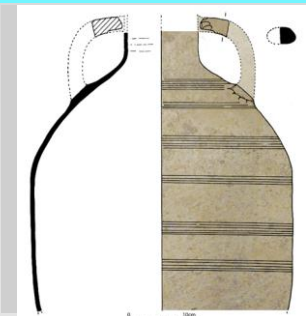


Identifying early medieval pottery 1

Although no wheel-turned pottery was made in early medieval Wales, it was still valued and imported in small numbers. For most of the period 400-1070 CE, many people in Wales used vessels made of wood or metal.

Find more archaeology guides or get in touch with our museum archaeologists for help with identification: museum.wales/collections/on-your-doorstep or on Twitter @SF_Archaeology



Late Roman wares

Some imported pottery made in the Mediterranean lands of the Roman Empire is known as 'Late Roman'.

Large storage jars from southern Greece or the north-eastern Mediterranean, from western Turkey and from North Africa, were imported into Wales and south-west Britain, probably from the late 400s and 500s CE.



Late Roman 1 (LR1) amphora

This is the handle from an amphora known as LR1 (Late Roman 1). It may have been made in Cilicia, Cyprus or Rhodes, and was found at Dinas Powys near Cardiff. It has an orange clay fabric, and horizontal combing on the body. This handle has been 'pulled' by the potter, leaving characteristic ridges.

Amphorae held liquids like wine and olive oil, but could hold other commodities such as olives.



Late Roman 2 (LR2) amphora

Some amphorae known as LR2 (Late Roman 2) have extensive ridging on the body, created by the potter with a comb.

They can be identified by their forms as well as their fabrics, and were made in the Argolid, Peloponnese, Chios and Kos (the Mediterranean around Greece), and possibly parts of Turkey.

This example was found at Dinas Powys near Cardiff.



Phocaeen red slipware

This tableware had smooth red-slipped surfaces. From the 350s CE it progressively replaced the red-gloss terra sigillata popular in the earlier Empire. Phocaeen red slipware was made on the west coast of Turkey (Asia Minor), and was exported to Iberia and the British Isles between about 450 and 550 CE. This dish from Dinas Powys was impressed animal decoration; some had bands of rouletting around the rim.



African Red Slipware (ARS)

This tableware was made in western Asia Minor and the area of Carthage, north Africa.

They were imported to Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries. The forms appear slightly later than Phocaeen red slipware, and were made about 525-575 CE.

It can be difficult to identify this ware, as the pottery forms can resemble late Roman-British red wares.