

Teapot-shaped wheel-made lamps from Cilicia and southeastern Turkey



Abstract: The aim of this research, based on a series of unpublished lamps from Mersin, Malatya and Mardin museums and all the necessary parallels, is to propose a new hypothesis on the chronology and diffusion of the type of lamps Donald Bailey nicknamed “teapot-shaped”, well attested in continental Turkey (Konya, Akşehir, Sagalassos), where their production is very well framed. In the coastal part of Asia Minor, on the contrary, this type seems to know at least three peaks of production: the Hellenistic period, the 2nd to 3rd century AD and, finally, the 6th century AD.

Keywords: Cilicia, Turkey, wheel-made lamps, teapot-shaped, production

Three lamps from the museum of Mersin in coastal Cilicia in southern Turkey have a very similar teapot-shaped body about 10 cm long, a butterfly handle and a wide filling-hole in the center of a flat disk, bordered by a large rib with a series of small holes [Fig. 1:1–3]. They all have smooth shoulders, while their circular nozzle, protruding from a cylindrical appendage, can be more or less wide and prominent. Indeed, discrepancies between the three are few and refer to details only, e.g., the shape of the handle is not identical, the width of the nozzle and the glaze are different. Their similarity sug-

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For the study of the lamp from the Museum of Mardin [Fig. 1:5] permission was granted by the museum authorities to Rojin Demir (Izmir) for her BA thesis at the Dokuz Eylül University in Izmir. The documentation and photographs were made by Demir in 2014. The Museum of Malatya granted permission to study the lamp from the museum collection [Fig. 1:6] to Türkay Yiğit (Izmir) for his BA thesis also at the Dokuz Eylül University in Izmir. The documentation and photographs were made by Yiğit in 2013. The authors wish to thank both of them for the photographs and permission to use them herein. We are also grateful to the editors of this journal for their patience and support.

gests that they were produced in a single local workshop. The color of the clay and glaze, red-orange or brown, is typical of Asia Minor lamps.

The lamps largely correspond to the “Kragenlampe” or collar lamps published by Susanne Fischer and Maria-Theresia Welling (1984) [Fig. 1:4]. The dating to the 2nd–1st century BC, suggested by Fischer and Welling, is based on a comparison with an Athenian lamp from the Kerameikos cemetery.

A circular crown surrounding the filling hole, with a variable number of small holes, seems to be the most distinctive feature of the Mersin lamps. In the Mersin specimens, the small holes are placed close to the circular ridge delimiting the disk. This feature is also present in the so-called Ephesian lamps.¹ A second type of lamp has been evidenced in Mardin, a locality almost 500 km away from Mersin. The form features 14 small holes, some doubled(?), spaced irregularly around the *infundibulum* [Fig. 1:5]. The third variant bears some resemblance to the other two, but for the holes in the discus, e.g., a small lamp (only 4 cm long), with a surprisingly large discus [Fig. 1:6], from Malatya, a city some 470 km away from Mersin. A form with a large filling hole in the center but without the small holes around the discus is also present in the material from Mersin.

TYOLOGICAL SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

The lamps published in this paper feature a number of traits typical of different pe-

riods; for example, a Paul Getty Museum lamp [Fig. 2:1], with a nozzle extended forward and a hollow around the filling hole is believed to originate from southern Anatolia and dates, presumably, to the 3rd century BC (Bussièrè and Wohl 2017: 26, No. 24). Except for the diameter of the filling hole and the attachment handle, it might be considered similar to one from the Bouvier Collection (Inv. no. B 354) with a graffiti inscription on the bottom mentioning the inhabitants of Gortina (Chrzanovski 2012: 5, Fig. 5) [Fig. 2:2].

Some similarities can be seen also with another Paul Getty Museum oil lamp, No. 52 [Fig. 2:3], which however has a completely different handle designed to be gripped, a nozzle with a thick wall opening up, a vertical wall and only a slight ridge around the filling hole. The fabric is typical of Anatolia. It has perplexed the authors to the point of being attributed by them either to the Hellenistic period or much later. Nozzles of this kind have been noted among Anatolian lamps of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD (see Bussièrè and Wohl 2017: Cat. No. 552). The fabric of all of the lamps is somewhat coarse and the glaze is missing.

A LATER VERSION?

Another lamp from Mersin [Fig. 1:8] bears a striking resemblance to those illustrated above. The only difference meriting mention is a high ring-shaped handle connected to the discus ridge, which is fairly typical of Islamic lamps. A raised and perforated discus appears in a Toronto lamp, for which John W. Hayes (1980: 134,

¹ On the spread of these lamps, see, recently, Kajzer 2013; objects of this kind have also been found in Tarsus (group VI) (Goldman and Jones 1950: 89–90) and in the Syro-Palestinian region (Sussman 2009: 66–70).

No. 545) hypothesizes an Egyptian provenance; he attributed this lamp to the 5th or 6th century AD.

Lamps without the small holes around the discus, presumably of Egyptian provenance, were classified by Donald Bailey in one group with three variants (Bailey 1988: lamps Q 2205, Q 2249, Q 2250, Q 2257, Q 2258, Q 2270–Q 2275);² they were found in 1913–1914, in the village of Wadi Sarga. A lamp found in 1994, during the excavation of the tomb of Pay and Raia, with a diameter of 7 cm, has been dated to the Coptic period, i.e., 6th–7th century AD (Raven 2005: 78). Cilicia was conquered by the Arabs in the early 7th

century, by which time Cilicia appears to have been deserted.

PRODUCTION, DATING, FUNCTION

The said lamps all originated from Mersin, suggesting that a workshop may have been located there, although the type has been attested as far away as in Malatya and Mardin.

Some features of the lamps, such as the filling hole within a discus surrounded by a ridge, often with a series of small holes in variable numbers pierced around the perimeter, seem to go back to the late Hellenistic period, but on the whole, based on handle and spout shape, and



Fig. 1. Local teapot-shaped lamps with cylindrical nozzle from Cilicia and southeastern Turkey: 1–3 – Museum of Mersin; 4 – Westfälische Sammlungen, Münster; 5 – Museum of Mardin; 6 – Museum of Malatya; 7–8 – Museum of Mersin (Photos E. Lafli [1–3, 7–8], L. Chrzanowski [4], R. Demir [5] and T. Yiğit [6])

2 Other parallels have emerged from the Theban area and from further south, for example, Tell Edfu.

the general section profile, these three lamps can be placed in the 2nd (especially the last decades) or even 3rd century AD. The example with a ring handle, based on Egyptian parallels, may be dated to the 6th and 7th centuries AD. It could suggest a revival of the form, possibly under Islamic influence, in the early Byzantine

period, prior to the devastation of Mersin as well as the territory around it by the Arabs.

The lamps presented here have not been identified to either place or context of finding, but their completeness makes it plausible they were part of a grave goods assemblage.

CATALOG

1. Lamp (Acc. no. 83.8.22) L. 10; H. 2.8, W. 6.6; Dia. filling hole 2; Dia. wick hole 1.2 cm [Fig. 1:1]. Found in the Mersin area(?); now in the Museum of Mersin
2. Lamp (Acc. no. 83.8.17) L. 10; H. 3.6; W. 6.5; Dia. filling hole 1.8; Dia. wick hole 1.5 cm [Fig. 1:2]. Found in the Mersin area(?); now in the Museum of Mersin
3. Lamp (Acc. no. 81.19.11) L. 9.9; H. 3.6; W. 6.3; Dia. filling hole 1.8; Dia. wick hole 1.7 cm [Fig. 1:3]. Found in the Mersin area(?); now in the Museum of Mersin
4. Lamp (Acc. no. 38) L. 9.6; H. 3.6; W. 6.8; Dia. filling hole 1.8 x 1.5; Dia. wick hole 1.5 cm [Fig. 1:4]. Unknown provenance; now in the Westfälische Sammlungen, Münster (Fischer and Welling 1984: Cat. No. 21)
5. Lamp L. 8.5; H. ?; W. 5.8; Dia. filling hole 2.0; Dia. wick hole 1.5 cm [Fig. 1:5]. Found in the Mardin area(?); now in the Museum of Mardin
6. Lamp (Acc. no. 3378) L. 4.1; H. 2.8 cm [Fig. 1:6]. Purchase of Mr. Zülfü Kısaç' ın 1972; now in the Museum of Malatya
Like the former, the fabric of the lamp is well-levigated, the slip a dull brownish-pink. There are no holes in the discus around the filling hole and the handle is missing the lateral terminations. The small size makes it almost a miniature lamp.
7. Lamp (Acc. no. 81.19.9) L. 10.5; Dia. 7; Dia. filling hole 2.4; Dia. burning hole (irregular) max. 2.0 cm [Fig. 1:7]. Found in Mersin(?); now in the Museum of Mersin. 5th–7th century AD(?)



Fig. 2. Typological similarities: 1, 3, 4 – The Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, CA; 2 – Collection Bouvier, Switzerland (Photos L. Chrzanovski)

8. Lamp, Egyptian? (Acc. no. 03.2.1) L. 12.2; H. 4.2; W. 8.2; Dia. filling hole 2.0; Dia. wick hole 1.2 cm [Fig. 1:8]. Found in Mersin(?); now in the Museum of Mersin. 6th–7th century AD(?)

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