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TROIA AND THE BEGINNINGS OF RELATIONS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST*

Troias strategic position in the trade network

The city of Troia in the 2nd millennium BCE was in Anatolia and belonged primarily to the cultural landscape of ancient Anatolia. Moreover, identifying the city of (W)Ilios with the tributary city of Wilusa mentioned in Hittite texts is also an interesting aspect from the archaeological standpoint.

Why, however, was the powerful central Anatolian kingdom of the Hittites particularly interested in the city of Wilusa and its tributary status in the second millennium BC?

The advantage possessed by (W)Ilios/Wilusa was its location on the straits. All transports could be handled most economically by ship. This holds not only for the transport of wares as well as time and energy consumption but also for the labour costs involved in the use of human carriers and draught and pack animals. Further, as far as the possibility of loss or damage to wares was concerned, the sea route was relatively safe. Even on the excellent Roman roads¹ the overland route was approx 62 times as expensive as transporting goods by sea with a corresponding reduction in profit margins.

The same must be assumed for the 10-20-tonne ships (Fig. 1), manned by crews of 10 to 15 seamen, which we can reconstruct as cargo ships plying the Aegean during the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC, especially when one bears in mind how bad the overland routes must have been. However, trading ships were relatively easy to destroy in the harbours of port cities or to capture, when one considers how powerful the rulers of this age were. Wherever shipping took place at this time – in Egypt, Syria-Palestine, within the

* The paper of the conference.

¹ Edict of Diocletian's, 301 CE.

Minoan and Mycenaean spheres of influence – it was also backed or at least tolerated by those in power. It is difficult to imagine that there were any entirely independent merchants with ships.

Let us take a brief look at the situation of trade and traders in the 2nd millennium BCE as we know it from ancient Near Eastern sources: from the standpoint of Mesopotamia and Syria, the West, for instance the trading city of Ugarit, was becoming increasingly important.² The well known trading posts operated by Assyria in distant lands abroad, the so-called Karum settlements in central and northern Anatolia, formed a chain with closely forged links in the 19th and 18th centuries BCE. The Assyrians quite obviously were not only interested in central Anatolia but also, and this is of particular importance in this connection, in the Black Sea as far up as the city and trading post of Zalpa. The indigenous population there, that is, the local rulers or 'The Palace', also took their share of earnings from trade as established within a contractual framework.

As for the economic upturn which Troia underwent precisely in 1700 BCE, one may assume that the city began about then to increase its trading activity with the Black Sea. Increased trading activity would have sparked off the 'Troia High Culture', the acme of Trojan civilisation, at exactly the same time as the Assyrian Karum settlements ceased overland trading operations or had to abandon them. The Hittites were now entering the stage of world history but were too late to be involved in the Black Sea trade. The reason for this may have been that, in the north, the Kaska mountain peoples, who had always been hostile to the Hittites, were settled between the Hittites and the sea. It may also lie in the Hittites' relations, which were fraught with tensions in any case, with their chief competitors, the powerful kingdom of Assyria.

We know that, in the ancient Near East, traders as well as the men who accompanied them might also have been soldiers and diplomats as well as merchants. If prosperous Troia was linked with its primary trading partners and suppliers by the sea route, if there was a sort of Hanseatic League with affairs largely regulated by treaties – and this must, of necessity, have been the case – it becomes clear that it must have been in the vital interests of the port cities and the surrounding peoples of the eastern and northern Aegean, the Marmara region and the southern Black Sea littoral to ensure the security and continuing existence of a reshipping point like Troia/Wilusa. Concluding treaties with a city like Wilusa would also have enabled the Hittites to profit at the same time from the entire commercial and trading network with which that city was linked. This network, which must have existed in the 13th

² Clay tablets with economic texts from the city of Mari on the Euphrates from ca 18th century BCE and later, from the 14th and 13th centuries, similar from the city of Ugarit itself.

century BCE in a form similar to that which existed at the time the Black Sea region was Hellenised with its various Greek mother and daughter colonies, is reflected by the catalogue of the Trojan allies in the *Iliad*. In any case, Homer could have visualised such enmeshed trade alliances, perhaps even alliances between peoples speaking different languages, in about 700 BCE.³

Troia's trading partners would naturally have been all those who did **not** belong to the city-state system of 'Mycenean Greece' (here in green). Nor would all those peoples who actually formed part of the Hittite imperial territory (here in red) (Fig. 2) have belonged to the Trojan trade alliance – these peoples were on the periphery of the civilisations bordering the three seas.

A great variety of goods and wares could have been shipped via Ilios/Wilusa:

- the Caucasus, northern Anatolia and Europe, especially south-eastern Europe, were the main potential source areas for supplying all sorts of *metals* (Fig. 3) *Iron*, which was greatly prized, came from the southern and eastern Black Sea region, where the appropriate metallurgical technology was evidently developed.

- Horses could be obtained from the Anatolian high plateaus as well as generally from the steppe regions of Pontus. And, in fact, zoologists working with Hans-Peter Uerpmann found horse bones suddenly occurring in great quantities from 1700 BCE amidst the other animal bones unearthed at Troia.

Amber came from the Baltic Sea, 1700 kilometres distant. The Turkish Black Sea coast provided *wood for construction purposes* and even *ships* as such together with ores and other wares.

Textiles, cornelian and *slaves* came from the Crimea and the Caucasus; *lapis lazuli* finds prove that trade links were maintained with Afghanistan, 4000 kilometres distant.

Egypt must surely have been the source of *faience* artefacts found at Troia (cf. the Sazci article).

A trading network like the one described above must have existed in this cultural landscape for the entire **historical** period, going back as far as Homer's day. This is, however, probably also true of the tributary city of Wilusa in the 2nd millennium BCE since the key region, geographically speaking, on the straits always controlled the destiny of the area. But how far back into the Bronze Age do these trade links go?

³ 2nd Book (797f).

The Early Bronze Age (3rd millennium BCE) (Fig. 3)

What the Near Eastern world was like in about 2500 BCE and the centuries that followed can be taken as verified in every respect, whether we are talking of Egypt, Mesopotamia or Syria-Palestine. Trade and commerce prospered; we know the states, who their rulers were and what wars they waged as well as their religious observances and other customs and traditions, including myths.

We are also very familiar with south-eastern Anatolia in all these respects because the cultural landscapes on the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates are firmly tied into the known political and trading networks.⁴ Evidence for these links has been uncovered in the form of archaeological finds and, most importantly, texts. By the closing 4th millennium BCE and during the 3rd millennium, the communications and trade network was based on a tightly woven fabric of outposts and central places from which wares were redistributed for dispatch to particular regions and from which there were links on beyond – either in the form of a network of ‘ports of call’ or a ‘system of colonies’.

This network of trade links functioned so efficiently that the know-how and facilities were even there for importing the large quantities of tin necessary for making bronze from very far away. At the latest from the 1st half of the 3rd millennium BCE it was possible – at least in Egypt and Mesopotamia – to acquire the blue semiprecious stone known as lapis lazuli in vast quantities and it could only be had from Afghanistan or the Pamir mountain range (Fig. 4).

Although barter was the usual form of trade, silver was the ‘clearing-house’ medium of exchange. From ancient written sources we learn that the net profits made by an overland trader, covering a distance of approx 1000 km with donkey caravans, were nearly 100%. This calculation dates from the 18th century BCE but we can assume that it would not have differed greatly for the centuries immediately prior to that date. Imagine how much more lucrative transporting goods by sea would have been, which, whenever possible, was preferred to overland trade routes!

What has all this got to do with Troia? The answer is that trade links also existed which extended into peripheral regions such as central, northern, eastern and western Anatolia, Greece and Crete. Lapis lazuli, for instance, appears in the 3rd millennium BCE, not only in southern Mesopotamia, the

⁴ How ancient these complex trade networks are is shown by the expansion of Uruk from the mid-4th millennium BCE and later the spread of the Djemdet Nasr Culture or the spheres of influence of Early Dynastic Egypt.

centre of the most highly developed culture at this time, but also as far as Troia.

In both places iron was highly prized at an early date and again, copper was being alloyed with tin both in Troia and southern Mesopotamia. The earliest bronzes of this type, some of which have a high percentage of tin, come from Troia, Beşik-Yassitepe, Thermi on Lesbos and Poliochni on Lemnos. All these places where such finds have been made are at the mouth of the Dardanelles and they must have been at the leading edge of the new metallurgical technology.

It is interesting that there are also places with the earliest tin bronzes in northern Turkey, in the Alaca Höyük Culture.⁵

The metal finds there are top quality for the time as far as casting techniques and craftsmanship are concerned (Fig. 6).

As in Troia, silver is also used in the Alaca Höyük Culture and occasionally iron as well (Fig. 7).

Consequently, there is no doubt at all that contacts bridging long distances existed then,⁶ which is also confirmed by the various 'finds of treasures' in Troia, which have yielded evidence of links in many geographical directions. The Trojan civilisation, which was mainly a maritime culture during the 3rd millennium BCE, provides important grounds for assuming that a communications network was behind this (Fig. 3).

In recent years our knowledge of the Early Bronze Age in western Anatolia has been considerably widened. Here a particularly distinctive culture group is discernible in north-western Anatolia, the 'Demircihüyük Culture'. Its definition includes, among other things, a distinctive settlement plan as well as some material aspects of the culture and peculiar cult observances, among which are a preference for a particular type of idol with a disc-shaped face and distinctive funerary customs. The eponymous central place is quite small yet it has been thoroughly explored. The place is situated, on the one hand, exactly at the edge of the Anatolian high plateau at an elevation of approx 850 m, where it drops off towards the sea and, on the other, on the natural main route which linked what was later Bithynia with Phrygia. Due to its location it may be considered representative of the culture. Prospection surveys have shown that there are numerous 'Demircihüyüks' in this landscape, each of them with the same material culture.

Typical of it is a regular, circular settlement plan (Fig. 8), with a granary sunk in the ground at the centre. During the 1st half of the 3rd millennium BCE, that is, chronologically paralleling the earlier phase of the 'Maritime

⁵ The core region of the Hittite kingdom developed several centuries later, in the 2nd millennium BCE, in the region of the Alaca-Höyük Culture.

Troia Culture' (Troia I Early and Middle) the place was rebuilt again and again in exactly the same style. The upper part of the mound has eroded; therefore, some decades of settlement history have probably been lost but are in the nearby cemetery. Evidently settlements of this type had a subordinate function within a larger hierarchical system. We can assume that the highest-ranking centre was the big settlement mound of Doryleion/Sharhöyük, which is approx 20 kilometres east of the very place which to this day is the central place in the region, the city of Eskişehir.

The Demircihüyük Culture covered exactly the geographical area which would later play an important role in history as the cultural landscape and territory of Phrygia.

Particularly striking features of this region are very early emergence of the potter's wheel (in ca 2500 BCE), the invariably reddish, brown and beige colour of its pottery as well as a large number of the elegant, two-handled beakers known as Depas vessels (ca 2400 BCE) and bottles, which are close to the so-called Syrian bottles (ca 2400/2300 BCE).

Pottery found in Troia which looks foreign in workmanship and style, shape and colour seems to chronologically parallel it or may possibly be slightly later and is designated Troia II (and Troia III) there. Consequently, one can conclude that some important influences radiated out from the area covered by the Demircihüyük Culture as far as the region of the Maritime Troia Culture with its dark to black pottery. We can, therefore, conjecture from which direction some of those foreign innovations came which gradually seeped into Troia and, in the course of about two centuries, came to dominate pottery and, therefore, eating and drinking customs. At the same time Troia's prosperity grew as over 20 finds of treasure show. On the other hand, it is certain that the Eskişehir cultural landscape had systemic links with the south-east. In any case, there are no geographical barriers from here straight across Anatolia. The first serious barrier is the Taurus mountain chain.

The typical Depas beakers, flat, turned plates (Blegen A2, figs. 11 and 12) and Syrian bottles also determined the culture of eating and drinking in Cilician Tarsus, for instance.

Settlements on a circular plan are evidently known at this time all the way to the region of the Kura-Araks Culture in the east.⁶ Kura-Araks is another important culture which is also expanding southward at this time. It is

⁶ Just as there were links on the Anatolian high plateau (the Eskişehir region) and to the east as far as Afghanistan (lapis lazuli from the Pamir Range), there were also links from Troia southward and to the south-west extending into the area around Izmir and to Cilicia and probably as far as Syria and the Levant. These last were maintained as sea links.

associated both with pastoral farming and metallurgy. Its core region lies where later the Trialeti Culture, which is primarily famous for rich metalwork, and after that, the state of Urartu were situated (Fig. 3).

However, to the south as well, on the Lycian high plateau, there is also at roughly the same time a feature which is, in principle, related to Demircihüyük. A real granary built of mudbrick forms the centre of a small round settlement, for instance, in Semayük-Karatas.

What is particularly interesting in this connection is also the Argolis region in Greece, which was later dominated by the city-state of Mycene.

There what is known as the 'House of Tiles' was excavated at the highest point of the place called Lerna, which was then still directly on the coast. Architecture and small finds, especially the numerous seals which have come to light there, underscore the economic background of the site and indicate that it belonged to the Near Eastern trade network described here.⁷

The excavator, J. Maran, has concluded that a very strong influence from the eastern Aegean/western Asia Minor is discernible at this particular time – that is, the 3rd millennium BCE – on the Greek mainland and the Cyclades. He sees what are known as passage houses, such as the 'House of Tiles', as buildings in which the ruling classes lived.

Control of storeroom inventory took place by means of seal impressions on clay sealings, a system which certainly must have come from the Near East. An area with passage houses is regarded as having been on the threshold of the 'emergence of small state structures'.

Just at this time tableware from western Asia Minor occurs here and, concomitantly, the introduction of the eating and drinking habits associated with it. Expensive luxury articles and the raw materials from which they were made also occur increasingly and, naturally, the trade that is behind them is growing. 'Interactive spaces, each from a mosaic of many smaller trade networks' grew up 'with large settlements which, situated as they were at favourable traffic junctions, functioned as entrepôts.'⁸

The picture sketched in above is just as discernible in northern and eastern Anatolia. Evidently it goes back in both places to close, long-established trade links with the Near East and is based on the desire of the ancient Near Eastern city-states especially to have access to sources and supplies of metal. How widespread was this interest and where did the cultural landscapes begin which were outside the direct sphere of influence?

Links extended from Anatolia and Greece as far as south(-eastern) Europe in any case. Here what first comes to mind are the finds of treasure in Troia

⁷ This is shown by the settlement of Pulus-Sakyol.

⁸ Maran, 1998.

such as the rather large battleaxes (sceptres) (Fig. 5), beautifully crafted of valuable types of stone, with links most likely to be in the Corded Ware cultural landscape far to the north and north-east or the intricately decorated bossed bone plaques with links between Troia, Lerna, Malta and Sicily.

The so-called clay anchors or hooks, widespread over roughly the same area, which does, however, extend deeper into the Balkans, or the idols with a cross band on their breasts also belong to this complex.

Here once should recall the spread pattern of the typically Anatolian vessel shapes, like the Depas beakers (Figs. 9 and 10) and beak-spouted jugs, as well as that of the so-called Cypriot knot-headed pins. It furnishes proof of the diffusion of a new fashion in wearing clothes.

An artefact like the gold dagger from Mala Gruda on the Adriatic, characteristic finds from Kyhna in Saxony and many more such finds give some indication of the far-flung structural links which must be assumed behind the artefacts of the material culture.

Just how far-flung the trade networks were then becomes clear when one takes a look at the urban character of the Early and Middle Bronze Age settlement of Monkodonja near Rovinj in Istria. Because it was located on the coast, it could control the entire surrounding region. Its sphere of influence included the trade route between the Aegean and Central Europe which has been conjectured as extending across the Ionian Sea and the Adriatic in the late 3rd millennium BCE. No trader could have bypassed fortified Monkodonja; therefore one can safely assume that the city functioned as an entrepôt (reshipping point) during the 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE.

We do not know yet exactly how the trade mechanisms operated in more remote cultural landscapes. However, there too they must have been efficient since tin bronze quickly spread throughout the ancient world during the 3rd millennium.

At this point the *system* of Near Eastern trade and the question of whether the distribution mechanisms operated from central places or via colonies should once again be addressed.

In the part of Turkey bordering on Bulgaria a citadel has been excavated which is much smaller in plan than Troia yet is strikingly similar to it.

The pottery (for instance the vessels known as tankards), which is not native to the area, as well as the distinctive idols found at the outpost settlement of Kanli Geçit indeed point to Troia and more particularly the region around Kütahya-Eskishehir⁹ (Fig. 13).

⁹ In this region there is also the site of Küllüoba, which, although as yet only scantily published, will in future figure prominently in the discussion we have embarked on here.

Such tankards, which occur both in Greece and in Anatolia, belong within the framework of the innovations mentioned above as having occurred in the mid-3rd millennium BCE.

The excavator of Kanli Geçit, M. Özdoğan, has suggested that it was a 'colony'. What was interesting to the Near East about Thrace was the copper ore there, which is only a few kilometres away from the site. There are large veins of it 40 kilometres distant, in the Istranca Mountains (Fig. 3).

Against the background we have sketched in here, one can perhaps use the term 'colony', particularly since it is mentioned for the time we are discussing and perhaps even earlier in ancient Near Eastern texts and is also used in the real sense of the word.

Since the distinctive features of Troia, especially its architectural ones, so obviously radiated northward, one can certainly expect similar-looking settlements to be found at other important places in western Anatolia.

Consequently, the hypothesis can now be put forward that there were apparently areas under the sway of cities also in the peripheral regions of the ancient Near East which, in the case of Troia, were naturally fixated on the coastal regions and, concomitantly, also on sea links.

Further, one can postulate the phenomenon of ruling cities not only for the peripheral regions of the ancient Near East shown here, in north-eastern, northern and western Anatolia (the Kura-Araks, Alaca-Höyük and Demircihöyük Cultures), but also for eastern Greece. Within the framework of the picture drawn here, the Cyclades (Fig. 1), with all their possibilities of communication and their favourable location for trade, seem to have played quite an independent and important role. This is suggested by the highly uniform cultural evidence they present such as their citadels.

Consequently, if we recall once more the ancient Near Eastern trade networks and trade routes, we can conclude by saying that they were established not only in the 2nd but evidently also by the 3rd millennium BCE on the borders of Europe. What is involved here is the relationship between core region and periphery and operative links within certain interdependencies with the purpose of transporting wares fairly reliably from periphery to core or to the network system maintained by any particular core. Important places in peripheral regions like Lerna and Troia were undoubtedly in contact with the regions under the sway of the city-states – or with others in between. We will certainly soon be able to add other places since the Izmir region, with Smyrna/Bayrakli, Panaztepe, Limantepe and Ulucakhöyük, is in this respect no longer merely the subject of conjecture. By now it has been recognized as a cultural landscape in its own right during the 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE. Finally, it should be noted that it seems to be no coincidence that, in all the peripheral cultures pointed out here, development took place

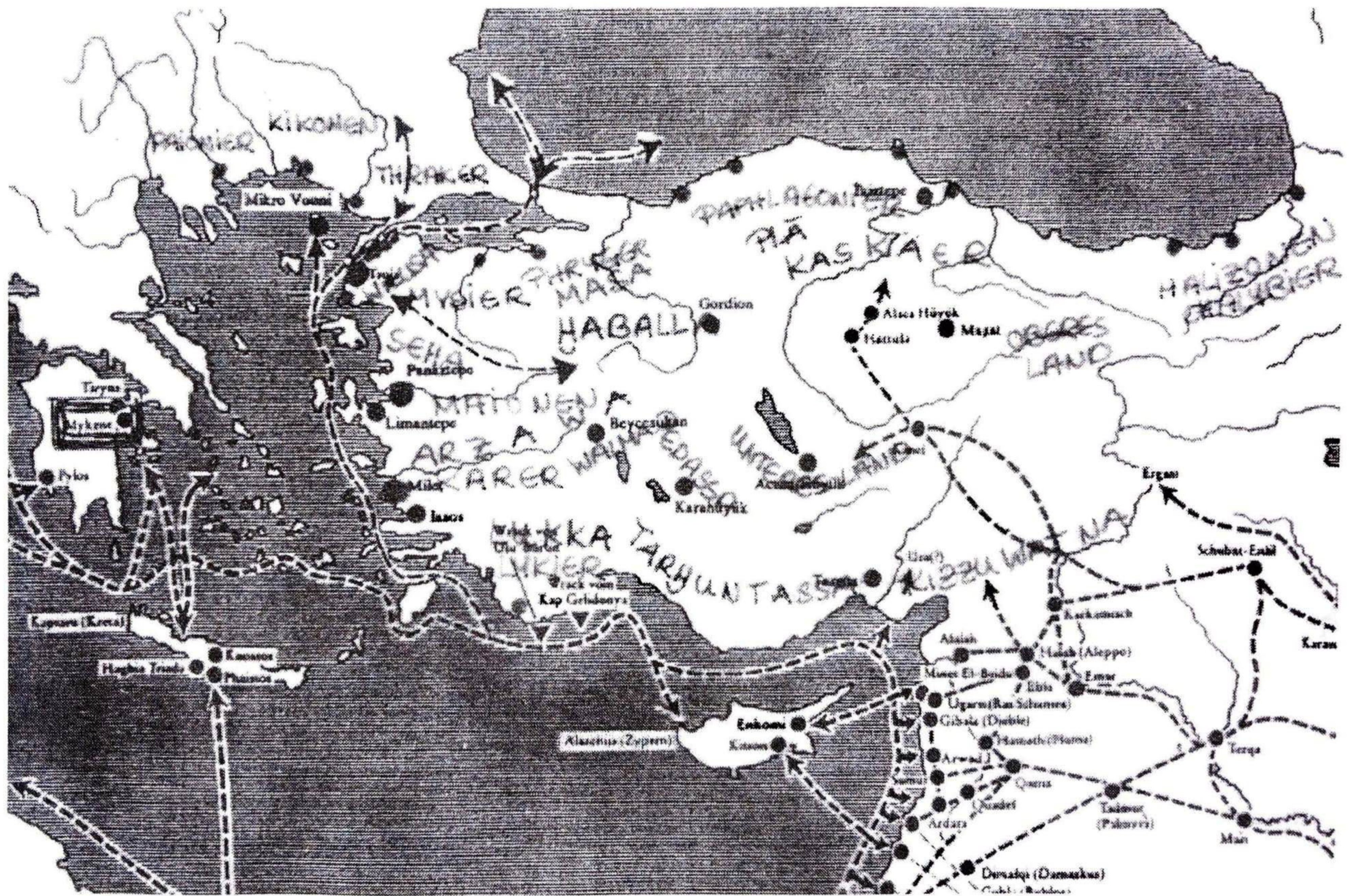
within a time framework of only a few centuries and that it is in these very cultures that the following largely independent, powerful core areas emerged:

1. the Mycenaean sphere of influence,
2. that of the Troia High Culture in Troia VI/VIIa,
3. that of the Phrygians,
4. of the Hittites and
5. that of the Trialeti and of the Urartu Culture.

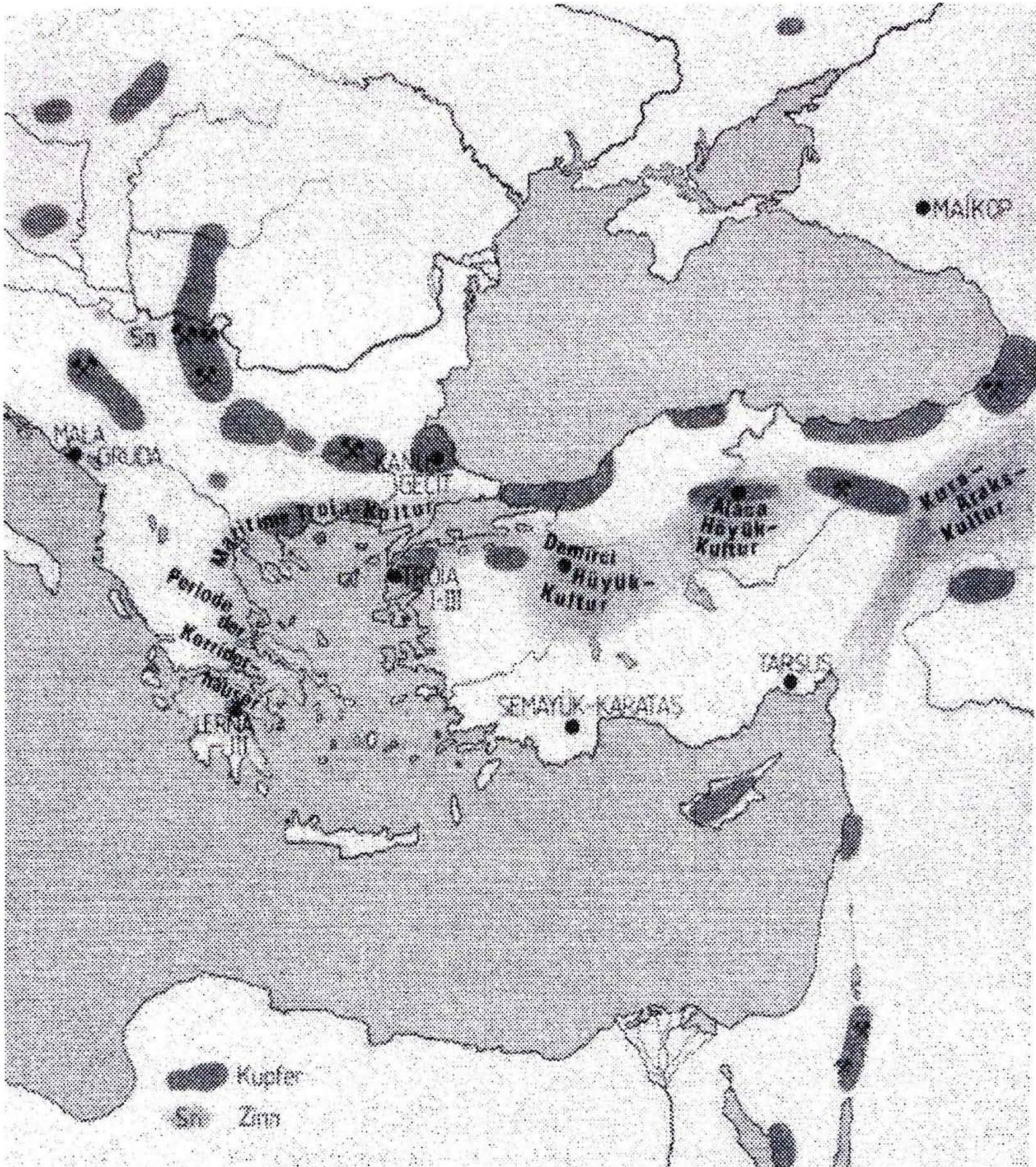
It looks indeed as if we are on the way to understanding the background against which these not only cultural but also political units developed.

Illustrations:

1. Cycladic 'frying pan' on display in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens



2. The peoples of Asia Minor (those linked and those not linked by trade with Troia) and the Assyrian trade network



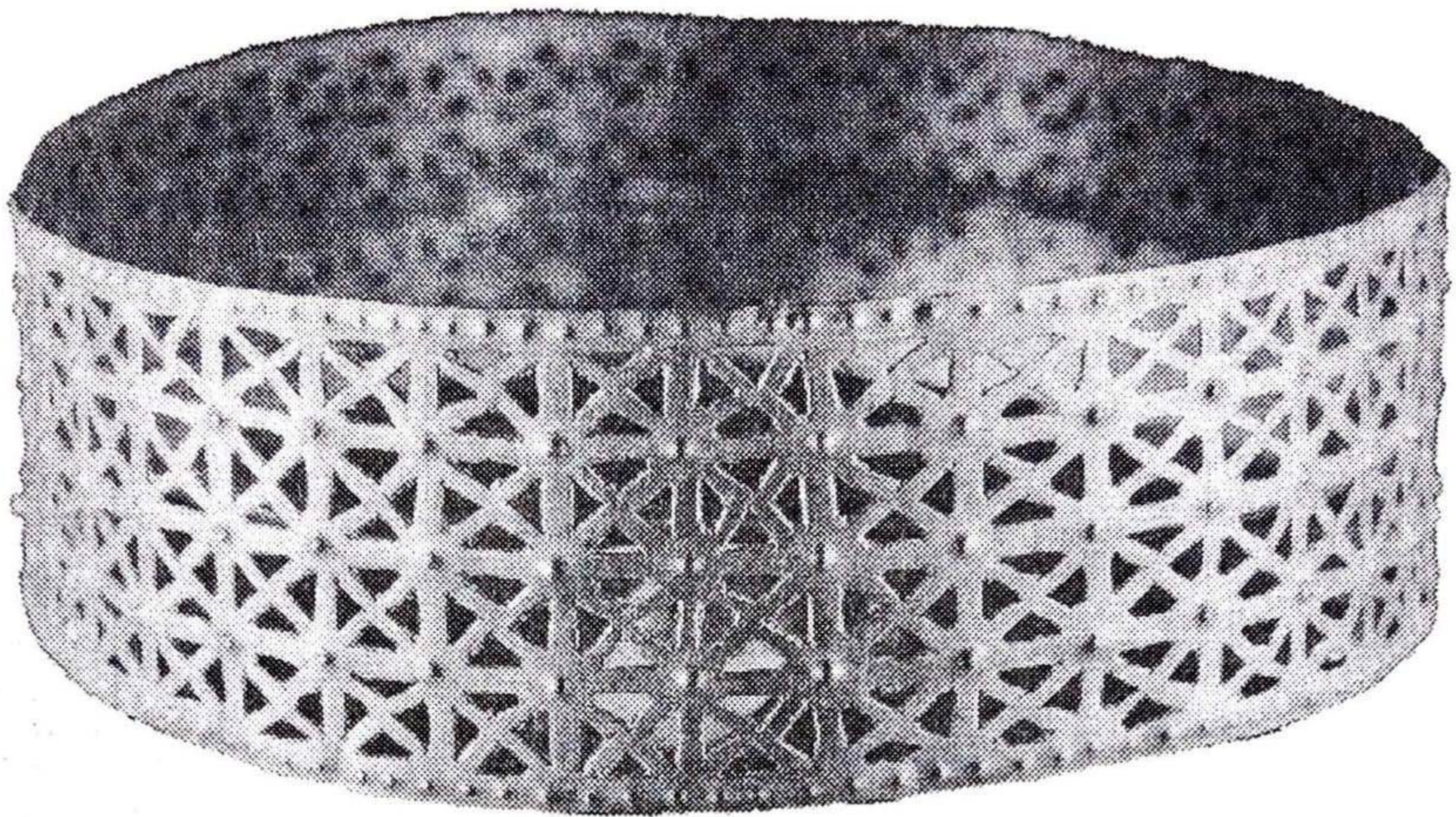
3. The natural resources and the location of Archaeological Cultures (Maritime Troia Culture, Demircihüyük Culture, Alaca Höyük Culture and Kura-Araks Culture)



4. The natural resources – amber, lapis lazuli and tin



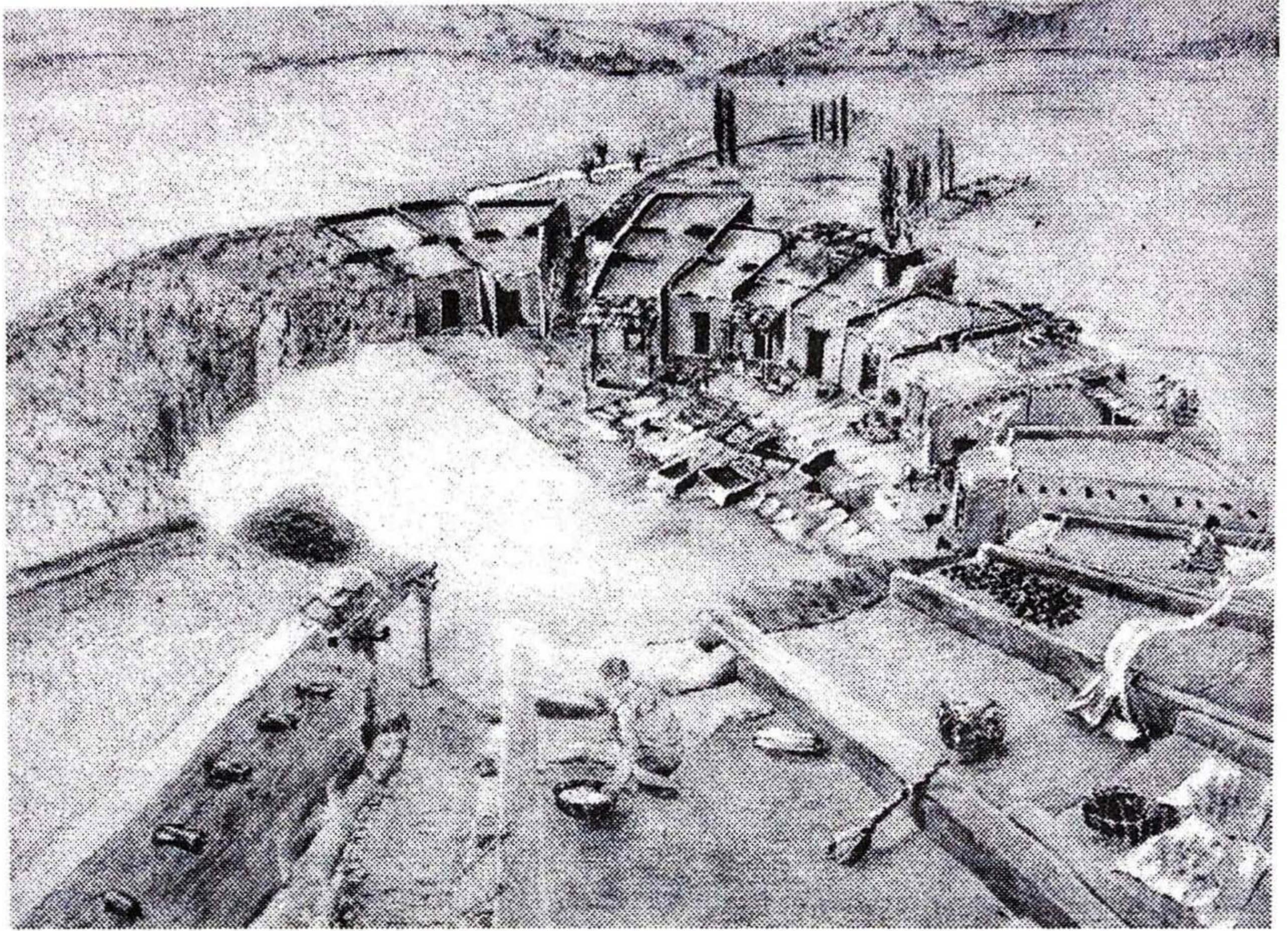
5. The lapis lazuli axes from Treasure L



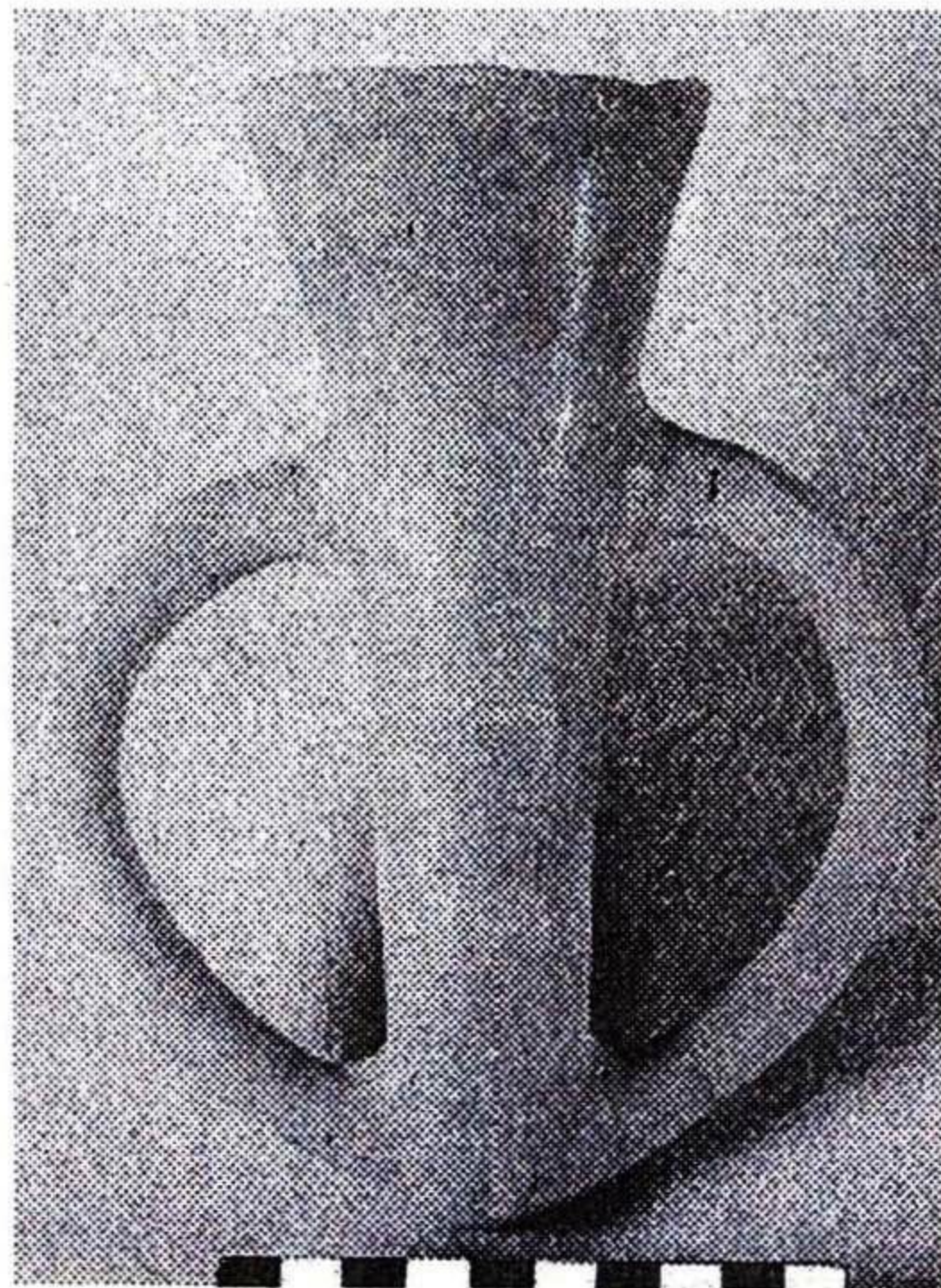
6. Golden crown from Alaca Hüyük



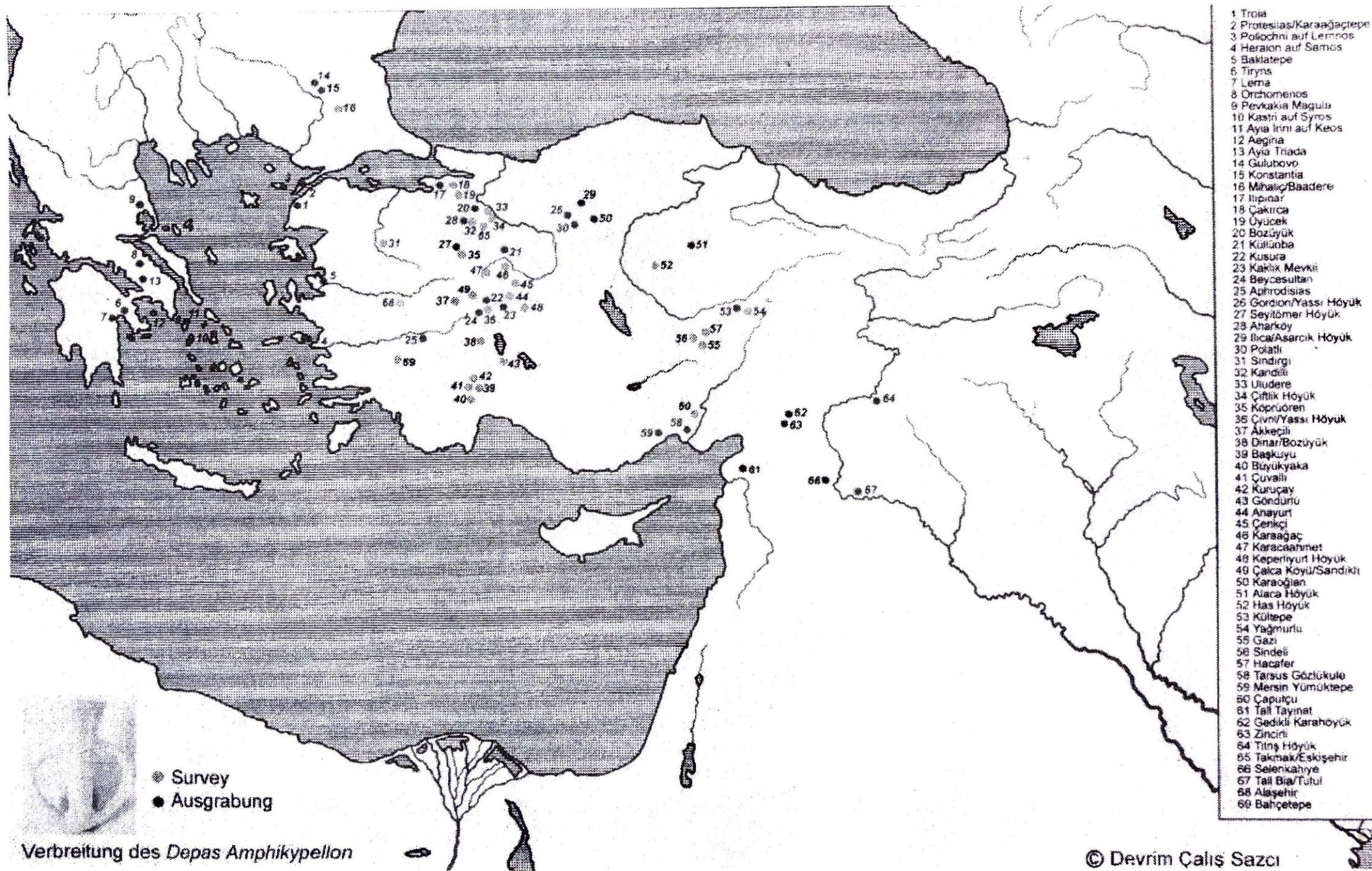
7. Silver vessel from Alaca Hüyük, Grave D



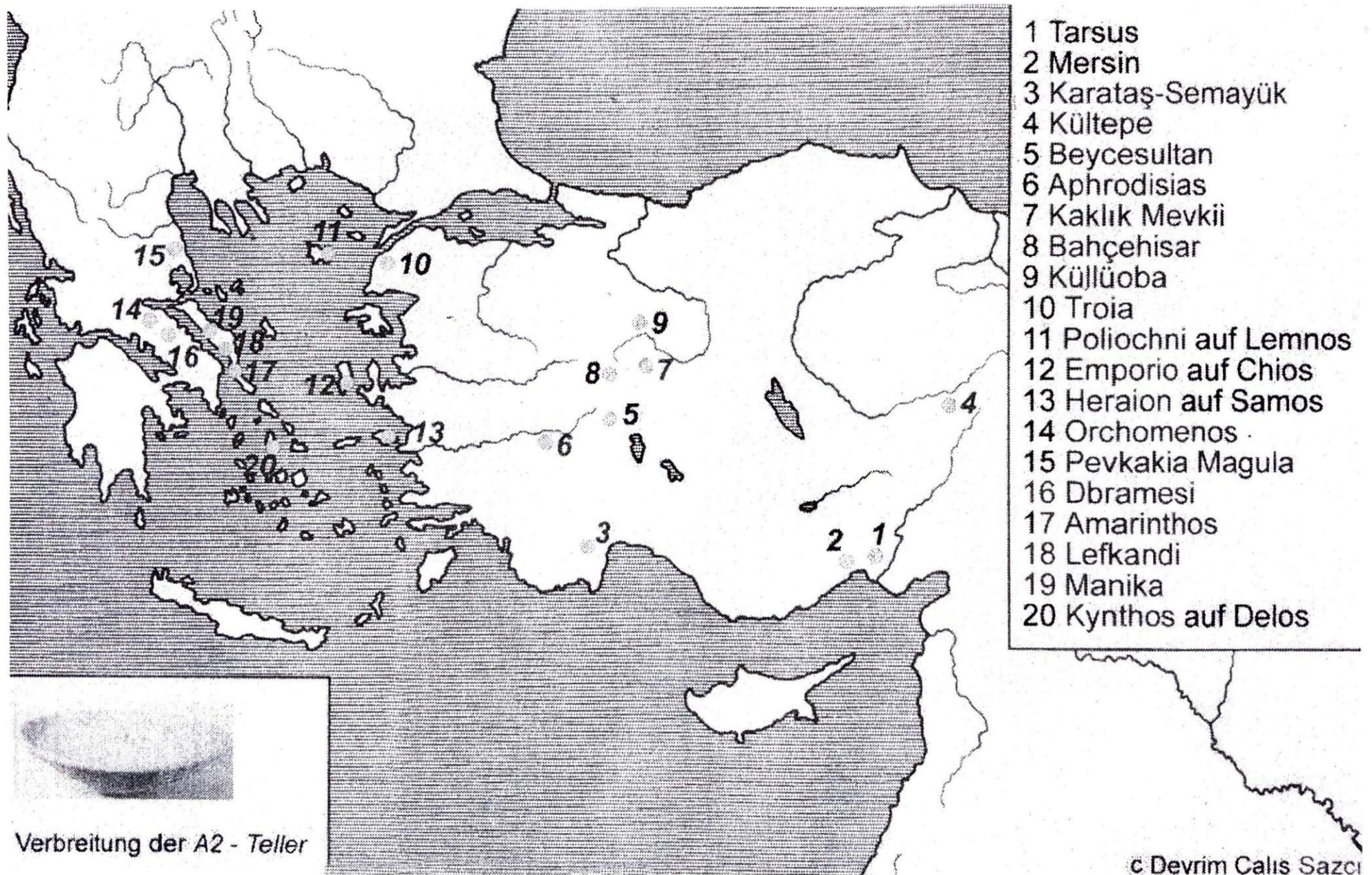
8. Reconstruction of the Demircihüyük settlement



9. Depas from Troia (G6.728.1)



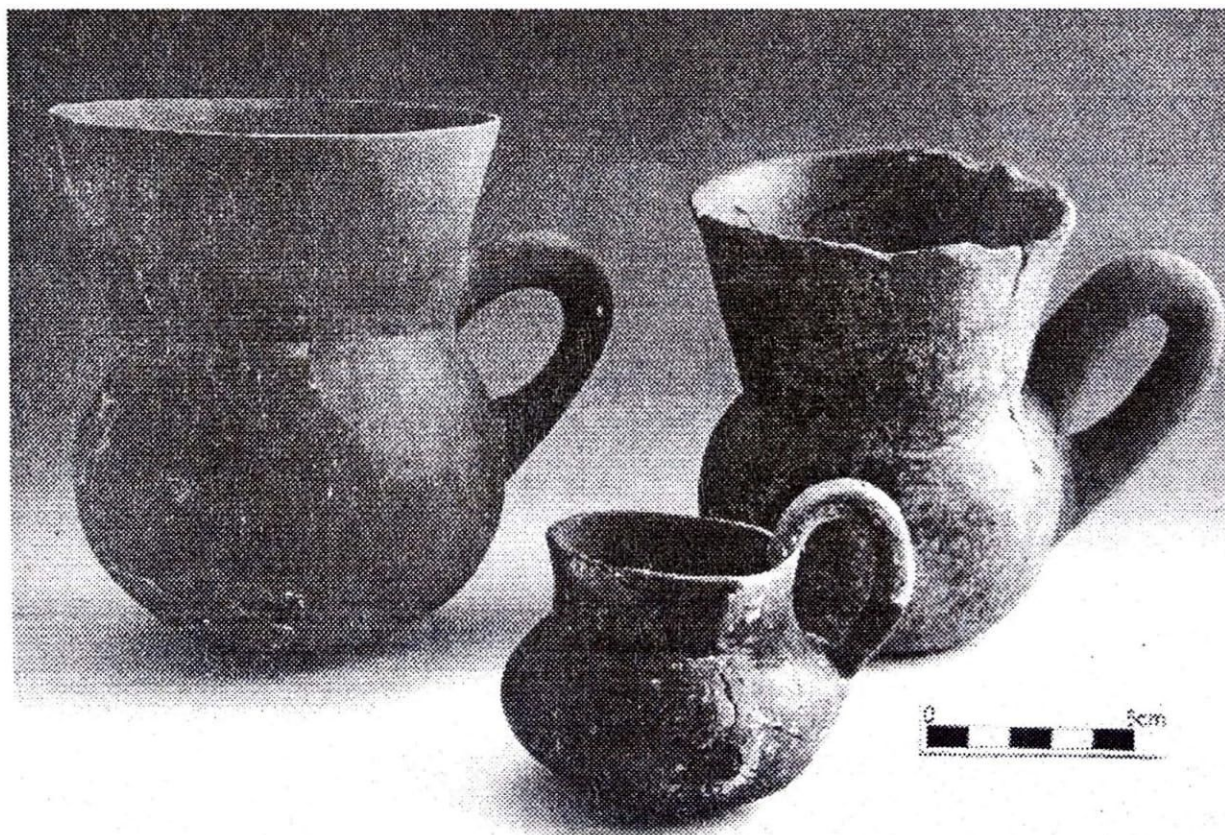
10. Spread of Depas beakers



12. Spread of Blegen A2 plates



11. Blegen A2 plate from Troia (G6.850.9)



13. Vessels from Kanli Geçit