

Rowan

CHERRY TREE FARM

The Other Pottery

9470 sherds, comprising all the pottery other than locally produced mortaria, and weighing 130,810g, were examined. The average sherd weight was 13.8g, a marked contrast with Hartshill, where the surviving sherds averaged 29.5g, a figure which presumably reflects the disposal of large numbers of body sherds at Hartshill.

At Cherry tree Farm only 26 fabrics were represented (cf Hartshill with 29). Thirteen of these are considered to be local products, of which only 4 occurred in significant quantity (ie over 1% of the total number of sherds). The non-local products amounted to 1.4% of the total number of sherds (and only 1% of the total EVEs). This quantity, and factors such as the relative scarcity of fine wares, suggest only limited domestic activity in the vicinity - a suggestion supported by the absence of excavated evidence for structures etc. 58.1% (of sherds) of the non-local material occurred in topsoil - unstratified contexts, whereas only 47.2% of the *comparable* likely kiln products were found in these contexts. This also implies that some at least of the non-local material was not originally closely *N. mortaria* associated with the production site but was introduced by agencies such as later ploughing or related to Roman activity which post-dated the production of pottery on the site.

The pottery was quantified by number of sherds, weight, a vessel count based on distinct rims, and EVEs (estimated vessel equivalents, arrived at by dividing the surviving rim percentage by 100). The results are tabulated (fig). The percentages derived from these figures contrast interestingly. Those for weight and EVEs tend to be similar, and those for number of sherds and vessel count were also fairly closely comparable. The differences between the two pairs of figures seem to demonstrate the tendency for fabric 34 (the principal oxidised fabric) to fragment more easily than the common reduced fabrics (45 and 47) and thus to be slightly overrepresented in sherd and rim counts. Hereafter, quantities (unless otherwise specified) are expressed in terms of EVEs.

not the case w. mortaria

As usual, reduced coarsewares were the most important element in the assemblage, totalling 62%. Fabric 45, with 52.8% of the total assemblage, was dominant. Fabric 47, the only other important reduced fabric (7.9%) is more difficult to assess. While macroscopically distinct it seems to represent simply an overfired version both of fabric 45 and also of some vessels which were originally intended to be oxidised (fabric 34). This is particularly evident in Kiln 1, which was clearly producing oxidised coarsewares, but where many partly reduced sherds were also found. An examination of the forms from the site with this problem in mind was, however, inconclusive since vessel types in fabric 47 occur both in fabrics 34 and 45. For example, though the majority of all tankards (65.5%) occur in fabric 34 they are also found in fabric 45, and their occurrence in kiln 105 (where reduced wares dominate) in fabric 47 probably reflects a genuine attempt to produce the form in a reduced fabric. Thus the extent to which fabric 47 represents either overfired fabric 45 or 34 cannot be quantified, though in most cases a relationship with the reduced fabric 45 has been assumed. The part reduced sherds from Kiln 1 were recorded as fabric 34,

on the (subjective) assumption that this was the fabric which the potter of this kiln had intended.

Fabric 34, the major oxidised fabric, amounted to 31.7% of the total pottery. This figure is higher than at Hartshill (26%), a fact which may reflect the date range of Cherry Tree Farm, where there is little or no evidence for coarseware production after the early 3rd century. At Hartshill, where production continued later, grey wares were more important in the later period, reducing the overall proportion of oxidised wares at this site. White wares were poorly represented at Cherry Tree Farm, totalling 4.4%, almost entirely in fabric 8, the only significant whiteware fabric. Even this figure may be regarded as slightly inflated owing to the tendency of flagon necks to survive as single sherds rather than being broken and dispersed like other vessel rims. Fabric 8 constituted only 2.4% of the total sherds, and 2.1% of the total weight.

most of the remaining local products can be regarded as variants on these main fabrics. The white fabric 314, oxidise fabric 43, and reduced fabrics 46 and 54 stand in relation to fabrics 8, 34 and 45 as sandier (and often harder fired) versions with little significant departure from the repertoire of forms shown by the 'parent' fabrics. Of the other oxidised fabrics, 44, a fine fabric usually used for beakers, occurs only in topsoil and is unlikely to have been produced in the excavated Cherry Tree Farm kilns. Fabric 326, a possible local product with very prominent iron inclusions, occurs mainly (c. 70% of sherds) in topsoil and unstratified contexts and entirely in MH Areas. It is uncertain if it was actually produced at Cherry Tree Farm.

The remaining reduced fabrics are all insignificant in terms of quantity. Fabric 323 is a variant of fabric 45 with ?grog inclusions. The relative scarcity of fabrics 42 and 58 is interesting and compares with Hartshill where neither was at all common, by contrast with Mancetter Broad Close where both were better represented. At Cherry tree Farm they together constitute only 1% of the total pottery (only .5% at Hartshill) and their production here can only have been on a very small scale, but nevertheless demonstrating the tendency for fabric 42 to recur in slightly unusual forms (eg 2 of the 5 surviving rim sherds are of lids).

NON-LOCAL FABRICS

These require little comment. Only 5 of the 22 sherds of samian ware (fabric 100) were stratified, severely restricting its value for independent dating evidence. Samian and Nene valley colour-coated ware (fabric 24) were the only 'fine wares' present on the site, totalling only .2% of the assemblage Amphorae represented by 6 sherds, with no rims. Of the remaining coarsewares only 2 fabrics were at all significant; fabric 4, a verticular fabric used almost exclusively for jars which occurs widely in this area and may have a relatively local source (eg at Colesmill where 520 sherds were recorded it constituted 3.2% of the total number of sherds from the site), and fabric 57, Black Burnished ware, with .5% of the total assemblage constituting half of all the non-local pottery (by EVEs). Other identifiable coarsewares were Severn valley ware (fabric 41 - 4 sherds), a possible sherd of Derbyshire ware (fabric 53), two typical rim sherds of late third-fourth century shell gritted ware, perhaps of Northamptonshire origin (fabric 73), and three sherds probably from the verlamium region

(fabric 7), one of which was a mortarium fragment undoubtedly from that source.

DISTRIBUTION OF FABRICS BY AREA

The distribution of coarseware fabrics between the excavated areas calls for comment. The quantity of pottery from MCB3 (2870 sherds) was only 30.3% of the total coarse pottery, though the excavated area was larger than that of MH83 (35.2% of the pottery (by weight) was from MC, but the figure for EVEs (29.6%) supports the proportion indicated by number of sherds). This implies that coarseware production, if carried on at all in MCB3, was probably on a fairly small scale, unless the potters had been very careful to dispose of waste outside the excavated area, which seems unlikely, particularly in view of the vast quantity of mortaria waste which found its way into ditch 9 and 14.

Broadly speaking the relative proportions of the fabrics follow the c. 70:30 split between MH and MC, but there are some exceptions. 83.7% of the non-local sherds occur in MH and only 16.3% in MC, where only 6 of the 13 non-local fabrics are represented at all. This is not necessarily particularly significant since most of the non-local fabrics are only represented by a few sherds, but only 10% of all the BB1 (fabric 57), for example, is found at MC. The significance of these facts is uncertain but tends to imply that the concentration of domestic occupation and activity over a relatively wide date range is in or closer to the area of MH than MC.

The kiln products are fairly evenly distributed between the two main areas, the most significant exception being fabric 34, an unusually high proportion of which occurs in MC (40.9% of sherds). When the material from the adjacent fieldwalking, which consists very largely of oxidised sherds (included with the MC material) is discounted this figure is reduced to 37.5%, which is still higher than average. Much of the MC fabric 34 occurs in ditch 14 and 9, where it is as common as fabric 45 (547 and 551 sherds respectively). The high incidence of fabric 34 in MC is not obviously related directly to kiln production (on the basis of the present evidence) and is not easily explained. The material may possibly be derived from a coarseware kiln specialising in oxidised products and located immediately adjacent to the excavated area. Some of the less important fabrics do display uneven distributions between MH and MC. 326, one of the oxidised fabrics thought to be a local product, was located entirely in MH (72 sherds, and 26 of the 27 sherds of fabric 42 also occur there. None of the other fabrics occur in sufficient quantity for anomalies in distribution to have any significance.

It is difficult to draw firm conclusions as to the exact nature of pottery production in any one kiln given the nature of assemblages which accumulate in or near to kiln structures. The results of a sherd count of the major fabrics occurring in each kiln are tabulated (fig). While the exact significance of these figures is uncertain it seems fairly clear that kiln 1 specialised in the production of oxidised coarsewares and that kiln 4 was used for firing reduced coarsewares. The connection of kilns 2 and 3 with coarseware production is uncertain. Their stokehole was filled primarily with mortarium sherds, and there seems no good reason to doubt that these indicate the firing of mortaria in at least the later of the two kilns.

The coarse pottery, also almost entirely from the stokehole context (3/5), is fairly evenly divided between reduced and oxidised wares, which makes it impossible to decide what part, if any, these kilns played in coarse ware production. The situation with regard to the MC kilns is even less clear. It is possible that kiln 105 was used for the production of reduced coarsewares, but there is insufficient clear evidence from kilns 108 and 113 to allow any conclusions to be drawn. It is quite likely that they were devoted largely if not entirely to the firing of mortaria.

An attempt was made to see if there were any discernible patterns when the incidence of fabric against context type was tabulated, but the figures were inconclusive. The occurrence of local and non-local fabrics in topsoil has already been discussed. 18.5% of the local fabrics (number of sherds) were found in kilns, oxidised wares being more common in kiln contexts (23.4%). This is because of the high incidence of oxidised wares in kiln 1. The figure for white ware occurrence in kilns (10.8%) is relatively low, and might suggest that white wares were not actually being produced at all in the excavated Cherry Tree Farm kilns.

VESSEL TYPES

A fairly wide range of vessel types was produced at the Cherry Tree Farm kilns, though a few types were poorly represented and the chronological limitations of the site probably also had an effect on the repertoire of forms.

The assemblage was dominated by jars of various levels, comprising 57.4% of the total number of locally produced vessels. Of these the variety of medium necked jars with curved outturned rims is the most important component, in white, oxidised and reduced fabrics. Jars with angled everted rims (13.5% of all jars) were also important but only in reduced fabrics, and wide necked vessels amounted to 12.6% of the jars. Apart from these, no individual jar types were particularly significant. Narrow necked jars were poorly represented. Vessels which could be described specifically as storage jars were very scarce, though the cut off point between these and the larger medium and wide necked vessels is difficult to define precisely.

Jars were most important in the reduced fabrics, where they amounted to 69.0% of the vessels produced, as against 38.9% for oxidised ware and only 31.0% of the white fabrics. Reduced jars formed 43.2% of the locally produced vessels on the site. This emphasis on basic jar types in the reduced fabrics is paralleled at Hartshill. It is noteworthy that the percentages of vessel types in fabric 47 does not entirely match that in fabric 45. While the percentage of jars (65.1%) is reasonably close to that for fabric 45 (70.4%) there are discrepancies in some other vessel types, particularly beakers (8.6% of fabric 47 and 3.0% of fabric 45) and tankards (only .6% of fabric 45 but 11.6% of the vessel types in fabric 47). This may support the suggestion (see above) that some fabric 47 vessels are in fact overfired versions of fabric 34, both beakers and tankards being significantly more strongly represented in oxidised than reduced versions.

Beakers, carinated bowls, bowls dishes and tankards were all significant components of the range of vessel types, but none was particularly prominent. Laminated bowls, comprising 7.21% of the total kiln products,

were the most important type after jars followed by beakers (6.21%). The percentages for these type show a variable distribution among the major fabrics. The majority of all the carinated bowls (51.5%) and beakers (59.8% were made in fabric 34, the principal oxidised fabric and each constituted 11.6% of the total production in that fabric, as opposed to 5.4% (for carinated bowls) and 3.9% (for beakers of the reduced wares. For bowls, however, the figure for oxidised and reduced coarsewares are much more comparable, bowls constituting 5.1% and 4.4% of output respectively. This contrasts with figures for white wares (fabric 8) which account for an appreciable percentage of the bowls (13.0% of all bowls, constituting 14.7% of all white ware vessel types). The total number of white ware bowls was, however, insufficient to boost significantly the proportion of the type as a whole. At Hartshill, with a considerably larger sample, bowls constituted 32.1% of all vessels in fabric 8 (and 5.7% of all vessel types, a figure closely comparable to that from Cherry Tree Farm), which demonstrates the importance of the type in white ware. Carinated bowls on the other hand do not occur at all in white fabrics at Cherry Tree Farm.

Dishes also comprised a higher proportion of vessels in oxidised fabrics (6.2%) as against 4.4% of reduced fabrics, though they only amount to 42.2% of the total number of dishes, reduced bowls being 56.3% and white wares 1.1%. Tankards were dominated by oxidised wares. They constituted 6.3% of all the oxidised vessels, but only 2.0% of the reduced wares. The remaining vessel types were all insignificant - flagons, all in white ware amounted to 2.1% of the total of locally produced vessels, and lids, were only .9% of local production. Cups and a dish/bowl (exact type uncertain) were each represented by a single vessel. Uncertain or unidentifiable types amounted to 12.8% of the kiln products. This proportion was considerably higher for the oxidised (19.8%) than for reduced wares (9.5%), reflecting the greater tendency of the former to fragment into unidentifiable pieces.

The non-local products add little to the range of vessel types. The presence of fabric 57 (BB1) boosts the total of 'cooking pot' jars, and, with two examples in Nene Valley ware (fabric 24), constitutes a substantial percentage of the total of straight sided bowls, but since the overall figure for the latter type is so low detailed consideration is meaningless. There are no types not represented by the kiln products, except for two amphorae which occur as body sherds only.

DECORATION

A fairly wide range of decorative techniques was employed at Cherry Tree Farm. The number of occurrences of each major decorative type for each fabric are shown in fig. and a more detailed breakdown of the most important types is also given, in which only locally produced fabrics are considered. Grooves in a variety of positions on the vessel were the most common form of decoration, followed by burnished zones; all other decorative types were much less commonly used. In fact it is most likely that the use of burnishing was originally much more common than now appears, adverse soil conditions being responsible for the removal of burnished and other surfaces. This can be shown from the figures for fabric 47. This fabric is generally well or overfired and consequently much more resistant to erosion than the other coarseware fabrics. 27.5% of sherds in fabric 47 have burnished zones of various kinds, as against 5.8%

of sherds in fabric 45 (the main reduced fabric) and 41% in fabric 34. There is no reason to suppose that fabric 47 is unrepresentative in the amount of decoration it was given. While less obvious, burnished lines were also more highly represented in fabric 47 than any other fabric. Burnished line decoration is generally scarce, particularly in fabric 34, 83.3% of all such decoration is in the form of horizontal lines. Burnished zones are less easy to define - a majority of the instances of this type of decoration (54.21) are of sherds with overall burnish, whose position in relation to the vessels from which they can only rarely be determined. 17.3 of all examples have burnish on the shoulder of the vessel, and a further 4.2% have evidence for burnish on the rim and shoulder. Internal burnish of open forms is rare, but this may be a factor of poor soil conditions.

Lattice decoration is scarce, though this may have suffered in the same way as burnished lines and zones. Other decorative types require little comment. 'Comb' decoration, particularly common on the oxidised fabric 326, was confined to fine horizontal rilling. Rouletting was also more frequent in oxidised than reduced fabrics, mainly for beakers. Roughcast, barbotine and red paint decoration are all extremely rare, the latter as a result of the relative lack of importance of white wares. White paint and rustication are absent entirely. The complete lack of rustication is surprising and does not seem to be a function at the date of the local production, since a reasonable proportion of this must belong to the first half of the second century, a period when rusticated decoration was still relatively common elsewhere in the west midlands (eg it was used as a decorative technique in kiln 2 at Tiddington, dated c. AD 120-160). In general terms rustication seems to be much less common in north Warwickshire than in the south of the county.