

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 97/88

A NOTE ON THE PETROLOGY OF A SHERD
OF ROMAN COARSE WARE POTTERY FROM
THE FORUM SITE, LEICESTER.

D F Williams PhD FSA

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Summary

Thin section analysis shows a distinctive 'grog-tempered'
fabric, possibly from a fairly local source.

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Hard, roughish fabric, buff (Munsell 7.5YR 7/4) outer surface, light red (2.5YR 6/8) inner surface and core, except for a central zone of grey in the latter producing a 'sandwich' effect. Thin sectioning and study under the petrological microscope shows a fairly fine-textured fabric comprizing a groundmass of small quartz grains mostly under 0.10mm in size and frequent flecks of mica, together with a sparse scatter of larger quartz grains up to 0.50mm across, some quartzite, iron oxides and argillaceous material. A number of the argillaceous inclusions appear to be reasonably well-rounded and may possibly be clay pellets that occur naturally in the clay. However, the angularity of the remainder of this argillaceous material strongly suggests that grog (i.e. crushed up pottery) was deliberately added to the clay by the potter, perhaps to give the vessel additional strength during the firing process.

This particular fabric is not one known by the writer in connection with Roman amphorae (Peacock and Williams, 1986). Instead, it may well represent a fairly locally-made ware. It is difficult to suggest a likely source on this one sherd alone, but as this is such a distinctive fabric further study should produce some worth-while results.

Reference

Peacock, D.P.S. and (1936) Amphorae and the Roman Economy (London, 1986).
Williams, D.F.