

Ancient Monuments Laboratory  
Report 8/89

ROMAN AMPHORAE FROM THE 1959  
EXCAVATIONS AT CATTERICK, YORKSHIRE

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 8/89

ROMAN AMPHORAE FROM THE 1959  
EXCAVATIONS AT CATTERICK, YORKSHIRE

D F Williams PhD FSA

Summary

Identification of a small group of Roman amphorae sherds. These included the following forms: the south Gaulish wine amphora Pélíchet 47 / Gauloise 4; the first century A.D. carrot amphora of unknown origin; a pseudo-Koan form of likely eastern Mediterranean origin; a Campanian 'black sand' amphora handle from the Bay of Naples area; and several rims and stamped handles of the Baetican olive-oil form Dressel 20. A bodysherd of the latter form contained part of a titulus pictus in black paint, referring to the weight of the amphora for customs payment.

Author's address :-

D F Williams PhD FSA

Department of Archaeology  
University of Southampton  
Highfield  
Southampton  
SO9 5NH

ROMAN AMPHORAE FROM THE 1959 EXCAVATIONS AT CATTERICK, YORKSHIRE

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

(HBMC Ceramic Petrology Project)

Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton

Pélichet 47 / Gauloise 4

1) F XX (8) 1

Complete rim and handles plus complete base and large part of the body.

2) J XIII (1)

Complete rim and handle.

3) LXIX (23)

single handle.

4) H XIII (u/s)

Single handle.

5) F XX (8)

Six bodysherds, one neck and one handle.

6) E VI (1S)

One bodysherd.

7) H IX (20)

Single handle.

8) D.I. (12)

Part of a base.

9) E V (9)

Part of a base.

10) D X (8)

One bodysherd.

11) D XIII (4)

One bodysherd plus one unknown bodysherd in a reddish-brown fabric.

12) D.I. (4)

Complete base.

Pélichet 47 / Gauloise 4 is a flat-bottomed wine amphora form that was made predominantly in southern France, more particularly around the mouth of the Rhône in Languedoc, where many kilns have been discovered (Laubenheimer, 1985). The type has a long life from about the middle of the first century A.D. to the third, possibly early fourth century A.D. (Panella, 1973; Laubenheimer, 1985). In Britain, Pélichet 47 / Gauloise 4 does not seem to be present in dated contexts until after the Boudiccan revolt (Peacock, 1978), when it soon becomes the most common wine amphora form found in Roman Britain. The material from Catterick represents a minimum of five vessels.

Carrot Type

1) M II (7)

Six rim sherds (representing two separate vessels), one looped handle and thirty-nine ribbed bodysherds of the small carrot type of amphora, all in a reddish-orange very sandy fabric. The source of this distinctive looking amphora with its small tapered body is uncertain, although an examination of the quartz grains in the paste by scanning electron microscopy suggested

an origin in a desert environment (Shackley, 1975). This would seem to point to a Mediterranean source, but the relative dearth of finds in this region is curious. The form may date from the very end of the first century B.C. and seems to continue until the latter part of the first century A.D. (Peacock and Williams, 1986, Class 12). It is often associated with early military sites in Britain and Germany (Reusch, 1970). The contents carried in these vessels are unknown, though dates have been suggested (ibid.).

#### ? Gallic Amphora

##### 1) E V (7)

Upright-rimmed sherd in a fairly fine buff-coloured fabric reminiscent of Gallic amphorae. Perhaps a variation on one of the Gallic forms (Laubenheimer, 1985).

#### Campanian Amphora

##### 1) N XI (3)

Almost complete oval-shaped amphora handle in the distinctive 'black sand' fabric, caused by many dark-coloured inclusions of augite in the paste. This particular fabric has been shown to originate from the Pompeii - Herculaneum region of Italy (cf. Peacock and Williams, 1986, Class 3). It is difficult to identify the precise form of the amphora involved. A somewhat similar handle has already been seen by the writer from Catterick (273/10 A.M. Lab. Report Series 31/86). In that case it was attached to an almond-shaped rim, and the vessel may have been a variation of the

more common Dressel 2-4 form. Alternatively it could be a new type of amphora described by Arthur from Masseria Starza and Masseria Dragone in Campania (1982, Fig. 4, nos. 3 and 4 and Fig. 5, nos. 7 and 8). The Masseria Starza examples were tentatively dated to the second or third century A.D., while those from Masseria Dragone were placed somewhere between the later first century A.D. and the mid-fifth or early sixth centuries (ibid.).

Undesignated

1) N X (3)

Small single rod handle attached to a short plain rounded-rim in a sandy reddish-brown fabric. Two similar vessels have been noted by the writer from the late Roman cemetery at Butts Lane, Colchester, but the exact form and possible origin of this type remain unknown.

Dressel 20

1) D XI (32)

Single handle.

2) F XIII (5A)

Large bodysherd of the upper part of the vessel with the neck 'smoothed' over.

3) H III (4)

One bodysherd.

4) H III (3)

Single handle with one of the ends 'smoothed'.

5) E V (23)

Single handle.

6) E V (20)

Single handle.

7) H XX (15)

One small bodysherd.

8) D XI (44)

Single handle and large part of the body.

9) G XXII (11)

Rim.

10) N X (10)

Rim.

11) K XXIII (18B)

Rim.

12) D III (4)

Rim.

13) E VI (26)

Rim.

14) F XIV (2)

Rim and attached single handle.

15) K IV (9)

Rim.

16) L XVI (1)

Rim and attached single handle which has been stamped towards the summit of the handle and reads upwards (towards the rim). The stamp, which is incomplete, possibly reads .....F C C V..... This may represent the stamp of 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 suggested).

17) L XVI (5)

One bodysherd with a graffito.

18) K XII (2)

Single handle which contains an incomplete stamp towards the summit and reads upwards (towards the rim) Q I M..... This stamp with various combinations of letters following the M appears in Callender, where Q I M is thought to have been located near to Malpica on the River Genil in Baetica and operated during the period A.D. 130-180? However, the evidence from Augst suggests that this date-range can be extended into the early years of the second century A.D. (Martin-Kilcher et al, 1985, Group 12).

19) Bulldozer scrap near Bath house

Single handle which contains the complete stamp Q S T L towards the summit reading downwards (towards the body). This stamp does not appear in Callender (1965) and the writer has not been able to trace parallels elsewhere.

20) C I (u/s)

Single handle with a graffito situated next to an incomplete stamp which is situated towards the summit and reads downwards (towards the body) H I S P S A E..... The stamp of HISPSAENIA has been recorded by Ponsich from Huerta del Rio in Baetica (1979, 43).



21) Bulldozer scrap near Bath house

Large bodysherd with graffito scratched on.

22) Bulldozer scrap near Bath house

Large bodysherd with graffito scratched on and part of an attached handle.

23) Bulldozer scrap near Bath house

Large bodysherd with graffito scratched on.

24) Bulldozer scrap near Bath house

Bodysherd of the neck area containing part of a titulus pictus in black paint. The tituli picti found on Dressel 20 amphorae invariably deal with customs payments and are elaborate pieces of writing dealing with such things as the weight of the empty amphora, the weight of the contents, the name of the shipper and the producing estate and details of the authorities controlling the export of the vessel. Fortunately this information tends to follow a set arrangement of presentation. The titulus on the Catterick sherd, labelled  $\alpha$  in Rodriguez-Almeida's scheme for Dressel 20 inscriptions, is an abbreviation for the empty weight of the amphora (1972; see also Peacock and Williams, 1986, 13-14). Professor Pedro Funari of São Paulo University kindly read this for me as the value 95. This would make the vessel average size, since these values range between  $79\frac{1}{2}$  and  $107\frac{1}{2}$  (ibid.).

25) F VI 6

Bodysherd with complete lead rivet attached.

Dressel 20 is the most common amphora form imported into Roman Britain. It was 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 transportation of the local olive-oil (Ponsich, 1974; 1979). This type of amphora has a wide date-range, from the Augustan period until the late third century A.D. (Peacock and Williams, 1986, Class 25). During that time there was some typological development of the rim and a scheme showing their evolution has been worked out by Martin-Kilcher (1983) at Augst, which

has many in well-dated contexts. Eight rims were recovered from Catterick, all of which can be roughly paralleled with examples at Augst.

- L XVI (1)            Dated at Augst late first century A.D. / mid second century  
                          (ibid., no. 18 or 29).
- F XIV (2)            Dated at Augst late first century A.D. / early second century  
                          (ibid., no. 20).
- G XXII (11)          Dated at Augst mid second century A.D. (ibid., no. 27).
- K XXIII (18B)        Dated at Augst late first century A.D. / mid second century  
                          (ibid., no. 30)
- E VI (26)            As above.
- K IV (9)             Dated at Augst mid second century A.D. / early third century  
                          (ibid., nos. 33, 34 or 36).
- N X (10)             As above.
- D III (4)            As above.

?Pseudo-Koan Amphora

1) M II (7)

This vessel is possibly a pseudo-Koan / imitation Dressel 2-4. Instead of the normal bifid handles associated with the latter, the Catterick example has a deep central groove running down the outside of the handles which are slightly peaked at the summit. The rim of the Catterick vessel is fairly thick and undercut, while the Koan / Dressel 2-4 has more of a simple rounded rim (cf. Peacock and Williams, 1986, Classes 10 and 11). The fabric is a distinctive light red with large plates of golden mica and pieces of white felspar scattered throughout the paste. It is difficult to suggest

a likely origin, perhaps one of the granitic areas of the eastern Mediterranean ?

Non-Amphora

1) H XXIV (7)

Small flask in a fine-textured buff fabric with quite thick walls. These small vessels are quite often associated with amphorae and have been referred to in the past as 'amphora stoppers', though with no real proof that this was the intention. The small size of such vessels perhaps suggests that they may have carried something which was normally used in sparing amounts, say an unguent?

SITE 46

1) CON 4403 A3

Two small bodysherds of Dressel 20.

2) 1819 308

Rim sherd in what looks to be a fairly similar fabric to Gallic amphorae such as Pélichet 47, but the beaded rim also contains a wide internal groove not normally associated with the latter type.

3) Con 1450

A triangular rim sherd again in a fine-textured light buff fabric commonly

associated with Gallic amphorae. This rim looks as if it might be a variation on the Gauloise 5 form made in southern France from the second half of the first century A.D. to the beginning of the second century A.D., and used to carry wine (Labenheimer, 1985, Fig. 158).

### References

- Arthur, P. (1982) 'Roman amphorae and the Ager Falernus under the Empire', PBSR, 50(1982), 22-33.
- Callender, M.H. (1965) Roman Amphorae, London.
- Laubenheimer, F. (1985) La Production Des Amphores En Gaule Narbonnaise, Paris.
- Martin-Kilcher, S. (1983) 'Les amphores romaines a huile de Betique (Dressel 20 et 23) d'Augst (Colonia Augusta Rauricorum) et Kaiseraugst (Castrum Rauracense). Un rapport preliminaire', in J.M. Blazquez and J. Remesal (eds.), Prod. y Com. del Aceite en la Antiguedad. II Congreso, Madrid, 337-347.
- Martin-Kilcher, S., (1985) 'Keramikanalysen an romischen Olamphoren aus Augst, Schupbach, S., Stern, W, Kaiseraugst, Avenches und Lausanne-Vidy and Ballie, J. Naturwissenschaftliche und archaologische aspekte', J. Schweizerischen Gesellschaft Fur Ur-Und Fruhgeschichte, 68(1985), 173-204.
- Panella, C. (1973) 'Appunti su un gruppo di anfore della prima, media e tarda eta Imperiale', Ostia III, 460-633.

- 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. no. 24, 49-51.
- Peacock, D.P.S. and Williams, D.F. (1986) Amphorae and the Roman Economy, London.
- Ponsich, M. (1974) Implantation Rurale Antique sur le Bas-Guadalquivir, Vol. 1, Madrid.
- Ponsich, M. (1979) Implantation Rurale Antique sur le Bas-Guadalquivir, Vol. II, Paris.
- Reusch, W. (1970) 'Kleine, spitzkonische amphoren', Saalburg Jb., 27 (1970), 54-62.
- Rodriguez-Almeida, E. (1972) 'Novedades de epigrafia anforaria del Monte Testaccio', Coll. de L'Ecole Francaise de Rome, 10, 107-242.
- Shackley, M. (1975) Archaeological Sediments, London.



[40.014]

