

SOUTH GAULISH TERRA SIGILLATA IN THE FORUM OF AEMINIUM (COIMBRA, PORTUGAL): A DECISIVE COMPONENT OF THE DATING PROCESS

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Abstract

The Augustan forum of *Aeminium* (Coimbra, Portugal) underwent a significant enlargement in the middle of the 1st century AD. The extension was built over a monumental cryptoporticus located on steep terrain. Archaeological campaigns carried out at this site more or less continuously since the 1990s have identified the construction levels associated to this extension.

This text presents the collection of red gloss pottery (*terra sigillata*) from South Gaul gathered in these stratigraphic contexts. The study of them, together with other chronological indicators, has enabled the second stage of construction of the forum of *Aeminium* to be dated to the mid 1st century AD.

Resumo

O fórum augustano de *Aeminium* (Coimbra, Portugal) terá sido significativamente ampliado em meados do século I d.C. Esse acréscimo desenvolveu-se sobre um monumental criptopórtico que se instalou em terreno declivoso. As campanhas arqueológicas efectuadas neste local, de forma mais ou menos continuada desde a década de 90 do séc. XX, permitiram identificar os níveis de construção associados a esta ampliação.

Neste texto, apresenta-se a colecção de *terra sigillata* sudgálica recolhida nesses contextos estratigráficos. O seu estudo, articulado com outros indicadores cronológicos, permite fixar o segundo momento de edificação do fórum de *Aeminium* em meados da primeira centúria da nossa era.

Keywords

South Gaulish *terra sigillata*; Forum of *Aeminium*; mid 1st century AD; forms; stratigraphic context.

Palavras-chave

Terra sigillata sudgálica; Forum de *Aeminium*; Meados do século I d.C.; Formas; Contexto estratigráfico.

1. Introduction

The *oppidum* of *Aeminium* (**Fig. 1, a**), built on the site of a protohistoric settlement (Almeida, Silva and Vilaça, 2015) at a notable geostrategic location (near the ocean, on the banks of a navigable river and on the road that linked *Olisipo* to *Bracara Augusta*, became the capital of *ciuitas* in the Augustan period (Alarcão, 2008). The first large urban renovation of the city dates precisely from that time, around the turn of the era (Mantas, 1992). Recent excavations have also revealed the presence of a forum dating from the time of Augustus (Alarcão *et al.*, 2009). Decades later, in the time of Claudius, this first forum was completely restructured, giving way to another that was more suited to the importance of the city (Carvalho, 1998). Of that Claudian forum there remains the cryptoporticus, over which the forum was built (**Fig. 1, b-c**). Consisting of two floors of vaulted galleries (**Fig. 2**), this cryptoporticus was designed as a platform to support the forum, and built to offset the steeply sloping terrain in this central zone of the ancient city (Oleiro and Alarcão, 1973).

The *forum* had original architecture with two-storey porticos and a ground plan designed around an apsed basilica (Vitruvian *basilica cum aede*), which functioned as a chapel for the imperial cult (*aedes Augusti*) (Carvalho, 1998; Alarcão *et al.*, 2009). Recent excavations have also revealed other remains of the urban fabric around the forum, such as stretches of sewers, roads, and parts of private buildings,