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THE EXISTENCE OF ELITES IN THE LIGHT OF BEADS IN THE PERIOD OF SEYİTÖMER HÖYÜK EARLY BRONZE AGE III

Nazan YÜZBAŞIOĞLU*

* Kütahya Dumlupınar Üniversitesi, KGSMYO, Eser Koruma Bölümü, Evliya Çelebi Yerleşkesi, 43100

Kütahya, TÜRKİYE,

nazan.unan@dpu.edu.tr,

Orcid no: 0000-0001-6517-9441.

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history</p> <p>Received:2025-04-19</p> <p>Received in revised form:2025-05-20</p> <p>Accepted:2025-10-01</p> <p>Available online: 2025-12-25</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p>Inner western Anatolia, Early Bronze Age III, beads, intercultural relations, trade</p> <p>JEL classification: Z13</p>	<p>Seyitömer Höyük is located 25 km northwest of Kütahya Province. The subject of this study is approximately 1500 beads recovered from the V/B, V/C and V/D layers of the Seyitömer Höyük. The materials of the beads found in the structure belonging to the manager, most of which are located in the V/ B layer, are carnelian, faience and gold. These beads were examined by dividing them into the materials and types from which they were produced. The centers where beads were seized, especially Anatolia and Mesopotamia, were mentioned. In the light of these centers BC. 3. In the light of jewelry in trade between Mesopotamia and Anatolia, the existence of elites and the importance of the Seyitömer Höyük in Inner Western Anatolia have been revealed.</p>

1. Introduction

Rescue excavations at Seyitömer Höyük, located 25 km northwest of Kütahya province, were first initiated in 1989 and have continued intermittently to the present day (Fig. 1). The reason for initiating rescue excavations at the mound is its location within a coal basin. As a result of the excavation work initiated for compelling reasons, important archaeological data has been obtained (Ünan, 2022, 1-20).

The stratigraphy at Seyitömer Höyük, as determined by the work carried out in 2021, is as follows: I. Roman Period, II. Hellenistic Period (A/B), III. Iron Age (A/B), IV. Middle Bronze Age (A/B/C/D), V. Early Bronze Age III (A/B/C/D), VI. Early Early Bronze Age IIIA, VI. Early Bronze Age II (A/B/C/D) (Ünan & Ünan, 2022, 50).

At Seyitömer Höyük, the settlement system developed from the radial plan settlement applied in the Early Bronze Age II was implemented with minor changes throughout all phases of the Early Bronze Age III (Yüzbaşıoğlu, 2024). The common features of the Early Bronze Age III layer include rectangular structures with two or three rooms built side by side using shared walls, and a wall system created by building the rear walls thicker than the side walls. In addition to being living spaces, the structures also served as workshops or storage areas and included bull-headed hearths, domed ovens, grinding areas, and small storage areas among their interior features

(Ünan, 2014, 74). When structures with multiple rooms and distinct floor plans are evaluated alongside their finds, some are identified as administrative buildings. In phase V/B, the megaron-plan structure located at the centre of the settlement is considered a religious space (Bilgen et al., 2011, 371; Ünan, 2014, 74). In addition to this structure, the multi-roomed structure located to the west of the settlement, when evaluated together with its findings, has been understood to belong to the administrator (Ünan, 2014, 74; Bilgen et al., 2014, 150).



Figure 1. Aerial photograph of Seyitömer Höyük

2. Beads Found at Seyitömer Höyük

Beads from different phases of the fifth stratum (Early Bronze Age III) at Seyitömer Höyük have been recovered. Most of these beads, recovered from within the administrative structure located in House V/B, were produced from three different materials: carnelian, faience, and gold (Fig. 2/a-c).





Figure 2: a-b. The faience beads found at Seyitömer Höyük, **c.** The gold beads found at Seyitömer Höyük.

1-Karnelyen Boncuklar

Carnelian beads are biconical in shape and have string holes. The beads range in length from 2.1 to 5.5 cm, and their body diameters vary between 0.7 and 1.00 cm. A total of three beads were recovered from the V/B, V/C and V/D layers. The bead recovered from the V/B phase, which is larger than the others, was found in the storage room of the administrative structure. The second example was found in room 31, dated to the V/C phase, and the other was found in the fill of the V/D phase (Fig. 3/1). This type of carnelian beads was made by bleaching the beads with an alkaline liquid after they had been fired. This technique is typical of the Mature Harappan Culture in the Indus Region. These beads have been found as early as the early Harappan layer at Naushoro/Baluchistan (2600 BCE). The production of carnelian beads using this specific technique is a tradition in Mesopotamia due to the lack of workshops, and this technique was used throughout the Indus Valley (Rahmstorf, 2015, 159).

Similar carnelian beads have been found at the Mohenjo-daro settlement in the Indus Valley and are dated to 2600–1900 BC (Collins, 2003a, 392/279). In southern Mesopotamia, they were found in the tomb of Queen Paubi in the royal tombs of Ur, dated to Early Dynastic IIIA - 2550-2400 BC (Maxwell-Hyslop, 1960, P.XI/4, P.XII/4; Collins, 2003d, 112, 62a-h). In Susa during the Akkadian period (2300-2159 BC) (Collins, 2003c, 300/201), in Mari during the Early Dynastic IIIB period (2400-2250) (Cholidis, 2003, 144/85a-b), Kish (Mackay, 1929, XLIII/8) and Tell Brak during the Akkadian period (Oates & Oates, 1993, 166, Fig. 12; Evans, 2003, 232, 158a) are other centres where it was observed in Mesopotamia. In North Caucasus, it was found in the Maikop Kurgan, dated to the Early 3rd millennium (Piotrovsky, 2003a, 295/196a). In Anatolia, it was uncovered in Troy during ETÇ III (Sazcı, 2007, 233, E-S1; Ludvik et al., 2015, 8, Fig. 5/b) and in the Alacahöyük L tomb (Koşay, 1951, Lev. CC). In the Aegean, it is found at Kolonna (Reinholdt, 2003, 261, 166/b) and Daskalio (Rahmstorf, 2015, 161).

2-Faience Beads

Tiles were probably first produced simultaneously in the Near East and Egypt around 4000 BC, and this production continued until the Roman period. The glaze colours of tiles used for making beads, amulets, inlaid pieces, figurines and vases are predominantly shades of blue and green (Dardeniz & Öztan, 2020, 841). The majority of the faience beads were recovered from the main chamber and various other rooms of the administrative structure dated to the V/B phase.

The total number of these beads is approximately 1,500. Three different types of faience beads have been identified: cylindrical, biconical, and spherical.

Type 1: Cylindrical beads have been examined under this type. These beads exhibit three sub-type characteristics.

Type 1a: This type consists of cylindrical beads with a smoothed surface and thread holes. Three beads were found, with diameters ranging from 0.3 to 0.5 cm and lengths ranging from 0.75 to 3 cm (Fig. 3-2/Type 1a).

Type 1b: These beads have a cylindrical body with embossed segments in the shape of half-circles following one another along the body. One Type 1b bead has been recovered, measuring 0.8 cm in diameter and 2.04 cm in length (Fig. 3-2/Type 1b).

Type 1c: The surface of this type of cylindrical bead is divided into rectangular areas by irregular horizontal and vertical scratches running parallel to each other (Fig. 3-2/Type 1c). Two beads of this type, measuring 1.00 cm in diameter and 3.3 cm in length, were found.

Similar beads to Type 1a were found at Tell Arbid during the Akkadian period (Kolinski, 2007, 108, Fig. 13, E/7), Tell Bia (Strommenger & Kohlmeyer, 1998, T. 19, 16/35:1, 11/3; T. 27, 42/23:6, 17/d), El-Qitar (Sagona, 1986, 115, Fig. 3, 15/f), Tell Chagar Bazar in the 3rd millennium BCE at Tell Chagar Bazar (Mallowan, 1937, P. XVIII, A/4), Tell Banat (Porter, 1995, 15, Fig. 10/A379a) and Halawa (Orthmann, 1981, T. 43/10). Similar Type 1b beads are found at Tell Qura Quzaq in the 3rd millennium BC stratum (Pereiro, 1994, F.23/24, 25), Tell Bia (Strommenger & Kohlmeyer, 1998, T. 19, 16/33:1/5; T. 19, 16/35:1, 11/2), Tell Banat (Porter, 1995, 15, Fig. 10/A379b-d), and Tell Brak during the Akkadian period (Steele et al., 2003, 262, Fig. 6.69/11, 15).

Type 2: This type consists of biconical beads. Biconical beads exhibit four subtypes.

Type 2a: These beads are biconical in shape and have a smoothed surface (Fig. 3-2 Type 2a). Type 2a beads range in diameter from 0.4 to 0.6 cm and in length from 0.8 to 1.03 cm, and 27 such beads were recovered.

Type 2b: The beads examined under this type feature a raised, segmented, spherical bead form at their centre. On either side of this section, there are semi-circular raised sections on the body that follow one another and taper slightly towards the tip. The bead has a biconical appearance with tapered extensions on either side of the central bulge, tapering towards the tip (Fig. 3-2/Type 2b). Twenty-nine of these beads, ranging in diameter from 0.4 to 0.8 cm and in length from 1.9 to 2.6 cm, were recovered.

Type 2c: The bead represented by a single specimen is flattened biconical in shape and measures 0.7 cm in diameter and 0.3 cm in length (Fig. 3-2/Type 2c).

Type 2d: Both ends of the flattened biconical bead are terminated by conical projections (Fig. 3-2/Type 2d). The three specimens of beads recovered measure 0.6 cm in diameter and 0.7 cm in length.

Similar to Type 2a beads, those found at Troy (Sazcı, 2007, 413, 414) and Tell Arbid (Kolinski, 2007, 108, Fig. 13, E/6), Tell al-Raga, dated to the middle of the 3rd millennium BC (Curvers & Schwartz, 1990, Fig. 16/7), Tell Qura Quzaq (Pereiro, 1994, F.23/17), Tell Chagar Bazar (Mallowan, 1937, P. XVIII, A/4, 5), Tell Bia (Strommenger & Kohlmeyer, 1998, T. 19, 16/35:1, 11/4) and Tell Brak during the Akkadian period (Mallowan, 1947, P. XXVII). Similar Type 2b beads are

found at Tell Bia (Strommenger & Kohlmeyer, 1998: T. 41, 24/49; 105/e; T. 168/6), in the Akkadian period at Tell Beydar (Bretschneider & Cunningham, 2007, 34, 58192-M3), and at Tell Brak (Mallowan, 1947, P. XXVII).

Type 3: Global beads have been examined under type 3 and divided into six sub-types.

Type 3a: Two examples of this type of bead are spherical in shape and have a smoothed surface (Fig. 3-2/ Type 3a). The beads range in diameter from 0.8 to 1.5 cm and in length from 1.2 to 1.4 cm.

Type 3b: Type 3b beads consist of flattened spherical examples of type 3a beads (Fig. 3-2/Type 3b). An average of 1,250 of these beads were found. The beads have a diameter of 0.4 or 0.5 cm and a length of 0.2 or 0.3 cm.

Type 3c: Consists of beads with a spherical body and a body circumference divided into vertical segments (Fig. 3-2/Type 3c). Eleven beads of this type were recovered. The diameters of the beads range from 0.9 to 1.4 cm, while their lengths vary between 0.6 and 1.1 cm.

Type 3d: This type consists of flattened spherical specimens of globular segmented beads (Fig. 3-2/Type 3d). There are an average of 75 Type 3d beads. The diameters of the beads range from 0.3 to 0.6 cm, while their lengths vary between 0.2 and 0.3 cm.

Type 3e: Examples of globular-shaped segmented beads with one or two knobs at each end (Fig. 3-2/Type 3e). There are 6 beads, each with a diameter of 0.7 cm and a length of 1.0 cm.

Type 3f: The surface of the globular beads has been carved into horizontal and vertical sections to create reliefs (Fig. 3-2/Type 3f). The four specimens recovered have diameters of 0.9 cm and lengths ranging from 0.6 to 0.9 cm.

Similar to Type 3a beads, Type 3b beads were found in the Alacahöyük D tomb (Koşay, 1951, Plate CLVI), Resuloğlu (Yıldırım, 2006, 13, Fig. 18/a), Tarsus-Gözkule in ETÇ III (Goldmann, 1956, p. 453/2), Tell Bia (Strommenger & Kohlmeyer, 1998, T. 108/3, 13; T. 110/10), Tell Germayir (Mallowan, 1937, P. XVIII, A/3), Tell Brak (Mallowan, 1947, P. XXVII) and El-Qitar (Sagona, 1986, 115, Fig. 3, 15/b). Type 3c beads have been found at Tell Arbid (Kolinski, 2007, 108, Fig. 13/1-3), Tell Qara Quzaq (Pereiro, 1994, F.20/14), Tell Brak (Oates, 1987, P. XL/c.), Tell Chagar Bazar (Mallowan, 1937, P. XVIII, A/4), El-Qitar (Sagona, 1986, 115, Fig. 3, 15/a, d) and Tell Beydar (Bretschneider & Cunningham, 2007, 34, 58192-M3). Type 3d beads are found at Kalinkaya Cemetery (Zimmermann, 2007, 72, Fig. 8), Tell Beydar (Bretschneider & Cunningham, 2007, 34, 58192-M3), Tell Bia (Strommenger & Kohlmeyer, 1998, T. 21, 17/35:1/14), while beads similar to Type 3e beads were found at Troy (Schliemann, 1881, 514, Nr. 606-738/730).

3-Gold Beads

The beads, most of which are gold, display five different characteristics.

Type 1: These beads are formed by rolling thin sheets of metal into spirals with a circular hollow in the centre. The beads formed by joining two spirals have spaces between them that are used as thread holes; the areas with thread holes are slightly convex (Fig. 3-3/Type 1). Thirteen beads with a diameter of 0.62 cm were recovered.

Type 2: A tube-shaped thread hole is visible on the surface in the centre of the oval or circular metal plate (Fig. 3-3/Type 2). Three beads with a diameter of 0.6/0.5 cm were recovered.

Type 3: A cylindrical bead has been obtained by stacking metal sheets on top of each other, leaving gaps between them (Fig. 3-3/Type 3). There is one bead with a diameter of 0.2 and a length of 0.4.

Type 4: This type consists of beads with four faces. It has two subtypes.

Type 4a: This type consists of convex beads with four faces (Fig. 3-3/ Type 4a). There are two beads, each 0.44 cm in diameter and 0.40 cm in length.

Type 4b: This bead is flattened, with four straight sides, and has a cuboid shape (Fig. 3-3/Type 4b). One bead measuring 0.33 cm in diameter and 0.27 cm in length was found.

Type 5: This type consists of circular flat beads and exhibits two sub-type characteristics.

Type 5a: Beads classified under this type are flattened cylindrical in shape (Fig. 3-3/Type 5a). Twenty-three beads with a diameter of 0.16 and a length of 0.06 were recovered.

Type 5b: Created by adding independent pieces to a flattened circular form and given a flattened cylindrical shape (Fig. 3-3/Type 5b). There is one bead with a diameter of 0.16 and a length of 0.06.

Gold beads, similar to Type 1, have been found at Troy (Tolstikov & Treister, 1996, 94/101) and Tell Brak (Mallowan, 1947, P. XXXV) (Akkadian period). Type 2 beads are found in Anatolia at Troy IIg (Blegen et al., 1950, Fig. 356/17), Karataş-Semayük (Mellink, 1969, 323, Lev. 74, Fig. 15, 17), Kültepe (Özgüç, 1963, 96; Özgüç, 1984, 43, Fig. 3-39), Alişar Höyük (Schmidt, 1933, 78, Fig. 120/a.92), Eskiyapar (Özgüç & Temizer, 1993, Plate 112/a-c), and a quadruple example at Alacahöyük (Koşay, 1951, 74, Plate CC). The silver and double-stringed examples were found at Baklatepe and dated to the end of ETÇ II and the beginning of ETÇ III (Keskin, 2009, 224, 225, Plate 18/385-391; Keskin, 2004, 148). In Mesopotamia, an example of silver was found at the FS Temple in Tell Brak during the Akkadian period (Oates & Oates, 1993, 167, Fig. 13; Mallowan, 1947, P. XXXIII; For examples of gold at Tell Brak, see: Evans, 2003, 232, 158a) and at Tell Umm El-Marra, dated to 2300 BCE (Schwartz et al., 2003, 335, Fig. 16.). Amlash (Culican, 1964, P.VIII/b, P.IX), Mohenjo-daro (2600–1900 BCE) (Collins, 2003a, 393/279–280), and Tell Abraq in the Late 3rd millennium (Collins 2003b: 314/211a-b) are other centres where they have been found in Mesopotamia. Beads of this type have been found in Novosvobodnaya-Kurgan 2 in the North Caucasus and dated to the second half of the 3rd millennium BC (Piotrovsky, 2003b, 296/197). Type 2 and 5a beads have also been recovered at Poliohni (Brea-Bernabò 1976: CCLII/5-10, 14). Similar to Type 4a four-sided beads are seen at Troy IIg (Blegen et al., 1950, Fig. 356/3). Type 4b beads are found at Troy (Sazcı, 2007, 182, A1-S6, 183). Similar beads to Type 5a are found at Alacahöyük (Koşay, 1951, Plate CLV/36), Eskiyapar (Özgüç & Temizer, 1993, 621, Fig. 39, Pl. 114/2 a-b), Kültepe (Özgüç, 1986, Fig. 3-41/b) and Troy (Sazcı, 2007, 228, D-S36). Similar examples of Type 3 are found at Alacahöyük (Koşay, 1951, Plate CCIV, Fig. 2).

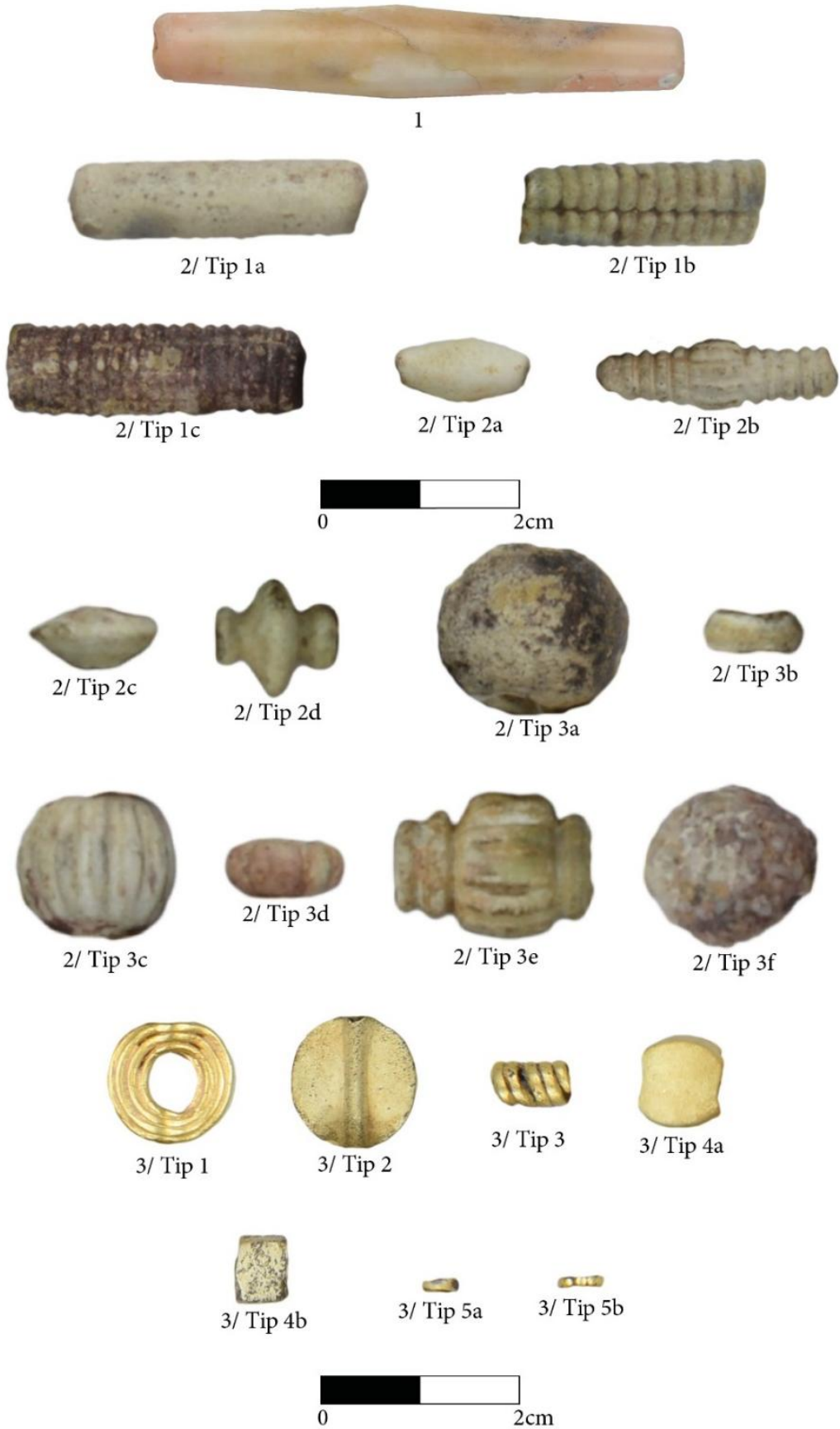


Fig. 3: Beads found at Seyitömer Höyük.

4. Evaluation and Conclusion

Seyitömer Höyük, the majority of the carnelian, faience and gold beads recovered from layer V were found in the main chamber of the administrative structure dated to phase V/B.

Beads that were likely used as jewellery appear along a line stretching from the Indus Region, Southern Mesopotamia, Northern Mesopotamia, Anatolia and the Aegean Islands. The beads were largely recovered from burial sites dating to the second half of the third millennium, such as Ur, Tell Beydar, Tell Bia, Tell Arbid, Tell Qara Quzaq, Tell Banat, Tell el Qitar, Tell Umm el-Marra, Alacahöyük, Kültepe, Eskiyaşar, Resuloğlu, Baklatepe, and Karataş-Semayük (Fig. 4). The number of beads recovered from both settlements and cemeteries is quite limited. Therefore, it is possible to say that the jewellery recovered was produced for use by a special group known as the elite in each society.

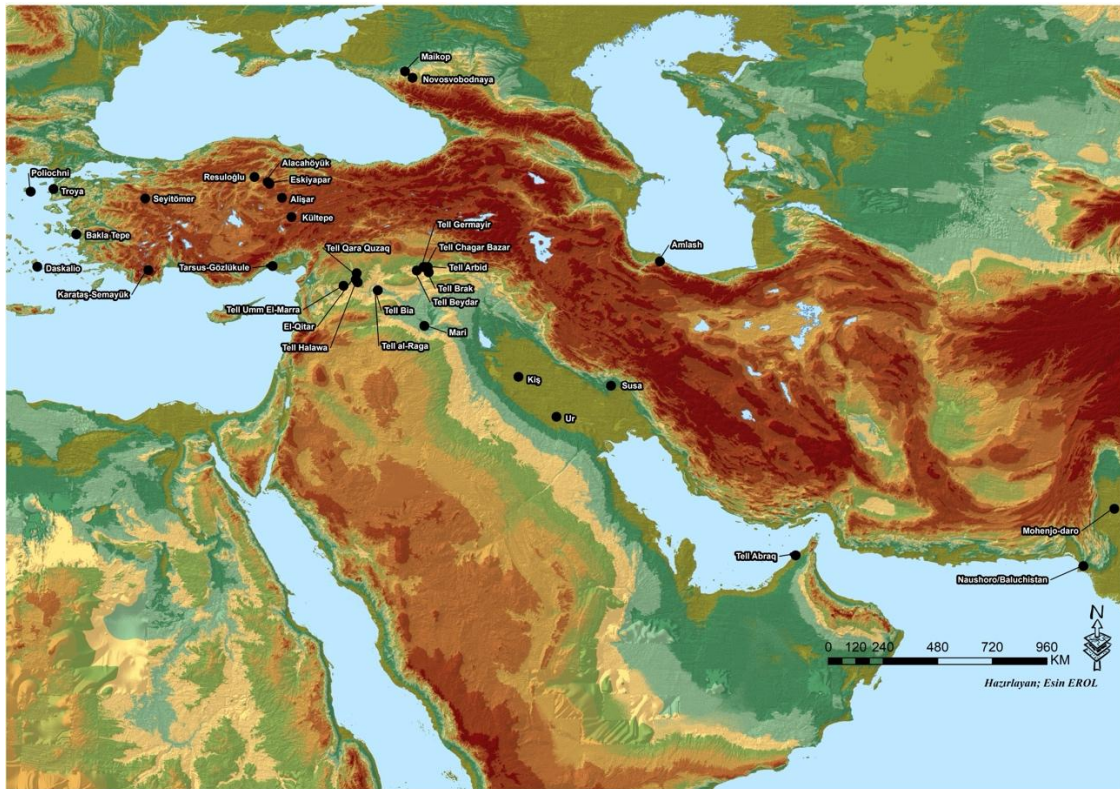


Figure 4: Map showing settlements where similar beads to those found at Seyitömer Höyük have been discovered.

The aforementioned beads, within the administrative structure of the V/B phase, include a group of animal-figured ceramic beads (Ünan, 2024), spiral-headed pins (Bilgen et al., 2015) and cylinder seals (Bilgen et al., 2015) also support the view that the structure was an administrative building that could be called a palace (Fig. 5). In addition to the finds recovered from this structure, Syrian-Mesopotamian artefacts such as lead figurine moulds (Ünan & Ünan, 2020, 37-53) from different phases of the settlement, as well as balance weights, one of the indicators of trade between Mesopotamia and Anatolia, have also been identified (Ünan, 2022, 33-47). Syrian bottles, goblets, tankards and depas-type vessels found at the settlement were identified in different structures (Ünan, 2023; Bilgen & Kapuci, 2019). When these findings are evaluated as a whole, they indicate the presence of a group of merchants engaged in long-distance trade, as well as an administrator at Seyitömer. Therefore, it is possible to say that, in addition to the administrator who possessed status objects forming a special group within the settlement, a

limited number of status objects were also possessed by some of the settlers. For this reason, there was an elite group in Seyitömer Höyük. It is thought that the special finds, including jewellery made of beads owned by the elite, reached Seyitömer via merchants from Mesopotamia.

When evaluated as a whole, these findings clearly indicate that Seyitömer Höyük was one of the key points of land trade during the Early Bronze Age (Şahoğlu, 2005; Efe, 2007; Oğuzhanoğlu, 2019). The routes following the Mesopotamia, Southeast Anatolia, and Central Anatolia itineraries passed through Seyitömer and must have branched off from there to Northwest Anatolia and the Aegean coast.



Figure 5: Seyitömer Höyük Phase V/B administrative structure and found jewellery and seals.

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