

VIII.

NOTICE OF A VIKING GRAVE-MOUND, KINGSCROSS, ARRAN.

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The south end of Lamlash Bay terminates with a rocky point of land known as Kingscross Point. The promontory reaches an elevation of about 80 feet above sea-level. This elevation is a plateau of rock. On

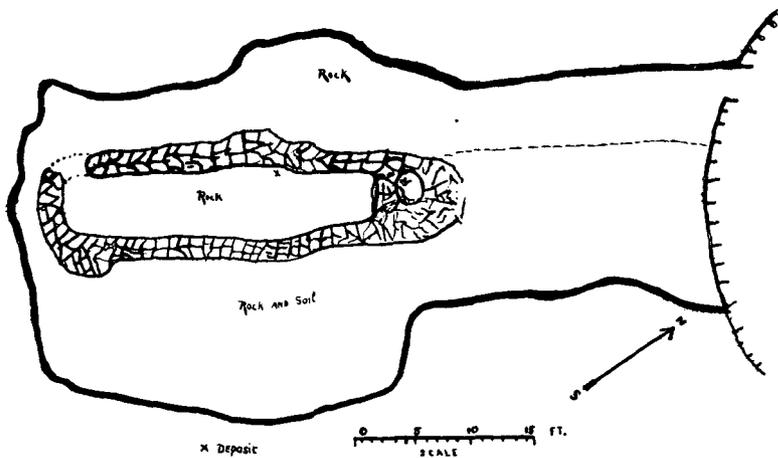


Fig. 1. Ground-plan of the Grave-mound.

the seaward side of the plateau is a circular fort. On the landward side, 23 feet from the circular structure, is the grave-mound now to be described, a ground-plan of which is shown in fig. 1.

The mound, when first examined, gave no indication of its purpose, being merely a very irregular heap of stones, about 30 feet in length, 8 to 10 feet broad, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 feet in height. When some of the upper stones had been removed, what seemed like a setting of stones was observed, and, on further examination, another was found; these settings were about 6 feet apart (fig. 2). The lines were followed as

closely as possible, clearing out the accumulated débris down to the rock. About 2 feet above the middle of the mound, at the north end, close to the western side, was found a heap of articles consisting of



Fig. 2. The Mound excavated.

calcined human bones, portions of a large cetaceous bone partly decorated, articles of iron, fragments of bronze, a bronze coin, charcoal, and two pieces of vitrified stone. Nothing else was found in the mound.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

Situation.—The promontory on which the mound is erected was one likely to commend itself to a seafaring people. The Sagas furnish

instances of such a choice being made; for example, "Egil had a mound made near the end of the Ness (cape), and in this he was laid" (Egil's Saga, c. 61).

The Mound.—The mound shows evidence of having been made use of as a quarry, therefore no datum was obtainable regarding the original outer measurement or the height of the structure. The shape of the mound as now seen suggests an oval form. It was noted that pieces of red sandstone had been used in the erection of the mound; this stone is not found in the immediate neighbourhood.



Fig. 4. Cetacean Bone, ornamented.

Human Remains.—The calcined human bones found along with the iron rivets indicate that the body of the dead viking was burnt, and buried in a boat.

Cetacean Bone.—The existing remains do not point to the use it may have been put to. The decorated portion is probably incomplete. The design is formed by a series of double circles with central point; the diameter of each section of the design is 10 mm. The pattern is one which is frequently employed on decorated articles of the Viking period¹ (fig. 4).

Articles of Bronze.—All the fragments of bronze obtained were unrecognisable as to use, evidently having been destroyed in the pyre,

¹ See a portion of a bone casket of the Viking time found at York in 1906, and figured in the *Proceedings* of the Society of Antiquaries of London, vol. xxii, p. 9.

the only exception being a doubled band of bronze; the straight length is 130 mm., width 16 mm., thickness $1\frac{1}{2}$ mm.; at the bend it has been slashed with a sharp instrument; one end of the band is square, the other has a portion of the metal pressed over.

Bronze Coin.—The coin is a styca of Wigmund, Archbishop of York, A.D. 831–854 (*obv.* + VIGMVND IREP; *rev.* + COENRED).

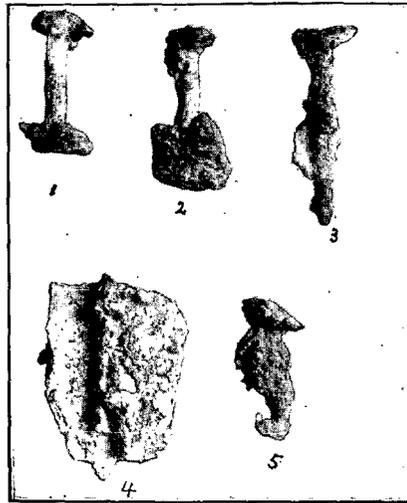


Fig. 3. Rivets and other objects of iron.

It may be noted that a similar coin was found in the Viking grave-mound at Kiloran Bay.¹

Articles of Iron.—A pointed shield-shaped article, 65 mm. in length, and measuring 42 mm. at top. The front shows clearly the impress of some woven fabric; there is also a bronze-like fragment adhering to the face; at the back there is a bolt 50 mm. in length with a counter bolt of 32 mm.; each bolt is held in position with a ring; the larger bolt is pressed by the lesser, evidently with the object of preventing

¹ *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*, vol. xli. p. 447.

slipping (fig. 3, No. 4). Rivets, outside length 42 mm., shaft 31 mm., round top 16 mm. in diameter, square end 21 mm. diameter; they are of the type frequently noted as having been employed in the construction of a Viking ship (fig. 3, Nos. 1, 2). Iron nail with oblong head, 61 mm. in length (fig. 3, No. 3). Article of iron shaped like a modern latch. A small quantity of broken fragments of rivets, nails, etc.

Vitrified Stone.—A small piece of dark-coloured vitrified stone. A block was observed of a grey-green colour, but was not removed.