

POTTERY

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Ancient Monuments Laboratory  
Report 138/87

POST-ROMAN IMPORTED AMPHORAE FROM  
CADBURY-CONGRESBURY.

D F Williams PhD FSA

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#### Summary

All of the amphorae sherds, many of which are small and in a friable condition, were examined macroscopically with the aid of a binocular microscope (x 20). In addition, to help characterise the fabric of some of the sherds, selective thin sections were made and studied under the petrological microscope.

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Introduction

All of the amphorae sherds, many of which are small and in a friable condition, were examined macroscopically with the aid of a binocular microscope ( $\times 20$ ). In addition, to help characterize the fabric of some of the sherds, selective thin sections were made and studied under the petrological microscope.

Bi (Thomas, 1959)

(a) Horizontally grooved sherds

Y1084 IV

Y0222 IV

SF 13 IV (Fowler et al, 1970, Fig. 12, no. 11)

P0397 IV

Y0597 IV

G0856 IV

G2 IV

G0654 IV

G0118 IV

G0134 IV

B0340 IV

G0839 IV

SF 130 IV (Fowler et al, 1970, Fig. 12, no. 14)

P0122/P0178 IV

R0343 IV  
B0708 IV  
P0239 IV  
Y0960a,b IV  
P0076 IV  
(? P0154 IV marked "lost" on bag)  
(? SF 51 IV " " " )  
(? SF 6 IV " " " )  
Y0962 I  
R0337 I  
Y0531 I  
Y0521 I  
P0274 II  
R0018 I  
Y1313a,b SF 46 (Fowler et al, 1970, Fig. 12, no. 12)  
Y0175 I  
Y0812 I  
P0066 II  
G2 unstratified II  
Y1094 II  
Y0336 II  
Y0609 II  
P0185 II

(b) small plain sherds probably Bi

B0187 I shoulder sherd (Rahtz, 1974, Fig. 2, no. 16)  
P0162 IV  
P0494 III  
Y0207a,b III  
P0184 III  
Y0683 III  
G0763a-c III  
G0728 III  
P0293 IV  
G0316 IV  
B0061 IV  
P0328 IV  
P0202 IV  
P0324a-d I  
P0177 IV

P0188 I  
P0181 I  
P0040 III  
C3 II  
Y0201 II  
P0414 II  
Y0101 II  
Y0043 II  
Y0755 II  
Y1021 II  
Y0152 II  
Y0001 I  
GF4 I  
P0169 I  
B0035 I  
B0540b,c  
P0269 I  
P3 unstratified I  
P0267 I  
P0354 I  
P0492 III  
P2a-c unstratified I  
P0071 I  
P0197a,b I  
B0420 I  
Y0304 III  
G1146 I  
Y0539 III  
P0200 IV  
P0215a IV  
P0215b IV  
Y1464c IV  
P0344a,b IV  
GF 72 III  
Y0841 III  
B0236 IV  
P0299 IV  
G1326a,b III  
Y0365a,b III

The following sherds illustrated by Fowler et al and Rahtz were not seen: Fowler et al, 1970, Fig. 12, nos. 10 and 13; Rahtz, 1974, Fig. 2, no. 15.

The fabric is fairly hard and smooth, commonly pinkish-cream throughout, with inclusions of white limestone. The Bi form has a globular body with a small basal knob, a short conical neck with a high everted rim and bowed handles from the shoulder to the neck. The upper part of the body contains deep horizontal grooves closely set together. All the Cadbury - Congresbury material is represented by fairly small bodysherds and one shoulder sherd. It is difficult to estimate the number of vessels present, perhaps two or more (see also Thomas, 1981).

Bi amphorae are widely distributed around the Mediterranean seaboard and are also found further afield in Britain and elsewhere (see Peacock and Williams, 1986 for refs. and to Thomas, 1981 for the British material). The numbers found in the northern Aegean and Black Sea area at one time suggested a possible source in this region. However, a suspected kiln site for Bi amphorae has recently been discovered near Kounopi in the Argolid (Munn, 1985).

Bi amphorae occur in fourth century A.D. contexts at Athens (Robinson, 1959, M272), while at Carthage there is a noticeable increase in numbers there from about the middle of the sixth century A.D. and production appears to have ceased by the late sixth/early seventh century A.D. (Fulford and Peacock, 1984). The principal content carried is unknown.

Bii (Thomas, 1959)

Mostly composed of small ribbed bodysherds

Y0958 XX

Y1048 XX

Y0528 XX

Y1272 XX

Y0552 XX

Y0754 XX

Y08820 XX

Y0566 XX

YF 104a XX

Y0586/Y0593 XX handle (see attached illustrations)

Y0431 XX neck/shoulder sherd (see attached illustrations)  
P0360a,b XI two joining rim-sherds with stub of handle (see attached illustrations)  
P0205 handle stub (see attached illustrations)  
GF103 handle stub (Fowler et al, 1970, Fig. 13, no. 21)  
SF 127  
B0812  
P0071  
R0275  
G0201 XII (Rahtz, 1974, Fig. 3, no. 20) Possibly trimmed to a rough disc-shape.  
R0103a-f V  
P0094 XVII  
Y0613 XVII  
P0047 XVII  
Y1108 VI  
Y0747 III handle (see attached illustrations)  
Y1063a,b III  
Y1074 III  
Y1146 III  
Y0677a-c III  
B1522a-d III  
CH41 III  
P0149 III  
SF 104 XV (Fowler, et al, 1970, Fig. 14, no. 25)  
B0330a,b XV  
B0904 XV  
B1532a-e XV  
R0322a,b XV  
SF 6 I  
Y1248 I  
SF 16 I (Fowler, et al, 1970, Fig. 13, no. 18)  
R0335 I  
SF 53/89 I (Fowler et al, 1970, Fig. 13, no. 17)  
SF 101 I (Fowler et al, 1970, Fig. 13, no. 15)  
R0131 I  
B0761 I  
C(R0141) IV 'featureless'  
SF 21 XIII (Fowler et al, 1970, no. 27)  
G0108 XIII  
SF 120 XIII  
G03436 XIII

Y0853 III handle (see attached illustrations)  
G0213a,b III  
Y1274 III  
Y0677a III  
Y0996 III  
Y0385 XI  
G0028 XI handle stub  
PF50 XI  
SF 49 XI  
G1165 XI  
G0904 XI handle (see attached illustrations)  
R0104a-d IV  
R0292 IV  
R0024a IV  
B0572 IV  
SF 122 XIV (Fowler et al, 1970, Fig. 14, no. 29; Rahtz, 1974, Fig. 3, no. 19)  
SF 24 IX (Fowler et al, 1970, Fig. 14, no. 26; Rahtz, 1974, Fig. 3, no. 18)  
GP23a-f IX  
B0382 II  
P0283a,b II two small handle fragments  
GF99 II  
SF 127 II (Fowler et al, 1970, Fig. 13, no. 20)  
B0379 II  
SF 53 I  
CH40 + 39 I  
Y0582 I  
SF 93 I  
CH20 I  
SF 38 I  
SF 120 I  
Y1497 I  
Y1017 I  
Y1464d I  
GF17 I  
Y0537a  
SF 48 I  
Y1150 I  
SF 8 I  
SF 85 I  
SF 20a I  
Y10636 III



R0027a X  
B1526 I  
Y1501 I  
Y0377 I  
R0149 I  
SF 117 I  
SF 76 I  
CH38 I

The following sherds illustrated by Fowler et al and Rahtz were not seen: Fowler et al, 1970, Fig. 13, nos. 16, 22, 23, 24, Fig. 14, no. 28; Rahtz, 1974, Fig. 3, no. 17.

The fabric tends to be hard and sandy, ranging from pinkish-cream to reddish-yellow in colour. The Bii form has an ovoid body with a rounded base, broad neck with thickened rim and thickish stumpy handles. Widely-spaced ribbing appears at the middle of the body, gradually narrowing at the shoulder and base of the vessel. The majority of the material at Cadbury - Congresbury is composed of ribbed bodysherds, although there are a number of handle fragments present and one small piece of rim. It is difficult to estimate the number of vessels represented here, the slight nuances of fabric in some of the fragments of handle points to at least 3 vessels, without taking the bodysherds into account. To suggest that these represent a further 15 vessels seems a little high (Rahtz, 1974).

Bii amphorae have a fairly similar area of distribution as the Bi form (see Peacock and Williams, 1986 for refs. ; Thomas, 1981 for the British material).

The origin of these distinctive vessels is not known, although a case has been made for the Antioch region of northern Syria (Williams, 1982), an area which had a contemporary olive-oil export trade of some importance (Liebeschuetz, 1972). However, other possible sources have been suggested, amongst them Cyprus, as some Bii vessels carry painted inscriptions of the Cypriot modius (Lang, 1976).

Bii amphorae date from the early fifth to the mid seventh centuries A.D., reaching a peak in the later fifth and early sixth centuries A.D. (Fulford and Peacock, 1986). The principal content carried is not known, although olive-oil has been suggested (Thomas, 1959).

Biv (Thomas, 1959)

Y1023/Y0543/Y0232/Y0513a/Y0513b/Y0343 BM XIX six joining sherds forming part  
of the shoulder (see attached illustrations)

GF1339

Y056a

O/11

G0953

The above material consists of deep red, highly micaceous ribbed bodysherds, probably from a Biv form of amphora. This type of vessel has a slender neck, high rounded shoulder and a tapering foot. A broad shallow ribbing covers most of the vessel, which is comparatively thin-walled. This type has a long tradition in the Mediterranean region. Unfortunately, it is not possible to tell from the bodysherds at Cadbury - Congresbury whether this material belongs to the earlier Biv form which has just one strap-handle and first appears in the late first century A.D., or the two-handled version which is first found in late fourth century A.D. contexts (see Peacock and Williams, 1986 for refs.). However, the association at Cadbury - Congresbury with the Bi and Bii forms strongly suggest that we are dealing here with the later version. The Biv is now generally thought to have come from Asia Minor and lasted into the sixth century A.D. (ibid.). The principal content carried is not known for certain, although contents analysis has identified olive-oil residues in a sample of Biv fabric (Rothschild-Boros, 1981; Passi et al, 1981). For a list of the British material see Thomas, 1959.

Unassigned

SF 2 BM XIV (Fowler et al, 1970, Fig. 14, no. 30)

GF101 BM XIV (Fowler et al, 1970, Fig. 14, no. 31)

BM V B0706

Y0531a/Y0468a,b/Y06314/Y0765 BM V an amphora foot in a 'gritty' fabric containing much quartz and some felspar ; possibly an eastern Mediterranean form (see attached illustrations)

The following ten sherds appear to be in a similar fabric:

Y0462a

Y0605

Y0631

R0065a, b

Y0698

Y0886a, b

Y0672

G1437

P0251

Y0821

#### Discussion

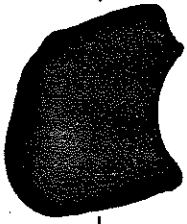
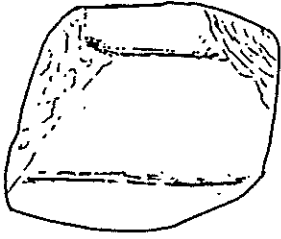
All of the identifiable amphorae sherds from Cadbury - Congresbury are from types which are believed to have been made in the eastern Mediterranean region. Nothing has been seen, for example, which suggests a North African origin, although there are a small number of unassigned sherds. In this context the amphorae assemblage should be viewed in connection with the composition of the late imported fine ware from the site, for Phocian Red Slip ware is present in greater quantity than the more common African Red Slip (pp. 00-00). Giving narrow dates to amphorae assemblages is always difficult as most types, including the three identified here, tend to have been produced over a long period of time. A date somewhere in the fifth century A.D. seems most likely for the Cadbury - Congresbury material, in line with the late imported fine ware.

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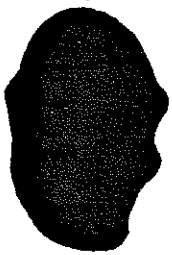
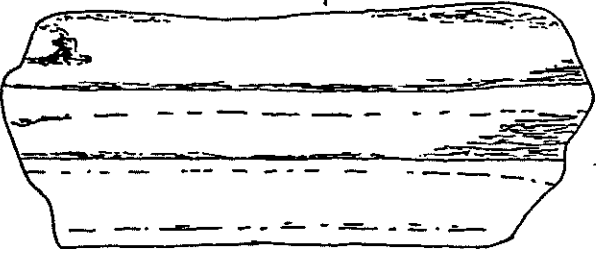
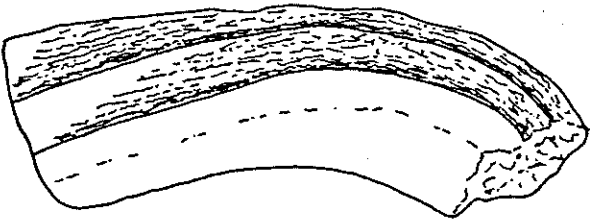
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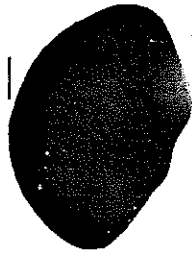
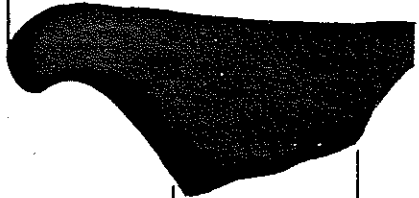
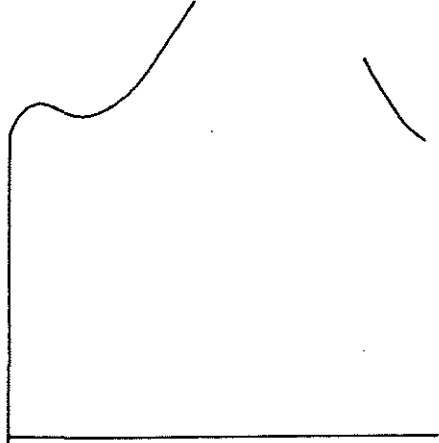
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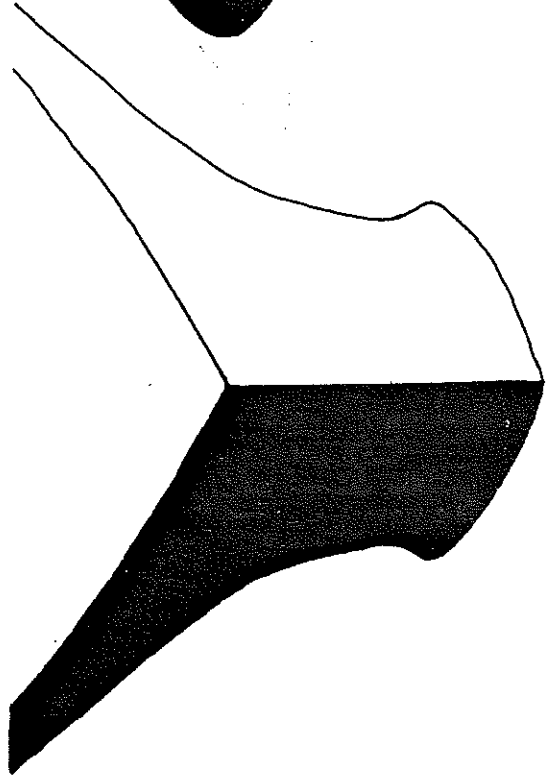
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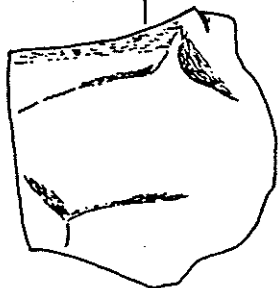
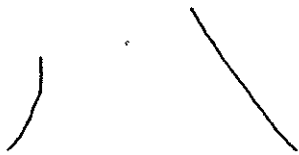
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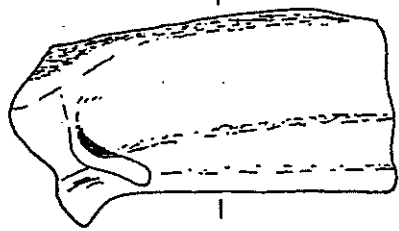
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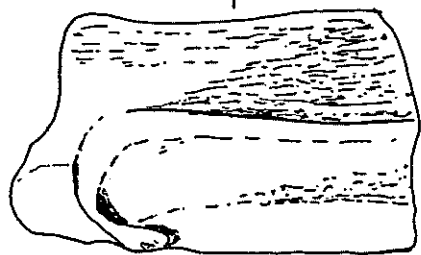
Y0531a Etc.



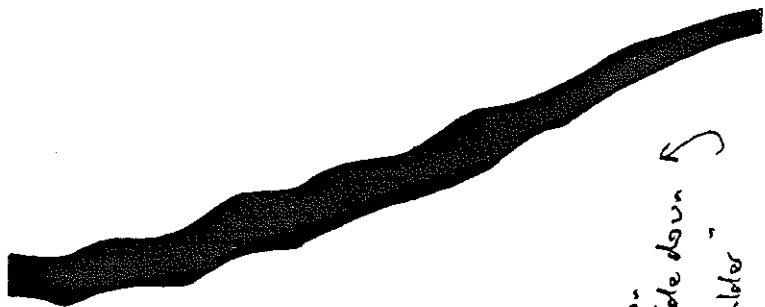
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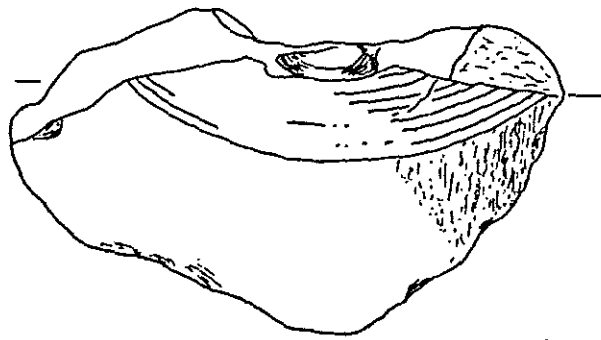
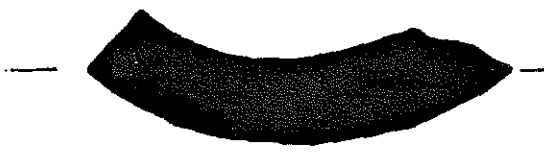
Y0883 III



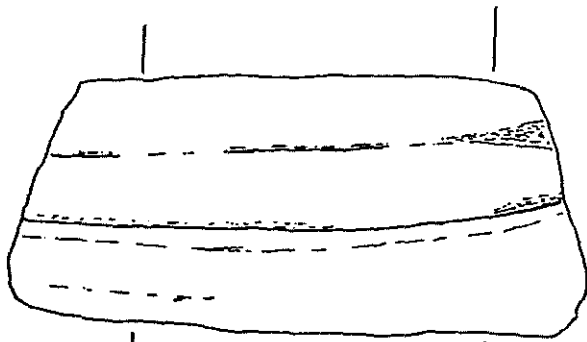
BM XII



\* Draw  
upside down  
"shoulder"



Yo 431 Bii IX



Yo 747 (Bii III)

