

TWO ROMAN BRONZE VESSELS FROM ST NICHOLAS AT WADE, ISLE OF THANET

CHRIS TUCKER

In the summer of 2001 a metal detectorist exploring farmland at St Nicholas at Wade on the Isle of Thanet uncovered two bronze vessels, one bi-conical vessel containing a cremation and the other, a dish, placed as a lid over it to protect the contents. These high status objects are now part of the archaeological collection at Quex Museum, Birchington. This preliminary report summarises what is known about the discovery of the vessels, and describes their physical characteristics. Some research has also been carried out into their possible history but much more needs to be done. It may be noted here that examination of the vessels has revealed the surprising survival of fragments of fabric adhering to the rim of the bucket. This material requires specialised study and its presence may shed new light on aspects of the burial ceremony which probably took place around the first quarter of the second century AD.

The two bronze vessels were found on arable land, in Nine Nails field, owned by farmer David Linington, near St Nicholas at Wade (NGR TR 2582 6732), on the western edge of the Isle of Thanet (**Fig. 1**) The following account was kindly given to the writer by metal detectorist Peter Locke in November 2008. In the mid-summer of 2001 Peter arrived for his second visit to that particular field, with a colleague, and after some time searching with negative results, he heard a faint signal which became much stronger as topsoil was removed. At a depth of about 40cm, a flat dinner-plate sized disc of bronze was uncovered which after further digging proved to be an upturned dish, and below this there was a second metal vessel which appeared at first to be a modern 'pipe'. On reaching the base of this larger object their true and ancient nature was revealed (**Fig. 2**). Both vessels were lifted and, as can be seen in a series of photographs taken soon afterwards (but not included here) the base of the larger vessel was only connected to its roughly cylindrical upper part in a couple of places. When removed from the hole much of the walls of the lower vessel were missing but soon afterwards a visual search at the bottom of the hole found more pieces of slightly curved sheet bronze, these being some of



Fig. 1 The findspot at St Nicholas at Wade (Peter Locke).

the missing parts. No other objects were noticed in the hole and no further detecting was done in that area. When the upturned dish lid was lifted the lower vessel seemed to be full of dark loam, and lower down some bones could be seen sticking out of the vessel through its damaged side.

A wooden crate was borrowed from the assistant farm manager and the objects transferred into it, and then the find was reported to the local police. The chain of custody is unclear after that but it is known to have passed quickly from Peter Locke, to his neighbour's garage, to the police, then apparently to the local mortuary for examination of the remains, then to Canterbury Archaeological Trust, and finally to Lincoln Council Archive, Conservation Laboratory (on 16th July 2001), where the vessels remained until 2007. Through the efforts of Chris Pout, President of the KAS, the vessels were returned to Thanet for the Society's 150th Anniversary Exhibition at Maidstone Museum. After an agreement had been reached between the farmer, the finder, the KAS (which funded the stabilisation work at Lincoln), and Quex Museum it was accepted into the Quex collection which already holds much other important archaeological material from the Isle of Thanet.

A summary of the conservation work done by Lincoln was made available to the author late in 2008, along with a CD of photographs of the vessels and their contents, before and after treatment; this information

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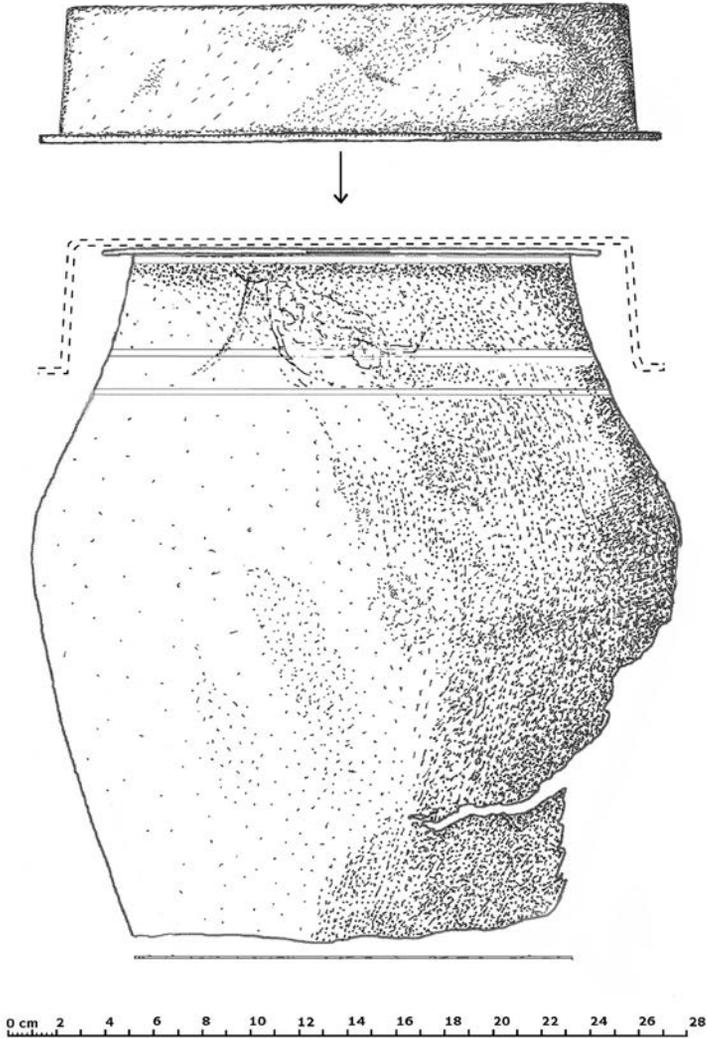


Fig. 2 The bronze dish and bucket.

is now in the archive at Quex. The Lincoln records do not show that x-rays were taken of the vessels, and if any were made earlier in Kent then they have yet to be located.

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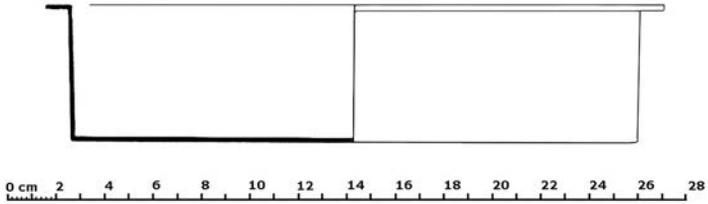


Fig. 3 The dish in cross section.



Fig. 4 The dish.

The Dish

This is a copper alloy vessel with a uniformly circular horizontal cross-section (**Figs 3 and 4**). It has a flat rim and base, and essentially vertical sides. There is no indication that the vessel ever had a handle. It is very solid and well-preserved, apart from a small amount of damage around the outer edge of the rim. There are no visible signs of decorative markings or of repairs but an x-ray may show otherwise. Its dimensions are as follows:

Rim outside edge diameter	255-257 mm (varies)
Rim inside edge diameter	234-235 mm (varies)
Width of rim	c.10mm

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Base outside diameter	c.235mm
Base inside diameter	c.230mm
Height	49mm
Thickness of metal throughout	c.2.5 mm
Weight	885gm

The form of this dish is very plain and practical and the type is quite a common find (see **Appendix 1**), particularly in hoards, with depth and diameter varying. This simple form is thought to have been in use over a long period, perhaps from mid first to third centuries AD (Koster 1997).

The bucket

A thin copper alloy vessel with a flat rim and, for a Roman vessel, an unusual bi-conical body where the diameter of the base is almost exactly the same as the diameter of the top (**Figs 5 and 6**). The vessel is now in two main parts, the body and base, with another 25 fragments of various sizes, awaiting further examination and then reconstruction. The vessel appears to have been manufactured in two parts: the sides and base were probably cast together and finished on a lathe (Munz 1972), the rim was cast and finished and then seems to have been brazed to the main vessel, from which it is now breaking away in places.

There are six shallow decorative incised lines around the wall of the vessel. These are arranged in three pairs, with the two pairs around the shoulder of the vessel about 3mm apart, and the widest pair of lines, 5mm apart, tucked just under the rim.

The base of the bucket is not flat but has three evenly-spaced concentric rings protruding whose purpose is to aid the distribution of the heat from an open fire rapidly and evenly around the vessel. These rings are a common feature of other types of Roman bronze vessels, for example *paterae* (Bishop and Coulston 2006, p. 106).

The bucket's dimensions are:

Height	c.284mm
Diameter of outside rim	205mm
Diameter of slight recess around the rim	200mm
Diameter of inside of rim	180mm
Maximum diameter of body	255mm
Diameter of base	180mm
Concentric corroded 'cooking' rings	at diameters 51/92/134mm; each of width c.3mm
Thickness of bronze sheet	at rim 2mm; body 1mm; base 1.5 mm
Crescent shaped notches in rim	length along outside circumference of rim 35mm; maximum indent 4mm
Weight of body/base/fragments	980/205/132gm. Total 1,317gm

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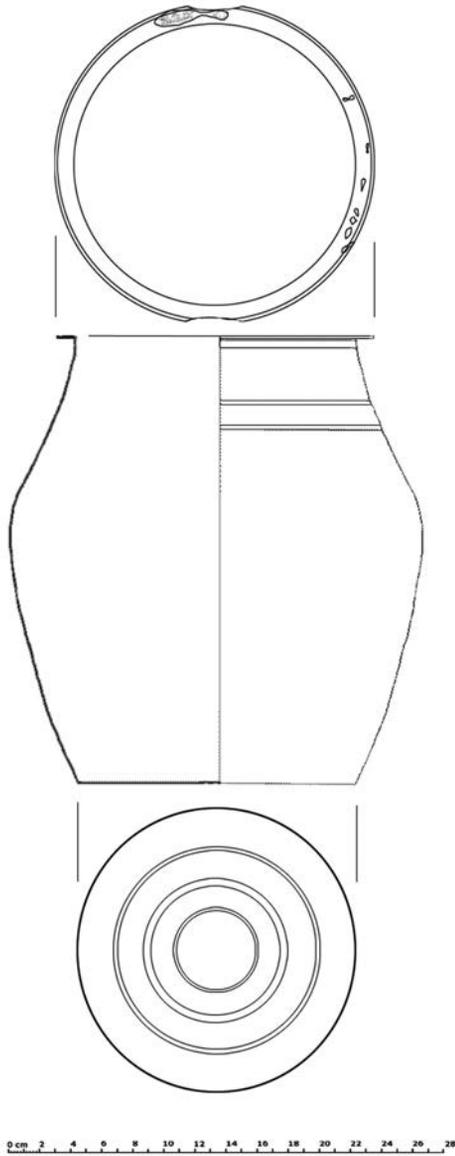


Fig. 5 Dimensions and shape of the bucket.



Fig. 6 Bucket.

Examination of the body of the vessel revealed on both its sides, just below each opposing notch on the rim, a roughly triangular 'shadow' of some object which was originally attached to each side of the vessel. Several irregular parts within these triangular areas are raised slightly above the surface, and are of a different colour to the bronze, indicating that this was probably surviving solder (**Fig. 7**).

Hans Eggers (1951) studied 800 bronze vessels of all types (including jugs, bowls, kettles, *paterae*, buckets) exported from Italy to 'Free Germany' (beyond the Germanic frontiers of the Roman empire) covering the whole Roman period. He produced a typology (250 types of vessel) and allocated each type of vessel to a date range on the basis of the complex evidence then available. His deduced date ranges were :

- A -before AD 1;
- B -AD 1-150;
- C - AD 150-375;
- D -after AD 375.

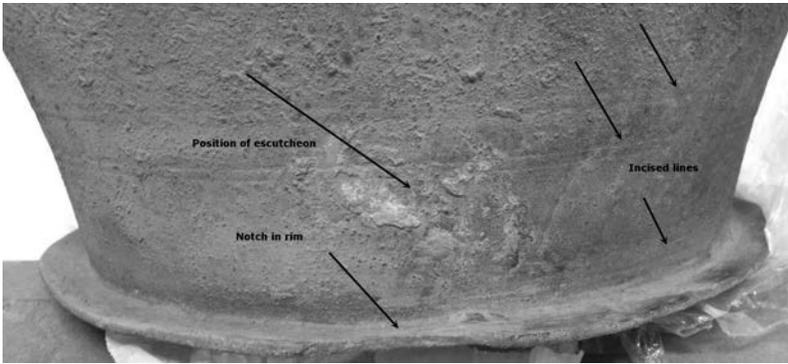


Fig. 7 Bucket details.

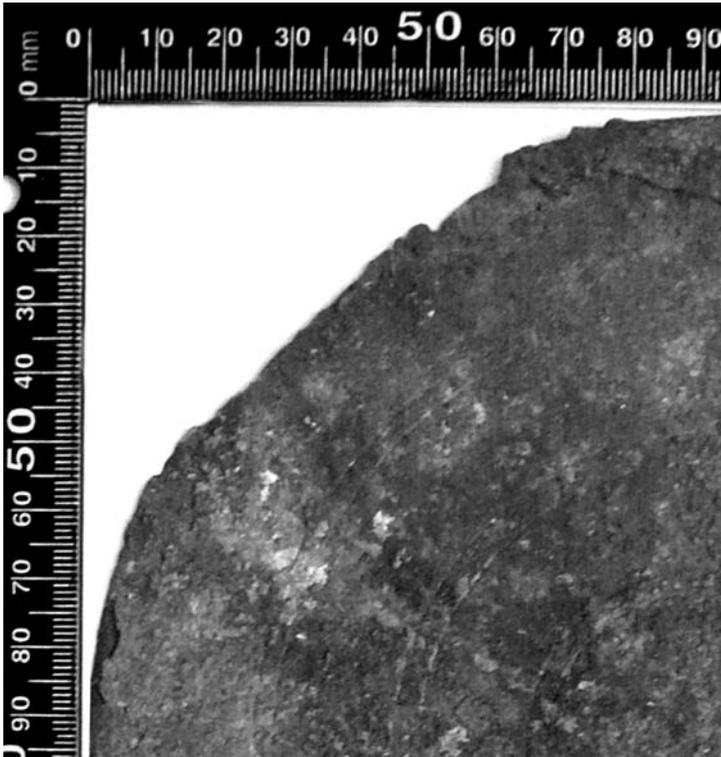


Fig. 8 Bucket base detail.

The extent of these date ranges have since been revised by others, for example by Kunow (1983), but remain essentially correct. There are several distinct groups of buckets described by Eggers, including the main three:

- situla forms with Dolphin handle loop escutcheons.
- the common Östland types, which have a curved everted rim, are generally less decorative, and often have plain iron handles fixed to loops, which are just bends in an iron ring running round under the rim of the bucket. Alternatively the handle loops can be riveted through the wall of the vessel.
- situla forms with ‘Gesichtsattachen’, these being 6 varieties of bucket which all have a flat rim, highly decorative bronze escutcheons, showing a face in the centre and usually a pair of lizard heads facing out sideways, and these escutcheons are soldered to the vessel (Types 24 to 29). The bronze handles are sculpted with bird’s heads at the loop ends. The overall size, nature of the vessel decoration and shape of the body differentiate each type.

The St Nicholas at Wade bucket is of the ‘Gesichtsattachen’ form, in fact a Type 26 and the triangular objects clearly missing from our vessel, but leaving a shadow, were bronze escutcheons with loops (**Fig. 9**). The notches on the rim are to allow the handle loops to sit vertically against the rim so that the bucket handle sits neatly on the flat rim surface.

Eggers lists examples of 65 buckets with this type of escutcheon from ‘Barbaricum’ of which at least 6 are of Type 26. Several of these buckets had up to three shallow pelta-shaped feet still soldered to the base so it is possible that our bucket originally had these too. The different examples of this bi-conical form vary a few centimetres in height, and the incised lines are not always at the same position on the vessel shoulder. See **Appendix 2** for examples of T26 buckets found elsewhere. **Appendix 3** gives details of the only other Roman bronze bucket recorded from Thanet – the find in 1902 at Southwood, Ramsgate.

The linen fragments

The most exciting feature of the bucket is the remarkable survival of a few remnants of what looks like white linen adhering to its flat rim. The largest of these textile fragments is shown in **Fig. 10**, and the position on the rim of the remainder of fragments is indicated in an earlier illustration. This survival is probably unique on a Roman cremation vessel in Britain. Presumably the linen was originally placed over the top of the bucket to cover the cremated bone, and all of it decayed except that small part trapped tightly between the flat metal rim of the bucket and the flat base of the dish/lid, apparently a nearly watertight seal. The copper in the alloy would have also acted as a preservative.

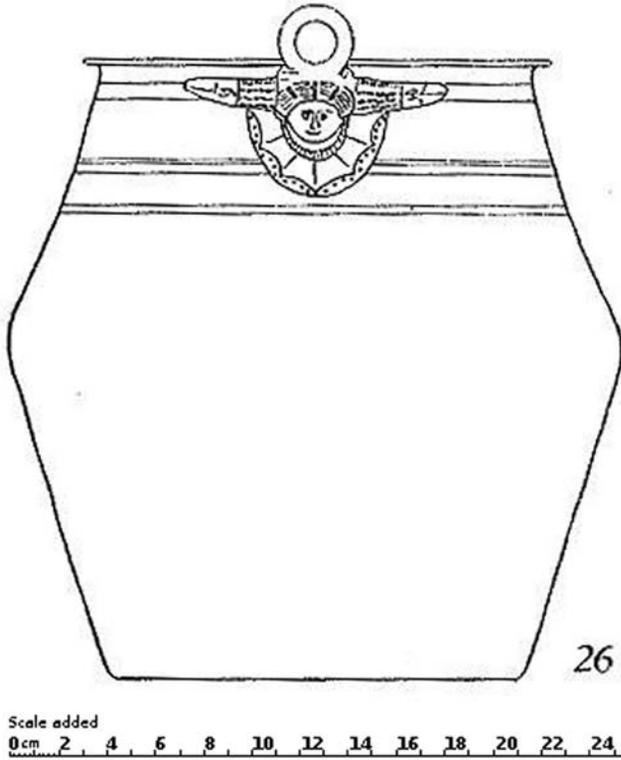


Fig. 9 Illustration from Eggers 1951 of the form of his bucket Type 26.

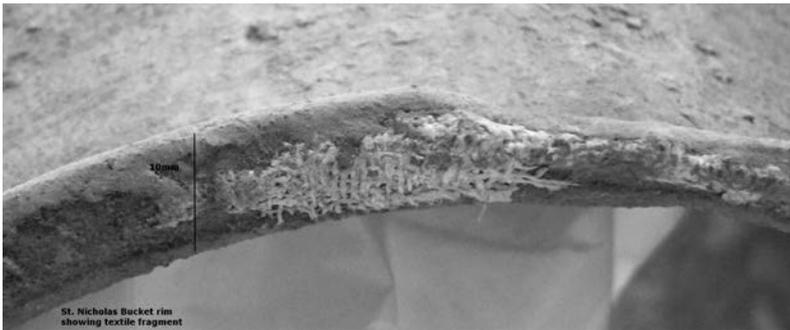


Fig. 10 Bucket rim showing linen near one of the two notches.

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Cremated bone

No detailed examination has yet been carried out on the several hundred grams of bone and ash found in the bucket. It is stated in a letter from Canterbury Archaeological Trust to David Linington (dated 22nd August 2001) that the remains are from 'a mature adult' but nothing more is known at this stage. No other artefacts were reportedly found in the cremation vessel and the bone is currently held with the vessels at Quex.

Interpretation

The vessels were found at the high end of a field which slopes gently down towards what was once the eastern shore of the Wantsum Channel (**Fig. 11**). From this position there would have been a clear view across this 3km wide, busy shipping lane, towards present day Reculver where the small first-century timber fort, or later the stone 'Saxon Shore' fort, would have been visible just as clearly as the towers of St Mary's Church

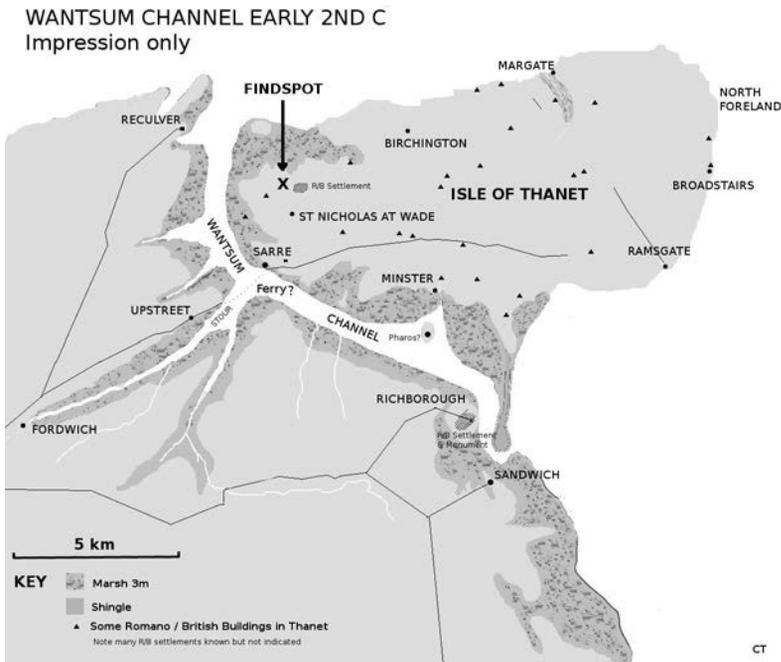


Fig. 11 The Wantsum Channel in the early second century AD

can be seen today. Thanet at that time was truly an island, with a ferry crossing point to the Kent mainland at Sarre and there have been a number of Iron Age and Romano-British sites excavated in recent years, including cremation burials, along this western edge of Thanet, within 2km of the vessels' findspot.

Bronze vessel exports

A paper by Peter S. Wells (in Schortman and Urban, 1992) discusses the export of high status products from the Roman world into regions beyond the Roman frontiers. Excavations of Iron Age settlements and graves along the north-west coastline of continental Europe, for example in north-west Germany at Feddersen Wierde and at Wijster in the Netherlands, have shown high status imported objects of all kinds, which indicate an elite was growing rich from trade with Rome and utilising these objects, whilst the cultural identity of the community remained largely unchanged. In these regions imported bronze vessels are still rare finds.

However, another group of graves from Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Denmark and Norway (about 25 known so far), were exceptionally rich, and showed comparability in burial structure and goods, though geographically widespread. Here great numbers of bronze vessels were found, and this can be attributed principally to the fascination these distant peoples had for the Mediterranean rituals of wine-drinking and banquets. This so-called 'Lubsow' group of burials did include buckets and at Gudme on the island of Fyn in Denmark 83 of 2,000 graves, dating from the late Iron Age to the fourth century AD contained Roman luxury imports. As seen in Appendix 2, examples of our bucket are included in the finds from this wide area and Eggers, in his chronology, includes our Type 26 type in his B2 group, thought to have been imported between 50 and 150 AD. The St Nicholas burial was not accompanied, as far as we know, by rich grave goods of gold and silver, so does not qualify as the first example of this 'Lubsow' group from Britain, but the dates should still apply. (Note that several scholars have suggested reassessing these dates, for example moving B2 to 70-170, but the Hod Hill escutcheon find is probably earlier than AD 70 so the author has used the Eggers date range in this report.)

Up until the middle of the second century AD the Campania region in Italy, and the town of Capua in particular, was the main centre for the production of luxury bronze vessels, both for sale in Italy and for export outside the frontier. This had been the Etruscan federation capital until the end of the fourth century BC, and their established metalworking skills had seemingly continued on into the Roman period. Later by the third century AD other workshops manufacturing bronze vessels were developed, including in Gaul and in the Rhineland, as production centres

for the outlying Roman provinces and for export, but the details of the trading patterns from these different centres has not yet been definitively established. Etruscan cremation burial in bi-conical vessels, capped by an upturned dish or bowl, mostly in ceramic but occasionally in bronze, are common from the ninth century BC. The author viewed several examples during a recent visit to Tuscany and was told that the bi-conical shape represents the human torso, and the upturned vessel a head-covering, the most convex vessels possibly indicating the helmet of a soldier.

The excavations at Pompeii and its surrounding districts have uncovered hundreds of ancient bronze vessels (Tassinari, 1993). Those from buildings overwhelmed by volcanic ash provide a snapshot of what was in use in AD 79, but say nothing about how many years a particular form was in production. The fact that both the St Nicholas vessels have a close parallel from Boscoreale, an area of country villas in the shadow of Vesuvius and only 41 kilometres from Capua, is one strong indication, apart from the quality of the objects, that these forms were produced in Capua itself and not in the provinces.

‘On the borders of the empire there was a long custom of placing Roman bronze vessels in graves so there have been many finds both with cremations, and inhumations, as well as some in hoards, at forts and settlements; however within the provinces of the empire they are not generally found in burials’ (Wielowiejski 1977). This may explain why, outside of the special case of preservation in the Vesuvius area, fewer bronze vessels have been found within the empire’s borders than one would expect, most were simply recycled at the end of their useful life, bronze being a valuable alloy, and were seldom buried.

Compared to the distinctive form of the wine buckets, which we can assume had a somewhat limited productive life (because perhaps they began to look dated to the buyer’s eye), one would expect on the other hand that the simple dish would have been in production for far longer because of its practicable and low-key appearance. Of course, one cannot be certain but a reasonable guess, taking into account these facts and Eggers estimated date for the bucket, might be to put a manufacturing date range for the dish between AD 50 and 120, and the bucket from 60 to 110.

How many middlemen were involved in the travels of a bronze vessel traded from Campania to beyond the frontiers is unknown, and what means of transport were used for each step in the route is unclear in detail, but to reach the Scandinavian islands cargo ships must have been used for the final stages and as traders most likely combined a variety of luxury goods in their loads, some of considerable weight, it is likely that river and sea routes were used predominately rather than the road network.

Richborough may well have been a convenient port of call for long-distance merchant ships, both for trade and revictualling, so we can

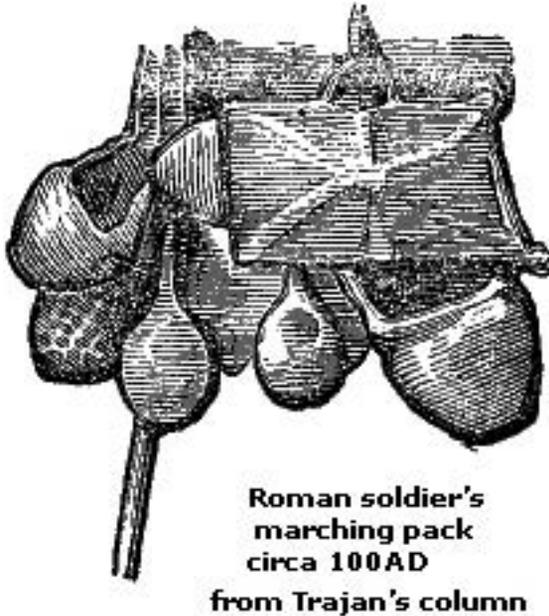


Fig. 12 Marching pack showing cooking pot at right.

perhaps envisage these high status bronze buckets being sold to a wealthy individual living close to the Wantsum channel sometime in the period AD 60 to 110. A Romano-British settlement is known, from stray finds and limited excavation, 600m to the east of the cremation findspot and this may well be where the deceased lived.

Questions have been raised as to whether these vessels could have belonged to a Roman army officer, perhaps associated with Reculver, rather than to a rich civilian. There is no doubt that bronze vessels were in normal military use and cooking vessels are illustrated on Trajan's Column as part of the 'standard' marching pack (Fig. 12). At Newstead, Curle excavated 7 bronze cooking pots of various sizes, some with handles, thought to be from the fort's early period, that is late first century AD (Curle 1911) and similar examples show that bronze vessels including cooking pots, buckets and particularly *paterae*, are not uncommon finds in a Roman military context. However the military buckets (and handles) seem always to be much plainer in form, than our high status form, as you would expect for vessels in general use by the ordinary soldier. Our dish shape also does not seem to appear in specifically military contexts.

However, it is possible that some senior officers may have used more luxurious vessels in camp, perhaps bringing them from Italy when they were assigned to a military unit in the provinces. The Hod Hill bucket escutcheon, was certainly found very near to a military fort. After its capture by Vespasian in AD 43/44 this Iron Age hillfort settlement of the *Durotriges* continued under the Roman administration and a Roman auxiliary fort was soon afterwards built in one corner. Whether the Hod Hill wine bucket was owned by a member of the *Durotriges* nobility, his chieftain's house in the settlement was identified in the excavations, or was owned by an auxiliary Roman officer in the fort is unlikely to ever be established for certain. But on present evidence the former is more likely and all the other Type 26 buckets listed below were found well beyond the frontier where no Roman forts existed.

Excavations at the complex third-century Roman cemetery at Brougham (*British Archaeology*. January/February 2005, 30-35) uncovered 123 urn burials of which 9, including adult females, were in bronze buckets. This cemetery was near a Roman cavalry fort with its associated civilian *vicus* and the burials seemed to include a broad cross-section of people of all ages from both these communities. There are indications that some of the burial customs at Brougham coincided with those found in 'barbaricum' the lands beyond the Roman frontier, and it may be that not only had the soldiers been sent from distant regions to serve in Britain, which was normal, but also perhaps their families had accompanied them.

There may be parallels here with the situation at the St Nicholas settlement, but it is too early to say. If we look more closely at the dates we find the Reculver fort, in its stone form was not constructed until c.AD 185-200 (Philp 2005, p. 216), and the early timber fortlet there had probably gone out of use by the end of the first century AD so at the time of the cremation, if it occurred around the beginning of the second century AD, there was probably little military presence on the western side of the Wantsum. However Richborough at this time, being an important supply base and controlling the southerly mouth of the Wantsum, may well have remained under the supervision of the Roman army. On the Isle of Thanet, always at the rear of the invasionary force, a couple of small auxiliary forts and several signalling stations would surely have been required in order to defend the main harbours of the island. No doubt there were also trade taxes to be levied on commercial shipping passing through the Wantsum and tax-raising responsibilities of this kind were normally given to a senior army officer with other junior officers, often of centurion rank, on secondment. For these reasons a military aspect to this cremation is not impossible but we need further archaeological investigation of Nine Nails field, perhaps to find indicative burials with associated military fittings, before we can prove this theory.

Use of the vessels

When originally purchased the two bronze vessels were intended for use as cooking/serving vessels for the kitchen and dining room and are probably the sole bronze survivors of a large bronze kitchen set, and a parallel drinking set. The dish is substantial enough to have been used as a general cooking vessel, with its flat bottom resting on a trivet on the fire, or placed in the oven. Soon after cooking it could have then been taken directly to the table with its contents. Alternatively it could have been used on occasion as a simple serving dish for hot or cold food.

The bucket however had a more specialised function. These vessels were used for the mixing of wine with water, and perhaps with the addition of honey and spices. The bucket's three feet, if it had them, would permit it to stand securely on a flat surface, but not tidily on a trivet. So perhaps it stood flat while mixing was being carried out and then suspended, over a gentle heat, by a chain passing through the standard loop, at the highest central point of the handle, to the ceiling. This would allow mulling of the drink and then serving it whilst hot to the assembled guests; perfect for a feast on a draughty winter's evening 2,000 years ago. The bucket was most likely fitted with a bronze or wooden lid with a central pommel, and the lid would help to keep the drink warm and keep out the Wantsum marsh mosquitoes. A lid would explain the slight recess in the flat rim designed to hold it in position. The complete drinking set would also have included a ladle for serving the drink, a sieve for straining it, and a cup for each drinker. The *paterae* normally included could also be used for mixing and heating a small amount of drink.

After a period of time, perhaps as long as twenty years of constant use, our wine bucket had probably seen better days. The fact that the escutcheons were soldered to the side of the vessel, rather than being secured by rivets, was very likely a weak point in the design and we know that these buckets are frequently found without these attachments. They probably just broke away after continued use, bearing in mind the weight of the bucket hanging on the solder, and after a few repairs the vessel would no longer be effective.

It is also possible, as the literature on this subject hints, that handles were sometimes intentionally broken off buckets before burial, perhaps for a local religious reason. Probably the St Nicholas vessel was just stored away, ready for a suitable family burial, always planned to be used as a *siwula* to contain the cremated remains of an important family member when the time arrived. Cremation vessels of similar size and overall shape, but made of ceramic material are commonly found in cemeteries of this period, but used presumably for mortals of lesser significance. These ceramic versions, in parallel with our vessel, may also have had lids of wood and their everted rims would allow a cord to encircle the rim, with a cord loop for a handle to allow carrying.

There is of course a symbolic significance in the St Nicholas burial too. To have one's ashes buried physically within these once luxurious vessels, already associated with fine food and drink enjoyed in the first life, would seem to guarantee a comfortable and festive life in the next.

What was the function of the textile on the rim of our bucket? In fact a few other ancient cremation burials are known where fabric has survived. For example an intact Etruscan burial from Casa Nocera, near Florence was reported in *Archaeology* (Archaeological Institute of America, Feb. 22 1999): 'In burial G a bronze urn contained the burnt bones wrapped in a linen cloth'. This burial dates from the eighth century BC so it is clear that linen can survive for more than two thousand years in a bronze vessel under the right conditions.

Examination of the outside area below the rim of the St Nicholas bucket shows that at one place, to the left of the original position of an escutcheon, is a narrow line of corroded metal. This could be the remnants of some kind of metal wire. Could it be that the linen was wrapped over the vessel before interment, and tied with a wire or cord around and under the rim?

There is a Kentish example from a later period which supports this theory, the Anglo-Saxon Burial excavated in 1845 at Coombe, south of Woodnesborough reported in *Medieval Archaeology*, XI (1967) by H.R. Ellis Davidson and L. Webster: 'a veil of cloth appears to have been placed over the urn, portions of which are still adhering to its edges ... in the exact position it was placed by the affectionate hand of the mourning relative'. This cloth was shown by the microscope to be woollen. Another similar Anglo-Saxon find from Brightwell in Suffolk is mentioned where 'the [bronze] bowl had been covered with linen, like the one from Coombe, and much of this can still be seen (p. 38). The material went over the top of the bowl and down the sides, and was tightly fastened round the rim with a string, part of which survives ... The loose pieces of the fabric are still white and flexible, a fine undyed linen' and another cremation at Loveden Hill (Lincs.) where 'Traces of cloth were noted on the sides of the hanging-bowl'. Referring to Northern Europe in the Roman Iron Age L.B. Jorgensen, in her report in *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles* (ed. D.T. Jenkins), suggests that textiles from cremation graves probably derive from a scarf, or perhaps another garment, selected as a kind of token of the missing whole.

Summary

It is suggested in this paper that the evidence points to both the bronze vessels having been manufactured in Capua in the second half of the first century AD, or early in the second, and being exported to Britain soon after. The trader's ship would have perhaps crossed from Boulogne and docked at Richborough briefly on its way perhaps to London and then on

to the Baltic. Perhaps the trader sold these items from the quay to a local Thanet nobleman who may have served at some time with the Roman Army and then retired to live in Thanet. Thirty years later, between AD 90-140, the old vessels were used by the family in a cremation burial, perhaps to contain the remains of this man who had enjoyed feasting with his friends using those same vessels earlier in life (**Fig. 13**).

It is possible that this cremation burial at St Nicholas is just one in a larger cemetery associated with the settlement. Of course most if not all of the other cremation vessels are likely to be ceramic, which is common on Thanet as elsewhere, and this is why detectorists have probably found nothing else of significance.

Through these vessels, and the distribution of their parallels, we can now see Thanet more clearly as being at the barbarian fringe of the Roman Empire, which is here defined by the northern and eastern shores of this small island, facing a dangerous sea. In some respects perhaps we can compare Thanet's island inhabitants at this time with those peoples living on the islands of Denmark and around the deep fjords of Norway. Those who could afford it, living on these fringes, shared the same tastes for Roman luxury goods, and shared a long history of sea trade and fishing. They had the knowledge to travel with confidence on the high seas along these trade routes carrying luxury goods from the heart of the Mediterranean to distant islands in the northern reaches of the known world.

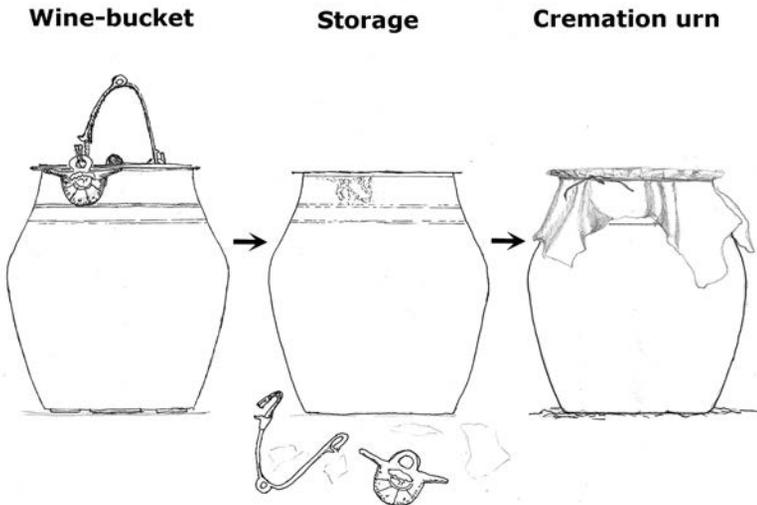


Fig. 13 The possible history of a Roman wine bucket.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX 1

Examples of the dish form found at Continental sites

Villa de Pisanella, Boscoreale, Italy: a wealthy villa near Pompeii, an example was found with a hoard of bronze vessels left in a stairwell during the eruption of AD 79. (Tassinari 1993, Type O1112). From the same villa came the fabulous hoard of 109 vessels of silver plate, the well-known 'Boscoreale Treasure' found by Pasqui in 1895, most of which is now in the Louvre (Baratte, 1986).

Kaiseraugst, Switzerland: Roman town site of Augusta Raurica, found in a hoard of more than 40 bronze vessels of a wealthy family buried in the 3rd C AD. (Photo of hoard examined).

Nijmegen, Netherlands: Roman town site of Ulpia Noviamagus, dish diameter 249mm, illustrated in Koster 1997. This reference also mentions at least five other dishes of this type including two from Weissenburg that are mounted on an iron frame, so that they could be used to cook food over a fire.

APPENDIX 2

Examples of Type 26 and closely related bucket finds (Eggers, 1951)
(Fig. 14)

a) On the Continent beyond the Roman frontier

Mönitz, Czech Republic: T25 or T26.

Dollerup, Denmark: 2 examples of T26, grave goods with inhumation (Voss 1948) (Fig. 15).

Lykkesholm, Island of Fyn, Denmark: either T25 or T26.

Hagenow, Germany: At least 1 example of T26. Note that recent work in this extensive cemetery brings the number of bronze vessels or part-vessels found there to 28, as well as finds of 3 sets of chain mail and a cavalry helmet.

Westersode, Hemmoor, Germany: 2 examples of T26.

Østerbø, Norway: T26.



Fig. 14 Distribution of Eggers Type 26 bronze buckets. The shaded area shows the extent of the Roman Empire in the west c. AD 117.

Østfold, Gralum, Norway: T26, cremation urn, with gold ring (Slomann 1958-9).

Zohor, Slovakia: T26 with 1 of T24, with an inhumation and grave goods, no handle or escutcheons found, but signs of 3 legs on base (Kraskovska, 1978).

b) Italian examples

Boscoreale, Campania: T26 (Pernice 1900) and illustrated in Oettel, 1991, now in the Berlin State museum.



Fig. 15 The T26 buckets from Dollerup (Voss 1948).

Naples region: at least 2 buckets with similar escutcheons and handles are known, probably in the Naples museum.

Pompeii: T24, Tassinari 1993, p. 161.

These last three Italian items are included here to demonstrate that rich vessels of the same general form as our exported bucket were also apparently sold locally in Campania, and were in use there in AD 79. How often they have been excavated elsewhere in Italy, and in the Roman provinces, requires more research.

c) Other bronze vessels

Several thousand Roman and provincial bronze vessels of all kinds are now known, only a small proportion of these are buckets, but unfortunately for the researcher there is no complete and up-to-date corpus being maintained covering the Roman world, though much thorough work is being done in particular regions, for example in Germany by Laser and Voss, with their *Corpus der römischen Funde im europäischen Barbaricum*, which includes bronze vessels and is published in annual volumes, now partly online.

For the Netherlands, 314 bronze vessels from the Nijmegen area of the Netherlands, many from the river Rhine, were studied by den Boesterd, 1956. More recently (2004) in the Netherlands, at Nistelrode, a hoard of 30 vessels was found including jugs, buckets, bowls, plates, and casseroles.

As far as Britain is concerned Eggers studied another 200 Roman bronze vessels of all types found here. As usual in such a wide group these are mostly *paterae* and strainers (Eggers 1966). Amongst the remainder he identified 11 flat-bottomed cooking vessels, including buckets, none of which were even of the general form of the St Nicholas vessel; e.g. none had escutcheons or decorative handles and only one (from a hoard from Knaresborough) had a flat rim. It is worth noting that he did illustrate a single find of an elaborate escutcheon with a face, which must have been part of a type T24 to T29 bucket, now lost. This was from Hod Hill, Dorset, 25 kilometres from the coast, in a context dated to between AD 45 and 65.

APPENDIX 3

A note on a bronze bucket from Southwood, Ramsgate

The only other Roman bronze bucket recorded from Thanet was reported in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, xxv (1902), lxvii and lxviii. This is of a quite different shape to the St Nicholas bucket and appears to be of later date:

ST. LAWRENCE, THANET Lieut-Colonel Copeland, F.S.A., Mr. C. H. Woodruff, F.S.A., and Mr. W. H. Hills kindly send particulars of a discovery, which Mr. Woodruff describes as follows: 'I believe you have had some account from Colonel Copeland of the remains which were found some weeks ago in the ground above West Cliff Terrace, St. Lawrence, i.e., at Southwood, near the Waterworks. I called on Colonel C., and saw them to-day, and sometime ago I saw the grave from which they were taken. It is about 3 feet deep in the chalk. An excavation had been apparently made of sufficient size to hold the large wine-cask, or whatever vessel it was, in which the other vessels were no doubt enclosed. The remains consist of:

- (1) a few fragments of this jar;
- (2 and 3) parts of two vases of hard grey ware resembling Upchurch, but not quite the same (I think possibly Colchester make) the form of neck is one I have never met with in Upchurch pottery, the mouth widening inside above the neck);
- (4) portions of a small vessel of Castor ware;
- (5) *the handle, rim, and some pieces of a bronze vessel, bucket-shaped;* and
- (6) the rim and a few fragments of a leaden vessel.

From the inquiries I have made this seems to be all that was found, and I think there can be little doubt the grave has been previously opened. The spot has been till lately in the garden of a private house, and in trenching

the ground to make this garden many years ago the workmen probably came upon the interment and scattered the greater part of the remains'.

Colonel Copeland kindly sent me all the fragments from this mutilated grave, the most interesting being those of the bronze bucket. To the bottom of this vessel a solid ring of metal was originally attached by solder or some other adhesive material, but it had become detached. At first sight I thought that it did not belong to the bucket, but on carefully examining both I detected that the remains of the decayed solder on the one exactly corresponded with that which existed on the other. I am not acquainted with any vessel having a base attached to it in this way. On either side of the bucket was a hole through which the stout square wire handle had been passed, the ornamented ends of which were turned up about 2 inches.

An illustration of this vessel (**Fig. 16**) appears in a British Museum Guide (Smith 1922 p. 93). It is of roughly hemispherical form, with body height approximately 17cm, and has a short cylindrical base of about one third the diameter of the upper part. The handle is strongly attached directly to the top of the bucket body rather than to soldered escutcheons. Eggers did not include this Ramsgate bucket in his 1951 or 1966 catalogue but he

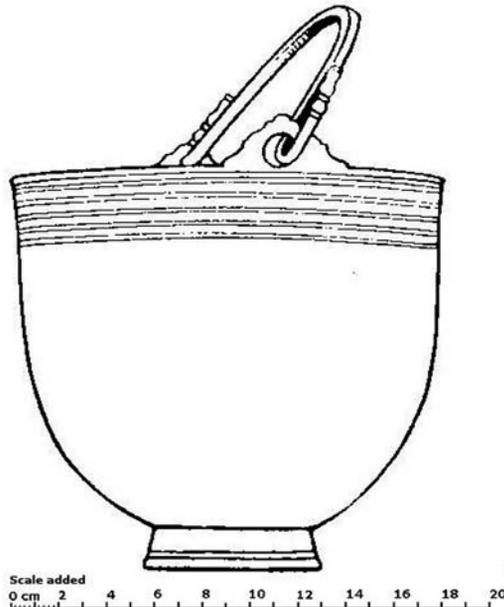


Fig. 16 The Ramsgate bucket.

does list one vessel which appears to be identical (his Type 57) found at Gödåker in southern Sweden. Another from the Swedish island of Öland is mentioned in Baumgartl (2009), both being used as cremation urns and dated to AD 150-300. This vessel's practical form, with more elaborate decoration, is also known in samian ware and in silver and like the St Nicholas bucket was originally used for mixing and carrying wine.

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