

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 147/88

A ROMAN AMPHORA SHERD FROM HAYDON
STREET, LONDON E.C.3.

D F Williams PhD FSA

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Summary

Identification of a late Roman ribbed amphora sherd,
most probably from the eastern Mediterranean region.

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A ROMAN AMPHORA SHERD FROM HAYDON STREET, LONDON, EC3

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Bodysherd of an amphora showing closely-spaced horizontal ribbing on the outer surface. Hard, fairly smooth sandy fabric, light reddish-brown (Munsell 2.5YR 6/6) surfaces, grey core, with small white inclusions of limestone scattered throughout. Thin sectioning and study under the petrological microscope shows frequent small inclusions of irregular-shaped limestone fragments, with subangular grains of quartz and some flecks of mica. The petrology suggests an origin in an area containing sedimentary rocks.

Ribbed amphorae are not an uncommon find on Romano-British sites, though rarely appear in any great numbers. The sherd from Haydon Street does not belong to the earlier ribbed types such as the 'carrot amphora' and possibly related forms of first century A.D. date (Peacock and Williams, 1986, Class 12 and nos. 65 and 66). The neat close-ribbing and the compact clay body suggest instead that this sherd probably belongs to a series of later Roman ribbed amphorae types, probably from the eastern Mediterranean region, that appear in Britain in small numbers from about the third century A.D. onwards, though a few may be earlier, and are mostly known from small ribbed bodysherds in a range of fabrics (Tomber and Williams, 1986, 44).

References

- Tomber, R. and (1986) 'Late Roman amphorae in Britain', J. Roman Pottery
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- Peacock, D.P.S. and (1986) Amphorae and the Roman Economy, London.
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