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Roman Glazed Vessel

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Notes

A DENARIUS OF CARAUSIUS FROM WITCOMBE

THE DENARIII of Carausius are very rare, and of those extant, only one-fifth have a provenance. The discovery of a specimen near the late 3rd-century villa at Witcombe is, therefore, of considerable importance. This coin was discovered in 1965 in a field behind Witcombe Farm Cottage, Great Witcombe; a spot lying between the site of the villa and the line of the nearby Roman road.

(o) IMP CARAUSIUS P AUG bust right, laureate, draped and cuirassed.

(r) ADVEN[TUS AUG] $\frac{1}{\text{RSR}}$ Emperor riding left, captive before.

↓ 3.3 gm. 18 mm. R.I.C. —

Find spot: SO 905162. Present whereabouts: Gloucester Museum, N3178.

This is the tenth known RSR denarius of the ADVENTUS type. As it shares neither obverse nor reverse with any of the other nine coins, nor, in the case of the obverse, with any other denarius at all, it provides us with two new dies. The new reverse die supports the current impression that this particular type was originally struck in some quantity, as one would expect the repetition of known dies in the case of a newly discovered coin from a very limited series. The coin was almost certainly struck early in the reign with the legend referring to Carausius' coming to Britain.

N. SHIEL

A ROMAN GLAZED VESSEL

During the summer of 1973 a watch was kept on the construction of a water pipeline from Churchdown Hill reservoir to a new reservoir above Stonehouse. This passed through the Romano-British site in the parish of Upton St Leonards, discovered during the construction of the M5 motorway.¹

In September the clearance of soil for the pipe revealed a small trench containing many sherds of Romano-British pottery about 80 metres south-west of Commelines Cottages at SO 86631588. Together with several mugs of 2nd-century type and a two-handled jug, all in local ware, there were several sherds of glazed ware. These were in a light grey fabric and were parts of two vessels. One sherd was a small base about which nothing can be said except that the glaze and fabric are similar to the second vessel. There were sufficient sherds to reconstruct the latter as shown in the accompanying drawing. The shape appears to be an attempt to copy samian form 30, though the wall slopes out more and the footstand is not so high, giving it some of the attributes of a form 37. This 'hybrid copy' is typical of other glazed vessels which are shadow copies of samian forms. As they are distinct from local vessels (though they may be made locally), did they have a special use?

1. P. J. Fowler and C. V. Walthew, *Trans. B.G.A.S.*, XC (1971), 44-9.

The glaze on the bowl is thin and brittle, the colour being greenish-yellow, turning to dirty brown in grooves and angles where it is thicker. The rim has blobs on its upper edge showing that during the glaze firing the vessel was inverted. Comparing it with other finds of Romano-British glazed pottery referred to below, the date of its manufacture is probably in the first quarter of the 2nd century A.D.

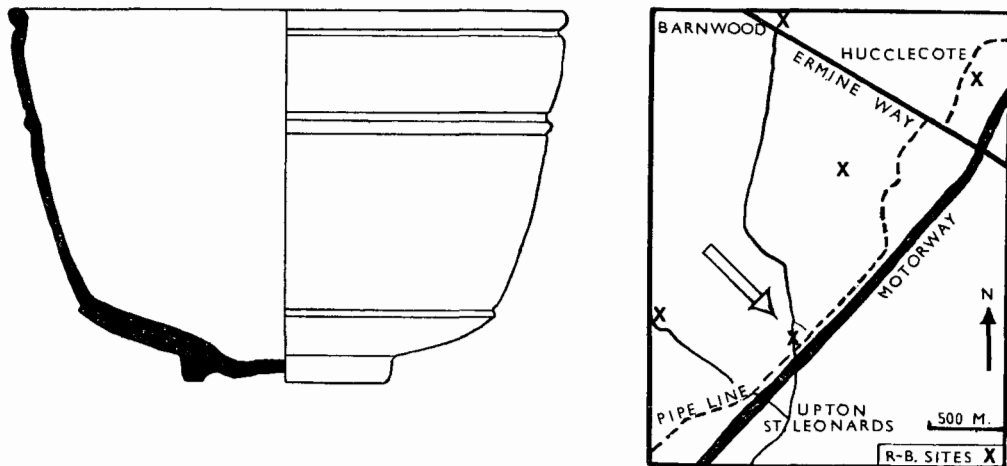


FIG. 1. Glazed bowl ($\frac{1}{2}$).

Glazed pottery, as distinct from ware with a glossy slip such as samian, was rare in the Roman west. At St Remy-en-Rollat in Central Gaul a ware was produced with a whitish fabric and a pale green to yellow glaze. Sherds of this ware are sometimes found on Romano-British sites in this country; its date is 1st century A.D.

It has been realized only recently that quite apart from this imported ware, other glazed ware may be found which is of a local Romano-British fabric. It is likely that in the past these sherds have often been rejected as medieval strays and that their occurrence is more frequent than previously thought. We know that glazed vessels were produced in this country at Holt² and at Derby.³ Among other sites chiefly in the south and west of England, glazed ware has been reported from Armsley in Hants.⁴ This report mentions sherds found at Caerwent (Gwent) and at Chew (Somerset) but none from Gloucestershire, though the ware has certainly been found at Cirencester. With sherds turning up on sites in Wilts and Somerset, it has been suggested that Mendip lead was used for glaze in that area. There are also a few sherds from Brecon Gaer,⁵ and a number of sites in the Midlands.⁶

ASSOCIATED POTTERY

The date of the pottery from the pit or trench has been estimated by comparison with known published types. As none of the individual pieces can be definitely ascribed to later than about 180 A.D. it appears that the feature was filled up in the last quarter of the 2nd century.

2. W. F. Grimes, *Y Cymrodor*, xLI (1930), 182 & 228.
3. M. Brassington, *Antiquaries' Journal*, LI (1971), 62-7.
4. J. Musty, *Antiquaries' Journal*, XLIX (1969), 128-30.
5. R. E. Mortimer Wheeler, *Y Cymrodor*, xxxvii (1926), 250.
6. Brassington, 62-7.

Samian

Form 31 rim. Burnt black. Lezoux ware. 2nd century.

Form 27 cup. Early 2nd century.

Two small pieces of South Gaulish vessels. Flavian.

Coarse Pottery

- 1 Straight-necked jar in buff micaceous fabric.
- 2 Small wide-mouthed jar. Pale grey micaceous fabric with dark flecks.
- 3 Jar with pronounced everted rim. Orange surface with grey in the break. Typical local fabric, sometimes referred to as 'Severn Valley Ware'.

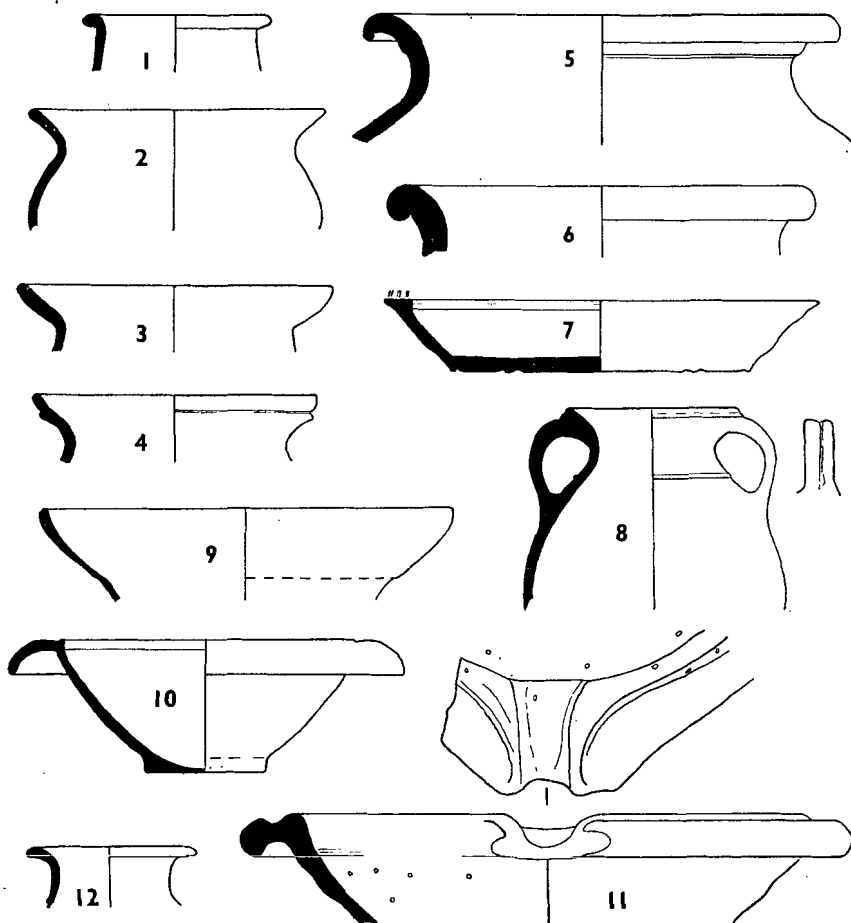


FIG. 2. Scale $\frac{1}{4}$.

- 4 Small jar. Ware similar to no. 3.
- 5 Large storage jar in ware similar to no. 3, but gritted with particles of limestone and occasional quartzite pebbles, one of which measures 8 mm. across.
- 6 Storage jar with heavy rolled rim. Similar grey fabric with orange surface to items above. Lightly gritted.

- 7 Dish with flat reeded rim. There are circular grooves on the level underside of the base. Pale grey fabric covered with a smooth black slip.
- 8 Two-handled jar. Red fabric with an orange-buff surface. There is a limy deposit inside.
- 9 Bowl. Ware similar to no. 3.
- 10 Bowl with an overhanging flange rim. This is unlikely to have been made locally, being in a sandy cream fabric. This form is usually ascribed to the late first and early second centuries.
- 11 Mortarium in soft red ware. The few trituration grits remaining are of flint. Probably mid-2nd century or a little later on the basis of form.
- 12 Small narrow-necked jar in pale grey. This fabric is very similar to that used in the glazed vessel.

The group also contained sherds of eight handled mugs in local fabric with buff to orange surface. The form of these, with slightly outward sloping walls, can be confidently placed in the 2nd century.

Two black-burnished cooking pots and a dish are all forms datable to the period A.D. 120 to 180 (Gillam). Finally there are four other rims in the orange-coloured local ware which fit into a 2nd-century context.

Apart from the study of local pottery reports the following have been consulted:
Brodrigg, A. C. C., Hands, A. R., and Walker, D. R., *Excavations at Shakenoak*, I (1968), II (1971).
Frere, S., *Verulamium Excavations*, I (1972).
Gillam, J. P., *Types of Roman Coarse Pottery Vessels in Northern Britain* (1970).

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