

VERENA GASSNER

## Fabrics of the North Aegean Area

### Introductory Note

Traditionally, the North Aegean area comprises the region between the Axios River in the west (near Thessaloniki), the peninsula of the Chalkidike, and the island of Thasos. To the east, the production centers of Maroneia and Abdera in Thracia have been included. In regard to the amphora production, this area is unified by a common morphological language that has been called "circle of Thasos" or, in recent times, subsumed under the terminus of North Aegean amphorae.<sup>1</sup> We have to bear in mind, however, that at least Maroneia and Abdera are of East Aegean origin, Maroneia being a colony of Chios, Abdera having been founded first by Clazomenae and later by Teos. They might therefore use another repertory of types, maybe to be connected with the so-called Zeest's Samian and Proto-Thasian amphorae.<sup>2</sup> Recently, M. Lawall extended the extension of this production region still further south, including the Aeolis and Lesbos,<sup>3</sup> giving an overview of the wide and hitherto rather unknown morphological spectrum of amphorae produced in this region. Whether or not this new definition will turn out to be useful has yet to be proven.<sup>4</sup>

Samples from the area of the Northern Aegean have only been available from imported amphorae at Velia.<sup>5</sup> The spectrum of possible fabrics is therefore mostly incomplete. The identification of the fabric as North Aegean relies mostly on the morphological type of the amphorae. Additional archaeometric analyses by R. Sauer do confirm the general identification, but, due to the lack of comparative materials from the production centers, cannot further specify the site of production.

### Fabric Description

**N-AEG-A-1** The fabric shows a brown, granulose matrix which is riddled by small yellow-white carbonate particles, often pseudomorphoses. To a minor degree we can observe small colorless quartz particles.

The fabric has been attributed to the North Aegean area because of the morphological type of the sample that is normally attributed to the production of Mende.<sup>6</sup> The petrographical-mineralogical analysis does not contradict this identification.

**N-AEG-A-2** Fabric N-AEG-A-2 corresponds to N-AEG -A-2 in the color and composition of the matrix as well as in the existence of numerous carbonate-pseudomorphoses but can be distinguished from it by rather large, reddish grey inclusions which appear together with quartz particles.

The representative sample comes from an amphora which can only be attributed to the North Aegean region in a very general way.<sup>7</sup> The different nature of inclusions makes it evident that N-AEG-A-2 belongs to a different production center that has not yet been identified.

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<sup>1</sup> For the amphora production in this region see in general Dupont 1998, 186–90. Additionally also Whitbread 1995, 165–216; Lawall 1995, 116–75; Garlan 1999; Lawall 2002. For North Aegean amphorae in the West see Spagnolo 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Dupont 1998, 178–86.

<sup>3</sup> Lawall 2002, 200–2.

<sup>4</sup> Lawall 2002 indicates a great range of varying fabrics without, however, giving images of them. Therefore it is not possible to correlate these fabrics to those presented in Facem.

<sup>5</sup> Gassner 2003, 120–21.

<sup>6</sup> See Gassner 2003, IIa.228, pl. 26 with bibliography.

**N-AEG-A-3** The fabric resembles N-AEG-A-2 in the general characteristics, but the carbonate-pseudomorphoses are much more frequent, riddling the matrix. Also the dark grey inclusions seemingly appear more often.

The fabric has been identified in an amphora with thickened rim<sup>8</sup> that could correspond to the difficult type of Zeest's Samian and Proto-Thasian amphorae. The archaeometric analysis of R. Sauer evidenced that N-AEG-A-3 should be attributed to the North Aegean region rather than to the area of the Ionian cities, so that a provenance from the area of Abdera or Maroneia (but maybe also from the Aeolis) could be assumed, but not ascertained. The identification therefore has to be judged as very preliminary.

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<sup>7</sup> Gassner 2003, IIa.229, pl. 26 with bibliography and the discussion of similarities with the amphorae of Akanthos (Rhomiopoulou 1986, 480, fig. 1–2). Comparable are also fragments from Gela that are classified as "anfore con piede ad anello" by Spagnolo 2004, nos. 3, 4 pl. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Gassner 2003, IIb.88.