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The Glozel Forgeries*

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THE readers of ANTIQUITY were, from the first, correctly informed about Glozel. But, having exposed the fraud, the Editor decided to ignore the torrent of polemics which ensued. His attitude was a wise one, for a forgery can only be scotched in its own country.

Why then revert now to the subject? Are there not good reasons for saying no more about it? One might urge, for instance, that the affair was now at an end: that it was an absurd hoax which now has been recognized as such by practically all prehistorians; that there remain only a few obstinate dupes who refuse to admit their original mistake; and that in the heat of controversy, inexpert people have become involved and have taken the affair out of the domain of science: so that it has now ceased to be of interest to serious students—it is no longer Science.

To such arguments we reply:—‘Pure science’ is an abstraction. In reality Science consists, at any given moment, of the sum total of the actions and opinions of the men who study it. It is these people who create what is called Science, and its value is exactly proportionate to theirs. Their behaviour, therefore, is by no means a matter of indifference to us, and it needs careful scrutiny. Thus, to use a simile, the idea of *weight* can be conceived quite apart from *scales*. But since in practice it is by means of scales that weights are determined, the physicist must see that his scales are true before discussing the results obtained by their means. He must know what order of accuracy to expect and, if the scales are out of order, he must discover the cause.

To withdraw from a controversy may be expedient as a means of evading attack, but there is absolutely no scientific merit in such

* Translated by the EDITOR. It will of course be realized that detailed exposures of the hoax have been published in numerous journals and do not therefore require reiteration in an article of a general character like this. Apart from the original exposure by MM. Vayson and Dussaud, the official reports referred to below give detailed categorical proofs of forgery.—ED.

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weak behaviour. It is merely playing the game of the forgers who attempt to profit by the withdrawal. The history of previous hoaxes shows that an affair of this kind is never completely finished until all the dupes, their disciples and friends are dead. The forger himself rarely confesses, but even when he does one never gets a complete admission of deception from all the dupes. A hoax which has been unmasked and recognized as such in contemporary scientific circles may then be simply put on one side with contempt, but yet if the evidence has not been completely exposed it will reappear at some later date. It comes to life at the first favourable opportunity, which is generally that of the emergence of a fresh hoax.

There are curious resemblances to be noted between forgeries of quite independent ancestry. Should a new hoax spring up, its dupes and advocates will not fail to invoke the aid of analogy. Their arguments are always the same: 'Analogous discoveries have already been made', they say, 'but they were declared to be false because they constituted a new discovery, because they ran counter to orthodox views. The similarity of the present discovery leaves no room for any further doubt; the authenticity of both finds is proved'. Thus does one hoax subsidize another.

That is why a hoax has to be as thoroughly extirpated as a crop of weeds; it is essential to pull it up, roots and all, if one does not want to find it sprouting again some fine day. That is why the Société préhistorique française thought it necessary to take legal action; so that the hoax might be shown up in all its details before the general public, misled as it was by press stunts, and before those timid prehistorians for whom scientific proof was insufficient and who had not the courage to hold an opinion contrary to that of certain eminent officials.

The history of Glozel is useful as well as diverting, because it lays bare so cleverly the workings of imposture and the development of a controversy. It is a strange human comedy, presenting a group of men of the scientific world and revealing both the positive and negative aspects of their knowledge, their method and their temperament. We have been allowed to see the scales of human judgment and how they behave in action. Each side rallied to its support everything that could possibly help to decide the issue. Thus we can assess the exact intellectual value of those combatants who retired hurt—and this is quite a useful acquisition for future use; in addition we have seen how an imposture is born, and how it grows and struggles against the truth.

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How and why did the impostor come to start operations? How and why did the dupes fall into the trap? By what arguments did they then try to bolster up their mistake? That is the aspect of the case which really deserves to be studied, because it leads to results of general utility in the realm of knowledge.

It must be observed that this concentration of interest on personalities does not imply a loss of objectivity in our treatment. It is as men of science that the individuals concerned are to be judged; it is from this point of view that they are so diverting. Reduced to the lowest terms of its wretched material content, Glozel would have no interest and the whole affair would be incredible. It is the living subject and its behaviour that is all-important.

A complete history would exceed the compass of this essay. We shall therefore attempt only to sketch the principal events in outline.

On 1 March 1921, a peasant proprietor named Fradin, living at Le Glozet, a hamlet of the commune of Ferrières-sur-Sichon (Allier), when working in a field brought to light some rather peculiar broken bricks. They attracted his attention; he dug on the spot and laid bare, at a depth of about 3 feet (1 metre) a pavement of oval form consisting of about fifteen large flat bricks. This paved area measured about 7 feet (2 metres 50) long and was enclosed within a little wall of unworked stones and small bricks cemented with mortar. All the interior surfaces had been subjected to an intense heat which had vitrified them. It was an old glass-kiln exactly resembling others which had been discovered in the neighbourhood. Moreover, amongst the débris were found fragments of glass, broken crucibles and a piece of iron which has since been identified as a glass-blower's rod.

Naturally the Fradins—a young man, his father and grandfather—could not explain their discovery. They thought it interesting because of the pretty appearance of the sparkling bits of glass and vitrified objects. Like every peasant on such occasions, they proceeded to hunt for 'the treasure'. Failing to find it, they informed the village schoolmistress, who, in accordance with the instructions issued to all such, made a report to the Educational Inspector of the department. She thought it consisted of a cremated urn-burial. The Société d'Emulation du Bourbonnais obtained information of the report, and delegated its nearest member, M. Clément, schoolmaster of La Guilleymie, to undertake a preliminary examination. M. Clément was young and had only very rudimentary ideas about archaeology.

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After his first visit on 9 July 1924, he accepted the burial hypothesis, and those members of the Société d'Emulation who visited the site a few days later equally failed to recognize the true character of the discovery.

If they could have said to the owners: 'This is merely an old glass-kiln of no interest', no doubt the matter would have rested there. But their uncertainty suggested that the find was something new, unknown, mysterious. It might be hoped then that from it would emerge objects of a remarkable character, of great *value* . . . Imagination had free rein and the field was clear for imposture.

THE BIRTH OF THE HOAX AND THE WAY IT DEVELOPED

Young Fradin's curiosity was aroused and he continued to dig. He was a humble peasant about 18 years old, somewhat work-shy and with a rather morose expression of countenance, anxious to escape from the hard labour of the farm work which was rather beyond his physical powers. He had done well at the primary school and remained there longer than usual, and he had developed artistic tendencies; his bedroom was ornamented by little watercolour paintings done by himself.

Schoolmaster Clément paid regular visits to Le Glozet. Attracted by prehistory, he was glad to find in young Fradin an attentive and keen pupil. He showed him his small collection and the few books and pamphlets he possessed. In the collection was one of those lumps of schist, quite common in the district, which are by-products of the manufacture of bracelets of the Bronze or Early Iron Age. This lump had the peculiarity of being engraved, at some period unknown, with four signs, and was doubtless carried as an amulet. The first sign was like an arrow, the three others like the letters σ τ χ . F. Pérot, an old collector of Moulins, had published a note about it, in which he described also a diorite axe with what he believed to be a cross and a kind of Greek *lambda*. Apropos of this, Pérot referred to the existence in ancient times of markings in the form of a cross, a *tau*, a swastika, etc. Clément accordingly regarded these objects as possessing quite a peculiar interest. A layman who saw them might well think that such interesting objects would be very easy to reproduce. This time the temptation was direct.

In a letter of 13 October 1924, addressed to the President of the Société d'Emulation, Clément narrated that young Fradin had just forwarded to him as having been found near the 'grave', the end of a

PLATE I

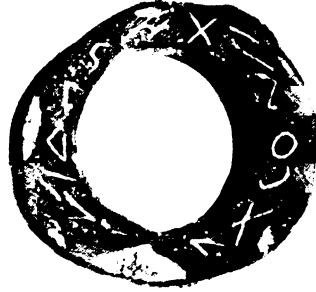


INSCRIBED TABLET FROM GLOZEL
(After Dr A. Morlet)

facing p. 204



PLATE II



INSCRIBED SCHIST RING
(After Dr A. Morlet)



DAGGER: 'LA PIÈCE LA PLUS DÉCORÉE DE GLOZEL'
(After Dr A. Morlet)

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schist pebble with three engraved signs : almost s x τ (the lower part of the s was unfinished, the τ was placed on its side). This was the first Glozelian object.

No shadow of doubt obtruded itself upon the schoolmaster, who was delighted by this discovery. He has since recalled the extreme hesitation with which it was offered to him.

The timid attempt had succeeded; it was not repeated, however, until two months later. This time it was the axe which inspired the forger. In a letter of 31 December 1924, Clément informed the Société d'Emulation of young Fradin's discovery of a ' piece of a rough polished axe of black schist '. He asked for a grant of 50 francs to continue the excavations.

The Society refused ; doubtless the interest of the finds appeared inadequate. Immediately there appeared ' further remarkable objects ', announced by Clément in a letter of 30 January 1925. He explained that a ' closer examination ' of one of the original bricks had revealed signs on it, of which he enclosed a copy. It was young Fradin who had drawn attention to this brick, whose surface was covered with mud. Clément, who had already seen all these bricks—about fifteen in number—without noting anything, was surprised now to find one of them covered with signs ; but he was so devoid of all suspicion that the possibility of fraud never occurred to him.

The forger's inspiration for this first inscribed brick appears to have been again derived from Pérot's notes and from a book of Levistre's lent to Fradin by Clément ; in this were figured certain signs which, engraved on megaliths, were more or less fortuitous in character and belonged to an unknown period. Levistre regarded them as a kind of script.

The Société d'Emulation was intrigued and its suspicions were aroused by this inscription. M. Espérandieu was consulted and he pronounced that ' it is Latin . . . or it is a forgery '. Doubtless the forger realized the danger, for he did not publish another of the kind, and confined himself during the months which followed to the manufacture of one or two small schist axes with some engraved signs.

It had taken more than a year to get to this point. Such moderation at the outset was undoubtedly one of the factors which contributed largely to the success of the hoax. The forger was prudently and patiently sharpening his native peasant wit. Thus he made up for his ignorance and lack of technical skill ; he was able to find out gradually how to act and how best to avoid suspicion.

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Apart from these 'merits' on the part of the forger, the hoax was well served by the inexperience of the first dupe. M. Clément could not detect the imposture, gross though it was, from a mere examination of the objects. The suspicion of fraud, which should always be kept in mind, did not occur to him. He acted imprudently, moreover, in lending books which served to guide the forger.

But the great development and success of the hoax is undoubtedly due to Dr Morlet. A doctor with a small country practice who had recently come to live in Vichy, Dr Morlet carried a light cargo of archaeological knowledge. He had done some excavating on a Gallo-Roman site, and had once attended Girod's lectures on prehistory. Aided and abetted to a remarkable extent by his weaknesses, he committed almost all the mistakes that could be committed in such an affair. Accordingly his case is peculiarly instructive.

Dr Morlet had heard of the excavations of Le Glozet and of the refusal of a grant by the Société d'Emulation, and he told M. Clément that he would like to see the finds. M. Clément showed him the objects and introduced young Fradin. Being quite incompetent in these matters, the good doctor did not detect the forgeries; on the contrary, he considered them very interesting. Full of enthusiasm and imprudence, he declared on the spot, so Clément has narrated, that 'here was a discovery which would attract to Le Glozet the savants of the whole world, more compelling than was even the Java skull'. A wirefence should be put round the field and a charge made for admission. Young Fradin listened agape. . . . He must have seen at once that Dr Morlet was his man, and he was not going to let him slip. But he acted with no undue haste.

It was not till a month later that Fradin, so he tells us (*Mercur de France*, 15 August 1926), sought out Dr Morlet at Vichy, to 'tell him his troubles'.

Indignant at the Society's refusal of a grant, Dr Morlet promised the Fradins, so he told me, that he would give 200 francs instead of the 50 francs asked for, and that '*if more was found he would give more*'. There he committed the classic error which cost Boucher de Perthes the forgery of Moulin-Quignon. Two days later there was brought to him a sort of pot-base, made of badly puddled clay, inadequately fired. It was the birth of Glozelian pottery.

His behaviour to M. Clément, who, after all, had been concerned from the outset with the pseudo-site, was somewhat brusque, to say no more. He arranged to cut him out, and to take over from him the

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original discoveries. He signed an agreement with the Fradins, purchasing the right of excavation, and the scientific control of the discoveries. The Fradins were to retain actual control over the objects themselves, thus obtaining the right of being constantly present at the scene of action to supervise all the finds.

From this time onwards it was Dr Morlet who excavated at Glozel, always in the company of young Fradin. Being, however, often absent himself, he allowed his 'colleague' to excavate alone. Furthermore, he began to increase his own knowledge by reading archaeological books which he passed on to his associate. 'I have never concealed anything from my colleague', he told me proudly.

This collaboration became increasingly productive, leading up to the great scene of June 1927. But we must not anticipate. What we must bear in mind at this stage is the fact that Dr Morlet, by his incompetence, rashness and lack of judgment, gave the impetus to a hoax that otherwise would have miscarried at the outset.

In my 'Chronology of Glozel' (*Bulletin de la Soc. préh. franç.* 1927, XXIV, 293-319) I have given the later history of the forgeries. This was made possible by M. Clément's letters, kept by the Société d'Emulation. Dr Morlet's first publications inform us of the course of events immediately after his arrival on the scene. From these unassailable documents we learn :—

1. That the different classes of objects appeared in succession ;
2. That the technique of manufacture gradually improved (this is particularly noticeable of the pottery) ;
3. That the forger's output corresponded closely with the documents provided by his dupes with the wishes they expressed with the objections and criticisms of opponents.

This development is true to type ; it is a characteristic of all great impostures. The forger is guided step by step by his dupes, thanks to their confidence and to the discussions which they initiate.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE HOAX AND ITS CAUSES

To have thus succeeded in deceiving a young schoolmaster and a country practitioner of no special attainments was but a moderate achievement. The forger was to have a real triumph, thanks to a series of events which we shall briefly narrate.

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The jealous nature and vanity of Dr Morlet prevented the so-called site from being properly tested and examined by prehistorians. At the outset Dr Capitan had visited the newly discovered site, and it must be admitted that he did not assess it at its true valuation. However, his intervention would have brought the site to the notice of prehistorians, and it would not have been long before it was shown up. But Morlet feared that Dr Capitan would 'steal his thunder', so he showed him the door. He would share his good fortune with no one, and incompetent though he was, he rushed into print with his 'Nouvelle station néolithique' (September 1925), without consulting any specialist, without making any attempt at serious study. So far from approaching people who might have enlightened him, Dr Morlet passed over the Société d'Emulation, of which he was a member, and paid his court to local journalists, in order to advertise himself.

But pamphlets and newspaper articles have no echo. So Morlet went to Paris, and knocked at the doors of a number of savants: M. Boule, Professor of Palaeontology at the Museum; M. Dussaud, one of the conservators of the Louvre; M. de Mortillet and the Abbé Breuil; M. Camille Jullian, the historian of Gaul; and M. Salomon Reinach, Conservator of the Museum of National Antiquities and a prolific writer. Everywhere he himself was received with cordiality, but his finds with reserve.

Confronted with this reserve, these warnings of the scientific world, anyone else but Dr Morlet would have paused to reflect, would have verified his facts, called in assistance and eventually discovered the truth. But not he! Oblivious to all else in his pursuit of fame, he could see only a hostility over which he must triumph at all costs. He managed to persuade—and there are many forms of persuasion—a publicist of no great repute, M. van Gennep, who supplied the *Mercure de France* with a running commentary on ethnography, folklore, etc. Van Gennep opened the *Mercure de France* to Dr Morlet, and from then onwards this remarkably omnivorous literary review became the official organ of Glozel. I have described in detail elsewhere the superficiality, the astounding one-sidedness of van Gennep's first Glozelian articles, reporting without any attempt at verification the sayings of the Fradin family. Since these included a certain number of stories harmful to members of the Société d'Emulation, contradictions and corrections were not long in appearing. This was the beginning of a controversy of a personal kind.

In his infectious enthusiasm, backed by an obvious sincerity,

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in the money that he never stinted for the cause, by his personal friends, and in the lure of mystery and novelty so dear to the laymen, Dr Morlet possessed an armoury of weapons with which to capture the journalists. So he had widespread support in the press.

Thus the protagonist of Glozel prevented that atmosphere of mistrust, present from the outset in scientific circles, from spreading to the general public. A fortunate accident obtained him converts amongst persons who opened the doors of the Institute to the Glozel hoax.

The forger had been lent textbooks of prehistory, and he had copied, more or less fancifully, and without discrimination, objects belonging to all ages between the palaeolithic and the historic periods. The result, a regular hotch-potch, included reindeer engraved on pebbles, polished axes, pottery reminiscent of Hissarlik and inscriptions. Amongst the last were some actual Phoenician signs—included to please Dr Morlet, who, from the start, had tried to discover traces of Phoenician amongst the scrawls in which he wished to find the beginnings of the alphabet. Since not only were the objects strictly associated, but the same inscriptions figured alongside of engravings of reindeer and on vessels of the Hissarlik type, a mingling of different periods was inadmissible. Dr Morlet, refusing to admit fraud, placed the whole group in the famous *hiatus*, whose transitional character and mystery have always conspired to make it the natural dumping-ground of forgeries. But in the present case this involved two conclusions as important as they were bizarre :—both the survival of the reindeer and the appearance of the alphabet in France at the beginning of the neolithic period.

By a stroke of good luck for the forger these results, contradicting the strongest and most abundant scientific evidence, coincided remarkably well with the opinions of M. Salomon Reinach on the *Mirage Oriental*. Dr Morlet perceived this, developed the idea and sent to M. Reinach (who, well advised at the outset, had not yet allowed himself to be caught) his third pamphlet, inscribed : ‘ To the father of the *Mirage Oriental*, an unrecognized child ’ An overwhelming temptation this for a naturally obstinate man, obsessed for forty years by a theory constantly in conflict with the facts ! Salomon Reinach set out for Glozel. He was lost before he started, for to counterbalance so great a temptation he would have required a highly disciplined critical faculty. Now this great man of learning, whose brain is essentially receptive, has always conspicuously lacked this faculty. He has,

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moreover, always looked at archaeological facts only through a veil of literary form, and he has always neglected the study of *things* and of technical matters ; so that it is not hard to perceive why he has so often been the victim of forgers. (For his mistake over the tiara of Saitaphernes, though the most famous, is but one of a long series).

Reaching Glozel 24 August 1926, M. Reinach saw unearthened in front of his eyes, by the expert hands of young Fradin, a complete series of the best products of the locality. M. Seymour de Ricci, who accompanied him, in vain tried to put him on his guard ; the innocent air of the excavator, the ardent faith of Dr Morlet and the yielding nature of the soil definitely overcame him. One must read in the *Mercure de France*, 1 November 1926, Dr Morlet's naive and delicious account of this excavation from which the old Conservator of Saint Germain, happy as a child, found, one might almost say to order, what he had announced that he wished to find. Two days later M. Reinach ascended the tribune of the Académie des Inscriptions and said that he could 'state without hesitation that all these objects are authentic, have not been tampered with and are from the same site', and that the theory of a mystification 'is for the future untenable'.

From this moment it was like a game of ninepins. The fall of Reinach brought with it automatically that of Espérandieu, his creature at the Académie des Inscriptions.

Depéret next hastened to the spot. Dean of the Faculty of Science at Lyon, his life had been dedicated to the study of palaeontology and geology ; but a few years ago he tried to found and direct a school of prehistoric and anthropological research that should be worthy of the former capital of Gaul. Hearing of the success of a discovery made within his own region, he came post haste with a colleague (14 September 1926) and allowed himself to be convinced. His researches in palaeontology and geology gave him no qualifications in prehistoric archaeology, least of all with regard to forgeries. On 11 October he announced before the Academy the authenticity of the discoveries. His influence was considerable for two reasons. He had quite a following of colleagues, pupils and friends, so that numerically he counted for a good deal. Then again, being well known as a geologist and as an excellent palaeontologist, he was nothing if not a man of science. Many people who attached no importance to the opinions of MM. Salomon Reinach or Espérandieu, were influenced by a statement from Depéret. It was in this way that the Abbé Breuil himself, whose visit to Glozel was made under unfavourable circumstances,

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allowed himself for the moment to be drawn into a qualified admission of authenticity. About the same time (19 to 23 October 1926) the old Celtic scholar, J. Loth, of the Académie des Inscriptions, having attended the excavations, declared himself convinced.

At the end of 1926 the situation was definitely in favour of Glozel. A constellation of members of the Institute had stated from the tribunes of both Academies that it was one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the century.

By the side of orthodox Glozelians, who recognized the neolithic authenticity of the finds, a small schismatic group formed itself round M. Camille Jullian, the learned historian of Gaul, regarding them as Gallo-Roman. M. Jullian described to the Académie des Inscriptions how he had succeeded in deciphering the Glozel bricks, which were inscribed, according to him, in Latin. He saw in them the magical formulae of a 3rd century sorcerer's workshop. It should be remarked that he created a feeling of amazement and that no epigraphist followed him. However, his solution recruited a few supporters from amongst the moderates, because superficially it seemed to harmonize everything : the pottery, the crucibles, the glass, etc., were not at all inexplicable in the Gallo-Roman period ; the miscellaneous assortment of polished axes, of uncouth inscriptions, of animal drawings were to be accounted for by magic. And Count Bégouen, Professor of Prehistory at Toulouse, who some months before had called for the appointment of a committee to test and investigate the site, had reached the point of stating in his lectures, at the beginning of 1927, that he was beginning to decipher some Glozelian inscriptions himself. (*Le Télégramme*, 12 and 21 Feb. 1927).

However, M. Jullian could not reconcile himself to the progress of the Glozelian script when it veered steadily round towards Phoenician. Being no longer able to read them as Latin (as he had succeeded in doing with the first formless scrawls) he declared that the first productions of 1926 were forgeries. This had two results : it aroused the fierce opposition of Dr Morlet and of M. Salomon Reinach ; and it subsequently induced the forger, who respected the criticism of so eminent a man, to correct his later products.

DISCOVERY OF THE HOAX

In spite of the apparent triumph of the Glozelian theory, in spite of widespread reticence due to the lack of arguments strong and precise enough to be set against the vehement statements of highly-placed people, a latent scepticism continued to smoulder amongst those most

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closely in touch with prehistory and epigraphy. Thus M. Dussaud, speaking at the Académie des Inscriptions in 1926 about the oldest alphabets, made no reference whatever to Glozel. But in the history of an affair like this, one must not reckon only with official public pronouncements. The earliest statement of scepticism published is, so far as I am aware, that of M. A. de Mortillet, who, at a meeting of the Société préhistorique française of 23 November 1926, stated that there were forgeries at Glozel, and that the letters of the inscriptions appeared to him to be 'suggested by various ancient alphabets, of different dates and origins, with the addition of imaginary signs'.

Mr Crawford was the first to write a note on 'l'affaire Glozel', which appeared in the first number of ANTIQUITY (March 1927). This note was reinforced and expanded in an article which appeared in the June number, where it was concluded that 'the majority of the objects of Glozel were quite certainly forgeries'.†

The same month (June 1927) without knowing about Mr Crawford's articles, I went to Glozel at the suggestion of MM. Boule and S. Reinach. Since for the previous two years or more I had neglected my prehistoric work, I was out of touch with the affair. The first rapid examination revealed to me the obvious and typical spuriousness of certain objects. Thinking that there might be, as so often, a mixture of spurious and authentic, I attempted to discriminate; I observed with surprise, however, that everything was spurious and obviously the work of one individual, with the exception of the bricks and crucibles. On the bones and polished stones could be seen traces of metal tools, and on some were clear marks of a file. The pottery, which was hardly baked at all, displayed an utter ignorance of all technique; it was the work, not of primitive man, but of a child; the incised designs, in spite of a clumsy and obvious faking of the surface, showed on certain specimens the traces of metal implements. It was, moreover, quite impossible, in view of their lack of firing and fresh condition, that they could have lain for centuries at a shallow depth in the damp soil of the locality.

A single rapid technical examination sufficed therefore to form a conclusion. I said nothing to the Fradins, but without further delay

† In using the expression 'majority' I wished to be strictly accurate. The only 'genuine' objects in my opinion, were, as I said, the bricks, crucibles and glass fragments and other débris from the glass kiln, together with a few minute flint chips. All except the last were plainly of quite a late date, and irrelevant to the main issue. I never had the least doubt that the rest of the stuff was all of it forged.—TRANSLATOR.

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I wrote a preliminary note recording these observations. (*Bulletin de la Soc. préh.*, July 1927).

Shortly afterwards I called upon Dr Morlet, satisfied myself that the objects in his collection were by the same hand as those in the 'Musée Fradin', and with his permission made two excavations at Glozel—the first time in his absence, the second time with him. It was a case of scratching at the sides of shallow trenches already dug (about 70 centimetres deep). Some small objects were met with in clay mixed with granitic grit, with no clearly visible traces of their method of insertion there. Towards the bottom of the trench, where the clay was more compact and harder, I found a sort of horizontal tunnel by means of which an engraved pebble had been intruded. The clay which had been used to stop up the hole again was of a consistency quite different from that of the rest.

A trench quickly driven out at right angles showed that a block of between 20 and 30 centimetres only (8 to 12 inches) in width had been thus 'salted': beyond this one ceased finding anything. This proved that the 'salting' of the site had been carried out *pari passu* with the progress of the previous excavations. The loneliness and isolation of the spot made this easy. The prying eyes of neighbours could achieve nothing, for they would not be able to tell from a distance whether any one was digging to extract objects or to insert them.

I was also able to satisfy myself that two recently opened pseudo-tombs were a kind of dug-outs set with dry stone walling. The roof was made of two inclined slabs. The forger had not even taken the precaution of ramming soil into his erection, and there were empty spaces left between the lateral stone walls and the earth which they were supposed to be supporting! The purpose of these constructions was to make possible the discovery on a single occasion of a large collection of vases and bulky objects which it would have taken too long and been too risky to insert one by one in the ground. I explained his mistake to Dr Morlet; but he refused to be persuaded, and launched out at once into that course of violent language and writings which he has pursued ever since. I set forth all these facts in detail in my second note which appeared at the same time as the first one (*Bull. de la Soc. préh.*, July 1927).

My statements and my offer to re-enact all these proceedings upon the spot were met by M. S. Reinach, verbally, with absolute confidence and unshakable faith. His tactics in front of me were not to engage in a public discussion.

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To complete my investigations I then took up the history of the affair. Everything then became clear, and I published a long note entitled 'La Chronologie de Glozel' (*Bull. Soc. préh. franç.*, September 1927). There I set out in detail the origin of the hoax and the stages of its evolution—the perfecting of technique, the emergence of discoveries in successive groups, and the influences affecting the forger, as I have just shown above.

Whilst this note was in the press, M. Dussaud undertook the task of demonstrating to the Academy the spurious character of the inscriptions and of the whole site of Glozel. He began at a secret sitting held on 16 September 1927. But the secret soon leaked out, and two days later the *Journal* published a long article on the subject. The character of the arguments used by M. Dussaud are essentially of an epigraphic kind; they can be read in his brochure: 'Autour des inscriptions de Glozel'. The most piquant portion is that which deals with the evolution of the inscriptions. To the composite, shapeless scrawls of the early days there had succeeded an incoherent mixture, consisting of true Phoenician letters but belonging, curiously enough, to the latest phase of that language. As soon as this anomaly was pointed out, there immediately appeared a few letters of the oldest phase. Finally, in the last months of 1926, Dr Morlet, and through him, the forger, having heard about the quite recent discovery of the alphabet of Ahiiram, four centuries older still, the writings of Glozel began to take on a likeness to that of Ahiiram.

THE CONTROVERSY

After such demonstrations one might have thought the matter ended. To do so would be to underestimate the capacity for obstinate resistance displayed in such cases by those who have been humbugged. The Abbé Breuil, however, whom the advocates of Glozel were so proud of including in their ranks, wrote me a letter (2 August 1927) which I published forthwith, in which he explained that it was solely on the authority of his precursors at Glozel that he had provisionally admitted the hypothesis of authenticity, in spite of his private scepticism.

But there remained a small group of irreconcilables, composed of those who had committed themselves over-rashly to the affair, amongst whom, it should be observed, was not a single student of prehistory.

First of all there was Dr Morlet, who in pursuit of fame had, so to speak, staked his whole existence on the wretched card dealt him by

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young Fradin. Glozel, true or false, was for Morlet 'to be or not to be'. Still young and endowed with a wild energy, with an inflexible resolution and a naive and immoderate self-esteem; devoid, on the other hand, of competence and of the critical faculty, he threw himself whole-heartedly into the fray. A strange figure indeed, for whom one cannot help feeling pity, as for a bull thrust into the arena whose courage and vigour one admires in spite of its stupidity.

By his side was Salomon Reinach, the man who of all men of learning shows the greatest pertinacity in adhering to an error; the man who, in the case of the famous tiara of the Louvre, even after the proofs piled up by the enquiry and the confession of the forger himself, still maintained, in a minority of one, that the problem was 'by no means settled' [nullement éclaircie]. (*L'Anthropologie*, 1903, pp. 361-4).

These two tireless henchmen were supported by several others. The most influential, for reasons we have stated, was Depéret, the geologist. To his prestige as a man of science there were added the qualities of urbanity and obvious moderation, so conspicuously lacking in his fellow combatants. Instead of maintaining, like them, an attitude of unshakable faith, he freely stated that he was prepared to admit deception if scientific proof were given. The severe rebuffs successively encountered by Glozel failed to draw from him prompt and heated rejoinders like those supplied by Dr Morlet, Salomon Reinach, and others. He said nothing, and one thought 'this time surely M. Depéret has got the scientific proofs he demands; he must now be convinced and surrender'. But a fortnight or a month later M. Depéret emerged afresh from his silence, and, while not replying directly to the proofs of fraud supplied, expressed yet once more, in describing some new investigation, his scientific adherence to the authenticity of Glozel.

It would take too long to follow in all its windings a controversy which lasted two and a half years. We shall be content to indicate its main psychological features.

The principal feature of the Glozel controversy has been its habit of continually taking up a fresh position. In this it is true to type. The defenders of a false position abandon in turn each of those points whose untenability has been proved, to take up their stand on another. True, in abandoning them they do not admit the truth but cover their retreat with any sort of rejoinder that can be furbished up. Thus there arises a controversy, which is all to the advantage of the protagonists of error. Actually in a scientific discussion arguments are weighed,

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whilst in a controversy they are counted ; an objection must not be left unanswered, but the kind of answer given does not matter. Thus the public demand for logic is satisfied. But to achieve this one must go beyond the radius of scientific circles. One has got to appeal to the general public. This is what the backers of a hoax do always ; the champions of Glozel followed suit. We saw how, at the start, Dr Morlet launched his discovery in public by writing to a literary review and to the newspapers. The whole controversy has been organized and backed up by the press. In addition to the time-honoured method of obtaining press support, the partisans of Glozel had certain factors on their side. There was, first of all, the lure of curiosity and novelty ; they had something sensational to provide and newspapers like that. Then Dr Morlet himself, with his ardent faith, his whole expression radiating the zeal of a missionary, stood, from a psychological point of view, for a great power of persuasion. His sincerity appeared to be above suspicion, and the average journalist and the man in the street concluded that there could be no forgery at Glozel.

Thus with the aid of the press it was easy to bamboozle the public—a manoeuvre that in such cases is made easier by the fact that the public is incapable of reasoning, or does so with its heart and not its head. One has only therefore to play upon its emotions.

After my first notes, Dr Morlet's first move was to publish a long personal diatribe entitled 'Sherlock Holmes à Glozel' (*Mercure de France*, 1 August 1927). He added some remarks in a similar strain addressed to Mr Crawford, and M. de Klercker, whose scepticism he had noted. Conducted thus upon a personal basis, a discussion has several advantages for the protagonists of error. It is a huge field with room for every kind of manoeuvre ; if one's opponent does not reply he is assumed to be silenced ; if he replies he becomes involved in controversy. The public concludes that one has 'lost one's scientific calmness', and that it is impossible to discern the truth. That is a satisfactory result for those who are in the wrong.

But the champions of Glozel were able sometimes to obtain even better results by appealing tactfully to public feeling. They appealed to notions of fair play and democratic sentiment by urging that a cabal had been formed against a poor peasant and a country doctor by rich and powerful people, jealous of the good fortune and fame acquired by these humble folk. They truckled to popular snobbery and respect for established positions by declaring that the great authority of MM. Salomon Reinach, Loth, Espérandieu was a sure safeguard against so gross an error.

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Then they fed the public appetite for learning 'secret history' by launching explanations that would 'explain all'. I had attacked Glozel, they said, because someone had refused to sell me the finds; M. Dussaud denied the authenticity of the neolithic alphabet, because if admitted his career as an orientalist would be finished. The opposition to the great discovery could be explained in a general way by its novelty, which upset old-established ideas, and by its importance, which aroused jealousy.

To this row of sentimental arguments the Glozelians added others of what is called a 'commonsense character', such as are always trotted out on these occasions—always the same and always false. 'The forger must surely be a great savant, a regular genius, to have organized such a fraud. A poor peasant could never have done all that'. But such an argument passes over the essential fact:—the hoax evolved itself gradually; it was unconsciously directed by the dupes themselves, and its course was guided by the criticisms of its opponents. It was the offspring of collaboration. Then, in the second place, it was maintained that 'there are thousands of specimens; surely a forger could never have achieved such mass production'! Actually, the mass of the specimens did not demand a great deal of work to produce, and in a few months a forger could well turn out a large quantity. Lucas alone in six years forged more than 27,000 autograph manuscripts. Moreover at Glozel, amongst the 1500 or 2500 objects the greater number were fragments of crucibles, bricks and such like from the glass kiln.

THE CHIEF INVESTIGATIONS

(1) *The provisional scheduling.* Directly after the epigraphic proofs provided by M. Dussaud, in consideration of the feeling aroused by the first discussions, the Minister of Education issued a preservation order, dated 5 October 1927. The immediate effect of this was to protect the site as a 'scheduled historical monument' for a period of six months, after which and upon the recommendation of the Fine Arts Commission, the scheduling is, or is not, confirmed. M. Peyroni, curator of the Les Eyzies Museum and M. Champion, the chief of the technical staff of the National Museum (St. Germain) were appointed by the Minister to supervise the site and catalogue the specimens.

(2) *The International Commission.* At the meeting of the Amsterdam Congress, the general assembly of the Institut International d'Anthropologie decided (24 September 1927), on the motion of

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MM. Comte Bégouen and Mendés-Corréa, to suggest sending a committee of investigation to Glozel. Dr Morlet let it be known that he 'accepted without reservation' this committee which 'offered only objective guarantees'. Nominated forthwith by the office of the Institute and composed exclusively of those who had taken no part in the discussion, it consisted of seven members: M. Hamal-Nandrin (Belgium), M. Absolon (Czecho-Slovakia), Miss Garrod (England), MM. l'Abbé Favret, Forrer and Peyroni (France), M. Bosch-Gimpera (Spain), M. Pittard (Switzerland).

The commission went to Glozel at the beginning of November and excavated for some days, maintaining absolute silence with regard to its proceedings. The journalists present, observing specimens emerging from the ground and the unbounded delight of Dr Morlet, lost no time in announcing that the authenticity of the site had come to be admitted. The commission's report, long and detailed, appeared in the *Revue d'Anthropologie* (24 December 1927). It denounced the falsity of objects of every class, the recent construction of the tombs etc.; even the way in which the ground had been salted was recognized. Beneath a badly replaced lump of turf, the commission encountered a cavity full of freshly disturbed soil, at the bottom of which was an inscribed brick.

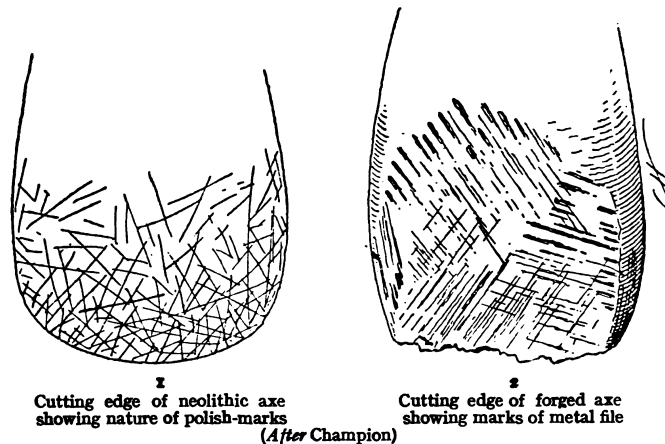
The commission reported unanimously upon the modern character of the documents which it had investigated. But the champions of Glozel, far from admitting defeat, reacted violently. M. S. Reinach, by way of a reply, communicated the same day to the press a little manifesto which he got two of his Academy colleagues to sign as well. It is a choice incident in his career, full of mistakes though it be: 'The admirable discovery of Glozel lacked only' he said 'the highest blessing of all—that with which the Roman inquisition honoured the genius of Galileo. To this extent the Bégouen commission has deserved well of Science, and the loyal soldiers of a just cause owe it their thanks. As for the commission itself and its originator from Toulouse, they will share with the Commissars of 1633 the only immortality they deserve, that of ridicule' (Signed, S. Reinach, J. Loth, Espérandieu).

3 *The Champion report.* Shortly after the commission's report appeared, M. Champion, who was sent to Glozel officially to draw up an inventory of the objects, produced a report entitled 'Observations techniques sur les trouvailles de Glozel' (Nourry, 1928). In a very precise and clear manner (thanks largely to his excellent drawings) the learned technician laid bare the true character of the workmanship

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observed on the stone objects from Glazel. The stone in question was generally of a soft nature. The perforations had been made with a steel drill, the sculptured designs with a steel graver of round section (doubtless made from a broken knitting needle). The shaping and polishing had been done with rasps and files, the marks of whose teeth could be seen perfectly clearly on certain specimens. One could even see them on the photographs published by Dr Morlet.

4. *Decision of the Commission on Prehistoric Monuments.* This commission was appointed by the Direction des Beaux Arts, and consisted of MM. Boule, Capitan, C. Jullian, Henri Martin, Verneau, and others, and reported that 'inasmuch as the site did not seem to possess any prehistoric features, they unanimously recommended the Minister not to confirm the provisional scheduling' (10 February 1928).



5. *The Research Committee (Comité d'Etudes).* The signatories of the 'Galileo manifesto' and Dr Morlet thought fit to call into existence a 'Research Committee', to counterbalance the effect of the International Commission's report and to consolidate the ranks of their supporters. From 11 to 14 April 1928, a dozen people, including S. Reinach, J. Loth, Depéret, etc., came to Glazel and 'were present at' excavations made by workmen in the clay, and announced themselves 'formally convinced that the finds clearly belonged to the beginning of the neolithic period, without any admixture of later objects'; and they published a report.

That cynical observer, René Benjamin, has taken the curious comedy as the subject of a witty book that has had a great success (*Glazel, Vallon des Morts et des Savants*).

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6. *The Legal Actions.* The newspaper ' *Le Matin* ', captured by the Glozelians as the outcome of some excavations (crowned with success) carried out by its reporters, published a letter of M. Dussaud's which was not intended for publication, in which the learned scientist formally accused young Fradin of being the forger of the inscriptions. Then the great daily caused him and his grandfather to bring an action for libel against M. Dussaud.

The affair thus reached the law courts in a most paradoxical form, with the Fradins in the rôle of plaintiffs and accusers. The action could lead to no good result ; the only question of which the court could take cognizance was that of libel and not that of its foundation. It was to be feared, on the other hand, that the public would regard a conviction for libel as a proof of authenticity. The Société préhistorique considered that, to vindicate the honour of its subject, it should put a stop to a scandal which disgraced French science. It felt bound to adopt a course of action which should open all eyes to the truth and to arrange matters so that the Law itself should unmask and punish the fraud.

The matter was legally possible. In fact, though there had been no sale of objects except to Dr Morlet, one could denounce as felonious the act of taking money from visitors for exhibiting modern productions in the guise of antiquities. Actually a well-grounded accusation of this kind would lead to the issue of a search-warrant and to an official enquiry by the police authorities. One might hope by this means to obtain for the public decisive proofs of a different order from those already furnished—proofs, moreover, which the champions of Glozel could not set aside as the outcome of professional jealousy and so forth. This result was, in fact, actually achieved.

The secret of the decision was well kept. Maitre Maurice Garçon, legal adviser of the Société préhistorique française, arranged all the formalities, and on a charge made on 24 February 1928, before M. Python, magistrate at Moulins, a search directed by Dr Regnault, then President of our Society, was made the following day at Glozel. There were found the débris of manufacture, and a certain number of objects were seized and submitted to the expert examination of M. Bayle, Director of the Service d'Identité judiciaire at Paris.

7. *The Bayle report.* M. Bayle adopted methods both exacting and thoroughly scientific. In many criminal trials of the past one had watched him unravel painful mysteries. His knowledge was profound, as should be the knowledge of a man upon whom the life of an accused person may depend.

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M. Bayle began by a general examination which quickly led to the detection of certain evidence of modern fabrication in the objects submitted to him. He proceeded to an exhaustive examination of all this evidence. At the request of the magistrate, M. Bayle sent to him in the spring of 1929 the only portion of his report which was finished—that dealing with the inscribed bricks. The gist of his report has been published.

M. Bayle affirmed that the bricks had not been baked and that they dissolved at once on being placed in water ; that some of them had never been buried at all ; that they contained as impurities tiny fragments of modern origin, particularly strands of cotton and coloured by aniline dye, pieces of moss and grass still retaining chlorophyll, etc.

Thus, by methods which excluded all archaeological considerations, the learned specialist succeeded in triumphantly proving fraud.

It may be said that the publication of this report brought down the curtain on the farce of Glozel. The great dailies and the general public are no longer interested in it ; and since the scientific world had already made up its mind long before, the affair was left without any genuine support.

THE PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

Last September, before finishing his report, M. Bayle was assassinated. He was a martyr to his profession and fell as the victim of one of those criminals whose misdeeds he had frequently shown up by the methods of his department.

At the present moment the action brought by the Société préhistorique is being delayed until M. Bayle's colleagues have finished drawing up their report. But, as we have already said, the result is now a foregone conclusion ; correct opinions have been formed and so far as this is concerned the desired object has been attained. There remains little more than the punishment* of the offender.

True, out-and-out Glozelians will not then, and never will, admit their mistake. But their ranks are strangely depleted. M. Depéret is dead ; the two pupils who fought by his side abandoned their Glozelian positions after the Bayle report. Certain of the Glozel champions who were noted for the violence of their statements, and their impertinence to those who contradicted them, appear to have admitted the truth.

* In view of the facts already stated one cannot help hoping that this may not be vindictive.—TRANSLATOR.

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But, being doubtless reluctant to submit to the humiliation of publicly confessing their error—a course which would involve also the withdrawal of their ill-judged remarks—they are content to remain silent.

As for Dr Morlet, he has attained Nirvana, where no event has power to disturb his serenity ; and he passes through life with his eyes fixed on the Glozelian paradise ! Science rejected the Truth he offered it, so he appealed to the great heart of the People ; but the People has failed him. He appeals now to future generations ; and then, surely, at the last there will come a day. . . .

Outside the ranks of orthodox Glozelians, clinging to the 'neolithic' hypothesis, there is a group of heretics. Each has his own solution to offer and each can translate the famous tablets. M. Camille Jullian continues to read some of them as a cursive script of low Latin. Lt.-Col. de St. Hillier, a retired African officer, translates them all in the light of Phoenician and of Arab roots. He has even published a 'Glozelian grammar for general use' (*Petite Grammaire glozélienne à l'usage de tout le monde*, Moulins, 1927). The Dutch Pastor Voelter deciphers Fradin's bricks as Hebrew, and has just published a huge volume on the subject (Strasbourg, 1929). M. J. Celajor, a Spaniard, explains the Glozel inscriptions by means of Basque ! M. Cartereau, a retired road-surveyor of Angers, has from his office table discovered dozens of proofs of authenticity, and is convinced that he has found in this wonderful site the sources of Gallic writing. M. Butavand, a retired civil engineer, has translated Glozelian by means of Greek roots and the Tifinagh script . . . Each of these gentlemen is almost alone in his opinion, but seldom has any mercy on the rest. Lt.-Col. de St. Hillier in particular is distinguished by the rudeness and severity of his style. He himself wrote his 'Glozelian Grammar' in order to 'establish once for all a sane explanation, free from literary verbiage and based upon a certain and dogmatic foundation' (p. 9).

We are not so sanguine as to expect, of course, that Dr Morlet, M. Salomon Reinach and the little group of persons round them, will ever perceive their mistake. It matters little. In actual fact, whatever may be the verdict of the Law with regard to the forger, the Glozel affair has been shown up so thoroughly that it will never more be a danger to science. One must hope, also, that all the trouble it has created will not have been in vain, and that it will have taught a useful lesson.