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MYCENAEAN FEMALE FIGURINE AND ZOOMORPHIC VESSEL IN THE AYASULUK HILL IN WESTERN ANATOLIA

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Abstract: A Mycenaean Psi-type figurine was discovered during archaeological excavations at Ayasuluk Hill in Western Anatolia in 2021. The Ayasuluk Hill Psi-type figurine is distinct from conventional Psi-type figurines regarding its production features. The horizontal ornamentation of the painted bands encircling the front and back of the body contrasts with the decorating of typical psi type figures. Consequently, there is no precisely similar decoration in the late Psi type figurines, when multiple patterns were experimented with. Therefore, the Ayasuluk Hill figurine, indicative of regional or local production, must be evaluated separately from an imported and standardized Psi type figurine. The figurines were probably fabricated in the same workshops, similar to how Mycenaean pottery was locally produced on the Aegean islands and the western Anatolian shores. The Ayasuluk Hill Psi-type figurine was likely produced in a same workshop.

The zoomorphic vessel from Ayasuluk, despite the absence of most of its components, can be inferred to have belonged to a bird askos based on certain basic features. The askos pieces exhibit the clay, slip, and painting attributes characteristic of Mycenaean pottery concerning technique and production. It is posited that the Ayasuluk bird askos arrived at the settlement via a link originating from Southern Greece or the Aegean Islands. Considering thus far, one might suggest the LH IIIC Middle and Late periods.

Despite the absence of LBA architecture on Ayasuluk Hill, the finding of the psi figure necessitates an explanation involving individuals of Aegean descent. Furthermore, it should not be disregarded that highlighting the presence of individuals of Aegean background does not inherently imply an extended residency in this site. Such figurines should also be present in instances of short-term residence inside the city. Regrettably, because to the mixed context of the psi type figurine and zoomorphic vessel, it is impossible to acquire more extensive information regarding their exact functions and the identities of their owners. Currently, the Mycenaean discoveries from the 1963 excavation reveal indications of the religious practices of the Aegean inhabitants on Ayasuluk Hill. Nevertheless, it would be inadequate to elaborate further on their dimensions. Upcoming archaeological discoveries on Ayasuluk Hill may provide further insights on the Mycenaean presence in the settlement.

Keywords: *Mycenaean, Aegean, Late Bronze Age, Figurine, Askos.*

INTRODUCTION

This study will introduce a Mycenaean female figurine and a zoomorphic vase discovered on Ayasuluk Hill and will typologically explore and evaluate

their context within the Aegean World. The initial figurine is a female representation discovered in Ayasuluk during the 2021 archaeological excavation season. The second consists of the remains of an incompletely recovered zoomorphic vessel. It was discovered during the 1990 excavation season, and no assessment or commentary regarding its chronology or prior presence has been provided. The evaluation of these artifacts on Ayasuluk Hill will be based on the findspots and functions of their counterparts beyond Greece.¹

MYCENAEAN ARTIFACTS FROM AYASULUK HILL

Although local Late Bronze Age pottery and Mycenaean pottery have been found at Ayasuluk Hill near ancient Ephesus in Western Anatolia, no Late Bronze Age architectural layer has yet been discovered (Fig. 1). Mycenaean pottery was found in grid squares S 22 and S 23 on the hill adjacent to the citadel, while the female figurine was located in a mixed context within grid square S 23, level 49.22.



Fig. 1. Ayasuluk Hill.

The unearthed Mycenaean female figurine belongs to the Psi type (Fig. 2a-b, 3). The figurine is composed of red clay and light beige slip. The figurine features a crescent-shaped body with a thin, elongated cylindrical neck extending from the center.

The neck is fractured in two, and its head remains unrecovered. The arms' extremities taper as they ascend from either side. Her left arm is slightly longer than her right. The figurine is fractured at the neck and at the waist beneath the body. The figurine features a pair of breasts appliquéd on the front and center of its body.

Semicircular painted bands on the front and back diminish in size as they ascend from the waist to the torso. Horizontally similar painted bands were applied to the neck. Blackish-brown paint was applied over light brown slip on the front of the figurine, while reddish light brown paint was applied to the rear.

Features of the figurine: Height: 4.3 cm, Width: 5.5 cm, Wall: 0.6 cm (arms), 1.3 cm (torso), 0.9 cm (neck), Clay: 2.5

¹ We would like to express our deep gratitude to Prof. Dr. Robert Koehl, Dr. Konstantinos Paschalidis and Prof. Andreas Vlachopoulos for their suggestions and comments regarding the essay.

YR 5/6 red, Slip: 5 YR 7/3 pink, Color: 2.5 YR 2.5/1 reddish black (front), 2.5 YR 5/6 red (rear)



a



b



Fig. 2a-b. Ayasuluk Hill Psi Type Figurine.

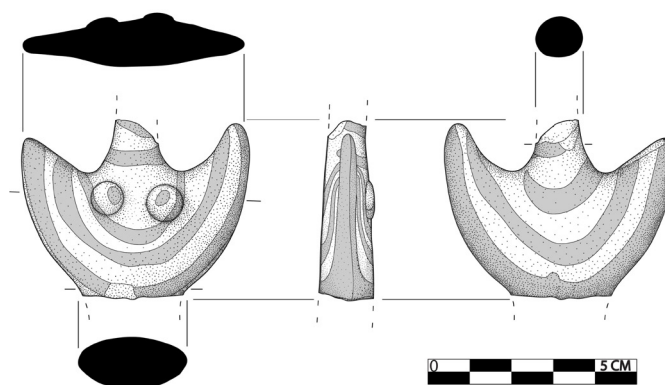


Fig. 3. Ayasuluk Hill Psi Type Figurine.

The second one can be classified as a zoomorphic Mycenaean vessel. The Ayasuluk zoomorphic vessel is a hollow object. The orifice of Mycenaean zoomorphic rhyta is typically open, with the inside being hollow and covered by a thin wall.

Considering the absence of most of its components, it is plausible to infer that it was part of an animal-shaped vessel, specifically a bird askos, based on a few basic features. (Fig. 4). Regrettably, no artifact indicating the mouth or the aperture for liquid ingress in the animal-shaped vessel (rhyta) have been unearthed. The fragments of the vessel exhibit the clay, slip, and decorative attributes indicative of Mycenaean pottery regarding technique and production. Among the four artifacts discovered in prior excavations, Piece no. 1 is likely associated with the back and body. The reverse side of the form is adorned with continuous black horizontal lines and dots. The tip and tail exhibit a modest upward curvature.

Rises from the tip to the front of the back. The front part of the back is broken. The black semicircles coming out of the body connect with the back. The “S” or worm motif between the semicircles at the tip is surrounded by dots. The surface has a pale yellow slip. The second piece belonging to the body, Piece no. 2, has semicircles on the outside of the roughly eye-shaped motif coming out of the thick black band. The body piece no. 3 contains semicircular decorations. It is seen that the decoration in piece no. 2 continues in this piece. No. 4 is another body piece. Like the other pieces, it has a pale yellow slip.

The zoomorphic vessel (bird askos) is from grid square S 22 on Ayasuluk Hill, where Mycenaean pottery were also found. As can be understood, grid square S 22 is the section where the Late Bronze Age findings and especially the Mycenaean activities in the settlement are most intense on Ayasuluk Hill.

Features of the zoomorphic vessel (bird askos): Clay: 10 YR 7/3 very pale brown, Slip: 10 YR 7/4 very pale brown, Color: 10 YR 2/1 black, **No.1:** Height: 2.8 cm, Width: 9.6 cm, Wall: 0.3 cm; **No.2:** Height: 3.6 cm, Width: 4.5 cm, Wall: 0.3 cm; **No.3:** Height: 2 cm, Width: 2.9 cm, Wall: 0.3 cm; **No.4:** Height: 2.6 cm, Width: 3.4 cm, Wall: 0.3 cm



Fig. 4. Ayasuluk Hill Zoomorphic Vessel (Bird askos).

PSI TYPE FIGURINES IN THE AEGEAN WORLD AND THEIR COMPARISON WITH THE AYASULUK FIGURINE

Mycenaean female figurines are categorized into three primary groups: Phi, Psi, and Tau figurines. A chronological development process exists among these three distinct groups.² Initially, Psi type figurines emerged in the Aegean World as hollow forms in Greece during the LH IIIA2 period at Mycenae. Standard Psi type figurines were also found in Argos, Prosymna, Berbati, and Mycenae, especially from the LH IIIB period. The production of this kind of figurines appears to be increasing.³ The psi type figurines show a

chronological development and transformation process.⁴ In a study carried out by French, figurines of these types were categorized as Hollow Psi type, Psi Type, High-waisted Psi type, and Late Psi type.⁵ This classification also offers a timeline related to Mycenaean pottery.

Multiple variants of the Psi type exhibit formal variations in the body, head, arms, and height, alongside diverse configurations concerning applied motifs. In particular, there are instances from Mycenae in the Hollow Psi form, where the arms ascend vertically on both sides like ears⁶. In canonical Psi type figurines, a crescent-shaped body, arms extending from both sides, vertical painted band lines on the body, and a cylindrical stem adorned with vertical painted bands are typical production features.⁷ Among the early forms (LH IIIA2 period), there are Psi type examples that are small, have protruding arms, and lack the crescent shape.⁸ In certain late examples (Late Psi type), the arms of some figurines can elevate sufficiently to reach their heads.⁹ The necks of certain Psi type figurines are noticeably longer than those of their counterparts.¹⁰ Upon examination of the bodies, it is observed that while the crescent form is the predominant shape, as defined in Mastos-Berbati, Psi type figurines are also produced in “V” or “U” shapes based on the anatomical characteristics.¹¹

In the Late Psi style, with vertical and vertically wavy line embellishments on the body, horizontally parallel, approximately semicircular ornaments encircling the body were utilized as well.¹² Nonetheless, vertical lines were further utilized between these semicircles.¹³ Miniature figurines featuring bodies adorned with vertical and horizontal lines are also found in Aigeira.¹⁴ The type also exhibits various ornamentation on the body. The Late Psi Type figurines from Lefkandi feature cross-painted, dotted, chevron, or wavy ornamentation.¹⁵ A figurine from Phocis¹⁶ features horizontal semicircles and dot-decorated variations on its surface, while a figurine from Midea¹⁷ is adorned with the craftsman’s brush strokes, exhibiting irregular, diagonal lines. The Late Psi Type figure from Mitrou features a distinct ornamental pattern of dots and interconnected oval shapes.¹⁸

The neck of the Ayasuluk Hill Psi type figurine is broken although it seems to feature a horizontal band encircling the neck. One might say that such an application was utilized in every phase of Psi-type figurines. This horizontal band serves as a border line denoting the end of the body in Phi and Psi types. Production features reveal variations in form and design among Psi type figurines from the LH IIIA2 to LH IIIC periods. To facilitate comparison, it is essential to assess

⁴ FRENCH 1981, Fig.1; 2016, 60, Fig.1.

⁵ FRENCH 1971, 126–142.

⁶ FRENCH 1971, Pl.18c,39.428.

⁷ FRENCH 1971, 128–131, Fig. 8, Pl.19a

⁸ KONSOLAKI-YANNOPOULOU 2016, 157–169, Fig. 10.14–15.

⁹ FRENCH 1971, Pl.21.13.

¹⁰ KONSTANTINIDI-SYVRIDI/PASCHALIDIS 2015, 421, Fig.21a-b.

¹¹ WEIBERG 2009, 68, Fig.5.

¹² FRENCH 1971, Pl.21.16–17.

¹³ FRENCH 1971, Pl.21.20–21.

¹⁴ ALRAM-STERN 2007, 17, Fig.3.3.

¹⁵ EVELY *et alii* 2006, Pl. 73.14–24.

¹⁶ SIDERIS *et alii* 2017, Fig.20b.

¹⁷ DEMAKOPOULOU *et alii* 2009, Fig. 47.

¹⁸ KRAMER-HAJOS/O’NEILL 2008, 220, Fig. 41, D121

² FRENCH 1971, 1981, Fig.1.

³ FRENCH 1971, 126–127, 129.

the Psi figurines discovered in the settlements of the East Aegean – West Anatolian Interface.¹⁹ In the Aegean Islands, Mycenaean figurines have been discovered in various settlements. A Late Psi Type figurine featuring parallel cross-bands was located in Lemnos-Koukonisi²⁰ in the north, while another Late Psi Type figurine, composed of light gray clay with an orange surface, devoid of painted decoration and exhibiting broken arms, was found in Chios.²¹ It cannot be claimed that both figurines substantially resemble the Ayasuluk Hill figurine regarding their overall features. The figurine from Psara-Archontiki is of the Late Psi type, featuring outstretched arms, a body adorned with cross-painted bands, and a short stem.²² The single horizontal neck decoration, the elongated shape of the arms, and the embellishments on the torso exhibit traits that distinguish them from the Ayasuluk Hill figurine.

Two Psi-type figurines with elongated arms arranged in a “V” configuration were discovered in separate tombs in Cos-Langada²³; nevertheless, they do not bear resemblance to the Ayasuluk Hill figurine in terms of form. In Western Anatolia, several Psi type figures have been discovered in the excavations at Troy²⁴, Liman Tepe²⁵, Miletos²⁶, and Iasos²⁷. The Psi type figurine from Troy is a headless, stemless body fragment with fractured arms. It contrasts with the Ayasuluk figurine in its production, which is featuring gray clay and a yellow slip surface.²⁸ The Troy figurine exhibits a thinner frame and lacks a crescent shape, distinguishing its production style from that of the Ayasuluk figurine due to differences in clay qualities.

The initial Psi type figurine discovered in Limantepe is a headpiece. While a general comparison with the Ayasuluk figurine is impractical a resemblance can be drawn with its dark pink clay and beige/cream slip.²⁹ The second is a Late Psi Type figurine showing a body and stem with broken arms. This sample lacks the typical body adornment found in Mycenaean psi type figurines.³⁰ While the Psi type figurines discovered in Miletos is classified as a local fabrication, it seemingly has traditional painting and decorative components than the Ayasuluk example.³¹ The figurine possesses arms that extend beyond the neck. The body features vertical and diagonal painted stripes. In light of these attributes, it diverges from the Ayasuluk Hill Psi type figurine regarding its stylistic aspects. In Iasos, located further south, the Psi type figurine, characterized by its beige slip and dark brown paint, is produced from local clay and contains thick

vertical painted bands on its body, contrasting it from the Ayasuluk Hill figurine in overall characteristics.³²

For use in comparison, while it does not quite match a figurine, the body of the huge Psi type figurine from the LH IIIC period at Tiryns and the two arms extending in a crescent form exhibit similarities.³³ A vague resemblance to the decoration on the Ayasuluk Hill figurine can be observed on a Psi type figure from Lerna. The object features a densely painted black semicircle on its body.³⁴

The body of the Late Psi type figurine from Amyklai shows a similar basic design. The arm openings and the chest painting with two appliques are analogous, although they diverge with the vertical wave motif on the torso.³⁵ The horizontal, semicircular design shown on another figurine from Amyklai closely resembles the decoration of the Ayasuluk Hill figurine, however it is distinguished by vertical lines and dots³⁶ (Fig. 5). The initial of the two Psi-type figurines found in Tiryns belongs to the Late Psi B category. This serves as an exemplary comparison, with semicircular patterns on its surface. The two breasts on the figurine’s body are painted similarly to those on the Ayasuluk figurine³⁷ (Fig. 6). The sec-



Fig. 5. Late Psi Type Figurine from Amyklai (FRENCH 1971, Pl.21.20).



Fig. 6. Late Psi Type Figurine from Tiryns (VETTERS 2019, 789, DB-Nr. 1726)



Fig. 7. Late Psi Type Figurine from Tiryns. (VETTERS 2019, DB-Nr. 396).

ond is a Late Psi C1 figurine adorned with randomly arranged semicircular motifs on its surface. The consecutively painted semicircular designs diminish in size near the neck of the figurine. Nonetheless, they were executed with considerable negligence.³⁸ (Fig. 7).

The parallel semicircular ornamentation on the front and rear of the Ayasuluk Hill figurine indicates a distinct variation. Vertical lines, waves, and parallel cross lines are the predominant and favored embellishments on Psi Type figurines.³⁹ The Ayasuluk Hill figurine is a significant exemplar of the diverse regional creations of Psi type figurines. The figurine embodies the craftsman’s personal style through its form and decorative components.

¹⁹ MOUNTJOY 1998, Fig.1, 9.

²⁰ ΜΠΟΥΛΟΥΤΗΣ 1997, 267, Fig. 28

²¹ HOOD/CLUTTON-BROCK/BIALO 1982, 629, Pl. 131.16.

²² ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΑΔΟΥ 2006, 102–103.

²³ MORRICONE 1967, 235, Fig. 256a-b; 249, Fig. 275.

²⁴ SCHMIDT 1902, 171, Fig. 3562.

²⁵ GÜNEL 1998, 29, Lev. 2; ERKANAL 2008, 95–96.

²⁶ NIEMEIER 2007, 15.

²⁷ BENZI 1999, 276.

²⁸ SCHMIDT 1902, 170–171, Fig. 3562.

²⁹ GÜNEL 1998, 25, 30, Lev. 1–2.

³⁰ MANGALOĞLU-VOTRUBA 2011, 51, Res.6a.

³¹ GÖDECKEN 1988, Pl.19f.

³² BENZI 1999, 276, Fig.2; 2019, 423, Fig. 42.

³³ DIVARI-VALAKOU 1989, 95–97, Fig. 25.

³⁴ WIENCKE 1998, 204, Fig. 47.M60.

³⁵ FRENCH 1971, Pl.21, a2.

³⁶ FRENCH 1971, Pl.21.

³⁷ VETTERS 2019, 789, DB-Nr. 1726.

³⁸ VETTERS 2019, 189, DB-Nr. 396.

³⁹ EVELY *et alii* 2006, Pl. 72. 6–7, 9–11; Pl. 73. 14, 18; TZAVELLA-EVJEN 2014, Cat. 155, 159, 165, 168, 170, 173–173.

ZOOMORPHIC VESSELS IN THE AEGEAN WORLD AND THEIR COMPARISON WITH THE AYASULUK ZOOMORPHIC VESSEL (BIRD ASKOS)

Upon examining the issue of animal-shaped vessel forms, it is evident that zoomorphic rhyta of different styles were widely used in Crete during the Neo-Palatial period.⁴⁰ Animal-headed rhyta has significant importance among Mycenaean zoomorphic vessels. Bull head-shaped rhyta were widely distributed in Crete, Rhodes, the Dodecanese, and Cyprus⁴¹, while ram and lion head-shaped rhyta have also been discovered throughout the Eastern Mediterranean⁴². Hedgehog-shaped rhyta, classified as zoomorphic vessels, were discovered in numerous cities in the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly in Ugarit and Greece, dating to the LH IIIA2-IIIB1 periods.⁴³ Moreover, fish-shaped rhyta from Ugarit feature similar designs found in the Mycenaean pottery repertory.⁴⁴

The Ayasuluk Hill zoomorphic vessel can be compared to Late Bronze Age bird askoi that originated in the Aegean World. Piece no. 1 possesses a horizontal and elongated back, a characteristic frequently observed in bird askoi⁴⁵ within zoomorphic vessels.⁴⁶ The sequential black horizontal line/dot decoration on the reverse of piece no. 1 is a technique employed on bird askoi. In the bird askoi of the LH IIIC period, the body expands from the lower back to the sides, assuming a spherical form, with the spout positioned centrally on the back and the head at the opposite end⁴⁷ (Fig. 8). The liquid exits the askos through the beak section.⁴⁸ The subtle rise of the tip and tail of Piece no. 1 is an additional feature observed in bird askoi.⁴⁹

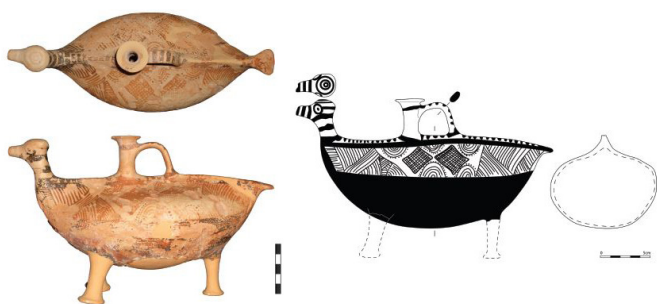


Fig. 8. Bird askos from Achaia Clausa (PASCHALIDIS 2018, 173, Fig. 330).

It is also possible to see the black horizontal line/dot decoration applications on the backs of Mycenaean female

⁴⁰ KOEHL 2018, 64.
⁴¹ KOEHL 2006, 128, Cat. 355–359; 208, Cat. 1095.
⁴² KOEHL 2006, 129–130, Cat. 361–368.
⁴³ KOEHL 2006, 79–81, Cat. 44–53; HIRSCHFELD 2000, 128, Fig.21. Cat. no. 297; Fig. 22. Cat. no. 298.
⁴⁴ HIRSCHFELD 2000, 129, Fig. 22. Cat. no. 301–302; KOEHL 2006, Pl. 27. 339.
⁴⁵ Bird askoi of this type are defined as rhyton. Ps. VLACHOPOULOS 2012, 116.
⁴⁶ VERMEULE 1960, 12, Pl. 4. Fig. 31, No. 45; PASCHALIDIS/MCGEORGE 2009, 99, Fig. 14a; PASCHALIDIS 2018, 173, Fig. 330; BIKATOY 2021, 554–555, Eικ.7g.
⁴⁷ PASCHALIDIS 2018, 173, Fig. 330; VLACHOPOULOS 2006, Pl. 47. 1735; 48. 1802; 2019, 168, Cat. No. 82; KOEHL 2006, 83, Cat. 68; PAPADOPOULOS 1991, 33, Pl.1c.
⁴⁸ VLACHOPOULOS 2012, 116.
⁴⁹ PASCHALIDIS 2018, 187, Fig. 360.

figures⁵⁰. It is also an arrangement used on the back of animal figurines and seated figurines⁵¹. Similarly, the nose bridge of the bull head shaped rhyton from a tomb in Enkomi is slightly elevated and has parallel painted lines, as in Piece No. 1⁵². It is understood that the back begins to rise from where the spine breaks, this part should be the beginning of the handle of the vase. The closeness of the distance from the tail to the handle is similar to the bird askos from Rhodes-Ialysos.⁵³

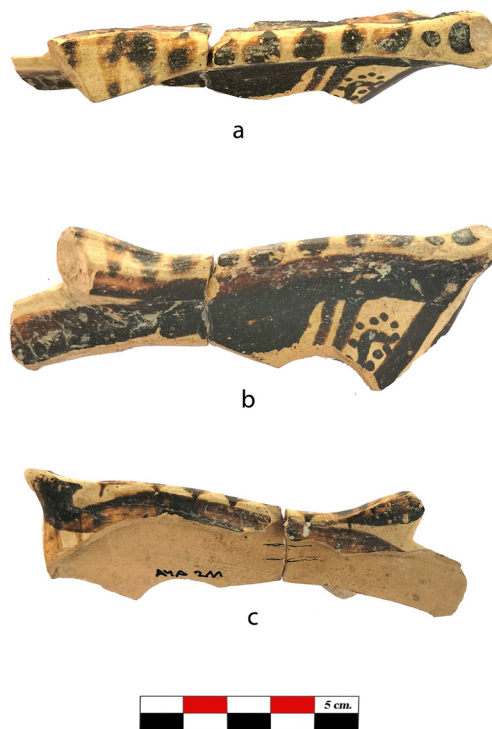


Fig. 9a-b-c. Ayasuluk Hill Zoomorphic Vessel (Bird askos).

It is possible to see similar “S” or worm motif and dot marks around it in Piece No.1 on unusual animal figurines from Mycenaean⁵⁴ (Fig. 9a-b). Dot decorations are also used on the heads of bull figurines⁵⁵.

In bird askos, semicircles on the shoulder under the back are a preferred motif.⁵⁶ In Piece no. 2, the motif with an eye-shaped interior and semicircles on the outside (Fig. 4.2) can be compared with the FM 43 isolated semicircles (43c, and especially 43.27) decoration in the Mycenaean pottery repertoire. In addition to its use in Greece⁵⁷, this decoration extends to Western Anatolia and Cilicia. It can be seen in a Mycenaean form in Limantepe⁵⁸ and on LH IIIC jugs in Tarsus-Gözlükule⁵⁹. When we want to compare based on more specific features, a similar decoration (FM 43 isolated

⁵⁰ FRENCH 1971, Pl. 16b; WEIBERG 2009, 65, Fig. 2.7, 69, Fig. 6.3; TAMVAKI 1973, 211, Fig. 3.11; VETTERS 2019, 1274, DB-Nr. 2995.
⁵¹ FRENCH 1971, Pl. 25e, 53.619, Pl. 26d; TAMVAKI 1973, 221, Fig. 8.45; BADRE/CAPET/VITALE 2018, Pl. XLVI.530
⁵² KOEHL 2006, 128–129, Pl.29.359.
⁵³ MAIURI 1926, 173, Fig. 100.
⁵⁴ FRENCH 1971, Pl.26a, 54.79.
⁵⁵ THOMAS 2011, Fig. 28.325.
⁵⁶ PASCHALIDIS 2018, 173, Fig. 330; 187, Fig. 360.
⁵⁷ DEMAKOPOULOU 2007, 174, Fig. 21.
⁵⁸ MANGALOĞLU-VOTRUVUVA 2012, Lev. 164f.
⁵⁹ MOUNTJOY 2005, Fig. 2.20, 24.

semicircles) is found on the body of a horse shaped rhyton dated to the LH IIIC period from a chamber tomb in Ialysos⁶⁰. When examined in terms of general characteristics, it is possible to compare the Ayasuluk bird askos with the LH IIIC Middle and Late phase askoi in Achaia Clausus in terms of dating⁶¹.

Although a bird askos dating to the Submycenaean period was found in Çömlekçiköy⁶², there is no similar example from the LH IIIC period in Western Anatolia. The closest example in terms of regional distance is from a chamber tomb in Ialysos, Rhodes⁶³.

WHAT INFORMATION DO THE MYCENAEAN ARTIFACTS ON AYASULUK HILL OFFER?

The existence of Psi type figurine and zoomorphic vessel (bird askos) in Ayasuluk presents a significant point for challenging the notion of Mycenaean involvement in the settlement. The excavations indicate that the Mycenaean pottery in the settlement covers the LH IIIA-IIIC periods.⁶⁴ In this regard, one might argue the presence of a continual association with Mycenaean commercial activities.

Upon examining the Mycenaean artifacts discovered in settlements containing Psi type figures in Western Anatolia, it is evident that they display varied diversity and density.⁶⁵ For instance, although local and imported Mycenaean pottery and the Psi Type figurine were discovered at Troy, it is not feasible to assert the presence of artifacts from various Mycenaean origins.⁶⁶ The Mycenaean discoveries in layer V at Miletos are linked to the presence of Mycenaean settlers, evidenced by pottery, buildings, tombs, and figurines.⁶⁷ In Limantepe, artifacts of Aegean origin, particularly from the LH IIIC period, provide evidence of migration to the site.⁶⁸ When evaluated together with the pottery, the figurine in the settlement seems to be related to the Mycenaean presence.⁶⁹ Despite the presence of local and imported Mycenaean pottery, along with Phi and Psi type figurines in Iasos, there is a lack of evidence, such as architecture and tombs, that can definitively indicate Mycenaean presence.⁷⁰

The functions and intentions of Mycenaean female figurines in Mainland Greece and the Aegean Islands may provide insights or prospects for discussion on their presence on Ayasuluk Hill. The use and spatial distribution of psi-type figurines in Mycenaean society indicate that they were placed in tombs as offerings, discovered in temples, and retained in public buildings.⁷¹ Nonetheless, it is evident that the figu-

rines of this type hold significant importance in Mycenaean religion, as they were discovered on benches at sacred places or among cult artifacts and votive offerings.⁷²

In this regard, Mycenaean female figurines had a significantly more intricate design than a widespread, utilitarian goods.⁷³ This is likely connected to the religious significance ascribed to these figurines. The utilization of this practice concerning the Mycenaean deceased, and its emergence as a significant component of funerary rituals, particularly during the LH IIIA2 period in Greece⁷⁴, elucidates its role within the Mycenaean civilization.

The presence of Mycenaean female figurines beyond Mainland Greece and the Aegean Islands indicates the likelihood of individuals of Aegean descent residing in the settlement where these artifacts were discovered, rather than serving as a commercial tool.⁷⁵ If the psi type figurine in Ayasuluk to be designed for a religious purpose, it must pertain to a spiritual practice of Aegean heritage. Benzi's analysis of the phi and psi type figurines discovered in Iasos suggests that they serve as evidence of Mycenaean ritual practices within the settlement.⁷⁶

When examining the topic by the viewpoint of findspots, Mycenaean zoomorphic vessels discovered in Mainland Greece and the Aegean Islands are predominantly derived from tombs or sacred places/temples.⁷⁷ In the Eastern Mediterranean, there are more instances of sacred places/temples⁷⁸ than of tombs.⁷⁹ This widespread situation can offer insights into the locations where the vessels were utilized and their overall activities. The presence of analogous bird askoi from tombs in the Aegean area elucidates their original purpose.⁸⁰ The presence of bird askoi from the tombs associated with child funerals⁸¹ likely signifies a more specific function and intent.

In this context, the discussion of the Ayasuluk Psi type figurine, along with French's assertion that Mycenaean traders, settlers, or representatives were present in locations where Mycenaean figurines have been discovered, such as Miletus, Ras Shamra, and Tell Abu Hawam⁸², implies that a comparable notion can be elucidated by the presence of a Mycenaean individual on or near Ayasuluk Hill. Despite the absence of architecture from the Late Bronze Age at Ayasuluk Hill, the discovery of a conical rhyton⁸³ utilized in religious ceremonies alongside various Mycenaean pottery in a previously excavated grave suggests that the practice in question has Aegean origins within the settlement. It serves as corroborative proof for existence.

Given that Ayasuluk Hill was a port linking the Cayster

⁶⁰ PAPAZOGLU-MAIOUDAKI 1989, 161, Cat. No. 120; 2014, 188, Fig. 5.

⁶¹ PASCHALIDIS 2018, 405, 173, Fig. 330; 187, Fig. 360.

⁶² BOYSAL 1969, 29, Taf. XXXIV.4.

⁶³ MAIURI 1926, 173, Fig. 100.

⁶⁴ GÜLTEKİN/BARAN 1964, 122–133; BÜYÜKKOLANCI 1998 72, Res.7; 2000, 39, 42, Fig. 13; 2005, 2; 2008, 46, Fig.17; 48, Fig. 18; KERSCHNER 2006, 367–368, Abb. 7; KONAKÇI 2016, 143, Fig. 4; YILMAZ 2015, 759–766; MİMAROĞLU/GÜR/MİMAROĞLU 2023, 545–571.

⁶⁵ Ps. KELDER 2006.

⁶⁶ SCHMIDT 1902, 171, Fig. 3562; MOUNTJOY 1997a 259–267; 1997b, 275–294; 1999, 301; 2006, 243–252.

⁶⁷ NIEMEIER 2005, 10–13, Fig.35.

⁶⁸ AYKURT-ERKANAL 2017, 64, Fig.4; AYKURT 2018, 74.

⁶⁹ GÜNEL 1998, 29.

⁷⁰ BENZI 1999; 2005, 204–205.

⁷¹ FRENCH 1971; TZONOU-HERBST 2010, 216; GÜR 2014, 92–93.

⁷² Ps. GÜR 2019, 99.

⁷³ ALBERS 2009, 97.

⁷⁴ TZONOU-HERBST 2010, 216–217.

⁷⁵ GÜR 2019, 104.

⁷⁶ BENZI 1999, 274.

⁷⁷ RENFREW 1981, 70, Fig. 13; KONSOLAKI 2002, 29–30; WHITTAKER 1997, 165, 182.

⁷⁸ WIJNGAARDEN 2002, 113, 115, 120, 156; KOEHL 2006, 80–81, 129.

⁷⁹ KOEHL 2006, 128–129; WIJNGAARDEN 2002, 156.

⁸⁰ KOEHL 2006, 82–83; BIKATOY 2009, 531–533; VLACHOPOULOS 2012, 50, 117.

⁸¹ LEMOS 1994, 233–234; PASCHALIDIS/MCGEORGE 2009, 96, 99–100; PASCHALIDIS 2018, 404, 408.

⁸² FRENCH 1971, 175.

⁸³ GÜLTEKİN/BARAN 1964, GÜR 2014, 149–150.

Basin to the Aegean Sea during the Late Bronze Age, and its equivalence to Apasa⁸⁴, the capital of the Arzawa Kingdom in Hittite records, the explanation behind the Aegean activities becomes significantly clearer. Based on the interpretation of Hittite sources indicating that the King of Arzawa sought refuge in the Aegean Islands associated with the Ahhiyawa/Mycenaean monarchy⁸⁵ and that an alliance was formed between Arzawa and Ahhiyawa, a comparison can be drawn with French's perspective. Furthermore, the figurehead⁸⁶ discovered beneath the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus has further significance when assessed along with the Mycenaean artifacts from Ayasuluk Hill.

CONCLUSION

The Ayasuluk Hill Psi type figurine is distinct from ordinary psi type figurines regarding its production features. The horizontal processing of the painted bands encircling the body on both the front and back sides is notably distinct from the decorations of typical psi type figurines. Nonetheless, a similarity may be drawn with the embellishments of the Late Psi B and C figurines from Tiryns, as referenced in the paper.

The Late Psi Type figurines exhibit a diverse array of ornamental components. It is possible to evaluate the Ayasuluk Hill Psi type figurine separately from an imported and standard Psi type figurine that reveals a regional or local production within the Late Psi type.

Similar to Mycenaean pottery, which was produced locally on the Aegean Islands and the coastlines of Western Anatolia, it is probable that the figurines were crafted in the same workshops. It is plausible that the Ayasuluk Hill Psi-type figurine was produced in such a workshop.

The zoomorphic vessel from Ayasuluk, despite the absence of most of its components, can be inferred to be a bird askos based on certain basic features. The askos pieces show the clay, slip, and painting characteristics associated with Mycenaean pottery regarding technique and manufacturing. To assess the potential place of origin, it is noted that bird askoi proliferated particularly in the southern region of mainland Greece.⁸⁷ Achaia is recognized as a significant production center⁸⁸; nevertheless, Crete, Rhodes, and Naxos⁸⁹ may also be noted. It can be posited that the Ayasuluk bird askos arrived at the settlement via a link originating from Southern Greece or the Aegean Islands. Regarding date, the LH IIIC Middle and Late periods may be proposed.

Despite the absence of LBA architecture on Ayasuluk Hill, the finding of the psi figurine requires an explanation involving individuals of Aegean provenance. Furthermore, it is important to note that highlighting the presence of individuals of Aegean origin does not inherently imply a prolonged residence in this region. Such figurines should also be found in instances of short-term residence inside the town.

The zoomorphic vessel, specifically the bird askos, can

perhaps be linked to the Mycenaean presence in Ayasuluk, given that bird askoi have been discovered in graves in Greece and their role in religious ceremonies. Conversely, if this askos was used for status and ostentation, it is important to acknowledge that it belonged to a local elite within the settlement. Regrettably, due to the artifacts originating from mixed contexts, it is impossible to acquire more particular information regarding their purposes and the identities of their owners. Currently, the Mycenaean discoveries from the 1963 excavation reveal indications of the religious practices of the Aegean populace on Ayasuluk Hill. Nevertheless, it would be inadequate to elaborate further on their dimensions. Future archaeological discoveries on Ayasuluk Hill may provide greater insights into the Mycenaean presence in the settlement.

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⁸⁴ BECKMAN/BRYCE/CLINE 2011, 46; BRYCE 2009 49; BRYCE/BIRKETT-REES 2016, 203.

⁸⁵ BECKMAN/BRYCE/CLINE 2011, 272.

⁸⁶ BAMMER/MUSS 2010, 88, res. 61.

⁸⁷ VLACHOPOULOS 2012, 117.

⁸⁸ VLACHOPOULOS 2012, 118.

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