

# KORONI: THE DATE OF THE CAMP AND THE POTTERY

(PLATE 10)

IN publishing the results of our excavation of the fortified camp on the Koroni peninsula on the east coast of Attica<sup>1</sup> we concluded that it had been built at the time of the Chremonidean War (265-261 B.C.) by Ptolemaic troops who had come to aid the Athenians against the Macedonians, that the site had not been occupied previously, and that the camp was abandoned at the end of the war and fell into ruins without ever being used again. On the basis of surface finds of sherds and Ptolemaic coins from Koroni Mrs. Eirene Varoucha-Christodouloupoulou had concluded independently that the fortification on Koroni dated from the time of the Chremonidean War.<sup>2</sup>

This conclusion has now been challenged by Mr. G. Roger Edwards and Miss Virginia Grace. Mr. Edwards maintains<sup>3</sup> that the site was occupied at least sporadically for a much longer period, starting in the late fourth century B.C. He does not deny that the camp was occupied by Ptolemaic troops in the Chremonidean War but claims that this was only one episode in the history of a site that was in use, at intervals at least, for about two hundred years. Miss Grace,<sup>4</sup> on the other hand, would like to dissociate the camp from the Chremonidean War and date it earlier, finding an occasion in 286/5 B.C. or a year or two earlier.

We feel that both these criticisms are ill-founded and would like to re-assert our belief that the camp was built by Ptolemaic troops during the Chremonidean War, was occupied by them briefly, and was abandoned and never used again.

Mr. Edwards is troubled by our statement that the pottery from Koroni is "a very consistent lot." He concludes that it has a considerable range in date, both before and after the Chremonidean War, and that it therefore does not supply a fixed point for pottery chronology. He goes on from this to suggest that there was activity in the camp at all periods represented by the pottery found there.

We would agree that there is some variation in the shapes of certain types of pot, particularly the fish plates and the rolled-rim plates, and that this variation probably indicates a difference in date. In stating that the pottery was a consistent lot, however, we did not, of course, mean to imply that we thought it had all been made at one time, as if it were a grave group bought for a specific occasion, but rather that it was

<sup>1</sup> *Hesperia*, XXXI, 1962, pp. 26-61.

<sup>2</sup> *Αρχ. Έφ.*, 1953-1954 (In Memory of G. P. Oikonomos), Part III (Athens 1961), pp. 321-349.

<sup>3</sup> *Hesperia*, XXXII, 1963, pp. 109-111.

<sup>4</sup> *Hesperia*, XXXII, 1963, pp. 319-334; conclusions on p. 332.

an assortment of pots closely enough contemporary so that they might reasonably have been in use all at the same time. We suggested that much of the Koroni pottery, particularly the smaller pots, had been obtained by requisitioning among the houses of the neighboring demes, and it seemed to us that, viewed in this light, it was just such an assortment as one might expect to find. Pottery in actual use at any given time is almost bound to be a mixture of old and new, and in the case in point the solid little rolled-rim plates (**12** and **13**) and the equally solid fish plate (**22**) and its companions **19** and **20** may easily have been in existence for several decades before the Chremonidean War. The presence of this earlier material need not, therefore, imply an earlier period of occupation of the camp.

If we now look at the circumstances of finding of the four fish plates (**19-22**) which Mr. Edwards analyses so carefully and to which he assigns a time range of fifty years or more, we will see that they were all lying together on the floor of a room (Pl. 10, a-c). It seemed perfectly clear to the excavators that these pots had all been in use simultaneously, that they had been left behind in the room when the camp was abandoned, and that they were subsequently buried in the ruins of the house. Mr. Edwards, however, relying on the criterion of shape development, comes to a different conclusion. He writes:

The estimate of 50 years or more in time of production among the four fish plates, **19-22**, if we assume that **21** was produced close in time to the Chremonidean War, would suggest activity in the fort at least as early as the last quarter of the 4th century. The graduation in shape in this series would suggest if not continuous, then sporadic activity from that time to and including the Chremonidean War. . . . If the data of the archaeological contexts seem to contraindicate the above suggestions, it is perhaps pertinent to ask ourselves how many of us could distinguish with ease stratigraphically the fillings resulting from sporadic occupation and occasional disturbance on an exposed site.

We invite the reader to study the photographs and sketch-plan on Plate 10 and draw his own conclusions.

The material that Mr. Edwards regards as later than the Chremonidean War cannot be explained in the same way, and, if it is really later, then Mr. Edwards is right in saying that there was later occupation, or at least later disturbance at the camp. But are the two vases he cites really later? His sole criterion is shape development. We realize, of course, the importance and the general validity of this criterion, but we may ask if it is really applicable in the present instance. Fish plate **18** is not Attic or Corinthian. Its clay is yellow and gritty; the glaze has almost completely flaked away; the vase itself was poorly made and became warped in firing. It was certainly made far from the main centers of Athens and Corinth, and we should perhaps not be surprised if it does not conform strictly to the pattern established for those sites. Fish plate **18** was found lying in the same room as the others, **19-22**, and less than a meter away from them, as shown in the accompanying sketch-plan

(Pl. 10, c). The fish plates and other objects on the floor all lay under a mass of tiles and fallen stones. Surely the logical conclusion is that they all, "earlier" and "later" alike, were in use at one time, not at intervals over a period of two hundred years.<sup>5</sup>

The archaeological evidence in the case of the rolled-rim plate (58), which Mr. Edwards also claims is late, is not as clear cut, but here too the blue-gray clay suggests a non-Attic origin which might explain its apparent non-conformity to the Attic canon. It was found in the fill of the main room of Building C, but not very closely associated with any of the other objects in the house.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Edwards notes (p. 110, note 5) the possibility that the two Megarian coins, 73 and 128, that have been dated 223-192 B.C. may be pertinent to his argument for a later occupation. He could hardly do more, for no one can say that the chronology of the bronze coinage of Megara in the Hellenistic period is well established. On the contrary, we may suggest that the discovery of two of these Megarian coins in a context of the time of the Chremonidean War, one in association with three coins of Ptolemy II, implies that they are to be dated in the first half of the third century B.C. rather than in the second half.

Thus Mr. Edwards' theory of a later occupation of the site after the Chremonidean War rests on two pots and two coins, and these can easily be accounted for in other ways.

Finally, Mr. Edwards suggests (p. 111, note 6) that "further testing of fillings pertinent to the construction of the fort would be most desirable" since "strictly and stratigraphically speaking the evidence now available is slender for the determination of the date of construction of the fort and for the attribution of its construction to a specific agency."

We would point out for the record that we searched in vain for places where stratigraphical evidence might be obtained. The entire fortification and all the upper part of the camp is built on bare, rocky ground where there is virtually no accumulation of soil. We tested two places<sup>7</sup> where it seemed that there might be such an accumula-

<sup>5</sup> In view of the site's lack of successive strata (see *infra* and p. 72) it is well to point out that our interpretation does not depend on strict stratigraphical analysis, though the fact that there was no accumulation between 19-22 and 18 suggests that there is no lapse in time between them. The grouping of vessels of identical function in one corner of the room naturally suggests that they were all collected there for the same purpose.

<sup>6</sup> One object demonstrably later than the Chremonidean War has been reported from Koroni—an amphora handle dated by Miss Grace *ca.* 180 B.C. (*Αρχ. Έφ.*, 1953-1954, p. 337, no. 25). This was apparently picked up in the cultivated lower fields (*ibid.*, p. 336, note 1), and is not, therefore, necessarily connected with the camp and its buildings. Although we feel that the bulk of sporadic finds also comes from the single occupation of the camp, since they can be related to finds that are archaeologically connected with the camp and its buildings, we do not, of course, maintain that all surface finds, especially those from the arable part of the peninsula, must belong to this period. For other sporadic finds of different date see our 137 and 138.

<sup>7</sup> *Hesperia*, XXXI, 1962, p. 41.

tion, one against the inner face of the acropolis wall a little to the west of Gate A, the other near the center of the acropolis about midway between Buildings B and C. In the first place bedrock was reached after about 0.30 m.; the few sherds found did not differ from those elsewhere on the site. In the second place bedrock was reached after 0.10-0.20 m.;<sup>8</sup> here we found a few coarse sherds and one coin of Ptolemy II. The lack of successive strata is, of course, to be expected in a site that was occupied for only one brief period.

Miss Grace, who wrote her article independently of Mr. Edwards, comes to a quite different conclusion. Studying the amphoras, she finds them all to be of the late fourth century B.C., and she would therefore like to date the camp much earlier than the Chremonidean War. A late fourth-century date would suit her amphora chronology best, but, since the coins would hardly permit this, she compromises and suggests an occasion in the early 280's, attributing the camp to Ptolemy I's admiral Zenon who was active in the Aegean and helped convoy grain to Athens, perhaps, Miss Grace thinks, via Porto Rapti bay.

This is an attempt to abide by a "hitherto accepted" chronology which, though true in its broad outlines, was admittedly based on insufficient evidence and lacked fixed points in the third century. For such a theory to be accepted, it must be supported by strong, incontrovertible evidence, and this, in our opinion, Miss Grace has failed to produce. On the contrary, her theory may be criticized on historical and numismatic grounds as well as on grounds of pottery chronology.

Miss Grace asks us to believe that a fortified military camp of the first half of the third century B.C. which can be proved by the coins to have been occupied by Ptolemaic troops is not to be associated with that landmark of Athenian history, the Chremonidean War, when we know that Ptolemy II had made a military alliance with the Athenians<sup>9</sup> and had actually sent troops to their aid,<sup>10</sup> but with another occasion about twenty years earlier of which we have a passing notice. Zenon, commander of Ptolemy I's squadron of light cruisers, did indeed see to the safe delivery of a shipment of grain to Athens in the early eighties of the third century B.C., but there is no indication that this was a large military operation which required the establishment of an extensive fortified camp, not to mention a series of such camps. On the contrary, Zenon and his squadron of swift, light cruisers (*ἄφρακτοι*) is merely recorded as having seen to the safe delivery of a shipment of grain, thus contributing to the safety of Athens.<sup>11</sup> This was an ordinary event at this period, however, and we have records that Athens received such shipments of grain on several occasions as gifts from various friendly princes, who were voted honors by the grateful Athenians.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Not 0.20-0.60 m. as erroneously given in the publication.

<sup>9</sup> *I.G.*, II<sup>2</sup>, 686, 687, and Supplement p. 664.

<sup>10</sup> Inscription from Rhamnous, cf. *Hesperia*, XXXI, 1962, p. 60.

<sup>11</sup> *I.G.*, II<sup>2</sup>, 650, lines 14-17.

<sup>12</sup> For two occasions in these very years, see *I.G.*, II<sup>2</sup>, 653, lines 23-24; and 654, lines 25-30, cf. 655.

Miss Grace's date involves the re-assignment of a large, distinctive series of Ptolemaic coins, generally thought to be among the most securely dated of the Egyptian sequence.<sup>13</sup> This series is known to have been minted in Cyprus and was assigned by Svoronos to Ptolemy II.<sup>14</sup> Miss Grace's date for the camp makes it necessary for her to assign the series to Ptolemy I. She says that Svoronos' date has never been seriously questioned, because, until now, there has been no reason to do so. Numismatists have, indeed, found no reason to doubt the attribution, nor do they do so now. On the contrary, the recent study by Miss Cox of the coins from the excavations at Curium has produced additional confirmation of it.<sup>15</sup> The difficulty of re-assigning these coins to the preceding reign should not be underestimated.<sup>16</sup>

Miss Grace's study of the amphoras has gone a long way towards establishing their typological development and relative chronology. Her absolute chronology is, however, admittedly based on that proposed by H. A. Thompson in 1934 for his groups A and B (e.g. p. 325).<sup>17</sup> That this pottery might have a longer period of use than previously thought, we believe we have demonstrated above in considering the fish plates. The greater flexibility which must thus be allowed in determining the absolute chronology of deposits dated by this pottery likewise demands a greater flexibility in the chronology of the amphoras found in such deposits.

Miss Grace (pp. 320-321) compares our amphora 44 with amphoras found at Gela in contexts dating from the destruction of that city in 282 B.C. There are many of these amphoras, and they are evidently of a type that was in common primary use

<sup>13</sup> I. N. Σβορόνος, *Τὰ Νομίσματα τοῦ Κράτους τῶν Πτολεμαίων, Ἀθήναι*, 1904-1908, vol. II, pp. 82-88 (Class Z, Series B).

<sup>14</sup> For a summary of the reasons for the attribution, see B. V. Head, *Historia Numorum*<sup>2</sup>, Oxford, 1911, pp. 850-852. That the series was minted in Cyprus seems firm in the light of the Curium excavations (note 15, *infra*) and is supported by the American Numismatic Society's section of the Gunther Collection, which was formed in Cyprus; of the bronzes of Ptolemy II, all examples of the larger denomination so abundantly represented at Koroni are of the shield series. We owe this and other information to the kind help of Miss Margaret Thompson.

<sup>15</sup> D. H. Cox, *Coins from the Excavations at Curium, 1932-1953*, *Am. Num. Soc. N. Mon.*, No. 145, New York, 1959, pp. 97-99.

<sup>16</sup> A clear objection to Miss Grace's suggestion (p. 330) that the letter-dates which appear on this series would agree better with the reign of Ptolemy I than with that of Ptolemy II is the fact that during the first ten years of the former reign (306-295 B.C.) Cyprus was not under Ptolemaic control; if the letters referred to the regnal years of Ptolemy I, the first ten should be lacking in the Cypriot series, but they are well represented. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 94-98.

<sup>17</sup> *Hesperia*, III, 1934, pp. 311-480. Miss Grace takes the higher date suggested by Mr. Thompson for group B, i.e. ca. 275 B.C. from his statement: "they were open into the early 3rd century. For the final closing up we may suggest a date in the first half of that century, perhaps about half way along." The critical handle (*Hesperia*, XXXII, 1963, pp. 333-334, no. 7, with references) comes from the South Chamber, apparently the last section to be closed. Of the other pottery from this chamber (nos. B 8-14) the only helpful shape is West Slope kantharos (B 8), which appears more attenuated than others of group B, and would not seem to be out of place toward the middle of the century.

as wine jars in Gela at the time of its destruction. It is therefore not surprising to find one in secondary use as a water jar at Koroni a few years later. The development of this type is not well enough known to say whether the Koroni example should be earlier or later than those from Gela. Judging from the glazed and decorated material associated with the destruction of Gela which is published by Mr. Orlandini in *Archeologia Classica*, IX, 1957, we would say that the Koroni material of this kind is more developed, in so far as Sicilian material is comparable to Attic;<sup>18</sup> this is as might be expected on a site of later date.

A major point in Miss Grace's argument is her association of our early Rhodian handle (27) stamped "Αγρ[ι]ο[ς]" (retrograde)<sup>19</sup> with one stamped "Ἐπὶ Ἀγ[ρί(ου)]?| Εὐφρον(ος)" found in the packing of the Compartment Wall on the Pnyx;<sup>20</sup> from the Pnyx context she derives the late fourth-century B.C. date which she assigns to the Koroni group of early Rhodian amphoras. This association and the date derived from it may be criticized on several grounds: that the Koroni Agrios and the Pnyx Ἀγ[ρί(ου)] are the same is by no means clear;<sup>21</sup> the assignment of an eponym Agrios to the last quarter of the fourth century is difficult, if not impossible;<sup>22</sup> and, in fact, the Pnyx context does not provide independent evidence for an absolute date. The Pnyx wall was assigned to the late fourth century principally on the evidence of the pottery found in it which could be associated with that of Thompson's groups A and B.<sup>23</sup> This

<sup>18</sup> Pp. 153-173. Compare, for example, the kantharoi: Pls. LX; LXVIII, 2; LXXII, 2; and especially LXVIII, 3, which appears to be Attic.

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that the readings of several Koroni stamps are cited by Miss Grace only in restored form, e.g. "Αγρ[ι]ο[ς]" (27) is cited as "Αγριος, Ἀντιλέ[-]" (where the fifth letter may be lambda followed by another letter; or mu; or nu) (64) as Ἀντιλέων etc. In some cases alternative restorations could be suggested.

<sup>20</sup> *Hesperia*, Supplement X, 1956, pp. 140-141, no. 70.

<sup>21</sup> There are 12 names beginning ΑΓ and two beginning ΑΠ in Miss Grace's published list of Rhodian eponyms (*Hesperia*, XXII, 1953, pp. 122-124). The Koroni stamp differs from the Pnyx stamp in shape, in the omission of the preposition, in the direction of writing, and in the omission of the name of the fabricant. Indeed, it seems to us not unlikely that the Koroni stamp with its lack of preposition does not, in fact, name an eponym at all, but rather a fabricant.

<sup>22</sup> The eponyms are generally thought to be priests of Halios (cf. V. Grace, *Hesperia*, XXII, 1953, p. 120, and Supplement X, 1956, p. 139). A list of these priests from the fourth century has been published by L. Morricone, *Annuario*, XXVII-XXIX, 1949-1951, pp. 351-380. The editor has shown that the second column of this inscription probably covers the years 333/2 or 327/6 to 299/8 or 293/2 B.C.; the lowest possible date for the beginning of the column is 327/6 B.C., and the highest possible date of the end (i.e. the last preserved traces of a name) is 305/4 B.C. (*ibid.*, pp. 367, 370).

Agrios does not occur on the list, and if he is to be a priest of Halios, his term must, therefore, come before 327/6 or after 305/4 B.C. (or, on Mr. Morricone's most probable dating, before 327/6 or after 299/8 B.C.). The earlier period is rather high even for Miss Grace's suggested date of Koroni, and the later period is rather low for her date of the Pnyx deposit.

<sup>23</sup> *Hesperia*, XII, 1943, pp. 333-334. The excavators of the Compartment Wall connect it with the *diateichisma* mentioned in *I.G.*, II<sup>2</sup>, 463, line 53, but they note that the wall cannot have

is the very sort of pottery with which the Koroni amphoras were associated—pottery which we have shown to have been in use at a date later than would be allowed by the “hitherto accepted” chronology. The Pnyx context thus merely establishes what is confirmed by Koroni, that early Rhodian amphoras of this type should be contemporary with other pottery belonging to Thompson’s groups A and B.

Having, then, examined the criticisms offered by Mr. Edwards and Miss Grace, we find no valid objection to the interpretation of the Koroni evidence given by us in the publication. We feel that the finds from the camp constitute a valuable group which illustrates the sort of material in use at a fixed point in time whose absolute date, as fixed by the coins, is independently supported by epigraphy and written history.

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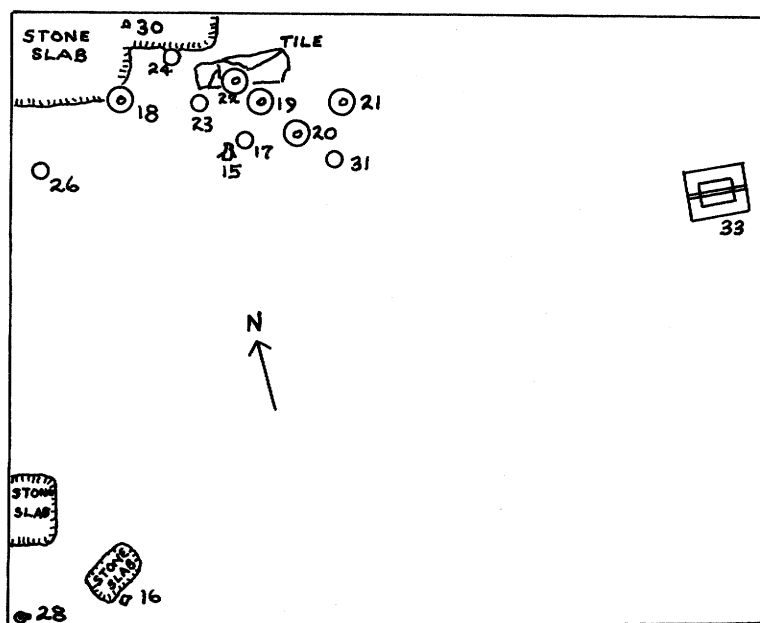
been completed in 307/6 B.C., the year of this decree (*ibid.*, p. 337) and suppose that its construction went on until 294 B.C. or so, a period of some 15 years. The implications which the inscription has for the history of the wall are still not entirely clear.



a. Building B. North part of Excavated Room with Objects as found, looking east.



b. Fish Plates 19-22 and other objects as found, looking north.



c. Sketch-plan of Building B showing positions in which objects were found.

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