

WEASENHAM LYNGS 1972

Technological appraisal of ceramic material ('brick' & pottery)

Several fragments of 'brick', when first received, appeared so similar to 'burnt daub' from medieval sites examined here that the first reaction was to doubt their postulated age. However, further specimens were requested, together with pottery from the site (Beaker) and these were examined all together, both microscopically and X-radiographically (by Justine Bayley).

This examination suggests, in general, that there is no reason why all the material should not be contemporary. In particular, the whole suite of specimens (with the exception of B 269, which is a stone fragment) is characterised by the same type and distribution of radiopaque particles, although they occur more sparsely in some of the finer pottery (eg P 29 & 257). Indeed, such distinctions between brick and pot as can be made X-radiographically are based on the ~~more~~ generally rougher texture and simpler 'sweep', as well as the frequent and large cracks, rather than on the 'fabric'. In some of the brick there are also some near-pebble sized inclusions, some of them radiopaque (ironstone), and in general the pottery shows evidence of vegetable tempering. But such distinctions are not universally valid. Depending on what one could accept as pottery on typological grounds, it is clear that eg B 388, B 674, and even B 511 might qualify on the present evidence.

It further follows from the above that a local source for the pottery is quite likely, since it is virtually certain that the clay from which the brick was formed (presumably as a result of a fierce conflagration on the spot) would not have been imported. More refined distinctions are possible between the various different pottery sherds on the present basis (see Biek & Bayley 1978) but more specimens would be needed for a firm interpretation.

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1978,
Biek, L. & Bayley, Justine, ^L in P.J.Drury, Excavations at Little Waltham, Essex,
1970-1, 59-62.