



Samuel Grady Gillett | Veronica Iacomi

The LCP Handbook to the Late Roman Amphora (LRA1)

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The Levantine Ceramics Project Handbooks

Number 1

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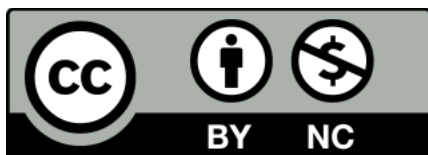
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Series Editor's Foreword

The **Levantine Ceramics Project (LCP)** is an open-access resource for the study of Levantine pottery—and its societies, cultures, and economies—from the Neolithic era (ca. 5500 BCE) until today. The LCP's mission is to provide present and future archaeologists and ceramicists with a dynamic digital platform that will enable us to help build the future of ceramic research—together.

With this handbook, we take a new step forward in the collaborative, open-ended experiment that is the LCP. LCP Handbooks are meant to be user-friendly, value-added resources, a combination up-to-date overview and helpful identification guide to vessel types and wares commonly found on archaeological sites throughout the wider Levant. For the first volume in this series, there could be no subject more suitable than the Late Roman Amphora 1 (LRA1). For four hundred years, this single vessel type served as both agent and symbol of the deeply entwined, far-flung economic network of the later Roman and Byzantine worlds. Versions are known to have been produced in over 20 workshops, spread over four countries; the jars themselves have been found at over 500 sites ranging from Scotland to India. These precise aspects—long duration, geographic range, tremendous ubiquity—mean that when an archaeologist finds an LRA1 on site, it is simultaneously familiar and challenging. It's easy to identify an LRA1 but hard to answer the many questions it raises. Who made it, and when? What did it hold? By what route and for what reason did it arrive? The jar itself is something like the tip of an iceberg: a recognizable object with much additional meaning behind it.

The LRA1 is exceptional but not unique. The “tip of the iceberg” analogy pertains to many ceramic forms, wares, and styles that archaeologists regularly find. So, along with summary overviews and identification guides, these handbooks will also provide the kind of fundamental information that helps scholars and students raise, frame, and begin to address bigger questions. Pottery has always been an essential wayfinding tool to the vast and varied landscape of the past. We see this series as a kind of navigation system, a twenty-first-century resource aimed at that past landscape.

The engine propelling this twenty-first-century resource is the LCP itself. The contents are built from data on the LCP's stable digital platform: every site, kiln/workshop, vessel, petrographic sample, and ceramic ware/ware family/style cited in this handbook also appears there. Each book will be available in hard copy as well as in a free, open-access download. Readers of the online version can toggle directly between the handbook and the LCP and there find additions, for example, new photographs, petrographic data, an LRA1 from a new site or different country, and so on. LCP contributors can set notifications to keep abreast of new information pertaining to LRA1s specifically (or late Roman/Byzantine amphoras or pottery in general). In this regard, we hope that LCP Handbooks offer a new model for print/digital partnership.

When I launched the LCP in 2011, the focus was archaeological ceramics from the Levant—the modern countries of Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Jordan, and Egypt—from the Neolithic era (ca. 5500 BCE) through the present day. I hoped that a tool that made it easier to find information and connect with other archaeologists would spark new ideas, spur collaborations, answer old questions and inspire new ones. Yet I could not have imagined that the site itself would become a seedbed for an even newer mode of communication—or that its geographic range would become so expansive. That this has come to pass is thanks to many, many people, beginning with the 744 contributors (as of this writing) who have submitted data to the LCP.

There is not enough space for the long roll call of people whose energy, efforts, and time have gotten us to this juncture. Collaboration takes multitudes! Here I give special shout-outs to the LCP's earliest adopters, people whose work and belief helped turn a big idea into reality: Austin Alexander, Peter Stone, Matthew Spigelman, Güzin Eren, Brigitte Keslinke, Sabine Ladstätter, Débora Sandhaus, Patrick Degryse, and Anastasia Shapiro. Thank you! Everlasting gratitude to Sharon Herbert, whose support has made the difference time and again, and who remains a deep well of sage advice. Deepest, dazzled thanks to Raoul Alwani, the engineering mastermind who makes it all work.

Finally, there is the indispensable team behind this volume. Tremendous thanks to Matt Adams and Bill Caraher, whose willingness to jump on this train has been instrumental to its forward momentum. The last bow must go to Grady Gillett and Veronica Iacomì, for their dedication, creative energies, and wide-angle vision. Thank you all.

Andrea M. Berlin

Founder and Editor, The Levantine Ceramics Project

The Levantine Ceramics Project



www.levantineceramics.org

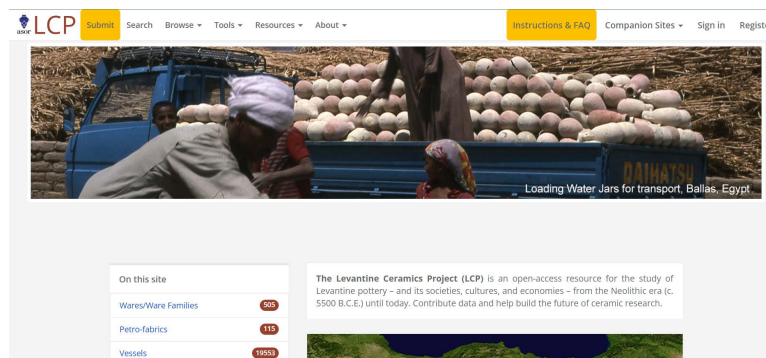
An invitation to Become an LCP Contributor!

The LCP is not just a resource designed *for* researchers as they reference the data and tools freely available on our platform. It was built and is constantly growing thanks to the contributions *by* scholars around the world. Every individual who uploads their original data to the LCP is a verified author of this digital publication and always receives full credit for all information submitted. We invite you to join us and hundreds of LCP contributors as we collaborate to make Levantine pottery easily available and thus propel dialogue and facilitate research.

There are three key things to know about the LCP: (1) contributors can edit their entries at any time; (2) all entries have a stable URL to ensure long-term accessibility; and (3) all entries are digital publications linked to their specific authors/contributors. For example:

Jackson, Mark; Meyza, Henryk; Late Roman D-E/Cypriot red slip (LRD-E/CRSW), *The Levantine Ceramics Project*, <https://www.levantineceramics.org/wares/160-late-roman-d-e-cypriot-red-slip-lrd-e-crsw>.

Registering as a contributor on the LCP takes less than one minute. Go to the homepage at <https://www.levantineceramics.org/>. Click the “register” button in the top right corner.



The default settings register you as an LCP **user**. Click the checkbox at the bottom of the registration page to *also* register yourself as a contributor. This will create a profile page where you, along with all LCP users and visitors can see all of the data you upload.

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Welcome to The Levantine Ceramics Project

Thank you for registering as an LCP user. As a user, you are able to submit data to the LCP. To complete your registration, click the Register button below.

If you plan to submit data that is the result of your own research, you should check the box that says "Yes, make me a contributor." Contributors are people who have studied, analyzed, and/or published data. On the LCP, information may be attributed to one or more contributors.

If you plan to submit data that another scholar has published, you should register that person's name as a contributor. To register somebody else as a contributor, you may either go to the Submit page and click on Add a contributor, or you may go to the [Contributor](#) page and click on "Add a new contributor."

Register

Create an account to begin.

☐ Check this box if you also want to register as an LCP contributor. Checking this box will create a profile page for you.

Contributing ceramic data to the LCP is intuitive. Select your category from the main submission page, and then follow the step-by-step prompts to submit your information. LCP editors and interns are available to help answer any questions or concerns you might have.



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Note that every entry on the LCP is a digital publication. Click the 'Get Citation' button at the top of any display page for a stable URL that names the contributor(s), page name, and date accessed.



Add a ware/ware family
305 wares currently



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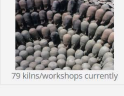
Add an individual vessel
1953 vessels currently



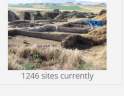
Add illustrations of individual vessels
4424 illustrations currently



Add an individual petrographic sample
6088 petrographic sample(s) currently



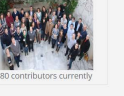
Add a kiln/workshop
79 kilns/workshops currently



Add a site
1246 sites currently



Add bibliographic information
2092 sources currently



Add a contributor
680 contributors currently



Bulk Upload: VESSELS
Import a spreadsheet of vessel entries

We invite you to register on the LCP, contribute data, and help build the future of ceramic research!

Preface

There are few other vessels of late antiquity, or indeed any historical period, so ubiquitous and representative of their own age as the Late Roman Amphora 1 (LRA1). Mass-produced and widely distributed, these amphoras are found in assemblages all over the Mediterranean and beyond from the 4th–8th centuries, and occasionally even later.¹ LRA1s are well attested in the main centers of Mediterranean trade (Athens, Alexandria, Antioch, Beirut, Caesarea Maritima, Carthage, Rome and Ostia, Marseille, etc.), in tiny “opportunistic harbors” frequented by local merchants, and inland agricultural villages alike. This range has made LRA1s an important proxy for analyzing social and economic connectivity. In the two decades following John Riley’s creation of the Late Roman amphora typology (1979), scholarly attention began moving toward the identification of production centers deduced by ceramic “wasters” (Peacock 1986; Empereur and Picon 1989), until actual kilns and production facilities started to be excavated (e.g., Paphos in Cyprus, see Demesticha and Michaelides 2001; Elaiussa-Sebaste in Cilicia, see Burragato et al. 2007, Borgia and Iacomì 2010). In recent years, petrographic analyses on specimens from a wide variety of assemblages, including Cyprus, Cilicia, Spain, and Israel (e.g., Leidwanger 2014; Diamanti 2010; Gillett 2023) have added new information to the picture. Eminent scholars have produced important synthetic studies (Opait; Demesticha), and a glance at the index of the LRCW annual publications shows the intensity and variety of LRA1 research.

Despite such a rich body of literature, we have still only scratched the surface of this complex and long-lived exchange network. We believe that by synthesizing the existing literature and supporting it with robust open-sourced ceramic data, we can create a state-of-the-art assessment of the “LRA1 question” that will grow more precise as more data are contributed. That is the mission behind this handbook. Stemming from data published on the Levantine Ceramic Project (LCP), and conforming to the LCP’s guiding principles (i.e., building the future of collaborative and open-access ceramic research), this handbook is your handy and compact—but at the same time comprehensive and updated—field guide to the comprehensive and updated-field guide to the LRA1.

After a short introduction (ch. 1), we discuss the typological features, together with a reasoned presentation of the different typological subdivisions, and present a simplified solution (ch. 2). A detailed catalog of all known production centers follows (ch. 3), including data on the workshops’ associated petrography, typology, and inscriptions (when available). Separate chapters are dedicated, respectively, to petrographic studies on various LRA1 assemblages (ch. 4) and extra data on inscriptions (*tituli picti*, stamps, and graffiti; ch. 5). After a concise presentation of the current scholarly discussions on contents (ch. 6), we present an overview of LRA1 distribution patterns through the synchronic and diachronic mapping of relevant assemblages (ch. 7). The closing chapter (8) is the synopsis of additional studies where the LRA1 question is analyzed from the wider perspective of the socioeconomic and political implications, alongside some final considerations stemming from the present book. Lastly, references to other ceramic databases are provided to encourage scholars to contribute to these practical digital resources (ch. 9). Are you a field archaeologist, researcher, or student who has come across LRA1s in your work? If so, we cordially invite you to join us and contribute data to this innovative digital pub-

1. All dates in the handbook are to be considered CE unless specified otherwise.

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lication via the LCP, and become a part of the future of ceramic research! Please see above for a quick guide on how to become a contributor.

Veronica Iacomi

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