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LLANGYNOG, BRECONSHIRE, 1922.



[P. B. Aberly, phot.]

LLANDDEWIRCWM, BRECONSHIRE, 1915.

THE CIRCLE AND THE CROSS.

By A. HADRIAN ALLCROFT, M.A.

FOREWORD.

The following pages are the outcome of the attempt to solve the problem of the true derivation of the word *church*. It is as odd as it is true that this problem should still await solution, and that the theory advanced by the Saxon writer Walafrid Strabo¹ (*obiit* 849) that the word represents the Greek *κυριακόν*, though admitted to be unsatisfactory, should still hold the field. Even the editors of the *New English Dictionary* admit that it holds only until a better be forthcoming.² Clearly therefore there is room for further enquiry, and no one will anticipate that it will prove a short and easy task to dethrone a theory which has reigned without serious challenge for close upon eleven centuries.

CHAPTER I.

THE CIRCULAR CHURCHYARD.

The Circular Churchyard a neglected fact—Probably the original form—Disguised by encroachment and enlargement—Influence of (a) Latin Christianity; (b) growth of population—Earlier attempts to explain the Circular Garth—Not due to pre-existing roads—Nor to moats—Nor to pre-Christian earthworks—The Circular Plan an inherited tradition—Derived from the Round Barrow—Hence the mounded elevation also—Gradual disappearance of these features—Possible connexion of the Circular Garth and the word ‘Church.’

No one will dispute that the ground upon which stands a sacred building must be older than such building.

¹ *De Rebus Ecclesiasticis*, pt. i, 7 (Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, nos. cxiii, cxiv).

² *N.E.D.* s.v. CHURCH.

As the *τέμενος* antedates the *ναός* and the *templum* antedates the *aedes*, so must the churchyard, its name notwithstanding, antedate the church. Yet save that Elias Owen briefly noticed¹ the circular plan of one or two Welsh churchyards and as briefly sought to find a reason for it, the subject appears to have been wholly ignored. 'The occurrence of such churchyards in England does not seem to have been studied' wrote Walter Johnson in 1912,² and the sentence might have been written to-day.

It will be understood that by a 'circular' churchyard is not meant such an exact circle as a modern surveyor would lay out. There is indeed quite a large number of such exactly circular garths to be found within the confines of the British Isles, others again which are exactly oval or elliptical, or very nearly so. But vastly more common are those of a plan which, though not geometrically regular, was yet unquestionably intended to be circular by those who first constructed them. Their irregularity may sometimes be original, due to some accident of topography ; in far the greater number of cases it is not original, but the result of subsequent alterations. With those other very numerous cases where there is evidence, documentary or otherwise, that no circularity was intended, these chapters are not concerned : they are probably without exception creations of late date, and from the point of view of this enquiry anything subsequent to the tenth century is late. It will be shown in the sequel that throughout the centuries preceding that date the normal form of the Christian burial-ground throughout the British Isles was circular or sub-circular ; that the old churchyards of this form which still subsist are not mere eccentricities, but genuine survivals from the earlier days of British Christianity ; and that even in those remote days the fashion of a graveyard was already an immemorial tradition, inherited indeed from prehistoric times. The churchyard in fact goes back as it were to the Eocene of history, whereas of all the multitude of those grey and time-worn churches which are the peculiar grace and interest of this England,

¹ *Reliquary* 1895, p. 136 ; *ibid.* 1896, p. 154 ; Andrews' *Antiquities and Curiosities of the Church* (1897), pp. 229-235.

² *Byways of English Archaeology*, p. 99.

not the oldest goes back beyond a date which by comparison may be called Pliocene.

The precise position of the structural church in relation to the surrounding graveyard is immaterial. Of English churches at any rate the vast majority have been so often altered, enlarged, or entirely re-built, that the existing edifice cannot possibly stand in the same relation to its precinct as did the original building, even if the precinct itself has not also been altered. An original church of any date before 1000 standing within an original garth, is probably not to be discovered. Thus both factors in the problem—the church and the precinct—are alike extremely variable. Of the two the churchyard is the less likely to be a constant factor. Builders and surveyors have for so many centuries been bred up to feel that walls and fences should rightfully follow right lines, that they have again and again interfered to alter the original plan of the precinct, without any suspicion that in so doing they were destroying the evidence of centuries. As modern fields are distinguished by their severely rectangular forms, so ancient enclosures are betrayed by their less rectilinear design; and if that design shows anything like circularity, it may be taken—in default of very good reason to the contrary—as proof that the enclosure belongs to a date when the strictly rectangular methods of this age were not yet inveterated. Nor must it be thought that the *religio loci* was always the safeguard which now it mostly is, and which it certainly always was in the earliest days. Between those two terminals lie all the centuries in which, not sentiment, but hedge and wall and fence were literally all that demarcated the sacred from the profane; and these were shifted and re-shifted at the will of parson and squire, lord of the manor and churchwarden. There are to-day in these islands hundreds of ancient graveyards which have suffered partial secularisation, whether to provide some adjacent householder with a few more rods of ground, to furnish space for a new rectory or vicarage-house, to bring the tiresome circular line of the original precinct into better accord with the rectangularity of the surrounding enclosures, or for any one of twenty other reasons more or less sufficient. Roads have been driven straight through ‘God’s acre,’ so that there may remain

on either side the segment of a circle, the one still sacred ground and including the church itself, the other desecrated.¹ Or again, when the Enclosure acts furnished excuse, the road which had erstwhile wound reverently outside the precinct has been straightened, perhaps even widened, at the expense of the graveyard. Doubtless in the case of many a country village excuse was to be found in the shrinkage of the population, which no longer required so large a space for the burial of its dead. In the case of towns this excuse could not be urged, yet it is in the towns that such encroachment has most frequently occurred. Every one can recall instances of churches, ancient and beautiful, which to-day stand so closely beset by the surrounding buildings that it is impossible to obtain a view-point which may show to proper advantage, not their entirety indeed, but even part only of their graceful proportions; while of their once spacious graveyards there remains nothing at all, unless it be a few unregarded tombstones that serve to pave the churchgoer's path to the door.

On the other hand enlargement has done quite as much to alter the original design. Within towns an understandable land-hunger has commonly prevented this in any form, but in the villages it has had freer scope; and as such additions to the original graveyard date almost wholly from a period when all memory of the significance of the circular plan was lost, they are naturally more or less rectangular. And a very small alteration will wholly obliterate most of the traces of circularity. It would seem at one period to have been quite usual for parson or squire to annex a portion of the precinct, removing its ancient rounded boundary and substituting a rectilinear wall, and by way of compensation perhaps adding an equivalent area on the opposite side. This new annexe being of course likewise rectilinear, the double alteration forthwith changed the original circle into something almost exactly rectangular. Where there was simply enlargement without encroachment, the result is very commonly a graveyard which has the plan of a semi-circle inscribed upon one side of a rectilinear figure. In

¹ This has been done at Newchurch, Carm., since the making of the Tithe map in 1846.

such cases the original form is sometimes recoverable, if not from such documentary evidence as that of the Tithe map or some older plan, from faint indications in the soil along the line of the original boundary, or from the survival of old trees which once grew along that boundary, or from the different level of the newer annexe. In too many cases, however, every trace of the earlier design has vanished.

The prime agents in destroying the circular precinct have been firstly the triumph of Latin Christianity, and secondly prosperity and consequent progress. Latin

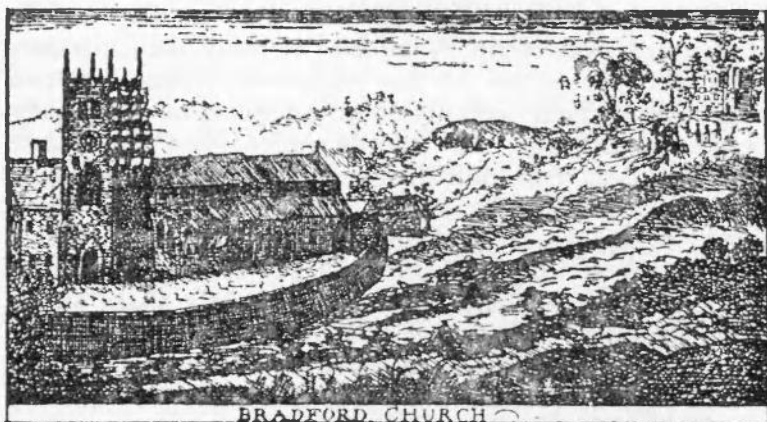


FIG. 1. PARISH CHURCH BRADFORD, YORKS.

(From *The Old History of Bradford*. 1776.)

Christianity made little of the burial-ground, very much of the church. Prosperity reacted in two chief ways. In the first place the piety of a prosperous community naturally sought expression in enlarging or reconstructing its place of worship. As the original churchyard was commonly of small area, frequently very small, the church came at last to occupy so large a share of the garth that it was necessary to enlarge the latter also; and this usually occurring at a date when all knowledge of the significance of the circular form was lost, the enlargement was almost always of rectilineal plan. At the same time the repeated reconstruction of the fabric entailed other interference with the original features of the precinct, and what had

been recognisably mounded up has gradually lost all or most of its mounded form, one generation of builders after another having levelled always a larger portion of it for their new foundations. In the second place the growth of the population in progressive communities led to the need of further space for burials, and again the original circular area was first distorted, then destroyed, by the necessary enlargements. It follows that the circular churchyard is now to be found most frequently in those parts of the country which have been less progressive ; and these happen to be mostly the Celtic districts, *i.e.* Cornwall, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

Nevertheless the fact that the plan of the earliest churchyards was originally circular is easily demonstrable. How is their shape to be explained ? One or two suggestions which have been advanced must be briefly examined, although they mostly suffer from the defect that they deal with individual cases only, those who made them not realising that an explanation was needed which should be of general application.

The suggestion most usually made is that a circular churchyard assumed that shape because of the shape of the roads about it. That graveyards owe something of their shape to pre-existing roads may be true of those consecrated within the last few centuries, but can scarcely be true of genuinely old examples which date back to a time when roads other than the derelict survivals of the Roman system scarcely existed. Roman roads, however, with the rarest exceptions avoid those small sinuosities which envelop many old graveyards ; they intersect mostly at abrupt angles, and a graveyard of which the plan was determined by the lines of Roman roads could so far have had rectilinear bounds only. The so-called roads of the thousand years following the departure of the Romans were for the most part mere trails, demarcated by no very fixed boundaries, and winding in a fashion as abhorrent to the modern as it was to the Roman engineer ; but inasmuch as the object of a road is to get there, and to get there by the most convenient way, it is clear that those perplexing deviations must have been due to the presence of obstacles which prevented a more direct course. Rivers and smaller streams, pools, boggy or broken ground, trees

and rocks and abrupt descents, are all admittedly reason enough for the vagaries of an old roadway. So too is the presence of a barrow or other artificial mound. It will be shown that the Christian graveyard was itself originally a barrow, and to argue that it was round because the winding roadway made it so, is as if one should maintain that the shape of Silbury Hill was determined by the great Roman road beside it, or that the multiplex series of dykes which envelop certain barrows on the Yorkshire wolds¹ were themselves the cause of the formation of the barrows. The more reasonable view is that old roads and lanes wind about old churchyards because the latter were there first, so many obstacles in the way of a more direct course. The feeling which until comparatively recent years forbade any interference with God's acre is precisely the same as that which led the peoples of an unknown date to respect the resting-places of the dead upon the Yorkshire hills, led the Romano-Briton to spare an unknown something on the site of Church Barrow in Cranborne Chase,² and led even the *terrarum domini* themselves and their *curatores viarum* to leave intact Silbury Hill. Indeed the presence of a roadway, so far from destroying, has in recent years prevented the disfigurement of many a circular churchyard, for when the need arose of enlarging the precinct, this could not be done where a roadway existed, and so far therefore the original form has remained unaltered. Where no road was in question, additions might be made to any extent, and the original plan destroyed.

Elias Owen,³ remarking that the circular churchyards of his acquaintance were 'usually encompassed by a road for which there is no obvious requirement,' surmised that the road represents an ancient rampart separating the churchyard from common ground. It will be shown presently that such a rampart was in fact a feature of very many early churchyards, and the reason why it took the circular form will also be explained. Owen leaves unexplained the circular shape, and his theory does not

¹ Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches*, pp. 365-380, 134.

² Pitt-Rivers, *Excavations in Cranborne Chase*, i, pp. 24, 124.

³ In Andrews' *Antiquities and Curiosities of the Church* (1897), pp. 229-235.

account for the many instances where, though no surrounding road exists or seemingly has ever existed, and though there is no rampart discernible or presumptive, the precinct is still circular.

Arguing from the single case of the churchyard of Efenechtyd in Denbighshire, the same writer suggested that here the encircling road was originally a moat containing water. There are scores of similar circular graveyards so situated that water can never have stood within any ditch or moat surrounding them, and again there is no explanation why the presumed moated area should be circular rather than of any other shape.

Walter Johnson¹ hazards the surmise that in these



FIG. 2. WHITTINGHAM CHURCH BEFORE 1840.

(From D. D. Dixon's *Whittingham Vale*).

circular ramparted churchyards 'we may have small ringworks belonging to the pre-Christian period, though not necessarily of a defensive character.' This comes near the truth in a limited number of cases. It can be shown that some circular churchyards actually do occupy an-historic ringworks; but the number of cases in which we have no evidence at all for any such origin is vastly greater, and on the other hand the number of those in which the pre-existing ringwork can reasonably be thought to have been also pre-Christian is, in England particularly, very limited. In a very large number of cases the topography

¹ *Byways*, p. 99.

is such as to exclude entirely the theory that the sites had once been those of secular fortresses.

Circular graveyards situated upon knolls or hill-tops of more or less circular contour might very well be due to the form of the hill, although, where an ancient site is in question, the writer would not allow that to be the correct explanation, but would rather maintain that the site was selected because, amongst other reasons, it was naturally more or less circular. In other words it is the circularity of the position which explains the choice of that position, rather than *vice versa*. But no such reason can be advanced to explain the many cases of circular graveyards which lie upon ground to all intents level or featureless. How are we to account for the laying out of circular churchyards in such localities? Caprice can hardly be urged, for in the far-away times with which we are concerned caprice must always have been a dubious element in connexion with matters so momentous. Even in modern times it is rare in England to find a case of the kind,¹ albeit there are many cases where a churchyard previously rectangular has been altered to a circular or oval figure to form the central feature of some open space or a road-centre within a town. But the occurrence of the circular plan in almost every part of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and in places where no excuse can be found in the lie of the ground or otherwise, points not to caprice but to custom, not to the exception but to the rule. The form was awkward, utterly at variance with all the customary practices connected with the division and enclosure of land for 1500 years in England,² giving rise to numberless awkward forms in the fields and the holdings adjoining. Yet the evidence proves that for long centuries this form and no other was the rule. Why?

¹ There is an example in the churchyard of St. Edmund, Vobster, Somerset, which dates only from 1849. It stands upon a knoll, and the yard is perfectly circular. In Wales, however, there appears still to survive a predilection for churchyards without angular corners: if the circumstances would otherwise require such an angle, the apex is usually rounded off. The churchyard of Builth Road (Cwmbach Llechrhyd), made only in 1889, takes the plan of an incipient quatrefoil or double

ancile, although there existed no recognisable reason for the fact. Such a case proves clearly that, while the tradition still exists as a force, its origin and significance are alike forgotten.

² The circular enclosure was the Celtic way. It ceased therefore so far as concerned secular matters, when the Roman came in. It was unknown in the Saxon's partition of land, excepting in this matter of his graveyards.

The answer is, because within circular precincts had been buried the dead of uncounted centuries before the introduction of Christianity. From the days of the arrival of the first Celtic people in Britain the dead were buried within the sign of the circle. The first Christian missionaries of the Scotie Church, accepting this as they accepted so many other basic facts of pagan life, made their own graveyards likewise circular; subsequently there were built churches within such circular precincts. Only the consecration was changed—in many cases one should perhaps rather say that the new consecration was charged upon the old, so that what had before been consecrated by the circle, thereafter bore also the further symbol of the cross which stood in every Christian burial-ground. The cross has triumphed and yet abides; the circle has been forgotten, but up and down the country it is still to be found in round barrows of every variety, in stone circles, in Irish *killeens*, and in the graveyards of many hundreds of our village churches.

Let it be assumed for the moment that the first Christian converts of these islands were buried, like their forbears for a thousand years, under barrows; that in course of time here and there one such barrow became the general burying-ground of a Christian community; and that finally there was built thereon a building which, through many vicissitudes of reconstruction and enlargement, came to be a parish church. What would be the probable outward semblance of the churchyard in such a case?

In the first place the churchyard, originally circular like any other Celtic barrow, would so remain unless deliberately altered by additions or otherwise.

In the second place the churchyard would show much the same section as a barrow: it would show either the familiar heave of the commoner 'bowl' or 'bell' barrow, or the level surface of the ring-barrow girt with its surrounding vallum.

In the third place the provision of a permanent fence about the graveyard would reduce it to the semblance of a sort of circular 'island,' with or without a revetment wall, standing considerably above the level of the surrounding soil, so that the pathway to the church would

require to be approached by steps, or to be sunk like a sloping holloway upward to the door.

These are precisely the features which characterise any churchyard of a sufficient age, where later alterations have not destroyed them. If the theory here advanced provides a natural and consistent explanation for the circular form, the humped elevation, and the raised 'island,' it is surely worth examination.

Those who have heretofore noticed the raised form of old churchyards have mostly accepted the explanation offered by William Cobbett¹ a hundred years ago, that it is the result of a vast number of interments. This explanation is utterly inadequate, for the human body in decay is reducible to but a handful of matter, and even if the bones, as happens in certain soils, defy decay, the residuary weight of matter is on the average but 10 lbs. Coffins need not be taken into account, because coffin-burial was rarely practised until quite recent years; and the same applies to vaults and brick-lined graves. The average weight of a cubic yard of soil is one ton, or the weight of some fifteen living adults of average proportions, and it is a small churchyard which measures only 50 yards across. If a circular churchyard of that size be raised as much as 6 feet above the surrounding soil, it means that the mound contains some 3,750 cubic yards of material, and the same number of tons in weight, that is, the weight of 56,250 average adults, male and female; and if we assume the graveyard to have been in use for the fullest possible span of some 1300 years, it means that, *had their bodies suffered no decay*, there would have been demanded the deaths of more than forty adults every year to raise the mound. There are few villages to-day which could stand so great a drain upon their population; there could have been few towns to do so in days when the whole population of the British Isles was less than three millions. It was little more than that in the sixteenth century, and it cannot have been much greater at any earlier period since Christianity came hither. If churchyards were to be built up by this means, Christianity must have buried the entire population within fifty years!

¹ *Rural Rides* (1853), p. 330, *Petersfield to Kensington* (12 Nov. 1825).

Others have calculated that the soil of churchyards rises—it is not explained how—by 3 inches in a century. Assuming this to be correct, it follows that a churchyard which is raised as little as 5 ft. represents the growth of 2,000 years; which is some 700 years longer than Christianity has been here. It assumes also a density of population and a death-rate alike invariable, and common sense precludes any such assumptions. There are plenty of churchyards which are mounded nearer 10 ft. than 5 ft. in height, and how shall these be explained?—occurring,

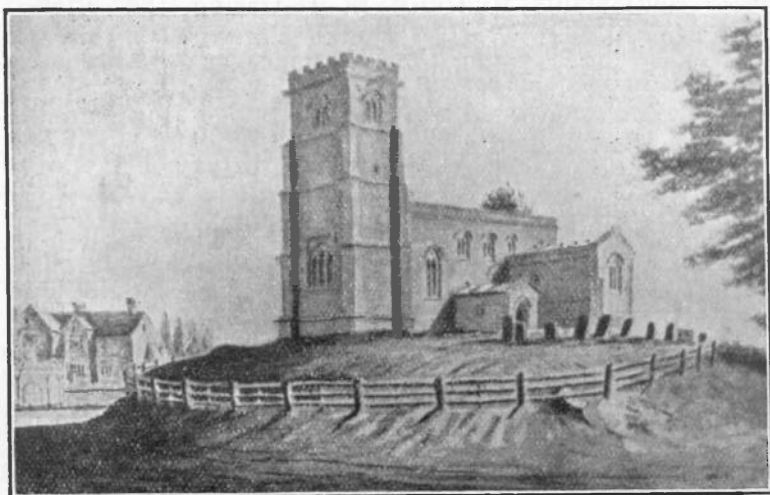


FIG. 3. WINWICK CHURCH, NEAR DAVENTRY, NORTHANTS.

(From a drawing by G. Clarke, *circa* 1840).

many of them, in remote parishes where nowadays the population is counted by 200 or 300, and there is no jot of evidence or any likelihood that it was ever much more numerous.

There are those who maintain that the constant breaking of the soil for new burials tends to raise the general level. But by breaking the soil, no matter how frequently, one adds nothing to it, and in a few years it settles back to its original level.

There is no explaining these mounded garths except as mounds purposely built up to serve their purpose, and

the sufficient proof of it is the fact that the floor of the church, albeit commonly sunk into the mass of the mound, is yet commonly several feet above the natural level of the soil surrounding the garth.

There is abundant evidence that, all edicts and injunctions notwithstanding, the fences of graveyards were constantly liable to be neglected, and this to such an extent as frequently to disappear entirely. In the course of centuries any barrow would waste considerably, and whenever it was decided to erect a fence about it or to reconstruct a fence which had decayed, there would be very considerable difficulty in re-tracing the original limits of the barrow. If a church had arisen within the area, it would be no longer possible without very great skill to demarcate it as a true circle. The work would be done largely by eye, and in such a matter the eye is a very unreliable guide. This explains why amongst garths which are yet circular many, when tested by the surveyor's tape, are found to be very considerably out of the true circle; and the very large number of decidedly oval garths, as for example in Cornwall, may perhaps be due to taking the radial measures, not from the actual centre (which was inaccessible), but from the walls of the building which then stood upon the centre. Moreover, the whole significance of the circle becoming forgotten, as the years went on there would be less and less care employed in any repairs from time to time needed to the fence. The modern workman, when ordered to rebuild a circular wall, prefers to do it in rectilineal segments, and so helps to blur the original figure. If there had grown up a considerable village in the vicinity, the need for ampler burial space would again tend to further deviation from the exact limits of the original barrow.

The favourite form of fence was a revetment wall of dry stone. It was more durable than any hedge, it required less upkeep, and it was better calculated to keep out cattle. When the time came for providing such a revetment, the outer edge of the now greatly spread barrow was cut steeply back and faced with a dry stone wall. This explains why the surface of an ancient churchyard is commonly flush with the surrounding wall. It explains also how there might arise, in the case of a church-

yard occupying the summit of a rounded hill, features which have been mistaken for the traces of old entrenchments about the churchyard. The dry-built wall was liable to constant falls, and after every such fall there was likely to be yet further modification of the original line, for with the wall would fall also more or less of the mounded soil within. The barrow stood the best chance of preserving its original plan if it were one or other of the 'ring' varieties, which, as will be shown, were the ultimate form in the evolution of the barrow, and the form in fashion in the more advanced parts of the British Isles at the time when Christianity came permanently upon the scene. In not a few circular churchyards there remain the visible traces of the surrounding ring-wall, commonly mistaken for that of a secular 'camp.'

So far as the writer is aware the circular churchyard does not occur in any Christian area outside Europe. The circular *enceintes* of some of the churches of Southern Abyssinia¹ have an accidental resemblance only: they are obviously defensive in their origin and purpose, they are used as graveyards by exception only, and their plan would seem originally to have been determined by the circular church which they still occasionally surround. But the circular churchyards of Europe did not originate in any defensive purpose: they were above all else the burial-grounds of their communities, and they belong to a Christianity (Scotic) which knew nothing of any circular churches.

Within Europe the circular churchyard is to be found everywhere in the British Isles and the adjoining islands. It occurs not infrequently in the northern departments of France, in Holland and Frisia, in Scandinavia, in Switzerland, in Germany and in Hungary. But, so far as the writer can learn, it is not discoverable in Southern Europe. The fact at once raises the question whether the circular churchyard and the name of *church* may possibly be connected, and whether there may not at last be forthcoming a reason for the fact, hitherto unexplained, that the word *church* and its congeners divide with the

¹ Copiously illustrated by Theo. Lupke in *Deutsche Aksum-Expedition* (Reimer,

Berlin, 1913), iii, pp. 50, foll. See also Bent, *Sacred City of the Ethiopians* (1893).

word *ecclesia* and its derivatives the map of Europe. For while the circular churchyard is very rarely to be found where prevail the *ecclesia*-words,¹ it is discoverable over most of those areas where prevail the *church*-words.

CHAPTER II.

THE ROUND BARROW.

Study of Barrows mostly unprofitable—Postulate that all Barrows are Pagan is wrong—Round and Oval Barrows the rule—Long Barrows and their builders—Peculiar care spent on the Round Barrow—The labour and skill required—Only explicable as matter of Religion—Religion and Sepulture—How the Round Barrows were built—Non-sepulchral Mounds of like design—The Circle the Sign of a ‘Locus Consecratus’—Persistent sanctity of such ‘loca’—The Temple and the Tomb—Relic-worship—Distribution of Barrows—Influence of Cremation on Barrow-building—The Sepulchral Urn.

The study of barrows cannot be said to have yielded results at all proportionate to the time, labour, and brains expended on it. Of the many hundreds which have been opened those of which the age is certainly known are extremely few, nor is there even an approximate certainty except in regard to those which demonstrably show Roman or later influence. Speaking generally, the opening of each additional barrow serves only to raise new problems, doubts, and contradictions.

Amidst all this fog, it has hitherto been believed safe to affirm that at any rate barrow-burial is a mark of paganism, and that therefore no barrow was ever reared for Christian sepulture. It will be proved conclusively that this view is wrong, and that the customary burial-places of the earlier Christianity of these islands were as

¹ The one conspicuous exception is that of Wales, which will be found to admit of ready explanation.

much barrows as were those of their unregenerate forbears. Certain differences there may have been in the details of the sepulture, but in outward appearance the graves of the Christian and the pagan were precisely the same. Each was a barrow, and moreover each was a round barrow.

For, where all else is matter of dispute, the one indisputable fact is that from the first introduction of the round barrow there prevailed one invariable plan, and that circular.¹ Here and there may be found mounds of a rectangular plan, but excavation has hitherto failed to show that they were intended for barrows.² Excepting the round barrows, the only artificial mounds of admittedly sepulchral origin in Britain are the long barrows, the so-called 'star-fish' barrows, and the 'horned' barrows peculiarly characteristic of Caithness; and of these the first and the last belong to an age, or at any rate to a civilisation—and therefore presumably to a religion—prior to that of which the round barrow is the symbol. The 'star-fish barrow'³ is simply the result of the accretion of a number

¹ In England the strictly circular barrow is the rule; in Ireland the slightly oval form is said to be the more usual, and it is very frequent in Cornwall also. Of Christian barrows, *i.e.* churchyards, a very large number are pronouncedly oval. So are most Irish *killeens* and almost all Manx *keels*; but Irish *raibhs*, so constantly surrounding churchyards, are usually correctly circular. Stone circles show the same variation, not in the British Isles only, but wherever they are found in N.W. Europe.

² 'Rectangular mounds with rounded corners, not apparently sepulchral,' occur on Grimston Moor, W. Riding, and in Westmorland (Greenwell, *British Barrows*, p. 343). Francis Villy has noticed and examined others near Keighley, Skipton, and Settle, and in Ravenstonedale, and inclines to believe them medieval on the scanty evidence of the shards found. O. G. S. Crawford (*Wilts N.S. and Arch. Trans.* xlii, p. 59) mentions isolated examples in Gloucesters. and Wilts. The sepulchral purpose of all these is conjectural. In East Yorks, parishes of Hutton Buscel, Riccall, Skipwith, Thorganby and Arras, occurs a group of proven sepulchral barrows (cremated) of round plan, accompanied by 'square trenches with rounded corners.' See Greenwell, pp. 369-370; Philips, *Rivers, Mountains, and Sea-coast of Yorkshire* (1853),

p. 205; Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches*, p. xx.

³ The most remarkable 'star-fish barrow' in the British Isles is that of Doohat (Dumha Ait, 'Place of the Tumulus') on Mount Bennaghlin, near Florencecourt, Sligo. It shows a central chambered mound, from which branch off five rays, 'well-defined stony ridges, averaging 16 or 17 ft. in breadth at their junction with the central cist or dolmen, from which point they taper off to distances' varying from 40 to 60 ft., terminating cleanly and abruptly. Each of these rays is formed of a number of separate small cists set in line. Nothing whatever has been found to throw light upon their date, and the whole work is said to be unique in Ireland. At Bighy, 2 miles away on the further slope of the same mountain, is a cairn (diam. 50 ft.), in the centre of which is a chamber 6 ft. by 4 ft. ranged east and west, and around it 'just within the outer edge' of the cairn are some 18 other cists or cells. One of these contained a fragment of an urn, but again there was nothing which could date the whole. See Wakeman, *Handbook of Irish Antiquities*, 3rd ed. pp. 116-120. There is no sufficient reason for regarding either monument as a work of extreme antiquity, and some reasons occur for believing them to be relatively late.

of other, usually smaller, circular interments about a larger one of the same plan; and where similar solitary accretions have now and again interfered with the original symmetry of a large barrow, there is commonly no great difficulty in recognising the fact. The resultant may be an irregularly round barrow, but it is not merely an irregular mound. Dr. Thurnam believed the more regularly planned oval barrows to have resulted from the juxtaposition of two or three separate interments in so many round barrows.¹ But be they round or oval, the area, the height, the material and the situation of these barrows may vary indefinitely, as do the character and the disposition of their contents, but not so the essential regularity of their plan. This, and this alone, is constant. It is no rare thing to find in long barrows secondary interments belonging to a later age,² but no long barrows seem to have been built by the men of the Goidelic time and after. The new fashion in grave-mounds appears to have gripped the imagination of the people of these islands far more completely than did the later fashion of cremation, and the evidence of their skulls proves that even the long-headed race, who had previously built long barrows only, adopting the new vogue, were likewise thereafter buried under round barrows,³ like their round-headed conquerors. From the Atlantic to the Ural Mountains and the Deccan, from the Northland to the Middle Sea, the round barrow and its related monuments are to be found everywhere.

There has not been laid sufficient emphasis upon the laboured circularity of the round barrow. Let the reader take all modern appliances and set about building for himself a perfectly regular and circular mound of only 30 ft.

¹ See *Archæologia*, xliii, 298, where he gives a diagram to illustrate his theory. It is to be noticed that where two round barrows, of presumably much the same age, are thus juxtaposed, very great labour has been spent on disguising the fusion, and giving to the compound barrow the form of a perfectly regular ellipse.

² Greenwell, pp. 485, 488, 491, 502. 'Alien interments, Anglo-Saxon, Roman, and pre-Roman, have been found in the superincumbent mass of earth covering the primary burials of the long barrow' (Windle, *Remains of the Prehistoric Age in England*, p. 139).

³ Greenwell, pp. 121-3. Homer makes implicit mention that Patroclus was buried in a round barrow (*τορνώσαντο δὲ σῆμα Iliad* xxiii, 225). In *Iliad* ii, 813 is a passage which implies either that barrows were already very old in that region, or that their 'proprietaries' were liable to be very quickly forgotten: mention is made of a barrow 'which men call Baticeia, but the gods know it as rightly the Tomb of Myrine.' Of the barrows about Troy one at least was a lofty one, for it was used as an observation-post (*ibid.* v, 793).

or so in diameter, of earth, or sand, or stone or turves, and he will be surprised to discover how hard a task he has undertaken. To make a mound is easy enough; to make of such unhandy materials a fairly regular mound is not altogether difficult; but to coax his gathered heap into anything at all resembling the geometrical symmetry of a genuine barrow will test his skill and exhaust his patience. Then let him ask himself how the thing was done by peoples who, while wholly innocent of carts and wheelbarrows and planks, were also in innumerable cases without spades, picks, or shovels as we understand those things.¹ There will be forced upon him the conviction that round barrows did not supersede long barrows because the former were easier to build, but for some other and very much more compelling reason; and that the painful care expended in making the barrow circular was not the outcome of a sense of symmetry only, or because some forgotten Plato deemed this the fairest of all figures.² He will feel that some very cogent reason must have worked toward the maintenance through long centuries of a type of monument so exact and so exacting. And he will ask what that reason could possibly be.

The only answer must be that the driving force was religion. From whatever cause arising, there existed and persisted a feeling that the peace of the dead—and of his living survivors also, if they were not to be haunted by his uneasy ghost—demanded that he should be buried in a circular grave-mound and no other. Differences of race and date, of taste and means and degree, might and did alter details of the monument, and so produced all the wide variety of 'bowls' and 'bells' and 'rings,' of barrows standing singly and in clusters, of barrows with and without peristaliths, and so on; but with the basic fact of the circular plan, when once that was introduced, no later age or later race ventured for many hundreds of

¹ See Greenwell, *Brit. Barrows*, p. 5. He mentions as the largest within his personal knowledge the barrow called Willy Howe, near Wold Newton, E. Riding, nearly 150 ft. in diameter and 24 ft. high. There are others in England as large or larger, and some of the stone-built cairns of Scotland are far larger: 'Three near

Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire, are 4 ft. in height and 1,000 ft. round the base. In the parish of Minnigaff, Galloway, is one with a base diameter of 300 ft.; and a chambered barrow near Drogheda (Ireland) is 400 paces about and 80 ft. high' (Hunter-Duvar, *Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages*, p. 224).

² Cf. Cicero *De Natura Deorum*, I, 10, 24.

years to interfere. It remained unaltered through the ages. As Christian England marks the graves of the dead by the symbol of the cross, so did pre-Christian humanity in Britain, from the coming of the Celt onward, mark its graves by the symbol of the circle. And as the sequel will show, in scores of cases to this day the Christian congregation still performs its ritual and still buries its dead within the same immemorial circle, albeit upon that circle has now been surcharged the more familiar figure of the cross.

It would be interesting, but it is not essential, to know what methods the builders of the round barrows followed in order to attain such remarkable exactitude in their results. Where there exists a fosse, it is supposed that this was usually constructed first, it being relatively easy to keep the mound in proper relation to such a definite periphery; but even so the evidence proves that in many cases the mound itself was built up not from the fortuitous upcast from such a fosse, but with materials gathered elsewhere, sometimes brought from great distances, and systematically laid stratum by stratum over the whole area. Clearly the plan of the whole was marked out upon a radius from the centre selected, and in the case of the larger barrows this radius was perhaps at first obtained by the simple linking of the hands of a number of the workers. In the construction of the perfectly elliptical barrows, and of the more highly developed forms, such as the superbly planned and executed disc-barrows of Wilts and Dorset, some much more accurate means¹ must have been employed. At or near the central point were laid the bones or the ashes of the dead, but there was less precision aimed at in this regard than was manifestly insisted on in regard to the circular plan of the completed monument. The burial is not seldom eccentric, and sometimes markedly so, but such eccentricity is probably due to accidental

¹ Exceptions to this general symmetry of construction are rare. The most striking instance is perhaps that figured by Pitt-Rivers, *Excavations*, iv, pl. 293, where however it is only the fosse that is irregular, and this possibly because the work never received the final touches. Cf. the case of the long barrow of Worbarrow figured

in the same volume, pl. 249. In Ireland the planning of *raths* was the work of professional *rath*-builders, and there is every likelihood that there were professional barrow-builders in Britain. The 'grave-maker' was doubtless an even more 'ancient gentleman' than Shakespeare's character imagined (*Hamlet* v, i.)

causes.¹ In not a few cases excavation has failed to find any trace of any burial at all, and some archaeologists have regarded such barren mounds as cenotaphs.² Local conditions may in some cases have been such as to cause the complete disappearance of the body, but in other cases there is reason to think that the mound was not built to be a funeral monument at all. Moreover the case of the mound 'No. 24' in Cranborne Chase shows that such a mound might mark a holy place without itself serving as a place of burial.³ Reason will be adduced later for believing that this was never intended for a barrow, and that some of the Celts habitually built works of precisely this form for purposes entirely different. Nor is this the only source of perplexity to the student of barrows. In their most rudimentary forms—the simple circular mound and the simple ringwork—such works are too little specialised to be determinable as barrows upon the evidence of shape, plan, and position only. They may have been built by any race for any one of a score of purposes. The habit of raising such mounds to serve, for example, as boundary-marks is certainly as old as the Romans, if not older, and is scarcely yet obsolete. It flourished vigorously all through the middle ages,⁴ and if in most cases the mound so reared was merely a diminutive 'bowl' and nothing more, this was not by any means always so. There are lines of so-called 'barrows' in Ashdown Forest which were raised merely to demarcate the various 'walks' of the Forest, and they vary from big 'bowls' and 'bells' to diminutive ring-barrows.⁵

The circular sepulchral barrow was holy ground. Created by the impulse of religion, it was consecrated by

¹ Cf. Greenwell, *British Barrows*, p. 27.

² Greenwell, pp. 27, 28. Cf. what O'Curry's editor says (*Manners and Customs of the Irish*, p. cccxxv) of the 'cairns of the Dibergaib,' which were not meant for burial-places.

³ Pitt-Rivers, *Excavations*, iv, 149-157.

⁴ E.g. in an 'Indenture of Accord made at Woky (Wookey, near Wells, Som.)' fixing the boundaries of certain lands of the bishop of Wells and the abbot of Glastonbury, 25 Ed. iii, 'by a hedge below the highway which is the boundary between their lordships to the new-made barrow by the corner of the wood . . . thence to

another new barrow, etc.' (*Hist. MSS. Commission, Cat. of MSS. of Dean and Chap. of Wells*, i, 324).

⁵ The boundaries of estates on the South Downs are constantly described in old deeds as running 'to the burgh,' 'by three burghs,' etc.; where *burgh* commonly means 'summit,' 'hill-top,' but in other cases certainly means 'barrow.' 'Burgh' is to this day the common term for a large barrow in Sussex (e.g. Five Lords' Burgh, the Long Burgh, Money Burgh), but it occurs also as an appellative of hills, e.g. 'the Burgh,' a crest beside Saxon Down near Mt. Caburn (*vide O.S.*), Lewes.

the burial within,¹ and its circular form declared its sanctity to all and sundry. Fosse, vallum, peristalith or revetment of stone, or all of these combined, marked it off from profane ground and safeguarded it from sacrilege. Why one barrow should be larger or more elaborate than another is a question of which the answer is written plain in every modern churchyard: why does one of the dead enjoy a 'monumental perpetuity' of Carrara marble, while others must be content with a cross or rail of perishable wood, or often with no monument at all? The larger the barrow, the greater the man, and the greater also the *religio loci*. The fact is so obvious as to demand no proof, but the proof is to be seen in the frequent grouping of many meaner burials about the great one. These were in the first instance the graves of the lesser dead of the great man's own generation, tribe, and race; but—and this is an all-important point—the sanctity of the spot was such as commonly to survive all normal changes of time and race, and even of creed. Anglo-Saxons laid their own dead within barrows of every preceding race and every earlier creed,² and perhaps most secondary interments are due to this abiding recognition of the sanctity of the ground within the charmed circle, rather than to any assumed kinship on the part of the dead.³ There is nothing unlikely in this suggestion, seeing that the same tradition of the barrow's sanctity actually survives in places to the present day. In Ireland it is still an active influence, and it is legitimate to say that it retains more of its force wherever there is more of Celtic blood.⁴

¹ In Roman custom, when cremation had supplanted the older practice of inhumation, the idea that a fleshly burial was still necessary was satisfied by the *os resectum*; some portion of the body, e.g. a finger, was cut off and separately buried. 'The object was to consecrate the place of burial, to make it a *locus religiosus*.' Smith, *Dict. Class. Antiq.* (Murray, 1890), vol. i, p. 893, b.

² 'There can be no doubt that the burial-mounds were used over a considerable period for later interments'; Greenwell, *Brit. Barrows*, p. 16. For examples see *ibid.* pp. 135, 395, etc., and J. R. Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches*, *passim*. Even the great 'Saxon' barrow at Taplow, built between 450-600, had been used as a place

of burial by lesser folk. The sequel will show that in some cases the Christian treated the barrows of his pagan forbears exactly as the latter had treated those of their predecessors.

³ Cf. Homer, *Iliad* xxiii, 246. Achilles bids his Myrmidons make Patroclus' barrow 'big enough, but not so very big. My survivors shall make it bigger and higher, when I am buried' in the same barrow. The passage tells us emphatically that the barrow was proportionate to the man, but it also tells us that it was quite usual to use a barrow as a collective burial-place, and that those buried in it need not be of one and the same blood.

⁴ 'As late as 1859 in the Isle of Man a farmer has actually been known to offer up

So far as we have any evidence at all for the plan of pagan places of worship in these islands, those of Celtic origin were invariably circular. Religion and burial being inseparable, the same circularity which marked the burial-place marked also the *temenos*; tomb and temple had one common plan. Further every pagan tomb was, according to its degree, likewise a place of worship,¹ and every pagan place of worship as surely attracted new sepultures to its vicinity. But as there was no *religio loci* where there was no burial, the tomb is in point of evolution prior to the temple; and even when there had at last arisen a conscious distinction between the two, none the less was it still essential that the temple should be built upon the grave of at least one human victim. In precisely the same way in the Roman Church of to-day no altar is complete without its relics, and in the Greek Church such relics are even sewn into the cloth which is used to cover the sacred elements, that it may on occasion serve as a portable altar.² The word 'relics' is literally *reliquiae*, and though other things will serve, the most desired relics are actual portions of the body of some holy person, the entire body if it may be so. The pagan Swedes refused to allow the body of their king Frey to be burned, as was customary with kings, for 'it would be well with them so long as he abode in Sweden'³; and when Halfdan the Black died, his body was cut in four pieces and given to as many different 'folk,' that those who had a share of it 'might look to have plenteous years therewith.'⁴ The practices of paganism and of Christianity have one and the same origin in the same firm belief in the peculiar virtue that abides in the very bones of the dead.

The barrows which survive to-day in the British Isles are but an insignificant fraction of those which once existed,

a heifer in sacrifice to prevent any harm from befalling him in consequence of the opening of a tumulus on his land' (Boyd Dawkins, *Early Man in Britain*, p. 338). The scene of this, 'probably the last sacrifice offered in Europe,' was close by the Tynwald Hill, a fact of some significance.

¹ *Et tot templa deum Romae quot in urbe sepulcra Heroum numerare licet.* So wrote Prudentius (iv cent.) of Rome as he knew

it. The words apply with at least equal force to Britain, *whether pagan or early Christian*. 'The temples of the heathen,' wrote Hospinianus (*Opera*, i, 20) 'arose out of tombs.' So also did those of Christians.

² Maugham, *Liturgy of the Greek Church*.

³ *Story of the Ynglings* (Saga Library),

c. 13.

⁴ *Story of Halfdan the Black* (Saga Library) c. 9.

and for every one burial which was deemed worthy of the dignity of a barrow there were probably hundreds which never boasted any such memorial. If the extant barrows are for the most part to be found upon the hills, this is only because cultivation has not yet obliterated them on all these higher levels. Even as it is there still remains a considerable number of such monuments upon the lower levels, and it is to be supposed that the dead of a community were commonly laid to earth in the vicinity of that community. The earlier peoples dwelt chiefly upon the hills because the lowlands were largely uncleared; and as time went on the population moved gradually in greater and yet greater numbers to the lower grounds.

But in course of time there came also a change in the type of barrow: its height steadily diminished, and the earlier 'bowls' and 'bells' eventually gave place to one or other of the many forms of the ring-barrow. Barrows of this type were much more liable to destruction, and for the most part they were constructed at levels where the plough very speedily came to destroy them.¹ This is one amongst several reasons why 'disc' barrows, for example, are so few. A still further development was the common urn-field, which stood but small chance of survival on the arables. It is rare to find an urn-field upon the high grounds, for such a thing belongs in Britain to a time when the population had ceased to be, to any great extent, dwellers on the hills.

Sir William Ridgeway has shown² that the practice of cremation probably originated in Central Europe and was thence carried into all quarters by the wandering Celts. He gives reason also for thinking that cremation remained to a great extent the privilege of the upper

¹ Moreover the soil of which they were composed was frequently of the finest quality, 'top-spit,' and not seldom enriched with potash from innumerable burnings. Its peculiar quality has indeed led some antiquaries to speak of it as 'church-yard soil,' and it was—probably still is—popularly regarded as a safeguard against magic and trickery. See *Reliquary*, 1896, p. 158.

² *Early Age of Greece*, vol. i, c. vii. In regard to England he remarks that the

question of the prevalence of inhumation or of cremation 'appears more complicated' than elsewhere, but flatly says that 'it cannot be maintained that cremation was the practice of the Bronze Age (p. 501).' The Sagas explicitly declare (*Story of the Ynglings*; *Story of Hakon the Good*, c. 17) that Odin introduced burning into Scandinavia, and that after the age of Burning there was a reversion to barrow-building in the age of Howes, but that the older practice long continued side by side with the newer.

classes. In the case of some peoples it became the general rule, as with the Celts of Wilts, Dorset, and Cornwall, and with the Jutes of Kent ; in other cases it remained the exception, as with the Angles of Yorkshire and with the generality of the Irish. Where it became the rule it led to the ever wider use of urn-fields without individual barrows to mark the graves, and only in exceptional cases was there accorded to the dead man the honour of a separate and imposing monument.

Thus the manner of disposing of the dead varied with every people and with every tribe, as well as with the dead man's degree, and a variety of different sentiments had each its voice in determining the method to be adopted. Foremost of these was the older habit of inhumation at feud with the newer vogue of cremation. But where everything else is variable there remains constant the predilection for a circular burial-place. Even in cremated burials within otherwise indeterminable urn-fields this predilection made itself felt, for the ashes were invariably laid in a circular urn.¹ In this country there is known nothing analogous to the rectangular hut-urns of Alba and of Crete,² or the model pile-dwellings of Melos and Amorgos. Like the barrow, the urn also was circular, and never of any other form. 'The mortal right-lined circle must conclude and shut up all.'³

CHAPTER III.

EVOLUTION OF THE SEPULCHRAL RING.

Barrow-building did not cease with Christianity—Intrusive-burials and Consecration-graves—Foundation-deposits—Criteria of genuine Barrow-burial—Classification of Barrows—The 'Limes' and the Monument—The 'Limes' invariably circular—The 'Bowl'—The Buried Circle—

¹ Glass vessels of square shape are found occasionally with interments of Roman date, but the Roman, though in Britain he reverted to the Celtic practice of barrow-burial, did so without understanding its symbolism. Small circular cists of stone are common in the Merovingian (vi-vii cent.) cemeteries of Poitou.

² Grenier, *Habitations Gauloises et Villes Romaines*, p. 26, figures rectangular hut-urns of Gallo-Roman age from the region of Metz, but these appear to be both late and exceptional.

³ Sir Thos. Browne, *Hydriotaphia*, v.

The 'Bell'; 'Table'; 'Cup'—The Evolution thus far—The 'Ring' and the 'Disc'—The 'Frying Pan' at Todmorden—Distribution of the 'Disc'—Evolution of the Stone-circle—Stone Ringworks—No Square Barrows in Britain—Variety of the Circular forms—Origin of the Dolmen—The Menhir and the Grave-slab—Ancient forms and modern analogues—Distribution of the various types of Monument—The Circle the Symbol of Death—Compound Circles—Hackpen Hill—Radial Burials—Mule Hill—Crichie and Tuack—General summary of the Evolution.

From the earliest times continuously onward, wherever paganism existed in the British Isles, the barrow in one or other of its forms was the customary memorial of the illustrious dead. At first perhaps the only form, it gradually became less frequent, and in some areas perhaps almost disappeared before the simpler requirements of cremation and the extended use of urn-fields. Even in post-pagan times pagan intruders would of course still adhere to the pagan custom, so that pagan barrows may have been reared in England as late as the tenth century.

So much has always been admitted. What has not been recognised is, that, so far from abolishing the practice of barrow-building, Christianity actually adopted it, and the making of Christian barrows did not cease earlier than the tenth century. These Christian barrows came to be so many churchyards, and after many years many of them came to have each its church. But this was not generally the case until the eighth century was well advanced or past, and if we find authority, a century later, still issuing orders forbidding the faithful to bury their dead elsewhere than in churchyards, the obvious inference is that until so late (ninth century) there survived a stubborn tendency to revert to the older practice. It is further implied that by that date the Church, if it had not actually forgotten the real origin of churchyards, was at any rate very anxious that its flock should forget it. From that date forward, therefore, barrow-burial was condemned as pagan. But in the case of any individual barrow reared between that date and the first introduction of Christianity into that locality, we have no means whatever to decide whether it

was reared over a Christian or a pagan, except such evidence as excavation may possibly reveal. And the chance of finding conclusive evidence even by excavation is small, partly because Christianity did its best to suppress the evidence by prohibiting the burial of grave-furniture with the dead, partly because the older traditions of pagan ritual tended obstinately to reassert themselves.

Throughout the British Isles, and more frequently in the more Celtic areas, are to be found Christian graveyards which still preserve all the essential features of the pagan barrow, the circular or oval plan, the mounded area, and not infrequently the encircling fosse or vallum. But whereas the pagan barrow was frequently, perhaps usually, designed by its builders to be the individual burial-place of one great man, in the Christian barrow were buried, or were entitled to be buried, all such of the community as could claim to be 'members of one family in Christ.' There will be produced, however, indisputable evidence that for many centuries still survived the sentiment that a barrow, Christian or pagan, was primarily the burial-place of one specially great man; and we shall find instances, long after the introduction of Christianity, where one or other of such great persons is buried with all the pomp and individuality of the older time. In 1581, it is recorded, 'Brian Ceach O'Coinnegain, an eminent cleric . . . died, and the place of sepulture which he selected for himself, was, to be buried at the mound of Baile-an-Tobair . . . And we think that it was not through want of religion that Brian Ceach made this selection, but because he saw not the service of God practised in any church near him at that time.'¹ Ever and anon the old sentiment reasserts itself even in this modern age, and as late as 1919 Sir Bryan Leighton was, by his own wish, buried upon the open hills of his estate in Shropshire.²

Barrows are the purposed monuments of the dead, or rather they are one class of such purposed monuments. Not every mound therefore which has the appearance of a barrow is really such. Many of them are indeed natural formations. Even if a burial be found within a mound, this does not in itself prove that the mound was in the first

¹ Wood-Martin, *Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland*, p. 237.

² *The Times*, 25 Jan., 1919.

instance constructed for a sepulchral purpose. So far as regards the simpler forms of grave-monuments, this is a common-place of archaeology. Less consideration has been given to the point in the case of the more elaborate forms of monuments, yet it is a point of the first importance. Exactly as a mound, natural or otherwise, which was never intended to be a barrow, has repeatedly been made to serve as such, many another construction which has the outward seeming of a ring-barrow, disc-barrow, or other form of circle, may quite conceivably have been constructed for a totally different purpose, even though a burial may have been found within it; or to put it another way, if, as is admitted to be the case, the finding of an interment within a mound does not of necessity prove that mound to have been reared as a barrow, neither does the finding of an interment within a stone-circle or an earthen ringwork necessarily prove this to have been intended for a sepulchral monument.

There are two main factors to be reckoned with and allowed for if any correct conclusion is to be drawn: one is the intrusive interment, the other the consecration-grave. During long centuries the greater number of the races who successively occupied these islands regarded any and every circular *enceinte* as necessarily sacred, and therefore a proper place for the interment of the dead.¹ There were circular burial-places—barrows in the legitimate sense—everywhere; but there were also other circular works, perhaps in very great numbers, which had been reared for entirely different purposes. When, from whatever cause, the proper use of such works was forgotten, the dead would inevitably be brought to them for burial, as they had always been brought to other works—the true barrows—externally precisely similar.² These

¹ Instances are to be found in any volume dealing with barrows, in Greenwell's *British Barrows*, Bateman's *Ten Years' Digging*, Jewitt's *Grave Mounds*, Mortimer's *Forty Years' Researches*. Sometimes the barrow was enlarged (raised) with each successive inhumation; Greenwell, pp. 196, 294, 491, and cf. the cairn at Carn Brea, below ch. xx. More often there was no such enlargement. In many cases, again, the mound covering a later burial has been added on to the earlier barrow,

thereby perhaps altering—occasionally spoiling—the circular plan of it. See John Ward in *Memorials of Old Derbysire*, pp. 59, 60.

² Amongst such cases are the *crucs*, the non-sepulchral mounds to be described presently. Speaking of 'Druid Circles,' i.e. circles of standing stones, Stukeley says (*Stonehenge*, p. 3) 'in many places . . . the people bury their dead in or near them to this day, thinking them holy ground.' This was written in 1723.

are all intrusive interments, and as they may belong to almost any age, very great caution is needed in reading the evidence. It has constantly happened that an intrusive or secondary burial has been mistaken by careless diggers for the primary one, and the age of the barrow consequently miscalculated by centuries. It has also happened that, on the strength of intrusive interments, mounds and circles which were never intended to be burial-places have been written down as such and entirely mis-dated.

The consecration-grave is a totally different thing, but an equally dangerous cause of erroneous conclusions. It is the concrete expression of the once world-wide feeling that the sacrifice of a human life was needful to the consecration of any spot for whatever purpose. There is ample reason for thinking that in not a few cases the act of ritual has been confounded with the purpose of an anhistoric work, stone-circle, ringwork, or other; and that certain sweeping conclusions as to the true character of such works, being deduced from such erroneous premisses, are in need of revision.

The belief that the success of any human undertaking, the permanence of any human construction, depended upon the sacrifice of a human life is of the widest occurrence. It is embodied in the story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and in that of the death of Remus at the foundation of Rome. In historical Rome it was liable to revive at any time of crisis, as when a man and a woman were buried alive to avert the coming of the Gauls, and when, to avert the coming of the Goths of Alaric, was sacrificed Serena the widow of Stilicho (A.D. 411). The foundation-deposits, reduced to merely animal bones, have been frequently found in Egypt¹; and more than one great bridge that spans a river of India, the work of English engineers, is reputed to conceal beneath its foundations the bones of an unofficial victim.² Even in some of the Balkan states, it is whispered, the belief is active still. Skulls of consecration-victims have been found in the fabric of Assurbanipal's buildings; when Jericho was rebuilt,

¹ Prof. Flinders Petrie in *Report of Brit. School of Archaeology in Egypt*, 1906, p. 22.

² See *Dict. of Religion and Ethics* (Clark, Edinburgh, 1909), s.v. BRIDGE, and

the references there collected; Haddon, *Study of Man* (1898), pp. 347-399; and for examples from Greece, Ridgeway, *Origin of Tragedy*, pp. 163-6, and *Early Age of Greece*, i, 506.

the builder 'laid the foundations thereof in Abiram his first-born, and in his youngest son Segub set up the gates of it'; and when King Thebaw commenced the building of a new palace at Mandalay in 1861, he grounded it upon the bones of as many victims as there are weeks in the year.

There is ample proof that the same superstition prevailed in these islands. Two consecration-burials, the one of an adult and the other of a child, were found beneath a massive mortarless wall in an anhistoric burial-ground at Harlyn Bay.¹ Under the wall surrounding the little Romano-British enclosure of Lowbury, Berkshire, was found the skeleton of a woman, so placed that the circumstances 'forbid us to think either that it was buried before the wall was thought of, or inserted after the wall was ruined.' The discoverer believed it to be a foundation-burial, and so it probably was.² Hugh Miller found the memory of the practice surviving in Cromarty. In the Isle of Arran, carefully built into the massive wall of what seems to have been a *broch*, was found a small cist containing a large urn 'of cinerary type' filled with calcined bones.³ Yet another was found under the wall of a pit at Caerwent.⁴ Under the wall of the *temenos* of the temple at Uriconium, near the south-eastern corner, was found 'a pot containing a fair number of bones,' apparently of the small ox for the most part.⁵ Irish writings make frequent allusion to the practice, and the sacrifice of a pig is discussed, in the *Life of S. Cellach*, in connexion with the building of *raths*.

The superstition was in fact universal, and it would seem ineradicable. We no longer kill a living victim, but we attach importance still to the presence of bones and ashes. The whole system of relic-worship grew out of it,

¹ Ashington Bullen, *Harlyn Bay* (Padstow, 1912), p. 54.

² F. Haverfield in *Roman Britain in 1914* (Oxford, 1915), p. 27. He adds 'I understand that Sir John Frazer accepts this suggestion.' Lowbury is thought to date only from the Middle Empire.

³ J. A. Balfour in *Book of Arran*, pp. 195-213. He writes that 'the builders had evidently come upon a burial of an earlier period, and left it undisturbed.' The article is not by any means so clear as could be wished, but, apart from the improbability of the event he suggests,

the position of the deposit and its arrangement makes it almost certain that this too was a foundation-deposit.

⁴ *Antiquary*, vol. xxxviii (1902), p. 376. Nennius (§§ 40-42) relates the sacrifice and burial of a child at the building of the Dun of Guorthegirn.

⁵ Bushe-Fox in *Report Research Committee Lond. Soc. Antig.* (1913), p. 7. He remarked that 'there does not appear to be any well authenticated example from this country,' but that was before the find at Lowbury.

and a hundred stories of monkish cunning in stealing a neighbour's most valued bones. It is a genuine 'idol of the race.' The first 'churches' of Latin Christianity were the mortuary chapels of the catacombs,¹ and that the first Celtic Christianity of these islands was founded upon the superstition in its most repulsive form, is proved by Adamnan's account of St. Columba's first procedure at Hy.

To decent-minded people to this day the presence of death is the presence of God. It is the canon law of the vast majority of Christians that there is no altar without its relics; and if the minority of Christians have broken away from that extreme attitude, none the less do they feel themselves the nearer their God, the nearer they be to their dead. The sentiment was equally as real in pre-Christian times, indeed more so, for with some at any rate of pagan peoples it took the illogical form that there could be no *locus consecratus* without a burial. Every place where was a burial was holy ground, and there could be no holy place where no burial was. The canon law of present-day Greek and Roman orthodoxy is but the old sentiment of all humanity with an added sanction.

If there is found within a circular work, whether it be a mound or a ringwork or a circle of standing-stones, an interment which may be regarded as of a certain date, it may or may not be a legitimate inference that the circular work is of the same date; but even if that also be conceded, it does not of necessity follow that the circular work was constructed only to serve as a place of burial. Such an inference is reasonable if the interment bears any proportionate relation, in point of position or of its accessories, to the surrounding circle; if it occupies a central or otherwise prominent position²; if it is marked by some elaborate external monument such as a dolmen

¹ In the book of the Apocalypse the martyrs are represented as reposing beneath the altar (*Rev.* vi, 9); and before the death of its author we behold the Christians of Rome offering the sacred mysteries on the tombs of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul. See in St. Cyril (*Cont. Julian*, pp. 327, 334) the testimony of the emperor Julian, which must outweigh the authority of those modern writers who date the veneration

of relics from the commencement of the fourth century.' Lingard, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, ii, 95.

² Cf. Homer, *Iliad* xiii, 241-2. There was no difficulty in distinguishing the bones of Patroclus from those of the victims sacrificed (and burnt) at his grave, for those of Patroclus lay 'in the middle,' and the others 'at the edge' of the place of burning.

or a pillar-stone or a slab, or if it is accompanied by the recognized accessories in the way of grave-furniture. But if there be no such reasonable proportion between the interment and the circle, if grave-furniture be cheap or even wholly wanting, if the interment lack all external monument, or if it be found to occupy a position which bears no intelligible relation to the surrounding circle, it is hardly credible that it should represent the *raison d'être* of the laboured construction which surrounds it.¹ In such cases it is more likely that the interment either is intrusive, or marks the consecration-grave, the choice between the two alternatives remaining to be determined either by internal evidence or by analogy. In neither event does the finding of the interment justify the conclusion that the circle within which it is found was designed to be a barrow.

Many and widely different as are the forms assumed by round barrows, it is nevertheless easy to demonstrate the development of all from a single prototype, and to establish a regular evolution, which, though not in itself chronometric, necessarily has a bearing upon the question of date. Into that vexed question it is not needful to enter here, save so far as to point out that, if there has been an error in placing by some centuries too early the *terminus ad quem*, it is quite possible that there has been made a similar error in regard to the *terminus a quo*.

It is not to be doubted that the simple 'bowl' barrow, the circular heap of material without any further elaboration whatever, is the original of all,² but it is an admitted fact that some such simple 'bowls' are amongst the very latest of such monuments: witness those reared by the Danes. The 'disc' again is most certainly late in time as in evolution. But there being in early times no such thing as equality of culture, the less fully developed type may have held its ground in one district contem-

¹ There are numerous instances of 'bowl' and 'bell' barrows in which the interment, albeit primary and without doubt the *raison d'être* of the mound, is not truly central. This might very easily occur in the building of such a mound over a grave. There could be no excuse for its occurring in any sort of ringwork or stone circle with its unencumbered area.

² So Thurnam (*Archæologia*, xlii, 291): 'It must be allowed that the bowl-shaped is the primary form of the circular barrow; which, so far from becoming obsolete, held its place side by side with the later-invented, and so to speak more fashionable bell and disc-shaped tumuli.'

poraneously with more highly developed types in districts but a few miles away. Moreover, the stubborn conservatism which dominates humanity in the matter of necrology, must inevitably have interfered to prevent any parity of development, individuals, families, clans, and tribes affecting each its own traditions of burial in those days, as they do at the present time.¹

In pre-Christian burials in these islands² there were two essentials, of which the modification and elaboration through long periods of time by different tribes in different localities, under the influence of local conditions, ethnic prejudice, foreign contacts, and perhaps even individual fancy, have produced the astonishing variety of our barrows, external and internal. These essentials were firstly the means taken to demarcate the place of burial, and secondly the means taken to mark the actual grave. The former it is convenient to call the *limes*. Beneath all diversity of the surviving examples these essentials remain constant ; and of the two the *limes* was the more important and the less perishable. There are indeed too many cases where the *limes* has perished and the monument alone survives, but there are many more cases where the reverse has happened, and the *limes* remains when all superficial trace of the monument has disappeared. It is the same to this day in any Christian graveyard, the faithful dead must lie within the *limes*, and the *limes* must be a thing fixed and abiding ; but how many of their number have any other monument to mark their graves than the 'heaving sod' ? And how many millions more lie there, whose very grave-mounds, like their frames, have vanished ages since ?

From the remote date when the builders of the round barrows reared the first monument of its kind in Britain, throughout the long centuries to the triumph of Christianity, and thereafter for several centuries more, the *limes*, the thing demarcating the piece of ground

¹ This fact is abundantly illustrated by ancient Greece and Rome.

² It is assumed that barrows, of whatever form, are the most complete expression of the ideas in matters of eschatology held by those who built them ; that they are the monuments of the select minority,

who would possess at once the most intimate understanding of these ideas, and the best means to give them expression. The vast majority of the lesser dead were doubtless in all ages buried without any such costly outlay or any abiding mark of their resting-places.

which, great or small, was hallowed by the presence of the dead, was in plan one and the same. It was a circle. In scores of cases to this day, in Christian England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, to say nothing of other areas of northern Europe, it is still the same. In many cases it is a geometrical circle; in some cases a geometrical ellipse. Old burial-places, pagan or Christian, were obviously never designed to be in any sense angular; or more correctly, they were obviously designed to be non-angular.¹

It is not asserted that this symbolism was peculiar to the Celt. It will be shewn that it prevailed at one or other period in countries as divergent as Greece, Italy, and Denmark. It is found also in Abyssinia, Arabia, Palestine, Persia, and India, to say nothing of remoter lands. To account for its appearance there may be matter of enquiry for other brains. The present papers are concerned only with the origin and history of the symbol in Britain.

The round barrow in itself embodies the circular plan. In its simplest form it is a circular mound in the shape of an inverted bowl—hence the accepted name of ‘bowl’ barrow—without other external feature of any kind.² To this large class belong most of our smaller barrows, albeit some of the ‘bowl’ barrows are of very large size. Whether this type was originally provided with any further visible mark of its sepulchral character is unknown. Some of them unquestionably had a peristalith of great stones set at intervals around the base.

Even in its most rudimentary form the ‘bowl’ barrow showed the primary essential, the circular plan. But excavation has in not a few cases shown that a circle had been constructed within and buried under the mound. Sometimes it takes the form of a circular trench³ which has been laboriously excavated in the soil around the spot where the body or the urn was to lie, and presently filled

¹ As with stone circles and ringworks, so the mound-barrows are not seldom of oval rather than of circular plan. This is usually explained as the result of juxtaposing two or even three separate true round barrows. ‘Disc’ barrows are occasionally juxtaposed; see the fig. in Heywood Sumner’s *Earthworks of the New Forest*, p. 80. In Ireland such juxtaposition of ring-barrows is not at all uncommon, and the late T. J.

Westropp regarded them as mostly of late date.

² I agree with Dr. Thurnam (*Archæologia* xlii, 291) that the true bowl-barrow was in its original form unfossed. Heywood Sumner has recently opened several barrows of this type on Ibsley Common, Hants; see *Proc. Bournemouth Nat. Sci. Soc.* vol. xiv (1923), pp. 3-12.

³ Mortimer, *Forty Years’ Researches* p. xxii; Greenwell, pp. 6, 201, 245.

in again. Sometimes it is a circle of isolated stones, even of pebbles or small nodules of flint¹ if larger stones were scarce in the locality, larger blocks where such were obtainable.² Or again it appears as a regular dry-built wall of stone.³ Occasionally the circle is double or even triple.⁴ The origin and meaning of this practice will be considered later. Here it is sought only to emphasise the fact of the presence of this circle, excavated or constructed at the cost of much painful labour, yet obviously never intended to be seen by mortal eye when once the barrow was raised and the circle buried within it. Only the religious sense could prompt such a procedure; the circle was, to the minds of those who built such barrows, *the* symbol of sanctity. It marked a *locus consecratus*, and it was the symbol of the grave.

Probably this 'cryptic' circle was the original piece of ritual, and the practice of giving to it more visible expression arose later when the growing mass of the superimposed earthen mound completely hid the circle from the eye. Thereafter it appears in the form of an exterior fosse, a ring-wall, or a peristalith, surrounding the mound; and the tendency being always to lay more and more emphasis upon the symbol, there were gradually evolved all the subsequent types of sepulchral monument, first the 'bell' barrow, then the ringwork and the cromlech, and finally the perfect 'disc' barrow. Where the buried circle is found, there is usually no exterior presentment of the symbol, whether as fosse or wall or peristalith.⁵

¹ *Ibid.* p. 6. Cp. Pitt-Rivers on inhumations of the Iron Age near Mount Caburn in Sussex: 'an oval space surrounded by a row of large flints appeared to have been cleared in the chalk rock, within which the body was placed at full length' (*Archaeologia*, xlv, p. 425). Worthington Smith (*Man, the Primeval Savage*, pp. 334-9, and fig.) found the skeletons of a woman and a child similarly ringed with some 200 fossil echinoderms, within a round barrow on the Dunstable Downs. The several heaps of burnt and unburnt bones found beneath the floor of a dolmen at L'Ancrese in Guernsey were each surrounded by a circle of small stones, and exactly similar was the arrangement of the bone-deposits found within a Christian *keel* in the Isle of Man (*Report*

of Manx Archaeological Survey, 1910). The ill-burnt ashes of an interment found (1923) in a mound in Rottingdean, Sussex, were surrounded by the broken fragments of the neck of a large urn arranged in a circle.

² Near Cawthorn Camps, N.R. (Bateman, *Ten Years' Digging*, p. 207); in Flaxdale, Derbyshire (*ibid.* p. 63); in Dorset (Warne, *Celtic Tumuli of Dorset*, p. 33); near Sherburn, E.R., Gilling, N.R., Hutton Buscel, N.R. (Greenwell, *Brit. Barrows*, pp. 145, 344, 358, 363).

³ Greenwell, p. 6.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 7.

⁵ The writer has not met with any recorded instance of the conjunction of the buried circle with the external circle. Nevertheless, it would be reasonable to suppose that such exist, marking the over-

The 'bell' barrow is the 'bowl' provided with a visible external fosse. Instead of concealing the symbolic circle within the mound, the builders dug it about the mound.¹ Occasionally there is also a raised parapet along the outer edge of the fosse. 'Bells' may be of almost any size, though it is not common to find very small examples of this type. The dimensions of the fosse naturally vary with the size of the contained mound, but allowance must be made for wastage, which will vary with the character of the soils. In very many cases the fosse is discoverable only by excavation.

As the necessary materials for the building of a 'bowl' barrow must have been brought to the spot from the surface of the surrounding country, the labour entailed was very great, and the construction of such a barrow on any large scale must have taken much time, even if many hands were employed. As the 'bell' was built largely of the material thrown out in making the fosse, the labour involved was considerably less; so that economically as well as artistically the 'bell' was an improvement upon the 'bowl.' The height of the mound naturally depended upon the dimensions of the enclosing fosse: so long as this was set out upon a circle of small radius there would be material enough for a considerable mound, but in proportion as the radius was increased the mound became necessarily of less and less elevation. In very few cases is it likely that the mound was built up of the *deblai* from the fosse alone: it must have been augmented by soil fetched from outside, as in the case of the primitive 'bowls.'² The tendency being steadily to increase the radius of the

lap between the earlier and the later suppose that such cases exist, marking the over-lap between the earlier and the later practices.

¹ 'Bowl' and 'bell' are merely convenient terms for the two varieties as they *now appear*, but a good many 'bowls,' as originally constructed, were actually 'bells,' the once visible fosse having been filled up or even wholly covered over by the wastage and spreading of the mound within. In these cases, however, the fosse is a wholly different thing from the buried circle previously described, which was never intended to be visible. On sandy soils especially, the tendency is always for the 'bell' to assume the appearance of a 'bowl,'

and many seeming 'bowls' were originally designed as 'bells.' Pitt-Rivers in the whole of his wide experience in Cranborne Chase met with but two barrows which had had no exterior fosse (*Excavations*, vol. ii, plate xxv). Besides its merit of better satisfying ritual requirements, the 'bell' had the further advantage that the digging of its fosse provided at once much of the soil needed to build the mound.

² Wright (*Uriconium*, p. 42) satisfied himself that this was the case with the great barrow at S. Weonards, Heref., and another at Fitz, 5 miles N. of Shrewsbury. 'The barrow was made by forming a circular bank round the objects to be buried, and the central part was afterwards filled in.'

fosse, and by consequence to diminish the height of the mound, the barrow tended to become always less and less elevated.

Some of the 'bowls' and 'bells' are still extraordinarily steep-sided, in spite of the denudation of centuries, and there is reason to think that, when first completed, they were sometimes covered over with turves to prevent their spreading.

The tendency to economise labour by reducing the height of the mound, produced the 'table' barrow. This is simply a geometrically circular platform with a perfectly level summit. The fosse, which commonly has no entrance-way, is quite distinct, and the height of the 'table' varies with the dimensions of the fosse; it may reach a vertical height of 10 ft. or it may be so slight in elevation as to be scarcely discernible. Occasionally, where the platform is of no great height, there was sufficient soil available to provide a slight parapet on the counterscarp. Yet another variety shows a slightly raised rim surrounding the edge of the 'table' itself.

In many cases the top of a 'bowl' or a 'bell' shows an irregular depression in the centre, quite distinct from the purposed regularity to be seen in the variety last mentioned. This is sometimes the result of unscientific exploration or other modern interference,¹ but in very many cases, amongst the smaller barrows especially, it is apparently original, though whether due to carelessness of construction, or to the sinking of the centre as the interment perished, is not determinable. Quite possibly it represents the first beginnings of a new design, developed fully in the 'cup' barrow.

The 'cup' is a small barrow with a shallow fosse, having, in lieu of a solid central mound, a mere ring of soil within the fosse; and where the area within the fosse is very small, the whole has the appearance of a cup. In some cases the ring of soil and the fosse are alike continuous; in other cases they are penannular, *i.e.* intermitted at one point as if to provide an entrance. The latter are the earlier in evolution, for in the symbolism of the grave,

¹ *E.g.* the erection of wind-mills upon such barrows, a very frequent proceeding in the Down countries. In this case, however,

the depression commonly takes a pronounced cruciform plan. See Allcroft, *Earthwork of England*, pp. 534-9, and figures.

the penannular ring is older than the complete circle.¹ In either form the 'cup' would seem to be a decadent and 'cheap' type, representing a penurious economy of labour.²

As the area embraced by the fosse grows larger, the 'cup' develops into a circular flat-floored arena surrounded by a ring of earth, and this again girt by the fosse. This is the 'ring' barrow, and there is no limit to its area, but rarely is the fosse, and by consequence the vallum, of any great depth.³

Thus far the evolution of the successive types is easy to follow. The keynote of all is the presence of the circular plan. Whatever else may vary, the circular plan is invariable. Originally it determined the shape of the simple 'bowl,' and it may be traced without breach of sequence, and with always more emphatic prominence, onward to the fully developed 'ring.' But here the perplexities begin, for there are innumerable ringworks in the British Isles all precisely identical in appearance and in construction, of which only a limited number were built to serve as barrows. Almost any ringwork may have been constructed for a barrow; no ringwork may safely be so labelled unless excavation has proved it to be such. And here in particular the intrusive interment and the consecration-grave prove themselves troublesome. As every ringwork possessed for earlier races and earlier generations precisely the same attraction as did every mounded barrow, the chances of finding intrusive interments within any ringwork are very high. On the other hand, every *locus consecratus* being of necessity circular, and of necessity hallowed by some victim, any ringwork may be found to contain the deposit needed for its consecration, while at the same time it may never have been in any sense constructed for a barrow. Residence, 'camp,' 'pastoral enclosure,' temple, place of debate or of judicature—a ringwork may have been built to be any of one of these, and possibly to be many other things as well, and for every one of these purposes it may have

¹ See the next chapter.

² Of those on the South Downs, which are very numerous, many are said to be of Saxon date.

³ The fosse may be many feet wide, but a few inches only in depth. In stony countries there is frequently no visible fosse at all.

received its consecration-deposit. For some of these purposes it certainly received it. But to prove it an intentional barrow there is needed something much more prominent, much more central perhaps, certainly much more proportionate, than the thing that served for a consecration-burial. And generally speaking, the same perplexities which attend the simpler forms of ringworks attend also every one of the more elaborate forms yet to be described.

Simple ringworks are to be found in almost every county, and the difficulty of determining their true character is enhanced by the fact that such works were constructed, for whatever purpose, by probably every race and every age from the days of neolithic man down to those of the Tudor sovereigns. On the top of the Mendips are the remains of four of the very largest of their kind, having an average diameter of 550 ft. These have vallum and fosse as usual, but they have thus far yielded no hint of their purpose. On Baildon Moor, Shipley, W.R., are three others, each of 50 ft. in diameter, enclosed by valla of earth and stone without fosses. Some of these have been proved to contain interments. In the North Riding and in Northumberland they are common. Dr. Thurnam thought the 'circular trenches' at Standlake, Oxon, to be perhaps tumuli of this kind.¹ They had diameters varying from 50 ft. to 120 ft. Of certain other individual examples more will require to be said in the sequel.

The final development is the true 'disc' barrow, a form of monument of which the perfect symmetry and finish strike with admiration anyone who sees it as it is to be seen on Setley Plain, Hants, on Oakley Down by Handley in Cranborne Chase, and in the vicinity of Stonehenge. It is nothing but a ringwork, sometimes of geometrical regularity, surrounding a perfectly level arena of turf often upwards of an acre in extent. The fosse, like the vallum, is but slight, and in the perfected type it lies within the vallum. The interment occupies the central spot, marked by a mound of very variable diameter, but rarely of high relief, and frequently so

¹ *Archaeologia*, xliii, 302 ; *ibid.* xxxvii, 362.

slight as to be scarcely noticeable. When other interments occur they are usually set as close as may be to the central burial. There is no entrance-way, vallum and fosse being completely annular.

The type is local and decidedly uncommon. It is most frequent in the neighbourhood of Stonehenge, the headquarters of the Brythonic power in the last centuries B.C., and becomes scarcer as one goes further away from that centre; but there are fine examples in Oxfordshire, Somerset, Sussex, Hampshire, on the Malvern Hills, and in Yorkshire. A group of four, the largest having a diameter of 120 ft., exists at Pendoylan, between Cowbridge and Llandaff, in Glamorganshire,¹ two others may exist in the neighbourhood of Hengwm, Merion.,² and there are examples at Llanelwedd in Radnorshire, close to Builth; but otherwise this type is hardly recorded from Wales. A chalk soil gives the best opportunities for its construction and the best chance of its survival. On harder soils it could not well be built with the same symmetry, and on softer soils it had little chance to escape destruction, for one or two ploughings would obliterate it wholly. The local variations are largely attributable to the character of the soil; in stony localities, for example, there may be no apparent fosse at all, the *limes* being marked only by the piled vallum of stone. In the perfected examples the height of the vallum seldom exceeds 2½ ft. One on Flower Down, Winchester, has an arena 81 ft. in diameter, a fosse 3 ft. deep, and an outer vallum which rises 2 ft. only above the natural surface. The central mound has a diameter of 27 ft, and is of very slight relief.³ There are examples, however, in which the central mound rises to a very considerable height.

¹ To the late Mr. W. Clarke of Wenvoe is due the credit of drawing attention to these, an invaluable peice of evidence for the infiltration of Belgic influences into S.Wales. When he discovered them one of the group had very recently been rifled by some unauthorised person unknown, who had left behind in the disturbed central area pieces of an urn; which fact is proof enough that the work was a purposed barrow.

² Explored in 1919 by O. G. S. Crawford, with small results (*Arch. Cambr.* 6th ser. xx, p. 111).

³ Williams Freeman, *Field Archaeology*

of Hants, p. 248. The same writer mentions (p. 276) another variety having now no visible vallum at all, and the fosse extremely wide and shallow. One he gives as having a diameter of 159 ft. and a fosse 21 ft. wide; another, which he says is the largest he has ever seen, has diameter about 195 ft. and ditch 48 ft. wide. Neither fosse is more than 9 in. deep, and neither work shows any central mound. (It is possible that these peculiar features are in part due to the works having been ploughed over). Both these are between Clanfield and Chalton, Hants.

Occasionally the fosse and vallum are duplicated, as in an example at Broadstairs, where the solitary interment (inurned) occupied almost the centre of a circular 'island' of 28 ft. in diameter, demarcated by a fosse 5.5 ft. in width, which in turn was surrounded by a second fosse of 3.5 ft. in width described on a radius of 29 ft. over all. Both fosses were complete, showing no gap; each was 2.5 ft. in depth; and it was not possible to determine on which side of the fosses the valla, if any, had been raised.¹

In the 'disc' barrows, and in the ringworks related thereto, the most casual observer recognises the laboured regularity and scientific construction which one is apt to overlook in the 'bowl' and the 'bell.' There are good reasons for thinking that the 'disc' is chronologically the latest outcome of barrow-building,² as it most certainly is the latest in point of artistry. In Ireland the construction of ringworks of various kinds was a special craft, and there can be very little doubt that in Britain also there must have been professional barrow-builders, and in particular expert builders of disc-barrows.³

The geographical distribution of the true disc-barrow, together with the character of its contents, goes to show that this type was the work of the last of the Brythonic invaders of South Britain, the Belgae, who made their headquarters on Salisbury Plain—probably because this was already the seat of an ancient sovereignty—and thence spread eastward and northward, and more particularly

¹ *Archaeologia* lxi, 432. The barrow was written down as late-Celtic, on the evidence of other finds made in the immediate vicinity. It should be mentioned that a large rubbish pit lay only 6 yds. away, and 40 yds. away what may have been the vestiges of a stockaded habitation-site, which suggests that the Celt did not invariably lay his dead at any great distance from his dwelling-place. The work near Casterley, Wilts, known as 'Robin Hood's Ball,' resembles this in plan, but in lieu of fosses it has two concentric valla, with an entrance on the north side.

² Dr. Thurnam in *Archaeologia* xliii, 303. Lord Abercromby (*Bronze Age Pottery*), on the other hand, thinks the latest specimens of the type to be no later than about 650 B.C., from the evidence of their contents; but the present writer is amongst the number of those who are not satisfied

with that evidence. Dr. Thurnam, who took no account of the aesthetic line of reasoning, believed the construction of disc barrows to have continued until the Roman conquest. Why it should have ceased then he does not explain, nor is there any sufficient reason to suppose that it did. In Ireland and Wales barrows of this type continued to be built so late as the fifth and sixth centuries. Dr. Thurnam endorses the observation of Colt Hoare (*Ancient Wilts*, i, 173) that cinerary urns are of extreme rarity in disc-shaped barrows, from which it would seem that they belong mostly to a people, or peoples, with whom the use of such urns was dying out.

³ So Heywood Sumner (*Earthworks of the New Forest*, p. 81): 'the precision of planning and construction of Bell and Disc barrows is remarkable, suggesting inner knowledge by a set-apart class.'

westward into Dumnonia and South Wales. If so, the type was at its zenith of prevalence about the Christian era.

Stukeley called these by the name of 'Druids' Barrows,' and if that expression is taken to mean merely that the type was characteristic of the race and the period in which Druidism likewise reached its zenith, Stukeley was probably right; but whether his choice of the name was founded on evidence, or upon a still persisting folk-memory, or was a mere guess, there is nothing to shew.

Now if a disc-barrow of the perfect type, with slight vallum, slight fosse, and still slighter grave-mound, be ploughed over but once or twice, the result is that the grave-mound disappears entirely, the fosse is probably filled in, and there remains merely a scarce-perceptible circular heave of the soil to mark where was the vallum. If the plough has gone deep enough to disturb the interment—and in disc-barrows it is almost always a cremated interment and therefore laid at small depth—it may be possible to find a shard or two of the broken urn; but if this has not occurred, there will most likely be no visible relic whatever to betray the real nature of the work. It is labelled, if labelled at all, a 'simple circular enclosure,' and having about its remains nothing whatever to distinguish it from a score of similar things, it is at the option of every one who chances upon it to argue it according to his bias a 'habitation-site,' a 'camp,' a 'pastoral enclosure,' or what not. Should there remain evidence that the fosse was on the inner side of the vallum, it is usual to write such works down as 'sepulchral' or 'religious,' but the criterion is hardly infallible.¹ A better test, though still not infallible, is the geometrical precision of the ring. In the matter of area no limit can be set.

¹ This interpretation is based upon the position of the fosses of Avebury, Arbor Low, and similar works, which the world agrees to call 'religious,' though it is by no means agreed that they were 'sepulchral.' The interpretation has the drawback of suggesting that every 'religious' or 'sepulchral' work should have its fosse within the vallum, which the cases of Stonehenge and many hundreds of 'bell' barrows show to be untrue. Pitt-Rivers' excavations at Handley Down, and others

at Beltout, Sussex, have established the fact that enclosures of rectangular plan sometimes had the fosse on the inner side of the vallum, and Mrs. Cunnington's exploration of Oliver's Castle, a camp near Devizes, has shown how this might arise fortuitously in any 'British village.' It may be contrary to modern practice, but it is none the less true, that cattle are more easily kept within bounds if the ditch be within the fence than without it.

‘Encircling mounds (*valla*) and trenches (*fosses*),’ writes Dr. Greenwell,¹ ‘are found to surround spaces of ground which have been devoted to the purposes of burial, but where apparently no barrow has ever surmounted the grave.’ There is no doubt at all that some such ringworks were themselves barrows, but whether or no there ever existed a grave-mound within any particular ring, it may be impossible to determine. The fine mould of such mounds, the flint and stone of barrows and cairns, all have their value: they may easily be carted away, leaving no visible trace of themselves; and if the ring-wall be treated in the same fashion, there remains nothing but a circular fosse surrounding a level ‘island.’ The original interment however, which was commonly made within the soil before the grave-mound was piled over it, may yet remain undisturbed until the grave-hunter digs expressly for it. But it is by no means certain that any burial found within such a ringwork or ‘island’ is part of the original construction. The burial or burials may easily be intrusive, and the ringwork may not have been intended by its builders to be sepulchral at all; and inasmuch as any circular *limes* continued to attract to it those who had dead to bury, from the time of the first round barrow to actually modern days, the chances of finding intrusive interments are very high. And again the interment, though original, may not be ‘sepulchral.’ It may be a consecration-grave. Here the only possible test is relative: does the interment bear any reasonable proportion to the ringwork in point of dignity, or does it occupy a reasonable position in relation thereto? A central interment, rich or poor, is very probably a veritable grave, and moreover the original grave and the purpose of the whole. A number of interments scattered about the area are just as likely to be intrusive, failing good evidence to the contrary.

A typical example of a burial-ring of this class is to be seen on ground called Blackheath, on the flat summit of a hill (1,224 ft.) outside Todmorden, Yorks. It is a perfectly regular ringwork formed by a single vallum with an exterior fosse, the diameter being 96 ft. The

¹ *British Barrows*, p. 6.

vallum, now much reduced, may originally have stood 5 to 6 ft. high. There was no mound within the ring, nor superficially anything to suggest that this was different from a hundred other 'camps,' unless it were the regularity of the design. The work was locally known as the 'Frying Pan,' and variously regarded as a camp, a fairy-ring, or 'a circus-ring made to break-in horses.' Some 350 yds. away stands the church of Cross Stone.¹

Explored in 1898, it revealed in the exact centre of the arena a fine urn, with others—distinct interments—arranged round it at regular intervals. In all there were recovered seven large urns and two 'incense-cups,' and amongst the finds were bronze pins. The methodical disposition of these interments, their number, and their elaborate character, prove that this was indubitably a barrow and had been constructed solely to serve as a place of sepulture.²

Thus far has been traced the evolution of the circular fosse from its first appearance as a mere symbol concealed beneath the mass of a superincumbent barrow to its presence as the chief, in some cases the only, feature of the whole monument. Precisely similar was the evolution of the stone circle, which, as Dr. Greenwell observed, is sometimes found, in lieu of a fosse, buried within the mound.

The first step was to bring the circle of stones out of the grave-mound and arrange it round the base of the mound as a peristalith, in which position it may perhaps have served in some cases the purpose of a rudimentary retaining wall to the whole. In many cases it stands at such a distance from the mound or cairn that it can never have fulfilled any such purpose. The tendency being always to spend less and less labour upon the mound, the circle of stones came to acquire always more importance,

¹ Cross Stone is an ecclesiastical district formed out of the parish of Halifax. The church, says Miss Arnold-Forster (*Studies in Church Dedications*) is probably old. Its present dedication is to St. Paul, but in 1542 it was to St. Ursula; and the change, she conjectures, was made when the church was rebuilt in 1572. The fact that the Christian church stands so near to the pagan burial-place has a certain significance.

² *Proc. Yorks. Geol. and Polytech. Soc.*, 1899, p. 144; H. Ling Roth, *Prehistoric Halifax* (1906), p. 307. From the character of the finds the whole is of course attributed to the Bronze Age. It is impossible to say at what date works of this type were first constructed as barrows, but it is certain that many of them are far later than the Bronze Age, and it is a question whether the 'Frying Pan' be as old as it is said to be.

until one reaches the large class of grave-monuments in which the stone circle or cromlech,¹ with or without an accompanying fosse, is the sole feature. The size and number of the stones seems to have been entirely a matter of individual taste, and the diameter of the circle may vary from as little as 3 ft. to as much as 40 ft. or even 50 ft. In peristalithic circles of still greater diameters, it has been for the most part impossible to prove a sepulchral purpose, and many of the smaller examples also have been proved non-sepulchral. The circle of stones, like the circular fosse and the circular vallum, demarcated a *locus consecratus*, but not necessarily a place of burial.

The circle of stones is found adapted to each and all of the various types of grave-mound and barrow above described, irrespective of size. It is present in the great stone-built cairns of Clava, Inverness-shire, in the vast 'bowl' barrows of Knowth and Newgrange, in barrows of average size in Cumberland and Northumberland, in diminutive grave-mounds of Cornwall, and was originally a feature also of the great artificial pile of Silbury Hill, which was apparently not sepulchral at all. It is found combined with the 'table' barrow of any size up to the great Ring of Brogar in the Orkneys. Standing upon the vallum of a ringwork it produces such monuments as Sunkenkirk in Cumberland. The last step in the evolution gives us the 'great circles' which have neither fosse nor vallum, and cannot be proved to be sepulchral. Occasionally the circles show a double concentric peristalith, *e.g.* that which once stood on Hackpen Hill, and that at Winterbourne Bassett (exterior circle, 90 ft.).² Stonehenge and Avebury excepted, the inner ring in such complex circles is not composed of stones of such size as to interfere with a clear view over the whole area of the circle.

The individual stones composing the circles are as a rule entirely untooled. The only determinable sign of

¹ Continental archaeologists use this term (Welsh *crcwm*, *crom*, Gaelic *crom* 'circular'; Welsh *llech*, Gaelic *leac*, 'stone') to denote a circle of free-standing stones. In West Cornwall any barrow demarcated by a ring of stones may be termed a 'grumbla.' Documents of the fourteenth century refer to them as *cromlegbes*, of which 'grumblas'

appears to be the modern representative. It is worth notice that this name is not applied by the Cornish to the 'great circles,' such as that of Boscawen-Ūn, which are a feature of Cornish antiquities. I am indebted for this information to C. H. Henderson.

² Stukeley, *Abury*, p. 45.

working to be discovered is in the cup-markings and similar symbols which are occasionally cut upon some of the monoliths.¹ The stones used are commonly the native surface blocks of the district, but in some cases pains have been taken to gather blocks of a particular kind, quality, or colour.

In place of the circle of free-standing stones is found again a continuous wall of dry stone treated exactly as is the true peristalith. It is sometimes buried under the grave-mound, sometimes set as a revetment thereto; and finally, treated as an independent feature and taking the place of the earthen vallum and fosse, it produces the simple stone ringwork like those to be seen on Baildon Moor. In not a few cases this, like the earthen vallum, is combined with the true peristalith, as was the case in the 90-ft. ringwork called 'the Kirk' at Kirkby Ireleth, Lancashire.

Fergusson remarked² that there appears to be no example in this country of a pre-Christian work of rectangular plan which can be proved to have been constructed as a place of burial; and apparently little has since transpired to qualify the statement. The dolmen in Jersey called *le Couperon* lies within a parallelogram of stones, 'the only instance in' the Channel Islands³; but it has yet to be proved that the dolmen in question is of pre-Christian date. The nearest approaches to anything at once sepulchral and rectangular which this country can show are the 'circular barrows with square trenches' of Yorkshire (p. 244, n. 2). Works like Studfold Ring near Ampleforth, between square and circular in plan, may be sepulchral, but the matter waits proof. The finding of Anglo-Saxon graves within the *enceinte* of Highdown Camp in Sussex, and of seemingly Roman burials within that of Poundbury near Dorchester, is merely parallel with the frequent presence of barrows within ancient camps, *e.g.* at Small-

¹ These are found chiefly in Scotland. They may have been placed upon the stone before it occurred to some one to use it in a cromlech, or they may have been cut upon it at a later date, and it is quite possible that the sculpturings have nothing to do with the purpose of the circles with which they are now associated. The meaning of the cup-marking is discussed in ch. iv.

² *Rude Stone Monuments*, p. 308. Borlase (*Dolmens of Ireland*) cites most of Fergusson's instances and adds many more, the outcome being to show that the rectangular figure in sepulchral monuments was almost as common in the Baltic lands as it is rare here. The case of the Coldrum dolmen with its rectangular compound is mentioned later on.

³ F. C. Lukis in *Archæologia* xxxv, 250.

down in Chesterblade, Somerset¹: in such cases the burials are probably intrusive, and belong to an age when the *enceinte* had ceased to serve its original purpose. So far as concerns the British Isles it would seem that the only matter in which rectilinearity was permitted was the avenue² of approach, if any existed.

This brief summary shows that a wide variety of forms may be produced by the gradual evolution of the circular *limes*, whether as fosse or vallum or peristalith, and the combination of these, with or without the central grave-mound; but in the upshot all tend to assume the form of a simple circular enclosure, whether of earth or of stone, with or without an accompanying fosse. Yet other varieties were produced by the gradual development of the various forms of grave-monument, of which the chief were the dolmen³ and the menhir or pillar-stone.⁴

Galleries and chambered tombs built of enormous unhewn stones are so constantly associated with long barrows as to prove them not the invention of the round-barrow men. As they are also found, however, within round barrows, it is clear that their construction did not cease when the round barrow came in. The true dolmen may be the outcome of the wish to adapt the earlier galleried tomb to the narrower limits afforded by the round barrow, or it may be an independent development from the small four-sided stone cist which was locally in use

¹ *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.* 1924, pt. ii, p. 32.

² Stone avenues—parallel lines of free-standing stones—are a frequent feature in connection with stone circles on Dartmoor, but the sepulchral purpose of the circle in each case remains to be proved. At Merivale Bridge and on Stalldon Moor are avenues formed of two parallel rows of stones, but at Assyscombe and Yardsworthy occur single lines only, while at Cordon there are three lines, on Challacombe Down four, on Shuffle Down five, and at Coryton Ball as many as seven. In 25 cases out of 38 the lines lead to and end at a stone circle, and appear to mark the approach to a *locus consecratus*, as did the avenues which once existed at Avebury and the paved causeway leading to the stone circle at Tullynessle in Aberdeenshire. At Stonehenge the avenue is represented by a roadway between parallel earthen *valla*.

³ The dolmen, or 'table-stone,' is an exaggerated cist made of one or more flattish blocks laid horizontally upon a number of vertical supporters. Commonly the horizontal stone (cap-stone) is single, and there is no limit to its size. The supporters are usually four, corresponding to the four sides of the cist, but there may be more, or sometimes only three. In its fullest development the whole becomes a rectangular flat-roofed house with wide eaves. The use of the word *cromlech* (p.) for these monuments is entirely wrong.

⁴ There was a menhir (στῆλη) upon the barrow of Ilus outside Troy (Homer, *Iliad*, xi, 371). In *Odyssey* xi, 77, we have a hint of the occasional use of more individual grave-marks, when the ghost of Elpenor begs Ulysses to give his body due burial, and to set up the dead man's oar upon his grave (πῆξαι τ' ἐπὶ ῥύμβῳ ἐρετμόν, τῷ καὶ ζωὸς ἔρεσσον). Obviously such a memorial would be but short-lived.

throughout the whole of the barrow-building ages. Quite possibly it owes something to both of these causes. It may be impossible to say when the building of dolmens began: there is no doubt at all that the round-barrow men built them freely, and there is no doubt that some dolmens were erected well within the limits of the historic period.¹ While there is no sufficient reason for regarding all dolmens as necessarily of immense antiquity, there is considerable reason to think them a late development in point of time, as they assuredly are in point of evolution.

It is scarcely to be doubted that the dolmen was originally intended to serve as an actual tomb and was therefore concealed under the grave-mound. In course of time it assumed greater and greater prominence, until it became first the visible monument crowning the grave-mound, and finally an independent structure irrespective of any mound at all.² Its evolution would seem to be precisely parallel with that which turned the rude stone cist of primitive times into the ornate beauty of a Roman sarcophagus, and produced from a forbidding tombstone the exquisite shrines and chantries of medieval times. It was again precisely parallel with that which evolved the symmetry of the naked disc from the symbolical buried circle of an earlier age. The more the labour spent upon the monument, the less likely is it that it should be purposely hidden out of sight. The dolmen, however, when thus erected *a jour* had mostly ceased to be the actual tomb. Whether it was put to any other use, and what such use may have been, are matters of pure conjecture. The only facts which seem to have any

¹ 'It is certain that' dolmens continued to be built 'in Africa under the Roman domination'; Baring Gould, *Deserts of Southern France* (1894) i, p. 179. Merrill (*East of Jordan*, p. 439) noticed their position 'on the line of a Roman road at commanding points.' Fergusson (*Rude Stone Monuments*) was led to suspect their connexion with Christianity alike in India and in Ireland.

² Whether the dolmen was or was not covered with soil, is one of the most debated questions of archaeology. Wakeman (*Handbook of Irish Antiqs.* p. 52) says that, 'the great majority of existing cromlechs

(i.e. dolmens) in Ireland are, now at least, of the free-standing order. Of these some, from the nature of their position and structure, could never have been the centres of tumuli. Others no doubt were covered'; and he cites G. A. Lebour (in *Nature*, May 9, 1872) as saying much the same of the dolmens of Finisterre. It is reasonable to surmise that in dolmens, as in other matters, there was a gradual development—that they represent the religious ideas of different ages throughout a long period of time; and that, while the earlier were simply tombs and no more, the later examples were rather in the nature of mortuary-chapels.

connexion with the matter are certain practices of Irish Christianity. In other words the dolmen not seldom seems to have a more intimate connexion with modern times than with any immeasurable past.¹

In almost every one of the forms assumed by the sepulchral ring the dolmen is to be found as the central feature. Covered with earth or stone it formed the grave-chamber of cairn or barrow, indifferently 'bowl,' 'bell,' and 'ring.' Brought out 'into the eye of light' it might stand, singly or in a group, upon the level platforms of 'table' barrows or in the arena of any form of ring-barrow. The encircling *limes* may be fosse or vallum or both, and the vallum may be of earth or of stone, or there may be a formal peristalith with or without fosse or vallum. Inasmuch as the dolmen needed very large blocks of stone, it is seldom found except where such blocks are abundant; and because stone is abundant in the dolmen-areas, the individual dolmen is commonly surrounded by a peristalith. The maker or mender of roads, the builder of dry dykes, the farmer in need of gate-posts, have between them destroyed hundreds of such peristaliths, and probably many hundreds of dolmens also; but a few of the latter

¹ Nothing that is said above is necessarily in conflict with the peculiar geographical distribution of dolmens. In England (excepting the group at Addington, Kit's Coty, and Coldrum, all within a very narrow area on the banks of the Medway, just north of Maidstone) there are none to be found east of a line drawn from Hull to Southampton. The fact does not prove that no others ever existed east of that line, but very possibly it was so. The dolmen at Coldrum has been partially explored and the results reported in *Journal Anthropol. Inst.*, xliii (1913). It was found that a number of interments, possibly all of the members 'of one family, or of several families united by common descent,' had been made within it. The dolmen stands upon and among old lynchets, enclosed within a rude megalithic compound of rectangular plan; and such lynchets are asserted to be of a date not earlier than the early Iron Age (O. G. S. Crawford, in *Geog. Journal*, lxi, pp. 342-366). There were no finds excepting a few worked flints and scraps of rude pottery. The bones were 'closely like' those from a Saxon cemetery of the seventh to eighth centuries at Folkstone. A. L. Lewis pointed out the close similarity

between the whole monument and certain examples from Denmark, Frankfort and Hanover, and believes it to be the work of a 'small prehistoric colony which came across from Germany and up the Medway.' This would account for its isolated position, but leaves its date undetermined. Possibly some further exploration of the rectangular compound will throw light on the matter. In the meantime all that can safely be said is that this particular dolmen was used as a tomb, and apparently as a family tomb. The dolmen called *l'Autel*, in Guernsey, was found to contain the remains of a great number of interments—piles of bones, mostly incinerated, and of all ages and sexes—and as many as 150 urns. See *Archæologia*, xxxv, p. 244. The late Mr. W. Clarke of Wenvoe took a human skull and other bones out of a small ruined dolmen forming one of the great group at Dyffryn Golwch, Glam. The name of Dyffryn Golwch signifies 'valley of Worship.' Sepulture and religion being synonymous to the Celt, the name suggests a genuine tradition of the purpose of the dolmens, and increases the suspicion that they are frequently more recent than is usually believed.

have survived because of the immense size of the stones employed in their construction, irrespective of the fact that many of them were concealed from sight beneath barrows. Thus all trace of a peristalith, or indeed of any *limes* whatever, may have vanished while the dolmen remains intact.

The menhir ('long stone') is usually a solitary stone, unhewn of course, planted upright upon or close beside a grave. Occasionally it is found in pairs, and still more rarely in groups of three, four, or five; and in the latter case the five stones are commonly set quincunx-fashion, one in the centre, the other four at so many points upon the circumference of a circle described about the first. Menhirs are associated with all the various types of barrows, but not very commonly, doubtless because they could so easily be removed. On the other hand they occur in great numbers without any mark of sepulchral significance, in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland especially; and excavation having frequently failed to bring to light any trace of an interment, there is reason to think that many of them were never set up to mark graves at all.¹ Olaus Magnus mentions their use in Sweden as a means of determining time by the shadow,² and their convenience as boundary-marks was almost universally recognised; while yet others seem to have been objects of veneration, amongst the Celts especially, quite apart from any discoverable connexion with the grave. As grave-monuments they are the originals of the Greek *stele* and the Roman *cippus*. When the use of writing came in, the dead man's name was written upon the stone in oghams, in Latin characters, or in both; and the final development is to be seen in the lettered headstones in any Christian churchyard. The simplest means of marking a grave, the menhir was un-

¹ Cf. Homer, *Iliad* xxiii, 329. There were two white menhirs near the tomb of Patroclus, but the poet does not venture to decide whether they marked the tomb of some forgotten person, or were the goal-posts of some earlier people. Evidently there was no barrow associated with them; evidently it was understood that not all menhirs were sepulchral: and evidently, if Homer could not distinguish sepulchral from non-sepulchral menhirs, it may well be difficult for us to do so, some 3,000 years

later. It was the custom of certain tribes in India (e.g. the Mundas of Chota-Nagpur) to set up menhirs of 9 to 10 feet in height to the memory of their great men, but such menhirs (*bid-diri*) had nothing whatever to do with the grave of the person so honoured. This, with its own grave-slab (*sasang-diri*), was in the general burial-ground of the community.

² But if they were *used* for this purpose it by no means follows that they were originally *set up* for this purpose.

questionably one of the oldest, and remained in use longest, if indeed it be not still in use.

In some cases the place of the dolmen or the menhir is taken by a flat slab or flag-stone covering the actual grave, a form of monument which did not so readily lend itself to any striking evolution.

There is no doubt that all these various methods of marking a grave—barrows in all their manifold varieties, dolmens and menhirs and slabs—were the monuments of the select few only. The vast majority in all ages would be buried without any such memorials. For a few years their graves would be marked by a mound no more noticeable than that of a modern grave, and in a few years the one, like the other, would wholly disappear.

It is curious to note how exactly the various types of prehistoric grave-marks have persisted to the present time. In almost any old churchyard one may see firstly the multitude of nameless graves, marked, if marked at all, by nothing but the mound of soil in various stages of evanescence; secondly, those with headstones only; thirdly, a number marked by horizontal slabs with various degrees of ornament; and lastly, the select few whose memorial is in the form of the rectangular altar-tomb. These severally represent the humblest barrow, the menhir, the slab, and the imposing dolmen of pagan times.¹ The efforts of all the centuries have failed to produce a single original type of memorial, while on the other hand it is not rare for the modern mourner, in his craving for novelty, to hark back to the actual originals, setting up slabs, menhirs and even dolmens,² of pseudo-antique simplicity.

The *limes* was always of greater importance than was the grave-monument. If then the forms of the latter have persisted almost unchanged through so many centuries, would it be in any way surprising that the *limes* also should boast something of the same continuity? The wonder would rather be if it did not. It is to be seen to-day wherever there is a circular churchyard, and it is traceable still in hundreds more which have lost most of their original plan.

¹ Cf. R. N. Worth, in *Cornwall Roy. Inst. Journal*, xii (1896), p. 90.

² Such pseudo-dolmens are a noticeable feature of several of the churchyards of Wharfedale.

Even in modern days the fashion in memorials is largely governed by local conditions: where stone is abundant, every grave has a headstone, possibly also a kerb-stone, and altar-tombs are common; but where stone is scarce or altogether wanting, the mass must be content with transitory memorials of wood or with none at all. It is to be supposed that the same facts governed life in earlier days. If there are multitudes of dolmens and cromlechs and menhirs in the western parts of Britain and in the north, the primary reason is that there also there is abundant stone; if they are rare in other parts, it is less owing to the activities of the *démolisseur* than to the fact that, because stone was scarce, there was never any great number built. In such localities attention would be given rather to the *limes* than to the monument, and as a matter of fact the *limes* reaches its best development in the districts where stone, if not altogether absent, is certainly scarce. The case of the timber-built circle at Bleasdale, Lancs.¹ shows that occasionally the attempt was made to substitute wood for stone where the latter was scarce, just as wooden memorials take the place of stone in many modern churchyards. The simpler way, if monument there must be, was to rely rather on the barrow itself, and of all the long list of various forms of the barrow the finest and most elaborate belong to the relatively stoneless southern counties of England. Conversely, with the exception of Avebury and Stonehenge, the megalithic structures of those areas are not imposing or, save in Devon and Cornwall, numerous.

It is clear that in pagan times the circle was associated with death and burial. It was associated therefore with religion, for religion arose out of death and burial, nor has the world yet seen any religion which, though divorced from the recognition of death, has yet exercised any wide and lasting influence. The symbol might occasionally be treated freakishly, but freakishness never went so far as to leave out entirely the circle. Similarly in Christian art, variously as the form of the cross is treated, the basic symbol remains one and the same.

In the last century B.C. came in the urn-field, that is,

¹ *Proc. Lancs. and Ches. Antiq. Soc.* xviii (1900), pp. 114-124.

the practice of laying the dead in individual graves in one extensive cemetery, without any superficial mound to mark the grave, or at any rate none of such proportions as to have left any sign to-day.¹ The best-known example of this form of burial-place is that at Aylesford in Kent,² which Sir Arthur Evans attributed to an immigrant Belgic tribe. Unquestionably their culture was very high, as is shown by the forms and the quality of the urns, which were also wheel-turned. In this case it was not determined that the urn-field had ever possessed a common *limes*, and perhaps it was not to be expected, but in default of this the sacred symbol was nevertheless present with each interment, for each was laid in a carefully-formed circular pit sunk into the chalk to a depth of 2 or 3 ft., and in some cases carefully lined with some kind of chalky puddling as with cement. Not only so, but the individual graves were themselves disposed in circular groups, and this so systematically that the excavators, on finding one interment, knew by inference where to seek for the remainder of the group. Three other important facts were noticed. In the first place the tribe which used this urn-field for its burial-ground had usurped that of a tribe before them, some of whose graves, and much of whose rude pottery, were discovered. Secondly, there were found upon the spot the pits in which the burial-urns had been fired. And thirdly, the highly elaborate grave-furniture of the later comers was intimately associated with the same flint-flakes and scrapers as are found in other barrows belonging to peoples of a culture much less advanced.

The use of urn-fields did not apparently make any very extensive headway in Celtic Britain, the Roman Conquest interfering to prevent it; otherwise it would probably have spread widely, for such urn-fields were the logical consequent of the great disc-barrow with its merely formal *limes*. It made a fresh start with the advent of the Saxon tribes, with whom at large barrow-

¹ The continental term for such featureless graves is *Flachgräber*, 'flat-graves.' There must, however, have been some visible mark of each interment, else they could never have been disposed with the regularity which marks such urn-fields,

nor would it have been possible for the several interments to have been made so close together without interfering one with another.

² *Archæologia*, lii (1890).

building was certainly exceptional. The Celts went on commemorating their dead mostly by one or other of the monuments already described, and all these various methods seem to have been practised simultaneously, the oldest side by side with the newest. 'Bowls,' 'bells,' 'discs' and 'rings' were in use at the same date and often in the same locality. Tribes, families, communities and individuals, claimed and exercised entire freedom of choice in these matters, and to write down any particular mound as of the Bronze Age, for example, without at least the warrant of scientific excavation, is as unlawful as it is misleading. Even where excavation has been made it is quite possible that there may be errors in the consequent deductions. The only point upon which the mass of archaeologists are agreed is that the disc-barrow is late in time, but not even archaeology can say off-hand when the first 'disc' was made and when the last.

Hackpen Hill¹ (887 ft.) lies 4 miles NNE. from Avebury. Along it runs from north to south the old British ridgeway, heading for a ford upon the Kennett river; and on the summit of the hill stood in Stukeley's time (1743) the remains of a 'temple' of oval plan consisting of two concentric rings of monoliths of an average height of 4 ft. to 5 ft. The inner ring measured 51 ft. by 45 ft., the outer 155 ft. by 138 ft.² As to whether it was ever surrounded by a fosse, Stukeley and Aubrey are at variance. Aubrey says that it was. One Dr. Toope, writing to Aubrey under date of 1 Dec., 1685, relates that he had personally visited it, and had dug up the bones of a large number of bodies which had been buried a foot only beneath the surface, in a double ring around the temple, 'so close that skull toucheth skull, their feet all turned towards the temple. . . At the feet of the first order [row] lay the heads of the next row, the feet always tending towards the temple.'³ The interspace between the bodies and the temple is given as 'about 80 yards.' There

¹ Otherwise Overton Hill. There is another Hackpen SW. of Wantage.

² The number of stones in either ring is unknown. The monument was to all intents destroyed when Stukeley saw it (*Abury*, p. 31, and pl. xxi).

³ The original letter is printed in Colt Hoare, *Ancient Wilts.* ii, 63, and reproduced by Fergusson, p. 76. Stukeley remarks (*loc. cit.*) that in his time the circle was still called the 'Sanctuary'; and 'sanctuary' for many centuries meant the same as 'cemetery.'

is no doubt at all that the main facts are as alleged, though it could be wished that we knew for certain that the ring of interments actually girdled the whole temple.¹ Even as the evidence stands it is clear that the circular monument was a *locus consecratus*, and that the dead were brought thither to be buried within its influence. In no other way can their peculiar disposition be explained. Of the race to which they belonged nothing is known.

The fashion of disposing the dead radially about some central point has been observed at Newport Pagnell, Bucks, at Cuddesdon, Oxon, at Shoeburyness, Essex,² and also in the great barrow at Driffield, Yorks, the only difference being that in the latter case the position of the individual body was reversed, and each lay with its head toward the centre.³ These cases are set down as Anglo-Saxon, and a parallel is found in a Frankish (Merovingian) cemetery at Vendhuile, Aisne, in France.⁴ In Anglesey the same disposition was noticed in burials around the Capel y Towyn, Holyhead, which stands upon 'a mound of sand 30 ft. high,' at the edge of the sea'⁵; and in Ireland it occurred at St. John's Point, co. Down, where the burials were arranged in a double concentric circle, the central object being a pillar-stone.⁶ In this case the interments lay within the graveyard of the ancient chapel of St. John. On the north side of the church of St. Andrew at Ford, Sussex, was found in 1899 a 'singular interment. Six skeletons placed in a circle, the heads innermost, and radiating from a centre, were found at about 5 ft. below the present level of the churchyard. No pottery or other remains to give a clue to the age of the interments were found with them.'⁷ The writers who record this fact

¹ If they did, then the number must have been very great, for the burials, 80 yards distant from a temple of the dimensions given, will represent a circle with a diameter of at least 650 ft., and a circumference of 681 yards, enclosing an area of $7\frac{1}{2}$ acres. Closely packed as Dr. Toope describes them, their number must have been upwards of 2,000 bodies, with ample allowance for any avenue of approach.

² *V.C.H. Bucks*, i, 204; *V.C.H. Essex*, i, 327.

³ Mortimer, *Forty Years' Researches*, p. 276. These were all secondary interments intruded upon an earlier barrow covering a

large cist-vaen. 'In another mound in the same district a similar irregularity of orientation was observed' (Thurlow Leeds, *Archæology of A.-S. Settlements*, p. 75).

⁴ E. Fleury, *Antiquités et Monuments du Département de l'Aisne*, pt. ii, p. 131.

⁵ Murray's *North Wales*, p. 76.

⁶ W. G. Wood-Martin, *Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland*, ii, 313.

⁷ A. H. Peat and L. C. Halsted, *Churches of West Sussex* (Chichester, 1912), p. 90. The name of Ford is one amongst several pieces of evidence that the Roman coast-road from Chichester eastward to Portslade crossed the Arun at this point. In 1890

hazard the 'obvious supposition' that the persons here buried were 'not Christian, and therefore either Celts or heathen Saxons.' W. G. Wood-Martin similarly calls non-Christian those found at St. John's Point. But it is by no means certain that the graves in either case were not Christian, for the same arrangement was found in an admittedly Christian burial-ground in the Greek East. 'During the explorations at Ephesus the graves in the Christian cemetery were found radiating from a central point, which was supposed to have been the tomb of S. John the Evangelist.'¹ Here is proof that at some very early period Christianity practised this radial disposition of the dead, and the question arises whether the similar discoveries elsewhere be not all or mostly of early Christian date, especially as so many of them are upon sites still Christian. The notable lack of any grave-furniture points in the same direction. In Glen Malin, Glencolumbkille, in the extreme west of Donegal, are the remains of a group of 'twelve large stone-covered tombs arranged as the *radii* of a circle' about some central monument now vanished, which is conjectured to have been a dolmen.² Tomb of some sort it almost certainly was, and probably Christian also, for Glencolumbkille, as the name imports, was the scene of very early Christian activities. That the *umbilicus* of a Christian cemetery should take the form of a dolmen or of a cromlech is only 'improbable' because it has never been suggested.

On Meayll (or Mule³) Hill, near Port Erin, Isle of Man, was a circle of 18 cists arranged in six groups of three cists each, each group so disposed as to form the figure of the Greek *tau*. The cross-line of the *tau* (two cists) lay upon the periphery of a circle of 50 ft. in diameter, while the stem (one cist only) was directed outwards, so that the plan of the whole was that of a ship's steering-wheel with six grips. Within the cists were a number of urns, the burials having been all cremated. The whole series had originally been covered with a broad vallum of

(*Sussex Arch. Coll.* xliii, 105) were still to be seen traces of the causeway leading to the river. So the churchyard lay, as usual, close beside an old road.

¹ *Journal R.S.A. Ireland*, 1879, p. 106.

² C. P. Kains-Jackson, *Our Ancient Monuments*, p. 82.

³ The word means 'promontory'; cf. Mull of Cantyre (A. W. Moore, *Manx Place-names*).

earth, with a gap or gaps for entrance-ways at the north-west (? and on the south). In the centre had stood something not now determinable, apparently either a menhir or another cist.¹ The cists, it is said, were not of a construction to have been free-standing, and if they were covered with an earthen vallum, the whole must have presented once again the familiar circle surrounding some central feature. Whether the dead were Christian or pagan is another question. Christianity, it is true, strove early to abolish cremation, but there must have been a transition period during which cremation held its own, at least locally, and the evidence that it did so will be forthcoming in the sequel. The name of *Rhullick*² points rather to the graves being Christian, as does the seeming absence of all grave-furniture, and possibly also the peculiar *tau*-pattern of their disposition. The circular figure tells us nothing at all as to the creed of those interred within it.

Excellent examples of yet another type of sepulchral ring are provided by Crichtie and Tuack in Aberdeenshire,³ both of which have been carefully explored. They are small, that at Crichtie measuring 50 ft. in diameter, that at Tuack but 24 ft., but each is surrounded by a formidable fosse 12 ft. wide. At Crichtie access is provided to the inner 'island' by 9-ft. interruptions of the fosse at the north and the south of the circle. At Tuack the fosse is continuous. Around the edge of the 'island' had been set in each case six pillar-stones, and a seventh stood in the centre. Excavation proved the presence of a large number of burials in each case. At Crichtie there were interments, one or more, at the foot of each pillar-stone, and others near the middle, while in the actual centre was a pit containing a carefully made cist-burial filled in with stones, in which last the central pillar-stone had been bedded.

Broadly speaking, the evolution of the round barrow

¹ See *Trans. Biolog. Soc. Liverpool*, Oct. 13, 1893; *The Manx Note Book*, no. xii (Oct., 1887), p. 157. Fergusson (p. 158) gives a cut and plan, scoffing at an earlier plan to be found in *Arch. Cambr.*, 1866, 3rd ser. xii, p. 54. Borlase (*Nenia Cornubiae*) says that the spot is called

Rhullick y Lagg Shliggah, 'The Graveyard of the Valley of Broken Slates.'

² *I.e. reliquiae*, 'relics.'

³ Anderson, *Scotland in Pagan Times (Bronze Age)*, lecture ii; Stewart, *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, i, pp. xx, xxi.

is from an abruptly conical mound, in which height was the most noticeable feature, to a symmetrical circular enclosure, of which the outstanding feature was not height but area. The mound becomes always less a mound, the circle always more and more a circle. If we find Romans building barrows of the older types, as at Bartlow, Anglo-Saxons doing the like at Taplow, and Danes following suit, these are either conscious reversions to the older type, or the work of peoples who had not advanced far in the path of barrow-evolution.

The evolution was attended by a constantly increasing economy of labour. The great central grave-mound becomes gradually less lofty and finally disappears altogether. Fosse and vallum become always more formal and less real. There is the same difference between the earlier and the later barrows as between Avebury with its 40-ft. fosse and Stonehenge with its merely symbolical *limes*. The huge megaliths tend to disappear. In the last stage of the evolution the flat ring-barrow and the disc-barrow pass into the urn-field. But even here the primordial symbol of the circle long remained: the individual interments are laid in carefully circular graves, or grouped in circular clusters; in the last resort the ashes are inurned in a circular vessel. The Roman may now and then have used a square vessel, but not so the Celt. In matters which concerned sepulture the 400 years of the Roman *régime* left the Celtic fashion almost unaltered. After the Roman had departed the Celt went on in his old way, burying his dead always within the same ancient circular *limes*,¹ and the Saxon, with whom such matters had apparently been heretofore of no particular moment, so soon as he came to adopt a formulated religion, adopted also the Celtic sepulchral formulae. Latin Christianity's efforts of 1000 years could not wholly eradicate these, for so late as 1723 Stukeley could assert that 'in many places . . . the people bury their dead in or near' the 'Druidical circles.'²

¹ Amongst the multitude of grave-monuments at North Moytura, co. Mayo, appear sporadically eccentric forms such as are frequent in Scandinavian cemeteries, e.g. triangular burial-places (W. P. Wood-Martin, *Rude Stone Monuments of Ireland*,

p. 176). Such cases are, however, of the extremest rarity in the British Isles, far too few to affect the general argument here advanced.

² *Stonehenge*, p. 3.

CHAPTER IV.

ORIGIN OF THE SEPULCHRAL RING.

The Circle symbolical of the Hut—The Round Hut in Greece— $\theta\acute{o}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ and $\pi\rho\upsilon\tau\alpha\nu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu$ —The Round Hut in Rome—The ‘Aedes Vestae’—Plutarch on the Foundation of Rome—The ‘Ius Municipiorum’—The prehistoric Hut and Pit-dwelling—The Penannular Ring and the buried Circle—The Barrow modelled on the Hut—The Peristalith—The ‘Cup-and-Ring’ Mark—A symbol of the Grave—Developed to the Wheeled Cross—The Tomb and the Medieval Chantry—Irish Shrines and Dolmens—‘Coped’ Tomb-stones.

The circular *limes* marking the resting-place of the dead man was derived from the form of the dwelling in which he had lived. The grave-circle is the same figure as the hut-circle, and the primitive round barrow or cairn was the contemporary round hut translated into earth and stone.¹

That this was the origin of the round barrow has often been suggested. ‘The Long Barrow is modelled on the long-galleried cave,’ writes Edward Clodd,² and continues : ‘the Round Barrows are modelled upon the hut-circles or pit-dwellings,’ for ‘among all barbaric peoples the home of the dead has been a copy of his dwelling when alive.’³ Those who have noticed this parallelism between hut and barrow appear, however, to have fixed their attention chiefly upon the elevation, as architects would say—the mound standing up against the sky just as did the bee-hive

¹ The Irish term for the true tumulus *as duma*, says Sullivan (O’Curry, *Manners and Customs*, i, cccxxxv), a rounded ‘mound or hill having a chamber or *dum* (cf. Latin *domus*) containing the ashes or bodies of the dead.’

² *Story of Primitive Man*, p. 110.

³ *Ibid.* p. 104. So Sir William Boyd Dawkins, *Early Man in Britain*, p. 338 :

‘The tombs were the habitation of the dead,

in which they were supposed to live.’ See the whole of ch. viii of the same book. Herbert Spencer (*Principles of Sociology*, p. 273) wrote that ‘the most primitive of burial practices is probably that where the dead man is simply buried in his own hut.’ The tomb of the late emperor of Korea (*ob.* 1919) is a large circular hut of straw covered with a high roof of thatch (see *Illus. Lond. News*, 17 May, 1919), almost an exact reproduction of a Gaulish hut.

hut.¹ They have paid less attention to what architects would term the plan. Yet the foundation is surely as important as the superstructure.

The remark that 'all barbaric peoples' have sought to make the home of the dead resemble that of the living requires qualification at both ends. It is not true of all barbaric peoples, nor is it true of barbaric peoples only. Many peoples in no sense barbaric have continued so to fashion and furnish the tombs of their dead for long centuries after their emergence into the full flower of civilisation. The chambered and painted tombs of Egypt and of Etruria, the bee-hive tombs of Mycenae with their elaborate decorations, the elaborate architectural rock-tombs of Lycia, can scarcely be called the work of barbarians, to say nothing of other such monuments of Greece and Rome. Yet even those most famous of all Roman tombs, the burial-places of Caecilia Metella and of Hadrian, go back to the archetypal round hut as surely as does the humblest round barrow.²

The typical Gaulish round hut, as represented upon the column of Antoninus, was identical in plan, if not also in elevation, with the typical British dwelling at any time before the supersession of the round hut by the square under influences part Roman and part Saxon. That the Roman in historical times built square requires no proof: he literally thought in squares, as when he centuriated almost half of ancient Europe. The Saxon also built square, for he was a carpenter, and carpenters find the rectangular form more easily dealt with than the round. The square, or something approximating thereto, was occasionally developed even by the British Celts, as in the case of the lake-dwellers³ of Meare; but as the evidence

¹ Cf. the remark of Vitruvius (ii, 1, 5) about the Phrygians. They hollowed out *tumuli naturales* for huts, and heaped upon them hillocks (*grumos*) of thatch.

² There appear to have existed three types of house in very early times—the round, the oval, and the rectangular—in the area of the Eastern Mediterranean (Miss B. C. Rider, *The Greek House*); but there is no question that in the west of Europe the round was the prevailing type well into historical times.

³ Bulleid, *Glastonbury Lake Village*, i,

pp. 56, etc. Rectangular huts are figured side by side with round ones on the column of Antoninus, but these were probably due to Roman influence. They are mentioned, but as exceptional only, by A. Grenier, *Hab. Gauloises et Villes Romaines*, p. 26, etc. Some of the circular pits (*mares, mardelles*) representing the dwellings of Romanised Gauls (*Mediomatrics*) in the vicinity of Metz, attain a diameter of as much as 40 metres (130 ft.) and had roofs supported by wooden pillars. Such buildings illustrate the stubborn persistence of the circular

shows those people also to have been exceptionally skilful carpenters, the fact is not surprising, especially as the peculiar circumstances of their case forbade the use of any other material than timber. If the Greek and the Roman had as a general rule early abandoned the round form, that again was the result of their long experience as masons, which taught them that the rectangular form—except in the case of dry building with undressed stones—was easier as well as more economical; but that both these peoples adhered to the circular plan, not in some of their tombs only, but even in some of their temples and in certain specific details of their homes, is sufficient proof that at an earlier period it had been their customary mode of building.¹

The Greeks early developed the rectilineal house and temple (*ναός*), but they preserved to the end of classical times the older circular temple (*θόλος*), and it is significant that the latter was reserved almost exclusively for the ritual of ancestor-worship, whether that of the family within their house, or that of the community in their *prytaneum*.

In the classical period the *prytaneum* was the sign visible of the Greek self-governing community, a *locus consecratus* dedicated to the goddess Hestia,² whose perpetual fire burned always upon its hearth. That which made it holy ground was the presence, actual or symbolical, of the relics of the community's founder. It was at once his grave and his *heroön* or chapel. So long as those relics were safe, so long might the community hope to prosper.³ The qualities which were his in life,

plan in the face of very obvious inconveniences. Strabo (§ 218) says that the wine-casks of Cisalpine Gaul were 'bigger than houses,' from which it seems to follow that the round hut was still common in that region in his days, and that such huts were usually small.

¹ For a striking illustration of the difference between the rectangular and the circular plans, see the anecdote related by Rev. John Mackenzie in *Ten Years North of the Orange River*, p. 485. He was building at Shoshong a rectangular kitchen, and the novelty of the plan struck a Makalaka native. It reminded him of the ruins of buildings which he had seen at Zimbabwe and on the Tatie river,

and drew from him the inference that those likewise must have been the handiwork of white men. In his book Mackenzie, being a white man, did not think it needful to mention that his kitchen was rectangular, but he emphasised the fact when relating the anecdote in person. (Information of Dr. Eliot Curwen).

² One of her titles was Prytanis or Prytanea.

³ When Theseus desired to put an end to the disunion of Attica, he suppressed (*κατέλυσε*) the *prytanea* of the other 11 independent communities, and provided all with one *prytaneum* in Athens. Plutarch, *Theseus*, 24; Thucydides ii, 15.

remained with his dust in death, a very present help to his people. In the city of Megara¹ the founder's tomb stood actually within the council-chamber of the government, that they might have the benefit of his influence in their deliberations. This, it appears, was a somewhat exceptional case,² and commonly the founder's tomb, the *prytaneum*, stood in the *agora*, that the hero's spirit might guard and guide the whole of his people impartially. There were local variations of course, and such inconsistencies as were bound to come with long history. Athens of the classical time had her *prytaneum*, where the Prytans messed together with certain others so privileged, and where they entertained the emissaries of foreign states; but the bones of the city's first founder Erechtheus lay within the Erechtheum on the Acropolis, and those of its second founder Theseus, when at long last brought home from Scyros, were enshrined in a special temple. Lesser towns had no such perplexities. Each had one *prytaneum*, and it was commonly a *θόλος*.³ That of Athens was generally spoken of as *ἡ θόλος*.⁴ The *prytaneum* was primarily the moot (*βουλευτήριον*), the place of council. It was also a court of law.⁵ Livy summed its functions in a single phrase, *penetrare urbis*,⁶ 'The city's holy of holies.'

The Roman also retained the older circular plan in certain of the more elemental parts of his very mixed religion. To the end of time the Roman tomb was as frequently circular as not. To the end of its history the temple of Vesta, eldest of divinities—she was the Greek Hestia, alike in name and in function, for she was the special guardian of the communal hearth and the eternal fire—was a circular building. So also was that of Hercules, a god whose real antiquity has been disguised under a quasi-Greek name.

¹ The magistrates there bore the style of *Aesymnetae*, and in Homer (*Od.* viii, 258) this is the style of the stewards of the *ἱερός κυκλος*, the Achean equivalent of the *prytaneum*.

² Pausanias (ii, 43, 2) gives the explanation. An oracle declared *τοὺς Μεγαρέας εὖ πράξειν ἢν μετὰ τῶν πλειόνων βουλευσῶνται*—they must take 'the majority' into the councils; and the Megarians understood 'the majority' to signify their dead. In this case, therefore, the founder's tomb

was regarded as symbolical of *all* their deceased forbears, their collective ancestry.

³ At Olympia the building by Curtius identified with the Gaeum (Paus. v, 14, 8) was a circular chamber, as was the Philippeum built in the fourth century B.C. See Miss Jane Harrison, *Themis*, pp. 258-7.

⁴ Plato, *Apol. Socr.*, 32 C; Pausan. i, 5, 1.

⁵ *Τὸ ἐν πρυτανείῳ δικαστήριον*.

⁶ Livy, xli, 20.

Such circular buildings were not the oldest form of Roman places of worship, for there had been a time when that people reared no buildings whatever to their gods, sharing the feeling of the ancient Germans, the Gauls, and even the Persians,¹ that the gods were not to be confined within walls and roofs. There were, however, holy places, and these were commonly—perhaps invariably—circular. Even in historical Rome there remained archaic survivals of the kind, such as the *Lacus Curtius*, the *puteal*, and the *bidental*, all grouped, it is to be noted, in or about the *forum Romanum*, the very heart of the city. Another was probably the *sacellum Larium*, for a *sacellum* was a circular *locus consecratus* having no roof.² In rural Italy, where the old order lingered longest, there were few *templa*, but many *sacella*; indeed the normal holy place of the *pagani* was commonly neither *templum* nor *sacellum*, but merely *lucus*, ‘a grove.’ Cicero cites from the Twelve Tables the law: *constructa a patribus delubra in urbibus habento, lucos in agris habento et Larum sedes*.³ There were famous and venerable *luci* even of Jupiter himself down to the days of the empire. Founding a new city in Sicily hard by the barrow of the dead Anchises, Aeneas, after marking out its bounds, proceeds to institute the regular cult of the dead Anchises as its *conditor*:—

Tumuloque sacerdos

Et lucus late sacer additur Anchiseo.⁴

So there was a priest and a ritual before there was any structural temple. The passage suggests also what was the origin of such ‘groves’: planted about burial-places—as indeed they still are planted in Italy—in the first instance to safeguard the spot from possible desecration, in the upshot they came themselves to be objects of veneration, when the barrow was perhaps forgotten. It was not needful to plant trees to safeguard such a spot within the walls, but every *urbs* must have at least one *delubrum*. As Cicero understood it, the word *urbs* meant a settlement ‘with ordered communal shrines and ordered communal places of meeting.’⁵ Whether he felt the two

¹ Cicero *de Legg.* ii, 10, 26.

² Festus.

³ Cicero *de Legg.* ii, 8, 19; cf. *ibid.* c. 27.

⁴ Vergil *Aen.* v, 760.

⁵ Cicero *de Rep.* i, 26, 41, *urbem . . . delubris distinctam spatiisque communibus*. For this use of *distinctus*, cf. Ausonius, *Ordo Nobil. Urb.* xiv, 14.

things to be identical, or originally to have been so, is not apparent; but there is evidence that it had once been so. Either way the 'place of meeting' and the 'shrine' were equally essential to the 'city,' matters of the first importance.

That the form of the temple of Vesta was derived from that of the primitive hut is a truism of classical archaeology,¹ and the memory of the fact was preserved to the end in its more correct name of 'Vesta's house' (*aedes Vestae*). The close association of the peculiar form with the most venerated of their divinities reflects the old-fashioned Romans' deep-seated regard for the sanctity of the home²; but that the same circular plan was once of wider prevalence is proved by its still surviving in connexion with certain other odds and ends of the 'elder faiths' of that people, shreds of beliefs far antedating the later influences—Etruscan, Greek and others—which so quickly came to dominate Rome. The temple of Dea Diva in the Arval grove was circular. So was that of Semo Sancus. So was the *bidental*. Circular was also the cryptic pit, the *mundus*, which was in ritual—possibly at one period in actuality also—regarded as the centre of the city.³

Plutarch's description⁴ of the procedure followed in marking out and consecrating the Romulean city is suggestive. The steps were four: firstly to send (to Etruria) for properly qualified persons to direct the ceremony 'according to the written rule'; secondly to dig a circular pit (*mundus*)⁵; thirdly to demarcate by a

¹ Guhl and Koner (*Life of the Greeks and Romans*, 3rd ed. English trans., p. 319) say the suggestion was first made by Weiss. Round temples, says Servius (on *Aeneid* ix, 408), were usually dedicated to Vesta, Diana, Hercules and Mercury. Cf. Vitruvius iv, 8, 3.

² W. Warde Fowler speaks of such circular temples as *iboli*. *Roman Festivals*, p. 282: 'The whole house certainly had a religious importance, like everything else in intimate relation to man . . . but the door and the hearth (Janus and Vesta) were of special importance, as the folk-lore of every people fully attests.' Cf. Jacob Grimm: 'What we conceive of as a house . . . passes, the further we go back into early times, into the idea of holy ground.'

The hearth was the altar to which the house was the temple. This is true both of Greeks and of Romans, and 'in the more spacious (Greek) dwellings of a later age it was transferred . . . to a small private chapel, vaulted so as to resemble the *θόλος*, the dome-shaped *εστία* of the State' (*Smith's Dict. Class. Antiqs.*, i, 868a). Sir J. G. Frazer (*Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, 1919) has a whole chapter upon the 'Keepers of the Threshold.'

³ *Smith's Dict. Class. Antiqs.* ii, 773 b., 787 a; Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, pp. 140, 211; Ovid, *Fasti* vi, 261, sqq.; Plutarch, *Romulus*, c. xi.

⁴ Plutarch, *l.c.*

⁵ It is customary to explain the *mundus* as symbolical of the city's store-chamber.

plough-furrow¹ the line of the city's wall (*pomoerium*) around the *mundus* 'as it were a circle'; and fourthly to lift the plough and carry it bodily over the space where was to be a gateway. Thus there was no lawful means of entering or leaving save by the gates expressly provided, and the sufficient reason for the legendary death of Remus was that he had overleapt the sacred *limes*.² Plutarch may, as Russell Forbes maintains,³ have made a mistake in attributing to Romulus ceremonies which belonged to another date, and he is certainly wrong in saying that Romulus sent to Etruria for properly qualified persons to help him,⁴ but there is no question that he conceived of the Romulean city as circular, whereas the later *pomoerium* was rectangular approaching to square. Clearly there was a fusion of the rituals of two distinct races: the rectangular plan of *Roma Quadrata* was that of a people who conquered the older Latini. The sacred figure of the latter was the circle, and the original Rome was a circular ringwork⁵ on the *Mons Palatinus*. Tradition could recall others like it on the Quirinal, Capitoline and Janiculan⁶ hills. Under the influence of the conquering race, perhaps also of the later conquest by the Etruscans, the square superseded the circle, and the augural *templum*

It is true that Plutarch says (*Romulus*, xi) that there were cast into it 'the first-fruits of all things accounted good and necessary,' but he adds that each man cast into it also 'a little of the soil of his own land'; a ceremony which is strongly suggestive of a sepulchral origin and at once recalls the handful of dust which mourners still cast upon a dead man's coffin.

¹ Cf. Vergil, *Aen.* v, 755, *Aeneas urbem designat atrato*. According to Plutarch the share was of bronze.

² ἅπαν τὸ τετχος ἱερὸν πλὴν τῶν πυλῶν νομίζουσι. Plut. *Romulus*, xi. Cf. *ibid.* *Ouaest. Rom.* 27. Some barrows are provided with a 'gate' where the surrounding *limes* (fosse or other) is broken; later barrows commonly show no such 'gate.' Perhaps there is no significance in the fact beyond a mere advance in the artistic sense, but more probably it points to a change in the manner of regarding the ghost. Originally the ghost must be free to come and go, as in life, and was therefore provided with a 'gate.' Later arose the feeling that it were better the ghost should not wander, and the gate was closed.

³ *Journ. Brit. Arch. Assoc.*, Dec. 1917. He shows that the term *mundus* was applied in classical Rome to 'a circular ritualistic pit on the *Comitium* in the Forum Romanum, sacred to the deities of the underworld,' and opened thrice only in the year—24 Aug., 5 Oct., 8 Nov.—'to enable the shades of the departed to pass from the lower to the upper world.' There is, however, nothing to show that the older consecration-pit of the earlier Palatine city was not called by the same name. The *Comitium*, it will be recalled, included also the *lapis niger*, the founder's tomb.

⁴ Dion. Hal. (i, 88) seems to make the same mistake.

⁵ The old-fashioned derivations of *urbis* from the root seen in *orbis* (see Varro in Servius on *Aen.* i, 12) and of *polis* from that seen in *πόλις*, seem to have been abandoned; but it is a fact that the original 'town' of Greeks, Latins, and Celts alike, was circular, as also that of the Saxons when it at last took coherent shape.

⁶ Dion. Hal. ii, 1; Vergil *Aen.* viii, 355-8, and scholiast thereon.

came to be normally of square plan¹; but there is abundant evidence that at one period the Roman people, or one element in that mixed people, had regarded the circle as the symbol of sanctity, exactly as did the Celts of Britain.

The entire settlement, large or small, was sacred, just as was each house composing it. This indeed is the reason given in Roman law for prohibiting all burials within the walls, viz., *ne sanctum municipiorum ius polluat*.² Each settlement required to be stabilised by the relics of its founder and safeguarded by unflinching worship at his tomb; but no lesser and later mortal might claim the right of burial within its walls.³ It was not the least among the changes wrought by Christianity that it entirely reversed the latter rule, substituting for the monarchic isolation of the oecist the democratic equality of all the faithful dead, and for the symbolical virtues of the founder's tomb the visible and personal bond of the churchyard.

The accustomed terms 'hut-circle' and 'pit-dwelling' together sufficiently emphasise the two essential features of the native Celtic hut: it was circular in plan, and it was more or less sunk into the ground like a pit. The circularity would seem to have been to all intents invariable. The depth of the pit would vary with the situation and the character of the soil, but rarely is there to be found one of which the floor was the natural level of the ground. The materials necessarily varied with the locality: if stone was abundant, it was used to make at least the footings of the circular wall, and in some cases to raise the wall to a considerable height, or even (as in the case of the bee-

¹ Therefore a circular temple, its peculiar sanctity notwithstanding, could not be a *locus inauguratus*; and for this reason again it could not serve as a meeting place of the later Senate (Servius on *Aen.* vii, 153; Gellius xiv, 7). The facts again point to the grafting of a newer cult of the square upon the older cult of the circle; and all Roman tradition declares that the former, which belonged essentially to the augural science, was a late introduction, from Etruria or elsewhere.

² *Codex Justinianus* iii, 44.

³ Instances to the contrary are rare. At Tarentum an entire ward of the city

was occupied as a cemetery (Polyb. viii, 30), and Megara (cf. above, p.) allowed intramural burial to those who fell fighting the Persians (Pausan. ii, 43, 2, with Sir John Frazer's *Commentary*, vol. ii, p. 533). Such special exceptions were allowed even in Rome, but very rarely; Cic. *De Legg.* ii, 23. When the mob insisted (44 B.C.) on burning the body of Julius in the *forum*, it was to emphasise their regard for him as the second founder of the state, and as much entitled to divine honours as Romulus Quirinus himself. They therefore burnt it 'in the mids of the most holy places' (North's Plutarch, *Julius Caesar*).

hive huts of Cornwall and Devonshire, Wales, Scotland and Ireland) to complete the whole building. Where stone was not available, the ring-wall would be of turves, or of wicker-work plastered with clay, or even of planks,¹ and the roof covered with grass, straw, fern, reeds, turves, skins, or whatever material could be had, laid over poles or boughs, which were commonly driven into the footings and bent over to meet in the centre. Sometimes there was a centre-post, and if the hut was a large one this was necessary.² There would be countless variations of detail according to the builder's whim and the facilities at his disposal, but in respect of plan and elevation there was none save in the dimensions. The diameter varied from as little as 4 ft. to as much as 20 ft., or even more in the case of stone-built 'bee-hives'; the height must have varied in more or less close proportion inversely with the depth. A deep pit would require a less lofty wall and roof, a shallower pit demanded a higher roof. And always the ring-wall was breached at one point to provide a doorway. The hearth was frequently inside—a few flagstones, or their equivalent, laid on the floor of the hut, the smoke escaping through the roof or by the door. Some huts, provided with a sort of lobby beside the entrance, where was the hearth, show the growth of a taste for less vitiated air. Probably in most cases, when the weather allowed it, the cooking was done outside. Other indications of advancing refinement are to be seen in the provision of a sort of raised dais or sleeping-bunk at one side of the hut, in the occasional presence of rudimentary partition-walls, and in the provision of means for ensuring efficient drainage of the floor, a matter in which the builders shewed no mean degree of ingenuity and resource. The most usual method was to dig a small fosse all round the outside, exactly as is done to-day about a military tent.

¹ So says Strabo (σάβιδες), § 197, speaking of the Gauls.

² Strabo (§ 197) remarks upon the great thickness of the roofs, the size of the huts, and the domical shape. Evidently the conical roof was the striking feature of the whole, and in districts where there was no stone to make walls or footings, the roof probably sloped down to the very ground, so that there was very little else of the

hut to be seen. At a little distance the whole would resemble nothing so much as a mound of earth, a tumulus. This, says Tacitus (*Germ.* c. xvi), was just the appearance of the huts of some of the Germanic tribes. Parrot (*Journey to Ararat*, pp. 89-90) described the villages in the vicinity of Mt. Ararat as looking exactly like heaps of rubbish. This was in 1829, their inhabitants indifferently Christians and Muhammadans.

In a very few cases, in localities where stone was the material employed, the hut assumes a plan approximating to the rectangular, but this is always the exception, and probably due to some accident such as lack of room. A few such sub-rectangular huts are to be found within the Welsh hill-fortress of Tre'r Ceiri, Carnarvonshire, apparently of a late date.

The description doubtless sounds but comfortless to modern ears. There is no doubt at all that such huts were in reality very comfortable. English charcoal-burners build them to this day, and until the close of the nineteenth century they were in common use in many of the Scottish islands amongst the crofters, who found nothing to quarrel with in the lack of light or the smell of peat-smoke.¹ The Welsh hills are covered with the remains of such dwellings. They are usually styled 'Irishmen's huts' (*cytiau Gwyddelod*) and attributed to a remote antiquity. Some of them are very old, and without doubt others—the majority perhaps—are relatively modern; and there is nothing Irish about them beyond the fact that precisely the same kind of huts (*clochauns*) was built, indeed is still built, by the Irish also. It was built by all Celts, Goidelic and Brythonic, wherever they went.

Presented in the form of an architect's plan the typical Celtic hut would figure as a circular area (the pit, or sunken floor) surrounded by another circle (the wall); and if the drawing were accurate, this circle would be penannular, the break showing the position of the single doorway. If the artist wished further to show the presence of a surrounding drainage-trench, he would add another circle, likewise penannular, for the trench would be interrupted in front of the doorway.

Now it is a remarkable fact, noticed again and again by all the more careful students of barrows, that the sepulchral circle, especially when associated with the older types of barrows, *i.e.* with the 'bowl' and the 'bell,' is frequently interrupted at one point. The circle is penannular. Dr. Greenwell, remarking that he had always found this to be the case where the circle—fosse or wall or peristalith—was buried within the mass of the

¹ Mitchell, *Past in the Present*.

barrow, goes on to add that 'this incompleteness appears to be almost invariable in connexion with sepulchral circles.'¹ In the case of very large barrows or circles there may be two such breaks, but in some form or other the breach is always present.² It has no structural significance, and it cannot be explained as meant to secure drainage, seeing that it is frequently found in the form of a penannular wall or a peristalith, and that even when presented as a fosse, it is commonly buried under the mound. It cannot well be explained as a 'ghost-hedge' to keep the spirit of the dead man from wandering abroad, for in that case there would be no break at all. There being no means of explaining it otherwise we must suppose that it was a survival, the symbol of something which had once been a reality; and the only thing which it can be shown to resemble is the penannular ring of the hut-circle, the familiar dwelling wherein the dead man had lived his allotted days.

A surveyor's plan of the typical Celtic hut roofed, and complete, would be identically the same as that representing a 'bowl' barrow. If the hut were provided with an external drainage-trench, the figure would be precisely that of a 'bell' barrow with its surrounding fosse. To show in his plan the position of the doorway, he would have no other means than by representing the wall and trench as penannular. Only the lettering at the foot of the drawing would tell whether it represented a barrow or a hut.

Waiving the mass of analogues presented by non-European peoples, it must suffice to cite that offered by the Bedawin Arabs of the Belka and of Sinai. These tribes show small concern for the general dead, making exception only of those whom they esteem as sheikhs or as 'saints.' Such are buried under circular cairns, or within ringworks of diameter ranging from a few feet to as much as 125 yards; and in its ultimate development the actual grave is covered

¹ *British Barrows*, p. 6. On p. 8 he has some inconclusive remarks upon the possible explanation of the fact.

² That the penannular circle was symbolical seems to be proved by the fact that, when composed of isolated stones (a

peristalith), between one pair of such stones is always constructed a rough sort of dry wall, so that instead of an actually continuous circular wall breached at one point by an entrance-gap, we have a free-standing circle interrupted at one point by a solid wall (Greenwell, *loc. cit.*).

by a square domed chapel, the precise analogue of the rectangular church which was (and is) the final development of the circular burial-place in Britain. But what is here of most immediate interest is the fact that the most rudimentary of such Arab ringworks almost invariably shows a formal doorway in the fashion of a trilithon, though its lintel may be no more than a foot above the ground. As the smaller ringworks (diams. 6 ft. or so) are occasionally roofed over with poles and straw, it may at first sight be impossible to distinguish the graves of the dead from the huts of the living, or from the small circular rickles of stone in which the wandering tribes make their beds of reeds and grass. Yet so completely sacred are these slight enclosures that the Bedawin confidently leave within them their ploughs and other implements of agriculture when moving, possibly for many months, to their seasonal pasture-grounds elsewhere.¹

As has been said above, some barrows, despite the denudation of centuries, still preserve a remarkable steepness of outline, only to be explained on the assumption that they were, at the time of building, literally roofed with turves, exactly as were many of the huts they represented. Most of them have, however, naturally wasted considerably, but without doubt many of these 'bowls' and 'bells,' when first reared, bore in elevation a more than faint likeness to the huts themselves. There was, it must be remembered, no standard height for roofs in those days, the elevation varying not with the locality only and the geology, but also with the rank, resources, and energy of the individual. Some of the German tribes lived in underground dug-outs so deeply sunk as to give no clue to their whereabouts, the entrance being concealed under a heap of dung. If the denizens of such habitations were consistent, they must have buried their dead under grave-mounds of no more distinguished or distinguishable outline, and Tacitus declares that they did so.² It is reasonably certain that there were wide local differences even within the narrow limits of Britain.

¹ See Guy le Strange in Schumacher's *Beyond the Jordan* (1887), pp. 301, 312; Conder, *Heib and Moab, passim*; Merrill, *East of the Jordan* (1881), p. 183, etc.; *Geog. Journal*, 1868, p. 243.

² *Germania* c. xvi. Their barrows were mere mounds of turf (*sepulcrum caespes erigit*) of no great size, for 'they accounted a large mound no compliment to the dead' (*ibid.* c. xxvii).

As the individual hut, so the aggregation of huts which formed a village or a town reflected also the same circular plan, if with less precision. In Hod Hill Camp, Dorset, are still to be seen small and perfectly circular ringworks—shallow fosses and feeble valla—surrounding each the sites of one, two, or three circular huts. Scattered over the country wherever cultivation has spared them, and notably on the uplands of Cornwall, Wales, or other remote parts of the island, are larger circular *enceintes* enclosing the remains of circular dwellings, pits or ‘bee-hives.’ Some of these are by no means prehistoric, while others unquestionably are so. The British village on Rotherley Down, Cranborne Chase, has for nucleus a very regular circular precinct 120 ft. in diameter,¹ and like features are to be seen at Woodcuts, at Oakley Lane near Farnham, on South Tarrant Hinton Down, and indeed in most of the settlements of Dorsetshire. Strabo tells us that the British *oppidum* was a circular stockade enclosing a collection of temporary huts.² Plateau-forts of the largest kind, like Yarnbury in Wilts, are as a rule circular, and many a hill-top camp carries with it the suggestion of perfect circularity. The suggestion, it is true, is frequently deceptive, but that is usually due to the accidents of contour; and in the case of a British village, as it was impossible to enlarge the nucleus—the circular is the one geometrical figure which cannot be enlarged without destroying it—the additions made from time to time inevitably blurred, ultimately destroyed entirely, the original plan. In Ireland, where there survive more numerous and more perfect specimens of the Celtic settlement than in any other part of the British Isles, the strictly circular plan is so predominant that any other is the exception. Thus just as the ‘bowl’ and ‘bell’ reproduce the individual hut, so the wider spread of the ‘disc’

¹ Pitt-Rivers, *Excavations*, ii, 51.

² Strabo, § 200. His remark that the settlement, and therefore the huts, were but temporary is important. The Celtic hut was not designed apparently to last long, unless indeed it were of stone. Compare what Giraldus Cambrensis says (*Description of Wales*, i, 17) of the huts of the Welsh as late as the twelfth century. To-day one

thinks of a dwelling as something fairly solid and durable, but as late as the seventeenth century the general run of English dwellings, even in the towns, could be pulled down with fire-hooks. There are still certain rights attaching by law to the person who can run up a dwelling between sunset and sunrise. The thing can yet be done—if one refrains from calling in a builder or consulting a County Council.

reproduces the family settlement of several huts, and the ringwork with its two or three contained grave-mounds is the model in earth of the great man's *rath* and its attendant *clochauns*. The familiar Irish type of cemetery called a *killeen*, with its promiscuous graves, may be regarded as carrying the analogy a step further and representing the communal *rath*. It belongs to a time when even the humblest member of the tribe claimed the right of burial in the cemetery of his fellows. The circular graveyards of so many churches of this England of to-day conserve and perpetuate the same tradition of things as they were in the far-off Celtic days. The advent of the building which we call a church, the activities of generations of builders within and of local boards without, the whims of parsons and churchwardens *soi-disant*, the needs of parishes, have conspired to alter, to disguise, and to destroy, the pristine plan of the burial-ground; but wherever there survives a circular churchyard, it is still the time-worn relative of the least considered 'bowl' upon Salisbury Plain, and of those superbly perfect 'discs' that lie almost unknown upon the turf of Oakley Down.

The sepulchral circle of free-standing stones has obviously the same significance as the circular *limes* in any other form. Like the fosse and the vallum it marked holy ground, and its occurrence actually within the mass of the barrow (p. 261) proves that this also was symbolical. In the instances observed by Dr. Greenwell one of the inter-spaces was invariably walled up; later, when it was developed into an independent sepulchral monument, this detail was omitted, and it became a regular circle, a cromlech. Sir William Boyd Dawkins declares that it 'sprang originally from the stones placed round the base of the circular hut.'¹ It certainly symbolised the hut. But both the free-standing circle and the disc-barrow exhibit an advance upon the older penannular fosse. They appear to belong to a later age when, as remarked above, the feeling towards the spirit of the dead had changed and the chief purpose present to the mind of the builders was to keep the ghost in. Such was the supposed virtue of the circle through the subsequent ages, and presumably

¹ *Early Man in Britain*, p. 377.

it was an inherited belief. There is, however, little profit to be got of the supposed workings of other men's minds, least of all when the other men are two thousand years removed in time. Very possibly the omission of the symbolical break in the ring is to be explained as merely the result of conventionalism. Even symbols have their evolution, and their last form is frequently something very unlike the first. There remains the certain fact that the sacred symbol of Celtism, originally the penannular circle, came presently to be the complete circle, and has so remained as the magic circle of astrology down to modern times.

Those various circular natural objects—*echini*, shells of various sorts,¹ and pebbles of flat or spherical form—which are so constantly found in the graves of the dead, are merely so many symbols of the same prehistoric hut. In the cases of 'the shepherd's crown' and of the common limpet-shell the resemblance is strikingly close. Less obvious cases are readily explained: symbolism rapidly declines from strict resemblance, and where 'shepherd's crowns' and limpets were not obtainable, humanity would make shift with something else that was but remotely similar. Commonly the pebbles are not white, but sometimes white quartz was chosen; and as they are found in unquestionably pagan graves, so also are they found with Christian interments.²

It was the ground-plan of the primitive hut again which gave rise to the puzzling figures known, according to the more or less complexity of their design, as cup-markings or cup-and-ring markings. In their simplest form these are mere circular cups, rarely more than 2 or

¹ In some parts of Brittany it is still customary to decorate a grave with shells of *H. Nemoralis* and *H. Hortensis*, a practice quite distinct from that of covering a grave with white shells, as e.g. in Wales. In Belgium, says Edward Lovett, the shells of *H. Pomatia* and *H. Aspersa*, filled with oil, are sometimes set upon graves, and left burning as lamps, 'to keep away evil spirits.'

² See on this matter Evans' *Ancient Stone Implements*, 2nd ed., pp. 467-8. He cites from *Arch. Camb.* 3d. ser., vii, 91, the finding of many skeletons, each accompanied by a white pebble, in the churchyard of

Penmynvdd, Anglesey, remarking 'it is doubtful whether the bones were of Christians or not.' If they were Christians, how came they to be accompanied by the pagan symbol? and if they were not Christians, how came they to be buried in what is now a Christian churchyard? It has been suggested that Holy Church found excuse for this bit of paganism in the text of *Revelation*, ii, 17. The fishermen in many Celtic areas decline to have a white pebble in their boats, just as English sailors refuse to carry a corpse, and for the same reason.

2½ inches in diameter, sunk into the surface of rocks or stones. To this central cup may be added one or two or even more concentric rings, similarly sunk into the stone as circular grooves; and the figure is completed by the addition of a rectilineal groove drawn like the radius of the circle from the centre across the whole series of rings, and projected a few inches beyond. Sometimes this radial line is formed of two closely parallel grooves; and a final elaboration shows these connected by short transverse grooves, so that the whole figure might suggest a Lilliputian ladder giving access to the bull's eye of a (proportionately) Brobdingnagian target. What it actually represents is the circular hut: the central cup is the pit, the concentric rings are the wall and possibly the drainage-trench, and the radial line is the path of entrance¹ breaching the trench and the wall. The whole is precisely what the plan of the typical hut would come to if reduced to a symbol, and as would be expected, it shows on the other hand an over-elaboration with three, four or even five concentric rings, and on the other hand the irreducible minimum of the cup alone. It is to be noticed that, while the rings are multiplied according to the artist's fancy about the single cup-mark, there appears to be no example of several cups within one common enclosing ring.

Some English authorities, Greenwell amongst them, have regarded the designs as representing 'camps.' Dr. Graves believed the Irish examples to represent the typical national *rath*, and when found in groups, he believed those to be intended as charts of the various *raths* in the vicinity. A gamekeeper on the moors about Ilkley, Yorks., where there are many stones having the cup-and-ring marks, fancied them to have been 'intended for some sort of guide-post,' and actually so used them in training his underkeepers.² This was merely a coincidence, if a curious one. They were undoubtedly sign-posts of a kind, but all that they signified was the proximity of a grave or graves. It has been shown that the same *motif* underlay all the

¹ Or possibly the actual ladder which must frequently have provided means of access to the deeper pit-dwellings, such for example as those of Fisherton near Salisbury.

² Information of the late G. G. T. Treherne.

various forms of barrows from the first 'bowl' to the last 'disc,' and it is a fact that these carvings, be they simple or elaborate, are constantly found in the closest association with burials.¹ It is therefore no far-fetched suggestion that both the plan of the barrow and the design of the cup-and-ring markings had one and the same meaning, and denoted the proximity of a grave, a dead man's 'home.' That the marks occur in many cases where no burial has yet been found or recorded is no disproof. That it occurs in very many cases actually within the grave, as for example upon the covering slabs of cists, is very strong evidence indeed for its sepulchral significance. A barrow in Cleveland, Yorks, yielded no less than 150 several stones bearing cup-markings, and another near Saltburn in the same region² produced 24 such stones in association with two interments, as well as a great slab, apparently not covering any grave, decorated with 20 cup-marks and 5 cup-and-ring designs.³ A large number of such stones has been found again upon an Aberdeenshire site in close proximity to an extensive Celtic cemetery and a considerable 'village.'⁴ The marks are found upon the top and the side of the 'altar-stone' of a circle at

¹ In a barrow on Came Down, Dorset (Warne, *Celtic Tumuli of Dorset*, p. 37); in a barrow at Ford, Northumb. (Greenwell, *British Barrows*, p. 408), and in another at Kirk Whelpington (*ibid.* p. 433); in the barrow at Warren, Pembroke, associated with a Christian symbol (below, ch. xx). Examples showing multiple concentric rings are almost confined to Great Britain, Ireland, and Sweden. See Tate, *Anc. Brit. Sculptured Rocks of Northumberland* (1865); Sir J. Y. Simpson, *Archaic Sculpturings* (1867); and various articles in *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*, 1881, 1882; *Journal R.S. Antiq. Ireland* (iv, 349; v, 16, 195; vii, 28); *Journal Brit. Arch. Assoc.*, 1881, 1882. For cases of its occurrence in conjunction with Christian symbols, see Romilly Allen, *Celtic Art*, pp. 58-60. The last-named writer endorses the view that the markings are more probably symbolical than decorative.

² The majority of English examples are from the northern counties.

³ W. Hornsby and R. Stanton in *Yorks. Arch. Journal* (1917), p. 267. The writers ventured the suggestion that such cup-marked stones may have been 'akin to our memorial wreaths . . . sent in from the

neighbourhood as tokens of respect.' This suggestion, which had been previously made by G. Rome Hall (*Arch. Aeliana*, 2d. ser., xii, 279), in no wise contradicts that advanced by the present writer, while it suggests further a new, and very probable, origin for the form of the funeral wreath.

⁴ Rev. F. Gordon in *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* 2d. ser., x. Other examples at New Deer, in an oval grave, and at Fyvie (one upon the covering-slab of a cist and another upon a stone used in building up the end of the grave; see *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* 1913-14, pp. 191-2); yet another at Old Rayne (*ibid.* xli, 126). All these are in Aberdeenshire. Near Grantully in Perthshire, at Clochfoldich, is a single stone bearing 52 plain cup-marks, and at three different localities in the same county occur single stones each bearing 13 such marks (*Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* 1910-11, p. 49). The numbers are curious, 13 being the quarter of 52, and the latter the number of weeks in a lunar year of 13 months. Whether the numbers bear any relation to the traditional monthly sacrifices to the new moon (Hector Boece, *Chronicles*, ii, 3) must be matter of opinion, for at present it is certainly not matter of proof.

Rothiemay in Banffshire.¹ That the cup-and-ring mark is as old as the early Bronze Age is held to be proved by its being found in barrows attributed to that age.² It is to be seen (a cup with two concentric rings) carved upon the two lower corners of a Roman sepulchral tablet found at Birrens in Annandale³; two slabs at Cilurnum bear as many as 10 and 5 cups respectively.⁴ That it continued to be in use until early Christian times is proved by its being found associated with the wheeled cross, as at Warren in Pembrokeshire, carved upon the shafts of sepulchral crosses at Mylor in Cornwall and at Lonan in Isle of Man,⁵ and associated with the Christian cross upon Merovingian sarcophagi at Poitiers. This explains the fact that stones bearing the symbol have been deliberately built into the walls of Christian churches,⁶ which proves that the memory of the symbol's meaning was still green at a date approaching A.D. 1000. In Aberdeenshire occur cup-marks arranged with purposed exactitude in the form of the Latin cross.⁷

Very much the same conclusion is that of W. Paley Baildon,⁸ who sees in these markings the equivalent of the ghost-houses and hut-urns which are a feature of the burial-furniture of many peoples. He does not, however, carry out the analysis of the designs to the logical conclusion, and he would see in the ladder-like *motif* of some of them a reference to the hill-side terraces (lynchets) upon which the dead man may have lived.

In Wakeman's *Survey of Inismurray* are given several illustrations of very early slabs, altar-stones and others,

¹ *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* xxxvii, 136. In *ibid.* xl, p. 206, it is said that such marks had to date (1906) been found upon the stones of twelve Scottish circles.

² *V.C.H. Yorks*, i, p. 381. There is no reason to doubt that it is very old, quite possibly of the date asserted; but in the present writer's opinion that assertion is based upon insufficient premisses, because we cannot be sure of the age of the barrows. See Appendix A.

³ Wilson, *Prehist. Ann. Scotland*, p. 400.

⁴ *Arch. Aeliana*, 2d. ser., xv, 43.

⁵ *Reliquary*, 1896, p. 113. This was a wheeled cross, and the cup-mark has a deep radial process.

⁶ Boyd Dawkins, *Early Man in Britain*,

p. 339. The examples he cites are from Switzerland, Prussia and Scandinavia. There were no churches built in Scandinavia until the tenth century at the earliest (see ch. xxviii), and probably none of stone until much later, while in Prussia things were if anything later still.

⁷ Bishop Browne, *Antiquities in Neighbourhood of Dunecbt*, p. 165.

⁸ *Archaeologia*, lxi, pp. 361, sqq. He reviews the various theories which have been advanced by others, and cites the finding of some 150 'soul-houses,' clay models of actual houses and their appointments, in Egyptian graves of vi, x-xii dynasties at Rifeh (Flinders Petrie, *Gizeh and Rifeh*, 1907).

bearing the Christian symbol, and whoso chooses may see therein various suggestions of the fusion of the pre-Christian motive of the cup-and-ring with the Christian sign of the cross. Two of the designs are here reproduced (fig. 4). The one figure shows a cross of four arms, the extremities of which are splayed into circular form, each having a cup-mark in the centre ; the

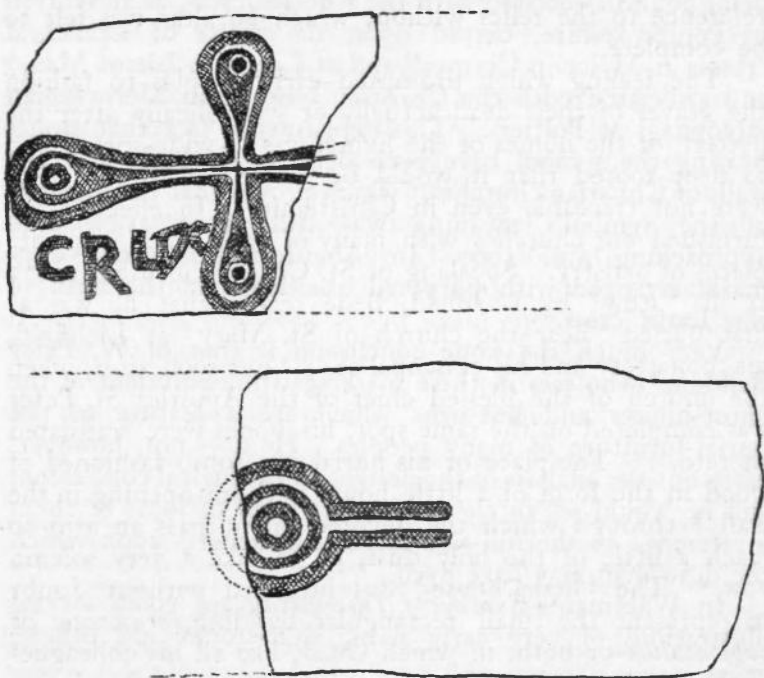


FIG. 4. ALTAR-SLABS AT INISMURRAY.

(After W. F. Wakeman.)

whole being made up as it were of four identical cup-and-ring marks conjoined at the gorges.¹ The other, on an altar-slab in the Teach Molaise, apparently the oldest Christian building on the site, shows the pre-Christian symbol only, viz., the cup-mark surrounded first by a con-

¹ 'A small central ring with two larger concentric ones is placed at the intersection of the arms of a cross on a sepulchral slab found at St. Peter's, Jersey.' W. Paley

Baildon in *Archaeologia*, lxi, 379, citing Cutts, *Manual of Sepulchral Slabs and Crosses*, pl. viii.

tinuous ring, and that again by a penannular ring, its extremities produced to form the usual radial lines; but the small size of the slab precludes the suggestion that in this case the symbol was intended to be completed in a cross and was accidentally left unfinished. One surmises that in Ireland, as in Scandinavia and Prussia, the meaning of the symbol was long remembered, and that its appearance upon a Christian altar-slab had direct reference to the relics without which no altar was felt to be complete.

The feeling which prompted early peoples to fashion the graves of their dead actually or symbolically after the pattern of the homes of the living, was so wide-spread and so deep-rooted that it would be matter of wonder if it were not traceable even in Christianity. In effect it has furnished our churches with many of their most exquisite pieces of artistry. Speaking of St. Chad, who died in 672 at his 'stow' by Lichfield, Bede relates that he was at first buried 'near the church of St. Mary' at Lichfield, his monastery and his episcopal see; 'but soon after, when the church of the blessed chief of the Apostles St. Peter was completed on the same spot, his bones were translated thereto. . . The place of his burial is a tomb fashioned of wood in the form of a little house with an opening in the wall'¹ through which the devotee might pass an arm to reach a little of the holy dust, or to take a very solemn vow.² The 'little house' was intended without doubt to represent the small rectangular building, *oratorium* or *habituaculum* or both, in which Chad, like all his colleagues of the Scotie *regula*, aspired to spend at any rate the closing days of his life and in which he wished ultimately to be buried. The larger ambition of later times substituted stone for wood, and glorified the once modest structure with all that medieval faith and skill could do in the way of fretted tracery and crocketed canopies; but to the last these 'shrines' or 'chantries' retained the rectangular

¹ H.E. iv, iii, §265. The S.V. has *is ofer bis byrgenne stowe treowgeweorc on gelicnesse medmicles bus geworbt . . . ibonne is on tbaem medmicel tbyrel geworbt*. On the word *stowe*, see below, ch. xxiv.

² Cf. *Life of St. Cadoc* (Rees, *Cambro-British Saints*, 1853), c. 33, of the saint's *cenobium* at Bannawc. In the *porticus* of

it were buried three of his disciples in *busta marmorea*, and *nullus audet sarcophagos inspicere, nisi caelebs aut virgo, seu ordinatus*; but 'there was an aperture in the wall of the *porticus*, so that great persons, kings and notables of the vicinity, if any dispute had arisen, might lay their hands thereon (on the *busta*) and so take oath.'

form, sometimes the pitched roof, the single door, and commonly the window of the primitive oratory, until in post-Reformation times Italian influence introduced the type of the *baldacchino* and finally the uncanopied portrait-tomb of modern times.

In Ireland the faith and the practice of men are still very much as they were in Bede's England. 'At Bovevagh, near Dungiven, co. Londonderry, there is in the churchyard a little building like a tiny stone-roofed Irish church; its length is about 9 ft., its breadth is 6ft. 6 in., its height a little more than 7 ft. Its stone roof is much ruined on the south; on the north about half of it is formed of two large slabs. It has a hole at the west end . . . probably made to get at the holy dust in the saint's tomb . . . At Banagher . . . the tomb of St. Muiredhach O'Heney is of similar form, but more elaborate. It is like a miniature stone-roofed church.'¹ Here the virtues of the dead are believed to extend beyond the limits of his tomb, for a handful of the sand gathered from the ground near the tomb, if thrown upon a passing horse in a race, is believed to ensure its winning.²

The 'coped' tombstones still to be seen in many English churchyards are the direct descendants of the tomb-houses of earlier days, and both are the outcome of the feeling which prompted the pagan Celt to shape his barrow on the model of his hut. Originally the coped tomb reproduced merely the plain pent-roof of the contemporary dwelling. Presently this was embellished with a carven cross, the apex of the roof as shaft and the arms merely chiselled upon the sloping sides of the stone. The final development, in which the arms were raised to the same plane as the shaft, produced a tomb-stone in the form of a transeptal roof.

Sometimes the tomb was provided with an aperture big enough to allow of the pilgrim's entering it with more or less effort. 'The Irish peasants of the early part of this (nineteenth) century, and still perhaps in some places, crawl on their hands and knees into the little shrines, such as that of St. Declan (at Ardmore), and after having lain on the bare ground carry away some of the blessed

¹ Champneys, *Irish Eccles. Arch.*, p. 108.

² Murray's *Ireland*, p. 113.

clay, which is supposed to contain the relics of the dead.¹ In Cornwall in quite recent times it was believed that epilepsy could be cured by the patient's crawling underneath the altar.² Similar practices are traceable in Wales. At Llangeler, Carmarthenshire, for example, infirm persons used to lie and sleep in the grave of the saint (St. Celer), 'deeper than any grave our sexton hath digged hitherto.'³

The hole in the side of the shrine or tomb at once recalls those to be seen in many dolmens. Possibly this had its origin in the same beliefs as produced the gap in the penannular ring, and the ghost-windows of Egyptian tombs and Chinese coffin-houses⁴; and possibly the later sentiment which led men to wish to finger a dead man's dust⁵ was grafted upon the older practice of providing the ghost with the means of egress and ingress. But seeing that the building of dolmens continued until some long time after the establishment of Christianity,⁶ one is led to doubt whether the two practices, and the states of mind which prompted them, were separated by any such vast length of time as is commonly believed—whether holed dolmens are necessarily as old as they are said to be. The attempt to explain such apertures as part of an astronomical use of dolmens is least of all convincing, and Christianity providing an indisputable and perfectly adequate analogy, it is safer to believe that the purpose of the holed dolmen and of the holed shrine was the same. If so, there was a period when dolmen and shrine overlapped, which means that some of the dolmens, holed or otherwise, are of a

¹ Borlase, *Dolmens of Ireland*, p. 709. Rev. J. W. Hayes has drawn my attention to a passage in Pausanias (ix, 17, 4), where it is said that the people of Tithorea in Phocis were in the habit of stealing soil from the grave-mound of the Thebans Zethus and Amphion, 'for if they do so, and put the soil on the tomb of Antiope (in Phocis), their own land gains in fertility, while that of the Thebans loses.' Herein, he suggests, may be found a reason for the denudation of some dolmens and the immense size of other grave-mounds.

² Andrew, *Antiqs. and Curiosities of the Church*, p. 237.

³ *Inventory Carmarthenshire*, no. 473, citing from Lhwyd's *Parochialia*, iii, 76. It would seem that the grave, originally outside the rectangular church, has been

included within a chapel attached to the south wall of the building.

⁴ Another theory is that it served for the passing of food into the tomb, as was certainly done in ancient Greece and Rome, and still is done by certain Indian tribes of North America. The roof-slab of one of the cist-burials in the Aylesford urn-field was thus perforated; *Archaeologia*, lii (1898), p. 326.

⁵ In the church of Ste. Radegonde at Poitiers, for example, one may to-day see a crowd of devotees quietly wiping the dust from the saint's sarcophagus as they pass round it in its crypt, and thereafter deliberately transferring the dust to their own faces.

⁶ For examples, see below, ch. xviii.

date very much later than popular sentiment would wish to believe. It is this sentiment which chiefly stands in the way of an impartial estimate of the evidence, for there is no obvious reason why the same veneration for a great man's dust which is illustrated by the cases of St. Chad and St. Declan, should not have prevailed at any earlier date. In sober truth it was likely to be more prevalent then than later.