

PETROLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF CERTAIN POTTERY FROM BREEDON ON

Report THE HILL, LEICESTERSHIRE
2084

Petrological analysis was undertaken on three different fabrics from Breedon, and comparisons made with a sample of a) Pre-Conquest Northampton ware, b) Lincoln Saxo-Norman ware and d) A tenth century French import (Platt and Coleman-Smith, 1975, fig. 175, no. 858). All the samples were selected for analysis by Miss Ann Dornier.

BR. 75. CE. Medium thick, moderately hard fabric, dark grey throughout.

Pre-Conquest Northampton ware. Medium thick, hard-fired fabric, dark grey to buff on the outside surfaces, light grey laminated core.

In thin section the temper for both sherds consists of numerous grains of subangular quartz set in an anisotropic matrix of fired clay. The quartz grains in the Breedon sample tend on the whole to be slightly larger than those in the Northampton ware sherd, average size 0.10-0.30mm. as opposed to 0.10-0.15mm., and less well sorted. In addition, there are a small number of clay pellets in the Breedon section not present in the Northampton ware sample.

The apparent difference in size and shape of the quartz grains would seem to suggest that the two samples do not share the same origin.

BR. 75. PE. Medium thick, hard fabric, dark grey throughout. Heavily gritted with shell.

Lincoln Saxo-Norman ware. Medium thick, moderately hard-fired fabric, reddish-brown throughout. Heavily gritted with shell.

In thin section both sherds show numerous inclusions of shell and a scatter of subangular quartz grains. It is possible to see some recrystallization of calcite in the shell suggesting that it is fossiliferous.

As the inclusions in both samples are similar, it is quite possible that the Breedon vessel was also made at Lincoln, however, this form of tempering is not uncommon and another source cannot be ruled out.

BR. 75. 6'1945. Medium thick, hard sandy fabric, light to dark grey throughout.

Tenth century French import. Medium thick, hard sandy fabric, light buff on the surfaces, light grey core.

Both samples contain inclusions of subangular quartz, set in an anisotropic matrix of fired clay. The size of the quartz grains in the French import are slightly larger than those in the Breedon sample, average size 0.30-0.50mm. as against 0.15-0.25, and tend to be polycrystalline in structure. A small amount of siltstone is present in the Breedon section.

It would appear that there is some difference in the size and

structure of the quartz inclusions in the two samples. This does not necessarily mean, of course, that the Breedon vessel is not an import, merely that the two samples appear to have different origins.

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Platt, C. and Coleman-Smith, R. (1975) Excavations in Medieval Southampton, 1953-1969. (Leicester 1975).