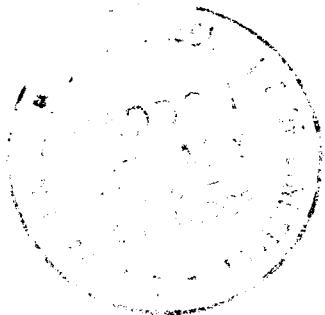
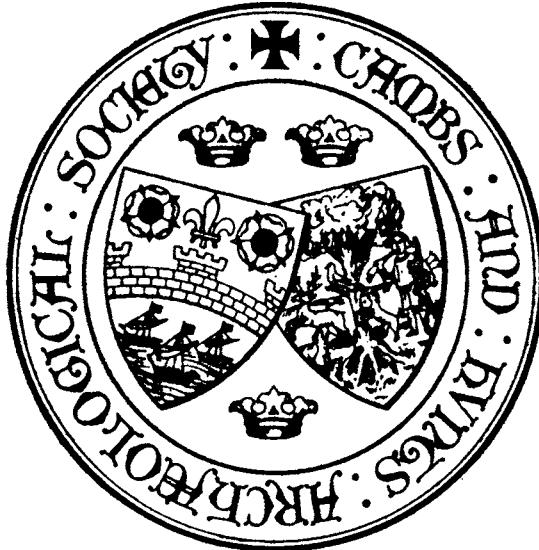


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SOME HUNTINGDONSHIRE QUERNS

J. R. GARROOD, M.D., F.S.A.

This paper deals only with rotary querns which are thought by Dr. Curwen¹ to be derived from the Donkey Mill of the Mediterranean area, rotated as its name implies by a donkey, or slaves, harnessed to a projecting pole.

The earliest type described is the beehive, shaped like the old fashioned beehive or skip made of plaited straw. The grinding surfaces are either conical or flat, the former being the earlier.

The upper stone has a passage or hopper at the centre, wider above, through which the corn is fed. There is a lateral passage which sometimes perforates the hopper, this is for the handle which may or may not have been cranked upwards.

The lower stone has a socket at its centre for a peg which keeps the top stone in place, being a loose fit in the hopper. The rynd is a block of wood or iron which is jammed in the lower end of the hopper and this rides on the peg allowing a slight clearance between the stones, thus varying the fineness of the flour, of course room is left for the corn to pass the rynd. Where, as in later stones, the lower stone is completely perforated, it is possible to vary the clearance between the stones.

The beehive type continued through the first centuries B.C. and A.D., but by the second century the stones were thinner and wider, the handle was fixed in a vertical hole, this was more convenient for operation. Flat stones of lava were imported from the continent.

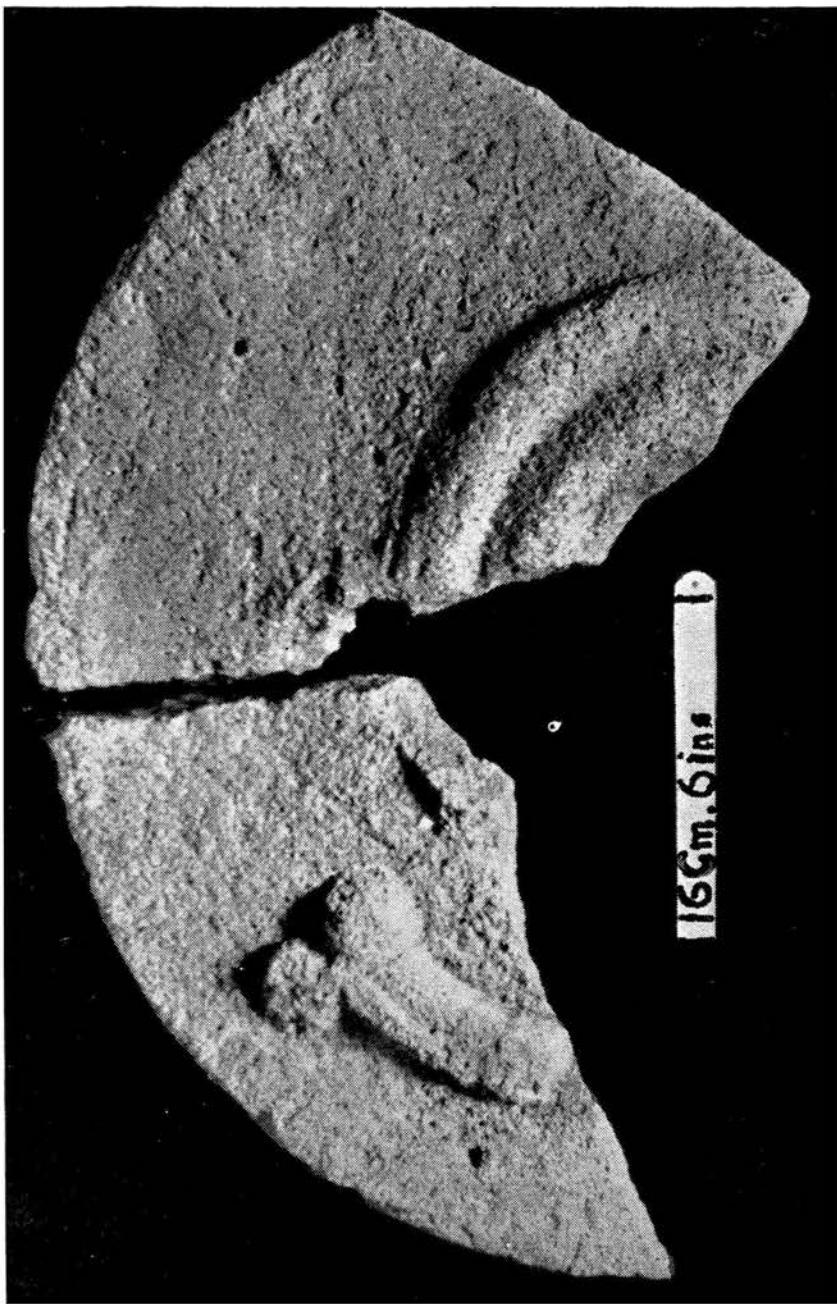
The Quern which has given rise to this paper was found by Mr. Roger Fuller, of Spaldwick, in a field 1,100 feet south of the first S. in Stow Brickyard, sheet XVI. S.W. 6in. Ord. Survey, 1902, Huntingdonshire.

Grid Ref. 119713.

Coarse Romano British pottery was found on the surface of the field. The special feature of this quern is that its upper surface has two raised mouldings round the hopper as well as another raised ornament.

The estimated diameter is 24.6 inches and 1.5 to 1.6 inches thick at the edge. The stone is millstone grit, probably from Derbyshire, identified at the Sidgwick

(1) Antiquity June 1937 p.133 March, 1941, p.15.



Museum, Cambridge. In the broken edge of the larger fragment can be seen a section of the hopper, 5-inch estimated diameter, and just outside the outer moulding a section of the handle hole, this seems to have been surrounded by a collar and perforates the grinding surface, indicating that the stone is much worn.

The grinding surface is circumferentially grooved by use, but there are no radial or tangential grooves. The slope of the under surface is 14 degrees and slightly concave. The ornament consists of two concentric mouldings, the inner 1.25 and the outer 1.5 inches wide, they project about 0.5 inches. The other part of the ornament is in the field as it were and appears to be independent of the circular mouldings, it is, I think, a Phallus, laterally curved to conform to the general design. The termination seems not to be accidental and the glans is indicated. Perhaps this fertility motif might be hoped to provide a good crop, giving the mill plenty of grinding in the future.

An alternative explanation may be that this is the terminal of a spiral moulding, but the finding of the other fragments will settle the matter.

The following are some of the querns from the county with which I am acquainted:

- 1—A beehive quern of gritty stone 11in. by 5.5in., grinding surface conical, hopper 5in., from the north side of Weybridge Farm, Alconbury, Newlands Field, below the crest of the hill; found by Mr. R. F. Aubrey, 1925. Huntingdon Museum 609²
- 2—Beehive quern, from Ray House Farm Gravel Pit, Lt. Paxton. Grinding surface, conical handle hole perforates, a grit. Mr. C. F. Tebbutt.
- 3—Broken top stone of a beehive quern of red gritty stone showing part of the handle hole and the hopper; found by Mr. Rook at Castle Hill Farm, Wood Walton, in the field called Banks, the grinding surface is slightly concave. Later, Mr. Rook found the lower stone in the same field, it is thick and hemispherical. Ref.³
- 4 Deformed beehive upper stone from just N. of Wheatleys Drain, near Manor Wood, Walton; found by Mr. Ayres, 1930. The grinding surface is slightly concave and worn, there are two handle

(2) VCH. Hunts., p.263.

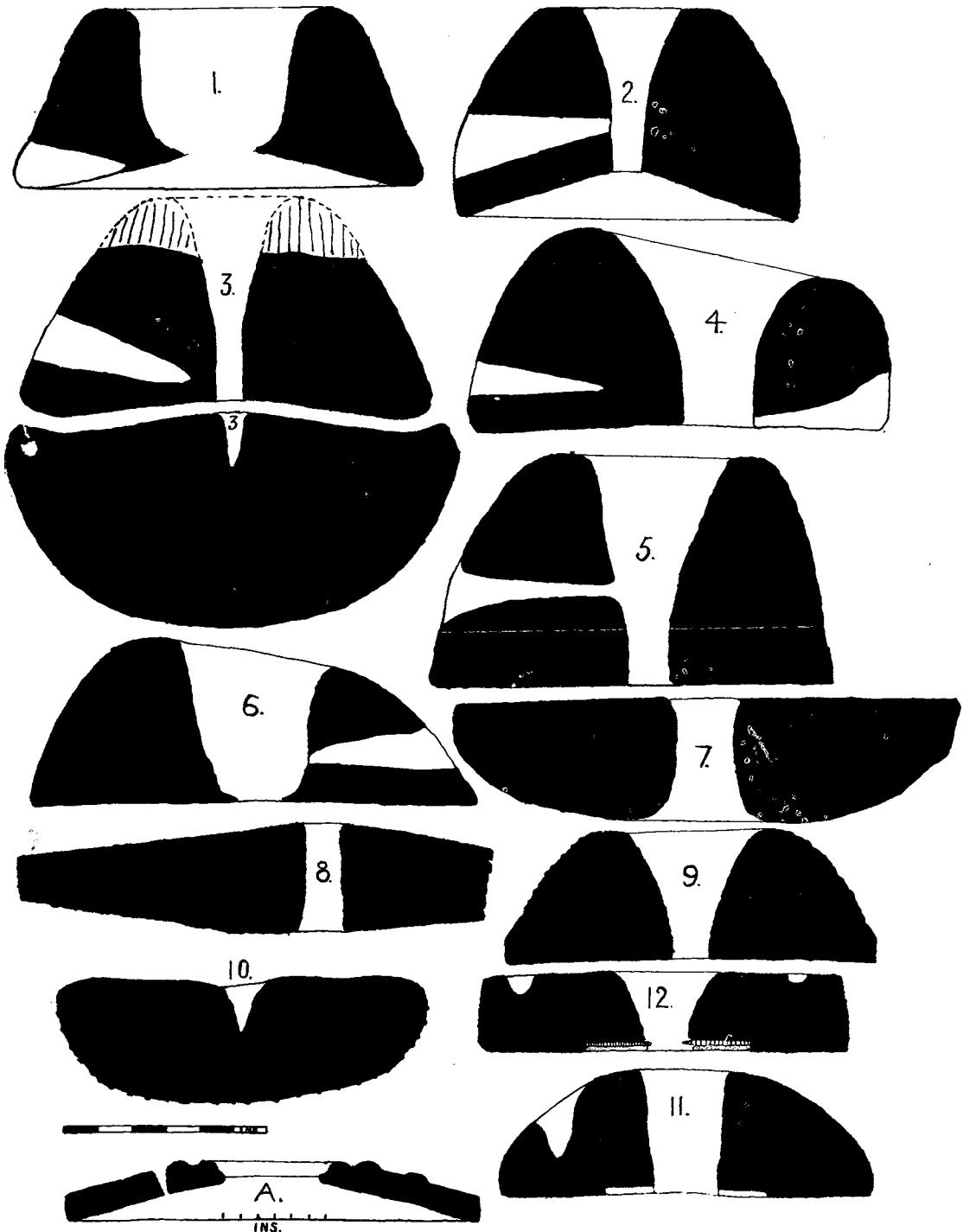
(3) Trans. Cambs. & Hunts. Arch. Soc. V.V. p.276.

- holes, one exposed by wear on the grinding surface, the other does not perforate the hopper.
- 5—A beehive quern 7in. high, 12in. diameter, from Barham; I found it acting as a doorstop in 1933. Grinding surface practically flat, the handle hole perforates.
- 6—A crude irregular beehive, handle-hole horizontal flat grinding surface, 13.5in. diameter; from Godmanchester, St. Ives Museum.
- 7—Lower stone of granite, grinding surface flat with irregular radial grooving; from Alconbury Weston. This group is of the earlier type, all but two of their bases are flat and they probably come within the Roman period. An Iron Age rubbish pit was found near the North Road, Weybridge (No. 1).
- 8—Lower stone from Ray House, Farm Gravel Pit, Lt. Paxton, Mr. C. F. Tebbutt; 18in. diameter, peg hole perforates, hard gritty stone, grinding surface slightly conical, no grooving, but a rough surface.
- 9 A low beehive quern of pudding stone, 11in. diameter, slightly concave grinding surface, no sign of handle hole; from Bury, St. Ives Museum.
- 10—A lower stone of pudding stone with slightly hollow grinding surface and tapering peg hole which does not perforate, 11in. diameter; from Houghton; St. Ives Museum.
- 11—A low beehive, about 3.5in. high and 11in. diameter, of lava with five vertical handle holes, one with an iron core surrounded with lead, grinding surface nearly flat, slight radial grooving, the lower part of the hopper has vertical grooves. There are oblong recesses for a rynd; from Somersham; St. Ives Museum.
- 12—A cylindrical top stone of lava, 11in. diameter, broken iron rynd kept in place by lead, two depressions on the upper surface for the handle; from Alconbury House there is a Roman coffin there. Presented to Huntingdon Museum by Miss Carnegie, No. 1568.

FRAGMENTS NOT ILLUSTRATED

Huntingdon Museum, 686: Half a lower stone, 15in. diameter.

Huntingdon Museum, 588: Upper stone of lava, probably from Colne or Hargrave, Boultbee Collection.



Flat lower stone, segment, diameter. 15in., hard gritty stone from Stocking Close ³

Small fragment probably a beehive, showing part of handle hole ³

Part of two flat stones, grit with large fragments of marble ³

Part of a beehive, grit; from Salome Lodge ⁴

Part of cylindrical quern, hard brown stone.

Part of a flat stone of lava, Salome Lodge.

A group of fragments from Salome Lodge illustrate the sequence, two flat-topped or perhaps amputated beehive querns come from the same trench (18), the first has a grinding surface rising 2in. from edge to centre, it comes from a depth of 3ft. 3in., the other only rises 0.75 inches and comes from 1ft. 6in., roughly first and third centuries, while a piece of lava quern came from 8in., this might be mediaeval.

We have beehive type, 9. Flato stones, 8. Pudding stone, 2. Lava, 4.

Now it is generally agreed that the beehive type was the earliest rotary quern, while the flat larger thinner ones were later and our numbers for these are nearly equal.

Two of the beehives have conical grinding surfaces and this is also found in Wessex, the rest have practically flat surfaces, these are found in the Hunsbury and Legionary Querns ⁶ the first an Iron Age fort in Northamptonshire, the latter in the North.

Thus we have one more instance of the Marcher character of our county with affinities with North, South, East and West. The flat stones are in their natural sequence in the Romano-British period and later than the first group. Pudding stone querns are of normal type and were probably imported from Hertfordshire, while the lava specimens came from the continent.

I would suggest that some of the earlier specimens may have been home-made from some of the larger eratics found in our boulder clay.

I am indebted to Mr. Coote for allowing me to publish the St. Ives' specimens and to Mr. Tebbutt for his from Little Paxton.

(4) Trans. Cambs. & Hunts. Arch. Soc. V.III.

(5) Trans. Cambs. & Hunts. Arch. Soc. VI.II.

(6) Curwen Antiquity, June, 1937.