

FABRIC ANALYSIS. DONYATT POTTERIES, SOMERSET

Samples from all the pottery groups except for Group 5 (believed by the excavators to have a similar fabric to Group 4) were examined in thin section under the petrological microscope. Pottery from Group 1 (c. A.D. 1200-1300) is heavily tempered with large quartz grains and small fragments of flint, both of which protrude through the surfaces. Thin sectioning of two cooking-pots (nos. 5 and 15) shows numerous ill-sorted subangular quartz grains, ranging in size from 0.15-1.20mm., some of them polycrystalline in structure, together with a small amount of flint and chert. This fabric is identical in thin section to sherds from pre-1350 cooking-pots from Taunton (nos. 8, 11 and 13). Also to the coarse cooking-pots in Group 3 (c.A.D. 1500-1550) (no.18), which would seem to suggest a traditional use of the same materials for these coarse vessels lasting some three hundred years.

The sample from Group 2 (c. A.D. 1300-1400) of a glazed barrel costrel (no. 16) appears to show a change in the clay used for this type of vessel compared to the coarser cooking-pots mentioned above. In thin section there are frequent well-sorted subangular quartz grains, average size 0.30-.40mm.,

and a number of grains of collophane. No inclusions of flint or chert are represented. This agrees well with a thin section taken from a late 14th century painted tile from Shaftesbury Abbey (no. 14). It has already been mentioned that possible tile manufacture at Donyatt could be associated with Group 2 pottery (see p.00).

Thin sections from the glazed cooking-pots (nos. 3 and 17) in Group 3 (c. A.D. 1500-1550) consist entirely of well-sorted subangular quartz grains, average size 0.20-.30mm., and are sufficiently different from that of Group 2 to suspect another change in raw materials. It has been noted that the coarser cooking-pots (no. 18) are similar in fabric to the 13th century ones.

Samples from a green glazed bowl (no. 6) and two glazed jugs (nos. 7 and 19) from Group 4, (c. A.D. 1600-1650), two glazed dishes (nos. 1 and 22) from group 6 (c. A.D. 1700-1750), including an imitation Staffordshire/Bristol type, and a glazed dish (no. 21) from Group 7 are virtually identical in thin section. The fabric consists of well-sorted subangular quartz grains, average size 0.05-.10mm., and abundant flecks of mica, together with a few grains of red iron ore. This compares very favourably with a sample of raw clay taken from Shave Lane clay pit closeby to Group 5 and then baked

and sectioned. It shows that a new source of clay appears to have been used for (?) most Donyatt products after c. A.D. 1600, and not just a refinement of the clays used previously.

Certain comparative samples were also analyzed which did not match up with the mineralogy of the Donyatt sherds described here. These included a 17th/18th century glazed dish from Bideford which contained igneous inclusions (no.9); a 17th/18th century glazed dish from Bideford in a much coarser fabric which was tempered with sandstone and quartzite (no.10); and a pre-1350 cooking-pot from Taunton which contained much fossiliferous shell (no.12).

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Examples for fabric analysis.

clay tablet A. Smooth Donyatt clay.

clay tablet B. Coarse Donyatt clay.

1. Donyatt Imitation Staffordshire/Bristol 18th type from Donyatt Gr.
2. West Country type excavated from Southampton \pm 17th.
3. 16th Century type from Donyatt Excavations
4. Painted tile from Shaftsbury Abbey late 14th.
5. Med type cook pot from Donyatt Excavations 13th/14th C.
6. 17th Century type green glazed bowl, Donyatt Excavations site 4.
7. 17th ~~Shard~~, Jug with rouletted design Donyatt Excavations site 4.
8. Pre 1350 shard from West Gate, Townton, Med Cook Pot type (Donyatt?).
9. North Devon, smooth fabric, from Bideford 17th/18th C.
10. North Devon, gravel tempered fabric from Bideford 17th/18th C.
11. Townton West Gate pre 1350 shard. Med cook pot type
12. Townton West Gate pre 1350 shard Med cook pot type.
13. Townton West Gate pre 1350 shard Med cook pot type.
14. Ridge tile shard from Glastonbury Abbey late 14th century.

Somerset Pottery Waster Groups.

These groups are defined as the main waster groups from the excavations. The numbers of the shards previously sent to you and the new numbers are shown at the end of each group.

Pottery Group 1. circa. 1200 - 1300. Contexts: Site 1, Cutting A, feature AF3, layer A3a.

Shard numbers sent to you : Nos. 5 and 15.

Products: Hand-made cooking pot and bowl.

Distribution: Taunton (by your analysis), Castle Neroche.

Pottery Group 2. circa. 1300 - 1400. Context: Site 2, Cutting D, feature DF7, layer D7a.

Shard number 16 sent to you.

Products: Glazed; jugs, barrel costrels, aquamanile in a fine fabric.
Unglazed; wheel thrown, cooking pot, cresset lamp, bowls in a gritty fabric.

Distribution: Taunton and Ilchester; probably a 30 mile radius area.

Pottery Group 3. circa. 1500 - 1550. Contexts: Site 3, Cutting E, features EF2 (layer E2), EF3 and EF5 (layer E6).

Shard numbers 3, 17 and 18 sent to you.

Products: Baluster and globular jugs and pitchers, mugs, lobed cups, cisterns in a fine fabric (cf No.17).
Wheel thrown cooking pots, cresset lamp, bowls in a gritty fabric.

Distribution: Covers a wide area probably up to 50 miles radius apart from coastal trade.

Pottery Group 4. circa. 1600 - 1650. Contexts: Site 2, Cutting C, features CF10, CF10b, CF10d (layers C10b.1., C10b.2.) CF10c (layers C10c.1., C10c.2.).

Shard numbers 6, 7 and 19 sent to you.

Products: Glazed jugs, cups, mugs, dishes, bowls, pancheons, candlesticks, jars and chaffing dishes.

Distribution: Widespread all over Somerset, Bristol, Plymouth and Southampton.

Pottery Group 5. circa. 1650 - 1700. Contexts: Site 2, Cutting C, features CF9, CF9a, CF9b (layers C9a.1. and C9b.2.) and CF9d (layer C9d).

No shards of this group sent to you.

Products: As group 6 except for pottery irons.

Distribution: As group 6.

Pottery Group 6. circa. 1700 - 1750. Contexts: Site 4, Cutting G, features GF1 (layer G9), GF5 (layers G4, G5, G6, G8, and G10), layer G3.

Shard numbers 1 and 20 sent to you.

Products: Dishes, porringers, jugs, cups, mugs, bowls, jars, pancheon, candlestick, chaffing dishes.

Distribution: Somerset, Dorset and Devon, and coastal trade.

✓ Pottery Group 7. circa. 1800 - 1850. Context: Site 5, Cutting L, feature LF1, layer L3.

Shard number 21 sent to you.

Products: Jars, jugs, money pots, puzzle jugs, saucers, dishes, porringers, mugs, pancheons, candlestick.

Distribution: Local: probably a radius of 15 miles.

Further Examples for Fabric Analysis: Donyatt, Somerset.

The following numbers continue from the previous list.

- ✓ 15. Cooking pot; Pottery group 1. 2 shards circa. 1200 - 1300.
- ✓ 16. Barrel costrel; Pottery group 2. 2 shards circa. 1300 - 1400.
- ✓ 17. Jug; Pottery group 3. 2 shards circa. 1500 - 1550.
- ✓ 18. Cooking pot; Pottery group 3. circa. 1500 - 1550.
- ✓ 19. Jug and dish; Pottery group 4. circa. 1600 - 1650.
- 20. Dish; Pottery group 6. 1 shard circa. 1700 - 1750.
- 21. Small dish; Pottery group 7. 1 shard circa. 1800 - 1850.
- 22. Clay tablet; clay A smooth Donyatt clay. Fired 1300 °C.
- 23. Clay tablet; clay A smooth Donyatt clay. Fired 1050 °C.
- ✓ 24. Clay tablet; clay B coarse Donyatt clay. Fired 1050 °C. 960°

The white slip used on the clay tablets Nos. 23 and 24 was not a Donyatt clay and should be disregarded.

