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**Electronic version**

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/anatoliaantiqua/2667>

DOI: 10.4000/12dd3

ISSN: 2823-1090

**Publisher**

IFEA - Institut français d'études anatoliennes

**Printed version**

Date of publication: January 1, 2023

Number of pages: 87-107

ISBN: 978-2-36245-088-4

ISSN: 1018-1946

**Electronic reference**

Yusuf Sezgin and Gözde Şakar, "A Plastic Vase in the Form of an Actor from the New Bouleuterion of Aigai", *Anatolia Antiqua* [Online], XXXI | 2023, Online since 15 March 2024, connection on 10 October 2024. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/anatoliaantiqua/2667> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/12dd3>

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# A Plastic Vase in the Form of an Actor from the New Bouleuterion of Aigai

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*We would like to thank Ayşe Çelebi for the translation of the text and Şahin Menteşe for the drawings.*

- Aigai is an Aiolian city founded 13 km inland from the sea, on a mountain called Aspendos<sup>1</sup> in ancient times and Yuntdağı today.<sup>2</sup> According to historical written sources, the Aiolians settled in the western shores of Asia Minor at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC. Archaeological excavations and research carried out in Aigai since 2004 show that the city was founded no earlier than the late 8<sup>th</sup> - early 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. In the 260s AD, the Goths advanced along the west coast of Asia Minor and sacked many settlements. The people of Aigai became aware of the impending Goth thread, blocked the doors of the domestic and public buildings with stone masonry, and abandoned their city. After that date, the city lost its former glory and turned into a small village for nearly nine hundred years, until the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. The last settlement in the city dates to the late 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. Limited traces of a late Byzantine fortress-settlement of this period can be seen in different parts of the city. The small Byzantine settlement at Aigai was completely abandoned after the Turkmen attacks around 1300.
- In the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, a *bouleuterion* was built in Aigai as part of the major building programme of the Hellenistic Period. This building was called the New Bouleuterion to distinguish it from the smaller and older Old Bouleuterion underneath it. The New Bouleuterion was dedicated by Antiphanes, son of Apollonidas, to Zeus Bollaïos, Hestia Bollaia, and the Demos. The building measuring 24 × 14 m is located on a sloping land on the main road connecting to the Agora. It has a tripartite and three-storey structure consisting of rooms on the lowest floor, a meeting room (main hall) on the second floor, and a portico on the third floor. Four doors on the façade overlooking the main road provide entrance to the rooms on the lowest floor.<sup>3</sup> Each of these entrances is a double-leaf door. Each room consists of a front and a rear room. These rooms have no direct

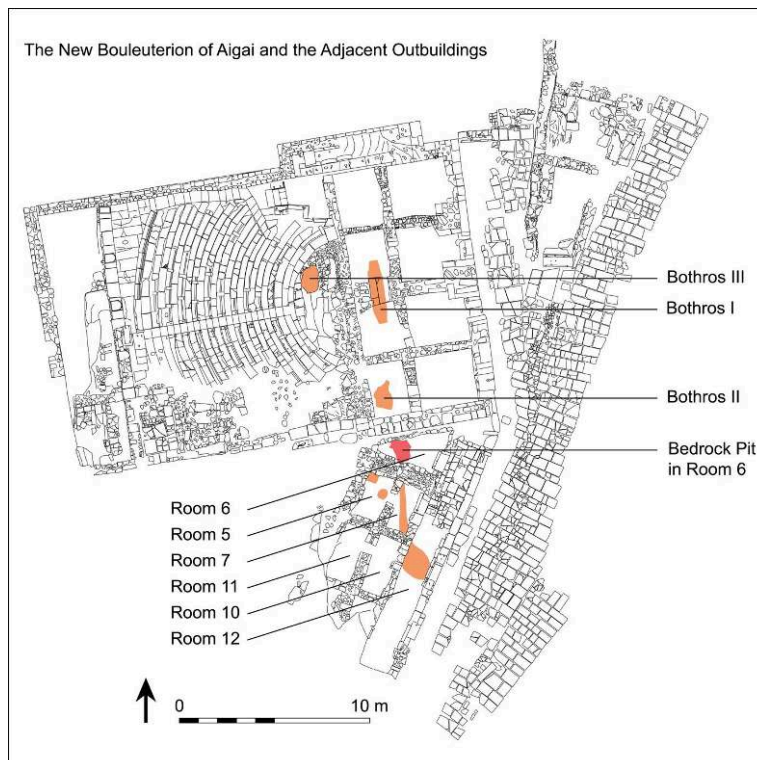
connection with the main hall. Entrance to the main hall is provided by a door on the south on the second-floor level. The portico on the third floor is open to the upper level of the *theatron* of the main hall and it has a separate door on the south (Fig. 1).

- 3 Adjoining to the south of the New Bouleuterion, on the same level as the front rooms of the building, there is a group of rooms/outbuildings (Doğer, Sezgin, & Gürbüzler, 2010, pp. 343-347) (Fig. 1, 2, 3). The excavations carried out in these rooms in 2007 yielded important finds, especially in the bedrock pits. One of the most important finds, and the subject of this paper is a plastic vase in the form of an actor recovered from a bedrock pit in Room 6.

## Archaeological Context

- 4 The area that contains outbuildings is located adjacent to the south side of the New Bouleuterion, lying parallel to Agora Street. It is 14 m wide, 6 m deep, and 7.5 m long on the northern oblique side (Sezgin, Gürbüzler, & Başdemir 2021, pp. 169-170) (Fig. 1, 2, 3). The entrance to the area is from Agora Street. Due to the sloping land, the bedrock is terraced. The single-story rooms are approximately 2 m below the walking level of the courtyard with the entrance of the main hall of the New Bouleuterion.

**Fig. 1** Plan of the New Bouleuterion and adjacent outbuildings in the south



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**Fig. 2** Aerial view of the New Bouleuterion and adjacent outbuildings in the south



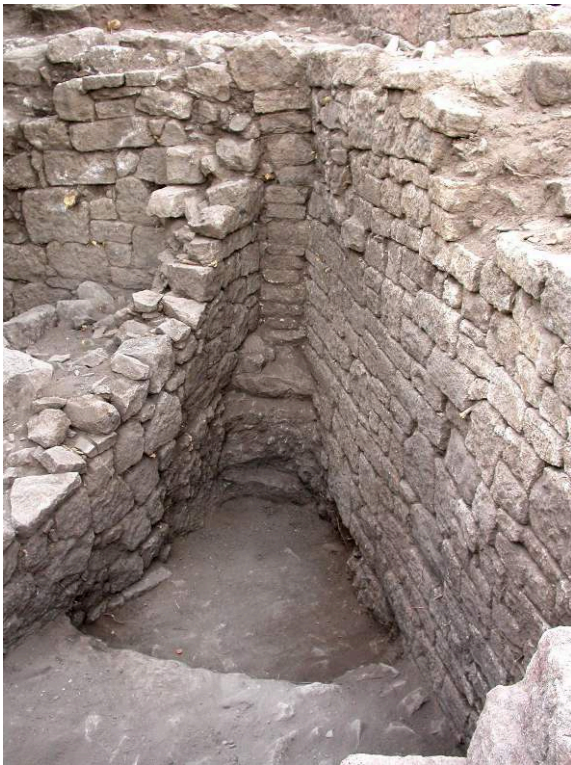
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**Fig. 3** View of the adjacent outbuildings from the east



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Fig. 4 Room 6



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- 5 The masonry of the front (east) façade of the New Bouleuterion continues uninterrupted towards the southwest and forms the façade of this group of rooms. The workmanship of the front façade and its organic connection with the front façade of the New Bouleuterion prove that the outbuildings were used concurrently with the Bouleuterion and were part of the same master plan. In the third quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, when the New Bouleuterion was built, there was probably an anteroom or a colonnade/*stoa* (Room 12) and a large, single main room. Room 12, measuring  $2 \times 12.75$  and paved with stone slabs, was designed as an opening or *stoa* facing Agora Street (Fig. 1, 2).
- 6 The main room behind Room 12 was rearranged in the Roman Period (probably in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD). At the northern end of the area, a triangular room (Room 6) (Fig. 1, 4) was formed as a natural consequence of the triangular space at the junction with the New Bouleuterion. In this triangular room's immediate south, the space was separated and four rooms with front and rear spaces were formed (rooms 5, 7, 10, and 11) (Fig. 1, 2). Each of the four rooms, accessed by the stone-paved entrance Room 12, measures approximately  $2.5 \times 1.5$  m and is about 4 m<sup>2</sup>. The floors of these rooms have been identified. The finds over the floors indicate that the rooms were used until the third quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Although the functions of the rooms are not fully understood, they must have been used as shops or a group of shops at the entrance of the Upper Agora during the Roman Period. A similar Roman rearrangement and functional development seem probable for the frontal rooms of the New Bouleuterion. With the abandonment of the city in the 260s AD, the Bouleuterion and this group of associated buildings lost their function.

- 7 Archaeological works carried out in this area have shown that the site was actively used from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards. The area remained in use until the third quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD with changes in function in different periods. After the city was abandoned at this date, the Bouleuterion and the associated buildings were wrecked. An important coin hoard from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, when life resumed in the city, was also discovered in this debris. The coins, which seem to have been deliberately placed in the stone debris of the collapsed walls of the building, are the latest finds from the area (Sezgin & Önder, 2013).
- 8 The find spot of the plastic vase in the form of an actor, which is the subject of this article, is Room 6 (Fig. 1, 2, 4). It is the northernmost and triangular room. The narrowest part of the room in the west is 0.30 m wide while the widest part in the east is 2.50 m wide. The northern border of the room is formed by a wall built against the southern wall of the New Bouleuterion. The bedrock to the west of the room lies at a level of 361.73 m. At this level in the same area, a pit measuring 120 × 90 cm was carved in the bedrock. The bottom of the 105 cm deep pit is at 360.68 m level. The pit extends very slightly below the northern and southern walls of the room.
- 9 During the excavations, an ashy, burnt soil deposit containing dense carbon fragments was identified in the bedrock pit. Although the hardness of the deposit and the amount of ash and carbon varies, this deposit continues as a single stratum to the bottom of the pit. Despite the presence of carbon and ash in the deposit, it should be noted that none of the finds recovered from the pit are burnt. In addition to bovine bones, numerous large fragments of ceramics that could partially be completed were found inside this pit. Most of the finds belong to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD, but examples from the Hellenistic Period are also found.
- 10 In the Bouleuterion there are also some bedrock pits. Following the ceremony for the consecration of the building at the beginning of the construction of the New Bouleuterion, the remains related to the ceremony and the offering materials were buried in two separate bedrock pits (*bothroi*) (Fig. 1). These two *bothroi* were carved into the bedrock and contain finds dating to the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. One of them (Bothros I) supports a stone pedestal for the statue of Hestia (Sezgin, Gürbüzler, & Başdemir, 2021, pp. 150-152). Bothros II on the other hand is located close to the south wall of the New Bouleuterion (Sezgin, Gürbüzler, & Başdemir, 2021, pp. 149-150). Although Bothros II is inside the New Bouleuterion and the bedrock pit in Room 6 is outside, and although they are not connected, they are very close to each other (1.5 m). Both the bedrock pit in Room 6 and the Bothros II have approximately the same upper levels and their dimensions are both about 120 × 90 cm. All these data suggest the possibility that the bedrock pit in Room 6 and Bothros II were carved together on the same date, at the beginning of the constructions of the New Bouleuterion (mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) or probably before.<sup>4</sup>
- 11 The finds recovered on the walking level of the last stage in the front rooms of the New Bouleuterion belong to the third quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. In this respect, the building was used up until that date, even if it lost its identity as a *bouleuterion*. Also, the group of rooms to the south of the New Bouleuterion was used until the third quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. A significant amount of the finds recovered in the bedrock pit in Room 6 belongs to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD. This date is concordant with the last use phase of the rooms in the area. A smaller number of finds from the bedrock pit are

dated to the Hellenistic Period. The earliest find is a nearly complete preserved *lekane* from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>5</sup>

- 12 The well-preserved finds recovered from the pit are mostly from the Hellenistic Period. Among these finds, there is an almost completely preserved upper part of a large storage vessel. Very similar examples to this storage vessel are found among the finds of the Athenian Agora (Rotroff, 2006, No 157, Fig. 24, context of ca. 265-200; No 158, Fig. 25, Pl. 22, context of 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, with several 2<sup>nd</sup>-century BC pieces). An “Ephesus” type lamp, missing only its handle and the tip of the wick hole, dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC (Howland, 1958, No. 569 (Type 44 A, moulded; undecorated; nozzles pointed with ridge or grooves on top), p. 140, Pls. 21 and 47, ca. 75-25 BC; Kassab-Tezgör, Sezer 1995, Kat.no. 290-292, 299 and 301, last quarter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC – 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, Ephesian workshop) was also found in the pit. The finds of the Roman Period recovered more abundantly, were generally preserved in small fragments.
- 13 Close to the bottom of the pit, fragments of two interlocking terracotta pipes were found. Below the floors of the rooms in this area, channels and reservoirs are carved into the bedrock. The bedrock pit in Room 6 and another one in Room 12 were connected with a channel carved into the bedrock (Fig. 1). The bedrock pit in Room 6, originally carved for a different purpose in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, must have been refunctionalized as a part of a water-related infrastructure in the Roman Period.
- 14 Immediately south of Room 6 are Rooms 5 and 7 (Fig. 1). Rooms 5 and 7, are connected through a door. These two rooms also yielded important finds in quite well-preserved condition. An Italian Sigillata platter found at a level close to the bedrock in Room 5 has a significant place among the finds from Aigai (Fig. 5). The platter, recovered for the most part, has a diameter of 49 cm. On the exterior of the rim, two gladiators are depicted in fighting position and four floral motifs (palmettes) are modelled in appliqué. Similar examples in form and technique were found in Cosa,<sup>6</sup> the Athenian Agora,<sup>7</sup> and Berenice.<sup>8</sup> The Aigai Platter from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD<sup>9</sup> is considered to be a special find due to its good preservation and large size.
- 15 **Inventory No:** BID / 2, TN 22, 361.90-361.85 m (Fig. 5)  
**Mouth Diameter:** 49 cm; **Bottom Diameter:** 23 cm  
**Clay:** High quality, little fine mica, little fine lime inclusion, 5YR 7/6 reddish yellow;  
**Slip Colour:** 2.5YR 4/8 red.  
**Definition:** Italian sigillata platter. Mostly preserved, missing parts completed with plaster. High and steep, vertical rim. Very sharp transition to the body. Thick-walled wide base. The inner surface of the tray is divided into three groups of thin circular grooves (On floor: Diam. 22, 16.5, 10.7 cm). A broad band of roulette decoration between the outward two groups of grooves. The outer face of the rim has two mouldings at the top and bottom, flanking a broad band of dense and regular roulette decoration. In this band two appliqué gladiator figures are placed opposing and in fighting position. Four appliqué palmette motifs are also arranged in intervals.

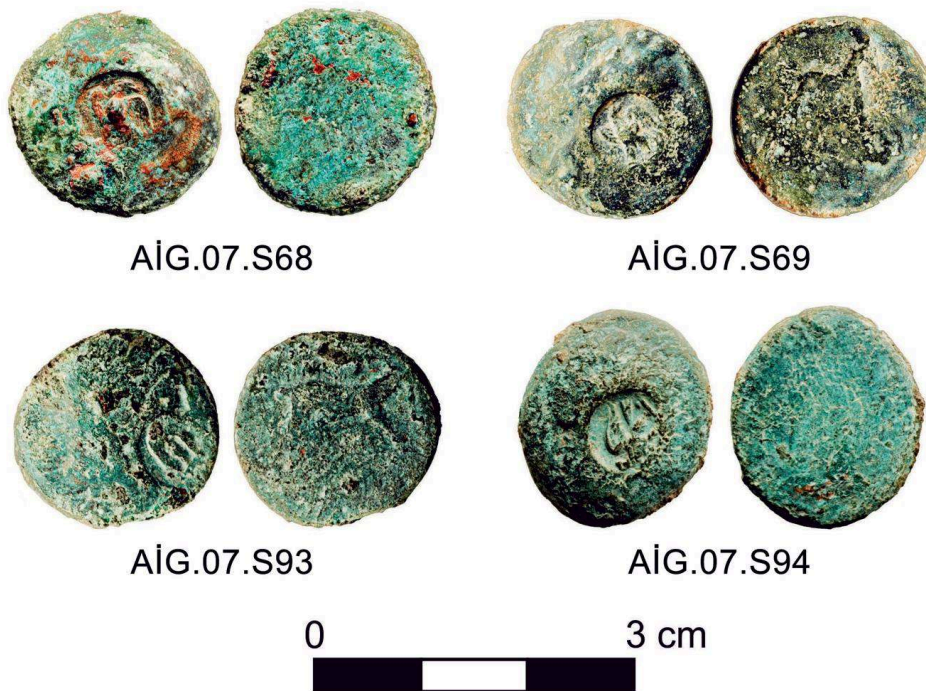
Fig. 5 Italian Sigillata platter found in Room 5



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- 16 Four coins were also discovered in the same bedrock pit of Room 6 where the plastic vase in the form of an actor was recovered (Fig. 6). Two of the coins (AIG.07.s68 and AIG.07.s69) were found at the upper levels of the pit, at a level of about 361.50 m; the other two (AIG.07.s93 and AIG.07.s94) were found at the bottom of the pit, at a level of 360.84 m. Although these bronze coins are not well preserved, all four have the depiction of the head of Apollo facing right and a countermark on the obverse. Three of the countermarks are filled with a slightly left-facing, standing eagle with open wings and head turned to the right, while the other countermark has a lyra. On all coins, the inscription [ΑΙΓΑΕΩΝ] is found below the head of Apollo, while the reverse shows a standing goat facing right. These coins produced in Aigai are dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.<sup>10</sup>
- 17 Eleven bronze Aigai coins were also found close to the bedrock in rooms 5 and 7. These coins are of the same type as the ones recovered in the bedrock pit of the adjacent Room 6 (head of Apollo facing right and [ΑΙΓΑΕΩΝ] below it on the obverse, standing goat facing right on the reverse) and are dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.<sup>11</sup> The total of 15 coins of the same type recovered in the bedrock pit of Room 6, and from Rooms 5 and 7 should be considered as parts of a whole.

Fig. 6 Four coins discovered in the bedrock pit in Room 6



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- 18 **AIG.07.s68:** Room 6, 361.50 m, TN 24, BIH-1, 07.08.07 (Fig. 6)  
Bronze; 17 mm; 3.69 g.
- 19 **Obverse:** Laureate head of Apollo, right, countermark: slightly left, standing eagle, with wide wings, head turned right, below: [AIGAEQN].  
**Reverse:** Goat standing right.
- 20 **AIG.07.s69:** Room 6, 361.50 m, TN 24, BIH-2, 07.08.07 (Fig. 6)  
Bronze; 16.5 mm; 4.08 g.
- 21 **Obverse:** Laureate head of Apollo, right, countermark: slightly left eagle with wide wings, head turned right, below: [AIGAEQN].  
**Reverse:** Goat standing right.
- 22 **AIG.07.s93:** Room 6, 360.84 m, TN 37, BIZ-1, 09.08.07 (Fig. 6)  
Bronze; 16.5 mm; 2.90 g.  
**Obverse:** Laureate head of Apollo, right, countermark: Lyra, below: [AIGAEQN].  
**Reverse:** Goat standing right.
- 23 **AIG.07.s94:** Room 6, 360.84 m, TN 37, BIZ-2, 09.08.07 (Fig. 6)  
Bronze; 17.5 mm; 4.43 g.  
**Obverse:** Laureate head of Apollo, right, countermark: slightly left, standing eagle, with wide wings, head turned right, below: [AIGAEQN].  
**Reverse:** Goat standing right.
- 24 The finds from a bedrock pit uncovered in the southeast corner of Room 7 are also noteworthy (Doğer, Sezgin, & Gürbüzler, 2010, p. 345). This pit is at the southeast end of the channel connecting the pits in Room 6 and Room 12. A large number of complete or nearly complete ceramics were recovered from the pit between the levels

361.60-361.35 m. The finds include numerous cups, miniature *hydrias* (*hydriske*), *olpe*, and bowls,<sup>12</sup> all in a complete or nearly complete state (Balaban, 2012). Almost all finds have identical clay and fabric qualities. They give the impression of votive materials because of their not-so-purified clay qualities, their small sizes, and their relatively sloppy workmanship. In terms of both form and clay characteristics, the finds show a close resemblance to the finds from Bothros III associated with the Old Bouleuterion.<sup>13</sup> In addition to the ceramic finds, six bronze coins were found inside the pit (AIG.07.s78 - AIG.07.s83).<sup>14</sup> The ceramic and coin finds from the bedrock pit in the southeast corner of Room 7 can be dated to the late 4<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Although we do not have sufficient data to explain the purpose, it is clear that the finds were deliberately deposited in this area. It is known that miniature ceramics of this type were left as offerings in sanctuaries, especially of Demeter-Kore. The finds unearthed in the bedrock pit discovered in the southeast corner of Room 7 can be considered as part of a collective group of finds (context), possibly as offering materials.

- 25 The earliest contextual finds unearthed in this area south of the Bouleuterion date to the first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Four cups with distinctive form characteristics were found together in the eastern bedrock pit in Room 5. Two of them are almost completely preserved. The form and decoration features do not allow reliable dating. However, the similarities in form with the flat-bottomed truncated conical cups widely represented in Aigai suggest that they belong to the late 7<sup>th</sup> - first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. All examples have graffiti under the base. One has a ligature composed of the letters Eta (H) and Rho (P) (Hera?), while the other two have a careless graffiti similar to an Alpha (A). There is no other known example of this form in the Archaic pottery of Aigai, which is represented by thousands of examples. On the other hand, they are represented with four examples in a single context. In other words, it is possible that this is not a form used in daily life and perhaps they were produced for cult purposes.<sup>15</sup>
- 26 The ceramic finds and especially the aforementioned four bronze coins recovered from the bedrock pit in Room 6 show that the finds in the pit do not belong to a single context. The good quality and special finds recovered in the pit and the surrounding rooms (rooms 5 and 7) belong to a period of approximately nine centuries between the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC and the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The current finds indicate that the area was important since the Archaic Period, and it did not lose its importance in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century BC when the Old Bouleuterion was built. After the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, when the New Bouleuterion was built, the area continued to serve as part of the Bouleuterion and maintained its importance. The platter with the gladiator relief and the plastic vase in the form of an actor are among the most outstanding finds of the Roman Period Aigai.
- 27 The finds evaluated hereby, particularly those belonging to the Hellenistic Period and later are quite special in terms of quality and characteristics. Therefore, it is possible to say that they originally had a public or a ritualistic function. These finds seem to have been collected in the bedrock pits sometime before the third quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, which is the last stage of use of the site. This date is a terminus both for the finds unearthed in the bedrock pits and the plastic vase in the form of an actor which is the subject of this article.

## Technique and Form

- 28 The terracotta plastic vase in the form of an actor from Aigai was found fragmented and was partly restored (Fig. 7, 8). It is made of a purified, non-porous, firm, and high-quality clay ranging in colour from pink to light red (Munsell 2,5YR 8/4 and 7/6 Light Red), containing small amounts of white fine mica and very small amounts of lime. The entire surface is covered with a light red-coloured slip, with brown or orange waves in parts due to firing.<sup>16</sup>
- 29 **Inventory No:** AIG.07 TN 37, BIZ, Env.No 33 (Fig. 7, 8)  
**Height:** 26.4 cm; **Figure Height:** 22.9 cm; **Maximum preserved width on figure's body:** 9.6 cm; **Maximum preserved depth on figure's body:** 9.4 cm; **Width of figure's head:** 5.7-6.1 cm; **Depth of figure's head:** 7.2 cm; **Inner diameter of vase (irregular):** 2.5-2.8 cm, **Outer diameter (irregular):** 3.4-3.6 cm; **Handle width/thickness:** 2.4 cm / 0.7 cm; **Pellets or knobs at the connection of handle and body** (measured on the fully preserved right one): 1.4 cm; **Neck height (height between the rim and the top of the figure's head):** 3.5 cm; **Bottom diameter (irregular):** 10.70-11.2 cm; **Maximum preserved width of reservoir:** 12.1 cm.

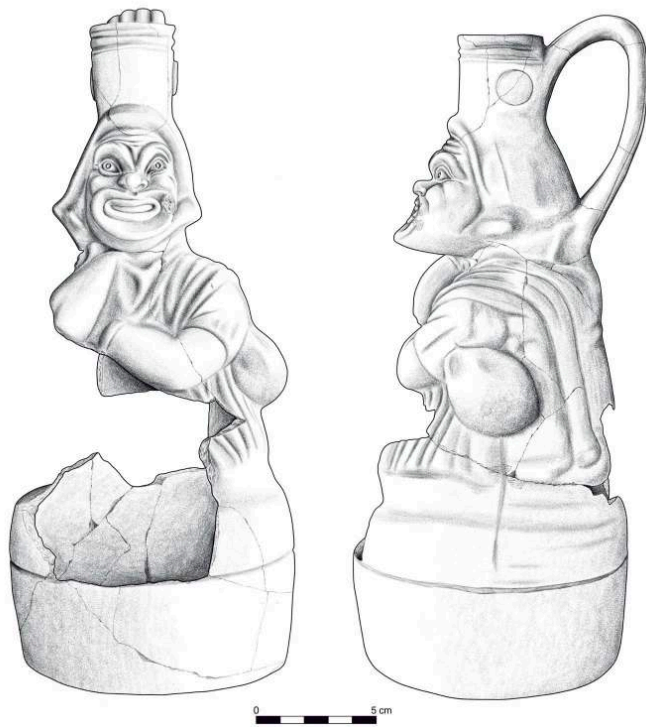
Fig. 7 Plastic vase in the form of an actor



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- 30 The ESC group ceramics dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD hold an important place among the finds from Aigai. Nearly 90% of the red-slipped Roman ceramics from this period consist of ESC ceramics.<sup>17</sup> A special group within the ESC ceramics discovered in various find spots of Aigai, differs from the rest in terms of clay and slip quality (ESC 01 – ESC 05; Fig. 10, 11). The fabric of the examples in this group is purified, non-porous, and high-quality. The fabric may contain, sometimes abundant but usually smaller amounts of fine white mica and very little fine lime inclusions. The clay colour is generally light red (2.5YR 6/6 – 2.5YR 7/6), and sometimes reddish yellow (5YR 7/6). The slip colour is usually red (10R 5/8; 2,5YR 5/8), with a transition from light red (2.5YR 7/6) to dusky red (2.5YR 3/2) in some examples.

**Fig. 8** Plastic vase in the form of an actor



Drawing: Şahin Mentеше, © Aigai excavations archive.

**Fig. 9** Face detail of actor figure



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31 The plastic vase from Aigai shares the same clay and slip qualities with the examples in this ESC group (Fig. 12). In particular, the slip colour and quality on the neck and mouth fragment of a round *oinophoros* (ESC 01, Fig. 10) is very similar to that of the plastic vase. The common clay qualities of the plastic vase and the ESC ceramics are also observed on a small number of figurines from Aigai.<sup>18</sup> This suggests that the clay used for the production of the plastic vase as well as for the other finds that share the same clay characteristics may have been sourced from a less-used clay deposit or, more likely, they may have been produced in a centre other than Aigai. At this point, Pergamon appears to be the strongest candidate.

32 **ESC 01**

**Inventory No:** AIG.14 TN 708, Flask (Fig. 10)

**Mouth Diameter:** 4.2-4.6 cm

**Clay:** Abundant, very fine (powder-like) white mica, very little fine lime inclusion, no grit, almost non-porous, firm clay, 5YR 7/6 reddish yellow; **Interior Colour:** 2.5YR 4/8 red; **Slip Colour:** Transitioning from 2.5YR 7/6 light red to 10R 5/8 red and 2.5YR 3/2 dusky red.

**Reference:** Mandel, 1988, pp. 18-20, P 126, Taf. 18, production of Pergamon.

33 **ESC 02**

**Inventory No:** AIG.14 TN 708.450, Hemispherical Flanged Bowls (Fig. 10, 11)

**Mouth Diameter:** 6.8 cm; **Height:** 4.2 cm; **Bottom Diameter:** 3.4 cm

**Clay:** Very little white mica, very little fine lime inclusion, no grit, almost non-porous, firm clay 2.5YR 7/6 light red; **Interior Colour:** 2.5YR 7/6 light red; **Slip Colour:** 2.5YR 5/8 red.

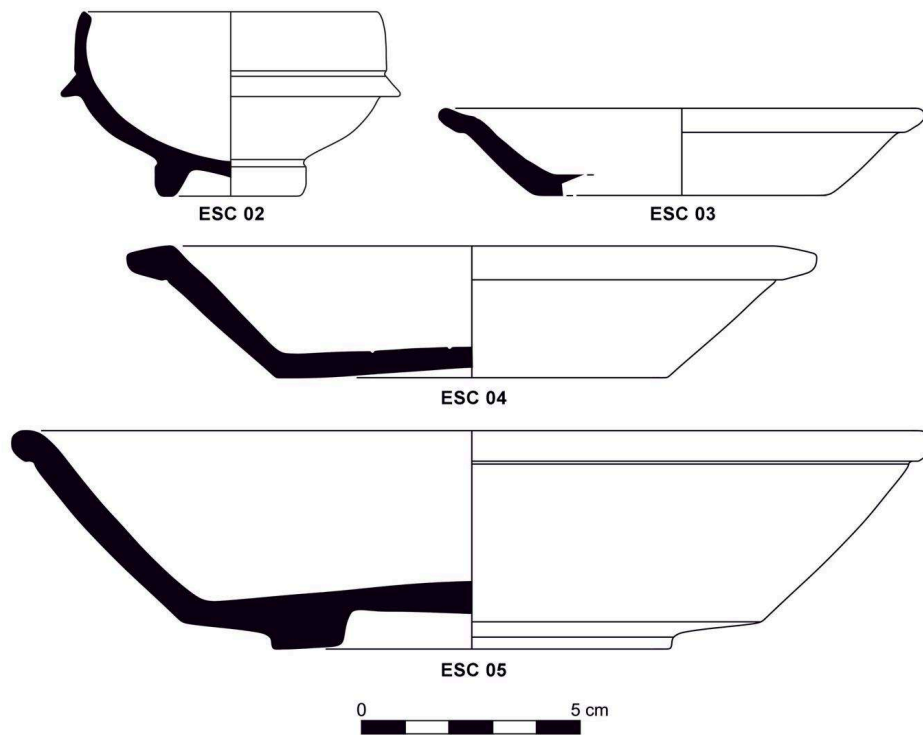
**Reference:** Hayes, 1985, Tav. XVII, Form 5 (L Form 19), Hayes, 2008, p. 199, No 789, Pl. 24, Çandarlı Ware: Later Series, Hemispherical Flanged Bowls: Loeschcke Type 19.

Fig. 10 ESC group ceramics from Aigai



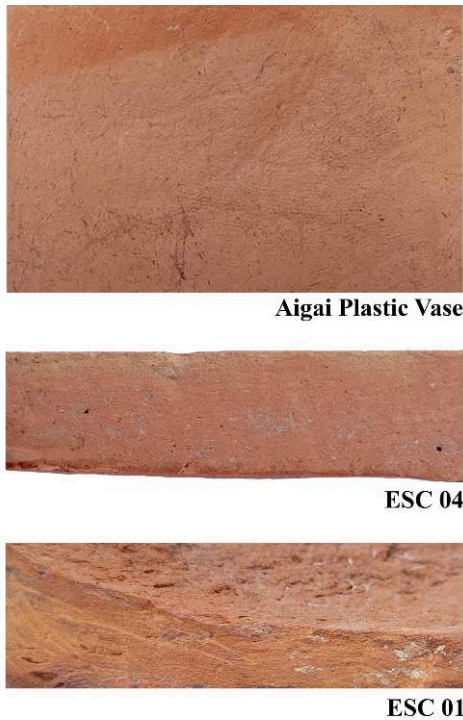
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Fig. 11 ESC group ceramics from Aigai (drawings)



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**Fig. 12** Macro photographs of the clay of the ESC group ceramics and the clay of the Aigai plastic vase



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34 **ESC 03**

**Inventory No:** AIG.14 TN 708, Plate (Fig. 10, 11)

**Mouth Diameter:** 11 cm; **Height:** 2 cm; **Bottom Diameter:** 6.6 cm **Clay:** White mica, little fine lime inclusion, no grit, almost non-porous, firm clay 2.5YR 6/6 light red; **Slip Colour:** 10R 5/8 red.

**Reference:** Hayes, 1985, Tav. XVII, Form 2 (L Form 9).

35 **ESC 04**

**Inventory No:** AIG.14 TN 708.480, Plate (Fig. 10-11)

**Mouth Diameter:** 14 cm; **Height:** 3 cm; **Bottom Diameter:** 9 cm

**Clay:** Small amount of white and small mica, a little fine lime inclusion, no grit, nearly non-porous, firm clay 2.5YR 7/6 light red; **Slip Colour:** 10R 5/8 red.

**Reference:** Hayes, 1985, Tav. XVII, Form 2 (L Form 9).

36 **ESC 05**

**Inventory No:** AIG.14 TN 708.447, Plate (Fig. 10, 11)

**Mouth Diameter:** 20.8 cm; **Height:** 5 cm; **Bottom Diameter:** 9 cm

**Clay:** Small amount of white and small mica, very little fine lime inclusion, no grit, nearly non-porous, firm clay 2.5YR 7/6 light red; **Slip Colour:** 10R 5/8 red.

**Reference:** Hayes, 1985, Tav. XVII, Form 11 (L Form 26B); Hayes, 2008, p. 200, No 799, Pl. 25, Çandarlı Ware: Late Series, Dishes and Basins: Loeschcke Types 26B.

- 37 The figure and the reservoir parts of the plastic vase are jointly mould-made in two faces. Carefully made from a detailed mould, it is very thin-walled for a production of this size. The neck, rim, and handle were shaped by hand and added later. The outer

edge of the rim is decorated with two 0.2 cm wide grooves. The flat and grooved handle starts at the centre of the neck of the vase and ends on its body, at the neck level of the figure. The small, round, and flat pellets or knobs flanking the handle at the upper attachment point to the neck were also shaped by hand and added later. The traces on the inside indicate that the flat base was also shaped by hand and added to the lower part of the vase. The outer surface of the reservoir is circled by a single 0.3 cm thick groove, like those on the handle (Fig. 7, 8)

- 38 Production of plastic vases increased in the Archaic Period when moulds were first used for the production of figurative terracotta. In the Late Classical and Hellenistic periods, most of these vases consisted only of a head-shaped or bust-shaped body, a long neck, a rounded mouth, and a flat and long single handle. This type of head/bust-shaped vase is called a “head vase”. The development of plastic vases in the Hellenistic Period can be best traced to the “Magenta Ware” from the region of Campania in Italy. However, the recent discoveries of various centres producing this type of vase have led to debates on the origins, production centres, and chronology.<sup>19</sup> In her study on the production of figurative ceramics in Asia Minor during the Roman Imperial Period, U. Mandel tries to define how the “head vase” type was transferred from the Hellenistic Period to the Roman Period (Mandel, 1988, pp. 199-206). According to Mandel, the tradition of Hellenistic plastic vase production, dominated by the “head vase” type, was interrupted at the beginning of the Roman Imperial Period and revived in different forms in some centres of the Mediterranean as of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD: In Athens, the production of “head vase”, which continued until Late Antiquity, was supplemented in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD by the tradition of figurative plastic lamp production which used the same themes (Mandel, 1988, p. 205; Grandjouan, 1961, pp. 32-41, Pl. 24-31). In North Africa, Alexandria and Tunisia/Navigiuis continued the production of plastic lamps and relief ware alongside plastic vases from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD until the end of Late Antiquity (Mandel, 1988, p. 205; Salomonson, 1969, pp. 4-109). The workshops of Asia Minor and the Black Sea continued to produce Hellenistic plastic vase forms in the Roman Period. In addition, a new “head vase” type with a low, wide mouth and two handles, close to the *kantharos* form, was developed (Mandel, 1988, 205). From the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the *oinophoroi* with an elongated or flask-shaped body, short neck, and a pair of handles placed on both sides of the neck began to dominate the Late Antique figurative ceramics in the Mediterranean.<sup>20</sup> As Mandel notes, *oinophoroi* or similar relief vases and plastic vases were produced together in the same workshops<sup>21</sup> (Mandel 1988, p. 206).
- 39 In Asia Minor, the most prominent data on plastic vases dating to the Roman Imperial Period come from Pergamon (Mandel, 1988, pp. 25, 228-229) and Knidos (Bailey, 1972/73, pp. 11-25). Sagalassos, one of the most important ceramic workshops of the Roman Period, has so far yielded only examples of plastic vases from Late Antiquity (Murphy & Poblome, 2016, p. 194, 195, Fig. 6-7).
- 40 The plastic vase from Aigai, which can be considered within the plastic vase production tradition summarised above, is a unique example since the actor is depicted up to the hip level. At Pergamon, the closest workshop in Asia Minor which makes this type of production, plastic vases mostly consist of variations of the “head vase” form (Mandel, 1988, pp. 25, 228-229, Pl. 20-22). Among the published material from Pergamon, no example of this size depicting the head and body of a figure as in Aigai is found. At Knidos, another important workshop producing plastic vases in Roman Imperial

Period, only a small number of head vases have been unearthed, except for *lagynoi* with plastic human head-shaped figures on the neck and relief figures on the bodies and numerous animal-shaped *askoi* (Bailey, 1972/73, pp. 11-25; Mandel, 1988, pp. 115-120, Pl. 29-30). There is no example from Knidos with a body form similar to that of Aigai. Although not closely parallel in form to the vase from Aigai, two Egyptian plastic vases depicting the head and torsos of actors as a whole, are important examples of the use of this iconography in plastic vase forms.<sup>22</sup> The Egyptian finds are quite small: they were produced as figurines and turned into plastic vases by adding a mouth to the upper part. Unlike these two examples dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC - 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and belonging to the “Magenta Ware” group, the size and design with a reservoir of the Aigai example indicates that it was produced directly in the form of a plastic vase.

- 41 In the Aigai vase, the large reservoir at the bottom of the figured body is also remarkable. This type of reservoir is not a common element in Hellenistic and Roman plastic vase designs. A fragment of a flat base close in diameter to the example of Aigai and with a similar thin groove on the outer surface was found in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD context of the Athenian Agora (Hayes, 2008, p. 113, 281, No. 1721, Fig. 54, Pl. 86<sup>23</sup>). However, since the body of the base from the Athenian Agora was not preserved, it is not clear what kind of vase form it belongs to.
- 42 The plastic vase from Aigai indicates the continuation of a tradition dating back to the Hellenistic Period, with its long neck, the rounded rim decorated with grooves, and the flat, grooved single handle positioned on the back (Fig. 7, 8). This neck-mouth-handle combination is seen on almost all plastic vases of the Hellenistic Period and continued to be used in the Roman Period with some minor changes (Mandel, 1988, pp. 25, 228-229, Pl. 20-22; Bailey, 1972/73, pp. 11-25<sup>24</sup>). This neck-mouth-handle combination of the vase from Aigai indicates that it was not produced in the tradition of the Late Antique *oinophoros* with double handles and short neck, but rather within the tradition which still uses the classical forms of the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial periods. Small round pellets or knobs are placed below the rim, at the point where the handle meets the neck (Fig. 7, 8). These may be regarded as reflections or imitations of handle rivets seen on metalware. Attic West Slope *oinochoe* and black-glazed *lagynoi* produced in the Hellenistic Period show pellets or knots at the point where the handles are attached to the neck (Rotroff, 1997<sup>25</sup>).

## Definition and Iconography

- 43 The plastic vase of Aigai is fragmented. Only the head, arms, left shoulder and left part of the torso of the figure, and the nonfigurative part of the reservoir at the bottom are preserved. The preserved left part of the figure reveals that the body was depicted up to the level of the hip. The front side is widely fragmented and incomplete. However, it is understood that the straight body of the figure also ends at the same level at the front. Below the hip level of the figure, the nonfigurative and plain part of the reservoir continues (Fig. 7, 8)
- 44 The figure is an actor who portrays the slave type in comedy plays. He has an exaggerated facial expression, as often seen in the masks carried by slave characters. The undetailed mass of the hair is formed in a rolled arrangement called *speira* on the forehead. The ends of the hair extending to the chin are slightly jutting. The eyebrows are shaped as an exaggerated arc and the deep wrinkles on the forehead are prominent.

The large eyes with raised edges are wide open. Both pupils are stamped with a circular tool. The nose is wide and flattened, the rounded tip of the nose is slightly upturned, and the cheekbones are protruding. The semi-circular beard with edges slightly raised towards the cheekbones surrounds the mouth. This beard and the mouth opening in the centre of it, form the “trumpet mouth” shape often seen on masks of this type.<sup>26</sup> The back of the head is flat and undetailed except for the contours of the hair mass. The torso ends at the hips. Depiction of the torso is frontal. The actor is dressed in a short-sleeved tunic below a himation wrapped around the body. The right arm is bent at the elbow and the right hand is placed at chin level, under the ear. As is the case in some actor figurines of this type the right hand supports the mask worn on his face from below.<sup>27</sup> The left arm is also bent at the elbow and is placed on the inner side of the right elbow. Right below the left armpit, the excess fabric of the outer garment forms a round bulge in the form of a pouch.<sup>28</sup> Just behind the left shoulder, a large piece of fabric belonging to the upper garment falls straight downwards until the waistline.

- 45 Numerous studies have been made on theatre-related figures, which have been frequently preferred in ancient iconography since the Classical Period. In almost all these studies, the characters in theatre plays and the masks used by the actors who portrayed them are defined based on the classification introduced by the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD linguist and rhetorician Julius Pollux in his *Onomasticon* (IV, 133-154). In this work, which is thought to have been created by Pollux with the help of a Hellenistic source<sup>29</sup>, the characters of tragedy, satyr play, and comedy are defined and classified one by one based on masks and sometimes costumes.<sup>30</sup>
- 46 Pollux mentions theatre types that emerged in different periods (tragedy, satyr play, and old/middle/new comedy), however most of the characters and masks that he describes belong to the New Comedy that also deeply influenced Roman Theatre (Webster, 1949, p. 80). New Comedy is a genre whose foundations were laid by playwright Menandros at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. This new genre, which was freed from the political concerns of the Middle Comedy of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, directed comedy mainly toward daily life, and the plays became situation comedies set in the lives of the middle-upper class (Bieber, 1961, p. 87). While some of the characters in New Comedy plays, which were popular in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, were the continuation of characters of the Middle Comedy, some appeared for the first time in the New Comedy genre (Webster, 1949, p. 80).
- 47 The actor depicted on the body of the plastic terracotta vase from Aigai is identified as a slave character due to his short-sleeved garment, beard, and exaggerated facial expression<sup>31</sup> (Fig 7, 8, 9). With its massive hair down to the chin, raised eyebrow arches, wide-open eyes, and an angry and mocking mouth shape, the figure portrays a “*hegemon therapon*” or “leading slave” among the seven slave types identified by Pollux.<sup>32</sup> Webster states that this character and the mask it wears evolved from the slave type of the Middle Comedy and was adapted to the New Comedy with some visual changes (Webster, 1949, p. 112). In the Middle Comedy, the “leading slave” is not as prominent as it is in the New Comedy, therefore it has a more subdued appearance: the hair is more unkempt, the face is calmer, even sad. In New Comedy, on the other hand, the hair becomes massively shaped, and the face gains a livelier expression (Webster, Green, & Seeberg 1995, vol. 1, p. 27).
- 48 Compared to the Middle Comedy, the New Comedy plays the weight of the role of the slave character and consequently its popularity increased. The slave type used for the

Aigai plastic vase, depicted with a hand placed under his chin and a lively and sarcastic expression points to the cunning and scheming “clever slave” character often portrayed in plays. Throughout the Hellenistic Period, however, the clever slave is still a character of only moderate importance, merely narrating the plot.<sup>33</sup> In the Roman Period, despite regional differences, in the plays developed through the interaction of the New Comedy with the Latin comedy, influenced by the ancient folk arts of Italy, the clever slave character begins to appear in the centre of the plot and becomes one of the main elements.<sup>34</sup> The slave figure, together with other figures related to the theatre and the Dionysiac world, was frequently preferred in visual material, with some iconographic and stylistic changes, until the end of Antiquity.<sup>35</sup>

## Style and Dating

- 49 The “leading slave” type seen in the plastic vase from Aigai was used with almost the same iconography from the Late Classical to the end of the Roman Period. However, it underwent some stylistic changes during this time span. On the other hand, the style of theatrical figures in the Roman Period generally follows the earlier styles. Therefore, precise dating of Roman theatrical figures is usually difficult without context.
- 50 Webster attempted to establish a chronology by examining all artefacts with theatre-related figures, produced from the Late Classical Period to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. He stated that although some dating suggestions can be made based on beard and hairstyles, it would not be correct to make a precise dating without context, since early examples were often imitated, especially in the Late Hellenistic and Roman periods (Webster, 1969, p. 5, 25). In the “leading slave” type of the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic Period, the trumpet mouth is deep, and the beard is elongated and slightly pointed at the tip. From the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC on, a shorter, semi-circular beard, outlined like a frame around the mouth, makes its appearance. During this period, examples, where the beard is detailed with incised or relief striation, are very few, and the hair and beard are generally smooth. Beginning from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, the depth of the mouth is reduced, the framing beard is flattened, and the edges of the beard are slightly upturned (Webster, 1961, pp. 102-104). This appearance can be observed in many artefacts until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD radial incised or relief striations on the beards made their appearance on many examples as an important innovation. This aspect was increasingly used in the later times of Antiquity (Webster, Green, & Seeberg, 1995, vol. 1, pp. 28-29).
- 51 Short and massive hair of the “leading slave” type can be seen from the Classical Period on. After the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, the ends of the hair begin to be depicted as slightly jutting and this model is also favoured in the Roman Period (Webster, Green, & Seeberg, 1995, vol. 1, pp. 28-29). On the other hand, the shape of the *speira* on the top of the head does not provide data for a clear dating until the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. From the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, the *speira* began to be detailed with radial striation, just like the beard. Nevertheless, the earlier smooth hair and beard and the radial striation which appeared at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD were used concurrently for a while (Webster, 1961, p. 108).
- 52 The short, massive, undetailed, and jutting side hair of the figure depicted on the plastic vase from Aigai was used from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC until Late Antiquity. The stylized, flat, semi-circular beard framing a shallow mouth can be found in examples

produced in different periods from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC until the end of the Roman Period. Although the treatment of hair and beard indicates a style seen after the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, it does not provide clear data for the dating of the artefact.

- 53 Another interesting feature of the actor depicted on the plastic vase from Aigai is the circular stamped pupils (Fig. 9) This technique, which creates a three-dimensional appearance enhancing the lively facial expression of the actor, was first used on ethnic figurines and grotesques in the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial periods.<sup>36</sup> It was also frequently preferred on plastic vases, especially on “head vases”.<sup>37</sup>
- 54 It is difficult to make a clear dating of the plastic vase based on related iconography and stylistic data, due to the continuity of the iconographical scheme from the Hellenistic to the Roman Period and due to the fact that the stylistic details do not point to a clear chronology. In this regard, it would be proper to evaluate the stylistic data together with contextual and technical frameworks.

## Function

- 55 Since the Classical Period, theatre-related iconography has been frequently used in various decorative elements such as vase paintings, statuettes of varying materials, wall paintings, and mosaics. Although theatre-related figures are mostly considered within the framework of Dionysiac cult practices,<sup>38</sup> contexts in which they were preferred as grave goods have also been revealed.<sup>39</sup> During the Hellenistic and Roman periods, find groups with depictions of this type of figures were also present in domestic contexts.<sup>40</sup> While Dionysiac figures, such as Dionysos, satyrs, and maenads, or actor figures and masks depicting characters of tragedy or various comedy genres unearthed in houses are mostly associated with domestic cults, there are cases, especially in the Roman Period, where they were used as decorative themes.<sup>41</sup> With the spread of Christianity in Late Antiquity, Dionysos lost his role in the belief system, however, the Dionysiac theme continued to be used as a nostalgic decorative element.<sup>42</sup>
- 56 No building directly related to the functions mentioned above is known in the vicinity of the findspot. Therefore, it was not possible to directly associate the artefact with a building nearby. The find spot of the plastic vase in question points to a probable relation with the Bouleuterion. However, *bouleuteria* are not normally associated with the Dionysiac or theatrical world. In addition, the vase is a singular artefact related to the Dionysiac or theatrical iconography from the find spot. Since the iconographic element of the vase was used in so many contexts and since it is not possible to determine the original context of the artefact with the help of its findspot, we cannot make any suggestion regarding the function of the artefact.

## Conclusion

- 57 The plastic vase, which is the subject of this study, represents an actor who portrays a “*hegemon therapon*” or “leading slave”. It was found in a bedrock pit in a room related to the Bouleuterion. It is also very near to the Agora. The quality finds and the collective find groups of the Archaic and Early Hellenistic periods prove that the area is important for the city from the Archaic Period on. Additionally, the plastic vase is among the most outstanding finds of the Roman Period Aigai. It is understood that the

rooms where the vase was found were subject to rearrangements during the Roman Period. These rearrangements disturbed or moved many contexts in the area and changed the functions of the bedrock pits. The deposit inside the bedrock pit in Room 6 was also formed as a single stratum during this process. The finds in this stratum do not belong to a single period nor to a single original context. The archaeological condition does not allow us to determine the exact original function of the pit; neither does it indicate the reason for the vase's presence in the pit.

- 58 The similarity of the plastic vase and the ESC ceramics found in Aigai in terms of the clay and slip suggests that the plastic vase may have been produced in Pergamon. The contextual data, the similarity of the fabric and slip to the ESC ceramics dated to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the neck-mouth-handle combination following the Hellenistic tradition as explained above, and the absence of the hair and beard details in the form of radial striation which stylistically intensified from the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD allow us to date the artefact between the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

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## NOTES

1. Aspendos was described by Strabo as rocky and barren: Strab. XIII.2.6.
2. For Aigai and excavations see Doğer, 2017, p. 325-331; Sezgin, 2017, p. 333-351; Sezgin & Eroğlu, 2020, p. 245-265; Doğer (ed.), 2021; Sezgin, 2022.
3. This section is considered to be a prytaneion. For the Prytaneion and the Bouleuterion of Aigai see: Sezgin & Aybek, 2016, p. 17-43; Sezgin, Gürbüz & Başdemir, 2021, 109-170.
4. It is possible to be sure about the ritualistic function of Bothros I and Bothros II because of their finds. But the archaeological condition of the bedrock pit in Room 6 does not let us determine its exact original function. A number of differences between the bedrock pit of Room 6 and the Bothros I and II draw attention. Apart from the dates of the finds, their conditions are also different. The ceramic finds recovered from Bothros I and II are preserved in a better condition and the sherds are largely complete compared to the examples from the bedrock pit in Room 6. On the other hand, the finds from the Bothros III (Fig. 1), which belongs to the Old Bouleuterion and dates to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, are quite scattered, and only a few examples are completed (Sezgin, Gürbüz, & Başdemir, 2021, pp. 137-140)
5. H: 22.4 cm, W: 33.4 cm, mouth diameter: 34 cm, base Diameter: 15 cm. The upper surface of the rim plate and the interior of the body are fully red-glazed. For an example similar in form see McPhee, Pemberton, Zervos, & Whitton, 2012, pp. 139-140, 161, Fig. 26, last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.
6. For Cosa examples see Marabini-Moevs, 2006, p. 59, No. AB22II.9 and AB22II.10, Pl. 27. In Cosa it comes from the Atrium Building I, Room 22, Level II and was dated to the Tiberian-Early Claudian Period.

7. For Athenian examples see Hayes, 2008, p. 165, no. 466 and 467, Fig.16, Pl. 21. Plates/Platters, Traditional Post Augustan types, first half and middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.
8. See Kenrick, 1985, pp. 149-150, Group D, Fig. 27, No. 231.1, between AD 30-79.
9. The platter from Aigai was found close to the surface, between the levels 361.90-361.85 m. About 25 cm above this level (362.13 m) lies the walking surface of Room 5, dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. This date constitutes a terminus for the Aigai platter.
10. The coins were identified and dated by Mehmet Önder. The coins discovered in Aigai between 2004-2016, including the above coins, have been prepared for publishing by him. The publication is in press. We are thankful to him for his support.
11. These coins were as well identified and dated by Mehmet Önder.
12. In addition to the complete finds unearthed from the pit, hundreds of ceramic sherds were found. The largest group among them consists of dozens of miniature, flat-bottomed, single-handled bowls. Other finds represented by numerous examples are sherds of cooking pots such as *khytra* and *lopas*, and bowls with inverted rims with dipped glaze decoration on the rims.
13. See Sezgin, Gürbüz, & Başdemir 2021, pp. 137-140. Bothros III is dated to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.
14. One of the coins is highly worn (AIG.07.s81). One is an Aigai coin dated between the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century and the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (AIG.07.s78). AIG.07.s80 is a coin of Myrina dated to the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Three coins (AIG.07.s79, AIG.07.s82 and AIG.07.s83) are included in the 15 coins mentioned above. These are Aigai coins dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century - first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.
15. We would like to thank Assoc. Prof. Nezih Aytaçlar for his support and guidance on this matter.
16. Transitioning from 2.5YR 7/6 light red to 10R 5/8 red and 2.5YR 3/2 dusky red. The upper body is 2.5YR 5/8 red.
17. Although there is no comprehensive scientific study on this subject, this inference was made empirically.
18. Emel Dereboylu, in her doctoral dissertation on the figurines from Aigai, remarks that the clay examples in the mentioned colour scale were used in 12 % of the entire corpus: Dereboylu, 2012, pp. 40-41, 463, Graphic 1. Examinations we have conducted on the terracotta figurines in the sanctuary of Athena in Aigai have revealed that clay with these characteristics has been used in almost 10 % of all fragments.
19. For the definition of the “Magenta Ware” group see Higgins, 1976, pp. 1-5. For the debates on the production centres and chronology of Hellenistic plastic ware see; Granata, 2015, pp. 651-653; Lund, 2011, p. 325.
20. For *oinophoroi* see Robinson, 1909, pp. 30-38; Hausmann, 1954/55, pp. 125-146; Heimberg, 1976, pp. 251-290; Bailey, 1979, pp. 259-262; Poblome, 1998, pp. 205-225. The above-mentioned ESC 01 fragment belongs to a round *oinophoros*.
21. As mentioned above, the similar technical features of the plastic vase from Aigai and the round *oinophoros* ESC 01 suggest that both were produced at the same workshop.
22. For these two plastic vases see Webster, Green, & Seeberg 1995, vol. 1, No: 3NV4, 3 NV9, Pl. 33-34, vol. 2, p. 239, 241.
23. Hayes has evaluated this fragment under the “Eastern (?) Aegean, “Attiko” Group. He has also stated that the production centre may have been Knidos, but a definite workshop cannot be determined due to a lack of similar examples.
24. Mandel states that this neck-mouth-handle form derives from the Early Hellenistic Period *lagynoi*: Mandel, 1988, p. 199.
25. For Black glazed *lagynoi* see, p. 296, No. 494-495, Fig. 37, Pl. 49; For West Slope *oinochoai* see, p. 293, No. 465-466, Fig. 34, Pl. 46.

26. In many types of masks, a special design was made to ensure that the actor's voice would clearly reach the entire audience: this design, where the mouth opening is framed by a more protruding beard and thus deepened, is defined as a "trumpet mouth": Bieber, 1961, p. 102.
27. Figurines of actors with the same arm position, holding the mask with one hand or supporting it from below, were found in various centres: *Delos*: Laumonier, 1956, No: 1219, pp. 262-263, Pl. 92, 1<sup>st</sup> century BC; *Myrina*: Leyenaar-Plaisier, 1979, No: 732, pp. 281-282, Pl. 107, 1<sup>st</sup> century BC; *Priene*: Rumscheid, 2006, No: 274, pp. 494-495, Pl. 115/7, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD; *Alexandria*: Breccia, 1930, No: 350, p. 64, Pl. 36/6, Roman Imperial Period.
28. It can be clearly seen on some figurines that this protrusion is not a pouch/sack but a collection of the excess fabric of the upper garment: Bieber, 1961, p. 161, Fig. 581.
29. According to many scholars, this Hellenistic source is Aristophanes of Byzantium who lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century BC: Webster, 1949, p. 97, n. 4; Bieber, 1961, p. 105; Webster, Green, & Seeberg 1995, vol. 1, p. 6.
30. For the classification of theatrical characters in the *Onomastikon* of Pollux see Webster, Green, & Seeberg 1995, vol. 1, pp. 1-53. Some scholars share the opinion that Pollux's classification contains vague definitions and is therefore insufficient for the definition of the entire iconography of ancient theatre: Bieber, 1961, p. 105; Webster, Green, & Seeberg, 1995, vol. 1, p. 6; Rumscheid, 2006, p. 287. Nevertheless, Pollux's classification has been useful for a basic distinction of the visual material and has been used in almost all publications studying ancient theatre iconography.
31. For the definition of slave characters see Bieber, 1961, pp. 102-106.
32. Pollux describes these characters as follows: "The Leading Slave has a roll of red hair, has his eyebrows raised and contracts the forehead (...)" (Webster, Green, & Seeberg 1995, vol. 1. p. 26). It is thought that the "roll of hair" mentioned describes the *speira* raising on the forehead. This description only gives information on the face and hairstyle. The rest of the physical features of the character are defined thanks to the figurative archaeological artefacts that depict scenes from known New Comedy plays: Bieber, 1961, pp. 92-93, 102, Fig. 324, 327, 328.
33. For the character of the "clever slave" in comedy plays see Quinn, 2015, pp. 14-19.
34. Plautus, the famous playwright of Latin comedy, is the first to adapt the Clever slave character from Greek plays to Roman comedy. The character becomes popular with his plays: Quinn, 2015, p. 15.
35. For iconography related to the Dionysiac world and theatre in Late Antiquity see Bowersock, 1990, pp. 41-53; Parrish, 1995, pp. 307-332.
36. For Hellenistic and Roman figurine examples with this type of eye design see Burr-Thompson, 1963, p. 120, No: 132, Pl. XXIX (Actor figurine, Troy - 1<sup>st</sup> century BC); Fischer, 1994, pp. 191, 193-194, No: 325, 335, Pl. 27 - 28 (Actor figurine, Egypt - both 1<sup>st</sup> century BC); Bailey, 2008, p. 152, No: 3583, Pl. 107 (Negro head, Egypt - 2<sup>nd</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> century BC); Besques, 1972, p. 245, E167, Pl. 320 (Grotesque head, Smyrna, Roman Imperial Period)
37. For Hellenistic and Roman head vases with this type of eye design see Bailey, 2008, p. 37, No: 3080, Pl. 14 (Head vase designed as negro head, Egypt, 2<sup>nd</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> century BC); Mandel, 1988, p. 205, P 187, Pl. 21 (Head vase designed as a grotesque head, Pergamon, 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD); Mandel, 1988, p. 206, Pl. 33 4a-b (Head vase in the form of a theatre mask, 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD); Bailey, 1972/73, pp. 16-17, no. 3, pl. 2.2 (*lagynos* neck in the form of a human head, Knidos, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD).
38. Originating from Dionysiac rituals, theatre plays have been performed in Dionysiac festivals in almost every period. In the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, new contests where the performances of actors were rewarded were added to the contests for the selection of plays in the Dionysia and Lenaia festivals held in honour of Dionysos. It is known from written sources that the directors of Dionysiac guilds of artists established in the Hellenistic Period were also priests of Dionysos and

that the actors dedicated various theatre-related votive objects, especially masks, to the sanctuaries: Bieber, 1961, pp. 80-86; Nicolaou, 1989, p. 269; Green, 1982, pp. 237-248.

39. The most detailed evidence for the use of groups of objects with Dionysiac and theatrical figures comes from the city of Lipara in South Italy. Bernabò-Brea argues that the Dionysiac and theatrical figurines placed in graves point to a mystical aspect of Dionysos, related to the afterlife: Bernabò-Brea, 2001, pp. 275-276. Besides Lipara, Dionysiac and theatrical figurines were found in graves of various *necropoleis* such as Tanagra and Myrina: Jeammet, 2003, pp. 130-133; Mollard-Besques, 1963, pp. 77-81; 141-142; Pl. 97-98; 172-173.

40. For Dionysos and theatre-related figurines from domestic contexts in different centres of the Hellenistic Period and their interpretation within context see Rumscheid, 2006, p. 274, 287.

41. Based on scenes on some decorative elements such as wall paintings and mosaics it is thought that especially in the Roman Period professional actors, comedians, pantomimes, or dancers performed in symposia held in houses and that life-sized masks may have been used as decorative elements in the places where the symposia were held: Ghiron-Bistagne, 1970, pp. 265-266; Parrish, 2021, pp. 233-257.

42. See above Footnote 35w.

## ABSTRACTS

Aigai, an Aeolian city located on the mountain known as Aspendenos in antiquity (today Yuntdaği), became an economic and cultural centre from the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, with the support of the Hellenistic kingdom of Pergamon. Archaeological excavations carried out in 2007 in the south of the New Bouleuterion, built in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century BC on the Old Bouleuterion dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, revealed a group of adjacent rooms that were used during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The research showed that the area was in use from the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC until AD 260 when the city was abandoned. The exceptional quality of the archaeological material uncovered during the excavations indicates that this building contains important spaces related to the Bouleuterion. The plastic vase in the form of an actor found in a bedrock pit in one of these rooms is one of the most remarkable objects discovered in the city. This study aims to contribute to the knowledge of Roman plastic vase production tradition in Asia Minor by analysing the vase in terms of archaeological context, technique, form, iconography, and style.

Aigai, ville éolienne située dans le massif montagneux connu sous le nom d'Aspendenos dans l'Antiquité (actuel Yuntdaği) est devenue, grâce au soutien du royaume hellénistique de Pergame, un centre économique et culturel à partir du début du III<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C. Les fouilles archéologiques menées en 2007 au sud du Nouveau Bouleuterion, construit au milieu du II<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C. sur l'ancien Bouleuterion remontant au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C., ont révélé un ensemble de pièces adjacentes utilisées pendant les périodes hellénistique et romaine. Les études menées à cet endroit ont montré que ce secteur avait été occupé depuis la fin du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle avant J.-C. jusqu'en 260 de notre ère, date à laquelle la ville a été abandonnée. La qualité exceptionnelle du matériel archéologique recueilli lors des fouilles, permet d'affirmer que ces constructions abritaient d'importantes salles liées au Bouleuterion. Le vase plastique en forme d'acteur, trouvé dans une fosse creusée dans le rocher, dans l'une de ces salles, constitue l'un des objets les plus remarquables découverts dans la ville. Cette étude vise à contribuer à une meilleure

connaissance de la tradition romaine de production de vases plastiques en Asie Mineure, en procédant à l'analyse du vase en termes de contexte archéologique, de technique, de forme, d'iconographie et de style.

## INDEX

**Keywords:** Aigai, plastic vase, Roman Period, ancient theatre, terra sigillata

**Mots-clés:** Aigai, vase plastique, époque romaine, théâtre antique, céramique sigillée

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