

ROMAN POTTERY FROM CHURCH
STREET, LANCASTER

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During November and December 1982 I had a linear excavation some 600 mm wide by 750 mm below street level along the south side of Church Street, starting from just below the junction with New Street and extending up as far as the west side of Covel Cross near the point that Castle Hill begins. This was because the Gas Board were working on their main. Messrs Steve Dewhurst, P. Howarth, P. Butler and J. Green, who were working for the Gas Board, were remarkably co-operative and interested in collecting the pottery and my warmest thanks go to them.

It was arranged that, as they found it, the pottery was to be kept in groups associated with the number of the nearest doorway: hence c65 group is from outside Andrew's cellar at No 65 Church Street. Each day I collected, cleaned and numbered the group found. At C59 there was only Samian. Thus of the 238 pieces, 105 are Samian (44%) which seems to indicate that the residents were reasonably well off! During this period, Stephen Penny of the museum told me he had collected a further 6 pieces.

Amongst the Samian are the following named pieces:

L82/CN/1-2 medallion design on bowl D37 with part of the name = '---Ani' in base.

L82/C67/4 part of a base of dish D18 with part of name = '---N{VA?}V--' {ligature}.

L82/C67/10 part of a small cup D64? With part of name = 'VESP---'.

L82/C71/15 lower fragment of bowl with small circle or an abandoned 'O' moulded in design, (see 17 below).

L82/C71/17 lower fragment of bowl with retro 'OFATT--', moulded in design.

L82/CC/11 wall of bowl D37 with name = '-NVI' moulded in design.

I can find nothing in Dr White's lists of names that appear to match nor anything in a list issued by Saintes Museum, France. However, no doubt someone else will throw some light on the names. It might be that '--ANI' is the end of MACRIANI [120-160] but there does not seem

to be sufficient space. SVLPICIANI [120-140] seems less likely. As well as the last, Alice Johnson offers QVINTILIANI.

Amongst the rest are quite a number of pieces that are probably from Quernmore and several pieces of Castor ware from two different 'dog' pattern beakers of Gillam 77 type. [L82/C67/29 & L82/C71/33-5]. There are also two different 'hunting' pattern Samian D37 one [L82/CC/3] with probably a lion, see J & S Roman Lancaster No.94 [90-110], and the other [L82/CO/5] a stag(?) & hound pattern. A gladiator, with a column as the separator, appears on bowl D37 [L82/CO/2] which is similar but not the same as J & S Roman Lancaster No. 97 [70-95]. What may be other early pieces [L82/C59/1 & L82/C67/8] are fragments of bowl D37 which has small 'swags' as Thomas May No.20 (1907) dated to 75-110. I would also mention L82/CO/4 which is a fragment of the wall of bowl D37 displaying a medallion. There are two things about it. First it is very sharp, as if from a new mould, and the other that is very severely burnt sufficient to have changed the material from red to dark brown and even black.

The north side of the trench, just south of Covel Cross, was what appeared to be the edge of a heavy cobble foundation in blue clay all much as seen in the 4th. century gateway found in 1974 (J & S Roman Lancaster p.83).

I had hoped that the dating might have given an indication of the development of the vicus down Church Street which Dr White thinks was heading for York but which I have always thought was heading for Lincoln. The difference is subtle but I think significant when linked with Adrian Olivier's findings at Walton-le-Dale. There has been that lingering thought, that probably stems from Droop & Newstead, that Lancaster might be earlier.

The complete list (7 pages including locations) can be made available for photocopying by contacting Dr White at the museum where the finds now are. I would welcome a reappraisal of the material if anyone has the time. All pottery came to light in 1995 as a result of peering into cardboard boxes that had been lying in my shed for a long time: as it turned out 13 years!