

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 123/88

ROMAN AMPHORAE FROM THE PARK SITE,
LINCOLN.

D F Williams PhD FSA

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Summary

Identification of a sherd of North African cylindrical amphora and two unidentified bodysherds of amphorae, one of which may be eastern Mediterranean in origin.

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1) P71 210 QG

Small bodysherd of a North African cylindrical amphora. Thin sectioning and study under the petrological microscope suggests that the fabric is characteristic of central Tunisia (Peacock and Williams, 1986). In Britain, North African cylindrical amphorae are attested to as early as the mid second century A.D. (Tyers, 1984), though it seems likely that the main export thrust came during the third and fourth centuries A.D., and may have continued to a lesser extent into the fifth century (Peacock, 1977). These vessels are generally thought to have carried olive-oil, though fish-products may also have been transported to a lesser extent.

2) P71 210 OR

Bodysherd of an amphora in a hard sandy fabric, light reddish-brown (between Munsell 2.5YR 6/3 and 5YR 5/3) throughout except for a patchy pinkish-white (7.5YR 8/2) outside surface colour. Thin sectioning shows frequent subangular grains of quartz and flecks of mica, with a few discrete grains of plagioclase feldspar. A North African source seems most unlikely, though it is difficult at present to suggest another source with any conviction.

3) P71 206 JO

Small bodysherd of an amphora in a hard micaceous fabric, light red (10R 6/6 to 5/6) throughout. Thin sectioning shows plentiful flecks of mica, together

with quartz grains, quartzite, potash felspar and a little limestone. The range of secondary inclusions and the texture of the fabric is different, for example, to that normally associated with the highly micaceous Biv amphora thought to have been made in Asia Minor (Peacock and Williams, 1986, Class 45). However, given that this sherd came from a 3rd/4th century layer, an eastern Mediterranean source is still perhaps quite likely.

References

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