

Settlements and Necropoleis of the Black Sea and its Hinterland in Antiquity

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New Archaeological Expeditions in the Ancient City of Amastris

Fatma Bağdatlı Çam, Ali Bora and
Handan Bilici Altunkayalier

Abstract

The ancient city of Amastris, about which little is known archaeologically, is situated on the southern shore of the Black Sea, between the important settlements of Heraclea Pontica in the west and Sinope in the east. With its location, the city is an indispensable part of Black Sea archaeology, but scholarly activity has, for the most part, lagged behind. In this respect, the archaeological surveys that started in 2017 aim to reveal the role as well as the history and cultural heritage of the city which. The work has been conducted by experts from many universities and in an interdisciplinary context. The findings and determinations contain important additions and modifications to what was known and also reveal new observations. At the same time, these studies, which provide an infrastructure for the archaeological excavations planned to be started in the near future, also make an internationally important contribution to regional archaeology. Our work on the northern coasts of Anatolia contributes to the maintenance of the cultural heritage and its transfer to future generations through identification of the evidence of public and civil architectural in ancient Amastris.

A surface survey was initiated in Amasra district (ancient Amastris) in 2017 (Fig. 1) within the scope of 'The Surface Survey of Bartın Province and Districts' Project.¹ The purpose of the project is to identify preserved cultural assets within the boundaries of Bartın province from the oldest to the Early Republican period and to ensure their protection by recording and documenting them. The region has been researched for a relatively short period of time, but the acceleration of urbanisation and industrialisation reveal the importance and urgency of protecting the existing cultural heritage in a region which has been a centre for treasure hunters and illegal excavations for many years.

Within the scope of the overall project, identification, definition and the historical context of archaeological remains in Amasra district and its surroundings were

the primary focus. In this respect, the foundations were the accounts of foreign travellers who visited Amasra since the 15th century, data² obtained at the Amasra citadel from surface surveys conducted by Crow and Hill between 1988 and 1991, the archaeological identifications³ made by Semavi Eyice in his articles and in his book *Küçük Amasra Tarihi* (A Short History of Amasra), the Paphlagonian research⁴ of Ahmet Gökoğlu, who served in Kastamonu Museum, Nejdet Sakaoğlu's publications,⁵ in which he shared his findings and observations from the years he served in the Archaeology Museum, and other related publications.⁶ In addition, thanks to the data obtained from archaeological excavations and surveys⁷ in Paphlagonia, detections and evaluations were carried out.

Two main research sectors were identified in the surface survey:

1. *Centre of Amasra District* (Figs. 2, 3). Construction techniques, identification of *spolia* and the latest

¹ With the permission of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Directorate General of Cultural Assets and Museums, dated 29 June 2017, no. E.131463; the work carried out between 14 and 25 August 2017 under the direction of Assoc. Prof. Fatma Bağdatlı Çam of Bartın University. Government representative: Güray Can Aytekin. Team members: İlkay Yıldız and Serdar Hasar (students), R.A. Mükerrrem Kürüm (Department of Art History) and Dr Feride İmrana Altun, all Adnan Menderes University; Asst. Prof. Asuman Kuru (Sub Department of Protohistory and Eastern Archaeology), Kütahya Dumlupınar University; Asst. Prof. Handan Bilici Altunkayalier, Asst. Prof. Ali Bora, R.A. İzzettin Elalmış and R.A. Sinan Paksoy (Archaeology Department), Melisa Bahçacı and Eda Köksalan (students), and R.A. Abdül Halim Varol (Department of Art History), all Bartın University. The project was supported by the Bartın Governorship, the Rectorate of Bartın University, Bartın Provincial Culture and Tourism Directorate, Bartın Municipality, Amasra Municipality and Kozcağız Municipality. We would like to thank all the institutions and administrators for their valuable contributions. All images unless otherwise attributed belong to the BIYA Project Archive.

² Crow and Hill 1990; 1995; Hill and Crow 1992: 1993.

³ Eyice 1965.

⁴ Gökoğlu 1952.

⁵ Sakaoğlu 1999; Ainsworth 1839: 233-34; Hoffman 1989; Crow and Hill 1990.

⁶ Ainsworth 1839: 233-34; Belke 1996; Brandes 1989; Bryer and Winfield 1985; Cresswell 1952; Crow and Hill 1990; de Clavijo 1928; Dull 1989; Foss and Winfield 1986; Hasluck 1910-11; Hoffman 1989; Kalkan 1991; Marek 1985; 1989; 1993; Mitchell 2010.

⁷ Marek 1993; for Tios Excavations: Yıldırım 2018; for Pompeiopolis: Summerer 2012; for Hadrianapolis excavations: Keleş, Çelikbaş and Yılmaz 2012. In addition, we would like to express our thanks to Asst. Prof. Tayyar Gürdal who conducted the surface survey of Heraclea Pontica begun in 2017.



Figure 1. Borders of Amasra and 2017 research region.

conditions of the inscriptions were identified at the citadel gates and fortification walls. On the Boztepe side of the citadel, we detected rocky areas which are probably used for stone extraction, square-shaped ritual pits, architectural blocks which possibly belong to a temple, ceramic finds and two new inscriptions which made identifications about Byzantine and Ottoman structures. The fortification wall and tower systems which lie between the eastern and western gates around the city walls were measured.

Frequent ceramic finds, the earliest pieces dating to the Bronze Age, were identified in and around Tekketepe (Tekke Hill). The current condition of the ancient theatre, used today as the municipal cemetery area, was observed. A Greek inscription was found at the bottom of the vaulted structure of the theatre and Ottoman tombstones in the cemetery were examined and identified. A marble quadrangular altar/pillar and a clay bed stratigraphy were found on the western slope of the Kaleşah neighbourhood.

In the county dump site, amongst rubble that possibly came from the foundations of new construction, were found ancient architectural blocks and an inscribed stone block that will help to illuminate the cultural and socio-economic status of Amastris during the Roman period. The presence of numerous Roman pottery in the strata around the Bartın-Amasra highway indicates concentrated settlement activity in that period.

2. *The Periphery of Amasra* (Figs. 2, 4). At the Kuşkayası Monument⁸ and its surroundings, which is located on the ancient Roman road reaching Amasra, surveys were conducted in order to determine the continuation of the Roman road. The road could be detected a few kilometres from the monument. An unexpected find was the presence of Palaeolithic instruments on the hill to the north of the monument. In addition to this, a site used as a stone quarry was found 300 m west of the monument.

Amasra Centre Survey Area

Fortification Structure and Citadel (Fig. 2, Sector 2 and Fig. 5)

In our Amasra survey, the first aim was to examine the surroundings of the citadel's fortifications and also the interior areas. Thus, we sought to observe the current state and status of the finds from the surface surveys conducted by Hill and Crow in and around the citadel between 1988 and 1991 and to determine other information they could not elaborate (Fig. 5).⁹ Hence, a general evaluation of the fortification walls of the citadel was undertaken. Surface finds, structures and structural traces in the inner and outer area of the

⁸ The Kuşkayası monument consists of a cloaked man figure within an *aedicula* on the bedrock and an eagle figure on the top of a column. It is on the ancient route reaching Amasra from Bartın province and it was dated to the Roman period. See Eyce 1955.

⁹ Hill 1990; 1991; Hill and Crow 1992; 1993.



Figure 2. Research sectors of Amasra and surroundings.

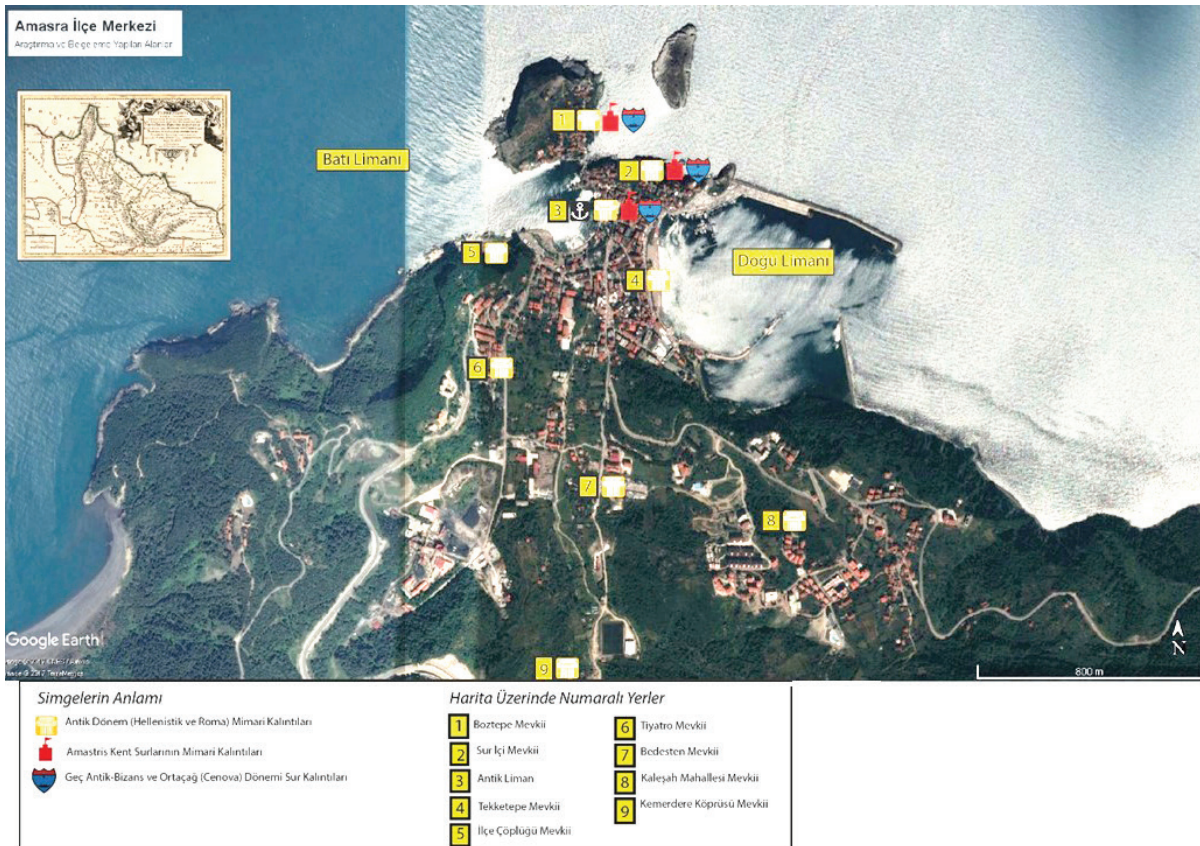


Figure 3. Research sectors of Amasra district centre.

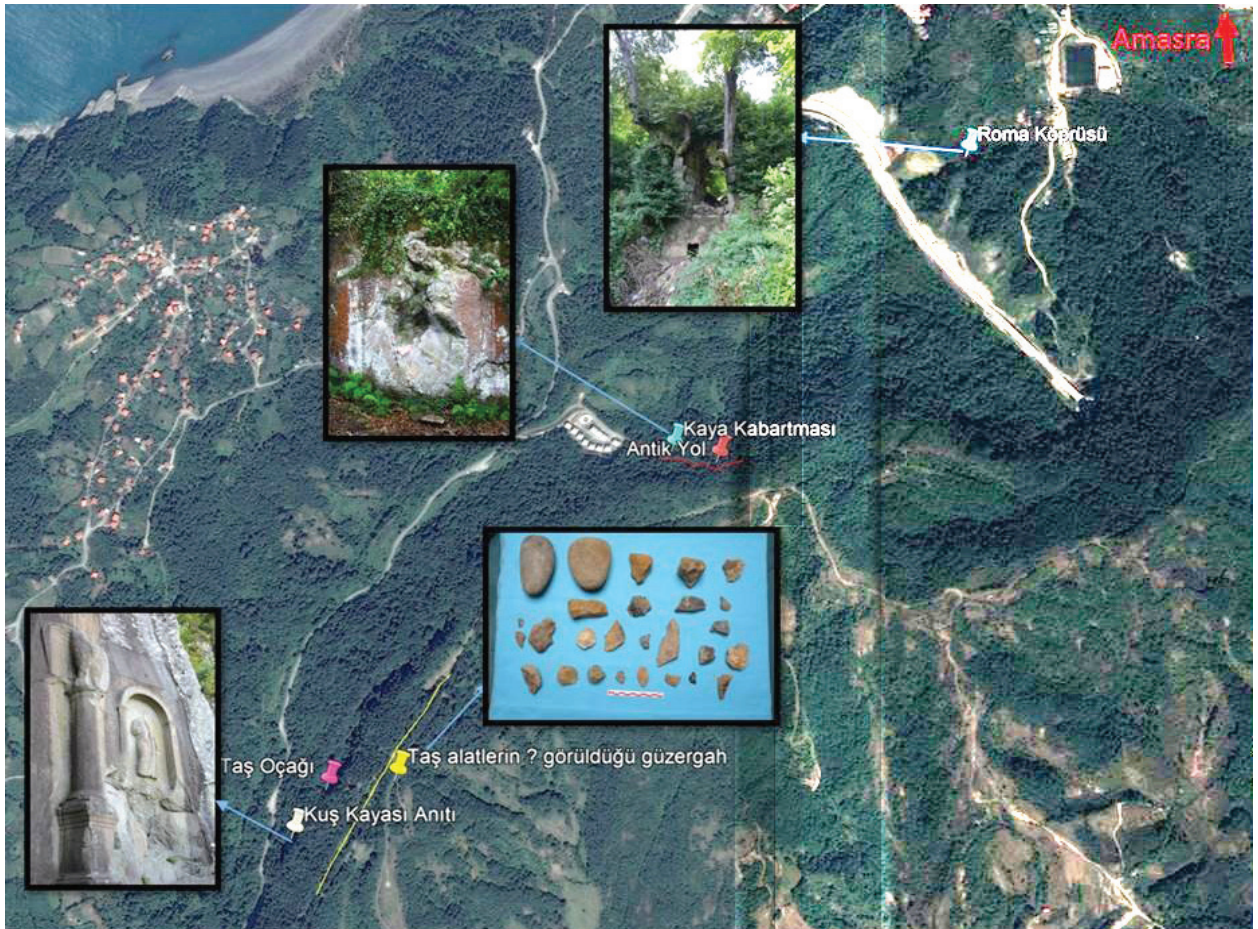


Figure 4. Research sectors in surroundings of Amasra.

fortification walls, etc. were examined to determine (Fig. 6) the arrangement of the fortification and the presence of *spolia* in related structures. Along the walls, especially in the lower parts, were bossage blocks, marble architectural fragments belonging mainly to the Roman period, inscribed pieces and embossed blocks, plus a coat of arms from the Genoese period (Fig. 6).¹⁰ The fortification structure is composed of well-crafted blocks at the bottom, but it transforms into an uneven stone structure with smaller stones in the upper parts; it can clearly be understood from the traces that the walls have undergone restoration over time. Crow and Hill determined that the walls were built in the late 8th century AD, corresponding with the architecture of the fortification. In the west of the inner citadel, the presence of bossage blocks – which can point to the Hellenistic period – in the bottom of walls that are on the shore of Küçük Liman and traces of Roman-period wall construction on the fortifications facing the East Harbour indicate that the wall structure had probably existed since the Hellenistic period.¹¹

¹⁰ Thus, it could be observed that Hill and Crow's architectural elements, which possibly belong to Hellenistic(?)–Roman-period structures used as *spolia* in the walls, were still preserved. See Hill 1989; 1990; Hill and Crow 1992; 1993. See also Cresswell 1952.

¹¹ In other cities of the Black Sea, well-known examples of mediaeval structures survive and preserve earlier wall traces. Classical-period

workmanship can be observed in walls at Trabzon citadel and various other buildings. See Bryer and Winfield 1985, figs. 110a, 111a, 111b.

There are two gates in the city walls to reach the city's two harbours. Restorations since the Byzantine period were detected in the fortification structure, approximately 300 m long, between these two gates. Restoration and completion works caused changes in the original structure of the fortification, especially towards the East Harbour.

The city gates were rebuilt during the period of Genoese dominance and besides *spolia* blocks such as Roman architectural pieces, the coat of arms of a dominant Genoese family in the administration was placed on top of the city gates (Fig. 7).¹² The citadel is surrounded by two rows of fortification walls and thus consists of an inner and an outer fortress. In terms of differences observed in the arrangement of the walls, the inner fortress, known as Boztepe, was surrounded together with the part on the mainland during the Byzantine and Genoese periods, and the outer fortress was formed as a result.¹³ Thus, it is understood that

workmanship can be observed in walls at Trabzon citadel and various other buildings. See Bryer and Winfield 1985, figs. 110a, 111a, 111b.

¹² In recent years, Amasris and its relation with other settlements have been examined in studies on the mediaeval period. The coat of arms was mentioned and detailed information has been obtained by communicating with the scholars involved. See Quirini-Popławski 2012; Hasluck 1910–11.

¹³ Crow and Hill 1990; 1995.

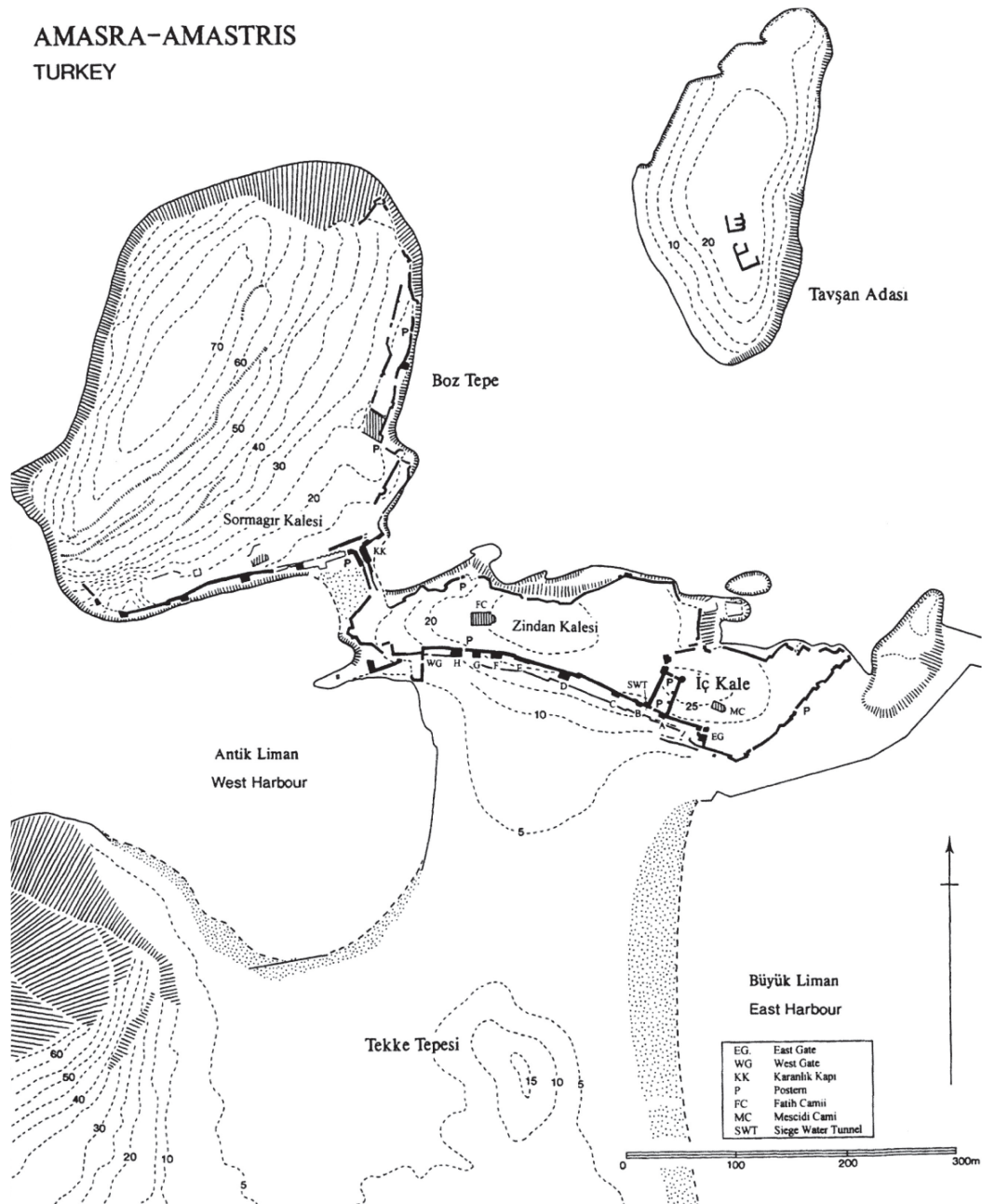


Figure 5. Plan of Amasra fortification.

the East Harbour gate and the West Harbour gate are contemporary. After passing through the western gate, the Kemere Bridge connecting Boztepe to the mainland and the gate of the inner fortress (Sormagir Gate) can be reached (Fig. 8). On the western gate, striking Roman-period *spolia* is to be seen – marble architectural blocks, a pedestal and an altar. Traces of a fresco have been preserved on the inner surface of the Sormagir Gate at the intersection with the city wall (Fig. 9). Careful examination of these traces reveals the presence of a bearded male head in a halo. According to information from the local people, the fresco was taken away by a Russian sailor in the early 1900s. Since the inner fortress is important for observing traces of the pre-Byzantine settlement of Amastris, we aimed to

investigate the inner and outer parts of the city wall that surrounds the island.

The ceramic finds observed in the fortress, which was particularly damaged by the dense settlement activities in the 1990s, are composed of small numbers from the Late Classical/Early Hellenistic and Roman periods, while there are numerous glazed ceramics of Late Byzantine date (Fig. 10). Byzantine ceramics are concentrated between the 9th and 11th centuries AD and the most common examples seem to belong to the 11th century.

A Late Classical/Early Hellenistic black-figured bowl fragment, found during the ground survey just outside



Figure 6. Fortification system between the two harbours.

Figure 7. Genoan heraldry on the city walls of Amastris.



the eastern part of the island, constitute important evidence of the citadel's early period of occupation (Late Classical/Hellenistic) (Fig. 11).¹⁴ The only study of ancient Amastrian ceramics relates to amphorae:¹⁵ it is known that the city had amphora production in the Early Hellenistic period (the first quarter of the 3rd

¹⁴ Sparkes and Talcott 1970: 135, 299, nos. 887-888, fig. 9. Inside the black-glazed small bowl, on the tondo, incised palmette decoration is widely seen in the second half of the 4th century BC; this decoration disappears with the Hellenistic period. In the dating of these little bowls, along with palmette decoration, the groove which is seen in the interior of the pedestal is common in 4th-century BC examples.

¹⁵ Ščeglov 1986; Stolba 2003.

century BC). Black-glazed ceramics dating to the Late Classical period, found at the citadel, constitute the earliest evidence of such kind. The remains of ancient walls in the form of arched structures seen among the foundations of modern houses beyond the western gate on Boztepe are evidence of the presence of structures on the citadel during the Roman period (Fig. 12).

The wall built with large rectangular fine blocks and the marble Corinthian capital in and around the garden of the Meteorology Building (located on the top of the Boztepe) suggest a temple structure that can be dated to the Roman period at least (Fig. 13).



Figure 8. West gate (Sormagir) of the citadel: *spolia*.

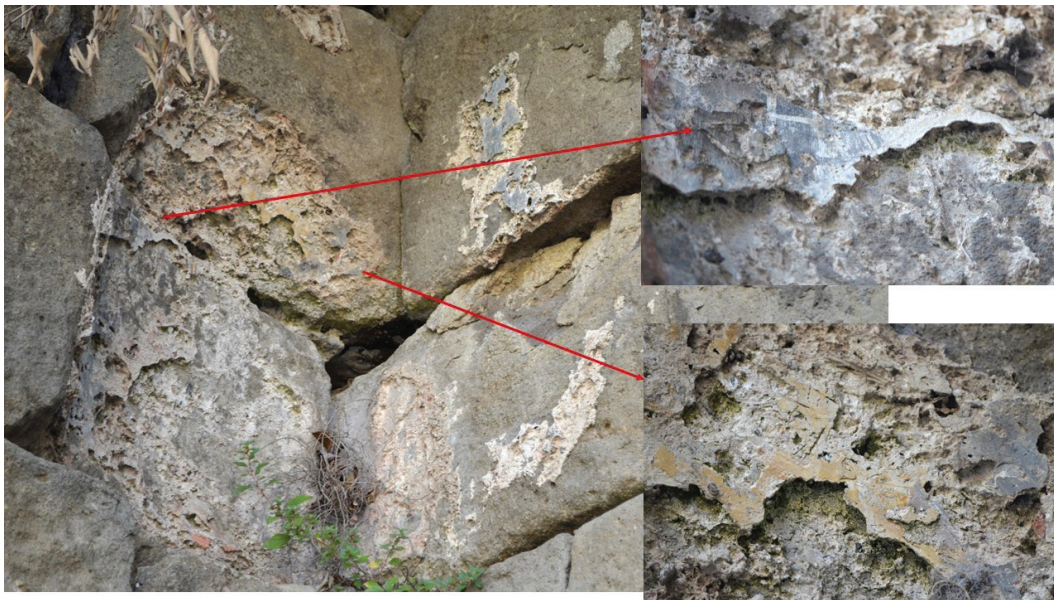


Figure 9. The fresco remains on the west gate (Sormagir).

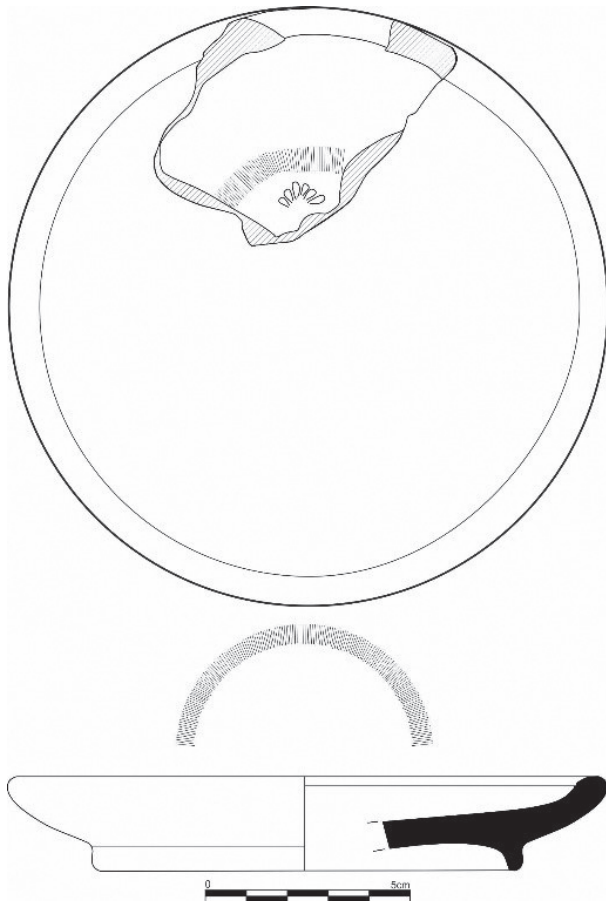
Excavations to be conducted in this area will ensure that evidence of constructions that can shed light on the Roman and Hellenistic periods of Amastris is revealed.

The harbours (Figs. 3, 14, East and West Harbours)

At the East Harbour, properly processed stone blocks, understood to be the remains of the ancient harbour, partly survive on the surface, starting from beneath the sea. The city walls on the east and north of the Great Harbour side of the fortress extend uninterrupted;

modern restoration and renovation works are more intense in this area. The wall construction northward was raised immediately on the bedrock. Here again, architectural blocks from the Roman period and the presence of Genoese-period coats of arms on the walls were detected. It was clear from the surveys on the breakwater at the East Harbour that the stones used here consist of those from the fortification wall and architectural fragments from other structures. Although the steps on the bedrock at the beginning of the breakwater seem roughly processed, they reflect ancient workmanship (Fig. 15). The rock steps, which

Figure 10. Pottery finds from the citadel.



are probably characteristic of the Paphlagonian region, may have been part of a stepped-altar



Figure 11. Late Classical black-glazed bowl fragment.

structure, perhaps a sign of the cult of the Mother Goddess.¹⁶

The wall structures of the citadel's western gate, which are on the Small Harbour side, were investigated. Here, well-crafted stone blocks, which can illuminate the early construction phases, are placed on the bedrock without using mortar between the joints. In the earth fill that is in the lower part of the wall large quantities of Roman pottery were encountered, supporting the suggestion of Hill and Crow that the city in the Hellenistic and Roman periods was in the area where the citadel is located.

¹⁶ Işık 1996; Roller 2004: 94-95, figs. 16 and 18, Phrygian altar 7th-6th century BC; Tamsü Polat 2010; Temur 2014.



Figure 12. Remains of an arched structure (Boztepe).



Figure 13. Architectural blocks from Boztepe (Temple?).



Figure 14. Inscription on architrave block from the Amasra district dump.

Figure 15. Stone stairs of East (Big) Harbour.



Figure 16. The west gate of the citadel. Pottery fragments in the deposits of West (Small) Harbour shore.

The presence of architectural blocks in the bay between the western harbour gate and the citadel and the numerous Roman pottery contexts observed are important evidence for the citadel's Roman period (Fig. 16).

The *spolia* seen in the structures inside the outer fortress was examined. It consists of two inscriptions: one on the wall of a house that is behind the eastern gate (Fig. 17), the other on an ostotheca in Ali Uğurtan's garden opposite the Fatih Mosque (Derviş Mehmet

House, 35 Camiönü Street) (Fig. 18). In addition to the recent detected inscriptions, two others, previously published, were reviewed. The inscriptions confirm our determinations about the Roman-period settlement of the citadel.

Detections in the District Dump (Figs. 3, 14, sector 5; and Fig. 4)

The most important discoveries in the Amasra district were made here. Large quantities of architectural



Figure 17. Inscription fragment on the house wall behind the eastern gate.



Figure 18. The inscribed ostotheca.

manifestation of the damage to the ancient city caused by rapid modern urbanisation.

The most important examples of these architectural fragments are architrave blocks of a monumental structure (possibly a temple). A Latin inscription was detected on two of the fascias (Figs. 14, 20). This may be a dedication by a high-ranking officer who probably served in a legion at Amastris during the Roman period (presumably the 2nd century BC). A detailed study is being undertaken by Asst. Prof. Bülent Öztürk. Together with this inscribed piece, marble architrave fragments, Corinthian capitals and many architectural blocks were detected.

Tekketepe (Fig. 2, sector 5; Fig. 3, sector 4; and Fig. 5)

Surveys were made in the Tekketepe area opposite the PTT building in central Amasra, where the first detection had been made by Hill and Crow;¹⁷ the area was extensively damaged by a just-completed building. The floor was completely covered, because the front of the building has been laid with a cobblestone pavement and the western slope of the hilly area has been turned into a park. However, during the survey on the soil area in the eastern part of the hill, ceramic fragments dated to the Bronze Age were detected, confirming the Bronze Age settlement mentioned by Hill and Crow.¹⁸



Figure 19. Find from Amastra district dump.

marble and other kind of stone blocks were found in the dump site on the southern coast of the Small Harbour among the rubble from modern building constructions. They were probably discarded there quite recently; the concentration of these architectural blocks in a certain area suggests this (Figs. 19 and 21). They are a

Theatre sector (Figs. 3, 14, sector 6)

The floor of the theatre was covered with parquet stone; this situation prevented further exploration.

¹⁷ Hill and Crow 1992: 85.

¹⁸ Hill and Crow 1992: 85.

Figure 20. Inscribed architrave fragment from the district dump.



Figure 21. Architectural fragment from the district dump.

In the *cavea* section of the theatre, which has become the modern cemetery of the district, tombstones of the Ottoman period were examined by our art history team and photographic studies were carried out. It was determined that most of the tombs were built using ancient architectural stone blocks. On the west of the sloping area of the theatre used as a cemetery, where the seating area should be (*kerkides*), one of the vaulted entrances to the theatre survives. Some of the seating rows belonging to the theatre were removed to the Fatih Mosque in the outer fortress. This shows that architectural blocks from Roman-period structures were used in the renovation work of the city during the Byzantine or Genoese periods. At the bottom of the

southern foot of the vault, the presence of a probable Greek inscription was detected (Fig. 22). It was cleaned and photographed, and its readable parts were recorded. The reading and publication of this inscription is of great importance because it will present the most valuable information about Greek population living in Bartın before the population exchange in 1924: the dates 1800-1820 can be read on it.

Large-sized stone architectural upper structure materials, some of them marble, columnar bodies and brick wall-masonry were detected in a field in front of the fire station on the north of the theatre sector. Pieces damaged in their original location during



Figure 22. Greek inscription from the ancient theatre.



Figure 23. Terracotta figurine fragment.



Figure 24. Clay deposit.

construction of the Amasra highway were moved here. In the same area, Roman-period ceramic (terra sigillata) and terracotta fragments were detected in the soil that was hoed for cultivation (Fig. 23). Their coordinate points were recorded and they were taken to the Museum.

The south of the district centre
(Figs. 3, 14, sector 8)

The entire area along the slope was investigated northwards from the Amasra Kaleşah neighbourhood, and the Industrial Area was also investigated up to Bedesten. A

small marble altar/pillar was found on the roadside of the slope which is right on the north of Kaleşah neighbourhood; its coordinates were recorded and it too was taken to the Museum. In the same area, a clay bed was detected on the wayside. Unfortunately most of this section is covered by a modern concrete road (Fig. 24). Traces of the rescue excavation carried out by Amasra Museum were seen on the slope on the western side of the modern road. This area surrounds a valley from the south-east of where the building terraces of the ancient city remain. The probable clay strata indicates that here may have been ateliers or the pottery workshops of ancient Amastris. Today, it is located just behind the Industrial Area of the modern city.

In examinations carried out on the Roman-era Kemerdere Bridge, which can be regarded as the starting point of the ancient road towards the south from ancient Amastris, pickaxes and shovels were found at the foot of the bridge. These suggest that an illegal excavation was underway there and that the bridge had been damaged.

The area which extends to the TKI (Turkish Coal Enterprises) houses in the hilly area on the south-west of the district centre was scanned by following the Amasra-Bartın highway. On the upper strata of a modern retaining wall beside the west of the highway, brick wall traces and numerous Roman-period ceramics were visible in the soil fill (Fig. 25). They were photographed and their coordinates were recorded. To the north of the TKI houses,



Figure 25. Roman lamp fragment.

the Kuşkayası Monument, north of where the stone pavement of the road starts to disappear. Flintstone fragments were detected (Fig. 26) and the ground was carefully scanned, based on the probability of this being a prehistoric stone tool (Fig. 2, sector 18). There were traces of engraving on the flint pieces. Thus it was understood that these are materials (cores, flakes) from the Palaeolithic. The coordinates of the flints were recorded and the fragments taken to the Museum for further identification by experts from the Department of Prehistory.



Figure 26. Chipped stone tools and hammers.

architectural stone blocks and broken sarcophagus pieces were observed on the roadside. Possibly, these were parts from the necropolis area, described in detail by Ainsworth¹⁹ when he visited the city in the first half of the 19th century.

Periphery of Amasra: detection survey of ancient road (Fig. 3, sectors 14-18)

***Kuşkayası monument and the ancient Roman road* (Fig. 2, sector 17; and Fig. 4)**

In the surveys of the Kuşkayası Monument²⁰ and its periphery, inscriptions of the Roman period, niches carved into the rock and wall crafts were examined and photographed by following the road southwards, which is carved into the bedrock. Surveys commenced on the hillside area that extends to the upper part of

***The ancient stone quarry* (Fig. 2, sector 16)**

A survey was commenced to detect the continuation of the ancient road north-westward of the Kuşkayası Monument. Because the ground was damaged by very dense vegetation and landslides, no continuation of the road could be detected. However, about 300 m further from the monument, there are dense chisel traces on the rocky surface where the monument is engraved, and Greek letters on the bottom of the anchoring holes on the rocky surface indicate that this area was used as a stone pit (Fig. 27). The bedrock in this area is an andesite-basalt formed by the rise of lava columns known from Güzelcehisar. This rocky area is basically a rock structure consisting of andesite, basalt and limestone units.

***The ancient road* (Fig. 2, sectors 14-15)**

By proceeding from the area north of the Kuşkayası Monument, where the prehistoric artefacts were

¹⁹ Ainsworth 1839: 216-76.

²⁰ For Kuşkayası monument, see n. 8 above.



Figure 27. Ancient stone quarry and a monogram.



Figure 28. Ancient road.

located, in a north-easterly direction, the surveys continued to find traces of the ancient road, and traces of the stone pavement started to be seen under the path to the west a few kilometres further on (Fig. 28). It was found that the path leading to the modern-day Kirazlar Hotel near the main road heading to Amasra is a continuation of the paved Roman road, its wayside rocky surface crafted in a similar way to the Kuşkayası Monument. A triangular roofed *naiskos*-shaped relief is carved into the rock (Fig. 29). However, treasure hunters have repeatedly dynamited the monument and only the tracks on the rock surface were protected. This route, which is the continuation of the ancient road from the Kuşkayı Monument, was first identified and coordinates were taken from the area to the point where the tracks disappeared. Preparations have begun for application to the Karabük Preservation Board in order to make this area a Grade 1 site, which is not an archaeological site.

Conclusions

*Evaluation regarding the Prehistoric periods*²¹

Surveys of Palaeolithic material in the Black Sea region of Turkey have been limited by the dense vegetation. Within the scope of the current project, the Palaeolithic finds detected near the Kuşkayası Monument in Gömu village in the Amasra district are of great importance (Fig. 2, sector 18).

The chipped stone finds consist mainly of flakes of different sizes. In addition to flakes, there are a few retouched tools (scrapers) (Fig. 26). The raw material is probably present in the form of a primary geological source. It is not generally high in quality, since it

²¹ We would like to express our thanks to Berkay Dinçer and Zeynep Kelpetin for their valuable insights in the evaluation of the Prehistoric finds.

Figure 29. Ancient road and relief figure on monument.



has not been fully silicified. The structure of the raw material and its quality prevent the Palaeolithic tools from being 'typical'. Among the finds, two round and flat volcanic rocks are probably *percuteurs*. Examination of the geological structure of the terrain indicates that *percuteurs* made of volcanic rocks are not naturally found there and these must have been brought to the region by humans.

According to initial surveys, the existence of both *percuteurs* and cortex flakes indicate that tools were produced here, perhaps by a small, short-lived atelier where instant (*ad hoc*) stone tools were produced. These tools are currently the earliest finds from Bartın. Since they were detected by surface survey, it is necessary to analyse them in a laboratory environment in order to be certain of those which can be dated to the Palaeolithic periods techno-typologically.

Evaluation regarding the Protohistoric periods²²

The earliest evidence for the Amasra region was found by the surface survey conducted under Stephen Hill in 1989-91 and 1993. The Late Bronze Age was seen in the area called Tekketepe (Fig. 3, sector 5; Fig. 14, sector 4; Fig. 4), which is thought to be a hill settlement or mound opposite today's post office building. It was stated that these ceramics, reported to be in Amasra Museum, were unfortunately unpublished.²³ The surface surveys which we carried out at Tekketepe area in 2017 support these findings. One piece of ceramic dating to the Middle Bronze Age was recovered as a

²² We would like to thank our team member Dr Asuman Kuru for her evaluation of the protohistoric periods.

²³ Crow and Hill 1995.



Figure 30. A piece of crescent-shaped lug.

result of the surface surveys. This is a rim sherd of a simple rim bowl with a cream/buff colour from Middle Bronze ware groups. Nowadays, as the Tekketepe area is damaged by construction activities, it is not possible to conduct a detailed study. A rim sherd belonging to a convex-rim bowl (called crescent or half-moon handled in the ware group of the ceramics unearthed at Tekketepe) was found in Bedesten Street, to the south of Tekketepe (Fig. 30).

The ceramic sherds detected in the 1990s and 2017 suggest that there might have been a Middle Bronze Age settlement in Amasra. Western Anatolia has special characteristics when the groups of ceramics found in 2017 are taken into consideration. Although it has been destroyed considerably by intensive modern construction activities, we can speak of the presence of a possible coastal settlement in the Middle Bronze Age in Amasra, which yields ware groups characteristic of western Anatolia.

Evaluation regarding the Greek and Roman periods

The survey in and around Amasra revealed that settlement dates back to much earlier ages; indeed, the

Palaeolithic evidence proves that the western Black Sea region of Turkey has been settled by humans since the Stone Age. Evidence from the research of the 1990s and our study shows that there was settlement in the centre and around of Amasra in the Bronze Age.

Construction of the citadel continued from the Late Classical/Early Hellenistic period through Roman, Byzantine and Genoese times into the Ottoman era, with restorations. Our survey, carried out in order to observe the current state of what had been reported in the studies conducted by Hill and Crow in and around Amasra citadel between 1988 and 1991, especially the pottery finds, indicates that the citadel had been inhabited since the Late Classical/Early Hellenistic period. On the Small Harbour (West Harbour) side, well-crafted blocks which can illuminate the early building phases of the wall were placed on the bedrock without mortar. Dense pottery finds were encountered in the soil fill in the lower part of the wall. Thus it was understood that settlement continued here during the Roman period.

Unfortunately, Tekketepe, where various Bronze Age ceramics were found by Hill and Crow, is the victim of new construction activities. However, several particular Bronze Age ceramic objects, which emerged in foundation debris, confirm the detection of Hill and Crow.

Architectural blocks of the Roman period, thrown into the Amasra district dump with debris that seems to come from building works, show that new construction in the city has destroyed the traces of antiquity. The presence of part of an inscribed architrave here brings to mind the possible existence of a legion(?) in Amastris during the Roman period. Unfortunately, while an inscription found in the city's dump proves that there was a military unit in Amastris in Roman times, nothing can be made out about its position.

Four unpublished inscriptions from the centre of the district will cast light on the Roman period of the city. The inscription found in the theatre constitutes very important proof of the Greek population here in modern times, before the exchange of populations in the 1920s.

The clay deposits to the south of the ancient city provide clues to where probably pottery workshops were situated.

The continuation of the Roman road preserved at the location of the Kuşkayası Monument was identified in the direction of Amasra (north). The monument on this road, unfortunately, was the victim of treasure hunters. The determination of an important part of the ancient road provided important information about the

existence of an ancient stone quarry and the historical development of Amastris and its surroundings.

The first year of the project has yielded evidence of the ancient city's destruction day by day. There has been continuous settlement since prehistoric times, without seeing daylight under the modern city. This is in fact the destruction of the history of a city and the erasure of the past. For this reason, we wish to complete our research in Bartın and surrounding area as soon as possible, to ensure that our cultural assets are preserved by being detected and recorded before they disappear.

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