

Roman Pottery: Fine Ware Imports

By John W. Hayes (*Agora 32*). Pp. xli + 341, figs. 56, b&w pls. 91, plans 2. The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Princeton 2008. \$150. ISBN 978-0-87661-232-3 (cloth).

This book obviously invites comparison with Robinson's 1959 publication of the pottery of the Roman period from the Athenian Agora (*Pottery of the Roman Period: Chronology. Agora 5* [Princeton]). Robinson's eight groups came from closed well deposits, and the organizing principle of the book was to establish a chronology. Deposits that did not overlap in time were deliberately chosen, and thus there was also little overlap in fabric. Robinson's goal of establishing a chronology from the last quarter of the first century B.C.E. through the seventh century C.E. meant that he relied as heavily on diagnostic coarse wares as on fine wares.

In his preface, Hayes acknowledges his great debt to Robinson, with whom he had worked since his graduate days. The volume under review consists principally of material excavated by Robinson and was projected by Robinson himself to be a companion to volume 5 of *The Athenian Agora*, but it would be devoted to typology. The sheer amount of material meant that this publication had to be divided into several volumes and allocated to several scholars. Hayes initially collaborated with Robinson and then was assigned this material on his own. Drafts of the volume under review had been circulated as early as the 1970s and have gone through several substantial revisions as the years marched on.

The wait has been worthwhile, since this volume reflects more than 60 years of Hayes' experience in the field. Some idiosyncrasies in arrangement are Robinson's (which Hayes honors), but the intervening years have allowed Hayes to tailor this volume so that it can be consulted in tandem with Rotroff's volumes on the Hellenistic material (*Hellenistic Pottery: Athenian and Imported Moldmade Bowls. Agora 22* [Princeton 1982]; *Hellenistic Pottery: Athenian and Imported Wheelmade Table Ware*

and Related Material. Agora 29 [Princeton 1997]). This is important, since Late Hellenistic styles continued in production into the first century C.E., and sigillata associated with the Romans began to appear in Athens in the first quarter of the first century B.C.E.

What changes in Athens with the arrival of the Romans is a growing dependence on import wares and a decline in local production. Hayes makes the important observation that the ratio of the main sigillata groups (Italian and Eastern Sigillata B; Eastern Sigillata A and Cypriot Sigillata; Black Sea Wares; Sagalassos-Pisidia Ware; African Red Slip Ware) vary at Athens in more or less the same proportions over time as at Benghazi and Sabratha. It opens the question of whether trends might be parallel for other major eastern centers, such as Gortyn or even Aptaera in Crete, which are not close to principal production sites. Stamps, however, provide a cautionary note. Frequent only on Italian Sigillata and early forms of Eastern Sigillata B, Hayes considers Athens "peripheral" to the study and collection of stamps. Other centers, such as Ephesos, produce far more evidence, and Athens has little to add to the corpus that is not known already from elsewhere.

Dating horizons for the Athenian Agora, as for sites in general, are tied to destruction levels. The Sullan sack (86 B.C.E.) and Herulian destruction (268 C.E.) have left debris in easily identifiable layers. Shrinkage of the city after the Herulians meant that the Agora was outside the defended area of the city, so there is far less material potentially associated with the incursion of 467/76 C.E. (presumably by the Vandals) or the Slavic destruction of ca. 582 C.E. The great plague of 540–542 C.E. left this area all but uninhabited. The latter date is the terminus ante quem for almost all the material

in this volume. Only African Red Slip Ware form 105 (entries 1161–64) extends into the seventh century; the water mill (Q 13:4) reported in the deposit summaries as dating to ca. 580 C.E. contains no material later than the last quarter of the sixth century C.E., as confirmed by the summary of major late fills (305).

Through this typology and chronology, Hayes envisions the Agora as an area where redevelopment lags behind other centers; an initial burst of reconstruction belongs more to the reigns of Tiberius and his immediate successors (but is curiously not extended to Nero) than Augustus. Dominance of Arretine Ware, pottery from Puteoli, and lead-glazed Eastern Sigillata B1 are replaced by Eastern Sigillata B2 ca. 60–160 C.E. From then on, Çandarlı Ware and Eastern Sigillata A continue the preferential shift for eastern production into the third century C.E. In the second century and first half of the third century, locally made derivatives of the major import wares are increasingly frequent until the arrival of African Red Slip Ware in the middle of the third century C.E.

The catalogue of the 1,824 items is preceded by an introduction to all the groups (13–121). Most space is given to the two largest groups, Eastern Sigillata A and African Red Slip Ware. The introduction to each fabric is general, considering evidence for manufacture, geographical distribution, shapes, chronology, decoration, and typology. Hayes, as always, alerts the reader to matters that require more research before consensus among scholars is possible. Tables with Munsell variations are provided. The catalogue itself hardly needs

comment (123–325), as the editors of *The Athenian Agora* series have long been noteworthy for their excellence. The same can be said of Hayes' profiles and the photographs by Frantz and Mauzy.

Hayes' 22-page bibliography is exhaustive and up-to-date and reflects his participation in projects across the Mediterranean. Hayes in general does not accept the work of Zahn and Knipovich on the greater porosity of post-Arretine wares, which leads to observations on how open shapes were dipped twice in the glaze solution (once per side) rather than dipped once in toto or brush painted (10–11). The sections on African Red Slip Ware and other Late Roman wares are a useful update to Hayes' *Late Roman Pottery* (London 1972), which is nearly 40 years old. This volume will be used in association with Rotroff's works by all who investigate Athens and even more so by experts in ceramics. Perhaps more important is the comparative material this volume provides for what is known of the Roman ceramic evidence at Corinth (capital of the province of which Athens was a part) from Slane's 1990 publication of *The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore: The Roman Pottery and Lamps* (Princeton).

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