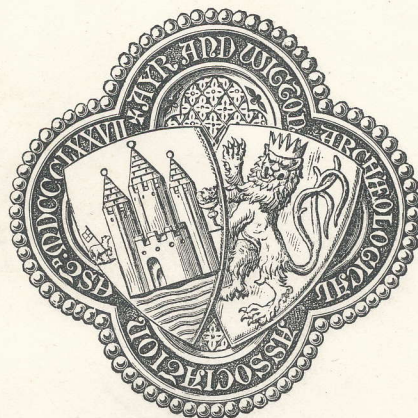


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RELATING TO THE COUNTIES OF

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VIII.

NOTES ON SOME AYRSHIRE EXAMPLES OF POTTERY, SUPPOSED TO BE MEDIAEVAL.

It must be understood that the term mediæval is employed in connection with these examples only provisionally, and not with the intention of conveying any opinion as to their exact age. They are not likely to be either prehistoric or modern; and in the present state of our knowledge of the history of the ceramic art in Scotland no other epithet suggests itself as more appropriate.

The only record we have of the discovery of the Jug represented in Fig. 1 is the following, which occurs in the *New Statistical Account* of the Parish of Dalrymple, by the late Rev. Robert Wallace:—"A pitcher of earthenware, like that represented in prints in the hand of the woman of Samaria at the Well at Sychar, was found at Perclewan . . . in 1833. . . . The pitcher is glazed, and of a greenish colour, and has the figure of a man's face and hands on the front in relief."¹

The dimensions of this jug are as follows:—Height, 13 inches; diameter at mouth, $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches; diameter at base, $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches; and greatest circumference 26 inches. The clay is of a coarse kind, and the walls are of unequal thickness. Both workmanship and ornamentation are alike rude, though there is evidence that it has been made on the wheel. Its mouth has a small spout, almost but not quite below which is a bearded face of very primitive design, with the lower part broken off. Round the edges of the beard, which is otherwise quite smooth, are straight markings, made apparently with the thumb-nail. The hands, rudely formed by the same

¹ *New Statistical Account of Scotland, Ayrshire*, p. 279.

means, rest on the sides, with the arms bent outwards. The slightly-curved handle is of considerable thickness, and furrowed by three or four shallow and narrow parallel grooves that, at its lower end, give place to one of much greater breadth, on either side of which are two large circular marks; all



FIG. 1.—Earthenware Jug, found at Perclewan, Dalrymple. Scale $\frac{1}{4}$.

three depressions seeming as if formed by the thumb. Round and beneath the bottom's edge is a series of markings that look as if made by applying the thumb and the joint of the bent fore-finger. A slightly-raised, circular, unglazed patch covers about half the surface of the bottom. The whole vessel has a greenish hue, and is glazed, except where the body, from the neck downwards about half-way, is traversed by eight nearly parallel, slightly raised, dark bands, the surface of which is rough, and studded each by a single row of slight prominences. These bands have the appearance of being the

result of some attempt at ornamentation, now partially destroyed, which had been attached by some means to the body of the pitcher after the latter was made and glazed all over; for here and there in the bands what seems to be the original glazed surface is still to be seen. One portion of the lower surface is covered by an irregularly shaped patch, of a darker colour than the rest.¹

Prof. D. Wilson speaks of the Dalrymple pitcher as bearing a close resemblance to one discovered in 1841 in London, under the foundation of a house in Cateaton Street, City, and figured in the *Journal of the Archaeological Association*.² A comparison of the two figures, however, will show that, except in shape, the resemblance is but distant.

Among what remains of the Museum of the Ayr Mechanics' Institution, mentioned on a preceding page,³ are some fragments of green-glazed pottery. These, which were presumably, though not to a certainty, found in Ayrshire—for the labels have been lost—remind one, in some respects, of the Dalrymple jug. The fictile vessel or vessels of which they are portions seem to have been quite as rude in design, but the workmanship is better and the paste finer.

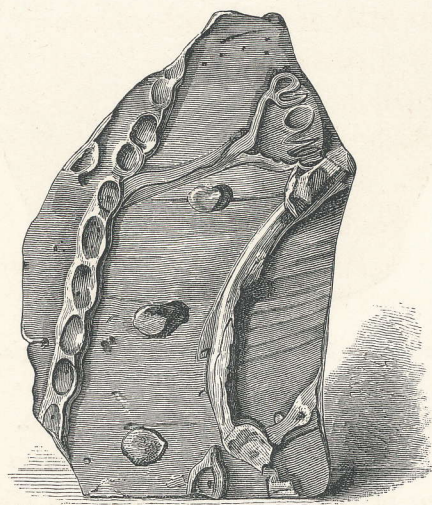


FIG. 2.—Fragment of a Jar, formerly in Ayr Mechanics' Museum. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

Fig. 2 represents a fragment of the body of a jar, showing what may

¹ The engraving, being from a photograph, does not show this and some other markings. ed.), p. 678; *Jour. Archæol. Assoc.*, vol. iii. p. 63.

² Wilson, *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* (1st

³ See p. 38.

be intended to stand for an arm and a hand, and decorated with ornamented raised bands and button-like knobs.

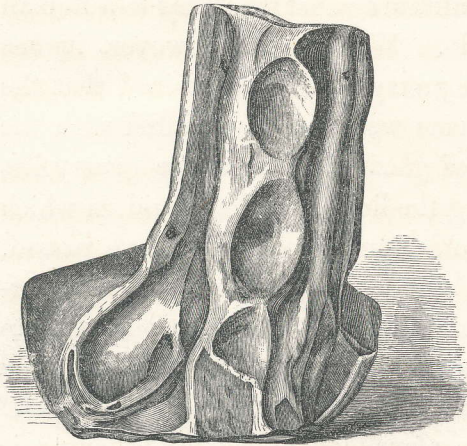


FIG. 3.

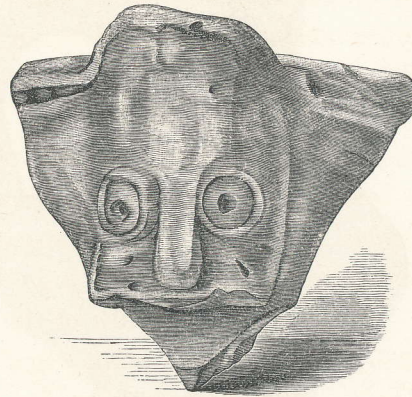


FIG. 4.

Fragments of a Handle and of the Mouth of a Jug, formerly in Ayr Mechanics' Museum. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

Fig. 3 shows the handle of the same, or of a similar jug, and Fig. 4 the spout formed into a head, which seems to have been bearded and notched, as in Fig. 1, though but little of the beard remains.

Fig. 5 is apparently a portion of the lower part of some shallow vessel, the sides and bottom of which were inclined at an angle of about 160° . This vessel had likewise been covered with a green glaze. There are also among the wreck of the Museum portions of another similar vessel that had been ornamented round the bottom with thumb-like markings like those as seen in the last Figure.

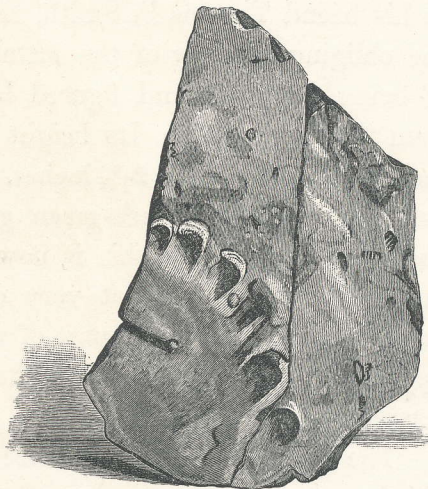


FIG. 5.—Fragment of a Fictile Vessel, formerly in the Ayr Mechanics' Museum. Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

Fig. 6 shows a small-sized but tastefully-shaped jug. All we know of its history is told in the following extract from the last *Statistical Account* of the Parish of Ayr:—"We have seen a very antique Tuscan-shaped pitcher, in possession of a gentleman in Ayr, that was found many years ago in the Townhead Quarry, thirty or forty feet under the present surface of the ground, along with a kettle that has since been lost.

What is somewhat remarkable, the pitcher, when found, was filled with sea-shells, and has the appearance of having been glazed, which has been thought

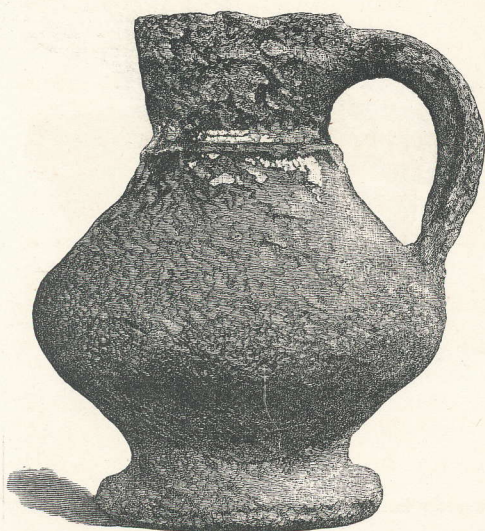


FIG. 6.—Jug found in the Townhead Quarry, Ayr.
Scale $\frac{1}{2}$.

to militate against its claims to a Roman origin. We believe, however, it has been pretty clearly ascertained that the Romans were well acquainted with the art of glazing. The above quarry lies along the line, as we have said, in which the old Roman road must have passed, and a relic of this kind, so far underground, unless it had been placed there by some contingency beyond the usual course of affairs, carries along with it some plausible reasons for believing it of *ancient* manufacture.”¹

On enquiry it was ascertained that the gentleman referred to was the late James Morris, Esq., who, subsequent to the date at which the notice was written (1837), had presented the jug to his friend Thomas F. Smith, Esq., the present Provost of Dumfries. By the obliging courtesy of the latter it was forwarded to Ayr for the purpose of being described and figured here. A very good idea of it can be got from the illustration. Its height is $5\frac{3}{10}$ inches ; diameter at the mouth 2 inches and at the base $2\frac{9}{10}$ inches. The surface had been once quite smooth, and covered with a dark-green glaze ; but, except a few small patches on the neck and handle, this is now all worn off. The upper surface of the latter is broadly but not very deeply grooved, and the vessel had been surrounded at the lower part of the neck by a narrow band. Its present appearance gives evidence that its whole surface has been subjected to some corroding influence.

The Townhead Quarry, where this jug was found, was long one of the chief sources of the supply of building materials for the town of Ayr, but was filled up about 1839, on the formation of the present railway station, which stands on its site.

JAMES MACDONALD.

Ayr, May 1878.

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