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NEW LIGHT ON 'DARK AGE' POTTERY: A NOTE ON FINDS FROM SOUTH-WESTERN TURKEY

Introduction

This paper sets out to present some Late Antique and Early Medieval ceramic finds from excavations in Lycia in south-western Turkey, and in particular ceramic finds from the urban site of Limyra in eastern Lycia. First, a general overview will be given of the percentages of the quantified ceramic assemblages from several excavation trenches, which were excavated between 1993 and 1999 in the eastern part of Limyra.¹ In addition, an attempt will be made to put the pottery finds from Limyra in a broader context (while especially looking at similar excavated examples on Lycian and adjacent Turkish sites), as well as to present some ceramic material of the so-called 'Dark Age' period.

The term 'Dark Age' was introduced for these parts of Turkey during the 1990s by the American historian Clive Foss, who has written several articles on Lycia during Late Antique and Byzantine times.² One of his conclusions was that the Dark Ages brought universal desolation and desertion in this coastal region, mainly because of attacks of the Persians and Arabs since the 7th century onwards.³ Now, ten years later we are in a position to test his theories with new archaeological discoveries, and here I will try to present the first steps of a picture of the Dark Ages with more shades of grey.

Lycia and Limyra

Lycia is known for its steep and densely forested mountains, which are broken by fertile plains and valleys suitable for habitation and cultivation. This rugged region was an area of importance since historical times, especially in the 6th century which appears to be the most flourishing time in this part of south-western Turkey.⁴ The main resources of Lycia were timber for shipbuilding and trade in agricultural products. Its most known ancient cities and harbours included (from west to east) Telmessos, Xanthos, Patara, Myra, Limyra, Olympos and Phaselis.⁵

Limyra is a multi-period site on the east coast of Lycia, some two miles from the sea and the modern port of Finike (ancient Phoenix). Human activity has been established on the site from Subgeometric/Archaic to Ottoman times.⁶ The site of ancient Limyra covers a substantial territory with an acropolis, several cemeteries and a lower city in the broad plain of Finike. In the lower city the Byzantine walls form two enclosures on the western and eastern sides of the stream Limyros, which separates the site in two parts: a Western and an Eastern one.⁷

The written sources indicate that Limyra was the seat of a suffragan bishop from the end of the 4th until the end of the 9th centuries after Christ.⁸ Nowadays, one can still observe the remains of a Bishop's church in the eastern part of Limyra,

as well as the remains of a structure which for the moment has been identified by the Austrian excavators as a 'Bishop's palace' (although it is not sure yet what its function really was). Recent excavations in this part of the city yielded large quantities of ceramic finds from Late Antique and Byzantine times.

In 1997 a start was made with the diagnosis, documentation and dating of the Post-Roman pottery fragments excavated in the eastern city of Limyra. That is to say: this is the pottery after the Roman period, approximately from the 5th/6th century to Medieval (and even Ottoman) times. The sherds originated from excavation pits with the numbers (SO) 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22, and were dug up in the years between 1993 and 1999 near a paved column street, as well as near the Bishop's church and the so-called 'Bishop's palace'.⁹

Quantification table 1 (fig. 1)

A total of circa 2720 fragments of diagnostic pottery were studied from these excavation trenches in the eastern city of Limyra. As one can notice on **table 1 (fig. 1)**, Fine wares of the Late Antique period make up 29% of this total (FW). Amphora fragments (AMPH) account for 19% of the total ceramic finds, whereas coarse wares (CW) make up at least 40% of the total ceramic finds from the eastern part of the city.

Vessels with special functions only account for 3% of the total ceramic finds in Limyra, among them are ritual vessels such as Late Roman *unguentaria* (RITUAL).¹⁰ A few

¹ The excavation of this site has been carried out under the direction of Prof. Jürgen Borchhardt and Dr. Thomas Marksteiner of the Archaeological Institute of the University at Vienna, and I would like to thank them for allowing me to study and publish the ceramic material from their excavation. Dr. Peter Ruggendorfer and Dr. Andreas Pülz were responsible for the excavations in the eastern city of Limyra. Selda Baybo was very helpful for inking my pottery drawings; Niki Gail made the black-and-white photograph of fig. 2. All are gratefully thanked.

² See, for instance, Foss 1994, 39–40; 49.

³ Foss 1993, 20. — Foss 1994, 2–3; 49–50.

⁴ Foss 1993, 16. — Foss 1994, 45–48.

⁵ Foss 1993, 1. — Foss 1994, 1.

⁶ Cf. for the earliest finds from Limyra, B. RÜCKERT, Remarks on archaic and classical pottery in Central Lycia. Questions of import and local production. In: S. LEMAÎTRE (ed.), *Les produits et les marches. Céramique antique en Lycie (VIIe s. av. J.-C.–VIIe s. ap. J.-C.)* (Poitiers, forthcoming). — See also BORCHHARDT ET AL. 1993, fig. 52 tables 72–73 and VROOM forthcoming (a) for some later finds of the Middle Byzantine and Ottoman periods.

⁷ See BORCHHARDT ET AL. 1993, map 4.

⁸ R. JACOBKE, Limyra als Sitz byzantinischer Bischöfe. In: BORCHHARDT ET AL. 1993, 111.

⁹ VROOM 2004, 289 note 14 (with further literature) and fig. 1.

¹⁰ VROOM 2004, fig. 7. — See also M. GRÜNEWALD, Kleinfunde aus den Kenotaphgrabungen 1973 und 1974. In: J. GANZERT (ed.), *Das Kenotaph für Gaius Caesar in Limyra*, *Istanbuler Forschungen* 35, 1984, fig. 19 pl. 29 and EISENMENGER 1993, 407 for more examples from Limyra.

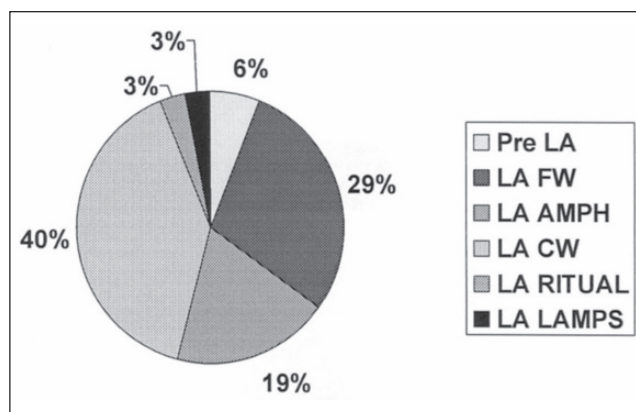


Fig. 1: Table 1: Pottery finds in Limyra in percentages.



Fig. 2: Limyra: oil-lamps.

of these Late Roman *unguentaria* have small stamps at the bottom. These stamps are often Christian monograms (block and star monograms) with names or titles of church officials as well as state officials. Some *unguentaria* were found in Limyra together with little round stoppers, which were used to seal the content of the vessels. At Xanthos, Perge and Sagalassos, similar *unguentaria* and stoppers were recovered in a 7th century context, often within houses and shops.¹¹ The provenance of these *unguentaria* is as yet unknown, but the latest results point to a production site on the south coast of Turkey.

Noteworthy in table 1 (fig. 1) are also fragments of oil-lamps of the 6th and 7th centuries (LAMPS), which account for 3% of the total ceramic finds in the eastern city of Limyra. This last group consists mainly of a wheel-made lamp (the so-called Bailey lamp Q 3339) with a flat base, rounded sides and a vertical loop handle, which is common in 6th and 7th century contexts in Turkey (fig. 2).¹² Similar examples were also found at other sites in Lycia (for instance, at the church of Dereagzi and in Xanthos, more westwards from Limyra), as well as at the excavations in Sagalassos and in Amorium in East Phrygia.¹³ Outside Turkey, these lamps were found in Italy (e.g., Sicily, Ravenna), in Spain (e.g., Alicante) and in Cyprus.¹⁴

Fine Wares: table 2 (fig. 3)

Among the fine wares on table 2 (fig. 3) are several types of imported Late Antique table wares, such as African Red

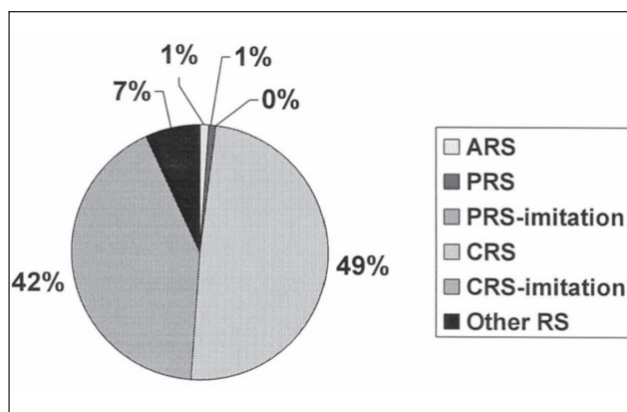


Fig. 3: Table 2: Red Slip Wares in Limyra in percentages.

Slip Ware from North Africa (ARS), Phocaeen Red Slip Ware from western Turkey (PRS) and Cypriot Red Slip Ware from Cyprus (CRS).

The bulk of the Late Roman fine wares in the eastern part of Limyra, however, is Cypriot Red Slip Ware, accounting for over 49% of the total of Red Slip Wares. Almost all shapes of Cypriot Red Slip Ware of Hayes' type series are present in Limyra. Most common is Hayes' form 11, a basin with horizontal slightly pressed-in handles, of circa the mid 6th to mid 7th centuries.¹⁵

Another small group of fine wares includes other types of Red Slip Wares, which account for 7% of the total of Red Slip Wares. Among these finds are the so-called Asia Minor fabrics (mid 5th–early 7th centuries), copying Phocaeen Red Slip Ware with bands of multiple rouletting on the upper part of the rim and on the walls.¹⁶

However, there are also several other shapes or imitations of Cypriot Red Slip Ware, which account for 42% of the total of Red Slip Wares found in the eastern city of Limyra. These include, amongst others, the so-called 'well form' dish with in-turned rim, flaring body and flat grooved base, which was found in Anemurium in a well fill of post-630 AD (fig. 4).¹⁷ Apart from Anemurium, similar dishes have also

¹¹ DEGEEST 1993. — DEGEEST 2000, figs. 222–223. — DES COURTILS et al 2001, figs. 18 and 20–21. — PELLEGRINO 2002, 256 (annexe). — FIRAT 2003, pl. LXVII. 1. — See also D. COTTICA, *Unguentari tardo antichi dal martyron di Hierapolis, Turchia*, MEFRA 112, 2000, 999–1021 for finds from Hierapolis.

¹² D.-M. BAILEY, *A catalogue of the Lamps in the British Museum III: Roman Provincial Lamps* (London 1988) 415 pl. 125. — See also EISENMENGER 1993, 408 and VROOM 2004, fig. 8 for more finds in Limyra.

¹³ R.M. HARRISON, *Amorium excavations 1991*, *Anatolian Studies* 42, 1992, fig. 6 nos. 1–12; id., 1993, pl. 6, nos. 11–12; DEGEEST 2000, fig. 221. — For similar finds in Lycia, see DES COURTILS ET AL. 2001, figs. 18–19 and T. GREGORY, *Additional pottery*. In: J. MORGANSTERN (ed.), *The Fort at Dereagzi and other material remains in its Vicinity: From Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, *Istanbuler Forschungen* 40, 1993, 137 pl. 26.13.

¹⁴ See, for instance, P. REYNOLDS, *Settlement and Pottery in the Vinalopó Valley (Alicante, Spain): A.D. 400–700*, BAR I.S. 588 (Oxford 1993) pl. 99. — P. REYNOLDS, *Trade in the Western Mediterranean: A.D. 400–700: The Ceramic Evidence*, BAR I.S. 604 (Oxford 1995) fig. 134.

¹⁵ HAYES 1972, fig. 83. — See also VROOM 2004, 291 fig. 2.

¹⁶ HAYES 1972, 408–411 fig. 92 no. 4. — See also COTTICA 2000, 50 nos. 13–32 fig. 2 for similar finds from Hierapolis.

¹⁷ WILLIAMS 1989, 34–35 nos. 191–194 fig. 15.

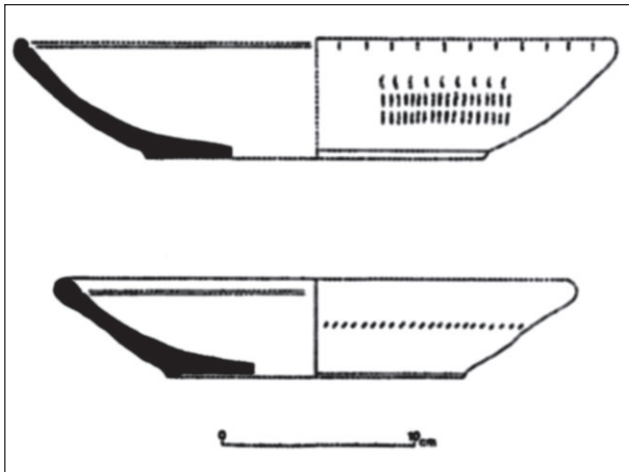


Fig. 4: Limyra: Cyriot Red Slip Ware, 'well form' dishes.

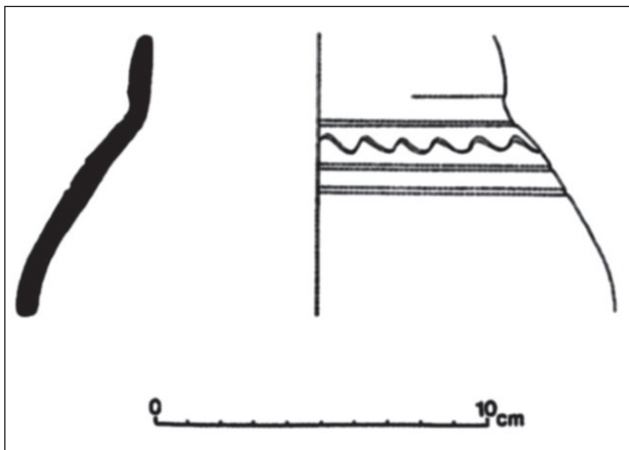


Fig. 5: Limyra: Cyriot Red Slip Ware, closed vessel.

been found at Perge and at Hierapolis, as well as at Dhiorios and at Kalavassos-Kopetra in Cyprus and in old Cairo in Egypt – most of the times in later contexts.¹⁸

Other unknown shapes in Limyra include closed vessels (probably jugs) with wavy incised lines on the shoulder (**fig. 5**). Until now, one similar jug has been published as part of the Kornos Cave group on Cyprus, where it was dated ca. 550–750 AD, and a few fragments of closed vessels (including a small pitcher) have been found on the site of Kalavassos-Kopetra.¹⁹ A mainland Asia Minor source for imitations or variants of Cyriot Red Slip Ware has recently been suggested, mainly because the site of Perge in Pamphylia (near Antalya) has yielded several unknown shapes.²⁰

Amphorae: table 3 (**fig. 6**)

As we have seen before on **table 1** (**fig. 1**), amphora fragments make up 19% of the total ceramic finds from the eastern city of Limyra. Among these, imported transport jars may be distinguished which indicate contacts with Egypt, with North Africa, with western Turkey and with the Near East. No locally produced amphorae of the Late Roman–Early Byzantine period have yet been recognised on the site.

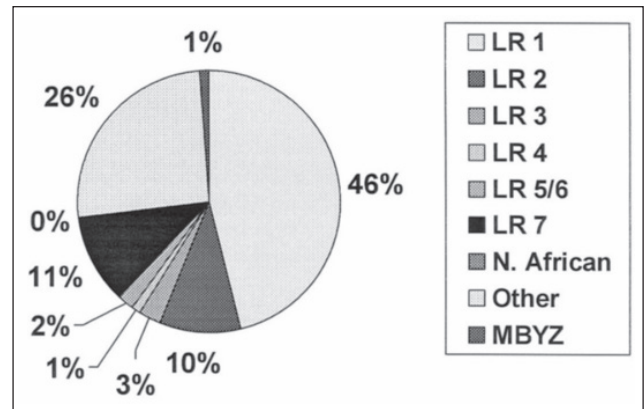


Fig. 6: Table 3: Amphorae in Limyra in percentages.

On **table 3** (**fig. 6**) we can notice that the most common type of the imported transport jars found in Limyra is the so-called Late Roman amphora 1 (or Peacock class 44) in a very sandy, buff fabric.²¹ This amphora type from the coasts of Cilicia and western Cyprus accounts at least for 46% of the total amphorae found in the eastern part of Limyra. Many fragments of this amphora type found in Limyra have a tall narrow neck, a slightly everted rim, as well as a horizontal ridge below the rim where the double-grooved handles are usually attached. These features are characteristic for a type of Late Roman amphora 1 (the so-called LRA 1a) which was dated on Cypriot sites from the 2nd half of the 6th to the late 7th century.²²

Other types of Late Roman amphorae (of approximately the same date-range) present in Limyra are: LR amphora 2 from the Aegean area (accounting for 10% of the total amphora finds), LR amphora 3 from western Turkey (accounting for 3% of the total amphora finds), LR amphora 4 from southern Palestine (accounting for 1% of the total amphora finds), LR amphora 5 from Caesarea in Palestine in a sandy grey fabric (accounting for 2% of the total amphora finds), LR amphora 7 from the Mareotis region in Northern Egypt (accounting for 11% of the total amphora finds), amphorae from North Africa as well as other types of amphorae (accounting for 26% of the total amphora finds).

Of special interest are several fragments of a LR amphora 7 in a brown fabric from the Mareotis region in Northern Egypt (perhaps from Abu Mena?) (**fig. 7**). The amphora is very inelegantly made: it has a short neck with sharply carinated

¹⁸ CATLING 1972, 9, fig. 5 P28 and P95. — RAUTMAN ET AL. 2003, fig. 5.3 nos. 32–34. — FIRAT 2000, fig. 3. — FIRAT 2003, pl. LXVI.3. — COTTICA 2000, 50 no. 12.

¹⁹ H. W. CATLING/I. DIKIGOROPOULOS, The Kornos cave: An Early Byzantine site in Cyprus. *Levant* 2, 1970, 46 no. 1 fig. 3 pl. 30. — RAUTMAN ET AL. 2003, fig. 5.3 nos. 36–37.

²⁰ N. ATIK, Die Keramik aus den Südhermen von Perge (Tübingen 1995) 161. — See also FIRAT 2000. FIRAT 2003, pl. LXVI.1–2 for more variants of Cyriot Red Slip Ware from Perge.

²¹ VROOM 2004, fig. 3. — See also DES COURTILS et al 2001, fig. 17. — PELLEGRINO 2002, fig. 1 no. 3 and E. PELLEGRINO, Presentation des céramiques issues des fouilles menées en 1998–1999 sur l'acropole lycienne de Xanthos. *Anatolia Antiqua* 11, 2003, fig. 6.8 for finds from Xanthos.

²² PEACOCK/WILLIAMS 1986, 185–187 class 44. — S. DEMESTICHA, The Paphos kiln: manufacturing techniques of LR1 amphorae, *RCRF Acta* 36, 2000, 549–554. — RAUTMAN ET AL. 2003, fig. 5.11 nos. 142–144.

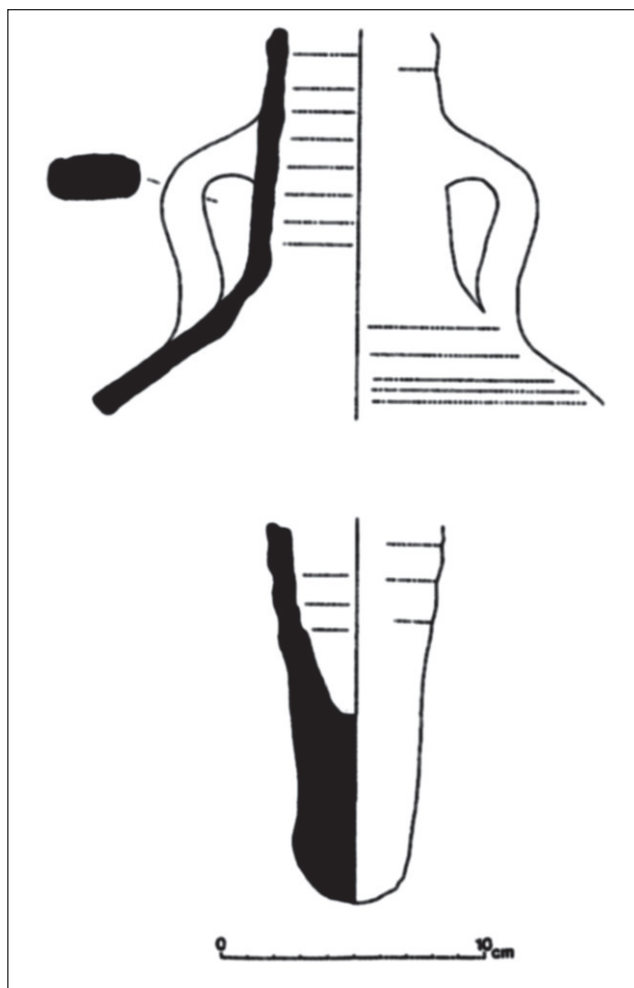


Fig. 7: Limyra: LR amphora 7.

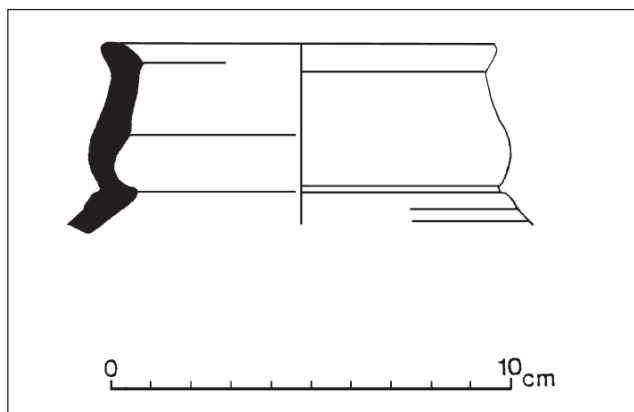


Fig. 8: Limyra: LR amphora 5-imitation.

shoulder and two small handles; a long tapering body and solid spike. The shape is common on sites of the Late Antique and Early Islamic periods in Egypt, and can be dated from the 7th to the (late) 8th/9th centuries, or even later (into the 10th–11th centuries).²³

Noteworthy is also the find of a rim fragment of a bag-shaped jar of the Early Islamic period (fig. 8). This is an imitation of a LR amphora 5 from Palestine, or of a Mareotic amphora from Abu Mena in Egypt.²⁴ It can be dated in the

first centuries of the Arab invasions in Egypt, that is to say: in the Umayyad period as well as in the Abbasid period (ca. 7th – end 9th c.). In Old Cairo, for instance, these bag-shaped jars appear in contexts of 8th–9th century date, with some examples somewhat later.²⁵ In Jordan, they were found at the excavations of Pella in Late Umayyad times.²⁶

In contrast, amphorae of the Middle Byzantine period (among them sherds of the so-called Günsenin amphora 1 of the 10th–11th centuries) are not very common in the eastern part of Limyra, and account only for 1% of the total amphora finds.

Coarse Wares: table 4 (fig. 9)

The coarse wares found in the eastern part of Limyra account for 40% of the total ceramic finds. As one can notice on table 4 (fig. 9), at least 82% of these coarse wares is probably locally produced, whereas only 7% of the coarse wares is

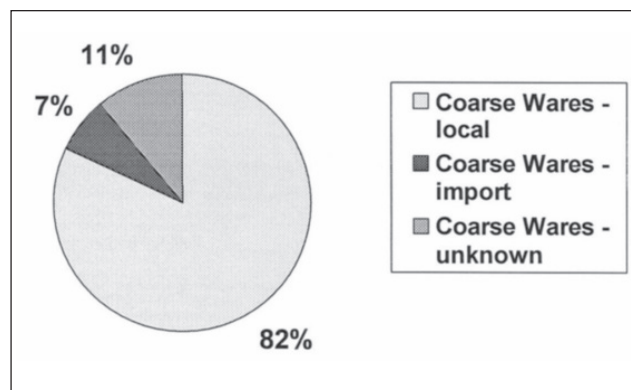


Fig. 9: Table 4: Coarse Wares in Limyra in percentages.

imported. Coarse pottery with an unknown provenance accounts for 11% of the total coarse wares found in the eastern city. These coarse wares include, for instance, broad-bellied cooking-pots with rounded bottoms and two short handles attached close to the rims as well as frying-pans with a long cylindrical handle, which were recovered in Limyra in large quantities.²⁷

Related in fabric but probably coming from Constantinople (Modern Istanbul) are jugs with a so-called double handle, which consists of a short oval handle bearing a second smaller handle.²⁸ A similar jug was also found in a 7th century context in Xanthos.²⁹ Attached to these double handles are convex lids. In some cases these lids are painted with dots and stripes in a red/brownish colour.³⁰ A similar decoration

²³ Cf. in general, PEACOCK/WILLIAMS 1986, 204–205 class 52 and EGLOFF 1977, 177. — See also VROOM forthcoming (b) with further literature.

²⁴ Cf. in general, EGLOFF 1977, types 187–188 pls. 60.5 and 61.5.

²⁵ A. Gascoigne, pers. comm.

²⁶ A. WALMSLEY, Pella/Fihl after the Islamic conquest (AD 635–c. 900): A convergence of literary and archaeological evidence. *Mediterranean Archaeology* 1, 1988, fig. III.9 no. 1.

²⁷ Cf. VROOM 2004, 297 fig. 4 with further literature.

²⁸ VROOM 2004, fig. 5 above.

²⁹ E. Pellegrino, pers. comm.

³⁰ VROOM 2004, fig. 5 below. — See also U. EISENMENGER/I. MADER, Bericht über die Arbeiten an der Keramik, XVI. Kazi Sonuçları Toplantısı II, 1995, 239 fig. 16 for such a lid from Limyra.

technique is generally found on Early Byzantine painted wares which were recovered on Crete (the so-called *ceramica sovradipinta* and dated there between the end of the 6th and the 8th centuries). Furthermore, it was found in the Near East (in Syria even until the 9th century), in Egypt and in southern Turkey. For instance, similar painted wares have been found at several sites along the coast of Turkey: at Xanthos and Perge, as well as at Antioch, in the Konya Plain and at the monastery of Alahan and Kilise Tepe in Cilicia.³¹

Interesting is a lid fragment with splashes of glaze on the inside, as well as on the outside. This seems to indicate that the lid was made in a pottery workshop which also produced glazed wares, or that it is even a Glazed White Ware I product from Constantinople (fig. 10). Its shape has parallels with similar pieces found at the Yassi Ada shipwreck, as well as with examples recovered at excavations on Cyprus, in Syria and at Saraçhane in Modern Istanbul. In general, the lid can be dated in the 7th–8th centuries, and on sites in northern Syria even into the 9th centuries.³²

The eastern part of Limyra also yielded imported coarse wares from the Near East. Among these wares are, for instance, the so-called 'Palestinian casseroles' with a horizontal tubular handle and 'Palestinian cooking pots' with long strap handles.³³ These last vessels in a red, 'brittle ware' fabric were first recognized at the kiln site of Dhiorios on North Cyprus, where it is generally dated in the mid 7th century (and according to the latest views even in the early 8th century).³⁴ Recently, evidence for the production of this type cooking pot in the Near East has also been found at the excavations in Beirut, where it is typical of late 6th–7th century contexts with a continuation into the Umayyad period.³⁵

Noteworthy are also fragments of a grey gritty cooking ware (fig. 11). The fabric is coarse, moderately soft with very many black and white (angular) quartz and big mica. Another example of the shown rim fragment can be distinguished at the Balboursa survey in Lycia, where it was dated by Pamela Armstrong in the late 8th century, as well as at the Saraçhane excavations in Istanbul where it was found in an 8th to 10th century context.³⁶ Of nearly the same gritty fabric is the handle fragment of another cooking pot, which is perhaps an imitation of a metal-made casserole or frying pan (fig. 12 below). Similar examples were found at Gortys on Crete in the late 7th–late 8th centuries (the ultimate phase of the monastery), as well as at the Saraçhane excavations in an early 10th century context.³⁷

Finally, the excavations in the eastern part of Limyra yielded two fragments of a glazed cooking pot or jar with handle (fig. 12 above). The fabric is coarse, with very many white (angular) quartz inclusions. The vitreous lead glaze is put directly on the interior body of the vessel (without a slip), which creates some pinholes. A similar shape was found at the Saraçhane excavations in a late 10th century context (925–950+ AD).³⁸

Discussion

It seems quite probable that the eastern part of Limyra was not deserted after the 7th century as was previously assumed by the historian Clive Foss.³⁹ Apart from the shown ceramic

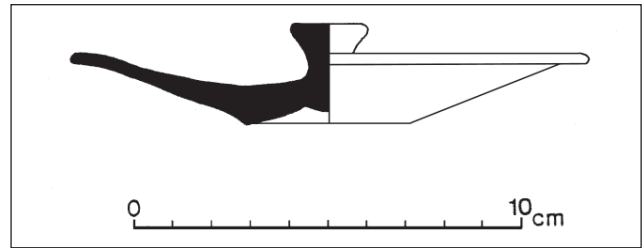


Fig. 10: Limyra: Coarse Ware, lid.

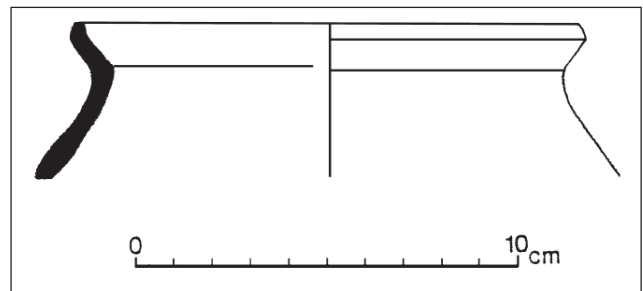


Fig. 11: Limyra: Coarse Ware, jar.

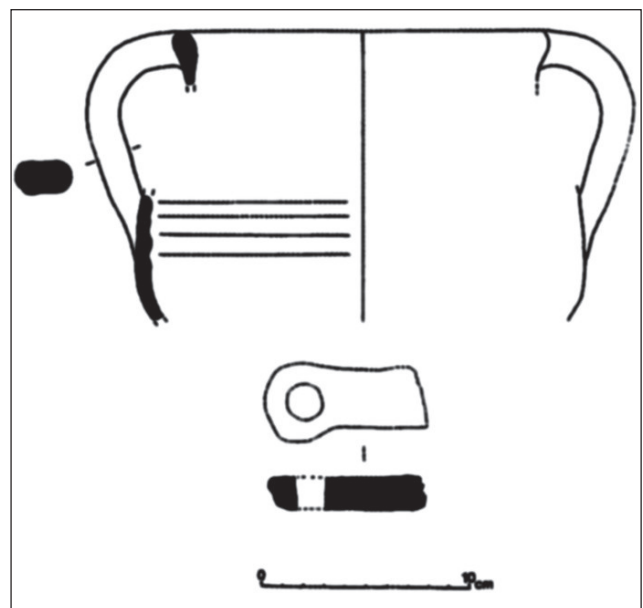


Fig. 12: Limyra: Coarse Ware, jar and casserole handle.

³¹ Cf. VROOM 2004, notes 31–33 with further literature. — See also D. Cottica, *Ricerche archeologiche nell'Anatolia centrale: la Galazia fra ellenismo, tarda antichità ed età bizantina*. In: *Le missioni archeologiche dell'Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia IV* (Venice 2004) 74 for similar finds in the Konya Plain.

³² Cf. for a Syrian example, D. ORSSAUD, *La céramique*. In: J.-P. SODINI ET AL., *Déhes (Syrie du Nord) Campagne I–III (1976–1978). Recherches sur l'habitat rural*. Syria 57, 1980, fig. 305 type 6b. — See also VROOM forthcoming (b) with further literature and HAYES 1992, 15–18 for Glazed White Ware I products.

³³ See VROOM 2004, 300 fig. 6 with further literature.

³⁴ CATLING 1972.

³⁵ P. Reynolds and Y. Waksman, pers. comm.

³⁶ P. Armstrong, pers. comm. — HAYES 1992.

³⁷ A. DI VITA, *Atti della scuola 1990–91. Annuario della Scuola archeologica di Atene 68–69, 1990–91 (1995)* fig. 31. — HAYES 1992, fig. 59 no. 14.

³⁸ HAYES 1992, fig. 182 nos. 15–16.

³⁹ FOSS 1994, 39–40.

finds of the 8th, 9th and even 10th centuries, this is also suggested by four other factors: 1) We know from the written sources that Limyra had a bishop until the late 9th century (879 AD); 2) Pieces of wood found above a pavement between the Bishop's church and the 'Bishop's palace' in the eastern part of Limyra, were dated by radiocarbon dating from the late 7th to late 9th centuries; 3) A coin of Basil II (AD 867–886) as well as several Anonymous *Folles* of the 11th century were recovered in Limyra; 4) Dating by thermoluminescence of brick samples from an enlargement of the bishop's palace also gave a late date. One sample was dated in the late 10th century; another one in the early 11th century. As the bricks were found in an architectural context, which means that they were used as building material, both dates give a clear hint to building activity at this late period.⁴⁰

These four factors seem to indicate that the site (at least the eastern part) was in function until the end of the 10th century (if not until the early 11th century). My suggestion, therefore, is that some ceramic wares (such as the Umayyad amphora and some unglazed and glazed cooking pots) can definitely be dated to this later phase of occupation.

The majority of the so-called 'Dark Age wares' found in the eastern part of Limyra consists of fine wares and amphorae which were imported from South-East Turkey, Cyprus, Egypt and the Near East. Imports of red slip wares come mainly from workshops on Cyprus (or from a production centre on the Turkish mainland?), while amphorae seem to have come from the Near East and North Africa (especially Egypt). It is interesting that we can distinguish fragments of LR amphora 1, LR amphora 2, LR amphora 5 and LR amphora 7. Several pieces of kitchenware seem to be imported from the Near East and Cyprus as well, such as the Palestinian casserole and the Palestinian cooking pot.

It is not surprising that we find these imported wares on the site, because Limyra belonged in Late Antiquity to an important but complex trade system, which connected various regions of the east Mediterranean. A wide variety of wares seem to have travelled towards the town from all directions: from Syria and Palestine, as well as from Egypt

via Cyprus to the Turkish coast. Apparently, Limyra also benefited from its position on the main shipping route between Constantinople, the Near East and Egypt. The Lycian coast continued to be the natural port of call for ships from Egypt, and relations between the two remained important as they had been in earlier times. The imperial grain fleet still stopped to collect supplies from the great Roman granaries, and the timber of Lycia was through the ages of great value to the treeless Egyptians.⁴¹ Likewise, contacts with the Holy Land grew with Christianity and the fashion for pilgrimage. Written sources suggest, for instance, a brisk traffic between Cyprus and Egypt mainly in the 7th century, usually for pilgrimage purposes.⁴²

Even for the period after the early or mid 7th century (with the loss of Byzantine territories in the East to the Persians and the Arabs) there is little reason to suppose that contact between Limyra and the Arab regions in the East Mediterranean ceased to exist or abruptly stopped. This is shown by the range of pottery finds from Limyra, which includes fragments of Palestinian cooking pots, of LR amphora 7, of LR amphora 5 and of an Umayyad imitation of this amphora type from Egypt.

Furthermore, trade with the Muslim world is mentioned many times by Arab sources describing Cyprus during the early Middle Ages. This island may have played an important strategic role as a neutral territory for merchants from both the Byzantine and Arab world, situated as it is within a day's sailing distance from both the Lycian coast with Limyra and Syria.⁴³

⁴⁰ VROOM 2004, 306 with further literature. — See also VROOM forthcoming (a) and VROOM forthcoming (b).

⁴¹ FOSS 1993, 17. — See also C. FOSS, Cities and villages of Lycia in the Life of St. Nicholas of Holy Zion. Greek Orthodox Theological Review 36, 1991, 323.

⁴² T. PAPACOSTAS, The economy of Late Antique Cyprus. In: S. KINGSLEY/M. DECKER (eds.), Economy and Exchange in the East Mediterranean during Late Antiquity (Oxford 2001) 113.

⁴³ R. BROWNING, Byzantium and Islam in Cyprus in the early Middle Ages. EKEE 9, 1977–79, 107.

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