

A GUIDE TO THE ANTIQUITIES OF THE BRONZE AGE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649112838

A guide to the antiquities of the bronze age by Various

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VARIOUS

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THE BRONZE AGE**

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**IN THE DEPARTMENT OF BRITISH
AND MEDLEVAL ANTIQUITIES**

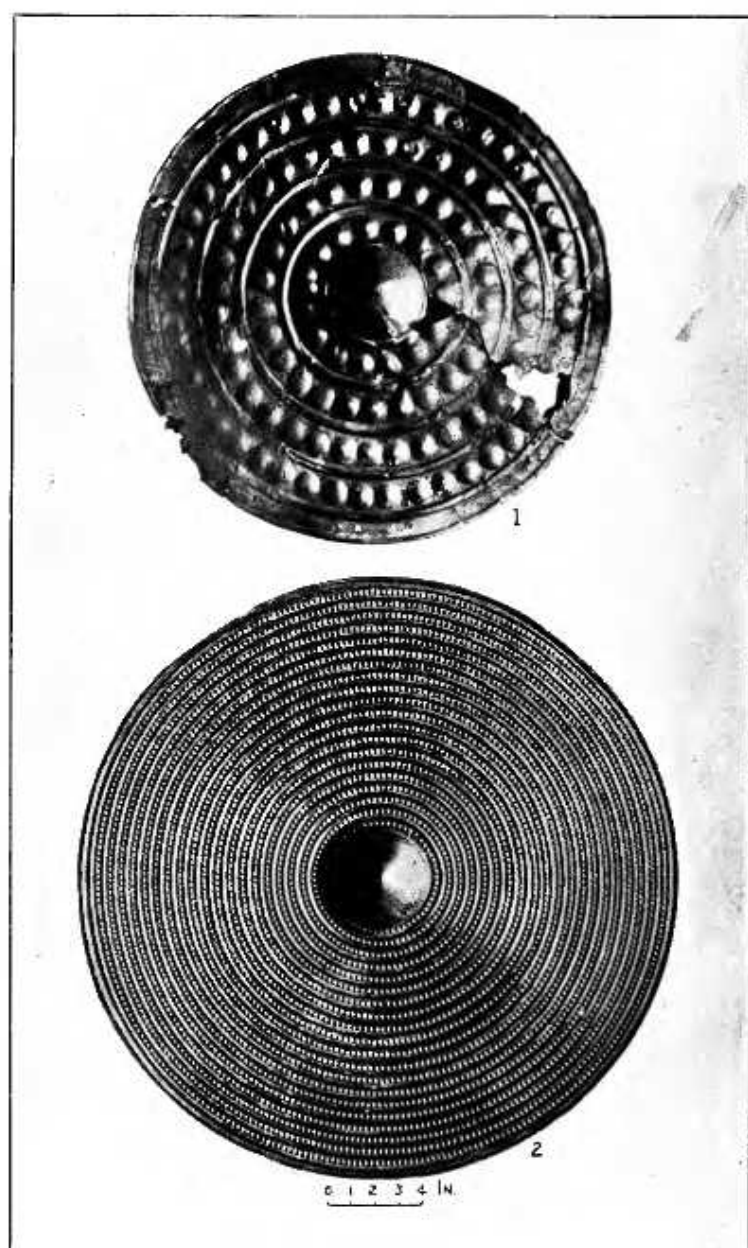


PLATE I. BRONZE BUCKLERS, THAMES AND WALES.
(Cases 3-7, see p. 30.)

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A GUIDE
TO THE ANTIQUITIES OF
THE BRONZE AGE

IN THE DEPARTMENT OF BRITISH
AND MEDIEVAL ANTIQUITIES

WITH TEN PLATES AND 148 ILLUSTRATIONS

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PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE TRUSTEES

1904

OXFORD
PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
BY HEBACE HART
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

PREFACE

As a sequel to the *Stone Age Guide*, published in 1902, the present volume is intended primarily to direct attention to our national antiquities, and to illustrate the connection between this country and the Continent in prehistoric times. For England, at least, there exists no work on the Bronze period that embraces the whole field, or brings the light of recent discoveries to bear upon Britain.

Considerable space has been necessarily devoted to the description of remains in England, but it is hoped that the treatment of certain areas abroad, of greater importance in themselves, will not be found too condensed. Much that was formerly regarded as vaguely prehistoric is now seen to belong to well-ascertained stages in the development of the highest ancient civilisations, and the objects themselves belong more properly to the Egyptian and Assyrian or to the Greek and Roman department. For this reason only typical series of such remains can be shown in the Prehistoric Room. Most of the antiquities here belong undoubtedly to the Bronze age, but there must have been a considerable overlap at the beginning and end of the period. Reference is made to certain stone and other primitive implements that clearly survived into the age of metal, and a compromise has been arrived at with regard to the Early Iron age. Bronze relics of what is known as the Hallstatt period are exhibited in this Room and included in the Guide, while those of iron, in many cases contemporary, are reserved for future treatment.

The collections from the British Isles in the Museum are fairly complete, but it is unfortunate that remains from Ireland, the district richest in gold and bronze antiquities of the period, should so seldom have a history: even when the locality is recorded, the circumstances of the discovery are generally unknown. It is in this way that prehistoric archaeology is thwarted at every turn; and one need only look at the Danish national antiquities to appreciate the value of some official control over early remains found in the soil.

In the work of arranging and describing the bronzes, Sir John Evans' comprehensive and laborious work has been of great service; and for the barrows of this country, Canon Greenwell's book on the subject has been largely drawn upon. Special mention must also be made of Prof. Montelius' classification for various parts of Europe: his beautifully illustrated works are generally regarded as of high authority. The opinions of other eminent archaeologists, at home and abroad, have also been frequently cited; while Prof. Gowland of the Royal College of Science, Prof. Rhÿs of Oxford, and Canon Greenwell of Durham have very kindly read in proof the passages dealing with subjects on which they are recognised authorities.

The Trustees are indebted to one of their number, Sir John Evans, for the loan of figs. 15, 33, 34, 35, 51, 53, 57, 58, 98 and 112; to the Council of the Society of Antiquaries for figs. 17, 22, 23, 45, 71, 93, 94, 96, 97, 124 and 145; and to the Delegates of the Oxford University Press for permission to use figs. 1, 2, 29-32, 36, 37 and 88, originally published in Canon Greenwell's *British Barrows*. Where the illustrations are not full size, the amount of reduction is generally indicated by a fraction; thus, $\frac{1}{2}$ means that the original has twice the length and breadth, but four times the area, of the reproduction.

The term *millennium* has been occasionally adopted for any of the successive periods of 1000 years before our era; for example, the first Egyptian dynasty is assigned to the middle of the fifth millennium (about 4500 B.C.), and the siege of Troy is generally supposed to have taken place towards the close of the second millennium (about 1100 B.C.). In describing the Table-Cases it has been found desirable to speak of the west and east sides, and of the left and right sections of either. To facilitate reference a plan of the room, giving the cardinal points, is provided on the back cover of the Guide.

CHARLES H. READ.

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