

CERTAIN AMPHORA GROUPS FROM THE ROMAN BATHS AND THE OLIVE MARKET OF TARSUS: SINOPE, SHELOV TYPE D, AND ZEEST 80

Işık ADAK ADIBELLI^a, Erkan ALKAÇ^b

^a Assoc. Prof. Dr., Ahi Evran University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Dept. of Archaeology, Bağbaşı, 40100, Kırşehir, Türkiye; e-mail: adakadibelli@hotmail.com

^b Assoc. Prof. Dr., Mersin University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dept. of Archaeology, Çiftlikköy Campus, 33343, Mersin, Türkiye; e-mail: ealkac77@gmail.com

Keywords: Tarsus, Amphora, Sinope Type C Snp III-2, Shelov Type D, Zeest 80, trade relations

Abstract: Archaeological excavations in Tarsus, a historically significant port city in the Cilicia region, yielded numerous fragments of amphorae produced in the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Black Sea regions. These finds, spanning various centuries, attest to the city's extensive commercial activities. Excavations conducted at the Roman Baths and the olive market provided valuable insights into the maritime trade of Tarsus. Among the amphorae recovered from these two excavation sites, certain amphorae groups were identified that were likely produced around the Black Sea and its surrounding areas. These include examples classified as Sinope, Shelov Type D and Zeest 80 amphorae, all unearthed from mixed ceramic fill layers at both excavation sites. Therefore, the amphorae discussed in this paper are dated by analogy. Among the amphorae, those of Shelov Type D and Zeest 80 are dated to the first half of the 3rd century AD, while the Sinopean specimens are attributed to the 5th and 6th centuries AD. This is the first publication on amphorae from Tarsus that feature the amphora groups of Shelov Type D and Zeest 80. It is noteworthy that these forms have not been previously documented in any publications concerning Cilician amphorae. The presence of these two amphora groups in this part of the Eastern Mediterranean region sheds new light onto the geographical distribution of these forms.

Cuvinte-cheie: Tarsus, amforă, Sinope Type C Snp III-2, Shelov tip D, Zeest 80, relații comerciale

Rezumat: Săpăturile arheologice de la Tarsus, un oraș-port semnificativ din punct de vedere istoric din regiunea Cilicia, au scos la iveală numeroase fragmente de amfore produse în regiunile Mediteranei, Egeei și Mării Negre. Aceste descoperiri, care acoperă diverse secole, atestă activitățile comerciale extinse ale orașului. Săpăturile efectuate la Băile Romane și la piața de măsline au oferit informații valoroase despre comerțul maritim din Tarsus. Printre amforele recuperate din aceste două situri au fost identificate anumite grupuri de amfore care probabil au fost produse în zona Mării Negre și teritoriile înconjurătoare. Acestea includ amfore de tip Sinope, Shelov Type D și Zeest 80, toate descoperite din straturi amestecate de umplutură. Prin urmare, amforele discutate în această lucrare sunt datate prin analogie. Dintre acestea, cele de tip Shelov D și Zeest 80 sunt datate în prima jumătate a secolului al III-lea d.Hr., în timp ce exemplarele sinopeane sunt atribuite secolelor al V-lea și al VI-lea d.Hr. Aceasta este prima publicație despre amforele din Tarsus care prezintă grupurile de amfore de tip Shelov D și Zeest 80. Este de remarcat faptul că aceste forme nu au fost documentate anterior în nicio publicație referitoare la amforele ciliciene. Prezența acestor două grupuri de amfore în această parte a regiunii Mediteranei de est aruncă o lumină nouă asupra distribuției geografice a acestor forme.

The Cilicia region, which encompassed a substantial portion of Turkey's contemporary Mediterranean coastline, was bounded by Korakesion (Coracesium) in the west and Alexandria Kat'Isson in the east¹. Situated within Plain Cilicia, Tarsus was one of the important port cities in the Eastern Mediterranean region during antiquity. Retaining its importance over the centuries, the city persisted in roughly the same location throughout its history. This, however, resulted in the destruction or reuse of earlier structural remnants by subsequent settlers, or even the construction of new settlements on top of the older ones. As a result, the archaeological works in Tarsus have not been conducted within the framework of a single plan and project, but instead have been carried out at different times and in different areas of the city. This paper focuses on the finds recovered from two of these areas that have gained prominence in recent years.

The first site is the Roman Baths, located in the city centre of Tarsus. Although largely destroyed, it still is one of the few remains of antiquity that have survived to the present day in the city. Excavations were conducted in this area between 2004 and 2006, which revealed the changes that the structure and the city underwent over time².

The other site is represented by the remains of a reservoir, which was discovered during the construction of the olive market of Tarsus. Rescue excavations were carried out at the site between 2012 and 2014, and exposed a reservoir structure consisting of a dam complex, regulator, and three chambers, as well as the remains of a mosaic floor³.

Both sites yielded a substantial quantity of potsherds from fill layers that possessed dense artifact assemblages, including numerous fragments of amphorae produced

¹ Strabon XIV, III, 1.

² Adak Adibelli 2007.

³ Dunbabin *et alii* 2019, p. 329–330.