

Introduction

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# Archaeology of the Roman Empire

## A tribute to the life and works of Professor Barri Jones

Edited by

### N. J. Higham

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Much of what is known about Phalassarna has been determined by excavations that began in 1966, and are still ongoing (Hadjidaki 1988; Fross and Hadjidaki 1990; Hadjidaki 1996; Hadjidaki and Iliadis 2007). Some of the main conclusions from these excavations will now be summarised.

The old port is situated roughly 100 m away from the present sea, and raised 5.66 m above it, due to the geological factors mentioned above (Fig. 15.2). It was constructed most probably in a pre-existing lagoon that may have been used as a port facility many centuries earlier, as is attested by pottery found in the silt, dating to the Middle Bronze period (1800 - 1700 BC). The oldest part of the port wall trenches in the port dates to sometime in the sixth century BC, although there is no remaining archaeological evidence for any water installation put up after that period.

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## The Roman Destruction of Phalasarna

Elpida Hadjidaki

**Introduction**

In 1939, an early third-century BC stone inscription was discovered at a sacred area on west Crete, describing Spartan intervention in a dispute between the Hellenistic town of Phalasarna and its neighbour Polyrrenhia (Illus. 15.1). The inscription shows nymph Phalasarne standing in front of the prow of a warship (Guarducci 1939, v. 2: 132). The presence of a ship and its patroness carved on a peace treaty between two enemy nations is strong evidence that Phalasarna was a naval power by the beginning of the third century BC. It became rich and famous because of its artificial 'closed port', a fortified military port completely enclosed within city walls, which was mentioned by ancient geographers from Scylax (Müller 1855: 47) in the fourth century BC down to the Anonymous Periplus known as the Stadiasmus (Müller 1855: 510) in the fourth century AD. By the end of the fourth century BC, it was minting its own coins (Svoronos 1890), which featured marine themes. However, this source of wealth led to conflict with Roman interests at sea, and the town and its harbour were destroyed by the Romans in 67 BC during their campaign against Cretan piracy (Frost 1989, 1997). The area was never reinhabited and the harbour today is found almost exactly as the Roman conquerors left it.

Most of the buildings at Phalasarna visible today were built some time around 335 BC (Hadjidaki 1988: 463-466). They occupy a strategic location on the west side of the island of Crete. The high hill upon which stood the acropolis could dominate for miles all the passing sea trade to the north up to the Peloponnese and south to Alexandria, which was being constructed at the same time.

Upon the top of the cape and along its hillside, there are remains of large public buildings, one of them with at least two floors, staircases, three temples, cisterns and extensive fortifications, none of which have been excavated. All the buildings are constructed of rectangular blocks in the familiar Hellenistic isodomic or pseudo-isodomic style with thick walls up to 1.4 m.

The bottom of the cape is lined with a massive fortification wall about 500 m long, with three square towers projecting from it. Between the towers, this curtain was reinforced by a second wall which made it difficult for the enemy to penetrate by ramming. The entire cape was turned into a strong fortress surrounded by towers, bastions and temples.

The geomorphology of Phalasarna is unusual, and has attracted a certain amount of attention (Dermitzakis 1973; Hadjidaki 1988: 466; Pirazzoli *et al.* 1992; Frost 1997; Dominey-Howes *et al.* 1998). This portion of Crete has been raised 6.66 m above its height in Hellenistic times by the earthquakes for which Crete is notorious. Dr. Paolo

Pirazzoli and collaborators from CNRS in France, have found that the harbour was almost completely silted up by around 66 AD, based on stratigraphic and radiocarbon analysis (Pirazzoli *et al.* 1992). The rapid silting must have contributed to the harbour's preservation. Pirazzoli also located stratigraphic evidence for a major earthquake in 365 AD, which he believes was responsible for the 6.66 m uplift.

Pirazzoli's findings have been contested by Dawson and collaborators from the University of Coventry, who carried out more extensive sampling of sediments from the harbour region (Dominey-Howes *et al.* 1998). The earliest shells they found in the harbour date to the sixth century BC, evidence that the harbour was in use during this period. Dawson claims to find no evidence of the earthquake from 365 AD. However, Dawson's conclusions are based upon the assumption that a large earthquake and accompanying waves would deposit a layer of sea-shells, while Pirazzoli looks for evidence of earthquakes in a layer of coarse deposited stones. Pirazzoli's interpretation of the sedimentary evidence is more convincing. The common image of a *tsunami* pictures an enormous breaking wave, but earthquake waves can also rise gradually, like an enormous slow tide. A wave of this sort would not deposit a layer of shells on land, but could easily drag stones and other debris back as it receded.

**The Military Harbour**

Much of what is known about Phalasarna has been determined by excavations that began in 1986, and are still ongoing (Hadjidaki 1988; Frost and Hadjidaki 1990; Hadjidaki 1996; Hadjidaki and Iniotakis 2000). Some of the main conclusions from these excavations will now be summarised.

The old port is situated roughly 100 m away from the present sea, and raised 6.66 m above it, due to the geological factors mentioned above (Illus. 15.2). It was constructed most probably in a pre-existing lagoon that must have been used as a port facility many centuries earlier, as is attested by pottery found in the silt, dating to the Middle Minoan period (1800 - 1700 BC). The oldest plant life from test trenches in the port dates to sometime in the sixth century BC, although there is no remaining archaeological evidence for any major installations put up from that period.

In c. 335 BC, as the town grew and trade with Ptolemaic Egypt expanded, it became necessary to improve the old port. The naval engineers had a long artificial channel cut through the natural bedrock, while another forked channel was used for de-silting purposes. It is possible that the

channel was cut earlier, but it seems most likely that it was created at the same time as the other major architectural features. The excavated area, quadrangular in shape, measured 100 x 75 m and was surrounded by high defensive curtains, stone quays, and at least four towers. All the installations were joined to the main town fortification walls, thus forming a fortified enclosure which was well-defended from all sides.

The architectural style of these monuments is magnificent and a model for those interested in military architecture. Furthermore, they bear witness to the wealth and power of a maritime city that flourished on the west coast of Crete for over 300 years.

### Rectangular Defensive Towers

The entrance to the channel was probably closed off with chains and was guarded by defensive towers that stood high on each side. The east tower, which recently was partly uncovered, has an estimated length of 8.0 m and a width of 6.50 m. It was constructed partly hewn into the rock. The stones were regularly cut in small, square or rectangular pieces varying in size from 0.40 to 0.20 m. They formed a rubble mound, so as to create a uniform structure for static support of the tower. Then, the exterior side was dressed with large rectangular blocks and chiselled faces were finished with drafted margins, 'peritaeneia'.

Similar design was applied to another rectangular tower, the North Tower, which defended the north side of the harbour (Illus. 15.3, 15.4). In this case, the architecture was even more elaborate. The tower has a preserved length of 7.0 m and a width of 6.5 m and its interior fill was identical to the previous one. However, the exterior facing stones have decorative drafted margins and an elaborate moulding, 'kymation', above the base of the tower. Furthermore, the isodomically-cut stones are connected to one another by metal clamps. One such clamp was found *in situ*. It had a Z shape and consisted of iron covered with molten lead in order to prevent rusting. This tower stood 2.00 m above ancient sea level.

### Fortified Gate

Some time during the second century BC a fortified gateway was built from material robbed from the North rectangular tower (Illus. 15.3). It connected the war port to an inner basin, and measured 5.00 m long and 3.00 m wide. The doorway, which was excavated during the summer of 2000, was only 1m. wide and 1.5 m high. Its wooden door was found burned and abandoned, probably in the first century BC during the Roman siege. Beneath the paving stones of the door was a drainage channel. It was built of rectangular, well-cut stones that provided a 0.50 x 0.50 m passageway for water to flow under the gate. The excavated silt produced many small objects including

large ships' copper nails, pottery from the Classical and Hellenistic period (Illus. 15.5), Minoan tripod sherds and a coin from Corinth. The coin is silver and dates to the end of the fourth century BC or the beginning of the third. More coins found in excavated areas around the port verify the wide relations of Phalasarna with the Dorian states of the Peloponnese as well as the Ptolemies in Egypt.

### Circular Defensive Tower

On the east side of the Fortified Gate, a stone stairway has been partly excavated that probably joins with another tower, the North-East Tower, on which excavation has not proceeded far enough to allow more than speculation.

A 50m. long high curtain connected this tower to the South-West Circular Tower (Illus. 15.6). This wall seems to have protected the landward side of the port. The circular tower is 9m. in diameter and is preserved to a height of 4.5m. It is constructed of ashlar blocks in an isodomic style without any connecting material, as on the north rectangular tower. Static support was provided to the interior of the tower by two cross-walls, which were further strengthened by a rubble fill. This fill differed from the other towers in that it consisted of a mixture of earth, sandstone chips, gravel, bones, and much broken pottery.

These ceramics provide an absolute date for the fourth century BC tower, since they were thrown into the fill during the time of its construction (Hadjidaki and Iniotakis 2000). In addition, they provide excellent examples of the shapes of black glazed vessels, including skyphoi, craters, bowls, and plates. Some of them are decorated with designs such as youths playing the flute or other Athenian red figures.

The final architectural feature that is remarkable on this tower is the carved moulding that projects above its base, which like the north rectangular tower, stood 2m. above ancient sea level.

### Quays

Two types of quays have been excavated so far in the military harbour. One was constructed of sandstone blocks with chiselled surfaces forming a long shelf 1.5m. wide. Three separate rows of steps led down to the water. This part of the ancient quay was used for loading and unloading cargo from boats, probably with the aid of wooden planks and ropes. The top of the quay was 40 cm above the sea level in 335 BC. The second quay consisted of thick limestone blocks arranged in a header and stretcher line (Illus. 15.7). The headers are 1.12 m long and bear traces of sea erosion. This edge of this quay is also 40 cm above the 335 BC sea level. If the sea indeed rose by 20-40 cm in the first century BC, both of these quays would have flooded in rough weather and become increasingly difficult to use.

### The Inner Basin

The doorway of the fortified gate, near the north tower, leads to a smaller inner basin which contained brackish water. Soil analysis has indicated that there was only occasional contact with the sea.

A long wall, constructed in isodomic style, bordered the basin and was used as a quay (Illus. 15.8). So far we have excavated 16 metres but it certainly continues for many more. About 0.30 m below this quay, a straight waterline is visible traversing the length of the quay. The depth of the water in the basin during the time of its use was about 1.50m. and 6.66m. above present sea level. Thus, it is precisely at the same level as the water line on the rocks along the artificial channel entrance to the harbour, right beneath which is embedded Hellenistic pottery.

### Industrial Area - Main Road

From the west side of the fortified gateway a broad double wall 50m. long extends westward to join the line of the main town's fortification walls. Here we excavated part of a paved road, probably a sacred road leading to temples and other public buildings on the acropolis (Illus.15.9). Adjoining the retaining wall of the road we uncovered part of an industrial area that consisted of a rectangular room 6m. long. In it we found five stone basins plastered with hydraulic mortar (Illus. 15.10), resting on a beautiful, paved stone floor. The basins must originally have been used for bathing, perhaps by temple visitors. However, in Phalasarna's final days they were put to other use. We found them filled with unbaked clay, which suggests that they were used for making pottery.

### The Destruction of Phalasarna

The archaeological evidence shows that Phalasarna in the Hellenistic period was exceptionally well-fortified. Other major cities of the period -- Gortyna, Knossos, Itanos, Kydonia, Polyrhennia, Phaestos-- must have had similar fortifications, but in all these cases they were overbuilt by the Romans and Venetians, and almost nothing of the Hellenistic defences remains. For several unique reasons, Phalasarna was completely abandoned in the first century BC and never re-inhabited.

There are three causes. First, the seismic activity of this end of Crete may have put the harbour out of use. Geological studies tell a somewhat complicated story. According to Pirazzoli's studies of stratigraphy and carbon dating of marine organisms, in the fourth century BC, the sea was approximately 6.20 m above today's level (Pirazzoli *et al* 1992: 388-9). By the first century BC, the land had subsided by around 20 cm. This relatively small rise in sea level may have made it difficult or even impossible to use the harbour as had originally been intended, since the edges of the quays were originally only 40 cm above the sea. The buildings found at Phalasarna from this period are small and haphazardly constructed,

often hastily built on top of older monuments, using fallen stones. For example, a gateway excavated in the summer of 2000 was built in the mid- third century BC with stones robbed from the monumental rectangular tower adjacent to it. By around 180 BC, even this structure could not be maintained, and a small rough building was constructed in front of it, blocking the entrance. One possibility is that walk-ways and passages surrounding the harbour were flooded by the rising sea, and poor-quality new structures were built upon them. These new buildings may have allowed some sort of use of the harbour, but they have none of the grandeur of the earlier constructions, and suggest a city impoverished by war and unable to adapt to changing circumstances. The sea continued to rise until 365 AD, when a massive earthquake raised the land by 6.66m.

A second possibility that has been overlooked previously but should be taken into consideration, is the attack on Phalasarna by Kydonia. Polybius (22.15.1-6) reports that when Cydas held office in the assembly (*kosmos*) at Gortyna, the people of that city appealed to Rome to intervene in their dispute with Cnossus. Appius Claudius, who was sent to Crete probably around 185 B.C., settled matters not only between the Gortynians and Cnossians, but also between Kydonia and Phalasarna. Kydonia was the only other strong Cretan city that possessed an enclosed port and a large fleet. She was an ally of Phalasarna according to a treaty of 293/92 BC inscribed on a stone, which twenty eight Cretan towns signed with Miletos (Kawerau and Rhem 1914: 140). In the treaty, Phalasarna was allied with Kydonia and Cnossus, whereas Polyrrhenia, Phalasarna's traditional enemy, had allied with Phaestus, the enemy of Cnossus. In the one hundred years that followed, both cities reached a peak of prosperity that can be attributed to their power at sea. As excavations at Phalasarna proceed, we shall expect to uncover many details of this golden age as well as the relations with the rest of the island and nearby Ptolemaic Egypt. However, in c. 185 B.C. or before, a dispute broke out between the two allies. It seems that a group of Phalasarnians, who at some point were exiled, together with some Kydonians, terrorised other parts of the island (Polybius 22.15.4). We do not know the motives of the exiles or the extent of the damage, but it was great enough to lead to a war against Phalasarna, and the city was defeated. Kydonia captured many hostages and entrusted one of her generals, Charmion, to try them in a joint court session. The Romans ordered Kydonia to return the hostages and to withdraw from Phalasarna without taking anything away from the town. Furthermore, both sides had to leave the rest of Crete untouched. Nothing more is known about this episode, but archaeological evidence shows that at around this date some catastrophe befell the city. Whether this decline is due to the war with Kydonia, or whether it is due to earthquakes and a rise in sea level will require further excavation to determine. Yet Phalasarna was not yet completely impoverished. Some of the most beautiful pottery and silver artefacts found at the site came from buildings of the middle of the second

century BC. These include fragments of local Megarian bowls decorated with flying Erotes, ducks, and various battle scenes (Illus. 15.11; Frost and Hadjidaki 1990: 520-524; for descriptions and analysis of ceramics from Phalasarna see Hadjidaki and Iniotakis 2000, 57-73, figs. 4-25).

In 172 BC, Phalasarna together with Cnossus sent 3000 men to assist Perseus, king of Macedonia, in his war against Rome (Livy 42.51.7). Commanders of this mercenary contingent force were Sossus of Phalasarna, and Syllus of Cnossus. The size of this force at first suggests that Phalasarna was prosperous, but another possibility is that the town was desperate, and sent most of its able-bodied men abroad in hopes of bringing back plunder. The war dragged on for three years. During the final battle at Pydna in June 168 BC, the consular Aemilius Paullus defeated the Macedonians, almost all of whom were slaughtered, and Perseus was carried off to Rome as a hostage (Livy 44.17-18, 20-21, 28, 32-46). Phalasarna alone may well have lost 1500 men. Surely this loss on top of other recent misfortunes contributed to the decline of the city.

Indeed, all evidence shows that, after 168 BC, Phalasarna had no remaining pretence to greatness. There are no new monumental buildings, and no historical references to the city. Proof that the city was still inhabited lies in buildings, in abundant pottery, and in five inscriptions. One is dedicated to Hermes and one to the nymph Akakallis (Guarducci 1939 19.3; Frost 1996), all written in the style of the first century BC.

It is precisely during this time that piracy began to rise in Crete. This brings us to the third and final reason for the ultimate destruction of Phalasarna, almost certainly by a Roman naval force in 67 BC.

However, one has to follow the events that lead up to the Roman invasion and its relation to piracy. Strabo (10.4.10), who had a good knowledge of Cretan affairs from information through his relatives, wrote that the Cretan pirates succeeded the Tyrrhenians of the western Mediterranean sea, and that the Cilicians came after the Cretans; they were both destroyed by the Romans. He emphasises the close relations between pirates and mercenaries and comments on a certain military expert named Dorylaos, who travelled often to Crete from Pontus, looking for private personnel. There is further historical evidence in Polybius (4.8.11; 4.68.3; 6.46.1-6; 8.15.1-6), Plutarch (*Pompey* 29.1) and Appian (*Mithr.* 94) regarding Cretan raiding, as well as pictographic evidence from inscriptions (Guarducci 1939: 2.1). Although the inscriptions trace Cretan piracy back to the mid-third century BC, there is no specific mention of Phalasarna. Perhaps Phalasarna was rich enough from trade at this time that her pirate raids were uncommon. Men of the neighbouring town of Allaria, near modern Rethymnon, were among the most notorious raiding forces, and did not

have any major harbour installations or large international trade.

There is no doubt that many coastal Cretan cities, such as Hierapytna, Olous, and Itanos, participated in piratical acts during that early period. However, Phalasarna and Kydonia were in no immediate need throughout the third century BC; they were perhaps competing with one another for the control of the sea trade routes and were busy fighting between themselves. Furthermore, the powerful Rhodian navy controlled the eastern Mediterranean throughout the late third and second centuries BC, protecting the freedom of the seas and trying to check piracy. In 204/203 BC, Philip V, king of Macedon, backed Crete's pirates against a Rhodian fleet (Polybius 13.3-5; Livy 31.15.8), and in 155/154 BC, Rhodes requested help from Rome because of Cretan piracy (Polybius 33.15.3-4; 33.16.1-8; 33.17.1-5).

In 102 BC, a Roman commander, Marcus Antonius the orator, was sent to deal with Mediterranean pirates (Livy *Ep.*, LXVIII; Plutarch *Pomp.*, 24) with the consequence that in 101 BC Cilician pirates regrouped on Crete. The Cilicians were Hellenistic Greeks who became active in 139 BC, when they were gathered together by Diodotus Tryphon, the brutal, Greek usurper-king of Seleucid Syria (Strabo 14.1.32 [664]; 14.5.2 [668]; Plut. *Pomp.* 27.1; App. *Mithr.* 92; Flor. 1.41.3; also Ormerod 1924: 190-247; Rauh 1997: 283). By 102 BC, they had become the most feared pirates of the Mediterranean, operating with hundreds of fast warships, probably biremes, adorned with gold, silver and purple, that sailed out of well-fortified ports with impressive watchtowers (Plut. *Pomp.* 24; Appian *Mithr.* 96). The pirates, by retreating to Crete under Roman attack, showed that they felt kinship with the Cretans. In 88 BC, pirates attacked Roman proquestor L. Licinius Lucullus as he sailed from Crete to Alexandria to raise naval forces for his general Lucius Cornelius Sulla (Appian *Mithr.* 33; Plut. *Luc.* 2). At the same time, Cretan pirates, as previously mentioned, allied with Mithridates VI, king of Pontus, in his war against Rome. Mithridates, was a fearless Hellenized king, simultaneously an intellectual and a brave general, whose expansionist activities posed a threat to Rome. He possessed enormous wealth and his fleets consisted of 400 triremes and 50 biremes and were manned by Greek and Cretan mercenaries and pirates (Strabo 10.4.10; Appian *Mithridates*; Plut. *Luc.* 13; also Ormerod 1924: 210-214; 220-221; Green 1993: 558-562). Sulla, at this time, after having sacked Athens in 86 BC and carried back to Rome the city's magnificent artworks, made peace with Mithridates leaving the pirates with the considerable naval supplies that the king had previously furnished.

In 74 BC, Marcus Antonius, son of the man who had dealt with the pirates in 102 BC and father of Mark Antony the *triumvir*, accused the Cretans of supporting raiding. The Senate issued him a special maritime command, an *imperium infinitum* with proconsular authority, and in 72 BC he invaded the island (Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.8; 3.91.213;

Velleius *Pat.* 2.31.3-4). Once more, there is little information on this expedition as with all other cases of Cretan direct involvement with piracy. Antonius, was defeated off the sea near Kydonia by its leaders Lasthenes and Panares, and many Roman soldiers were caught as prisoners and bound with chains, among them his own quaestor. He was compelled to conclude a humiliating peace and for this he was given the title of Creticus in mockery (Florus 3.7; Dio Cass. fr.108; Diod.Sic. XL.1). He died in the same year, 71 BC.

Antonius's peace agreement was not honoured by Rome, which instead made a series of impossible demands. A Cretan embassy was dispatched to Rome, but the tribune Lentulus Spinther persuaded the Senate otherwise (Appian *Sic.* 6.1; Vell. *Pat.* 2.34; Diod. *Sic.* XL; Dio 36.17-19). Crete was to return all prisoners, give up Lasthenes and Panares, hand over all ships of more than 4 oars, deliver 300 hostages, and present a ransom of 4000 talents of silver. Naturally, Crete refused, and began raising an army of 24,000 men (Vell. *Pat.* 2.34). In 68 BC the Roman Senate gave Pompey and Quintus Caecilius Metellus proconsular power to lead campaigns against the pirates of the eastern Mediterranean.

The campaign of Metellus from 69 to 67 BC was completely successful for the Romans and completely disastrous for the Cretans, as Appian describes in *Sicelica* VI. The Romans started out with 3 legions (Phlegon, *Fr. Gr. Hist.* 257 F12.12). Sanders (1982, p. 3) argues that they crossed from Gytheion and may have made their base at Kisamos, the port of Polyrrhenia. Phalasarna was only ten kilometres to the west, over a ridge. It is highly implausible that Metellus would have turned east to march on Kydonia while Kydonia's frequent ally, Phalasarna, remained untouched at his back. He is far more likely to have attacked and destroyed Phalasarna first.

Metellus next attacked Kydonia. The Kydonian commander Lasthenes ran to his home city and old ally Cnossus, while Panares surrendered Kydonia in exchange for his own safety. Metellus chased Lasthenes to Cnossus, where he burned his house and possessions to the ground. He was so brutal that Cretans appealed to Pompey who simultaneously was attacking Cilicia, and demanded to surrender to Pompey instead. Pompey dispatched a general, Octavius, who met Metellus with force (Dio 36.17-18). However, Metellus ignored him and continued to reduce the island with fire and iron until Lasthenes had surrendered. He put the Cilicians, who had taken refuge on Crete, to death and finally reduced the whole island, making Gortyna its capital. The island of Crete was then united with Cyrene as a joint Roman province. Metellus upon his return to Rome was given the cognomen *Creticus*, while his statue was erected at Polyrrhenia calling him *emperor*, *benefactor* and *saviour*. It is very likely that Polyrrhenia assisted the Romans in destroying their traditional enemies, those of Kydonia and Phalasarna.

This Roman campaign ended piracy in the Mediterranean,

and brought both Crete and Cilicia under complete Roman control.

Plutarch remarks that pirates were 'men of wealth and exceptional intelligence, regarding piracy as a profession in which honour could be obtained and ambition satisfied.' (*Pomp.* 24). Nicholas Rauh has argued that 'the Cilician pirates represented a common man's response to decades of authoritarian oppression' (Rauh 1987: 280). Neither of these explanations appears plausible for Phalasarna. The Cretan city-states were predominantly Dorian and were governed along the Spartan lines by a group of officials, elected yearly from aristocratic families (Strabo 10.4.9; Polybius 6.46.5; also Willetts 1955, 1969). Phalasarna was in decline by 100 BC, the time when the Mediterranean Sea had become a pirate lake and had paralyzed international trade and Roman interests. It appears most plausible that neighbouring cities, such as Phalasarna, Polyrrhenia and Kydonia, were reducing one another to rubble in repeated attacks, that huge numbers of men were lost in mercenary service against Rome, and the few survivors turned to piracy as a way to quick wealth.

In addition to the literary evidence, there is archaeological evidence of the Roman attack. In 1987 we excavated the channel that connected the military port to the sea. It was impossible to finish the excavation because huge worked stones were found choking the channel and rendering it useless. The size of these blocks suggests that they came from a sea wall, and the way they were scattered in the channel indicates a deliberate act of war rather than an earthquake. This sort of destruction was typical of the Romans, who at Carthage destroyed the harbour by blocking it with stones torn from the city walls, and then sowed the fields with salt. In addition, several catapult stones have been found throughout the site and bear witness to a heavy attack. One was excavated near the base of the quay running through the inner basin. It was made out of limestone, finely worked, with *XX* inscribed on top (Illus. 15.12). The stone weighs 6 kg, which corresponds to 20 Roman *libras*, and was presumably delivered by a Roman catapult machine.

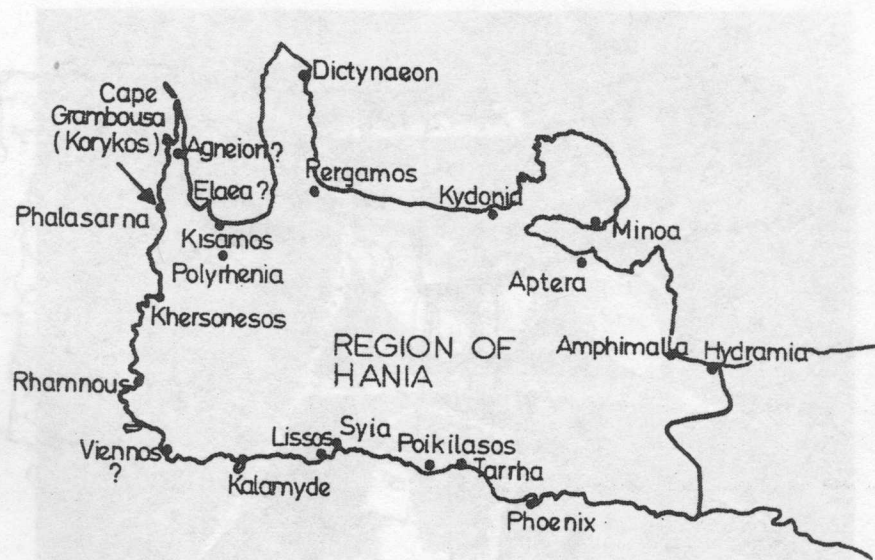
This find provides direct evidence of a Roman attack, also showing that this basin contained water in 67 BC and that it silted up only much later. The archaeological and literary evidence all point to the conclusion that Phalasarna was in severe decline at this time, with its harbour installations partly out of use and a large part of its population destroyed. The Romans cannot have had a difficult time vanquishing the city, and there is no historical reference to the event. Yet Metellus appears to have been completely ruthless in destroying what was left. No wonder that other Cretan cities insisted on surrendering to Pompey, and that Metellus came to be known as Metellus Creticus.

While the general outline of the final days of Phalasarna is becoming clear, many questions yet remain. What was the nature of the city before 335 BC? Did Phalasarna become rich from trade, from piracy, or from both? What sorts of

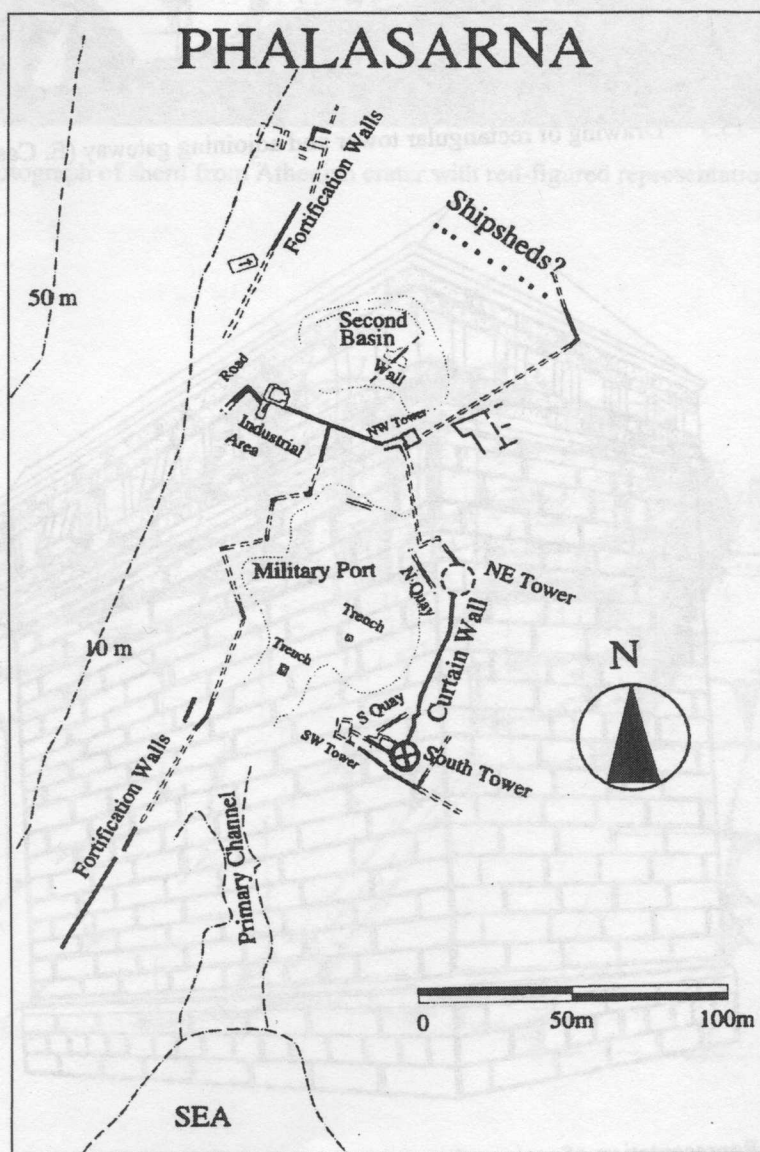
ships did the city use? Where are the shipsheds? Was destruction of the city due to war, or was it due to earthquakes? Can more direct evidence of the Roman attack be found? Continued excavation may eventually answer these questions. My only regret is that Professor Barri Jones, who supervised my Master's thesis, will never now be able to visit the site and share with us the excitement and challenge of understanding Phalasarna, as he had long intended.

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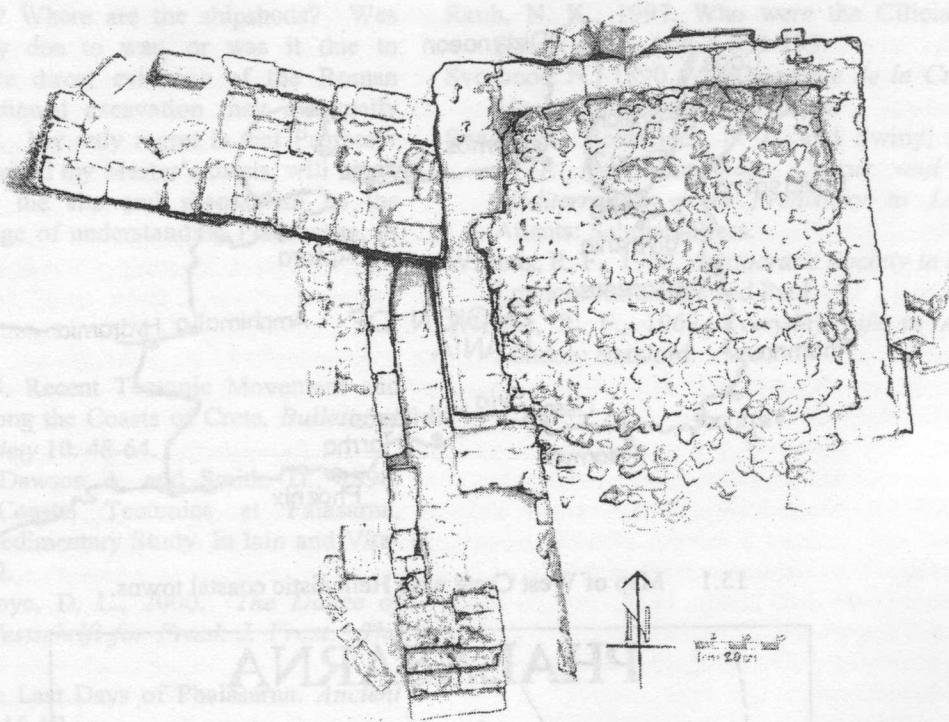


15.1 Map of West Crete with Hellenistic coastal towns.

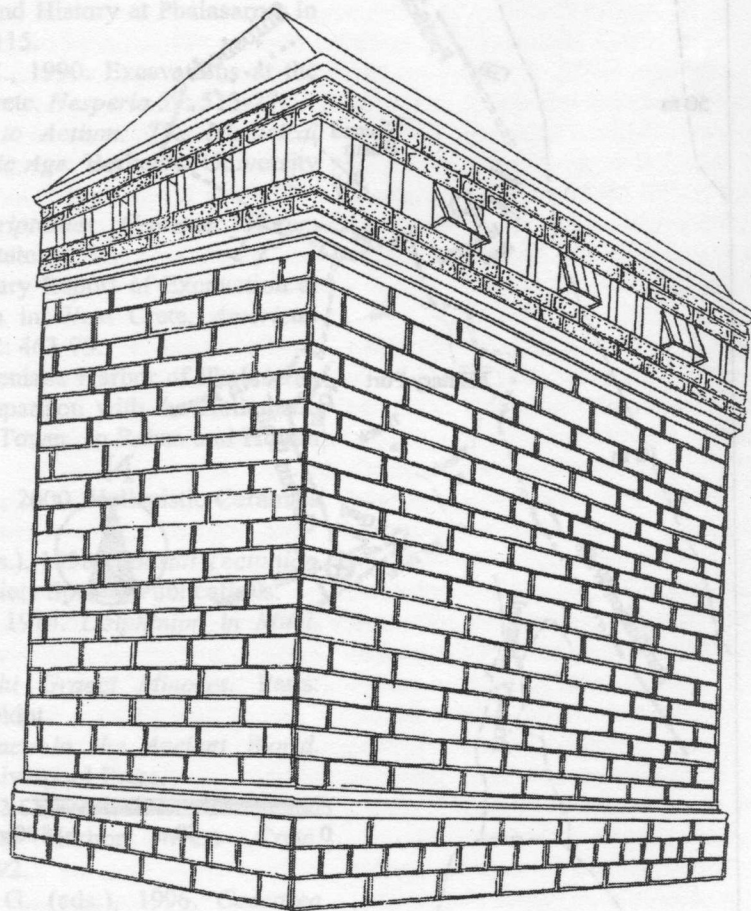


15.2 Map of Phalasarna.





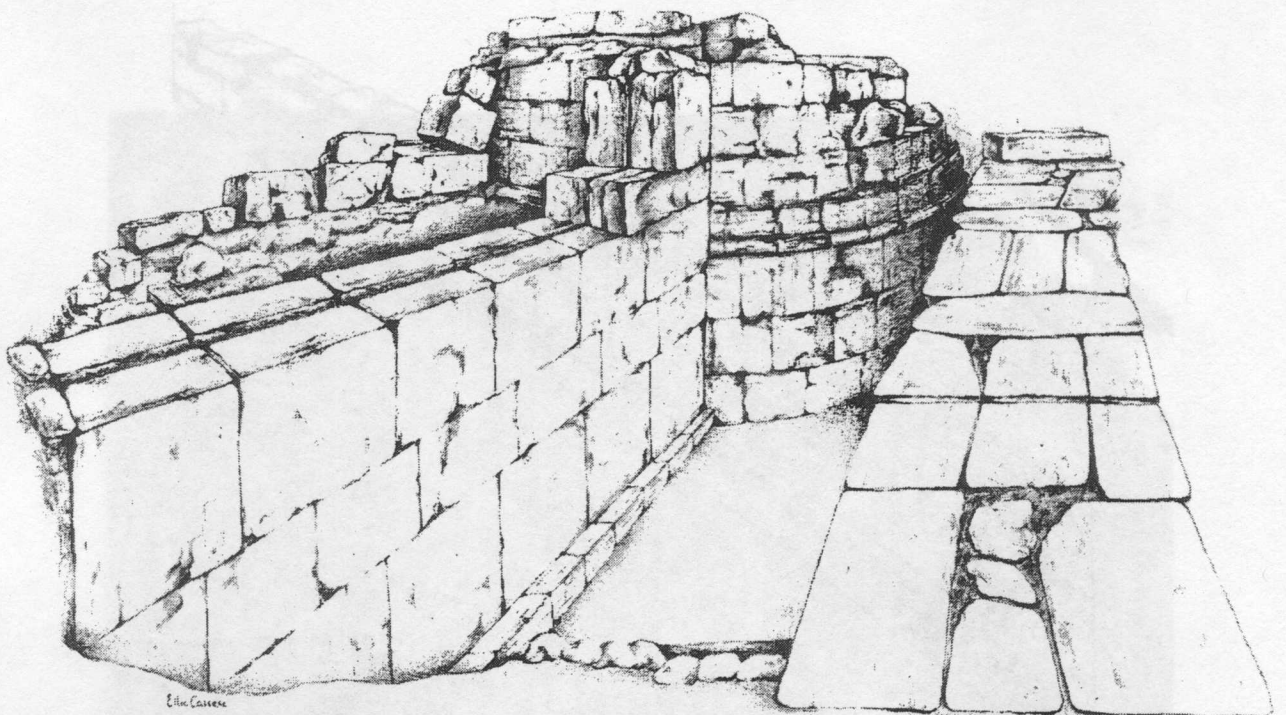
15.3 Drawing of rectangular tower and adjoining gateway (E. Cassese).



15.4 Representation of rectangular tower as it appeared in antiquity (N. Sekunda).



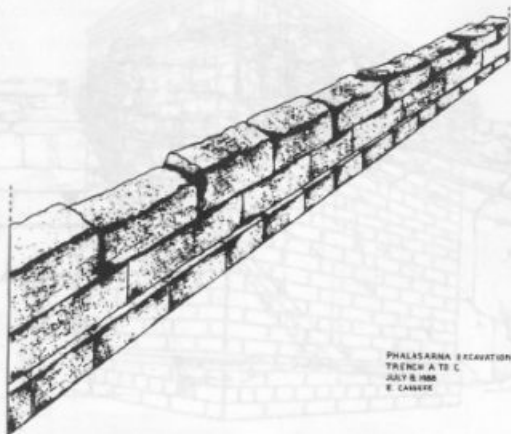
15.5 Photograph of sherd from Athenian crater with red-figured representation of a youth.



15.6 Drawing of circular tower (E. Cassese).



15.7 Photograph of quay in military port.

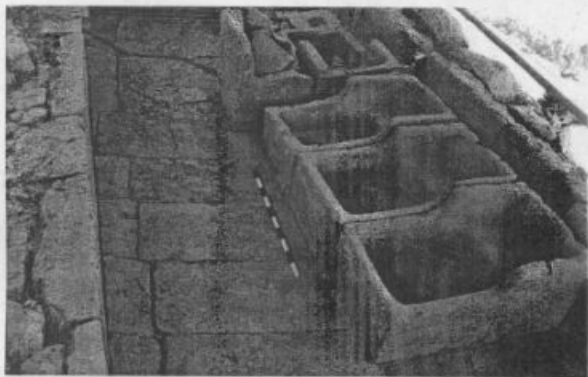


PHALASARNA EXCAVATION  
TRENCH A TO C  
JULY 8 1980  
E. CAESESE

15.8 Drawing of quay in inner basin (E. Caesese).



15.9 Photograph of public road.



15.10 Photograph of basins in 'industrial area'.



15.11 Red-figure painting from a burial urn representing flying Eros between two maidens.



15.12 Photograph of Roman catapult stone