

**Some thoughts on the Crescent Road kiln material (5/7/00)**

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During a visit to the Colchester Museum archive (Jarmin Rd) on 4th July 2000, I looked at all the illustrated pottery from the 1972 Crescent Road excavations identified as the 'discarded products of a nearby kiln' (Wickenden 1986, 46). I wanted to see if I could match any of this with the Elms Farm kiln pottery. The upshot of was that none of the pottery, except a D11 stamped mortarium from pit 75 (which wasn't part of the kiln material), could be matched by form, though some of it matched by fabric.

Pit 65: The fabric of ten illustrated vessels matched GRS and GRF fabrics from the Area W kilns. These vessels are B2/B4, G24, G5, E5, G9, and H34. None of these *exactly* matched Area W forms.

Pit 75: No matches, except the mortarium above

Pit 76: The fabric of three illustrated vessels matched GRS fabric from Area N. The forms are G5, rilled shoulder G24, and H34. One vessel (G5) matched the Area W GRF fabric. A buff ware D11, placed in non-kiln product category, is probably local product.

Well 79: No matches, although the fabric resembled Area N GRS. Wasn't much like Area W GRS, and nothing like Area L GRS. Two of the products looked more like BB2 than BSW, and I would have called them this, had I recorded the pottery.

I then looked through the boxes that contained pit 65 and pit 76 the bulk of the grey ware (non-illustrated pottery). Most of it was small sherds, fairly abraded. There were little signs of spalling or wasting generally. Fabrics were mixed, too; pit 65, for example, contained Area N-looking grey ware, as well as Area W-looking grey ware. There was also pottery that looked like neither. Incidentally, the illustrated pottery was not spalled or overfired, either.

Conclusions: I wonder whether this pottery does mainly represent the discarded products of a nearby kiln. To me, the pottery resembles an ordinary pottery assemblage that has had a hard life; that is, the pottery was made (somewhere), used, discarded, and probably redeposited. The assemblage size doesn't raise my eyebrows. But it obviously seemed like a lot in comparison to some far smaller contexts, and this, along with the fairly homogeneous forms and fabrics, led Wickenden to suggest that it came from a kiln dump. It should come as no surprise that there are fabric matches, if most or all of the pottery is locally produced. Perhaps there is another kiln somewhere; it is conceivable that this pottery *was* fired in Area W and/or Area N. But I don't think this pottery includes many wasters, if any. On a more positive note, the presence of two mortarium stamps brings the total of 'kiln' stamps to 23.