

D.F. Williams, Ph.D.,

(DOE Ceramic Petrology Project)

Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton

Nine sherds of samian from Cleavel Point were submitted for thin sectioning and study under the petrological microscope as part of a current programme of petrological analysis of arretine and early samian.

OWR 171

Thin sectioning shows a highly micaceous fabric which compares favourably with early samian examples from Lezoux (Williams, 1978).

OWR 268, OWR 133, OWR 730, OWR 76, OWR 696, OWR 162 and OWR 792

Thin sectioning shows that all the sherds contain numerous small grains of quartz and flecks of mica. Comparison with material attributable to the main arretine and early samian production centres (Williams, 1978), shows that texturally the Cleavel Point sherds are unlike samples attributed to Italy (Arezzo, Puteoli and Pisa), South Gaul (La Graufesenque and Montans) and Central Gaul (Lezoux). Instead, the Cleavel Point material compares fairly well with samian considered to have been made at Lyon. However, to date the amount of Lyon samian thin sectioned is small, and more sherds need to be analyzed from this centre to check for any possible variation in the fabric. In view of this, the Cleavel Point sherds cannot as yet be confidently allocated to a likely production centre on the basis of the thin section results.

OWR 792 is slightly less micaceous than the rest of the sherds, but probably belongs to this group.

OWR 178

In thin section this sherd is quite different to the other Cleavel Point samples, as it contains a small amount of volcanic material. This suggests an Italian centre, possibly Puteoli which is situated in a volcanic area on the Bay of Naples.

Williams, D.F. (1978) 'Petrological analysis of arretine and early samian: a preliminary report', in Arthur, P. and Marsh, G. (eds.), Early Fine Wares in Roman Britain BAR 57 (1978), 5-12.