

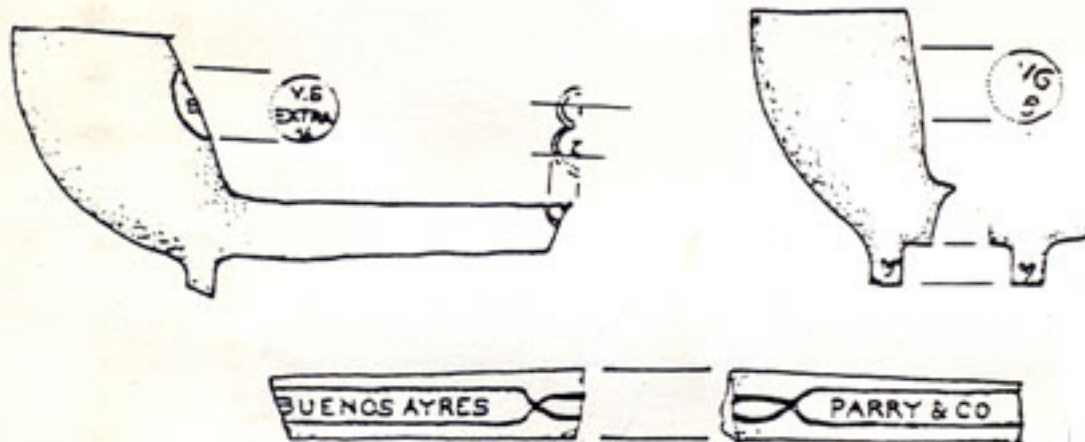


ARQUEOLOGIA URBANA

CLAY PIPES FROM RECENT EXCAVATIONS IN ROSARIO

THE PROBLEM OF VG PIPES FROM ARGENTINA

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Presentación:

Uno de los aspectos sustantivos que la arqueología histórica ha dado a la arqueología en general, es la reconsideración de los sistemas de fechamiento del material cultural. Al trabajarse con objetos de producción industrial o semi-industrial, y al existir fuentes documentales que están siendo exhaustivamente estudiadas, las posibilidades de fechar son mucho mayores de lo que se pensaba hace sólo pocos años atrás. Además de elementos tradicionales como la cerámica, se han ajustado otras alternativas que mostraron ser mucho más precisas: desde las pipas de caolín de que trata este trabajo de Peter Davey hasta las bolitas infantiles que permiten un fechamiento muy estricto, aunque quizás aun no tan exacto como los picos de botellas de vino o los moldes de marcas de botellas de cerveza, por citar algunos ejemplos. Este estudio es la continuación de una publicación anterior (no.15, 1989) en que se presentaron las primeras pipas de caolín descubiertas en el país. Estas fueron utilizadas desde el siglo XVI hasta finales del XIX en todo el mundo, a partir de la exportación masiva desde sus fábricas en Europa central; dada la regularidad de su presencia son marcadores cronológicos excelentes. Los casi 200 ejemplares ya excavados en Buenos Aires abrieron varios interrogantes entre los especialistas europeos, en especial por la alta frecuencia del denominado Grupo VG, que recién ahora ha logrado identificarse como proveniente de Francia a fines del siglo XIX, y no como inglés del siglo XVIII como se había pensado en un principio. Quedan aun muchos otros interrogantes en este insólito tema que serán investigados en la medida en que los trabajos continúen, ampliando así nuestros conocimientos sobre las formas de la vida cotidiana urbana, su cultura material y su relación con los contextos arquitectónicos en que se llevó a cabo.

Las excavaciones en el basural de Rosario en el cual se rescataron las pipas analizadas por Davey, están siendo llevado a cabo por un grupo interdisciplinario de investigación del Museo de la Ciudad. En los informes ya distribuidos existe información contextual sobre estas pipas y recomendamos al interesado su lectura. Pueden verse un número considerable de pipas en S.Volpe (1988) Informe 3, arqueología urbana: descripción de lotes (material), Museo de la Ciudad, Rosario. Los dibujos que acompañan estos trabajos fueron hechos por Pablo López Coda. Agradecemos al Museo de la Ciudad de Rosario la información para publicar este artículo.

Daniel Schávelzon

The Problem of VG Pipes from Argentina

Peter J. Davey

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Recent Urban excavations in Argentina have revealed the first groups of European-style clay tobacco pipes to have been recovered from that country. Five sites in Buenos Aires produced a total of one hundred and seventy four fragments ranging in date from around 1720 to 1900. Most of these appeared to be of British type and to have been imported from England (Davey 1989). A further fourteen clay pipe fragments were recovered in September 1989 from a late 19th century rubbish deposit located near the docks at Rosario, on the River Parana at some 300km north-west and inland of Buenos Aires, (Davey forthcoming). Again, these seemed to be mainly of British types.

These groups included six examples with a circular bowl stamp including the letters VG. Four were derived from four of the five sites explored in Buenos Aires, the other two from Rosario (Figs 1-6).

1. Plain, spurred bowl with oval stamp on the front facing the smoker reading VG 16 [Parque Lezama, Buenos Aires; L-110]
2. Bowl as 1, with similar stamp on the front; moulded letter L on either side of the spur [680 Peru Street, Buenos Aires; C.205].
3. Bowl fragment, with a stamp on the front, facing the smoker which reads VG 4; the stamp has a floral design above the lettering [Defensa Street, Buenos Aires; S.6988].
4. Spur and lower section of bowl fragment; part of a VG stamp survives on the front and the moulded letters VG occur on one side of the spur, possibly a number 1 on the other [Palermo Sitio 1, Buenos Aires; P.338].
5. Spurred bowl with a circular bowl stamp containing the legend VG/EXTRA/16; the edge of a stem mark is also visible; stem bore diameter 2.00mm [Rosario; W.001].
6. Spurred bowl with the moulded letters V/V on either side of the spur; part of a circular bowl stamp which reads VG/?6 survives; stem bore diameter 2.00mm [Rosario; W.002].

None of these six VG pipes is from the same mould. None of the stamps appears to be the same. Three definitely contain the number 16 within the frame of differing VG stamps, one of which includes the word EXTRA (Fig 5) and a fourth (Fig 6) almost certainly bears the same number. One has the number 4

(Fig. 3). The sixth, though damaged, does not appear to have included a number (Fig. 4). Three of the six have moulded letters on the side of the spur. One has VG on one side (Fig. 4), one has the letter L on both sides (Fig. 2) and the other has the letter V on both sides (Fig. 6).

In the earlier publication it was suggested, on grounds of quality and form, that these finds might date from the period 1780-1820 and that their origin, though uncertain, might be Britain (Davey 1989). New evidence has been forthcoming to suggest that they were made by Fiolet of St. Omer in northern France in the latter part of the 19th century.

6. An almost complete pipe with the word EXTRA and number 16 within the VG frame, the moulded letters VG on one side of the spur and the number 1 on the other. On the stem, transverse to the long axis, are the words L. FIOLET/St OMER. The stem bore diameter is 1.50mm. Unprovenanced example from the collection of Miss D Freeman of Great Tey in Essex.

This pipe is important for the understanding of the Argentine finds. Its bowl stamp appears very similar indeed to one of the ones from Rosario (Fig 5) and of similar type to the other find from Rosario and those from Buenos Aires. The moulded VG on the spur is very similar to one from Buenos Aires (Fig. 4) which may also have the number 1 on the other side.

The firm of Fiolet was in production in the Pas-de-Calais from 1765 to 1921 (Walker 1977, 286-288). The height of its output was in the latter years of the 19th century with products turning up in many parts of the world. In North America a group of eight Fiolet pipes was found at Fort Walsh, a North-West Mounted Police post occupied between 1875 and 1883 (Richie 1983, 96, 102-3, Figs. 10-12) and further examples were recovered from the Hudson's Bay Company farm on San Juan Island, Washington (Pfeiffer 1983a, 178, Fig. 4w), the Martinez Adobe, Pinole, California (1836-1909: Pfeiffer 1983b, 189-191, Fig. 1E) and from Port Royal, Jamaica (Oswald 1983, 257). These various finds demonstrate the degree to which Fiolet's products penetrated a variety of market types over a wide area of the New World.

Although the finds of VG pipes from the Argentine form part of this general picture, they are the only ones known to the writer with the VG mark. The meaning of these letters and the numbers which accompany them is quite obscure. Their frequency and uniqueness to excavated assemblages in Argentina is also noteworthy. The Rosario finds, in particular, seem to indicate a date during the latter years of the 19th century.

A bowl fragment bears the moulded initials TD in a circular frame with the remains of leaf moulded seams above was also recovered from Rosario. TD pipes have a very complex history. The first examples which appear in North America in the middle



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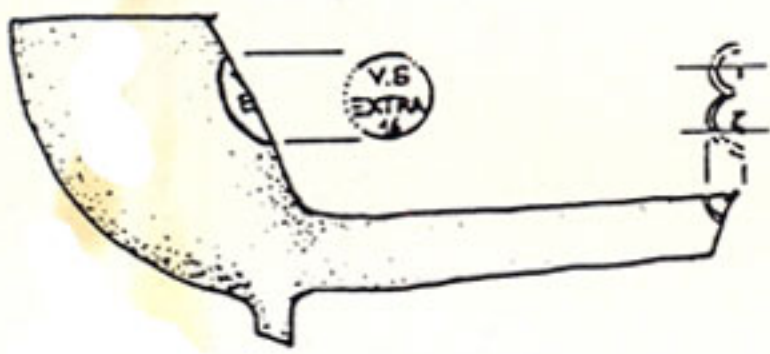
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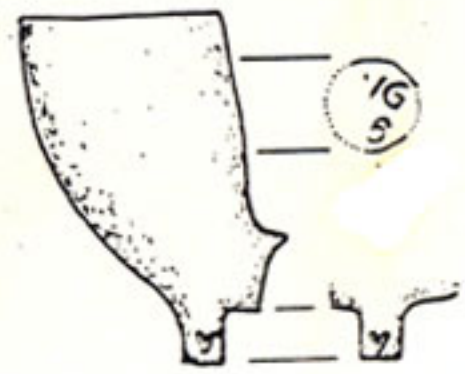
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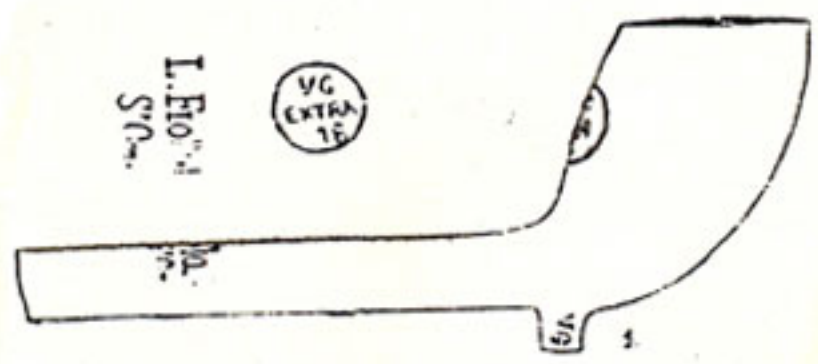
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6



7

of the 18th century are usually considered to be the products of a London maker Thomas Dormer, though none have been found in England. In the 19th century they were made by many factories both in Europe and America (Walker 1983, 36-39). It may be significant that when the site of the Fiolet factory in St. Omer was explored in 1977, examples of TD pipes of British type were found together with a variety of Dutch styles bearing the Arms of Gouda (Tymstra 1981, 46-47). Given the link already established with the Fiolet factory, this seems quite a possible source for the Rosario find. The whole field is complicated by the degree of imitation going on between makers and countries at this period.

It may be that the VG stands for nothing more exciting than "very good" - a kind of slogan that fits well with the use of "EXTRA" on Figures 5 and 7. The use of numbers in the stamps poses the same problems as for the WM stamps from Venice (Oswald 1987). Curiously, a further example of a WM stamp, which probably contained a number 19, was recovered from Defensa Street, Buenos Aires (Davey 1989, Fig. 7). The concentration of finds in Argentina, together with the range of moulds and stamps represented, imply both a reasonable scale of production and a significant trade in these pipes. The existence of a locally procured example in the Freeman collection (Fig. 7) would appear to rule out their having been made in South America. Further information and ideas about this type would be gratefully received.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Dr. Daniel Schávelzon, Director of the Urban Archaeology Programme at Buenos Aires University for the opportunity to study his notes and sketches of these finds and for permission to publish this short article about them. Diana Freeman very kindly loaned me her Fiolet pipe and Peter Hammond made some very helpful suggestions. Figures 1-6 are based on drawings by Dr. Schávelzon and Figure 7 on one by Miss Freeman.

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CLAY PIPES FROM RECENT EXCAVATIONS IN ROSARIO

Peter Davey

Reader in Archaeology, University of Liverpool

Fourteen fragments of white clay tobacco smoking pipes were recovered in September 1989 from a late 19th century rubbish deposit located near the docks at Rosario, on the River Parana at some 300km north-west and inland of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Stem-bore measurement was possible for eleven of the collection. Only three exceed 2.0mm in diameter and may, therefore, possibly pre-date the nineteenth century. Given such a small sample and the known variation in bore sizes in the wide range of models available at that time, it would be unwise to lay undue stress on this. In general the bore sizes would confirm the excavator's estimate and the other pipe evidence that the group should belong to the period circa 1870-1900.

Sufficient detail survived for six of the pieces to be worthy of illustration (Figs. 1-6).

Figure 1

Spurred bowl with a circular bowl stamp containing the legend VG/EXTRA/16; the edge of a stem mark is also visible; stem bore diameter 2.00mm. [W.001]

Figure 2

Spurred bowl with the moulded letters V/V on either side of the spur; part of a circular bowl stamp which reads VG/?6 survives; stem bore diameter 2.00mm. [W.002]

This pair of bowls brings the total of VG marked pipes from Argentina to 6, four earlier finds coming from recent excavations in Buenos Aires (Davey 1989, nos. 3-6). None of the six is from the same mould. Three definitely contain the number 16 within the frame of differing VG stamps, one of which includes the word EXTRA (Figure 1 above) and a fourth (Figure 2 above) almost certainly bears the same number. One has the number 4 (*ibid.*, no. 5). The sixth, though damaged, does not appear to have included a number (*ibid.*, no. 6). Three of the six have moulded letters on the side of the spur. One has VG on one side (*ibid.*, no. 6), one has the letter L on both sides (*ibid.*, no. 4) and the other has the letter V on both sides (Figure 2 above).

In the earlier publication it was suggested, on grounds of quality and form, that these finds might date from the period 1780-1820 and that their origin, though uncertain, might be Britain. New evidence has been forthcoming to suggest that they were made by Fiolet of St. Omer in northern France during

the latter part of the 19th century. An almost complete unprovenanced example forms part of the collection of Miss D Freeman of Great Tey in Essex (Figure 7 below). This also has the word EXTRA and number 16 within the VG frame, the moulded letters VG on one side of the spur and the number 1 on the other. On the stem, transverse to the long axis, are the words L. FIOLET/St OMER. It has a stem bore diameter of 1.50mm.

This pipe is very important for the understanding of the Argentine finds. Its bowl stamp appears very similar indeed to that from Rosario (Figure 1) and of similar type to the other finds from Rosario and those from Buenos Aires. The moulded VG on the spur is very similar to one from Buenos Aires (*ibid.*, no. 6) which find also probably has the number 1 on the other side.

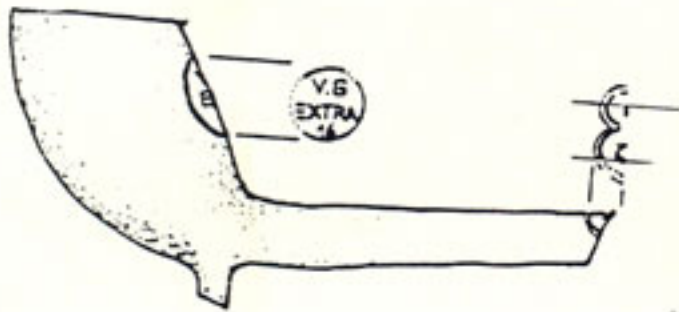
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Figure 3

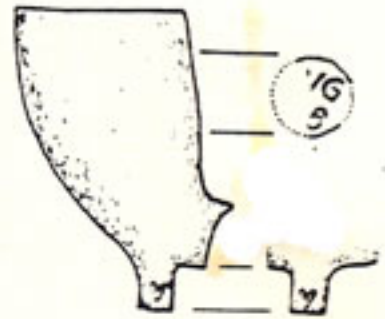
A bowl fragment bears the moulded initials TD in a circular frame with the remains of leaf moulded seams above. [W.003]

TD pipes have a very complex history. The first examples which appear in North America in the middle of the 18th century are usually considered to be the products of a London maker Thomas Dormer, though none have been found in England. In the 19th century they were made by many factories both in Europe and America (Walker 1983, 36-39). It may be significant that when the site of the Fiolet factory in St. Omer was explored in 1977, examples of TD pipes of British type were found together with a variety of Dutch styles bearing the Arms of Gouda (Tymstra 1981, 46-47). Given the link already established with the Fiolet factory, this seems quite a possible source for the Rosario find. The whole field is complicated by the degree of



1

W. 001



2

W. 002



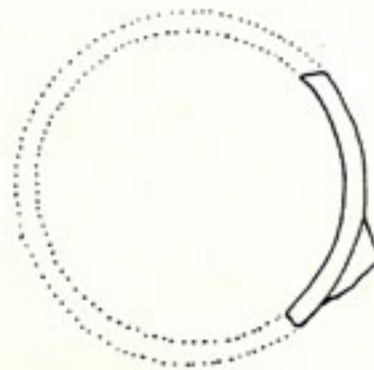
W. 003

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W. 0013

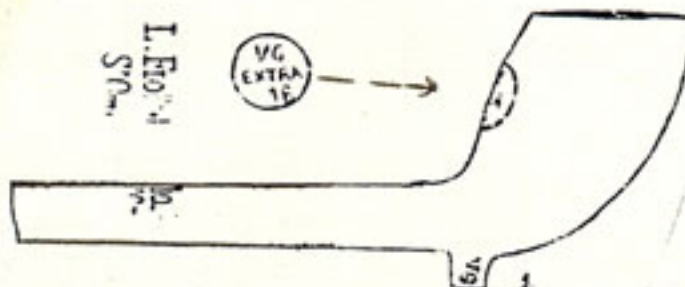
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W. 004

7



imitation going on between makers and countries at this period.

Figure 4

A bowl rim fragment with crude rouletting. W.014]

This type of decoration which was normal in 17th century products of north-west Europe was abandoned from around 1700, but re-appears almost 200 hundred years later towards the end of the 19th century. It is usually associated with very crudely made pipes with thick walls of a type smoked by the labouring classes (eg "Home Rule" products of McDougall's factory in Glasgow cf Gallagher 1987, 77, Fig. 14, no. 11). This fragment is probably British around 1900.

Figure 5

This is a very unusual rim fragment of large diameter. No reasonable parallels can be suggested. [W.013]

Figure 6

A stem fragment with the moulded name PARRY & CO on one side and BUENOS AYRES in a "rope" frame on the other. This Anglo-Saxon name and style of framing suggests a British origin. The "rope" moulding is particularly common in Scotland (eg William Beveridge stems from Aberdeen and Forres (Davey 1982, 221, no. 243 and Gallagher & Davey 1987, 277, Fig. 9, no.27) where they date from 1873-1908. As no pipemaker named Parry is recorded in the British lists, it is possible that an Argentine based merchant of that name imported them as an advertising item. Perusal of the Buenos Aires later 19th century Trades Directories might provide a answer to this question. Stem bore diameter 2.0mm. [W.004]

In all, the Rosario finds provide a small but significant extension to the material already studied from Buenos Aires. Much larger groups of pipes will be needed before firm trends can be ascertained.

Stem-bore measurements

W.001	2.00mm
W.002	2.00mm
W.003	-----
W.004	2.00mm
W.005	2.00mm
W.006	2.00mm
W.007	2.00mm
W.008	2.00mm
W.009	2.10mm
W.010	2.20mm
W.011	2.40mm
W.012	2.40mm

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