

Piroska Hárshegy

AMPHORAE FROM EARLY ROMAN CONTEXTS

The case of Víziváros (Budapest, Hungary)

Background

The earliest settlement in *Aquincum*, dated to the Claudian period in the modern Víziváros (Budapest, Hungary) was studied in course of the excavations carried out by K. Kérdő (Budapest History Museum-Aquincum Museum) between 1991 and 2003¹. The aim of this paper is to give a preliminary assessment of the amphorae fragments which came to light on four sites very close to each other (Ganz u. 12–14., Gyorskocsi u. 26., Kacsá u. 7., Fő u. 68.)² (fig. 1).

During the Roman Period this territory gained in importance its local significance. Research has identified an ala fort here as the earliest within the series of forts that spread along the Budapest section of the Danube between Nagytétény and Óbuda. The first personnel here was provided by the unit named *Ala I Hispanorum*, that was dispatched here from Dalmatia around AD 50. This unit was replaced by the *Ala I Hispanorum Auriana* which arrived from Noricum and then was moved on to *Raetia* around AD 107. The most significant coin find in recent decades was discovered in one of the clay walls of a building situated in the fort: a coin hoard of 9 *aurei* dated to the 1st c. AD. After the mounted troops left the fort, a flourishing civil settlement developed in the 2nd–3rd c. AD.

Amphorae

The small number of coins from these sites increases the significance of the well-dated pottery groups. In my ongoing research I have classified the early amphora types which came to light from this area.

Up to this point I have found 57 fragments belonging to eight different types of Roman amphorae (Dressel 6B, Aquincum 78, Schörgendorfer 558, Dressel 2–4, Rhodian, Knidian [= Pompeii 38 in figure], Beltrán IIA, Haltern 70) (fig. 2).

All the eight types identified in the area of the ala fort can be dated from the beginning or middle of the 1st c. AD to the middle of the 2nd c. AD. These types stemmed from three main production areas of the Roman Empire: North Italy, Asia Minor and the Iberian Peninsula.

These amphora types can be found all over the province of Pannonia and are the main containers of early Roman food importation³. The only exception is the Haltern 70 type

– from which only one fragment was found in Aquincum and a newly discovered form in the case of Pannonia. It is very interesting that Haltern 70 amphorae occur very rarely in the eastern half of the Roman Empire⁴ and „normally combined with goods being transported officially”⁵.

In these vessels wine from North Italy and Asia Minor, olive oil from the Istrian Peninsula, fish-based products and possibly olives preserved by means of different substances from the Iberian Peninsula as well as from Italy had been transported to provision the commanders of the newly arrived Roman army.

It is notable that in percentage distribution the most frequent commodity could be the olive oil (38,6 %), second is the wine (24,5 %), followed by fish-based products (14,1 %) and other foodstuffs (7 %). This suits well to the known Roman (military) diet (fig. 3).

Stamps

From this area – within and around the ala fort – we have found five stamped amphora fragments. All of them belong to the Dressel 6B type used to transport olive oil. They are datable to the first half or middle of the 1st c. AD. (fig. 4.)

¹ K.H. KÉRDŐ, Die Anfänge von Aquincum und die Änderungen in der Siedlungsstruktur in Víziváros in den Jahrhunderten der Römerzeit. In: Die norisch-pannonischen Städte und das römische Heer im Lichte der neuen archäologischen Forschungen. Aquincum Nostrum II.3., 2005, 83–99.

² K.H. KÉRDŐ, Das Alenlager und Vicus der Víziváros. In: Forschungen in Aquincum 1969–2002. Aquincum Nostrum II.2., 2003, 81–84.

³ T. BEZECZKY, Roman amphora trade in Pannonia. In: La Pannonia e l'Impero Romano. Atti del convegno internazionale “La Pannonia e l'Impero Romano”. Accademia d'Ungheria e l'Istituto Austriaco di Cultura, Roma 13–16 gennaio 1994 (Roma 1994) 155–175. – P. HÁRSHEGYI, East Mediterranean amphorae in Aquincum. In: D. Gabler/P. Hárshegy/G. Lassányi/P. Vámos, Eastern Mediterranean import and its influence on local pottery in Aquincum. Acta Arch. Acad. Scien. Hungaricae 59, 2008, 275–296.

⁴ See for the distribution: CARRERAS MONFORT 2005 Fig. 4; D. PARASCHIV, Amfore occidentale romane în zona Dunări de jos. Pontica 2002–2003, 181 (Moesia Inferior/Novae 1 example); I. B. ZEEST, Keramicheskaia Tara Bospora. (Moscow 1960) 109 Pl. 27 (North of the Black Sea).

⁵ CARRERAS MONFORT 2005, 89.

⁶ BAR // C.LAEB stamps: BEZECZKY 1998, n° 54–62 [Fažana or Pullaria ins. ? (2), Pullaria ins. (2), Fažana (2), Patavium (1), Atria (1), Aguntum (1), Poetovio (1), Aquincum (1)].

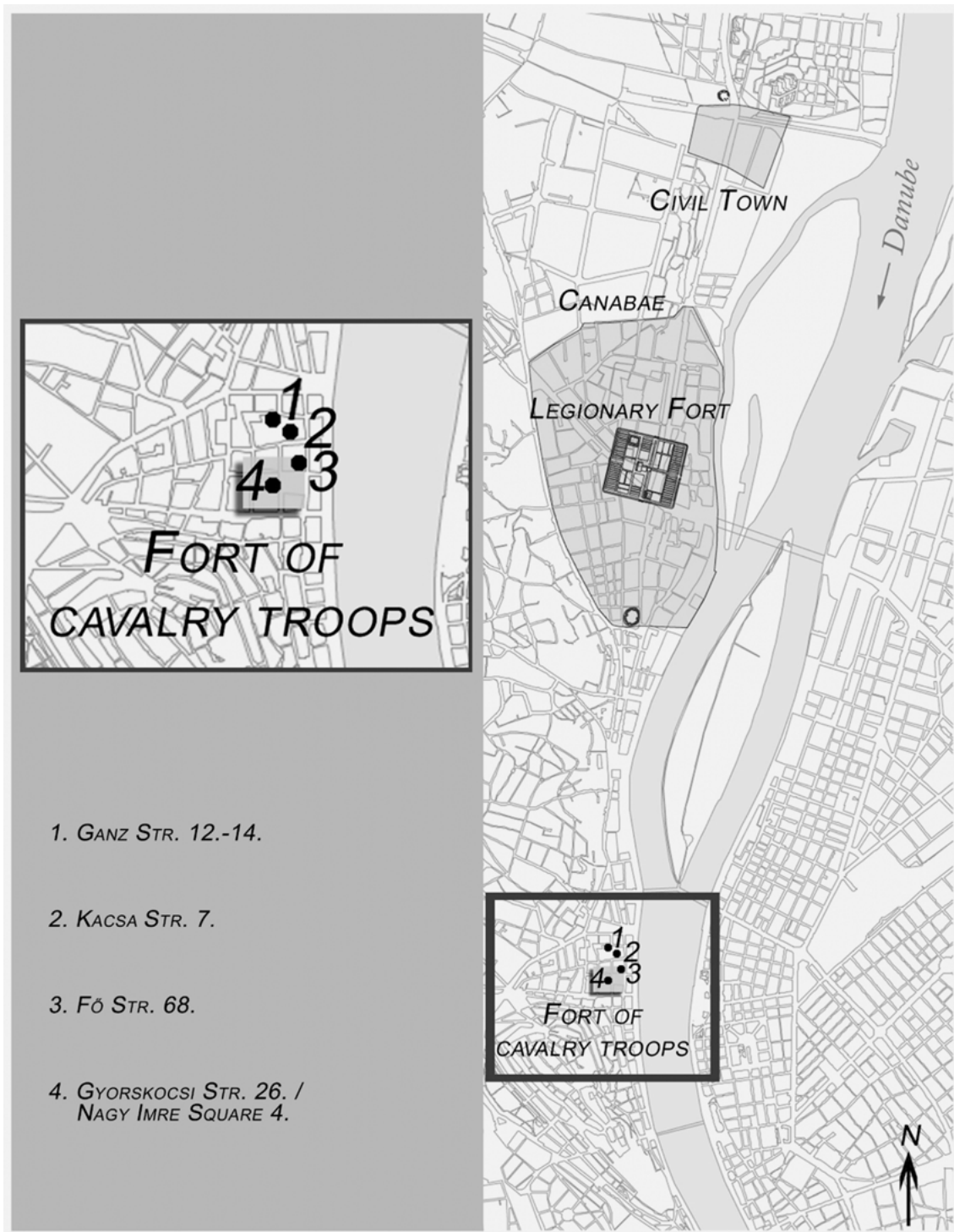


Fig. 1. The topography of *Aquincum*.

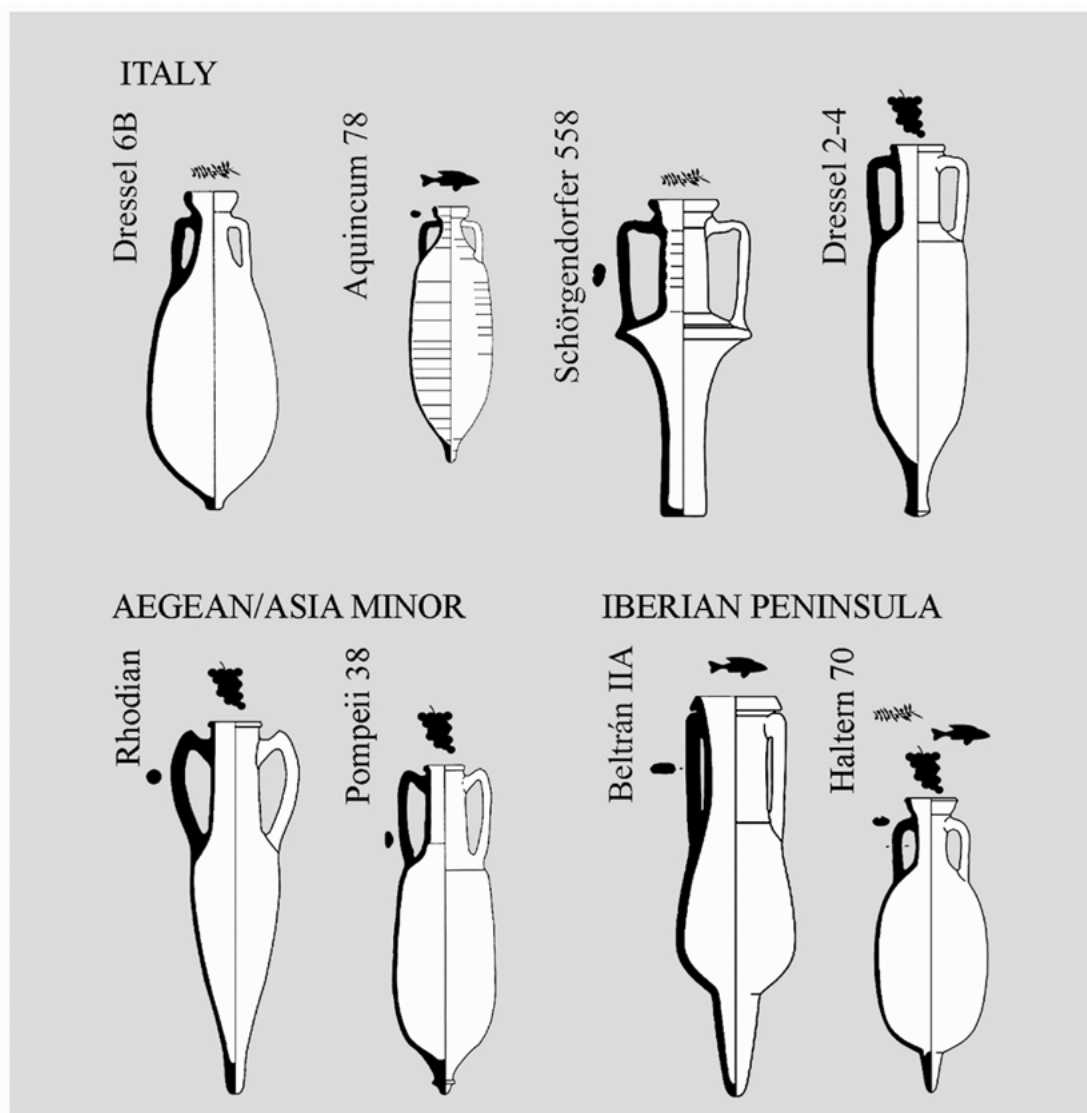


Fig. 2. Amphora types from the Víziváros excavations.

Two of them surely came from the Istrian figlinae of the Laecanii (BAR-stamps)⁶ (fig. 4,1–2). Another one (DA...-stamp)⁷ also can be regarded as a product of the above mentioned workshop (fig. 4,3).

A very rare stamp also came to light from the vicus of the fort (Q.C.P. HE)⁸ which has only three parallels and is probably datable to the first half of the 1st c. AD (fig. 4,4).

The last one bears a fragmentary stamp (PICO...), which can probably be grouped with the APICI-stamps and could also be datable to the first half of the 1st c. AD (fig. 4,5).

The work was subventioned by OTKA 72292.

⁷ DATI // LAEK B stamp: BEZECZKY 1998, n° 192–193 [*Fažana ou Pullaria ins.* (1), *Fažana*(1)]; S. SAKL-OBERTHALER, Die römischen Transportamphoren aus Altgrabungen in Flavia Solva. Fundber. Österreich 39, 2000, 382. [*Flavia Solva* (2)]; S. CIPRIANO, Il consumo di derrate ad Altinum tra I secolo e II secolo d.C.: i dati dei contenitori da trasporto. In: G. Cresci Marrone/M. Tirelli (eds.), Produzioni, merci e commerci in Altino preromana e romana (Venezia 2001/Roma 2003) 245. Fig. 2.b [Altinum (1). – DAT // IMP CAE VESP? stamp: BEZECZKY 1998, n° 640–643 [*Fažana* (1), *Iuvavum* (1), *Aquincum* (2)].

⁸ Q.C.P. HE stamp: different reading (Q CR HE) in S. PESAVENTO MATTIOLI, I commerci di Verona e il ruolo della via Postumia. Un aggiornamento sui dati delle anfore. In: G. Sena Chiesa/E. Arslan (eds.), Optima via. Postumia. Storia e archeologia di una grande strada romana alle radici dell'Europa (Cremona 1996, Milano 1998) n° 104 [Verona (1)]; S. CIPRIANO/F. FERRARINI, Le anfore romane di Opitergium, Cornudo (Treviso 2001) 140. n° 48. [Opitergium (1)]. Probably can be grouped here a Q. CAE. HE stamp: A. STARAC, Napomene o amforama Dressel 6B. In: B. Čečuk (ed.), Arheoloska istrazivanja u Istri (Zagreb 1997) T.VI.3 [*Pola* (1)].

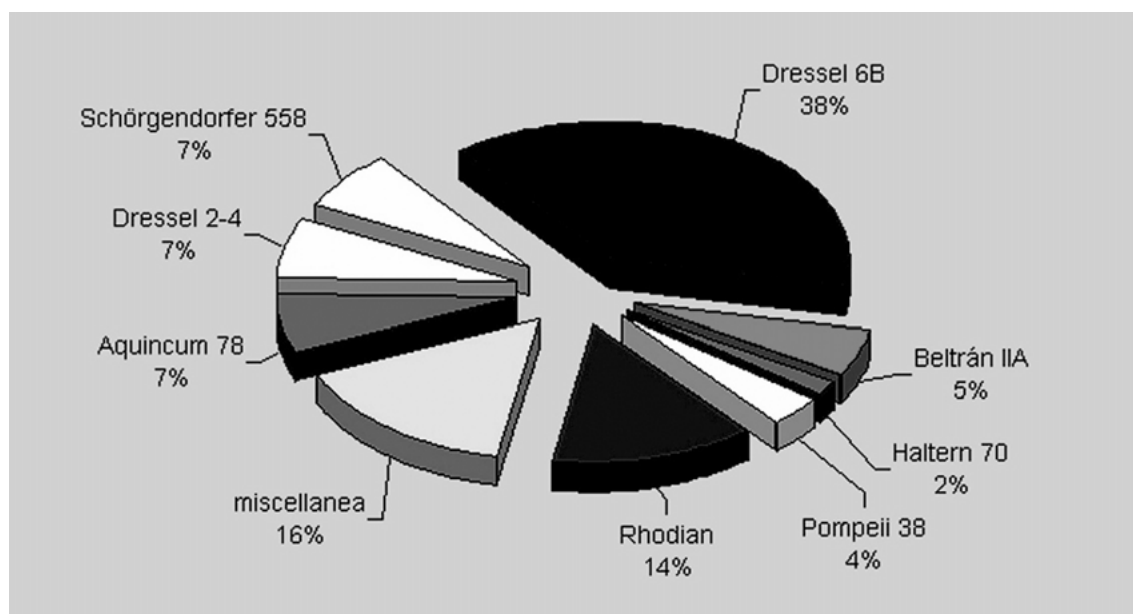


Fig. 3. The distribution of the amphora types.



Fig. 4. Dressel 6B stamps.

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C. CARRERAS MONFORT, Haltern 70: a review. In: J. Plouviez (ed.), Amphorae in Britain and the western Empire. Journal Roman Pottery Stud. 10, 2005, 85–91.