

RHODIAN JARS IN FLORIDA

THE FIRST interest of historians in the study of amphora stamps has been the possibility of establishing the chronology of the eponymous officials whose names were stamped on Rhodian amphoras.¹ These names seem to have been those of the annually chosen priests of Helios who were the dating authorities of the Rhodian state. No fragment of an ancient list showing the sequence in office of these priests has been found. But it appears probable that we have on amphora stamps the whole series for over two hundred years covering the period of greatest political and commercial eminence of Rhodes.

Absolute dating is dependent on identification of persons named on the jars with individuals about whom we have information from other sources, and on discovery of the amphoras, or stamped fragments of them, in independently dated deposits. The relative dating needed to fill out the series is derived mainly from two studies: 1) a following of the development of the amphora and the stamps in shape and other physical features, and 2) a working out of the interconnection between the names of the eponymous officials and an overlapping series of names that also appear on the amphoras, and seem to be those of the potters responsible for a standard output of fluid containers. On Rhodian amphoras the two names do not usually appear on the same handle. So it will be seen that, conditions of discovery being equal, a whole jar provides a great deal more information than two stamped handles. It may be added that in addition to evidence on the development of shape and on name combinations, whole jars provide also capacity measurements: for standard containers, such measurements have the same kind of interest as the weights of coins.

When the chief studies of Rhodian amphora stamps were made, in 1907 and 1909,² the most important group of whole amphoras known was that forming part of the Cesnola collection from Cyprus in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, about thirty jars. Since then, more have been found, notably in Rhodes, and the museums in both Rhodes and Cyprus now have important collections of Rhodian jars. In the meanwhile, the Metropolitan has disposed of all but two from its Cesnola group. However, fourteen of them were bought by John Ringling for his museum in Sarasota, Florida; and these have remained the third largest collection of whole Rhodian jars on record.

¹ Bibliography on stamped jars may be found in my article, "Standard Pottery Containers of the Ancient Greek World," shortly to appear in the Shear Memorial volume of *Hesperia*, Supplement VIII, or through the index of Rostovtzeff's *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, Oxford, 1941.

² F. Bleckmann, *De inscriptionibus quae leguntur in vasculis Rhodiis*, Göttingen, 1907 (dissertation). M. Nilsson, *Timbres Amphoriques de Lindos*, in *Exploration Archéologique de Rhodes*, V, Copenhagen, 1909.

The Cesnola jars have been known from a brief account published in 1885 by I. H. Hall, an article described by Nilsson in his bibliographical study of Rhodian stamps as the most interesting and the least perfect of the stamp publications.³ The readings proposed by Hall have been the subject of repeated attempts at emendation; but apparently no one attempted to reexamine the stamps until 1934, by which time the majority of the jars had already left New York.

In February, 1948, I was able to study and photograph the part of the group now in Sarasota.⁴ It is planned that the detailed record of these jars, including photographs, shall be used in an article assembling all known potter-eponym combinations from Rhodian jars, a series vastly increased since the last listing.⁵ But because the Cesnola jars have received so much critical attention in the special literature, I give here corrected readings of the names on those now in the Ringling Museum. I follow Hall's order, with page references to his article, and the jars numbered as he found them marked in the Metropolitan Museum:

P. 390, no. 5055. The name of the potter is Agathoboulos.

P. 390, no. 5050. This item has not been identified with certainty, but a possible candidate was found in a jar with very dim worn rectangular stamps, for which no other identification was available. The name of the potter is possibly Diokleia, with asterisks in the corners of the stamp as in Nilsson, *op. cit.*, no. 175, 5. No restoration is proposed at present for the name of the eponym on this jar; certainly it provides no support for the otherwise unknown name proposed by Hall for the eponym of 5050.

P. 391, no. 5060. Hall's readings here are correct. He omits mention of a subsidiary stamp B, impressed on the side of the handle bearing the name of the potter.

P. 392, no. 5058. The device is a caduceus, the sigma "at the handle" of the device is the end of the potter's name, Drakontidas, here written in the nominative, instead of the more common genitive. The name of the eponym is clearly Aristakos.

P. 392, no. 5052. The name of the potter is Sosikles, the device a caduceus.

P. 392, no. 5061. The device with the potter's name is a thyrsos. Letter traces support the indicated restoration of the eponym's name as Aristombrotidas.

P. 392, no. 5057. The device with the potter's name is a caduceus. The eponym is Aristakos.

³ I. H. Hall, "The Greek Stamps on the Handles of Rhodian Amphorae, Found in Cyprus, and now in the Metropolitan Museum of New York," in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, XI, 1885, pp. 389-396. Compare Nilsson, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

⁴ I am grateful to the Institute for Advanced Study for special provision of travel funds. The director, A. Everett Austin, Jr., and the staff, of the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, now owned and operated by the State of Florida, facilitated in every way the work I did in Sarasota, although my visit fell during their busy season.

⁵ Note that in *Hesperia*, III, 1934, p. 219, fig. 2, I have given only groups that include one or more names published in the article; and many more pairs of names are known now than were known in 1934.

P. 392, no. 5063. The devices with the potter's name are the usual grape cluster and caduceus. There is no device in the eponym stamp; a mysterious emblem described by Hall seems to have strayed from a ceramist's valentine.

P. 393, no. 5043. The eponym is Alexiadas, his name preceded by the title priest.

P. 393, no. 5053. Hall's readings of the names are correct.

P. 393, no. 5067. The name of the potter is Onasioikos, and there is no device.

P. 393, no. 5066. Hall's readings of the names and identification of the device are correct.

P. 394, no. 5050. It appears possible that this is the same object as no. 5050 described on pp. 390-391, and that the rather circumstantial description here of the stamps as *circular* was carried over from another item. Note that the two sets of readings of 5050 on pp. 391 and 394 look very much like uncoordinated attempts to decipher the same difficult texts.

P. 395, no. 5040. The eponym is Nikasagoras. The potter is Agesippos. (The initial letter is clear. The position of the gamma seems to be occupied by a counter-stamped rose, much worn in the impression.)

Nearly every one of these corrections had already been made by Nilsson.⁶ In fact, of the jars found in Sarasota, the only one (with the possible exception of the dubious 5050) on which he made a wrong guess at a name was Hall's p. 392, no. 5058, on which he suggested that the eponym should probably be read Aristratos.

No other jar from Hall's list was found in Sarasota.⁷ However, the copy of this list which appears in the Atlas of the Cesnola Collection includes an additional jar, bearing circular stamps with rose as device; and the readings proposed for these stamps were too extraordinary even for Nilsson's ingenuity.⁸ This jar turned up in Sarasota, in a rather fragmentary condition. The potter is Nikasion, the eponym probably Eudamos or Sodamos (about two letters are missing from the beginning) with the title priest, and the month (correctly read) Panamos.

Lest Hall's score of right answers should appear unduly low, it is fair to state that some of the stamps are very dim and difficult, and if they had been on broken-off handles would have been left without any reading by many editors. No very high standard of correct readings can be expected of any who worked on small collections

⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 115-118.

⁷ The two retained by the Metropolitan Museum are p. 391, no. 5041, and p. 394, no. 5049, both correctly read by Hall. The rest will be discussed in a later publication. In this connection I should like to express my thanks to various members of the Department of Greek and Roman Art in the Metropolitan Museum, particularly to Miss Christine Alexander, for much help in the investigation of these jars.

⁸ L. P. di Cesnola, *A Descriptive Atlas of the Cesnola Collection of Cypriote Antiquities*, New York, 1903, Volume III, Supplement, Greek Inscriptions, no. 101. Compare Nilsson, *op. cit.*, p. 115, note 1.

before the appearance of Nilsson's Lindos publication, or who in these more enlightened days publish such collections without consulting this essential companion to Rhodian studies. Actually, those who work in this field quickly become aware of the multifarious value of his book, with passages in which we may constantly take issue, but to which we will continue to return for control and suggestion.

What appears curious to us is that many who know Professor Nilsson's scholarship in other branches of archaeology are not aware of his achievement in this. When it becomes generally realized, as I believe it will, that organization of the data provided by amphora stamps is an indispensable source for the study of Greek history, the Lindos stamp publication will receive the recognition it merits.

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