably be either part of the spoils they won, or was brought to this stronghold by some of their prisoners.

I have wished thus to record the *authenticated* finding of an unique Saxon coin in our county, because I understand it

is very rare that the date and locality can be ascertained of such discoveries; and to suggest from it the establishing, with much accuracy of proof, the place of *Ceolwulf* amongst the Mercian kings, and the corroboration of what is said in our early Saxon Chronicles both of *Ceolwulf* and Beornwulf.

May I not also call your attention to the use of giving information, and making public every discovery, however small it may seem, or however trifling. "Hæ nugæ in seria ducunt," and, like the first fragment of bone which enabled Professor Owen to predicate the existence of the *Dinornis*, a little coin, or a fragment of stone or pottery, may link together imperfect knowledge, and support and corroborate history.