

HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL



ARTEFACTS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

1 SITE CODE													
			H	N	D	1	6	N	E	0	1	1	B

2 NGR		3 QUAL											
N	D	1	9	3	6	6	8	7	6	CE			

6 SITE NAME													
C	A	S	T	L	E	H	I	L	L				

7 GENERIC TYPE
 BROOCH, COPPER, TORTOISE +
 ARMLET, JET + PIN, BONE

11 PERIOD/DATE							12 DATING METHOD					
EM (NOR)							TYP					

15 EXCAVATOR AND DATE

16 EXCAVATION RECORD NO.

4 DISTRICT
 CAITHNESS

5 PARISH
 OLRIG

8 CONCORDANCE
 OS ND 16 NE 11
 NMR

9 MUSEUM/LOCATION OF FIND(S)
 RMS (QUEEN STREET)

10 ACCESSION NO.
 Brooch - IL 222
 Armlet - FN 2

Pin - FN 3

13 FIND CIRCUMSTANCES

14 CONDITION

17 LAND USE
 ENCLOSED PASTURE

18 GEOLOGY

19 SOILS

20 VEGETATION

21 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE

22 RELIEF
 GENTLE HILLSLOPE

23 ASPECT
 NE

24 ALTITUDE
 0 = 10m OD

25 DETAILED DESCRIPTION/DIMENSIONS

26 BIBLIOGRAPHY (AUTHOR: DATE: TITLE: JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER: VOLUME: DETAIL)

1. RCAHMS : 1911: CAITHNESS INVENTORY: HMSO: p87, No. 320
2. ANDERSON, J: 1845: PROC. SOC. ANT. SCOT: Vol. 10: pp549-51
3. NMAS: 1951: SCOTLAND'S ANCIENT TREASURES
4. GRIEG, S. & SHETELIG, H: 1940: VIKING ANTIQUITIES IN GT. BRITAIN & IRELAND: Vol. 2: pp23-24
5. NMAS: 1892: MUSEUM CATALOGUE: 217, 278

27 GROUND PLAN NO.

28 GROUND PHOTO NO.

29 SLIDES NO.

30 HR. AP. NO.

31 NMR. AP. NO.

32 OTHER AP. NO.: SOURCE

33 ARCHIVE AND LOCATION

34 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

35 SAMPLES

36 PALYNOLOGY

37 NUMERICAL DATES: RANGE: LAB NO.

38 OTHER

39 NAME & ADDRESS OF OWNER

40 ATTITUDE OF OWNER

41 NAME & ADDRESS OF TENANT

42 ATTITUDE OF TENANT

43 ACCESS & RESTRICTIONS

44 NAME & ADDRESS OF FINDER/RECORDER: DATE

45 RECORDER: DATE
 ALM: 5.3.1986

46 CHECK: DATE
 GS: 20.3.86

47 TEXT

"See continuation cards for text."

II. TORTOISE OR BOWL-SHAPED BROOCHES.—This strikingly peculiar class of relics has a special interest as illustrative of the style of that purely Pagan art, which flourished in Scandinavia even after the rest of Europe had been leavened with the refining influences of Christianity.

The following specimens have been found in Scotland:—

1. The fine brooch here figured is one of a pair found at Castletown, Caithness, in 1786. It is noticed in the list of donations to the Museum for the year 1787, printed in the Appendix to the "Archæologia Scotica," vol. iii. p. 61, as one of several articles presented by James Traill, Esq., among which were:—

(2)

"Two oval brooches of copper gilt, embossed and decorated with rich carvings, each surrounded with a double row of silver cord near the edge, with an iron tongue on the hollow side, much corroded; the length of each brooch, 4½ inches, the breadth 3 inches. These were, in September last (1786), dug out of the top of the ruins of a Pictish house in Caithness, lying beside a skeleton, buried under a flat stone with very little earth above it."

One of this pair of brooches was given to Mr Worsaae, on his visit to Scotland, along with other Scottish specimens, in exchange for representative specimens of Danish antiquities; and I had no difficulty in recognising it in one of the cases of the Museum at Copenhagen.

The notice of the interment with which these brooches had been deposited states that it had been made on the top of one of the mounds covering the ruins of a Pictish broch. This is what we should expect of



Tortoise or Bowl-shaped Brooch, found with a Skeleton at Castletown, Caithness.

a Norwegian burial of the period when a "how" or mound was always selected or made for the interment.

The specimen here figured belongs to a class of these oval brooches common in Norway, and still more frequent in Scania in Sweden. The pattern is nearly always the same, though with slight variations in the details. The centre of the brooch is occupied by a bold ornament resembling a crown, and the four ornamental bosses below it are shaped like horses' heads. The body of the brooch is double, the lower shell being highly gilt, and the pierced upper part has been ornamented with silver chains laid in the channels dividing the ornament into compartments, as is still seen in the case of the Tine brooch, to be subsequently noticed. The "double row of silver cord near the edge," mentioned in the description of the brooch in 1787, no longer exists. In this case the brooches were associated with an unburnt burial.

SCOTLAND IN PAGAN TIMES.

These brooches were "dug out of the top of the ruins" of a Broch near Castletown, and were found "lying beside a skeleton, buried under a flat stone with very little earth above it." This evidently implies that the interment had been made in the upper part of the mound covering the ruins of the Broch.¹

¹ It was the custom of the Northmen to bury their dead in mounds raised in their honour, but they also took advantage of mounds already raised, and of natural or artificial mounds which were convenient for the purpose.

Grave find of the Viking period, from Castletown, Caithness (National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh, I. L. (221), viz. ---

a) *Bronze tortoise brooch* of the type *Rygh* 655, but of finer, more elaborate crafts than the type specimen. The central knob, particularly, is done with great care, with panels having four divisions. The other knobs are exactly like the corresponding knobs in the type specimen. Both the outer and inner shells are gilt, and verdigris is only seen in a few scattered places. The brooch is well preserved. Length about 8 cm. Greatest width about 5 cm. (Fig. 7).

(4)

b) Brooch of the same form as the above. Was given in exchange to *Worsaae*, now to be found in the National Museum of Copenhagen.

c) *Round jet armlet*, quite without ornaments, with a flat inner face, a rounded outer face, and quite flat edges. Diameter about 7 cm. The under face is a little imperfect. According to a kind communication from Mr. *Callander*, armlets of this kind are very common in Scotch finds from the early Iron Age. As a similar armlet also appears in a Viking find at Sanday, Orkney (see below, p. 87), it is probable that the jet-rings were originally a Celtic ornament adopted by the women of the Viking period. (Fig. 8).

d) *Bone bodkin*, quite smooth without ornaments, roughly cut, and pointed at one extremity (fig. 8). Length 8 cm. Width on the top 0,07.

According to information given 150 years ago, the two brooches were found with the armlet and the bodkin in September 1786 at the top of the ruins of a Pictish house in Caithness. They lay beside a skeleton buried under a flat stone with very little earth above it.

Literature: Proc. S. A. Scot. X 1874, p. 549, and XII, p. 329. — Illustrations in both places. *Archeologia Scotica*, Vol. III Appendix II, p. 61.

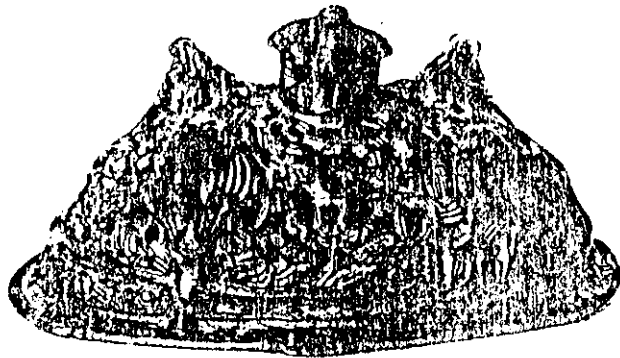


Fig. 7. Tortoise brooch, one of a pair of brooches found in a grave at Castletown, Caithness.

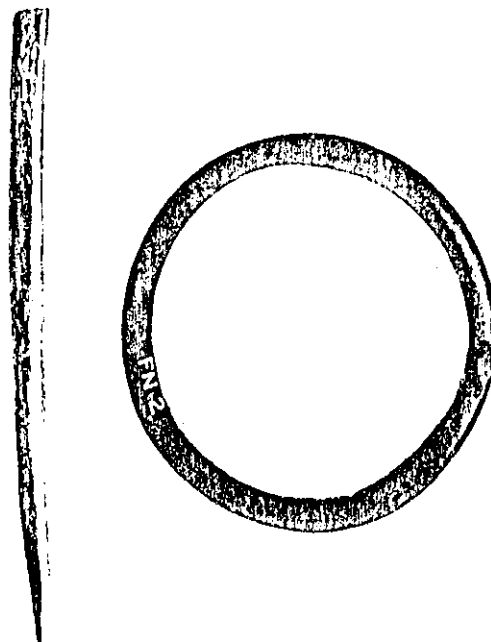


Fig. 8. Bone bodkin and jet armlet from the same grave at Castletown, cf. Fig. 6.

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8 CONCORDANCE												
os ND 16 NE 11												

9 MUSEUM/LOCATION OF FIND(S)												
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF COPENHAGEN, 1874												

10 ACCESSION NO.												

11 PERIOD/DATE												
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HAR:13.3.1986						CS:20.3.86					

47 TEXT												

"Two oval brooches of copper gilt, embossed and decorated with rich carvings, each surrounded with a double row of silver cord near the edge with an iron tongue on the hollow side, much corroded. Each brooch was 4½" (114.3mm) long and 3" (76.2mm) wide. One of these was given to Mr. Worsaae on his visit to Scotland, and I had no difficulty in recognising it in one of the cases of the Museum at Copenhagen."