



Bacon, Photo.

ROMAN VESSELS OF BRONZE,

found at Prestwick Whins, Northumberland, July, 1890.

## XVIII.—DISCOVERY OF ROMAN BRONZE VESSELS AT PRESTWICK CARR.

BY THOMAS HODGKIN, LL.D., F.S.A., SECRETARY.

[Read on the 30th July, 1890.]

THE piece of waste land called Prestwick Carr was well-known a generation ago by all naturalists and sportsmen. It is about two square miles in extent, and lies between Ponteland and the little hamlet of Dinnington. It forms a long, bent trough towards which the surrounding country slopes gently both on the north and south. There are traces of an extensive forest having formerly overspread the whole of this tract of land, but for some centuries it has been chiefly known as a district which, except in the height of summer or in any dry winter, was generally under water, and there were several parts in it which were always full of water.

Such was Prestwick Carr forty years ago; the favourite haunt and breeding place of various sorts of wild-fowl, and with a diversified flora and fauna which, as before said, made it a favourite place of pilgrimage for the naturalists of Northumberland. But the great draining operations which were successfully carried out here between 1850 and 1860 have changed all this, and which, doubtless, increasing the rent rolls of the neighbouring proprietors have taken away that which gave Prestwick Carr its special interest, and turned it from a picturesque, unprofitable waste into two square miles of common-place Northumbrian corn-land.

Having heard a rumour that some ancient bronze vessels had been discovered in the neighbourhood of Ponteland, I drove over on the 7th of June, 1890, to Woolsington to enquire if anything had been heard of the discovery there. The news had not yet reached the inmates of Woolsington Hall, but Mr. Bell kindly offered to accompany me in my quest. We followed several false scents, but at length got hold of a clue which led us to the farmhouse of Prestwick Whins, which fortunately for our purpose is situated on Mr. Bell's property. We saw some of the bronze vessels and had a full conversation with William Shotton, the farm-labourer who discovered them. Since then the whole find has been collected by Mr. Bell

from the various cottages among which they had been scattered, and by his desire they are exhibited to the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries this evening.

The vessels are as follows:—

1.—A large bronze cauldron, now worn extremely thin, and in a very tattered condition, measuring 27 inches one way and 24 inches the other. This seems to have served as a kind of envelope for at any rate some of the other vessels.

2.—A circular vessel much broken and apparently patched. 10 inches in diameter; depth 7 inches. Three concentric circles on the bottom.

3 and 4.—Two bowls, 10 and  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter. No circles on the bottom.

5.—A circular basin measuring 15 inches in diameter and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches in depth.

6.—A beautiful dish, 12 inches in diameter, with one handle attached to side, and concentric rings at the bottom, both inside and out.

7, 8, 9, 11, and 12.—Saucepans, varying in size from one to two quarts; three with handles complete, the other two handles broken. All with concentric circles at the bottom.

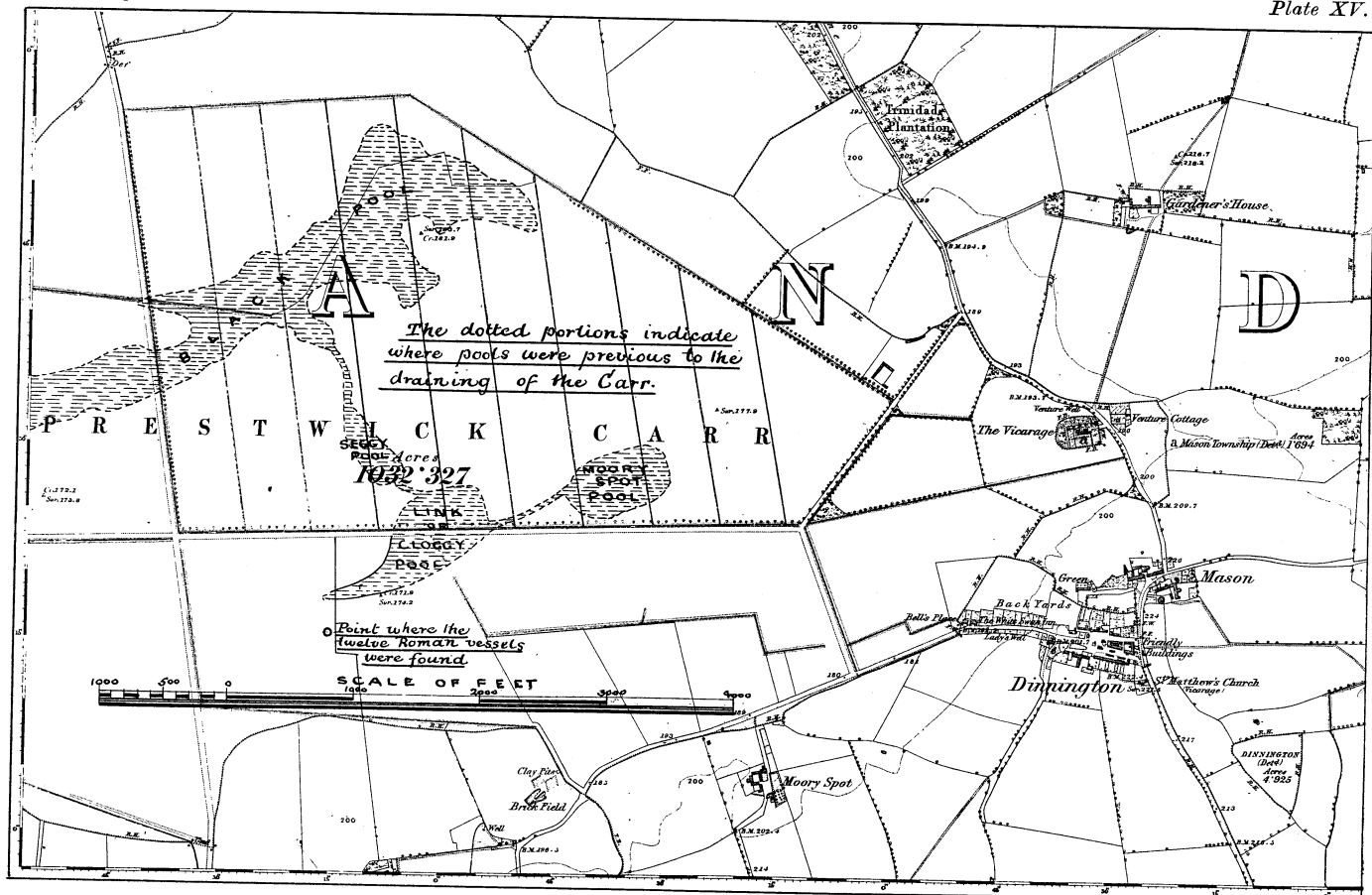
10.—A bowl with chased border. Five concentric rings at the bottom, and a curious patch on one side.

13.—A massive ring-like object, 6 inches across, which was, perhaps, a handle; probably it belongs to the cauldron (1).

The vessels were found by Shotton while ploughing in the field called Middle Carr, about 350 yards north of the farmhouse of Prestwick Whins. The place is shown on the map herewith, and near the little pond of water formerly known as 'Link Pool' (Plate XV). There is no doubt that the field in question once formed part of Prestwick Carr.

W. Shotton is clear on the point that the vessels were not found all together, but in two lots about 10 or 12 yards apart, but he cannot particularize further as to which vessels formed part of each lot.

Mr. Bell retains at Woolsington Hall the four vessels to which his name is attached, but has presented the remainder to the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle.





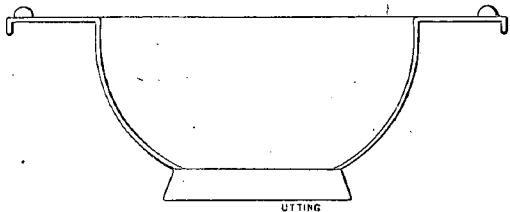
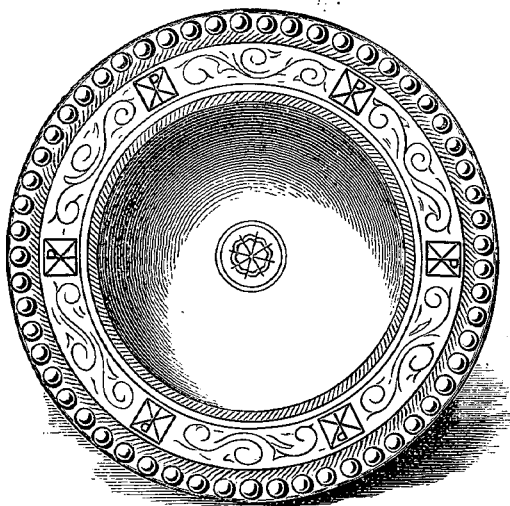
The following are notes of other discoveries of similar silver and bronze vessels in the counties of Northumberland and Durham :—

## VESSELS OF SILVER.

1.—A silver vessel (now lost)<sup>1</sup> was found on the west side of the Tyne below Corbridge bridge in the summer of 1736. The cup was formerly in the possession of Sir Edward Blackett, bart. It weighed 20 ounces, was nearly 4 inches high, and had a diameter of  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inches. There is an account of it in the minutes of the Society of Antiquaries of London, dated October 28th, 1736, with some sketches. From these sketches the appended illustrations have been prepared.

2.—In 1747, a number of silver vessels similar in shape to that exhumed at Backworth (see No. 3), together with coins, was discovered at Capheaton, within half a mile of the house of Sir John Swinburne, bart.

The vessels that were saved are now in the British Museum. Many more were secreted and melted by the workmen. The handles of the vessels are decorated, in low relief, with mythological figures. Full descriptions of them, by Mr. A. W. Franks, C.B., may be seen at page 343. of the *Lapidarium Septentrionale*, where there is also a lithographic plate of the objects.



<sup>1</sup> *Lapid. Sept.*, No. 653.

3.—Found near Backworth (?), now in the British Museum. ‘An elegant silver vessel resembling a saucepan . . . In the vessel were found five gold rings, one silver ring, two gold chains with ornaments attached to them, a gold bracelet, a pair of silver gilt *fibulae*, three silver spoons—two oval and one circular—and about 280 Roman *denarii*, and two large brass coins of Antoninus Pius. The discovery was made in 1812, and the objects were sold sometime after they were found, to Mr. Watson, a Newcastle silversmith.’ The silver dish has ‘an elaborately carved handle inscribed to the mothers by Fabius Dubitatus.’<sup>2</sup>



4.—Wallis (*North. II.* 152)<sup>3</sup> gives an account of a silver cup discovered near Bywell, in 1760, which had on its rim the inscription:—

DESIDERI VIVAS.

It was sold to Mr. Langlands, a Newcastle goldsmith, for fifteen shillings, but was claimed by William Fenwick, esq., as lord of the manor, in whose possession it was for some time. It is now lost.

#### VESSELS OF BRONZE.

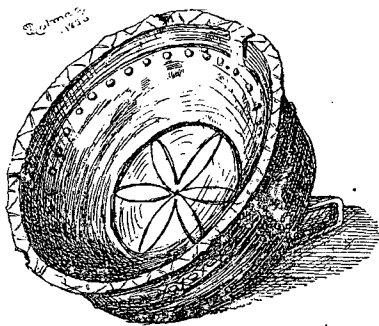
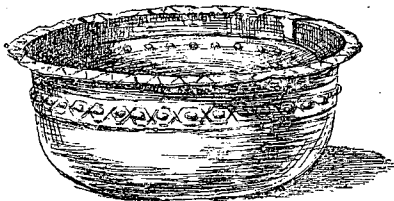
1.—On the 9th September, 1886, Dr. Bruce, vice-president, presented to the Society a bowl found about three years previously in the bed of the river Tyne opposite Blaydon Burn. It was found, bottom

<sup>2</sup> *Lapid. Sept.* No. 535.

<sup>3</sup> See also *Lapid. Sept.* No. 631.

up, at a depth of about 7 feet. The vessel has been hammered into bowl shape, and has a plain rim about 2 inches wide rivetted to it. Its width is 1 foot  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches inside measurement, and its depth  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches; its thickness about  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch, and weight 7 lbs. The illustrations show the vessel.<sup>4</sup>

2.—On the 25th February, 1891, a bowl-shaped cauldron of light coloured bronze,<sup>5</sup> formed out of a thin sheet of metal, was found in Westgate Street, Newcastle, and presented to the Society by Mr. Angus of that town. The dimensions of it are  $14\frac{1}{2}$  inches diameter, 4 inches high, with a rim  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide. It is similar in shape to the vessel found near Blaydon burn (see *ante* No. 1).



3.—A saucer-shaped bronze votive *patera* of the Roman period, found at low water mark in the Tyne, near the Herd Sand, South Shields. Round a central boss inside is the inscription:—

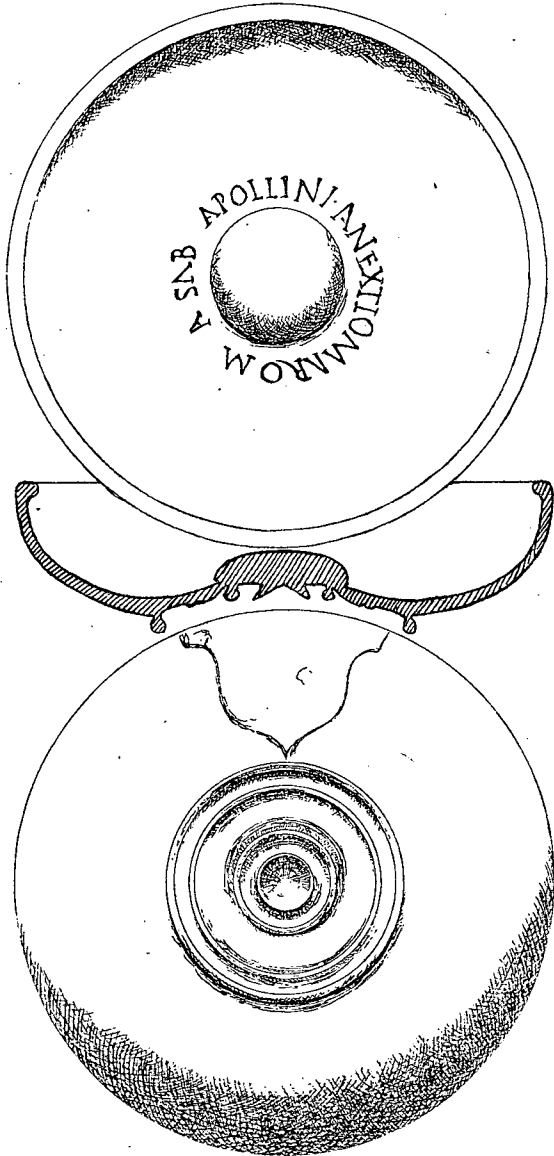
APOLLINI ANEXTIO MARO M A SAB.

The handle is missing, but the shield-like place where it was attached is plainly to be seen. It is 6 inches in diameter and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches high. The vessel is apparently of the end of the first or beginning of the second century, and may have belonged to one of the soldiers of Vespasian, Trajan, or Hadrian. It is not against possibility that a temple of Apollo Anextius was situated on the banks of the Tyne. . . . The full names of the *dominus*, whose slave Maro—Virgil's namesake—was, cannot be guessed at with certainty. They may have been—M(arcus) A(ntonius) Sab(inus), or something like, for instance, M(arcus) A(elius) Sab(ellus). The second name of the god Apollo,

<sup>4</sup> *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Newc.* vol. ii. pp. 279 and 301.    <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* vol. v. p. 10.



which may be compared with Grannus and Maponus, is evidently of Celtic origin.<sup>6</sup>



<sup>6</sup> *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Newc.* vol. iii. pp. 173 and 174.

4.—In the Black Gate Museum there is a bronze ewer (*praefericulum*), 8 inches high, deposited there by the River Tyne Commissioners. It was dredged out of the Tyne a few years ago.

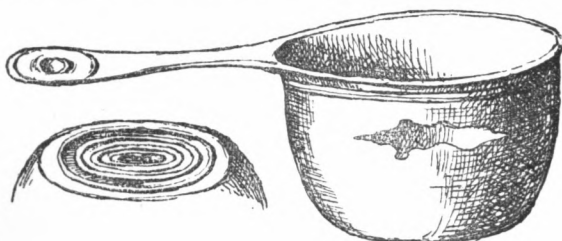
5.—Ploughed up in a field at Harwood, near Cambo, a bronze bowl-shaped vessel, the ornament round it filled in with blue enamel.<sup>7</sup>



6.—Found during some excavations in 'The Guards,' near Bolton chapel. The bottom of a bronze *patella*. It was exhibited in the Museum of the Royal Archaeological Institute during their meeting at Edinburgh in 1856, and is described in the catalogue (page 61) as 'the bottom of a bronze skillet formed with concentric circles in high relief. It was found in a large camp called *The Guards*, near the river Aln at Bolton, and was presented to the Antiquaries of Newcastle by Sir David Smith.' The object is shown in the annexed illustration (kindly lent by the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club).<sup>8</sup> It is now in the Black Gate Museum.



7.—Found near the Wannay Crag, a little above Risingham (*Habitancum*), by the Rev. Thomas Stephens of Horsley vicarage (in



<sup>7</sup> *Arch. Ael.*, (O.S.), IV., p. 102.

<sup>8</sup> See their *Transactions*, X., p. 309.

whose possession it now is), a saucepan. 'It lay,' the finder writes,<sup>9</sup> 'a small portion only exposed to view, in the bed of a runner which rises at the foot of the crags towards the north.' . . . The vessel is of bronze, and similar in shape to that found near Backworth.<sup>10</sup>

8.—The handle of a small bronze vessel bearing the inscription VTERE | FELIX, was found in the Roman station at South Shields a few years ago.<sup>11</sup> This shews it full size.



9.—The handle of a skillet, similar in shape to the vessels found at Prestwick Whins, has been discovered in the Roman station at Chesters (*Cilurnum*). It is now in the Museum at Chesters.

10.—From Pompeii; now in Alnwick Castle Museum. Diameter, 5 inches. Dr. Bruce informs us<sup>12</sup> that some vessels like it 'have recently (1879) been found in the vicinity of Belsay, Northumberland.' He also refers to the similar *patellae* found at Castle Howard, which are now in the York Museum.



<sup>9</sup> *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Newc.* vol. ii. p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> *Lapid. Sept.* No. 525.

<sup>11</sup> See *Arch. Ael.* X. p. 260.

<sup>12</sup> *Catalogue of Antiq. at Alnwick Castle*, No. 725, p. 131.

but the attendance of his many friends and fellow-workers in the various undertakings in which he was interested gave it almost the character of a public funeral.

The public life of Newcastle has lost one of its best known and most familiar figures ; the city one of its most respected and beloved citizens ; but we, as members of the Society of Antiquaries, naturally feel our own loss the most. We shall no more see him entering with his plaid over his shoulder to take his place in the president's chair in this room. Our debates will never again be helped by his wise and courteous guidance, nor enlivened by his ready humour, nor enriched by the treasures which his memory had accumulated in half a century of archaeological study. We shall honour his memory most fittingly by endeavouring to keep alive the enthusiasm which he imparted to us for his own pursuits ; but we shall long feel that there is a painful gap left in our ranks by the removal of our honoured chief, John Collingwood Bruce.

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#### XXXIV.—ROMAN VESSELS OF BRONZE.

IN addition to the bronze vessels of Roman date found in Northumberland and Durham, and described at pp. 162-166, there is in the South Shields Free Library museum the bottom, with the usual concentric circles on it, and part of the sides, of a saucepan, which was found on the Herd sand, at the mouth of the Tyne, near that town.

Three bronze cauldron-like vessels were found near Whitfield in Allendale about the year 1851. With them was found a well preserved colander or strainer four inches and three quarters diameter, with a horizontal handle projecting from one side six inches and a half long. All these vessels are now in the museum of the Society in the Black Gate. In the first edition of *The Roman Wall*, the smallest of the bronze cauldrons and the colander are shewn in Plate XVII., Figs. 1 and 3, and a note on them at p. 444.