

MYCENAEAN CULTURE IN YASSITEPE HÖYÜK

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Abstract

The Mycenaean Culture spread from the the settlement of Mycenae in mainland Greece, dominated the peninsula throughout the Late Helladic period. The Mycenaeans, who practiced agriculture and animal husbandry in the mild climate and expansive plains, also generated additional economic income through maritime trade. The competition between cities reflected in long-distance sea trade, establishing commercial relations with different regions along the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts. The Mycenaeans' interest in the western Anatolian coast coincides with the period of the Late Bronze Age in Anatolia. While there are many suggestions about why they may have come to the region, trade, colonization, and seasonal labor status stand out. The lack of another settlement with significant Mycenaean influence, aside from the Miletus settlement in southwestern Anatolia, indicates that the local population was active along the coasts. The Mycenaean cultural artifacts found in large storage jars, chests, and chamber tombs dated generally to the Late Helladic IIIA period along the western Anatolian coasts are regarded as prestige items. At the Yassitepe Mound in the Bornova Plain, in the eastern part of the İzmir Gulf, Mycenaean-influenced pithos and chest tombs have also been found. The discovery of these finds alongside local Anatolian products suggests the presence of an elite class in the settlement capable of purchasing Mycenaean prestige goods. In this context, the Yassitepe Mound may have been one of the points in Anatolia opening to the Aegean Sea for maritime trade during the Late Bronze Age.

Keywords: Late Bronze Age, Mycenaean, Trade, Western Anatolia, İzmir Region, Yassitepe

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Introduction

Since early times, the western coasts of Anatolia have hosted many civilizations with its jagged shores, favorable climate, rich fauna and flora, and various mineral resources. These people, who form the local culture of Western Anatolia, have also been in contact with people from different geographies through overseas relations. The Mycenaeans, whose traces have been first encountered in Mycenae in Mainland Greece, are one of the communities that communicated with the local people of Western Anatolia through their kingdoms established at various points on the peninsula. The merchants of the Aegean Sea have transported the commercial products such as various spices, olives and grapes as well as the wheat and barley of their own geography to different regions in a portable and distributable way as the olive oil and wine. As understood from the Linear B tablets, craftsmen living in the villages probably have produced perfumes and ointments on special orders and marketed¹ these products to overseas regions such as Crete, Italy, Anatolia, Cyprus and the Levant. Apart from this, it has been considered that² they have demanded various minerals from Anatolia in exchange for the products they have marketed, and also have bought with them people/slaves to employ. So, to what extent was this interaction and what were its reflections on Anatolia?

Mycenaean Existence in Western Anatolia

A big number of scientists have had presentments regarding the existence of Mycenaeans in Anatolia. Quoting from Homer, Özgünel has mentioned³ the Mycenaeans, as people who developed in the Argolis region in the 16th century BC, used the Linear B recording system, engaged in maritime trade like their Minoan ancestors, and selected the western coasts of Anatolia as an important spot in their trade routes. Bryce defines the Mycenaeans as people who were generally engaged in trade, lived partly with the local people on the coasts of Western Anatolia, and could not establish settlements outside Miletus. In other respects, he considers the Mycenaeans politically as a confederation extension of Ahhiyawa. With regard to the Tawagalawa text, he describes them⁴ as those who transferred resources such as slaves, horses and metal to Mainland Greece over Miletus. Gür states that Mycenaeans may have come to Western Anatolia as seasonal workers, Mycenaean merchants, or in the status of Mycenaean elites.

He also states that⁵ the local elites of Anatolia may also have liked Mycenaean elements and used them as the fashion of the period. C. Mee believes in the Mycenaeans's presentment for trade and colonization in Western Anatolia. For trade, he grounds especially on the Troas region. He believes that mackerel and tuna migrate to the Black Sea to spawn as the rivers in the Mediterranean dry up in May and June, and that they have been hunted in the narrows of the Bosphorus Strait and Çanakkale. Mee, who associates this situation with the finding of tuna bones in several settlements, thinks that the Mycenaeans set up camps in the

1 Castleden 2005, 104-108

2 Yakar 1976, 125.

3 Özgünel 1983, 696, 697.

4 Bryce 1989a, 2-5.

5 Gür 2013, 40-44.

Troas Region to dry the fish they caught; there they also had potters with them, and hence the pottery they made may have existed in the region consequently. For the colonization context, Mee emphasizes⁶ the dominance of the findings in Miletus and Değirmentepe after the Minoan influence of Miletus. Mountjoy details the Mycenaeans with the depiction of a ship on the crater unearthed on Bademgedigi Hill. The bird-headed people on the ship appear with the hedgehog-shaped helmets and spears and shields in their hands. He associates⁷ the appearance of the mentioned motif in the settlements along the Mediterranean coast, especially during the LH IIIB-C periods, with the expansion area of the Mycenaeans. An example of a similar type was identified⁸ in the depiction of a warrior with a chariot on a ceramic shard dated to LH IIIC in Liman Tepe. In addition, Aykurt takes into account the baby grave in the cube grave called “Barbarian Ceramics”, which was unearthed in a layer where local cultural materials are concentrated in Liman Tepe, and puts forward⁹ that the sea tribes that lived together with the locals in Liman Tepe. Also the Mycenaean pottery sherd unearthed at Liman Tepe, depicting warriors aboard a ship is commonly interpreted in relation to the movements of the Sea Peoples in Western Anatolia¹⁰.

İreç emphasizes the concept of ethnicity regarding the existence of the Mycenaeans and its context with cultural historiography. He states that the statements about the commercial registration system, mentioned in the Linear B tablets in Mykenai, Knossos and Pylos, which are the earliest written sources of the Mycenaeans, remained only in the Aegean Sea and that it was a registration system that did not reach other regions including Anatolia. He defines the Mycenaeans as an introvert organization within a class society structure. Considering the absence of Linear B tablets in Western Anatolia and the palaces in Mainland Greece and Crete, he defines¹¹ the Mycenaeans as inactive in the Late Bronze Age of Western Anatolia.

Besides the interpretations made depending on different archaeological sources within the recent centenary, the archaeological findings obtained from Yassitepe Höyük located in the center of İzmir provide new data regarding the existence of the Mycenaeans in Western Anatolia.

Yassitepe Höyük and Mycenaean Finds

Yassitepe Höyük is located within the borders of Kazımdirik Quarter of the Bornova District within the Province of İzmir. When the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Degree protected areas in and around the höyük center are included, it is understood that the höyük is 150x200 m in size and spreads over an area of 3 hectares. Its location in the middle of the Bornova Plain and its proximity to İzmir Gulf, geopolitically connects the settlement to the inner parts of Anatolia and the cultures on the Aegean Sea. Mineral resources, fertile agricultural lands, wetlands, rich fauna and flora solemnize the geography where the settlement is located. The

6 Mee 1978, 148-150.

7 Mountjoy 2005, 423-427, XCVI; Mountjoy 2011, 483-488, Fig. 3

8 Aykurt 2018, 72, figüre 3-4.

9 Aykurt 2018, 74.

10 Aykurt – Erkanal 2017a, 64-67, Fig. 4-5.

11 İreç 2015, 158-160.

presence of cultural layers in the höyük from the Neolithic Period to the Roman Period reflects¹² the cultural process of Yassitepe that has continued for thousands of years. Research activities carried out in recent years have shown that the settlement was also an important center in the 2nd millennium BC¹³.

In Yassitepe Höyük, the period of 2nd millennium BC was identified in the sections in the center and southeast of the höyük. The Late Bronze Age layer (II0) is known from the pits dug into the Middle Bronze Age structures and from the parcel excavations in the southeast of the höyük. Among the pottery unearthed from the pits, trefoil-mouthed jugs produced in brightly burnished red and gray ware, bowls with outward-opening rims, high-legged bases and loop handles stand out¹⁴. A part of the cemetery area was reached in the southeast part of the höyük (figs. 1-2a-b).

A total of six burials consisting of stone cist and pithos graves were identified in the east of the höyük in 2022, during the construction activities in the 3rd Degree protected area. Among the identified burials, numbers 1 and 2 are dated to the Late Bronze Age according to Anatolian chronology, while the other graves are dated to the Early Bronze Age I period. The finds from the graves were evaluated in typological and cultural terms.

Graves

Grave no. 1 (Stone Cist Type)

Among the graves identified in the parcel, number 1 was unearthed at the 15.15 m level. It is a stone cist grave type (fig. 3). It has dimensions of 1.74x1.27 m. It was found right in the middle of the parcel. The burial within the tomb was reached at the 14.45 m level. The burial was left on a pebble soil ground. The skull, foot bones and ribs of the burial were found in the southeast of the grave. The back part of the skull was recovered. The jaw bones came from the northeast of the area therefore the burial was thought to be destroyed. Since the bone has not been analyzed yet, there is no information about the gender of the burial. Considering the condition of the bones, it is understood that the burial was placed in the "hocker" shape. The lid of the grave could not be identified. The reason for this may be the lid of the tomb that was opened during its period or some metal or semi-precious items that were taken. The scattered and broken bones in the grave support this situation.

In the Coastal Aegean, Beşiktepe¹⁵, Panaztepe¹⁶, Kömür Burnu¹⁷ and in Central Anatolia, Dede Mezarı¹⁸, Gordion¹⁹ Kültepe²⁰ can be given as examples of stone cist type graves in the 2nd Millennium BC.

Left as burial gifts, two whole vessels, 106 agates, 1 lapis lazuli, 3 bone

12 Derin 2020

13 Erdem 2023

14 Erdem 2023, 81; Erdem – Derin 2024, 36.

15 Akyurt 1998, 17 şekil 10.

16 Erkanal 1986, 255.

17 Şahoğlu et al. 2023, 406, Figure 5.

18 Üyümze et al. 2007, 816

19 Mellink 1956, 5.

20 Özgüç 1950, 51-53; Özgüç 1964, 37; Özgüç 1986, 88,

beads, 1 clay bead, loom weight and crushing stone were found in the grave. One of the vessels is near the skull. It has a flat body and a narrow neck. In Western Anatolia, these types of vessels were called PYXIS or ARYBALLOS. The mouth diameter is 10 cm. On the shoulder, there are three horizontal basket handles placed opposite to each other. The vessel is made of clean paste and cream slip (10 YR 8/3). Brown line decoration with an average thickness of 0.5-1 cm was applied on the body of the vessel, and zigzag motifs were placed between the shoulder and neck (figs. 4a, 6).

The other vessel in the grave is a double-handled, pear-shaped/wide-bellied jug (pelike). The container was left at chest level of the deceased. Mouth diameter is 8 cm. It has a long neck, wide body and ring bottom. On the body of the container, there are two carrier, vertical handles placed opposite to each other. The paste and the slip colors are the same (5 YR 6/6 Reddish Yellow) (fig. 4c).

Grave no. 2 (Pithos Type)

The grave in question is just in northwest of the stone cist grave no. 1. It was discovered at the 15.03 m level. It has dimensions of 1.00x0.75 m. The mouth of the pithos, placed in the northeast-southwest direction, faces northeast. Large stones 0.50-0.60 m in size were placed at the mouth of the pithos. The upper part of the pithos has been destroyed. The burial was placed in the “hocker” shape (fig. 5).

Pithos type graves were found in the 2nd millennium BC, in Anatolia in Troy²¹ and Beşiktepe²², in the coastal Aegean in Panaztepe²³, Kömür Burnu²⁴, Halkapınar²⁵, Sarimeşe Tepe²⁶, Hacigebeş Tepe²⁷ and Bakla Tepe²⁸ in Southwestern Anatolia and the Lakes Region in Karataş Semayük²⁹, Çaltılar Höyük³⁰ and Dereköy II³¹, in Central Western Anatolia in Çavlum³², Kusura³³, Yanarlar³⁴, Dede Mezari³⁵ and in Central Anatolia in Gordion³⁶, Alishar³⁷ and Kültepe³⁸.

The findings in the grave are similar to those found in the stone cist type grave. A pyxis, 55 agates, 57 frites and two lapis lazuli beads were unearthed in this tomb. While the pyxis is exactly the same in form as the other pyxis found in the stone cist type grave, but differs with the decorations on the body and shoul-

21 Blegen et al. 1953, 371.

22 Korfmann 1986b, 318.

23 Erkanal 1986, 255

24 Şahoğlu et al. 2023, 405

25 Meriç 1982, 31-33.

26 Gençer 2006, 6.

27 Ersoy – Koparal 2009, 77-78.

28 Aykurt – Erkanal 2017b, 35.

29 Mellink 1967a, 257

30 Aykurt et al. 2023, 320.

31 Birmingham 1964, 30

32 Bilgen 2005, 3-5.

33 Lamb 1937, 13-15

34 Emre 1978, 3, 15.

35 Üyümüz et al. 2007, 816-820.

36 Mellink 1956, 3.

37 Osten 1937, 91.

38 Özgüç 1954, 358.

der. The mouth diameter of Pyxis is 10 cm. It has a flat body and a narrow neck. There are three horizontal basket handles placed opposite to each other on the shoulder. One of the handles has been destroyed. According to the pyxis in tomb no. 1, the brown line decorations on the body of the vessel are 0.1-0.3 cm thick. In addition to these, a motif consisting of straight lines arranged at a 15-degree angle was applied on the shoulder (figs. 4b, 6).

Grave Analysis

Anthropologist Associate Professor Songül Roodenberg-Alparslan worked on the human skeletons found in graves no.1 and no.2 identified in Yassitepe. The fragmented and worn bones made anthropological analysis difficult. This situation has been stated as a constantly encountered situation in pithoi graves.

The skeleton in the stone cist type grave no. 1 has been severely damaged. The identified parts were initially identified as few long bones, costa fragments, and 2 foot bone fragments (metatarsal, phalanx). Although the age identification of the burial within the grave cannot be realized, the skeleton probably belongs to an adult. Additionally, small pieces of animal bones were found in the tomb.

Pithos type grave no. 2 belongs to a 1.15 month old (post-natal) baby. Although it was severely damaged, parts of the pelvis were recovered, with the right femur diaphysis complete and the left femur diaphysis fractured and complete. Apart from these, tibia diaphyseal fragments from the right and left legs, 1 costa fragment, and a broken primary molar tooth fragment are other identified findings regarding the skeleton.

Analyzes of skeletons, in tholos, stone cists and pithos tombs in the coastal Aegean in Panaztepe and Müskebi where Mycenaean artifacts were found, provide information about the Late Bronze Age people of Western Anatolia. In the samples in Panaztepe, there are skeletons of children and adults, and it is understood that different biological types of people namely dolichocephalic and brachycephalic lived in there³⁹. Again, in the Bodrum-Müskebi tombs, it is seen that adult individuals are predominant among the skeletons in the graves yielding Mycenaean finds. It is stated that the majority of individuals belong to the Alpine race and partly reflect the Dynamic race⁴⁰. The extreme destruction of Yassitepe graves no.1 and no.2 made it impossible to provide information about racial discrimination.

Evaluation

Findings similar to the finds identified as grave gifts in Yassitepe were found in cemetery areas in the contemporary period. From both their form and decoration perceptive, it appeared that the vessels were produced specially, therefore the vessels are considered to be used for ritual purposes rather than daily use. The most striking of these are the pyxis. We also encounter areas of expansion of the culture that we see developing, especially in Mycenae and Pylos in Mainland Greece and its surroundings, in Knossos on the Island of Crete. The fact that, the

39 Güleç – Duyar 1997, 186.

40 Çiner 1964, 65.

pyxis recorded in Western Anatolia have been found in graves or were brought to museums through purchase, could be explained by the fact that they were purchased or imitated as a result of overseas relations through the Aegean Sea. Those identified along the Coastal Aegean could be evaluated in this context. A few examples identified in the Lakes Region could be related to their transportation to the region through intermediaries.

Similar vessels were found⁴¹ in the urne tomb and the megaron planned chamber tomb no. 1 in Beşiktepe, in the Troas Region in the Coastal Aegean.

Korfmann dated the findings to the 13th century BC⁴². Blegen points out the LH IIIA2 period for the form identified as alabastron that was found in the cemetery area of Troy in Çanakkale Hisarlık⁴³. Pyxis from Tholos type and pithos graves in the Panaztepe settlement in Menemen district of Izmir province are handled together with the alabastron form. The related samples were associated by their excavators with the LH IIB and LH IIIA periods⁴⁴.

Two samples identified as alabastron from the Tumulus grave in the Bakla Tepe cemetery area in the Menderes district of Izmir province indicate the LH II-IA1-LH IIIB period⁴⁵. Again, the sample found within the borders of Halkapınar village, located on the Tire-Belevi route in Izmir province, was brought to the museum through purchase, and Recep Meriç and Coşkun Özgünel propounded the LH IIIA2 period, the 14th century BC for this artifact⁴⁶. Two Pyxis and one alabastron specimen are identified from the rock tombs in Müskebi, located within the borders of Bodrum district of Muğla province, on the southwestern Anatolian coast. Yusuf Boysal has interpreted⁴⁷ these artifacts as LH IIB. Benter has emphasized⁴⁸ the LH IIIA-IIIB period for the samples found in the chamber tomb in Milas Pilavtepe and identified as alabastron. The alabastron identified in the studies carried out in the Iasos Agora was dated to the LH IIIA1 period of the specimen defined as the Southeastern Aegean production (figs. 7b-8).⁴⁹

Pyxis in the Lakes region were identified in the Dereköy II and Düver cemeteries. The sample identified in the cemetery area in Dereköy, located near Ak Göl within the borders of Burdur province, was dated to LH IIIA2- LH IIIB by Mee⁵⁰. A specimen, from near Düver-Yarıklı lake in the same region, brought to the museum through purchasing was evaluated by Coşkun Özgünel as LH

41 Dresely – Wahl 1986, 341-343

42 Akyurt 1998, 18-19, figure 14b-c; Korfmann 1986a, 24

43 Akyurt 1998, 11, figure 8e, Blegen et al. 1953, figure 294, C52(Pl.324: 34.281)

44 Günel 1999, 58-59, Plate 131: 1-6. (Panaztepe cemetery findings have been chronologically reviewed in four phases. First phase has been identified as Middle Bronze Age. Second phase has been specified as LH 1- LH IIA/B. Third phase LH IIIA 1- LH IIIA 2, and fourth phase has been emphasized as LH IIIB 1/2- LH IIIC. Pyxis in Panazetepe have been mainly evaluated within the third stage LH IIIA 1- LH IIIA2 group. In the mentioned period there has been an existence of a considerable Mycenaean impact on Aegean Sea. Günel 1999, 143 footnote 187)

45 Aykurt – Erkanal 2017b, 18, 41, pic.53-pic.54, Plate. 15: 2-3.

46 Akyurt 1998, 28, figure 21d; Meriç 1982, pg. 31; Özgünel 1987, 547

47 Akyurt 1998, 33, figure 30: a, b, c; Boysal 1967b, 31

48 Benter 2010, 345-347, figure 6: 7-12

49 Momigliano et al. 2002, 344, Fig. 2

50 Akyurt 1998, 37 figure 38d; Birmingham 1964, pg.30; Özgünel 1983, pg.740; Mee 1978, 1265

IIIA2- LH IIIC1⁵¹.

Özgünel also states that the mentioned findings are related to the cult of the dead and that they may have been brought here through trade by either Anatolian or Mycenaean merchants⁵².

The distribution of the pyxis in the coastal part of Western Anatolia and the Lakes Region extends outside the Aegean Sea until the island of Sicily. The specimen found in the Thapsos cemetery on the island of Sicily and identified as an alabastron, is of Poloponnesian origin and dated to the LH IIIA-B period⁵³. The sample found in the circle tomb in Elateia-Alonaki in Mycenae was interpreted as LH IIIC⁵⁴. Specimens from the Nikoleika cemetery in Achaia were recovered during the LH IIIC period⁵⁵. Pyxis, coming from tomb A under the Middle Stoa in the Agora of Athens, was evaluated within the scope of LH IIIA1 and also was stated that it may have been used to carry ointment/cream⁵⁶. The sample that was thought to be of Argolis origin and discovered in the port known as Matala during the Hellenistic and Roman Periods located in the south of the Island of Crete, was processed in the LH IIIA2 period⁵⁷. The sample from the Eleona cemetery in the Serraglio settlement on Kos Island was dated to the LH IIIA2 period and was identified as Minoan in origin⁵⁸. Another pyxis found in the cist grave at Emporio was dated to the LH IIIA2 period (figs. 7b-8)⁵⁹.

A couple of vessels in the form of double-handled jug (pelike) were recovered in Western Anatolia, exactly the same as the pyxis. The sample from Beşiktepe grave no. 4 was identified as a vase and was dated to the 13th century BC by Korfmann⁶⁰. The excavators propounded the LH IIIB-C period for the sample recovered from the Tholos tomb in Panaztepe and identified as Amphora type⁶¹. The double-handled jug found in Liman Tepe's LH IIIC layer and contemporary LBA II.1 layer is close to this form with its wide-bellied structure⁶². The C47 double-handled sample from the Troya LBA VII layer is substantially similar to the Yassitepe sample⁶³. The locally produced pottery in the Tumulus tomb in the Bakla Tepe LBA cemetery was identified as type 6 (figs. 7a-9)⁶⁴. In

51 Akyurt 1998, figure 39d; Özgünel 1983, 743. (Burdur Museum inv. no. 7026, plate. XXXIa) Özgünel states that this artifact originates from Argolis, with its typical home landclay. Its hows as an example the decoration consisting of panels scanned into a cage in the shoulder area between the handles. He states that similar depictions are found in Argos - Schoinchori, Athens, Ain Shems and Enkomipyxis. He stated that the pyxis may be from the Mycenaean IIIA: 2 phase, like the Ras Shamra (Ugarit) pyxis, with which it is closely related in terms of form and decoration. (Özgünel 1983, 697.)

52 Özgünel 1987, 544 vd.

53 Tanasi 2020, 179-182, Table 3, Figure 3

54 Jalkotzy 2007, 139, fig. 5.1:

55 Petropoulos 2007, 256-260, 277, Fig. 17-18.

56 Vermeule – Travlos 1966, 73, Pl.23: 2

57 Tomlinson et al. 2010, 196: C 7636.

58 Vitale 2016, 84-85, Fig. 5.3: f.

59 Hood 1982, 384, fig.260: 2703.

60 Akyurt 1998, 18-19, 210,

61 Günel 1999, 62, 416, Plate.136:2

62 Mangaloğlu – Votruba 2011, 48, Fig 3a

63 Blegen et al. 1958, pl.216: C47

64 Aykurt – Erkanal 2017b: 9, 56: T20, 192: Fig.33, 220: plate.6:1

other respects, Amphoroid pottery dated to LH IIIB-IIIC is commonly found in Mycenaean tombs⁶⁵.

Mountjoy's LH IIIC proposal is taken into consideration for the three-handled sample in the chamber tomb in Değirmentepe, the Necropolis of Miletus⁶⁶. Three-handled, paint-decorated samples, in the chamber tomb in Pilavtepe between the Miletus and Iasos route, were dated between the LH II-IA2-IIIB periods⁶⁷. The sample identified in Çavlum Middle Bronze Cemetery in Inner Western Anatolia is similar with its handle and body structure to the Yassitepe find (figs. 7a-9)⁶⁸.

The double-handled jug (pelike) form found in grave no. 1 in Yassitepe is typologically quite different from the samples coming from the graves yielding Mycenaean finds. The samples of which similar ones encountered mostly in the Çavlum tomb area and Troy show that this form may be of Anatolian origin. In addition, the double-handled, wide-bellied drinking vessel found in Lerna and dated to the EH III period, was interpreted by Rutter as of Anatolian origin⁶⁹ (fig. 9). It is also a striking detail that there are amphoroid-shaped samples among the ideograms shown in the commercial records on Linear B tablets⁷⁰, whereas there are no wide-bellied samples as the ones in Yassitepe. When considered within this context, it can be stated that the vessels produced locally in Anatolia are wide-bellied, while those originating from Mainland Greece are broad-shouldered and pear-shaped.

The beads found scattered in the graves were made of frit and agate stone. Frit beads are short cylinders, long cylinders, with notched edges and in the form of olive seeds. Samples made of agate stone have a flat, round and spherical appearance. The flat, round shaped and notched edged samples in Yassitepe are similar to the beads in the cemetery in Bakla Tepe which are dated to LH IIIA-B⁷¹. Apart from these, similar beads were also encountered in the Tholos tombs in Kömürburnu excavation in Western Anatolia⁷², and in Panaztepe⁷³, Pilavtepe⁷⁴ and Beşiktepe⁷⁵ tombs.

The production location of the beads found in Yassitepe graves no.1 and no.2 is unknown. There have been cultures that effectively used stone, bone, metal and terracotta raw material resources since the Neolithic Period in the Bornova Plain where the höyük is located. The period that bead production became a craft was the Late Bronze Age. The beads encountered especially in graves, must be the product of a workshop. The location of these workshops is a question mark. Considering the possible local workshops in Anatolia in the 2nd Millennium BC and according to bead researchers of the Acemhöyük Sarıkaya Palace and Arıbaş Cem-

65 Aykurt – Erkanal 2017b, 17, 201: fig.55, 229: plate.15:1; Aykurt – Erkanal 2017b, 41.

66 İslam – Aslan 2015, 382-394, figure 5.

67 Benter 2010, 345-347, figure 7: 13, 15, 17.

68 Bilgen 2005, 26, Plate LII_1

69 Rutter 2008, 461-481, Fig. 5.

70 Mountjoy 2001, 81, fig.187.

71 Aykurt – Erkanal 2017b, 23-24,205, 233, Plate.19: 1-63, Fig. 64, Fig. 66:1/3

72 Şahoğlu et al 2023, 404-405

73 Erkanal – Öktü 2018, taf. 27, taf. 31 vd

74 Benter 2010, fig 10/2

75 Basedow 2000, taf. LXXXVII-LXXXVIII

tery area for the Middle Bronze Age, they were produced⁷⁶ in a local workshop in Anatolia. Beads may also have been produced⁷⁷ in glass production workshops in the workshop area unearthed in Tel Atcana (Alalakh) for the Late Bronze Age. The data from Anatlia are limited. In light of the Mycenaean vessels discovered within the tombs, it can be argued that these beads were likewise imported too.

It is known that in the palace buildings of Knossos and Zagros on the Island of Crete, some parts of the palace were left as workshops where craftsmen produced beads⁷⁸. It has been determined that the production was widespread in the LBA, especially in Greece, and that there was a massive production of tiles, lapis lazuli and ivory raw materials as rosettes, spirals and lilies motifs within the workshops of the LH Period⁷⁹. Traces of local production were found in the research conducted in the centers such as Tyrynis and Thebes in Mainland Greece. A glass workshop was unearthed in Trynis Citadel⁸⁰. One of the rooms is reserved for production in the building defined as the House of Kadmos in the Palace of Thebes⁸¹. Thebes finds and the samples recovered from the Elateia cemetery have been analyzed. The fact that the analyzed samples used a plant ash with a lower oxide content than the glass found in Egypt and Mesopotamia, was interpreted as the analyzed samples may have come from a local workshop in Mycenae⁸². It is thought that the raw materials for production at these points and at similar points like these, were provided by commercial ships such as Uluburun. Distribution to production centers was probably provided over the island of Crete through commercial ships as Uluburun⁸³. As a matter of fact, beads and even raw glass ingots were detected among the products carried by the Uluburun shipwreck. In addition to agate and tiles, many semi-precious glass types were also found among these⁸⁴.

Conclusion

Generally speaking, the burial tradition is extramural in Yassitepe in the Late Bronze Age. The coexistence of pithos and stone cist type graves indicate the usage of different burial techniques. With this structure, Yassitepe tombs indicate similarity with other cemeteries in Western Anatolia that date back to the 2nd millennium BC.

The existence of a Mycenaean pyxis and a double-handled, wide-bellied jar thought to be an Anatolian production together in the stone cist grave, indicates the simultaneous use of an imported product and a local product. Considering the rich bead finds, it can be said that these two people buried side by side were people who were at least valued during their lives. There is limited evidence to make an assessment on the social status of these people, since the current data

76 Dardeniz – Öztan 2020, 865

77 Dardeniz 2013, 166-169.

78 Foster 1987, 289-290, Fig.1-2.

79 Panagiotaki et al. 2005, 14-18

80 Panagiotaki et al 2005, 14-18

81 Nikita-Henderson 2006, 77, Fig 2-3.

82 Nikita-Henderson 2006, 117-120.

83 Pulak 2008, 298, Fig.97.

84 Pulak 2008, 296.

on the LBA in the Yassitepe settlement are identified only from these graves and the garbage pits within the grave settlement.

The pyxis found in graves no. 1 and no.2 are guiding lights in dating the graves. The mentioned form is characterized by Mountjoy as the Late Helladic period. According to Mountjoy, these types of vessels were defined as “Straight-Sided Alabaster” and were used until the Sub Mycenaean Period according to the decoration style on them⁸⁵. The horizontal line motifs on the body of Yassitepe pyxis can be seen starting from LH IIB and can be dated according to the decorations on the shoulder⁸⁶. The Yassitepe samples indicate exact similarity with the samples dated to the LH IIIA1 period⁸⁷. In accordance with the horizontal lines at the shoulder level, Yassitepe samples belong to the period LH IIIA2, 1375 BC (fig.8)⁸⁸. On the basis of their fine fabric, cream slip, lightly burnished surface, the horizontal black and Brown band motifs on the body, and the comb decoration on the shoulder, these pyxides may be attributed to production in Argolis. A pyxis in Selcuk Archaeological Museum, similar in form and decoration has been identified as Argolis by Özgünel⁸⁹.

It can be said that the beads found in Yassitepe graves were used for jewelry purposes like the ones found in the other centers. “Wheat grain” term is used in the general literature especially for the forms that look like pipes and olive seeds⁹⁰. Necklaces being made from real wheat and barley grains in societies before the Late Bronze Age, and the beads being shaped being inspired by early samples in the Late Bronze Age are indicated as the reason for this⁹¹. The samples in Yassitepe are probably the products of the same taste.

It is not clear what might have been carried in the pyxis and the double-handled jug. Akyurt defines the intended use of Pyxis as oil and ointment containers⁹². Shelmerdine states that aromatic scents produced from plants such as rose, sage, coriander and pomegranate were transported as commercial products. She also states that the products such as wine, honey and olive oil were transported as commercial materials⁹³. On the other hand, although it is not known what was carried in the double-handled jug, it can be assumed that wine, water and oil were carried, based on the liquid storage vessels classified by Mountjoy according to Mycenaean amphoroid vessels⁹⁴.

The fact that products thought to be of Mainland Greece origin, which emerged during the Late Bronze Age of Western Anatolia and generally found in graves, indicates limited interaction in some regions. Similar findings, found with local products of Miletus⁹⁵ and its surroundings in Southwest Anatolia and

85 Mountjoy 2001, 32-118.

86 Mountjoy 2001, 53, fig. 76.

87 Mountjoy 2001, 67, fig. 130.

88 Mountjoy 2001, 4, Table 1, 76, fig. 160.

89 Özgünel 1987, 547.

90 Çınardalı-Karaaslan 2012, 7.

91 Hugges – Brock 1999, 287; Çınardalı – Karaaslan 2012, 7.

92 Akyurt 1998, 130

93 Shelmerdine 1985, 22, 123-124.

94 Mountjoy 2001, 122, Table III.

95 Graeves 2002, 59-69.

the Troy⁹⁶ axis in Northwest Anatolia, have been found leastwise in the centers such as Panaztepe⁹⁷, Liman Tepe⁹⁸ and Çeşme Bağlararası⁹⁹. There are no traces of this culture, except for the ceramics consisting of a few pieces within the Bayraklı Höyük¹⁰⁰ in Izmir Gulf and the bronze sword said to be found in the Smyrna Agora¹⁰¹. The findings from the Yassitepe cemetery area have importance in showing that the Mycenaean influence reached Izmir Gulf and the Bornova Plain.

It can be said that the Mycenaean culture existed in Western Anatolia with the idea of trade and colony. From a commercial perspective, it is possible to grow the same products on the eastern side of the Aegean Sea under similar climatic conditions. However, traders may be able to present their own products better with the exotic additives they bring from other regions. Depictions of ships and wars on the ceramics unearthed in Liman Tepe and Bademgedigi Hill, suggest the idea of establishing sovereignty in the region as well as the commercial activities. At this point, it is known that women were brought from the center where today's Knidos city is located and referred to as *ki-ni-di-ja* in the Pylos texts, to work in textile works in the Mycenaean palaces¹⁰². A similar situation may have occurred in Izmir and its surrounding centers. However, this does not seem possible, since there are a few traces regarding the presence of the Mycenaean culture in the region and thus, that would indicate the dominance of the local culture in Izmir and its surroundings. Since warrior and ship depictions were obtained in many centers and in limited numbers on the coast of the Mediterranean, these types of products perhaps were made to order through requiring from ceramic masters within the conception of power and symbol of the period.

Pavuk, who thinks that there was no center other than Miletus in the Western Anatolian coastal region in the Late Bronze Age that could indicate writing, seals and a ruling class and based upon the different types of findings, takes into account the settlement of more than one group along the coastline¹⁰³. One such example is a *psi-type* figurine unearthed at Ayasuluk Hill, which Gür and Mimaroglu associate with Aegean-origin populations¹⁰⁴. The information about Ahhiyawa aristocrats, mentioned in Hittite texts, coming to Anatolia supports the existence of both Ahhiyawa and Hittites in Western Anatolia at the same time apart from the local population¹⁰⁵. The existence of rich grave findings on the coasts of Western Anatolia, where different groups lived together, should not be

96 Mountjoy 2020, 524-526.

97 Erkanal – Öktü 2008, 70-72.

98 Mangaloğlu – Votruba 2011, 43-53.

99 Aykurt 2010, 12-25.

100 Based on the data from the initial excavation phases at Bayraklı Höyük, Coşkun Özgünel dated five ceramic fragments to the LH IIIA2 phase. These represent the earliest known Mycenaean pottery from Bayraklı (Özgünel 1983, 710). Excavations have started again in Smyrna/Bayraklı Höyük since 2015. It is possible that findings related to the Mycenaean period could come out of Aylin Ümit Erdem's studies. She states that Mycenaean pottery was unearthed in different parts of the mound and in limited quantities (Erdem 2024, 211).

101 Özgünel 1983, 714; Mee 1978, 130; Akyurt 1998, 24, figure 19.

102 Ergin 2007, 269-270.

103 Pavuk 2022, 53, 57.

104 Gür – Mimaroglu 2024, 209-210.

105 Kelder 2010, 61-62.

a coincidence. The finds must be the products of an overseas organization rather than local production. Pulak states that the commercial organization between the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea in this period may have been provided by people who looked after elite or royal interests but also carried out their own trade¹⁰⁶. Production in Crete and in Mainland Greece palaces also supports this datum. Çınardalı recommends palace-controlled merchants for the production and distribution of the beads we encounter in the tombs¹⁰⁷. At this point, it would not be wrong to discuss a trade network between different groups in the coastal part of Western Anatolia.

So, what could be the Anatolian leg products of overseas trade? Within this context, Özgünel and Magie associate merchants' arrival to Caria Region with the silver deposits in the region, and present the Mycenaean ceramics found around Mydos as evidence¹⁰⁸. Özgünel also attributes, the existence of Mycenaean vessels found in Anatolia, to trade and believes that the vessels found in the tombs were brought by Mycenaean or Anatolian merchants. Besides, he thinks that the owners of the Mycenaean chamber tombs may have been seasonal workers that came from across islands and stayed in tents¹⁰⁹.

Gür also includes an extra elite class alongside the merchants. He states that Mycenaean merchants buried their loved ones they lost while sailing at sea in the nearest port on the route. On that note, he suggested the Kömürburnu cemetery area in Karaburun as the closest port to Izmir¹¹⁰. As a matter of fact, the Mycenaean finds unearthed in the Kömürburnu cemetery area, excavated recently by Şahoğlu and his team, support this situation¹¹¹.

In summary, traces of the Mycenaean culture can be seen from north to south in the coastal part of Western Anatolia. Although the mentioned culture is profound on the coasts of Southwestern Anatolia, it is also seen to a lesser extent in Izmir and its surroundings.

It is difficult to say anything on the origin or race of the individuals in the graves identified in Yassitepe. Although most of the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age skeletons in the Anatolian geography belong to the Dolichocephalic race, there are also few individuals belonging to the Brechycephalic race. The increase in the Brechycephalic race in human skeletons after the Hittites coming to Anatolia indicates that the Hittites belonged to the Alpine race and could have been merged with the race in Anatolia¹¹². On the other hand, it is stated that the Achaeans, who are thought to be the ancestors of the Mycenaean, could be Indo-Germanic people who came from Europe in the early 2nd millennium BC¹¹³. In addition to this opinion, Mansel mentions that the Achaeans are not only Indo-Germanic, but also a hybridization with brechycephals coming from

106 Pulak 2008, 303.

107 Çınardalı 2013, 56

108 Magie 2004, 36; Özgünel 1983, 735.

109 Özgünel 1987, 553-555.

110 Gür 2013, 41.

111 Şahoğlu et al. 2023.

112 Şenyürek 1941, 226-227.

113 Saatçioğlu 1982, 198

Anatolia¹¹⁴. Regardless of their identity, one established fact remains: in Western Anatolia, burial practices reflecting Mycenaean culture display similar patterns. At Yassitepe, pithoi type burial is associated with a child, whereas stone cist burial contain adult individuals, a pattern that is consistent with other contemporary centers. The cemetery data from Bakla Tepe also support this situation. Unlike Yassitepe, evidence for cremation burials has been reported¹¹⁵. The small area in which Yassitepe graves were found has limited our knowledge of the burial customs.

Based on the racial similarity of the skeletons unearthed in Anatolia and Greece, it is possible that the same race was existing in the Late Bronze Age graves in Yassitepe, but it should be mentioned that this assessment made only by looking at the skull structures, may also be wrong. At this point, ongoing excavations in the region continue to contribute to the Late Bronze Age culture of the region. As new findings are obtained, the spread of the Mycenaean culture in the İzmir Gulf will be well understood and different interpretations will emerge regarding the reasons of the culture's interest in Anatolia.

114 Mansel 2014, 65.

115 Erdal 2017, 253-254.

Öz Yassitepe Höyüğü'nde Myken Kültürü

Miken Kültürü Kıta Yunanistan'da Mikenai yerleşiminden yayılarak Geç Hellas dönemi boyunca yarımadaya hakim olmuştur. İlman iklim ve geniş ovalar üzerinde tarım ve hayvancılık yapan Mikenliler deniz ticareti ile de ekstra bir ekonomik gelir elde etmiştir. Kentlerin birbirleriyle rekabeti uzun mesafeli deniz ticaretine yansımış Ege ve Akdeniz kıyıları boyunca farklı bölgeler ile ticari ilişkiler kurulmuştur. Mikenlilerin Batı Anadolu kıyılarına olan ilgileri Anadolu'da Geç Tunç Çağı'nın yaşandığı döneme denk gelmektedir. Bölgeye neden gelmiş olabilecekleri konusunda birçok öneri bulunmakla birlikte bunların içerisinde ticaret, koloni, mevsimlik işçi statüsü öne çıkmaktadır. Güneybatı Anadolu'daki Miletos yerleşimi dışında Miken etkisinin yoğun olarak hissedildiği başka bir yerleşim yerinin olmaması yerel halkın kıyılarda etkin olduğunu gösterir. Batı Anadolu kıyılarında tespit edilen genellikle Geç Hellas IIIA dönemine tarihlenen pithos, sandık ve oda mezarlarda bulunan Miken kültürüne ait bulgular prestij göstergesi ürünler olarak değerlendirilmektedir. İzmir Körfezinin doğu bölümünde, Bornova Ovası'nda yer alan Yassitepe Höyüğü'nde de Miken etkisini gösteren pithos ve sandık mezar bulunmuştur. Buluntuların Anadolu'nun yerel ürünleri ile bir arada ele geçmesi yerleşimde Miken prestij ürünlerini satın alabilecek elit bir sınıfın varlığını göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda Yassitepe Höyüğü Geç Tunç Çağı'nda denizyolu ticaretinde Anadolu'nun Ege Denizi'ne açılan noktalardan biri olabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Geç Tunç Çağı, Miken, Ticaret, Batı Anadolu, İzmir ve Çevresi, Yassitepe

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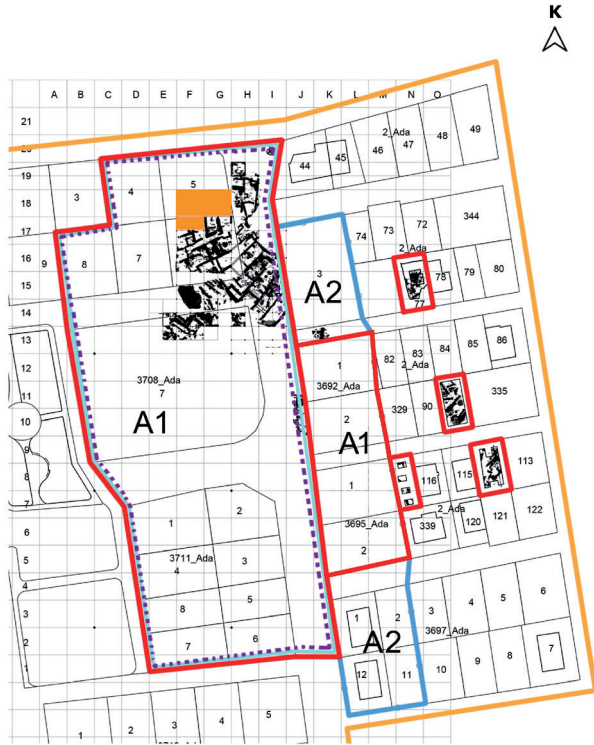


Fig. 1. Yassitepe Höyük settlement plan



Fig. 2a. Yassitepe Höyük aerial photograph



Fig. 2b. Yassitepe Höyük cemetery area (Plot 77)



Fig. 3a. Yassitepe Höyük grave no.1

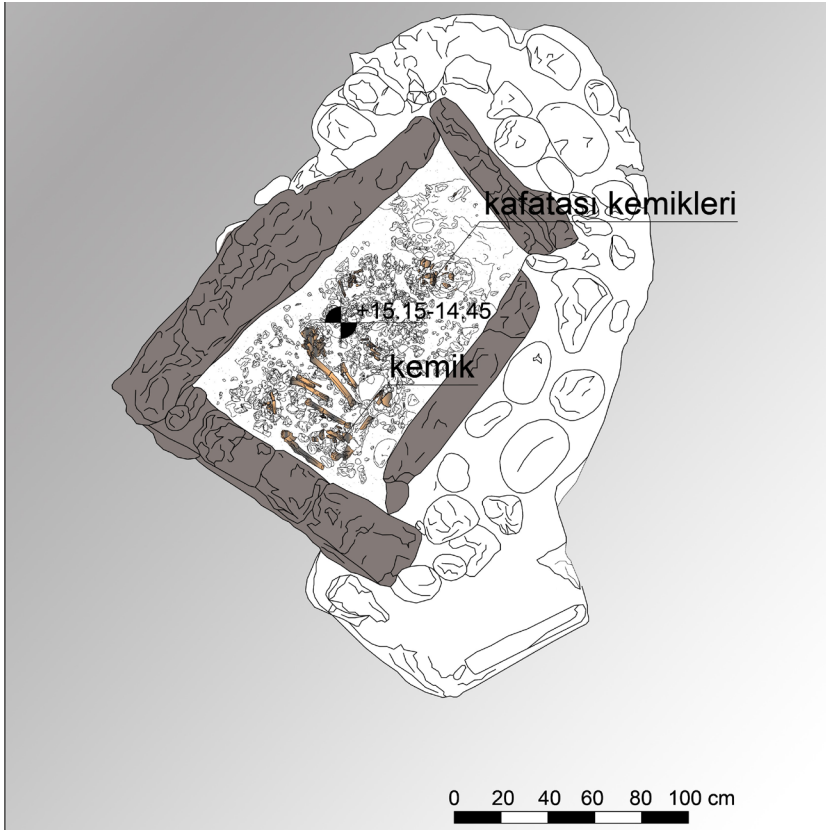


Fig. 3b. Illustration of Burial no. 1 from Yassitepe Höyük



Fig. 4a. Pyxis find from grave no. 1 at Yassitepe Höyük

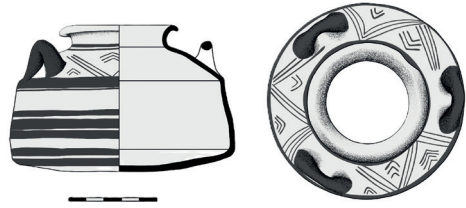


Fig. 4a. Illustration of the Pyxis discovery in burial no. 1 at Yassitepe Höyük



Fig. 4b. Pyxis find from grave no. 2 at Yassitepe Höyük

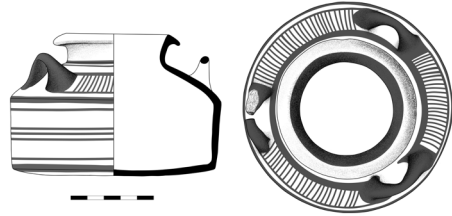


Fig. 4b. Illustration of the Pyxis discovery in burial no. 2 at Yassitepe Höyük



Fig. 4c. Double-handled jug (pelike) find from grave no. 1 at Yassitepe Höyük

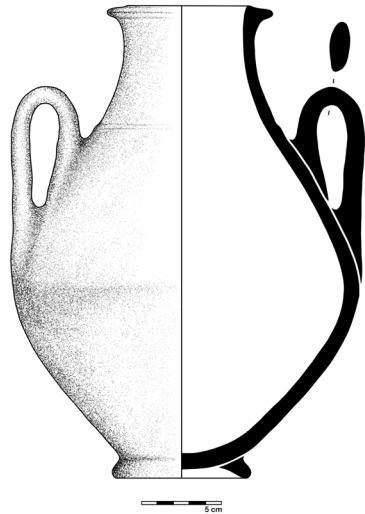


Fig. 4c. Illustration of the Double-handled jug (pelike) discovery in burial no. 1 at Yassitepe Höyük



Fig. 5a. Yassitepe Höyük grave no.2

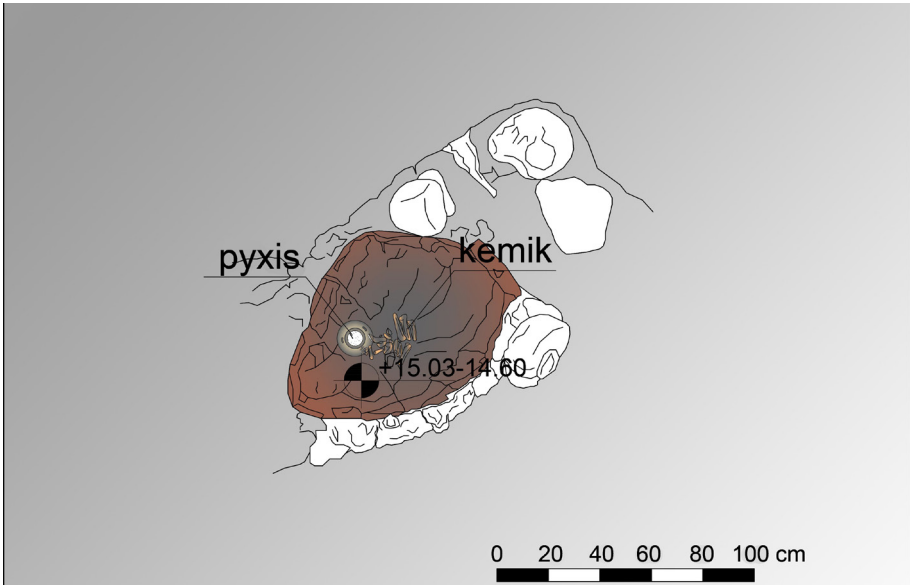


Fig. 5b. Illustration of Burial no. 2 from Yassitepe Höyük



Fig. 6a. Agate Stone Beads found in graves no 1-2 at Yassitepe Höyük



Fig. 6b. Faience and Frit Beads found in graves no 1-2 at Yassitepe Höyük

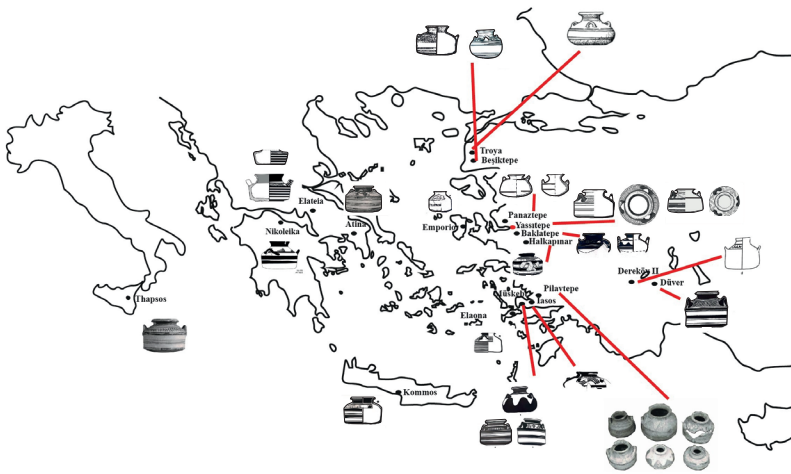
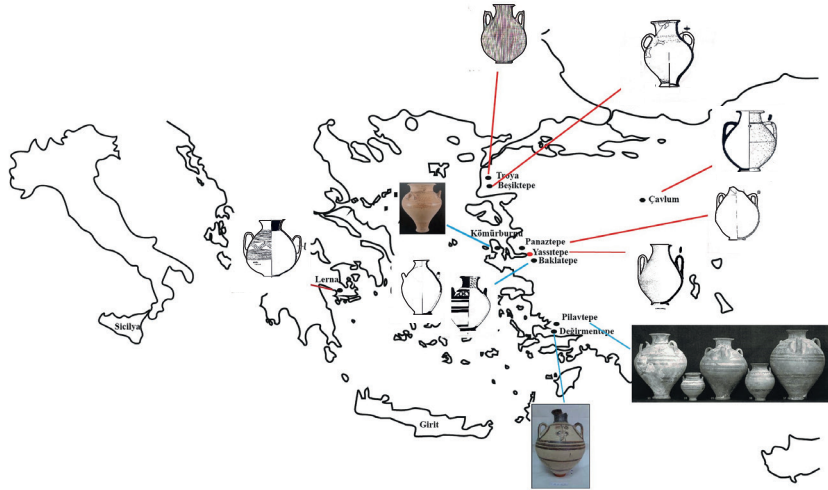


Fig. 7. Centers with double-handled jugs (pelike) and pyxis mentioned in the text

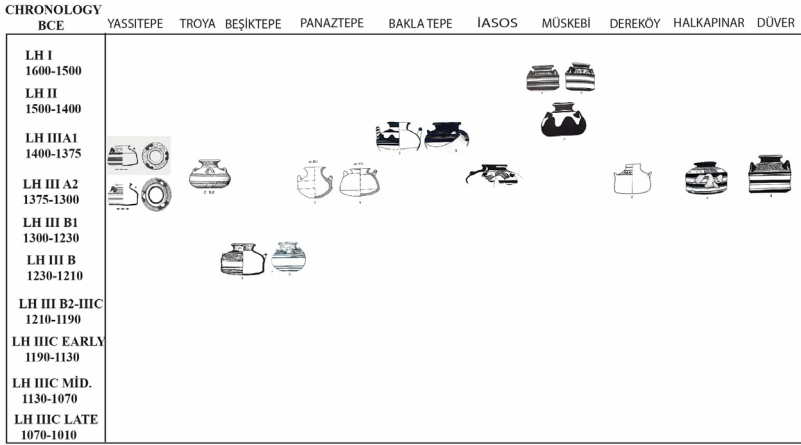


Fig. 8. The chronological comparison of pyxis found at Yassitepe Höyük with other examples found in Western Anatolia and Eastern Aegean Island, Main Greece and Crete

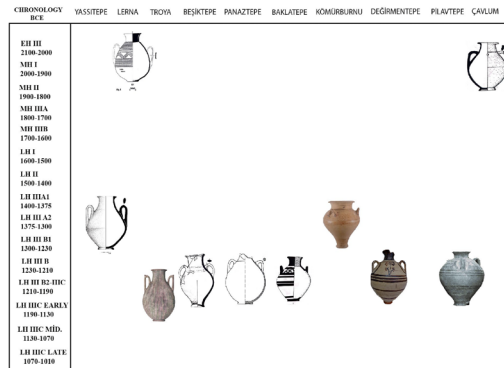


Fig. 9. The chronological comparison of double-handled jug (pelike) found at Yassitepe Höyük with other examples found in Western Anatolia