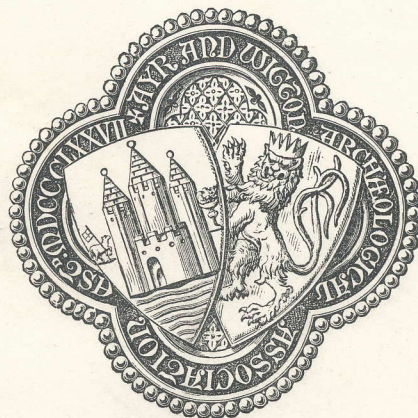


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RELATING TO THE COUNTIES OF

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II.

NOTICES OF ANCIENT URNS FOUND IN THE CAIRNS AND BARROWS OF AYRSHIRE.

It is scarcely necessary to remind the archæologist that to the graves of the early races of Britain we owe the greater part of the knowledge we possess of these races, as well as of the arts of war and peace as practised among them. In various parts of the country, more especially of Scotland, underground dwellings, long uninhabited, that from their situation have escaped the ravages of time and the improving hands of succeeding generations, are occasionally brought to light; here and there, also, menhirs, cromlechs, and stone circles of unknown antiquity, excite wonder at their size, or curiosity as to the tribes by whom, and the purpose for which, they were set up; and on many of our hill-tops are to be seen the remains of the rude strongholds in which a primitive people sought to make themselves secure against marauding neighbours or foreign foes. But the information regarding the men who reared these dwellings, monuments, and forts, to be gathered from an inspection of their handiwork, is far less in extent and value than what may be got from a careful examination of their final resting-places.

Man of every clime, and in almost every stage of civilisation, seeks to honour the memory of the mighty and the lamented dead by distinguishing in some way the spot chosen as their last earthly home. In addition, however, to this instinctive feeling, of which the manifestations are widely varied in design and construction, according to the circumstances of different peoples and countries, motives, the origin of which can now be discerned but obscurely, have sometimes led to weapons of war, personal ornaments, and vessels of clay of different shapes and sizes, being laid in the graves of

those who may perhaps have worn or used them when alive. Thus, an examination of sepulchral barrows and cairns shows that the warrior chief had often been interred with his axe-hammer of stone and knife-dagger of flint or of bronze placed in his hand, and that females of distinction, as in some such cases they may well be supposed to have been, had been decked out after death with their ornaments of polished jet; while not seldom "urns," to use the common, though not in every sense appropriate, designation—some accompanied with burnt bones, others empty—have been discovered when ancient grave-mounds were accidentally or intentionally disturbed.

It is to these "urns" that the present paper, which will probably be afterwards followed by one or more on Ayrshire deposits of this class, should materials be provided, specially refers; and its object is to give notices of such as have been found within the limits of the county, and, when possible, an account of the circumstances under which they were discovered. The list is not put forth as by any means complete. Since it was drawn up the existence of other specimens has been made known to the writer, the description of which must now be deferred till a future occasion. But it is hoped the beginning is made of what will be an exhaustive account of these curious memorials of past times. It may be expected also that a greater interest regarding them will be in this way excited among those who have it in their power to increase our knowledge by careful explorations in localities where they are likely to occur, or by their preservation when brought to light, as they often are, by the operations of the agriculturist. And by way of introduction, as well as of affording some guide to local explorers, it seems desirable to prefix a short account of the tumuli beneath or in which deposits of the kind are generally found, of the modes in which the bodies of the ancient dead have been disposed of, and of the classes into which sepulchral "urns" have been divided by archæologists.

Grave-mounds are designated barrows or cairns, according as they are composed of earth or of stone, both being sometimes included under the former term. Local circumstances alone appear to have determined the materials employed in raising them. On the Yorkshire wolds and the Wiltshire plains they are, as might be expected, commonly made of earth, while in our own part of the country gravel or stones have been frequently

employed. Within or below them bodies were deposited either by inhumation, or after being reduced to ashes by fire. Which of these methods was first practised in Britain cannot as yet be positively determined. We may, indeed, suppose that burial would suggest itself to a primitive people as the most natural way of disposing of their dead, and that cremation was a refinement of a later age, adopted to prevent dishonour being done to the remains of the departed by barbarous foes or ravenous beasts,¹ or from some vague notions of the purifying influences of fire. It so far accords with this supposition that in the long-shaped barrows, usually regarded as the oldest, cremation is the exception.² There are, however, instances of it; while in the more numerous round-shaped mounds both methods would seem to have been employed contemporaneously.³ When the body was burned, the ashes were collected, and frequently placed in an earthenware jar or urn; but it must be borne in mind that in a large, indeed the larger, number of such interments no urn is found, nor is there any reason to believe one had been used. The unburnt body, as a rule, was laid on its side in a contracted state, with the head leaning forward and the knees drawn up, probably the position in which, in an age that the sick had but little external protection against cold, natural warmth was best fostered, and in which, therefore, it had been left when life had departed.⁴ Vessels, likewise called "urns," sometimes lie beside such bodies. The mounds are often found occurring in groups; and in many of the larger ones there have been interments at an earlier and a later period, distinguished respectively as primary and secondary. Attempts, more or less successful, have been made by different writers to classify barrows according to their shape.⁵ Founding on this, Sir R. C. Hoare distinguishes as many as eleven varieties. But it is sufficient for our present purpose to regard them as circular and long. The ordinary circular barrow or cairn is perfectly simple in its structure. It has been at first raised above remains placed either on the ground or in a grave more or less sunk beneath the natural surface, sometimes without any protection

¹ Sir R. C. Hoare, *Ancient Wiltshire*, pp. 23, 24.

(*Ancient Wiltshire*, p. 24) quotes Genesis, chap. xlix. 33.

² Thurnam, *Archæologia*, xlii. p. 191.

³ Greenwell and Rolleston, *British Barrows*, p. 19.

⁴ Evans, *Ancient Stone Implements of Great Britain*, p. 135; Greenwell, *British Barrows*, p. 24. In this connection, Sir R. C. Hoare

⁵ Sir Richard C. Hoare, *Ancient Wiltshire*, vol. i. pp. 19-22; Wilson, *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* (1st ed.), p. 44; Thurnam, *Archæologia*, xlii. p. 168, and xliii. p. 290.

whatever, but often, in Scotland at least, surrounded and covered by stone slabs, called a kistvaen, or cist. The dimensions of this latter receptacle vary greatly, irrespective of whether burial has taken place by inhumation or after cremation. The long barrow or cairn, which, as some think, is the older form of the two, is characterised by its greater length in proportion to its breadth; its direction, which generally runs from east to west; the greater elevation of the eastern end; and its frequently, though by no means always, containing a chamber or chambers, to which a passage leads from or near the exterior.¹ In some chambered cairns, however, apparently of the same age as the long barrows, the shape is oval or circular. As the long barrows, though scattered over the length and breadth of the island, are comparatively rare, we are prepared to find that but few of them occur in Ayrshire. Indeed, there seems to be only one that at present can with any degree of propriety be pointed out as representative of the class—that on Cuff Hill, Beith; and it differs so much from all the others of which we have any trustworthy account, that it cannot be taken as a typical example.² No systematic exploration of Ayrshire cairns has ever been made, as has been the case with those of Caithness and the barrows of Wiltshire, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Dorset, Cornwall,³ and other parts of England. In these circumstances there is little cause for wonder that our knowledge of their contents is fragmentary. Even when they have been opened, the records we have of the excavations are in most cases defective.

A long series of years must have run their course during the period when these mounds were being raised, of the exact commencement or termination of which nothing definite can be said. A general conclusion may, however, be drawn from the fact⁴ that while weapons and articles of stone and of bronze have been met with in them in considerable abundance, the latter being more plentiful in the south than in the north, those of iron are extremely rare. This

¹ Anderson, *Proc. Soc. of Ant. of Scot.*, vol. vii. p. 481; Thurnam, *Archæologia*, xlii. pp. 169-243.

² See "Notices of the Several Openings of a Cairn on Cuff Hill, etc., by Robert Love, Esq., F.S.A. Scot." *Proc. Soc. of Ant. of Scot.*, vol. xi. p. 272.

³ See Anderson, *Proc. Soc. of Ant. of Scot.*, vol.

vi. p. 442, and vol. vii. p. 480; Sir R. C. Hoare, *Ancient Wiltshire*; Greenwell, *British Barrows*; Bateman, *Ten Years' Diggings*; Warne, *Celtic Tumuli of Dorset*; Borlase, *Nenia Cornubiae*.

⁴ Thurnam, *Archæologia*, xlii. pp. 401-487; Greenwell, *British Barrows*, pp. 130-132.

circumstance seems to fix the age of even the less ancient of them, in the more settled parts of the country at least, to a period previous to the Roman invasion of our island, by which time it is believed iron had come into general use. But some of them may be later, while, no doubt, many date from a period long antecedent. Even the names of the race or races that lie beneath them cannot be given with certainty. It is often assumed that they were all Celts, but there is no direct evidence in support of this conclusion. On the other hand, a continental archæologist is of opinion that weapons of stone are those of a people who had inhabited Western Europe previous to the arrival of the Celts, and to whom bronze was unknown. "It is," says he, "scarcely a hasty conclusion that the Iberians were the *stone-using* people, who were overcome by the Celtic *bronze-using* hordes, and that the former were either extirpated by or became fused with the latter. It is highly probable that the Iberians were the original inhabitants of Ireland, and of several parts of Britain, and were there the stone-using people, of whom there are so many traces."¹

As has been stated above, "urns" are among the articles most frequently found in ancient grave-mounds, and are the earliest specimens we possess of the art and skill of the native potter. They accompany both burnt and unburnt bones. In shape, size, and ornamentation they differ greatly, as well as in the quality of the clay of which they are formed, and the degree of heat to which it has been exposed. Their colour ranges from a light red to a brownish or dirty yellow. At one time it was thought they were merely sun-dried, but a closer examination proves that they have undergone to a greater or less extent the action of fire, though, as is shown when they are fractured, the firing has been in most cases very imperfect. The style of ornamentation applied to them consists chiefly of straight lines, but is wonderfully diversified. "The patterns," to use the words of one of our most recent and most careful observers, "have been made by a sharp-pointed instrument drawn over the moist clay, by stamping with a narrow piece of bone or hard wood, cut into alternate raised and sunk squares, or simply

¹ Professor Keyser, quoted by Thurnam, *Crania Britannica*, vol. i. p. 55. Fuller information, however, than we at present possess may yet enable archæologists to solve these and similar questions with some degree of accuracy. Mean-

time, interesting observations, founded chiefly on craniological data regarding the races that lie buried under the long and the round barrows respectively, will be found in *British Barrows*, pp. 121-130.

notched ; by rows of dotted markings, round, oval, and triangular, of greater or less size ; by the impression of the finger nails ; and most commonly by impressions of a twisted thong, generally made of a strip of hide, but certainly, in many cases, of string manufactured out of some vegetable fibre, and consisting in some cases of two, if not three, plaits. Curved lines and circular markings, though they occur now and then, are uncommon, the pattern being generally made up of straight lines arranged in cross, zigzag, chevron, saltire, reticulated, and herring-bone fashion.”¹

“Urns” are generally arranged by writers on the subject in four classes—named from the purposes for which some archæologists suppose them to have been employed in connection with ancient interments. These are cinerary urns, “incense cups,” “food vessels,” and “drinking cups.”² In one, if not more of these classes, the designation is unfortunate, there being no certainty whatever that the vessel had been used as assumed. These names, however, have all become so associated with the objects to which they are generally applied, that it is necessary to retain them here.

1. *Cinerary Urns*.—These are for the most part found either containing calcined bones or inverted over them. In height they range from 10 to 17 inches, examples occasionally occurring that exceed or fall short of these dimensions. They vary also so much in shape, that as many as seven sub-classes have been distinguished by the late Dr. Thurnam.³ Usually the upper part consists of a broad overhanging rim, more or less ornamented, though in many examples the decoration is not confined to this part. In some the rim is surrounded by a concave space as broad or broader than itself, below which the urn tapers to a comparatively small base. The larger specimens, generally believed to be the most ancient, are of coarse clay, mixed with small pebbles or gravel, and their walls are in most cases thick.

2. *Incense Cups*.—Like the last class, these vessels also occur with calcined bones. Judging, however, from recorded examples, they seldom contain such bones. But they often occur among them, enclosed in cinerary

¹ Greenwell, *British Barrows*, p. 65.

² Bateman, *Ten Years' Diggings, etc.*, p. 280 ; *Hydriotaphia Cambrensis ; Ancient Interments and Sepulchral Urns found in Anglesey and North Wales*, by the Hon. William Stanley and Albert

Way, F.S.A., pp. 3-6 (reprinted for private distribution from the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 3rd series, vol. xiv.) ; Greenwell, *British Barrows*, p. 61 ; Thurnam, *Archæologia*, xliii. p. 337.

³ *Ib.* p. 345.

urns, though sometimes lying at a little distance off. In size they vary from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 inches in height, and in shape and appearance differ so much, that it seems very doubtful whether they ought all to be grouped together as is usually done. Thurnam recognises three sub-classes, to the third of which he assigns no fewer than six varieties.¹ The most common form is that in which the sides are bevelled in towards a narrow mouth and base. Very often these little vessels are pierced on one side with two small holes, the true use of which has given rise to many conjectures. Rarely the perforation is single, while in other instances there is a pair of holes at opposite sides. "Incense cups" were so named by Sir Richard Colt Hoare,² from a belief that they had been used to contain perfumes or unguents suspended over the funereal fire—a supposition the correctness of which is open to much doubt. They are made of purer paste, and are better burnt than the vessels of the last class.

3. *Food Vessels*.—These are generally admitted to have been placed beside the body as receptacles of food. They are shaped either like a flower-pot or a bowl, and range from 5 to 6 inches in height. Some approximate so closely in appearance and size to certain forms of the first class, that it is not easy to determine in which of the two classes they ought to be placed. Thurnam arranges them under four sub-classes.³ Food vessels are usually, though by no means exclusively, found with unburnt bones, and in the majority of cases are placed near the head. Whether beside unburnt or burnt bones, they are almost invariably empty, but in some instances traces of animal or vegetable matter have been found in them. The ornamentation of some is rude and irregular, while of others it is most elaborate and tasteful.

4. *Drinking Cups*.—Drinking cups are found only with unburnt bones, and are generally laid near the shoulder of the skeleton. In Wiltshire, however, they have occurred more frequently near the feet. They are vessels of a somewhat elegant form, often contracted towards the middle. In height they vary from 6 to 9 inches. Their ornamentation is more uniformly profuse and elaborate than that of any of the other three classes. Thurnam distributes them under three sub-classes.⁴ A few specimens have occurred having a handle at the side. The clay of which drinking cups are made has

¹ *Archæologia*, xliii. p. 359.

² *Ancient Wiltshire*, vol. i. p. 25.

³ *Archæologia*, xliii. p. 378.

⁴ *Ib.* p. 391.

been carefully tempered with fine sand, and the vessels have been well baked. Their present name was first applied to them by Sir R. C. Hoare¹ from a supposition, apparently not ill founded, as to the purpose for which they were used.

Specimens of all the four classes are found from Cornwall to the Orkneys, though a class that is rare in certain localities may be the most abundant in others. In Ayrshire—judging, however, only from what we at present know of the examples it has yielded—the “food vessel” and the cinerary urn are the most plentiful; the “incense cup” has but seldom occurred, while the “drinking cup” must be regarded as extremely rare. But fuller information may alter this estimate. In now noticing Ayrshire “urns,” it will be convenient to follow the ordinary classification.

1. AYRSHIRE CINERARY URNS.

The fine specimen of the first class of urns, here figured, was presented in 1865 to the Museum of the Ayr Mechanics' Institution by the representatives of the late Dr. C. F. Sloan, F.S.A. Scot., of Ayr. On the closing of the Museum, after the sale of the Mechanics' Library and the breaking up of the Institution, it was removed to a small dark apartment in the Town's Buildings, along with the miscellaneous collection of articles of which it had formed a part.



FIG. 1.—Cinerary Urn, found at Moathill, Ochiltree.
Scale $\frac{1}{8}$.

This urn, which is formed of a coarse light-coloured clay, measures 17 inches in height; the diameter of the mouth is $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and that of the base 5 inches—dimensions that are but seldom exceeded in any vessels of the kind. Its sides are fully an inch in thickness, and its weight is

¹ *Ancient Wiltshire*, p. 25.

considerable. The mouth is slightly oval. There is a prominent overhanging rim with a still broader concave belt beneath. The circumference of the upper edge of this rim is $45\frac{1}{2}$ inches, of the under, 48 inches. The ornamentation, consisting of impressions apparently made by a twisted thong or sinew, is mostly confined to the rim and to its lip, which is slightly bevelled off inwards. These impressions are arranged some longitudinally, others in zig-zag fashion, and also appear in the latter style on the bevelled edge of the rim. Deep diagonal markings, as if made with some blunt instrument, are scattered very irregularly over the inside of the rim here and there throughout its whole breadth. The urn, which was at one time half full of calcined bones, was found at the Moot or Moat hill of Ochiltree. The label formerly attached to it is lost, but the testimony of several that had been connected with the Mechanics' Museum is quite explicit on the point. Whether it is identical with the urn mentioned in the following extract from the notice of the parish of Ochiltree, in the *New Statistical Account*, has not been ascertained; but it is not unlikely that the two are one and the same:—"At the toll-bar, on the road to Ayr, there is a place called the Moat, where, a few years ago, was found an urn with calcined bones."¹ Old residents who remember the circumstance say that the urn referred to in this extract was discovered by workmen in making that portion of the Ayr road by which the steep ascent in the main street of the village may now be avoided. This fixes the date at about the year 1838.

To those who were privileged to spend an occasional hour with Dr. Sloan when his leisure permitted, the Ochiltree urn was a familiar object. For years it lay in a corner of his consulting-room, carefully placed in a box made for its reception. In many respects Dr. Sloan was a superior man. To a thorough knowledge of his profession, and a most genial disposition, he added intellectual gifts that made him a valuable friend and agreeable acquaintance. His store of information on general subjects was large, and on none did he dwell with greater enthusiasm than on the natural history and antiquities of his native county, more especially when he found a sympathetic listener. In the progress and prosperity of the Mechanics' Museum, as calculated to promote a taste for such studies, he took a warm interest, and had he lived longer its fate might have been different. To the great regret of a wide circle he was cut off in the very midst of his years and his

¹ *New Statistical Account of Scotland, Ayrshire*, p. 109.

usefulness. Those who knew him will not, I feel sure, deem this brief tribute to his memory out of place in the present volume; and others may excuse it on learning that to him we owe the preservation of nearly one half of the "urns" to be noticed in this paper as being still in existence.

The urn to be next described is of the same type as the last, but of smaller size. It is in the possession of Robert Hunter, Esq., of Hunterston, Hon. Mem. Roy. Soc. of Antiquaries of Copenhagen, who has kindly presented the accompanying illustration of it.



FIG. 2.—Cinerary Urn, found at Seamill, near Hunterston.
Scale $\frac{1}{4}$.

The height of this urn is $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches; its diameter at the mouth is $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and at the base $3\frac{1}{8}$ inches. From information obligingly furnished by Mr. Hunter, as well as from a notice of the discovery in the *New Statistical Account* of the Parish of West Kilbride,¹ we learn that it was found in 1830 by workmen employed in making the turnpike road from Kilrusken to Chapelton, at a place called Seamill,

in the immediate neighbourhood of an early circular fort. The decoration extends from the rim over the whole of the concave belt, on the latter of which it is arranged in a lozenge-shaped pattern, while on the rim it takes the form of perpendicular lines. Round the top and bottom of the rim, as well as the base of the belt, run similar encircling lines. The markings on the rim, as well as those on the belt, seem to have been produced by a twisted cord. Along with this urn was found another, which was presented at the time to the Museum of Anderson's College, Glasgow, where it may possibly still be.

In addition to these two existing examples of cinerary urns, there is, I am informed, a very large one in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, marked

¹ *New Statistical Account of Scotland*, Ayrshire, p. 258.

as from the "neighbourhood of Girvan," which probably belongs to the same class; and among some newspaper notices of objects gifted to the Mechanics' Museum the following occurs under the date of 1840:—"A fragment of an urn, with bones in it as discovered, was presented by Mr. Andrew, Fail Mill (Tarbolton), on whose farm three entire urns were lately found, which unfortunately crumbled away on exposure to the air."

The writer of the *New Statistical Account* of the Parish of Ayr, after mentioning that British urns of rude baked clay have frequently been found all over the lower part of the county, adds:—"One of the largest and most beautiful of these urns was found some years ago near the banks of the Doon, among a collection of ancient bones—

‘Beneath the cairn
Where hunters found the murdered bairn.’”¹

It is not known whether the specimen thus referred to still exists or not, but its occurrence proves the famous cairn to have been sepulchral; and the short description given of the relic renders it pretty certain that were the latter again brought to light it would be found to be either a cinerary urn or a "drinking cup," most likely the former. In the notices of other Ayrshire parishes in the same publication, "urns" that, from their containing burnt bones, were in all likelihood cinerary are mentioned. Thus, in the account of Dalry we read:—"On the lands of Linn four urns were found containing burnt human bones. At Auchingree two similar urns were also discovered. About ten years ago an urn was discovered near Blair House containing burnt bones, and ashes apparently of coal. A part of the jaw-bone was unconsumed, which, with the remains of the urn, is in the possession of the gardener at Blair."² The writer of the account of Dundonald says:—"On the line of railroad passing through the farm of Barassie an earthen urn was found in 1839. It was filled with the usual complement of calcined bones, and from the coarseness of the material and rudeness of the workmanship, it seems rather to have been of British than of Roman manufacture. It was unfortunately broken in the course of extraction, and the fragments have found their way into the private museum of Colonel Blair of Blair."³ The minister of the parish of Stewarton writes in 1840:—"About thirty years ago, while Mr. Deans of Peacockbank was rooting out

¹ *New Statistical Account of Scotland, Ayrshire*, p. 40.

² *Ib.* p. 220.

³ *Ib.* p. 667.

some trees in a small plantation, on Carnduff Brae, on his property, he discovered three urns containing human bones. The urns were covered with a great quantity of stones, forming, it is conjectured, one of those cairns in which the ancient inhabitants of this country buried their dead."¹ In the notice of the parish of Beith, by the late James Dobie, Esq., of Crummock, F.S.A. Scot., we are told that "on a field in the lands of Townend of Threepwood, about thirty-five years ago (*i.e.* about 1804), there was found a large vase of burnt clay, of a size capable of containing about six gallons. In it there was a considerable quantity of burned bones. The vase broke on being handled and exposed to the air, and soon crumbled into dust."²

The "urns" mentioned in these extracts cannot of course all be positively set down as cinerary. But if the accounts are trustworthy, and there is no reason to suspect the contrary, the greater number may be fairly reckoned as such, from the fact of their being stated to have contained burnt bones. Similar notices are found in the *Old Statistical Account* (Sir John Sinclair's) of several Ayrshire parishes, which, in order to make the record of Ayrshire "urns" and barrows more complete, may perhaps be collected on another opportunity.

2. AYRSHIRE "INCENSE CUPS."

The late Mr. Dobie of Crummock, in his notice of the parish of Beith, adds, immediately after the extract already quoted regarding the discovery of the cinerary urn at Townend of Threepwood:—"Within it there was



FIG. 3.—Incense Cup, found at Threepwood. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

found a small open urn of hard burned clay, and at a short distance from it another small urn was found by itself; probably the larger one, in which this last had been placed, was destroyed without being noticed."³ One of these small urns has been preserved, and was lately presented to the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland by John Shedden Dobie, Esq., F.S.A. Scot., who, in Appendix No. III. of his edition of Pont's *Cuning-*

hame (Glasgow, 1876), has given an engraving of it from a photograph, which, by his kind permission, is reproduced here. It is an "incense cup"

¹ *New Statistical Account of Scotland*, Ayrshire, p. 734.

² *Ib.* p. 578.

³ *Ib.* *ut antea*.

with two perforations, and, as will be seen from the engraving (Fig. 3), is perfectly plain. It is 2 inches high, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide at the mouth, and $1\frac{7}{10}$ inches at the bottom. The distance between the perforations, from the inner edge of each, is $\frac{4}{10}$ inch.

In the year 1851 a very remarkable example of this class (Fig. 4) was found at Genoch, parish of Straiton, by workmen engaged in preparing the foundations for a new dwelling-house. The site chosen was occupied by an artificial mound of earth, and in clearing it away a number of urns were exposed, containing burnt bones, several having in addition smaller urns lying inside them along with these bones. Except the "incense cup" here figured, the urns are said to have been all broken, or rather to have fallen to pieces as soon as touched.

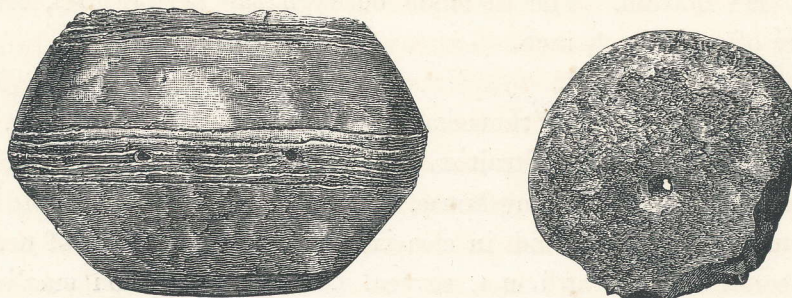
Hearing of this discovery, Dr. Sloan visited Genoch some time afterwards, where he got details of it from the tenant, who at the same time presented him with the "incense cup" and its contents. Unfortunately, he does not seem to have committed the information he then received to writing, no record of it being now among his papers.

The little "urn" is 3 inches in height, 3 inches in diameter at the mouth, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ at the base. Its greatest circumference is 15 inches. On one side, and in the line of this circumference, there are two holes about $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch apart (Fig. 5). The "cup" is nearly full of burnt bones and ashes, and accompanying it is a round piece of baked clay, $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, and perforated near the centre with a single hole (Fig. 6). This lid or top, which Dr. Sloan believed to have been found lying on the cup when discovered, is much thicker, and made of coarser clay than the cup itself, and has been thoroughly burnt, showing, where a part of the edge has been broken off, no black fracture, as urns, owing to imperfect firing, so frequently do. The ornamentation is simple, being confined to incised lines, four of which encircle the mouth, six the middle, and four the base. The walls of the "cup" are comparatively thin, and formed of clay well prepared and fired.



FIG. 4.—Incense Cup, found at Genoch, Straiton. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

The particulars stated above in regard to the discovery of this very interesting object have been furnished by Mrs. M'Clive, widow of the



FIGS. 5 and 6.—The same Cup, showing (Fig. 5) the holes in the sides, and (Fig. 6) the perforated lid. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

former tenant of Genoch, and by Miss Sloan, from recollections of what she had heard her brother say. They are all that I have as yet been able to obtain. But two points are of importance.

At first sight, and considering the fact that in no instance, so far as I know, has any such appendage been elsewhere found with an "incense cup," and only in a few rare cases with "food vessels," one is inclined to doubt whether the connection of this lid or top with the little cup is anything more than accidental. Even were it ascertained beyond all doubt that it was found lying on the latter, it might possibly have been used, as coming readily to hand, merely to protect the enclosed bones, in the same way that slabs of stone are often found laid on the mouths of large cinerary urns evidently for this purpose. On the other hand, its size, exactly a quarter of an inch larger in diameter than the mouth of the cup, and the existence of the hole near its centre, as if intended to serve the same use, whatever that was, as those in its side, seem to point in another direction. While more explicit evidence of its having originally belonged to the cup than has been given is no doubt desirable, the two cannot, I think, be in the meantime dissociated.¹

¹ Since the above was written, the evidence of one of the workmen that had been employed in levelling the mound has fortunately been obtained—James Crombie, labourer, Straiton. On being questioned by Mr. A. R. Ralston, the present tenant of Genoch, he gave additional information about the discovery of the "incense cup," which it seems best to record here in Mr. Ralston's words in a letter to me, dated 29th April 1878. "I did not see Crombie till yesterday afternoon, as he was

Of equal interest are the contents of this "incense cup." From their small size it was evident even to the unscientific that the bones were those of a young person. But as it was expedient to have the point authoritatively determined, they were examined at my request by Wm. Turner, Esq., M.D., Professor of Anatomy in the University of Edinburgh, who obligingly furnished me in writing with the following statement:—"Numerous fragments of human bones, which had evidently been subjected to the action of fire, were submitted to me by Dr. Macdonald, of the Ayr Academy. These bones had been found in a small 'incense cup.' They were the bones of a child apparently in its fifth or sixth year. The evidence of the bones being those of a child is to be found in the palatal and alveolar part of the upper jaw, which is in a fair state of preservation, in the fragment of a cervical vertebra, and in the terminal phalanx of one of the fingers." In an exami-

late of getting home on Saturday night. He gave me the following particulars about the urns found here:—

"1. The mound where the urns were found was natural, and only about 3 feet of the soil, which is a light gravel, was taken off the top, in order to level the ground for the present farmhouse. They were discovered on the very top, within $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet of the surface, and would not be more than a few yards apart.

"2. There were a good many urns, probably about a dozen, but Crombie could not give the exact number. Every one of them contained burnt bones and ashes.

"3. The small urn was within a larger one, burnt bones and ashes being in both urns when found. The large urn was unfortunately broken by the pick of one of the workmen, the lid of the small one suffering slightly from the same cause. This lid was on it when found.

"4. There was no protection whatever round the urns.

"5. The urns were all standing on their narrow bases.

"6. The mound where the urns were found is called 'Knockerrennie Knowe,' and is supposed to have been at one time used as a burial-place. All the urns, except the one you write about, were broken by the workmen's tools, and were cast aside among the rest of the debris. Some of the broken pieces were covered over with carved work, more especially those of the large one containing the small one."

Crombie's account, the accuracy of which is shown by his mention of "carved work" on some of the broken pieces, not only confirms in every respect the statements made in the text on the authority of others, but adds considerably to our knowledge of the circumstances in which the Genoch "incense cup" was discovered. One cannot help regretting, though the regret is now a vain one, that nothing else has been preserved of this interesting "find."

nation of the ashes the experienced eye of Mr. Joseph Anderson, Keeper of the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, detected two fragments of a bronze pin, one of them about an inch in length.

So rarely in the Rev. Canon Greenwell's experience have burnt bones been found in "incense cups," that he says of the latter that when discovered they "invariably accompany deposits of burnt bones, placed both amongst and upon them, but scarcely ever, except accidentally, containing them."¹ The late Mr. Dobie of Crummock, in his notice of the parish of Beith already referred to, puts forward the opinion that they "were doubtless for receiving the ashes of the brain and heart, while those of the body were lodged in the larger vessel," a supposition which has had its supporters. On the other hand, Mr. Llewellynn Jewitt considers that these small vessels, "from their usually containing calcined bones, were the receptacles for the ashes of the infant, to be buried along with those of its mother,"² and the same archæologist has more recently proposed to call them "Immolation Urns," from a belief that they were "intended to receive the ashes of the infant, perhaps sacrificed at the death of its mother," and made small, "so as to admit of being placed within the larger urn containing the ashes of the parent."³ Dr. John Alex. Smith, in a paper read some years ago before the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland on a small "incense cup" discovered in Fifeshire filled with indurated ashes, amongst which were the bones of a child, and enclosed in a larger urn, says more cautiously:—"There is no doubt, from the instance I have described, as well as from the others referred to, that in some cases, at least, these small urns were actually used to contain the ashes of an infant, buried, in all probability, along with the ashes of its mother."⁴ The Genoch "incense cup" adds another to these instances, its contents, however, being not those of an infant, but of a child of still tender years.

Very great diversity of opinion exists among archæologists, not only as to the use for which "incense cups," so called, had been employed in connection with ancient interments, but also as to whether they had previously served

¹ *British Barrows*, p. 18.

² *Grave Mounds and their Contents*, p. 107.

³ *The Ceramic Art of Great Britain*, vol. i. p. 4.

⁴ *Proc. Soc. of Ant. of Scot.*, vol. ix. p. 207.

For other cases besides Dr. Smith's of small urns

supposed to contain the remains of infants and found in larger ones, see *Hydriotaphia Cambrensis*, etc., p. 12, and *Transactions of the International Congress of Prehistoric Archaeology*, vol. iii. pp. 383, 384, 386.

any domestic purpose before being so used. This latter question has also been raised in regard to the other three classes of sepulchral pottery, as will be afterwards briefly noticed. The opinion which led Sir Richard Colt Hoare to give the class now under consideration its present name is by no means generally accepted. According to others, they were lamps,¹ censers, or chafers, for conveying fire,² or salt-cellars. If, "incense cups" were domestic as well as sepulchral vessels, it seems to me highly probable that, differing as many of them do from one another in almost every respect but size, the various forms may have been put to distinct economic uses.

3. AYRSHIRE "FOOD VESSELS."

Fig. 7 represents a "food vessel" from Dr. Sloan's collection. It is of coarse dark clay, somewhat inelegant in shape, and marked "Skeldon, Ayrshire." Nothing more than this is known regarding its history. The markings, which are impressions of a twisted thong arranged in perpendicular



FIG. 7.—"Food Vessel," from Skeldon. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.



FIG. 8.—Another "Food Vessel," from Skeldon. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

and diagonal lines, extend over its whole outer surface. In some places the spaces between them are filled up by triangular-shaped punctures, made

¹ Birch, *Ancient Pottery and Porcelain*, vol. ii. p. 380.

² *Hydriotaphia Cambrensis*, p. 73.

with a blunt instrument. Round the upper edge of its mouth are three encircling lines of corded impressions, and a narrow but well-marked groove runs round the outer surface about an inch and a half from the top, below which it begins to bevel off towards the base. This "urn" is $4\frac{7}{8}$ inches high, $4\frac{7}{8}$ inches wide at the mouth, and $2\frac{7}{8}$ inches at the base.

Another "food vessel" from the same locality (Fig. 8) is in Dr. Sloan's collection. It also is $4\frac{7}{8}$ inches high, but its width at the mouth is $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches, while at the base it is only $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. It is more tasteful in shape than its companion. The upper part is surrounded by a broad concave belt. Round this belt and the upper edge of the mouth are circling lines of cord-like impressions. Immediately below comes a slight groove, in which are four knob-like projections at irregular intervals. In some "food vessels" such projections are often pierced in the direction of the groove. The lower portion is encircled by five similar lines, or shallow grooves, the spaces between which are all ornamented by diagonal lines drawn with a sharp instrument in herring-bone fashion.



FIG. 9.—"Food Vessel," found at Law, Tarbolton.
Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

The "urn" represented by Fig. 9 was formerly in the collection of the Ayr Mechanics' Museum, and was presented to it in 1840 by Mr. James Hunter, Law, parish of Tarbolton, on whose farm it was dug up about the year 1831. "It was found," says a short notice of it that appeared in the Ayr newspapers at the time it was gifted to the Museum, "placed on a rock, and covered with upwards of three feet of earth. It contained no bones, but was

blackened as if it held ashes of animal matter."

The walls of this "food vessel" are of very coarse clay. Nearly all the outer surface is ornamented, but after a rude fashion. Round the upper edge of the mouth are three lines of the twisted cord pattern; other three encircle it below the slightly beaded rim. Then follows a band formed of a

series of slight depressions, which are ornamented in chevron fashion. Below this are other two lines of the twisted cord type, and then, where the circumference of the body is greatest, an encircling groove, indented by two rows of punctures, and having seven scarcely raised projections similarly marked. The rest of the outer surface down to the base is occupied by three bands, with similar rows of punctures, separated from the groove and from one another by three or four rows of thong-like impressions. The "urn" is $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches high, $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide at the mouth, and $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches at the base.

In the same collection was another urn which is unfortunately no longer entire. The fragments show it to have been bowl-shaped, as well as tastefully moulded and ornamented, but the firing has been very imperfect. Its height is $4\frac{5}{8}$ inches, its diameter at the mouth is $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and at the base $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The label which had been attached to it in the Mechanics' Museum is lost; and among the newspaper notices of articles presented, no one likely to answer can be found, except the following, dated August 1849:—"A Roman (*sic*) sepulchral urn, in excellent preservation, found in a field near Maybole, presented by Mr. Hugh M'Millan, Maybole." But this identification is by no means certain.

The ornamentation of this "food vessel" is somewhat complicated and peculiar.¹ The lip or upper edge of the mouth is scored with diagonal lines. Just below the rim come several encircling lines, indistinctly dotted as if with a finely-toothed instrument, and then a band so incised with triangular depressions as to have a zigzag form. At the line of greatest circumference is an encircling ridge scored with perpendicular markings; an inch and a half below is another, the space between being adorned in nearly the same way as the rather broader space between the first ridge and the mouth. Below the second ridge is a thin band with zigzag markings, between which and the bottom notched lines cross each



FIG. 10.—"Food Vessel," found at Maybole (?). Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

¹ The engraving, being from a photograph, does not show the markings very distinctly.

other in diagonal fashion. The bottom, as is shown in Fig. 11, is slightly ornamented with eight lunate depressions round the edge, giving the whole a star-like appearance.¹



FIG. 11.
Bottom of "Food Vessel," shown in Fig. 10.

The occurrence of any kind of decoration on the bottoms of "food vessels" is a very rare feature, at least in British examples; but there are Irish specimens in which they are thus ornamented, after a radiating or stellate fashion. On the bottoms of English "incense cups" a cruciform pattern is by no means uncommon.

Fig. 12 is from the Lanfine Collection.² Its dimensions are $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches high, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter at the mouth, and $1\frac{2}{3}$ inches at the base. This "food vessel" is one of those mentioned in the following extract from the *New Statistical Account* of the Parish of St. Quivox:—"Several small earthen urns were lately discovered in levelling a sandbank at Content. . . . They are now in the possession of Dr. Memes, rector of the Ayr Academy."³



Fig. 12.—"Food Vessel," found at Content, now in Lanfine Collection.⁴ Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

The ornamentation is very distinctly seen in the engraving, and consists of diagonal lines scattered over the whole surface, and arranged more or less closely in herring-bone fashion. Round the greatest circumference of the body runs a groove, with several knob-like projections.

Another of the Content "Urns" (Fig. 13) remains the property of Mrs. Memes. Its height is $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and its diameter at the mouth $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, at the base $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The ornamentation is elaborate, and covers the whole outer surface, including part at least of the bottom. The bevelled upper surface of the lip, which is $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in thickness, is encircled by two rows of dot-like depressions, that have a

¹ Both in its shape and some details of its decoration this "food vessel" bears considerable resemblance to an Irish example figured by Thurnam, *Archæologia*, xliii. p. 381.

² See page 65.

³ *New Statistical Account of Scotland*, Ayrshire, p. 120.

⁴ Illustration presented by Miss Brown of Lanfine.

very small prominence in the centre of each, alternating with the same number of rows of closely-set notches. Round the projecting rim is another row of dot-like depressions. Below the rim a belt, $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. in breadth, is filled by perpendicular rows of notches, in the broader spaces between which are incised lines arranged in herring-bone fashion. This is followed at the greatest circumference of the "urn" by an encircling line of notched markings and two rather narrow bands, divided by perpendicular rows of notches into oblong portions, in the centre of each of which is a longitudinal line of similar notches. Eight bands, separated by sharply cut lines, and covered with incisions made after herring-bone pattern, occupy the rest of the surface, except round the bottom, where there is a band divided and notched in the same way as those on the greatest circumference. Round the inner edge of the bottom, of which the greater part has been unfortunately broken off, runs a row of closely set notches, enclosing zigzag lines of the same, as shown in the engraving.



FIG. 13.—Another "Food Vessel," found at Content. Scale $\frac{1}{4}$.

Two Ayrshire "food vessels," to be seen in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, are here figured.



FIG. 14.—"Food Vessel," found at Kirkhill, Ardrossan.

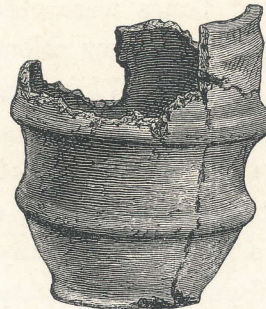


FIG. 15.—Another found near Eglinton Castle. Scale $\frac{1}{3}$.

In size and general appearance the Kirkhill "food vessel" (Fig. 14) bears a close resemblance to the Skeldon one (Fig. 7). It is ornamented by punctures arranged in nearly perpendicular lines. The height of this "urn" is $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, the diameter of its mouth is $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and of the base 3 inches. The Eglinton "food vessel" (Fig. 15) is not entire, but enough remains

to show its original form. It is undecorated, except by two encircling ridges which divide its outer surface into three nearly equal parts. Its height is 7 inches; diameter at the mouth 6 inches, and at the base $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches.

In the Hunterian Museum there is a "food vessel" found at Ladyland, Kilbirnie, and presented to that collection by the late William Cochran, Esq., of Ladyland. It will likely be described in a succeeding paper.

In the *New Statistical Account* of the Parish of Tarbolton, the Rev. Mr. Ritchie thus describes the opening in May 1837 of "King Coil's Tomb," so called, and its contents, so far as then examined:—"To the south of Coilsfield House, and immediately west of the farm-offices, is a circular mound. . . . On the centre and highest part of this mound are two large stones, masses of basalt, which, according to tradition, mark the spot where the mortal remains of Old King Coil were deposited." When these stones were removed "the centre of the mound was found to be occupied by boulder stones, some of them of considerable size;" and, at the depth of about four feet the excavators "came on a flag-stone of a circular form, about three feet in diameter," under which "was first a quantity of dry yellow sandy clay, then a small flag-stone laid horizontally, covering the mouth of an urn filled with white-coloured burnt bones. In removing the dry clay by which this urn was surrounded, under flat stones, several small heaps of bones were observed, not contained in urns, but carefully surrounded by the yellow coloured clay mentioned above. . . . The urn is $7\frac{7}{8}$ inches in height, $7\frac{7}{8}$ inches in diameter, and $\frac{5}{8}$ ths of an inch in thickness. It has none of those markings, supposed to have been made by the thumb nail, so often to be observed on sepulchral urns, and it has nothing of ornament except an edging or projecting part about half-an-inch from the top. No implements of any description could be found. . . . Other urns were found less indurated, and so frail as to fall to pieces when touched."¹ The urn of which the dimensions are given is understood to have been taken to Eglinton Castle by the late Mr. Johnston, then factor for the Earl of Eglinton. These urns were probably all "food vessels."

¹ *New Statistical Account of Scotland*, Ayrshire, p. 752.

4. AYRSHIRE "DRINKING CUPS."

Of these, only one example can here be recorded with certainty. It was found in the course of some explorations in a tumulus called the "Court-hill," in the parish of Dalry, as elsewhere described in the present volume¹ by Mr. Cochran-Patrick of Woodside, as well as in a paper read by him some time ago before the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and published in their Proceedings.² On opening a trench into the tumulus, as will be seen from the account of the operations, a line of small boulders and stones was met with, which led to a cairn, partly sunk below and partly raised above the original surface. On removing this cairn a flat sandstone was reached, and all about lay fragments of what, when collected and put together, proved to be a fine "drinking cup," minutely and elaborately ornamented. Around it are five belts or bands at about equal distances from each other, covered with lines of punctures, diagonally set and arranged in herring-bone fashion. Round the mouth and base, and in the spaces between the belts, are a number of regular rows of minute dotted markings. The height of this "drinking cup" is $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches; the mouth is $6\frac{5}{8}$ inches in diameter, the base $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches.



FIG. 16.—"Drinking Cup,
found at Courthill, Dalry.
Scale $\frac{1}{4}$."

Before leaving Ayrshire "urns" for the present, a single remark has to be made on a question already referred to, that has given rise to much discussion. Setting altogether aside the consideration of the particular funereal purpose for which "urns" of all the four classes may have been used, were they, it is sometimes asked, made specially to be deposited with the dead, or are they articles that, previous to being so deposited, had been in daily use for the purposes of common life? By many eminent foreign, and not a few of the most sagacious of British, archæologists, the opinion is held that

¹ See p. 55.

² "Note of some Explorations in a Tumulus, called the Court-Hill, in the parish of Dalry and

county of Ayr, by R. W. Cochran-Patrick, Esq., B.A., LL.B., F.S.A. Scot." *Proc. Soc. of Ant. of Scotland*, vol. x. p. 281.

they were all specially manufactured for the object to which they were devoted, as we now find them. Not to mention others, Canon Greenwell, whose opinion is entitled to the highest respect, comes to this conclusion, which is perhaps that of the greater number of those who have given the matter some attention.¹ On the other hand, the late Mr. Albert Way pronounced very decidedly in favour of the "probability that all the so-called sepulchral vessels, without exception, may have been fabricated for the ordinary purposes of daily life."² Dr. J. A. Smith, in the paper already quoted, is inclined to take the same view, and calls attention to the fact that hand-made vessels, quite as rude in style and ornamentation, have been in use in the Hebrides in our own day as domestic utensils.³ Curious and interesting as the subject is, it must not be pursued farther here. The series of volumes of which the present is the first is intended to be a store-house of facts rather than a medium for discussing probabilities. It was a true insight into the proper spirit in which all such investigations ought to be conducted that led the great Wiltshire antiquary,⁴ the first scientific inquirer into that branch of archæology to which the present paper belongs, to choose as the motto of his magnificent volumes, "We speak from facts, not theory."

JAMES MACDONALD.

AYR, April 1878.

¹ *British Barrows*, pp. 103-109.

³ *Proc. Soc. of Ant. of Scotland*, vol. ix. p. 204.

² *Hydriotaphia Cambrensis, etc.*, pp. 67-75.

⁴ Sir Richard Colt Hoare.