

I.

THE TARDENOISIAN MICRO-BURIN IN SCOTLAND.

By A. D. LACAILLE, F.S.A.Scot.

Although several communications on the Scottish Tardenoisian have appeared in our *Proceedings*, no recent contribution on the subject has been given to the Society. Of late, however, evidence has been forthcoming to throw more light on Scottish industries of Mesolithic facies. In view also of certain statements made regarding these industries it is opportune to record data now available.

Characteristics have been noted indicating that in the Tweed valley is generally represented a more ancient horizon than in Ayrshire. Comparison shows that on Deeside the appearance of the Tardenoisian collections assembled is similar to that met with in the different series from the Tweed valley. Inspection of the artifacts reveals forms present in England and on the other side of the Channel testifying to earlier craftsmanship than do the Shewalton group and similar industries

elsewhere, in which occur forms absent in the valleys of the two Scottish rivers mentioned. On the other hand it can be shown that the Ayrshire site has not yielded products found in what, in some places, may be regarded as an earlier Tardenoisian phase.

The stressing of the consistent absence of the *micro-burin* in Scotland and the presence of arrow-heads—although trimmed in a manner not in vogue in late industries—has apparently led to the deduction that the Scottish microlithic industries represent but a survival of Tardenoisian tradition even into the Bronze Age.¹

An authoritative work just published contains conflicting references to the occurrence of the *micro-burin* in Scotland, and one may possibly infer therefrom that only two of these typical pieces have so far been recorded from Scottish sites.² This calls for modification, as the writer at a meeting in London of the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia on the 25th May 1933 mentioned that, having inspected several Tweedside collections, a number of *micro-burins* had been noticed, although not recognised by their finders, probably on account of their unfamiliar aspect. Possibly, too, the collectors were influenced by the insistent suggestion that the *micro-burin* was an absentee from Scottish microlithic series. Nevertheless, it had previously been noted in the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society of East Anglia* that I had identified several characteristic specimens in Border collections.³ One in particular, a perfect example, of grey flint, found by Master Alex. N. G. Munro, and sent me with others picked up by his father, Dr W. A. Munro, F.S.A.Scot., was presented to the national collection and is exhibited in the Museum (fig. 1, No. 1). The case in which Scottish Tardenoisian implements are displayed contains some examples of notched flakes, the parents from which the typical *micro-burin* is derived. All these come from the Border counties, and it was with satisfaction I obtained lately what seems confirmation of similarity between Border and Deeside microlithic industries in the form of many typical *micro-burins*, discovered by Miss Hilda M. Leslie Paterson, F.S.A.Scot., in the neighbourhood of Banchory. Among the Scottish prehistoric specimens in the collection of the late Mr W. J. Lewis Abbott are two *micro-burins* of light flint from the Culbin Sands, Moray.

Four, for the permission to figure which I am indebted to the finder, will suffice to illustrate North-Eastern Scottish examples of *micro-burins*

¹ V. Gordon Childe, *The Prehistory of Scotland*, p. 20.

It must be pointed out here that the diminutive arrowhead from Shewalton, so strongly emphasised and described as barbed and tanged (*ibid.*, p. 20), has no barbs.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 16 and 20.

³ *Cit. supra*, vol. vii. pt. i. p. 129.

possessed of slight variations, all paralleled in well-known series of other regions (fig. 1, Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5).

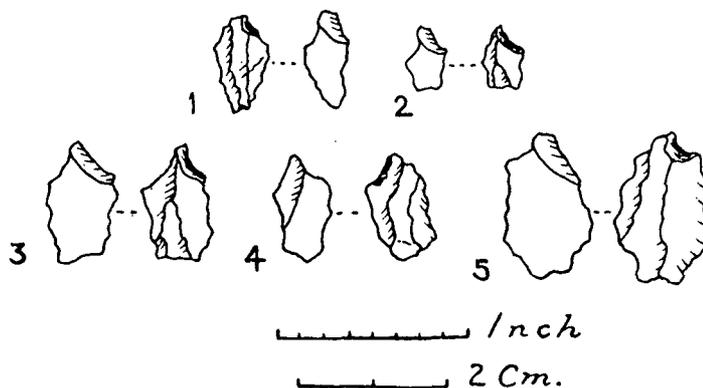


Fig. 1. Tardenoisian Micro-burins: No. 1, Dryburgh Mains, Berwickshire; Nos. 2-5, Birkwood, Banchory.

No. 2 is of Buchan rich brown flint, and Nos. 3, 4, and 5 of grey chalcidonic flint. In the case of No. 4, the only instance with the notch on the left, the edge of the characteristic hollow bears delicate trimming.