

I.

REPORT ON A BRONZE AGE GRAVE AND TWO OTHERS DISCOVERED LAST YEAR AT CAMELON, STIRLINGSHIRE. BY MUNGO BUCHANAN, CORRESPONDING MEMBER. WITH A NOTE ON THE RELICS FOUND. BY J. GRAHAM CALLANDER, F.S.A.Scot., DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES.

In the *Proceedings*, vol. lvi. p. 65, I described a Bronze Age short cist discovered, early in 1921, in line with Hamilton Street, Camelon, a short distance south of its junction with Brown Street (A on fig. 1). From the cist a few pieces of cremated human bones were recovered, but they were in such a fragmentary condition that it was impossible to define them further than that they were those of an adult. The only other relic found was a calcined flint scraper.

I am glad to be able to report the discovery of three other graves in the vicinity during the past year.

On Saturday, 15th April 1922, a second short cist was unearthed, about 450 yards north-east of the first, at B on fig. 1, by workmen engaged in extending the tramway line in a sand-pit near Camelon Railway Station. The site of the burial is about 50 feet south of the station, the highest part of the ground hereabout. It was oriented north-north-east and south-south-west: the east wall was formed by one large single stone, and the west side was built in two courses by four stones to the same height: the north and south ends were also built in two courses of irregularly shaped stones, and the whole was covered by a large stone slab.

The interior measured 36 inches in length, 19 inches in width, and 18 inches in depth to the gravelly bottom, the cover stone projecting 9 inches on each side, and a little less at the south end. Round the margin of the cover stone on the same level there had been carefully placed large boulders, averaging 1 foot long, which made the covering

over 6 inches wider. Thus the covering stones extended 15 inches beyond the cavity of the cist.

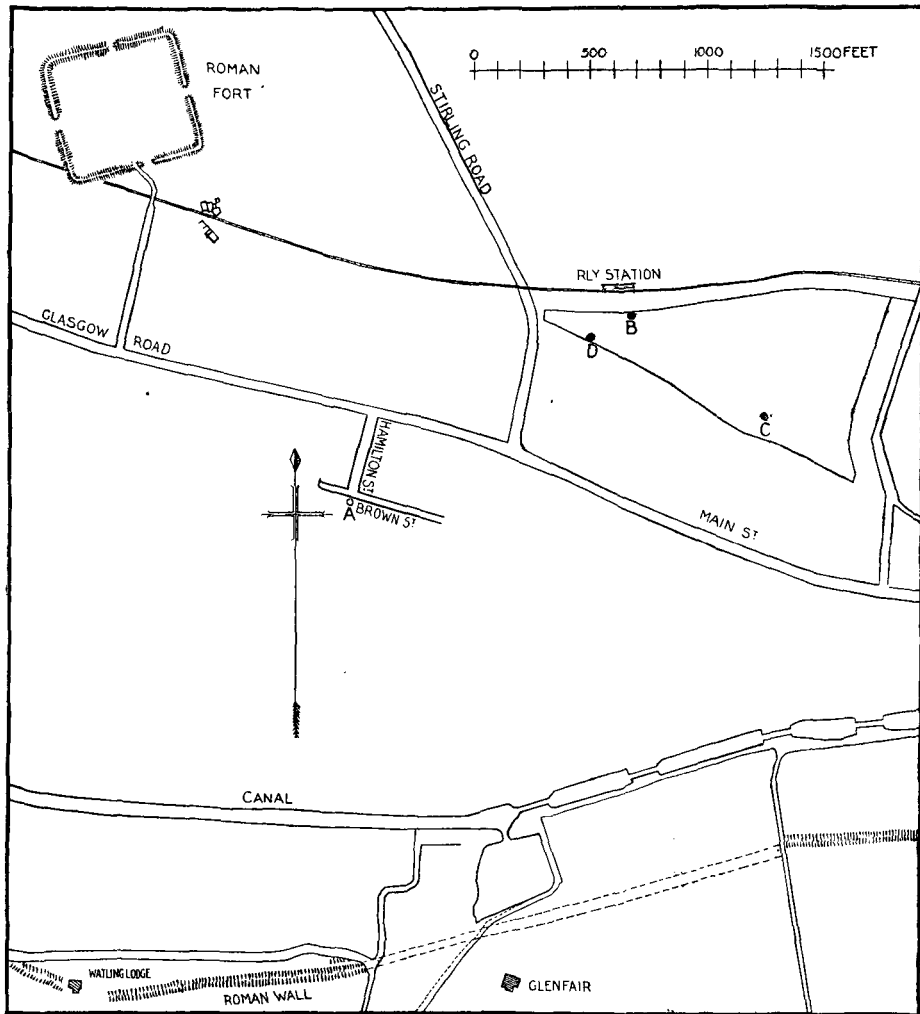


Fig. 1. Plan showing relative Positions of Burials, Roman Fort, and Antonine Wall at Camelon.

The depth from the surface to the top of the cover stone was 2 feet 6 inches, and to the bottom of the cist, altogether, about 4 feet 6 inches. Mr M'Kenzie, lessee of the ground from the North British Railway Co., immediately realising the necessity of a careful search, stopped the

workmen, and summoned me for advice. I went out to the site immediately with him, but, as it was getting dark, I only made a few suggestions for its clearing, so that we might commence on Monday morning. This was begun early on Monday. Mr M'Kenzie took from the grave near the south-east corner a beautiful ornamented urn of the food-vessel type (fig. 2), and a large piece of a human skull.

The whole of the sand which had fallen into the interior was cautiously put through a fine sieve, and a fair quantity of small bones was got amongst it, with several large pieces of the skull and a considerable part of another bone, but no implements of stone or metal were found. Certain of the bones did not appear to have been cremated, for parts of the skull were found at the south end, the ribs in the centre, and the large bone at the north end, as we would expect after inhumation rather than cremation.

The human remains were submitted to Professor Thomas H. Bryce, F.R.S., F.S.A.Scot., who reported, "the deposit in this case consists of both burnt and unburnt bones. The burnt bones probably represent the skeleton of a single individual, as no duplicate fragments can be detected. The bones are much comminuted. The recognisable fragments include a number of phalanges both of hand and foot, and as there is no trace on any of them of an epiphyseal line, it can be concluded that the individual was of full adult age. Some of the finger bones are entire; they are well shaped and somewhat delicate, suggesting the possibility that they belonged to a female hand, or to that of a male of slight build. A portion of the ramus of the mandible confirms this judgment.

"The unburnt skeleton is unfortunately very imperfect and fragmentary. It has not been possible to make any reconstruction of the skull. The largest fragment represented the greater part of the frontal bone. The lower part of the tabular portion is flat and vertical, suggesting that the individual was a woman. The frontal sinuses, which are laid open, are of small dimensions, indicating that the person was not far advanced in life. The upper and lower jaws are broken and parts are missing, but the teeth have nearly all been recovered. They show neither wear nor any caries. None of the wisdom teeth have erupted, and their fangs have not been fully formed. The rest of the skeleton is represented by a few broken vertebræ and some broken long bones, but no one of them is entire. They are all of slender proportions, but the ossification is complete in every case. This fact, along with the small size of the bones, the character of the frontal bone, and the incomplete dentition, indicate that the individual was in all probability a female over eighteen or twenty, but not fully adult."

A few days later I was summoned to examine another stone cist which had been discovered in the same field, about 220 yards south-east of the last, at C on fig. 1. The sand had been removed to a depth of 10 feet or so, leaving a sloping bank, which had caused the east wall of the cist to give way, the cover stone at the south end falling into the interior on the west side. Here, as in the above cist, the walls were built of large boulders. Stones suitable for building such cists seem to have been scarce in the locality, there being no rock in the neighbourhood, and those utilised must have been brought from a distance.

The interior of the cist measured 4 feet in length, 18 inches in width, and 2 feet in depth, the distance from the surface of the ground to the bottom of the grave being 4 feet. The main axis lay north-west and south-east. The walls were built all round in two courses of large stones, mostly boulders, and the cover was in three pieces, the whole just over 4 feet in length. The top stone that covers the south portion was 3 inches thick, the mid-stone $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch in thickness, while the third stone was barely 1 inch. This was a rudely constructed cist, but it was uncommonly long. Perhaps this was necessary owing to the method of burial, for the bones it contained have been traced the whole length of the interior. The head appears to have been at the south end, the other bones being in the centre and north end, the whole having the appearance as if the body had been placed on its side, close to the west wall. Near what was considered the head were found several pieces of an iron sword, very much corroded, with little of the metal remaining.

Professor Bryce, to whom the bones from this cist were also submitted, stated, "the bones from this cist have no tale to tell. There are only a few fragments of long bones, from which no conclusion can be drawn. They are much stouter in build than those in the first cist."

In the month of December a further discovery was made in the same sand-pit, about 260 yards west-north-west of the last described at D on fig. 1. It consisted of a wheel-turned vessel of dark-coloured pottery, with a number of objects made out of thin sheet bronze or brass, and some much corroded fragments of iron, and particles of wood. The vessel was found standing on its base at a depth of 2 feet below the surface of the ground in stratified sand, the objects of bronze were arranged in a curve a few inches to the east of the pot, and the fragments of iron and wood a few inches farther away. There was no structure surrounding the deposit and no evidence of human remains, but the sand above the objects had been disturbed and was mixed with dark soil.

NOTE ON THE RELICS FOUND. By J. GRAHAM CALLANDER.

Like the grave discovered the previous year, the first brought to light in 1922 was structurally a typical short cist of the Bronze Age; this was confirmed by the presence of the food-vessel (fig. 2) which it contained. The urn is of a common variety of this class of pottery, both as regards form and the texture of the ware, but in its ornamentation it shows the very unusual feature of impressed curvilinear lines. It is very seldom indeed that curved lines are seen in the ornamentation of Scottish Bronze Age pottery.

The vessel, which is formed of buff-coloured ware, measures $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height, $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches in external diameter at the mouth, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches at the shoulder, and $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches at the base, the wall being $\frac{1}{16}$ inch thick. The upper part of the vessel is almost vertical, with a slight concavity between the shoulder and the lip, the lower part tapers rapidly to the base, and the top of the rim is bevelled downwards towards the interior. The wall and the top of the rim are covered with ornamentation. Between the shoulder and the lip the vessel is encircled with a row of small arches or loops

impinging at the sides, and a broad band of straight upright lines, separated by a single transverse line and bordered with two lines above and below. The tapering lower portion is encircled by three bands of ornamentation, separated from each other and bordered above by transverse lines, the central band consisting of short vertical straight lines and the two others of a row of small arches or loops similar to those on the upper part of the vessel. The edge of the lip is decorated with short cuts or notches, and the bevelled top by short radial lines between a marginal line on the outside and on the inside. All the ornamental designs, with the exception of the cuts on the edge of the lip, have been formed by pressing a twisted cord on the clay before the vessel was fired.

From Professor Bryce's report on the bones found in this grave, it will have been noticed that two individuals had been buried in it, one of

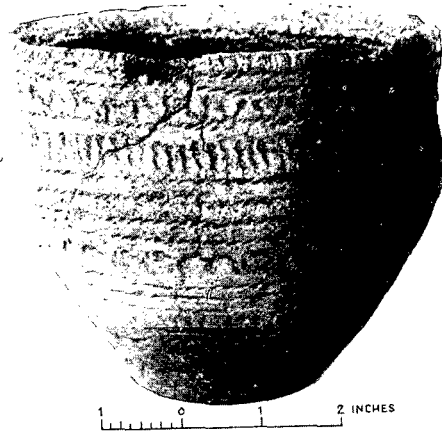


Fig. 2. Food-vessel from Camelon.

them having been cremated. This combination of burials by inhumation and after cremation in the same grave is worthy of notice, as also the presence of a food-vessel urn with incinerated bones. This latter circumstance is not common, as generally in Scotland food-vessel urns are found with inhumed burials. Still, a few reliable records of the occurrence of this class of pottery with cremated human remains have been published.

This grave belongs to the early part of the Bronze Age, but the next two date to a considerably later period—the time of the Roman occupation of the south of Scotland.

The first of these later deposits consisted of a rudely formed stone grave, rather longer than the short cist of the earlier period, and it contained the unburnt remains of a human skeleton with the much decayed remains of an iron sword (fig. 3). Only the tang and the upper part of the blade survive, the total length being 9 inches, of which the tang accounts for 4 inches; the blade is flat and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth. At the root of the tang are the remains of a thin flat plate of bronze, which has separated the hilt from the blade, and the top of the tang has been riveted. There are indications in the mass of rust adhering to the tang that the grip had been of wood. The breadth of the blade of the sword is such as to indicate that probably the weapon had been a *gladius* of the Roman legionary and not the sword of a native Caledonian; the native swords found at Newstead have much narrower blades. The grave having been found within 600 yards of the Roman camp at Camelon, it is quite likely that it is that of a Roman soldier.

The occurrence of a sword in a Roman grave in Britain seems to be very unusual; I have not been able to learn of any such discovery in these islands.

The relics from the last-discovered deposit consisted of a wheel-turned vessel of pottery, three discs and two other small fragments of thin sheet bronze or brass, and several pieces of much corroded and contorted iron. Although there were no indications of a coffin and no traces of human remains, it may be that the deposit was sepulchral.

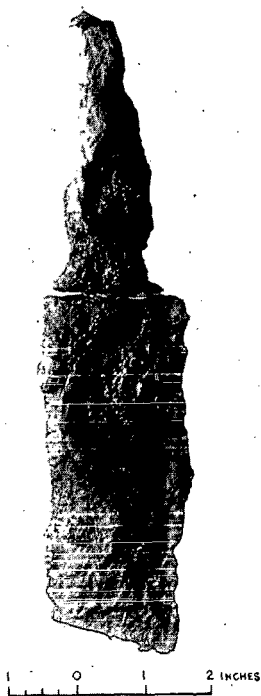


Fig. 3. Fragment of Iron Sword from Camelon.

The vessel (fig. 4) is of hard ware formed of well-washed clay. Black on the exterior, it becomes lighter in colour towards the inside, which is grey. The pot, which measures $4\frac{1}{8}$ inches in height, $3\frac{5}{8}$ inches in diameter at the mouth, $5\frac{5}{8}$ inches at the shoulder, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches across the base, has an ovoid body flattened on the top and set on a pedestal foot, the mouth having a short upright brim concave on the outside. At the junction of the body and brim and round the foot is a slight groove. Part of one side of the vessel was broken in by the pick of the workman who discovered it, and the fragments so dislodged were not preserved. With its high shoulder and flattened top, I have not been able to find



Fig. 4. Urn of dark-coloured Pottery from Camelon.

an exact parallel figured in any of the books dealing with this class of pottery. Mr Thomas May, F.S.A.Scot., considers that the vessel belongs to the Agricolean period.

Of the three bronze discs (fig. 5), two are nearly complete and one is crushed out of shape. They measure $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, and have a hollow boss in the centre $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch across. In the flat edge between the central boss and the periphery are three small rivet holes placed not quite equidistant. The two other fragments of bronze are incomplete and too much broken to allow of their purpose being determined.

After some of the rust from the iron fragments had been cleaned off, these were seen to be the remains of two hinges. They were of the kind in which the loop on one side passed through a perforation at the end of the complementary part, and not of the variety which work on a transverse pin. The best preserved hinge showed a length of about

3 inches of one limb, but it had been longer; its breadth was $\frac{7}{8}$ inch. Portions of three rivets remained in position, with fragments of wood impregnated with iron still adhering to them. Evidently there had



Fig. 5. Bronze Disc from Camelon. ($\frac{1}{3}$.)

been a wooden box or coffer deposited with the pottery vessel, which had decayed away with the exception of the parts just described. Possibly the bronze discs and the other pieces of this metal may have served as mountings for the box; but this is uncertain, as the discoverer stated that they were found placed on edge on one side of, and concentrically with, the urn.