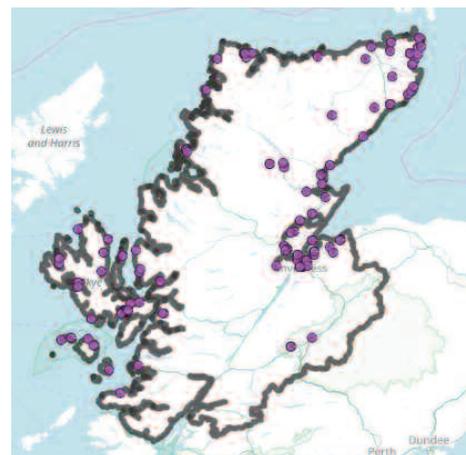


Prehistoric Pottery

Period: Neolithic, Bronze Age or Iron Age
(c. 4000BC – c. 300 AD)

Material: ceramic

These are fragments of genuine prehistoric pottery. Pottery has been used since the Neolithic. Whilst the shape of pots varied over the centuries it is difficult to tell which kind of pot fragments like these came from, and so we do not know whether they date to the



Neolithic, the Bronze Age or the Iron Age. They could have been used for storage or cooking

Although the pottery in prehistory was fired and unglazed – and therefore somewhat porous – experimentation suggests that mixing fats with the clay or boiling milk in the pot after firing could enable the pottery to hold liquids. This same porous quality allows us to test pottery fragments like these to see what kinds of fats and proteins had soaked into the pottery, and therefore what it was used to cook or store.



Pottery was very fragile. Mixing other materials with the clay (such as sand or

grass) helped to make the pottery stronger, but it was still easy to break. As a result we more often find sherds of pottery than complete examples on domestic sites. Occasionally there is also evidence of repairs to pots in the form of tiny holes either side of a break where it has been riveted back together.



Can you see any sand inside the pottery?

How many pots do you think these fragments belonged to?

Top left and right: Prehistoric pottery sherds found on Skye, now in Skye & Lochalsh Archive Centre.



Neolithic pottery from Tornagrain near Inverness

See also:

CT Making Prehistoric Pottery

When? Neolithic

When? Bronze Age

When? Iron Age

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