Site Nº 357

PETROLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF ROMAN POTTERY FROM

THE LITTLE CHESTER KILNS, DERBY

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A group of material from the series of Roman kilns situated close to Little Chester were submitted for fabric characterization in thin section and by heavy mineral separation (cf. Brassington, 1971).

Petrology

- 1) Grey ware jar (Kiln 1e & 1f).
- 2) Grey ware jar (Kiln 2a fill below platform).
- 3) Grey ware jar (Kiln 1a fill).
- 4) Cordoned-neck jar (Kiln 5z).

Thin sectioning shows a groundmass of small subangular quartz grains 0.10mm and under in size, with a scatter of larger grains, flecks of mica, iron ore, a little plagioclase felspar and the odd grain of sandstone.

5) Brownish-grey jar (kiln 2b).

6) Flanged bowl in orange fabric (Kiln 1b fill).

Thin sectioning shows a slightly coarser fabric than nos. 1-4 above, with many more flecks of mica in evidence.

7) Narrow-necked grey ware jar (Kiln 1 stockhole).

Thin sectioning shows a slightly finer fabric than for nos. 1-6 above, consisting of a scatter of subangular quartz grains, average size 0.30mm-0.40mm across, iron ore, some sandstone and argillaceous material, set in a fairly fine clay matrix of baked clay.

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A heavy mineral separation was conducted on all of the above seven sherds, and while none of them produced a large percentage of heavy minerals, grains of zircon and a few of almandite garnet were noted. The petrology of this kiln material from Little Chester suggests that the clay used for the pottery was quite likely to have been obtained from the local Keuper Marl clay deposits. This is known to have bands of micaceous 'skerries', as well as containing almandite.

Reference

Brassington, M.

(1971) 'A Trajanic kiln complex near Little Chester, Derby',

Antiquaries Jour., 51 (1971), 36-69.