

# REPORT ON THE FIRST CAMPAIGN OF EXCAVATIONS AT KARATAŞ - SEMAYÜK

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The general problem to be investigated by the Bryn Mawr College expedition is the Bronze Age habitation of South-western Asia Minor and its relations with the Aegean area.

The first practical approach to this problem is the excavation of a Bronze Age site in the plain of Elmalı, Antalya. This plain is dotted with high and low mounds of prehistoric and classical date which are relatively simple to excavate. In contrast, the Bronze Age sites of the coastal plain are difficult to find as they tend to be covered by sand and silt and may be under the present watertable.

The site of Karataş near the village of Semayük (now Bozüyük), about 10 km. to the east of Elmalı, consists of an extensive cemetery of the Early Bronze Age and a nearby small settlement of the same period.

In the first season, a cemetery area of about 35 × 45 m. was cleared. The following observations were made:

1. The burials are all pithos burials without exception. The pithoi are large, medium or small in size. They are laid in shallow soil (now partly eroded) at a slight inclination.
2. The layout of the cemetery is regular. Every pithos faces east. Originally tomb markers must have existed to facilitate the maintenance of order in the plan; at a later date some confusion arose in the location of tombs and disturbances of earlier tombs

occurred, but the orientation is strictly consistent.

3. Individual pithos-tombs served as family graves. Some of the graves contain no more than one skeleton, but in many cases the burial jars were reopened to receive additional burials. The original burial was put into the jar in contracted position on its right or left side, with the head at the east side of the pithos. The pithos was closed with stone slabs or large pot sherds, and propped up on the sides with smaller stones. When the burial was followed by supplementary burials, the pithos was opened from the side by breaking the walls of the large vessel. The original skeleton was moved to the bottom of the pithos to make room for the next, care being taken to put the skull in a tidy position. This procedure was repeated for up to five reburials. If the pithos needed repairs, sherds from other large vessels were used to close the gaps.
4. Tombgifts accompanied the burials in a modest number. They were put with the body in the pithos or among the blocking stones at the mouth of the pithos, outside of the pithos proper. Disturbances and breakage occurred in the course of reburials. The gifts consist mostly of pottery: small pitchers and jars, an occasional larger piece. The pottery is red or black burnished, the red polished ware sometimes has white painted decora-

tion. The shapes are reminiscent of the Burdur area but there are local peculiarities. The range is Early Bronze II-III in general terms.

There were some items of bronze: pins, one toggle-pin, several bracelets, one torque.

Three tombs contained idols of marble. The shape is flattish convex, and consists of a stylized spade-shaped body, tall neck and round head. The heads often broke off when the tombs were reopened in antiquity. The idols have parallels at Kusura.

5. The burial jars are of two main types: large pithoi with stump-bases and lug-handles; and large jars with offset shoulders and two or four loop-handles. The burial jars were red burnished or mottled, plain or very simply decorated with incisions. One pithos had a stamp seal impression of simple geometric type; another had a rosette-like incised frieze around the neck; a third had scattered incised patterns including goats, trees, swastikas and architectural forms.
6. Two or three of the architectural forms on the incised pithos seem to represent the façade of a wooden shed (ambar or granary). The design shows a portable construction in wood with a rounded roof and paneling in front, its floorlevel is extended horizontally on both sides of the walls, and two legs are shown to support the floor. This design resembles the design imprinted on the Phaistos disc (found in Middle Minoan III context on Crete and tentatively attributed to a Lycian origin). It seems to be the earliest

Lycian representation of a typical local building form later on used as the prototype of many Lycian rock-cut tomb-façades and sarcophagi. In modern Lycia, the same form of ambar survives except that the shape of the roof now is that of a simple gable. The Karataş design shows that the Lycian building form is as old as the Early Bronze Age and that the Phaistos disc symbol may well have been derived from Lycia or belong to Lycia in the Middle Minoan period.

The settlement area was investigated in a preliminary way. Two trenches were cut on the east side of the site to find a place where earth may be dumped safely. The limits of the habitation area were established and much debris from the Early Bronze Age settlement was found here in secondary (erosion) deposits.

In the center of the small mound, a sounding proved that the upper level of the site is in relatively well-preserved condition. The mudbrick walls of the top level are burnt and stand to 0.75 - 1.00 m. in height. Enough pottery was gathered to show that the habitation area was contemporary in use with the cemetery.

The cemetery and settlement trenches have been fenced in with posts and wire. A guard has been appointed (Bekir Kaya from the village of Semayük-Bozüyük) to protect the site. We hope to continue excavation in 1964 with the clearance of an additional 30 × 40 area of the cemetery (to the west of the present excavation) and with the opening up of a similar trench on the highest part of the small mound.

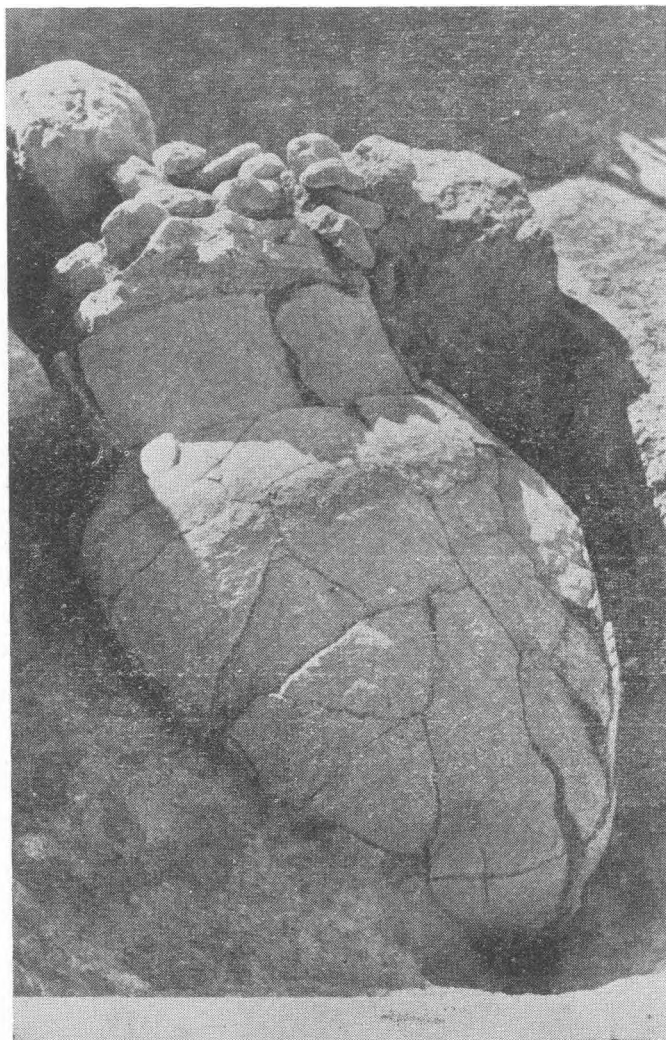


Fig. 1 - Tomb 14. Pithos, Cracked by weight of earth. Height 1.50 m.



Fig. 2 - Tomb 46. Contracted burial

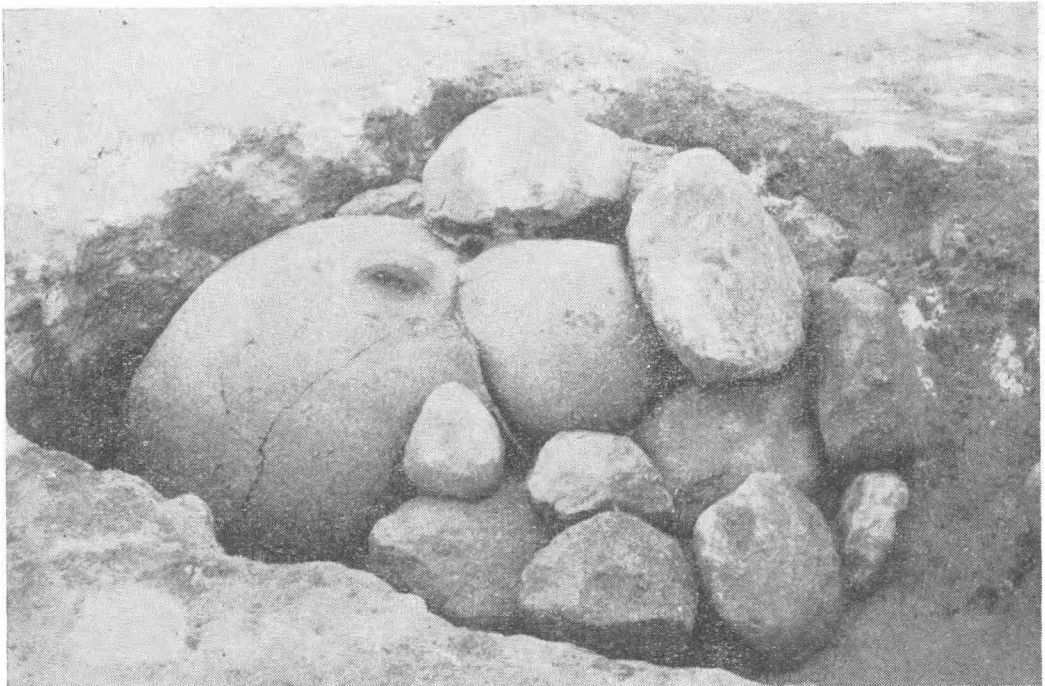


Fig. 3 - Tomb 23. Jar of Child's burial with a large bowl as Cover. Total height 0.97 m.



Fig. 4 - Red burnished burial Jars, tombs 61 and 24. Height 0.50 and 0.40 m.

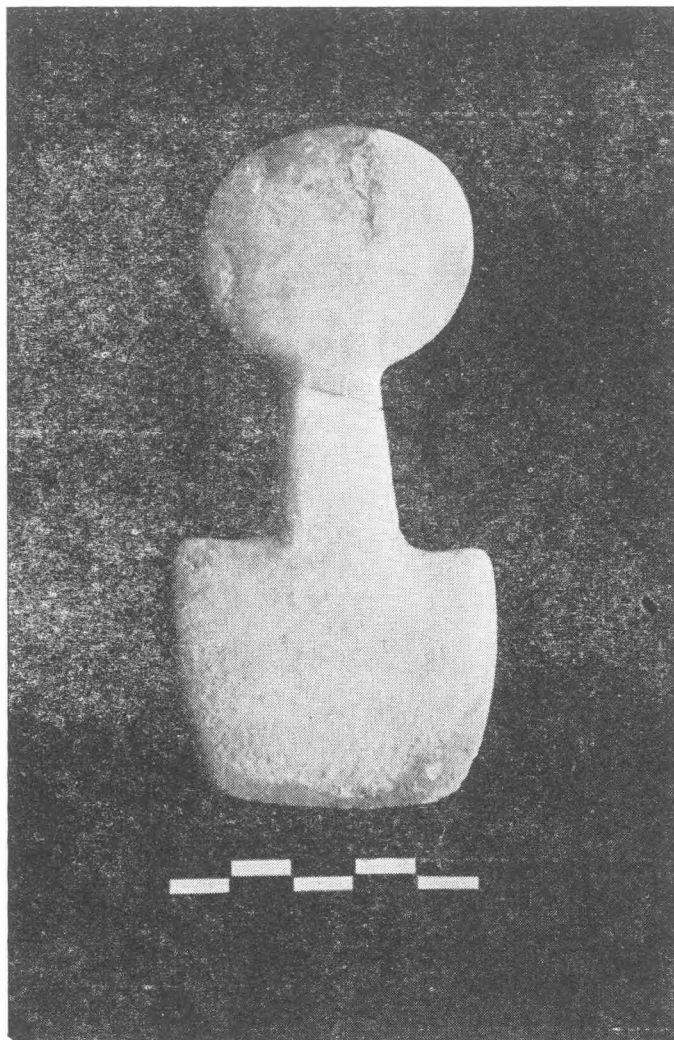


Fig. 5 - Marble idol from tomb 41. Height 0.107 m.



Fig. 6 - Incised black Jar from tomb 37. Height 0.10 m.





Fig. 7 - Red polished pitcher from tomb 29. Height 0.26 m.

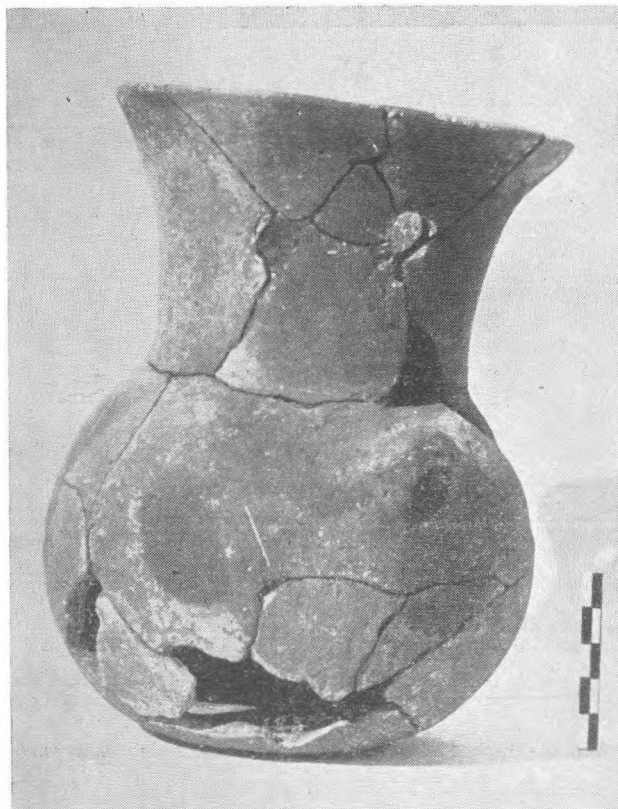


Fig. 8 - Black burnished Jar from burial 8. Height 0.177 m.