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AMPHORAE FROM METCHLEY

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Introduction

The amphorae sherds, many of which were in a friable condition due to exposure to fire, were classified by fabric and form. The classification of types is based on Dressel (1899) and the Camulodunum series (Hawkes and Hull, 1947), supplemented by descriptive terms suggested by Peacock (1971; 1977). The types represented are Dressel 2-4, Rhodian style, Dressel 20, to which the overwhelming majority of sherds belong, Camulodunum 185A, Camulodunum 186A, Camulodunum 186sp, Southern Spanish and a few unassigned sherds. Brief notes on the origins and chronological span of the amphorae are given below.

|                                 |           |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Total weight of amphorae        | 76,354gms |
| Total number of amphorae sherds | 874       |

% Total of each fabric

|                  | <u>% By Weight</u> |       | <u>% By Count</u> |       |
|------------------|--------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| Dressel 2-4      | 642gms             | 0.8%  | 8                 | 0.9%  |
| Rhodian style    | 424gms             | 0.6%  | 7                 | 0.8%  |
| Dressel 20       | 71,638gms          | 93.8% | 807               | 92.1% |
| Cam. 185A        | 441gms             | 0.6%  | 1                 | 0.1%  |
| Cam. 186A        | 114gms             | 0.1%  | 2                 | 0.2%  |
| Cam. 186sp       | 907gms             | 1.2%  | 5                 | 0.6%  |
| Southern Spanish | 456gms             | 0.6%  | 6                 | 0.7%  |
| Unassigned       | 1,732gms           | 2.3%  | 39                | 4.6%  |

Comments on Individual Forms

Dressel 2-4

M 68 T. Bifid handle in a very gritty fabric.

M 68 7. Simple bead rim which might belong to either Dressel 2-4 or Rhodian style.

M 68 D4 1. Bifid handle (two sherds) in a soft sandy fine-textured fabric, reddish-brown (2.5YR 6/6) in colour. Thin sectioning shows little but grains of quartz and flecks of mica, giving no indication of origin.

M 68 F5 1. Bodysherd with slight stub of incipient bifid handle, plus two bodysherds.

M 68 T. Bifid handle. In thin section this fabric is very similar to Peacock's (1971) Fabric 1, with an Italian origin.

This amphora type was made over a wide area, e.g. Italy, France, Spain, the Aegean, as well as Britain (Castle, 1978), during the period from the late first century B.C. to the mid second century A.D. However, quantitative trends suggest that it was in decline by the later first century A.D. (Panella, 1973). Tituli picti indicate that the principal content carried was wine (Zevi, 1966). One of the extant bifid handles (M 68 T) from Metchley probably originates from Italy.

Rhodian style

M 68 5. Bodysherd showing the stub of a rod handle, plus a small piece of a rod handle.

M 68 D4 1. Bodysherd showing the stub of a rod handle.

All the above material is in a soft sandy fine-textured fabric, orangy-brown (2.5YR 6/8) in colour.

M 68 D7 1. Four bodysherds (see below).

This form developed from late Hellenistic prototypes by the late first century B.C. and probably lasted until the early second century A.D. (Panella, 1973; Peacock, 1977). The predominance of this form on pre-Flavian military sites in Britain may be associated with the possible tribute of Rhodian wine exacted during the period A.D. 43-53, when Claudius rescinded the liberty of the Rhodians (Peacock, 1977). Thin sectioning of four bodysherds (M 68 D7 1) from Metchley shows a fabric similar to Peacock's (1977) Fabric 1, with a probable origin in Rhodes. The remainder of the material appears in the hand-specimen also to belong to Peacock's Fabric 1.

#### Dressel 20

##### Rims

M 68 F5 1; M 68 S7 1; M 68 D2 1 31; M 68 RA<sup>\*</sup>; M 68 F2 1 (4); M68 D7 1;  
M 68 C5 2; M 68 C5 2 30; M 68 T; M 68 \* 1<sup>\*</sup>; M 68 \* 6; M 68 X F1<sup>\*</sup>;  
M 68 F6 1; M 68 F4 1; M 68 D7 1; M 69 G3 F3; M 69 G4 T; M 69 G3 T (2);  
M 69 G2 T (2); M 68 S (2); M 68 T (5); M63 MFB 36; M67 AD1; M 68 S.

##### Handles

M 68 C5 2; M 65 1; M 68 D7 1; M 68 T (12, three stamped); M 68 RA<sup>\*</sup> (2);  
M 68 F2 1; M 68 71; M 68 F2 1; M 68 C7 1; M 68 D7 1; M 69 G2 T (2);  
M 68 S10; M 68 X S1; M 68 D5 1 (2); M 68 S63; Trench X level 1 outside  
inner fort ditch (3); M 68 F3 P2 (3); M 68 C6 2; M 68 S.

##### Bases

M 68 T (3); M 68 RA<sup>\*</sup>; M 69 G4 537; M 68 S 81.

Bodysherds

M 68 D2 1; M 68 D7 1 (6); M 68 T (153); M 68 D7 1 (4); M 68 S7 1 (3);  
M 68 C7 2; M 68 C7 ES (7); M 68 C6 ES (2); M 68 E6 1 (5); M68 RA (21);  
M 68 D6 1 (7); M 68 E5 1 (16); M 68 XRA 1. M 68 F5 2 (2); M 68 RA\* (8);  
M 68 F6 P1; M 68 D6 1 (26); M 68 DX 6 (6); M 68 D5 1 (28); M 68 C6 2 (6),  
M 68 F6 P3 (4) M 68 X 2 (2); M 68 F6 P2; M 68 F2 1 (11); M 68 C7 2 (3);  
M 68 D7 1 (16); M 68 F3 P2 (10); M 68 F6 CP (2); M 68 C2 1; M 68 D2 2;  
M 68 C3 2 (3); M 68 F1 1; M 68 C2 2 (3); M 68 D7 1 (7); M 69 H1 T;  
M 69 J2 1 (2); M 69 J2 F2 (3); M 69 J3 T; M 69 J1 P1 (3); M 69 H4 T;  
M 69 J3 F2 (2); M 69 J3 F1 (5); M 69 G3 P1; M 69 B0 T; M 69 G4 S19;  
M 69 H2 G1; M 69 I2 T; M 69 O2 ditch 1; M 69 G4 T; M 69 G3 T (7);  
M 69 G2 T (3); M 68 S43 (3); M 68 S17; M 68 S23; M 68 S10 (7); M 68 S32 (10);  
M 68 S33 (2); M 68 XS1 (9); M 68 S3; M 68 S69 (4); M 68 S2 (5); M 68 S55 (4);  
M 68 D5 1; M 68 S82 (2); M 68 S63 (2); M 63 S F9 (2); M 63 7 11 (3);  
M 68 X 2; M 68 S9; M 68 D7 P2 (3); M 68 D7 P1 (2); M 68 E6 1; M 68 D5 F2 (5);  
M 68 D5 PH4; M 68 C4 2 (9); M 68 IA 1; M 68 C5 2 (7); M 68 D4 2 (6);  
M 68 D3 2; M 68 K1 1 (3); M 68 D4 P1 (3); M 68 D7 F1; M 68 D6 CP (14);  
M 68 X \* (12); M 68 E2 H3 (6); M 68 C6 F1 (2); M 68 E5 1; M 68 C6 P1;  
M 68 C3 P1; M 68 F3 1 (25); M 68 F6 1 (6); M 68 F4 1 (3); M 68 F5 1 (5);  
M 68 F6 P2; M 68 D6 P1 (2); M 68 E1 1 (2); M 68 F6 P3; M 68 X F1\* (7);  
M 68 D4 1 (19); M 68 D2 1 (5); M 68 D3 1; M 68 D7 1; M 68 C7 1 (6);  
M 68 D4 1 (6); M 68 E3 1 (11); M 68 C5 1 (28); M 68 C2 1 (6); M 68 S (53).

This is the most common amphora type imported into Roman Britain (Williams and Peacock, 1983). Dressel 20 amphorae were made in the southern Spanish province of Baetica, along the banks of the River Guadalquivir and its tributaries between Seville and Cordoba, and carried olive-oil (Ponsich, 1974; 1979). At Metchley this form is represented by thirty-four rims, thirty-seven handles, six bases and over seven hundred bodysherds.

All the rims appear to belong to the earlier part of the Dressel 20

series, dating to the Claudian-Neronian period. The majority can be paralleled with nos. 6-15 from Augst illustrated by Martin-Kilcher (1983) in her scheme for the development of the Dressel 20 rim, and with the Dressel 20 finds from the Port Vendres II Claudian shipwreck (Colls et al, 1977). Sherds M 69 G4 T, M 69 G3 T, M 69 G2 T and M 68 T with a slightly less rounded more upright rim may possibly be pre-Claudian in date (e.g. nos. 3 and 5 at Augst).

Three of the Dressel 20 handles from Metchley (all from M 68 T) carry stamps, though one of these is illegible.

C.S..... This could be one of a number of stamps (cf. Callender, 1965).

OPT There is no exact parallel in Callender (1965) or Ponsich (1974; 1979). The nearest is Callender 1266 OPTATI dated A.D. 60-100, though there is no mention of the amphora form.

#### Camulodunum 185A

M 63 Trench 6 layer 5. Friable condition, but possibly the neck of a  
Camulodunum 185A.

This form had its origin in Baetica (Tchernia, 1980), the similarity in fabric with the more common Dressel 20 suggesting a source in the region of the River Guadalquivir (Peacock, 1971). In addition to the above neck of an amphora from Metchley which may possibly be of this type, in view of the fabric similarities it is possible that some of the thinner-walled sherds from the site classified as Dressel 20 are in reality Camulodunum 185A.

Amphorae of Camulodunum 185A form (Haltern 70) recovered from the Port Vendres II shipwreck carry inscriptions describing the contents as defrutum, a sweet liquid obtained from boiling down the must (Colls et al, 1977; Parker and Price, 1981). The date range for this form is from about the mid first century B.C. to the mid first century A.D. (Colls et al,

- M 68 C5 2. Upright rim in a soft fine-textured fabric, buff (7.5YR 7/4) in colour. Thin sectioning shows little but grains of quartz and flecks of mica, giving no indication of origins.
- M 68 T. Ribbed handle in a rough gritty fabric, dark buff (between 7.5YR 7/4 - 6/4) in colour.
- M 68 D2 2, M 68 C4 2, M 68 C3 1. Three pieces of ribbed handle in a rough sandy fabric, light red (10R 6/8 - 2.5YR 6/8) in colour. Possibly belonging to an amphora or a flagon.
- M 68 D7 1. Bodysherds (2).
- M 68 T. Bodysherds in a very friable condition (16).
- M 68 C5 2. Bodysherd.
- M 68 C4 2. Bodysherd.
- M 68 D7 1. Bodysherd.
- M 68 T. Part of a footring.
- M 68 T. Bodysherd.
- M 68 S17. Bodysherd.
- M 68 S55. Bodysherds (2).
- M 68 S82. Bodysherd.
- M 63 6 9a. Bodysherds (4).
- M 63 6 9bi. Bodysherds (2).

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