

A RHODIAN POTTER'S DATE-STAMP

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In the process of excavating a Late Hellenistic pool¹ during the 1974 campaign at Tell Ḥesbân, workmen under the direction of Area Supervisor James A. Sauer unearthed, along with a number of datable ceramic sherds, mostly of the Late Hellenistic period (198-63 B.C.),² an amphora handle (H74 2095) impressed with a finely executed and remarkably well-preserved Rhodian potter's "date-stamp."³

This rectangular stamp bears the Greek formula ΕΙΗ ΑΡΙΣ-ΤΕΙΔΑ ΣΜΙΝΘΙΟΥ (preposition, eponym, and name of the month) which formula was probably intended to indicate the date of the license which permitted the potter involved to manufacture and sell his wares according to specific governmental regulations regarding capacity, etc.⁴ Consequently, this stamp is probably intended to be understood as indicating that the license which permitted the production and sale of the amphora on which it was impressed was secured, literally, "in the time of (or, in the year

¹ See James A. Sauer's unpublished locus description for Locus B.4:249; and "Area B and Square D.4," pp. 29-62 above.

² Especially sherds 11689-11691 and 11784-11793. Some of the sherds in Locus B.4:249 were from the Iron and Persian periods; none were from periods later than the Hellenistic. The Hellenistic sherds themselves represent, in the main, the Late Hellenistic period (198-63 B.C.). See also L. T. Geraty, "The Excavations at Tell Ḥesbân, 1974," *American Schools of Oriental Research Newsletter* No. 5 (1974): 5.

³ A photograph by Eugenia Nitowski appears in Pl. XV:B.

⁴ See Virginia Grace, "Stamped Amphora Handles Found in 1931-1932," *Hesperia* 3 (1934): 197-99; "Standard Pottery Containers of the Ancient Greek World," *Hesperia: Supplement* 8 (Commemorative Studies in Honor of Theodore Leslie Shear; Athens, 1949), pp. 177-78; and *Amphoras and the Ancient Wine Trade (Excavations of the Athenian Agora: Picture Book*, 6; Princeton, 1961), pp. 10-11.

of)⁵ Aristeidas,⁶ in the month Sminthios",⁷ or, more idiomatically,

⁵ The preposition ΕΠΙ followed by a "personal genitive" in formulae such as this one normally connotes "in the time of." See e.g., H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (revised by G. M. Messing; Cambridge, Mass., 1963), § 1689b. Since the Rhodian priests of Helios usually carried their priestly responsibilities for one year, we may rightly understand the preposition ΕΠΙ in this particular case to connote "in the year of" or "in the year in which X was priest of Helios." According to Grace ("Standard Pottery Containers," p. 177), "A name accompanied by *epi*, 'in the term of,' is the principal expression which has been recognized as a date." See also Grace, *Amphoras*, p. 10.

⁶ That the form ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΑ is to be understood as a genitive is clear. It is formed on the analogy of those proper names of the first declension masculine whose stems end in *a*, which, in the genitive singular, contracts *a*-(*i*)*o* to *a* in both Aeolic and Doric. See Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, §§ 211 and 214D, and W. W. Goodwin, *Greek Grammar* (revised by C. B. Gulick; Boston, 1958), §§ 193 and 196c. Compare the form ΛΕΟΝΤΙΔΑ in the formula ΕΠΙ ΛΕΟΝΤΙΔΑ ΑΡ[ΤΑ]ΜΙΤΙΟΥ ("in the time of Leontidas, in the month Artamitios") which occurs on a Rhodian amphora handle found in the Baths of Placcus in Gerasa (see C. B. Welles, "The Inscriptions," in *Gerasa: City of the Decapolis* [ed. C. H. Kraeling; New Haven, Conn., 1938], p. 460, item 244); and the form [ΑΡ]ΧΙΛΑΙΔΑ in the formula ΕΠΙ [ΑΡ]ΧΙΛΑΙΔΑ ΚΑΡΝΕΙΟΥ ("in the time of Archilaidas, in the month Karneios") which occurs on a Rhodian amphora handle found in Field I, Locus 279, during the 1957 excavations at Beth-zur (see O. R. Sellers *et al.*, *The 1957 Excavation at Beth-zur* [AASOR, 38; Cambridge, Mass., 1968], p. 81), and on the left handle of a Rhodian amphora (CMC 199) of the early 2d century B.C. housed (as of 1949) in the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia (see Grace, "Standard Pottery Containers," pp. 186-187); and the same form in the formula ΕΠΙ ΑΡΧΙΛΑΙΔΑ ΑΓΡΙΑΝΙΟΥ ("in the time of Archilaidas, in the month Agrianios") which occurs on a Rhodian amphora handle found in Field I, Locus 296, also during the 1957 excavations at Beth-zur (see Sellers *et al.*, *Beth-zur*, p. 81).

⁷ The names of the Rhodian months are ΑΓΡΙΑΝΙΟΣ, ΑΡΤΑΜΙΤΙΟΣ, ΒΑΔΡΟΜΙΟΣ, ΔΑΛΙΟΣ, ΔΙΟΣΘΥΟΣ, ΘΕΣΜΟΦΟΡΙΟΣ, ΘΕΤΔΑΙΣΙΟΣ, ΚΑΡΝΕΙΟΣ, ΠΑΝΑΜΟΣ, ΠΕΔΑΓΕΙΤΝΤΟΣ, ΣΜΙΝΘΙΟΣ, ΤΑΚΙΝΘΙΟΣ, and the intercalary month ΠΑΝΑΜΟΣ ΔΕΤΤΕΡΟΣ. See Grace, "Stamped Amphora Handles," p. 307.

The month Sminthios occurs on a stamped Rhodian amphora handle found during the 1908-1910 excavations at Samaria (see G. A. Reisner, *et al.*, *Harvard Excavations at Samaria 1908-1910* [Cambridge, Mass., 1924], I, p. 314); on another found in the Forum at Gerasa (see Welles, *Gerasa*, p. 460, item 245); and on yet another found recently (in Stratum IV [Hellenistic Period]) during archaeological excavations carried out by the Department of Antiquities of Jordan on the Citadel at Amman. The stamp of the latter reads, ΕΠΙ [ΑΡΧΙ] ΒΙΟΥ ΣΜΙΝΘΙΟΥ ("in the time of Archibios, in the month Sminthios"). See F. Zayadine, "Recent Excavations on the Citadel of Amman," *ADAJ* 18 (1973): 31. It also occurs on a stamped Rhodian amphora handle in the Benachi collection, Alexandria, dated to the late 2d century B.C. (See Grace, "The Eponyms Named on Rhodian Amphora Stamps," *Hesperia* 22 [1953]: 126, item 109).

"in the year in which Aristeidas served as priest of Helios,⁸ in the month Sminthios."

That this stamped handle belonged to an amphora that was produced on the island of Rhodes is highly probable. In the first place, as far as its ceramic *fabric* and *finish* are concerned, it consists of a fine pink ware⁹ finished with a smooth pink slip¹⁰ both of which are characteristic of the fabric and finish of the amphorae produced on the island of Rhodes;¹¹ in the second, as far as its *form* is concerned, it is contoured in that abrupt angular fashion (see Fig. 22) so distinctive of the stamped handles of the amphorae fabricated on the island of Rhodes;¹² in the third, as far as the *stamp* it bears is concerned, it is distinguished by both (a) its location (impressed upon the upper surface of the handle at a slight remove from its exterior angle)¹³ and (b) the formula (preposi-

⁸ Rhodian amphorae are regularly dated according to the annually changing priests of Helios. Aristeidas was one such priest. See Grace, "Standard Pottery Containers," p. 177; "Rhodian Jars in Florida," *Hesperia* 17 (1948): 144; and "Eponyms," p. 120.

Grace observes that "on Rhodian jars . . . the eponym is frequently qualified by the title 'priest.'" For example, compare the formula ΕΠ(Ι) ΙΕΡΕΩΣ Θ[Ε]ΡΣΑΝΔΡΟΥ ("in the time of Thersandros, priest [of Helios]") on a Rhodian amphora handle found in the Forum at Gerasa and dated to the 4th quarter of the 3d century B.C. This example is reported by Welles, *Gerasa*, p. 460, item 241.

For other examples, compare the formula ΕΠ(Ι) ΙΕΡΕΩΣ ΑΡΙΣΤΩΝΙΔ[Α] ("in the time of Aristonidas, priest [of Helios]") on a Rhodian amphora handle (SS 240 [E]) found in the Agora in Athens and dated to the end of the 3d century B.C.; the formula ΕΠ(Ι) ΙΕΡΕΩΣ ΞΕΝΟΦΑΝΤΟΥ ("in the time of Xenophantos, priest [of Helios]") on a Rhodian amphora handle (SS 258 [A-HD]) found also in the Agora in Athens and dated to the last quarter of the 3d or the 1st quarter of the 2d century B.C.; and the formula ΕΠ(Ι) ΙΕΡΕΩΣ ΕΥΠΟΛΕΜ[ΟΥ] ("in the time of Eupolemos, priest [of Helios]") on a Rhodian amphora handle in the Benachi collection, Alexandria, dated to the 1st century B.C. For these examples see Grace, "Stamped Amphora Handles," p. 225, and "Eponyms," p. 126, item 84.

⁹ *Munsell Soil Color Charts* (Baltimore, Md., 1971), hue 7.5YR 7/4. The readings were made in daylight under an overcast sky.

¹⁰ Hue 7.5YR 8/4.

¹¹ See Grace, "Stamped Amphora Handles," p. 203.

¹² See Grace, "Stamped Amphora Handles," pp. 203, 218-20.

¹³ See Grace, "Stamped Amphora Handles," pp. 201-206 and Pl. II.5. On Thasian amphorae, for example, the stamp occurs on the exterior curve of the handle.



Fig. 22. The angular profile of Rhodian Amphora Handle H74 2095 (actual size).

tion [ΕΗΙ], eponym [ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΑ], and name of the month [ΣΜΙΝΘΙΟΥ]) which it bears¹⁴ both of which are typical of the date-stamps of the amphorae manufactured on the island of Rhodes; and, finally, as far as the *eponym* (ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΑΣ) by which it is dated is concerned, it occurs again and again in the date-stamps of amphorae made on the island of Rhodes.¹⁵

And that this stamped handle belonged to an amphora that was made sometime during the latter part of the 3d or the early part of the 2d century B.C. is also highly probable. Firstly, the *form* of the handle (its rather abrupt angular profile) is typical of Rhodian amphora handles of that period;¹⁶ secondly, the *priest* whose name it bears and during whose term of office it purports to have been manufactured is most probably to be identified with that Aristeidas, priest of Helios, who fulfilled his term of priestly service sometime within the four decades between ca.220-180 B.C.¹⁷

¹⁴ See Grace, "Stamped Amphora Handles," p. 204.

¹⁵ See footnote 17 below.

¹⁶ See Grace, "Stamped Amphora Handles," pp. 203, 218, esp. 220. Grace notes, "Not earlier than the third quarter of the third century begins the angular type and the angle sharpens in the early second century." See also Grace, "Eponyms," pp. 119-20.

¹⁷ See Grace, "Stamped Amphora Handles," p. 204; "Timbres amphoriques trouvés a Délos," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 76 (1952): 528; "Eponyms," p. 122; and J. W. Crowfoot, "Potters' Stamps," in J. W. Crowfoot, *et al.*, *Samaria-Sebaste III: The Objects from Samaria* (London, 1957), p. 381. There was another Aristeidas who was priest of Helios on the island of Rhodes sometime during the last quarter of the 4th or the 1st quarter of the 3d century B.C.

D. G. Lyon, "Excavations in 1908," in Reisner, *et al.*, *Samaria 1908-1910*, 1:18, lists two Rhodian amphora handles discovered at Samaria during the 1908 excavations which bear the name ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΑΣ in the formula, preposition [ΕΗΙ], eponym [ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΑ], and name of the month [ΑΡΤΑΜΙΤΙΟΥ (1); and Σ[ΜΙ]Ν[Θ]ΙΟΥ (1)]; and Reisner, "Archaeological Material (1909-1910)," in Reisner, *et al.*, *Samaria 1908-1910*, 1:314, lists nine Rhodian amphora handles found at Samaria during the 1909-1910 excavations which bear the name ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΑΣ in the formula, preposition [ΕΗΙ], eponym [ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΑ], and name of the month [ΑΡΓΙΑΝΙΟΥ (4); ΑΡΤΑΜΙΤΙΟΥ (2); ΒΑΔΡΟΜΙΟΥ (1); ΠΑΝΑΜΟΥ (1); and ΣΜΙΝΘΙΟΥ (1)]. Crowfoot, "Potters' Stamps," p. 381, lists seven Rhodian amphora handles unearthed during the 1931-1933 and 1935 excavations at Samaria which bear the name ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΑΣ. Presumably all of these occur in the regular formula: preposition, eponym, name of the month. Unfortunately, it is not possible to tell from Crow-

This dating harmonizes well with that reached on the basis of the stratigraphic evidence from Tell Ḥesbân (and indeed contributes to its confirmation) for that evidence strongly infers that the stamped amphora handle under discussion was discarded at Esbus (the contemporary Greek name of Tell Ḥesbân)¹⁸ sometime during the Late Hellenistic period.¹⁹ As already indicated, it was discovered along with ceramic sherds, the latest of which are identified as representing the Late Hellenistic period, in a gray-black clay layer (Locus B.4:249) which filled a Late Hellenistic pool, a layer that was covered first by a Late Hellenistic soil layer (Locus B.4:229) and then by an Early Roman soil layer (Locus B.4:228), both of which were sealed by "several thin Early Roman plaster and red soil layers" (Loci B.4:227 and 226).²⁰

We may therefore conclude with some confidence that a potter (unfortunately we do not know his name)²¹ produced on the

foot's list of eponyms whether or not the eponym ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΑΣ was accompanied by the name of a month and if so, which month. We cannot be sure as to which Aristeidas these amphora handles found at Samaria belong. Crowfoot states, "As to the dating of our handles I have to confess that we did not pay the proper attention to their shape and technique; like our predecessors we contented ourselves with recording the find spots and the contents of the stamp. . . . And the stratification at Samaria, as we shall see, has not given us any close indications." P. M. Fraser and G. E. Bean (*The Rhodian Peraea and Islands* [Oxford, 1953], p. 6) make reference to an inscription (no. 8) which is dated in the term of Aristeidas.

¹⁸ See W. Vyhmeister, "The History of Heshbon from Literary Sources," *AUSS* 6 (1968): 164-65, esp. n.42. The Greek name continues to be used in the Roman period. It occurs again on coins minted at Esbus in the time of Elagabalus (A.D. 218-222). See A. Terian, "Coins from the 1973 and 1974 Excavations at Heshbon," pp. 133-142 in this number.

¹⁹ Cf. Geraty, "Tell Ḥesbân, 1974," p. 5.

²⁰ See Sauer's unpublished Area B locus list and "Area B and Square D.4," pp. 29-62 above.

²¹ Rhodian amphorae regularly had two handles both of which were customarily stamped—the one bearing the name of the priest during whose term of office the potter's license to manufacture such items was obtained and dated, and the other bearing the name of the potter. See Grace, "Stamped Amphora Handles," p. 204; "Rhodian Jars in Florida," p. 144; "Eponyms," p. 117, n.3; and Crowfoot, "Potters' Stamps," p. 379. Grace remarks, "A comparatively large number of complete Rhodian amphorae is preserved. This is particularly fortunate, because the information is regularly divided between the two handles, one giving, for instance, the fabricant's name, the

island of Rhodes an amphora (the handle of which was found at Tell Hēsban on August 5, 1974) sometime between the years ca. 220-180 B.C., that he dated it in the customary fashion ("in the year in which Aristeidas served as priest of Helios, in the month Sminthios"), and then sold it to a wine merchant who, in turn, having filled it with Rhodian wine,²² shipped it to Esbus where its dated handle eventually became part of a soil fill laid down in the Late Hellenistic period (198-63 B.C.).²³

other that of the eponym or official naming the year, who in this case is the priest of Helios, plus that of the month, a feature peculiar to Rhodian seals" ("Stamped Amphora Handles," p. 204); and, with respect to the fabricant, "One is not, however, to imagine a craftsman, like the men who signed Attic vases, but a person responsible for an output of standard products, perhaps a pottery operator appointed as a commissioner, as we know bankers sometimes served as coin magistrates" ("Standard Pottery Containers," p. 177).

²² Though the pottery of Rhodes was fine, its wine was poor. See Grace, "Stamped Amphora Handles," p. 199; and *Amphoras*, p. 12. I assume that the amphora under consideration was employed to transport and store wine. However, it may have been used for other purposes. While most Rhodian amphorae were employed for the transport and storage of wine, many were used for the transport and storage of oil, preserved fish, pitch, water, and the like. See Grace, *Amphoras*, p. 1.

²³ The Rhodian amphora handle described above is to be housed in the Museum of the Department of Antiquities, Amman, Jordan.