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A Group Imported from Achemhöyük: Black-Glazed Pottery from the Hellenistic Period



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Abstract

In this first study on the Hellenistic period culture of Achemhöyük, the Black Glazed Pottery among the imported pottery of the settlement were evaluated. This article, the Black Glazed Pottery were dated, introduced to the scientific world and the socio-economic structure of Achemhöyük in that period and the relations between the regions were tried to be understood. In this study, the Black Glazed Pottery found at Achemhöyük has been dated and introduced to the scientific world, and an attempt has been made to understand the socio-economic structure of Achemhöyük during that period as well as its interregional interactions. The Achemhöyük samples in the form of kantharoi and bowls were dated to the last quarter of the 4th century BC and the 3rd century BC. Their production characteristics suggest that they were produced in West Anatolia/North Ionia. This information reveals that Achemhöyük had direct or indirect relations with Western Anatolia at the mentioned date and that Achemhöyük had a place in the regional trade network in the 3rd century BC. These data have demonstrated that Achemhöyük established direct or indirect relations with Western Anatolia in the 3rd century BC and that it was part of the regional trade network during this period.

Keywords

Hellenistic Period • Achemhöyük • Cappadocia • Black Glazed Pottery • Imported Pottery



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Introduction

Achemhöyük is located within the borders of Yeşilova Yeşilova Town, 18 km northwest of Aksaray Province, southeast of the Salt Lake (Özgüç, 1968: p. 2) (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Achemhöyük and Sites with Black Glazed Pottery in Central Anatolia



The settlement of Achemhöyük consists of two parts; mound and the Lower Town. The mound is 650x550 m in diameter and 20 m in height (Kamış & Şener, 2022: 348). The dimensions of the Lower Town have not been determined for the time being. However, the soundings carried out at different points of the Lower Town, which attracts attention with its size, have shown show that this settlement surrounded the mound and spread over a much larger area than the mound during the Assyrian Trade Colonies Age (Kamış & Şener, 2022: 348).

The first scientific excavations began in 1962 and have continued uninterrupted until today. For more than 60 years, the excavations were carried out under the direction of Prof. Dr. Nimet Özgüç between 1962-1989 and Prof. Dr. Aliye Öztan between 1989-2019. The studies have been carried out under the direction of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yalçın Kamış since 2020.

The results of the excavations at Achemhöyük have demonstrated demonstrate that the Lower Town was inhabited only during the Assyrian Trade Colonies Age, while the mound was inhabited from the Early Bronze Age onwards until the Roman Period with some interruptions (Özgüç, 1968: 3). According to the order of the stratification based on the archaeological information, the earliest stratum XII and V belong to the Early Bronze Age; and the IV-Ith strata belong to the Assyrian Trade Colonial Age (Kamış & Şener, 2022: 350-372; Şener, 2024: 3). The settlement, which ended at the end of the Assyrian Trade Colonial Age, resumed during the Classical Period and continued until the 1st century AD (Öztan, 2012: 66). From this date onwards, the settlement shifted to today's Aksaray city centre, which was formerly called Garsaura but was rebuilt by Arkhelaos, the king of Cappadocia, and renamed Arkhelais (See. Plin. HN., 6.3.8; Joseph., AJ., 17, 339).

Acmehöyük represents one of the largest cities of Central Anatolia with the Early Bronze Age and Assyrian Trade Colonies Age settlements mentioned above. Archaeological findings obtained from these settlements helped to understand the historical development of the region by providing information on the social, economic and cultural structure of these periods (Kamış, 2017; Kamış, 2018; Kamış, 2022a; Kamış, 2022b; Şener 2024). For this reason, studies at the mound have long focused on these two periods and the Hellenistic Roman settlements have not been the subject of a detailed study until today. Therefore, research on this period has been initiated in order to contribute both to the complete understanding of the stratigraphy of Acmehöyük and to the elucidation of the Hellenistic Period culture of Central Anatolia. This study includes the results of the first research on the Hellenistic-Roman Periods.

Acmehöyük in Hellenistic-Roman Periods

At Acmehöyük, the mound was abandoned at the end of the Assyrian Trade Colonies Age and the settlement resumed during the Hellenistic Period. The settlement pattern of the mound completely changed with this period. Accordingly, the mound, which hosted a dense and extensive settlement during the Early Bronze Age and Assyrian Trade Colonial Age, was inhabited in a more limited area during the Hellenistic-Roman Period.

The archaeological information on the Hellenistic-Roman Period settlements was obtained during the extensive excavations carried out for the Assyrian Trade Colonies Age levels. The information obtained during these excavations revealed that the settlements of this period were concentrated especially on the hills to the south of the mound (Figure 2). The southeastern and southwestern elevations, the southern slope and the surroundings of the Assyrian Trade Colonies Age palace, now called Sarıkaya Palace, are the areas where the Hellenistic-Roman Period settlements were identified. Archaeological studies indicate that the Hellenistic-Roman Periods in these areas consisted of at least two successive building levels (Figure 2 - Figure 3).

Figure 2
Acmehöyük Topographic Map and Sarıkaya Palace

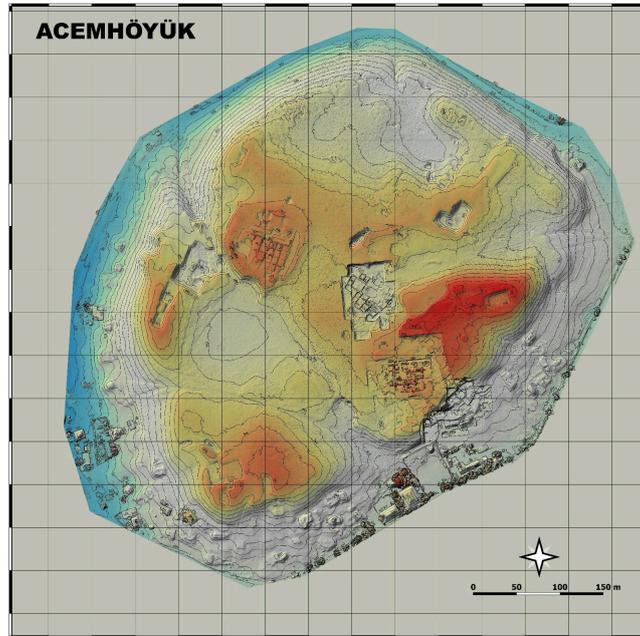


Figure 3
Achemhöyük South Slope Hellenistic Period Remains



The architectural remains of these levels are represented by mudbrick walled buildings with stone foundations. The buildings have courtyards, interconnected multi-roomed rooms and the rooms have quadrangular plans.

The archaeological materials associated with these structures include pottery, terracotta figurines and their moulds, animal-shaped drinking vessels, oil lamps, coins (Kızılkaya, 1990)¹, ivory and metal artefacts (Öztañ, 2012: 66).

Among the archaeological materials mentioned above, pottery constitute the most dense group of finds. Preliminary studies on pottery have shown that Achemhöyük pottery can be divided into two groups: regional/local production and imported production. Among these groups, imported pottery, which give clues about Achemhöyük's interregional commercial and cultural relations, were evaluated first. The imported groups, which are also the subject of this study, are represented by Black Glazed Pottery at Achemhöyük for the time being.

Black Glazed Pottery

Black Glazed Pottery are one of the most common groups of the Hellenistic Period. This group was developed by Athenian potters in the late 6th century BC, inspired by the elegant and shiny appearance of Persian metal vessels (Miller, 1997: 136-137; Cook, 1960: 143). A metallic lustre was achieved on the surface of the pottery by means of a black slip obtained by several stages of firing². This made them one of the most popular products of the period, both aesthetically and functionally.

The most characteristic feature of the Attica Black Glazed Pottery is their clay and slip structure. The clays of these ceramics are in shades of red, brown or pink and very well refined, fine sandy. Although the slips vary in tone and quality throughout the period, they are generally black, mostly glossy but sometimes matt (Farnsworth & Simmons, 1963: 389; Rotroff, 1982: 14; Rotroff, 1997: 10-11). The decorations on them are

¹The coin of the Classical Period consists of one coin of Klenderis dating between 450-400 BC.

²For black slip and firing methods, see Farnsworth & Simmons, 1963, p. 389; Noble, 1960, pp. 310-311.

palmette and roulette ornaments especially on the tondos of the open vessels (Talcott, 1935: 487; Rotroff, 1997: 37-38). Some of the specimens also have banded reserves (Sparkes & Talcott 1970: 17-18) under the bases or on the outer surfaces, which may be included in the ornamental elements.

Although Black Glazed Pottery were initially produced in Athens, they were also produced in different centres outside Athens (Smyrna: Cook, 1965; Pergamon: Schäfer, 1968; Ephesos: Mitsopoulos-Leon, 1991; Daskyleion: Tuna-Nörling, 1999; Tralleis: Civelek, 2001; Sardeis: Rotroff & Oliver, 2003; Troia: Tekkök-Biçken, 1996; Gordion: Stewart, 2010; Tarsus: Jones, 1950; Knidos: Kögler, 2010; Klazomenai: Hasdağlı, 2010). However, the clays and slips of the Black Glazed Pottery produced outside Athens never achieved Athenian quality. However, imitations called “Atticizing”, which are almost identical in form and slip to Athenian products, were also produced (Berlin & Lynch 2002). Atticizing ceramics can be distinguished by their production techniques and clay characteristics. The clay colours of these ceramics vary in shades of pale red, brown, brownish red. The clay colour of some examples is grey or brown in the core and pink or red around the core due to firing. The clay structures are also porous and mica and lime inclusions can be observed.

Black Glazed Pottery have spread over a very wide area in ancient geography since their introduction. In the centres within the distribution area, both examples imported from Athens and locally/regionally produced examples are observed. Sparkes-Talcott states that Black Glazed Pottery were found in Italy, Sicily, Bulgaria, Germany, France, Spain, the Nile Valley, Nubia, Babylon, Susa, Northern Syria, Palestine, Cyprus and the western parts of the Persian Empire (Sparkes & Talcott, 1970: 16). Anatolia is one of the areas where these pottery were both produced and found. These pottery were found especially in the metropolises along the coastline. However, Central Anatolia has recently been added to the find centres of imported Black Glazed Pottery. With the recent studies, these ceramics come from the excavations of Dorylaion (Yedidağ, 2024: 14-30); Gordion (Stewart, 2010: 156-157, Cat. No. 71-83, 95-97, 123, 125-130, 132, 133, 144, 153, 154, 158-160, 162); Çatalhöyük (Zoroğlu, 2007: 13-21); Kaman-Kalehöyük (Matsumura, 2007: 97-110, Fig. 23), Alişar (Waage, 1937: 74, 76, Pl. VII, 3, Fig. 81, 2, Fig. 86, 5); Kınıkhöyük (D’Alfonso *et al.*, 2014, Fig. 11) and Kültepe (Tüysüz, 2021: 161-177) (Figure 1). Acmehöyük is another centre in Central Anatolia where Black Glazed Pottery were recovered.

Black Glazed Pottery from Acmehöyük

Black Glazed Pottery of Acmehöyük were recovered from the Hellenistic Period buildings in plan squares SA/TA-42-43, ZA/42 above Sarıkaya Palace during the 1968 excavations (Figure 2). There is no detailed information about the archaeological contexts of these ceramics. Nevertheless, the evaluated ceramics are very important as they are the first concrete evidence of Acmehöyük’s interregional communication network in the Hellenistic Period.

Black Glazed Pottery from Acmehöyük have a homogeneous structure in terms of clay and slip properties. The clay colours are mostly red and brown and in one example pink. The clay colours of some sherds vary in and around the core due to firing. (Cat.no 3, 6, 8, 11, 14). The clay of some sherds, which are mostly well refined, contains lime (Cat. nos. 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15) and mica (Cat. nos. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13). The surfaces are slipped in different shades of black and are either matt or glossy. The slip is red only in three samples (Cat. nos. 9, 12, 13).

The analysed pottery are represented by two different forms: incurved rim bowls and kantharos.

Incurved Rim Bowls

The bowl examples belong to the incurved rim group, also known as *echinus* bowls in the literature (Edwards, 1975: 29; Rudolph, 1978: 216; Rotroff, 1997: 161). In general, this form has an incurved rim, spherical body and ring base. Bowls of this form were used as tableware (Schäfer, 1968: 37; Sparkes & Talcott, 1970: 131-

132; Rotroff 1997: 156–161). This type of bowls is one of the most common forms found in Hellenistic Period settlements. And they have been documented with their typological development thanks to the stratigraphic information obtained from many centres³.

The most detailed information on the form origin and type development of black glazed bowls is provided by Athens-based studies, one of the most important sources of the literature (Sparkes & Talcott, 1970: 130-132; Edwards, 1975: 29; Rotroff, 1997: 161). These studies reveal that bowls with incurved rims were first produced in the 5th century BC as a continuation of single-handled bowls. This form became widespread rapidly from the 4th century BC, but lost its popularity from the last quarter of the 3rd century BC. Hellenistic examples are divided into three groups as *Shallow Classical Type*, *Shallow Hellenistic Type* and *Deep Type* according to the development of form and decoration (Rotroff, 1997: 161). The examples in the *Shallow Classical Type* have similar characteristics with the bowls of the Classical Period. Produced intensively in the last quarter of the 4th century BC and the first quarter of the 3rd century BC, the tondo of this type of bowls is decorated with roulette and four palmette motifs inside the roulette. On the exterior surface, the junction of the body and the base is decorated with a reserved band and the base is chamfered. The bowls of the second type, the *Shallow Hellenistic Type*, are much simpler than those of the *Shallow Classical Type*. Bowls of this type, popular in the last quarter of the 4th century BC and the middle of the 3rd century BC, have undecorated tondos and exterior surfaces, and flat bases. The slips are thin and there are also semi-slipped examples within the type. The bowls in the last group, the *Deep Type*, have a deeper body structure than the first two types. Popular in the 3rd century BC, this type was used intensively until the 3rd quarter of the 2nd century BC.

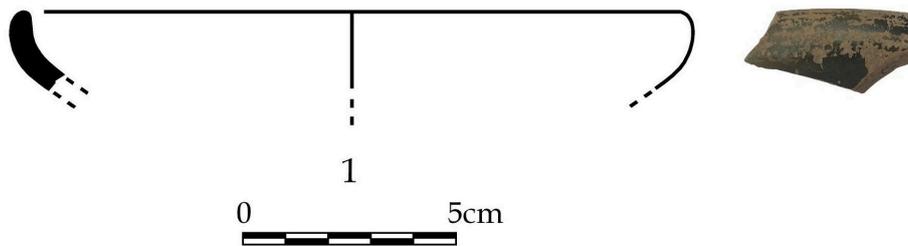
The bowls recovered from the Acmehöyük excavations belong to the *Shallow Classical Type* or *Shallow Hellenistic Type* group according to this typology (Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6). The samples are represented by eight sherds, all of which are rim, body and base fragments. The rim diameters are between 15 and 20 cm. A general analysis of the form schemes shows that the rim is incurved inverted and the body is shallow. The bases should be ring-shaped according to the complete examples found in different centres. Although these bowls are similar in terms of the general form scheme, they have some differences in terms of the stylistic features of the rim and body structures. According to these differences, Acmehöyük bowls can be divided into three groups.

Group 1 (Cat. no. 1) Fig.4

In the first group of bowls, the rounded rim is gently turned inwards. In other words, the rounded rim rises as a continuation of the body. And it shows a slight inclination inwards. The body is rather shallow compared to the other groups.

Figure 4

Photographs and drawings of black-glazed pottery found at Acmehöyük



³For the typological development of bowls with inverted rims, see Tarsus: Jones, 1950: 155-157; Ephesus: Mitsopoulos-Leon, 1991: 18-19; Pergamon: Schäffer, 1968: 37-38; Troia Tekkök-Biçken, 1996: 20; Knossos: Coldstream, 1999: 335.

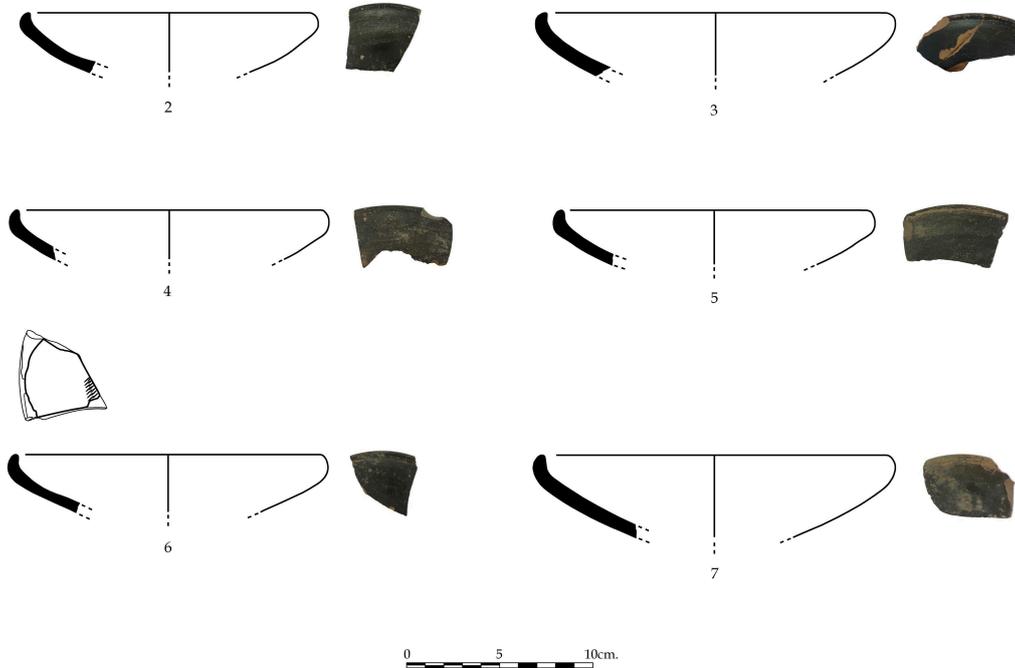
This example can be dated with reference to the rim and body form. Both Attic and local productions of this sherd have been found at many Hellenistic sites. In this respect, Cat. no. 1, with its slightly incurved rim and shallow body form, is in parallel with the examples from the Athenian Agora (Rotroff, 1997: Fig. 63, 965), which are included in the *Shallow Classical Type* bowls group and dated to 325-300 BC, and from Kerameikos (Knigge, 2005, Abb. 41, 674.), which are dated to the end of the fourth century BC. Accordingly, bowls of similar form are dated to the late fourth and early third centuries BC at Smyrna Kadifekale (Granata, 2015, Cat.no. 6), Smyrna Agora (Aktaş, 2011: 127, Cat.no. 28) and Nif (Olympos) Mound (Bilgin, 2015, Pl III, 20; Bilgin, 2017, Lev. 8, 51); to the third quarter of the third century BC at Pergamon Asklepieion (Boehringer, 1968, Taf. 65, 111); to the late fourth century BC at Aigai (Gürbüz, 2017, Figure 3, 1-2.) and Knidos (Doksanaltı, 2006, Cat.no. 672); to 300-250 BC at Phokaia Maltepe Tumulus (Saygıner, 2019, Fig. 35, Cat. no. 251); to the third century BC and the last quarter of the third century at Troia (Berlin, 1999, Pl. 4, 112; Tekkök 2000, Pl. 4, 35), and to the second quarter of the fourth century BC at Nagidos (Durukan & Körsulu 2007, Cat.no. 43). Examples with similar typological characteristics were also found in Central Anatolia. These examples were found at Şarhöyük Dorylaion (Yedidağ, 2024, Lev. 5 SF1) in the early third century BC and at Gordion (Stewart, 2010, Cat.no. 79) in layers dating to 333-235 BC. According to the similar examples found in different centres, the Acmehöyük find, Cat. no. 1 can be dated to the late fourth century BC and third century BC.

Group 2 (Cat. no. 2-7) Figs. 5.2-7

The second group of bowls has a sharper incurved rim. This sharpness is emphasised by the hard profile below the lip edge. The body structures are deeper than the first group. Nevertheless, the body structures are compatible with the shallow Hellenistic bowls. In this group, Cat. no. 6 in this group preserves a roulette on the tondos.

Figure 5

Photographs and drawings of black-glazed pottery found at Acmehöyük



Group 2 bowls are stylistically comparable to those of the Athenian Agora (Rotroff, 1997, Figs. 63, 972, 977, 978, 980, 982) from contexts dated between 300-275 BC. Bowls with similar forms have also been found at Khios, Paphos and Chersonessos. These bowls were dated to the Early Hellenistic Period at Khios (Anderson,

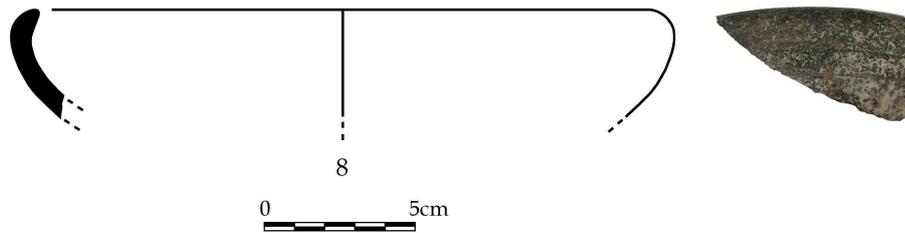
1954, Fig. 15, 115); to the early third century BC at Paphos (Hayes, 1991, Fig. II, 3), and to the third century BC at Chersonessos (Zolotarev, 2006, Figure 4, 4, Figure 7, 1). Similar shaped examples were also found in Corinth. However, it is stated that there is no chronological development for these bowls and that the form was used from the end of the fourth century BC to the 1st century BC (James, 2018, Fig. 25). A similar time frame has been suggested for bowls from Anatolia. These bowls have been dated to the third century BC at Smyrna Bouleuterion (Alkan, 2019, Cat. no. 33); to the first half of the second century BC at Ephesos (Mitsipoulos-Leon, 1991, Taf. 3, 14); last quarter of the fourth century BC to the middle of the third century BC Nif (Olympus) Mound (Bilgin, 2017: Lev. 8 52, 53); to the third quarter of the third century BC at Pergamon Asklepieion (Boehringer, 1968, Taf. 64, 119); to the last quarter of the third century at Troia (Tekkök, 2000: Pl. 4, 33); to the third and second centuries BC at Labraunda (Hellström, 1965, Pl. 33, 64); to the late fourth century BC at Tarsus (Jones, 1950, Fig. 180, A), and to the second quarter of the fourth century BC-early third century BC at Nagidos (Durukan & Körsulu, 2007, Cat.no. 41). The most stylistically similar examples with the second group bowls of Acmehöyük were found at Kültepe (Tüysüz, 2022, Pl. 3, 13-14, Pl. 88, 44-50). The examples from Kültepe, which are considered to be of Western Anatolian production, resemble the Acmehöyük bowls in terms of production as well as stylistic characteristics. Formally similar bowl fragments were also found at Dorylaion (Yedidağ, 2024, Pl. 6 SF8) and Çatalhöyük (Zoroğlu, 2007: Pl. 9, Figure 7). The Dorylaion samples are dated to the last quarter of the fourth century BC, while the Çatalhöyük and Kültepe bowls are dated to the third century BC. Considering the date range presented for similar finds, it can be concluded that Cat. nos. 2-7 can also be dated to the third century BC.

Group 3 (Cat. no. 8) Fig. 6

The rim of the bowl in the last group is thinned and has a distinctly incurved form. The example belonging to this group has a deeper body structure compared to the other groups. (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Photographs and drawings of black-glazed pottery found at Acmehöyük



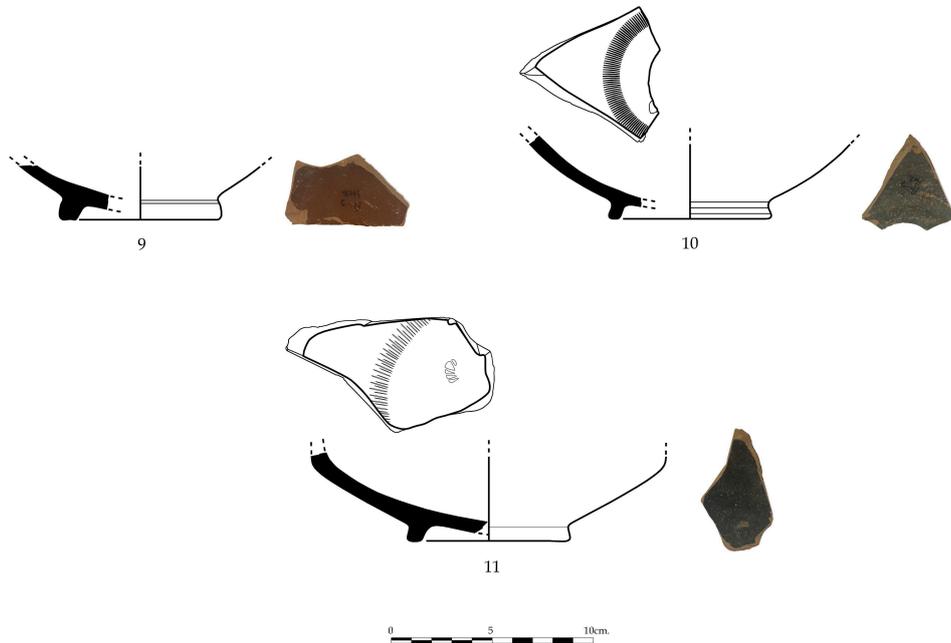
Cat. no. 8 is generally characterised by the form of bowls from the third century BC. Accordingly, bowls with similar rim and body shapes are dated to 300-275 BC at the Athenian Agora (Rotroff, 1997, Figs. 63, 996, 1001), to the late third and early second century BC at Corinth (Edwards, 1975, Pl. 2, 26, 30; James, 2018, Figs. 25, 162, 166.) and to the Early Hellenistic Period at Khios (Anderson, 1954, Fig. 15, 193). Examples that can be compared with the Acmehöyük bowl in general terms have been found at Nif (Olympus) Mound, Pergamon, Ephesos, Patara, Knidos, Tarsus, Assos, Troy, Sardis and Dorylaion. Among these, Nif (Olympus) Mound bowls dated to MÖ 300-200 (Bilgin, 2017: Lev. 9), Pergamon Asklepieion bowls (Schäfer, 1968, Taf. 4, C18-C19) were found in the phase dated to 230-190 BC. At Ephesos (Mitsipoulos-Leon, 1991, Taf. 2, A4, A8), black glazed bowls of similar form, dated to the mid-3rd century BC and considered to be locally produced, continued to be used in the mid-2nd century BC. Among other centres, similar bowls are dated to the 300's BC at Patara (Işın, 2008, Taf. 40, 3); to the late fourth and first half of the third century BC at Knidos (Doksanaltı, 2006, Cat.

no. 417); to the Early Hellenistic Period at Tarsus (Jones, 1950, Fig. 178, 7); to the Hellenistic Period at Assos (Sezgin, 2010, Cat. no. 688); and to the second and third quarter of the second century BC at Troia (Tekkök-Biçken, 1996, Figure 3 A4-A5); late fourth century BC at Sardis (Rotroff & Oliver 2003, Pl. 5, 14) and early third century BC at Dorylaion (Yedidağ, 2024, Pl. 5 SF4). Considering the similar finds, Cat. no. 8 can be dated to the third century BC.

Apart from the rim, three base sherds belonging to the bowl form were also found (Figure 7 .9-11). The sherds recovered as body and base have a base diameter of 8 cm. The bodies are shallow and the bases are in the shape of a low ring. The seating plane of the pedestal is flat in all three examples. Cat. no. 10-11 preserved some of the roulette and palmette decorations on the tondo.

Figure 7

Photographs and drawings of black-glazed pottery found at Acmehöyük



In order to date these bases, the form characteristics of the bowl bases should be analysed. Accordingly, in the bowl pedestals of the last quarter of the fourth century, the body- pedestal transitions are banded in the colour of the clay and the seating planes are profiled with a concave groove. However, it is observed that these decorative features were abandoned on the bowls produced in the third century BC. The reserve area in the body- pedestal transitions of the bowls produced in this period was removed and the pedestal seating planes were flattened (Rotroff, 1997: 161-163). Considering the typological developments mentioned here, Figure 7.9 is dated to the last quarter of the fourth century BC and Figure 7.10-11 should be dated to the third century BC.

Kantharos (Cat. no. 12-15) Figs. 8.12-15

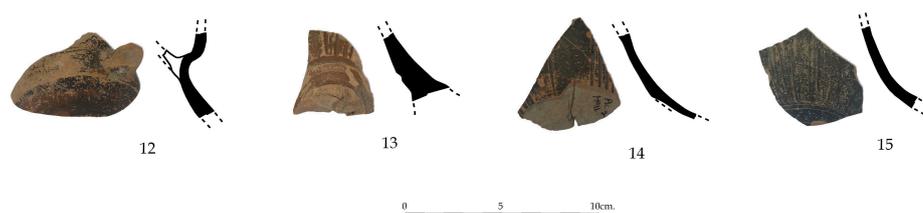
Another form belonging to the Black Glazed Pottery Group found at Acmehöyük is the kantharos used as drinking vessels (Figure 8.12-15). This form has been preferred since the early periods and was used

frequently especially during the Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic Periods (Rotroff, 1997: 83). The grouping and dating of the kantharos, which are divided into numerous sub-types according to their rim, body and handle profiles, are based on the typology developed on the basis of the finds from the Athenian excavations with intact contexts. According to the grouping based on the Athenian finds, the Hellenistic kantharos are divided into two groups: *Classical Kantharoi* and *Hellenistic Kantharoi*. Within each group, sub-types were formed according to the rim, body and handles (Rotroff, 1997: 83-119). *Classical Kantharos*, as the name suggests, were in use from the late fourth century BC to the early third century BC, continuing the form characteristics of the Classical Period (5th and 4th century BC) kantharos. Their main features are a neck with a concave profile below the rim and a sharp shoulder at the transition from the neck to the body. *Hellenistic Kantharos* were in use from the middle of the third century BC. Unlike the *Classical Kantharos*, this type is characterised by a deep body form that descends straight from the rim to the lower body. Both types have a wide distribution in the ancient geography and are represented by numerous examples from the sites where they were recovered.

Body sherds belonging to the kantharos form were also recovered from Acmehöyük. Among these finds, **Figure 8.12** represents the neck, shoulder and handle fragment; **Figure 8.13-15** represent the lower body fragment. **Figure 8.13-15** are fluted with concave profiles on their outer surfaces.

Figure 8

Photographs and drawings of black-glazed pottery found at Acmehöyük



The fact that these examples are only body fragments makes it difficult to determine typologically to which group or subtype they belong. However, **Figure 8.12** with its concave neck and sharp body form at the transition from the neck to the shoulder, and the fluted body features of when the fluted body features of sherds **Figure 8.13-15** are taken into consideration, it can be said that these examples belong to the *Classical Kantharos* group. Based on this evaluation, the Acmehöyük samples should have a thick rim with a flat or moulded thick rim, a long concave neck, an oval body narrowing towards the bottom, and a profiled high ring base, as in *Classical Kantharos* forms. The two opposite handles should be attached to the body, starting below the rim and ending on the shoulder⁴.

It is very difficult to date the Acmehöyük kantharos recovered as body fragments. However, a general date can be suggested according to the chronological range of the *Classical Kantharos* in different centres. Accordingly, the *Classical Kantharos* found in Athens, where Black Glazed Pottery were developed and became the fashion of the period, are dated to the last quarter of the fourth century BC and mostly to the third century BC (Rotroff, 1997, Figs. 1-116). Formally similar kantharos and their fragments have been dated to the late fourth and early third centuries BC at Kadıfekale in İzmir (Granata, 2015, Cat. no. 1); to the late

⁴For the form see: Thompson, 1934: 319, **Figure 5**, A27-A28; Cook, 1965: 146-147, **Figure 3**; Schafer, 1968: Taf. 5, C24; Sparkes & Talcott, 1970: 286-287, **Figure 7**, 717; Mitsopoulos-Leon, 1991: 34, 44, 80, 84, Taf. 21, B5-B6, Taf. 101, F49, F52; Rotroff, 1997: 242-244, **Figure 1-9**; Dusenbery, 1998: 208-211, S131A/788, H13B, XS-191; Knigge, 2005: 187, Taf. 111, 563; Rotroff & Oliver, 2003: 20, Pl. 4, 7.

fourth century BC at Sardis (Rotroff & Oliver, 2003: 20, Pl. 4, 7) and to 333-275 BC at Gordion (Stewart, 2010: Figs. 207, 154, 155, 159). The kantharos found at Kültepe and Alişar in the neighbourhood of Acemhöyük belong to the first quarter of the third century BC (Waage, 1937, Fig. 86, 5; Tüysüz, 2022, Pl. I, 1-3). Similar examples of this type of *Classical Kantharoi* were also found at Ephesos and Kerameikos (Mitsopoulos-Leon, 1991, Taf. 23 B13, Taf. 24, B15; Knigge, 2005, Abb. 36, 660). Considering the date range suggested for similar finds, the Acemhöyük kantharos can also be dated to the end of the fourth century BC and the beginning of the third century BC.

Conclusion

In this study on the Hellenistic Period of Acemhöyük, the imported Black Glazed Pottery found in the settlement were evaluated. Black Glazed Pottery are a group of ceramics that were started to be produced by Athenian potters in the late 6th century BC, inspired by Persian metal vessels. These potteries spread over a wide geography in time and became one of the most popular types of ceramics in the Hellenistic world. The interest in the vessels increased so much during the period that local examples were produced in most Hellenistic settlements. These pottery, which were found in many geographies including Anatolia, also created a market for themselves in Central Anatolia. Studies have proved that at Dorylaion, Gordion, Çatalhöyük, Kaman-Kalehöyük, Alişar Alisar, Kültepe and Alisar, both imported samples from Attica and local samples produced in Anatolia were used. For the first time, this study reveals that Black Glazed Pottery also found buyers at Acemhöyük and more importantly, Acemhöyük was a part of the trade network of the region in the Hellenistic Period.

Acemhöyük Black Glazed Pottery are represented by the inverted rimmed bowl and kantharoi forms. According to the comparative dating, the earliest sherds are a rim of the bowl with inverted rim and base, a kantharos dating between the last quarter of the fourth century BC and the third century BC. The other bowl examples are dated to the third century BC.

These finds make important contributions to the chronology of Acemhöyük. The Hellenistic Period settlement, which was previously mentioned only between the lines in reports and studies, has been concretised with the finds examined in this study, supported by archaeological data. These black slipped sherds dated to the Early Hellenistic Period proved that the Hellenistic settlement at Acemhöyük started from the early phases of the period.

The Black Glazed Pottery of Acemhöyük has a homogeneous structure in terms of clay, clay additives and surface characteristics. The clays show transitions between brown, red and pink tones. On the walls of some sherds there are grey and red colour differences in the core and around the core due to firing. There are lime and mica inclusions in most but not all of the samples. The slip is in shades of black on both surfaces and red on only three sherds. The slip is either matt or glossy. These details, which have so far been determined by macroscopic observations, resemble the characteristics of Western Anatolia/Northern Ionia productions (Cook, 1965: 143). This suggests that these ceramics were imported from Western Anatolia/Northern Ionia.

Considering the geographical location of Acemhöyük, the presence of ceramics produced in Western Anatolia/Northern Ionia should be regarded as normal. Acemhöyük is located at the intersection of routes connecting different regions of Anatolia. Studies conducted to date have determined that the geography of Acemhöyük and Aksaray lies on important roads stretching from east to west and north to south across Anatolia (French, 1993; French, 1998; Kariş, 2022: 780). The question of which route Western Anatolia/Northern Ionia ceramics took to reach the Aksaray region raises two possible routes. The first route is a land route, which includes the route proposed by D. French in relation to the 'King's Road' (French, 1998: [Figure 8](#), [Figure 9](#)). This route constitutes a historical main axis extending from Western Anatolia to the

central settlements of Central Anatolia. The Royal Road enabled trade caravans departing from the western coasts to reach the vicinity of Aksaray (ancient Garsaura/Arkhelais) via Phrygia and Lycaonia. A second route that could be considered more likely is the sea route and the port of Tarsus⁵. The most important factor supporting this idea is that, after the port of Tarsus, the Cilician region had the shortest and safest passageways to Central Anatolia (Alkim, 1959). This route connecting the Mediterranean Sea with Central Anatolia is noteworthy both in terms of geographical accessibility and historical usage intensity. Starting from the Port of Tarsus, the route passing through the pass known as ‘Kilikia Pylai’ (Kilikia Gates) in ancient sources and today as the Gülek Pass was also a frequently preferred route in ancient times. This road starts from Tarsus, crosses the Gülek Pass, and then reaches Aksaray (Garsaura/Arkhelais) via Pozantı (ancient Padandos) and Niğde (Tyana). It is thought that the imported materials examined in this study also reached Acmehöyük via this road (Figure 9a-b)⁶.

Figure 9

Possible trade route of Acmehöyük and Aksaray



This study also contributes to research aimed at understanding the socio-economic structures of the Kingdom of Cappadocia and the settlements affiliated with it, many aspects of which remain unclear. The period between the last quarter of the 4th century BC and the 3rd century BC was a historical era in which struggles between Alexander's generals took place throughout Cappadocia, followed by the establishment of the Cappadocian Kingdom under the Seleucids and then the Independent Cappadocian Kingdom (Günaltay, 1987: 257-278; Tekin, 1998: 194-225; Speidel, 2019: 105-118; Bilge, 2022: 43-104). By the 3rd century BCE, the end of the wars between the generals, the stabilisation of the Independent Kingdom of Cappadocia, and the

⁵See Port of Tarsus Arıcı-Göçmen 2022.

⁶W.B. Calder-G.E. Bean's Asia Minor Road Map has been revised by Associate Professor M. Bilgin.

successful political policies implemented by the Cappadocian kings laid the groundwork for an environment of prosperity and peace in the region.

Previous studies have revealed that commercial activities increased during this period, particularly in settlements affiliated with the Kilikia Strategias, thus demonstrating that Cappadocia was not an isolated region as previously believed, but rather had a structure open to regional and foreign trade (Tüysüz, 2022: 390-391). The ceramic fragments evaluated in this article, which are predominantly dated to the 3rd century BCE, also indicate that settlements affiliated with the Garsauria Strategia participated in commercial activities by establishing interregional connections

In addition to these ceramics, coins found at Acemhöyük and imported Hellenistic-period ceramics discovered at Büyük Deller, one of the fortified settlements of Garsauria, are other important findings that indicate regional trade in the Aksaray settlements (Kızılkaya, 1990; Tüysüz et al. 2024). In addition, Strabo's description of Garsaura as a village-city (κώμηπόλις) and his statement that 'it is said that this place was once the metropolis of the country' are quite important for understanding the regional position of Aksaray during the Hellenistic period. Furthermore, the fact that King Arkhelaos of Cappadocia rebuilt the city and renamed it Arkhelais, and that it later gained the status of a Roman colony during the reign of Emperor Claudius, must be attributed to Aksaray's location at the crossroads of important transportation routes, Strab., 12.2.6; Plin. HN., 6.3.8).

When these data are considered together, it becomes clear that Aksaray's participation in interregional trade during the Hellenistic Period was a natural and expected development within both the historical and geographical context.

Finally, the ceramics evaluated in this study are important as they are the first concrete evidence for the commercial activities of Acemhöyük. These finds indicate that Acemhöyük was a part of regional trade during the Hellenistic Period. Acemhöyük, which has been reflecting the cultural and commercial connections brought about by its geographical location since the beginning of the third millennium BC (Kamış, 2022a: 780), must have continued this feature in the Hellenistic Period. Excavations and studies to be carried out at Acemhöyük during the Hellenistic Period in the coming periods will contribute to obtaining more detailed information on these issues.

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Appendix

Catalog

In this study, Munsel Soil-Color Charts 2009 have been used. Abbreviations: RD: Rim Diameter; H: Height; WT: Wall Thickness; BD: Base Diameter.

Figure: 4.1 / 6.a

Form: Bowl

Sizes: RD: 15 cm H: 1.8 cm WT: 0.5 cm

Clay: Fragment of the side of the rim-body. The reddish yellow (5YR 6/6) clay is well refined, fine-grained, densely textured and hard. Inner and outer surfaces are very dark brown (10YR 2/2) glazed, shiny and smooth.

Figure: 4.2 / 6.b

Form: Bowl

Sizes: RD: 12 cm H: 3.2 cm WT: 0.5 cm

Clay: Fragment of the side of the rim-body. Light reddish brown (5YR 6/3) clay, slightly lime tempered, fine-grained, densely textured and hard. Inner and outer surfaces are glazed black (10YR 2/1), shiny and smooth.

Figure: 4.3 / 6.c

Form: Bowl

Sizes: RD: 18 cm H: 3.3 cm WT: 0.6 cm

Clay: Fragment of the side of the rim-body. The clay is pink (7.5YR 7/3) in the core, light red (2.5 YR 6/8) around the core, well refined, fine-grained, densely textured and hard. The inner and outer surfaces are glazed black (10YR 2/1), shiny and smooth.

Figure: 4.4/ 6.d

Name: Bowl

Sizes: RD: 16 cm H: 2.7 cm WT: 0.5 cm

Clay: Fragment of the side of the rim-body. Light reddish brown (5YR 6/4) clay, well refined, fine-grained, densely textured and hard. Inner and outer surfaces are glazed black (2.5Y 2.5/1), matt and smooth.

Figure: 4.5 / 6.e

Name: Bowl

Ölçüler: RD: 16 cm H: 2.9 cm WT: 0.5 cm

Tanım: Fragment of the side of the rim-body. Brown (7.5YR 5/2) clay, slightly lime tempered, fine-grained, densely textured and hard. The inner and outer surfaces are glazed black (2.5Y 2.5/1). Both surfaces are matt and smooth.

Figure: 4.6 / 6.f

Name: Bowl

Sizes: RD: 16 cm H: 3.1 cm WT: 0.5 cm

Clay: Fragment of the side of the rim-body. The clay is grey (5YR 6/1) in the core and light red (2.5 YR 6/6) around the core. The lime tempered paste is fine grained, dense textured and hard. The inner and outer surfaces are black (10YR 2/1) glazed, matt and smooth. The preserved part shows roulette decoration towards the tondo.

Figure: 4.7 / 6.h

Form: Bowl

Sizes: **RD:** 20 cm **H:** 4.4 cm **WT:** 0.7 cm

Clay : Rim-body sherd. Pale red (10R 5/3) clay, slightly lime tempered, fine-grained, densely textured and hard. The inner and outer surfaces are black (2.5Y 2.5/1) slipped, matt and smooth.

Figure: 4.8 / 6.g

Form: Bowl

Sizes: **RD:** 20 cm **H:** 3.5 cm **WT:** 0.6 cm

Clay : Fragment of the side of the rim-body. The clay colour is light red (2.5YR 6/6) in the core and a different shade of red (7.5 YR 6/4) around the core. The lime tempered paste is fine grained, dense textured and hard. The inner and outer surfaces are black (10YR 2/1) glazed, shiny and smooth.

Figure: 5.9 / 6.i

Form: Bowl

Sizes: **BD:** 8 cm **H:** 2.7 cm **WT:** 0.5 cm

Clay : Fragment of the side of the base-body. Light red (2.5YR 6/8) clay, slightly lime and mica tempered, fine grained, dense textured, hard. The slip is red (2.5YR 4/6) on the inner surface and dark red (2.5YR 2.5/2) on the outer surface. Both surfaces are shiny and rough.

Figure: 5.10 / 6.l

Form: Bowl

Sizes: **BD:** 8 cm **H:** 3.8 cm **WT:** 0.5 cm

Clay : Fragment of the side of the base-body. Light reddish brown (5YR 6/4) clay, slightly tempered with mica and lime, fine-grained, densely textured, hard. Inner and outer surfaces are very dark grey (2.5Y 3/1) glazed, matt smooth. Tondo decorated with roulette and palmette.

Figure: 5.11 / 6.j

Form: Bowl

Sizes: **BD:** 8 cm **H:** 4.2 cm **WT:** 0.6 cm

Clay : Fragment of the side of the base-body. The clay is light red (2.5YR 6/8) in the core and light reddish brown (5YR 6/4) around the core. The clay is slightly mica and lime tempered, fine-grained, densely textured and hard. The inner and outer surfaces are black (2.5Y 2.5/1) glazed, matt and smooth. Tondo decorated with roulette and palmette.

Figure: 5.12 / 6.k

Form: Kantharos

Sizes: **RD:** - **H:** 4.3 cm **WT:** 0.4 cm

Clay : Fragment of the side of the body. Light red (2.5YR 6/6) clay, slightly tempered with mica and lime, fine-grained, densely textured, hard. Inner and outer surfaces are dark reddish grey (2.5YR 3/1) glazed, matt and smooth.

Figure: 5.13 / 6.l

Form: Kantharos

Sizes: **RD:** - **H:** 3.5 cm **WT:** 0.9 cm

Clay : Fragment of the side of the body. Light red (2.5YR 6/6) clay, slightly tempered with mica and lime, fine-grained, densely textured, hard. Inner and outer surfaces are red (10R 5/6) slipped, matt, rough.

Figure: 5.14 / 6.m

Form: Kantharos

Sizes: RD: - H: 6 cm WT: 0.3 cm

Clay : Fragment of the side of the body. The clay is light red (2.5YR 6/6) in the core, light brown (7.5 YR 6/4) around the core, well refined, fine-grained, densely textured and hard. The inner and outer surfaces are glazed black (7.5YR 2.5/1), slightly dull and smooth.

Figure: 5.15 / 6.n

Form: Kantharos

Sizes: RD: - H: 4.7 cm WT: 0.4 cm

Clay : Fragment of the side of the body. Light red (2.5YR 6/6) clay, slightly lime tempered, fine-grained, densely textured, hard. Inner and outer surfaces are black (7.5YR 2.5/1) slipped, matt, smooth.