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Book Reviews



S. Yu. Monakhov, E.V. Kuznetsova, N.B. Churekova, *Amphorae of the 5th-2th c. BC from the Collection of the State Museum-Preserve « Tauric Chersonese »: Catalogue*. Saratov: Novyi proekt Press, 2017, 208 p., illustrations. ISBN 978-5-6040074-0-2.

As indicated in the title, this work is devoted to transport amphorae held in the State Museum-Preserve « Tauric Chersonese » (official English title of this museum). It is a further addition to the series of works designed to publish museum collections of transport amphorae from archaeological sites in the North Pontic region, which are being published by a team of scholars led by S. Yu. Monakhov. The first book was devoted to amphorae from the Eastern-Crimean Historical and Cultural Museum-Preserve.¹ The monograph consists of an Introduction, two chapters, a Catalogue of Amphorae and also reference material collected together in an Appendix.

The Introduction includes a short analysis of the current state of “amphorology”² in our country and abroad: one of the key tasks facing these scholars is to ensure that transport amphorae – a mass-scale category of archaeological finds – be regarded as a major archaeological source which should be widely used for dating purposes and for historical reconstructions in archaeology and Classical history. These authors, however, see it as incumbent upon them not just to publish and date these amphorae and to attribute them to various types, but also to re-examine the archaeological assemblages to which they belong. This approach ensures that the dates given are more reliable and it often enables the authors to provide more precise dates for certain types of amphorae and the assemblages from which they came.

There is no reason to object to the chronological range used for this research, which the authors make clear from the start – namely the 5th-2nd centuries BC. The first date was determined by the date for the earliest amphorae found

1 Monakhov, Kuznetsova, Fedoseev, Churekova 2016.

2 The term used by these authors was originally suggested by Y. Garlan.

within the fortified settlement. The earliest assemblage of pottery items found in Chersonesos, which included amphorae, dated from the 5th century BC (p. 25). The end date for the period under consideration was selected in view of the fundamental changes which took place in Pontic trade affecting the North Pontic region in the second half of the 2nd century BC, when the Roman period in Classical history began.

The first chapter treats the history of how the amphora collection at Chersonesos took shape. This chapter starts out with a short review of the early stage in the research at the fortified settlement, necropolis and the *chora*, during which work began on collecting finds and setting up the Chersonesos museum.

Information about the origin of the amphorae included in the Catalogue is presented in conjunction with details on the individual scholars involved in the excavations and those in charge of them. It is presented in chronological order. The main factor determining the inclusion of a particular scholar in this list (and in each case with a photograph) was that transport amphorae from the relevant excavations should be present in the repositories of the archaeological museum of the State Museum-Preserve « Tauric Chersonese ». The review provides quite a rich range of information and does not require additional commentaries, except in a few isolated cases.

In a comment regarding the excavations of N.I. Repnikov carried out in the necropolis in 1908 there is mention of an amphora from Sinope found in Burial 2811 (p. 14). Unfortunately there is no reference to the fact that in the Chersonese repositories there is a handle bearing the stamp: ΠΡ]ΩΤΟΦΑΝΟΥ ΑΣ]ΤΥΝΟΜΟΥ ΠΟΣΕΙΔΩΝΙΟ / small flower.³

Special mention should be made of amphorae found during excavations of part of the necropolis, which were carried out in 1960-61 and 1963, directed by E.G. Surov. As is mentioned in the text, the background to those finds is unknown, but hand-written documents, reports and photographs relating to those excavations have survived. It is evident that these materials merit considerable attention, for the history of any collection consists not only of acquisitions but also of losses.

It is important to mention that the method selected by the authors for the presentation of their historical material makes it possible to include specific information about the organization of the museum's collection of amphorae against the background of research at Chersonesos in general. This presentation of the material comes at the cost of analysis, over which factual details

3 Inv. No. 99/36481. We should like to express our gratitude to V.I. Katz for this information.

take precedence. Although the authors have gone out of their way to avoid this, the historical part of the work would have benefited, if as much attention had been focused on analysis of the details and problems involved in assembling the collection as on its history.

The second chapter describes how the pottery assemblages were selected: these were assemblages for which it had been possible to establish their composition fairly reliably (p. 24). Naturally enough the main criterion for selecting these assemblages was that they included amphorae described in the Catalogue.

As a result of that selection process there is nothing on materials from excavations undertaken by K.K. Kostsyushko-Valyuzhinich and mention of only a few of the amphorae found during excavations led by R.K. Leper, which – as aptly pointed out by the authors themselves – do not constitute a single assemblage (p. 37). More than half of the assemblages analysed in this chapter stem from the excavations carried out by M.I. Zolotarev, S.G. Ryzhov and S.V. Ushakov. Materials found by the other researchers mentioned in the first chapter consisted of only one assemblage. The pottery assemblages from the excavations carried out by G.M. Nikolaenko, O. Yu. Savelya and V.M. Zubar are not mentioned.

The authors carried out extensive and painstaking work when it came to their survey of earlier publications. Revealing in this respect was their discussion of the materials from the in-fill of Pits 1 and 2 found during the excavations carried out by M.I. Zolotarev in 1983 in the III District of Chersonesos. The scholar had identified these as dug-outs of the original settlers of Dorian Chersonesos (pp. 30 *ff.*). Analysis of the assemblage – and, in particular, of the transport amphorae – demonstrated convincingly that they dated from the first fifteen years of the 4th century BC. This meant that the pits could not have belonged to the first settlers, who had come to that location a hundred years earlier.

Despite the selective nature of the materials included in the second chapter, their value is indisputable. It is not merely thanks to the fact that a major series of archaeological sources has been introduced into the academic literature but also to the more precise definitions of types and dates for individual amphorae provided.

The Catalogue covers 214 vessels arranged in 21 different sections depending upon where they were produced and three further sections covering centres which have not been determined. For reasons which are unclear, a Punic amphora dating from the 1st or 2nd century AD was included in the Catalogue (Pl. 1, p. 174). There is a photograph illustrating each of the amphorae, a

drawing of the whole vessel and also separate drawings of the profiles of the foot and rim. For amphorae bearing stamps there are photographs, rubbings or tracings of the latter.

As far as the Catalogue's practical significance is concerned, it enables scholars to determine types of transport amphorae. Together with the authors, it is important to stress that it is only with the help of catalogues such as this one, based on whole vessel shapes, that it is possible to elaborate reliable criteria for defining the nature of profiled parts of vessels (p. 10). It is difficult to exaggerate the indispensable nature of those vessel parts in the context of field work and during the processing of materials in repositories or laboratories. The value of data obtained on the basis of statistical analysis of mass-scale amphora material and the main conclusions drawn from such data regarding trends and changes in trading relations within specific settlements, centres and regions are dependent on the reliable specification of production centres, types and dates.

Reference materials are provided in the Appendix. First and foremost there is a bibliography containing lists of books, articles and archive documents. A separate geographical index is provided and also an index of Greek names of magistrates and pottery manufacturers. These reference materials make it significantly easier to find information and render this volume easy to use in both field and laboratory conditions as a reference work for identifying vessels.

Finally, it is worth stressing once again how timely and significant this study of amphorae is – a reference work based on thorough and detailed research carried out by the authors at a highly professional level. It is to be hoped that work of this kind will be carried forward and that in the foreseeable future publications of transport amphorae held in other Russian museums will appear, particularly the largest of them in St.-Petersburg and Moscow.

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