

CROCKERTON, WILTSHIRE

PETROLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF POTTERY/  
FROM 16TH CENTURY KILN

The late sixteenth century pottery kiln at Crockerton, Wiltshire is situated on the Upper Greensand, closeby to a bed of Gault clay. In order to establish whether or not the sixteenth century potters were making use of the Gault for their pottery, typical products of the kiln were sectioned and compared with a sample of Gault taken from the neighbourhood of the kiln and baked and sectioned for study under the petrological microscope in the same way as the pottery.

Pottery sample 67-11. The paste varies in colour from buff to reddish-brown and is slightly micaceous, with a light grey to reddish-brown core. The glaze is greenish-brown, some sherds appear to have been splashed-glazed. The fabric contains inclusions of very fine quartz.

In thin section both the sample of pottery and the Gault reveal an optically anisotropic matrix containing uniform inclusions of subangular quartz grains, average size below 0.10mm., and muscovite. Also present in both sections are a number of grains of collophane, which may be associated with phosphatic nodules present in the Gault ( Reid, 1903, 39 ).

The mineralogy thus suggests that the local Gault was used in the production of Crockerton pottery. The identification of collophane in the sections examined may be useful in any future examination of likely products of this kiln, though care will be needed as collophane is a fairly common mineral, especially in heavy mineral assemblages.

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D.F. WILLIAMS, Ph. D.,  
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY,  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON.

Reid, C. (1903) The Geology of the Country Around Salisbury (London, 1903)