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Rough Cilicia Archaeological Survey Project: Analysis of Amphora Finds Season 2000 Summer

Elizabeth Lyding Will, University of Massachusetts Amherst

During a visit to the RCSP headquarters at Gazipaşa in September, 2000, I analyzed the Study Collection of amphora fragments amassed since 1996, as well as 49 bags of additional fragments, seven of them collected during the surveys of the year 2000. I also visited three areas that had been identified as the sites of possible kilns, at Biçkici, Syedra, and Antiocheia ad Cragum. In addition, I examined and photographed the amphoras on display in the museums at Alanya and Antalya.¹

The amphora fragments collected during the 1996-1999 seasons have been noted in the reports for those years. They have also been described by Nicholas Rauh and Kathleen Slane in the article, "Possible amphora kiln sites in W. Rough Cilicia."² About the 1996-1999 finds I have only a few observations of my own to add.

Previously identified forms in the Study Collection include several rims that originate from North Africa Tripolitanian 1/Will Type 23 (see figure 1) and African Grande/Panella Form II/Will Type 21b, or are imitations of the same (see figure 2).

1 This report was transformed from an html format into a PDF by Stanislav Pejša, the data curator at PURR. The article was lightly edited in order to accommodate the different presentation format. Typos and minor character encoding issues were corrected.

2 Rauh, N. K., and K. W. Slane. "Possible Amphora Kiln Sites in W Rough Cilicia." *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 13 (2000): 319–30. doi:10.1017/S1047759400018961. Further reference, 9/2002: see now N. K. Rauh and E. Lyding Will, "'My Blood of the Covenant': What Did the Apostles Drink at the Last Supper?" *Archaeology Odyssey* 5.5 (2002): 46-51, 62-63.

Figure 1: Tripolitanian and Tripolitanian imitation Amphora Rim from Site RC 9716 ("Church Site"); above right, from Govan Asari; below left, from Laertes and Antioch

Figures 2-3: Possible North African amphora with almond shaped rim from Nephelion; profile drawing of African Grande transport amphora

There are also several handles that appear to imitate Kapitän 2/Agora V, K-113 (see figures 4-5) and K-115 handles (see figures 6-8).

Figures 4-5: Intact Athenian Agora K-113 "Hollow Foot" amphora at Isthmia (courtesy T. Gregory); Possible Agora K-113 Amphora handle attachment (or imitation) from Antioch

Figures 6-7: Athenian Agora K-115 Large Aegean Amphora rim from Isthmia (courtesy T. Gregory); Athenian Agora K-115 Large Aegean Amphora rim from Site RC 9605 ("Site Five")

Figure 8: Athenian Agora K-115 Large Aegean Amphora rims from Isthmia (courtesy T. Gregory).

The Study Collection also contains several examples (variant) of Late Roman 1 / Caroline Williams Type B Late Roman Amphora (5-8 centuries AD) (see figures 9 and 10), as well as several examples of unidentified Late Roman amphora forms (4-8 AD) displaying combed, banded, or spiral grooved wall surfaces (see figures 11-13).

Figures 9-10: A variant of Late Roman 1 / Caroline Williams Amphora Type B in Alanya Museum (left); Late Roman 1 amphora sherds in the RCSP Study Collection (right)

Figures 11-13: A small Late Roman spiral grooved amphora from Nephelion (left); fragment of a Late Roman banded combed amphora from Site RC 9614 (near Selinus; middle); fragment of a Late Roman combed amphora from Antioch (right); all three are in the RCSP Study Collection

Finds imported into the area from other parts of the Roman world were few, and of varying dates, and they included a (Hellenistic) Rhodian handle with a possible monogram stamp (see figure 14) and two possible Rhodian toes (from "Cloud City" and Nephelion, respectively); a possible rim of Dressel Type 20/Will Type 20 and a possible handle from the same type of South Spanish olive oil jar, the former from Nephelion and the latter from Selinus (see figures 15-17); a handle from an Istrian olive oil jar of Dressel Type 6/Will Type 14 (1-2 AD), also from Laertes (see figures 18-19); two handles of olive oil jars of the so-called "Brindisi-type" (Will Type 11a or its later descendant, Will Type 11c/Dressel Type 25), one from Selinus and the other from Site RC 9715 (Sarnıç Tepe); and two probable handle fragments of Kapitän Type 2 (provenience and contents uncertain), one from Antiocheia and the other from 1998 Transect 6-1-A.

Figure 14: Stamped Rhodian amphora handle from Site RC 9712 ("Cloud City")

Figures 15-17: Rim of a Dressel 20/Will Type 20 amphora from Nephelion, imported from Spain; Handle of a Dressel 20/Will Type 20 amphora from Selinus; profile drawing of the Dressel 20 / Will Type 20 amphora

Figures 18-19: Italian Dressel 6/Will Type 14 amphora handle from Laertes; profile drawing of the Dressel 6 amphora

Other possibly imported finds, notably a double handle from 1998 Transect 10-3-B, probably stamped, Q.R.P., could be assigned proveniences if the surface accretions covering them were removed. The stamp, Q.R.P., seems to be unique. It is not in my alphabetical file of Latin amphora stamps, and the letters do not match any of the known *tria nomina* at Pompeii in Castrén's listing. More double handles with Latin stamps originated in Pompeii, though they are also known from Brindisi and from Kos itself (see figure 20).

Figure 20: Koan-type amphora handle from RC 9712 (“Cloud City”), in the RCSP Study Collection, that appears stamped with Latin stamp, together with similar Koan-type amphora handle from Tomak Asarı (RC 0019)

My examination of the finds from the year 2000 revealed a few additional imported amphora fragments: two double handles from Kos (see figures 21-22) and a piece of a Late Rhodian handle (see figures 23-24).

Figures 21-22: Koan type amphora handles from the RCSP 2000 survey

Figures 23-24: Late Rhodian handle from Govan Asari; Late Rhodian amphora at the Alanya Archaeological Museum

The scarcity of imports seems to me to be accounted for by the several kilns apparently producing export amphoras at the sites of Biçkici, Syedra, and Antiocheia ad Cragum and quite likely elsewhere. Areas engaged in exportation of amphoras and their contents generally bring in fewer imports. In the case of each of the kilns, I was struck by the variety of wares visible and the homogeneity of fabric (less so at Syedra), as well as by the presence of wasters. Rauh and Slane (2000) confirm my impression in their descriptions, though Slane did not know about two wasters found at Antiocheia in 2000. There seems to be no reason now to doubt that these were kiln sites. I did not visit Kestros, but in my examination of the finds from that site, I noted that they were all of the same fine, powdery pinkish buff clay, quite unlike the fine, hard pinkish buff clay of the objects from Biçkici and the very coarse clay of the fragments at Antiocheia. At Kestros, too, there could have been a kiln. Wave action along the coast probably accounts for the disappearance of the kilns, where they were located too close to the shore.

Each of the kiln sites studied seems to have produced a variety of ceramic objects, including amphoras imitative of well known shapes. Chief among those shapes are Koan amphoras, which were widely copied throughout the Mediterranean area. Kos exported most of its wine to India, and those who prized the wine for its medicinal and other qualities had to be content with imitation Koan wine from Italy, France, Spain, and other areas. At the kiln sites studied by the RCSP, there are many pseudo-Koan double handles made of local clays, and I noted two Tripolitanian rim fragments (Will Type 23) of local, or at least non-Tripolitanian, clay (see figure 25).

Figure 25: Imitation Tripolitanian rim fragment from Govan Asarı (RC 0040)

A unique, highly distinctive shape, however, dominates at all the sites. It is the “pinched-handle” type referred to by Rauh and Slane 2000 by its Zemer type 41 identification. The Romans identified the contents of shipping amphoras through shape, and the jar shape in question, with its unique “squeezed” handles and deeply ridged body was clearly an effort to distinguish this West Cilician shape emphatically from all others. What were the contents of this little amphora? Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* 14.81 (a book published in 77 AD), refers to the esteem in which Cilician raisin-wine (*passum Cilicium*) was held in his day, and the conclusion seems unavoidable that the pinched-handle amphoras, ubiquitous in Cilicia, were commercial shipping containers for that wine. The Flavian era was one in which surrealism flourished in literature, painting, architecture, and even in women’s hairstyles. We need not be surprised, then, by the unprecedented shape of this Cilician container, which was apparently manufactured up and down the West Cilician coast. A kiln for this type of jar at Anemurium, described by Caroline Williams (1989, p. 94), gives us an idea of the types of kilns that may have existed at Biçkici, Syedra, Kestros, and elsewhere in the area of the RCSP’s activities. Apparently there was only one kiln at Anemurium, as the clay of almost all the finds there was, with rare exceptions, of one type. Williams, in her very thorough study, also mentions the passage from Pliny the Elder as indicative of the contents of the Cilician amphoras, her Type A or Zemer 41.

Evidence from dated contexts at the Athenian Agora allows us to theorize about the history and chronology of these West Cilician amphoras. As Henry Robinson (1959) points out, three stages in the jar’s development are illustrated by Agora finds. His G 199, a fragment preserving neck, handles, and shoulder, and dating from the late 1st to early 2nd centuries A.D., has the clean lines and exhibits the precise workmanship

of fragments found at the Biçkici kiln site in Cilicia (see figure 26). We may assume that the Agora neck and the Biçkici fragments represent the earliest shape of this jar-type, at least four examples of which also occur at Pompeii, a chronological benchmark that agrees with the earliest Agora date and with the date of the passage cited from Pliny the Elder. The Pompeii examples are in two graded sizes. There are three examples of the larger size (CIL IV.6386-6388, 10392; Form XXVII), one of which bears a dipinto that could be interpreted as naming Cilicia in Greek letters (*KILIK*). The other jar is smaller (CIL IV.5964; Form XXVIII). Cf. Clementina Panella 1973 (*Ostia III*), pp. 474-476 and figs. 34 and 372, who reports many unbroken examples of the type in the Pompeii storerooms and refers to similar jars at Parenzo, Bengazi, and Bodrum, in addition to the fragment she is describing at Ostia. She proposes an Aegean origin for the type. A probable origin in North Africa was suggested by the Israeli scholar, Avshalom Zemer. In his *Storage Jars in Ancient Sea Trade* (1977), he illustrated (pp. 52-54, no. 41) a pinched-handle amphora found in the sea off Atlit. The type was often referred to thereafter as "Zemer 41." Other finds in Israel have been made at Caesarea, Hadera, Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Shiqmona. J. A. Riley (1979: 186), however, commenting on some fragments found at Berenice, Libya, disagreed with Zemer and ruled out a North African origin, on the basis of thin section analysis.

Figures 26-27: Athenian Agora type G 199 (pinched handled amphora) from Laertes (left); fragments of Athenian Agora type M 239 from Syedra Kiln Site (right)

A second stage in the type's development, Robinson (followed by Panella) suggests, is represented by his L 11, a ribbed, cylindrical belly fragment datable to the second half of the 3rd century. To a third stage he assigns his M 239, datable to the early 4th century, a whole jar with a ribbed cylindrical belly, wide neck, and handles that are

almost vestigial. Some of the fragments found by the RCSP group may belong to these later forms of the type.

Wider-bellied jars looking to be later developments of the early pieces in Rough Cilicia and at Pompeii and Ostia were reported from Cyprus by John Hayes in 1977. He dated the jars in the 2nd century A.D. and suggested a Cypriot origin for them. In 2000, John Lund, arguing from the frequency with which the later jars occur in Cyprus and from what he described as their non-micaceous clay, suggested that Cyprus was the manufacturing center for the type, the geographical distribution of which he detailed. He implied that the Cilician examples, which he described as having micaceous clay, were a branch of the Cypriot industry. Lund's hypothesis about clay-micaceousness results from his mistaken impression that published descriptions of amphoras regularly analyze the micaceousness of the clay; in fact, they do not, regrettably, so Lund's theory rests on a tenuous *argumentum ex silentio*. I might add that, after studying amphoras for almost fifty years, I have never seen amphora clay that was non-micaceous. Mica can always be found in the sunlight with a magnifying glass. Most amphora clay is finely micaceous to a greater or lesser degree. In those cases, the mica is visible in the sun with the naked eye. Very few amphoras have clay that is studded with mica particles, like Massaliote jars.

Widespread finds of Cilician amphoras in the Mediterranean area attest to the popularity of Cilician raisin-wine during several centuries. The industry could even have spread, as some suggest, to Cyprus, though no kilns have been found there. The proximity of Cyprus to Cilicia could explain the frequency of finds on the island, as Williams also notes. The type must have been developed in Cilicia, however, as an export container for the popular Cilician raisin-wine praised by Pliny. When exports of wine from Italy gradually eased during the early empire, Asia Minor and the Dorian Hexapolis, like Gaul and Mauretania Caesariensis in the western Mediterranean, stepped into the breach. They helped to satisfy market demands for wine not just with the exports from Rhodes, Kos, and Knidos, but also with the raisin-wine of Cilicia. [For further discussion of the Pinched handled amphora by E. L. Will, see Rauh and Will 2002.]

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