

16. THE PREHISTORIC POTTERY

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16.1 Beakers

Within the Croy assemblage are four²² sherds which are probably from beakers (see 16.3, below). All are decorated with horizontal lines of twisted cord impressions or cord impressions (Illus 16.1).

The accepted date for most British beakers, established through the British Museum's radiocarbon dating project in the 1980s, is *c* 2500 to 1700 BC (Kinnes et al 1991). It seems that after a short phase when beakers were introduced into Britain, there was considerable overlap in the use of the various types of beakers (Case 1995; Boast 1995). Needham's review of beaker typology concluded that early beakers from around 2500 BC to 2250 BC are the product of a degree of interaction

between a western Maritime Bell Beaker tradition and an eastern Corded Ware tradition that resulted in low-carinated vessels with horizontal decoration either in impressed cord or comb-stamp (2005: 182–3). While the sherds from Croy are small, their decoration indicates that they date to this early phase.

16.2 Cordoned urn

One of the sherds from Croy (LDL 1) is possibly from a cordoned urn (Illus 16.2). Cordoned urns are often found accompanying cremated remains. They date from between 1900 BC and 1400/1300 BC (Sheridan 2003: 213). Collared urns and cordoned urns overlap in date range and at some sites, for example Skilmafilly in Aberdeenshire (Johnson & Cameron 2012), seem to have been made and used at the same time, and were probably made from



Illus 16.1 Beaker sherds



Illus 16.2 Sherd of cordoned urn

the same clay deposits. It has been suggested that cordoned urns may have been a regional response to the spread of collared urns (Sheridan 2003).

16.3 Later prehistoric pottery

Two sherds of probable late prehistoric domestic pottery (RAC) were recovered. They are undecorated and include a rim with an exterior bevel, probably from a straight-sided vessel (Illus 16.3). The context (RAC), a shallow Roman drainage gully cutting across/partly following the line of the palisade

trench of an oval palisaded enclosure, is consistent with this interpretation.

16.4 Catalogue

► **LDL 1 Narrow linear gully/fence line – vicus**
Body sherd with a cordon and traces of a possible further cordon below (Illus 16.2). The exterior surface is smoothed and textured/decorated above the cordon with shallow oblique incised lines. The fabric is fine clay with *c* 80% of angular rock fragments that has fired hard and is grey with red margins.

Th 14mm, Wt 35g

► **BBB Unstratified – west side of pre-fort enclosure**

Sherd from the neck of a beaker (Illus 16.1, 4). The exterior surface is smoothed and burnished and decorated with parallel lines of twisted cord impressions with *c* 2mm between each. The fabric is fine sandy clay with *c* 10% of small rock fragments that has fired hard and is black with red margins.

Th 4mm, Wt 5g

► **EAA Unstratified – southernmost area of land divisions**

Sherd from a probable beaker (now broken in two) (Illus 16.1, 3). The exterior surface is smoothed and decorated with two lines of impressed comb



Illus 16.3 Rim sherd of later prehistoric pottery from RAC: left: exterior surface; right: interior surface

decoration 2mm apart, below which there is an undecorated zone. The fabric is fine sandy clay with *c* 10% of small rock fragments that has fired hard and is red.

Th 6mm, Wt 5g

► **RAA Unstratified – vicus area**

Sherd from a probable beaker (Illus 16.1, 2). Both sides are abraded but there are traces of impressed comb decoration. The fabric is fine clay with finely crushed rock fragments that has fired hard and is red with a grey core.

Th 9m, Wt 3g

► **RBO Shallow pit or stone hole adjacent to palisade trench**

Sherd from a beaker (Illus 16.1, 1). The exterior

surface is slipped and decorated with fine comb impressions – from bottom to top – horizontal lines, oblique lines, horizontal lines, oblique lines in the opposite direction to previous.

Th 7mm, Wt 4g

► **RAC gully/fence line cutting through palisade trench RAB**

One rim and one body sherd, probably from the same vessel. The rim has a slight exterior bevel (Illus 16.3). The profile of the sherd suggests a straight-sided vessel. The exterior surface is smoothed. The fabric is fine clay with *c* 60% black shiny and light grey rock fragments which has fired hard and is red/brown with brown surfaces. Sooting on both surfaces.

Th 10–12mm, Wt 43g