

## Terracotta Statuette of “Bathing Aphrodite”?

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Two terracotta statuettes of closely parallel iconography are exhibited at the Silifke and Sadberk Hanım Museums. The statuette at the Silifke Museum is 20 cm., while the one at the Sadberk Hanım Museum is 23 cm. Both were formed from a cream coloured paste consisting of mica and their slips were also cream coloured. The Silifke statuette has a sort of draping formed by painting geometric lines on the slip in pink (obtained by mixing pink-red with white)<sup>1</sup> over the breast and in black over the hips. Cracks on other parts of the body are due either to poorly regulated temperature during firing or to firing at temperatures lower than necessary; furthermore the paint has flaked off<sup>2</sup>. Both statuettes have a ‘firing hole’ (*Brennloch*) at their backs, whose function is still disputed and may be linked with setting or hanging them up<sup>3</sup>.

Both statuettes were made from various piece moulds (*Matrize*) worked separately and then joined together with clay slurry (*Tonschlicker*). Hand-modelling applied on details later is worth noting. This is clearly seen especially around the hair gathered in a chignon at the back of the head.

The parallel features of both statuettes are the following: The statuette is depicted frontally; it is seated on a round stool with a single profile at the bottom and two profiles below the sitting plane. These stools have a hole at the back and rise on a rectangular base that was worked separately and joined later to the round sitting plane. The statuette at the Sadberk Hanım Museum (Fig. 1) has two amphorae with convex flutes resting on the base, one on either side of the figure, while the Silifke example (Fig. 2) has only one amphora with convex flutes on the left side of the base. The rectangular base of the Silifke example is broken exactly where the second amphora would be expected. The Silifke example also features a seashell on the base, placed slightly to the left. The Sadberk Hanım example

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I would like to thank the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums and Mrs. İlhami Öztürk, director of the Silifke Museum, for permission to study the statuette with inventory nr. 528 at the Silifke Museum. I would also like to thank Mrs. Hülya Bilgi, director of the Sadberk Hanım Museum, for giving permission to study the statuette with inventory nr. 7501 and Mrs. Sinem Üstün Türkteki, curator-archaeologist of Sadberk Hanım Museum, for her help. My thanks are also due to Mr. Tarkan Kahya of AKMED, who called my attention to the example at Sadberk Hanım Museum, and also Mr. Kayhan Dörtlük, director of AKMED, for his help during my studies at AKMED.

<sup>1</sup> Herdejürgen 1978, 112.

<sup>2</sup> Witteyer 1996, 490; Rumscheid 2006, 368.

<sup>3</sup> Rumscheid 2006, 378.

is damaged at this point but such a seashell should also be expected on it. The left leg is placed on the right leg and the sole of the left foot, which is on the right knee, is in contact with another object held in the right hand. The left arm rests on the left knee and the fingers are depicted joined. The Sadberk Hanım example has a better preserved face and exhibits clear eye cavities and thick lips. Both examples have large, round earrings. The hair is under the *stephane*, which is triangular and rises accentuated toward the middle, and the hair is tied into a chignon. The Silifke example has parallel vertical flutes in the triangular part, while the Sadberk Hanım example has a sharp profile on the bottom and on the top and a more plastic one in the middle. Both statuettes feature a long neck. In the Sadberk Hanım example, the neck terminates at a necklace with a round pendant in relief while the neck of the Silifke example terminates in a thick profile that is more like a garment collar. However, there is a pendant here too and the profile looks like a necklace with a pendant rendered in paint. Another possibility is that both examples may have the necklace and the collar depicted together because the profile is a bit too thick for a necklace only.

The greatest difference between the two statuettes plays a discriminative role for the interpretation of these statuettes. The Sadberk Hanım example does not display any trace of paint on the body and therefore the figure may be interpreted as being depicted naked. Thus the rings observed above the elbows of both arms can be regarded as 'armlets', those on the wrists as 'bracelets' and those around the ankles as 'anklets'<sup>4</sup>. However, the Silifke statuette has a lacy, mesh-like 'garment' with a V-shaped décolleté reaching from the shoulders down to the breasts, rendered in pink paint. The same clothing is given in black paint with more open mesh on the back of the figure, especially covering her hips<sup>5</sup>. The surface has cracks which led to fractures and flaking; therefore, the profiles above the elbows can be considered to be 'armlets' and those on the wrists and ankles can be considered 'bracelets' and 'anklets' or as the cuffs of a garment covering the arms, body and legs. In case of the latter possibility the Sadberk Hanım example also might be considered to have had clothing painted on it.

Following is an evaluation of both examples from Silifke and Sadberk Hanım museums in regard to iconography, dating and provenance proposals. The most important point that suggests a bathing action is the amphora at the feet of the figures. One other strong evidence is the gesture of rubbing the sole of the left foot with pumice or some sponge-like object held in the right hand. This is further supported by the seashell at the base of the Silifke example – which, we think, also existed on the Sadberk Hanım example, and it is likely that the pumice or sponge-like object could be placed on this seashell after use. The identification of the figure as Aphrodite is possible due to the link between the seashell and Aphrodite in mythology<sup>6</sup>. One further feature supporting the identification of the figure as Aphrodite is the convex or serpent-shaped armlets actually with gems, schematised here in simple round form<sup>7</sup>. Most of the Aphrodite statues come from Asia Minor, which

<sup>4</sup> Anlağan – Anlağan – Günsenin 1995, 63 no. 3; Koleksiyon 2002, 123 no. 128; Türkiye – Hürmüzlü 2007, 76 fig. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Hamdorf 1996, 44: The 'breast band' exemplified on Aphrodite given here can be applicable for the statuettes at the Silifke and Sadberk Hanım museums. For the Silifke example, when the mesh-like garments on the breast and hip are considered as a whole we have bikini-like clothing. See Wheeler 2004, 132.

<sup>6</sup> Kerenyi 1951, 71; Kelperi 1997, 12, 34.

<sup>7</sup> Rumscheid 2006, 219 ff. n. 1334-1335; Kelperi 1997, 12, 34.



suggests that their provenance goes back to the Eastern Greek–Asia Minor region. Early examples do not have armlets but with the influence of Cnidian Aphrodite, Hellenistic examples start featuring armlets<sup>8</sup>, so much so that these armlets become a criterion for the interpretation of Aphrodite; thus, as of the late Classical period, the armlets<sup>9</sup>, bracelets or necklace distinguish Aphrodite from a *hetaire*. The amphora depiction is a significant feature for identifying Aphrodite. The Roman copies of Cnidian Aphrodite of Praxiteles depict the deity laying her towel on an amphora<sup>10</sup> on the floor and the same motif can be found on the statuettes despite the lack of amphorae in those examples<sup>11</sup>. Although the motif of the statuettes at the Silifke and Sadberk Hanım museums do not at all remind of the Cnidian Aphrodite, they do feature the amphora of the Cnidian Aphrodite, which is associated with bathing<sup>12</sup>. Thus, based on the evidence presented, the identification as Aphrodite combined with the phenomenon of bathing seems possible for both statuettes. An example of the modification of common and well-known iconographies in accordance with the taste of the artist and the patron may be taken from the coins of Nagidos as a case study for Aphrodite<sup>13</sup>. Among coins of Nagidos there is a 'western' type of Aphrodite as well as an entirely 'oriental' type in which Aphrodite is depicted sitting next to a sphinx. Like this 'Persianised' Aphrodite coin, there are also 'oriental' depictions of Aphrodite in baked clay statuettes:<sup>14</sup> Finds from Myrina, Smyrna, Priene, Assos, Pergamum and Cyprus contain depictions of Aphrodite seated, clothed quite conservatively and wearing very rich jewellery. It is thought that Aphrodite was identified with her oriental parallels such as Isis and Astarte and indeed, for the Greeks, Aphrodite was of oriental origin<sup>15</sup>. Although she does not wear such conservative garments as the ones on these examples, Aphrodite is regarded as 'oriental' when her body is for the most part covered with jewellery or amulets with round motifs<sup>16</sup>. The hair style of 'oriental Aphrodites' is presented as distinctly wavy and gathered into a chignon; an oval diadem, enriched with gems, is placed on the forehead<sup>17</sup>. Examples of this splendid hair style are dated to the Hellenistic period but the widespread use continued during the Roman Imperial period. Examples with a crescent-shaped, bejewelled *stephane* rising above the head, and the hair gathered in a chignon at the back, are encountered especially at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. in Asia Minor<sup>18</sup>. Looking for evidence of earrings, it is observed that they are not applied on naked female sculptures of the Classical and Hellenistic periods<sup>19</sup>, but earring and *stephane* are depicted together

<sup>8</sup> Kelperi 1997, 11.

<sup>9</sup> idem, 4.8: This feature arising from oriental iconography is not a discovery of Praxiteles. The armlet in Greek art is first attested on an Attic *lekkythos* of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

<sup>10</sup> Robertson 1975, 392-393; Stewart 1990, 277, 279 fig. 503.

<sup>11</sup> Rumscheid 2006, 219 ff. nr. 1331, 427 ff. pl. 28,1-2 nr. 60; pl. 28,3-4 nr. 61; pl. 28,5 nr. 62; pl. 28, 6 nr. 63; pl. 28, 7-8 nr. 64; Işın 2007, 34, 40 ff. nr. 250.

<sup>12</sup> However, no clear form, thus a date, can be proposed for the vessel with convex flutes observed on both the Silifke and Sadberk Hanım examples; the basic point here must be the transfer of any vessel containing water.

<sup>13</sup> Durugönül 2007, 5 ff.

<sup>14</sup> Burn - Higgins 2001, 119 ff. pl. 50 nr. 2279; pl. 51 nr. 2280; Jentel 1984, nr. 107-108.

<sup>15</sup> Pirenne-Delforge 1999, 839.

<sup>16</sup> Burn - Higgins 2001, 130 pl. 56 nr. 2307; Leyenaar-Plaisier 1979, 99 nrs. 692-694.

<sup>17</sup> Burn - Higgins 2001, 120 ff. pl. 51 nr. 2280, 2282; 121 pl. 51 nr. 2283.

<sup>18</sup> idem, 133 ff. pl. 58 nr. 2319; pl. 59 nrs. 2320-2322; for examples with a veil and *stephane* see Rumscheid 421 pl. 18, 19, 1 nr. 37; 424 pl. 22, 3-4 nr. 46; pl. 22, 5-6 nr. 47; pl. 22, 7-8 nr. 48.

<sup>19</sup> Kelperi 1997, 43-45: In the marble statues, examples wearing golden earrings go back to the Archaic period.



moreoften in the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. In the late Hellenistic period, nakedness and *stephane* are seen together especially in Aphrodite depictions, and this feature also continues in the Roman examples. The *stephane* of Aphrodite which was depicted high with edged profile increased in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.<sup>20</sup> and had a great influence on the Ptolemaic women's iconography from Berenice II onwards. The *stephane*, which was used by goddesses and women in general, does not go back to a certain type and is found especially in Aphrodite variations, of the late Hellenistic to early Roman periods<sup>21</sup>.

The *stephane* of the Silifke statuette is fluted, while that of the Sadberk Hanım example is profiled; the hair bun at the back goes back to the Hellenistic examples; however, these *stephane* together with the hair bun essentially reflects a style that spread during the Roman Imperial period, especially under Claudius and Trajan<sup>22</sup>. Besides, as seen on the Sadberk Hanım example, in the Hadrianic-late Antonine period, the *stephane* with profiled edges peculiar to the Hellenistic period came back into use and heavy and monumental appearances were especially favoured.

The above-mentioned iconographic analogies suggest that these two statuettes from the Silifke and Sadberk Hanım Museums should be evaluated within the frame of the early Roman period. The stylistic criteria cannot be formulated owing to the fact that the details of the statuettes, especially on the deteriorated parts on the body and head of the Silifke example are not known, furthermore the localness of both examples is a hindrance. Yet, the plain, unexaggerated and very proportionate body lines as well as the bold facial lines of the Sadberk Hanım example and the round faces of both examples point to early Roman period examples from Tarsus and other sites in Anatolia<sup>23</sup>. Consequently, data available at hand indicate that both statuettes can be dated to the late 1<sup>st</sup> or the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.

We can infer in light of the data examined that the statuettes at the Silifke and Sadberk Hanım museums depict any female imitating Aphrodite in a very special and humane pose. Indeed, the seashell and serpent-shaped armlets peculiar to Aphrodite became ordinary in time and were applied for any female depiction. These statuettes could be products of a workshop that knew the Cnidian Aphrodite, which is linked with bathing, or its terracotta statuette imitations, a workshop that knew Aphrodite was symbolised with seashells and armlets with serpent motifs. It is likely that these statuettes could have been produced in Cilicia, possibly at Tarsus workshops, thanks to their 'oriental' features<sup>24</sup>. It was mentioned above that the dressed Aphrodite had oriental features; furthermore, the preference for the 'oriental' style, depicting a partially 'dressed' figure for Aphrodite is observed on these two statuettes. The preference that she is not seen naked even during bathing may have arisen from the custom of not bathing naked in the bathhouses<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> idem, 49, 52.

<sup>21</sup> idem, 47, 48: When considering other female statues, the *stephane* is found on the korai of the Archaic period. On the other hand, in the Classical period, it is usually seen on pottery and coins.

<sup>22</sup> Thompson 1963, 131 pl. XLVI nr. 215; Blanck 1996, 82 ff. fig. 17 C.

<sup>23</sup> Goldman 1950, 302, 304, 308 nr. 12; 310 nr. 14; Koleksiyon 2002, 122 nr. 217; 213 nr. 219, 221.

<sup>24</sup> Işın 2007, 38; Goldman 1950, 297-383. The fact that one of the two statuettes studied in this article has reached the Silifke Museum in the considered region also supports this hypothesis.

<sup>25</sup> Yegül 1992, 42.

Until it was prohibited by Hadrian thanks to scandals, women and men could bathe together in public baths; however, later, bathing half-naked should have spread in the baths<sup>26</sup>. Surely such an official decree would not have reflected on the iconography of the goddess. The hypothesis that these two statuettes from the Silifke and Sadberk Hanım museums depict women imitating Aphrodite is thus supported. Those who ordered the sculptures must have not been able to reflect themselves as naked even though they were imitating Aphrodite. In this case, also supported is the hypothesis that the addition of a lace-like partial garment on the Silifke example had existed on the Sadberk Hanım example as well, but either the painting had not been completed or the paint had flaked off in time.

The identity and purpose of the people who ordered these two statuettes, which we think are in the 'oriental' style and possibly were produced at an eastern workshop, must remain hypothetical as their provenance and context are unknown. In other words, the question of why they were produced – for civic or religious use, for a house or another civic building or a sanctuary – cannot be clarified. In one aspect, a more civic background should be considered because one of the best-known genre statuettes is the 'Spiniario' and our statuettes recall it iconographically<sup>27</sup>; however, it is likely that they were produced to adorn a room<sup>28</sup> or to create a genre figure that would fit into an *andrones* – that is, one imitating the goddess who symbolizes eroticism and beauty, and not a figure that would fit into a cultic corner of a temple or house.

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<sup>26</sup> idem, 32 ff.

<sup>27</sup> Rumscheid 2006, 497 pl. 119, 2-3; 120 nr. 278.

<sup>28</sup> Kreeb 1988, 21-29, 36-40, 102-119, 200-215; Rumscheid 2006, 219.



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## Öz

### Yıkanan Aphrodite Heykelciği

Bu makalede hem ikonografik hem de ebatlar ve malzeme özellikleri açısından birbirine benzeyen iki pişmiş toprak figürin incelenmektedir: Bunlardan biri Sadberk Hanım Müzesi diğeri ise Silifke Müzesi tarafından satın alınmışlardır. Üretim yerleri bilinmemektedir. İlk bakışta Sadberk Hanım Müzesi örneği çıplak görünmekte fakat Silifke Müzesi örneğinde göğüs ve basen üzerinde dikdörtgen biçimli motifler seçilmektedir. Her iki figür de, dikdörtgen bir platform üzerine yerleştirilmiş yuvarlak bir blok üzerinde oturmaktadır. Sadberk Hanım figürünün iki yanında birer amphora, Silifke Müzesi örneğinde ise yalnızca bir tane amphora yer almaktadır. Silifke örneğinin platformunun kırık olması nedeniyle onun da orijinalde iki amphoralı olduğu düşünülmektedir. Silifke figürünün platformunda bir deniz kabuğu bulunmaktadır. Aynısı Sadberk Hanım örneğinde de bulunmuş ama sonradan kaybolmuş olmalıdır. Her iki örnekte de figür sol ayağını sağ bacağı üzerine koymuş ve muhtemelen sağ elindeki bir ponza taşıyla sol ayağını ovmaktadır. Her ikisinin de başının üzerinde bir *stephane* ve boyunlarında pandantif vardır.

Üç ipucu bize bu iki figürünün Aphrodite'yi banyo yapar halde temsil ettiğini düşündürmektedir: Amphoralar, ayağını ovma motifi ve Silifke figüründe var olan ama Sadberk Hanım örneğinde de normalde bulunması gereken deniz kabuğu. Figürlerin Aphrodite olarak tanınması, öncelikle mitolojide tanrıçanın bu deniz kabuğu ile özdeşleştirilmesi nedeniyle mümkündür. Yılanvari stilize pazibentler, özellikle Klasik dönemden sonra, Aphrodite için çok yaygın şekilde kullanılmıştır. Nihayet, yıkanan Aphrodite, özellikle de Knidos Aphroditesi ile özdeşleşen amphorayı dikkate almalıyız.

Aphrodite 'doğulu' tarzda giyimlidir. Aslında Aphrodite'nin doğulu karşılıkları olan Isis veya Astarte'nin bir yansıması olduğu düşünülmektedir. Doğu Yunan ve Küçük Asya örneklerinde çoğu zaman, giyimli veya büyük takılarla örtülmüş Aphrodite figürleri görmektediriz. Silifke figüründeki dikdörtgen motifler ise bu figürün en azından kısmen giyimli olduğunu göstermektedir. Sadberk Hanım Müzesi örneği tüm açılardan Silifke örneğine benzediği için onun da giyimli gösterilmek istendiğini ve boyanın solduğunu düşünebiliriz.

Sadberk Hanım ve Silifke Müzelerindeki bu pişmiş toprak figürinlerin Aphrodite'yi 'doğulu' tarzda betimlediklerini ve bunun da onların Kilikya'da üretilmiş olabileceğini akla getirdiğini söyleyebiliriz. Tarihleme için ise *stephane* bir ipucu sunmaktadır. Stephanelerin belirgin bir tipolojik gelişimi söz konusu değildir ancak çoğunlukla Aphrodite'nin Roma varyasyonlarında karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Geç Hadrianus'dan erken Antoninler dönemine

kadar olan zaman diliminde büyük formatlı şekilde yaygın olarak kullanılmışlardır: Her iki figürinimizde de geniş ve ağır tip görülmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, bu makalede incelenen figürinlerin doğulu tarzda ve büyük olasılıkla da doğudaki bir atölyede çalışıldığını söyleyebiliriz. Ancak kesin üretim yerlerini ve özellikle de kontekstlerini bilmeden kullanım amaçları konusunda yorum yapmak zordur: Acaba bir tapınak için mi yoksa bir evin kült köşesi için mi yapılmışlardı? Belki de, tanrıçanın çok özel ve insani bir pozunu yansıtan bu figürinler, bir evin bir odasını, belki de *andrones* i bezemek için genre figürini olarak üretilmişlerdi.





Fig. 1 Statuette in the Museum of Sadberk Hanım.



Fig. 2 Statuette in the Archaeological Museum of Silifke.