

XIV.—*Ancient Gold Ornaments: described by JOHN YONGE AKERMAN, Esq.
Secretary.*

Read May 12, 1853.

WITH the exception of Figs. 1, 2, 3, the Gold Ornaments engraved in Plate VIII. have no reference whatever to each other. The first three were obtained by Viscount Strangford, Director of the Society, from a Greek priest at Milo, in the year 1820. Figs. 1 and 3 appear to have formed the ends of a light chain, and the other (fig. 2) to have been pendent by a small loop on the top of the head. The figure has unfortunately lost the feet and the left hand, but the other parts are perfect. The right hand is raised in an admonitory attitude. The forehead appears as if encircled with a wreath, while the body is crossed by what would seem to be intended for the tendril of a vine. The necklace was formerly in the collection of the late Mr. H. P. Borrell, of Smyrna, but I am informed by his brother, Mr. Maximilian Borrell, who now possesses it, that no record exists of its discovery, and that he cannot learn the name of the individual from whom it was purchased. It was well known that Mr. H. P. Borrell was in the habit of purchasing ancient coins, which were sent to him from all parts of Greece and Asia-Minor, and that many rare and unique specimens fell into his hands, of which he contributed descriptions in various volumes of the Numismatic Chronicle. The necklace may, therefore, have been included in one of these numerous consignments, and we can scarcely indulge the hope that the place of its discovery will ever be made known. As an example of ancient art, it may vie with the most elaborate and beautiful specimens of goldsmiths' work of any age or period. The details are wonderfully minute and delicate, even the backs of the button-like objects at the ends of the pendent cords being elaborately finished.

The object in the centre of the plate (fig. 5) also formed part of the collection of Mr. H. P. Borrell. It is of massive gold work, encasing a gold stater of Alexander the Great :—

Obverse.—Galeated head of Minerva to the right.

Reverse.—ΑΑΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ. Victory standing, regarding the left; in her right hand a garland, in her left a long trident; in the field a ram's head, beneath which an object, which appears to be a globular-shaped vase.

Figs. 6, 7, 8, belonged to the same collection, and, like the other objects, the



GOLD PERSONAL ORNAMENTS.

place of their finding is unknown, but the antiquary will not fail to detect their Asiatic character. The first is a pendent gold ornament, representing the facade of a temple of archaic structure, within which is the figure of the world-worshipped goddess, Diana Ephesia, represented as on the well-known silver medallions of Claudius and Agrippina, and the Imperial Greek coins of Emperors down to a late period, standing between a crescent-shaped object and a serpent. We may safely conjecture that this amulet is the work of some goldsmith of an Ionian city, and very probably of Ephesus herself. Had this object been of silver, notwithstanding its archaic character, it would answer to the description of those little shrines the *ναοὶς ἀργυροῦς* described in the Acts of the Apostles;^a for, although the workmanship is rude, it might probably be designed to be so out of reverence for ancient custom.

Fig. 8 is another pendent ornament, doubtless designed for the same purpose, but representing Diana in her character of Hecate. The lamina of metal of which it is formed is included within a crescent-shaped ornament, the horns of which are terminated by small knobs precisely as in the subordinate symbol in the field of fig. 6. That Diana was worshipped in Ephesus as Hecate we learn from Pliny, who tells us that she had a statue of marble there of so dazzling a lustre that the beholders were instructed to shade their eyes from its effulgence.^b In the British Museum is a brass coin of Antoninus Pius, struck at Ephesus, on which are the figures of Diana Ephesia and Diana Lucifera side by side.^c

With regard to the age of the objects, I cannot do better than quote the words of Mr. Burgon, in reply to some questions recently addressed to him by me in reference to the enched coin and the workmanship of the necklace.

MY DEAR SIR,

British Museum, May 12th, 1853.

The symbol of a ram's head, observable in the field of the gold stater of Alexander the Great, which ornaments the gold clasp, so carefully engraved, is too vague, and belongs to too many cities to warrant a well-founded conjecture as to where the coin was struck. The symbol under the ram's head is also, most unfortunately, too ill defined to help the question.

Still I cannot help being of opinion that the coin of Alexander was struck in some city of Asia Minor, perhaps Clazomenæ, in Ionia.

As to the age of this elegant and most rare specimen of ancient art, one can only

^a Acts xix. v. 24.

^b Et Hecate Ephesi in templo Dianæ post ædem, in cujus contemplatione admonent æditui parcere oculis, tanta marmora radiatio est. *Hist. Nat.* lib. xxxvi. c. 5.

^c See Remarks on the Coins of Ephesus struck during the Roman Dominion, p. 29, and the plate, fig. 2.

arrive at the period to which it belongs by a careful comparison of it with other similar objects of which the age is known.

According to my own experience at Ithaca, and the experience of Dr. Lee at the same place, and of other persons who have excavated at Milo (the ancient Melos Insula), objects more or less similar as to workmanship and style of art, have been found with finely preserved Roman family coins in the same grave. These facts seem to point to about 100 B.C. as the period of deposit. If the object appears older, as in the case of the necklace before us, we may assign 150–100 B.C. as its probable age.

The objects discovered at Ithaca by Dr. Lee are, I believe, now deposited in the museum of the Society of Antiquaries, so that every one can have an opportunity of inspecting and comparing those very precious and interesting objects.

I regret that it is out of my power to give you other than these very insufficient hints concerning these beautiful objects.

Believe me, ever,

My dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

THOS. BURGON.

J. Y. Akerman, Esq.

&c. &c. &c.

SINCE this was written I have been favoured with the following observations by Mr. Birch. This gentleman thinks the head at the ends of the chain may probably be that of the goddess $\chi\rho\tau\epsilon\eta$, to whom the Argonauts sacrificed at Lemnos,^a and whose name would allude to the material of which this beautiful ornament is composed:—

“The reason of the abundance of gold ornaments in the sepulchres of the Greeks is owing to the custom which prevailed, just prior to the first century and during the Roman times, of interring the dead in all their decorations and other jewellery. It is to the existence of a similar custom among the Etruscans that the preservation of so many tinsel ornaments is to be ascribed, such being evidently made by undertakers for the dead alone, as they are far too fragile for the ordinary uses of life. This custom prevailed in Asia Minor from the most remote antiquity. The Assyrian, Lydian, Persian, and other monarchs had placed with them in their sepulchres their wardrobes and ornaments; and in the extraordinary tale narrated

^a Millingen, *Vases Grecques*, pl. ii.

by Phlegon of Tralles,^a the damsel Philinnion, who rises from the tomb after death, presents the youth Machates with a gold ring and girdle. Hence he thought that the resurrectionists had sold to her father the garments and jewellery, or gold ornaments, of the girl. In the novel of Charito, the heroine Callirrhoe, who dies suddenly, is laid in the sepulchre with all her jewellery,^b which occasions the pirates to break into the tomb."

^a Opuscula, Halæ, 1777, p. 11. *ᾤετο δὲ νεκρορύκτας τινὰς διωρυχένας τὸν τάφον καὶ πεπρακέναι τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ τὰ χρύσια τῷ πατρὶ τῆς ἀνθρώπου.*—Ibid. p. 12.

^b *πρῶτος μὲν ὁ τῆς φερνῆς χρυσός τε καὶ ἄργυρος, ἐσθητῶν κάλλος καὶ κόσμος.* Charito, Chæreas and Callirrhoe, p. 10, l. 9, ed. 4to, Amstel, 1750.

JOHN YONGE AKERMAN.