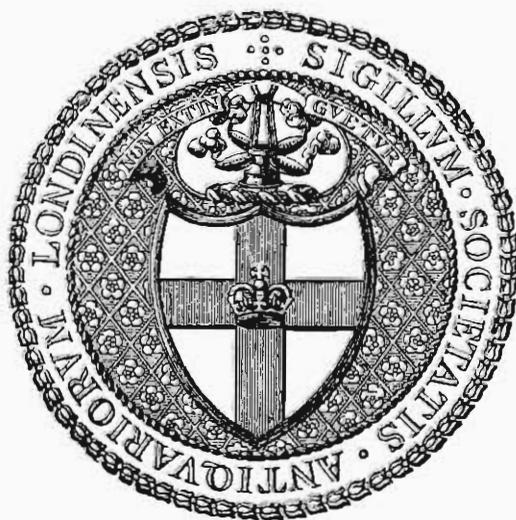


THE
THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES

BY

G. F. HILL, ESQ., M.A.



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THAT the incident of the Betrayal of Christ for Thirty Pieces of Silver should have had an attraction for the mediæval maker of legends, and that pieces professing to be the original coins received by Judas should have been treasured as relics, are hardly matters for surprise. There is no lack of literature on the legend which was woven round the story of the Thirty Pieces, and of late years two or three writers have devoted some attention to the supposed relics of the Betrayal. A comparison and analysis of the various forms of the legend have, however, not been instituted, so far as I have been able to discover. As to the relics, the material for study is only to be found in foreign periodicals and works not generally accessible. It seems worth while therefore to make some attempt to trace the development of the legend, and to collect the descriptions of the coins which were or are preserved in various sanctuaries.

The earliest extant work in which I have been able to find the legend in a fully developed form is the *Pantheon* of Godfrey of Viterbo, who died in 1191. He gives it in one of his Latin poems in rhyming three-line stanzas,^a beginning :

Denariis triginta Deum vendit Galilæus,
quos et apostolicus describit Bartholomæus,
unde prius veniant, quis fabricavit eos.

^a I follow the text as given by E. du Méril, *Poésies Populaires Latines du Moyen-Âge*, 1847, p. 321. I may here record my thanks to Miss L. Eckenstein and Mr. J. A. Herbert for several references to literature and documents bearing on the subject of this legend.

Freely translated, and somewhat abridged, Godfrey's account is as follows:^a "Ninus, King of the Assyrians, had these coins made, and it was Terah who fashioned them out of gold; with them the Ninivite king set up his market. The face of the King was stamped on these denarii to furnish an example to all time, and to perpetuate his own likeness. The son of this Terah, called Abram, afterwards took away these coins with his wife Sara when, at God's bidding, he went into Canaan. With these coins he bought land from the men of Jericho; with these also Joseph was bought by the Ishmaelites; these did wealthy Pharaoh keep in his treasury. These also the mighty Sibyl, the Queen Nicaula, possessed; even the Queen of the South, who afterwards from the Court of Solomon gave them, a reverent offering, to the Temple. But Nebuchadnezzar, when he spoiled the Temple, carried them away to Babylon, where they were given as pay for soldiers to the kings in Saba. When the three Magi together brought their three gifts, the scripture of the ancients records that the kings whom the strange star called forth brought these coins to God. But when, taught by angelic warnings, these kings had gone home, a most worthy garment was sent down from heaven for the Child; without seam was it, and of wondrous hue. His Father sent it from heaven; no woman span it; it became longer as the Child grew in stature. Now when Herod commanded that the Child should be sought out to be slain, His Mother in fear of death fled to the land of the Nile and lay hidden there. Then these three gifts were left in that hiding place, the gold, frankincense and myrrh, and the blessed garment of God. Some shepherds came and carried away the gifts. Now there was a certain astrologer who removed the gifts which had been left behind. He knew by the stars all the portents of Christ's coming; he was an Armenian, just and honourable. Now in the time when Christ was teaching, an angel said to this man: Render up the gifts of God which thou hast taken; let the sacred gifts of God be restored to Him. So the short tunic of the Child was given back, and as Jesus put it on it became of full size. The man saw it, and his mind was troubled and astonished. The thirty denarii which they had brought to God they gave, at the behest of Jesus, to the treasury of the Temple, which denarii they say Judas afterwards received as his price. After the death of Christ Judas brought them back and cast them down in repentance, and hanged himself and burst asunder. Then they gave fifteen denarii for the Potter's Field, and as

^a If my version is prosy, confused, and disjointed, I think I am justified in saying that the original is hardly less so.

many to the soldiers who guarded the tomb by night. Perchance thou thinkest, reader, that my words agree not together, since I have written that those coins were of gold; for the Book speaks of silver. Mark said that the Lord was bought for silver; of coins or of a talent of gold he spoke not. But it is even as I have said; for it was the custom of the ancients to use more than one name for gold, and to call different metals by the name of silver. Know that Saint Bartholomew wrote thus of this matter; his Hebrew discourse to the Armenians tells how the very God was sold for gold:

Ergo, patente nota, solus negat hoc idiota,
cujus habent vota non discere facta remota;
lectores dociles pagina nostra vocat."

The "discourse of St. Bartholomew to the Armenians written in Hebrew" seems to have disappeared without leaving any other trace; it is at least ignored by the chief modern authorities on the apocryphal literature. We may perhaps assume that Godfrey drew from a Latin translation of some legend of Armenian origin. This is suggested by the facts that the *Sermo*, although written in Hebrew, is addressed to the Armenians, and that the hero of the story is an Armenian.

Very little later than Godfrey of Viterbo is the author of the Syriac *Book of the Bee*,^a Solomon, who became Bishop of Baṣra about 1222 A.D. In him we find the legend in an elaborate and considerably different form, betraying the influence of the legend of Abgarus, King of Edessa. Before giving his version, it is as well to note that the legend can hardly have been known in Syriac-speaking lands before the ninth century. Otherwise it would surely have been worked into the Chronicle of Dionysius of Telmahar (Patriarch of Antioch from 818 to 845 A.D.). This writer^b and Pseudo-Ephraim,^c the author of the *Cave of the Treasures*, deal in great detail with the history of the treasures brought from Paradise. Adam took from the borders of Paradise gold, myrrh, and frankincense, and placed them in a cave, and blessed it, and consecrated it, so that it

^a See the edition (Oxford, 1886) by Mr. E. A. W. Budge, who called my attention to this version of the legend. Assemani (*Bibl. Orient.* III. i. 317) says that the legend occurs frequently in Syriac MSS., but gives no details; and inquiries from several Syriac scholars have failed to confirm his statement.

^b Cf. E. Renan, in *Journal Asiatique*, 1853, p. 467.

^c C. Bezold, *die Schatzhöhle*, 1883.

should be the house of prayer for him and for his sons, and called it the Cave of the Treasures. The Gnostic Apocalypse of Adam^a connects these treasures definitely with the Magi: "And we sealed this Testament, and placed it in the Cave of the Treasures, where it remains unto this day, with the treasures that Adam had taken from Paradise, the gold, the myrrh, and the incense. And the sons of the Magi kings shall come, shall take them, and shall bear them to the Son of God, in the grotto of Bethlehem of Judah."^b

To return to Solomon of Baṣra. He refers (p. 85) to the belief that the gifts brought by the Magi were descended from Adam only to condemn it as not received by the Church. The legend itself, as he gives it (p. 95), is briefly this.^c Terah made these pieces for Abraham; Abraham gave them to Isaac; Isaac bought a village with them; the owner of the village carried them to Pharaoh; Pharaoh sent them to Solomon, who placed them round about the door of the altar. Nebuchadnezzar, struck by their beauty, carried them off. He gave them to some Persian youths who were at Babylon as hostages, and these youths, being released by Nebuchadnezzar, carried them to their parents. From Persia the Magi brought them with the other gifts. On their way, when near Edessa, the kings fell asleep by the wayside, and when they went on they left the coins behind. Certain merchants found them and brought them to the neighbourhood of Edessa. On that same day an angel appeared to the shepherds and gave them the seamless garment. The shepherds, taking this garment, met the merchants, and an exchange was promptly effected. The merchants went into Edessa with the garment, and the King Abgarus sent to them and asked if they had anything meet for kings, that he might buy it. When he saw the garment he asked whence they had it, and on learning the facts sent for the shepherds. Thus he acquired both the garment and the coins, and sent them to Christ for the good which He had done him in healing his sickness. Christ kept the garment but sent the pieces to the Jewish treasury. The priests gave them to Judas, and the rest follows as in the gospel.

I have said that this version differs considerably from that of Godfrey of Viterbo. Nevertheless there can be no doubt of their common origin; they begin

^a Renan, *op. cit.* p. 457.

^b This passage is referred to in the Syriac "Passing of the Blessed Virgin" (W. Wright, *Contr. to the Apocr. Lit. of the N. T.* 1865).

^c The thirty pieces of silver, he says, were thirty pieces of silver according to the weight of the sanctuary (*i.e.* the sacred Jewish shekel of about 224 grains troy) and equivalent to 600 pieces according to the weight of our country (*i.e.* dirhems).

and end alike; the seamless garment is associated with the coins in the same mysterious way. Godfrey's Armenian astrologer corresponds to King Abgarus. But we lose the attractive episode of the presentation of the coins to the infant Christ and the losing of them by the Virgin.

Of course the discovery of other Syriac versions may throw new light on the development of the legend. But with the present evidence we are probably justified in supposing that the ultimate source of both Godfrey's and Solomon's stories would be found in a comparatively simple form in Pseudo-Bartholomew. Possibly the minute germ from which the connection of the coins with the Magi sprang is to be found in the well-known Apocryphal Gospel of Matthew. The date of this apocryph is not later than the fourth century after Christ. Here in chapter xvi.^a we read: "then they opened their treasures, and gave exceeding great gifts to Mary and Joseph. *But to the Child Himself they each offered one gold coin.* After these, one offered gold, the second frankincense, and the third myrrh."

Surely there is an echo of this in Godfrey's stanza :

Hos reges Saba quos post nova stella vocavit
ferre Deo nummos Veterum scriptura notavit
cum tria tres socii dona tulere magi.

The picturesque effect of these three coins would appeal to the mythopœic faculty. It would be easy to multiply them by ten. And once connected with the Magi, with all the mysterious traditions that involved the Kings of the East, it would be but natural to take the history of the coins back to the time when the Sabæan land previously played a part in Biblical history, *i.e.* to the time of the Queen of Sheba. Possibly also the tradition that the Magi were descended from Abraham by Keturah^b may have made it easy to carry the story of the coins back as far as Abraham.

This, however, is mere speculation. Let us return to the legend itself.

In the third quarter of the fourteenth century a great vogue was given to the story by two writers, Ludolph of Suchem and John of Hildesheim. The latter, a Carmelite friar, is better known, but the priority seems to rest with

^a Tischendorf, *Ev. Apocr.* 1876, p. 83.

^b Did this tradition originate in the name *Sheba* borne by one of the grandchildren of Abraham by Keturah? (*Gen.* xxv. 3.)

Ludolph. His *de Itinere Terræ Sanctæ*^a was dedicated to Baldwin of Steinfurt, Bishop of Paderborn, a fact which dates it before 1361. Internal evidence and comparison with the "Book of Cologne" show that it is later than 1350. Ludolph, according to his own statement, was in the Holy Land from 1336 to 1341.

He gives as his authority (chapter xxxix.) the *History of the Kings of the East*.^b The coins were some of a number made for Ninus by Terah, who received thirty of them *pro suo salario*, a pleasing touch. Abraham spent them in his exile, and they came into the hands of the Ishmaelites. The Ishmaelites bought Joseph with them, and with them Joseph's brethren bought corn out of Egypt. Afterwards they were sent into the land of Saba to buy merchandise for Pharaoh (*in Saba pro mercimoniis ex parte Pharaonis*). The Queen of Sheba brought them to Solomon, and they were placed in the Temple; thence they were carried off by Nebuchadnezzar, who gave them to the King of Godolia. There they remained until, at the time of the birth of Christ, the kingdom of Godolia was transferred to the kingdom of Nubia. Melchior brought them to Christ, because older and nobler gold than this he found none in his treasury. They were lost by Mary when she fled to Egypt in the Balsam Garden; and there they were found by a certain shepherd, who kept them until the time of the Passion approached. Falling ill and hearing of the works of Christ, this shepherd came to Him and was cured. The rest of the story agrees with the account as given in Godfrey of Viterbo; but there is no excursus on the sacred garment, nor are we told what the coins were like. The discrepancy between the metals is briefly explained. Finally we are told that when the predestined object of the denarii was fulfilled, they were immediately separated and dispersed.

Ludolph's book was meant for pilgrims and those interested in their journeys. John of Hildesheim appealed to an audience perhaps even wider. His *Liber de gestis ac trina beatissimorum trium regum translacione* was dedicated to and written at the bidding of Florentius of Wevelinghoven or Wevelkoven, Bishop of Münster. Florentius held that see from 1364 to 1379, and, as John died at Marienau in 1375, the date of the composition is fixed between 1364 and 1375. It appeared in a

^a Ed. F. Deycks, *Stuttgart Lit. Verein*, 1851. Cp. the same critic's *Ueber ältere Pilgerfahrten*, 58 ff. He regards John of Hildesheim as the source of Ludolph; but the view taken in the text, and supported by Neumann in *Archives de l'Orient Latin*, II. (1884), Doc. 313 ff, seems to be dictated by the chronological data. Ludolph's work has been translated for the Palestine Pilgrims Text Society (1895).

^b As Ludolph was in the Holy Land for some time, he may very possibly have gone to some Syriac sources.

German translation as early as 1389.^a In modern times attention was called to it by Goethe.

The account given by John in chapters xxviii. xxix. is very full. I have space only to note the chief points of interest.

The source of the story of the offering of the coins by Melchior is described as the *libri Indorum*.^b After the death of Jacob, Joseph sent the coins to the kingdom of Saba for spices to bury his father, and they were placed in the treasury of the Sabæan kings. Then, just as Godfrey and Ludolph relate, they found their way to the Temple of Jerusalem. In the time of Rehoboam, in the taking of Jerusalem and the spoiling of the Temple, they came into the hands of the King of the Arabians, who was then an ally of the Egyptians, and thus into the royal treasury of Arabia. Melchior King of Nubia and of the Arabians brought, together with many other precious gifts, these thirty denarii, since older and nobler gold in his treasury he found none. These only he offered to our Lord, passing over the other gifts in his fear (as described in chapter xxii.). The treasures (*i.e.* the coins, frankincense, and myrrh) were taken by the Virgin, wrapped up in a linen cloth, and lost on her flight into Egypt. They were found by a Bedouin shepherd. He kept them until, shortly before the Passion, he fell into an incurable disease. Hearing of the fame of Jesus, he came to Him, and was cured and converted. He offered the gifts to Jesus; but Jesus knew them and bade him put them on the altar. And the priest burnt the frankincense, and put the myrrh with the coins in the treasury. In order that all the Jews indifferently should be responsible for the Passion and death of Christ, the priests took the coins out of the common treasury and gave them to Judas. Part of the myrrh was mixed with the vinegar offered to Christ on the cross, and the rest was given by Nicodemus for the embalming of the body. The coins when returned by Judas were divided, as we have learned they were from Godfrey and Ludolph. A description follows of the cemetery in the Potter's Field; also we have Godfrey's ingenious explanation of the discrepancy between Gospel and

^a The Latin version was first printed in Germany in 1477; reprinted in 1478, 1481, 1486, and 1514, and at Modena (as *Legenda sanctorum trium regum*) in 1490. A more or less critical edition was published by E. Köpke from a Brandenburg MS. in *Mittheil. aus d. Handschr. d. Ritterakad. zu Brandenburg*, 1878. A text with very full apparatus criticus accompanies the edition of the English version in the Early English Text Society's publication, *The Three Kings of Cologne*, ed. by C. Horstmann (1886), to which I may refer the reader for further details.

^b Doubtless, as Horstmann suggests, John's sources may have been largely fictitious; in any case he can hardly have known such Oriental sources except through some Latin history.

legend as to the metal of the coins, given in a more elaborate and confused form. They were called by the general name *argentei*, just as gold denarii are now called *scuti mutones*^a or florins. The type, weight, and appearance of the coins in use from the time of Abraham down to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and Vespasian remained, we are assured, unchanged, and in all parts of the East coins never alter their weight or value. Then comes an obscure passage on the garment of Christ: the style and size of the seamless garment have remained in hereditary use among very many princes and nobles down to the present day.^b Each of the thirty pieces is said to be worth about three florins;^c and on one side of the coin is impressed the head of a king, laureate, and on the other side are Chaldaic letters which modern men cannot read or decipher.

The early German translation of John's book already mentioned^d presents certain small variations, of which perhaps the only one worth recording is that Potiphar, Pharaoh's chamberlain, is said to have bought Joseph directly from his brethren with these coins.

It will be observed that John differs from the other writers in saying that the Egyptians, not Nebuchadnezzar, carried off the coins in the reign of Rehoboam, *i.e.* when Shishak took Jerusalem.

The legend seems to have found its way into England in the fourteenth century, although it has left, so far as I know, but one slight trace at that early date. This occurs in a mutilated scripture history, which used to be attributed to Adam Davie (*circa* 1312 A.D.). But the attribution is baseless, and there is, it would seem, no reason why this fragment should not belong to the end of the century. In that case the author may have learned the story from Ludolph or John of Hildesheim. The fragment is as follows:^e

For þritty pens þai solden þat childe ; þe seller hiȝth Judas.
þo Ruben com hom *and* myssed hym ; sori ynouȝ he was.

^a In the Modena edition *scudati mutenes*. The French écus with the mouton (Agnus Dei) are meant.

^b The garment, we have seen, is also associated with the coins by Godfrey and Solomon. The object here appears to be to draw a parallel between the fashion in dress and the fashion in the coinage in respect of permanence.

^c Say 25s. of our money.

^d See Simrock, *die Legende von den heiligen drei Königen*.

^e MS. Laud Misc. 622, fol. 65 (Bodleian Library). I have to thank Mr. A. E. Cowley for procuring me a copy of the whole of this portion of the MS. W. Sandys (*Christmas Carols*, 1833, p. lxxxv.) notes the connection of the verses with the legend.

þe childe kirtel hij nomen ; *and in blood it wounde*
Ac casten it at her fader feet ; *and seiden hou þai it founde.*
Allas allas seide Jacob ; þat I þis day schulde ywite.
Wilde bestes in þe wood ; habbeþ my childe y-bite.

Unfortunately the verses that should follow are lost ; but it is possible that there was no further allusion to the legend than that involved in the alteration of the price from twenty to thirty pence.

A fifteenth-century MS. account in the British Museum (34,276 fol. 33b.), written in Latin by an English scribe of the name of Barow, is obviously an abridgment of the story as told by John of Hildesheim. It was probably taken, to judge from the style of the writing, not from the printed book, but from one of the many earlier MSS. It omits the stages by which the coins, after they were deposited in the Temple, came into the hands of the Magi. The *Badwini* (Bedouins) of John of Hildesheim are transformed into the English-sounding name *Bodwynny*.^a The explanation of the discrepancy between the metals is omitted, but the passage describing the coins agrees almost *verbatim* with John. This writer adds :^b after the denarii had fulfilled that which was to be fulfilled, they were dispersed.

The pilgrim Felix Fabri, of Nürnberg, at the end of the fifteenth century, read the story, he tells us, in a certain long and wordy history.^c He is not given to brevity himself, but his words accurately describe John of Hildesheim's work. But certain small coincidences show that he rather followed Ludolph, or Ludolph's source. Thus he says that the coins were sent to the land of Saba *pro mercimoniis*, without mentioning spices ; Nebuchadnezzar presented them to Godolias,^d by whom they were transmitted to the kingdom of Nubia. He does not mention the balsam-garden ; the treasures were lost in the desert. But from the finding of them by "a certain shepherd" down to the end of the story he agrees most

^a The MS. of John's work at Corpus Christi Coll. Cambridge has *Bodewini*. The English MSS. edited by Horstmann do not attempt to classify the shepherd.

^b Like Ludolph, and like the English translation (Horstmann, pp. 100, 101).

^c See his *Evagatorium*, i. 426 (ed. by C. D. Hassler in *Stuttgart Lit. Verein*, 1846-1849). The Palestine Pilgrims Text Society have published the work in English (1892-3). The passage in question is translated by de Vogüé in *Rev. des Deux Mondes*, viii. (1875), 531 f ; see also Barbier de Montault in *Rev. de l'Art Chrétien*, N. S. iv. (1886), in an article to be referred to later.

^d Godolia, in Ludolph and in John of Hildesheim (chapter xi.), is the name of the kingdom ; but John does not mention it in this connection.

closely with Ludolph, except that he does not deal with the question of the metal, and that he supposes all the thirty to have been spent on the purchase of the Potter's Field.

It seems clear from the evidence here given that between Godfrey of Viterbo and Ludolph of Suchem there is a gap which should be filled by the History of the Kings of the East from which, or from different versions of which, both Ludolph and John of Hildesheim drew.

There are two other MSS. in the British Museum which represent different versions of the legend. Both are of the fifteenth century. One (22,553 fol. 144 b) is in an Italian hand. I mention here only the more important details in which the account differs from those already described. Nothing is said about the coins being of gold. Abraham bought with them the tomb in which Adam and Eve had been buried. From the Egyptian treasury they came into the hands of Moses, who gave them to a Queen of Sheba. The Virgin, when she had received them from the Magi, gave them to the shepherds who came to adore Christ, because they were poor; and they departing placed them in the Temple. There is no reference to the division of the money between the soldiers and the purchase of the Potter's Field.

The other MS. (34,139 fol. 87), which is in a German hand, differs from the preceding in stating that the coins found their way into the Temple for the second time as the price for which the Virgin redeemed her Son according to the law, after she had presented Him in the Temple. Finally, I may note an isolated statement in the thirteenth century *City of Jerusalem* to the effect that the thirty pieces were struck at Capernaum. This does not seem to fit in with any of the versions of the legend that we have considered.^a

In all the versions, except that of Solomon of Başra, the coins are actually presented by the Magi to the infant Christ. Solomon, by a very complicated process, brings the coins into the hands of King Abgarus. In Godfrey's version also there is some confusion in the transition from the finding of the coins by the shepherds to their acquisition by Abgarus' double, the Armenian astrologer. It looks as if, in the story from which both Godfrey and Solomon drew, this point was not quite clear. Solomon has "joined his flats" better than Godfrey, but has evidently had to exercise considerable ingenuity in doing so.

^a The *City of Jerusalem*, part ii. in no. 8 of the Palestine Pilgrims Text Society's publications, p. 31. The date of this work appears to be between 1220 and 1229 A.D.

If I may be allowed to venture one more hypothesis, I would suggest that the two short versions in which the whole episode of the losing and finding of the coins is omitted may, in view of their comparative simplicity, represent a very old form of the story.

Here we may leave the legend. Perhaps the somewhat irritating gaps in the material so far collected may stimulate some scholar, better equipped than myself, to bridge them over. But it is not amiss to recall the warning which I seem to have heard somewhere: he who thinks that he has attained a definitive result in tracing the development of a mediæval legend may deceive himself, but he will not deceive his readers.

But the history of the coins does not stop here, and we have now to deal with something less elusive in the shape of those pieces which, each professing to be a "Judas-penny," found their way into the sanctuaries of Christendom.

Between fifteen and twenty such pieces have been traced; some are still extant; others though lost have been described with sufficient accuracy to enable us to say to what class they belong; of others we have but a bare mention. What we do know makes it probable that no single one of the professed relics was actually a coin of the kind that was in circulation in Judæa in the time of Christ.^a

The most exhaustive treatment of this subject is to be found in an article by the distinguished "lipsanographer," M. F. de Mély.^b This was, however, preceded in 1886 by an article by M. Barbier de Montault,^c dealing especially with the reliquary of S. Croce in Gerusalemme. Finally, some additional information has been furnished by two other writers.^d The existence of these articles relieves me from overloading this paper with detailed references for each coin.

M. de Mély has noted the following six places in which specimens of the

^a On the general subject of coins as relics I may refer to E. Babelon, *Traité des Monnaies*, i. 76 f. An interesting case which has not been mentioned in this connection is the *nummus perforatus lancea Sancti Mauricii Martyris* which used to be at Canterbury (J. Dart, *History of the Cathedral Church of Canterbury*, 1726, App. xlvii.; from British Museum MS. Cotton Galba E. iv fol. 125 b, of the early fourteenth century). Any perforated coin with the head of a Roman Emperor would no doubt serve as a relic of the soldier saint who had refused to worship his imperial master.

^b *Les Deniers de Judas dans la Tradition du Moyen Age* in the *Revue Numismatique*, 1899, pp. 500-509.

^c *Rev. de l'Art. Chrét.* N.S. iv. 214 f.

^d F. de Villenoisy, *Le Denier de Judas du Couvent des Capucins d'Enghien* (Enghien, 1900); P. Perdrizet, *Une Recherche à faire à Rosas* in *Revue des Études Anc.* 1902. My thanks are due to both these writers for copies of their contributions.

Thirty Pieces, not sufficiently described to allow of identification, were preserved:

- (1) The Visitandines at Aix.
- (2) Notre Dame du Puy.
- (3) The Abbey of St. Denis.
- (4) Montserrat in Catalonia.
- (5) S. Croce in Florence.
- (6) The Annunziata in Florence.

Of the coin at S. Croce we are told that Cosimo de' Medici the Elder received it from the Greek Patriarch who came to the Florentine Council (*scil.* in 1439-1442). Richa, who says that the coin in the Annunziata was similar to it, suspends judgment as to the authenticity of the S. Croce relic, which he says was neither a Hebrew nor a Roman coin. The piece in Notre Dame du Puy was left to the ancestors of the barony of Agrain by a virtuous lady of that house, who, having a son in the service of the Grand Turk, received from him this precious denarius, "which is of great efficacy for the comforting of women labouring with child." As to the pieces at Aix and St. Denis, M. de Villenoisy points out that as they are only mentioned in the *Dictionnaire des Reliques* of Collin de Plancy, an author who is not to be trusted when he does not give his sources, they cannot be regarded as undoubted instances.

Finally, I am informed by Professor Markoff, through M. Alexeieff, that a silver coin is preserved as one of the thirty at (7) the Abbey of the Trinity and St. Sergius in Moscow. Professor Markoff describes it as an evident forgery. At the time of writing I have not the further details which would enable me to transfer this coin to the next group, that of coins of which the description is known.

Of these, no less than eight can be identified, either because they are still extant, or from illustrations or descriptions, as coins of *Rhodes*. For the most part, it would seem, they date from the fourth century before Christ. They bear on the obverse a facing head of the Sun-God, with flowing hair, sometimes surrounded by rays; on the reverse is a rose and the inscription $\text{PO}\Delta\text{ION}$. Figs. 1 and 2 show specimens of two coins of the same class now in the British Museum. The coin which was in the Temple at Paris must, from Morand's description, have been a coin of the same issue as fig. 2, for it had the same mint-letter (Δ) and adjunct (thunderbolt).

The places where these Rhodian coins were or are preserved are the following:

- (8) Rhodes, in the castle of the Knights of St. John. The earliest mention

of this particular piece which I have been able to find is by Luchino dal Campo,^a who wrote the account of the visit of Niccolò III. of Este to the Holy Land in 1413. He describes it as “one of those very denarii of silver for which Christ was sold; the which denarius is of the size of an *agrunzano*.^b On one side is the head in relief and on the other is a flower as it were like the flower of a marguerite.”

As the Rhodian piece is not mentioned in the account of the voyage of the Seigneur d'Anglure,^c who visited the island in 1395, it is probable that the relic was only acquired between 1395 and 1413. It is unlikely that the Judas-penny would have been passed over, when the *denier de Sainte Helène* was mentioned.^d



Figs. 1, 2. Silver coins of Rhodes, fourth century B.C.

^a *Viaggio a Gerusalemme di Niccolò da Este*, ed. by G. Ghinassi in *Collezione di Opere ined. o rare pubbl. per cura della R. Comm. pe' Testi di Lingua nelle Prov. dell' Emilia* I. (Turin, 1861), p. 143.

^b The editor suggests that this word is a mistake for *agostaro* (the gold coin issued by Frederick II.). But this was hardly in circulation in the fifteenth century, so that dal Campo would not be likely to use it as a measure of size.

^c Bonnardot et Longnon, *Le Saint Voyage de Jérusalem du Seigneur d'Anglure* (Soc. des anc. Textes français, 1878).

^d *Op. cit.* p. 9: “item, ung des deniers de sainte Helene envaissellé en plomb, sur lequel on fait les bulletttes de Rodes qui sont de si grant vertu; et les fait on le jour du Grant Vendredi.” *Op.* p. 94, note: “Item, en laidicte esglise de Saint Jehan nous fuit montrés ung dez denier d'ors l'ampersise sainte Eslainne, qui est aissis en ung pomelz de laiton et soldéz di plont, car aultrement ne se lait ledit denier assoir ne solder. Sor lequels denier on fait chescun ans plussour bullete de virge sire, c'est aissavoir le jour dou Saint Vanredi, en tant que on dit l'office en l'esglise; lezquelle bullete porteet on plussour vertus belle et noble.” We shall see later on the bearing of these passages

After Luchino dal Campo comes Johann Tucher of Nürnberg, who went to the Holy Land in 1479 and 1480. He mentions the coin in his description of Rhodes, and again, when dealing with the Potter's Field, he says, "I have seen one of these pennies, and three such in silver are worth a ducat."^a

Felix Fabri, after telling the story as we have already heard him, continues: "After the purchase of the field they were dispersed throughout all the world; I saw one at Rhodes, of which Johann Tucher of Nürnberg made an impression. He made a model in lead and cast similar ones in silver, which he distributed to his friends. In the year 1485, when we were assembled at Nürnberg to hold the provincial chapter, the said person gave one of these denarii to each of the brothers. The size is the same as that of the cross-blafferts,^b and on one side is the face of a man and on the other is a lily. There was certainly an inscription, but it cannot now be seen." Fabri mentions the coin at Rhodes (in the Castle) when he comes (iii. 288) to describe the relics in that island. "Marguerite" and "lily" are not very good descriptions of the Rhodian rose, but will pass muster for the time.

Yet another reference to the Rhodian piece is to be found in Bernhard of Breydenbach's *Peregrinationes ad Terram Sanctam* (Mainz, 1486) in the chapter on the relics at Rhodes: *item ibi illorum xxx. argenteorum denariorum unus esse perhibetur, ymmo et demonstratur, pro quibus Judas vendidit Christum iudeis.*

But not the least important reference to the Judas-penny of Rhodes is that in the *Stabilimenta* of Guill. Caoursin.^c In describing the veneration which should be paid to the relics, he says: "nor let less honour be paid to the silver denarius, one of those thirty pieces of silver at which the traitor Judas priced Christ: from an impression of which stamps are made in white wax every year while the

on our investigation. It may be noted that Cennino Cennini in his treatise on painting has a chapter (188, p. 177 in Mrs. Herringham's translation) on "how to make impressions of *santelene* in wax or paste." I do not know Milanese's authority for the statement that *santelene* was a general name for a medal or coin bearing the image of a saint. More probably it meant just one of these *bullettes de Rhodes*.

^a Feyerabend, *Bewehrtes Reysbuch* (1659), 656, 666.

^b *Quantitas est sicut blaphordorum crucis*, which De Vogüé ingeniously translates "il y en a autant que de clous à la croix." It is sometimes risky to guess at the meanings of words. *Blaphordus* or *blaffardus* is the German *Blaffert* or *Plappert*, a silver coin widely current in Germany and Switzerland in Fabri's time. A variety with a cross on it was called *Kreuz-blaffert*, *blaphordus crucis*.

^c *Stabilimenta Ichodiorum Militum Sacri ordinis* (1496), fol. d 1 verso.

Passion is being chanted by the priest; which stamps are esteemed to be of virtue for the health of men, for the labour of women, and for perils by sea.”

As we find a similar relic described as being in the possession of the Order at Malta, we may presume that when the knights left Rhodes in 1523 they brought this precious coin with them. The Prior of the Order, Ant. Cressin (1556-1584), used to distribute to pilgrims wax impressions covered with silver or gold leaf.

(9.) Rome, in S. Croce in Gerusalemme. This piece is still kept in a little fifteenth-century reliquary inscribed with the name of Cardinal Bernardin de Carvajal, and given by him towards the end of the fifteenth century.^a

(10.) Rosas in Catalonia (still preserved).

(11.) Oviedo, in the Camera Santa of S. Salvadore.

(12.) Paris, Church of St. John Lateran.



Fig. 3. Medallie portrait of Judas Iscariot, and production of a Rhodian coin, from Rouille's *Promptuaire des Médailles*.

(13.) Paris, Temple.

(14.) Vincennes.

(15.) Enghien, still preserved in the Capuchin Convent, and formerly at Héverlé near Louvain. This is a Rhodian four-drachm piece with the magistrate's name ΑΡΙΣΤΟΚΡΙΤΟΣ.^b M. de Villenoisy describes the adjunct as an "armed man." Curiously enough this adjunct is not, to my knowledge, otherwise associated with Aristokritos, who generally, if not always, placed an *aplustre* on the coins struck by his authority.

Rouille, in his *Promptuaire des Médailles*,^c gives, together with an imaginary medallie portrait of Judas, a reproduction of one of the Rhodian coins. The engraver has made the Δ of ΠΟΔΙΟΝ into an A (fig. 3).

^a See especially B. de Montault, *loc. cit.* I have not been able to consult his *Antiquités Chrétiennes de Rome*, in which the reliquary is photographed. M. de Mély gives a sketch.

^b Cp. B. V. Head, *British Museum Catal. of Greek Coins, Caria*, p. 241, no. 122.

^c Lyon, 1553, part ii. 10.

(16) Another Greek coin which was utilised for this pious purpose was one of the famous silver ten-drachm pieces of Syracuse, struck at the end of the fifth or beginning of the fourth century B.C. On the reverse was a chariot-group, below which were the prize arms competed for in the Assinarian games. On the obverse was the female head generally identified as Persephone; behind it a small shell by which we are enabled to identify the exact variety. The specimen, which has since unfortunately disappeared, and of which the provenance was never known, was framed in a gold mount and inscribed in Gothic letters *Quia precium sanguinis est.*^a

(17) Still preserved in the treasury of the Cathedral of Sens, and mentioned in an inventory of 1464, is a silver *dirhem* of the Egyptian Sultan El Ashraf Salah-al-din Khalil, of the Bahri Mamluks (A.D. 1290-1293).^b

(18) M. de Mély refers incidentally to the coins once preserved in the church of S. Eustorgio at Milan; but he does not give them a place in his list. Ughelli, however, to whom he refers, describes them as *monete quedam ex iis, quas Christo Magos tributi nomine obtulisse pie credunt.*^c The legends which we have discussed above show that these coins may perhaps be classed with the "Thirty Pieces." Later authorities speak only of a single gold coin, which as a matter of fact was a solidus of the Emperor Zeno (474-491 A.D.). It was known as the *ducato dei tre Magi*. Allegranza suggested that the remains of the three kings had been translated to Milan in the reign of Zeno, and a coin of his reign placed in the coffin from which it was afterwards extracted. This, however, is a pure conjecture. All that is certain is that this solidus was exposed for the public worship as one of the gold coins offered to Christ by the Magi.^d

To the above list, it will be observed, Russia so far has contributed only one instance. It is highly probable that search in the proper quarters would reveal others in that country. In spite of considerable search I have found no mention of any such relic in Germany, and England too seems to have been without one.^e

By the Capuchins of Enghien the legend POΔION is explained as [H]POΔION, "coin of Herod." This fact seems to favour M. de Mély's suggestion that in the superficial resemblance between the names of Herod and Rhodes lay the reason

^a Matthew xxvii. 6. It is described in Rollin and Feuardent's *Catalogue d'une Coll. de Medailles*, Paris, 1864, p. 124, no. 1769, where it is wrongly called an octodrachm.

^b Cp. de Montault, p. 218, who quotes from a seventeenth-century inventory.

^c *Italia Sacra* (1719), t. iv. 27, 28.

^d See *Delle antichità longobardico-milanesi illustr. con dissert. dai monaci della congreg. cisterciense di Lombardia*, iv. (1793), pp. 285, 286; and H. J. Floss, *Dreikönigenbuch* (1864), p. 56.

^e Mr. W. H. St. John Hope confirms me in this particular.

for the association of these coins with the Thirty Pieces of Silver. Otherwise why should so large a proportion of the relics (eight out of the ten or eleven which can be identified) be of this particular class? M. Babelon, however, throws doubt on this hypothesis. He points out that Rouille makes no allusion to Herod, and has allowed his engraver to give the inscription as POAION (for POMAIION); the text of the gospel gives no ground for thinking of coins of Herod. Further, he cites Mommsen as proving from an inscription that the coins of Rhodes even in Roman times were prized for their beauty. It must, however, be admitted that Mommsen's interpretation of the inscription goes beyond the evidence; the Rhodian coins may have had a higher exchange value than others of the same weight, but we do not know that their beauty was the cause. In matters of this sort beauty counts for little. Probably the Rhodian coins had a reputation for purity. Again, the A in Rouille's engraving is probably a mere slip on the engraver's part; he would not be the only engraver who, from ignorance of Greek, has made this mistake, nor Rouille the only numismatist who has allowed it to pass. Is not the word given as POAION in one of the illustrations reproduced by M. de Mély from the work of Budæus? Again, the quantity of the *o* in Herod's name would, in those days, offer no obstacle to the identification. Nor has the objection drawn from the text of the gospel much force; after all, "pieces of silver" could be interpreted as coins of Herod no less than as Roman coins. M. Babelon's first objection has more validity than the others. There is no trace of this connection with Herod in any of the older literature. On some of the relics, as on that at Rhodes itself, we know that the legend was quite obliterated. These then could not have been chosen because of the reason suggested by M. de Mély.

The true reason, after all, is a very simple one, and has only escaped notice because the presence of the specimen in the castle at Rhodes was not recorded by M. de Mély, on whose researches all subsequent discussion of the question has been based. It must be remembered that a very large number of the pilgrims to the Holy Land would see the relics in the Castle. Now Rhodian coins must have been as common in the Levant then as now, and, being of striking beauty, once seen were not easily forgotten. The pilgrim would thus recognise another Rhodian coin, if shown him, as similar to the one at Rhodes. Here then, to his mind, was a possible "Judas-penny." It was thus inevitable that many such pieces should find their way into shrines.

This theory seems to me to explain why so many Rhodian coins figure in our list. But, it will be asked, Why was the particular relic at Rhodes selected for the purpose? To this it might be answered, Why was the Egyptian dirhem or the

Syracusan decadrachm chosen? But it is not necessary thus to evade the question. As we have seen, the Rhodian church possessed at the end of the fourteenth century a gold coin of the Empress Helena, impressions or facsimiles of which, made under certain circumstances of peculiar solemnity, were of great virtue. Now the *Voyage du Seigneur d'Anglure*, which mentions this gold coin of St. Helena in 1395, does not mention the silver "Judas-penny." Conversely, the later authorities, beginning in 1413, who mention the "Judas-penny" do not mention the coin of St. Helena. Finally we learn that impressions were made of the "Judas-penny" under the same circumstances and with the same effect as they had been made of the coin of St. Helena.

The "Judas-penny" then, early in the fifteenth century, had taken the place of the gold coin of St. Helena. And I think, on the evidence before us, we shall not be unjust to the knights in suggesting that, the latter having disappeared, the



Fig. 4. Silver reproduction of fourth century coin of Rhodes, fifteenth century.

authorities found it necessary to have some other relic of equally miraculous properties. If they were for any reason hard pressed, nothing could be easier to obtain in Rhodes than an ancient Rhodian coin; and if the inscription on it were obliterated, so much the better.

In the light of the fact that reproductions in silver were made by people like Johann Tucher, particular interest attaches to a piece cast in silver and now preserved at Paris in the Cabinet des Médailles in the Bibliothèque Nationale.^a As will be seen from the illustration (fig. 4), we have a considerably debased^b reproduction of a Rhodian coin of the kind with which we are familiar. In the mould of the obverse have been added the words *IMAGO CESARIS* in lettering of the fifteenth century. The man who added them obviously argued as follows:

^a Published by M. de Mély in *Rev. Numism.* 1901, p. 262 ff. M. de la Tour informs me that the piece is undoubtedly cast, not struck.

^b So much debased in style that many reproductions must have intervened, one would think, between the original and this.

This coin, one of the thirty pence for which Christ was sold, must have been one of those about which He asked the question, "Whose image and superscription is this?" Therefore the head is that of Cæsar, and the fact may as well be made clear in the reproductions which I am issuing.

In a painting of the school of Lucas van Leyden, a detail of which I have published elsewhere,^a the Thirty Pieces are represented by the imitations of the Jewish shekel which became popular early in the sixteenth century. It is curious that neither the genuine Jewish shekel nor this much commoner imitation appears among the actual relics which have been identified. Before the sixteenth century the Jewish shekel was probably quite unknown in Europe; and doubtless most of the relics which we have discussed were acquired much earlier. Nevertheless it seems puzzling that no shrine availed itself in the sixteenth century of these imitations, which were undoubtedly regarded as genuine by the vast majority of people, then as now.

Having dealt with matters of fiction, it would be unreasonable did we not attempt to satisfy ourselves on the much more prosaic question as to what were the coins actually in circulation in Judæa in the time of Christ. Our choice lies practically between two kinds of silver coin.^b

The piece which both English versions of the New Testament call a "penny" was the ordinary Roman silver denarius, worth about 9½d. The specimen here illustrated (fig. 5) shows on the obverse the laureate "image" of the Emperor Tiberius with his "superscription" TI(berius) CAESAR DIVI AVG(usti) F(ilius) AVGVSTVS; on the reverse is the Empress Livia seated, and the inscription PONTIF(ex) MAXIM(us), completing the titles of Tiberius.

But it is much more probable that we have to look for the Thirty Pieces of Silver in another kind of coin, corresponding in weight to the shekel. Such coins were not issued at this time by any mint in Judæa itself; but the large silver four-drachm pieces of the mint of Tyre, weighing from 224 to 220 grains troy, and often less than this, were in common circulation. There were also coins,

^a *Reliquary and Illustrated Archæologist*, x. (1904), 135.

^b M. de Villenoisy, by a curious reversion to the argument of Godfrey of Viterbo, suggests that the coins described by St. Matthew as τὰ τριάκοντα ἀργύρια (*triginta argenteos*) were really gold pieces, on the ground that *argentum*, *argenteus* had become synonymous with "money," without regard to the metal. This may be true of the collective noun τὸ ἀργύριον, but I do not think it can be proved of τὰ ἀργύρια in the sense of separate pieces of money. The author of the *Narratio* of Joseph of Arimathæa was, however, of M. Villenoisy's opinion; for Mr. Herbert calls my attention to the fact that according to this work (edited by Tischendorf, *Evang. Apocr.*, 1853, p. 440, from a twelfth-century and other MSS.) the Jews bribed Judas with τριάκοντα ἀργύρια χρυσίου. Of course no argument can be based on evidence of this date.

struck at the great city of Antioch on the Orontes, of which the weight sometimes rises as high as 236 grains troy. Such coins of Tyre or of Antioch are meant by the "staters" mentioned in the New Testament. Fig. 6, a four-drachm piece of Tyre, has on the obverse a laureate head of the Phœnician god Melkarth, who appears in his Hellenised form of Herakles. On the reverse is an eagle standing on the prow of a vessel, with a palm branch over its shoulder; around is the name of the city, "Tyre the sacred and inviolable sanctuary." In front of the bird is a club, the emblem of the god whose head appears on the obverse. In the field of the coin are also a date (corresponding in this case to 11 B.C.) and a monogram differentiating this issue from others.



6 5 7
Figs. 5-7. Denarius of Tiberius and Staters of Tyre and Antioch.

The staters of Antioch are better works of art than those of Tyre. On the obverse of the specimen in fig. 7 is a fine laureate head of Augustus, with the Greek inscription "of Cæsar Augustus." On the reverse is represented the famous personification of the City of Antioch by the sculptor Eutychides: a female figure, wearing a mural crown, and holding a palm branch, seated on a rock; at her feet is a half-figure of the river god Orontes in a swimming attitude. The inscription around identifies the piece as a coin "of the metropolis of the Antiochians," and letters in the field fix its date to A.D. 11.

To one of these two classes, Tyrian or Antiochian, then, belonged not only the stater which was taken out of the mouth of the fish, and which, being equivalent in weight to a shekel, was sufficient to pay the tax for two people; but also probably the thirty pieces of silver, which altogether must have been equivalent to something between £4 10s. and £5 in our money.