

## NEW CONTRIBUTION TO WESTERN ANATOLIAN FUNERARY ARCHITECTURE: CLASSICAL PERIOD ROCK-CUT-BUILT CHAMBER TOMB FROM *TISNA*

### *Una nueva contribución a la arquitectura funeraria de Anatolia occidental: tumba de cámara excavada en la roca del período clásico de Tisna (Turquía)*

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper presents preliminary observations and interpretations of a monumental tomb discovered in 2021 at *Tisna*, an ancient city within the boundaries of the *Aeolis*. The tomb was found in the lower area of a huge rock mass to the North of the acropolis of Sarıkale Tepe, which is the main area of *Tisna* settlement. The monumental tomb, which reflects a type unknown in the region until today, reflects a typology hitherto undocumented in Anatolia, which is novel both because it is carved into the rock mass and because it is partially constructed of stone blocks. The tomb is even more striking for its painted burial chamber.

Various archaeological artefacts have been found in and around the tomb, making it the most magnificent of the Aeolian tombs to date. Although the earliest finds date from the Geometric Period, the material continuity up to the Byzantine Period is evident. Coins recovered inside and in the surroundings of the tomb date to between the late 5th and early 4th century BC. In addition, the construction technique used in the walls, as well as other architectural features of the burial chamber, also correspond to the characteristics of the Classical Period. The strong link of *Tisna* to the Achaemenid Empire, which is also seen in the city's coinage, suggests that this tomb may have belonged to a nobleman or a wider family group.

*Key words:* Western Anatolia; Funerary Architecture; Sepulchral Painting; Achaemenid; Classical Period.

**RESUMEN:** Este trabajo presenta observaciones e interpretaciones preliminares sobre una tumba monumental descubierta en 2021 en *Tisna*, antigua ciudad dentro de los límites de la Eólida. La tumba fue encontrada en la zona inferior de una enorme masa de roca al N de la acrópolis de Sarıkale Tepe, que es el área principal del asentamiento de *Tisna*. La tumba monumental, que refleja un tipo desconocido en la región hasta hoy, corresponde a una tipología no documentada hasta ahora en Anatolia, que resulta novedosa tanto por estar tallada en la masa rocosa como por haber sido construida parcialmente con bloques de piedra. La tumba aún llama más la atención por su cámara funeraria con pinturas.

Dentro y alrededor de la tumba se han encontrado diferentes artefactos arqueológicos, por lo que podemos definirla como la más magnífica de la Eólida hasta el momento. Aunque el más antiguo de los hallazgos data del Período Geométrico, la continuidad material hasta el Período Bizantino es evidente. Las monedas recuperadas en el interior y en las proximidades de la tumba se fechan entre finales del s. V e inicios del IV a. C. Además, la técnica de construcción utilizada en los muros, así como otros rasgos arquitectónicos de la cámara

funeraria, también responden a las características del Período Clásico. El fuerte vínculo de *Tisna* con el Imperio aqueménida, que también se observa en la acuñación de monedas de la ciudad, sugiere que esta tumba pudo haber pertenecido a un noble o a un grupo familiar más amplio.

*Palabras clave:* Anatolia Occidental; arquitectura funeraria; pintura sepulcral; aqueménida; Época Clásica.

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

*Tisna* is located within the borders of the Aliğa District of İzmir Province in western Turkey (Fig. 1). Located in the region defined as Seha River Land in the Bronze Age and Aeolis in the Iron Age, *Tisna* lies almost in the middle of many important cities in the region such as Aigai, Kyme, Myrina, Gryneion, Larisa and Temnos. The research that had been carried out in *Tisna*, now known to be inhabited since the end of the EBA, revealed that the city prospered especially between the 8th and 4th centuries BC (Erdan and Tiro, 2018; Aydaş and Erdan, 2019; Aydoğmuş, 2019; Erdan, 2019; Erdan and Aydoğmuş, 2019; Vardar *et al.*, 2019; Aydoğmuş 2020; Erdan, 2020; Erdan and Gür, 2020; Erdan *et al.*, 2020; Gür, 2020; Erdan, 2021; Erönand Çakan, 2021; Ürkmez, 2021; Erdan, 2022; Civelek, 2023). The city, which minted coins especially in the 4th century BC, is understood to be a pro-Persian political centre. This argument is further ossified by the coinage of the city, specific mints of which depict *akinakes*, an important Persian heraldic insignia (Erdan, 2021: *passim*). The city's fortifications, a defense system with a length of 2400 m further supported by 13 towers, which were specifically fortified towards the direction of

philhellenic Aeolian cities, especially towards Kyme, can also be related to its pro-Achaemenid stance. In addition, the silence about the city in ancient texts, despite the density of archaeological material, suggests that *Tisna* may have been abandoned after the Achaemenid Period due to its pro-Persian political stance.

This paper is the first scientific publication on a newly found monumental rock-cut-built tomb from *Tisna* that aims to briefly introduce the tomb and share preliminary ideas on its architecture, importance, and tentative dating. Within this scope, in the course of the paper, initially a brief description of the necropoleis of *Tisna* and its tombs were provided. Later, the location of the tomb within the necropolis of the city was narrated in detail for a better understanding of its location-oriented importance and contextualizing within the wider sphere of *Tisna's* necropolis. This was followed by a brief narration of the tomb through the handling of its architectural and decorational traits. As the paper is shaped around only preliminary observations, a detailed analogy of architecture or else was omitted and the author supplied only with minor observations related to the overall structure of the tomb. Last but not least, certain ideas will be shared through the material data which consists of selected artifacts obtained from in and around the tomb.

<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank first the *Tisna* research team for their dedication to the scientific investigation of the city and its surrounding. Further thanks are to the Associate Professor H. Kaba for reading the draft of this paper and providing invaluable feedback. Further thanks are to the Professors A. Diler, G. Polat, L. Summerer, S. Ateşlier, T. Saner, Y. Polat and the Associate Professors A. Erön, M. Çekilmez, Ö. Ürkmez as well as the Drs. C. M. Draycott, U. Kelp and N. Aydoğmuş for their kind remarks and opinions about the tomb. *Tisna* survey project is carried out with the permission of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye and with the financial support of Aydın Adnan Menderes University and Aliğa Municipality.

## 2. Necropoleis of *Tisna* and its Rock-Cut Tombs

The necropoleis of *Tisna* attracted attention by being as rich as the one evident at Kyme –rich in various tomb types–, a settlement that was described by Strabo (13.3.6) as the most important city in the region (Fig. 2). We get our first information about the city and the some of the tombs in its vicinity from Alexander Conze, who discovered the city in

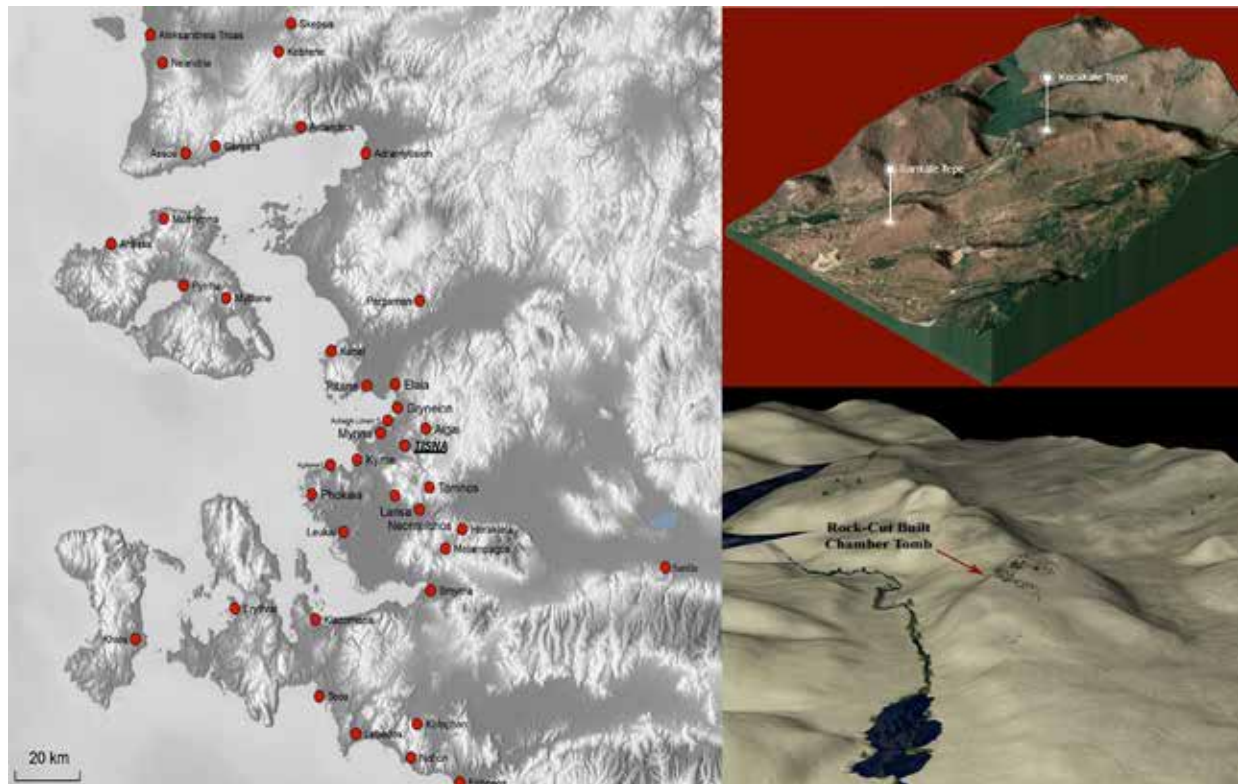


FIG. 1. Location and topography of Tisna.

1900 (Conze, 1910a, 1910b). Conze published the results of his travels to the area around *Tisna* at the beginning of the last century. He presented the first comprehensive information on three different rock-cut tombs, which were later examined during the current research at *Tisna*.

All the rock-cut tombs from the necropoleis of the city have recently been re-evaluated by Nihan Aydoğmuş (Aydoğmuş, 2019, 2020). These tombs have features that distinctly separate them from each other. An example among these tombs that are located on Sarıkale Tepe acropolis is worth mentioning as it more or less resembles the Lydian contemporaries, yet it still has some differences from the latter in terms of specific architectural features. The tomb has a rectangular entrance with a gabled roof whereas its chamber reflects a vaulted character. There are also other rock-cut tombs in Kocakale Tepe, another location within *Tisna*. The tomb in the South comprises a narrow and long dromos

opening to a single chamber with a flat roof. The chamber of the tomb, which contains three klinai, reflects similarities with some Aeolian examples known from the rock-cut tombs in Elaia (Pirson, 2009: 188, Abb. 55). The second tomb is located on the northern slope of Kocakale Tepe in an inaccessible rocky area at an altitude of 315 m above sea level. It too has a dromos opening to a rectangular antechamber. Two chambers are presented which were both reached from the antechamber. While one of the chambers is devoid of any traits the other on the South has a single *kline*. Both chambers have vaulted roofs. The chamber with a *kline* was carved next to the back wall, and the burial chamber is in a highly damaged condition.

Another traveler, Demosthenes Baltazzi, is known to conduct archaeological excavations in the Mantar Necropolis located just south of *Tisna* in the years following the visit of Conze. A summary report of Baltazzi's excavation has been published in

*Chroniques D'Orient* (Chronique d'Orient, 1891: 21-22 [9.122-23]). The exact location of the excavation area, defined in the report as the *Dumanlı Mountain Excavation*, was revealed in another study published by Carl Schuchhardt in 1912, and it was

understood that this excavation was carried out at Mantar Village, south of Sarikale Tepe (Schuchhardt, 1912: 102-103). According to the report, during the excavations which were conducted between on April 20th and May 7th, 1883, Baltazzi

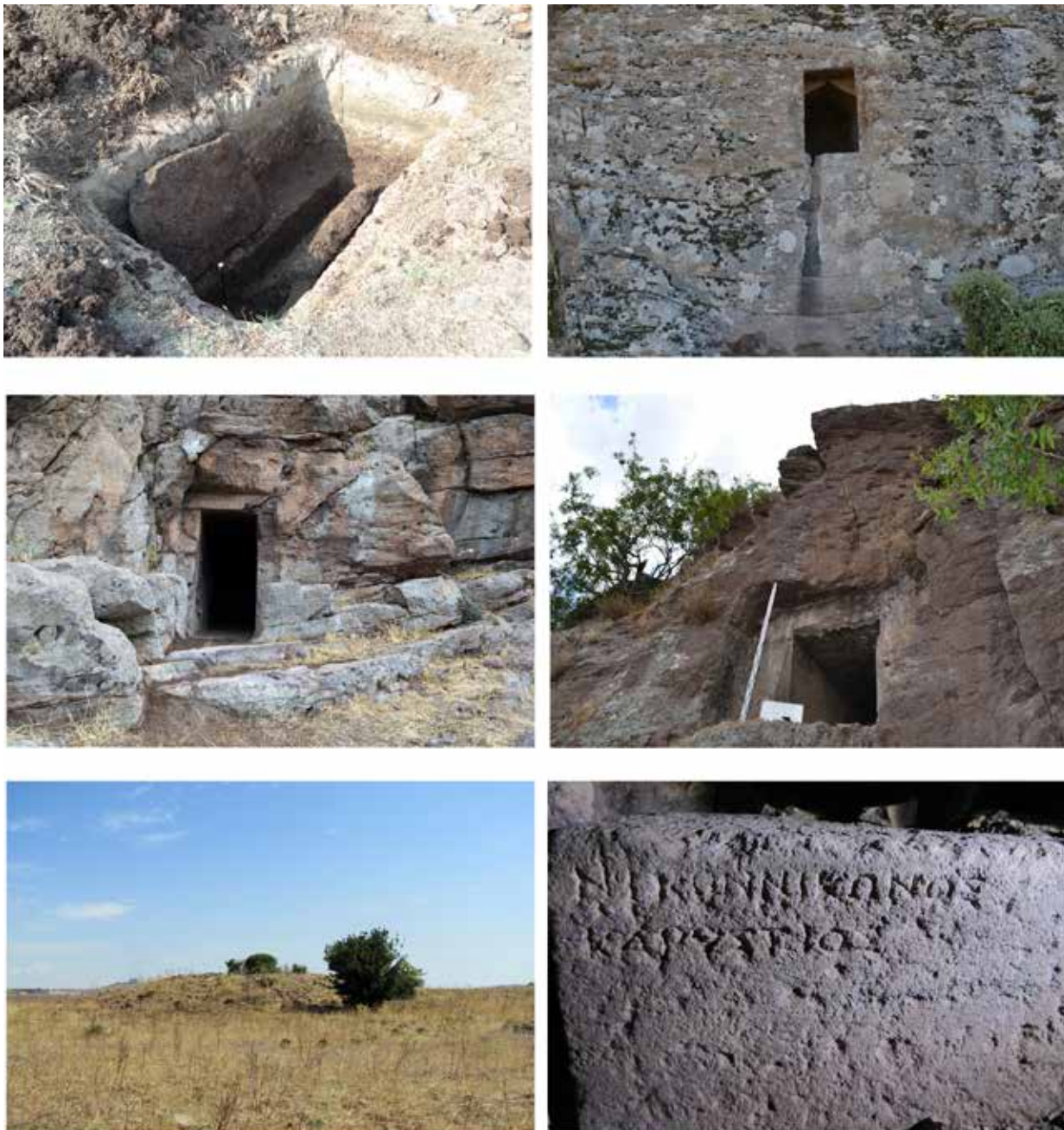


FIG. 2. *Examples and findings of the tombs from the other necropolis of Tisna.*

excavated a total of 102 tombs. Tombs were noted to reflect different characteristics and revealed numerous artefacts ranging from coins to pottery, bronze mirrors, strigils, necklaces, pins, rings, silver hooks, mirrors, terracotta figurines, masks, and terracotta plates.

The archaeological surveys from 2018 revealed that three areas around the *Tisna* were large-sized necropoleis. All are on the Sarıkale Tepe. The largest among the three identified so far is located on the slopes to the south of Sarıkale Tepe. The necropolis area was designated as *Sarıkale Tepe South Slope Necropolis*. A total of 321 *chamasonry* tombs were documented in this necropolis so far, almost all of which had been looted and damaged. These tombs, which were carved into the bedrock floor, incommutably have an east-west orientation, except for a few examples. The graves are located remarkably close to each other, with only 1-2 m between them. Archaeological artefacts found in and around these *chamasonry* tombs dated back from the 7th century BC to the 4th century BC.

A second necropolis on Sarıkale Tepe is located towards the West and designated as the ‘Tumulus Sector’ by the current research team. This necropolis houses many Aeolian-type tumuli covered with masonry stones. An inscription, which was tentatively dated back to the 4th century BC, was found in one of the largest examples among the tumuli which was highly damaged. The type of tumulus was defined as “tumulus type with ring-wall” by Turgut Saner and İlgin Külekçi (Saner and Külekçi, 2017: 59) whereas Özden Ürkmez prefers the term ‘rock-carved tumulus’ (Ürkmez, 2021) in terms of its general structure.

### 3. A Monumental Rock-Cut-Built Tomb in *Tisna*

A new tomb is discovered in *Tisna* during the 2021 survey season. The tomb is on the northern slope of Sarıkale Tepe and can be reached by climbing a hill with an approximately 40 to 50-degree incline (Fig. 3). The slope, and hence the tomb, in

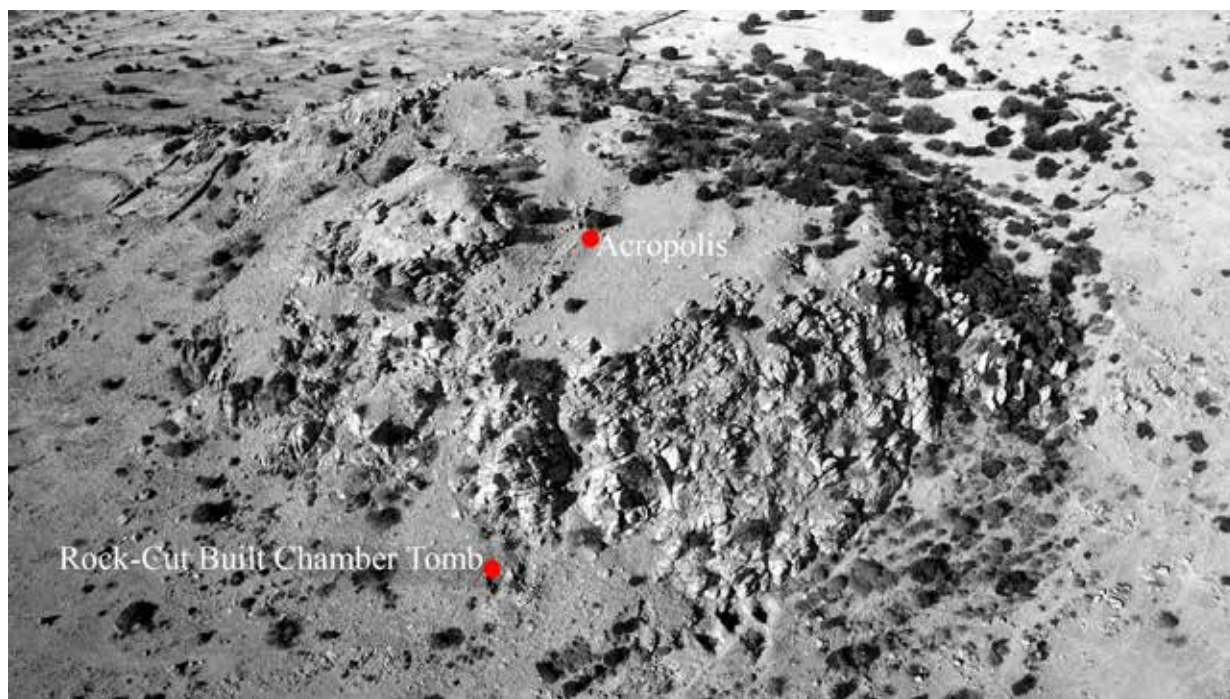


FIG. 3. Location of the rock-cut built chamber tomb of Tisna.

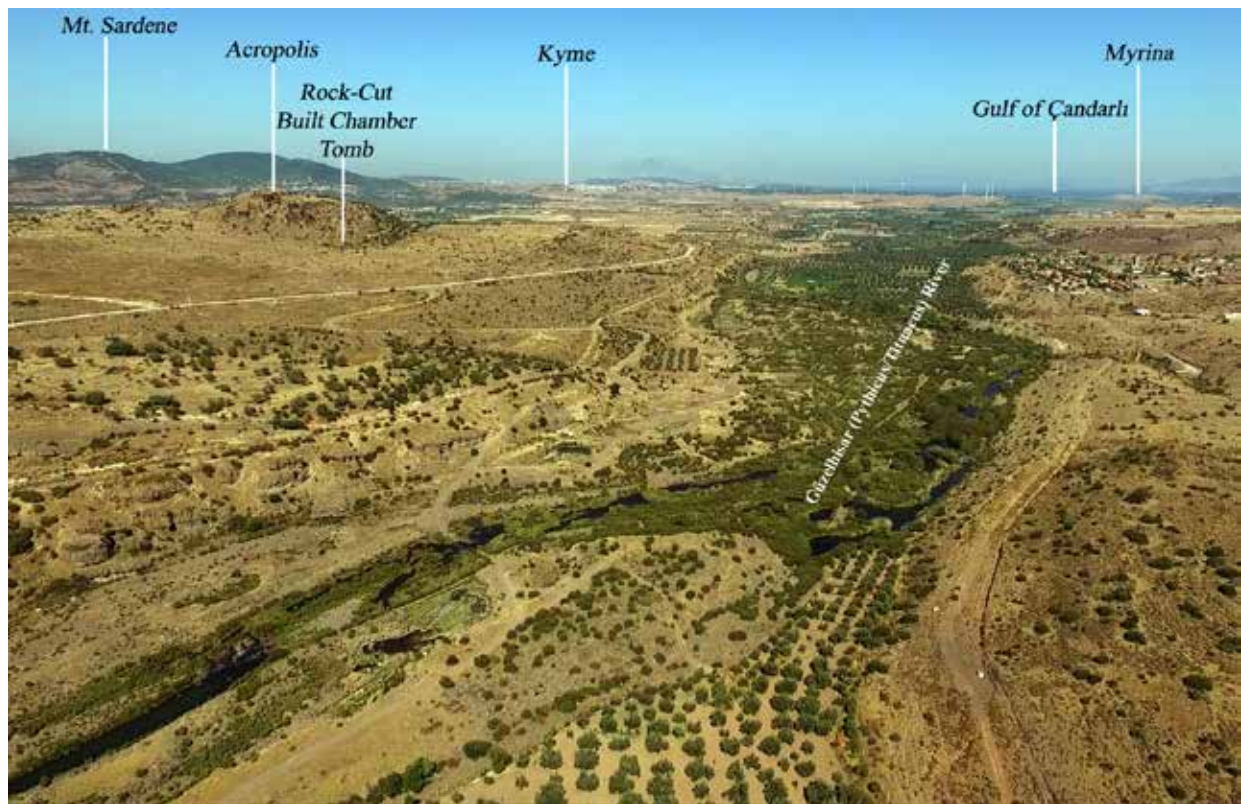


FIG. 4. *Landscape of the tomb.*

front of the andesite bedrock mass, overlooks the Güzelhisar (Pythicus/Titnaeus) River (Fig. 4). The front of the tomb is dominated by terraces which lead the way to its entrance (Fig. 5). The character of these terraces in the form of a lead way or path is further emphasized by their narrowing from bottom to top, i.e., from the lower levels towards the entrance of the tomb. Another possibility is that some of these terraces might have served as ‘ceremonial areas’, e.g., platforms where extra-sepulchral funerary ceremonies were held. It is also highly likely that these terraces might also have carried certain architectural elements that were raised to further amplify the monumental look of the tomb from the outside in connection with the surrounding landscape. Unfortunately, the entrance and interior are quite damaged as a result of the illegal excavations and natural reasons which disabled, in the end, the secure designation of the connection between the sepulchral structure and the terraces. Still, we can think

of a connection between the terraces and the tomb and the slope as well as the landscape below. It is understood that a row of terraces, which we made visible by cleaning the surrounding area, and the entrance of the tomb, are placed on the same axis. It is without a doubt that this location choice and landscaping were meant to symbolize the dominance of the tomb owner(s) over the landscape around.

In the present day, one can descend into the tomb by crawling about 3 m down from a hole with a diameter of approximately 0.30-0.35 m (Fig. 6). The tomb, which comprises an overall ovoidal plan, consists of four parts (Figs. 7-8). The first of these is located right after the descent from the hole. Although there is no sign of a dromos today, many big and pyramidal blocks that were evident in and around the area where the hole providing the entrance to the tomb is located suggests that the tomb once had an impressive built entrance from the outside. There is an antechamber after this



FIG. 5. *Terraces in front of the tomb.*

point following the opening providing the entrance to the tomb. Two chambers carved into the bedrock were located between the antechamber and the main burial chamber, which were both designated as side burial chambers. They lie on the North and the South sides and are accessed from an opening that is rectangular in shape, which can be interpreted with caution as a 'ceremonial area/platform'. What lies after all these is the main burial chamber located high on the western façade towards the end of the ceremonial area. A chamber carved to the bedrock the roof of which is intended to be gabled via the use of plaster.

The tomb is descended from the East after a depth of 3.05 m. The entrance of the tomb is 2.13 m in width and faces the East. The total distance between the entrance and the façade at the West is monumental in measurement with a length of 11.17 m. The tomb, which stretches along this length (Fig. 9), has a width of 2.13 m in the East, dramatically widens to 6.80 m at the widest point towards its middle and narrows to 5.20 m at the point of the façade in the West. This façade, which houses the entrance of the main burial chamber, has a height of 5.20 m.

There is a 5.10 m long antechamber in the form of a ramp leading to the West from the entrance of the tomb (Fig. 10). The northern and southern edges of this ramp-shaped antechamber were cut as steps to form stone

beds which are seven in numbers as seen at the time being. Two different walls are evident: one at the beginning and the other at the end of these steps or the stone beds. In the course of the steps at the South the wall is built at the beginning whereas at the North it stands at the end of the steps (Fig. 11a). Two of the pyramidal blocks, one of the most interesting architectural elements of the tomb, sit on the dense filling soil in the antechamber. These pyramidal stone blocks, which reflect a previously unknown form of building material, are an average of 0.72 m wide at the base and 0.69 to 1.02 m in height (Fig. 12).

At the lowest part of the antechamber, the elevation decreases to 1.80 m. At the end of this point, about 0.30 m to the West, there lies a rectangular structure. This structure was partly formed by being carved from the bedrock and partly built with walls that reflect masonry traits of the Classical period (Fig. 11b-c). Two tunnel-like openings side were carved into the bedrock both on the North and the South of this point (Fig. 13). Both openings are densely filled with rubble and stone. The opening at the South has a width of 1.26 m and continues into the bedrock as long as 8.14 m<sup>2</sup>. The opening on the North has a width of 1.21 m and continues into the bedrock as much as 3.35 m. The relatively less width of these strikingly consistent openings as well as their length is of utmost importance in their possible designation. Thus, it will be logical to welcome them as 'tunnels'

<sup>2</sup> This value represents the length that could have been measured via a laser meter as much as the filling inside the tunnel let it possible.

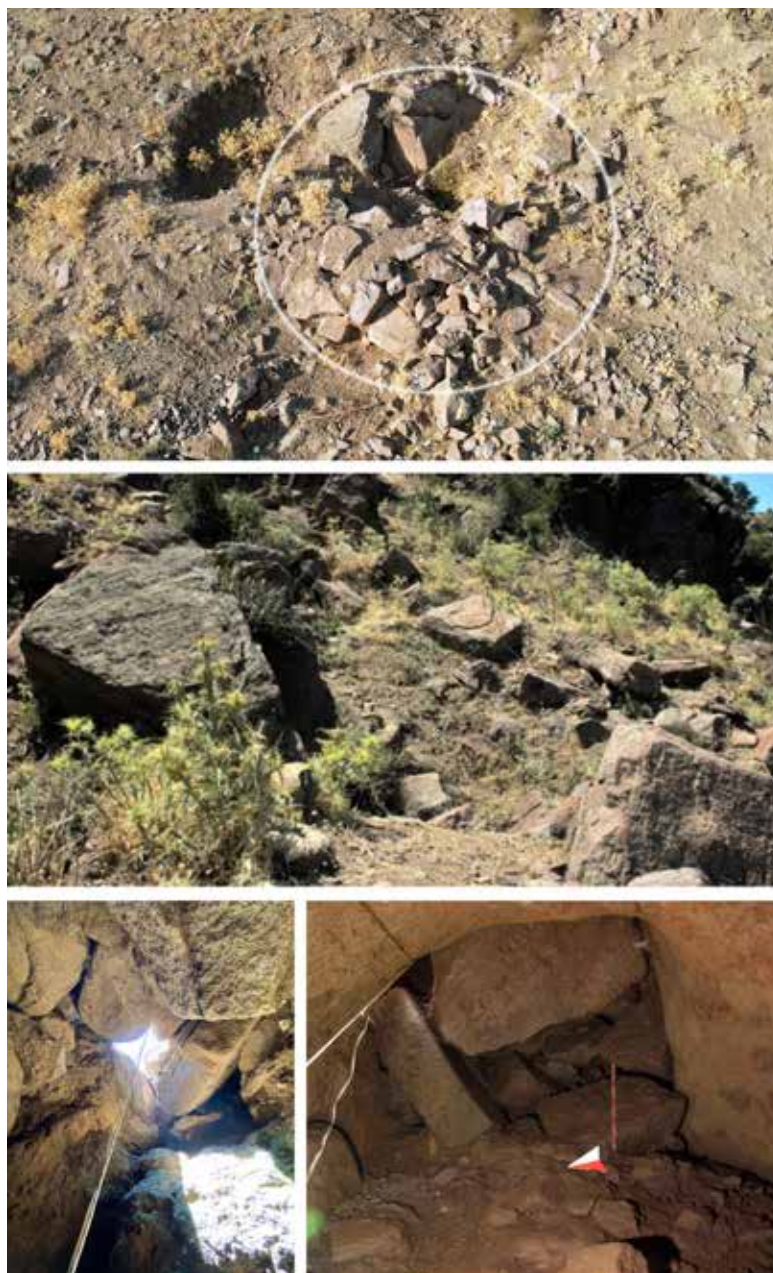


FIG. 6. *Entrance of the tomb.*

or lead ways to other possible burial chambers, e.g., side chambers.

The lead way to the main burial chamber situated on the western façade is provided by a threshold that is 0.98 m in width and 0.31 m in length. There are traces of three steps on the side walls which must



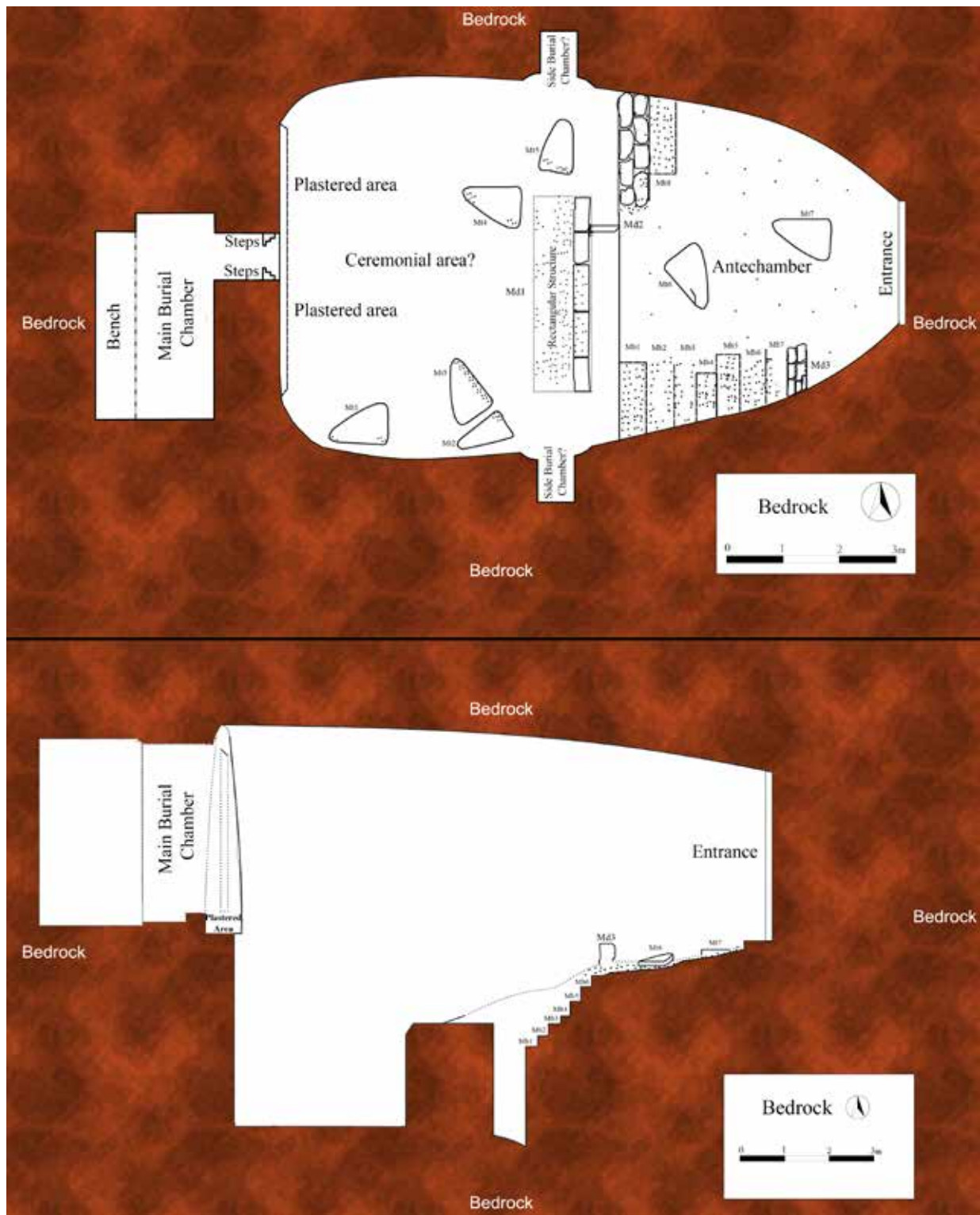


FIG. 7. *Main parts of the tomb and the elevation plan.*

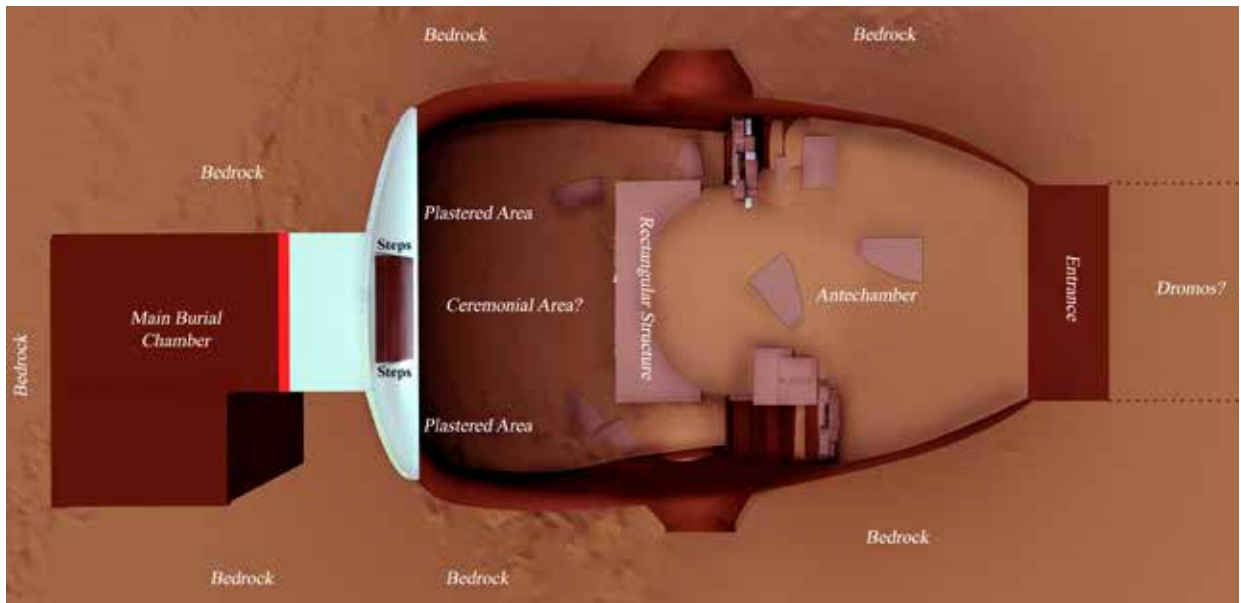


FIG. 8. *Main parts of the tomb.*

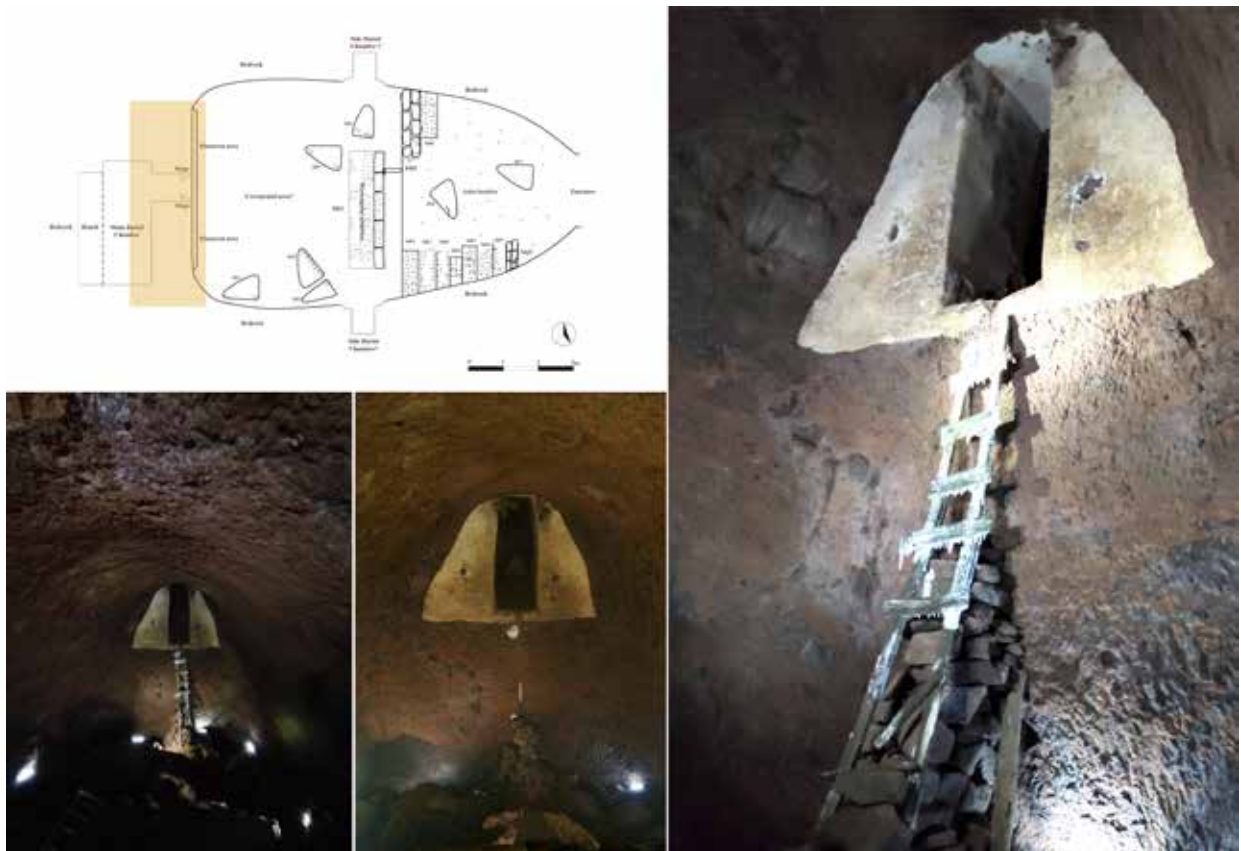


FIG. 9. *The main burial chamber.*

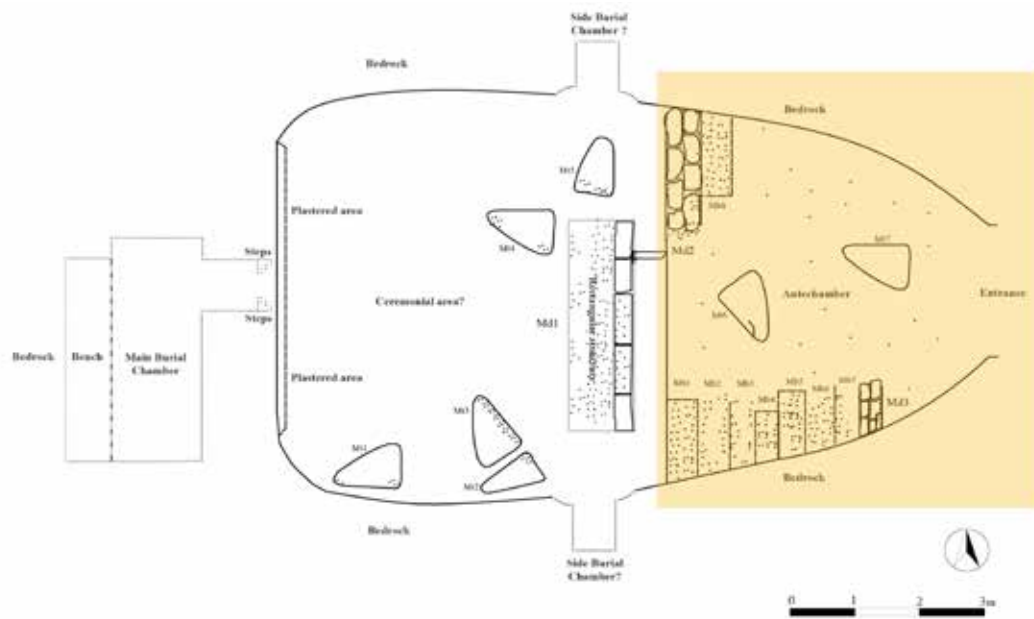


FIG. 10. *Antechamber.*



FIG. 11. *Wall fragments.*

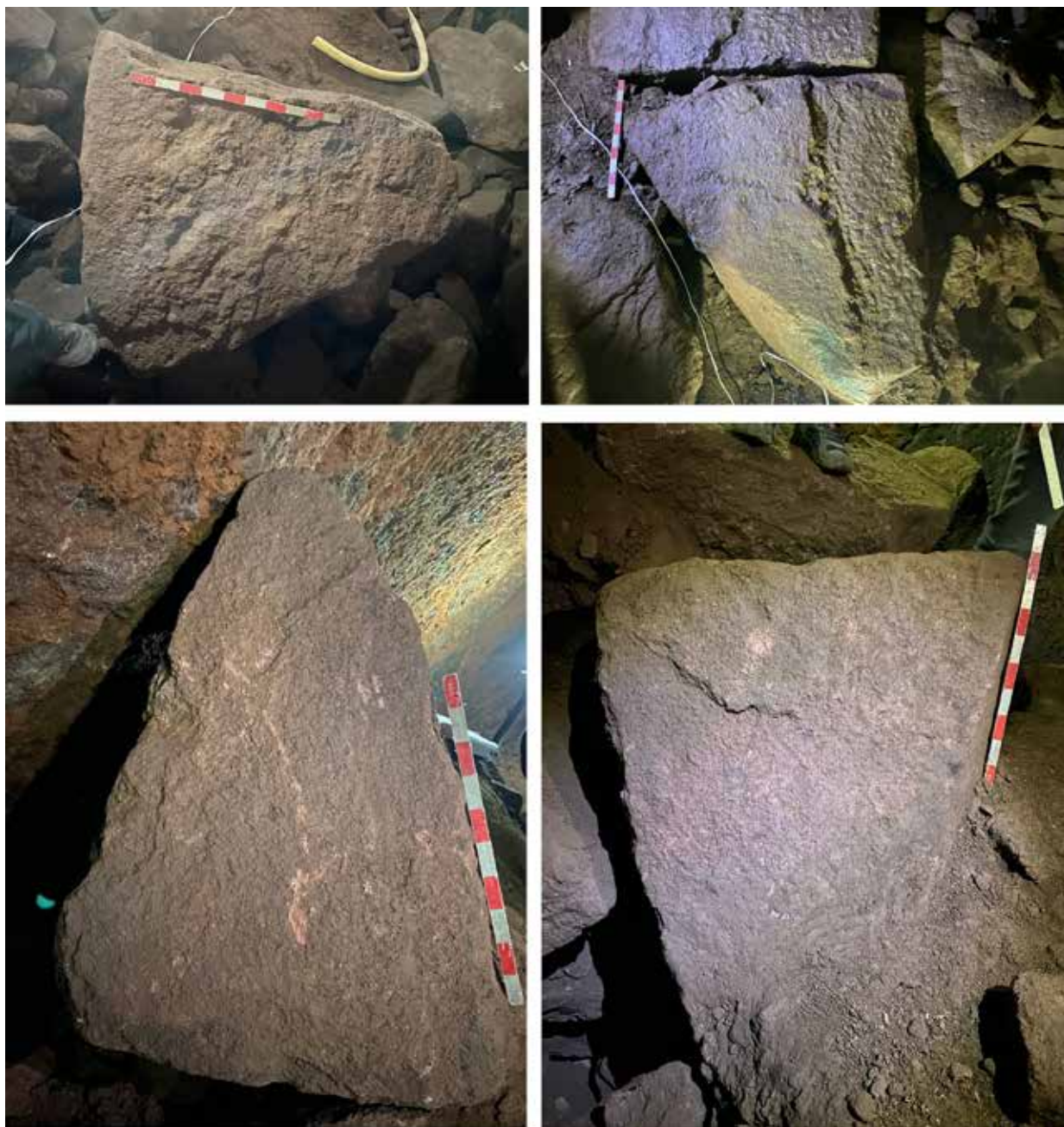


FIG. 12. *Triangle stone blocks.*

have been built of mudbrick. This three-stepped entrance, which has the same width as the threshold, provided access to the main burial chamber. However, this destroyed stepped entrance could only be noticed by the traces left on the plaster on both

sides. In light of these traces, it becomes evident that the first step is 0.38 m in depth and 0.24 m in height; the second is 0.40 m in depth and 0.30 m in height whereas the third step is 0.46 m in depth and 0.30 m in height (Fig. 14).



FIG. 13. *Side burial chambers.*



FIG. 14. *Traces of a platform with three steps on both sides of the entrance.*

This stepped entrance and lead way attract attention with its painted walls. The first trace of this decoration program is evidenced at a point situated 0.31 m towards the west of the entrance adorning both sides of the sill and the ceiling. It is comprised of a red band, 0.20 m in width, which is executed on white plaster with a thickness of 0.5 to 4 cm. Some figures, unfortunately all damaged and faded, are hardly noted as being executed in red colour on the white plastered side wall. Although one of

the figures looks like a lion with its head turned backwards, it is not possible to say anything definite about it at this point. Precise and definite identification of these figures will only be possible after documenting the paintings with advanced technical opportunities (Fig. 15). The upper borders of the white plaster are surrounded by a 0.05 m wide black band. This black band, once again adorning both sides of the entrance, extend towards the inner portion of the main burial chamber. In the northern part of the entrance horizontal lines with black paint on white plaster, possible executions of meander and 'U' shaped decorations, are also evident.

The main burial chamber is reached 0.68 m after the threshold following a bend towards the South. The burial chamber is rectangular in shape. Interestingly it reflects an orthodox axial layout when compared with the rest of the tomb as it has a north-to-south orientation. The main burial chamber has a flat roof. Its whole western side is carved as a bench which was meant for receiving the dead. The bench lies on the same axis as the chamber and measures 2.19 m in length and 1.16-1.26 m in width. Its bed, the flat surface on which the dead was laid, rests 0.28 m higher than the floor. Though neither the chamber nor the bench reflects any traces of painted decoration one should still not



FIG. 15. *Decoration on the white plaster with red and black color.*

expect them to be so when especially the decorated entrance-lead way is into consideration.

#### 4. Achaemenid Period Tomb from *Tisna*?

As it is known, Anatolia has been under the influence of Persian domination for many years. On the other hand, it is stated by scholars in recent years that Persian domination did not cause a strong effect (Briant, 1996: 95). Tavernier defines the presence of Persians in Anatolia as “level of the imperial signature” (Tavernier, 2019: 142). However, they transformed some cities in different cultural regions, such as Dascylium, Kelainai, Halicarnassus, Sardes and Xanthos into administrative centers.

There are numerous tombs that date back to the Achaemenid Period located in both the centers mentioned above and the settlements under their influence. These tombs, often associated together with Persian influence, include The Mausoleum (Newton, 1862: 93; Jeppesen, 1958: 14-18; Ridgway, 1997: 112; Henry, 2010: 70-72; Jenkins, 2010: 124), Harpy Tomb (Tritsch, 1942: 48; Demargne, 1958: 44-45; Gabelmann, 1984: 43), Nereid Monument (Demargne, 1969), Sarcophagus of Pajawa (Demargne, 1974: 61-87), Heroon of Limyra (Borchhardt, 1976: 99-105), Pyramidal tomb of Sardes (Ratté, 1992: 135), Taş Kule (Cahill, 1988: 482-485; Ateşlier, 2004: 111), Karaburun (Mellink, 1971: 250-253; Mellink, 1972: 263-269), İkiştepe (Mertens, 1987: 42), Tatarlı (Briant, 1996: 390; Summerer, 2007: 131-132) and they are all built or constructed for Persians or Persianized Anatolian individuals (Tavernier, 2019: 152).

The rock-cut-built tomb from *Tisna* is an exceptional and monumental example within the corpus of Anatolian sepulchral architecture. It would seem that this exceptional and monumental tomb is without an exact similar as no analogous tomb, contemporary or earlier, is known to the knowledge of the author. Yet, it is impossible to state that the rock-cut-built tomb from *Tisna* is unique without any source of inspiration.

As previously mentioned within the paper, *Tisna*'s pro-Persian political stance, a fact further supported by material evidence originating from the survey, inevitably makes it necessary to search for parallels for this tomb from outside of the relatively narrow confines of Achaemenid Anatolia; but more from the wider Achaemenid world. What attracts attention at this point is the partial analogy that the *Tisna* tomb shares with the most known Achaemenid monumental tombs: the tombs from the necropolis of Naqsh-e Rostam (Callieri, 2021: 1277-1278). The analogy especially caught with the Naqsh-e Rostam tombs is obtained through the design of the façade at the western end of the *Tisna* tomb; a similarity that does not seem like a coincidence. Thus, a façade architecture carved on the bedrock and its positioning well above the ground level for a spectacular view can be counted as the leading commonality shared between the *Tisna* tomb and the tombs at Naqsh-e Rostam<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, differences are not few too. The façade of the *Tisna* tomb lacks any relief or painted decoration; rather it is plain and marked only by a small rectangular entrance. Still, the scarce evidence and superficial observation originating from the field must leave open the possibility, with caution of course, that the *Tisna* tomb could have a painted façade too which did not survive until our day. Whether it was painted or not, the façade of the *Tisna* tomb definitely aimed towards the same policy as the tombs from Naqsh-e Rostam did: impressing the viewer through monumentalism.

However, the *Tisna* tomb gains an exceptionality at this point by being situated underground. This trait of it brings another question to mind: was this tomb meant to be sacred in some way that it was preferred to be built underground rather than being displayed on the surface? Insisting on the policy for having the tomb underground despite the suitable and dominant setting on the slope against the Güzelhisar (Pythicus/Titnaeus) River stands

<sup>3</sup> This trait of *Tisna* tomb can also be paralleled with some rupestrian tombs from Paphlagonia too: Summerer and Von Kienlin, 2010, 196 ff.



out as another trait of the tomb that needs further and detailed analysis.

Yet it seems logical so far to place the *Tisna* tomb within the wider horizon of the Achaemenid sepulchral architecture it is still hard to answer the question to whom this tomb originally belonged to or when was it built.

Since no inscriptions were found in and around the tomb epigraphic evidence fails to answer this question. Historical narrations neither change the current state of affairs related to the owner of the tomb too. Nevertheless, certain arguments can be put forward. When the dimensions of the tomb, the labour force and the cost required for its construction as well as its decoration by mural paintings are taken into consideration it becomes certain that the tomb was meant for an important person from *Tisna*. The formation of the tomb into the rock mass on which the city was built further emphasizes the connection between this unknown individual and the main settlement. Although ‘tunnels’ leading to possible side burial chambers suggest that the tomb might have belonged not only to an individual but also to a family. It would not be correct to make any definite comments on this matter at the time.

There is not much to be said about the date of the tomb too. *Tisna* was a settlement that has been inhabited continuously from the end of the Early Bronze Age to the Byzantine Period. The intensive surveys conducted on the site since 2018 showed that certain parts of the city were inhabited in specific periods. Although it is previously emphasized that masonry from the tomb reflects architectural



FIG. 16. *Selected archaeological materials from inside and around the tomb.*

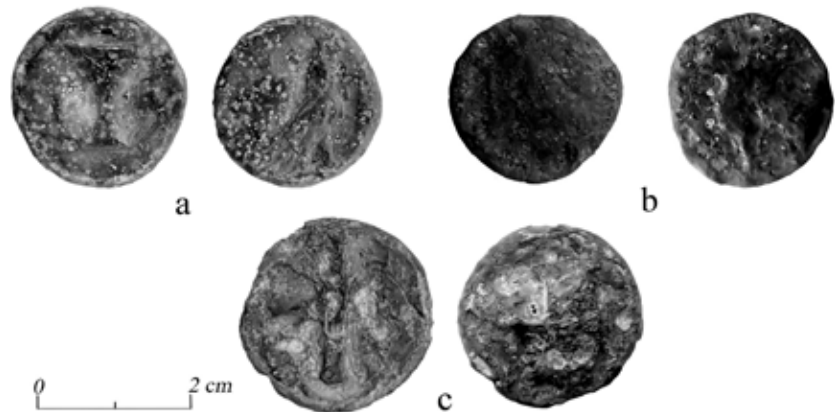


FIG. 17. *Coins from the tomb.*

traits of the Classical Period, they are solely not enough to date the tomb. On the other hand, archaeological artefacts found both inside and around the tomb can supply us with more concrete results. The finds collected from the *Tisna* tomb range from the Geometric period to the Byzantine era. However, the bulk of the finds is narrowly dated between the end of the 5th century BC and the beginning of the 4th century BC (Fig. 16). Three coins, two of which belong to Kyme (Fig. 17a-b), one to *Tisna* (Fig. 17c) are especially of importance as they strongly clarify this date range. The first Kyme coin is a part of the city’s frequently seen eagle/vessel series. The coins featuring the standing eagle were struck in Kyme between the 5<sup>th</sup> and

4<sup>th</sup> centuries (Caltabiano *et al.*, 2014: 145-146). Other coin belonging to Kyme is quite damaged, but the letters KY reflecting the initials of the city's name can still be read, albeit with difficulty. The only existing *Tisna* coin is part of the akinakes series and dates back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC (Erdan, 2021, 2022). Furthermore, these finds are in strict harmony with the history of Achaemenid influence both in *Tisna* and Western Anatolia.

To sum up, both the architectural traits and material found in the tomb only able us to superficially designate the *Tisna* tomb as a monumental, or maybe even a sacral, sepulchral structure that was carved/built in the course of the late 5<sup>th</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The whole structure was meant to be the final resting place either of an Achaemenid overlord or a pro-Achaemenid elite from the local community.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

This paper superficially analyzed, through the use of scarce data, a recently found rock-cut-built monumental tomb from *Tisna* in Aeolis. The tomb, despite the scarcity of data related to it, importantly candidates to change the state-of-the-art related to many matters surrounding *Tisna*. The first among those is the status of *Tisna*; a settlement which was welcomed so far only as a small Persian fortress. The monumentality and underground-built character of the tomb, together with the knowledge of a huge necropolis that housed many other similar or different tombs, nowadays able us to designate *Tisna* as an important Achaemenid settlement situated in an advantageous position between Aeolis and Lydia.

On the other hand, the slight, yet ocular, Achaemenid traits evident within various parts of the tomb enabled us to place it and the city it belonged within the wider confines of the Achaemenid Empire. Thanks to this tomb it is also possible to further emphasize the existence of a wealthy and powerful Achaemenid or pro-Achaemenid ruling class which lived in *Tisna* and was eventually buried in its burial grounds. The latter emphasizes

the place-attachment of this Achaemenizing or pro-Achaemenid ruling class to the region and implies the long-lived geo-political interest of the Empire both within the city and its surrounding.

How can the monumentality of the tomb and the efforts to carve/build it underground be interpreted? Considering the other tomb types in *Tisna*, especially the rock-cut tombs, it is understood that monumentality and visibility were important factors for the nobility in *Tisna*, as it was elsewhere. In this case, we can state that we have enough reason to think that there could have been a monumental entrance on the outside of the rock-cut-built chamber tomb, which overlooked the Güzelhisar (Pythicus/Titnaeus) River. The terraces and the destroyed blocks in the upper part of the tomb are the only valuable evidence of this idea and now stay as tempting objects of scientific study for the true realization of this argument.

Both the upper mentioned traits of the tomb and its tentative dating into the late 5<sup>th</sup> and the early 4<sup>th</sup> century BC should not be welcomed as definite. Rather they should be welcomed as promotive and influential arguments for the emerging of new studies and development of fresh ideas on the exact character, architecture, or date of this rock-cut-built monumental tomb from *Tisna*. Nevertheless, what has become evident with this preliminary study is that sites like *Tisna* promises to supply us with interesting, and never-seen-before, aspects of the Achaemenid rule and culture in Western Anatolia. Thus, scientific approaches to rural sites like *Tisna* and further development of new understandings of their documentation, survey, but also excavation should be strongly encouraged and supported.

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