THE EXCAVATION at Freestone Hill can be regarded as completed until the excavation of similar sites make it necessary to check the results obtained elsewhere. For this reason small areas of cairn and enclosure on top of the Hill suitable for this purpose and the entrance were left untouched.

The excavated areas are shown on the enclosed sketch-plan. The results of the excavation can be summed up as follows:

A. There are no indications that Freestone Hill was occupied prior to the erection of a Bronze Age cairn on top of the hill.

B. (1) After having uncovered practically the whole area of the cairn (15 sq. m. at its southwestern edge were left deliberately untouched) it can be stated that the cairn in its final state was a circular mound of 23 m. diameter bounded by a kerb of medium sized vertical set stones (A on the sketch-plan). Concentric to it runs at 3m. distance an inner kerb formed by somewhat smaller stones. These kerbs are only preserved in parts and in one layer and the same applies to the smaller stones which had been used for piling up the cairn. It has suffered very much from the later Iron Age occupation, so it cannot be stated how high the cairn had once been.

Near to each other were in the centre of the cairn two oval shallow pits with main axis N-S. (c) The eastern pit has been disturbed by the Iron Age people, some remains of a human skeleton survived in the filling. The eastern pit contained at the bottom an undisturbed crouched skeleton with head in the S. (adult but young and likely female). No grave goods accompanied this interment.
Inside both kerbs there were found 12 cremations still intact deposited in small roughly built cists. Some had a horizontal flag as cover. Three of these had each one food vessel as grave goods. These three food vessels are of different types. Three of the cremations (two with food vessels) were deposited in the line of the kerb as secondary interments. Frequent scattered remains of calcined human bones and fragments of at least two other food vessels, two arrow heads (one of flint, the other of limestone), an unusual Bronze Age belt-fastener of bone are certain indications that many more burials inside the cairn have been destroyed by the later occupation. In spite of its ruined state this cairn is a valuable addition to our knowledge of multiple Bronze Age cairns on hilltops and it contributes to the relative chronology of the different types of food vessels.

(2) South of the cairn, at D., were found in a small area indistinct traces of habitation of the time of the cairn. This area produced some pottery of food vessel-type and many worked flints. Possibly we have to deal here with remains which the builders of the cairn left behind.

3m. outside the cairn to the E. an isolated cremation deposit was found in a hole broken into the rock. There were no grave goods. To the badly calcined bones much charcoal was admixed, a feature quite distinct from the cremations in the cairn where very little charcoal is mixed with the deposits.

D. There are no indications that the hill had been occupied after these activities until it was selected as a fortified habitation in the second half of the 4th century A.D.

E. (1) At this time the cairn was levelled. The surface of its lower strata and outside of it a roughly circular area of 35m. diameter was inhabited. Cairn and also the old surface outside of it was covered by a habitation layer up to 1-1½ foot thick. This area is bounded by a roughly constructed wall (e) 1.50-2.50m. wide with an incurved entrance in the S.E. (g) and a narrower (f) one in the E. Only one layer of the foundation of this wall is still more or less in situ, so it cannot be stated how high this wall has once been. The cairn will have provided the building material.
No structural remains of houses were found inside this enclosure. In the ground the only tangible remains of this habitation are five hearths (two inside the cairn). On the other hand, the considerable amount of animal bones in the habitation layer indicate a rather intensive occupation.

(2) With the exception of 6 to 8 small terraces cut into the northwestern slope the area between this enclosure and the defensive bank remained free from occupation. The terraces look to-day like "hut-sites" so well-known from hill forts in England, Wales and Scotland. Habitation layer found on the two investigated terraces (i and h) made certain that the terraces had been occupied. H. yielded some small fragments of crucibles of clay mixed with molten bronze. No structural remains could be traced and it is quite certain that no substantial buildings ever stood here.

(3) The eastern part of the area enclosed by the bank has freestone (dolomite) as subsoil. Carboniferous limestone forms the subsoil in the western part (see plan). Smaller and bigger bands and lentils of calcite are arranged along the contact zone. This glittering white mineral which is associated with a poor manganese ore and a little malachite had apparently attracted as "tracer" for metal ore the attention of the Iron Age inhabitants on the lookout for minerals.

Numerous holes and hollows (K, L) flat and up to 2m. deep, are in this area certain indications of this prospecting activity. The holes were filled in again during the occupation and produced an interesting series of hitherto unknown bone tools.

(4) The position of the defensive bank is not given by the terrain (no contour fort). Its outline marks the minimum of space needed by the Iron Age people. The construction of a defensive bank 400m. long enclosing an oval area of 150 to 120m. diameter (with one entrance in the W.) called for a considerable amount of labour. The defence is of the terrace-bank type well-known from Iron Age hill forts in England, Wales and Scotland and from the Continent. The depression outside the bank which looks to-day like a silted up defensive ditch turned out to be a quarry ditch and foundation trench cut very irregularly $\frac{1}{2}$-1$\frac{1}{2}$m. into the rock, 1,50m. wide in the average (m.). Antler-tines were
used (as in the mining hollows) for quarrying. At a distance of about 1.20m. from each other vertical timber was set into this foundation trench. The timber supported a vertical face of dry-walling which hid the timber, similar to Chorlesbury, England. Behind this face loose rubble was filled up to form a horizontal rampart walk, 6m. wide in the average and 6-8 feet above the level outside the terrace. We have to assume that the terrace was protected by a parapet (wattle?). The state of the crumbled bank is very bad and likely stones have been carried away for the construction of fieldwalls further down the hill. So it could not be made out if horizontal timber also was used for further stiffening of the terrace. Frequent animal bones and pottery found on the inner part of the terrace wherever it was cut indicate that this zone had been inhabited, but again no traces of structural remains of houses were found. All bones associated with the Iron Age occupation derive from domesticated animals (ox, sheep, goat and pig) and show that the inhabitants had ample supply of livestock. One gets the impression of a rather provisional character of the defensive arrangement. This leads in accordance with the evidence of the inhabited area on top of the hill to the conclusion that the site was occupied for a short time only by a relatively great number of people. No solid building built to last stood inside the defense. The site had rather the character of a temporary fortified camp than that of an oppidum. There are no traces that the short occupation came to an end by a catastrophe (fire). But at two widely separated places parts of smashed human skulls were found in the quarry-ditch outside the defensive terrace.

(5) Pottery (unfortunately only in small fragments), some miscellaneous iron tools, whetstones, smootheners, tracked stones, palettes, spindle-whorls, stone-discs, numerous blue glass beads, fragments of glass and shale bracelets are the usual inventory of an Iron Age occupation. Fortunately the bronzes allow a precise dating. There are fragments of two ear spoons, two bronze bracelets and a tinned iron-mount—these objects are highly decorated with compass drawn circles and geometric ornaments, show late Roman style. It is that decoration in which a renaissance of pre-celtic style precedes the complete barbarisation of classical styles of earlier centuries. A bronze coin of the Constantine the Great, imperial coinage minted at Treves 337 A.D. after his death gives a further date
post quem. The bronzes are distinctly products of "international provincial Roman" character and can be matched from 4th century contexts inside the Roman empire from many sites in England and on the Continent. None of them are products of workshops decorating the "celtic native" style.

F. After the camp had been deserted the site was never reoccupied. There are distinct indications that it had been covered by trees before the modern circular bank (P.) was built for the protection of an ornamental plantation on top of the hill in the middle of the 19th century. At least since this time the hill has been grassland, but in the S. of the area enclosed by the bank there are to be seen some traces of tillage which are later than the bank.

G. Investigation of the old workings outside the hillfort on the eastern slope produced no conclusive evidence as to their age and purpose. So the question remains open where the (bad) iron-ore had been mined which was found frequently in the habitation layer of the camp. These were limonite and haematite.

The important results of the excavation of Free-stone Hill and new to Ireland are:

(1) For the first time concrete evidence of Iron Age mining (prospecting for ore inside the camp) has been found.

(2) For the first time a well dated complex of finds of mid 4th century date, a hitherto rather obscure period is available. The exclusively provincial Roman provenience of the bronzes (mount and bracelets of this type are so far unknown from Ireland) indicate that already in pre-Patrician times close contacts existed with the area of the Roman empire.

(3) The camp, an alien feature on Irish soil, is the first dated Iron Age hillfort of English, Scottish, Welsh or continental type.

The obvious explanation that the Roman material came over to Ireland by trade does not satisfy as the occurrence of Roman material is associated with the alien feature of the camp. Had the Roman material been found in a burial, trade could account for it. Hillforts portray political history. So the following interesting historical problems are raised.
Was this hillfort built by an invading people which had come over from England, Wales, Scotland or directly from the continent looking out for metals and bringing with them their own civilization? If so, this camp can have been only an advanced post as it is rather distant from the sea and as it was occupied only for a short time. So, where was their base? The strategical position of the hill judged by modern standards from the configuration of the adjoining country would indicate that they controlled already an area north or northwest from Freestone Hill. On the other hand, Freestone Hill overlooks the river plain of the Nore with its easy communications to the S.

Another alternative is that these provincial Roman articles are loot brought over from raids (from Wales?) to Ireland by Irish people. In this case, the Irish must have learnt during their stay overseas to build hillforts of alien type for the protection of the inhabitants in hostile surroundings (during a period of prospecting for minerals).

Or did refugees (not Romans) bring their own belongings over to Ireland during the disturbed times of the late Roman empire and taught the Irish to build fortifications hitherto unknown when they went into hostile territory?

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