BLACK-BURNISHED WARE AND AMPHORAE FROM LITTLE CHESTER, DERBY

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Introduction

Sixteen sherds of BB1 (Black-burnished category 1) and twenty four amphorae sherds from excavations at Little Chester were submitted for identification of sources. All the BB1 sherds were examined with the aid of a binocular microscope, and a number were also thin sectioned and subjected to heavy mineral separation and then studied under the petrological microscope. Locally produced pottery in the form of a cordon-necked jar from the Little Chester kilns and a Derbyshire lid-seated jar were provided for comparative purposes.

(1) BB1 sherds

Thin sections were made of BB1 sherds BAC, FCE, GZG, GZA(bowl), PMA and the cordon-necked jar K52 and the Derbyshire lid-seated jar HBK. The BB1 sherds all showed frequent quartz grains, average size 0.20-0.60mm, and some pieces of shale, set in a fairly clean light brown anisotropic clay matrix. The two non-BB1 sherds also contained quartz grains, but the size and texture were noticeably different to the BB1 material. The cordon-necked jar contained a groundmass of small quartz grains 0.10mm and under in size, with a scatter of larger grains, while the Derbyshire lid-seated jar contained a scatter of ill-sorted quartz grains up to 1.50mm in size.

A heavy mineral separation of these same seven samples showed a tourmaline -rich assemblage for each of the BB1 sherds, which agreed well with analyses on BB1

vessels shown to have been made in the Wareham-Poole Harbour area of Dorset (Williams, 1977, Group 1). A similar origin for the Little Chester material is also likely. The cordon-necked jar and the Derbyshire lid-seated jar both produced suites in which the principal heavy mineral was zircon.

A hand-specimen examination of the remaining BB1 sherds revealed in most cases a fabric which appeared to be close to the analyzed material and hence likely also to have originated in Dorset: EKB, GZA(jar), EOC, BMA(jar), LAA, FCJ, BMA, AWA, FLB. The only exceptions were CAA, which was too burnt to tell, and EEG, which appears to be a different fabric - possibly ?Rossington Bridge.

(2) Amphorae sherds

Dressel 20

DLC 79 PCS (1)

DLC 79 DCZ (1)

DLC 79 ABA (1)

Dressel 20 amphorae were made along the banks of the River Guadalquivir and its tributaries between Seville and Cordoba in the Roman southern Spanish province of Baetica (Bonsor, 1931; Ponsich, 1974; 1979). They were used for the transport of olive-oil and have a wide date-range, from the Augustan prototype (Oberaden 83) to the late third century A.D. (Zevi, 1967).

Gallic Amphorae

DLC 79 FAA FAB (10)

DLC 79 DCZ (1)

DLC 79 ABA (2)

DLC 79 FEA (1)

DLC 80 LMF (5)

Pélichet 47 probably accounts for most, if not all of the sherds. This amphora type was made predominantly in Languedoc and Provence in southern France,

particularly around the mouth of the Rhone (Widemann et al, 1979). Panella (1973) has demonstrated that the principal content carried was undoubtedly wine. This type had a long life from about the middle of the first century A.D. to at least the early fourth century A.D. (ibid.). In Britain, Pélichet 47 is not found in pre-Boudiccan contexts (Peacock, 1978).

Unassigned

DLC 79 FAA FAB (1)

DLC 75 AFA (1)

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