

Anna A. Nagy

NEW AMPHORA FINDS FROM SAVARIA (PANNONIA)

Preliminary report

Background

The aim of this research was to get a better knowledge of the trade of the ancient city of *Savaria*, a colonia along the Amber Route in Western-*Pannonia* (fig. 1) in the light of new amphora finds.¹

Roman troops marched through the territory of the later *Savaria* in the first half of the 2nd century on their way against the Marcomanni and Quadi.² After this the Romans always had a say in the confrontations between the Barbarians living north of the Danube – to be able to do it they stayed close to them. Soldiers were most probably stationed near *Savaria* as well – one amphora attests to this activity.³ But the real amphora trade began after the emperor Claudius established *Colonia Claudia Savaria* – a new city along the Amber Route and the imperial road connecting *Sirmium* with *Augusta Treverorum*.⁴

The settlers, the veterans of the *legio XV Apollinaris* and the Italian inhabitants accompanying them immediately demanded the wine, olive oil, fish sauces and various fruits (olives, dates, figs) that they were used to in their homeland. These goods were shipped in amphorae to *Savaria*.

Amphorae

Wine amphorae used in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD belong to the Dressel 2–4, Koan, Rhodian and Dressel 24 types. The Koan and Dressel 24 types are very rarely found in *Pannonia*, while the Rhodian type is the most common wine amphora in the province (the same is true for *Savaria*). The single Dressel 24 fragment has a CCCX black inscription on it – it may refer to the weight of the empty vessel, of the product that was stored in it or to how much it weighed altogether. Previously it

was believed that the importation of the Dressel 24 amphorae in *Pannonia* began during the reign of the emperor Hadrian,⁵ but this fragment can be dated to the Flavian period. Wine was imported from *Hispania Tarraconensis*, Southern-Gaul, Italy, the Greek islands and *Asia Minor*.

Until the reign of Antonius Pius the inhabitants of *Savaria* consumed olive oil coming from the Istrian peninsula (Dressel 6B type). One of the Dressel 6B rim fragments bears a retrograde [IM]PDO[MITI] stamp (fig. 2) which is evidence of the fact that the Istrian workshops became properties of the emperor.⁶ With the decline of the Istrian olive oil production oil was shipped to *Savaria* in Dressel 20 amphorae. *Hispania Baetica* continued to supply the ancient city with oil until the middle of the 3rd century AD. Starting from the beginning of the 4th century oil came in LR 2 amphorae. This is a newly discovered type in *Pannonia* thus it adds to the later economic history of the city and of the province as well.

In the 1st and 2nd centuries AD fish sauces were imported from *Hispania Baetica* and *Hispania Tarraconensis* in Dressel 7–11 and Beltrán 2A amphorae. Sherds belonging to the Aquincum 78 type which also contained *liquamen*⁷ were found as well but we do not know where they were made.⁸

Until the beginning of the 3rd century AD olives were traded in Schörgendorfer 558 type amphorae, probably coming from Northern-Italy.⁹ Dates and figs arrived in Camulodunum 189 amphorae – this type has never been recorded in *Savaria* before.

Fragments belonging to the Portorecanati type were also found but it is unknown where they were produced and what they contained. Oil has been suggested.¹⁰

A single Ephesian sherd and some North African fragments were also found.

¹ A total of 262 new amphora fragments were found out of which 38 have been earlier identified by T. Bezczy. I hereby would like to thank him for letting me use these 38 fragments for the sole purpose of better understanding the trade of *Savaria*.

² TÓTH 1998, 14.

³ T. BEZCZY, Amphora findings from Savaria. *Savaria* 15, 1981, 176.

⁴ *Itinerarium Antonini* 231,8–240,5.

⁵ D. GABLER ET AL., Eastern Mediterranean import and its influence on local pottery in Aquincum. *Acta Arch. Acad. Scien. Hungaricae* 203, 2009, 64.

⁶ BEZCZY 2005, 50–51.

⁷ R. AURIEMMA, Le anfore del relitto di Grado e il loro contenuto. *Mél. École Française Rome* 112, 2000, 34–37.

⁸ T. BEZCZY, Amphorae from the south area of the auxiliary fort at Carnuntum (Preliminary report). In: M. Kandler (ed.), *Das Auxiliarkastell Carnuntum 2* (Wien 1997) 174.

⁹ BEZCZY 2005, 56–57.

¹⁰ S. CIPRIANO, Anfore con collo ad imbuto. In: S. Pesavento Mattioli (ed.), *Anfore romane a Padova: ritrovamenti dalla città* (Padova 1992) 47.



Fig. 1. The location of *Savaria* along the Amber Route (after T. BEZECZKY, *Amphorák az adonyi [Vetus Salina] kora római táborból.* Arch. Ért. 117, 1990, Fig. 1).

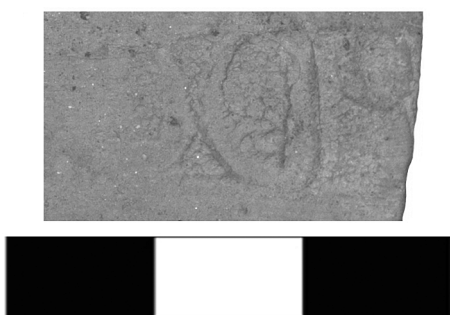


Fig. 2. Retrograde [IM]PDO[MITI] stamp on Dressel 6B rim fragment.

TYPE	NUMBER OF FRAGMENTS	PERCENTAGE
<i>Wine</i>		
Dressel 2-4	10	3.77%
Koan	7	2.63%
Rhodian	46	17.30%
Dressel 24	1	0.37%
<i>Olive oil</i>		
Dressel 6B	69	25.94%
Dressel 20	2	0.75%
LR 2	2	0.75%
<i>Fish sauce</i>		
Dressel 7-11	12	4.52%
Beltrán 2A	1	0.37%
Aquincum 78	18	6.76%
<i>Fruits</i>		
Schörgendorfer 558	7	2.63%
Camulodunum 189	2	0.75%
<i>Unknown contents</i>		
Portorcanati	5	1.88%
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	84	31.58%

Fig. 3. Distribution of the amphorae in accordance with their contents.

Conclusion

The majority of the amphorae presented here contained olive oil (27.44 %), followed by wine (24.07 %), fish sauces (11.65 %) and exotic fruits (3.38 %). Amongst other foodstuffs wine and oil were included in the Roman (military) diet – these amphorae can be connected with this fact (fig. 3).

Although relatively few amphorae came to light from *Savaria* (and *Pannonia* as well) they show that the city became an organic part of the Roman Empire right after the settlers had arrived. Regular amphora trade began in the Claudian period – this was the time when they started consuming the goods coming from the Mediterranean. The amphorae were transported on the Amber Route – the main distribution center was *Aquileia*, later *Nauportus*, *Emona* and *Poetovio*. The Aegean foodstuffs were shipped to *Pannonia* on the Danube.¹¹

It can be said that the demand for the goods contained in the amphorae seemed to have decreased in *Savaria* during the 3rd-4th centuries AD (fig. 4). This is not an uncommon phenomenon in the case of the settlements along the Amber Route: the Roman soldiers and Italian inhabitants were in need of good quality wine, olive oil, olives, dates, figs and fish sauces but they didn't stay in *Savaria* forever. The commercial route's military control continuously weakened and after the Marcomannic wars most of the Roman soldiers who stayed here were sent away to the bank of the Danube, to the *limes*.¹²

¹¹ T. BEZECZKY, Roman amphora trade in Pannonia. In: G. Hajnóczy (ed.), *La Pannonia e l'Impero Romano.* Atti del convegno internazionale. Accademia d'Ungheria e l'Istituto Austriaco di Cultura (Milan 1995) 170.

¹² BEZECZKY 2005, 69.

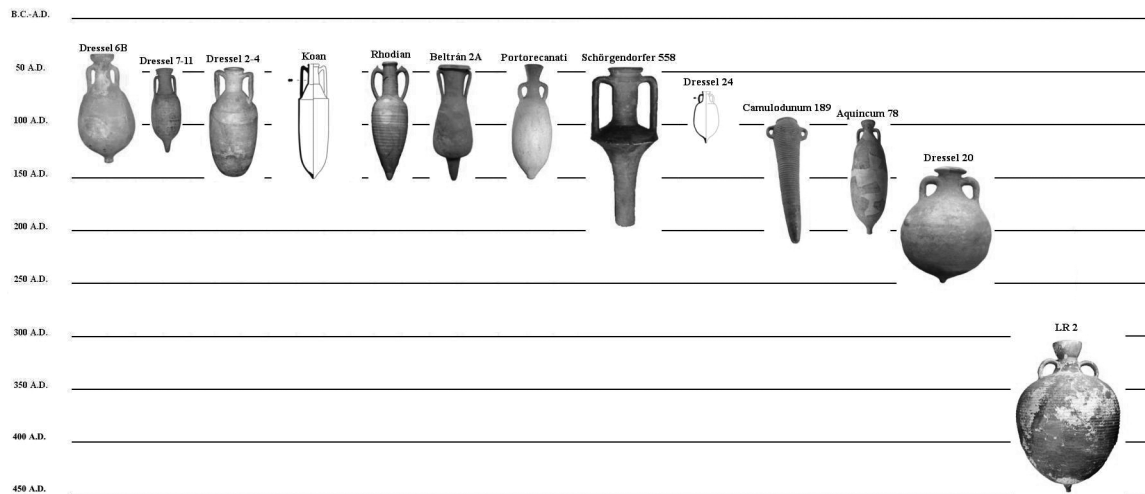


Fig. 4. Chronology of the amphora trade in *Savaria* based on the new finds. The size of each amphora shows how long the type was in use in *Savaria*. (The pictures and drawings are from the online database of the Southampton University Amphora Project: http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/amphora_ahrb_2005/cat_amph.cfm).

It has to be noted as well that from the beginning of the 2nd century AD not only Mediterranean soldiers but local people were admitted into the legions. Finally they made up the army. Only the commanders remained Italian – it was they who were in need of the foodstuffs contained in the amphorae. They were able to pay for these expensive goods

which were considered exotic in the whole of *Pannonia*.¹³ It seems the majority of the native population kept their eating and drinking habits.

anna.quickening@gmail.com

¹³ Ibid. 70.

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