

ROMAN AMPHORA FROM FISON WAY, THETFORD, NORFOLK

D.F. Williams, Ph.D., FSA

(HBMC Ceramic Petrology Project)

Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton

5853 THD 269

A small featureless amphora bodysherd in a fairly hard, smooth somewhat micaceous fabric, light grey (Munsell 10YR 7/2) outer surface, light red (2.5YR 6/8) inner surface and core. This sherd probably belongs to a Dressel 2-4 amphora form. Dressel 2-4 amphorae were made over a wide area, e.g. Italy, France, Spain, the Aegean, as well as Britain (Castle, 1978), during the period from the late first century B.C. to the mid second century A.D. This was the most common type present for example in the large group of amphorae recovered from the 1970 excavations at Colchester-Sheepen, which must have reached Britain between A.D. 43 and A.D. 60/61 (Sealey, 1985). Quantitative trends suggest that the form was in decline by the later first century A.D. (Panella, 1973). Tituli Picti indicate that the principal content carried in these vessels was wine (Zevi, 1966). Thin sectioning and study under the petrological microscope of the Thetford sherd reveals inclusions of fresh volcanic glass, which may suggest an origin in Italy or perhaps the Aegean area.

References

- Castle, S.A. (1978) 'Amphorae from Brockley Hill, 1975', Britannia, 9(1978), 383-392.
- Panella, C. (1973) 'Appunti su un Gruppo di Anfore della Prima, Media e Tarda Eta Imperiale', Ostia III, 460-633.
- Sealey, P.R. (1985) Amphoras from the 1970 Excavations at Colchester-Sheepen BAR British Series 142 (1985).

Zevi, F. (1966) 'Appunti sulle anfore romane', Archaeologia Classica,
18(1966), 207-247.