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# RHODIAN POTTERY OF THE 8<sup>TH</sup> AND 7<sup>TH</sup> C. BC, AND ITS DISTRIBUTION IN MAGNA GRAECIA AND SICILY

MATTEO D'ACUNTO

**Riassunto.** Il contributo esamina alcuni aspetti relativi alla produzione ceramica di Rodi tra l'VIII e il VII sec. a.C., e alla sua circolazione in Magna Grecia e in Sicilia. La ceramica geometrica rodia, nel corso dell'VIII sec. a.C., mostra delle differenze legate alla produzione dei tre centri principali dell'isola: Ialysos, Kameiros e Lindos. La ceramica deposta nei contesti funerari dimostra come tali centri avessero costruito un'ampia serie di relazioni esterne, in particolare attraverso le intense frequentazioni dell'isola da parte di cipro-fenici e di euboici. Differentemente, la ceramica rodia circola poco al di fuori dell'isola, con l'eccezione macroscopica degli *aryballoi* in *spaghetti style*. Questi ultimi, prodotti a Rodi e in particolare a Ialysos tra l'ultimo ventennio dell'VIII e il terzo quarto del VII sec. a.C., sono destinati all'esportazioni di profumi. Essi sono stati rinvenuti in numerosi centri della Magna Grecia e della Sicilia, e in una quantità particolarmente significativa a Gela, come portato della colonizzazione rodia.

**Περίληψη.** Η μελέτη εξετάζει ορισμένες πτυχές σχετικές με τη ροδιακή κεραμική του 8<sup>ου</sup> και 7<sup>ου</sup> αι. π.Χ., καθώς και με την κυκλοφορία της στη Μεγάλη Ελλάδα και τη Σικελία. Η ροδιακή γεωμετρική κεραμική κατά τον 8<sup>ο</sup> αι. π.Χ. παρουσιάζει διαφοροποιήσεις που σχετίζονται με την παραγωγή των τριών κύριων κέντρων του νησιού: της Ιαλυσού, της Καμείρου και της Λίνδου. Η κεραμική, η οποία βρέθηκε σε ταφικά σύνολα, δηλώνει πώς τα κέντρα αυτά είχαν οικοδομήσει ένα ευρύ φάσμα εξωτερικών σχέσεων, ιδίως μέσω της έντονης παρουσίας στο νησί Κυπρο-Φοινίκων και Ευβοέων. Αντιθέτως, η ροδιακή κεραμική κυκλοφόρησε ελάχιστα εκτός του νησιού, με προφανή εξαίρεση αυτή των *spaghetti-style* αρύβαλλων. Οι τελευταίοι, που παράγονται στη Ρόδο και ειδικότερα στην Ιαλυσό μεταξύ των δύο τελευταίων δεκαετιών του 8<sup>ου</sup> και του τρίτου τετάρτου του 7<sup>ου</sup> αι. π.Χ., προορίζονται για την εξαγωγή αρωμάτων. Έχουν βρεθεί σε πολλά κέντρα της Μεγάλης Ελλάδας και της Σικελίας, και σε μεγάλους αριθμούς στη Γέλα, ως αποτέλεσμα του ροδιακού αποικισμού.

**Abstract.** The paper deals with some general aspects of Rhodian ceramics in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC, and its circulation in Magna Graecia and Sicily. Rhodian Geometric pottery during the 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC shows differences related to the production of the island's three main centers, Ialysos, Kameiros, and Lindos. The pottery, which was found in burial contexts, shows how these centers had built up a wide range of external relationships, particularly through the intense frequentation of the island by Cypro-Phoenicians and Euboeans. Conversely, Rhodian ceramics circulated very little outside the island, with the macroscopic exception of Spaghetti-style aryballoi. The latter, produced on Rhodes and especially in Ialysos between the last two decades of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the third quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC, are intended for perfume exports. They have been found in many centers of Magna Graecia and Sicily, and in large numbers in Gela, as a result of Rhodian colonization.

## 1. RHODES AND THE RHODIAN POTTERY OF THE 8<sup>TH</sup> AND 7<sup>TH</sup> C. BC

In this paper I will deal with some general aspects and contexts of Rhodian ceramics in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC. For the Geometric period, I have examined the Ialysos pottery in the volume recently published by the Italian Archaeological School at Athens, concerning the funerary contexts excavated during the Italian occupation of the Dodecanese<sup>1</sup>. Of course, my analysis of Ialysian Geometric pottery evolves from the two seminal works of Friis Johansen, *Exochi*, and Nicolas Coldstream, *Greek Geometric Pottery*<sup>2</sup>. My study allowed me to distinguish in the Ialysian pottery a phase of LG I from one of LG II: this was possible thanks to the contextual associations found in individual graves with imported ceramics, especially Euboean and North Ionian, and with Rhodian Spaghetti-style aryballoi from LG II<sup>3</sup>.

An important issue is that of the dissemination of Rhodian ceramics from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC in Magna Graecia and Sicily. This is a lesser phenomenon and one that needs to be reconsidered, after the end of the

<sup>1</sup> D'ACUNTO 2020. For a synthesis on the history and the archaeology of Rhodes and the Dodecanese from the Late Bronze Age until the Archaic period see *Id.* 2015.

<sup>2</sup> JOHANSEN 1958; COLDSTREAM 2008, 262-287, 477-479.

<sup>3</sup> D'ACUNTO 2019, 272-280; 2020, 369-380.

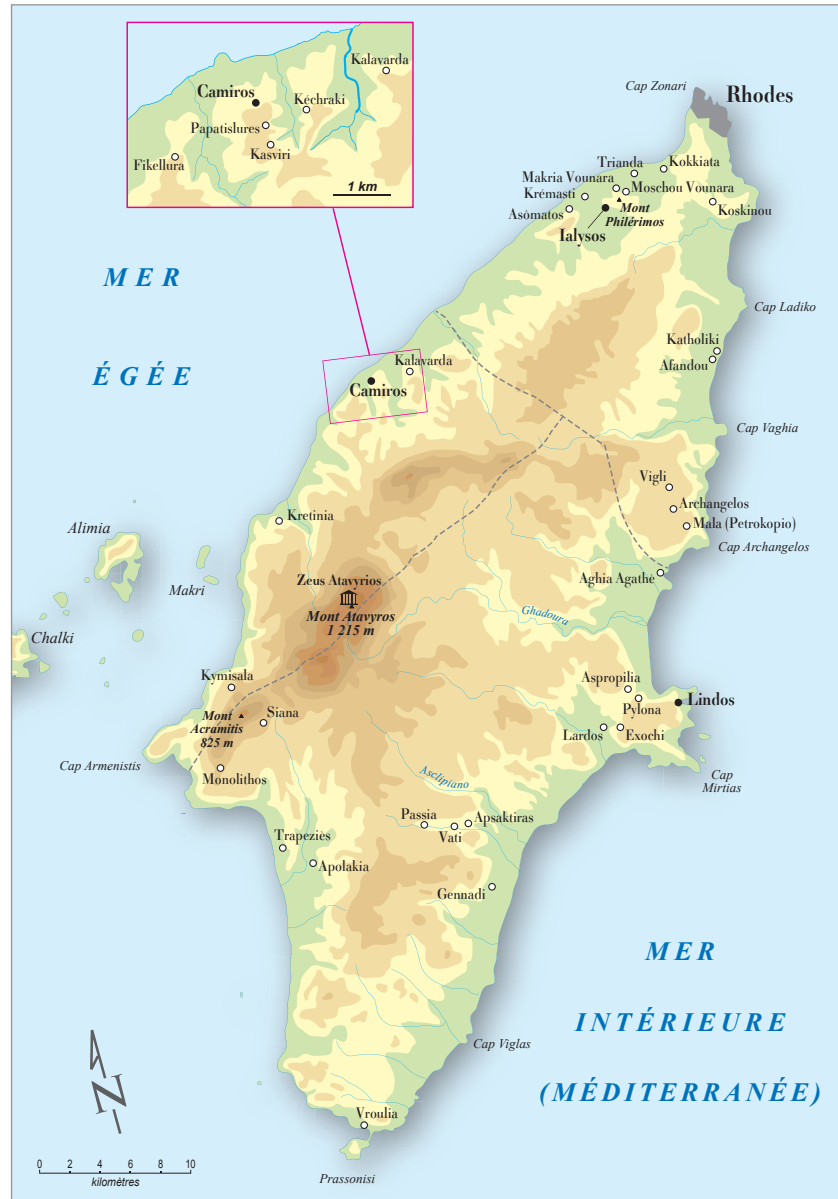


Fig. 1. Rhodes: the main sites of the prehistoric and historical periods (after COULIÉ - FILIMONOS-TSOPOTOU 2014; © Musée du Louvre / Jean-Pierre Pirat).

so-called “pan-Rhodian myth”<sup>4</sup>: the productions of bird kotylai and bird bowls and the Wild Goat Style, once assigned to Rhodes, are now firmly ascribed to the different areas of southern and northern Ionia, and Aeolia<sup>5</sup>. In particular, it is interesting to focus on the circulation in the West of pottery produced in Rhodes, before and after the Rhodian-Cretan foundation of Gela on the southern coast of Sicily (689/688 BC)<sup>6</sup>.

As is well known, with regard to the foundation of Phaselis on the Lycian coast (691/690 BC)<sup>7</sup> and of Gela in Sicily<sup>8</sup>, the colonial memories recorded in ancient sources refer generically to Rhodes in some authors, while in others, and especially in the *Chronicle of Lindos*, specifically to the role played by Lindos. The latter represents one of the three poleis on the island, which were politically independent of one another until the foundation by synoecism of Rhodos in 408/407 BC on the northern tip: Lindos controlled the southern part of the island, Ialysos the northern and Kameiros the western section (Fig. 1).

<sup>4</sup> On the “pan-Rhodian” myth in pottery production see COULIÉ-VILLING 2014, with references.

<sup>5</sup> AKURGAL *et alii* 2002; KADIOĞLU *et alii* 2015; D’ACUNTO 2020, 258-291; and different contributions in COULIÉ - FILIMONOS-TSOPOTOU 2014, with references.

<sup>6</sup> On this aspect see also D’ACUNTO 2024.

<sup>7</sup> PHILOSTEPH.HIST. *FHG* III.29 fr. 1; ARISTAENET. *FGrH* 771 fr. 1; cf. *Lindian Chronicle* C XXIV; ATH. 7.297-298 E-F.

<sup>8</sup> HDT 7.153.1; *Lindian Chronicle* C XXV and XXVIII; TH. 6.4.3; D.S. 8, fr. 23.



Fig. 2. Ialysos, T. LVIII/422 Tsambico plot, LG II (720-690 BC): 1. Phoenician lekythos, H. 16 cm; 8. Spaghetti-style aryballos, local production, H. 4.1 cm; 9. Lekythos, local production, H. 4.5 cm; 22. Amphora, likely of Cretan production, H. 34 cm; 23. Pithos of Cretan production, H. 16.3 cm (Nos. 1, 8 and 23: drawings N. Sergio; Nos. 9 and 22: drawings M. Barbato after D'ACUNTO 2020).

An interesting point of view on the identity and community expressions between the three Rhodian poleis is that of Geometric ceramics. Between the end of the MG (ca. 775-750 BC) and the LG (ca. 750-690 BC) significant differences in pottery production emerge amongst the three centers. These differences affect both the vase shapes and mostly the decoration<sup>9</sup>.

The pottery of Ialysos is imbued with Phoenician and especially Cypriot influences, through the local adoption of decoration techniques such as Black-on-Red and ornamentation such as groups of tremuli, small concentric circles and so-called Spaghetti motifs<sup>10</sup>. A good example is T. LVIII/422 from LG II (ca. 720-690 BC) (Fig. 2)<sup>11</sup>: the conspicuous vessels set also includes a *pithos* (23) and an amphora (22) both imported from Crete and two jugs, Phoenician (1) and Cypriot respectively; in the local pottery, its grave-offerings illustrate how much the Ialysian production was influenced by mostly Cypriot ceramics (cf. the Spaghetti-style aryballos No. 8).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. D'AGOSTINO 2020. For a general picture see COLDSTREAM 2008, 274-287 and 479. On archaeometric analyses, which help to highlight the existence of distinct productions among the different centers of Rhodes between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, see COULIÉ-VILLING 2014, 116-117; COULIÉ - FILIMONOS-TSOPOTOU 2014, 300-302, Nos.

167-169 [A. Coulié, M. D'Acunto]; VILLING-MOMMSEN 2017; cf. D'ACUNTO 2020, 132-135.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 160-209.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 711-720, pls. XXI-XXV, LIII-LIV, 11-12.

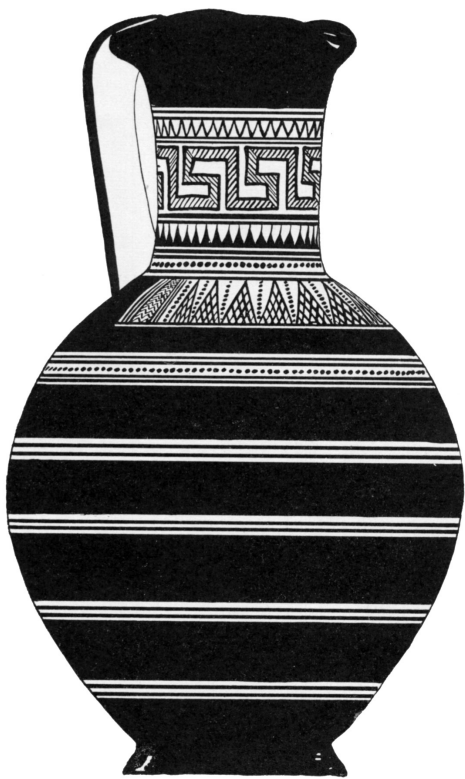


Fig. 3. Exochi, T. V (late MG, ca. 775-750 BC), oinochoe, H. 45 cm (after JOHANSEN 1958).

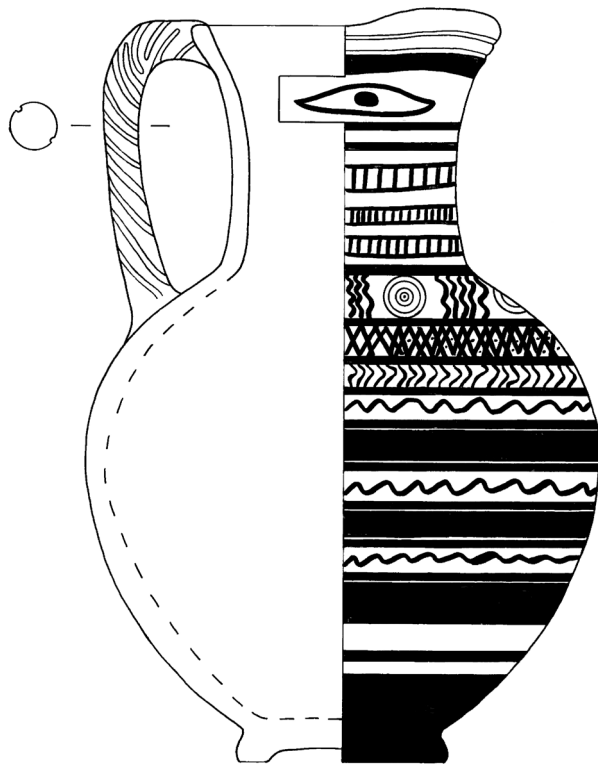


Fig. 4. Kameiros, T. XXII (27) Papatislures (LG II, 720-690 BC), oinochoe, H. 29 cm (drawing I. Bossolino after BOSSOLINO 2018).

As for Lindos, judging from the necropolis of Exochi (a site located in its territory), the pottery is characterized by stronger influences from the Aegean Geometric, especially Attic, and perhaps also through the mediation of Euboean pottery<sup>12</sup>. Unfortunately, most of the Exochi grave offerings are no longer accessible today. Therefore, in these cases our assessment is based on the drawings and photographs edited by Johansen, which calls for the utmost caution. For example, in the case of T. V (late MG, ca. 775-750 BC) the skyphoi and kantharoi could have included imported specimens<sup>13</sup>; but in the two Atticizing oinochoai the emphasis on shoulder decoration and triangle motifs are typical of Geometric productions of the Dodecanese (Fig. 3)<sup>14</sup>.

As for Kameiros, the local LG style displays idiosyncrasies, mixing Attic MG lingering with solutions that take up Cypriot formulae and still other motifs of various origins. These idiosyncratic trends may be illustrated by the vases of T. CC (2) Kekraki from LG I and of T. XXII (27) Papatislures from LG II (Fig. 4)<sup>15</sup>.

Behind these distinctions in ceramic styles may lie not only the craftsmanship differentiation of the island's three main centers, but also perhaps, at least partially, different systems of external relations. Lindos seems to be even more open towards the Aegean; Ialysos is influenced by the closer relationship with Cypriots or Cypro-Phoenicians settled on site; Kameiros manifests phenomena of conservatism.

## 2. RHODES AND ITS EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

In the second part of my paper, I will deal with Rhodes' opening to a thick network of external relations. From this point of view, Nicolas Coldstream's and Nota Kourou's studies have been of seminal

<sup>12</sup> JOHANSEN 1958, see, for example, T. V (however this burial is older, since it is from the end of the MG, ca. 775-750 BC), 49, 52-53, esp. the two big oinochoai Nos. 1 and 2, figs. 111-112 and 113-114; the latter is reproduced in the present contribution at Fig. 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 49, 52-53, see esp. Nos. 3, 5-6, figs. 115, 117-118.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 49, 52, Nos. 1 and 2, figs. 111-112 and 113-114 (= Fig. 3 in the present contribution).

<sup>15</sup> T. CC (2) Kekraki: JACOPI 1931, 342-345, figs. 379-382; BOSSOLINO 2018, 18-19. T. XXII (27): JACOPI 1932/33, 73-74, figs. 82-84; BOSSOLINO 2018, 21.



Fig. 5. Ialysos, T. CIII/388 Tsambico plot, LG I (750-720 BC): skyphos in Black-on-Red, local production, H. 4.8 cm (after D'ACUNTO 2020).

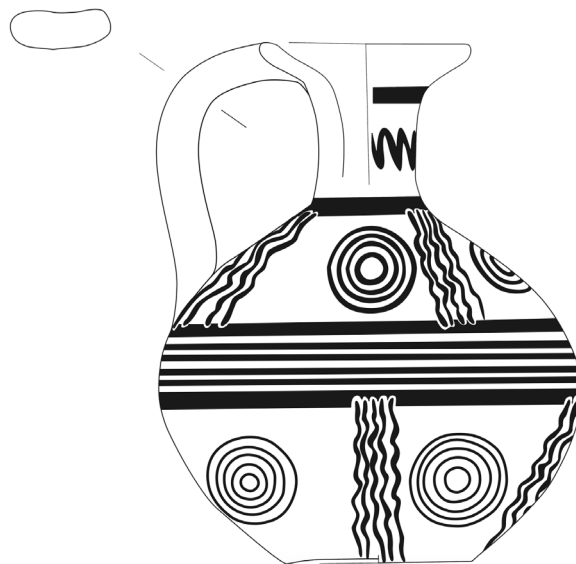


Fig. 6. Ialysos, T. LXII/444 Tsambico plot (LG II, 720-690 BC), Spaghetti-style aryballos, local production, H. 7.1 cm (drawing N. Sergio after D'ACUNTO 2020).

importance. As early as the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the relations established with the different areas of the eastern Mediterranean turn out to be very intensive: with Phoenicia and Cyprus in particular until the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC, while those with Egypt clearly intensify from the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC onwards<sup>16</sup>. We will show these phenomena through an examination of the pottery found in burial contexts at Ialysos.

At the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC, T. 1 Laghos contains two Black-on-Red juglets imported from Cyprus and a Dodecanesian re-elaboration in Geometric style; its grave-offerings also include an Attic amphora<sup>17</sup>.

In the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC, the imitation of Cypriot perfume vessels is a widespread phenomenon in Ialysos. Such imitation is seen both in the shape of the neck-ridge juglet and through the resumption by local craftsmen of the Black-on-Red technique. This technique is also employed in pottery shapes that are alien to Cyprus, such as the skyphos (Fig. 5): this demonstrates the spread of a true Cypriot “fashion” in Ialysos<sup>18</sup>.

In Ialysos, the imitation of eastern Mediterranean perfume vessels experienced an exponential intensification during LG II (720-690 BC), when the local production of so-called Spaghetti-style or KW aryballoi began (Fig. 6). The partial imitation of the shape and decoration of the Cypriot perfume containers in White Painted IV leads to the hypothesis that they contained perfumes, which were likewise created in imitation of the Cypriot perfumes<sup>19</sup>. Spaghetti-style aryballoi are produced on a massive scale on Rhodes and especially in Ialysos between the last two decades of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the third quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC. They circulate on a wide scale along the trade routes of the Mediterranean, from the Aegean to Italy and beyond. As already assumed by Coldstream, the initiative for local perfume production must have been due, at first, to the establishment on the island and especially in the center of Ialysos of foreign groups: Cypriots or Cypro-Phoenicians<sup>20</sup>.

It is precisely the tomb contexts of Ialysos that allow us to construct a typology of the aryballoi related to this class. The globular-bodied type (Fig. 6) is distinctive for the LG II: by removing the ridge on the neck, which is characteristic of the prototypes of the Cypriot juglets, it is thus transformed into an aryballos of globular type akin to that of the Early Protocorinthian. Spaghetti-style aryballoi are indeed

<sup>16</sup> BOUROGIANNIS 2009; 2012; 2017; 2018; COLDSTREAM 1969; 1998; COULIÉ - FILIMONOS-TSOPOTOU 2014; D'ACUNTO 2020, 813-843, with references; KOUROU 2003; 2004; 2014; 2015.

<sup>17</sup> D'ACUNTO 2020, 153-160, 778-782, Nos. 1-4, figs. 9.15-21, 821-822.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 173-189, 833-837, with references.

<sup>19</sup> JOHANSEN 1958, 155-161; COLDSTREAM 1969; 1998; D'ACUNTO 2012, 200-204; 2020, 189-207, 833-837.

<sup>20</sup> COLDSTREAM 1969; 1998; KOUROU 2003; D'ACUNTO 2012, 200-204; 2020, 189-207, 833-837.

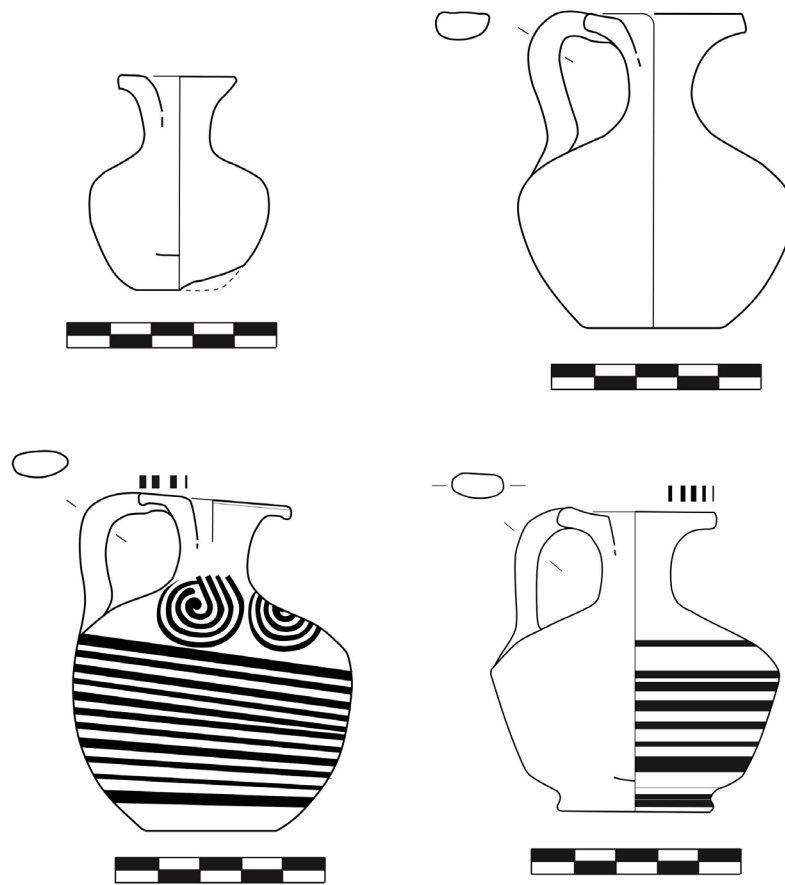


Fig. 7. Ialysos, T. XIX/257 Drakidis plot (ca. 650-640 BC), Spaghetti-style aryballoi, local production (drawings M. Barbato after BARBATO 2018).

the alternative in the perfume trade to those mass-produced in Corinth<sup>21</sup>. Several variants may be singled out in the Spaghetti-style globular type. A different type makes its appearance in the advanced-final LG II: namely, the biconical body type<sup>22</sup>. Other types may be identified during the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC; they are found both in the tomb contexts of Ialysos and outside Rhodes: the type with a detached shoulder and carination underside, and the flattened-body type<sup>23</sup>. See, for example, the Spaghetti-style aryballoi (Fig. 7) from T. XIX/257 in Drakidis plot, dated around 650/640 BC, due to the other grave-offerings<sup>24</sup>.

On the Aegean side, Euboeans certainly stopped in the harbours of Rhodes and established relations with the local elite from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC and must have also been interacting with the Cypro-Phoenician groups. This is demonstrated by the fairly conspicuous presence of Euboean imported vessels among the grave-offerings in Ialysos, Kameiros and probably Exochi in the Lindos territory<sup>25</sup>. See, for example, the LG I T. LI/393 in Ialysos: alongside the dominant presence of Cypriot imports and local imitations in Black-on-Red, there is a skyphos which is imported from Euboea (Fig. 8)<sup>26</sup>.

### 3. RHODES AND THE WEST

Spaghetti-style aryballoi make their appearance in the archaeological contexts of Italy, more or less at the same time as the beginning of their production on Rhodes and as the Early Protocorinthian aryballoi. As a

<sup>21</sup> D'ACUNTO 2012, 200-215; 2020, 189-207.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 189-207, tab. 3.3.

<sup>23</sup> For a typology of the Spaghetti-style aryballoi from the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC see BARBATO 2018.

<sup>24</sup> JACOPI 1929, 46-47, figs. 33-34.

<sup>25</sup> D'ACUNTO 2017; 2020, 241-253, 837-839.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 241-242, 695, No. 2, 837-838, pls. XIII, 6.

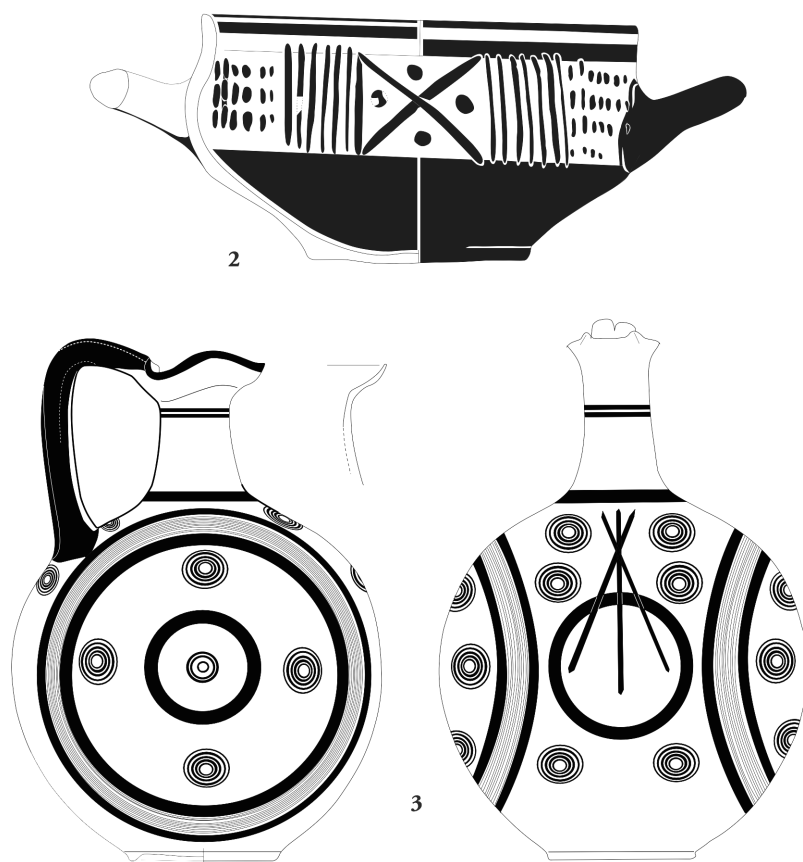


Fig. 8. Ialysos, T. LI/393 Tsambico plot (LG I: 750-720 BC): 2. Euboean skyphos, H. 6.5 cm; 3. Cypriot oinochoe in Black-on-Red, H. 21 cm (drawings N. Sergio - M. Barbato after D'ACUNTO 2020).

matter of fact, these Rhodian aryballoi are traded in Magna Graecia and Sicily already during the LG II, thus well before the Rhodian-Cretan foundation of Gela (689-688 BC)<sup>27</sup>. The distribution of Spaghetti-style aryballoi, prior to the founding of Gela, may have been connected to three possible trade channels: that of a “pre-colonial” trade, so to speak, run by Rhodian merchants themselves; that of joint ventures by Rhodians with Euboeans and Cretans; and that of second-hand trade by Euboeans. The case of the necropolis of Pithekoussai may illustrate this phenomenon: Pithekoussan burial contexts of LG II yield a conspicuous series of Spaghetti-style aryballoi<sup>28</sup>. In the burials of Pithekoussai, Rhodian perfume-containers are found together with Early Protocorinthian aryballoi, in percentages, if not equal, at least of ca. 1:4<sup>29</sup>. This illustrates how Rhodian perfumes were competitors of Corinthian ones<sup>30</sup>. For Spaghetti-style aryballoi at Pithekoussai, besides their commerce by Euboean middlemen, the hypothesis of concurrent direct trade by Rhodian merchants could be suggested by two remarks. First, as David Ridgway had already pointed out, there are tombs in which the number of Spaghetti-style aryballoi is remarkable; an exceptional case is that of a single tomb that yields no less than 40<sup>31</sup>. Moreover, a few Spaghetti-style aryballoi found at Pithekoussai were considered by Buchner and Ridgway to have been produced from local clay, due to their very micaceous character: these could be evidence of forms of mobility of individuals from Rhodes to Pithekoussai, as well as the transmission of know-how in the production of these containers and their scents<sup>32</sup>. Of course, this hypothesis awaits confirmation through archaeometric analysis of the clay. Conversely, one must now exclude the vessel that was considered to be the Rhodian vase par excellence in Pithekoussai: namely, the bird kotyle of Nestor’s Cup. Its production must be shifted, along with the entire class, to northern Ionia<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> On their dissemination see references in D’ACUNTO 2020, 189-195, 205-207.

<sup>28</sup> RIDGWAY 1984, 76; D’ACUNTO 2020, 194, 205-207, with references to the catalogue Nos. of BUCHNER-RIDGWAY 1993.

<sup>29</sup> This proportion was calculated by the present writer, roughly, taking into account the necropolis contexts published in *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> D’ACUNTO 2012, 200-215; 2020, 191-192, 206-207, 834-839.

<sup>31</sup> RIDGWAY 1984, 76.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. D’ACUNTO 2020, 207, with references.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 279-280, fig. 3.10, 289-291, 839-842, with references to the publications of the archaeometric analysis, e.g. AKURGAL *et alii* 2002, and KADIOĞLU *et alii* 2015.

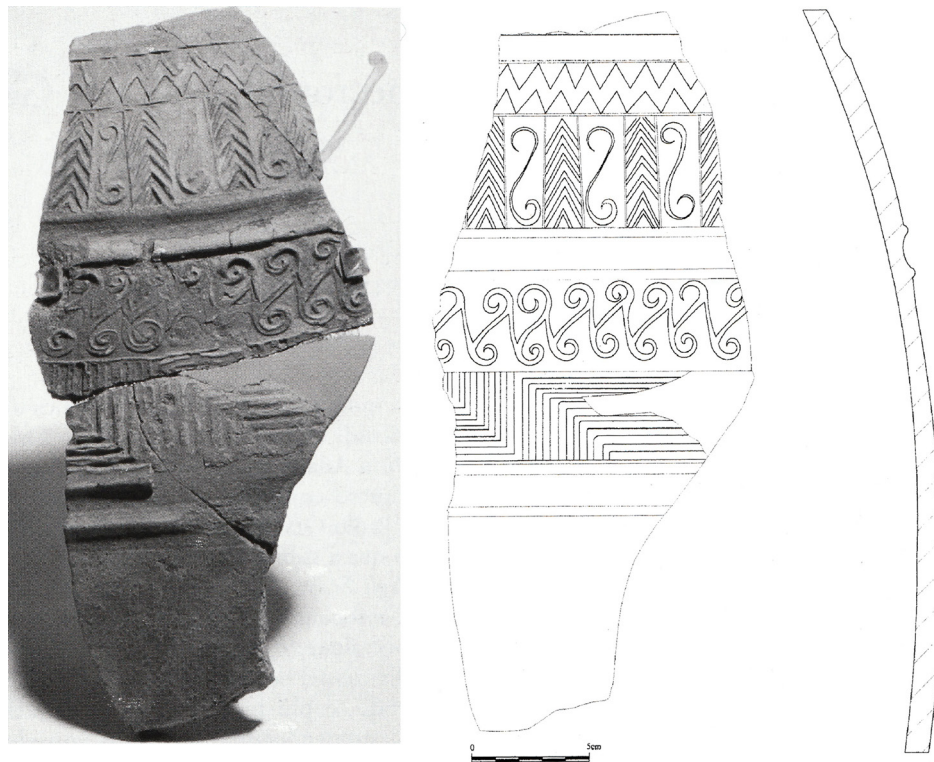


Fig. 9. Gela, Archaeological Museum, inv. No. 8602, sporadic find from the Piazza Garibaldi necropolis: Rhodian relief amphora (after LENTINI 2005).

The commercial impact of Rhodian spaghetti-style aryballoi is shown by their wide circulation in southern Italy, both in Greek colonies and in Italic sites: for example, in southern Italy, they have been found at Cumae, Pontecagnano and Metauros; and in Sicily, at Mylai, Villasmundo and Motya<sup>34</sup>. What is special is, however, the case of the Rhodian-Cretan *apoikia* of Gela: its archaeological contexts have yielded a conspicuous series of these aryballoi, related to the late types with carinated and flattened bodies; they are obviously the result of direct relations with the motherland Rhodes<sup>35</sup>.

In order to better assess the quantum leap in commercial terms represented by the Spaghetti-style circulation, we must consider how little Rhodian ceramics circulated outside Rhodes, with the exception of aryballoi of this class<sup>36</sup>. For example, few Rhodian vases have been found on Crete. Among the finds referred to by Antonis Kotsonas, are MG and LG vases from Knossos and Eleutherna: they may be assigned to manufacture from the Dodecanese, but it remains uncertain whether from Kos or Rhodes<sup>37</sup>.

A similar situation applies to the West. The evidence for pottery from the 8<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> c. BC whose manufacture can be ascribed to Rhodes, other than Spaghetti-style, is extremely limited. For the Geometric period, a few fragments were identified by François Villard as being of Rhodian manufacture among the Geometric finds from Megara Hyblaea; these have been recently published by Jean-Christophe Sourisseau<sup>38</sup>. Fragments of a Rhodian tall neck-handled amphora with relief decoration were found in Gela, as a sporadic find from the Piazza Garibaldi necropolis (Fig. 9)<sup>39</sup>. This has been convincingly identified by Maria Costanza Lentini as a Rhodian product referring to the well-known series of relief amphorae/pithoi produced on the island; she suggests a late 8<sup>th</sup>-c. date and its provenance from Lindos, as the main Rhodian protagonist in the *apoikia* of Gela. In addition, there is another relief pithos, still under restoration, used as an *enchytrismos* in the necropolis of Megara Hyblaea, also published by Sourisseau<sup>40</sup>. Clearly, in the case of these two amphorae/pithoi, their size and elaborate characteristics raise the hypothesis that they are prize vessels brought by the Rhodian colonists themselves: they could well be colonists' *ousiai*.

<sup>34</sup> See e.g. STAMPOLIDIS 2003, 299-300, Nos. 280-286, and for Cumae ŽEVI *et alii* 2008, 214.

<sup>35</sup> See LAMBRUGO 2024, with references.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. D'ACUNTO 2024.

<sup>37</sup> KOTSONAS 2008, 274-282, with references; cf. D'ACUNTO 2020,

256-257. On the relationships between Crete, Rhodes, Sicily and the foundation of Gela see now KOTSONAS 2024.

<sup>38</sup> SOURISSEAU 2024.

<sup>39</sup> LENTINI 2005, figs. 1-3.

<sup>40</sup> SOURISSEAU 2024, 110-112, figs. 4-6.

## 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Moving on to the conclusions, the picture sketched here brings us to the controversial question regarding the traditions of early Rhodian maritime and colonial enterprises in the West<sup>41</sup>. According to Strabo (14.2.10), this maritime and colonial activity by Rhodes dates back to a period before the beginning of the Olympic Games, *i.e.* before 776 BC. In the West, these traditions would not seem to be confirmed by the findings of Rhodian ceramics before the foundation of Gela: before 690 BC, Rhodian pottery in southern Italy and Sicily is extremely rare. A remarkable exception are Spaghetti-style perfume containers, which circulated extensively in the West in LG II, between 720 and 690 BC; however, their circulation may be due not only to early forms of trade by Rhodian merchants, but also to Euboean and other traders. Thus, behind Strabo's assertion of very early Rhodian maritime and colonial activity, rather than a real historical basis, may lie a possible propagandistic projection of the Rhodian "thalassocracy" of the Hellenistic age to a very high chronological horizon<sup>42</sup>.

The quantum leap in the initiative by Rhodes itself must be placed in the early 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC, at the time of the foundations of Gela in Sicily (689/688 BC) and Phaselis in Lycia (691/690 BC). However, in turn, the background to these colonial enterprises must be sought in the thick network of relations that Rhodes had established with the different groups who had been active in commercial trade and who had visited the island intensively during the Early Iron Age: the Cypro-Phoenicians, on the one hand, who may also have played a role in relation to the southern Asia Minor routes to Lycia and Cilicia; on the other, the Euboeans, in relation to colonization in the West, alongside the Cretans with whom direct links with Rhodians must have existed<sup>43</sup>. These relations may have been accompanied by early Rhodian enterprises and joint ventures, initially of a commercial character, and later on as a true colonial phenomenon in these regions.

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<sup>41</sup> On this aspect see MARTON 1997.

<sup>42</sup> On Rhodian "thalassocracy" see GABRIELSEN 1997.

<sup>43</sup> KOTSONAS 2024.

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