

5. A BRONZE AGE FOOD VESSEL FROM FINNART HILL, S. AYRSHIRE.

In John Smith's *Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire* he records that at a short distance from a camp on the west top of Finnart Hill, in the direction of the entrance to Loch Ryan, there is a small mound of earth and stones, 9 paces in diameter and 3 feet 6 inches high. He also gives a sketch of the mound as it appeared to him fifty years ago.

Recently Mr S. R. C. Symes of Belfast, while exploring the moor, chanced on the mound, and being interested in antiquarian lore, dug into it and proved it to be a cairn. About 2 feet below the surface the coverstone of a cist was exposed—a large block of greywacke, 6 feet long by 3 feet wide. This cover differed from the usual form, being sharply arched both inside and outside; the stone being 10 inches in thickness. Judging by its appearance, it may have been the naturally weathered cornice of a rock prised off from its seat.

The cist seems to have been built in a hollow of the natural rock which rises about 9 inches high on each side. The interior measurements of the cist are 3 feet by 2 feet, and 27 inches from the floor to the peak of the roof. The floor is the natural rock. In the S.W. corner this is raised about an inch, and forms a low platform, at the inner edge of which a Food Vessel urn was found tilted over. About an inch of clay covered the floor when the cist was opened, probably the dust that had filtered through the interstices of the walls during the centuries. When the urn was lifted, a clear impression was left slightly above floor level, suggesting that its fall had occurred at a period long after the entombment had taken place. The walls of the cist are of slabs, but these being too short to reach the coverstone, the gap between has been filled with small stones.

Nothing was found in the cist but the Food Vessel. In this there was only a little earth similar to that on the floor, and on the uncovered portion of the urn wall numerous spicules that dropped away at a touch. Its colour is a pleasing light brown. This may have been originally a little darker, for one part of the face shows a deeper tint than the rest, as if there had been a coating of slip now almost wholly peeled off. While cleaning the surface I found a tiny piece of almost transparent film scaled off at this point. The clay of which the urn is made is well sprinkled with specks of granite and mica, minerals that are common in this part of the country.

The urn (Pl. XI, 1) is a Food Vessel of Abercromby's type A, measuring $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in extreme height, 6 inches across the mouth, and 7 inches in diameter at the greatest width of the bowl immediately above an inch-broad hollow or neck. In its profile there is a suggestion of a dwarf collared cinerary urn; but though it has a flat 3-inch base, yet the junction with the wall has a hint of the early round-bottomed bowl.

Like others of this Bronze Age type, the Finnart Food Vessel has an



Fragments of Cinerary Urns from Monkton.

G. WEBSTER.

URNS FROM MONKTON.

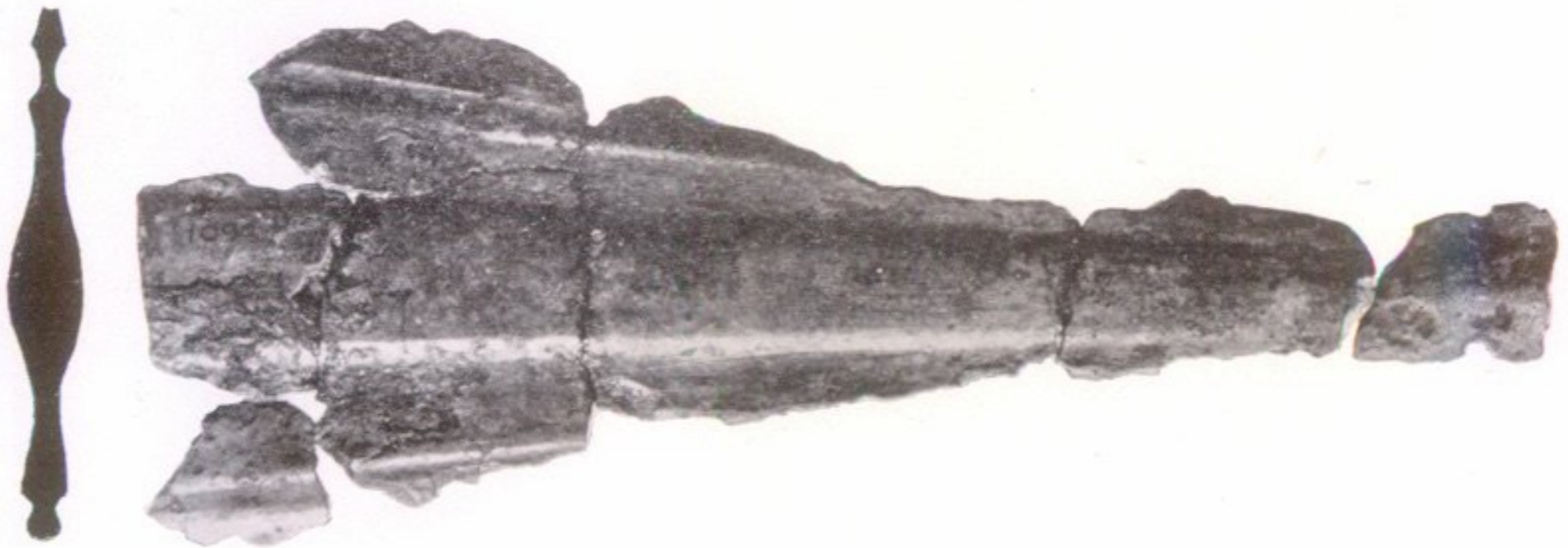
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1. Food Vessel from Finnart Hill.

R. S. G. ANDERSON.

FOOD VESSEL FROM FINNART HILL.



2. Blade from Craigsorry.

V. G. CHILDE.

BRONZE BLADE FROM CRAIGSCORRY.

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elaborate scheme of decoration, made up of horizontal bands covering the entire surface. The work has been roughly, not to say, slovenly done; but it remains quite impressive in its total effect. The detail is as follows:—

1. A steep interior rim— $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in depth—having a chevron design in “false relief” produced by alternating impressions of a small triangular tool.

2. On the face, round the mouth, an almost vertical band— $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in depth—ornamented with a series of left-slanting strokes.

3. Below this, on the expanding collar or rim, 4 parallel rings of punctuations made with a short square-toothed comb, leaving plain bands between. The square-toothed combs vary both in the size and number of the teeth. Those used on this urn seem to have been 9-toothed or 10-toothed, with sometimes a triangular tailpiece. Some of the combs seem to have been slightly curved.

4. A band of the false relief ornament similar to No. 1.

5. Two parallel rings of punctuations with the short-toothed comb as in No. 3, with plain band between.

6. Ring of vertically placed triangular stabs on strong ridge here surrounding the widest part of the urn.

7. Hollow neck or groove—1 inch from ridge to ridge—having round its centre a ring of boomerang-like figures, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in length, touching at their ends, evidently impressed with a narrow triangular instrument—an enlarged edition of the zigzag ornament. Above and below this ring, on the falling and rising slopes of the neck, are series of stabs more or less grouped and assorted to the central figures.

8. A plain band surrounds the shoulder below the groove, to be followed by 4 parallel rings of punctuations, as in No. 3.

9. A broad ring of herring-bone design made with the short square-toothed comb, the large Vs closely dovetailed.

10. A final band of punctuations, similar to that of No. 3. The 4 rings seem to have been diverted upwards at one point to include, and probably help to disguise, a flaw or crack in the surface of the urn.

The shape of the urn, with the greatest diameter immediately above the central hollow, suggests an early date for its manufacture on Abercromby's typology. The style of the ornament, confined so much to punctuations with the square short-toothed comb in strings and zigzag and herring-bone effects, suggests a still-living remembrance of the Beaker technique. The maker of this urn may have lacked the skill to give his work the highest artistic finish, but he had still the craftsmanship to produce a strong, durable vessel, of much grace in spite of its shortcomings, lacking the coarseness and weakness to which the type was eventually to descend.

The Finnart urn might belong to a period about 1500 B.C.

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