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INTRODUCTION

The majority of traded commodities in the ancient world, many of them perishables, have rarely left traces behind for the archaeologist or historian interested in the trade-routes and commerce of antiquity. However, certain valued items of trade such as wine, olive-oil and fish-products were commonly transported long distances in large tightly-sealed pottery-amphorae, sturdily-built to stand up to the buffeting of the journey, and sherds of these vessels are often found on a variety of sites during the Greco-Roman and Byzantine era. A detailed study of such amphorae can sometimes provide invaluable evidence of economic activity not readily available from most other classes of pottery. These large two-handled jars were specifically intended as containers for bulk carrying of goods, and unlike the majority of other pottery-types, it was the contents which were prized rather than the vessel itself. From this it follows that an appreciation of the goods carried in amphorae and their point of origin can furnish us with information on the ancient economy, the trade routes employed and the relative importance of the centres of exportation and importation. Additionally, it may throw some light on the lifestyles of the people who chose to import the best Italian wine or acquired a taste for Spanish fish sauces.

Despite the fact that amphorae were apparently produced in

large quantities and might well be broken-up on receipt of their contents. There is a high degree of standardization of manufacture within each category of form. The various producing centres appear to have had their own particular amphorae shapes, perhaps for easy recognition of the contents, although similar types were made in diverse areas. Fortunately, an appreciation of the fabrics involved, largely through the application of petrological studies, is beginning to allow certain amphorae types to be confidently allocated to the exporting centres involved in this trade. Equally importantly, formless bodysherds can now often be attributed to particular types. These latter two points are especially relevant for late Iron Age studies in Southern Britain. A detailed examination of the forms and fabrics of Roman amphorae in pre-Roman Britain by David Peacock (1971) some ten years ago, considerably advanced our understanding of the trade contacts, chronology and political events of the British La Tene III period. In this paper it is the purpose of the writer to briefly re-examine this material in the light of recent amphorae discoveries, which add further to our knowledge of the wide trading contacts that existed in the late pre-Roman British Iron Age.

ROMAN AMPHORAE IN LATE IRON AGE BRITAIN

In his study of amphorae in British pre-Roman Iron Age contexts, Peacock (1971) drew attention to the variety of sources from which these vessels had originated. He was able to demonstrate for example that the important second and first century B.C. Dressel form 1 wine-amphora (fig. ,1 and 2) was made principally in Campania and Latium (later extended to include Etruria, 1978). Moreover, the Dressel 1A type with its jutting triangular-rim (fig. ,1) and the 1B variety with a near vertical collar-rim (fig. ,2) turned out to be

petrologically similar, both containing characteristic inclusions of green augite and volcanic rock fragments, and therefore did not represent the products of two distinct areas as had been previously suggested (Ettlinger, 1960).

The distribution pattern in Britain of these two amphorae types is revealing (Peacock, 1971, fig. 36). The earlier Dressel 1A form, dating from the second century to about the middle of the first century B.C., is present in some numbers at Hengistbury Head in the south of the country, with outliers as far away as Carn Euny, Cornwall (Williams, 1978) and at Mushrooms Farm, Braughing, Hertfordshire. Finds of the later Dressel 1B form are concentrated in the south east part of the country, more especially the Hertfordshire - Essex region. The two distribution patterns seem to reflect historically known events: (a) the uprising of the Gaulish Veneti in 56 B.C. disrupting Roman trade with Hengistbury Head, and (b) the friendship of Rome with the Trinovantes in the east of Britain following Caesar's expedition to Britain in 55 and 54 B.C. Both of these events roughly coinciding with the typological change in amphora form from Dressel 1A to 1B.

The appearance of the Dressel 1 amphora in Britain can perhaps be summed up as follows. Importations of the 1A variety arrived at Hengistbury Head during the period from the second half of the second century to just before the middle of the first century B.C. A small number of the Dressel 1B form also occur at Hengistbury Head. This suggests that the shift of amphorae distribution away from Hengistbury Head took place at the very time of the change in form. Unfortunately this typological change cannot as yet be precisely dated, but

sometime around the middle of the first century B.C. would be in keeping with the continental evidence (Peacock, 1971). The Dressel 1A type was essentially a wine-amphora from Italy, and the British vessels appear to have come mainly from the Campanian and Latium regions (ibid). According to Peacock the trade route to Britain is likely to have been via Narbonensis and the Garonne waterway, and then around the coast of Brittany into the English Channel. The Dressel 1B type, which appears predominantly in the Hertfordshire - Essex region, seems to have been coming in the main from the same producing regions and to have followed roughly the same trade route as its 1A predecessor.

The writer has supplemented Peacock's thin section analyses on both variants of the Dressel 1 form in the hope of working out the proportions of vessels which were sent from the various Italian centres to Britain. With one fabric exception, the results have proved disappointing, as it has proved difficult to achieve clear-cut geological groupings. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that the three main producing centres of Campania, Latium and Etruria are all covered by fairly similar volcanic tracts. In addition, any slight nuances of fabric may well be accounted for in the manufacture of these amphorae on different farming estates within a given region, rather than seeing them as products of large 'factory-type' concerns (ibid, 164). The one exception to this is the 'black sand' fabric associated with the Dressel 1B form in British contexts, for which a Campanian origin has been convincingly argued, in particular the region around Pompeii and Herculaneum (Peacock, 1977, 153).

Dressel 1B appears unaccompanied by other forms of amphorae in the rich Welwyn-type burials which have been dated independently by the associated metalwork from 50 - 10 B.C. (Stead, 1967). The earliest appearance of new amphorae forms is at the Lexden tumulus,

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near Colchester, where ten Dressel 2-4 types and one Rhodian were buried together with four Dressel 1B vessels (Laver, 1927). The Greco-Roman Dressel 2-4 type with simple beaded-rim and bifid handles (fig. ,3) and the Rhodian with sharp peaked rod handles (fig. ,4), both seem to have started production in the last ten to fifteen years of the first century B.C. The former superseding the Dressel 1B type which stopped being made at this time. A date within the last fifteen years of the first century B.C. would thus see the arrival in eastern Britain of the Dressel 2-4 and Rhodian types, although the latter form is probably more characteristic of post-Claudian contexts. Selective thin section examination of the Lexden Dressel 2-4 amphorae show that these types were initially coming from Italy. The Lexden tumulus is also revealing in that no Spanish amphorae forms are present in what is a relatively large group of vessels, and this suggests that at this time Spain took a minor or non-existent part in the amphorae trade to Britain. As the Greco-Roman amphorae types are well represented in the Rhineland during this period (Wittlinger, 1977), the main trade-route to Britain was probably via the Rhone-Rhine waterways. Gallo-Belgic pottery, for example, starts to appear in Britain at this time, or shortly after, and could have accompanied the amphorae via the Rhine.

Shipments of southern Spanish amphorae began arriving in eastern Britain shortly after the Greco-Roman types. The Mount Bures burial, north of Colchester, contained four Spanish Dressel 10 vessels associated with a Dressel 1B body and Gallo-Belgic pottery (Smith, 1852). The Dressel 1B vessel had its neck and handles removed in antiquity, and may well have been somewhat 'archaic' when buried (Rodwell, 1976, 319). The Dressel 10 type is not exactly matched in the Camulodunum series of Spanish amphorae (Hawkes and Hull, 1947), so a pre-Cunobelin date (i.e. before A.D. 10) should probably be

applied to the Mount Bures burial, and the first arrival of southern Spanish amphorae to Britain.

Small amounts of southern Spanish and Baetican amphorae appear in Period 1 levels at Camulodunum in the form of Camulodunum 185A with its characteristic grooved handles (fig. , 5), the bell-mouthed Camulodunum 186A (fig. , 6) and the familiar globular type Dressel 20, together with Greco-Roman types, mainly from Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean region (Peacock, 1971; 1977). These early Spanish forms also appear in some numbers on the Rhineland (Ettlinger, 1977), while they are virtually absent from that area of south Britain which saw the main distribution of the Italian Dressel 1A type, suggesting that the above Spanish amphorae were arriving in eastern Britain via the Rhône and Rhine.

The late Iron Age tribes of the central south coast area of Britain do not appear to have obtained supplies of either the fish products which seem to have been the major contents of the southern Spanish amphorae or the Italian wine associated with the Dressel 2-4 types, both of which were enjoyed in increasing numbers by the Belgic tribes in the south-east of the country. However, the previously held view of a dearth of amphorae contact in the former area from the middle of the first century B.C. until the Conquest, now needs to be radically altered following recent excavations at two coastal sites within the Durotrigian region: Cleavel Point, Ower and Hengistbury Head.

Both Cleavel Point and Hengistbury Head have produced a number of examples of a distinctive amphora made in the Catalan region of northern Spain. Stratification details are at present lacking for Hengistbury Head, but at Cleavel Point these amphorae were associated with Tiberian imitation Gallo-Belgic forms, together with pottery from the Aquitaine region of France which could be early Augustan in date (information from Jane Timby). A late Augustan or Tiberian

date for the northern export of this amphora type would broadly agree with a similar find from the east Rhineland fort of Westphalie, near Holsterhausen, which should be dated to the last decade of the first century B.C. - early first century A.D. (Tchernia, 1971, 56-57).

The amphora in question is form Dressel-Pascual 1 (fig. ,7), which was based on the Italian Dressel 1B type, and which has a high vertical rim, cylindrical neck, ovoid body and rounded handles with a distinctive longitudinal groove. This amphora form probably held wine, as the Layetanian area where kilns producing this type have been found (Pascual, 1977) was praised by Martial as having a quality of wine second only to that of Campania (xiii, 118). Production of this amphora-form has also been claimed in south-west France at Aspiran, just west of Montpellier (Genty, 1975).

Two fabrics of the Dressel-Pascual 1 form are represented at both Cleavel Point and Hengistbury Head. Fabric 1 is in a hard rough, dark red to reddish-brown fabric (10R 4/4 to 4/6), with large white inclusions of quartz and felspar, golden mica and fragments of granite scattered throughout (see pl.). Fabric 2 is in a slightly softer, smoother creamy-white fabric (between 7.5YR 8/2 and 7/4), lacking the mica but containing the quartz and felspar present in Fabric 1 (see pl.). Both fabrics appear to have been produced in the Barcelona region (Pascual, 1977), but Fabric 2 may also have been made a little further down the south coast.

Dressel-Pascual 1 types are present on the continent in contexts ranging from late Republican/early Augustan at Vieille-Toulouse to A.D. 79 at Pompeii (Tchernia, 1977, 52-54), though the main export thrust was probably over before this latter date. Outside Spain, the main distribution area for Dressel-Pascual 1 amphorae was Narbonensis and Aquitania, and to date these types have appeared only rarely in northern Gaul and the Rhineland (Parker, 1977, 37). In Britain, besides Cleavel Point and Hengistbury Head, sherds from

likely Dressel-Pascual 1 vessels have recently been recognized at Bagendon, Gloucestershire (site dated A.D. 20-50) and Knighton, Isle of Wight (Unstratified - information on both sites from Dr. D.P.S. Peacock); while single sherds have possibly been identified at Colchester (Hawkes and Hull, 1947, fig. 45, 2 - unstratified) and almost certainly at Thaxted, Essex (associated with a Dressel 1B amphora-burial). On present evidence, the distribution of the Dressel-Pascual 1 form in Britain shows a distinct southerly bias, more especially in the suspected territory of the Durotriges, and seems likely to have arrived in late Augustan or Tiberian times. Given the apparent paucity of finds in northern Gaul and the Rhineland, and only one pre-Conquest find in eastern Britain, it is probable that supplies of Dressel-Pascual 1 amphorae came from northern Spain via the Narbonensis-Garonne route around the coast of Brittany. This route would also more easily explain the presence at Cleavel Point of early Augustan pottery from Aquitania.

It seems significant that no southern Spanish or Italian Dressel 2-4 types of amphorae appear in the early first century levels at both Cleavel Point and Hengistbury Head, although these types are to be found in some numbers in the eastern part of the country at this date (Peacock, 1971). The answer may lie in some form of regional differentiation of amphorae deliveries to the late Iron Age tribes of pre-Conquest Britain. The south-eastern tribes receiving southern Spanish fish products and Italian wine via the Rhône-Rhine route, while the tribes of the Durotrigan region and surrounds received Catalan wine by way of the Garonne waterway. Fish products could be obtained by the Durotriges from a source closer at hand, namely a number of sites along the Brittany coastline which specialized in garum, etc. (Sanquer and Galliou, 1972).

Quite what the appearance of Dressel-Pascual 1 amphorae in British Iron Age contexts means in terms of regional distribution

is not immediately clear. More work obviously needs to be done in this area, but the possibility exists that what we are seeing in the amphorae distribution is some form of social and economic division, in terms of long distance products, between the tribes of the south-east and those of the central south. The presence in the Durotrigian area of early first century A.D. Roman amphorae at Cleavel Point and Hengistbury Head, strongly suggests that the tribe was not anti-Roman at this time, whatever the position may have been in the immediate pre-Conquest period (Wheeler, 1943, 63).

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