

PETROLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF IRON AGE, ROMAN AND DARK
AGE POTTERY FROM HALANGY DOWN, ISLES OF SCILLY

D.F. Williams, Ph.D.,

(DOE Ceramic Petrology Project)

Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton

Many of the sherds submitted for examination were studied in thin section under the petrological microscope (denoted by an asterisk). This allowed a division into two distinct fabric groupings.

Group I HD C18, HD C33* (Iron Age), HD H91, HD H153* (Dark Age).

Flecks of mica are present on the surfaces and white grains of felspar and fragments of rock can be seen in fresh fracture. In thin section inclusions of tourmaline-granite can be seen scattered throughout the clay matrix, together with numerous large discrete grains of felspar, quartz, mica and some tourmaline. Deposits of granite, much of it highly tourmalinized, make up the majority of the landmass of the Scilly Isles, and so a local source for this pottery would agree with the petrology. However, it may be worth while noting that similar tempered Iron Age pottery has also been recognized at Nernour, in the Eastern Isles of Scilly, and at Carn Euny, Cornwall (Williams, 1978), which is also situated on the granite. The two Dark Age grass-marked sherds would seem to be a local adaptation of the Cornish grass-marked series (Peacock, 1975).

Group II HD A43*, HD A1488*, HD A1533, HD B7*, HD B16,
HD B286*, HD B345, HD C516, HD C1309*, HD F41,
HD F1519*, HD G70*, HD G1463* (Iron Age), HD D25*,
HD D67*, HD D345, HD E39*, HD E1466 (Roman).

Small angular fragments of white felspar occur in some numbers throughout the fabric. In thin section the most prominent inclusions are made up of angular grains of altered felspar and colourless grains of amphibole, many of which appear as fibrous aggregates. Also present are a few grains of pyroxene, olivine, quartz and magnetite. This assemblage of minerals closely resembles Peacock's (1969) description of the gabbroic clays of the Lizard Head, Cornwall, and it seems probable that this was the source of the raw materials for the Halangy Down pottery.

The wide distribution of Iron Age Cornish gabbroic pottery is now a well-known fact, due to the work of Peacock (1969). This pottery industry has recently been shown to have been active in the Roman period as well (Williams, 1976).

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