

IV.

NOTICE OF A SCULPTURED STONE CIST-LID AND CLAY URN FOUND IN CARNWATH MOOR. BY D. R. RANKIN, Esq., CARLUKE.

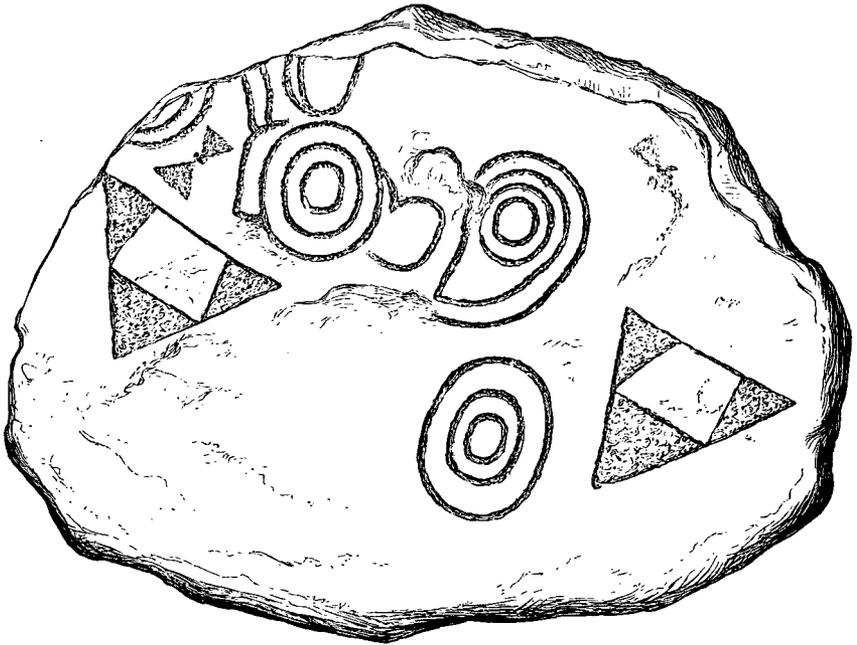
Having been informed by a friend that, when on a visit in Carnwath district in June last, he had seen part of a fine urn, and the sculptured lid of the cist in which it was found, and having notified the fact to the Society of Antiquaries, I was afterwards induced to proceed, in company with three young promising inquirers, to examine and report upon these ancient remains.

Four miles north from the village of Carnwath, on the Edinburgh road, and a little to the west, is the farm of Wester-Eird-House, or Yird-Houses, the property of Mr Somerville, occupied by Mr James Bryce. No one who has crossed the dreary Lang-Whang need be informed that the country around is wild, moorish, and much of it still in a state of nature, in one of her rougher aspects. A short way north from the farm-steading, where stood the cairn in which the cist was found—notwithstanding that there had been successive clearances—all around seemed to be a stony wilderness, so numerous were the boulder masses. Several cairns on the farm are still, apparently, undisturbed; and on the adjoining lands the existence of many cairns is reported to be well known.

Some years ago, in clearing a few acres of the land of these blocks of stone, with which fences were constructed, some cairns were removed without anything being found except red clay or earth in the bottom of each—seen nowhere else on the farm. About two years ago, while engaged in a similar operation—a further clearance—the farmer and his son came upon the cist, the subject of these remarks.

Mr Bryce, knowing the purpose of our visit, very kindly resigned his

ordinary duties, and cheerfully pointed out the site of what he called the humplock, which would be about 21 feet in circumference, and not exceeding a man's height in the centre. He also indicated the precise spot and position of the cist, which was of the short kind, formed, as is common, of two side and two end stones, with the lid, all rough and unhewn. The cist lengthways lay north and south, and the urn stood mouth upper-



Sculptured Cover of Stone Cist at Carnwath (4 feet 3 inches long).

most in the west corner, filled with a quantity of black earth. No bones or fragments were observed. At the time of the discovery all the stones of the cist with the urn—to which we now directed attention—were carefully conveyed to the farm-house, as if acknowledging, in the best manner, the claims of science. Probably, however, the antiquary must

credit the preservation of these interesting relics to that intuitive reverence for the manes and sepulchres of the dead which impels some to act rightly, who were little likely to be actuated by scientific motives.

The urn, at first entire, was unfortunately broken, but a fragment, sufficient to determine its character and form, and the sculptured lid of the cist, have been handsomely presented to the Society by the discoverer.

The urn, which is of the ordinary "drinking-cup" type, and elaborately ornamented, was about 9 inches high. The sculptured symbols on the under or inside of the lid of the cist, which is a roughly shaped slab 4 by 3 feet, and from 4 to 6 inches thick, well represented in the annexed woodcut, must, for the present, remain unexplained, as the key has not yet been discovered. Although different as to details, with its triangles, ovoids, and circles, this curiously incised record, of very remote date, is of kin to the Coilsfield stone, described in Wilson's Prehistoric Annals, vol. i. p. 480.