

Diversification in Roman Industry:

Some Ceramic Evidence

Elizabeth Lyding Will

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Comparison of the stamps on Roman amphorae with those on Arretine ware, bricks, and tiles permits us to chart, if only in a preliminary way at present, some of the features of Roman industrial diversification in the 1st c. B.C. and the 1st c. A.C. As study of the stamps of Roman ceramics continues, we accumulate evidence that, with the decline of Italian agricultural production at the end of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire, some of the amphora factories that had provided international shipping containers for Italian exports turned increasingly to the manufacture of bricks, dishes and other products, in addition to amphorae. The amphora factories, which had brought wealth and power to many Roman nobles as well as to other groups, continued to expand by making new products for new markets: bricks and tiles for the building projects of the early Empire and tableware for a society in which leisure was an increasing preoccupation. Some businesses even appear to have moved their locations in response to new opportunities. The factories of the Umbricii Scauri in Campania and of the Sestii in Etruria are two examples of the trend, but smaller pottery factories were also involved.

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