

## **The petrology of a Trevisker ware vessel from Monkton, Thanet, Kent**

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A sample from the Trevisker ware vessel from Monkton, Thanet (site MMP94) was thin-sectioned in order to establish whether the vessel was an import from the southwest of England and, if so, how it related to other Trevisker wares, whose petrology has been studied by Parker-Pearson (1990).

The vessel contained abundant angular fragments of metamorphosed basic igneous rock, an amphibolite. Angular quartz was present but not common.

In his study of Trevisker ware in the southwest, Parker Pearson identified several distinct fabrics:

- Gabbroic clay, containing abundant fragments of Lizard Gabbro
- Fabrics containing gabbro and other rock types and minerals
- Fabrics containing greenstone fragments
- Fabrics containing greenstone fragments and rounded quartz
- Fabrics containing granite and granitic minerals

The first two of these fabric groups have similar distributions, centred in southern Cornwall. Parker-Pearson interprets the first fabric as being the product of potters in the Lizard peninsula and the second to be most likely either produced by peripatetic potters from the Lizard area who carried gabbroic clay with them from site to site, mixing it with local materials or by potters based at some distance from the Lizard who periodically travelled to the peninsula to collect raw materials. Ethnographic parallels support both models. Whether the Lizard clay was thought to be particularly suitable for pottery production or whether the gabbro was added for symbolic reasons is unknowable (although the parallel use of greenstone in south Devon and dolerite in northern England suggests the latter).

The greenstone fabrics are found mainly in south Devon and north Cornwall and the granitic fabrics are widely distributed, but with a concentration in west Cornwall.

The Monkton sherd is definitely an example of the first group, produced from Lizard Gabbroic clay, probably at the Lizard peninsula itself.

ApSimon and Greenfield (1972) have listed 29 findspots of Trevisker ware outside of the southwest and of these two have been studied in thin-section by Parker-Pearson. Both proved to have been made from the Lizard Gabbroic clay. This is, perhaps to be expected since the distribution of the greenstone-tempered fabrics shows that they were not particularly common on the south coast, where people sailing along the coast might have acquired them. Parker-Pearson argues that the larger Trevisker

ware vessels, found outside of the southwest were probably used to hold water or store provisions on board these boats and, if so, rather than being an example of prestige exchange the presence of a Trevisker ware vessel from the Lizard at Monkton may well indicate direct contact between the inhabitants of this site and traders from Cornwall.

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## Bibliography

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