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This volume is the revised and expanded version of Maja Miše's (henceforth MM) Ph.D. dissertation, »Gnathia Ware on the East Adriatic Coast (from 4th to 1st c. BC)« (2010: Department of Archaeology, University of Zagreb, Croatia). The reason for the study is the abundance of Gnathia pottery at sites in the East Adriatic region, originating from South Italian as well as local workshops and contributing to the clarification of production issues and trade relations in the regions on both sides of the Adriatic Sea. As MM points out in the introduction, the primary aim of the publication is to give the Gnathia ware of the East Adriatic region greater scientific attention. This goal is already achieved by the publication of the finds and their analysis in an international language – English; making the material available to the research community in a satisfactory manner. Further objectives of the study are the definition of the local production of the city of Issa, the identification of additional workshops and the exploration of trade contacts and exchange mechanisms in the Adriatic region.

The material basis of the study is the author's previous compilation of all Gnathia vessels in the East Adriatic area published so far, totaling 605 specimens. Of these, the largest part (426 vessels) comes from forty sites along the eastern Adriatic coast with a concentration in Issa; the remaining pieces (179) belong to the Greek and Hellenistic Collection of the Archaeological Museum in Split. However, the inadequate publication and documentation of the material, mainly from older excavations, impedes fully-fledged data collection. The lack of contextual information is a severe handicap for context analysis, which, in combination with the accepted stylistic and typological approach, represents the fundamental methodological perspective of the study.

The comparative style analysis in particular is therefore used to differentiate the local products from the imported Gnathia ware. Such a target requires the thorough study of the South Italian Gnathia pottery. Hence, the author devoted the first of five parts of her work to a summary of the state of research of the latter class. Clearly arranged in small subchapters, MM presents what is known so far about its genesis, production facilities, production technology, chronology and distribution - or better, what is not known. The chapter drastically highlights the still large gaps in our knowledge of the South Italian Gnathia commodity, notwithstanding the large amount of funds for research provided over decades.

The second part of the publication addresses the problems that the open questions about the South Italian Gnathia ware imply for the treatment of the East Adriatic finds. Here as well, MM presents clearly structured sections on the status and history of research, provides more information on the collected vessels, illuminates the location of the specimens from different find-spots and classifies the imported vessels with an allocation to production groups. Finally, the author describes in detail the Gnathia ware of Issaeian production and its previous research, before addressing the typological and chronological contextualization. In the classification of the vessels, unlike in previous studies, a sum of characteristic features is considered: shape, decoration, motifs, and fabric. Clay and coating are described in detail, unfortunately without color illustrations which would give the reader a better impression of the material.

Noteworthy is the limited type spectrum of Gnathia ware of Issaeian production, consisting of only four forms: oinochoe, pelike, skyphos, and table amphora, with each of these forms revealing predominantly developmental variants. Attached type charts clearly illustrate every single vessel form with all its appearances. When evaluating this small repertoire, however, the reader should be aware that the majority of the material comes from necropolises and that the spectrum of vessels used as grave goods is limited to a few types. The picture that emerges here - also with regard to the percentage of Gnathia vessels in the total quantity of finds - can change quickly with future finds from a more intensive urban excavation.

The detailed typological analysis is followed by a similar study of the decoration, limited in the same way, yet especially by comparison with the South Italian production displaying a restricted motif repertoire. Again, the description is reader-friendly, supplemented by a comprehensive table with a compilation of motifs. Both in the vessel types as well as in the painting, the author was able to work out an initial dependence on or influence of late Apulian prototypes. In the course of their genesis, however, the Issaeian vessels dispense with their Italian models, which they outlive in time, and continue to develop independently, with the motif repertoire influenced by the West Slope pottery. Only isolated motifs, on the other hand, are Issaeian inventions.

On the basis of the preparatory work carried out by means of individual studies, the author succeeds in defining three production phases within a time span from the introduction of the Issaeian Gnathia ware around the mid-3rd century BCE until the end of the 2nd century BCE. The problems of a chronological framework, not based on stratified contexts but on only a few coin-dated graves, are finally discussed in detail in a separate chapter.

The author concludes the second part of her work with a survey of the distribution of Gnathia ware from Issa, focusing mainly on Dalmatia, and with a list of possible other production sites along the East Adriatic coast.

Lastly, the third part of the book deals with related Hellenistic wares on the East Adriatic coast. The author discusses - on the (limited) basis of the published material - various groups of painted and non-painted pottery: red-figured ceramics, West Slope ware, Alto Adriatico vases, black- and gray-glazed wares, and late Hellenistic coated wares. The discussion takes into account the different aspects of the individual genres, such as their chronology in the places of origin, the relationship of individual groups to each other, and finally their distribution and chronological appearance in the East Adriatic region.

In the fourth part of the book, MM summarizes the results of her research and evaluates them with regard to the goals formulated at the outset. In doing so, she undertakes the difficult task of combining and correspondingly interpreting the picture derived from the development and distribution of the Issaeian Gnathia ware as part of the economic and historical development of the region. The distribution study documents the full integration of the East Adriatic coast into the Adriatic trade network since the 4th century BCE, whereby Issa and Pharos played a significant role as trading centres and transshipment points. The subsequent reflections on the economic conditions and trade relations in the region throughout the Hellenistic age certainly have some plausibility. However, at the same time they must also be viewed critically, as they rely on the Gnathia ware, representing a very small and exclusive portion of pottery production and commodities. For example, to construe the absence of imports from southern Italy as an indication of disturbed trade relations may be somewhat over-interpreted, due to the possibility that the strong domestic production of the Issaeian workshops may have led to the displacement of the South Italian Gnathia ware from the local market. Similar concerns hold true when interpreting the absence of Issaeian Gnathia ware in neighboring regions as an indication of non-existent economic or other types of contacts. To draw such conclusions a more intensive study of the archaeological material and context would have to take place, which also includes other genres. As the author is well aware, once again the desolate research and publication situation has to be considered.

The work is completed by a detailed and generously designed catalogue of the 179 Gnathia vessels in the collection of the Archaeological Museum of Split, including the samples from South Italian and local workshops.

Overall, the volume is characterized by a sound and clearly structured presentation, adequate in form and content. The methodology is always clearly recognizable and makes the individual work steps easily comprehensible for the reader. The study displays a sensitive, yet critical handling of the material and reveals the author's extraordinary awareness of the problems. Regrettable is only the absence of coloured illustrations.

The publication closes one of the many gaps in our knowledge of the Hellenistic material culture in the East Adriatic region. At the same time, like many similar studies of its kind, it very drastically highlights the immutable research deficits and our severely limited knowledge of ancient civilizations as a result of the negligent and careless treatment of this kind of material in former times.