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Amphorae Production of the Ionic-Adriatic Region

Introductory Note

The Albanian and North Western Greek coast and the opposite Apulian area of Italy have been influenced by close cultural and economic contacts from the very beginning of Greek colonization or even before.[1] Taking into account these similarities we decided to subsume this region under the common name Ionic-Adriatic region.[2]

On the eastern side, this region comprises the Albanian coast from Epidamnos (?) via Apollonia to Buthrotos, actual Butrint, as well as the Epirote coast with the offshore island of Corfu.[3] Though recently a production of amphorae of the Corinthian B type was also assumed for the island of Hvar (ancient Pharos) in the surroundings of Split (Croatia), it is still unclear if we have to consider these finds as imports or as local products.[4]

On the Italian side, the definition of the region turned out to be more difficult and the suggestions made here have to be seen as preliminary only. Evidently the Apulian coast and the Salento area make up part of it though, at the moment, no amphora production centers of major importance are known to us. We also suggest including the gulf of Taranto, in particular the ancient territories of Taranto, Metaponto and probably Siris/Heracleia. Though the amphora production of all these sites is poorly known, there is some evidence at Metaponto that this site did not use the form Sourisseau's A-MGR 2. When publishing the necropolis of Metaponto (loc. Pantanello and Salone) the American team observed 51 transport amphorae, 38 of which belonged to the Corinthian types A, A' and B, the latter being strongly in the minority with only four specimens.[5] Most of the amphorae dated to the Late sixth and to the fifth centuries B.C.E. and therefore to a period when we would expect Western Greek amphorae of Sourisseaus type A-MGR 1 or A-MGR 2 like in the materials from Sybaris, Caulonia and Locri. These types evidently are completely missing at Metaponto. We therefore can conclude either that the type Corinthian A was the preferred import to Metaponto from Corinth and from centers of the Epirote coast or we also could assume a local production that used that type.[6] Doubtlessly further investigations have to be conducted on the topic.

Thus, the series of transport amphorae supposed to have been produced in the Ionic-Adriatic region show a puzzling variety both of fabrics and of form types. Their morphology mostly displays the clear impact of Corinth or its colonies like Corcyra, but, in particular in the Hellenistic period, we also find amphorae of the Graeco-Italic type that could have been produced there (see below). Whereas the production of amphorae of the so-called Corinthian B type has already been identified by V. R. Grace and C. Koehler,[7] the confirmation that also amphorae of the Corinthian A type were produced in this region is mainly a result of Roald Docter's studies of the amphorae of Butrint.[8] We have, however, to take into consideration that

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[1] See in general *Magna Grecia, Epiro e Macedonia*.

[2] For this terminus see also Gassner 2003, 111.

[3] For the geomorphological description of the coast see Fouache 2005.

[4] Katic 2005.

[5] Morter and Leonard 1998, 731–47.

[6] The amphorae were analyzed archaeometrically by H. Iceland, but the results, being far from clear due to the lack of comparable material, brought evidence that not all amphorae could come from Corinth.

[7] Grace 1953, 108–9; Koehler 1979, 33–49. See also Kourkoumelis-Rodostamos 1988; Kourkoumelis 1990; Preka-Alexandri 1992.

[8] For previous indications concerning the local production of Corinthian A type amphorae in the territory of Epidamnos see Mano 1971, 103–207; Ceka 1986, 71–98, resumé 88–9. If the 'imitations' published for Selinunt

there are many other sites for which the production of amphorae seems very probable as for example Phoinike, Ambrakia or the islands of Leukas and Zakynthos.[9]

At the present state of research the reasons why certain shapes were preferred at a particular site remain unclear as do their mutual relations. The difficulties of understanding the situation are increased by the fact that according to our experience the region in question shows raw materials with very similar characteristics so that in some cases it even may be difficult to distinguish nearby production sites by clay analyses alone.

Thus, the attribution of our samples to particular production centers still seems risky and we decided to restrain from detailed attributions and preferred the terminus "Ionic-Adriatic region" (ION-ADR-A-x) as an overall code, giving explanations and suggestions as to the possible sites of production only in this text. The following attributions seem possible:

ION-ADR-A-1 to 4: region of Corfu/Butrint (Central part of Epirus)
ION-ADR-A-5 to 6: Central (?) Albanian coast (North Western part of Epirus?)
ION-ADR-A-7 to 11: Southern Illyria (Apollonia) and/or Apulian coast?

The material available for the **FACEM** project comes from two important sites on the Albanian coast and is supplemented by finds from Velia, namely the so-called Corinthian B shapes.[10]

Most important for the definition of the amphora production in the south of the sampling area is the material from Butrint. As Butrint is very close to Corfu, the raw materials of both sites are supposed to be very similar. This is particularly important as Korkyra/Corfu is the only site of the region with a secured production of Greek amphorae.[11] The material from Butrint has therefore been taken as characteristic for the area Corfu/Butrint as neither raw materials nor finds from Corfu were available for samples. The samples come from the excavations at the acropolis of Butrint by the late A. Nanaj and C. Hadzis and have been studied for publication by Kees Neeft, Roald Docter and Babette Bechtold.[12]

Important for the Central Albanian region are amphorae from Apollonia, in particular a series of samples from the so-called amphorae wall in the south east of the "Apsidenstoa" east of the agora, excavated and studied by an Albanian-German team.[13]

For the Italian side, samples from the production region are completely missing at the moment. One specimen from the Butrint material could be attributed to this region because of the amphorae type (Brindisi amphora) and we tentatively compared our samples to fabrics of the Roman period published in the Amphora Project developed by the Archaeology group at the University of Southampton.

Amphorae from the Central Part of Epirus (region of Corfu/Butrint)

ION-ADR-A-1 The fabric consists of a light brown, very fine-grained matrix. Under the binocular microscope small inclusions of carbonate-pseudomorphoses and of mainly white to

and Kamarina in Sicily and for Amendolara in the territory of Sybaris are really local products, or imports from the region under discussion cannot be decided, see Albanese Procelli 1996, 95 note 12 and de la Genière 1980, 387–8, tomb 33, no.6.

[9] For Ambrakia, Leukos and Zakynthos the growing of wine is attested, see Athenaios I 33 and Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 14, 9. For Phoinike and its economic importance see now Gamberini and Vecchietti 2011.

[10] For Velia see Gassner 2003, 111–3, 119–20 and 183–6.

[11] Kourkoumelis 1988, 101–6; Kourkoumelis 1990, 42–7; Preka-Alexandri 1992, 41–52. The close resemblance was confirmed in a short study campaign by Roald Docter of local material found on Corfu, after having studied the Butrint material.

[12] Bouthrotos II. La Céramique, edited by K. Neeft and R. Docter. Unfortunately, the publication of this profound study is in delay until today. The amphorae were studied by Roald Docter, archaeometric analyses was conducted by Roman Sauer together with Verena Gassner. For the time being see Nanaj 1995, 149–73.

[13] The project is directed by Bashkim Lahi, Henner von Hesberg and Manuel Fiedler, see now Lahi and Fiedler 2010, 213–55.

grey quartz particles are visible. Using an amplification of at least 25 × we could also observe small dark particles.

The fabric was defined at Butrint where samples were taken from amphorae of the Corinthian A type and of the Corinthian B type of the fourth century B.C.E. (so-called "figure of 8 rim").[14] It also was identified on MGS I amphorae at Velia so that an attribution to the production of Corfu/Butrint seems evident. This hypothesis was corroborated by the observation of Roald Docter that this fabric is typical for common wares at Butrint and on Corfu so that the regional-local character of the fabric seems ascertained.

ION-ADR-A-2 This fabric shows the same characteristics as ION-ADR-A-1, but the color of the fine-grained matrix is white to greenish-yellow.[15] Small carbonate-pseudomorphoses and quartz particles are rarely visible, while small brown inclusions seem rather characteristic. According to the archaeometric analyses, the fabric ION-ADR-A-2 belongs to the same production as ION-ADR-A-1, but has been fired under higher temperatures.

At Butrint this fabric was identified both on early amphorae of the Corinthian A and B type. At Velia it is attested also on amphorae of the MGS I type of the early fifth century B.C.E.

ION-ADR-A-3 The characteristics of this fabric largely correspond with those of the previous fabrics. Distinctive, however, is the existence of coarser inclusions, mainly white and grey quartz. Its attribution to the region of Corfu/Butrint is attested by archaeometric analyses by Roman Sauer.

Fabric ION-ADR-A-3 can be identified exclusively with amphorae of the Corinthian B type at Butrint, beginning with the late archaic form with thickened rim (Gassner's rim 1), the MGS I type of the early fifth century B.C.E. and amphorae with rims of the figure 8 of the fourth century B.C.E.

ION-ADR-A-4 This fabric is characterized by its fine matrix, similar to ION-ADR-A-1, but shows very distinctive clay clasts together with tiny white particles. On the basis of the archaeometric analyses of Roman Sauer, a production in the region of Corfu and/or the opposite mainland seems very probable.

The fabric has been observed at Butrint on amphorae of the Corinthian A type and on amphorae with rims of the figure of 8.

Conclusions

For the region of Corfu/Butrint, four different fabrics could be distinguished. The most important of these are the fabrics ION-ADR-A-1 and 2, differing only in the kind of firing. Evidently they were used both for amphorae of the Corinthian A and B type from the Archaic period to the fourth century B.C.E., but at the moment we are not able to understand the factors that influenced the choice of the respective type. Amphorae of the Corinthian B type displaying these fabrics have been sampled at Velia and at Naples in contexts of the fifth century B.C.E.[16] At Velia also an amphora of the Corinthian A type is attested in a context of the late fifth century B.C.E.[17]

The fabric ION-ADR-A-3, however, seems to have been used exclusively for amphorae of the Corinthian B type at Butrint from the sixth to the fourth centuries B.C.E., while ION-ADR-A-

[14] At Butrint the fabric was named "Corfiote I", see also the use of the term by Bechtold 2008b, 30, tab. 2.A.4. Its local/regional origin was already noted by Nanaj 1995, 161–3; 171–2.

[15] At Butrint the fabric was named "Corfiote IV", see also the use of the term by Bechtold 2008b, 2, 30, tab. 2.A.4

[16] The samples from Naples (M 137/9-10) come from the recent excavations for the Metropolitana, Piazza N. Amore and were provided by E. Scopetta, Università di Studi, Salerno (Italy) with the permission of the Soprintendenza (D. Giampaolo).

[17] M 6/123; see Gassner et al. (in preparation).

4 occurred both on amphorae of the Corinthian A type and on amphorae with rims of the figure 8. The two latter fabrics are hitherto only attested in the production region.

The situation is complicated by the fact that a fabric nearly identical to ION-ADR-A-1 was observed on Graeco-Italic amphorae at Apollonia which have been dated to the middle of the third centuries B.C.E.[18] This might indicate that the type used for the production of amphorae in this region was still more fluid and from the Hellenistic period onwards changed to the then common Graeco-Italian type.

Amphorae from Not Localized Centers on the Central Albanian (?) Coast

ION-ADR-A-5 This fabric is characterized by a fine grained buff matrix that breaks cleanly. Some sparse carbonate inclusions are visible as well as rare red spots. The pores are mostly elongated and sometimes filled with carbonate as well.

From a macroscopical point of view, fabric ION-ADR-A-5 is very similar to the previous group, but the heavy mineral analyses of Sauer showed a higher degree of Epidot/Klinozoisit than in the fabrics ION-ADR-A-1 to 4. That may point to a provenance from central Albania, but at the moment we cannot prove this hypothesis as archaeological data are missing.

ION-ADR-A-6 The fabric displays the same characteristics as the other fabrics of the region. The matrix is buff and very fine grained. Tiny carbonate inclusions and equally small quartz inclusions are rarely visible. Distinctive are dark red particles of varying size.

Through both visual examination and mineralogical-petrographical analysis, this fabric could be distinguished from the fabrics of the Corfu-group. Roman Sauer grouped it together with the fabric ION-ADR-A-5 (his group D).

Conclusions

Fabric ION-ADR-A5 was used for amphorae of the Corinthian A type of the Archaic period, but also for amphorae of the fourth century B.C.E. with “figure of 8 rims” that normally are seen in the tradition of the so-called Corinthian B amphorae. Fabric ION-ADR-A-6 appeared until now only with amphorae of the Corinthian A type. As a consequence, the production of these fabrics must have taken place in a long-living center of the region that still has to be sought. It might be a different workshop on Corfu, but we could also imagine a local production at Butrint or sites like nearby Phoinike or Orikos.[19] At the present state of research, production in centers of the Northern Illyrian region like Pharos/Hvar also cannot be excluded where M. Katic has announced the production of amphorae of the MGS I type, dating to the fourth century B.C.E.[20]

Amphorae from Southern Illyria (Apollonia?) and/or the Apulian Coast

ION-ADR-A-7 Like the following fabrics, ION-ADR-A-7 is characterized by a mixed clay. This means that the matrix is composed of two different clay ingredients, one firing reddish or orange and one firing yellowish. Both clays were not mixed well and therefore are visible as different layers on the fresh break. As inclusion we observe carbonate particles and reddish larger inclusions.

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[18] M 93/11 and M 93/13. The samples were provided by B. Lahi, Tirana.

[19] For the pottery production in this region see now Gamberini and Vecchietti 2011.

[20] Katić 2005, 75–80.

The fabric had already been described by Roald Docter within the finds from Butrint, and was later identified at Apollonia where it is very frequent among the Graeco-Italic amphorae of the so-called amphora-wall, but it was also found with Hellenistic amphorae with triangular rim at Butrint. [21]

ION-ADR-A-8 The fabric is very similar to ION-ADR-A-7, but the color is more violet, the large inclusions being dark brown to dark grey.

The fabric was identified both at Apollonia and at Butrint with Graeco-Italic amphorae.

ION-ADR-A-9 The fabric shows the same laminated matrix as the previous fabrics of this group, but is finer grained and of yellowish color. The dark brown to dark grey inclusions resemble fabric ION-ADR-A-8.

The sample comes from a Graeco-Italic amphorae (MGS V/VI) from Apollonia.

ION-ADR-A-10 The fabric is correlated to the previous ones by the laminated matrix of rather dark color which is riddled with carbonate-pseudomorphoses. Well visible are also dark inclusions.

The fabric stems from a Graeco-italic amphora (MGS V/VI) from Apollonia.

Conclusions:

The mixing of clay to improve the quality of the clay is a well known phenomenon in pottery production. Nevertheless, the appearance of ION-ADR-A-7 to ION-ADR-A-10 is rather peculiar, all fabrics being characterized by a fine matrix with well visible carbonate-pseudomorphoses and dark to red or violet inclusions. Their provenance from a single production region therefore seems to be most likely. Due to the lack of material for closer comparison the archaeometric analyses of Roman Sauer resulted only in a general attribution of the fabric to the Adriatic region.

Most of the amphorae these fabrics have been identified on, stem from Apollonia from the so-called “amphorae wall” east of the “Apsidenstoa” in the central part of the town, dating shortly after the middle of the third century B.C.E.[22] The excavators favored the hypothesis that the Graeco-Italic samples of the types MGS IV to V (and VI?) displaying the fabrics in discussion were produced on a not yet identified site of the Apulian coast, suggesting the area of Brindisi or Lecce as possible production centers as amphora production is well attested here.[23]

The Apulian coast became more important, and archaeologically better known, for the production of amphora in the Late Republican period from the second century B.C.E. onwards. In general, two types are attributed to the Adriatic coast: the so-called Brindisi type and the type Lamboglia 2, both having been produced from the late second to the first century B.C.E.. As discussed under ION-ADR-A-11, the only fabric at our disposal to be linked with the amphorae production of Brindisi displays rather different characteristics so that a correlation is evidently not possible.

With regard to the unclear situation in the Adriatic region another hypothesis should not be omitted. In 2007, the present author was at Apollonia during the Albanian-German excavations and in one of the trenches was able to observe a natural situation where a very light-colored, nearly white material was naturally mixed with darker clay. This led to the idea that the fabrics in discussion could be typical for the local amphora production of Apollonia, an opinion not shared by the excavators who also thought that the amphorae from the so-called

[21] Butrint: M 79/55; for Apollonia see note 13.

[22] See Lahi and Fiedler 2010 with bibliography. The amphorae are presented p. 232–7, the chronology is discussed p. 237–42.

[23] Lahi and Fiedler 2010, 232, note 40. On the opinion of the present author the equally assumed imports from Campania can be excluded securely.

amphorae wall were imported, as they were reused.[24] We know a similar situation from Marseille (site Bourse) where amphorae were used for filling up a swampy area of the shore. Also in this case, the majority of the amphorae are local.[25] Anyway, for an important colony like Apollonia, the production of amphorae seems rather likely even if we cannot yet identify it with a sufficient degree of certainty.

Amphorae from Apulia and the Gulf of Taranto

ION-ADR-A-11 is characterized by a brown, rather fine matrix. Particles of grey and white quartz are rather large and poorly sorted; they appear together with small brown particles. Contrarily to the previous fabrics no microfossils have been observed.

The fabric has been identified on an amphora of the Brindisi-type at Butrint, so that a provenance from the region of Brindisi could be assumed. This rather weak hypothesis, based only on a single sample, could be strengthened when comparing the fabric to the photo of the fabric of an amphorae of the same type, produced on the Apani site north of Brindisi, published in the Southhampton amphora data base by Jill Phillips.[26]

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[24] See Lahi and Fiedler 2010; Lahi 2009.

[25] Bertuccchi 2001, 77–90: the context probably belongs to the fourth century B.C.E., the amphorae being of the Massaliote type 4.

[26] "Roman Amphorae: A Digital Resource, University of Southampton, 2005" s.v. Brindisi amphorae – specimen (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/resources.html?amphora2005).

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