

NOTES.

1. NOTE ON LONG CAIRNS NEAR RHINAVIE, STRATHNAVER, SUTHERLAND
(known also as Horned Long Cairns, Coille na Borgie).

In the *Proceedings* of this Society for the year 1884, the Rev. Robert Munro described and illustrated a group of long cairns near Rhinavie, Strathnaver.¹ "These cairns," he stated, "are three in number." He went on to say: "The largest is the most southern of the group, and fronting the entrance to its chambers there is an arc of a circle composed of large upright stones. A few feet north of the circle there is another long cairn which has not yet been opened. In general appearance it is similar to the former. Separated by an old road from this one, there is a third cairn entirely different from the other two, being circular in form and possessing only one chamber."

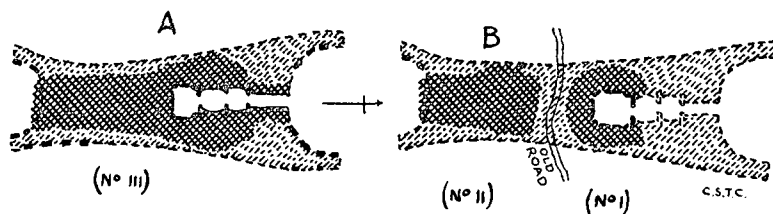


Fig. 1. Long cairns near Rhinavie, Strathnaver.

Dr Joseph Anderson, in his book *Scotland in Pagan Times*,² evidently accepts without dissent Munro's version of the three cairns, and reproduces the plans which Munro, on his own admission, had made "in ignorance of the general plan and structure of long cairns."

In the *Inventory of the Royal Commission on the Ancient Monuments of Scotland*, the same group is noted under the title of "Horned Long Cairns, Coille na Borgie," and is referred to as "the remains of two, or possibly three, chambered cairns,"³ but again they are described as three separate items.

Without having visited the site and judging only from Munro's drawings, it seems to me that the proper number of cairns represented is two, not three, and both are of the horned long cairn variety. My belief is that Munro's circular cairn, No. I, and his long cairn, No. II, are merely parts of a single structure which has been cut through between these portions by the old road previously mentioned. This idea is materialised in the sketch plan, fig. 1, B, where Munro's plans, indicated

¹ P.S.A.S., xviii, 228 f.

² *Scotland in Pagan Times* (Bronze and Stone Ages), 261-3.

³ *Inventory of the County of Sutherland*, No. 243.

by a cross-hatch and numbered within brackets, have been incorporated in the supposed original long cairn, delineated by a broken hatch.

Miss Audrey Henshall, a member of the staff of the National Museum, has visited the site in the course of a study of the Scottish cairns, and informs me that she had arrived independently at the same conclusion. While agreeing in general with the view, her opinion, however, differs on the detail of the finish of the northern end of the cairn, where my imaginary restoration has been based solely on Munro's plan No. III. From her own observations on the spot she is led to suspect a shorter extremity with only a passage, and no ante-chambers, to the existing chamber.

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