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Peter Talloen and G. Senem Özden-Gerçeker



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Out of the Rock? Terracotta Figurines from Sagalassos in the Sadberk Hanım Museum in Istanbul

Peter Talloen and G. Senem Özden-Gerçeker

Introduction

- 1 Stripped of their archaeological contexts, many ancient objects without provenance that are on display in museums¹ today may retain their aesthetic qualities, but we cannot know how people in the past actually used them and what meaning they had for their users. Looting and undocumented digging deprive artefacts of their human connection, the contextual data associating objects with people.² This is particularly true for terracotta figurines, which were used in a variety of settings for a wide range of purposes, but often ones that are ritual in nature.³ As a category of material culture that was available to all, terracotta figurines have the potential to shed light on the ritual practices—religious and otherwise—of those social groups that rarely feature in the inscriptions and other official sources of religious life. But in most cases the origin, let alone the context of deposition, of such figurines belonging to museum collections is not known and these objects therefore generally remain mute.
- 2 The contextualization of figurines that have been acquired by museums and lack appropriate archaeological documentation is a growing trend in coroplastic research and a topic that demands further attention.⁴ It is the aim of this paper to contribute to this trend by trying to reconstruct the context of some of the terracotta figurines kept at the Sadberk Hanım Museum in Istanbul (Turkey), a museum with a rich collection of such items.⁵ Mostly belonging to the former private collection of Hüseyin Kocabaş, a known collector from the Turkish province of Bursa, that was bought by the Sadberk Hanım Museum in 1983, these objects lacked provenance and therefore their social meaning could not be determined.

- 3 Recent investigations of terracotta figurines found and produced at the Pisidian city of Sagalassos (SW Turkey),⁶ however, has allowed for some of the figurines at the Sadberk Hanım Museum to be attributed to this production center on the basis of typological parallels, as well as macroscopic examination of the clay fabric that was used. What is more, several indications suggest the exact site where these figurines were originally deposited: the so-called Rock Sanctuary (hereafter RS), a cult site in the periphery of Sagalassos.⁷ This in turn would facilitate the reconstruction of the meaning and function of these objects, and make them once again informative about the people who used them.
- 4 This paper will present a short history of the Kocabaş collection, followed by a presentation of the figurines in question, before turning to the production of terracottas at Sagalassos and the probable find spot of the figurines from the Saberk Hanım Museum.

Sadberk Hanım Museum and the Hüseyin Kocabaş Collection

- 5 The Vehbi Koç Foundation's Sadberk Hanım Museum was opened on October 14, 1980 at the Azaryan Mansion in Istanbul, becoming Turkey's first private museum. The founding objective of the museum was to display the collection of Sadberk Koç, the wife of Vehbi Koç, which included traditional costumes, embroidery, and silver artefacts of the Ottoman and early Turkish republic periods.
- 6 In 1983, following the passing of Hüseyin Kocabaş, an extensive part of his collection was acquired by the museum with the financial assistance of the Vehbi Koç Foundation. Hüseyin Kocabaş was a businessman from Bursa, and he had a great enthusiasm for collecting antiquities. Over the years, this passion for ancient objects led him to put together one of the greatest privately-held antiquities collections, comprising over 10,000 artefacts of primarily archaeological significance.
- 7 Kocabaş was known for opening up a floor of his apartment once a week in order to exhibit these items to interested persons and scholars, such as Thomas Hoving, who was Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Irwin Hersey, an expert on tribal art, Pierre Demargne, of the Department of Art History and Archaeology at the University of Paris 1 Sorbonne, P.R.S. Moorey of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and numerous others from the British Museum and the Louvre Museum, who were among those welcomed by Hüseyin Kocabaş to his museum-apartment. Sevgi Gönül, the daughter of Sadberk Koç, was a family friend of Kocabaş, and she has described him in these words:
- 8 "My mother and I often visited the home of Hüseyin Kocabaş. The owner of a fabric store in Beyoğlu, Hüseyin Bey possessed what was, I believe, one of the rarest and most knowledgeably assembled collections of artefacts in Turkey... The collection that he put together was later moved to a place in Nişantaşı that was to become a sort of club attended on Saturday mornings by antique-dealers, collectors, and just plain hobbyists - all of whom took part in meetings and exchanged ideas and news. I was one of those hobbyists..."⁸
- 9 In 1983, the acquisition of a major part of the Hüseyin Kocabaş collection by the Sadberk Hanım Museum, including over 6000 ancient objects, provided a significant and welcome expansion to the holdings of the Museum. In response to this, the

neighboring mansion was purchased to display and provide storage for the archaeological artefacts of this extensive collection, through the efforts of Sevgi Gönül. On the 24th of October 1988, the annex building opened its doors to the public as the Sevgi Gönül Wing. More acquisitions followed, and the archaeological holdings of the museum now range in date from the late Neolithic period up to the Byzantine period. While it has been enriched and developed in both scale and importance, it is still the Hüseyin Kocabaş Collection that forms the treasured core of the museum's antiquities.

The terracotta figurines

- 10 Among the 506 terracotta figurines kept in the collections of the Sadberk Hanım Museum (SHM) a total of eight examples can be identified with certainty as products of Sagalassos on the basis of their type, style, and clay fabric.⁹ They include representations of deities, as well as mortals. The following is a typological catalogue of these figurines.

1. Deities

1.1. Aphrodite

Inventory number: SHM 7607 (Fig. 1.a-b).¹⁰

Height: 28.7 cm; width: 9 cm; thickness: 3.4 cm.

- 11 Aphrodite is depicted standing frontally. She is wearing a "V"-necked, long chiton falling to her feet, with short sleeves. It is made of a thin fabric that reveals her navel and has short, arched folds over her chest. A himation is hanging from her left shoulder in a long vertical pleat and is wrapped loosely around the waist and legs. Both her hands are raised to hold long braided locks of hair to either side of the head. One row of short curls frames the face, while the rest of the hair is arranged in high vertical braids, with a fan-shaped grooved knot at the top of the head. Both wrists are adorned with bracelets, and she is wearing globular earrings. The goddess has an elongated neck, an oval face with a narrow forehead, almond shape eyes with thick upper lids, a broad, flat nose, a mouth with fleshy lips, and a rounded, fatty chin. To her left, Eros is shown as a winged, naked and chubby child seated on a low, rounded base. His chin rests upon his clasped hands, which hold his raised left knee; his right leg is stretched out forwards. He has a rounded face, large wide-open eyes, a straight nose, and a slightly open mouth. To the right of the goddess an amphora is depicted. The figurine group is supported by a high rectangular base decorated with a relief of two doves facing each other on either side of a kantharos on the front side. The relief is framed by molding on the top and on the bottom of the base.

Fig. 1 – Terracotta figurine of Aphrodite tying her hair from SHM: a. front; b. back



© Sadberk Hanım Museum

- 12 Repaired; the left forearm of the goddess, once broken off, has been reattached; missing pieces on the lower part of the figurine group and its pedestal have been filled in with paraffin wax and repainted; the base is reconstructed from three broken fragments; numerous slight chips and cracks. Fine, light red (2.5YR 6/6) fabric with some tiny limestone inclusions and voids. Molded, hollow figurine with open bottom. Half-worked, flat back with a round vent hole (c. 0.9 cm). Pared, flat seam between the front and back halves.
- 13 Fragments of similar figurines, such as the left shoulder (find number SA2014RS-26-43; Fig. 2.a) and the raised left hand of Aphrodite wearing a bracelet and holding a strand of braided hair (find number SA2014RS-4-9), were excavated at RS. Furthermore, an identical head of Aphrodite, of unknown provenance, is kept at the nearby Archaeological Museum of Burdur (inventory number E-47; Fig. 2.b).¹¹ Although the Sadberk Hanım figurine was originally attributed to the third century C.E., the contextual date of the fragmentary figurines from the Rock Sanctuary near Sagalassos allows it to be placed in the first to second century C.E.¹²

Fig. 2 – Terracotta figurines of Aphrodite tying her hair: a. left shoulder fragment from RS; b. head kept at the Burdur Museum (height: 5.7 cm)



© Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project

- 14 The type of Aphrodite tying her braided hair, not to be confused with the more popular *anadyomene* type of the goddess rising from the sea and drying her hair in her raised hands, is not very common among terracotta figurines of the goddess and can be considered as a variant of the representations of Aphrodite at her toilet.¹³ A similar type, but depicting a half-naked goddess with Eros standing on a small column to her right, is kept at the Princeton University Art Museum (inventory number y1964-54; Fig. 3);¹⁴ it too can be attributed to Sagalassos on the basis of fragments of an identical figurine found at RS (find number SA2014RS-3-4).

Fig. 3 – Terracotta figurine of Aphrodite tying her hair, kept at the Princeton Art Museum (height: 33 cm)



© Princeton University Art Museum

1.2. Eros

Inventory number: SHM 8313 (Fig. 4.a-b).

Preserved height: 8.2 cm; preserved width: 5.8 cm; preserved thickness: 2.9 cm.

- 15 The figurine depicts a youthful, naked and winged Eros standing towards the right, his head facing front. He is clutching reins with both extended hands, driving a pair of animals - possibly dolphins - which are now missing. He has a chubby, rounded face, large round eyes with heavy eyelids, a broad, flat nose, a small mouth and a rounded chin. His semi-long curly hair frames the face and has a long fishtail braid above the crown of the head, falling downward over the back of the neck.

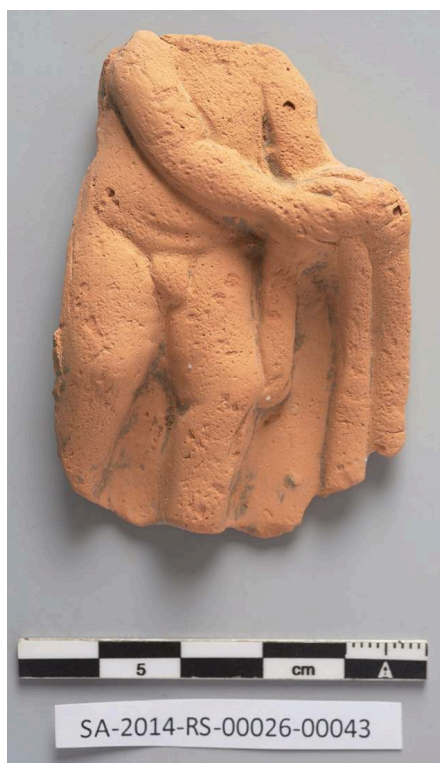
Fig. 4 – Terracotta figurine of Eros holding reins from SHM: a. front; b. back



© Sadberk Hanım Museum

- 16 Partially preserved. The right leg and left foot of the figure are broken off and the animal on top of which he is standing is completely missing, as are small chips from the bottom of the left wing. Fine, light red (2.5YR 6/6) fabric with few tiny limestone inclusions. Double molded, hollow figurine. Plain backside except for the minimal tooling at the head. Pared, flat seam between the front and back halves.
- 17 Fragments of similar, although not identical figurines have been excavated at RS (find number SA2014RS-26-43, Fig. 5; SA2014RS-31-48). Based on the contextual date of the fragmentary figurines from RS this figurine type also can be attributed to the first to second century C.E.

Fig. 5 – Terracotta figurine of Eros holding reins from RS



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- 18 Figurines of Eros driving different pairs of animals, like cocks, dogs, geese, and goats, are attested.¹⁵ Yet, none of these quite correspond to the stance of the child god in the Sadberk Hanım figurine, where he is seemingly standing on top of the animals he is driving, rather than in a chariot behind them; this would explain why the reins are hanging down rather than pulled forward. An exact identification of the type remains problematic.

1.3. Nemesis

Inventory number: SHM 8339 (Fig. 6.a-b).

Preserved height: 4.6 cm; preserved width: 2.1 cm; preserved thickness: 2.3 cm.

- 19 Head of a female figure. Her wavy hair is parted in the middle and combed backwards, except for the strands of hair tied in loops on top of the head and two strands of hair falling on her shoulders.¹⁶ She has an oval face, a narrow forehead, almond-shaped eyes, a broad, flat nose, a small mouth with thin lips, and a rounded chin.
- 20 Broken where the neck attaches to the body; chips missing from the left edge of the knot and the nose. Fine, light red (2.5YR 6/6) fabric with few tiny limestone inclusions. Double molded, hollow figurine. Backside with minimal modelling.

Fig. 6 – Terracotta head of Nemesis from SHM: a. front; b. back



© Sadberk Hanım Museum

- 21 The upper body of an identical figurine is kept at the Archaeological Museum of Burdur (inventory number K-40.7.83; Fig. 7.a). It depicts a frontally standing female figure pulling the edge of her peplos at the neck with her right hand raised before her chest to create a *kolpos* or blousing of the peplos; her left arm rests beside her body.¹⁷ Its provenance is unknown, but it was brought to the museum as part of a group of figurines, nearly all of which have exact parallels at RS. The Burdur figurine in turn can be related to several fragments of identical figurines found at RS (find number SA2018RS-19-55; Fig. 7.b) depicting the goddess pulling the fold of her peplos forward at the neck with her right hand and holding a measuring rod in her left hand beside her body, an attribute that confirm the identification as Nemesis.¹⁸ Based on the contextual date of the fragmentary figurines from RS the figurine can be attributed to the first to second century C.E.

Fig. 7 – Terracotta figurines of Nemesis: a. upper body kept at the Burdur Museum (height: 6.8 cm); b. body from RS



© Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project

- 22 While marble statues and statuettes of the goddess Nemesis were popular in Asia Minor during the Roman Imperial period, generally speaking terracotta figurines of Nemesis are rare. It is quite telling that the only example of a terracotta figurine listed in the contribution to the *LIMC*—a different type depicting the goddess holding the ruler in her right hand and the seam of the overfold of her peplos in her left—kept at the Martin von Wagner Museum in Würzburg¹⁹ is equally a product of Sagalassos, based on fragments of identical figurines found at RS (find numbers SA2014RS-12-16 and SA2017RS-12-34). A good iconographic parallel is provided by a marble statuette, most probably from Asia Minor and dated to the second century C.E., now in Kassel.²⁰

2. Representations of mortals

- 23 Among the figurines depicting mortals are representations of women and children.

2.1. Women

- 24 Several figurines depict women, more particularly as female busts and a harpist.

2.1.1. Female busts

- 25 The identification of this group is challenging, since in Pisidia, as elsewhere, these shoulder busts, are frequently identified as goddesses, often Aphrodite.²¹ In her study of the figurines from the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Corinth, Gloria Merker

explains the inevitable link between anonymous representations of women and the idea of Aphrodite.²² The difficulty of distinguishing deity from mortal in these votive gifts is itself the essence of the relationship between the two. In other words, women may have wanted to represent themselves as Aphrodite. Real portraits they were obviously not, as the serial production of mold-made figurines does not allow such a degree of individualization. Yet, a generic portrait as *kore* or *gyne* certainly is possible²³.

Bust Type 1

Inventory number: SHM 7448 (Fig. 8.a-b).

Height: 13.1 cm; width: 8 cm; thickness: 3.2 cm.

- 26 Bust of a draped female figure, truncated above the waist; both arms held tightly against the sides of the body. Wears a sleeved himation hanging down from both shoulders leaving the chest uncovered. This has folds indicated by diagonal lines and an embroidered edge and is most probably present on top of a chiton. The woman is wearing globular earrings. She has a round face with a narrow forehead, small eyes, long eyebrows, a closed mouth with a thin upper lip close to the flat, broad nose, and a rounded, full chin. Her elaborate hairdo consists of two rows of pin curls framing the face, while the rest of the hair is arranged around the face in three rows of braids with a central part. A high, bejeweled diadem decorated with alternating round and square inlays surmounts the hair.
- 27 A large part of the torso is missing at front; cracks and clay burrs are on the surface. Fine, light red (2.5YR 6/6) fabric with few tiny limestone inclusions and voids. Molded, hollow figurine, with open bottom and plain, flat back with a small round vent hole (c. 0.6 cm). Pared, flat seam between the front and back halves.

Fig. 8 – Terracotta bust type 1 from SHM: a. front; b. back



© Sadberk Hanım Museum

- 28 A fragment of an identical figurine has been excavated at RS (find number SA2018RS-38-112; Fig. 9). Based on the contextual date of the fragmentary figurines from RS the figurine can be attributed to the first to second century C.E.

Fig. 9 – Terracotta bust type 1 from RS



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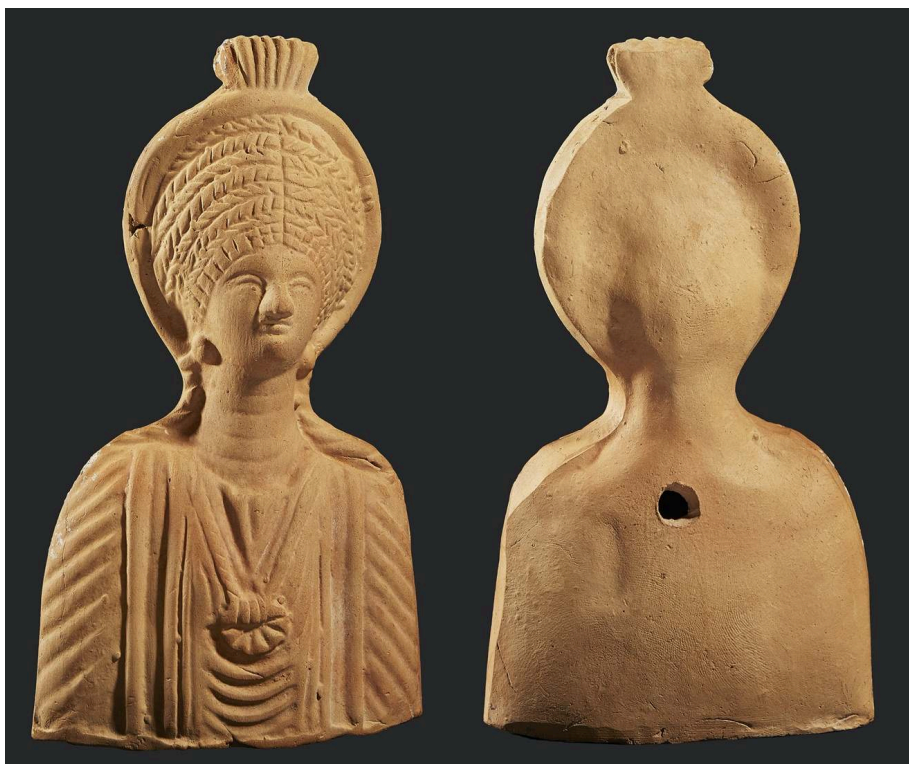
Bust Type 2

Inventory number: SHM 19045 (Fig. 10.a-b).

Height: 13.7 cm; width: 7.8 cm; thickness: 3.4 cm.

- 29 Bust of a draped female figure truncated above the waist; both upper arms are held tight against the sides of the body; wearing a (sleeved?) himation which has folds indicated by diagonal lines and an embroidered edge, hanging down from both shoulders and leaving the chest uncovered. Underneath is a chiton with “V” shaped folds at the top, while incised arch-shaped lines denote folds of the garment on the torso. The woman is wearing globular earrings and a long, braided necklace with a shell-shaped pendant forming a “V” on the chest. She has a round and short face with small eyes, long eyebrows, a closed mouth with thin lips almost adjoining the flat, broad nose, Venus rings on the elongated neck, and a heavy, rounded chin. Her elaborate hairdo consists of two rows of pin curls framing the face, while the rest of the hair is arranged around the face in seven rows of braids with a center part. The head is framed by an edge, possibly of a himation, and the head is surmounted by a fan-shaped top-knot with vertical grooves. Two twisted locks of hair fall on her shoulders.

Fig. 10 – Terracotta bust type 2 from SHM: a. front; b. back



© Sadberk Hanım Museum

- 30 Complete; small break on the left side of the knot; cracks and chips on the surface. Fine, light red (2.5YR6/6) fabric with some tiny limestone inclusions and voids. Molded, hollow figurine with an open bottom and plain, flat back with a small round vent hole (c. 0.6 cm). Pared, flat seam between the front and back halves. Irregular bumps of clay on the surface.
- 31 An identical head, of unknown provenance, is kept at the Burdur Museum (inventory number E-2150; Fig. 11). Several heads with similar elaborate hairdo, as well as comparable busts with shell-shaped pendants, have been unearthed at RS. Identical facial characteristics and hairdo also can be seen on the terracotta figurine of Aphrodite tying her hair that is cited above (Fig. 4) that now is in the Princeton University Art Museum. Based on the contextual date of the fragmentary figurines from RS the figurine can be attributed to the first to second century C.E.²⁴

Fig. 11 – Terracotta bust type 2: head kept at the Burdur Museum (height: 8.9 cm)



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Bust Type 3

Inventory number: SHM 7582 (Fig. 12.a-b).

Preserved height: 10 cm; preserved width: 6.3 cm; preserved thickness: 4 cm.

- 32 Head of a female figure. Her wavy hair is combed back and surmounted by a thick bound wreath decorated with rosettes. The woman is wearing globular earrings and a short and thick necklace with vertical grooves, tight round the neck. Venus rings are indicated on the throat by shallow grooves. She has an oval face, wide-open eyes with thick upper eyelids, a flat nose, slightly open mouth with thick lips, and a rounded chin.

Fig. 12 – Terracotta bust type 3 from SHM: a. front; b. back



© Sadberk Hanım Museum

- 33 Only the forepart of the head is preserved. Restored from two fragments; large section of the wreathed hair on the right side is missing; surface is worn and partly covered by dirt. Fine, light red (2.5YR 6/6) fabric with few tiny limestone inclusions. Double molded, hollow figurine.
- 34 A very similar, but not identical, head of a female figure wearing a bound wreath decorated with rosettes, undoubtedly part of a bust, is kept at the Burdur Museum (inventory number K-62.58.82; Fig. 13.a). The different treatment of the rosettes distinguishes this type. Its provenance is recorded as unknown, but it was brought to the museum in 1982 as part of a group of 17 fragmentary figurines most of which have exact parallels at RS. Moreover, a fragment of an identical figurine has been excavated at RS (find number SA2015RS-1-1; Fig. 13.b). These busts could be dated to the first to the second century C.E., based on the contextual date of the RS.

Fig. 13 – Terracotta bust type 3: a. head kept at the Burdur Museum (height: 8.4 cm); b. head from RS



© Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project

2.1.2. Harpist

Inventory number: SHM 8308 (Fig. 14.a-b).

Preserved height: 8.2 cm; preserved width: 8 cm; preserved thickness: 2.4 cm.

- 35 Figurine of a female harpist playing a triangular harp, or *trigonon* with both hands, supported by her left shoulder. Her head is slightly turned to the left. She is wearing a half-sleeved chiton with a “V” shaped fold at the neck formed by deep drapery folds. The woman is wearing globular earrings, and her hair is arranged in a melon coiffure with the rest of the hair tied up in a thick fishtail braid at the crown of her head. She has a rounded face with large almond eyes, a closed mouth, and a broad, flat nose. The harp has a curved neck, a thick fore pillar with incised wavy lines, and a stepped triangular base.
- 36 Only the upper part of the figurine is preserved: at the front the torso is broken off at the waist and a large part of the back side is missing; there is a missing chip from the nose. Fine, light red (2.5YR 6/6) fabric with few tiny limestone inclusions. Molded, hollow figurine. Plain, flat back except for the minimal tooling at the head. Pared, flat seam between the front and back halves.

Fig. 14 – Terracotta figurine of a harpist from SHM: a. front; b. back



© Sadberk Hanım Museum

- 37 Fragments of similar, though not identical, figurines have recently been excavated at RS (find number SA2018RS-5-10, Fig. 15.a; SA2018RS-19-56), as part of an accumulation of ritual waste dating to the second century C.E. A complete figurine of similar type, but unknown provenance is kept at the Burdur Museum (inventory number E-2019.1; Fig. 15.b).

Fig. 15 – Terracotta figurines of a harpist: a. head from RS; b. complete figurine kept at the Burdur Museum (height: 16.5 cm)



© Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project

- 38 Representations of a woman playing a triangular harp were widespread throughout the Mediterranean world during the Hellenistic period, especially in Alexandrian art.²⁵ In Asia Minor, two figurines from Myrina show harpists: in one the harpist is dancing, in the other, two banqueters are reclining on a couch with a female harp player seated beside them.²⁶ The harp has often been linked to banquets in ancient texts and the extant representations coming from the Near East also hint that they were used in symposia.²⁷ But *trigonon* players are also known to have accompanied religious rituals in the eastern Mediterranean.²⁸

2.2 Children Reading

Inventory number: SHM 6891 (Fig. 16.a-b).²⁹

Height: 15.4 cm; width: 8.7 cm; thickness: 3.1 cm.

- 39 A girl and boy are depicted sitting on a bench side-by-side. They are both holding their writing tablets (*tabellae* or diptychs) consisting of two leaves hinged together, folded open on their laps. The girl is wearing a half-sleeved long chiton with vertical folds, partly covered by a himation with diagonal folds hanging from her left shoulder. Her long, wavy hair is parted in the center with long locks falling behind her back. She has an oval face with large almond-shaped eyes, a large nose, a slightly opened mouth, and a rounded chin. Her right hand is placed on the *tabella*, while her left hand is not visible. The boy, seated on her left side, is wearing a half-sleeved short chiton with a “V” fold at the neck that is repeated at his chest. Deep lines denote the folds of the chiton, and short, curving lines around the upper arms define the sleeves. His short straight hair is combed forward. He has an oval face with fleshy cheeks, small eyes, a broad, flat nose, a closed mouth with thin lips, and a heavy and rounded chin. His right hand is placed on the tablet of the girl, seemingly indicating something with his right index, while his left hand is resting on the side of the bench. The group is supported by a high, rectangular base with double molding at the top and bottom.
- 40 Complete; weathered surface with some lacunae, bumps, and deep long cracks, mainly on the pedestal. Fine, light red (2.5YR 6/6) fabric with some tiny limestone and voids. Molded, hollow figurine with open bottom. Half-worked, flat backside with a round vent hole (c. 1.5 cm). Pared, flat seam between the front and back halves.

Fig. 16 – Terracotta figurine of reading children from SHM: a. front; b. back



© Sadberk Hanım Museum

- 41 Fragments of similar figurines, such as the fragmentary example of the group depicting the tablet and lower legs of the seated boy on the right side (find number SA2017RS-10-27; Fig. 17.a), have been excavated at RS. Based on the contextual date of those fragments, the group can be dated to the first to the second century C.E. A very similar figurine group of a seated girl and a boy holding *tabellae* on their laps, most probably of the same origin given the presence of fragments of identical groups at RS, is kept at the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (inventory number I-1975-10.1; Fig. 17.b).³⁰

Fig. 17 – Terracotta figurines of reading children: a. fragment from RS; b. similar figurine kept at the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (height: 14.5 cm)



© National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden

- 42 A diptych was a simple and widely used writing tool during antiquity. It consisted of two rectangular wooden tablets commonly with a protruding frame so as to protect the inner wax-covered surface which were joined using metal rings or leather straps. Letters were incised onto the waxed surface by means of a stylus, a pointed object of metal, wood or bone. In some cases, one end of the stylus was flattened so as to scrape the waxed surface in order to correct errors or reuse the tablet. The iconographic type of children holding a diptych, generally as individual figures, appears in the coroplastic production of Greece during the second half of the fourth century B.C.E. and is widely dispersed during the third century B.C.E. Later examples are mostly known from Asia Minor, Cyrenaica, and Egypt.³¹ Such figures with diptychs comprise a motif commonly associated with the education of boys and girls. From the Classical period onwards, writing, along with reading, recitation, and arithmetic, constituted the basic curriculum for the first degree of education that began at the age of seven.³² The figurine group discussed here depicts the students in the process of reading, rather than writing.

The production of figurines at Sagalassos

- 43 The typological parallels for these figurines, as well as the clay fabric of the figurines discussed above, indicate that they were produced at the city of Sagalassos in the ancient region of Pisidia (SW Turkey). Sagalassos is well known for the production of its own Red Slip Ware.³³ Starting from the reign of the emperor Augustus, the Pisidian city produced red slipped tableware made from high quality local clay. Marginalized by the

importance of Sagalassos Red Slip Ware, the terracotta figurines from Sagalassos have received little attention thus far.³⁴ Their production appears to have started in earnest at the beginning of the Roman Imperial period, most probably as a by-product of relief-decorated pottery.³⁵

- 44 Petrographical analyses have indicated that the coroplasts of Sagalassos were essentially using the same clay materials for the figurines that also was used for the production of Sagalassos Red Slip Ware, namely the local Çanaklı clay, a relatively clean clay with few small limestone inclusions that was quarried in the valley of Çanaklı, 7 km southeast of Sagalassos.³⁶ The hollow figurines were made from various piece molds worked separately. The fronts of the figurines were invariably contained great detail, while the backs were only roughly modeled to indicate hair or folds of garments, either by hand or using a vaguely detailed mold. These were then joined together with clay slip. Hand-modelling could be applied for details later. The bottom of the figurine was left open and a small circular vent hole was cut at the back to ensure proper firing of the object. Although generally well-fired, the firing temperature of figurines appears to have been somewhat lower than that of the pottery, as they are more prone to weathering than ceramic vessels. After firing, the figurines could be covered with a white engobe and then painted, though this has seldom survived. More rarely, figurines were slipped, as was the case for hand-shaped figurines of animals. The simple (often rudimentary) and schematic execution of most of the figurines, typical for the Roman Imperial period, shows an industry far removed from the creation of the small works of art known from the Hellenistic period, but aimed at a market that called for mass production, valuing quantity over quality.³⁷
- 45 In terms of typology, the figurine production of Sagalassos is characterized by a very wide range of types, indicating a substantial output. Although typological parallels with other known production centers, especially Myrina in Western Anatolia, could be established, previous study of the locally-made, decorated pottery already determined that local context was of crucial importance for the iconography of the products.³⁸ The native pantheon and mythology, as well as social and cultural practices, in short, the *Gedankenwelt* of the community, determined what was represented by these products. A similar cultural influence undoubtedly determined the design of the figurines by the coroplasts as well. Images of deities are generally miniature copies of local cult statues and famous works of sculpture. Home-grown cult installations were a source of inspiration, as illustrated by the shrine of Tyche on the city's Upper Agora, but also famous masterpieces, such as the Aphrodite of Knidos by Praxiteles and the Aphrodite Genetrix of Kallimachos, were used as archetypes by the artisans at Sagalassos. These cited instances already hint at the primarily Greek character of the represented pantheon. But indigenous Anatolian heritage is also represented through typical deities, such as the mother goddess Kybele and the lunar god Men, whose cults were dominant in Central Anatolia. Foreign influence, on the other hand, is made manifest by the Egyptian figures of Isis, Harpokrates, and Sarapis, a sign of the connectivity that characterized the Roman Empire.
- 46 As far as depictions of humans are concerned, they mainly include women and children in different guises. Busts of women are especially common, followed by women playing musical instruments (especially the harp and lyre), and *kourotrophi* nursing infants. Children were mostly represented as students with their writing tablets on their lap, or again as busts. Youths were depicted on horseback or as athletes, but adult males do

not appear to feature in the Sagalassian repertoire, except as grotesque figures, which were common apotropaic devices in ancient times. Figurines of animals were also produced and mainly included bulls and dogs, but also birds, such as pigeons and eagles.

Probable find spot of the figurines: The Rock Sanctuary near Sagalassos

- 47 Although three decades of excavations at Sagalassos have yielded a considerable number of such locally produced figurines, they generally concern small fragments from a wide range of secondary contexts, the result of cultural superposition at a site that remained inhabited for more than 1600 years, between the late fifth century B.C.E. and the early 13th century C.E. Nowhere within the city have figurines been found in significant concentrations, or in a state of preservation resembling that of the Sadberk Hanım figurines. This situation changed recently with the discovery and excavation of a Hellenistic- Roman Imperial period cult site in the eastern periphery of Sagalassos that yielded many thousands of figurine fragments, as well as some better preserved figurines.
- 48 The so-called Rock Sanctuary, a distinctive limestone rock outcrop with natural cavities, is located some 600 m to the east of the urban center (Fig. 18). Dumps of excavated material found throughout the site indicated that it had fallen victim to many years of illicit digging, which destroyed much of the stratigraphical record. This undoubtedly caused the loss of numerous finds, which were sold to private collectors and museums all over the world. Most of those pieces most probably ended up in Turkey. At the regional archaeological museums of Burdur and Isparta, for example, 330 of the 541 registered figurines (or 61 %) and 70 of the 140 registered figurines (or 50 %) respectively could be generally attributed to the production at Sagalassos on the basis of typology and clay fabric; in some cases actual joins between fragments kept at the Burdur Museum and fragments excavated at RS leave no doubt that these were brought from the sanctuary.³⁹ More exceptional figurines in terms of preservation that are also suspected to have come from RS on the basis of exact parallels found there have been recognized among the collections in museums outside of Turkey. These not only include the examples at the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden and the Princeton University Art Museum mentioned above, but also figurines at the Martin von Wagner Museum in Würzburg and the Huntington Museum of Art in West Virginia⁴⁰. Moreover, probable RS figurines also feature among items that were sold at major auction houses, such as Christie's, Sotheby's, and the gallery Royal Athena.⁴¹ These facts, together with the several parallels of the Sadberk Hanım figurines from RS cited above, strongly suggest that the latter too originated from the Rock Sanctuary.

Fig. 18 – Location and aerial image of the Rock Sanctuary southeast of Sagalassos



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- 49 Rescue excavations carried out at the site by the Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project between 2014 and 2018 yielded evidence for the deposition of specialized offerings in the form of ceramic, glass, metal and stone vessels, pieces of personal adornment, instruments for textile production, but especially many thousands of fragments of terracotta figurines.⁴² All of these identified RS as an area set apart for the worship of gods. It was a holy place where people went to undertake religious rituals in the form of sacrifice, prayer, and the giving of votive offerings, either to ask the gods for assistance, or as *ex-voto* to express one's gratitude to the gods for benefits already obtained. Judging by the pottery that was found there, this cult site was in use from the first half of the second century B.C.E. until the beginning of the third century C.E.
- 50 The absence of monumental architecture, sculpture, or inscriptions identifies RS as a natural sanctuary: a non-monumentalized cult site with a natural feature—in *casu* a cave-like crevice—as the primary recipient of worship.⁴³ It was an enculturated natural feature that became a religious monument through a process of constructive social and ritual practice, rather than through its physical creation by human agents. Although the site stayed in use for more than four centuries, throughout this period it remained very modest from an architectural point of view, even during the Roman Imperial period when several other cave sanctuaries in the region were enlarged and monumentalized.⁴⁴ This fact, together with its extramural location, suggests that RS was located outside the sphere of official *polis* religion, as a focus of popular religious practice.
- 51 In spite of its modest architectural settings, RS yielded an abundance of ritual material, deposited over a considerable period of time, which identifies it as an important cult site for certain groups within the community of Sagalassos. The excavated deposits contained finds, namely pottery and faunal remains, that could be identified as the debris of meals that were held at the sanctuary throughout its lifespan. The fair quantity of closed vessels, as well as the limited number of actual cooking vessels, suggest that these worshippers presumably brought their meals and beverages to this place rather than preparing them there. No large sets of dining accoutrements have

been retrieved at RS. The meals held there appear to have involved smaller groups of people who brought their own crockery.

- 52 Beside the consumption of rituals meals, the deposition of votive offerings proved to be a key cultic activity taking place there, especially during the Roman Imperial period when terracotta figurines entered the assemblage of votive goods. The detritus of these rituals has been used to describe the social groups involved.⁴⁵ While lack of written sources at RS will never allow us to obtain complete certainty concerning the exact composition of the participating groups, representative votive offerings in the form of terracotta figurines leave no doubt that female concerns stood at the heart of the cult practiced there.
- 53 In the contexts that have been studied so far representations of deities were most common, making up some 59 % of all terracotta figurines. Among them figurines of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and sexuality in many different guises, proved predominant throughout all studied find contexts (69 % of all figurines of deities); she was followed by her son Eros (10.5 %) frequently accompanied by his girlfriend Psyche (Fig. 19).

Fig. 19 – Terracotta figurines of Aphrodite and Eros from RS: a. *Anadyomene*; b. *Genetrix*; c. *Strophion* (SA1999Y-6; height: 9.5 cm); d. *Pudica*; e. two wrestling Erotes (SA1999Y-8; height: 7 cm); f: Psyche and Eros seated on a throne, holding a pigeon



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- 54 Other female deities included (in order of frequency) Tyche, the goddess of fortune, Athena, the goddess of war and protectress of children and crafts, the Anatolian mother goddess Kybele, Nemesis, the goddess of retribution, Hygieia, the goddess of health, and Isis, the Egyptian mother goddess (Fig. 20.a-c). Over all, male divine presence was restricted, with Hermes, as god of commerce as well as education, being

the most represented god (c. 4 % of all deity figurines); others comprised Ares, the god of war and lover of Aphrodite, Asklepios, the god of health, Harpokrates, the Egyptian child-god, the Anatolian moon god Men, a known protector of families, and the Egyptian god of fertility and the underworld Sarapis, all of whom were attested by only few examples (Fig. 20.d-f).

Fig. 20 – Terracotta figurines of other deities from RS: a. Athena; b. Tyche/Isis and Nike; c. Hygieia; d. Hermes; e. Ares; f. Harpokrates



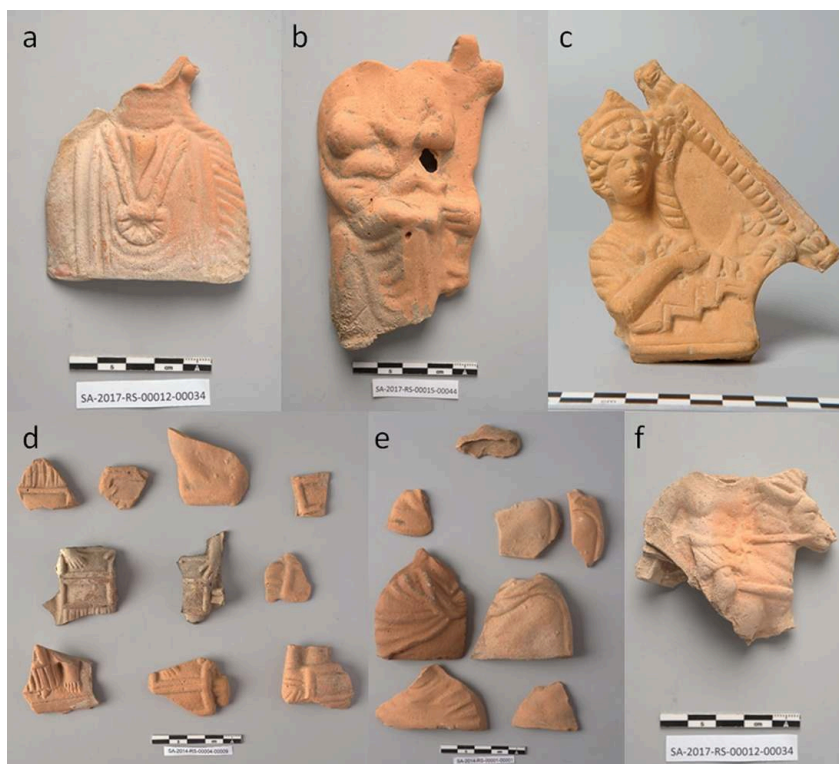
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- 55 In absence of dedicatory inscriptions or inscribed votive offerings, the identity of the god(s) worshipped at RS was approached through the identification and quantification of divine representations. The figure of the worshipped deity was one of the most common offerings for all sorts of occasions, dedicated to these deities at their respective sanctuaries. Although it is not always the case that the tutelary deity of a sanctuary is represented by the largest number of figurines,⁴⁶ the outright dominance of her representations at RS clearly single out Aphrodite as the main object of worship. This is somewhat extraordinary as there is normally a significant relationship between the physical configuration of places where sanctuaries were established and the gods to whom they were dedicated.⁴⁷ Although she is commonly associated with lush gardens with fruit trees and flowers, cave sanctuaries for Aphrodite are scarce.⁴⁸ This, and the fact that the goddess seems to have reached Pisidia only by the end of the Hellenistic period,⁴⁹ suggests that she was only a later addition to a sanctuary that may originally have served the cult of another god(dess). Such locations often are predestined for the cult of the Mother Goddess, who, because of her strong ties to nature, was predominantly worshipped at naturally formed cult places.⁵⁰ Yet, contrary to other cave sanctuaries in the region,⁵¹ clear evidence is lacking so far for RS. It is obvious

from the limited number of terracotta figurines of Kybele that by the Roman Imperial period at least, she only played a secondary role here and was overshadowed by Aphrodite. She was the standard for female beauty and patron of the sphere of sexuality, and her cult was emphatically the preserve of women.⁵²

- 56 Having said that, the broad repertoire of divine representations retrieved from RS would suggest that the sanctuary was not exclusively the preserve of a single deity, but that several deities were worshipped there. The amalgam of gods and goddesses represented at RS do share certain characteristics: they are all deities concerned with female fertility, womanhood, and the nursing and upbringing of the young. Such dedications to kourotrophic divinities who nurtured the young indicate a concern for female reproductive processes and the physical development of infants,⁵³ all of which brings us to the people who worshipped them.
- 57 Almost 40 % of the identifiable terracotta figurines consists of representations of mortal subjects, belonging to different age classes (Fig. 21): young girls (depicted as students holding *tabellae* or writing tablets, and as busts), young women playing several musical instruments, nurturing mothers or kourotrophi, and especially busts of adult women (up to 80 % of all mortal images). Male figures, on the other hand, are only attested as boys (again as students and as busts) and adolescents on horseback or as athletes, not as adults. Although these images are generic, not realistic portraits, they probably should be seen as representations of the votaries or the individuals for whom divine protection was invoked.

Fig. 21 – Terracotta figurines of human figures from RS: a. female bust; b. *kourotrophos*; c. woman playing the harp; d. fragments of seated girls and boys with *tabellae* on their lap; e. fragments of busts of boys wearing a *chlamys*; f. fragment of a rider on horseback



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58 The presence of other categories of gendered material culture provides corroborating evidence to that extent. For example, the tools used in spinning and weaving, essential skills of housewives and brides-to-be, were dedicated: spindles, spindle whorls, and distaffs (Fig. 22). The distaff was a tool usually associated with the status of women as matron or lady of the house, while the dedication of spindles and whorls was considered appropriate for goddesses such as Athena, Demeter, and Kybele.⁵⁴ When combined with other find categories, such as (miniature) mirrors, worked bone hair pins, ceramic and glass perfume bottles, and pieces of jewelry, all of which are traditionally identified as archetypical female attributes,⁵⁵ the assemblage yields a consistent picture of womanhood as the dominant theme of the sanctuary, at least for the Roman Imperial period, and of women as the social group most probably responsible for their dedication. Consequently, it is permissible to assume that these gifts were primarily, if not exclusively, dedicated by (young) women, reflecting their (future) social roles as wives and mothers. The terracotta figurines of the Sadberk Hanım collection should therefore most probably be seen in the same ritual light.

Fig. 22 – Overview of gendered votive offerings from RS: a. glass distaff; b. fragments of worked bone spindles and a hair pin; c. worked bone spindle whorl; d. fragment of the lead frame of a miniature mirror; e. copper-alloy pendent; f. glass bead



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Conclusion

59 This study of some of the terracotta figurines of the former Kocabaş collection, now kept at the Sadberk Hanım Museum in Istanbul, attempted to reconstruct their original context of deposition, and thus restore some of the meaning and importance of the objects which had been taken out of this context several decades ago. Examination of their clay fabric, as well as typological and stylistic analysis allowed the figurines to be identified as products of the coroplasts of the Pisidian city of Sagalassos. While their production at Sagalassos is beyond doubt, the general overlap of the types with those recently excavated at the so-called Rock Sanctuary suggests that these pieces too came

'out of the rock,' especially as the sanctuary is known to have fallen victim to many years of illicit digging.

- 60 Even if, however likely, we can never be 100% sure that the figurines actually originated from RS, this paper has demonstrated that identical figurines were in fact used at the Rock Sanctuary as part of religious rituals performed there by female members of the community of Sagalassos. Issues of love, sexuality, motherhood, childhood, education, and health were all clearly brought to bear at the sanctuary. This raises the possibility of a similar social function for the Sadberk Hanım figurines and thus partly restores their original meaning, enabling us to add additional layers of meaning to these museum pieces other than their art historical value.

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NOTES

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2. Barrett 2015, 119.
3. For a recent overview see Huysecom-Haxhi and Muller 2015.
4. Papantoniou et al, 2019, 2.
5. Çokay-Kepçe and Özden-Gerçeker 2011.
6. Talloon 2020.
7. Talloon 2019; Talloon et al, 2020.
8. Anlağan et al, 1995, 7.
9. Several more terracottas in the collection may also have been produced at Sagalassos, but these were not included in this study because of the lack of exact typological parallels.
10. Çokay-Kepçe and Özden-Gerçeker 2011, 207-209.

11. The publication of the terracotta figurine collection of the Burdur Museum by P. Talloen is forthcoming.
12. For the original date see Çokay-Kepçe and Özden-Gerçeker 2011, 207-209. While providing a wealth of terracotta fragments, the mixed stratigraphy of the Rock Sanctuary, the result of a clean-up operation in the fourth century C.E., only allows wide date ranges for the figurine types retrieved there, in the first and second centuries C.E. (Talloen et al, 2020).
13. Delivorrias et al, 1984, 59-63.
14. See <http://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/objects/29489> (last accessed on 21/07/2020).
15. Cocks: Winter 1903, 314 n° 3 (Cyrenaica); dogs: Winter 1903, 308 n° 4-8 (Italy and Asia Minor); gees: Winter 1903, 314 n° 1 = Mollard-Besques 1963, MYR 114 = Hermany et al, 1986, 870 n° 204 (Myrina, first century B.C.E.); goats: Winter 1903, 305 n° 10 (Myrina) and Burr 1934, n° 29 (Myrina).
16. Terracotta female figurines from Tarsos with a similar hairstyle are dated to the middle of first century C.E. (Besques 1972, Pl. 414.g).
17. The pulling of the fold refers to the apotropaic practice of spitting into the kolpos to avert the wrath of the goddess Nemesis (Stafford 2013, 231).
18. For the iconography of Nemesis see Karanastassi and Rausa 1992.
19. Karanastassi and Rausa 1992, 743 n° 77.
20. Karanastassi and Rausa 1992, 749 n° 173a.
21. See f.i. Korkut 2005.
22. Merker 2000, 169.
23. On the interpretation of busts as representations of the votaries or the individuals for whom divine protection was invoked rather than depictions of deities see Huysecom-Haxhi and Muller 2007.
24. A bust with similar hairstyle has been excavated at Elaiussa Sebaste and dated to the end of the first to the middle of the second century C.E. (Ferrazzoli 2015, 401 fig. 3).
25. Castaldo 2018, 106-107.
26. Louvre MYR 661 and 272 from Myrina, dated to first century B.C.E. (Mollard-Besques 1963).
27. Castaldo 2018, 105.
28. See Erlich 2019, 376-377.
29. Çokay-Kepçe and Özden-Gerçeker 2011, 214.
30. Leyenaar-Plaisier 1979, no. 1606. See <http://www.rmo.nl/collectie/zoeken?object=I+1975%2f10.1> (last accessed on 21/07/2020).
31. See Benissi 2019, 210 and note 3 for additional references.
32. Benissi 2019, 209-210.
33. Poblome 1999.
34. The production of late antique terracotta figurines is briefly discussed by Talloen 2006 and 2011, and Murphy and Poblome 2012.
35. Talloen 2020.
36. Degryse and Poblome 2008.
37. Erlich 2015, 164.
38. Especially some of the many Aphrodite types appear to be tributary to the coroplasts of Myrina, known for their mastery of the subject during the first centuries before and after the start of the common era (Mollard-Besques 1963; Higgins 1967, 114-115), yet all were executed in the typical local style indicating that also the molds were locally manufactured. On the importance of local context for the production of material culture see Talloen and Poblome 2005.
39. Talloen 2020.
40. Martin von Wagner Museum (Würzburg) inventory number 5405: Mold-made terracotta figurine of a standing Nemesis holding a measuring rod, accompanied by griffon and wheel

(Karanastassi 1992, 743 n° 77); Huntington Museum of Art (West Virginia) inventory number 2004.3.8: Mold-made terracotta bust of the goddess Isis (see <https://www.hmoa.org/art/collections/touma-near-eastern-collection>, last accessed 14/10/2018; or <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/bust-of-isis/gQF8IxB-EOJ07Q?hl=en-GB>, last accessed 24/07/2020).

41. Christie's: Mold-made terracotta figurine of Aphrodite *strophion* seated on a rock (see <https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot/a-greek-terracotta-figure-of-aphrodite-hellenistic-3831794-details.aspx?from=searchresults&intObjectID=3831794&sid=dc715c9e-959b-4339-b4a7-7a980810197e>, last accessed on 24/07/2020); Royal Athena Gallery: Mold-made terracotta figurine representing a pair of wrestling, naked Erotes standing on top of a rectangular base (erroneously identified as *ephedrimos* (see <http://www.royalathena.com/PAGES/UpTo2500/Roman/CBM13.html>, last accessed 24/07/2020); Sotheby's: Mold-made terracotta figurine of Eros-Harpokrates and Psyche embracing each other (see <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2007/antiquities-n08373/lot.76.html>, last accessed on 24/07/2020).

42. Talloen et al, 2020.

43. Mylonopoulos 2008.

44. Talloen 2015, 236-240.

45. Talloen 2019.

46. Alroth 1989, 112.

47. Bradley 2000, 25-26.

48. Bumke 2015. One of few known examples is situated at Naupaktos in Lokris, where widows prayed to the goddess that they might contract a new marriage (Pausanias, 2.32.7; 2.37.2; 10.38.12).

49. Talloen 2015, 186-187.

50. Ateş 2014.

51. For the sanctuaries of Zindan Mağarası (Meter Theon Vegeina), Kocain (Meter Oreia), Karain (Meter Oreia), Eleksi Tepe (Meter Malene?), Dutalan (Meter Tyriose), and Arpalık Tepe (Meter Theon) see Talloen 2015, 236-241.

52. Pirenne-Delforge 2007.

53. Cole 2004, 213-214.

54. Trinkl 2004.

55. Allison 2015.

ABSTRACTS

The contextualization of figurines that have been acquired by museums and that lack appropriate archaeological documentation is a growing trend in coroplastic research. This paper contributes to this trend by trying to reconstruct the context of some of the terracotta figurines kept at the Sadberk Hanım Museum in Istanbul. These objects could be identified as products of the coroplasts of Sagalassos (SW Turkey). What is more, there are several indications that suggest an exact origin for these figurines in a recently excavated cult site situated in the periphery of the Pisidian city. This in turn allows us to restore some of the social meaning of the terracottas and once again make them informative of the people that used them.

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Keywords: Sadberk Hanım Museum; terracotta figurines, Sagalassos, contextualization

AUTHORS

PETER TALLOEN

Assistant Professor of Archaeology, Süleyman Demirel University of Isparta (Turkey), Assistant Director of the Sagalassos Archaeological Research Project, directed by Professor Jeroen Poblome of KU Leuven (Belgium)
petertalloe@gmail.com

G. SENEM ÖZDEN-GERÇEKER

(PhD) Former Curator of Antiquities, Sadberk Hanım Museum, Istanbul
senem.ozden@gmail.com