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From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*

Angeliki E. Laiou, Editor-in-Chief

Scholarly Committee

Charalambos Bouras

Cécile Morrisson

Nicolas Oikonomides[†]

Constantine Pitsakis

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Anemourion

James Russell

The city of Anemourion, located on the east flank of Cape Anamur, the southernmost promontory of Asia Minor, has been the subject of investigation by Canadian archaeologists since 1965. Because of the dearth of written sources, most of what we know about the city and its history is based on the results of these excavations. The picture that emerges is consistent with cities in other parts of southern Asia Minor during the Roman and early Byzantine periods.¹ From the first to the middle of the third century, Anemourion shared in the general prosperity of the eastern Roman Empire and, like many other cities of the region, issued its own copper coinage. To this period belong the most striking ruins still visible on the site, especially the extensive necropolis outside the walls and a cluster of public buildings at the southern end of the site. The most conspicuous of these is a spacious baths-palaestra complex more than 100 m in length dating from the mid-third century. Though never quite finished, it represents the most ambitious expression of the prosperity the city enjoyed during the second and early third century. This prosperity came to a decisive end with the city's capture by the Persian forces of the Sassanid Shapur I around 260.² This was followed by a long period of unrest throughout the region, culminating in a succession of Isaurian rebellions during the fourth century. Anemourion was especially exposed, and for a time at the end of that century it was occupied by a military garrison responsible for renewing its defenses.³

The revival of the city's fortunes in the fifth century is evident in the building of at least four churches and two small baths (Fig. 1). Some of these buildings too have

¹ For summaries of the history and antiquities of the site on the basis of fieldwork, see J. Russell, "Anemurium: The Changing Face of a Roman City," *Archaeology* 33.5 (1980): 31–40; *The Mosaic Inscriptions of Anemurium*, *Ergänzungsbande zu den Tituli Asiae Minoris* 13 (= *Denk Wien* 190) (Vienna, 1987), 15–23. Interim reports of field work in progress have appeared regularly since 1966 in *Türk-ArkDerg* and in "Recent Archaeological Research in Turkey" in *AnatSt*. All of the objects discussed here are housed in the Anamur Museum.

² E. Honigmann and A. Maricq, *Recherches sur les Res Gestae divi Saporis* (1953), 2.21, pp. 14, 149, 153.

³ E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum, "Matronianus, Comes Isauriae," *Phoenix* 26 (1972): 183–86; C. P. Jones, "The Inscriptions from the Sea-Wall at Anemurium," *Phoenix* 26 (1972): 396–99; J. Russell, "The Military Garrison of Anemurium during the Reign of Arcadius," in *Atti del XI Congresso Internazionale di Epigrafia Greca e Latina, Settembre 1997* (Rome, 1999), 721–28.

been explored, revealing well-preserved mosaic floors, some of which were donated by private individuals whose names are recorded in inscribed panels.⁴ Anemourion, in common with other communities of the region, probably benefited from the favor that the Isaurian emperor Zeno I (474–491) bestowed on his native land, and the city seems to have prospered well into the following century. There is ample evidence for a sharp decline in the city's fortunes sometime before the end of the sixth century, however, probably accelerated by an earthquake that caused widespread damage around 580. The effects are evident in the collapse of the roofs of at least two of the churches and in the breakdown of the aqueduct system, which accounts for the construction of wells as an alternative source of water and the transformation of whatever baths were still functioning to other uses.⁵ The failure of the inhabitants to repair or rebuild structures affected by the earthquake, however, clearly reflects the city's impoverished state. This condition was perhaps exacerbated by a serious loss of population and by the increasingly turbulent conditions that attended the long Persian War (611–628) and the subsequent depredations of marauders that plagued the Anatolian coast in the aftermath of the Arab invasions of Cyprus in 649 and 653/654. The marked break in the series of coin finds that occurs around 660, especially when associated with evidence for the abandonment of the various seventh-century houses explored, indicates that human activity on the site during the last decades of the seventh century was much reduced and had probably ceased completely by the early eighth century.⁶

Compared to the flourishing city of the early Roman Empire or the Christian city of the fifth and early sixth centuries, the community of Anemourion in the final decades of its existence (ca. 580–660) was a sadly diminished shadow of its predecessors. It is an interesting irony, however, that the circumstances of its abandonment have made it possible to present a far more detailed account of the daily lives and occupations of the city's residents and the commerce and industry that they practiced in this final phase of its history than in any earlier phase. A great deal of the evidence comes from the vast baths-palaestra complex of the mid-third century, which had long ceased to fulfill its original function. Indeed, the process of dismantling the architectural decoration of the palaestra seems to have begun within less than a century of its construction. By the late sixth century the colonnaded porticoes of the palaestra had disappeared completely, its mosaic floor lay concealed beneath 25 cm of earth fill, and much of its open space was occupied by modest houses forming virtually a small village community. Especially noteworthy was a sequence of three houses standing more or less in line from west to east overlying the mosaic of the long dismantled north portico of the palaestra (Fig. 2). The most informative feature of these buildings was the well-stratified context of the many objects rejected or overlooked by the last occupants when

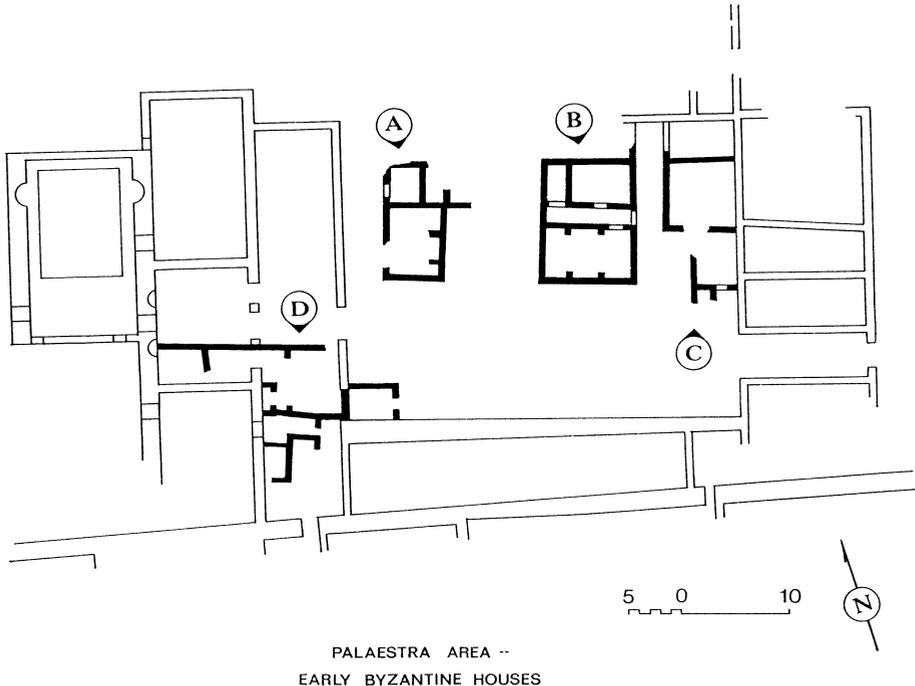
⁴ Russell, *Mosaic Inscriptions*, 61–69, 76–89.

⁵ For a detailed account of a well in the palaestra area, see C. Williams, "A Byzantine Well-Deposit from Anemurium (Rough Cilicia)," *AnatSt* 27 (1977): 175–90.

⁶ For a summary of coin finds at Anemourion for the years 641 to 705, see J. Russell, "Transformations in Early Byzantine Urban Life: The Contribution and Limitations of Archaeological Evidence," *The 17th International Byzantine Congress: Major Papers* (New York, 1986), 137–54, esp. 154 n. 37.



1. Anemourion, general plan of city (drawing by Tom Boyd)



2. Anemourion, plan of baths-palaestra complex with secondary domestic structures indicated A-D (drawing by Tom Boyd)



3. Anemourion, general view of heated chambers of large baths subsequently reused for industrial installations (photo: Hector Williams)



4. Anemourion, plan of small Byzantine baths adapted for commercial purposes in the city's latest phase (drawing by Tom Boyd)



5. Anemourion, seventh-century pottery kiln in the service area of the small Byzantine baths (photo: Hector Williams)

they abandoned their homes. Sealed beneath the accumulation of debris from fallen roofs and collapsed walls, these objects had remained lying on the floor undisturbed until the time of excavation. The clearing of these buildings has produced considerable quantities of pottery, glass, coins, and a heterogeneous collection of bric-a-brac. Even without counting innumerable copper and iron nails, links of chain, and other unidentified metal fragments, there is a catalogued inventory of more than five hundred individual items. These consist of broken fragments of tools, harness, furniture, and dress, or stray objects such as weights, seals, amulets, gaming pieces, and the like. Although insignificant at first sight, the cumulative total of the archaeological scraps sealed by the destruction debris of these late houses at Anemourion illuminates many aspects of the social, economic, and cultural life of their occupants.⁷

Of the occupations and trades practiced by the residents of the houses of the palaestra, fishing was probably the most widespread, to judge from the number of objects associated with that activity, such as bronze barbed fishing hooks of various sizes, lead weights for nets, and netting needles. Whereas the prevalence of fishing is hardly unexpected in a coastal community, it remains unclear whether this was a full-time activity assigned to certain members of the household, as is the custom with the villagers living near the site today, or a part-time or seasonal occupation combined with the practice of some other trade. In sharp contrast to fishing, evidence for agriculture is surprisingly sparse. Only two items clearly identifiable as farming tools have been found in domestic contexts, a curved iron blade, probably belonging to a billhook employed for chopping trees and hedges and a multipurpose iron pickax (*dolabrum*). The discovery of bronze bells with pierced suspension lugs in several houses might indicate the presence of livestock, but their diminutive size points rather to their use as *tintinnibula* for apotropaic purposes.⁸ Nevertheless, it is reasonable to suppose that some residents at least owned and worked land in the fertile alluvial plain that extends northeast of the city. The many fragments of basalt grain mills and at least one oil press found on the site clearly imply the ready availability of two major crops. Unfortunately, the intensive agriculture practiced in the region in recent decades has virtually obliterated all trace of rural settlement in the Plain of Anamur. Evidence of a once thriving olive industry in the chora of Anemourion, however, survives both in the remains of oil presses visible in the ruins of some of the early Byzantine villages situated on the higher ground that overlooks the plain and in the clumps of olive trees, now wild, standing in their vicinity.⁹

The same contexts already noted in Anemourion itself have also produced an inter-

⁷ For illustrations of many of the objects listed, see J. Russell, "Byzantine *Instrumenta Domestica* from Anemurium: The Significance of Context," in *City, Town, and Countryside in the Early Byzantine Era*, ed. R. L. Hohlfelder (Boulder-New York, 1982), 155–62, figs. 1–8.

⁸ These are discussed in J. Russell, "The Archaeological Context of Magic in the Early Byzantine Period," in *Byzantine Magic*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C., 1995).

⁹ Remains of circular stone basins and crushers have been noted, for example, at Ayvasıl (H. Basi-leios), Bonjuk Kalesi, and at the ancient settlement identified as Rygmanoı that underlies the medieval fortress of Mamuriye Kalesi. F. Hild and H. Hellenkemper, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, vol. 5, *Kilikien und Isaurien* (Vienna, 1990), 205, 216–17, 393.

esting variety of general purpose tools, perhaps in some cases forming part of a carpenter's kit. They include iron awls, cold chisels, knife blades, and an iron adze. More closely identifiable with specific trades, on the other hand, are a leaded bronze stonemason's plumb bob, tailor's thimbles, the heavy needle of a leatherworker or sailmaker, and the bronze balance arm and pan of a jeweler's miniature scales. A diminutive leaded bronze hammerhead may conceivably also have been part of a jeweler's equipment. That there were goldworkers operating in the community seems to be confirmed by the discovery in a late grave constructed on the floor of one of the city's churches of a small collection of gold appliqué ornaments in repoussé and openwork designs that exhibit characteristics of local workmanship.¹⁰ Female occupations may also be identified among the small objects from the palaestra houses. Spinning was clearly the most common activity, as is clear from the number of spindle whorls in various shapes and materials and spinning crochets, but the occasional appearance of loom weights indicates that weaving was also practiced. It is also evident from the discovery of lead weights in varying denominations and fragments of apparatus belonging to steelyard scales that retail activity of some form was taking place.¹¹ There is nothing to indicate the nature of the goods being traded, but the appearance of a number of lead seals bearing official monograms suggests that some of the commodities on sale may have been shipped in containers from distant places.

Unlike the predominantly domestic economy found in the residential quarter that had developed in the former palaestra and its environs was the industrial character of activities conducted within the walls of some of the former public buildings of the city. A low circular walled enclosure of coarse construction built against the front row of seats in the cavea of the odeon-bouleuterion, for example, contained a considerable accumulation of ash. This may have been part of a blacksmith's establishment that must have extended into the west wing of the cryptoporticus ambulatory that supported the cavea, for several iron tools were found there in fill overlying the mosaic floor. The large baths that dominated the west end of the palaestra, however, produced the most striking evidence of an industrial quarter during the last phase of the city's existence (Fig. 3). The building, long ago stripped of the marble revetment and moldings that once adorned its walls, must have presented a gaunt appearance. Even the raised hypocaust floors of the heated rooms had been dismantled to accommodate the industrial operations now conducted there. Occupying the apse of the easternmost of the three heated rooms in the south wing of the baths (Room G), for example, stand the remains of a large limekiln. This is only one of a number of limekilns still standing in various parts of the city, including two situated beyond the southeast corner of the palaestra. There is no evidence to date when these limekilns were in operation, but from the partly burned architectural and even the occasional sculptured fragments found in or near the kilns that have been cleared, there can be no doubt that the methodical spolia-

¹⁰ For description and illustrations, see J. Russell, "Excavations at Anemurium, 1982," *Classical Views* 27 (1983): 179, pls. 13–14.

¹¹ The most striking example is a lead counterpoise weight encased in bronze in the shape of a bust of Athena. C. W. J. Eliot, "A Bronze Counterpoise of Athena," *Hesperia* 45 (1976): 163–70.

tion of the city's public buildings provided a steady supply of limestone to keep them busy. There is in fact some indication that the inhabitants were still engaged in this practice in the late sixth or early seventh century in a pile of marble and limestone fragments found in one of the city's churches that had been left in ruins after the earthquake of ca. 580. Consisting for the most part of fragments belonging to the bema screen, this carefully assembled material was perhaps destined for one of the limekilns, but had somehow escaped the attention of those responsible for transporting it there. Alternatively, of course, the pile of architectural fragments may have been intended for reuse as spolia in some building project.

The manufacture of pottery seems to have been Anemourion's principal industry through much of its history. Claybeds situated beyond the city's northern limits seem to have provided the main source of supply. Here an extensive potters' quarter developed, the remains of which have survived the intensive agriculture of recent decades in the form of an extensive mound approximately 60 m² strewn with kiln brick and supports, wasters, and vast quantities of sherds, for the most part belonging to amphoras. With a much reduced population confined to a restricted area of the earlier city, the potters of Anemourion in the last years of the city's existence clearly found it more convenient to locate their kilns nearer their own homes in the center of the site. Thus kilns were constructed in convenient recesses and corners of the long disused public buildings. This development is especially marked in the large baths within which at least three pottery kilns were established. One of these was certainly employed in making lamps, for three terra-cotta lamp molds were found in the course of excavating the fill of the baths. An excellent sample of the wares produced by this pottery came to light in a hoard of nearly seven hundred unused lamps in a variety of forms, for the most part moldmade, the most distinctive being one of ovoid shape with its convex upper surface decorated with a stylized face. They were found carefully stacked in the long disused hypocaust system of another of the city's public baths. The fact that one of the molds discovered in the vicinity of one of the kilns situated in the large baths was designed to create lamps in the form of the stylized face found in the hoard confirms the association. No datable material was found with the lamps, but the dangerous conditions that prevailed after 650 when the Isaurian coast was exposed to Arab raids from Cyprus would have provided ample motivation for a lamp merchant fearful for his livelihood to conceal a portion of his stock from marauders. In more peaceful times he had been engaged in shipping his lamps to Cyprus, for examples of another form of his wares have been recorded at Salamis and in the Kornos Cave.¹²

Further evidence of Anemourion's economy in the last decades of its existence has also come to light in another of the city's baths that was subsequently adapted for commercial use. This structure, erected probably toward the end of the fifth century about 200 m north of the palaestra, functioned as a bath for no more than a century. It had certainly gone out of use before the end of the sixth century, probably at the time of the earthquake of ca. 580, which must have caused serious and irreversible

¹² H. Williams and P. Taylor, "A Byzantine Lamp Hoard from Anamur (Cilicia)," *AnatSt* 15 (1975): 77-84.

damage to the aqueduct that supplied it. Though modest in size and simple in design compared to its spacious predecessors, this establishment was handsomely appointed with walls sheathed in marble revetment and the entire floor of the *apodyterium* paved with an elaborate mosaic.¹³ The plan of the baths consisted of a straightforward succession of barrel-vaulted chambers, with the frigidarium at the south, followed by the heated tepidarium and caldarium respectively, the floor in each case supported by the piers of a hypocaust system (Fig. 4). During the last half century or so of the city's existence, the building seems to have been adapted for domestic use, with the heated rooms of the former baths largely reserved for the owner's commercial enterprises, especially pottery. The evidence for this lies in the considerable quantity of material recovered from the excavation of the confused layers of debris that had accumulated when the raised floors of the heated rooms had collapsed from the impact of heavy masses of masonry falling from the vaulted roofs. Especially noteworthy was the large amount of pottery found immediately above or mingled with the layer of furnace ash covering the flagstones that formed the base of the hypocaust system. Some of this material consisted of broken tile from the original raised floor, but most of it took the form of fragments of a wide variety of household wares.

These vessels were evidently standing in stacks on the floor up to the time when the raised floor collapsed, carrying everything that it supported into the hollow space beneath. Although a number of vessels associated with everyday domestic living such as cooking pots and assorted lids were found, most of the pottery belonged to various categories of the fine red slip wares in circulation in the eastern Mediterranean during the first half of the seventh century. Cypriot Red Slip accounted for the majority of vessels found, but African Red Slip was also represented in considerable quantity, as well as a number of imitation wares, perhaps of local manufacture.¹⁴ The abundance and variety of the quality wares found in these rooms far exceeds what one would expect to find in an ordinary domestic setting. Moreover, the large number of copper coins found in the same rooms, a total of sixty-two, almost all of them dated to the period 629–658, is without parallel from other domestic contexts in Anemourion of the same period. Also remarkable for a normal household is the quantity of objects associated with commerce, eight lead weights and one lead seal. Thus it is reasonable to conclude that the occupants of these premises were engaged in the sale of pottery and probably other commodities. It is equally clear, however, from the heterogeneous character of the other small objects found in similar contexts throughout the baths, such as lamps, fishhooks, spindle whorls, rings, a buckle, bone die and gaming counters, as well as the terra-cotta kitchen utensils mentioned above, that the family that owned the business also lived amidst their stock.

Explorations at the rear of the building in the enclosed space that once housed the service area of the baths brought to light a pottery kiln of considerable size (2.30 × 2.10 m) at the southern extremity (Fig. 5). It is a brick-lined stone structure consisting

¹³ For a description of the baths, see J. Russell, "Excavations at Anemurium," *TürkArkDerg* 22.2 (1975): 125–26; Russell, *Mosaic Inscriptions*, 39–49.

¹⁴ C. Williams, *Anemurium: The Roman and Early Byzantine Pottery* (Toronto, 1989), 108, 113.

of a lower furnace chamber roofed by three parallel brick ribs. These would have supported the perforated grill floor of an upper chamber no longer existing where the objects were placed for firing. Unfortunately the scanty finds of pottery from the kiln and its immediate environs do not suffice to identify the wares that it produced with any certainty, though most sherds seem to belong to amphoras.

From the northern end of the same service enclosure in the vicinity of the baths' *praefurnium* there came to light the most significant evidence for a local pottery industry in the last years of Anemourion's life. At some point after the baths had fallen out of use, this part of the service area had become a rubbish dump. Conspicuous among the finds was a remarkably homogeneous deposit of broken pottery consisting of many hundreds of fragments. With the exception of a handful of sherds of the latest seventh-century African and Cypriot Red Slip types found at Anemourion, the deposit was entirely composed of a previously unknown ware of inferior fabric and poorly executed. Because of the distinctive modeling of its rims in a scalloped or undulating design, it has been dubbed Piecrust Rim ware. It was manufactured in a surprising range of forms that includes not only plates and bowls for the table in shapes imitating the latest African and Cypriot Red Slip types, but also vessels intended for everyday kitchen use, such as large basins, casseroles with lids, and a colanderlike dish. The uniqueness of this ware makes it virtually certain that it was manufactured locally. Especially striking about this deposit is how much its composition differs from that of every other seventh-century pottery assemblage on the site, including that found in the heated rooms of the same baths. In every other context the dominant wares are African and Cypriot Red Slip or obvious imitations produced from inferior clays. It is easy to explain the relative abundance of these copies to supply a less affluent market unable to afford the genuine articles.

The unique deposit of Piecrust Rim wares, covering the entire gamut of table and kitchen wares, on the other hand, requires a very different set of circumstances to account for its existence. It is tempting to see this deposit as originating from a local pottery industry that was obliged to produce not only the traditional range of coarse vessels, especially amphoras, as in the past, but the entire range of pottery required by the community. The obvious context for such a necessity would have occurred in the 650s, when the community was prey to Arab raids from Cyprus. It is easy to envisage coastal traders with their familiar cargoes of imported traditional fine wares giving the Isaurian coast a wide berth during these perilous times. The community of Anemourion, with a long pottery tradition in its past, could surely have proved capable, at least in the short term, of responding to the emergency from its own resources. How better to explain the local Piecrust Rim ware in its many forms than as a temporary solution until normal trading practices might resume? As the archaeological record makes very clear, however, this expectation turned out to be in vain.¹⁵

¹⁵ I am much indebted to my colleague Caroline Williams for elucidating the significance of this and other forms of pottery evidence at Anemourion. Williams, *Roman and Early Byzantine Pottery*, 53–57, 108, 114, 116–18.

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