

ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

REPORT

3573

SERIES/No CONTRACTOR

AUTHOR D F Williams Dec 1981

TITLE Roman mortarium from Gilsland, Cumbria

D.F. Williams, Ph.D.,

(DOE Ceramic Petrology Project)

Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton

Hard, fairly smooth slightly micaceous fabric, pinkish-white (between Munsell 7.5YR NS/ and 8/2) throughout. The trituration grits are mainly composed of sandstone, red iron ore, shale, coarse sand, pebbles and at least one fragment of basalt. All the grits appear well-worn and they may have been obtained from river-gravels. The assemblage as a whole suggests derivation from the New Red Sandstone. Deposits of NRS occur in the Carlisle area, which might favour a local origin for this mortarium. A thin section was made of the vessel itself, and studied under the petrological microscope. This revealed numerous quartz grains, average size 0.15mm and under, with a scatter of slightly larger grains, together with flecks of mica, iron ore and sandstone. This would again suggest an origin in a region containing quantities of sandstone - such as the Carlisle area.