

Ancient Monuments Laboratory  
Report 191/87

A NOTE ON THE PETROLOGY OF MORTARIA  
FROM MANCETTER-HARTSHILL,  
WARWICKSHIRE.

D F Williams PhD FSA

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### Summary

Samples of several mortaria sherds from the Roman kilns at Mancetter and at Hartshill were examined petrologically to test the possible variation of fabrics in use. Apart from one distinctive fabric, the remainder appeared to be fairly similar in composition, although differences were noted in the quantities of temper employed.

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(HBMC Ceramic Petrology Project)

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Fabric A

(45) H60 (A) 5 Fabric 3

(57) H60 (A) 5 Fabric 3 (overfired example)

(3) W70 (16) 6 Fabric 6

Thin sectioning and study under the petrological microscope of the paste of these three vessels shows a groundmass of frequent small grains of quartz under 0.15mm in size, a sparse scatter of slightly larger grains, flecks of mica, quartzite, several pieces of sandstone, iron ore and a little fine-grained silica. The Fabric 6 sample is a little finer-textured than the other two sherds.

Fabric B

(26) H60+ (346) Fabric 8 (GRATINVS)

(40) H60 (A) 2 Fabric 12

(2) H60 (A) 3 (137) Fabric 12

This appears to be a sandier version of Fabric A above. The same range of non-plastic inclusions are present with the addition of a few pieces of diorite in the cases of sherds Fabric 8 and (2) H60 (A) 3 (137) Fabric 12.

Fabric C

(8) H61 (31) 2 Fabric 12

Similar to the previous two fabrics but heavily charged with quartz grains.

Fabric D

(9) H61 (31) 5 Fabric 12

This is an extremely fine-textured fabric containing little in the way of non-plastic inclusions except for a few quartz and quartzite grains and some iron ore.

Comments

The Roman kilns at Mancetter and at Hartshill are situated on glacial sand and gravel, underlain by the Keuper Marl (Trias), closeby to the Hartshill Quartzite and several diorite sills (Hains and Horton, 1969). All of the inclusion types recognized in the samples of mortaria could quite easily therefore have been obtained near to the kilns themselves. Apart from the single sherd of Fabric D, Fabrics B and C appear, more-or-less, to be sandier versions of Fabric A.

Reference

Hains, B.A. and (1969) Central England, British Regional Geology,  
Horton, A. (London, 1969).