

ART. XXV.—*Ring-marked Stones at Glassonby and Maughanby.* By the Rev. CANON THORNLEY.

*Read at Kirkby Stephen, August 29th, 1901.*

WITH this paper are illustrations of archaic tool-markings discovered by the writer on the stones of tumuli in the neighbourhood of Kirkoswald.

Others in the neighbourhood were previously known. In these *Transactions* (vol. xiii., art. 28) Chancellor Ferguson described and illustrated some of the markings on Long Meg, also on stones from the Old Parks tumulus. The latter are now in the garden of the Old Parks farm, Mr. Councillor Potter's; but he informs me that it is purposed to remove them to Edenhall. These stones are remarkable as exhibiting none of the concentric circles so common elsewhere—for example, on Long Meg—but they show other figures of a different type. On the stone distinguished by Chancellor Ferguson as No. 5 are nine or ten forms resembling the archaic type of the Semitic letter *lamed*; also a figure like an 8—two circles touching one another, in which the tool-marks are very plain to be seen. They seem to have been incised by repeated slight blows of a rude hack or stone hammer—not, I think, of a chisel. The east side of the stone No. 3 has two markings very clearly cut—the *lamed*-like form and a rude circle or oval. The west side of No. 4, still standing *in situ*, has three other different forms, as may be seen in the illustration to Chancellor Ferguson's paper. Just as the crook on No. 5 resembles an archaic Phœnician *lamed*, and the circle or oval on No. 3 is like the archaic *ayin*, so these figures on No. 4 recall early forms of the letters *beth*, *daleth*, and *yod*. I do not say that the carver meant them for Phœnician letters, but I



FIG. I.—RINGS AND SPIRAL ON A STONE OF THE MAUGHANBY CIRCLE.

(TO FACE P. 381).

wish to call attention to the fact of their resemblance. Articles of commerce, such as the bead found at the Glassonby tumulus, travelled hither in the Bronze Age from the East; and I think it not impossible that the letters of Eastern writing may have been imitated as mystic symbols.

Another stone, known as the Maughanby stone, was figured in Chancellor Ferguson's article (vol. xiii., facing p. 397) from the paper by Sir James Y. Simpson. It is remarkable as exhibiting a figure of four concentric circles joined with that of a spiral of rather smaller size. I understand that this stone is now in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, but there is a very similar pattern on a stone still *in situ* at the Maughanby circle (Fig. I). Five concentric circles are distinctly marked, the largest 2oin. in diameter, with perhaps another outside them; a spiral branches off, about 9in. in diameter. This site was described by Dr. Taylor (these *Transactions*, vol. vi., pp. 111, 116) as a circle containing a cairn in which was found "a semi-ovoid cist with an urn and burnt bones." In *Transactions* vi., p. 492, Chancellor Ferguson is reported as saying that on the stones of the cist at Little Meg (*i.e.*, this Maughanby circle) there were markings like those on Long Meg, but much more distinct. One of these stones, or part of it, was shown to me by Mr. George Watson in the Penrith Museum, and as it does not seem to have been published I give a sketch of it by our Editor (Fig. II). It is of sandstone, measuring 18in. by 15in., and 5in. thick. There are three cups, each surrounded by three rings; in the figure to the dexter side the rings are interrupted beneath the cup. A somewhat conventionalised drawing of this stone hangs framed in the Penrith Museum.

In the description of the Glassonby tumulus and circle (these *Transactions*, N.S., i., p. 298) the Editor says that an old resident, Mr. Thomas Glaister, remembers to have

seen ring-marking on a stone now lost, but once filling a gap at the S.S.E. or S.S.W. side. On another boulder (marked No. 28 in the plan, N.S., vol. i., p. 296), I have found markings on the smooth inner face. It exhibits

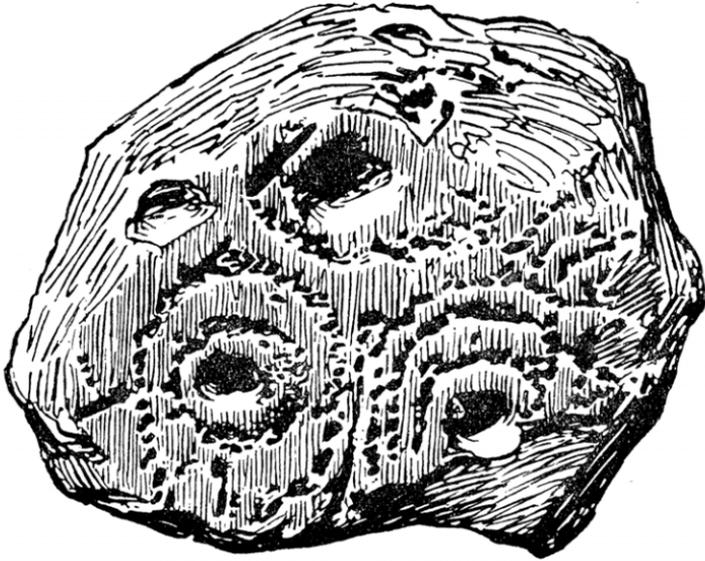


FIG. II.—STONE FROM THE CIST AT MAUGHANBY,  
NOW IN PENRITH MUSEUM.

concentric circles, one group of four complete and plainly marked circles, above which are two groups of four circles or curves each, springing from or intersecting the ring below (Fig. III). The work is rudely and lightly hacked on the hard cobble-stone. The diameter of the lower group of circles is  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inches; the height of the whole figure is  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Rings are found only on Long Meg, and on the stones of the Maughanby and the Glassonby circles. The Old Parks tumulus yields other forms, but no rings. At the Maughanby circle there were also spirals. Except on the Maughanby cist-stone there are no cup-marks (conical



FIG. III.—RING MARKINGS ON A STONE OF THE GLASSONBY CIRCLE.

(TO FACE P. 382).

cavities) so carefully described by Dr. Taylor from the Redhills stone (these *Transactions*, vol. vi., pp. 112-113), nor of the peck-marks—little pits or small holes irregularly dispersed over the stone. The carvings are found incised on any convenient part of the stone, usually on the flat sides of boulders which have been smoothed by glacial action, and they appear to face to all points of the compass. The five stones of the Old Parks tumulus are slabs of sandstone, now fast weathering. Hence good illustrations are greatly to be desired, and in the future will become increasingly valuable.

Figs. I. and III. are from photographs by Mr. F. W. Tassell, of Carlisle, with the ring-marks very carefully retouched on the spot from the original stones. Without this retouching the faint marks would hardly have been visible in the engravings.

---