

ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY FROM COLESHILL, WARWICKSHIRE

D.F. Williams, Ph.D.,

(DOE Ceramic Petrology Project)

Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton

Introduction

A selection of Romano-British sherds from the temple and settlement site at Coleshill were submitted for fabric examination. All the sherds were studied macroscopically with the aid of a binocular microscope, and the majority were thin sectioned and examined under the petrological microscope. The object of the examination was to confirm the validity of a provisional fabric identification made in the hand-specimen.

Petrology and Fabric

1). Fab.78, Fab.84, Fab.83, Fab.80, Fab.87, Fab.86 and Fab.75.

All the above sherds tend to be in a fairly fine fabric, with numerous inclusions of reddish-buff argillaceous material clearly visible in the hand-specimen. In some of the sherds, Fab. 86 in particular, these inclusions are sharply angular suggesting grog (crushed up pottery), while in others the inclusions are more rounded and finer grained, which may indicate that they occur naturally in the clay.

2). Fab.90.

A heavily vesicular fabric, possibly once containing some form of calcareous material, no traces of which now remain. Also present are a scatter of argillaceous inclusions.

3). Fab.89.

Hard, sandy fabric containing frequent quartz grains, average size 0.20-.50mm, and a scatter of argillaceous inclusions.

4). Fab.77.

Hard, sandy fabric containing a scatter of large, up to 1.70mm across, grains of quartz and quartzite, and some argillaceous inclusions.

5). Fab.82.

Soft, fairly sandy fabric containing quartz grains and argillaceous inclusions.

6). Fab.79.

Fairly hard, sandy black ware. One of the two samples ?BB1.

7). Fab.76.

Thin sectioning reveals that these sherds contain a range of crushed igneous and metamorphic rocks similar in composition to that found in pottery shown to have been made in the Malvern district of Worcestershire (Peacock, 1967).

Comments

Apart from Fab.76, it is difficult to predict origins for the remainder of the sherds due to the fairly common range of inclusion types in the clay. On the face of it, there is nothing to suggest anything other than a fairly local origin for the majority of the pottery. However, a source, or sources, further afield cannot be ruled out on this evidence.

Reference

Peacock, D.P.S. (1967) 'Romano-British pottery production in the Malvern district of Worcestershire', Trans. Worcestershire Arc. Soc., 1(1967), 35-46.