

## AIM OF THE WORKSHOP

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Before we turn to our first speaker – the author of our book of focus – let me say a few words of background. First, as many of you know, for the past decade I have been trying to make typological and chronological sense of the mass of amphora fragments from the Athenian Agora. Here, and at many other sites on both land and underwater, I have been thus immersed in interpreting pottery in the archaeological record. I have often depended on three comforting assumptions – assumptions based, I hasten to add, on various rationales: 1) if one works from older deposits towards more recent deposits, one can recognize the relatively few residual pieces and the remainder should be dated relatively close to the date of deposition; 2) all things being equal (and this itself was an assumption), the mix of different types in multiple contemporary deposits gave a decent overview of shipping patterns to Athens at that point in time; 3) short term re-use on a local level was relatively common, but reshipment was rare. Sure, I could rattle off some contradictory evidence, but I did not dwell on such things. Indeed, some of the contradictory evidence was provided in the conference on residual pottery published in 1998, but even there my main point I took away was that amphoras were not necessarily any older than other types of pottery; so, contrary to some critics, one could not assume that amphoras in particular were older than other classes of pottery.

I don't remember now what drew me to Ted's book... I do remember hastily ordering it from Cambridge as soon as I saw the title and contents. I remember being amazed that my library already owned a copy; I brought this copy with me to Athens last August. Every morning over my bowl of Alpha-Vita generic muselix, yoghurt, and fruit I would sit on the balcony of the Canadian Institute and read. It is easy, I suppose, to fall into despair, to watch one's interpretive world crumble – perhaps it was with that morbid sense that I found Ted's book so ... dare I say... gripping. At the same time as the examples chipped away at the comforting assumptions I just listed, it seemed that with sufficient thought the book also provided a way out, methodological salvation of sorts. By focusing our attention on new aspects of the finds for documentation, new ways of looking at old patterns, and new ways of structuring our thoughts, Ted has done what often

seems impossible for so many others: pointing out problems with existing paradigms without sinking into a pessimistic quagmire rendering future progress impossible.

The primary rule, if there is one, for this seminar is to maintain this momentum, to heed Ted's cautions while emulating his efforts to look for patterns and to offer suggestions for moving forward.

Another quite obvious point about the book, a point easily judged from its cover, is that it focuses on Roman pottery. The book's appropriately strong emphasis on cultural behavior and the formation of the archaeological record means that we cannot take the message of the cover too lightly. Cultural behaviors in the Greek world – chronologically, geographically, and culturally diverse as that world was – might well affect the archaeological record in different ways. Hence, John Lund and I agreed that a seminar addressing Ted's book from a Greek perspective – a book review seminar of sorts – would provide a very useful service to the broader community of archaeologists concerned with ceramics in the Greek archaeological record.

In planning this seminar and developing lists of potential speakers, our initial thought was to deal with each of Ted's chapters in turn. Despite the obvious formal appeal of this scheme, it turned out not to be a fair reflection of how participants were likely to apply their areas of expertise to topics raised in the book. As a result, we loosened our schematic approach and tried to let the structure of the seminar take shape on its own. In the end, I think the program reflects our basic goal of bringing new data and new perspectives to bear on *Roman Pottery in the Archaeological Record*.