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# Phrygian-Lydian Tomb Architecture in Synnada: The İnli and Yatağan Rock-Cut Tombs

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**ABSTRACT**
The ancient border between Phrygia, Lydia and Pisidia held a significant position at the intersection of strategic trade routes in Ancient Anatolia, connecting the north to the south and the east to the west. Its role as a crossroads culture enhanced the cultural diversity and social interactions of the area. Particularly, the ancient city of Synnada (now the Şuhut district of Afyonkarahisar Province), located at the junction of these regions, stands out for its historical continuity from the Iron Age to the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The fact that this territory hosted various civilizations is evident from the traces of settlements from different periods and local archaeological remains. In this context, the sacred sites and rock-cut tombs associated with workshops in the area provide significant examples of this cultural richness across both space and time. In addition to the tombs identified by earlier researchers, this study has uncovered settlements and sites that have not yet been included in the literature. The İnli and Yatağan necropolises are filled with rock-cut tombs used in different periods that reflect both the burial traditions of the region and the architectural and artistic characteristics of the premodern era, as they were used from the Classical to the Byzantine Period. This demonstrates the necessity of considering earlier dating in contrast to previous chronologies.
**Keywords:** Phrygian rock-cut tombs, Lydian rock-cut tombs, Chamber Tomb, Synnada, Burial traditions

## Introduction

From a spatial perspective, this study focuses on an area located within the boundaries of Şuhut, a district in Afyonkarahisar Province, which is an important part of the Inner Western Anatolia Region, approximately 25 kilometers southeast of the provincial center. Historically and geopolitically, this region played a significant role in Ancient Anatolia as a crossroads for north-south and east-west trade routes (Tüfekçi-Sivas and Sivas, 2016, 613), particularly within the Pisidia-Phrygia-Lydia triangle, connecting various cultures and civilizations (Belke and Mersich, 1990, TIB7). In antiquity, this area—often defined as the farthest boundary of Phrygia—was in close interaction with neighboring cultural regions like Pisidia, enriching the region's cultural heritage and fostering closer ties with the Mediterranean hinterlands. According to Strabo, "Phrygia Paroreia" was characterized by mountain ranges extending east to west and wide plains along the foothills of those mountains (Str, Geo., XII.8.13-14). Its strategic location facilitated the emergence of cultural border transitions, allowing interaction among different civilizations and cultures, which significantly shaped local social and economic structures. These cultural interactions facilitated the presence of various political formations and empires (Koçak et al., 2019). Its strategic position along ancient trade routes, particularly the Silk Road, further contributed to the area's role as a central hub for rich resource and cultural exchanges. In this context, it holds significance not only as a settlement but also as a historical bridge (Ramsay, 1960, 41; Baytak, 2014, 471-472).

From a topographical perspective, the Şuhut Plain, which is located between mountains at an altitude of 1,120 meters, provided easy access via its low mountain passes to different cultural groups such as those from the Göller Region and Menderes. At lower altitudes, the meadows offer grazing lands, while in the higher areas such as Kumalar, Paşadağı, Karakuş, and the Sultan Mountains, agricultural activity decreases above 1,300 meters, giving rise to a history of scattered rural settlements (Taş and Yakar, 2010, 70; Koçak and Baytak, 2013, 322). The region's relationship with surrounding cultures and settlements preserved its important role and central position in its historical geography. After Phrygian rule, the area became part of the Lydian dominion and was later governed by the Persians. The region, especially the city of Synnada, retained its importance during the invasions of Alexander the Great and his successors in Anatolia (Ramsay, 1890, 40-42; Koçak, T., 2020, 532-533). The cities surrounding Synnada—including Apameia, Prymnessos, Polybotos, Philemeion, and Amorium—remained significant for both urban and rural life throughout the local territory (Cic. Att., V.20; Magie, 2003, 5-9).

Synnada, famous for its marbles(*synnadic*) centered in nearby Dokimeion (Drew-Bear, 2003, 77), frequently appears in ancient sources up to the Roman period (Str. Geo., XII.8.14). During the Roman Empire, Synnada became a *conventus* center in the Province of Asia (Pliny, Nat. His., V.105; Ramsay, 1890, 171). Its name, which can be found on coins, was sometimes

associated with a Doric colony, sometimes with an Ionian colony, and occasionally with the phrase "*Synnadeon Dorieon Ionon*" (ΣΥΝΝΑΔΕΩΝ ΔΩΡΙΕΩΝ ΙΩΝΩΝ), reflecting a combination of both cultures. The first records of the ancient city, localized to the present-day Şuhut District, are linked to Akamas, son of Theseus, a hero of the Trojan War (Head, 1906, 393-406, n. 8-73). Previous excavations and studies (by scholars such as W. Lamb, S. Lloyd, J. Mellaart, D. French, Ö. Koçak, and M. Üyümez) carried out in the region focusing on the Neolithic to the Eastern Roman periods have significantly contributed to the understanding of the regional cultural inventory (Lamb, 1937-8; Lloyd and Mellaart, 1965; Mellaart and Murray, 1995; French, 1976, 51-54; Koçak, 2013; Üyümez et al., 2024).In later periods, the area saw further transformation. For example, one well-known practice in the area that was influenced by the Christian traditions of the Eastern Roman Empire was the conversion of areas that initially served as rock tombs into rock churches and residential structures, particularly during the Late Roman Empire. Within the Synnada territory, the rock settlements in Bininler, Hüseyinli, and Köpekinleri are prime examples of this transformation. As observed in many other places during early Christianity, rock settlements were adapted for habitation as settlements concentrated in valleys and sheltered areas. These tomb structures, used as settlements, have undergone internal and external alterations as a result.

In addition to the necropolis areas in the center of the Şuhut District, previous studies have indicated a significant concentration of the above rock settlement areas across the surrounding rural valleys and hilly terrains, which all have evidence of continuous use over time. This paper will focus on several rock tombs that were used consistently over multiple periods within both the district center and its surrounding territory. These rock tombs, which were registered in 2015 and 2019, have not been subject to any detailed studies until now. The paper will holistically consider both the central and rural settlement areas and the necropolis sites (Fig. 1). Among the discovered tombs, three were specifically evaluated for this article: two in the İnleriçi area of Mahmut Village and one in the Yatağan area within the district center. Our findings and the results obtained from them are presented in detail in the evaluation section

## Methods

This paper is based on the extensive studies of the necropolis areas containing the tombs undertaken during the project "Synnada and Surroundings Surface Survey" (Project No. YA010303) in the Şuhut District of Afyonkarahisar Province, under the permission of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, General Directorate of Cultural Assets and Museums (Baytak, 2024, 471). During the surveys of the rural extensions, a significant number of rock settlement areas were identified. All settlement types, necropolis areas, and archaeological sites associated with the ancient city of Synnada and its surrounding regions were evaluated as part of this project. During our field research, over 500 rock/underground

chamber tombs were identified, with the focus being placed on the necropolises of İnleriçi in Mahmut Village and Yatağan in the district center.

Effective preservation and documentation of archaeological sites are of critical importance for the sustainability of cultural heritage. In this context, the detailed identification and mapping of the boundaries of the area containing the tombs in necropolis sites are of paramount significance. As part of the fieldwork conducted in these necropolis areas, the boundaries of the tomb zones were determined through a detailed survey of the site (Fig. 2). In accordance with the Large-Scale Mapping Regulations, photogrammetric triangulation (control points) was carried out. The coordinates for the identified areas were based on Turkey's ED50 six-degree zone coordinates. Instantaneous coordinates were obtained using a Global Navigation Satellite System receiver, and a 1:1,000 scale orthophoto and the existing map of the region were prepared using drone-captured aerial photography (Baytak, 2024, 478). This comprehensive study is significant for the preservation and management of the necropolis areas. The maps that have been created will serve as a foundation for future research, provide valuable data for monitoring and assessing the status of the area, and could be considered a model that could be applied to other archaeological sites. Moreover, they will serve as an important source of information for decision-makers regarding the conservation of cultural heritage sites.

## Results

## The Yatağan and Derbent Necropolises

The Yatağan rock tombs are in the area known as Yatağan Dede or Yatağan Mevkii, 1.4 kilometers south of the center of Şuhut. Excavations and surveys in the area have confirmed that it is a necropolis. The site, which has a hill-like appearance, covers approximately 12 hectares and rises about 30 meters above the surrounding plain. At the highest point of the site is the Yatağan Dede Tomb. Just south of this tomb, the remnants of a wall and foundation, approximately 80 centimeters in height, were identified as part of a probable defensive structure, known as Yatağan Kale Tepe. The necropolis area is mainly spread across the northern and eastern slopes, facing toward Synnada (or Hisar) Hill. This site, located within the borders of the central Şuhut District in Afyonkarahisar Province, was registered as a first-degree archaeological site in 2015 by the Eskişehir Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board under the designation "Baş ve Yalı Mahalleleri Kaya Yerleşimi ve Nekropolü."

During the registration process, the nearby Derbent Mevkii, which is located just northwest of the Yatağan site along the road connecting Ortaköy and Aydın, was included as part of the necropolis extension. Derbent Mevkii, which is situated 1.5 kilometers southwest of the town center, covers 25 hectares and rises 19 meters above the surrounding landscape. Studies conducted on the slopes, particularly the parts facing the town center and the plain, confirmed that this is also a necropolis.

In the central area, 82 rock tomb entrances and *dromoi* (burial corridors) were identified in the Yatağan necropolis, and 112 were identified in the Derbent necropolis, totaling 200 rock tombs in the entire area. The coordinates for each tomb were recorded and mapped. In Yatağan, 10 tomb structures that allowed access and measurement were documented in detail, and 15 such tombs were similarly documented in Derbent. Both the Derbent and Yatağan necropolises are located very close to each other in central Şuhut and were part of the main necropolis area of the ancient city of Synnada. These two hilltop areas, which form a significant portion of the Synnada necropolis, are easily visible within the Şuhut Plain and would have occupied a strategic position along the eastern and southern road networks of Synnada. At the eastern slope of the hill, distinct road traces approximately 50 meters long and 2–3 meters wide, known as the Yatağan Roman Road, are visible. This road appears to have encircled the lower slopes of the necropolis and connected directly to the city center, where it intersects with remnants of a road leading eastward. Additionally, smaller road traces that seem to have followed the shape of the tomb terraces within the necropolis are linked to the larger road on the lower slopes, confirming a complex interaction between the settlement, road systems, and burial practices in the area (Baytak, 2014, 473-5).

## The İnleriçi-İnli Necropolis

The area known as İnleriçi Mevkii, which includes the Inlı rock tomb, is located 4 kilometers south of Şuhut's city center, in the northwest part of Mahmut Village. It sits at the northwest extension of the village, in Ada/Parsel and the surrounding areas, and studies have revealed that this region is a necropolis. The site, which forms a hill, spans approximately 6 hectares and has an elevation of about 10 meters above the plain. The site was registered as a first-degree archaeological site in 2019 by the Eskişehir Cultural and Natural Heritage Protection Board under the name "İnli Mevkii Kaya Mekanları ve Nekropolü" and is located on the border between Mahmut Village and Aydın Village, which lie within the boundaries of Şuhut District. The area containing the tombs lies across both Mahmut Village and Aydın Village. The parts in Aydın Village are referred to as Maltepesi Mevkii and Süllü Cemetery. However, due to its proximity and suitability, the area is mainly used as pastureland for Mahmut Village. Additionally, there are tombs located about 300 meters west in Üçler Gediği, and southwest in Taşlı Tepe Mevkii. Recent records also indicate that the northern sections of the area, toward the plain, have also been referred to as Kürtler Mevkii. According to information gathered in this area, tile tombs and more recent Türkmen tombs have been encountered during field plowing. During our investigations in the primary necropolis area, we identified around 60 rock tombs, some of which were damaged and others whose entrances were barely visible. The tombs labeled as M4 and M5, which are the focus of our documentation and article, have been given priority (Baytak, 2014, 476).

## İnli Rock-Cut Tomb M4

Our investigations at the M4 tomb revealed a tomb plan with two consecutive chambers (an antechamber and a burial chamber) extending 9 meters from east to west after a dromos was identified (Figs. 3–4). The tomb is situated on a hilltop area with a commanding view over the plain. At first glance, the site appears to resemble a tumulus; however, it better fits the definition of an underground chamber tomb. An earthen mound in front has blocked the entrance, which likely resulted from both natural collapse and debris thrown by grave robbers from inside the tomb.

The tomb's plan begins with a 2.60 × 1.60 meter dromos that is divided into two equal sections. The dromos leads into a rectangular doorframe measuring 0.68 × 1.17 meters with a thickness of 60 centimeters. This doorframe shows no traces of door fittings such as frames or moldings, and no indications of tool marks like drill holes or grooves are visible. Through this entrance, one enters a square-shaped antechamber with dimensions of 2.25 × 2.32 meters. The walls of the antechamber rise to a height of 1.70 meters, topped by a vaulted triangular roof with a rise of 2.33 meters. No traces of a *klinai* (burial bed) or bench/altar space, nor any evidence of burial-related carvings, were found in this chamber, suggesting it was only intended as a passage. The chamber is simply constructed, with only beams measuring 27 centimeters in thickness used to support the roof. These beams are only visible where the walls connect to the roof structure.

Following this passage, another door frame measuring 0.67 × 1.14 meters with a thickness of 60 centimeters leads to the main burial chamber. This floor of this chamber is 15 centimeters below that of the antechamber, further emphasizing the distinctive nature of this space. Unlike the antechamber, the burial chamber's roof was not flat; instead, it was designed as a slightly domed or vaulted triangular roof, a feature reminiscent of the Roman period (Dökü, 2015, 81). The burial chamber itself measures 2.93 × 2.98 meters, forming a perfect square. The north wall is 3.00 meters long, the west wall measures 2.93 meters, the south wall is 2.98 meters, and the east wall (with the door) is 2.87 meters. Although the southern and western walls are somewhat damaged, the remnants of two L-shaped rectangular *klinai* can be identified. The southern *klinai* is raised 60 centimeters above the floor and measures 0.68 × 2.06 meters, while the western *klinai* is 80 centimeters above the floor and measures 0.94 × 2.11 meters. At the southwestern corner, where these two *klinai* meet, is a raised square platform measuring 95 centimeters in height, with a surface area of 82 × 94 centimeters. Another square platform, measuring 86 centimeters in height and 70 × 75 centimeters, stands independently in the northeastern corner, separated from the *klinai*. These platforms likely served as benches or altars rather than burial spaces. Both the *klinai* and the bench/altar platforms have a thin border around their edges, and the front facades of the *klinai* are adorned with rectangular relief profiles. On the fronts of the *klinai*, there is a

profile frame *klinai* leg, 20 centimeters thick with a 3 centimeter embossment, resembling a wooden table leg. This is in a similar style to the bench and *kline* leg of the Düm Düm Kaya tomb (Fig. 14e) chamber (Büyüközer and Gider, 2015, 146, figs. 6–7). The profiles mimic wooden table legs, a typical feature in the Hellenistic and Roman architectural that are also seen in later tombs. A similar form of *klinai* is found in the M5 tomb, located approximately 50 meters to the northeast of M4.

## İnli Rock-Cut Tomb M5

In our examination of rock-cut tomb M5, we observed a burial plan of 7.5 meters in length, extending east-west (Figs. 5–7). This consists of an east-west dromos 6.20 meters in length, an antechamber, and a main burial chamber (Fig. 8). It is located approximately 50 meters southwest of M4, on the eastern slope of the same hill, at a slightly lower elevation. The entrance is provided from the east through a dromos, measuring 1.02 × 1.10 meters in length, and shows some signs of erosion and traces of disturbance that were likely caused by collapses and natural deterioration. The dromos has suffered considerable damage, and its roof appears to have collapsed, as indicated by the remaining traces. This same collapsed condition is observed in the antechamber, which also has a roof that is partially destroyed. Despite the damage, the antechamber's side walls and plan are clearly visible, and it presents dimensions of 2.03 × 2.36 meters. At the western end of this room, in the center of the 2.03-meter-wide wall, a broken and damaged door frame is barely visible. The door measures approximately 0.90 × 1.30 meters and has a thickness of 60 centimeters.

Beyond the door, the main burial chamber is accessible, which has a near rectangular plan, measuring 2.90 × 4.98 meters. This room has side wall elevations of 1.95 m., and a vaulted/ slightly arched triangular roof with a height of 2.45 meters. The north wall of the room

**Table 1:** Below are the coordinate data showing the location of the necropolises where the graves we evaluated are located.

| **Locations of İnli and Yatağan Rock Tombs Table** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Village and Location Name** | **Sheets and block/parcels on maps(Ada-Parsel)** | **Coordinate** |
| **İnleriçi-İnli Necropolis (M4 and M5)** | Şuhut-Aydın Köyü<br>İnler İçi | K25.D.2.1C pafta<br>177/5 ada/parsel | N-38,5078<br>E-30,5265<br>1158 m. |
| | Şuhut-Aydın Köyü<br>Malyatağı Tepesi | L24.A.O1.A pafta<br>177/6 ada/parsel | N-38,5071<br>E-30,5268<br>1162 m. |
| | Şuhut-Mahmut Köyü<br>Sünlü Mezarlığı | K25.D.21.C.4 pafta<br>5/6 ada/parsel | N-38,5069<br>E-30,5283<br>1170 m. |
| **Yatağan Necropolis (M15)** | Şuhut Merkez<br>Yalı Mahallesi | K25.D.21.C.2.B pafta<br>153/135-7 ada/parsel | N-38,5214<br>E-30,5446<br>1147 |

measures 3.70 meters, the west wall 2.63 meters, the south wall 3.70 meters, and the east wall (where the door is located) measures 2.96 meters. Despite some minor damage to the south and west walls of the burial chamber, two L-shaped rectangular *klinai* are visible. The southern *klinai* is elevated 60 centimeters and measures 0.67 × 1.85 meters, while the western *klinai*, also elevated by 60 centimeters, measures 0.70 × 2.03 meters. Adjacent to the western *klinai*, at the southwest corner, there is a lower rectangular-shaped offering area measuring 40 centimeters in height and 60 × 70 centimeters in size. A gap of 1.15 meters separates the front of this offering space from the southern *klinai*. Due to the significant damage, no frame profiles or cushion marks are visible on the *klinai*. However, raised rectangular profile traces can be detected on the facades of the *klinai*. On these facades, there are wooden imitation profiles resembling table legs, with a thickness of 18 centimeters and a raised profile of 3 centimeters. This is particularly evident on the facade of the western *klinai* on the back wall (Fig. 9–10).

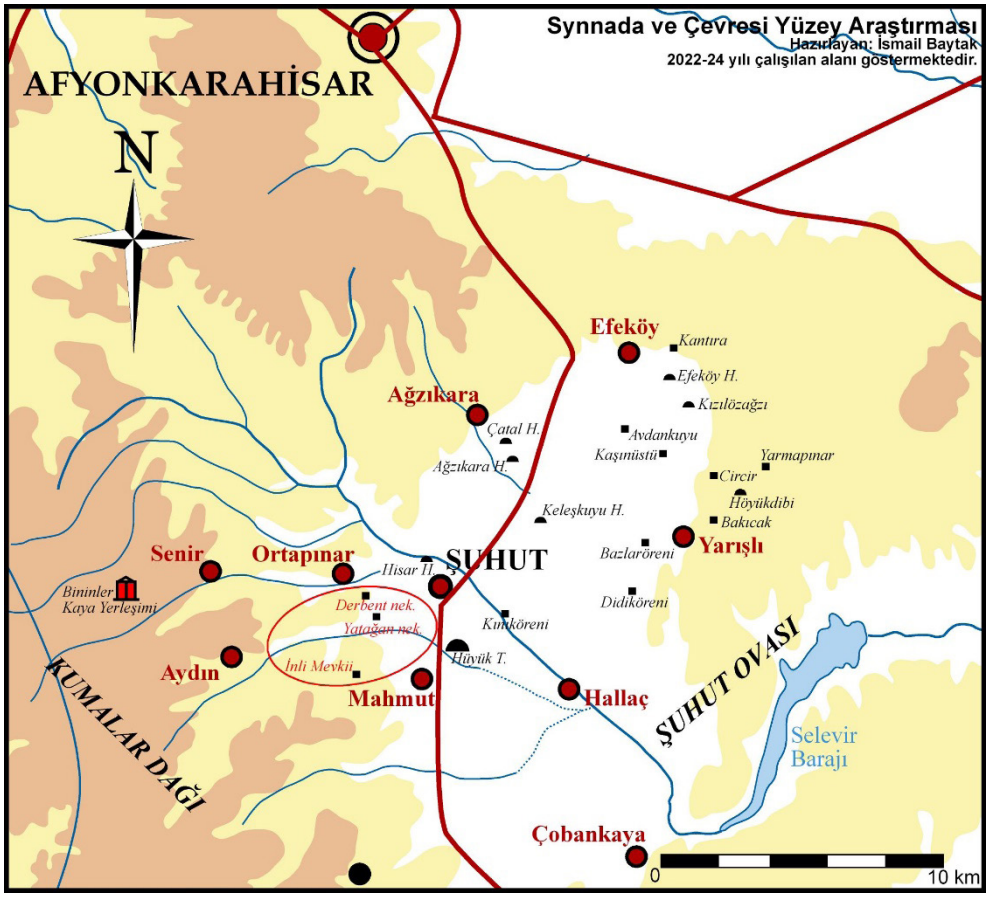



**Figure 1:** Synnada Survey Project: Yatağan and İnli necropolis settlement map-plan (i.baytak)

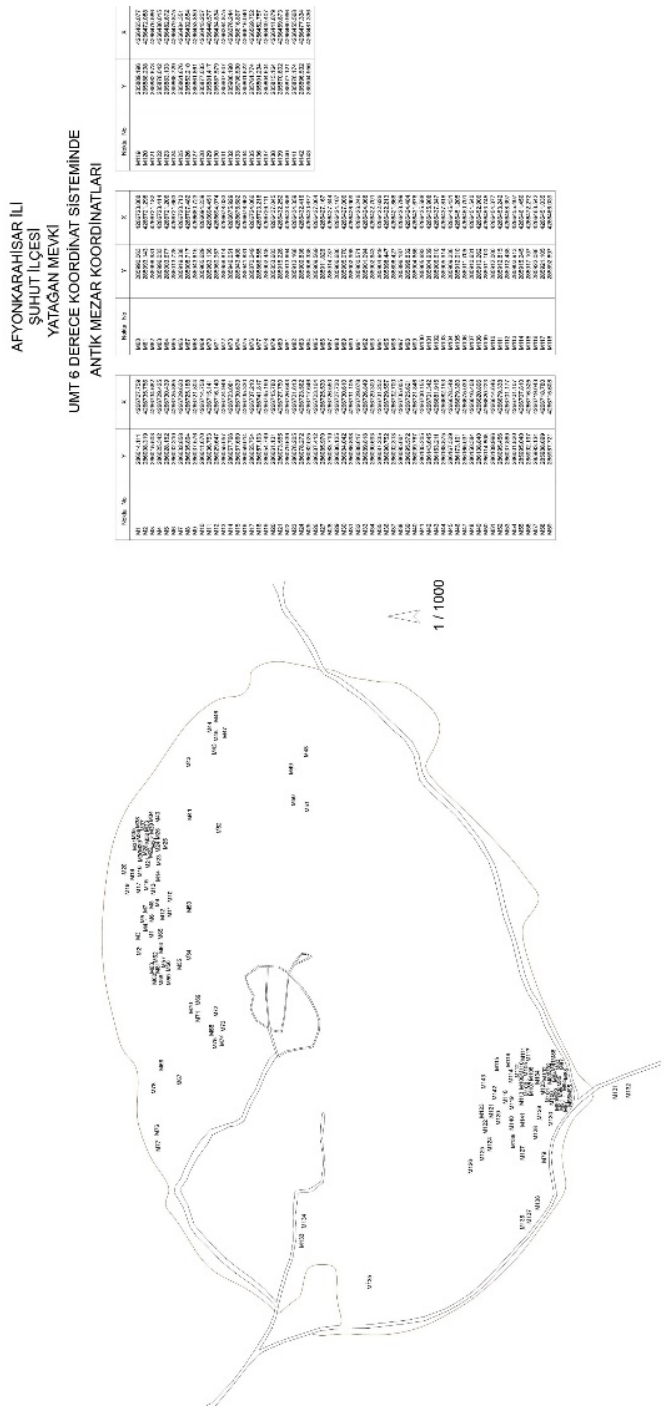
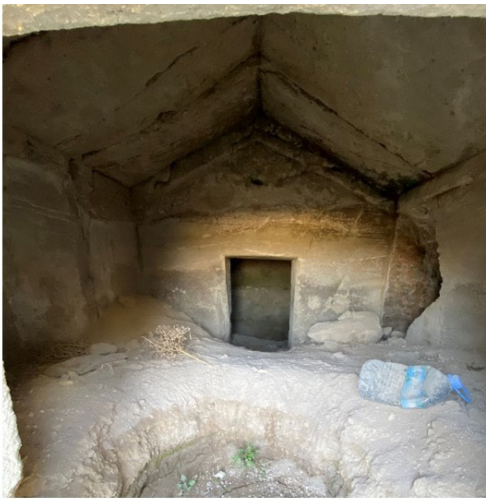



**Figure 2:** Yatağan necropolis positioned map-plan. (ibaytak)

M4 dromos and entrance gate



Front chamber and rear burial chamber gate

Burial chamber west klinai

Burial chamber south and west klinai

Burial chamber east wall, door and bench/altar

Burial chamber south klinai and offering bench/altar

**Figure 3:** İnleriçi necropolis rock-cut tomb M4 of İnli (i.baytak)


**Figure 4:** İnleriçi necropolis rock-cut tomb M4 of İnli (i.baytak)

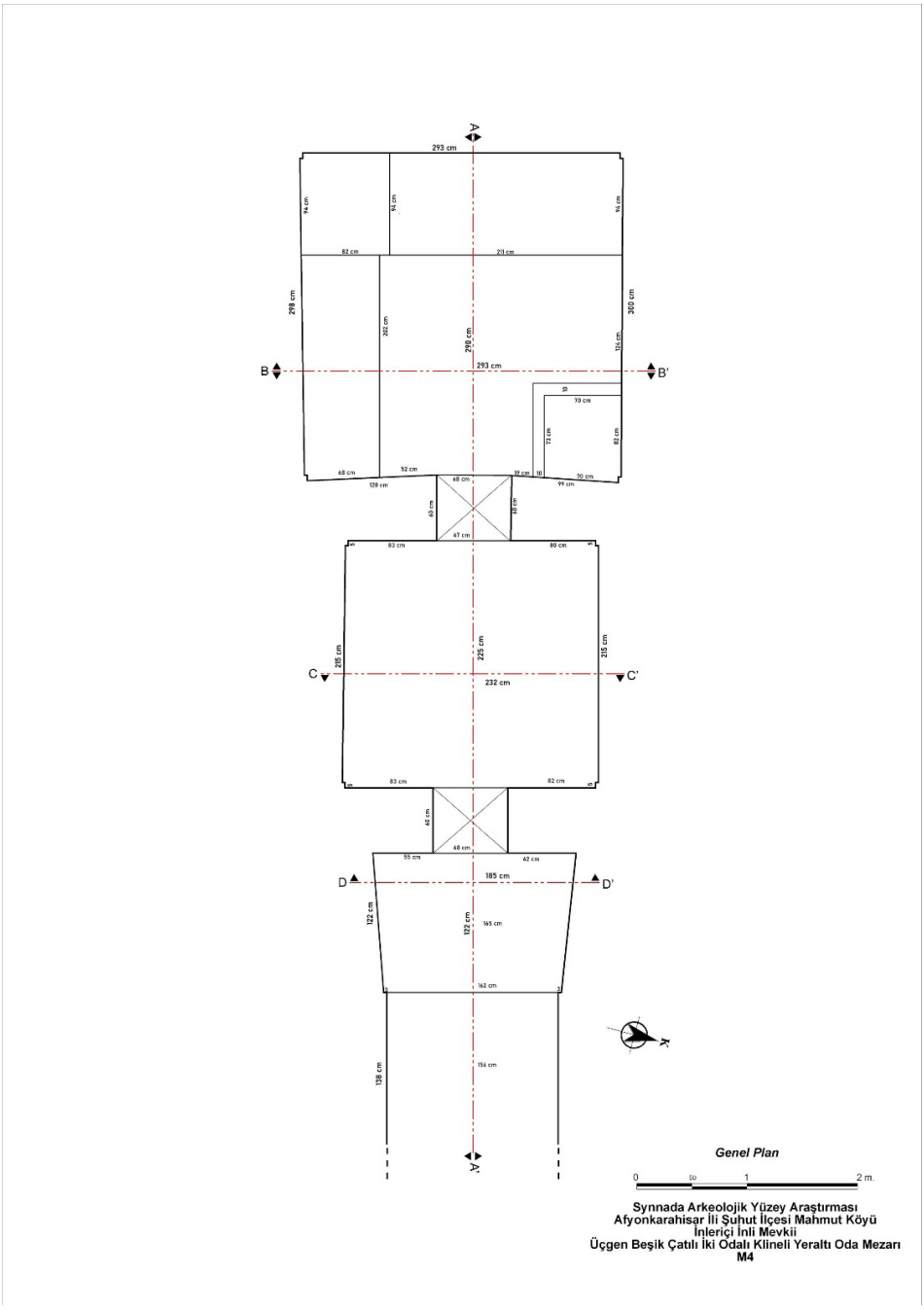



**Figure 5:** İnli M4 drawing, plan view of rock-cut tomb (i.baytak)

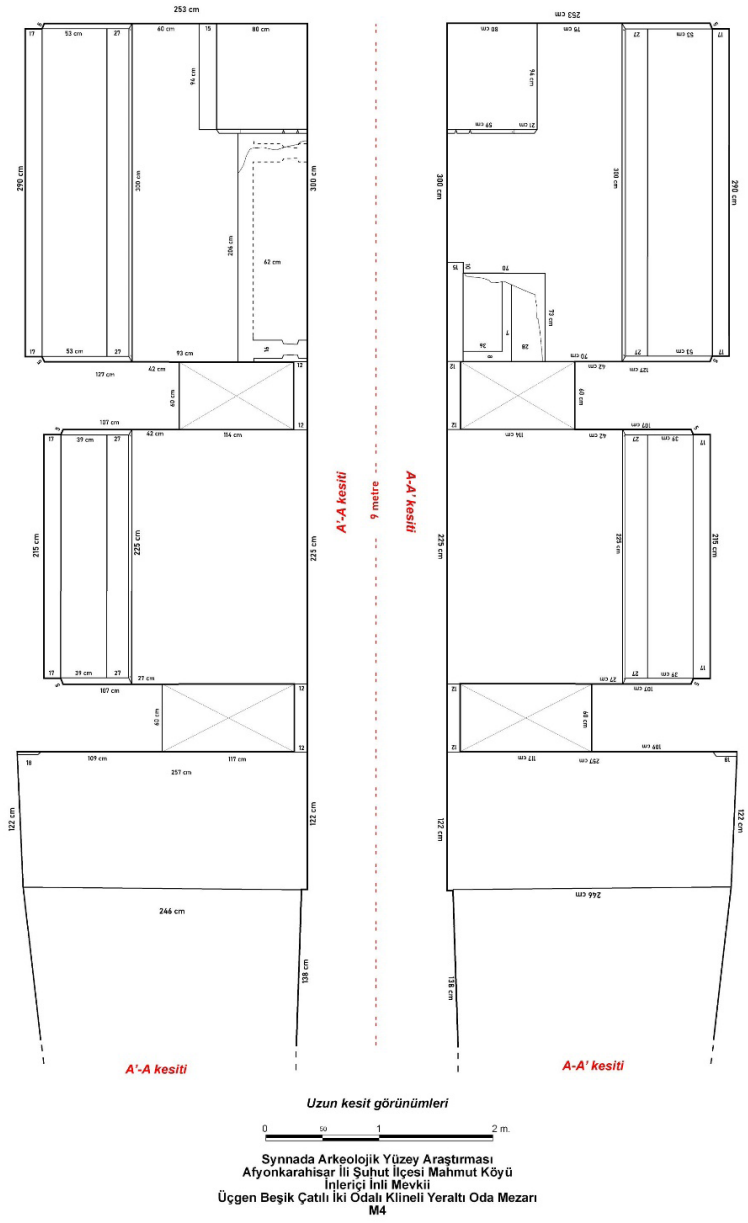



**Figure 6:** İnli M4 drawing, plan and cross-section view of rock-cut tomb (i.baytak)

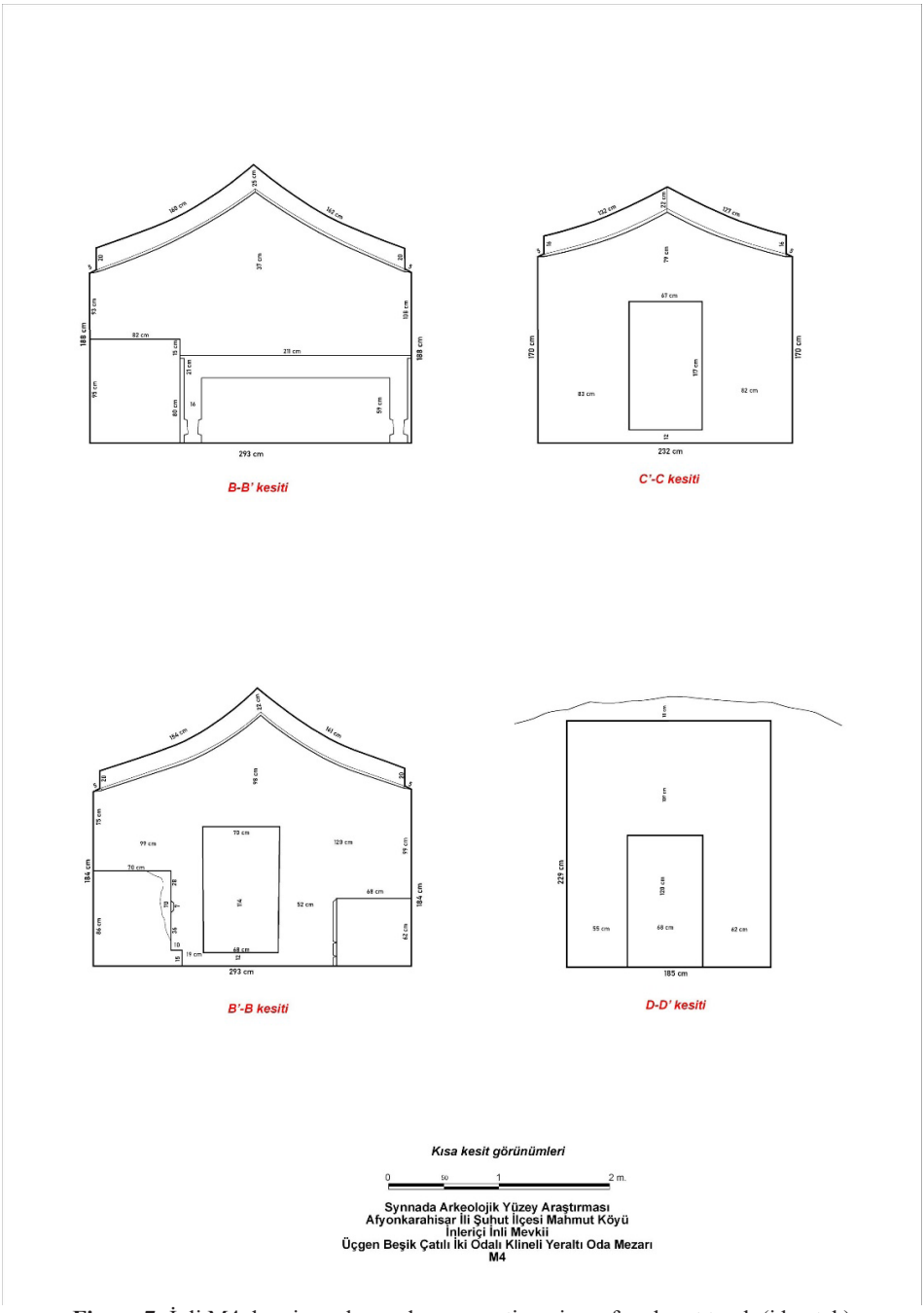



**Figure 7:** İnli M4 drawing, plan and cross-section view of rock-cut tomb (i.baytak)


**Figure 8:** İnleriçi necropolis rock-cut tomb M5 of İnli (i.baytak)

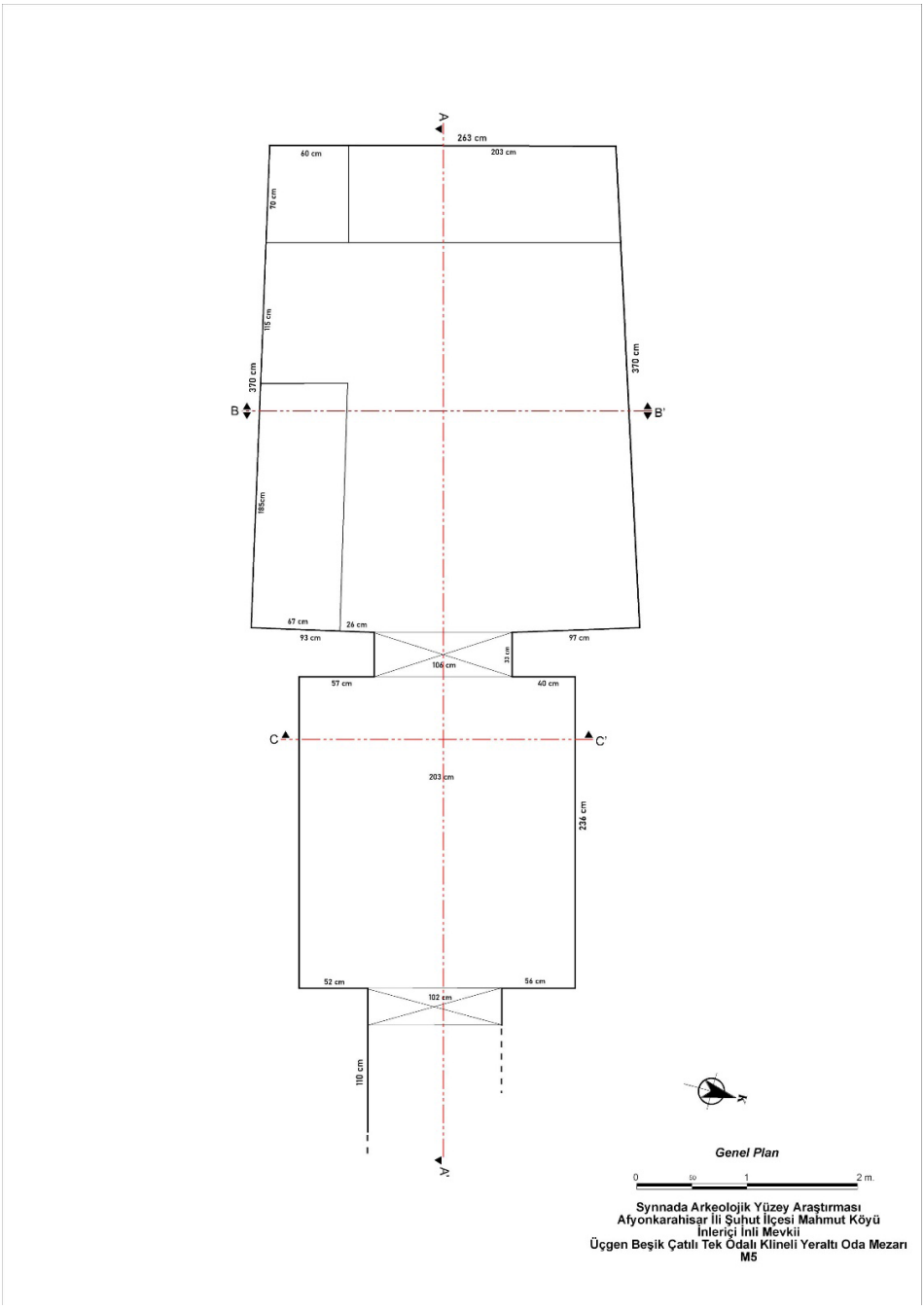



**Figure 9:** İnli M5 drawing, plan view of rock-cut tomb (i.baytak)

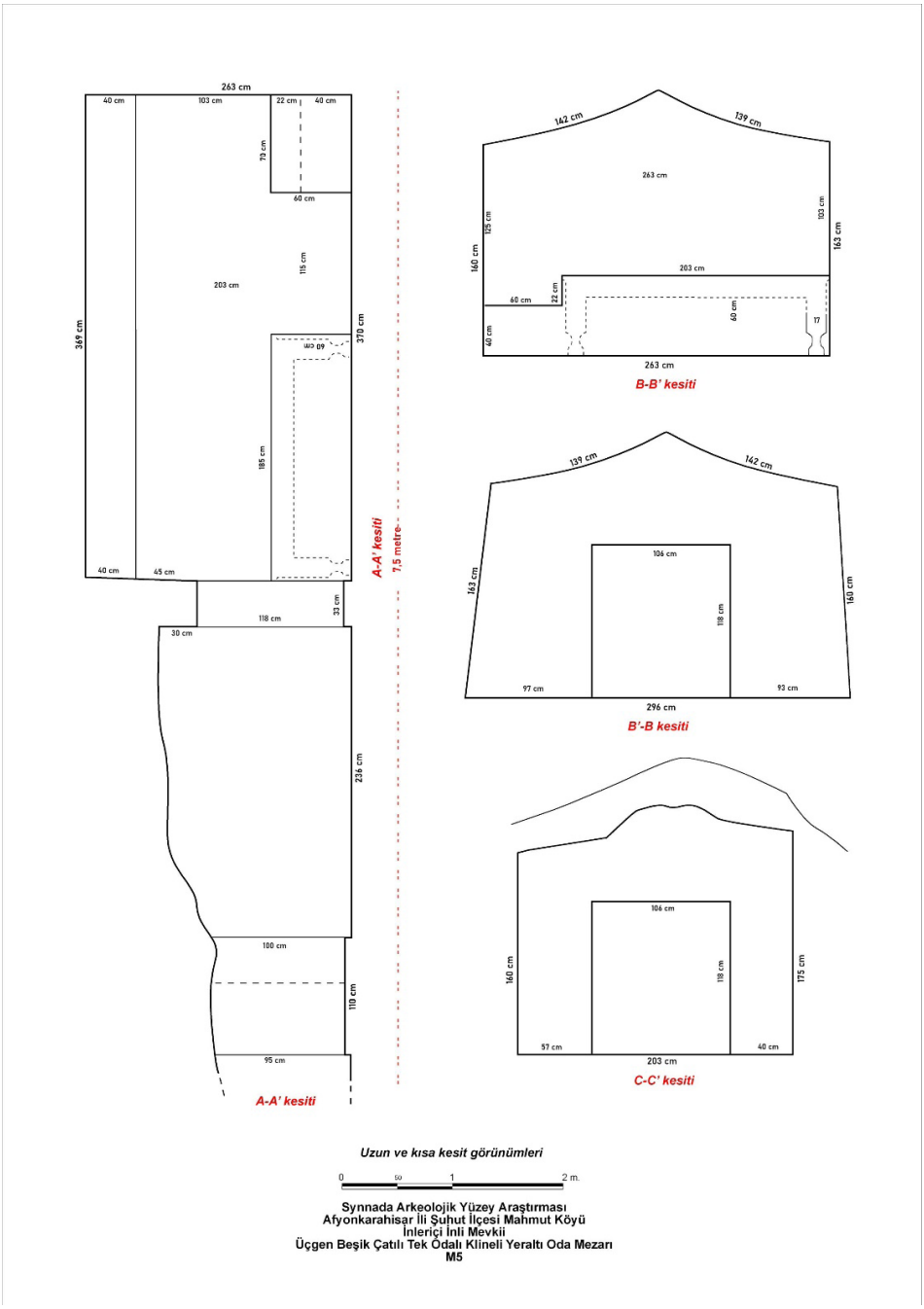
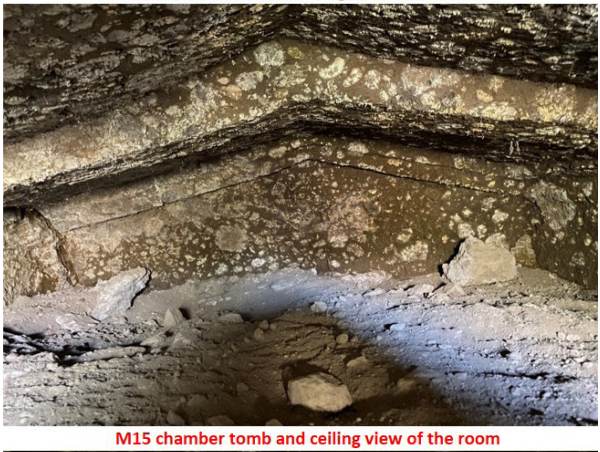



**Figure 10:** İnli M5 drawing, plan and cross-section view of rock-cut tomb (i.baytak)

M15 dromos and entrance gate

M15 chamber tomb and ceiling view of the room

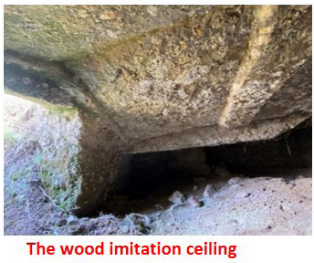
Gate facade with triangular pediment



M15 chamber tomb and ceiling view of the room

The wood imitation ceiling

M15 The ceiling of the chamber tomb and entrance



The wood imitation ceiling

**Figure 11:** Yatağan necropolis rock-cut tomb M15 of Yatağan (i.baytak)

**Figure 12:** Yatağan necropolis rock-cut tomb M15 of Yatağan (i.baytak)

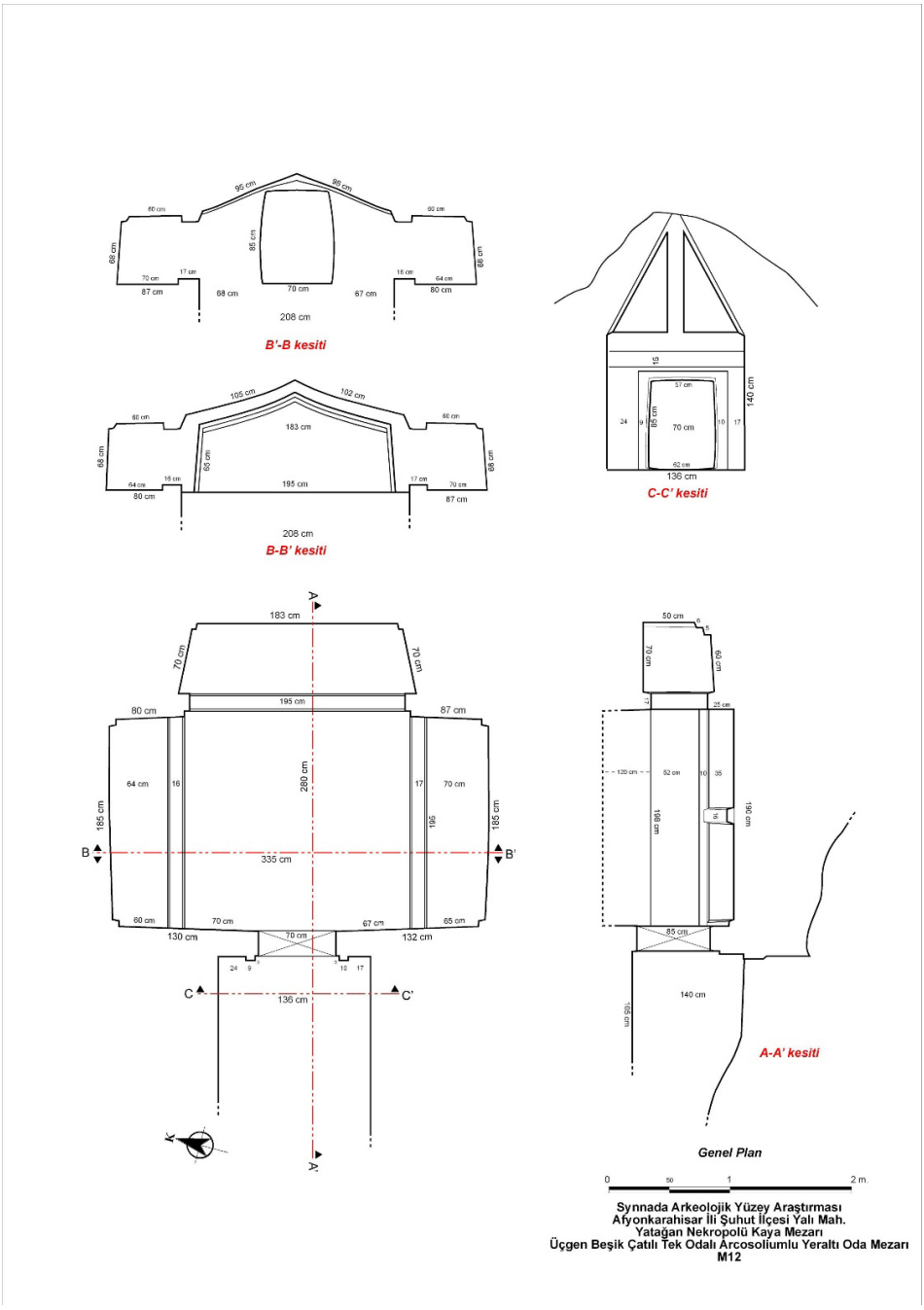
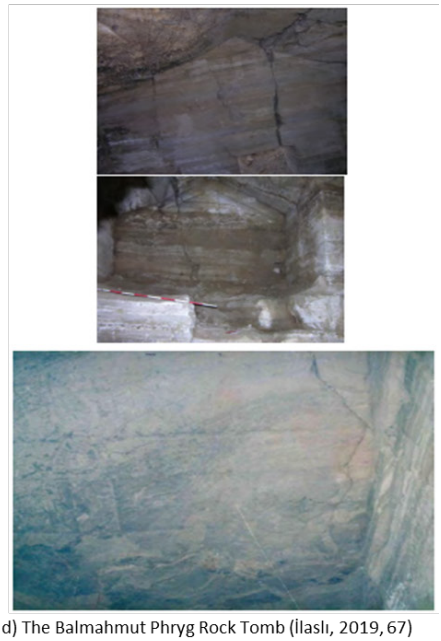



**Figure 13:** Yatağan M15 drawing, plan and cross-section view of rock-cut tomb (i.baytak)

a) Gerdekkaya Yazılıkaya, Phrygian Rock Tomb No.6 (Tuna and Çağlar, 2000, p. 69, Fig. 2-5)

b) İhsaniye-Yılantaş Rock Tomb (i.baytak Archive)

c) The Lale Tepe tumulus. Digital reconstruction of the tomb chamber.(Summerer/von Kienlin 2016.fig.5)



d) The Balmahmut Phryg Rock Tomb (İlaslı, 2019, 67)

Fig. 5 Ahşap konstrüksiyona oyktinmeli kline

Fig. 6 Kline ayağı

e) The rock-cut tomb of Düm Düm Kaya in İncesu Village, Seydişehir; The ones on the right in the picture are from (Büyüközer and Gider, 2015, fig.5 and fig.6)

**Figure 14:** Similar examples in the region and neighborin

## Yatağan Rock-Cut Tomb M15

Rock-cut tomb M15, located within the Yatağan necropolis site, is distinct from the other rock tombs in the area in its architecture and decoration. As a result, it was closely documented. This tomb stands out particularly due to its interior, which adds significant value to the site (Figs. 11–12). Positioned to face Hisar Tepe in Synnada, the tomb is located on the northern slope of the necropolis hill. The entrance is slightly visible and appears to be filled with soil. Upon conducting our investigations of M15, we found that the tomb consists of a dromos, followed by a rectangular door and a single-room burial chamber. The plan is 4.20 meters long in total and extends east to west, with the door facing west. The dromos, which is quite narrow and short and was likely built with a stepped descent, measures 1.05 meters in length and 1.36 meters in width. At the eastern end of the dromos, there is a wall measuring 1.36 meters. This wall features a triangular pediment and a gabled roof (with traces of roof beams), mimicking the architecture of a wooden house, with a doorway in the center. Two rafters are embedded into the rock to a depth of 3 cm, creating the impression of a roof reflected in the stone. A prominent ridge beam supports the roof structure. The craftsmanship and detailing of the roof exhibit a coarse and rudimentary execution. The door's dimensions are approximately 70 × 85 centimeters with a thickness of 30 centimeters, and the doorframe has a simple design with a single-molded profile.

After passing through this simple rectangular entrance, one enters the burial chamber, which is constructed in a rectangular plan. The ceiling is modeled to imitate a wooden *hatıl* and a steep gable construction. The burial chamber itself is in proportion to the façade and has a vaulted/sagging triangular roof with a height of 1.20 meters. However, due to the current soil filling and degradation, the height is not very obvious, with only a .75-centimeter elevation being noticeable. The burial chamber was designed as a single room, measuring 2.80 × 3.35 meters. It includes three rectangular arcosolia used for burials (Fig.13). Two are located on the sides, and one is situated at the back of the room. It is likely that both the remains found inside and the pottery fragments outside the tomb belong to these niches.

## Discussion

The areas in which the Yatağan and İnli rock tombs are located are generally categorized as belonging to the Roman and Late Roman periods in registration documents, along with their surrounding tomb types. However, when this dating undertaken, it is likely that the above rock tombs had not been entered; they may have been assessed based solely on the entrances in a manner similar to the neighboring tombs. Given that only the general plan of the tombs were covered and their interiors were unexplored, this may have been the most logical assumption at the time. It is also important to note that the tombs discussed in this paper have recently been opened and damaged by illegal excavators. During our surface

survey conducted in 2022, we gathered evidence suggesting origins from an earlier period, which necessitated a reconsideration of the tomb's dating based on both its external and internal architecture. We propose that these tombs, in connection with the geography in which they are located, can be placed between the eighth and sixth centuries BC, with ties to the Phrygian and Lydian cultures. Within this cultural domain, imitations, similarities, transformations, and cultural exchanges were reflected in burial traditions and, consequently, in tomb architecture. These intercultural processes continued with the Persian era in the fifth century BC, followed by the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial periods (Kortanoğlu, 2012, 288-307). During Persian rule, the Lydian cultural influence extended as far as the Şuhut Plain in present-day Turkey. The tombs under evaluation therefore hold significant importance as representations of the continuation and adoption of architectural traditions inherited from Phrygia, which were then shaped according to Lydian culture's unique architectural style. In this context, discovering traces of this approach in the rock tombs excavated at Sardis should not be considered surprising (Dökü, 2015, 79).

In evaluating the İnli rock tomb, particularly the M4 burial chamber, the stone *klinai* exhibit a similarity to those found in Phrygian tombs, following an L-shaped plan. This similarity is also evident in the nearby M5, which exhibits a three-cornered, roofed, *semerdam* (beam construction) structure with an L-shaped plan. Additionally, the stone *klinai* inside M4 resemble those seen in the triangular-roofed Lydian tomb architecture, suggesting a connection to the Lydian tradition as well (McLauchlin, 1985, 142-145; Baughan, 2004, 54-100; Dökü, 2015, 82; Kahya, 2012, 29, fig.11). It is well known that burial practices involving *klinai* were common in the Megale Phrygia region, especially near the Lydian border (İzmirligil, 1975, 47). These rock tombs, especially the İnli rock tomb, share other structural features with Lydian rock tombs and tumuli, including *dromoi* (corridors) that lead to the tomb entrances (Butler, 1922, 158–165). Furthermore, they show notable similarities with the architecture of tumulus chamber tombs. The Tatarlı Tumulus (Uçankuş, 1979, 305-334; Tüfekçi-Sivas, 2010, 330-341) and the Sandıklı Maltepe Tumulus (Üyümez, 1993, 389-404) also exhibit similar plans. The Phrygian tumulus tradition, which originally featured a wooden chamber structure, evolved into stone architecture in the Lydia region starting in the seventh century BC, as exemplified by the Sardes Bintepeler necropolis (İzmirligil, 1975, 47). Meanwhile, similarly embossed decorative *kline* legs can be observed on the *klinai* in Tombs 17 and 26 in the Köhnüş Valley. (Haspels, 1971, 120, fig. 536.6; 121, fig. 537.2).

While the underground chamber tombs do not present monumental architecture, they are still remarkable for their short, stepped dromoi that lead to a main burial chamber following an antechamber. When compared to other regional examples, the tombs surrounding the Yazılıkaya Midas Monument in the Phrygia Valley are particularly noteworthy (Sivas, 2012, 112-159). Among the tombs discovered near the Yazılıkaya monument during the 1970s, one

of the most remarkable was the Phrygian underground rock tomb (No. 6), which measures 2.40 × 3.90 meters and exhibits careful craftsmanship and a distinctive structure. This tomb shares similar characteristics and craftsmanship with the İnli rock tomb chambers evaluated above. This Phrygian monumental tomb is dated to the first half of the sixth century BC (Tuna and Çağlar, 2000, p. 69, Pl. 2-5). Meanwhile, benches inside a rock-cut chamber tomb in Sardes and the examples of the İnli rock tomb chamber share their own similarities (Roosevelt, 2012, fig. 177). In addition, there are very detailed studies that present the characteristic features of this grave type (Tüfekçi-Sivas and Sivas, 2016, 613).

The example of the Yatağan rock tomb, M15, does not present monumental architecture. However, it draws attention with its short, stepped dromos leading to a passage and the less obvious triangular pediment facade and ceiling, which mimic a wooden structure. Based on both the facade and the interior architecture, M15 first serves as an example of the stone reflection of the Phrygian funerary architecture, which is characterized by a triangular pediment, vaulted roof, and construction reminiscent of a wooden house. In this context, the definitions by Haspels come into play. In almost all the Phrygian monuments in the region, there is a pediment at the front of the facade and a pointed roof inside the burial chamber (Şahin, 1995, 137-150). Haspels defines the rock-cut tombs that began in the eighth century BC as Type 1, which can be entered through a simple rectangular door at the front and largely feature triangular pediments, pitched roofs, and wood architectural imitations, with beams carved into the rock. He classified the Type 1 tombs into four subgroups: A, B, C, and D. In this context, the İnli rock tomb can be classified in Group C due to having two-bed *klinai* (Haspels, 1971, 112-113). Although the earliest evidence of the use of *klinai* in tomb chambers has been identified in Lydian tombs, this tradition was also practiced in Phrygian culture in the sixth century BC. (McLauchlin 1985, 142-145).

Haspels identifies rock tombs from the sixth century BC as Type 2, and these also include triangular pediments, gabled roofs, and carved roof trusses and purlins on the facade (Haspels, 1971, 126). One of the best examples of Phrygian-Lydian interaction, categorized as Type 2, is the Düver rock tomb in Burdur Yarışlı, which is notable for both its dating and its facade. Although this example is generally considered Phrygian, its baked clay covering slabs and the presence of sixth century BC Lydian painted pottery suggest the predominance of Lydian culture over Phrygian culture (Kahya, 2012, 13-32). The Hasanpaşa-Manca Deliktaş rock tomb in Burdur Tefenni exhibits similar features (Dökü, 2015, 78). Another noteworthy example of Type 2 is the Hoyran rock tomb, which lies just southeast of our research area in the northeastern part of the Pisidia region, near Lake Hoyran in Isparta (Fiedler and Taşlıalan, 2002). A similar situation can be observed in the Lydian tumuli, such as the Laletepe (Fig. 14) tumulus (Stinson, 2008, 25-48, fig. 9; Summerer and von Kienlin, 2016, Plate 252, fig. 5; Dökü, 2015, 77-79). When examining the ceiling craftsmanship of the burial chamber,

similar wooden-mimicking beam structures can also be observed in the Yılantaş (Fig. 14) rock tomb chamber in Afyon İhsaniye and the Gerdekkaya (Fig. 14a) example in Eskişehir (Kortanoğlu, 2016, 249, fig. 18). Additionally, the Beyce Tumulus near Soma can also be referenced for the "carved framework of the roof" in this region (Summerer and von Kienlin, 2016, 502, Plate 250, fig. 1).

The finds within M15 also present noteworthy results. This tomb is particularly remarkable for the scattered fragments of a terracotta sarcophagus found in the debris at the front. In this tomb, broken pieces of the body and lid of two different sarcophagi were discovered both within the rubble inside and in the surrounding soil. Sarcophagi, which occupied an important place in ancient burial practices and were used as part of mortuary rituals, can also be found in rock tombs. Sarcophagi of both stone and more fragile terracotta materials are positioned on the ground and in the *kline* areas of tombs, sometimes in various forms, enhancing the esthetic and ritual significance of the space they occupy. The finds in M15 support this interpretation. The terracotta sarcophagi, adorned with simple geometric decorations, carry esthetic value, and their surfaces feature motifs, paintings, and graffiti. These sarcophagi, which date to the fifth century BC, continued to be used throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods as part of an ongoing tradition (Baughan, 2010). Similar examples can also be found in Lydian burial practices. In this context, the Balmahmut Kaya Tomb in Sinanpaşa (Fig. 14d) which is geographically close to the region under discussion, supports this notion not only through its architectural similarities but also its contents. The tomb chamber—with its triangular pediment, vaulted roof, and bench—along with its artifacts date to the late Phrygian period, specifically the sixth century BC. Among the finds are broken wooden interlocking furniture pieces on and in front of the bench, along with jewelry, rosettes, appliqués, and alabastron (marble) vessels, which are highly impressive and valuable for dating purposes (İlaslı, 2019, 61-63).

Like the sarcophagus fragment found in M15, lid fragments of a *semerdam*-style sarcophagus have also been found in other tombs in the Derbent area. Originally constructed during the Phrygian period, this tomb structure underwent three distinct phases of use, which are reflected in the fragments. The excavations revealed scattered terracotta sarcophagus box fragments (Fig. 11, top left), broken marble slabs, a broken unguentarium, and ceramics in both the tomb and the surrounding debris. The marble slabs, which were likely used as parapet blocks for the *klinai* or for closure functions, are assumed to be from the Roman period due to their craftsmanship, thus supporting the second phase of use for the tomb. The rock tombs and pottery fragments found on the hilltops and slopes further indicate that the tomb was used a second and even third time, following its original Phrygian (Iron Age) usage. Furthermore, the burial gift, which is identified as belonging to the Late Roman period due to its monogrammed seal, confirms a third phase of use for the tomb.

## Conclusions

The tradition of rock-cut tombs dates to the early first millennium BC, with Phrygia emerging as the primary locus for such tombs. The İnli and Yatağan rock-cut tombs provide significant insights into burial traditions and cultural diversity during the Iron Age, Roman period, and Late Antiquity. The architectural features of the examined tombs, including simple entrance structures (dromoi), antechambers, rectangular doors, and barrel-vaulted ceilings, reflect both Phrygian influences and local traditions. These tombs display a distinctive architectural layout for burial chambers that sets them apart from other regional examples. The findings offer crucial data for understanding the burial structures and cultural interactions in the region and highlight the necessity for more detailed excavations to further explore these aspects.

Research and archaeological excavations in Synnada and surrounding areas have revealed burial traditions of the local populations spanning from the ancient period to the Roman era. The key characteristics of these tombs are that they were carved into solid rock and their burial chambers were reused, with modifications made to their layouts. Finally, there was diversity in the internal structure of the tombs: some tombs were arranged with non-standard forms and cinerary niches resembling *klinai*, while others featured sarcophagi placed on the chamber floors or in depressions carved into the ground. These archaeological findings reflect the burial structures, traditions, and practices of the ancient communities in the region. The presence of different practices indicates the evolution and development of burial customs over time. They provide valuable data for understanding local and cultural interactions, underscoring the need for further exploration through detailed excavations.

In addition to the studies conducted in the region and the collected data, the evaluations interpreting the regional culture may not be fully comprehensive. However, recent studies focusing on quick results have played a critical role in illuminating the historical and cultural heritage of the region, allowing for a clearer understanding. Underground chamber tombs, as significant archaeological remnants from antiquity, can help in illuminating the burial cultures of these prehistoric societies. However, the destruction and looting of many of these tombs complicate their dating. Based on the above findings, it is necessary to consider an earlier dating for the tombs based on new research and findings in the region. In this context, particularly for the İnli rock-cut tombs, the previously proposed dating has been reexamined, and the findings support an earlier dating. Considering all this data, a general assessment suggests that the tombs, dated to the eighth through seventh centuries BC, can be classified as follows: the İnli rock-cut tombs M4 and M5, with their dromoi, antechambers, small superficially processed door, barrel-vaulted ceilings, and *klinai* features, can be identified as Lydian tombs. Meanwhile, Yatağan rock-cut tomb M15, with its triangular pediment arrangement, shares similarities with Type 1 tombs in the mountainous Phrygia necropolises and can thus be identified as Phrygian.

This study presents significant results on tomb architecture and burial rituals in the Synnada area through the examples of the Yatağan and İnli rock-cut tombs. The examined tombs display unique architectural features shaped by the interaction between the Phrygian and Lydian cultures. Furthermore, the architectural designs and internal findings of the tombs reflect traces of different periods. Although these rock-cut tombs have been officially classified as belonging to the Roman and Late Roman periods, the findings thus indicate that a more in-depth investigation is required.

The surface surveys and excavations have revealed that the İnli rock-cut tombs underwent at least three phases of use. The initial phase can be dated to the Phrygian period, but the findings show that the tombs were reused during the Roman and Late Roman periods. Findings such as marble plaques and fragments of sarcophagi from the second phase reflect Roman period interactions and craftsmanship. The third phase, confirmed by burial gifts and monogrammed seal impressions, took place in the Late Roman period. The internal architecture of the İnli rock-cut tomb, particularly the L-shaped *klinai* and triangular vaulted structures, demonstrates the clear similarities between the Phrygian and Lydian traditions. These features also resemble other rock-cut tombs and tumuli in the region, particularly in areas like Sardis and Tefenni. Moreover, the stone *klinai* and ceiling workmanship inside the rock-cut tombs reflect an architectural evolution transitioning from Phrygia to Lydia. The nearby Balmahmut rock tomb provides supporting evidence for this development.

The findings from the Yatağan M15 rock-cut tomb provide their own important insights into the initial uses of the tomb. In particular, the terracotta sarcophagi and marble plaques indicate that the tomb was used functionally at different periods, reflecting a cultural evolution. These findings show that the tomb was initially constructed during the Phrygian period, then reused during the Roman period, and finally had a third phase of use during the Late Roman period.

The Yatağan and İnli rock-cut tombs thus provide an important window into the evolution of tomb architecture in the region. These tombs, carrying traces of Phrygian and Lydian cultures, reflect a cultural continuity that was endured into the Roman and Late Roman periods. The architecture and internal findings of the tombs offer a profound understanding of the area's historical and cultural context. Future studies and detailed excavations will further illuminate the cultural interactions and architectural developments of these tombs.

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