

ADALYA



SUNA-İNAN KIRAÇ AKDENİZ MEDENİYETLERİ ARAŞTIRMA ENSTİTÜSÜ
SUNA & İNAN KIRAÇ RESEARCH INSTITUTE ON MEDITERRANEAN CIVILIZATIONS

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Two Italian Sigillata Fragments from Perge

Senem ÖZDEN-GERÇEKER*

Perge is one of the major cities of the Pamphylian plain between the Taurus Mountains and the Mediterranean Sea. Although Perge is located approximately 12 km. from the sea coast, the Kestros River (today the Aksu River) that flows east of the city made it become one of the important ports in the Pamphylian region (Fig. 1)¹. The Kestros River not only linked Perge to the Mediterranean Sea but also to the inland cities behind the Pamphylian region. Most probably Perge was exchanging goods with neighboring and overseas countries by using this river. During the excavations which have been directed by Istanbul University since 1946 and by Prof. Dr. Halûk Abbasoğlu since 1988, a remarkable amount of imported pottery was recorded as the evidence for the exchange patterns of the city. In particular, Hellenistic and Roman period tableware imports reveal that the city met its tableware needs mostly from the Eastern Mediterranean². However, two residual Italian sigillata fragments found in excavations carried out in 2008 of Lot 159-Western Necropolis are of considerable interest, since Italian sigillata has rarely been observed among the imports of Perge. Italian sigillata, then, is the subject of this article.

Excavations of Lot 159 in the Western Necropolis

Since 2006, excavations of the Western Necropolis have concentrated on Lot 159, approximately 500 m. south of the West Gate to illuminate the burial customs of the city (Fig. 2). As a result of this work, several tombs and burial gifts from the Hellenistic and Roman periods have been discovered (Fig. 3)³. However, these excavations not only shed light on the burial customs of the city, but also revealed a part of the water distribution system with some uncovered terracotta pipelines (Fig. 4). The paths of these pipelines between the tombs suggest that they were installed when the area had lost its funerary function⁴.

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I wish to thank Prof. Dr. H. Abbasoğlu, director of the excavation and restoration project at Perge, and Prof. Dr. İnci Delemen, chair of the Department of Classical Archaeology at Istanbul University, for permission to publish the two sigillata fragments in question found in Lot 159; and Prof. Dr. J. Poblome for encouraging my research into this subject. I also would like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. S. Çokay Kepçe and Dr. A. Özdzibay.

¹ "Then one comes to the Cestrus River; and, sailing sixty stadia up this river, one comes to Perge" in Strabo, Geography 14.42; Martini et al. 2008.

² Fırat 1999; Fırat 2003, 91-95.

³ For the Western Necropolis excavations see Abbasoğlu 2007b; 2008; 2009.

⁴ Çağlayan 2009, 17-20.

Canal no. 6, the topmost pipeline with a depth of 1.37 m. from the surface, is assumed to be the latest phase of the water system (Fig. 5). The canal lies over a mortar floor (approx. 10-15 cm. in thickness) which is substrated by a matrix of materials including a large amount of deliberately cut animal bones and large amounts of Sagalassos Red Slip Ware (SRSW) and other pottery fragments. The cut animal bones are believed to have come from the waste of a manufactory that produced bone artifacts at Perge⁵. The potsherds in general belong to the 2nd-3rd centuries A.D., but there are some 1st century A.D. sherds probably mixed in from the layer below (Fig. 6). Without exception, all the sherds have old breaks and there are almost no joining pieces. Two coins from this layer of Philippus I (A.D. 244-249) and Diocletian (A.D. 284-305) can represent a terminus ante quem for the context. Although the actual origin of the material is unknown, it seems that commercial (pottery) and industrial (animal bones) wastes were brought to Lot 159 with the aim of supporting the waterpipes and the mortar floor⁶.

In the 2008 season, on the northern trench of Lot 159, excavations aimed at exposing the extension of the water distribution system of the terracotta canals⁷. During these excavations, the matrix of canal no. 6 was partially revealed and the two sigillata tableware were found as residual in the context.

1) Fragment of a rim (Figs. 7-8)

The dimensions are 15 cm. in rim diameter, 0.5 cm. in wall thickness. The paste is pale red (Munsell 2.5YR5/8) with a small quantity of lime and silver mica inclusions. It has a hard, smooth texture and clean breaking. The interior and exterior surfaces are covered with a bright red slip (Munsell 10R4/8). Overhanging high rim with everted triangular lip having a groove on top and a row of roulette notches below. One groove at the rim on interior. Slightly flaring conical body with a row of roulette notches. One groove above the row and two below. Barbotine technique in the form of a wavy stripe applied to the body.

This fragment of a rim is thought to have come from a modiolus, a drinking vessel shaped like a modius, a cup for measuring volumes of dry material like grain, corn, etc.⁸. The modiolus type is very common between the 1st century B.C.-1st century A.D., and used in glass, silver and earthenware like green-glazed and sigillata types⁹. General forms of modiolis include overhanging rim with everted triangular lip, cylindrical body and a vertical strap handle. The name modiolus is mentioned in the *Digesta* (*Scaevola on legacies*) 34.2.36: "I charge the heirs on their honour to give my beloved wife Seia a gold goblet of her choice. My question is, where the inherited property contains only truellae, scyphi, *modioli*, phialae, can Seia make her selection from these categories of vessel?"¹⁰.

⁵ Abbasoğlu 2008, 59.

⁶ The date and the original function of the material in the matrix will be defined by the results of current doctoral and master dissertations that are ongoing in the Ph.D. and M.A. Programmes of the Classical Archaeology Department, Institute of Social Sciences, İstanbul University. "Sagalassos Red Slip Ware" found in the matrix material is currently being studied as a Ph.D. thesis by the writer of this article. In addition, the cut bones found in the matrix are being studied by H. Garan Toper as a M.A. thesis.

⁷ Abbasoğlu 2009, 61-69.

⁸ In Latin *modiolus* is the diminutive of modius; see White 2010, 167-168.

⁹ For silver modiolis examples see Ling et al. 2002, 62-63; Roztovtzev 1963, 56; for glassware modiolis see Kern 1963, 400-405; for green-glazed modiolis see Robinson 1972.

¹⁰ Quintus Mucius Scaevola, one of the Roman lawgivers, died in 82 B.C. His book of civil law is the oldest source compiled in Justinian's *Digesta*. For the original text and its English translation see White 2010, 167 no. 22(c).

The rim fragment of the Pergaeon modiolus resembles a modiolus from Arretium. It has an overhanging rim, everted triangular lip and concave rouletted body. The cup has one vertical strap handle and a straight lower wall with ring base. The modiolus is only listed in Ettlinger et al. 1990¹¹, with the name of M. Perennius Tigranus who was the owner of a pottery workshop at Arretium in the Augustan period¹² (Fig. 9).

In the 1976 excavations of Corinth, two modiola were found among the floor deposit of a Roman Cellar Building, located outside the Forum, on the western side of the North-South street¹³. Both of these modiola have an almost similar form with the Pergaeon modiolus with overhanging rim, everted triangular lip, and concave body¹⁴. One of them, which has relief decoration of a vine stem with leaves and bunches of grapes, also bears a stamped signature on the bottom of the rim. The stamp "M. PEREN: BARGATHES" refers to the M. Perennius workshop and the potter Bargathes (Fig. 10). Slane assumed that the former modiolus might also belong to Bargathes, and could be dated to the Tiberian period when Bargathes produced his vessels successfully as a freedman¹⁵.

2) Fragment of a base (Figs. 11-12)

The dimensions are 7.90 cm. in base diameter, 0.2 cm. in wall thickness. The paste is pale red (Munsell 2.5YR5/8) with a small quantity of lime and silver mica inclusions. It has a hard, smooth texture and clean breaking. The interior and exterior surfaces are covered with a bright red slip (Munsell 10R4/8). The little-preserved part of the convex lower wall has relief decoration of a bunch of grapes on the exterior. The base of the fragment has a low foot ring with a deep groove at the bottom.

It is very hard to classify the form of the vessel since most of its body is missing. At any rate, the preserved part of the lower wall suggests a possible drinking cup with a curved lower end. For its similar paste, slip and design features, this fragment of a base could also be a product of the same workshop with the fragment of a rim. Considering the decline of Italian sigillata imports after the reign of Nero in the Eastern Mediterranean, it is possible to date the base sherd to the first half of the 1st century A.D.

In view of the analogies, it seems that both of the sherds are from the same workshop of Italian sigillata (perhaps from Arretium) and date to the late Augustan-Tiberian period.

Italian Sigillata in the East

Italian sigillata ware was part of regular commercial exchange from the 1st century A.D. onwards, especially in the Augustan-Tiberian times. However, the *OCK* map indicates that the existence of Italian sigillata in Western Europe is more outstanding than in the Eastern

¹¹ Ettlinger et al. 1990, 170-171, R. 3.3.1 (inventory no. 3149).

¹² The workshop was known with the names of its prolific and active freedmen potters; see Oxe et al. 2000, 21.

¹³ Wright - Jones 1980, 140-141 nos. 1-2 Figs. 2.1-2 (inventory nos. C-1976-20 a-e, C-1974-53 (handle) and C-1976-395).

¹⁴ Wright - Jones 1980, 140-141 no.2.

¹⁵ Wright - Jones 1980, 166-167. Bargathes signs explicitly as a slave of Tigranus before signing in his own right by the end of Augustan period; see Oxe et al. 2000, 21. In comparison with their European distribution, there is a notably low proportion of M. Perennius Bargathes stamps in the Eastern Mediterranean. Troy and Priene can be mentioned as the sites in Asia Minor where Bargathes' wares have been found. For Troy see Tekkök 2003, Fig. 1 nos. 17-21; for Priene see Comfort 1938, 33.

Mediterranean (Fig. 13)¹⁶. Apparently, Italian sigillata could never play an important role as the local products in the East.

In the mid-Hellenistic period, the East underwent an important change in tableware production, and sigillata products took the place of black-slipped tradition. Eastern Sigillata A (ESA)¹⁷ along the southern Anatolian and Syrian coasts, and Eastern Sigillata C (ESC) at Pergamon appeared in the mid-2nd century B.C.¹⁸. In the late 1st century B.C., with the specialization of eastern crafts, a series of mass production centres opened one after another. Eastern Sigillata D (ESD) (Nea Paphos, Cyprus), Eastern Sigillata B (ESB) (probably Tralles), Pontic Sigillata and Sagalassos Red Slip Ware (SRSW) are the major eastern sigillata wares that started to be produced at this time¹⁹. These workshops were organised by wealthy land owners to improve their socio-economic and political position. Since locally produced sigillata centres sufficed to meet the needs in the region, there was probably no additional demand for imported sigillata.

Despite the fact that Italian sigillata was apparently not demanded by the Eastern Roman provinces, its complex effects can be seen on the Eastern sigillata. Once Italian sigillata appeared on the Eastern market in the Augustan period, ESC workshops began to produce stamped Italian imitations²⁰. In ESB production, the traces of Italian sigillata can be followed not just in the typology, but also with the stamped signatures of some Latin potters from the Italian workshops²¹.

In Asia Minor, the percentage of the sigillata distribution up to the 2nd century A.D. implies the lack of popularity of Italian sigillata with respect to the Eastern wares as follows²²: 43.93% ESA, 25.53% ESB, 14.14% ESC, 10.12% ESD and just 6.38% Italian sigillata (Fig. 13). However, the paucity of excavations and pottery publications makes it difficult to form a clear, balanced distribution map of Italian sigillata²³.

Italian Sigillata in Perge

Perge is the only Pamphylian site that has published its Italian sigillata data. In Perge Italian sigillata has only been recorded in three excavation areas: Southern Baths, Domestic Area and Western Necropolis. On a previous sounding in the Southern Baths of Perge, a rouletted chalice and three saucers (two of them have stamps) of Arretine sigillata

¹⁶ Oxe et al. 2000, 40 Fig. 4.

¹⁷ Crowfoot et al. 1957, 471-474; Slane et al. 1993; Slane et al. 1994; Schneider 1996.

¹⁸ Loeschke 1912; Bounegru 1996.

¹⁹ The percentage is taken from the published work of Prof. Daniele Malfitana. Aim of the analyses is to address detailed quantitative analyses of Eastern sigillata wares produced between the mid-2nd century B.C. production and 1st-2nd century A.D. in particular, ESA, ESB, ESC and ESD. However, amounts of Italian sigillata wares found in the East were also added to the quantitative analyses. Analyses includes eight large areas: Greece, Asia Minor, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan and the north coast of Africa. There are 2365 sigillata examples recorded in Asia Minor. For the whole work of Prof. Malfitana see Malfitana 2002.

²⁰ Poblome – Zelle 2002, 275-287.

²¹ J. Poblome suggests two possible explanations for Latin names appearing on the Eastern Sigillata B: 1) there might be some new ESB workshops working as dependent branches of Italian production centres or 2) new independent workshops were set up personally by some Italians.

²² Malfitana 2002, 141-145.

²³ Important quantities of Italian sigillata were published for Ephesos; see Zabehlicky-Scheffenecker 2006.

were discovered and dated to the Augustan period²⁴. In the excavations conducted in the domestic area of Perge, six pieces of Italian sigillata have been found. Two of them were identified as Arretine ware and attributed to the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. Four other sherds are assumed to be from the sigillata workshops of North Italy and date to the 1st century A.D. The percentage of the Italian sigillata found in the domestic area is only 7%²⁵.

In conclusion, it would be appropriate to stress that the two Italian sigillata sherds recorded in the matrix context of Lot 159 are the only examples of Italian sigillata found in the Western Necropolis so far. The scarcity of Italian sigillata wares in the Western Necropolis implies that probably Perge did not have large scale pottery trade with Italy. On the other hand, mainly SRSW and secondly ESD are the most common tablewares found in the matrix material and indicate that Perge mainly imported fine wares from the nearest production centres in the period of the 1st–3rd century A.D. However, further work is needed at the excavation sites in Pamphylia to get a more detailed and clear view of the pottery exchange patterns in the region during the Roman period.

²⁴ Atik 1995, 81-82 nos. 138-141.

²⁵ Fırat 1999, 12-13 Pl. 207c.

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Özet

Perge'den İki İtalyan Sigillata Fragmanı

Bu çalışmada Roma İmparatorluğu'nun doğusunda az rastlanan İtalyan sigillatasının Perge-Batı Nekropolis'te bulunan iki örneği tanıtılmaktadır. Hellenistik ve Roma Dönemi mezar yapılarının ortaya çıkarıldığı Batı Nekropolis'in 159 no'lu parselde denk düşen kesiminde ele geçen söz konusu iki İtalyan sigillatasından ilki bir ağız, diğeri ise bir dip parçasıdır. Her iki parça da az mika ve kireç katkılı açık kırmızı hamurlu (Munsell 2.5YR5/8) ve parlak kırmızı astarlıdır (Munsell 10R4/8). Ağız parçası bir içki kabı formu olan modiolusa aittir. Dışa çekik ağızlı, dışa doğru üçgen biçiminde kalınlaştırılmış dudaklı ve içbükey gövdelidir. Ağız ve gövdenin dış yüzeyine rulet bezeme işlenmiştir. Perge'de bulunan modiolus parçasının en yakın örneklerine Arretium ve Korinth'te rastlanmıştır. Bu analogilerden yola çıkarak Perge'de bulunan modiolusun geç Augustus-erken Tiberius dönemine ait olduğu düşünülmektedir. İkinci buluntu olan dip parçası ise çok az bir profil kesiti sunabilmektedir. Korunagelen alt gövdesi dışa doğru açılmaktadır. Gövde üzeri üzüm salkımı şeklinde kabartmalarla süslenmiştir. Ancak, profilinin çok az korunagelmesi nedeni ile dip parçasının ne tür bir kaba ait olduğu kesinlik kazanamamıştır, fakat alçak kaide dipli bir içki kabı olduğu anlaşılabilmektedir. Buluntu, İtalyan sigillatalarının Küçük Asya'da en fazla görüldüğü Augustus-Tiberius dönemlerine tarihlendirilebilir. Perge'de bulunan ağız ve dip parçası hamur yapıları, astar renkleri ve işçilikleri açısından benzer özellikler taşıdıkları için İtalya'da aynı atölyede (belki Arretium) üretilmiş olabilirler.

İtalyan sigillatasının Roma İmparatorluğu'nun doğusuna ihracatı özellikle Augustus-Tiberius Dönemleri'nde artış göstermektedir. Buna karşın İtalyan sigillatası Doğu Akdeniz'de hiçbir zaman yerel üretilen sigillataların yerini alamamıştır. Küçük Asya'da en fazla kullanım gören sigillatalar arasında İ.Ö. 2. yy. ortasında üretimi başlayan ESA ve ESC, İ.Ö. 1. yy. sonunda ardarda açılan ESB ve ESD gibi atölyeler olmuştur. Bu nedenle, kendi yerel sigillatalarını üretmekte olan Küçük Asya ve diğer Doğu Akdeniz bölgeleri yoğun olarak İtalyan sigillatası ithal etme ihtiyacı duymamış olmalıdır. Bununla beraber, İtalyan sigillatasının bazı doğu sigillataları üzerinde yadsınamaz bir etkisi olduğu da görülmektedir.

Perge, şimdiye kadar İtalyan sigillatası buluntuları yayınlardan takip edilebilen tek Pamphylia kentidir. Perge'de az sayıda İtalyan sigillatalarının bulunduğu alanlar Konut Alanı, Güney Hamamı ve makalemizin konusu olan Batı Nekropolis'tir. İtalyan sigillatalarının az sayıda ele geçmesi Perge ile İtalya arasında keramik alışverişinin sınırlı olduğunu göstermektedir. Diğer yandan, Batı Nekropolis'te İtalyan sigillatalarının ele geçtiği kontekstteki diğer sofa kapları arasında başta SRSW ve daha sonra ESD üretimleri gelmektedir. Bu durum, Perge'nin sofa kabı ihracatının büyük bölümünü daha çok yakın çevresindeki üretim merkezlerinden karşıladığını göstermektedir. Kentin ihracat ve ithalat ilişkilerinde kentin doğusundan akarak Akdeniz'e dökülen Kestros Nehri'nin önemli bir kolaylık sağladığı düşünülmektedir.

Fig. 1
Location of Perge in
the Pamphylia region.

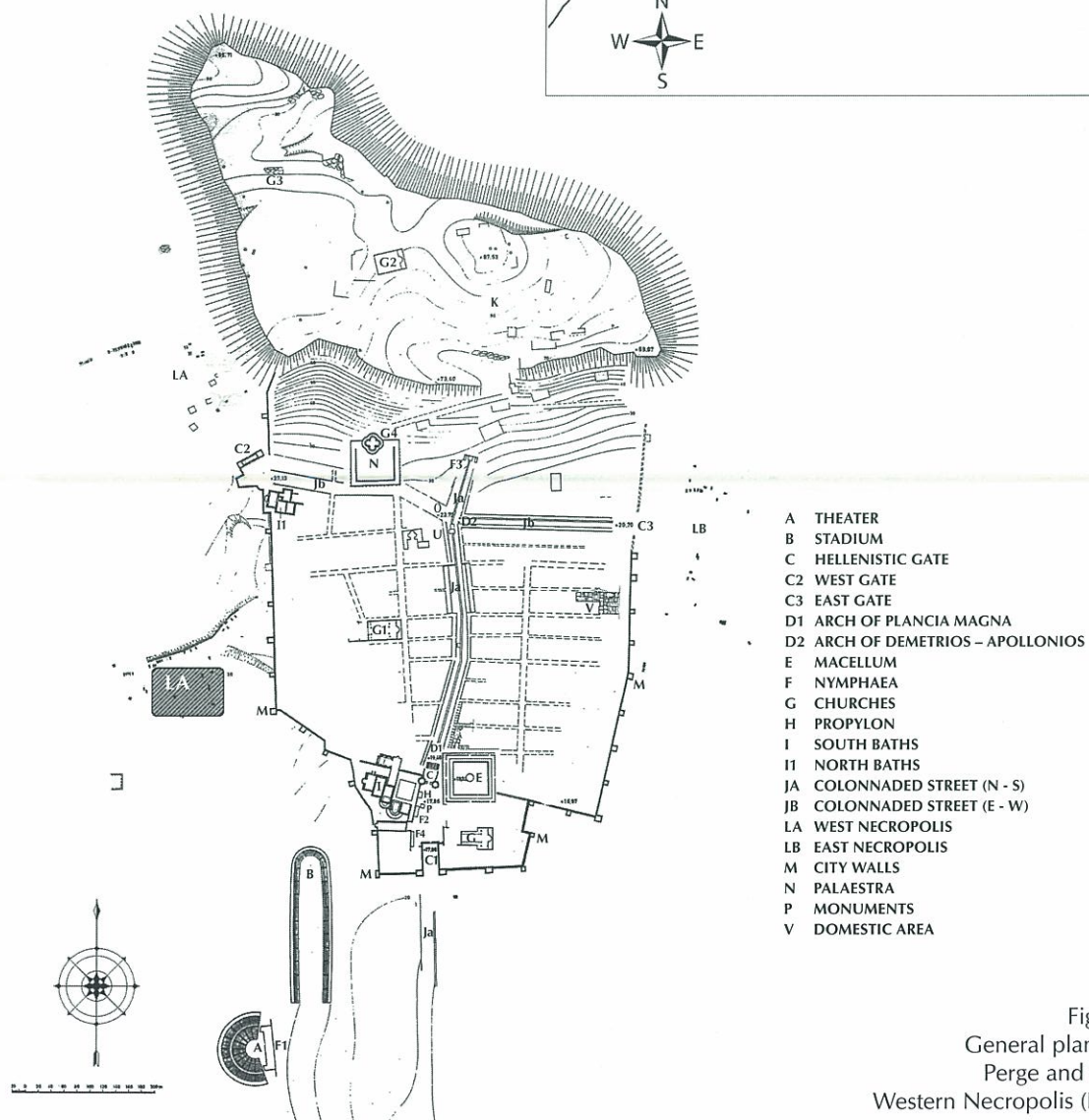
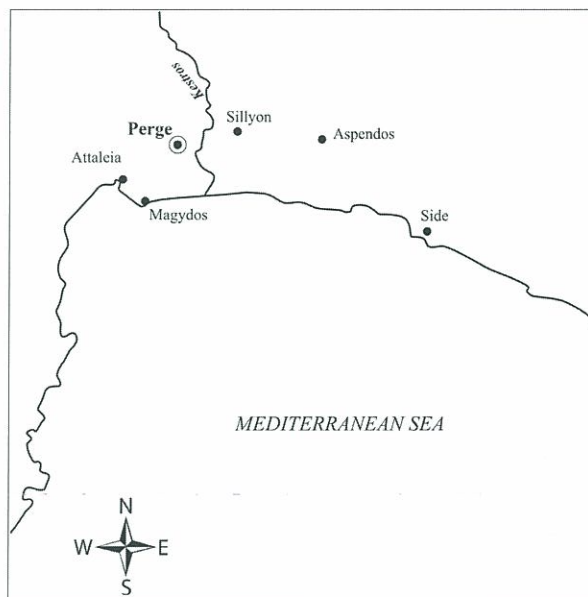


Fig. 2
General plan of
Perge and the
Western Necropolis (La).

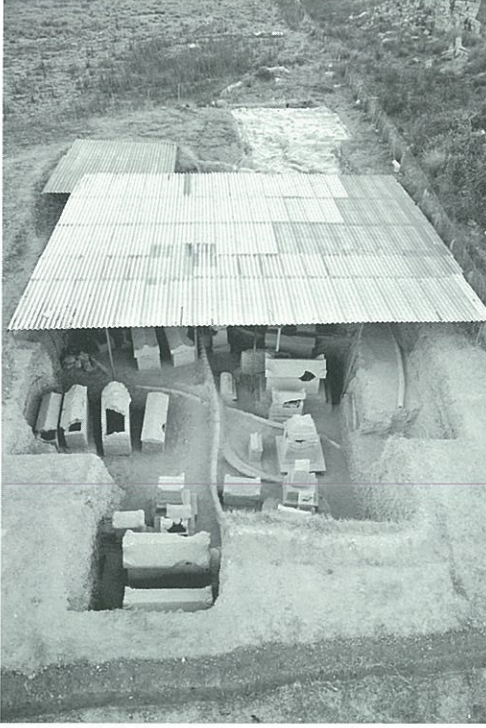


Fig. 3 General view of Lot 159.



Fig. 5 Canal no. 6, from south, Lot 159.

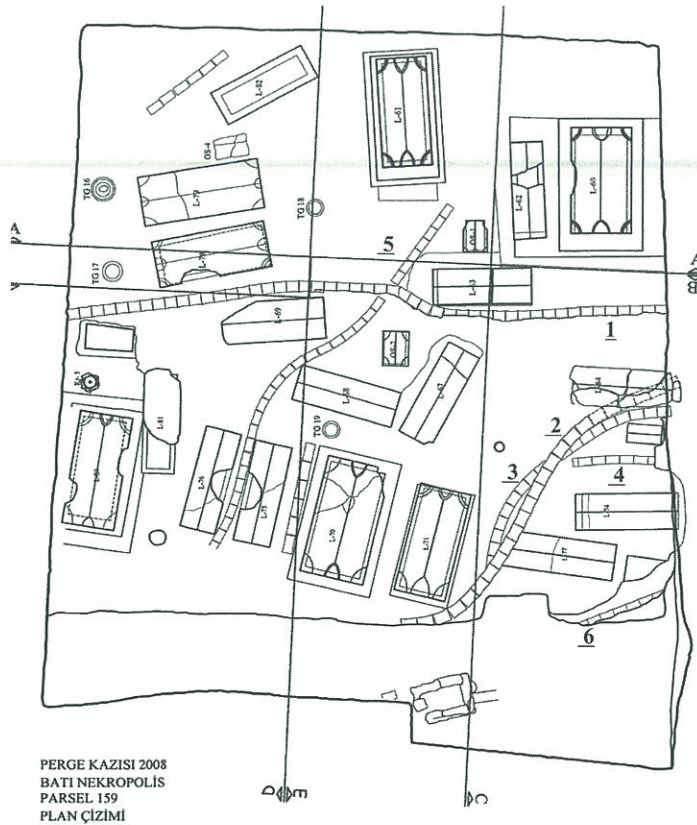
Fig. 4
2008 Excavations
in Lot 159,
canal nos. 1-6.



Fig. 6
Mortar floor and the
fill layer, Lot 159.

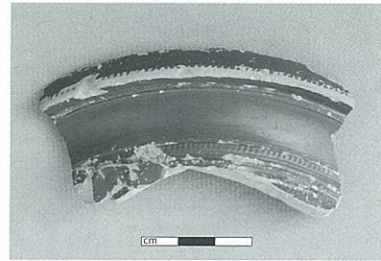


Fig. 7
Fragment of rim
found in Lot 159.

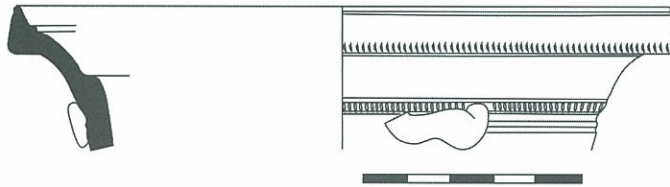


Fig. 8 Fragment of rim found in Lot 159.

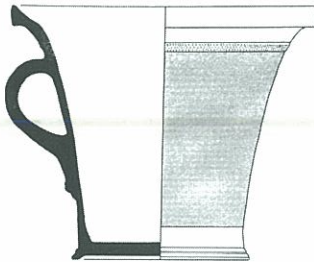


Fig. 9 Modiolus fragment
found at Arretine (Ettlinger et
al. 1990, 171, R.3.3.1).

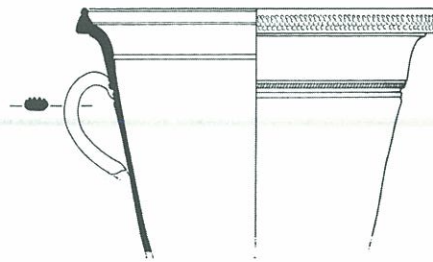


Fig. 10 Stamped modiolus
fragment found at Corinth
(Wright – Jones 1980, 141,
Fig. 2.2, Pl. 28.1).

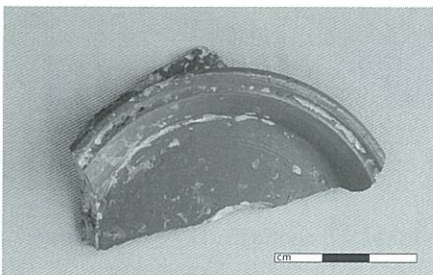


Fig. 11
Fragment of base found in Lot 159.



Fig. 12
Fragment of base found in Lot 159.

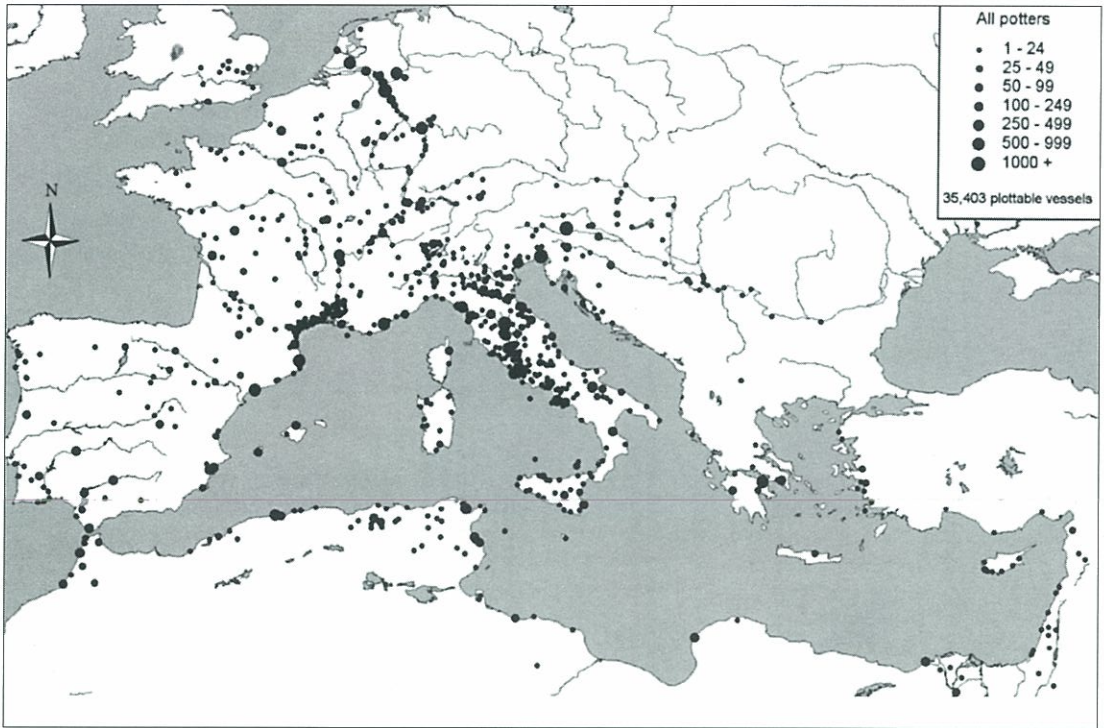


Fig. 13 Distribution map of Italian sigillata (Oxe et al. 2000, 40, Fig. 4).

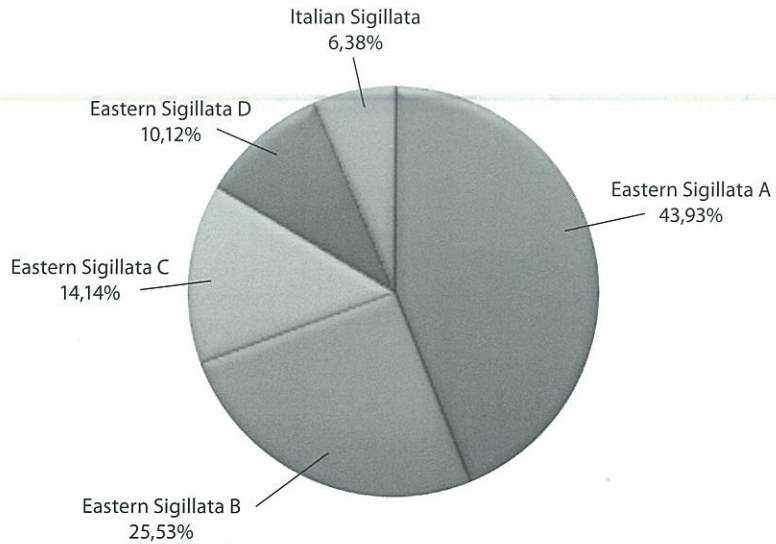


Fig. 14 Distribution by type of sigillata dating up to the 2nd century A.D. in Asia Minor.