

6. "LOP-SIDED" ARROW-HEADS.

As recorded on p. 189, Miss C. Mullins has generously presented to the Museum an extremely fine lop-sided arrow-head, which was found long ago by her grandfather, Mr Norman Deggerman, near the Knaps, Killellan, near Kilmacolm. It is of dark grey-brown flint becoming paler towards the tip. Its total length of 2.55 inches includes a single barb almost an inch long. The barb is thus slightly longer than that on a much broader arrow-head from Airhouse, BMA. 86, incomplete, which is much the longest of those preserved in the Museum. The workmanship is also considerably more careful than that of the latter, which is indeed rather rougher than is normal for an arrow-head of this type. A rare feature of the Kilmacolm arrow-head is, however, that the whole of one face is carefully retouched right up to the three edges, while only the two shorter edges are retouched on the other (ventral) face (fig. 1).

¹ Bryce in *The Book of Arran*, "Archæology," 1910, pp. 130, 131.

As is well known, one of the distinguishing features of lop-sided arrow-heads is that one of the long sides is formed of the edge of the primary flint flake unre-touched on either face. J. G. D. Clark has demonstrated that a continuous typological series exists linking the petit-tranchet or transverse arrow-head of Mesolithic times, where the cutting edge was at right angles to the arrow-shaft, through the "halberd" types to lop-sided arrow-heads.¹ He made the distinction that the halberd types (types E-F) were in the direct line of development from the petit-tranchet, while the lop-sided (types G-I) represent devolution or divergent development from the main group.

Whether the "halberd" heads really belonged to arrows and how they were hafted is highly speculative; their cutting edge was in all probability oblique

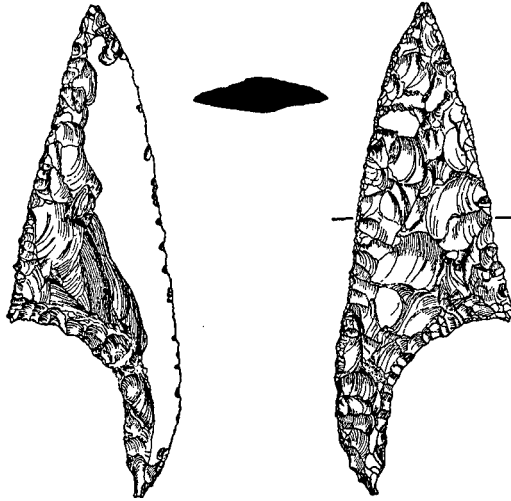


Fig. 1. Arrow-head from Killellan, Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire. (†)

to the shaft. That the lop-sided heads belonged to small hafted knives was the view of the Rev. G. R. Buick,² but at any rate those without pronounced barbs and with a symmetrical hollow or even straighter base (Clark, type G) seem unlikely to have been hafted very obliquely; the usually very sharp point was clearly intended for piercing. Despite these difficulties the typological connection is reasonably convincing, and Clark's grouping of various types under the general name of "petit-tranchet derivatives" is supported by the similarity of context in which the flints have often been found—on the fringes of the beaker invasion.

An examination of upwards of 80 lop-sided arrow-heads in the National Collection (the exact boundary between these and the halberd type, or even the purely triangular ones, being as Callander and Clark pointed out very indefinite) makes it apparent that Clark's series does not go far enough: it does not reach the Kilmacolm specimen if, as he says, "in every case one edge at least consists of the original edge of the primary flake"; and again, "in no case is there any secondary flaking on either of the main faces of the implement." However, we may safely continue the series further, for, inclusive of one from Ormiegill, Caithness, illustrated by Clark without comment, more than a dozen of our less markedly

¹ *Archaeological Journal*, vol. xci. 1934.

² *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xxii. 1887-88.

barbed examples (type G) and nine of the single-barbed ones (type H) are retouched on all sides. Usually the third side is only trimmed on one face, as on the Kilmacolm example, thus retaining a "reminiscence" of the petit-tranchet edge. In these totals I have omitted specimens where the third side was partly retouched as a part of the process of forming the point, and also a dozen cases where the trimming might well not be due to the original maker (compare for example Clark, No. 43). In addition there are half a dozen specimens worked fairly completely over one or both faces, thus finally discarding the advantage of the petit-tranchet technique. These various typologically late specimens which have lost the characteristic petit-tranchet edge otherwise retain the forms of types G and H.

There are specimens of both types, with and without working on the petit-tranchet edge, which are marked by very fine pressure-flaking scars. Such ripple flaking is relatively rare in Scottish flint work, but a dozen fine examples on these

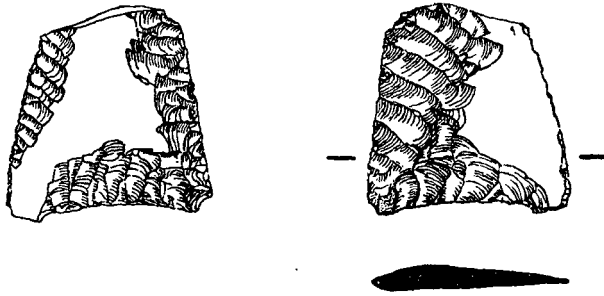


Fig. 2. Broken arrow-head from Culbin Sands, Morayshire. (†.)

arrow-heads, besides as many others of less high quality, come from all over the country, *i.e.* Culbin Sands (5) (fig. 2), Kildrummy (1), Tentsmuir (1), Blairgowrie (1), Lauderdale (1), Wigtownshire (4). Two specimens illustrated by Clark, from Woodhenge, Wiltshire, show the same marked feature. In passing we may note that ripple flaking is a characteristic of some large knives found in the Arran chambered cairns, *e.g.* Giant's Graves, in which beaker sherds have been found too; but the fineness and regularity of some of the lop-sided arrow-heads is not equalled on other Scottish flints.

Yet another point: Callander¹ pointed out that a selection of flints from north-east Scotland will contrast in its general coloration with a selection from the south-west, reds and yellows predominating in the former and light grey among the latter, while in the south-east all varieties of grey are found shading into black. But lop-sided arrow-heads form a striking exception, as he mentioned. Among the 80 lop-sided specimens examined there are no reds or pinks, and only three purely yellow. Indeed the predominance from all localities of dark colours—grey, yellow-grey, yellow-brown, and brown—is remarkable; even pale grey appears less common than one would expect. The colour scheme of the whole collection of these lop-sided flints contrasts with any sample of leaf-shaped or tanged-and-barbed arrow-heads, where dark flints are relatively scarce. A further striking feature is the number of dark or rich brown lop-sided arrow-heads: 8 from the south-east, 5 from the east, and 7 from the north-east. Two slightly hollow-based arrow-heads from the south-west are of this colour.

¹ *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxii. (1927-28), p. 172.

Brown flint, using the same standard to distinguish it from yellow or grey-brown, is otherwise represented in the thousands of flints in the Museum—scrapers, arrow-heads, and so on—by at most 40 specimens. One particularly rich shade appears native to the south-east—notably Lauderdale—but no evidence exists at the moment to suggest a trade in it. Rather it would seem that the makers of lop-sided arrow-heads from Caithness to Wigtownshire had a traditional preference for dark flint, besides a fairly standardised idea of the shape they aimed at, and a fondness for ripple flaking. In fact they are likely to have been scattered or wandering parts of one people.

The *a priori* typologically related halberd group (Clark's types C-F) is, again considering those in the National Museum, on the whole lighter and more varied in colour, though pinks and yellows are by no means as common from, say, the Culbin Sands as one would expect, and the typical yellowish-red of north-east Scotland completely absent. Two from the south-east are of rich brown flint, while the example from Ormiegill is made of the same dark flint as the lop-sided arrow-heads from the same cairn (Clark's Nos. 22, 45, and 46). The halberd group is often quite roughly made—that from Ormiegill is one of the best—and there is no example even approximating in workmanship to the finest lop-sided arrow-heads, though of course some specimens from the latter group are equally rough.

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