

CHAPTER XVII.—THE ARCHAIC CHARACTER OF THE CONTEMPORANEOUS RELICS FOUND IN COMBINATION WITH THEM.

Antiquarian relics found in connection with ancient human habitations, whether the dwellings of single families or of large communities, are liable, as archæological chronometers, to mislead us by the evident fallacy that these dwellings may have, in ancient times, been often the residences, not of one generation, but of many successive generations, and even of successive races of men.

A similar source of fallacy is often involved in the answers which the archæologist may obtain from the examination of ancient places of sepulture, unless he pursues his interrogations with all due caution; for chambered tumuli, burial mounds, and cemeteries when once rendered sacred structures and spots, by the interment of the dead, continued occasionally to be used as places of sepulchre, for long ages by later and distant populations. Hence the well-known fact, that as late as 785, Charlemagne had to issue a special order to his christianised Saxon subjects, that they should cease from interring their dead in the tumuli of

¹ When speaking of the lines cut upon the cromlech called the Merchant's Table, at Locmariaker in Brittany. Mr Lukis observes, that "the stones were engraved *previously* to the construction of the cromlech, for the scored lines pass over the tops of the props at the points in contact with the capstones. This ornament was, however," Mr Lukis adds, "completed [occasionally] after the erection of the whole structure, for in the instance of Gavv Inis, the small stones—wedged into the spaces between the principal—have the scored work continued over their surfaces."—*Archæologia* for 1853, vol. xxxv. p. 250.

the pagans, instead of burying them in the churchyard.¹ (*Ut corpora Christianorum Saxonum ad cœmeteria Ecclesiæ deferantur, et non ad tumulos Paganorum.*) Many of our oldest barrows and burial mounds contain, in this way, *secondary* or later interments, which have often been confounded in archæological researches with the *primary* burial, for which the barrow or mound was raised. The long barrows of England, for example, seem to have been originally the graves of a population who had elongated skulls,² and apparently possessed no metallic weapons; but in other parts of the long barrows, and before reaching

¹ Pertz's *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica; Legum*, tom. i. p. 49. In the same capitulary Charlemagne issued orders against the practice of burning the dead, and laid it down as a capital crime. (*Si quis corpus defuncti hominis secundum ritum paganorum flamma consumi fecerit, et ossa ad cinerem redierit capite punietur.*)

² The doctrine of the greater antiquity in Britain, of the long-headed or dolicocephalic, as compared with the round-headed or brachycephalic race, was first broached some twenty years ago, by one of our greatest leaders in Scottish archæology, Professor Daniel Wilson. (See his *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, 1851, p. 160, &c.) A late writer on the subject, and a most keen and accurate observer, Dr Thurnam, in an essay "On the Two Principal Forms of Ancient British and Gaulish Skulls,"—in speaking of his own extensive experience in England, remarks, in regard to the long-chambered barrows of North Wilts and Gloucestershire,—“There is no well authenticated proof that metallic objects, whether of bronze or iron, have in any case been found in the undisturbed chambers of these tombs, which, however, yield well-chipped flakes and arrow heads, and also axes of flint. The skulls from these barrows, which are those of a people of middle, or even short stature, seem certainly the remains of a more ancient people than those who raised most of the circular tumuli of this part of the island.” Dr Thurnam, in the essay referred to, p. 39, and previously in the “*Crania Britannica*,” enumerates as the results of his observations and study of British barrows, in regard to their shape, and the skull forms of those buried in them, the brief axiom,—“Long barrows, long skulls; round barrows, round or short skulls.” The connection of the long skull with the long barrow and the Stone period seems founded on well established facts by Dr Thurnam with regard to some parts of Great Britain; but it is doubtful if his axiom holds true of all parts of England, or of other countries, and still more distant human races. The skulls from the Neanderthal and Engis caves, when man was contemporaneous with the cave bear, are elongated in form; one from the cave of Lombribe in the “rein-deer period,” is said, on the contrary, to be round. But the whole subject of skull forms, as connected with ages and races of men, is still at best involved in no small doubt and difficulty.

the spot in which their *primary* occupants have been placed, other graves are frequently enough met with in the same mound; and their *secondary* occupants are occasionally found to have been buried with weapons of bronze, and even of iron.

In this respect single graves or kist-vaens are freer from doubt than grave mounds, and barrows, and cairns. The sculptured slab in the Coilsfield cist covered an urn presenting, to use the language of Professor Wilson,¹ "the usual characteristics of primitive sepulchral pottery." (See figure of a portion of this sepulchral urn in Plate XIII. fig. 2.) In Plate XI. fig. 5 is sketched an urn with even ruder markings, found near Scarborough in a tumulus, some of the stones of which were cut with cups and rings. Yet archaic man ornamented his sepulchral and other pottery far oftener than he cut figures on stones; and his bone carvings were often more elaborate than his lapidary. The mode of burial, with the body more or less contracted and bent within a short cist or grave, is usually regarded as a form of interment older and more archaic than that with the body buried at full length and in long kist-vaens. Most, if not all, of the single cists hitherto found covered with sculptured slabs,

¹ Unfortunately this fragment of urn has not been preserved, and the original sketch of it, from which Dr Wilson made his woodcut, is also lost. On asking Mr Birch of the British Museum, the author of the well-known and classical work on the "History of Ancient Pottery," the probable age of this urn, as far as could be judged from the sketch of it given by Dr Wilson, and copied, as stated above, into Plate XIII., that eminent archaeologist replied, "It is always desirable, if possible, to see the object itself before pronouncing an opinion, but the urn seems to me closely like those found in Wales and Ireland of the so-called stone period. Its closely-hatched lines have great similarity with the vases of North Wales and Ireland, and it was no doubt of a light brown, imperfectly baked clay, such as is commonly found in the early Celtic graves, and some examples of which are engraved at the end of my work on pottery (vol. ii. *ad finem*). It must therefore be assigned to a remote epoch as to style." My friend, the Rev. Mr Greenwell of Durham, another high authority on such questions, has kindly outlined, as seen in Plate XIII., the probable shape of this Coilsfield urn, and adds, that such urns are found not unfrequently in Ireland, are often associated with bronze daggers, and hence probably, he thinks, pertains to the bronze period. "The Scarborough urn (Plate XI. fig. 5) is," he adds, "of the type of those that contain the burnt bones of a body, and which in all cases, except in the Coilsfield instance, have been found with the circular-marked stones."

have been of the short form, and hence of the earliest type, as the stone-coffins at Carlowrie (p. 28), and Craigie (p. 28.) The cist at Carnban, which contained the sculptured stone panel, is only four feet in length. The cist at Oatlands or Balnakelly, in the Isle of Man (see p. 19), with a cupped stone standing near it, is short also, being two feet three inches in breadth, and between four and five feet in length. Some of the sculptured sepulchral lids were small, as they merely covered urns, and hence burned bones, and are important as marking the very frequent co-existence of the cup and ring cuttings with the practice of cremation.

Within the urns and cists connected with these sculptured stones nothing has been as yet found, I believe, except tools and weapons formed of flints and other stones, with implements and ornaments of jet and bone,—all of them works of a very antique type. But, as far as the British Isles are concerned, we still greatly lack data to indicate—on any large scale—the kinds of implements which co-existed and were buried with those men whose sepulchres show the ring and cup carvings. We want also greatly any characteristic crania from such sepulchres, in order if possible to arrive at the probable race or races of the primary carvers of these rude sculptures. It is true that the human bones hitherto discovered where the urn lid or kist lid has been sculptured with rings and cups have been few, and almost always destroyed by burning; for, as just stated, the sculptures and cremation are often conjoined. But in very ancient times, with the Celt, and probably the pre-Celt and Turanian, as with the Greek, Roman, and early Saxon, the inhumation was sometimes used as well as the incineration of the body; and in the ancient tumuli of Brittany, and the cromlech sepulchres of the Channel Islands, the archaic dead have been found both buried and burned in different yet analogous barrows, and even within the same sepulchre.

In Brittany much more successful inquiries have been made than in our own country as to the contemporaneous relics and weapons of the stone carvers. We have already seen that the stones in a few of the great sepulchral barrows and chambers of Brittany have been found marked and carved,—the sculpturing in some of them, as at Gavr Inis, Locmariaker, Long Island, &c., being far more elaborate and objective than the simple rude cup and ring carvings of Great Britain,—and hence, we infer, later than them in date, unless we may hold—what is not

impossible—that the art of lapidary sculpturing advanced at a very different rate of progress in the two countries.

Many of the Brittany barrows have been opened in search of supposed treasures, &c., for years past, without the character of their contents having been ascertained; but the interiors of others, where sculptures exist, have been examined and determined with the greatest accuracy. Thus one large Brittany barrow,—that of St Michael's Mont, at Carnac,—was found to have the single large slab covering its contained cist cut with cups, like many of our Scottish stones. See a sketch of these cups on this Brittany slab in Plate XI. fig. 4. They were not, I believe, above one and a half inch in diameter each. This ruder cup-carving most probably marks this tumulus as of an age older than some of the other elaborately carved sepulchral chambers of the same district. The contents of the St Michael's Mont barrow are consequently interesting, as marking the kind of contemporaneous weapons, ornaments, &c., that were known to those men whose hands cut these cup sculpturings. There were found within the sepulchral chamber thirty-nine polished celts of jade, tremolith, and other stones; nine pendants and one hundred small beads, mostly of jasper, perforated, and hence probably the remains of necklaces; two fragments of flints; and a ring of small beads, said to be formed from the bones of a bird's leg. Fragments of the calcined bones of the occupant of the tomb were discovered underneath the floor of the chamber.¹

Another and more gigantic Brittany barrow was opened a few years ago at Tumiac, in Arzon. On some of the slabs forming the sepulchral chamber of this Tumiac tumulus "curious ornamental work,"²

¹ See Mr Barnwell in the *Archæologia Cambrensis* for 1862, and "Fouilles du Mont Saint-Michel," by M. René Galles.

² The ornamental work on three of the stones of the Tumiac barrow was curious and exceptional. On one of the supporting slabs of the chamber, there was, at its upper part, a kind of double crescent, formed of two strings of circles or beads, like an imperfect necklace or collar. Lower down on the face of the same stone were four crossed and somewhat irregular lines, ending each in a very imperfect and irregular circle. On another of the stones were a number of projecting points, in rows, like small mammillary protruding pegs; and at its lower part, two parallel straight lines, which end in curves at both extremities. (See L. Galles' "Fouille du Tumulus de Tumiac en Arzon.")

observes Mr Barnwell, "was found, and a large number of stone implements,—some more than eighteen inches long; and necklaces of stone beads, the various articles being nearly forty in number. All the stone celts had been fractured across about two-thirds of their length." "On this occasion," adds Mr Barnwell, "and indeed on all other similar ones where these chambers have been explored, no copper or bronze implement has ever been found. The articles are invariably of stone, and in the case of the grand chambers of Plouharnel, of gold." The body in this Tumiac barrow was inhumed, and without incineration, whilst that contained in the neighbouring barrow at St Michael's Mont had been burnt.¹

A remarkable sculptured slab containing carvings of hatchets, bows, &c., found in opening the tumulus of Manné-er-Hroek at Locmariaker, is represented in Plate XXXII. fig. 3. This carved slab was found amongst the stones filling up one end of the sepulchral chamber. In opening the tumulus MM. Lefebvre and Réne Galles dug down about thirty feet from the summit before they reached this central sepulchral chamber, which measured about thirteen feet by nine, and was about five feet high. Within it were found the following objects:—A hundred and four broken stone hatchets of tremolite and jade, one of them eighteen inches in length; two perfect jade hatchets, thirteen inches long, and of beautiful finish; five beautiful pendants of jasper; forty-four small beads in jasper, quartz, and agate; one prism of crystalline quartz; three pieces of sharp cutting flint; a quantity of charcoal; and some fragments of pottery. Earthy matter covered the floor to the depth of about a foot and a half, but no trace of bones or animal matter could be detected.

Weapons and ornaments of bronze have been found within some megalithic tombs and cromlechs, analogous in their type of building to those of Tumiac, St Michael, and Manné-er-Hroek.² When discovered they have

¹ *Archæologia Cambrensis* for 1862, p. 335.

² Baron Bonstetten, in his "Supplément d'Antiquités," states that in the megalithic tomb at Plouharnel a kind of ligula in bronze was also found; and more lately, in his "Essai sur les Dolmens," he adduces a few rare and exceptional instances of bronze implements being found in these catacombs in France and Spain, though throughout Northern and Western Europe their general and primary con-

been found usually, if not always, in circumstances showing that they were most probably introduced secondarily, or later than the primary age and use of the catacombs. Indeed layers, showing different and distant burial deposits, have been repeatedly found along with relics and bones displaced laterally to admit of the interment of others. Dr Lukis has specially pointed out this fact in relation to the megalithic catacombs in the Channel Islands, where he had an unusually favourable opportunity of studying the contents of these tombs and their interior arrangements, in consequence of their cavities having in long past times become silted up—and stereotyped, as it were, for modern investigation—by layers of sea-sand. We have figured a specimen of cup-carvings on the props of one of these cromlechs (see Plate VIII. fig. 2). In one only, however, of the many archaic sepulchres which he examined did Dr Lukis find an implement of bronze. In this instance, in the upper layers filling the interior of a cyclopic chambered tumulus in Guernsey, covered by nine capstones, he discovered beneath one of the capstones an ancient armband made of a copper alloy. In subsequently pursuing his researches downwards among the contents of this megalithic tomb, Dr Lukis states that he “arrived at the usual varieties of pottery, bearing evidence of greater age . . . accompanied by many stone instruments, mullers and mills of granite;” and he believes the metallic armband—and another found near it of jet, pretty highly ornamented—must have been placed within the cromlech for security or otherwise at a subsequent period.”¹ Elsewhere he has stated that,—with this spurious exception,—in all his extensive re-

tents are entirely of the stone age. But cromlech building, we must remember, has extended to other districts of the world, and has in them extended onwards into later periods. As proof of the occasional posterior introduction of relics into cromlechs with *secondary* interments or otherwise, M. Bonstetten states, that inside an archaic “dolmen” at Locmariaker, and sunk down twice the depth of some remains of archaic pottery and flints, two statuettes in terra-cotta of Latona, coins of the second Constantine, and some Roman pottery, were found. Messrs Christy and Ferard opened fourteen cromlechs near Constantin, in Africa, and discovered in their interior, besides the corpses,—which were buried in a bent or contracted position,—worked flints, bits of pottery, rings of copper and iron, and in one instance, a coin of the Empress Faustina, who died 200 A.C. (See *Recueil de la Société Archéologie de Constantin* for 1863, p. 214.)

¹ Journal of the British Archæological Association, vol. iii. p. 344.

searches among the deposits within the megalithic sepulchral chambers and cromlechs of the Channel Islands, "no metallic instruments nor ornaments were discovered, nor even indications of the knowledge or use of metals."¹

We have had several megalithic catacombs and cists opened in England of late years, as at Rodmarton, Uley, Littleton Drew, West Kennet, Long Lowe, Nympsfield, Arlington, &c., where the relics found interred with the dead were entirely those of the Stone age; but the walls of these olden tombs have not been examined with the necessary care for the discovery of cup and ring markings, and possibly none may be present. In the field adjoining the sculptured stones of Largie, in Argyleshire (see anteriorly, p. 34), a megalithic round tumulus with three chambers or compartments in it was lately examined by the Rev. Mr Mapleton and Mr Greenwell. One of the three chambers was nearly twenty feet long. They found within these catacombs burnt and unburnt bones, charcoal, flints, and several urns or rather portions of urns, some of which were ornamented externally. The Rev. Mr Greenwell believes, from the examination which he has made of this great barrow, that the dead deposited in it at different periods were at one time inhumed and at another burned. But he concludes further—contrary to the general opinion on such subjects—that the age of cremation in this tumulus preceded, and perhaps long preceded, the age of burial.

At present I am not aware that within any of the sepulchres, whose stones are marked only with the incised ring and cup cuttings, any kind or form of metallic tool or instrument has yet been found. Should further and more extended observation confirm this remark, then it will naturally follow that the *commencement* of these sculpturings must be thrown back to the so-called Stone period, or to an era anterior to the use

¹ I have mentioned anteriorly (p. 65) Mr Conwell's discovery at Slieve-na-Calligh, in Ireland, of an extensive old "city of the dead," containing a great number of chambered tumuli with carvings on their stones. In one of the crypts of one of these chambered cairns Mr Conwell found what in all probability were the remains of a secondary and late interment, viz., a few fragments of iron and of small bronze rings and glass beads. No similar metallic relics have hitherto been found anywhere else in this large necropolis, except a bronze pin, probably also a secondary introduction.

of metals; unless, indeed, we can imagine, with some archæologists, that in consequence of the extreme age, moisture, &c., of these places of interment, any bronze or iron articles deposited in them have disintegrated and totally disappeared in consequence of the destructive oxidation of the metals—an idea contradicted by the chemical fact that the human and other bones have been more or less spared under conditions which, on this supposition, have removed all the metallic objects.

I have no doubt, however, that at whatever time the simple cup and ring sculptures were first begun to be cut, the practice of carving them—if it did not initiate in—was at least continued into, and indeed extended during the so-called Bronze era, and perhaps till a later period;¹ for bronze tools and ornaments have been occasionally found in localities in Argyleshire, Northumberland, and elsewhere near to spots where the sculptures exist in unusual numbers; though none yet have been discovered, as far as I am aware, in immediate and direct connection with these carved stones or cists themselves.

Mere peculiarities in the artistic type of the figures found cut on stones and metals, on pottery and bone, &c., have been sometimes held as suffi-

¹ Last century an example of lapidary circles, &c., was found upon the sepulchral slabs of a cist which contained iron weapons. The discovery was made in opening a barrow at Aspatria in Cumberland, and is casually described by Mr Rooke in the *Archæologia*, vol. x. p. 113. On digging the barrow, a stone cist was exposed containing the skeleton of a tall man. Beside the skeleton lay a long iron sword and dagger, their handles ornamented with silver; a gold buckle and a figured ornament, in the end of a piece of belt; with remains of a shield and battle-axe, and of a horse-bit and spurs, all very much corroded by rust. The stones marked were two cobblestones which inclosed the west end of the cist. The sculptures upon them consisted of single and double rings, some with cups and others with crosses in their centres. One of the stones had on it "marks which resemble" letters, but none such are visible in the accompanying sketches in the *Archæologia*. These lapidary rings, however, differed entirely from all the British forms described in this essay, as their "rims and the crosses within them are cut in relief"—raised and not incised. Lately I made, through Mr Page of Carlisle, full inquiries after these stones of Aspatria, but unfortunately they have disappeared. The crossed circles or discs on these Aspatria stones is common on Scandinavian stones (see anteriorly p. 73); but I know no other example of it in Great Britain. The relics are such as we would expect to find in a Scandinavian grave, and probably mark the interment as a result of the Scandinavian settlement of Cumberland.

cient criteria for determining the age of their production. Thus the pottery, for instance, of the Stone and of the Bronze age, shows usually on its surface only dots, nailmarks, and compositions of straight lines, from the markings of cords or thongs upon the soft clay; and occasionally, in addition, we find some curved, circular, and spiral lines. It has been stated by various antiquaries,¹ that, on the contrary, while all attempts at the representation of natural objects, as plants, animals, weapons, &c., are rare, the ornamentation of the bronze age is specially characterised by combinations of circular, spiral, and sometimes zigzag lines; and certainly such are the geometric patterns generally seen on the most ancient bronze ornaments and weapons—whether we regard these combinations and peculiar types of decoration as foreign or native, Semitic or Aryan, Asiatic or European, Eastern or Western, in their origin. Again, however, if we turn to carvings on stones, we find that in some localities, apparently before metals were much if at all used, archaic man attempted to cut representations of external objects, as celts, animals, &c., upon the walls of his sepulchral chambers, as we have already seen (p. 69-70) in the cromlechs and chambered tumuli of Brittany. While we are not entitled, then, to draw any strong inference as to the age of the lapidary cup and ring sculptures from their artistic characters being supposed to be comparable with the geometric forms of ornamentation of the Bronze era, we are yet perhaps entitled to hold that—from their rudeness in artistic type—our Scottish and English cup and ring sculptures are earlier than those lapidary carvings and representations of natural and artificial objects which, along with circles and zigzags, exist in the cairns of Brittany;—and are consequently, according to this mode of reasoning, to be carried back with them in their origin to the so-called Stone age.

But the very formation and cutting of such lapidary cups and rings has been supposed of itself to involve the use of metallic tools. Let us, therefore, in the next chapter inquire for a moment into the soundness of this opinion.

¹ See Kemble's *Horæ Ferales*, p. 78; Lubbock's *Prehistoric Times*, p. 25; and Nilsson's *Skandinaviska Nordens Ur-Invanare*, p. 2, &c. Professor Nilsson and his school regard all the earlier and finer ornamentation upon our archaic bronzes as Semitic or Eastern, and not Celtic or Western, in their origin.

PLATE XI.

FROM YORKSHIRE AND BRITTANY TUMULI.

