

X

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1. OBJECTS FROM VIKING PERIOD GRAVES AT NORBY, NORWAY (fig. 1)

THE PURPOSE of this note is to supplement and correct the description given on presentation to the Society in 1820 of some objects in the Museum of Antiquities,¹ and to put them into a clearer context than is there provided.²

The entry for this group of objects in the Society's Donations Book, no. 1820.1/1-6, does not give details of the individual objects but simply bears the numbers 1820.1/1-6 on the left, and on the right the statement that "Mr. Peterson presented Various antiquities found upon the property of Gullbrand Rosenberg Farmer in the County of Laurvig in Norway". It seems likely that the numbers in this entry would have corresponded with those in Peterson's letter of description. Of these, numbers 1 ("fragments of an earthen jar") and 4 ("A steel spear") are not now identifiable in the Museum's collection—a fact recognised in a later annotation to the entry. Since their presentation to the Museum, the objects have received several different sets of numbers, with their most recent numbering a reversion to the sequence of 1820—unfortunately not correlated absolutely correctly. For the sake of completeness, the correlation is here given in tabular form:

Present Number	Previous numbers	1820 number
1820.1/1	V2	?1820.1/5
1820.1/2	56, 89, 119, V3	1820.1/2
1820.1/3	V4	1820.1/3
1820.1/4	V5	?1820.1/5
1820.1/5	67, V6	1820.1/5
1820.1/6	V7	1820.1/7

* Prepared for the press by Dr. D. J. Smith. Warmest thanks are accorded to the contributors.

¹"Letter from Mr. [Eric] Peterson to the Rev. John Hodgson, Sec.", *AA* 1 (1822), 205-7.

² It is a pleasure to record my thanks to Dr. Smith and Mr. Miket for facilities and help provided for study of the objects at the Museum, and to Miss M. M. Hurrell who has kindly drawn the illustrations.

It is fairly clear that once the original objects 1820.1/1 and 4 were missing, their numbers were assigned to other objects apparently not separately recorded in 1820. These objects certainly cannot be parts of the axe or spear, and it seems certain that the bowl no longer had its handle in 1820, so that we may legitimately infer that the present objects 1820.1/1 and 4 were originally part of 1820.1/5 but subsequently parted company. The present numbering will be adhered to here.

1820.1/1: fig. 1, no. 1

This object is described as a "Viking wallhook" on its card in the Museum's Register of Accessions. It is of iron with no remains of decoration or plating visible, being heavily corroded. It is $3\frac{1}{8}$ " (9.7 cm) long, varies from $\frac{7}{16}$ " (1.1 cm) to $\frac{1}{4}$ " (0.6 cm) wide, and is $\frac{3}{8}$ " (1.0 cm) thick in the middle.³ There are the remnants of a hook or ring at one end, but at the other simply a broken flat extremity merely $\frac{1}{8}$ " (0.3 cm) thick. Despite the corrosion, one gets the impression that the metal has been beaten at this point, and that there may well have been a hook at this end also.

It seems likely that this object is part of a horse-bridle. A link in a snaffle-bit is a possibility—certainly those figured by Wheeler from London have a thickening in the centre, with a ring at either end.⁴ But perhaps clearer parallels in the British Isles are provided by the fragments of bridles from Reay, Caithness,⁵ and Crayke, Yorkshire.⁶ The type is well known in Norway (e.g. from Lirhus and Tinnhaugen),⁷ being Rygh 567.⁸ The dimensions of the Norby example fit well with both the Norwegian and British examples, and its shape would seem to accord with the description of Reay as "quadrilateral". Of course, without the rings, definite ascription to a particular type is not possible, for in this case it could as well be from Rygh 569, 571, or possibly, in view of the thickening, 574.

1820.1/2: fig. 1, no. 2

This object was described by Peterson as a "sling stone . . . in the form of an egg", but it is more likely to be a stone net-sinker. It is heavy, and would have suited this purpose well. It is $3\frac{7}{8}$ " (9.8 cm) high, $2\frac{3}{8}$ " (6.0 cm) wide, and $2\frac{1}{4}$ " (5.7 cm) thick. The means of attachment was by cord to the grooves, which are cut roughly about $\frac{1}{8}$ " (0.3 cm) deep without clear sharp lines—except at the top, where indeed the stone might well have been broken slightly, thus

³ Most objects considered in this Note are fragmentary and in poor condition; hence all measurements must be approximate and, where relevant, will indicate maximum dimensions.

⁴ R. E. M. Wheeler, *London and the Vikings* (London Museum Catalogue, No. 1, 1927), Fig. 20 opposite p. 42.

⁵ S. Grieg, *Viking Antiquities in Scotland* (= *Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. H. Shetelig, Part II; Oslo, 1940), 22 and Fig. 5 on p. 21.

⁶ T. Sheppard, *Viking and Other Relics at Crayke, Yorkshire* (Hull Museum Publications, No. 203= *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* XXXIV, Part CXXXV, 1939), no. 5, 10–11.

⁷ H. Shetelig, *Vestlandske Graver fra Jernalderen* (Bergens Museums Skrifter Ny, Raekke, Bd. II, No. 1, 1912) 182, 198, Figs. 414, 470.

⁸ O. Rygh, *Norske Oldsager* (Andet Hefte, Kristiania, 1885), Fig. 567. All further references to this work will follow this pattern and not be separately noted. A very similar, but larger example from Denmark is illustrated by H. H. Andersen et al., *Århus Sønder vold en byarkæologisk undersøgelse* (Jysk Arkæologisk Selskabs Skrifter, Bind IX, Copenhagen, 1971), 115.

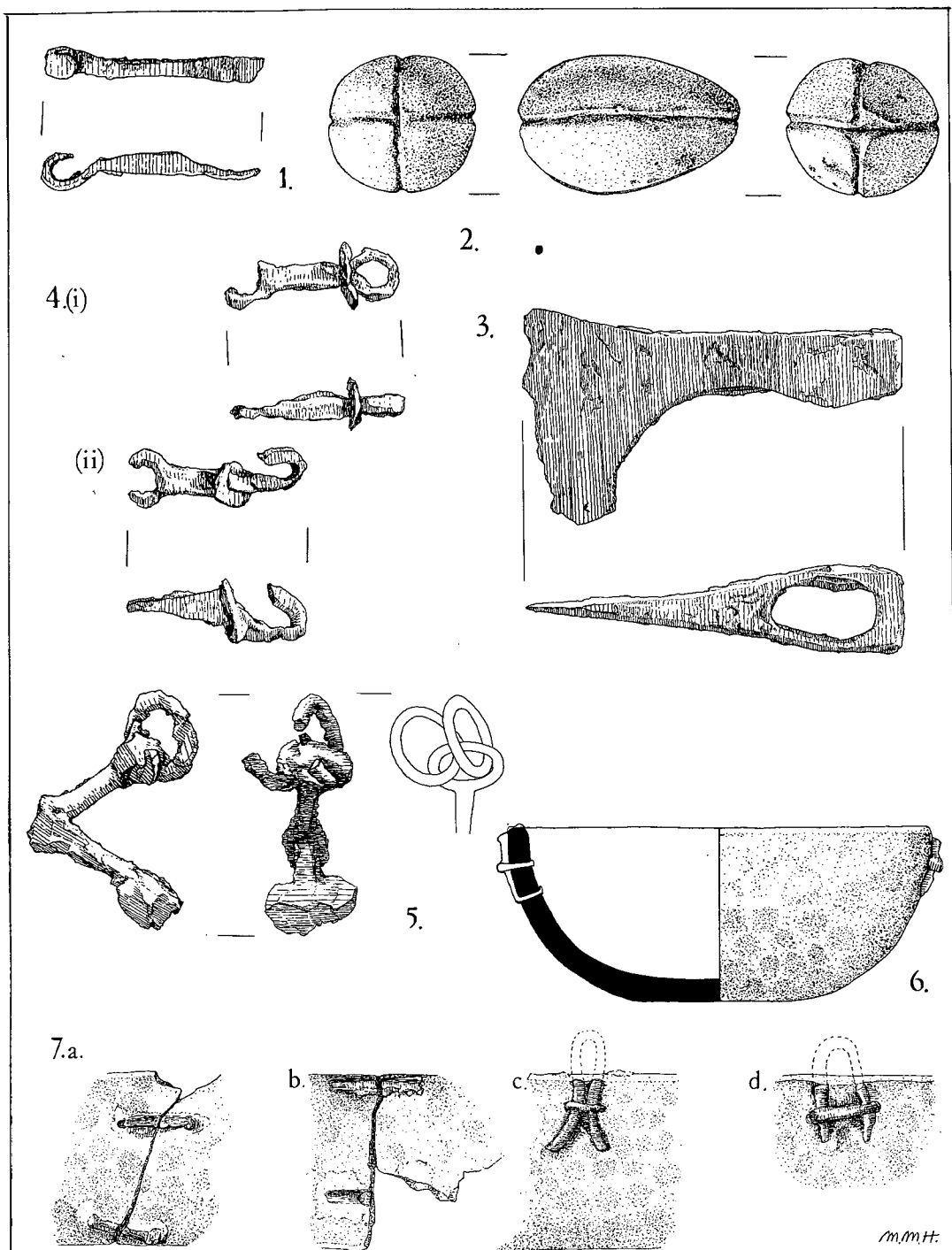


Fig. 1. Objects from Norby, Norway ($\frac{1}{3}$). Drawn by Mary M. Hurrell

necessitating re-cutting of the grooves. There is no decoration and there are few signs of the fashioning and shaping of the stone, which is quite smooth. It is as Rygh 477, but without the cross-groove there shown, and can be paralleled at several places in Viking contexts such as Storhaug,⁹ Kaupang,¹⁰ and Jarlshof¹¹—albeit with minor variations in the shape and grooving.

1820.1/3: fig. 1, no. 3

This iron axehead is undecorated and, though without most of its cutting edge through corrosion, substantially complete. The drawing of its profile shows clearly that it is unlikely to have been more than $\frac{1}{4}$ " (0.6 cm) longer, and it may well be that the bottom edge is partially original. It is now $6\frac{3}{8}$ " (17.8 cm) long, $3\frac{7}{8}$ " (9.8 cm) high, and $1\frac{3}{4}$ " (4.5 cm) thick at the socket, which is approximately 1" (2.5 cm) by $1\frac{3}{4}$ " (4.5 cm).

The shape of the axe is a well known type, being Rygh 559,¹² and Peterson type C.¹³ It can be seen, for instance, in specimens from Lirhus,¹⁴ Ballinaby,¹⁵ Strand-on-the-Green, London,¹⁶ and Kilmainham.¹⁷ This type is therefore a well distributed Viking type, normally dated to the early-mid ninth century on typological grounds.¹⁸

1820.1/4: fig. 1, no. 4

These two objects are described on the card in the Register of Accessions as "Two Viking holdfasts (?) with washers". Whilst their corroded condition does not make identification easy, it may be possible to suggest something more familiar. The two objects are of a very similar nature, and quite possibly were originally a pair. Both are broken, but (ii), in having a complete ring at one end, provides an indication of the original position of the "washer". Here it is clear that the "washer" is in its original position, and that it was not a ring linked with the terminal ring—as might be suggested from examination of (i). The dimensions of both are extremely similar, despite the damage: in length $3\frac{1}{4}$ " (8.3 cm) and $3\frac{1}{8}$ " (8.0 cm), with terminal rings approximately 1" (2.5 cm) in external diameter and $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.2 cm) internally. The dimensions of the "washers" are very similar to those of the rings. It is noticeable that the two objects will hook together in such a way as to leave the "washers" parallel to one another. This immediately again suggests a bridle-bit similar to Rygh 568 with the "washers" acting as cheekpieces. However, as now surviving, these are very small, and one can only presume that originally they would have been larger, with their present shape and dimensions as no guide to

⁹ Shetelig, *op. cit.*, 224, Fig. 522.

¹⁰ C. Blindheim und R. Tollness, *Kaupang. Vikingenes Henselsplass* (Oslo, 1972), 69, Fig. 40.

¹¹ J. R. C. Hamilton, *Excavations at Jarlshof, Shetland* (Ministry of Works Archaeological Reports, No. 1; Edinburgh, 1956), 118, Fig. 55, Pl. XXXIV.

¹² On Wheeler's classification (*op. cit.*), pp. 22, 24, Figs. 6, 7, it would be type III (E).

¹³ J. Petersen, *De Norske Vikingsverd* (Videnskaps-

selskapets skrifter II, Hist.-Filos. Klasse no. 1, Kristiania, 1919), fig. 32, p. 39.

¹⁴ Shetelig, *loc. cit.*

¹⁵ Grieg, *op. cit.*, 34, Fig. 15.

¹⁶ Wheeler, *op. cit.*, Fig. 9, 1, opposite p. 26.

¹⁷ J. Boe, *Norse Antiquities in Ireland* (= *Viking Antiquities* ... cit. n. 5 above, part III, Oslo, 1940), 32, Fig. 12.

¹⁸ Petersen, *op. cit.*, p. 182.



THE HALTON CHESTERS TOMBSTONE. See Note 4

Photo: University of Newcastle upon Tyne

their original shape and dimensions.¹⁹ These objects are probably those described by Peterson (under number 5) as "two other iron rings, having the resemblance of swivels".

1820.1/5: fig. 1, no. 5

This object, now encrusted with iron corrosion products, is roughly V-shaped with "arms" approximately $1\frac{3}{4}$ " (4.5 cm) and 3" (7.6 cm) long. At one end is a ring approximately $1\frac{3}{4}$ " (4.5 cm) in external diameter and 1" (2.5 cm) internally. Corroded into it are the remains of at least one other ring. The other end is a mass of corrosion products, but appears to be the core of a similar ring. The V-shape of the object after corrosion suggests that the two "arms" were originally linked freely together. As the card in the Register of Accessions probably correctly says, this looks like a harness bridle-bit, and certainly Peterson described it as such, though his description of "a very powerful bridle-bit of iron, with an iron ring, three inches and a half in diameter" cannot now be followed. Either the ring has disappeared since his time or, perhaps more likely, the ring is that now extant, and the dimensions given refer to the length of the "arms" rather than the diameter of the ring. In type it would appear to be Rygh 570. (Note: an earlier drawing in the Museum shows both rings still intact, as illustrated diagrammatically in fig. 1, no. 5.—D.J.S.)

1820.1/6: fig. 1, nos. 6, 7a-d

This object is a bowl of steatite (or soapstone). It is $7\frac{1}{4}$ " (18.4 cm) in diameter externally and $6\frac{1}{2}$ " (16.5 cm) internally, with walls $\frac{3}{8}$ " (1.0 cm) thick. It stands approximately 3" (7.6 cm) high, with variations of up to $\frac{1}{8}$ " (0.3 cm) either way, on a flattened base. In type it is Rygh 729, and Skjølsvold's type b.²⁰ In size it is at the lower end of the range—the most usual size being between 20 and 30 cms—but considerably bigger than the smallest.²¹ It has a smooth surface on the inside and, although the facets on the outside indicate that it was not turned on a lathe but cut out with a knife, it would appear to be a professional piece of work. However, no special hollowing-out technique or "signature" is to be seen, as on other Norwegian examples,²² and its utilitarian nature is evident from the fact that there is no elaboration or decoration of the rim.

The bowl is now in four pieces joined together, with a piece missing. It was originally broken in antiquity across the middle into two large pieces, and was repaired by means of four iron "stitches" (figs. 7a and 7b). That there was the intention of continuing to use the bowl can be seen from the fact that the repairs are set up from the flattened base, presumably so that the bowl's stability would not be affected by protruberances. There are unmistakable signs of heavy burning across the base of the bowl. Each repair consists simply of a small length of iron

¹⁹ The present state of the Balladoole bridle-bit in comparison with its probable original state is instructive in this context. Cf. G. Bersu and D. M. Wilson, *Three Viking Graves in the Isle of Man* (Society for Medieval Archaeology, Monograph No. 1, 1966), 20, Fig. 11, Pl. IVc. Also to be noted here are the "large numbers of pieces of iron of which only a

few are now significant"—presumably meaning identifiable in terms of form, *ibid.*, 20.

²⁰ A. Skjølsvold, *Klebersteinsindustrien i Vikingetiden* (Oslo, 1961), 17, Fig. 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

²² *Ibid.*, 90, 91, 93, 101–3, Figs. 25, 26, 27, 28a,b,c.

placed across the crack, with its ends bent through 99° to fix into the stone on either side of the crack; these ends can be seen on the inside of the bowl where they were, where necessary, bent back to be flush with the surface. Subsequently the bowl appears to have broken again on these lines—no doubt due to iron corrosion—and also received two new breaks (at least). The bowl was then repaired with wire across the breaks through drilled holes in the stone, and has since also been repaired with glue in the breaks. Both types of metal repair were noted in 1820 by Peterson, and have been noted on the steatite bowl from Beginish, Co. Kerry, by O'Kelly.²³ It is not possible now to tell when the wire repairs were made; the wire itself is not ancient, but it could well have been a replacement through existing holes.

It is clear that originally the bowl had a handle, for there are remains of two iron escutcheons (figs. 7c and 7d) such as can be seen on bowls with handles.²⁴ Nothing remains of the handle or even of the ring-attachments for the handles. The type of escutcheon seems to be approximately that represented by Skjølsvold's type c, i.e. with the ends turned through 90° to pierce the walls of the vessel and bent over on the inside.²⁵ There is, in addition, a strengthening strip across the bars of the escutcheon, which also goes through the wall of the vessel. Although the two escutcheons differ in appearance, in terms of function they were the same, being affixed in identical fashion.

Although this form of steatite vessel is found in the Viking period in Norway it should be noted that, due to lack of decoration and variations of shape, it is impossible to date it more closely than to the Viking period on typological grounds; indeed the type is found in the preceding Merovingian period.²⁶ It has been established for some time now that there was an industry, indeed a trade, in steatite within and from Norway,²⁷ but, without minute comparison of examples from steatite outcrops and extant material, it would be difficult to assign particular vessels to particular sources. It is, in fact, difficult to ascertain where Norby "in the county of Laurvig" is. Laurvig is neither a large township, nor one of the modern *fylke*. The Norwegian Consulate in Newcastle has suggested to me that Peterson may have been referring to a locality in what is now Nordmøre, north of Ålesund, and a subdivision of the *fylke* Møre og Romsdal. In that *fylke* there are five steatite outcrops noted by Skjølsvold, and that at Grødal, Sunndal, was probably worked from the prehistoric period; but without analysis it would be difficult to assert that this bowl came from there.²⁸

It may seem at first sight surprising that all the smaller metal objects have been tentatively identified as bridle-bits, in view of their apparent association together. However, it is explicitly stated by Peterson that these objects were not found in one grave, or even at one time: "there have also been found in these barrows, at different periods, the following articles..." It is quite possible, therefore, that nos. 1, 4 and 5 all came from different graves. Certainly nos. 4 and 5 would seem to be unconnected, as both are fairly clearly identifiable as bridle-bits. No. 1 *could* have been attached to no. 5—Peterson does write of "other appendages of iron

²³ M. J. O'Kelly, "A Stone Bowl of Viking type from Beginish Island, Co. Kerry", *J. Roy. Soc. Ant. Ireland* XCI (1961); cf. Pl. VI opp. p. 49 and Fig. 9, p. 66.

²⁴ E.g. Skjølsvold, *op. cit.*, 22, Fig. 6; Blindheim, *op. cit.*, 51, Fig. 27.

²⁵ *Op. cit.*, 23, Fig. 7. A close parallel to the Norby bowl is seen at Hedeby in K. Schnitzel *et al.*, *Ausgrabungen in Haithabu*, Bericht 4 (Neumünster, 1970), 95, no. 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 28–9.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, *passim*; J. Petersen, "Vikingetidstudier", *Bergens Museums Årbok 1919–20* (Hist. antik. række, nr. 2), 11–14; H. Jankuhn, *Haithabu: Ein Handelsplatz der Wikingerzeit* (Neumünster, 1972), 201–2. The latest material from Hedeby is discussed in Schnitzel *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 92–8.

²⁸ I am grateful to the Norwegian Consulate for this suggestion. For outcrops cf. Skjølsvold, *op. cit.*, 40–145.

attached to *each* side of it" (my italics). If one of these were no. 1, then it would probably have been of the nature of a metal attachment for the leather of the head-gear or bridle itself.²⁹ Alternatively it might be one of the articles referred to by Peterson when he added that there were "some other articles, which may have belonged to the reins of a bridle". Iron strap-pieces are known in Viking contexts,³⁰ but the absence of any sign of rivets for attachment to the leather would seem to weigh against this identification. A remaining possibility would be the handle of a key such as Rygh 459, to be seen, for instance, in a grave of the Migration period from Døsen or a grave of the Viking period from Tinghaugen.³¹ This seems unlikely, though, for the flattening at the present end would have seriously weakened the shaft of the key.

The plainness of the bridle-pieces precludes any close dating, but certainly they would not be out of place in a Viking context.³² The axehead, similarly, is a Viking type, and the bowl and net-sinker would be well suited to such a context—with the possibility of an earlier dating. It is of course impossible now to say anything about the pottery or spear as they are missing and no illustration appears to have survived. Whilst it is perhaps disappointing that these objects may well be unassociated, it is yet clear that they represent some of the objects from an important burial-ground with both inhumation and cremation burials, and probably of the Viking period. Mr. Peterson's letter, carefully descriptive, helps to compensate for the unsatisfactory nature of their discovery in the early nineteenth century.

C. D. MORRIS

2. A SHERD OF IRON AGE POTTERY FROM SOUTHERN ENGLAND (fig. 2)

It seems worthwhile to comment on the illustrated sherd of pottery, which seems to be entirely out of place at Great Chesters Roman fort, where it is said to have been found by J. P. Gibson in 1894.³³ When the sherd was on display in the Black Gate Museum some

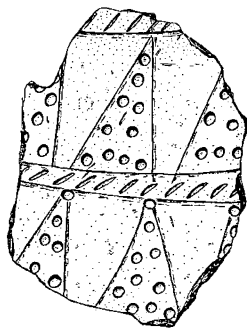


Fig. 2 ($\frac{1}{2}$)

²⁹ Cf. the reconstruction in Fig. 16, p. 26, of Bersu and Wilson, *op. cit.*

³⁰ Cf. the examples at Hasket-in-the-Forest and Birka cited by Bersu and Wilson, *op. cit.*, 24–5.

³¹ Shetelig, *op. cit.*, 135, 198, Figs. 319, 468.

³² The considerable number of pieces from the Viking period

in Norway have been considered by Jan Petersen in *Vikingetidens Redskaper* (Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo Skrifter, II, Hist.-Filos. Klasse, No. 4; Oslo, 1951).

³³ AA² XVII (1895), xxii–xxxi. Museum accession no. 1956.364.

twenty years ago, it was provenanced thus, but there seems to be no other authentication: Gibson left no record of his pottery finds, and the sherd cannot be identified in the records of museum accessions.

In fact the sherd is unique in the Border area. It is 6 mm thick, is hand-made and its colour is grey-black shading to grey-brown. The fabric is fine and hard and contains very fine crystalline grits. The lines of the decoration are lightly scored, and the dots are the impressions of larger, rounded, implements. The short diagonal lines with the horizontal bands, however, consist of thumb-nail impressions. Parallels for it should be sought primarily in Iron Age Wessex. There, pots of similar hard, dark, black-brown fabric, and bearing similar dotted triangle motifs, are dated to the third–fifth centuries B.C.³⁴ The Chinnor-Wandlebury group and the Yarnbury-Highfield style, in particular, provide comparable pottery; though no single piece can be cited to afford a perfect parallel. The dotted triangle, and the band of diagonal nicks, also decorate a small proportion of the repertoire of the East Anglian Darmsden-style pottery,³⁵ which is likewise assignable to the third and fourth centuries B.C.

Thus the sherd is widely separated both geographically and chronologically from the Great Chesters site, and while it is conceivable that one such gap should be bridged, two is a virtual impossibility. It can only be supposed that this piece of pottery was inadvertently mixed with material from Great Chesters at some time in the past, when the collection was not as closely supervised as it is now.

T. G. NEWMAN

3. A SCULPTURED AND INSCRIBED TOMBSTONE FROM HALTON CHESTERS, NORTHUMBERLAND (pl. XI)

(a) *The discovery and the inscription*

The two portions of this buff sandstone tombstone, 0.55 m wide by 1.12 m high by 0.15 m thick, were found in 1973 at a depth of about 2 m in the centre of Halton Chesters fort (*Onnum*) on the south side of the Carlisle–Newcastle road (N.G.R. NY 997684).³⁶ The slab has lost its apex and the left-hand portion of the die. The foot of the sculptured panel and the right-hand portion of the die are preserved on the second and conjoining fragment. The gabled top carries a pine cone flanked with the unusual feature of lettering.

The text in the gable reads VI|TA|LIS, but it is not clear how this name, *Vitalis*, is to be related to the rest of the text, which has been pecked, not chisel-cut, on the die and reads: [.] M | [.....]M POSV|[..... V]IRILIS E|[.....]S · VI|[.....]VOS|[.....] The order is abnormal and may provisionally be restored: [D(is)] M(anibus)[titulu]m posu|[erunt

³⁴ Cf. B. Cunliffe, *Iron Age Communities in Britain* (1974), 39, 43, 325, 331.

³⁵ B. Cunliffe, "Early Pre-Roman Iron Age Communities in Eastern England", *Ant. J.* XLVIII (1968), 175–191.

³⁶ Mr. R. Miket reported the discovery and sent a sketch with details. Unless it had been brought inside the fort for some secondary purpose a tombstone would have been out of place

in this position. Major and Mrs. F. H. Blackett kindly presented the tombstone to the Museum, with a fragment of each of two other inscriptions found at the same time (Accession nos. 1973.16–17). See Wright and Hassall, *Britannia* V (1974), 462, no. 6, Pl. XL, B; D. J. Smith, *Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne: An Illustrated Introduction* (1974), 16, no. 18, with pl.

*V]irilis e(t)[[8 or 9 letters]s · vi[*vi sibi et...*]vos[... "To the spirits of the departed: Virilis and (.....)s in their lifetime set up this tombstone to themselves and to..." The death of their child may have prompted the parents to set up this family group, described in the next section. (R.P.W.)*

(b) *The relief*

This tombstone was unearthed during the process of removing a tree in order to set back the east pillar of the monumental gateway at the northern end of the drive leading from Halton Castle to the Military Road. It was found in two pieces, entangled in the roots of the tree. The relief is crudely carved in local, gritty sandstone; it appears from signs of re-cutting on the back of the relief that it may have been re-used, face-down, as a paving-stone, or as part of a road surface, but the circumstances of the discovery preclude the possibility of certainty concerning this hypothesis. There were no associated small finds.

The two pieces which have survived are the battered remains of a gabled funerary stele. The inscription is, unusually, scattered about the decoration in the pediment, as well as in the normal rectangular field beneath the relief. This field is delimited by a rough frame which was created by cutting the field deeper into the surrounding stone. The distinction between the field and the relief panel is simply one of depth of cutting, since the rope moulding around the upper panel appears on only three of its sides, and is omitted on the side immediately above the inscription.

The major surviving element on the stone is the central rectangular panel with the busts of three members of a family; each looks rigidly forward. The father appears on the right, the mother on the left, and their child is between and in front of them. All are in outdoor clothes. The man is probably wearing a military cloak (the *sagum*), for there is a pronounced bulging roll of material around his neck. Little detail can now be discerned on the father's face, but he has short cropped hair and a light beard. The woman also wears a cloak which is pulled closely around her shoulders, and the child would seem to be wearing a cloak also. These cloaks are the normal garments for wear out-of-doors and conceal completely all indication of what was worn underneath. The one notable feature of the busts is the flat cushion of hair which crowns the woman's head. This is probably a provincial representation of the "Scheitelzopf",³⁷ a distinctive hairstyle in which the hair was pulled back over the ears down to the nape of the neck, then turned up and braided into a solid plait which was brought forward over the top of the head and turned under at the front. This is a much more likely explanation of the feature than that the woman could be wearing some kind of hat, since these were not commonly represented on women in Roman provincial sculpture.³⁸ The woman's hairstyle is a useful pointer to the dating of this stone since the "Scheitelzopf" was fashionable from the middle of the third century A.D. into the early years of the fourth century. A date in the later part of the third century is consonant with the epigraphical evidence, and

³⁷ Klaus Wessel, "Römische Frauenfrisuren von der Severischen bis zur Konstantinischen Zeit", *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 1946-47, 66-70.

³⁸ John Peter Wild, "Clothing in the North-West Provinces of the Roman Empire", *Bonner Jahrbücher* 168 (1968), 166-240, esp. 198.

the general character of the sculpture. The indistinct features of the man's hair and beard are also quite consistent with such a dating.³⁹

The panel containing the family is framed by a crudely conceived and executed rope moulding and surmounted by a triangular field set within the gable. The centre of this field is filled with a large pine-cone which is represented as an egg-shaped object covered with diagonal cross-hatching. Although the top part of the stone is badly damaged, it is clear that there were no acroteria, and it is unlikely that any further decoration would have been placed on the apex of the gable. The pine-cone is a symbol which occurs frequently in Roman funerary art, and which was especially popular in the region of Hadrian's Wall.⁴⁰ The appearance of a pine-cone in the pediment of a gabled tombstone was common enough in Britain,⁴¹ as in the other European provinces,⁴² and may have been intended as a symbol of the life-force. As well as the pine-cone the gable contains the letters of the name *Vitalis* split up unsymmetrically: it is tempting to wonder whether the name was placed in the pediment as a play on the pine-cone, which was a symbol of life (*vita*).

The Halton Chesters stone is unusual in that it may be dated to a period in the history of Hadrian's Wall which has produced very few tombstones. It is also a depiction of a family group which includes both parents: such groups are not common in the northern provinces, and are particularly rare in Britain. The fine tombstone of *Flavia Augusta* and her family, at York, is the best parallel,⁴³ although it depicts full-length figures rather than busts. It may be dated to the later second century A.D., or to the third century. The discovery of the Halton Chesters tombstone thus contributes an interesting new piece of evidence to our knowledge of what is a comparatively unknown chapter of Roman provincial art. (S.H.)

R. P. WRIGHT

STEPHEN HILL

³⁹ Compare the portraits of the emperor Gallienus (252–268) and his successors in e.g. R. Delbrueck, *Die Münzbildnisse von Maximinus bis Carinus* (1940).

⁴⁰ Stephen Hill, "A Bearded Lady from Carlisle"; *AA* 5 II (1974), 271–5.

⁴¹ Cf. *RIB* 612 and 614 (Overborough), 1260 (Risingham), and 2172 (Bar Hill).

⁴² E.g. E. Espérandieu, *Recueil Général des Bas-reliefs*,

Statues, et Bustes de la Gaule Romaine (1922) (with supplements), nos. 1283, 1723, 6953, 6954, and 6958; N. Vulić, "Anticki Spomenici Naše Zemlje", *Spomenik, Srpska Kraljevska Akademija* 71, N.S., 55 (1931), 5–259, nos. 45, 136, 158, 280, 527, 570.

⁴³ R.C.H.M. (Eng.), *Eboracum: Roman York I* (1962), 122, no. 77, Pl. 54.