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A NOTE ON THE PETROLOGY OF THREE
LATE IRON AGE 'CORDONED WARE'
SHERDS FROM THE 1985 EXCAVATIONS
AT FURZEY ISLAND, CORFE PARISH,
DORSET.

D F Williams PhD FSA

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Summary

Petrological examination of three 'cordoned ware' sherds (Hengistbury Head Class B) from the Armorican Massif of north-western France. Each of the three sherds probably represents a separate vessel and can be roughly dated to the period c. 100 BC - AD 50. Sherds of Italian Dressel 1 wine amphora have also been recovered from the site (see AM Lab Report 4/86).

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A NOTE ON THE PETROLOGY OF THREE LATE IRON AGE 'CORDONED WARE' SHERDS
FROM THE 1985 EXCAVATIONS AT FURZEY ISLAND, CORFE PARISH, DORSET

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(HBMC Ceramic Petrology Project)

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- 1). W62 (1006) FSN-68 FMB.
- 2). W62 (156) FSN-69 FMB.
- 3). W62 (128) FSN-65 FMB.

Three small wheelturned bodysherds from the junction of the shoulder and neck of a bowl or jar, decorated with cordons. In all probability they represent three separate vessels. All are in a hard, smooth fabric that has been carefully burnished to a high degree, dark grey surfaces with a reddish-brown to dark grey core of fairly compact clay of fine texture with small creamy-white inclusions clearly visible in fresh fracture. Typologically these sherds belong to Bushe-Fox's (1915) Hengistbury Head Class B wares; Cunliffe's (1978) Class 1 group, dated to the period c. 100 B.C. - A.D. 50.

Thin sectioning and study under the petrological microscope shows that the fabric of the Furzey Island sherds is composed principally of angular grains of amphibole, predominately tremolite in composition, quartz and a little plagioclase felspar all set in an optically anisotropic matrix of fired clay. This assemblage of non-plastic inclusions is identical to material from Hengistbury Head examined by the writer and considered to come from the Armorican Massif of north-western France. The Furzey Island sherds can therefore be regarded as imports from across the Channel rather than local 'cordoned ware' copies.

For an up to date discussion of the origin of this pottery and its distribution in southern England see Cunliffe (forthcoming).

References

- Bushe-Fox, J.P. (1915) Excavations at Hengistbury Head, Hampshire, in 1911-12 (Oxford, 1915).
- Cunliffe, B. (1978) Hengistbury Head (London, 1978).
- Cunliffe, B. (forthcoming) Excavations at Hengistbury Head.