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The Roman City of Tarsus in Cilicia and its Terracotta Figurines¹

Isabelle Hasselin Rous and Serdar Yalçın

- ¹ From the Bronze Age to Greco-Roman antiquity, Tarsus was an important urban center because of its proximity to the famous Cilician Gates that connected central Anatolia to the Mediterranean coast and northern Syria, as well its maritime connections to the eastern Mediterranean through its harbor. The mound of Gözlükule (Fig. 1), the oldest and continuously inhabited part of the ancient city, informs modern scholarship about the material and visual culture of Roman Tarsus, as well as the earlier periods of habitation. The mound was explored in the middle of the 19th century, excavated in the mid-20th, and for the last 10 years was the focus of renewed excavations by Boğaziçi University. During the course of all these explorations a number of deposits of Roman terracotta figurines was brought to light. This rich coroplastic material shows the evolution of a coroplastic typology according to changes in the occupation of this city from the early Imperial to the late Imperial eras. It also reveals new aspects of production and use in the city of Tarsus, demonstrating the importance of these figurines for provincial Roman religion, especially in the transitional period of the late Roman Empire.

Fig.1. View of Gözlükule in Tarsus

www.tarsus.boun.edu.tr

- 2 During the Hellenistic and Roman periods, Tarsus was not only a major administrative hub in southern Anatolia, especially as the capital of the Roman province of Cilicia, but it also was a center of culture and religion, as classical writers including Strabo noted (14.5.12-15). Roman emperors, particularly Commodus, honored the city by the establishment of temples dedicated to the imperial cult. This importance and the accompanying wealth of this Roman city is expressed in the baths, bridges, temples and beautifully paved streets with sophisticated drainage systems, all of which were built both through imperial and local initiatives. Perhaps thanks to its status as a sophisticated urban and scholarly center, it may even have been that the emperor Julian (361-363) considered moving his government from Antioch to Tarsus, if he could return from his eastern campaign alive.³

History of the Gözlükule Excavations

- 3 The Tarsus figurines were first discovered in large quantities in the mid-19th century by local inhabitants who had explored the mound of Gözlükule, while being careful not to reveal the exact site of their discoveries. Roughly a thousand figurines were brought to the attention of the British consul William Burckhardt Barker for purchase during the course of his various visits to Tarsus in 1845. A very small part of Barker's collection of figurines is now in the British Museum, while it is presumed that the rest was dispersed.
- 4 Seven years later Victor Langlois, a linguist and specialist in eastern numismatics and Armenian history, was assigned the task of exploring Lesser Armenia, a Christian kingdom founded in the Middle Ages in the part of Asia Minor known as Cilicia by the French Ministry of Public Education and Religious Affairs. For eight months Langlois investigated the cities of this ancient kingdom dominated by the French princes of the House of Lusignan, looking for antiquities and remains of ancient monuments, especially inscriptions, coins, and terracottas. In the description of the mound he excavated, the

Kusuk-Kolah, now known in Turkish as Gözlükule, Langlois noted a Greco-Roman necropolis beneath the ruins of the amphitheatre of the city of Tarsus that measured four hundred metres in length. This necropolis had already been plundered, a fact that accounted for the fragmentary state of the objects brought to light, which he dated between the early Hellenistic period and the middle of the third century C.E. Having discovered no Christian artefacts there, he concluded that the necropolis was abandoned when Christianity was introduced to Cilicia. The Musée du Louvre has some 900 figurines found mainly in the Gözlükule necropolis by Langlois.

- 5 The 20th century saw the first scientific exploration of the Gözlükule mound by Hetty Goldman, a professor at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. Goldman's excavations took place between 1934 and 1938, and then again from 1947 to 1949.⁴ The chronological scope of the site's occupation revealed by the excavation work is considerable, since it begins with the Islamic levels of the ninth to tenth centuries C.E. and descends to Neolithic levels dating from 7000–5800 B.C.E., at a depth of 32 meters. Goldman was able to explore only the southern part of the mound, as dwellings covered the rest (Fig. 2). Two areas were excavated on the mound's southern portion: Sector A to the east on the highest part of the mound that revealed the oldest vestiges, including the remains of a Hittite temple; further to the west, Sector B yielded the most extensive domestic installations from the Hellenistic and Roman periods, located between 10 and 13 meters lower than the summit of the hill to the east. Six hundred and thirty-one Hellenistic and Roman figurines, as well as 16 plaster moulds, were discovered and published by Goldman. This would suggest the clear presence of a coroplastic production center located on this site, as we shall see below.

Fig 2: Topographic map of the mound in the 1930s.

After Goldman 1950.

- 6 Finally, since 2007 Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, has been conducting new excavations on the mound led by Aslı Özyar, opening up five new trenches to the north of Sector A, the site of Goldman's work, and next to the area where Goldman discovered the remains of a monumental Hittite building (Fig. 3). These new excavations have revealed a pit

containing Roman figurines, including many masks and lamps, and several features associated with their production. In all likelihood, it is the setting of a workshop that produced figurines and lamps, an unprecedented discovery to date.

Fig. 3. View of the first five trenches in 2009. In the section of the excavated area, the light-coloured earth extending vertically towards the depression is the eastern scarp of former Section A dug by Goldman

www.tarsus.boun.edu.tr

- 7 The context of this new terracotta corpus is worth discussing here. It comes almost entirely from a pit located in the northwest quadrant of the trench C7 17 (Fig. 4). The pit, which started showing itself in the 2010 season as a small accumulation primarily of lamp fragments, but also mask and figurine fragments, eventually reached a size of more than 3 m in diameter and up to a meter in depth (Fig. 5); it clearly extends into the western and northern ends of the trench, which is to be excavated in the upcoming seasons. Stratigraphically, it sits on the remains of an early imperial terrace wall and was cut by a late antique oven and later an Abbasid well structure (Fig. 5). Based on the stratigraphy and preliminary observations of the material unearthed, the terracotta pit excavated at Tarsus-Gozlükule should be dated to the high and late Imperial periods (i.e. 2nd to 4th centuries C.E.).

Fig. 4. Özyar excavations (2010): trench C717

© Archives of Boğaziçi University Excavations at Tarsus-Gözlüküle Documentation

Fig. 5. Özyar excavations (2010): trench C717

© Archives of Boğaziçi University Excavations at Tarsus-Gözlüküle Documentation

- 8 The soil of the pit contained heterogeneous layers of ashy, burnt, or wet earth. Overall, it produced almost entirely the terracotta material mentioned above, but very little pottery. The predominant material was lamps, in complete or fragmentary condition, (Fig. 6) and in the three seasons of work on the mound, hundreds of complete or nearly complete lamps, along with thousands of fragments, some containing mythological

motifs, have been discovered. The pit also produced numerous terracotta figurines. All figurines that depicted divinities and heroes appeared in fragmentary condition (Fig. 7). This group was accompanied by a large assemblage of terracotta hoofs, arms, wings, grapes and discs with rosette motifs. (Fig. 7).

Fig. 6. Lamps and reliefs discovered in the pit of trench C717

© Archives of Boğaziçi University Excavations at Tarsus-Gözlüküle

Fig. 7. Figurines discovered in the pit of trench C717

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- 9 The terracotta objects seem to have been deposited in pockets across the pit. In other words, each dump was covered with soil; and then another layer was deposited above. Although the pit is located close to some installations for production purposes, such as the late antique oven mentioned above, or an intriguing brick structure to the east, which may have been used as a clay basin, the way the material was deposited, its fragmentary nature, and the stratigraphy all indicate that the terracotta pit at Gözlüküle was likely a deposit of votives dedicated in nearby temples, such as the Severan complex located ca. 1

km to the east of the mound. The excavation and the analysis of the figurine corpus will continue in the upcoming seasons of the Boğaziçi University excavations. Dr. Serdar Yalçın from Macalester College, who has been a member of the Gözlükule excavation team since 2007, will conduct the archaeological and art historical analysis of this corpus.

Corpus of Tarsus Figurines from the Early Imperial and the Later Imperial Periods

- 10 The oldest traditional Greek figures found on the Gözlükule mound date from the early Hellenistic period, i.e., the late fourth and early third centuries B.C.E. However, this paper will focus only on those of Roman date, from the early Imperial era to the fourth century C.E. Older terracotta figurines have been discovered on the site, but they are eastern or Cypriot. Greek models would therefore appear to have been introduced in Tarsus only after the conquests of Alexander the Great and with the creation of the Hellenistic kingdom of the Seleucids. No specifically Greek coroplastic tradition existed in Tarsus prior to the Hellenistic period. It is striking to realize how the enduring clear influence of a powerful syncretism with eastern religions played a role on Greco-Roman iconographic types, such as is documented by these terracottas from Tarsus.
- 11 From this extensive corpus of terracottas we have selected only figurines from the period of Rome rule found in a context dating from the end of the early and the beginning of the later Roman Imperial period. In addition to finds made in stratigraphic contexts, certain criteria, such as female hairstyles in particular, dress, and the presence of pupils hollowed out more deeply— a feature dating from the second century C.E. onwards—have facilitated the dating of figurines that lack context, thus enabling them to be included within this corpus. The presence of an ivy wreath crowning the heads of many Tarsus figurines is reminiscent of the radiant crown found in the iconography of many eastern deities; it became a prominent feature in the figurines of the city in the late Hellenistic and early Imperial periods that disappeared with the advent of Christianity. During the Augustan Age, the braided headbands that appeared on both male and female sculptures was a motif that prevailed among the Tarsus figurines until the third century C.E. Certain themes were introduced by the second century C.E. and remained popular until the 4th century, such as aurigae (charioteers), victorious horsemen bearing crowns and palms, and types of theatrical masks, in keeping with the popularity of circus acts and theatrical performances in Roman times.
- 12 While the gods of Olympus are generally well represented within the Tarsus repertoire, we nonetheless should point out the rarity of some deities, such as Zeus, Hera, Artemis, or Demeter. Conversely, figurines of Aphrodite, Eros, and Dionysus accompanied by his thiasos were particularly favored. The fondness for the worship of these deities can be traced from the Hellenistic period onwards, only to intensify during the Imperial period, as can be seen by the torso of Aphrodite Anadyomene⁵ (Fig. 8) found in the necropolis on the southern slope of the mound and dated to the third to fourth century C.E.

Fig. 8. Torso of Aphrodite Anadyomene

After Goldman 1950, inv. 35-198

- 13 In Tarsus the goddess of love also frequently has the attributes of Ariadne, such as the head of Aphrodite-Ariadne⁶ (Fig. 9) that was found in the craft production Sector A ('5.20 m complex') and that is dated to the second to third century C.E. It is a very handsome head illustrative of the 'mixed type' invented by the craftsmen of Tarsus: the goddess of love wears her fine diadem and is surmounted by the ivy wreath of Ariadne, in a reference to the importance and assimilation of Bacchic culture in Roman times.

Fig. 9. Head of Aphrodite-Ariane

After Goldman 1950, inv. 35-927

- 14 The iconographic diversity of the Tarsus figurines of Dionysus testifies to the importance of his cult in imperial times. In one example, taking the form of a child, Dionysus is recognisable by his radiant crown of ivy leaves⁷ (Fig. 10). The three-quarter profile and chlamys draped across the shoulders may be explained by reference to other more complete figurines of the young god straddling a large feline, probably a lion⁸ (Fig. 11). It is dated from the second to third century C.E. and was discovered in the '5.90 m complex' of Sector A. Dionysus also appears as Taurus⁹ in this youthful head found in a similar context to the previous figurine (Fig. 12); in addition to the ivy wreath and headband there are two small bull horns, reflecting another of the forms adopted by the god of wine.

Fig. 10 et 11. Dionysos child and Dionysos child overlapping

After Goldman 1950 inv. 35-538 and inv. 37-194

Fig. 12. Head of Dionysos Tauros (Tarsus, inv. 35-394)

- ¹⁵ The goddess Athena appears in Tarsus in her traditional form in these two heads of Athena wearing the Boeotian helmet¹⁰ (Fig.13), both taken from the same mould and

made in the same workshop. They were found in the area of the necropolis of Tarsus and are dated to the second century C.E. or later.

Fig. 13. Two heads of Athena wearing a helmet from the same mould (Louvre, Tarse 23 and 24)

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- 16 The goddess Artemis is a rare subject in the coroplastic production of Tarsus, where she appears as the Artemis of Ephesus type¹¹ (Fig. 14), whose image is widespread in Asia Minor and as far as Tarsus, as is evidenced by this figurine. The goddess is dressed in an *ependytes*, a narrow tunic worn by Anatolian deities, and adorning her chest is a heavy pectoral decorated with two rows of hanging ornaments above three rows of breasts or bull's testicles, symbols of fertility. The present figurine is faithfully styled on the Artemis of Ephesus discovered in the Prytaneion of Ephesus and created in the early second century C.E.

Fig. 14. Torso of the Artemis of Ephesos (Louvre, S 2939)

After Besques, 1972. © P. et M. Chuzeville

- 17 Other syncretic deities at Tarsus include Zeus Ammon, who is represented by a plaster mould of his head ¹² (Fig. 15) that was found together with other plaster moulds in Sector A in a deposit above the '5.20m complex.' It most probably belongs to the finds from a coroplast's workshop that has been dated from the second to the third century C.E. The god appears here in his Greco-Egyptian version, with ram's horns on his temples.

Fig. 15. Plaster mould of a head of Zeus-Ammon

After Goldman 1950

- 18 Harpokrates is another deity of Egyptian origin who is well represented in the coroplastic production of Tarsus, a fact that indicates the importance of mystery religions in the city. This child god derived from the Egyptian god Horus the Child was a saviour and protector, and is notably recognisable by his forefinger raised to his mouth. A symbol of childhood in Egypt in the Greco-Roman sphere, Harpokrates prompted initiates not to

divulge the deep mysteries that had been revealed to them. Two heads of Harpokrates taken from the same mould¹³ (Figs. 16, 17) and found in the '5.90 complex' in Sector A are dated from the second to the third century C.E. Besides the gesture of the forefinger, the god can be identified by the crown of Isis that he wears that consists of two cow horns enclosing a sun disk. In Tarsus the ivy wreath also was worn by Harpokrates, whereby the attribute of Dionysos was adopted to create a syncretic deity.

Fig. 16 and 17. Two heads of Harpokrates from the same mould

After Goldman 1950, inv. 35-478 and 35-525

- ¹⁹ The cult of Attis, another mystery religion that was popular during the Imperial period, is also well evidenced in Tarsus through its coroplastic production. This god of Phrygian origin and consort of Cybele wears all of his customary attributes and, on occasion, may also sport the ivy wreath. A figurine of Attis¹⁴ kneeling was found in the cemetery sector (Fig. 18), and the hollowing out of the pupils by a spatula would indicate a date after the second century C.E. Attis is wearing his usual attributes: a tunic open at the belly, anaxyrides, or trousers, and a Phrygian cap.

Fig. 18. Attis kneeling (Louvre, Tarse 63)

After Besques 1972 © P. et M. Chuzeville

- 20 The demigod Herakles was also very popular in Tarsus. Often portrayed wearing the crown of Dionysus, his image also was affected by the prevailing climate of syncretism. Original statues by Lysippus of the late fourth century B.C.E., including the Farnese Herakles or the Herakles Epitrapezios that were frequently copied in the Imperial period, inspired the city's coroplasts to produce models of them, (Fig. 19) as we see in the torso of the Herakles Epitrapezios in the Louvre¹⁵ found in the cemetery sector. For the Farnese version, there is the upper portion of a body of a Herakles¹⁶ (Fig. 20) found in Trench 4 of the cemetery sector, still bearing traces of red paint; it is dated from the third to the fourth century C.E. Similar to the Farnese Heracles is the left half of the head of Herakles with deeply-bored pupils that was brought to light from the '5.20 complex'¹⁷ and dated from the second to the third century C.E. (Fig. 21). Finally, a fragment recovered from the cemetery sector(?) representing Herakles wearing an ivy wreath and probably holding a club in his left arm¹⁸ (Fig. 22) likely dates to the second century C.E. (?).

Fig. 19. Torso of Herakles Epitrapezios (Louvre, Tarse 300)

© (C) RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / Tony Querrec

Fig. 20: Farnese Herakles

Fig. 21. Head of Herakles

Fig. 22. Herakles holding the club? (Louvre, S 3798)

After Goldman 1950, inv. 35-168 ; After Goldman 1950, inv. 35-298 ; © Isabelle Hasselin

- 21 Although the figurines associated with the cult of Dionysos undoubtedly account for the most significant proportion of this corpus, the finds also include numerous representations of actors and theatrical masks that obviously were linked to the festive celebrations of the god of wine. We may speculate that these terracotta figures of actors were most likely dedicated to the god or placed in tombs in connection with theatrical performances. A head of a comedic actor wearing the mask of a slave¹⁹ (Fig. 23) was found in the '5.20 complex' of the craft production Sector A and is dated from the second to the

third century C.E. This actor figurine refers back to the New Comedy of Menander, where masks were used to identify stock characters.

Fig. 23. Head of an actor with the mask of a slave

Fig. 24. Head of a man with a physical deformity.

After Goldman 1950, inv. 35-313 ; After Goldman 1950, inv. 35-403.

- 22 Tarsus has also yielded a certain number of figurines that were caricatures of illness and physical deformity that are reminiscent of those of Smyrna. This left half of a man's head with deformed skull,²⁰ oversized lower jaw, and protruding ears (Fig. 24) was found in the '5.20m complex' and is dated from the second to the third century.
- 23 Scenes from everyday life—circus acts in particular—were a great source of inspiration for coroplasts in the imperial Roman period at Tarsus. They created figurines, probably intended as votives, that represented a particular act or a victory won. A relief figurine of a victorious auriga holding the palm of victory and wearing a helmet and a short tunic with a very wide belt²¹ (Fig. 25) was probably recovered from the cemetery sector and can be dated from the second to the third century C.E.

Fig. 25. Victorious charioteer holding a palm (Louvre, Tarse 97)

© Anne Chauvet

- 24 Finally, full-length representations or busts of Roman citizens, not necessarily actual portraits, were also often to be found in the coroplasts' workshops at Tarsus; they chart the evolution in hair fashions as initiated by the empresses in particular and subsequently adopted by Roman women. This standing woman, draped and veiled,²² was recovered from the 'Middle Roman Unit' (Fig. 26), dating from the late second to the third century C.E. The figure, loosely styled on Tanagra figurines that appeared at the beginning of the Hellenistic period, represents a matron type dressed in a tunic and cloak worn as a veil when going out. A bust of a man on a fluted plinth shows him wearing a tunic clasped at the shoulders;²³ (Fig. 27) this too was brought to light from the '5.90m complex' and can be dated from the second to the third century. Particularly notable is this handsome head of a Roman woman,²⁴ perhaps even a portrait (Fig. 28), recovered from the cemetery and dated to the second century. It is distinguished by a complex coiffure based on the hairstyle of Sabina, the wife of Hadrian, who ruled from 117 to 138, and has deeply hollowed-out pupils and a tear on each of the cheeks.

Fig. 26. Female standing

After Goldman 1950, inv. 36-18

Fig. 27. Bust of a man on a pedestal

After Goldman 1950, inv. 35-471

Fig. 28. Portrait of a Roman woman (Louvre, Tarse 140)

© (C) RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / Tony Querrec

Figurines for a City at a Cultural Crossroads

- 25 There are three categories of discovery contexts for the figurines in the present corpus.
- 26 Six of them came from the habitation area in Sector B (Middle and Late Roman Unit, from the duct built into the perimeter wall south of the mound and the pit located beneath the cemetery of the perimeter wall) (Fig. 2); these are dated between the second and the early fourth century C.E. A few more, some 10 in all, came from the necropolis and probably include those eight that are now in the Louvre. This is suggested by Langlois's records concerning an area within Sector B that was excavated by Goldman. It was situated on the perimeter wall to the south of the mound of the third and fourth century C.E., not far from the habitation area. Finally, the remainder of the figurines and figurine moulds were discovered in Sector A located at the highest point of the mound to the east, in an area occupied by coroplasts' workshops or even shops, complexes known as '5.90m' and '5.20m.' This identification is based on the presence of two kilns, secondary assemblages of votive offerings, and figurine rejects from workshops; they are dated to the second and third centuries C.E. (Fig. 2).
- 27 These terracotta figurines therefore fulfilled at once a religious role in the domestic sphere, since they were dedicated in private *lararia* (household shrines), as well as a votive role in the case of those clustered in the secondary pits in accordance with the practice of burying *ex-votos* so as to make room in the shrines where they had been dedicated. Finally, a funerary function may be ascribed to those from burials that accompanied the deceased in the afterlife. There is also ample evidence for the presence of production workshops on the Gözlükule mound. It therefore provides a quite remarkable opportunity to chart the life cycle of these figurines from the early empire

through to the later Roman empire, from their creation in the coroplast's workshop through to their burial in the graves. However it should be stressed that similar iconographic types can be found indiscriminately throughout these various contexts. The meaning of the figurine therefore varied according to the way in which it was used by its owner. This feature is not specific to the city of Tarsus, but is very common to all cities that produced terracotta figurines.

- 28 However, what is specific and unique to the city of Tarsus is the importance of religious syncretism beginning with the early empire. The traditional deities of the Greco-Roman pantheon are adorned with new attributes, the ivy wreath of Dionysos in particular, which practically became the norm irrespective of the identity of the god represented. The cult of Dionysos therefore eclipsed all others. The ivy wreath of Dionysos is, in a sense, a hallmark of the Tarsus workshops. Also of note is the very strong influence of Eastern religions on the iconography of Greco-Roman gods and, in particular, the advent of certain Eastern and Egyptian gods (such as Attis, Harpokrates, or Serapis) in the religion of the city's inhabitants. There reveal close links between Tarsus and Egypt, in both the adoption of these Greco-Egyptian deities and in the use of plaster moulds, hitherto specific to Egyptian workshops, that emerged among the coroplasts of Tarsus. Did Egyptian craftsmen settle in Tarsus, bringing these new techniques with them? Indeed, the links were already long-standing, since we know that Antony and Cleopatra came to Tarsus in the first century B.C.E. to celebrate the wedding of Dionysos and Aphrodite-Ariadne. The so-called Cleopatra's Gate erected not far from the Gözlükule mound, still stands to mark the visit of the Queen of Egypt to Tarsus.
- 29 The geographic location of Tarsus, at the crossroads of routes linking the Aegean coast to the nearby cities of the East and the Levant and open to the southern reaches of the Mediterranean basin via its access to the sea, easily accounts for the importance of Eastern religions in the city. As a place of transit, Tarsus thus absorbed many influences, as reflected in its figurines.
- 30 These syncretic deities also illustrate the importance of the mystery religions that had become pervasive in Roman religion since the early Empire. The secret initiation of a community of devotees into these mysteries gave them hope and the promise of future bliss. Because of this these new cults sprang up alongside the worship of the official pantheon as they probably fulfilled a growing spiritual need of the populace. We should also bear in mind that these foreign forms of worship were open to women. In addition to the progression of popular piety towards gods of salvation and initiatory cults, certain emperors themselves fostered the emergence of foreign deities, as was the case with Septimius Severus and the cult of Serapis.
- 31 In conclusion, the remains of the Roman city of Tarsus, which lie buried beneath the present-day city, are gradually emerging as a result of successive excavations. These include the programmed excavations of the Gözlükule mound by Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, but also the rescue operations at various locations within and around the ancient city: a Roman bridge over the River Cydnus that was uncovered beneath the Mosque of Danyal not far from the Gözlükule mound; the forum with a wide porticoed street found close to the court of justice; the remains of a temple taken from a church; an imperial temple podium of huge dimensions at a site known as Donuktaş to the east of the mound; the triumphal arch known as Cleopatra's Gate (Fig. 29). These vestiges, located far from one another, are all indicative of a Roman city of considerable size and notable prosperity. The Gözlükule mound enables one to chart the development of housing within

an urban complex that dates from the early to the later Roman era. Within this, it also is possible to see the extent to which the coroplasts' workshops located to the east of the domestic quarter catered to the populace's cultic requirements. In particular, these were centered around the celebrations of Bacchus, due perhaps to the proximity of the theater, and to the needs associated with a necropolis on the southern slope of the mound at the turn of the third and fourth centuries C.E.

Fig. 29. Location of the mound of Gözlükule in Tarsus and the other Roman monuments of the city

From Özyar et al. 2005, 10

- 32 Continued excavations in Sector A will undoubtedly shed more light on the way that the craft production district was organised. In any case, a comprehensive study of the coroplastic production of Tarsus that considers the Louvre collections and those conserved in Tarsus illuminates the nature of popular piety during the later Roman empire at Tarsus, the distinctive characteristics of the religious syncretism present in the city, and the originality of the coroplastic production in relation to other cities in the region. This study will ultimately result in an updated publication of the terracotta collection from Tarsus in the Musée du Louvre as a recontextualising initiative. However, it also is hoped that it will result in the development of a database that will bring together the full range of the coroplastic production of Tarsus as it is currently known to exist that currently is scattered across a number of institutions.

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NOTES

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2. English translation: Susan SchneiderMusée du Louvre
3. Collins 1991, 39.
4. Reports of the excavations were published swiftly, as early as 1935: Goldman 1935; Goldman 1950; Goldman 1956; Goldman 1963.
5. Goldman 1950, 308, n°9, fig. 212.
6. Goldman 1950, 357, n°393, fig. 241.
7. Goldman 1950, 319, n°67, fig. 216.
8. Goldman 1950, 319, n° 66, fig. 218.
9. Goldman 1950, 320, n°82, fig. 219.
10. Musée du Louvre, Tarse 23 and Tarse 24. Besques 1972, E 233, E 234, pl. 403 G, I.
11. Musée du Louvre, S 2939. Besques 1972, E 213, pl. 353 B.
12. Goldman 1950, 382, n°632, fig. 254.
13. Goldman 1950, 326, n°123, 124, fig. 222.
14. Musée du Louvre, Tarse 63. Besques 1972, E/D 2295, pl. 354.
15. Musée du Louvre, Tarse 300. Besques 1972, E/D 2338, pl. 359.
16. Goldman 1950, 327, n°133, fig. 223.
17. Goldman 1950, 328, n°138, fig. 223.
18. Musée du Louvre, S 3798. Besques 1972, E 214, pl. 359 I.
19. Goldman 1950, 346, n°271, fig. 234.
20. Goldman 1950, 346, n°273, fig. 234.
21. Musée du Louvre, Tarse 97. Besques 1972, E 225, pl. 368 D.
22. Goldman 1950, 354, n° 355, fig. 239.
23. Goldman 1950, 360, n° 420, fig. 243.
24. Musée du Louvre, Tarse 140. Besques 1972, E 243, pl. 414 F, H-J.

ABSTRACTS

From the Bronze Age to Greco-Roman antiquity, Tarsus was an important urban center because of its proximity to the famous Cilician Gates that connected central Anatolia to the Mediterranean coast and northern Syria, as well its maritime connections to the eastern Mediterranean through its harbor. The mound of Gözlükule, the oldest and continuously inhabited part of the ancient city, informs modern scholarship about the material and visual culture of Roman Tarsus, as well as the earlier periods of habitation. The mound was explored in the middle of the 19th century, excavated in the mid-20th, and for the last 10 years was the focus of renewed excavations by the Boğazici University. During the course of all these investigations a number of deposits of Roman terracotta figurines was brought to light. This rich coroplastic material shows the evolution of a coroplastic typology according to changes in the occupation of this city from the early Imperial to the late Imperial eras. It also reveals new aspects of coroplastic production and use in the city of Tarsus, demonstrating the importance of these figurines for provincial Roman religion, especially in the transitional period of the late Roman Empire².

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