

VIII. *An Account of some Antiquities found in a Cairn, near Hesketh-in-the-Forest, in Cumberland, in a Letter from Mr. CHRISTOPHER HODGSON, to the Rev. JOHN HODGSON, Secretary. See Plates I. and II.*

ON Friday, the 15th of February, 1822, the workmen employed under my directions in widening Hesketh Lane, on the great road between Carlisle and Penrith, about seventy yards from the Court Thorn, and on the east side of the way, fell in with a Cairn, which, with the antiquities it contained, I will endeavour to describe to you in the best manner I can.\*

The hedge which was removed to make the alteration ran close by the west side of the cairn, and the new one runs through it. One would suppose the road had been curved round the west side of the cairn to avoid injuring it. Mr. Atkinson, of Cross-Gaps, which is the nearest dwelling-house to the cairn, tells me he remembers that when the turnpike road was made, between 50 and 55, or 56 years since, this cairn consisted of a very large heap of stones; that he believed many of them were taken at that time for forming the road, and since then, the successive farmers of the ground have taken stones in such considerable quantities from it, for repairing their hedges, as to have reduced it so far below the level of the adjoining ground, that none of it has, of late years, been within the reach of the plough.

On the Monday after the workmen fell in with it, I set several of them to work to clear away its area; in the progress of which operation, a very large quantity of cobble-stones, consisting chiefly of such red

\* See plate i. fig. 2, for sketch of the road, situation of the Cairn, &c.



PLATE II

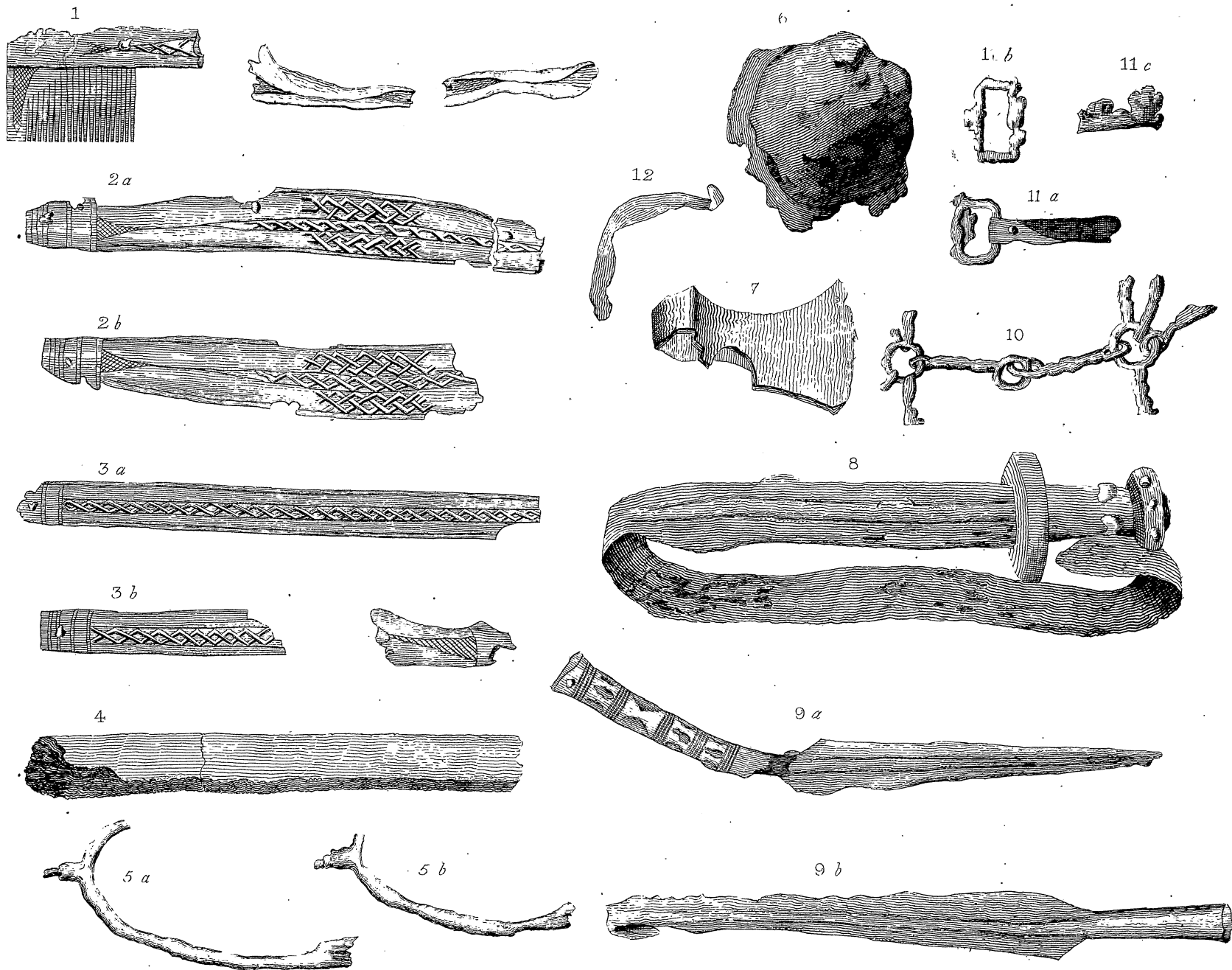
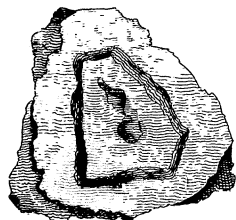


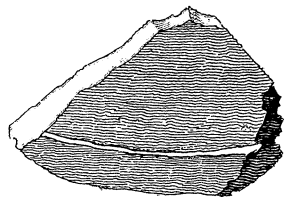


PLATE I

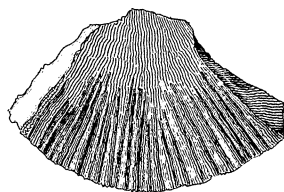
3



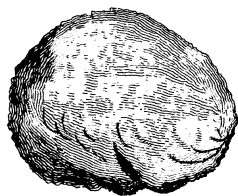
4 a



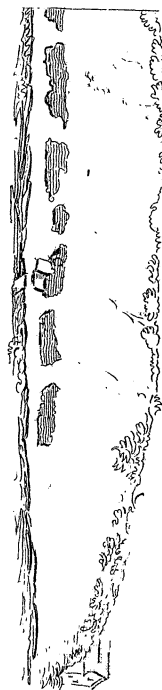
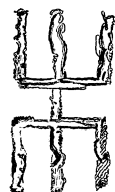
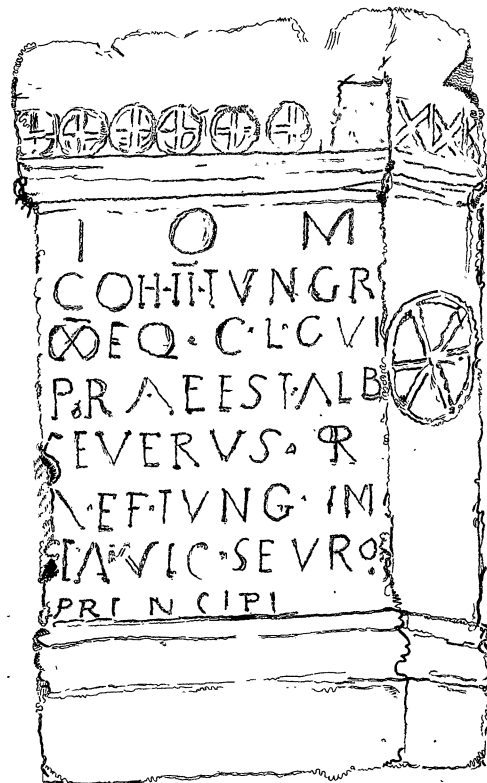
4 b



4 c



1



5



2

All the Antiquities excepting the Stones  
were found here

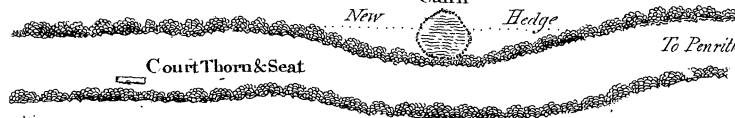
Cairn

New

Hedge

Court Thorn & Seat

To Penrith



sand-stone as is found *in situ* in the neighbourhood, but partly of the different varieties of the hard blue rocks, which form the mountains that environ the sides and head of Ullswater; some of them were so large as to take three men to roll them out. They were lying in a circular manner, in an area of about 22 feet diameter, and about two feet below the surface of the field. Immediately below the stones, and upon a natural bed of very fine dry sand, we came to a stratum consisting of charcoal, burnt bones, ashes, and the following antiquities, chiefly lying in a heap, with strong marks of fire in the sand, over an area of about 14 feet diameter. The stones immediately covering the ashes were large, and closely set together; those above smaller, compact, and regular. The four stones in Plate I, were found amongst them.

Plate I. fig. 3, is a stone perforated with two holes, and having a part of its upper surface sunk about an inch deep. It is 18 inches across, at the broadest part, by 16 inches.

Fig. 4, *a*, is part of a millstone, of freestone; it measures  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches across in one line, and  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches in the other, and differs from 1 to 3 inches in thickness.

Fig. 4, *b*, is another fragment of a millstone, of the kind that are called the blue stone, and which are quarried on the Rhine, near Cologne.—It measures  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches across in one line, and  $6\frac{3}{4}$  inches in the other.

Fig. 4, *c*, is a rude hemisphere of freestone, having several small holes on its base. It has probably been an upper millstone. The diameter 15 inches.

Plate II. fig. 1, is a fragment of an ivory comb, neatly carved, and turned to a greenish brown colour.

Fig. 2, *a* and *b*, and fig. 3, *a* and *b*, are also of ivory, and I suppose them to have been the hafts either of knives or razors, as they are very like those of the razors now in use, and of the clasp knives used before the modern invention of springs at the hinge. They have each a fret upon them, very neatly and very regularly carved, and such as is commonly met with on Roman antiquities.

Fig. 4, is a sharpening stone, not unlike those called water of Ayr stones.

Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4, are about twice the size of the figures in the plate.

Fig. 5, *a* and *b*, are parts of a pair of steel spurs, and are about 6 inches in length.

Fig. 6, a sort of iron dish, which I take to have been either the upper part of a helmet, or the umbo of a shield. It is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter.

Fig. 7, an axe of steel, which the Romans called *securis*. It is 7 inches long.

Fig. 8, is a double edged steel sword; the hilt is 3 inches long, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch broad. The guard 5 inches long,  $\frac{2}{3}$  high, and 1 inch broad. The pommel or balance knob, behind the hand is three inches in diameter, and of the same strength as the guard: both the guard and the pommel have been plated with silver, which has been melted, but still adheres to them in globules, and they have a similar fret carved upon them to that on the ivory. The blade is 2 feet 10 inches long, next to the guard  $2\frac{5}{8}$  inches, and at the point  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inch broad.

Fig. 9, *a*, is a spear head of steel, of very neat workmanship. It is bent between the blade and socket, the latter of which is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, and  $\frac{5}{8}$  of an inch in diameter, having the copper rivets through it. The blade is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches long.

Fig. 9, *b*, is another head of a lance or spear, also of fine workmanship, the socket 6 inches long,  $\frac{5}{4}$  of an inch in diameter, and having in it 7 holes on each side, fitted in copper rivets. The blade is 12 inches long, a part of which is wanting.

Fig. 10, is an iron bit of a bridle, which has apparently been plated with brass. It is remarkable, that though of the kind called a snaffle, it has rings for one rein and head; they have been fixed by iron plates. It measures 7 inches.

Fig. 11, *a*, *b*, and *c*, iron fragments of a bridle, and other appendages to a bridle.

Fig. 12, a piece of iron, 8 inches across the bow, which I suppose to have belonged to the pommel of a saddle.

I can make very few general conclusions concerning these antiquities.

From the style and excellence of their workmanship, I would conclude that they are Roman; and I am much in favour of this conclusion from the circumstance of querns of Cologne stone being generally and very frequently found near Roman camps and forts, and from their being found on the site of a funeral pile. The remains of a bridle and saddle, however, are in favour of their belonging to a Scandinavian or Tartar race of people, as they make it probable that the ashes of a horse, as well as those of its rider, had been interred here. All the implements that are of metal, have been exposed to great heat, probably to that of the funeral pile, lighted to consume the body of their original owner; after they had been softened in the fire, the sword and the spear heads, No. 9, had received the twists with which they are represented in the drawings

If the turnpike road was on the line of Watling-Street, I would infer that these antiquities are older than, or coeval with, the Roman way from old Penrith to Carlisle, as it makes a turn at this place, which can be accounted for by no other way, than supposing that it had that direction given to it, for the purpose of avoiding the Cairn which I have been endeavouring to describe to you.

Dear Brother, your's affectionately,

C. HODGSON.