



ROUGH CILICIA

New Historical and Archaeological Approaches



edited by

Michael C. Hoff and Rhys F. Townsend

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*Proceedings of an International Conference
held at Lincoln, Nebraska, October 2007*

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Oxbow Books
Oxford and Oakville

Published by
Oxbow Books, Oxford, UK

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ISBN 978-1-84217-518-7

This book is available direct from:

Oxbow Books, Oxford, UK
(Phone: 01865-241249; Fax: 01865-794449)

and

The David Brown Book Company
PO Box 511, Oakville, CT 06779, USA
(Phone: 860-945-9329; Fax: 860-945-9468)

or from our website

www.oxbowbooks.com

Cover photos courtesy of the editors

The upper photo is a view of the acropolis of Selinus from Cestrus. The lower is a view of the River Bath at Selinus

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Rough Cilicia: New Historical and Archaeological Approaches (2007 : University of Nebraska--Lincoln)

Rough Cilicia : new historical and archaeological approaches / edited by Michael C. Hoff and Rhys F. Townsend.
pages cm

Papers originally presented at the conference "Rough Cilicia: New Historical and Archaeological Approaches" held at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2007.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-84217-518-7

1. Cilicia--Antiquities, Greek--Congresses. 2. Cilicia--Antiquities, Roman--Congresses. 3. Cilicia--Antiquities, Byzantine--Congresses. 4. Excavations (Archaeology)--Turkey--Cilicia--Congresses. I. Hoff, Michael C., author, editor of compilation. II. Townsend, Rhys F., author, editor of compilation. III. Title.

DS156.C5R68 2013

939'.35--dc23

2012044283

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Short Run Press, Exeter

2.

Problematizing Greek Colonization in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Seventh and Sixth Centuries BC: the case of Soli

Remzi Yağcı

Ancient Greek colonization in the East is a matter of controversial discussion. Although Greek presence in the Levant is an undeniable fact, many scholars have debated the nature of settlements and their positioning within the wider colonization process. In this paper, I will discuss Greek colonization in the eastern Mediterranean in the seventh and sixth centuries BC, focusing on the case of Soli where recent archaeological excavations have revealed new and promising finds. Written evidence, from both classical and Near Eastern sources, along with archaeological material, are the primary sources of information on East Greek colonization in Cilicia and especially in Soli. This paper examines the evidence in three parts: First, ancient sources and modern interpretations will be summarized and analyzed; second, a brief terminology on colonization will be provided; and last, the recent archaeological finds at Soli displaying the city's remarkable position in Cilicia will be discussed.

The first traces of Greek presence in Cilicia are said to commence in the Heroic period when legendary figures such as Mopsus and Amphilocus lived.¹ Scholars consider the Karatepe bilingual epigraphic monument as confirmation of this presence due to the occurrence of the name Mopsus in this inscription that connects the lifespan of Azzatiwatas (the end of the eighth or early seventh century BC) to the legendary past.² The narrative described in this inscription may be seen in parallel with Homeric events.³ Finds of Mycenaean and Mycenaean-type pottery (LH IIC) found extensively in Tarsus, Kilisetepe, and Soli, dated to the 12th century BC, are

usually considered archaeological confirmation for what has been called the migrationist approach, which argues for the establishment of settlements from the west.⁴ This hypothesis receives some support from the literary testimonia, which also place Greeks in the area; Strabo, for instance, cites Soli as the place where Amphilocus, the son of Amphiaras, the founder of Argos, was killed by Apollo.⁵

There are many older as well as more recent criticisms, however, which deconstruct this stance.⁶ According to these approaches, the wide distribution of Mycenaean pottery (either imported from Greece or made locally) provides clear evidence for the existence of broader and complex trade systems as well as agents and mechanisms.⁷ Both stances naturally agree to some extent that the period after the collapse of the great Mycenaean and Hittite empires was an era of new trade enterprises and migrations.⁸ All these activities may be thought to create diasporas where different cultures and people intermingled.⁹ How much of the intermingling was due to trade and how much due to migration is precisely the same question that forms the focus of this paper for the seventh and sixth centuries BC, the next important era for the presence of Greek settlements in Cilicia.¹⁰

Turning first to literary evidence to address this question, a number of authors may be cited in support of actual Greek settlement. Strabo claims that Soli was a "ktisma of the Achaeans and of the Rhodians of Lindos."¹¹ Polybius, Livy, and Pomponius Mela assert that Soli was founded by the Rhodians, descendants from Argos.¹² Scylax cites

Soli as one of the most important cities of Cilicia after the Greek colonization; others include Charadrus, Anemurium, Nagidus, Celenderis, Aphrodisias, Holmoi, Sarpedon, Soli, Zephyrium, and Mallus. Scylax adds that there are only two poleis, Holmoi and Soli, that show characteristics of Greek cities.¹³ Xenophon mentions the name of Soli as a maritime city in the *Anabasis*.¹⁴ In addition, Eusebius' *Chronica* preserves Greek historical fragments describing a major battle in Cilicia between Greeks and Assyrians during the reign of Sennacherib.¹⁵ Eusebius makes use of Abydenos and Alexander Polyhistor who narrate two different versions.¹⁶ The Eusebian chronology sets the foundation of Phaselis in 691 and that of Soli is considered contemporary. These events are also included in the Neo-Assyrian sources that link the conflicts with the campaign against Kirua in which Sennacherib says that his army seized and plundered Ingira and Tarzi fighting against the Iamans (possibly Ionians).¹⁷

In the context of these classical and Near Eastern sources that reference Soli's identity, it will be helpful to clarify certain terminology dealing with the nature of settlement and which clearly relates to our questioning. The leitmotif of this paper, the colony, is the first term to be defined in order to contextualize the map of the ancient world. The word "colony" has its etymological roots in the Latin word *colonia*, which indicates a place meant for agricultural activities and, by extension, means settlement. The Greek term for colonization, *apoikia* (ἀποικία), refers to the foundation of a new city or settlement, more often than not with nonviolent means.¹⁸ Colonists or immigrants usually transfer to the new homeland their religion and cult, their burial customs, their eating and drinking manners. The nature and structure of colonies are highly debatable and it is not easy to get one all-encompassing and holistic definition for the word "colony."¹⁹ Scholars have distinguished different types of colonies. For Keith Branigan, a "settlement colony" corresponds to the Greek term *apoikia* – a settlement founded in a foreign country and populated by people resettled there from their homeland. A second type, a "governed colony," is a settlement that has a foreign administration or government imposed upon it by force; there are no pre-Hellenistic Greek examples. Last, a "community colony" is an *enoikismos*, that is, a settlement in which a more or less significant element of the population is comprised of emigrants from a foreign place.²⁰

Within this framework, we may return to our central questions: What is the position of Soli in the seventh and sixth centuries BC? How can we define Greek presence at Soli? Was it a period of change? Were there any alterations in the economic and social life and in demographic structures? Could a new people have arrived with different dwelling habits? And finally, in brief, was Soli a colony as the written sources straightforwardly claimed?

Archaeological criteria for determining foreign presence include imported religion and cult, burial customs, settlement layout, architecture, and kitchenware.²¹ However, it is not always possible to provide archaeological evidence for each criterion. For instance, in the case of Soli, this period has been represented on the acropolis where traces of inscriptions and burial customs have not yet been found. However, the settlement layout, the architectural remains, and numerous ceramic wares are of highly representative value that aid in identifying the East Greek presence.

Soli is located near Mezitli, 11 km west of modern Mersin. According to Strabo, it is a border city between Cilicia Tracheia (lat. *Aspera*, "Rough") and Cilicia Pedias (lat. *Campestris*, "Plain").²² It is also possible that in the Neo-Babylonian period Soli was the border between Pirindu (Assyrian Hilakku) and Hume (Assyrian Que) and in the Hittite period between Kizzuwatna and Tarhuntassa. Excavations at Soli have uncovered abundant small finds and a remarkable amount of architectural material.

Pottery related to the LH IIIC period, contemporary with the Heroic period, is represented at Soli most reliably in Trench G8 within a thick ash layer. Other LH IIIC sherds datable to the first half of the 12th century were also found in trenches E9 and F9.²³ The architectural remains on the upper level began above the thick ash layer and started to appear in trenches E7 and E8 (Fig. 2.1). They continue through trenches G7, G8, and G9. This is the architectural context dated to the seventh and sixth century, and the finds in these trenches represent a Late Geometric pottery assemblage revealing the beginning of Greek presence at Soli (Fig. 2.2). The city was also in close contact with Cyprus during this period, as the pottery finds seem to demonstrate.

As revealed in archaeological stratigraphy, Soli had remarkable connections with central Anatolia, Cyprus, and the east Greek world in the seventh and sixth centuries BC. Soli's pottery assemblages also include a wide range of locally produced wares. All these pottery finds are indicators of a cultural change that arrived with the newcomers. We may claim that Soli became a cosmopolitan trade center in the seventh and sixth centuries. Two examples especially are clear indicators of the close interactions with Cyprus and Anatolia. The first one is a Cypro-Archaic I cult amphora on which an Astarte-Wanassa prostitute smelling a lotus flower is depicted.²⁴ Another example that reveals maritime trade is a Cypriot Bichrome IV amphora on which garlands of lotuses are depicted. A Phrygian fibula, a unique find in Cilicia, illustrates the commercial and cultural relationships with central Anatolia.²⁵ This socio-cultural change is dated between 700–520 at Tarsus and is divided into two sub-periods or phases, the Assyrian period (700–600) and the sixth century.²⁶ The recent excavations more or less confirm this chronology for Soli.

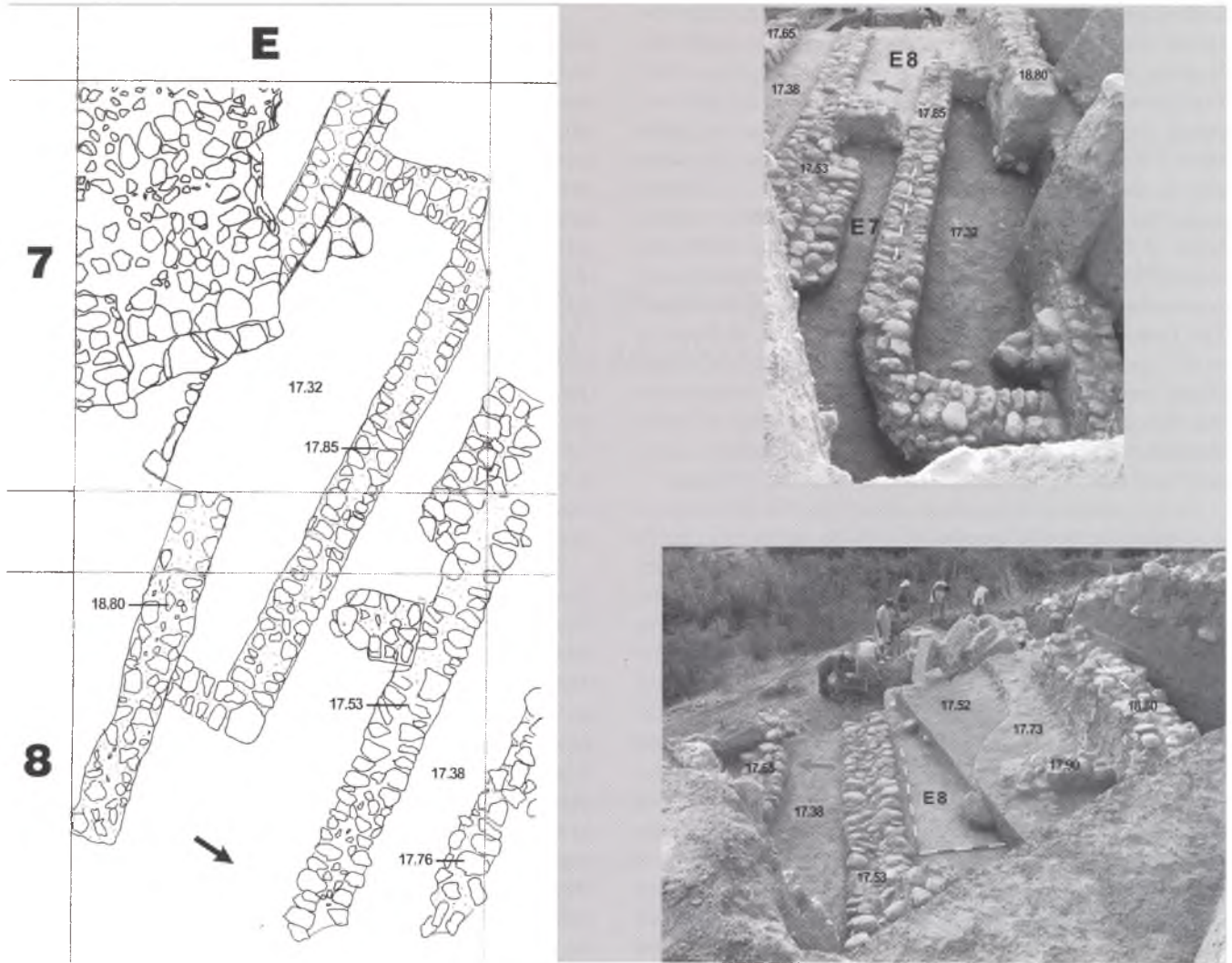


Fig. 2.1. Soli. Trenches E7 and E8 dated to the seventh and sixth centuries BC.



Fig. 2.2. Soli. Late Geometric pottery sherds.



Fig. 2.3. Soli. Architectural terracottas.

The wide ceramic repertoire consisting of various finds and types illustrates the East Greek presence. Amphoras, kraters, skyphoi, lekythoi, and lebes (dinoi) as well as architectural terracottas (Fig. 2.3) have also been excavated at Soli. Bird bowls date to the seventh century. Wild Goat Style

pottery dates to the late seventh and early sixth centuries, covering both a relatively broad span of time and multiple production centers. Most examples are from the latest stage of Milesian Wild Goat Style (Fig. 2.4).²⁷ Wave line (possibly Chian) amphoras, red glazed kraters, East Greek lebetes (Figs. 2.5–6), Ionian bowls (Fig. 2.7), and Samian lekythoi (Fig. 2.8) color the city's pottery assemblage.²⁸ A lekythos of Phoenician type, thought to be a Rhodian imitation of Levantine wares, is also found. A Chian-type skyphos (Fig. 2.9), Middle Corinthian pottery sherds, along with the East Greek-type handles (Fig. 2.10), are noteworthy pieces that represent the diversity of Greek style pottery at Soli.

However, it is widely known that these kinds of East Greek pottery are excavated in nearly all the east Mediterranean coastal cities where there are traces of Greek presence. This is one of the main reasons why recently many scholars have begun to rethink the assumption of the philhellenic migrationist approach and colonial discourse regarding these cities as colonies. In view of this new contextualization, a growing number of researchers have claimed that all these cities were rather emporia or trade ports.²⁹ They have further put forward the idea that these pottery finds alone



Fig. 2.4. Soli. Milesian Wild Goat Style pottery sherds.

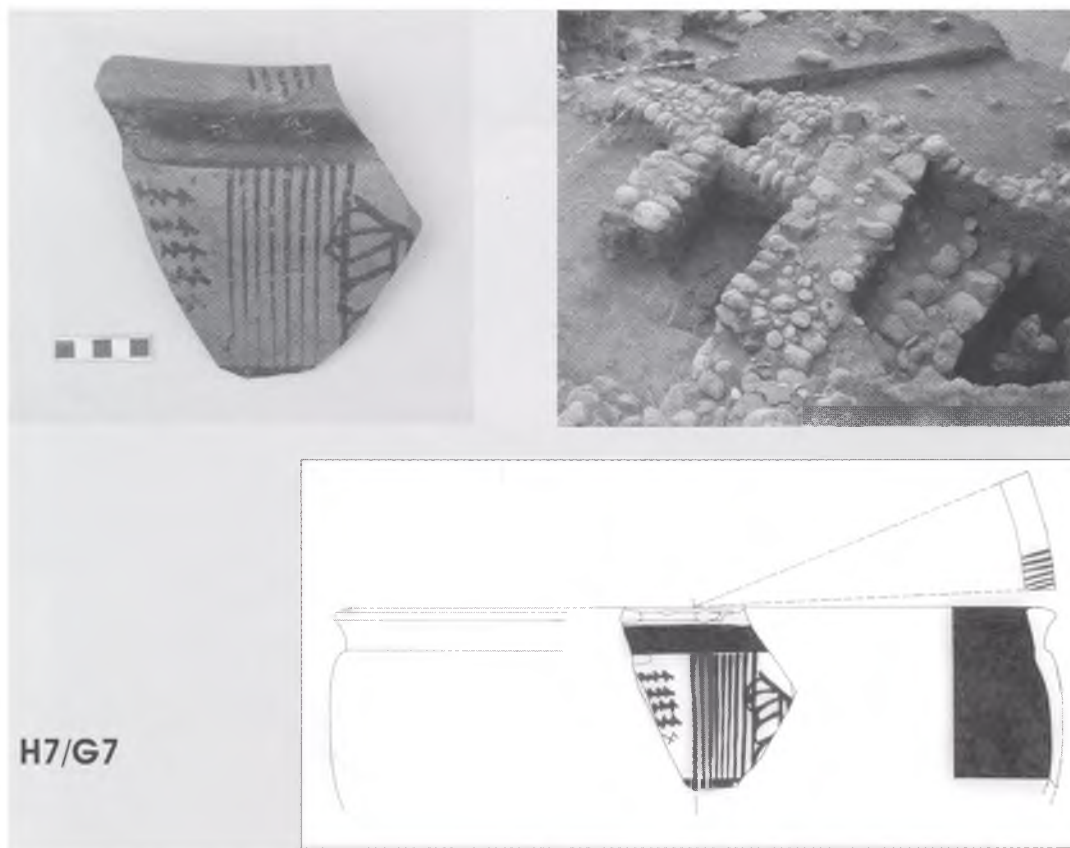


Fig. 2.5. Soli. East Greek lebes sherd and its context.



Fig. 2.6. Soli. East Greek lebetes sherds.

cannot be considered as evidence of Greek presence unless some architectural remains were found together with other determinants such as tombs and inscriptions.³⁰

In the 2006 and 2007 seasons, important archaic architectural remains were excavated at Soli (Fig. 2.11).³¹ The architectural terracottas found scattered around these trenches are promising finds that reveal the existence of an East Greek building, possibly a temple (to Athena?) on the

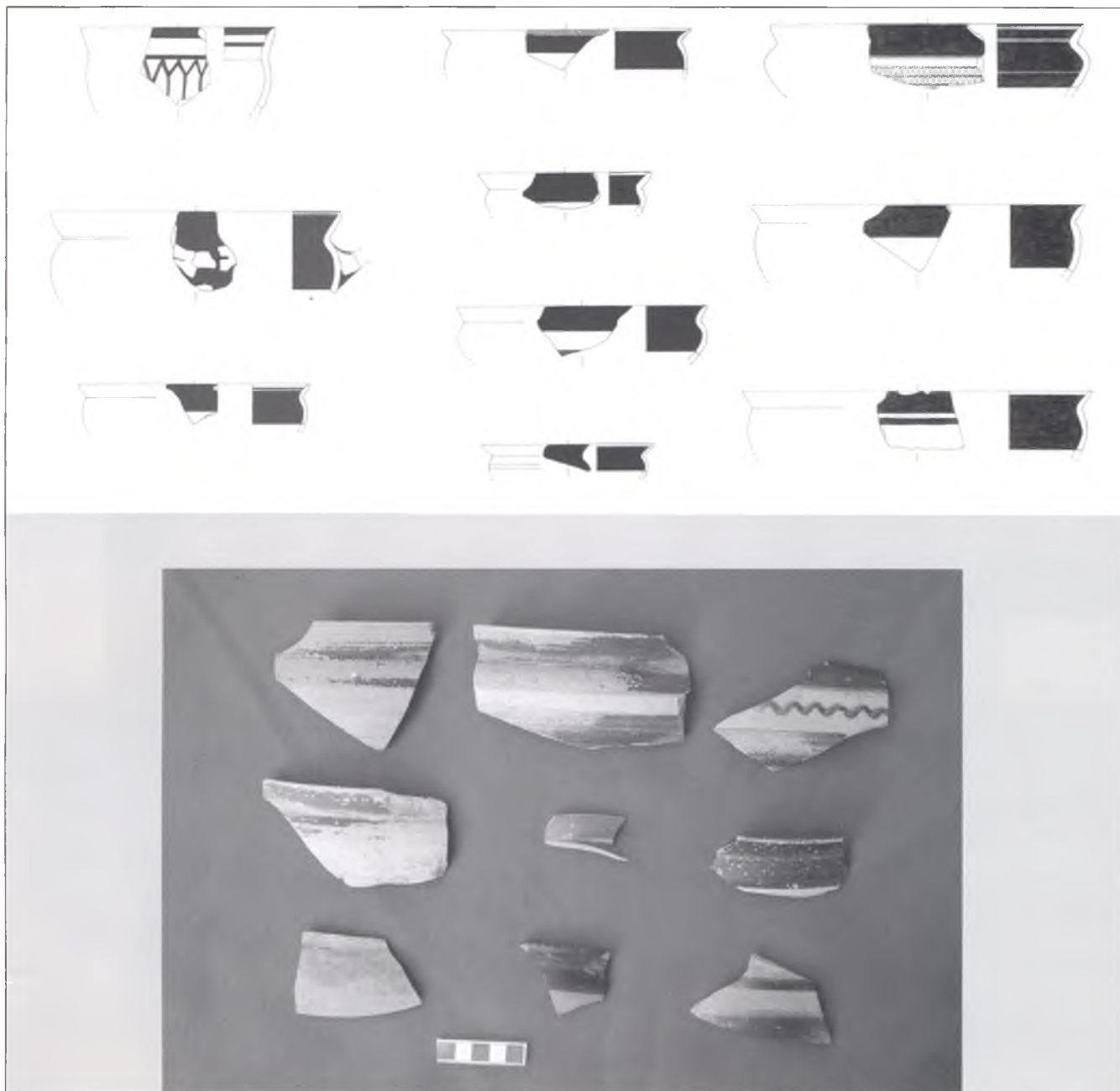


Fig. 2.7. Soli. Ionian bowl sherds.

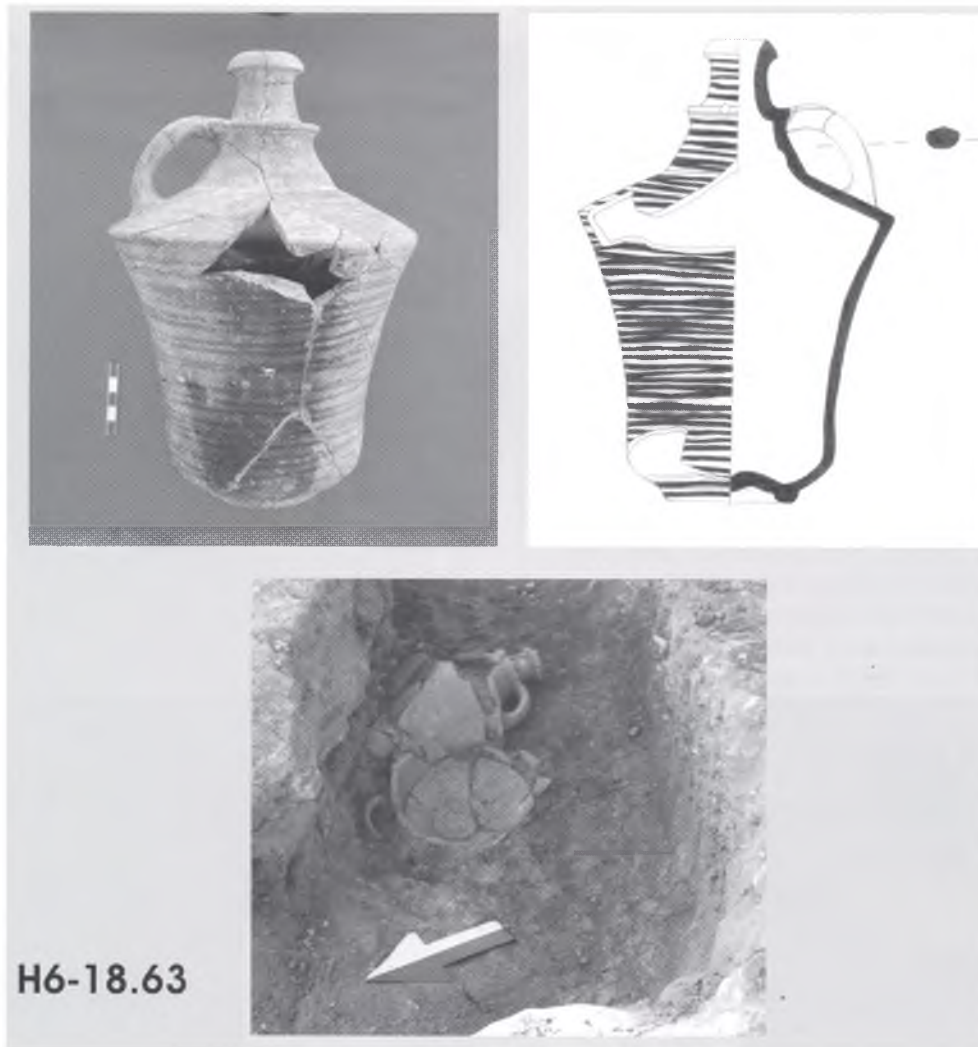


Fig. 2.8. Soli. Samian (or Rhodian-type) lekythos and its context.

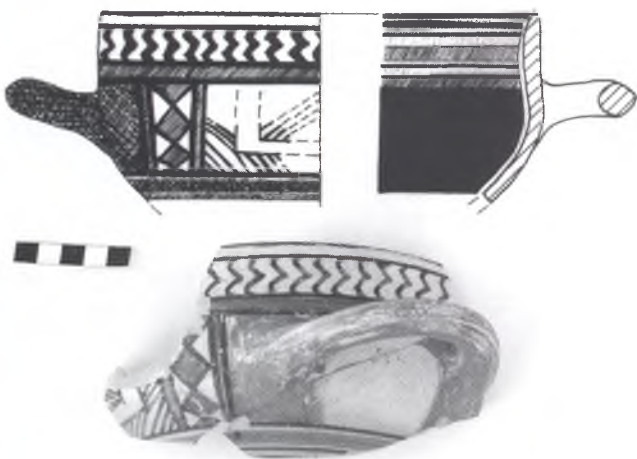


Fig. 2.9. Soli. Chian-type skyphos.

acropolis. These materials consist of simas, antefixes, and roof tiles (Figs. 2.3 and 2.12). Since architectural material is considered to be stronger evidence of presence, these architectural fragments are significant indicators of Greek activity at Soli, especially on the acropolis. We may, for the present, claim that Soli's examples are unique in the east Mediterranean since architectural elements of similar kind have not been excavated at sites that are located to the east of Soli.³²

As is commonly known, architectural terracottas are a Greek invention of the seventh century BC.³³ Terracotta tiles were first used in Corinth to cover the early temple of Apollo after ca. 680 BC. Åkerström suggests two itineraries for the penetration of architectural terracottas into Anatolia. The first is south Ionia via Miletus and the Meander River Valley, and the second is north Ionia via Smyrna and the Hermus River



Fig. 2.10. Soli. East Greek-type handles.



Fig. 2.11. Soli. Archaic architectural remains and finds.

valley (Fig. 2.13).³⁴ Architectural terracottas are extensively used in the regions of Lydia and Phrygia.³⁵ Penetration also took another route: from the cities on the coast, in the Black Sea region (at Akalan) as well as in the South.

The architectural terracottas at Soli may be considered to show that the Greeks – possibly Rhodians or Ionians

– transmitted the practice of using terracotta roofs into the Cilician region by the sea route as an integral part of a colonization process. The architectural terracottas may be accepted as an architectural *koiné*, indicative of Greek presence. The itineraries illustrating the distribution of architectural terracottas and roof tiles (Fig. 2.12) in the western Mediterranean and in Anatolia reveals Soli's intermediate location, which completely correlates with the historical events. Located on the border between Rough and Plain Cilicia, Soli might well have been an East Greek outpost with its obviously Greek elements such as wide range of pottery and architectural terracottas unique in Cilicia (Fig. 2.13).³⁶ Soli's position as an East Greek outpost may be compared to the case of Phrygia where the direction of the distribution of architectural terracottas was presumably related to Croesus' military dominance.³⁷ The terracottas at Soli have both orientalizing motifs and pure Greek elements. The antithetical sphinxes and rosettes are orientalizing themes. Pure Greek motifs include, for instance, mythological subjects such as Theseus slaying the Minotaur (Fig. 2.14 and 2.15). These figures might have a propagandist value for the expanding Greek power in the East. The Çineköy and Karatepe bilingual inscriptions and Neo-Assyrian sources provide strong evidence for this propagandist discourse. Soli,



Fig. 2.12. Soli. Archaic roof tiles.



Fig. 2.13. Åkerström's map of distribution of terracotta roof tiles (1978 Pl. 85 fig. 1).



Fig. 2.14. Soli. Archaic architectural terracotta with rosettes and leg of Minotaur.

as a Greek outpost within this framework, seems to be located on the border of the conflicting power relations.

To sum up, these architectural terracottas complement East Greek pottery finds. They may be labeled as the strongest evidence of East Greek presence. Unlike pottery finds that some scholars have suggested were acquired by local elites as luxury and exotic items, architectural remains point to a more permanent presence and a more settled population. The architectural elements on the acropolis that may be straightforwardly taken as evidence of a temple strengthen the arguments for Greek presence. Soli, within this context, may be seen as the eastern border of Greek expansion and the city may be labeled as a Greek *enoikismos* in the seventh and especially in the sixth century. In other terms, it was a Greek settlement in which a more or less significant element of the population is comprised of emigrants from a foreign place. This population may have consisted of pirates and/or traders and their relatives that are mentioned in ancient texts.³⁸

Notes

- 1 Strabo 14.1.27, 14.5.16–17; Hdt. 3.91, 7.91.
- 2 Cassola 1957, 110–18; Çambel 1999.
- 3 This heroic period is praised in the seventh century and it is remembered in the East as well as in other regions. Both Azatiwatas in Karatepe inscriptions along with Urikki (Warikas) in Çineköy are proud of being descendants of Mopsus; see Çambel 1999; Jasink and Marino 2008, 407–8.
- 4 Goldman 1956, 205–9; Postgate 1996; Bing 1971, 99–109; Mountjoy 2005.



Fig. 2.15. Soli. Archaic architectural terracotta depicting Theseus slaying the minotaur.

- 5 Strabo 14.5.17; Strabo is citing Hesiod (*Op.* 279).
- 6 Laroche 1958; Salmeri 2003, 2004; Ünal 2003, 2005; Işık 2008.
- 7 Sherratt and Sherratt 1993; Sherratt 1998.
- 8 Jasink and Marino (2008, 425) take the Mycenaean or Mycenaean-type pottery found at Cilician sites (e.g., Kazanlı, Mersin, Soli Höyük, Kinet Höyük, and Kilise Tepe) as indicators of “a population having a Mycenaean material culture, that would have settled there taking advantage of the power vacuum left by the shattering of the country of Kizzuwatna, and that would have later fused with local people, probably for its reduced number.” Jasink and Marino, furthermore, assert (2008, 425) that this population may be recognized as a “‘colony’ from the country of Ahhiyawa both for the the stylistic analogies, which appear to relate the ceramic findings discovered in this

- area with those of the eastern Aegean, even through Cyprus, and for the foundation – coeval and following the Mycenaean material demonstrations – of many coastal centres in Cilicia.”
- 9 Yağcı 2007.
 - 10 Even the most ardent views refusing Greek colonization in Cilicia seem to accept Greek presence in Cilicia in the seventh century BC; see Ünal 2005, 472.
 - 11 Strabo 14.5.8.
 - 12 Polyb. 1.24.10; Livy 37.56.7; Pompon. 1.71.
 - 13 Scylax 102 (*GGM* 1.76).
 - 14 Xen. *An.* 1.2.24.
 - 15 Dalley 1999, 73–80; Jasink and Marino 2008, 407–26; Lanfranchi 2000, 22–3; Rollinger 2001, 241–42.
 - 16 Although Abydenos and Alexander Polyhistor present different versions, both writers depended on the *Babylonika* of Berossos.
 - 17 For further discussion on Assyrian texts, see Dalley 1999, 73–80; Rollinger 2001, 243; Lanfranchi 2000, 28; Muhly 2009, 27.
 - 18 Graham 1999, 25–7; Gosden 2004, 2–4.
 - 19 Popham 2004, 11–35.
 - 20 Branigan 1981, 23–33.
 - 21 Waldbaum 1997, 1–17.
 - 22 Strabo 14.5.8.
 - 23 Yağcı 2007.
 - 24 Yağcı 2006, 801–7.
 - 25 This Phrygian fibula most probably came to Soli during the period when Phrygia claimed dominance over the region. The Assyrian texts moreover reveal that there was cooperation between Phrygia and the Ionian “pirates” to threaten Assyrian dominance over Cilicia (Que); for further details see Lanfranchi 2000, 17–19.
 - 26 Goldman 1963, 23. This chronology is related to Mersin III, Domuztepe A, Al Mina 6–5, and Cypro-Archaic I.
 - 27 Personal communication with Michael Kerschner; Cook and Dupont 1998, 36.
 - 28 A very similar lekythos is found at Sicilian Naxos and some others at Gela, which is another Rhodian Lindos colony like Soli; Stampolidis and Karageorghis 2003, no. 264.
 - 29 Supra n. 6.
 - 30 Waldbaum 1997, 1–17; Aslan 2001, 7.
 - 31 This context is partially destroyed and it is even more incomplete because it is located on the step trenches and thus only partially cleared. Further excavations will help unearth the other parts.
 - 32 At Tall Sukas in Syria some roof tiles have been found and they have been interpreted as evidence of a Greek tomb or temple; Ploug 1973, 93.
 - 33 Summers 2006.
 - 34 Åkerström 1978, pl. 85; Winter 1993, 12.
 - 35 Summers 2006, 684–86.
 - 36 See Parker 2002, fig. 2.
 - 37 Summers 2006.
 - 38 Rollinger 2001, 241–42.