

II.

NOTICES OF (1) THREE STONE CUPS FOUND IN A CAIRN IN ABERDEENSHIRE, AND (2) A SHORT CIST CONTAINING A BEAKER URN FOUND AT BOGLEHILL WOOD, LONGNIDDRY, EAST LOTHIAN. BY J. GRAHAM CALLANDER, SECRETARY.

THREE STONE CUPS FOUND IN A CAIRN.

More than forty years ago, while some ground on the south-eastern shoulder of the Hill of Scares, in the parish of Culsalmond, Aberdeenshire, was being trenched and reclaimed for agricultural purposes, a cairn of stones, probably of the Bronze Age, was removed. The site, which lies in one of the fields now included in Woodside Croft, is noted on the Ordnance Survey Map. No record of the discovery of any sepulchral deposit within the cairn seems to have survived, but two stone cups which were found during the removal of the cairn were secured by two local collectors of antiquities, and a third, which was not discovered until many years after, and that very unexpectedly, certainly came from the same source. The story of the third cup, like that of many outstanding relics in our National Collection, is surprising. A quantity of stones from the cairn was carted to the neighbouring hamlet of Colpy, some $\frac{3}{4}$ mile south of the site, as building material for a house that was being erected for the local ground officer. Some of these stones were not required for the building, and were allowed to lie behind the house on the spot where they had been emptied out of the cart until 1898, when the occupant of the dwelling thought of removing them. While so doing he found this cup, which he presented to me. From the length of the handle it might be termed a ladle as suitably as a cup.

Though I have been able to trace both of the first-mentioned cups, I have only seen one of them, and it is here illustrated along with my own specimen.

The first cup (fig. 1) is formed of steatite or soap-stone, and is a very good example of this class of relic. The bowl is circular, with a rounded bottom so flattened that it can stand without danger of overturning, and it is provided with a short handle placed about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch below the lip. The cup measures externally $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter across the mouth, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in depth, and the cavity, which is almost perfectly circular, is some $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches in diameter and $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch in depth, the rim being about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Encircling the vessel is a flat

ornamental band or moulding placed about $\frac{5}{16}$ inch below the lip, and projecting slightly from the general contour of the bowl. It measures $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in width, and is formed by two incised parallel lines, with a central line placed midway between them. At irregular intervals, averaging about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in length, the parallel lines are crossed by transverse lines slanting slightly from right to left, thus forming a double row of rhomboids around the cup. The handle, which projects $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the wall of the vessel, measures about 2 inches in width and 1 inch in thickness, is rounded at the end, and is pierced vertically by a hole $\frac{5}{16}$ inch in diameter. It is ornamented on the top by straight, incised lines which cross at right angles, the transverse lines being carried down the sides of the handle.

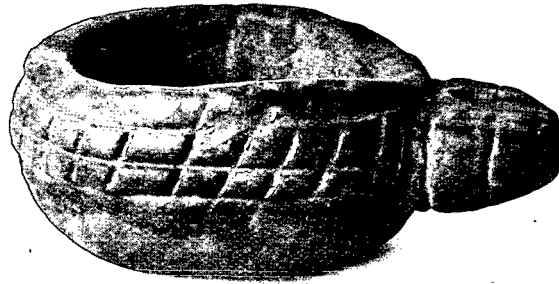


Fig. 1. Stone Cup found at Woodside Croft, Culsalmond. ($\frac{1}{2}$.)

The other cup (fig. 2) is made of what seems to be a decomposed diorite, or "heathen" as it is locally called, and is probably unique in the length of its handle and in the size of the perforation in it. The bowl is roughly semi-globular, and measures $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter externally, and $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches in height; the cavity is $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches in width and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch in depth, and the lip tapers towards the brim. The handle is $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length; is rounded in section, and at the narrowest part near the centre measures $1\frac{3}{16}$ inch in diameter. It thickens towards the junction with the wall of the cup, about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch below the lip, and at the extremity, which is flattened and pierced vertically by a hole $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in diameter. It bears no ornamentation.

Cups of stone with short handles, frequently perforated for suspension by a thong, have apparently been used as drinking cups, and are not to be confused with hollowed stones of less regular shape without

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handles, which belong to the same period, and seem to have been used as lamps. Some of the latter have simply a circular cavity on the top, others have a hollow on one side of the cavity for the wick, and occasional examples roughly cut into a rude resemblance of some of the Roman lamps of clay are doubtless the precursors of the iron cruisie.

Handled cups of the type under review (fig. 1) have been found in considerable numbers in Scotland. Their range is from Shetland to the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, and from Skye to Aberdeenshire, being most abundant in the latter county. They occur less frequently in Ireland, and though one at least has been noted from the Isle of Man, Sir John Evans does not mention a single specimen from England.¹



Fig. 2. Stone Cup found at Woodside Croft, Culsalmond. (½.)

While the great majority of the Scottish cups are casual finds, picked up in fields unassociated with other objects, a fair number have been recovered from anciently inhabited sites in association with other relics by which it is possible to tell their approximate age. Like many other objects dating from prehistoric times, antiquaries of the first half of the last century had no hesitation in describing them as the handiwork of the Druids. But though Sir Daniel Wilson in 1852 contributed to the Society a paper entitled "On the Class of Stone Vessels known in Scotland as Druidical Pateræ," it is quite evident that he did not consider the Druidical theory satisfactory. A few of the specimens preserved in our National Museum are recorded as found on, or near, sites of Bronze Age monuments. In the paper just

¹ Cups of Kimmeridge shale found in England belong to a different class of drinking vessel, as they have been turned in a lathe (*Ancient Stone Implements*, p. 445).

referred to, mention is made of two found, in 1828, under stone paving in the immediate vicinity of the stone circle at Crookmore, Tullynessle, Aberdeenshire, another found "within the area of the celebrated Hebridean circle at Classernish" (Callernish),¹ and one found within a stone circle at Whiteside, Aberdeenshire. The first two of these cups are preserved in the National Museum. Other two specimens in that collection are recorded as having been found in a cairn at Newton of Auchingoul, Inverkeithney, Banffshire,² and in a tumulus at Gallowflat, Rutherglen.³ Although these records are suggestive, particulars of discovery are not so definite or detailed as to permit us to place the period of origin of the stone cup within the Bronze Age. And even the evidence adduced in this notice of the discovery of these three cups is faulty, as there is nothing to show that they were not found actually on the surface of the cairn, in which case they would probably not be contemporary with the construction of the monument.

When we come to the succeeding period, the Early Iron Age, the case is quite different, as a goodly number have been found in structures, such as brochs and crannogs, which belong to this time. Part of a cup of steatite with a short perforated handle was found in a crannog, at Hyndford, near Lanark,⁴ remarkable for the relative number of objects characteristic of native sites occupied during the time that the Romans were in Scotland which it produced, the relics including Roman pottery, a small penannular fibula, melon-shaped beads of glass, a very fine beaded torc of bronze, three spiral rings of bronze, stone moulds for ingots, portions of glass armlets, and a thin, circular, polished disc of stone. Two cups in the Museum were found near a large cairn on the south slope of Knockargity, near Tarland, Aberdeenshire,⁵ in a square-shaped hollow lined with stones and containing ashes in the centre; these hollows were locally known as "Pict's Houses," and many of them were to be seen in Cromar. In the article in which they are described, cairns, stone circles, and "very small circles of upright stones," possibly what we would now call hut-circles, are said to have been "frequent in the district." These stone cups have been discovered not infrequently in brochs, and the collections in the Museum from these structures include a typical selection. Amongst these may be mentioned one from the broch of Kintradwell, or Cinn Trola, Sutherland, which was found beside the topmost of the five steps leading down to a neatly built well within the building,⁶ and two of three found in Dun Telve, one of the brochs at Glenelg, on the west coast of Inverness-shire, taken over by

¹ *Proc. S.A. Scot.*, vol. i. p. 117.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. xl. p. 47.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 261, and vol. vi. p. 89.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 138.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiii. p. 381.

⁶ *Arch. Scot.*, vol. v. p. 97.

the Office of Works. The Glenelg examples are roughly fashioned with short perforated handles, and two of them, those in the National Collection, are of small size.

So far none of the class of cup under review has been found on the native hill fort at Traprain, and they have not been found in any of the excavations carried out by the Society on Roman stations, although contemporary relics of native manufacture have been found in large numbers. This is not surprising, as it is hardly to be expected that rude stone cups would be used by communities well supplied with the more suitable wares of the Roman potter. At Dunadd, another native fort, not a single example was recovered. A cup, in the Museum, was found at Inchtuthil,¹ but there is no record whether it came from the site of the Roman camp there, or from the native promontory fort in its near neighbourhood.

Many of the cups are very rudely formed and bear no ornamentation, while others display a good deal of skill and care in their manufacture. The decoration, when such exists, is invariably done in geometric patterns formed by straight lines incised on the wall and handle of the vessel. The ornamental motif is more that of the Bronze Age than of the Early Iron Age, and the wall of one cup, from the so-called Pict's House at Knockargity, is ornamented with three bands of design bearing a striking resemblance to that seen on many drinking-cup or beaker urns of the first-mentioned period. The difficulty of carving curved lines on stone does not explain the absence of this motif, as a number of our Scottish carved balls, probably belonging to the Early Iron Age, bear intricate curvilinear patterns beautifully cut on their projecting discs. With the information presently at our disposal we can only say with safety that such cups were in use in the first centuries of this era, that the circumstances of the discovery of several, along with their style of ornamentation, are suggestive of a rather earlier date.

Since the foregoing notes were written, the second year's excavations carried out on the vitrified fort of Dunagoil, in the island of Bute, by the Marquess of Bute, under the auspices of the Buteshire Natural History Society, have been described,² and among the numerous and important relics recovered from that site are portions of two short-handled cups of steatite, and several blocks of steatite bearing tool-marks, showing that objects of this material were manufactured on the spot. The excavators consider that Dunagoil has been occupied in earlier times than the Roman stations in Scotland and the excavated portions of the fort on Traprain Law. While the period of occupation of the last-mentioned site cannot be put back further than the last part

¹ *Proc. S.A. Scot.*, vol. xliv, p. 220.

² *Trans. Buteshire Nat. Hist. Soc.*, vol. ix.

of the first century A.D., it is believed that the former was occupied before the dawn of the Christian era. Amongst the evidence adduced may be mentioned the absence of rotatory querns and the abundance of saddle querns, the non-appearance of any traces of Roman influence such as Roman pottery or coins, and the discovery of a number of ornamental bronze and iron pins believed to be of very early types.

A SHORT CIST CONTAINING A BEAKER URN.

On the 12th of April last year, a short cist of Bronze Age date was discovered on the Gosford estate of the Earl of Wemyss; and notice of it having been sent to the Museum, I visited the site two days after. By that time the grave had been cleared out, but the structure still remained in position. The site lies in the Boglehill Wood, near Longniddry, some 200 yards south of the shore of the Forth, and 50 yards east of the road through Longniddry Dean, near the summit of the steep slope on the north-western shoulder of the plateau which rises about 50 feet above sea-level. In the course of clearing the ground of wood to form a golf-course, the trees were overthrown and not cut. The roots of one of the trees had grown round and clasped the cover stone of the cist, and as the tree fell it lifted the slab, exposing the grave.

The cist lay almost due east-north-east and west-south-west, and was formed of four fine, thin slabs, averaging about 3 inches in thickness, set on edge. It measured 2 feet 5 inches in length along the north side, 2 feet 11 inches along the south side, 2 feet 3 inches in breadth across the east end, 2 feet 5 inches across the west end, and 1 foot 9 inches in depth. The cover stone, which was almost square with rounded corners, was 4 feet 1 inch long, 3 feet 10 inches broad, and 6 inches in thickness, and was covered by 6 to 8 inches of soil. The slab at the east end slightly overlapped the ends of the side slabs, and that at the west end was placed inside those on the sides, the northern slab projecting about 6 inches beyond it, as if the western slab had been forced inwards by the pressure of the soil for about 6 inches at its northern end. The slabs fitted closely at the corners, and there was no indication of their having been packed with clay, as is sometimes noticed in Bronze Age short cists. When the cist, which was full of soil, was cleared out, the fragments of an urn were found lying in the north-eastern corner of the grave. It was supposed that the vessel had been broken when the parts of the roots of the tree which had grown into the cist were wrenched out. Small pieces of burnt wood were detected in the soil near the bottom of the grave.

Fortunately the fragments of the urn recovered represent more than the half of the vessel, and, on being pieced together, have produced an example of the beaker or drinking-cup type (fig. 3), with a straight, upright brim. The urn is $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height, $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter at the mouth, $5\frac{3}{8}$ inches at the bulge, and $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches across the base, the wall being about $\frac{5}{16}$ inch thick at the lip, which is flat. The outside of the wall bears two broad zones or bands of decoration roughly impressed on the clay with a comb-like stamp, the first between the neck and the brim, and the second round the bulge. The higher band of ornament consists of straight lines slanting slightly from right to left crossed by more oblique lines, all contained between two marginal, straight, transverse lines, below which is a series of crossed lines forming an irregular lozenge pattern; the lowest band of ornament is also composed of two parts, a band of chevrons, the apex pointing to the right, with a straight marginal line above, and a band of roughly crossed lines below.



2 ins.

Fig. 3. Urn from Boglehill Wood, Longniddry.

The thanks of the Society are due to the Earl of Wemyss, the proprietor of the ground, who has presented the urn to the National Museum.