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The Roman Bronze Small Finds from Mancetter

by Janel Webster

Brooches

1. W70 19 20 Fragment of a penannular brooch. The terminals and the pin are missing and the hoop is plain.
2. M65 II 3 Perhaps the pin from a sprung brooch.

Bronze Vessels

3. Bucket handle. The handle is of crude manufacture; it describes an irregular curve; it is widest at the top and tapers toward the terminal hooks; it is of rectangular cross-section over most of its length but takes on a circular cross-section where it is bent round to form the hooks; the latter are everted at the ends. The irregular curvature of the handle is not without parallel and was indeed probably fairly common (cf. Tassinari 1975 pl. XXVII, No. 120). The everted ends give the suspension hooks the appearance of debased stylised swans' heads (cf. Tassinari 1975, pl. XXVI, No. 119a). Den Boesterd points out that swans' head terminals on bucket handles belong to a long tradition (Den Boesterd 1956 p.46, No. 151). Eggers illustrates several bronze buckets from Roman Britain which have survived complete with their handles (Eggers 1966 p.123-5, Abb. 16, 17 e,c,d-Newstead; Abb. 18 Bar Hill, with an iron handle; p.155 Abb. 56, 5 a Ramsgate). But it is not now possible to determine what type of bucket the Mancetter handle was originally attached to. Diameter 27 cms. approx., Height 12 cms. approx. 1977 Well 17/23 Bottom of well

4. W77 17/23 94 Small saucepan handle. There are faint traces of an incised or impressed sub-lozengic motif close to the spatulate end which may itself have had open-work ornament in the form of two circles or crescents; possibly there was once a bronze-smith's stamp within the lozengic area but the piece is too badly abraded to be sure.

Medical/Cosmetic Tools

5. W77 7/20 64 93 Ligula or ear-scoop. The object comprises a shaft with a small circular expansion, now damaged, at one end; the other end is lost. A short way above the circular expansion the shaft is decorated with a series of fine transverse mouldings. Further up the shaft is bent, though whether deliberately or not cannot now be determined. Because so little remains of the circular expansion it is not now possible to be certain whether the object represents a ligula or an ear-scoop, though a slight hollowing of the circular expansion on one side suggests the latter. For a discussion of the function of both the ligula and the ear-scoop (Jackson 1986 p.157-158 and p.128-129 Nos. 28-29, fig.4).

6. W77 17/23 215 91 An end-looped pestle from a cosmetic pestle and mortar set; for a discussion and catalogue of cosmetic pestle and mortar sets (Jackson 1985 p.165-192). The Pestle is plain save that the end of the loop is extended to give it the appearance of a bird's possibly a swan's head. The Mancetter pestle lies on the North-Western fringe of the main distribution of cosmetic pestle and mortar sets as currently known. Jackson notes that while these sets have their origins in the late pre-Roman Iron Age, the majority were made in the first and early second centuries A.D.

Items of Personal Equipment

7. W77 17/23 182 67 Bronze fitting attached to an iron blade. Perhaps a

7. W77 17/23 182 67 Bronze fitting attached to an iron blade. Perhaps a simplified form of the more elaborate type of razors described by Marien (Marien 1971 p.213 f., Marien 1973 p.71 f).
8. W69 7 4 7 Small fragmentary strip of bronze bent at one end. Perhaps part of a pair of tweezers.
9. W77 17/23 4 47 Two small strips of bronze. Possibly tweezers.
10. W77 17/23 14 15 Broken shaft, circular in cross-section at one end, spatulate and slightly curved in profile at the other. Each face of the spatulate part carries a tapering groove; these grooves are not aligned together nor do they co-terminate. Part of a needle?
11. W70 23 21 Fragment of a shaft similar to No. 10 above but smaller. Part of a needle?
12. W77 17/23 4 18 Small bronze ring of roughly D-shaped cross section with a flat internal facet. Perhaps a finger ring.
13. W69 10 1 4 The central portion of a balance beam? There is a notched semi-circular projection, pierced centrally for the pivot, to which two bronze washers remain attached. The means of suspension, secured by the pivot, served also as a pointer to be used in conjunction with the notches on the semi-circular plate for greater accuracy of measurement. For a balance beam which uses a central needle in conjunction with the mean of suspension for a similar purpose (Wheeler 1930 p.85 fig.I from Finsbury Circus). The arms of the balance may perhaps have been marked off into graduated divisions so that a small sliding weight could have been used in addition to the loose weights which will have been used in the scale-pans (Crummy 1983 p.99; 2507 from Colchester and Wheeler 1930 p.85 fig.22 No. 2 from the Mansion House - with restorations). But numerals impressed into the beam opposite to the semi-circular projection cannot have been part of such a system of gradations.

Objects with a possible Military association

14. W70 19 4 8 Bronze ferrule. These are not uncommon finds, particularly on Roman military sites, (cf. Brailsford 1962 p.1-2 A 18, A 19 fig.I Hod Hill; Ritterling 1912 pl.XVI Nos. 28-33 Hofheim), there are three examples from Usk and four from Caerleon Roman Gates (forthcoming).
15. W70 7 a 24 22 Part of a terret ring. Originally with plain collar mouldings to either side of the bar and with a series of partially milled discs projecting at intervals from the loop. The interstices of the milling are filled with red enamel.
16. W77 17/23 104 12 Strap end with an annular extension in the middle and, probably, a split butt terminal as a means of attachment. The two types of strap end characterised by an annular extension, whether at the end or in the middle, were discussed by Oldenstein (Oldenstein 1976 p.147-150 taf.37 Nos. 335-340) and have been the subject of more recent study by Diaconescu and Opreanu (in ed. Dawson 1987 p.158-162 p.166 fig.6). The latter's review of the Dacian evidence has led them to suggest that these fittings are not Germanic in origin; instead they suggest such strap ends should be considered as typical Roman equipment but they do not preclude the possible Pontico-Sarmatian influence first suggested by Raddatz. There is nothing in the Dacian evidence discussed by Diaconescu

and Opreanu to contradict a later second-mid third century date range for the type. The Mancetter piece is unusual in that it is much more elegant than any of those illustrated by Oldenstein or Diaconescu and Opreanu and than other examples of the type from Roman Britain (cf. A.Rae and V.Rae 1974 p.194-5 No. 5 fig. 14 and Allason-Jones and Milet 1984 p.188-9 Nos. 594-595). The annular extension of the Mancetter piece consists of a flat plate with a small circular piercing with, on one side only, a pair of impressed lines above and below; the lower part of the strap-end is embellished with elegant mouldings; unfortunately the top of the fitting is lost but there are traces of impressed line ornament above the annular extension, at least on the front of the fitting. Whether the degree of sophistication which the Mancetter fitting shows suggests that it belongs at the beginning of the series or at the end, or indeed whether it is to be seen as a local variant of the type, cannot, in the absence of a dated provenance or of closely similar parallels, either from the vicinity or from further afield, be determined.

Other bronze objects

17. W77 34 I 52 Small fragment of sheet bronze with repousse decoration. The design cannot now be determined but seems to have comprised curvilinear ornament within a rectangular frame.

18. W77 34 I 52 Bronze nail.

Post-Roman Items

1. W77 7/20 I Post Roman Stud.

2. W77 7/20 Copper alloy fitting with a split loop at the top and an elaborate, moulded, floral motif below. Both sides of the piece are fully worked suggesting that the item when in use might be seen from either side; the fitting is slightly curved in profile but its function remains unknown.

3. Copper alloy foot. The item was attached to a larger object by means of a screw threaded shaft from which a short limb extends to the hoof shaped plate which forms the foot proper.

4. Wk77 7/20 + 5 Fragment of the stem of a clay tobacco pipe stamped 809.

ARCHIVE

Bronze

A1. W77 7/20 64 79 Shaft of a pin of circular cross-section.

A2. W77 17/23/35 35 Small piece of bronze waste.

A3. W70 17 4 7 Folded strip of sheet bronze.

A4. W70 16 1 1 Triangular fragment from what was probably originally a rectangular piece of heavy sheet bronze, of unknown function.

A5. W69 11 3 8 Small strip of bronze with one straight edge and perhaps with curved line ornament on one face.

Items of Personal Equipment

A6. W70 19 24 Short length of cast bronze of rectangular cross-section.

A6. W70 19 24 Short length of cast bronze of rectangular cross-section. The piece is tapered and may have served as a small handle perhaps for a saucepan.

Lead

A7. W69 7 1 2 Torn fragment of sheet lead.

A8. W77 17/23 4 36 Sub-rectangular fragment of lead, partly folded and with cut marks.

Small Finds of Glass, Lead, Pottery and Stone from Mancetter

Glass Bead

19. W77 7/20 40 49 Small blue glass melon bead. Guido suggests that glass melon beads are restricted to the first and second centuries A.D. in Britain (Guido 1978 p.100).

Lead Fragments

20. W77 34 63 Lead rivet.

Spindle-whorls of pottery

21. W70 17 I 9 Part of a pottery spindle-whorl, perhaps purpose made in a white ?mortarium fabric.

22. W70 23 27 Part of a pottery spindle whorl, perhaps made in a white ?mortarium fabric.

23. W77 7/20 4 105 Part of a pottery spindle-whorl in coarse grey ware.

Stone Spindle-whorl

24. W70 17 55 27 Complete stone spindle-whorl.

Pottery Counters

25. W69 10 17 9 Part of a small pottery counter. The fabric is orange buff above and grey below. The counter is flat below, its upper face is recessed within an upstanding rim. Purpose made.

Other Pottery Small Finds

26. W69 II 23 22 Fragment of a small crucible.

27. W69 10 9 6 Fragments of an overfired waster.

Other Object of Stone

28. W77 17/23 + 14 Part of a whetstone.

29. W77 17/23 4 64 Short length of carved stone. The fragment has been cut to produce six irregular facets.

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Hartshill small finds

By Janet Webster

Objects of stone

1. H 61 14a 7 Half a stone spindle-whorl on to both faces of which radiating grooves have been cut.
2. H 61 14a 7 Plain stone counter.
3. H 61 9 I Fragment of shaped stone.

Pottery Small Finds

4. H 60 15 2 6 Pottery counter. Made from the base of a vessel in coarse grey ware. On one face there are scratches on the centre of the counter, perhaps representing an X or two conjoined triangles; for bone counters with similar scratches (cf. Frere 1972 p.152, 154 Nos. 213-215 fig.56).
5. H 60 I I 5 Pottery counter. Made from the base of a vessel in coarse grey ware.
6. H 61 32 5 Pottery disc in light orange fabric.

IRONWORK FROM MANDETTOR

Hammer: W69 (7) 59 Length 0.9cm. Cross-pene hammer with a flat face with slightly splayed edges at one end and a chisel-edged pene at the other. The sides swell out slightly around the circular eye. The cross-pene hammer was the typical smith's hammer of the Roman period and was used by all metal-workers. They vary considerably in size. The circular eye is characteristic of Roman hammers. Generally similar hammers may be quoted from the eckford, Roxburgh. hoard (Piggott 1953, fig.6, E13, E14), London (Museum of London), the Lunt (Hobley 1972, 88, fig.29, 23), Silchester (Reading Museum) etc. They are equally common on the Continent.

Hammer: M63 (II) 422 Length 4.8cm. Small cross-pene hammer with a flat face at one end and a chisel pane at the other. There is no expansion about the circular eye. An unusually small example which would have been used for fine metal working. However, it is difficult to find a parallel of Roman date and may be post-Roman, possible even relatively modern.

Billhook: W70 (8) 5 9F110 Length 34.3cm. The back of the blade is strongly concave; the edge, which was stepped slightly below the tang, is much damaged but originally was probably slightly concave before curving forward to the now missing tip.. The tang, which has a heavy rectangular cross-section, lies on the midline of the blade. Although the blade is damaged there can be little doubt that it is an example of a rare form of billhook with a long tang and heavy, curving blade. Other examples come

from Bigbury, Kent (early 1st century A.D.?) and Worcester (Antonine) (Rees 1979, 471, fig.232). They form Sian Rees's Type V billhooks, and although she was cautious in her acceptance of them as billhooks, there is no obvious alternative identification.

Ox-Goad: W77 (32) 4 Length 5.6cm. With a three-twist spiral socket and relatively long prick. (Drawn from X-ray photograph). Ox-goads may have either tubular or spiral sockets, and both types are equally common, although the use of three twists, rather than one or two, is slightly unusual. Other examples may be quoted from Woodyates (Pitt-Rivers 1892, 137, pl.CLCCCIII, 17), Rotherley (Pitt-Rivers 1888, 136, pl.CV,10), Lydney (Wheeler and Wheeler 1932, 92, fig.23, 189), Verulamium (Manning 1972, 170, No.21), etc.

Linch Pin: W77 (32) 8 /38/ Length 12.1cm. Spatulate-headed linch pin with a turned-over loop at the top of the head. There is a slight rebate on the front of the stem. Linch pins of this form are Manning Type 2b, the commonest of all types. They are discussed in Manning 1985, 74.

Cleaver: W71 (22) 88 SF9 Length 22.8cm. The back continues the line of the damaged socket before angling down to the rounded tip. There is a slight heel from which the edge sloped up to the tip. An example of Manning Type 4 cleavers (Manning 1985, 123). The type is not common but others come from Silchester (Reading Museum) and London (Museum of London).

Shear-Blade: W71 (22) 88 (SF9) Length 8.7cm. The end of the triangular blade is missing, and the spring, which widens as it approaches the curve, is largely lost. The heel of the blade has a curved notch in it. For Roman shears in general (cf. Manning 1985, 34). When complete this one would have been of Type 2, Medium Shears, where the blade length was more than 8cm. They were the common, general, purpose shears of the ancient world. However, the notching on the heel of the blade is not normal in Roman shears although it is commonly found in medieval ones (cf. Ward-Perkins 1954, 154ff), and this may cast some doubt on its being of Roman date.

Stylus: W71 (19) 72 /110/ Length 12.6cm. Type 1 with a small eraser and simple tip. (Partly drawn from X-ray photographs). Styli are discussed in Manning 1985, 85. Type 1 is the simplest form with a small eraser and a simple tapering point. It is a very common type examples are plentiful.

Stylus: W77 17/23 149 /89/ Length 11.7cm. Probably of Type 1 although the tip is missing. The eraser is small with very slight shoulders. Drawn from X-ray photograph.

Latch Lifter: W71 (22) 88 (SF10) Length 19.8cm. The handle is a flat, slightly waisted plate, rounded and perforated at its end. The end of the round-sectioned blade is missing. This is a typical Roman-British latch-lifter. The type is discussed in Manning 1985, 88ff.

Lever-Lock key: W77 (34) /96/ Length 7.4cm. The greater part of the bow is lost, as is a part of the bit. There are mouldings on the stem on either side of the junction with the bit. (Drawn from X-ray photograph). Although lever-lock keys are not the commonest type of Roman keys they are by no means rare. For a short discussion of the type and other examples cf. Manning 1985, 94.

L-shaped Lift-key: (421) Length 15.4cm. The square-sectioned handle has a perforated loop at its top. The round-sectioned stem runs into the bit

which has the remains of three teeth. This is the commonest form of

which has the remains of three teeth. This is the commonest form of Roman-British key and the examples catalogued here are typical of the typw. Details of the way in which they functioned and other examples are given in Manning 1985, 90.

L-shaped Lift-key: M65 (II) 2 /5/ Length 15.0cm. The square-sectioned handle was probably originally perforated at the top. The bit has the remains of three teeth.

Hinge: W77 17/23 219 Length 9.0cm. One plate of a strap-hinge. The plate is a long rectangle with three large nail holes set in a line close to its outer edge. The inner edge is rolled to form a sleeve for the pivot which remains in position. The Roman strap-hinge usually has markedly longer and relatively narrower plates than is seen here (Manning 1985, 126). An example with a generally similar plate comes from the Gadebridge Park, Herts. vo;:a (Manning 1974, 159, fig.69, 344), although even there the pierced lugs which received the pivot are much shorter and show the normal arrangement of having two on one plate and one on the other. A post-Roman, even recent, date for this piece would not be improbable.

L-shaped Hinge Staple: W77 7/20 62 /112/ Length 7.1cm (Drawn from X-ray photograph). Hinge staples of this type were driven into the jamb of a door to act as pivots for drop-hinges on the door itself. The type is discussed and other examples given in Manning 1985 (126).

Nail: W69 (7) 15 /24/ Length 14.0cm. Type 1 nail with a slightly pyramidal head. The tip of the stem is missing. (Drawn from X-ray photograph). Type 1 nails were the basic nails of the Roman period and have been found in their millions. They are discussed and a few examples quoted in Manning 1985 (134).

Nail: W77 (7/20) 35 Length 11.7cm. Probably of Type 1, but now bent and with the head damaged.

Nail: W77 Length 9.9cm. Type 1 nail. The head is probably damaged and the end of the stem is missing. (drawn from X-ray photograph).

Nail: W71 (20) 132 Length 9.2cm. Type 1 nail with a damaged head.

Nail: W70 (23) 14 Length 8.0cm. Type 1 nail. The tip is missing. (Drawn from X-ray photograph).

Nail: M65 (T) 13 /4/ Length 3.4cm. Fragment of Type 1 nail. Found with the rove below.

Rove: M65 (T) 13 /4/ Diameter 2.4cm. Slightly dished disc with a central perforation. A rove is the plate through which the point of a nail is driven and turned over to form a holdfast when there was a danger of the nail working loose. Examples are given in Manning 1985, 132.

Rove?: W69 (13) 4 /125/ Diameter 2.4cm. Disc with a central perforation. (Drawn from X-ray photograph).

Rove?: W69 (7) 8 /10/ Diameter 2.2cm. Disc with a rectangular perforation at its centre. (Drawn from X-ray photograph).

Double-Spiked Loop: W69 (7) /20/ Length 8.5cm. A very common type with many uses. Cf. Manning 1985, 130 for a discussion and other examples.

Double-Spiked Loop: W77 7/20 13 Length 6.0cm. The arms are bent.

Dog?: W70 (17) 54 /31/ Length 14.3cm. This is a rectangular-sectioned bar, broken at its ends, one of which had begun to turn down just before the break. The joiner's dog was used to connect two pieces of wood and they occur in many sizes. Cf. Manning 1985, 131 for a discussion and other examples.

Dog or Staple: W77 17/23 213 Length 6.2cm. Small rod with down-turned spikes at its ends. (Drawn from X-ray photograph).

Collar: (355) Diameter 7.0cm. For similar collars cf. Manning 1985, 140. They were probably used to bind the ends of wooden hafts, line pivots etc.

Binding: (424) Length 6.2cm. Thin rod bent to form a square binding. For a similar binding from Verulamium cf. Manning 1985, 188 No. 123, where other examples are mentioned.

Loop: W71 (22) 119 Length 11.6cm. Loop of thin rod, now flattened.

Bolt?: M65 Flue of Drier T (West) Length 9.1cm. Thick, round-sectioned rod with a flattened head. It may be compared with a short bolt from Hod Hill (Manning 1985, 126, R7). They were probably used to hold fittings in position, being dropped vertically into a socket.

Rod: W71 (22) 117 SF30 Length 27.1cm. Square-sectioned rod tapering to points at both ends.

L-shaped Fragment of Plate: M65 (4) (7) 13 Length 5.0cm. One arm is almost circular in outline, the other oval. It is probably a fragment of a larger piece possibly being part of a corner-binding, for example. It may be compared with a piece from Worth, Kent (Manning 1985, 142, S108) where other examples are quoted.

Fragment of Plate: W71 (8) 15 Length 6.0cm. It is slightly curved and is probably part of a strong binding, or, possibly, a door pivot. For pivots cf. Manning 1985, 127.

Fragment of Plate: W77 17/23 210 /90/ Length 9.2cm. One edge is rolled.

Various fragments of bars, broken nails etc. have been omitted.

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