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Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article

A Silver Oil Lamp Unearthed from the Prytaneion of Patara

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Abstract

The subject of this article is a silver oil lamp that was discovered during the 2012 excavations at the Prytaneion, which is located between the Bouleuterion and the Theatre in Patara. Because they were used for a long time in antiquity and made for different purposes, oil lamps made mostly of terracotta are some of the most common artefacts found in archaeological excavations. Apart from terracotta, stone, glass and various metals were also used to make oil lamps. However, the rarity of metal lamps makes it difficult to establish their typologies and chronologies. Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive studies on metal oil lamps and their reuse complicates these assessments. Researchers have generally sought to overcome this difficulty by relying on the typological and chronological frameworks established for terracotta specimens. The scarcity of examples such as the silver oil lamp examined in this study is primarily due to the metal's intrinsic value. Additionally, old, discarded or otherwise damaged and deformed specimens were typically melted down to produce new oil lamps or other metal objects. As well as their primary function of providing light, the frequent use of oil lamps for cultic, ritual, or votive purposes in graves and sanctuaries demonstrates the diversity of contexts in which they are found. Moreover, their intrinsic monetary value and the sacred symbolism of the light they emitted facilitated their use in public buildings. Notably, the findspot in Patara is a public building reserved for state officials and dignitaries, not a private residential structure. The sanctity of this structure, which was associated with the cult of Hestia, was a decisive factor in the decision to use an oil lamp crafted from such a precious metal. The Patara specimen is dated to the 1st century AD through analogical comparisons and contextual finds.

Keywords: Oil Lamps, Silver, Patara, Prytaneion, Roman Imperial Period

Patara Prytaneion'unda Ele Geçen Gümüş Bir Kandil

Öz

Patara'da, Bouleuterion ile Tiyatro arasında yer alan Prytaneion'da 2012 yılı kazılarında bulunan gümüş kandil, bu makalenin konusunu oluşturmaktadır. Çoğunlukla pişmiş topraktan üretilen kandillerin Antik Dönem'de hem uzun süreli kullanımları hem de farklı amaçlar için üretilmeleri bu eserlerin arkeolojik kazı çalışmalarında sıklıkla karşılaşılan eserler arasında yer almasına neden olmuştur. Kandillerin yapımında pişmiş toprağın dışında taş, cam ve farklı metaller de kullanılmıştır. Bununla birlikte metal

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kandillerin nadirliği, tipolojilerinin belirlenmesinde ve tarihlendirilmelerinde büyük zorluklara neden olmuştur. Ayrıca metal kandiller ve yeniden kullanımları üzerine yapılan çalışmaların eksikliği de söz konusu bu kronolojik değerlendirmeleri zorlaştırmaktadır. Araştırmacılar genellikle pişmiş toprak örneklerin tipolojik ve kronolojik değerlendirmelerinden faydalanarak bu zorluğun üstesinden gelmeye çalışmışlardır. Bu çalışmada ele alınan gümüş kandil gibi örneklerin az bulunmasının başlıca nedeni eserin madeni değeridir. Buna ek olarak eski, kullanılmayan ya da bir şekilde kırılmış ve şekli bozulmuş örnekler genellikle yeni kandiller ya da başka metal örnekler yapmak için ergitilmiştir. Yalnızca aydınlatma aracı olarak kullanılmasına ek olarak mezarlarda, kutsal alanlarda kült, ritüel ya da adak nesnesi olarak sıklıkla tercih edilmesi bulundukları alanların çeşitliliğini göstermektedir. Ayrıca hem madeni değeri hem de yaymış olduğu ışığın taşıdığı kutsal anlam kamu yapılarında kullanılmalarına da olanak sağlamıştır. Patara'daki buluntu yerinin ise halkın yaşadığı özel bir yapı değil, devlet görevlileri ve misafirler için ayrılmış bir kamu yapısı olması önemlidir. Aynı zamanda bu yapının Hestia inancı ile bağlantılı kutsallığı, değerli bir madenden yapılmış bu kandilin kullanım için tercih edilmesinde etkili olmuştur. Patara örneği az sayıdaki benzer örneklerden yola çıkarak yapılan analojik değerlendirmelere ek olarak kontekstteki diğer buluntular sayesinde MS 1. yüzyıla tarihlendirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kandil, Gümüş, Patara, Prytaneion, Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi

Introduction

The aim of this article is to introduce a silver oil lamp found in the Prytaneion, one of the public buildings in the ancient city of Patara, which has an important historical background. The use of a precious metal such as silver in the production of the lamp and its connection with the building in which it was found increases its importance. On the one hand, it is hoped that this will help, at least by analogy, researchers who in the future will study an oil lamp of a similar type. It is also intended to emphasize the relationship between places and objects in antiquity and to deal with a good example of this. In terms of scope, the first step was to examine the use of silver in antiquity, especially in the Roman Imperial Period, and its preference in objects such as oil lamps. Then, not only the silver lamp is discussed, but also the building in which the artifact was unearthed and its connection with the oil lamp. At the same time, the dating criteria are based on analogy and other finds in the layer from which the oil lamp was recovered.

It is known that the ancient city of Patara, located in the village of Gelemiş in the Kaş[1] district of Antalya, in the westernmost part of the region known as the Teke Peninsula today, and whose history dates to the end of the 3rd millennium BC, was completely abandoned in the 15th century AD[2]. It is thought that the main reason for the city's decline in prominence was the gradual filling of its harbour with alluvium over time[3], leading to economic stagnation and eventual decline. It can be said that the city, which served as the capital of the Lycian League during the Hellenistic Period and later as the capital of the province in the Roman Imperial Period[4], experienced its most glorious era starting from the middle of the 1st century

1 İşkan 2019, 16-17.

2 The latest information about Patara indicates that in 1478 AD, Cem Sultan arrived here under the order of his father, Mehmed the Conqueror, to negotiate a treaty with the Rhodians. See Işık 2011, 24.

3 Öner 1997, 89.

4 İşkan 2019, 276.

AD, as evidenced by the extensive building activities in the central agora[5]. Today, most of the buildings in Patara date back to the Roman Imperial Period, indicating a period of robust construction and prosperity for the city during this time.

As briefly mentioned above, perhaps the most significant factor contributing to Patara's extensive historical significance is its strategic geopolitical location and its well-protected harbour[6]. In antiquity, the port of Patara served as the main hub of maritime trade for the cities of the Xanthos valley, providing vital access to both inland and coastal trade routes[7]. As a result, the port provided Patara with a key strategic advantage, supporting a dense population and facilitating intensive trading activity throughout ancient times. The first evidence of imported goods in Patara dates to the Archaic Period[8], evidenced by Corinthian black-figure pottery[9]. These trade relations continued throughout the Classical, Hellenistic[10], and Roman Periods, as evidenced by a variety of artifacts such as amphorae[11], red-slipped pottery[12], and oil lamps[13]. It is clear that Patara played a particularly influential role in maritime trade from the Archaic Period until the 5th and 6th centuries AD[14].

The Use of Silver in the Roman Period and Silver Oil Lamps

The production of objects from metals such as iron, gold, silver and lead by mining activities dates to the Neolithic Period[15] and this process continues to be the preferred method of manufacturing products to this day.

Throughout this long historical process, mining and metalworking have evolved to meet the needs of the people. The rich mineral deposits in the lands they ruled supplied the needs of the Roman Empire. During the Roman era, especially in the 1st century AD[16], Anatolia is known to have had gold, copper, iron and silver mines. The Romans were also very skilled in working these metals and produced works in many areas, from furniture to everyday items and war equipment. The silver oil lamp that is the subject of this study dates from this period.

5 Şahin – Aktaş 2019, 167.

6 Dündar – Koçak 2021, 127, 129, 144.

7 Işık 2011, 16.

8 For the Archaic Ionian pottery found in Patara, see Dündar 2013a, 205-231.

9 Acar 2011, 88-89; İşkan 2002, 283; Işık 2019, 121-122, Fig.19.

10 Dündar – Işın 2015, 212-213.

11 Dündar 2013b, 142-149.

12 Uygun 2011, 127-130.

13 The excavations at Patara have unearthed high-quality, and exceptionally lustrous, black slipped Attic lamps from the Late Classical/Early Hellenistic Period. Despite their limited number, the form of the lamps and application of slips strongly suggest that the lamps originated in Attica. In addition, local imitations of the same lamp form have been found during the excavations, which are characterised by their poor quality and dull colours. See Gerçek 2023, 40, Type III.

14 During this period, North African Oil Lamps began to appear in Patara, alongside the red-slipped ceramics that were particularly influential in Egypt. For examples of North African Oil Lamps found in Patara, See Gerçek 2023, 72-75.

15 Avşaroğlu 2021, 12.

16 Atasoy 1981, 32, 33.

From the inscriptions we learn that the term "silver" in ancient Rome was probably derived from the word "argentaris". However, this word was used as a synonym for both the craft of working silver and the concept of banking. It could refer to a silversmith or someone engaged in commercial activities related to precious metals[17]. The skill of the craftsman was also very important in the working of the metal and the production of artifacts. In this regard, there were skilled craftsmen in the Roman Imperial Period. These craftsmen functioned as part of a complex system, like that of today, associated with workshops dedicated to handicrafts. In fact, they were part of a meticulous and complex process of defining the work to order, specifying the time frame for production, the date of delivery and the method of delivery. They could make their products to order, for private residences, public buildings or sanctuaries[18]. This use of precious metals contributed to the versatility of the concept of silver and the diversity of its applications. On the other hand, our knowledge of these production stages or activities in Anatolia was very limited. Our knowledge was based on the interpretation of objects found at excavation sites rather than in ancient sources[19].

As briefly mentioned above, in the Roman period, which had an advanced understanding of the mining and production of objects made of metals, the number of objects made of silver, one of these metals, is remarkable. At this point, there is a negative correlation between ancient sources and silverware. This is because, as we know from ancient authors, silver and gold were used extensively in the Late Republican and Early Roman Empire periods[20], and reserves were even mentioned as having reached the point of exhaustion in some regions[21]. However, there is a discrepancy between the number of artifacts made of silver and other metals found in excavations. This is probably because, unlike other metals[22], silver has to be melted before it can be reused. We can explain the relationship between silver and other metals in terms of its extraction from mineral deposits as follows. According to popular belief, the first metals discovered and used by humans were gold, silver and copper. In order to extract these metals, the raw material had to be easily accessible, and the ore had to be clearly visible. For this reason, minerals that were easy to obtain in nature and easy to process were widely known and

17 Pettinau 1991, 27.

18 Şahin 2018, 16, fn. 86.

19 For example, our knowledge of the mining in Lycia during the Roman Period is limited to the information we have obtained from excavations rather than ancient sources. See Oransay 2012, 142. Moreover, in Patara, various objects such as silver medallions, rings (Uygun 2000, 56, 120), amphorae, spoons, copper-silver alloy bowls, and belt buckles (Şahin 2018, 7-8) show the metallurgical influence of the region.

20 According to Pliny the Elder, gold and silver were widely utilized in Rome from the Late Republican period onwards. Plin. *Nat. Hist.* XXXIII-33, 42-63. He also mentions that silver is obtained from both silver ore veins and lead. Plin. *Nat. Hist.* XXXIII-13.

21 Strabon mentions that these mines in Attica were exhausted in his time. Strab. *Geographica*, IX, 1-23.

22 The process of extracting silver from ore deposits and preparing it for processing was indeed challenging. Silver deposits typically contained traces of silver embedded within other minerals, with lead sulphide being a common source. This complexity in accessing raw materials, coupled with the precious nature of silver, contributes to the rarity of silver objects found in excavations. In addition, the survival of silver objects to the present day is particularly challenging, especially if they have been reused and have lost weight in subsequent manufacturing processes. The rarity of silver artefacts underlines the difficulty of finding evidence for the use of silver in ancient societies. For more on this subject see Patterson 1972, 205-206.

preferred. The fact that gold was physically easier to see than other minerals, that it could be collected in bulk and used as raw material in new forms made it preferable. Likewise, copper is widely recognized and rarely found in mineral deposits. But silver is not as well-known as other metals because it is normally hidden in ores as sulphur[23]. Silver is found in the earth as a metal or ore. Metallic silver is very rare and difficult to obtain.

Silver Oil Lamps

The lamps found in the excavations are mostly made of terracotta. However, there is an increase in the production of metal lamps, especially bronze lamps, during the Hellenistic and Early Roman Imperial Periods, perhaps because they are more durable. It is even thought that these metal lamps were used as prototypes in the production of terracotta examples[24]. As for silver oil lamps, despite the prevalence of silver objects in the Roman world, very few examples of silver oil lamps have survived from excavations[25]and as far as we know from museums and exhibitions[26].

Silver, which was rarely used as a raw material in the production of oil lamps, was not used directly in its pure form, but often in combination with other metals used as additives in certain proportions. For example, from the Late Hellenistic Period[27] onwards, especially in the 1st century AD, bronze and silver were often combined in the production of oil lamps. This often involved adding silver elements to bronze oil lamps[28]. Similarly, the proportion of silver and nickel in oil lamps increased from this period[29]. The high material value of silver sometimes led to the production of imitations, and craftsmen favoured bronze imitations of silver oil lamps during the Roman Imperial Period[30]. This change can be seen as a cost-saving measure to meet the demand for luxury goods.

23 McDonald 1967, 4-5.

24 Rosenthal – Sivan 1978, 156.

25 A double-nosed silver oil lamp found in Slovenia is a rare example of this material, see Perko et al. 2012, 82. There is another oil lamp from the same century as the Patara example from Hungary. See Valenza Mele 1981, 49, Fig. 47. Additionally, two silver lamps found in a church in Slovakia and dated to the 2nd and 4th century AD. And finally, among the rare examples, see Perko 2019, 8, Fig. 18. Not only silver lamps but also other silver objects do not reach us. For example, only a small part of the enormous quantity of silver tableware produced in Roman times, has reached us. See Stefanelli 1991, 37.

26 There are only five silver oil lamps in the British Museum, consisting of a candelabrum, polycandelon hook, and a simple ordinary oil lamp. See Bailey 1988, 158. None of these lamps match the Patara find exactly. The Getty Museum, which has a very rich collection of oil lamps, has a single example of a silver lamp. This oil lamp, like the one found in Patara, dates to the 1st and 2nd century AD. For more details, see Bussiere – Wohl 2017, 453, Fig. 613. In addition, there are only two miniature silver oil lamps in the Antikenmuseum. Platz 1978, 187, Figs. 262-263.

27 For example, in Egypt, there are human-shaped lamps with silver inserts. See Xanthopoulou 2010, 20, Fig. 18.

28 For examples of plastic oil lamps where bronze and silver are used together, see Bailey 1996, 20, Q 3596, 3649, 3671.

29 Bailey 1996, 152.

30 Oransay 2006, 37.

During the Roman Empire and Late Antiquity[31], the use of gold and silver as raw materials for oil lamps was not only an indicator of wealth, but also of the social status of the user. The use of objects made of precious metals is a sign of wealth, but it also implies a concern to create an aesthetic and impressive environment in the area where the oil lamp is lit. The ability of a shiny surface such as silver, gold, or bronze to enhance illumination is also extremely important. The flame rising from the nose of the lamp illuminates both the lamp itself and its surroundings in the dark[32]. It is therefore extremely important that the surface of the oil lamp is made of a shiny alloy that not only reflects light but also contributes to the illumination of the environment. Furthermore, stems in the shape of hearts or animal protomes, as seen in the Patara example, make the lamp look more impressive in the light reflected by the flame burning in the nose of the lamp[33]. In line with these considerations, and because of the importance of light, bronze, tin and lead metals were sometimes used in varying proportions to achieve the silver colour in both figurines and oil lamps[34].

Description of the Lamp

This oil lamp has a circular body with a short ring-like handle (Fig. 3) and belongs to the category of round-nosed volute oil lamps. With these characteristics, it can be classified in the same category as the lamps of Loeschcke Type IV[35] and Bailey Group B (ii) [36], which are well known from terracotta examples. In addition, volutes flank both sides of the nose and connect to the discus, reminiscent again of terracotta lamp designs. There is a noticeable difference in height between the center of the discus and the shoulder, giving the discus a slightly concave appearance. The lamp, including the handle, measures 16 cm in length. Large handles like this were chosen to balance the weight of metal lamp bodies[37]. The wall thickness is remarkably thin, measuring 0.2 cm at the body and 0.4 cm at the base, characteristics that can only be achieved with metal specimens. The width, including the shoulder, is 8 cm and the height is

31 Although it is known that the use of silver in lamps from the Roman Imperial period was both aesthetic and a sign of wealth, the production of silver lamps acquired a spiritual meaning with the influence of Christianity. With the acceptance of Christianity, it is easy to say that there was an increase in the use of silver lighting instruments during the Byzantine Period, in other words, an increase in the number of examples found in excavations. Apparently, it was not only the form of the lamp that was important, but also the light provided by a lighting instrument with a sacred meaning. After the Roman Empire, and especially in the Middle Ages, silver lighting instruments became more visible in churches as offerings or souvenirs associated with Christianity. Examples of silver oil lamps in the form of lucernes used in churches are known from the Early Christian period, especially from the time of Constantine. See Xanthopoulou 2010, 1. One of the most obvious examples of the sacred significance of making oil lamps or other lighting instruments from a precious metal such as silver is the fact that these lamps were favoured even in churches in castles, where few people would ever see them. For examples of silver lamps found in the castles of Villa and Häme in Finland, see Karivieri 2019, 38. In particular, as a silver candlestick, it may have enhanced its sanctity and use in sacred spaces. See Motsianos 2019, 54, Fig. 12. In addition to bronze lamps, silver or copper lamps were also used in churches during this period. See Motsianos 2019, 56. Candlesticks designed to stand on a table or similar surface were usually made of silver and bronze. See Motsianos, 2019, 57; Maguire et al. 1989, 70, Fig. 16.

32 For publications on how long and to what extent lamps light up dark surroundings and what activities can be performed under this lighting, see Moullou – Garnett 2019, 186-199; Moullou et al. 2015, 119-132.

33 Bielfeldt et al. 2022, 26.

34 Bielfeldt et al. 2022, 99.

35 Loeschcke 1919, 225-228.

36 Bailey 1980, 157-172.

37 Menzel 1969, 106.

4.7 cm. The base has a raised profile with a slight bulge in the center[38]. Concentric circles surrounding the filling hole on the discus are irregularly spaced and asymmetrically arranged. There are no decorative elements or figurative expressions on the lamp.

The moulding method was evidently preferred for its production[39]. This is consistent with the Hellenistic innovation of using moulds to produce both terracotta and metal oil lamps[40]. Similarly, the silver oil lamp in question was made by casting into a prepared mould. This involved either covering a positive wax model of the lamp with clay, melting the wax away, and casting into the mould, or joining two positive clay moulds together, firing them, and then casting into the resulting mould[41]. Finally, the handle was soldered to the body to complete the lamp[42].

Findspot and Dating

First, Patara is a harbour city on the Mediterranean Sea, and because it has a long sandy beach, the city is spread over a large area in an east-west direction. As it also has an inner harbour, settlements can also be seen in a north-south direction, especially around the inner harbour. The central agora of Patara was formed by the grouping of many buildings. The Theatre to the south, the Bouleuterion[43] to the north and the Baths of Nero[44] to the north-east form the boundaries of the Agora. In addition, the main street between the Bouleuterion and the Baths of Nero extends northwards to the inner harbour[45]. All these buildings form the heart of the city centre as public buildings arranged around the Agora (Fig.1).

The silver oil lamp that is the subject of this study was found in the building known as the Prytaneion, between the Bouleuterion and the Theatre, as mentioned above (Fig. 2). The building in this area generally consists of a main room with a courtyard and adjoining rooms. The general opinion about its function is that it was a private building where the guests of the state were accommodated[46]. In the Ancient Period, in addition to buildings built for a single purpose, structures were also used for a common purpose, as in the case of the Odeon/Bouleuterion. This situation can be considered as the best possible use of space. The same approach applies to the prytaneia. The centrepiece of accommodation in the Prytaneion is an

38 The base of the oil lamp was found detached from the body during the excavation. The base is shown separately in Fig. 3, which could not be fully restored due to missing pieces.

39 Throughout history, there has been considerable variation in the techniques used to make oil lamps. Early examples were generally handmade, and in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages, simple, handmade, flat bowl-shaped oil lamps have been produced. See Kassab Tezgör – Sezer 1995, 23. Wheel-made oil lamps appeared in the Archaic Period. See Öztürk 2003, 25. In the Hellenistic Period, moulds were used in the production of oil lamps. See Hayes 1980, 2.

40 Forbes 1958, 156.

41 Demirer 2013, 42.

42 Metin – Polat Becks 2015, 274.

43 İşkan 2019, 272-286. Also, for a comprehensive publication on the excavations of the Bouleuterion and the proposal for its restitution, see Grosche – Korkut 2007.

44 Koçak 2019, 234-250.

45 Aktaş 2019, 259-268.

46 Orhan – Kızıltaş 2014, 278- 279.

invitation to dinner. This is the highest honour the city can bestow on a visiting official or guest. The guests were, as mentioned above, ambassadors or officials of foreign states[47]. It is obvious that the main subject of this activity was high-level state affairs. Apart from the basic function of the building, what gave it a religious identity was the fact that there was a constantly burning fire/hearth inside. Dionysius of Halicarnassus also emphasises the religious aspects of these structures, associating them with the cult of Hestia and explicitly defining Greek prytaneia as temples of Hestia served by the chief magistrates of the cities. Furthermore, he did not consider prytaneia solely as sacred buildings, but also described them as venues where guests were entertained with feasts[48]. As far as we know, in the ancient world, where religion and politics were closely intertwined, this sacred building in the centre of the city was used to dine with foreign ambassadors, offer sacrifices and discuss bilateral relations between states. Since the building was also a place of worship, it was not designed as a circular tholos like the temples of Hestia/Vesta. Since it is assumed that prytaneia were also places where meals were eaten and invitations issued, it would have had the plan of an ordinary house, based on the known examples.

One of the important issues is its location. The building was not built in an ordinary area; it was built in a place where everyone could easily reach and where the most popular crowd of people in the city was the densest. That is why it was built in the agora, where the heart of the city beats. At the same time, due to its political infrastructure, its proximity to the bouleuterions and the theatres, one of the other public buildings, is the reason for this. The prytaneia located in the agora or next to it, were built side by side with the stoa, the bouleuterion, as were the Prytaneia of Patara, Syracusa[49] and Ephesos. There are many architectural similarities between the Prytaneion of Ephesos, Tlos and Patara. The Prytaneion at Ephesus, Tlos[50], and Patara are located next to the Odeion/Bouleuterion, structures whose function is clearly known. At the same time, these buildings underwent some architectural changes during the Byzantine Period. During this period, certain solutions were considered to meet the increasing demand for water in the agorae, and channels were cut into the structure, which had lost its original function. The modification of the structure to collect water in the Prytaneion of Patara shows clear parallels with the Prytaneia of Ephesos[51] and Patara[52]. On the other hand, as in the comparison between Ephesos[53] and Patara, although the location of the Prytaneion in the town plans is similar, it is evident that the prytaneia do not have a standardised architecture[54].

When considering the relationship between the Prytaneion and the silver lamp, the first thought that comes to mind is the purchasing power of the precious metal. It is generally accepted that terracotta oil lamps were preferred by people with less purchasing power, while wealthier people

47 Miller 1978, 4-5.

48 Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* II.LXV.4; II.XXIII.5.

49 Miller 1978, 28, 29.

50 Korkut et al. 2023, 119-123.

51 Steskal 2010, 219.

52 Orhan – Kızıltaş 2014, 278.

53 In the Prytaneion of Ephesos, oil lamps were found dating to the same century as the one at Patara. See Steskal 2010, 11. fn. 83.

54 Steskal – Ladstätter 2009, 137.

used finely crafted oil lamps made of metal with high durability and longevity[55]. Therefore, it can be said that lamps made of gold, silver or glass were a sign of wealth, along with their metal value[56]. Considering that the Prytaneion was frequented by high-ranking officials and wealthy individuals rather than ordinary citizens, it is not surprising that an oil lamp made of a highly valuable metal such as silver was found in this building.

Beyond its socio-economic context, this discovery also carries a profound ritual dimension. A sacred synergy exists between a lighting device crafted from precious metal -such as silver- and the space it occupies. Similarly, in the context mentioned earlier, the sacred fire at the center of the prytaneion and the presence of an oil lamp to ignite it underscore this relationship. The importance of the connection between sacred fire and lamps is also mentioned in ancient sources[57]. These lamps, imbued with sacred value, were used to kindle the perpetual flame in prytaneia, which also served as centers of worship for Hestia/Vesta. Known as Hestia in the Greek world and Vesta in Rome, this deity personified both domestic and civic continuity as the guardian of the hearth. The eternal flame in the hearth symbolized stability and endurance of the state, rendering its locus both religiously and politically pivotal[58]. Indeed, ancient authors explicitly record that should the sacred fire be extinguished, it was strictly relit using a dedicated oil lamp[59]. Within these framework, the spatial context of the Patara Lamp and its execution in precious metal become entirely coherent.Considering the building's function, we are fortunate to have precise dating for both the structure and the layer where the lamp was discovered. The Prytaneion in Patara, where the silver lamp was unearthed, has been confidently dated to the 1st century AD based on architectural features and numismatic evidence[60]. This robust dating framework provides reliable data. Furthermore, other artifacts recovered from the same archaeological context support this dating. For instance, an amphora originating from the Adriatic coast of Italy, dating to the early 1st century AD, aligns perfectly with the temporal context of the building[61]. Additionally, a coin and an amulet[62], both dating to the same century, were discovered within the Prytaneion. Moreover, whether they were terracotta lamps or metal lamps, they reflected the fashion of their time. The choice of the form or material of the oil lamp may be based on various reasons such as trade, religious beliefs, economic status or just pleasure. For this reason, no matter what material the oil lamps are made of, terracotta samples can provide important references in terms of dating. Such oil lamps have been dated to the

55 Bailey 1975, 11.

56 For example, there are examples of oil lamps made of silver and gold in the Sumerian Ur King Tombs. See Kinal 1960, 155.

57 Plutarch gives examples from Delphi and Athens and explains that the expression "the holy lamp has been extinguished" is used to describe the extinguishing of the sacred fire. See Plut. *Numa*, 9.6. In addition, a Sicilian tyrant named Young Dionysus dedicated a special multi-nosed oil lamp designed to light a different nose each month of the year to the Prytaneion in Tarentum. See Miller 1978, 211.

58 Külahlı 2023, 877.

59 Miller 1978, 34.

60 Orhan – Kızıltaş 2014, 279.

61 Dündar 2018, 168.

62 Gerçek 2022, 66.

1st century AD by researchers such as Loeschcke[63], Bailey[64], Perlzweig[65], Menzel[66], Lightfoot[67], and Schäfer[68]. It is not surprising to say that the Prytaneion was actively used in the 1st century AD, as is evident from the analogues of the lamp in addition to other finds in the layer[69].

Conclusion

In a detailed publication on terracotta oil lamps from Patara, only 14 oil lamps of Loeschke type IV were mentioned[70]. In addition, although some moulds of the same period were found in the city[71], but no mould used in the production of Loeschke type IV oil lamps was found during the excavation. For these reasons, it is difficult to mention the local production of oil lamps without having the clay analysed. Apart from this, it is already quite difficult to determine the workshops of metal oil lamps[72]. But despite all these explanations, it may not be entirely correct to say that the silver oil lamp is not local production, given the close relationship between terracotta lamps and metals[73]. Because, as we said, there was an intense relationship between the two groups and this relationship was too strong to be ignored just because they were made of different materials.

As for the silver oil lamp, the lack of silver specimens recovered from excavations or exhibited in museums[74] makes it very difficult to make use of direct analogies with silver examples other than bronze and terracotta examples in this study. On the other hand, as we have already mentioned, one of the biggest problems for metal examples is that these artifacts are not easily broken, they are used for a long period of time and even if they are broken, they can melt down and reused[75]. Thus, researchers have tried to classify them according to their specific typological features[76]. Disregarding the handle, the Patara lamp represents a classic round-

63 See fn. 35.

64 See fn. 36.

65 Perlzweig 1961, 81.

66 Menzel 1969, 38.

67 Lightfoot 2021, 118, Fig. 140.

68 Schäfer 1990, 38.

69 The Bouleuterion, closely associated with the Prytaneion, is known to have been acvely used from the Hellenistic Period to the 4th century AD. See Grosche – Korkut 2007, 179.

70 Gerçek 2023, 60.

71 Gerçek 2023, 183.

72 Atasoy 2005a, 194.

73 The studies on oil lamps in Lycia, including Patara, are few so far. Besides, due to scarcity of oil lamp moulds recovered during excavations and the limited number of clay analyses, a definitive conclusion is rarely reached regarding the local production of oil lamps from the Roman Imperial Period. However, among these cities, Tlos stands out. A large number of oil lamp moulds (131) recently recovered at Tlos provide conclusive evidence for its local production. See Uygun et al. 2023. In addition, the fact that the leaf-shaped handle arrangement, which is also found on some metal oil lamps, is also seen on terracotta moulds at Tlos is thought to show the relationship between both craftsmanship. See Uygun et al. 2023, 215.

74 See fn.25, 26.

75 Another reason for the scarcity of silver samples is the difficulty of extracting silver compared to other metals. Xanthopoulou 2005, 303.; Metin – Polat Becks 2015, 275.

76 For example, the bronze examples in the National Museum of Rom, which are similar only in terms of their volutes, were classified by Spagnolis and Carolis under Type II. And due to their similarities with Pompeii and Mahdia dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. See Spagnolis – Carolis 1983, 16, 13.

nosed volute lamp of the 1st century AD[77], a from well documented in terracotta. Bronze examples from the same century and slightly later –exhibiting similar handle and body forms– are preserved in various museum collections[78].

As far as dating is concerned, we can say that the samples found in Pompeii and Herculaneum are generally taken as a basis. For example, researchers such as Spagnolis [79], Loeschcke[80] , Szentléleky[81], Pozo[82], Bailey[83], etc., in their own studies, have generally emphasised the first half of the 1st century AD and the 2nd century AD for the dating of this type of metal lamps, and they have mentioned the difficulty of knowing exactly how long they were in use. This dating of the metals is also consistent with the dating of the terracotta samples. When examined carefully, it is understood that oil lamps had an important commercial value in the period in which they were produced. They were made according to contemporary fashion trends and were highly sought-after commodities in commercial transactions, a characteristic shared by both metal and terracotta lamps. For this reason, it is not entirely wrong to use terracotta samples by analogy in dating[84]. At the same time, typological classification remains complex, as metal lamps can often be grouped only by select features. For instance, when İványi categorized the bronze lamps from Pannonia, she classified them based on overlapping morphological traits[85]. The Patara silver oil lamp, grounded both its stratigraphy and in comparative analyses of terracotta and metal analogues is firmly dated to the 1st century AD. This date accord with chronologies proposed aforementioned scholars and reinforces their framework.

77 For example, Leibundgut, one of the important oil lamp researchers, gives terracotta counterparts from the same century. See Leibundgut 1977, 399. Type. 10. And there are more examples from same century. For Lauriacum samples, see Deringer 1965, Pl. 51. 6, Fig. 337., For the Athenian Agora, see Perlzweig 1961, 81. For Moesia samples, see Korać 2018, 121. For Knidos, see Pastutmaz 2009, 25, Res. 37. For Tralleis see Civelek 2001, 34-40. For Kyzikos see Öztürk 2003, 132., For Patara see Gerçek 2023, 60, Type XV-B.

78 Appear in the form of oil lamps that are similar to the Patara example in both form and century. The copper alloy examples in the Istra Archaeological Museum, see Starac 2022, 143-144; Bronze examples found in the Kinch Excavation and now in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, see Atasoy 2005b, 15, Fig. 28. Other bronze examples can be seen in the İzmir Archaeology Museum. The Museum examples have the same form, except for the difference in its handle. See Altun – Erginer 2020, 545, Pic. 1. For other museum examples: Fethiye Museum see Metin 2017, 21-22, K.12; Mersin Museum, see Laflı – Buora 2014, 446-447, Lev. 2, Fig. 13. Burdur Museum see Metin – Polat Beks 2015, 284, K.26. Troy Museum see Koçyiğit 2023, 335, Fig. 2c. For Rome National Museums see Spagnolis – Carolis 1983, 30-33, Fig. 13. Additionally, the Haluk Perk collection includes bronze lamps reminiscent of the Patara example. In this collection, there are examples dated to the late period that are very similar in body aninnose form, as well as examples from the Roman Empire Period that are similar only in terms of handles. See Atasoy 2005a, 193-230. Fig. 28,30,37,38,42. In addition for Getty Museum see Bussiera – Wohl 2017, 143-152. Frankfurt Archaeology Museum see Schäfer 1990, 38 ff, and for Royal Ontario Museum see Hayes 1980, Pl. 38.

79 Spagnolis – Carolis 1988, 55.

80 Loeschcke 1919, 499.

81 Szentléleky 1969, 145.

82 Pozo 1997, 204.

83 Bailey 1996, 153.

84 Terracotta samples serve as valuable reference points for dating metal lamps, as tracing the development of silver or bronze lamps presents considerable challenges Atasoy 2005a, 194.

85 Iványi 1935, 22.

Consequently, the silver lamp discovered at Patara is of great importance, not only for its metallurgical composition, but also for its rarity and distinct characteristics. The specific nature of its findspot dictated the use of a special lightening device. The Prytaneion, where the lamp was unearthed, served both as a civic sanctuary and as a venue for receiving foreign dignitaries, where ceremonial meals were hosted in their honour[86]. The literature on the relationship between the metal oil lamps and the place where they were found is generally inadequate. The Patara silver lamp therefore makes an important contribution to the subject. In addition, the presence of the sacred fire/hearth in this area is associated with the cult of Hestia, which further emphasises its importance. The lamp's role in relighting the sacred fire when it was extinguished further underlines its importance. Historical evidence suggests that silverware, including lamps, was often dedicated to Hestia, as evidenced by inscriptions found in the Prytaneion at Delos[87].

86 Apart from its findspot, the oil lamp itself, due to its form and the material from which it is made, must have been used by wealthy and high-status individuals rather than ordinary people. Szentléleky mentions that even embossed bronze examples should be read in this way. See Szentléleky 1969, 144.

87 Williams 2004, 65-66.

Review

This article has been reviewed by at least two reviewers using a double blind peer review model. A similarity check was performed to confirm that it was free of plagiarism.

Ethical Statement

It is declared that scientific and ethical principles were complied with during the preparation of this study and all the works referred are mentioned in the bibliography.

Complaints

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Use of Artificial Intelligence

No artificial intelligence-based tools or applications were used in the preparation of this study. The entire content of the manuscript was produced by the authors in accordance with scientific research methods and academic ethical principles.

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Bu makale en az iki hakem tarafından çift taraflı kör hakemlik modeliyle incelendi. Benzerlik taraması yapılarak intihal içermediği teyit edildi.

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Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.

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Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde yapay zekâ tabanlı herhangi bir araç veya uygulama kullanılmamıştır. Çalışmanın tüm içeriği, yazarlar tarafından bilimsel araştırma yöntemleri ve akademik etik ilkelere uygun şekilde üretilmiştir.

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Teşekkür

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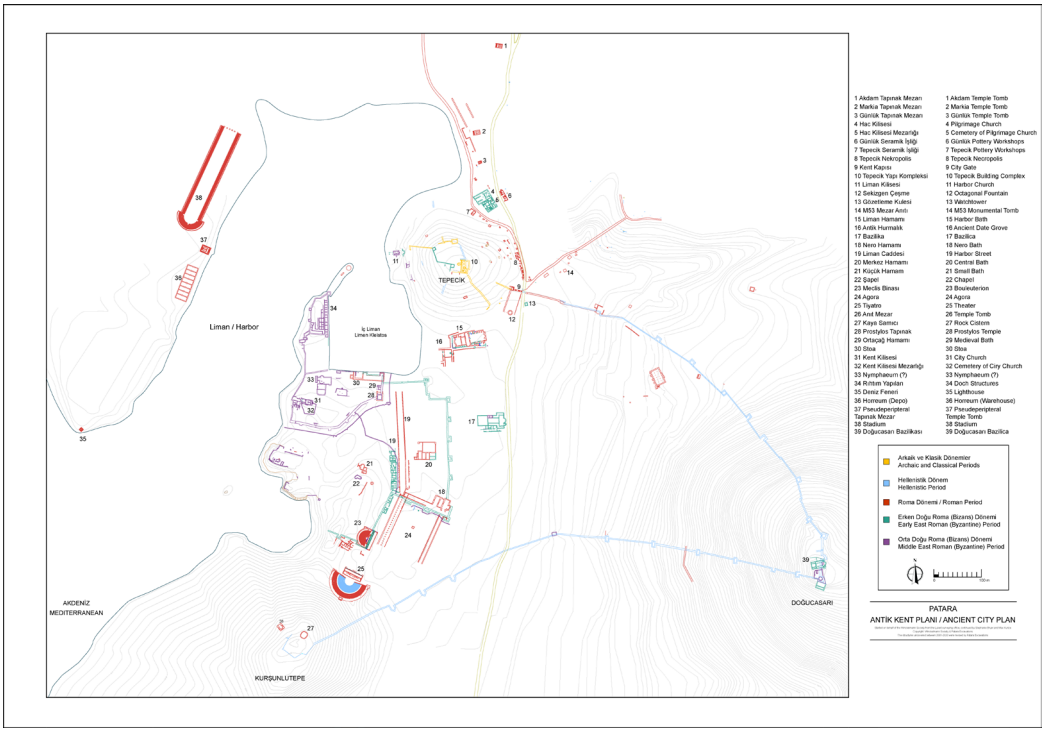


Figure 1. Patara city plan (Patara Excavation Archive)

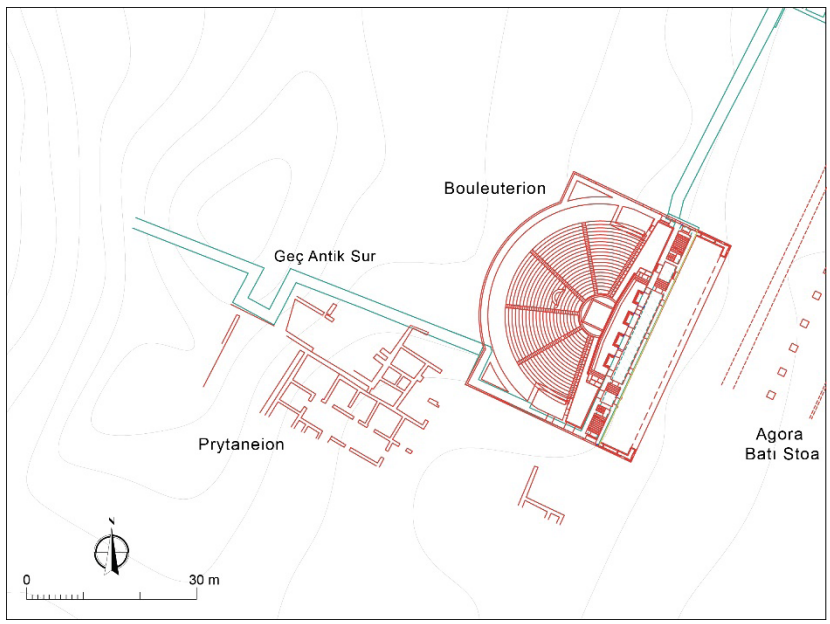


Figure 2. Prytaneion and Bouleuterion (Patara Excavation Archive)

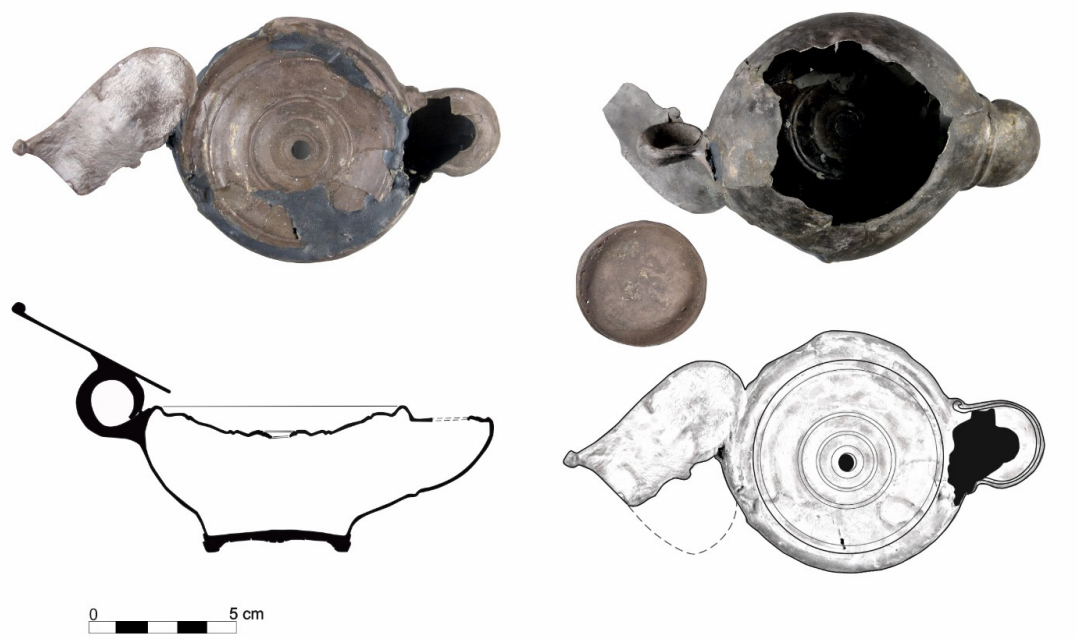


Figure 3. Silver Oil Lamp