

A BURIAL OF THE 'VIKING AGE' IN SKYE.

By T. C. LETHBRIDGE.

A large grass-grown cairn on the foreshore at Tote, Skeabost, in Skye, was opened in the autumn of 1922. The cairn was about 40 ft. in diameter and about 8 ft. high. Originally, however, it had been at least 2 ft. higher. There was a cup-shaped depression on the top which may have been caused either by the removal of stones to build a rough wall not far distant, or by the burial of the Viking who formed the secondary interment.

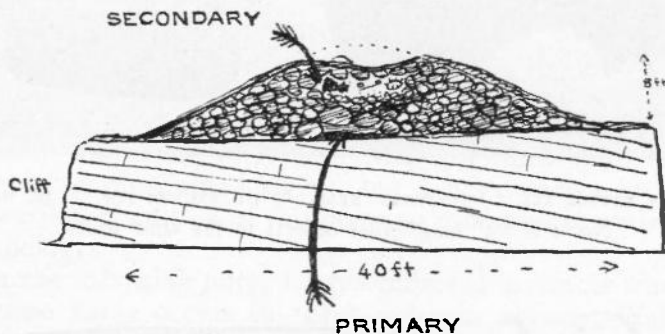


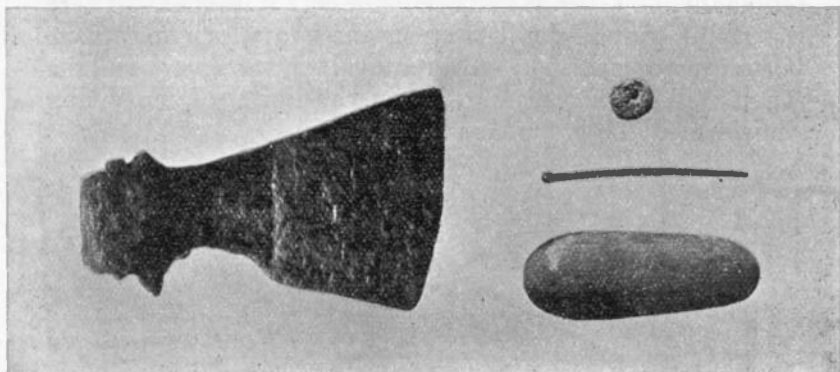
FIG. I. SKEABOST : SECTION OF CAIRN, SHOWING RELATIVE POSITIONS OF VIKING AND PRIMARY BURIALS.

On the ground level in the centre were several large boulders which formed a rude cist. This cist contained nothing but upwards of 150 flint and other flakes and two rude scrapers. There was no trace of bone, although charcoal was abundant. No objects of bronze or pottery were contained in the cist. Although no actual human bones were found, it seems probable that here was the primary interment and the cause of the construction of the cairn.

The secondary interment, which was also central, was about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ft. below the surface of the depression on top of the cairn; it was composed of fine sand in which were

a few fragments of charred bone and the end of a human femur. There was no trace of a cist.

Associated with the secondary interment were numerous articles of iron : (1) a heavy iron battle-axe (weighing 2 lb. 11 oz.) of Scandinavian type,¹ a portion of the haft of which is still in the head. (2) Near the axe-head was found a hone of close-grained sandstone. (3) A piece of wood 2 in. long



I. IRON BATTLE AXE. II. IVORY BEAD. III. BRONZE PIN. IV. HONE.

No. I is 7'3" long, other objects to the same scale.



BEAD ($\frac{1}{2}$).



BRONZE PIN ($\frac{1}{2}$).

of unknown use, with a slip of rusty iron inset along one side and several smaller fragments of iron. (4) A bronze pin with a loop head, not unlike a common Bronze Age type found in the Swiss lakes. On this pin was a small piece of leather which crumbled to powder. Very close to the pin was (5) an ivory bead, roughly circular in shape, the hole being eccentric. Lastly (6) there was a quantity of rusted pieces of iron attached to fragments of wood; the whole probably representing the warrior's shield.

¹ See Du Chailu, *The Viking Age*, fig. 166.