

From the 2nd into the 8th century a type of pottery was produced in what is now modern Tunisia and shipped over much of the Roman world from several seaports, not the least of them, ancient Carthage, which had been rebuilt by the Romans. This pottery is known as African Red Slip; it was the most desirable tableware in the Roman World for much of the period of its production and it was imitated in many regions. African Red Slip, at its very best, was an attractive, well formed and smooth red table ware; at its worst the pottery looked not unlike crumbling old bricks such as are found in decaying old houses in Ontario.

At some point in the 4th century A.D. the Africans began making lamps in African Red Slip. There are two basic types, one with a rounded shoulder (fig. 1) and one with a flat shoulder. These two types are known as Hayes I and Hayes II, respectively. Canadian students may be interested to know that the world expert on African Red Slip is the chief curator of the Greek and Roman Department, Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Dr. John W. Hayes. The

different shapes of the African Red Slip vessels are often referred to by his name, because he has made the classification. A variety of African Red Slip lamps and pots may be seen in the Royal Ontario Museum.

The African Red Slip lamps had many varieties of designs, both on shoulder and discus (or cuvette). Palm wreaths were frequently found around the discus on the shoulder; these wreaths were a Christian symbol and replaced the pagan shoulder design, the olive wreath, which largely disappears on Roman lamps at this time. The shoulder designs on Hayes Type II lamps were more elaborate, perhaps because it was easier to create a design for the flatter surface.

The different shoulder designs were often mixed: squares with circles, flowers, hearts, animals, trees, lozenges, birds, and assorted scrolls and indeterminate curvy shapes were used around yet another series of designs on the discus (to be discussed in later articles). The variety, in fact, causes one to quote Pliny: *Semper aliquid novi ex Africa.*