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A LATE ROMAN FIBULA.

[Frontispiece

A LATE ROMAN FIBULA.

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IT is somewhat surprising that it should still be possible to find a hitherto unnoted variety of the *cross-bow* fibula, so popular throughout the Roman Empire, during its closing years.

The peculiarity of the brooch under review, is that in place, as is usual, of the *acus* being hinged on the cross-bar, this jewel has a detachable pin inserted through a hole in the free end of the shank, its point being held in place in a hole drilled in the centre of the cross-bar. This fibula, which measures 4 inches in length, is of silver-gilt and consists of an hexagonal cross-bar enriched with three hexagonal knobs, one, the central, larger than the others, a tall narrow bow and a long shank, quadrangular in section, adorned along the sides of its upper surface with applied scrolls, treated *à jour*. On the top of the cross-bow is a cresting *à jour*, a frequent enrichment of *cross-bow* brooches of the later empire. The pin, which is $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches long, has on its end a small hexagonal knob.

In general design this fibula is very similar to a brooch of normal type from Syria, preserved in the Ashmolean Museum, which example also has the shank treated *à jour* and its cross-bar crested with openwork.

Though no other example is known to the writer, in which the pin passes through the length of the shank, Mr. E. Thurlow Leeds, F.S.A., has very kindly directed my attention to two brooches, in which the detachable pin is employed from the reverse direction. These brooches are: 1. That illustrated in Daremberg & Saglio, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités*, II, 2009, fig. 3016, which is analagous in outline to the fibula under discussion. 2. A brooch from the tomb of Childeric, ob. A.D. 481, which has a wide flat oblong shank. In both these cases the *acus*, removable by unscrewing a lateral knob, is thrust through the ends of the toga, the point passing into the shank, whilst the other end,

which is provided with a loop, is then pressed into a slot cut in the cross-bar, being firmly fixed in position by screwing in the lateral knob. In reference to the fibula under consideration, it is interesting to mention that a very similar *cross-bow* fibula appears on the right shoulder of the armed warrior, presumed to be Stilicho,¹ on a leaf of an ivory diptych, preserved at Monza.²

It would thus appear that this type of fibula may be regarded as previously unrecorded and as probably of provincial Roman workmanship of c. A.D. 410.

¹ Stilicho, the father-in-law of the Emperor Honorius, was murdered at his instigation, A.D. 408.

² Hodgkin, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, I p. 60. Pl. 16.