

A SCOTTISH NEOLITHIC POTTERY SEQUENCE

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The most recent assessment of Scottish Neolithic pottery was that published by Atkinson in 1962 in The Prehistoric Peoples of Scotland (Atkinson 1962). Since then certain aspects of the subject have been studied independently, notably Scott's work on the Beacharra series in the Clyde and Hebrides (Scott 1964), but it is not too soon once more to review the problem as a whole.

Two major difficulties, common to Scottish archaeology as a whole not just to Neolithic studies, are immediately apparent - the lack of clear associations and the paucity of dating evidence. Although the bulk of our Neolithic pottery comes from chambered tombs, much of it was excavated over fifty years ago and stratigraphical evidence is often lacking. Even where unexceptional excavation techniques have been employed it is not always possible to relate the finds to a specific phase of a tomb. It is agreed that chambered tombs had a long life, and the later deposits in a tomb are likely to disturb earlier deposits. No doubt future excavation will provide further stratigraphical evidence, but meanwhile one is forced in part to depend on a typological pottery sequence.

In his paper Atkinson proposed a two-fold Neolithic penetration of Scotland - an east coast spread from Yorkshire marked by form G bowls, and a west coast spread to be recognised by simple bag-shaped pots and coming ultimately from Wessex (Atkinson 1962, 10). Common to both are small hemispherical bowls (Coles & Simpson 1965, Fig. 4 No. 5; Bryce 1903-04, Fig. 5, 26). Form G bowls have a limited distribution in Scotland being found only in the south and east, at Cairnpapple, West Lothian (Piggott 1947-48, Fig. 15 No. 1, 102), Bantaskine, Stirlingshire (Callander 1928-29, Fig. 38 No. 8, 57), Pitnacree, Perthshire (Coles & Simpson 1965, Fig. 4 No. 1, 42), Powsode Cairn, Aberdeenshire (Nat. Mus. Ant. unpublished) and in the south-west at Cairnholy I, Kirkcudbright (Piggott & Powell 1948-49, Fig. 7 No. 1, 119) and Luce Bay, Wigtownshire (McInnes 1963-64, Fig. 1 No. 2, 61). The carinated bowl from Pitnacree, Fig. 1, was originally published as Lyles Hill ware but Manby has shown that it has greater affinities with the lightly carinated vessels of Yorkshire than with the Irish series (Manby 1967). A Yorkshire origin for these form G vessels is borne out at Luce Bay and Cairnholy where the bowls in question are of a fabric which is quite distinct from that of the other local Neolithic wares and at Cairnholy is so like that from some Yorkshire barrows as to suggest possible importation.

Atkinson's western spread of Neolithic pottery, related to simple bag-shaped pots has a rather wider distribution. It extends from Luce Bay in Wigtownshire (McInnes 1963-64, Fig. 2 Nos. 34 & 46, 63), through the Clyde estuary, where it is found on Arran at the chambered tombs of Torlin, Clachaig and Sliderry (Callander 1928-29, Figs. 15, 16 & 18, 46) and on Bute at Bickers Houses (Callander 1928-29, Fig. 21, 49), to Argyll, where again the finds are from chambered tombs, at Crarae (Scott 1960-61, 14), Beacharra (Scott 1964, Fig. 8b, 146) and Ardnacross II (Unpublished information from Miss A. S. Henshall). Further north these simple vessels occur in North Uist at Eilean an Tighe (Lindsay Scott 1950-51, Fig. 5 W1, 15) and Clettraval (Lindsay Scott 1934-35, Fig. 38 IC2, 522), in Harris, at Northton (Nat. Mus. Ant. unpublished), in Orkney at Calf of Eday, Taversoe Tuack, Unstan, etc. (Henshall 1963, No. 16, 249; No. 22, 251; Nos. 22 & 24, 253) and in Aberdeenshire at Pitcaple (Inverurie Mus. unpublished), Fig. 2. In addition there is a stray example of a small bag-shaped pot from Roslin, Midlothian in the south-east (Nat. Mus. Ant. unpublished), Fig. 3. Atkinson concentrated on lugged vessels, regarding the plain bag-shaped pots without lugs as unlikely to have much cultural significance. However, simple bowls without lugs, and in particular those with rounded rims as those from Beacharra (Scott 1964, Fig. 8b, 146), Bickers Houses (Bryce 1903-04, Fig. 6, 26) and Luce Bay (McInnes 1963-64, Fig. 2 No. 37, 63) in the west, are equally important to the further development of Scottish Neolithic pottery.

Scott differentiated four basic types of Scottish Neolithic pottery forms in the west (Scott 1964, 152), namely lugged bowls, plain bowls, cups and carinated bowls, and pointed out that origins could be found for all these types in Wessex contexts. Carinated vessels as well as the simpler forms occur for example in the earliest levels of the ditch at Windmill Hill (Keiller 1965, Figs. 26 & 27), and it should be pointed out that some of these Wessex carinated vessels are decorated with simple vertical grooving, and that punctate decoration is also present. In the Clyde it is the less severely carinated bowls which have the simpler linear and punctate decoration (Scott 1964, Fig. 8d, 146), Fig. 8. Whatever their origin, however, Scott has shown that the style of carinated bowl present in the Clyde area also turns up in the Hebrides (Bryce 1903-04, Fig. 4, 26) where the linear and geometric decorative motives of the Clyde (Scott 1964, 155) are continued, Fig. 9.

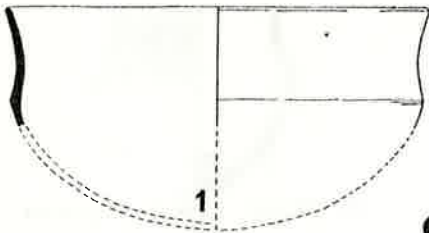
In the Hebrides these decorative techniques continue and the Clyde carinated bowl can be seen to develop, for example at Clettraval (Lindsay Scott 1934-35, Fig. 39 HICI & VC2, 523), into a deep-based vessel with decorated neck. Also important in the Hebridean series is the carinated bowl with

fairly upright neck, seen at Cletraval with hurdle pattern grooving (Lindsay Scott 1934-35, Fig. 38 IIC2, 522). At Unival similar carinated vessels are also present but there is a greater proliferation of decoration and a weakening of the shoulder (Lindsay Scott 1947-48, Fig. 7 No. 2, 21). At Eilean an Tighe (Lindsay Scott 1950-51) and Northton the geometric decoration of the carinated and shouldered bowls, Fig. 11, can be seen to develop into the all-over herringbone decoration of the flanged bowl, Fig. 12. These deep bowls with their angular and out-turned rims are in complete contrast to the simple rimmed forms of the parent style. In discussing this development it would seem reasonable to suggest a connection between carinated Beacharra Clyde bowls and Irish Ballyalton bowls (Case 1961, 186-9). These Irish bowls are similar in form to the Clyde carinated bowls, have grooved and/or whipped cord decoration, but in addition to simple rim forms may also have developed everted rims (Case 1961, Fig. 13, Nos. 2, 3 & 6, 187). This is not to suggest that Ballyalton bowls are ancestral to the Clyde series or vice versa, but merely to point to a relationship which may be reflected in the Hebridean development. However, it must be admitted that the development from simple rims to complex ones is a feature not only of the Hebridean Neolithic but also of other Scottish and English styles and of the complementary Irish series. It would appear that increased detail in decoration is accompanied by increased detail in form. Lindsay Scott worked out a complicated stratigraphy for Eilean an Tighe in which the simpler forms are proportionately commoner in his earlier levels, but the more complex forms, flanged bowls and even Unstan ware, are present from the beginning (Lindsay Scott 1950-51, 29). This contemporaneity is undoubtedly underlined at Northton, Harris, where all forms occur, from carinated bowls with decoration confined to the neck found alongside profusely decorated flanged bowls, similar to those from Cletraval and shallow Unstan bowls.

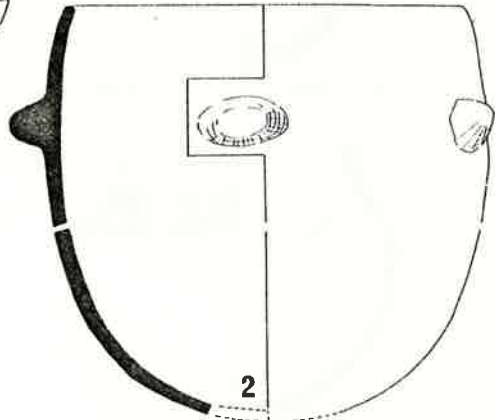
The presence of Unstan pottery in the Hebrides at Eilean an Tighe and Northton must indicate contact between the Hebrides and Orkney. But the origins of Unstan ware are difficult to assess. The Unstan form is foreign in the Hebrides where bowl forms tend to depth rather than width. It would be possible to suggest that a carinated vessel such as that from Unival, Fig. 10, could develop contrary to the mainstream into a shallow Unstan bowl such as that from Northton, Fig. 13. The decoration is strikingly similar. In the Orkney tombs are undecorated wide-mouthed bowls (Henshall 1963, No. 19, 251; No. 5 etc., 254) which could be seen as forerunners of the Unstan form. On the other hand, the ornate decoration of the Unstan ware is difficult to derive from Orkney or eastern forms, whereas it has been shown that linear decoration is present in the Hebrides, deriving from the Clyde series. The stab-and-drag decoration, particularly common at Taversoe Tuack and

Unstan (Henshall 1963, Nos.1 & 3, 251; 252), although not common in the Hebrides, is found on Unstan ware in the west (Lindsay Scott 1950-51, 16; also from Northton, unpublished material, information from D. Simpson). It seems more likely that the wide-mouthed undecorated bowls of Unstan-like form are undecorated forms copying Unstan ware rather than as in any way ancestral; again, undecorated Unstan sherds occur sporadically at Northton. It must be admitted, however, that the absence of other Hebridean forms such as the flanged bowl in the Orkney tombs is puzzling. The only other form which appears to be common to Orkney and the Hebrides is a shallow bowl with rather heavy rim decorated with grooving, seen in Orkney at Sandyhill Smithy and Bigland Round (Henshall 1963, 248) and in the Hebrides at Eilean an Tighe (Lindsay Scott 1950-51, Fig.6 Y53, 17) and Rudh an Dunain (Lindsay Scott 1931-32, Fig.12, 199), Fig. 14. It is noticeable that the Sandyhill Smithy bowl, Fig. 15, is decorated on the body also in a manner to be found on the deep bowls of Eilean an Tighe and Northton (Lindsay Scott 1950-51, Fig.6 Y1, 17; Fig.8 1.33, 21). No doubt we will continue to call this type of pottery Unstan ware despite the possibility of a Hebridean origin.

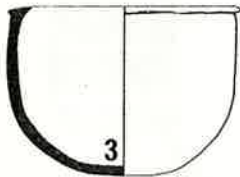
The somewhat unsatisfactory term Neolithic B has been revived to describe the impressed wares of Scotland. It is necessary to use a portmanteau term for these impressed Neolithic wares, otherwise we are going to speak of Hedderwick ware, Tentsmuir ware, Luce ware and so on. The impressed wares of Scotland have a common denominator in their decoration and in their fabric, but the forms are innumerable and their decoration follows no classifiable pattern. This is in complete contrast to the decorated wares in southern England where localised decorated styles are followed in sequence by Ebbsfleet, Mortlake and Fengate wares. No such pattern can be seen in Scottish impressed Neolithic pottery. At Luce Bay (McInnes 1963-64, 50) the dominant decorative techniques employed are whipped cord, birds' bone or stick impressions and stab-and-drag, and the forms are principally deep straight-sided vessels with everted or flattened rims, Fig. 4. At Hedderwick, East Lothian (Callander 1928-29, 67-72) cord and birds' bone impressions are also prominent and shape and rim forms are similar to those at Luce Bay but with a tendency for rims to be squarer, Fig. 5. At Brackmont Mill, Fife (Longworth 1966-67, 73) and Grandtully, Perthshire (Unpublished, information from D. Simpson, Leicester University) the dominant decorative technique is finger-nail impression, which, though present at the previous sites mentioned, is not common. More marked is the difference in form which at Brackmont is typically a wide-mouthed bowl with deeply bevelled rim or collar. At Grandtully simple rounded bowls with flattened rims comparable to Luce Bay forms have twisted cord impression, and shallow bowls



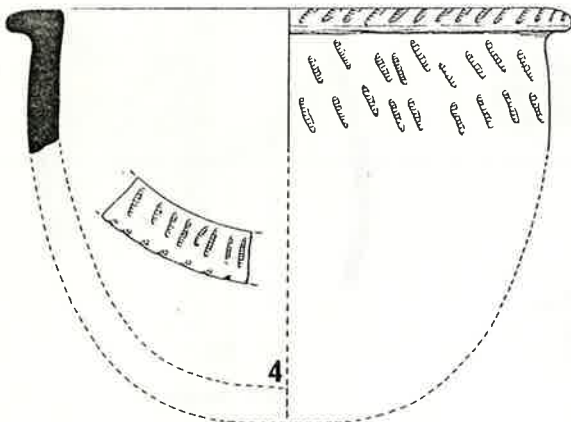
1. Pitnacree - after Simpson



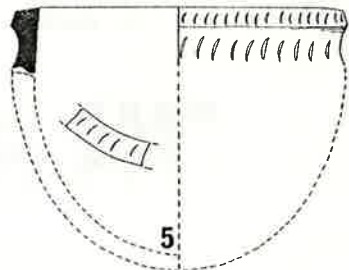
2. Pitcaple



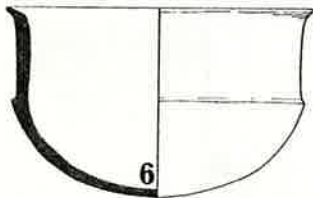
3. Roslin



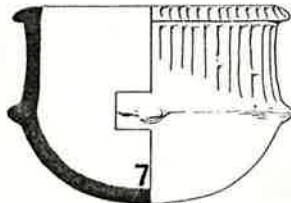
4. Luce Bay



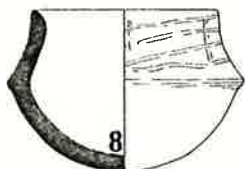
5. Hedderwick



6. Clatchard Craig



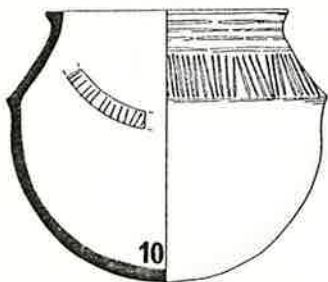
7. Achnacree



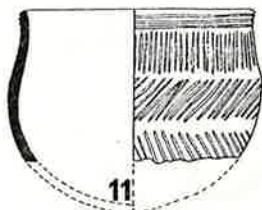
8. Beacharra - after Scott



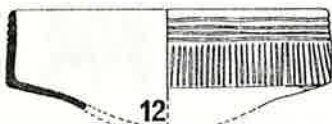
9. Unival - after Lindsay Scott



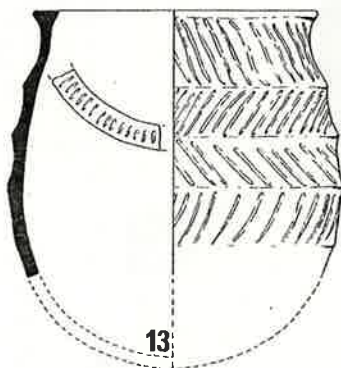
10. Unival - after Lindsay Scott



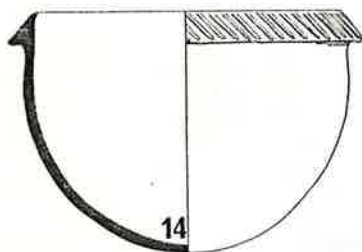
11. Northton



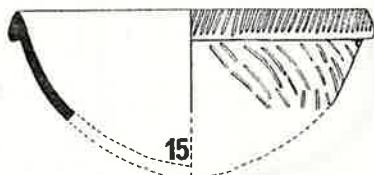
12. Northton



13. Northton



14. Rudh an Dunain



15. Sandyhill Smithy - after Henshall

with collared rims have finger-nail pinching as at Brackmont. On the sites at which Neolithic B is found in any quantity it is the dominant form and decoration which varies, not the range of forms and decorative techniques which can be seen to be common throughout. Common also is the fabric of the pottery which is very coarse, with large grit present, reddish in colour and tending to be poorly fired.

The nature of the fabric is a strong factor in relating Neolithic B to the Peterborough ware of Yorkshire. As Newbigin pointed out some thirty years ago (Newbigin 1937, 203), the Yorkshire impressed ware, which she called Neolithic B, although resembling the impressed ware further south appeared to include another element. Since Newbigin's paper, examples of what are explicitly Ebbsfleet, Mortlake and Fengate wares have been found in Yorkshire, for example at Ampleforth (Wilmott 1938, 338) and Carnaby (Driffield Mus. unpublished), but Newbigin's statement still stands. In Scotland, Neolithic B pottery may be seen as a development of the early Neolithic forms, the bowls with rounded rims, referred to above, to which has been added the idea of impressed decoration. At Luce Bay, therefore, one finds rather deep baggy pots reflecting a development similar to that in the Hebrides, and ultimately harking back to the bag-shaped pots of the early western penetration. A similar situation exists at Hedderwick, although possibly the bowls there are shallower. At Brackmont Mill and Grandtully the wider form of bowl surely reflects the original form G tradition. Longworth (Longworth 1966-67, 74) has related the collared forms at Brackmont to Fengate ware but it is possible to suggest another origin for the collared form, namely the Unstan forms of the Hebrides and Orkney. The collared bowl from Blackhammer (Henshall 1963, No.1, 248), is a possible example of interaction between Unstan and Neolithic B. The internally bevelled rim so common at Brackmont Mill and also found at Grandtully is the normal form of developed rim on Unstan ware (Henshall 1963, Nos.1, 3 & 10, 252). This is not to deny the influence of Fengate ware on Neolithic B. Sherds of what, if they were found in England, would be called Mortlake and Fengate wares have been found in Scotland, for example at Hedderwick (Callander 1928-29, Fig. 46 No.6, 68), Cairnholy (Piggott & Powell 1948-49, Fig.8 No.4, 120) and Brackmont Mill (Longworth 1966-67, Fig.5 No.2), but they are rare. They do, however, point to contact with the south, probably with Yorkshire, or rather to a number of contacts. But one cannot stress too strongly the localised nature of Neolithic B in Scotland in contrast to the unity displayed by Peterborough ware in the south.

The final style discussed here is that known to us as the Lyles Hill style. The distribution extends from the Solway Firth through the Clyde and Argyll

and north into Aberdeenshire and Caithness. There are three eastern outliers to this distribution, in Perthshire, Fife and Selkirk. Although the original impetus of this style seems to have come from Ireland, much of the pottery classified in Scotland as Lyles Hill is of derived form. Close to the Irish series is the pottery from Cairnholy I (Piggott & Powell 1948-49, Fig. 7 No.2, 119), Monamore, Arran (Mackie 1963-64, Fig.4 No.3, 26), White-moss, Bishopston, Renfrewshire (Nat.Mus.Ant, unpublished) and Clatchard Craig, Fife (Nat.Mus.Ant, unpublished), Fig. 6. But localised forms are apparent. In the west a group of small rather coarse vessels with carinations sometimes bearing lugs and decorated with fluting on the rim, and sometimes on the body as well, occur at Achnacree, Argyll (Callander 1928-29, Fig. 3, 38), Glecknabae (Bryce 1903-04, Figs. 20 & 21, 48), and Glenvoiden, Bute (Unpublished information from Miss A.S. Henshall, Nat.Mus.Ant.). In the east a further group may be recognised which in form relates more to the form G bowls of Yorkshire than to the more upright conical forms of Ireland. Typical of this group is the pottery from Easterton of Roseisle with all-over fluted decoration (Callander 1928-29, Fig.37, 56). Other sites in this group are Tulloch of Assery B, Caithness (Corcoran 1964-65, Fig. 15b, 43), Culbin Sands, Moray (Nat.Mus.Ant. unpublished), and Yarrow, Selkirk (Nat.Mus.Ant. unpublished). Also possibly to be regarded as belonging to this phase are the examples of lugged vessels from Loanhead of Daviot (Kilbride-Jones 1934-35, Fig. 14 No.12, 207), East Finnercy (Atkinson 1962, 19), Pitglassie, Aberdeenshire (Nat.Mus.Ant. unpublished), and Easterton of Roseisle, Moray (Nat.Mus.Ant. unpublished). As Atkinson pointed out (Atkinson 1962, 19), the pointed upturned lugs of the Loanhead of Daviot and East Finnercy vessels are characteristically Irish; in addition the lugs are placed on the body or shoulder which would relate them to the Achnacree form, Fig. 7, rather than to the earlier vessels of the western penetration with lugs below the rim. These groups again suggest a continuation of a local Neolithic tradition with the adoption of Lyles Hill decorative techniques. The two strange vessels, one from Nether Largie, Argyll (Callander 1928-29, Fig.1, 37) and the other from Cultoquhey, Perthshire (Atkinson 1962, 34) underline this localised development.

Having outlined the various groups of pottery which make up the Scottish Neolithic series one must now turn to the question of dating. At Pitnacree sherds of a simple bowl came from the old land surface along with charcoal which gave a date of 2,860 \pm 90 B.C. (Coles & Simpson 1965, 46). The form G sherds at Pitnacree also came from the old land surface, although their unabraded condition led the excavators to suggest that they only immediately preceded the building of Phase II of the monument, that is, the rectangular enclosure. But as this enclosure is compared with wooden enclosures beneath

the long barrows of southern England, a date shortly after 3,000 B.C. would be quite acceptable for the form G ware as well. At Cairnholy the form G pottery came from below the forecourt blocking (Piggott & Powell 1948-49, 118), possibly at an early stage in the tomb use, and at Cairnpapple the relevant pottery came from the old land surface (Piggott 1947-48, Fig. 15 No.1, 102) and may antedate not only the erection of the Henge, but also the preceding phase.

No absolute dates are available for the simple bowls, lugged bowls, etc. of the western group, and it is necessary to turn to Wessex for information. Although plain and lugged bowls and bowls with simple decoration analogous to the Clyde series are found in the lower levels of the filling of the ditch at Windmill Hill, analysis of the pre-enclosure material from the site suggests that plain light-rimmed vessels are likely to come from the earlier phase (Keiller 1965, 59). The pre-enclosure phase has been dated to $2,950 \pm 150$ B.C. (Keiller 1965, 58), and this correlates with the Hembury date of $3,140 \pm 150$ B.C. (Radiocarbon V 1963, 106). The presence of a groove-decorated vessel associated with the burials at Fussells Lodge, Wilts, suggests that this type of decorated ware too may date to around 3,000 B.C. (Ashbee 1966, Fig. W1, 18 & 27-8). The absence of any indication of Ebbsfleet influence upon the Scottish pottery now in question suggests that the spread from Wessex must have occurred before the development of Ebbsfleet pottery in the south, that is, before the middle of the third millennium (Keiller 1965, 11).

It is unfortunate that none of the tomb sites in the west gives further information upon this problem. At Torlin, Clachaig and Slidery the lugged bowls came from the period of use of the tomb, but cannot be related to a specific building phase (Bryce 1901-02, 84, 88-9, 94).

The difficulty of dating the Clyde and Hebridean series has been to some extent resolved by the recent date published for the Rothesay site (Scott 1968). Scott pointed to the connection between the Rothesay material and one of the pots from Beacharra with heavy decorated rim (Scott 1964, Fig. 8f, 146). It seems likely that all the pottery from Beacharra is more or less contemporary. The nature of the deposition of the pottery strongly indicates this, each pair of pots being protected by a mini-cist of schist slabs (Bryce 1901-02, 105). A connection between Beacharra carinated bowls and the Ballyalton bowls of Ireland has already been suggested and the Rothesay pottery and the relevant bowl from Beacharra seem to relate to Dundrum bowls (Case 1961, Fig. 16, 192-3). Rothesay pottery dates to $2,120 \pm 100$ B.C. and Ballyalton bowls are dated at Ballyutoag to

2,160 ± 300 B.C. (Watts 1960, 113). Therefore the dating evidence is also in agreement with the Beacharra pots being contemporary.

The Clyde series therefore must begin in the last quarter of the ~~second~~ ^{third} millennium and the Hebridean development follow closely upon this. It is possibly significant that in the Hebridean Neolithic pottery series there is no evidence of Beaker influence. This also applies to Orkney. This is somewhat negative evidence and unfortunately there are no viable Beaker dates available for Scotland which would give us a terminus ante quem for the Hebridean series.

The dating of Neolithic B is again somewhat uncertain. Smith's work on Peterborough pottery (Smith 1956) enables one to suggest at what stage in the Ebbsfleet/Mortlake/Fengate series the Scottish pottery is most strongly influenced. The absence of developed necks in Neolithic B suggests that the Scottish pottery should relate to Ebbsfleet ware; this would be borne out by the preference for whipped cord and birds' bone impressions at Luce Bay and Hedderwick. These forms of decoration are common on Ebbsfleet ware, occur on Mortlake but less frequently, and are rare on Fengate ware. One may therefore suggest that Neolithic B began to develop in Scotland shortly after the development of Mortlake in the south but that the contact, once made was a continuing one. We are fortunate in having radio carbon dates for the Grandtully site (Forthcoming. Information from D. Simpson, Leicester University). Two charcoal samples, both from pits containing pottery, gave dates of 1,870 ± 100 and 2,030 ± 190 B.C. The Grandtully date would indicate that the Neolithic B style flourished at the end of the third millennium and into the beginning of the second, with the Grandtully pottery towards the end of the sequence. The continuation of the style is suggested by the occurrence of a sherd of Neolithic B in a cist at Drummelzier, Peeblesshire, along with a beaker (Craw 1930-31, Fig. 8, 366).

When dealing with Lyles Hill ware it is possible also to turn to absolute dates. The Lyles Hill pottery at Monamore came from a level slightly below that from which a date of 2,240 ± 110 B.C. was obtained (Mackie 1963-64, 12). This would slightly antedate the date at Ballyutoag cairn in Ireland where Lyles Hill ware was associated with Ballyalton bowls (Watts 1960, 113). Although Lyles Hill ware in Ireland is known from around 3,000 B.C. (Watts 1960, 112), its influence does not appear to be felt in Scotland until toward the end of the millennium. The continuation of the Lyles Hill style in Scotland until after 2,000 B.C., and that of the local derivatives, is suggested by the presence of Lyles Hill sherds along with beaker sherds beneath the cairn at East Finnercy (Atkinson 1962, 22). Similarly at Cairnholly a Neolithic B sherd

and sherds of beaker were found inside the tomb and blocked by material in the forecourt containing sherds of Lyles Hill ware (Piggott & Powell 1948-49, 119).

To summarize - pottery first begins to appear in Scotland with the sporadic occurrence of Yorkshire forms in the south and east at the beginning of the third millennium. Some time before the middle of the millennium plain and lugged bowls appear which derive from Wessex, where there is also a tradition of carination and linear decoration. These plain wares occur first in the west but spread to all parts of the country and with them a strong local tradition of potting begins. Towards the end of the millennium interaction with Ireland results in the Clyde series and the Lyles Hill style. Both develop local forms. The Hebridean series develops from the carinated bowls of the Clyde and its ultimate form is seen also in Orkney in the individual Unstan form. In the west and north-east localised forms of Lyles Hill develop, as at Achnacree and Easterton of Roseisle. At the same time connections with Yorkshire result, in the south and east, in the ornamenting of local forms recognised as Neolithic B. This style or series of styles, together with Lyles Hill and its derivative styles, continue until after the arrival of beakers in Scotland.

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