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The Necessity of Changing the Methodology of Preserving Waterlogged Wooden Objects
The Maritime Trade of Roman Patara

Preliminary Remarks on the Amphorae

Erkan Dündar

Abstract – Located on the south-west coast of Anatolia, Patara became one of the principal cities of Lycia and southwestern Anatolia due in part to its natural harbor. The archaeological finds demonstrate that Patara became an important node in the maritime commerce between the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean. During the Roman Imperial Era, Patara became the capital of the province of Lycia (shortly afterwards Lycia et Pamphylia) and received a higher commercial and political status. This study presents some preliminary observations about Roman Imperial Era amphora finds from Patara. To date amphorae originating from 34 different regions and urban production centers were identified. Particularly following Lycia’s incorporation as a Roman province by the Emperor Claudius in 43 AD, Patara began to display commercial ties with distant production centers. As in the Hellenistic era, Patara remained primarily connected with commerce in the Aegean. However, Patara now supplemented this trade with imports from Cilicia, Palestine and Egypt to the east, and Thyrrenia, Narbonensis, Baetica, Lusitania, Mauretania Caesariensis, Tripolitania and North Africa to the west. The range of these contacts reflects Patara’s new status as a provincial capital.

Located on the Lycian coast in southwest Anatolia, Patara attracted merchant cargo ships to its natural harbor (fig. 1). Despite its historical significance, there are only few studies on the amphorae from Patara, as from the entire Lycian region. Consequently, archaeological work at Patara on this matter was intensified since 2006, which has provided some new and important results.

Although we have abundant information about the political history of Lycia before the Roman Imperial Era there is only limited information concerning the ceramics and trade relations. However, the data relating to the Roman Imperial Era in Lycia is more extensive than that of earlier periods. The main reasons for this are the lack of studies assessing the ceramics and other pottery finds providing data on trade relations and the absence of any harbor settlement completely excavated in Lycia. In this respect Patara has a prominent position especially for ceramic studies, due to its natural harbor and as the capital of the Roman Province. The most important indicators comprise the pottery of various forms imported or exported to different regions during antiquity, as well as the pottery workshops and ceramic kilns found within the city. Region-wide, studies have mainly focused upon the monumental structures dated to the Roman Imperial Era, rather than minor artefacts and ceramics, which tends to impede a healthy interpretation of the region’s ceramic circulation and extra-regional trade. Despite these limitations,
recent archeological studies on ceramics conducted at Patara, Tlos and Rhodiapolis, provide hope that the above-mentioned issues can be overcome within a short period of time.\footnote{Dündar 2016b, 504–519.}

The harbor, which was both the primary factor for the establishment of the city, as well as for its abandonment, is one of the most sheltered ports on the south western coast of Anatolia.\footnote{Ýýkan – Koçak 2014, 271–294; Dündar – Koçak forthcoming.} The harbor has also been an important destination for logistical support, especially of fresh water, provided to seafarers in the maritime trade from the Aegean to the Eastern Mediterranean and vice versa. The city became the gate of the region to the world and the scene of intensive commercial relations in antiquity.

This study aims to analyze the probabilities of regional or of local production together with the typological and chronological problems of the amphorae of Patara. On the other hand, a contribution is intended to the chronology problems by determining the amphora typology of the region. One of the main aims of the study is to obtain information about the maritime trade of Patara and Lycia, the role of the city in maritime trade, the production industries and the economic structure. More than 10,000 amphora fragments dated to the Roman Imperial Era were classified and identified. To date commercial jars originating from 34 different regions and urban production centers identified.

Lycia was transformed into the Roman provincia Lycia by the Emperor Claudius in 43 AD\footnote{Suetonius, Claud. 25,3; Cassius Dio 60,17,3, for comments, see Kolb – Kupke 1992, 26; Adak 2014, 55–56.} which shortly afterwards became provincia Lycia et Pamphylia with Patara as capital. Unlike during the Hel-
lenistic Period, the city then began to establish commercial ties with distant centers. However, despite this development, relations with the producing cities in the Aegean intensified.

Amphorae Recovered at Patara

Among the amphorae of the 1st century AD found at Patara, the Knidian productions constitute the largest group, followed by Rhodes. Further, the Egyptian AE 4 (DR 2–4), Italian Brindisi, Eastern Mediterranean Carrot (Zemer 40) and Cilician Agora M54 amphorae are among the amphora groups recovered dating from the 1st century AD. Italian amphorae such as DR 6, DR 7-11, DR 24 and DR 21-22 of the 1st century AD indicate that Italy began to play an important role in the maritime trade of Patara (fig. 2). This situation complies with the new role of Patara and Lycia as part of the Roman Empire. According to the amphorae of the 1st century AD, Patara was in contact with south-west Anatolia, Egypt, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Italian peninsula.

An Egyptian produced DR 2-4 amphora dated to the 1st century AD is noteworthy because of its find context: it was reused for an infant’s grave in the Tepecik settlement outside the fortification wall of the 3rd century BC (figs. 3–4).

In the 2nd century AD, the largest group of imported amphorae was

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7 For Roman amphora stamps in the 1st century AD at Patara, see Dündar 2013b, 141–149.
Knidian. The amphorae of Cilicia (Agora G199, Agora M54), the Eastern Mediterranean (Carrot/Zemer 40) and Egypt (AE 4/DR 2-4, AE 3) were the other most common groups of the 2nd century AD. This indicates that Patara’s trade relations with the Eastern Mediterranean and especially with Egypt intensified compared to the 1st century AD. On the other hand, trade with Italia continued, as demonstrated by examples of Forlìmpopoli and Pompei VII amphorae. In addition, Gaulise 1 amphorae attest that the sea trade network of Patara extended westward beyond Italia to Gallia (fig. 5).

In the 3rd century AD, Knidian, Kapitân II and LR 3 amphorae were found in large quantity. Relations with Cilicia continued with Agora G199 (or pinched handle) amphorae, and with Egypt with AE 3 amphorae. In the 3rd century AD, amphorae of North African origin (Carthage and Libya) began to appear at Patara with Africana Type 1 and 2 (fig. 6). In consequence, in the 3rd century AD the commercial relations of Patara extended to northwestern Africa (Mauretania Caesariensis) while retaining the ongoing focus on the eastern Mediterranean.

In the 4th century AD, the dominance of Knidian amphorae in Patara ended. Only LR 3 amphorae of Aegean origin were found. The only evidence of relations with Egypt are AE 3 amphorae. Thus in the 4th century AD Patara had commercial relations mostly with North Africa (Africana Type 1 and 2, Tripolitania II) and Lusitania (Almagro 50).

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8 For the origin of the LR 3 amphora, large geographical areas such as western Anatolia or Aegean were also proposed. Dominique Pieri pointed to the workshops in the Karacasu district of Aydın in western Anatolia and stated a morphological proximity between the ceramics produced today and the LR 3 amphorae in Karacasu. For this reason, Pieri said that Aphrodisias may be among the producers of LR 3 amphorae. Pieri attempted to support this view by stating that the word ἀφροδίσιος on an LR 3 amphora in Ravenna could be considered as ἀφροδίσιος [ниец]. Pieri 2005, 100, however, stated that it was not clear whether the script on the Ravenna amphora was made before or after firing, and stated that the word could also be a person’s, a producer’s or a merchant’s name.
During the 5th century AD the maritime trade of the city changed radically and there was an intense relationship with the eastern Mediterranean and Cilicia. The most common amphora groups in Patara include LR 1a and 1b amphorae, which were produced from Cilicia to the coasts of south west Anatolia in late antiquity, as in all the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. The presence of LR 1 amphorae in Patara should be closely related to

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9 For the distribution of workshops in Cilicia, see Empereur – Picon 1989, 236– 239 figs. 18–19. For the production on
the political, military and economic situation of the period, as is the case in all Eastern Mediterranean cities. The relations with the Aegean (LR 2 and 3 amphorae) and with the Eastern Mediterranean (LR 5-6 amphorae) continued (fig. 7).

The commercial relations in the 6th and 7th centuries AD continued the pattern of the 5th century AD. LR 1, 2, 3, 4 and 9 amphorae, and amphorae of northern African origin are found in large quantity. In the 6th century AD, trade relations tested by amphorae were limited to the Eastern Mediterranean and to a small extent with North Africa. The LR 1 amphorae formed the most imported group at Patara in 7th century AD. In the context of trade relations and amphorae, data is almost entirely restricted to the Eastern Mediterranean.

Local or Regional Productions

Among the amphora groups in Patara of Roman Imperial Era, important data also on local or possibly regional production was obtained. In this context numerous amphorae, which are reminiscent of the late Knidian amphorae in their appearance, but differentiated from them through the neck and sharp shoulder profiles, are important (fig. 8). This group, which is frequently encountered in the port cities along the coastline from Patara to Perge, is likely to be a locally produced imitation which we term late pseudo-Knidian. It is dated to the 3rd century AD according to the contexts at Patara. Another group that attracts attention with its profiled toes is a new form that suggests local or regional production (fig. 9). Detailed studies in the city and within the nearby region are expected to further investigate both groups with regard to these issues.

Stamps, Dipinti and Stoppers

Among the amphora stamps found in Patara, the stamped finds of the Roman Imperial Era form only 1%\(^\text{10}\). Most of the amphora stamps found in the city are on Italian amphorae like Brindisi, DR 1B and DR 2-4 amphorae from the 1st century AD (fig. 10). A small number of dipinti was also recovered. All of the dipinti at Patara date to the late antique period. A dipinto in the neck-shoulder point of an amphora of the LR 1b type (probably), written in red paint, records what had been carried in it: γλυκή (sweet) (fig. 11). The wine in this amphora was probably very sweet, reminder.

Cyprus, see Manning et al. 2000, 233–257; Demesticha 2003, 470–472. For the production on Kos Island, see Paulou-Papadimitriou – Didioumi 2010, 742–743. For Egypt, see Dixneuf 2011, 174–179. For the production centers of LR 1 amphorae, see in particular Pieri 2005, 80 fig. 38.

\(^{10}\) For the Hellenistic stamps found in Patara, see Dündar 2017.
ing the famous sweet passum made from raisins in Cilicia.

Stoppers or lids used to cover the mouths of the amphorae were also found, some of them with graffiti or stamps. The two examples on fig. 12 show how the amphorae were closed. In one of them, the mouth of the amphora was blocked only by lime mortar. In the other, a cracked ceramic piece was placed in the mouth which was then covered in mortar and sealed.

Conclusion

As a result of this study, Patara had intense commercial relations with overseas regions from the late 1st century BC to the end of 7th century AD. The producing regions on the Italian peninsula were prominent from the 1st century AD when Lycia was incorporated into the Roman Empire as provincia Lycia in 43 AD and Patara became its capital; no doubt, the city’s importance was instrumental in the resultant finds of Italian amphora.

LR 1 amphorae were the dominant amphora group in the city after the 5th century AD, although products from the entire Mediterranean basin came to Patara until the late 4th century AD. These amphorae are originating from the Aegean, the Black Sea, South Anatolia, Cyprus, Levant, the Syro-Palestine region, and Egypt. The Late Roman amphorae dating from after the 6th century AD have a more sloppy morphological appearance, unlike the amphorae of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. This appearance, which does not have any appeal, including the LR 1 and LR 2 amphorae, shows that the consumption economy and marketing strategies in particular had changed at the end of the 6th century AD. The social and economic situation in the eastern Mediterranean had a great change at the beginning of the 7th century AD due to the Byzantine-Persian war (602–625 AD). The large numbers of LR 1 amphorae at Patara – and at other settlements on the Mediterranean coast of Anatolia – may be related to the establishment of the new praetorian prefecture quaestura exercitus by Justinian. The standardization of the LR 1 amphora and its small dimensions, which facilitate transport, raises the possibility that they were used to meet the needs of the troops. It is expected that detailed studies on the subject will help in further resolving the lingering uncertainties regarding the amphora trade and production.

Particularly following Lycia’s incorporation as a Roman province in 43 AD, Patara began to display commercial ties with distant production centers – in sharp contrast to its commercial ties during the Hellenistic era. As in the Hellenistic era, Patara remained primarily connected with commerce in the Aegean. However, during the Roman Im-

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12 Haldon 1997, 120.
perial Era, Patara supplemented this trade with imports from Cilicia, Palestine and Egypt to the east and south, and Tyrrhenia, Narbonensis, Baetica, Lusitania, Mauritania Caesariensis, Tripolitania and North Africa to the west (Fig. 13). The range of these contacts reflects the settlement’s new status and importance as a provincial capital during the era of the *Pax Romana*.

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Fig. 1: Patara Excavation Archive; Figs. 2–13: E. Dündar

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