

TWO SAMIAN BOWLS WITH MOULD-MAKERS' NAME-STAMPS IN THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM, TORONTO

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More than 350 fragments of relief-moulded samian ware are among the Royal Ontario Museum's collection of Romano-British artifacts. Most are from building sites in the City of London and were acquired from G. F. Lawrence during the 1920s. Some were donated by the Guildhall Museum and the City of London in 1939 and a number are from excavations elsewhere in Britain or from unknown British sources.

A few pieces retain either the name-stamp or cursive signature of their respective mould-makers. These include two fragmentary bowls from moulds by Belsus I and Julius I of Rheinzabern. Both bowls have an orange-red paste with a moderately glossy orange-red surface.

1. Bowl from a mould with the name-stamp of Belsus I of Rheinzabern, from the Old General Post Office site, St. Martin le-Grand, and possibly from excavations during 1913-14¹ (Royal Ontario Museum, 927.15.17) (Fig. 1).

Acquired from G. F. Lawrence in 1927.

Height 115mm., original diameter 203mm., diameter of footring 77mm.

Below the ovolo-band, formed by a punch with one tongue and two ovolos (LRF.E1),² are two panels alternating around the circumference and separated by a vertical cabled line (LRF.O242). One panel contains Hercules with his club and lion's skin (LRF.M84) on the left and a veiled woman (LRF.M31) on the right with a rosette (LRF.O52) in each corner. The other panel has a large cabled festoon suspended from astragali (LRF.O201) and within, a krater with volute-handles (LRF.O21) on the left, a peacock (LRF.T227) on the right and a goose (LRF.T255) below. The festoon appears to be a double cable and is not recorded in LRF. Only traces of the inner band are present but the upper left end is visible in the panel with Belsus I's retrograde name-stamp (LR taf.255/a)³ placed horizontally above the peacock. Below the decoration is a wreath of double leaves (LRF.R36).

The decorative scheme is not among the mould- and bowl-fragments from Rheinzabern published in LR, nor at Lauriacum,⁴ Iuvavum⁵ or Ovilava.⁶ The general arrangement of the stamps is similar to two moulds by Belsus I at Rheinzabern, *cf.* LR taf.109, nos. 3a-bF, 4F, but rosettes are placed below the festoon rather than in the panel with the figures. In both moulds, the festoon is from a different punch. On a sherd from Köngen,⁷ Belsus created a similar festoon-panel, using a different krater and festoon but placing the same peacock and name-stamp in positions similar to those on the Toronto bowl. Cerialis V, who used 56 of the 80 decorative punches recorded in LRF for Belsus I, created an arrangement similar to ours on a bowl at Rheinzabern (*cf.* LR taf.65, no.1a-b), but placed two pygmies below the festoon.

Belsus I has been dated to the reign of Commodus and into the first quarter of the 3rd century AD⁸ and it has been suggested that he may have begun work before AD 175.⁹

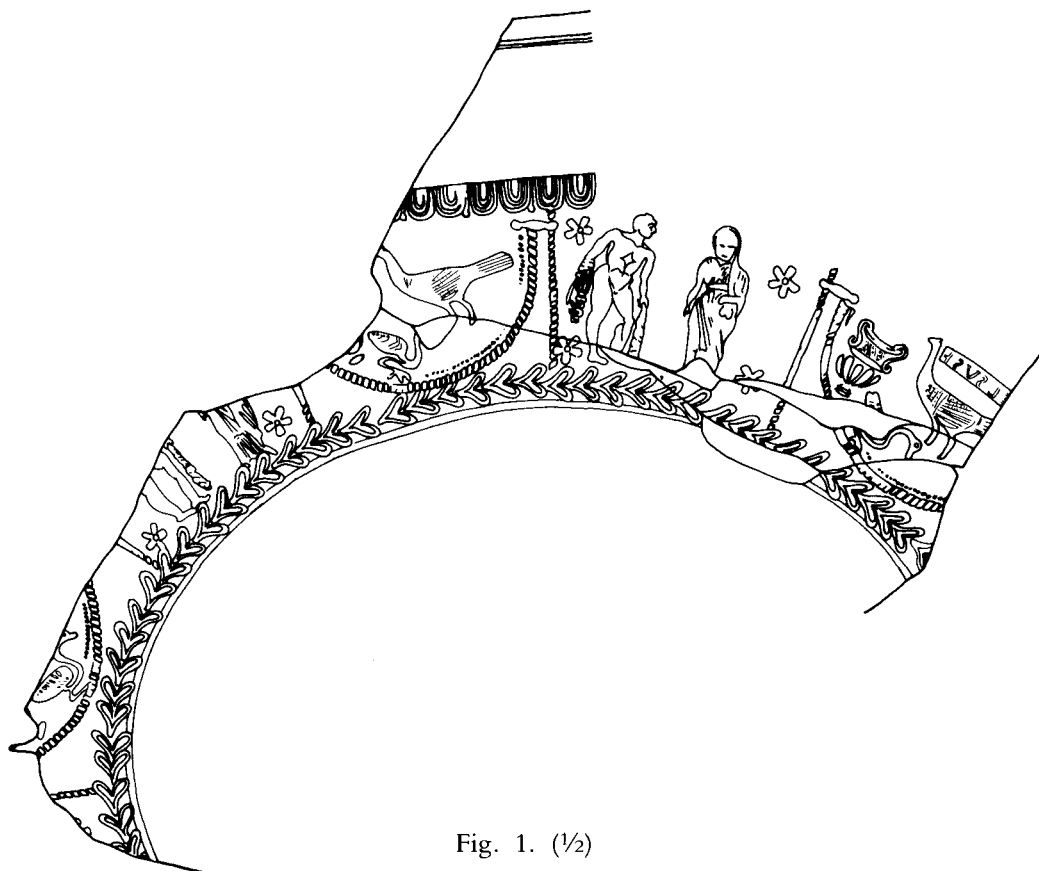


Fig. 1. (1/2)

2. Bowl from a mould with the name-stamp of Julius I of Rheinzabern, from Leadenhall St., City of London (Royal Ontario Museum, 929.49.46) (Fig. 2).
Acquired from G. F. Lawrence in 1929.

Height 146mm., original diameter *c.* 253mm., diameter of footring 91mm.

Below the ovolo-band (LRF.E42) are vertical beadrows (LRF.O261) with double wings (LRF.P145) at top, centre and bottom. These separate double-bordered medallions (LRF.K20) enclosing a sequence of four stamps: pecking pigeon (LRF.T254), tree (LRF.P3), eagle (LRF.T205a) and gladiator (LRF.M220b). This is repeated once around the circumference of the bowl. Julius I placed his retrograde name-stamp (LR taf.257/c) diagonally downwards in the lower left corner of a panel with a pecking pigeon in the medallion.

This design by Julius I does not appear in LRF or at Lauriacum, Iuvavum or Ovilava.¹⁰ He is recorded as using a closely related scheme with three rosettes¹¹ or small double arcades¹² punctuating the beadrows between medallions enclosing figures or other motifs.

The mould-maker Lupus, whose repertoire included 36 of the 70 stamps used by Julius I, created very similar decorative schemes in which medallions are separated by herring-bone lines punctuated with 3 rosettes¹³ or by short beadrows with a rosette or double wing at the bottom and two wings at the top.¹⁴

A sherd decorated with seahorses within medallions separated by beadrows with double wings at the top, centre and bottom, was found at Lauriacum and attributed to Art des Comitialis VI.¹⁵ The placing of the various elements in the design is similar to the Toronto bowl and likely should be attributed to Julius I. The sherd, however, lacks the ovolo-band

which would have aided a more positive attribution since the two mould-makers used different ovolo-stamps.

At Ovilava, Julius I was dated to the first half of the 3rd century AD¹⁶ and at Kastell Künzing, a bowl-fragment attributed to him was assigned to perhaps the beginning of the 3rd century.¹⁷

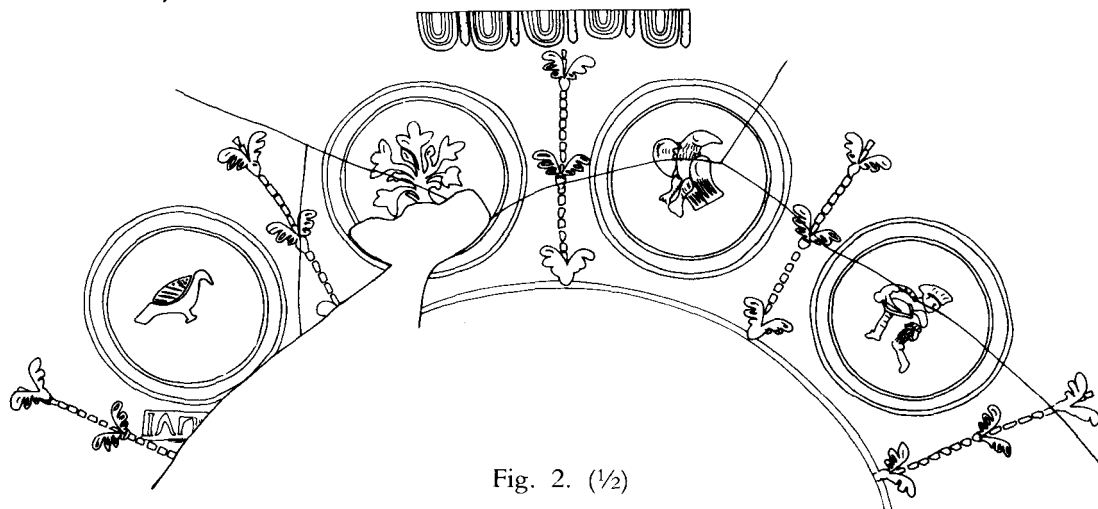


Fig. 2. (1/2)

Because they lack archaeological contexts, the Royal Ontario Museum's bowls cannot aid in dating Belsus I, Julius I or the industry at Rheinzabern.¹⁸ They do, however, add two schemes of decoration signed by their mould-makers and what appears to be a previously unpublished stamp, the double cabled festoon, to the repertoire of Belsus I.

NOTES

1. Information kindly supplied by Dr. H. Chapman, Museum of London.
2. LRF: W. Ludowici, H. Ricken and C. Fischer *Die Bilderschüsseln der Römischen Töpfer von Rheinzabern, Typenkatalog* (Bonn 1963).
3. LR: W. Ludowici and H. Ricken *Die Bilderschüsseln der Römischen Töpfer von Rheinzabern, Tafelband* (Speyer 1948).
4. Karnitsch (1955): P. Karnitsch *Die verzierte Sigillata von Lauriacum (Lorch-Enns)*, *Forschungen in Lauriacum* 3 (Linz 1955).
5. P. Karnitsch *Sigillata von Iuvavum (Salzburg)*, *Jahresschrift Salzburger Museum Carolino Augusteum* 16 (1971).
6. Karnitsch (1959): P. Karnitsch *Die Reliefsigillata von Ovilava (Wels, Oberösterreich)* (Linz 1959).
7. H-G. Simon 'Terra Sigillata aus Köngen' *Saalburg Jahrbuch* 20 (1962) 30 No. 212 and Abb.13.
8. Karnitsch (1959) 356.
9. H-G. Simon 'Das Kleinkastell Degerfeld in Butzbach' *Saalburg Jahrbuch* 25 (1968) 23.
10. See Notes 4-6 above.
11. LR taf.154, nos. 4F, 8, 16; J. N. Dore and J. P. Gillam *The Roman Fort at South Shields* (Newcastle 1979) 124 No. 118 and Fig. 32.
12. LR taf.153, nos. 14, 19.
13. LR taf.157, no. 1F and taf.158, no. 1.
14. LR taf.157, no. 7F; Karnitsch (1959) taf.162, no. 1.
15. Karnitsch (1955) taf.36, no. 4.
16. Karnitsch (1959) 398.
17. H. Schönberger *Kastell Künzing-Quintana*, *Limesforschungen* 13 (Berlin 1975) 23.
18. For comprehensive bibliographies on the dating of the Rheinzabern industry, see H. U. Nuber 'Zum Ende der reliefverzierten Terra-Sigillata-Herstellung in Rheinzabern' *Mitteilungen des Historischen Vereins der Pfalz* 67 (1969) 136-147 and B. Pferdehirt *Die Keramik des Kastells Holzhausen*, *Limesforschungen* 16 (Berlin 1976) 19-29. I am grateful to Dr. B. Oldenstein-Pferdehirt, Römisch-germanische Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, for bringing these two publications to my attention.