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## SAGALASSOS ROMAN RELIEF WARES FROM SELEUCEIA SIDERA IN PISIDIA (TURKEY)

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### *Introduction*

In the summer of 1987, a team of archaeologists discovered a potters' quarter on the slopes to the east of Sagalassos, the metropolis of ancient Pisidia.<sup>1</sup> This site is located at 7 km north of the Ađlasun town (on the Antalya-Isparta Highway) and 37 km south-east of the city Burdur in Southern Turkey (Fig. 89). An excavation under the direction of M. Waelkens (Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium) continued the investigations there since 1990.<sup>2</sup> Sagalassos was founded in the Hellenistic period, but it became an influential city only in the Roman period; it was destroyed during the early Byzantine era as a result of Arabian attacks and consecutive earthquakes. Up to present, excavators of Sagalassos have published the most extensive evidence for their ceramics of the Roman period.<sup>3</sup> Now, we have the information that Sagalassos was a flourishing regional centre in the Roman period and played a critical role in the eastern Mediterranean pottery trade. In its pottery workshops, a complete range of coarse and red slip wares were produced: tiles and bricks, terracotta figurines, wheel- and mould-made oil lamps, cooking vessels, mortaria, amphorae, dolia, a series of red slip ware and relief wares (Poblome 1995, 177). According to J. Poblome, Sagalassos had already been producing pottery in the Hellenistic period; but at the end of the first century BC the craftsmen intensified their efforts and started mass producing a wide variety of ceramic products. The results of the excavations at potters' quarter clearly show that the production of Sagalassos tableware lasted into the first half of the seventh century AD, shortly after the town of Sagalassos was abandoned (Poblome 1996, 86). These wares were intensively traded in Asia Minor and could also be identified in a series of sites in the rest of Eastern Mediterranean, Italy and North Africa (Poblome 1996, 75-77). Among others, an important centre of trade was a small Pisidian city, Seleuceia Sidera, which is about 40 km north-east to Sagalassos. This site lies exactly 16 km north-east of Isparta at Asar Tepe, which was excavated in 1993 by O. Bingöl (University of Ankara; Fig. 89). During the late nineteenth century the site was located by the German geographer G. Hirschfeld (1879, 312-314). Later it was visited and briefly described by several travellers, but detailed investigation of the remains began only in 1993 by a Turkish archaeologists team. The results of this excavation appeared in one report by Bingöl (1994).

Seleuceia was founded by Antiochus I of Seleucia in the 3rd century BC as a colony in order to guard the northern frontier of Pisidia and the famous 'Syria-Asia Minor Road', which comes from Ephesus and extends to Tarsus (Bracke 1993, 21, n. 54). The slight evidence provided by the surface finds from the site may confirm that the first settlement was in the Hellenistic period. During the Early Roman period, the name of Seleuceia Sidera was changed to Claudioseleuceia (Lafli 1999, 59). This city remained influential until the 8th century AD. During the 1993 field season, Bingöl excavated in seven different areas: first, the southern terrace (and the round building), second, the southern terrace, eastern gate, eastern terrace, necropolis, cistern and the theatre. These sondages generated a considerable amount of ceramic material. All sherds, with the exception of those discovered in the necropolis, were found in unstratified contexts and belong to the following ceramic groups: fine ware, coarse ware, relief ware, oil lamps, terracottas, and unguentaria. Almost all the recognised red slip table ware found at Seleuceia Sidera was imported from Sagalassos. It occurs in large quantities and predominates in all of the periods. These groups are inclusive to give a comprehensive picture of the city life and provide historical evidence of this unknown site and part of Pisidia. One of the most important groups is formed by the Roman relief wares. The other pottery groups of Seleuceia Sidera have been studied by me (Lafli 1998b; 1999; 2000). In this paper I give a general presentation of Sagalassos relief ware production and trade.

### *Relief wares*

Publications on Roman relief wares in Asia Minor are rare. In 1988, U. Mandel was the first to publish a proper book on Anatolian Roman relief ware productions (Mandel 1988). She discerned three main production centres in Asia Minor: Pergamon, Knidos and 'Werkstattgruppe der Gladiatoren-Feldflaschen'. On the other hand a considerable amount of literature has appeared on Sagalassos red slip ware. The only not well-studied classes of this ware are the relief wares, which constitute in Seleuceia Sidera a small fraction of the total ceramic finds. In Seleuceia we have found a total of 136 relief ware sherds, which were collected primarily from the First Southern Terrace Trench. The three main forms of relief wares are the so-called round based pilgrim flasks or *ampullae*, a type of flattened

and cornered square flasks, which is actually a version of the *oinophoros*, and the relief bowls.

Over 90% of the total relief ware finds (some 130 sherds) of Seleuceia Sidera belong to the mould-made flasks of the Roman Period (Pl. 21c). These vessels were called 'pilgrim flasks', 'pilgrim bottles' or *ampullae*, and for their origins Egypt was considered. This form is known since beginning of the Hellenistic period in Egypt (Atik 1995, 178). A group of the earliest examples was identified by J.W. Hayes in the Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto), which was originally from Egypt (Hayes 1976, 37). In later times *ampullae* or 'small pilgrim flasks' were produced mostly in tear-shape, with two holes for a suspension cord. In several publications of the Late Roman and Byzantine sites of Asia Minor, this shape is common (Saraçhane, Sardis, Ephesus etc.). The characteristic features of this ware, which was found at Seleuceia Sidera and may be defined here as 'Sagalassos products of Roman flasks', are a reddish body and a red slip, rather similar to those of 'Sagalassos table ware' and other red slip Sagalassos products, with relatively thick walls and prominent wheel-marks on the interior, visible only on broken specimens. Some lamps and figurines, for instance, have a quite similar fabric. No distinctive larger inclusions are visible in the clay. The colour of the core is usually red (Munsell 2.5 YR 5/8). The slip varies from Munsell 7.5 YR 7/4 pink to 7.5 YR 7/6 reddish yellow and is mostly well preserved. The body of these flasks is wheel-made in two sections and was moulded, probably, after the wheel. They have a small globular-ovoid shape with a rounded bottom; the thin-rim, usually found broken off, is marked by a slight ridge. The concave neck was also made separately on the wheel, and later luted on. There have probably been two handles or one handle on the top. The strap-handles of the flasks, which were mostly found separately from the flasks, are standard jug-handles with grooves on the surface, attached between the round shoulder of the vessel and the lower part of the neck. Individual stamps on the sherds are not found. Only two flasks were found almost intact (Pl. 21c).

These flasks are more or less constant finds, especially in the round building of the first southern terrace. A few examples have been found elsewhere. The round building lies at the south side of the 'Second southern terrace', an habitation area at the southern part of the Late Roman city. In spite of its unpretentious architecture, a lively religious activity seems to have existed in this round building, as witnessed by the large quantity of objects found, like some terracotta figurines and large-sized red slip table wares. The stratigraphy of that building is unfortunately uncertain.

Very few examples of flattened and square jugs can

be identified as versions of the *oinophoros*. Their bottoms are usually plain, but three or four button-type bases can be distinguished. Their decoration mostly consists of Dionysiac themes. A series of wheel-made open vessels (bowls) has been recovered from the eastern terrace as well.

The main decorative elements of Sagalassos relief ware are Dionysiac thiasos members, Maenads, Satyrs, vines etcetera (Pl. 21d) and religious scenes with figures and floral or geometrical ornaments, e.g. medallions framed with rinceaux, triangles, vine scrolls, and bunches of grapes. These figures can be treated as two different classes: human and animal. Human figures consist of the god Men, with a Phrygian cap, standing frontally under an arcade, or with the moon in his hand (Pls. 21e-f), Dionysiac figures and religious persons. Most common animals are hares, fishes, birds and dogs. In general, they have a particular decoration, making the identification of a local style possible. Floral and geometrical ornaments were freely used in combination with human and animal figures. They are less carefully and frequently, and often less tastefully ornamented. The material from Pergamon and Knidos, not yet fully published, can be most valuable in providing an extensive repertory of fabrics, shapes and decorative motifs.

What these Sagalassos flasks with moulding decoration normally contained is not clear: present evidence from Seleuceia Sidera is that these vessels may well have functioned as religious vessels, used to contain sacred substances, since they were mostly found in religious buildings. I would suggest therefore, that the contents of these vessels may have served also religious purposes of Dionysos' cults. The occurrence of Maenads and vine may help the identification of their contents (wine or any other substances?). An analysis of the residues of contents in these vessels can yield some useful results.

Characteristically these sherds do not appear in Seleuceia Sidera before 4th century AD; they remain in use as late as the 6th century. The exact date of these examples in Seleuceia Sidera remains rather uncertain. Dates for these wares established in Sagalassos and Perge show that these vessels were produced between the 4th and 6th centuries (Atik 1995, 180). On the basis of the Sagalassos' chronology, the relief wares arrived in Seleuceia Sidera not before the 4th century AD. Those found in Seleuceia Sidera suggest that relief ware-makers at Sagalassos found a good market for their products throughout Pisidia. Since there are a few published relief ware examples of Sagalassos products, such as Sagalassos, Perge, Anemurium,<sup>4</sup> and from other excavations in Asia Minor, these classes are useful indications for the Sagalassos ceramic industry, but unfortunately they do not yield comparisons as to dating.

### Conclusion

Due to their decorations and characteristics of compositions, the examples from Seleuceia Sidera may indicate the local tradition of Sagalassos relief ware production, which differs somewhat from that of western Anatolian workshops (Knidos, Pergamon) and perhaps owing more to a local style of the interior of south-western Asia Minor. These examples are either just imitations of the western relief ware productions, such as *oinophoroi* workshop of Pergamon or Knidos, or they are products for religious functions produced in local workshops at Sagalassos. In that case they were capable of meeting religious (?) demands of the Pisidian cities, like Seleuceia Sidera. One cannot at present judge, since the functions of Sagalassos mould-made findings elsewhere remain unclear. The relief ware examples from Seleuceia Sidera offer a remarkable opportunity not only to broaden our understanding of Sagalassos pottery, but also to help establish a firm foundation for local relief ware production of Roman Asia Minor.

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### Notes

- 1 Mitchell/Waelkens 1988, 60; Mitchell/Owens/Waelkens 1989, 74-77.
- 2 For the results of recent excavations in 1994 and 1995: Waelkens et al. 1997.
- 3 For a list of bibliography on Sagalassos red slip ware: Poblome 1996, 98-103; Lafli 1998a.
- 4 Sagalassos relief ware from Sagalassos: Mitchell/Owens/Waelkens 1989, el. XVI-c; Waelkens/Owens/Hasendockx/Arikian 1992 pl. XXI a; Poblome 1996, Taf. 25.2. Ware from Perge: Atik 1995, 176-180; Abb. 75-76, 395-397, Taf. 16, 391, 393, 395-7. Material from Anemurium: Williams 1989, pl. 8.

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## AMPHORAS AND AEGEAN TRADE: STRUCTURE AND GOALS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

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To what extent, in future decades, will Classical Archaeology contribute to economic-historical debates? Traditionally, the field has illustrated text-based economic histories or supplied new 'texts' (graffiti, inscriptions, papyri, etc.). Nevertheless, the unique nature of the archaeological record - providing evidence with a more or less precise chronological and geographical context - remains under-exploited. Archaeological evidence from transport amphoras allows discussion of economic

issues that depend on such geographical and chronological variables. Amphoras have a long association with economic history, and recent studies show increasing interest in typologies, production sites, and statistical methods (Empereur/Garlan 1997). Given such research, such evidence can be applied to issues of Aegean economic history. Here, I survey three topics: 1) communicating economic information; 2) practices of local trade; and 3) arrangements for long-distance trade. This survey



a. Innenbild einer Schale, Athen, American School of Classical Studies, Agora Excavations, inv.no. P 32422 (Grabungsphoto)



b. Kännchen, Capua, Museo Campano (nach CVA Capua 2, III I Taf. 19,10)



c. Flask from 'Round Building', Seleuceia Sidera (photo author)



d. Flask sherd with Maenad, Seleuceia Sidera (photo author)



e. Flask sherd with Men, Seleuceia Sidera (photo author)



f. Flask sherd with Men in an arcade, Seleuceia Sidera (photo author)



g. Fourth-century dedication to Asklepios and Hygieia, Athens, American School of Classical Studies, Agora Excavations, inv.no. S 2505

