

## X.

### GROOVED WARE FROM KNAPPERS FARM, NEAR GLASGOW, AND FROM TOWNHEAD, ROTHESAY. BY REAY R. MACKAY, F.S.A.Scot.

#### KNAPPERS FARM.

On examining some of the material from Mr Ludovic Mann's excavations at Knappers Farm, near Clydebank (Nat. Grid Ref. 26/505713), some pottery fragments have come to light which were first described by Mr J. M. Davidson in 1935,<sup>3</sup> but in view of recent developments they may now be worthy of further discussion and illustration.

The pottery concerned is that referred to as from "site No. 15," which is evidently a grave, and is described as belonging to a flat-bottomed "urn" which was found in a very much broken state, some sherds being recovered by riddling the soil. One of the fragments (Pl. XXVII, 3, 3) had black material adhering to it which contained charcoal, and was reported as "suggesting alder or other pithy wood rather than the hard woods like birch, beech or oak." There was no evidence of a cremation burial. From the same site came some flint flakes, two small scrapers, "two small objects of greenstone," and a lignite disc.<sup>4</sup> The "greenstone" objects, which were almost certainly axe chips, cannot now be traced. It should also be remarked that the lignite disc was in definite association with the pottery, which would seem to represent at least two vessels.

<sup>1</sup> The Basque alboka closely resembles the pibgorn, and a very beautiful ivory specimen is in the Beane Institute Museum, Canterbury, Kent.

<sup>2</sup> The late A. H. Frere (1860-1931), the musical antiquary, expressed the belief that the pibgorn family, ranging from Ceylon to Wales, was intimately connected with the builders of megalithic monuments; for they are characteristic instruments wherever such monuments exist, and nowhere else.

<sup>3</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxix. p. 362, site No. 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 3, No. 7. Mr Davidson suggests that it has been used as an implement for making the grooves.

*Vessel No. 1.*

The first vessel is represented by a single rim sherd with wall and base fragments (Pl. XXVII, 3, 1-3), and three miscellaneous scored wall fragments of the same material. An attempted reconstruction is shown in fig. 1, 1. This vessel appears to have been of the squat "flower-pot" type<sup>1</sup> with a slight convexity on the upper wall, which is inclined at rather a steep angle to the very slightly splayed base (cf. the "Horgen Type" at Rinyo. At Knappers the splaying would seem to be a mere constructional feature).

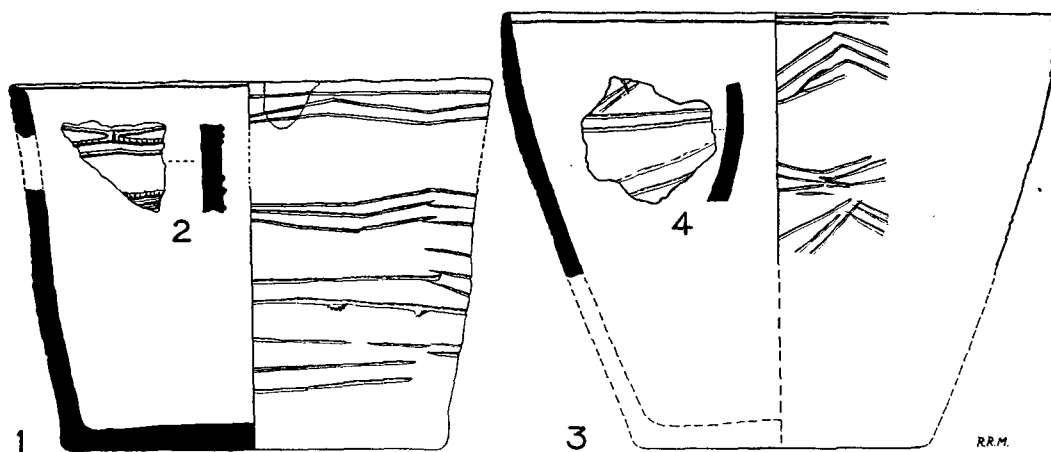


Fig. 1. (Scale, slightly less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ .)

The pot has been well fired, in contrast to Skara Brae and Rinyo ware, and has a firm and compact texture. Colour varies from a light grey, through light khaki, to a very light red, and the amount of backing is very small,<sup>2</sup> but the grits vary greatly in size (2 mm. to about 1 cm.). Of these the larger seem to consist of crushed igneous rocks, whilst the smaller are coarse water-rolled sand.<sup>3</sup> The slip is very slight, at times being more a smoothing of the wall; in any case it is inseparably bonded to the wall fabric. A deep groove bisects the internally flattened rim. This does not seem to be exactly paralleled among the Southern English material, but the idea occurs at Sutton Courtenay, in the "step bevel" at Rinyo,<sup>4</sup> at Hedderwick<sup>5</sup> and at Skara Brae.<sup>6</sup>

Good potting technique is evidenced by the thorough bonding of the material, with the consequent absence of constructional weaknesses, often

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vol. ii. p. 190, fig. 4.

<sup>2</sup> In Southern English grooved ware it is practically absent, but excessive grits are a characteristic of Skara Brae ware.

<sup>3</sup> Water worn backing from Rinyo (*Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxxi. fig. 6, No. 16, and p. 37).

<sup>4</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxxi. p. 35, fig. 6, Nos. 1 and 2, also vol. lxxiii. Pl. XXII, No. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. lxxx. p. 142, fig. 1, No. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Childe, *Skara Brae*, London, 1931, fig. 15.

markedly present at Skara Brae and Rinyo. The decoration (in addition to the internal groove on the rim) seems to have been a series of horizontal "grooves" which are neither so broad nor so shallow as true grooves, yet such scorings occur on the English ware.<sup>1</sup> The lower section of the wall is decorated with a zone of horizontal scorings surmounted by rather flat triple chevrons; this system is paralleled at Clacton,<sup>2</sup> and less distinctly at Bourton-on-the-Water.<sup>3</sup>

*Vessel No. 2.*

On what might be termed "appliqué ware," or ware decorated with applied ribs, etc., there seems to be in general a slight difference in technique, or rather in finish of the applied decoration. In some cases the ribs are simply moulded into union with the wall by the fingers, while in others they are trimmed with a strip of wood or a split-reed as suggested by Professor Childe at Rinyo.<sup>4</sup> As a result the ribs are thinner, and are thrown into bolder relief than most of the finger-moulded "appliqué ware."

The second vessel is represented by a single wall fragment (Pl. XXVII, 3, 4, and fig. 1, 2). In firing and texture it is very similar to the sherds mentioned above. It has a slight but firmly bonded slip with a thin, well-executed appliqué decoration—the wall being only 7 to 8 mm. thick, and the applied strips some 2 mm. broad by 1.5-2 mm. thick. Whatever the actual design of the appliqué strips, it probably included an elongated lozenge or triangle. Plain and ladder-pattern strips and a knot-like intersection of these are certainly the basic elements.

The only other parallel to this "knot" or "stop-ridge" seems to be found among the English grooved ware from the Woodhenge area,<sup>5</sup> and the general characteristics of this ware are very similar to the Knappers example except that the walls are often even thinner (in one instance only 2 mm. thick).

When we compare the Knappers features with the Scottish grooved ware, it would appear that although trimmed ribs are common at Skara Brae, even the smallest are about double the size of the Knappers example, and that at Knappers the panels seem to be open, which is rare at Skara Brae. On the whole, the technique and superior finish is perhaps only met by one fragment from Rinyo,<sup>6</sup> and there is a greater resemblance to the Rinyo ware in general than to that of Skara Brae. The true ladder pattern (*i.e.* transverse incisions at right angles to the strip) may be considered one of the characteristics of English grooved ware<sup>7</sup> and, with the exception of a rather rough example from Skara Brae,<sup>8</sup> this sherd would appear to be the

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* at Clacton (*Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vol. ii, pl. xl, No. 3).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190, fig. 4, No. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. xli, No. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxiii, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vol. xv, p. 124, fig. 1a.

<sup>6</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxiii, Pl. XIX, No. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vol. ii, p. 195, fig. 7, and p. 190, fig. 4, No. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Skara Brae*, pl. xlix, No. 1.

only example from Scotland. A related pattern, however, with broader oblique transverse slashings, does occur at Skara Brae<sup>1</sup> and Rinyo.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the above, a correlation with Skara Brae and Rinyo seems possible. Vessel No. 1 may be related to the Class "C" technique, which belongs at Skara Brae almost totally to Period II.

At Rinyo it would seem to belong to Rinyo I (although a thin-walled vessel with sharp incisions in a mechanical slip<sup>3</sup> belongs to Rinyo II), which is pre-Beaker in date at least in Orkney. Vessel No. 2 seems to belong to Class B, and this technique is not later than Skara Brae II. At Rinyo it seems to belong to Rinyo I (*e.g.* the oblique slashed ribs on thin ware<sup>4</sup> comes from the layer below "G"). Childe says that the lower layers of this period are contemporary with Unstan ware.

It may be that the Knappers pottery belongs to Skara Brae II and to the upper layers of Rinyo I. If this correlation is valid, then the pottery would be somewhat post-Unstan ware and pre-Beaker with reference to the chronology of Orkney at least.

#### TOWNHEAD, ROTHESAY, BUTE.

In 1919 a discovery of a Neolithic habitation site at Townhead, Rothesay, Bute, was reported in the *Glasgow Herald* and the *Buteman* for 1st August.

It is hoped to describe this site in a later volume of the *Proceedings*.

The pottery found (now in the Buteshire Museum, Rothesay) seems to be mainly of Western Neolithic type, although there are four sherds of one vessel of grooved ware. Fig. 1, 3 shows a reconstruction of this vessel (the rim, diameter, however, seems doubtful), which is of good red to buff ware with sparse large grits. The "grooves" are, like the Knappers vessel No. 1 (*v.* above), rather carelessly executed scratchings on the wet clay.

Decorations on the wall consist of the usual lozenges (or chevrons). Two parallel grooves on the exterior and one on the interior run slightly below the rim. On top of the rim (although slightly weathered) there seem to be small transverse slashes. An unusual feature is the slight inward curve of the wall near the rim—although this is not unknown.<sup>5</sup>

The nearest parallel seems to be that from Knappers (Vessel No. 1) mentioned above.

There is another sherd which may represent a second vessel of grooved ware from this site (fig. 1, 4), but both the ware and the lightly stroked decorative lines, which are not real incisions into the surface, might possibly belong to a vessel of Western Neolithic type.

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxii. fig. 31, No. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. lxxxi. Pl. X, No. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxiii. Pl. XXI, A.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. lxxi. Pl. X, No. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Cf. Clacton, Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vol. ii. p. 190, No. 5, and Bourton-on-the-Water, *ibid.*, pl. xli, No. 1.

In conclusion it might be said that, apart from the similarity of the pottery, both sites present certain similarities. They both show the presence of one or two vessels of grooved ware amongst a relatively larger amount of Western Neolithic ware. All the pottery from Townhead is domestic, and at least one sherd of grooved ware (Vessel No. 2) and some of the Western pottery from Knappers<sup>1</sup> is non-sepulchral. Imported Greenstone axes were present at both sites, while both Beaker and Peterborough pottery seem to be totally absent.

The distribution of grooved ware in Scotland seems to be essentially coastal. The Knappers and Townhead sites might be regarded as providing a further geographical connection between the grooved ware areas of the south of England and the north of Scotland, which might confirm Professor Piggott's derivation of the northern wares from the southern. Sir Lindsay Scott has, however, maintained that the Orkney wares are the result of fresh movements along the Atlantic route from Iberia and southern France.<sup>2</sup>

The following is a list of Scottish grooved ware sites:—

*Orkney* (in addition to Skara Brae and Rinyo):

Dingieshowe, near Deerness, *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxx. p. 142.

Evie, *ibid.*, fig. 1, No. 6.

*Unival, N. Uist, Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vol. iv. p. 337; *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxxii. pp. 26-8 and Pl. VII.

*Knappers Farm, Dunbartonshire* (v. above).

*Townhead, Rothesay, Bute* (v. above).

*Gullane Sands, East Lothian, Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. xlii. pp. 308-19; *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vol. ii. pl. xli, Nos. 2 and 3, and p. 200.

*Hedderwick, East Lothian, Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxx. p. 142, fig. 1, No. 5.

*Glenluce, Wigtownshire, ibid.*, pl. xxiv, Nos. 3, 4 and 5.

*Tentsmuir Sands, Fife.* Unpublished: in St Andrews University Museum. (Information from Mr Stevenson.)

For permission to examine and publish the material from Knappers and from Townhead I must thank Mr Ludovic Mann and Miss D. M. Marshall respectively.

My most sincere thanks are due to Professor Piggott, who lent me his notes and drawings on the Townhead site, to Mr R. B. K. Stevenson for having the photograph made, and to both for all their help.

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxxii. pp. 234-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Proc. Prehist. Soc.*, vol. iv. p. 337; *Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.*, vol. lxxxii. p. 27.