5. An Upper Quernstone from Perthshire, near Bridge of Allan.

An upper quernstone (fig. 4) of Niedermendig lava (now in *N.M.A.*, BB 127) was found recently in the top course of a wall surrounding a rocky knoll, formerly covered with trees, on high ground, about half a mile NNW. from Bridge of Allan Station. This knoll is marked "Camp" on O.S.1″ Sheet 54–1947, also on older maps. Though little remains to show the ancient nature of the site, heaps of stones suggest a single stout stone wall as defence (Nat. Grid ref. 26/782984). The quern, of imported material and Roman type may be dated to the 1st century A.D. The nearest known Roman site is Hillside Camp, identified by Dr St Joseph in his air survey, which is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles N.W. from the knoll (Nat. Grid ref. 27/7700).

The measurements of the quern are as follows: diameter $15\frac{1}{2}$ ins., depth $3\frac{1}{2}$ ins. and diameter of straight central performation 3 ins. The top is counter sunk, the bottom slightly concave, the hole for the handle running diagonally to the side from the upper surface. A smaller hole only $\frac{1}{4}$ in. deep has been made in the upper raised margin. The stone is very much weathered.

It is interesting to compare this quernstone with the complete Niedermendig handmill from Newstead, one of four, all 1st century A.D., exhibited in the Museum's Roman gallery (FRA 1640). The top is also counter sunk and has a similar diagonal hole with still *in situ* an iron ring, stapled and leaded in, projecting from the side for a wooden upright handle.[1] It is, however, a more developed type with an iron bridge (rind) fitted into slots on either side of the central perforation. (Possibly the Bridge of Allan stone had such slots, which could have been as little as $\frac{2}{5}$ in. deep, if so they have disappeared through weathering.)

In her article on a quern from Parkburn,[2] Miss Henshall mentions three quernstones with similar perforation and suggests that the handle arrangements of these dark-age stones were derived from the Niedermendig type. Their evidence, and even more that of the Newstead querns, is against the use of a loop of rope or other substance threaded as a handle through the diagonal hole as is suggested in an article on Niedermendig querns in *Antiquity*,[3] where Pl. III (right) shows a ring moving freely in the hole. It is there explained that such a ring-handle would have been used for oscillating, not rotating, a quern, but this seems questionable.

Though Miss Henshall's native dark-age type may show a persistence of Roman ideas, the Bridge of Allan stone shows that the diagonal handle-hole was not always acceptable even if available. For the small hole on the margin must be a handle-hole made by secondary users, presumably the occupants of the "Camp" on the Knoll. Similar small holes are normal, *e.g.* among the querns from the hut-sites excavated by Dr Wainwright beside the souterrain at Ardestic in Angus, and went on in the Middle Ages.[4]

M. Stirling.

[1] J. Curle, *A Roman Frontier Post*, pl. xvii.
[2] *P.S.A.S.*, 1955–6, 262, fig. 4*a–c*.
[3] *Antiquity*, xxxix (1955), 70, fig. 1–4.
[4] *U.J.A.*, 1954, 146–7.

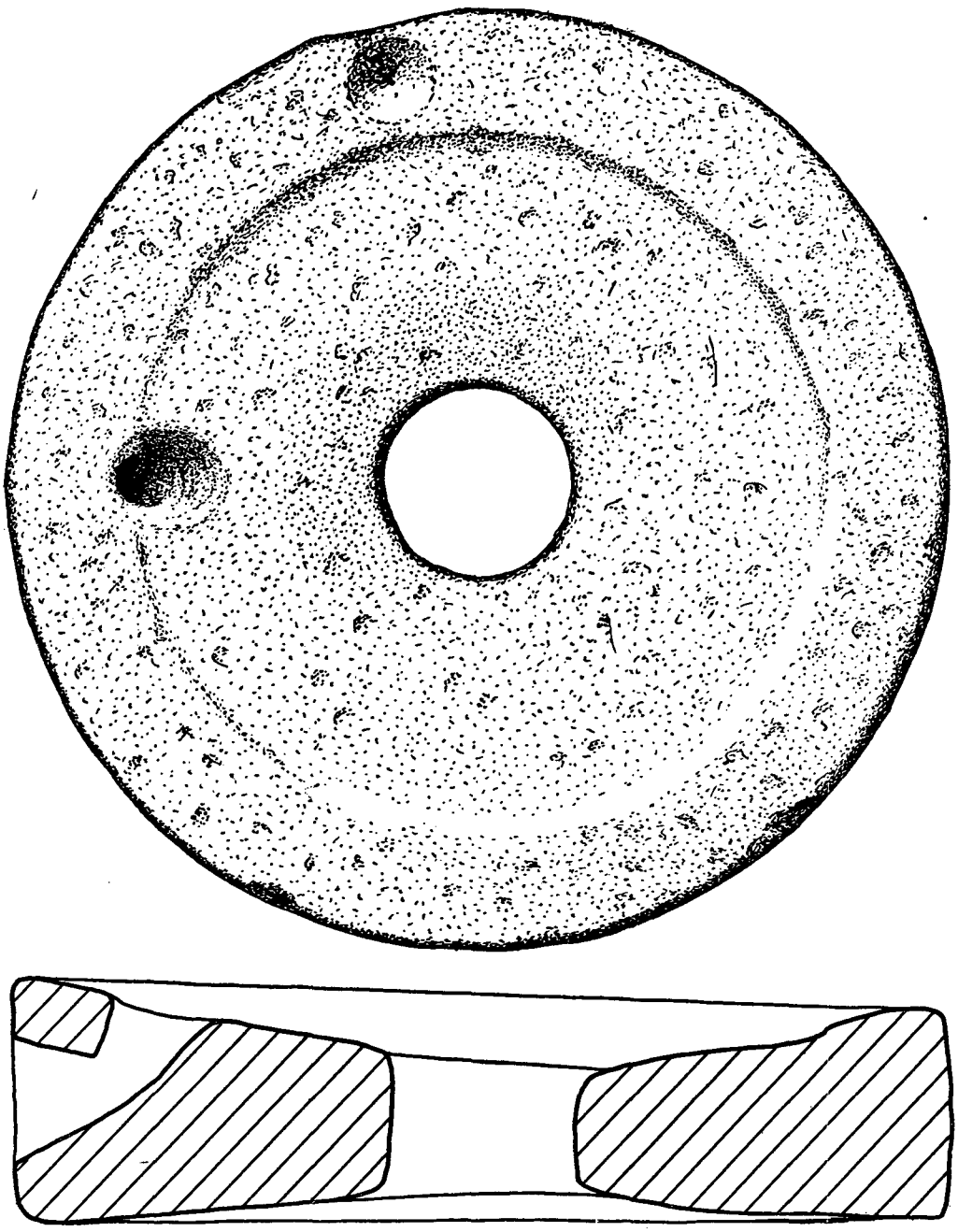

Fig. 4.