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## LONG-DISTANCE IMPORTED POTTERY AT HORVAT KUR (GALILEE, ISRAEL): CATEGORIES AND QUANTITIES

*This paper presents data and preliminary observations concerning Roman, particularly Late Roman, pottery from the excavation of a synagogue at Horvat Kur, near Capernaum (Lower Galilee, Israel). Following introductory paragraphs concerning the site and the study of the pottery, the specific focus is on the categories of long-distance imported pottery that were identified amongst what is a ceramic assemblage of largely regional manufacture. Most notable is the relatively common presence of Pontic amphorae, very likely from the area of Sinope, and African Red Slip Ware, Late Roman C and D. The limited variety and quantity of this imported pottery serves as a basis to make preliminary observations concerning the significance of this pottery, as a reflection of a changing Mediterranean world on the macro scale, and local circumstances on the micro level.*

Galilee – Roman Pottery – Late Roman Amphorae – Sinopean Amphorae – Late Roman Red Wares

### 1. Introduction

Within the study of material culture, pottery, as has oftentimes been observed, is a valuable proxy to help understand past people, communities and societies. Despite inherent practical and methodological hurdles, its durability, plentiful occurrence, and a range of tools for analyses, classification and interpretation serve a variety of potential research questions.

One common research question – usually through the study of fabric and shape and laboratory analyses, coupled with one or more techniques of quantification – is to determine proportions of the provenance of ceramic categories, how these may have changed over time, and how these reflect the ways in and extent to which a settlement was integrated into exchange, and on which spatial level(s). One further classificatory device thereby is to label the provenance of the pottery – in so far as it is known, or reasonably suspected via e.g. petrographic analysis – as local, regional and supraregional. Although useful, this three-tiered classification presents problems of itself. How does one define ‘local’, for example? Should this label only apply to pottery manufactured within the confines of a settlement at a particular time? Or (also) to that which was manufactured at places within a reasonable or feasible walking distance from that settlement, or that belonged to its territory? What, in fact, about rural manufacture (i.e. manufacture at farms and *villae*), not an uncommon phenomenon in the ancient world? Surely such a framework should not be limited to pottery only. Numerous examples – figuratively speaking – can be cited of a ceramic category, or a style, for which we have a fairly good notion regarding its geographic spread, but that at the same time understanding why this was so (if this perceived pattern is confirmed), touches upon aspects that are much less, if sometimes not at all, tangible. And yet, even if some of the very basics of

human society have fundamentally changed, we continue to observe such regional patterns in languages/dialects, customs, building styles, clothing, and so on; the list is endless, so to speak. By looking more closely at modern day examples of aspects for which the geographical limits can be more or less defined, we might perhaps – to some extent – also better be able to understand those observed for past societies.

Space prohibits that this paper should seek to resolve these questions, mainly because there is no simple, clear cut model that can be applied in a general fashion. The above, however, serves as a backdrop for some of the observations shared in the remainder of this paper, which deals with quantified evidence for imported pottery from long-distance sources that has been excavated at the site of Horvat Kur (Lower Galilee, Israel). As the study of Horvat Kur’s ceramic assemblage is ongoing, some of the observations presented in this contribution are preliminary in nature. This pertains specifically to the Late Roman<sup>1</sup> Red Wares (LRRW) and some of the utilitarian wares, which will be reviewed once more in the near future; hence, no precise date ranges are given here below yet.

### 2. The Site

At a stone’s throw west from the important regional centre of Capernaum, the remains of the village of Horvat Kur are located in the gently rolling hills overlooking the Sea of Galilee (or Lake Tiberias) to its southeast (map reference

<sup>1</sup> Prompted by a practical purpose, Late Roman as used in this article concerns the period of ca. AD 350-650, and as such deviates from the common use of Byzantine for this period in scholarly literature that concerns the southern Levant.



**Fig. 1.** Aerial photograph of the architectural remains of the basilical broadhouse-type synagogue at Horvat Kur following the 2018 excavation season. The north is towards the top of the photograph (Griffin Aerial Imaging © Kinneret Regional Project).

250575/754475 NIG). The site is being studied as part of Kinneret Regional Project (<http://kinneret-excavations.org/>), an international academic consortium that previously carried out stratigraphic excavations at nearby Tel Kinrot, an important – mostly Bronze and Iron Age – site located on the very shores of the Sea of Galilee. The remains of Horvat Kur are spread across a flattish hilltop and the surrounding fields, with the village's Late Roman synagogue situated at this hilltop's highest point. An initial survey, aimed to understand the village's extent and limits, was followed by the opening of test trench Area A in 2008, followed by test trenches Areas B and C in 2010, the latter revealing parts of two courtyard houses separated by an alley. From 2011 onward, all efforts have been directed towards what was already presumed to be a synagogue (Area A), which must have been the village's social, cultural and religious focal point. Over the course of seven excavation campaigns (2010-2013, 2015-2016, 2018) the remains of a basilical broadhouse-type synagogue (Hachlili 2013: 125, 600) (**fig. 1**) were fully excavated, unfortunately with relatively little remains *in situ*. Some notable finds have been made nonetheless, such as a stone table and part of the mosaic floor that belonged to the first phase of the synagogue (Zangenberg 2016, 2017). Of more mundane appearance yet not of less significance are, among

others, the many thousands of pottery fragments that over the years have been diligently collected, washed and stored.

### 3. The Pottery – Background

From Area A – the synagogue – ca. 147.500 pottery fragments have been retrieved up till 2018. This total does not include the Ceramic Building Material, or CBM (roof and cover tiles, or *tegulae* and *imbrices* respectively). All pottery has been studied and classified according to the three parameters of fabric, shape and decoration/surface treatment. It is from the combination of these parameters that information can be distilled regarding provenance, among others.

A selection of loci, of stratigraphic significance according to the excavators, has been studied mostly for dating purposes. After sorting by fabric, shape and/or surface treatment, all sherds from these loci were quantified by count and weight, further distinguished by rims, bases, handles and body sherds. In general, the pottery is strongly fragmented (**fig. 2**) because of building and other activities during the period of active use of the synagogue and its surroundings, as well as subsequent human (and natural) doings well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century AD, testified, for example, by grenade pins,



shrapnel and bullet casings, as well as several Ottoman clay pipes of somewhat earlier date. Four joining fragments of a Sinopean amphora – found in three different spots (with two findspots being ca. 20 metres apart), all just outside the synagogue's exterior walls – serve as an example to illustrate this (partly) disturbed stratigraphy.

While these selected loci represent a significant share of all pottery fragments, the pottery from all other loci (the majority) was studied more cursorily, partly in order to retrieve information in support of one of the project's original research questions: to what extent, and represented by which ceramic categories, was Horvat Kur connected to Mediterranean exchange? The aim of the analysis was to establish a full sherd count of pottery of long-distance provenance, not only to calculate its percentage within the total collection – thought to reflect the measure to which Horvat Kur was connected to Mediterranean exchange – but also to see which wares and which functional categories arrived, and how these compare to other sites in the region. Whilst full counts of pottery from long-distance sources are now available for Horvat Kur, this percentage can only be approximated as not all loci have been quantified, and a noticeable but uncertain percentage of the pottery is non-Roman in date. The oldest finds are two possible Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550-1200 BC) sherds. Iron Age I – (ca. 1200-1000 BC) and IIA – (ca. 1000-900 BC) period fragments occur with modest frequency yet are relatively common in some of the deeper loci in the excavations to the immediate east of the synagogue. Persian and Hellenistic fragments are rare, whereas quantities of Early and Middle Roman Imperial (ca. the later 1<sup>st</sup> century BC-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD) pottery are considerable. The great majority of the pottery, however, comprises the 4<sup>th</sup> to early/first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. There is a token presence of Umayyad and/or later pottery, most clearly represented by Islamic Cream Ware, some of which was possibly manufactured at nearby Tiberias. A scatter of (equally small) green- and yellow-glazed as well as non-glazed fragments, tentatively dated to the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, is considered to represent a major phase of stone robbing activities. These considerations, significant though they are, almost certainly do not lead to major deviations from the quantities and percentages that are discussed in the remainder of this paper.

#### 4. The Pottery – Quantified Evidence for Long-Distance Imports

In total, 618 fragments were marked as being of non-regional provenance. This qualification is somewhat relative: a total of 89 fragments are not long-distance imports, but concern amphorae (n=62, mostly types Late Roman Amphora 5 and Agora M334) manufactured on the coastal stretch from *Caesarea Maritima* up north to the area of Akko (Reynolds 2005: 570-574); 21 fragments of Hawarit ware, a category that largely comprises cooking wares, and which was manufactured at or near Khirbet al-Hawarit, located on the slopes of Mount Hermon (Hartal, Hudson and Berlin 2008); and six fragments of one Jerash Bowl presumably of Form 10 or 11 (Uscatescu Barrón 1993: 212, fig. 4). The provenance of a further 56 fragments could not be reliably identified, yet in terms of fabric,



Fig. 2. Impression of the general state of preservation of the pottery excavated within and around the synagogue (Jaakko Haapanen © Kinneret Regional Project).

shape and/or surface treatment these are sufficiently different from the regional spectrum to be regarded as non-regional. This includes 10 fragments of unclear shape (among which a possible Egyptian cooking vessel), and 46 amphorae fragments. Among the latter, several tentative identifications were made that include one or two Egyptian amphorae, micaceous fabrics other than those characteristic of the Maeander Valley (possibly from Cyprus or Rough Cilicia?), as well as nine fragments that are all very likely of a single amphora with pronounced ribbing – fragments with the same macroscopic appearance (perhaps even from the same vessel) were found in a nearby cistern.<sup>2</sup> What thus remains are 473 fragments that are (almost) certainly of long-distance provenance. This latter number forms the basis for the following observations.<sup>3</sup>

##### 4.1. Amphorae

A total of 135 amphorae fragments was attributed to identified, albeit only a handful of sources (tab. 1). The vexing question of what was primarily transported in these types cannot be addressed in detail here, as reuse also needs to be considered. Late Roman Amphora 1 and those from Western Asia Minor/the Maeander Valley are traditionally associated with wine (Pieri 2005: 81-85, 100-101), while debate (also) surrounds the content(s) of Sinopean amphorae: wine (Dobrev 2018: 311, n. 6), olive oil (Kassab Tezgör 2009: 137; Doonan 2015: 51, 57) and, perhaps more plausibly, fish products (Reynolds 2013: 102) have been suggested as their primary content.

With 83 fragments those of Pontic origin are most plentiful, 76 of which are in so-called *pâte claire*, and very likely originate from the area of Sinope in central northern Turkey, whilst the remaining seven have lighter reddish hues, but prop-

<sup>2</sup> These nine fragments are now tentatively considered to have belonged to a waterpipe (presumably manufactured regionally).

<sup>3</sup> Research for this paper has benefited from a literature review carried out within the Ceramics in Context Project, directed by professor Rubina Raja (University of Aarhus); see Bes et al. forthcoming.

Form or Ware	No. of sherds	Remarks
Sinopean D Snp II	9	4 join; another 4 join (+one body sherd?)
Sinopean <i>pâte claire</i>	67	2 presumably from the same vessel
Pontic (Sinopean?)	7	2 join
Central North Africa?	1	
LRA1	11	
LRA1A?	1	
Agora F65-66 or similis	5	
Maeander Valley	27	12 likely from the same vessel
LRA3 or similis	5	2 join
LRA3 Pieri B3?	1	
LRA3 (amphoriskos or unguentarium)	1	
<i>Total</i>	135	

**Tab. 1.** Quantification table showing sherd counts for the identified long-distance imported amphorae (Philip Bes © Kinneret Regional Project).

erties that merit a Pontic – and presumably also a Sinopean – attribution (Bes 2020). In so far as features allow typological identification, these amphorae in *pâte claire* seem to belong to Kassab Tezgör's Type D Snp II (Kassab Tezgör 2009: 135), datable to the later 5<sup>th</sup> and early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD (**fig. 3**).

A further 39 fragments originate from Western Asia Minor, in part probably more specifically from the Maeander Valley, based on their highly micaceous (mica-dusted) fabrics and soapy feel, characteristics that easily stand out among the repertoire of regional fabrics. Some have the characteristic dark reddish-brown colour of Late Roman Amphora 3, while at least half presents lighter brownish (sometimes almost mocha-coloured) hues. Five joining fragments belong to a one-handled amphora – indicative of a date prior to the later 4<sup>th</sup> century AD – presumably of type Agora F65-66 or *similis* (**fig. 4**) (Bezczky 2013: 65-69).

Twelve fragments are attributed to the family of Late Roman Amphora 1. Most of these concern small body sherds; one handle, however, has features that suggest it is rather earlier within the chronological range, ca. AD 350-450/500 (Pieri 2005: 69-85, esp. 70-74, figs 25, 27-32).

Finally, one fragment has macroscopic features that are reminiscent of Central North African fabrics. This identification must remain uncertain, however, as one regional fabric – on a fresh break – also presents characteristics that could remind one of fabrics from Tunisia and Tripolitania, especially the common to abundant white specks. A regional provenance seems preferable because of typological features that allow identifying it as belonging to the family of bag-shaped amphorae.

#### 4.2. Cooking & Utilitarian Wares

Given the overwhelming presence of regionally manufactured cooking and utilitarian wares, it is no surprise that hardly any



**Fig. 3.** The restored top of a Sinopean amphora of Kassab Tezgör Type D Snp II. The fragments were found in one locus in the southeast corner of the synagogue's eastern aisle. Note the partially preserved *dipinto* in light red (Jaakko Haapanen © Kinneret Regional Project).

such vessels from long-distance sources were identified. The first to fourth centuries AD are characterised by what appears to be a near-exclusive supply and use of Kefar Hananya Ware (Adan-Bayewitz 1993; 2003). By the second half of, or possibly the late, 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, another ware made its appearance, rich in rounded sand and with some basaltic inclusions. Certain typological features continue (rim profiles in particular), and it is the author's impression that closed cooking pots in this latter ware generally have a larger volume. This ware predominates from the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD onward, and is still recognised in loci that are datable to the late 6<sup>th</sup>, early 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.

One notable, yet far from unique, exception are three fragments of so-called Syrian *mortaria*, now known to have been manufactured at coastal Ras al-Bassit in modern-day Syria (Mills and Reynolds 2014: 133). These very hard fired vessels were widely, albeit – it appears – thinly, distributed throughout parts of the Eastern Mediterranean, and on occasion beyond. At Horvat Kur, two base fragments were found, as well as one squarish rim that chronologically falls later in the typological repertoire (Mills and Reynolds 2014: 134, 141, fig. 7.29).

#### 4.3. Slipped Tablewares

In terms of sherd count, slipped tablewares form the most common functional category of long-distance imported pottery at Horvat Kur. Besides three fragments of Eastern Sigillata A, two of Hayes' Form 54 (perhaps from the same vessel) (Hayes 1985: 38-39, fig. VII.4-5), and one of Hayes' Form tarda b (Hayes 1985: 42, fig. VIII.5-6), and 12 fragments that could only generally be classified as *terra sigillata*/red slip ware, most other fragments belong to the usual triad of Late Roman Red Wares (LRRW) that characterise the Late Roman Eastern Mediterranean: African, Phocaean

and Cypriot Red Slip Ware, and derivatives thereof (Hayes 1972; 1980). In total, 320 fragments were identified, which includes four fragments that presumably concern ERSW.

Most if not all major classes of *terra sigillata* and red slip ware are characterised by a model of regional production: a number of (nucleated) workshops spread across an area that to a certain extent share a morphological ‘language’, whereby not all these workshops need to have played equal roles in terms of manufacture and/or distribution. One such class, Late Roman C (LRC), was manufactured at various places in Western Asia Minor, and which has been identified also at Horvat Kur (cf. *infra*). So far, however, it appears that Phokaia, with which the manufacture of LRC was originally associated, catered for the lion’s share of manufacture and distribution (Bes and Keweloh-Kaletta forthcoming). In some cases, this shared repertoire can be confirmed archaeologically or otherwise, in other cases it is (still) a matter of perception, or a result of classification. Moreover, it seems that these major classes also provided inspiration (directly and/or indirectly) for ceramic workshops that manufactured for more limited, regionalised markets. These latter workshops, however, were not slavishly following more international trends: in so far as is known, these ‘smaller’ workshops also present a considerable degree of singularity.

That said, quantitatively most common is Cypriot Red Slip Ware (n=120) or, as recent insights and shifting conceptual thoughts suggest, Late Roman D (LRD) (Poblome and Firat 2011) (**tab. 2**). All except one fragment present macroscopic characteristics that are sufficiently homogeneous to identify this group with what Hayes originally characterised as Cypriot Red Slip Ware (Hayes 1972: 371-386) (**fig. 5**). In so far as fragments allow typological identification, all except one could be matched to Hayes’ typology – it is interesting to note that the basin of Hayes’ Form 11 is absent. The single fragment classified as LRD belongs to either Meyza’s Form K1 or K1/3 (Meyza 2007: 50-51, 65).

African Red Slip Ware (ARSW) takes up a second place by sherd count, with 99 fragments (**tab. 3**), including several stamped motifs (Hayes 1972: 13-299; Bonifay 2004: 154-210) (**fig. 6**). As with LRD and LRC, most of the fragments remain typologically unidentified, yet a close look at their fabric allowed them to be narrowed down chronologically. Those that could be identified by form present nothing out of the ordinary, and chronologically speaking mostly represent a limited time span: the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, with one or a few that might stretch back into the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Not a single form was identified that postdates the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. The majority arguably circulated between the mid-4<sup>th</sup> and mid-5<sup>th</sup> century AD, according to current insights a time when the distribution of ARSW witnessed a significant increase in the Eastern Mediterranean – including finding its way well beyond the coastal consumer cities (Bes 2015: 135-137, 125-127, fig. 100).

The third class of LRRW by sherd count (n=97) is Phocaean Red Slip Ware (Hayes 1972: 323-370) (**tab. 4**), for which the former moniker LRC is finding new and increased use. Recent archaeological and archaeometrical research in Western Turkey has identified a number of production centres that, again, to a significant degree share a morphological language



**Fig. 4.** Small segment of an Agora F65-66 or similis (Esther van Eenennaam © Kinneret Regional Project).

Form or Ware	No. of Sherds	Remarks
1	18	2 join
2	12	4 join
1-2	4	
7	1	
9A	14	2 join; 2 from the same vessel; 3 join; 2 join
9C-10	3	
9-10	3	
CRSW/LRD	63	2 from the same vessel; 1 possibly ESD; 2 join; 2 join; 2 join
LRD K1 or K1/3	1	
Stamp	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	

**Tab. 2.** Quantification table showing sherd counts for CRSW/LRD. Form identifications are based on Hayes 1972 and Meyza 2007 (Philip Bes © Kinneret Regional Project).



**Fig. 5.** Two joining fragments of a Cypriot(?) LRD bowl of Hayes Form 1. Note the uneven and mottled character of the slip (Esther van Eenennaam © Kinneret Regional Project).



(Bes and Keweloh-Kaletta forthcoming). Phokaia – as mentioned already – still seems to have catered for the lion's share of the productional and distributional output. At Horvat Kur, nearly all fragments correspond indeed to the Phocaean variant of LRC; a few presumably originated

from other LRC-workshops in Western Asia Minor. A few forms that postdate the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD could be identified.

Finally, four fragments are tentatively considered to be Egyptian Red Slip Ware.

Form or Ware	No. of Sherds	Remarks
32/58	2	
50A	1	Possibly this form
50A or A/B	1	C fabric
50B	4	3 in D fabric; 1 in C fabric
50	2	
57	1	C fabric
58B	1	Possibly
57/58	6	1 in C fabric; 4 from one vessel
59A	7	5 from one vessel
59B	3	Join
59A-B	8	3 from one vessel
58-59	1	
67	5	2 join; 2 possibly from one vessel; the 5 <sup>th</sup> fragment is from a small-sized example in D(2)-fabric
ST38A/B3	3	2 join, the 3 <sup>rd</sup> fragment likely belongs
ST41A	1	With edge of Stamp Type 70A or 71
ST41B	2	Presumably from one vessel
ST41B-C	1	
ST49	3	2 from one vessel, the 3 <sup>rd</sup> fragment from a second vessel
C fabric	2	4 <sup>th</sup> century AD?
D1 fabric	4	2 join
D fabric	7	1 stamped concentric circle; 1 burnished interior
ARSW	31	1 is 3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> centuries AD; 17 are 4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> centuries AD (2 from one vessel); 1 possibly from a LR plate (e.g. Hayes 104-105)
Stamp 69	2	Join
Stamp Style A	1	
<i>Total</i>	99	

**Tab. 3.** Quantification table showing sherd counts for ARSW. Form identifications are based on Hayes 1972 and Bonifay 2004 (ST refers to Sigillée Type) (Philip Bes © Kinneret Regional Project).



**Fig. 6.** Floor fragment of an ARSW bowl or dish in D fabric, decorated with Hayes' Stamp Type 69 (Esther van Eenennaam © Kinneret Regional Project).

Form or Ware	No. of Sherds	Remarks
1A	4	2 join
3C	2	
3E	4	Join
3F	13	3 join
3F-G	2	
10A	5	3 join
10C	1	
Phocaean LRC	61	
Stamp	2	
LRC 1A	1	
LRC 3H	2	Possibly the same vessel
<i>Total</i>	97	

**Tab. 4.** Quantification table showing sherd counts for PRSW/LRC. Form identifications are based on Hayes 1972 (Philip Bes © Kinneret Regional Project).

## 5. Observations & Conclusion

Thus far, no archaeological evidence for local pottery manufacture has been attested at Horvat Kur, in the form of wasters, for instance. Even if no exact percentage of long-distance imported pottery can be calculated, on the basis of the present evidence it can, however, be stated with confidence that it does not exceed 1%. This means that, according to current knowledge, at least 99% of the pottery was derived from regional manufacturers – which here includes the coastal zone from *Caesarea Maritima* up north to the area around Akko.

The spectrum of long-distance imported pottery is interesting, for several reasons. First, chronologically. Only the three Eastern Sigillata A fragments can be confidently attributed to earlier centuries. The majority falls within the period between the 4<sup>th</sup> and earlier 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. It remains perfectly possible that, on a micro scale, occupation and/or activity at the site prior to (the middle of) the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD was (more) limited in scope. At the same time, however, on a macro scale we may be observing the effect(s), which now more clearly reached the interior of this part of the Levant, of a changing world in which parts of the Eastern Mediterranean grew in economic, political and military significance. What is nonetheless interesting is that while CRSW/LRD and PRSW/LRC are represented by several forms that are chronologically late within their respective typologies, this is not the case for ARSW. Late ARSW forms did circulate in the Eastern Mediterranean, yet their scarcity is also seen elsewhere (e.g. in Boeotia: Peeters et al. forthcoming; pers. obs.). Several explanations can be considered: perhaps quantities in circulation were no longer sufficient to reach smaller, inland settlements such as Horvat Kur; perhaps other manufacturing centres began to cater for part of the market for slipped tablewares. The absence of late ARSW forms should perhaps not be seen as a sign that local (economic) circumstances were deteriorating.

Secondly, the morphological-functional variety is very limited: some amphorae, a few utilitarian vessels, and mostly tablewares. Pontic amphorae, with their source farthest away from Horvat Kur, are most common, whilst Late Roman Amphora 1, making a common appearance at many places in the Eastern Mediterranean, is uncommon. Moreover, Late Roman Amphora 4, manufactured in the region of Gaza and the Negev, is absent. These observations might well reflect the character, intensity and/or direction of exchange of these categories of amphorae. The late Sinopean amphorae in particular appear to represent a phase of intensification (Bes 2020). The amphorae that were brought to Horvat Kur are all relatively small sized vessels, which quite possibly indicates that size mattered. This notion is further strengthened by the fact that tablewares are relatively common, which were probably easier to handle and transport. At the same time, it must be pointed out that these areas seem not to have had any significant tableware production, if one at all, prior to the Late Roman period, and even then, only Gerasa appears to have played a notable role.

Thirdly, and more importantly perhaps, is that people and places in these areas were tightly connected to a regional agricultural economy, presumably already well before ‘the’

Romans arrived on the scene. This is not to say, of course, that other influences did not find their way into the cities and villages and the minds of people. This begs the question whether the trickle of long-distance imports – the amphorae in particular – that arrived at Horvat Kur were essential additions for the inhabitants’ daily life. This question cannot be confidently answered, but the very small quantity suggests this was not the case. Furthermore, one needs to keep in mind the possibility of reuse, and that (part of) the amphorae no longer contained their original content by the time they arrived at Horvat Kur.

On the subject of the economic flows of pottery, the very low quantities of long-distance amphorae and tablewares contrasts significantly with the Ceramic Building Material (CBM) from the excavations in and around the synagogue. Ca. 75% of the roof and cover tiles (*tegulae* and *imbrices* respectively) are considered to have been manufactured in the region, though precisely where thus far eludes us. The remaining ca. 25%, however, appears to have been imported from more distant sources. As a matter of fact, a combination of archaeometrical (analyses were carried out and the results studied by Dennis Braekmans, Cranfield University) and ceramological arguments thus far suggest that ca. 20%, and possibly a little more, was manufactured in Eastern Cilicia, perhaps around the Gulf of Iskenderun (Mills 2013: 55–62; Bes in preparation). This suggests that CBM on the one hand, and amphorae, tablewares and other functional categories on the other, might well have formed part of different economic systems, even if part of the amphorae and tablewares may well have been redistributed through, for example, Seleukia Pieria, for shipment southwards along the Levantine coast together with the CBM. It is in fact not unthinkable that the *tegulae* and *imbrices* were shipped together with tree trunks or wooden beams – as a package, as it were – intended for truss construction.

To conclude, imported pottery at Horvat Kur comprised only a very small share of the ceramic material culture in use at Roman-period Horvat Kur. A substantial part of the pottery found in the synagogue during the excavations possibly originated from within other structures. Thoughts on how this pottery ended up within the synagogue is part of another discussion, although one scenario is that the building remained standing – whether or not still being used as a synagogue – and required some level of maintenance, for instance taking care of floor levels by bringing in material from outside. This pottery thus presumably does not represent material culture that was used – liturgically or otherwise – when the synagogue functioned as a building for religious (and other) purposes. This notion is indirectly strengthened by the preliminary study of the pottery from nearby Area C, some 40 metres southwest from the synagogue, in which parts of two courtyard houses were excavated, and which shows a similar range of long-distance imported pottery. There, however, it is chronologically limited to the 6<sup>th</sup> and early 7<sup>th</sup> century AD and characterised mostly by Sinopean amphorae in *pâte claire* and Phocaeen LRC. Repair holes, with the lead hole-and-clamp (other materials could have been used, such as string) no longer preserved, on several imported LRRW vessels (fig. 7) as well as the single Ras al-Bassit rim (cf. *supra*), reflect the



**Fig. 7.** Two joining fragments – with an old break – of Cypriot(?) LRD of Hayes Form 9A, with repair holes (Jaakko Haapanen © Kinneret Regional Project).

notion that the owners appreciated (some of) these vessels, and apparently put some effort into repairing and preserving their possessions (for actual use, though perhaps other motivations – also – played a role). Besides content and/or intended purpose, the colours and shapes – important for us also nowadays – of the Sinopean amphorae, LRRW and Ras al-Bassit *mortaria* must have stood out against the pottery that was regionally manufactured. As a matter of fact, a literature review, which presents Roman- to Umayyad-period ceramic profiles for sixteen urban sites between Caesarea Maritima and Canatha, suggests that only a limited number – and presumably in (very) limited quantities – of long-distance imported ceramic categories circulated inland, the more common of which were LRRW and Late Roman Amphorae 1 and 3 (Bes et al. forthcoming). Although Horvat Kur cannot be marked as urban, categories and quantities of long-distance imported pottery that are attested so far seem to conform well

to these new insights. Whilst coastal cities, especially one such as *Caesarea Maritima*, received pottery from all corners of the Mediterranean and Black Sea (in addition to local and/or close-regional manufacture), cities, villages and other settlements located beyond the coastal zone predominantly relied on ceramic manufacture from inland sources, even if details of that picture remain poorly understood.

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