

Paul Reynolds, *Hispania and the Roman Mediterranean AD 100–700*. London: Duckworth, 2010. Pp. xi + 372. ISBN 978 0 7156 3862 1.

Reynolds provides an exhaustive synthesis of the distribution of pottery across the Mediterranean and Atlantic provinces from the second to the eighth centuries AD focusing in particular on the role of the Spanish provinces. Whilst occasionally referring to other areas of economic activity Reynolds' interest is almost exclusively ceramic charting the distribution of pottery through several crucial ceramic assemblages. The depth of Reynolds' analysis is reinforced by his involvement in the analysis and publication of the excavation reports from several of these sites. The current volume differs from Reynolds' earlier discussion (*Trade in the Western Mediterranean, AD 400–700. The ceramic evidence* British Archaeological Reports, International Series, 604, Oxford, 1995) with the incorporation of new material from Marseille and Tarragona as well as evidence from the Eastern Mediterranean. The result is an authoritative synthesis of the distribution of pottery throughout the Mediterranean. Although some suggestions such as the Black Sea origin of Kapitan 1 and 2 amphorae could do with further elucidation before they become convincing, Reynolds' analysis is firmly based on the ceramic evidence from which he draws sensible although at times inconclusive conclusions. Particularly intriguing is the large quantity of unexplained imports found at Benalúa-Alicante (pp. 116–119).

Reynolds begins with a brief survey of previous work on ceramics in Spain, Portugal and the Balearic Islands focusing on John Hayes' *Late Roman Pottery* (British School in Rome, 1972) and Simon Keay's work on Late Roman amphorae from Cataluña (*Late Roman Amphorae in the Western Mediterranean: a typology and economic study: the Catalan evidence* British Archaeological Reports, International Series, 196, Oxford, 1984). He then proceeds to discuss the production of olive oil (pp. 24–39), fish sauce (pp. 39–48), wine (pp. 49–55) and local fine-ware pottery – principally Terra Sigillata hispánica and T.S. hispánica tardía (pp. 56–67) – with respect to the rise of Tunisian production and the distribution of African Red Slip (ARS).

The next section deals with the distribution of amphorae throughout the Mediterranean to look at shipping routes and the role played by Hispania as both a producer and a consumer (pp. 68–119). Reynolds' analysis is based on the comparison of ceramic assemblages at Beirut, Carthage, Marseille and Tarragona to provide a picture of economic vitality (at least in the Eastern Mediterranean) brought to an end by the crises of the later third century AD.

The Severan period proved deleterious in limiting Spanish production to local or regional markets. The expansion of the *annona* to include olive oil and the establishment of Imperial control over the supply of oil from Baetica and Tripolitana led to the decline of Baetican oil and fish and Lusitanian fish sauce production. Although fish sauce production recovered to a point it never regained its earlier levels and was confined to the satisfaction of local and regional demand. The reforms of the Tetrarchy exacerbated

this growing tendency towards economic regionalism and the separation of the Eastern and Western Mediterranean.

The discussion of the fifth century economy focuses on the effects of the fall of Carthage (429) and the formation of the Vandal Kingdom. Rather than cause disruption the Vandal conquest seems to have been accompanied by an increase in ARS and agricultural production in the vicinity of Carthage. From c.450 Tunisian oil reached markets in South-Eastern and North-Eastern Spain, Southern Gaul and Italy and culminated in the appearance of a new amphora type (Keay 62) c.500 (p. 101). This revival of African and Eastern Mediterranean trade extended as far as Britain – reaching Tintagel, Bantham, Cadbury and Dinas Powys – and presages the Byzantine resurgence under Justinian. Contrary to their portrayal in Late Roman and Byzantine sources Reynolds suggests that the barbarian kings functioned in the manner of their legitimate Roman predecessors in ensuring adequate supplies of grain. This is in contrast, for example, to Zanini's picture of a crisis in the later fifth century that does not recover until the Byzantine reconquest (*Le Italie Byzantine. Territorio, insediamenti ed economia nella provincia bizantina d'Italia (VI–VII secolo)* Bari, 1998 pp. 677–688).

The final section examines the fragmentation of the Mediterranean trade networks in the late sixth and seventh centuries AD with supplies becoming increasingly polarised and dependent upon local sources of supply (pp. 120–135). The Byzantine conquest of Southern Spain and the establishment of a military presence at Cartagena may explain the presence of Tunisian and Eastern imports. Tunisian products not only dominated Byzantine markets (at Cartagena, Málaga, San Antonino di Perti, Carthage) but also reached beyond the Byzantine sphere reaching Marseilles and Tarragona. It seems pertinent to draw attention to the remodelling of the harbour facilities at Carthage (Roskams, S., 'Urban Transition in North Africa: Roman and Medieval Towns of the Maghreb' in N. Christie and S. Loseby, eds., *Towns in Transition. Urban Evolution in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* Guildford, 1996 pp. 163–166), Naples (Zanini 1998 pp. 306–308) and Cartagena (Berrocal Caparrós, Ma. C., 'Instalaciones portuarias en Carthago Nova: la evidencia arqueológica' in J. Pérez Ballester and G. Pascual Berlanga, eds., *Actas de las III Jornadas de Arqueología Subacuática. Puertos antiguos y comercio marítimo* Valencia, 1998 pp. 99–114) that took place at this time. Reynolds follows Whittaker ('Late Roman trade and traders' in P. D. A. Garnsey, K. Hopkins and C. R. Whittaker, eds., *Trade in the Ancient Economy* London, 1983 pp. 163–180) in stressing the importance of the church in Late Antique trade: the prominence of Caesarea and Askalon-Gaza in long distance trade is attributed to their importance on the pilgrim route to Jerusalem. The Crypta Balbi deposit associated with the Monastery of San Lorenzo has yielded large quantities of ARS suggesting that the distribution of grain was in the hands of the church (p. 130).

By the first half of the eighth century there was a large-scale collapse in long distance trade throughout the Western Mediterranean – evidenced by the assemblages at Marseille, Rome and Naples – that it is tempting to associate with the dislocation caused by the Islamic conquests.

Reynolds' analysis is reinforced by abundant notes (pp. 233–310) and bibliography (pp. 311–348) as well as tables giving the relative quantities of the different pottery types from the ceramic assemblages discussed enabling the reader to view the raw data on which Reynolds bases his conclusions. Reynolds offers an authoritative synthesis that builds upon his earlier books on this topic (*Settlement and Pottery in the Vinalopó Valley (Alicante, Spain) A.D. 400–700* British Archaeological Reports, International Series, 588, Oxford, 1993, and 1995). His current work will be of interest not only to economic historians but to anyone interested in the transformations of the Late Antique world and the on-going debates surrounding Henri Pirenne's portrayal of the continuity of the Mediterranean World prior to the expansion of Islam.

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