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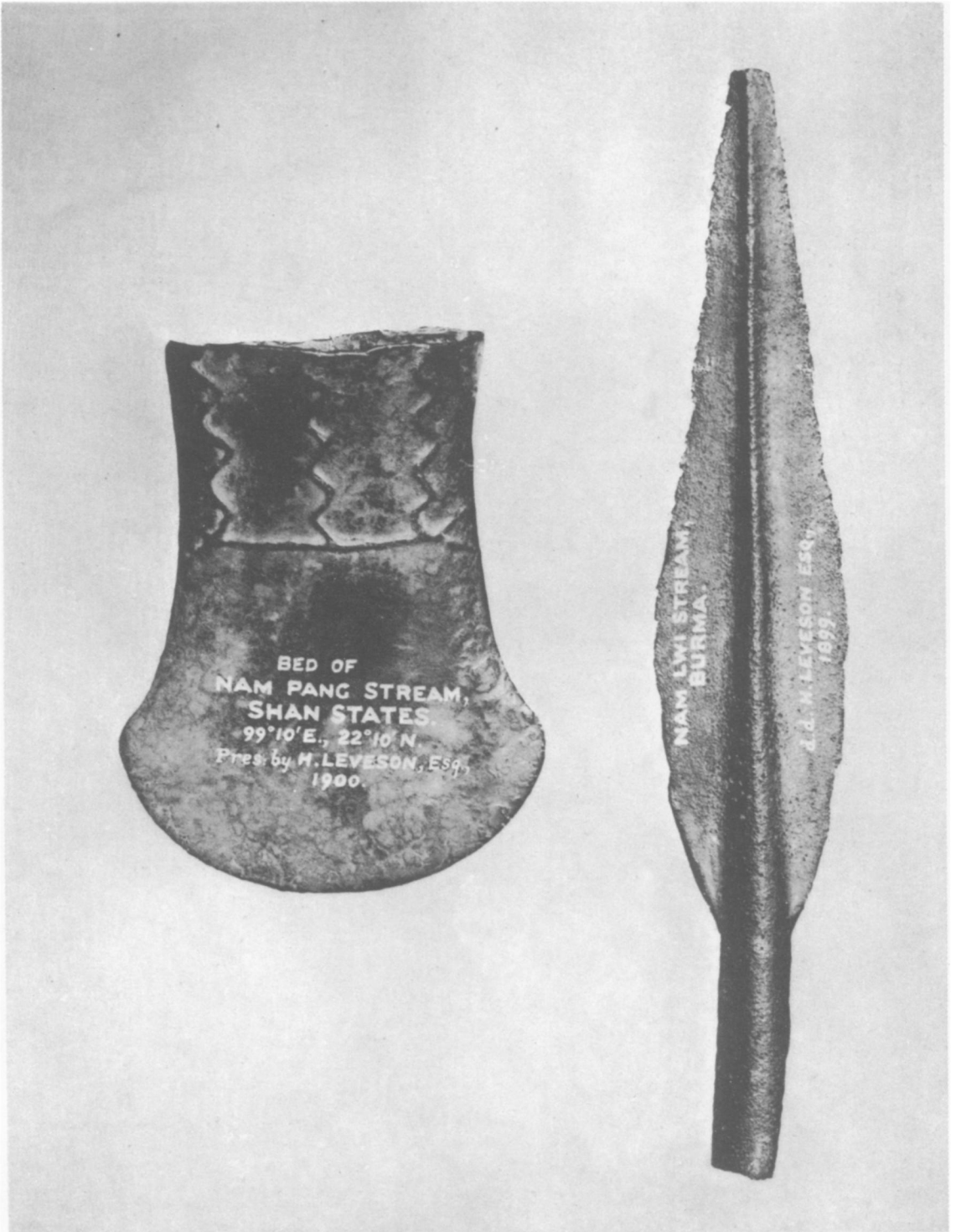
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SPEAR-HEAD AND SOCKETED CELT OF BRONZE
FROM THE
SHAN STATES, BURMA.
NOW IN THE PITT RIVERS MUSEUM, OXFORD.

ORIGINAL ARTICLES.


With Plate G.

Burma : Shan States.

Balfour.

A Spear-head and Socketed Celt of Bronze from the Shan States, Burma. **77**
 Communicated by Henry Balfour, M.A., Curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.

Implements of forms referable to a Bronze Age in South-eastern Asia are of sufficient rarity to justify the publication of the two examples shown in Plate G. These came to me through the kindness of Mr. H. Leveson, C.S., who obtained them from natives on the spot. The bronze spear-head was procured by him in 1896 from a native who stated that it had been found by his father some thirty years previously in the bed of the Nam Lwi stream, a tributary of the Mekong River, *lat.* 21° 20' N., *long.* 100° E. As the native informed Mr. Leveson, it was believed to have descended with the lightning, and that it pierced deep into the ground, and "in the fulness of its time ascended to the view of man." It is interesting to find that this belief in a celestial origin, which is so commonly and universally associated with implements of a forgotten Stone Age, should be also held in regard to those of the Bronze Age, and it goes to prove a considerable antiquity to these bronze weapons, which have become surrounded with myth because their real nature and human origin has long passed out of memory. Its length is 6½ inches, and its width 1½ inches or a trifle more. As will be seen, it is leaf-shaped and socketed, the socket being produced in the casting and not hammered round. A portion of the socket has been broken away, so that the present length is less than its original length. The surface is pitted considerably with small gas-vents formed in the casting. This spear-head is practically identical in form with many of the leaf-shaped socketed bronze spear-heads of Western Europe.

The bronze celt was discovered in digging in the gravel bed of a stream called the Nam Pang, a tributary of the Nam Hka stream, which runs into the Salween River on the left bank, *lat.* 22° 10' N., *long.* 99° 10' E. Gold-washing operations are carried on in the Nam Pang bed, and it was thus that this bronze celt was found, together with a polished stone axe-head. It is a well-cast implement, and, although it resembles in form some of the socketed bronze celts of Western Europe, it presents at the same time minor peculiarities which give to it a local colouring. It is 3½ inches long, 2½ inches wide, and weighs 3 ozs. 306 grs. The metal is somewhat thin, the cutting edge expanded and crescentic. In transverse section the shape is fusiform, the two faces being convex and meeting to form edges at the sides. When viewed from one of the sides it is seen to be unsymmetrical, one face being considerably less convex than the other towards the cutting edge, in fact it is nearly flat at this part. This shape has the appearance of being intentional, and the implement may have been designed for some special kind of work. On the obverse are three raised zig-zag lines running parallel to each other from the socket rim to a transverse line which forks at the sides of the celt. The reverse is marked with a raised line following the contour of this shape:— 

There is a fine green patina over the surfaces.

Both spear-head and celt are now in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.

Dr. J. Anderson procured a socketed bronze celt in the Sanda Valley, Yunnan (c. 98° E., 24° 40' N.), of a peculiarly specialized form, with oblique edge and winged sides. He mentions the rarity of these implements, and says that he paid 2*l.* 10*s.* for his specimen, while for three others exactly similar he was asked 5*l.* each ("Rep. on Exped. to W. Yunnan," 1871, p. 414, pl. V.). There are many copper and tin mines in Yunnan, and these materials were brought in quantities thence to Mandalay and Momien by Chinese caravans.

Sir J. Evans mentions also an example of socketed celt from Yunan in the British Museum, and one from Cambodia, also a specimen from Java which is in the Cabinet of Coins, Stuttgart. They appear to be very rare.

HENRY BALFOUR.

Nomenclature: Glaze or Varnish.

Myres.

Note on the Use of the Words "Glaze" and "Varnish" in the Description of Painted Pottery. Communicated by John L. Myres.

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Frequent confusion appears to have arisen among students of ancient ceramics, and particularly of the early pot-fabrics of the Mediterranean, from the use of the term "*varnish*" or "*varnish-pigment*" to describe such painted ornament as exhibits a lustrous surface after firing.

For this kind of pigment, the proper term in English is not "*varnish*" but "*glaze*," and the use of the word "*varnish*" is due to an ill-advised attempt to translate literally the German "*Firnis-malerei*." This German term was, I believe, first used by Drs. Furtwängler and Loeschke, in their *Mykenische Vasen*, published in 1886, to denote the third and most highly finished group of their classification of Mykenæan pottery; in contra-distinction to the second and more primitive group, to which, because its colours are powdery and lustreless, they gave the name of *Matt-malerei*.

Now *Firnis* in German appears to be rightly used, both (1) for those pigments which, as in the case of the Mykenæan pottery, contain enough fusible matter to vitrify in the firing and so to acquire a permanent glassy lustre; and also (2) for those which, like ordinary housepainters' colours, or the characteristic "Kabyle pottery" of Algeria, are made up with gummy or resinous matter, which, while it soon dries hard and gives a lustrous appearance to the surface of the vessel, is easily scratched or washed off with turpentine or other solvent of the lustrous gum; and, if exposed to even a dull red heat, burns away altogether, leaving the pigment charred, powdery, and easy to rub off.

In French, also, the corresponding word *vern* seems to be properly applied either to a fusible or to a resinous surface covering.

In English, on the other hand, the word "*varnish*" has become restricted in common use so as to denote the gummy or resinous pigments only; while for vitrified pigments English potters regularly use the word "*glaze*" or "*glazed-pigment*," which has the advantage of suggesting at once the idea of something *glass-like* or vitreous, and is not likely, in descriptions of pottery at all events, to cause confusion with the various lustrous substitutes, such as starch or albumen, to which this term is sometimes popularly applied. It will, therefore, save much confusion and inconvenience if those who have occasion to describe pot-fabrics with lustrous ornaments will confine their use of the word "*varnish*" to gummy and resinous pigments only; and of the word "*glaze*" to vitreous pigments; reserving the word "*lustrous*" as a generic term (as in mineralogy) for all pigments the surface of which throw back the light at all, but of which the specifically vitreous or resinous character is not clearly apparent, and the words "*burnished*" or "*polished*" for those on the surface, or parts of the surface, of which a lustre has subsequently been brought out by mechanical friction. The only objection, so far as I am aware, to this generic use of the term "*lustre*" is that "*lustre-ware*" has become a common phrase for certain mediæval glazed wares which exhibit what in mineralogy would be termed a "*metallic lustre*." But I do not think that in practice there would be any difficulty on this score.

Three other useful terms may, perhaps, be suggested, in conclusion, to describe kindred processes of decoration, which do not fall under any of the foregoing, but are, I find, frequently liable to confusion with them.

1. The term "*slip*" is usually employed in its correct technical sense (corresponding exactly with the French *enduit* and the German *Ueberzug*) of a coating of finely levigated clay applied to the whole surface of the vessel by dipping it in a bath of clay-