

FURTHER FABRIC ANALYSIS OF IRON AGE POTTERY FROM
BECKFORD, WORCESTERSHIRE

A selection of Iron Age pottery from Beckford was thin sectioned and studied under the petrological microscope.

Group 10

Characterized by Malvernian igneous and metamorphic inclusions (Peacock, 1968, Group A).

Sherd nos. 1740(431), 278210(707), 276308(490), 1728(445) and 272303(451).

The fabric tends to be medium thick, fairly hard and black throughout, with a burnished outside surface. Feldspar and quartz are normally visible in fresh fracture.

Group 11

Inclusions of shelly limestone, probably Palaeozoic (Peacock, 1968, Group B1).

Sherd nos. 276808(706), 5546, 55870, 5596, 55100, 195455(415), 184247(388), 387508(692), 55707B, 5591 and 5590E.

The fabric tends to be medium thick and moderately hard, ranging in colour from dark grey to buff and with a slightly 'soapy' feel. Numerous inclusions of limestone are visible throughout the fabric, as well as vesicles.

Group 13

Numerous inclusions of fossiliferous shell. Possibly a local origin, see previous report.

Sherd nos. 1803101(685), 293701(518) and 299508(656).

Fairly thick, moderately hard fabric, brownish-grey throughout. Fragments of shell can be seen in fresh fracture.

Group 14

A scatter of subangular quartz grains, average size 0.15-.20mm. Sherd no. 2762(501).

Medium thick, moderately hard sandy fabric, black throughout and highly burnished on the outside surface, with a lattice decoration.

VCP

Numerous inclusions of subangular quartz grains, average size 0.10-.20mm., together with a scatter of argillaceous material. Sherd nos. 1798 and 179806(127) also have occasional fine-grained sandstone, and 1798 contains a number of elongate voids, in all probability representing chopped grass or chaff. This group seems unlikely to have been made from the local Lower Lias clay in the Beckford area.

Sherd nos. 1798, 179806(127), 297608 and 2501.

All the sherds are in a thick, hard very coarse fabric, orange-buff throughout. Large inclusions of buff coloured argillaceous material can be seen scattered throughout the fabric. Grass or chaff impressions are visible on the surfaces of no. 1798. On sherds nos. 1798 and 2501 the finger impressions of the potter can clearly be seen on the inner surface where, during the building of the wall of the pot, one roll of clay has been placed on top of another and then pressed down to join both pieces together.

Miss Elaine Morris¹ has examined sherd nos. 1798 and 2501 in the hand-specimen and has pointed out their similarity to salt industry ceramics from the Droitwich Friar Street site (1974 excavations). This similarity was also noted in a comparison with thin sections taken from material from Droitwich and from Beckford (above), though the samples from Droitwich so far analyzed seem to lack the fine-grained sandstone inclusions present in two of the Beckford sherds.

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Peacock, D.P.S. (1968) 'A petrological study of certain Iron
Age pottery from western England',
· PPS, 34(1968), 414-426.

¹ Miss Morris is currently researching into the salt industry of the West Midlands at Southampton University.

BECKFORD FABRIC GROUPS

Period	Fabric group	Former groups used by WJB	Groups used on 15/3/77
earlier prehistoric pottery	1-9		
Iron Age pottery	10 Peacock A	1	A
	11 Peacock B1	2	B
	12 Peacock B2/Oolitic limestone	8	C
	13 Fossil shell	5	E
	13.1 Fossil shell plus quartz		
	14 Quartz	3	D
	14.1 Quartz plus shell		
	14.2 Quartz plus limestone	6,9	G
	14.3 Quartz plus ironstone	7	F
	14.4 Quartz and mica	10	
'ultimate Iron Age'	etc.		
Roman	etc.		
Medieval	etc.		