

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 205/87

IRON AGE 'GLASTONBURY WARE' FROM
THE 1985/6 EXCAVATIONS AT MAIDEN
CASTLE.

D F Williams PhD FSA

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Summary

Nineteen sherds were shown by thin sectioning to be of two fabrics, previously defined by Peacock as Group 1 (Gabbro) and Group 5 (Sanidine).

Author's address :-

Department of Archaeology
University of Southampton
Highfield
Southampton
SO9 5NH

0703 559122

IRON AGE 'GLASTONBURY WARE' FROM THE 1985/6 EXCAVATIONS AT MAIDEN CASTLE

D.F. Williams, Ph.D., FSA
(HBMC Ceramic Petrology Project)
Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton

Introduction

Nineteen further sherds of early Iron Age 'Glastonbury Ware' from the recent excavations at Maiden Castle were submitted for a detailed examination in thin section under the petrological microscope. The object of the analysis was to carefully examine the fabrics involved and see if they were similar to any of the fabric groupings established by Peacock (1969).

Petrology

Gabbro

401-5712 AOR 3252

401-5773 AOR 3246

401-6302

401-5696 AOR 3270

401-6193 AOR 3266

401 5772 AOR 3247

401-5026

401-5281

The most prominent inclusions are made up of angular grains of partly decomposed feldspar, some of which have altered to sericite, fresher plagioclase and colourless or brown grains of amphibole, many of which appear as fibrous

aggregates. Also present is a little pyroxene, serpentine and some grains of quartz. This assemblage of minerals closely resembles Peacock's (1969) description of the natural weathering clays overlying the gabbro deposits on the Lizard Head, Cornwall, and these sherds from Maiden Castle undoubtedly belong to his Group 1 (Gabbro) from this source.

Sanidine

401-6121 AOR 3275

401-5038 AOR 3211

401-6249 AOR 3262

401-5264 AOR 3260

401-6070 AOR 3268

401-6249 AOR 3265

401-5412 8220

401-5198

401-6139

401-5146

401-5178

Frequent rounded fragments of sandstone, shale, siltstone and mudstone, with some igneous material, flecks of mica and quartzite. However, the most prominent inclusions are rounded grains of orthoclase feldspar, in particular sanidine. The fabric of these sherds from Maiden Castle matches very closely Peacock's (1969) Group 5 (Sanidine) which it was suggested derived from the Permian of south-western England. In particular the area north of Watcombe to Exeter and along the Crediton Valley as far as Colebrook was singled out as being the likely source of the raw materials used in the potting.

Reference

Peacock, D.P.S. (1969) 'A contribution to the study of Glastonbury ware from south-western Britain', Antiq. J., 49(1969), 41-61.