

## Elms Farm: The Terra Nigra Potters' Stamps

By Val Rigby (May 2000)

### *Potters' Stamps on Gallo-Belgic Imports*

#### a. Name Stamps

##### 1. HE1 [13801]

[BE] TO(S), bordered. Central stamp; one bordered rouletted wreath; small platter. TN (Terra Nigra), pale grey dense, laminating matrix, blue-grey surfaces.

Bentos Die 2A3. This is the most commonly found die of the potter, or potters, Benios/Bentos, which is recorded typically on TN platters of Camulodunum form 8 – Camulodunum, Essex (7 egs, Hawkes and Hull 1947, pl xlv, 49), Faversham, Kent (1 eg), Milk Street, London (1 eg, in a Neronian context), Cemetery S, Nijmegen (1 eg, Holwerda 28e). Source – Marne-Vesle potteries. Date – manufactured between AD 40-65 and presumably imported via Camulodunum.

##### 2. HE3 [10978]

IAIo (I and lower case o ligatured). Central stamp; three evenly spaced incised circles; cup, with a flat base and functional foot-ring. Sand-tempered Black Ware, sandy matrix, brown core, brownish-black surfaces; polished finish on upper surface, unfinished lower within the footring.

The die and potter are unrecorded. The stamp may read IATO. The fabric is not Gallo-Belgic TN. However, the vessel is still more likely to be an import from northern Gaul, than a local product. Date – manufactured between AD 40 and 85.

#### b. Pattern Mark

##### 3. HE2 [4142]

IO(..?), bordered. Central stamp; small platter. TN – pale grey fine-grained matrix, blue-black surfaces; traces of a polished finish.

The die and potter are unrecorded. It is probably a pattern mark with repeated sloping I and O motifs. Source – Marne-Vesle potteries. Date – manufactured between AD 25 and 80.

### *Potters' Stamps on Local Coarse Ware*

Both stamps are recorded at Colchester, which is the likely source. Although 82 stamped vessels have been recorded at Camulodunum/Colchester, and some are

known to have been traded from the West Stow potteries, Suffolk, most were manufactured locally during the period AD 50-180, yet few parallels have been recorded at other settlements (Symonds and Wade 1999, 218-229). The shortage of 'traded' parallels enhances the value of the Elms Farm examples.

a. Name Stamp

1. XHE2 [5604]

Broken and abraded impression ?S<sup>^</sup>LIC[CAIE]. Central stamp; one burnished circle around the stamp; small domed platter with useless foot-ring. Sandy Ware; fine matrix with mixed sand inclusions; brown core; dark grey surfaces; abraded, no finish survives.

The die appears to be one already recorded three times at Colchester, LTC 15-17, and is likely to be a local product, but could be an import from northern Gaul (Symonds and Wade 1999, fig 5.5, LTC 15).

b. Name Copy or Mark

2. XHE1 [17258]

Bordered Mark, broken and abraded. Platter with functional foot-ring. Fine sandy micaceous ware; grey core, with some black 'organic' inclusions, grey-brown abraded surfaces.

The die appears to be one already recorded at Colchester, LTC 74 (Symonds and Wade 1999, fig 5.6, LTC 74). Colchester potteries are the likely source, and the date of manufacture lies between AD 70 and 180.

Robin P Symonds and Sue Wade *Colchester Archaeological Report 10: Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester 1971-86* (1999)

CFC Hawkes and MR Hull *Camulodunum* (1947)

JH Holwerda *De Belgische Waar in Nijmegen* (1941)