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City and Countryside in Byzantine Anatolia: Amorium

Bizans Anadolusu'nda Şehir ve Kırsal Bölge: Amorium

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CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE IN BYZANTINE ANATOLIA: AMORIUM

ABSTRACT

Amorium is a key site for the period AD 700-900 owing to its historical importance as the capital of the Anatolic Theme. The well preserved remains provide an exceptional opportunity to study the layout and function of the Byzantine city and its excavation sheds light on the transition, modification, and continuity of the settlement between the Late Roman and Byzantine periods. The evidence from twenty years of excavation points to the existence of a large and prosperous city during Early and Middle Byzantine times, where various trades and crafts were practised and which served as the centre of a vibrant rural community engaged in agriculture as well as animal husbandry. The destruction layers from the capture of Amorium by the Arabs in 838 create a fixed horizon and reference point for the entire archaeology and material culture of early to mid-ninth century Anatolia. Pottery and coin finds in particular provide good indicators of the level and nature of economic activity. In this study some conclusions are drawn from that material, and discussion of it is set in the context of other sites and the interpretation of finds there. The evidence from Amorium presents new insights that appear at odds with accepted views of the Byzantine world in the Early Middle Ages.

Keywords: Byzantine, Anatolia, Amorium, Pottery, Coinage.

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BİZANS ANADOLUSU'NDA ŞEHİR VE KIRSAL BÖLGE: AMORIUM

ÖZ

Amorium, Bizans Anadolu Teması'nın başkenti olarak tarihi önemi nedeniyle MS 700-900 dönemi için seçkin bir arkeolojik alandır. İyi korunmuş kalıntılar, Bizans şehrinin planını ve işlevini incelemek için olağanüstü bir fırsat sağlıyor ve burada yapılan kazılar, yerleşimin Geç Roma ve Bizans dönemleri arasındaki geçişine, değişimine ve sürekliliğine ışık tutuyor. Yirmi yıllık kazılardan elde edilen kanıtlar, çeşitli ticaret ve zanaatların uygulandığı ve hayvancılığın yanı sıra tarımla da uğraşan canlı kırsal topluluğun merkezi olarak hizmet veren Erken ve Orta Bizans dönemlerinde büyük, gelişen ve zengin bir şehrin varlığına işaret ediyor. Amorium'un 838'de Araplar tarafından yağma edilmesinden sonraki yıkım katmanları, dokuzuncu yüzyılın başlarından ortalarına kadar Anadolu'nun tüm arkeolojisi ve maddi kültürü için sabit bir tabaka ve verimli bir referans noktası oluşturuyor. Özellikle çanak çömlek parça ve bakır alaşımı sikke buluntuları ekonomik faaliyetin düzeyi ve doğası hakkında iyi göstergeler sağlar. Bu çalışmada

Amorium'da bulumuş olan materyalden bazı sonuçlar çıkarılmış ve diğer sit alanları ve oradaki bulguların yorumlanması bağlamında tartışılmıştır. Amorium'dan elde edilen kanıtlar, Erken Ortaçağ'da Bizans dünyasına ilişkin şimdiye kadar kabul edilen bilimsel görüşlerle çelişen yeni bilgiler sunuyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bizans, Anadolu, Amorium, Seramik, Sikke.

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INTRODUCTION

The fact that there is no comprehensive handbook on the history and archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia is a good indication of the complexity and magnitude of the subject. Such a study would encompass a period of more than a millennium (taking the foundation of Constantinople in AD 330 and the city's conquest by the Ottomans in 1453 as its basic timeframe) and include a vast array of different sites and monuments.[1] Certain aspects have been more thoroughly studied and published than others. For example, in chronological terms, the Late Antique/Early Byzantine period (end of the 5th to the mid-7th century AD) is relatively well documented and, with regard to types of archaeological remains, churches and fortifications have often attracted the most attention. Much scholarly interest has also been shown in recent years in the subject of change, continuity, and transition in the Byzantine period, most especially, in the context of the survival or disappearance of cities.[2] Yet, there is still little consensus about what all this diverse and disparate evidence means.

The site of Amorium (Fig. 1), located in ancient Phrygia (the modern Turkish province of Afyonkarahisar), offers a rare opportunity to investigate many of the perplexing questions about Byzantine Anatolia. The site's importance for this period of Byzantine archaeology had already been recognised by 1993.[3] In particular, the excavations there have provided good evidence for urban continuity during the Byzantine Early Middle Ages (also known as the 'Dark Ages') from the mid-7th to the mid-9th century AD. The size and vitality of the city during this

* This paper was first presented at a Byzantine conference held in Nicosia, Cyprus in 2011. The promised publication of the Proceedings entitled *Byzantium in Transition: The Byzantine Early Middle Ages, 7th-8th Centuries*, edited by Athanasios Vionis, has never materialised. This version sadly contains only references to works before 2014, at which time it had been accepted for publication. I wish to thank Prof. Dr. Zeliha Demirel-Gökalp for her kind permission to publish this article. Since 2013 Prof. Demirel-Gökalp has been directing the ongoing excavations at Amorium on behalf of the University of Anatolia, Eskişehir.

1 The most comprehensive list of Byzantine sites is provided by the Tabula Imperii Byzantini series of publications; for additional information, see http://tayproject.org/TAYBizansMar.fm.

2 See, most recently, Dally – Ratté 2011. The papers on Anemurium and Amorium that were presented at the conference held at the University of Michigan on January 8-10, 2008 were omitted from this publication. For Amorium, see now Demirel-Gökalp – Tsivikis 2022.

3 Sodini 1993, 150.

period implies a robust infrastructure based on rural activity and production, despite the frequent Arab incursions across Anatolia between the 640s and AD 838. The latter date is crucial for the history and archaeology of Amorium, which converge with irrefutable proof for the siege and destruction of the city by the forces of the caliph al-Muʿtaṣim in August of that year. However, the city recovered from this disaster and again enjoyed considerable prosperity during the 10th and 11th centuries before it was abandoned by its Byzantine inhabitants in ca. 1080-1100.[4]

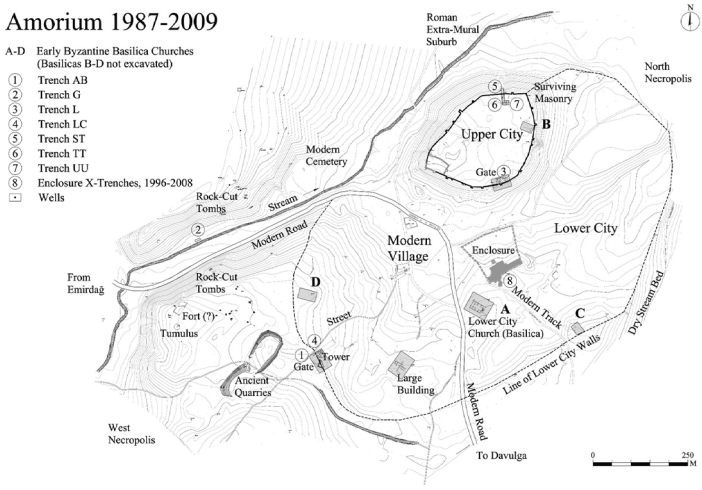

Fig. 1. Topographical site plan of Amorium, showing excavation areas. Plan © Amorium Excavations Project 1993-2013.

THE EVIDENCE FROM AMORIUM

Much of the evidence has come from the so-called Lower City Enclosure, the modern name given to a Middle Byzantine fortified area located at the centre of the site.[5] In addition to the Lower City, there is a large prehistoric mound, known as the Upper City, which also continued to be occupied throughout the Byzantine period and probably served as a fortified citadel, especially in Middle Byzantine times. The entire area of the Upper and Lower City had been furnished with a massive circuit of walls, probably in the late 5th century.[6] These fortifications were maintained and were still in use when the city was besieged and sacked in AD 838. Within the walls there are at least four churches-three in the Lower City and one on the Upper City Mound.

4 Ivison 2000, esp. 13-18, 27; Lightfoot 2012c, 473-74.

5 Ivison 2012, esp. 60-65.

6 For a discussion of other early Byzantine fortifications in Anatolia, see Niewöhner 2011, esp. 111-12. See also Crow 2001, 98-100 and fig. 6, drawing a direct comparison between triangular gate towers at Amorium and Thessaloniki.

The Byzantine Early Medieval settlement therefore covered some 70ha, making it almost as large as the walled Late Antique city of Carian Aphrodisias.[7]

Various other intra-mural areas of the site have also been investigated and, contrary to the views expressed by some scholars, the archaeological findings have not provided any evidence for the existence of open spaces within the circuit of Lower City walls that could be interpreted as gardens, waste ground, or plots converted for burial use during the Byzantine Early Middle Ages.[8] The only building that can be shown to have been abandoned at this time was the large polygonal hall or *apodyterium* attached to the bathhouse in the Lower City Enclosure, and this was left as a derelict and gradually decaying building after it had been stripped of its marble floors and wall revetment.[9] Moreover, it seems that the extra-mural cemeteries continued in use throughout this period, implying that even after the mid-7th century room was not readily available within the city for such use.[10] In one tomb (Fig. 2), for example, a hinged belt buckle was found (Fig. 3); elsewhere in Anatolia and in mainland Greece similar belt buckles have been dated to the 8th century AD.[11]

Fig. 2. Rock-cut tomb 90, West Necropolis, excavated in 2007. Photo © Amorium Excavations Project 1993-2013.

7 The mid-4th century fortifications at Aphrodisias enclose an area of ca. 80ha; Ratté 2001, 126. Suggestions that Amorium should be regarded as a Byzantine site that was different and more complex than a village settlement but 'not necessarily implying a larger size' are ill founded; *pace* Vionis et al. 2009a, 201.

8 See, for example, Brubaker–Haldon 2011, 541; see now also Yılmazyaşar–Demirel-Gökalp 2021, 1025.

9 Lightfoot–Lightfoot 2007, 131-32, with illustrations.

10 Yaman 2012.

11 Compare Davidson 1952, 271-72, nos. 2191-2194, pl. 114; Frantz 1965, 198, fig. 12 (bottom left); for examples from the Byzantine cemetery at Ilıpınar in Bithynia, see Roodenberg 2009, 155, fig. 8, nos. 1-2.

Fig. 3. Bronze belt buckle found in tomb 90. SF7989, length 4.48 cm. Photo © Amorium Excavations Project 1993-2013.

The same tomb also produced a copper alloy decanummium of Constantine IV, dated to AD 674-85.[12] Admittedly, a number of Early Byzantine epitaphs has been recovered during excavations at the Lower City church but, since they had been reused as *spolia* in the construction of Middle Byzantine (10th-11th century) tombs, there is no way of knowing where they were originally set up.[13] However, other earlier funerary inscriptions and monuments, dating from Roman imperial times, had clearly been brought in from the city's ancient necropolis for reuse in the Middle Byzantine period. For example, another Middle Byzantine tomb at the Lower City Church, tomb 62, was constructed of reused Roman funerary doorstones (Fig. 4), which must at some point have been brought from the ancient necropolis outside the city.[14]

12 SF7990: Yaman 2010, 52-53, no. 6, fig. 4.

13 *Ivison 2010, 321 and fig. 13, 323 and fig. 16.*

14 Lightfoot 2009, 144, fig. 12; Lightfoot et al. 2010, 134, pl. 1 (in both citations wrongly numbered as tomb 57); Lightfoot 2012a, 180, fig. 7.3 (wrongly numbered as tomb 65). For an overview of Phrygian doorstones at Amorium, see Yaman 2008.

Fig. 4. Roman double doorstone in the north side wall of tomb 62, area A13, south of the Lower City Church, excavated in 2008. Photo © Amorium Excavations Project 1993-2013.

Within the Lower City walls evidence has been found for construction work carried out during the Byzantine Early Middle Ages that encroached on paved courtyards around both the bathhouse in the Enclosure area and the Lower City church. Many of the buildings were apparently dwellings and/or workshops with stone footings and mud-brick superstructures, but in the Enclosure area a chapel was also inserted into the angle formed by the junction of the rectilinear bathhouse and the polygonal hall.[15] Despite its small size it was decorated with polychrome wall frescoes. Likewise, some elements of the installations that have been recognised as wine presses are of an impressive size and would have required considerable skill and dexterity in mounting in place. For example, the front of the pressing tank in installation G is formed by a single, monolithic limestone slab of remarkable size, measuring 3.9 m. long, 0.9 m. high, and 0.25 m. thick (Figs. 5-6); the weight of the block can thus be calculated as being about 2,200kg (2.425 tons).[16] Such elements are not the usual sort of material used in 'squatter' construction during the process known as the 'ruralisation' of urban sites. Indeed, the existence in the very centre of the city of numerous installations for the production of wine in commercial quantities remains something of a puzzle. They were built, used, and indeed dismantled or converted into storage silos while the city walls, the basilica church and the bathhouse, all of which had been constructed in the late 5th

15 Ivison 2012, 45.
16 Ivison 2012, 44.

or 6th century, were still standing in the early 9th century AD.[17] The wine installations cannot therefore be interpreted as anything but part of the fabric of the city.[18] So, at Amorium (and, by inference, in the surrounding countryside), we can observe a phenomenon that is contradictory to one postulated for the Byzantine countryside around Sagalassos in Pisidia. There, it is argued, the settlement pattern for Medieval Anatolia is based on hamlets and villages, which 'superseded the Classical city-state as the dominant unit of social and commercial organization, and cities themselves became large or minor villages.'[19] The publication of the Aphrodisias Regional Survey, on the other hand, suggests that the evidence there indicates that, in conjunction with the large-scale abandonment of Aphrodisias in the early 7th century, the rural population of the region also seems to have declined.[20] The case of Balboura and its territory remains ambiguous with no noticeable decline in urban or rural population levels in the 'Early Byzantine period' (i.e. 7th and 8th centuries) and abandonment of both occurring only in the 9th century.[21] No systematic regional survey for Amorium has as yet been carried out, but it can be assumed that large areas of the surrounding countryside must have been cultivated and therefore inhabited, even in the 8th and 9th centuries, in order to supply the Byzantine city with enough agricultural produce to satisfy its needs.[22]

Figs. 5-6. Wine press installation G in trench XE-08, excavated in 2007, with large slab (length 3.90 m.) in the front wall of the pressing tank. Photo © Amorium Excavations Project 1993-2013.

17 It should be noted that the winemaking installations had gone out of use some time before their destruction in AD 838; pace Brubaker – Haldon 2011, 462

18 For detailed discussion, see Ivison 2012, esp. 49-50; Lightfoot 2007, 274; see now also Tsivikis et al. 2023.

19 Vionis et al. 2010b, 430.

20 Ratté – De Staebler 2012, 36.

21 Coulton et al. 2012, vol. 1, 169, 174-76. This, however, is largely based on Armstrong's late dating of some of the pottery; see infra n. 52. Incidentally, Coulton mistakenly dates the sack of Amorium to AD 844; Coulton et al. 2012, vol. 1, 164. Likewise, Armstrong dates the 'restoration of Orthodoxy' to AD 787, not 842; Coulton et al. 2012, vol. 2, 65.

22 For Byzantine rural settlement and rock-cut monuments in Phrygia, see Olcay Uçkan [nd].

EARLY MEDIEVAL AMORIUM: A SPECIAL CASE?

The apparent contradiction between these different sites and surveys (and indeed between large sites such as Amorium and refuge places such as the area of the former temple of Antoninus Pius at Sagalassos) only serves to highlight that excavation and field survey can produce dramatically different results and conclusions.[23] In reality, the state of affairs that existed in Byzantine Anatolia probably lay somewhere between the two extremes of urban and rural settlement as the dominant component. They were, after all, often mutually dependent. The situation, however, is further complicated by attempts to trace the affects of climate change on settlement patterns and agricultural production in Byzantine Anatolia.[24]

Associated with the study of historical geography is the increasing amount of information provided by archaeobotanical and archaeozoological research. This is slowly changing perceptions of land use and agricultural wealth so that it is no longer acceptable to maintain that during the Byzantine period the production of wine and grain, the two basic staples needed for the supply of the Byzantine army, was restricted to the coastal areas of Anatolia, while the central plateau was fit only for stock rearing, mainly sheep and goats.[25] Evidence now exists to show that large areas of central Anatolia, even during the Byzantine Early Middle Ages, were give over to grain production, cattle rearing, and cash crops, notably vineyards for winemaking.[26] It would seem that Anatolia continued to be the source of surplus agricultural produce, and it was that wealth that essentially kept the Byzantine state running during the difficult times of the 7th and 8th centuries. It should also be remembered that Anatolia at that time formed the main land mass of the Empire.

The study of shipwrecks and amphorae provides good evidence for maritime trade and coastal activity. Indeed, the distribution of mass-produced Roman or Medieval pottery has been discussed principally in terms of maritime trade, where tablewares were a secondary item of cargo, used as ballast in ships' holds.[27] Little, on the other hand, has been done to document the substantial evidence that exists in Turkey both on the ground and in museum collections for such things as stone press weights and terracotta pithoi (Fig. 7, see Ivison 2012, 55).[28] Both are well attested in Byzantine contexts at Amorium, whereas amphorae are scarse.[29] At

23 See Vionis et al. 2009.
24 See Brubaker – Haldon 2011, 460-63; Coulton et al. 2012, vol. 1, 179-80.
25 For the traditional view, see Decker 2008, 255-56, fig. 23; Wittke et al. 2010, 246-47.
26 For the evidence from Amorium, see Giorgi 2012; Ioannidou 2012.
27 Armstrong 2009, 158.
28 For the press weights at Amorium, see Lightfoot 2003, 73-79, and further discussion in Ivison 2012, esp. 47-48; for Aphrodisias, see Ratté - De Staebler 2012, 209-10, apparently assuming the use of press weights in olive oil production and ignoring the evidence from Amorium, see also Lightfoot 2013, 843-45; for Balboura, see Coulton et al. 2012, vol. 1, 106-7, 109-111, and table 5.1.
29 For an example from the 838 destruction, see Böhlendorf-Arslan 2012, 155, no. 22, fig. 4.1.

Amorium, the latter have yet to be studied in depth, but both intact examples and a large number of fragments have been found in contexts ranging from the Early to Middle Byzantine periods.[30] Indeed, no serious attempt has yet been made anywhere to classify and date Byzantine pithoi-a remarkable fact, given that amphorae have attracted so much scholarly interest.[31]

Fig. 7. Pithos (height 0.81 m.), from trench XE-05 context 950, excavated in 2005. Photo © Amorium Excavations Project 1993-2013.

THE AMORIUM POTTERY

The study of Byzantine pottery in general has focussed largely on the fine wares, and the common or kitchen wares have been relegated to a minor role, despite the fact that in terms of quantities (by number or weight) such finds greatly outnumber sherds of wares that are variously described as luxury, imported, or glazed

[30] Lightfoot 2007, 277-78, figs. 8-9 (with refs.); Böhlendorf-Arslan 2010, 354-55, figs. 8.2 and 9.5; for Middle Byzantine pithoi found at Hierapolis, see Cottica 2007, 263, fig. 12, 1-6. Large numbers of Byzantine pithoi have also been recovered during the excavations at Pessinus; Devreker et al. 2003, 358-60, figs. 205-8; 369-74, figs. 232-37; for Sagalassos, see Vionis et al. 2010, 442-44, figs. 16-17; for 'undated' pithoi from the Balboura survey, see Coulton et al. 2012, vol. 2, 63-64 and 297, nos. 4403-4410.

[31] Ken Dark, for example, mentions pithoi only once in his survey of Byzantine pottery in contrast to his many references to amphorae; Dark 2001, 44 and 159 (Index, s.v. amphorae). Likewise, Vroom mentions pithoi only in her introductory outline but not in her survey of Byzantine pottery; Vroom 2005, 19 and fig. 6. Pithoi are, of course, much more common than ceramic beehives (although two examples of the latter have tentatively been identified at Amorium); for beehives, see Vroom 2005, 50-51.

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tablewares.[32] For example, finds of Cypriot Red Slip Ware (CRS) from the survey at Pednelissos in Pisidia during the 2003 and 2004 field seasons amounted to only 2% of all the sherds collected-and this is despite the fact that in the 2008 season wasters and other kiln debris were found in the vicinity of the site, indicating local production of CRS-type wares, although sadly no kiln sites were excavated.[33] The study from Pednelissos therefore ignores 93% of the material and gives no indication of its date or type beyond stating that on the basis of the pottery the settlement at the site lasted from the 2nd century BC to the 12th century AD.[34] At Saraçhane in Istanbul, however, it is reported that cooking wares are present 'in much the same quantities as the fine red-slipped and lead-glazed tablewares,'[35] while at Sagalassos cooking pots reach 27% of the Early Medieval assemblage by count (both wheelmade and, significantly, handmade vessels) from the former Temple of Antoninus Pius, and another 27% of the Middle Byzantine assemblage by count from Alexander's Hill.[36]

Social and economic interpretations for the use of specific types of vessel are highly speculative. For example, one study has argued that cooking pots with flat bottoms were associated with a rural way of life, whereas round-bottomed pots reflect an urban setting.[37] However, at Amorium the cooking pots are as a rule of the flat-bottomed variety. An intact example (Fig. 8) was found in 2009 in the winemaking installation attached to the north side of the Lower City church in a destruction level that can be attributed to the sack of the city in AD 838.[38] Similar cooking pots have been found at Kalenderhane in Istanbul, although there they are dated between the late 11th and the first half of the 13th century.[39] Other flat-bottomed cooking pots dated to the Middle Byzantine period have been found elsewhere. [40] Likewise, according to John Hayes, Constantinopolitan cooking wares in terms of quality of manufacture 'stand in stark contrast to the domestic pottery current elsewhere in the Byzantine Empire…' and represent the 'products of a sophisticated urban industry.'[41] It is worth considering the Amorium cooking wares as examples of a similar, if much smaller, local urban industry.

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32 For Byzantine coarse wares, including amphorae and lamps, see Dark 2001, 31-52. He discusses Middle Byzantine lamps briefly, assuming them to have used olive oil as fuel; Dark 2001, 44. Contrast the numerous finds from Amorium; Gill 2003; Lightfoot 2010, 44-47; Lightfoot 2012d.

33 Kenkel 2007, 134.

34 Kenkel 2007, 133; see also Vandeput and Köse 2008, 33; Armstrong 2009, 158; Vandeput et al. 2012: 277-279, 284-285, fig. 13 (no date is given to these finds of Late Roman D Ware); Jackson et al. 2012.

35 Hayes 1992, 53.

36 Vionis et al. 2009: 150-154, 161, table 2; Vionis et al. 2010: 431-433, table 1, fig. 6

37 Bakirtzis 1989, 41; see also Hayes 1992, 53. For the advantages of round-bottomed over flat-bottomed cooking pots, see Joyner 2007, 189 (with refs.).

38 Lightfoot et al. 2011, 49, pl. 5; for other examples, see also Lightfoot – Ivison 1996, 106, fig. 7 (mistakenly identified as Seljuk); Böhlendorf-Arslan 2007, 282-84 and fig. 9, nos. 42-44; Böhlendorf-Arslan 2010, 350-51, fig. 4, 6-7; 353, fig. 7, 4. 6-7; fig.8, 6; fig. 9.2.

39 Striker – Doğan Kuban 2007, 96-97, nos. 263-267, fig. 57.

40 At Hierapolis, see Cottica 2007, 262, fig. 11, 1; Saraçhane, see Hayes 1992, 56, fig. 20; Sagalassos, see Vionis et al. 2010, 442; and several sites in Greece, see Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2002, 346-48, nos. 395-99.

41 Hayes 1992, 53.

Fig. 8. Cooking pot from trench A17 at the Lower City Church, excavated in 2009. Photo © Amorium Excavations Project 1993-2013.

Pottery, especially common ware, is crucial for a better understanding of the Byzantine Early Middle Ages, but it is generally difficult to date the material accurately. This is true not only of Anatolia but other areas of the Byzantine world. So, for example, Palaipaphos in Cyprus has been described as a site that 'was inhabited at least into the 7th century… [but] for the period from the 8th to the 11th century no positive settlement evidence has been recovered.' The apparent abandonment, however, cannot convincingly be explained as the result of Arab raids; rather, 'it seems far more likely that the [occupation] gap represents nothing but our imperfect knowledge of local Byzantine pottery.'[42] The same could be said for mediaeval sites in Anatolia but on a much larger scale.

Amorium presents a unique opportunity to advance the study of Byzantine ceramics in terms of establishing both a corpus of common wares and a secure chronology. Pottery from the 838 destruction layers within the Enclosure have recently been studied and provide a good 'overview of the range of pottery types in use at Amorium in the latter part of the 8th and the early 9th century.'[43] The contemporary wares included examples of *Burnished Ware*, *Red Painted Fine Ware* and *Amorium Glazed Ware* (Fig. 9), as well as small fragments of Constantinopolitan

[42] Maier 2004, 28.
[43] Böhlendorf-Arslan 2012; see also Böhlendorf-Arslan 2010.

Glazed White Ware,[44] but the assemblages also contained residual late Roman pottery and wares of the 7th and 8th centuries. The detailed study and analysis of this material is ongoing and will doubtless be supplemented by further finds. Nevertheless, a number of significant conclusions can be drawn from this large corpus of well-dated pottery. The picture drawn by Brubaker and Haldon both of the ceramic assemblage at Amorium and, more generally, of pottery production and distribution in Byzantine Anatolia should be treated with care and needs refinement as well as correction.[45]

Fig. 9. Fragment of an Amorium Glazed Ware chafing dish. Photo © Amorium Excavations Project 1993-2013.

Firstly, it should be stated that the entire corpus of cooking and tablewares at Amorium comprises wheel-made pottery (in contrast to the handmade medieval pottery at Sagalassos mentioned above), most of which seems to have been produced in local workshops.[46] Secondly, the Amorium potters produced a variety of different wares, which implies a relatively large and sophisticated industry, supplying a sizeable market. The ability of local workshops to provide a wide selection of wares most likely lessened the need for imported pottery, and it is this factor, more than any supposed impoverishment of the local population, that may lie behind the lack of significant quantities of Constantinopolitan wares in the archaeological record at Amorium. Likewise, the virtual absence of transport amphorae at Amo-

[44] Böhlendorf-Arslan 2004, vol. 1, 223-24; vol. 2, 424-25, nos. 391-397; vol. 3, pl. 104; see now also Demirel-Gökalp-Kurt 2023, 243, 248, no. 2, fig. 4.2. For a general survey of Byzantine pottery from Amorium, see Böhlendorf-Arslan 2010.

[45] Brubaker–Haldon 2011, 502-4.

[46] For 'Handmade Ware' of the 7th-9th centuries, see Dark 2001, 46-47.

rium can be explained by its inland location and the greater suitably of wooden casks for use in overland transportation.[47] The multi-handled pots (Fig. 10), found in an 838 destruction layer in trench LC behind the Lower City walls, attest to the production of wares for some, as yet undetermined, specialised use.[48] Those strange vessels, however, are not unique to Amorium. An equally bizarre multi-handled jar, now in the Jordan Archaeological Museum, has been dated to the 8th century.[49] A close parallel to the Amorium pots, acquired between 1937 and 1947 by the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, is recorded as coming from Kastamonu in Paphlagonia, and three similar vessels are to be found in the local museum, all of which are said to come from the village of Hacimuharrem about 10 km. northwest of Kastamonu.[50] One example, seen on display, is of the same shape and size as the Amorium jars and has eight loop handles arranged in two rows around the body, but there are three little knob feet around the base and two cross-shaped bars over the mouth to the cylindrical chamber that runs vertically through the jar.

Finally, at other sites and in other areas it has been argued that red-slipped pottery, known either as Late Roman D Ware or Cypriot Red Slip Ware (CRS), continued after the end of antiquity, with its production extending well into the 8th century AD. This is implied by Joanita Vroom, who defines 'Early Byzantine' as continuing through to the middle of the 9th century, although she dates the production of CRS Ware as lasting from the late 4th to the late 7th (and, possibly, 8th) century.[51] Pamela Armstrong, however, is the leading advocate for dating CRS Ware production 'into the 8th century and most possibly beyond.'[52] Consequently, Armstrong dates some of the Balboura survey finds to the 7th and 8th centuries.[53] Her arguments for such dating have been accepted as 'convincing.'[54]

47 Lightfoot 2009, 143.
48 Böhlendorf-Arslan 2010, 357-58, fig. 11.
49 Evans – Ratliff 2012, 144, no. 92.
50 Inv. no. 12637. İstanbul 1949, 32 and fig. 17 (recorded as coming from the ilçe of Araç). This example was kindly brought to my attention by Dr. Marlia Mango. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Nimet Bal, then director of the Kastamonu Museum. The vessels in Kastamonu remain unpublished.
51 Vroom 2005, 15, 39; see also Vroom 2007, 263, 287, suggesting that CRS Ware 'did not suddenly disappear in the late seventh century... but probably remained in use for a longer period.'
52 Armstrong 2006; Armstrong 2009.
53 Coulton et al. 2012, vol. 2, 60, 275-85, nos. 4103, 4107, 4116, 4127-4130, 4133, 4144-4145, 4153-4155, 4202-4205, 4209, 4222.
54 Vionis et al 2009b, 160.

Fig. 10. Pottery found in 1998 in trench LC behind the Lower City fortification wall, including some of the multi-handled pots. Photo © Amorium Excavations Project 1993-2013.

Finds in Cyprus in the late 1950s at various 'Early Byzantine' sites are seen by Armstrong as crucial evidence, especially those from a rescue excavation at Panayia on the outskirts of the village of Kormakiti in the northwest of the island, where CRS of Hayes's Form 9 is reported from a destruction layer that also contained a silver coin (*miliaresion*) of Artavasdus and Nicephorus, dated to AD 742/3.[55] However, at the time the work that produced those finds was described as a 'limited excavation' of a large site that had been 'occupied continuously from the 5th century BC until the middle of the 8th century AD.'[56] Moreover, Megaw makes no reference to the presence of CRS Ware, while later Hector Catling did not associate the coin find with the presence of CRS Ware at the Kormatiki site.[57] The significance of this single coin may be overestimated, especially if, as a result, it is claimed that 'a coin could reasonably be assumed to have had a life-span of at least fifty years,' thereby allowing the occupation of the site and, by association, the use of CRS Ware to be extended 'to the very end of the 8th century.'[58] Armstrong connects the Panagia [sic] dating evidence to the finds from the Kornos cave, also in northwest Cyprus, but strangely ignores the coins from the latter site. These comprise 17 copper alloy coins (*folles*), which should be regarded as more reliable indicators of occupation than a single silver coin. They comprise issues of Heraclius

55 Armstrong 2006, 22-23; 2009, 160-61.
56 Megaw 1959, 30 (wrongly cited by Armstrong as pages 34-35); Armstrong 2009, 159, fn. 12.
57 Megaw 1959, 30 and 34; Catling 1972, 79.
58 Armstrong 2009, 161.

(seven coins), Heraclonas (eight coins) and Constans II (two coins, one of which could be dated to year 3 of his reign, i.e., AD 643/4).[59] Thus, the coin evidence provides a mid-7th century date, whereas Armstrong argues that some types of pottery found in the Kornos cave 'are known only from the 8th century,' citing coin evidence from 'Ain el Jedīde in Palestine.[60] In fact, this Palestinian site produced only one coin, described as a late Umayyad bronze coin of the 8th century, found 'laying high up in the debris filling room C.'[61]

At Amorium, however, such continuity has been difficult to find and red-slipped pottery is poorly represented among the wares excavated in Byzantine Early Medieval contexts.[62] This should not be the case at a large, thriving urban centre, if indeed red-slipped pottery was made in significant quantities after ca. AD 650. It should come as no surprise therefore that small and impoverished 'squatter' settlements, such as those attested in two temple site areas at Sagalassos, have produced little evidence for sustained production of red-slipped pottery.[63] Despite this, there is a desire to push Sagalassos Red Slip Ware (SRSW) in its last phase-Phase 9-beyond the 650 barrier.[64] Examples of this ware recovered from 'the domestic area' at Sagalassos appear to include large fragments that preserve their entire profiles, whereas at Amorium no such well-preserved pieces of red-slipped ware have been recovered from contexts immediately predating AD 838 in the Lower City.[65] Most of the red-slipped sherds are small and worn, indicating that they had existed as residual detritus for a considerable time before deposition.[66] In short, the abundant pottery assemblage recovered in twenty years of excavations at this major Byzantine city provides no support for the view that red-slipped ware continued to be produced and used there in the late 8th or early 9th century. The apparent absence of contemporaneous CRS Ware or imitative local tablewares cannot be explained simply by Amorium's location in landlocked central Anatolia. Instead, it has to be admitted that red-slipped ware had been supplanted or replaced by other types of Byzantine pottery, including glazed wares, in the households and daily lives of the inhabitants of the city.

59 Catling–Dikigoropoulos 1970, 52, 62.
60 Armstrong 2009, 163 and fn. 16.
61 Hamilton 1935, 117.
62 For references to red-slipped ware finds at Amorium, see Harrison et al. 1991, 226-68, fig. 7, 1-2; Harrison et al. 1992, 216, fig. 5; Böhlendorf-Arslan 2007, 275-77 and fig. 3.
63 Vionis et al. 2009b, 159: 'no phase 9 SRSW has been retrieved from the excavations of AK or AP' (the two temple sites).
64 References to the presence of this ware are ambiguous and confusing; see preceding note and Vionis et al. 2009b, 160: 'phase 9 SRSW is mostly absent from the temple sites.'
65 Vionis et al. 2009b, 160, figs. 12-13.
66 Böhlendorf-Arslan 2007.

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EARLY MEDIEVAL BYZANTINE COINAGE

The coin evidence at Amorium is also highly unusual and forms a pattern that contradicts that found at many other sites across the Byzantine Empire.[67] Over fifty years ago, George Ostrogorsky published a seminal article about Byzantine cities in the Early Middle Ages, laying out the arguments and the evidence then available to support two diametrically opposed views-those of continuity and of collapse in the 7th century AD. The article first discussed the case of coinage and pointed out that 'there have been very few publications or studies of coin finds made in Asia Minor.'[68] Amorium has now been able to fill some of this gap, showing that low denomination base metal coinage continued to circulate there after the reign of Constans II (Figs. 11-12).[69] The numbers are not large, admittedly, amounting to 50 identifiable specimens dating between the reigns of Constantine IV (AD 668-685) and Leo V (AD 813-820), but the fact that some coins of the late 7th century were picked up as surface finds indicates that they were not uncommon.[70] Such coins must exist elsewhere in Anatolia but they have simply not been found, recorded, or collected by the local museums. Naturally, they would occur most frequently at sites that retained a sizeable population and sustainable monetary economy, but few such urban centres, apart from Amorium, have been investigated in a thorough, on-going manner.[71] Yet, despite the numismatic evidence from Amorium it is still possible to find statements that conclude 'coins of the period extending from Constantine IV (AD 668-685) up to Theophilus (AD 829-842)… are in general rare, and on almost all Anatolian or European regional archaeological sites of whatever size *virtually or entirely* absent' (my italics).[72]

Figs. 11-12. Copper alloy coins: SF8227, surface find 2008, follis of Constantine V, dated AD 751-769; SF8466, from trench A20, Lower City Church, follis of Leo V, dated AD 813-820, excavated in 2009. Photos © Amorium Excavations Project 1993-2013.

67 Katsari et al. 2012, esp. 116-18; see also Lightfoot 2012a, 180-82 and table 7.1.
68 Ostrogorsky 1959, 49.
69 SF8227: Yaman 2010, 53, no. 9, fig. 5; SF8466: Lightfoot et al. 2011, 53, pl. 8.
70 Katsari et al. 2012, 136-40, nos. 157-206, found between 1987 and 2006. A further 7 coins belonging to the same period, including the two illustrated here (figs. 11-12), were recovered from the site during the 2007, 2008, and 2009 seasons.
71 Pace Brubaker-Haldon 2011, 472. There are no 'similar sites from which comparable evidence is available.'
72 Hendy 2007, 175, and see also 179-82.

BYZANTINE BRONZE VESSELS

There has been a marked reluctance to date other categories of material recorded as finds in Anatolia to the Byzantine Early Middle Ages. This is noticeable with the metalwork from Beycesultan, which is placed in either Early or Middle Byzantine times but not in the intervening period of the mid-7th to mid-9th centuries.[73] Several bronze and iron vessels found at Amorium in the 838-destruction layers contradict this traditional dating.[74] Indeed, it would be well to compare such material with contemporaneous items from Islamic sites in the former Byzantine regions of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, like the two bronze jugs found in excavations at Umayyad palatial complexes in Jordan.[75] Significantly, perhaps, an inscribed bronze ring weight was found in the very first year of excavation and was published in that year's preliminary report as possibly Umayyad, dated *ca*. AD 690-750.[76] The weight has therefore be highlighted as one of a very few items found at Amorium that can be identified as coming from the Arab world. Recent research has shown that it is inscribed with the name of the Emir al-Sarī, who was the Abbasid governor and financial controller of Egypt in AD 816 and again from 817 until his death in 820.[77] It seems likely that the ring weight also comes from an 838 destruction context, but there is no way of telling whether it was being used by the Byzantines before the siege or was lost by the Arabs during the capture of the city. If the former is the case, then the weight would provide striking evidence for trade between Egypt and Anatolia in the early part of the 9th century, thus significantly predating the evidence of the Cairo Geniza documents.[78]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper has shown the necessity to reappraise the role played by Anatolia in the survival of the Byzantine Empire. The picture was not as bleak as Leo of Synada in the 10th century would have us believe nor as most modern Byzantinists would want us to accept.[79] The wealth of archaeological evidence that is now slowly coming to light suggests that the infrastructure of communities and communications may have been more robust and sustainable than has previously been recognised. Despite the frequent Arab incursions in the second half of the 7th and throughout the 8th century, some urban centres remained in Anatolia and the countryside continued to provide the basic resources not just for subsistence but also for surplus wealth. The focus here has been on Amorium, and I make no apology for that fact

[73] Wright 2000, 165-70; Wright 2007, 146, figs. 18-19. For additional comments, see Lightfoot 2007, 282 and esp. n. 44.
[74] Koçyiğit 2012, 323-27, figs. 3-4, 6-9, and 12.
[75] Evans - Ratliff 2012, 219, no. 151A, B (with refs.).
[76] Harrison 1989, 171, 173-74, no. 4, pl. xlviii(b).
[77] Lightfoot 2012b, 383, no. 17, pls. 11/11-13 and fig. 11/8.
[78] See Goitein 1999, 211 and 214.
[79] Lightfoot 2009, 139; Lightfoot 2012a, 184; see also Coulton et al. 2012, vol. 1, 179.

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since it is one of very few sites in Anatolia that not only provides us with rich evidence of Byzantine occupation but also a wealth of material that can be dated on solid archaeological grounds because of the sealed 9th-century destruction layers. The challenge now is to prove or refute this evidence by investigating similar levels of the Early Middle Ages at other major Byzantine settlements in Anatolia.

Conflict of Interest

Within the scope of the study, there is no personal or financial conflict of interest between the authors.

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