

NEOLITHIC BONE SPOONS FROM BARCIN HÖYÜK

BARCIN HÖYÜK NEOLİTİK DÖNEM KEMİK KAŞIKLARI

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Anahtar Sözcükler: Barcın Höyük, Neolitik Dönem, Kemik Aletler, Kemik Kaşıklar, Anadolu

ABSTRACT

Bone tools constitute an indispensable group of tools and materials for Prehistoric people in particular. The typological diversity and quantity of bone tools increased during the Neolithic Period. One of the best examples of this diversity are the numerous and various types of bone tools obtained from Layer VI of Barcın Höyük, dated to the Neolithic Period (cal. 6000-6600 BC) and to "Fikirtepe" and "Pre-Fikirtepe" cultures. Spoons in different sizes constitute the most striking group among them. The spoons, generally made from the metapodial bone of cattle, are composed of a round, oval or poplar leaf-shaped bowl and a circular-sectioned shaft, with a few exceptions. Given the typological characteristics of the tools concerned and my macro-observations, I think the spoons were used to cook food, to eat, and in various kinds of kitchen work. Spoons are among the few tools which continued to be used with different functions after various parts of them had broken off. In this context, the spoons whose bowl tips had broken off were converted into spatulas and the broken bowls into new tools like belt hooks, whereas pins were made from the shafts and provided for reuse. At Barcın Höyük, bone spoons were generally obtained from various deposits, platforms, pits, and – although much more scarcely – from graves. Analogues of the bone spoons from Barcın Höyük, which offer a comprehensive collection, are known from Çatalhöyük in Central Anatolia, from other Neolithic settlements in the Marmara Region, and from Early Neolithic centers in the Balkans.

ÖZET

Kemik aletler, özellikle Prehistorik Dönem insanların vazgeçilmez araç-gereç grubunu oluşturur. Neolitik Dönem ile birlikte kemik aletlerin tipolojik çeşitliliği ve niceliği artış göstermiştir. Bu duruma en iyi örneklerden biri olan Barcın Höyük'ün Neolitik Dönem'e ve aynı zamanda "Fikirtepe" ve "Pre-Fikirtepe" kültürlerine tarihlenen VI. tabakasında (MÖ 6000-6600) çok sayıda ve çeşitli tiplerde kemik alet ele geçmiştir. Bunların içerisinde en dikkat çekici grubu farklı boyutlardaki kaşıklar oluşturmaktadır. Genellikle sığırın metapodial kemiğinden yapılan kaşıklar, birkaç istisna dışında yuvarlak, oval ya da kavak yaprağı biçiminde bir ağızdan ve dairesel kesitli bir saptan meydana gelir. Söz konusu aletlerin, tipolojik özelliklerinden ve makro gözlemlerimden yola çıkarak kaşıkların yemek yapımında, yemek yemede ve çeşitli türde mutfak işinde kullanıldığını düşünmekteyim. Bunun yanı sıra kaşıklar, çeşitli kısımları kırıldıktan sonra farklı işlevlerle kullanılmaya devam edilmiş az sayıdaki aletlerdendir. Bu bağlamda, ağız ucu kırılan kaşıklar spatulaya, kırık ağızlar kemer çengeli gibi yeni aletlere dönüştürülürken saplardan da deliciler yapılarak yeniden kullanıma sunulmuştur. Barcın Höyük'te kemik kaşıklar, genellikle çeşitli dolgulardan, platformlardan, çukurlardan ve çok daha az olmakla birlikte mezarlardan ele geçmiştir. Geniş bir koleksiyon sunan Barcın Höyük kemik kaşıklarının benzerleri, Marmara Bölgesi'ndeki diğer Neolitik Dönem yerleşimlerin yanı sıra Orta Anadolu'daki Çatalhöyük'ten ve Balkanlar'daki Erken Neolitik Dönem merkezlerinden bilinmektedir.

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INTRODUCTION

Bone tools are among the indispensable groups of tools for prehistoric societies since they were made from the bones of already consumed animals, required no workforce or cost, and were made from raw materials which were relatively easy to access and treat. Also being hard and convenient for pointing, bone tools were often used at the times when metals were rarely found, particularly in the Neolithic Period. Likewise, bone tools appear the most prevalent assemblage after stone tools in the Neolithic Barcın village as well. A total of 2,737 bone artifacts were found during the excavations carried out at Barcın Höyük between 2007 and 2014. Although these bone artifacts include various tools such as pins, spatulas, polishers, and fish hooks, the most remarkable group comprises spoons, which require much more workforce, delicate workmanship, and experience than other materials. The bone spoons unearthed from Phases VIc-e of the Late Neolithic layer of Barcın Höyük during the excavations in 2013 and 2014 will be addressed in this manuscript. This study will aim to describe the production, use, and function of the bone spoons from Barcın Höyük and to reveal their reuse. In line with this objective, first of all, the typological characteristics of bone spoons will be mentioned and then an evaluation will be made considering their use wear and formal differences. I further aim to raise interest in bone tools, which are among the finds mostly overlooked in Turkey, and to contribute to the understanding of the methods of life in the Neolithic Period at least through bone spoons.

Located on the plain with the same name in the district of Yenişehir in the east of Bursa, Barcın Höyük is composed of two interconnected hills which are 4.5 m high on average and about 120 and 50 m in diameter. Constituting the last step of the project, the Netherlands Institute in Turkey has been conducting the investigation of “Early Farming Communities in the Eastern Marmara Region” since 1987, Barcın Höyük was excavated under the supervision of the İznik Museum and under the scientific supervisor of Jacob Roodenberg between 2005 and 2006 and has been excavated under the directorship of Fokke Gerritsen since 2007¹. The excavations were continued on the larger eastern hill of the mound, and six occupation layers were detected. Layer VI of the settlement, dated to the Late Neolithic Period and having five subphases (a-e), constitutes a deposit of about 5 meters. As a result of the pottery comparisons, it is found that phases a-c of Layer VI of Barcın Höyük resemble the “Fikirtepe Culture.” In other words, Layer VI is contemporary with the Late Neolithic settlements in the Marmara Region. However, a different type of pottery

unknown from the settlements of the region concerned was detected in VI d and VI e – the two earliest phases. Therefore, these phases were called “Pre-Fikirtepe” as they were dated to a period earlier than the Fikirtepe Culture. According to the calibrated C14 results, the topmost Phase VI a gave circa 6000 BC, whereas the bottommost Phase VI e gave 6600 BC. So, Layer VI was found to have uninterruptedly covered a period of about 600 years².

BONE SPOONS FROM BARCIN HÖYÜK

A spoon is a kitchen utensil which comprises two parts, the bowl and the shaft, and is generally used to consume or cook juicy dishes or dishes with small granules³. It is seen that the use of spoons made from different substances such as clay, wood, and bone became widespread in Anatolia in the Late Neolithic Period. One of these settlements is Barcın Höyük, and 129 of a total of 2,737 bone artifacts found during the excavations carried out here between 2007 and 2014 were identified as spoons (Fig. 1). When an evaluation was made in the context of the distribution of bone artifacts and spoons in the two-year process considered here, it was discovered that 41 of 379 bone artifacts in the excavation season of 2013⁴ and 17 of 207 bone finds in 2014 were spoons⁵. Totally 58 spoons were obtained at Barcın Höyük in the two years concerned, and of them, 9 were classified as complete, 19 as bowls, 11 as shafts, and 17 as bowl & shaft fragments (Table 1). Accordingly, when bowl and shaft fragments are considered besides the examples which are in good condition, 45 spoons are reached in total.

¹ Roodenberg/Alpaslan-Roodenberg 2008; Gerritsen/Özbal/Thissen 2013 a-b-c.

² Gerritsen/Özbal/Thissen 2013a: 97; 2013b: 57, 73-74, Tables 6-7.

³ Eren 1984: 4. At this point, it is necessary to mention the handled spatulas often encountered in Anatolia in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods and sometimes identified as spoons. The bowls of handled spatulas are generally quadrangular; their tips are flat; and they have no interior depth. Since they qualify as both spoons and spatulas, they are sometimes identified as spatula-spoons. In the process concerned, handled spatulas were known only with five examples at Barcın Höyük.

⁴ Erdalkıran 2015.

⁵ Erdalkıran (in press).

NEOLITHIC BONE SPOONS FROM BARCIN HÖYÜK

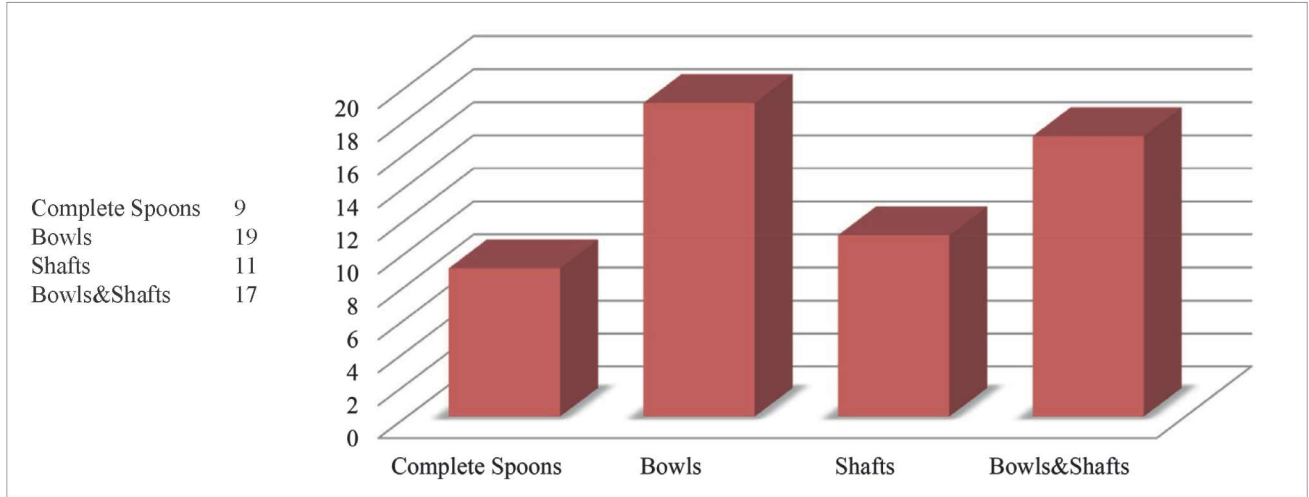


Table 1. Distribution of the Spoons from Barcin Höyük in 2013 and 2014 / *Barcin Höyük 2013-2014 yılları Kaşıklarının Dağılımı.*



Fig. 1. The Complete and almost Complete Spoons found at Barcin Höyük in 2013 / *Barcin Höyük'te 2013 Yılında Bulunan Tam ve Tama Yakın Kaşıklar.*

Although the spoons were generally made from the metapodial bones of cattle, similar bones of sheep/goats must have also been utilized in small-sized examples⁶. The spoons made in a single piece were shaped with flint tools and made usable after they had been sanded down with ground stones or sand⁷. Likewise, the chisel traces

which occurred during the chiseling of the tools are also observed especially at the bowls of some spoons besides the traces in the form of lines that belonged to the production process and resulted from rubbing (Figs. 2 and 3). Furthermore, spoons which display workmanship of extreme quality are also available and after they had been shaped, the process was completed by polishing (Figs. 4 and 5). The most visual proof of the production process of spoons such as awls and pins at Barcin Höyük is the sandstones in different sizes which contain grooves of various depths and thicknesses. Various points and the shafts of spoons were shaped and sanded by rubbing them against these stones⁸.

⁶ John Nandris, who examines the Early Neolithic bone spoons from Hungary, states that the metapodial bone of wild cattle *Bos primigenius* and particularly its metatarsal were preferred on the grounds that they were more suitable for the size and thickness of the tools concerned, 1972: 75. Nevertheless, in the study Alice M. Choyke has carried out in recent years, she suggests that domestic cattle *Bos taurus* were also used to make bone spoons in addition to the wild cattle, 2013: 5.

⁷ Nandris 1972: 64; Sidéra 2005: 81-82; 2013; Vitezović 2011.

⁸ Gerritsen/Erdalkıran/Dekker 2014.

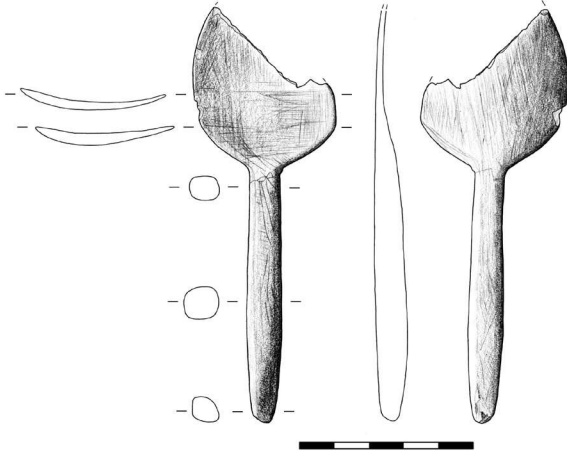


Fig. 2. Spoon BH 32398 with a Short Shaft / *BH 32398 No.lu Kısa Saplı Kaşık.*

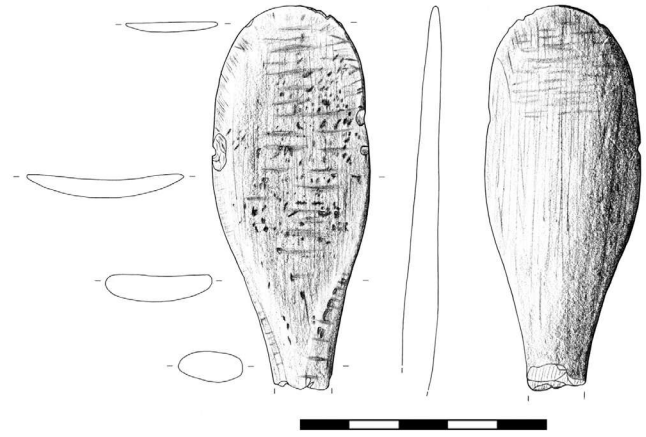


Fig. 3. Spoon BH 36732 / *BH 36732 No.lu Kaşık.*

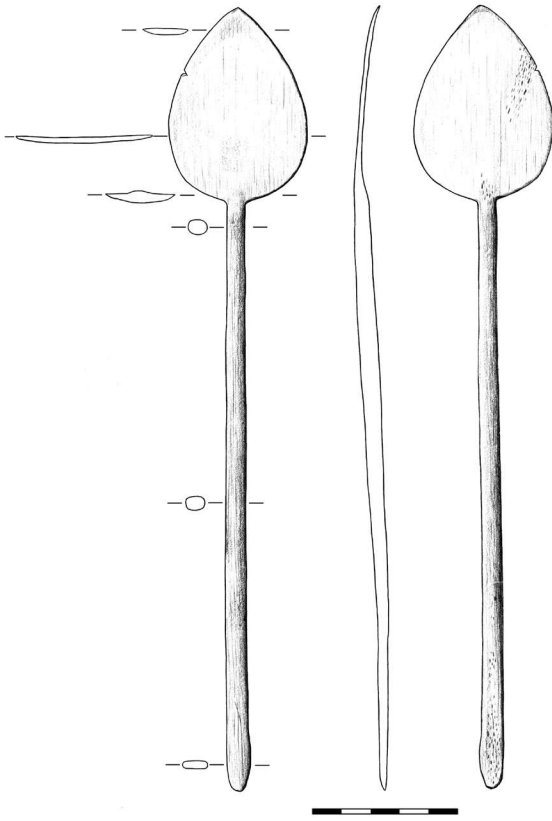


Fig. 4. Spoon BH 35610 as a Grave Gift / *Mezar Hediyesi BH 35610 No.lu kaşık.*

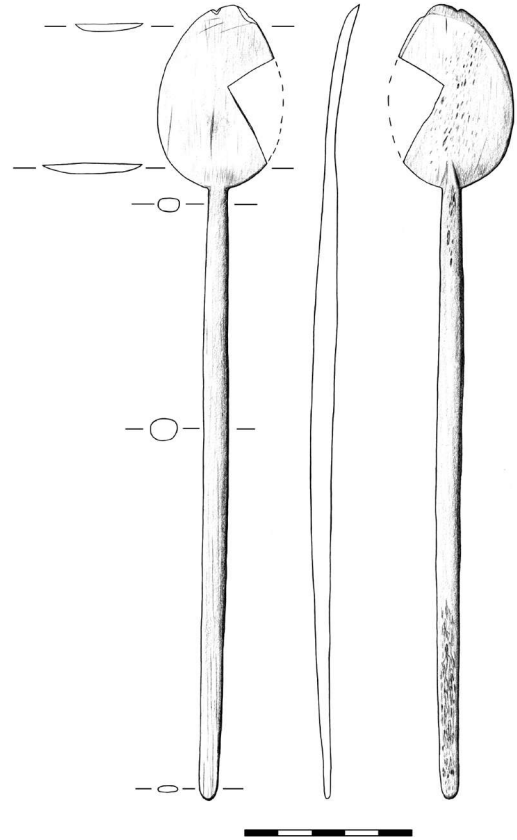


Fig. 5. Spoon BH 32319 with Wear / *BH 32319 No.lu Ağız Aşınımlı Kaşık.*

Colors of the spoons from Barcın Höyük range from beige to orange, depending on the chemical structure of the soil in which they were found, along with the places where they were used (Fig. 1). In addition, there are also a few examples which suffered from fire; these vary between black and greyish white depending on the degree of heat.

The complete bone spoons found from Barcın Höyük in the two years concerned weigh between 13 to 41 g and

are 22 to 28 cm in length. With a few exceptions, the spoons are composed of two parts, a bowl and a shaft. The bowls of the spoons are in the shape of a poplar leaf and oval; moreover, they range from 2.2 to 4.7 cm in width and from 3 to 8 cm in length. The front surfaces of bowls are generally flat (Figs. 5, 6, 7, and 8) or display very slight (Figs. 4 and 9) or obvious concavity (Figs. 2, 3, and 10). Although the front faces of the bowls were flat, the back surfaces were always made to taper towards the edges and to be convex.

NEOLITHIC BONE SPOONS FROM BARCIN HÖYÜK

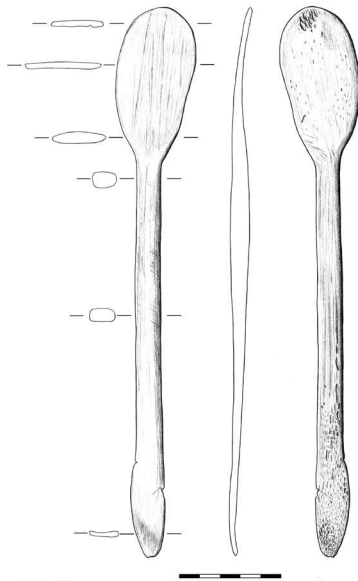


Fig. 6. Spoon BH 33865 with Wear / *BH 33865 No.lu Ağzı Aşınmış Kaşık.*

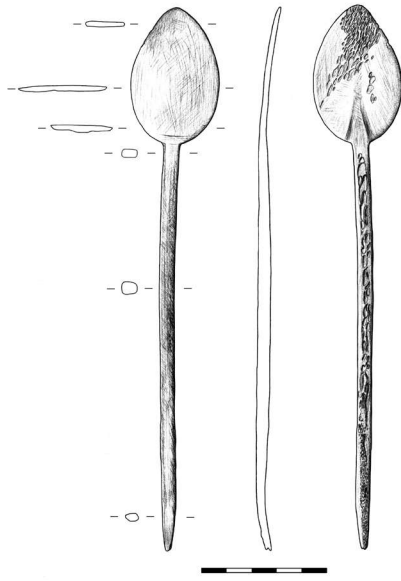


Fig. 7. Spoon BH 36121 as a Grave Gift / *Mezar Hediyesi BH 36121 No.lu Kaşık.*

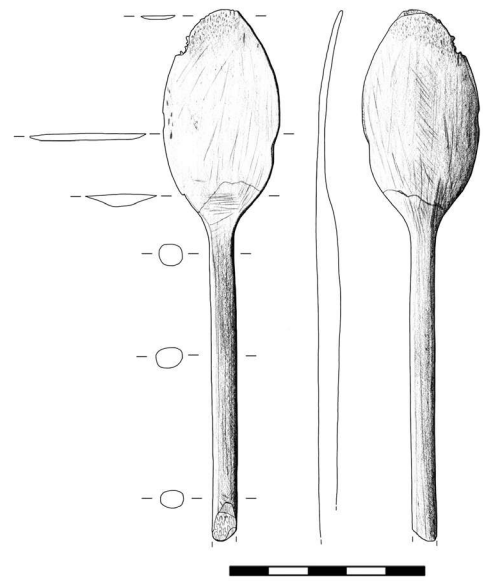


Fig. 8. Spoon BH 32210 / *BH 32210 No.lu Kaşık.*

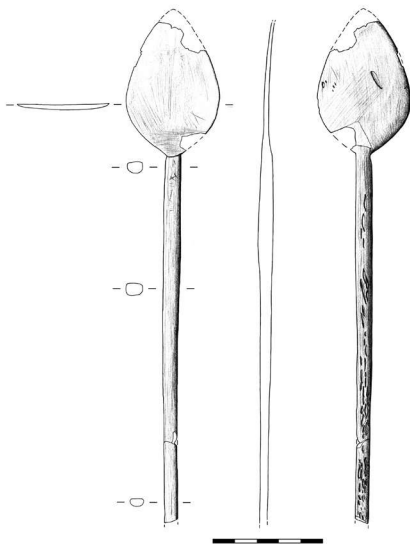


Fig. 9. Spoon BH 35236 / *BH 35236 No.lu Kaşık.*

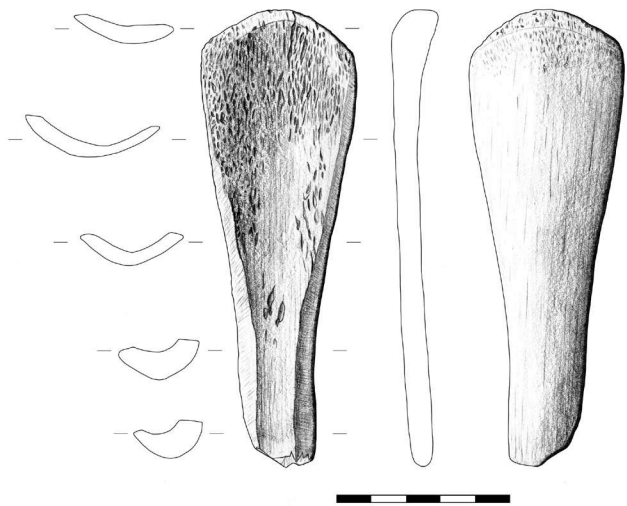


Fig. 10. Spoon BH 41705 / *BH 41705 No.lu Kaşık.*

The shaft sections of the spoons are generally oval or in the form of a rectangle with rounded corners, mostly thickened and widened in the middle of the shaft, and sometimes take a circular form. Mostly tapering and narrowing towards both tips, the spoon shafts range from 0.50 to 1.7 cm in thickness and from 9 to 20 cm in length. The tips of the shafts were frequently finished to be oval or by pointing them very scarcely in agreement with the course of the body. However, there are also exceptional examples associated with the shafts. The shaft tip of one of the complete examples (Fig. 6) was completed like that of a slightly deep, oval, and small bowl. Nevertheless, there was no use wear in this part, unlike the bowl, and the cancellous bone tissue on the back face did not wear out, either. In another different example which was shaped by preserving the natural structure of the bone (Fig. 10), the shaft was made by cut-

ting the bone as much as almost half the cylindrical bone; hence, the section of the shaft took the shape of a crescent.

Another interesting element in spoons is the junction of the bowl and the shaft, particularly on the back face. This part was indefinite in some examples but completed with a V-shaped ridge in some of them (Figs. 5, 7, 11, and 14). However, the connection between the shaft and the bowl were flat on the front faces of the spoons. A relief in the form of concentric chevron marks is seen on a single different example (Fig. 12). The relief line concerned at the junction of the shaft and the bowl, which is seen on the back face of the spoons, must have been made to prevent the spoon from breaking off easily and to increase its resistance. Likewise, most of the spoons broke off at the junction of the shaft – their most fragile point.

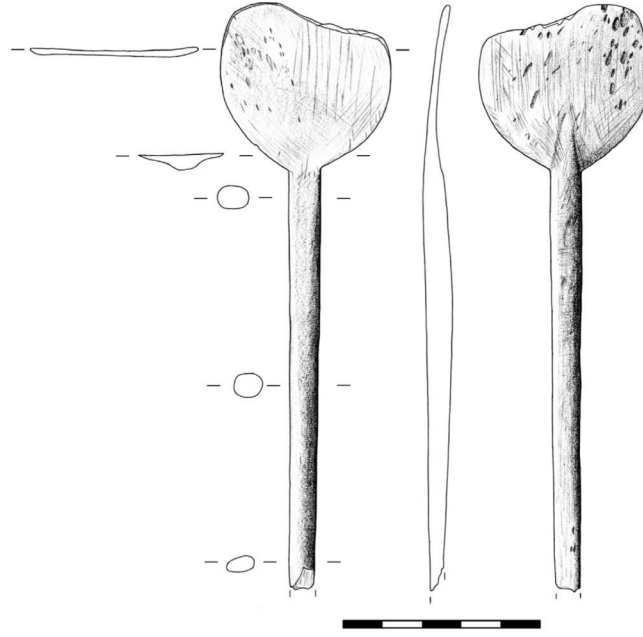


Fig. 11. Spoon BH 30211 that was Used as a Spatula after It had Broken off
/Kırıldıktan Sonra Spatula Olarak Kullanılan BH 30211 No.lu Kaşık.

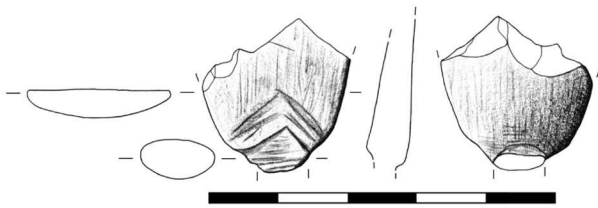


Fig. 12. Spoon BH 37347 with an Incised Decoration /
BH 37347 No.lu Kazıma Bezemeli Kaşık.

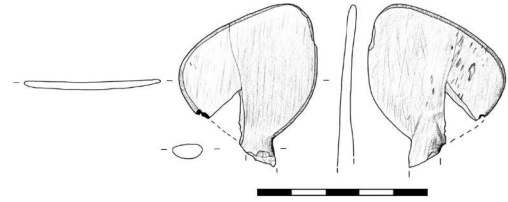


Fig. 13. Spoon BH 29954 that was Used as a Spatula after It
had Broken off / Kırıldıktan Sonra Spatula Olarak Kullanılan
BH 29954 No.lu Kaşık.

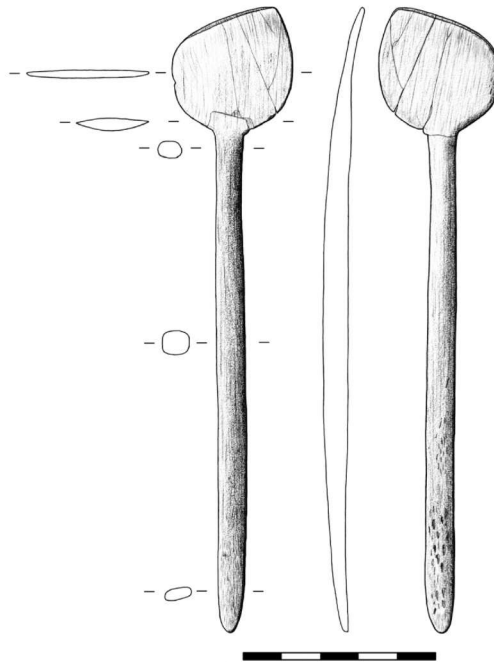


Fig. 14. Spoon BH 27166 that was Used as a Spatula after it had Broken off /
Kırıldıktan Sonra Spatula Olarak Kullanılan BH 27166 No.lu Kaşık.

Except for a few examples, no cancellous bone is seen on the front surfaces of the spoons, while a spongy cancellous bone belonging to the essence of the bone is seen on the back faces of some examples and sometimes only at their bowls or shafts or on both parts of them (Figs. 7, 9, and 11).⁹ This reveals that a specific method was followed when making the materials concerned and that the front faces of the spoons were always shaped to remain in the exterior part of the bone, while their back faces were always shaped to remain in the interior part of the bone. However, this does not apply to the spoons made by using the cylindrical structure of bone, as in Fig. 10. Probably to minimize the cancellous bone, the spoons were sanded down at the last stage so that a smooth surface was obtained at the maximum level.

Moreover, the different sizes of spoon bowls and shafts encourage one to think that they were used for various functions. In this context, it might be supposed that the spoons with a relatively shorter shaft might have been handier in eating¹⁰ (Figs. 2 and 10), but those with a long shaft (Figs. 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9) might have been handier in cooking. Likewise, use wear and sometimes a change in form are observed at the bowls of some spoons. The use-induced wear and shine are generally seen at the tips and on the lateral edges of the bowls. The use wear occurring at the tip of the bowl and immediately on its edges is more common (Figs. 5, 4, 8, and 15), and the wall becomes obviously thin as the bone wears on the lower face in this case. Occurring on the back face of the bowl, this wear is important in that it shows that especially one edge or tip of the spoon touched a hard surface. The wear observed on the lateral edge of the bowl was detected in one example only. Wear and a change in form depending on intense use are seen on the left-hand edge of the front face of the spoon which was made from a thicker bone than those of the others and had a different form (Figs. 6 and 16). However, in this example, wear did not merely take place on the back face and the edge wore and was rounded on both surfaces. In this case, we may propose that especially the right-hand edge of the spoon concerned touched a hard surface and that the person who worked with it used his/her left hand. Although the microscopic use trace analysis of the spoons has not yet been conducted, the wear traces in question prove that the spoons were at least used in cooking for a long period of time. Moreover, small-scale burn marks were also encountered on the shaft tips (Fig. 5) or at the bowls (Fig. 13) of some spoons, and these burns might indicate that the materials concerned were left too nearby the embers in the hearth.

⁹ Nandris states that the cancellous tissue holes seen on the back side of the shafts of the spoons show that the bone used was taken from an area close to the joint, 1972: 63-64.

¹⁰ The shafts of the spoons considered to have been used to eat are 12-15 cm in length.



Fig. 15. Single-Sided Wear on Spoon BH 32319 / BH 32319 No.lu Kaşıktaki Tek Taraflı Aşınma.



Fig. 16. Wear on the Edge of Spoon BH 33865 / BH 33865 No.lu Kaşıktaki Kenar Aşınımı.

Furthermore, spoons are among the rare bone tools which continued to be reused for various purposes after they had broken off. The spoons whose bowl tips had broken off must have continued to be used with the same function or as spatulas. Double-sided wear and shine that occurred accordingly are striking on the broken edges of the spoons in this condition (Figs. 11, 13, 14, and 17). Especially double-sided wear is a case which is not encountered on the spoons that functioned for traditional purposes and may represent that both sides of these materials were used in rubbing (Fig. 17). Nevertheless, there are also spoons which did not experience any sec-

ondary use even though their bowls had broken off (Fig. 12). Additionally, the broken bowls of some spoons were reshaped and made suitable for different functions such as a belt buckle or a belt hook. Furthermore, the broken shafts of the spoons were also utilized, and the shafts one tip of which was pointed were converted into pins and provided with a new function. Likewise, the broken bowl of the former spoon was partially preserved at the head of a pin found in the previous years.¹¹ The broken shafts were also used as spatulas by treating one tip of them. So, when the spoons broke off and failed to serve their purpose of production, they were converted into different tools and reutilized.



Fig. 17. Double-Sided Wear on Spoon BH 27166 / BH 27166 No.lu Kaşıktaki İki Tarafta Aşınma.

Bone spoons were found from various deposits, pits, platforms, different surfaces, and graves at Barcın Höyük in the two years concerned.¹² Of the spoons in question, three were unearthed as grave goods from the graves of adult individuals. Two of them (Figs. 4 and 7) are almost complete and in good condition, have a long shaft, and are among the spoons which might have been used in cooking. Likewise, even though use wear is seen on one of the above-mentioned spoons (Fig. 4), the other one (Fig. 7) contains no such traces. On the other hand, the third example, left as a burial gift, is a bowl fragment with no shaft and use wear is seen on its tip and edges.

ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

The Late Neolithic spoons from Barcın Höyük cover a clear portion of bone artifacts, i.e. about 4.5% of them. The fact that the bone spoons have such a significant rate might have resulted from the functional use of the materi-

als concerned and from the unavailability of the terracotta examples likely to substitute for them.¹³ On the other hand, the bone spoons must have been used together with their wooden analogues. Despite the failure to obtain any wooden spoon from Barcın Höyük or the other Neolithic settlements in the Eastern Marmara, the widespread use of wood, as seen during the excavations at Yenikapı, encourages one to think that such tools must also have been available.¹⁴ Likewise, various forms of wooden vessels and lids were obtained from some graves and buildings at Çatalhöyük in Central Anatolia – another Neolithic settlement in which we know wooden materials were widely used.¹⁵ Among them is also a material from Grave No. “E. VI, 8” which James Mellaart identified as a spoon but which I think is a spatula due to its size and form.¹⁶

Additionally, it is possible to make some proposals on the basis of the typological characteristics of the spoons. As mentioned above, the spoons with a short shaft might have been used to consume food while those with a long shaft might have been used in cooking. Likewise, wear traces are predominantly seen on the spoons with a long shaft, which I consider were used in cooking because of the friction between them and the hard surface of the cooking vessel. Similarly, the burn mark seen on the shaft of a spoon with a long shaft shows that these materials functioned in cooking. Whether the interior surfaces of the spoons are flat or concave may also be related to the dishes consumed. It is possible to state that the spoons with a flat or slightly concave surface might have predominantly been used to eat mash-style dishes of dense consistency, whereas the spoons with a concave inside might have predominantly been used to eat juicy dishes.

Even though spoons are generally stated to have been utilized to prepare and cook food in the kitchen,¹⁷ there are also various suggestions about the areas of use for spoons. Likewise, Nerissa Russell states that spoons are a rare group of tools at Çatalhöyük and proposes that they were used for special purposes and on special days instead of in daily affairs but gives no detail about this. Accordingly, Russell also highlights the very scarce use

¹³ The completely opposite of this case – the unavailability, or the presence of a very small number, of bone analogues in spite of the abundance of terracotta spoons – is seen at Köşk Höyük, Özkan 2002: 515-516. A similar case was also detected at Hacilar. Probably owing to the availability of clay spoons here, no bone spoon was made. Instead, spatulas were preferred. Likewise, 14 complete or broken bone spatulas, on some of which wear traces were seen, were found at Layer VI of Hacilar, Mellaart 1970: 162, Figs. 180, 182. There is no doubt that this also results from the originality of settlements and chronological differences.

¹⁴ Kızıltan/Polat 2013: 122-123, Figs. 31-33.

¹⁵ Mellaart 1964: 85-92, Fig. 35-39, Plates XIX-XXI; Asouti 2013.

¹⁶ Mellaart 1964: 86, Fig. 37: 2; XVIIIb.

¹⁷ Mellaart 1970: 162; Nandris 1972: 64; Marinelli 1995: 128; Dekker 2014: 103.

¹¹ Gerritsen/Özbal/Thissen 2013b: 99, Fig. 15: BH5773.

¹² Dekker 2014: 88-89.

wear and expresses that the spoons might have been used to eat food and to prepare soft food.¹⁸ Selena Vitezović, who examines the bone spoons in Serbia, expresses that such tools were not used with hard inorganic and abrasive materials. She states that the spoons had been worked on soft organic surfaces such as leather, hide, and plants for a long period of time and that the surfaces of the materials under examination are therefore very well burnished and shiny and contain fine scratches. Hence, she sets forth that these spoons with a flat and small bowl might have been used to produce clothes and similar products or to measure and prepare spices, medicinal plants, and substances like paint instead of for cooking or consuming food.¹⁹ As Vitezović states, the examples among the spoons from Barcın Höyük which have a broken tip, show wear on both sides, and have a shiny surface with fine scratches (Figs. 11, 14, and 17) might have been used like a spatula in the preparation of organic and inorganic substances. She further states that the spoons were painstakingly made from the selection of raw materials, required time and ability to produce, in various stages, and were generally used for a long period of time after they had been repaired. According to her, the production of a spoon by the hard work of a talented person increased its value and hence may have provided its owner with prestige or enabled its owner to be respected.²⁰ Mehmet Özdoğan, however, puts forward that the bone spoons particularly found as grave goods in the Neolithic settlements of the Marmara Region might have also acquired a symbolic value.²¹

When I evaluate the typological characteristics of the bone spoons from Barcın Höyük in general, I can say that with a few exceptions, they do not differ too much from modern examples in form, volume, and size. Doubtlessly, the size and quality of the bone used are also important in determining their dimensions and forms.

Even though a burial gift was not a very common tradition at the graves of Barcın Höyük, bone spoons were left as gifts.²² Three of the 58 spoons examined in this manuscript came from graves. Wear traces are seen on the spoons left as burial gifts into the graves (Figs. 4 and 7) except for one example (Fig. 7). Hence, it is possible to state that these materials were not solely made as burial gifts and might have been the respective private belongings that people used in their everyday lives. Likewise, the spoons left as burial gifts into the graves were not always complete examples, and broken and incomplete examples were also found. A similar case is also seen at Çatalhöyük. A used – although little – and broken

spoon bowl made of horn was obtained from Grave No. “F.213”.²³ In this context, at least on account of the use traces seen on the examples from Barcın Höyük, I do not think that the spoons had a symbolic meaning. Nevertheless, I also agree with Vitezović and think that a delicately treated beautiful bone spoon might have provided its owner with reputation.

Moreover, the production process and social organization of bone spoons are also essential issues. Isabelle Sidéra, who carries out experimental archaeology on the materials concerned and is not an expert on production, states that she completed a spoon in about 25 hours. Stating that she only roughly shaped the spoon in the first 14 hours of the production process, Sidéra expresses that she worked to complete the tool in the next 11 hours.²⁴ Following her experimental study concerned and her research, Sidéra suggests that at least for the Early Neolithic Period of the Balkans, the spoons were produced domestically and made by an expert rather than a crafts-person.²⁵ I also agree and, based on the data obtained from Barcın Höyük, would like to state that the spoons whose typological diversity, delicate workmanship, conversion into new tools for different purposes (in the case of broken materials) and production required experience to create and were produced by an expert. Moreover, the experts on making spoons doubtlessly spent less time for this work.

Bone spoons also bear the traces of cultural interaction. One of the best examples in this context is the fact that the notched shaft²⁶ seen on both a spoon and a spoon-like spatula at Barcın Höyük is also seen on an example from Ilıpınar²⁷ that is dated to a later process. This may indicate that the Neolithic Barcın Village interacted with the other settlements in the region. On the other hand, the spoon shafts were generally made flat at Barcın Höyük

¹⁸ Russell 2005: 348.

¹⁹ Vitezović 2011.

²⁰ Vitezović 2015: 13.

²¹ Özdoğan 2014: 45.

²² Gerritsen/Erdalkıran/Dekker 2014.

²³ Cessford 2007: 467, Fig. 12.43. Russell expresses that the same spoon is complete, 2005: 348.

²⁴ Sidéra 2013: 174.

²⁵ Sidéra 2013: 177.

²⁶ Gerritsen/Özbal/Thissen 2013b: Fig. 24: 3.

²⁷ Marinelli 1995: Fig. 6: 1.

and the examples with an animal head,²⁸ twisted²⁹ examples or knobby³⁰ examples, which are known from the other Neolithic settlements in the Marmara Region, have not been encountered yet. This also applies to other tools such as pins and spatulas and might indicate that importance was attached to the functionality and practicability of the materials rather than to their aesthetic appearance. Another, and perhaps the most important result, might be that Barcın Höyük dates to an earlier period than these other settlements. Such visual attributes must have been put into use subsequently.

On the other hand, Nandris and Catherine Perlès related bone spoons to the dissemination of slotted bone or horn sickles.³¹ Nandris thinks that the slotted sickles, which he suggests were used to make spoons, also show the close relationship between Anatolia and the Balkans.³² Although numerous bone spoons were found at Barcın Höyük, no slotted sickles were obtained. In my opinion, this is because slotted sickles were not used in this region or were used at a later time. The manuscripts on the other Neolithic excavations in the Marmara Region do not contain any data about slotted sickles either. On the other hand, it is also necessary to consider that wooden examples of such tools might have been used.

Bone spoons are also one of the cultural elements in the transfer of the Neolithic way of life from the core region to the west.³³ Neolithization and the spreading area might underlie the typological diversity and regional differences in bone spoons.

The spoons from Barcın Höyük display local qualities, along with their resemblance to those in Ilıpınar,³⁴ Akto-

praklık,³⁵ Fikirtepe,³⁶ Pendik,³⁷ Yenikapı,³⁸ Hocaçeşme,³⁹ and Aşağı Pınar⁴⁰ in the Marmara Region, considered within “the Fikirtepe Culture,” and to the Early Neolithic⁴¹ settlements in the Balkans in qualitative and quantitative aspects, as also seen in the other bone tools. It is also possible to see the analogues of the bone tools from Barcın Höyük in Central Anatolia, particularly at Çatalhöyük.⁴² Furthermore, the West Anatolian bone tools and spoons, which we have not mentioned in this manuscript apart from those at Hacılar, Kuruçay, Höyücek and Bademağacı, differ from the tradition in the Marmara Region. This issue will be scrutinized in detail in my future study and an evaluation will be made over some wider geography.

²⁸ Yenikapı, Kızıltan/Polat 2013: Fig. 35: 7. Spoons whose shafts were made in the shape of an animal head are also known from Çatalhöyük, Russell 2005: Fig. 16.9; Russell/Griffitts 2013: Fig. 16.20. In addition, at Hacılar, the spatula shafts were also finished in the form of an animal head, Mellaart 1970: Fig. 180, 182, Plate CXXII: c. The same case is also observed at Layers 13-11 of Kuruçay, which are dated to the Neolithic Period. The heads of the tools which might be identified as spatulas were shaped in the form of bull and stylized animal heads, Umurtak 1994: 65, Lev. 208: 1-4; 217: 1-2. On the other hand, the spoons or spatulas whose shafts ended in the shape of an animal head were not encountered – at least in the manuscripts – in the settlements of Höyücek and Bademağacı, although they are located in the same region, Umurtak 2005: 119-120, Lev. 140: 5-7; 176: 3; Duru 2005: 532, Lev. 32:1-5; Duru/Umurtak 2008: 201, Levha 22; 27; Duru 2012: 20, Fig. 81. This is striking.

²⁹ Yenikapı, Kızıltan/Polat 2013: Fig. 35: 7.

³⁰ Aşağıpınar, Özdoğan 2013: Fig. 139.

³¹ Nandris 1972: 68-69, Perlès 2005: 278.

³² Nandris 1972: 65, 77.

³³ Özdoğan 2010, 2011, 2014; Perlès 2005.

³⁴ Marinelli 1995: Fig. 6.

³⁵ Karul/Avcı 2013: Fig. 22. A complete spoon which is extremely analogous to the examples from Barcın Höyük is dated to the Chalcolithic Period.

³⁶ Bittel 1969/1970: Abb. 4; Özdoğan 1983: 409, Abb. 6: 1-3, 6; 2013: 174, Fig. 14.

³⁷ Özdoğan 2013: Fig. 14, 27.

³⁸ Kızıltan/Polat 2013: Fig. 35: 6-8.

³⁹ Özdoğan 2013: 182, Fig. 87-88.

⁴⁰ Özdoğan 2013: 187, Fig. 139.

⁴¹ Sidéra 2005.

⁴² Russell 2005; Russell/Griffitts 2013.

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