

## NB – UNEDITED CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

### **Mouldmade relief bowls from Ephesus – the state of research**

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### ***Definition***

Since this is the first paper in this session on mouldmade bowls, a few introductory comments on “hemispherical mouldmade relief bowls” may be useful.

These bowls, formerly known as “Megarian bowls”, were the most widespread drinking vessels in Hellenistic times. The diagnostic features include: a hemispherical body, without handles or foot, and the use of a mould for production. The mould was wheel made and thick-walled. The inner surface was divided by grooves into several zones: bottom-medallion, wall and rim-borders. Then it was decorated with stamps showing ornamental, floral, vegetal or figural motifs. The resulting bowls from such moulds show their relief designs on the exterior surface. These bowls were glazed and fired.

They were used as drinking cups at symposia. In combination with the other relief-decorated forms like krateriskoi, amphorae or funnels they represent a complete drinking set.

But above all, the mouldmade relief bowl, its introduction, its development, its changes and its end are some of the most useful ceramic dating tools of the Hellenistic period. For its introduction Susan Rotroff proposed and recently reaffirmed a date around 220 B. C. The duration of production may have lasted until the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century B. C. in general, but this ending date may vary from one centre to each other. Despite a long history of research, important but unsolved issues remain in terms of the origins and manufacturing of mouldmade relief bowls.

### ***Introduction***

The material that serves as the focus for this paper from the Austrian excavations in Ephesus. The city of Ephesus was, since her foundation, an important centre on the Ionian coast of Asia Minor, and during the Hellenistic period she became more and more significant. Belonging first to the Seleucid (281-246 B. C.), to the Ptolemaic (246-196 B. C.) and then to the Pergamene (since 188 B. C.) kingdom, Ephesus at last became part of the Roman Empire as a metropolis of Asia, the new Roman province, which established in 129 B. C.

Excavations over the last 50 years have produced around 5.000 fragments of mouldmade bowls or even moulds. Many of the sherds are quite tiny, but some of the moulds and a few examples of the bowls are better preserved.

### ***Ephesian find spots***

Five major areas of excavation contribute the most important evidence for Ephesian mouldmade bowls (fig. X: Ephesus, map of the city).

1. The material excavated at the Magnesian Gate in the end of the 1970s and in the beginning of the 1980s includes not only more than 1000 fragments of bowls but also around 70 fragments of moulds. These moulds demonstrate a very high level of quality in manufacturing and they are, indeed, the most characteristic examples for the main production of Ephesian mouldmade bowls; they were produced in the so-called PAR-monogram-atelier, or simply PAR-workshop. (fig. X, mould).
2. The second context, a drainage filling at the South Gate of the Lower Agora (or better known as Tetragonos-Agora) was excavated around the same time and contains many quite well preserved bowls. Many of these appear to be earlier in date than the preceding examples of the Ephesian PAR-workshop (fig. X).
3. Third, filling 2 of a well in Terrace House 1, offered a complete set of table wares including some quite well preserved mouldmade bowls, which again were manufactured in the PAR-workshop (fig. X). This material was excavated in 1994.
4. Fourth, the excavations of the western Hellenistic stoai in the area of the Tetragonos Agora, mainly in the 1990s, revealed a valuable stratified sequence for Hellenistic and Early Roman pottery including mouldmade bowls (fig. X).
5. Finally, similar stratigraphical studies were undertaken for the material from layers in the Terrace House 2 which were excavated in the end of the 1990s and in the beginning of the new millennium (fig. X).
6. In addition to this basic material many further fragments from boxes in the depot, belonging to the excavations in the area of the so-called "Akropolis", Heroon, "Auditorium", "Lukasgrab" and in the Basilika complete the picture of Ephesian mouldmade bowls. Recently some supplementary stratigraphic studies were made for the material which was excavated in the Upper Agora or Staatsmarkt, concerning the Basilika, the Prytaneion, the Odeion and the so-called Rhodian Peristyle.

These complexes and contexts help to arrange the bulk of the material within a chronological framework, but in many cases it is very difficult to suggest more precise dates, or to give precise assignments to workshops.

#### *History of research in the field of Hellenistic pottery in Ephesus*

It seems worth mentioning to me that although the Austrians excavated interesting complexes of Hellenistic pottery in Ephesus quite early – in the 1960s, 70s and 80s – the first publications came out much later. The material from the Staatsmarkt was published by Veronika Mitsopoulos-Leon 1991, the material from the South Gate of the Tetragonos-Agora by Verena Gassner 1997 and the finds from the Magnesian Gate are studied currently. Prominent publications in the field of Hellenistic pottery and especially of mouldmade bowls like those from Alfred Laumonier to the Delian material, from Gérard Siebert to the workshops of the Peloponnese or from Susan Rotroff to the Athenian and imported mouldmade bowls from the Athenian Agora were already published 1977, 1978 and 1982.

A change in this policy and a new impetus for pottery research in Ephesus was brought on by Sabine Ladstätter. Research and activities for publication were intensified within the last 10 years and in 2002 even a project on the mouldmade bowls was started. Again, it took some time to finish, but the results are now here:

#### *Basic material, goals and results of the study*

From the 5.000 fragments of mouldmade bowls which were “unearthed” in the depots in Ephesus, a selection of less than 700 examples was made on the basis of the context, the stratigraphy, and the chronology, the common and special features of the decoration and the stamps, the combination and the size of the stamps, the profiles, the forms and the fabrics of the finds. Major goals of the current study have been to present the material which was found in the city of Ephesus (as concisely and as clearly as possible for a probable and hopeful \*S\* user of the forthcoming publication), to set up criteria for the definition of mouldmade bowls which were produced in “Ephesian” workshops, to facilitate the recognition of Ephesian products among the finds on other sites and to discuss the chronology in and outside of Ephesus. Until now no workshop for Hellenistic relief pottery was pinpointed in or around Ephesus although there are enough hints for the existence of such workshops.

#### *Moulds*

In order to define workshops we usually start with moulds and fragments which bear signatures. We currently possess 108 fragments of moulds in Ephesus.

As mentioned above, moulds were wheelmade and thick-walled, grooved and stamped. Most of them were excavated at the Magnesian Gate, belong to the PAR-workshop and are remarkably consistent in their decoration and fabric. Among the moulds for bowls, three types of profiles were identified (figs. XX). Type 1 and 2, the main types, have projecting horizontal rims, type 3 shows a smaller, slightly sloping rim. There is a correlation of type of rim with type of stamp (compare the Lesbian kyma on type 1 and the varying version on type 3). Additionally few variant profiles were grouped under type 4. The base is commonly a ringfoot, or sometimes simply flat – as very few preserved examples demonstrate. From an analysis of all known mould-fragments in Ephesus, we can distinguish 88 moulds for bowls, 7 moulds for small bowls, 7 moulds for big bowls, 3 fragments for krateriskoi(?), 2 others possibly rhyta or skyphoi (of imperial times?), and one thick fragment with a strikingly straight wall may have served for producing kalathoi. A parallel on Delos can support this interpretation.

Beside the moulds from the PAR-workshop there are moulds from further Ephesian workshops. For instance, one mould shows the signature of Menemachos (in the genitive-form), another one bears the letters NI. In comparison to the stamped signature Menemachou the letters N and I were scratched into the clay of the bottom of the mould (figs. XX).

### **Signatures**

Altogether there are 45 bowls and one krateriskos in the collection at Ephesus which bear signatures or traces of letters (figs. XX).

The following examples are represented: one PAR-monogram, one fragment with some preserved letters of the name of Athenaios, one fragment with the beginning of an ANTI....., 3 fragments with the signature of Gorgias, 3 of Menemachos, one Dionysios, one Melidon and above all, we have 16 fragments of bowls which show the signature of Philon. Additionally there are bottom-medallions with the letters A, AΔ, Z, I, Λ, N and NI.

Signatures of the Ephesian bowls generally appear in the bottom-medallion and they are generally scratched. The exceptions are the one bowl of Dionysiou – with his name within the wall-decoration – and the fragments with the stamped PAR-monogram and the signature of Menemachos.

Beside moulds and signatures which are quite valuable for defining workshops, the research of the last decades shows, that also the stamps of the rim, from time to time the small stamps for filling the decoration ground, and the stamps for the rosettes in the bottom-medallion of the bowls are of enormous significance. The latter are very reliable features for recognizing workshops and potters. Some examples will make it plain.

#### *Types of bottom rosettes*

A quite restricted range of bottom rosettes was used. Beside the smaller rosettes of the early Ephesian production (and the stamps of animals and names) – above all – two types (1 and 2) are mainly represented. Type 1 shows two different types of petals in one layer; this type has some subtypes (please compare a-e on the plate, the numbers of petals and also the arrangement can vary). In contrast to this type, type 2 always consists of only one petal type in two layers. Both types belong to the PAR-workshop (one mould found at the Magnesian Gate bears a type 1-rosette, another mould a type 2-rosette). Bottom rosettes of type 3 and 4 are not often represented in Ephesus, the same is true of type 5; but the last type may belong to workshops which are later in date as is suggested by the decoration on our bowls and contextual evidence from the Tetragonos Agora (figs. XX).

#### *Types of profiles*

Profiles of the bowls also help define workshops and their products. Therefore I have compiled another plate showing the most distinctive profiles of Ephesian bowls. Type 1 illustrates the profiles of bowls that belong to early Ephesian production. Deep bowls with outturned or thickened lips are characteristic of type 1. Type 2 combines all the possibilities of shape which until now were called a “Delian profile”. Bowls with such profiles are attributable to the very prolific PAR-workshop and possibly related workshops but also to later, succeeding workshops. A big and rounded body with a vertical rim-zone (2a) characterizes the early stage, smaller bowls with vertical or inturned rim-zones (2b), or quite slender bowls (2c) are typical for further but succeeding workshops. Bowls of type 3 – demonstrated by bowls from the latest Ephesian production and connected with the bowl signed by Dionysios – are of small dimensions and thick-walled (fig. X). These variations in profile not only help define workshops but also clarify the chronological sequence.

#### *Fabrics*

For defining what’s “Ephesian” on these mouldmade bowls, descriptions of clay and glaze were made and studies regarding the fabric were undertaken. Although ten fabrics were distinguished by microscope, the analysis of the thin sections resulted in one petrographical fabric. All the samples are quite homogenous in terms of mineralogical composition. Even so, colours of glaze and clay show wide variation: red, orange, brown, grey, dark grey are represented, the glaze sometimes even has a silvery sheen. Characteristic for the clay are the white inclusions and the mica as some photographs of fresh breaks show (figs. XX).

Optical differences are caused by different firing temperatures. A local or regional origin is indicated – with only one exception – for all bowls. Heavy mineral analyses were planned but not carried out.

Neutron activation analysis (NAA), carried out by Hans Mommsen some years ago, proved that a mould which is signed by Menemachos has a fabric that differs significantly from the moulds which were found at the Magnesian Gate and belong to the PAR-workshop.

### *Decoration and motifs*

In Ephesus the types of decoration applied to the surface were fairly standard and correspond to those known from other sites. There are pinecone-bowls, imbricated bowls, floral bowls, figural bowls and bowls with linear decoration-schemes like shield bowls, net pattern bowls and long petal bowls. The larger part of the bowls usually shows a mixed decoration. Indeed, Ephesian bowls typically have more zones of decoration than bowls from other production-centres. Therefore it is tempting to use the German term “Zonenbecher”. Additionally two bowls bear a decoration consisting only of vertical beading. I refer to them as “Punktreihenbecher”.

A statistical study of the decoration of the fragments from the Magnesian Gate was made in order to characterize Ephesian designs and document the frequency of different motifs (fig. X, graph: 9 net-pattern bowls, 22 shield-bowls, 43 long petal bowls, 59 pinecone bowls, 25 figural bowls, 100 imbricated bowls, 187 fragments which show the decoration of calices, mainly consisting of lotus and acanthus leaves, and many more sherds with vegetal and ornamental motifs). The predominant motif in the upper rim section is the Ionian kyma (or egg and dart?), followed by the meander, the rosettes and the Lesbian kyma. Further motifs are the guilloche, wave patterns, bead and reel, S-motifs, very seldom are beadings, palmettes, lozenge, comb-motifs or on one fragment some small figures, very often erotes. The borders following beneath are dominated by floral motifs, especially by trefoil-garlands and “Fünfblatt-Sträußchen”.

While drawing the bowls I noticed a striking correlation between zones and motifs. The Ephesian bowls demonstrate a kind of “canon”, especially the bowls from the PAR-workshop. Particular motifs belong to particular decoration-zones. For instance, Ionian kymata, eight-petaled star-rosettes or seven-petaled blossom-rosettes usually are applied only to the rim zones. The seven-petaled star-rosettes additionally can be stamped within the main zone, but there you will find them mixed with the points of the shield decoration. And within these shields, among the 5.000 examples studied, only the stamped motifs of windwheels(?) appear.

These correlations may offer a means of distinguishing Ephesian originals from locally made imitations on which different, non canonical filling stamps – in many cases you will find various motifs of vessels – were applied. Unfortunately we have to be very cautious if we apply this knowledge of correlation between zone and motif. As the bowls from chronologically later Ephesian workshops illustrate, they start to lose this canon, too. Those Ephesian bowls now also can show additional filling ornaments, like imitations on other sites.

And in order not to spare you from another still unsolved issue (\*S\*) we should turn to the problem of nomenclature for the stamped motifs. Although Ferdinand Courby gave an overview of the stamped motifs on “Delian” bowls, arranged the motifs according to zone, and started to name and number them in 1922 no serious continuation of his work was done.

For the Ephesian material now the most frequently applied motifs were compiled, named and illustrated on plates. This work is restricted to the motifs of the bowls from the PAR-workshop and its succeeding ateliers for the present, and only in German. The aim was to give an overview of those motifs that demonstrate their own and local development, and were exported over long distances to other sites (figs. XX).

### *Repertoire of forms, technical details and extraordinary pieces*

As I mentioned above there are particular moulds for relief vases beside the ones for bowls. But usually new forms were manufactured by combining the moulded relief-decorated bowls – small or

big – with further parts like foot, handles, shoulders, necks or tubes. Thus the hemispherical body served as the basis for a footed krater, or a closed shape such as a jug, filter jug, an amphora, a lagynos, a juglet, a funnel or a cup.

We have examples of all these more unusual forms among our material, although sometimes the examples are very tiny (fig. X, graph: 48 big bowls, 42 krateriskoi, 25 small bowls, 4-6 funnels, 3 lagynoi, 3 amphoras, 8 juglets, 14 cups and 2 small cups). As the graph shows few fragments of lagynoi, juglets and amphoras are represented. Funnels are often better preserved and easy to identify. A further unusual form is the one-handle cup or “Relieftasse (Henkelbecher)”. The absolutely predominant form is the bowl, normally we find more bigger bowls (over 16cm) than smaller ones (under 10cm), followed then by the krateriskoi, less represented are the juglets, the cups and the funnels. We seldom find lagynoi and amphoras and almost unknown are kalathoi (figs. XX). These vessels together could serve as a drinking set, as we already know from other places.

Among these different mouldmade vases all derived from the basic form of a bowl, it was possible to differentiate stamps according to the size of the vessel. Very small stamps were used in the workshops for the production of small bowls (fig. X); for big bowls or kraters there must have been a set of very big stamps. Drawing the material piece by piece made this fact unambiguous. But the choice of large or small stamps may also have depended on the sets which were available for the potter just in the moment of stamping the mould. An Ephesian example of a small bowl with an oversized stamp – overlapping the ridges – proves that potters might use whatever was at hand. For the most part, however, our observations suggest quite standardized dimensions for moulds, vessels and stamps.

These studies also permit some considerations of whether the moulds were decorated stamp by stamp or sometimes with a roller. Some examples may help to illustrate the problem (figs. XX). Motifs like Ionian kymas or rosettes likely resulted from the application of single stamps, but motifs of very fine and complicated structures (compare plate) may imply the existence of rollers. If you have a look to the screen you can recognize that each motif of each border (regardless how complicated it may look) starts again, always in the same fashion. That votes for a single stamp; but of course, it is not possible to exclude, for the rim sections, a kind of roller with a marker to stop.

### *Phases of production and probable workshops*

Having defined the methods of distinguishing workshops and details of their production, it is now possible to survey the chronological sequence of Ephesian mouldmade production. The known production of Ephesian mouldmade bowls can be separated into four chronological phases defined by the dominant workshops and groups active in each phase. While the “Ionian” bowls on Delos were divided into many groups or series by Laumonier in 1977 (but notice here, that a big part of the Delian bowls represent Ephesian exports!), I have classified the Ephesian material into bigger, but more culturally meaningful groups.

#### 1. The bowls of the “Early-Ephesian” production (figs. XX).

Almost all examples assigned to the Early Ephesian phase of production were part of the drainage-fill of the South Gate (Tetragonos Agora). Therefore I propose the term “Südtor-Atelier” for the workshop in which they probably were manufactured. These bowls show decoration-systems that are similar to early products of other production centers like Athens or Pergamon. The bowls are quite deep, they have outturned or thickened lips, small bottom-rosettes, small rim zones and horizontal ridges which are dotted. The analysis of the context, (remember some detailed discussions of this assemblage in the literature concerning Hellenistic fine wares, and amphoras...) suggests – for the bulk of the material – a date in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B. C. for the manufacture of these bowls. No examples of these early bowls have so far been uncovered either on Delos or on more distant sites. The most distant example so far known is found at Pergamon.

2. The bowls of the so-called PAR-monogram-atelier or PAR-workshop (figs. XX) represent the best known and most widely-distributed products of Ephesus. As discussed elsewhere this workshop may also have produced the “vases gris” (as classified on Delos), certain bowls of the “belles méduses”-workshop and also many sherds of the Delian bowls which were not specifically classified and assigned by Laumonier. Some examples may illustrate the output of this workshop (compare: main types of bottom-rosettes, figural decoration of gray-fired bowl, typical motifs...). Almost every find-spot in Ephesus produces bowls and fragments of the PAR-atelier.

All groups of this workshop were exported. These bowls are found in the region around Ephesus as well as throughout the Mediterranean and Black Sea areas. Some of the earliest bowls of this workshop are found in the drainage-fill of the South Gate of the Tetragonos-Agora in Ephesus, on Delos or in Tell Dor. The export of the bowls may have started shortly after 166 B. C., the year in which Delos became free-port. Further contexts in and outside of Ephesus suggest continuation of the production of these bowls until the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B. C. (remember the contexts: Magnesian Gate: end of 2<sup>nd</sup> century B. C. and fill 2 of well in Terrace House 1: around 100 B. C.)

3. The bowls of the “succeeding” or “smaller” workshops (“Nachfolge-Ateliers”, “kleinere Ateliers” as I call them, figs. XX).

Many bowls in Ephesus can be grouped according to quite similar and common features. Some examples illustrate the products of these workshops.

The bowls are small in their dimensions, have a carinated or slender profile, are often gray-fired, and use of signatures either of names (like Menemachos, Melidon, Athenaios or Philon) or letters (like NI, A, Λ, Δ). Their motifs reveal close connections to the motifs of the decoration designed by the PAR-workshop. But in many cases the canon is already lost and new motifs occur. Regarding these aspects these workshops obviously were following the PAR-workshop. Additionally the bottom of the bowl is flatter, and the ridge of the medallion can take the shape of a small ringfoot. Thus they could have been used as (ordinary) drinking bowls (for the daily life) and still for symposia. Drinking customs may have started to change. With the increasing influence of Italians in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean we may assume that the customs of eating and drinking, the architecture and the mobiliar of the dining rooms and thus even the drinking cups have changed in order to fulfill more multifunctional purposes.

These bowls are found in the region around Ephesus as well as throughout the Mediterranean and Black Sea areas. Contexts in and outside of Ephesus indicate that these bowls were manufactured within the chronological framework 100 B. C. – first decades of the 1<sup>st</sup> century B. C. (especially proved for Philon). Thus Laumonier’s and Hausmann’s conclusion that these “Ionian-Ephesian” bowls were imported to Delos until 88/69 B. C. seems to be right.

4. Bowls of the “latest” workshops or the end of production (figs. XX).

The end of production of mouldmade bowls in or around Ephesus is marked by examples like the one bowl signed by Dionysios. These bowls of the latest workshops are very low, small and thick-walled. Their stamped decoration partly consists of unintelligible and misunderstood motifs. Now every motif can be placed wherever the potter wanted, without any sense for correlations and proportions.

The contexts for these bowls in Ephesus – almost all are found in Augustan and Tiberian fills – suggest an end of the manufacture of mouldmade bowls in Ephesus around the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century B. C. Perhaps drinking customs had changed completely, to the extent that, there was no demand anymore for this particular form of bowl. Experiments like the example of a relief-

decorated fragment of a black-sigillata-bowl in Ephesus and the continuation of mouldmade relief bowls in the quality of reddish ESA in Syria tempt to assume that some traditions and memories of the glorious old days were kept, but it seems impossible that bowls of such an appearance were used for symposia.

### *Details*

After these – really – worst examples of Ephesian mouldmade bowls and before completing the report I would like to present a few extraordinary and unique pieces in order to illustrate the full range of possibilities for Ephesian mouldmade bowls (figs. XX).

a mouldmade bowl in the quality of black sigillata (an experiment?)

a mouldmade bowl with white ground and black glaze,

a so-called “bols à reliefs quadrilobés” (Vierblattbecher), a bowl of which the rim is shaped like four leaves.

And there are also some fragments with “homeric” or otherwise interesting figural decoration.

These unusual examples help to demonstrate the wide variety of Ephesian designs for mouldmade bowls (figs. XX).

### *Scale of manufacture and exports*

Alongside this wide variety of common and less common mouldmade bowl types just described, there is also great variation among the assemblages of mouldmade ceramics found in the different areas of the Ephesus excavation – especially regarding the mouldmade bowls, their stamps, the combinations of their stamps and their quality. Furthermore, although we possess 5.000 fragments of mouldmade bowls in Ephesus which bear extremely often the same motifs we cannot find – with the exception of very, very few examples – fragments or bowls with demonstrably identical stamps. And at the risk of anticipating some facts of further reports here, Ephesian ceramic products were brought to light all over the Mediterranean and Black Sea Area. These exports resulted in innumerable imitations and some locally produced imitations are already known and defined. A map may illustrate the signed Ephesian bowls which were exported (fig. X). Beside few examples with the monogram PAR, there are many bowls with the signatures of Menemachos or Philon. All these facts and arguments may demonstrate the great quantities and the immense scale we have to assume for the total output of “Ephesian” workshops.

In order to conclude and to complete the confusion on “Ephesian, “Ionian” or still “Delian” mouldmade bowls I give a short preview of material from Samos. Many of the published sherds were obviously produced in the Ephesian PAR-workshop or – I do not want to exclude – in a branch of this workshop on the island of Samos, but there are also many other fragments which are of local manufacture. Although the zones of the wall or the rim often are showing the same decoration and motifs as seen on the Ephesian bowls, detailed comparisons of the bottom-medallions demonstrate that especially the stamps of the bottom-rosettes differ from the Ephesian ones (fig. X). Locally manufactured products, Samian potters and workshops may be identified more clearly by this means in the future.

Well, I hope that the study and presentation of the bowls from Ephesus will be a significant contribution to the enlargement of our knowledge of mouldmade bowls in the Eastern Mediterranean area although there are now probable more questions than answers. Further detailed investigations in this field are of essential interest.

