

**Federica Sacchetti, *Les amphores grecques dans le nord de l'Italie: échanges commerciaux entre les Apennins et les Alpes aux époques archaïque et classique***, Paris: Errance, Aix-en-Provence: Centre Camille Jullian, 2013 (Bibliothèque d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne et Africaine 10), 287 pp., ISBN 978-2-87772-486-9, € 39.00.

Ancient amphoras are indubitably one of the most important indicators regarding the study of the economy and trade relations in the Mediterranean in antiquity. However, the analysis of amphoras in certain areas is still in its infancy, which leaves many gaps with regards to their geographical distribution. Federica SACCHETTI (= S.), an Italian archaeologist, associated with the French Centre Camille Jullian in Aix-en-Provence, has recently filled one of these gaps with the publication *Les amphores grecques dans le nord de l'Italie: échanges commerciaux entre les Apennins et les Alpes aux époques archaïque et classique*.

This book explores the issue of Greek amphoras dated to the archaic and the classical period that were found in northern Italy, namely in the Po Valley. It shows that the commercial contacts between the Padanian Etruria and the Greek world flourished between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

*Les amphores grecques...* is divided into two parts. The first one presents *bilan des études* on the Greek amphoras dated between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC that were attested in northern Italy. It fully describes their typology and the theories regarding their content, as well as the centres where they were produced and to which they were exported. It investigates Corinthian A and B amphoras, as well as a variant of the latter from Magna Graecia called 1  $\alpha$ . Moreover, it deals with Greek occidental amphoras form 2 and Attic containers called “à la brosse”. There is also a description of northern Aegean (Thasian, Mendeian, etc.) as well as eastern Aegean (Chios and Klazomenai) containers. Finally, it deals with the Samos-Milet group and Solokha I amphoras. The second part of the book contains a catalogue of Greek amphoras found in the Po Valley. They come from sites such as: Adria, San Basilio, San Cassiano, Le Balone, Spina, Forcello, Felsina and Marzabotto. It should be emphasized that the geographical area taken into consideration by the author covers both the delta region (Spina, Adria) as well as the interior (Forcello, Marzabotto) of the Po Valley.

First of all, *Les amphores grecques...* is an example of a respectable archaeological workshop. Moreover, it is richly supplied with illustrations, such as maps and plans of the sites as well as pictures and drawings of amphoras. It also contains graphs that illustrate various statistical analyses of Greek amphoras from various sites in the Po Valley.

It should be noted that S. is indubitably an expert in the field of Greek amphoras. The study of these containers from northern Italy was the subject of her PhD thesis *Le anfore commerciali greche d'età tardo-arcaica e classica in Etruria padana e in Italia settentrionale*. She has also published *Le anfore commerciali greche d'età tardo-arcaica e classica in Etruria padana e in Italia settentrionale: la metodologia di studio e di catalogazione*, which focused on a similar issue<sup>1</sup>. Also, she has been the head of the AGAME project (“Archaic and classical Greek Amphoras in north-western Mediterranean area and central Europe: diffusion, origin and content”). This project focused on the study of unpublished Greek amphoras found in Central Europe and their comparison with the containers from the north-western Mediterranean.

*Les amphores grecques...* is a very valuable publication. It summarizes the state of research on the production and content of certain types of Greek archaic and classical containers. Furthermore, it shows new centres to which they were exported. The main advantage of this book is the

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<sup>1</sup> *Le anfore commerciali greche d'età tardo-arcaica e classica in Etruria padana e in Italia settentrionale: la metodologia di studio e di catalogazione*, Ocnus. Quaderni della Scuola di specializzazione in archeologia dell'Università di Bologna XIV 2006, pp. 293–298.

elaboration of the amphoras that had previously been unpublished. It presents an updated analysis of some containers that had already been examined; however, in the light of new evidence these required revision. It needs to be highlighted that S. worked above all with archaeological material. She only referred to the archaeological reports during her investigation of Spina and Forcello.

It is true that a number of the ancient containers from Adria<sup>2</sup>, Spina<sup>3</sup>, Forcello<sup>4</sup> and Marzabotto<sup>5</sup> has already been examined. Moreover, there have been publications about Greek amphoras from northern Italy<sup>6</sup>. However, these publications focused on the amphoras from a limited geographical area (in most cases this was merely one site) or from a narrow period of time. Moreover, they rarely show statistics providing important information about the quantities of certain types of amphoras. Therefore, the evidence provided by these texts is insufficient to form any general hypotheses about trade relations between the Aegean and the Padanian regions. Contrary to the former publications, *Les amphores grecques...* presents us with a broader perspective both in time and space, and hence it sheds new light on the commercial activities between northern Italy and Greece.

Nonetheless, it seems that *Les amphores grecques...* might have considered a few more aspects. It would have been good to include a history of the region, showing why it is important to see it as a closed entity. Moreover, it needs to explain why this part of the Etruscan world is studied in isolation from the Etruscan cities of Tuscany and Campania. In another publication<sup>7</sup>, S. mentioned that this region became an important intersection of the economic interests of various groups of people from the western Mediterranean after the closure of the Rhône axis in 500 BC and the battle of Cumae in 474 BC. These events led to the displacement of the commercial routes to the Alpine valleys and to the closure of the south Etruscan emporia to Greek merchants, which resulted in the development of the Adriatic route and the Padanian Etruria. However, in *Les amphores grecques...* these aspects have been omitted. It should also be noted that the transportation of Greek amphoras in the Po Valley could have been shown in a broader context, as a part of all the commercial activity in this area. For example, the commercial relationship that sites in the Po Valley shared with non-Greek traders could have been mentioned. The author wrote about the lack of Etruscan and Phoenician amphoras in this region, but ignored other indicators of commercial activity.

<sup>2</sup> A. TONIOLO, *Le anfore di Adria (IV–II secolo a.C.)*, Sottomarina–Venezia 2000.

<sup>3</sup> S. DE LUCA DE MARCO, *Le anfore commerciali dell' necropoli di Spina*, MEFRA XCI 1979, pp. 571–595; P. DESANTIS, *Anfore commerciali dall'habitato di Spina dal V al III sec. a.C.*, [in:] *Gli Etruschi a nord del Po. Atti del Convegno, Mantova, 4–5 ottobre 1986*, Mantova 1989, pp. 103–127; *Le anfore commerciali dell' necropoli di Spina-Valle Trebba*, [in:] *Studi sulla necropoli di Spina in Valle Trebba*, Ferrara 1993, pp. 155–180; *Anfore commerciali ed altri particolari vasi vinari nei corredi funerari della necropoli di Spina-Valle Trebba dal V al III secolo a.C.*, [in:] *2500 anni di cultura della vite nell'ambito alpino e cisalpino*, G. FORNI, A. SCIENZA (eds.), Trento 1996, pp. 349–372; M. SCIORTINO, *Un nucleo inedito di anfore da trasporto dall'habitato di Spina*, LANX XII 2012, pp. 158–194.

<sup>4</sup> R.C. DE MARINIS, *Le anfore greche da trasporto*, [in:] *Gli Etruschi...*, pp. 211–229; *Adria e S. Basilio: Le anfore greche da trasporto*, [in:] *2500 anni...*, pp. 317–348; *Anfore chiote dal Forcello di Bagnolo S. Vito (Mantova)*, [in:] *Κοίνα. Miscellanea di studi archeologici in onore di Piero Orlandini*, Milan 1999, pp. 255–278; *Le anfore greche da trasporto. L'abitato etrusco del Forcello di Bagnolo S. Vito (Mantova): le fasi di età arcaica*, R.C. DE MARINIS, M. RAPI (eds.), Mantova 2005, pp. 165–201; *Le anfore greche da trasporto, L'abitato etrusco del Forcello di Bagnolo S. Vito (Mantova): le fasi arcaiche*, R.C. DE MARINIS, M. RAPI (eds.), Florence 2007, pp. 157–189.

<sup>5</sup> R.C. DE MARINIS, *Le anfore greche da trasporto*, [in:] *Marzabotto. La casa 1 della Regio IV-Insula 2.2, I materiali*, E. GOVI, G. SASSATELLI (eds.), Bologna 2010, pp. 77–88.

<sup>6</sup> A.C. CATTANEO CASSANO, *Anfore greche da trasporto del VI–V a.C. in Italia settentrionale*, StClOr XLIII 1993 (1995), pp. 381–398.

<sup>7</sup> SACCHETTI, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

Furthermore, it seems that a brief description of the state of investigation regarding the rest of the archaeological material from the Po Valley should have been given. Without it, the reader cannot place this book in a broader context. Besides, some trends relating to the importation of Greek amphoras might have been correlated with historical events. For example, S. observed that throughout the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Greek occidental amphoras form 1  $\alpha$  were widely attested on the majority of the sites (e.g. in Adria, Spina and Forcello). However, it seems that in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC they were replaced by Corinthian B containers. Is there any historical explanation for this fact; for example, does it reflect changes within the political and economic scene? M. SCIORTINO explains the increase in the export of Corinthian B amphoras (produced *inter alia* in Coreyra) in the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC as a consequence of the breakdown of the Athenian monopoly in Mediterranean trade<sup>8</sup>. However, S. neither referred to this theory nor presented her own explanation regarding this issue.

It is worth mentioning that Greek wine amphoras are not only indicators of trade and economy. They also provide evidence concerning certain social aspects, for example, the symposion. The correlation between the amphoras and other Greek imports could confirm or exclude the existence of banqueting practices in Padanian Etruria. However, it seems that this issue was not relevant to S.'s work.

Summarizing, it is possible to say that *Les amphores grecques...* is a valuable archaeological report. However, it lacks development with regard to broader interpretations of the evidence. It seems that S. limited her work to simply providing a presentation of the data. She has provided a base which allows for further interpretation of the data, but she has left any scholarly discussion for other researchers.

Nonetheless, the idea of making a compilation of culturally homogenous material from a specific geographical and cultural area is worth following. This approach has already been applied, albeit on a smaller scale, by M. BATS and N. DI SANDRO<sup>9</sup>. It brings results that seem more valuable than simple reports which show the statistics of the amphoras that have been found on one archaeological site. However, the latter practice seems to dominate in this research field.

*Les amphores grecques...* definitely deserves to be included in the canon of publications about commerce and *l'amphorologie*, which began with two conference volumes, *Il commercio etrusco arcaico* (Roma 1985)<sup>10</sup> and *Recherches sur les amphores grecques* (Paris 1986)<sup>11</sup>. It can be recommended to any scholar who deals with archaic and classical Greek amphoras. Moreover, it should be valuable to scholars who investigate the commercial activities of Aegean merchants or the issue of north-Italian trade relations.

Paulina Komar  
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<sup>8</sup> SCIORTINO, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

<sup>9</sup> M. BATS, *La diffusion des amphores massaliètes en Provence orientale*, [in:] *Les Amphores de Marseille grecque: chronologie et diffusion, VIe–Ier s. av. J.-C. Actes de la table ronde de Lattes, 11 mars 1989*, M. BATS (ed.), Lattes–Aix-en-Provence 1990, pp. 207–213; N. DI SANDRO, *Appunti sulla distribuzione delle anfore commerciali greche in Campania tral'VIII sec. e il 273 a.C.*, AIONArch III 1981, pp. 49–53.

<sup>10</sup> *Il commercio etrusco arcaico: atti dell'Incontro di studio*, 5–7 dicembre 1983, Roma 1985.

<sup>11</sup> *Recherches sur les amphores grecques: actes du colloque international organisé par le Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, l'Université de Rennes II et l'École française d'Athènes (Athènes, 10–12 Septembre 1984)*, J.-Y. EMPEREUR, Y. GARLAN (eds.), Athènes–Paris 1986.