



Excavations at the Hittite Site, Maşat Höyük: Palace, Archives, Mycenaean Pottery

Author(s): Tahsin Özgüç

Source: *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (Jul., 1980), pp. 305-309

Published by: Archaeological Institute of America

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/504705>

Accessed: 04-11-2016 13:45 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://about.jstor.org/terms>



Archaeological Institute of America is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *American Journal of Archaeology*

Excavations at the Hittite Site, Maşat Höyük: Palace, Archives, Mycenaean Pottery

TAHSİN ÖZGÜÇ

(Pls. 36-37)

Maşat Höyük (Hittite Tapigga), a site in northern Hittite territory (pl. 36, fig. 1), is located 20 km. south of Zile (ancient Zela, Hittite Anzilia) and 312 km. northeast of Ankara. Boğazköy-Hattusha, the capital city of the Hittites, is 150 km. from Maşat Höyük (116 km. as the crow flies).¹ There are two main communication routes between these two large Hittite centers:

a) the route Boğazköy-Alaca-Çekerek-Maşat Höyük, which also provides communication with Alaca Höyük, Eski Yapar, Kale Höyük (near Aydıncık), Kazankaya,² and Eğridir Höyük as well as some other Hittite towns of great importance; b) the route Boğazköy-Köhne (Sorgun)-Çekerek-Maşat Höyük, which arrives at Zile through Karapınar.

Both of these routes have been of notable importance through the centuries.³

Maşat Höyük measures 450 x 225 m., and is 886 m. above sea level. The peak of the mound is 29 m. above the surrounding plains. A citadel and lower town compose the site. The lower town is extensive on the east and southeast of the citadel, while the north, west and south settlements of the lower town are smaller.

The plains around Maşat Höyük are wide, fertile and well irrigated, which makes them suitable for almost all kinds of agriculture. Most of the surrounding mountains are covered with forests. Scattered randomly in the plains are a few large masses of palaeozoic crystalline limestone. The citadel of Maşat Höyük is on one of these formations.

Maşat Höyük entered the archaeological literature in 1943 through the chance discovery of a

Hittite cuneiform tablet on its surface. This tablet was published by H.G. Güterbock in 1945.⁴ In the same year a brief trial excavation was made at the site with limited funds.

During the following 28 years, the mound did not attract much attention. In 1973 a project was organized and excavations started under the sponsorship of the Turkish Historical Society. This work brought to light a beautifully preserved palace as well as the first Hittite archive outside of Boğazköy. The latest cultural level of Maşat Höyük covers the first quarter of the first millennium B.C. to the first half of the 4th century B.C., the Iron Age period of the Phrygians. During this time only the citadel, located on the highest part of the mound, was used for a settlement, which is represented by three building levels. The earliest culture discovered by our excavations, overlying the virgin rock of the citadel, is of the Early Bronze Age.⁵ However, there might possibly be even earlier occupation in a different part of the lower town (terraces). The second cultural period is to be associated with the Hittites (ill. 1). Three Hittite building levels have been identified on the citadel.⁶ In addition, older Hittite levels are expected to be found in the lower town. The oldest Hittite level (the third) on the citadel basically consists of a monumental Hittite palace and its archive. At the end of the 15th century B.C., this palace was destroyed in a huge fire. The second and first Hittite building levels overlie the remains of this palace. The following discussion concentrates on the palace and its archive.⁷

This architectural monument was adapted to the

¹ T. Özgüç, *Maşat Höyük Kazıları ve çevresindeki araştırmalar—Excavations at Maşat Höyük and Investigations in its Vicinity* (Ankara 1974) 49-112 (English text) (hereafter cited as *Maşat*).

² *Maşat* 52, n. 3.

³ K. Bittel, *Kleinasiatische Studien* (IstMitt 5, 1942) 11-14.

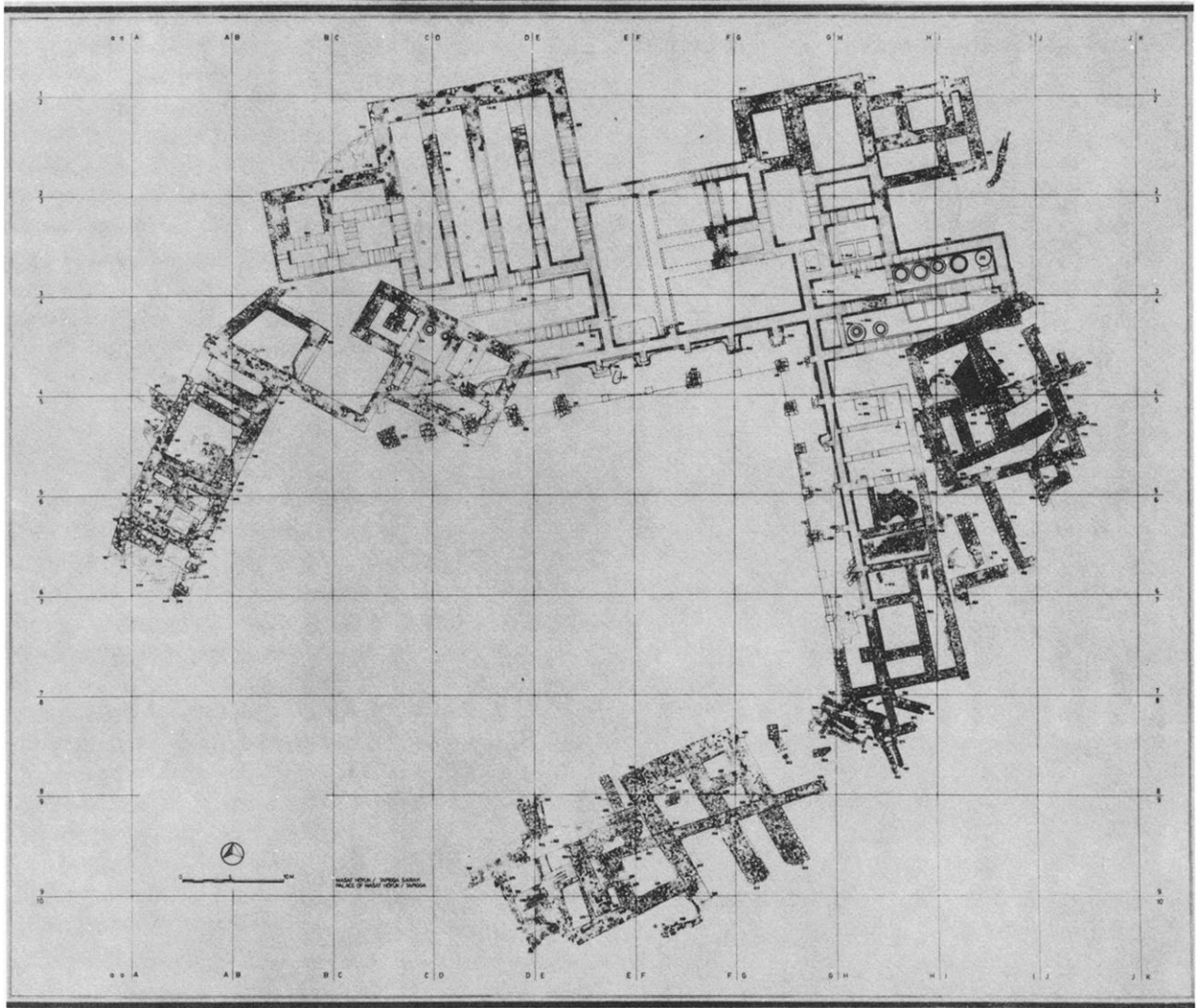
⁴ H.G. Güterbock, "Zile yakınında Maşattan gelme bir Etil mektubu," *Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi* 2:3 (1944)

399-405; J. Garstang and O.R. Gurney, *The Geography of the Hittite Empire* (London 1959) 25, 125.

⁵ K. Emre, "Maşat Höyük'de Eski Tunç Çağı—The Early Bronze Age at Maşat Höyük," *Belleten* 169 (1979) 21-48 (English text).

⁶ *Maşat* 52-66.

⁷ *Maşat* 52-63.



ILL. 1. Maşat Höyük, plan of palace

topography and the irregular contour of the rocky hill. Most of the foundations rest on the rock base. The plan, overall size of the building, dimensions of the individual rooms and, most of all, the existence of an archive confirm that the building is a palace. The north facade of the building extends over a width of 72 m., while the east facade is 65 m. wide on the north-south axis. There are 26 rectangular rooms of varying size in the north wing of the palace. Although most of these belong to the basement, some are constructed on the rising slope of the rocky summit and thus are at ground floor level (pl. 36, fig. 2). The shape and size of

the rooms identify them as storage areas. Four rooms in a row are quite narrow and long, measuring 17 x 4 m. (pl. 36, fig. 3). Two of these rooms have four regularly aligned flat stones that served as bases for wooden posts. Sample measurements of various north basement storage rooms are 14 x 5.5, 7 x 4, 5.5 x 2, 2 x 2.5 and 4 x 7.5 m. These variations in size indicate that different types of goods and supplies were stored in these spaces.

Two of the 20 rooms facing east measure 18 x 2.5 m. Huge grain jars were discovered in situ in these rooms. To the south of a row of 12 rectangular rooms are two long and narrow grain maga-

zines. The archive of Hittite cuneiform tablets was discovered inside two of these 12 rooms. Typical dimensions of rooms in this row are 6.5 x 2.5 and 4.5 x 3.5 m.

The masonry technique used in the palace is the construction of the outer and inner faces of the foundation with courses of rather large, irregular stones; the space between was filled with rubble. The foundation stones are carefully fitted together. The large mudbricks of the superstructure are well bonded and laid with great regularity in level courses. Stone foundations and mudbrick walls join at floor level. Closely spaced wooden upright beams were used in the wall construction. Horizontal wooden beams extending the length of the stone foundations were discovered at the base of the mudbrick walls. These beams were further supported by transverse wooden beams set side by side, extending the width of the stone base. The amount of timber used in the wall construction undoubtedly contributed to the severity of the fire which destroyed the building.

The upper floor of the two-storey palace has a relatively weak construction of wood, mudbrick and plaster. Wood is used extensively, with little mudbrick masonry; the walls are coated with mud plaster.

The immense heat generated by the fire transformed the stones into lime and the mudbricks into dark green and dark red slag. The palace is covered with charcoal and the rooms are filled with burned debris.

All the characteristics of Hittite architecture can be observed in the construction of the palace, including excellence of workmanship, strength and attention to spatial arrangement. Opposite walls are parallel and the corners meet at right angles. There is no trace of interior or exterior doors and no staircase base was found. We have thus postulated trap-doors in the floors of some of the rooms of the upper storey through which one could descend to the basement by means of a ladder. A new architectural feature, which has not been observed elsewhere, is found in the long, narrow rooms: there are either three or six compartments for grain storage contained in these rooms, which are constructed of narrow mudbricks (pl. 37, fig. 4).

The two rooms with the large grain jars remind us of the palaces at Kültepe and Acemhöyük, and

especially the Great Temple at Boğazköy. Such discoveries allow us to build up the economic profile of a Hittite palace. Inscribed on the jars are signs identifying their purpose and contents.

Some of the cuneiform tablets that belong to the archive have been scattered by the collapse and disarray caused by the fire. Phrygian construction activities as well as those of the villagers also contributed to the dispersal of the tablets within the palace. However, the main archive was found in rooms 8 and 9 on the east; it must have been on an upper floor that collapsed into the basement during the fire, and thus was discovered buried among the ruins. The fire naturally affected the tablets, either by cracking them or turning them into slag. Sometimes as many as four or six tablets were baked into a single, unreadable mass. The positions of these tablets suggest that they were arranged neatly on wooden shelves on the upper floor.

The four rooms south of the archives are paved with flat stones and belong to the ground floor; they have no basement.

No fireplaces, ovens or fire-pots were found in the basement rooms. The palace was either emptied by the inhabitants before the fire or robbed by the enemy. The small finds are limited to grain jars, pitchers, pilgrim flasks, very fine bullae with hieroglyphic signs, stamp seals and broken statuettes of bulls and deer. The amount of tablets found is considerably larger than that of pottery.

The open courtyard is on the south and west of the storerooms facing east and north respectively. The courtyard is bordered on the north and east by the stone bases for the pillars of the open colonnades. These bases are finely worked on all sides and profiled. They are built as rectangular prisms and are evenly aligned (pl. 37, fig. 5). The inside of the colonnade is plastered since it was roofed and thus no rain damage was expected. The 3.70 m. wide floor of the colonnade is paved with pebbles mixed with mud which are firmly packed and plastered. The large open courtyard and the colonnades bordering it constitute an important part of the palace, providing space—together with the first floor rooms—for daily activities and palace affairs. The size of the open courtyard is 40 x 34 m.

The eastern part of the palace was probably reserved for administrative purposes whereas the

north was residential. This conclusion is indicated by the location of the entrance as well as of the archive rooms.

Seen from a distance, the palace presents a monumental appearance on its wide rock base, the architectural image of the military, political and administrative power of the frontier lord who communicates directly with the Great King. As also demonstrated by the temples at Boğazköy and Alaca Höyük, large open courtyards bordered on either one or two sides are peculiar to the Hittites. This particular architectural style is the greatest contribution of the Hittites to Anatolian architecture.

In addition to the general functions of the palace, the spatial arrangements of the basement show that the building was used as a central storage facility. The existence of this type of economic arrangement is further confirmed by the cuneiform tablets. Given the size, layout, impressive architectural appearance and, most importantly, the archive which contains correspondence with the king, this palace can only be the headquarters of the ruler of Maşat Höyük. The palace covers all the citadel, leaving no space for other structures. It is a single building, not a complex composed of individual buildings. The bedrock is very close to the surface at the south and west of the citadel. This topographical feature is a major contributing factor to the destruction of the narrow wings on these sides during the later Hittite and Phrygian building phases.

Maşat Höyük is in the border area between the Kashka people living in the Pontic region and Hittite territory proper. However, Maşat Höyük was under the rule of Boğazköy, as one of the most powerful and reliable Hittite centers on the Kashka border. Tapigga must have been located here for strategic purposes and for the fertility of the land, as well as for proximity to the natural route between Boğazköy and Zile. Thus, the palace represents the socio-economic and administrative center of a frontier Hittite region in addition to being the home of the ruler. The rooms of the upper floor must have been quite different in size and

shape from those of the basement, because their functions certainly differed.

The tablets have been valuable in dating the palace and archive. Various information contained in the tablets,⁸ their "Middle Hittite" style of writing and the occurrence of the name of Tudhaliya II and his wife on two stamp seal impressions suggest that the building is contemporary with this king (1410-1380 B.C.).⁹ As is known from written documents found at Boğazköy, the Kashka people invaded and pillaged Boğazköy-Hattusha during the reign of Tudhaliya II.

The palace at Tapigga¹⁰ with its archive, serving as the administrative center of the Great King at Hattusha for the border with Kashka, must have been captured and looted during the years 1410-1380 B.C., somewhat earlier than the invasion of Boğazköy. This is assumed because the enemy forces could reach Maşat Höyük with great ease from the Kashka land. Another reason is to be found in some of the tablets: there are constant mentions of threats and expressions of hostility by the Kashka people towards Tapigga. It is our opinion that the Kashka people reached Boğazköy via the route through Maşat Höyük, the logical thoroughfare to the capital. We know little about Boğazköy in this period, but the new discoveries at Maşat Höyük have the promise to fill this gap.

Similar to the rebuilding at Boğazköy, the level 3 town at Maşat Höyük was rebuilt shortly after the destruction by the Kashka people. This construction period falls during the reign of Shuppiluliuma I (1380-1335 B.C.); on top of the ruins of the third level of both the citadel and the lower town rose the large structures of the Second Hittite level.¹¹ On one of the floors of these new monumental buildings, the seal impression of Shuppiluliuma I was found.¹² This discovery, as well as others, confirm that the Second Hittite building phase is contemporary with the reign of Shuppiluliuma I.

During this time, Tapigga regained its importance, while re-establishing communication with Boğazköy. The fortunes of Maşat Höyük declined considerably after a disastrous fire in the second phase which destroyed the official buildings of the

⁸ S. Alp, "Die hethitischen Tontafelentdeckungen auf dem Maşat-Höyük," *Belleten* 173 (1980) 25-59.

⁹ Alp (supra n. 8) 53-58.

¹⁰ S. Alp, "Remarques sur la géographie de la région du haut-Yesil Irmak d'après les tablettes hittites de Mashat Höyük,"

Florilegium Anatolicum, Mélanges offerts à Emmanuel Laroche (Paris 1979) 29-35.

¹¹ Maşat 63-65.

¹² Maşat 65.

citadel as well as whatever was in the lower town. Over the ruins of the buildings of the Second Hittite phase that were placed on the slopes of the mound, modest residential structures with a few rooms were built.¹³ The destruction of these houses corresponds with the beginning of the Phrygian era. The importance of these small habitations consists in the imported Mycenaean IIIB pottery that is found on the floors, beside Hittite pottery and Hittite seal impressions with hieroglyphic signs.¹⁴ These imported vessels are either stirrup jars or two-handled flasks (pl. 37, fig. 6). They are made of buff clay with cream or greenish cream slip, decorated with alternating wide and narrow stripes in lustrous black paint. The flasks are 0.10 m. and 0.117 m. in height. The question arises as to whether the imported pottery was brought to Maşat Höyük through the Black Sea or from Cyprus.

¹³ *Maşat* 65-66.

Other finds at the site suggest that the imports did come via Cyprus. With the aid of the Hittite material in the same level and location, we have assigned the Mycenaean IIIB pottery to the first half of the 13th century B.C. or a little later, extending into the second half of the same century.

The material of the Iron Age Phrygian period cannot be discussed in detail here. While a variety of typical Phrygian ceramics appeared in the early Phrygian levels (pl. 37, fig. 7), in the late Phrygian ones we find types peculiar to the Pontic region (pl. 37, fig. 8). Vessels in the Achaemenid style of the 6th century were discovered in the last building level of the Iron Age.

RECTOR'S OFFICE
ANKARA UNIVERSITY
ANKARA, TURKEY

¹⁴ *Maşat* 66, 127-28.



FIG. 1. View of Maşat Höyük from W

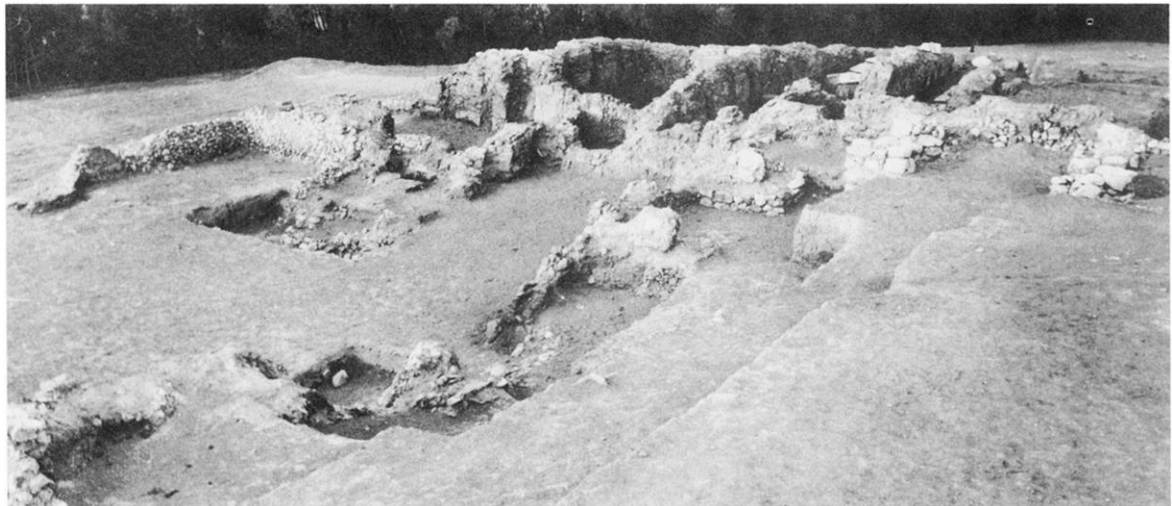


FIG. 2. View of NE wing and slope of citadel



FIG. 3. Hittite palace, N magazines

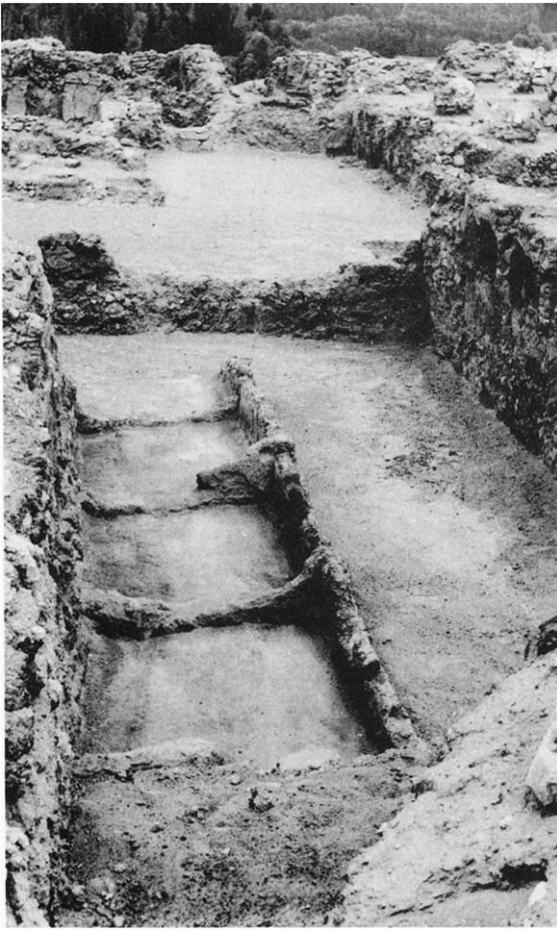


FIG. 4. Storage bins in N wing



FIG. 5. Bases of E colonnade, courtyard

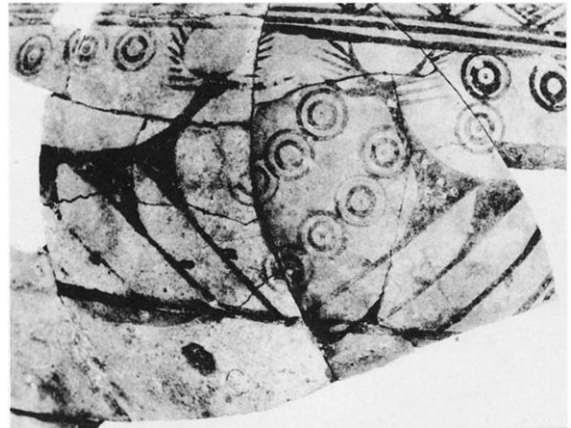


FIG. 7. Old Phrygian jar fragment

FIG. 8. Later Phrygian sherd, polychrome style

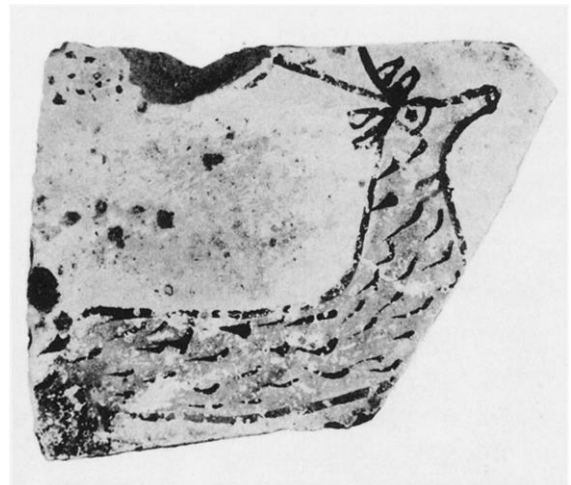


FIG. 6. Mycenaean flask