

## VII.

NOTICES OF CISTS DISCOVERED IN A CAIRN AT CAIRNHILL, PARISH OF MONQUHITTER, ABERDEENSHIRE, AND AT DOUNE, PERTHSHIRE. BY JOSEPH ANDERSON, LL.D., ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND KEEPER OF THE MUSEUM.

In the beginning of May 1894 I received information from Rev. John Milne, LL.D., King Edward, Aberdeenshire, of a very remarkable discovery of objects which he had just inspected. The site on which the objects were found is marked "Cairn" on the O. M. (six inch scale, Aberdeenshire, No. xi.), and is about two hundred yards to the north-west of the steading of the farm of Cairnhill, parish of Monquhitter, the property of Mr William Hannay and occupied by Mr William Norrie, to whose judicious care we owe the preservation of the objects, while the description of the circumstances in which they were found is due to the observations made and communicated to me at the time by Mr Norrie and Rev. Dr Milne.

The whole of the articles found having come into possession of the Crown, a certain number of them were selected to be retained for the National Museum, the usual compensation being paid to the finders, while the others were returned to Mr Norrie, who had petitioned to be allowed to retain that portion of the find which consisted of purely natural objects. Circumstances prevented an adequate description of this singular find from being given at the time; but having subsequently had an opportunity of seeing Mr Norrie and satisfying myself on various points in the evidence that had appeared obscure, I take the opportunity of putting the facts on record so far as it has been possible to ascertain them precisely.

The cairn, which is known in the district as Cairnmore or the More Cairn, is an oblong and somewhat irregularly shaped hummock of stones, measuring about ninety yards along the east side, sixty-eight yards along the west side, and with a nearly uniform width of about

thirty yards, except at the south end, where it tailed off to a point on the east side. Part of this irregular accumulation of stones may have been due to the deposit of gathered stones taken off the land in process of cultivation, but the nucleus was undoubtedly a prehistoric cairn, the outline of which was visible as a ring of stones, some of which were nearly three feet in height, enclosing a circular area of about twenty-eight yards in diameter.

In the carrying out of some improvements on the farm during the previous two years, including the making of a new road, a large portion of the cairn had been cleared off for the sake of the stones, and in 1894 the site was finally trenched over to clear out the remainder of the stones so as to convert it into arable land.

In the course of this final trenching there were discovered within the circular ring of stones that formed the basal boundary of the cairn, four separate constructions, with deposits as hereafter described.

In the centre of the cairn an approximately circular chamber was defined by rudely-built walling, which measured about ten feet by eight feet in diameter, and was about six feet in depth. No relics were observed in this, but the interior towards the bottom was full of a "very black sticky burnt-like stuff," which adhered to the stones and filled the crevices of the walling. No sign of a passage from the chamber to the outside of the cairn was observed.

A few yards to the south of this central pit or chamber, and a little towards the east side of the cairn, two cists were found placed in line with each other and about a yard apart, the line of their direction being nearly east and west. They were both about the same size, measuring inside about eighteen inches in length by about a foot in width and the same in depth. They were of the usual construction, the sides and ends of single rough slabs placed on edge, with a larger and thicker slab for a cover. The eastmost cist contained a burial after cremation, the calcined bones lying in a small heap on the floor of the cist and much mixed with ashes.

The westmost cist apparently contained no burial; at least no traces

of bones, burnt or unburnt, were observed. But both Dr Milne and Mr Norrie state unhesitatingly their belief that the whole of the remarkable collection of objects found as hereafter stated were contained in this cist, although it is admitted that about half of them were not recovered till the next day, and were not thus taken directly out of the cist. The manner of their discovery as stated by Mr Norrie was as follows:—

It was late in the afternoon and close on the end of their day's work when the cist was discovered by the two workmen removing the end stone of the cist, when a number of the articles were observed and gathered up from the earth about the opening so made. Mr Norrie was not present at this time, but on the following day he gathered up a number of the articles which had been spread about with the spade in trenching over the site of the cist, and subsequently he started to riddle the earth all round the spot, and found a good many more of the objects, till they numbered over sixty in all. Unfortunately there is now no possibility of distinguishing which of the objects were found on these several occasions. While there is therefore no positive evidence that all or any of the articles were actually derived from the interior of the cist, there can be no question that they were all either in it or placed in its immediate vicinity. They form a very curious collection, consisting of sixty-three different articles, a few only being products of human art, while the majority are natural objects, but of such diverse character and origin that it is plain that they could not have been deposited there by natural agency, but must have been collected from various quarters. There were thirty-one agates—pebbles of various sizes—water-rolled as if they had been collected from a sea-beach, two water-rolled pebbles of black flint, three water-worn nodules containing chalk fossils, three almost perfectly round water-rolled quartz pebbles about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter, four egg-shaped pebbles of jasper and serpentine, beautifully rounded and variegated in colour, a flat disc-shaped water-rolled pebble about an inch and a quarter in diameter, with two veins of white crossing each other at right angles on the grey ground of the stone, six pieces of rock-crystal not water-worn, and a water-rolled lump of pale-yellow amber 2 inches in diameter, much

roughened, and darkened to a reddish brown on the exterior surface. All these are of purely natural formation, but evidently selected and deposited here by human agency.

But along with these purely natural objects there are a number of artificial products which are no less singular in their diversity of character and the incongruous nature of their associations with each other and with the archæological circumstances of the deposit as a whole.

They consist of (1) a well-made fabricator of flint; (2) a leaf-shaped tool of greyish flint; (3) a small ring of jet; (4) two little balls of green glass ornamented with small spirals in white; (5) a large bead of variegated vitreous paste; (6) an intaglio of a dancing faun in sardonyx; (7) an uncut stone of three layers—white between an upper and under layer of black—shaped to an oval form with bevelled edge and the upper side and edges polished; and (8) a portion of a bracelet of vitreous paste with yellow stripes.

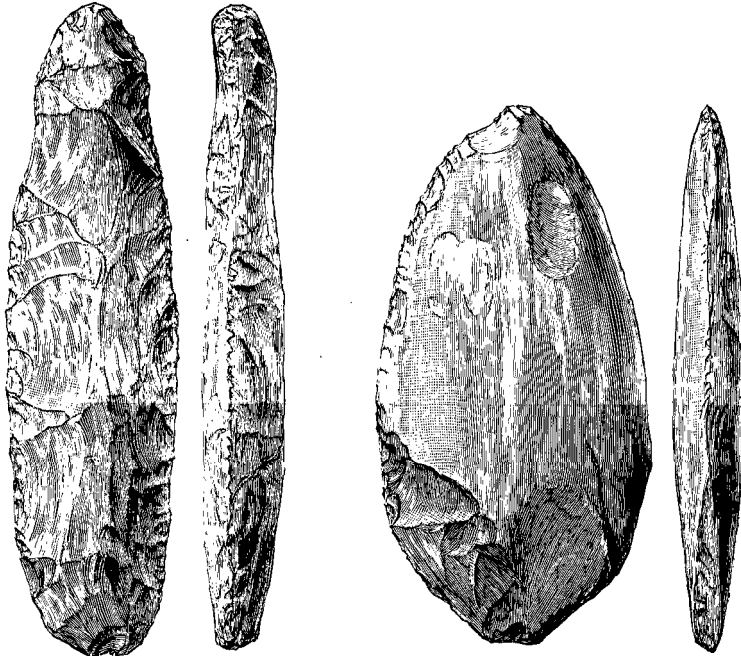
The fabricator of flint (fig. 1), is of the usual type, but flat on the under side, rising to an almost triangular section in the middle of its length, one end rather flattened and broadly rounded, the other end thicker and more pointed, and well worn down by use. It measures  $3\frac{3}{8}$  inches in length,  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch in greatest breadth, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in greatest thickness. It is carefully worked along both edges, and the flat underside is flaked along one edge, the rest being the flat surface of the flake from which it was made.

The leaf-shaped tool (fig. 2), is a piece of chalcedonic flint, 3 inches in length by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in greatest breadth, and  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch in greatest thickness, fashioned to a leaf-shape, and polished all over, with the edges ground on both sides to a moderate sharpness.

The ring of jet (fig. 3), is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter, the opening barely  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch in diameter, and the body of the ring about  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch in diameter, the section slightly oval and the surface finely polished.

The two balls of green glass (figs. 4 and 5), which are about the size of small marbles, one being  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch and the other  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch in diameter, have

each a row of spirals inlaid in white round the middle, the larger one having six spirals in the row and four more in each hemisphere, and the smaller having only four spirals in the row and one more in the centre of one hemisphere, the other hemisphere having none.



Figs. 1 and 2. Fabricator and oval tool of flint, from the Cairn at Cairnhill, Monquhitter. (Actual size.)

The large bead of vitreous paste (fig. 6), which is in shape nearly three-fourths of a flattened sphere  $2\frac{3}{8}$  inches in its longer and  $1\frac{7}{8}$  inch in its shorter diameter, and  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inch in thickness, was unfortunately shattered to pieces by a stroke of the pick, and a number of the pieces were not recovered. Enough remains, however, to show the form and character of the object. It has one flat edge, answering to the section which would

be produced by cutting a fourth off one side of the laterally compressed sphere. The other sides are more or less rounded. The perforation, which is not in the centre but nearer the flat edge than the rounded edge, is made at right angles to the compressed sides of the sphere and is half an inch in diameter. The colour is a reddish brown, variegated with whitish streaks, the core a dark blue, almost black, as shown in the section, and the surface layer with the variegated streaks is fully  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch in thickness.

The intaglio in sardonyx (fig. 7), is an oval measuring  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch by  $1\frac{3}{8}$  inch in diameter and composed of two layers, the under layer translucent and of a brownish hue; the upper layer, left only as a rounded moulding round the field of the intaglio, is a pale blue. The figure in the centre of the field is rather more than  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch in height, and beautifully cut, the intaglio being more highly polished than the field. It is the figure of a youthful Faun, nude, in an erect attitude, and poised upon the forepart of the left foot, with the right leg from the knee raised to a horizontal position,<sup>1</sup> the back slightly bent and the head thrown backwards, both arms extended. Over the right arm hangs a panther's skin with the fore paws dangling below the head; the left hand holds a thyrsus, with a conical head and a fillet of two streamers.

The uncut stone (fig. 8), is oval in shape,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  by  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch on the under side, with a bevelled edge which brings the upper face of the stone to an oval of  $\frac{7}{8}$  by  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch. The whole thickness is less than half an inch, and is composed of three layers, black above and below, and white between. The under black layer is nearly  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in thickness, and the white and black layers above it each about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch in thickness. The upper face and the bevelled edge are well polished, the under side rough, showing the vesicular structure of the lava and one or two small included grains of quartz. In one place where there is a slight fracture of the edge the structure of the lower layer resembles that of obsidian.

The portion of a bracelet of vitreous paste (fig. 9), is  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inch in length

<sup>1</sup> Montfaucon figures a gem precisely similar to this in the Brandebourg cabinet.—*Antiquity Explained*, vol. i. pl. lxxxii. King shows a gem with a Bacchante in the same conventional attitude.—*Handbook of Engraved Gems*, pl. lxi.



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 9.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 6.

Figs. 3-9, found in the Cairn at Cairnhill, Mouquibitter. (Actual size.)

and must have formed a circle of three inches in diameter internally. The interior surface of the bracelet is flat, the thickness half an inch, the exterior convex and ornamented with three broad bands of yellow crossing the convexity with a slight twist, and between them three narrow bands each composed of a cord of yellow and pale blue glass threads spirally twisted. The most peculiar feature of this fragment of a bracelet is that the surface, and especially the two broken ends, are greatly waterworn, as if it had been long exposed in the bed of a brook or washed about among the pebbles on a sea-beach.

About three yards to the south of these two cists, and about the same distance within the circular ring of stones that formed the basal boundary of the cairn, was found an oblong pit or grave, measuring about 6 feet in length,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet in breadth and 4 feet in depth. It was excavated in the subsoil, which is a hard coarse clay and contained a blackish deposit of ashes and what looked like extremely small fragments of bones presumably burnt. Among this black deposit there were observed a few fragments of a clay urn (fig. 10), of somewhat unusual character. Six of these fragments have been preserved, one showing part of the flat bottom, another part of the shoulder, and a third a small part of the slightly everted lip, which has on the inside bevel an ornamentation of zig-zag markings impressed into the clay. There are two lines of similar markings running horizontally round the vessel a quarter of an inch apart, the upper line being half an inch below the brim. As only two of the pieces join, it is impossible to say what was the height of the lip of the vessel above the shoulder, but from what remains it seems to have been straight and surrounded by horizontal rows of markings similar to those underneath the brim. Two of these rows remain on the piece that shows the shoulder, one at the insertion of the straight piece into the shoulder, and the other a quarter of an inch above it. Immediately beneath the shoulder are two horizontal lines impressed in the same way and nearly a quarter of an inch apart, and from the lower of these to a similar double line of markings surrounding the bottom of the vessel there are a series of double lines meeting each other obliquely so as to form a series of triangles round the



basal portion of the vessel, which has thus the whole exterior ornamented from the bottom to the brim.

But the most interesting feature of the urn is disclosed by a careful examination of the portion (fig. 11), which was at first considered to be part of a second urn from the same grave. It is slightly darker in colour than the other five pieces of the urn ; but a close examination shows that the paste is of exactly the same nature in all the

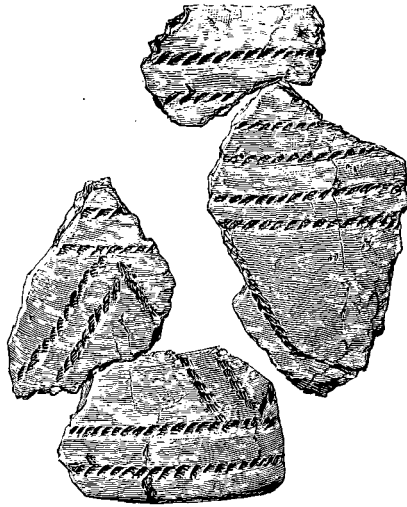


Fig. 10. Fragments of the Urn from the pit in the subsoil. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ .)

pieces, with an exceedingly coarse interior largely composed of broken stones, while the skin is a smooth and well-tempered clay. The form of the fragment is quite unusual. It is curved longitudinally, and is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch in width and about the same in length at one side, the other broken short, leaving only  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch of the length of its margin. The special peculiarity of the fragment is that it has a margin at both sides, both margins curving in the direction of its length. It cannot therefore be

any part of the body of the urn, but must be regarded as a broken portion of a flat loop-handle attached to one side of the upper part of the vessel. It is plain on the inner side of the curve, but the outside is moulded with a bold mid-rib and two side mouldings. The surface is also decorated by a double line of impressed markings in zigzags running lengthwise on either side of the mid-rib. The character of these markings is similar to that of the markings on the body of the vessel. The urn was therefore one of the type which has a bulging lower part with a decided curvature from the shoulder to the base, the shoulder

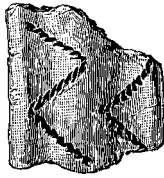


Fig. 11. Fragment of loop-handle of Urn from the pit in the subsoil. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ .)



Fig. 12. Urn with loop-handle from Balmuick, Comrie. ( $\frac{1}{2}$ .)

sharply defined above, and the lip slanting considerably outwards above the shoulder. Its chief peculiarity, however, was the loop-handle, and although there is no evidence to show how it was attached, it may be concluded from the analogy of the loop-handled urn found at Balmuick, Comrie (here represented in fig. 12), and the similarly loop-handled urns found at March, Cambridgeshire, and Pickering, Yorkshire,<sup>1</sup> that the loop was attached from the neck to the shoulder of the vessel. It is to be regretted that such an interesting and peculiar urn was not recovered in better preservation.

<sup>1</sup> Both figured in *Archæologia*, vol. xliii. p. 397.

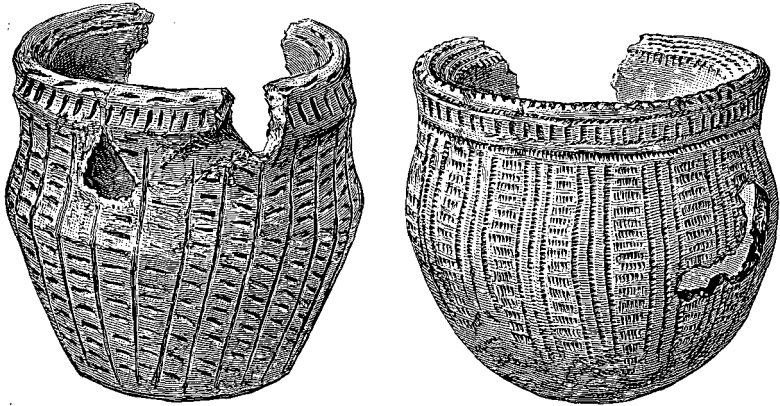
## NOTICE OF THE DISCOVERY OF CISTS AND URNS AT DOUNE.

Having received information of this discovery from the Countess of Moray in June last (1901), I went to Doune and was kindly met by the Earl and Countess of Moray, Rev. J. S. M'Kay, Provost of the Burgh, Dr T. Andrew, and Mr Samuel Smith, Clerk of Works, who uncovered the cists for inspection and explained the circumstances of their discovery. In making a deviation road on the north side of the railway at Doune Station, two cists had been discovered near each other in the south side of the excavation and scarcely eighteen inches under the surface. They were constructed in the usual way of rough slabs for the sides and ends and larger covering slabs. The first was two feet six inches in length internally, by about seventeen inches in width and twenty inches in depth. The second, which was only three feet distant from the first, was twenty-six inches in length internally, and about the same width and depth as the first. The bottoms of both showed traces of ashes and a slight intermixture of burnt bones, but no remains of urns or any other relics of an artificial nature were observed.

Subsequently, in the track of the new road, at a distance of eight yards to the north-west of the first cist, and at a depth of rather more than six feet from the original surface, another cist was discovered by its covering stones giving way under the wheel of a cart which was passing over it. It differed from the others in being considerably larger, and also in being constructed with built sides and ends, the upper part of the sides converging inwards by the overlapping of the stones in the higher courses to carry the covering slabs, which were of comparatively small size. The dimensions of the cist internally at the level of the floor were four feet four inches in length, one foot eight inches in breadth, and one foot eight inches in depth. The floor of the cist contained a considerable quantity of ashes and burnt bones, and near the opposite ends of the cist were found the remains of two urns, broken into small fragments by the collapse of the roof and upper part of the sides under the cart wheel. The fragments were, however, collected and preserved by Mr

Smith, from whom I received them, and the urns have been so far as possible reconstructed.

Urn No. 1 is of the usual type of the so-called "food-vessel,"  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches in height by 5 inches in diameter at the mouth, the lip slightly bevelled inward, and the whole exterior surface ornamented. The ornamentation consists entirely of lines impressed into the soft clay with what seems to have been the roughly broken end of a small twig about  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch in diameter. On the bevel of the lip there are two parallel lines of short scorings going completely round the upper surface. On the



Figs. 1 and 2. Urns (No. 1 and No. 2) found in a cist at Doune.

exterior surface there is a kind of slightly concave collar half an inch in width immediately under the brim, which is ornamented with short perpendicular indentations about a quarter of an inch apart. Underneath the collar the vessel expands slightly to the shoulder and then contracts to a flattened base of three inches in diameter. The part above the shoulder is slightly concave externally, but the scheme of decoration above and below the shoulder is the same, consisting of a series of short impressed lines scarcely half an inch in length ranged round the circumference in horizontal rows about a quarter of an inch apart, and crossed

perpendicularly by lines about half an inch apart, not impressed, but scored into the clay. The perpendicular lines above the shoulder are more divergent than those below the shoulder, which converge towards the bottom in consequence of the tapering form of the lower part of the vessel. The paste is coarse, and mixed with small stones; the wall of the vessel is about a quarter of an inch thick, and the colour a reddish brown on both the exterior and interior surfaces, but quite black in the fractures exposing a section of its thickness.

Urn No. 2 is of the same wide-mouthed, thick-lipped form of the so-called food vessel type, 5 inches high and  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter at the mouth. The lip is bevelled inwards, and the general shape of the vessel somewhat resembles that of No. 1, except in the lower part, which, instead of tapering to a flat bottom, narrows from the shoulder in a much more gradual curvature to the bottom. The ornamentation also is much more elaborate, though partaking of the same general character, inasmuch as it is a scheme of impressed markings, in bands arranged alternately in vertical and horizontal directions, and covering the whole exterior surface of the vessel. On the bevel of the rim is a horizontal band of three lines of impressed markings, surmounted on the upper verge of the rim by a row of shallow oval impressions less than  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch apart. Under this there is a horizontal band of impressed markings as with the teeth of a comb, and below that the general scheme of ornament is carried out in alternate bands of about half an inch in width, running vertically from collar to base. The one set of these bands consists of three parallel rows of impressions of about  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch in width, and  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch apart, which seem to have been produced in the surface of the soft clay by a comb-like instrument, while the other set of bands has been produced by marking the spaces between the triple bands in the same way with a similar instrument, but placing the lines horizontally and closer together.

The special peculiarity of this urn, however, is, that the form of its under part is so suggestive of its having had a rounded bottom. The interior surface of the bottom is nearly complete and shows a well-

rounded contour, but unfortunately the exterior surface has scaled off so completely that it is impossible to affirm that it may not have been merely rounded off to a narrow flattened base, as is frequently the case.

Round-bottomed urns have hitherto only been known in Scotland from Chambered Cairns, and they are usually of a different make, being composed of a dark hard-baked paste, quite unlike the light reddish or reddish-brown paste of coarser and looser texture which is characteristic of the urns from cists which are classed as of the Bronze Age.

It is interesting to note that at the same meeting of the Society at which this urn was exhibited, another apparently round-bottomed urn of a similar reddish-brown paste, and of similar "food-vessel" type, was exhibited among a number of urns of the ordinary flat-bottomed shape from a cairn containing a central cist and several cremated burials with urns at various points around it, which had been excavated by Mr H. Scrimgeour-Wedderburn of Wedderburn in 1899.