

V.

NOTICE OF AN ENAMELLED CUP OR PATERA OF BRONZE FOUND IN
LINLITHGOWSHIRE, RECENTLY PURCHASED FOR THE MUSEUM.

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THE MUSEUM. (PLATE I.)

The enamelled bronze patera, which is the subject of the present notice, was found a considerable number of years ago in Linlithgowshire, the precise locality being unknown. It was exhibited to the Society in 1865 by Mr James Nicolson, Kirkcudbright, and has now been acquired by the Purchase Committee for the National Museum.

It is a shallow bowl-shaped vessel of bronze, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, with a flat handle $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, attached to the brim of the bowl. The body of the bowl is of one piece, the bottom, which is soldered on, seems to have been renewed, and the handle is also attached by solder to the side of the cup. The form is that of the ordinary Roman *patera* of bronze, but it differs from the prevailing Roman form in the shallow and globular shape of the bowl, and in the

peculiar shape of the handle. Its most remarkable features are the enamelled decorations of the exterior of the bowl and of the upper surface of the flat handle. Representations of these in the colours of the original are shown in Plate I.

The bowl has a plain hollow moulding round the outside of the rim. Beneath this it is encircled by a band of enamel of a light green colour traversed by a wreath, the stem and leaves of which are formed by the metal, showing in relief on the ground of the enamel. Underneath this band, and separated from it by a narrower band of red, there is a wider band of dark blue, traversed with a wavy scroll with leaf-like ornaments of pale green in the alternate spaces of the scroll. The leaves are serrated with points of pale yellow. Under this band, and separated from it by another narrow band of red, is a band of vandyked ornament of bluish-green, each vandyke of green alternating with one of yellow. The upper part of the flat handle is decorated with heart-shaped and scroll-like ornaments in red and green on a blue ground within a yellow border. The process employed in the enamelling is that which is known as *champlevé*, in which the spaces to be filled with the enamels are chiselled or hollowed out of the metal. The patterns of the decoration are a wreath, a wavy scroll, and a vandyke; and the colours blue, red, and green, with a slight admixture of a faint yellow. The combination of these peculiar colours and patterns imparts to the object a certain individuality of character sufficiently marked to be distinctive. Apart from the singular beauty of its decoration, it is possessed of this special interest that it is the only vessel of its kind and character known to exist in Scotland. It is, however, one of a class of objects, which though few in number, are pretty widely distributed over the area, which may be termed the outskirts of the Roman Empire, towards the north and west—that is Britain, North Germany, and Scandinavia. We look in vain for anything like it within the area of the Empire proper, and it may therefore be regarded as a product of the culture of some portion of the area of north-western Europe, where it was touched and modified by the Roman culture.

Within this area there are other three objects presenting the same essential features of character, and no more than three are at present



ENAMELLED BRONZE VESSEL FOUND IN LINLITHGOWSHIRE

known to exist anywhere. Of these two are in England and one in Denmark. The two that are in England are—a cup found at Braughing, and a vase found in a sepulchral tumulus at Bartlow, in Essex.

The cup from Braughing is similar in form to the *patera* from Linlithgowshire, except that it wants the handle.¹ It is $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high. Beneath the plain moulded rim is a band of bluish-green enamel traversed by a wreath, the stem and leaves of which are formed by the metal showing in relief on the ground of the enamel. Beneath this is a broad band of blue, traversed by a wavy scroll, with leaf-like ornaments placed alternately in pale green. Between this band and the foot of the cup is a broad band of triangular spaces or vandykes of alternate blue and green.

The same style of ornament and the same combination of colours (red, blue, and light green) are seen in the decoration of the splendid spheroidal vase of bronze found in a tumulus at Bartlow, in Essex.² The tumulus was the largest of a group of four situated in a line, with a space of from 13 to 15 feet between their bases. In form they were truncated cones, the diameter of the smallest being 80 feet and its height 18 feet, and that of the largest being 144 feet and the height 45 feet. In the centre of the tumulus there was found a chest or coffer of oak, 4 feet 2 inches in length, 3 feet 8 inches in width, and 2 feet deep, made of planks about 4 inches thick fastened together with stout iron nails. It contained several squarish bottle-shaped vases of green glass, one of which was filled with calcined human bones. It was a largish vase, shaped like a case bottle, having squarish sides and a bottle-neck, with a flat loop-handle from the neck to the shoulder. It stood altogether $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches to the shoulder, and the lip $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter, admitting the hand freely. It was thus capable of containing the cremated bones of a human body. There was also a small vase of clay and several of the slender long-necked unguent or perfume vessels of glass, which are misnamed "tear-bottles." The objects in bronze were a small *patera* with a reeded handle, terminating

¹ Engraved and described by A. W. Franks, in the *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Lond.*, second series, vol. iv. p. 514.

² Described and figured in *Archæologia*, vol. xxvi. p. 300, pl. xxxv.

in a ram's head; a bronze lamp, with an acanthus leaf-shaped handle; two narrow-necked vases of bronze, with looped side handles; two strigils; a large bronze vase, with an elegant pattern in relief round the neck, and a looped handle surmounted by a sphinx-like figure; and the splendidly enamelled spheroidal vase, with a rectangular handle across the mouth fitting into loops at the sides. It is of small size, $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches in extreme diameter and $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches high. The moulding round the lip is decorated with narrow parallel bands arranged in groups of six, each group filled with enamels of the same colour—red, green, or blue. Under the hollow of the neck, which shows the plain bronze, is a band of double triangular spaces, the lower arranged in threes of red, green, and blue, each separate vandyke of the lower series alternating with those of the upper, which all show the plain bronze. A similar band of double vandykes is repeated at the bottom of the vase. The space between them is filled by two wide bands of blue separated from each other by a band of pale green traversed by a wreath formed by the bronze coming up to the surface of the green ground. The two wider bands of blue are traversed by a wavy scroll of red, with pale green five-pointed leaves in the alternate spaces of the scroll.

An enamelled cup, found in a moss at Maltbeck in Denmark,¹ has a close similarity to that found at Braughing. Under a plain moulded rim, there is a band of bluish-green enamel traversed by a wreath, the stem and leaves of which are formed by the metal showing in relief on the ground of the enamel. Below this is a wider band of blue enamel, traversed by a wavy scroll, with leaf-like ornaments placed alternately, each having a centre of red, surrounded by a rosette of pale green; the space between this band and the bottom of the cup is filled with vandykes of blue, green, and red. The cup measures 5 inches in diameter and 3 inches deep. It had been deposited in a clay vessel, of which only a portion was preserved.

Describing this cup, M. Engelhardt remarks of the style of its decoration, that it is unique among the objects of the early Iron Age in Denmark. But in point of fact, the descriptions of all the four objects

¹ Described and figured in the *Memoires de la Société Royale des Antiquaires du Nord*, 1866-71, p. 151.

show that they are identical in the manner and motive of their decoration. They are all in the same process of enamelling—a process applied to no work of pure Roman art-workmanship that I know. They all possess the same scheme of colour—blue, red, and light green; and they all present absolutely the same combination of patterns—a wreath, a wavy scroll, and a band of vandykes.

I have said that this process of enamelling is not of Roman origin. No work of the palmy days of the Empire exhibits it. No contemporary writer notices it as one of the arts practised by Roman artificers. But, on the other hand, we have the testimony of Philostratus, that in his time—that is about A.D. 200—this art of enamelling was practised by the barbarians in the Ocean. In his work called the *Icones*,¹ in describing a painting of a boar-hunt, he refers to the harness of the horses as enriched with gold and various colours; and in order to account for his reference to diversity of colours in the harness of horses, he adds these remarkable words—“For it is told that the barbarians in the Ocean pour these colours upon heated brass, and that they adhere to it, and become as hard as stone, and so preserve the forms which they thus represent.” This is as distinct a description of *champlevé* enamelling as could be expected from one to whom the process and its products were known only by hearsay. The barbarians in the Ocean by whom it was practised are not more distinctly indicated as to their nationality. But we now know for certainty that horse-trappings enriched with *champlevé* enamel, and pertaining to a period before the time of Philostratus, are peculiar to Britain. There is not a single example in Scandinavia. The Gauls as well as the Britons—of the same Celtic stock—practised enamel-working before the Roman conquest. The enamel workshops of Bibracte, with their furnaces, crucibles, moulds, and polishing stones, and with the crude enamels in their various stages of preparation, have been recently excavated from the ruins of the city destroyed by Cæsar and his legions. But the Bibracte enamels are the work of mere dabblers in the art compared with the British examples. The home of the art was in Britain, and the style of its patterns as well as the associations in which the objects

¹ *Iconium*, lib. i. xxviii.

decorated with it are found, demonstrate with certainty that it had reached its highest stage of indigenous development before it came into contact with the Roman culture. But in the objects which I have described in this paper there is palpable evidence of the influence of a foreign culture, although in style and execution we may still claim for this peculiar variety of enamelled work the distinctive name of the *opus Britannicum*, first bestowed upon it by Mr Franks, who has always maintained the Celtic origin of the art of enamelling, so far as the west of Europe is concerned.

An enamelled patera of similar character, though differing somewhat in form as well as in the style of its ornamentation, was found at Pymont, in the Rhine valley.¹ It was found at a depth of 10 feet under the surface, near a mineral spring, in the close vicinity of which there were also found about 300 fibulæ of various forms, 12 belt-buckles, and coins of Domitian, Trajan, and Caracalla. It appeared from the observations made during the excavations that these objects had been deposited at different times as offerings to the divinity of the well—not thrown into the water, as was the Roman custom, but deposited beside it, at the foot of an aged tree. The vessel, which is of bronze, is $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. The handle, which is similar to that of the Linlithgowshire *patera*, is $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in greatest breadth. The cup has a plain moulded rim; and the enamelled part, which reaches from the rim to the bottom, is divided into a series of pentagonal spaces, bordered by a simple line or scroll, and enclosing a scroll-like ornament with leafy terminations. The triangular spaces between the tops of the pentagons are filled with triplets of leafage. The ground is blue, the leafage green and red. The flat upper part of the handle is ornamented with a wavy scroll of similar leafage, also on a blue ground.

¹ Figured and described by R. Ludwig, in the *Jahrbucher der Vereins von Alterthumsfreunden in Rheinlande*, Heft xxxviii, p. 53, pl. i. Bonn, 1865.