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Petrological analysis of a ribbed
basal sherd from Gloucester

PETROLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF A RIBBED BASAL SHERD
FROM GLOUCESTER

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A small ribbed basal sherd from a (?) late Roman amphora (46/74 III (24)) suspected of originating from the Eastern Mediterranean region, where vessels with ribbed decoration are particularly common, was submitted for thin sectioning and study under the petrological microscope. The sherd is in a fairly thin, hard, sandy fabric, with frequent inclusions of white limestone, and is a light red colour throughout (between Munsell 10R 6/3 and 6/6). Thin sectioning reveals frequent inclusions of limestone, fossil foraminifera and well-sorted quartz grains, average size 0.20-.40mm, together with a little mica and plagioclase feldspar. This range of non-plastic inclusions reflects a choice of raw materials from an area dominated by sedimentary rocks. It is, however, far too common to indicate any one particular region. Moreover, the Gloucester section does not, for example, compare favourably to the fabrics normally associated with the Bi and Bii Eastern Mediterranean amphorae found in Britain in post-Roman contexts (Williams, 1982). The origin and form of this amphora sherd must therefore remain unknown for the time being.

Williams, D.F. (1982) 'The petrology of certain Byzantine amphorae: some suggestions as to origins'; Colloque Sur La Ceramique Antique de Carthage, Dossier 1 CEDAC (1982), 99-108.