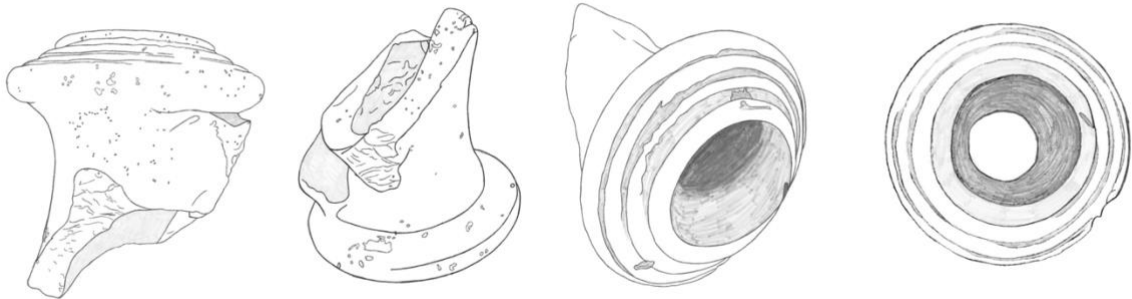
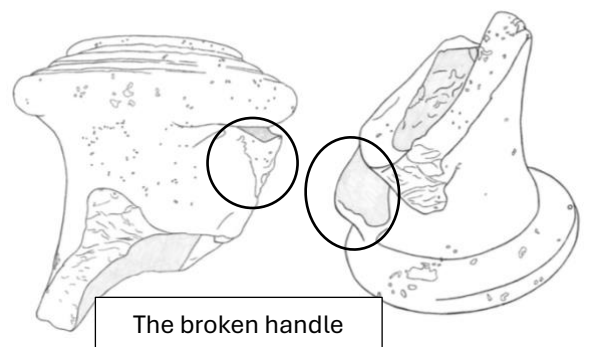


Object Biography – Roman Flagon

The Object



The above drawings are illustrations of the neck of a Roman flagon. Flagons were used for decanting liquids such as wine with a narrow neck and usually a globular body with one or more handles and were a Roman import, the use of flagons illustrates the romanisation of areas (Pitts, 2005 and Webster, 1992). The material is Caerleon Ware which is oxidised (Webster, 1992). The colour of the pottery is orange and the inner rim measures 2cm in diameter while the outer rim measures 5cm with a height of 4.3cm. There is also a small conservation mark reading 'UWL-092'. The handle is connected just underneath the rim and is a single handled flagon. Above the broken handle on the rim there is smooth section, perhaps suggesting that the liquid inside flagon was poured out holding the handle with a thumb resting on the rim. There are also four distinct decorative rings on the rim of the flagon.



the



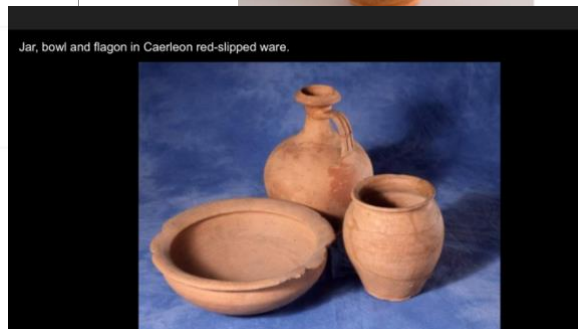
The broken neck of the flagon was found at Caerleon and is unstratified. Caerleon is the site of the Fortress known as 'Isca'. Fortress 'Isca' was one of three long term legionary fortresses in Britain situated along the River Usk in the county of Newport in South Wales (Gardner and Guest, 2008). OS Grid Reference - ST 33924 90571. Longitude - 2°57'20"W and Latitude - 51°36'36"N (OS Maps, 2025). The fortress 'Isca' was built in the mid 70's AD and was in use until the 4th century AD (Gardner and Guest, 2008). 'Isca' was home to Legio II August, the Second Augustan Legion and so Caerleon Ware was originally termed Legionary Ware in reference to the Roman Legion (Cadw, 1996, Webster, 1992). However in the second century, the Second Legion left to build Hadrian's Wall and Antonine Wall and early in the second century there was a drop in production of Samian Ware importation which was potentially a factor in the creation of Caerleon Ware. Caerleon Ware is predominantly oxidised and can have a red-slip which is thought to be an imitation of Samian Ware (Webster, 1992). As opposed to Samian ware, local wares were used more frequently and the top of this flagon shows wear suggesting it was used frequently. There would also have been non-slipped pottery for the local market. No slip can be seen on the flagon, this may be because no visible trace of a red-slip has survived. If this flagon was created for the local market, it illustrates the spread of Roman ideas between the legionary forces and locals (Pitts, 2005). Equally the flagon could have belonged to a Roman Legionary Soldier. There is little information on the usage of a flagon beyond its basic function of a vessel for decanting. Flagons may have been used for transport, or in dining contexts however flagons have not been the focal point of research. The flagon has a distinctive decorative pattern on the rim and there are three other examples of similar patterns on the rim. All are from the Peoples Collection Wales and are from Caerleon. There are distinctive styles of flagons, yet they do not appear to be named or dated as a specific styles.



COLLECTION AREA
Archaeology & Numismatics
ITEM NUMBER
87.48H/211
FIND INFORMATION
Site Name: Great Bulmore Farm, Caerleon
Grid Reference: ST 33 91
Collection Method: excavation
Date: 1984
Notes: excavated from beneath newly renovated buildings at the farm
ACQUISITION
Donation, 30/9/1987
MEASUREMENTS
height / mm:235
maximum diameter / mm:180
diameter / mm
diameter / mm:60 (rim)
internal diameter / mm:43 (rim)
diameter / mm

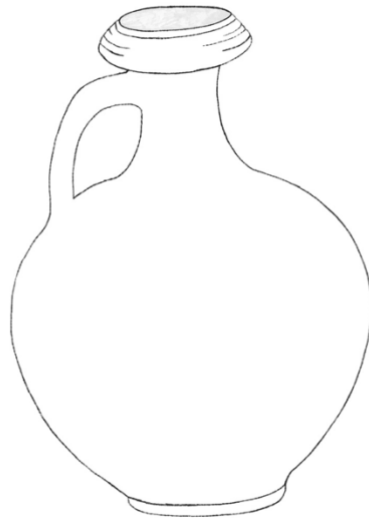


COLLECTION AREA
Archaeology & Numismatics
ITEM NUMBER
32.60/211
FIND INFORMATION
Site Name: Prysg Field, Caerleon
Grid Reference: ST 33 91
Collection Method: excavation
Date: 1927-1929
Notes: From barracks building 'B'
ACQUISITION
Donation, 6/2/1932
MEASUREMENTS
height / mm:210.0
maximum diameter / mm:150.0
diameter / mm
minimum diameter / mm:65.0
diameter / mm
MATERIAL
pottery



Jar, bowl and flagon in Caerleon red-slipped ware.

The flagon was potentially produced at the Abernant Kiln which produced Caerleon Ware and is the only kiln to be identified in the immediate area (Cadw, 1996). The kiln was in use between the 2nd and 3rd Century and is situated 2.5km away from the settlement (Coflein, 2025). However it is believed that the legion potentially had their own kiln that has not yet been identified (Evans, 2004 pg 13) Using the three examples identified, the drawing below shows an estimate of what the flagon would have looked like.



The piece of flagon currently resides in the archaeology labs at University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Lampeter Campus, this limits access to viewing the flagon to the academic sphere. The future of this campus and the archaeology labs is currently undetermined. There is the possibility of future research involving this piece of Roman pottery however this is dependant on funding. The current situation limits the immediate importance of the object. Despite this, the site is of international importance as it is easier to access than other significant Roman sites such as York (Gardner and Guest, 2008).

Future areas of research could potentially include the analysis of liquid residue from within the inside of the neck of the flagon, regional variation in flagon types and styles and the usage of flagons in military sites like Caerleon.

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Pitts, M. (2005) 'Regional Identities and the Social Use of Ceramics' *TRAC 2004: Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference*, Durham 2004, p. 50–64

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