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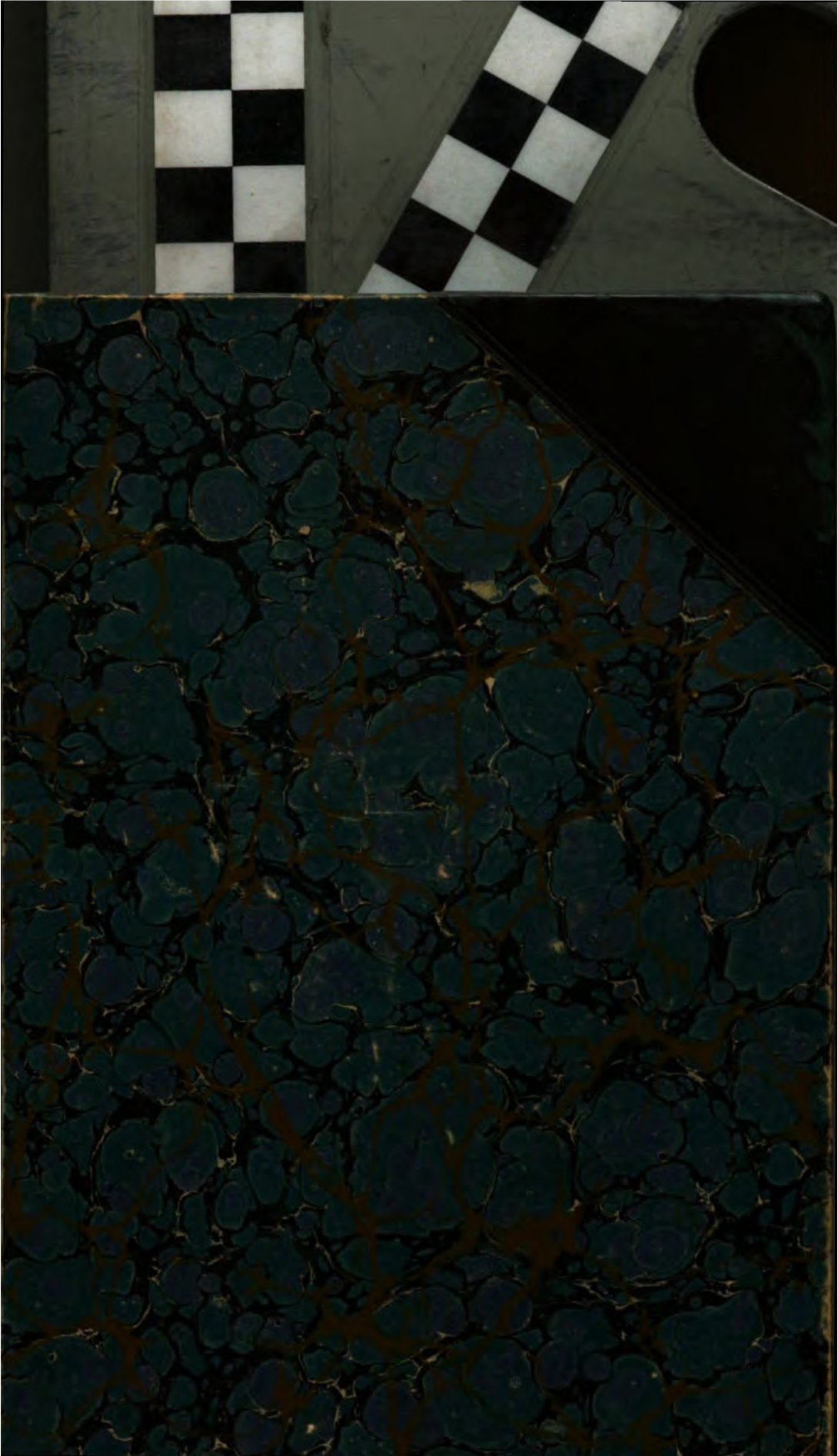
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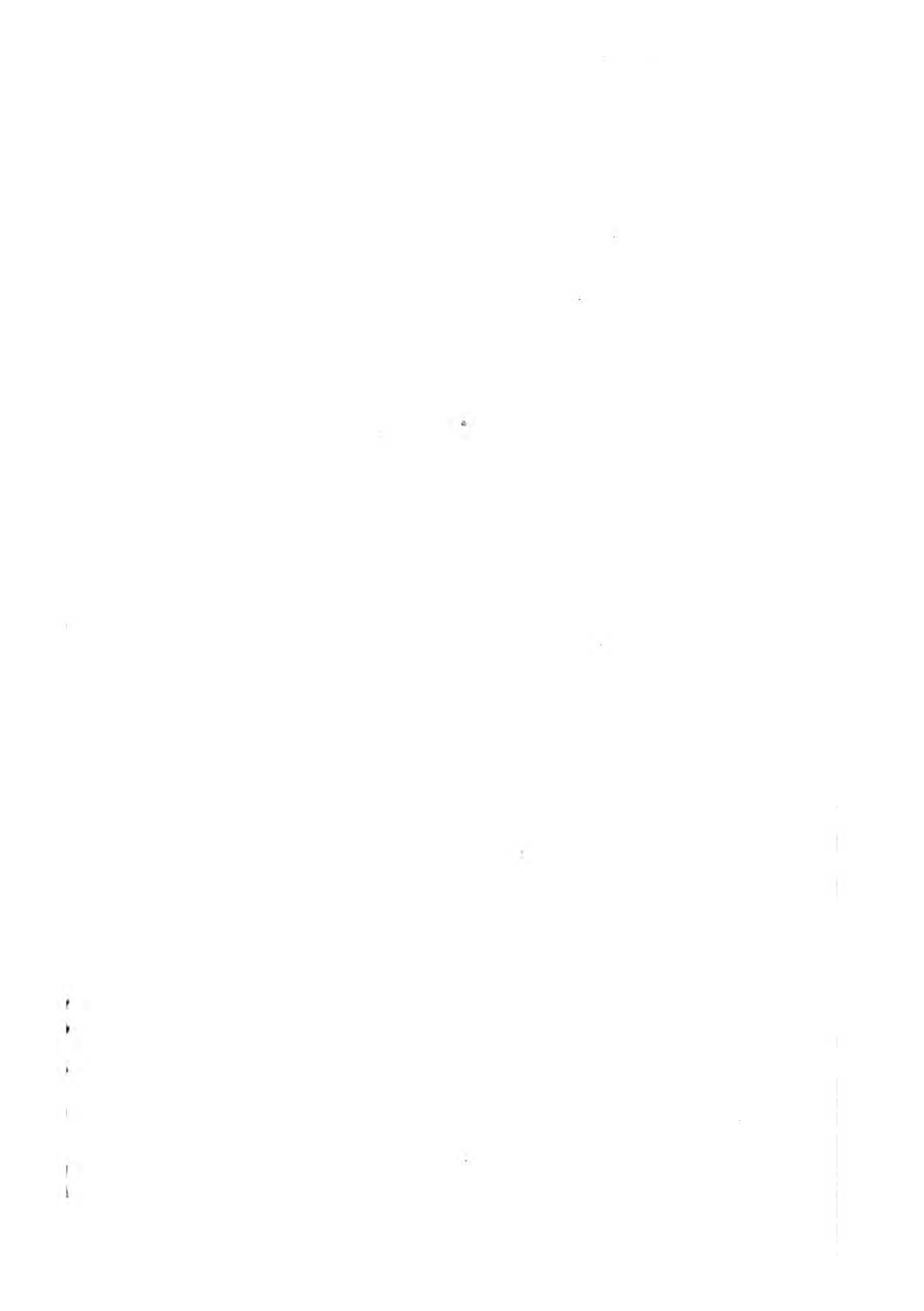
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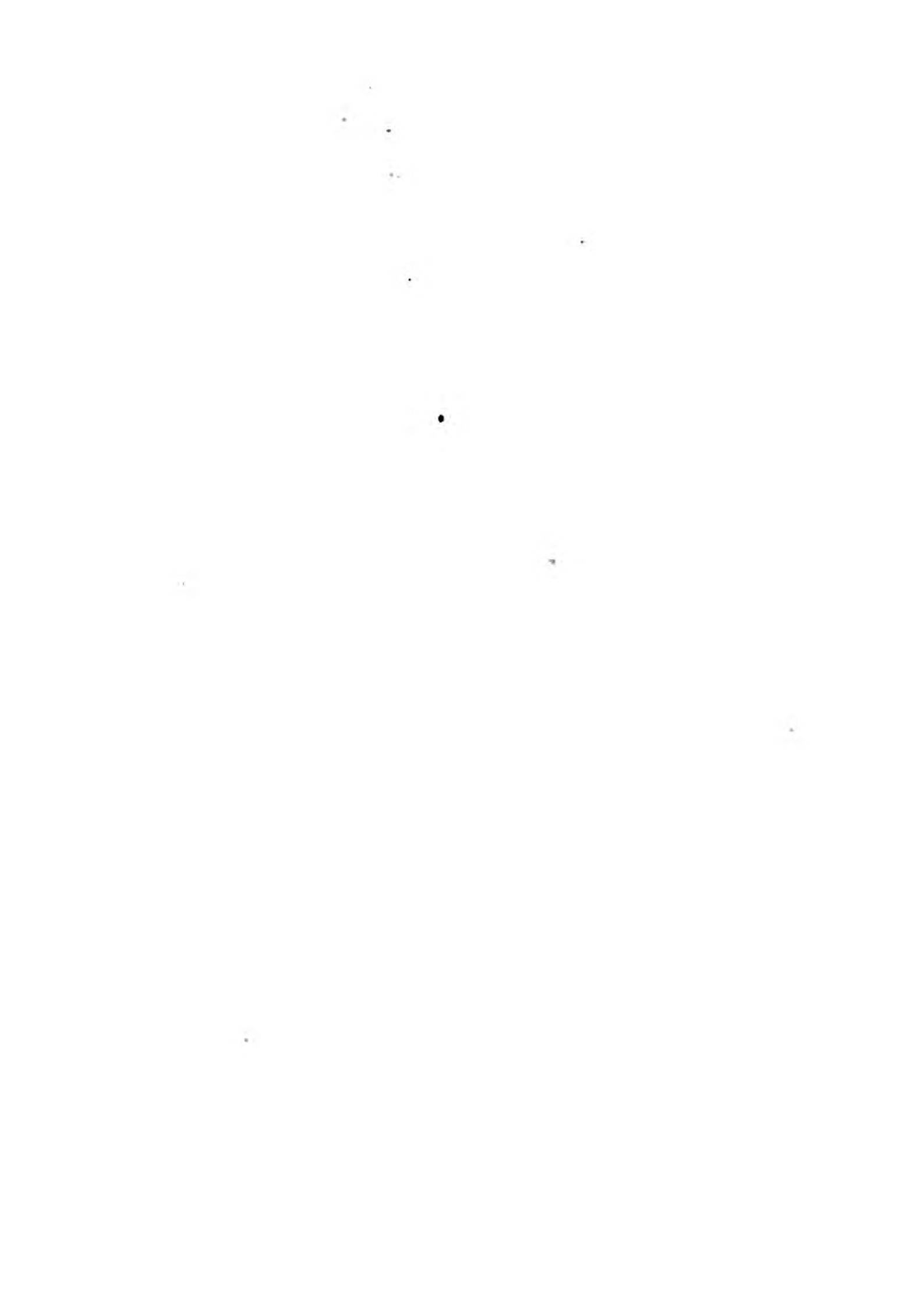
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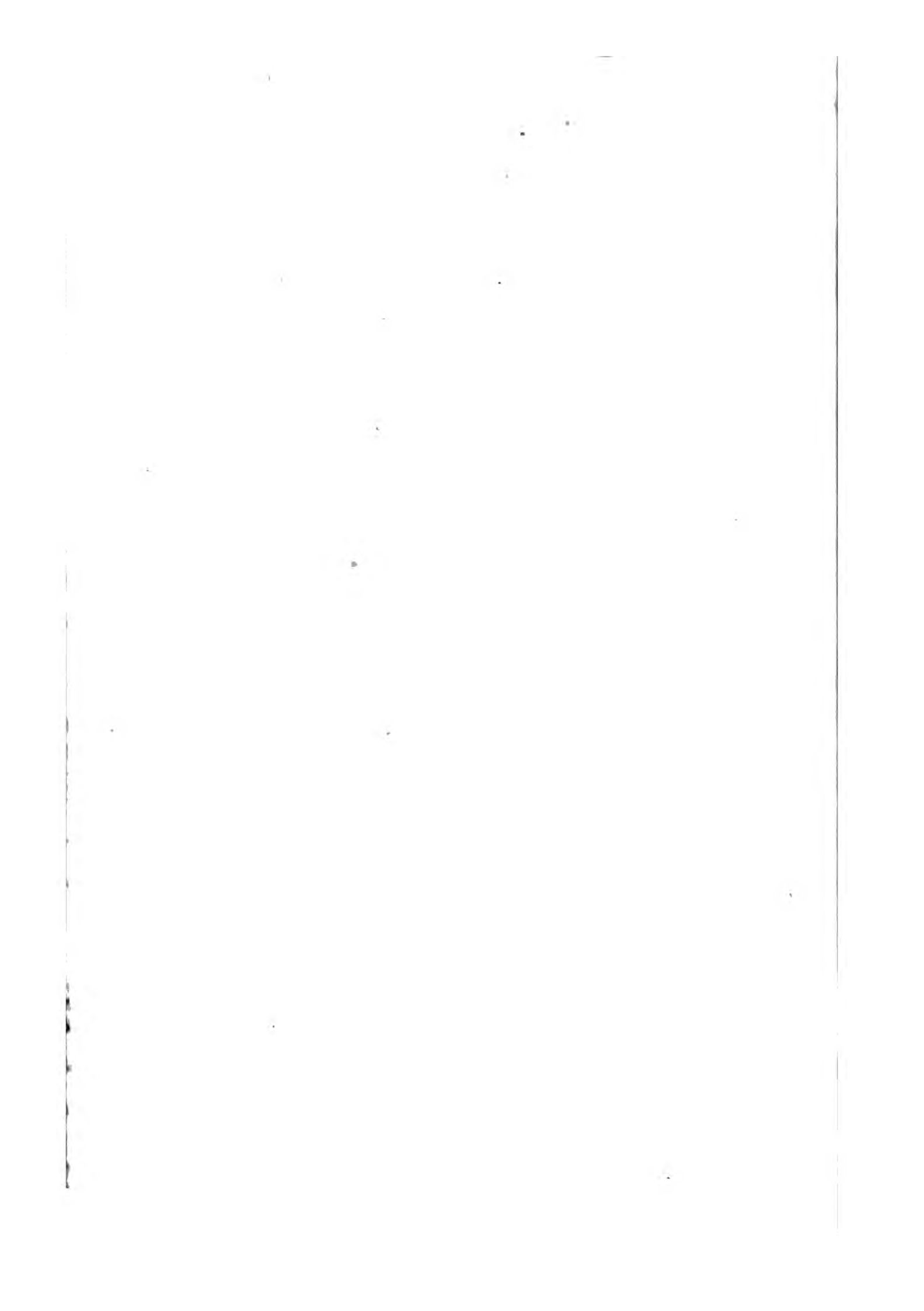
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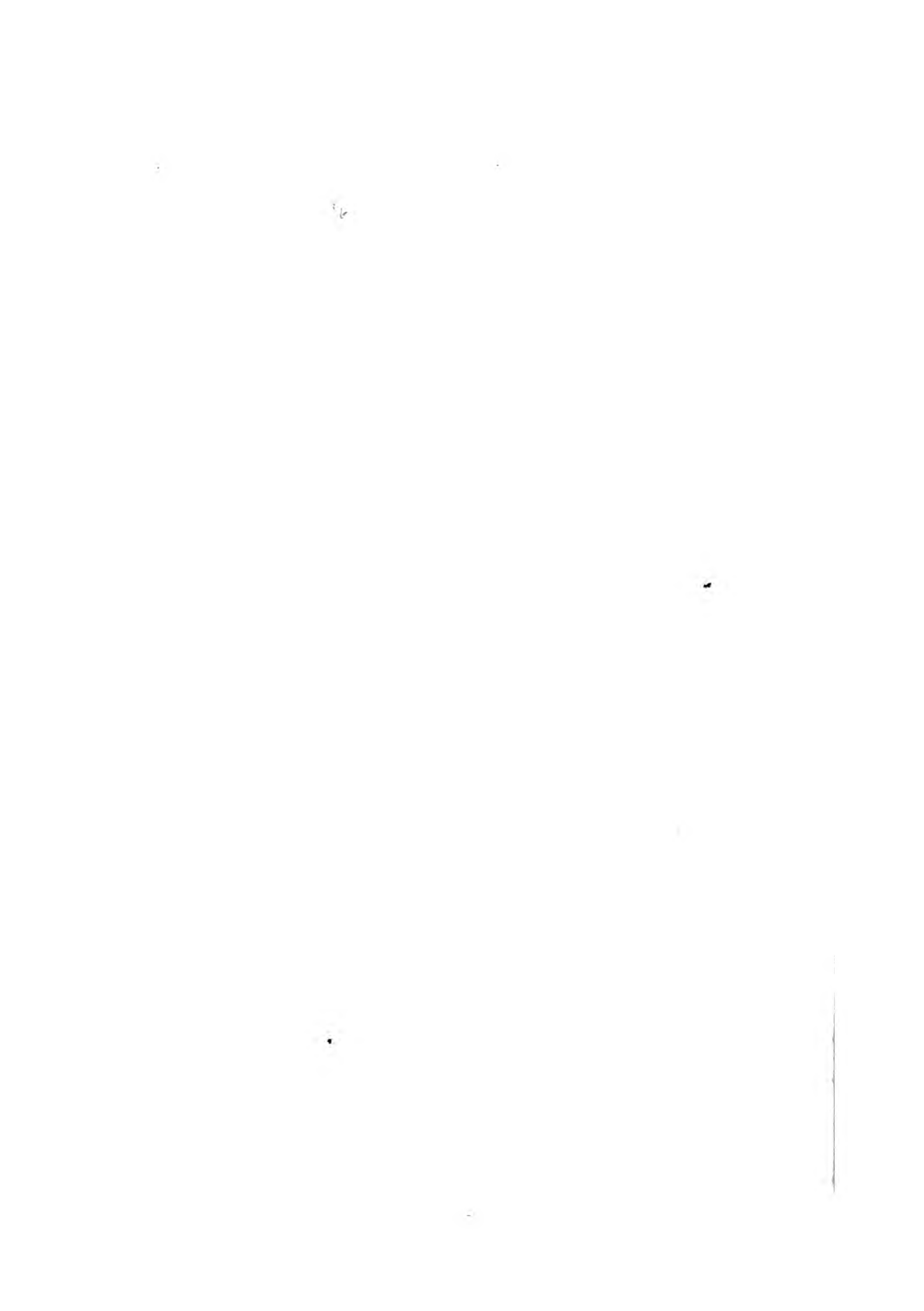


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ON SOME FINGER-RINGS, OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN PERIOD.

By C. DRURY E. FORTNUM, F.S.A.

IN bringing before the notice of the Society a small collection of rings in my possession, which, judging from the emblems and symbols engraven upon them, were undoubtedly worn by Christians of the earlier centuries of our era, I will not venture to discourse upon finger-rings generally, or upon the history of early Christian emblems. Both of these subjects are of large extent and great interest, and have been elucidated by far more able persons than myself. I would merely preface the descriptions of the rings exhibited, which form part of my "*Dactyliotheca*," and are an extremely interesting section, from the associations connecting them with the early history of the Christian church, by a few remarks which bear generally on the subject. It is well known that the greater number of the early converts to Christianity were of the poorer classes, among whom very many were slaves. The habit of dividing the goods of the rich for the benefit of their poorer brethren also prevailed, the indulgence therefore in rich dress and valuable ornament could hardly exist consistently with such observances. Indeed we are told that it was directly reprobated and forbidden by the early fathers; and although so often quoted, I cannot but refer to the letter of Clement of Alexandria who, alluding to the then fashionable use of ornament in excess, particularly to the great number of rings worn,—it being no uncommon thing to cover each joint, (indeed Martial states that one "Charinus" wore always six to each finger, making sixty rings in all for his daily adornment,)—admonishes the Christians that they should wear but one ring, the which to use as a signet, reprovng the habit of having immoral subjects engraven on their signet rings, but that they should adopt a device typical of their faith, such as the palm-branch, emblematic of peace; or a ship in full sail,

representing the church ; a dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit and eternal life ; an anchor, of hope ; a fish, the allegorical “*ἰχθὺς* ;” and other similar devices. Among the rings now described will be found all the emblems here referred to, and in addition some others. The quaint and curious combinations of emblems adopted on early Christian monuments are well known to students of that section of archæology. I would also wish to make some remarks, with a view to the classification of the forms exemplified in this collection, and which appear to have been in vogue at that period, and also on the material of which the rings are made.

These forms do not appear to differ from the general fashion of their day, in the world Christian and Pagan, and may be classified as follows :—

A. The circular hoop of convex metal swelling to the shoulders and flattened to an oval or angular *chaton*. Such are Nos. 2, 8, 10, 24, and 25. The “legionary” rings may be also classed as an oval variety, so shaped possibly to permit of more space on the *chaton*. Such is No. 23.

B. Rings formed of two, three, or more hoops springing from one, widening to the bezel, and generally having beaded wire or chain-work between each hoop. This form, as the last, occurs also at an earlier period. Nos. 1 and 9 are examples of this form.

C. Octagonal. A flat hoop of metal formed into an octagon ; sometimes oval and swelling to the bezel, which is set with a stone or has a raised table of metal ; a form, I think, peculiar to the third and fourth centuries. Such are Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

D. A peculiar form, greatly varying, and, I think, only occurring during the Lower Empire ; sometimes of the largest size, and great weight of metal. The bezel is more or less raised, either in the metal or by an oval truncated conical stone. The shoulders diverge in straight lines at a greater or less angle from the bezel to the sides, from whence the hoop is completed by a semicircle. These rings are sometimes of extreme widths. Nos. 11 and 12 are of this class.

E. A simple hoop, generally of convex metal more or less swelling to the shoulders, and having a circular bezel with flat table, on which the device is engraved ; Nos. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 are of this abundant form. No. 26 is a variety with a square bezel.

F. The simple hoop has a high, trumpet-shaped bezel, formed as an inverted cone, of greater or less height, and sometimes octagonal laterally. Such are Nos. 20, 21, and 22.

This form, and also D., are peculiar to this period of decadence, and occasionally occur of grotesque proportions and development, the tower-like head rising sometimes to more than half an inch in height.

It is singular how the forms of rings repeat themselves at distant periods, but always with modifications. Thus the pointed oval *chaton* of the early Greek, recurs transposed in the last century. The tower-like head, in Gothic times, assumes a crocketed and pointed form of extraordinary development.

On the subject of material, it may be observed that, as a rule, early Christian rings of gold are rare. This might be expected, as the use of rich and numerous ornaments was not in accordance with the teaching of the early church. The rule also of wearing one ring only, as a signet, instead of one nearly on every joint, as was mostly the fashion among the Pagans, would account for the comparative rarity of rings with early Christian symbols.

I have not, to my recollection, seen more than two authentic early Christian rings of silver. Bronze is the more common material; iron being much more rare. This probably arises from the easier oxydation and destructibility of that metal, whilst gold and "enduring bronze" come down to us in good preservation. Among the twenty-six rings now described, *six* are of gold, one of them being Byzantine, and one possibly Pagan. Of iron there are two, one from the dry climate of Egypt, the remaining seventeen being of bronze, and one of jasper. Rings with Pagan subjects of the same period are frequently found of massive gold and silver, occasionally weighing as much as two and three ounces; a silver ring in my possession weighs one ounce.

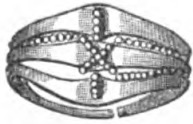
Before entering into a description of each of the rings to which the present notice relates, I will take this opportunity of warning collectors against the many admirable counterfeits, now manufactured at Rome and elsewhere, of early Christian rings, as well as intaglios and cameos, requiring the most careful examination, and not a little experience, to detect the forgeries. All those which I now proceed to

describe have passed the scrutiny of far more able judges than myself, and are of unquestionable antiquity.

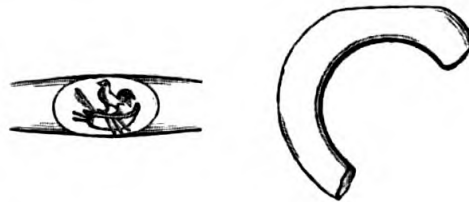
1. Gold triple ring, formed as three hoops, springing from one, and widening towards the bezel, between which a beaded wire fills the open space, and on the bezel is formed into the Christian emblem. This form of the emblem was in use before A.D. 312, and is believed to have ceased after that date.

The ring was, I am told, dug up in a vineyard in Rome, and is probably of the latter end of the third, or beginning of the fourth century.

It is possible that the triple ring tied by the cross may be emblematic of the three persons of the blessed Trinity. Rings of this form were, however, in fashion at that, and at earlier periods, two, three, and as many as five hoops springing from one, being found.



2. Portion of a ring of dark green jasper, on the oval bezel of which the following remarkable, and hitherto unknown symbol is engraved in intaglio, viz.—a boat, on which is a cock, carrying a branch of palm. This symbol, as read by the Padre Garrucci, would indicate the arrival of the blessed soul in the haven where we would be; thus, the bird (the cock) representing the soul, and carrying the palm-branch of peace and victory over this world, is conveyed by the boat, which typifies Christ's Church on earth. The workmanship is sharp and good, pointing to an early period of Christianity, probably the second or third century. I purchased it at Rome.¹



3. Ring of bronze, formed as a flat octagonal band, on the

¹ In the collection of the British Museum is a portion of a ring in cornelian of similar form, on the flat bezel of which is engraved a dove holding a branch; its form, size, and general similarity of workmanship would indicate a corresponding

date. The ship frequently occurs. On an intaglio in the British Museum is a ship having a Greek cross on the prow; two fish are beneath. The dove also occurs on another intaglio in the British Museum, standing on a fish.

outside of which is engraved the inscription—V.I.V. I.N. D.E.O.—*Vivas in Deo*, a form of expression frequent on the *loculi* of the catacombs.

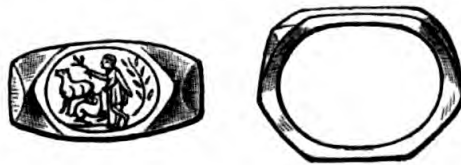
4. Copper ring, formed as a flat octagonal band, engraved thus on the outside—DONATE BIBAS IN DEO. The use of B in place of V in the word VIVAS frequently occurs. This ring and No. 3 are both from Rome, and probably of the fourth century.²

5. Solid gold ring, also formed as a flat octagonal band, but instead of the inscription being engraved outside as in the case of the more ordinary bronze rings, the letters are cut out; each letter occupying a square panel, the ground of



which is cut away, leaving the letter attached merely by points to the sides, a technical peculiarity that may be termed "*champlevé à jour*." This inscription reads—X. P. Ω. Μ. Α. Τ. Ι.—CROMATI—a Christian family name, known to be of the fourth century, as I am informed by the Chevalier De Rossi. This ring was also found at Rome, but I am unable to state in what precise locality. It is believed to be of the third or fourth century, and is an object of considerable interest.

6. Bronze ring of oval octagonal form, widening at the bezel, which is set with a red jasper engraved in intaglio with the subject of a shepherd who stands on the left leg, the right being bent; he is supported by a stick in his right



hand, while the left holds a branch of olive towards two sheep, one standing, the other lying at his feet. Behind

² An intaglio on cornelian in the British Museum has the inscription, "Deus dedit vivas in Deo," a circular wreath or coronet probably of olive or

palm, and the Christian emblem formed of the combined Greek letters, Chi and Rho.

him is an olive tree. The shepherd here would typify our Blessed Lord offering the emblem of peace ("My peace I give to you") to his flock. The two sheep, or lambs, may also be intended to represent the Church of the Circumcision and the Church of the Gentiles, to both of whom he offers the peace of his blessed doctrine. Although there is no distinctive Christian emblem upon this intaglio, I have no doubt, from the subject and its mode of treatment, as well as the general character of the ring, that it is Christian of the third or fourth century.³ I purchased it at Rome.

7. Small heavy gold ring, formed as an octagonal band widening towards the bezel, on which, set in an oval raised collar, is a pointed onyx of three strata, engraved in intaglio with a palm branch. I have some hesitation in thinking that this ring is Christian, although the form and general character is of the third or fourth century, and the palm branch is undoubtedly an early Christian emblem. I have not therefore had it engraved. My doubt of its Christian origin arises, firstly, from its being so weighty for its size; such, however, do occur. One, of angular form, in the British Museum, is set with an emerald, having a fish carefully cut in intaglio, and on the opposite side of the hoop, a dove, seated on a branch, between the letters F A. Another massive gold ring bears an intaglio on onyx I M of the Sacred symbol, the P (the Greek rho) being I L crossed with the third stroke, a form of much more unusual occurrence. My ring is of excellent workmanship—I purchased it at Athens.

8. A child's ring of gold, a simple hoop, flattened out on the bezel, which is engraved also with the palm branch. It was found in a child's tomb in the neighbourhood of Rome, accompanied by that next to be described.⁴

9. Small ring of gold found with the preceding. It consists of two hoops of gold, springing from one, and widening to the bezel; on each of which a small round paste

³ Genuine intagli of early Christian subjects are rare. The British Museum has some interesting examples—the Good Shepherd carrying the lamb on his shoulders being represented in three intagli. On one he is placed between a

fish and a palm branch.

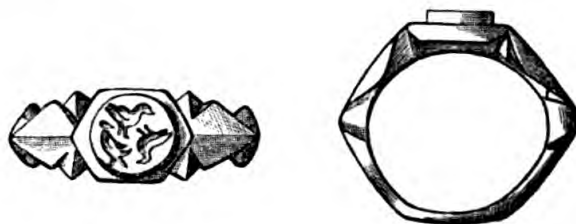
Others of this simple form and engraved with the palm are of frequent occurrence. Several are in the Museum at Naples; and one of silver, a rare material, is in the British Museum.

has been set, but these are now wanting. A plait of gold wire fills the opening between the hoops, and is attached at their junction. The Christian Symbol of the palm-branch engraved on one of these rings, and the workmanship and form, being of the third or fourth century, would, perhaps, warrant the conclusion, that they had belonged to a child received into the faith of Christ.

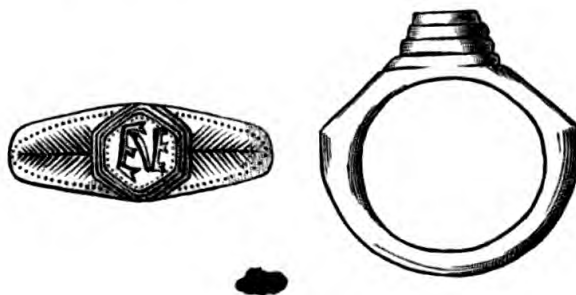


10. Bronze ring—circular hoop of convex metal, swelling to the *scudo* which is of lozenge shape, and on which is engraved the well-known combined X and P. The shoulders are ornamented with lozenge-shaped panelling. From Rome, and of the fourth or fifth century.

11. Bronze ring of coarse workmanship and angular form; the shoulders splayed from the *chaton* to the centre of either side, thence continuing the hoop in a circular form. On a raised circular table of the *chaton* is engraved the device, two doves and a fish.⁵



12. Bronze ring of nearly similar form; the shoulders engraved as palm branches, the bezel raised by four steps or tables, and engraved with a monogram. Also from Rome, and of the same period.



⁵ The fish typifying the Christ or the Christian, the doves the church militant and triumphant.

13. Bronze ring formed as a circle of half round metal, swelling to the shoulders, and having a circular raised *chaton*, on which is engraven a double fluked anchor, crossed by one of a single fluke, and surrounded by a pearled border. This emblem was in use previous to A.D. 312. From the catacombs at Rome.



14. Bronze ring, a plain wire hoop attached to a circular *chaton*, on which is coarsely engraved a ship (the Church) between the letters X and P (*Chi* and *Rho*). Obtained at Rome.



15. Bronze ring, a plain rounded hoop slightly swelling to the shoulders, and surrounded by a plain circular *chaton*, engraved with a draped female, standing between two birds, probably intended for doves, and typifying⁶ the church feeding her proselytes. On either side is the monogram, composed of the letters Chi and Rho. This highly interesting ring is of superior workmanship, and in an excellent state of preservation; it was found in the catacombs, I believe, of S. Calixtus, and was presented to me by my esteemed friend the



Padre Garrucchi, so well known as one of the greatest authorities on early Christian antiquities, and to whom I am indebted for the examination and explanation of the majority of the rings which I now bring under the notice of the Institute. This ring is of the fourth century of our era.

16. Bronze ring, with flat circular bezel, the hoop is circular, and decorated with engraved ornament to represent branches of palm in angular panels. On the bezel a monogram is deeply cut, and for the reading of which I am indebted to the Chevalier de Rossi, the great authority on early Christian antiquities. He renders it "*Deus dona vivas in Deo.*"⁷ This ring is also of the fourth century, of good



⁶ This may also be intended to represent our fond mother, the church, feeding or gathering to her those of the circumcision and of the Gentiles.

⁷ The "*Deus-dona*" must be taken as a single word, or rather a Christian name of base Latinity, but known to have been used in the fourth century. It would equally read *Deo-dona*, a name also I be-

lieve found in inscriptions of the period. The French descendant of this name, "*Dicudonné*," is still met with in France. I have already, in describing No. 4, alluded to an intaglio in the British Museum on which occurs—"Deus dedit vivas in Deo." The engraving of this monogram, as well as that of Nos. 19 and 20, is reversed, being intended for signets.

workmanship, and in excellent preservation, having a rich green patina. I purchased it in Rome.

17. Bronze ring of coarse workmanship, a circular hoop surmounted by a flat circular bezel, on which is engraved an ear of corn between two fishes, emblem of the bread of life, and of those who live in faith of it. This ring is also from the Roman catacombs, and of the fourth century.



18. Bronze ring of similar form and coarse work, having the sacred emblem, the standard of Constantine, engraved on the *chaton*. It is much oxidised, and was found in a Roman vineyard.

19. Bronze ring of similar form but smaller, and also engraved with the same monogram, but with the P (rho) reversed. This ring is said to have been found in the neighbourhood of the house of *Pudens*, which underlies the church of Santa Pudentiana at Rome, and was supposed to have been brought out with the rubbish excavated therefrom.



20. Bronze ring formed as a circular hoop, from which springs a trumpet or inverted conical bezel, on the flat circular face of which is engraved the sacred monogram, round which is the inscription *COSME . VIVAS*. This ring is in excellent preservation, and was found in one of the catacombs on the Via Appia.



21. Bronze ring of the same class as No. 20, but of still more exaggerated form, the trumpet-shaped bezel rising more than one-third of an inch beyond the outer surface of the hoop ; this conical piece is encircled by three projecting mouldings, and the *scudo*, or face, is engraved with the double anchor crossed by a single one, as on No. 13, and surrounded by a dotted line. Where this ring was found I am unable to say ; I purchased it in London. It is probably of the fourth century.

22. Iron ring, of somewhat similar fashion to the last : the bezel is higher, and of octagonal form ; on its flat surface is engraved a subject of two figures, over which is the sacred monogram. On each face of the octagon is

engraven a figure, but the oxidation of the metal renders it impossible to distinguish more than the indistinct form. It is a remarkable ring of its class, both from the material and the great amount of subject engraven upon it. I purchased it in London. From their easy destructibility by oxidation, iron rings are seldom found entire. In the British Museum there is one with a cornelian set in the bezel, and which has been burnt. The intaglio is very rude, an animal, but the cross or sacred emblem is apparent.



23. Bronze "Legionary ring" of oval form with flattened bezel, on which is engraven the so-called legionary number, but this numbering I am unable to decipher. Beneath, at the opposite extreme to the bezel, the hoop is flattened, and



the Christian letters occur. I am unable to account for the *m* which occurs on each shoulder. I procured the ring in Rome. These rings are called "Legionary rings" by the Roman antiquaries. Mr. Waterton thinks that they may have been for the use of soldiers, the number denoting the company or "*cohors*." The Legions never exceeded 28, whereas the numbers on these rings occur to 100. From Rome.⁶



24. Gold ring: a circular convex hoop, widening to the shoulders, and flattened to form an oval bezel, on which is engraven a monogram between two Greek crosses. I have not been able to read the monogram. The ring is Byzantine, probably of the fifth or sixth century, and was found at Constantinople, where I purchased it. The workmanship is excellent.

⁶ See the supplementary notice of a legionary bronze ring in Mr. Waterton's collection.

25. Small iron ring, a circular hoop swelling to the *chaton*, on which is engraved the lion of St. Mark. This ring, which is also probably of the sixth century, was found in a Coptic grave near the Temple of "Medinet Aboo," at Thebes, whence the Christians were driven by the Arabs in the seventh century.⁹ The Lion is probably allusive to the church of St. Mark of Alexandria. On an onyx in my possession the lion is represented in intaglio, accompanied by the Greek cross.



26. Bronze ring, a simple convex hoop holding a square tabular *chaton*, on which is engraved a draped male figure having a nimbus round the head, and standing before a cross which is placed on, or springs from, what would appear to represent a bunch of grapes, to which the cross forms the stem—"I am the true Vine." The form of the cross is what would be termed "potent," each arm having a τ formed termination. This ring is probably Byzantine, of the sixth or seventh century, and is from Athens.



With the Christian rings which have been described I obtained also during my recent visit to the Eternal City a few objects of a different description, but likewise early Christian. These consist of a bronze lamp from the catacombs at Naples, and probably of early Christian origin. The handle is surmounted by a large open flower of six petals. It has two nozzles for light, each of which is also formed as a flower or star of eight points. The cover is wanting; there are points for attaching three chains for suspension. Also two fibulæ of bronze, formed as doves, very probably of Christian origin; and a martyr's tooth, from the Catacomb of S. Callixtus. These objects, as well as the rings, I have had the honor of exhibiting to the Society.

LEGIONARY RING, IN POSSESSION OF EDMUND WATERTON, Esq., F.S.A.

There are a considerable number of the bronze rings designated by collectors "legionary" in the Waterton *Dactylitheca*; they were submitted to the Institute at the annual

⁹ See a notice of Eucharistic and other Christian relics found there, and now in my possession, Arch. Journal, vol. xxv. p. 244.

meeting, at Gloucester, in 1860, and are noticed in the Catalogue of the Temporary Museum, p. 24. Mr. Waterton observed that they had been supposed to have been worn by soldiers, as indicating the legion to which they belonged: the numbers engraved upon them range from 1 to 100. At no period, however, did the legions exceed 28. I am enabled to place before the reader a representation of one of the specimens in Mr. Waterton's series; the letter C. engraved upon



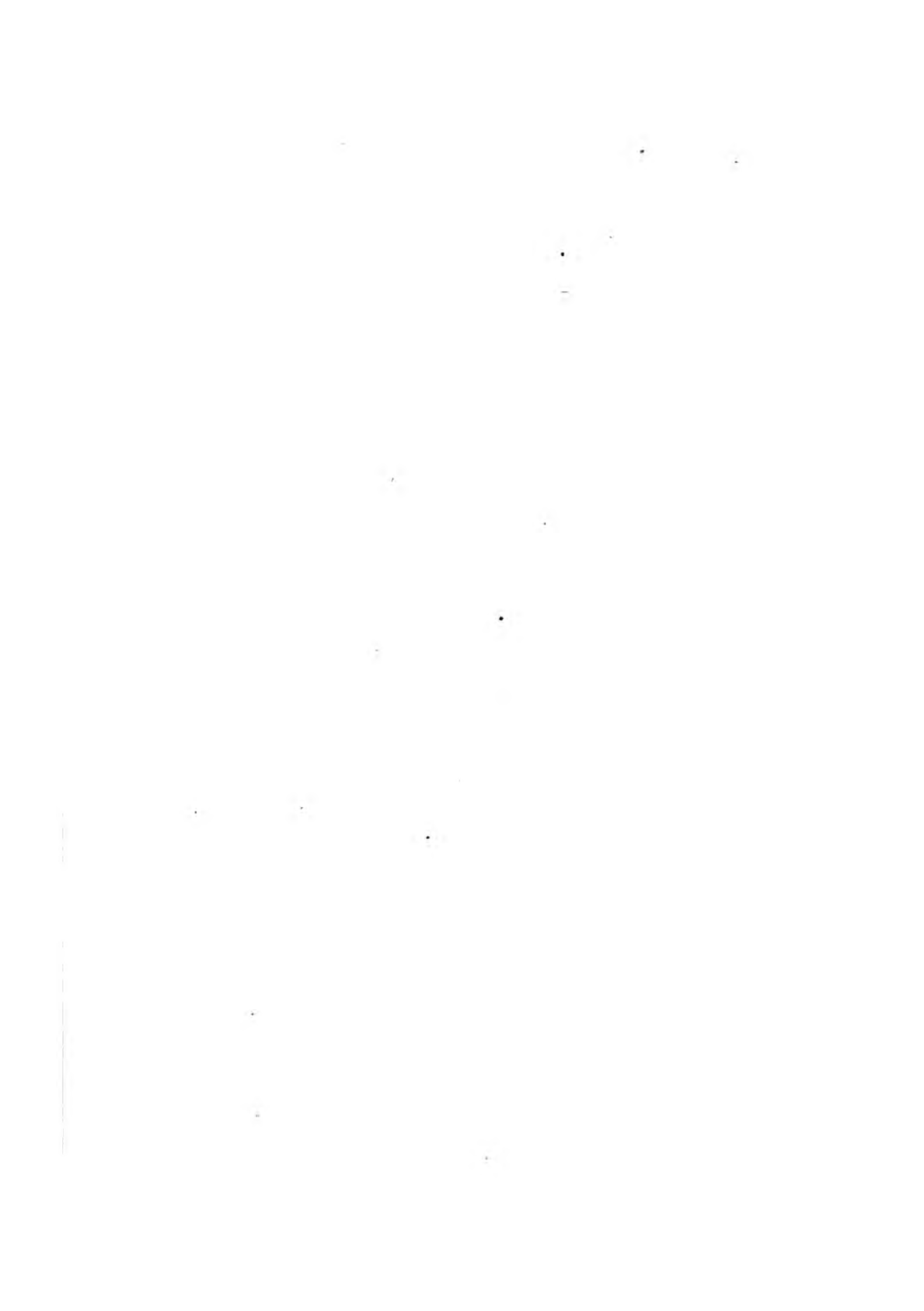
it may seem to corroborate his conjecture, as denoting possibly the Cohort. These curious Roman rings have not been satisfactorily interpreted; one in my possession bears the number LXIV. I am not aware whether any example has been found out of Italy, nor have I heard of another ring of this class that bears,

in addition to the usual Roman numerals, like that in my collection above figured (No. 23), any symbol or monogram that may be assigned to the Christian period.

A remarkably fine gold ring of pierced workmanship, similar to that of No. 5, above described and figured, is in the possession of the Duke of Northumberland. The ground surrounding the letters is cut away; the legend reads—AEMILIA ZESES—small foliated ornaments being introduced to divide the two words. It was found at Corchester, the supposed site of the *Corstopitum* of Antoninus, about a mile west of Corbridge, on the Tyne. This beautiful Roman relic is described and figured in the *Archæological Journal*, vol. vii. p. 192; also in the *Illustrated Catalogue of the Museum formed at Edinburgh during the meeting of the Institute in 1856*, p. 59. There is every probability that this ring is early Christian, and of about the same period as that in my collection (No. 5, *supra*).



2.



ON FINGER-RINGS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN PERIOD.

By C. DRURY FORTNUM, F.S.A.

IN vol. xxvi. of the *Archaeological Journal*, issued by this Society in 1869, at page 137, will be found a somewhat hasty and inadequate notice of twenty-six finger rings of various materials.

All these are ornamented by engraving in intaglio or otherwise, with emblems, monograms, or inscriptions, by which we may conclude that they were, for the most part, fashioned for and used by Christians of the early period of the Church's history.

I now have the pleasure of exhibiting other examples of considerable interest, some of which it has since been my good fortune to obtain; and, in order to give some additional interest to the subject, I have laid upon the table the whole of my collection of early Christian rings, for inspection by the members of our Society.¹

Before describing these additions to my cabinet, I would first propose entering into some consideration of the emblems of more frequent occurrence upon such rings, referring to the works of authors in which examples are recorded, and to collections in which specimens are preserved.

I would then briefly notice the early Christian rings preserved in those museums and private collections which I have had the opportunity of examining.

And, lastly, I would describe those which I now have the honour of presenting to the notice of the Institute.

In my former paper I have referred to the well-known passage in the *Pedagogus Christianus* of Clement of Alexandria. The emblematic representations recommended by him to the members of the Christian Church, for use as signets engraven upon their rings, are—The Dove; the Fish; the Ship running before the wind; the Lyre (a device

¹ This memoir was read at the monthly meeting of the Institute, February 2nd, the collection of rings being then exhibited.

used by Polycrates); the Ship's Anchor (which Silenus wore); a Man Fishing, by which the wearer will be reminded of the apostle and of the children drawn out of the water.

Accordingly we find in the works of Bosio, Aringhi, Boldetti, and later writers, descriptions and some figures of rings and ring stones, discovered in the catacombs and elsewhere, upon which these various emblems are represented. We also find upon rings, other emblems and devices figurative of the Christian faith, and frequently of very beautiful symbolism; together with sentences and words of acclamation. These are engraven upon the material of which the rings are formed, or upon stones with which they are set.

That gold rings were in use by Christians at the time of the Apostles may be inferred from the passage in the Epistle General of St. James, ch. ii. v. 2: "For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel," &c., and Prudentius is referred to (*Peristeph.*, hymn i. v. 85) as an authority for their use, of gold, of silver, and adorned with precious stones. It is against the wearing too many of such adornments that Clement of Alexandria, St. Cyprian, and St. Jerome protest, desiring the use to be limited to one signet, the *annulus*, or *annulus sigillarius* of the Romans.

Two rings are preserved, which are said to have been worn by the Blessed Virgin. One of these was treasured in the Church of Sta. Anna at Rome, and is alluded to by Baronius. The other and more notable is at Perugia, and is formed of amethyst. It is spoken of by V. Du Saussay, in the *Panoplia Episcopalis*, 194; and there is a small volume by Jo. Baptista Laurus (*De annulo pronubo Deiparæ Virginis, Roma*, 1622), entirely devoted to the consideration of this relic, which I regret never having seen.

Boldetti refers to the *ansulæ* or simple rings of bone and ivory which have frequently been found attached to the closing bricks of the *loculi*; the smallness of some, and the large size of others of which, as also the fact of several occurring attached to the same niche, would preclude the idea of their being finger rings. Boldetti and Buonarrotti were of opinion that they were for funereal use only. That term was, however, applied to simple hoops worn as finger rings, for it is recorded that St. Saturnus at his martyrdom

gave such an one to Pudens, dipping it in his blood—
*“Ansulam de digito petiit, et vulneri suo mersam reddidit ei,
 hæreditatem pignoris relinquens illi, et memoriam sanguinis.”*
 Simple rings of iron and bronze have been found in the
 Catacombs.

1. One of the earliest, if not the most ancient emblem in
 use was the Anchor, which in the form of its upper portion
 at once represents a cross, and was a favourite device with
 the early Christians. It was, moreover, the emblem of hope
 in Christ, “the anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast.” It
 sometimes occurs alone and upright, the transverse bar thus
 directly representing the cross or patibulum on which our
 Saviour was suspended; sometimes between the Greek
 letters **X** and **P**, as also between the **A** and **Ω**. On a gem
 mentioned by Bottari, it is seen between the letters **X** and **B**,
 which, as he suggests, may stand for **XPICTOC · BIOC**—
 Christ our life. In the Vatican Museum, on
 No. 2 of the list of that collection which I shall
 presently give, it occurs with the ship. On the
 bronze rings in my own cabinet, described under
 Nos. 13 and 21 of my former paper, it is represented crossed
 by a second anchor with a single lower arm or fluke.²



In the Museum at Naples is a duplex ring of gold, on
 which this emblem is seen with the palm branch. On No. 1
 of my list of the Castellani Collection, a gold ring, is the
 anchor of simple form, not having the loop or ring at the
 lower end, as so frequently depicted on the slabs of the
 Catacombs, nor the recurved arms; neither are the ends of
 the cross-bar wedge-shaped.

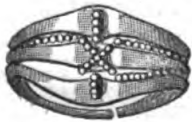
A ring figured by Boldetti, and from him by Macario
 (p. 157), Martigny, and others, has a bezel formed of two
 conjoined circles, upon one of which is a ship and on the
 other an anchor. This last, if rightly figured from the ori-
 ginal, would cause some doubt as to the genuineness of the
 ring, the anchor being without cross-bar, the lower arms hav-
 ing double-winged or barbed flukes, like those in modern use.
 A similar careless misrepresentation occurs however in the
 engravings of anchors accompanying inscriptions.

² By the word fluke I do not wish to
 denote that flattened and winged or
 barbed extremity of the curved lower
 arm, which is characteristic of the modern

anchor, and, I believe, never to be seen
 on antique representations, but the lower
 and hook-formed arm itself.

2. The Cross. Volumes have been written upon this glorious emblem of our faith, but I do not propose going further into the subject than to mark those varieties recorded upon rings or ring stones. That the anchor was a covert representation of the cross there can be but little doubt;³ and it seems equally probable that its use preceded that of the sacred monogram composed of the letters **X** and **P**, *chi* and *rho*. That the "wedge-limbed" cross was derived from the form, and was to a certain extent representative of the Greek letter, as suggested by the Rev. J. G. Joyce, F.S.A., B.D., in his able paper on the Sarcophagus of Valerius Amandinus, in vol. xxvii. of the *Archaeological Journal*, would seem to be highly probable; but that it preceded the simple form represented by the upper portion of the anchor, may be open to question. A peculiar and early form of the cross occurs, which I have never observed upon rings, it is † what in heraldry is termed a "cross cramponnée," the limbs of equal length having their extremities bent at a right angle to the right.

A plain upright cross $+$, having arms of equal length, and not wedge-shaped, occurs on various objects, and sometimes on rings. The same form turned one-fourth round becomes a "saltire," and would represent the letter **X** of the sacred monogram. This again crossed perpendicularly by an upright stem is another variety ✠ , which is referred to by Boldetti and Longpérier, and thought to be a form of sacred monogram derived from the letters **I** and **X**, and without the **P**. Of this variety we have an instance on the gold triple ring described in my former paper (No. 1). Dr. Smith is of opinion that these several forms were in use anterior to A.D. 312.



A further complication of this figure consists of two crosses crossing each other, and forming a star of eight points ✳ . An example of this occurs on a ring in the Castellani Collection (No. 11 of my list). It also is seen apparently as a star upon a ring now in the Vatican (No. 15 of my list), and figured by Aringhi, Boldetti, Curtius, and others, in combination with a dove and the sacred mono-

³ See De Rossi's references to gems, &c., in the *Spicilegium* of Pitra, noticed by the Rev. Mr. Joyce.

gram. Aringhi figures a foot-shaped stamp ring having the name JVSTVS and the star * or double cross.

These forms lead us to, and are almost superseded by, the sacred monogram.

Nevertheless the cross occurs alone at a later date, in the form generally known as the Greek cross, as also with the lower limb elongated. Two varieties are frequent—one with wedge-formed limbs of equal length ✠ as seen on either side of a monogram on the gold ring described and figured (No. 24) in my former paper, and which may be of earlier date than there stated. Also upon a gilt bronze ring in the Vatican (No. 17 of my list). It is the “cross patée” of heraldry. The other variety, having the lower limb longer than the others, we have illustrated on the gold Byzantine ring of the fifth century, bearing two portrait-heads, which I shall presently describe under No. 33.



Again we have another variety, the arms of which have a T *tau*-formed termination—the “cross potent” of the heralds. It is seen on a fine gold duplex ring in the Castellani Coll. (No. 2 of my list), above a monogram and beneath the name BLITHIA. Again on No. 3 of the same collection, on either side of a seated figure. In the Vatican, on Nos. 7 to 10, and on No. 14 with the word VIVAS.

No. 26 of those in my own collection, figured in my former paper, is another instance, where it surmounts what may be a bunch of grapes, but which the Rev. Padre Garucci thinks may represent a glass cup, decorated with those bosses of blue or green colour enclosing subjects in gold, so well known to students of Christian antiquities, and which have been so ably illustrated by that learned antiquary. While upon this matter, I would call attention to the subject engraved on the bezel of the iron ring described by me in that paper under No. 22. On it are represented two figures, surmounted by the sacred monogram, probably intended for Sts. Peter and Paul, and exactly corresponding with the representations upon some of the gilded glass bottoms



of drinking-cups found in the Catacombs, and so well known.

The significance of the cross is palpable, and its power as a charm over evil well known. Prudentius says—

“ Crux pellit omne crimen,
Fugiunt crucem tenebræ,
Tali dicata signo
Mens fluctuare nescit.”—Cathem. Hymn VI.

3. The sacred monogram composed of the letters **X** and **P**, the *chi* and *rho* of the Greek alphabet. This emblem is found more frequently than any other on Christian rings and various objects, but it cannot be considered as one of the earlier symbols. It was adopted by Constantine on the *labarum*, although probably known and in use anterior to his placing it on the imperial standard. The earliest instance of its occurrence is said to be about A.D. 317, although it has also been stated that its first use was in A.D. 323. We find it alone, and accompanied by almost all the other emblems, with inscriptions, with monograms, and between the **A** and **Ω**.

Letronnius (quoted by Macario) thinks that its earliest form was as the upright Greek cross, the upper limb of which **♀** is looped to form the letter **P**.

Under the ordinary form **☩** it was publicly used in 377. Macario, in his *Hagioglypta* (Paris, 1856), at pages 162-3, gives a great variety in the form of this monogram as occurring on monuments. He, however, sadly misrepresents an engraving from a ring given by Aringhi (*Roma Subterranea*, p. 385), and correctly copied by Curtius (Francesco de Corte) at p. 120 of his *Syntagma*. This ring, which belonged to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, was of crystal, with twisted or corded stem; upon the *scudo* or face was engraved an unusual type of the monogram **☩** formed by an elongated **T** passing through the centre of the **X**, and having the reversed lobe of the **☩** immediately beneath its top bar; thus combining the *tau* cross with that derived from the letter **X**. The letters **Ω** and **A** are, one on each side of the upper part; a snake coils round the base, on either side of which is a cock; the word *SALVS* is engraved beneath the bezel. It will be observed that the **A Ω**, as well as the **P**,

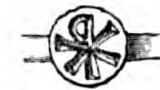
are reversed, the ring having served as a seal. In Macario's engraving from Aringhi he reverses the letters as though copying from an impression of the signet, omitting the cross bar of the **T** above the loop of the **P**, and merely leaving us the ordinary monogram. Again, in place of the serpent at the base, as shown by Aringhi, he figures a sort of flower of four petals, and he represents the hoop as though fashioned like a series of cylindrical billets placed side by side, in lieu of being corded.

This interesting ring no longer exists in the Barberini cabinets. In answer to inquiries kindly made by a friend at my request, the librarian most courteously made recent search among all the private collections in the palace, as well as the contents of the library cabinets. It is supposed to have been swept away among the many thousand other objects of which Italy was pillaged during the devastating wars of the first years of this century.

The ordinary form of the monogram is seen alone or with other emblems on rings Nos. 11, 15, 16, 18 to 25 and 26 of my list of the Vatican collection, on one now missing from the Waterton collection with the ship, on No. 7 of the Castellani Collection, also with the ship. On No. 5 of that collection the **P** and **X** occur separately as on No. 14 of my own with the ship. Boldetti figures one on which it is placed between two palms.



In my own collection it is graven on No. 15 with a female and doves; on Nos. 18, 19 alone; on No. 20 with *COSME VIVAS*; and on the iron ring No. 22 with two figures. On No. 30, presently to be described, it is of the form of the upright slightly wedge-limbed cross; and on a fine gold ring in the Castellani Collection (No. 5)

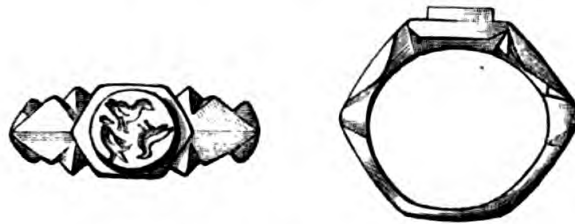


it is similarly formed of cloisons to contain precious stones or enamel. The same shape is seen on a stamp in the Vatican. The variety having a third and horizontal cross bar is to be seen on a rudely worked gold ring in the British Museum engraved on nicolo. This ring has been, not too well, figured by Edwards in his "History and Poetry of Finger Rings," at p. 40.



4. The letters **A** and **Ω**, the alpha and omega under which our Lord is represented in the Apocalypse, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," "the beginning and the ending." These occur with other symbols as in the nielloed ring which I shall describe under No. 30, and again upon Nos. 16 and 26 in the list of those in the Vatican. Boldetti at p. 504 figures a ring on which these letters occur alone. The **Ω** is, as far as my observation goes, always written thus, and not as the capital letter now in use. I may here add, as a correction to my former paper, that a more careful cleaning of the bronze ring there described under No. 10 has revealed the existence of the **A Ω**, one on each side of the sacred monogram.

5. The Dove, which typifies the Holy Ghost, the Christian soul, or when flying with the palm or olive branch it represents the *SPIRITVS . IN . PACE*, having won the prize in the race or battle of life. It is frequently depicted with other emblems. On a ring figured by Aringhi, and now in the Vatican (No. 15 of my list), it occurs with the **☩** and a star. Boldetti mentions it on a flat gold ring; and a gold one is recorded by De Rossi, probably the fine ring now in the British Museum, set with an emerald on one side engraved with the fish, while the lower bezel has a tree engraved on the metal, surmounted by a dove, the letters of the name *AEMILIA* being on either side.⁴ A bronze ring in the Waterton Collection (No. 3) is engraved with a dove. In my own



collection it is seen on No. 11 with the fish; on No. 15 with a female figure, probably typifying the church.

⁴ In my former paper at p. 142, the first letter of this name is wrongly printed as **F** and the lower **A** omitted. On the ring they are reversed, as for a signet, thus:—

E A
I M
I I
A

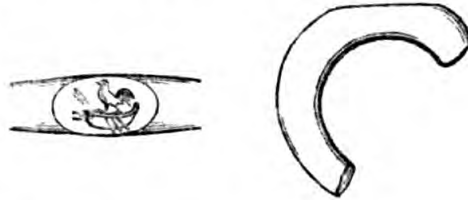
This ring is not too correctly represented at the top of Plate XVI. in Perret's "Catacombes de Rome," in which it is made to appear deeper in proportion to its width than is actually the case.

6. The fish, or **ΙΧΘΥΣ**, a symbol of our Lord, used because the letters of the word form an acrostic of His sacred name and title Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour. This symbol is one of the earliest, and occurs more frequently on gems, than engraved on the metal of rings. It is moreover the symbol more frequently forged in various ways than perhaps any other, that of the **☩** being however almost as often added to antique plain metal rings, and other objects, by the clever fabricators of false antiquities. The fish would sometimes appear to typify the Christian. It occurs on the fine gold ring in the British Museum, engraved upon the emerald with which it is set; on another gem, the fish, on the back of which is the dove with palm or olive branch, with the **☩** and the name **RVFI**. The ring of St. Arnulphus, which is considered to be earlier than the fourth century, and is preserved in the Cathedral of Metz, has an agate of milk-white colour on which a fish is engraved. In my own collection it is seen with two doves on the coarse bronze ring No. 11, and two fish, between which is an ear of corn, on No. 17. On No. 9 of the Castellani collection one large fish is seen between three smaller ones. Again on a simple gold ring in the museum at Naples. De Rossi describes about thirty genuine gems on which the fish and variations of the word **ΙΧΘΥΣ** occur. Some others have since been found.



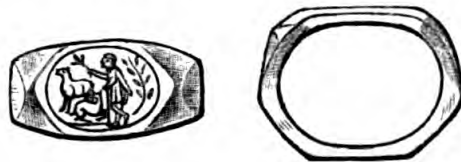
7. The Ship. This emblem is met with engraved on stones and on the metal bezel of rings. When alone it is considered to be emblematic of the happy voyage to the safe haven of eternity, whereas, when represented on the back of the fish it probably typifies the Church. In Boldetti we find figured a ring, already mentioned, with double bezel, on one of which is an anchor (of dubious form), and on the other a ship. In the Waterton Collection was a massive bronze signet ring, with the ship in full sail, having the sacred monogram upon the sail, while round it are the names, **STEPENVVS . HELENÆ**. In the Castellani Collection are two fine bronze rings in perfect preservation, on which this emblem is seen (Nos. 6 and 7), and it is rudely represented on No. 14 in my own cabinet. Alexander (Ref. Symb. Rom., 1628) describes a ring-stone, and another is given by Ficoroni (Gemme Antiq.) on which the ship is

borne upon a fish. The ring of Cardinal Borgia was set with an antique intaglio, the subject of which was a ship, having six rowers on one side, which, presuming the corresponding six on the other, would represent the twelve apostles; there is also a pilot or helmsman, and the name **IHCOYC** inscribed on the reverse, allusive to Our Lord. Another variety of the



ship, on which is a cock, with palm, is seen on a jasper ring, No. 2 in my former list.

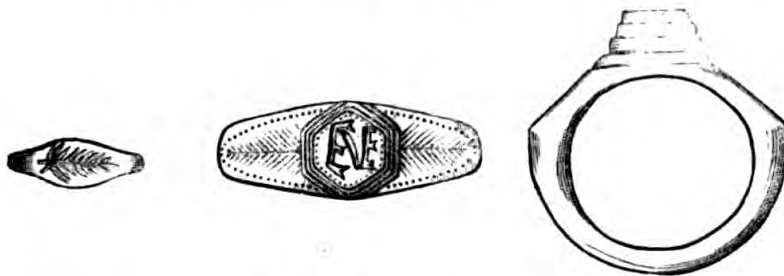
8. The Good Shepherd, the *Pastor bonus*, generally represented carrying the lamb in his arms or upon his shoulders, is a subject engraved upon ring-stones, but I have never seen it upon the metal bezel of the ring itself. Forgeries of this figure are also frequent. In the British Museum is an early Christian gem with this subject on red jasper; another on carnelian, with a wreath and **✠**, and the inscription, *Deus dedit vivas in Deo*; and also on an onyx of three strata between the fish and a palm. I may again refer to my own collection, No. 6 of which is a bronze ring set



with an intaglio on red jasper, representing the Shepherd holding a branch of olive to two sheep, a variety differing from the typical representation. The lamb alone occurs on a fine bronze ring in the Waterton Collection. Tertullian tells us that in his day it was usual to represent the *Pastor bonus* upon the chalice used for the commemoration of the Sacrament. "Procedant ipsæ pictura calicum vestrorum ubi est ovis perdita a Domino requisita et ejus humeris revectora."

9. The Palm Branch. This emblem occurring alone is one of various signification, as there is no doubt that it was in constant use as a pagan symbol of material victory, and adopted by the Christians as emblematic of the spiritual victory over

sin and death. For this reason, in the absence of other evidence to prove that the object on which it occurs is really Christian, I should hesitate accepting it alone as a warrant for such attribution. Mr. Waterton is of opinion that those really Christian may be distinguished by the rude manner of the representation, more truly, as he justly observes, figuring the natural object, but I cannot pin my faith on that alone. Among the rings discovered in Greek and Greco-Roman tombs by General Cesnola in the Island of Cyprus, were several children's rings, some of which are now in my possession; of those found together, some are rudely figured with a palm leaf, others inscribed in *opus punctatum* with the word ΕΠΑΓΑΘΟΙΣ or ΕΠΑΓΑΘΩ—Ep' agathois, or agathō "to the good," child or children being understood, and from which we may infer that they were rewards or prizes given for success in learning, or in the games.⁵ Moreover, no other Christian emblems have occurred on objects found with these rings. I should be disposed, therefore, to doubt whether the examples numbered 7, 8, and 9, and perhaps even 12, and described in my former paper, can really



be considered as Early Christian. The same doubt may attach to a silver ring with palm in the British Museum; to a duplex ring of gold with two palms, and to several small single rings of gold in the Naples Museum; as also to a gold one in the Waterton Collection.

When used as a Christian symbol the palm branch is also the emblem of martyrdom; it signifies victory over death, as seen by St. John in the Apocalypse.

⁵ Mr. Oldfield suggests that these words may rather imply that the rings were given as rewards for the good deed or action, deeds or actions; as it would hardly be reasonable that *one* ring should be given between good children. It was also suggested that they may have been

votive rings to the good deity or deities of the temple or spot where they were found. It is even more probable that the words signified, or were intended to convey, a wish or invocation of good to the recipient of the gift.

10. We find on some Christian rings and stamps words and sentences, or acclamations, of a parallel character though in a different spirit from those so frequently occurring upon Pagan Roman objects. Thus we have VIVAS . BIBE. &c., and again SPES . IN . DEO—VIVAS . IN . DEO alone, or accompanied by a proper name. On a gem in the British Museum we find DEVS . DEDIT . VIVAS . IN . DEO. De Rossi gives a nearly similar reading to the monogram on my ring, No. 16,



and on Nos. 3 and 4 are varieties of the second admonition. On No. 20 COSME . VIVAS . surrounds the sacred monogram. On the gold ring I shall presently describe it occurs with the name and a star. Upon shoe-sole shaped rings we have IN DEO. Again, upon larger stamps of bronze in the Vatican Museum, and upon one in my own collection to be described. A larger shoe-sole stamp in the Vatican bears SPES . IN . DEO. The word VIVAS alone, and accompanied by the palm and cross, and by the words IN . DEO, is also seen upon rings in the Vatican Collection (Nos. 6, 13, 14).

Some sixteen years or more since, a fine gold ring was discovered in the river Saone, which passed into the hands of Cardinal de Bonald. It is believed to be of the third or fourth century, and round the *chaton* is engraved the acclamation, VIVAS . IN . DEO . ASBOLI. It is figured by Le Blant (*Insc. Chrét. de la Gaule*, t. i. p. 64, pl. 6).

Other devices more rarely occur, as that of Abraham's Sacrifice, which I shall presently describe; the female figure typifying the Church on No. 15 of my former list; the ear of corn on No. 17; the lion on No. 25.

No. 8 of the Castellani series is a bronze ring with twisted shank of exactly similar character, and apparently of similar *provenance*, to those on which the ship is incised. This represents a hare or rabbit feeding on a bunch of grapes, and is believed by that gentleman to be a Christian emblem.

When last in Rome I purchased a solid gold antique ring engraved with the subject of a hare pursued by a dog.

I hesitated adopting the opinion of some, that a Christian emblem of persecution was here represented, agreeing rather with the suggestion of the Rev. Padre Garucci, that dogs chased hares before the days of Christianity. The ring is of the fourth or fifth century. Perret, in his folio work, "Catacombes de Rome," volume iv. on plate xvi. at No. 43, figures a gem on which this subject is represented, and which, it appears to me, has little more claim to rank as an early Christian emblem than that upon the gold ring in my possession, and which I have exhibited with the rest. I have already alluded to a bronze ring in the Waterton Collection, on which a sheep or lamb alone is engraven. In that gentleman's description of the portion of his rich *Dactyliotheca* contributed to the Special Loan Exhibition of 1862, at page 627 of the revised edition of the catalogue, he gives an explanatory account of the subject on a gold ring with silver bezel, engraved with an elaborate symbolical representation. I do not recollect having examined this ring, which has unfortunately been lost sight of during the vicissitudes to which that fine collection was exposed, previous to its being secured for the nation. A coarse double-bezeled ring, No. 6 in that collection, has the cross upon one, and the figure of an *orante* on the other.⁶

EARLY CHRISTIAN RINGS IN THE VATICAN MUSEUM OF
CHRISTIAN ANTIQUITIES.

As might be expected, the Vatican contains one of the richest collections of early Christian rings, many of which were found in the Catacombs.

I will briefly describe all the more important from notes taken directly from the rings themselves, the greater number of which I had an opportunity of minutely examining.

The majority are of bronze, of which the following,—

1. A key-ring, with circular projection, pierced with a cross, of precisely similar type to that presently to be described and figured (No. 32) from my own collection. It is believed to have been found in the Catacombs.

⁶ While writing on a subject connected with early Christian antiquity, I am made too painfully aware that one kindly face is missing from amongst us, which used to beam over our table and our assembly, spiriting our driest subject with a genial

joke, enlightening us with a fund of learning, illustrating our discussions by apt reference, and now by the want of these we are sadly reminded how much we have lost in our lamented friend the very Rev. the Canon Rock.

2. One with circular bezel, on which is engraved the ship and the anchor.

3. Having a monogram on the bezel, $\text{N}\overline{\text{E}}$, composed of the letters N . A . P . E . E and perhaps I. There is no Christian symbol on this ring, nor on that which follows.

4. With the letters Ξ Ϡ reversed.

5. Having the separate letters P . X . (I had some doubt of the integrity of this ring, but it may have been over-cleaned).

6. Having a square bezel, incised

VIVAS
INDEO

7 to 10. Three bronze hoops, each engraved with a ⚡ "potent," and inscriptions which I was unable to transcribe.

11. A fine ring, with broad pelta-shaped bezel engraved with the Ϡ between two stars * above a name, which in consequence of the oxidation of the metal is not clearly legible, but which appears to be composed of the letters N O T -- M O R M I T -- M.

12. On the circular-oval bezel are inscribed two words separated by a transverse line, which Mr. Soden Smith suggests may be read—

Κυριε	O LORD
Σωτηρ(?)	(our) SAVIOVR.

13. A stamp-ring, of bronze, with bezel shaped as the sole of a shoe, and engraved with the word VIVAS reversed, SAVIV.

14. A hoop-ring, engraved with a branch of palm, a ⚡ , and the word VIVAS.

15. A bronze ring, with large oblong square bezel engraved with the Ϡ (reversed) and the dove standing on an olive branch, and beneath a star. This is, in all probability, the ring engraved and described by Aringhi in the Roma Subterranea, p. 385, of his second volume.

16. The Ϡ between Α and Ω .

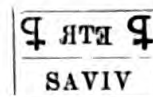
17. A bronze ring, gilt, with high trumpet-shaped bezel, similar to that described under No. 21 of my former paper, and engraved with a ⚡ .

18 to 25. Are bronze rings of less importance, engraved with the Ϡ only, or with the dove, the palm, &c., one of which is formed as the sole of a shoe.

26. A bone or ivory ring, on the oval bezel of which is engraved the P between the A and W . This can hardly be one of the ansulæ referred to by Boldetti?

27. The only gold ring in the collection was found with a gold and a silver bell. It is a simple hoop, I think inscribed, but unfortunately I am unable to find a memorandum of the inscription.

As I shall presently have to direct your attention to a bronze stamp, found with the ring No. 30 in my own collection on which is represented the sacrifice of Abraham, I have appended hereto the inscriptions upon four similar stamps, which are also preserved in the Christian Museum of the Vatican. On one of them the following inscription in relief is upon the oblong square face of the stamp,



On another of similar form is incised



Another of the same shape is in relief, $\boxed{+ \text{ANST}}$

Another, formed as the sole of a shoe, of larger size than the rings of that form, has the letters reversed and incised—



THE MUSEUM AT NAPLES

contains some Christian rings of gold,—

1. Of duplex form, is engraved with the palm and the anchor.
2. Of simple form, engraved with a fish.
3. Set with an intaglio on sard, engraved with a ship.
4. Duplex, with palms engraved on each bezel; doubtful whether Christian.

And several small gold rings engraved with a palm, which may or may not be Christian.

In several of the continental museums are to be seen antique rings with palms engraved upon them, and occasionally one with the sacred monogram.

The unfortunate state of the French capital, till lately,

has precluded my examination of the contents of her cabinets. I am therefore unable to refer to them in this paper.

THE CASTELLANI COLLECTION,

now exhibited in the British Museum, contains some remarkably fine early Christian rings.

1.⁷ Of gold, a flat band swelling towards the bezel, on which is a raised oval, engraved with a simply-formed anchor.

2. A heavy duplex ring of gold, found at Orvieto ; on the oval bezel of one of the united hoops is incised the name BLITHIA, and on the other $\text{L} \frac{\text{H}}{\text{A}} \text{B}$, apparently a monogram of the same name.

3. A massive gold ring, set with a garnet, on the face of which is rudely engraved a draped figure seated between two Greek crosses, of the form known in heraldry as "potent." The gold setting is embossed with figures of doves on the shoulders.

4. A heavy plain gold ring, round, with flattened bezel, coarsely engraved with the palm (? Christian).

5. Gold ; an octagonal hoop, swelling to the shoulders, and surmounted by the letter D , formed of *cloisons* of gold, which have held stones or enamel. A remarkable and beautiful ring.

6. Bronze ring, with twisted or corded hoop and circular bezel, engraved with a ship propelled by oars, the mast and yard of which form a D cross.

7. Bronze ring of similar form ; on the bezel is engraved a ship, also propelled by oars, the mast of which supports a circle bearing the sacred monogram, X

8. Bronze ring of similar form ; on the bezel is engraved a hare feeding on a bunch of grapes.

9. Bronze ring of coarse work, the bezel engraved with one large fish between three smaller ones.

10. Coarse bronze ring, with oval bezel, engraved with a cross or anchor, partially obliterated by wear.

⁷ These Nos. are only used for the convenience of reference, and do not correspond with those of the Castellani

Catalogue. The same remark applies to the other lists.

11. Coarse bronze ring, circular bezel, engraved with a double cross *.

THE WATERTON COLLECTION,

recently purchased for the South Kensington Museum, contains a few interesting specimens of early Christian rings. I have already referred to one exhibited by that gentleman in 1862, and to another engraved with a ship, but which are now unfortunately wanting in the series. Of those still in the collection are the following :—

1. A leaden ring, of coarse workmanship, having the figure of a cross punched upon the bezel (S. K. M. Inv., No. 607.71).

2. A small ring of gold, with broad flat hoop, swelling to the bezel, which bears a palm branch, rudely punched with a blunt instrument—possibly Christian (No. 467.71).

3. A heavy bronze signet ring, with massive hoop and projecting bezel, upon which is the figure of a dove; the hoop is modelled as a wreath, having the bezel as a central ornament (No. 605.71).

4. A bronze signet ring, with oval bezel, on which is incised a sheep or lamb; the hoop of this also is formed as a wreath (No. 604.71).

5. Of bronze, with square bezel, inscribed VIVAS IN DEO (No. 603.71).

6. A bronze ring of remarkable form: a hoop surmounted by a flat circular bezel, on which is rudely engraved the figure of an *orante* with nimbus; on the opposite point of the hoop is a smaller tabular sigillum, engraved with a Greek cross. Of rude workmanship; perhaps Byzantine (No. 606.71).

In the British Museum is a remarkable gold ring of analogous form, on one face of which are three interlaced triangles, and on the other intertwined circular lines, leaving the form of a cross in the centre. These lines, and others on the hoop, are in niello.

Mr. Crofton Croker, in his catalogue of rings and personal ornaments formed for Lady Londesborough, describes and figures under No. 152 a gold ring set with a stone of elongated octagonal form, and rising with sloping sides to the face, on which is engraved what is said to be a palm,

but what appears more closely to resemble an olive branch ; while the sloping sides bear the inscription, TE . AMO . PARVM. It is stated to be of fine Roman workmanship, of the fourth or fifth century, and found at Amiens, and that the form of the gem resembles that of a Christian coffin lid. Without the opportunity of examining this ring, I should, from the engraving and description, have some doubt of its being early Christian.

No. 183 of the same catalogue, of "alchemy" or mixed metal, bears upon its face the sacred monogram, composed of the letters X and P.

The Braybrooke Collection, by the catalogue, would only appear to contain one which may be early Christian. It is No. 49, described as bearing the sacred monogram.

It is, in all probability, one of these rings which is figured by Mr. Fairholt, at page 85 of "Rambles of an Archæologist," 1871, in which volume his "Facts about Finger Rings" are reprinted from the Art Journal.

On plate xvi. of the fourth volume of Perret's "Catacombes" are figured several ring-stones, which, it seems to me, have no more claim to being of Christian origin than the many others on which the palm alone is engraved. Thus we have portrait heads with the palm, figures, and animals, which may be pagan as well as Christian. I have exhibited in my case some half-a-dozen antique rings, which have quite as strong a right to that distinction as those referred to in Perret's work. On one of gilded bronze is a rude palm or laurel branch. On the square bezel of another, also of bronze, is a male head in profile, having a palm on one side and the word VITA on the other. Another, of gold, is set with a nicolo, on which is engraved in intaglio a male and a female draped figures, facing each other, while "hand joins hand." She is the taller of the two, and behind her is a branch of palm. The lady may be a Christian or a pagan bride, or may represent a wingless victory, or a province welcoming a brave or fortunate ruler or soldier. Another bronze ring is engraved with a fish, but I fear it is a pagan gurnard, and the ring Greek or Italo-Ionic work, of too early a period for its conversion. Another bronze ring of curious form, with wide splayed shoulders of open work, is set with a paste, on which is what appears to be a peacock ; but this again may be intended for Juno's emblematic bird, as well as a Christian

symbol. These have as strong a claim to be recorded among good Christians as many of those figured in the above named and other works, and which I fear may have been too easily admitted into the fold; but I hesitate accepting them, and they may not pass the *atrium* without further proof of character.

It is well known that when the tomb of Maria, the wife of the Emperor Honorius, was opened in the year 1544, a vast quantity of personal jewellery was discovered, nearly all of which has been dispersed and lost to knowledge. The *bullæ* is preserved in the Trivulzio palace at Milan; but of the contents of one casket, her *Dactyliotheca*, plated with gold and silver, and containing more than 150 rings of gold set with gems and precious stones, nothing is left to us which can be recognised. Among these was the priceless emerald engraved with a portrait of Honorius, but whether many or few of them were ornamented with Christian symbols we are not informed; and indeed it is more probable that such was not the case, but that they were of the usual type of costly ornaments belonging to a Roman lady of high position, and treasured for their beauty and their value. But as a Christian lady she would more probably wear, at any rate on ordinary occasions, a signet ring, or rings, on which her faith was symbolically represented.

I will now proceed to describe the new additions to my own collection.

No. 27.⁸ A gold ring of duplex form, the united bezels being each of elongated and pointed oval shape. On one is engraved the name

D
FILINAN, and on the other VIVAS * From
A IN DEO.



between these ovals at their junction a line of six beads falls on either shoulder of the ring, the remainder of the hoop, diminishing in width from the bezel, being plain and rounded externally. It is of solid gold, and weighs $5\frac{1}{2}$ pennyweights.

This remarkable ring was discovered in the neighbourhood of Massignano, a small township of the archdeaconry of

⁸ These numbers are in sequence of those under which I described other Christian rings in my former paper.

Fermo, in the Marches, by some peasants who were digging trenches for planting trees, in the year 1860. They found some large slabs of stone, placed together to form a tomb, beneath which were pieces of cement and small fragments of gold, some bones of the deceased, and the ring. On hearing of the discovery my friend, Don Antonio Donati (till lately librarian to the college of the "Sapienza" at Rome), and who was then in the neighbourhood, immediately visited the spot for the purpose of ascertaining whether any inscription existed upon the stones; but none was found, nor could he hear of the discovery of any coins. He, however, secured the ring, which was shown by him at the Roman Exhibition of Ecclesiastical Objects in 1870, and which he subsequently ceded to me.

I have already referred to a duplex ring of gold, of somewhat coarser workmanship, preserved in the Castellani Collection, No. 2.

The ring now described is in all probability of the latter part of the third or beginning of the fourth century, although it has been stated that Christianity extended to that part of Italy as early as the second.

No. 28. A silver ring of duplex form, the united bezels being each of elongated and pointed oval shape, similar in general fashion to that of the gold ring just described, but wanting the bead-work on the shoulders, where,



in the present example, the united bezels are received into a wider collar of the hoop, marked by two transverse incised lines. On one oval is engraved the name FAVSTVS, and on the other is the palm branch. The weight of this ring is 4 dwt. 4 grains. In the year 1865, during excavations made by Prince Torlonia, at Porto, on the northern side of the Tiber's mouth, ruins of a large house were discovered, which are believed to be those of the Xenodochio of Pammachio, the friend of St. Jerome. In and near these ruins many objects for domestic and table use were subsequently discovered, of glass, of pottery, bronze, and silver, the greater part, or nearly all of which were adorned with Christian subjects or Christian emblems. The larger number of these most interesting objects were presented by the Prince to the Christian Museum of the Vatican, and are now preserved there. They are described by Signor de Rossi in

his "Bulletino" for May and June, 1868, and in subsequent numbers of that work. But although many were acquired by the Vatican Museum some others escaped, notably some "rat-tailed" silver spoons, inscribed with names and monograms in niello, which are now in the rich collection formed by Signor Castellani, now exhibited at, and we hope secured for the British Museum. Among other small objects which escaped, the ring now under observation is believed to be one, having been sold in Rome by a person who had been employed at Porto. It was immediately recognised by Sig. de Rossi as being of the same workmanship, having the same patina, and bearing the same name as one of the spoons now in the Vatican, the figure of which, No. 6, will be seen on the plate from the "Bull. d'Arch. Crist.," Nov. and Dec., 1868. One of the spoons in the Castellani Collection bears the same name.

Christian rings of silver are unusual. The date of this specimen is probably of the latter half of the fourth century.

No. 29. A bronze ring, with high projecting bezel of square form, expanding to the shield; the hoop is a simple circle, of angular projection externally. On the square face the subject of Abraham's sacrifice is deeply engraved, covering the whole surface.

In the centre of the composition Abraham stands grasping the upraised knife in his right hand, while with the left he holds the head of Isaac, who kneels before the altar. Abraham's attention is seen to be arrested at the moment, for he looks behind over his left shoulder at the ram, standing beneath what would seem to be a palm branch. Above his right arm, and between the sword and the back of the patriarch's head, is what would appear to be the figure of an angel, but may also represent, as suggested by the Padre Garucci, rays of light (the celestial voice) descending to stay the sacrifice.

This figure or object, which is rendered with a near approach to accuracy in the accompanying engraving, is not sufficiently well defined in the intaglio of the ring to enable us to decide upon its nature with certainty, but I am dis-



posed to think that it conveys a rough idea of the figure of an angel quite as much as that of rays of light, or of a roll of a book.

The execution of the intaglio, which is in a perfect state of preservation, is superior to the fashion of the ring, and may be attributed, perhaps, to the latter end of the third century, but more probably to the fourth.

This subject is new upon a ring. It occurs in mosaics, on sarcophagi and lamps, on wall paintings, and on gilt glasses.

The ring, which I obtained in Rome during the winter before last, was brought by a person from Viterbo, in which neighbourhood it was presumed to have been found, together



with the bronze stamp No. 29* (here also figured), and which is incised with the words QVINTILIANE VIVAS. This inscription is in intaglio and reversed, the stamp having been probably used for impressing the

name upon pottery when in a soft state, previous to baking. The engraving shows the impression.

The Chevalier de Rossi, to whom I communicated these objects, giving him impressions from them, has published both in a late number of his valuable serial, the "Bulletino" (new series). Number 3 of the first year (1870) contains engravings from the ring and from the stamp; and in No. 1 of the second year (which has only recently arrived in England) he has given a description of them. Abraham's sacrifice he reminds us is typical of the sacrifice of Our Blessed Lord; and he states his opinion that the object represented between the back of Abraham's head and the sword, may be intended for a bundle of rolls of writings, tied together with cord or ribbon, and meant to express the volumes of the prophetic Scriptures; which gives to the subject a sublime symbolical meaning, proclaiming Abraham Father of the Faithful, in whose posterity all people should receive the promised blessing.⁹

⁹ "Tra il capo di Abramo ed il ferro da lui impugnato, è un piccolo arnese dal mio disegnatore assai incertamente

delineato. Nell'impronta che ho sotto gli occhi, favoritami dalla cortesia del possessore, parmi vedere un fascetto di

The Chevalier de Rossi agrees with me in assigning this ring to the latter end of the third or beginning of the fourth century. He publishes another stamp, which was brought into Rome for sale at about the same time as those just described, which may be of rather later date, and upon which the name FLORENTINI and the sacred monogram XP are incised. This was purchased by Count Gregorio Strogonof. And also an intaglio ring-stone, which was secured by the Rev. Padre Tongiorgi for the Kircherian Museum, and on which is engraved $\text{IX}\Theta\text{YC MT}$ around an anchor with loop between its lower arms, which are recurved, and upon the stem of which a fish is placed. This may be an interesting emblematic representation of the Crucifixion.

The suggestion that these objects had perhaps been found in the neighbourhood of Viterbo, from the circumstance of their having been brought from that place for sale to Rome, may, I fear, have been imparted by me when conversing on the subject with the Chevalier, in language more affirmative than I intended; as he makes my communication the authority for such being the locality of their discovery.

I wish, therefore, to state that it was merely suggested as a probability, heightened by the indefinite information of the vendor, but not from any positive knowledge of the facts. This is the more necessary, as at the same time the Chevalier tells us that this would be the first instance recorded of the occurrence of Early Christian remains in the vicinity of that city. The duplex gold ring in the Castellani Collection, engraved with the name BLITHIA, is stated by that gentleman to have been found near Orvieto; possibly some locality between these two cities may have been the site at which all these objects were discovered.



No. 30. A bronze ring with square expanding bezel, on which is engraved the sacred symbol, the united *chi* and *rho* between the *alpha* and *omega* above, and two sheep below.

It is remarkable that although the q is reversed as though intended for sealing, the *alpha* and *omega* are rightly

volumi legato con cordicella o nastro, del quale pendono da ambi i lati le estremità. Sarà questo a mio avviso, il volume delle scritture profetiche, che danno alla scena

il sublime simbolico significato e proclamano Abramo padre dei credenti nella cui posterità era promessa a tutti i popoli la benedizione."

placed, and would be reversed in the impression. The form of the sacred monogram is precisely similar to that on the sepulchral tablet of the boy Marcianus (except that the loop of the P is reversed), which is figured in plate 1, at page 279 in vol. xxvii. of our Society's Journal, in the Rev. Mr. Joyce's extremely interesting paper on the Sarcophagus of Valerius Amandinus, discovered at Westminster.

It may, however, be doubted whether the ring was intended for sealing, as there is an appearance inside the engraving on the bezel and the ornament of the hoop, as of the remains of niello, with which all the incisions may have been originally filled. The hoop is circular, swelling to the shoulders, and of angular section; it is ornamented with incisions, probably intended as palm leaves, and of similar character to that on the ring No. 16, described in my former paper, at page 144 of Vol. xxvi. of our Journal.

This interesting ring, which is probably of the middle of the fourth century, was recently brought to me from Rome.



No. 31 is a bronze ring, the bezel of which surmounts the swelling shoulders of a hoop of half-round wire, and is shaped as the sole of a shoe, upon which is coarsely incised INDEO, with a continuous border line of punctuations. The bronze is covered with a dark-green patina. This ring could hardly have been used for stamping or sealing, as the lettering reads rightly on the ring, and would of course be inverted in the impression.

Aringhi, followed by Francisco de Corte, figures a ring with shoe-sole shaped bezel, bearing the name IVSTVS with a *, which was found in the Catacomb of St. Agnese on the Via Nomentana.

There is a foot-shaped stamp ring in the Vatican Museum (No. 25), engraved with the palm and a sort of star, or double cross.

Boldetti gives an engraving, at page 506, of a ring-stamp, shaped as the side of a boot, on which are the letters MARO, and what seems to be a heart. It was found in the Cemetery of Priscilla.

The foot-stamp was probably typical of possession, the "*pedis positio*" among the Romans, but whether adopted

by the Christians as having another signification is a question which would lead me beyond the subject of this paper. It was a form used previously and contemporaneously by pagans, and similar rings, bearing names and words that cannot be assumed as Christian, are preserved in the Castellani, the Waterton, the British Museum, and other collections.

No. 32. A key-ring of bronze, which opened the lock by lifting a latch. It is a simple hoop, the bezel of which is slightly raised and flattened, and from the side of which projects a small neck, attaching a circular table flattened towards the ring. This is pierced with a cross, which is surrounded by a circular depression or bordering; the cross-shaped piercing corresponded with the wards of the lock. It is presumed to have been for the use of a Christian, as the emblem of that faith adopted for fashioning the wards, would hardly have been applied inadvertently at a period when the cross was looked upon as a badge of disgrace, or as the Christian standard. I have referred to a key-ring of similar form in the Christian Museum at the Vatican, which is believed to have been found in one of the Catacombs.



It is perhaps worthy of remark that the cross is placed in an upright position relatively to the hoop of the ring, and not as the letter X; neither is it in any degree wedge-limbed, but a pure Greek cross. I procured this ring several years since at Rome. It is perhaps of the fourth century.

Boldetti gives us figures of key-rings found in the Catacombs, but upon which no Christian emblems are to be seen. These have been supposed to possess talismanic properties from having been placed in contact with relics of the saints, a supposition which may savour of a later period than that at which they were made and worn.

No. 33. A gold signet-ring, formed as a hoop of angular projection externally and flat inside, which bears a circular button-like bezel, on the face of which are a male and a female bust, looking towards each other; above them is a cross, the lower limb of which is longer than the others, and all having a wedge-shaped termination.

The subject is incised upon the gold; the workmanship is of that rude and peculiar character so well known upon

the coins of the Byzantine emperors of the earlier half of the fifth century, and I am accordingly disposed to consider its probable date as about 440.



This ring is probably a *Bicephalic* matrimonial or love ring, having the portraits of husband and wife "respectant," as the language of heraldry would express. Such exist of pagan times, and I am reminded by Mr. Way that a ring of that class, found in the north of England, is figured in the *Archaeological Journal* at vol. vii., p. 191.

They were doubtless the prototypes of the love rings of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, some of which are in my collection.

It is a ring of Byzantine character, as regards its form and style of workmanship, and was sent to me from Athens. Its weight is $3\frac{5}{8}$ pennyweights.

It was my intention to have added to this paper a notice of Early Christian rings referred to by various writers, but to do this it would be necessary to go over considerable ground, the which, I find, has been already and most ably traversed; for only since writing the foregoing pages has an opportunity been afforded me, for the first time, of reading the interesting *brochure* by the Abbé Martigny, "*Des Anneaux chez les Premiers Chrétiens*" (Macon, 1858), in which I find that he has adopted an arrangement of the subject somewhat similar to mine. I have merely given a list of the emblems mentioned by Clement of Alexandria, and have then considered those met with upon *rings*, not venturing to do more than occasionally refer to engraved ring stones, or gems, in illustration of my subject. Upon these the Abbé Martigny, in the pamphlet just named, gives much interesting matter. His references to the works of previous writers are most valuable, as also to recent authorities on the engraved gems, but he does not refer directly to more than a few rings as existing in museums and private cabinets. Probably from the statements of Boldetti and other early writers, he tells us that such rings have been found in Catacombs in considerable quantity; but if such were ever the case, how few, comparatively, now remain to our knowledge.

I am afraid, in consequence of the many forgeries which have been produced within the last few years, that Early Christian engraved stones have been, and are often regarded with suspicion and consequent neglect.

The discrimination between a genuine antique intaglio or cameo and a modern imitation, is a matter requiring, in the first place, an inherent appreciation of those indescribable characteristics which distinguish the art of various epochs, and the power of a keen eye. The development of these faculties by the examination and comparison, the constant handling and intimacy with objects of art and antiquity of all sorts and periods, stimulated by a real love for them and for their study, is the next requirement. No amount of classic learning or book-knowledge will make up for the want of these ; although most valuable, and indeed necessary for the elucidation of the objects themselves and of their history.

The art exhibited in Early Christian gems is almost invariably of a low order ; they were, for the most part, the production of a period of decadence. The greater number have been cut by means of the wheel. Hence arises an additional difficulty in distinguishing the genuine from the false. Their rude workmanship is easy to copy with the same instrument as that with which they were cut ; antique stones are abundant at hand, and Roman artists are apt and facile in imitation.

I do not think that the fabrication of Early Christian rings has been carried on quite to the same extent, but that such falsification is practised I can too truly testify. Some of the imitations in ivory and in silver are very ingenious, and well executed ; fragments of antique ivory or bone are worked upon ; as in the case of bronze, plain antique rings of which are engraved with the requisite emblems, and duly coloured ; or, where they have held a stone or paste, it has been replaced by a modern intaglio with Christian symbol, the interstices being filled up with green wax, or a composition of the scraping of antique bronze and other ingredients.

It is greatly to be regretted that these nefarious practices among all the various objects of art and antiquity receive so much encouragement from dishonest vendors and unwary purchasers.





3.



No. 1.



No. 2.

Gold Rings in the Possession of A. W. Franks, Esq.

ON A ROMAN KEY-LIKE FINGER RING OF GOLD, AND A
BYZANTINE BICEPHALIC SIGNET OF THE SAME METAL.

By C. DRURY E. FORTNUM, F.S.A.

ON two former occasions¹ I have ventured to direct attention to certain finger rings of the Early Christian and immediately succeeding periods, the great interest of which arises from typical representations occurring upon them, symbolic of the, then, newly-promulgated and adopted faith.

Through the kind courtesy of my friend Mr. Augustus W. Franks, Director of the Society of Antiquaries, I am now enabled to supplement these notices by a description of two rings, recently added to his choice *Dactyliotheca*, each of which is of singular interest and rarity.

It may be recollected that in my last paper (at page 290 of our twenty-eighth volume) I described and figured a key finger-ring of bronze, the projection from the bezel of which is pierced with the figure of a Greek cross, corresponding to the wards of the latch-lock it was intended to open, and I urged that this device warranted the presumption, that it had been made for the use of a believer in that symbol of the atonement. In confirmation of my opinion I referred to a key-ring, of similar model, preserved in the Christian Museum at the Vatican, and which is believed to have been found in one of the catacombs.



The key-like ring now under consideration might seem to have been formed for similar use, but is of a more noble material and far more dainty fashion. In this respect nothing indeed can be more elegant, the artistic workmanship corre-

¹ Arch. Journal, vol. xxvi. p. 137, and vol. xxviii. p. 266.

sponding with the beauty of the design. (Woodcut No. 1.) Its form is a wide hoop of flattened gold, twelve times fluted or channelled externally, and ornamented with a foliated and pierced scroll-work edging. Each fluting has a central square piercing, in which one letter of the inscription is reserved in the metal, and from which the ground is entirely cut away (*découpé-à-jour*). I have ventured elsewhere to designate this style as *champlevé-à-jour*. It is the *interrasile opus* of Pliny's day, and was in use from the time of Severus; an ornamentation of which I know no finer example than this ring.

The inscription round the hoop reads MVLTVS ANNIS, the twelfth space being occupied by a leaf; while on the upper side or *chaton* the words ACCIPE DVLCIS occur in double line, between three plain bands of the metal. Thence projects the tongue or lift, by which, if practically serviceable, a latch may have been raised, opening the door or lid of casket, cabinet, or other treasure house, the contents of which would gladden our antiquarian eyes could we but see them. The piercing or seeming wards of this projecting tongue, is as a diaper of Greek crosses, nine in number, attached by pellets of the metal, and bordered laterally with a corded edging, on the top with scroll ornament. The width of the hoop is $\frac{4}{10}$ ths of an inch, its diameter $\frac{7}{8}$ ths, and the projecting tongue $\frac{5}{8}$ ths long by $\frac{6}{10}$ ths wide; the weight of the ring is 192 grains.

Another fine ring, ornamented with the words AEMILIA ZESES in *opus interrasile*, belongs to the Duke of Northumberland, and is figured in the *Archæological Journal*, vol. vii. p. 192. In vol. xxvi., at page 141, I have described and figured a more humble example from my own collection.

I have been informed that a key-ring of silver occurred among the *trouvaille* at Ostia in 1858, but, if published, I cannot now quote the reference to it; the present is, however, the only instance, of which I am aware, of a ring so formed in the more noble metal.

I term it a key-like ring from its correspondence in form and character with others of the same class in inferior metal, but that it was intended for use as a key may, I think, be open to doubt. That it was fashioned as a birth-day, or New Year's gift, from one member to another, of a Christian family, of the latter half of the third or earlier years of the fourth century, is, I believe, more probable. The arguments

used in favour of the Christian origin of my bronze key-ring² confirm the latter inference. The kindly words upon it are such as may be found both on pagan and Christian rings and ring-stones of that period, for the most part, however, conveyed in the Greek rather than in the Latin language.

In support of the former suggestion I have figured another bronze key-ring from my own collection, found at Rome ; devoid of ornamentation, but corresponding in form, and probably of about the same period as its more noble contemporary. This was undoubtedly made for service as a key.



In the Waterton Collection, at the South Kensington Museum (No. 551, '71), is one with a circular lift, pierced with seven holes, and attached to the hoop by a neck, as is the case on mine.

Our information on the origin, uses, and import of these key-rings, which are found abundantly on various Roman sites, and in great variety of form, is still very imperfect. Learned writers³ have connected them with various quotations from the classic authors, having reference to the habit of securing the casket or the wine cupboard of ancient days, but in so doing they have frequently superadded confusion to our imperfect knowledge ; the method of securing by the impression of the signet ring on clay or wax, attached to the door by a cord or otherwise, being sometimes confounded with the rings in question, which were presumably formed for turning locks or lifting latches. That they were for both these uses is assured by an examination of various examples in collections, and by a reference to the figures given by Licetus,⁴ Montfaucon, and other writers. The lateral wards attached to a pipe projecting from the ring-formed handle can be for no other use than turning on a central pin, and driving the bolt ; while on other varieties the projecting tongue could only be used for lifting a latch, on the plan of the so-called "French latch-lock." One

² Arch. Journal, vol. xxviii, p. 290.

³ See Gorlaei, *Dactyliothe.* 42, 205-209.

⁴ Licetus de *Anulis*, 1645, figures seven varieties, of which one is a latch. Six are with pipes ; of these Nos. 2, 5 and 6 are, I suspect, the original cuts, which

Georgius Longus and Francisco de Corte have badly reproduced. One of them has the figure of a rudder between two ears of corn engraved on the bezel. His No. 8 is precisely similar to one in my collection.

example in my own collection combines both these arrangements, a piped key projecting from one side of the finger ring, and a double-tongued (one half unfortunately injured) latch-key from the other; it could, therefore, open and close two distinct locks of small size and probably was so used. Notwithstanding, it has been doubted whether these key-rings were really intended for use; but if merely emblematic why the great variety and intricate arrangement of the wards on some of the examples in our collections? almost equalling those of the larger keys of bronze and iron which have descended to us from Roman times. That they were frequently used as talismans in a darker subsequent age is probable. Boldetti tells us that it was the custom for the Pope to send keys (? key-rings) to great princes, to some of gold, which had been lowered through an opening in the altar of the confessional into the vault, to touch the tombs of the Saints Peter and Paul; referring particularly to some sent by S. Gregory I. (Pope A.D. 590—604.) This statement has been referred to by the learned Abbé Martigny and other writers. Boldetti figures some found in the catacombs, and it has been supposed that they might have had talismanic powers from having been placed in contact with the relics of saints. He also tells us that, in his day, silver key-like rings were suspended to the necks of children as charms, said to have come from the Santa Casa at Loretto. He, however, figures one (No. 37) which he distinctly states to have been used for the ordinary purposes of a key.⁵


⁵ Boldetti, Osservazioni sopra i Cimiterj De' S. S. Martiri, lib. ii. cap. xiv. p. 507. "A numeri 36 e 37 si veggono delineate due Chiavette di metallo inserite negl' Anelli trovati in diversi Cimiterj. E l'uso di quella del N. 36 potrebbe ascriversi al pio costume de i Cristiani antichi di toccarvi le Reliquie de i Santi, o altre cose Sagre, e poi per devozione portarle o in dito, o addosso; e corrispondendo in ciò la loro pietà alla Fede, venivano con esse ad esser preservati da i mali. Anzi i sommi Pontefici costumarono di trasmetterle a i gran Principi in luogo di Reliquie, e massime quelle d'oro calate prima da una piccola finestra dell' Altare della Confessione del Principe degli Apostoli S. Pietro *ad hauriendam Sanctitatem*. Di una di queste chiavi trasmessa da S. Gregorio Papa in dono a

Gio: Ex Console così parla il medesimo Santo: '*Clavem parvulam à Sanctissimo corpore Beati Petri Apostoli pro ejus benedictione transmissimus*' (S. Greg. l. i. Æ. 26 and Æ. 31). Ed altrove '*Beati Petri Apostoli vobis claves transmissi, quæ super ægros positæ multis solent miraculis curare*'; e scrivendo a Childeberto (Æ. 6, l. 5). '*Claves Sancti Petri, in quibus de Vinculis Catenarum ejus inclusum est, excellentiæ vestræ diriximus, ut collo vestro pensæ à malis vos omnibus tueantur*.' Il che diede poi occasione alla pietà de i Fedeli di restituirne altrettante d'oro da collocarsi ne i Cancelli della

¹ Upon this statement Mr. Waterton founded the opinion that the large, so called, "papal rings" contained filings of St. Peter's chains.

Kirchmann refers to key-rings, but without giving any very definite explanation, nor does Longus throw much additional light on the matter. Licetus, writing of the use of the signet to secure treasure, &c., further refers to key-rings. Mr. Waterton supposed that they were used by slaves. Edwards⁶ repeats the opinion advanced by some Roman archæologists, that they were given at marriages, and emblematic of the possession of the husband's household goods by the wife. Others suppose that they were given to the affianced bridegroom by the future bride's father, in token that his house was opened to his son-in-law. Mr. King thinks that they must have been the secret keys, *crypto claves* of the ancients, as being concealed when turned inside the hand.

But few deny that some, at least, among these bronze key-rings must have been made for practical purposes, as a convenient and safe form of portable key for opening the casket or the cash-box ; a fashion which has been renewed in our own times.

The doubt, however, again arises as to whether the beautiful and delicately-formed ring of nearly pure and soft gold, now under notice, could really have borne any such practical application ; and this doubt is strengthened by the fact, noticed by Mr. Franks, that the projecting tongue or lift is attached to the hoop, not merely by a neck, but in all its breadth ; differing herein from those of bronze which I have figured. The latter would pass through and up the inverted  T-shaped key-hole, whereas it is difficult to conceive an arrangement which would permit of the up-

Confessione di S. Pietro in contrassegno di gratitudine per le grazie ricevute per mezzo delle altre donate loro da i Papi. Rimane anche oggi l'uso di sospendere dal collo, o da gli omeri de i Bambini alcune chiavette con anelli di argento fatte a somiglianza della chiave, che dicono essere della stanza della B. V. che si trova in Loreto, sperimentate di molta virtù per il contatto della medesima, o pure di qualche altra insigne Reliquia.

"La piccola chiave poi delineata al No. 37, congiunta coll'anello, e sigillo, era di quelle, che gli Antichi in uso appunto di sigillo, e di chiave da aprire, e chiudere gli Scrigni, come riflette l'erudito Nicolai, per non ismarrirle, sempre portavano in dito a guisa di anello." (Jo.

Nicolai di sigtis, antiquor, cap. 44, de acquir : vel amittend : poss :

"*Mercæ claves sunt cum annulo, quatis et hodie in nostris Clavibus, que sunt longiores, scapo digiti inserebantur, et annuli sigillatorii quò commodius verti possent intrà claustrum ; Scapum quippe non habent, quo teneri queant quippe sit instar manubrii. Excepto annulo totæ intrà claustrum mergebantur.*"

"Festo ancora fa menzione di alcune chiavette, che costumavansi mandar in dono alle Donzelle, come annunzio di felicità nel futuro parto. '*Clavium consuetudo erat mulieribus donare, ob significandam partus facilitatem.*'"

⁶ Hist. and Poetry of Finger Rings, p. 196.

ward passage of such a tongue as that upon Mr. Franks's ring.

In the collection of Lord Braybrooke is a finger ring of mixed metal, "similar to that of many of the Roman denarii," with a broad tablet bezel on which a lion passant is represented in high relief, and gilt. Thence projects a tongue or flap, but not hinged, rounded at the end and "incuse" with figures, which may represent a central vase, on either side of which a bear is seated, facing his fellow. Seven minute holes open between the vase and the limbs of the bears, which have been supposed to have some reference to the Pleiades. It was found in December 1853, in the Borough field, Chesterford, with Roman remains. Here we have the openings in the tongue (doubtless somewhat filled in by the oxydation of the metal), which also is affixed to the hoop in its entire breadth.

In the Museum at Basle, Mr Franks informs me that there is another ring of the same class, of gold, with the inscription FELIC . AVROR . worked in niello on the bezel, from which projects a tongue of pierced work formed as two eagles, with some object between them. It was found at Augst, and may be of the Merovingian period.

Both these examples would be equally impracticable as latch-lifting keys.

Considerably modified, but partaking of the same character as to form, is the well-known ring in the British Museum, bearing in niello the name of Ethelwulf (A D. 836-838), the father of Alfred the Great, the pyramidal projecting tongue of which is ornamented with eagles on either side of a central standard. This ring is also figured in the *Archæological Journal* in a paper on Niello by Mr. Waterton, vol. xix., p. 326.

May we not, therefore, infer that these rings were fashioned, not for practical purposes, but as representative of their earlier, as also contemporary, and more useful prototypes, and possibly emblematic of that office or position in the household or the family, which entitled the holder to the possession of the key-ring? Or were they merely eccentric developments of antique fancy, of which we have abundant parallel instances in our own day?

Another form of ringed key, which in the smaller examples became, and was probably worn as a key-ring, of later date

and probably Byzantine origin, is figured by Licetus, at fig. 4 on his folding-plate, but he omits the *chaton*, a characteristic feature seen on all those specimens which I have examined. They consist of a short-stemmed and piped key, suspended to a ring, which passes through an eye purposely formed, and kept in position by a projecting shoulder on either side; the substance of the ring, thicker where the key is suspended, diminishes towards the opposite point of the circle, where it is attached to a circular button-like bezel incised with inscription or figures. A series of these keys, of various sizes, is preserved in that rich mine of antiquarian wealth, the British Museum. One, I believe unique, is in the possession of my friend, Mr. R. H. Soden Smith, F.S.A., the hoop and bezel being of silver, and the key of bronze; the subject engraved on the *chaton* is too indistinct to be recognisable; it seems to represent a man fishing. There is every reason to believe that this was worn as a finger ring. Possibly the double security of locking and sealing may have been attained by the use of this curious variety.

The second ring which I have to describe is one also of unusual type, and remarkable for the amount of ornamentation with which it is covered. (Woodcut No. 2.) In form it consists of a rectangular bezel or table, perfectly plain, but on which two portrait heads, confronting each other, male and female, and beneath a Greek cross, are deeply incised. The hoop is formed of a series of small circular discs, having a pellet of gold on either side of the point of junction with each other and with their attachment to the bezel of the ring. On each of these is a bust, with leaves in the background; they seem to be alternately male and female, as shown by the cruciform fibula on the shoulder of the former, and the ear-rings of the latter. These busts are engraved and filled in with niello; their drawing is carefully finished, but marks the decadence of art.

There can be no doubt that this fine Byzantine *bicephalic* ring was used as a signet, and that it belonged to a person of high position; possibly a matrimonial or betrothal gift. It has been suggested that the heads resemble those of the Emperor Leo. I. and Verina (A.D. 457-74), but it is doubtful whether they are Imperial portraits. They are probably of man and wife, and are deeply and well incised. The male figure is clad in a toga, which is fastened on the

left shoulder by a large cruciform fibula, worn with the point upwards. This would seem to be of the same kind as that massive one of gold found at Odiham in Hampshire, and figured at page 46 in Vol. ii. of our Journal, which is now preserved in the British Museum. His hair is closely cut over the head, with whiskers and moustache. The hair of the female is dressed in a frizzed (?) coil or roll behind,



whence small ringlets, four of which are shown, fall over the forehead; in her ears are ear-rings formed of two large beads or pearls, a string of which adorns her neck. Her dress consists of a simple under-garment, covered by one which falls over either shoulder. The workmanship of this ring is massive, but rather rude; it weighs $445\frac{1}{2}$ grains. I am inclined to ascribe it to the middle or perhaps the earlier half of the fifth century. It is clearly of similar character,

although, to judge from its superior art, possibly of somewhat earlier date than that more simple one in my own collection, described in the Journal, vol. xxviii. p. 291, and which may probably be of about A.D. 440; both are of gold.

This fashion of double portrait signets was in use in earlier times, as witnessed by many well-known gems and metal rings. Mr. King refers to one of gold in the Uffizi at Florence, having the busts of M. Aurelius and L. Verus incised on the metal.

As might be surmised, the habit of engraving in intaglio on the metal for the signet, worn as a ring, existed at a very early period, both among the Etruscan⁷ and Italiote inhabitants of Italy, and from still earlier times in Egypt. By the Greeks it was much used at various periods on bronze, iron, silver, and gold, as also by the Romans, and its practice was probably more or less retained among the

⁷ A recent learned writer on the glyptic art has stated that no rings of bronze had come under his observation which were anterior to the later times of the Roman Empire. My own collection affords bronze rings of form, and incised in intaglio of sufficient depths for sealing, with subjects of purely Tyrrhenian character. Egyptian signet rings of

bronze engraved with hieroglyphics also occur. One in the Londesborough collection is engraved in Fairholt's "Facts about Finger Rings," p. 77; "Rambles of an Archæologist." Another is in my own possession. Greek and Roman engraved bronze rings of early date are also well known in collections.

Byzantines when the sculptor's art was dead to the barbarized nations of the west.

The engravings of the two rings now described are of the dimensions of the originals. It is presumed that they were found in Egypt, where they had been preserved in the Demetrio collection until acquired by Mr. Franks.



ON A KEY-LIKE GOLD FINGER-RING OF THE SIXTH OR SEVENTH CENTURY FOUND AT MARZABOTTO.

By C. D. E. FORTNUM, F.S.A.

THE ring now figured and described was kindly lent to me for that purpose by Mr. S. T. Baxter, of Florence, the fortunate owner of many fine specimens of antique goldsmith's work. It was found, as I am informed, at Marzabotto, in the neighbourhood of Bologna, during excavations made by the Conte Aria. By accidental pressure it has been bent from a circular into an almost triangular form. Its present entire length is $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch; the key-like portion from the hinge of attachment, eleven-twelfths of an inch; the width of the hoop, a quarter of an inch; its weight, 6 dwt. 19 gr. This curious ring is formed as a circle or hoop of open work, to which a key-formed piece is attached by a hinge. Its mode of construction is, however, worthy of being considered more in detail, and would seem to be as follows:—Two hoops of beaded wire—the beading probably formed by rolling between two grooved surfaces of stone or metal, or by the use of a wedge-shaped hammer—are kept apart by, and fastened on either side to, a waved square wire, which impinges upon them at each alternate bend and is attached by fusion. At their point of union to form the hoop, which thus presents the appearance of a flat band, edged by beading, with a wavy line between and spaces left *à jour*, two stout loops are attached, between which the perforated extremity of the key-like appendage is fastened by a pin passing through it and them, working as a hinge. The stem of this projecting or suspended key-formed portion, which gives characteristic importance to the object, is formed of a stouter wire less deeply beaded; it is solid, and from one side project the simulated wards. These are formed of a flat wire, one piece of which is bent into a quadrilateral form, the centre being filled in by other pieces of the same wire, bent in wavy and circular forms without design, and

the whole soldered or rather fused together at the points of junction, thus forming a small grating of irregular open work ; by one of its longer sides it has then been attached by fusion to the beaded stem. It is made of soft gold. This workmanship, curious in its rude simplicity, yet bears the impress of earlier modes of ornamentation—the granulated beading, of Oriental origin, coarsely represented by another method in the beaded wire ; and the *opus interrasile*, or open work, but this again arrived at in effect only, by uniting beaded wires in lieu of cutting designs through the flat bar of solid metal, also an eminently Oriental method, still so ably executed in Persia, &c. But it shows also to what a low degree the goldsmith's art had descended at the period and place of its production, probably Italy, and during the sixth century of our era or early in that which followed. Its precise date who can fix with certainty ? for how few data have we to work from, and how little is left to us of the handicraft in precious metals of that dark age of discord. That this ring could be for no practical use as a key is manifest, but that the semblance of a key was intended in its fashion is equally obvious. What then was its purpose ?

In Volume XXIX. of the *Archæo. Journal*, at page 305, was described and figured a remarkable latch key-like ring of gold belonging to Mr. Franks, which, of earlier date and more dainty workmanship, was shown to be equally of practical uselessness. In that notice I ventured to suggest that these rings may have had some emblematic significance ; may have been badges of some office, public or private ; and I directed attention to the curious statement by Boldetti in his "*Osservazioni*," lib. ii. cap. xiv., p. 507, that—"i sommi Pontefici costumarono di trasmetterle a i gran Principi in luogo di Reliquie e massime quelle d'oro calate prima da una piccola finestra dell' Altare della Confessione del Principe degli Apostoli S. Pietro ad hauriendam Sanctitatem."¹

Can this be one of these key-like rings of gold, which, let down through the grating by a cord to touch the tomb of the key-bearing Apostle, was sent by the then Pope—perhaps Gregory I.—to some personage of high estate ? or was it but an emblematic badge ? In plan it approaches more to the silver and bronze key ring (also probably of earlier time)

¹ See foot-note, "*Arch. Journal*," vol. xxix. p. 308. *

belonging to Mr. Soden Smith, and referred to by me in the same paper at page 311, and others of similar form which are preserved in the British Museum.

I may be permitted to take this opportunity also of referring to two other rings, which seem to be of the same family as that belonging to Mr. Franks. One is in the Museum at York, is formed of jet, cut out of the solid, and having a projecting tongue which is ornamented by incision. It was found in Yorkshire, and may be of the later Roman period. The other is in the British Museum, and is of Byzantine character, made of gold; on the upper portion or table of the hoop a cabuchon emerald is set; a lateral oval tongue thence projects, corresponding to the latch lift, not worked with open work pattern, but set with a cabuchon sapphire. There can be little doubt that these may be considered as varieties of the same class as Mr. Franks' beautiful ring, and although differing materially in form, perhaps not so much in significance from that now under consideration, unless the latter be really one of those referred to by Boldetti. But even in such case it is possible that a double meaning may have been conveyed by their gift, as an emblem or badge of some unrecorded position or authority, and an Apostolic benediction conveyed in tangible and evil-dispelling form.





5

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON FINGER RINGS AND ON SOME
ENGRAVED GEMS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN
PERIOD.

By C. D. E. FORTNUM, F.S.A.

It has been my privilege on some former occasions to bring before the notice of the Institute, and to publish in our *Journal*, descriptions of Early Christian finger-rings in my own possession, and to refer to others preserved in some of the public museums and private collections in Europe. Reference to vol. xxvi, page 137, to vol. xxviii, p. 266, to vol. xxix, p. 305, and to vol. xxxiii, p. 111,¹ will discover the papers to which I allude.

A recent sojourn of some months at Rome has enabled me to accumulate additional material on this subject, I having been fortunate enough, by various means, to secure important additions to my own collection, some of which, from the subjects represented, are worthy of record.

By the liberality of friends ; by a fortunate opportunity of securing the private collection of an amateur of long experience and critical judgment resident at Rome ; further by the acquisition of that portion of a friend's collection of engraved gems ; and also by good fortune in the chace, I have been enabled to acquire the interesting addition to my *Dactyliotheca Christiana*, which I now propose to describe in detail. Thirteen gems, engraved with Christian subjects, some of which are unique, will be included in the category.

For convenience of reference it will, perhaps, be better to commence the numeration of my list in sequence of that published in vol. xxviii of the *Journal*, and which ended with No. 33.

Some of the illustrative woodcuts were executed at Rome, others in England by Mr. Utting ; they have occasionally been taken from the originals, but several are from impressions of the intaglio, reversing the representations of the subject. These woodcuts are, with one exception, of the size of the originals.

¹ The ring described in this notice has, through the kindness of Mr. Baxter, since passed into my own collection.

CHRISTIAN FINGER RINGS.

34. A bronze ring with simple hoop; on the flat circular bezel is incised the sacred monogram $\chi\rho$ reversed, within a border line. Fourth or early fifth century. From the Dressel collection. Of similar character to those numbered 10, 18 and 19 of my former list, and others in the Vatican and Castellani collections, &c.

35. Bronze ring with circular bezel, the hoop lobed in leaf shape on the shoulders; rudely made. The bezel bears incised a palm branch between two fish. It also is probably of the later fourth or early fifth century, and from the Dressel collection. The woodcut is taken from the impression upon wax.



36. Bronze ring, the hoop beaded (one half is wanting). On the plain circular bezel is the rudely incised figure of a sheep or lamb, standing upon a ship and with head turned backwards. From the Dressel collection, Rome. Of the fourth or early fifth century.



37. Bronze ring; the hoop, plano-convex, thickening to a slight protuberance at the shoulders, widens to the oval bezel on which is a coarsely executed figure of the *pastor bonus* in intaglio. He is clad in a short tunic, carrying the sheep or lamb on his left shoulder, and stands facing to his left (the engraving is from the impression and reversed) between two other sheep, or perhaps his dogs,¹ which look upwards towards him.



This ring was found in the Tiber and is from the Dressel collection. It is probably of the well-advanced fourth century. I have never previously seen the subject upon a metal ring, although it is one of the most usual upon gems.

38. A bronze ring with plain circular bezel, on which, rudely incised, is a representation of the raising of Lazarus, surrounded by a beaded bordering line. The hoop, of plano-convex section, widens slightly to the shoulders.



Lazarus, swathed, is standing beneath

¹ Vide a gem in the British Museum referred to by King, "Gems and Rings," vol. ii, p. 30.

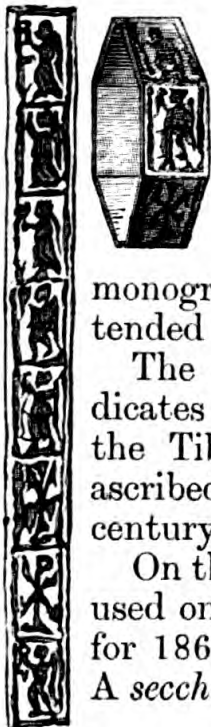
the doorway of the sepulchre, before which the Saviour stands erect, holding a rod or wand raised by his right hand towards the tomb. He is fully draped, the feet and hands not visible; a nimbus is round the head, and a cruciform star is seen in front and above. It may be of the later fourth or early in the fifth century. This ring is in perfect preservation and covered by a fine green patina. It was probably found in the neighbourhood of Rome, and was presented to me by an esteemed friend.



A similar subject treated very much in the same manner, except that the Saviour is without a wand, is to be seen depicted on the vault of a chapel in the Catacombs of S^a. Agnese; also in the Basilica of Petronilla (*Bull.*, vol. iv, pl. i, ii.)

Again on a sarcophagus in the Gregorian Museum the Saviour represented beardless, and holding a wand. On glass also, as figured by Buonarroti, &c. Other variations exist of this probable symbol of the Resurrection, but I am not aware of its occurrence upon gems or rings. The subject is also similarly rendered in the Gregorian Gospels in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

39. A hoop ring of bronze, octagonal externally. On six of these sides, between a beaded border line, are representations, incised, of winged figures, each bearing an object which may be intended for a wreath or coronal; some seem to be habited in longer drapery, others in short tunics, with high domed hats and boots. On the other two sides the sacred monogram $\chi\rho$ is repeated. These figures may be intended to represent angels, or more probably victories.



The ring is in perfect condition; the surface indicates that it has been under water, probably in the Tiber. I purchased it at Rome. It may be ascribed to the later fourth or early in the fifth century.

On the subject of the pagan figure of Victory being used on Christian objects, *vide* De Rossi, *Bulletino* for 1867, p. 77 and 84, on a monument from Tunis. A *secchia di piombo*, a leaden pail or *situla*, on which,

among other devices, are the figures, in relief, of an *Orante* and a *Victory*, near a palm tree. The former probably represents the martyr *Perpetua*, the *Victory* the symbol of triumph. A figure of *Victory* was also impressed on the coins of the early Christian emperors, associated with the sign of the cross or sacred monogram. Again it occurs on consular diptychs of Christian times, and this, notwithstanding that the *curia* and the altar and cultus of *Victory* had been abolished. See also Renier (*Inscrip. de l'Algérie*) who records a marble from Cirta, on which *Victory* is represented with a crown in the right and a palm in the left hand; three crosses and the words A . DEO . DATVR . BICTORIA prove that the *Victory* is the emblem of spiritual as of moral triumph, symbolising the *manus Dei*, the Divine influence.

AENVNLTAKAVZYNDEOCANAEBCITSA



40. Bronze ring, a hoop circular within, and seven-sided externally, bearing an inscription, engraved from right to left as though to serve for impression upon wax or other soft material. It reads—

VENANTI VIVAS IN DEO CVM SERCHV (SERGIOLA ?)
? T

the last letters indistinct. Probably of the later fourth century, and found in or near Rome, where I purchased it.

It is doubtless a marriage ring, or *anulus pronubus*, remarkable also for having only seven instead of the more usual number of eight sides.

The name *VINANTII*, similar to that of the bridegroom, occurs on a medallion figured by the Comm^{re} de Rossi in the *Bulletino*, vol. vii, p. 43-45, 1st series.

+ TECLA . VIVAT . DEO . CVM . MARITO . SEO . is incised on a gold ring found at Arles in 1619. (See the able article by Prof. Babington in *Smith's Dic. of Ch. Antiq.* at page 1808).

41. Bronze ring; an octagonal hoop, on the outside of which is engraved SPES . IN . DEO . SEMPER . ✱, and what appears to be an eight-pointed star, or double cross. For other octagonal rings see my Nos. 3, 4, in former paper.

42. Bronze ring, a flat hoop, on the outside of which is incised the name RODON . R , and the sacred monogram. Of the fourth or early fifth century.

It is so far interesting as shewing that this name was still in use among Christians more than two centuries after the time of the celebrated teacher of doctrine, who bore it in the time of S. Severus.

43. Bronze ring, with plain hoop slightly swelling to the shoulders, beneath a high square bezel laterally pieced with a hole at a right angle with the hoop. On the face is engraven the name reversed as for sealing, the outer letter of the last word being indistinct from wear. I procured this at Naples.

C R E
S C E S
V I V A S

44. Bronze ring, with beaded hoop and oval bezel, on which is engraven the sacred monogram above what would seem to have been intended for a ship, but which is rendered indistinct by the corrosion of the metal ; surrounding are the words : SPES IN DEO.



This ring, which was found on the Esquiline, is probably of the later years of the fourth century.

45. Bronze ring with simple hoop, half of which is wanting, and tabular bezel, upon which is deeply incised the reversed word VIVAS between two branches of palm. From the Dressel collection.

46. Copper ring, a simple hoop, slightly convex externally, widening at right angles into a square bezel, upon which is rudely engraven the name SILVANUS .
SILVA
NVSCOMV COMVNALIS ., the letter s being reversed. It
NALIS was, as I believe, found in Algeria, and is of
coarse workmanship, perhaps not older than
the end of the fourth or early fifth century. The gift of
my esteemed friend the Com^{te} J. B. de Rossi.

47. Gold ring of oval form, the hoop swelling to the shoulders and flattened bezel, upon which a palm branch is rudely engraven ; weight, 4 dwts. 19 grs.

The general character and workmanship of this ring would lead to the conclusion that it is probably Christian, and of the fourth or early fifth century.

RINGS ; THE SUBJECTS UPON WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT
BE OF CHRISTIAN SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE.

48. Bronze ring: the hoop of plano-convex section widening to the shoulders. On the circular bezel is a rudely incised representation of Orpheus surrounded by animals which he charms by his music. It is probably of the latter half of the fourth century. From the Dressel collection.

Orpheus is seated, fully draped, and holding a lyre in the left which he plays with his right hand ; an ill-defined covering, a Phrygian cap, or may be a wreath, is on the head, and a six pointed star is seen in the field above his left shoulder ; on his right are a monkey, a lion, and a bull or goat (?), on his left a reptile or fish, and a hare or rabbit. The arrangement of this subject differs but little from what is found on pagan gems, but I do not recollect the star, which may have Christian significance, or may, on the other hand, be merely emblematic of the sun, or the lyre of Orpheus, which, after his death, became a constellation.

Representations occur of the good shepherd standing among his sheep and playing upon the "*siringa*" (De Rossi, *Rom. Sott.* t. ii, p. 353, also in Cat: of the Arvali), having the pipes (*Bull.*, vi, pp. 74 and 86) approaching to the characteristics of Orpheus, but not so distinctly as on our ring.

It is, however, the opinion of some Roman archæologists, who are among the highest authorities on early Christian antiquities, that there is great probability of this being an emblematic representation of a pagan subject having Christian reference.

De Rossi (*Rom. Sott.*, 3) states his belief that Christians did not always scrupulously observe the precepts of Clemens in regard to the subjects depicted on their rings and domestic objects. In support of which opinion is the evidence of a ring found by M. Armellini in the Catac: of Callistus, on a finger bone in one of the loculi ; it was set with a red jasper, on which a Cupid, holding a torch in the right and a butterfly (emblem of Psyche) in the left hand, was engraved in intaglio.

49. Bronze ring with projecting angular shoulders and

small oval bezel, on which a dolphin is very rudely incised. Probably, but not certainly, Christian.

50. Bronze ring, the hoop of plano-convex section flattened at the shoulders, which are engraved with a palm branch, and to the oblong square bezel on which a monogram is rudely cut, with surrounding dotted line. Probably Christian, but of the fifth or sixth century. This is one of a class of rings mostly engraved with monograms and of rude workmanship, many of which are probably Christian.

Of such is the following, as are also those described in my former paper, Nos. 12, 16, and 21: consult De Rossi, *Bull.*, 1863, pp. 33, 34, for Christian Monograms of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries.

51. Bronze ring, the hoop widening to an oval bezel, on which is rudely incised what may be a monogram formed as a sort of double anchor, with a surrounding plain line, and of somewhat similar character to that described in my former paper (*Archæological Journal*, vol. xxvi, p. 144, Nos. 13, 21), but less distinctly an anchor, and with greater probability monogrammatic.

There is, perhaps, equal uncertainty in respect to the rings Nos. 5, 7, 9, and 23 of my former list.

I do not attempt to include in these notices rings or ring stones of so late a period as that of the Merovingian dynasty.

52. Gold ring, hollow, the hoop of plano-convex section widening and swelling to the shoulders, which are produced on either side beyond the ends of an oval bezel, in which is set an intaglio on sard, representing a sheep standing before two ears of corn.

The workmanship is good, probably of the second or early third century, and the ring quite intact.

It is possible that this subject may have a Christian symbolic significance, but at the same time there is equal probability that it is merely of pastoral character and pagan. A sheep or ram is the hereditary device of the *Gens Rustia* (King, i, p. 345), but on the denarius of that gens struck anterior to 70 B.C. it is in a defiant attitude as though to repel attack. Corn is not usual food for sheep, and must have some special significance.

In the museum at Naples I recently observed what I had not previously noticed in my former paper, viz., a

Christian ring formed entirely of calcedony, and having the chrisma engraved upon the bezel.

Of key rings, similar in character to mine (No. 32, figured at page 290 of vol. xxviii of our *Journal*), and thought from the cruciform ward openings to be Christian, three are preserved in the Kircherian Museum at Rome.


Of key-like rings, of the same type as that described by me in vol. xxix, at page 305, a very fine one, set with small cameos and bearing an inscription in *opus interrasile*, is in the possession of Signor Alessandro Castellani at Rome, who suggests that their purpose may have been the protection of the long finger nail, like the contrivance with that intent used by the Chinese. The ring, he possesses, is a small one, which might have fitted the last joint, but both that belonging to Mr. Franks, that in the British Museum, and one in the Museum at Basle are too large in circumference to have fitted the last joint of any finger save that of a giant; they may, however, have decorated a stout thumb.

Of the Christian rings in the Vatican collection, some twenty-six in all, not counting those of the later monogrammatic period and mediæval, some one or more appeared to me to have been acquired since my last visit, or may have been overlooked by me at that time. Of these is a gilt bronze tubular ring, fluted externally and inscribed with a letter in each channel VTEREFEX (Utere Felix).

The inscription on a small gold ring, a flat octagon widening to the bezel, reads

B I C T
O R I A
E V I T A

(Victory [the fruit] of life.)

In the same collection the only early Christian ring stone to be seen is an oval red jasper worked in intaglio. (I  Θ v c).

ENGRAVED GEMS.

1. Intaglio on nicolo of oval form. The *Pastor Bonus*¹ between the two letters R. V., doubtless the initials of the owner of the signet, and of contemporary execution. The woodcut is from the impression, but gives but a poor idea of the quality of the workmanship, which is of a



¹ On this subject consult Martigny, "Etude Arch. sur l'Agneau, &c.," Macon, 1860. De Rossi, "Roma. Sott., &c.;" and Smith's "Dict. of Christian Antiq.," *sub voc.* "Gems."

good period of art, probably of the second century, if not earlier. I purchased this intaglio in Rome.

He is clad in a short tunic having the small domed shepherd's cap upon the head. As seen in the intaglio he is advancing towards his left, supporting the lamb upon his shoulder with his left hand, and carrying a situla in his right.

The water vessel, emblematic of baptism, is occasionally to be seen in the hand of the "good shepherd," but not frequently as a situla. In the church of S. Prassede, at Rome, is a sarcophagus, on which this figure occurs at the angles, but it is a vase, not a situla which he carries.

It is, however, seen on wall paintings. Occasionally also with the attributes of Orpheus.

2. Intaglio on green jasper, streaked with red (blood stone), of oval form. The good shepherd standing among his sheep and holding the lost and found one upon his shoulder. He is clad in the usual short tunic and hat; he



stands upon one leg, the other being crossed over it; one sheep is reclining behind him, two others stand in front beneath the shade of a tree, upon which a bird, probably intended for a dove, is perched. It is of a good period of art, perhaps as early as the second century, and was recently found at Rome, where I purchased it.

In the British Museum is a red jasper of nearly similar size and form, perhaps the work of the same artist, on which a like subject is engraved, but with only two sheep upon the ground.

On a broken fragment, in the possession of Dr. Dressel, is a nearly similar representation. The good shepherd stands with sheep about him and on either side a tree, on each of which a dove is perched. It is in intaglio on carnelion. Refer also to No. 6 in my descriptive list (*Archæological Journal*, vol. xxvi, p. 141), which, however, differs considerably, though probably of cognate significance.

Again it is depicted over an arcosolium in the Cat: of S^a Agnese.

Also on a cippus figured by De Rossi (*Bull.*, 3rd ser., vol. iv, pl. vii.)

In the British Museum are two gems, on which the

good shepherd among his flock is represented, together with the Jonah and other emblematic subjects.

3. Intaglio on a golden yellow sard of oval form, through which a vein of darker colour passes longitudinally. On the slightly convex surface two figures are represented standing in water, which covers their feet to and above the ankles; this water is represented by waved lines intended to convey the idea of a running stream, doubtless the Jordan. The taller of the two figures, both of which are habited in short tunics, seems to guide or sustain the other by slightly holding the side of his tunic. The shorter has the arms extended in the position of an *Orante*, emblematic of eternal reception, his left hand rising above the other's shoulder. No head-covering is worn by either, but a dove is perched upon the head of the shorter personage, who doubtless is intended to represent the Christ, the taller St. John the precursor. The workmanship is fairly good and may be anterior to the third century. I acquired this interesting gem from the Dressel collection at Rome.



At Ravenna, in S. Giovanni in Fonte, and S^a Maria in Cosmedin; at Rome in SS. Cosmo and Damiano; in the cemetery of Pontianus, &c. we have representations of this subject in Mosaic and in painting, as also upon Christian glasses, &c., but I am not aware of its occurrence hitherto upon rings or engraved stones.

4. Intaglio on red jasper, of flat surface. A fish, before the head of which is a bunch of grapes, seemingly hanging from a nail. The workmanship of this gem is excellent, the head of the fish highly polished in the intaglio. It may probably be of the earlier years of the second century. From the Greville Chester collection, and found in Italy.



In the Castellani collection is a ring on which a hare is represented eating a bunch of grapes. It is believed to be Christian.

5. Intaglio on red jasper, oval, of slightly convex face, half an inch long. A fish between the Greek letters Α Α as they occur on the impression.

This is also of fairly good work, and perhaps of not

much later date than the preceding. Probably also found in Italy, and from the Greville Chester collection.

6. Intaglio on sard, of slightly convex surface. The seven-branched candlestick, curiously modified in respect to the three central branches, which are formed as Roman Standards. These, as well as the four outer limbs are surmounted by figures of birds, not the Roman eagle with outstretched wings, but which may be intended for doves; on the medallions, in lieu of the Imperial portrait, and



pagan devices, a cross is distinctly to be seen. The outer limbs are represented as imbricated or foliated branches; the base would seem to be fluted. There is no Hebrew inscription on the back, as on that described and figured by Mr. King (*Gems and Rings*, 2nd ed., vol. ii, pp. 37-83), the candlestick on which, by the way, is only five-branched.

From the Greville Chester collection. Found in Italy.

7. Intaglio on carnelian, of oval form and convex surface. The name I A Ω between two stars of six points: beneath is a fish, above it is a bird, probably a dove. The workmanship is fairly good, and may be of the earlier half of the fourth century. From the Dressel collection.



There is a certain Gnostic *rapprochement* in this signet, although hardly so much as in the curious gem belonging to Col. Stronge, which is figured at p. 37, and described in the foot note at the bottom of page 27 in Mr. King's second volume of the second edition of *Antique Gems and Rings*, and in Smith's Dictionary, *sub voce*, "Gems." Does not "I A Ω" here more distinctly apply to Jehovah as the Father; the fish, the Christ; the dove as the Spirit—in fact an emblematic representation of the Trinity; or is it of cabalistic character, invoking the names of I A O of the Spirit and of the Fish?

8. Intaglio on red jasper, oval: long $5\frac{1}{2}$ lines. An anchor between an eight pointed star and a crescent. From the Greville Chester collection.

9. Intaglio on paste, imitative of red jasper, of oval

form : long, $4\frac{1}{2}$ lines. An anchor. Greville Chester collection. Found in Egypt.

10. Intaglio on nicolo, oval : $9\frac{1}{2}$ lines long. An anchor, without cross bar, reversed, the arms and flukes of which thus form a cross ; from each arm a fish is suspended. Of coarse but deep cutting. Found in Egypt, where it was probably incised. From the Greville Chester collection.



11. Intaglio on garnet, irregularly circular, with flat face ; $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameter. Within a surrounding wreath is a figure with outstretched arms, in the attitude of an *orante*, between two animals ; doubtless it represents Daniel in the den of lions and in the same typical manner as it is to be seen on Christian glasses and other monuments. On either side, above his arms, is a cross. The execution, by the wheel, is extremely rude, but nevertheless effective. I am not aware of a similar subject being recorded as upon a gem. It was found in Egypt, and is doubtless a work of that country, probably of the fourth or fifth century. From the Greville Chester collection.

12. Intaglio on pyrites, a material very rarely made use of for gem engraving ; it is oval, barely half an inch in its longer diameter. On the flat surface the winged figure of an angel or probably Victory is very coarsely incised, closely draped to the feet ; a sort of long shafted double cross is held in the right hand, seemingly a sort of cruciform *Signa* or standard with double arms.

There can be no doubt of the Christian significance of this standard, and I have already referred to the representation of Victory upon Christian objects in my description of the bronze ring, No. 39 (*vide ante*). The rudeness of the engraving, doubtless difficult upon so intractable a material, would denote a late period, probably not earlier than the fifth or even the sixth century. It was found in Egypt, and is from the Greville Chester collection.

13. Intaglio on nicolo, circular, diam. $\frac{1}{3}$ of an inch. A cross "potent," round which are three letters of the Pehlevi language. Found in Egypt. From the Greville Chester collection.

¹ De Rossi (*Bull*, vol. iii, p. 76, plate v), notices a gold ring belonging to Ct : Stroganoff, on which the fish between OY and OX is incised.

I am indebted to Mr. E. Thomas, the great authority on Pehleri gems, for the translation of this legend, which reads *Avasta*, signifying "praise," a word usually associated with *Āfastān-ul-Yazdān*, equivalent to "*Laus deo.*" There is reasonable supposition, rather than distinct evidence, that this gem may have belonged to some Persian Christian, as also that of like character and workmanship on nicolo referred to in my first paper when describing No. 25, and bearing a similar cross with the figure of a lion; but we must not forget the fact that the cross may also be intended to represent the solar emblem of the Persians themselves, to which the laudatory exclamation *Avasta* would equally apply.

I am indebted to my friend, Mr. A. W. Franks, F.R.S., for permission to describe an interesting early Christian gem in its antique gold mounting as a pendant, probably for the use of a child or young person. It is an intaglio on carnelian of oval form and convex surface, seven-twelfths of an inch in its longest diameter. On it is represented, in unusually deep intaglio, a bird seated upon a branch, without leaves, but from which a fruit, in form resembling a pomegranate, is projecting. The gold mounting covers the back of the gem, and forms an overlapping edging round the sides; a small hole on the upper part indicates the former existence of a loop or ring for suspension. In punctured relief upon this gold backing is the name or word VERIAE, above which is a chrisma of unusual form, approaching nearer to that upon the lost Barberini ring referred to in vol. xxviii, p. 271. In that the cross bar surmounts the loop of the P, beneath which is the X saltirewise. On Mr. Franks' the cross bar is placed beneath the loop of the P and above the saltire. This very pretty and suggestive ornament is probably of the well-advanced fourth century of our era, but the intaglio may be earlier.

I regret that an opportunity of communicating these additional memoranda on Christian finger rings and seal stones did not occur before the admirable, but to me too flattering, articles on these subjects, by Prof. Churchill Babington, were published in the volumes of Dr. Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, a work of the greatest value to all students of cognate subjects.



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NOTICE OF A FEW MORE EARLY CHRISTIAN GEMS,

By C. DRURY E. FORTNUM, F.S.A., etc.¹

On some former occasions I have had much pleasure in directing the attention of members of the Royal Archæological Institute to various rings and engraved gems in my own and other collections, the workmanship of the earlier centuries of our era, whereon are represented in intaglio upon the metal, or upon the stones encased therein, emblems or subjects having indirect or symbolic reference to Christianity. The descriptive remarks read to the Institute on those occasions were honoured by publication in the *Archæological Journal*, and may be found by reference to vols. xxvi, p. 137; xxviii, p. 266; xxix, 305; xxxiii, p. 111, and lastly in vol. xxxvii at page 351.

Since the last publication I have been fortunate enough to acquire some other early christian gems of not less interest than those considered in my former papers, some description and remarks on which, together with an illustrative engraved plate, I would now offer to the Society.

For the convenience of those who take interest in this special branch of antiquarian enquiry I would propose to number the objects now to be described in sequence of those which were the subjects of my former papers, the last gem in which was numbered 13.

Of those now under consideration No. 1 on the illustrative engraved plate, on which they are figured of the actual size, will be No. 14 of the collective and descriptive list, and so forward.

These gems are from various sources, some kindly ceded to me by my friend the Rev. Greville Chester, others from the collection of Dr. Dressel, some from my own gather-

¹ Read at the Monthly Meeting of the Institute, May 7, 1885, when the objects therein referred to were exhibited.

ing; and independently of my own belief in their integrity, all have been submitted to the careful scrutiny of no less than five or six of the best judges of my acquaintance, who were agreed in considering them genuine and antique.

No. 14. A nicolo of oval form, which from certain fine crackling on the surface would seem to have been subjected to the action of fire, but insufficient to do more than slightly impair the purity of the white stratum. (See plate fig. 1.) Its surface is covered with subject in intaglio. Above is the ship, emblematic of the voyage of life and, perhaps subsequently, of the church, and in the field over it are the letters I H C.¹ De Rossi, Garrucci, and the late much regretted Padre Broussa consider that the ship with these initials of Christ above it, is typical of Him and of His church. To the right (in the impression and as seen in the engraving) is the chrisma, beneath which an anchor with a fish on either side, the head of the upper one being towards the top, that of the lower fish towards the flukes of the anchor, viz., counter-naiant as in the sign *Pisces*.

On the other side, the left, Jonas, with a star above him, is being ejected by the marine monster² whose serpentine body and fish-like tail extend across the field, here spotted over with oblong cuts from the scalptor's wheel to indicate the water of the great deep, in which and below a dolphin swims.

I have before suggested and, then unknown to me, a similar idea has been advanced by the late Canon Martigny, that the two fish with the anchor may have connubial reference, and supposing this to be the fact, may we not venture to interpret this complex representation of Christian emblems as follows: viz., that the stone was originally set in a marriage ring—that the fish, the wedded pair, united in hope (the anchor) under Christ (the chrisma) that the voyage of life (the ship) or the church of Christ of which they are disciples, may lead them to the resurrection (Jonah) to Eternal life? (the star). This may be a too poetical surmize, but it would at least give some

¹ As on a gem of the Borgia coll. and elsewhere.

² The "whale" represented with Jonah

is the "*pristis*" (Pliny His. Nat. xxiv, 19, 8), *pristas* or *pristes*, i.e., Sea monsters.

reason for the occurrence of so many emblems together, and in the relative positions in which they are seen on this curious gem.

Or, on the other hand, it may be suggested that the two fish are hopefully united under the sacred monogram as members of the Church of Christ (the ship) and so on.

It may also be argued that although those gems on which two fish are represented, one on each side of the stem of cross or anchor, the heads of which are in the *same direction*, may have matrimonial reference,¹ the fact that the fishes on this gem are placed head to tail, as in the Zodaical sign, would be against such an inference.

It came from Beirut in Syria and is of fairly good workmanship. In the opinion of some of the more learned Roman antiquaries it is of classic time, probably of the later years of the third century, and may be even anterior to Constantine, the *chrisma* having been known previous to its adoption by him for the *Labarum*.

No. 15 (fig. 2). The gem engraved under this number is also one of considerable interest. On the face of an oval piece of red jasper we have the following representation in intaglio. A figure, undoubtedly representing the Good Shepherd, stands erect, his weight borne upon the right leg and foot, the left being slightly bent backwards, the toe touching the ground. He is clad in the usual short tunic, &c., a *pallium* or shawl falling from the left shoulder is held by that hand. On and over his right shoulder and back he holds the sheep or lamb, its fore legs being held by his raised and extended right hand. He looks upwards to his right and the usual domed shepherd's hat is on the head.² On either side a sheep is standing on the ground from which a tree of serpentine growth, doubtless intended for a vine, rises spreading above his head; below his feet and the incised line indicating the ground on which he stands, a fish is swimming, while on the field of the gem immediately before him is an anchor. Here then again we have several well known emblems combined on the same gem. In section, this jasper is an oval thin truncated cone, the base

¹ The laying together the extended index fingers of each hand is a well known sign referring to marriage in the East.

² These descriptions of attitude are as seen in the impressions from the intaglio on which they are reversed.

of which is the face of the gem, the reverse being an oval of smaller surface, and on this we find incised the letters, as shown in the engraving, IAΘ. My first impression on examining this intaglio (which was kindly secured for me by my friend Dr. Dressel, whose practised eye is authoritative as to the genuineness of an antique) was that these letters were to be read as the well known IAΩ (Ω) the third letter being accidentally and wrongly written on its side. On showing the gem to my friend the learned Padre Garrucci he doubted that such a form of the letter could have been unintentional. Further consideration of the subject and reference to notes, &c., led to the conclusion that the letter in question was a B (beta) not a ω wrongly inscribed, and that the word was to be read the other way, as on the stone, BAI, being an abbreviation of Βαιγ. On referring to *Sueceri (J.C.) Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus*, Vol. i., sub. voc. Βαιγ it is explained as of Egyptian origin and signifying "*ramus palmæ*" a palm branch. *Sueceri* refers to the *Evangelium Egyptianum*, Ino. xii, v. 13, *ὡς βαια φοινηταν*. See also *Peyron Lexicon Copticum*, p. 19, βαιγ, *ramas palmæ*, the emblem of Martyrdom and of Victory. BAI would also signify the soul (King) and also a prize = the palm branch. The workmanship of this gem is good and its preservation perfect; it is probably of the first half of the third century, according to the opinion of the Com: De Rossi, who thought the inscription, reading it as IAω indicated a Gnostic tendency on the part of the original owner.

No. 16 (see plate 3) is a gem, a carnelian or sard much broken, which was referred to in my former paper (page 359) as then belonging to Dr. Dressel, but since acquired by me; on which we have the Good Shepherd standing between, probably, two sheep but one only remains, beyond on either side is a cypress tree on each of which a bird is perched. Here we have the sheep, the disciples or church on earth, and the birds their spiritual state in heaven, perhaps also typifying the Jewish and Christian churches mundane and celestial—a curious and interesting figurative representation, well executed. It also is a work probably of a somewhat later period of the third century.

No. 17. At the dispersion of the Castellani collection in

Rome last year, I acquired another gem of similar character to that figured on page 359 of my last paper (No. 2). It is a *nicolo* of fairly good workmanship, probably of the advanced third century; the Good Shepherd carrying the lamb or sheep seems to be advancing towards his right, beneath the spreading branch of what is probably intended for a vine, a sheep is on either side, the whole group reversed in arrangement, but much resembling that on the red jasper (No. 2 on the plate), but beyond the sheep on the ground before him is what appears to represent a bird, above which is an object like the letter J, as seen on the intaglio, but longer in proportion to its width, and which may be intended for a shepherd's crook *or pedum*, if not a letter, in which case it would probably be the initial of the original owner of the gem. I believe, however, that it represents the shepherd's crook, as, on sealing, the letter would be reversed.

A similar subject on a *nicolo*, but varied from that just described, was also sold at the Castellani sale; it was in bad condition, chipped and of coarse inferior workmanship.

In the Ravenna Library are two gems, a crystal and a carnelian, on each of which is a *pastor bonus* in intaglio of very rude execution.

By way of illustration I have laid on the table a terracotta lamp, on which the subject of the Good Shepherd is seen in relief surrounded by bunches of grapes.

I would also direct attention to the interesting and perfectly preserved archaic Greek bronze statuette representing the Hermes Criophoros, a nude figure, his head only covered by a close fitting cap or hood and carrying a ram sheep on his shoulders. This little group, found in the neighbourhood of Santa Maria Capua, is referred to by the late M. Veyries¹ in his interesting monograph on Criophoric figures of Greek, Roman and early Christian times, and is probably of a date considerably anterior to the third century B.C.

In it we have the type adopted in later time by the early Christians in representing the Good Shepherd as we

¹ Veyries, M.A., *Les Figures Criophores*. Paris, 1884., p. 7, No. 11. Bib. des

Écoles Fr. d'Athènes et de Rome.

see it upon the lamp, and upon the engraved gems I have just described.

This "Hermes" carrying the young male sheep or goat may merely represent a peasant bringing an offering to the shrine of his favourite deity, and in this respect such group may have been considered as doubly typical by the Christian mind, the young male sheep, of the first of the flock, representing that Lamb, without spot, who was offered for us all; while, on the other hand, as a shepherd carefully bearing the young or weakly ram, would signify the disciple gently borne on the loving neck of Him who is the Shepherd of our souls. The group would thus have two-fold significance, although there can be little doubt that it was in the latter sense as the *pastor bonus* that it was generally accepted and represented.

The gem described under No. 10 in my last paper (No. 4 in our plate) is a *nicolo*, the intaglio on which is of similar character to a stone referred to by Martigny and to one by Gorli; on the gem figured by the latter, the fish hang from the arms of a cross, which in no way resembles an anchor. On that now under notice the anchor is reversed in position, the fish hanging by their heads one on each side of the stem. The work is coarsely executed but somewhat deeply cut, and probably of the later years of the third or early fourth century; found in Egypt.

The two fish—if such representation has no connubial reference—are believed by some to typify the multiplication of *the* food—Christ's body; the anchor—the cross; or, the faithful attracted or attached to an eucharistic or other emblem of the faith (vide De Rossi, Bul. 1879, p. 109) two fish, with emblem, the two *conjugi* united, yoked, or mated together under the faith—" *pisciculi secundum Jesum Christum* " to quote Tertullian.

In the library at Ravenna are two Christian gems, on one, a green jasper, is an anchor between two fish; on the other, a carnelian, a cross between two fish.

No. 18 (No. 5 on the plate) is a gem of similar material and character to that described in my former paper under No. 12. It is an intaglio on pyrites, and represents a winged draped figure, an angel or victory holding an orb surmounted by a cross potent, (the *cruce ansata* reversed,) and an inscription below, which Mr. King rather agreed

with me in reading *pax* from an impression, but which may be of badly formed Greek letters XAT, and the initials of the owner. It came from Egypt and is rudely executed, but somewhat in the early Byzantine manner of the fifth and early sixth century; its oriental origin would be strong reason for the inscription being in Greek, rather than in Roman letters. On the gem (No. 12) described in my last paper, the victory holds a double cross, an emblem which, it would seem, does not appear till the period of Justinian II. The victory with orb and cross on that now under consideration, occurs on coins of Arcadius after 383 A.D. The double cross, *i.e.*, the cross having above the lateral arms a smaller cross-bar, may probably have taken its origin from the title affixed over the head and bearing the well known superscription which Pilate would not alter.

The intaglio now under notice is larger than that No. 12, and better in execution, though very coarse, as might be expected on so harsh and ungrateful a material.

No. 7 on the engraving (numbered 19 in my list) figures an intaglio upon sard found at Rome, the Christian significance of the subject on which, a spreading tree between two branches of palm, was open to some doubt; my own opinion was that it was intended to represent the tree of life. That opinion is in a measure confirmed by the representation of a similar tree upon the side of one of those Egyptian earthen flasks which are (when hollow) supposed to have contained oil from the shrine of St. Menas, or were tokens of that Saint, and which generally bear his figure with arms extended between two camels, with an inscription surrounding or on the other side.¹ That bottle, the Christianity of which is manifest, was brought over by the Revd. Greville Chester and is now in the British Museum; it has not the figure of the saint, but the usual inscription

(Του αγίου Μηννα) ΤΟΥΤΑ
ΓΙΟΥΜ
ΗΝΑ

is on one side: and the tree on the other.

Another instance of the tree occurs in intaglio on a small *plasma* gem, which I subsequently procured in

¹ An example was exhibited.

Rome; on it is a wide spreading tree having on either side an ear of corn.

It seems to me that, however we may differ on the precise significance of these representations, there can be little doubt that they are of Christian symbolism and that the principal figure is intended for the tree of life. In the one case the palm may refer to victory over sin and death unto eternal life—the tree—which can hardly be intended for a vine, or the explanation would be manifest. The ears of corn on the smaller stone must have reference to the bread, the typical of body of the Lord.

The tree occurs on gems together with the Good Shepherd, as on some we have described, but it is of different form and character of growth, (see also Bull. Arch. Ch. 1879, T. vii) and painted in the catacombs (Bull. 1876, T. ix). The perseae tree or Sebestene plum (*Cordia Myxa*), wreathes of whose branches were ordered by Alexander to be used as prizes in the games he instituted at Alexandria, and the leaves of which frequently adorn the head of Horus, could hardly be that figured upon the S. Menas bottle, nor upon the two gems under consideration. If not the tree of life, as I believe, it might rather be intended for that tree at Matareyeh by Heliopolis under which the Holy Family are said to have reposed on their flight into Egypt, but if so the reference is Christian.

No. 8 on the engraving (No. 20 of our list) is a stone which would seem to be a mottled brown jasper, on one face of which an anchor is incised of the form usually found on Christian gems, and probably intended as a Christian emblem; on the reverse however is the inscription honouring Serapis METAC CAPANIC, a curious record of the intermingling of the two Cults, Serapis being honoured as a type of Christ. Merivale (History of Rome) states that Serapis and Christ were, in the time of Hadrian, equally worshipped as being nearly identical. Mr. King (Gnostics, p. 68) refers to “the curious letter of Hadrian to Servianus” from which he quotes “Those who worship “Serapis are also Christians; even those who style themselves the bishops of Christ are devoted to Serapis. The “very patriarch himself when he comes to Egypt is forced “by some to adore Serapis, by others to adore Christ.

“There is but one God for them all, him do the Christians, him do the Jews, him do all the Gentiles also worship.”

Noble sentiments worthy of that enlightened Emperor.

The execution of this inscription is sharp and clean, and the work may be of the later second or earlier third century. The gem was found in Egypt.

Figure No. 6 (21 of our list) is a very pale oval amethyst, on the slightly convex face of which is incised what is doubtless intended to represent a lamb holding a cross—an *Agnus Dei*. It is interesting as an early representation of the subject on a gem, being probably of the fifth or sixth century, and for the very rude manner in which the intaglio is executed, probably by some local artist. As seen in the impression the lamb is walking to the right; the head surmounted by the nimbus being turned over the back; the cross is of the form known as potent, an elongated stem being attached to the lower limb.

No. 9 on the engraved plate, No. 22 of my list, represents a gem of the genuineness of which I could hardly feel quite assured, but on submitting it to the careful examination of three of the best judges of antique gems at Rome, all were satisfied of its antiquity. It is an amethyst of oval form, on the slightly convex face of which is incised the figure of a fish, swimming, and holding in its mouth what seems to be intended for a spray of olive rather than an ear of corn or a palm, as it will be noticed that the leaves alternate and are not one opposite the other. A curious representation which I do not recollect to have seen recorded, but can hardly have other than Christian significance. Could it be intended to convey that the fish—the Christ—brings peace and happiness to the believer—“peace be unto you,” “my peace I give to you”? Or is it the disciple who has received and holds that emblem of his peace in Christ?

The work of the intaglio is fairly good, and may be of the third or early fourth century. It was procured at Rome.

In my last paper (*Arch. Journal*, vol. xxxvii, p. 362) on Christian rings and gems I figured and described under No. 11 a circular *intaglio* on garnet, on which is incised an erect draped figure with laterally outstretched arms,

beneath each of which is an animal, I believe to be intended for a lion, with head down as crouching beneath the central figure. This I concluded was no other than a representation of Daniel in the lion's den; but some learned antiquaries have thought that S. Menas and his camels, rather than Daniel and the lions, was the subject of the intaglio. On showing the gem to the Padre Garrucci he quite agreed with my view, and considers the representation of importance as typical of Christ; the attitude denoting the crucifixion and the scared lions His persecutors the Jews. See also De Rossi, Bull. Inst., 1872, tav. II., who agrees in my opinion, as to the subject being Daniel and not S. Menas.

For other representations of Daniel on gems see Garrucci, (Storia, plates 478 and 492), one of these is in a reliquary at the Duomo in Cividale; the other at Vienna.

Mr. King (Gnostics, p. 142) refers to a sard gem formerly in the Hertz collection having the Good Shepherd between two tigers (or lions?) looking up at him with the legend ESIVKEV which he writes "evidently cloaked the, at the time no doubt, dangerous confession KE (for *Κυριε*) IESV 'Lord Jesu help.'"

This representation bears a curious analogy to that upon our garnet, and would seem to confirm the opinion that the Daniel on my gem was typical of Christ, who is figured as the Good Shepherd on the Hertz sard.

No. 10 on the engraved plate represents an interesting Gnostic gem, a green jasper with some red spots (blood-stone) the intaglio, of fair workmanship, and the inscription on which, I have Mr. King's authority for stating, are important; being "an unpublished legend of much interest identifying Isis with the Moon, as Osiris was with the Sun, according to Plutarch. In this case, therefore, the adjunct $IA\omega$ is very appropriate that being, properly in the Greek form $IAO\Sigma$, merely a title of the autumnal "Sun."

On the face of the gem is incised an erect figure of Isis wrapped in the *peplum*, in the act of advancing to the right (in the impression) and holding the "cup of libation," in Mr. King's opinion, but which looks equally, from the indefinite workmanship of the intaglio, like a globular fruit, while along and up the arm is a straight line indicating portion of some instrument, but which two objects

taken together may, not improbably, represent the *simpulum* or, more correctly, the *cyathus* by which libations were offered to the Gods. Before and at her feet is a gryphon, apparently holding some object beneath its right fore foot, (this I regret to see is not correctly rendered on the copper-plate). Beneath and around is the inscription already referred to, and which Mr. King, the first authority on Gnostic lore, reads—

ECICKYPIA MEΓAA HNEM,

and translates 'Isis the mighty Lady of the moon.' In section the gem is a much truncated oval cone, on the reverse and smaller face is incised the ΙΑΩ. I purchased this stone at Naples, but have reason to think that it may have been brought from Sicily.

I have ventured to publish this *intaglio* with the others, although it is not to be numbered among the Christian gems which are the special subject of the present paper, but I have done so firstly by reason of the interesting nature of its inscription, as pointed out by Mr. King, and secondly because there was an unoccupied space at the bottom of the engraved plate which I thought it would not too unworthily occupy.

I may here refer to some interesting notices of "Christian Gem-Types" by Mr. King and by Mr. S. S. Lewis, published in the "Communications" of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, accompanied as they are by much learned comment and valuable reference. There also are described some Gnostic stones of curious interest.

I may also here record the following, which are preserved in the Museum at Parma, where I noticed nine coarsely executed early Christian gems, the subjects of which are :—

1. Carnelian—anchor, fish and IXBYE.
2. Yellow jasper—palm and wreath.
3. Carnelian—dove and palm incised on the reverse of an older pagan gem, the subject of which is nearly ground down.
4. Red jasper—*Pastor bonus* and two sheep below.
5. Plasma—dove and palm.
6. Fish and some letters.
7. Wreath and palm.
8. Anchor.

9. Dove and palm.

They are, for the most part, unimportant.

In the collection of objects which belonged to Carlo Morbio, and which were dispersed by auction at Munich in Sept. 1883, were some gems and finger rings of which, judging from the description in the catalogue, some were of early Christian character, others probably mediæval.

While occupied in revising proof of the foregoing, I have received from my friend the Rev. Greville J. Chester, the oval bezel of a bronze ring from which the apparently simple hoop has been broken away. On it, figured in intaglio, is a boat extending across the field, in which three figures are seated; the centre one, in full face, draped and nimbed is, doubtless, intended for Christ; one sits at the prow, the other at the stern, Simon, probably, and another disciple; while from the depth below three fishes are rising toward the boat. This may be intended to represent the miraculous draught of fishes; or, with equal probability—Christ being in the boat and not on the shore—His preaching from the ship to the assembled multitude (Mark iv, 1) here typified by the fishes. The workmanship is rude, probably of late fourth or early fifth century. It was found at Smyrna.



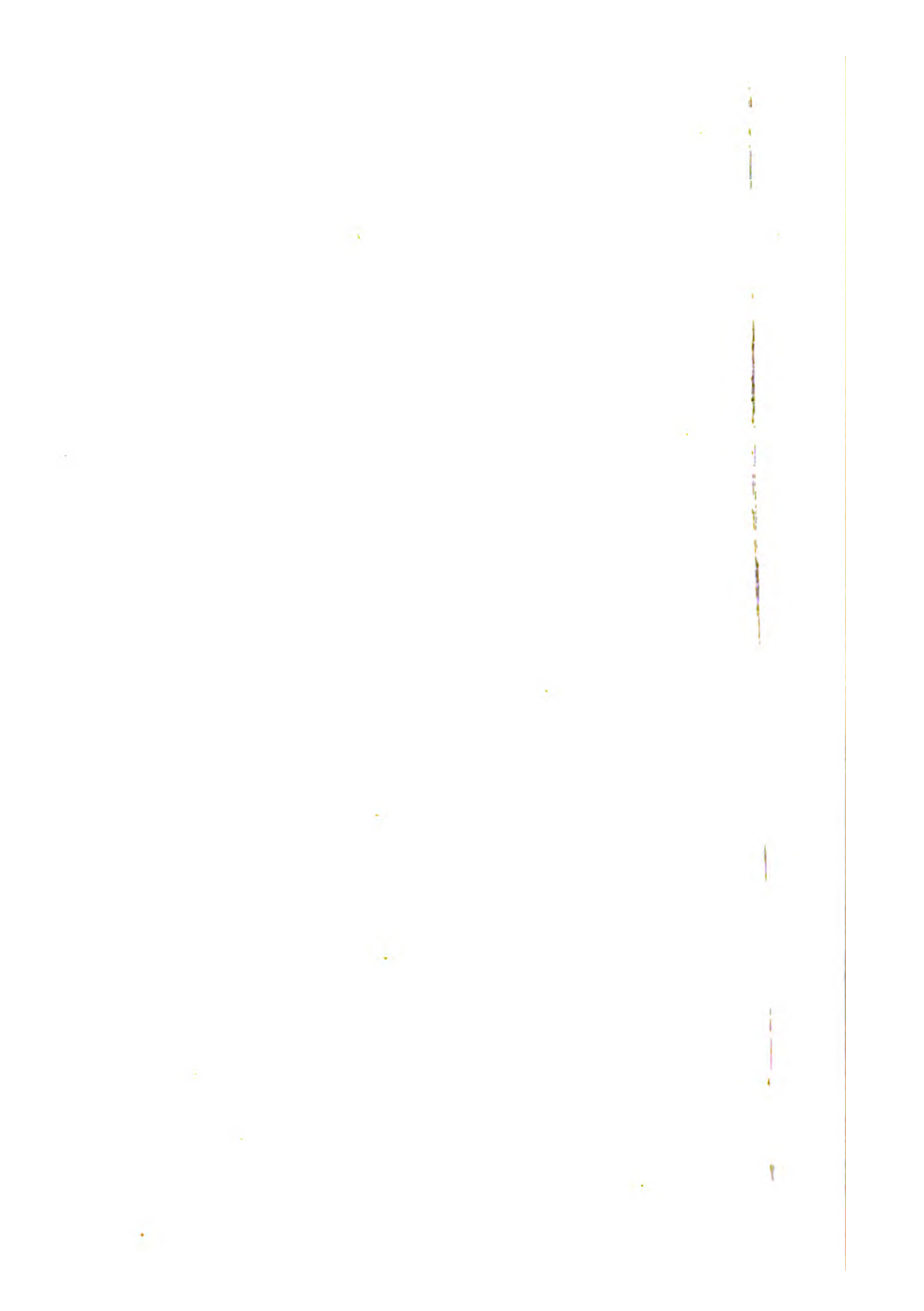
POSTSCRIPT.

MR. C. D. E. FORTNUM'S PAPER ON EARLY CHRISTIAN GEMS.

On again examining better impressions and the engraving of the gem described at page 169, line 9, *et seq.*, Mr. King finds that he has here given a wrong reading, "in consequence", he writes, "of my examining the letters through a defective transcript. It reads NEMECIC H KYPIA MEΓAAH, and thereby addresses the invocation to Nemesis and not to Isis, which adds greatly to the interest and rarity of the gem."

The globular fruit is, doubtless the apple, the straight line above and those below the left arm may represent the bridle, the gryphon holds the wheel, attributes of Nemesis.

C. D. E. FORTNUM.







1.



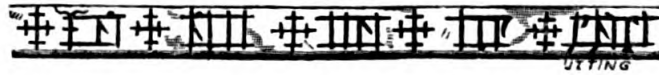
2.



3.



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6.



7.

Seals and Rings found at Fountains Abbey,
and
in the possession of the Marquess of Ripon.

A DESCRIPTION OF FIVE FINGER-RINGS AND TWO SEALS,
THE PROPERTY OF THE MARQUESS OF RIPON, K.G., &c.

(Exhibited at the Ripon Congress, July, 1874, and at the Monthly Meeting held in London, November 6, 1874.¹)

Of the series of finger rings and seals that I am about to describe, four, or five at least were found at various times among the ruins of Fountains Abbey, near Ripon, long before that most lovely and interesting spot was owned by their present possessor, by whom they were exhibited at the Ripon meeting of our Institute, and since at the Society's rooms. They are altogether seven in number, of which five are rings and two are seals.

The circumstances and period under which they were severally found unfortunately do not seem to have been noted. Three at least of them were in the possession of the Messenger family, owners of the estate and occupants of Fountains Hall when Dr. Burton wrote his "Monasticon Eboracense" (London: 1758-59, fol.), in which work, on the engraving that faces page 140, he has figured those numbered 2, 6, 7, on our plate. Burton writes, "most of these seals have been found at different times in the ruins of this Abbey, and are now in possession of Mr. Messenger."

It is presumable, from this passage, that some others, besides those which he has figured, were seen by Burton in Mr. Messenger's possession, but we are without particulars. From the Messengers they probably passed into the hands of Mr. W. Aislaby, of Studley, who purchased the estate from that family in 1768, and with it have since become the property of its present noble and hospitable owner.

Walbran, in his excellent "Guide" (p. 89, ed. 1851) states that on the removal of the mass of cinders and rubbish in the coal yard adjoining the Abbot's kitchen, during the excavations made in 1848, a silver spoon, a silver ring, and a brass ring were found, but we have no means of distinguishing which, if either, is among those before us. One of them, a silver ring, but which we know not, was found, as his Lordship informs me, in 1855. To commence with the rings:—

No. 1. A signet ring of bronze, the bezel of elongate octagonal form, the hoop in alternating spiral bands, which, commencing at the three narrower sides of the octagon as slightly convex members, are divided from each other by a line of beading. On their wider ends, at the shoulders of the ring, they are each incised with two leafy sprays or buds, which have originally been filled in with enamel, an enrichment that also occurs on gold rings of the same period and fashion; the colours still perceptible are white and very dark red. Can these be intended for rose-buds, alternately white and red, to denote the nascent union of the two great rival houses of York and Lancaster? which event took place at the accession of Henry VII. in 1485, and to which approximate period this ring may be assigned. It has been richly gilt, and from its large size

¹ See p. 107 of the "Archæo. Journ." vol. xxxii.

would seem to have been worn on the thumb. On the bezel is deeply incised a bearded male head, whose brows are encircled with a twisted fillet, tied in a bow and falling behind. The inscription, in old English characters, reads **R̄ic̄us** (for Ricardus) **Sherde**. A corded edging surrounds the whole.

It might at first be thought that this is a ring of magical or prophylactic virtue, and that the head represented was that of John the Baptist, the potent spell against the falling sickness or epilepsy; but there is no charger or cup, as usually shown, containing the severed head of the Precursor; nor is it an heraldic bearing. It may possibly convey some covert allusion to the owner, a *rebus*, but the force of it does not occur to me, and I am more disposed to consider it as a merchant's mark, a Saracen's or wild man's head—perhaps the sign of the owner's warehouse. In all respects this is a fine and interesting ring, and is in a good state of preservation.

No. 2 is a monster ring of brass or latten, a signet, which also has been gilded; the shank plain and of nearly semi-circular section, swelling to the bezel, which is slightly raised and of a somewhat ovoid circular form. This bears, in deep intaglio, the head and bust, in full face, of an ecclesiastic, perhaps of a sainted abbot, but more probably that of S. Bernard, the type of the Cistercian order. He holds a pastoral staff or crozier in the right hand; his hair is cut short over the forehead, the tonsured head being surrounded by a dotted nimbus or aureole. Over his left shoulder is the old English letter **h**; an imperfectly defined corded moulding forms the edging. Though the period would approximate, it is hardly probable that this could have been the seal ring of Marmaduke Huby, who was created Abbot in 1494, and whose initials are seen above the lowest west window of the tower at Fountains Abbey, as in a niche above the ridge of the transept his probable effigy is still visible.

The ring is very coarsely made by casting to a pattern, the head and bust of the saint not having been incised but cast in intaglio, and little, if at all, touched up by the graver, small signs of its working being perceptible, except upon the letter **h**, which shows distinct marks of tooling. From this we may surmise that such rings may have been made in quantity, perhaps for the use of certain members of the order, each individual one having its owner's initial superadded; or as tokens of pilgrimage to the shrine of S. Bernard. It is probably of the later decades of the fifteenth century, and is one of the three represented (but not very accurately) in Burton's "Monasticon," and described by him as "a ring seal worn on the thumb."

Layman or clerical, a stalwart Yorkshireman must have owned it; no meagre mannikin could have borne the weight of so much metal, or supply a digit of such dimension as two inches and three quarters in circumference! a marked development of thumb power quite beyond that of ordinary mortals in the present day.

No. 3. A silver thumb signet, of coarse workmanship, with corded hoop and elongated octagonal bezel, upon which is engraven a merchant's mark or emblem, that partakes in fashion of the cross and the *caduceus*, in combination with some letters. We may perhaps infer therefrom that our cautious trader wished to propitiate the pagan as also the Christian powers! On either side of the "mark" is a spray of laurel (?), and the

whole is surrounded by a beaded or corded edging. Although rude, this is an interesting merchant's signet of the end of the fifteenth or earlier years of the sixteenth century. The corded moulding or edging, which occurs on several of these examples, and which is so frequent upon signet rings and seals of the fifteenth and following centuries, may have originated in the habit of surrounding the brittle wax of the seal with a twisted band of grass, straw, or parchment, in the form of a fillet, by which it was protected from fracture or abrasion; a practice which came into use in the fourteenth century.

No. 4 is a curious ring of betrothal or matrimonial character. It is a flat hoop of silver, half an inch wide, the lower portion of which, to the extent of about one fourth of the whole circumference, is formed into two interclasped hands—the well-known *fede* or betrothal emblem. The hoop portion is divided by engraving into four panels, each of the first three bearing a letter of the sacred monogram *i h c*, and the fourth a palm branch.

These letters, and their surrounding edges, are reserved in the plain surface of the metal, the ground around them being incised by cross hatching with the graving tool. I find no signs of enamel or niello, but this ring has been gilt.

Figures of saints, and the sacred monogram, are frequently met with on rings of the fifteenth century, and were not restricted to those for the use of ecclesiastics. One of silver, in the Londesborough collection, has the clasped hands, and the inscription ✠ IESUS . NAZARUS . REX . We may therefore assume that this was a layman's ring, and probably had served to record the betrothal of his future wife, or his marriage with her. It is of a somewhat unusual type.

No. 5 is probably a prophylactic or cabalistic ring: a plain band of silver one-sixth of an inch wide, formed into a simple hoop, and engraved outside with the inscription shown upon our plate, which may be in old French, but which has defied the most cunning readers to interpret. It also is probably of the fifteenth century.

No. 6 is the bronze matrix of a seal which has been figured in the *Monasticon*, but certainly is not that of an Abbot of Fountains, as has been supposed. Moreover, no abbot is recorded of the name of Peter, since Peter Aling in 1274, throughout the lists given by Burton or by Dugdale. It is apparently of the latter part of the fifteenth century or early sixteenth. One inch and an eighth in diameter, it is circular in form, having engraved in the centre a shield with the bearings, argent, a bordure engrailed — ? — over all a bend, sable. The head and shoulders of an angel, whose wings fall on either side, rise above and behind, as though balancing or supporting the shield, at the base of which, on each side, is a key, emblematic of the saint after whom the owner was named. The circumscription, in old English lettering, reads *S. Pierre . de . Fontaines .*, it is filled in at its termination with three roses, and surrounded by a corded moulding. The upper portion and ring for suspension have been broken off, above a projection to which it tapers in a six sided form. I can find no traces of gilding.

It is, in all probability, the private *sigillum* of one Pierre de Fontaines, a member of one of the French families of that name, but in connection with which the shield does not appear to have been recorded. The nearest coat among English families, but differing in the colours,

seems to be that of Belkmore, viz., gules, a bordure engrailed argent, over all a bend of the last. Its occurrence among the ruins of Fountains may be considered as purely accidental.

No. 7 is a steel matrix of a seal of the "Curia" or Court of St. Mary of Fountains. It is circular, one sixteenth less than an inch in diameter, and engraved with a whole length figure of the Blessed Virgin, holding the Child on her right arm. Both have an aureola of rays above, and an awkwardly executed scarf or veil falls on either side of the Virgin's head; they are represented in full face, and her figure is rendered in a peculiarly squat manner, the engraver having, in a somewhat arbitrary way, apparently to adapt it to the limited space, curtailed the figure by leaving out the upper half of the legs from the knees, and the lower half the body from the waist! The arm is clothed with a full sleeve, and a short but ample skirt is worn beneath a tight-fitting bodice. The inscription ✠ CVRIA . B . MARIE . DE . FONTIBVS, in Roman character, surrounds the figures, and is encircled by a dotted edging.

The seal tapers to the stem in a conical form pared into eight sides, which unite beneath the lowest of four projecting members, the upper of which is faceted and surmounted by a loop for suspension. A seal, perhaps of somewhat earlier date, but of nearly similar design, is also engraved in the Monasticon, with the note "said to be the seal us'd at their court." In the collection of casts from seals made by the late Mr. Charles Spence, are two that have since been presented to the library of the Society of Antiquaries by Mr. Perceval, one of which seems to have been taken from Lord Ripon's matrix, the other from that engraved in Burton. On the latter the Virgin is represented as veiled and crowned; the figure and drapery are more correctly and artistically drawn, the legend similar, but the ✠ smaller.

The seal, now in the hands of Mr. Nicholson, the present Steward of the Court, may possibly be that figured by Burton.

Burton informs us that Richard II. confirmed to the Abbey all possessions, granting also "sac, soc, toll, team," &c., with the courts of all their tenants, nomination or removal of their own bailiffs and servants, and with power to inflict fines and forfeitures within the said precincts.

A peculiar ecclesiastical jurisdiction was also held by the Abbey of Fountains, but of which no trace remained in 1828. But it would seem that the Court still possesses certain functions which originally appertained to Fountains, and that it formerly had jurisdiction both for debt and criminal misdemeanor. A court is still held at Fountains, at which any transfer of property by sale or otherwise within the Manor and Liberty is registered, and to which court each occupier or owner in the said manor is liable to be summoned, as being a sort of fief or feoff to the lord of the manor—now the Marquess of Ripon. It also appears that they are still so summoned in rotation, but that practically the most severe penalty inflicted is perhaps that condition of mind and body which follows too good a dinner.

The seal figured by Burton was therefore that of the Court of the Manor and Liberty of Fountains, the powers of which were derived from the dissolved monastery, and probably is not older than the latter end of the sixteenth or earlier years of the seventeenth century; while that under consideration may be some fifty years more recent. It does not appear to have been under ground, and is only slightly rusted.

I am indebted to Mr. Carter, one of our hospitable entertainers at Ripon, and a member of the Institute, for some of the above information. The office of Steward to this Court is held by Mr. R. W. Nicholson, who also fulfils the duties of Town Clerk at Ripon, and is in possession of a duplicate seal of the "Curia" of Fountains.

From that gentleman I have since received the following rough notes :—

"The monastery, having been founded by Thurston, Archbishop of York, in the reign of King Stephen, and having been largely endowed by most munificent gifts afterwards from subsequent benefactors, and thus rescued from the state of poverty and privation under which the first abbots and monks had so patiently and bravely struggled, had, in the reigns of Stephen, Henry II., Richard I., and succeeding monarchs, not only their possessions confirmed to them, but received also grants of 'Inspeximus' and confirmation, and other grants of almost every kind of privileges, franchises, and immunities (including privilege of sanctuary within, if not beyond, the boundaries of the 'site' or 'close' of the Abbey), which the sovereign could bestow or subjects could hold—besides which many ecclesiastical privileges and immunities were conferred by various Papal Bulls.

"Amongst many other franchises (not incident to ordinary feudal tenures) there was a Court of Pleas, having jurisdiction for the recovery of debts and the redress of other civil injuries, the jurisdiction of which long survived the dissolution of the monastery, in which plaints were entered and tried, in comparatively very recent times.

"The Court for the Manor *and Liberty* of Fountains, of which the most honourable the Marquess of Ripon is the lord, and his local solicitor, Mr. R. W. Nicholson, of Ripon, is the steward, and which was formerly held in the Court House, or (as it is called in the records of the Abbey) the 'Hall of Pleas,' is still held annually in Fountains Hall. The jurisdiction and franchises of the Court extend over all the large possessions of the monastery (wherever situate) at the time of the dissolution, and amongst the other franchises still maintained by the visitors and jurors of the Court, is the exemption from all chartered tolls throughout England, Wales, and Ireland."

C. D. E. FORTNUM.



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[*From the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries, Nov. 27, 1890.*]

C. D. E. FORTNUM, Esq., D.C.L., F.S.A., by permission of the owner, Dr. Little, of Ryarsh, West Malling, exhibited a gold ring, of the later years of the last century, containing a lock of hair presumed to be that of King Edward IV.

Concerning the history of the ring, Mr. Fortnum read the following memorandum which had also been lent to him :

“ Remarks on a mourning ring containing a small relic of hair, with the inscription *Edwardus Rex, 1483.*”

The hair in the ring can hardly be that of Edward V., as was suggested. This prince was never crowned, and ought not to be reckoned as a king at all. He is generally supposed to have been murdered in the Tower of London and secretly buried there under the staircase. A mere child and so little known, it is not likely that any of his hair would have been cut off and preserved during his life, and even if such had been the case, it would probably have been lost long before the date of the ring, which is quite modern.

It is very probable, however, that the hair is actually that of his father, Edward IV., who died on 9th April, 1483, and was buried in a vault under the north aisle of St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

It is recorded that on the 13th March, 1789, some workmen employed in the chapel in making the ground to receive the new pavement, perceived a small aperture in the side of the king's vault. Some of the stones falling out, and others being removed, the vault was entered, and the royal coffin of lead exposed to view. In the presence of two of the canons and the clerk of the works, Mr. Emlyn, the coffin was opened. Writing to the Earl of Leicester, President of the Society of Antiquaries, Mr. Emlyn states: ‘Some long brown hair lay near the skull, and some of the same colour, but shorter, was on the neck of the skeleton.’ There can be no doubt that on this occasion some of this hair was removed, either with or without permission, and as the vault was not closed directly more was taken away afterwards (as will presently be shown).

The Bishop of Carlisle, Dean of Windsor, presented some to the Society of Antiquaries, certified by the letter of Mr. Emlyn above quoted. The Society also had drawings made of the vault and coffin containing the skeleton, which were engraved and published in their *Vetusta Monumenta* (vol. iii.). The hair is still in their museum at Burlington House.

Another portion of the hair found its way into the possession of Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society, who gave it to Horace Walpole, and it was included in the sale of his collection at Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, in the year 1842, described as follows:

'15th day's sale, lot 57. A highly interesting and curious relic. The hair of King Edward IV., cut from his head when the coffin was discovered in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, in the year 1789, presented by Sir Joseph Banks.'

The purchaser was — Rylands, Esq., at £3 3s.

A third lock of the hair, 11½ inches long, was shown by 'Mr. Cato,' at a meeting of the British Archaeological Association in 1869, with the following remarkable letter:

'I beg you will accept of a curiosity, which you may depend upon being real, as I took it from the skull with my own hand, and it has never been out of my possession since, a lock of the hair of Edward IV., entombed 309 years ago in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. The two men who had charge of the tomb I knew well and had done some services for; they obliged me with going in many times. I have got some more of it, which you shall be extremely welcome to part of whenever you think proper.

(signed) HENRY W. LEGEE.

The letter is without date or name of the person to whom it was addressed, but appears to have been written in 1791. Both the hair and the letter are now in the Brighton Museum.

These are the only portions of the hair I have been able to trace. There must have been much more taken, as the engraving of the skeleton above referred to in *Vetusta Monumenta* shows a considerable quantity attached to the skull, on both sides worn long, as the king is represented in his portraits. (Besides this there is the last sentence in Legee's letter.) It is quite possible your ring may contain some of this. Or it may be suggested that what was sold at Strawberry Hill may have got into the hands of an enterprising jeweller, who cut it up and divided it among a great number of old mourning rings which he had in stock.

November, 1888.

GEO. P. W."

The lock of the king's hair belonging to the Society, which was also exhibited, is of similar colour and character to that contained in the ring, allowance being made for any dressing that may have been used in shaping the latter for setting it in the ring.

The initials at the foot of the memorandum are those of Mr. George P. Willoughby.

The ring has been for many years in the family of the present possessor.

9.

ON SOME LOMBARDIC GOLD ORNAMENTS FOUND AT CHIUSI.

By Mr. S. T. BAXTER, of Florence.

I HAVE the pleasure of bringing to notice a photograph (the size of the originals), together with a description of various objects of gold, discovered about two years ago in a tomb in the territory of Chiusi (Tuscany). They are interesting from the style of workmanship as well as from the rarity of ornaments of the epoch to which they may be attributed—that of the Lombard dominion in Italy (A.D. 568—774).

From the intrinsic value of these ornaments we may infer that they belonged to one of the chiefs, perhaps to one of the independent dukes who governed Chiusi, the Etruscan Clusium, during the supremacy of the Lombard nation. Previous to describing them, however, it may be well to give a short account of the Lombards or Langobardi, principally taken from the history of this people, written by Paul Warnefrid, generally known as Paulus Diaconus, from his ecclesiastical title. He is the only Longobardic historian whose writings have come down to us, and it is from him that most of our knowledge of these times has been obtained. He lived during the greater part of the eighth century; surviving the overthrow of his nation by Charlemagne, after which event he retired to the Benedictine Monastery of Monte Casino, and died there, about the year 799.

This nation, owing to an excess of population, took its departure from the shores of the Baltic, in search of new dwellings further south, and passed into Pannonia, the modern Hungary, soon after A.D. 539. They came into Italy by the gulf of the Adriatic, in the year A.D. 552, during the reign of their King Alboin, as allies of the Romans; Narses, who then ruled Italy in the name of the

Emperor Justinian, having sent ambassadors asking for their aid in his war against the Goths under Totila ; but, owing to their cruelty, they were dismissed after the first battle. Soon after the death of Justinian, Narses, who was now in disgrace at the court of Justin II. and Sophia, the existing rulers at Constantinople, invited Alboin and his nation to leave Pannonia, and take possession of Italy, which they did in the year A.D. 568, and thus Alboin became the founder of the Lombard power in Italy.

After the murder of Alboin, at the instigation of his wife Rosamond, Clepho reigned for one and a half years ; for ten subsequent years there was no supreme power, but the nation was governed by thirty-six independent dukes, the principal of whom were those of Pavia, Milan, Bergamo, Brescia, Trent, Cividale di Friuli, and Spoleto ; it is uncertain whether at this time Benevento was among the number. Each Duke ruled in his own city, taking the third part of the produce from the Romans as tribute. Amongst the less important dukedoms was that of Chiusi, the site of the tomb in which the ornaments I am about to speak of, were discovered.

In the period of time between the fall of the Western Empire, A.D. 476, and the year 800, I have only found three instances in which history speaks of Chiusi or its Dukes. Muratori¹ tells us that Vitiges, after raising the siege of Rome on his way to storm Rimini, left a garrison at Chiusi, who in the month of June in the same year were taken prisoners by Belisarius, and sent into Sicily. Cesare Balbo,² in his "History of Italy under the Barbarians," gives the number of this garrison as 1000 men. The next mention is in the year A.D. 742, when we find³ that Pope Zacharia having gone to Terni to meet the Lombard King Liutprand, and obtain restitution of four cities, the latter sent back with him his nephew Agiprand, Duke of Chiusi, to give him possession of the contested towns. Again we find Pope Adrian I. writing to Charlemagne⁴ in the year after the fall of the Lombard kingdom, that Reguinaldo,

¹ Muratori. *Annali d'Italia*, A.D. 538.

² Cesare Balbo. *Storia d'Italia*, book ii. chap. 5.

³ Anastasius. *De Vitis Pontificum Romanorum*: "Alia verò die, quae fuit secunda feria vale faciens ei ipse rex

misit in ejus obsequium Agiprandum duces Clusinum nepotem suum atque . . . easdemque civitates cum suis habitatoribus traderent, quod et factum est."

⁴ Muratori. *Annali d'Italia*, A.D. 775.



Lombardic gold ornaments found at Chiusi.

or Reginaldo, Duke of Chiusi, was conspiring with the Dukes of Spoleto and Benevento to assist Adelchis, son of the dethroned King Desiderius, in returning to power.

The principal interest now attaching to Chiusi is in its earlier history and the inexhaustible field it affords to the antiquary. Dennis's "Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria" contains a full account of it during the period of its Etruscan independence, and the light thrown upon the arts in primitive times by the treasures yielded from its tombs. During the winter months excavations are yearly made by the landed proprietors in the neighbourhood of Chiusi, or, if not so inclined themselves, they give or sell the right of excavating in their possessions; and some of the diggers, from long practice, possess a kind of instinctive knowledge of the most promising localities likely to reward their labours. The search is, however, made for Etruscan tombs only, from which they bring forth ash-chests, bronze idols and terracotta vases, or else the black Chiusi ware, of which many varied forms are to be found in museums; so many, that even my own private collection contains between one and two hundred different shapes. Occasionally, also, when they meet with a tomb unripled in bygone ages, those beautiful gold ornaments of surpassing workmanship, which our modern goldsmiths are now endeavouring to imitate, repay their exertions.

I believe this to be the first virgin tomb of the Lombard period which has been discovered in Tuscany, and a rich treasure it proved to its finders, for besides the articles I am about to describe, others of as great or greater value are said to have been found, which were dispersed and sold in various cities of Italy. I have heard of a helmet and shield inlaid with gold as being amongst them, but of this I speak from rumour alone.⁵ First in interest is the hilt of a sword (pl. I., no. 1), which seems originally to have been formed of ivory bound with gold; the latter only remains entire, and is ornamented with a rude chasing of marine monsters, with

⁵ Among other treasures of the antique goldsmiths' art, till lately deposited by Signor Alessandro Castellani at the British Museum, were several objects of similar character to those now described by Mr. Baxter, but of which, unfortunately, we have no detailed account or

drawing. It is believed that these also were found in the same Chiusian sepulchre. With the rest of his important collection they have been taken by Signor Castellani to Philadelphia, the purchase by our government having been, unfortunately, declined. — C. D. E. F.

a rich beading at the edge.⁶ The ivory is partly decayed, but a portion remains encrusted on each side of the steel blade. Lower down, beneath the hilt, is another band of gold, similarly ornamented, binding together in like manner the ivory and steel; this is furnished underneath with a loop of gold, whereby to attach it to the person, and seems to prove that this gold band terminated the sheath, composed like the hilt of ivory.⁷ In the course of time the ivory and gold forming the sheath of the sword have become, from oxidation of the steel, united into a mass with the blade. What favours this latter supposition is, that there were found with the above the extremities of two ivory scabbards terminated with gold, as seen in the photograph (pl. I., nos. 2 and 3), similarly ornamented with a beading and marine monsters, two golden rivets still holding portions of the ancient ivory in each. It will be observed that these "chapes" are reversed in shape, as if belonging to a sword and dagger, intended to be worn one on each side of the body. There can be no possibility of these two "chapes" of the dagger and sword having belonged to one object, as each is complete in itself, being $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in thickness, although the photograph does not give a clear idea of this. The engraving of the back of one of them (pl. II., no. 2), shows the ends of the rivets seen on the front, which fastened the gold to the ivory, with which one is still nearly filled, though much discoloured. The unequal length of the sides of the "chape" would seem to prove that the sword was curved, and the fact that one side is higher than the other is an equal proof that the blade was one-edged.

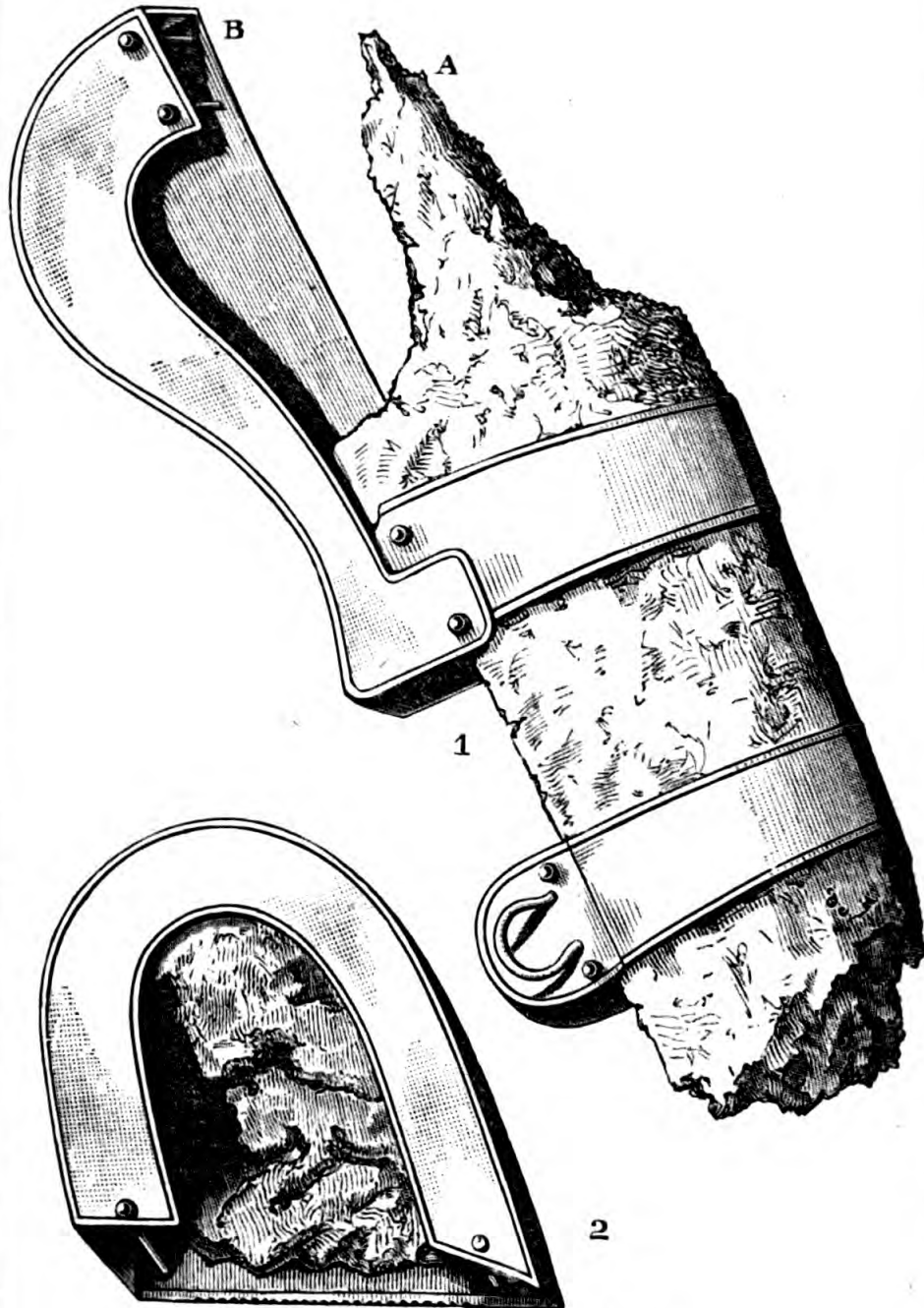
In the left upper corner of the photograph (pl. III., no. 1) is a heavy buckle of solid gold, having a geometrical design

⁶ As observed by Mr. Soden Smith, these figures may represent a modified form of the bird-headed ornament so characteristic of Celtic goldsmiths' work, and suggest some Celtic influence or reminiscence on the part of the maker. But Mr. Baxter's description is, nevertheless, correct, at least in respect to the dolphin, so distinctly figured upon the wing of the sword hilt.

The beading here referred to is formed, not by separate globules soldered side by side, but of a wire of gold, which by rolling on a grooved surface of stone or metal, or by hammering has been divided into a series of irregularly formed and

connected beads. This method is detected upon gold ornaments discovered in various places, and attributable to the Merovingian and Carovingian periods.—C. D. E. F.

⁷ Regarding the sword hilt, on further examination I still retain this opinion. The two gold rivets at the upper end hold part of the ivory hilt in which the iron blade was evidently fixed. If the part A (pl. II., no. 1) were hilt, and the part B scabbard, the sword could not be freely drawn; even if the rivets and the remaining ivory did not prove that a large portion of the latter is now wanting.



Lombardic gold ornaments found at Chiusi.

deeply cut into its surface, and on the under side three loops of the same metal, which served to fasten it to the warrior's dress. I remember having seen a somewhat similar one at the British Museum,⁸ in the room of the Etruscan gold ornaments. The present one, however, is furnished with a gold tag, adorned with a similar pattern, which when fastened to the end of a leathern strap passed through the buckle. The leather has, of course, long since decayed, but the rivet which fastened it is still in its place. There is also another buckle of the same metal and form, but much more elegant, and elaborately worked with a design in rich relief, surrounded by a border of large globules, and with three loops on the under surface to attach it to the dress (pl. II., no. 2). On the right of the photograph is yet another pair of solid gold buckles, rather smaller, but more complete (pl. III., no. 3); these are ornamented by indentations in the metal, the three large rivets in each, which once fastened them to the leather, still hang loosely in their sockets. They are accompanied by their respective tags, together with two oblong plates of gold backed with silver, with four rivets in each to unite the two metals. These seem to have formed part of slides, by which the extra leather was confined, after passing through the buckle.

One gold button only is in my possession, although I have heard that others were discovered. It has a long shank ending in a loop, and the upper surface is rudely chased in the form of a human face, which is surrounded by a gold beading (pl. III., no. 4). There are also five crosses of Greek form, cut out of thick sheet gold (pl. III., nos. 5, 6). These clearly indicate the Christian character of the tomb;

⁸ The objects of like style and approximate period preserved in the British Museum are the following:—

1. A buckle of similar form to these belonging to Mr. Baxter. It is enriched by a panel of punched ornaments in the centre, surrounded by two rows of beaded wire.
2. A tag which may have belonged to the buckle, being similarly ornamented.
3. Another tag, devoid of beading, but on which a kidney-shaped ornament is punched or chased.
4. A fastening for the dress, of similar form to these tags, and enriched with stamped and beaded orna-

ment, but the flat end of which is produced to an angle having a loop, through which a bar of gold is passed. This, doubtless, served as a fastening in the manner of an *agrafe*.

5. A quatrefoil ornament, which has been fastened to the dress. A punched or incised ornament on the flat surface of each lobe is surrounded by a row of beading intertwined with a corded wire.

Of the exact *provenance* of these ornaments nothing is known; it was said that they had been brought from Naples.

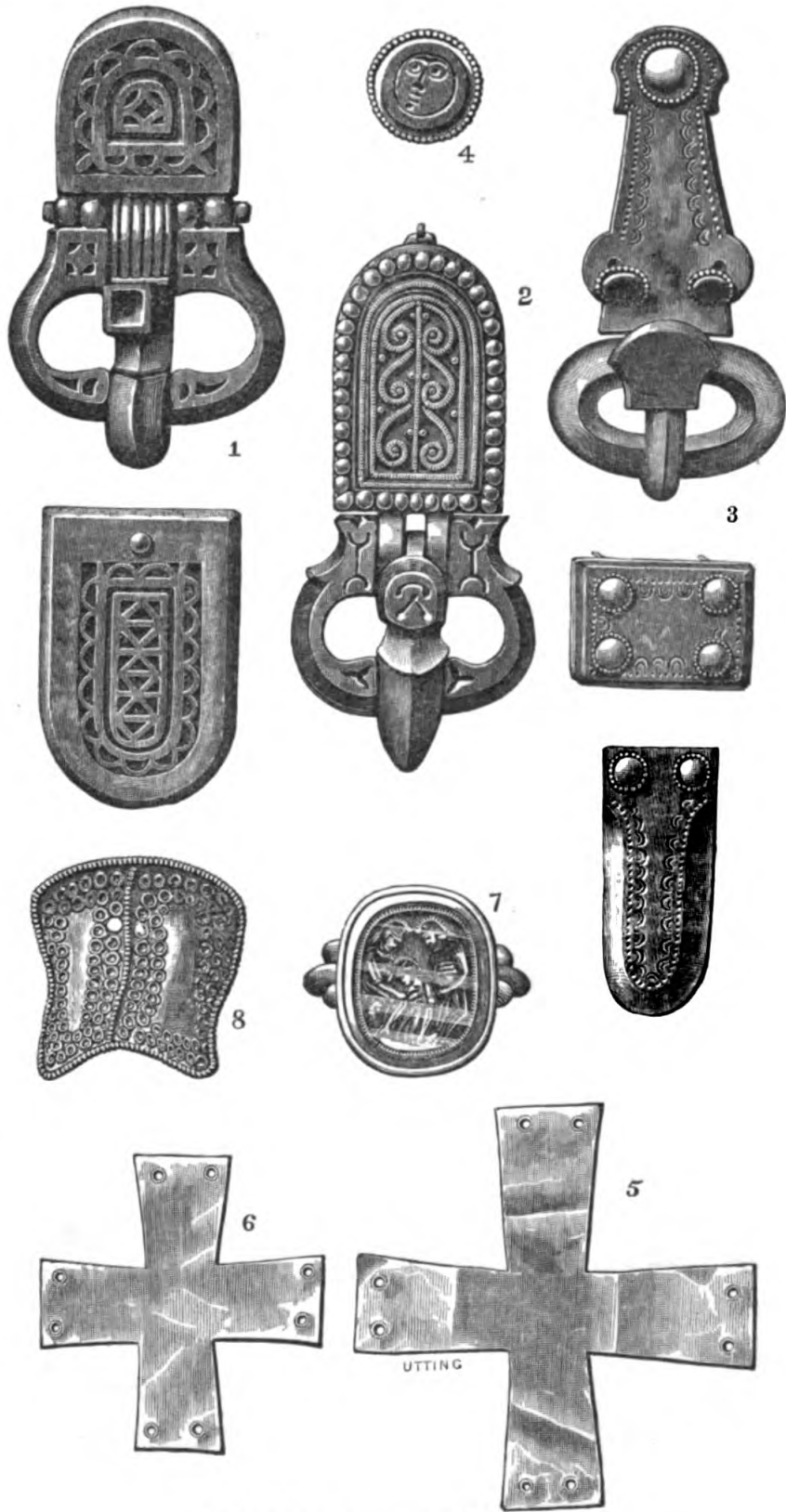
C. D. E. F.

four of them are $1\frac{3}{8}$ in. each way, while the other is $1\frac{7}{8}$ in. All the extremities are pierced with two holes, by which the crosses were probably sewn on the dress. The man who excavated the tomb informed me that, from the position in which they were found, they must have been on the breast of the warrior; or they may have been attached to a pall or cloth thrown over the body in the tomb as a covering. It is known that the early Christian altars were always signed with five crosses, four of them arranged in the form of a square, and the other in the centre. And it is but natural that the same holy signs should have been adopted to mark the sacredness of an early Christian tomb, or rather the sepulchre of one who died shortly after his nation had become Christian.

The warrior's ring, of large size even for a man, is also most interesting. The setting is in the plain rude workmanship of the Lombard period, characterised by two large solid gold globules on each side of the bezel; but what is most remarkable, this setting contains a magnificent intaglio in black and white onyx, of the finest period of Etruscan art, representing two warriors raising a third, who is wounded. This stone was probably discovered about the time of the Lombards, in a tomb, or as frequently happens, even now around Chiusi, a ploughman while tilling a field may have turned it up in the furrow. We may suppose the landowner reserved it for his own use, and had it mounted by a goldsmith of his own nation (pl. III., no. 7).

The purposes to which all the above objects were applied cannot be mistaken; not so, however, the last I have to mention. These are two plates of gold bent downwards at the sides and upwards at the ends in the form of saddles (pl. III., no. 8). Each of them is pierced with a single hole; the upper surface is ornamented with a double row of small rings soldered to the gold plate, and the edges are finished by a gold beading, while the under surface is quite plain. I have not received a satisfactory explanation of their use from any person who has seen them, but as they fit accurately between the thumb and forefinger, I am led to the opinion, until I find a better one, that they may have formed part of the warrior's glove or mitten, the Latin *MANICA* (*χειρίς*), which we are told was used by some of the northern nations.

PLATE III.



Lombardic gold ornaments found at Chiusi.

Since the above discovery at Chiusi—but also in 1874—another Lombard tomb has been found at Cividale di Friuli, the ancient Forum Julii, in the north of Italy, ten miles east of Udine, and near the Austrian frontier. Through the kindness of the Marchese Carlo Strozzi, who has allowed me to take notes from a letter received by him from Signor Orlandi, Director of the Archaeological Museum at Cividale, I am enabled to furnish an account of the ornaments found therein. This tomb contained a sarcophagus, in which were the remains of Gisulf, the first Duke of Friuli,⁹ nephew of Alboin, and his Strator, or Master of the Horse, left by him in command of Friuli, the first province conquered by the army when the nation entered Italy. According to Muratori, however,¹ Grasolf, father of Gisulf, was the first Duke of Friuli, as the latter from the testimony of the Exarch Romanus was “in juvenili aetate” in the year A.D. 590. Gisulf died in the year A.D. 611, as we are informed by Muratori, in the battle fought against the Huns, led by their king, whom Paulus Diaconus calls Cakanus.² This name, however, was a title used by the princes of that nation, and not a proper name, but a dignity, as the chief of the Tartars is still called Khan, or, as Gibbon writes it, “chagan.”

On the exterior of the sarcophagus was inscribed GISULF in rude characters. The marble cover was of unfinished workmanship, probably from the short space of time which elapsed between the battle and the taking of the town of Cividale by the Huns or Avars, who were so called from the name of one of their kings. The capitulation was owing to the treachery of the widow of Gisulf,³ who, admiring from the battlements the youthful leader of the Avars, sent a messenger to him offering to give up the city if he would make her his wife, which he deceitfully promised to do, but after two days he caused her to be impaled. His troops then sacked and burned the town, killing the men and leading the women and children into captivity.

Among the precious objects in the tomb of Gisulf may be

⁹ Paulus Diaconus : book ii. chap. 9.

¹ Muratori. *Annali d'Italia*. A.D. 590.

² Paulus Diaconus : book iv. chap. 38.
“Circa hæc tempora rex Avarorum quem sua lingua Cakanum appellant, cum innumerable multitudinem veniens Venetiarum limes ingressus est. Huic Gisulfus

Forojulianus dux cum Langobardis quos habere poterat, audaciter occurrit. Sed quamvis forti animositate contra immensam multitudinem bellum cum paucis gereret ; undique tamen circumseptus cum omnibus pene suis extinctus est.”

³ Paulus Diaconus : book iv. chap. 38.

mentioned :—1st, A ring of pure gold, weighing one ounce, with an Aureus of the Emperor Tiberius set therein ; 2nd, a gold clasp of Greek workmanship, with an elegant design in enamel, representing a peacock, or some other bird ; 3rd, a Greek cross of gold, with the head of Christ repeated eight times upon it. This cross was found on the breast of the dead warrior, sewn on his dress, of silk interwoven with gold, thus indicating an exalted personage, for we know⁴ that the ordinary vestments of the Lombards were of linen, made wide like those worn by the Anglo-Saxons at this period, and ornamented with wide bands embroidered with various colours ; 4th, the lance, helmet and spurs, the latter of which were of silver.

The above facts may prove interesting as throwing some light on the history of a people who governed Italy during two of the darkest centuries after the Christian era, and of whom but few remains are to be found. The jewels of Queen Theodolinda in the treasury of Monza, and the early Christian churches built by them in their capital city of Pavia, are among the most important.⁵

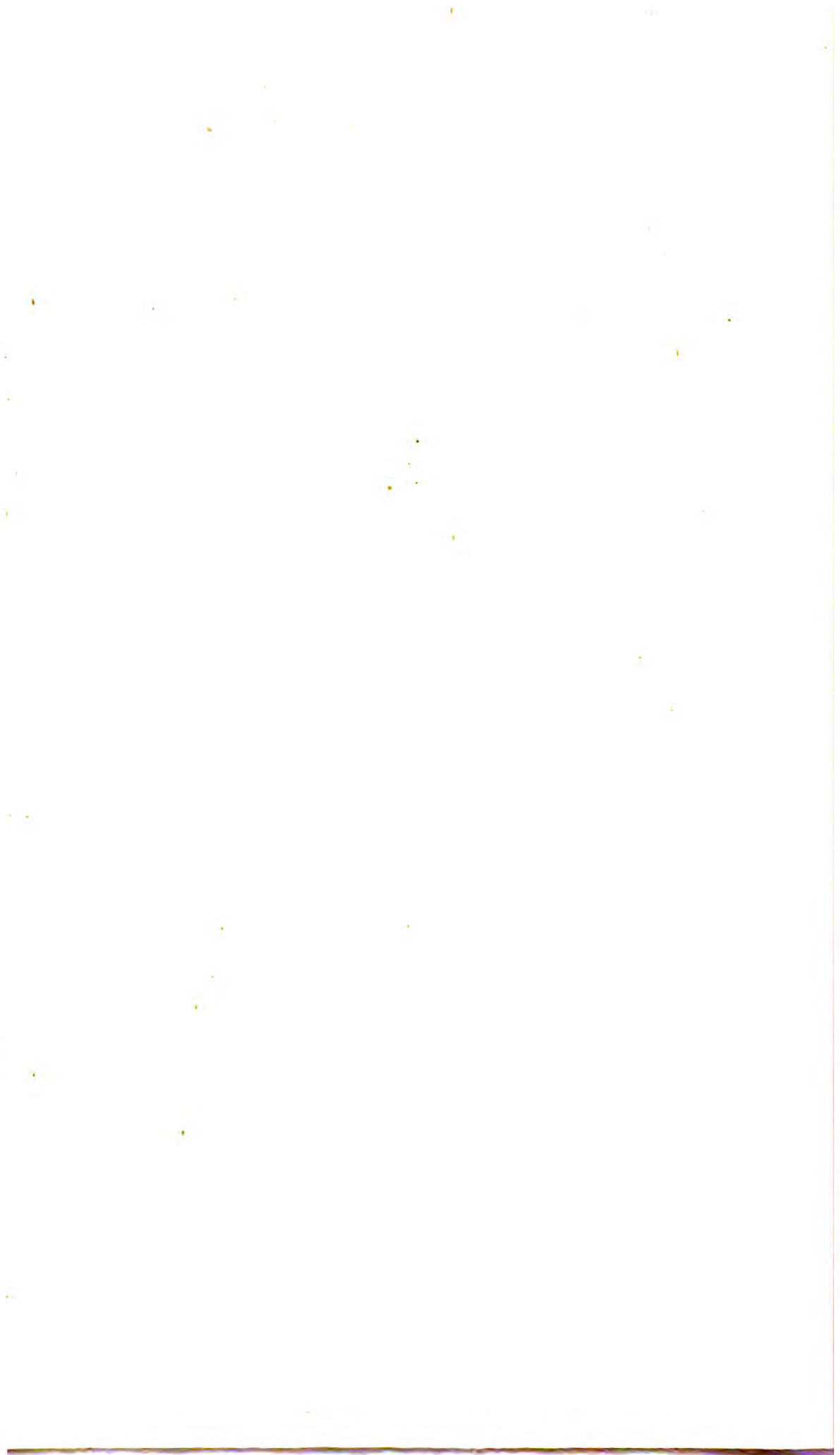
⁴ Ib. : book iv. chap. 23.

⁵ On the 21st May, 1868, Mr. Alexander Nesbitt, F.S.A., exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries some Lombardic gold ornaments, said to have been found at Belluno in North Italy. They are described in the 4th Vol. of the 2nd series of "Proceedings" of that Society at page 127, and consist of :—

1. A circular fibula of *cloisonné* work

with red glass on garnet inlay.

2. A pin, the head modelled as a left hand.
3. A cross of thin sheet gold, similar in form and character to those under consideration, but ornamented with pounced lines.
4. Four small pieced beads.
5. A finger ring ; a hoop widening to the bezel.—C. D. E. F.



ON A SIGNACULUM OF ST. JAMES OF COMPOSTELLA.

ON A SIGNACULUM OF ST. JAMES OF COMPOSTELLA,

By C. D. E. FORTNUM, F.S.A.

At page 179 of the twenty-sixth volume of the *Archæological Journal*, in an account of objects exhibited at the meeting held on the 4th December, 1868, two casts in plaster of Paris, taken from jet images supposed to be of St. James, were shown by Dr. Ferdinard Keller, the learned antiquary of Zurich, and are described—one of them being figured on the succeeding page. These images had been sent to him by Father Gall Morel, of Einsiedeln, about the month of June preceding. One was found in peaty soil, at the depth of several feet, near the chapel of the leprous pilgrims at Einsiedeln: it is 5 inches in length, 2 inches broad, and 1 inch thick, and is that figured at p. 180. The other is smaller, measuring only 1 inch and 3-8ths in length, and was also found in Switzerland.

Subsequently, in 1869, Dr. Keller wrote a more detailed description of these jet objects in the *Anzeiger für Schweizerische Geschichte und Alterthumskunde*, published at Zurich. That notice, in which Dr. Keller expresses the doubtless correct opinion that the figure represented is that of St. James the Greater, and is a *signaculum*, or pilgrim's sign, confirmed the previous suspicion of Mr. Joseph Anderson, that a similar figure, presented to the museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, by James Gibson Craig, Esq., a fellow of that society, was of that material and character.

In the eleventh volume of the Proceedings of that learned society at page 62, Mr. Anderson has figured and described the example under his care, and has accompanied his description by much valuable reference and observations on the subject of the representation of





Signaculum of St. James of Compostella.

the patron saint of lepers in pilgrim's garb, and the importance attached to pilgrimage made to the shrine of Saint Iago at Compostella in Galicia of Spain. He confirms the known fact that, having accomplished the object of their weary journey, the pilgrims received the blessing and obtained a *signum* or emblem of that Saint, which had also been duly blessed by the priests, and was a badge or sign of their having performed the pilgrimage. These badges or signs were formed of various materials of greater or less value, doubtless in accordance with the liberality of donation to the shrine. We are well acquainted with the numerous "pilgrim's signs" made of lead and pewter, which have been disinterred at various localities in this country and elsewhere, as also with their more numerous modern imitations; but *signacula* in other material are less common, and it is to be presumed that among the "*varias effigies Jacobi*," those so skilfully carved in jet, and which seem to have been almost special to the Compostella shrine, were only bestowed upon persons of the higher ranks.

On this part of the subject, Mr. Anderson has also gathered much information, and he notices and figures moulds for casting the more ordinary class of "signs."

My object in referring to those valuable papers, is to introduce another and perhaps more interesting example of these jet figures of St. James, which was procured by me in Italy many years since, and, if I rightly recollect, at Florence.

It represents the Saint in pilgrim's dress, the loose long garment known as the "*esclavina*" or "*pera*," reaching nearly to the ankles, and seemingly fastened at the throat with a circular *fibula*. He is bearded, and wears a large broad hat with recurved brim, the front of which is adorned with the scallop shell, the special emblem of pilgrimage to the Compostella shrine. In the left hand he holds the open book of the Gospel, to which he points with the extended index finger of the right hand; beneath the volume is seen the gourd, but its mode of suspension is not apparent; with the right arm he supports the "*bourdon*" or pilgrim's staff, the upper end of which is unfortunately wanting; to this is suspended the wallet or *gibecière*. The height of this figure, including

the shallow grounding or base on which it stands, is 3 inches and 7-10ths; width 1 inch 8-10ths, thickness 8-10ths of an inch; with the trifling exceptions of the hand pointing to the open book instead of grasping the staff, and the addition of the gourd, there would seem to be but small difference between my St. Iago and that published by Mr. Anderson; his, however, is laterally pierced, which mine has not been. But the remarkable feature in that I now describe, is the fact that it forms the centre of a group of three, St. James between two kneeling figures of much smaller size, one on either side. That on his left has been unfortunately chipped away, only its outline in front and the feet and a fold of drapery behind bearing witness to its similarity in posture to its fellow. That on the Saint's right is of a man, bearded and with head uncovered, clad in a long loose garment, girded at the waist; he kneels, his hands palm to palm are raised in the attitude of prayer, while hanging from his wrists is a chaplet of ten beads. There is considerable probability that this kneeling figure is intended as an *icon* of the pilgrim to whom the *signaculum* of the Saint originally belonged, and there is nearly equal probability that the figure on the other side, now unfortunately lost, may have represented the pilgrim's wife, who also, probably, had earned the badge of Compostella, if, as is not unlikely, these jet images of St. James were really to be obtained only by pilgrimage to that celebrated shrine. That the kneeling figure on the Saint's left was that of a woman, is confirmed by a similar group in the same material, and doubtless, emanating from the same sanctuary, which is preserved in the British Museum. In that a string of beads is also held pendant from the right hand of St. Iago; the kneeling male figure on his right holds a similar chaplet, while with one hand he clings to the Saint's staff. On his left a female kneels habited in long garb and with raised clasped hands, from which depends a rosary.

Comparing it with the engravings above referred to, and with the British Museum example, which, however, has the advantage of more perfect preservation, my own is, perhaps, of somewhat finer and more careful execution; certain details moreover would appear to have been gilt, as the hair and beard of the saint and of the male pilgrim,

the leaves of the Gospel, the scallop shell, &c. One may, I think, infer from these facts that the badge in my possession, as also that in the British Museum, were specially made for pilgrims who, together with their wives, desired to be represented in adoration on either side of St. James; pilgrims, probably of the higher class, who together had offered their prayers and their gifts before the Galician shrine.

On the other hand, that the single figures of the saint, such as those described by Dr. Keller, the one figured in our *Journal* at page 180 of vol. xxvi, and that in the Scotch Antiquaries' Museum, figured in vol. xi at page 62 of their Proceedings, were made for solitary pilgrims, perhaps less generous or less influential; and that for the greater number, the pilgrims of a more ordinary class, some smaller "sign" of less costly material and workmanship were made, and were to be obtained at Compostella.

I should be inclined to ascribe the middle of the sixteenth century as the probable period at which these groups were executed.

I have yet to direct attention to another object of equally fine and lustrous jet, the workmanship of which would seem to have been of the same period and of the same locality as that I have just described, and may perhaps have been obtained by pilgrimage to the same sanctuary, although it might possibly also record pilgrimages made to other holy places.

It is a quadrilateral and somewhat rhomboidal block of jet, with channelled sides diverging towards the rounded top, on which is a four pointed star-like ornament, pierced with a hole in the centre. The height of the block is $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch, its longest diameter $2\frac{3}{4}$, the shortest $2\frac{1}{2}$. Inserted in that hole is the stem of a brass holder, apparently of more recent workmanship, the upper part formed as a support, with diverging flat and recurved sides, for holding some object of elongated form.

At each angle the figure of a saint is cut in full relief, against what may be intended for a sort of pointed arch or tabernacle. The carving has been executed with great precision and care. First we notice St. James in pilgrim's dress, as before described, except that we miss the gourd, but have the upper end of the staff terminating

in a round knob, the hook on its side to which the wallet is attached being also visible. The next figure to the right of St. James is St. Peter, the head uncovered, the ample robe, falling nearly to the feet, is girdled at the waist and fastened by a circular fibula at the neck; in his right hand he holds the keys, in his left a book. At the angle next beyond is the figure of a saint, bare-headed, bearded, draped in a long and loose vestment, holding a sword with blade downwards in his right hand, and a book in his left. This can be no other than St. Paul. A circular spot or wound, raised *en cabuchon*, is seen on his left breast, a distinction which I do not recollect to have noticed on other figures of that saint.

The last of the series, a somewhat feminine figure to the left of St. James, is doubtless that of St. John: his head uncovered, but with hair falling on either side; he is draped in a long and loose garment, fastened by a brooch or fibula at the neck, and falling in heavy folds over an inner skirt. In his left hand he holds a chalice, from which a serpent is issuing, its head approaching the finger of St. John's right hand.

The question naturally arises, for what purpose was this carefully executed carving made? To this I can offer no certain answer, but that it may have been the foot of a reliquary or *ostensorium* is not improbable, or possibly the base for a crucifix. The brass fork is probably a more recent addition, making it serve the purpose of a support for a staff, crozier, baton, or other such object—or, as some one has irreverently suggested, for a cigar!

I would not have ventured to direct the attention of the Institute to these comparatively unimportant objects, but from the circumstance of their rarity, a fact confirmed by Mr. Anderson, who, in his paper above referred to, states his belief that the jet figure in the Scotch Antiquarian Museum is the only one in the United Kingdom; and also that mine, as well as that in the British Museum, differs from the others hitherto made known, in having iconic representations of the pilgrims for whom they were made, and of their wives, kneeling in adoration at the sides of the great Saint Iago of Compostella.





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NOTES ON OTHER SIGNACULA OF ST. JAMES
OF COMPOSTELLA.

By C. D. E. FORTNUM, F.S.A.

Since the publication of our Thirty-sixth Volume, in which, at page 33, will be found a short notice of a *signaculum* of St. James of Compostella formed of jet, I have had an opportunity of examining other examples preserved in museums and by private collectors, and have myself had the good fortune to secure two of unusual size, and also a figure of St. Andrew formed of the same material. The closing of numerous monastic institutions in Italy has brought to light many objects of interest and rarity, which had been carefully preserved in their secluded treasuries and churches—votive gifts, in many instances, to the chapels of those saints to whom they more immediately had reference, or were the patrons of the donor. As might be expected, the monasteries and nunneries of the Neapolitan territory and of Sicily have yielded objects of Spanish origin, and the three fine examples which I was fortunate enough to obtain were brought from that island.

A short description of these, and some notice of other examples, may not be without interest, and will be rendered more so by the addition of some memoranda on the subject of Jet and its use as an ornamental material, the more important of which have been obligingly furnished to me by my friend the Baron Charles Davillier, whose investigations among numerous archives, and energetic researches on various subjects of artistic handicraft and archæological reference (particularly in respect to Spanish art), have been so fertile of valuable results.

To commence with the examples before me: the first is that figure of St. James the Greater, which has been figured and described in my former notice.

The second is the largest and finest figure of that saint cut from a single piece of jet which has fallen under my

observation. It is 8 inches high by $3\frac{7}{8}$ inches wide, and is pierced laterally for suspension by a cord; the dress and attributes are varied only in arrangement from those of the smaller figure; the gourd is on his right side; the arms are crossed, the right hand holding a rosary, the left his staff, from which unfortunately the small pennon has been broken; he does not carry the book, nor is the wallet attached to the staff, but is fastened to his left side; the feet are bare. On his left is the kneeling figure of a male pilgrim, bearded but bare headed, his hat hanging behind upon the back; from his hands, uplifted together in the attitude of prayer, a rosary hangs, his *bourdon* being supported by the arm on his right shoulder. I find no trace of gilding upon this carefully executed and unusually fine figure of St. Giacobe.

The third is carved from a thinner slab of jet, but is even in more perfect preservation; it is $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. high and 3 in. wide. The open book is in the left hand, the staff with *gibecièrè* and rosary is held by the right, the gourd at the left side, the feet in boots. On his right a kneeling male figure clings to the saint's staff, he is bearded and hooded, but the hat hangs behind. On the left a hooded female also kneels with hands in prayerful attitude; her hat also hangs backwards. This *simulacrum* is attached to a surbase evidently made for it, but from another piece of jet, and which bears the incised inscription in two lines

ORA PRO NOBIS
BEATE GACOBE.

This group, not quite so highly finished as the last, though perhaps by the same hand, has been enriched with gilding, remains of which are seen in various parts, the inscription and its bordering lines among the rest.

The fourth figure I secured, though probably carved at Compostella, is not a *signaculum* of the saint of that great sanctuary, but probably represents St. Andrew clad in flowing robes, standing and holding to his right side the saltire formed cross, emblem of his martyrdom. His head is bare, the long hair falling behind; the left hand, gathering up the folds of his outer mantle, supports at the same time, some insufficiently defined object. This figure stands upon an ornamental square base in three stages, the upper lobed to represent an eight petalled and flat-

tened flower; the middle corded, the bottom incised with scroll foliage. It is probably of somewhat later date than those described of St. James. Including the base it is $5\frac{5}{8}$ in. high.¹

Among other examples of Spanish sculpture in jet, second only in size and excellence to the larger one I have described, is a fine pilgrim's effigy of St. James preserved among other objects of the Farnese collection in the National Museum at Naples. Including a surbase, ornamented with an escallop shell, it is nearly 9 inches high.

In the Kircherian Museum at Rome are two small jet figures of St. James and some fragments, two small figures of men, one of a woman, also a coarsely executed figure, probably of St. Francis, of larger size.

Signor Alessandro Castellani has a St. Giacomo which differs in having the head turned towards one side. It is large and is accompanied by a male and female pilgrim.

In the Museum at Perugia is a jet St. James with male and female pilgrim; it is of medium size.

The Baron Davillier in Paris has a small St. Giacobe, and a small cleverly sculptured group, a *pieta*, in the same material; also a female figure of somewhat later date.

Mr. Nesbitt has recorded one which has been introduced as an ornament in a book cover.²

In my former notice I referred to that at Edinburgh, to one in the British Museum, and to the two smaller ones found and preserved at Zurich.

I have also noted another figure of a saint ornamented with silver filligrane which was in the hands of a dealer, and another of a female—a Magdalen (?)—of later date which I saw at Rome.

Jet and amber, cousins of one family but of different complexion, has been more or less known in various places from prehistoric times; its closeness of grain, brilliant surface, and intense blackness would soon attract attention, and although easily splintered and broken it yields to the knife and is a ready material for carving into ornaments, as beads, rings, whorls, &c. We find such among prehistoric remains in this and in other countries; again

¹ The above examples of carvings in jet were exhibited at the Monthly Meeting of the Institute, November 4, 1880.

² Vide "Arch. Journal," vol. xxxvi p. 285.

in Saxon graves and occasionally with Roman remains, when, it has been observed, it has generally been found accompanied by objects connected with the worship of Isis. A finger ring of this material, with key-like projecting bezel, of Roman origin, is preserved in the Museum at York, in which neighbourhood it was found. Abundant in certain localities of England it seems to have been more rare upon the Continent, except in Spain, where from an early period it was adopted for the fabrication of beads and amulets, of small figures of saints and various ornaments, and later of coffrets and inkstands.

The name by which it is known in Spain is identical with that used by the Moors—*Azarache*—Azabache.

M. de Laborde ("Notice des émaux du Louvre," II^e partie, p. 349, sub voce "Jayet") writes:—

"La France (Aude e Arrége), la Saxe, et l'Espagne fournissent tous le jais qu'on porte. (He omits England). Les anciens l'ont connu; au moyen âge on lui a attribué une grande puissance curative, surtout à cause de sa vertu attractive. On en faisoit un grand usage en crucifix, en amulettes contre le mauvais sort, en petits tableaux portatifs, en petites statuettes, en vases, en patenôtres, et en ornements de broderies pour les vêtements."

He refers to various objects in inventories, &c., of dates varying from 1328 to 1599, such as crosses, a mirror, candlesticks, paternosters, and "*un petit Saint Jacques taillé de geitz noir, assix sur un pillier de mesme, à trois coquilles en chiefs, 1524,*" &c.

The Moors in Spain used jet, or "*azarache*," for amulets potent against the influence of the evil eye, "*il mal de ojo*," mounted in gold, silver, and copper. This usage was so general that his most Christian Majesty Charles V., in 1525, issued a "*pragmatica*" prohibiting the custom.

One of these, of early date, formed as a hand closed with phallic significance and mounted in gold is in the possession of my friend the Baron Charles Davillier, who kindly furnished me with a copy of the following curious extract from the "*Tesoro de la lengua Castellana*," by Covarrubias, 4to, Madrid, 1611:—

"AZAVACHE, es una piedra negra lustrosa, y no muy dura; y en España hay algunos minerales della, de la qual en Santiago de Galicia hazen algunas efigies del

Apostol, cuentas de rosarios, higas para colgar de los pechos de los niños, sortijas con sus sellos, y otras muchas cosas. . . . El nombre azavache es Arabigo, y dize el Padre Guadiz que viene de cebecha, que significa piedra negra. Diego de Urrea la pone en su terminacion arabiga ezzebejn, del verbo zebege, que significa negro. La cosa muy negra comparamos á él, y dezimos ser negra como un azavache. . . .”

Which, being translated, reads: “Azavache (Jet) is a lustrous black stone and not very hard; in Spain there are some mines of it, from which, at Santiago of Galicia, they make certain effigies of the Apostle (Saint James), beads for rosaries, amulets for hanging on the breasts of children,¹ rings with seals, and many other things. The name *azavache* is Arabian, and the Padre Guadiz says it comes from *cebecha*, which means a black stone.² Diego de Urrea puts it in the *terminacion Arabiga*, *ezzebejn*, from the verb *zebege*, which means black. The blackest things are compared to it, and we say Black as *azavache*.”

The veneration for the shrine of St. Giacobbo of Compostella is well known, and in the neighbourhood of the cathedral of that city is still to be found the *Azabacheria*, or place of jet, where “*rosarios de azabache*,” jet rosaries, are sold. In some of the inventories of Queen “*Isabel la Católica*” we find mention of such beads of jet of which the rosaries were composed. These inventories date from 1475 to 1500, but no entry occurs of figures of St. James. They are now in the possession of the Baron Davillier.

Other objects of more recent date, 17th century and later, made of this material and occasionally to be met with in Spain, are caskets of open work, inkstands, and some figures. To these I have already referred, but the earlier and more interesting *signacula* of St. James the Greater, which date, as we have seen, from at least as early as 1524, are more interesting to us from an archaeological point of view.

¹ Could this be a modified form, derived from or indicative of the phallic emblem, or *ficus*, in use among the Romans as a charm against the influence of the evil eye and other fascination? It is true that *higa*, an amulet, differs in its terminal from *higo*, a fig, but are they not both derived rather from the Latin *ficus*, than

from the Arabic *hamalet*, suspended? Such suggestion is confirmed by the example belonging to Baron Davillier.

² Probably the hard jet-black stone used by the Arabs for making small charms of the form of arrow heads, of which I have some examples.









