

A LEADEN CROSS BEARING A STYCA IMPRESSION
AND OTHER ANTIQUITIES FOUND IN YORK.

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IN spite of the long Anglo-Danish occupation of York, the number of antiquities discovered in the City which can definitely be ascribed to this period is surprisingly small.

From time to time, however, building operations in the neighbourhood of Castlegate and the modern Clifford Street have brought to light a number of characteristic objects. The most notable find of objects belonging to this period was made in the autumn of 1906 during excavations for widening and rebuilding a narrow street known as Nessgate, which opens into the street mentioned above. Several of the antiquities found have not been previously reported in England and chief amongst these may be mentioned a bronze chape from a sword scabbard. It is ornamented with an open zoö-morphic interlacing design which shows traces of the original gilding. The design shows the feet of an animal, and terminates on each side in a much conventionalised head whereby the metal was fixed to the material of the scabbard. See illustration, Figure A. A chape which has a close resemblance to this was found at Rorvik in Norway and is figured by Rygh.¹ Dr. Sophus Müller has expressed his belief that the York specimen may be either of Danish or Norwegian workmanship.

In order to obtain an approximate date for the objects found it was necessary to examine the series of antiquities belonging to the Anglo-Danish period preserved in the York Museum. Amongst those found on the site of the Public Library in Clifford Street in 1884-5 were two stycas and a small leaden cross almost equal-limbed and pierced at the base of the longer arm or shaft with a circular hole for

¹ *Norske Oldsager*, vol. ii, Figure 516.

suspension. The measurements of the cross, which is shown in the illustration, Figure B, are as follows :—

Length of shaft	...	...	5·2	cm.
Width of arms	...	...	4·1	„
Breadth of parts	...	...	1	„
Thickness	...	...	·02	„

The stycas proved to belong to Eanred (808–841) and Æthelred II. (841–850).

- (a) +EANRED REX. Cross.
+FORDRED. Cross.

No. 142, *British Museum Catalogue*, vol. i, p. 151.

- (β) +EDILRED X. Cross within a circle of dots.
+MOINE ? Pellet within a small circle of dots.

Cf. No. 527, *British Museum Catalogue*, vol. i, p. 177.

It is, however, upon the cross that the chief interest centres, for on examination it at once became evident that by way of central ornamentation a styca (not the die) had been sharply impressed upon it. Below this impression, upon the shaft, there is a second impression, which, although not very distinct, most fortunately preserves the reverse of the coin.

The central impression is wonderfully clear, and proves that the coin used was a styca of Osberht, King of Northumbria, *circa* 849–867. The impression of the reverse is light, but the name of the moneyer can be made out. The fact that the legends were retrograde upon the coin renders the impressions upon the cross more easy to read. Mr. Carlyon-Britton, to whom I am indebted for the identification of the legend, reads it thus :

OSBREHTREX.

Reverse.—+EANVVLE.

It is thus comparable to the coin numbered No. 664, *British Museum Catalogue*, vol. i, p. 187. Although the presumptive evidence is in favour of the use of the cross in its Christian significance, and that it therefore belonged to a Northumbrian Christian, it is not necessarily certain, for the cross and even the crucifix seem to have been worn as amulets by the Norse traders. In like manner, many

of them accepted baptism without actually embracing Christianity, in order to facilitate their trade relations with the Christian communities with which they came in contact. Thus silver crucifixes have been found in Norway, *e.g.*, at Hoer (Bergen Museum) and in Senjen, an island within the arctic circle, which must be referred to the pre-Christian period.¹ Cross-like pendants are also known.² Mention may also be made in this connection of the silver cross which, together with the representation of a boar, adorned the helmet found by Bateman at Monyash, Derbyshire.³

¹ *Norges Indskrifter med de yngre runer; Runerne paa en Sølving fra Senjen.* Sophus Bugge og Magnus Olsen. Christiania, 1906, p. 2, Fig. 4.

² Sophus Müller, *Ordning av Danmarks Oldsager, Jernalderen*, 665.

³ *Catalogue Bateman Collection*, p. 242.

