

THE AGER COSANUS AND THE PRODUCTION OF THE AMPHORAE OF SESTIUS: NEW EVIDENCE AND A REASSESSMENT *

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This article arises from the current programme of excavation and survey of the Ager Cosanus and, in particular, of the Late-Republican villa of Settefinestre.¹ The villa stands on a hill in the hinterland close to Cosa beside the line of the road which ran from the *statio* of Succosa, on the Via Aurelia, towards Saturnia. This villa is the most substantial and best preserved of a number of farms scattered over the district, all similar in plan and architectural features. The structural remains of some of these are still clearly visible: namely, the villa of Casale della Provinca which stands immediately to the north of Poggio di Malabarba, and the villa of Sughereto di Ballantino (or Valle d'Oro) which stands a few metres from the Via Aurelia opposite Succosa.² Other visible remains, although clearly recognizable as villas, are in a worse state of preservation and do not allow any reasonably accurate reconstruction of their plan to be made. Nevertheless they help to create an impression of a considerable network of farms, which all show a close relationship between the buildings of the *villa rustica* and of the *villa urbana*, which is characteristic of the whole hinterland of Cosa. The villas concerned are the unpublished ones of Monte Alzato, which stands on a hill to the north of the hill of Settefinestre, and of Casal de'Marchi, hidden in the thick undergrowth of a copse still further to the north, along the same valley through which the main road from Succosa to Saturnia runs.³

This group of villas in the Ager Cosanus appears to be connected not just with the city of Cosa, whose walls overlook at least one of the major villas, but even more closely with the *statio* of Succosa⁴ and, through it, with the Via Aurelia, the arterial road which runs beside

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List of abbreviations used in the notes:

- Benoit 1957 = F. Benoit, 'Typologie et épigraphie amphoriques. Les marques de Sestius', *Riv. St. Lig.* 23 (1957), 247-85.
- Benoit 1961 = F. Benoit, *L'épave du Grand Congloué à Marseille*, *Gallia Supp.* XIV (1961).
- Brown = F. E. Brown, 'Cosa 1: history and topography', *Mem. Am. Acad. Rome* 20 (1951), 5-113.
- Lamboglia 1955 = N. Lamboglia, 'Sulla cronologia delle anfore romane di età repubblicana (II-I secolo a.C.)', *Riv. St. Lig.* 21 (1955), 241-70.
- Lamboglia 1961 = N. Lamboglia, 'Problemi tecnici e cronologici dello scavo sottomarino al Grand Congloué', *Riv. St. Lig.* 27 (1961), 138-54.
- Roman = Y. Roman, 'La place du couloir rhodanien dans la diffusion des amphores de Sestius', *Rev. arch. de l'Est et du Centre-Est* 25 (1974), 125-36.
- Thevenot 1953 = E. Thevenot, 'Les importations vinaires en pays bourguignon avant le développement de la viticulture', *Rev. arch. de l'Est et du Centre-Est* 4 (1953), 234-9.
- Thevenot 1954 = E. Thevenot, 'La marque d'amphore "Sesti"', *Rev. arch. de l'Est et du Centre-Est* 5 (1954), 234-43.
- Uenze = O. Uenze, *Frühromische Amphoren als Zeitmarken im Spätlatène* (1958).
- Will = E. Lyding Will, 'Les amphores de Sestius', *Rev. arch. de l'Est et du Centre-Est* 7 (1956), 224-44.
- ¹ The excavation of the villa of Settefinestre began in the summer of 1976 for a first campaign lasting one month, which was carried out by students and staff of the Universities of Siena, Pisa, Florence, Rome and Bologna and a group of English archaeologists, led by T. Tatton-Brown, under the aegis of the British Academy.
- ² The villas are largely unpublished. Some information can be found in D. Levi, 'Escursione archeologica nell' Agro Cosano', *St. Etr.* 1 (1927), 478 f.; E. Galli, 'Antiche vestigia nel dominio cosano dei Domizi Ahenobarbi', *Historia* 1. 2 (1927), 15 f.; P. Raveggi, 'Ville imperiali romane dell' Agro Cosano', *Maremma* VIII. 3 (1933), 3-8; M. Santangelo, *L'Antiquarium di Orbetello con brevi note su alcuni centri archeologici* (1954), 73; F. Castagnoli, 'La centuriazione di Cosa', *Mem. Am. Acad. Rome* 24 (1956), 147-65; G. Corvino, 'Villa romana in località "Settefinestre"', *Bollettino della Società Storica Maremmana* x. 20 (1969), 39-44. Work by L. and S. Quilici on the three villas of Settefinestre, Casale della Provinca and Sughereto di Ballantino is being published currently in the *Rivista Istituto Archeologia Storia Arte*, 1976. As for the excavation of the villa at Settefinestre, the director of the excavation, Andrea Carandini, has given an account of the results of the first season in a series of lectures in Rome (at the British School and the Deutsches Archaeologisches Institut) and at the Institutes of Archaeology of the Universities of Lancaster, London and Oxford.
- ³ The only mention of the villa at Monte Alzato is in Levi, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 479, n. 5, which notes the remains of walls with turrets shaped like columbaria (now collapsed) of the type also found in the three surviving large villas.
- ⁴ For the identification of the site of Succosa cf. particularly Brown, 21 and Castagnoli, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 159.

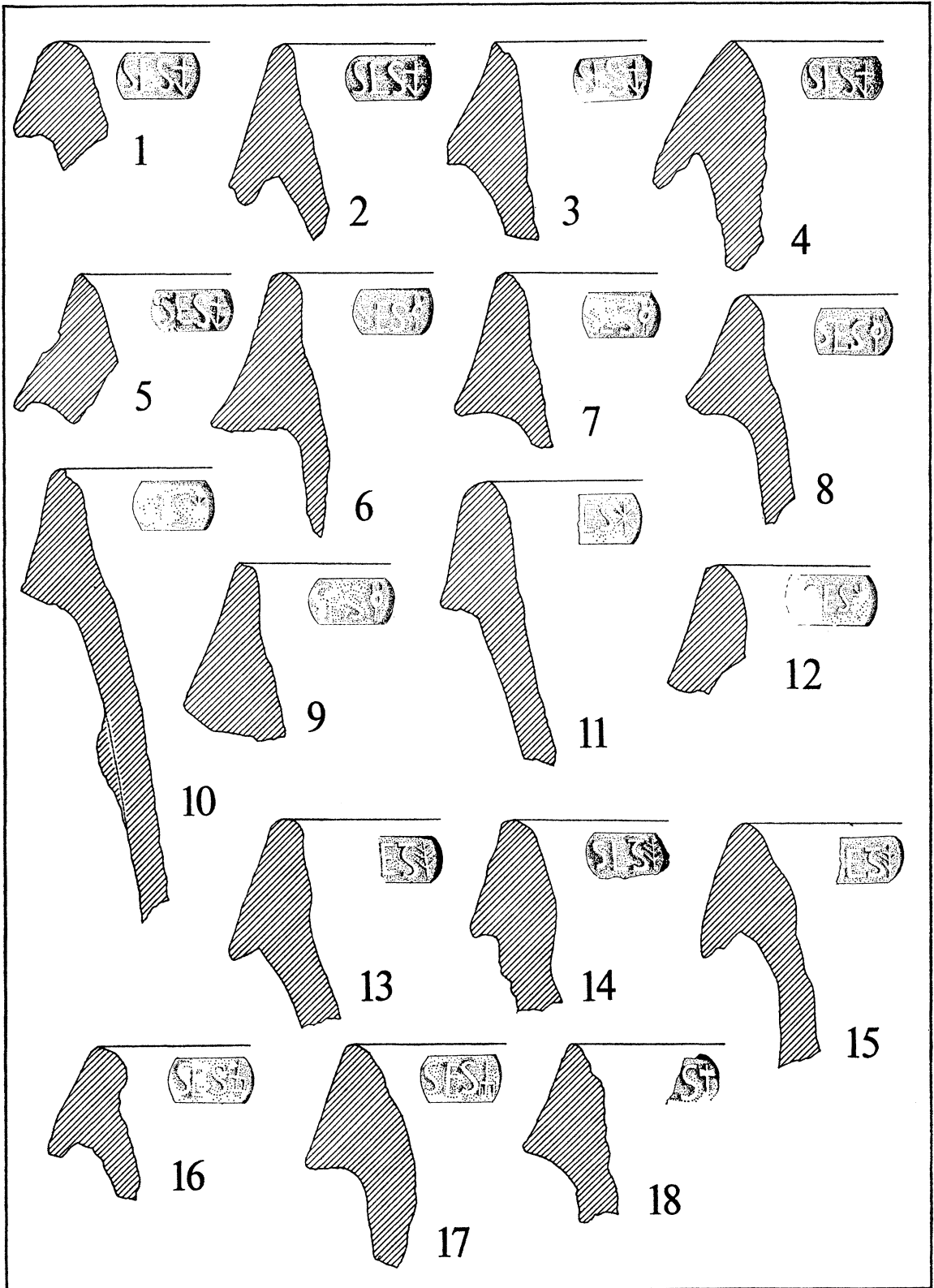


FIG. 1. STAMPED RIMS OF AMPHORAE FROM PORTUS COSANUS (NOS. 1-18).
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the villa of Ballantino, and, beyond Succosa, with the Portus Cosanus. So the port, the major communication route and the villas appear as structures linked together in a district which seems to have attained the point of its highest economic development in the historical period which we are studying, the Late Republic.⁵

The find which is reported in this article was made within the area of the Portus Cosanus.⁶ It consists of a large deposit of pottery, mainly composed of thousands of fragments of rims, handles, bases and walls of amphorae which can be identified as type 1 in Dressel's classification;⁷ a small number of scattered fragments belong to amphorae of Dressel type 2-4. Fragments of black-glaze ware were very few; nevertheless there were a number. Apart from the Dressel 1 amphorae, the greatest quantity of finds from the deposit was made up of numerous fragments of very compact, heavy and roughly dressed fire-bricks.

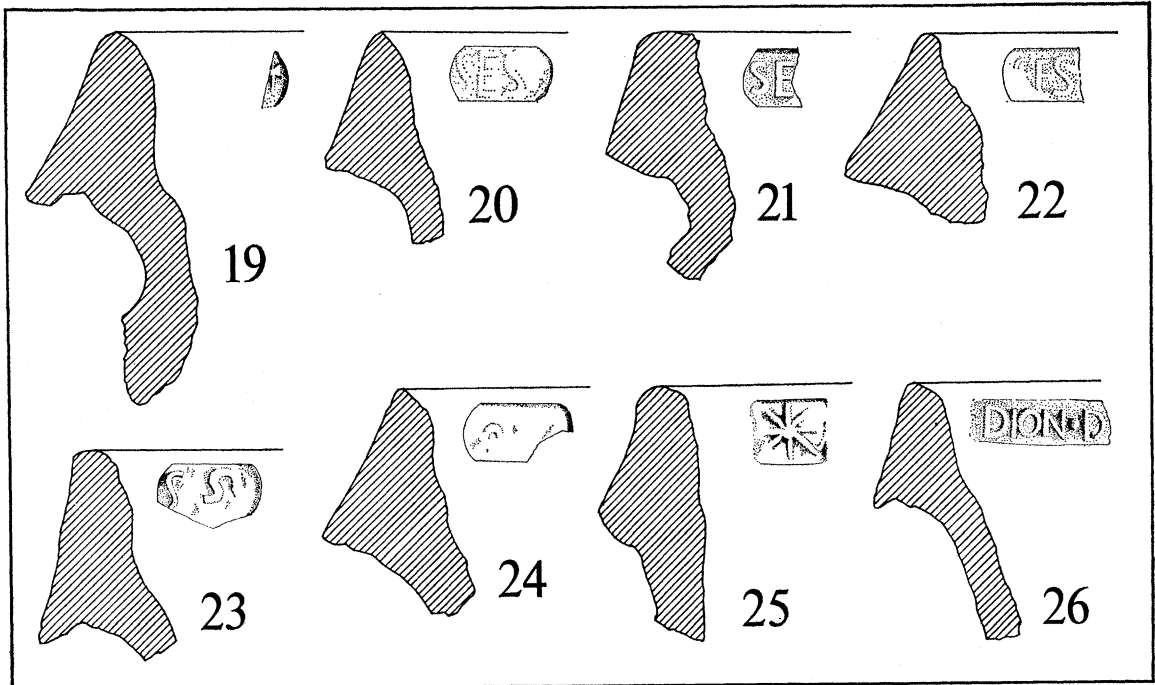


FIG. 2. STAMPED RIMS OF AMPHORAE FROM PORTUS COSANUS
(Nos. 19-26). Drawn by Anthony C. King. Copyright reserved

Inquiries at the site have made it clear that the deposit of pottery, which covers an area of approximately 100-200 square metres, comes from the recent work carried out in the immediate vicinity to lay the foundations for some buildings, luckily of no great size. In the course of this work it appears that some brick structures were seen—described as ‘cuniculi’—from which the bricks found in the deposit came. It seems equally certain that the deposit is of local origin and is not made up of earth and material brought in from outside and that it, in fact, comes from the subsoil of the adjoining land.

A particularly large number of rims of amphorae was found on the surface of the deposit. Among these we have been able to collect a number of examples with stamps: 5

⁵ The recent excavations carried out on the stretch of coast next to Tagliata d'Ansedonia have shown definitely that it is in this area that buildings, both external and internal, of the ancient port should be located, cf. Brown, 89-96; J. Bradford, *Ancient Landscapes* (1957), 227-31; A. McCann and J. D. Lewis, ‘The Ancient Port of Cosa’, *Archaeology* 23 (1970), 200-11; G. Schmiedt and others, *Il livello antico del Mar Tirreno* (1972), 19-49; A. McCann, ‘Excavations at the Roman Port of Cosa, 1972’,

International Journal of Nautical Archaeology 11, 1 (1973), 199-200; J. D. Lewis, ‘An early Roman Harbour’, *Marine Archaeology* (1973), 233-58.

⁶ The deposit was noticed in the winter of 1976 by two students from the University of Siena, Giuseppe Della Fina and Silvano Vichi.

⁷ For a brief discussion of amphorae of Dressel 1 type see F. Zevi, ‘Appunti sulle anfore romane’, *Arch. Class.* 18 (1966), 212-14 and C. Panella in *Ostia* 111, *Studi Miscellanei* 21 (1973), 492-4.

rims with the stamp SES and an anchor (fig. 1, 1-5); 4 rims with the stamp SES and a *caduceus* (fig. 1, 6-9); 3 rims with the stamp SES and an eight-point star (fig. 1, 10-12); 3 rims with the stamp SEST and a palm-leaf (fig. 1, 13-15); 2 rims with the stamp SES and a trident (fig. 1, 16-17); 2 rims with the stamp SES and a *bipennis* (fig. 1, 18; 2, 19). To this group of rims must be added three other fragmentary stamps which have not preserved the symbol which accompanied the letters SES (fig. 2, 20-2), and some with uncertain lettering which are in a very bad state of preservation but seem to belong to the same series. In one case the stamp was impressed on the elbow of the handle instead of the rim.

Also recovered were two rims with stamps with indecipherable lettering on which it is impossible to detect any trace of the letters SES in spite of the fact that the shape of the frame is identical (fig. 2, 23-4); one rim with a square stamp without lettering but with the symbol of an eight-point star in relief (fig. 2, 25); and finally a fragmentary stamp in a rectangular frame with the letters DION.D[- -], which turns out never to have been published before (fig. 2, 26).

The presence of stamps in the SES series is not unprecedented at Cosa. Despite the fact that the amphorae from the American excavations of the city are still entirely unpublished, we know from an article by E. Lyding Will, published as long ago as 1956,⁸ that there are already examples at Cosa of the stamp SEST with a palm-leaf and SES with a five-point star (the latter is as yet unparalleled in our deposit). Also, from an article by F. Benoit we learn that at Tagliata d'Ansedonia, that is to say at Portus Cosanus, the following stamps are attested: SES with wreath (also not found in our deposit), SES with an anchor and SES with a trident.⁹ Consequently we can state that at the moment (June 1977) all the known symbols in the SES series are attested in greater or smaller numbers in the city and port of Cosa, with the sole exception of the symbol of the hook which up to now is attested by a single example from Nyon in the Rhône valley.¹⁰

As is well known, the SES stamps pose complex problems of interpretation to which a fairly considerable bibliography has been devoted; yet the problem, which was first posed almost thirty years ago by the first finds of amphorae with SES stamps in the Marseilles wreck at Grand Congloué, still lacks a definite solution.¹¹ Up to now we have not been in a position to settle with certainty the doubts about the region of production of the amphorae, their chronology or the identity of the Sestius who, as everyone agrees, is indicated by the stamp SES.

From the wreck at Grand Congloué a cargo was recovered which consisted of more than a thousand amphorae of Dressel 1 type, stamped with SES and anchor and SES and trident; there were also some amphorae, also of the Dressel 1 type, with the stamp DAV. ATEC, about 400 amphorae of the Greco-Italic type, about 30 Rhodian amphorae, a number of odd containers of Aegean provenance (Cnidus) and of Punic type, all associated

⁸ Will, *passim*, and in particular figs. 80 and 82.

⁹ Benoit 1961, 60, fig. 56 *bis*; 64, n. 1. But the stamps in the Museum at Florence with the symbols of the anchor and the trident were attributed by Uenze to the area of Saturnia (Uenze, 12; table 4, 8-9). However, the recent find at Portus Cosanus makes it certain that there are examples of these types at Cosa as well.

¹⁰ Benoit 1961, 67, fig. 59, n. 8.

¹¹ The literature, both scholarly and otherwise, on the wreck at Grand Congloué and the related problem of the amphorae of *Sestius* is particularly vast. I give here a reasonably full list of works of a scholarly nature: F. Benoit, 'Archéologie sous-marine en Provence', *Riv. di St. Lig.* 18 (1952), 237 f.; Thevenot 1953; Thevenot 1954; F. Benoit, 'Amphores et céramique de l'épave de Marseille', *Gallia* 12 (1954), 35 f.; F. Benoit, 'Synchronisme des amphores rhodiennes et de la céramique hellénistique de l'épave du Grand Congloué à Marseille', *Rhodia* 29-30 (1954-5), 9 f.; Lamboglia 1955; F. Benoit, 'Épaves de la côte de Provence. Typologie des amphores', *Gallia* 14 (1956), 28; Benoit 1957; Uenze; F. Benoit,

'Typologie des amphores et construction navale', *Actes 83^{me} Congrès des Sociétés Savantes, Aix-en-Provence*, 1958 (1960), 55-64; G. Perinet, 'Typologie et structure cristalline des amphores de l'épave du Grand Congloué', *ibid.*, 65-7; M. Labrousse, 'Puits funéraires d'Aquitaine', *Gallia* 16 (1958), 148 f.; M. P. G. Serrano, 'Anforas romanas con la marca "Sestius"', *Archivo Español de Arqueología* 33 (1960), 113-22; Benoit 1961; F. Benoit, 'Archéologie sous-marine (à propos des fouilles du Grand Congloué)', *Riv. St. Lig.* 27 (1961), 135-8; Lamboglia 1961; N. Lamboglia, 'Cronologia relativa dei relitti romani nel Mediterraneo occidentale', *Atti III Congr. Int. Archeologia Sottomarina, Barcellona* 1961 (1971), 371-83; F. Benoit, 'Signature de potier sur une coupe campanienne du Grand Congloué', *Riv. St. Lig.* 28 (1962), 266-9; J. P. Morel, *Céramique à vernis noire du Forum Romain et du Palatin* (1965), 26 f.; Y. Roman, 'Les amphores de *Sestius* de l'Institution Saint-Joseph à Roanne', *Études Foréziennes* v (1972), 89-97; Roman, p. 125, n. 3 gives another list of local publications on recent finds made in Gaul which I have been unable to consult.

with many thousands of pieces of black-glaze ware.¹² The date of the wreck is still the subject of discussion and reappraisal. The latest date, suggested by Morel, about 180 B.C., can be taken as a useful point of reference.¹³ A further problem which remains unresolved is the question of the homogeneity of the cargo and of the possible presence of two wrecks, one on top of the other, which were not distinguished during the underwater excavation. However, it is well known that the interpretation of the wreck provoked considerable argument throughout the 1950's. Ranged on the one side were F. Benoit and N. Lamboglia, although their position gradually crumbled; while on the other side were E. Thevenot and E. Lyding Will.¹⁴ I do no more here than note just how much of the matter under discussion is still the subject of dispute. I am referring not only to the problems connected with the excavation at Grand Congloué and its validity, or to the certainty with which the production of the wine which was transported in Dressel 1 amphorae used to be ascribed exclusively to the Campanian region, but also to the problems raised by the interpretation of the inscriptions which an amphora can carry (this in turn is bound up with some of the crucial problems concerning the history of production and trade in the Roman world). The fact is that we still know very little about the organization of the work inside the potteries which produced the amphorae, and about the connection between these potteries and the area which produced the goods to be transported in them. We are as ignorant of the relationship between the maker of the amphorae and the producer of the goods as we are of the connection between these two (whose roles can, of course, in some cases be combined) and the merchant. At various times opinion has tended to see on the stamps either the producer of the amphora (the owner of the pottery), or the owner of the goods (the purchaser of a quantity of amphorae), or the merchant himself (the purchaser of the goods and their containers). We do not have enough evidence to make a definite choice from these possibilities. Further, it ought to be pointed out that the way in which such problems have to be tackled must depend on the period of Roman history and the geographical region concerned. Finally, the whole problem is complicated by the possibility of there being signatures on the stoppers of the amphorae. Some say that these refer to the producer of the contents which will then be guaranteed by the stamp on the stopper; others claim that the reference is to the merchant, because the moment when the container is closed is closely connected with one of the stages in his trade. This particular problem occurs in the case of the amphorae with SES stamps, which sometimes still retain a stopper with *L. Titi C. f.* written on it. In Benoit's opinion, Sestius is the merchant and L. Titius the producer. But, in fact, the references could just as well be the other way round.

As a result of the find at Grand Congloué and the subsequent underwater excavations, attempts were made for the first time to produce a systematic typology for Dressel 1 amphorae by distinguishing the most significant variations and drawing up the criteria for the evolution of the shape of the rim, the size of the mouth and the shape of the body, handles and foot. A most useful contribution to this was N. Lamboglia's publication of a series of rims of Dressel 1 amphorae recovered from various Republican levels of Albintimilium.¹⁵ However, these produced contradictory results in some cases and also inspired fruitless attempts to apply rigid dating criteria which were based on nothing but comparison of profiles. This technique caused Uenze to propose a date of c. 130 B.C. for the Grand Congloué amphorae on the basis of comparisons made with the rims in Lamboglia's typology.¹⁶ The corollary of this approach was a totally arbitrary attempt to assign different dates to the different symbols which appeared on the stamps with SES.¹⁷ The division of Dressel 1 into types 1A, 1B, 1C which was proposed by Lamboglia, while broadly valid, is inadequate today. In the case of the finds from Portus Cosanus we can at least note that the rims which have been collected, whether stamped or not, all belong to Dressel 1A. Until we can make an analytical study of the profiles and compare a petrological analysis of the

¹² For a detailed account of all the evidence about the cargo consult the publication of the wreck by Benoit 1961, 27-121.

¹³ This date is proposed in J. P. Morel, 'Céramiques d'Italie et céramiques hellénistiques (150-30 av.J.C.)', in *Hellenismus in Mittelitalien* II (1976), 478.

¹⁴ For fuller information cf. the bibliography cited in n. 11.

¹⁵ Lamboglia 1955, figs. 8-16.

¹⁶ Uenze, 16.

¹⁷ cf. *ibid.*, 14.

fragments with that of other local ceramic products, such as tiles, bricks and dolia, we can at least state that: (1) the profiles of the rims from Cosa, even with the variations, seem to be homogeneous, (2) there does not seem to be any correspondence between the profiles of the rims and the variations in the stamps; there are no six varieties of profile of rims to correspond to the six different symbols found on the SES stamps from the port.

If we study the distribution map of the SES stamps (fig. 3),¹⁸ first of all we can distinguish two areas of diffusion: one coastal and the other inland. The coastal area covers an arc which runs along Etruria from Cosa—with the hinterland at Saturnia (doubtful) and at Volterra—Luni, the Ligurian settlements of Vada Sabatia and Albintimilium, and then

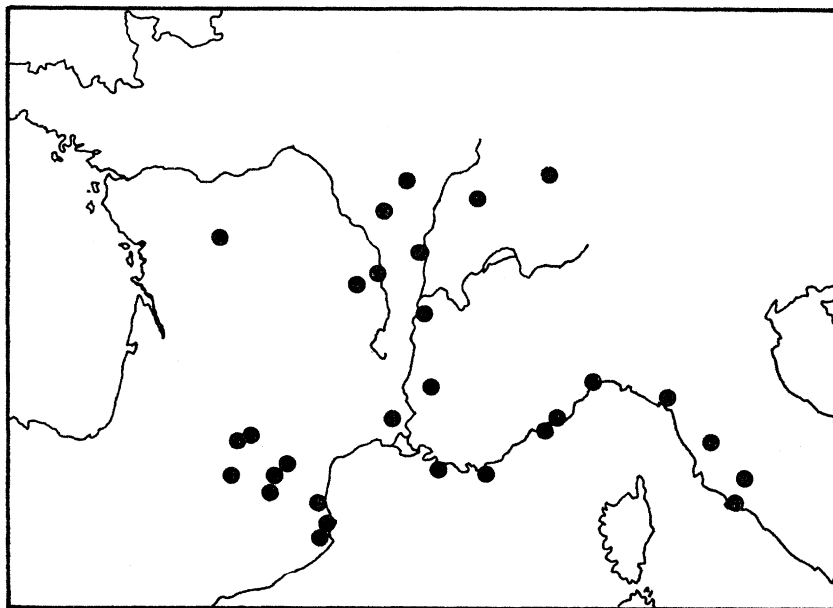


FIG. 3. DISTRIBUTION MAP FOR THE STAMP SES (1977).

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passes through various sites in southern Gaul from Cap Roux to Ile du Levant, to Grand Congloué at Marseilles, and finally to Ruscino, Ampurias and Torroella in Spain. The inland distribution comprises basically two geographical regions. One consists of the Gallic isthmus, with finds from Tolosa, Vieille Toulouse, La Lagaste, Bourrière, Belesta and Pamiers. The other is indicated by the Rhône-Saône river system and is marked out by the finds in the south at Nîmes and Nyons and then those at Vienne, Tournus, Besançon, Alesia and Mont Beuvray, with considerable branches to the East as far as Basilea and to the West to Roanne, Lezoux and Poitiers.

If we analyze the distribution of the different symbols found on SES stamps, we see

¹⁸ The map which is published here is notably fuller than the one given by Benoit in 1961, thanks, in particular, to the examples published by Y. Roman and to some more recent finds. The evidence for the find-spot, typology and date of the individual stamps can be found in the bibliography cited in n. 11. To these should be added the following: Volterra, SES stamp with five-point star (cf. B. Michelotti, *Notizie degli Scavi*, 1973, suppl. 3, p. 204, fig. 131, p. 212, fig. 133, 420), SES stamp with *bipennis* (Museo Guarnacci, unpublished); Luni, SES stamp with five-point star (unpublished,

information from S. Lusuardi, Siena); Ampurias, SES stamp (also see now M. Beltran Lloris, *Las ánforas romanas des España* (1970), 212, fig. 57, n. 254); Torroella, SES stamp (cf. *Riv. St. Lig.* 38 (1972), 439); Tolosa, SEST stamp with palm (cf. M. Vidal, *Rev. Arch. de Narbonnaise* 6 (1973), 77, fig. 4, 23); Vieille Toulouse, SEST stamp with palm (cf. *ibid.*, 78); Tournus SES stamp with anchor (?) (cf. J. B. Devauges, *Gallia* 32 (1974), 446, fig. 35); Basilea, SES stamp with *bipennis* (now also in *Archäologie der Schweiz* IV, 80, fig. 23, 1; 129, fig. 25).

that the trident is attested at Cosa, Saturnia (?) and Grand Congloué; the crown at Cosa and at Cap Roux; the five-point star at Cosa, Volterra, Luni and Vieille Toulouse; the *caduceus* at Cosa, Nîmes, La Lagaste, Bouriège and Roanne; the palm-leaf at Cosa, Vada Sabatia, Albintimilium, Ruscino, La Lagaste, Pamiers, Tolosa, Vieille Toulouse and Vienne; the anchor at Cosa, Saturnia (?), Ile du Levant, Grand Congloué, La Lagaste, Tournus (?), Besançon and Mont Beuvray; the *bipennis* at Cosa, Volterra, La Lagaste, Vieille Toulouse, Basilea and Lezoux (?); the eight-point star at Cosa and Alesia; the hook only at Nyons. The chance nature of the survival of this scattered evidence is clear¹⁹ (we need only realize that the port of Narbo, where the amphorae which we find distributed over the Gallic isthmus surely landed, does not appear on our distribution map).²⁰ This enables us to exclude the possibility that there is any clear 'regionalization' in the distribution of the different symbols. In the case of some symbols our evidence is too restricted to enable us to map their area of distribution; but for others we have evidence which shows us symbols scattered over Etruria, on the coast of Gaul, on the Gallic isthmus and further inland. The anchor, for example, seems to have spread more widely than the trident; but, as Grand Congloué shows, it is certain that the two series of stamped amphorae were, or at least could have been, traded together.

On the basis of the existing evidence we can also be sure that there is no chronological significance to be given to the various symbols. For the trident we have only the indication of date provided by Grand Congloué; for the five-point star there are the dates of Cosa (120/110–50/30 B.C.), Volterra (*post* 50 B.C.) and Vieille Toulouse (*c.* 50 B.C.); for the *caduceus* La Lagaste (about 110–50 B.C.), Roanne (*post* 50 B.C.); for the palm-leaf Vada Sabatia (about 110–100 B.C.), Albintimilium (*c.* 70 B.C.), Ruscino (100–0 B.C.), Pamiers (about 50–30 B.C.), Tolosa (*post* 50 B.C.), Vienne (*post* 50 B.C.); for the anchor, besides Grand Congloué, there are the dates of Besançon (*post* 50 B.C.), Mont Beuvray (*post* 50 B.C.); for the *bipennis* Basilea (about 100–15 B.C.); for the crown, the eight-point star and the hook we have no chronological evidence. Thus the presence of SES stamps, as has been noted on numerous occasions before, appears to be confirmed in contexts belonging to the first and second halves of the first century B.C. As has been pointed out, this contrasts with the chronological evidence from Grand Congloué. The evidence from Vada Sabatia, which suggests a date in the last ten years of the second century B.C., seems as unparalleled as is the profile of the rim on which the stamp is impressed. It is at least worth pointing out that the few dated fragments from the interior of the continent, at Vienne, Mont Beuvray, Besançon and Basilea, all suggest a definite, or at least very probable, date later than the Caesarian conquest of Gaul. Until we get some further verification this evidence, imprecise as it is, is still worth noting.

The huge quantity of SES stamps at Cosa ought to make us reconsider, as we will now see, the question both of the origin of these amphorae and also of their date. Given the privileged situation which Cosa offers of stratified sites running from the beginning of the third century B.C. down to the Augustan period, it should be realized that these stamps—at least those for which we have definite information—appear only in the levels dated to the last years of the second century and to the first century B.C.

If the problem of the date of the SES stamps remains open and is linked to the question of the precise interpretation of Grand Congloué, the definite identification of the area of production of these amphorae is no more clear. Certainly today it is no longer possible to assert with the confidence which was shown by Benoit, Lamboglia and so many others in their wake, that the amphorae with the SES stamp carried wine produced in Campania.²¹ On the other hand this does not mean that we have to accept the hypothesis of Will, who sought

¹⁹ Both at Vieille Toulouse and La Lagaste many SES stamps with a variety of symbols are attested; up to now they have not been published (cf. Roman, 128, nn. 25–7). They will enhance and modify the map of the distribution of the various series of stamps.

²⁰ For an analysis of the commercial role of the port of Narbo in the Republican period cf. G. Clemente, *I Romani nella Gallia meridionale (11–1 sec. a.C.)* (1974), 61–6.

²¹ For the interpretation of the wreck at Grand Congloué there is a noticeable and definite, even if rightly cautious, tendency on the part of historians to accept the reconstruction of Benoit; cf. for example, F. Cassola, 'Romani ed Italici in Oriente', *Dial. di Arch.* 4–5 (1971), 309; Clemente, *op. cit.* (n. 20), 25 f. and M. Labrousse, *Toulouse antique des origines à l'établissement des Wisigoths* (1968), 149 f.

to identify the amphorae with SES stamps as the containers for wine produced on the *praedia* of P. Sestius at Cosa about the middle of the first century B.C.²²

I do not believe that sufficient evidence exists today to resolve this problem decisively. But I do believe that a number of points, for which the map of the distribution of the amphorae and the new finds at Portus Cosanus provide evidence, should be stressed:

1. Cosa is the place where the SES stamps are attested in greater numbers than elsewhere up to the present.
2. Cosa is the only place where all the symbols which accompany the stamp SES are attested, with the exception of the hook.
3. Cosa—and I think that this point deserves particular attention—is also the most southerly site of all those on which these stamps have been found. The SES stamps are not found at all in Ostia, Rome, Southern Latium or Campania. This could be accidental; but in the case of other stamps on wine amphorae which definitely come from South Latium and Campania, such as those of P. Veveius Papus and L. Eumachius, there are finds from the region in which they were produced.²³ It should also be noted that there are only very scattered finds of Campanian wine amphorae of the Dressel 2-4 type along the coast of Etruria; this could be evidence of a real vitality in the viticulture of Roman Etruria.²⁴
4. Roman Etruria is the only region of Italy which displays, albeit only on a small scale, a distribution in the hinterland of amphorae with the SES stamp.

These observations cannot be, nor are they intended to be, conclusive. When we raise the question whether these amphorae could possibly have been produced at Cosa, we ought at the same time to consider the more general problem of Dressel 1 and the possibility that the variants of this type originated in different areas. Certainly anyone today who visits the city of Cosa and the store-rooms of the Museum established by the American Mission would gain the clear impression that Dressel 1 dominates the archaeological scene in the Ager Cosanus in the Late Republic. Equally the excavations at the port, which are practically unpublished, have revealed considerable quantities of these containers.²⁵ Are we presented here with evidence for an impressive production of commodities or for a massive consumption of imported produce? In so far as this is a matter of classification of pottery, there is, I believe, need for a comprehensive study of the amphorae found in the maritime cities of Roman Etruria and in the hinterland; this will enable us to draw an overall picture of where the various types are found or are absent in this region in the last two centuries of the Republic. At the same time we need to analyse those scattered and unclassified series of containers which are found on sites of the Hellenistic and Late Republican period in South Etruria, the hinterland of Etruria and Umbria. As a result of such an analysis we will be able to search for possible precedents in a tradition of craftsmanship to which we may be able to assign our supposed production at Cosa. But the problem, obviously, is not just a matter of studying the pottery. It is also necessary to assess whether it is possible to fit into the context of the society, economy and geography of the region of Cosa the production of the amphorae and the sort of agricultural products for which the Sestius amphorae provide evidence.

²² Will associated the SES stamps with P. Sestius, praetor in 54 B.C. and a landowner at Cosa (Cicero, *ad Att.* 15, 27, 1), father of L. Sestius Quirinalis, *cos. suff.* in 23 B.C., whose stamped tiles are known from Rome (*CIL* xv, 1445).

²³ On the remarkable wreck of Madrague de Giens, which carried a cargo of Dressel 1B amphorae, stamped 'P. Veveius Papus', cf. *Gallia* 31 (1973), 589 f.; 33 (1975), 585-9 (the excavation is still continuing). For the known examples of stamps of P. Veveius Papus in Italy cf. *CIL* x, 2489 and the work of A. Hesnard, 'Note sur un atelier d'amphores DR. 1 et DR. 2-4 près de Terracine', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome: Antiquité* (1977), 157. For the amphorae with the stamp 'L. Eumachi', cf. Thevenot 1953, 236 and, more recently, A. Tchernia and F. Zevi, 'Amphores vinaires de Campanie et de Tarraconaise à Ostia', *Recherches sur les amphores romaines* (1972), 37-40.

²⁴ Sources from the imperial period for the wine produced in Etruria: Pliny, *NH* 14, 67, which specifically mentions the wines of the southern coast (Gravisca) and from the hinterland of Cosa (Statonia); Martial 1, 26, 6. *Vinum Tuscum* is still mentioned in the late empire in the *Expositio totius mundi* 55.

²⁵ On the finds at the port cf. McCann and Lewis, *op. cit.* (n. 5), 204. During a discussion which took place at the German Archaeological Institute in Rome in March 1977, F. E. Brown confirmed that there is an enormous quantity of Dressel 1 amphorae from the port. He also gave the information that E. Lyding Will, who is engaged on the publication of the amphorae from the Cosa excavations, has so far been able to catalogue a great number of stamps in the SES series, from both the port and the city, in particular from a large dump-embankment, found on the *arx* of Cosa, of amphorae with SES stamps which apparently show no signs of having been used.

In the excavations of the villa of Settefinestre no SES stamp has hitherto come to light. Nevertheless the unstamped fragments of Dressel 1 amphorae found so far seem very similar to those from the deposit at the port. If—and let us keep the possibility open—these amphorae were produced at Cosa, what is the connection between the production of these amphorae and the farm buildings in the Ager Cosanus in the Late Republic? As yet we are not in a position to establish a direct connection between the farming activities on the villas and the production of these amphorae. However, let us note that the date of the SES stamps, however problematic, coincides with the period to which the first layout of the villa at Settefinestre seems to belong (first half of the first century B.C.). This is also the period for which we have literary evidence which provides us with the names of at least two of the great proprietors in the area, L. Domitius Ahenobarbus and P. Sestius.²⁶ The SES stamp from Vada Sabatia, dated to the last years of the second century, seems to suggest a slightly earlier chronology. We do not know of farms which definitely go back to that period, but it is very likely that some of them did (one such may perhaps be the farm at Monte Alzato).

Consequently the period of the last quarter of the second century and the first quarter of the first century B.C. seems to take on a particular importance in the life of Cosa and its territory. The growth of public building in the city seems to have stopped in the ten years after the middle of the second century with the construction of the Basilica in the Forum.²⁷ We do not know if the process of the fundamental transformation of the rural landscape had already started in the territory of the colony. This process is attested by the establishment of the first villas and the occupation of the centuriated land by these new settlements, as can be seen in the case of the villa at Sughereto di Ballantino.²⁸ The rise of the villas in the Ager Cosanus was accompanied by an increase in private building in the city, attested by several large houses with gardens.²⁹ In these fifty years a process of relative drift from the city to the countryside seems to have been taking place. This upheaval had already occurred—so it seems—when Cosa underwent a period of trauma, revealed by the destruction, fires and hurried rebuilding of the walls about 70 B.C.³⁰ The crisis in the city of Cosa seems to have lasted until the beginning of the Augustan age. But the crisis in the city did not bring with it a crisis in the port; this at least is suggested by the archaeological evidence and our deposit of pottery in the port. In this period the port seems to show signs of activity which might be seen to be connected closely with the production of agricultural goods on the farms in the district. A deposit of pottery dated to the period 120/110–50/30 B.C. which was found below the walls of Cosa³¹ seems to be evidence for continuity of life around the city, although this was also the period which saw the growth of the settlement at Succosa. The first years of the Empire saw an attempt to revitalize the buildings in the city; the construction of the Odeon on the site of the Basilica in the Forum belongs to this period.³² The villa of Tagliata was begun near the sea in the neighbourhood of the port. As far as we can judge from the meagre excavation reports,

²⁶ Sources in I. Shatzman, *Senatorial Wealth and Roman Politics* (1975), 339, n. 198; cf. also T. P. Wiseman, *New Men in the Roman Senate 139 B.C.–A.D. 14* (1971).

²⁷ For the Basilica in the Forum of Cosa cf. Brown, 75–8; D. M. Taylor, 'Cosa: Black-glaze pottery', *Mem. Am. Acad. Rome* 25 (1957), 91 f.; M. T. Marabini Moevs, 'The Roman Thin-Walled Pottery from Cosa', *Mem. Am. Acad. Rome* 32 (1973), 21 f.; F. E. Brown, in *Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica*, Suppl. 1970, 263 f., s.v. 'Cosa'.

²⁸ cf. Castagnoli, art. cit., 164. The villa of Sughereto di Ballantino was the subject of two short campaigns of excavation in the years 1975–6, carried out by an American archaeological team from Wesleyan University. The *floruit* of the villa seems to lie in the period of approximately 100 B.C.–A.D. 100.

²⁹ On the houses at Cosa cf. Brown, 89; F. E. Brown, 'Scavi a Cosa-Ansedonia, 1965–66', *Boll. d'Arte* 52 (1967), 39–41; V. J. Bruno, 'Antecedents

of the Pompeian First Style', *AYA* 73 (1969), 305–17; V. J. Bruno, 'A Town House at Cosa', *Archaeology* 23 (1970), 232–41.

³⁰ A 'crisis' at Cosa in the second quarter of the first century B.C. was already recognized by Brown, 112, and has been confirmed repeatedly by the archaeological evidence (cf. in particular the destruction of the houses described in Brown, art. cit., 40). Its possible connection with the pirate wars was considered by Brown in 'Incontro di studi su "Roma e l'Italia fra i Gracchi e Silla" Siena 1969', *Dial. di Arch.* 4–5 (1971), 362 f.

³¹ Deposit E: cf. Taylor, op. cit. (n. 27), 133–5; Marabini Moevs, op. cit. (n. 27), 22 f.

³² A series of dedications and statues on the Arx testify to a renewal of life in Cosa at the beginning of the Imperial period (cf. Brown, 112). On the Odeon cf. the bibliography cited in n. 27. An unpublished inscription from the Forum, now in the Store of the American Mission, testifies to its restoration in the third century under the Maximini.

it seems to have the characteristics of a holiday villa, not those of the working farms in the immediate hinterland in the Late Republic.³³

But with the early imperial period the productive capacity of the agricultural system at Cosa seems to have been gradually exhausted, at least as far as the opportunity to export agricultural goods was concerned. In the succeeding centuries the territory of Cosa shows signs of being a centre for imports, as is attested by the numerous amphorae of provincial provenance kept in the store-rooms of the American Mission. This state of affairs seems to have lasted until the second half of the second century. Then, as part of the general crisis in the system of production based on slavery and the consequent disruption of the agricultural system and manufacturing in Italy, the villas of the Ager Cosanus decayed and seem to have been largely abandoned.³⁴ With the dynasty of the Severi we witness the appearance of the *respublica Cosanorum*, attested in epigraphic sources during the first half of the third century.³⁵ Although the nature of the process eludes us, this seems to reflect a new development in the territory of Cosa. This consisted of an ephemeral rebirth of the city combined with a new organization of the territory, perhaps linked with the rise of *latifundia*.

To sum up: in the last century of the Republic and certainly in the Sullan period, the territory around Cosa, quite independently of the sudden crisis which hit the city, seems to have been organized in accordance with a system of agriculture based on large working farms. Furthermore, there were considerable signs of commercialization connected with this system. These two aspects accord well with a picture of agriculture based on slave production and the fact that the original system of farming, which was associated with the establishment of the Latin colony and the centuriation of its territory, was superseded.

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³³ On the villa of Tagliata cf. Levi, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 478; Galli, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 22-4; P. Raveggi, 'Orbetello. Ritrovamenti archeologici nel territorio cosano', *Notizie degli scavi* 1927, 204-10.

³⁴ This seems to be the first result of the excavation of the villa at Settefinestre, where, however, sporadic occupation is documented for the four following centuries as well.

³⁵ The existence of the *respublica Cosanorum* is

indicated in A.D. 213 by *CIL* XI, 2633; in A.D. 238 by the unpublished inscription from the Forum cited in n. 32; in A.D. 241 by *CIL* XI, 2634; in A.D. 251 (if we accept the reference to the Emperor Decius proposed by the editors) by an inscription in the so-called Temple B in the Forum (cf. C. L. Babcock, 'An Inscription of Trajan Decius from Cosa', *AJP* 83 (1962), 147-58). For the siting of the *respublica Cosanorum* at Succosa cf. Brown, 21.