

NOTICE OF ROMAN-BRITISH CULINARY VESSELS,  
DISCOVERED IN NORTH WALES.

By Henry Ecroyd Smith.

READ 3RD DECEMBER, 1868.

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REMAINS dating from the Roman occupation of this country very sparsely occur in the northern portion of the Principality. The stations situated upon or near the sea-board, have within record yielded few mementoes of the Latin conquerors, or the arts they not merely introduced, but thoroughly established, in the important, flourishing, and we may add favoured, province of Britain; consequently the objects now chronicled possess additional significance and interest. Even throughout Great Britain, as likewise in France, the *adjuncts of the kitchen*, in houses of the better class, are, with little exception very rare,\* having proved far too useful to be relinquished whilst reparable in any possible manner, and only as a last resort melted down for other purposes. The exceptions are confined to coarse articles—the common *mortaria* or mortars of baked clay, in which meats, as also grain, fruit, and other vegetable produce were pounded for *made* dishes, to which the Romans were partial—and the still more cumbrous *quern*, formed of stone, or of lava from Andernach on the Rhine. *Iron fire-dogs*—not for use in the warming of apartments, as in mediæval times, but for sustaining *bars*, from which

\* *The Celt, the Roman, and the Saxon*, p. 336.—Montfaucon states, “We have very few remains of the Kitchen utensils of the ancients, having no marbles to represent more than part of them. They were, however, very numerous.—Vol. III, book iii, p. 78.



depended *caldrons* and other large vessels over fires—have been found at Mount Bures near Colchester surmounted by moulded heads of oxen, with bright knob-ended horns;\* and at Shefford near Stamford Bury, Bedfordshire, in 1832, other examples bearing stag's heads, were discovered in a funeral vault, paved with Roman tiles, along with an iron *tripod* and a number of bronze objects of smaller size.† The tripods of bronze or iron, holding *pot-hooks* and *chains* to sustain *kettles* or boilers, complement the very meagre list of identified culinary utensils, hitherto recorded as occurring in Britain, save a few of minor class as *saucepans*, *ladles*, and *colanders* or strainers, which were all used in connection with the *cooking by stove*. Though our present examples belong to the last named category, they yet present some especially noteworthy features.

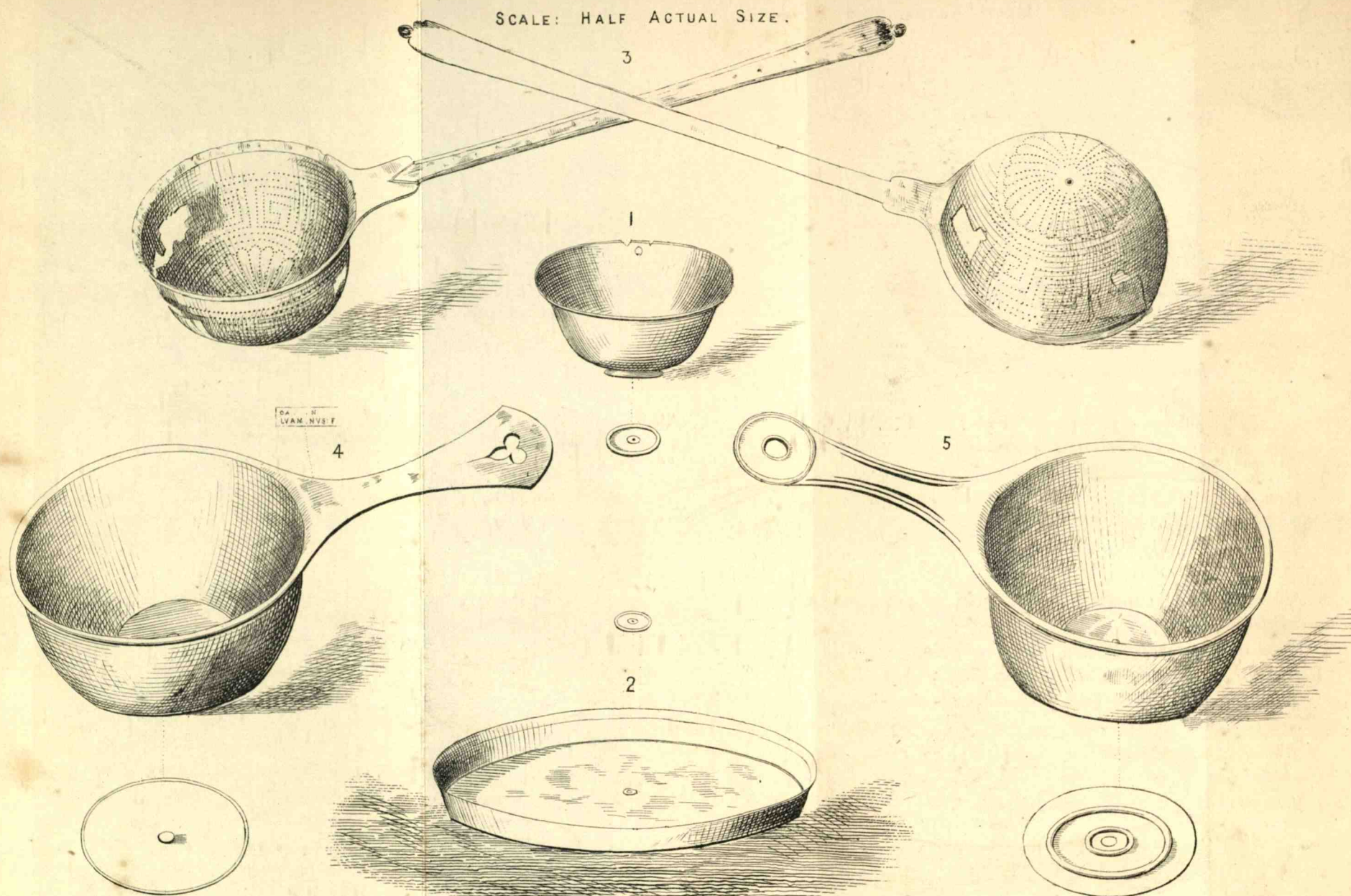
In or about the year 1862, whilst engaged in ploughing a somewhat elevated but yet secluded field bordering on the main feeder of the Aber, among the hills, nearly a mile and a half directly south from Abergele in Denbighshire, an old farmer named Hughes encountered a quantity of "rusty pots and pans," the bulk of which he very stupidly sold for their metal value. The only person of his household who had sufficient sense to desire the retention of a few pieces, was a servant girl, Mary Owens by name, to whom we are indebted for preserving from the melting pot or furnace, the sole representatives of what may safely be designated as the most valuable discovery of Roman culinary bronze vessels ever effected in this country.‡ So numerous were they, it is stated a wheelbarrow might have been filled with them; consequently half-a-hundred pieces is a very moderate estimate,

\* *Collectanea Antiqua*, II, p. 25, and plate.

+ *Ibid.*, p. 29, pl. xi.

‡ They were found in sets or "nests," i.e. packed one within another according to shape, and the deposit, from the description of eye-witnesses, and taken in conjunction with the superior character of the pieces, evidences a burial dating from the early Roman occupation of the Principality.





ROMAN-BRITISH CULINARY & DIETARY UTENSILS, DISCOVERED NEAR ABERGELE, VALE OF CLWYD.  
ABOUT THE YEAR 1862.

of which only six examples were *scoured with brick-dust*, to remove the rust, and retained. One of even this small batch has since unfortunately disappeared; the remaining five utensils consisting of—

1. A *cup*,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in height by 3 inches in diameter; capacity  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ounces.

2. A *platter*,  $\frac{1}{8}$  of an inch high, and  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inches diameter across the rim,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches at the base; capacity 9 to 10 ounces.

3. A *strainer-ladle* or colander, 12 inches long, the bowl  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches diameter, 2 inches deep.

4. A *saucepan*, 2 inches high by  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide, exclusive of the handle, which is 4 inches long; capacity  $10\frac{3}{4}$  to 11 ounces.

5. A second *saucepan* of similar size, but differing in ornament; capacity 11 ounces.

With the exception of No. 3, which is owned by Mr. Jones of Abergale, these vessels are now in the possession of Mrs. E. M. Humphreys of the Cambrian Arms, Pensarn, who will have pleasure in shewing them to interested visitors. The above enumeration is simply for convenient reference, and we now proceed to a more particular description.

The Cup is of an elegant and classical bowl-like form, with small projecting rim moulded within. It has been cast in bronze, and the solid base displays below, a raised button with a still higher central knob; its upper (inner) surface being convex, with a decided apex. This little *scyphus*, which much resembles many examples in fine old oriental porcelain, both in shape and in the absence of any handle, has been plated with tin over the whole inner surface, so artistically that one of our first local silversmiths asseverated the vessel could not possibly be antique, being plated in *the best modern workmanship*; whilst the finish is so fine and bright as strongly to suggest the use of silver for burnishing. Of a truth, there is little really new under the sun! No



similar little drinking vessel would appear to have been described or in other way recorded as occurring in this country.

The Platter, Waiter, or Salver, for any of these designations would be applicable, is apparently a specimen of the Roman *scutella* or *patera*, of which latter class there certainly was a flat variety, as distinguished from the more frequent shallow-bowl or saucer shape, of which a nice example was exhumed at the Roman station of Chesterford, in Essex, being illustrated and described by the Right Hon. R. C. Neville (subsequently Lord Braybrooke).\* It bears the device of a serpent, upon the horizontal handle, which is looped at the extremity for suspension when not in use, and possessed a circular projection below the centre of the bowl, as a "rest." This vessel has been gilt, and is presumed to have been intended for sacrificial purposes. Waiters or stands have certainly been found at Herculaneum. Pennant remarks upon a confusion of the terms *patera* and *apophoreta*, the latter being *round, flat*, and without a cavity,† thus completely describing the Abergele utensil. Our platter is circular, and in general character resembles the cup, but its rim possesses three narrow line mouldings in place of the single broader one of the smaller vessel. Here, the broad and flat bottom constitutes the base, concave inside, with the bare central apex, visible through the plating; the outside being sufficiently concave to enable its central button to be level with the outer rim, where a band of slight lathe-grooves appears in the *tin-plating* which completely envelopes the platter, inside and out, and looks, with little exception, fresh as from the hands of the artisan.

The Colander or Strainer is formed of bronze, and remains

\* *Sepulchra Exposita*, p. 74, and plate.

† *Whiteford*, p. 88; *Fosbrooke's Encyclopedia*, I, 343.

nearly perfect, though thin and unplated. It belongs rather to the class termed *Trulla* than *Cola*, the latter being of greater size, and chiefly used for cooling wine, which was poured over ice (held in the *colum*) into a large bowl beneath. The smaller variety, like our example, combined the uses of both ladle\* and strainer, more especially when the bowl was deep, as also in a specimen found containing Roman coins at Chesterford, in December, 1847,† the perforation being executed in pattern, but by no means so elegantly as in this, which bears a floral radiation of pierced work in the centre or base, surmounted by a broad border in a variety of the beautiful Greek fret, which, deservedly popular in decoration anciently as now, was frequently reproduced on vases by painting, as also in Mosaic work, stucco, and masonry. It is said that at least half-a-dozen other bronze Colanders were found with this, probably differing in pattern, but one example at Pompeii *fitted into its bronze pan*, is engraved by Archdeacon Trollope, apparently of identical design; in this case, however, the bowl is of larger size, and is probably a *cola*. Another Romano-British example, similar to the Chesterford one in size, metal, and design, was found at Whitfield, Northumberland, together with three kettles or boilers, all of which are now in the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. A second, Mr. Roach Smith informs me, occurred in Lothbury, London, some years ago, but was lost ere the fact was reported to him; a fourth, with fragments of two others, are enumerated by the Hon. Charles Townley among the fine bronze Roman antiquities discovered at Ribchester, in the last century, and to which further reference will be made.‡ Dr. Kendrick of Warrington adds, that a

\* A *Silver Ladle* is recorded to have been found, with Roman coins, within the walls of Richmond Castle in Yorkshire.—*Gough's Camden*, II, p. 91.

† *Sepulchra Exposita*, p. 95, and plate.

‡ *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. iv.



Colander of this class, described but not figured in *Baines' Lancashire*, and found in Risley Moss in this county, is now in the possession of John Ireland Blackburne, Esq., of Hale Hall.\*

The Sauce or Stew Pan—forms like this bearing the name of *skillets* in many parts of the country—No. 4 of our list (and plate) belongs to a class of vessels, *patelle*, in constant use in all houses of the better class. It consists of a deep bowl-shaped receptacle, recurved at the rim and furnished with a horizontal and flat handle, broadening outwards—the extremity being semicircular—enclosing centrally a pierced or perforated trefoil, the lower lobe of which is somewhat narrower and more elongated than the others, and from its point an incised line or groove, half an inch long, tapers off. This peculiar orifice is the more carefully described through an impression it has induced in many minds that it implied the *sacrificial* character of the vessel, an idea more specious than sound. Its form is certainly not calculated for suspension by any hook except a wire one, but as this class of vessels would seem to have been regularly kept in sets and fitting inside one another, even so small an opening would prove amply sufficient for suspending all together by a wire-ring or cord. The sacred character of the trefoil is well known, but the healing virtues of the pansy (the real form of the perforation) were greatly valued in early times. A late writer remarks, "It is well known with what affectionate regard that simple flower, the pansy, is held by cottagers and others throughout the country; they do not know why, but there is a feeling in regard to it that cannot be attributed to the beauty of the flower, and it has no perfume. The pansy (*viola tricolor*) was an emblem of the Trinity, and was prescribed for, and considered good in, almost all complaints. The name is

\* Montfaucon figures a fine specimen, perforated in a very elaborated pattern. Vol. III, Book iii, plate 20.

" derived from and is the same as the Welsh word 'penser,'  
 " to think of God in the hour of sickness must do good, for  
 " viewing His mercy aright must produce *heartsease*, another  
 " and the common name for this plant."\* Consequently the  
 symbol of the revered plant might be expected to exercise a  
 wholesome influence upon everything cooked in this recep-  
 tacle, a very unnecessary precaution in regard to sacrificial  
 libations. On the right of the upper surface of this handle,  
 obscured by rust and much corroded, I detected the subjoined  
 letters, which no doubt formed part of the inscription of the  
 maker's name, the latter line evidently being *Luaminus*  
*F(ecit)*—

" CA . . . . V  
 LVAM . NVS . F."

These letters are *incised*, but the names upon metal vessels  
 are usually stamped. The bowl is quite plain, with the  
 exception of the base which is slightly concave, and has an  
 outer line moulding and a central button, but the rim of the  
 latter is not sufficiently produced to the level of the former  
 to constitute part of the "rest." The inner surface was  
 originally tinned over, but the plating has mostly been  
 eroded.

The Skillet, No. 5, is of the same general form as the last  
 described, and though of similar capacity it fits into No. 4  
 up to the rim; it differs, however, in the handle and base  
 mouldings. The handle bears curved line mouldings along  
 the margins of the contracted portion, and concentric ones at  
 the semicircular extremity, the centre of the inner one being  
 perforated for easy suspension of the vessel when not in use.  
 The base has an outer rim, two concentric and concave

\* *Evidences of the Antiquity and Universality of a Belief in the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity.*—By a Layman, London, Hall & Co., 1863. It is somewhat remarkable that the only example engraved by Montfaucon possesses a similarly perforated handle.



mouldings, with a central button. This button and the small outer rim of the inner band, form part of the "rest," having a common level. Inside, the bottom is convex, its centre also possessing concentric mouldings, and the intermediate hollows still display traces of the original tin-plating which, as in the former case, frequent scouring in process of time has all but completely removed.

These two vessels—which have been used for cooking upon the stove small stews, soups and sauces, (which were poured from them into the *simpulæ* or ladles proper, for conveyance to the table by attendants)—are, like the platter of bronze, cast in very substantial metal and finished in a superior manner upon the lathe; with the exception of a small hole in No. 5, they are in excellent condition, and if *re-tinned*, would prove almost as serviceable as ever. They are most worn, as might be expected, on the *near side*, as held properly in the right hand for use.

The few examples of similar vessels in this country have mostly been found in pairs.\* Two—one *found* lying within the other, among a large number of bronze objects and the iron *fire-dogs* above mentioned—are deeper in the bowl than our Welsh saucepans; a still larger vessel of bronze was found near. In the *Catalogue* of Antiquities forming the temporary museum in connection with the meeting of the Archæological Institute at York, in July, 1846,† a couple are thus described, "Two *patellæ* or skillets, the *inner side* "tinned, supposed to have been culinary vessels; one fits "into the other, but not closely; they have flat handles, "perforated at the extremity for suspension. The bottom is

\* The Mayer Collection only contains one bronze stewpan, which is probably a Continental specimen; its base is moulded similarly to those mentioned in the text, but the sides are so thin and oxidised it is difficult to recognise any trace of plating.

† *Memoirs illustrative of the History and Antiquities of the County and City of York*, 1848, p. 10.

“of considerable thickness, and ornamented with deeply cut concentric hollows and raised mouldings, formed by the lathe. A hole on the side of one of them has been mended with lead or some soft white metal. Dimensions—diameter of bowl (larger specimen)  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches, (smaller)  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches; length, including handle,  $10\frac{1}{4}$  inches and  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches, depth of both about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches. On the handle of the smaller patella is an impressed pattern, composed of a *thyrsus*, vine-leaves and tendrils. Found in 1841 on a farm called Round Hill, in one of the upper gills or valleys of the parish of Masham, North Riding, called Arna Gill. They lay in a small pit, covered by a large flat stone, and nothing was found in them. From the Swinton Park Museum.”

Unfortunately these have since been purloined; the smaller of the two must have closely resembled our No. 4. A pair of very similar pans are stated to have been found near Dumfries, and to be figured in the *Archæologia*; \* likewise an example in *silver*, with a vase, and four handles of similar vessels were found, in 1747, near Capheaton, Northumberland, adjacent to a Roman road,† which are now preserved in the National Collection, as are two others found at Ribchester, with some remarkable objects in bronze, to be noticed shortly. On the river Witham, near Lincoln, a small pan was dredged up along with a number of antique weapons in bronze and iron, which is apparently identical in shape, as it was in size, with our No. 4. It is thus described, “From its form and the grain of its fracture and its being one entire piece, it appears to have been made of cast metal. It is considered to be a piece of Roman workmanship. It is neatly and curiously grooved at the bottom, to admit the fire to penetrate to the contents more easily. On the handle is impressed, seemingly with a stamp, ‘C. ARAT,’ which letters

\* Vol. xxxiii, pl. 25, p. 436.

† Vol. xv, pl. 23.



"may possibly signify—*Caius Aratus*, as the latter part of the stamp seems not to have made an impression. It appeared to have been *tinned*, but almost all the coating had been worn off. *As it was said that it had been used by some boatmen for some time after it had been found, it might have been tinned after it got into their possession.* The art of tinning copper, however, was understood and practised by the Romans,\* though it is commonly supposed to be a modern invention, so that it is not very improbable that this utensil was originally covered with tin by that people."

A fine bronze vessel somewhat analogous in contour, and engraved in the *Archæologia*,† might seem at first sight to belong to our category, but it has evidently been constructed for sacrificial purposes. Its handle is most elaborately ornamented with dolphins, in high relief, and with vine and ivy wreaths, executed in nigellum and pure copper, besides other decorations, and the name of the artificer, "BODUOGENUS F," upon the handle. This beautiful vessel was found at Prickwillow, in the Isle of Ely, in April, 1838, and belongs to the Bateman Collection. From the peculiar ornamentation it would seem to pertain to the class termed *patra hederata*.

The above-mentioned vessels are all we have been able to find recorded, in any way resembling the present ones, and the metallurgy of these is the next point to be considered. Here, we are fortunate in possessing a record of carefully elaborated experiments on the *metal* of certain antique objects, which, so far as can be judged, was perfectly analogous in character to that of the bronze vessels before you. These experiments were evidently made *con amore* ;

\* "Stannum illitum æneis vasis, saporem gratiorem facit et comprescit æruginis virus."—*Pliny*, Lib. 34, cap. 17.—This may be freely rendered, "Plated Tin upon Bronze Vases makes the flavour more agreeable, and neutralizes the bitterness of the rust."

† Vol. xxviii, p. 436.—See also *Bateman's Catalogue*, p. 132.

no trouble has been spared, and they were not confined to a chemical analysis of the ancient metals themselves, but extended to synthetical manipulations of alloys, to produce similarity; or, varied for testing comparative utility and durability, in connection with the several purposes to which the various utensils had been applied.

In the years 1787-8, the river Witham, between Kirksted and Lincoln, and contiguous to the Roman Foss-road (*Via Fossata*), became the scene of numerous discoveries of antiquities in metal. Near the site of Bardney Abbey a large quantity of armour was dredged out, including a fine sword, inscribed "BENVENUTUS + ME + FECIT." In another portion of the stream bronze objects, usually held to be of pre-Roman character, were obtained, along with others of undeniable Roman origin. Many of these were added to the collection of Sir Joseph Banks (incorporated in the British Museum), who communicated them to the Philosophical Society,—one member, at least, being so interested in their composition as to spend no inconsiderable time upon experiments connected with the investigation. The result is a disquisition, printed in the *Transactions* of the Society,\* entitled "Observations on some Ancient Metallic Arms and "Utensils, with experiments to determine their Composition," by George Pearson, M.D., F.R.S. The analysis appears to have been conducted with the greatest care and in a thoroughly scientific manner, hardly to be excelled at the present time. It is impossible to enter upon all the details which are described *in extenso*, but the facts and conclusions deduced and the more important observations thereupon are here reproduced, as the best exposition of this portion of our subject. The objects, which are all of bronze, comprise—

1. A Roman Military *Lituus* (a musical wind instrument,

\* Orig. Ed. 1796, Tab. xii-xv, p. 450; Abridged Ed. Vol. xviii, 1796-1800, pl. I, p. 38, *et seq.*



and the only example known to have been found in this country\*), of hammered metal  $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch thick, soldered at the joints with tin, it being readily melted by the application of a red hot iron.

2. A *Spear-head*, of large size, cast hollow to receive a wooden shaft.

3. A *Saucepan* (Fig. 3). This we have already described at length.

4. A *Scabbard*—with a sword of iron rusted within—supposed to be either Danish or Saxon, being found with other armour near the site of Bardney Abbey, destroyed by the Danes in the year 870.† The scabbard is of hammered metal,  $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch thick, is well designed, and of good workmanship.

The above were all found in the River Witham.

5. A *Celt*, found on the peninsula of Ballrichen, near a Druidical grove; it weighs  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lbs.

6. A second *Celt*, found in Cumberland, weight  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb.

7. A third *Celt*, of smaller size, weight 5 ounces.

The analysis shewed these objects to consist of *metals only*, these being *copper* and *tin*, principally the former; the latter being apparent from a white deposit (in the *saucepan* amounting to  $21\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.) afforded upon dissolution in nitric acid; as also by synthetical experiment. The actual proportion of tin proved to be, in the Lituus and Celts, Nos. 6 and 7, a little more than 12 per cent., or 1 to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  parts of copper; the *Spear-head*, 14 per cent.; the *Saucepan*, a little above 14 per cent.; the *Scabbard*, a trifle above 10 per cent.; and the largest *Celt* a little over 9 per cent. All proved to be “malleable and uniform in their texture, which properties

\* So rare is this class of objects, that Mr. Roach Smith alludes to a trumpet (*tuba*) he met with in a continental museum, as probably the only example on this side the Alps!

† *Tanner's Not. Monast.*, p. 248.

“metals do not possess when they are mixed by fusion with  
 “extraneous substances hitherto discovered by analysis,  
 “except *carbon* in several metals, and siderite in iron only.”

The principal uses of alloy of copper by tin, are—to render copper less oxydable by water or atmospheric air; to give hardness; to render it sonorous and more fusible; to produce a closer texture, and whiteness for reflecting light; and to render it less tough and clingy, or “claggy” as moulders term it. “It is worthy of remark, that these alloys of copper  
 “with tin, are evidently different in their colour and grain  
 “from such alloys with the addition of even  $\frac{1}{10}$  of their  
 “weight of *zinc*, and also from copper alloyed by  $\frac{1}{10}$  of its  
 “weight of zinc.

“The *grain*, also of the fractures of the spear-head and  
 “*saucepan* before melting, is much coarser than that of the  
 “ancient metals which contain a smaller proportion of tin,  
 “but it appears from the synthetic experiments that the grain  
 “becomes finer as the proportion of tin is increased.

“Copper, alloyed with a larger proportion of tin than is  
 “generally contained in *celt-metal*, i.e., with  $\frac{1}{10}$  or  $\frac{1}{20}$  of its  
 “weight of tin, is fitter for cutting instruments, and piercing,  
 “boring, and drilling tools, than celt-metal, because it is  
 “harder, takes a finer edge, and yet is sufficiently strong on  
 “most occasions; nor do we possess at this day any metal  
 “that I know, which is so fit for knives, swords, daggers,  
 “spears, drills, &c., as this alloy, *except iron and steel*. The  
 “spear-head contains tin in the very proportion here men-  
 “tioned, and if the metals had been pure, it would perhaps  
 “not have been possible to have made this instrument of any  
 “other metals, which were so proper, and at so small an  
 “expense. The *saucepan*, also was made of alloy of copper  
 “by tin in the proportions last mentioned, but as this  
 “instrument is sufficiently hard with less, or without any,  
 “tin, there seems to be no use from the addition of it. We



“ may conjecture, indeed, that as the *saucepan* was made of  
 “ cast metal, the tin was used for the purpose of rendering  
 “ the copper more fusible, and thus also for more easily  
 “ *casting* forms of it. Perhaps also the tin was added to  
 “ render the copper less readily oxydable, and for the colour  
 “ of this composition.

“ There is not the least reason to suppose that the ancients  
 “ added *iron* or *steel* to increase the hardness or strength of  
 “ the alloy of copper by tin; nor does it appear from the  
 “ experiments with this mixture that any advantage is to be  
 “ expected from this addition, at least not for cutting instru-  
 “ ments.

“ Mr. Dizè made several different experiments on eight  
 “ different sorts of coin, Greek, Roman, and Gallic. It  
 “ appears from these experiments that those contained from  
 “  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a grain, to  $24\frac{1}{2}$  grains of *tin* in 100 grains of each of  
 “ the old metals, and it appears that these coins contained no  
 “ other metal but copper and tin.

“ From the preceding experiments and observations we  
 “ learn that tin was infinitely more valuable to the ancients  
 “ than it is to the moderns; without this metal it is not easy  
 “ to conceive how they could have carried on the practice,  
 “ and invented the greater part, of the useful arts. Tin was  
 “ even of more importance to the ancients than steel or iron  
 “ to the moderns, because alloys of copper by tin, would  
 “ afford better substitutes for steel and iron than any which  
 “ the ancients in all probability could procure. We see also  
 “ the importance of Britain in times more remote, probably,  
 “ than those of which we have any record or tradition, being  
 “ probably the only country that furnished the metal so  
 “ necessary to the progress of civilization. In the barbarous  
 “ state of its inhabitants this island was known to the  
 “ civilized nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa, and de-  
 “ nominated in two of the most ancient languages, viz., the

"Phœnician and the Greek, by terms which denote *the land of tin*; for such, according to Bochart, is the import of "*Britain*, a corruption of *Barat-Anac* or *Bratanac*; and "there is no doubt of the meaning of the Greek word "*Cassiterides*."\*

Tin-plating, such as appears upon most of our Abergele vessels, claims more attention than would seem ever to have been paid to it. The coating of sacrificial implements and personal ornaments with the precious metals has repeatedly been commented upon, but mostly in reference to minor objects of the latter class, as fibulæ, a specimen of which was found on the sea-beach of Cheshire in the course of last year. Among the culinary vessels we have enumerated, a few are distinctly stated to be lined with tin, and others have been suspected to retain a trace of the application, yet no English antiquary has called attention to this interesting art. We have seen that it was practised by the Romans,† and numerous examples might reasonably be expected to abound, but such is not the case; and even at Pompeii and Herculaneum, Mr. Trollope‡ does not appear to have remarked such plating in the numerous culinary and other vessels he so carefully illustrates and describes; whilst Fosbroke, evidently quoting some other writer (probably from the Sister isle) says,

\* *Britannia*.—"Notwithstanding the research of Camden and those who preceded him, it may be doubted whether the origin and significance of this name have been ascertained. I am not aware that any more recent attempts have been made; so, perhaps, a charge of presumption will not lie, if for *Brit*, speckled, parti-coloured, and *tania* region or country, it is suggested that the correct derivation is *Brith*, bringing forth; *stain* or *stan*, tin; and *ia*, country or island; the combination *Britannia*, signifying the tin-producing country or island, it being observed that an aspirate before the letter *s* renders it quiescent, and is apt itself to be lost. Another similar root is *Bruth*, pure, unalloyed; and this, considering the noted purity of the metal found in these islands, would be a very natural variation. . . . In the words *Insula Britannia*, we have a synonym for the Greek *Kassiterides*."—"A Dicky Sam," in *The Athenæum*, 21st November, 1868.

† Fosbroke asserts that coating iron with tin, for making utensils, is ancient, but gives no authority or examples.

‡ *Illustrations of the Remains of Roman Art*, by the Ven. Archdeacon Trollope, M.A.



“Dripping-pans are found at Herculaneum, *tinned with fine silver!*” Coming down to the great Roman *municipia* of Britain, we search in vain among the records of discoveries at Isurium, Eboracum, and Londinium, the successive capitals of the province, for any description of such manipulation, whilst the antiquaries or historians of Lindum, Rataë, Deva, Uriconium, Corinium, Aqua Solis, Portus Lemanis, Ragulbium, and other important Roman towns and *Castra*, apparently have no examples to shew. With the exception of Rigodunum\* (Ribchester), it seems to have been reserved for isolated localities on different sides of the island to produce good specimens of a very important art in connection with bronze receptacles. The valuable objects of Roman art in bronze, discovered at Ribchester, are, happily, described by the then owner, the Hon. Charles Townley, F.R.S., in a communication to the Society of Antiquaries of London, which was subsequently printed in the *Vetusta Monumenta*, with superior illustrations.† They were found near the bank of the Ribble, preserved in red sand, and comprise a fine *processional helmet*, with mask of Minerva, and covered with embossed figures in action; a *patra*, with fragments of two others; portions of a *vase* with silvery-looking polish inside, and doubtlessly tinned; a *bust* of Minerva; four circular *plates* from a military standard, with remains of two *quadruple buckles*; a *colander*, pierced in elaborate design, with portions of two others; part of a *candelabrum*, a circular *bason*, and four *round plates* resembling antique mirrors in form, but not possessing half their thickness of metal.

By a careful analysis, kindly undertaken by Mr. Alexander Norman Tate, the metal used for lining these saucepans and cup, and completely coating over the platter, is veritable *tin*,

\* This name is strongly and most reasonably suspected to have been *Ribodunum*.

† Vol. V, pl. i to iv.

and little else. A slight residuum was evolved, evidencing the presence of a minute quantity of some softer substance, probably lead, and this metal or an alloy of it with tin (pewter), no doubt was employed in soldering the plate around the side, to that upon the base in each vessel, which appears to have been first separately affixed to the bronze. The whole has been admirably finished, like the cast bronze itself, upon the *lathe*, as the circular indentations abundantly exemplify.

A difference of opinion will no doubt exist among antiquaries, as to whether the fabrication of these tinned patellæ, apparently the "*incoctilea*" of the Romans, is to be attributed to Italy, Gaul, or Britain. Well, and in fact artistically, manipulated as they are, there seems good reason to conclude these to be Roman-British, or the produce of British artificers under Roman superintendence (possibly copies of continental examples), and the liberal use of the metal tin,—rare and invaluable on the continent,—confirms this view. The Latin and Greek artizans commonly impressed their names, as we have seen, upon the better class of wares; and the Bateman sacrificial patella, as also very possibly the sword from the Witham—though this latter object is evidently of some centuries later date—may have been manufactured abroad. Montfaucon illustrates an example (one of the three named) found in France; it is similar to our No. 4, but below the pierced trefoil at the end of its handle appears the maker's name, "NARGISS."\* The Gaulish, or rather perhaps Romano-Celtic character of this and other manufacturers' names quoted is worthy of note, and it is interesting to compare them with those of potters, during the Roman period, found upon *ficilia* in France. Mr. Roach Smith, who opines that all the bronze vessels above recorded are the products of Britain and Gaul, gives in his list of Gaulish

\* Vol. III, Book iii.



potter's marks,\* "*SACRILLOS CARATI*," on a mould of white clay, ("*C. Aretti*" or "*Caretti*" occurs in London); "*BODUOC F.*" appears on a vessel from the valley of the Allier, and "*BURDONIS*" has been met with in London. *Boduognatus* was the name of a chief of the Nervii, whom Cæsar subjugated;† and "*BODENI*" (probably part of *Bodenius*) occurs in Mosaic-work, in a fragmentary inscription formed of unusually large letters, in a fine pavement of the Roman villa at Thruxton, Hants. The affinities of these two series of names, the one on metal the other on terra cotta, will be apparent to all. It was through such carefully educed ethnological affinities, that enabled Mr. Smith to determine the respective Roman provinces in which certain classes of fictilia were produced long anterior to the discovery of the local kilns, which remarkably confirmed his attributions and set the vexed question to a great extent at rest.

The manipulation of bronze and brass was necessarily a costly and troublesome process at this period, yet it must have been introduced at a still earlier one into our country, though whether by Phœnicians, Carthaginians, or some Romanised-Gallic tribe, constitutes matter of current dispute.

This paper has already far exceeded its intended limits, but it may be desirable to complement it by a short reference to the chief Roman remains hitherto known to have been found in the lower reach of the beautiful vale of Clwyd, upon the western side of which these interesting vessels were encountered.

Abergele lies about four miles from the nearest bend of the Clwyd, which, eight miles directly above, is joined by the little stream *Whiler*‡ from the east, at Pontruffydd, shortly after the latter has passed the finely situated village of

\* *Coll. Antiqua*, vol. vi, pp. 69-71. + *Comment. de Bell. Gallico*, II, p. 23.

‡ *Wheeler* of the Ordnance Maps, the concoctors of which having been misled, as in hundreds of other instances, by the pronunciation.

*Bodfari*, which, in *Benton's Itinerary of Antoninus*, and copied in *Lewis's Topographical Dictionary*, is said to take its name from the Roman *Varis*, through signifying "*the mansion of Varus*." *Bod*, undoubtedly signifies a settlement (or equivalent to our English *abode*), but as no mention is made in history or tradition of any general or other public officer in Britain, named Varus, the probability lies in favour of a derivation from the adjacent *ford* of the Clwyd, inasmuch as Dr. Gale intimates, apparently from Pliny and Camden's remarks, that *varia* and *varus* (as in *Dunovaria*, *Isannavaria*, &c.) are Latinised forms of a *native word* signifying a ford or shallow, probably *bar*, *far*,\* or *var*; instance the appellation of a pass through the Clwydian mountains, south of Moel Fammau, and about three miles west of Ruthin, *Bwlch pen baras*. Fragments of weapons, ornaments, urns, and other Roman objects, are said by Lewis to have been found in the groves of Pontruffydd Hall, in addition to coins at the point of junction of the Whiler and Clwyd, the supposed site of the ancient station upon or adjacent to a north-eastern branch of the Watling Street, which passed from Chester (Deva) to Caerhun (Conovium), situate upon the left bank of the Conway. The actual line of its route is undetermined, but, until recently, the local antiquaries have held it to lie almost directly west from *Varis* (three miles north-west of Denbigh), across the whole shire to the Conway. Recent discoveries, however, have served considerably to modify this view and to mark out, at least in the first instance, a north-western course.

Pursuing this presumed route, four miles from *Varis*, brings us to the southern side of St. Asaph (Llan Elwy) which, though commonly understood to derive both origin and name from a Church here erected in the 6th century, is not improbably of much earlier date. The township in

\* *Ffar*, that extends out or over.—*Pugh's Dictionary*.



which it is situate is called *Bryn Polyn*, a name traditionally believed to have been derived from the Roman general Suetonius Paulinus. Three additional miles in advance, Kimmel Park is reached, a fine domain of the Dinorben family, and now the residence of H. R. Hughes, Esq., a nephew of the late lord. The old manor-house was once the residence of the Cromwellian General Carter, who it is said here concealed the Protector; and until very lately an extremely large spur hung in the church of the village of St. George, a mile further, which tradition asserts to have been worn by the redoubtable Oliver.

To the westward of St. George, a range of hills projects into the vale, the most prominent rocky elevation being *Parc-y-Meirch* (*vulgo* Peny-Park Hill), or "the field of the horses," which overlooks the ancient manor-house of Dinorben, and indeed commands a fine prospect both up and down the vale. This was the site of a Roman encampment, in succession no doubt to an ancient British one, and appears to have been the centre of a host of battle grounds. Numerous local names still attest the murderous conflicts which occurred here in the 12th and 13th century, as *Pwll Angen*, "the pit or hollow of death," now the Rectory; and *Duill-y-Bwa*, "the quillet of the bow," quillet being nearly equivalent to the English paddock. On *Parc-y-Meirch* the doubly entrenched camp was partially examined, during the past year, by W. Wynne Ffoulkes, Esq., of Chester, who reports the discovery of foundations of buildings; several descriptions of pottery, red, brown, and black, the last including some ornamental kinds of the so-called Upchurch ware; nails, a bronze coin, and quantities of animal bones, with numerous pebbles evidently brought from the sea-beach. This spot wants a thorough overhauling, and most interesting results may be anticipated from a careful manipulation of its rich and deep soil accumulating here from vegetable growth and calcareous

disintegration for many centuries. Immediately beneath the northern escarpment of the hill is a narrow belt of pasture land, which bears the name *Parc-y-Milwyr*, or "field of the soldiers," where, last Spring, a large mass of human bones were discovered—no doubt removed from some battle-field in the contiguous gorge, not improbably during the gallant struggle of Owen Gwynedd for his country's independence, with Henry II. At the same time, upon the uprooting of a large ash tree, a remarkable assortment of objects, chiefly in iron, and connected with horse-gear, were exposed, and have been carefully preserved by Mr. Hughes. They include a curious quadruple buckle in bronze, with rings and chains, most of which were exhibited shortly after discovery at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries. Westward, upon the elevated ground, and bordering upon a Roman vicinal road, many antiquities in bronze and iron have at times been met with, between *Parc-y-Meirch* and a point nearly opposite *Abergele*, as spear-heads, daggers, lance and arrow-heads, with a kind of battle-axe. These objects, now preserved by Lady Dinorben at her residence in *Anglesea*, are said to be mostly engraved in the *Archæologia*. Near *Abergele*, and over against the site of the deposition of the valuable nest of culinary utensils which have formed the subject of these pages, stands a ruined tower called the Old Windmill, but in all probability it is the relic of a watch tower, for which its elevated position is admirably adapted.

We thus find a presumed Roman station at the distance certainly of about ten miles, but connected with the site of these vessels by a military road. The immediate cause of the secretion of so extraordinarily large a number of culinary vessels at this spot, may have been a simple necessity of war, and considering also their excellent quality and superior workmanship, it seems highly probable that they formed part of the sutlery equipage of the commander in some expedition



from Deva or Conovium, who was temporarily forced to effect a hasty retreat along the vale from overwhelming numbers of half savage Kelts. The field is known as *Caemurddyn*, i.e., "the field of the old foundations," such having been long known there, but their origin is very problematical.

From the account given by Tacitus it appears that his father-in-law, Julius Agricola, upon being nominated by the emperor Vespasian to the governorship of Britain, A.D. 78, inaugurated his command this same year by an attack upon the Ordovices, who were severely punished for their revolt. It is asserted that the Vale of Clwyd constituted the opening scene in this successful campaign, Anglesea likewise shortly falling under the general yoke of Rome.

Since these notices were submitted to the Society I have been kindly presented by the writer, Edmund Oldfield, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., and Secretary to the Arundel Society, with a copy of his article, contributed to the current half-yearly volume of the *Archæologia*, upon some Roman bronze vessels discovered upon the Castle Howard estate, Yorkshire, in June, 1856, of which I had been previously unaware. They comprise a "*nest*," five in number, of similar receptacles to the skillets of the Abergele find, from which they only appear to differ, exteriorily in the trifling ornamentation, and interiorly by greater proportionate depth. The *regulation* of their sizes has suggested to Mr. Oldfield the idea of *measures of capacity*, which, so far as the intention of the makers to render each capable of certain contents, may readily be acquiesced in, but when further conclusions are arrived at, that not only were they standard measures but that their only other purpose was *sacrificial* and not culinary, I cannot but hold these as *non proven*. The subject is ably treated, yet with all due respect to the learning, research, and general experience of the writer, I consider some inductions to be thoroughly incon-

sequent and untenable. In elucidation of this conviction the subjoined remarks are laid before the antiquarian public.

Before proceeding to the *design* of the utensils, their *scarcity* or otherwise invites a passing remark, inasmuch as we are informed such "have frequently been found on Roman sites, "and are to be seen in several museums," a statement which, as we have seen, is contradicted by Montfaucon, who only engraves one example in his very comprehensive antiquarian repertory as found in the large and important province of Gaul. Turning to Britain, a very careful enquiry has failed to elicit the fact of discovery of even a *dozen* identified specimens, hitherto recorded, viz. :—Prickwillow 1, Durham 2, Colchester 1, Mount Bares 2, Masham 2, Ribchester 2, River Witham 1. Of these, several were merely represented by fragments; and as a "set off" to the reported *handles*, which may or may not have belonged to vessels of this form, the Prickwillow specimen is enumerated, though I deny its claim to be thus classified. Of the above, Mr. Oldfield only mentions *four*. As to museums of antiquities, their contents must be regarded with caution, and no doubt some held to be Romano-British may have come from Italy, rare as the latter are. Mr. Oldfield, in a postscript, mentions others he saw in the Paris Exhibition, 1867, found in ancient Gaul; but "one swallow does not make a summer," neither do all our discoveries of "skillets," the Castle Howard and Abergele ones inclusive, render these utensils of *frequent* occurrence.\*

The antiquarian reader of this *brochure* cannot fail to note with surprise, the sacrificial character or purpose claimed for all the vessels of the skillet or saucepan form, *without distinction of metal or the elaborated ornamentation* of some examples. It is in this utter ignoring of discrimination that,

\* Since this paper has been in press, I have been informed by Mr. Ffoulkes of a recent and unrecorded discovery of similar vessels in South Wales.



as I take it, the chief source of error lies. In the instance of the Prickwillow vessel it is by inference assumed that antiquaries have classed it along with such plain simple ones as those from Abergele; but how stands the fact? In the enumeration of objects forming the temporary museum of the Institute meeting at York, in 1846, we find it mentioned with culinary vessels of bronze, but this was the result of *shape*, not use. In the Catalogue of the museum of its late owner, Thomas Bateman, F.S.A., published in 1855, its understood character is unmistakably attested: "114 p. *Sacrificial vessel* "of bronze, with an elaborately ornamented handle," &c. Thus, for fifteen or twenty years at least, this receptacle has been acknowledged as sacerdotal, and yet Mr. Oldfield can remark, "the introduction of enamel into the handle of the "vessel found at Prickwillow is surely inconsistent with *its* "*use as a saucepan*"!!!

Antiquaries have been accustomed to consider, in common with Mr. Wright, that though we have "examples of tripods "used by the Romans to support culinary vessels over the "fire," yet "a great portion of their cooking appears to have "been performed *on stoves*, and the *few* supposed culinary "vessels that have been found in this country partake rather "of the character of saucepans and fryingpans than of "kettles."\* Mr. Oldfield, on the contrary, deliberately assures us that these small vessels, if culinary, were "placed "upon a *heap of fuel*," and proceeds to state "that their "under sides shew no signs of the action of fire." This is begging the question in a most extraordinary fashion, and unless it can be shewn that cooking by stove was *unpractised*, the argument is perfectly futile, inasmuch as, brought into contact with blazing fuel, these utensils would be simply *abused*. The *mouldings*, which are said to endanger the stability of the skillets, if placed upon the fire, were ingeni-

\* *The Celt, the Roman, and the Saxon*, p. 336.

ously suited for the stove, their thinner intermediate portions of the surface, as Dr. Pearson has remarked, enabling the heat to act more quickly upon the contents than could possibly be the case with a base of uniform thickness.

Mr. Oldfield appears never to have had his attention directed to another important point—the relative condition of the sides of these and other vessels, which it may fairly be assumed were mostly used by *right-handed* servitors, as in the present day. In the cases of the Abergele skillets and cup—as probably would be found with all other examples—the side *poured from* is not only much thinner through increased use and scouring, but in one of the pans the metal is worn through on this particular side, whilst the rest of the vessel is strong and sound. The question may be referred to any impartial person—was such wear the result of the occasional service of the altar, or of the constant requirements of the kitchen?

The discovery of a clearly *incised* maker's name upon the handle of the Abergele skillet, No. 4, effectually disposes of another assertion of Mr. Oldfield's, "the inscriptions, which occur on bronze vessels, are *all marked with a stamp*, and record the maker's name."

I have purposely reserved the question of *measure and capacity* for final remark, as it is, unfortunately, almost the only novel conclusion of Mr. Oldfield's in which I can agree to any extent. He confesses that, out of his nest of five vessels—unquestionably a *set*—he has been unable to find a common multiple, or exact correspondents in these ordinary Roman measures, for more than *three*. One of the others contains 22 ounces, or just double the capacity of the Abergele examples, a fact which, though attesting design in the makers of all, would seem to point to quite a distinct basis from the sub-multiple of 5 *cyathi* (8 ounces), which answered with the former, holding respectively 16, 40, and 80



ounces. The largest of the Castle Howard vessels holds 92 ounces, thus agreeing with *neither* of the two sets mentioned. It will *not* do to imagine any discrepancy, but, in fact, we are still minus the true key to these measures of capacity, if such they were, and Mr. Oldfield's ingenious suggestion but supplies an inkling of the system or design pursued. It must be conceded, however, that all these vessels in point of capacity bear *some* certain or definite relation to one another.

From the above remarks, made in no *ex parte* spirit, but with every desire to arrive at the truth, it will be apparent to all, that I can see no occasion to alter the title, or even to modify materially the memoir submitted in the preceding pages. The conviction remains strong as ever that the greater portion of the bronze vessels ordinarily termed skillets or saucepans, and certainly all the plain ones—whether precise measures or no—were *mainly designed for culinary purposes*. The more ornamented vessels, and such as were made of silver, on the contrary were doubtlessly designed for the service of the altar. The other Abergele utensils I still consider to be simply such as would be used at the table of a military officer or civilian of position.