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Determinations Concerning Grave Stelae with Banquet Relief Found in the Surroundings of Yalova in the Context of the Old and New Findings

Yalova Çevresinden Eski ve Yeni Buluntular Işığında Ölü Ziyafeti Kabartmalı Mezar Stelleri Üzerine Tespitler

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Abstract: There has been very little study of Yalova and its surroundings since the excavations carried on in the 1930's. Besides the small rescue excavations carried out by Museums, there are archaeological materials gathered through construction activities and even from the earthquake and "grave stelae" are among them. "Grave Stelae with Altar" form a unique local and distinctive group among these stelae. There is a typical iconographical pattern to be noticed among these examples, as the entire group decorated with the popular theme of "the funeral feast". There are inscriptions on seven of these stelae. Epigraphically, there is also a common language. The finds suggest the use of these stelae, eleven represented in this paper, was limited to within the region of Yalova. Although, unfortunately, the lack of studies prevents the localization of production, for now, it is possible to suggest from literary sources that these stelae should have been produced in Pylai.

Keywords: Bithynia, Yalova, Grave Stele, Funeral Feast, Iconography, Epigraphy

Öz: Yalova ve çevresinde 1930'lu yıllarda yapılan bilimsel kazıların ardından günümüze kadar az sayıda araştırma gerçekleştirilmiştir. Müzeler tarafından yapılan küçük çaplı kazıların yanı sıra, deprem, inşaat gibi olaylar sayesinde ele geçen arkeolojik materyaller içerisinde mezar stelleri de bulunmaktadır. Bunların arasında "sunaklı mezar steli" olarak adlandırılan bir grup stel bölgeye özgü bir mimari form olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu özgün mimari formunun yanı sıra stellerde ortak bir ikonografi tercihi de göze çarpmaktadır. Tamamında antikçağın sevilen temalarından ölü ziyafeti konusu işlenmiştir. Bu stellerden yedi tanesi, üzerinde yazıtları ile ele geçmiştir. Epigrafik açıdan ele alındığında da steller üzerinde ortak bir dilin varlığı gözlemlenebilmektedir. Bulgular, bu çalışmada on bir adet ile temsil edilen bu stellerin kullanım alanının yalnızca Yalova ve çevresiyle sınırlı kaldığını göstermektedir. Ne yazık ki bölgedeki çalışmaların azlığı tam üretim yerinin tespitini engellemektedir. Bununla birlikte şimdilik bu mezar stellerini üreten merkezin, varlığı yazılı verilerle belirlenebilen Pylai yerleşiminin olabileceği önerilmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Bithynia, Yalova, Mezar Steli, Ölü Ziyafeti, İkonografi, Epigrafi

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In memory of our beloved professor, Burhan VARKIVANÇ.

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Fifteen tombstones with reliefs depicting banquets, which were found around the modern city of Yalova constitute the subject of the article. Nine of them are preserved and exhibited at the Raif Dinçkök Cultural Center (RDKM) in Yalova. Two of the RDKM pieces, most of which their find spots cannot be known exactly, were found during the excavations in the 1930's, and the rest were found after the 1999 earthquake and during various construction works. Two tombstones (Cat. No. 7 and 10) discovered in the 1930's were published by A. M. Mansel and five of them (Cat. No. 5, 6, 8, 9 and 15) were introduced for the first time in the collaborative study of F. Baz and S. Seçkin, which is epigraphy-focused¹. In this study, the inscriptions of some of the pieces were deciphered and evaluated as an additional group to the inscriptions of Pylai ancient city published by Th. Corsten in 1987². Four tombstones (Cat. No. 1-4) within the scope of this study are evaluated here for the first time. Although the permission to study Cat. No. 3. tombstone, among the new finds, belongs to H. Keskin with the permissions obtained between 2017-2019, it was studied epigraphically by N. E. Akyürek Şahin and H. Uzunoğlu in 2019³. There are some deficiencies to this study, such as dimensions, etc., due to the fact that the original of the piece was not seen. In this context, it should be noted that for the first time this tombstone has been dealt with from a holistic archaeological aspect. In addition to these, four tombstones which were published in previous years, were found in Yalova and are today in the Bursa Archaeology Museum (Cat. No. 12) and in Istanbul Archaeology Museums (Cat. No. 11, 13-14) have been brought together.

In the study, firstly, a catalogue of the tombstones was formed and briefly introduced. Subsequently, the architectural form was examined typologically and dated. After the typology and dating, iconographic and epigraphic evaluation was carried out. Workshop inquiries are included in the evaluation part. At the same time, epigraphic data on the tombstones were also evaluated in the catalogue part.

Yalova and its Surroundings

The main data in determining the settlement landscape of Yalova and its surroundings, which were in the Bithynia Region in antiquity are obtained from written sources (Fig.1). According to these, the region on the southwest coast of Astakenos Kolpos (Izmit Bay), where Yalova is located, was within the borders of the Bithynia Region in antiquity⁴. The settlement called Kap Poseidon or Triton (around Boz Burun/Arnavutköy)⁵ in the west, Pythia Therma (Thermal Spas)⁶ in the southwest and Strobilos in the east was located in today's Çiftlikköy location⁷. On the eastern provincial border of Yalova, the settlement of Drepanon, also known as Helenopolis and used as a summer resort by the Byzantine emperors, is today's Altınova/Hersek⁸.

Some settlements in the region can only be shown from epigraphic documents. The existence of one of them, Xenodokhion, is detected only from a boundary stone. It is suggested that this settlement represents a "guest house" and a private property including Yalova and its surroundings⁹. An honorific inscription indicating the settlement of Pratomysitai was found in the vicinity

¹ Mansel 1933, 113, 115-116; Baz & Seçkin 2013, 387-404.

² Corsten 1987.

³ Akyürek Şahin & Uzunoğlu 2019, 273-274, nr. 34.

⁴ Sevin 2001, Res. 8; On Bithynians see Hdt. VII. 75; Str. XII. 4; For Bithynia in Ps.-Skylax's writings see Arslan 2012, 250.

⁵ Corsten 1987, 157-161.

⁶ Sevin 2001, 41; In addition, in Prok. *Aed.* V. iii. 16-20 it is mentioned that the hot springs in the place known as Pythia were visited by people requiring healing and especially by Byzantionians.

⁷ Şahin 1978, 102-105.

⁸ Sevin 2001, 41-42.

⁹ Şahin 1978, 105-106; Corsten 1987, 103, 107-108; Sevin 2001, 36.

of today's Gacik Village, approximately 5-6 km south of Çiftlikköy to the east of Yalova¹⁰.

The location of the settlement of Pylai, the name of which was first mentioned in the Tabula Peutingeriana, is the most controversial among them. M. İ. Tunay and V. Sevin suggested that Pylai was located in today's Çiftlikköy¹¹. Based on the data from a boundary stone found in Yalova in 1974, S. Şahin has suggested that the most suitable location for Pylai is today's Çiftlikköy and the official name of the settlement, known as Strobilos by the local people, is Pylai¹². Th. Corsten detected that the city consisted of two parts Anō Pylai (Ἄνω Πύλαι) and the emporion Pylon (ἐμπόριον Πυλῶν). He states that the first of these should be sought in today's Yalova harbour location, and the emporion part should be sought in today's Çiftlikköy locality under the name of Strobilos¹³.

In the context of epigraphic finds, although there is dense settlement in the region from the Hellenistic to the Byzantine Period, as can be understood from the use of the Doric dialect, Pylai was politically dependent on Byzantium and had its brightest period in Xth-XIIth centuries A.D.¹⁴. There is a tetrakomia (τετρακομία) structure as the local administration in the region¹⁵.



Fig. 1. Ancient settlements around Yalova (Th. Corsten 1987. Adapted from Map 3)

There are uncertainties about the find spots of the majority of the tombstones cataloged below. It is known that only the tombstones discovered by A. M. Mansel in the 1930's were found during the excavations in Pythia Therma. Others were recovered as a result of rescue procurement, from construction works. In this context, the find spots can only be known approximately.

¹⁰ Corsten 1991, 81-85, 100.

¹¹ Tunay 1981; Sevin 2001, 36.

¹² Şahin 1978, 105-108.

¹³ Corsten 1987, 106-107.

¹⁴ Şahin 1978, 97-98, 107-108. On the extension of Byzantium borders to Pylai, see Arslan 2010, 401 and fn. 1646.

¹⁵ Corsten 1987, vii, 101 ff., 162; Sherk 1991, 236; Cremer 1992, 60.

Catalogue

1. Tombstone (Fig. 2)

Yalova RDKM, Inv. No: YAM 88.

Ist Group, Banquet with a servant.

Dimensions: H: 39 cm, W: 29 cm, D: 10 cm.

Definition: The find spot is not known. The tombstone made of marble narrows from bottom to top. The upper part of the piece is broken. There is a slot measuring 2x7 cm on the side of the block, the reverse of which is roughly trimmed.

At the bottom there is a flat area 22 cm high. It is bordered by a 3 cm wide frame on the sides. There are 4 figures on the relief. Two of them are servant figures and are located on both sides of the scene. To the right, a girl in a long dress, with her hair reaching to her shoulders, is leaning her back on the frame and holding a basket in her hand. On the left, a short-haired boy wearing a chitoniskos stands with one foot crossed in front of the other, in a mourning pose. A woman is sitting on a high stool to the right of the relief. Only the lower part of the body is preserved.

She wears chiton and hymation. The loose fabric of the chiton is heavily folded, and the hymation is decorated more plainly. Her right hand is on her leg. Although it is understood that there is a clothed figure lying on the kline opposite the woman, this part of the relief cannot be seen completely because it is broken. In front of the kline, there is a mensa tripes with legs in the form of animal legs and paws. There is a popana in the middle of two round fruits, which is almost rectangular in shape.

Date: IInd century A.D.

2. Tombstone (Fig.3)

Yalova RDKM, Inv. No: YAM 44.

Ist Group, Banquet with a servant.

Dimensions: H: 38 cm, W: 40 cm, D: 8 cm.

Definition: It was found in Soğucak, in the direction of Bursa, in Yalova. It constitutes only the lower part of a tombstone made of gray marble. It is quite worn. It has two relief areas in its preserved state. At the bottom, two oxen towards to the right on a 5 cm high molding are pulling the plow. The bodies of the oxen are in profile and their heads are towards the front. The main relief, which is limited by sills of 4.5 cm width on the sides, is located on the area with a total height of 22 cm. To the right of the relief, a female figure wearing chiton and hymation sits on a high stool. It is missing above the hips. In front of it stands a mensa tripes with high legs in the form of animal legs. It can be observed that there are some objects on the mensa tripes, but their exact forms cannot be determined. On both sides of the relief, small servant figures adjacent to the frame can be seen with contours. Its details are completely worn, it is understood that they are thin and long, and the male servant on



Fig. 2. Cat. No. 1. By courtesy of Bursa Archaeology Museum



Fig. 3. Cat. No. 2. By courtesy of Bursa Archaeology Museum

the left, wearing a tunic, stands with his arms and legs crossed in a mourning pose.

Date: IInd century A.D.

3. Tombstone with Altar by Aurelia Teimothea (Fig. 4-5)

Yalova RDKM, Inv. No: YAM 53.

II a Group, Banquet with a servant.

Dimensions: H: 151 cm, W: 60 cm, D: 16 cm.

Definition: The find spot is not known¹⁶. The tombstone made of marble has been preserved almost entirely. On the top, there are cracks to the stone block and surface abrasions. It is carved as a single piece and consists of two main parts. The altar section with seven lines of Greek inscription at the bottom is 89 cm in height. The rectangular crown of the altar is located just below the relief area. Here, there is a leaf on each side and a Medusa head in the center. There is a relief area on the altar section that narrows upwards from 42 cm to 40 cm. At the top of the relief, a triangular pediment with top and side acroteres is carved. Figures are bordered by flat moldings 4.5 cm wide on both sides. To the right of the relief, a woman wearing a chiton and hymation sits facing left in a low-backed chair. Her long hymation covers her head. Her right arm, in which she wraps her hymation, is over her knees. She touches the leg of the man opposite her with her left hand. Her face and upper body are facing front. Her hair, which is visible from under her hymation, is divided into two on the forehead and depicted in four rows on both sides. Opposite the woman is a man in long clothes, lying on kline with a thick cushion. His face and torso are facing front. The short, curly-haired figure rests on his left elbow and holds a round object in his hand. With his right hand, he raises a wreath up. He reached out his left leg parallel to the kline and bent his right leg at the knee. In front of the kline a small figure in a short tunic is standing facing the front. He is holding a small object, which may be a drinking pot. Next to it, there are three objects, two round and one rectangular, fruit and popana on a tray that probably belonged to a low mensa tripes.

Ed.: Akyürek Şahin & Uzunoğlu 2019, 273-274, Nr. 34.

Date: After 212 A.D.

- Αύρ(ηλία) Τειμοθέα Δείου¹⁷ ζῶ-
 2 σα ἑαυτῆ τὸ μνημεῖον κα-
 τεσκεύασα καὶ τῷ ἑαυτῆς
 4 ἀνδρὶ Φοιβίωνι Δείου ζή-
 σαντι ἕτ(η) ν' μνήμης χά-



Fig. 4. Cat. No. 3. By courtesy of Bursa Archaeology Museum



Fig. 5. Cat. No. 3. Detail. By courtesy of Bursa Archaeology Museum

¹⁶ Akyürek Şahin & Uzunoğlu (2019, 273 ff.) stated in their studies that the piece was found in Çiftlikköy. Since there is no such information in the Yalova records, it was preferred in this study to stick to the inventory record.

¹⁷ For Δῖος see *LGPN* V A, 143. For the usage of both, either Δεῖος or Δειάς see Akyürek Şahin & Uzunoğlu 2019, 274.

6 ριν μετὰ τῶν τέκνων Εύ-
τύχους καὶ Τειμοθέας.

“While Deios’ daughter Aurelia Teimothea was alive, I had this tomb built for myself and my husband, Phoibion, son of Deios, who lived for 50 years, along with my children Eutyches and Teimothea, in memory of him”.

4. Tombstone with Altar (Fig. 6)

Group II b, Group of Banqueters.

Material: Marble.

Dimensions: H: 113 cm, W: 52 cm, D: 25 cm.

Definition: It was found in Koru Village during the foundation excavations of a house in 2018. The upper part of the tombstone made of white marble is broken and missing, and there are occasional cracks in the lower part and its body. There is a slot measuring 6cm x 4.5cm under it. There is an inscription on the altar part. The inscription, which is quite worn, cannot be read. There is a Medusa head in the center of the altar crown, which ends with leaves on both sides. Most of the upper relief area is missing. As far as it has been preserved, there is a clothed figure sitting on armchairs on both sides. Among the figures, the cushion of a kline is visible.

Date: Dating is not possible.

5. Tombstone with Altar (Fig. 7)

Yalova RDKM, Inv. No: YAM 12 .

IInd Group, Banquet of Family Members.

Dimensions: H: 61 cm, W: 44 cm, D: 16 cm.

Definition: The find spot is not known. The tombstone made of gray marble is highly eroded due to the weather conditions it is was exposed to and its surface is in the form of granules. The upper left corner of the block is worn and missing, and the lower part is also missing. It has a rectangular form. On its face, there is a triangular pedimented naiskos with side and top acroteres. There are rosettes with four leaves in the center of the pediment and in the upper right space. Only the contours of the highly worn figures can be seen. Accordingly, on the right, a woman in a long dress is sitting facing left. Her right hand was completely worn away, she has her left hand at face level. No details of her dress are visible. It is understood from the contours of the mantle that she draped over her head that she was holding it from its end.

Opposite her, a male figure lies on the kline with cushion. He is leaning on a pillow with his left elbow, holding a round object in his hand. He raises a wreath up with his outstretched hand towards the woman. A thick wad of fabric surrounds his waist. In front of the kline, a small figure stands facing the front. The contours of a low mensa tripes can be seen just to its left.

Ed.: Baz & Seçkin 2013, Nr. 8.

Date: IInd century A.D.



Fig. 6. Cat. No. 4. By courtesy of Bursa Archaeology Museum



Fig. 7. Cat. No. 5. By courtesy of Bursa Archaeology Museum

6. Tombstone with Altar (Fig. 8)

Yalova RDKM, Inv. No: YAM 26.

IInd Group, Banquet of Family Members.

Dimensions: H: 46 cm, W: 42 cm, D: 15 cm.

Definition: The find spot is not known. There are cracks and missing parts on the upper and lower parts of the tombstone carved from gray marble. Intense fungus has formed on the highly eroded stone surface. A Syrian type pedimented naiskos was depicted in the relief area on the top¹⁸. A woman in a long dress sits in a low-backed chair facing left to the far right in naiskos. She is holding the end of the mantle that covers her head with her left hand. Her right arm in her mantle is on her knees. Opposite the woman is a man lying on a cushioned kline with his face and torso facing the front. He reaches out his right arm, which is leaning on his left elbow (heavily worn), towards the woman, as can be seen from the folds of his clothes. He reached out his left leg parallel to the kline and bent his right leg at the knee. In front of the kline is a small figure in clothes, facing front, and only the tray of a low mensa tripes.

Ed.: Baz & Seçkin 2013, Nr. 9.

Date: IIIrd century A.D.



Fig. 8. Cat. No. 6. By courtesy of Bursa Archaeology Museum

7. Tombstone with Altar by Auge Matrodora (Fig. 9)

Yalova RDKM, Inv. No: YAM 87.

Group II b, Banqueters.

Dimensions: H: 58 cm (It is originally 150 cm.), W: 51 cm, D: 24 cm.

Definition: It was found in the Pythia Therma (Thermal) locality. It constitutes the upper part of a tombstone carved from white marble. The lower part with the inscription is broken and missing, but the inscription is known from Mansel's (1933 and 1936a) publications. It has a form that narrows from the bottom to the top. Three human figures are depicted in the naiskos with a triangular pediment with top and corner acroteres. To the right of the relief, a woman dressed in chiton and hymation sits on a low-backed chair. She has draped her long hymation over her head. Her face and torso are depicted from the front, the hips and legs are from the sides, and her feet are also from the front. The woman holds a small object in her right hand and touches the knee of the man opposite her with her left hand.



Fig. 9. Cat. No. 7. By courtesy of Bursa Archaeology Museum

Opposite her, two male figures lie side by side on a kline with a thick cushion. Both wear chiton and hymation and lean on their left elbows. They hold an object (fruit) in their left palm. The face and torsos of both are given from the front. The lower torso of the man on the far right is behind the other. Their faces are extremely similar to each other. The man on the far right raises up a wreath by crossing his right arm behind the head of the one in the centre. The right arm of the man in the center is not visible. There is only a rectangular tray of a low mensa tripes in front of the kline. On it, there is a round object (popana and fruit) on each side, rectangular in the middle.

¹⁸ About the use of Syrian type pediments in Anatolia, see Erdinç 2021.

Ed.: Mansel 1933, 113-115, Mezar 1, Res. 2; 1936a, 32-33, Lev. VIII, Nr. 3; Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, Nr. 1922; Corsten 1987, Nr. 141; Cremer 1992, Y3.

Date: IIIrd century A.D.

Αύγη¹⁹ Ματροδώρα²⁰ Θεοφίλου ζῶ-
 2 σα ἑαυτῆ [καὶ τῶ] ἑαυτῆς ἀνδρὶ Διο-
 δώρω Δωρίωνος ζήσανται ἔτη
 4 ο´ καὶ ὁ υειὸς αὐτῆς Δωρίων
 ζήσας ἔτη λ´ τὸ δὲ μνημεῖον
 6 ἀνέστησα μετὰ τῶν τέκνων
 Μητροδώρου καὶ Ἑρμῆ²¹. Χαῖρε.

“When Auge Matrodora, the daughter of Theophilos, was still alive, I erected this tomb with my children Metrodoros and Hermes for myself, for my husband, Diodoros son of Dorion, who lived 80 years, and for my son Dorion, who lived 30 years. Goodbye!”

8. Tombstone with Altar (Fig.10)

Yalova RDKM, Inv.No: YAM 35 .

Il a, Group of Banqueters.

Dimensions: H: 90 cm, W: 64 cm, D: 28 cm.

Definition: It was found in Koru Village. The lower part of the tombstone made of white marble is broken and missing. It consists of two parts. There is an carved relief section at the top, which gradually narrows upwards, and an altar with acroter at the bottom. The altar, possibly having an inscription, is broken down from the crown and missing. On the crown, two acroteres on the sides and a Medusa head from the front are depicted in the center.

On the upper part of the relief, there is a naiskos with Syrian style pediment. The figures inside are bordered with flat moldings measuring 4-5 cm on the sides and bottom. On the right is a woman in a long dress, sitting on a low-backed chair facing left. Her right hand is on her knees, her left hand is completely worn away. She steps on a footstool. Her face is completely eroded. In front of the woman, facing towards her, a man in a long dress lies on the kline with a cushion. The figure of which head is heavily worn-away leans on a small pillow with his left elbow, raises a wreath up with his right hand. The left leg reaches out parallel to the kline and the right leg is bent at the knee. The rectangular object in front of the kline from its position and form must have been a low mensa tripes with worn legs.

Ed.: Baz & Seçkin 2013, Nr. 7.

Date: End of the IIIrd century A.D.



Fig. 10. Cat. No. 8. By courtesy of Bursa Archaeology Museum

¹⁹ Pfuhl & Möbius suggested Αύρη(λία) instead of Αύγη. Mansel, who carried out the first reading of the tombstone, read Αύγη. Th. Corsten argues that Pfuhl & Möbius did not see the tombstone and accepts the reading Αύγη.

²⁰ Line 1 and line 7 Ματροδώρα / Μητροδώρου. In line 1, Ματροδώρα in Doric dialect is used instead of Μητροδώρα.

²¹ For the wrong spelling of Ἑρμῆ for Ἑρμᾶ, which is used in the Doric dialect instead of Ἑρμοῦ, see Corsten 1987, 155.

9. Tombstone with Altar (Fig. 11)

Yalova RDKM, Inv. No: YAM 89.

II b, Group of Banqueters.

Dimensions: H: 75 cm, W: 56 cm, D: 24 cm.

Definition: The find spot is not known. The upper and lower parts of the tombstone of marble are broken and missing. There are slots on the reverse indicating that it functioned as a door sill in secondary use. It consists of two parts, a relief at the top and an altar with an inscription at the bottom. Only the crown of the altar is preserved, and there are two acroteres on the sides and a Medusa head in the middle. The upper part of the six letters of the top line of the inscription are preserved.

The relief area at the top is bordered by a 6 cm molding on the sides and a 2 cm molding at the bottom. To the right of the tombstone, a long-dressed woman with her face and torso facing forward sits from the waist down to her left on a low-backed chair. Her right hand, in the mantle that covers her head, is on her knees and her left hand is not visible. Opposite her is a long-dressed man lying on a kline with cushion. His face and torso are turned to the front. Only the right side of his short and fluffy hair and his right ear are preserved. The figure leans on his left elbow and raises a wreath up with his right hand. His left leg reaches out parallel to the kline, and his right leg is bent at the knee. In front of the kline is a thin rectangle and three round objects on it. There was probably a low mensa tripes with fruit and popana on it.

Ed.: Baz & Seçkin 2013, Nr. 6.

Date: End of the IIIrd century A.D.

10. Tombstone with Altar by Olympas (Fig. 12)

Yalova, Termal locality.

Group II a, Banqueters .

Dimensions: H: More than 120 cm, W: 60 cm, D: 27 cm²².

Definition: It was found in Pythia Therma (Termal) locality. There are fractures and missing parts on the top and bottom of the marble tombstone. It consists of two parts, the upper part with relief and the lower part with a larger inscribed altar. On the relief, there are three human figures in a naiskos with Syrian style pediment. To the far right is a woman in a long dress sitting in a low-backed armchair. Opposite her, two men lie on a kline with thick cushion. In front of the kline is only the tray of the low banquet mensa tripes. At the crown of the altar, there are half leaves on the sides and a Medusa head in the centre.



Fig. 11. Cat. No. 9. By courtesy of Bursa Archaeology Museum



Fig. 12. Cat. No. 10. By courtesy of Bursa Archaeology Museum

²² This tombstone, preserved in the garden of the church ruins in Termal, appears incomplete in the publication of Pfuhl & Möbius (1979). This is probably because the authors took the piece from Mansel's publication. The tombstone, which is almost complete in the original, remains buried to some extent in the soil in Mansel's publication, only the upper part is broken and missing. The tombstone itself was seen and studied by the author. However, since it was under other blocks, a recent photograph could not be taken and it was not possible to obtain accurate dimensions. For this reason, Mansel's measurements are given.

Ed.: Mansel 1933, 115-117, Mezar 2; 1936a, Mezar 4, 33-34; 1936b, 13, Lev. IX, Res. 4; Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, Taf. 277, Nr. 1923; Corsten 1987, Nr. 142.

Date: Late IIIrd century A.D.

- Ὀλυμπᾶς Ἀρίστωνος ζῶν
 2 αὐτῶ κὲ τῆ ἑαυτοῦ γυνεκί
 Μαρκ[ει]ανῆδι ζησάση
 4 ἔτη εἰκοσιπέντε μνή-
 μης χάριν κὲ τὰ τέκνα
 6 μου συνανέστησαν
 Μάγνος κὲ Νεμέριος
 8 Χαῖρε.

“When Olympas, son of Aristonos, was still alive, he (had it built) for his memory for himself and his wife Marciane, who lived for 25 years; my children Magnus and Nemerios erected together. Goodbye!”

11. Tombstone with Altar by Sophilos and Choirile (Fig. 13)

Istanbul Archaeology Museums, Inv. No. 4058.

Group II b, Banqueters.

Dimensions: H: 168 cm, W: 58 cm, D: 35 cm²³.

Definition: It has been almost completely preserved. There are abrasions to the surface of the tombstone made of marble; the top is broken and missing. The altar part with the inscription at the bottom is broken and joined. On the upper part of the tombstone, a banquet scene is depicted in a naiskos with a triangular pediment, of which only one of its side acroteres is preserved. Two women sit on low-backed chairs on either side of the scene. The heads of both are facing front and their bodies are in profile. They are dressed in long clothes and their coats cover their heads. Two men lie on the kline with cushion in the middle. Both are dressed in long clothes, leaning on their left elbows and facing the front. The man in the center raises a wreath up in his right hand. Only the tray of the mensa trips in front of the kline has been preserved.

Below the relief area, there is an altar section of parallel width. At the crown of the altar, there are leaves on both sides and a Medusa head in the middle. Below it, there are six lines of a Greek inscription.

Ed.: Mansel 1936a, Mezar 2, 31-32, 34; Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, Taf. 277, Nr. 1978; Corsten 1987, Nr. 143; Cremer 1992, Y1, 60-61.

Date: Second half of the IInd century A.D.

- Σόφιλος Ἀρίστωνος καὶ Χοιρ[ίλη]
 2 [γυνή] αὐτοῦ ζῶντες ἐ[αυτοῖς κ]-
 αὶ Δομετία τῆ [α]ύτοῦ μητρὶ καὶ
 4 Παπία ^{vacat} ζησάση ἔτη
 κγ' τὸ μνημεῖον ἀνέστησαν
 χαῖρε.

“Sophilos son of Ariston and his wife Choirile, while still living, erected this tomb for themselves and for (Sophilos') mother Domestia and Papias, who lived 23 years. Goodbye!”



1978

Fig. 13. Cat. No. 11. Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, taf. 277, no. 1978

²³ Adapted from Mansel 1936a.

12. Tombstone with Altar (Fig. 14)

Bursa Archaeology Museums.

II a, Group of Banqueters.

Dimensions: H: 168 cm, W: 58 cm, D: 35 cm²⁴.

Definition: The tombstone in the Bursa Archaeology Museum is made of marble. The lower part is broken. In the upper relief area, there is a triangular pedimented naiskos with side and top acroteres. Inside the naiskos, on both sides a female figure facing the center sits on low-backed chairs. Both were in long clothes and covered their heads with their coats. Two male figures lie between them on a kline with cushion. Both lean on their left elbows. The man on the far right reaches out his right hand behind the man next to him and raises up a wreath. In front of the kline is a low mensa tripes with food on it. The lower altar is wider than the relief area. There is a Medusa head in the center between the petals of the altar. The remaining part of the altar, which probably included an inscription, is broken and missing.

Ed.: Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, Taf. 277, Nr. 1979; Corsten 1987, Nr. 198, 163-164.

Date: Beginning of the IIIrd century A.D.

13. Tombstone with Altar (Fig. 15)

Istanbul Archaeology Museum, Inv. No.4458.

IIb, Group of Banqueters.

Definition: It looks quite abraded and worn. There is a relief carved out section at the top and an altar section at the bottom. As seen, there are figures participating in the banquet in a naiskos in the relief part. To the far left, a clothed woman sits on a low-backed chair. Opposite her, two figures lie on a kline with thick cushion. A low mensa tripes is seen in front of the kline. There is a Medusa head in the center of the lower altar.

Ed.: Cremer 1992, Y5, 60-61.

Date: IIIrd century A.D.

14. Tombstone for Iulia by Aurelius KhrySION (Fig. 16)

Istanbul Archaeology Museum, Inv. No. 6138.

Group of Banqueters.

Dimensions: H: 96 cm, W: 40 cm, D: 29 cm²⁵.

Definition: The upper part of the tombstone, which is quite worn, is broken and missing. There is an relief carved out area at the top and an inscription section at the bottom. A woman in a long dress sits on the far right in the relief carved out area. Opposite him is a male figure lying on a kline with cushion. He is raising one hand, possibly holding a wreath.



Fig. 14. Cat. No. 12. Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, taf. 277, no. 1979



Fig. 15. Cat. No. 13. Cremer 1992, Y5



Fig. 16. Cat. No. 14. Şahin 1978, plt. IX. no. 12

²⁴ Dimensions adapted from Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, 463, No 1979.

²⁵ Dimensions adapted from Cremer 1992, Y8.

There is a small table in front of it.

Ed.: Şahin 1978, Nr. 12, 112; Corsten 1987, Nr. 104, 163-164; Cremer 1992, Y8, 62.

Date: After 212 A.D.

Ἰουλίᾳ ζησάσῃ ἔτη []
τὸ μνημῖον ἀνέστησ[εν]
Αὐρ. Χρυσίων Χρηστίωνος
μνήμης χάριν· χαῖρε.

“Aurelius KhrySION, son of Khrestion, erected this tomb in memory of Iulia, who lived for ... years. Goodbye!”

15. Tombstone erected by Aurelius Neikon and Aurelia Marciane for themselves and their children (Fig. 17)

Yalova RDKM, Inv. No: YAM 30.

Banquet of Family Members.

Dimensions: H: 83 cm, W: 33 cm, D: 40 cm.

Definition: It was discovered in the Koru Village locality. It is carved from gray marble. The rectangular tombstone was decorated in its secondary use as a column and there are some missing parts from the upper part.

At the top, there is a pedimented naiskos in the form of a cradle arch. In the center of the pediment, a rosette with six-leaves and three human figures are depicted in the naiskos. A woman sits on a low-backed chair on the right, facing her left. Her face and torso are turned to the front. She wears a long chiton and hymation. She rests her right hand on the elbow of her left hand, leaning on her chin. Her hair, visible from under her hymation, is depicted like a head-dress. She steps on a small footstool. Opposite her, there are two male figures, of which the one on the left is depicted from the front and up from the waist. The hairstyle is similar to the woman's, without details, almost in the form of a headdress. His ears are from the front. He holds a bowl in his right hand and a long, thin object like a roll or stylis in his left hand. To the right of the scene, a male figure lies on a cushioned kline with a curved end and a high back. His face and upper body are completely frontal. He is quite similar to the other male figure with his straight headdress-like hair and ears depicted from the front. While holding a bowl in his left hand, leaning on his elbow, he raises a wreath up in his right hand.

The leg of the kline, which can be seen on the right of the scene and behind the seat of the woman, has a bi-knotted profile. At the bottom, there is a plain boat and below it is a five-line Greek inscription.

Ed.: Baz & Seçkin 2013, Nr. 1.

Date: IIIrd century A.D.

Αὐρήλιος Νείκων Τατιανοῦ
2 καὶ Σε{Ρη}ρείνας καὶ Αὐρηλία Μαρκι-
ανῆ θυγάτηρ Παλαίμονος καὶ Ζω-
4 τικῆς τὴν στήλῃν ἀνεστή-
σαμεν αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις.

“Aurelius Neikon, son of Tatianos and Sereina, and Aurelia Marciane, daughter of Palaimon and Zotike, we had this tombstone erected for ourselves and our children”.



Fig. 17. Cat. No. 15. By courtesy of Bursa Archaeology Museum

Typology and Dating

When the pieces within the scope of this study discovered in Yalova and surroundings are examined, it is understood that there are two main types and two subtypes within them. In the context of the architectural form, it is possible that the main forms can be termed “plain tombstone” and “tombstone with altar”. The most important difference between the two types is the altar part below the relief area. There are only reliefs on the type called plain tombstone here. The second type, the altar tombstone, has an altar part that is carved as one piece.

I. Plain Tombstone

Four tombstones belonging to this group were previously published by Corsten and have the appearance of thin plates²⁶. On the facade of the stone block, which narrows slightly upwards, figures were carved in low relief by creating a shallow, rectangular relief area. Within the scope of the study, there are two tombstones belonging to this group and the upper parts of both are broken (Cat. No. 1-2). The tombstones, the thickness of which varies between 8-10 cm, seem possible to have been between 50-60 cm in length, considering the figure proportions. Cat. No. 1 is in the form of a thin plate (Fig.2). There is a wide frame at the bottom and a thinner frame on the sides, and figures are carved inside. There is no altar at the bottom. In this context, it is included within the group of "plain tombstones". The relief composition is quite crowded. The figures are intertwined and closely depicted. There is a soft craftsmanship to the folds of the woman's loose clothing. Therefore, it should be dated to the IInd century A.D. Cat. No. 2. has a form just like Cat. No. 1 (Fig.3). The difference between the two tombstones is in the use of the relief area. A thick frame was created at the bottom and a banquet scene was depicted on the top. Unlike Cat. No. 1, a second relief area is formed at the bottom. Here, oxen pulling the plow are depicted. In this respect, there are similar ones from Bithynia/Mysia²⁷. On the heavily-worn tombstone, intense folding depiction is observable on the woman's clothing. The fabric spills over her feet. It is understood that the intense craftsmanship of the folds started to become schematic and the folds were depicted with successive notches. The legs of the low mensa tripes still have elongated craftsmanship that can be called elegant. For these reasons, it should be dated to the end of the IInd century A.D.

II. Tombstone with Altar

“Tombstones with altar”, which are the most striking group amongst the Yalova tombstones, are represented by eleven pieces (Cat. No. 3-13). Unlike the first group, the tombstone consists of two parts²⁸. These two parts, the relief and the altar in the context of our examples were depicted in one piece. These examples are divided into two subgroups in terms of form. The main distinction is observed in the transition from the relief area to the altar part (Fig. 18). In the context of the available examples, the depth of the carved out relief part of the tombstone varies between 15-35 cm. Differs from Group I plain tombstones by being thicker.

Group A) In the first subgroup, just below the relief part, there is the altar part, which is significantly wider than the top. There is usually an inscription in the altar part.

Group B) In the second subgroup, the altar part is shaped in the same width as the carved out area. At the end of the carved out area, the petals of the altar, which were treated as a monolith, were carved. It is understood in the context of the existing examples that there are inscriptions

²⁶ Corsten 1987, 167-168, Grup 3.

²⁷ cf. Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, Nos. 1742, 1710-1711.

²⁸ When tombstone Cat. No. 7. was published by Mansel in 1933, the long inscribed part at the bottom remained attached. Today, however, the inscribed part is preserved in the churchyard in the Termal Hot Springs (Pythia Therma) location.

in the altar part.

Cat. No.3 is the best preserved example among the RDKM artifacts, with a height of 151 cm. It belongs to the group IIa typologically, with the lower altar part which is wider. In addition to the inscription, the relief can also be used to date the tombstone. Due to exposure to bad weather conditions, the deterioration of the surface of the marble prevents the head of the male figure from being exactly seen. However, it is clearly understood that the woman's hair modeling was shaped in the form of a watermelon slice. Therefore, stylistically, this tombstone should be dated to the first half of the IIIrd century A.D. According to its inscription, this tomb monument was built by Aurelia Teimothea for her family. Having the name Aurelia, the inscription dates to after the Constitutio Antoniniana in 212 A.D. It is understood that Cat. No.4 tombstone is one of the tombstones with an altar in form, with relief at the top and altar at the bottom.

Due to the close width of the relief and altar part, it belongs to the group II b here. Since the surface of the stone is quite worn and abraded, the inscription is greatly damaged and cannot be read. The figures in relief are in the same condition. In this context, it does not seem possible to date it. Although the lower part of Cat. No. 5 tombstone is broken, it is understood that it is one of the group II altar tombstones with a depth of 16 cm. Unfortunately, the damage prevents it from being understood whether the altar part is equal/close in width to the relief area. The heavily eroded surface makes dating the figures difficult. However, fine and graceful forms are observed, indicating the Early Imperial Period²⁹. In this context, it should be dated to the Roman Imperial Period, to the IInd century A.D. Cat. No. 6 was found with the lower part broken and missing. Since the thickness of the relief area is 15 cm, it differs from the plain tombstones of Group I and seems closer to the dimensions of Group II tombstones with altar. However, since the altar part is broken, it cannot be determined exactly to which subgroup it belongs. This tombstone is dated to the IInd century A.D. due to the style of the folds of the clothes of the figures. An intense schematic clothing craftsmanship is seen in all three human figures. There is also a disproportionate appearance to the limbs of the male and female figures. The heads are large, and especially the torsos are short. Because of these features, it should be dated to the IIIrd century A.D.³⁰ The original of Cat. No. 7 tombstone, first published by A. M. Mansel, had an altar part with an inscription at the bottom. However, the inscribed part has been broken today and is preserved separately in the church garden in the Termal locality³¹. As understood from Mansel's study, the altar part is as wide as the relief area. In this context, the tombstone typologically belongs to the group IIb here. In the context of its inscription, it is dated to the first half of the IIIrd century A.D.³² Cat. No. 8. tombstone is in the typology of the group IIa here, with relief at the top, altar at the bottom, and the altar part being prominently protruding. The heavily eroded surface of its relief makes it difficult to date it stylistically, but it should be dated to the end of the IIIrd century A.D.

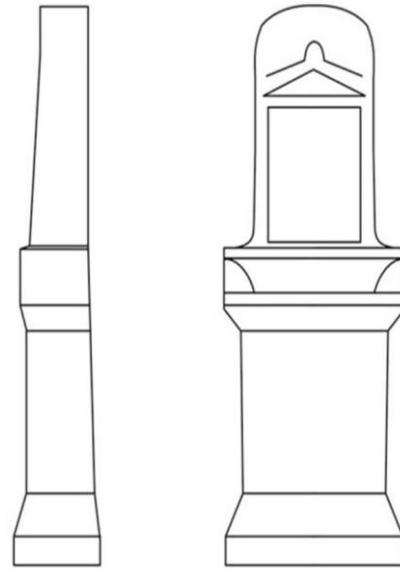


Fig 18. Tombstone with Altar IIa

²⁹ Cf. Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, Nos. 1672, 1680, 1694; For dating IInd-IIIrd century A.D., see Baz & Seçkin 2013, No. 8.

³⁰ Cf. Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, Nr. 1706; Baz & Seçkin 2013, Nr. 9.

³¹ Mansel 1933, 113.

³² Corsten 1987, Nr. 141, 164.

because of the folds and disproportionate proportions that started to become schematic³³. The top and bottom of Cat. No. 9 tombstone are broken. As far as it is preserved, the relief area is bordered by a 6 cm molding on the sides and 2 cm on the bottom, and there is probably a naiskos depiction here. The tombstone belongs to the group IIb, with a relief on the top and an altar part with the same width at the bottom. With uniform folds and disproportionate proportions, it should be dated to the end of the IIIrd century A.D.³⁴ Cat. No.10 tombstone is included in group IIa, with the relief part at the top and the altar part in larger dimensions at the bottom. When the tombstone was first published by A. M. Mansel, it measured 120 cm to the buried part. However, the tombstone is almost complete and has the same typological form as Cat. No. 3 here. The inscription on the tombstone has been deciphered and published, and accordingly it is dated to the late IIIrd century A.D.³⁵ The carved out relief part on Cat. No. 11 is included in the group IIb, as it is close in width to the altar part below. The inscription on the tombstone, which was found in Termal (Pythia Therma) with No.7 in the 1930's, was read by Mansel for the first time and dated to the second half of the IInd century A.D.³⁶ Since the altar part is larger than the upper relief part, Cat. No. 12 tombstone typologically belongs to group IIa. The previously published piece is dated to the early IIIrd century A.D. by Th. Corsten³⁷. Cat. No. 13 tombstone is typologically included in the group IIb here, as the relief and altar part are parallel to each other. It is dated to the IIIrd century A.D.³⁸

Cat. No. 14 tombstone looks very close to the tombstones with altar. There is an inscribed altar part at the bottom and a banquet scene at the top. However, in the middle of the two parts, in the transition area, there is no part in which there are petals, but in the area in all the examples above there are petals and a Medusa head in the center. It is therefore excluded from the typology presented above. The tombstone, which was dated to the IIIrd century A.D. due to its inscription, is contemporary with the tombstones of group II here³⁹. In this context, it seems possible that there is another type, despite the commonality of the iconography.

Cat. No. 15 tombstone has a form other than the typology presented above. It is carved as a single piece and is in the form of a small pillar. No relief area was created, the figures were placed without a frame. In this context, it cannot be included into the first group. While being in the form of a pillar reminds of group IIa, being without an altar shows that it does not belong to the group II in any case. The use of incising as well as the relief technique in the processing of the figures causes them to be distinguished from the other examples. The tombstone is dated to the IIIrd century A.D. due to its inscription, and is contemporary with Cat. No. 3, one of the original form examples also dated with its inscription. Therefore, it does not seem possible to explain the differences as being changes in form over time. All these points make us think that Cat. No.15 tombstone is an exception, perhaps representing another type. However, in terms of the relief iconography, which is discussed below, it has similarities with the depictions of both main groups.

Among RDKM tombstones, most of which have broken and missing parts due to their condition on finding them, the only example nearly complete is 151 cm in height (Cat. No. 3). A detail found in all of the examples is that the block, in which the reliefs are carved, gives the impression of a rectangular form at first glance, but gradually narrows towards the top of the tombstone.

³³ The tombstone is dated to the second half of the IInd century A.D. See Baz & Seçkin 2013, Nr.7.

³⁴ Baz & Seçkin 2013, Nr. 6.

³⁵ Mansel 1933, 115-116; Mansel 1936b, 13.

³⁶ Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, Taf. 277, Nr. 1978.

³⁷ Corsten 1987, Nr. 198, 163-164.

³⁸ Cremer 1992, Y5, 60-61.

³⁹ Şahin 1978, Nr.12, 112. Because of the name Aurelius, it is dated to after 212 A.D.

Considered in terms of the composition of the relief area, it is seen that the figures are located under a temple facade in all of these examples. These depictions, termed the *naiskos* type, are typologically divided into three different groups in the Yalova examples: ones with Syrian type pediments (Cat. No. 6, 8, 10), triangular ones (Cat. No. 3, 5, 7, 11-13) and ones with an arched pediment (Cat. No. 15). In the remaining five tombstones (Cat. No. 1, 2, 4, 9, 14), it cannot be determined whether there is a pediment decoration as the upper parts are broken and missing. However, a banquet scene is depicted on all the tombstones. In this context, they should be examined within the common iconography.

Iconography

On all of the tombstones, the banquet is depicted as the main subject. Generally, it consists of one or two banqueters lying on a kline in the center of the depiction and the accompanying woman/women sitting on a separate armchair or stool. In some examples, there is also a servant. Commonly, the figure on the kline raises a wreath with one hand in all of the tombstones, except for Cat. No. 1 and 2, of which upper parts are almost half broken off.

Just as the *naiskos* form can vary, the number of figures, their postures, and the objects around them can also vary. In this context, it seems possible to generate three groups according to the possible identity of the figures.

I. Banquet with the Servants

In the examples of this group, there is a clothed woman sitting on a low-backed chair or a rectangular stool on the left side (Cat. No. 1-3). There is a male figure lying on the kline right in front of him. In front of the kline is a low mensa triped with food on it. The main participants of the banquet are accompanied by two servants, one standing on either side.

II. Banquet of Family Members

Here, the adult female and male figures at the banquet are accompanied by another figure that can be defined as a family member (Cat. No. 5-6, 15). The reason for this is both the clothing worn and the position of the figure. Unlike the servant figures in the first group, the family member is depicted approximately in the center of the depiction and in front of the kline. In particular, the fact that the small figure in the center of Cat. No. 6 tombstone wears a long dress similar to the male and female figures, instead of the short tunic peculiar to the servants, suggests that the figure is a member of the family. Among some of the pieces in the Pfuhl & Möbius catalogue, similarly the examples in the center and named as child figures are supportive of the Yalova examples. On all of these examples, servant/servants are also depicted to the sides. In addition, there are figures separated from the servants among the Miletropolis tombstones, where the theme of banquet is repeatedly depicted⁴⁰. In the Miletropolis examples, the figures are depicted in the center of the banquet scenes and in similar clothes with the main figures⁴¹. Although they were not named as family members in this study, it would not be wrong to think that only they could attend such a banquet. The fact that the figures wear similar clothes to those worn by the main figures and are in a more central position shows that they should be considered as being family members. In the Yalova examples, there are no examples in which servant and child figures are depicted together. However, the small figures should be considered as family members (children) in terms of their clothing similarity and their position relative to the main figures. In this context, other three examples (Cat. No. 5 and 15) are similar in that the third figure is located in the center instead of standing at the corners of the depiction and should be included in this group.

⁴⁰ Cf. Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, Nr. 1688-1692.

⁴¹ Şahin 2000, TA 3-4, TA13, TA 15, TA 19, TB 6, TB 32, TB 43, TX 6, KB 8.

Cat. No. 15 tombstone also belongs to the group of “sailors” identified by Pfuhl & Möbius, with the depiction of a boat under the scene⁴². In this context, it differs from the original tombstones of Yalova in the form as well as in the description of the depiction.

III. Banqueters

This group includes only adults attending the banquet (Cat. No. 4, 7-14). On Cat. No. 7 tombstone, a well-preserved example, two male figures lie on a kline opposite the clothed woman sitting to the left. These three figures, who are the main participants of the banquet, are not accompanied by servants⁴³. On Cat. No. 11 tombstone exhibited in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, there are women sitting on both sides of the depiction, while two men lie on the kline in the center. In the context of examples, this group, in which only the attendants of the banquet are depicted, it can be understood that it is depicted with two figures, a woman and a man (Cat. No. 8-9, 14), and three figures, representing a woman and two men (Cat. No. 7,10,13). And with four figures (Cat. No. 4, 11-12), as two women and two men⁴⁴. The Group of Banqueters is the largest group, represented by nine examples among the Yalova tombstones.

It is a remarkable fact that the banquet theme was preferred in all of the Yalova tombstones. Despite the differences in detail gathered into the three groups above, the fact that the main theme is the banquet suggests that there may be an iconographic unity in the reflection of the burial tradition and understanding of the afterworld within the region.

The theme defined as symposion (συμπόσιον) in Greek culture and *convivium*⁴⁵ in Roman culture is frequently seen in many fields of ancient art. It has long been known that the tradition of eating by lying on the kline, which is the main focus of the theme, is essentially an Eastern originated practice⁴⁶. While the earliest usage on tombs is found in Western Anatolia, the motif called dead food (Totenmahl) with this usage has few examples dating from the Late Archaic Period. Since the second half of the Vth century B.C. to the IVth century B.C., it was frequently employed in votive reliefs particularly dedicated to heroes in Attica⁴⁷. The spread of the motif happened during the Hellenistic Period. The main scheme has diversified, with the addition of more figures to the main figures of the banquet, the number of people lying on the kline could increase to four. It has become possible for more than one woman to sit on the sides of the scene and children could also be added to the scene⁴⁸.

Although the motif is generally accepted to express economic prosperity and high status in society, there are difficulties with this interpretation⁴⁹. The subject is basically interpreted in two ways. The first of these is that the lying person depicts the dead person while he is alive, and the second is that it describes the participation of the dead person in a banquet held in the afterworld. A third group interprets this depiction as a burial ritual to be performed by relatives in memory of the deceased. Recently, some researchers think that the long-term use of the motif and its use

⁴² Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, 290-292, Taf. 179, Nr. 1185.

⁴³ For “Auge Matrodora” Tombstone, see Mansel 1933, 115-118, No. 2. In addition, he writes that an inscribed tombstone was still preserved in Yalova Seyrisefain depot, but he could not examine it.

⁴⁴ Tombstone Cat. No. 4 is broken from the top. Therefore, the depiction on the kline is not visible. However, it is understood that there were women sitting on both sides. In the context of the existing examples, it is thought that this tombstone was made in the scheme of two women and two men.

⁴⁵ Hug *RE*.II.7, “Symposion”, 1266-1270, Hug, *RE*.II.8, “Symposion-Literatur”, and Mau, *RE*. IV.1, 1201-1208, “Convivium”.

⁴⁶ Dunbabin 2003, 104-107; Also, on the Greek banquet of the dead, see in general Thönges-Stingarar 1965, for the tradition of lying and eating, especially: 6-9; Effenberger 1972.

⁴⁷ Dunbabin 2003, 104-107; Also, on the Greek banquet of the dead, see in general Thönges-Stingarar 1965.

⁴⁸ Dunbabin 2003,106.

⁴⁹ About motif, see in general Thönges-Stingarar 1965; Effenberger 1972.

in different cultures will not permit of any single explanation. The fact that the motif can be adapted to suit many different meanings is thought to be the reason for its long-term use and frequent preference⁵⁰.

Epigraphical Evaluation

There are inscriptions on seven of these tombstones, only the inscription on Cat. No. 4 cannot be read due to the destruction of the stone surface. Except for this example, the epigraphic texts on Cat. No. 3, Cat. No. 7, Cat. No. 10-11 and Cat. No. 14-15 were previously introduced and evaluated by the scientific world.

It is observed that the materials brought together in this study, which are similar in terms of typology and iconography, also have similarity in terms of the epigraphy employed. Each of the tombstones belongs to a family tomb. They were built for deceased family members, together with their living children, by a living wife or husband.

It is stated in Cat. No. 3 that while Teimothea was still alive (ζῶσα), she had the monument built (τὸ μνημεῖον κατεσκεύασα) in memory of her possible brother and also her husband⁵¹ Phoibion who lived 50 years (μνήμης χάριν). In the last part of the inscription, it is recorded that she built this monument with her children (μετὰ τῶν τέκνων). With similar statements in Cat. No. 7, Auge Matrodora, who was still alive, had this monument built for her husband Diodoros, who lived 80 years, and their son Dorion, who was one of the three children of the couple, who lived for 30 years, together with her other two children. In this inscription, the verb ἀνέστησα is used differently, and the expression χάρις, which is commonly used in tomb inscriptions, is used in the last line. Except for Cat. No. 3 and 15, all these inscriptions seem to end with the expression χάρις. There is a monument built by a person named Olympas for the memory of his deceased wife while he was still living in Cat. No. 10. In lines 5-6 of this inscription, the verb συνανέστησαν is used, indicating that his children had erected the tombstone together. In the inscription in Cat. No. 11, Sophilos and his wife Choirile stated that they had this monument built for Domitia, Sophilos' mother, and 23-year-old Papia who had died, probably their daughter. The language used in the inscription is similar to the other examples. The husband and wife who erected the tombstone had this monument built while they were still alive (τὸ μνημεῖον ἀνέστησαν). Cat. No. 14 is the monument (τὸ μνημεῖον ἀνέστησεν) erected by Aurelius KhrySION to the memory of the deceased Iulia. Cat. No. 15 differs from other materials in terms of its style and epigraphy. From an epigraphical point of view, it is understood that it is a piece belonging to a family tomb. Aurelius Neikon and Aurelia Marciane, who had the tombstone erected, were carved on the stone with the names of their parents, and they had this stele erected for themselves and for their children. Unlike other materials, the expression ἡ στήλη is used here, instead of τὸ μνημεῖον. As discussed in the typology and evaluation part, the form it exhibits unlike other materials, is also revealed epigraphically. At this point, it can be thought that the two different typologies produced in the workshop are also named differently as well as epigraphically. It is also noteworthy that the inscription stating that the names of the parents and the owner of the tomb had erected the tombstone for themselves and their children and the banquet scene of the family members were chosen iconographically.

Evaluation and Conclusion

Two main architectural forms are seen among the tombstones found in Yalova and in its surroundings: the plain tombstone and the tombstone with altar. While those in the first group have a common form that can be found in many places in antiquity, the second group of tombstones

⁵⁰ Dunbabin 2003, ii ff., 108.

⁵¹ Akyürek Şahin & Uzunoğlu 2019, 274.

with altar form seems to be a regionally specific production and use⁵². The tombstones with altar, shaped as monoliths, consist of two parts. At the bottom there is an altar with a petal and an inscription on it. This part is wider and thicker than the upper part in the context of the existing examples. It narrows slightly upwards. There is always the head of Medusa between the petals. There is a narrower and lower relief part on the altar. The typological analysis presented above shows that the pioneers of the tombstones with altar, which are considered as Group II here, could only be in Bithynia.

The first form of "plain tombstone" type observed among the tombstones here is found throughout the ancient world, although it has regional differences. The closest iconographic similarities with the figure of a man raising a wreath, lying down on the kline and a woman sitting on a chair accompanying him are found on the tombstones produced by Byzantion⁵³. In addition, in the tombstones found around the city of Prusa ad Olympium, which is adjacent to Yalova, the almost rectangular, slightly narrowing form, as in Yalova Group I, was frequently found. However, while these examples have a mortise protrusion at the bottom, while this part is shaped as flat in Yalova tombstones within the context of the existing examples. In this sense, they differ from each other in terms of type. Th. Corsten rightly classifies these examples under a single group⁵⁴. The upper part of our examples is broken and missing, but it is possible to say that the upper part of them ends in a triangular shape with the aid of Corsten's study⁵⁵.

The group of tombstone with altar, represented here by eleven examples, has an unusual form⁵⁶. Considering that this form could come from the idea of raising the tomb up, Mansel based the origin of the form on the pillars, which are the original tomb architecture of Lycia⁵⁷. In this context, a similarity can be established between them in terms of the tomb on the pillar and an inscription below as in the Inscribed Pillar of Xanthos, even if it is difficult. However, it does not seem possible to establish a traditional relationship between the dynast tombs pillars erected in Lycia between the VIth century B.C. and the IVth century B.C. and the Roman Period tombstones with altar of Bithynia. If such a relationship is to be established, perhaps the Dascyleium tombstones can be considered as an architectural form closer to the Yalova tombstones, of which the depth varies between 15 and 24 cm, with their slender form in the appearance of pillar. But it is rather difficult to think of a traditional link between them for the present.

When other regions are examined in order to find a similar form, it is understood that it is a unique type. For example, this form has not been found so far in Mysia, the southwestern neighbour of Bithynia. It has been suggested that a similar form was seen at the Beşkardeşler locality in another neighbouring region, Phrygia to the southeast, Th. Corsten found the five bases still standing there to be close in form⁵⁸. However, these are defined as *bomoi*, on which the holes of statue footprints are found⁵⁹. On the other hand, none of the Yalova examples have any craftsmanship that indicates they could be used to support and locate a statue. Moreover, the depth of the tombstones, which varies between 16 and 24 cm, does not permit this use. In this context, the Yalova tombstones with altar and the Beşkardeşler bases should be kept completely separate from each other. A tombstone found in Sinop Museum can be compared with the Yalova tomb-

⁵² Mansel 1933, 118. He writes that no other examples are known from Asia Minor. No specimens from any other region has been found to date.

⁵³ Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, Taf. 241-256.

⁵⁴ Corsten 1987, 167-168, Grup 3.

⁵⁵ Corsten 1987, Taf. 4.

⁵⁶ Corsten (1987, 163) used this expression for the first time for a group of tombstones from Yalova.

⁵⁷ Mansel 1936, 118-120.

⁵⁸ Corsten 1987, 65; see for the inscriptions *MAMA V*, 97-98.

⁵⁹ *MAMA V*, 97-99, Fig. 21.

stones with altar in respect to some features. This piece, published by A. Temür, is 173 cm in height and ends in a triangular pediment. The banquet scene was depicted in a window on the upper part and an inscription was carved on the lower part. Although this piece from the Pontus Region reminds of the Yalova tombstones with altar in terms of the general composition, the absence of an altar form at the bottom, clearly makes it different⁶⁰.

When the first examples were found in the 1930's, the tombstones with altars in Yalova were compared with the Diliporis and Geryllane tombs from Bithynia, around today's Sakarya, in terms of the idea of raising the tomb up from the ground⁶¹. According to M. Cremer, this form of tomb with altar reflects the grabara tradition of Rome in its origin⁶². However, both the Diliporis and the grabara examples are quite monumental. Although it is clear that the Diliporis monument, with the idea of having an inscribed altar at the bottom, constitutes a monumental example to the Yalova tombstones, it does not seem possible for it to be a pioneer in terms of dating it to the IIIrd century A.D. On the other hand, Bithynia altar-ostotheks, examples of which can be found in the Iznik Archaeology Museum and the Istanbul Archaeology Museums, are similar to the Yalova examples with the idea of having an altar at the bottom. Altar-ostotheks seen only in this region are ended with a small ostothek on the lower high altar and were produced only for a limited time in the second half of the IInd century A.D.⁶³

Dating of the tombstones with altars from Yalova starts from the second half of the IInd century A.D.⁶⁴ In this context, it can be thought that the tradition of burial, which started with ostotheks with altars raised from the ground on inscribed altars in Bithynia, continued with tombstones with altar around Yalova in the IIIrd century A.D. The examples of Diliporis and Geryllane, which were previously likened by Mansel and dated to the IIIrd century A.D. with their inscriptions, constitute only monumental examples of the altar-ostothek form⁶⁵. However, scenes of the banquet of the dead were preferred neither in Diliporis and Geryllane nor for the altar-ostotheks. This situation shows that although a relationship can be established in terms of form, the Yalova findings should be considered as a separate group. It is noteworthy that the form of the tombstone with altar is not found in the neighbouring regions, but only in Bithynia, and more specifically around Yalova. Although the finds indicate an area between Pythia Therma (Termal), Koru Village (possible Pylai due to its natural harbour) and Çiftlikköy (Strobilos) (Fig. 1), future finds may of course indicate a wider area.

The banquet theme is depicted in all of the Yalova tombstones and the motif is very monotonous. The delicacy whereby such themes were depicted in early period tombs and almost none of the details reflecting the status of the tomb owner are found on the later examples⁶⁶. In all the examples, the male figure lying on the kline raises the wreath up that he is holding. There is a careless composition and craftsmanship, almost as if it was made using a stencil. Possibly, this monotonous theme choice and imprecise craftsmanship were due to some sort of mass production by a local workshop.

Tombstones reflecting the banquet iconography are also frequently found in regions outside

⁶⁰ Temür 2018, Nr. 6.

⁶¹ Tomb monuments are dated to the IIIrd century A.D. from their inscriptions.

⁶² Cremer 1992, 60-64.

⁶³ Koch 2001, s.22-23, Res. 84. No altar-ostothek before the IInd or dated to the IIIrd century was found. It was determined that it was exported to a single region, Dyrrachium.

⁶⁴ The earliest example is the tombstone Cat. No. 11 Sophilos and Choirile, dated to the second half of the IInd century A.D. from its inscription.

⁶⁵ Cf. Mansel 1936 a.

⁶⁶ Cf. Thasos Relief in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum.

of Bithynia. For example, in the Amasra Archaeology Museum, there is also a banquet scene on the tombstones with acroteri and triangular pediment⁶⁷. There are also many examples from the neighbouring region of Mysia⁶⁸. It is possible to find the closest examples in terms of iconography on the tombstones discovered at Praenetos, located within the borders of Karamürsel to the east of Yalova in Bithynia. Here, too, there are figures raising up the wreath in their hands in the banquet scene⁶⁹. However, the tombstones with the motif of a man lying on the kline with the wreath he raised up and a woman sitting on the chair accompanying him are defined as Byzantion production because of the area in which they were found in quantity⁷⁰. The main difference between the Yalova tombstones and Byzantion tombstones, which are iconographically very similar in terms of the figure lying on the kline raising up the wreath in his hand, is observed in the form of the tombstone. Byzantion tombstones are mostly of the common form with the plain tombstones, Group I here⁷¹. The iconographical closeness can be explained by the fact that the surroundings of modern Yalova were within the political borders of Byzantion in antiquity, and the rural region was influenced by the central workshop. However, it should be emphasized that the tombstones cannot be produced entirely by Byzantion. Because, as discussed above, the tombstones have the form of a tombstone with an altar, which can only be found in Bithynia and especially around Yalova. A regional workshop, which is close to Byzantion, the active center of the period, and politically depended, must have adopted a popular motif specific to the center and applied it to its own tomb form.

The depictions on the Yalova tombstones generally show some differences under the iconography of the banquet of the dead according to the number and identity of the figures. It is seen that all of the tombstones with altar have a banquet theme, the "Banqueters" template is preferred on nine of them and the "Family Members Banquet" template on the remaining three tombstones. In this context, it is understood that the template without servant was widely used. However, these details do not affect the meaning of the main theme. In this context, the banquet motif was used as a stereotyped motif rather than reflecting a meaning such as status and prosperity in the period when these tombstones were produced. This should also be the result of mass production. It should have been considered sufficient to add an inscription to the altar to identify the owner of the tomb on these tombstones, which were probably produced as semi-finished in a way that would quickly satisfy need.

The tombstones with altar suggest that they are the product of a common regional workshop in terms of their typological and iconographical unity and the common language used epigraphically⁷². This workshop is represented here with eleven examples. These produced tombstones, which have a kind of monumental appearance with their height of 168 cm, but with a thickness

⁶⁷ Öztürk & Öztürk 2016, Nr. 5-6.

⁶⁸ Şahin 2000.

⁶⁹ Cremer 1992, Taf. 15, Taf. 16. P20.

⁷⁰ About Byzantion tombstones Firatlı 1965, 317, Plt. VII-XII, XXIII. For the motif of a man raising a wreath up in his hand and a woman sitting on a chair, see Pfuhl & Möbius 1979, 403ff. There are examples where the motif was even used on the sarcophagus, Plt. XXV, No.52; Pfuhl & Möbius I, Taf. 43.

⁷¹ In addition, in the Mysia region, such themes were used in small tombstones with mortise. Corsten 1991; Uzunoglu 2015; Pfuhl & Möbius I, Taf. 43.

⁷² For the previous workshop proposal for Cat. No. 7, 10-12, see Corsten 1987, 163, Nos. 141-143 and 198.

ranging between 16 and 24 cm⁷³, which saves weight, stone material and labour⁷⁴. By depicting the banquet, the beloved theme of antiquity, a new and original burial tradition was constituted within the understanding of the tomb with altar. However, the coexistence of the tombstone and the altar suggests that the two forms may have been used together in the cult of the dead within the region⁷⁵.

It is quite difficult to determine the location of the workshop at present. After the 1930's, the region were quite lacking in terms of archaeological surveys and excavations. The presence of a workshop was detected in the tombstones found in the Kestel settlement of Bursa, southwest of modern Yalova⁷⁶. However, the tombstones produced there have a mortise at the bottom and differ in form from the tall Yalova examples, similar to a pillar. Another distinction is in the relief area. While the banquet scene is depicted alone in the naiskos in the tombstones with altar, the depictions of farming are generally preferred at the bottom in the Mysia examples⁷⁷. In this context, the existence of another workshop that produces these tombstones, which are represented by eleven examples at present, should be considered, which contains thematic integrity in the description of the banquet. It is still early to consider the tombstones Cat. No. 14 and 15, which are similar in iconography but differ in form, as a third type. Another example can be added to these, which was found around Yalova, with an altar on the lower part and without a banquet scene on the top. Although it is similar to the examples in this study from an epigraphical point of view, it is inadequate for similar examples for now⁷⁸. However, it is not improper to state that they are a joint workshop piece when considered from an epigraphical point of view. Future research and findings will enable a more accurate suggestion to be made in this respect.

The fact that the tombstones with altar with naiskos reliefs with banquet scenes were found around Yalova indicates that the workshop should be sought there. As stated above, the finds point to an area between Pythia Therma (Termal), Koru Village and Çiftlikköy (Strotilos), but it is possible to suggest the Pylai settlement, of which its existence is known with written data for this workshop, and which could be included in *Tabula Peutingeriana*⁷⁹. Due to its natural harbour, this settlement is thought to have been the location of the modern Koru Village. The dating of the pieces shows that this workshop was active between the IInd and IIIrd centuries A.D.

⁷³ The thickness of the tombstones with altar varies between 16 cm and 24 cm. The width varies from 51 cm to 41 cm in the relief part, but there is a widening from top to bottom in all. For example, Cat.No.5, of which relief area started with 54 cm, expanded to 56 cm at the end of the relief. The closeness in the dimensions suggests that the main architectural form and figure template, which may have been produced as mass production, may have been employed.

⁷⁴ Among the examples in the Yalova RDKM area, the only tombstone with altar (Cat. No. 3) that is close to the whole reaches a height of 151 cm. Among the examples published by Mansel in 1933-36, there is the Sophilos and Chorile tombstone, reaching 168 cm in height (Cat. No. 11).

⁷⁵ The association of tombstone and altar around a sarcophagus found in Tlos ancient city has been archaeologically documented within the framework of dead cult practices. See Özdemir 2019. Such a practice may be at the root of the tombstones with altar in Yalova.

⁷⁶ Corsten 1990. Also for Miletopolis workshops, see Şahin 2000, 101-136.

⁷⁷ Cremer 1992, 60-61. As seen in the example of Cat. No. 2 found around Yalova, the depiction of ploughing oxen under the banquet scene shows that the close relationship between the two regions is also reflected in the orders/trade in tombstone.

⁷⁸ Corsten 1987, Nr. 106. According to the inscription, there is a monument built by the brothers of a person named Menandros, who lived here for 23 years, in his memory. It is important that the same expressions were used in the formulation of the inscription as employed in the examples in this study.

⁷⁹ Cremer 1992, 61. Although the exact location has not been determined due to the lack of research, for the suggestions that such tombstones belong to Pylai, see Corsten 1987,163; Cremer 1992, 61.

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