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Rogues and Renegadoes: A Ceramic Cargo from a Barbary Coast Shipwreck (Site T3D). First Half of the 18th Century

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Abstract: Site T3D is the wreck of a small ship discovered by Odyssey Marine Exploration at a depth of 835 metres, midway between Morocco and Spain. The ship was a coastal tartane dated around the first half of the 18th century. When lost, this small coaster was seemingly tramping passed the Kingdom of Morocco selling pottery. The sample of 157 ceramic wares examined share close profiles with pottery excavated in the *Place des Martyrs* in Algiers and produced there as a recent study shows.

Keywords: Shipwreck ; Algiers pottery workshop ; pottery trade ; Turkish Regency

Resumen: El yacimiento T3D son los restos de un pequeño barco descubierto por Odyssey Marine Exploration a 835 metros de profundidad, a medio camino entre Marruecos y España. El barco era una tartana costera datada hacia la primera mitad del siglo XVIII. Cuando se hundió, esta pequeña embarcación de cabotaje pasaba aparentemente por el Reino de Marruecos vendiendo cerámica. La muestra de 157 piezas de cerámica examinada comparte perfiles cercanos con la cerámica excavada en la *Place des Martyrs* en Argel y fue probablemente producida allí, como muestra un estudio reciente.

Palabras clave: Naufragio; Taller de cerámica de Argel; Comercio de cerámica; Regencia Turca

This article is dedicated to a shipment of pottery from a recovered wreck, midway between Morocco and Spain, in the westernmost Mediterranean Sea. The ship, discovered over ten years ago by Odyssey Marine Exploration at a depth of 835 metres, is a coastal tartane, around 14 metres in length (Kingsley, 2010). The tartane is the best known of the sailing merchant ships used in the western Mediterranean basin during Modern times (Botcazou, 2020, vol. II: 235). It is very common along the French, Sardinian, Corsican, Italian and Spanish coasts, as well as in North Africa (Fig. 1 A). The tartane is between 15 and 20 m long and its tonnage during the 18th century varies between 28 and 180 measurement tons. It has only one deck that covers the entire length of the ship, except for the hold area, which is accessible by means of a hatch located in front of the main mast. Ten men operated it. The reasons for the sinking of this ship are unknown: a storm or a corsair attack? We know from the Algerian register of maritime catches that ceramics, more or less valuable,

were part of the booty of the Barbary corsairs (Devoulx, 1872: 14 n° 6, 15 n° 15, 35 n° 144; De Grammont, 1890: 170). Then is it possible to imagine that this tartane was chased by rogues and renegadoes which usually armed large ships as barks or bricks, generally from 10 to 20 cannons and sometimes vessels which carry up to 50 cannons. Because of the great depth, the wreck was investigated with robots directed from the surface (Fig. 1 B). Hull remains appear immediately below the sediments (Fig. 1 C, D). It seems that the cannon and anchors as well as stones were carried, at the bottom of the hold, as ballast. For its size, the ship was heavily armed with four 3-pounder Danish iron cannons and multiple muskets. Ten wrought-iron swivel guns were stowed midships. Cannon are poor indices of chronology and these swivel guns seem to be old stock, so particularly useless for dating. A few evidences support the chronological frame. The tartane was well equipped with European-style material culture, including an early form of spyglass and two side-flattened glass onion

bottles of English tradition dated between 1720 and 1760 (Fig. 1 E). Ottoman tobacco pipes and well-known Kütahya coffee cups confirm a dating in 18th century (Fig. 1 F-G). However, a thick wall bottle, square in shape, with a rather short and wide neck, made in Holland and dating from the end of the 17th century-first half of the 18th century, allows us to propose a dating in the first half of the 18th century¹ (Fig. 1 H). The other items found are: cannon ball, lead shots, rifle guard, rifle butt or wooden handle tools, sounding lead, sieve, comb, dividers and cork stopper. When lost, this small coaster seemingly carried pottery, the principal cargo, and possibly decomposed organic goods. On the site, the team have documented the presence of a wide variety of pottery for everyday use directly overlying the hull's wooden strakes (Fig. 1 I). At least, 157 ceramics were counted, based on surface visibility. Only a sample of them were recovered. Technically, we do not know the total cargo size. However, because the pottery is directly overlying the hull's wooden strakes, there is probably no substantial cargo still buried.

We need to look at the entire volume of the pottery in association with the homogeneity of the assemblage and its location in the tartane all together to distinguish what is the ship's equipment from the goods for trade. As only a part of the pottery was collected, it is therefore difficult. However, the plates stacked inside each other and the large number of certain types, that have no use on a ship, are clear evidence of a commercial transport.

The wreck assemblage dating to the first half of the 18th century seems to have been made in the workshops of Algiers. Indeed, most of the ceramics of the ship share close similarities with pottery excavated in *place des Martyrs* in Algiers. Preceding the digging of the subway station on the extension of the line towards Bāb al-Wād, the excavation of the *place des Martyrs* led by the *Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives* (France) and the *Centre national de recherche en archéologie* (Algeria) took place in the area of the great souk of the Turkish Regency between 1518 and 1830. In these well-preserved structures, a great deal of pottery locally made and imported was unearthed (François, 2021).

The archaeological exploration of this site has revealed the existence of ceramic produc-

tion as shown by the presence of tripod stilts and over fired fragments. The existence of production centers in Algiers, during the Turkish Regency, is also confirmed by written sources (François, 2021: 37-42). However, the exact place of production remains unknown; it could be in an area closed to the souk. The Algerian production is mainly of light-coloured limestone fabric, consisting of 70% of the entire ceramic assemblage. The surface is often lightened by the adding of salt, which has the advantage of producing light backgrounds after firing. These vessels are undecorated except a small part of them that are covered with a lead-glaze. The remaining 30%, is made with a red fireclay. It consists mainly of lead-glazed cooking pots. While most of the pottery from the excavation is wheel-made, some of them are handmade, essentially cooking vessels. If the handmade pottery was very popular in Algiers during the period of the Berber and Arab dynasties between the 10th and 13th century, it is much rarer in the Ottoman period (Parent, Djellid et Chalah, 2018: 313-317). In the wreck, the variety of functional forms is large and comprises vessels used for preparing and serving food and beverage, for storing and lighting. These ceramics are identical to the objects discovered in the *place des Martyrs* excavation and often much better preserved. However, some types have not been identifying in Algiers, but it is useful to remember that the excavation unearthed the remains of the great souk in which domestic pottery did not necessarily find its place.

The ceramics from the wreck are arranged here in comparison with those provided by the excavations in Algiers. Indeed, the pottery types discussed here are for the most part types that will had been published in the catalogue of pottery from the *place des Martyrs* excavation (François, 2021).

Ottoman tobacco pipes and Kütahya coffee cups, in limited numbers, are possibly indicative of the crew's personal possessions, items acquired *en route* by the members of the crew, or bought in Algiers where they were marketed as the souk excavation showed (Fig. 1 F, G). A second group of pottery can be considered as part of the ship's equipment for food preparation – on the tartane, we cooked on the deck. Braziers, called *kanoun*, are handmade from a coarse sandy fabric containing many inclusions and mica (Fig. 2 A, B; Fig. 5 A). They are very deep pots with a truncated cone-shaped body and flat base in which embers were placed.

1 See a similar bottle in the wreck of "La Lune" in 1664. I thank Laurence Serra, underwater archaeologist and glass specialist, for this information.

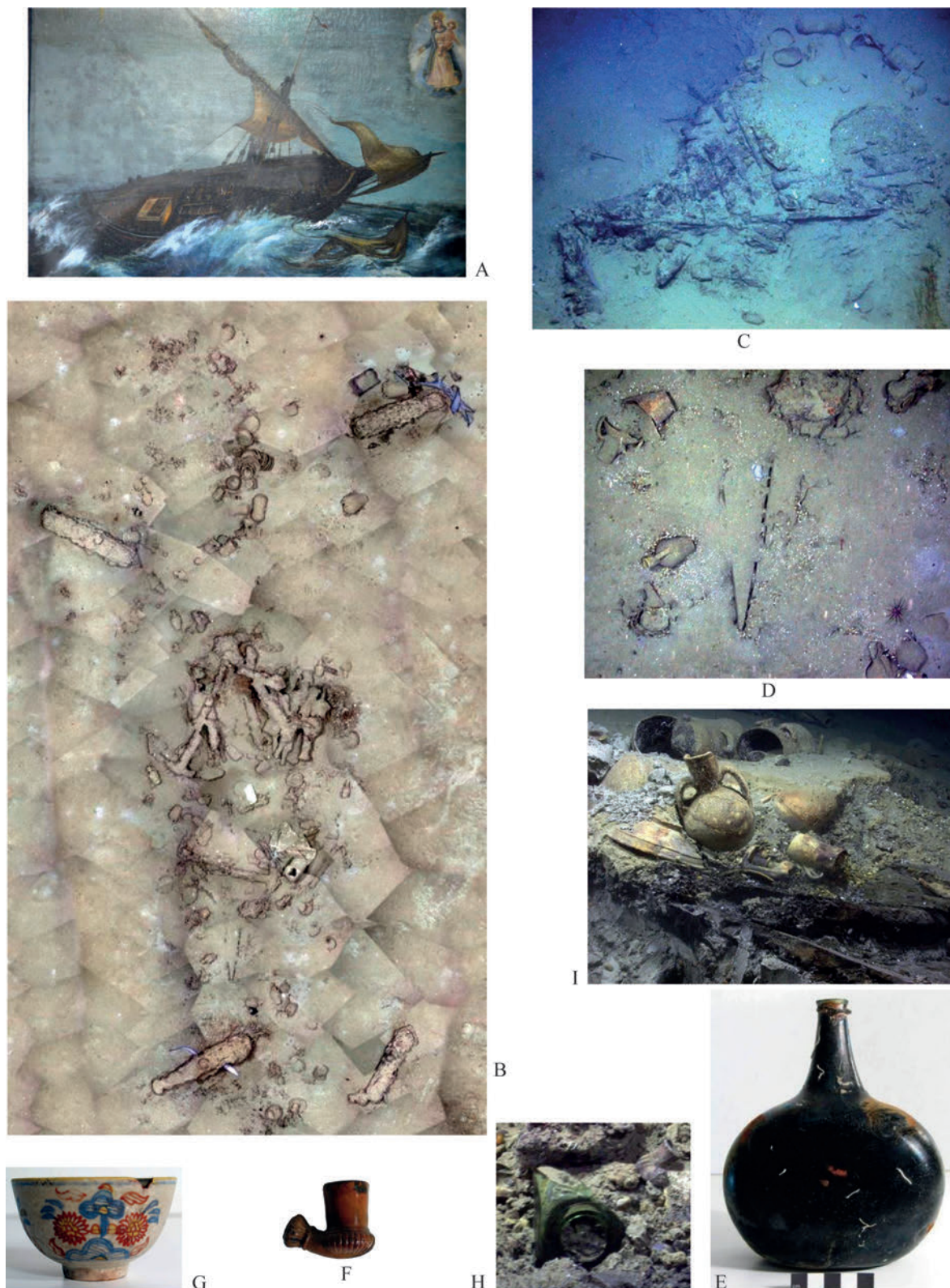


Figure 1. Tartane in the storm (ex-voto, St Agnel church, Rogliano, Corsica, Botcazou, 2020) (A); Photomosaic of site T3D (B); V-shaped termination of the bow to the west (C); detail of the hull and sternpost to the east (D); side-flattened glass onion wine bottle of English Tradition, c. 1720-1760 (E); ottoman tobacco pipes and Kütahya coffee cup (F, G); thick wall bottle, square in shape, from Holland end of the 17th century-first half of the 18th century (H); pottery directly overlying the hull's wooden strakes (I). (© Seascope Artifact Exhibits Inc.)



Figure 2. Handmade braziers/*Kanoun* from the shipwreck (A), from the *Place des Martyrs* (B); glazed cooking pots from the shipwreck (C), from the *Place des Martyrs* (D, E); couscous glazed cooking pots from the shipwreck (F), from the *Place des Martyrs* (G).

Three tapered pebble supports are fixed on the lip and at the top of the body on the interior. They vary in size from 17 to 27 cm diameter (Fig. 2 B). Wheel-made cooking pots can be fitted on *kanoun*. They are made from a sandy red fabric containing many red and white inclusions. They share a globular form and their thick everted rim is well adapted to receive a lid. The cooking pot has a transparent glaze on the interior extending to mid-body to the exterior that gives a brown appearance. Bands of small flowers, hatches and palms are impressed on the exterior (Fig. 2 C, D, E). This type of cooking pots, most likely produced in Algiers during the 18th century, was commonly used in the city. Finally, the upper part of a couscous cooking pot, wheel-made in a pink, dense and heavy limestone fabric, rather fine with quartz and mica inclusions, was fitted onto this set. The base of this deep cooking pot is pierced with many holes allowing steam to pass through to cook the seed. Two or four handles are attached to the lip and mid-body. Glaze is applied on both the exterior and the interior (Fig. 2 F, G). According to travellers, the Berbers who came to Algiers at the beginning of the 19th century, cooked in the street. They placed a cooking pot on three stones, under which they made a fire with small pieces of wood; they put in this pot a little mutton fat or bad oil, tomatoes, onions, long peppers, green corn, several kinds of aromatic herbs, and finally meat cut into small pieces. The pot was covered with a dish with holes in the bottom like a skimmer, and in which there was as much couscous as could fit. Once everything was in place and the fire was always well maintained, the couscous was cooked by the steam of the mixture placed in the lower pot; when it was well cooked, the whole thing was poured into a large dish. When the meal was over, they passed each other a jug of water, from which they drank and washed their moustaches (Rozet, 1933: 16-17). Braziers and cooking pots may have been used by the crew to cook their meals otherwise that set indicate North-African cooking traditions. It would then have been marketed for people sharing similar food-preparation tradition. Note that two large copper cooking cauldrons were also found in the wreck. Water jugs made from a white or pink colour limestone fabric are common. The two most frequent shapes are first the jugs with a predominant tubular spout on the vessel's shoulder opposite the handle and connected to the neck with a sort of bridge of clay which supports the spout and avoids cracks during manufacture and use. They

came in two sizes (Fig. 3 A, B, C). Second, a slightly different jug type has a short spout (Fig. 3 D, E). Jugs, maybe oil jugs, have a pinched rim, a globular body, one handle and an everted low ring base (Fig. 3 F). In the wreck, the exterior is lead-glazed while, in the souk, it seems that the jug, badly preserved, is covered with a tin-glaze with traces of green drips (François, 2021: 47, 129, pl. 24 9). The archaeological exploration of this wreck has revealed the existence of types that were not found in the souk excavation: medium-sized jars with a baluster-shaped body, long neck and two handles (Fig. 1 I ; Fig. 3 G, H); several very small glazed *albarelli*; a glazed mug very small in size (Fig. 1 I; Fig. 3 I, J, K). We found also two-handled juglets, between 15 and 24 cm high, wheel-made in a pinkish fabric, rather fine with quartz inclusions. The lead glaze, yellow or green, is applied into the interior and extending on the exterior with sometime a brown and green painted decoration (Fig. 4 A, B). High-standing oil lamps with a pinched rim have and a handle at the base are present on both sites. They are entirely covered with a green or honey yellow lead glaze applied on a light colour calcareous fabric (Fig. 4 C, D, E, F, G). In the excavations of the great souk of Algiers, there is very little locally made glazed table wares whereas they are abundant in the wreck where dishes and bowls were stacked. The local glazed table wares, made from a light colour limestone fabric, include mainly bowls and dishes with truncated or carinated profile, sharing a low ring base and varying in size from medium to large forms. They are decorated in monochrome glaze applied over a whitish slip on the interior. The green glaze being most frequent. Slip and glaze occasionally extending to mi-body on the exterior. All of them have, in the inner, a relief central medallion or two incised concentric circles (Fig. 1 I; Fig. 4 H, I, J, K, L, M; Fig. 5 F). Large jars both in the wreck and in Algiers share the same form but differ in size and type of decoration (Fig. 5 A, B, C, D, E). They are made from a pink fabric, rather fine, with white inclusions and quartz. In the wreck, four handled storage jars with a baluster-shaped body and a short neck are smaller in size. We can observe on the first one, a vent hole on the top of the body while, on the other one, brown vertical straight lines are painted on the clay body. Splashes of green glaze occur on different part of the body. In the souk, the jars with an egg-shaped or baluster-shaped body, have four or even five handles. Many of them are decorated with dark red/brown painted designs on the



Figure 3. Water jugs/*ibrik* from the shipwreck (A, B, E), from the *Place des Martyrs* (C, D); oil jugs (F) jars (G, H) and pharmaceutical glazed pots and mug from the shipwreck (I, J, K).



Figure 4. Small glazed pitchers from the shipwreck (A), from the *Place des Martyrs* (B); oil lamps from the shipwreck (C), from the *Place des Martyrs* (D, E, F, G); lead glazed table wares from the shipwreck (H, I, J, K), from the *Place des Martyrs* (L, M).

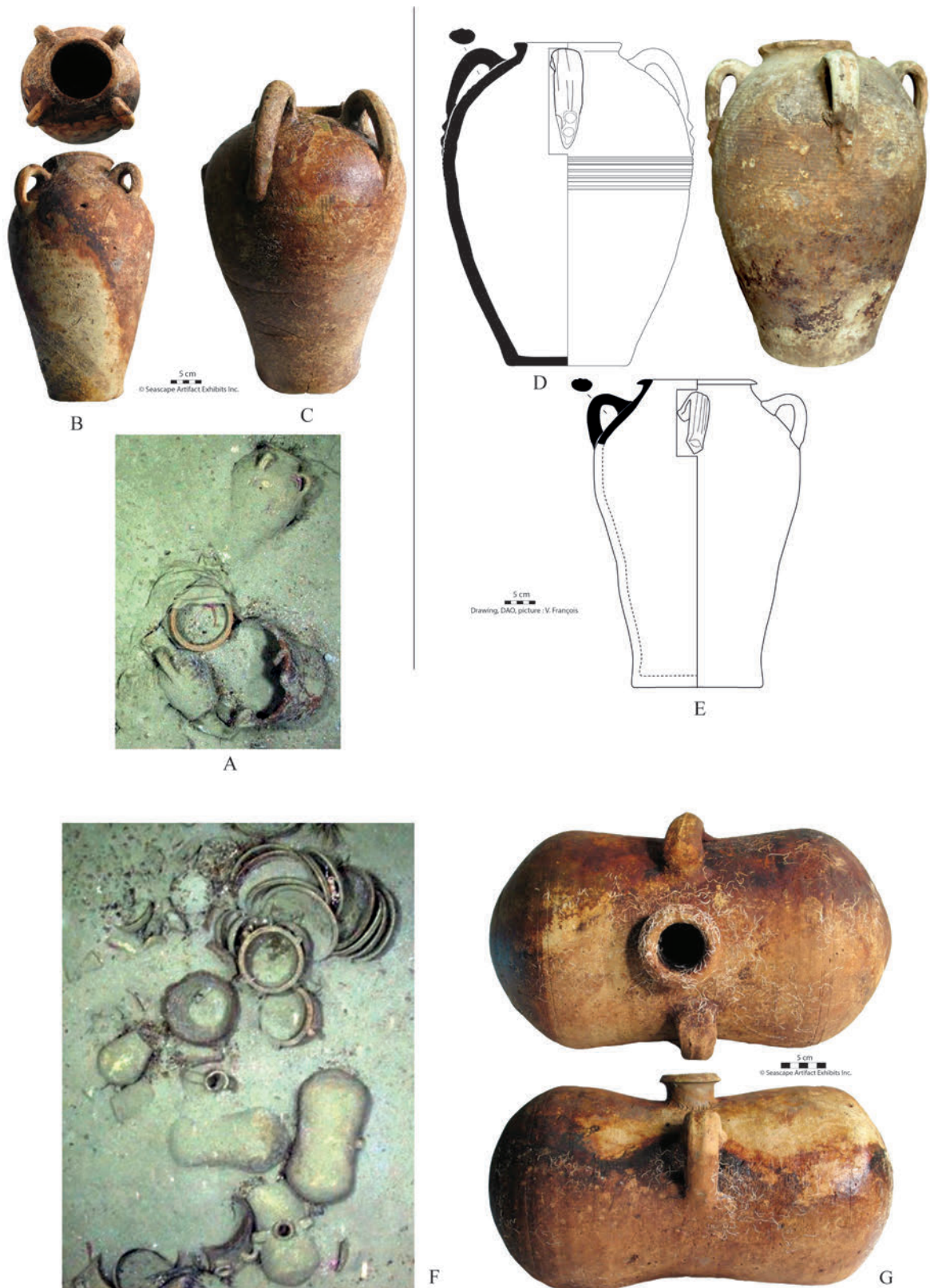


Figure 5. Four-handled jars from the shipwreck (A, B, C), from the *Place des Martyrs* (D, E) ; Churns/*Chekoua* (F, G).

body and even on the rim. Usually, according to written sources, that type of jars was especially using to put the oil or the meat that they want to preserve but the vent hole indicates that it also contained wine. Finally, a last type was found in the wreck excavation: eight churns (Fig. 1 I; Fig. 5 F, G). Captain Jacquot, in his article on Berber utensils and indigenous butters, perfectly described these large tubular containers and their use (Jacquot, 1818: p. 64). He reported that in Algiers, the townspeople formerly used a cylindrical pot, rounded at both ends, open in the middle of its upper surface to allow the introduction of the milk and the exit of the butter, and provided with two handles where the ropes necessary for the swinging were fixed. The oscillating movement provokes coagulation and the whey, carefully collected, was used to make a highly appreciated refreshing drink, the *laban*.

The comparison of both assemblages has led to several preliminary observations regarding production, distribution and consumption. What V. François recently shown, according to the joint study of archaeological data and written sources, is that pottery workshops were in activity in Algiers during the Turkish Regency, particularly in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The potters there made a wide range of products for daily use - for storage, cooking, service, hygiene and lighting. Based on the finds from the *place des Martyrs* excavations, we cannot determine the full diversity of this production, but these underwater archaeological finds complete the typology of the products of Algiers. Concerning the 18th century, in the souk, 88% of the pottery is of local origin while imported wares account for 12%. The rustic character of the Algerian pottery contrasts with the faïence, porcelain and other glazed wares from Provence, Liguria and Tuscany, Catalonia and the region of Valencia, Tunisia, Saxony, Holland, Turkey, Syria and China (François, 2021: 55-71). Various types of sources such as reports made by travellers and captives, letters written by the French consuls and their staff and the French traders, commercial sources from Marseille and records of captured vessels, inform us, more or less directly, on the conditions of the international pottery trade (François, 2021: 83-89). So, we know a little more about Algiers' supply of pottery and architectural ceramics coming from all over the Mediterranean mainly by way of Marseille, a reception port that also plays a redistributive and exporting role. The everyday objects, found in the wreck, also enable us to reposition the city

within the framework of Mediterranean trade but a smaller scale. This shipwreck is the first site that can be associated with the corsair town of Algiers and its cargo of ceramics is the first testimony of the maritime trade of the Algerian production during the 18th century, at least in the western Mediterranean Sea. It is therefore too early to draw conclusions regarding the trade patterns and our knowledge is insufficient at present to determine the places where the tartane was constructed, and registered, and the place where it ship was fitted out for a voyage. Through the materials that have been recovered, we can reasonably assume that the economic place of origin of this merchant ship is Algiers. However, we do not know the exact destination of it. In conclusion, our study of these underwater archaeological discoveries associated with those made in Algiers, sheds light on a recently identified production and a part of its distribution. It provides a better understanding of the pottery trade in this region during the Modern time and renew our knowledge of the Turkish Regency and its relations with neighboring states.

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