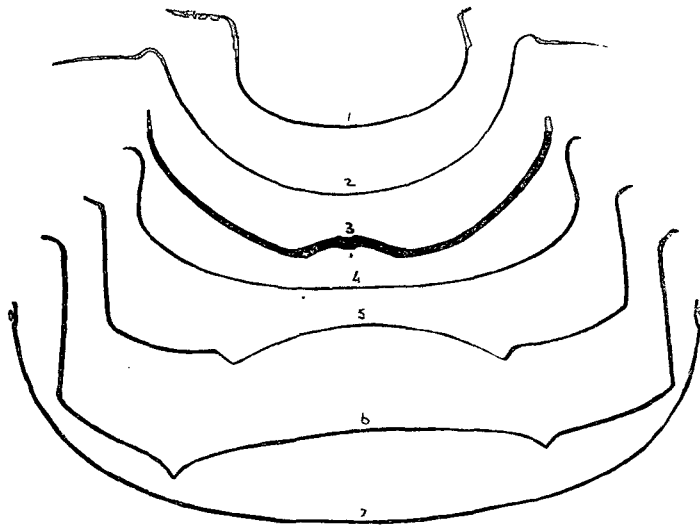


## V.

NOTICE OF A HOARD OF BRONZE VESSELS FOUND, IN 1868, NEAR HELMSDALE, SUTHERLAND. BY REV. J. M. JOASS, LL.D., CORR. MEM. S.A. SCOT.

The bronze vessels described in this paper were found in 1868, during the progress of railway works near Helmsdale, on the south-east coast of Sutherland. They lay packed one inside another, at the back of a large earth-fast boulder in the steep face of an old sea terrace, and about one foot under the present surface.

No. 1, the smallest has a strong rim with out-turned lip (see



Sections of the Seven Bronze Vessels found near Helmsdale, Sutherland  
(one-third of actual size).

section No. 1). It has had a handle of iron or wood, or some such perishable material, of which the four rivets remain. It is per-



Seven Bronze Vessels, Helmsdale, Sutherland.

forated in tasteful design, by small clean-cut holes, as if for use as a colander.

No. 2, made of thinner metal, is also perforated in similar design by punching from within. The rim is ornamented in chevron pattern, struck from above by half-inch chisel.

No. 3, of much thicker body, rings like a bell when poised inverted on the finger-tip. The hammer marks of formation are visible inside and out.

No. 4, thin and somewhat corroded, has its overturned edges cracked at circumference as if in hammering.

No. 5, thinnest at resting-ridge below, has been patched in solder, and shows purplish stains inside.

No. 6 is thin, as in No. 5, with holes of corrosion in bottom, and marks of the pin-end of a hammer outside.

No. 7, thin all over, has had a rim probably of iron,  $\frac{1}{10}$  inch thick, of which the rivets remain. It has also a riveted patch.

The whole seem to have been beaten into form, and lathe-dressed. Before being acquired for the Dunrobin Museum they had been rather severely scrubbed with lime and sand to make them fit to be seen, so that only a few traces remain of a peculiar lacquer or varnish, apparently distinct from *patina*.

#### *Other similar Specimens.*

At *Irchester*, near Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, in 1872, some ironstone-diggers, chancing to cut through part of a Roman cemetery, found a set of eight bronze vessels, about fifteen inches below the present surface. In a paper by the Rev. R. S. Baker of Hargrave Rectory, read before the Antiquarian Society of London, and reported in the *Morning Post* of January 22, 1876, they are described as in "a perfect state of preservation. They were found packed one inside another, the eighth being inside a ninth vessel, which was corroded and had crumbled to pieces. Enough remained of this latter vessel, however, to show that it was a kind of pail of thin copper, edged with iron hooping, and having an iron handle like that of a pail, but of twisted iron, to improve its appearance. Two of the vessels were like colanders,

perforated with minute and clean-cut holes at the bottom and partly up the sides, forming regular and handsome patterns. Two others of the vessels were more saucepan-shaped, and once had handles. The other four were more basin-shaped, one of them being much like a modern hand-basin except that it had a handle. The turned-over rim was slightly ornamented. There was no inscription or lettering of any kind upon them. All the vessels were of thin material, and would not stand much wear and tear. They had, however, seen considerable service, and once had been neatly mended with patches and rivets. On referring to Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*, under the heads *vinum* and *colum*, Mr Baker found that Roman 'wine-strainers' were made of bronze, and their perforations sometimes formed an elegant pattern. He suggests that since this description applies to two of the Irchester vessels [as it also does to two of the Sutherland set], these two were *wine-strainers* and the others *measures*, probably used for sacrificial purposes."

In the course of correspondence with the above-named gentleman, it was kindly arranged for me that an exchange of photographs should be made with Capt. Arkwright of Knuston Hall, Wellingborough, owner of the land where the bronzes were found, and their present possessor. This enables me to show the general resemblance of the Irchester and Sutherland specimens.

At *Castle Howard*, Yorkshire, there is a similar set of five bronze vessels, found in 1856 on the property of the Earl of Carlisle. They were the subject of a paper read before the Society of Antiquaries (London) by Mr Edmund Oldfield, in 1867, in which he suggested that they were "Roman vessels used as liquid measures for common secular purposes, such as measuring out wine and water at parties." These vessels, also graduated in size, "were found in a pack or nest" and one of them has "an engraved ornamental pattern round the top of the bowl outside."

In *York Museum* is a set of four bronze vessels. I regret that, at present, I have no information as to when or where they were found, but the following notes of their sizes, furnished by Mr Baker suggest their belonging to the same class. The three last mentioned sets were measured by him in relation to the Roman *cyathus*, which was about

the size of a modern wine glass, or 1.6 oz. The capacity of three of the Sutherland specimens (3, 5, 6) was ascertained by closing the corroded holes with sheet gutta-percha, and filling with water poured from a graduated measure.

*Approximate Capacity of Bronze Dishes in relation to 100 Cyathi.*

Irchester.	York.	Castle Howard.	Sutherland.
One of 100.	$\frac{3}{4}$ of 100.	$\frac{2}{3}$ of 100.	$\frac{1}{2}$ of 100.
$\frac{3}{4}$ "	$\frac{2}{3}$ "	$\frac{1}{2}$ "	$\frac{1}{3}$ "
$\frac{2}{3}$ "	$\frac{1}{2}$ "	$\frac{1}{3}$ "	$\frac{1}{4}$ "
$\frac{1}{2}$ "	$\frac{1}{3}$ "	$\frac{1}{4}$ "	$\frac{1}{5}$ "
$\frac{1}{3}$ "	$\frac{1}{4}$ "	$\frac{1}{5}$ "	
$\frac{1}{4}$ "		$\frac{1}{6}$ "	

*Comparative Analysis.*

Cyathi.	No. of Specimens.	Ir.	Y.	C. H.	S.
100	1	1	...	...	...
$\frac{3}{4}$ of 100	1	...	...	...	1
$\frac{2}{3}$ "	3	2	1	...	...
$\frac{1}{2}$ "	2	1	...	1	...
$\frac{1}{3}$ "	4	...	2	1	1
$\frac{1}{4}$ "	1	...	1	...	...
$\frac{1}{5}$ "	1	...	...	1	...
$\frac{1}{6}$ "	2	...	...	1	1
$\frac{1}{10}$ "	1	...	...	1	...