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TERRA SIGILLATA FROM THE CELLARS OF BRIGETIO'S CIVIL TOWN. SOME REMARKS ON THE POTTERS' STAMPS

In 2012 a cellar was revealed in the civil town of Brigetio which is in the northern part of Pannonia. Its excavation ended in 2016 because of unforeseen special circumstances. A huge amount of well-preserved terra sigillata came to light from its man-made backfilling layers, which are providing very important information. There are some interesting and fascinating rare vessels in this unique closed context, especially a relief-decorated bowl from Lezoux which shed light on the connections between the manufactures of Central Gaul and Pannonia. This paper presents the examination of the cellar's terra sigillata finds and some other remarks on the material of a previously excavated cellar.

Pannonia – terra sigillata – Roman cellar – Central Gaul – Crispinus II

1. Introduction

Brigetio is situated in the northern territory of Pannonia, and it was one of those Pannonian cities where legionary soldiers were stationed (**fig. 1**). Systematic excavations in the civil town started in 1992, carried out by the Department of Classical and Roman Archaeology of Eötvös Loránd University and the Klapka György Museum of Komárom. In 2008 a cellar (the so-called 1st cellar) was revealed in the civil town of Brigetio, and in 2012 another one's (the so-called 2nd cellar) excavation started. The nomenclature of these buildings does not refer to any chronological order. From the point of view of *terra sigillata* studies the 2nd cellar is more interesting; therefore, it is the main subject of this preliminary study.

2. The so-called 1st cellar

The first excavated cellar was revealed in the end of July 2008, and its excavation continued in the next year's excavation season, as well (Bartus and Borhy 2016: 101-102; Szórádi 2010: 12). The building was orientated in northeastern direction, and its size was 4,5 m in length, 2,4 m in width and 1,8 m in depth (Bartus and Borhy 2016: 102; Szórádi 2010: 13).

2.1. The terra sigillata finds

The material of this cellar consisted of 138 *terra sigillata* sherds (Szórádi 2010: 13, 25) – besides other finds – from the man-made backfilling layers after the abandonment of the building. These vessels were imported from the workshops of South and Central Gaul, and Rheinzabern (Szórádi 2010: 25-26) (**tab. 1**). Similarly to the so-called 2nd cellar (**tab. 2**),

the Central Gaulish *terra sigillata* is predominant (**table 1**) among the finds. Furthermore, a massive horizon consisted of *Cinnamus'* wares (Szórádi 2010: 20), as it is usual in Brigetio (Bartus et al. 2013: 36, 39-40; 2016: 132-133; 2017: 104) and on the whole territory of Pannonia province (Kandler-Zöchmann 2002: 51).

In contrast with the so-called 2nd cellar's *terra sigillata* finds, the earliest North Italian wares and the vessels from Eastern Gaul, Westerndorf and Pfaffenhofen were also missing. However, this narrower spectrum brings us nearer to the dating of the cellar's abandonment. Unfortunately, the dating cannot be stated precisely because the earliest attributable vessel can be connected to one of the decoration series of *Crucuro* (75-120 AD) from La Graufesenque (Szórádi 2010: 17). Due to the lack of the North Italian *terra sigillata* and the dominance of the Central Gaulish wares, it seems likely that the backfilling of the building has started in the early decades of the 2nd century and could have proceeded until at the latest the turn of the Antonine to the Severan era.

3. The so-called 2nd cellar

This building was eastward from the previously excavated one, and it was 4.4 m in length and 2.7 m in width (Bartus and Borhy 2016: 102). Its size was quite the same as the other, however the quantity of the *terra sigillata* finds was almost twice as much as in the 1st cellar. The excavation of the building came to a standstill in 2012 – after its finding – because of unforeseen special circumstances which means that the beams of its ceiling and remained in a very well-preserved condition and there were also seeds in the cellar's backfilling. The excavation continued during the following three years due to the long-lasting process of the restoration,

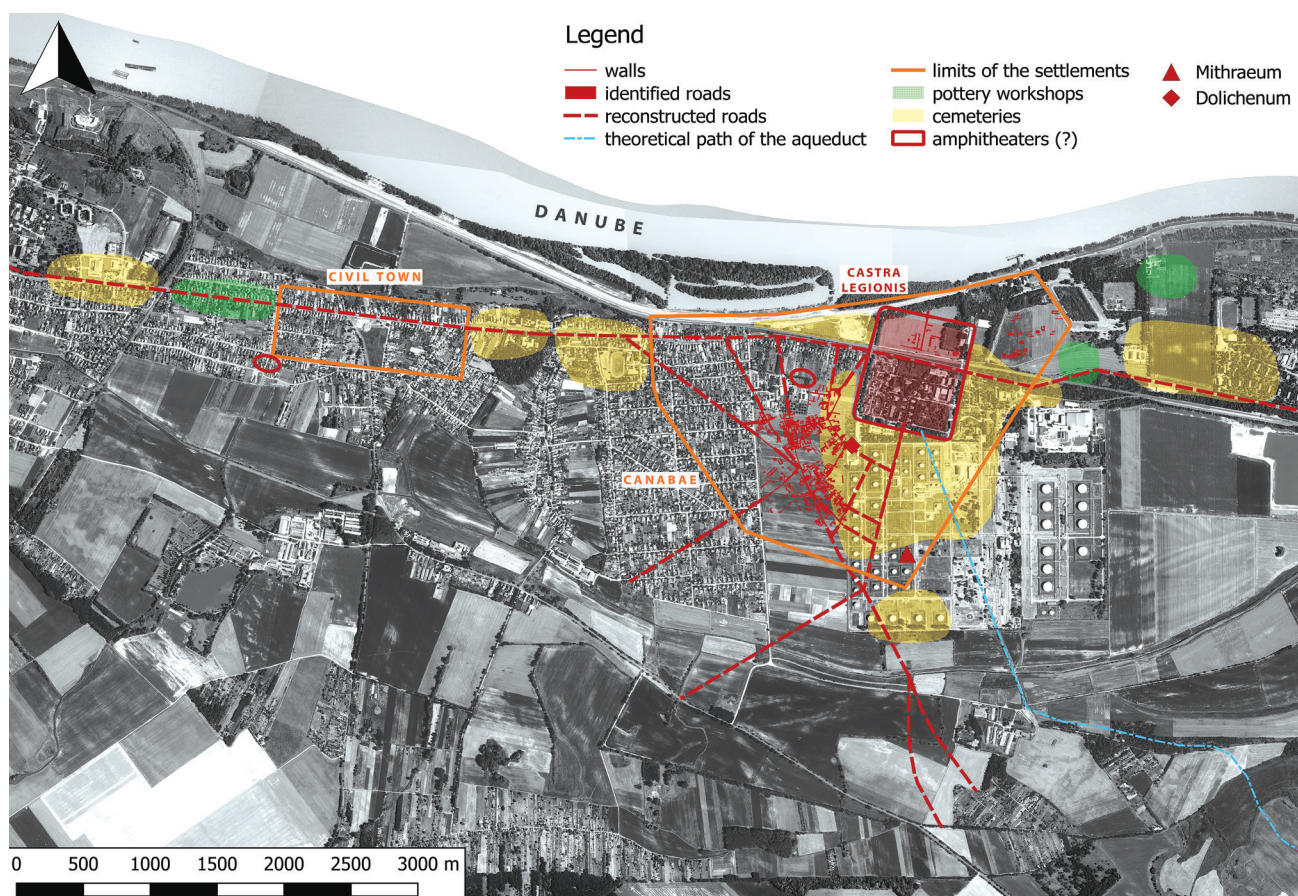


Fig. 1. The map of *Brigetio* (by László Rupnik, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest).

conservation and the removal of the wooden parts. After that procedure they were taken out by restorers, then the excavation of the lowest layers has started (Bartus, Borhy and Számadó 2015: 246). A huge amount of *terra sigillata* came to light from the cellar's man-made backfilling layers of rubbish – besides other types of pottery, a lot of animal bones and wide range of small finds.

The archaeological surveying process enlightened that most of the finds under the roofing did not belong to the original equipment of the cellar because the finds were concentrated on the southern end of the building, where the collapsed wooden roofing was missing. This indicates that originally there was an opening on that side of the ceiling used as an entrance to the cellar. Then, it was clear that the rubbish was thrown through this opened section into the building and started to fill it up (Bartus, Borhy and Számadó 2015: 246). When the ceiling collapsed, it created a time capsule-like closed context.

3.1. The *terra sigillata* finds

A total of 285 *terra sigillata* sherds were found in the backfilling layers. These are various forms from the workshops of Northern Italy, Central and Eastern Gaul, Rheinzabern, Westerndorf and Pfaffenhofen (**tab. 2**). Most of these *terra sigillata* were produced during the Antonine era.

Workshop	Number of sherds	Percentage
South Gaul	4	5.41%
Central Gaul	68	91.89%
Rheinzabern	2	2.70%
Unidentified	64	86.49%
Total	138	100%

Tab. 1. *Terra sigillata* finds from the backfilling layers of the 1st cellar.

Workshop	Number of sherds	Percentage
North Italy	3	1.05%
Central Gaul	86	30.18%
East Gaul	1	0.35%
Rheinzabern	86	30.18%
Westerndorf	70	24.56%
Rheinzabern/ Westerndorf	20	7.02%
Pfaffenhofen	3	1.05%
Westerndorf/ Pfaffenhofen	10	3.51%
Unidentified	6	2.11%
Total	285	100%

Tab. 2. *Terra sigillata* finds from the backfilling layers of the 2nd cellar.

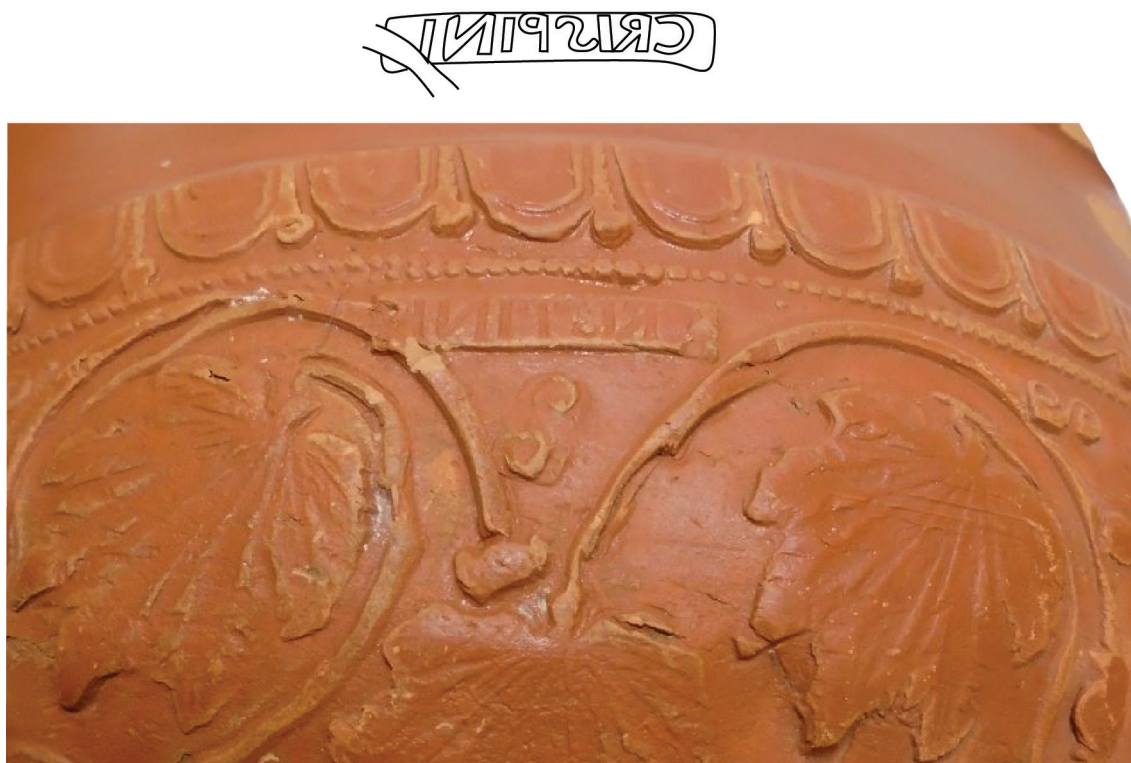


Fig. 2. Drag. 37 bowl from the workshop of *Crispinus* ii.

In the depths of the cellar, under the collapsed wooden ceiling, 23 *terra sigillata* sherds (table 3) were found. From the point of view of dating the cellar's abandonment, these vessels are the most important to study, because they were the first ones which were thrown into the building before the roofing collapsed. The earliest piece of the cellar's *terra sigillata* material is a broken, very badly preserved Consp. 43 form of Italian *terra sigillata* with barbotine decorated rim. In this layer 21 Central Gaulish sherds were found. The relief decorated bowls can be attributed to *Criciro*, *Paternus* ii and *Crispinus* ii¹ (fig. 2). There were also some plain wares with potters' stamps on their base. Among these, one Drag. 18/31 plate of *Mammius* (Gabler, Gauthier and Márton 2009: 255, Fig. 24/350.5) and three Drag. 33 cups of *Aunus* ii (Gabler, Gauthier and Márton 2009: 230, Fig. 18/86.1), *Cadgatis* (Gabler, Gauthier and Márton 2009: 233, Fig. 18/116.3) and *Macrinus* (fig. 3). All these Central Gaulish potters were active during the Antonine era. Besides these, a fragment of an unidentifiable Rheinzabern ware was also found.

Among the *terra sigillata* finds – besides the usual vessels – there are some interesting and rare ones in this cellar. Especially a relief decorated bowl from Lezoux which sheds light on the connections between the manufactures of Central Gaul and Pannonia. This is a vessel from the workshop of *Crispinus* ii (160-200 AD), as its potter's stamp shows (fig. 2). The bowl's uniqueness is that the naturalistic composition, which is made of leaves and tendrils, is originating from the

Workshop	Number of sherds	Percentage
North Italy	1	4.35%
Central Gaul	21	91.30%
Rheinzabern	1	4.35%
Total	23	100%

Tab. 3. *Terra sigillata* finds from beneath the collapsed ceiling of the 2nd cellar.

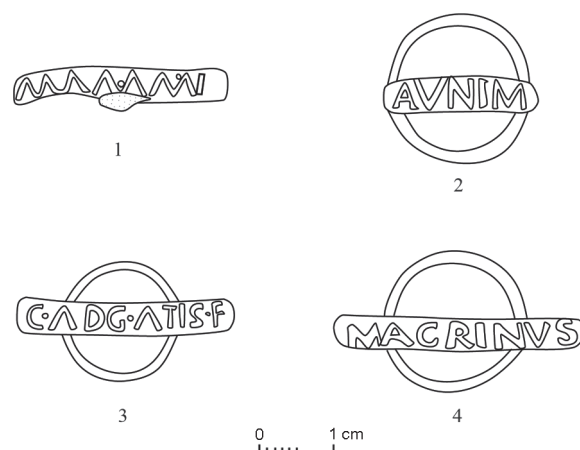


Fig. 3. Central Gaulish potters' stamps in a Drag. 18/31 plate (1) and Drag. 33 cups (2-4).

¹ The attribution of the potters was based on the following publications: Oswald 1964, Rogers 1974, Stanfield and Simpson 1990.

workshop of *Cettus*, who worked in Les Martres-de-Veyre (130-160 AD) (Dickinson and Hartley 2008: 5-6), but it has the stamp of *Crispinus* ii. The possible reason for it lies in the moulds' trade between potters. Therefore, in this case, one of *Cettus*' moulds got to Lezoux from Les Martres-de-Veyre via commerce. In Lezoux, *Crispinus* ii made a new mould and stamped it with his name, which can be proved by the fading of the motives' contour due to the shrinkage of the clay. Another reason is that one of the tendrils crosses the potters' stamp which means that it was pressed earlier into the mould (Bartus et al. 2017: 104).

4. Conclusion

As it was mentioned above, the so-called 1st cellar's life has ended by man-made backfilling when the residents of the building abandoned it. It was also a quite fortunate situation

due to the reason that this activity provided a closed context for us. They have been started to fill up the abandoned 1st cellar around the first decades of the 2nd century and they finished this process not so long before the turn of the 2nd and 3rd century.

The advantage of the so-called 2nd cellar's closed context is that we can date its abandonment more precisely, because we know which vessels were the first to be thrown in. Based on the *terra sigillata* finds they started to fill up the building with rubbish around the middle of the 2nd century AD. Then the ceiling collapsed during the second half of the 2nd century, probably in the last quarter of it. They have finished the backfilling not long after the middle of the 3rd century according to the wares from Pfaffenhofen.

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