



LINCOLN CITY AND COUNTY MUSEUM
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Roman Antiquities,

IN THE
CITY AND COUNTY MUSEUM, LINCOLN.
(PART 3.)

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ROMAN ANTIQUITIES.

Having referred in previous publications to the larger remains illustrating the period of the Roman occupation in this City,* and to that class of pottery and glass known as Cinerary Vessels,† the present pamphlet is devoted to vessels of various forms that appear to be more of a domestic character.

It should be pointed out, that vessels of domestic use were afterwards used for funeral purposes, so that it is quite possible to have a domestic vessel described as a cinerary urn, in many cases accompanied by various vessels in which may have been placed food, drink, and perhaps ointments and balsams, as well as offerings. Lamps also have been found among the pottery used in burials.

Most of the specimens, however, may be looked on as examples of domestic pottery of the period.

The making of pottery by the Etruscans, the Greeks, and the Romans has not been excelled in modern times; for graceful form, and beauty of design, the early potters have provided patterns on which modern makers still base their work.

Clay, that almost universal material for the potters' art, was taken advantage of in very early times. It is possible that the first vessels made were simply sun dried and used as temporary receptacles; it would probably not be long before the baking of the clay vessel was found to add to its durability, and even to-day vessels of ancient times are found, often incorrectly called sun-baked, but without doubt fired, though not as in later times in a kiln.

* See Museum publication, No. 3.

† See Museum publication, No. 4.



H. PRESCOTT.

GROUP OF SIX VESSELS FOUND IN LINCOLN.

(In the City and County Museum, Lincoln.)

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Even in the early periods the pliability of the clay was taken advantage of, and rude decorations of an almost savage tribe are seen in the Early British pottery, designs probably formed with notched sticks, and twisted grass, were doubtless in imitation of basket work, and possibly the work of females whilst the men were busy with their hunting expeditions.

Such early vessels were made by hand alone, hence their shape is simple and often lack symmetry.

The discovery of using a wheel was a great advance in the potters' art, and the use of a properly constructed kiln rendered the pottery so durable, that after many centuries perfect examples are frequently being brought to light.

The manufacture of pottery in late Celtic and Roman times was no doubt an important art, and during these periods great care was used in selecting sites on which to establish kilns, where suitable clay was to be obtained.

The sites of potteries, and in some cases, the kilns themselves have been found and described.

Specimens found in this city and county have characteristics by which the chief makes can be traced to the localities in which they were made.

Durobrivian or Castor Ware, is the production of extensive potteries, computed to have covered some twenty square miles in the counties of Northampton and Huntingdon.

The pottery is especially interesting, being gracefully formed, and compared with other pottery of the period, very light in weight and richly ornamented, often the designs presenting figures and hunting scenes, the latter being the favourite scheme of decoration.

Scroll work was also much indulged in, many of the designs being very beautiful and characteristic of British art.

The decoration of this ware was formed by trailing liquid clay "slip," on the vessel when in a "green" state, in the way that the modern confectioner decorates his cakes with designs in white sugar. It was never formed in a mould as was "Samian."

Examples of this ware may be seen in the collection of pottery found in Lincoln.

Upchurch ware is also frequently found. This pottery has been extensively discovered along the Medway, below Chatham, and owes its name to the Upchurch Marshes, where it occurs somewhat abundantly. The ornamentation is not nearly so elaborate or refined as in Castor ware.

"Salopian Ware" owes its name to the supposition of the older antiquaries that it was made from the clay of the Severn Valley. A large number of examples are to be seen, which were found in this city, and which are in all probability the product of local kilns.

The colours of the vessels are generally white to light red, and mostly of very graceful outline.

A most attractive form of pottery is that known as "Samian," a term which, although it be of more than questionable propriety as thus applied, has become generally accepted and need not here be disturbed. It was principally made in the South of France, and was imported into this country from early in the first century A.D., till the close of its manufacture in the third century.

The material is a beautiful red clay, of close texture. The inside and outside having received a fine coral-red glaze.

Many specimens have been found in Lincoln, mostly fragments of fine examples doubtless used as better class table ware. Many of these vessels are most highly decorated, having been pressed in a mould which has formed a bold relief ornamentation.

The group of six vessels, of which an illustration is included in this publication, show the forms and material of which Salopian ware is referred, and may be classed as such.

These vessels were presented to the Lincoln City and County Museum by Mr. R. D. Darbshire, of Manchester, who, on becoming aware that Lincoln had now provided a museum for the county, expressed a desire to return them to their proper home.

This fine example of public spirit was readily appreciated and the vessels are now to be seen within a few hundred yards of the spot where they were discovered in 1877.

The son of Mr. Darbshire was superintending excavations in Monks Road, when a hollow in the clay bed was found. "This filled with sand from above, so loose as to run out into the cutting, disclosing a 'Pot,'" Mr. Darbshire writes. "My son took out a certain handled urn or bottle, and on emptying the basin recovered three others, all of well-baked cream-coloured earthenware, and one of smaller size and of a darker brown material sufficiently polished, and also a small, baby's feeding bottle of the first-named material.

The specimens are (except a small piece out of one) in absolutely perfect condition.

The workmen joked that they had dug up the old gentleman's wine cellar.

Partly for information and my own pleasure in inspection, my son brought the lot home to me for safe deposit and custody.

For some time I have exhibited these in the museum of the Whitworth Institute at Darley Dale, near Matlock, but as my own days are rapidly running out, I have come to the conclusion to discharge my trust by placing them in your hands for deposit and exhibition in your Museum, and am happy to think that they will now be preserved on their own soil."

Many congratulations have been accorded to the Museum for the acquisition of so fine a group of local Roman vessels.

The accompanying illustration shows the form of each of the vessels. In the upper row, the three largest are figured. The one to the left being a fine three handled vessel, of by no means a common form, eight inches in height.

The central pitcher-shaped vessel is eleven inches high, and the lip is "pinched" together, giving it an interesting shape and forming a spout through which the contents could be gently poured.

The other vessel is of plainer form, and is nine inches in height.

In the lower row is the vessel referred to previously as being of darker colour than the rest, it is probably an *olla*, or drinking cup.

The central figure is a gracefully shaped little vessel, six inches high.

The smallest vessel being the baby's feeding bottle. In the same case as the foregoing group, are other vessels of similar form and ware, some of them deposited by the Dean and Chapter, others kindly presented by Mr. R. A. MacBrair, City Surveyor. All were found during various excavations in the city.

There are also a number of pieces of a class of shallow vessels termed "Mortaria."

Quantities of such fragments are often unearthed in the city, proving it to be a form of domestic vessel largely used by the Romans.

In outline, the rim of the Mortarium is round and is provided with a lip for pouring out the contents. The vessel is shallow, and the inside is closely studded with small

hard pebbles, etc., pressed into the earthenware, thus providing a hard and somewhat rough surface on which substances for food might be ground, or to counteract the wearing away of the vessel in the process of stirring up such food.

In some cases the bottom of the vessels are burnt, suggesting that the food may have been cooked in them. One example is almost whole, giving an accurate impression of the form and make of these vessels. It bears the potter's mark on the rim and is the gift of Dr. E. Mansel Sympson and was found in Monks Road, Lincoln.

Other portions are in the same collection, some having the potter's mark, all of which were found in the city, and contributed by various donors, whose names are on the labels.

A lamp, of dark brown ware, is also exhibited. It was found at Walesby, in 1861, and is in perfect condition, notwithstanding the fact that it was being knocked about by a boy when a gentleman riding past pulled up and secured it. Eventually it got to Barton, and was there secured by the Curator.

A quantity of Roman remains were found at Walesby, in 1861, and most probably the lamp was from the same site.

A hollow pillar-shaped vessel with rim and wider base is three inches in height, and has been termed a dice box. It is the gift of the Rev. E. Nelson, and was unearthed in the city.

A pear-shaped vessel, with small base and still smaller orifice, was found on the site of the Municipal Technical School, and is the gift of Miss O'Neill. It is of whitish ware, encircled with bands of a dark colour painted on.

Another small vase of coarser material is beside it, and was found in Silver Street.

These small vessels have been termed "Tear Bottles," the supposed use being that they were carried by mourners to receive their tears, and the bottles then placed with the remains of the dead.

They were, however, intended for other uses, probably as receptacles for unguents, etc.

In one of the side cases will be seen a large number of fragments of that finely made "Samian" ware, which has been previously referred to in this publication. Most of these are the gift of Miss O'Neill, who so kindly presented to the Museum the late Dr. O'Neill's collection of local Roman pottery.

One small bowl, to which the name of *Acetabulum* has been given, it being supposed that it was a receptacle for vinegar or similar liquid used at table, bears the potter's mark: SENILA. M. stamped on the inside at the bottom. Other pieces also bear the mark of the potter, and the rest of the fragments consist of portions of Mortaria and vessels of various shapes and sizes.

Mr. J. E. Dickinson contributes a piece of the same ware with the stamp VESPONI, this was found on Nettleham Road in 1861.

A portion of a rim of what was a fine vessel in this ware is the gift of Sir Berkeley Sheffield, Bart., M.P., and was found with a quantity of pottery of this Period near Scunthorpe.

There are also fragments of highly decorated vessels, which have been pressed in a mould leaving figures in relief. Some with animal figures, others with human figures and some with floral designs. There are also combinations of these and the perfect vessels must have been of very fine finish and ornamentation, though the glaze is not so rich as on some of the plain vessels.

One piece, the gift of the Co-operative Society, and found in 1908 in Silver Street, bears the impress of a stamp which appears to have been of wood or similar material.

Two bronze vessels, probably of domestic use, are exhibited in another side case. An illustration of these is given.

The shallow bowl is nine and a quarter inches across and decorated round the rim by small bosses on the upper side.

The other vessel is four and three-quarters inches in height, and of graceful form. The handle is not secured at the bottom, and the only decoration is a few marks cut into it.

Both vessels were found many years ago in the city and have been presented to the Museum by Mr. J. D. Newbold.

The thanks of the Committee are tendered to all who have assisted in making so fine a local collection of Romano-British pottery, and it is hoped that many more examples may be presented by those who possess such, so that in future issues of these publications further specimens may be illustrated and described.

Assistance by gift or loan of specimens for exhibition will be highly appreciated.

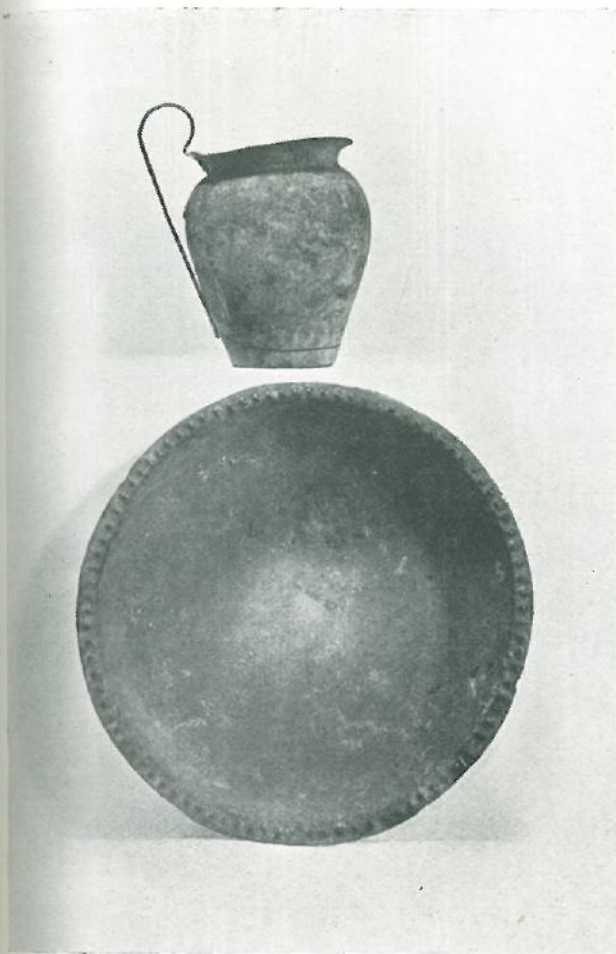


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H. PRESCOTT.

BRONZE VESSELS FOUND IN LINCOLN.

(In the City and County Museum, Lincoln).