

Amphorae and amphora stamps from the Laecanius workshop

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Most works dealing with N. Italy, Noricum and Pannonia mention the Laecanius senatorial family.¹ The careers of the two Caius Laecanius Bassus were described in detail about 10 years ago by Tassaux.² Since the members of the family owned one of the biggest pottery workshops in Istria, their name is usually mentioned in connection with amphora stamps.³ We have now reached a new stage in research into the Laecanius workshop as a result of the collection of all the amphorae and stamps of the Laecanius family. Among thousands of amphorae from Fasana, Pola, Brioni, Parentium, Aquileia, Magdalensberg, Flavia Solva, Emona, Poetovio, Salla, Savaria, Carnuntum, Aquincum and Solva* we now know of more than 400 Laecanius amphora stamps, and it is possible to illustrate the known stamps.

The primary sources for this article are the records of the Istrian and Magdalensberg excavations. A. Gnirs started excavations in Istria around the turn of the century and worked for 15 years.⁴ The publication of these excavations had little to say about the pottery found. He published a few photographs of the amphorae, and he illustrated and evaluated the stamps. These excavations were, however, neglected for 50 years until A. Degrassi⁵ realised their significance. The original excavation records, which might help solve a number of problems, do not seem to be available. The amphorae are now in the museums of Pola and Brioni. The Magdalensberg settlement was inhabited between the late republican and the early Claudian periods. The excavations unearthed about 1000 stamped amphorae, among them a significant number of Laecanius amphorae. Until 1969, however, only facsimiles of the stamps were published; the newer publications contain drawings also.⁶ The Magdalensberg amphorae are important for understanding the early period of the Laecanius workshop.

First, I shall review the sites where the amphorae were found. Then I will describe the formal characteristics of the amphorae and their stamps. Finally, I will present a survey of the amphorae with reference to their stamps.

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- 1 The first known member of the family is C. Laecanius Bassus, praetor 32, *cos. suff.* 40, presumably *magister sodalium Augustalium Claudialium* 64; *PIR*², L 30; His son of the same name was *cos. ord.* 64. Died about 77; *PIR*², L 31. It supposed that after the death of his son the elderly senator may have adopted C. Laecanius Bassus Caecina Paetus, *cos. suff.* 70/71, *proconsul Asiae* 80/81, *PIR*², C 104. C. Laecanius Bassus Paccius Paelignus, *PIR*², C 34, who dedicated an inscription for the elderly senator in Rome, *CIL* VI. 21010.
 - 2 Tassaux 1982, 247-60; There are brief references to the family in Tassaux 1983-84, 208; Alföldy 1982, 330; Zaccaria 1989, 481; Callender 1965, No. 365.
 - 3 In most cases there are only one or two brief references to the family. I will mention only a few: Rostovtzeff 1957, 235; Chilver 1941, 100, 175; Panciera 1957, 74, 79; Buchi 1973-74, 437; Brizzi 1978, 90, 93; Šašel 1987, 146; D'Arms 1981, 157; Horvat 1990, 238; Sometimes mistakes have been made: Muffanti Muselli 1987, 204; Gabler 1983, 92; Kelemen 1987, 33, No. 3.
 - * The following sites are written with different forms or Latin names: Pola = Pula, Brioni grande = Veli Brijun, Monte Collisi = Kolci, Val Catena = uvala Verige, Castrum = uvala Dobrinka = Val Madonna, Fasana = Fazana, Dignano = Vodnjan, Matteredia = Materija, Parentium = Poreč, Flavia Solva = Klein-Wagna (near Leibnitz), Emona = Ljubljana, Poetovio = Ptuj, Salla = Zalalövö, Savaria = Szombathely, Carnuntum = Petronell and Bad Deutsch-Altenburg, Aquincum = Budapest (Óbuda), Solva = Esztergom.
 - 4 There is a detailed bibliography in Gnirs 1976.
 - 5 Degrassi 1953, 57-61; Degrassi 1956, 965-72.
 - 6 "Bericht" 1-15; Fuchs 1978, No. 924-1000; Maier-Maidl 1992, 38-60; Bezeczky 1994, 54-75.