

AMPHORAE FROM EAST BIGHT AND TEMPERANCE PLACE, LINCOLN

for Lincoln  
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Report  
3158

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A small group of amphorae sherds from East Bight and Temperance Place, Lincoln were submitted for fabric examination. All of the sherds were initially viewed under a binocular microscope (x 20), and some were thin sectioned and studied under the petrological microscope. Munsell colour charts are referred to, as well as free descriptive terms.

1) Fabric 203 (EB I966. EB200 x Ti 6I4)

Dressel 30 wine-amphora from Southern Gaul, in particular the area around the mouth of the Rhone. In Britain, these vessels date from the latter half of the first century A.D. into the third century, with the main concentration occurring during the second half of the second century.

2) Fabric 204C (9III EB 257, 34)

Thick, hard fabric, light red (2.5YR 6/6) throughout, containing visible inclusions of dark augite. In thin section numerous grains of green or colourless augite are scattered throughout the clay matrix, together with fragments of volcanic rock, sanidine feldspar, biotite and quartz. Both in the hand-specimen and in thin section, these sherds are similar to the 'black sand fabric' of some Dressel I amphorae types shown by Peacock (I97I) to have been made in the Campanian area of Italy. It seems likely, therefore, that the vessel(s), amphorae (Dressel 2-4 ?) or otherwise, represented by the Lincoln sherds also originated from this region.

3) Fabric 200 (9I27-9. 24 x 6II8).

Rim sherd in a thick, hard micaceous fabric, creamy-white (7.5YR 8/2) slip on the surfaces, light red (2.5YR 6/8) core. Thin sectioning shows numerous flecks of mica, both muscovite and biotite, quartz, some limestone and a little plagioclase feldspar. With such a comparatively common range of inclusions, it is difficult to suggest a likely origin for this vessel. However, in thin section the texture is quite distinctive and may be useful in any future comparison of similar material of known origins.

4) Fabrics 204A and 204B

The majority of the sherds submitted are of ribbed amphorae form, and many are probably of Mediterranean origin. Unfortunately, this scheme of decoration is a comparatively common one, and it is difficult to be sure of the exact vessel type from bodysherds alone. The fabric of the sherds tends to be fairly sandy, with small white fragments of limestone scattered throughout. The colour is variable, but tends to be reddish-brown (5YR 6/4) to greyish-brown (7.5YR 5/2). There are, however, slight differences in texture between some of the sherds to suggest that they represent the products from more than one centre. A fairly similar range of material has been recovered from excavations at two further sites in Lincoln, The Park, 1970-72 and Flaxengate, 1972-76.

One of the sherds from East Bight (LCL 4) was thin sectioned and produced an assemblage of inclusions that agrees reasonably well with the thin sections of certain amphorae known to have been made in Palestine: a ribbed amphora from Avenches containing carbonized dates (Callender, 1965, fig. 20, no. 4) and carrot-amphora (Camulodunum, form I89) from various first century A.D. sites.

This suggests a Palestine origin for this particular sherd, though the evidence is not conclusive.

More work obviously needs to be done on these ribbed amphorae vessels which occur in Britain, and the writer is currently engaged in their study with a view to establishing the forms represented and their origins.

- Callender, M.H. (1965) Roman Amphorae (London, 1965).
- Peacock, D.P.S. (1971) 'Roman amphorae in pre-Roman Britain',  
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