

# Cooking ware pottery from the “Hellenistic” House at Nea Paphos Seasons 2014 and 2016

Monika Więch<sup>1</sup> with appendix by Grzegorz Ochala<sup>2</sup>  
with contribution of Adam Łajtar<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Sciences,

<sup>2,3</sup>Department of Papyrology, Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw

**Abstract:** The paper presents a selection of cooking ware pottery excavated in 2014 and 2016 from the fill under the central and eastern parts of the main courtyard (1) of the “Hellenistic” House in Nea Paphos–Maloutena. Most of the studied vessels are of early Roman date and, for the most part, Cypriot production, although there is a spattering of imports from the Aegean, Italy, the Levant and Egypt.

**Keywords:** Nea Paphos, “Hellenistic” House, early Roman period, Cypriot cooking ware pottery, Aegean cooking ware pottery

The cooking ware pottery assemblage discussed in this paper comes from layers underlying the central and eastern parts of the main courtyard (1) of the “Hellenistic” House in the Maloutena district of Paphos in Cyprus. The building in question is situated directly to the south of the Villa of Theseus and was inhabited from the middle of the Hellenistic period (mid-2nd century BC) through the mid-2nd century AD (Mazanek 2014: 280). The layers under discussion were excavated in the 2014 and 2016 seasons within the frame of an archaeological project run by the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology University of Warsaw.

An expected sizable ceramic assemblage was recovered, including large quantities of cooking ware. The preservation of the pottery is fairly good, including some bigger sherds, but even so no complete or fully restorable pots were found. A selection of the better preserved finds from the two seasons is discussed in the following pages, representing the contexts: F.13, F.16, F.26, F.32, F.52 and F.76 from the 2014 season and F.2, F.7, F.8, F.12, F.17 and F.50 from the 2016 season. The merit of certain of these finds is their very rare occurrence at Nea Paphos–Maloutena.

Most of the contexts, except for F.76/14 and F.50/16 which are clearly

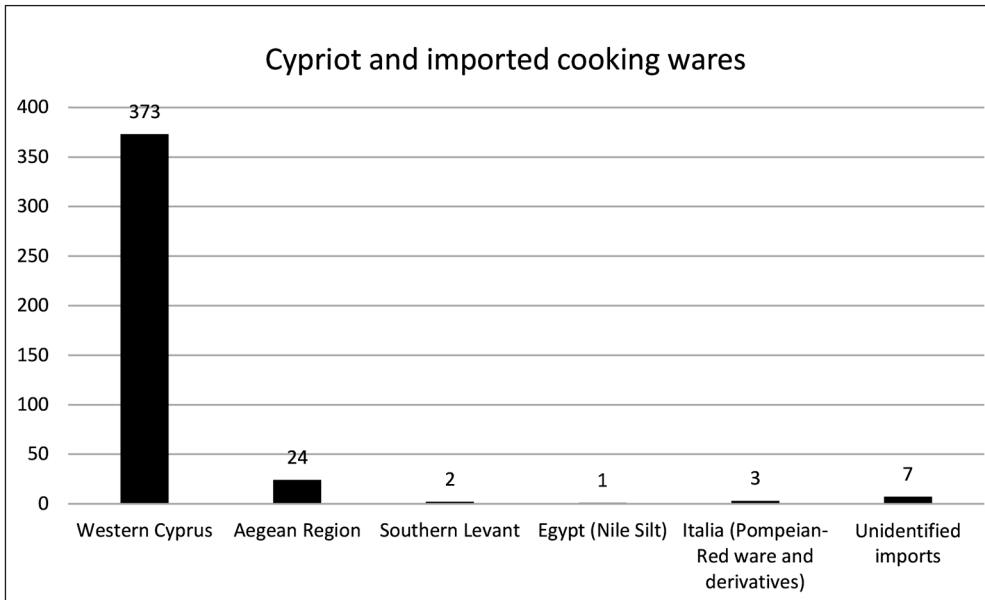


Fig. 1. *Quantitative comparison of Cypriot and imported cooking wares based on the early Roman contexts from fieldwork seasons 2014 and 2016 ("Hellenistic" House, below courtyard 1)*

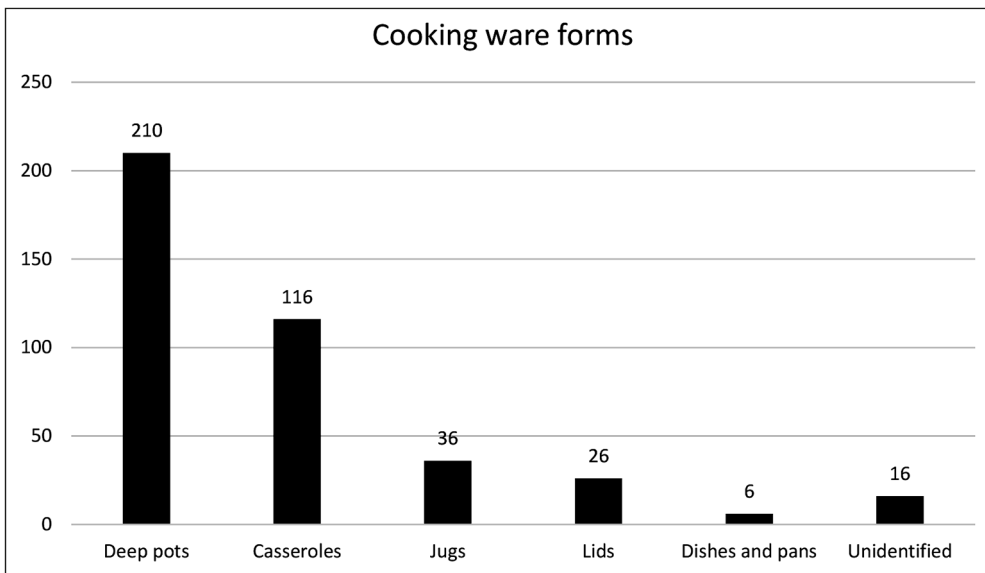


Fig. 2. *Quantitative comparison of cooking forms of Cypriot and imported origin, based on early Roman contexts from fieldwork seasons 2014 and 2016 ("Hellenistic" House, below courtyard 1)*

earlier, constituted the fill of the main courtyard and the immediately underlying layer, namely, loose soil without larger stones, interpreted as garden soil (Meyza, Romaniuk and Więch 2017, in this volume: 398). The ceramics coming from these contexts are very homogenous and, in the light of the latest finds, should be dated to the late 1st or early 2nd century AD (Meyza, Romaniuk, and Więch 2017, in this volume). The material from the two excavations seasons, presented jointly, is important inasmuch as it covers a considerable timespan from the late Classical to the early Roman period, creating an opportunity for some general observations on the appearance of specific cooking ware forms and imports. It should be emphasized that none of the contexts is Hellenistic, but the early Roman contexts contain numerous pieces from earlier periods.

The assemblage consists of potsherds recovered by sieving the soil from all contexts through screens with 1-cm mesh. The sherds were counted and weighed in order to produce preliminary statistical data regarding cooking vessels of local and imported production. Statistics were based on diagnostic fragments from the studied contexts, considered together due to extensive joining of fragments and the

overall similarity of the cooking wares from the early Roman contexts dug in 2014 and 2016 [Figs 1, 2]. Joining pieces were naturally treated as one piece, as were also sherds evidently belonging to a single vessel. Contexts dated to the late Classical period (F.76/14 and F.50/16) were omitted from the statistics as they yielded very few cooking ware remains. It is worth noting, however, that these early contexts contained only Cypriot products.

A quantitative evaluation of the number of locally made and imported cooking wares shows that more than 90% of the products came from western Cyprus [Fig. 1]. The only significant group of imports (6%) was from the Aegean. Compared with the material from the House of Dionysos site, where the Italian and Aegean types are considered to be the main imports (Hayes 1991: 78–80), it seems that the latter were more numerous at the Maloutena site. A quantitative comparison of cooking utensils, namely deep pots, casseroles, jugs, lids and flat-bottomed baking dishes demonstrates the predominance of deep round-bottomed pots and casseroles over the thick flat-based pans with internally slipped, “non-stick” surface. This shows that Paphos dwellers preferred dishes requiring thermal processing in water or oil.

## CYPRLOT COOKING POTS

### DEEP POTS AND CASSEROLES

Cypriot pots of the Classical and Hellenistic periods are characterized by their plain, simply sloping rims, strap handles attached directly at the lip and slightly protruding above, and perfectly round bottoms (Papuci-Władyka 1995: 70, 217, Cat. 418, Pl. 55). Surface treatment and the ware

differ from later-period pots: the external surface is not very smooth, especially in the lower part of the body where there are scratches left from the turning process, the fabric is grittier, with more frequent and larger inclusions.

Of the few small cooking ware sherds from context F.50/16, which is dated to

the late Classical(?) period, one was a body fragment from a small casserole with round bottom [Fig. 3:1] (Hayes 1991: 97, Fig. 40:14).

A rim fragment from a deep pot [Fig. 3:2], although found in an early Roman context (F.8/16), should be dated to the Hellenistic period. Its fabric is

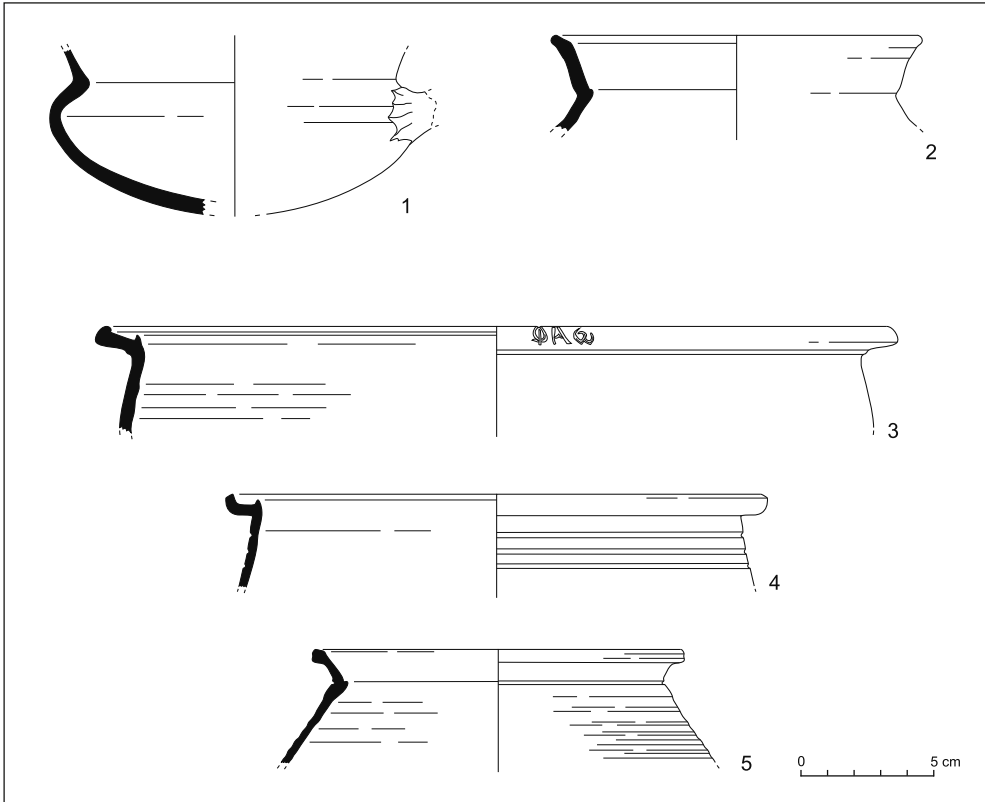


Fig. 3. Selection of Cyriot cooking ware pottery from layers preceding the “Hellenistic” House courtyard (1): 1 – small round-bottomed casserole; 2 – deep pot; 3 – large casserole [see Fig. 4]; 4, 5 – ribbed pots (PCMA Nea Paphos project/drawing and digitizing M. Więch)

Fig. 4. Casserole with Greek inscription on the rim [see Fig. 3:3] (PCMA Nea Paphos project/photo M. Więch)



gritty, but less sandy and with more white inclusions than in the case of the Classical casserole. The same type of Hellenistic pot was found at the House of Dionysos in a context dated to the late 2nd or early 1st century BC (Hayes 1991: 81–82, Figs 29:4, 30:1, OΔ 3572).

A fragment of a large casserole with plain walls and Greek inscription  $\phi\alpha\omega$  on the rim [see Figs 3:3, 4] was found in context F.16/14. The three-letter graffito was clearly made before firing, which means that the potter, and possibly also the customer, were Greeks in a cultural, if not ethnic sense. A similar type of casserole, although smaller in size, with flat rim and ridges along both edges, was found in the House of Dionysos, in Well 4, dated to the late 1st century AD (Hayes 1991: 187, 192, OΔ 4707, Fig. 35:7).

Most of the Cypriot deep pots and casseroles from the Hellenistic and early

Roman period are consistently unribbed. A number of ribbed pots with various rim types have occurred in contexts dated to the late 1st/early 2nd century AD [see Fig. 3:4–5], but the mixed nature of the contexts considered here does not help in determining whether the ribbed forms are slightly later than the plain types or should be assigned the same date (Hayes 1991: 81). Ribbing on the body of Roman-period vessels was already observed in the material from the cemetery known as the Tombs of the Kings, which constitutes part of a large burial ground to the north of the city wall of ancient Nea Paphos, as well as from the theater site which lies by the northeast gate of the ancient town (Gabrieli and Merryweather 2002: 36).

### JUGS

The last two seasons brought to light a set of Cypriot cooking ware jugs. Two of the

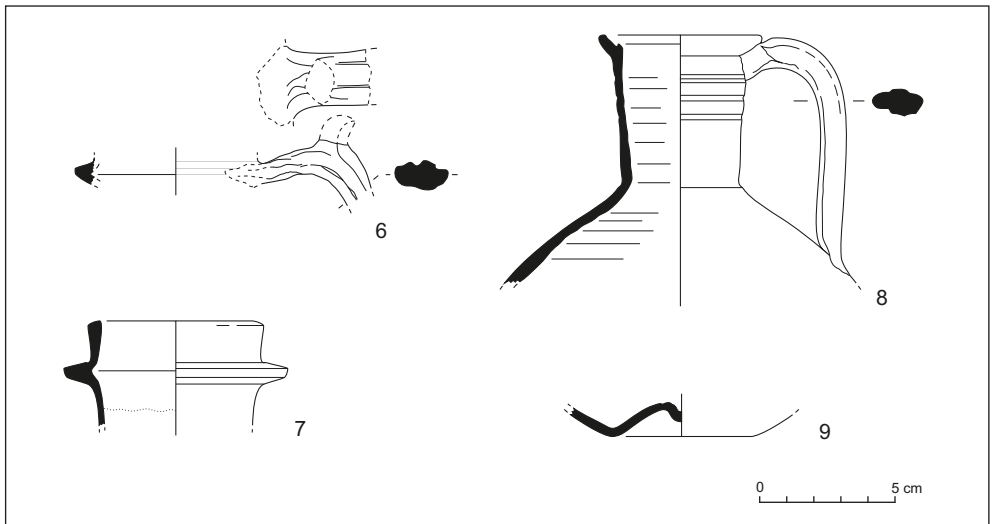


Fig. 5. Selection of Cypriot cooking ware jugs from layers preceding the “Hellenistic” House courtyard (1): 6, 7 – flanged rim type [see Fig. 6]; 8 – ledge-rim type; 9 – concave bottom of either type (PCMA Nea Paphos project/drawing and digitizing M. Więch)

presented examples belong to a flanged rim type [Figs 5:6–7; 6]. A small neck fragment retained the spurred handle (spur missing), bearing two grooves. According



Fig. 6. Cypriot cooking ware jug with white deposit on the interior (PCMA Nea Paphos project/photo M. Więch)

to Hayes the flanged-rim type jug from the House of Dionysos may originate from the Soli region (Hayes 1991: 82, 84, OΔ 4981, Fig. 35:10), however the example from the Maloutena site shows no visible differences from the standard western Cyprus cooking fabric. Another type of jug, with ledged rim and double-ribbed handle, was found in context F.32/14 [Fig. 5:8].

Although no complete example of a cooking-ware jug has been discovered so far at the site of the Polish excavations, parallels from the House of Dionysos let it be assumed that both illustrated types had the same thin-walled concave bottom with central “button”, such as the fragment from context F.8/16 [Fig. 5:9]. It is also assumed that they should be dated to the end of the 1st or the beginning of the 2nd century AD (Hayes 1991: 193–194, Fig. 67:19–20; deposit presumably of Trajanic date). All specimens, except for a small



Fig. 7. “Pompeian-Red” ware pan [see Fig. 8:11] (PCMA Nea Paphos project/photo M. Więch)

neck fragment, have a white (lime?) deposit on the interior walls [see *Fig. 6*], same as that observed on an imported Aegean jug [see below, *Fig. 9:14*], and on a bottom fragment [see *Fig. 5:9*] which also shows signs of blackening by fire.

### BAKING DISHES

#### CYPRriot AND IMPORTED

A coarse baking dish [*Fig. 8:10*] was found in context F.26/14, which was interpreted as fill accumulated above a floor (S.4/14). The vessel is similar to a find from the House of Dionysos, a deposit dated to the late 3rd–early 2nd century BC (Hayes

1991: 82, 84, 104, *Fig. 32:8*, 11, 124, OΔ 5145, *Fig. 45:24*, local ware, uncertain date of deposit, probably late Hellenistic).

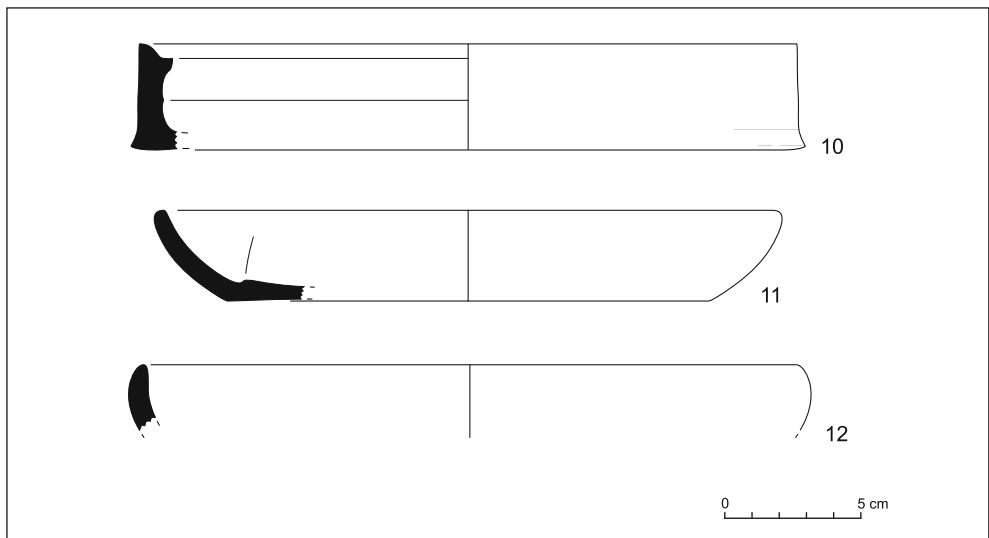
Two dishes were imports. A “Pompeian-Red” ware pan [see *Figs 7; 8:11*] from context F.52/14, above the well-head of cistern S.12/14, is an example of late Campanian “black sand” fabric (Blakely and Bennett 1989: 205–225; Hayes 1991: 78, 205, OΔ 55, *Fig. 28:1–5*). A small rim fragment of a Nile silt dish from context F.12/16, its interior surface reddish in color, may be an Egyptian imitation of an Italian “Pompeian-Red” ware pan [see *Fig. 8:12*].

## IMPORTED COOKING WARES

#### AEGEAN IMPORTS

The most frequent cooking ware imports at the Maloutena site are products from

the Aegean, mostly thick flat-bottomed baking-dishes (a form not discussed in this paper) and deep baggy pots and carinated



*Fig. 8. Cypriot and imported baking dishes from layers preceding the “Hellenistic” House courtyard (1): 10 – Cypriot coarse ware baking dish ; 11 – “Pompeian Red” ware pan of the Campanian “black sand” fabric [see *Fig. 7*]; 12 – Egyptian Nile-silt imitation of an Italian “Pompeian Red” ware pan (PCMA Nea Paphos project/drawing and digitizing M. Więch)*



casseroles with concave walls, wide flat rims and two small “sliced” handles (Knossos type 2).

Rare finds in Nea Paphos and elsewhere are two forms: a pot with a short vertical, triangular rim [Fig. 9:13], representing Knossos type 1 (Hayes 1983: 105, 122, Fig. 5:56, 57), and a jug (Hayes 1983: 106, 122, Fig. 6:76–77). A fragment of an Aegean jug [Fig. 9:14] from context F.7/16 is just like an unillustrated small base fragment from context F.2/16 in that it has a white deposit on the inner wall surface. According to J.W. Hayes and G. Forster, these jugs often bear limescale deposits attesting to their

use for boiling water (Hayes 1983: 107; Forster 2001: 158, Fig. 4.11:c). Numerous small pieces of trefoil-mouthed rims, probably belonging to this type of jug, were discovered at the Maloutena site. An Aegean cooking ware pot with triangular rim [Fig. 9:13] and a casserole with sloping rim [Fig. 9:16] were found in context F.8/16; a deep pot with ribbed body [Figs 9:15; 10] comes from context F.52/14. Both contexts are dated to the end of the 1st–beginning of the 2nd century AD; the casserole type with triangular rim is considered to be earlier, however, than the types with wide sloping rim (Hayes 1983: 105).

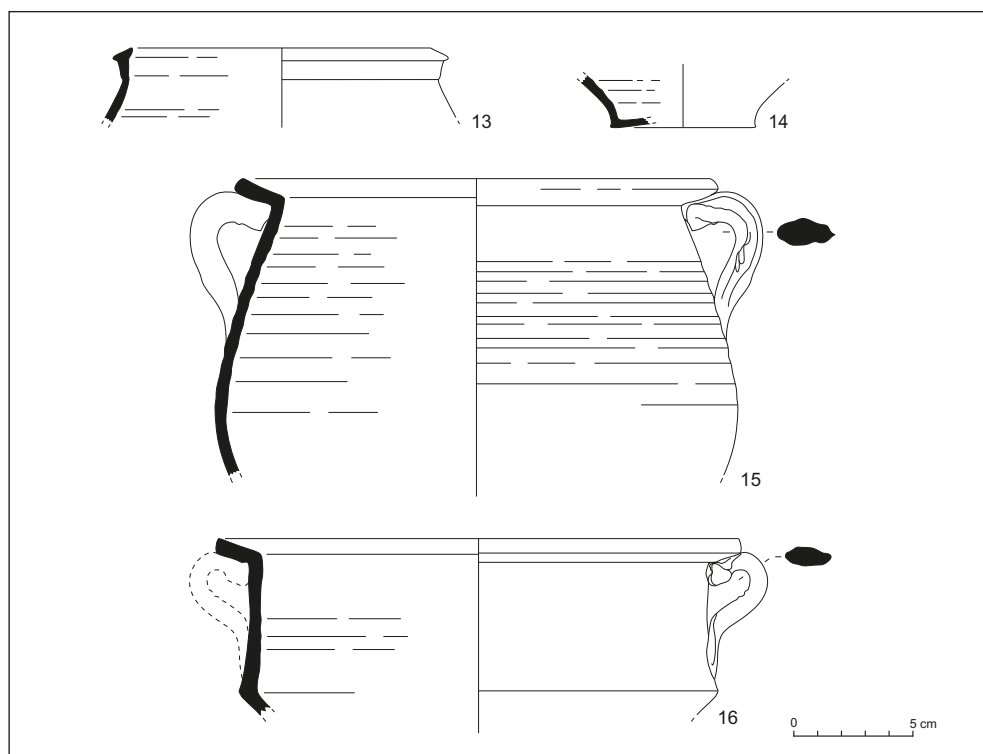


Fig. 9. Aegean cooking ware imports from layers preceding the “Hellenistic” House courtyard (1): 13 – Knossos type 1 pot; 14 – jug base; 15 – deep cooking pot; 16 – casserole (PCMA Nea Paphos project/drawing and digitizing M. Więch)



SOUTHERN LEVANTINE  
IMPORTS

Cooking ware imports from the Levantine coast are very rare at the Maloutena site, especially in the early contexts, but they do



Fig. 10. *Aegean cooking ware pot (PCMA Nea Paphos project/photo M. Więch)*

occur sporadically. A rim fragment of a pot, preserving just one handle [Fig. 11:17], is most probably a product of a pottery workshop working in the industrial quarter of Beirut (BEY 015 site) in the late 1st to early 2nd century AD. The fabric is reddish brown with gray surface, very hard, similar to the fabric of Beirut amphora type 3, and the form with a tall collar rim and the “Beirut” handle closely corresponds with cooking pot form 1.1–1.2 from BEY 015, dated to the mid to late 1st century AD (Reynolds et al. 2010: 80, 89, Fig. 18.1–7).

## AFRICAN IMPORTS

Two small fragments of African Red Slip ware casseroles were found in contexts F.2/16 and F.17/16 [Fig. 11:18,19 respectively]. The rim fragment no doubt belongs to Hayes form 197 (Hayes 1972:

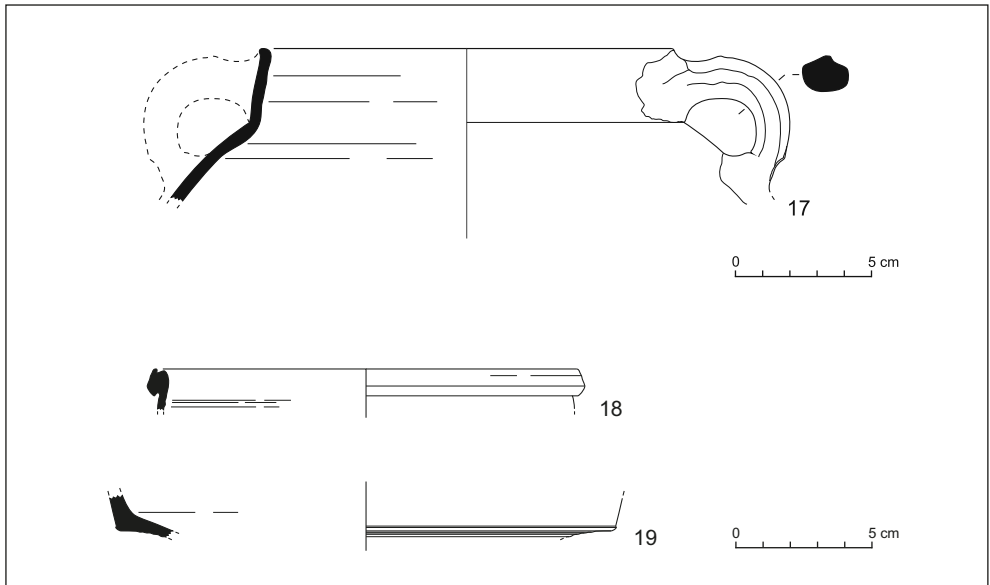


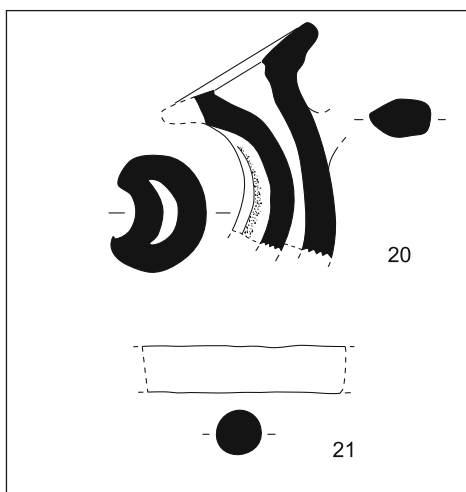
Fig. 11. *Levantine (17) and North African (African Red Slip casseroles, 18, 19) cooking ware imports from layers preceding the “Hellenistic” House courtyard (PCMA Nea Paphos project/drawing and digitizing M. Więch)*

209, Fig. 36). Identification of the body fragment with carination [see *Fig. 11:19*] is more difficult. The fragment is unslipped, with blackened exterior surface, like the above mentioned ARSW form 197, but with a more pronounced flange. Taking into consideration the dating suggested for this form — late 2nd to the mid 3rd century AD — both sherds, found in early Roman contexts, can be intrusive.

### COOKING POT-SUPPORTS

Two supports, designed for different cooking vessels, were found during the last two excavations seasons. A Classical or early Hellenistic cylindrical, bent cooking pot-support (Hayes 1991: 82–83, 100, OΔ 4716–4717, 4723, Fig. 30:6–7, Pl. 16 bottom; Morris 1985; Grandjean 1985: Fig. 16; Papadopoulos 1992)<sup>1</sup> comes from context F.76/14, an early context below the floor, dated by a heavily corroded Ptolemaic coin, possibly of Soter (Svoronos 1904: Pl. 8a:4), which was found under it. Only the upper part and half of the rim is preserved [*Fig. 12:20*]. The fabric of the pot-support illustrated here is non-micaceous, light brown to reddish, corresponding to Cypriot cooking ware.

A grille fragment [see *Fig. 12:21*] from context F.8/16, bearing clear marks of soot, was meant to support flat-bottomed baking dishes. This kind of utensil, round or square, was used in Greek kitchens already in the Classical period. It was placed straight over the coals, or across the top of a portable brazier (Sparkes 1962: 129, Pl. V.5).



*Fig. 12. Miscellaneous finds: 20 – pot-stand, 21– grille fragment (PCMA Nea Paphos project/drawing and digitizing M. Więch)*

## CONCLUSIONS

Petrographic differences, visible also to the naked eye, were observed between late Classical, Hellenistic and early Roman Cypriot cooking ware fabrics. The fabric of the pots dated to the earlier periods is more gritty and rough on the whole, with larger and more frequent inclusions, and it seems to be less standardized than

that of the early Roman period. Surface treatment also shows clear chronological changes. Roughness and scratches left from the turning process, often visible in the lower parts of Hellenistic pots, are not present on vessels from later periods. Most of the cooking ware pots and casseroles of the early Roman period are plain, but

<sup>1</sup> S.P. Morris (1985) suggested that props of this kind could have been used during metalworking, but J.K. Papadopoulos (1992) argued against this idea.

parallel slightly ribbed examples occur in the same contexts as well. Aegean cooking ware appears at the Nea Paphos site no earlier than the late 1st century AD and it comprises a whole set of forms: deep pots, casseroles and jugs. Much less frequent are

the cooking wares from Italy, Levant and Egypt. It seems that the only intentionally imported cooking utensils were flat-based pans, which represented a form that was not manufactured in western Cyprus during the early Roman period.

## APPENDIX

### Inscription on a casserole rim

Grzegorz Ochała<sup>1</sup> with contribution of Adam Łajtar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1, 2</sup> Department of Papyrology, Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw

The inscription on a casserole rim [Fig. 33] from an early Roman context was executed before the vessel was fired and can be read as ΦΑΩ. Its interpretation, however, is difficult. Taking it as a complete word is rather out of the question, because the only possible meaning would be the 1st person singular of the present tense of the verb φαειν, that is, φάω, 'I shine', which is nonsensical in the given context. Otherwise, one can take it to be an abbreviated form (although no sign of abbreviation is present) of, for example, the proper name Phaon (Gr. Φάων, -ος) or the name of the Egyptian month Phaophi (Gr. Φαῶφι). In the former case, Phaon could be a producer of the vessel or a person who ordered the production; in the latter, in turn, the name of the month could indicate the date of production.

Alternatively, the inscription can be read as ΦΙΑΩ. This could be interpreted

as either the 1st person singular of the present tense of φιλεῖν, that is φιλω, 'I love', or dative singular of the noun φίλος, that is φίλω, 'to/for a friend'. While the former explanation is nonsensical in the given context, the latter could be understood as a message inscribed by the potter who wanted to present his vessel as a gift. Tempting as it appears, such an interpretation cannot be supported by any parallel known to us. Moreover, the reading of ΦΙΑΩ is palaeographically difficult, because the left-hand oblique bar of the supposed *lambda* is unusually short: we would have to assume that the author of the inscription started writing this letter too close to the preceding one, and the resulting space allowed only for a short second stroke. Note also that the space between the putative *iota* and *lambda* would be much smaller than the spaces between other letters.

Monika Więch

Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Sciences

00-330 Warsaw, Poland, ul. Nowy Świat 72

mwiech@iksio.pan.pl

Dr. Grzegorz Ochała

Department of Papyrology, Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw  
00-927 Warsaw, Poland, ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28  
g.ochala@uw.edu.pl

Prof. Adam Łajtar

Department of Papyrology, Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw  
00-927 Warsaw, Poland, ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28  
a.f.lajtar@uw.edu.pl

## REFERENCES

- Blakely, J.A. and Bennett, W.J. (eds). (1989). *Analysis and publication of ceramics: The computer data-base in archaeology*. Oxford: B.A.R.
- Forster, G. (2001). The Roman period. In J.N. Coldstream, L.J. Eiring, and G. Forster, *Knossos pottery handbook: Greek and Roman* [=British School at Athens Studies 7] (pp. 137–167). London: British School at Athens
- Gabrieli, R.S. and Merryweather, A.D. (2002). A preliminary study of Hellenistic and Roman kitchen ware from Nea Paphos. In F. Blondé, P. Ballet, and J.-F. Salles (eds), *Céramiques hellénistiques et romaines: productions et diffusion en Méditerranée orientale (Chypre, Égypte et côte syro-palestinienne)* [=Travaux de la Maison de l'Orient 35] (pp. 33–41). Lyon: Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen-Jean Pouilloux
- Grandjean, Y. (1985). Tuyères ou supports? *BCH*, 109(1), 265–279
- Hayes, J.W. (1972). *Late Roman pottery*. London: British School at Rome
- Hayes, J.W. (1983). The Villa Dionysos excavations, Knossos: the pottery. *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 78, 97–169
- Hayes, J.W. (1991). *Paphos III. The Hellenistic and Roman pottery*. Nicosia: Department of Antiquities
- Mazanek, D. (2014). Preliminary typology of glass vessels from the so-called Hellenistic House, explored by the Polish Archaeological Mission in Nea Paphos (Cyprus). *EtTrav*, 27, 279–321
- Meyza, H., Romaniuk, M., and Więch, M. (2017). Nea Paphos. Seasons 2014 and 2016. *PAM*, 26/1, 397–426
- Morris, S.P. (1985). Lasana: a contribution to the ancient Greek kitchen. *Hesperia*, 54(4), 393–409
- Papadopoulos, J.K. (1992). Lasana, tuyeres, and kiln firing supports. *Hesperia*, 61(2), 203–221
- Papuci-Władyka, E. (1995). *Nea Pafos: studia nad ceramiką hellenistyczną z polskich wykopalisk (1965–1991)* [Nea Paphos: Studies on the Hellenistic pottery from Polish excavations (1965–1991)]. Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński [in Polish]
- Reynolds, P., Waksman, Y.S., Lemaître, S., Curvers, H.H., Roumié, M., and Nsouli, B. (2010). An early Imperial Roman pottery production site in Beirut (BEY 015): chemical analyses and a ceramic typology. *Berytus*, 51–52, 71–115
- Sparkes, B.A. (1962). The Greek kitchen. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 82, 121–137
- Svoronos, J.N. (1904). *Ta nomismata tou kratous tōn Ptolemaïōn* [The coins of the Ptolemaic state]. Athens: P.D. Sakellarios [in Greek]