

MARBLE IDOLS AND STATUETTES FROM THE EXCAVATIONS AT KÜLTEPE

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Alabaster idols and statuettes form an important category among the finds peculiar to Kültepe-Kanish. This type of object has been known since Hermann published a crude specimen in the year 1894¹. Since that date the number of such objects has greatly increased as they were brought into the museums of Ankara, the Louvre, Kayseri and other places; and it gradually became possible to study their types, technical characteristics, style and meaning². As Tahsin Özgüç has explained, various interpretations have been put forward regarding their meaning and especially the civilization they belong to. One of the questions we wished to answer upon beginning our excavations at Kültepe was that regarding the chronological context of this class of objects and their find circumstances.

In the excavations of the karum area, down to and including level IV, we encountered a good number of previously known objects but not a single specimen of these marble idols. It became clear that they would not be found in the karum. The new excavations on the city mound have clarified the situation³. There are many new speci-

* This communication was read at the Fifth Historical Congress at Ankara.

¹ Hermann, *Archäologischer Anzeiger* IX, 1894, p. 35.

² H. Grothe, *Meine Vorderasien-Expedition 1906 und 1907*, I, pl. 20, 6; G. Contenant, *Idoles en pierre provenant de l'Asie Mineure*, *Syria* 8 (1927) p. 193 ff; Olmstead, *Two stone idols from Asia Minor at the University of Illinois*, *Syria* 10 (1930), p. 311 ff; H. H. von der Osten, K. Bittel, McEwan, *Kayseri civarında kâin Kültepe'den getirilen yeni eserler (Türk Tarih Arkeolojya ve Etnografya Dergisi* I, p. 81 ff; cf. *O I P.* 30, figs. 281-285); K. Karamete, *Idoles du Kültepe au Lycée et au Musée de Kayseri*, *RHA* 18 (1935) p. 64 ff; *Nouvelles idoles du Kültepe au Musée de Kayseri*, *RHA* 24 (1936) 245 ff; *Idoles récemment découvertes au Kültepe*, *RHA* 30 (1938) p. 205 ff; Tahsin Özgüç, *Kurs vücutlu Kültepe idolleri*, *Arkeoloji Araştırmaları*, 1940—41, İstanbul 1941, p. 854 ff; Krusina Cerny, *Three new circular alabaster idols from Kültepe*, *Archiv Orientalni* 20 (1952) p. 601 ff.

³ *Anatolian Studies* 4 (1954) p. 20; M. Mellink, *AJA* 59 (1955) p. 232; M. Vieyra *Hittite Art* p. 21.

mens, about half of which resemble the items previously known from dealers' acquisitions, but in addition another group is represented with strikingly new characteristics. One can distinguish two categories according to shapes: statuettes and disc-shaped idols.

1. *Statuettes* :

All of these were found in squares P/36-37 on the city mound in an area Southwest of the buildings representing the Hittite architectural level ⁴ and associated with a certain type of pottery. They are dressed or nude females seated on chairs.

a. This example of a dressed woman presents us with a new type (fig. 1). H. 0.061 m, w. 0.026 m., th. 0.039 m., much worn. In spite of this one notices the large aquiline nose and the full, round and soft receding chin as distinctive features. The rather pointed headgear continues down as a veil extending to the shoulders. The hands are folded on the abdomen. Around the waist is a belt-like raised band. The skirt of the garment is clearly visible, going down to the knees. The figure is seated on a small bench with a special footstool but without a backrest. The shoulders and legs are narrow and short, out of proportion to the head and the distance from hips to knees. The part of the chair on which the figure is seated is separated by a groove from the footstool which is attached to it. The back is straight(!).

b. Statuette of a nude seated woman, H. 0.058, W. 0.036, Th. 0.042 m. (figs. 2-4). Seated on a solid chair with zigzag decoration on the sides and provided with a footstool, this figurine belongs typologically to the well-known group of nude females grasping their breasts; but it shows innovations in its individual traits. Conspicuous features are the ears, the very short and thick neck, the eyes rendered as concentric circles and the blunt nose. At the back the hair begins on the middle of the head, gathered in the shape of a wig, and descends to the waist. It is decorated with wavy rather deep lines. The hair is arranged so that the front view of the statuette makes the impression of its being bald. The upper part of the body is short, the shoulders rather narrow but the hips are very wide. In this specimen too the lower legs are joined and seem short and thin, out of proportion to the distance from hip to knee. In this respect our

⁴ Tahsin Özgüç, *Anitta Hançeri*, *Bellesten* 77, p. 29 ff.

statuette differs clearly from the one to be discussed below. Its eyes, ears and the shape of its face resemble the heads of some of the disc-shaped idols⁵. We found two heads belonging to this type of idol in the same spot (fig. 5).

c. The best example of the nude female statuettes is fragmentary and missing above the waist (fig. 6). This figurine H. 0.081 m., W. maximum 0.047 is of the type known from former finds⁶. It is seated on a massive throne ornamented all over with notches. The relief on either side emphasizes the sides of the bench by a raised band. Hips and legs are rendered in moderate dimensions. A natural depression marks the lines of the groin and the separation of the legs. Rounded contours increase the plasticity of the figurine. The toes, propped up against the throne, are rendered in slight relief. Of the left arm a sizeable fragment is preserved and makes it clear that the figure was holding its breasts with arms bent at the elbows.

These statuettes, created in the last quarter of the third millennium B. C., are the precursors of a type of goddess which saw a major evolution in the Colony period and reached a characteristic style⁷, or of goddesses closely related to this.

d. The body of a male dressed statuette is preserved from neck to hips. H. 0.095 m., W. 0.075 m., Th. 0.035 m. (fig. 7). In its right hand it holds a weapon which passes over the shoulder and continues straight to the back. The left hand with remarkably thick and coarse fingers is put flat on the chest. The navel is a dotted circle. On the back there are five dotted circles, on the front four over the right and four over the left arm. Around the waist runs a fairly wide belt incised with three parallel lines. The belt continues on the back. A projection at the level of the left hip makes it clear that this statuette like the others was represented seated. This incised round specimen is the one most closely related to the category of statues among the alabaster finds from Kültepe. Its closest parallel is a statuette in the Archaeological Museum at Ankara⁸. One may be inclined to res-

⁵ *RHA* 24 (1936) pl. 11.

⁶ *TTAED* I, 79, 137-139, and *OIP* 30, figs. 282-284.

⁷ Nimet Özgüç, *1951 Yılında Kültepe'de yapılan kazı*, *Belleten* 66, p. 293 ff; Tahsin Özgüç, *Kültepe'de 1951 yılında yapılan kazılar*, *Belleten* 71, p. 367 ff.

⁸ *OIP* 30, fig. 281.

tore the head of this statuette by analogy with Kt. g/t 171, like the heads of the idols from Kültepe, but it is also possible that the head was in style like that of the seated dressed female discussed above.

2. *Steatopygous idol.*

This idol was found together with the statuettes described above. L. 0.035 m., W. 0.035 m. (figs. 8-9). The part below the waist is extremely fat and there is not even a sign of separation of the legs. At the back, a small groove emphasizes the buttocks. Breasts and abdomen are rendered in relief. Neck and head are broken off. This idol offers precious evidence that this type of steatopygous female idol, found in many sites in Anatolia, continues to be made in this period. The gap between this idol and the oldest Anatolian representatives of this type at Çukurkent⁹ is filled also by the steatopygous female idol discovered at Dündartepe in Copper Age context¹⁰. However, this idol is not the first specimen of the steatopygous category at Kültepe. Previously an enthroned fat female idol had been found at the same site¹¹. A marble steatopygous idol from a field at Tomarza Southeast of Kayseri (district of Tokla, village of Taf)¹² is now in the museum at Kayseri (figs. 10-11). This idol with its short neck, long and wide face, and stylized breasts shows strong local characteristics, but confirms that the type of steatopygous idol is spread over a wider area in Anatolia than known before. Accordingly, Matz is entirely right when he assumes that the Anatolian idols of the Early Metal Age are derived from the squat fat type¹³.

3. *Idols with disc-shaped bodies.*

Among these idols, the majority of those found, there are new types not paralleled until now (figs. 12-14). The most important one was found in square N/39 in the building level with mudbrick walls

⁹ K. Bittel, *Einige Idole aus Kleinasien*, *Prähistorische Zeitschrift* 34/4, 1949/50, p. 135 ff.

¹⁰ *Bulleten* 35, pl. 66, 6; and S. Weinberg, *Neolithic figurines and Aegean interrelations*, *AJA* 55 (1951) p. 131.

¹¹ *RHA* 30 (1938) pl. 3, 21-22.

¹² Kiepert, C IV Kayseri.

¹³ F. Matz, *Torsion, eine formenkundliche Untersuchung zur aigaiischen Vorgeschichte*, *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz, Abhandlungen der geistes- und sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse* 1951, Nr. 12, 1012.

starting at 11.60 m., associated with a definite pottery context. This specimen is especially remarkable for its size and subject matter.

Although its sides are broken, its Height is 0.198 m., its Width 0.151 m., its thickness 0.082 m. These dimensions bring our idol close to the specimen in the Dresden Museum¹⁴. Our idol has four heads, as is shown by the traces of necks and necklaces and by the four oblong masses of hair on the back, decorated in herringbone patterns.

On the chest of the idol there is the figure of a nude man in relief; also in high relief, almost sculptured in the round, the image of a lion which extends its forepaws to two of the idol's necks. The face of the man is badly damaged. Nevertheless, with its crude ears, its eyes drawn as concentric circles and its triangular chin, it must belong typologically with the head of the Dresden idol, which a closely related specimen in the Kayseri Museum¹⁵ and with the female nude idol analyzed above. Its neck is thick and long, its shoulders are narrow and angular. The relatively short legs are separated by a thin groove. In contrast to the ill-proportioned human figure in relief the lion is of normal proportions and successfully combines naturalism with convention in a harmonious form. There is good craftsmanship in the rendering of the lines of the mane, in the division of torso and rump, in the modelling of the forelegs and in the way the tail is left free. Although the head is broken, one can see from a preserved groove that the mouth was closed. The hairs of the mane are rendered in hatched motives. The little man pushes an unidentified object held in his hand against the left paw of the lion. It is hard to determine whether this is a spear or a leash.

This specimen is unique in subject-matter and the rendering of the lion. With the aid of this and a newly found idol from Zencideresi¹⁶ the true nature of the Dresden object (which Przeworski

¹⁴ St. Przeworski, *Ein altkleinasiatisches Alabasterfragment in Dresden*, *Archiv Orientalni* 4 (1932) p. 41 ff.

¹⁵ *RHA* 24 (1934) pl. 10.

¹⁶ Zencidere is near Talas and at a distance of 17 kilometers from Kayseri. The idol was found in the vineyard of Mustafa ağa south of the village of Ispir; undoubtedly there was once a cemetery or flat settlement site; in the coming years we plan to begin an investigation of this place.

interpreted as the lid of a stone vessel¹⁷) becomes clear. The idol from Zencidere belongs to the same group of round-bodied idols with multiple heads (fig. 15). One of the heads apparently has a rectangular beard. On the body there are reliefs of three persons with hands folded on their chests and short skirts. Their eyes and breasts are rendered by concentric circles. Like in the specimen from Kültepe, here too the disc-shaped body is decorated with concentric circles scattered at random. Here again the technique and style of the human figures in relief is the same as with the idols at Dresden and at Kültepe.

It used to be known that until now all alabaster idols had come from Kültepe; our excavation had confirmed this. Now the Zencidere idol represents the first alabaster idol found outside of Kültepe¹⁸. Zencidere is very near Kültepe; this type of idols therefore may be expected to occur in other settlements in the plain of Kayseri. The most important meaning of these crude idols with reliefs of men and lion, as against the simple, disc-shaped types, is that they represent an art of relief modelling.

The other idols found at the new excavations are not different from the previously known ones (figs. 16-20). Their outstanding feature is that they were all found together in the same context with the relief-decorated and more developed idols. It is thus proved stratigraphically that all these idols, the type to be called simple and the developed type, were made and used at the same time¹⁹. It is therefore impossible to separate the seated dressed (fig. 1) or nude female statuettes (fig. 2) from the disc-shaped, long-necked idols with schematic heads (fig. 16). Apart from simple idols with single or double triangular heads (fig. 17) and disc-shaped bodies decorated with the conventional motives, several instances were encountered of idols decorated on the body with smaller reliefs of human figures (figs. 19-20). One of these is remarkable because its neck, decorated with a zigzag pattern is partly rendered in relief on the disc and because it has a projection at the base (fig. 21). This specimen is the first to show that disc-shaped idols may be fastened to a base.

¹⁷ *Archiv Orientalni* 4, p. 41 ff.

¹⁸ *Kiepert maps*, C IV, section of Kayseri.

¹⁹ Tahsin Özgüç, p. 867.

The most important question with regard to the alabaster idols of Kültepe is the determination of their chronology. In connection with the publication of some forty idols scattered over museums for the last sixty years, several authors have put forth contradictory views regarding their chronology. Tahsin Özgüç, disputing all previous opinions, wrote that since these disc-shaped idols of Kültepe are not found in the so-called Copper Age culture of central Anatolia (Alişar I a-b), and taking into consideration that we know the Hittite material well, these idols must belong to the civilization of the Early Bronze Age at Alişar (=Alişar III) and that they are to be dated to the period of c. 2200-2000 B. C.²⁰ Krusina-Cerny, who referred to this subject most recently, compared the concentric circle motifs on the idols with those on a bone cosmetic box from a cist-grave of karum level II (found below the floor of the archive of Lakişum, and as a result attributed the alabaster idols to the Assyrian colony period²¹.

In squares M-N-O-P-R/36-40 of the hüyük we excavated heavy and deep foundations of Hittite buildings²². They are to be subdivided in three building phases. These heavy foundations cut into and destroyed the buildings of the period before 1900 B. C., which are simple, thin and built of small stones. In squares M-N / 38-40, however, the large Hittite buildings did not continue to the west, and consequently the prehistoric buildings were well preserved; and one could see how part of them had been destroyed by Hittite constructions.

In this section mudbrick walls began to emerge at a level of 9.85 m., in a rectangular plan, belonging to a house of two rooms. The foundations are never over 0.40 m. wide and made of large and small unworked stones (fig.34). The hearth is in the larger room near one corner. The small mudbricks are of the size used in level IV of the karum. About 50 % of the pottery found on the housefloors belongs to the wheelmade, monochrome slipped Hittite category of which the style is well-known; the remaining 50% is handmade and of the bichrome decorated Alişar III class (figs. 22-24, 39-40, 43-44,

²⁰ Tahsin Özgüç, p. 870.

²¹ *Archiv Orientalni* 20, pp. 601 ff.

²² *Bulleten* 77, p. 29 ff.

46-47, 49). The house is not burnt. This building level corresponds in all its characteristics to level IV of the karum Kanish, i. e. to the oldest karum level founded on virgin soil²³. These levels of the karum Kanish and the Kültepe mound of Kanish are contemporary with level 5M at Alişar²⁴.

Three of the idols published here (figs. 12, 17-18) were found in an earlier building level to which belongs a floor with a hearth at 11.60 m. Technically the architecture of this level is not to be distinguished from the level above (fig. 33 A). The pottery found *in situ* on the same floor shows the following characteristics:

a. Hittite pottery is not found in any form;

b. Alişar III ware continues, although by no means as abundant or rich in variety as in the level above (figs. 42, 51); also found with this was a pot (fig. 26) representing the type of jar of light brownish surface color, with dark brown painted design, long-necked, and with a grooved handle (figs. 25, 52); and the simplest version of cups of Alişar III (Res. 26).

c. The class called *intermediate ware* of which von der Osten has explained the find circumstances at Alişar, reddish-cream slipped and painted with pink to brown designs²⁵, mostly found in the shape of one-handled cups, begins to appear first in this level (fig. 50);

d. Two grey bottles, imports from Syria, were found in this stratum (fig. 27). These are undoubtedly two precious documents for the date of this level. As is known, these bottles were also imported to Gözlükule and at the same time imitated there locally²⁶. Miss M. Mellink tells me that they are found at Gözlükule in the E. B. III level; the earliest specimens in the 10-11 m. level and somewhat later than the earliest appearance of the two-handled goblets. Braidwood mentions that these bottles belong to Amuq phase J²⁷. Thus

²³ Tahsin and Nimet Özgüç, *Kültepe Kazısı 1949*, p. 22 ff.

²⁴ *OIP* 28, p. 208 ff.

²⁵ *OIP* 28, p. 236.

²⁶ H. Goldman and J. Garstang, *A conspectus of Early Cilician pottery*, *AJA* 51 (1947) p. 384, pl. 94, 5; H. Goldman, *The relative chronology of Southeastern Anatolia*, in: *Relative Chronologies in Old World Archaeology* p. 75, fig. 1 m. and H. Goldman, *Excavations at Gözlü Kule-Tarsus II*, fig. 268, 617.

²⁷ *Relative Chronologies in Old World Archaeology*, p. 38.

the alabaster idols under discussion at their latest belong to this level and with the ceramic class just described.

Finally comes a third level of which the walls begin to show at 11.20 m. (fig. 33 B). The female statuettes described by us and a large number of the alabaster idols were found in this level. A large house of this level in squares P/36-37 was very well preserved under the overlying building. One group of the pottery used in this level is the decorated *intermediate ware* of Alişar. Its clay is well levigated and its paste is tempered with fine particles of sand. Many of these vessels are slipped creamy reddish; their design is in brown to pinkish or reddish paint. In shapes, many are bowls and cups (figs 35-37, 45); or two-handled jars and small fruitstands decorated with wide bands (figs. 38, 41). The ornaments consist of the same motifs as at Alişar: geometric, i. e. simple bands, triangles, zigzags and lozenges ²⁸. Along with this pottery, but in a very small quantity (in a proportion of 1:20) one encounters decorated Alişar III fragments of jars and cups. Also found in this level were two crude pieces belonging to two-handled, bell-shaped cups, very characteristic of the decorated pottery of Alişar at this period (fig. 53) ²⁹. The Kültepe specimens, however, differ from their counterparts at Alişar in showing local peculiarities: pinkish-cream slip, dark red paint, well-levigated sandy clay and very well-fired thin walls.

The monochrome pottery is of the same technique and shapes and generally red, brown, or buff slipped and well polished. Its fabric, make and shapes are by now well-known. In contrast to Alişar we find in this level monochrome wheelmade depata (fig. 28) associated with handmade painted depata (figs. 29 and 48). A rim fragment of a grey Syrian bottle turned up in the same stratum. It is thus clear that there is only a short interval between these two building levels and that the alabaster idols are contemporary with both.

This level, characterized by an abundance of alabaster idols, overlies what is until now the earliest building level uncovered on the hüyük at Kültepe, which represents the last phase of the civilization of Alişar I b. In this lowest level the orientation of the buildings changes, the size of mudbricks increases, and the

²⁸ OIP 28, p. 230, 236.

²⁹ OIP 28, fig. 233, c 2204 and fig. 234.

widths of walls and foundations are twice those of the level above. In this earliest level we found no Alişar III or intermediate ware, no alabaster idols or Syrian bottles. What is found as pottery consists of thick red-slipped and burnished bowls (fig. 30), beak-spouted pitchers (fig. 31), grooved two-handled cups (fig. 32), coarse pots and jars with or without handles. This repertoire contains the well-known and most typical specimens of the last phase of the Copper Age in central Anatolia (Alişar I b)³⁰.

Now that we have brought this to light it becomes evident that the building level 6M of the civilization of Alişar III³¹ appears in Kültepe in two architectural sub-phases.

The Syrian bottles which also occur at the beginning of the M. B. age at Gözlükule are not found in levels III-IV of Karum-Kanish. They are imported into Kültepe in the oldest phase (6M) of the Alişar III period, in the time when intermediate ware and wheelmade depata were in use. Thus it can be proved that the familiar alabaster idols from Kültepe belong to a short period between the last phase of Alişar I b and level IV of the Karum, the date correctly suggested by Tahsin Özgüç in 1942³². We are not led to believe that the two strata in which the alabaster idols are found are earlier than the E. B. III period at Gözlükule. The E. B. III period at Gözlükule and the levels with idols produced here must be contemporary³³.

³⁰ K. Bittel, *Prähistorische Forschung in Kleinasien*, p. 13 ff.

³¹ *OIP* 28, p. 208 ff.

³² Tahsin Özgüç, p. 870.

³³ H. Goldman, *Relative Chronologies*, p. 75.



Res. 1 — Fig. 1



Res. 2 — Fig. 2



Res. 3 — Fig. 3



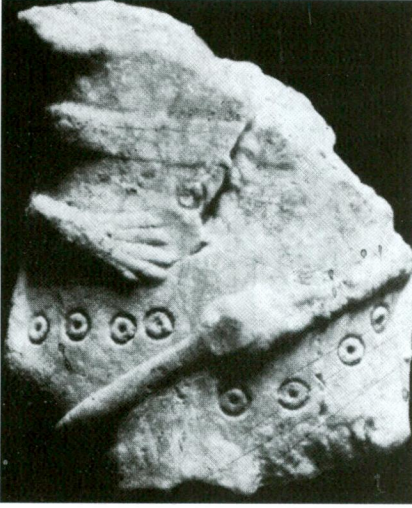
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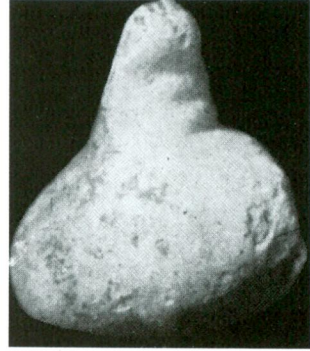
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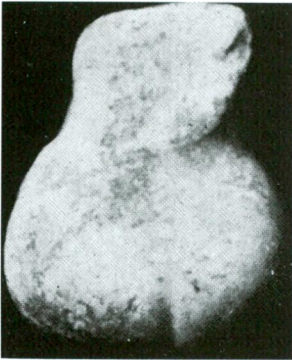
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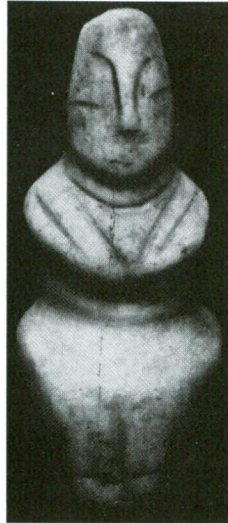
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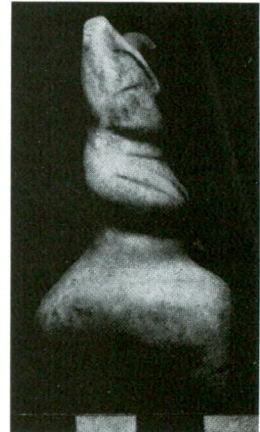
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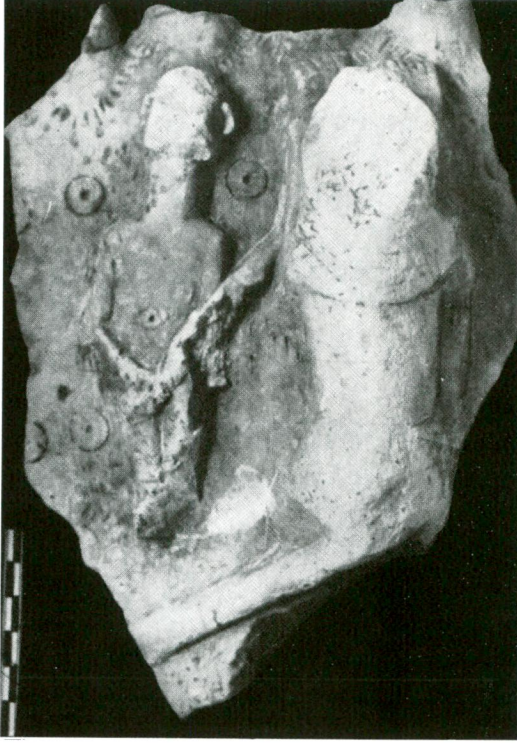
Res. 9 — Fig 9



Res. 10 — Fig' 10



Res. 11 — Fig. 11



Res. 12 — Fig. 12

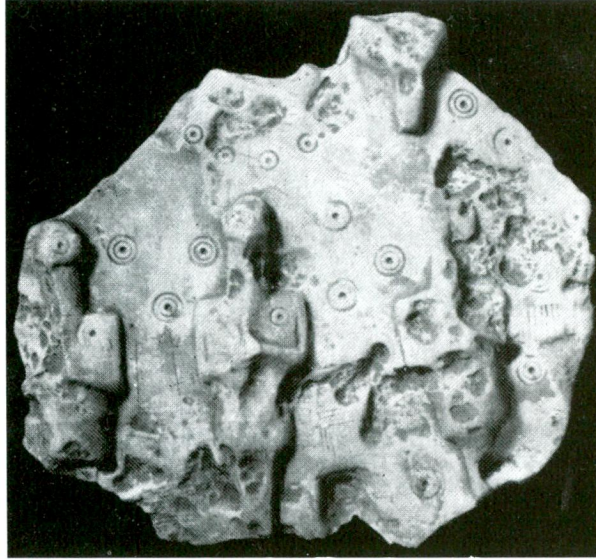


Res. 13 — Fig. 13

N. Özgüç



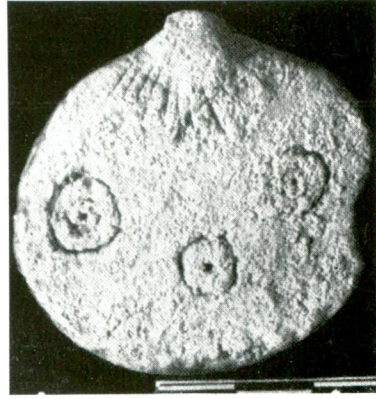
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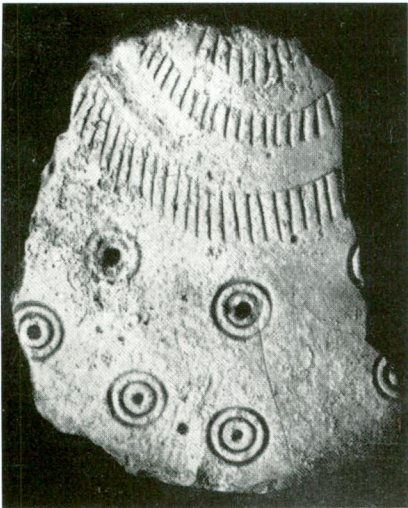
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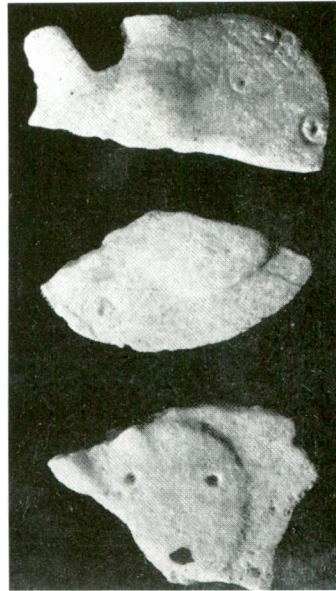
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Res. 17 — Fig. 17

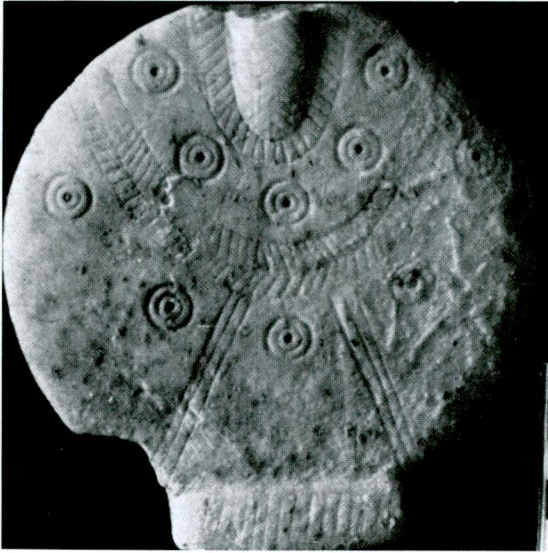


Res. 18 — Fig. 18



← Res. 19
Fig. 19

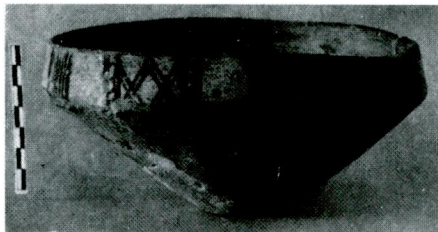
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Fig. 20



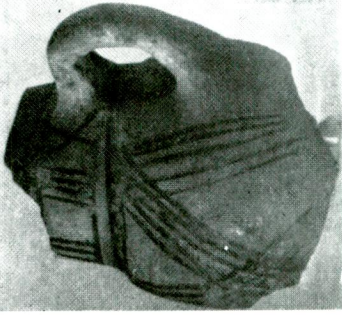
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Fig. 21



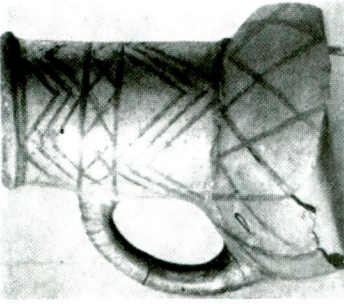
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Fig. 22



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Fig. 23



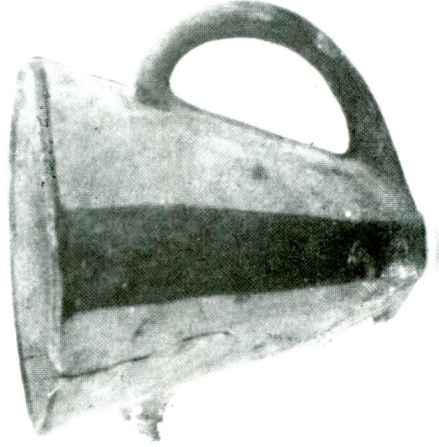
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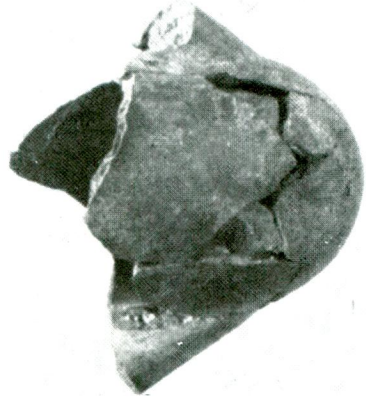
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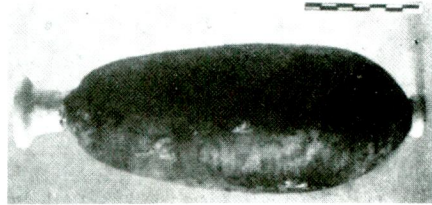
Res. 24 — Fig. 24



Res. 29 — Fig. 29



Res. 28 — Fig. 28

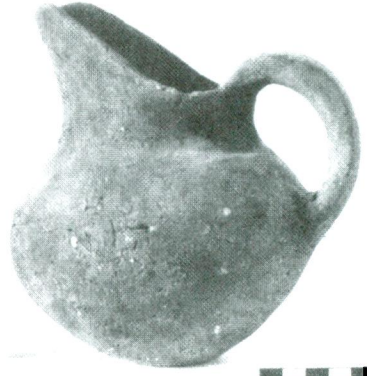


Res. 27 — Fig. 27

N. Özgüç



Res. 30 — Fig. 30



Res. 31 — Fig. 31



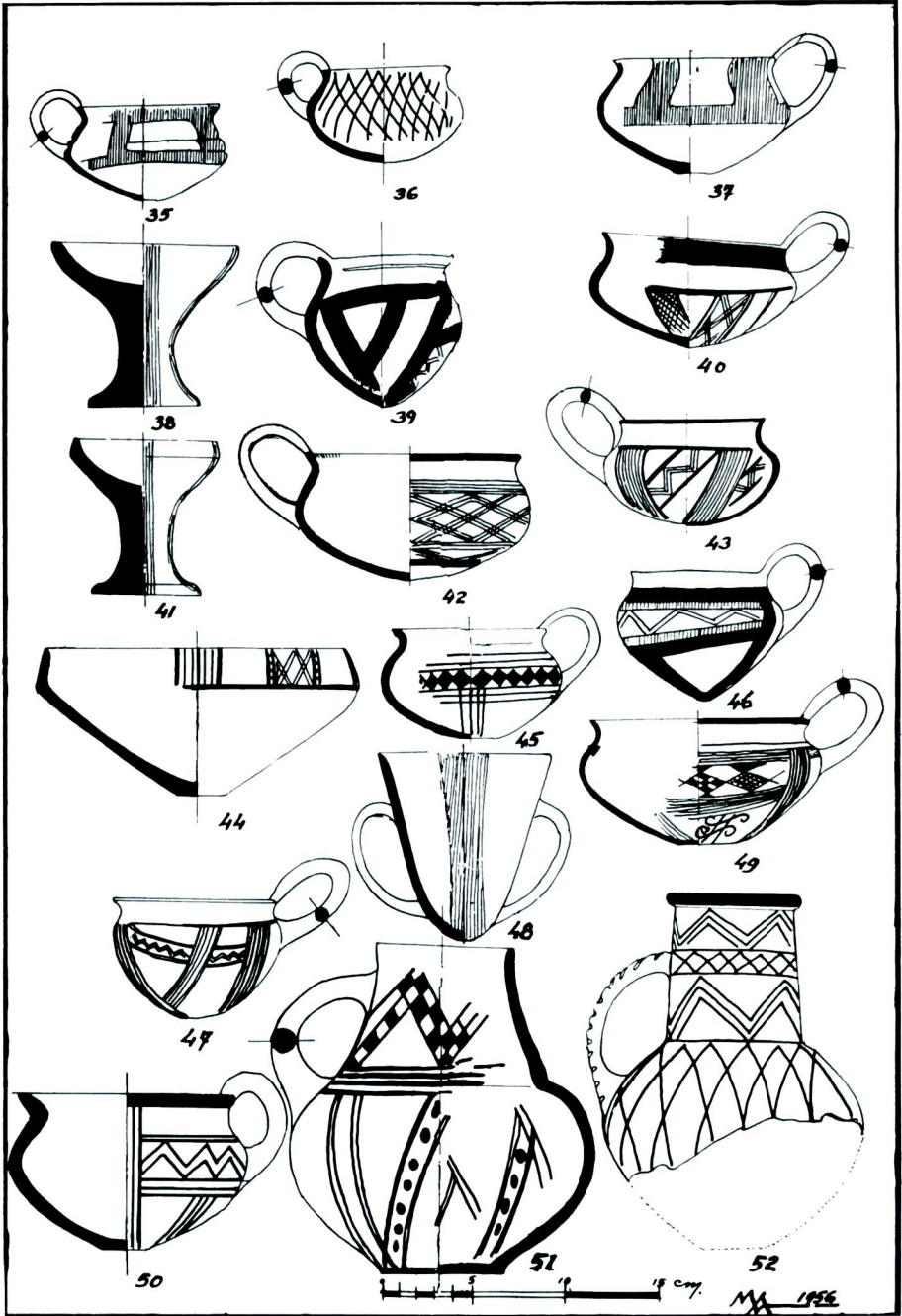
← Res. 32
Fig. 32



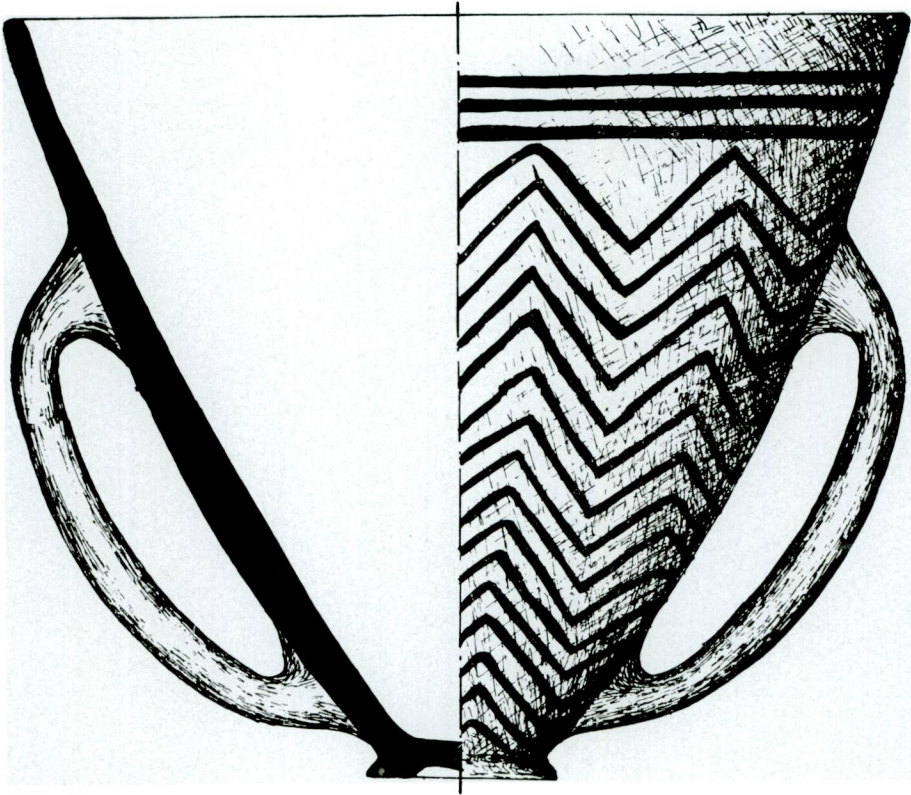
Res. 34 — Fig. 34



Res. 33, A-B — Fig. 33, A-B.



Res. 35-52 — Fig. 35-52



Res. 53 — Fig. 53

