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BULLETIN
DE LIAISON DE
CÉRAMIQUE
ÉGYPTIENNE 24



INSTITUT FRANÇAIS D'ARCHÉOLOGIE ORIENTALE

BCE 24 – 2014

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Amheida/Trimithis (Dakhla Oasis): Results from a Pottery Survey in Area 11

THE CERAMIC MATERIALS presented in this article were collected during a survey carried out at Amheida, ancient *Trimithis*, in February 2013. This Roman polis is located 3,5 km South of the Islamic village of *el-Qasr*, in the North-western part of the Dakhla Oasis.¹

Archaeologists have so far identified 11 main areas (fig. 1), four of which are under excavation: Area 1, characterized both by private dwellings and workshops, presents pottery highly diversified and dating from the early Empire to the beginning of Late Antiquity;² Area 2, which consists of vaulted and painted buildings, presents ceramic materials that are mainly dated to the fourth century AD;³ Area 3 is characterized by an impressive pyramid surrounded by vaulted tombs;⁴ Area 4, on top of the main hill of the site, shows remains of a temple with different construction phases dating from the Late Period to the Roman Period, with a deep stratigraphy that testifies to earlier occupations dating back to the Old Kingdom.⁵

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1. The archaeological expedition at Amheida has been carried out by an international team under the sponsorship of Columbia University and (since the 2009 season) New York University, where it is based in the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World. It is directed by R.S. Bagnall (ISAW), the archaeological director is P. Davoli (University of Salento), and the pottery study is supervised by P. Ballet (University of Poitiers): BAGNALL *ET AL.* 2006, p. 26-29; BAGNALL, RUFFINI 2004, p. 143-144; BAGNALL, RUFFINI 2012, p. 1-2.

2. The study of ceramic materials from building B2 (Area 1) is forthcoming by D. Dixneuf (CEALex).

3. The excavations focused on B1 (Area 2.1), a Late Roman house that belonged to Serenos and dated to the 4th century AD: DAVOLI 2012, p. 267-277. The ceramic material coming from the house has been studied by the author, Irene Soto (PhD student, ISAW) and Julie Marchand (PhD student, University of Poitiers) and will be the subject of a future publication. Two other sub-areas, Areas 2.2 and 2.3, are still under excavation. The preliminary results are published at: <http://www.amheida.org/index.php?content=reports>.

4. The restoration of the pyramid (Area 3) was done by Nicholas Warner during the 2006 season: http://www.amheida.org/inc/pdf/Architectural_conservation_2006.pdf.

5. DAVOLI, KAPER 2006, p. 12-14; DAVOLI 2012, p. 263-267. The pottery coming from the temple area dates from the Old Kingdom to the end of the fourth century AD. The ceramic vessels identified and dated

The topographical survey in Amheida started in 2000 and is still in progress.⁶ During the 2013 season, the survey focused on the identification of the Western limits of the ancient site, in an area covered by large sand dunes (Areas 9 and 7). As it is well known, the dunes move across the years: since 2007 the sand moved toward the South in a significant way and exposed a new quarter of the city.⁷ This area, labelled Area II, is characterized by the presence of a cluster of dwellings extending for about 120 m East-West and 90 m North-South. The North limits of this area are clearly identifiable, whereas towards the South the buildings are not visible yet.

The topographic survey started investigating also Area 6, a sector located to the South-West of Area 2, identified as a huge necropolis. Several well preserved tombs with vaults and painted walls emerging from the sandy surface up to 2 or 3 m are still visible.⁸

Area 11

Area II (fig. 2) seems to have functioned as a living district of *Trimithis*. The architectural structures identified during the survey reveal the presence of a dense net of orthogonal streets that vary between 2 to 6 m in width. These streets delimit a block of dwellings, 100 to 180 square meters each, which are preserved up to the roof level. Two possible building phases have been identified by the slightly different orientation of the houses and by the different construction techniques employed.

The new quarter seems not be contiguous to the central urban area (Area 2). A preliminary ceramological survey was carried out by Pascale Ballet, Julie Marchand and the author from February 7th to 11th 2013 to determine the chronology of Area II. The pottery was not collected systematically but in a selective way, choosing the most datable ceramic materials.⁹

to mid XIII Dynasty (c. 1700 BC) to the beginning of the XVIII Dynasty are similar to those found at Balat: see MARCHAND, SOUKIASSIAN 2010.

6. Most of the city's buildings visible on the surface have been mapped by means of a Total Station by different teams of topographers, like MoLAS and Ar/S Archeosistemi (Reggio Emilia). Their reports are available at: <http://www.amheida.org/index.php?content=reports>.

7. By comparing the data collected from 2001 to 2013, it has been possible to determine that the sand dunes moved toward the South about 7 to 7.5 m each year.

8. The 2013 topographical survey was carried out by F. Pavia: <http://www.amheida.org/inc/pdf/Report2013.pdf>.

9. I would like to thank Pascale Ballet for the availability and the precious aid of supervising, Fabrizio Pavia for the valuable cooperation, and Julie Marchand for the drawings of the sherds recovered.

The ceramic sherds collected are mostly datable to the Roman Period (1st-3rd century AD). They were parts of locally produced vessels and of transport containers, mainly imported amphorae.

The oasis productions

The common wares are made in local fabrics, identified on the basis of the *Dakhleh Oasis Fabric System's* classification by Colin Hope, who has worked extensively on the production of pottery artefacts in the Dakhla Oasis for all historical periods.¹⁰ The vessels recovered consist mostly of table ware, cooking ware, and food preparation ware.

The small and medium-sized bowls, part of the category of the table wares, can be divided into two types, one with incurved rim and the other with straight-sided rim.

Small convex bowls or lid/footed bowls, present in great number on the surface, belong to the first type (fig. 3, nos. 1-2) with, usually, a flat base on which the spiral pattern made when the vessel was cut off the clay is still clearly visible. They were used both for the consumption and the preparation of food, but more often as lids for storage jars. This use is attested by the presence of residues of gypsum plaster attached to their inner walls. These kinds of bowls were produced as early as the beginning of the Hellenistic Period, both in the Oases and in the Nile Valley.¹¹ However, comparisons from Ismant el-Kharab were dated to the second or third century AD.¹² Another kind of bowls with incurved rim found at Amheida is characterized by a slightly domed base (fig. 3, nos. 3-4). These were often used as cooking vessels, as the black soot on the external surfaces clearly proves. This type can be sub-divided according to size into a small variant, with a diameter ranging from 10 to 14 cm, and a large one, with diameters in the 16 to 23 cm range. The same kinds of bowls were found in great quantity in the Early Roman deposits at Ismant el-Kharab and in the tombs (i.e. T. 20) of the necropolis of Douch.¹³

The second type of bowls, with straight sided rim (fig. 3, nos. 5-6), is characterized by slightly raised bottom, sloping walls, and, sometimes, a lip that is slightly rounded toward the exterior. They were mostly used for cooking, as attested by the heavily blackened surfaces of many of them. This type is generally dated to the Early Roman

10. HOPE 1999, p. 215-243. For the fabric descriptions see: HOPE 2000, p. 194-195.

11. HOPE 1987, pl. 171, fig. 5 (j); PATTEN 2000, p. 165-167, pl. 46 (Form 38); DUNSMORE 2002, p. 135-136 (197/103c); HOPE 2004, p. 40, fig. 7 (a, c, f) and p. 41, fig. 9 (d, e, h).

12. HOPE 2003, p. 213, fig. 5 (a); HOPE 2003, p. 269, fig. 20 (b-c) and p. 272; HOPE *ET AL.* 2006, p. 27-29, p. 50 fig. 5 (c 61).

13. DUNAND *ET AL.* 1992, p. 48-57, pl. 79 (3); PATTEN 2000, p. 141-143, pl. 41 (Form 6/1, Form 6/2); DUNSMORE 2002, p. 135-136 (197/104c).

Period, but at Ismant el-Kharab it was more common in the second and third century AD contexts (Phases 1-2).¹⁴

One small restricted bowl found during the survey does not belong to either type. It has a composite convex profile, an everted rim with grooves for the lids, a carinated body, and a round base (fig. 3, no. 7). This shape is present in Dakhla and Kharga Oases during the Early Roman Period, with rim diameters ranging from 10 to 13,5 cm.¹⁵

Numerous sherds of cooking pots were also recovered in Area 11. They are characterized by rounded rims with a groove on the top and carinated body (fig. 3, no. 8). The closest parallels are from Ismant el-Kharab, dated to the second and third century AD.¹⁶

Another category of vessels found are basins or deep bowls used for food preparation (fig. 3, no. 9). They usually have slightly flattened lips with triangular section, convex walls, and ring bases. Although these shapes are usually dated generally to the Early Roman Period, the comparative material from Ismant el-Kharab seems to suggest that they were produced in the Oasis as early as the first or second century AD.¹⁷

One complete body of a small globular bottle was found broken into two parts (fig. 3, no. 10). It is similar to one found in the North Tomb 6 (Room 2) at Ismant el-Kharab and dated to the late third to fourth century AD.¹⁸

14. HOPE 1987, p. 171, fig. 5 (d); see also DUNAND *ET AL.* 1992, pl. III (4); PATTEN 2000, p. 147-148, pl. 42 (Form 10/1).

15. PATTEN 2000, p. 179, pl. 54 (Form 66 R-F).

16. HOPE 1987, p. 171, fig. 5 (f).

17. PATTEN 2000, p. 177-179, pl. 51 (Form 62/1); HOPE *ET AL.* 2006, p. 27, p. 49 fig. 4 (a).

18. HOPE 2004, p. 22-24, p. 39 fig. 6 (c).

Catalogue

[fig. 3.1-10]

fig. 3.1

Small convex bowl or lid/footed bowl

Inv.: A13/o.o/1/30103

D. rim: 9,0 cm

Fabric: A1a, reddish in colour, medium-fine texture. Many small fine sand and black particles.

Dating: 2nd-3rd century AD.

The bowl is almost complete. The base is partly eroded. Light orange surfaces.

fig. 3.2

Small convex bowl or lid/footed bowl

Inv.: A13/o.o/1/30133

D. rim: 8,0 cm

Fabric: A1a, red in core and surface. Considerable presence of white inclusions, few voids, sand, quartz.

Dating: 2nd-3rd century AD.

The base of the vessel is missing. Cream slipped surfaces.

fig. 3.3

Small bowl with incurved rim

Inv.: A13/o.o/1/30136

D. rim: 14,0 cm

Fabric: A1a, red in core and surface. Sandy core with white and quartz inclusions.

Dating: Early Roman.

The bowl is not complete. Plain surfaces.

fig. 3.4

Medium-sized bowl with incurved rim

Inv.: A13/o.o/1/30128

D. rim: 18,0 cm

Fabric: A1a, red in core and surface. Few white dots, voids, some big black inclusions, few big yellowish and whitish inclusions.

Dating: Early Roman.

The bowl is not complete. Plain orange surfaces.

fig. 3.5

Small bowl with straight sided rim

Inv.: A13/o.o/1/30101

D. rim: 13,0 cm; d. base: 9,0 cm

Fabric: A1a, red-orange in colour. Fine texture. Dating: Early Roman.

Complete small bowl. Traces of soot on the base. Plain orange surfaces.

fig. 3.6

Medium-sized bowl straight sided rim

Inv.: A13/o.o/1/30134

D. rim: 17,0 cm

Fabric: A1a, red in core and surface. Numerous tiny white inclusions, voids, and quartz.

Dating: 2nd-3rd century AD.

The rim of this bowl forms a small "marli". All the surfaces are blackened by soot.

fig. 3.7

Small carinated bowl

Inv.: A13/o.o/1/30138

D. rim: 10 cm

Fabric: A1a, red in core. Fine texture.

Dating: Early Roman.

Very eroded surfaces.

fig. 3.8

Cooking pot

Inv.: A13/o.o/1/30132

D. rim: 13,0 cm

Fabric: A1b, dark grey core. Fine, tiny white inclusions, few sand, quartz, few voids. Hard fired fabric.

Dating: 2nd-3rd century AD.

A small handle just under the rim. Grey surfaces. Smooth exterior surface with traces of use.

fig. 3.9

Basin

Inv.: A13/o.o/1/30139

D. rim: 19,0 cm

Fabric: A1b, with grey core. Fine texture.

Dating: 1st-3rd century AD.

The lower part of the basin has evident wheel marks. Plain cream surfaces.

fig. 3.10

Small globular bottle

Inv.: A13/o.o/1/30137

Fabric: A1a, red in core. Sandy fabric. Considerable presence of white inclusions.

Dating: Late 3rd-4th century AD.

The neck is missing. Red slipped surfaces.

The imported amphorae

The fragments of imported amphorae recovered in Area II have been identified according to their morphology and fabric characteristics. They can be divided into two groups: amphorae of Egyptian production and amphorae from Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean seas.

Two examples of Egyptian amphorae have been identified as *Amphores Égyptiennes 3* (AE 3): one comes from Mariout Lake area (fig. 4, no. 11), and another one from the Nile Valley. According to the classification made by D. Dixneuf of the Mariout amphorae AE 3, the fragment of Area II, can be identified with the sub-type AE 3-1.1 A.¹⁹ The fabric is characterized by a calcareous clay, sandy, and medium-coarse to medium-fine texture. The colour of the fracture varies depending on the firing from buff-brown to red-brown. These types of amphorae have “C”-shaped edges, flat interior surfaces, high cylindrical neck, and “ear-handles” attached to the upper part of the neck with rounded sections starting from the base. They are commonly dated to the end of the first century BC to second century AD.²⁰

The second sherd of AE 3 in Nile silt²¹ corresponds closely to the amphorae recognized by R. Tomber as AE 3a in the Eastern Desert and dated to the Neronian-Trajanic Periods.²² The presence in the Eastern Desert and Upper Egypt of amphorae of the same typology of those produced in Mariout area but in different fabrics indicates that they were produced in other *ateliers* in Egypt with local clays.²³

Among the imported amphorae from Aegean area one item can be identified as a Cretan amphora (fig. 4, nos. 12, 12a). Cretan amphorae were generally used to transport Cretan wine (*passum*)²⁴ and were produced in many centres scattered all over the island

19. DIXNEUF 2011, p. 98-107, 319 (fig. 83).

20. DIXNEUF 2011, p. 101-104.

21. The fragment of AE3 in Nile silt (Inv. A13/o.o/1/30126) was not drawn because it is too eroded.

22. TOMBER 2007a, p. 529, fig. 2 (4).

23. TOMBER 2007a, p. 525-535; DIXNEUF 2011, p. 107.

24. MARANGOU-LERAT 1996, p. 5-29.

from the early first to the mid-fourth century AD.²⁵ Since the end of Augustan age, these amphorae spread in different areas of the Mediterranean sea.²⁶ They have been found also in Egypt, as at Marina el-Alamein,²⁷ Alexandria,²⁸ in the Fayum (Tebtynis),²⁹ and in the Eastern desert (Mons Claudianus).³⁰ The sherds found at Amheida belong to the so-called *Amphore crétoise* I, variant “a” (AC_{1a}), extensively produced at Crete from the second half of the first century AD until the beginning of the third century AD.³¹ This variant had an ordinary capacity calculated between 20 and 25 l, and it is characterized by a slightly convex rim, straight neck that becomes concave in connection with the shoulder, ovoid or cylindrical body, and pointed or button base. The arc-shaped handle is positioned from below the rim to the end of the shoulder.³² Amphora AC_{1a} is interpreted as the earliest type produced, since it is the only variant present in contexts dated to the first century AD.³³ The fragment of Cretan amphora AC_{1a} recovered in Area II has a narrow straight neck and bowed handles from below the rim to the shoulder.

Two other fragments of imported amphorae come from the southern coasts of Anatolia: one is from Pamphylia and the other from Cilicia. The Pamphylian amphorae (fig. 4, nos. 13, 13a), relatively widespread in the Hellenistic Period, were used to transport wine and are unfortunately poorly documented in Roman sites. V. Grace has created a system of identification and typological development for the later versions of this shape (1st-3rd centuries AD) based on her study on the finds from Delos and the Athenian Agora.³⁴ A considerable group of fragments of Pamphylian amphorae is attested at Marina el-Alamein, together with those from Crete, mainly in the assemblages of the second century AD. The fragment from Amheida, similar in shape to those from Marina, has a thickened rim with a small groove on the top and low cylindrical neck that curves out toward the rim and the body.³⁵

The fragment from Cilicia corresponds to the “Pinched-handle” amphora known as Agora G199 or Mau XXVII/XXVIII (fig. 4, nos. 14, 14a).³⁶ This is a medium-sized

25. MARANGOU-LERAT 1996, p. 35-122.

26. RILEY 1979, p. 181; MARANGOU-LERAT 1996, p. 74.

27. MAJCHEREK 2007, p. 12-13, 26-27 (fig. 1, nos. 1-6; fig. 2, nos. 7-10).

28. A cargo of Cretan amphorae were identified in the shipwreck discovered by Empereur near the entrance of the port of Alexandria: EMPEREUR 1997, p. 836.

29. MARANGOU, MARCHAND 2007, p. 247, 280 (fig. 31, AC₄); BALLEZ, POŁUDNIKIEWICZ 2012, p. 168, 318, pl. 80 (724).

30. MAJCHEREK 2007, p. 11-12.

31. MARANGOU-LERAT 1996, p. 68-70, 74-75; MAJCHEREK 2007, p. 12, 26 (fig. 1, no. 1).

32. MARANGOU-LERAT 1996, p. 68.

33. MARANGOU-LERAT 1996, p. 74.

34. GRACE 1973, p. 183-208.

35. MAJCHEREK 2007, p. 24-25, 31 (fig. 6, nos. 39-40).

36. Agora G199 (ROBINSON 1959, p. 43, pl. 8); Mau XXVII/XXVIII; *Ostia* 631 (PANELLA 1973, p. 474-6 fig. 34); Zemer 41 (ZEMER 1978, p. 52 no. 41); Mid Roman Amphora 4 (RILEY 1979, p. 186-187); *Nea*

amphora, with short and cylindrical neck, rim gently everted, plain or slightly ribbed body, and terminating with a distinctive elongated toe, sometimes with a 'mushroom' cap. The short and right-angled handles, which are grooved and pinched from the sides, are the type's distinctive morphological feature.³⁷ The variants of the fabric are indicative of different production centres: kilns producing these amphorae with micaceous red-orange fabric have been discovered by C. Williams in Rough Cilicia (Anemurium)³⁸ and by N. Rauh and K. Slane in Western Rough Cilicia (Syedra and Biçkici).³⁹ Examples made in hard pinkish-red/orange and yellowish/buff-beige wares have been attributed to Cypriot workshops by Hayes.⁴⁰ J. Lund has suggested that the "classical" shape dated to the first-second centuries AD, with high neck and handles (Agora G199), developed progressively into the late third-early fourth century AD shape of smaller volume, featuring a wide low neck and small handles (Agora M239).⁴¹ C. Williams has suggested that these containers were probably intended for the transport of a highly-prized Cilician raisin-wine (*passum Cilicium*)⁴² and olive oil. The amphorae were mainly distributed in Western Cyprus (especially at *Nea Paphos*), in Rough Cilicia, and complete examples were found at Marina el-Alamein in Egypt.⁴³ Most of the finds in Marina correspond to the type Agora G199 while the others may be transitions or later variations. According to the well-dated finds, as table wares and lamps, they occur principally in assemblages from the second to the early third century AD.⁴⁴ Our find in Amheida, according to the fabric and the highness of the neck, corresponds to the type Agora G199 and is very close to the examples found at Marina el-Alamein in assemblages of the second-early third century AD.⁴⁵

The last imported amphora found during the survey has been identified as a *S. Lorenzo 7*. It was found at the southern edge of Area II and most probably it belongs to the cemetery context (Area 6).

Paphos Type 3 (HAYES 1991, p. 91-92) ; Pinched-handle amphora (LEONARD 1995, p. 144-145).

37. MAJCHEREK 2007, p. 21-24.

38. WILLIAMS 1989, p. 91-96.

39. RAUH, SLANE 2000, p. 319-330.

40. HAYES 1991, p. 91. Even if no kilns have been found in Cyprus, the source in the island proposed by Hayes has been supported by Lund: LUND 2000, p. 565-578; see also MAJCHEREK 2007, p. 22.

41. LUND 2000, p. 565-578.

42. WILLIAMS 1989, p. 90-91, fig. 54 (no. 548), Plate 16 (no. 548). Cilician wine (*passum Cilicium*) was mentioned by Pliny the Elder. In the XIV book of the *Naturalis Historia* (Paragraphs 81-94), several chapters deal with the subject in detail: vine species, nature of soil, climate, types of wines known: MAJCHEREK 2007, p. 23.

43. DASZKIEWICZ ET AL. 1997, p. 132-138; MAJCHEREK 2007, p. 22.

44. This seems to be the period of greatest distribution of this type on other sites in the Mediterranean: MAJCHEREK 2007, p. 23.

45. MAJCHEREK 2007, p. 23-24, 30-31, fig. 5 (32-33) and fig. 6 (34).

Several eroded fragments and handles of this type of amphora (at least parts of two vessels) have been collected in the same location (fig. 4, nos. 15, 15a).⁴⁶ This amphora, known also as Berenice 298-99, is an Aegean-Eastern production, but it owes its current name to the findings made in the excavations carried out in the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Milan.⁴⁷ It is a heavy vessel with thick rim and handles and a wide body that narrows towards a concave base.⁴⁸

Various examples have been recognized in Italy. During the archaeological excavations done between 1986 and 1992 in the area of the “Catholic University” of Milan, archaeologists investigated a complex stratigraphic deposit called “dark layer” and corresponding to a portion of the cemetery *extra muros* in use from the third to the fifth century AD. Six rims of *S. Lorenzo 7* were found inside this dark layer among the numerous imported amphorae from the Eastern Mediterranean, together with “Pinched-handle” amphora fragments. The possible secondary use of this amphora for funerary purposes is suggested by the presence of *enchytrismos* burials dated between the late third and the early fourth century AD. This type of container was used as “coffin” by making a cut just above the shoulder.⁴⁹ The analysis of the clay suggests an origin from the surrounding regions of Phocaea or the Marmara Sea.⁵⁰ Other examples come from Dalmatian coasts (Sibenik),⁵¹ Black Sea (Tomis), Crimea (Tiritake), Israel (Caesarea), North Sinai (Qasrawet), as well as Cyrenaica (Benghazi).⁵²

The date-range of production suggested by L. Villa for this type of amphorae is “between the third and fourth and perhaps even fifth century”.⁵³ The date of the destruction of Qasrawet in the late fourth century AD confirms the circulation of these amphorae still at the time. However, according to three examples found at Tomis the later dating for these amphorae could be the sixth century AD.⁵⁴

Our example is very close in shape to those found both in Cattolica University excavation⁵⁵ and in Qasrawet.⁵⁶ It has a short, slightly cylindrical neck, rounded rim, slightly concave in the inner side, and the handle, with oval section, starts from the rim.

46. In addition to the fragments of common pottery and amphorae, many fragments of coffins in very coarse fabric (A4) were found in Area 6: <http://www.amheida.org/inc/pdf/Report2013.pdf>

47. CORRADO 2003, p. 101-107.

48. ARTHUR, OREN 1998, p. 203.

49. AIROLDI 2001, p. 119, fig. 9. An analogous case is also attested in the necropolis of S. Lorenzo di Parabiago, see: SCOTTI 1996, p. 170.

50. CORRADO 2003, p. 107.

51. VILLA 1994, p. 382-386.

52. ARTHUR, OREN 1998, p. 203 (n. 32).

53. The dating of the amphorae in VILLA 1994, p. 382-386, are confirmed by findings from Ostia and Altino, see: FERRARINI 1993, p. 157-164.

54. ARTHUR, OREN 1998, p. 203.

55. CORRADO 2003, p. 101-130, fig. 7, 47-52.

56. ARTHUR, OREN 1998, p. 200, fig. 5 (4-5).

Catalogue

[fig. 4.11-15]

fig. 4.11

Amphore Égyptienne 3 (AE 3) from Mariout

Inv.: A13/0.0/1/30131

D. rim: 13,0 cm

Fabric: fairly coarse gritty reddish-brown fabric with sparsely medium-fine and fine white calcareous, few squared grey, and rare fine red inclusions.

Dating: End 1st century BC-2nd century AD.

Fabric: soft, buff-orange fabric. Fine texture, with red and black particles.

Dating: 2nd century AD.

The external surface is cream in colour. Only the initial part of the handle remains attached below the rim.

fig. 4.12

Cretan amphora

Inv.: A13/0.0/1/30130

D. neck: 8,0 cm

Fabric: hard, smooth and fine fabric, buff in colour with small white limestone inclusions.

Dating: Second half of 1st-beginning of 3rd century AD.

Traces of pitch are visible on the handle. The fragment has a very eroded internal surface.

fig. 4.14

“Pinched-handle” amphora

Inv.: A13/0.0/1/30135

D. rim: 9,0 cm

Fabric: very smooth and fine fabric, pinkish-red colour with buff-beige surfaces. Few micas, voids, tiny black inclusions.

Dating: 2nd-early 3rd century AD.

The rim is missing.

fig. 4.13

Pamphylian amphora

Inv.: A13/0.0/1/30110

D. rim: 14,0 cm

fig. 4.15

S. Lorenzo 7 amphora

Inv.: A13/0.0/1/30123

D. rim: 13,0 cm

Fabric: buff in colour, with a considerable presence of quartz, micas, many tiny black inclusions. Some big particles and minerals particles on the surface. Light brown surfaces.

Dating: 3rd-6th century AD.

Conclusion

The preliminary study of the collected pottery during the survey suggests that the houses in Area 11 have been active until the end of the third century AD. The clusters of potsherds visible on the surface are more similar to those observed in Area 1 than the sherds present on the other areas, mainly datable to the fourth century AD.

The most interesting category among the potsherds recovered is that of the imported amphorae, a kind of vessels usually found in lower quantity than oasis ware in Amheida. Those studied above are a small group out of a larger body of amphora sherds found at the site from 2004 to 2013. Not all of them have been identified so far, like for example a series of sherds found in Area 7 during the 2012 season, of which

the state of conservation is very poor; others, found in Area 2, have been identified as parts of an amphora Dressel 20 type (used for the transportation of olive oil),⁵⁷ as an amphora Late Roman 4 type from Gaza (for wine),⁵⁸ and as amphorae from Knidos.⁵⁹

Imported amphorae were recovered also during the excavation. Fragments of imports from the Nile Valley, such as wine amphorae Late Roman 7,⁶⁰ were found in the three areas investigated, as well as a small number of imports from the Mediterranean sea, such as wine amphorae Late Roman 1 from Cyprus, and wine amphorae of Rhodian type.⁶¹ An interesting find is one example of amphora Keay LII from Italy (South Calabria and Sicily) found in Area 2.2.⁶²

So far, the amphorae presented in this article have been found only in Area 11 at Amheida. They add new information on imports and trade involving the Dakhla Oasis in general, and Amheida in particular during the Roman Period (2nd-4th century AD). Even if it is not yet possible to provide quantitative information on these imports, the data recorded must be added to those already published by Hope and Ross on imported amphorae in Dakhla Oasis.⁶³ Despite the distance from major trading centres, such as the Nile Valley and the Delta, Amheida is so far the site in the Oasis with the greatest range of imports, especially from the Aegean, the Iberian Peninsula, North Africa, as well as from other regions within Egypt.⁶⁴

57. Inv. A12/0.0/1/30109 (variant type unknown).

58. Inv. A12/2.1/30052 (fourth to sixth century AD): BALLET, PICON 1987, p. 33; HOPE, ROSS 2007, p. 473, 480 (fig. 4g). See also PIÉRI 2005, p. 101-114.

59. Inv. A10/2.1/30058 (variant type unknown).

60. Inv. A05/2.1/67/2766; A06/2.1/151/10350 (Type 1, end of the fourth century-beginning of the fifth century AD). Several rim fragments were found also in DSU 233 of Serenos house (Room 14). See also PIÉRI 2005, p. 129-132.

61. Inv. A10/2.1/368/30016 (Rhodian fabric 1, dating from first century BC to second century AD). NICOLAOU, EMPEREUR 1986, p. 515-531; HOPE, ROSS 2007, p. 465, 477 (fig. 1c-f).

62. Inv. A12/2.2/29/30065. Known also as Robinson M 234, this wine amphora, seems to have been produced between the fourth and the beginning of the sixth century AD in workshops located mainly in Calabria and Sicily. Our example, very close to one found at Tell el-Farama, is comparable to sub-type 2, which according to the classification by Bonifay and Piéri is a type characteristic of the second half of the fifth century AD: BONIFAY, PIÉRI 1995, p. 114-116; DIXNEUF 2006, p. 393 (fig. 7), 394.

63. HOPE, ROSS 2007, p. 463-480.

64. The other two sites investigated are Mut el-Kharab (ancient Mothis) and Ismant el-Kharab (ancient Kellis): HOPE, ROSS 2007, p. 474. For the imports found at Mons Claudianus see: TOMBER 1996, p. 46-49.

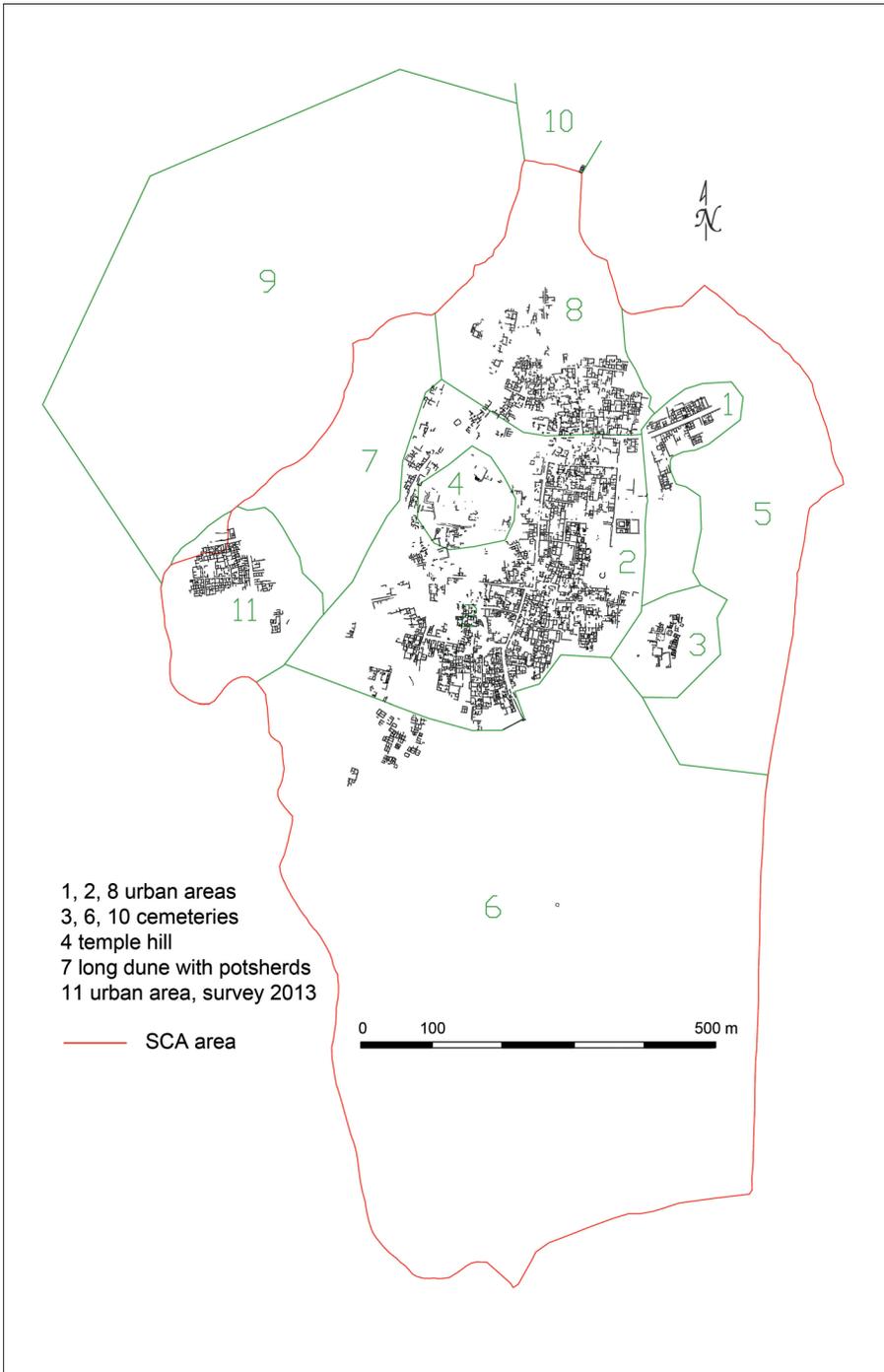


Fig. 1. *Ambeida plan (2013).*



Fig. 2. Area II, looking East.

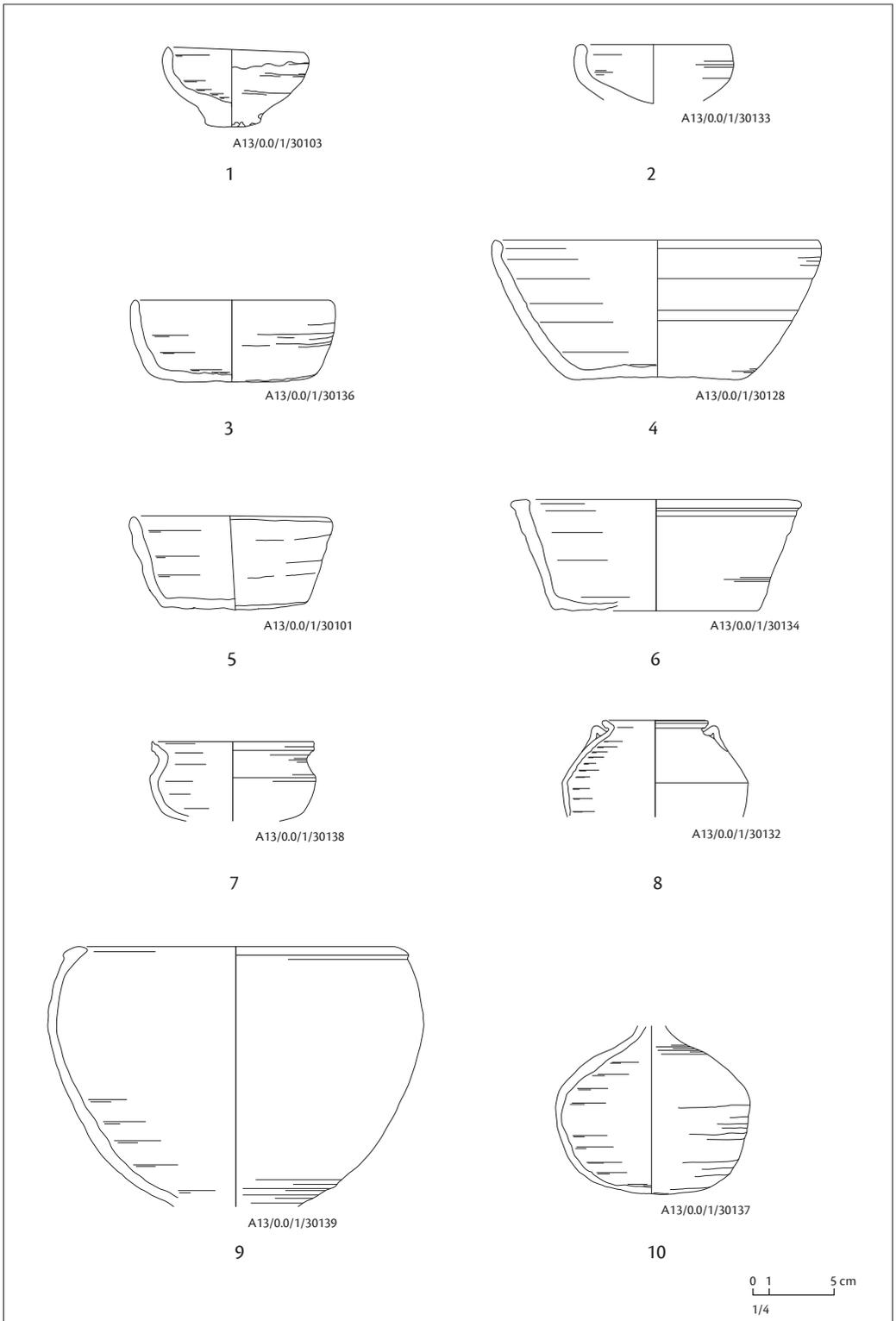


Fig. 3. Local productions (Roman Period).

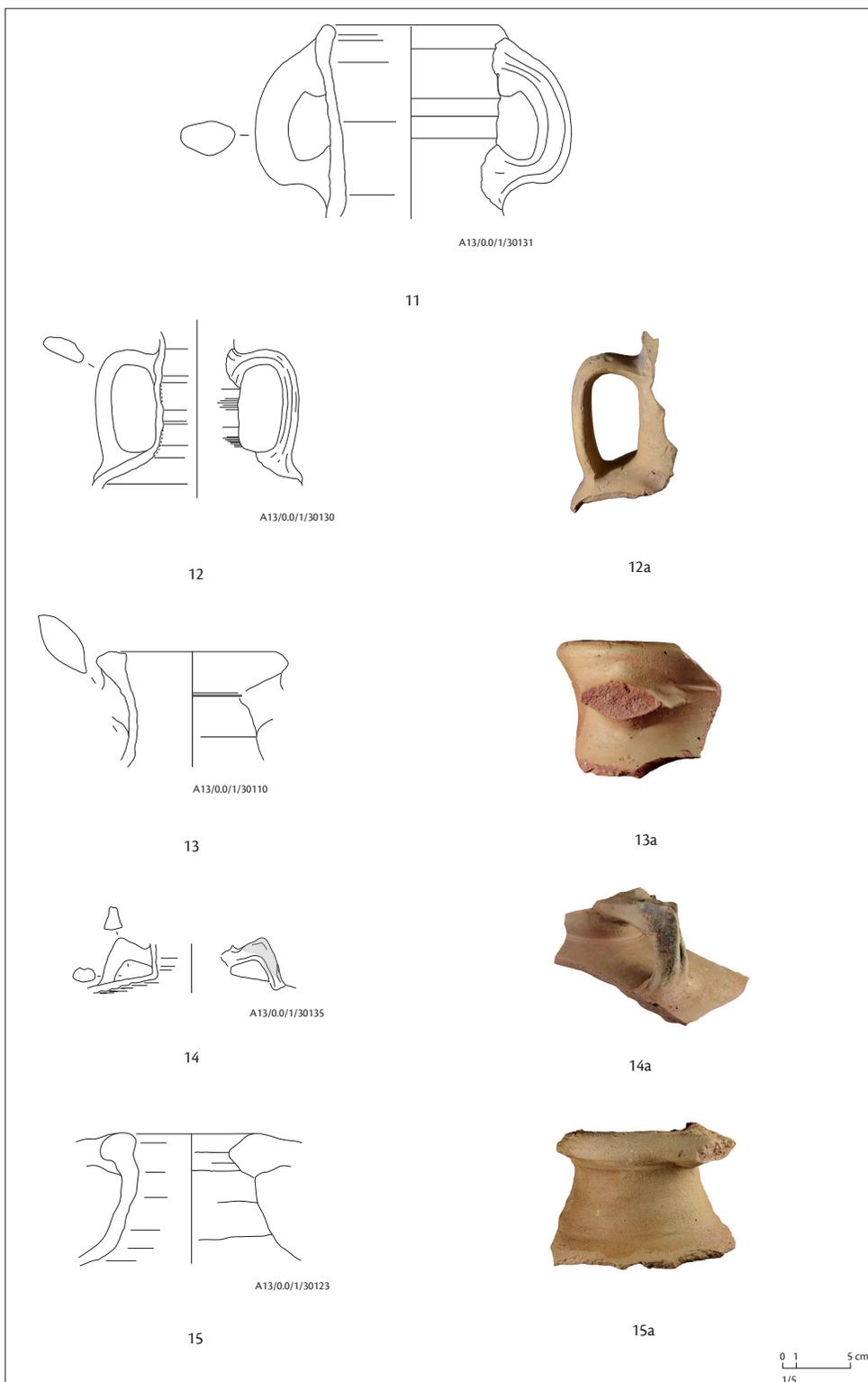


Fig. 4. Imported amphorae: Amphore Égyptienne 3-I.1 A from Mariout, end 1st c. BC-2nd c. AD (11); Cretan Amphora AC1a, second half 1st-beginning 3rd c. AD (12, 12a); Pamphylian Amphora, 2nd c. AD (13, 13a); "Pinched-handle" Amphora, 2nd-early 3rd c. AD (14, 14a); S. Lorenzo 7 Amphora, 3rd-5th c. AD (15, 15a).

