

MELLOR (OVM EXCAVATIONS) - THE SAMIAN WARE

by Margaret Ward MA MIFA, March 2004

1998 TD (205)

Missing

2002 Tr 18 (148)

5 sherds: 3 sherds produced in the range c AD 70/80-110; 1 sherd c AD 120-150; 1 sherd has been re-worked and survives as half a spindle-whorl of uncertain date and origin, but probably Central Gaulish ware produced in the Antonine period (c AD 140-200) rather than earlier

2002 Tr 18 (149)

1 sherd, probably c80-110 rather than Hadrianic

2002 (152)

1 sherd c 120/140-200

2002 Tr 18 (161)

2 flakes apparently of the same vessel, c 70-110 rather than later? (but lacking all surfaces and features)

2003 Tr 18 (301)

1 flake in an orange ware, impossible to attribute specifically to Central or East Gaul but probably produced in the range c120/140-200. Badly eroded and abraded rather than from a sherd re-worked as a small counter?

2003 Tr 18 (304)

4 sherds and flakes: 1 possibly c 70-110, 1 c 120-160, 2 probably c120/140-200

2003 Tr 18 (305)

17 sherds: 7 c 70-110 including a decorated fragment; 8 c 120/140-200; 2 c140-200, possibly c150/160+ (of which one has the end of a potter's stamp reading JF This is the abbreviation for the Latin "... FECIT", "... made it" It is very common and is not attributable to a specific potter.

2003 Tr 18 (306)

1 sherd, c120/140-200

2003 Tr 18 Cut 303, unstratified

3 sherds: 1 c120-160; 2 c120/140-200 (one flake of a potter's stamp is burnt and may have been Antonine rather than earlier, but the stamp may need detailed work)

NOTES ON THE COLLECTION

For general information and terminology, see Bulmer 1980 and Webster 1996.

Date-ranges, such as c AD 120-200 rather than the use of epochs such as 'Hadrianic-Antonine,' have been given. These should not be thought more precise than the use of epochs. They are employed to facilitate detailed analysis of the material.

The 35 sherds received for examination are likely to have represented no more than 34 vessels. Minimum numbers of vessels cannot be calculated meaningfully in groups containing numerous sherds of indeterminate form, fabric and date. 13 vessels appear to have been produced in South Gaul in the period c AD 70/80-110. The remainder consists of 22 sherds which are likely to have been of Central Gaulish origin; one of these may possibly have been a contemporary East Gaulish product.

There were two fragments of potters' stamps. At least two sherds represented South Gaulish decorated bowls, but only one in context (305) retained a fragment of decoration.

The great majority of the sherds were small; all were badly battered and most were badly eroded. At least one fragment had been burnt, and more were suspected. One sherd in context (148) had been re-worked to form a spindle-whorl, probably produced in Central Gaul in the Antonine period. Re-use of samian ware as spindle-whorls often indicates late-Roman date, suggesting use in the late 4th to 5th-century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bulmer, M 1980 An introduction to Roman samian ware, with special reference to collections in Chester and the north-west, *J Chester Archaeol Soc* 62, for 1979, 5-72

Webster, P V 1996 *Roman samian pottery in Britain*, CBA Practical Handbook in Archaeology 13, York