

AMK SITE FILE NO: 920.

920

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 4/89

ROMAN AMPHORAE FROM THE EXCAVATIONS
AT ROCESTER, STAFFS, 1985-7.

D F Williams PhD FSA

AML reports are interim reports which make available the results of specialist investigations in advance of full publication. They are not subject to external refereeing and their conclusions may sometimes have to be modified in the light of archaeological information that was not available at the time of the investigation. Readers are therefore asked to consult the author before citing the report in any publication and to consult the final excavation report when available.

Opinions expressed in AML reports are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England.

Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report 4/89

ROMAN AMPHORAE FROM THE EXCAVATIONS
AT ROCESTER, STAFFS, 1985-7.

D F Williams PhD FSA

Summary

Identification of 1,232 amphorae sherds resulted in the recognition of the following forms: Dressel 20, Pélisset 47 / Gauloise 4, Camulodunum 186sp and Southern Spanish. The Spanish olive-oil type Dressel 20 was easily the most common vessel present.

Author's address :-

D F Williams PhD FSA

Department of Archaeology
University of Southampton
Highfield
Southampton
SO9 5NH

ROMAN AMPHORAE FROM THE EXCAVATIONS AT ROCESTER, STAFFS, 1985-87

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

(HBMC Ceramic Petrology Project)

Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton

Introduction

The amphorae were classified by fabric and form, and in order to consider the material quantitatively were then weighed and counted. The classification of the forms is based on Dressel (1899), the Camulodunum series (Hawkes and Hull, 1947), Pélichet (1946), Laubenheimer (1985) and with descriptive terms suggested by Peacock (1971). The dominant amphorae type present is the southern Spanish olive-oil vessel Dressel 20, with lesser amounts of Pélichet 47 / Gauloise 4, Camulodunum 186sp, southern Spanish and a small number of unassigned sherds. Brief notes on the origins and chronological span of the amphorae are given below.

Total weight of amphorae	85,159gms.
Total number of amphorae sherds	1,232

% Total of each fabric

	<u>% By Weight</u>		<u>% By Count</u>	
Dressel 20	81,868gms	96.1%	1,188	96.4%
Pélichet 47 /				
Gauloise 4	385gms	0.4%	5	0.4%
Camulodunum 186sp	205gms	0.3%	3	0.3%
Southern Spanish	1,375gms	1.6%	24	1.9%
Unassigned	1,326gms	1.6%	12	1.0%

Dressel 20

Rims: 1182, 1119, 1101, 1278, 1365, 1366, 1503, 1488, 1368, 1044, 1382, 1583,
1417, 1447.

Handles: 1242, 1250, 1101, 1003, 1095/1117, 1298, 1366(2), 1516, 1675, 1458,
1697, 1689(2), 1488, 1132, 1477.

Warts: 1365

Bodysherds: 1171(2), 1162, u/s back fill, 1079, 1120, 1242(2), 1133, 1170,
1198, 1124, 1101, 1133, 1248(3), 1354, 1143, 1251, 1162, 1219(6),
1171, 1138, 1052, 1168, 1250(12), 1100(2), 1243(23), 1181, 1182(6),
1168, 1162(2), 1155, 1258, 1143(2), 1217, 1126, 1120(7), 1224,
1001(4), 1220(10), 1148(10), 1162, 1203, 1044(10), 1196 (90+inc.
'splinters'), 1182(15), 1119(5), 1101(10), 1033/1081, 1044(2),

1032, 1081(3), 1033, 1062, 1033, 1018/1044, 1095(10), 1024, 1030(2),
1385, 1101(2), 1248, 1083, 1084, 1023, 1095/1117 (50+), u/s(10),
1307(29), 1364(15), 1366(60+ 'splinters' - burnt?), 1357(40+
'splinters' - burnt? From same vessel as 1366?), 1366(80+ 'splinters' -
burnt?), 1298(4), 1350, 1351, 1325, 1324, 1300(2), 1265, 1299(5),
1357, 1376, 1326, 1365, 1328, 1272(33), 1307(22), 1345(8), 1365 (40+
'splinters' - burnt? From same vessel as 1366?), 1366 (40), 1444(3),
1687, 1673(3), 1011, u/s(2), 1567, 1456, 1595(3), 1454(2), 1387,
1500(2), 1485(4), 1583(4), 1622, 1661(6), 1577(8), 1446(3), 1465(2),
1444, 1414, 1458, 1532, 1631, 1484, 1576(3), 1430(5), 1474(2),
1447, 1588(2), 1575, 1446(2), 1433, 1430(7), 1551, 1449, 1558,
1439, 1471(2), 1449, 1564(2), 1503(3), 1488(3), 1477(7), 1385,
1393/1, 1018(2), 1413, 1408(3), 1551, 1634, 1405 (90+ 'splinters' -
burnt?), 1520(3), 1024, 1378(6), 1369(20), 1401, 1568, 1406(5),
1410(20), 1369(80+ 'splinters'), 1387(80+ 'splinters'), 1379(15),
1430(3), 1390(4), 1404(6), 1405(40+ burnt?), 1417, 1427, 1356(3).

Dressel 20 is the most common amphora type imported into Roman Britain, as well as being present in some numbers during the late Iron Age (Williams and Peacock, 1983). Dressel 20 amphorae were made along the banks of the River Guadalquivir and its tributaries between Seville and Cordoba in the southern Spanish province of Baetica, where they were used for the long-distance carrying of olive-oil (Ponsich, 1974; 1979). This type of amphora has a wide date-range, from the Augustan prototype (Oberaden 83) to the well-known globular vessel which, with some typological variation was in use up to at least the late third century A.D. (Peacock and Williams, 1986, Classes 24 and 25). All of the Dressel 20 rims from Rocester can be paralleled with examples from Augst illustrated by Martin-Kilcher (1983) in her scheme for

the developement of the Dressel 20 rim. The majority of the Rocester rims appear to fall within the period from the late first century A.D. to just after the middle of the second century A.D. It is interesting to note that some joining rim sherds come from not only different contexts but different phasing as well.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1044 | Dated at Augst late 1st c. A.D. to early 2nd c. A.D. (<u>ibid.</u> , no. 17). |
| 1119 | Dated at Augst late 1st c. A.D. to early 2nd c. A.D. (<u>ibid.</u> , no. 20). |
| 1358 | Similar type. |
| 1583 | Dated at Augst to <u>c.</u> A.D. 125-175 (<u>ibid.</u> , no. 27). |
| 1101 (joins 1417 and 1503) | Similar type. |
| 1365 (two joining sherds) | Dated at Augst late 1st c. A.D. to A.D. 175 (<u>ibid.</u> , no. 27 or 30). |
| 1366 (four small pieces,
might be same vessel as
1366) | Similar type. |
| 1182 (joins 1365) | Similar type. |
| 1488 | Dated at Augst late 1st c. A.D. to A.D. 175 (<u>ibid.</u> , no. 30 or 32). |
| 1382 | Similar type. |

Amongst the handle fragments from Rocester were three which contained stamps:

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1477 | Partial stamp <u>in ansa</u> <u>M</u> <u>VE</u> . This may possibly be the stamp <u>L M</u> <u>VE</u> which appears in Callender (1965, no. 898) and where a late first century A.D. to early second century A.D. date is suggested. This stamp was also found by Ponsich (1982) at Mejia during his survey of Dressel 20 production sites in Baetica. |
|------|--|

1132 (on bag, 1018 on sherd) The stamp L F C appears in ansa. This probably represents L. Fabius Cresens, whose stamps on Dressel 20 amphorae are widely distributed, and whose figlina may have been situated closeby to the Roman city of Decuma, on the banks of the River Guadalquivir (Callender, 1965, no. 851, where a date between A.D. 140-198? is suggest

1366 The complete stamp in quite bold relief T. A. ASI ATI CI P C appears in ansa. This stamp is recorded on Dressel 20 amphorae at a number of sites by Callender, who suggests a date in the second half of the first century A.D. (1965, no. 1696).

The high count of Dressel 20 bodysherds may in some part be accounted for due to the number of small flakes of bodysherds that have been collected. Some of these appear to have been burnt, presumably on site.

Pélichet 47 / Gauloise 4

Rim: 1668.

Bodysherds: 1120(3), 1477.

One rim and four bodysherds of the flat-bottomed amphora type Pélichet 47 / Gauloise 4 which was predominantly made in southern France, more especially around the mouth of the Rhône in Languedoc, where a number of kilns are known (Laubenheimer, 1985). In Britain, Pélichet 47 does not appear to be present in pre-Boudiccan levels (Peacock, 1978). Production of this form continues until at least the early fourth century A. D. (Laubenheimer, 1985). This is the only recognizable wine amphora form present at Rocester, though it is

possible that some of the undesignated bodysherds below may also have carried wine.

Camulunum 186sp

Bodysherds: 1052, 1101(2).

This form was produced along the southern Spanish coast, notably in the Cadiz region, and was used to carry fish-based products, especially fish sauces such as liquamen and muria (Beltrán, 1970; Peacock, 1971; 1974). It is not possible to say which variety of form the Rocester sherds belongs and so they could fall anywhere in the period from the late first century B.C. to the early second century A.D. (ibid.).

Southern Spanish

Bodysherds: 1116, 1220, 1272(4), 1307(4), 1345(13), 1425.

Twenty-four small bodysherds of southern Spanish amphora. These probably carried fish-based products and may have arrived at Rocester during the first or second century A.D. (Peacock, 1971; 1974).

Unassigned

1132, 1503, 1356, 1248, 1162, 1228, 1119, 1365, 1458, 1477, 1447, 1342.

References

Non-Amphorae

1483 (small ribbed handle, probably a flagon), 1709 (5 sherds - possibly from a mortarium), 1272, 1178(2), 1018 (small ?flagon handle), 1447 (probably tile with scored lines).

References

- Beltrán, M. (1970) Las anforas romanas en Espana, Zaragoza.
- Callender, M.H. (1965) Roman Amphorae, London.
- Dressel, H. (1899) Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, XV, Pars 1, Berlin.
- Hawkes, C.F.C. and Hull, M.R. (1947) Camulodunum, Res. Rep. Com. Soc. Ant. London, 14.
- Laubenheimer, F. (1985) La Production Des Amphores En Gaul Narbonnaise, Paris.
- Martin-Kilcher, S. (1983) 'Les amphores romaines a huile de Betique (Dressel 20 et 23) d'Augst (Colonia Augusta Colonia Augusta Rauricorum) et Kaiseraugst (Castrum Rauracense). Un rapport preliminary', in J.M. Blazquez and J. Remesal (eds.), Prod. Y Com. del Aceite en la Antigüedad. II Congreso Madrid, 337-347.
- Peacock, D.P.S. (1971) 'Roman amphorae in pre-Roman Britain', in M. Jesson and D. Hill (eds.), The Iron Age and its Hill-Forts, Southampton, 169-188.
- Peacock, D.P.S. (1974) 'Amphorae and the Baetican fish industry', Antiq. J., 54(1974), 232-243.

- Peacock, D.P.S.. (1978) 'The Rhine and the problem of Gaulish wine in Roman Britain', in J. du Plat Taylor and H. Cleere (eds), Roman Shipping and Trade: Britain and the Rhine Provinces, CBA Res. Rep. 24, 49-51.
- Peacock, D.P.S. and Williams, D.F. (1986) Amphorae and the Roman Economy, London.
- Pélichet, P.E. (1946) 'A propos des amphores romaines trouvees a Nyon', Zeit Schweiz Arch. und Kungstesch, 8(1946), 189-209.
- Ponsich, M. (1974) 'Implantation Rurale Antique sur le Bas-Guadalquivir', Madrid.
- Ponsich, M. (1979) 'Implantation Rurale Antique sur le Bas-Guadalquivir', Paris.
- Ponsich, M. (1982) 'Marcas de anforas de aceite de las riberas del Betis', Archivo Espanol De Arqueologia, 55(1982), 173-204.
- Williams, D.F. and Peacock, D.P.S. (1983) 'The importation of olive-oil into Roman Britain', in J. Blazquez and J. Remesal (eds.), Prod. Y Com. de Aceite en la Antigüedad. II Congreso, Madrid, 263-280.