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Source: *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 2007, Bd. 161 (2007), pp. 101-104

Published by: Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20191290>

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PANATHENAIC AMPHORAE, AGAIN

The recent volume on the Panathenaic games, Palagia and Spetsieri-Choremi 2007, includes much lively debate on a full range of aspects of the topic. Michaelis Tiverios' (T.) keynote talk on the Panathenaic amphoras (PPA) is no exception, and this note is a response to some of the useful and challenging ideas that he and others put forward.

T. argues as one of his major points that the amphoras of oil listed in *IG II*² 2311 (hereafter 2311) of c. 375 BC are measures, not pots.¹ In this he follows others who have held or hold that view, including Themelis in the same volume, who further argues that the prize oil was not necessarily placed in PPA, with the result that we cannot use survival rates of the amphorae, *inter alia*, in any assessment of overall pottery survival. There are difficulties here which should not be overlooked, and one piece of neglected evidence.

A point argued strongly by T. is that the term "*Panathenaic amphora*" is not used in 2311, and that elsewhere the word "kados" is employed as a synonym for "amphora" in a Panathenaic context; from this he concludes that the units in the text are measures, not pots, and that as the term "κάδος" is a measure the conclusion is thereby strengthened; the use of the term "Panathenaic amphora" in the *Demiopratoi* or "*Hermokopidai*" texts (hereafter H), of 414 BC, would suggest it should have been also used in 2311. One should however point out:

1. In H there are several types of jar being *distinguished*, whence the more specific designation; such detail would be unnecessary in 2311, unless the oil was contained in different types of jar which needed to be differently cited, on unlikely procedure (though one entertained by Themelis), whatever interpretation we put on the text.

2. There is no substantial evidence that "κάδος" was ever used as a measure. Indeed in the main modern text which T. cites Amyx (1958, 186–7, n. 3, end) specifically argues that "κάδος" has a very loose meaning (as does "jar", which I am using here), and therefore *cannot* be a measure.

Prima facie, "amphorae of oil" in 2311 is ambiguous; nobody will, I trust, deny that in the period, c. 420–360, that concerns us the word "ἀμφορεύς" was being used at Athens as both capacity measure and pot shape. Regarding the latter, ancient use of "ἀμφορεύς" is not attested for those decorated pots which we tend to call *amphora*, where κάδος or στάμνος and their derivatives seem the norm;² the H text clearly show its use for storage jars, and the PPA is indeed at base a decorated storage jar, deriving its shape from the SOS or, more closely, 1501 type of the earlier sixth century.³ I am unable to agree with T.'s views (2) that the features of the SOS and (early) PPA made them suitable for shipping; the base, scarcely "rather unstable" in comparison with other contemporary storage amphorae, is no great

¹ Regarding merely the text of 2311, that which I proposed in 1987 has been suitably corrected by J. Shear 2003. My text was the first local attempt to use computerised epigraphic Greek and some symbols were regrettably left uncorrected; I would dot some letters differently, but that is a minimal matter. It is important to stress however that I was attempting to see what the shortest possible text might be, a point that was included in a caption which was not eventually printed.

Kratzmüller 2003 presents arguments similar to those of Tiverios.

² Johnston 1979, 32. It would not be relevant perhaps to argue the origin of the word **amphiphoreus* as a handled jar to be particularly pertinent to fifth century usage.

³ I use, and have used, this term as a variant, accepted occasionally by others, for "*à la brosse*", disliked by Tiverios; indeed the latter is ambiguous, since many late SOS are themselves painted "*à la brosse*".

Whatever the reasons, one should stress that, in normal ceramic terms of dating, the SOS amphora ends its life virtually contemporaneously with the "re-organised" Panathenaia of 566.

I add one corrigendum to T. p. 2; the name inscribed on one of the SOS jars from Cerveteri is Thorax, not Korax, as demonstrated not only by what would be an odd use of kappa, but by the joining sherd, found by Guarducci but still unpublished to the best of my knowledge.

help in transport.⁴ It is also a *hysteron proteron* to argue that since the SOS was an oil amphora the PPA was also; it is surely, currently, the belief that the PPA carried oil which leads to the conclusion regarding the SOS, rather than vice versa, *pace* Dionysos on the François vase. Organic analysis may eventually help us here, but has yet to be carried out.

It would be strange indeed to deny that the decorated Panathenaic amphora was ever used for carrying prize oil. I take it as agreed that they were so used at least initially. It is then incumbent on those who prefer to see only a proportion of the winners' oil being placed in the jars of later years to come up with some more convincing argument than "there are not enough Panathenaic amphora preserved to support the other view".

Amyx in his treatment of this matter has said virtually all that is needed (1958, 181–3, and especially the procedural point in his n. 36), though a few nuances can be added. In addition to the evidence of H we now have additional material from Eretria (Themelis) and Rhodes (Bentz 4.125, some 14 jars) to suggest strongly that more than a token number of the prize containers were decorated. In addition, if only a few painted jars were given, it is difficult to see how the shield "blazons" – denoting the main oil-providers on T.'s argument – have any significant purpose.

It is ever more clear, not least from Bentz's work, that the jars differed in size, but what evidence do we have that in archaic and classical Greece tight control of the size of *larger capacity* measures was imposed, or expected, especially when more than one such large measure was at issue? The "Standards Decree" of c. 445 or 425 requires the use of *Attic* measures, not *precise Attic* measures; controls on precious metals are surely very different, though even here one might argue that a two percent variation was acceptable.⁵ Later there is good evidence of a 5% or so tolerance in the capacities of "standard" wine-jars,⁶ and most Classical Panathenaics lie within the 35–39 l. range (Bentz 1998, 200), a 10% variation. As soon as one accepts the unescapable conclusion that the painted vases were used for prize oil, one must then assume that there was a consensus that "amphoras of oil" could be so awarded, whatever the logical or physical relationship between the clay amphora and the amphora measure. T.'s suggestion that a check regarding capacity could be made against a control such as the Trachones type B amphora is one possible solution to the matter of accuracy (see Shear 2003, 101–2), though one would also like to be able to include similar late decorated amphoras in the picture; the latest known type B amphora, of c. 400 from Kos, has no Panathenaic connection, but another Eleusinian scene, while just one other, much earlier, type B in red-figure has a scene involving amphorae, Louvre CA1852 by the Boreas painter.⁷

No oil in the PPA? In my own inspection of many hundreds of "storage" or "transport" amphorae, it has not struck me that there is differential wear on inside surfaces such as to suggest that some carried "corrosive" olive oil and others did not. I am aware that this is a subjective remark, but it does seem to me to be relevant to the argument of those who would argue that PPA did not contain oil because of the condition of the inside surface. The repair of the Trachones amphora discussed by Tiverios and Themelis and the pre-firing patch on the Kerameikos sherd published by Eschbach (94–5) are relevant, but at different ends of this spectrum – the former repaired but unusable, therefore a mere "heirloom", the other perhaps incapable of being used *ab initio*; but neither proposition, to misuse an analogy, is watertight.

⁴ See Johnston 1984.

⁵ I use as a probably typical example Martin Price's remarks on the lifetime coinage of Alexander – very little variation in weight of the gold stater, 2% variation in the silver tetradrachm (Price 1991, 41–2).

⁶ See the basic groundwork on the topic, Matheson Wallace and Matheson 1982, especially 294 and 301, n. 24. That precision was not out of reach, and was at least an aim, is seen in the very tight range of weights of gold coins at one end of the scale (e.g. note 5 above) and the use of cylindrical measuring jars, whose capacity could literally be trimmed, at the other (Schilbach 1999, 323–4).

⁷ Kos amphora, LIMC VIII, Triptolemos 136; Louvre CA1852, ARV 540, 4.

It is also perverse, if the PPA did not contain oil, to have an inscription on them referring to the prizes; or did the word “ᾠθλα” subtly change its significance, appearing first on a type of jar clearly intended as a container, and presumably indicating “prize” (Shear 2003, 87), i.e. the contents, to the more general meaning of “contest”, i.e. merely “a souvenir from Athens”, as is argued by some for the non-prize amphorae? One must suspect that the addition of the archon’s name, when considered within the broad usage of such titulature in the classical Greek world, *prima facie* rules out such a possibility.

Oil in *some* PPA, but not all? This compromise position is adopted by Themelis (29): “If the ratio of 1:5 for olive oil given to the first- and second-place winners is also applicable to the number of additional Panathenaic amphoras awarded to them, then the first-place winner in wrestling for youths would receive 5 Panathenaic amphoras and 40 measures of oil, while the second would receive 1 Panathenaic amphora and 8 measures of oil.” A correct calculation, but a system unsupported by any evidence of substance. The reasoning is based on the cache of PPA found by Themelis at Eretria, where three of the PPA for youths’ wrestling from one archon year were found. The argument therefore entails that 60% of the relevant PPA are known, and, tacitly, that no youths’ wrestling PPA were made in any other year in the *penteris*. This sits ill with the independent evidence adduced by Oakley,⁸ and the mention of some 100 *Panathenaic* amphoras in H. If a random (Shear 2003, 103) or even fixed percentage of the total prize was placed in PPA, the elaborate system that we see in place in the fourth century, especially again the archon names, would seem to have little point of reference.

The most persuasive evidence that (some) PPA were always empty is Eschbach’s technical observation regarding the patch on one Kerameikos sherd and the general thinness of walls of Classical PPA. This matter certainly deserves closer investigation, and my only contributions here are to observe that the patch is reasonably high on the vase and that storage jars too can have reasonably thin walls, though more measurements need to be collected than I have available myself; I noted 0.3 cm for the shoulder of the 1501 jar from Tell Defenneh which I recently discussed in this periodical (*ZPE* 133, 2000, 236).

Somewhat neglected has been a scrap of an earlier, now lost, text (mentioned to me now and again in the past by David Lewis), *IG* I³ 1386, where there is listed in bare numerals a series of prizes for athletic events, which Lewis surely rightly takes to be in amphoras of oil.⁹ What we can glean is that the numbers (of amphoras) are half of those listed in 2311, while the date of the text can only be approximately judged, to probably the third quarter of the fifth century (if we put full weight on the reported use of an earlier form of *upsilon*). There has been debate about the festival to which the text pertains, with Lewis doubting that the Panathenaic prizes in the fifth century could have been half those of the fourth, as a response to Raubitschek’s throwaway remark on a Panathenaic connection. We might justifiably ask two questions: what *other* festival, and what *other* prize object? If we accept that there is references to PPA here, would this mollify the statistical qualms felt by some commentators? If this text does indicate that the prizes were doubled at some point in the earlier fourth century, a suitable point would be at the time around the inception of the Confederacy; Shear (2003, 100) argues with some good reason that the reforms may have occurred before 380. Instead of the fifth century imposition of demands on the allies to present themselves at the “national” Panathenaia, the obviously conciliatory tone of the period c. 380 is merely to encourage and promote the games by increasing the rewards.¹⁰

⁸ Oakley 1992, esp. 198–200.

⁹ Any financial interpretation of the numerals, rightly doubted by Lewis, is untenable in view of the lack of use of the drachma sign.

¹⁰ I am grateful to Martin Bentz and Robert Parker for useful and timely comment, but retain all responsibility for the above text.

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c. a. 450 – 440 ? [παιδὶ παλαιστῆι – –] ΣΤΟΙΧ.
 [δ]ευ[τέροι – –]
 ἀγεν[εῖοι παλαιστῆι – –]
 δευτέροι – –
5 ἀνδρὶ παλαισ[τῆι ΔΔΔ]
 δευτέροι ΠΙ^ν
 παιδὶ πύκτει Δ[Π]
 δευτ[έ]ροι ΙΙΙ^ν
 [ἀ]γενεῖοι πύκτ[ει ΔΠ]
10 δευτέροι ΙΙΙ^ν
 ἀνδρὶ πύκτει Δ[ΔΔ]
 δευτέροι ΠΙ^ν
 παιδὶ παγκρατ[ιαστῆι ΔΠ]
 δευτέροι ΙΙΙ^ν
15 ἀγενεῖοι παγκ[ρατιαστῆι ΔΠ]
 δευτέροι ΙΙΙϚ – –
 vacat

Figure 1. *IG I³ 1386*, after *IG*