
4 Pottery from the Loch Shurrery hut circle

by Ewan Campbell

Three sherds of pottery were recovered from this site, but none retained diagnostic features. All are handmade and fired at a low temperature. Pottery of this nature has been made in western Scotland from the Iron Age until recent times, and it is difficult to date sherds which are undecorated and do not show the vessel form. However, an Iron Age date is the likeliest for these sherds. Nos. 2 & 3 are very coarsely tempered with large rock fragments derived from the bedrock of Old Red Sandstone. Comparable coarse fabrics were found at Crosskirk broch in the early broch-period deposits (Fairhurst 1984, 110–12), though there the inclusions were not quite as coarse. A tradition of very coarsely-tempered pottery is found in various parts of Scotland, and is sometimes referred to as Dunagoil Ware or VCP (Very Coarse Pottery). In southern and western areas these are found in early/middle Iron Age contexts (Campbell

2002, 141). A date in the later first millennium BC would fit with the evidence from Crosskirk and the radiocarbon dates from the Loch Shurrery hearth. Sherd no. 1 is even less identifiable. Its soft fabric suggests that it is pre-medieval, but it is impossible to be more specific.

1. Body sherd. Handmade, burnt fabric, inner face missing. Fabric soft, grey to brown. Few inclusions, of decayed material, unidentified. Layer 1, paving of entrance passage (Section 3.5, small find 1).

2.& 3. Bodysherds from large vessel. Handmade, fabric very coarsely gritty, siltstone rock fragments up to 15 mm. Colour brown to black. T 10 mm. Layer 2, surface of wall foundation, south cutting (Section 3.5, small find 2).

4. Labelled 'burnt clay', but is in fact burnt siltstone. Layer 4, core of wall (Section 3.5, small find 4).

[report written 1997, revised 2002]