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# ROMAN FINEWARES FROM SECTOR II PYRGI, ELEUTHERNA

KELLY AMANDA

This paper presents a small, but representative, sample of imported Roman finewares at Eleutherna, Sector II Pyrgi, and considers its implications for, or at least small contribution to, an appreciation of Imperial Rome's earliest influence on the settlement on the acropolis of Eleutherna within its provincial context.

At the ancient site of Eleutherna, the excavations at Pyrgi Sector II are located on the northern spur of a dramatic ridge, flanked by two deep riverbeds, which dominates the site. The earliest excavations in this sector, conducted in 1987, were focused on an area directly southwest of the foundations of a tetraconch structure (plan 1). Here contexts 8010-8012 overlay a damaged mosaic floor found at a depth of 1.8 m from the top of the architectural elevations in this area. The combined layers, consisting of a compacted red soil, with a high charcoal and crushed bone content, yielded hundreds of crushed sherds.

The layers were effectively sealed by a large pile of stone as the result of modern agricultural clearance. The cairn yielded a range of inscriptions while the overburden served to protect the layers from further disturbance caused by later building on the site (Van Effenterre  $\it et~al.$  1991, inscriptions E5 $\beta$  and E6, 38-39 and 51-68). As such, the contexts represent some of the few layers from Sector II Pyrgi which remained relatively undisturbed, thereby yielding a defined ceramic chronology.

# EARLY IMPORTED FINEWARES

The earliest ceramic profiles in context 8012 include a rouletted Arretine plate of Conspectus Form 18 which can be dated to the early 1st century AD (fig. 1E, 2iii). Similarly, examples of Conspectus 22, with spectacle spirals, found in context 8010 (fig. 1A-B, 2i-2ii), indicate a production date early within the 1st century AD (possibly early in the reign of Tiberius, as the transition to Conspectus form 23 is often viewed as complete by his reign).

Italian imports in Crete, however, do not generally date to the reign of Augustus and Eiring notes that the very earliest Italian sigillata at Knossos is Late Augustan in date (as represented by only four diagnostic and 25 body sherds) (2004, 71). The Late Augustan contexts at Knossos are dated by similar diagnostic forms which also feature in the Eleuthernian contexts discussed here, notably of Conspectus Forms 18 and 22 (Eiring 2004, 71), as also identified in the Eleuthernian contexts in Sector II. The slim yields of Augustan material at Knossos should, however, be balanced by the knowledge that few Augustan

contexts have been excavated at all<sup>1</sup>. In light of the dearth of excavated Augustan material at Knossos, the question as to whether we have gleaned a realistic impression of the earliest Romanising (or Roman related) activity at Knossos is highly questionable.

Early 1st century AD links with Italy, as indicated by this pocket of Arretine ware in Eleutherna, Sector II (i.e. contexts 8010-8012), are further corroborated by the presence of imported Arretine relief sherds elsewhere in Pyrgi; but how this contact became socially manifest remains a more complex question. Sherds with relief decoration, from across Pyrgi can, nonetheless, be attributed to the workshops of Rasinus and Perennius.

Arezzo, however, is not the only Italian atelier which is represented in context 8010, as an in planta pedis stamp, on the interior of a small cup of Conspectus Form 34, contains the name of either the potter Sex. Murrius Festus or Sex. Murrius Pisanus "SEXMF/P?" (fig. 1F, 2iv). Baldwin Bowsky records a similar stamp of Sextus Murrius at Eleutherna Sector I in Public building 76 (2009a, 162). Sex. Murrius Festus' earliest plain produce generally occur in Flavian contexts, suggesting he commenced production just prior to Sex. Murrius Pisanus. The signatures of either of these potters points to production in Pisa which "became the main export centre in the region after about 75 AD, where the so-called Late Italian Sigillata was produced until the mid-second century" (Hayes 1997, 52)2. Certainly, any association with this Late Italian production, more commonly attributed to the major potter L. Rasinius Pisanus, ascribes a late date in the range to the name Sex. Murrius, possibly somewhere between 50-150 AD (Oxé, Comfort & Kenrick 2000, no. 1690; Kenrick 2004, 254). Slane's date range of between 80 and 100 AD for another in planta pedis stamp of Sex. Murrius Festus found at Corinth complies with this chronology (1990, 44, no. 75, fig. 4, pl. 8). On Crete, the potters are further represented in the capital, Gortyna, by two stamps from the Odeion and Praetorium (Baldwin Bowsky 2009a, 1613) which should also adhere to this date range.

Two other *in planta pedis* stamps from nearby contexts in Sector II also point to links with ceramic production at Pisa; they include stamps of Cn. [Gnaeus] Ateius Euhodus "A^T^E V^H O" and Cn. [Gnaeus] Ateius Arretinus

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Eiring (2004, 71) reports that only one Augustan (presumably he is referring to mid-Augustan i.e. 15-1 BC, as opposed to Late Augustan i.e. 1-15 AD) destruction deposit has been excavated (i.e. Deposit A1 in the Southwest House, see Sackett 1992, 178-183). This statistic should also modify Baldwin Bowsky's observation that Italian sigillata stamps are not attested on the island prior to the mid-Augustan period (2009a, 166).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Sackett notes that at Knossos Pisa constitutes one of the secure ceramic provenances, while it may be relevant that an *in planta pedis* stamp "L.R.P.", signifying L. Rasinius Pisanus, came from the Neronian context N2/9 (Sackett 1992, 145, 155, 214, Y25) indicating an early date within the later range.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Citing Di Vita personal communication for a stamp of Sex. Murrius Festus in the Odeion, also Rizzo (2001, 38, no.1) and Magnelli (2001, 631, no. 6) for a stamp of Sex. M(urrius) P(isanus) in the Praetorium.

"CN.AA" (fig. 3-4)4. The earliest of the stamps relates to the potter Cn. [Gnaeus] Ateius Euhodus (Oxé, Comfort & Kenrick 2000, no. 292 (160) (2) no. 35, see 21 083), whose entire range of stamps has been dated between 5 BC and 25 (Oxé, Comfort & Kenrick 2000, 137, no. 292, see no. 35)5. The in planta pedis frame (which is a feature of the Eleutherna stamp) indicates a date at least after 15 AD and, conceivably, this fragment can be dated to the decade between 15 and 25 AD6. Another stamp of Ateius Euhodus (but in a rectangular frame) is found on a plate from the Southwest House at Knossos, where it was located in a Claudian destruction deposit (C1) (Sackett 1992, 144, Y14, pl. 142, deposit C1, no. 12, see also 154 and 197-198). The date attributed to this overall context at Knossos postdates that given for the entire range for Ateius Euhodus in Oxé, Comfort and Kenrick, 5 BC-25 AD (2000, 13), yet it adheres to dates for the corpus of Italian sigillata at Knossos, where this fineware is rarely noted prior to the Late Augustan period. At Knossos Italian sigillata only represents 3% of the Augustan finewares, rising to 29% in the Tiberian period, peaking in the Claudian period, when it registers at 43%, and dropping to 7% in the Hadrianic (Sackett 1992, 153). If we consider Baldwin Bowsky's observation that Italian sigillata stamps are not attested on the island prior to the mid-Augustan period (2009a, 166), then the Euhodus stamp from Sector II, as a Tiberian form, appears relatively early in the overall sequence.

The third stamp from Sector II represents the pottery atelier of Cn. Ateius Arretinus "CN.AA", an offshoot from Ateius in Pisa operating between 30-80 AD (Oxé, Comfort & Kenrick 2000, no. 279) (fig. 4)<sup>7</sup>. The format of this potter's stamps provides a date range between 30-80 AD (Oxé, Comfort & Kenrick 2000, no. 279, or possibly 282). At Gortyna, of the two examples of this Italian potter's stamps found, the example found from the Nymphaeum opposite

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Confirmation regarding of the Pisan operation of an atelier of the Arretine producer, Cn. Ateius, was established by the rare discovery of three fused waster plates and a series of separating clay rings, directly providing evidence of the firing processes within an industrial kiln (Pucci 1985, 365-406, esp. 368). Kenrick studied assemblages of workshop waste relating to this potter both at Pisa and Arezzo and concluded that Ateius finished his activity in Arezzo before moving to Pisa (Kenrick *in press*), while Poblome proposes that Ateius' move from Arezzo to Pisa, c. 5 BC, reflects a desire to tap into the wider exchange patterns accessible from Pisa (Poblome 2004, 29).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Oxé, Comfort and Kenrick distinguish 37 types of Cn. Ateius Euhodus' signature (2000, 13)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> From about 15 AD there was a definitive change in the appearance of stamps, whereby late Arretine examples featured abbreviated names, rather than full signatures, within the confines of a miniature footprint frame (*in planta pedis*), usually the right one. The frame and the abbreviated form of the names therein, are generally viewed as signalling a date later than 15 AD, although Kenrick fine-tunes this development to 9 AD (Kenrick 1990, 147).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> At excavations along the via Santo Stefano in Pisa, Menchelli suggests there are two distinctive groupings within the ceramic material; the first associated with Ateius, predating 40 AD, with the remainder gravitating towards the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (1995) while the same clusters are reflected in the excavations at Isola di Migliarino in Pisa (Banti & Pasquinucci 1988, 191-198). In contrast to Menchelli, Kenrick favours a Flavian date for the entire ceramic corpus from via Santo Stefano, as almost all of the potters are also well attested in Pompeii; however, he singles out the name Murrius as intrusive (Oxé, Comfort & Kenrick 2000, 30).

the Praetorium is of the same form and date as that from Sector II (Martin 2006, 184, fig. 6).

In terms of associated material, context 8011 in Sector II also yielded an interesting find of a clay plaque with a mould-made relief of the infant Herakles with snakes (fig. 1G, 2v). A 1st century AD date seems likely based on both the majority of 1st century AD evidence from its strategraphical context and similarities with motifs on lamps of that date discovered at Trier and possibly at Bingen (Menzel 1969, no. 111-112, O.10859-O.25580, fig. 27, no. 3 and 4; LIMC IV2 Herakles 1617)8.

The presence of a rim of an ESB2 bowl (Atlante II, Form 60) in context 8010 could also be suggestive of a late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD date, as the series begins after 50 AD (Hayes 2008, 39 and 155-156); however, its presence could also project the related activity into the late 2<sup>nd</sup> and even the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD (fig. 7). Its inclusion points to other spheres of influence and exchange, as Eastern Sigillata B constitutes Roman fineware produced in, or near, Tralles in western Asia Minor<sup>9</sup>. Its early forms convey Italian influence and at least two early ateliers may have been established by immigrant potters from the West (Zabehlicky-Scheffengger 1995).

# A REPRESENTATIVE COOKING WARE

Societal change at Eleutherna, Sector II Pyrgi, may be reflected in cooking wares in context 8010, albeit at a relatively later date, whereby the complete profile of a casserole dish perhaps signals a favourable reception of Roman dietary tastes on the site (fig. 5) 10. An identical form was collected in the area of the basilica in the Malia Survey in East Crete (fig. 6) (Kelly forthcoming, PM 90 206-1, no. 12). At Ilion, Heath and Tekkök present an impressive range of identical casserole of local manufacture, which they classify as "Gritty Gray Cookingware Flanged Casserole", and date to the late 2nd century AD at the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> The motif certainly enjoys a lengthy celebrity, made famous in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC by the painter Zeuxis and is later admired by Pliny (Pliny *NH* xxxv 63) and features prominently in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD paintings in Pompeii, specifically in The House of the Vettii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Hayes writes that two phases can be distinguished in ESB (which is an offshoot of the Arezzo factories) (1972, 10). He notes that "the Pergamon products of the 1st century AD show similar influence from Arretine ware, as may be seen from Loeschcke's earlier group at Candarli and the material published from Pergamon by Schafer. Direct influence from Italian wares seem to have persisted here somewhat later than at Tralles; the form of stamp *in planta pedis*, typical of later Arretine, is quite common and the relatively late forms; Dragendorff 18 and 24/25 (flanged bowls) are imitated to become the standard vessel forms of the late 1st century and onwards" (Hayes 1972, 10).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Changes in pottery can reflect changes in diet, and, as such, are frequently used as indicators of Romanization, as demonstrated at Bliesbruck, in northeastern Gaul (Albrecht 1998), where three chronological ceramic phases reveal that the initial domination of northern, in particular Belgian, wares, was slowly overtaken by more typically Roman shapes and wares, like *mortaria* and *terra sigillatas*, while amphorae in the late phase demonstrate growing demands for imported olive oil and fish sauces.

earliest (Heath & Tekkök digital archive) 11. Similarly, at Argos, cooking forms did not change until the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, intimating that while the Argives may have been generally receptive to new styles of pottery, their diet was (at least initially) traditionally conservative, as suggested by the absence of ceramics catering for the preparation of Roman cuisine (Abadie-Reynal 2007). At Argos, a steady increase in the number and range of imports in the late 1st century AD is regarded by Abadie-Reynal as testimony of changing tastes, such as a demand for Cretan wine (Abadie-Reynal 2005, 45). By the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD newly-acquired tastes do not reflect influence from Italy, but rather point to a broader variety of products operating within the wider network of Romanfacilitated markets. Roman cooking wares are slow to arrive at Argos and, when they do, they seem to reflect contact with, or influence from, Asia Minor rather than Italy. Abadie-Reynal maintains that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD the western coast of Anatolia, the Aegean islands and Crete have a sort of monopoly on trade with Argos (2005, 47-48). It is perhaps this regional influence that is also represented by this cooking ware profile in early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD Crete (as represented both at Eleutherna and Malia) and its proliferation at Ilion (Heath & Tekkök digital archive).

# ARCHITECTURAL HORIZONS

At Pyrgi Sector II the architectural horizon located under these contexts (8010-8012) is a mosaic floor, much of which was already destroyed in antiquity, although a kantharos motif can be identified in a surviving corner. Similarly, this motif is also visible on a mosaic from a mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD villa at Kasteli Kissamos in western Crete (Ling 1998, 60, fig. 42; Hellenkemper Salies 1986, 241-285, pl. 4)<sup>12</sup>. Ling, in his mosaic study, notes that the mosaic at Kasteli Kissamos represents the influence of Italian black-and-white style (although he observes that some details are highlighted in polychrome, such as the bird's tail feathers, which include some blue and green glass tesserae).

#### PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

From these contexts southwest of the tetraconch foundations at Pyrgi, Sector II, we can make some preliminary deductions: the impression given by the Roman finewares is one of early contact with the Arretine markets, established in the early-mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (or even slightly earlier), a contact which shifted to Pisa by the end of the century. While it is possible that this horizon provides a *terminus ante quem* for the laying of the mosaic, and, consequently, the construction of any associated architectural framework, there

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 $<sup>^{11}</sup>$  Aspects of local manufacture may also be reflected in the wider assemblage at Ilion, where ESB, although regularly appearing in  $1^{\rm st}$  and early  $2^{\rm nd}$  century AD deposits, was less commonly found than the ESC/Candarli forms produced in the relatively closer manufacturing centres (Heath & Tekkök, *digital archive*).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Kantharoi are known from the narthex mosaic of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD basilica in Eleutherna Sector I but these are rendered in full polychrome and are stylistically distinct (Θέμελης 2002, 95).

are some problems with this sequence. Firstly, there is the presence of some Hellenistic intrusions in these contexts, not discussed here, which precludes a water-tight and absolute time-line. Secondly, the mosaic which underlies the deposit was damaged in antiquity and, consequently, does not constitute an impermeable seal, and seems to have permitted intrusions from below.

Mosaics in Crete are almost exclusively Roman in date, with only one identified Hellenistic example represented by the pebble mosaic adorning the floor of the temple treasury at Lebena (Sweetman 1999, 104). The reportedly sudden appearance of Roman mosaics in Crete in the late 1st century AD precludes progression from pre-Roman development and marks them as distinctive Roman features. The appropriation of this decorative device heralds a radical alteration in architectural décor and display in Crete.

It would be proved highly significant if the mosaic at Eleutherna could be dated to the 1st century AD as this might coincide with corresponding activity in Sector I where two townhouses were constructed (Θέμελης 2004a, 57-64; 2004b, 41-42; Tsigonaki 2007, 271). In House 2, in Sector I, an entire mosaic floor collapsed from an upper storey, falling into room 23 below, where it had originally adorned a room in a private bath-suite (Θέμελης 2002, 80); admittedly, while the townhouse was originally constructed in the 1st century AD, the mosaics therein may be later additions<sup>13</sup>. There are, however, some potentially late 1st century AD mosaics elsewhere on the island; the earliest mosaic at Knossos, the Apollinarius Mosaic, is generally dated to the late 1st century AD or early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Hood & Smyth 1981, 41, no. 91; Sanders 1982, 53; Sweetman 1999, 82-8), although Ramsden assigns it squarely to the 1st century AD (1971, 229-231). At Myrtos, Sweetman dates the mosaic in the tepidarium between the late 1st and early 2nd century AD (1999, 116, cat. 58, pls. 88-92), while Livadiotti and Rocco apply the range to the first construction phase of the bathsuite (2004, 742-743). Elsewhere, 1st century AD construction phases have been recorded at bathing facilities at Knossos, Gortyna, Chania, Kouphonisi and Makriyalos - all of which are adorned with mosaics, albeit their installation may post-date their architectural contexts. This horizon is, however, attested at other Roman centres in Greece, notably at Corinth, where the earliest mosaics are 1st century AD in date and, while they are mainly public in context, one example from Anaploga is said to have come from a private context, that of a domus (Sweetman & Sanders 2005, 365-366).

At Eleutherna, Sector II the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD Arretine ware, the Pisan potter's stamp and the mosaic itself are indicative of strong Italian influence in this area of the site at a relatively early stage in the development of the Roman province. The 1<sup>st</sup> century AD is certainly a busy period at Eleutherna, with Tzifopoulos (2009, 103-152) recording honours to Augustus, Tiberius, Trajan (a tradition that continues into the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD with honours to both

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> It is perhaps significant to finally note that Baldwin Bowsky compares the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD foundations of the private houses and their bath suites at Eleutherna, specifically that of House 1, with the urban villas of Campania (2009b, 210).

Trajan and Hadrian) in Sector I. Baldwin Bowsky has noted a proliferation of Roman onomastica in the period and, significantly, she views coinage minted by Eleutherna (albeit in its capacity as a member of the *Cretan Koinon*) featuring the name of Cornelius Lupus, the provincial governor at the closing years of Tiberius' reign, as equivalent to provincial tender (Baldwin Bowsky 1987, 506-7, fn 16; 2009a, 165). In light of the intense activity in Sector I, it is tempting to interpret the Italian sigillatas and any associated architectural foundations in Sector II as representatives of an overarching civic reconstruction which is more explicitly manifested in Sector I, where it involved the construction of the large and small baths and Houses 1 and 2 (Themelis 2009, 64).

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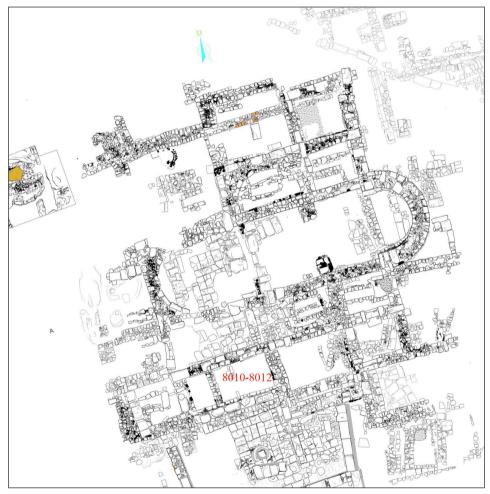
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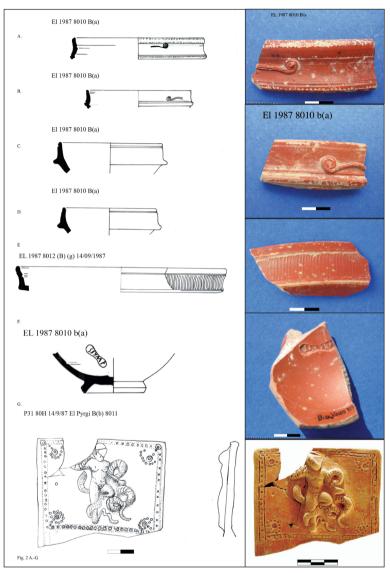
# Ρωμαϊκή Λεπτοτέχη Κεραμική από του Τόμε ΙΙ Στο Πυργί Ελευθέρνας

KELLY AMANDA

Σε αυτό το άρθρο παρουσιάζεται μια ομάδα πρώιμων ρωμαϊκών εισηγμένων αντικειμένων που βρέθηκαν σε ανασκαφικά στρώματα στον Τομέα ΙΙ στη θέση Πυργί της Ελεύθερνας. Τα σφραγίσματα σε αγγεία sigillata υποδηλώνουν σχέσεις με κεραμικά εργαστήρια από την Ιταλία, αρχικά από το Αρέτζο, αλλά σταδιακά περισσότερο από την Πίζα προς το τέλος του 1ου αι. μ.Χ. Η παρουσία ρωμαϊκών μαγειρικών σκευών του 2ου αι. μ.Χ. δηλώνει μια όλο και μεγαλύτερη αλλαγή στις διατροφικές συνήθειες και την αύξηση της ζήτησης για εισαγόμενα καταναλωτικά αγαθά. Η εικόνα από την κεραμική συμπληρώνει τις τάσεις που διακρίνονται στον Τομέα Ι, όπου κατά τον 1ο μ.Χ. πραγματοποιείται μια αναδιοργάνωση των αρχιτεκτονικών δομών του χώρου.



Plan 1. Site plan, courtesy of Dr. Christina Tsigonaki.

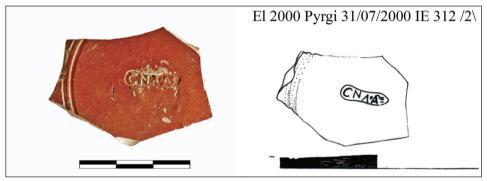


**Fig. 1 (a-g).** Collection of sigillata forms and plaque from contexts 8010-8012 (drawings Amanda Kelly).

Fig. 2 (i-v). i. Arretine rim, Conspectus 22 with spectacle spiral. ii. Arretine rim, Conspectus 22 with spectacle spiral. iii. Rouletted rim of Arretine plate; Conspectus Form 18. iv. Base of small sigillata bowl, Conspectus 34, in planta pedis <SEXMF/P?>. v. Plaque of infant Hercules with snakes (i-iv: photograph Amanda Kelly, v: photograph – courtesy of Dr. Christina Tsigonaki).



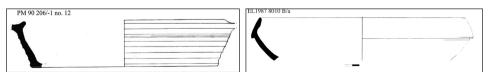
**Fig. 3.** Ring base of sigillata bowl with in planta pedis <A^T^E(?)V^O> (photograph & drawing Amanda Kelly).



**Fig. 4.** Flat base Italian sigillata with in planta pedis <CN.AA> (drawing Amanda Kelly, photograph – courtesy of Dr. Christina Tsigonaki).



Fig. 5. Profile of casserole from context 8010 (photograph & drawing Amanda Kelly).



**Fig. 6.** Profile of casserole from the Malia Survey (drawing Amanda Kelly).

**Fig. 7.** Rim of ESB2 bowl (Atlante II, Form 60) (drawing Amanda Kelly).