

SOME PONTIC FLAVOUR ON THE LYCIAN TABLE. PONTIC AMPHORAE IN LIMYRA*

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Cuvinte-cheie: *Limyra, Licia antică, amfore romane, amfore pontice romane târzii, Sinope, comerț.*

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Rezumat: *Orașul antic Limyra a fost un centru urban bine dezvoltat de la perioada Clasică la cea Bizantină. Vestigiile sale se păstrează la circa cinci kilometri nord-est de orașul modern Finike, la poalele masivului Toçak Dağı în sud-estul fostei provincii antice Licia, astăzi pe coasta de sud a Turciei. Fragmentele ceramice, cu precădere cele de amfore, descoperite în sapăturile recent desfășurate (2011-2012 și 2016-2019) au permis o mai bună cunoaștere a legăturilor comerciale de lungă distanță cu Limyra. Dacă în perioada secolelor IV-VII amforele proveneau în marea lor majoritate din estul Mediteranei, o cantitate mai mică, dar notabilă, își avea originile în zona Pontică, în mare parte produse în sau lângă Sinope cel mai probabil. Acest articol are ca scop (1) prezentarea dovezilor principale care atestă prezența amforelor Pontice în Limyra din punctul de vedere al pasteii și a tipologiei, precum și (2) să aducă în discuție importanța amforelor Pontice în perioada secolelor IV-VII adoptând o perspectivă mai largă, est-mediteraneană.*

Abstract: *The ancient city of Limyra was a well-developed urban centre from Classical to Byzantine times. Its remains are located some five kilometres north-east of the*

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modern town of Finike, at the foot of the Toçak Dağı massif, in south-east Lycia, an ancient region on modern Turkey's southern coast. Pottery, and amphorae in particular, from recent excavations (2016-2019) as well as excavations carried out in 2011-2012, provide us with new insights into Limyra's long-distance exchange connections. While during the fourth to seventh centuries¹ amphorae predominantly originated from Eastern Mediterranean sources, a small but notable quantity came from the Pontic area, most of which were presumably manufactured in or near Sinope. This article wishes to (1) present the basic evidence for Pontic amphorae in Limyra in terms of fabric and typology, and (2) by taking a broader, Eastern Mediterranean perspective, to throw some light on the significance of Pontic amphorae during the fourth to seventh centuries.

INTRODUCTION

The ancient city of Limyra is located in Lycia, a region in southern Asia Minor, modern day Turkey, some five kilometres north-east of the modern coastal town of Finike at the foot of the Toçak Dağı massif. The city was a well-developed urban centre from the Classical until the Middle Byzantine period (**Fig. 1**).

With the exception of some pottery and flint fragments that can be dated to the prehistoric era, the earliest finds belong to the seventh century BC, with the settlement thought to have been established some time in the sixth century BC. The first prosperous period in Limyra started in the late fifth – early fourth century BC², after Pericles had conquered Xanthos and extended his power towards the north and the west. Under his rule, an extensive building program was initiated at Limyra, which included massive defence walls encompassing approximately 25 ha and a fortification on the peak of the acropolis hill³. The monumental heroon of the dynasty was also built at this time⁴, and five necropoleis laid out during the same period comprise more than 400 tombs⁵.

During the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the area of the Classical city was extended to the south⁶ where private and public buildings were erected; such as, the Ptolemaion⁷, the theatre⁸, the public baths⁹, colonnaded streets¹⁰, bridges¹¹, the Cenotaph of Gaius Caesar¹², the Northern and the Southern Baths (the latter also known as the Bishop's palace)¹³. Under the reign of Commodus, Limyra received the title of *metropolis* marking its importance amongst the Lycian urban centres¹⁴.

¹ All dates are AD and ca. unless indicated otherwise.

² MARKSTEINER 1997.

³ BORCHHARDT 1990; MARKSTEINER 1997; SEYER 2019, p. 377; SEYER & QUATEMBER 2020, p. 365.

⁴ BORCHHARDT 1976.

⁵ BORCHHARDT & PEKRIDOU-GORECKI 2012; KUBAN 2012.

⁶ SEYER 2019, p. 378-379; SEYER & QUATEMBER 2020, p. 368.

⁷ STANZL 2012; STANZL 2017.

⁸ DINSTL & KNOBLAUCH 1993.

⁹ GANZERT 1996; SEWING 2015.

¹⁰ PÜLZ & RUGGENDORFER 2004.

¹¹ SEYER & QUATEMBER 2020, p. 375.

¹² GANZERT 1984; BORCHHARDT 2002.

¹³ GANZERT 1996; SEWING 2015.

¹⁴ BORCHHARDT 1993, p. 99.

From the fourth to the ninth centuries, the city was an Episcopal See subordinate to the Metropolitan of Myra¹⁵. Major urban changes occurred in the late fifth – early sixth century when the city was divided into two parts (East and West), each being surrounded by its own wall circuit¹⁶. Few details are known about the urban development and everyday life of the citizens during this period, despite several Early Byzantine¹⁷ public buildings having been uncovered: three Christian basilicas – one of which is interpreted as the Bishop’s Church¹⁸, and one possible synagogue¹⁹. Some of the public buildings constructed in Hellenistic or Roman times maintained their function for longer periods, while others were repurposed, abandoned or dismantled (Fig. 2).

BYZANTINE LIMYRA

During the Byzantine era, urban life in Limyra was very dynamic, especially in the Early Byzantine period when significant investments took place, changing (in some cases drastically) the city fabric. As mentioned above, the city walls were restructured creating two fortified areas. Despite large-scale spoliation, some earlier monuments were preserved and repurposed so they would fit in with the change in the urban perspective that unavoidably touched all of the formerly “classical” cities in the Eastern Mediterranean. Nonetheless, earlier monuments were also systematically dismantled in order to reuse material for new constructions.

From an urban point of view, Limyra was a characteristic Byzantine centre. It invested abundantly in its appearance in the Early Byzantine period; however, pragmatism remained a major element of the city’s development, easily observed through the intense reuse and recycling of various materials. The latest archaeological and geophysical investigations suggest that the East City (5.2 ha) represented the administrative and religious centre with colonnades and porticoes flanking the streets, while the West City (2.7 ha) was a busy, agglomerated place where the houses and the *tavernae* had most probably less impressive appearances and dimensions.

The Middle Byzantine period was more penurious in leaving traces of monumental public buildings, but compensated with huge financial and labour efforts to massively re-fortify the walls of the West City (which was much easier to defend/protect than the East City as this was double the size). In the Early Byzantine period, the two parts of the city had been connected via a wall that started from the podium of the Ptolemaion and ran eastwards towards the East

¹⁵ DARROUZÈS 1981, p. 76-77; JAKOBKE 1993, p. 111; HELLENKEMPER & HILD 2004, p. 686-687; PÜLZ 2014, p. 162.

¹⁶ JAKOBKE 1993, p. 112; SEYER 2013, p. 58; RANTITSCH *et al.* 2016, p. 204-205.

¹⁷ Early Byzantine spans the mid-fourth to the early/mid-seventh century, while Middle Byzantine is used for the early/mid-seventh to the eleventh century. For a better understanding of the chronological framework, see DOLEA, BES & SCHWARCZ 2020, p. 222.

¹⁸ PESCHLOW 1984; JAKOBKE 1993, p. 112-113; PESCHLOW 1997.

¹⁹ SEYER & LOTZ 2014; WEISS 2014. The date for the construction of the presumed synagogue is unclear for now and it is very probable that the initial building has been erected in the Roman imperial period and the synagogue itself might have occupied the area and functioned between the fifth and the seventh centuries.

City's fortification wall. In the Middle Byzantine period, this connecting wall and the north-western defensive wall of the East City were dismantled; the area was filled and levelled in order to create an open, and thus more easily defensible space between the two cities²⁰. The urban perspective had thus changed again; its citizens now understood that the West City was the place for shelter in times of military threat, yet it remained continuously inhabited. Archaeological evidence for primary and secondary iron production, together with a variety of Byzantine weaponry uncovered across the newly re-fortified area (in the western part) of the West City, point to major threats to the settlement, indicating that this might have been the last resort of refuge. The East City gradually lost its grandeur and most probably remained inhabited mainly in times of peace. The new focus of the city required various building materials, resulting among others in the massive production of lime for mortar, which also meant a systematic program of dismantling older buildings as an answer to new external threats.

RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

Between 2011 and 2019 several excavation campaigns in both the East and West City of Limyra brought to light constructions, contexts, and finds of high interest, especially for the Byzantine era. We will present here a general overview and the main results of these investigations, focusing on certain contexts that are relevant for the subject of this contribution, namely the presence of Pontic amphorae in Limyra during the fourth to the seventh centuries.

During the 2011-2012 seasons, the East Gate of the Byzantine East City of Limyra was excavated²¹. Besides the gate, also the street and the water system running through it were partly exposed on both sides of the gate. This East Gate underwent significant transformations during the Byzantine period following its construction at the end of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century, and it was still functioning between the late eight and late tenth century²² (**Fig. 3**).

The excavations in the West City of Limyra revealed a series of highly interesting features dated to the Byzantine period. The excavations performed in 2011 and 2012 focused on the West Gate of the Byzantine fortification wall²³, while those between 2016 and 2019 continued towards the inner city in order to get an overview on the urban development of the area between Hellenistic and Byzantine times. Altogether, these excavations revealed, among others, that the Byzantine West Gate and its street had at least two phases of construction (both the gate and the street were narrowed in the seventh or eighth century). Furthermore, numerous Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine constructions that were affected by later interventions were uncovered, including a massive Byzantine lime kiln set on top of two earlier paved areas and an Early Byzantine tavern that stopped functioning probably when the lime kiln was installed (**Fig. 4**).

The tavern functioned between the second half of the fifth until the first half of the seventh century at the latest. Its interpretation as a tavern or a public

²⁰ MARKSTEINER 2012, p. 208.

²¹ SEYER & LOTZ 2012; SEYER & LOTZ 2013.

²² RANTITSCH *et al.* 2016, p. 206-207; BES 2020a, p. 380-381.

²³ SEYER & SCHUH 2012; SEYER & SCHUH 2013.

eating-house rests on the variety of animal bones, which show patterns of selection and skilled butchery techniques. Pottery (including fragments of several later variants of Late Roman Amphora 4 from the Gaza-Negev region, which carried wine of some reputation)²⁴, coins and glass support this interpretation²⁵.

The installation of the lime kiln in this area led to a series of changes in its immediate vicinity and possibly beyond. The stratigraphical relations between the kiln and the surrounding structures towards the north and east suggest the kiln started functioning towards the end of the use of the tavern. The preliminary chronological indication for the abandonment of this building dates to the first half of the seventh century. It is highly probable that stone construction materials from nearby buildings were taken and reintegrated in the kiln and, at the same time, the wooden elements were used as fuel for the kiln. Immediately west to the kiln at least four large sized pits were documented that were very rich in medium and large size stones as well as fragments of architectural elements and inscriptions. Two pits contained large depositions of semi-processed stones ready for reuse and/or recycling in the nearby kiln, and two other pits contained soil mixed with charcoal and ash²⁶. Further fragments of inscriptions and architectural elements were found in the area of the lime kiln during the 2018 and 2019 campaigns. They belong to various periods and should be connected with the need for reusing and recycling materials during the Byzantine period²⁷.

The rich and abundant material culture from the 2011-2012 as well as 2016 and 2018-2019 excavations forms an essential contribution to the understanding of the diachronic functioning of the excavated areas. The pottery finds are certainly important for dating purposes, and also help to throw light on the sources from where the ceramics and, in the case of amphorae, some of its food requirements were procured. One case study illustrates this latter point: the presence of fourth- to seventh-century amphorae from the Pontic area.

A SUMMARY OF FIFTH- TO SEVENTH-CENTURY POTTERY IN LIMYRA

Pottery datable from the fifth to the early/mid-seventh centuries forms an important component of the ceramic evidence that has been excavated over the years across ancient Limyra. More specifically, it makes up a large share of the pottery that was brought to light in the course of stratigraphic excavations at the West and East Gate in 2011 and 2012²⁸. Large quantities were also unearthed during the most recent stratigraphic excavations, in 2016, 2018 and 2019, in the areas named Polis West and West Gate (cf. *supra*). This pottery reflects a phase of intensive urban occupation and activities in Limyra, particularly regarding the Western City for which we are currently best informed. Not only is this pottery an

²⁴ BES 2020b, p. 234-235, table 1, locus 1052.

²⁵ FORSTENPOINTNER 2020, p. 238-241.

²⁶ DOLEA 2020, p. 228, fig. 10.

²⁷ There are several indications for considering this area of the West City as one where not only material reuse and recycling intensely occurred, but also where artisanal activities (primary and secondary iron production) took place. SCHWARCZ 2020, p. 235-237.

²⁸ BES 2020a.

important dating tool to better understand diachronic developments, it also helps to document Limyra's regional and interregional ceramic exchange profile.

For their requirements of kitchen and utilitarian wares during these centuries, citizens of Limyra relied strongly on regional workshops, as they had done during the previous two to three centuries, certainly for cooking and related vessels. These "lyciennes kaolinitiques", in which a variety of cooking and related vessel shapes were manufactured, on average make up about 95% by sherd count of the pottery that is classified as being for food preparation. This remarkably high percentage supports the hypothesis, which is in part also based on archaeometrical analyses²⁹, for a source in the (immediate) vicinity of Limyra. Moreover, vessels in "lyciennes kaolinitiques" travelled to areas such as Cyprus and even as far away as Spain, among others³⁰. Second, the recently characterised 'Fabric 2' presumably originates from somewhere in south-east Lycia³¹, and makes up a significant share of utilitarian vessels that include large one-handled jugs, bowls, mortaria and it appears also amphorae or amphora-like vessels (cf. *infra*). This picture is complemented by various categories of tablewares, mostly Late Roman D-style vessels, a portion of which conforms very well to Hayes' Cypriot Red Slip Ware, whereas other such vessels were presumably manufactured in regional – i.e. Lycian and/or Pamphylian – workshops³². Represented by smaller quantities we nevertheless recognise imports from western Turkey (Late Roman C) and Tunisia (African Red Slip Ware), and occasionally from Sagalassos (Sagalassos Red Slip Ware) and Egypt (Egyptian Red Slip Wares)³³.

Amphorae, however, were all imported. Even if we are currently not yet well informed about patterns prior to the fifth century, at least one fourth century locus from the 2018 excavations contains vessel fragments in the regional Fabric 2 that likely belonged to vessels for transport, albeit perhaps for intraregional use³⁴; fragments in Fabric 2 that belonged to amphorae have thus far not been recognised in loci that postdate the fourth century, except for the sporadic residual piece. Amphorae predominantly originated from production sites and areas in the Eastern Mediterranean, especially the southern Levant and Cilicia and/or Cyprus, areas that are well represented by Late Roman Amphora 1, 4 and 5 in particular, and which all occur in several variants³⁵. Other southern Levantine amphorae such as Agora M 334 and Late Roman Amphora 6 also occur but with less frequency – while the latter indeed belongs to the family of bag-shaped

²⁹ LEMAÎTRE *et al.* 2013, p. 193-200, figs 4-10.

³⁰ Paphos: HAYES 2003, p. 511-512, fig. 35.376; northwest Spain: FERNÁNDEZ 2014, p. 363-365, fig. 188 (with further references). We warmly thank Paul Reynolds for bringing the latter to our attention.

³¹ BES 2020a, p. 384-385, 401, figs 11-12.

³² For a recent important contribution to the debate on Late Roman D and tableware manufacture in southern Asia Minor, see ÖZDEN GERÇEKER 2020.

³³ BES 2020b, p. 233, fig. 14.

³⁴ BES 2020b, p. 233-235, fig. 15, table 1. Such a rim has been identified at Paphos on Cyprus, see HAYES 2003, p. 477-478, fig. 17.169, where it is considered a probable import.

³⁵ BES 2020a, p. 386, 403, table 1; BES 2020b, p. 234-235, table 1.

amphorae traditional to the southern Levant it is a distinctly different product in terms of fabric, appearance and provenance. We can further mention a variety of Aegean (e.g. Late Roman Amphora 3, Agora M 273/Samos Cistern Type family), Egyptian as well as Western Mediterranean (from Tunisia, for example) types. Of particular interest for this contribution are small quantities of Pontic amphorae that are attested in a number of fourth- to seventh-century loci. Limyra is one of a number of sites where these have been identified, yet since their identification and publication is a rather recent phenomenon this merits detailed attention. One specific reason for doing so is that various clues strongly suggest that Pontic amphorae – particularly those that were manufactured in Sinope and environs – seem to have played a rather significant role in Eastern Mediterranean exchange particularly during the sixth and early seventh centuries.

EVIDENCE FOR FOURTH- TO SEVENTH-CENTURY PONTIC AMPHORAE IN LIMYRA³⁶

Fragments of Pontic amphorae – including fragments that are thought to be Pontic – are regularly recognised yet do not occur in each excavated context. Generally, the matrix of these Pontic amphora fragments is relatively fine grained with colours encompassing orange, red and brown hues, though the occasional fragment is light-coloured. Certain light-coloured fragments, however, are characteristic for a specific type-group (cf. *infra*). Fragments are generally hard-fired and have a surface feel that is perhaps best described as finely sandy and dry. Figure 5 shows microscope photographs of ten fragments of an equal number of Pontic amphorae, most of which were identified in contexts that were excavated at and around the West Gate in 2011-2012. What most of these fragments have in common in terms of macroscopic appearance and inclusions³⁷, and which is one of several distinguishing features, is the presence of varying albeit usually small quantities of shiny black volcanic inclusions – of varying size – that are scattered throughout the matrix (in a single vessel their quantity may vary from one part to the next). These pyroxenes can sparkle when a fragment is held in direct sunlight (e.g. **Fig. 5e, h**). These pyroxenes are usually accompanied by small quantities of reddish/brownish grits (ferruginous?), few crumbly lime-based grits, light greyish angular and subrounded translucent bits, and the occasional olive-green glassy inclusion (quite possibly olivine; see **Fig. 5h**). Some fragments are distinguished by having fewer and mostly very small inclusions yet many tiny rounded and linear pores (e.g. **Fig. 5a, f**). With several of these latter fragments lime has formed around the edges of some pores, which when seen with the naked eye can appear as tiny pale (yellowish) flecks (**Fig. 5c**). Fragments with yet another macroscopic appearance partly resemble the majority in terms of inclusions, yet have a wavy-layered matrix, which was possibly caused by mixing different raw clay materials (see **Fig. 5j**).

Figure 6 illustrates profile drawings of a selection of fragments that share the most common macroscopic characteristics as described above. The restored top on

³⁶ Discussed more fully in BES in press.

³⁷ KASSAB TEZGÖR 2020, p. 15-16.

the left concerns a so-called carrot amphora, which leaves very little doubt about a Pontic provenance. This fragment in particular can be classified as Kassab Tezgör type-variant C Snp III-1b (**Fig. 7**)³⁸. Based on fabric and typological characteristics a number of other fragments can almost certainly be classified similarly, including the complete lower half of a type C Snp III (**Fig. 8**), possibly type-variant 1. Whilst other fragments do not permit a reliable typological identification, mostly because of the size and kind of fragment (e.g. a small body sherd), we nevertheless presume that also these fragments mostly belong to type C Snp III, even if we cannot exclude the possibility of, for example, types C Snp I or C Snp II for some fragments (see for instance **Fig. 6f**, presumably type C Snp II)³⁹.

The relative homogeneity of macroscopic fabric and typological features strongly suggests that the majority of these vessels was in fact manufactured in Sinope and environs, where kilns, remains of workshops and vessel wasters have been excavated⁴⁰. Even if this claim can only be securely confirmed by means of archaeometrical analyses, these indications are nevertheless considered sufficient to presume that Sinopean amphorae played a role of some significance in Pontic-Eastern Mediterranean exchange during (parts of) the fourth and fifth centuries, the timeframe to which these carrot amphorae are dated⁴¹. Fragments of such amphorae were also found in the most recent excavations and presumably again mostly belong to type C Snp III or otherwise closely related types (**Fig. 9**).

Despite the prevalent role that Sinope played in the manufacture and distribution of (carrot) amphorae during the fourth and fifth centuries, it certainly was not the only one. One place of manufacture other than Sinope is represented by the restored top of a carrot amphora (**Fig. 10**), whose macroscopic fabric and morphological details suggest it was manufactured in Herakleia Pontike (modern Ereğli in northwest Turkey) or in its vicinity, at Alaplı⁴².

The predominance in the production and circulation of Sinopean amphorae nonetheless continued after the fifth century. This can be illustrated by five fragments in so-called “pâte claire” that can be attributed to Kassab Tezgör type-group D Snp I-III, which are dated to the late fifth to early/first half of the seventh century (**Fig. 11**)⁴³. These fragments were found in two contexts that were excavated in 2012 at the East Gate, and which both belong to the same stratigraphic unit that is dated to 550-600/625. These fragments contain the same range of inclusions as seen in most fragments of carrot amphorae that are mentioned above and that are attributed to type C Snp III or (a) similar type(s).

³⁸ KASSAB TEZGÖR 2009, p. 130, 139, table 1, plates 17:4 and 19:4; KASSAB TEZGÖR 2020, p. 25-26.

³⁹ KASSAB TEZGÖR 2020, p. 24-25.

⁴⁰ KASSAB TEZGÖR 2009; KASSAB TEZGÖR 2020, p. 15-16.

⁴¹ KASSAB TEZGÖR 2020, p. 27-28, although opinions differ regarding the dating of certain type-variants (27).

⁴² OPAIŦ 2010, p. 389, 391-393, 396-398, figs 8, 9.5-6; KASSAB TEZGÖR 2020, p. 44-45 (who does not formally discuss carrot amphorae in relation to Herakleia Pontike).

⁴³ KASSAB TEZGÖR 2009, p. 134-137; KASSAB TEZGÖR 2020, p. 34-38.

Other than the majority of the carrot amphorae, however, these amphorae in “pâte claire” are, as the name implies, light-coloured: very light grey, sometimes with a greenish and/or yellowish tinge (**Fig. 12**), although very small numbers of amphorae of type-group D Snp I-III do occur in oxidising hues (e.g. orange, light red).

The quantitative role of Pontic/Sinopean amphorae of type-groups C Snp (II-)III and D Snp I-III in Limyra is not yet entirely clear. Recent evidence suggests these were relatively significant in a locus that presumably dates to the second half of the fourth and early fifth century. The quantification of the pottery from locus 1025 (2018, West Gate excavations) by means of Minimum Number of Vessels (MNI) indicates that Pontic amphorae make up ca. 12% of the amphorae found in that locus. At the same time, however, Pontic amphorae are absent from the sixth-century locus 1052 (2018, Polis West excavations)⁴⁴, yet five fragments are present in two contexts from the East Gate excavations (cf. *supra*). Clearly, this prevents us from generalising these context-specific quantifications for Limyra as a whole. Presumably, their presence, use and deposition in Limyra was location-specific, e.g. it differed from one quarter to the next, or reflects variable tastes or preferences⁴⁵. Pontic amphorae, mostly Sinopean, nonetheless played a role of some significance in fourth- to early seventh-century Limyra, which points to some degree of exchange between Limyra and the Black Sea, and in fact the Eastern Mediterranean more generally.

A BROADER CONTEXT

The combination of an ongoing literature survey and the study of Pontic amphorae at various excavation and survey projects in Greece, Turkey and Israel allows to begin building a picture of the distribution of presumably mostly Sinopean amphorae in the Eastern Mediterranean during the fourth to early seventh centuries.

Figure 13 illustrates sites and surveys where specimens of the fourth- and fifth-century types C Snp II and above all C Snp III have been identified thus far. Unfortunately, we have hardly any quantitative evidence besides that from Limyra (cf. *supra*), which cannot be taken as a guiding principle. More quantified data would certainly help us to understand more precisely the quantitative role these amphorae played in Eastern Mediterranean exchange during these two centuries. What can be observed, however, is that their distribution is largely confined to coastal or near-coastal sites.

The distribution of amphorae of type-group D Snp I-III, which presumably are chiefly Sinopean, presents quite a different picture (**Fig. 14**). We continue to observe their presence at a number of coastal and near-coastal sites, though at considerably fewer sites along Asia Minor’s west and south coasts in comparison to where C Snp (II-)III specimens are attested. D Snp I-III amphorae have thus far

⁴⁴ BES 2020b, p. 234-235, table 1.

⁴⁵ OPAIT 2004, p. 294.

not been identified in (central) Greece (and if present, they are presumably rare). Arguably the most important and interesting difference is that these amphorae are present at inland sites in the northern and particularly the southern Levant, which suggests a significant change at the receiving ends of the chain(s) of distribution. One of these inland sites is the fourth- to seventh-century village of Horvat Kur in the Galilee, located in the hills overlooking Lake Tiberias, some 10 kilometres north of Tiberias as the crow flies. Whereas long-distance imported pottery hardly played a role, it is noteworthy that Sinopean amphorae of type-group D Snp I-III are the most common long-distance imported amphorae in terms of sherd count⁴⁶. In fact, there is further quantified evidence from other sites that supports the idea that D Snp I-III amphorae played a significant role in Eastern Mediterranean exchange⁴⁷.

This picture of the distribution of both type-groups that gradually emerges also brings up the question regarding their content. There is, unfortunately, no conclusive evidence. Some scholars who have discussed these categories of Pontic/Sinopean amphorae tend toward wine as their primary content⁴⁸ and/or perhaps olive oil⁴⁹, whereas others suggest a variety of possibilities that echoes regional differences⁵⁰. Owen Doonan entertains the idea of olive oil, pointing to a flourishing agricultural economy in the area of Sinope in the Late Roman period⁵¹. Reynolds, on the other hand, favours fish-based products⁵² – as does De Boer⁵³ – and ponders upon a “special connection” between Sinope and Beirut⁵⁴ regarding the latter’s “penchant for consuming fish sauce”⁵⁵. In that case, one needs to think of a (semi-)liquid fish-based product, as the necks particularly of amphorae of type-group D Snp I-III simply would have been too narrow for anything solid or chunky. This morphological aspect, especially of this latter type-group, more generally favours a liquid product as the primary content; the pitch that is noted on the interior wall of examples of type D Snp I-III supports the idea of wine.

CONCLUSION

Following an introduction to the site of Limyra and the most recent excavations, this article focused on the attestation in Limyra of Pontic amphora types datable to the fourth to early/first half of the seventh century. Macroscopic fabric and typological identification suggest that the majority, comprising two

⁴⁶ BES 2020c.

⁴⁷ BES in press, table 1.

⁴⁸ DOBREVA 2018, p. 311, n. 6.

⁴⁹ KASSAB TEZGÖR 2020, p. 21-22, 34-35.

⁵⁰ DE BOER 2013, p. 111-112.

⁵¹ DOONAN 2015, p. 51, 57. VNUKOV 2017, p. 121-122 supports the hypothesis that olive oil was the main agricultural produce from the area of Sinope. Herakleia Pontike is thought to have focused on grape cultivation instead, with less attention for the production of olive oil.

⁵² REYNOLDS 2013, p. 102, 105.

⁵³ DE BOER 2013, p. 112.

⁵⁴ REYNOLDS 2010, p. 91.

⁵⁵ REYNOLDS 2013, p. 102.

main type-groups, was manufactured in Sinope and environs, although at least one other place of manufacture of so-called carrot amphorae is attested. While we currently lack sufficient quantified data – from Limyra and elsewhere – to begin to understand their regional distribution and numerical role across the Eastern Mediterranean, a first study and a handful of quantifications concerning these amphorae suggest that they played a relatively significant role in exchange between the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean.

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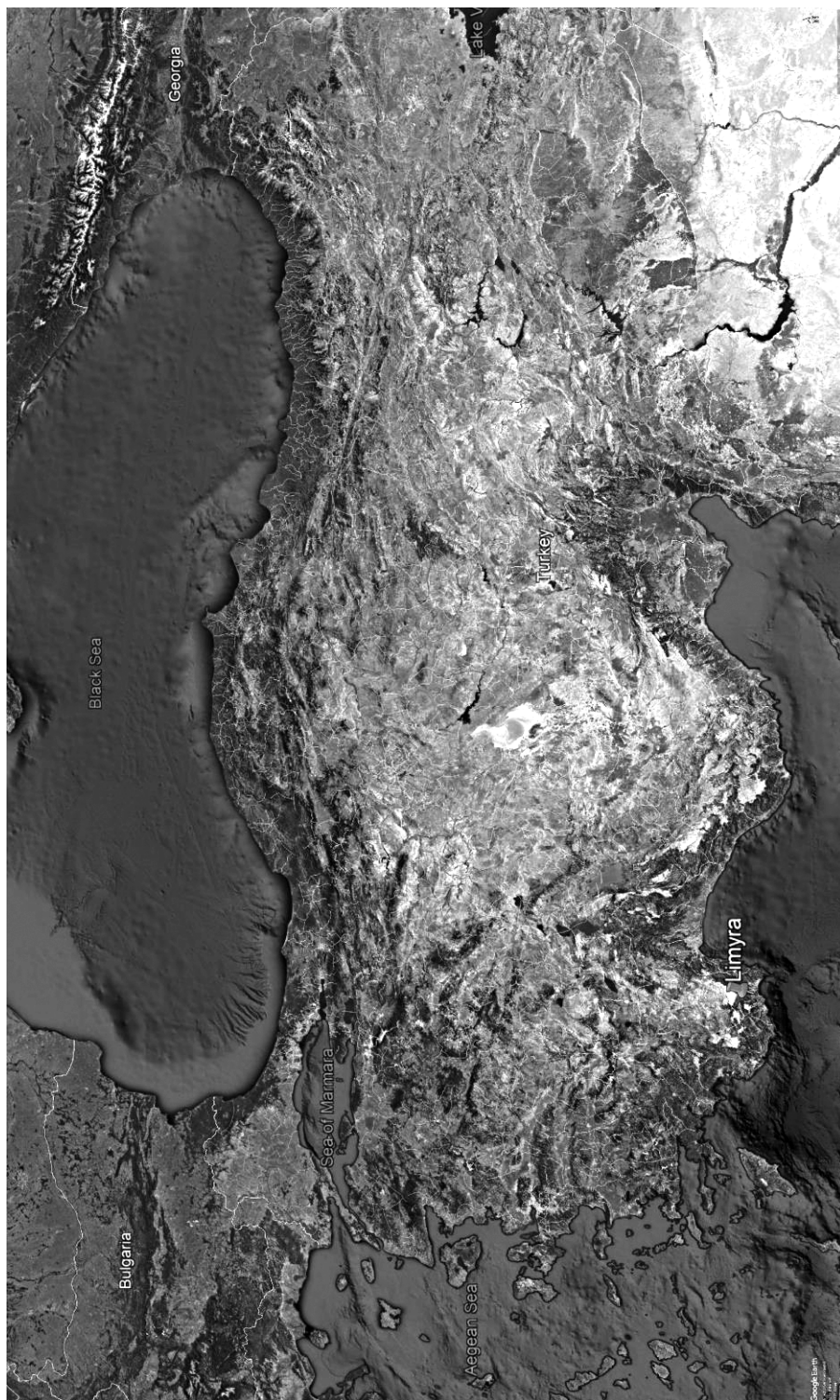


Fig. 1 - Map with the localisation of ancient Limyra. (© GoogleEarth)



Fig. 2 - Limyra – West and East City plan. 1. Theatre; 2. Theatre Baths; 3. Ptolemaion; 4. Church near the Ptolemaion; 5. Cenotaph of G. Caesar; 6. West Gate of the West City; 7. East Gate of the West City; 8. Byzantine fountain house; 9. The so-called Bishop's Church; 10. Southern Baths, also known as Bishop's Palace; 11. Northern Baths; 12. East Gate of the East City. (© OeAW – OeAI/C. Kurtze, A. Dolea)



Fig. 3 - Limyra – East Gate excavation sector at the end of the 2012 campaign. (© OeAW – OeAI/edited by A. Dolea)



Fig. 4 - Limyra – West Gate and West City excavation sectors at the end of the 2019 campaign. (© OeAW – OeAI/C. Kurtze, B. Orakçılar, A. Dolea)

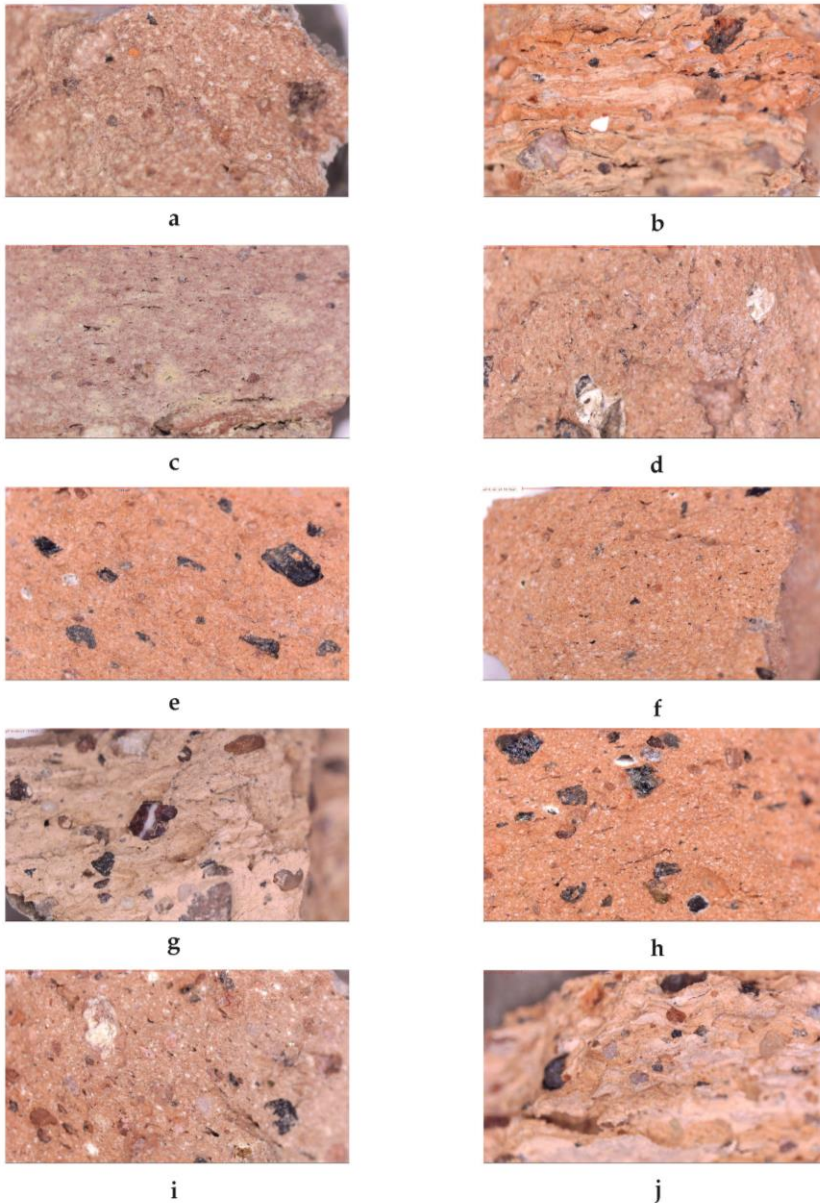


Fig. 5. Microscope photographs (magnified ca. 35 times) of fragments of ten Pontic carrot-type amphorae. Except for e-f (2011, West Gate excavations) and j (2016, Polis West excavations) these are all from the 2012 excavations at the West Gate: a) from context 125 (=Fig. 7); b) from context 114A (=Fig. 10); c) from context 114 (=Fig. 8); d) from context 70 (=Fig. 6b); e) from context 35 (=Fig. 6f); f) from context 35; g) from context 105; h) from context 72; i) from context 133 (=Fig. 6d); and j) from stratigraphic unit 4015/4076 (© P. Bes).

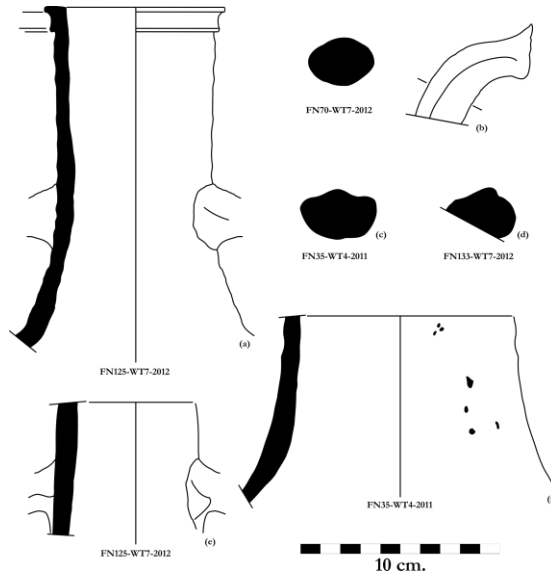


Fig. 6. Profile drawings of a selection of Sinopean carrot amphora fragments: a)=Fig. 7; b)=Fig. 5d; d)=Fig. 5i; e) presumably C Snp III; f)=Fig. 5e, possibly C Snp II. The three handle fragments (b-d) presumably belong to type-variants C Snp II or III (© P. Bes).



Fig. 7 (=Figs 5a, 6a) - Restored rim-neck segment of a Sinopean carrot-type amphora of type-variant C Snp III-1b, from context 125 from the West Gate excavations in 2012 (© OeAW – OeAI/R. Hügli).



Fig. 8 (=Fig. 5c) - Complete lower part of a Sinopean carrot-type amphora of type-variant C Snp III(-1), from context 114 from the West Gate excavations in 2012. Note the slightly indented wall, a feature that is commonly observed for this category of amphorae (© OeAW – OeAI/R. Hügli).



Fig. 9 - Fragments of Pontic – mostly if not all Sinopean – amphorae from stratigraphic unit 6005, from the Polis West excavations in 2016 (© OeAW – OeAI/R. Hügli).



Fig. 10 (=Fig. 5b). Restored rim to upper wall segment of a Pontic carrot-type amphora of type-variant C Snp III-1 similis, possibly manufactured at Herakleia Pontike, from context 114A from the West Gate excavations in 2012 (© OeAW – OeAI/R. Hügli).



Fig. 11. Three of the four fragments in Sinopean *pâte claire* from context 1039 (the fifth fragment was found in context 1036) from the East Gate excavations in 2012 (© OeAW – OeAI/R. Hügli).

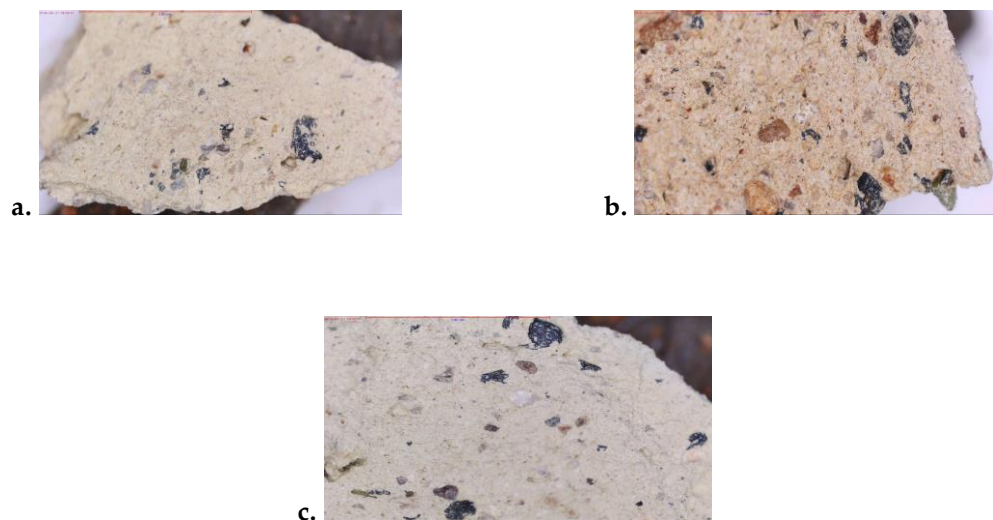


Fig. 12. Microscope photographs (all magnified ca. 35 times) of the fragments in Fig. 11: a) fragment on the left; b) fragment in the centre; c) fragment on the right (© P. Bes).



Fig. 13 - Sites where Pontic, presumably (mostly) Sinopean carrot-type amphorae of Kassab Tezgör type-variants C Snp (I/II-III) have been identified. Non-solid dots are uncertain identifications (© P. Bes/T. Brughmans).

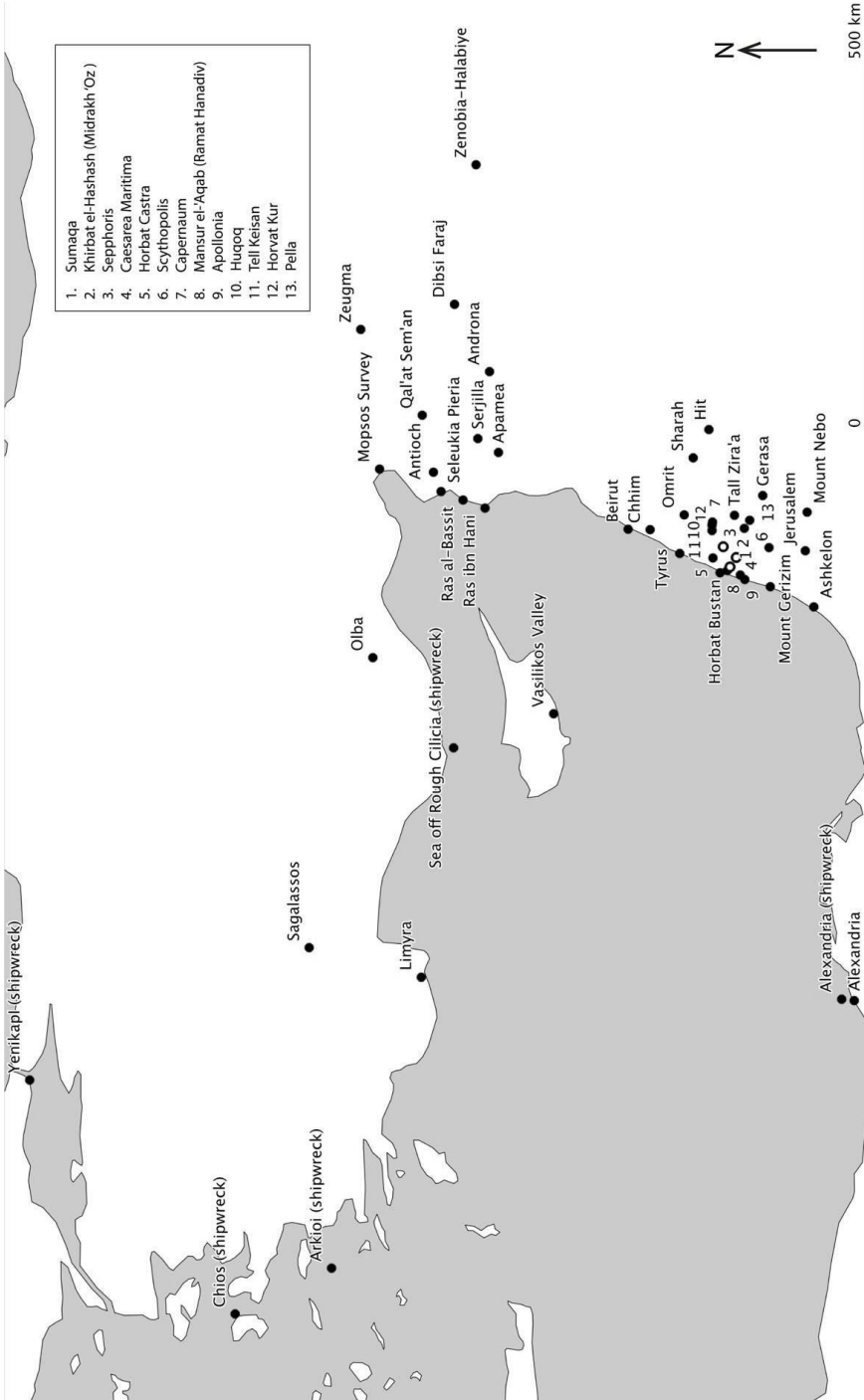


Fig. 14. Sites where Pontic, presumably (mostly) Sinoean amphorae in *pâte claire* of Kassab Tezgör type-group D Snp I-III have been identified. Non-solid dots are uncertain identifications (© P. Bes/T. Brughmans).