

Prof. Dr. Haluk Abbasoğlu'na
65. Yaş Armağanı

EUERGETES

Festschrift für
Prof. Dr. Haluk Abbasoğlu
zum 65. Geburtstag



Suna - İnan Kıraç Akdeniz Medeniyetleri Araştırma Enstitüsü
Suna & İnan Kıraç Research Institute on Mediterranean Civilizations

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Yayına Hazırlayanlar

İnci DELEMEN

Sedef ÇOKAY-KEPÇE

Aşkım ÖZDİZBAY

Özgür TURAK



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SUNA & İNAN KIRAÇ RESEARCH INSTITUTE ON MEDITERRANEAN CIVILIZATIONS

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A Grave at Soli Höyük from the Hittite Imperial Period

Remzi Yağcı*

Excavations aiming to determine the Kizzuwatna – Hittite stratigraphy at Soli Höyük in Mezitli (Viranşehir), situated 11 km west of Mersin, were carried on in the 2006 campaign. At Soli Höyük¹ that is located on the Kizzuwatna – Hittite border in the Hittite Imperial era, this period is represented by the F9, G8, and G9 eastern step trenches. The remains of civil and military architecture from the 15th-13th centuries B.C. were heavily destroyed by a Roman tower and related fortification walls. These architectural remains include workshops (E9) and gallery type monumental buildings (F/G 9) dated to the Hittite Imperial period (14th century B.C.). and box style fortification walls from the earlier periods (16th-15th centuries B.C.). In the context of the 14th-13th centuries, in addition to inscribed finds such as a bulla, a seal impression on a jar handle, each bearing Hittite hieroglyphics and an Egyptian scarab, mass produced monochrome drab ware with incised potmarks and a number of Red Lustrous Wheel-Made (RLWM) ware including flasks, pitchers, and juglets were unearthed. This ceramic repertoire may be compared to the examples coming from the other Kizzuwatna – Hittite metropoleis of the 14th-13th centuries B.C. Furthermore, the significance of Soli as an important and active harbor city² in the period under study is strengthened by other finds from the same context; for instance, White Slip (WS) II milk bowls (2) refer to Cypriot links while scarabs (2) evince relations with Egypt. Grave offerings reveal a similar context. WS II pot-sherds and scarabs found in the two urn graves indicate that “prestige goods” used as grave offerings in the East Mediterranean were also circulated in the harbors of Kizzuwatna. Moreover, the urns reveal that cremation burial, known since the Early Neolithic period in Anatolia³, was also practiced at Soli.

This article written in honor of the 65th anniversary of the distinguished Professor Haluk Abbasoğlu who contributed vastly to Turkish archaeology focuses on the urn grave dated to the Hittite Imperial period excavated at Soli Höyük in 2006. An intramural urn burial consisting of a broken jar with ceramic sherds, animal bone fragments, and grave offerings inside was excavated, in the G8 plan square within the Hittite Imperial context (13th century B.C.) at the level 15.55 (figs. 1-2) under a space lying in a northwest and southeast direction within three walls at the level 15.69 in the 2006 excavation season (fig. 3). Numerous piles of sherds of monochrome and coarse kitchen ware were unearthed in the 2006 season. The piles of sherds in this area were

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¹ Goetze 1940: 58. The city continued to be on the borderline in classical antiquity due to its geographical location, see Strab. 14.5.8.

² Yağcı 2007.

³ Bittel et al. 1958: 31; Bryce 2002: 196.

located among the debris of the walls. Along with this ceramic assemblage, animal bones, an oxidized bronze pin, and a bead inside a dispersed jar were discovered (fig. 1). Many ceramic finds continued to appear extensively in the levels 15.69 – 15.55.

The first finds from the G8 grave were intermingled pot-sherds and bones. As we broadened the excavation area, a reversed buff jar, probably blown up by pressure (fig. 4) and containing a scarab in its southeastern side and an oxidized bronze pin were found in situ (fig. 5). In order to determine the distribution of the grave offerings, the area around the base of the jar was excavated and grave offerings, including a WS II fragment (fig. 6) at 15.45 in the northwestern side of the base and a black-banded bead (fig. 7) in the south at 15.36 were unearthed. The sounding between G8 and F8 yielded a WS II pot-sherd, animal bones and teeth. In the southern part of the base within a thick ashy layer at level 15.45, a burnt bulla with Hittite hieroglyphics came up at 15.43 (figs. 8-9). All of these finds have testified the existence of a dispersed urn-cremation burial and related grave offerings between the levels to 15.55 and 15.45.

The grave G8 is the second example of the kind⁴. The bulla with hieroglyphics shows that it belonged to an adult. The inscription in Hittite hieroglyphics is transcribed and published by Professors Ali and Belkıs Dinçol⁵ (see *Appendix*). According to the inscription, the bulla belonged to a man named “Parnapi” who had a military title. As far as the contextual and calligraphic features are concerned, the bulla is dated to the early 13th century B.C. The burial type involving intramural urn cremation is not very common in South Anatolia with the exception of some graves in Tarsus Gözlükule (1600-1500 B.C.) and in Tell Atchana (the second half of the 15th century)⁶. From Central Anatolia⁷, the single example of Konya Karahöyük (1800-1700 B.C.) may be added. However, there are examples of urn-cremation burials in extramural cemeteries⁸ in Western Anatolia, for instance at Troia (1400-1300 B.C.), Beşiktepe (1300 B.C.), Panaztepe (1400-1300 B.C.), Müsgebi (1400-1200 B.C.) and in Central Anatolia at Ilıca (1800-1600 B.C.), Boğazköy-Bağlarbaşı (1400-1300 B.C.), and Osmankaya (1500-1400 B.C.). Although cremation burial was known since the late phases of the Colony Period in the Hittite cultural sphere⁹, the practices of cremation in the burial rituals of the Hittite dynasty were attested in the written sources of the 14th-13th centuries B.C.¹⁰ The basic principles of cremation burials bear similarities with those narrated in *The Iliad* and the tradition of cremation at Troy VI may be considered as the origin of the ritual in the Hittites or rather it may be thought that it was a common tradition not a direct borrowing¹¹. Moreover, in the Hittite world the repetition of many unknown Luwian

⁴ Grave offerings found around an urn grave in an earlier excavation in F9 plan square at level 15.98 consist of a scarab dated to Thutmose III, a golden earring, and a WS II pot-sherd. However, there were no ashes (the ashes were most probably dispersed), see Yağcı 2003a: 94.

⁵ I offer my grateful thanks to them.

⁶ Akyurt 1998: Map 4.

⁷ In this region, inhumation was commonly practiced and only one of five burials contained cremation (the earliest example is in Konya Karahöyük). If a statistical analysis is carried out, the centers where cremation was most practiced are Troia (65%), Boğazköy (Osmankaya 73%; Bağlarbaşı 100%) and Ilıca (73%). This analysis solidifies the assumption that Central Anatolia might be the origin of cremation as a burial custom, which is practiced along with inhumation, see Akyurt 1998: 123-126, 169.

⁸ Dinçol 1969: 222; Akyurt 1998: 125, Table 79; Erkanal 2004: 90-93. Secondary regions: Western Anatolia - the Biga peninsula: (1500-1200 B.C.); Gediz- Meander basin: (1400-1200 B.C.); Central Anatolia, the inner and northern parts of Kızılırmak valley: (1900-1300 B.C.); the south of Kızılırmak and the Konya plain (2000-1500 B.C.); South Anatolia, Çukurova: (1600-1500 B.C.); the Amuq Plain: (2000-1300 B.C.); see Akyurt 1998: Table 81.

⁹ For instance, Konya Karahöyük, see Alp 1953: 35.

¹⁰ Otten 1958a: 13.

¹¹ Gurney 1981: 170.

expressions¹² during the cremation burials of Nergal, the God of the Underworld, and the twelve deities seems to provide evidence for the ethnic origin of this ritual¹³.

The burial customs inhumation and cremation¹⁴ in Cilicia during the 2nd millenium B.C. are exemplified by the intramural graves at Meydancikkale¹⁵ and Gözlükule¹⁶. The Gözlükule intramural urn-cremation grave, which may be compared to the Soli G8, belonged to a baby¹⁷ and is dated to the Early Hittite period, the earliest known example of the kind in the region. The Soli G8 grave demonstrates that the urn-cremation custom continued from the Late Bronze Age I to the Hittite Imperial period. This continuation in burial customs shows that Kizzuwatna was a rather “conservative” and homogeneous region devoted to its traditions during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages.

Another question that arises is whether cremation as a burial custom had any relation to the age of the deceased. If the Tarsus - Gözlükule grave belonging to a baby and the Soli G8 belonging to an adult are taken into consideration, we may suppose that cremation could be used for every age group without limitation in Cilicia during the Hittite Imperial period. Although the evidence coming from only two sites is not sufficient to establish further links, the relation between the rituals in cremation burials (using Luwian expressions in Hittite tablets)¹⁸ and the ethnic structure of the region is worth investigating.

The positioning of the G8 burial between monumental walls, i.e. whether it was buried under ground as was the tradition¹⁹ or not, cannot definitely be ascertained. Then it could be claimed that it was situated in an area bordered by the walls of the 13th century B.C. The urn was left upside down and both the jar and the offerings inside were dispersed. During the excavations only the reversed base and some fragments of the jar were found. The sides of the jar were not recovered; however, a thick and solid ash layer in the form of a platform which contained a scarab, animal bones, and fragments of coal slag was discovered. The reason for the reversed position of the urn is open to debate.

The principal grave offerings consist of an uninscribed stone scarab, a bulla with hieroglyphics, a bead, and a WS II pot-sherd (figs. 1, 5-9). The Egyptian seal-amulet scarab is a well-known grave offering representing life and rebirth that is widely found in Egyptian dynastic and public graves²⁰. The scarab found at Soli G8 is uninscribed and it has a suspension hole. It most probably had an amuletic significance. Its function in the grave is different from the scarab of Thutmose III excavated at Soli F9, which was used as a seal/amulet.

¹² Bittel et al. 1975: 191.

¹³ A similar scene is depicted on the Tyskiewicz seal, see Akyurt 1998: 153-154.

¹⁴ Both burial types (cremation-inhumation) are common with the Hittites. Bittel et al. 1958: 24; Dinçol 1969: 222; Akyurt 1998: 126, 169, Map 1-2.

¹⁵ For inhumation graves, see Mellink 1972: 171; Akyurt 1998: 169.

¹⁶ Goldman 1956: 47.

¹⁷ Late Bronze I (1650-1450 B.C.), Area “A”, in terrace and under the east wall of Room “N”, see Goldman 1956: 47.

¹⁸ See n. 12.

¹⁹ Bryce 2002: 196.

²⁰ The Egyptians associated the beetle (scarab) with one of the many aspects of the great sun-god Ra, that of the rising sun, Khepri, see Lurker 1980: 104-105; <http://mcclungmuseum.utk.edu/permex/egypt/egs-text.htm>. Scarab was a rare grave offering in Anatolia. For instance, of 44 centers and 1000 graves investigated, only two scarabs were found. Akyurt 1998: Table 76, 84, the first one was found in Panaztepe: these are two scarabs found in two different pithoi. According to the inscription on one of them, the scarab is dated to the rule of Amenophis III (1396-1358 B.C.). According to the writer, it was brought to the region later. Erkanal 2002: 193; 2004: 91, the second one was found at Tell Atchana at the fourth architectural layer (1447-1370 B.C.) in a pithos belonging to an adult, see Woolley 1955: 215. Woolley (1955: 361), moreover, found more than fifty pieces of WS II wares. Only two of them were grave offerings.

The function of the bronze pin (fig. 5) found near the scarab is also known from the urn-cremation burial customs. For instance, it was traditional especially in public cemeteries to wrap up the ashes and the remains of the bones with linen which was then fixed with a pin. The most typical example of this practice²¹ is observed in Gedikli²². The reason for the absence of any traces of linen at the Soli G8 grave may be related to the perishable or invisible nature of the material.

Beads (fig. 7) as personal grave offerings, were also commonly encountered in the 2nd millennium B.C in western Anatolia at Troia, Beşiktepe, Panaztepe; in the transition region at Yanarlar; in Central Anatolia at Gordion, Alişar, Kültepe; and in Southeastern Anatolia at Kargamış and Tell Atchana²³. This kind of jewelry was excavated in graves belonging to different age groups.

Although broken and amorphous, the WS II pot-sherd is another find that may be classified as a grave offering (fig. 5). This type of Cypriot pottery with globular body and wishbone handle were labeled as “milk bowls” and common in the Central Mediterranean basin, in Egypt and, along the Syrian and Palestinian shores²⁴. WS II wares were usually used as grave offerings in Cyprus and they are generally regarded as related to the cult of the dead²⁵. Soli G8 WS II pot-sherd is a part from the body²⁶. Among 13 fragments in total excavated at Soli Höyük, only two body fragments are grave offerings²⁷. Cypriot WS II wares are rarely used as grave offerings in Anatolia²⁸.

Cups broken in this manner are considered as “libation vessels” directly related to the cult of the dead on account of the written evidence indicating that the deceased carried these objects into the other world and the cups were deliberately broken after the libation ritual²⁹. As the Soli G8 grave illustrates, broken libation cups, animal bones, and several offerings may be cited among the essential elements of cremation burials³⁰. The fact that urn-cremations have less grave offerings than the inhumations may be related to the nature of the cremation ritual itself. The destructed and mostly burnt pot-sherds and beads demonstrate that people used to put in the urn the remnants of the offerings as well as the ashes³¹. The burnt bulla *Parnapi* found at Soli Höyük should be considered as this type of grave offering. The bulla has a suspension hole and it was probably used to keep safe the goods or a storehouse. Within this framework, we may think that the deceased was a relative or servant of Parnapi.

²¹ Alkım 1966: 27-57; Dinçol 1969: 223. In the inscriptions describing the cremation ritual of a king or a queen, the ceremonies of collecting the bones with a pair of silver tongs and putting them into the fine oil in a silver jar and lastly laying them on a linen *gazzarmulli* to wrap them together are thoroughly narrated. After the wrapping procedure, the bones in the garment were placed on a chair if it is a man or on a stool if it is a woman. At the last stage, bones were taken from *Ukturi* (cremation), carried to the stone house of the dead (É-NA₄), and laid out a bed; see Otten 1958b: 82; Gurney 1981: 167; Akyurt 1998:149

²² Gedikli cremation graves are dated to the Early Bronze Age III (2200-2000 B.C.). Several *depas amphikypelloi* excavated at Gedikli graves refer to a still unexplained relationship between Gedikli and Troia II. There are also interactions between Troia II and Cilicia during the Early Bronze Age III; see McQueen 1986: 30, 133.

²³ Akyurt 1998: Table 84.

²⁴ Karageorghis 2001: 9; Yağcı 2003b: 9. For their distributions in Anatolia, see Todd 2001: 206.

²⁵ Kromholz 1978: 2. It is also thought that they were used both as kitchen ware and libation vessels. Malmgren 1999: 78.

²⁶ Until present, 13 different sherds of WS II ceramic i.e., 8 bodies, 3 rims and 2 handles (the second one was excavated at E6 in 2006) are excavated at Soli Höyük.

²⁷ See n. 4; Yağcı 2007: fig.19.

²⁸ The other example in addition to the find from Soli is the no. 59 inhumation grave at Tell Atchana; see Woolley 1955: pl. 130, BM 30.

²⁹ Bryce 2002: 194. For discussions on the tradition of breaking vessels after libation in Anatolia and in the Mycenaean civilization, see Akyurt 1998: 143-144.

³⁰ Akyurt 1998: 152.

³¹ Akyurt 1998: 137.

The bones found at the Soli G8 grave are cattle bones. Inscriptions about the Hittite cult of the dead reveal that libation, animal sacrifice, and funeral-meal formed the fundamental burial practices. In the inscriptions of the 14th-13th centuries B.C. that narrate the funerary rites practiced at dynastic cremations, animal sacrifice is accepted as a facilitator of the soul's return³² with the belief that these animals accompany the deceased to assist him in his journey.

In conclusion, the Soli G8 intramural urn-cremation grave is a continuation in the Hittite Imperial period (13th century B.C.) of a burial custom known in Cilicia since the Early Hittite period (exemplified by the earliest evidence of Tarsus Gözlükule). These two examples show that cremation was practiced without age limitation. As stated above, grave offerings such as scarabs and WS II wares were usually common in coastal cities due to the impact of maritime trade. In the light of these finds, it is clear that imports from Cyprus and Egypt were in circulation in the markets of Soli for both daily and ritual usage as "prestige goods".

The finds further reveal that the deliberate breaking of vessels was a traditional funerary rite in Cilicia. The grave offerings were traditionally linked to the cult of the dead (Manism) and consecrated to the dead in the hope of ensuring a symbolic reincarnation.

Finally, as a personal written document, the *Parnapi* bulla along with the *Muwazi* bulla and *Targasna* seal impression provides a promising source for Kizzuwatna onomastics, while the title sword/dagger man (*gladius*) is an important contribution to the titles used in the region. Since the bulla did not belong to the deceased himself, the deceased was most probably a relative/servant of Parnapi. However, there is no precise data on the gender. The Soli G8 grave dated to the 13th century B.C. is important since it provides detailed data on burial customs in Kizzuwatna in the last century of the Hittite Imperial period.

The Grave Inventory

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Fragments of the base of the jar | 4) 1 Bead (height: 0.9 cm, width: 1.5 cm, the diameter of the hole: 0.4 cm) |
| 2) 1 Scarab (height.: 2.3 cm, width: 4.9 cm) | 5) 1 WS II pot-sherd |
| 3) 1 Bulla (height: 2.1 cm, diameter: 2.6/2.8 cm) | 6) Animal bones |

³² In the Imperial Hittite tablets, the executioner calls the body of the dead during the cattle-sacrifice: "Let this ox take your place and your soul come down to it", see Otten 1958a: 13; 1958b: 81; Bryce 2002: 193-194.

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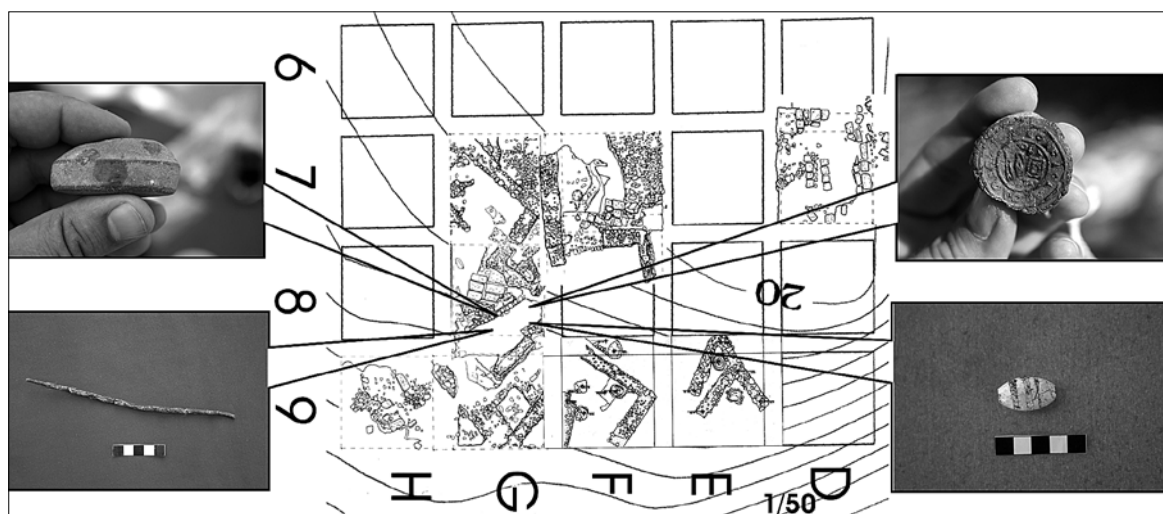


Fig. 1 The location of the G8 plan square and grave offerings

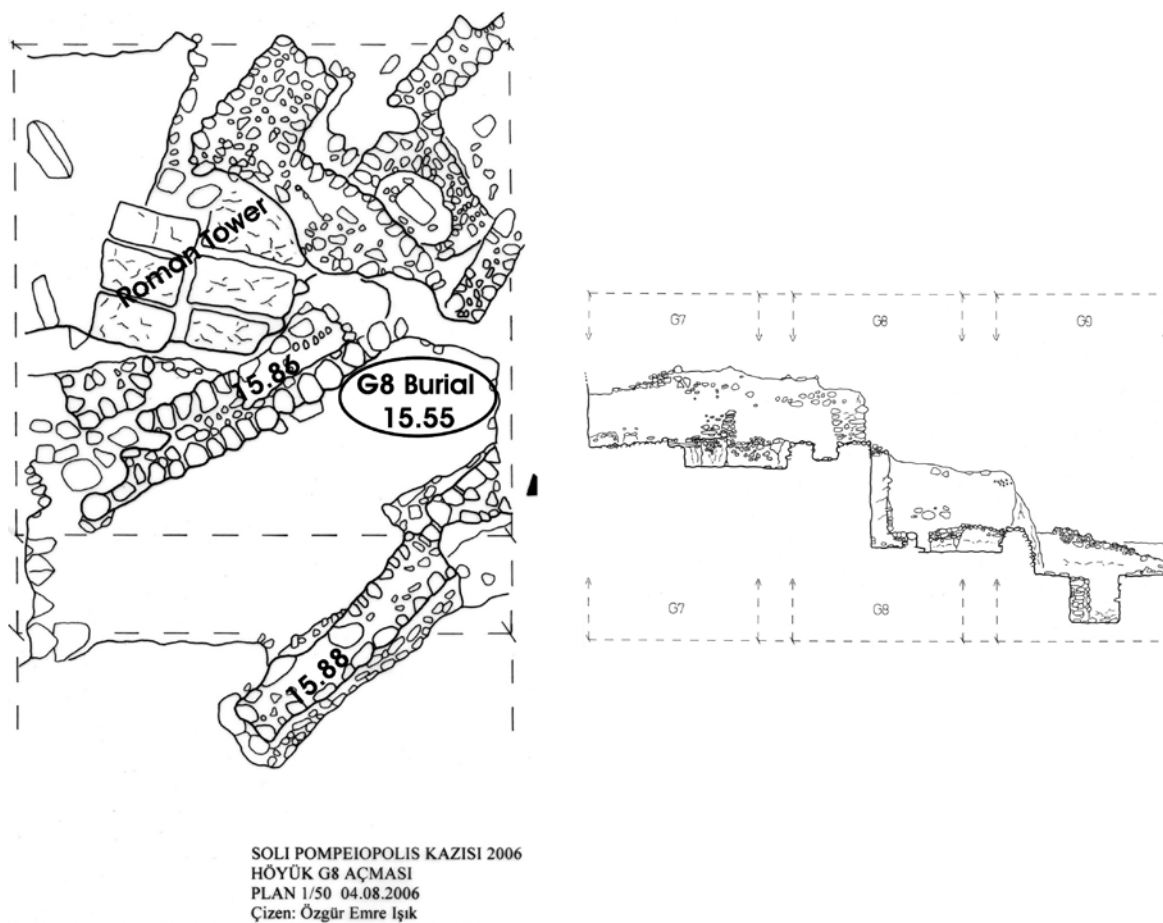


Fig. 2 G8 15.69 level

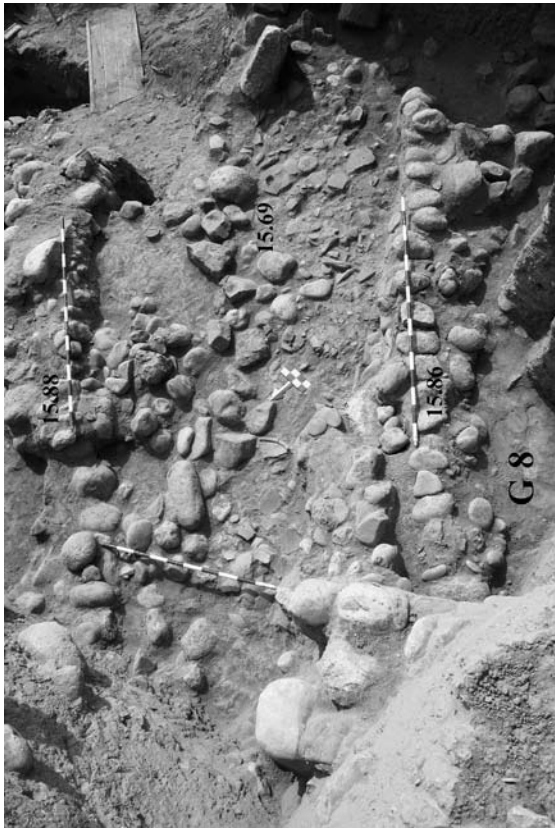


Fig. 3 G8 plan square, the grave and the section

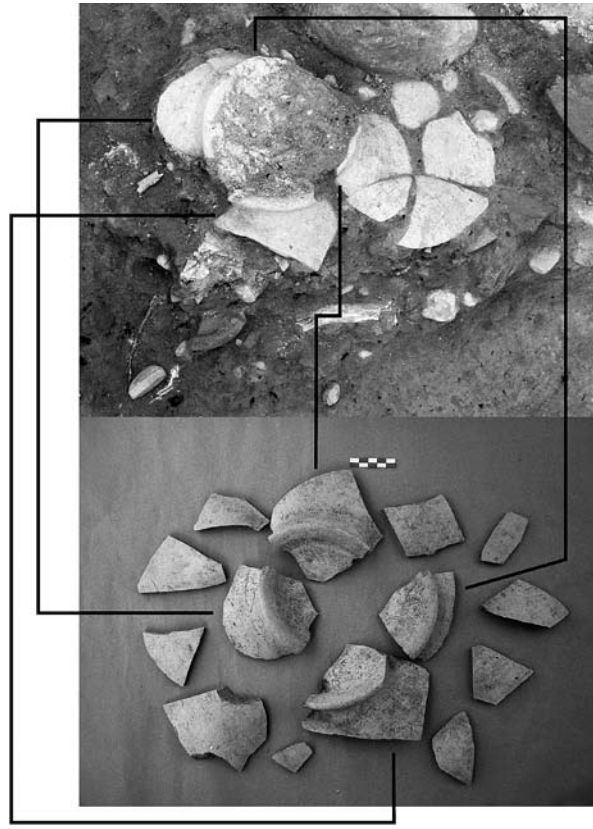


Fig. 4 The fragments of G8 urn grave base

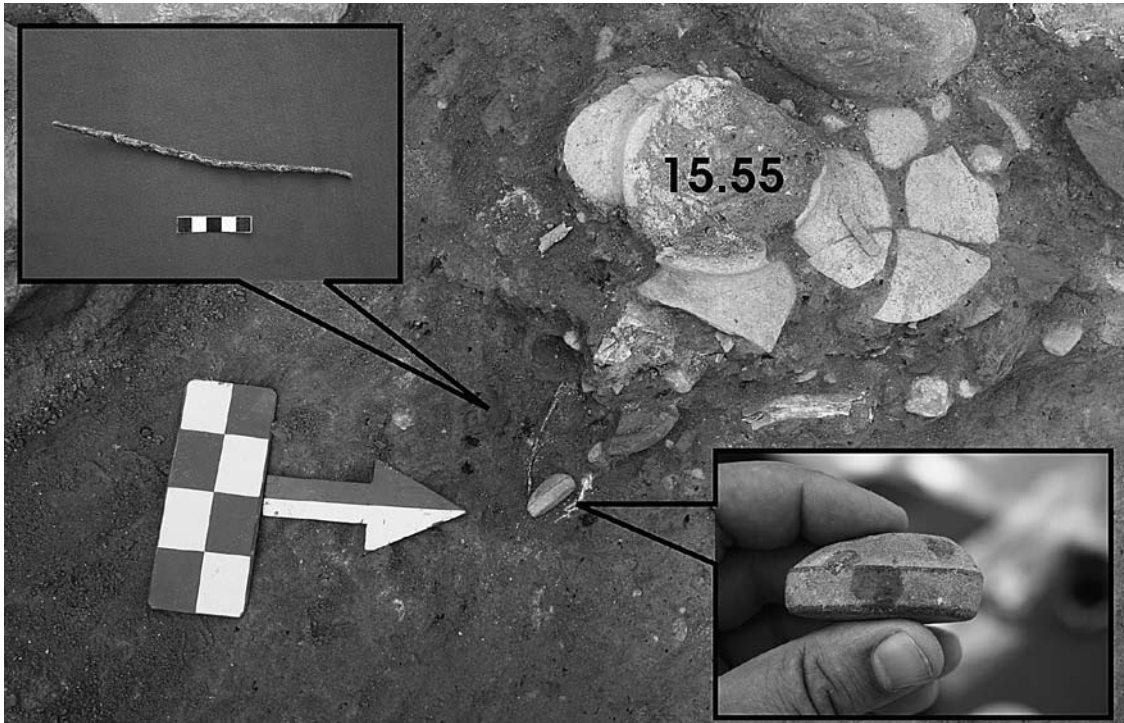


Fig. 5 The jar and related grave offerings: bronze pin, scarab and animal bones



Fig. 6 G8 bead and animal bones

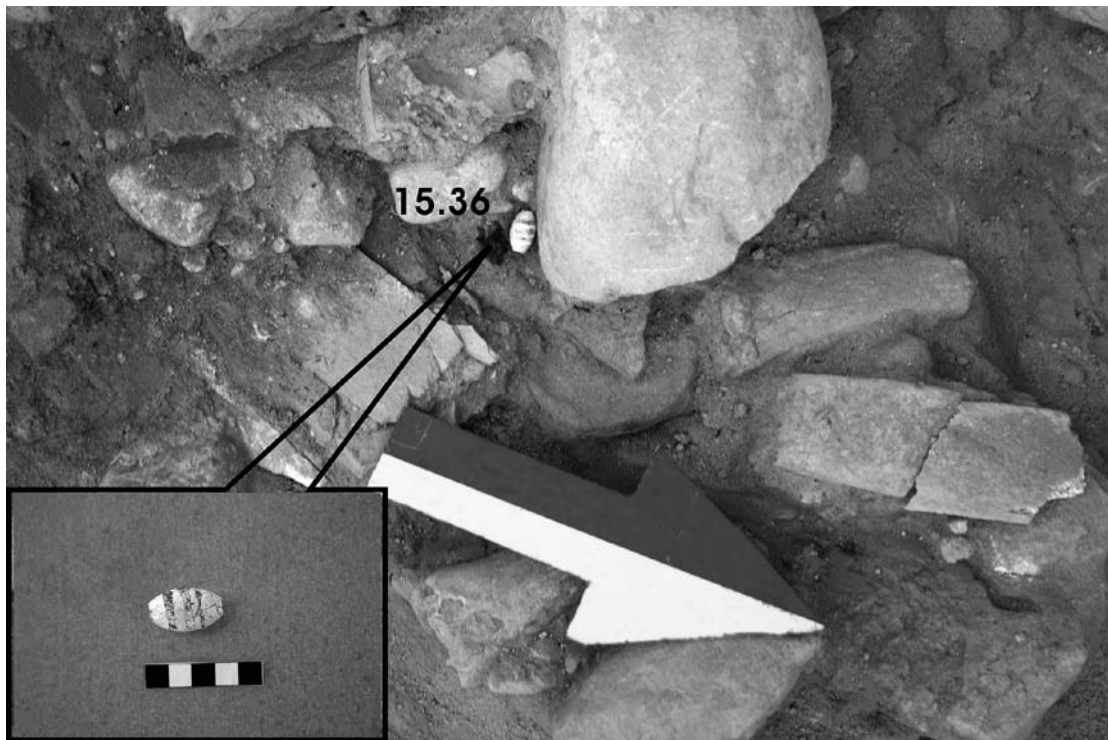


Fig. 7 Soli Höyük 2001, D6, D8 WS II sherd (left; Yağcı 2003b: fig. 5) G8, WS II sherd (right)



Fig. 8 G8 bulla with Hittite hieroglyphics, traces of burning, and animal bones

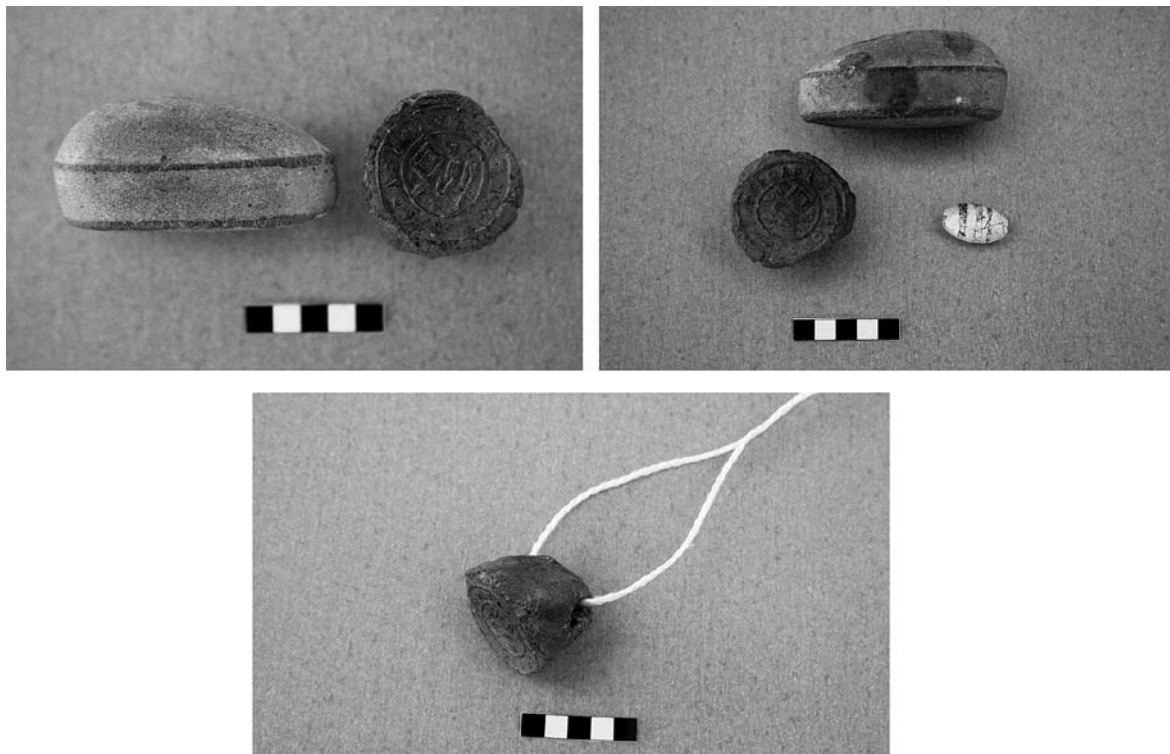


Fig. 9 G8 grave offerings: 1. Scarab and HH bulla 2. Scarab, HH bulla, and bead, 3. HH bulla with suspension hole