

FINDS FROM THE HELLENISTIC 'FAVISSA' AT 'AKKO-PTOLEMAIS

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In a salvage excavation carried out at 'Akko in the summer of 1989, a Hellenistic pit was revealed 2 m below the surface (Aviam 2004:36).² The site, south of the central bus station, is located outside the Hellenistic city walls.

The pit, 2 × 3 m wide and 1 m deep, had a filling of gray soil, which contained a large quantity of pottery sherds, including 21 stamped amphora handles and three terracotta figurines (discussed below). The majority of the finds were concentrated in a layer approximately 0.2 m thick resting at the bottom of the pit. In addition to the pottery, the contents of the pit included fragments of frescoes, a stucco-fluted pillar drum, various architectural elements and ceramic roof tiles. A fragmentary marble statue was found in the upper part of the pit and two further pieces of the statue were recovered elsewhere in the debris.

The marble statue is of a smaller-than-life-size standing male figure, now headless. The extant portion is 1.15 m high. Aviam (2004:37–38) traced the origin of the marble to one of the Aegean islands, and interpreted the figure, clad in a mid-shank-length toga, as a priest bearing an offering. He dates the statue to the third century BCE, and not later than the beginning of the second century BCE.

The identification of the pit as a *favissa* derived in the main from the headless state of the statue, the presence of sporadic architectural elements and the pit's extra-mural location. Aviam assigned the finds from the pit to a Hellenistic temple, probably located inside the city; the statue's condition led him to believe that a violent event had damaged the temple, and that its debris had been deposited in the pit after repairs were made to the temple. The custom of discarding temple debris in a nearby *favissa* is well known from sites

of this period (Derfler 1984) and earlier (Negbi 1966:1; Stern 1982:158).

In this regard, the ceramic finds are indicative: they date from the late Persian to the early Roman periods, with the bulk ranging from the late fourth/early third to the second centuries BCE. Dalit Regev (in prep.) has kindly provided the following summary of her study:

“An undetermined number of sherds from the context were discarded in the field. What remained to be studied were predominantly bowls and plates of types popular throughout the Hellenistic period, both undecorated and painted. Also found were a large group of ‘slender’ fusiform unguentaria, and in smaller quantities, amphorae and jars of imported and local production, jugs, kraters, cooking pots, juglets and oil lamps.

While this ceramic assemblage is undoubtedly Hellenistic, its date cannot be refined. Some of the oil-lamps were of a type popular in the fourth and third centuries BCE, while the unguentaria date from the second century BCE onward.

The fragmentary nature of these finds, and the fact that storage and kitchen wares were found together with tableware and perfume containers, do not lend support to Aviam's suggestion that the context was that of a *favissa* (Aviam 2004:38). This pottery corpus is not strictly one that can be expected at a sanctuary”.

The present report discusses the stamped amphora handles and the fragmentary terracotta figurines found in the pit.

RHODIAN STAMPED AMPHORA HANDLES

Twenty-one stamped amphora handles were retrieved from the *favissa*. Their significance—especially as no coins were found—lies in

establishing the chronological range in which the pit was filled.

The stamped handles belong to the Rhodian class (though Nos. 1 and Nos. 6 are somewhat doubtful). In Nos. 15–21 the names cannot be read. There are no unstamped fragments in our assemblage and it remains unclear whether there were any unstamped imported amphora classes in the pit at all. Owing to the nature of the context, there is no reason to assume that the stamped amphora handles are of connected pairs, i.e., originally having belonged to the same vessel.

Our dating follows the lower chronology of Finkielsztejn (2001a) as presented in the tables of his summary (Finkielsztejn 2001a:188–195), unless otherwise noted.

The main conclusion drawn from the dates of the stamped amphora material is that the filling of the pit spanned less than a century, from toward the end of the third quarter of the third century BCE until sometime in the third quarter of the second century BCE. Within the group of well-dated handles, no doubt the overwhelming majority is early, preceding the end of the third century BCE. Only one well-dated stamped handle (No. 13) dates to the second century, falling within its second quarter. To that century we should probably also assign the majority of the Rhodian stamped handles bearing illegible names, especially Nos. 15–18 and 21, which have angular profiles.

Some stamped Rhodian amphora handles from 'Akko have been published (Dothan 1976:31; Finkielsztejn 2000a), but the majority have not. Finkielsztejn examined the chronology of the largely unpublished 'Akko Rhodian amphoras and determined a range of 220 to 200 BCE, peaking sharply in 210–205 BCE (Finkielsztejn 2000b; 2001a:180; 2001b:191, Fig. 5). The explanation offered for this high importation rate is the overall importance of this port city during Ptolemaic rule. A garrison of military personnel was probably stationed there at the time, encountering the Seleucid enemy to the north. The battles of Raphia (217 BCE) and Paneas (200 BCE) may be viewed

as the early and late limits of this phenomenon (Finkielsztejn 2000b:208), particularly accounting for the 210–205 BCE peak, with two-and-a-half times the average occurrence of stamped handles (particularly of Ptolemy IV).

The amphora handles from this pit well reflect the peak of 210–205 BCE as presented by Finkielsztejn. All but two (Nos. 4, 13) of the fourteen dated handles most likely belong to Period II (c. 234–c. 199 BCE). Numbers 2 and 3 are securely dated by eponyms to the period of c. 209–c. 205 BCE.

Based upon the latest dateable material, the date of the pit—or more precisely, of its filling—falls within Period IV or thereafter (c. 160–c. 146 BCE). One may thus conjecture how long the amphoras of the late third century BCE remained in use: were any of the fragments still in use during the second quarter of the second century BCE, or is this a mixture of contemporaneous objects together with older refuse? Both are possibilities, as amphoras are known to have been in use for lengthy periods. It is more likely, however, that discarded amphora material had become mixed with the later material deposited in the pit.

CATALOGUE

The arrangement of the handles and conventions regarding the readings follow Finkielsztejn 2001a:213–216.

1. Reg. No. 306. IAA 1998–2042.

Rectangular stamp

Αγησ[α? - -]



The ware is not necessarily Rhodian in appearance, perhaps because it had been overfired. Its surface is very pale brown (10 YR 8/3);

some inclusions appear on the surface. The pinkish gray (7.5 YR 7/2) core is well levigated. The everted, rounded rim and the handle's curved profile indicate that it belongs to an early Rhodian amphora. The only name of a fabricant I am aware of that begins as above is Ἀγήσαρχος of mid-second century BCE date, too late for our profile. An alternative is Ἀγησίλας, published in a single line type without device in Porro 1916:109, No. 7, 1, and Empereur 1977:203, No. 2. The most restricted time span of Ἀγησίλας runs between c. 196 and c. 190 BCE, based upon the three eponyms in whose terms he produced amphoras (for eponyms see Jöhrens 1999:36, No. 83). Considering this period of activity for Ἀγησίλας, it is less likely that his name would appear on handles with this profile. Finkielsztejn (2001a:98) notes an undated fabricant—Ἀγήσιππος 1st(?), whose name appears on rectangular stamps accompanied by a small schematic Helios head device. Seemingly, this is an earlier homonym, not related to Ἀγήσιππος, who produced an amphora endorsed by a Νικασαγόρας 1st(?) (c. 172/170 BCE), or 2nd(?) (c. 131 BCE, first published in Hall 1885:395, No. 5040; reading corrected in Grace 1948:146). The earlier Ἀγήσιππος would then be the most suitable alternative, providing that the handle is in fact of Rhodian origin and assuming that originally there was a Helios device to the right of the stamp.

2. Reg. No. 303. IAA 1998–2049.
Rectangular stamp.

Ἐπὶ Ἄρισ
τωνίδα



This eponym is dated to c. 209–205 BCE. Cf. Gentili 1958:50, No. 62, 1.

3. Reg. No. 301. IAA 1998–2046.
Circular stamp.

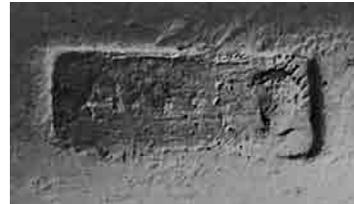
Ἐπ[ι] Ἀ[ρ]μ[οσί]λα Ἀγριανίου
rose



Ἄρμοσιλας officiated between c. 209 and c. 205 BCE.

4. Reg. No. 315. IAA 1998–2044.
Rectangular stamp.

Δίσκου Helios head



A published example from Maresha has a Helios head device accompanying the name of this fabricant (Macalister 1901:36–37, No. 90, Pl. 2:55). A Period II homonym has the month along with his name (Ariel 1990:34, S 30). The profile of the handle appears to be angular, probably identifying the fabricant as Δίσκος 2nd, of Period III. Though the Period III Δίσκος stamps are often void of devices, an exception is a star device (Schuchhardt 1895:459). Finkielsztejn (2001a:98, and Pl. 9:174—not identical to the 'Akko stamp—possibly a rubbing of a handle figured in Macalister 1901?) attributes the Helios head type to Δίσκος 2nd and suggests (Finkielsztejn 2001a:120–121) that, together with Ἄριστος, Δίσκος 2nd ran a pottery workshop. Based upon the eponymic connections noted

there, Δίσκος 2nd was active between 189 and 186 BCE at the least.

5. Reg. No. 311. IAA 1998–2055.

Rectangular stamp.

Δίσκου
Δαλίου

The month inscribed on this stamp (above, No. 4) identifies the fabricant as the earlier homonym Δίσκος 1st, of Period II. He worked in the term of Ξενόστρατος (Grace 1963:334, No. 8), now dated to Period IIb (219–210 BCE) or thereafter. Even adopting the high chronology, Conovici and Irimia's suggested date for the eponym (237–230 BCE) is apparently too high (Conovici and Irimia 1991:163–164, No. 278). Our date for the period of activity of this fabricant falls generally within Period II.

6. Reg. No. 321. IAA 1998–2050.

Rectangular stamp.

[Βαδρ]ομί[ου]
Δοκίμο[υ]



This handle has a curved profile, a pink (7.5 YR 8/4) surface and a reddish-yellow (7.5 YR 7/6) core. It is apparently Rhodian, naming the fabricant Δόκιμος. I thank Gérald Finkielsztejn for his assistance in identifying the fabricant. See Pridik 1926:311, 123, and Grace 1934:219, where the name Δόκιμος appears with the eponym Ἀρχοκράτης 1st, dated to c. 209–205 BCE, thus placing this rarely occurring fabricant in Period II.

7. Reg. No. 308. IAA 1998–2047.

Rectangular stamp.

Ἐπι Καλλι
κράτους



The curved profile of the handle indicates that this is the earliest of three homonyms (see Nachtergaele 1978:51–53, No. 22). Conovici and Irimia (1991:163, No. 271) attempted to date the eponym to c. 243–238 BCE (high chronology). Finkielsztejn (2001a:191) placed it between 233 and 220 BCE.

8. Reg. No. 310. IAA 1998–2051.

Rectangular stamp.

Κρέωντ
ος Δαλ
ίου



This fabricant was active late in Period I and in Period IIa, until c. 220 BCE. See Jöhrens 1999:46, No. 111. The fact that a month-name is included dates the stamp to after the transition from Period I to Period II, i.e., after 235 BCE. A stylistic association (Finkielsztejn 1990: under No. 238) with the eponym Ἐγλώκριτος may extend Κρέων's period of activity into Period IIb (c. 219–c. 210 BCE).

9. Reg. No. 307. IAA 1998–2054.

Rectangular stamp.

Κρέ[ον]τος
Σμινθίου



For the date, see above No. 8.

10. Reg. No. 316. IAA 1998–2056.

Rectangular stamp.

Κρέοντος
Υακινθίου



For the date, see above No. 8. Three examples of the type were published: from Greece (Dumont 1871:98, No. 164), from Maresha (Macalister 1901:42–43, Nos. 142, 143) and from Samaria (Reisner, Fisher and Lyon 1924:19, No. 140).

11. Reg. No. 309. IAA 1998–2045.

Rectangular stamp.

Παυσανία

The handle's curved profile indicates that this fabricant was the earliest homonym of this name, dating it to Period II (Conovici and Irimia 1991:166, Nos. 308–310). The new dates offered for the three eponyms appearing on amphoras of Παυσανίας 1st (Finkielsztein 1990: under No. 296) place the fabricant's activity in Periods IIa and IIb (c. 234–c. 210 BCE).

12. Reg. No. 319. IAA 1998–2043.

Rectangular stamp.

Ἐπὶ Πολυ
κράτους



This eponym, though originally dated to Period I (Grace 1956:143, No. 95—similar, but non-identical stamp), appears on amphoras bearing stamps with named months (*EAD* 27:293), thus dating it to Period II (Fraser and Matthews 1987:292, but see under No. 13), refined by Finkielsztein to Period IIb (c. 219–c. 210 BCE). A similar stamp comes from Jerusalem (Macalister and Duncan 1926:210).

13. Reg. No. 312. IAA 1998–2039.

Rectangular stamp.

Πολυξένου asterisks in corners



See Jöhrens 2001:430, No. 260 for this fabricant's activity in Period IV. Rehard (1996:152, No. 14) found no eponym connections for this fabricant. Finkielsztein (1993:224, n. 106) assigned the fabricant's activity to the end of Period IV—beginning of Period V, based on Fraser and Matthews' (1987:380) Period IV/V date; they in turn drew on unpublished lists prepared by Virginia Grace in 1965. This list should no longer be relied upon (Grace, pers. comm. 1993); Finkielsztein's and Fraser and Matthews' extended date is thus insufficient. A Period IV date (only) for Πολύξενος, as noted by Jöhrens, is here warranted.

14. Reg. No. 314. IAA 1998–2053.

Rectangular stamp.

Ἐπ[ι] Φιλῶ
 νίδα

Grace (1986:564, under No. 23) dated the eponym to just after the end of Period I. Conovici and Irimia (1991:162, No. 268) suggested a (high chronology) date between 243 and 240 BCE, i.e., just before the end of Period I; Finkielsztein dated it to c. 233 to c. 220 BCE. Published examples of the type are from Lindos (Nilsson 1909:497, No. 431,1) and Samaria (Finkielstein 1990: No. 391).

Names Not Read

15. Reg. No. 305. IAA 1998–2036.

Rectangular stamp.

Ἄρισ[

Angular handle.

16. Reg. No. 304. IAA 1998–2052.

Circular stamp.

]ακρ[(retrograde)
 rose

Angular handle.

17. Reg. No. 317. IAA 1998–2048.

Circular stamp.

]κρατευ[ς
 rose

Angular handle.

18. Reg. No. 318. IAA 1998–2040.

Circular stamp.

]ου
 rose

Angular handle.

19. Reg. No. 320. IAA 1998–2037.

Rectangular stamp.

]ου
]ου

Curved(?) handle.

20. Reg. No. 313. IAA 1998–2041.

Rectangular stamp.

Helios head]υ
 symbol]νι



Curved handle.

The Helios-head symbol (Finkielsztein 2001a:99–101) dates this handle roughly to Periods IIa and IIb (c. 234–c. 210 BCE).

21. Reg. No. 302. IAA 1998–2038.

Illegible circular stamp. Rose device. Angular handle.

INDICES

A. Personal Names

Numbers refer to the catalogue entries in this article. Boldface indicates that the name appears on the specific stamp presented here.

Ἄγησαρχος Fab. 1

Ἄγησίλας 1st Fab. 1

Ἄγησιππος 1st? Fab. 1

Ἄγησιππος 2nd? Fab. 1

Ἀγλώκριτος Fab. 8

Ἄριστωνίδας Ep. 2

Ἄριστος Fab. 4

Ἄρισ[Fab. **15**

Ἄρμοσίλας Ep. 3

Ἄρχοκράτης 1st Ep. 6

Δίσκος 1st Fab. 4, **5**

Δίσκος 2nd Fab. **4**

Ἰασικράτης Ep. 1

Καλλικράτης 1st Ep. 7

Κρέων Fab. **8–10**

Μένων 3

Ξενόστρατος Ep. 5

Παυσανίας 1st Fab. **11**

Πολυκράτης Ep. 12
 Πολύξενος Fab. 13
 Φιλωνίδας Ep. 14

B. Rhodian Months

Ἀγριάνιος 3
 Βαδρόμιος 6
 Δάλιος 5, 8
 Σμίνθιος 9
 Ὑακίνθιος 10

C. Devices

Asterisks in corners 13
 Helios head 4, 20
 Rose 3, 16, 17, 18, 21
 Star 4

TERRACOTTA FIGURINES

Three small and medium-sized (8–20 cm) fragmentary figurines were recovered. All are hollow, two of them made up of two molded components joined at the drying phase before firing. The horse and rider figurine (Fig. 1:3) has molding only at the front, while the sides and back were handmade. The molds used were worn, and the artisans defined parts of the figurines' features with a sharp tool.

The clay of the figurines was finely levigated and well fired. All three fragments bear white slip and one has traces of black and brown paint. In general, the figurines are of relatively high quality.

Bird/Dove (Fig. 1:1).— Reg. No. 1. IAA 1998–2095. Height 5 cm, max. body width 4 cm, clay thickness 0.3 cm. Pink-orange fabric.

Short beak, legs folded underneath the body, and remnant of the wing on one side. The eye was carved with a sharp tool.

Bird figurines appear before the Hellenistic period, allegedly reflecting the Astarte cult (e.g., at Tel Goded: Bliss and Macalister 1902:137, No. 10; Pl. 69:10). The 'Akko figurine differs from earlier representatives in style and proportions; it is similar in style to the dove figurines from Rhodes related to the Aphrodite

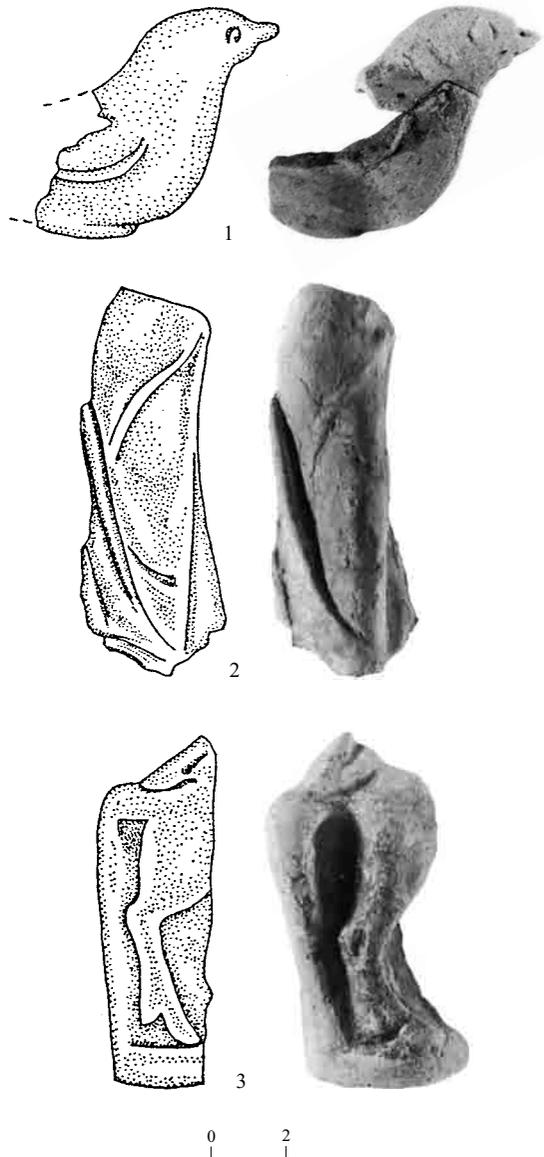


Fig. 1. Terracotta figurines.

cult (Higgins 1959: Pl. 34:184; Besques 1992: Pls. 42-c, 43-b).

Female Human Figurine (Fig. 1:2).— Reg. No. 9. IAA 1998–2094. Height 8 cm, max. width 4 cm, clay thickness 1.2. Light pink fabric.

This body fragment depicts a slightly protruding belly, with the left leg stretched forward and slightly bent. A fine tunic with

diagonal folds emphasizes the motion of the body.

A female figurine clad in a long tunic is a very common subject in terracotta art, especially from the fifth century onward. Our example is of distinct Hellenistic character: the folds of the tunic are finely molded, emphasizing the motion of the leg underneath (Baudand 1953: Pl. 1; Higgins 1959: Pl. 128:885). The figurine may represent the deity KIKĀ (Mirina: Higgins 1967: Pl. 54), an Aphrodite (Gerasa: Iliffe 1945: Pl. 2), or a muse (Alexandria: Higgins 1967: Pl. 62).

Horse and Rider (Fig. 1:3).— Reg. No. 10. IAA 1998–2093. Height 7.5 cm, max. width 3.7 cm, clay thickness 0.9 cm. Pinkish-white fabric.

Only the rear part of the horse is preserved. Near its tail is the hand of the rider. The figurine has a flat base that is hollow in its lower part. The ‘horse and rider’ figurine represents an ancient local tradition. The Persian-period types are schematic, lacking in proportions between horse and rider. In our case, the leg of the horse is well shaped and the rider’s palm is proportionate to the size of the horse (for parallels see Davidson 1952: Pl. 13:180; Besques 1992: Pl. 7:6; Higgins 1967: Pl. 25:a; Chéhab 1951–1954: Pl. 5:1–3). A similar figurine found in Mirina (Asia Minor) is of higher quality (Mollard-Besques 1963: Pl. 157).

Discussion

The iconographic character of the figurines clearly relates our group to the Western artistic sphere. This tradition begins to appear before Alexander’s eastern conquests, particularly along the coast, including the town of ‘Akko. Certainly by the late fourth and early third centuries BCE, the Western Greek artistic tradition was integrated into the material culture of ‘Akko.

The subjects represented in this group of terracottas are familiar and variations thereof appear in earlier figurines. The importance of these particular pieces lies in their style, which links them to the major manufacturing centers in the West: Rhodes, Cyprus and Asia Minor. Stylistically, the group dates to the chronological range of fourth to the end of the third centuries BCE.

The identification of the pit as a *favissa* would account for the fragmentary condition of the terracotta figurines: they may have been broken intentionally as part of the practice of breaking cult objects prior to deposition, in order to prevent their reuse. Presumably, this group of objects was part of a larger assemblage, dispersed for some reason.³

One may speculate as to which of ‘Akko’s temples originally housed these figurines. Among the depictions of temples from the city’s coins, is a fine example showing Aphrodite under an arch (Meshorer 1984:15, No. 16). This lends support to our tentative association of the female and bird figurines with Aphrodite, as well as to the possible existence of an Aphrodite cult in ‘Akko.⁴

CONCLUSION

The Hellenistic pit in ‘Akko has been identified as a *favissa* on the basis of the presence of a marble statue and three fragmentary terracotta figurines. The pottery evidence, on the other hand, does not point to a cultic source for the pit’s fill: the overwhelming majority of the finds are household wares and transport amphoras.

A possible explanation for this mixed assemblage is that the statue and figurines did indeed originate in a cultic context, but were eventually discarded in an ordinary refuse pit rather than a ritual repository.

NOTES

¹ Donald T. Ariel is the author of the section on the stamped amphora handles; the section on the terracotta figurines is by Natalie Messika.

² The excavation (Permit No. A-1684) was directed by Eliezer Stern on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

³ Large assemblages of terracotta figurines were found in 'Akko, but have not yet been published.

Excavations on the tell and in the modern city also yielded many Persian and Hellenistic figurines, some of them researched by the author (Messika 1996).

⁴ The cult of Aphrodite is attested at Ashqelon and 'Akko. The Mishna relates that Rabban Shimeon son of Gamliel visited the Aphrodite bath in 'Akko (Mishna, Avoda Zara 3:4).

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