

A SHERD OF DERBYSHIRE WARE FROM SOUTH WALES

By PETER V. WEBSTER

(Department of Extra-Mural Studies, University College, Cardiff)

AMONG the many hundredweights of coarse pottery from the recent total excavation of the Iron Age and Roman farmstead site at Whitton Cross Roads, Glamorgan,¹ there is a single sherd of Derbyshire ware.² The sherd is from a comparatively thin-walled (2.5 mm.) vessel with a maximum girth of approximately 9 cms. and an estimated height of about 15 cms. No fragment of rim survived. Comparison of the fragment with material in the Teaching Collection of the University of London, Institute of Archaeology, suggests that the vessel may have been made at the Hazelwood kilns. The sherd comes from a drainage gully associated with the final phase of the North Range of the Roman farmstead (and provisionally dated to the 3rd/mid-4th century).

The chief interest of the fragment lies in its provenance — it must surely be the most southerly find of Derbyshire ware yet made. With no other Derbyshire ware identified among the great mass of material from Whitton, the vessel in question seems most likely to have reached the site while serving as a container.³ Even so, it is hard to imagine that this can have been the only Derbyshire ware vessel to have reached South Wales, or southern Britain generally. Derbyshire ware, even in the period of greatest production (the 3rd and 4th centuries)⁴ was chiefly to be found in the area within easy reach of the kilns and in the northern military market. However, this new find from a hitherto unsuspected "export area" suggests that in future the possibility of the limited marketing of Derbyshire ware in areas considerably to the south of the kilns cannot entirely be excluded.

¹ Grid Reference ST 081713. Excavation for the Ministry of Public Building and Works and University College, Cardiff, under Dr. M. G. Jarrett (to whom I am grateful for permission to publish this sherd), cf. *J.R.S.*, LVI, 1966, 196; LVII, 1967, 175; LVIII, 1968, p. 176; LIX, 1969, 200, and fig. 26; also *Britannia* Vol. 2 forthcoming.

² Site Code no. W70To. The pottery is at present stored in the University College, Cardiff, Dept. of Archaeology, but will shortly be deposited in the National Museum of Wales.

³ cf. *D.A.J.*, LXXXII, 1962, 42, where it is suggested that Derbyshire ware jars may have served as containers for beans.

⁴ i.e. at the same date as the sherd under discussion. cf. *D.A.J.*, LXXXIX, 1969, 20, fig. 1, for comparative distribution maps.