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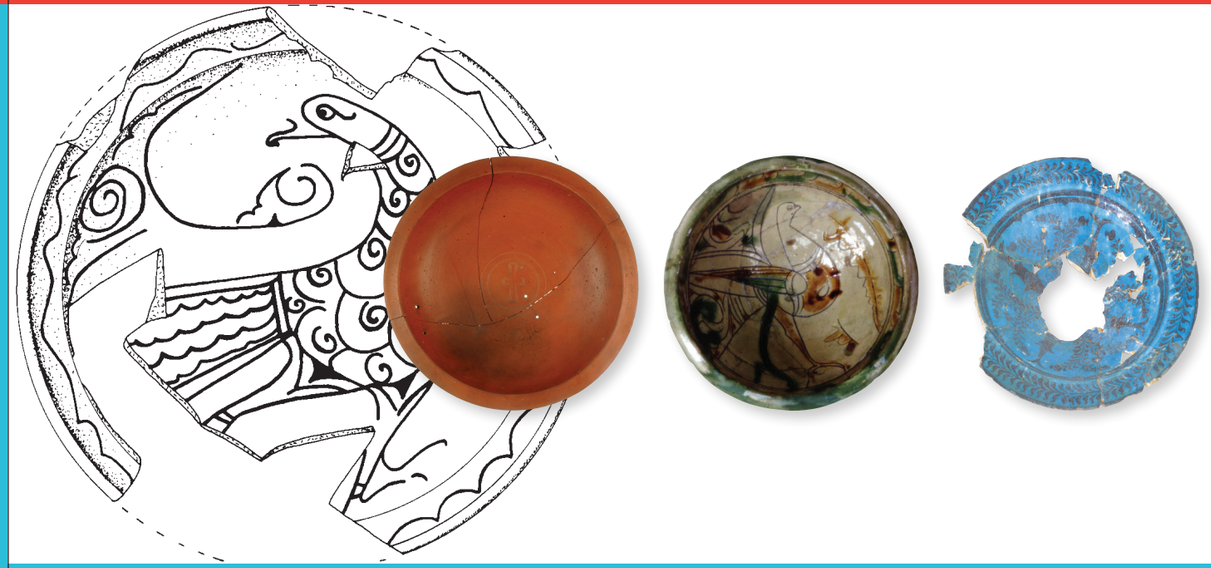
Late Antique and Medieval Pottery and Tiles in Mediterranean Archaeological Contexts



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Relations between Pottery Workshops in the Greek Mainland during the Early Byzantine Period[1]

Platon Petridis

To the old days at Üsküdar

Abstract

Having as starting point a thorough investigation[2] of the early Byzantine material from the town of Delphi, we examine in this paper the relations of this precise local production with other (supposed or well known) local productions of neighbouring or distant cities like Athens, Corinth, Demetrias and Nea Anchialos as well as the relations between the two most important centres of pottery production (Corinth and Athens). We attempt also to clarify the role of the imported pottery and its impact on the local wares. A last question to be examined is that of the self-sufficiency of the small provincial towns of Greece in the second half of the 6th century AD.

It seems that from the 2nd to the 4th century AD, the big centers of ceramic production export their products to smaller towns like Delphi, which at the same time export some of their own productions to other cities. The exchanges in terms of the products themselves become rare from the 5th century AD onwards, as local productions of the smaller cities become more and more flourishing and independent. But, surprisingly, the relations between all the workshops of the Greek mainland remain constant, this time in terms of creative exchanges or mutual imitations. Even at the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 7th century AD, at a moment when commerce, transports and communication in general are considered to face many difficulties, the local potters share a common repertory of motifs and adapt their

[1] I would like to thank the organizers of the First International Symposium on Late Antique and Medieval Pottery in Mediterranean Archaeological Contexts held in Çanakkale for the idea of bringing together scholars of different periods working on pottery and for the good atmosphere during the Symposium. I would also like to thank Mr. Ioannis Georgopoulos for the patience with which he corrected my English manuscript and Mrs. Nina Baka who helped me with the illustrations.

[2] A typological study and chemical and petrographic analyses of the material have already been done. The results will be published in a forthcoming volume (see supra n. 9). For shorter publications of the early Byzantine pottery of Delphi see: P. Petridis, Βιοτεχνικές εγκαταστάσεις της πρώιμης βυζαντινής περιόδου στους Δελφούς in: Αρχαιολογικά τεκμήρια βιοτεχνικών εγκαταστάσεων κατά τη βυζαντινή εποχή. 5ος-15ος αιώνας, Χριστιανική Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία - Πολιτιστικό Ίδρυμα Ομίλου Πειραιώς (2004) 243-256; Idem, Ateliers de potiers protobyzantins à Delphes in: Bakirtzis 2003, 443-446; Petridis 2001, 279-295; Idem, Les ateliers des potiers à Delphes à l'époque paléochrétienne, TOPOI 8, 1998, 703-710; Idem, Delphes dans l'Antiquité tardive: première approche topographique et céramologique, BCH 121, 1997, 681-695; Idem, Das frühchristliche Delphi. Die keramische Zeugnisse in: M. Maass (ed.), Delphi, Orakel am Nabel der Welt, Badisches Landesmuseum (1996) 121-124. 208-209.

productions to the types in fashion. This repertory was mainly based on African or Italian prototypes, which have been freely interpreted and with persistence on a few particular motifs.

Özet

Erken Bizans Dönemi Boyunca Yunanistan Kıtasındaki Seramik Atölyeleri Arasındaki İlişkiler

Bu yazıda, Delphi sehrindeki erken Bizans malzemelerinin baştan başa araştırılmasını baslangıç noktası yaparak, en önemli iki seramik üretim merkezi arasındaki ilişki ve bu iki yerel üretim merkezi ile (Korint ve Atina), tahmini yada bilinen diğer komşu yada uzak şehirlerdeki (Atina, Korint, Demetrias, Nea Anchialos) yerel ürünlerin arasındaki ilişkileri inceleyeceğiz. Ayrıca ithal çömlekçiliğin yerel çömlekçilik üzerindeki rolünü de açığa kavuşturmak amacındayız. Sorgulanacak son bir soru ise 6. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında Yunanistanın küçük kasabalarının kendi kendilerine yeterli olup olmadıklarıdır.

2. yüzyıldan 4. yüzyıla kadar olan dönemde büyük seramik üretim merkezlerin, ürünlerini Delphi gibi küçük sehirlere ve aynı zamanda üretimlerinin bazı ürünlerini de diğer şehirlere ihraç ettikleri görülmektedir. 5. yüzyıldan ileriye doğru, daha küçük şehirlerin değişimleri gittikçe gelişip özgürlüğe kavuşurken, ürünlerinin değiş tokuşu nadirleşmiştir. Fakat çok şaşırtıcıdır ki; Yunan başkentindeki atölyeler arasındaki ilişki, yaratıcılık alış verişi ve karşılıklı değiş tokuş adına sabit kalmıştır. Ticaretin, taşıma ve iletişim gibi alanlarda genel olarak zorluklarla karşılaştığı 6. yüzyılın sonu – 7. yüzyılın başında bile, yerel çömlekçiler motiflerin genel listesini tutmuşlar ve moda olan türlere uyarlamışlardır. Temel olarak serbestçe dile getirililen bu listeler, birkaç özel motif üzerinde duran Afrika ve İtalya prototiplerine dayanmaktadır.

Although publications on early Byzantine pottery have become more and more frequent in the last few years, the question of the relations between pottery workshops of neighboring or distant cities of the Greek mainland during the early Byzantine period (4th – 7th century AD)[3] has not yet been examined satisfactorily.

The first and most important reason for that is our incomplete knowledge of local productions. Any observation can be based only on monographs on a special group of material (i.e. the lamps) or on the whole of Roman and early Byzantine pottery from Corinth[4], Isthmia[5], Kenchreai[6], Athens[7], Boeotia[8], Delphi[9] and Demetrias[10] and on partly or briefly

[3] The so-called "Slavic pottery" is not examined here, because it almost exceeds the chronological borders of the paper and this hand-made pottery attested mainly in the Peloponnese can not be associated with the production of particular workshops.

[4] Broneer 1930; Garnett 1975; Slane 1990.

[5] O. Broneer, Terracotta Lamps. Isthmia III (1977).

[6] B. Adamsheck, Kenchreai, Eastern Port of Corinth IV, The Pottery (1979).

[7] Robinson 1959; Perlzweig 1961; Karivieri 1996.

[8] J. Vroom, After Antiquity. Ceramics and Society in the Aegean from the 7th to the 20th century. A case study from Beotia, Central Greece (2003).

[9] P. Petridis, La céramique protobyzantine (Agora Romaine, Secteur au Sud-Est du Péribole, Xyste, fouilles anciennes). Fouilles de Delphes V (forthcoming).

[10] Eiwanger 1981.

presented pottery from some other sites like Argos[11], Sparta[12], Nea Anchialos in Magnesia[13] and Louloudies in Pieria[14]. But yet, the question of local productions is not always clear in the publications cited above and the chemical or petrographic analyses remain rare if not almost nonexistent. On the other hand, tons of discovered but unpublished material wait and will wait for years to be studied[15]. For all these reasons, any remarks made on the eventual relations between workshops today risk becoming valueless by future investigation related to an eventual study of the non-published material.

Having as starting point a thorough investigation[16] of the early Byzantine material from the town of Delphi, I will try to examine in this paper the relations of this precise local production with other (supposed or well known) local productions of neighboring or distant cities as well as the relations between big centers of pottery production like Corinth and Athens. I will also attempt to clarify the role of the imported pottery and its impact on the local wares. A last question to be examined is that of the self-sufficiency of the small provincial towns of Greece in the second half of the 6th century AD.

The pottery found at Delphi derives mainly from systematic excavations undertaken by the French School of Archaeology of Athens between 1990 and 1997[17] at two secular buildings of the archaeological site, one public, the Roman Forum, and one private, the so-called South Eastern Villa. A smaller quantity of pottery also comes from the Xystos of the ancient Gymnasium, where the existence of ceramic workshops, already in the second half of the 4th century AD, has been proved[18]. Lamps and tableware have also been found, mainly during rescue excavations, in the cemeteries and in some of the houses.

The Roman Forum has been mostly dug up during the "Grande Fouille" of 1892-1903. This forum, built probably in the 2nd century AD, was renovated in the 4th century AD in

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11 A. Bovon, Lampes d'Argos. Études Péloponnésiennes V (1966); Aupert 1980; C. Abadie, Les amphores protobyzantines d'Argos (IVe-VIe siècles) in: V. Déroche – J.-M. Spieser (eds), Recherches sur la céramique byzantine. BCH Suppl. XVIII (1989) 47-56; C. Abadie-Reynal, Céramique et commerce dans le bassin égéen du IVe au VIIe siècle in: V. Kravari – J. Lefort – C. Morrisson, Hommes et richesses dans l'Empire byzantin I, VIe au VIIe siècle. Réalités byzantines (1989) 143-159; A. Oikonomou–Laniado, Argos Paléochrétienne: Contribution à l'étude du Péloponnèse Byzantin. BAR IS 1173 (2003) 14, 19, 33-50.

12 W. Cavanach – J. Crouwel – R. W. V. Catling – G. Shipley, The Laconia Survey II. Archaeological Data. BSA Suppl. 27 (1996).

13 P. Lazaridis, Ανασκαφή Ν. Αγχιάλου, Prakt, 1965, 10-23; Idem, Ανασκαφή Ν. Αγχιάλου, Prakt, 1972, 41-43; A. Dina, ADelt 41, 1986, 88; Eadem, Ανασκαφή Φθιωτίδων Θηβών Π. Λαζαρίδη, Prakt 1990, 148; Eadem, ADelt 46, 1991, 231; Eadem, Ανασκαφή Φθιωτίδων Θηβών, Prakt, 1991, 146-168.

14 E. Marki – M. Cheimonopoulou, Céramique de l'époque paléochrétienne tardive de la fouille de Louloudiès en Piérie in: Bakirtzis 2003, 703-712.

15 The material coming from rescue excavations is usually very fragmentary and has to be combined with other materials from systematic or rescue excavations before leading to some safe conclusions. For instance, an important amount of early Byzantine pottery has been found during the excavations for the Athenian Subway in the 1990s. When these finds coming from different parts of the city are combined with those found in the past at the Agora or the Kerameikos area, I hope that we will finally have an almost global idea of the Attic ceramic industry of the early Byzantine times.

16 See supra n. 2.

17 For the excavation reports see: BCH 115, 1991, 700-702; BCH 116, 1992, 709-711; BCH 117, 1993, 641-644; BCH 118, 1994, 423-428; BCH 119, 1995, 649-650; BCH 120, 1996, 847-851; BCH 121, 1997, 754-755; BCH 122, 1998, 543-547.

18 For the excavation reports see: BCH 110, 1986, 774-782; BCH 111, 1987, 609-612; BCH 112, 1988, 722-725.

Fig. 1 Different local wares of 6th and 7th century from Delphi.

order to adjust it to the ancient Sacred Way which served in Christian times as a commercial street. Our team has excavated the only one of the shops/workshops left untouched by the first excavators of Delphi. In the second half of the 4th century AD, the excavated room ceased to function after one of its walls had collapsed. A possible reason for this collapse could be the earthquake of July 365 AD[19]. It was then that the room's door was sealed, and it was filled up to a height of 5m with rich material containing thousands of pottery sherds, mosaic tesserae, marble fragments, shells etc. A possible first function seems to be related to that of a glass workshop.

The Southeastern Villa constitutes the largest so far excavated architectural complex in Early Byzantine Delphi. It is a typical sample of a rich private building with a large number of reception rooms (four triclinia), many smaller rooms, storerooms, open courtyards and private baths. Its function as a residence is dated from the late 4th or the early 5th century to the late 6th century AD. In around 580, the house was abandoned while, at most a decade later, workshops of pottery, metalwork and tannery or dye-works were installed inside its rooms. The final abandonment of the building is dated to around 620 AD, a date also attested in other places of the town.

The variety of the architectural discoveries (houses, commercial centre, pottery and other workshops, tombs etc) and their chronological spread to the 4th, the 6th and the 7th century AD make any observation on the imported and locally produced material quite representative of the whole town of Delphi at two decisive points of its late antique history: the end of the oracle in the second half of the 4th century which is also the starting point for the development of the town itself, and the abandonment of the town at the beginning of the 7th century.

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19 For this earthquake see among others: S. Stiros, The AD 365 Crete Earthquake and possible Seismic Clustering during the Fourth to Sixth Centuries in the Eastern Mediterranean: a Review of Historical and Archaeological Data, Journal of Structural Geology 23, 2001, 545-562; F. Jacques – B. Bousquet, Le raz de marée du 21 juillet 365, du cataclysme local à la catastrophe cosmique, MEFRA 96, 1984, 423-461.

The discovery of kilns and kiln deposits with hundreds of wasters, kiln supports, moulds etc., inside the area of the Southeastern Villa and at the Xystos, confirmed the existence of a local production whose traces can be surely followed to the second half of the 4th century and during the second half of the 6th and the beginning of the 7th century (fig. 1). Our study has also focused on the material used by the inhabitants of the villa before 580 and all the pottery found in the necropolis and other places of the archaeological site. The petrographic examinations and the chemical analysis[20] have confirmed the results of the typological analysis and proposed two main groups of local ceramics depending on the presence and on the rate of micas, feldspars and magnesium silicates. The differences in the aspect of the two varieties are minor. The clay is of good quality with small inclusions, generally light red (2.5YR 6/6) to pink (5YR 7/4), well fired with a lightly soapy external surface of light red (2.5YR 6/6), light brown (7.5YR 6/4) or reddish yellow (5YR 7/6) color. A slip of red (10R 4/6) or weak red (10R 5/4) color covers the upper part of the vases, leaving – intentionally in my opinion – large tears descending vertically or obliquely to the bottom. In other cases, the slip is applied with a large brush forming bands of color. An incised decoration is also used, but more rarely, with large wavy lines or bands of parallel wavy lines made by a comb.

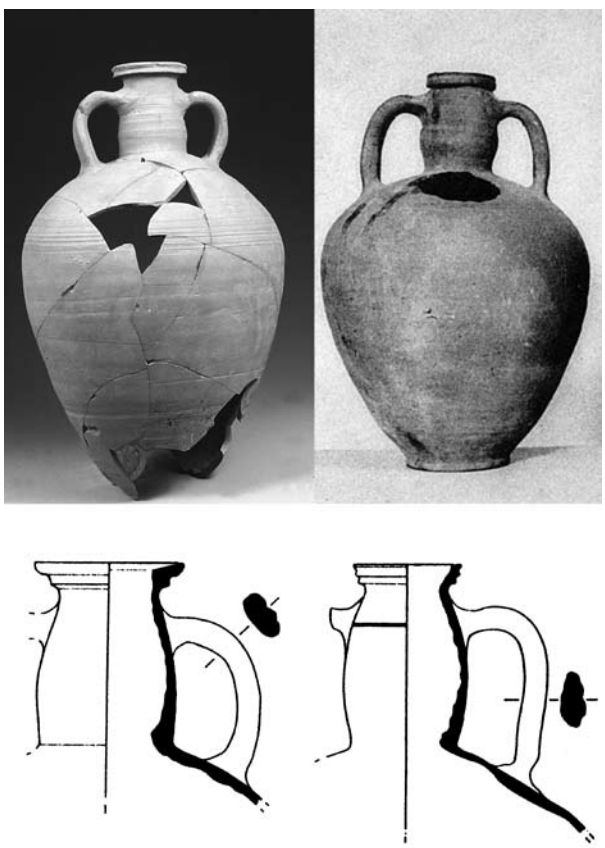

Fig. 2 Amphorae from Delphi (top left), Athens (top right, from Robinson 1959, pl. 22) and Corinth (bottom, from Slane 1990, fig. 28).

Almost all domestic or outdoor needs could be covered by the locally produced ceramics, especially those of the 6th and 7th centuries, from small baskets and strainers to keyhole moulds, loom-weights and beehives.

The 4th century production comprises amphorae, bowls and basins. The main type of amphora has an ovoid body, a thickened lip with groove on vertical edge and a characteristic swelling on the neck. Some parallels come from Corinth[21] and Athens[22] (fig. 2). The basins have an everted rim, high oblique wall and a wheel-ridged body.

[20] Dr. Calliope Kouzeli has been charged with the analyses of the ceramic material. The methods used are: Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy (chemical analysis) and -X ray diffraction, free sections, polished sections and thin sections under a polarizing microscope (petrographic examinations).

[21] Slane 1990, 115-116 fig. 28 pl. 14 (no. 248-249); K. W. Slane, Two deposits from the Early Roman Cellar Building, Corinth, Hesperia 55, 1986, 296. 312 pl. 68 (no. 111).

[22] Robinson 1959, 93 pl. 22 (M96).

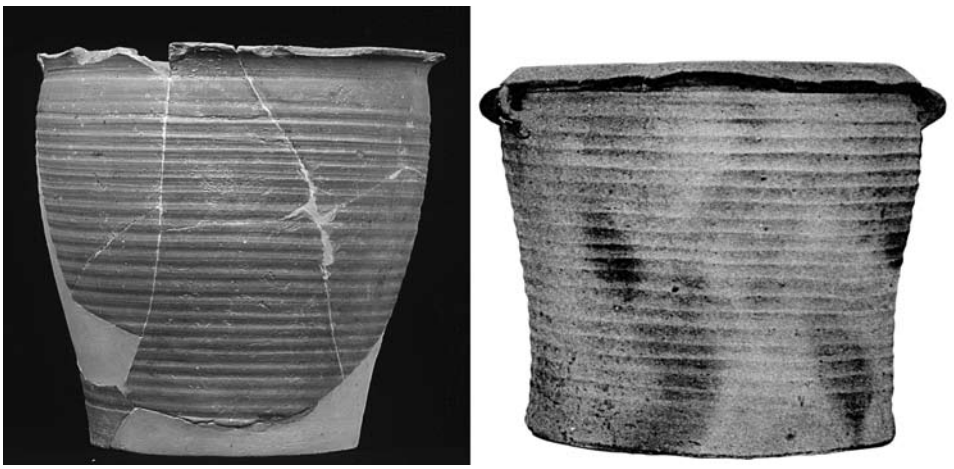

Fig. 3 Basins from Delphi (left) and Athens (right, from Robinson 1959, pl. 13).

They bear also red slip at the interior. Close parallels but of earlier date have been found in Athens[23] (fig. 3). The bowls, discovered in large numbers, are small, with a hemispherical body and a pronounced horizontal rim. They remind us of bowls of form Hayes 78.2 or other productions of ARS.

The 6th and 7th century local production comprises all kinds of material. The amphorae are of small or medium size and can be classified into three different types judging by the shape of their body (ovoid or spherical) and base (flat or umbilical). The jugs are also of three types, with a spherical body standing on a false ring foot or with an ovoid body and flat compact base or with a piriform body and false ring foot. The small jugs are also of three types. The bowls of that period have either an everted lip and a ring foot or a heavy rolled rim and a flat base; this second type is very common at Delphi and its rim is an imitation of the Form Hayes 99 of ARS. The basins have horizontal handles, oblique walls slightly closing before the rim and a proportionally small flat or umbilical base. They bear slip on the inside. The cooking wares are of two main forms: of an almost vertical body and flat or nearly flat bottom and of a spherical body with a rounded bottom. Two main types of locally made lamps are detected: the first type is an interesting imitation, or should I say, interpretation of African lamps. The variant with long channel bears very often representations of birds (doves?) and stylized rim patterns that are far reminiscences of the original African rim motifs. The variant with a shorter channel bears always a cross on the disc and a raised branch on the rim and has parallels to lamps found at Demetrias[24], Athens[25] and Corinth[26] (fig. 4); the second type is that of circular lamps with small plain disc and chevron motifs on the rim creating the impression of a star. Close parallels come from Athens[27] (fig. 5) where they are interpreted as Attic imitations of South Italian round lamps. Many moulds of both types of lamps have been found.

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23 Robinson 1959, 66 pl. 13 (K78).

24 Eiwanger 1981, Teil I, 103 Taf. 74 (II 510-514).

25 Perlzweig 1961, 183-184 pl. 41 (no. 2591).

26 Broneer 1930, 285 pl. XXII (no. 1456).

27 Perlzweig 1961, 193 pl. 44 (no. 2828-2831); Karivieri 1996, 207 pl. 48. 50 (no. 157-158).

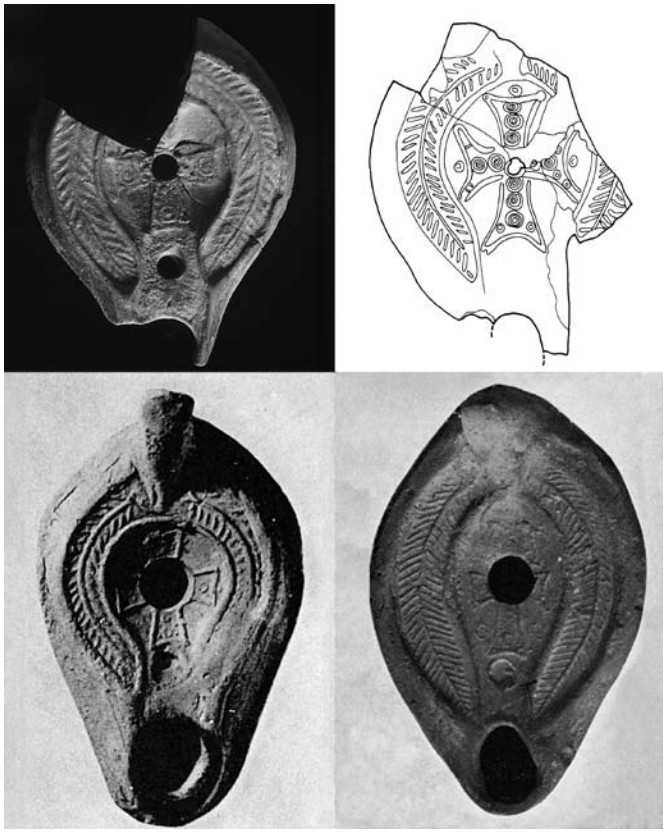

Fig. 4 African Type lamps from Delphi (top left), Demetrias (top right, from Eiwanger 1981 II, Taf. 74), Athens (bottom left, from Perlzweig 1961, pl. 41) and Corinth (bottom right, from Broneer 1930, pl. XXII).

Fig. 5 Circular lamps from Delphi (left) and Athens (right, from Perlzweig 1961, pl. 44).

The only form not detected in the 4th or in the 6th and 7th century local production is that of the large plates or dishes: the needs where probably covered by the imported pottery (although reduced at that period) or the food habits had already changed at the end of the 6th century.

The imported pottery comprises mainly:

- Amphorae of type Riley Mid Roman 3 and probably Mid Roman 18, Kapitän 2, Egloff 177, Robinson G 197, Riley Late Roman 2 and the commonly called Africana Grande and Spatheion or, for being more precise, the pseudo-spatheion miniature amphora.
- Lamps: Corinthian[28] of the 2nd and 3rd century, Attic of the 4th and 5th century, a very small quantity of Asia Minor lamps and only a few original African, while a large scale imitation of African lamps took place at Delphi as we realize from the number of lamps discovered and the existence of clay moulds.
- Sigillatae and other good quality pottery: some sherds of Gaulish, Cypriot and Phocean sigillata, a few sherds and a whole plate of Central Greek Painted Ware whose production center should be located at Nea Anchialos and its region and not at Delphi or Argos[29], a few examples of Attic vases of the 3rd and 4th century

[28] For the question of the or not Corinthian origin of these lamps see M. Petropoulos, Τα εργαστήρια των ρωμαϊκών λυχναριών της Πάτρας και το Λυχνομαντείο, 1999, 129-131; Karivieri 1996, 33; Petridis 2000, 244-246.

[29] Aupert 1980, 455.

decorated with spirals and a large quantity of African Red Slip wares dating from the 2nd [Form Hayes 8] to the 7th century [Form Hayes 109].

As one can see from this short survey of the pottery discovered at Delphi, the surprising creativity of the local potters who had not a long pottery tradition or a big infrastructure behind them, and the good quality of the clay used are undeniable. The existence of workshops producing ceramics of the same type with that of the previous to 580 AD years and the imports of ceramics even from distant places of the Mediterranean world which continued, though reduced, between 580 and 620 prove that: whatever it was that forced the inhabitants of the Southeastern Villa and other houses of Delphi to abandon them at the last quarter of the 6th century (economic difficulties or, less probably, the raids of Slavic tribes), did not give the final blow to the city nor did it cut off the cities of the Greek mainland from their neighboring cities and from the distribution centers of imported pottery.

The constant characteristic of the pottery imported at Delphi is the direct or indirect presence of the African products: ARS plates and bowls are far the most popular imported tableware at the Delphic market place and two of their forms were partially or fully imitated by the local potters. In the case of lamps also, since the African lamps appeared they were so widely imitated at Delphi that all the other types of imported lamps almost disappeared. Delphi clearly belongs to the sphere of influence of the African productions[30] along with other sites of the central and south Greek mainland such as Athens, Corinth, Isthmia, Kenchreai and Argos. Imports from North Africa continued at Delphi even in the 5th and the whole of the 6th century, while in some of the other towns mentioned above, Asia Minor pottery succeeded in expelling the African products. On the other hand, Constantinople, Thessaloniki, Philippi, Thasos, Nea Anchialos and Demetrias in Thessaly, Samos and Emporio on the island of Chios imported mainly Asia Minor sigillatae and lamps during the whole early Byzantine period. With the exception of the two Thessalian neighbouring cities, Demetrias and Nea Anchialos, where Delphic amphorae of the 4th century have been found, no real pottery exchanges between Delphi and the cities of northern Greece or the islands can be detected. On the contrary, close relations can be found between Delphi and cities like Athens and Corinth.

The African products must have arrived at a small town like Delphi indirectly, from one of the biggest cities of the region. Athens could play this role, but Corinth, as a bigger town and in a more appropriate location, has more possibilities than Athens to have served as a transit point, mainly via the Gulf of Corinth.

Although Corinth could have controlled the distribution of African and other imported pottery to Delphi, it is surprising that ceramic products made at Corinth itself are not detected at Delphi after the late Corinthian lamps of the 3rd century AD. For instance, lamps of the 5th and 6th century are completely absent. We arrive at a similar conclusion if we examine the commercial relations between Delphi and Athens. The Attic bowls with painted decoration and the hundreds of Attic lamps of the 3rd and 4th century found at

30 J.-P. Sodini, Productions et échanges dans le monde protobyzantin (IVe-VIIe siècles): le cas de la céramique in: K. Belke – F. Hild – J. Koder – P. Soustal (eds), Byzanz als Raum. Zu Methoden und Inhalten der historischen Geographie des östlichen Mittelmeerraumes (2000) 188.

Delphi show a strong relationship between the two towns at that period. At Delphi we have also found two unknown signatures of Attic workshops[31]. But, the imports from Athens become rare from the beginning of the 5th century onwards and Attic lamps of the 6th and 7th century, very popular in other Greek cities, are also almost completely absent at Delphi. The only possible reasons for the absence of Corinthian and Attic lamps in the 5th and 6th century are the popularity of African lamps and the large-scale imitation of African lamps at Delphi itself. The local workshops responded to the demands of the local clientele with types in fashion and probably much cheaper than their African prototypes, leaving no place for other imported products.

Fig. 6 Small jug from Delphi (left) and Athens (right, from Robinson 1959, pl. 34).

The absence of Corinthian or Attic imported pottery after the 4th century does not mean the absence of relations between the workshops of these three cities. The parallels to the Delphic material of the 4th century AD mentioned earlier, i.e. the amphorae and basins found in Corinth and Athens, as they are of an earlier date, could have served as prototypes to the Delphic 4th century production. A small jug (lekythos) of the late 6th or 7th century found in Athens could have been imported from Delphi[32] (fig. 6). Close similarities can also be found between the Delphic round lamps with the chevrons decoration and those from Athens. The discovery of clay moulds at Delphi proves the local origin of the lamps found at Delphi itself. No moulds of that type have been found in Athens. If the Attic lamps are not imported from Delphi, we are confronted with the provincial imitation by distant workshops of an Italian type in fashion at this moment. Local imitations of African lamps discussed infra constitute another common point between these three cities.

The relations between Athens and Corinth are also very close from the first centuries of the Christian era until the 6th century Corinthian lamps arrive in Athens during the 2nd century. From the beginning of the 3rd century Attic workshops start producing large-scale imitations of Corinthian lamps. The transplantation of Peloponnesian workshops like the one of Preimos in Attica[33] could be the starting point for such a production. The Attic

[31] Petridis 2001, 283-284.

[32] Robinson 1959, 118 pl. 34 (M367).

[33] Petridis 2000, 246-247.

potters imitated not only the shape and the decoration but also the characteristic buff clay of the northern Peloponnese. With the first signs of decline of the Corinthian workshops, their Attic counterparts expelled them from the market places, imposing their own products. During the 3rd and 4th century Athens imported almost no lamps; imports began again in the 5th century[34]: among lamps from North Africa and Asia Minor, we found also some Corinthian lamps[35]. Corinth on the other side imports Attic lamps mainly during the 4th century[36]; some Attic imitations of African Red Slip tableware found in Corinth are also of the 4th century[37]. A long time after the Athenian potters imitated Corinthian models, Corinthian potters started producing Corinthian imitations of Attic lamps from before the middle of the 5th century into the 6th century[38].

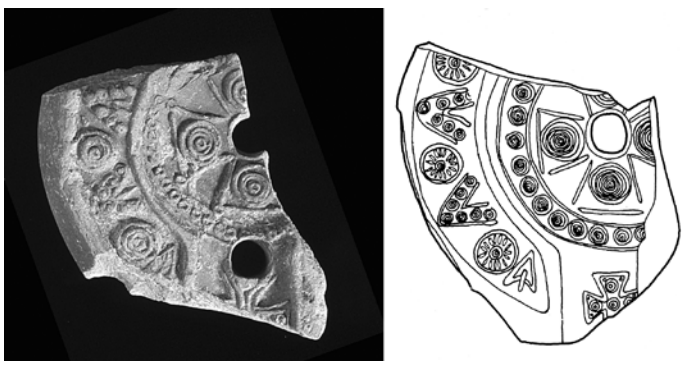

Fig. 7 African type lamps from Delphi (left) and Demetrias (right, from Eiwanger 1981 II, Taf. 74).

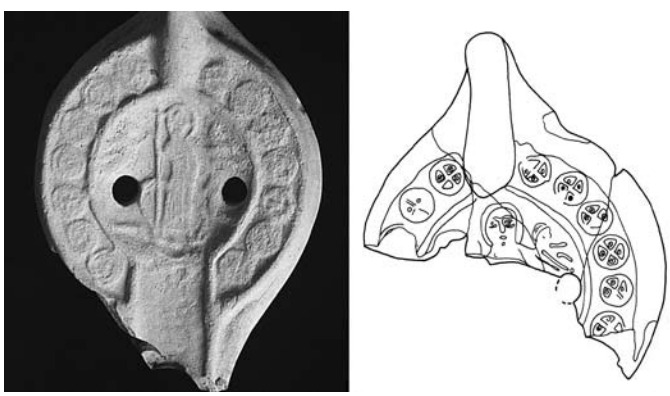

Fig. 8 African type lamps from Delphi (left) and Demetrias (right, from Eiwanger 1981 II, Taf. 82).

Comparing the lamp productions of different cities of the Greek mainland we notice a strong similarity especially in the decoration of the African type lamps produced at Delphi, Demetrias, Corinth and Athens. The cross on the disc and the branch on the rim are the most common motifs, used in all these cities, but mostly in Demetrias and Delphi (fig. 4). The relationship between the lamps from Demetrias and Delphi is so close (two among many common motifs are illustrated fig. 7 and fig. 8), that we could speak of a Central Greek version of African-type lamps. Some other motifs, but quite few compared to the rich African repertory, as the bird on the disc, or the circles and triangles on the rim, are also very popular in the production of all these cities and derive directly from African lamps. No lamp from Delphi is strictly identical with one from Demetrias, Athens or Corinth, so we cannot suppose an exchange of moulds or a surmoulage

34 Perlzweig 1961, 9.

35 Perlzweig 1961, 98 pl. 9, 52.

36 Slane 1990, 19-21. 34-35 fig. 2 pl. 5.

37 Slane 1990, 57 fig. 10.

38 Garnett 1975; Slane 1990, 21-23. 35-36 fig. 2 pl. 5.

from the same prototype. There is also a difference of fabric, so that the lamps found in one of these places cannot be considered as exports of another. Should we consider the similarities in the decoration as the result of the action of itinerant workshops? The difference in fabric could then be explained as these workshops normally used the local clay, but the lamps should be identical in form, as the use of the same moulds from the same workshop, even itinerant, must be considered as certain. I think more credible the idea of local potters of different cities copying one another as all these lamps were sold at the same market places.

All this means that, from the 2nd to the 4th century AD, each of the big centers of ceramic production (mainly Corinth and Athens) export their products to smaller towns like Delphi, which at the same time export some of their own productions to other cities. The exchanges in terms of the products themselves become rare from the 5th century onwards, as local productions of the smaller cities seem to become more and more flourishing and independent. But, surprisingly, the relations between the workshops of the Greek mainland remain constant, this time in terms of creative exchanges or mutual imitations. Even at the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 7th century AD, at a moment when commerce, transports and communication in general are considered to face many difficulties, the local potters seem to share a common repertory of motifs and adapt their productions to the types in fashion. This repertory was mainly based on African or Italian prototypes, which have been freely interpreted and with persistence on a few particular motifs.

Although the relations shown above cannot be denied, the local production of cities of the Greek mainland like Delphi and Demetrias at the end of the 6th century is characterized by self-sufficiency: the decrease of imported pottery after 550 is well attested in many cases and the variety of the local forms is also very important. But, as self-sufficiency is very often related in our mind to isolation, I would like to emphasize that we are not talking of isolated communities covering their pottery needs by their own means, without following the types in fashion. Could these provincial potters have produced the African type lamps mentioned above without a vivid interaction with potters of the neighboring cities? Could they have chosen to reproduce the same African motifs and not others just by chance? I do not think so. Self-sufficiency from a point of view of quantity and variety of forms, yes but, no isolation at all!

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