

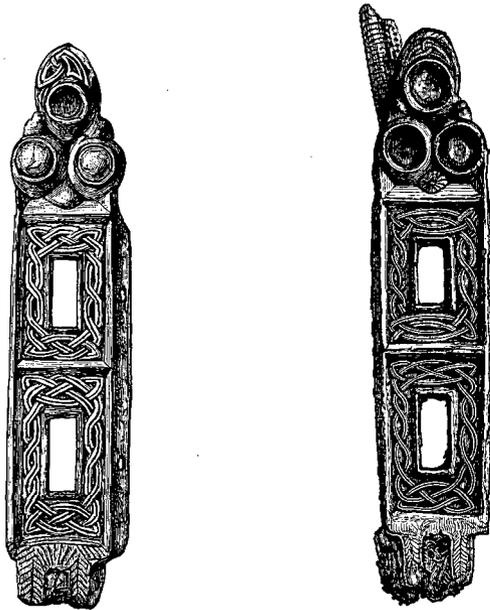
III.

NOTICE OF BRONZE BROOCHES AND PERSONAL ORNAMENTS FROM A SHIP-BURIAL OF THE VIKING TIME IN ORONSAY, AND OTHER BRONZE ORNAMENTS FROM COLONSAY. PRESENTED TO THE NATIONAL MUSEUM BY THE RIGHT HON. LORD STRATHCONA AND MOUNT ROYAL, G.C.M.G. WITH A DESCRIPTION, FROM NOTES BY THE LATE WILLIAM GALLOWAY, OF A SHIP-BURIAL OF THE VIKING TIME AT KILORAN BAY, COLONSAY. BY JOSEPH ANDERSON, LL.D., ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND KEEPER OF THE MUSEUM.

The first group of objects now to be described was found in 1891 in a ship-burial mound of the Viking time on the east side of the Island of Oronsay. It consists of two oblong brooches of bronze of unusual form, elaborately ornamented with interlaced work and settings of amber, a broken penannular brooch of bronze of the ordinary Celtic form, a ring of bronze, broken, a bead of amber, and an ovoid water-worn pebble of serpentine, pierced for suspension.

The oblong Brooches (figs. 1, 2) are the most remarkable objects in the group. They are interesting not only on account of their uncommon form, and the character of their ornament and settings, but also as being the only examples known to have been hitherto found in Scotland. They are both of the same form, 3 inches in length by $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in breadth, having the hinge of the pin at one end, and at the other end a group of three settings in front, and the catch for the pin at the back. The pin, which has been of iron, and at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, is entirely gone. Its head was hinged on a small iron bolt or rivet passing through a slot projecting about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch from the end of the brooch. The mode of hinging a pin of iron to a brooch of bronze is characteristic of the oval bowl-shaped brooches of the Norwegian Viking time. The Celtic brooches had usually pins of bronze loosely looped over the back part of the penannular ring, and moving freely upon it. The front of each of the brooches is decorated in the same manner, being divided into two oblong rectangular panels, each $\frac{7}{8}$ inch in length by $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in

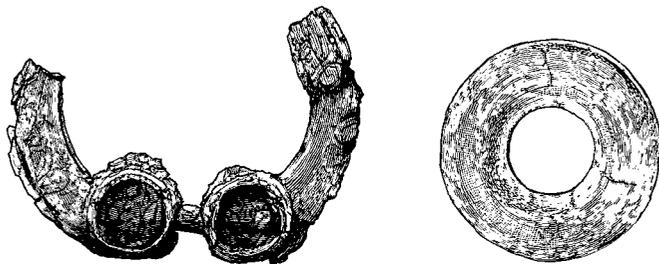
width, surrounded by a thin marginal border about $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch in height. The panels are each pierced in the centre by a rectangular perforation $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in length by $\frac{1}{16}$ inch in width, having a slightly raised marginal border in front and a sunk marginal border at the back. These were evidently intended for settings of some kind of stone or coloured glass



Figs. 1, 2. A pair of Oblong Brooches from a Burial-mound of the Viking time in Oronsay. (†.)

or amber, most probably the latter, as no trace of them remains. The sides of the brooch are $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in depth, and opposite the middle of each of the rectangular perforations for settings in the centre of each panel are small perforations for rivets passing from side to side underneath the setting to keep it in its place. Each panel is filled with a pattern of interlaced work carried round the central perforation in precisely the same manner. At the end of the brooch which has the catch for the

point of the pin at the back, there is a group of three circular settings, the sockets of which are empty in the one brooch, but in the other two of the settings still remain in the sockets, and appear to be of a reddish amber. Under the point of the pin at the back and around the catch was looped a small fragment of a circular cord about $\frac{3}{16}$ of an inch in diameter, composed of many strands of apparently some vegetable fibre most complexly plaited together. The preservation of this fragment is due to the permeation of oxide of iron from the oxidised pin. These brooches were evidently worn on the breast as a pair, like the oval bowl-shaped brooches, with a cord stretched between.



Figs. 3, 4. Portion of Penannular Brooch of Bronze and Bead of Amber from a Burial-mound of the Viking time in Oronsay. (†.)

Portion of a small oval Ring of bronze, $\frac{7}{8}$ of an inch in diameter, the body of the ring of cylindrical section and $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in thickness. It appears to have been silvered.

Portion of a bronze penannular Brooch of Celtic form (fig. 3), $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter, the back part of the penannular ring wanting. In the expanded ends are two circular sockets for settings, each $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter. These sockets are now empty. The two expanded ends of the penannular ring are joined together by a thin straight bar of the metal between the sockets, not an uncommon feature in these penannular brooches.

Bead of reddish amber (fig. 4), $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches in diameter over all and nearly $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in thickness, perforated by a central hole about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in

diameter in the middle of the thickness of the bead, widening to $\frac{3}{8}$ at the surface on both sides, so that the ring of the body of the bead has an almost oval section. The perforation is so wide that the bead bears much resemblance to a small whorl. For this purpose, however, its small size and light weight render it unfitted.

Bead of greenish serpentine, a naturally-formed water-rolled pebble of a flattened ovoid shape, $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches in length, 1 inch in breadth, and $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in greatest thickness, having a perforation through the centre rather more than $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter, which has been bored first from the one side and then from the other.

These objects were found in April 1891 in the course of the excavation of a low mound near the beach on the east side of the Island of Oronsay.¹ From the characteristic rivets of iron met with in the excavation, the mound had evidently been raised over a ship-burial of the Viking time. Towards the centre and 4 feet under the surface two skeletons were found, laid at full length, with the feet to the S.S.E. One was that of a large man, whose teeth seemed to indicate advanced age. An iron knife or dagger-blade 7 inches in length (of which the tang was $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches) lay near his right thigh-bone. The other skeleton, judging from the more slender size of the bones and teeth, the latter also indicating advanced age, was apparently that of a woman. Near the head were found the beads of amber and serpentine, and one of the oblong brooches of bronze adhered to the left collar-bone, presumably indicating the position in which they were worn. The two burials had apparently been made at the same time. I am indebted to Mr Haakon Schetelig, of the Bergen Museum, for references² to three separate instances in which personal ornaments of bronze of somewhat similar form, and with a similar style of ornamentation, have been found in Norway. No one of these, however, presents an exact parallel to the

¹ See a Notice of Excavations in a Burial-mound of the Viking time in Oronsay, by Mr Malcolm M'Neill, in the *Proceedings* of the Society, vol. xxv., 1891, p. 432.

² *Foreningen for Norske Mindesmaerkeres Bevaring*, 1874, pl. ix. fig. 42; 1885, pl. iii. fig. 19; and 1900, p. 306, fig. 13.

Oronsay pair, which thus remains, as far as I know, the only pair of its kind as yet on record.

The next to be described is a Celtic penannular Brooch of bronze (fig. 5), found at Machrins in Colonsay, also in 1891. There are no details of the circumstances in which it was found. Its shape is slightly oval, measuring $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches from front to back of the penannular ring, and 2 inches across the ring above the expansions at the ends. The ring of the brooch, which appears to have been silvered, is flat on the under side and slightly convex on the upper, and less than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in width at the narrowest part. The expanded ends of the penannular

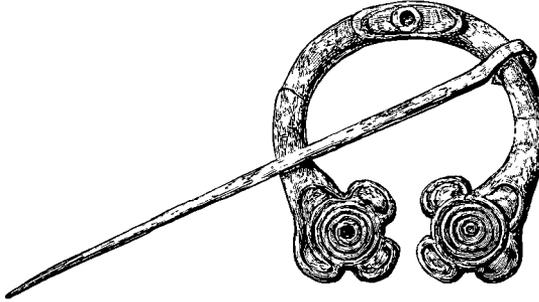


Fig. 5. Celtic Penannular Brooch of Bronze found at Machrins in Colonsay. (3.)

ring are approximately trefoil in form, and ornamented with a small central setting (now gone), surrounded by concentric circular mouldings in low relief, with a semi-oval sunk panel at the junction of the ring with the expansions. At the middle of the ring, opposite to the expansions, is a sunk panel $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in length, with a small circular socket for a setting in the centre, which is now empty. The pin of the brooch, which is 4 inches in length, is loosely looped over the back part of the penannular ring.

A bronze Pin, with a ring in the loop of its head, and a bronze Mounting of a Belt, ending in a buckle, found at Ardskinish, also in 1891. There are no details of the circumstances in which these were found.

The pin (fig. 6) measures $5\frac{2}{3}$ inches in length. The ring, which swings freely in the loop at the head of the pin, is slightly oval, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter one way and $\frac{7}{8}$ inch the other. The body of the pin is cylindrical and fully $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in diameter at the head, tapering to a quadrangular section about half-way to the point. The loop at the head and the terminal parts of the ring on either side of the loop are ornamented with slightly incised mouldings.



Fig. 6. Bronze Pin found at Ardskinish, Colonsay. (3.)

The belt mounting (fig. 7) is 3 inches in length. It is double, the belt having been fastened between the upper and lower strips of bronze by rivets. The buckle at one end is of a slightly oval form, and ornamented by incised lines in groups of two and three across the pin and rim. The shank of the upper strip is ornamented with a chased pattern along the narrowest part. The two broader ends of the strip

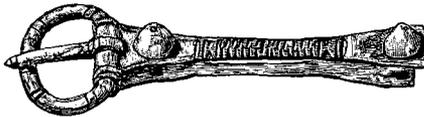


Fig. 7. Bronze Belt-mounting found at Ardskinish, Colonsay. (3.)

are ornamented with bosses about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in diameter and the same in height.

There is also a Billon Penny of James IV. which was found at the high altar of Oronsay Priory. It was a custom of the Late Middle Ages that debts were contracted to be paid at the high altars of churches, and this may explain the presence of so small a coin in that situation.

All these interesting objects have been presented to the National

Museum by a generous member of the Society, the Right Hon. Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, G.C.M.G., D.C.L., etc., through the good offices of a member of the Council, Mr William Garson, W.S.

I take this opportunity of putting on record some other discoveries in Colonsay of considerable archæological importance which have not been described in the *Proceedings* of the Society. I am enabled to do so from notes by the late Mr William Galloway, copies of which were given me by Miss J. M. Galloway in 1899, with liberty to use them for this purpose. In bringing together from these notes the details relating to the different subjects, I have confined my abstract to the essential facts.

VIKING GRAVE-MOUND AT KILORAN BAY.

This grave-mound was first discovered and partly explored in 1882 by Sir Malcolm M'Neill, and the exploration was subsequently completed by Mr William Galloway in 1883. In the first exploration the interment, with its accompanying grave-goods, was found; in the second, the skeleton of the horse and two cross-marked slabs; and subsequently three Anglo-Saxon stycas of the ninth century were discovered.

The leading features of the interment may be described as follows. Within an enclosure of irregularly rectangular shape, 15 feet in length by 10 feet in breadth, formed by rough schist slabs, there were found towards one angle the remains of the skeleton of a man of powerful build but no great stature, and with a long narrow dolicho-cephalic skull. The skeleton lay on its left side in a crouched-up position, and around it were distributed, through the sand of which the mound was composed, a number of weapons, implements, and other objects, including a quantity of clinker nails and rivets of iron, such as were used by the Norsemen in constructing their ships and boats. These rivets, which had a round head on one end and a lozenge-shaped or rhomboidal plate on the other extremity, permeated the whole of the sand within the enclosure, and lay among and around the human and other remains

within it in such a way as to suggest that the boat, from the planks of which they came, had been inverted over the whole deposit and covered by a tumulus of sand. The rivets were of various sizes, and most of them still retained more or less of the thickness of the wood originally enclosed between their heads. In addition to these there were clinker nails up to 3 inches in length with broad round heads, most of them also having wood adherent. From these circumstances it is to be

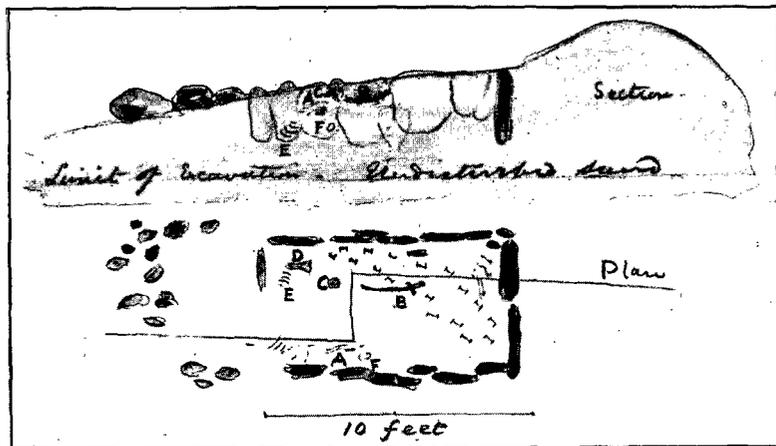


Fig. 8. Plan and Section of Viking Grave-mound at Kiloran Bay. A, Human remains; B, Sword; C, Umbo of Shield; D, Axe; E, Broken pieces of Iron Pot; F, Bronze Balance, and Scales and Weights.

concluded that the rivets and nails settled down in the sand among the other deposits as the timbers of the inverted boat decayed. The most interesting of the objects deposited with the interment were a pair of scales, with their balance-beam and weights, which were found lying together in the space between the knees and the cranium of the crouched-up skeleton. The scales, which are circular and slightly concave in contour, are about 3 inches in diameter. The balance-beam to which they were hung is about $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, and has an eye

at each end in which there is a ring for the suspending cords of the scales. In the middle of the beam there is a standard nearly 3 inches in length, with an ornamental trefoil at the top. The beam is hung from a central pivot working in holes in the free ends of a loop made of a flat strip of bronze a little longer than the standard. The scales and balance-beam are of bronze. The weights are apparently of bronze and lead, approximately cubical in form, with the upper surfaces ornamented by inlaid or applied designs.

Along with these there were also found within the enclosure the various objects shown on fig. 9, which is a reduced copy of a drawing made when they were exhibited in the Fisheries Exhibition, London, in 1883.

An iron Sword, 3 feet 8 inches in total length, with the characteristic pommel and cross-guard of the Viking time. It is considerably bent and broken into several pieces.

An iron Spear-head, about 18 inches in length, with round socket, and the blade tapering evenly to the point from its greatest width close to the socket.

An iron Axe-head, with rounded socket for the helve.

The iron Umbo or central boss of a wooden shield, the upper part of the convexity rising in a conical form, the terminal part broken away. It bears on its oxidised surface traces of a strong textile fabric like coarse canvas, with which it had been lying in contact.

A triple Strap-mounting of bronze, and a Buckle of bronze with broken strap-attachment.

A bronze Pin, $4\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length, with small globular head.

Four ornamental Studs or Buttons of a coppery bronze.

All these were found in the first exploration. In the second exploration, towards the west end of the enclosure, Mr Galloway found the skeleton of a horse lying on its right side, with the limbs well drawn up, the neck stretched out, and the head set vertically, resting on the lower jaw in line with the neck. The bones lay all in their undisturbed natural positions, and occupied a space of 6 feet 10 inches from the point

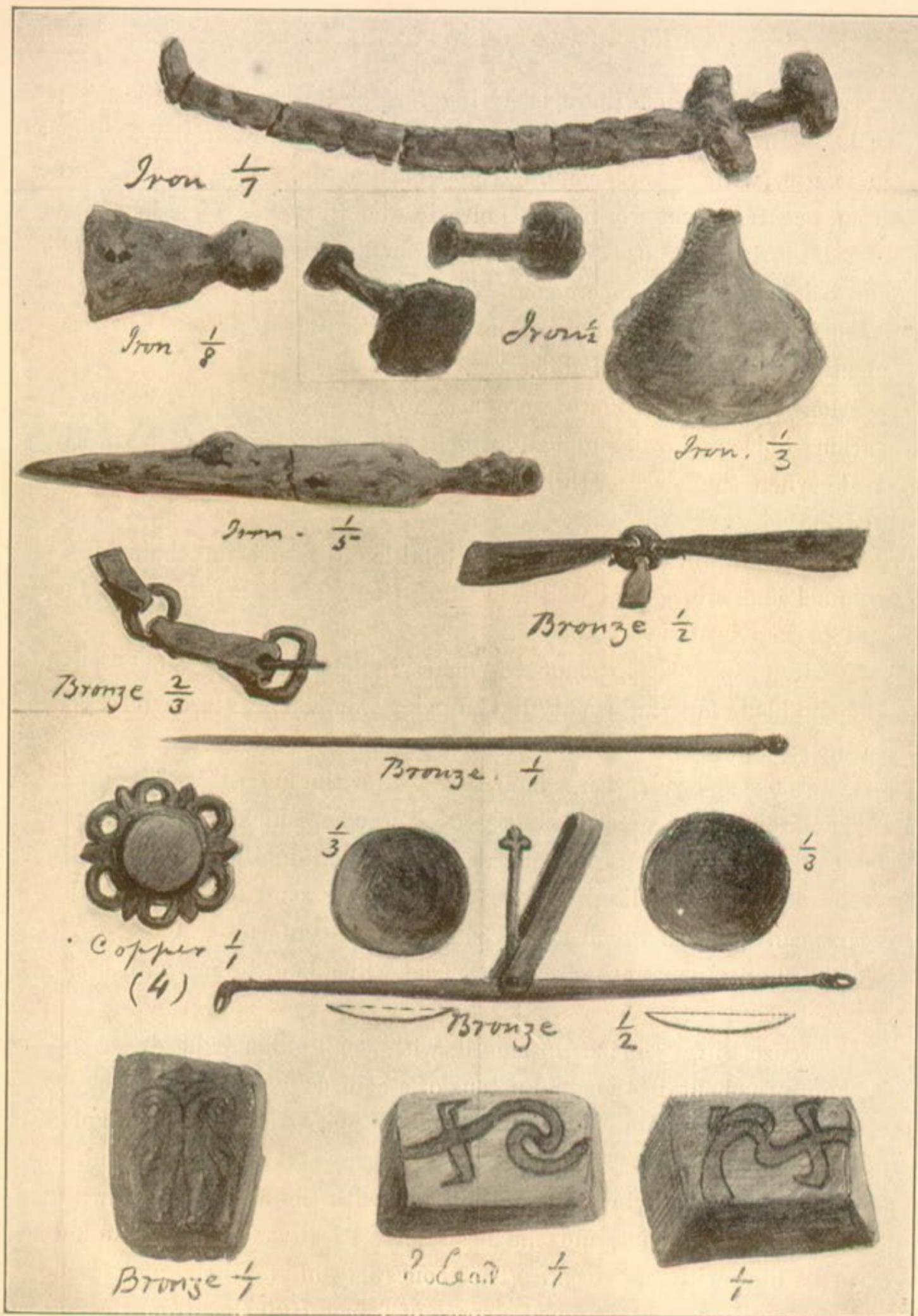


Fig. 9. Objects found in the Viking Grave-mound at Kiloran Bay. The sizes given on the drawing must here be read as reduced by about $\frac{1}{3}$.

of the nose to the extremity of the pelvis. The horse had evidently been a fine-bred animal of about 15 hands high, and apparently from 15 to 20 years of age. The metatarsal bone of the right hind-limb was partially severed by a clean sharp cut and the rest of the bone fractured. The right tibia also had a portion cut clean out of it. An iron girth buckle was found beneath the belly of the horse, but the other harnessings must have been removed previous to the deposit of the body in the grave-mound.

Among the rough schist slabs then lying at the west end of the enclosure, Mr Galloway found one 2 feet 5 inches in length by 1 foot 4 inches in breadth, unshaped and undressed, but with a roughly incised vertical line in the middle of the upper part on one face, crossed by a horizontal line of nearly equal length. At the east end he found another slab 2 feet 7 inches in length by $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches in breadth, showing similarly scratched or incised lines in the shape of a cross on the upper part of one face.

Some time after the exploration was completed, as the sand within the enclosure dried and was blown away, there were found within its limits three Anglo-Saxon Stycas—the smallest denomination of the North-umbrian coinage. Owing to the diminutive size of these coins and their lightness of weight, there was little chance of their discovery during the operations when the sand was more or less moist, but they were not difficult to discover on the surface of the dry sand after it had been blown over for some time. Of the three coins, one was illegible; the second was of the reign of Eanred, A.D. 808–840; and the third was issued by Vigmund, Archbishop of York, A.D. 831–854. If these may be taken as part of the original deposit, they make the interment not earlier than the close of the first half of the ninth century, a date with which all the other indications completely harmonise.

The objects found in this grave-mound are exhibited in the Royal Scottish Museum.

Since the foregoing was read to the Society there has appeared in the Saga Book of the Viking Club (vol. v. pt. 1, April 1907) a short paper

by Haakon Schetelig, of the Bergen Museum, on this ship-burial, from which I take the liberty of quoting the following paragraph:—

“In most respects this find has the characteristics of a regular Norwegian grave from the Viking Age. The ship, the horse, the weapons, and other objects correspond exactly to the requirements for a man’s grave in Norway at the same period, and do not need any further explanation. But there are some points where we meet with differences, and in this respect I would mention especially the fact that the grave before us was laid out under the plain surface of the soil, and provided with an enclosure of slabs set edgewise, while in Norway the graves from the Viking Age are almost without exception covered by a tumulus of rather considerable dimensions. Moreover, two of the slabs forming the enclosure were marked with a cross, which, though executed in a very primitive manner, must be supposed to have some religious significance in connection with the grave. It seems to me most likely that upon these points we may trace an influence from the contemporary customs in Christian Scotland. On the other hand, the antiquities found in the grave are all of forms which also appear in Norway, and they thus indicate as clearly as possible the nationality of the man buried here. It is true, all the objects are not properly Norwegian—*e.g.* the scales and the balance were probably not made in Norway, nor the weights, whose upper surface is covered with bits cut off some richly decorated and enamelled ornaments of Irish origin. But similar bits are frequently met with in Norway also, and they do not indicate that the Norwegian colonists in Scotland were less Norwegian than their compatriots at home; they prove that the whole Norwegian population was subject to the same influences from the art and industry of Ireland. A most precious document for determining the date of the grave is afforded by the two coins found. As regards the Viking Age in Norway, instances of such finds are not frequent, and consequently all additions to the material are of great importance. At the moment of writing I have not the means for discussing the question of the grave before us ready to hand, but, with all reserve, I venture to pronounce as my

personal opinion that the grave is most likely to date from the beginning of the tenth century."

THREE STONE CISTS AT URAGAIG, COLONSAY.

These cists were opened by Mr Galloway in 1882. They were situated on the western slope of an elevated knoll at the western extremity of Kiloran Bay, and within a short distance of each other.

Cist No. 1 was covered by a massive slab 6 feet 10 inches in length, 4 feet 8 inches in breadth, and from 2 to 3 inches in thickness. The sides were each formed of a single slab, and the ends of shorter slabs set in between the side slabs. The interior measured 3 feet 10 inches in length on one side and 3 feet 6 inches on the other; the breadth at one end was 1 foot 10 inches and at the other 1 foot 11½ inches. The cist had a bottom slab, and the total depth was roughly about 2 feet. The body had been laid on its right side in the usual contracted position, with the head towards the east end of the cist, and facing about N. to N.E. The bones were those of a young person of low stature and slight build, probably a female. Immediately in front of the face lay the fragments of a crumbled food-vessel urn, ornamented with a diagonal pattern of roughly impressed markings, as if with the teeth of a comb.

Cist No. 2 lay more towards the summit of the knoll. Its cover was 6 feet 10 inches in length by 4 feet 6 inches in breadth and 3 inches in thickness. The sides and ends were constructed in the same way as those of No. 1. The interior measured 3 feet 6 inches in length by 1 foot 8 inches in breadth and 1 foot 6 inches in depth. There was a bottom slab, on which the body lay on its right side in a contracted position, with the head towards the east end of the cist. It was considered to be that of a short-statured male about 50 years of age. The fragments of a very plain urn, decorated only by a little notching round the lip, lay in front of the face, and a flint knife or flake, somewhat delicately chipped round one edge, was found near the pelvic bones, among what seemed to be the remains of a very open textile fabric.

This skeleton is now in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.

Cist No. 3, situated about 4 feet to the south of No. 1, had a covering composed of one larger and two smaller slabs. The interior measured 3 feet 11 inches in length by a little more than 2 feet in breadth and 1 foot 8 inches in depth. The end slabs, instead of being set in between the ends of the side slabs as in the two former cases, were set against them with a slight overlap. There was a bottom slab on which the body had been laid, and some small fragments of an urn were found here and there, but the contents of the interior had been considerably disturbed, probably by rabbits.

A stone 2 feet 6 inches in length by 4 inches in breadth and 2 inches thick, which was said to have been found lying on the cover-stone of a cist at Kilchattan, was found on examination to be incised on its flat face with seven diamond or lozenge-shaped forms, produced by a series of incised rectilinear lines or grooves, crossing each other at an angle of 45 degrees.

[Other notices, with descriptions of antiquities in Colonsay, will be found in the *Proceedings* of the Society at the following references:— Notices of the discovery and exploration of a Bone Cave in Colonsay, by Symington Grieve, F.S.A. Scot., in vols. xiv. p. 318 (1880), and xvii. p. 351 (1883); Notes on the Antiquities of the Islands of Colonsay and Oronsay, by William Stevenson, vol. xv. p. 113 (1881); Notice of Excavations in a Burial-mound of the Viking Time in Oronsay, by Malcolm M'Neill, vol. xxv. p. 432 (1891); and Notes on Three Shell-mounds in Oronsay, by Dr J. Anderson, vol. xxxii. p. 306 (1898).]