When Pedro Paulo Funari asked me to supervise his researches, while he was aiming at an MSc program, his ideas about the theme to be addressed were already well-defined. More than this, at a very young age, he already had good knowledge of the bibliography about this theme, namely the universe of Roman amphorae and their economic implications.

During the time of our supervisor-student relation – which became a source of immense contentment for me, as a result of his great commitment –, the initial elements of a Dressel 20 category of amphorae began to ripen as he progressed. These amphorae date to the 1st-3rd centuries AD, particularly ca. 194 AD, and they are named after German archaeologist and epigraphist Heinrich Dressel (1845-1920), who developed a typology for amphorae. The Dressel 20 amphorae were originally from Baetica, a province of Roman Hispania.

Thus, between 1982 and 1985, as a holder of CNPq and FAPESP scholarships, Pedro Paulo Funari carried out his MSc researches and presented a dissertation with the title “The morphological transformations of Baetican Dressel 20 oil amphorae” [“As transformações morfológicas das ânforas oleárias béticas do tipo Dressel 20”] at the Department of Anthropology at FFLCH-USP.

His reflections on this theme led him to publish a study that defined the status of the researches on amphorae:


As a good ceramologist, Funari was also concerned with finding the original classification of Roman vases in Latin vocabulary. Thus, he published the following two articles:

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From 1986 to 1990, Funari dedicated himself to the researches of his PhD thesis, as holder of a CAPES scholarship. He brilliantly presented his study “Baetican oil consumption standards in Roman Britain” [“Padrões de consumo do azeite bético na Bretanha Romana”] at the Department of Anthropology at FFLCH-USP. At that point, his concerns with the contents of amphorae and with economic life started to emerge in addition to his typological studies.

The following references are some significant articles based on the experience and reflections of Prof. Funari from his MSc and PhD trajectories:


With his keen erudition and scientific maturity, Prof. Funari presented his Free Professorship thesis in 1995 at the University of Campinas (UNICAMP) with the title “The Dressel 20 inscriptions from Britain and the consumption of Spanish oil, with a Catalogue of seals” [“As inscrições Dressel 20 provenientes da Bretanha e o consumo do azeite espanhol, com um Catálogo de selos”], in 2 volumes.

Before his Free Professorship thesis and soon after its presentation, Prof. Funari became a specialist in Latin epigraphy, particularly in amphoric epigraphy. Since then, his numerous contributions to this area have included the following highlights:


Even though some articles written by Prof. Funari’s did reach beyond the Brazilian frontiers, it was doubtlessly the publication of his Free Professorship thesis by a prestigious collection in the United Kingdom that deserves our best compliments:

- Dressel 20 inscriptions from Britain and the consumption of Spanish olive oil. Oxford: Tempus Reparatum – BAR 250, 1996, 137 p., maps, illustrations (Figure 1).
Largely focused on the epigraphy of Dressel 20 amphorae found in Britain and their economic consequences (the oil trade in this region during the Roman rule), this work also presented a chronology (of the 3rd century AD) and a matrix as comprehensive as possible of what can be inferred from the Dressel 20 amphoric epigraphy, based on painted and graphite inscriptions and seals (Figures 2 and 3).
Figura 2. Epigrafia da ânfora Dressel 20; Link: https://goo.gl/images/FYoLSr

Figura 3. Ânfora Dressel 20 e inscrições. Link: https://goo.gl/images/FYoLSr

α peso da ânfora vazia ou tara
β nome de uma pessoa que interferiu em seu transporte
γ peso líquido da ânfora
δ controle fiscal ou aduaneiro, com uma série de diferentes dados
ε número ou cifra desconhecida

We must also compliment Prof. Funari for his concern and effort to publish amphorae and amphoric inscriptions in museum collections, exemplified by the amphorae he published at the Assis Chateaubriand Art Museum of São Paulo (MASP), at the Verulamium Museum (St. Albans, United Kingdom) and the Archaeology and Ethnology Museum, in São Paulo (MAE-USP). It was not by a lack of interest on his part and of effort, on mine, that nine amphorae from the National Museum (at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) were left out of these publications.


Bearing this interest in mind, Prof. Funari went beyond Roman amphorae and Latin epigraphy to pursue the publication of three anepigraphic amphorae (two Greek-Italian, and one Greek), and five amphora handles with Greek stamps (four from Rhodes, and one from Cnidus):


Only in 2014 did Prof. Funari resume his work with this theme that was so dear to him for two decades, by publishing the article:


In this article, which affirms the central role of archaeology for the study
of ancient economy, Prof. Funari studied the case of Baetica and, among other material culture evidences, he highlighted the results that can be obtained via amphoric materials.

To conclude, I recall an excerpt of Socrates’ narrative on the *invention of writing* (274c-275d) in the work *Phaedrus* by Plato (428 - 347 B.C.): the inventor of writing – the Egyptian god *Thot* – affirmed that writing is meant to strengthen memory.

Thus, if for many of our colleagues – my own and Prof. Funari’s –, such a fruitful period for studies on ceramics has waned from individual memory, now there remain the writings of the initial researches and publications on classical ceramology in Brazil. In this regard, among the many students I have supervised in this academic discipline, Pedro Paulo Abreu Funari was an exemplary pioneer.

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