ON

A VOTIVE DEPOSIT OF GOLD OBJECTS FOUND

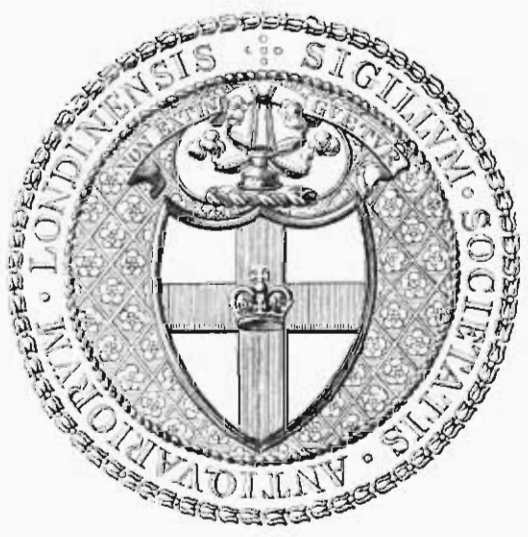
ON THE

NORTH-WEST COAST OF IRELAND.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES

BY

ARTHUR JOHN EVANS, ESQ., M.A., F.S.A.



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On a votive deposit of Gold Objects found on the North-West Coast of Ireland.

By ARTHUR J. EVANS, *Esq.*, *M.A.*, *F.S.A.*

Read 21st January, 1897.

A REMARKABLE hoard of gold objects was recently acquired by our Fellow Mr. Robert Day, of Cork, who has kindly allowed me to describe them and exhibit them to the Society. The objects were found together by a ploughman, who turned them up in subsoiling, and the ploughshare somewhat injured the boat and bowl. The spot where the treasure was found is near the sea on the north-west coast of Ireland.

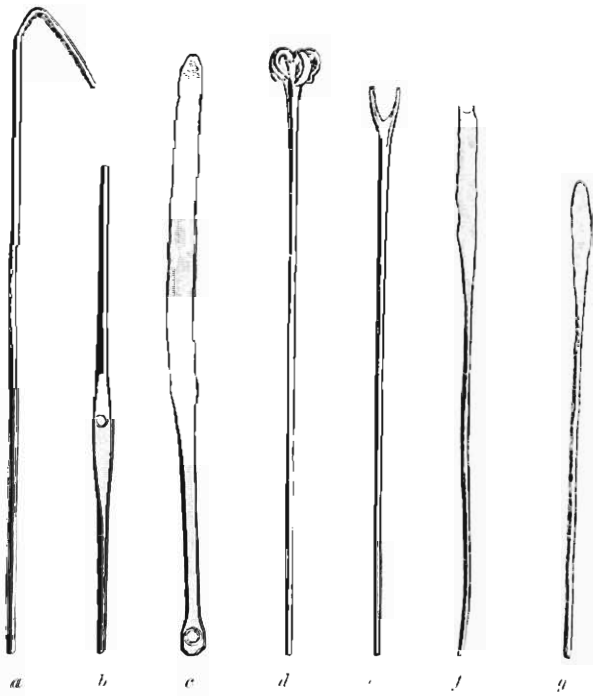

Fig. 1. Minor objects found with a votive Gold Boat on the north-west coast of Ireland. (Full size.)

The objects, which are all of gold, consist of a small boat with rowing benches and a place for a mast, miniature yards, oars, a grappling-iron, and other implements; a bowl, apparently intended for suspension from four rings; two chains of very fine fabric; two twisted gold neck-rings, one of them broken; and a hollow gold collar with *repoussé* work designs, beyond question the most magnificent object of its kind ever discovered. In the following account I have to acknowledge the kind assistance rendered me by Sir Wollaston Franks and Mr. C. H. Read.

The Boat.

The boat (Plate XXI. fig. 1) is $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches long by 3 inches broad. It is of pale gold, apparently approaching electrum and containing a fair proportion of silver, and it weighs 3 ozs. 5 dwts. It was provided with nine benches for rowers, of which the first is now wanting. The central one is slightly broader than the others, and has a hole in the middle through which originally the mast passed. Moveable wire rings, attached to the margin by means of a series of small holes, serve for the rowlocks, and the number of holes shows that there were originally nine of these on each side, giving two rowers to each bench, or eighteen in all. There is besides another moveable ring on the left side of the boat at the stern for the steering-oar or rudder. This (fig. 1*c*) and fifteen of the oars have been preserved. The oars are about $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length, and their blades are, with the exception of two, more or less lanceolate (fig. 1*g*). The two exceptional oars (fig. 1*f*) have a square, chisel-like end.

Besides the oars there were found a miniature grappling-iron (fig. 1*d*) with four hooks, a boat-hook (fig. 1*a*), and three forked implements (fig. 1*e*), which may either be fishing-spears or, more probably, forked barge-poles, such as are still in use. The mast is wanting, but the yard (fig. 1*b*) has been preserved, and there is also another small spar. A certain analogy with the steering-oar and the square-ended variety is presented by an ancient Irish oar-blade of black oak found at Toome Bar, on the lower Bann, and shown in fig. 2.[a]

Fig. 2. Irish oar-blade found at Toome Bar.

The boat itself is made of a single sheet of gold plate, which has, however, been slit and rejoined at the prow and stern. From its capacity and width it is impossible to regard it as a mere "dug out," though in form it unquestionably belongs to the genus "tub." It must, in spite of its rude appearance, represent a regularly built craft.

Some faint punch-marks are observable on its under-side, roughly arranged in vertical lines. These marks are so rough that they may, perhaps, be simply the result of the methodical hammering of the plate into shape. This regular arrangement suggests, however, the appearance of the ribs of a boat, the framework of which was covered with hides in the place of planks.

[a] From Wilde's *Catalogue*, etc. i. 204, fig. 188, No. 3. The Society is indebted to the Royal Irish Academy for the loan of this illustration.

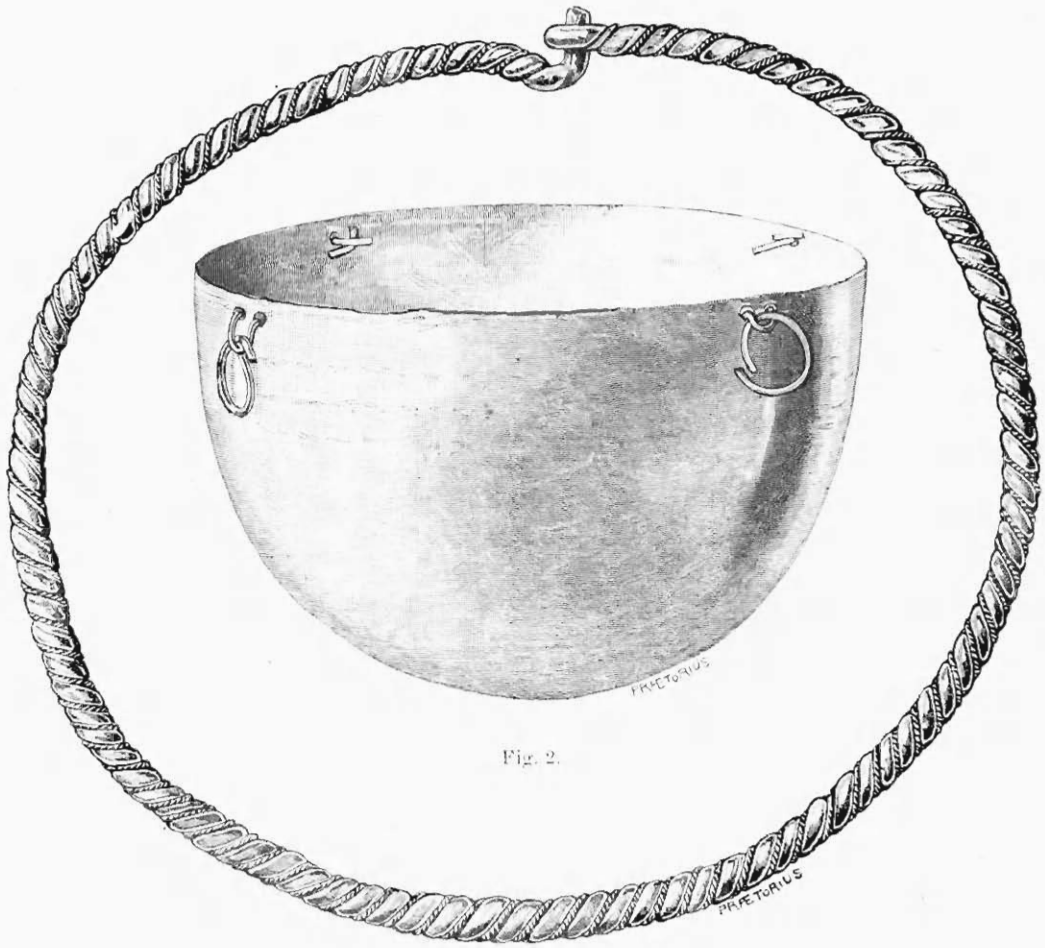

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

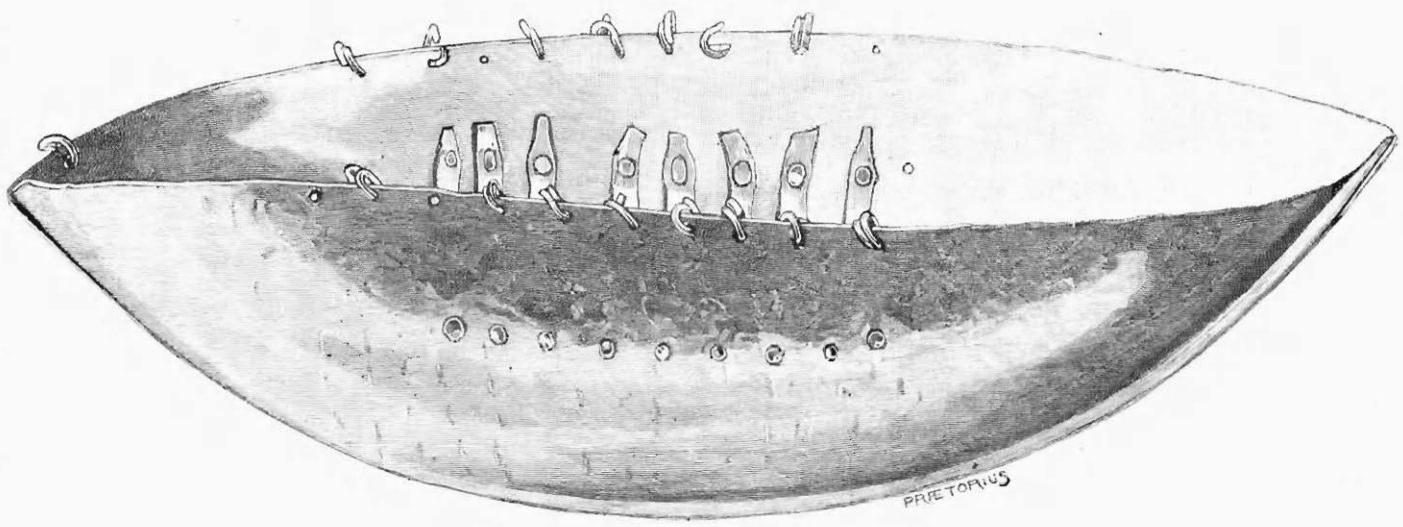

Fig. 1.

GOLD BOAT, BOWL, AND NECKLET FOUND IN IRELAND.

(Full size.)

There is a variety of evidence to show that sea-going vessels of this class were constructed by the ancient Irish and other Celtic populations. The following passage in the *Second Life of St. Brendan*[a] describes an ancient "currach" made in this way: "They made a very light barque, ribbed and fenced with timber, and covered it with raw cowhide . . . . They also fixed a tree in the midst of the barque and a sail and other things belonging to the steering of a boat." There are other instances in which the old Irish "currachs" are furnished with sail-yards, sails, and ropes, as well as oars.

Earlier evidence of the same kind is supplied by Festus Avienus's description of the Pictish vessels sewn with hides, and sea-going ships of composite construction with hides in place of planks were known to the ancient Britons. In this respect Cæsar himself took a lesson from the native shipbuilders, and on the occasion of a Spanish campaign[b] ordered his men to construct vessels on the British model, with keels and ribs of light timber, the rest of the hull being supplied by wicker-work covered with hides.

It is obvious that in the boat before us we have not so much to deal with an exact model or miniature reproduction as with a rough representation of the votive class. It would indeed be easy to find an almost perfect analogy among the small votive offerings of returned mariners suspended in the shrines of Roman Catholic countries. In such cases the work itself is often of the poorest kind, but although the local workman was incapable of giving anything more than a general representation of the whole, he is often excessively careful in introducing the proper complement of details, such as, in this case, the right number of oars, spars, and boat-hooks.

The Bowl.

The bowl or cup (Plate XXI. fig. 2) is formed of the same pale gold as the boat. It is beaten out of a single thin plate and weighs 1 oz. 5 dwts. 12 grs. It has four double perforations at equal distances round its rim, with a small wire linked through each, from which, in two cases, a larger twisted ring hangs down like the handle of a cauldron, and indeed the twisted handles are characteristic of some early iron cauldrons found in Ireland. Faint punch-marks roughly arranged in horizontal zones round the exterior of the bowl, if they be anything more than

[a] T. Wright, *Notes to Metrical Life of St. Brendan;* quoted by Miss Stokes, *Three Months in the Forests of France*, p. xxxvii. In the introduction to this work (p. xxxiv. *seqq.*) much interesting information regarding ancient Irish ships and boats is collected, to which I am indebted.

[b] Cæsar, *De Bello Civili*, l. c. 54. "Imperat militibus Cæsar ut naves faciant cuius generis cum superioribus annis usus Britanniæ docuerat. Carinæ primum et statumina ex levi materia fiebant: reliquum corpus navium viminibus contextum coriis integebatur."

tool-marks, might suggest a reminiscence of the rivetted plates of metal that formed the sides of the Early Iron-Age cauldrons. The fact, however, that the bowl had four rings, for presumable attachment to chains, instead of two, may be thought to militate against its identification with a cauldron, since the early examples of these that have been preserved have only two rings for suspension. Perhaps it should therefore be regarded as the scale of a measure. Mr. Day suggests that it was a lamp.

The Chains.

The larger chain (Plate XXII. fig. 1) consists of three separate strands, each formed of quadruple links joined together by what may be called the bolt ends of the necklace. It is $14\frac{1}{4}$ inches in length, of a dull gold, of different alloy from that of the boat and bowl, and it weighs 2 oz. 7 dwts. The fastening (*see* fig. 3) is a regular bolt, a double pin sliding in and out of a loop. The outside of this lock is ornamented with granules; some of them arranged in pyramids of three. The chain itself is of exquisite fabric, and the links are all spirally twisted.

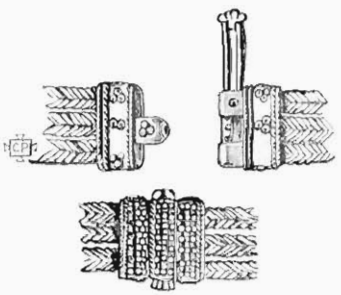

Fig. 3. Fastening of the larger Gold Chain or Necklace found in Ireland. The upper figure represents it open as seen from behind; the lower closed as seen in front. (Full size.)

The smaller chain (Plate XXII. fig. 2), which is $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, consists of a most complicated plait-work of eight wires. It weighs 6 dwts. 12 grs., and is of the same poor gold as the other. Its fastening (*see* fig. 4) is on the same principle.

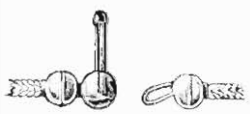

Fig. 4. Fastening of the smaller Gold Chain found in Ireland. (Full size.)

The extraordinary fineness and the complicated character of these chains mark a very different style of goldsmith's work from that of the boat and bowl. Their civilised appearance and, perhaps, the quality of the gold recall certain chains of Greek and Greco-Roman fabric. A plait-work chain resembling the smaller of the two, but with a hook fastening and of even more delicate fabric, was found in a tomb at Curium, the principal interment in which belonged to the fifth century, B.C.[a] General Cesnola obtained a similar chain from the same site, and similar chains are known from Etruscan tombs of the fifth

[a] Tomb, No. 86, Turner Fund Exploration, British Museum. A few Mycenæan objects were found in the inner chamber, and in a separate position a "woman and pitcher" vase of Ptolemaic date, otherwise the deposit seems to have belonged to the best period of classical art in the chamber. With the chain was found a gold ring engraved with a female head, belonging to the second half of the fifth century B.C.

and sixth centuries before our era. Two electrum chains formed like the larger of the two Irish chains, one ending in a knob like the smaller example, occurred among the sixth century Greco-Scythian relics of the Vettersfelde find.[a] An earring with pearl pendants suspended from fine gold chains of the same kind was found in a tomb at Kalymnos,[b] and with it was another earring with a kind of openwork canopy showing the pyramidal granule ornament seen on the fastening of the larger of the two Irish chains. This double parallelism is significant, and in this case the form of the earrings seems to point to Roman Imperial times. Similar chains of late Ptolemaic or early Egypto-Roman fabric have been found at Alexandria.

The manufacture of fine chains was not, however, confined to the classical world. The use of such chains for suspension between a pair of *fibulæ*, one worn on each breast, is a well-known Celtic fashion. On the earlier class of Late-Celtic *fibulæ*, these chains are generally of simple and somewhat coarse construction, such as those from the Champagne cemeteries, dating from the third and fourth centuries B.C.[c] But there is evidence that the use of very fine silver chains for this and other similar purposes goes back among the Gaulish tribes of the Continent at least to about 200 B.C. They are found in "Middle La Tène" interments belonging to that time in the great cemetery recently excavated at Jezerine, in Bosnia.[d]

Silver chains of the same fine fabric were also found attached by rings to *fibulæ* of the same metal in a tomb of a Gaulish cemetery at Ornavasso, in the province of Turin.[e] They were there associated with a Gaulish silver coin[f] of a type disseminated in the Upper Rhone Valley and the neighbouring Alps,[g]

[a] A. Furtwängler, *Goldfund von Vettersfelde*, 10, Taf. ii. fig. 3.

[b] Brit. Mus. 56, 8-26, 722.

[c] See for example Morel's *La Champagne Souterraine*, pl. xv. 7; xxix. 27; xl. 4.

[d] See *Wissenschaftliche Mittheilungen aus Bosnien und der Herzegovina* (Vienna, 1895), iii. 128, figs. 336, 337, 340, and 137, fig. 372. In these cases they are in double or treble rows with terminal rings, some with pendent ornament attached.

[e] E. Bianchetti, *I sepolcreti di Ornavasso* (Turin, 1895), 227, 228, tav. x. 6—10.

[f] Cf. *op. cit.* tav. xiv. 16—18.

[g] Mommsen, *Die Nordetruskischen Alphabete*, Taf. I. 7, 8, pp. 202, 253; Meyer, *Beschreibung der in der Schweiz aufgefundenen Gallischen Münzen*, Taf. i. 1-5, pp. 1, 2. The legend of the Ornavasso coin is read DIKOI by Bianchetti. It seems probable, however, that it should be completed ΡDIKOF = Prikou, a legend seen on gold coins of the same region, attributed by Mommsen to the Salassi. Mommsen (*Op. cit.* 253) regards the silver coins of this class as contemporary with the gold coins of the Salassi of the Val d' Aosta, which were struck on the Roman footing about 150 B.C., and the identity of inscription would be a corroboration of this view. The contents of the

representing a very late degeneration of the fourth century hemidrachms of Massalia. The date of the coin in question is about 150 B.C.

A pair of Celtic silver *fibulæ* connected with a chain of the same metal were also found in the hoard of Lauterach, near Bregenz, associated with Gaulish and Roman consular coins, the latest of which were struck in 80 B.C.[a]

Very fine silver chains of a somewhat later date have been found attached to silver *fibulæ* of British fabric. As an instance of this it may here be sufficient to mention the silver chain found, with two enamelled silver *fibulæ*, originally connected by it, at Chorley, in Lancashire, together with a hoard of Roman coins. These *fibulæ*, now in the British Museum, are of a type peculiar to Roman Britain and represent there a purely Celtic tradition.[b] The chain is very similar in fabric to the smaller of the two Irish specimens, and there is every warrant for supposing that it was from the hand of the same British craftsman, to whose skill the *fibulæ* to which it is attached were also due. There is then good reason to believe that such fine chains were made during this later period by British artificers. The date of the Chorley find is approximately fixed both by the type of the *fibulæ* themselves and the coins found with them, which range from Galba to Hadrian, from 68 to 138 A.D.

It thus appears that these fine chains were in use among the Celtic peoples during the first two centuries before and after our era. In Britain however the finest class is, as far as I am aware, confined to the latter half of this period, the chains attached to the earlier of British *fibulæ*, like one in the British Museum from the Warren, near Folkestone, which may date from the second century B.C., being, like those referred to from the Champagne cemeteries, of simpler and coarser construction.

In the case of the gold chains from the present hoard there is no evidence of the attachment of *fibulæ*. From the fact of their fastening with a clasp it is probable that they were worn round the neck, perhaps for the suspension of the twisted torques. The method of fastening by a pin, inserted through and thus locking the loops at the two ends of the chain, as in fig. 3, is remarkable. It is a common method of fastening in India and other Oriental countries at the present day.

The same method, however, was also known to classical goldsmiths. Mr. Hilton Price has kindly shown me two gold bracelets in his collection, from Alexandria,

Ornavasso tombs themselves show that already before that date the Roman *asses* and *denarii* had become the usual currency of this part of Cisalpine Gaul.

[a] Dr. S. Jenny, *Die Münzenfunde bei Lauterach. Mitth. d. Central Commission, &c.* 1881, p. 87 *seqq.*

[b] See *ante*, p. 185.

with similar fastenings. In one case the bracelet is locked by a divided pin precisely similar to that of our larger chain, and the plate of the clasp is adorned with pyramidal granules. Another bracelet from Alexandria of the same class in the collection of Sir John Evans shows a fastening on the same principle. These bracelets are ascribed to the latest Ptolemaic and Early Egypto-Roman times and belong to the first century before and after Christ. Fine gold chains closely resembling the specimens from Ireland have also been found with jewelry of this class, and, considering the extent of the parallelism shown by the occurrence in both cases of the double removable pin and the granular ornamentation of the clasp-plate, there arises a fair presumption that these objects may have been imported to the British Islands from Alexandria about the beginning of our era. In any case we obtain here a chronological fixed point of the greatest value.

The alternative supposition, indeed, that they were of British fabric closely imitated from Greco-Egyptian models at least deserves attention. The usage of such fine chains was an old Celtic tradition, and, as we have seen, silver chains comparable in workmanship to these gold examples have been found attached to *fibulæ* of distinctively British manufacture. It is true that this characteristic form of fastening is new in connexion with Celtic chains, but a very close parallel is apparently presented by the thin-plated jointed bracelets of Late Celtic fabric found in Scotland,[a] where the fastening seems to have resembled a hinge with a removeable pin.[b] There are certain features in the gold chains before us which also point to known Late-Celtic analogies. The fashion of wearing three chains together united at their ends is illustrated by examples from the great Jezerine cemetery already referred to. More than this, the socketing of the ends of three chains in a flat covering-plate, as seen in the larger of the Irish chains, finds an absolute parallel in the silver collar found at Æsica[c] with *fibulæ* belonging to the latter part of the second century of our era. In my account of the Æsica collar attention has been already called to certain features which seemed to point to the influence of Greco-Egyptian jewelry.[d]

Whether the chains before us should be regarded as Celtic, and in that case probably British, products, executed under the influence of classical models, or as

[a] *E. g.* one from Plunton castle, Kirkcudbrightshire. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, xv. 331, fig. 28.

[b] The pin is wanting, but the fastening is thus described, *loc. cit.*: "The armlet is formed of two curved plates of bronze, probably held together by a bronze pin or moveable joint to allow it to be opened and fixed on the forearm or wrist."

[c] See *ante*, p. 179, fig. 1.

[d] See *ante*, p. 180.

actual imports from an Alexandrian source does not affect the main value of the evidence that they supply. In any case, we must admit a very great conformity with certain characteristic features of the Late-Ptolemaic and Early Egypto-Roman jewels of the kind, and in any case we obtain an approximate chronological guide pointing to the beginning of our era.

The twisted Necklets.

Of the twisted necklets there were originally a pair, of one of which only about half is preserved. They are of very pure gold, and the perfect specimen, which is about 5 inches in diameter, weighs 3 oz. 7 dwt. 9 grs.[a] The characteristic feature of these necklets (Pl. XXI. fig. 3) is that a twisted wire has been wound round the spiral grooves of the torque itself. The use of twisted wire we have already seen exemplified among the other objects from this deposit in the handles of the bowl or miniature cauldron, and in the links of the larger chain.

This method of applying twisted wire to spiral ornaments is not infrequent in ancient jewelry. A very near parallel is supplied by a twisted gold arm-ring, without opening, wound round with beaded wire, found in one of the most characteristic Continental deposits of the Late-Celtic class, that of Waldalgesheim, near Bingen on the Rhine.[b] This deposit, which was of a sepulchral character, contained, amongst other imported objects, a bronze pail of Italo-Greek fabric,[c] belonging apparently to the third century B.C.

A spiral gold arm-ring of the same type, rolled round with twisted wire, was found at Hurstpierpoint in Sussex,[d] but in this case the circumstances of the find have not been handed down. Otherwise the procedure seems specially characteristic of the Viking period.

Necklets and armlets of this type, both of gold and silver, formed part of the great hoard found at Douglas in the Isle of Man, associated with Saxon coins which fix the date of the deposit between 925 and 975 A.D.[e] Twisted silver neck-rings coiled round with twisted wire are also found in Gothland[f] and elsewhere in Scandinavia in deposits dating from the same period.

[a] The fragmentary specimen weighs 1 oz. 10 dwt. 4 grs.

[b] *See* E. Aus'm Weerth, *Der Grabfund von Waldalgesheim* (Bonn, 1870), taf. i. fig. 4, p. 15; Lindenschmit, *Alterthümer, &c.* B. iii. H. i. T. I. i.

[c] *Op. cit.* taf. iii.

[d] In the British Museum, from the Payne Knight collection.

[e] The objects are in the British Museum.

[f] *Cf.* Montelius, *Les temps préhistoriques en Suède* (traduction S. Reinach, 1895), 254, fig. 355.

It is, however, to be observed that in the Douglas and Scandinavian examples, belonging to the Viking period, the fastening of the twisted torques is a hooked end caught in a long loop. In the Irish specimen, on the contrary, the hook is shorter, and caught in a mere eye, and this form of fastening is found in the case of a series of early Gaulish Torques from the Champagne cemeteries.[a]

The Collar.

The magnificent hollow gold collar or hollow torque[b] shown in Pl. XXII. fig. 3, is $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, and the section of its tubular ring $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch. Apart from its fastening, it is formed of two *repoussé* plates of thin gold, folded over into a tubular form and soldered together. This delicate tube must undoubtedly have been backed and supported by a central core, which was probably formed, as in the case of another tubular torque found at Frasnes, in Belgium, by a circular iron rod, surrounded by hard cement. The ornament on both halves of the collar absolutely corresponds, and must have been executed in the same matrix, perhaps an engraved bar of bronze, like one used for beating out early Corinthian diadems, which is now in the Ashmolean Museum.

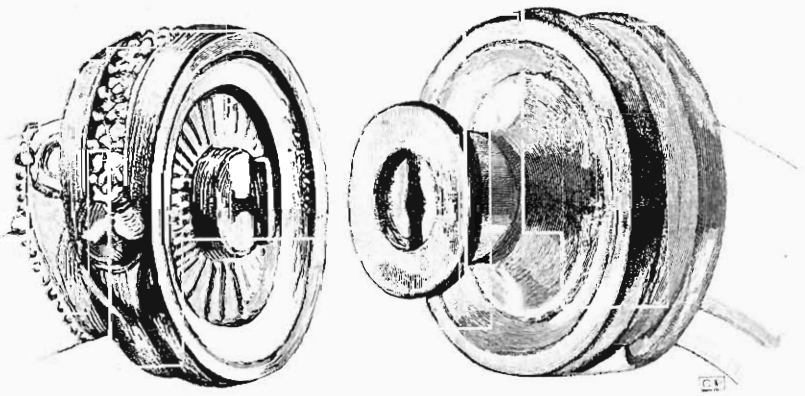

Fig. 5. Fastening of a Gold Collar found in Ireland. (Full size.)

The fastening of this collar is most remarkable. At one end is a fixed projection, like the cock of a tap, which catches in a slot at the other extremity (*see* fig. 5). This is so arranged that, in order to open the collar when thus locked, one-half of it has to be turned at right angles to the other. A section,

[a] E. G. Morel, *Champagne Souterraine*, pl. xxi. 3; xxii. 6.

[b] The classical word *torques* as applied to the neck ornaments of the ancient Gauls does not necessarily imply that they were always twisted, though that is the original and etymological sense of the word.

apparently about 2 inches in length, at the back of the collar on the opposite side to the fastening is unfortunately wanting, though rivet holes are seen at the end of the two tubes for attachment to it. A part of this, at least, must have been removeable in order to allow the one side of the hoop of the collar, when worn round the neck, to turn round enough to free its key from the key-hole of the other side, or at all events to allow it to turn enough to slip the collar off the neck.

So far as the key itself is concerned, a perfect analogy is presented by some gold torques found at Serviés-en-Val, near Carcassonne, in the territory, that is, of the Volcæ Tectosages.[a] The opening of these torques terminates on one side in a cock-like projection of the same form as that of the Irish specimen, but in this case, instead of turning round after insertion in an oblong slot, it fits into the upper part of a T-like opening, and is caught by sliding into the vertical line of the T.[b] The hoops of the torques in question were of solid twisted metal, and a very slight bend would in this case suffice to slide the key from its catch.

Fig. 6. Gold Torque found at Serviés-en-Val, near Carcassonne. (½ linear.)

The method of locking varies thus in the two cases, but the identical form of the key, and the general principle involved, supply good reasons against separating by too wide an interval the date of the production of the Irish torque from that of the Gaulish example. These were, as will be seen from fig. 6, representing the most ornate specimen from Serviés-en-Val, of a very different type. The solid twisted hoop is here fitted towards the opening with a series of foliated rings; in other examples the hoop ends in two plain disks. It will be at once

[a] *See* J.-P. Cros, "Mémoire sur des torques-cercles Gaulois trouvés à Serviés-en-Val (Aude)," in *Mémoires de la Société Archéologique du Midi de la France*, iv. 143 *seqq.* and pls. xvii. xviii. xix. whence the accompanying illustration (fig. 6) is reproduced. The torques are now in the museum at Toulouse.

[b] A certain analogy to this form of catch is presented by a gold twisted torque from Söderman-land, Sweden, belonging to the Early Iron Age of Scandinavia (Montelius, *Antiquités Suédoises*, 103, fig. 343).

seen that the Serviés torques belong to a late period of Gaulish art. The foliated work in fact shows a certain approach to that on the back of some British or Romano-British *fibulæ* of the first two centuries of our era, of which those from Chorley are an example. It must, however, be borne in mind that Tolosa, the capital of the Volcæ Tectosages, in whose territory these massive gold torques were found, was already plundered of its celebrated hoards of gold by the Roman Consul Cæpio about 106 B.C., and already before Cæsar's time had been incorporated in the Roman *Provincia*. That the deposit of the hoard itself was connected with these events, and was actually a part of the *aurum Tolosanum*, is by no means improbable. In any case it would be difficult to bring down independent Gaulish work of this rich kind in that region later than the beginning of the first century B.C.

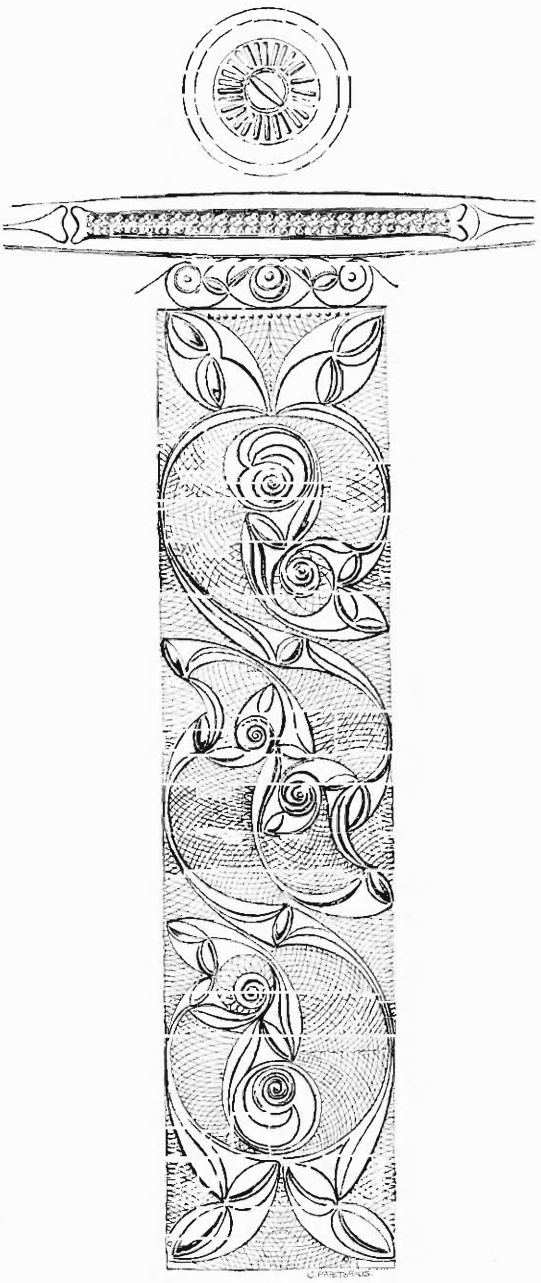

Fig 7. Plan of the fastening, and scheme of ornamentation of a Gold Collar found in Ireland. (½ linear.)

The scheme of the ornament on the Irish specimen before us can best be understood by the annexed illustration (fig. 7), which gives a faithful presentment of the design as originally executed on the flat surface of the plate. The decoration is produced by two methods: *repoussé* work, and a series of engraved lines filling the vacant spaces in the interstices of the raised ornaments. These fine lines are curved and form more or less concentric groups. They were in nearly all cases executed with a compass, and they illustrate the process by which the harmonious curves of *repoussé* ornament were first sketched out. This engraved work was executed after the *repoussé* design itself had been completed, and certain

straight lines seen in places along the axis of the collar and at right angles to it seem to have been drawn for the purpose of regulating the arrangement of the concentric groups. At the back of the collar on one side is seen a complete circle, with the point-mark of the compass in the middle.

This compass-work, which must have also been employed in the original design of the *repoussé* ornament itself, plays a very important part in Late-Celtic ornament. It is well known on the mirrors, sheaths, and other objects of metal-work, and has recently been found applied to wood-work decoration in the Glastonbury Lake Village, a fact which shows that the art had attained considerable development in our island before the Roman Conquest of that part of Britain. But the best illustration of compass-work designing is supplied by the objects discovered in the so-called tomb of Ollamh Fodhla. A number of bone flakes were there found ornamented with a quantity of compass-work figures, and iron compasses were found with them, showing that this primitive shelter had been used by a Celtic craftsman to practise this art of design. The compass-work on the gold collar itself displays great accuracy and proficiency, and is unique of its kind. It is used here to fill up between the interstices of the *repoussé* reliefs, where there is more usually found only a hatchwork of engraved lines.

The relief work is executed in a bold and brilliant style which marks it as belonging to the most flourishing period of Late-Celtic work. Among its most characteristic features are the spiral coils which terminate many of the sprays and recall certain helix shells. The outer whorls of these snail-like coils overhang the surface of the collar, and they could not therefore have been executed by a *repoussé* process. On minute examination they are seen to be each of a separate piece inserted in small circular holes cut out of the face of the collar and secured within by overlapping tags.

The nearest approach to these snail-like coils on Celtic metal work seems to be found on certain sprays of the *repoussé* bronze and enamelled shield from the River Witham.[a] This shield is perhaps slightly earlier than one of similar shape, but somewhat more elaborate design from the Thames[b] belonging to the latest Pre-Roman period of Southern Britain. That from the Witham may therefore be approximately referred to the Christian era.

The combination of engraved line work with *repoussé* reliefs is also found in some Late-British bronze work of the same period, as, for instance, the horned

[a] A. W. Franks, *Horæ Ferales*, pl. xv. p. 190.

[b] *Ibid.* pl. xvi. p. 190.

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

GOLD COLLAR AND CHAINS FOUND IN IRELAND.

(FULL SIZE.)

helmet found in the Thames at Waterloo Bridge and now in the British Museum. Among Irish antiquities the same procedure is found applied to the well-known class of bronze disks,[a] and the fine *repoussé* reliefs of these plates suggests more than one analogy with those of the gold collar.

The character of the relief and the design, which is of purely geometrical character, also recalls that of certain Celtic armlets mostly found in Scotland,[b] though one specimen was found near Newry, in Ireland.[c] The finest period of these overlaps the Roman occupation of Southern Britain, since a Roman *patella* was found in company with one of them at Stanhope, in Peebleshire.[d] The Æsica brooch, which may be claimed as a Caledonian fabric[e] representing a somewhat advanced stage of a similar class of design, apparently dates from the last half of the second century of our era.

There is then good warrant for believing that a bold pure style of Late-Celtic art was prolonged awhile among the Celtic population of the North and West of our islands after the Roman Conquest of Southern Britain. In other words the stage of culture which, shortly after the beginning of our era, is cut short over a large part of England by the rapid increase of Roman influence, culminating in actual conquest, finds its continuous development in Caledonia and Ireland.

On the margin near the front end of the collar before us are to be noted certain cupped bosses, containing in the centre of the cup a small globule. This latter feature recalls the similar cupped bosses with a central bead of red enamel seen on the remarkable bronze ornament in the Petrie Collection of the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, and regarded by Miss Margaret Stokes as part of a radiated crown.[f] Radiated crowns characterize the coins of Roman emperors struck in Gaul and Britain during the last half of the third century of our era; a fact which, as Miss Stokes has observed, gives a clue to the date of the crown. The incipient use of enamel, which in Ireland appears later than in Britain, also argues a comparatively late date. On the other hand the somewhat more advanced and attenuated character of the decorative designs on this ornament tends to show that it belongs to a rather later period than the gold collar.

[a] Compare an example in the British Museum.

[b] See especially J. Alexander Smith, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, xv. 316 *seqq.*

[c] *Op. cit.* xv. 362, fig. 31.

[d] *Op. cit.* xv. 318, fig. 1.

[e] See *ante*, pp. 190 *seqq.*

[f] *Archaeologia*, xlvii. pl. xxii. and p. 473 *seqq.*; *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, xxx. pl. xix. 2, and p. 290.

The free and noble decorative style of the collar before us, fitting on as it does to the latest style of Pre-Roman Britain, and representing its independent outgrowth, can best be referred to this immediately ensuing period, and, roughly speaking, to the first century of our era. The tendency of all Late-Celtic art was to reduce the naturalistic motives borrowed by it from the classical world to geometrical schemes. In its earliest phase, mostly represented by Continental finds, the borrowed elements are not yet perfectly assimilated, and Greek motives such as the confronted monsters the sphinxes or palmettes are often still distinguishable. But the decorative design of the present torque is of a purely geometrical character. There is no trace here either of animal or spray, and the Celtic spirit has triumphed in a beautiful abstraction of curving lines. This in itself is an evidence of a comparatively late date.

Yet the whole history of Late-Celtic art instructs us that this geometrical scheme, elaborate as it is, was originally based on ornaments of a naturalistic kind. The elements out of which it was evolved are in fact clearly shown by another collar, the tubular construction of which shows that it belongs to the same family as the Irish example, though to an earlier generation. I refer to the hollow gold collar, containing a core of hard cement with a central iron hoop, already referred to, found at Frasnes, in Belgium, together with uninscribed coins of ancient Belgic type dating from about 80 B.C.[a] In this case bull's heads are seen immediately beneath the terminal disks, and the raised S-like sprays which also adorn the collar may be taken to represent degenerations of the Greek palmette ornament which is here absorbed in a very favourite geometrical figure of Gaulish art. On an earlier gold bracelet in the museum at Breslau, which has an important bearing on the evolution of this class of Celtic collars, the palmette which springs from the terminal disks is seen in a state of transition, half decomposed into geometrical coils. A further transitional stage is illustrated by a torque from the Waldalgesheim find.

If in the other direction we turn from the Frasnes collar to the Irish example before us we see that the last naturalistic traces, exemplified in the former case by the the bull's head, have entirely vanished, while the spiral curves have attained a free and much more elaborate development, further removed from the mere balanced S's of the earlier Gaulish tradition. In other words the Irish collar seems to belong to a distinctly later period than that from the Belgian hoard.

[a] J. Evans, "On some gold ornaments and Gaulish coins found together at Frasnes in Belgium," *Numismatic Chronicle*, N.S. iv. pl. v. p. 96 *seqq.*

A certain analogy to the newly-discovered collar is presented by a tubular gold collar in the collection of the Royal Irish Academy reproduced in fig. 8. Some of the decorative scrolls on the hoop terminating in a coil distinctly resemble those of the Ulster example, and though the *repoussé* work cannot compare with it for boldness and beauty of design we have here a distinct indication that both were made in Ireland. Whether the curious interlacing coils which form the section opposite the opening throw any light on the missing part of the present specimen must remain a moot point.

Fig. 8. Gold collar in the collection of the Royal Irish Academy. (½ linear.)

General Conclusions.

The great variety in character of the objects, which, according to the account given, were found together in the present hoard, might suggest the conclusion either that it contained relics of different periods or that the treasure itself had been collected from more than one source by its original modern possessor. With regard to the last possibility Mr. Robert Day has made most careful investigations and has completely satisfied himself as to the *bonâ fide* character of the find, and that all the objects were brought to light at the same place and at the same time. The farmer on whose land the find was made, and with whom he is personally acquainted, is a shrewd hard-headed Presbyterian upon whose word Mr. Day could thoroughly rely, and who was most precise about the facts. The fine brown clay with which all the objects were more or less covered also bore out his statement as to their place of discovery.

But, if in view of this evidence we must regard the objects as all belonging to one hoard, is it possible that the hoard itself contains objects of different periods? I must confess that on first examining them this possibility occurred to me. The hoard itself is clearly divided into three groups, each formed of a

different alloy of gold; the boat and bowl are of pale gold, the chains of gold of a somewhat dull hue, the collar and twisted rings of bright pure metal.

It has been suggested, indeed, in explanation of the deposit that we have here the hoard of some Viking who had plundered earlier Celtic graves. This theory has certainly the charm of romance; it bears, however, an unfortunate resemblance to that started on the first discovery of the Mycenæan treasures. It was seen that the decoration upon some of the relics recalled certain Celtic motives, and the theory was accordingly put forward that the graves were those of Gaulish invaders of Greece who had robbed pre-historic tombs and buried with their dead chieftains a mixed assortment of objects belonging to widely different ages.

But it is now known that the contents of the Mycenæan tombs, with the exception of a few objects of foreign fabric, were the work of the same race and that all belonged to the same period, namely the pre-historic age of Greece. It must be said at once that the balance of probability is very largely against any explanation of an ancient treasure which involves such far-fetched hypotheses. Unless it can first be proved that the objects from the Irish hoard belonged to different periods, such a theory is at least premature.

The detailed examination of the relics found has led me to the conclusion that there is at least no necessity for believing that they were the work of different ages. The rude character of the boat and bowl may well be explained by the analogy already invoked of votive objects manufactured in modern times. The jewelry found in tombs and made specially for the use of the departed is often of paler gold and of flimsy fabric when compared with other objects, exhumed from the same grave, which had been the property of the deceased in his lifetime. The same law may well hold good in the case of a votive deposit, such as this appears to have been, buried in honour of a god.

There is no reason why the eighteen-oared vessel here represented should be of Scandinavian origin or belong to the Viking period. The reproduction is indeed too rude to supply very definite evidence as to details; so far as it goes, however, it tends to show considerable divergence from Scandinavian models. The great proportional width of our vessel recalls rather the primitive coracles and currachs than the slender proportions of Northern boats of the same calibre. The rowlocks here are moveable rings, not the fixed horn-like prongs such as are found in the Nydam boat and still survive in the river-craft of Norway and Finland. The oars and rudder have the same general outline, but primitive Irish oars still exist of much the same form, and an elongated example

of considerable antiquity with a straight end answering to one of the types of oar represented in the present boat has already been figured above.

The early maritime intercourse not only between Ireland and Britain, but with the Iberic coasts and Scandinavia, which goes back well into the Bronze Age, shows that the art of navigation was well advanced in these islands at a very early period. In Cæsar's time the Veneti of the opposite coast of Gaul had an ocean-going fleet, and already relied on sails in place of oars. The apparent indication that the vessel of which we have the miniature reproduction had hide-covered sides is, as already shown,[a] of special importance in connection with a form of sailing-vessel in use among the ancient Britons, who also possessed ocean-going ships, and were able, indeed, on occasion, to detach a Channel Squadron to the aid of their hard-pressed kinsmen in Western Gaul. That we have here a ship with mast and yards points rather to early Celtic usage than to that of the Norsemen, who, accustomed to fiord navigation and the more confined waters of the Baltic, trusted rather to oars than sails.

That the gold chains were made out of Ireland is probable enough, but abundant evidence has been brought forward to show that during the first two centuries before and after our era fine chains of this character were a Celtic speciality. It is possible that the chains in question were made in Britain; the peculiar form of fastening has indeed been compared with that of Caledonian bracelets, just as the three chains socketed one above the other in a flat terminal receptacle recalls the triple-chained collar with similar terminations found with the Æsica brooches. On the other hand the close correspondence of the fastening with that of Alexandrian jewels of the latest Ptolemaic and early Roman period makes it not improbable that we have here examples of objects imported from a Greco-Egyptian source about the beginning of our era. As far as I am aware no fine chains of this character have been found in deposits of the Viking age.

Of the remaining gold ornaments the twisted gold torques wound round with twisted wire undoubtedly recalled certain Scandinavian types and others of the Viking period found at Douglas in the Isle of Man. But it has been shown that the type is also Celtic and the form of the catch, moreover, agrees better with that of early Gaulish torques than with the later Scandinavian examples.

There is at least no question as to the indigenous Celtic character of the most important relic contained in the Ulster hoard. The hollow gold collar, with its bold *repoussé* designs, is undoubtedly an ancient Irish fabric, and is at the same

[a] See above, p. 3

time the finest example existing of this class of gold-work. On grounds of style and from certain details of ornament it has been referred above to the first century of our era. Its peculiar method of locking indeed closely recalls that of the "Tolosan" gold torques of a century earlier, a circumstance which makes it improbable that the Ulster collar comes down to a much later date.

But, as has been already demonstrated, there is nothing inconsistent between this approximate chronology and the indications of date supplied by other objects of the hoard, such as the fine chains.

The conclusion then to which we are led by these various considerations is that the treasure was, as the recorded circumstances of the find indicate, deposited at the same place and time, probably in the first century of our era. The custom of making votive deposits was very widespread in the Early Iron Age, and in the Northern countries such hoards were often buried on the borders of lakes and pools, or actually beneath their waters. In the present case the deposit was made close to the sea-shore, on a rocky part of the coast liable to shipwrecks, and from the votive ship and its furniture, there can be little doubt that it was a thank-offering dedicated by some ancient Irish sea-king, who had escaped from the perils of the waves, to a marine divinity. This was perhaps the Celtic Neptune, Nuada Necht, the British Nud or Nodens, whose name, in the later form of Lúd, is connected with the port of London, and still survives in Ludgate Hill.[a] The Temple of Nodens at Lydney, which also preserves his name, has produced representations of Tritons and sea-monsters, and the God himself in a chariot drawn by four horses.[b]

[a] *See* J. Rhys, *Lectures on Celtic Heathendom*, 125 *seqq.* London itself was the Welsh Caer Lúd.

[b] *See* W. H. Bathurst and C. W. King, *Roman Antiquities at Lydney Park, Gloucestershire.*