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<i>E-mail address</i>	adalya@ku.edu.tr

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# A House Type Tomb in Sinope: A Neglected Burial from Paphlagonia

ZEKİ METE AKSAN\*

## Abstract

A tomb structure west of Sinop was uncovered during a construction work back in 1979. A salvage excavation was conducted by the local museum, and a tomb with a courtyard was revealed. Dated to the Roman period, the distinctive character of its architecture, not known in the region of Paphlagonia, compensates for the scarcity in the finds. The aim of this article is to present and describe the tomb structure based on architectural features from the museum reports and to try to set a date in order to establish its position and importance in the burial traditions of ancient Sinope. Since the tomb could not be preserved following its excavation, the whole work is based on museum reports. Although some information which could be important in understanding the tomb is missing from the museum report, it is still possible to make an interpretation of the tomb thanks to the photographs taken at the time and the careful drawings.

**Keywords:** House-type tomb, tomb architecture, Sinope, Paphlagonia, Black Sea

## Öz

Sinop'un batısında 1979 yılında bir inşaat çalışması sırasında bir mezar yapısına rastlanmıştır. Alanda, yerel müze tarafından gerçekleştirilen kurtarma kazısı, avlulu bir mezar yapısı ortaya çıkarmıştır. Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi'ne tarihlendirilen mezar yapısı, Paphlagonia Bölgesi'nde pek bilinmeyen mimarisinin kendine özgü karakterleriyle, buluntulardaki azlığı telafi eder niteliktedir. Bu makalenin amacı, müze raporlarındaki mimari özelliklere dayanarak mezar yapısını tanıtmak, tanımlamak ve antik Sinope'nin ölü gömme gelenekleri içindeki yerini ve önemini belirlemek için bir tarih belirlemeye çalışmaktır. Mezar kazıldıktan sonra korunamadığı için tüm çalışma müze raporlarına dayanmaktadır. Her ne kadar mezarın anlaşılmasında önemli olacak bazı bilgiler müze raporlarında eksik olsa da o dönemde çekilen fotoğraflar ve özenli çizimler sayesinde mezar hakkında bir yorum yapmak mümkün olabilmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ev tipi mezar, mezar mimarisi, Sinope, Paphlagonia, Karadeniz

## Introduction

Tombs provide us with a great deal of information about the burial customs, funeral rites, and beliefs of ancient people. The types, qualities, and dimensions of tombs depend on factors such as social status and economic power of the deceased as well as workmanship, expertise, and general conditions in any given society. One can argue that tombs have a dual meaning, both as a place where the dead rest for eternity and bear traces of the afterlife, and as a place

\* Asst. Prof. Dr. Zeki Mete Aksan, Sinop Üniversitesi, Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi, Arkeoloji Bölümü, Korucuk Mah. Üniversite Cad., no: 52G, 57000, Sinop, Türkiye. E-mail: zmaksan@sinop.edu.tr ; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3768-8040>

that allows the living to commemorate the deceased. Consequently, the structures built for the dead are in fact extremely valuable not only for the deceased, but also for the family, relatives, and the community to which they belonged, thus providing information about the world of the living. And sometimes a particular tomb type can be an important piece of evidence to understand the individuals as well as identify certain “trends” that emerge in certain periods, and moreover to point out possible similarities between regions within a larger geography.

The discovery of a tomb structure in Sinop back in 1979 is one such example. It was encountered during construction work of residential buildings in Gelincik Quarters and excavated by the Directorate of the Sinop Archaeology Museum under the supervision of Director Servet Yerli in 11-22 October 1979.<sup>1</sup> The tomb structure was located on the southern slope of a ridge extending in an east-west direction, west of the ancient city of Sinope, immediately north of today’s Sinop-Boyabat Road and approximately 60 m above sea level (fig. 1-3).<sup>2</sup> The tomb probably overlooked the main road that reached the ancient city from the west and was probably part of the western necropolis (see Discussion). According to the museum report, the terrain on which the tomb stood was of sandy formation. In addition, a tile grave and grave stones were revealed around and in close proximity to the tomb structure during the salvage excavation of the museum (see below).<sup>3</sup>

The location of the tomb structure and its surroundings are quite noteworthy since it is an area where important finds were uncovered during the excavations and research carried out on Sinope.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it will be useful to briefly mention here the finds revealed in and around the area where the tomb structure was found.

The first systematic excavations carried out in Sinop in the 1950s yielded important information about the necropolis west of the ancient city.<sup>5</sup> Various graves dating from the Archaic period to the Roman period were unearthed during the excavations conducted in the area where the Old Match Factory was once located. This is a few hundred meters west of the western rampart of the ancient city and approximately 900 m east of the tomb structure at Gelincik (fig. 1).<sup>6</sup> Approximately 500 m east of the Gelincik tomb at Bahçeler, a fourth-century BC sculptural fragment of a lion biting a deer was found during the same campaigns and interpreted as a part of a monumental tomb structure.<sup>7</sup> Approximately 700 m east of the Gelincik tomb, a salvage excavation was conducted by the Directorate of the Sinop Archaeology Museum in 2017 and part of the western necropolis was revealed as a result.<sup>8</sup>

The aim of this article is to present and describe the tomb structure based on architectural features from the museum reports and to try to set a date in order to establish its position and importance in the burial traditions of ancient Sinope. According to the museum reports, the tomb structure could not be preserved after its excavation. Its architectural components were looted over time and probably used as construction material. Consequently, information about

<sup>1</sup> The name of the parcel where the tomb was located is 33 Evler mevkisi, Museum Report of 10 December 1979, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Thanks to the cadastral map provided by the museum, it is possible to determine the exact location of the tomb structure; see Museum Report of 10 December 1979, Ill. II.

<sup>3</sup> Museum Report of 10 December 1979, 1.

<sup>4</sup> For an overview of the researches in general on Sinope, see Kaba and Vural 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Akurgal 1956, 50.

<sup>6</sup> Budde 1956a, 6-7; 1956b, 33-34.

<sup>7</sup> Budde 1956a, 7.

<sup>8</sup> Kaba and Vural 2018, 454-55.



its architectural properties is entirely based on the museum report, the photographs taken during and after the museum's excavation, and the illustrations made after the tomb structure was completely revealed. The museum report is unfortunately quite inadequate, a disadvantage in understanding the tomb structure, and contrary to the very detailed illustrations of the tomb, which provide satisfactory information.

First, an architectural description of the tomb will be made, which will be followed by the analogy and dating of the tomb based on parallels from various regions in Asia Minor and beyond. General plan, roofing system, material, and construction techniques will be the main criteria for determining the analogy. After that burials and finds found within the tomb structure will be presented, followed by a discussion where all the finds will be evaluated.

## Architecture

Built of local limestone and oriented in a northwest-southeast direction, the structure consisted of a courtyard and a main chamber (figs. 4-5). The total dimensions of the tomb, including both the main chamber and the courtyard, were 6 m in length and 3.75 m in width.

The courtyard, approached from the southeast, is shaped like a rectangle and measures approximately 3.75 m on its east-west axis and 2.5 m on its north-south axis (fig. 6). The entrance to the courtyard was emphasized by large stone blocks in the appearance of door jambs, which may indicate a door (fig. 5). However, there is no architectural find and the excavation report does not specify any holes present in the stone blocks that might have functioned as jambs. The walls were built of irregular rubblestones with crude workmanship and preserved to the height of the jambs. Whether this was the original height of the courtyard is unclear.<sup>9</sup> Its entrance from the southeast was not in the center of the wall, but slightly to the west. In addition, the southwestern wall was not exactly perpendicular to the northwestern and southeastern walls; therefore the northeastern and the southwestern walls were not perfectly parallel to each other.

A doorway on the same level as the courtyard was located approximately in the middle of the northwestern wall, which is framed by the limestone jambs and a lintel without any decoration (figs. 7-8). On the threshold of regularly cut stones stood a limestone slab that functioned as a door. The face of the door slab was left unfinished. At the upper left part of the slab was placed a circular hole, below which a metal ring was attached with a metal nail (figs. 9-10). The metal ring was found broken due to over-oxidation. Below the circular ring was a metal bolt attached with two metal knots on the interior face of the door. Metal door hinges were also observed. There is a metal square foot at the lower part of the door slab, which is connected to a metal pivot rectangular in section on the narrow side of the door. The metal pivot is placed within a canal cut on the narrow side of the door slab. Lead was poured inside the canal to fix the pivot. According to the museum report, lead was used to fix the metal provisions of the door; in addition, traces of the metal hinge was still observable at the upper section of the door jamb on the interior side of the main chamber.<sup>10</sup> The functioning of the door indicates that the main chamber was visited more than once, either for additional burials (see below) and / or funerary activities.

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<sup>9</sup> No observations were made on any evidence pointing to a superstructure of the courtyard in the museum report.

<sup>10</sup> Museum Report of 10 December 1979, 2.

Unlike the courtyard, the main chamber had a rectangular plan measuring 2.6 m on its east-west axis and 3.4 m on its north-south axis (figs. 4-6). The walls were built of small stone blocks and rubble similar to the courtyard, but with slightly better workmanship.<sup>11</sup> According to the museum report, mud was used as binding material between the rubble.<sup>12</sup> On the western side of the door, the surface of the exterior wall of the main chamber was plastered with mud and coated with pieces of bricks.<sup>13</sup> The façade was especially emphasized with larger stone blocks concentrated around the entrance. In addition, the façade of the main chamber rose to a height of 2.7 m including the pediment overlooking the courtyard. The main chamber at the interior measured approximately 2.3 m in length and 1.5 m in width. The main chamber was covered with a vault on the interior (figs. 12-13), while its exterior was covered with a gabled roof upon which terracotta tiles were placed (figs. 7-8). The walls and vault were observed to be plastered on the inside. Metal nails were observed at regular intervals on the ceiling, which was probably used to prevent the plaster from falling off.<sup>14</sup> The museum report does not specifically state the dimensions or number of the tiles. According to the photographs taken by the excavators, each tile is rectangular. There are three rows of tiles on each side of the roof, each consisting of seven tiles. Thus, approximately 42 tiles were used to cover the gable roof (fig. 11). Four rows of stone blocks in different sizes and shapes were added at the upper part of the façade, above the level of the roof. The width of this extension is not given in the museum report. Tiles were also placed above the pediment (figs. 7-8).

### Analogy and Dating of the Tomb

The Gelincik tomb stands out with its rectangular main chamber covered with a vault from the inside and a gable roof from the outside, an axially designed entrance, a distinctive façade that comprises an entrance emphasized with two doorjambs, a lintel, and a threshold, all of which is crowned by a pediment. As described above, the two short sides of the courtyard are not parallel to each other. Neither the entrance of the courtyard nor the entrance of the main chamber are on the same axis, and the workmanship of the walls forming the courtyard is cruder than that of the main chamber. This suggests that it may have been built later than the main chamber. Therefore, an analogy of the main chamber without the courtyard will be made first.

The closest parallels to the tomb structure at Gelincik are known from Cilicia in Asia Minor. The structures in the northern part of the northeastern cemetery of Elaiussa in Cilicia are classified as house tombs.<sup>15</sup> Their similarities with the Gelincik tomb can be observed in terms of plan, roof covering, and material. All of these tombs have a quadrangular plan, vaulted on the inside and, in some cases, with a slightly sloping gable roof on the outside. In addition, small irregular stones were used as building material. A very similar tomb in terms of rectangular

<sup>11</sup> The museum report states that spolia material was used in the construction of the walls. However, there is no further description or any dating of the spolia.

<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, there is no other evidence about the binding material of the stone blocks and rubble. The mud mentioned in the museum report may in fact have been mortar. For the use of mortar as binding material in house-type tombs, see Townsend and Hoff 2004, 260.

<sup>13</sup> It is not clear whether the brick coating was applied to the entire exterior of the main chamber or whether it was limited to the area around the door; see Museum Report of 10 December 1979, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Museum Report of 10 December 1979, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Schneider 2003, 269, fig. 15.

plan, roofing system, axially placed doorway, and pediment was found; however, it differs from the Gelincik tomb with its secondary main chamber at the back and its ashlar masonry.<sup>16</sup>

A house tomb at Cambazlı<sup>17</sup> measuring approximately 7 x 5 m has a plan of *templum* in *antis* and was covered with a vault and a gable roof. A comparison based only on the main chamber of Gelincik tomb, excluding the courtyard, suggests that the tomb at Cambazlı resembles the Gelincik tomb in terms of roof covering. However, it is not possible to say the same thing in terms of plan and dimensions.

Similar tombs were recorded at Anemurium in Cilicia, where single burial chambers were observed to be covered by a barrel-vault, on which slightly curved roofs and, in some cases, a saddle roof was built.<sup>18</sup>

Outside Cilicia, more parallels for the Gelincik tomb can be found in southern Asia Minor. A structure (Tomb E7) at Ariassos measuring 7.8 x 6.2 m resembles the Gelincik tomb in terms of its roofing system and is dated to late second or third century AD.<sup>19</sup> Another parallel roofing system is at Oinoanda in Lycia, where a tomb belonging to Licinnia Flavilla and Flavianus Diogenes was dated to the second century AD.<sup>20</sup>

The use of a vault inside and a gable roof outside the burial chamber can also be observed in temple tombs, a common tomb type throughout Asia Minor during the second-third centuries AD and especially widespread in Cilicia.<sup>21</sup> Although similarities do exist such as the roofing system consisting of a vault and a gable, there are certain differences between the two types, especially in terms of construction techniques and material.<sup>22</sup> Temple tombs usually have two to four columns at the entrance and have a plan similar to a *prostylos* temple. Consequently, there are two pediments. Their façade is decorated elaborately, and the tombs are built generally in ashlar masonry. Most of them stand on a podium, and the entrance is usually made by stairs.<sup>23</sup>

The evidence provided by the analogy indicate that the Gelincik tomb belonged to this tradition of house tombs.<sup>24</sup> Architectural features displayed on the Gelincik tomb are reminiscent of tomb houses common in Italy, especially in Rome and its surroundings. This is generally accepted to be the place of origination for this type.<sup>25</sup>

A tomb at Pompeii, belonging to Gaius Munatius Faustus according to its inscription, is another example resembling the Gelincik tomb. This structure was defined as a house enclosure

<sup>16</sup> Machatschek 82-83, pl. 35, fig. 51.

<sup>17</sup> Keil and Wilhelm, 1931, 35-36, pl. 18, fig. 55.

<sup>18</sup> Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1971, 90-91, fig. 1, nos. A. VII 8, VIII 5, VIII 19, A. IV 24.

<sup>19</sup> Cormack 1996, 14-17, figs. 10-11; Cormack 2004, 180-82, figs. 36-39.

<sup>20</sup> Hall et al. 1996, 112-16, figs. 1-2.

<sup>21</sup> Durukan 2005, 109-10.

<sup>22</sup> Townsend and Hoff 2004, 251.

<sup>23</sup> For general information on temple tombs, see Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1971; for similar examples from Asia Minor, see Işık 1995; Hallet and Coulton 1993; Schneider 2003; Köse 2005; Durukan 2009; Townsend and Hoff 2004, 275. For temple tombs with roofing systems similar to the Gelincik tomb: at Iotape (third century AD), see Townsend and Hoff 2004, 274-75, figs. 25-26; at Hierapolis (end of the Roman Republic - beginning of the Roman Imperial Period), see Waelkens 1982, 432, 438, fig. 13.

<sup>24</sup> "House tomb" and "grave house" are the most common terms used to designate this type. For "grave house," see Durukan 2005; for "house tomb," see Schneider 2003.

<sup>25</sup> For the origin of the tomb type, see Hesberg and Zanker 1987; Rönnberg 2018, 173-85. For a detailed description and analysis on the house type tomb, see Machatschek 1967, 80-84.

because its façade was similar to that of a house.<sup>26</sup> Its entrance was positioned centrally on the façade wall, while an inscription was placed in the middle of the triangular tympanum.

There are also several examples at Rome that resemble the Gelincik tomb. One includes a façade that is finished with a pediment and whose height exceeds the roof covering of the burial chamber, again quite similar to the Gelincik tomb.<sup>27</sup> They differ from each other in terms of material and workmanship. In addition, there is not a gable roof above the vault. Adjacent to this tomb is another house tomb that includes a large courtyard in front resembling the courtyard of the Gelincik tomb. Further similarities with the Gelincik tomb demonstrate itself at the design of the entrance, which was emphasized by stone doorjamb, lintel, and threshold of monolithic blocks.<sup>28</sup>

The analogy of the tomb points to a date in the second and third century AD.<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, as pointed out above, the workmanship of the courtyard of the Gelincik tomb is poorer compared to the main chamber, and the southwestern wall was not placed parallel to the opposite wall of the courtyard. Moreover, the entrance to the courtyard and the entrance to the main chamber were not exactly on the same axis. All these features may point either to a lack of expertise or possibly that the courtyard was built later than the main chamber.<sup>30</sup> There is one parallel at Rome that resembled the tomb structure together with its main chamber and courtyard (see above).

## Burials

A single burial in the courtyard and several in the main chamber of the tomb were recorded during the salvage excavation. At the northeastern part of the courtyard, a rectangular grave oriented in a northwest-southeast direction was formed by two thin walls. The northeastern one was attached to the northeastern wall of the courtyard (figs. 14-15). According to the plan and photographs of the museum report, the width of each wall is not more than 0.25 m, and the width of the grave is approximately 0.8 m. The report does not specify anything about the material, but a stone row on top of each wall can be observed in the photograph (fig. 14). According to the report, the grave was observed to be covered by flat tiles; in addition, two extra stone lids were placed on the northwestern part. An inhumation burial was encountered inside the grave; however, not a single grave find is mentioned in the report.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, a rectangular grave stele of limestone with inscription (fig. 25) was found during the excavation, fallen towards the northern part of the grave (see below).

The main chamber was observed to be filled with soil up to a height of approximately 1 m. A brick wall was revealed after excavation, which extended in a northwest-southeast direction that divided the main chamber into two parts (fig. 15). It measured approximately 2.3 m

<sup>26</sup> Hagen 2016, 40-41.

<sup>27</sup> Calza 1940, 45, fig. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Calza 1940, 58, fig. 16.

<sup>29</sup> For the dating of the house tombs at Anemurium in Cilicia generally to the second and third century AD, see Alföldi-Rosenbaum 1971, 30; Durukan 2005, 118. For those dating from the mid-second century onwards in the Olba region, see Machatschek 1967, 105; Durukan 2005, 116. For different interpretations of the dates see Berns 2003. For different tomb types where vault and saddle roof are observed in the same roofing system, see Masino and Sobrà 2016, 442-43, fig. 14.

<sup>30</sup> The museum report also states that the ante chamber was annexed at a later stage to the main chamber. However, there is no further explanation and evidence for this assumption; see Museum Report of 10 December 1979, 1.

<sup>31</sup> There is no information about the details of the skeleton found inside the grave.

in length and 0.15 m in width (fig. 15), while its height was measured as 0.5 m. The upper surface of the brick wall was observed to be approximately at the same level of the threshold (fig. 16).<sup>32</sup> Six stone slabs of different dimensions covered the western part of the main chamber (fig. 6). According to the museum report, a total of ten skulls and skeletal fragments were found, five in the western part of the main chamber and five in the eastern part.<sup>33</sup>

## Finds

Contrary to the satisfactory architectural findings, the salvage excavation carried out by the museum inside the tomb structure did not reveal the same level of grave finds. Therefore, it is highly probable that the tomb was robbed in antiquity. However, the information on some of the finds in the museum report raises serious doubts about the exact location, time and manner of their discovery. Therefore, although these finds will be briefly discussed in this article, I believe that it would be misleading to make further interpretations about the date and significance of the tomb structure, as well as the identities of the burials, on the basis of these finds, and that it would be problematic to associate them with the tomb structure with certainty. An inscribed grave stele of limestone associated with the grave located in the northeastern part of the courtyard and a bronze coin found in the main chamber are the finds that can be directly associated with the tomb structure. The finds that cannot be directly associated with the Gelincik tomb for the reasons mentioned above are two gravestones, a grave marker, two tile fragments, and a marble head.

The inscribed grave stele was found at the foot of the grave at the northeastern part of the courtyard (fig. 25). Made of limestone, it measures 1.2 m in length, 0.27 m in width, and 0.1 m in thickness. It was published by French in 2004 and dated to the first and second century AD.<sup>34</sup> The inscription is in Latin and some of the lines, also observed by French, are worn off, which may point to a secondary usage of the stele. The name C. Fanius may indicate the name of the person buried in the grave or the person who had the stele erected.<sup>35</sup>

A bronze coin was found on the eastern part of the main chamber (figs. 17-18).<sup>36</sup> Its diameter is 18 mm, and its thickness is 3 mm. On the obverse is a head of Geta facing right with head bare, with the legend, [P] SEPT GETAC C. On the reverse, a captive(?) with a frontal view standing left with a legend, CIF SINOPES. The coin dates to AD 198-209 when Geta was Caesar.

As for the finds that cannot be definitively associated with the tomb structure, two of them are gravestones (figs. 19-20) and one a grave marker (fig. 21), which were all found in front of the tomb structure.<sup>37</sup> They are all made of limestone. The two gravestones are un-inscribed and bulbous on top, while the grave marker is in the shape of a phallus on both ends. Measurements of gravestone no. 1 are 61.5 cm in length and 18.5 cm in width, while

<sup>32</sup> Museum Report of 10 December 1979, 3.

<sup>33</sup> On the gradual decline of the practice of cremation from the second century AD onwards and its gradual replacement by inhumation burial that spread to the provinces by the mid-third century, see Toynbee 1971, 40.

<sup>34</sup> According to the report, the stele must have stood at the foot of the grave; see Museum Report of 10 December 1979, 2. For the publication, see French 2004, 94-95, no. 129.

<sup>35</sup> I am most grateful to Prof. Dr. Mustafa Hamdi Sayar for his support with the publication search and his own observations on the inscription.

<sup>36</sup> Museum Report of 10 December 1979, 3. This coin was previously published in Casey 2010, no. 363.

<sup>37</sup> Gravestone no. 1, inv. no. 6-3-79; gravestone no. 2, inv. no. 6-4-79; grave marker, inv. no. 6-7-79.

gravestone no. 2 is 49 cm in length and 20.5 cm in width. The diameter of the grave marker is 38 cm. According to the museum report, there is also a tile grave that was found in front of the tomb structure, approximately 0.6 m below the level of the tomb. The museum report does not specify the exact distance between the tile grave and the Gelincik tomb, though it is clear that the tile grave was located at a different elevation level, lower than the tomb structure. There are two tile fragments<sup>38</sup> (figs. 22 and 23) preserved in the museum storage room that might have belonged to this tile grave, however, they could also belong to the tiles that covered up the roof of the tomb structure.

A marble head of a helmeted soldier (fig. 24) was found 4.5 m away from the southwestern part of the courtyard. The head depicts a man with a beard and a helmet. The helmet covers the hair, part of the cheeks and forehead. A slight elevation is observed on top of the helmet for perhaps a crest with a different material. A cheek-piece is well preserved on the right side of the helmet, leaving the right ear open. Above the ear and cheek-piece a volute decoration can be observed. The head is worn off on the left side.<sup>39</sup>

There were no other finds in relation to the marble head in the vicinity of the tomb structure such as a base or an inscription, nor there were any finds such as weapons and military gear in the grave inventory of the Gelincik tomb that could be linked to the marble head. For all these reasons, the suggestion that the marble head may be evaluated separately from the Gelincik tomb is more favorable for the time being, and it would not be incorrect to consider the possibility that it might have belonged to another grave in the vicinity of the Gelincik tomb. Nonetheless, all these finds together with the marble head further strengthen the fact that the Gelincik tomb was in the immediate vicinity of the western necropolis.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The Gelincik tomb provides interesting results in terms of location, date, and the burial tradition to which it belongs. It has been mentioned above that other graves, thought to belong to the necropolis west of ancient Sinope, were found during the excavations carried out in the immediate vicinity and in the area between the Gelincik tomb and the western city walls. The fact that a tile grave and finds indicating other possible graves were also encountered around the structure supports the view that the Gelincik tomb was not alone in this location. It is also important in terms of proving that the city's western necropolis extended westward along the main road. Therefore, in terms of its location, it can be suggested that the tomb structure is located within the western necropolis of the city. In this respect, because the Gelincik tomb was built on the southern slope of a hill with a northwest-southeast orientation and entrance facing southeast, this indicates its location could be seen from the road approaching Sinope from the west. From a topographical point of view, the tomb must have overlooked the western route approaching the ancient city.

As stated above, the plan, roofing system, general appearance of the façade and axially aligned entrance to the main chamber are the key elements that help determine the type of

<sup>38</sup> Inv. no. 6-6-79 (Length: 42 cm, width: 35 cm, thickness: 5.5 cm) and inv. no. 6-5-79 (Length: 36.5 cm, width: 36 cm, thickness: 4 cm).

<sup>39</sup> Museum Report of 10 December 1979, 5-6. Inv. no. 6-7-79. Height of the head is 36 cm, while the width is 18 cm. A similar marble statue of a helmeted soldier in the Louvre Museum dates to the first and second century AD (<https://collections.louvre.fr/ark:/53355/cl010277257>), while a fragmentary marble head of a helmeted soldier in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is dated to the first century AD (Fragmentary marble head of a helmeted soldier | Roman | Early Imperial, Flavian | The Metropolitan Museum of Art ([metmuseum.org](https://www.metmuseum.org))).

the tomb. Close analogies regarding architectural features point to a date in the second-third century AD. The presence of a bronze coin dating to the early third century also supports this assumption. The number of burials inside the main chamber and function of the door indicate a long-term usage of the tomb structure. The metal nails observed during the museum's excavation inside the main chamber may indicate an attempt to prevent the plaster from falling off, which can also support this view. One may suppose that the structure was perhaps built as a family tomb for a certain period of time during which necessary alterations might have been made. Meanwhile, the condition of the graves and single find of a bronze coin within the main chamber also raise some questions, so it is difficult to ascertain whether the tomb was robbed in antiquity or at a later period.

The fact that Gelincik tomb structure belongs to the house tomb tradition is another important point to be emphasized. The house tomb tradition became quite widespread in the coastal cities of Cilicia, Pamphylia, Lycia, Caria, and Ionia during the Roman Imperial period.<sup>40</sup> Except for the Gelincik tomb, a house tomb has not been found so far in Sinope or Paphlagonia. From this point of view, a definitive interpretation of this singular example from Sinope is not possible for the time being. However, even though it is a unique example, it is worthwhile to make a comparison with other regions in Asia Minor. In this regard, as stated in the analogy and dating section above, the closest examples of the house-type tomb tradition to which the Gelincik tomb belongs are found in Cilicia in Asia Minor.<sup>41</sup> Last but not least, it would be useful to remind some historical information about Sinope and the region Paphlagonia.

Sinope, an ancient city on the southern shore of the Black Sea was a major center throughout antiquity. It had strong ties with other major centers not only around the Black Sea but also in the Aegean and the Mediterranean worlds due to its commercial activities. It played a significant role as the capital city of the Pontic Kingdom during the late Hellenistic Age. After the historical events following the defeat of Mithradates VI in 63 BC, Sinope became part of the Roman Republic in the province Bithynia et Pontus and received Roman colonists in 45 BC.<sup>42</sup>

Our knowledge on Sinope during the Roman Imperial Period is extremely limited. When we look at the research history of the city of Sinope, it is notable that scientific excavations have mostly focused on the early settlement of Sinope.<sup>43</sup> Strabo mentions stoas, gymnasium and an agora in his time (12.546). During the reign of Traian, an aqueduct was built to provide clean water to the city.<sup>44</sup> Recent excavations at Balatlar Church revealed that the building was originally constructed as a bath complex that dated to the Roman Period.<sup>45</sup> Salvage excavation of the Sinop Archaeology Museum revealed architectural fragments of a *nymphaion* dating back to the second century AD.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, the discovery of a tomb structure in the western necropolis of the ancient city, which displays Roman cultural influences especially in terms of architecture, is extremely important for the city of Sinope in the Roman Imperial Period.

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<sup>40</sup> Rönnerberg 2018.

<sup>41</sup> For Roman influence in Cilicia, see Spanu 2003. For the Roman involvement in Cilicia and the process of the region becoming a Roman province see Mitford 1980 and Oktan 2011. It would be indeed interesting to note that there might have been some similarities in the process of provincialization of Cilicia and Paphlagonia during the first century BC in Asia Minor.

<sup>42</sup> Magie 1950, 365, 407-14; Barat 2022, 90-91.

<sup>43</sup> Kaba and Vural 2018, 440-44.

<sup>44</sup> Robinson 1906, 257.

<sup>45</sup> Köroğlu et al. 2014, 512-13.

<sup>46</sup> Kaba and Vural 2018, 453-54.

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Fragmentary marble head of a helmeted soldier | Roman | Early Imperial, Flavian | The Metropolitan Museum of Art ([metmuseum.org](https://www.metmuseum.org))

Makale Geliş / Received : 30.11.2023

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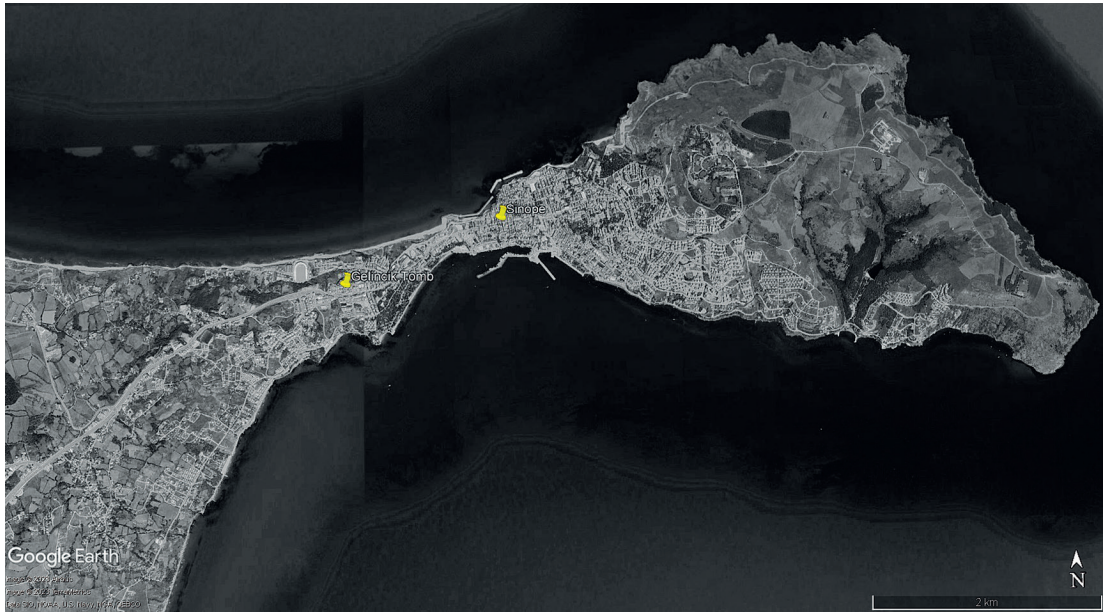


FIG. 1 Location of Gelincik tomb.

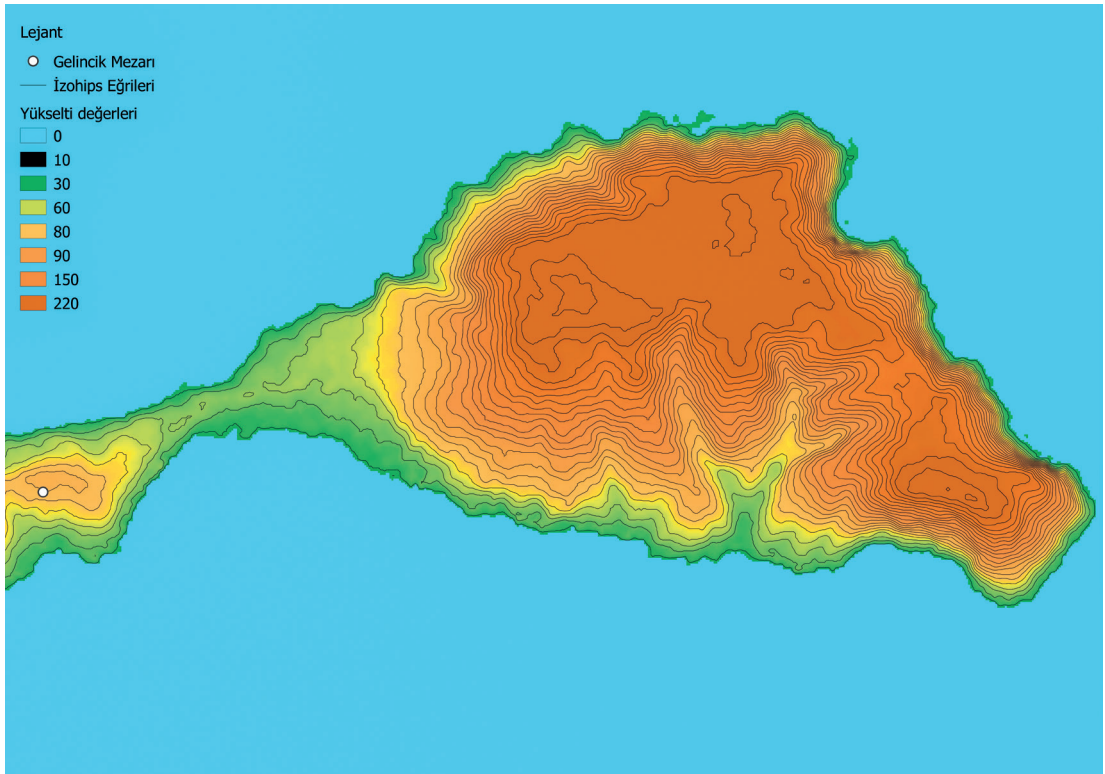


FIG. 2 Location of Gelincik tomb from the west and the promontory of Sinop.



FIG. 3  
Before the excavation. Sloping hill where the tomb was located. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.



FIG. 4  
After excavation. Tomb from the southeast. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.

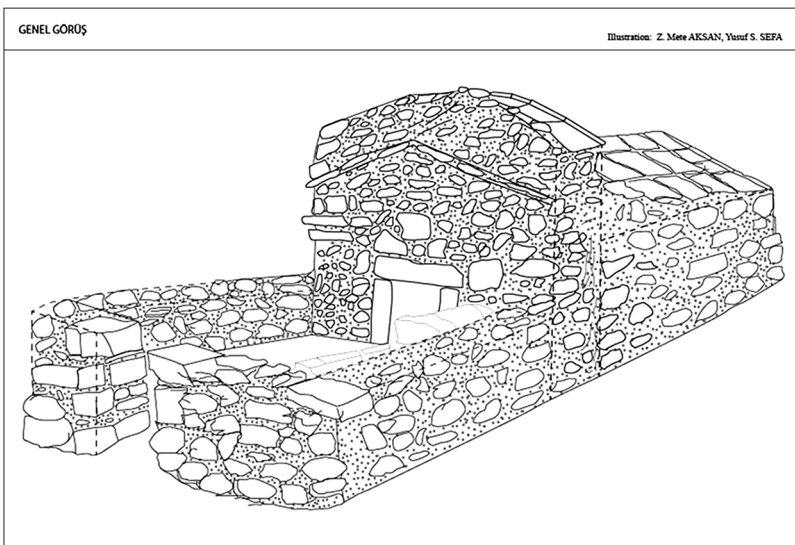


FIG. 5  
Illustration of the tomb from the southeast. After Mehmet Armağan. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.

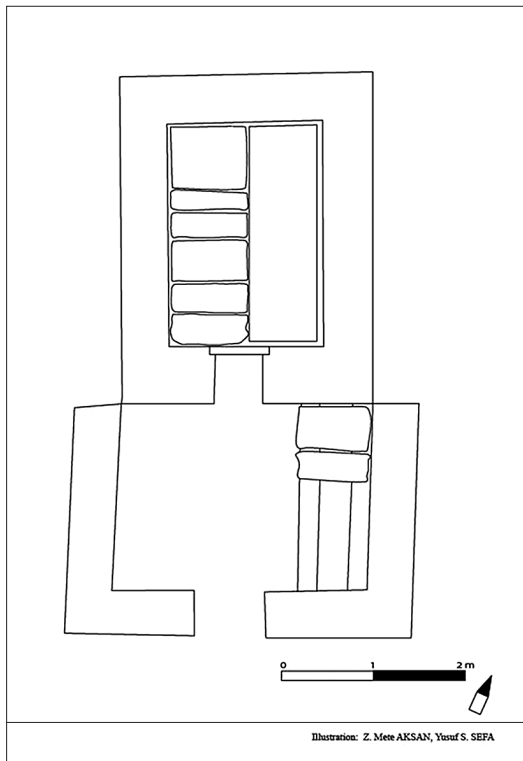


FIG. 6 Plan of the tomb. After Mehmet Armağan. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.



FIG. 7 Facade of the main chamber. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.

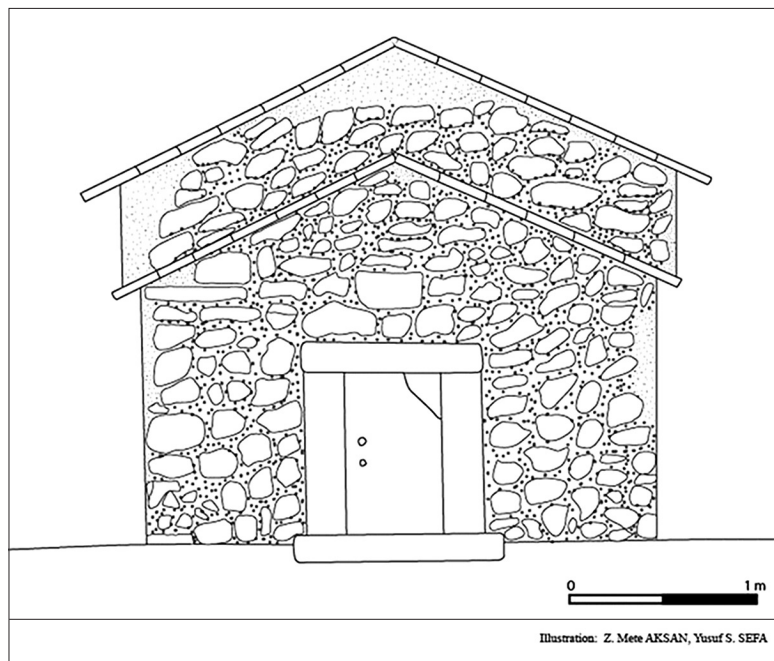


FIG. 8 Facade of the main chamber. After Mehmet Armağan. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.



FIG. 9 Door at the entrance to the main chamber. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.

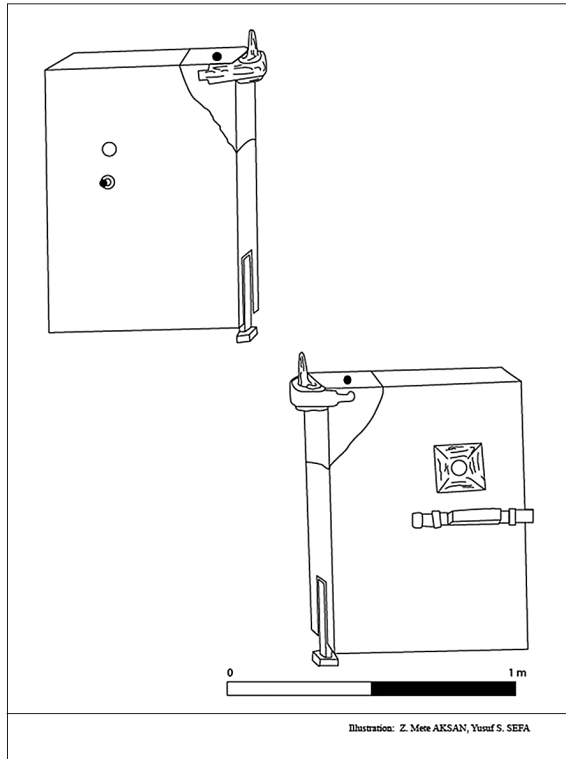


FIG. 10 Illustration of the door. After Mehmet Armağan. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.



FIG. 11 Tiles covering the gable roof of the main chamber. From the north. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.

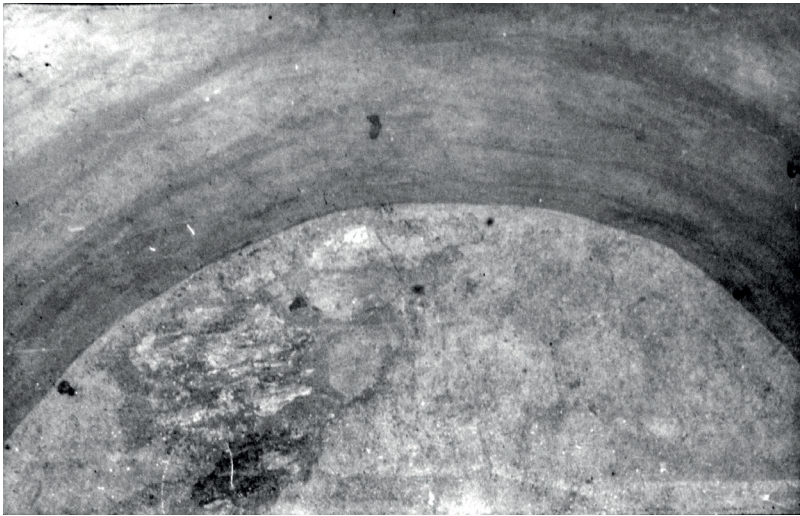


FIG. 12  
Vault inside the main chamber. The vault and the rear wall are plastered. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.

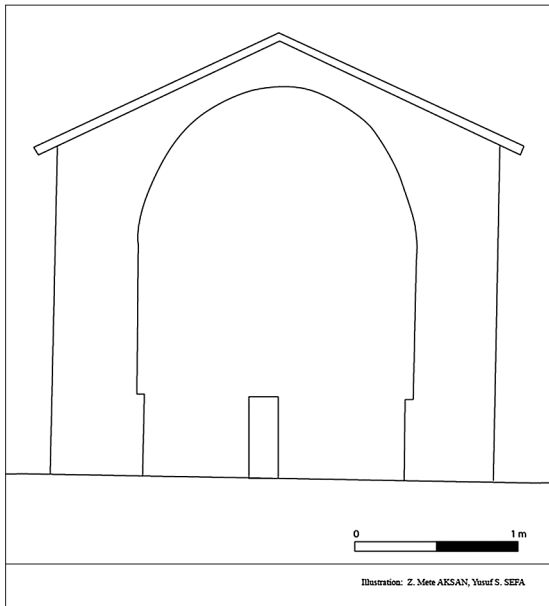


FIG. 13 Section of the main chamber demonstrating both the vault and the gable roof. After Mehmet Armağan. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.



FIG. 14 Inhumation burial at the eastern part of the courtyard. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.

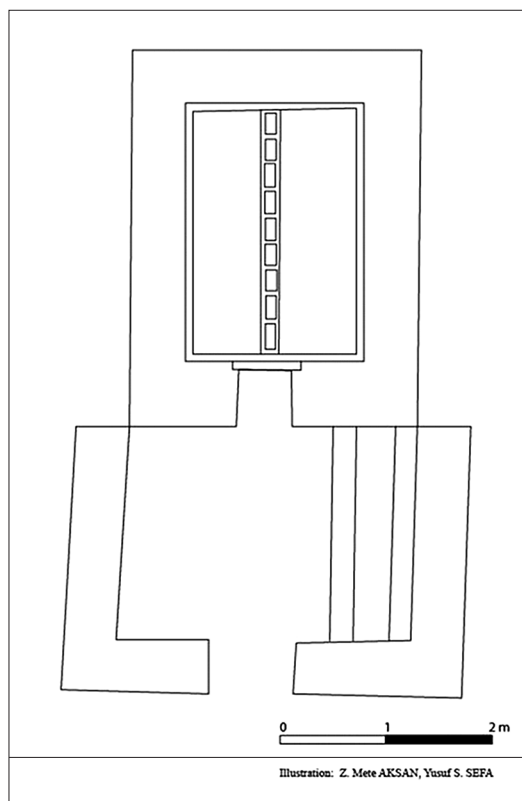


FIG. 15 Plan of the tomb structure and the burials. After Mehmet Armağan. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.

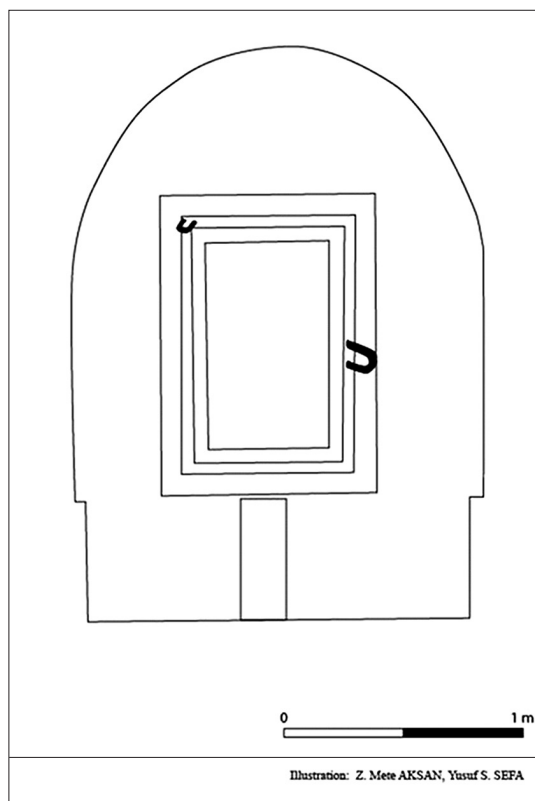


FIG. 16 Section of the main chamber with the entrance and the section of the brick wall inside the main chamber. After Mehmet Armağan. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.



FIG. 17 Bronze coin, obverse. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.



FIG. 18 Bronze coin, reverse. Courtesy of the Directorate of Sinop Archaeology Museum.



FIG. 19  
Limestone grave  
stone.



FIG. 20  
Limestone grave  
stone.



FIG. 22  
Tile piece.

FIG. 21  
Limestone grave marker.





FIG. 23 Tile piece.



FIG. 24 Marble head.

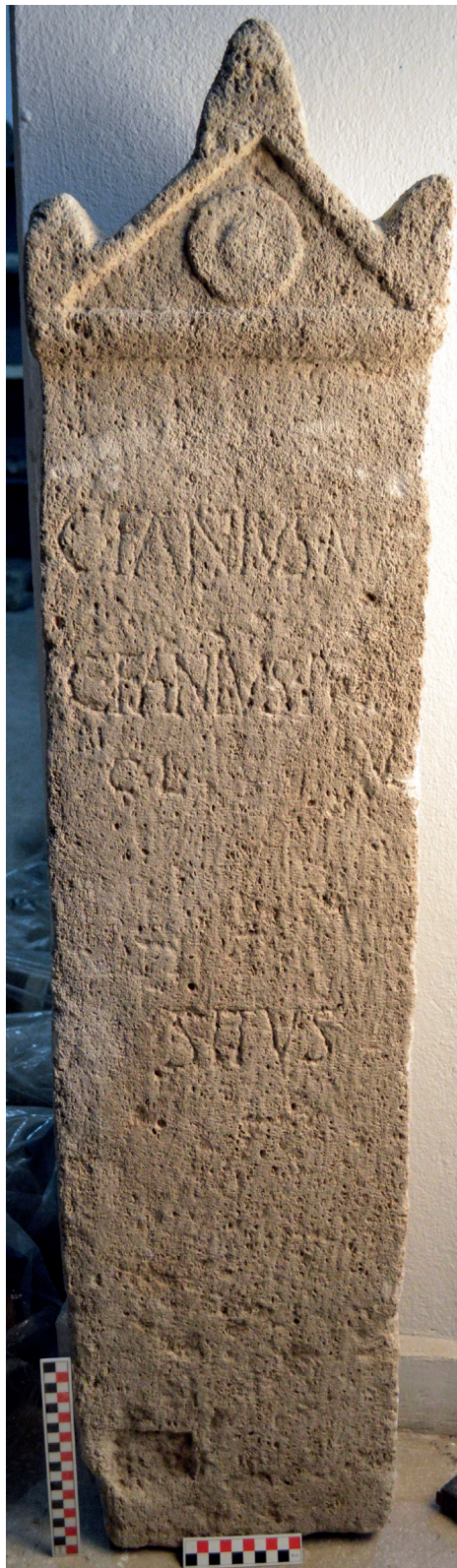


FIG. 25 Inscribed stele.





