

5. FRAGMENT OF A MEDIEVAL AQUAMANILE FROM SKIPNESS CASTLE, ARGYLL

This fragment of a pottery aquamanile (a type of horizontal ewer used in washing the hands at table) was found in an unstratified context during excavations carried out at Skipness

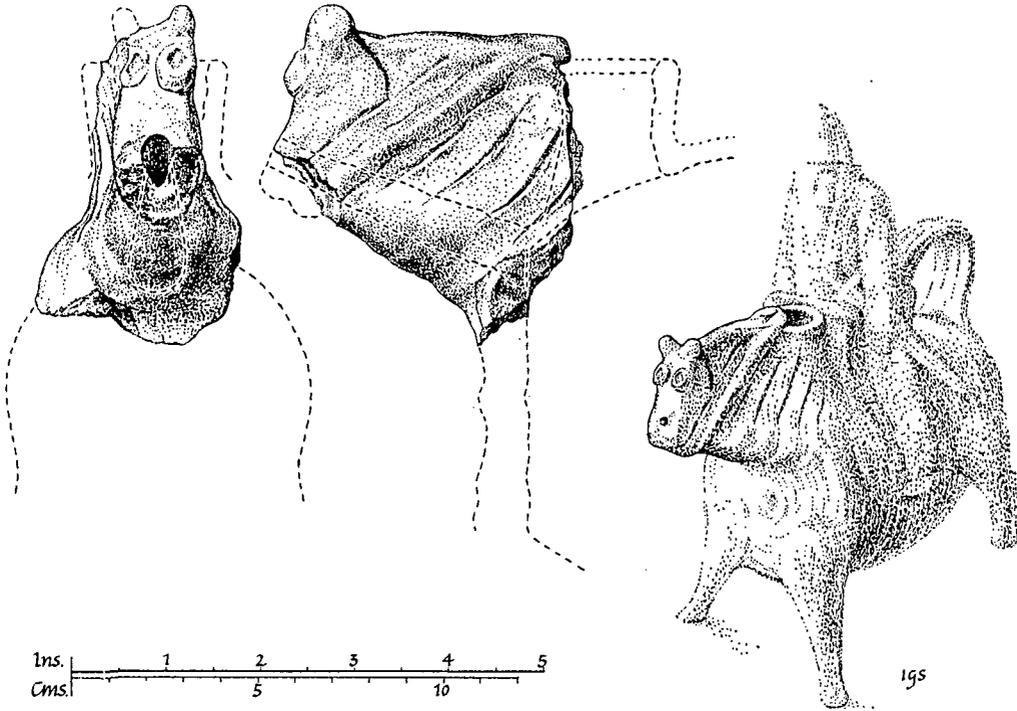
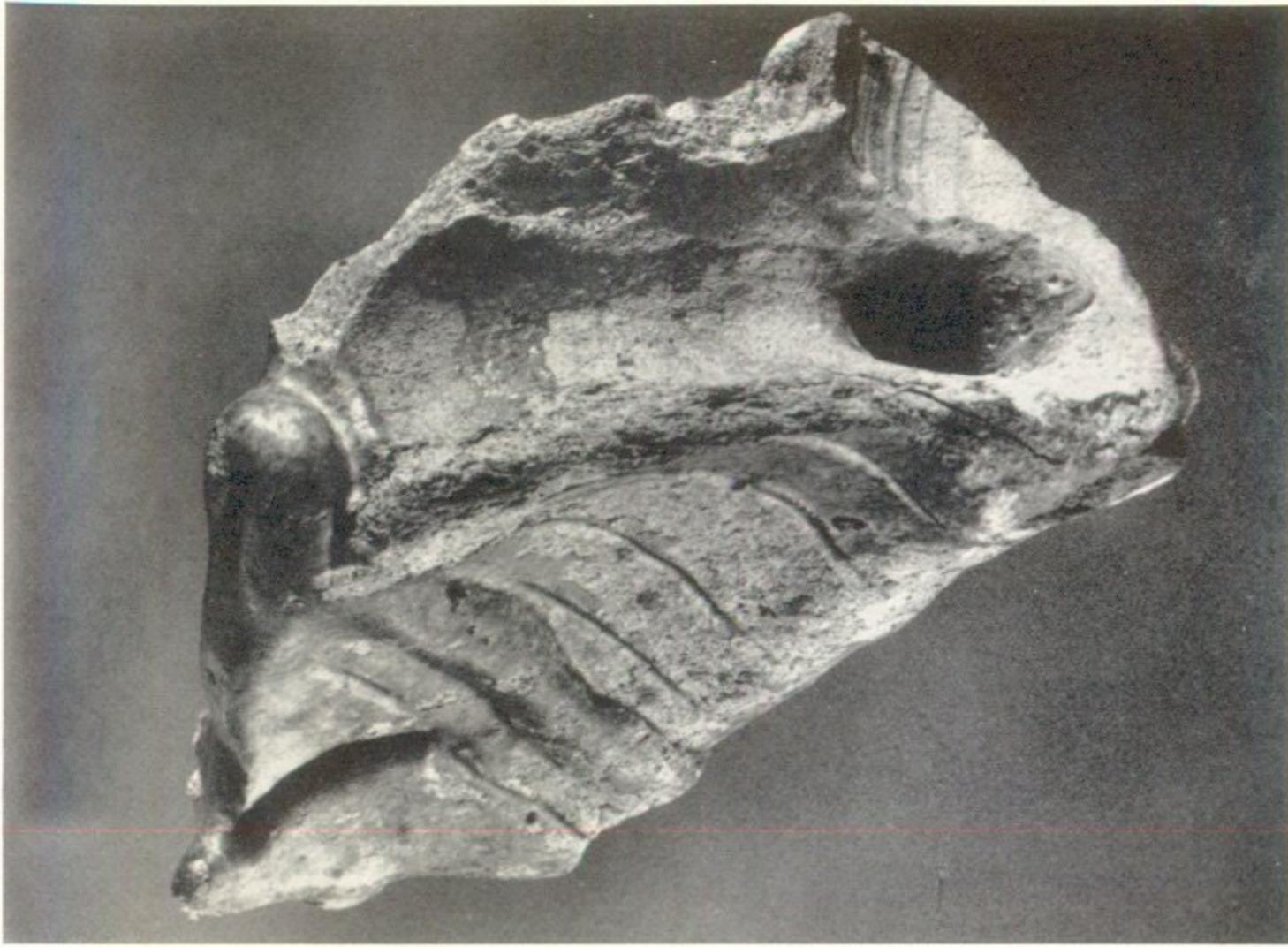


FIG. 6. Aquamanile spout-head, with suggested reconstruction of complete vessel

Castle in 1966.¹ Medieval aquamanile were commonly zoomorphic, and in this case the vessel evidently represented a horse, of which the surviving fragment comprised the spout-head, together with part of the body and filler-opening (fig. 6, Pl. XXII, 2). The fabric is coarse and gritty, the core of the spout-head being buff-coloured and that of the body dark grey.

The depiction of reins strongly suggests that the horse was mounted, in which case the filler-opening must have been situated immediately in front of the rider, rather than to the rear as seems to have been customary in aquamanile of this type.² No other pottery aquamanile have so far been recorded in Scotland, and in view of its provenance it is not unlikely that the present example, which may be ascribed to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, was imported from England by way of the W. coast sea-route.

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2. Aquamanile fragment showing filler-opening and spout-hole



1. Cast of ? sheep foot-prints in a Roman tile from Camelon; view showing vertical striations in anterior surface of leading print (natural size)