

Miscellanea.

WORKED FLINTS FROM HOOLE.

Prehistoric finds in Chester and the immediate vicinity are sufficiently rare to make this actual occurrence worthy of note. The objects here illustrated (fig. 1) were found in 1955 in the garden of No. 48, Oaklea Avenue, Hoole, and subsequently presented to the Grosvenor Museum by P.C. A. J. Hughes (259 P.55). They are both of flint, the one being a barbed and tanged arrow-head referable to the early Bronze Age, while the other is a flake bearing traces of secondary working along one edge and no doubt belonging to the same period.

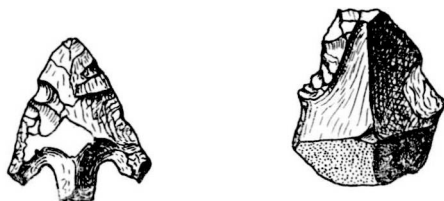


FIG. 1.

ROMAN LEAD WEIGHT FROM ALVANLEY.

A notable addition to the series of Roman lead weights recorded from Cheshire is one found near Alvanley in 1955 (fig. 2) and subsequently presented to the Grosvenor Museum by Dr. J. D. Bu'Lock (28. R.56). It bears on one face four deeply punched digits indicating a nominal value of 4 *unciae*. It was submitted to Mr. H. Robinson, who kindly examined it and reported that its present weight is 1688.1 grains, comparing very closely with the nominal figure of 1683.3; the difference may be the result of an original slight error or subsequent oxidization.



FIG. 2.

ROMAN BUILDING IN PEPPER STREET, CHESTER.

In December 1955 it proved possible to make a further examination of a shaft in the Pepper Street premises of the Grosvenor Motor Co., Ltd., which had originally been recorded by the late Professor Newstead in 1942 (*C.A.J.* xxxvi, 62). In addition to the concrete floor of Roman date, supported on a tile wall, which he noted, there was also seen a coursed but unmortared sandstone wall 1ft. 9in. wide, running N-S and abutting on the tile wall at the S.W. corner.

PILGRIM'S FLASK FROM MEOLS

Although the coastal site of Meols, near Hoylake, is not now so prolific of antiquities as in the days when the Rev. A. Hume could devote a whole book to cataloguing the Romano-British, Saxon and mediæval finds made there,¹ single specimens are occasionally recovered. One of more than usual interest is shown here (fig. 3), found in 1955 in a peat layer two feet below the sand at a point 300 yards seaward of Dove Point, and subsequently presented to the Grosvenor Museum by Mr. Brian Gunning (43. M.56). It is a small earthenware flask in a pinkish-brown fabric, of a type issued in vast quantities at the shrine of St. Menas near Alexandria to pilgrims wishing to take home a small quantity of holy water. On the less worn side can be seen the figure of St. Menas with his arms raised in prayer and flanked by two kneeling camels.

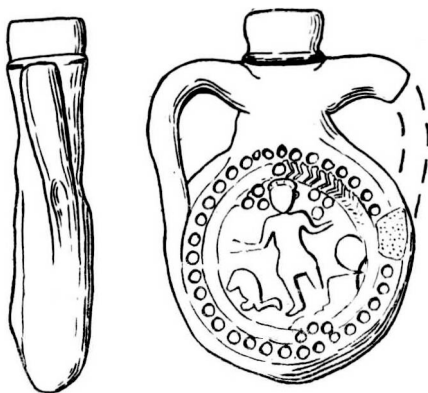


FIG. 3.

The iconography alludes to the story of the martyrdom in A.D. 296 of Menas, an Egyptian soldier in the Roman army, who was put to death during the persecutions under Diocletian. His body was recovered and tied to the back of a camel which was driven into the desert; where it stopped the body was buried and a shrine eventually built. This became so popular as a place of pilgrimage in the fourth century that a large monastery grew up around it.

¹*Ancient Meols*, 1863.

Whether this particular flask was acquired at the shrine and brought to England in the Saxon period is now difficult to say. One found in Derby in 1949² was thought not to have reached there until after the Conquest, having perhaps been acquired at a continental monastic house. On the other hand, finds of the late Saxon period from Meols are sufficiently common to suggest that this flask may well be contemporary. Dr. D. B. Harden, who is contemplating a note on the occurrence of these vessels in Britain, has previously suggested that they did in fact reach this country in the later Dark Ages.³

MEDIAEVAL CHALICE AND PATEN FROM PULFORD

A number of lead fragments found in a box in the vestry of Pulford church were submitted to the Grosvenor Museum for an opinion in 1955 by the Rev. Coleman Harrison. They were recognized as a mediæval chalice and paten of the plain type which it was customary to bury with bishops and priests after the eleventh century.⁴ The present examples (fig. 4) were no doubt recovered from the coffin of a mediæval rector of Pulford, perhaps uncovered during building alterations in the church, though there is no record of any such discovery. They cannot be closely dated: the paten, a plain lead disc 1½mm thick, affords no help; the bowl of the chalice has been crushed but, as restored in the drawing, is of the hemispherical type with everted lip which, with a plain circular foot, appears on chalices between 1200 and 1300.⁵

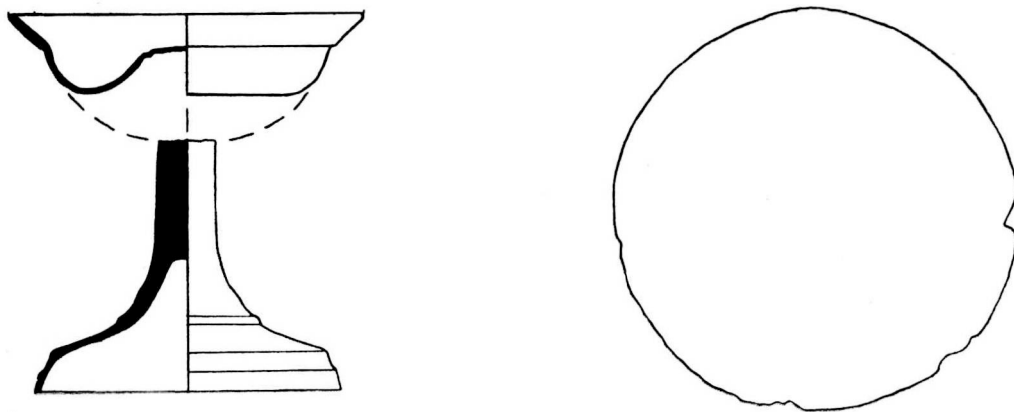


FIG. 4.

²*Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, LXXI (1951) 78-9.

³*Dark-Age Britain: Studies presented to E. T. Leeds* (ed. D. B. Harden), p. 156.

⁴Cf. Constitutions dated 1230 of William de Blois, bishop of Worcester, describing *ornamenta* for use in churches, *duo calices, unus argenteus in quo celebretur, alius stanneus non benedictus, cum quo sacerdos altaris sepeliatur*.

⁵*Arch. J.* XLIII, 141 (W. St. John Hope & T. M. Fallow, *English Mediæval Chalices and Patens*).