

Article V.—A BRONZE FIGURINE FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA.

By FRANZ BOAS.

In 1894, while visiting the village of Kincolith on Nass River, in northern British Columbia, my attention was called to an interesting bronze figure, then in the possession of Rev. W. H. Collison. The figure was evidently cast showing a distinct seam. The method of manufacture as well as the form of the figure suggested at once a foreign origin. According to the testimony of Mr. Collison, which was borne out by remarks of Indians who had seen the object, the same was found in digging over a potato-patch on a place which had formerly been covered with heavy timber. It does not seem at all likely that the specimen should have got into this position recently.

I submitted a cast and photographs of the figure to Prof. Albert Grünwedel of Berlin, to whom I am indebted for the following statement. A comparison with a number of bells in the Royal Ethnographical Museum in Berlin (catalogue Nos. 16890, 2501, 10960, 8674, 16707) proves that the object in question must be considered as the handle of a ghaṇṭā, which is a bell used by the Brāhmaṇa in the Pūjā ceremony. The small flattened projection seen under the beaded column which forms the handle was originally riveted into the bell. The specimen is most easily identified by this beaded column. All the bells mentioned before come from Bengal, Orissa, and Nepal. The kneeling winged figure on top of the column is undoubtedly a Garuḍa, characterized by the wings attached to its upper arms, the beak-like nose, the somewhat degenerate head-dress, and the drapery hanging down from the waist.

None among the very modern bells of the Berlin Museum is identical with the present specimen. The nearest approach to it is No. 2501, on which the Garuḍa is represented kneeling on the top of the handle. This piece comes from Âsikā (Asca), Orissa. Nos. 8674 and 16707, from Orissa and Bengal, show the kneeling Garuḍa at the side of Hanumân. A very small bell (No. 10960) from Nepal, and another one (No. 16890) from Calcutta, have a standing figure of Garuḍa, the forms of which

resemble closely those of the kneeling figure of the present specimen.

It is not possible to determine the age of the specimen definitely. It may be a hundred years old or a little older. It is not more recent, although the workmanship is very crude. Thus far Professor Grünwedel's statement.

An analysis of the bronze, which Prof. Morris Loeb of New York had the kindness to make for me, shows the bronze to be composed of

	Per cent.
Copper	68.99
Zinc	27.2
Lead	1.2
Tin	2.26
	99.65

The specific gravity of the bronze is 8.642.

Prof. Loeb adds, that the amount given as tin may contain some antimony, but, as this admixture did not seem of importance in regard to the provenience of the specimen, the analysis was not carried any further.

It seems probable that this specimen may have been carried to the North Pacific Coast by Spanish vessels. Prof. Otis T. Mason, who has paid much attention to the question of intercourse between Mexico and the Malay Archipelago, states, in a letter to the writer, that "it is a matter of well authenticated history that from 1570, for a period of two hundred years, a royal fleet of Spain passed over from Acapulco to Manila every year, carrying on the most vigorous trade. This fleet passed outward following the tropical current, but returned following the northern route, and skirting the coast of America all the way from Alaska to Mexico. Mexican and Peruvian silver passed outward, and was eagerly sought for in trade by the Chinese, Cambodians, and Siamese, and by other peoples of southeastern Asia. There is not the slightest embarrassment in the way of this bronze image having been transported from Manila to British Columbia at any period between 1570 and 1770."