PETROLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF A 'MERIDA-TYPE' COSTREL FROM

BREACHACHA CASTLE, ISLE OF COLL, HEBRIDES

AML REPORT 3623

D. F. Williams, Ph.D., P.S.A.

(DOE Ceramic Petrology Project)

Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton

A sherd from a near complete sixteenth century costrel from Breachacha Castle, suspected of being a Spanish import (Hurst, 1973), was submitted for thin sectioning and study under the petrological microscope as part of a current programme of petrological analysis of 'Merida-type' imports to Britain (in collaboration with John Hurst of the DOE). The sherd is in a hard, fairly smooth sandy fabric, with conspicuous flecks of mica, light red (Munsell 10R 6/8) outer surface, reddish-yellow (5YR 7/6) inner surface and core. Thin sectioning reveals frequent ill-sorted subangular grains of quartz and large plates of muscovite mica, together with some plagioclase and potash felspar and quartzite. A fairly similar fabric has been noted by the writer for certain 'Merida-type' vessels found at Stonar, Plymouth Castle, Southampton and Guy's Hospital, London. It is, however, likely that late medieval red micaceous pottery was made at other places in Spain besides Merida, as well as in Portugal (Hurst, 1977; Williams, 1979).

The Breachacha Castle costrel fabric is not unlike the red micaceous pottery recovered from two wrecks of the Spanish Armada, the <u>Trinidad Valencera</u> and the <u>Santa Maria de la Rosa</u> (Williams, 1979). On documentary evidence an origin for the red micaceous Armada pottery in or around the Lisbon area seems likely (Martin, 1979). A similar origin for the Breachacha costrel is also a possibility, though there are slight textural differences between the latter vessel and those from the <u>Trinidad Valencera</u> and <u>Santa</u>

Maria de la Rosa which may indicate another source.

Bibliography.

- Hurst, J. G. (1973) 'Note on Merida ware', in Turner, D.J.

 and Dunbar, J.G., 'Breachacha Castle, Coll:

 excavations and field survey, 1965-8',

 Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot., 102(1973), 184.
- Hurst, J. G. (1977) 'Spanish pottery imported into medieval Britain', Med. Arch, 21 (1977), 68-105.
- Martin, C. J. M. (1979) 'Spanish Armada pottery', Int. Jour. of

 Nautical Arch. and Underwater Explor.,

 8 (1979), 279-302.
- Williams, D. F. (1979) 'Petrological analysis', in Martin, C.J.M.,

 'Spanish Armada pottery', Int. Jour. of

 Nautical Arch. and Underwater Explor.,

 8 (1979), 298-299.

Site 998

LIST OF TECHNOLOGICAL SAMPLES SENT TO THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

Please contact Leo Biek (01-734-6010 x 529) or Justine Bayley (x533) before you excavate or at least while you are excavating. We need to see structures in situ and can usually arrange to visit at short notice.

SITE:

ISLE OF COLL.

GRID REF

SHEET NO

COUNTRY

Sanano

EXCAVATION DATE

PERIOD:

DATE SENT 10 11 80

EXCAVATOR'S NAME, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR FUTURE COMMUNICATION.

TURNER (via lithurst)

MATERIAL: Please complete a separate sheet for each category ringing the appropriate material(s).

RAW MATERIALS

STRUCTURES

Clay/Coal/Ore/Sand

CRUDE PRODUCTS

Furnace/Hearth/Kiln/Oven/Tank Bloom/Enamel cake/Glass bun/Ingot/Pig

WASTE

Ash/Dross/Slag

BUILDING MATERIALS

Brick/Burnt daub/Floor/Mortar/Plaster/Tile

OBJECTS VESSELS ETC (For technological examination-rather than conservation) Alembic/Crucible/Palette/Potsherds

OTHER MATERIALS

Char/Food residue/Pigment/Other

Please sent these lists to RECORDS OFFICE, ROOM 522, FORTRESS HOUSE, 23 SAVILE ROW, LONDON W1X 2HE, under separate cover. Boxes should be labelled ON THE OUTSIDE with site name and contents and should contain identification label.

WORK CANNOT BEGIN UNLESS LISTS ARE RECEIVED

Excavator's No Separate entry for each Item	AM Lab No	Full details of Archaeological and Stratigraphic context and Problem to be investigated. Please include sketch plan and section, photographs and colour sildes.
_Co 1	810691	Sherd of Merida type ware
		Sherd of Merida type ware for pethological exam as part of So ton project
		So ton project
:		
		1