

NB – UNEDITED CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Tableware from Knidos: The local production during the 2nd and 1st century B.C.

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The tableware production in Knidos during the 2nd and early 1st cent. B.C. is well represented in a number of homogeneous pottery groups, each containing at least around 350 pieces of local fineware. Considering the dating range of each group, this material clearly represents two chronological phases: They either contain vessels produced between the late 3rd cent. B.C. and the 3. quarter of the 2nd cent. B.C. (phase 1) or they consist of material from the late 2nd and the early 1st cent. B.C. (phase 2).

Despite this chronological cut of unknown reason, that obviously took place around 125 B.C., the pottery in both phases gives evidence of an unbroken development of the local production.

This production was mostly concentrated on undecorated wheelmade vessels and was dominated by 4 shapes (knidian cup, bowl with rouletting, echinusbowl, plate with thickened lip). These constitute a kind of common standard dining set, that includes two (!) different drinking vessels. A series of other open and closed shapes, not produced in such large numbers but frequently attested in the pottery assemblages, completes the local repertory. The examination of this material concerning the chronological position, the development and the typological roots of each shape has brought to light a production of great diversity and complexity: The majority of the shapes were produced during the whole period in questions, some only in one phase for a rather short time; Some of the known shapes were invented by the knidian potters, others were developed in foreign workshops and assimilated to the local repertory (like i.e. the so called 'Palestinian bowl'). Many shapes were in use all over the Mediterranean, some were only distributed /produced in the region of the former Hexapolis.

Since it is not possible to discuss the complete repertory of the undecorated fineware in this presentation, the above mentioned aspects of the knidian production will be demonstrated by selected examples.

Taking the bowls with rouletting out of consideration, decorated tableware made up only a small part of the local production. Except lagynosware, all current methods of decoration are represented within the material: Westslope painting, moldmade ware, applied and stamped decoration. It will also be one aim of this paper, to give an impression of the knidian production in these categories, to summarize the characteristics of the local 'style' and to analyse foreign influences. Especially the situation of the moldmade bowls in Knidos raises a number of questions concerning their value, their social context and evidence as well as the conditions of production, that will be discussed.

Although the knidian fineware production during the middle and the late hellenistic period is continuous, the two phases show some striking tendencies concerning its general development: First the production of the 4 standard types mentioned above rises enormous in the late hellenistic phase 2. This goes along with a decline of what is generally defined as 'quality': walls become thicker, the coat becomes thinner, the inclusions become bigger, etc. Second the production of decorated fine ware is extremely retrograde in this later phase. The reasons for these changes are not easy to explore, since literary sources concerning the history and economy of the city in this period are missing; Nevertheless an explanation based on the ceramic evidence shall be offered.

A big problem is the development of the knidian production during the 1st cent. B.C., since pottery assemblages of the later 2nd and the 3rd quarter of the century are still not available. In the Augustan period then it seems that the hellenistic repertory was completely replaced by new shapes. Meanwhile, a detailed study of the material has shown, that hellenistic traditions are still present. First of all the technical treatment of the pottery has not really changed, the vessels are coated in the same way and colours as their late hellenistic predecessors. Second, the production is again dominated by 4 shapes, including the well known knidian cup – beside the lamps the most obvious survivor of the hellenistic repertory -, a small bowl, a plate, and again a second drinking vessel: the ,skyphos'. Most interesting is a look on one more survivor from the hellenistic repertory, a small jug called ,olpe': this shape has shown no appreciable development during the 2nd and early 1st cent. B.C. but now appears in a strongly changed design. This observation leads to the supposition, that also other shapes may have suffered an extreme transformation at the latest in the 3rd quarter of the 1st cent. B.C. The hypothetical reconstruction of such a shape transformation shall be demonstrated here by some selected examples (especially by shapes usually considered as ,sigillata-like').