

ROMAN AMPHORAE IN EPHEBUS

Wine, olive oil, fruits and fish based foods were shipped to Ephesus from a number of places in amphorae, and the estates around the city produced similar foodstuffs. The ancient written sources mention the local production but we do not know enough about the villas near Ephesus.

The amphorae, a particular group of ceramic objects, provides information both about agriculture, commerce and consumption. The amphorae presented here come from various sites in Ephesus: the Tetragonos Agora, the Terrace Houses, the Basilika Stoa, a Late Hellenistic / Early Roman Well next to the State Agora, the Magnesian Gate Survey and Arap-Dere Survey. [\[1\]](#)

In the Hellenistic period a huge amount of well-known Greek wine amphorae was transported from Rhodes, Kos, Chios and Knidos to Ephesus. There are a few amphorae from Egypt and the Black Sea. In addition, there is the group of vessels produced in the vicinity of Ephesus. The Mushroom rim type (with the stamp of Nikandros) belongs to this group. The earliest Western wine amphorae came from Campania and Sicily. There are only sporadic Hellenistic 'Greco-Italic' pieces among the finds from this period. [\[2\]](#)

Late Hellenistic / Late Republican Period (late second and first centuries B.C.)

The Ephesian food import from the Western Mediterranean grew significantly from the end of the second century B.C. It seems most likely that the increased number of Italian wine and olive-oil amphorae is related to the Roman immigration. The Roman power in the Eastern Mediterranean gained momentum after the victory of Pydna and the Pergamon inheritance (133 B.C.). Delos was declared to be a free port (167 B.C.) in order to undermine the role of Rhodes.

Italian amphorae mixed with the amphorae from Rhodes, Chios, Knidos, Kos and the Aegean "locally produced" amphorae from the late Hellenistic period. The Cup-shaped rim (Dressel 24-predecessor) amphora type was produced near Erythrae. The "Local Aegean 1 and 2" amphorae were produced in the Cayster Valley

(sometimes with monogram stamps). There are a few jars from the Punic (Van der Werff 1-3) and the Phoenician (‘Baggy Jars’) regions.

The Hellenistic Megarian bowls, the West Slope ware, the White Ground ware and the Eastern Sigillata A (ESA) were unearthed with the amphorae. The Italian vessels include the best-known amphorae of the Republican age: Dressel 1A, Dressel 1B, Dressel 1C, Lamboglia 2 and Brindisian types. The Dressel 1 amphorae were produced from the late second century to the late first century B.C. The major workshops were in Campania, Latium, Etruria and Spain. There are many Dressel 1 amphorae in Ephesus but only two of them have stamps (M.D. and CAA). Most pieces have black volcanic sand, and probably come from Campania. Among the Dressel 1 amphorae, type 1C is the most common. In addition to wine, the content of the Dressel 1C amphorae may have been fish sauce from the Cosa and the Algeciras regions.

The number of Lamboglia 2 amphorae (used for the wine of the Adriatic coastline) is also significant. Some of them have stamps (LICIN, ER...C, DAM, C.OPIM, CADMVS). The Lamboglia 2 amphorae are supposed to have been produced in a number of workshops from Aquileia to Calabria and Sermin (Slovenia). A workshop on the island of Vis (Issa) in the eastern Adriatic region has also been mentioned. The ovoid amphorae of the Adriatic coast were shipped to a number of places. The excavations and the stamps have revealed the amphorae were produced near Brindisi (Giancola, “La Rosa” and Apani workshops). The amphorae of two well-known families, the Visellii and the Betileni, from the Brindisi olive-oil region are known in Ephesus. The stamps of both workshops can be found all over the Mediterranean. Their well-organized distributors sent some shipments even to the Crimean peninsula. The production of the Lamboglia 2 and Brindisi amphorae started in the late second century B.C. and ended the late first century B.C.

Who shipped and who ordered these products? It seems quite probable that a number of Romans lived in Ephesus. In the summer of 88 B.C., Mithridates ordered that all the Roman citizens in Asia Minor should be killed (Ephesian Vespers). [3] Though the resulting massacre was serious, it seems that the Roman sources may have exaggerated the number of victims. It seems that the Romans (Ῥωμαῖοι) were not expelled or even intimidated and that the number of Romans in Asia actually increased, as they were interested in the potential profit to be gained by the economy and commerce of the region. [4] There are inscriptions in Ephesus with the names of

Italian merchants. F. Kirbihler has published a detailed study of the Italians in Ephesus. [5] However, the name of L. Agrius is mentioned in an inscription dated to the first century B.C. The name Agrius is also known in other Greek regions. The name also occurs in Cicero and Varro. A certain M. Agar(is) is mentioned in the *tituli picti* of Lamboglia 2 amphorae in Northern Italy. M. Rostovtzeff says that the family of Agrii settled in Dalmatia (where the Lamboglia 2 amphorae were produced). [6] The Agrii were well-known from Italy to Asia Minor. The name must have been common and there is no evidence to suggest that the Agrii mentioned in different places were members of the same family. The Gerillanus family of Apulia were similarly well-known. J. Hatzfeld has demonstrated the presence of this family in Ephesus, as well as on Delos and Kos. [7] In the Tetragonos Agora two Dressel 21-22 amphora rims bear the Postumus Curtius stamp (POST.CVRT). He was a *senator* and the *proconsul* of Asia, his amphorae were produced in Campania. [8] The Dressel 21-22 fish product or fruit(?) vessels came from Italy, probably from Campania or Latium and Sicily. Sometimes they have inscriptions in red/black paint (CET...?).

The Early Roman Period (late first century B.C. to the end of the first century A.D.)

Augustus started to reorganize the eastern provinces and Ephesus became the capital of Asia and the largest commercial centre on this side of the Taurus mountains (Strabo XIV: 1. 24). It reached its climax in the second century A.D. A number of new amphorae appeared in the late first century B.C. The Ephesian one-handle micaceous fabric jar (Athenian Agora F65-66 type) is one of the most important products of Cayster Valley. This vessel had a number of variants from the first century B.C. to the end of the sixth century A.D. (Sometimes it is called the "one-handle variant of the LR 3 amphora"). The Dressel 25 was another new amphora form. It comes from the Ionian coast, the Corinth region. One of the handle fragments has a Greek stamp: Ζοίλου.

The Western trade intensified during the Augustan period. From Italy, Campanian and Adriatic wines were shipped in this period. The Italian copies of the Kos amphorae (Dressel 2-4) contained Campanian wine with the stamps of a number of known producers from Campania (Eumachius, Livius Caustrius and Liccaus/Liccaius). [9] The lighter and more beneficial capacity/weight ratio of the Dressel 2-4 amphorae gradually replaced the big and less practical Dressel 1B wine

amphorae. The Lamboglia 2 amphorae were replaced by the Dressel 6A amphorae. The continuity of the production of the workshops can often be shown. The name of M. Herennius Picens who had properties in Picenum can be read on two Dressel 6A stamps. [10] The younger Herennius was *consul suffectus* and became the proconsul of Asia under Augustus. The wine amphorae bearing his stamp have been found in many sites in Northern Italy and in some Mediterranean towns (Athens, Carthage) and they were distributed as far as Magdalensberg in Noricum. The rest of the Dressel 6A stamps have abbreviations of names (S.L.E., C.F.G, D.L.F.PRI). Beside the Italian amphorae, there are few amphorae from the western Mediterranean (Spain). Lomba do Canho 67, Dressel 12, Haltern 70 and Pascual 1 amphorae contained wine, *defrutum* and fish sauce. Greek wines (from Rhodes, Chios, Knidos and Kos) are still represented, even though in smaller quantities when compared with the earlier periods. This was the time when the new Eastern Sigillata B (ESB) appeared, mixed with Italian terra sigillata and amphorae.

There was also a change in the import of olive oil. The Apulia production went down dramatically in the late Augustan period. It was replaced by the oil from Baetica. There are stamped (BA... and Q.ANT.R) Dressel 20 amphorae among the objects. Dressel 20 amphorae are found in Athens, Corinth, Rhodes and Antioch. In addition to the Baetican oil, small quantities of North African oil was imported in Tripolitanian II amphorae. The Adriatic olives were shipped in few Schörgendorfer 558 amphorae.

Spanish fish sauce was also imported (Dressel 12). For almost two centuries, fish products from the Southern Spanish coastline were shipped in a variety of amphorae (Beltran I). There are few amphorae (AC 2 and AC 4) from Crete, from Cilicia (Agora M 54, Agora G 198, Agora G 199 and Pseudo Koan Pinched Handle), somewhere from the Aegean area (Dressel 5, Dressel 35) and from Egypt (Dressel 2-4).

The Mid Roman Period (from the early second century to the end of the third century A.D.)

There are some amphora types that were produced for a longer period. They were shipped to Ephesus even in the Trajan and Diocletian periods. The Spanish fish sauce amphorae (Beltran I and IIA types) came until the middle of the second century, the Baetican olive oil vessels until the end of the third century.

Three types of one handle jar can be linked with the production in Ephesus region. Both forms are the continuations of the Agora F 65-66 type with different rims and

bases. These type of amphorae are common in Ephesus. The Agora M 45 group dated to the middle of the first to early second century A.D., the M 125 amphora type dated to the late second to early third century A.D. The Agora J 46-47 type dated to the period between the second century to early third century A.D.

Kapitän II amphora is present in significant numbers at the Terrace House 1 and 2. This type of amphora is not represented in the Tetragonos Agora. There are two groups of Kapitän II amphorae. The kind with red fabric has a wide distribution and is represented in substantial numbers in Ephesus and was common both in the Mediterranean and elsewhere. The amphorae of a buff colour are less frequent. The analysis of the fabric suggests that it may have been produced in the Cayster Valley (Küçük Menderes) and in the region of Ephesus (Samos can also be considered). They are also known from Pannonia (Vindobona) and Egypt (Alexandria). Interestingly, the locally produced Kapitän II amphorae can only be found at distant sites.

There are also a few Black Sea amphorae (Knossos 39, Zeest 80, Zeest 84). A small amount of African fragments were also found (Ostia 59/Bonifay 15, Africana IID, Tripolitanian I, Tripolitanian III and Dressel 30). The increase of African export can be observed in the whole Mediterranean. Later the "carrot" type is a direct evidence of the Black Sea import from Sinope. Some of the fish products were imported from Lusitania (Almagro 51C).

The Late Roman/Byzantine Period (from the fourth to the seventh centuries A.D.)

The production of foodstuffs in the Eastern Mediterranean from the late fourth century A.D. reached the degree that the wine and olive oil amphorae of the region can be found in the Western Mediterranean and even in the Northern provinces. There are few one handle jars (Athenian Agora form M 240, M 255-259 types) in Ephesus in the fourth centuries layers. The LR 3 (Athenian Agora M 373 type) and Ephesus 56 amphorae occur in large quantities in Ephesus from the end of the fourth century to the seventh century. Some of the fish products were continuously imported from Lusitania (Almagro 50), one of the amphorae has a stamp (OLYNT). The Late Roman 1 amphora, one of the commonest forms of the Aegean region, is also among the objects unearthed. They were produced probably at several sites in Asia Minor. The globular Late Roman 2 amphorae were also produced at a number of sites. Their

fabric is different. There are a few of them in Ephesus. The vessels of Samos Cistern type, the Agora M 273 amphora were not shipped to Ephesus in large quantities, too. The Palestinian “bag-shaped” (Late Roman 5/6) and the Gaza (Late Roman 4) amphorae represent the vessels produced in Levant. The Egyptian (Late Roman 7 and Egloff 172), Tunisian (Keay 34 / Bonifay 53 type) and the `Spatheion` amphorae were transported to Ephesus.

Summary

The Valley of the River Cayster was famous for its agricultural products. Ancient sources claim these areas produced fruit, wine, olive oil and figs. The production areas in the Cayster Valley were closely connected to Ephesus. One of the inscriptions at the Temple of Artemis mentions that the Temple had estates in the Cayster Valley. [11] The inscription speaks of a wine co-operative, and of the way wine was sold in the city centre and in the small shops in the street between the stadium and the theatre. [12] Both Strabo (XIV: 1. 15) and Pliny the Elder (N.H. XIV: 75) mention Ephesian wine. Philostratos, a pupil of Damianus, mentions the agricultural estates and the port his master, a second century A.D. philosopher. [13] The late literary sources mention that Ephesus could be approached easily on land and sea, and add that local and imported products were readily available for the population. The *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* describes the region as rich in various wines, olive oil, grain, good purple dye, and spelt. A large quantity and variety of locally produced amphorae have been excavated from the area near the port.

The overview of the foodstuffs imported in amphorae to Ephesus during the Hellenistic period reveals that they were produced in the eastern Mediterranean. As a matter of fact, only wine imports can be distinguished. The arrival of the Romans in Eastern Mediterranean brought a greater demand for Italian wines, olives and olive oil (Tyrrhenian and Adriatic coast). Spanish commodities served to widen the range of existing goods. Less African, Black Sea and more Eastern Mediterranean amphorae dominate the mid and late Roman periods. Italian and western Mediterranean goods never accounted for more than twenty per cent of the imports. However, the bulk of the products came from the Aegean region.

The majority of the late Roman and post-Roman amphorae found in Ephesus was produced “locally”. [14] Some type of these micaceous storage jars are well known from various sites in the Roman Empire. Since these show a wide variation and since

the fabric of these variants differs, it seems unlikely that they had been manufactured in one workshop. They contained wine, oil or other liquids. Very little is known about the economic activities of the villas around Ephesus, but the enormous number of amphorae provides convincing evidence to support the continuation of the research. In sum, we may say that the change in consumed foodstuffs (and amphora types) can obviously be correlated with the consumers' taste, regardless of whether they were Greeks or Romans. In any case, the demand had to be adjusted to the available range of commodities on the market.

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[2] Bezeczký 2004, 85.

[3] Appian *Mitr.* 12. 23.

[4] Wilson 1966, 4.

[5] Kirbichler 2007.

[6] Rostovtzeff 1998, 639 n. 64.

[7] Hatzfeld 1919, 102.

[8] Siani-Davis 2001, 50 and 226; Bezeczký 2001, 13.

[9] Hesnard et al 1988, 49-67; Blanc-Bijon et al. 1998, 110.

[10] Baldacci 1967-68, 27 f.; Blanc-Bijon et al. 1998, 130.

[11] Engelmann 2001, 40, IV.4.4 and 41, IV.4.6; detailed Ladstätter 2008, 181 f.

[12] Ladstätter 2008, 181 f.; Knibbe 1985, 71-77; Engelmann 1986, 107.

[13] Philostatos, *The lives of the Sophist*, 606.

[14] Bezeczký 2005, 203-205.

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