

V.

NOTE OF A STONE ON THE MOOR NEAR DULLATUR, CALLED THE CARRICK STONE, SHAPED LIKE A ROMAN ALTAR, AND HAVING CUPS ON ITS UPPER SURFACE. WITH A DRAWING. By W. A. DONELLY.

The stone, of which a rough sketch is given in fig. 1, stands on a rounded knoll overlooking Dullatur and Cumbernauld, on the line of the old moor road between Glasgow and Stirling, and about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile

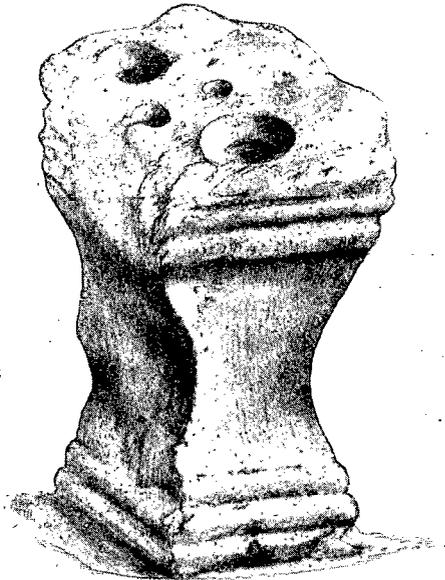


Fig. 1. Cup-marked Stone at Dullatur.

to the southward of the line of the Roman Wall. It is known locally as the Carrick Stone, and is also said to have been a Roman altar, which its shape certainly suggests, and it has also a legend attached to it that King Robert the Bruce, on some one or other of his campaigns, raised his standard upon it. It is of buff-coloured sandstone, and measures 3 feet 1 inch in height, and 2 feet 4 inches by 1 foot 9 inches in breadth and width upon the top, narrowing considerably in the middle of its height, and expanding again to the bottom.

Apart from all conjectures as to its historic associations, the stone seemed to me to be chiefly interesting on account of the cup-markings on its upper surface. It is not a cup-and-ring-marked stone, but some of its cups have unmistakable ducts leading from them, one of which is

very deep. The two larger cups are about 8 inches in diameter and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in depth; the two smaller have no ducts, and do not exceed 3 inches in diameter. Most of those who have visited the stone, I believe, regard it as a Roman altar; but I have not been able to find any explanation of the cups upon the top, which are certainly not usual accompaniments of a Roman altar. Could they have been upon the stone before it was made into an altar? Another curious feature is the worn and rubbed appearance of the waist of the altar, as if it had been subjected to powerful friction. It reminded me of nothing so much as one of the old wooden pauls on a pier, the middle part of which had been worn much thinner than the upper and lower parts by the constant friction resulting from the mooring of vessels to it.

Having been asked whether the stone was called after the farm of Carrickstone, on which it stands, or whether the farm had received its name from the presence of this particular stone, I revisited Dullatur and procured some further information. It seems that the present generation has confused this stone with another which was formerly called the Carrick Stone. The latter was a large slab, which lay horizontally on the ground at the foot of a field about 200 yards in a direct line from the front door of Carrickstone farm-house, and at the base of the slope of the field. This stone, as described to me, was a rudely dressed slab of freestone, having inscribed on its surface, in large and boldly incised letters, the one word CARRICK, and the local tradition said that it marked the grave of a noted Covenanter who was killed and buried here. In 1857 this stone went the way of so many other relics of the past, and was used in the erection of a modern farm-steading on the site of the older Carrickstone farm. I went to the farm, and made a careful survey of all the dykes, outhouses, and garden-walls, and finally of the farm-house itself. Mr Pollock, the present tenant, who has been in the farm for twelve years, gave me his cordial permission to search within the buildings for such a slab as I was in pursuit of, but there were none of the kind wanted except some paving-stones in the boiler-house floor, and these Mr Pollock told me he had laid down himself, and they had no marks of any kind upon them. The only other large stone he knew was one at the foot of the steps at the front door. It looked likely

enough, but no marks were to be traced on its upper surface, and to make the matter certain it was raised to allow the under side to be examined. No marks of any kind, however, were discovered. If this were the original Carrick Stone, it must have been re-dressed and all traces of the inscription erased.

After some inquiry, I succeeded in disentangling the confused traditions of the two stones. The cup-marked stone is more generally known as the 'Standing Stone' or the 'Roman Altar,' and it is the one which is associated by tradition with King Robert the Bruce, and sometimes confused also with the original Carrick Stone, which no longer exists, so far as I could make out. The site of the Covenanter's Stone is about half a mile from the place where the cup-marked stone stands. Carrickstone Farm is mentioned in a parchment deed dated 1401, which makes the Covenanter's legend all the more puzzling.