INTRODUCTION

While the Collared Urn was already emerging as a separate entity in the first major synthetic work to include a discussion of Bronze Age pottery (Thurnam 1871), it was not until Abercromby had produced his monumental work (1912) that the main outlines of the Collared Urn tradition as a whole began to take shape. It is an obvious and just tribute to Abercromby that this work marks the first attempt since that date to study the Collared Urns of the British Isles *en masse*. Abercromby's work has lasted so long unrevised for perhaps two reasons. Firstly, he was able to provide a corpus of primary data which, though not exhaustive of the material in existence in 1912, was sufficiently extensive to meet the needs of most of the successive workers in this field. Secondly, he set out in exemplary fashion a simple typological scheme which purported to give an approximate relative position in the series for any vessel subsequently wrested from the ground; a scheme which seemed supported by a simple diffusionist theory – a folk migration from south to north which, within its span, saw the rise and gradual decline of this pottery form. Abercromby's type of analysis was (and still is) readily acceptable to anyone who believes that, given a group of admittedly related pottery vessels, these can always be arranged in an ordered sequence marking a single line of development with a bifurcation, if necessary, when the going becomes too rough. Here are our latter-day evolutionists imbuing inert pottery with the spirit of Darwin. By offering a corpus of photographs so small as to be often ambiguous, and sometimes altogether deceptive, Abercromby gave to the antiquarian child which lurks in most of us an ideal game which all can play. The game is to match like with like. The smallness of the photographs coupled with the variation inherent in the material could flatter the intelligence into thinking that some inner meaning would emerge when, after infinite care, the nearest parallel has been selected. Yet, to those who have employed the method, this inner meaning could exist, for the very fact that the pottery lay in a unilinear devolutionary sequence meant implicitly that the nearest parallel would, by definition, give the most exact position for a particular vessel in that series.

Abercromby had published his first analysis of Cinerary Urn types in 1907. In this work he modified the Thurnam system by amalgamating the 'Overhanging Rim' and 'Moulded Rim' types and coupling these with the 'Partially decorated Urn-shaped Food Vessels' into a single class. For this Abercromby retained the single term 'Overhanging Rim Urn'. In the ensuing discussion he emphasised the changes in shape which he saw occurring over time. In general this took the form of a gradual devolution from a tripartite into a bipartite shape. In particular he argued that a narrow rim gradually became broad, though he was forced to concede that this did not occur everywhere, and that a hollow neck became less concave and at the same time broader, with a consequent diminution in the shoulder element, eventually resulting in the bipartite shape. Abercromby was at pains to stress that this typological development was not synchronous over the whole country and suggested, with the aid of an ingenious diagram, how contemporary urns could appear typologically disparate.

Two further lines of thought were also put forward. Firstly, that the Overhanging Rim Urn finally gave rise to the Cordoned Urn and in this form enjoyed a protracted life in what he termed 'the remoter parts of Britain'; and secondly, that the Overhanging Rim Urn was itself immigrant to the British Isles, arriving in the south-west and thence spreading by migration to the north, east and west. Throughout, it was shape rather than decoration which Abercromby held to have significance for defining relative positions within this migratory progress. Ornament received only summary treatment.

Much of this analysis was retained in his major work, *A Study of the Bronze Age Pottery of Great Britain and Ireland and its Associated Grave-Goods*, published five years later in 1912, but one significant change of thought had taken place in the intervening years. Abercromby had abandoned his belief in an origin for the Overhanging Rim Urn outside the British Isles. Instead, he now postulated a development from a Food Vessel form, which in turn he saw as a modification of a Neolithic vessel. He retained, however, the belief that the Overhanging Rim Urn developed first south of the Thames and spread thence by migration to the rest of the British Isles. If this were so, then it followed that the further one moved from the source of origin the later in time the pottery was likely to be. To

facilitate comparison, Abercromby divided the British Isles into five areas which, with the exception of Area V (Ireland), were arbitrary bands across the map, starting from Area I (the country south of the Thames) and ending in Area IV (north Britain).

As in 1907, it was form which was held to be the significant factor for setting a vessel early or late within this sequence, while ornamentation received only a cursory eighteen lines of comment. So little importance was set by decoration that, though the major techniques of ornamentation were listed, whipped cord – one well represented on the urns illustrated in the work – was totally ignored.

As recently as 1951 Grimes (Grimes 1951:91) had sought not to challenge the Abercromby devolutionary system but to define the scheme more explicitly in relation to the Welsh material. It remained for Smith (Butler & Smith 1956) to put into print the growing feeling of distrust in unilinear development, while in the same paper Butler disposed of the final peg onto which the closing stages of the series had been firmly anchored by Mrs Piggott (1946). Smith wrote with the critical spirit of one who had studied the pottery immediately ancestral to the Collared Urn tradition and in her thesis submitted in the same year (Smith 1956) had suggested that the Collared Vessel was likely to have developed from her Fengate Style of the Peterborough tradition.

A number of valuable regional studies of Bronze Age pottery had also begun to appear. For England, Patchett had catalogued and illustrated the Collared Urns of Cornwall in a general study of the Bronze Age pottery of the peninsula in papers published in 1944 and 1950. In the latter year Powell published the Urns of Leicestershire. In 1954 Musson listed and illustrated most of the Bronze Age pottery then known from Sussex and Smedley and Owles brought together the Bronze Age pottery of Suffolk in a paper published in 1962. More recently, Kennett has listed those from Bedfordshire (1970) and Gibson has published the Bronze Age pottery of north-east England (Gibson 1978). The majority of the urns from Wales had been catalogued by Grimes in the various editions of the Guide to the Collections of the National Museum (1939 etc.) and this corpus has been brought up to date in a revised version recently published by Savory (1980). In addition, the urns of Anglesey have been described in detail by Lynch (1970). The Collared Urns of Ireland have been fully catalogued by Kavanagh (1976), but in Scotland only those from the south-west have been recorded by Morrison (1968).

Two authors alone had suggested new subdivisions within the general class of Collared Urn. In 1938 Varley introduced the term 'Pennine Urn' for urns comparable to those from the Bleasdale Circle in Lancashire, possessing a 'necklace' of punctured ornament round the shoulder, and in 1951 Brailsford suggested the term 'Sheep Down Urn' for vessels which he felt to be comparable to the narrow-rimmed examples from Winterbourne Steepleton. In neither instance were the features singled out as significant sought for systematically throughout the pottery available for study, and indeed, without a major research programme, this would not have been possible since the full corpus of material, despite the pioneering efforts of Abercromby and subsequent regional studies, still lay widely scattered in the museums, either unpublished or recorded haphazardly in a wide spectrum of national and local journals.

It was to remedy this need that the present study was undertaken. In a previous paper the writer suggested the use of the term 'Collared Urn' to replace others then in use (Longworth 1961) and introduced the concept of a Primary Series. A first definition of the Secondary Series was put forward in a second paper published nine years later (Longworth 1970). The present work supersedes and extends these previous publications. All surviving vessels known to the writer have been studied and wherever possible analytically drawn. All pottery so presented in the corpus is reproduced to a standard quarter-scale, while associated objects are reproduced at half-scale. The accompanying catalogue has been arranged alphabetically for England, Scotland and Wales by city/town or parish under counties; in Ireland by townplace. The main dimensions of the vessels are given with a short description of the decoration, the present location of the vessel with museum registration number together with a short abstract concerning site, context and associated grave goods and the major bibliographical references on which the abstracts have been based. Only where adequate documentation exists have vessels which no longer survive been included in the analysis. The bracketed number following a reference to a vessel or site in the text is the appropriate number of the catalogue.

The intention throughout this work has been to treat Collared Vessels not as a primary source for period delimitation within the Bronze Age, but essentially as a single pottery tradition whose origins can be traced, whose content can be closely defined and whose regional divergencies can be examined so as to reflect the presence or absence of regional styles within the tradition as a whole. It is the writer's contention that the current trend to denounce pottery as a reliable source of cultural demarcation takes too sweeping and pessimistic a view. Pottery remains the most sensitive cultural indicator in the non-organic field of material culture. The plasticity inherent in the clay coupled with the fertility of man's imagination allow for the production of an almost infinite number of variations in pottery, governed in abstract by only the single condition that the result be functional if a vessel is in mind. In practice, of course, man is not a free agent. In himself he is an amalgam of personal preferences, some logically, others more often illogically inspired, which act as a self-imposed set of limitations within which his ideas can find expression. Man as a member of a social

group is still less free, compelled often to subject his personal inclinations to group taste, the common denominator of acceptable practices. It is this group taste which, in ceramic terms, defines a pottery tradition.

A pottery tradition in these terms is a complex of separate usages which recurrently occur together. This complexity is made apparent at once if a single vessel is considered not as the finished unit but as an amalgamation of separate, distinct but complementary components which, taken together, make up the whole. These components can be grouped under the three main headings of 'fabric', 'form' and 'surface treatment'. In turn, each of these major components can be further subdivided. Thus decoration is one aspect of 'surface treatment' and is itself divisible into the motifs of which it is composed and the techniques used in their production. The disposition of the ornament on the pot provides a further set of variables. Finally, the number and nature of the techniques and motifs themselves can be isolated and defined. As in any subject based upon a graded form of analysis, differences will emerge at successive levels. An analysis based on the major headings of 'fabric', 'form' and 'surface treatment' is often sufficient in itself to define a given pottery tradition and to show it to be distinct from one which is grossly dissimilar. The Collared Urn tradition at this level is readily distinguishable from pottery of the Grooved Ware tradition. If, however, an attempt is to be made not only to define the tradition in contradistinction to others, but to trace its origins in one or more ancestral traditions, to assess change – for no tradition is wholly static – and to seek evidence for regional variation within the single tradition itself, then clearly analysis must be sought at a far greater depth. To this end the typological analysis has been based largely upon a definition and selection of individual traits. Where it has appeared permissible, these traits themselves represent combinations of features expressed as a single unit rather than basic features each with a separate value. Thus, in the discussion of form, it has been possible to use combinations of features as single traits in the comparative analysis. Conversely, decoration at all times has proved to be more informative when analysed in terms of basic motifs and techniques.

In studying a pottery tradition in depth one is studying, in effect, a direct reflection of a particular group's tastes. The surface of this cultural mirror is not perfect. There are areas where the reflection has been lost or distorted, but in the main the image is there to be seen. By defining the tradition quantitatively it is possible to demonstrate explicitly the twin aspects which are inherent in its structure. A tradition will always be basically an expression of continuity, of the conservative retention of group taste, but coupled with this goes the dynamism created by the incorporation of divergent ideas into general acceptance. A tradition is an expression of the conflict between these elements of retention and divergence, a conflict in which conservative retention as the element of continuity will always be dominant. In this way, too, can be expressed in precise terms what is characteristic of a tradition in a particular region at a particular time. Here one is dealing not merely with absolutes, though these occur, but with relative degrees of frequency in elements found diagnostic for a particular series. When analyses of this nature are available for all the pottery traditions of the period, then it will be possible for the first time to express with confidence the nature and degrees of interaction, of ideas exchanged and accepted between these traditions and, by implication, the interrelationships of the various groups which comprise the Bronze Age population of the British Isles.

Unlike the specialist metal industries of the period, whose cultural attachment must be demonstrated not assumed, the production of Bronze Age pottery was essentially a domestic labour. In the Collared Urn tradition no indications exist of that degree of uniformity which stamps the specialist and no evidence of an itinerant potter peddling his wares. In the very fragility of the pottery lies the unlikelihood that pot and potter can be separated by many miles. In this sense, too, the Collared Urn stands as a sensitive guide to the actual people who made and used it. In Britain, because of its very insularity, much emphasis has been placed upon the new, the exotic and the intrusive. Cultures and culture groups have become compartmentalised – defined in terms of the distinctive rather than the common heritage. Basic elements of continuity have often been assumed rather than made explicit, ignored rather than studied. Continuity of population is one of these. In this area the study of pottery traditions has an important role to play.

Contextual terminology

This work follows the contextual terminology first put forward in 1961 (Longworth 1961). When referring to a specific vessel, the term 'Urn' is reserved for vessels serving the function of a container of cremated bones, while 'Accessory Vessel' is used for vessels associated with burial rites but not actually used to contain the burial.

In practice, when the context is sufficiently explicit, the pottery listed in this corpus falls functionally into one of the following contexts:

1. Domestic
2. Funerary as
   a. Urn
   b. Accessory Vessel, in which the vessel is:
      1. Accessory to an inhumation
      2. Accessory to an Urned cremation
      3. Accessory to an un-Urned cremation

For simplicity, however, the phrases Collared Urn Series and Collared Urn tradition are used, without prejudice, when writing of the pottery in a collective sense.

1

FABRIC, FORM AND DECORATION

Fabric

With the exception of the smaller examples, Collared Vessels were coil built, the base having first been prepared as a single piece. A typical section through the wall displays a succession of either diagonal or 'tongue and groove' coil junctions resulting from bifacial thinning (Fig. 1). The

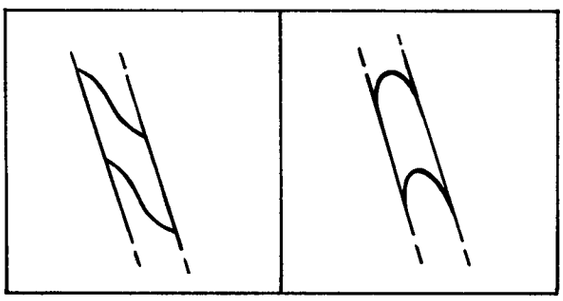

Fig. 1. Sections through wall showing method of construction from coils.

near-horizontal coil junctions which result are natural lines of weakness in the finished product and consistent structural weaknesses can be noted in many vessels at the shoulder and in the luting where a final broad beaten-out coil has been added to the outer face of the topmost neck coil to form the entire or major part of the collar. Additional minor coils were often added to form an expanded rim element and these, too, can be fugitive. The method of manufacture of the vessel from Lisnagat, Co. Antrim (2215) (Jope & Jope 1952: Fig. 2, No. 2A), with broad wall bands and continuous internal skin, appears to be atypical.

On many vessels the surface preserves, at least in part, a self-slip, but where this has been eroded (and erosion often occurs over large areas of the external surface) the inner matrix is revealed, usually displaying the eruption of quantities of tempering material through the surface. The erosion of the self-slip tends to make the pottery seem more coarse than it would originally have appeared.

The classic colouring of a Collared Vessel is one in which the external surface is a shade of brown, frequently with tones of red or yellow, and the inner surface varies from dark grey to light greyish-brown. In cross-section this yields a simple two-tone fabric – light externally, dark internally – suggesting that the vessels were, in most instances, fired in an inverted position with relatively free access of air to the external surface but with air largely excluded from the interior. The often blotchy appearance of the external surface, especially round the rim and on the collar, indicates that firing conditions were not fully controlled, parts of the surface often remaining in contact with the fuel. Temperatures appear never to have reached the 600°C required to fuse together the constituents of the clay.

Given the wide geographical distribution and the range of clay sources utilised, it is not surprising to find that the tempering materials employed to make the clay more tractable appear largely to conform to the geological conditions of the locality in which the pottery occurs, but within the range of materials thus offered by the local environment very clear cultural choices seem to occur. The words 'seem to' are used deliberately, for the author entertains grave doubts as to the reliability of a purely visual examination of the fabric when this has been modified and concealed by preservatives ranging from an intemperate use of plaster of Paris and household glue to cement reinforced with overlapping metal plates. For this reason no divisions within the material have been based upon grounds of fabric alone and the following comments are offered as qualitative statements based largely on macroscopic observation.

The most significant exclusion from the range of tempering materials readily available to Collared Urn potters is crushed burnt flint, an additive which had been much favoured by the majority of Early and Middle Neolithic potters, at least in southern and eastern Britain, and one extensively employed by potters of the Deverel-Rimbury and allied traditions. Amongst additives rarely used are shell and chalk, though the latter occurs with some regularity in vessels from the Yorkshire Wolds. Sand is a regular component, but rarely appears to have been a deliberate additive. In contrast, grog is often employed and appears as a major tempering material in many of the vessels of the Primary Series. This gives way to a more general use of crushed non-flint grit and this form of

tempering is entirely characteristic of pottery in northern and western Britain. Within the range of crushed stone, the type chosen appears to have been governed more by local supply than by cultural preference.

Components of form

Collared Vessels are rarely symmetrical and, generally speaking, the larger the vessel the less likelihood there is that a given detail will appear consistently round the entire circumference of the pot. To some extent local irregularities must therefore be discounted and in the ensuing analysis trait definition has been based on major consistencies. The terminology employed to describe the main elements of form throughout this work are shown in diagrammatic form in Fig. 2.

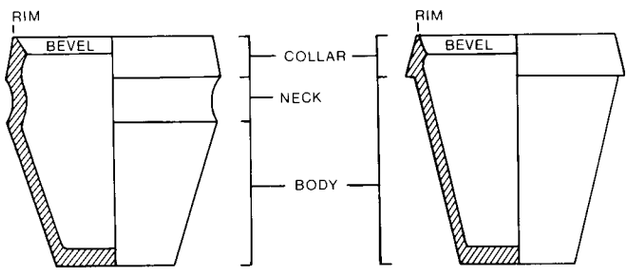

Fig. 2. Components of form.

Rims

The principal rim forms occurring in the tradition are set out in Fig. 3. For convenience these can be subdivided into four main categories: simple, expanded, multi-internally bevelled and externally bevelled.

Simple. Under this heading can be placed rims of simple pointed, rounded or flattened profile (1–3) together with those carrying a simple internal bevel of the type which involves no expansion of the vessel's wall (6–8). Form 4, with a slight gradual swelling of the inner surface, and form 5, with a pinched-out ridge set some way beneath the simple rim, are rare variations.

Expanded. The majority of rims fall within this category. They comprise flattened, flat-bevelled and concave-bevelled forms with marked expansion of the vessel's wall externally, internally, or on both faces (9–27).

Multi-internally bevelled. A small number of rims carry more than one internal bevel (28–31). These are atypical of the tradition as a whole.

Externally bevelled. External bevels are extremely rare in the tradition but they are found (32–36).

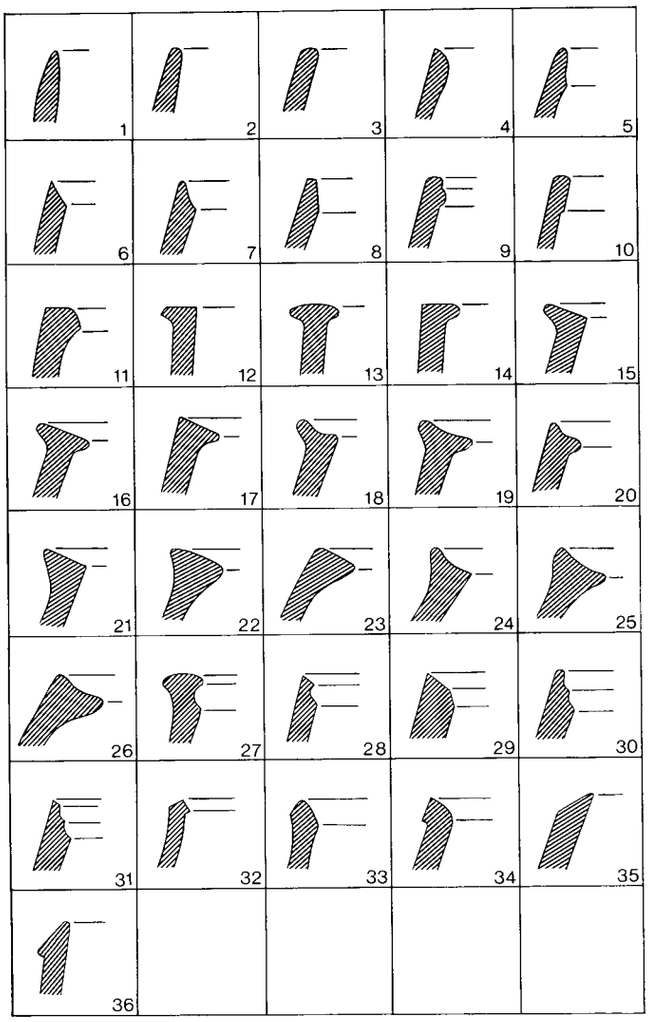

Fig. 3. Rim forms.

Internal mouldings

This term is used to describe a deep concave moulding prepared beneath the rim or rim bevel on the internal surface. The prepared surface normally ends beneath in a fairly well-defined ridge (Fig. 4). Neither concave surface nor ridge appears to result from any simple structural process in the pot's manufacture. The feature often provides a setting for a zone of internal decoration.

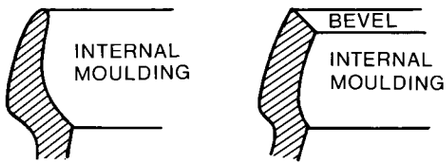

Fig. 4. Internal moulding.

Collar

Collars show considerable minor variation, but five basic forms can be abstracted:

A. Convex
B. Straight
C. Concave
D. S-shaped
E. Complex

These are shown in diagrammatic form in Fig. 5. All forms occur up to a collar depth of 3 in., but convex and straight forms are not represented amongst the deepest examples.

The function of the collar element remains debatable. While presenting an obvious way of securing an organic cover over the vessel by tying a thong beneath its base, it is clear from the actual mode of manufacture that the vessel could never have sustained strain at this point. For this reason it is inherently unlikely that the collar was developed principally as a point of purchase for lifting the vessel. Any attempt to do so leads to the inevitable separation of the collar from the underlying matrix along the line of luting. The basic role for the Collared Vessel in a domestic context is likely to have been as a storage vessel. The need for a cover would therefore have arisen spontaneously. The ability to secure a cloth or skin cover firmly on the top of the vessel raises the possibility that some may also have enjoyed a secondary use as drums.[1] Two vessels, one from Stanton Moor, 1 Derb. (293), and another from Wimborne St Giles 17, Dorset (499), carry in addition multiple perforations through the rim to aid attachment.

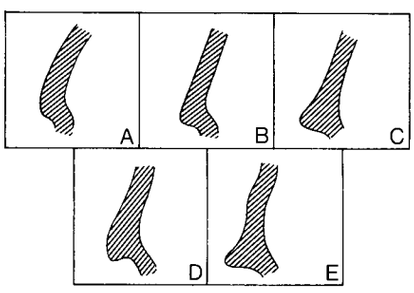

Fig. 5. Collar forms.

Neck and shoulder

Of all the structural elements represented in the Collared Vessel, the neck shows the greatest range of consistent variation and for this reason ranks as a highly sensitive factor for the definition of forms within the tradition. To some extent this feature is interlinked with the shoulder formed by the junction of neck and body. Seven basic neck forms can be abstracted:

A. Concave, vertical
B. Concave, asymmetric
C. Concave, angled
D. S-shaped
E. Straight, vertical
F. Straight, angled
G. Converging

These are represented diagrammatically in Fig. 6.

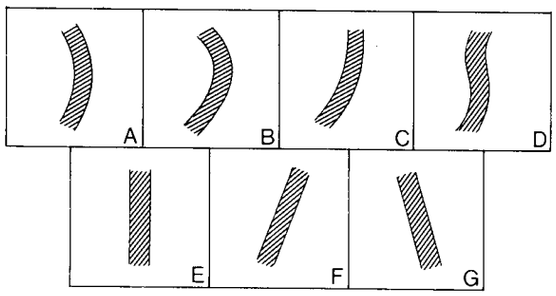

Fig. 6. Neck forms.

The junction of the neck and body can be sharply defined (Fig. 7A) or more weakly expressed (Fig. 7B). To some extent this is merely a function of the type of neck. For example, the concave neck forms A–C, as defined above, are inevitably coupled with a sharp shoulder form. The straight vertical and angled forms E and F, on the other hand, can be found with both weak and sharp shoulders. Neck forms D and G are usually coupled with a shoulder having a pinched-out cordon-like projection (Fig. 7C). This form may have arisen through a desire to bind together more firmly a structurally weak part of the design. The function of such a pinched-out cordon on vessels carrying a converging neck is less well explained in terms of structure and is perhaps more likely to reflect a desire on the part of the potter to differentiate a 'neck' element which would otherwise merge imperceptibly with the 'body'. A 'stepped' shoulder form (Fig. 7D) is found but is of very rare occurrence.

Body

The body element of tripartite Collared Vessels shows the greatest degree of local irregularity, and consequently useful trait abstractions are more difficult. The majority of vessels either conform in general to a trunco-conic form or have a more or less regular ogee profile; but a considerable range in form is represented.

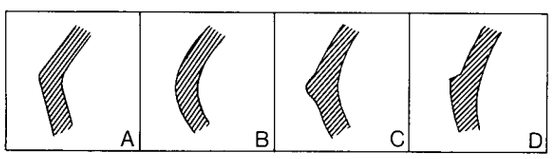

Fig. 7. Shoulder forms.

The much smaller class of bipartite vessels appears to fall into three quite distinct categories in which the body is either globular, recurving beneath the collar with a maximum diameter some distance beneath; convex, but without recurve beneath the collar, the base of the collar being the maximum diameter of the body; or a more or less straight-sided truncated cone.

Base angle and base

Some variation occurs in the junction made by the body with the base. This junction can be a simple angle (Fig. 8A), but often the wall makes a concave entry (Fig. 8B) with the body meeting the base almost vertically at this point. A much smaller number of vessels possess a well-defined protruding foot (Fig. 8C).

Both flat and omphalos bases are well represented in the tradition, but foot-rings are absolutely rare, e.g. Dorchester, Oxon. (1360), Roxby, Humberside (756).

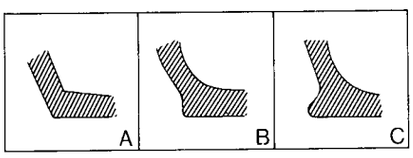

Fig. 8. Forms of base angle.

Total form

To assist and simplify the ensuing analysis, eight basic forms can be defined:

Tripartite

Form I. The collar is generally angled but occasionally approximates to vertical. The neck is concave and varies in depth and in relation to the depth of the collar. The shoulder is usually well marked (Fig. 7A). The body is either trunco-conic or ogee

The form can be further subdivided according to the angle and concavity of the neck:

IA in which the neck is set vertically (Fig. 6A).

IB in which the concavity is asymmetric, being markedly skewed towards the upper part of the neck (Fig. 6B)

IC in which the neck is angled, the concavity even, the diameter of the shoulder exceeding that of the neck immediately below the collar (Fig. 6C)

Form II. The collar is angled and usually of approximately equal depth to the neck. The neck is angled, i.e. 5°± and approximates to straight (Fig. 6F). The shoulder is often sharply articulated (Fig. 7A), but less sharply defined shoulders also occur. The body varies from trunco-conic to ogee

The form has one subdivision:

IIA in which the shoulder is stepped (Fig. 7D)

Form III. The collar is generally angled and usually equal to, or less than, the depth of the neck. The neck approximates to vertical, i.e. less than 5°± from vertical and straight (Fig. 6E). The body is usually truno-conic but occasionally ogee

The form has two subdivisions:

IIIA in which the shoulder is sharp (Fig. 7A)

IIIB in which the shoulder is not sharply articulated (Fig. 7B)

Form IV. The collar is angled and usually equal to, or less than, the depth of the neck. The neck is set approximately vertical and is S-shaped (Fig. 6D), usually meeting the shoulder in a moulding or pinched-out cordon (Fig. 7C). The body is usually ogee but occasionally trunco-conic

Form V. The collar is angled and usually equal to, or less than, the depth of the neck. The neck is convergent (Fig. 6G), the shoulder emphasised by a pinched-out cordon (Fig. 7C). The body varies from trunco-conic to ogee

The form has two subdivisions:

VA in which the neck is straight or slightly convex

VB in which the neck is S-shaped (Fig. 6D)

Bipartite

Form BI. The collar is usually angled. The body is globular, recurving beneath the collar with the maximum diameter some distance beneath

Form BII. The collar is usually angled. The body is convex but does not recurve beneath the collar, the base of the collar being the maximum diameter of the body

Form BIII. The collar is usually angled. The body with convergent straight sides approximates to a truncated cone

The proportion max. base diam./max. diam. of vessel shows considerable variation. Vessels in which this factor approaches 1:3 are unstable even when empty and were

clearly intended either never to have stood upright or, as seems more likely, to have been placed in pits in the ground.

Handles, lugs and feet

Neither handles nor lugs are a regular component of the Collared Urn tradition and when they occur invariably suggest absorption of ideas from other contemporary ceramic groups. The most obvious example of this is the small series of Collared Urns from Cornwall carrying horizontally perforated lugs, a feature taken over from the ceramic traditions of the local Trevisker Series (ApSimon & Greenfield 1972:360).

Outside Cornwall only three examples of vessels carrying true perforated lugs appear in the tradition: Timsbury, Avon (5), Charlton, Herefs. & Worcs. (653), and Livery, Co. Antrim (2216). The vessel from Charlton is unique in having a polypod base and there seems little reason to doubt that in this instance these rare features have been adopted from comparable Food Vessel usage. A similar source is likely for the rare occurrence of non-perforated lugs and stopped grooves. These extraneous features are more fully discussed in later sections devoted to the relationship of Food Vessel groups to the development of the Collared Urn.

Holes made before firing

Only three vessels carry perforations made before firing. Two of these, Stanton Moor 1, Derb. (293), and Wimborne St Giles 17, Dorset (499), have previously been noted as having perforations driven in through the internal rim bevel and out through the inner wall of the vessel. The third vessel, a miniature version of a Collared Vessel (1762), has opposed pairs of perforations driven through the wall immediately beneath the collar to allow for suspension.

Holes drilled after firing

Three vessels carry holes drilled after firing: Amesbury 78, Wilts. (1630), Ogbourne St Andrew, Wilts. (1697), and Scalby, N. Yorks. (1247). The habit of binding cracked vessels by passing thongs across the break through holes drilled on either side does not seem to have been in use in the Collared Urn tradition. This cannot be viewed entirely as a reflection of the poor standards of firing, for repair holes of this type are known to have been drilled through equally ill-fired vessels in the late Neolithic Grooved Ware tradition. Either cracked vessels were not considered worth repair, or, since one is dealing very largely with pottery derived from graves, the vessels chosen were ones which were still relatively sound.

Decoration

The decorative repertoire of the Collared Urn potters draws on a wide range of geometric motifs made in a variety of corded and non-corded techniques. No naturalistic representations are known. It is common for more than one technique to be employed on each vessel and, at least in the latter part of the tradition's life, for different motifs to be employed if more than one surface of the pot is ornamented. With the exception of a small number of vessels, the majority of which are likely to fall early in the series, decoration is confined to the upper half of the vessel, the body being left plain. Totally undecorated vessels appear to be a regular component of the tradition throughout its life and lack of decoration can in no way be used in isolation as an indicator of lateness.

Decoration, with its wide spectrum of choice not only in the selection of basic components but also in their combination, offers a particularly sensitive area for analysing easily quantifiable cultural differences within the tradition. To facilitate this analysis decoration will be discussed in terms of its three main components:

1. Techniques
2. Areas of decoration
3. Motifs

Techniques

Corded. Three distinct types of cord are employed:

1. Whipped cord, in which a light thread has been whipped more or less at right angles round a flexible core.
2. Twisted cord, in which two strands are twisted round each other to form a single cord.
3. Plaited cord, in which strands are plaited together to form a single cord.

Occasionally two lengths of twisted cord have been employed with twists opposed to give an impression very similar to that of true plaited cord. This type of decoration is referred to in the Catalogue as 'pseudo-plaited cord', e.g. Cassington, Oxon. (1354). On other occasions, pairs of twisted cord have been employed with the twist in the same direction.

Non-corded

1. Linear incision made by a pointed or rounded instrument drawn across the surface of the pot while still soft.
2. Grooves made with a blunt-ended instrument dragged through the surface of the pot while still soft.
3. Comb impressions, usually made with a point-toothed comb, but a much coarser comb is also known.

4. Non-linear incision and impression including:
   a. stab-and-drag
   b. a wide variety of impressions made with the end of a flint flake, the articular and broken ends of bones, twigs, hollow reeds, etc.

Applied. Applied strips of clay to form decorative motifs are completely alien to the tradition. Only a single extant example is known, a vessel from an unknown locality of Ireland (2251) carrying an applied ring. A lost vessel from Bodedern, Gwynedd (2090), may have carried an applied horizontal cordon in the neck, but is more likely to have resembled the urn from Usk (2089) in which 'reserved' cordons are produced mechanically by the heavy impression of decoration above and below.

Areas of decoration

For comparative purposes, potential areas of decoration can be described as occurring on:

Collar
Neck
Shoulder
Body
Rim (including rim bevel)
Internal (usually, but not invariably, on the internal moulding)

The collar emerges as the prime focus of ornament. If a vessel carries any form of decoration then the area decorated will, with only rare exceptions, include the collar. In many instances the collar alone is ornamented. The rim and neck are the next most favoured areas, followed by the shoulder. Internal decoration, other than on the rim bevel, will be shown to be an early feature in the tradition together with decoration extending beneath the shoulder onto the upper part of the body in tripartite vessels. In only one instance, a vessel from Wimborne St Giles 17, Dorset (499), does the inside of the base carry decoration, in this case a simple twisted cord cross.

Motifs

A series of basic motifs can be defined and these are set out in the first column of Fig. 9. They comprise:

A. Horizontal lines
B. Vertical lines
C. Hurdle pattern
D. Rectangles
E. Diagonal lines
F. Opposed groups of diagonal lines
G. Zigzag
H. Filled triangles
I. Vertical herringbone
J. Herringbone
K. Lozenges
L. Lattice
M. Horseshoes, loops and rings
N. Wavy lines
O. Individual impressions

Variation within each basic motif occurs to a greater or lesser extent and this is set out in Fig. 9 in the columns to the right.

Though these basic motifs may be used as the sole form of decoration in any particular area of the vessel, they are frequently flanked on the collar, and sometimes on the rim, neck and internally by bordering patterns (Fig. 10). These usually comprise either simple horizontal lines or rows of impressions, or combinations of the two, but short vertical and diagonal lines, zigzag, herringbone, split herringbone and horseshoe elements are also sometimes employed.

In addition to the simple use of the basic motifs in this way, zoned ornament also occurs. In this the basic patterns are either split or separated by one or more horizontal lines, or, more rarely, placed simply one above another (Fig. 11).[2] Zoned patterns occur most frequently on the collar but are also occasionally employed on the neck. Split herringbone is the only combination to occur repeatedly on the rim and zoned ornament only rarely occurs as a form of internal decoration.

With the exception of hurdle pattern, panelled motifs are rarely employed in the tradition (Fig. 12). Again this type of decoration is mainly confined to the collar, though examples of panelled decoration on the neck, and a single example on the body,[3] are also found.

The range of motifs employed on the rim and shoulder, the two most restricted areas for decoration, is relatively narrow and these are set out separately for ease of reference in Figs. 13 and 14.

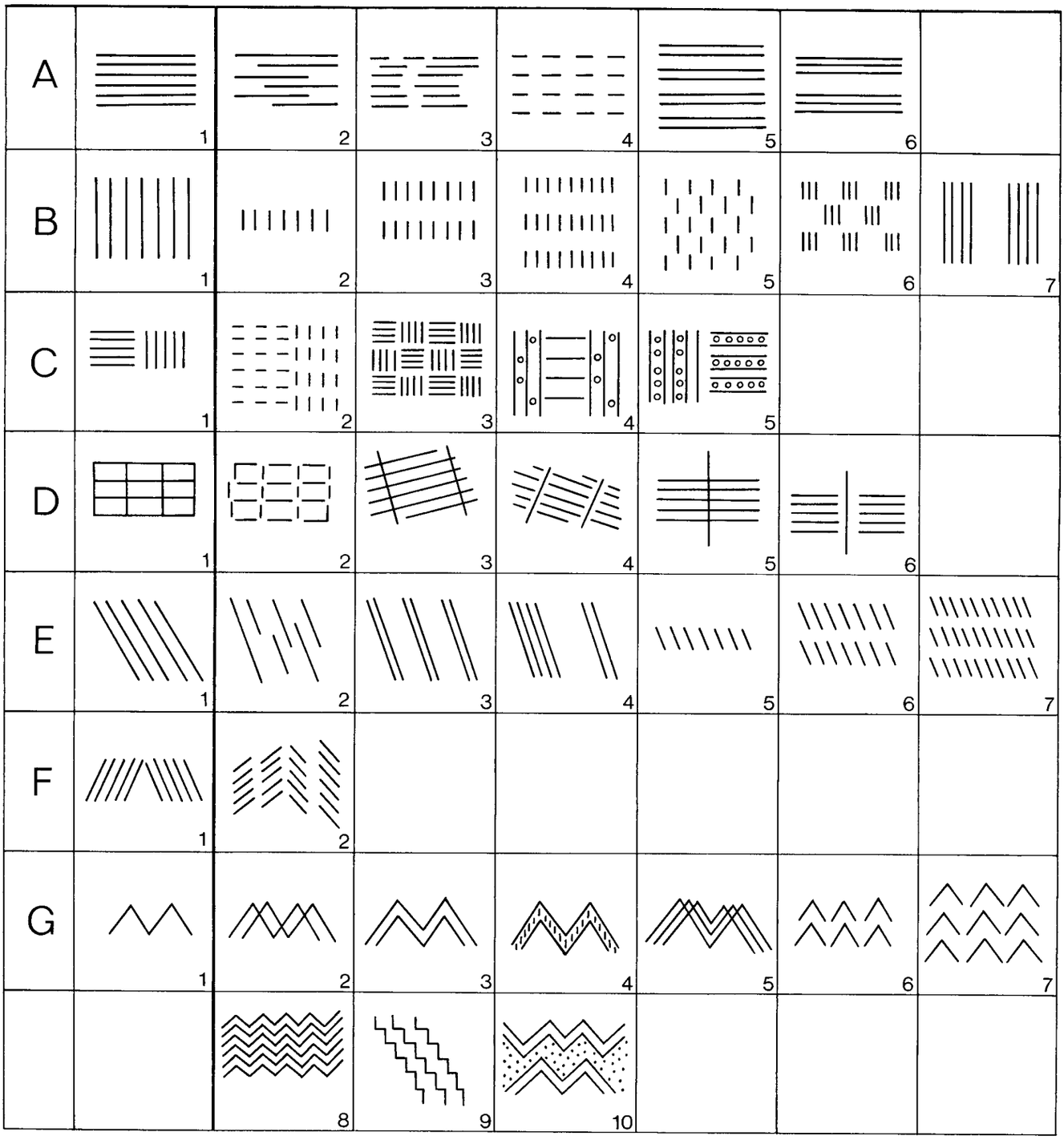

Fig. 9. Motif repertoire.