

Tall Bazi: the Middle and Late Bronze age pottery from the Citadel's *Nordhang*

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1. Introduction

The Nordhang trench is located on the northern slope of the citadel of Tall Bazi, more precisely on its lower half (see EINWAG – OTTO this volume, Fig. 1). The citadel lies on a natural hill, which is 60 m high, and the fortification surrounding it, consists of a system of circular walls (OTTO 2006: 8). Thanks to the excavations conducted on the hill slopes, it has been possible to gain a coherent picture of the walls system's function. It worked both as a defensive system and as a terracing system¹. Results from the excavations on the northern slopes permitted to clarify the presence of such defensive system and of the buildings related to it.

Works on the Nordhang took place during the 1994 campaign and resumption occurred during the 2001 working season. Digging and documentation works were supervised by Mohammed Miftah, to whom I will be eternally grateful for the inspiring talks and suggestions about the elaborate stratigraphy of the excavated area.

Before the beginning of excavations, it was possible to observe on the slope the presence of outcropping stones, which were well visible on the ground. Their presence opened questions about their possible connection to parts

of a circuit defensive wall already found on the eastern slope of the citadel (EINWAG ET AL. 1995: 109). Moreover, it was possible to recognize on the terrain a sloping line, which was visible depending on light and vegetation lying on the surface (EINWAG & OTTO 1996: 22). The presence of such a line was a hint for the possible existence of the main way up the hill under the surface. These elements made investigations on the northern slope as quite compelling, in order to add new information about a defensive system of Tall Bazi (see §2. Stratigraphy).

The present contribution in the frame of the International Workshop about the Late Bronze Age aims to illustrate the stratigraphic sequence and related ceramic assemblages from the Nordhang². This aim is related to the main goals of the workshop, thus dealing with the establishment of a relative and absolute chronology for the Late Bronze Age Euphrates Valley. In this sense, the northern slope sequence contributes to add a new plug in the picture of Late Bronze Age Tall Bazi. The ceramic material has been analyzed both in its techno-morphological, i.e. ware, fabric, surface treatment, manufac-

1 The terracing system worked as a sort of artificial ground, which was supposed to facilitate the construction of buildings on the tell slopes.

2 I am grateful to Adelheid Otto for the opportunity of taking part to the very stimulating and interesting workshop, and to the other participants for their suggestions and the exchange of ideas. I furthermore owe my warmest thank to Adelheid Otto and Berthold Einwag for entrusting me with the study of the Nordhang ceramic, which is half the core of my PhD thesis (COPPINI in preparation), and for their support during the course of my research.

turing technique, and in its formal aspects, i.e. vessel's shape, rim, base, decoration. Both techno-morphological and formal aspects have been evaluated with the help of a quantitative statistic method (SINOPOLI 1991: 172). The ceramic assemblage has been then compared to other ceramic assemblages from sites in the Upper Syrian Euphrates Valley, in order to get the determination of a relative chronology.

2. Stratigraphy

It was quite difficult to investigate this part of the tell because of its position on this steep side of the hill. In order to explore the area in an accurate way, five adjacent squares, each measuring 5×5 m, were opened, namely 54/32, 54/33, 55/32, 55/33, 56/33. The stratigraphic sequence is subdivided into four levels: level 4 is the lowest one, level 1 is lying directly below the surface. Since it was not possible to remove later walls, earlier levels were excavated only where the upper level was eroded, or in the areas between the walls.

Level 4 (Fig. 1; Fig. 2.1-2) is centered around two small rooms facing on a narrow alley, which measures 2.70 m width and is paved with small stones (SZELAG 2012: 135). The alley slopes eastwards and runs east-west with a slight curve to the north-west. It was covered by debris consisting of ashes and collapsed mud-bricks. The two rooms are next to each other and are located on the alley's northern side. They are both built with the same technique: a sub-structure made of stones and the proper wall built with grey mud-bricks that are coated with clay. Both rooms have handicraft characteristics, with installations that determine their function (SZELAG 2012: 136). The best-preserved room, named Room 2, is located in the southwestern part of square 56/34. The entrance from the street side is well preserved, consisting of two stones with step function: the door was probably made by charred wood panels, since traces of them were found on the room's floor, just north of the door. The floor is paved with smooth stone slabs, which was covered by a huge quantity of pottery sherds pertaining to bottles and jars. The room was provided with three installations: a small wall running parallel of the room's southern wall; a small staircase, to which the preceding wall was connected; a bench made of stones and clay with an integrated rectangular terracotta basin (SZELAG 2012: 140-142, figs. 7, 8). Room 1 is provided with more significant installations. As we have seen about Room 2, it has an access from the street as well, although better preserved than in Room 2. The passage consists of two slabs flanking it and a smooth stone working as curtail

step to the room entrance (Fig. 1; Fig. 2.2). The floor has been recovered on the whole surface and slopes south-north: it consists of smooth stones and coated with two layers of clay and on it a small quantity of pottery has been found. The installations here recovered confirm its handicraft character (Fig. 1; Fig. 2.1): a working platform made of stones and mud-bricks, in which an oval stone basin is integrated, is located near a kiln, which is small and has a unique hole³. As observed by Dariusz Szelag in his recent contribution (SZELAG 2012), this level can be subdivided into two phases, i.e. phase 4a and 4b. In Room 1 the subdivision is based on the presence of a door socket, which was then partly covered by a wall in phase 4b (SZELAG 2012: 137)⁴. Room 2 was built in phase 4b, when the larger Room 1 was divided by a wall, the same that partly covered the door socket of Room 1 (SZELAG 2012: 140). Consequently, in phase 4b Room 2 was provided with a door and a western wall (SZELAG 2012: 140).

Level 3 (Fig. 1) was excavated in square 55/34. In this square, part of a limestone building has been found: the stones are dressed and huge, and they constitute the outer part of the building's walls, while the inner part is filled with small and medium limestone blocks. The building was traced on a length of 9 m, a width of 2.70 m and a height of 2.50 m, but it was certainly much larger. It has been interpreted as a huge platform, intended for the building of a terrace or an edifice⁵. On the platform stood a mud-brick wall, which is 1.60 m wide and consisted of grey mud-bricks. To the wall a floor was connected, but just a small part of it was traced⁶. In square 55/34 a huge wall has been recovered as well, probably connected to the wall in square 55/34: its grey mud-bricks are coated with a colored plaster. This level has a younger phase, named level 3A and investigated in square 55/34. In this level, a room was built: three walls have been excavated and its floor, which is paved and has some traces of fire. In the room rubbing stones have been found, and in its southern part there was a ceramic container decorated with an incised bull. To the east of this room, another room was found, the floor of which was paved with small stones.

Level 2 (Fig. 1) has been more extensively investigated: its surface covers squares 56/33, 54/33 and 54/34. The

3 It has been interpreted by the excavators as a metal kiln.

4 In this second phase, a second door socket was added to the door (SZELAG 2012: 137).

5 It is hypothesized by the excavators that the platform was in use in level 3a and 2 as well.

6 The excavators suppose that the wall belonged to a large building, possibly a *templum in antis*.



Fig. 2.1: Level 4: Room 1, from N.



Fig. 2.2: Level 4: entrance to Room 1, with a view on the street. From N.

layer is articulated around the three rooms excavated in the northern and in the southern part of the trench. Rooms 1 and 2 have the same shape and size, i.e. quadrangular and 4×4 m. No communication way between them has been found, but possibly it was covered by the trench baulk. Their walls are 1-1.20 m wide and are preserved for 0.90-1.20 m height. They are built with a stone substructure and a proper wall made of mud-bricks⁷. In Room 1 a unique installation has been found: it consists of four standing mud-bricks on which lay a square made of stone interpreted as a seat or a vase stand. In its northern wall there is an opening, interpreted as a door. Room 2 is located to the east of Room 1 and contiguous to it. In this case, the floor has been traced: laying on it where found pottery sherds and granite pestles. Room 3, located to the south of the two preceding rooms, is larger than then: it covers almost the whole square 54/33. Only three of its four walls are preserved: they are built with medium- and large-size stones. A possible entrance to the room has been found in the southern wall, where small stones are located in a step-fashion, indicating the presence of a threshold. On the room's floor, which is not well-prepared, a small quantity of pottery has been found. The room borders a street, which is situated south of the room, paved with stones and earth, and is leading up the citadel slope. East of Room 3 there is a circular structure, built with stones and filled with them. It has been interpreted as a small tower, apparently controlling the way up to the citadel's tip, and connected to the defensive system of the citadel.

Level 1 has been traced only in square 56/34. It lies directly under the surface. Due to erosion, it was possible to identify just two walls forming a corner, probably pertaining to a room.

3. Pottery assemblage

It is necessary to present a brief overview of the wares concerned with the ceramic material that is going to be presented here. Wares with chaff inclusions are the most attested in all levels: they can be differentiated by a compact or grainy texture. The most occurring are compact texture fabrics. Among them we register a high presence of wares 73, 79 and 74. Ware 73 is characterized by a reddish/brownish core; it is rich in vegetal inclusions (chaff) and calcite inclusions, the consistence is middle compact. Ware 79 is reddish/brownish and presents few chaff in-

clusions, together with calcite inclusions; like ware 73, it is also compact. Ware 74 is characterized by a light brown colour, with the presence of chaff and few calcite inclusions; in contrast to wares 73 and 79, this ware is porous. Among grainy texture wares, ware 9 is the most attested: a coarse, slightly porous ware with black and grey inclusions. Most cooking pots consist of ware 10, a coarse kitchen ware.

3.1 Level 4

Pottery from this level has been recently published by Dariusz Szélag (2012: 144-150). It has been found in Room 1 and Room 2: closed shapes are the most attested (SZÉLAG 2012: 144). They were found on the clay floor of Room 1 and on the plastered floor of Room 2 (SZÉLAG 2012: 144). Thanks to the destruction to which this part of the settlement underwent, a relatively rich inventory has been found in the two rooms. As described by Szélag, we find small and medium pots, cooking pots, bottles and jugs, and a small number of bowls (SZÉLAG 2012: 144). Among open shapes, we observe a large variety of bowls, mainly with convex or straight wall; rims are inside thickened, above flat and squared or rounded (Fig. 3.2). Plates occur in low percentages and present in most cases a straight wall and a big diameter: they have an inside thickened rim, triangular shape, or with ridges (Fig. 3.1-2). Deep bowls are represented by exemplars with high-convex wall, which rim is simple and flat above (Fig. 3.3).

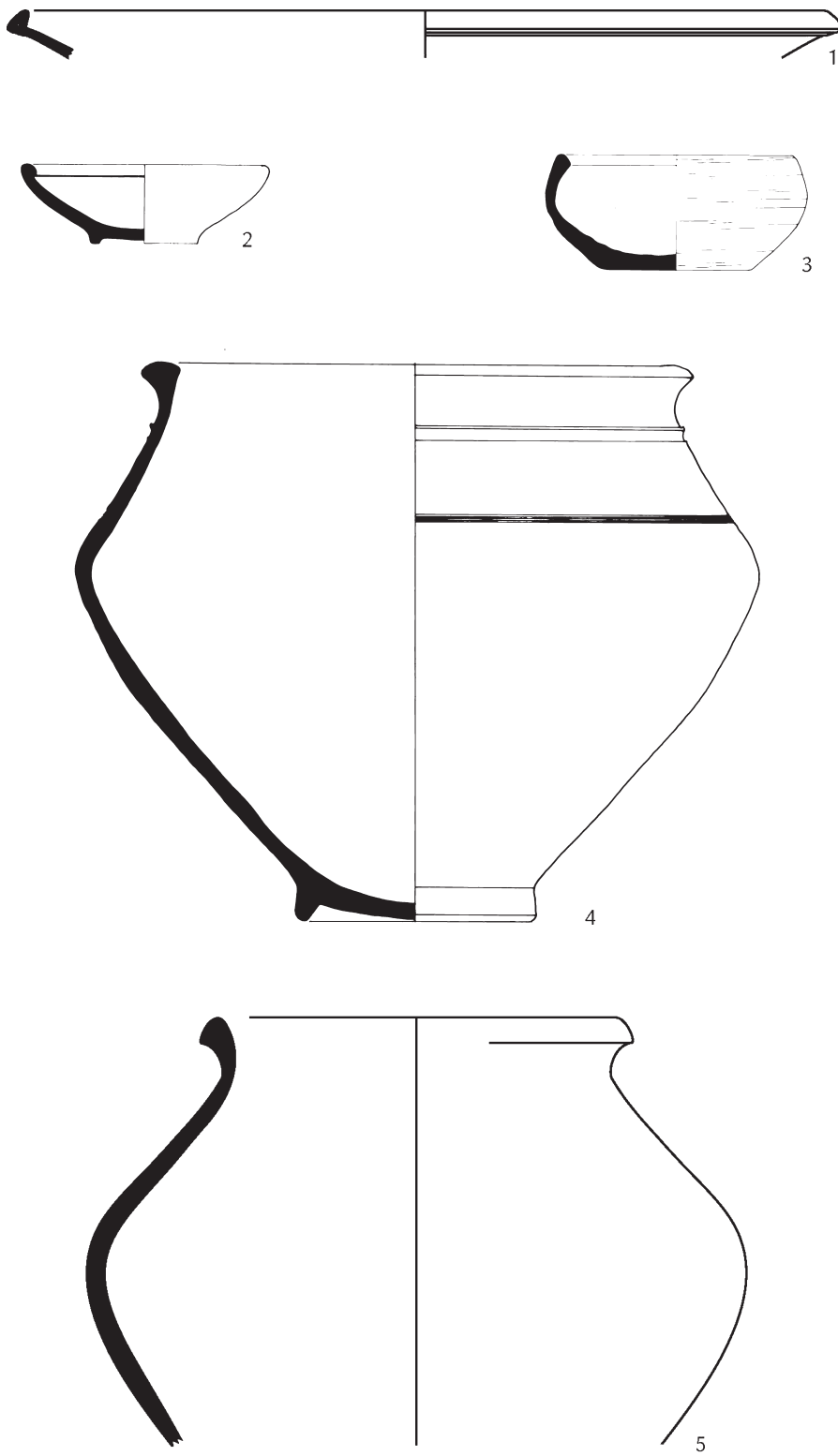
Closed shapes occur in a large variety of shapes: pots, cooking pots, jars, large jars and bottles. Jars are the most attested, in the shape high-neck jar with vertical neck: the rim is usually outside thickened, rounded, or flat above and outside squared or rounded (Fig. 4.1-3). The rest is represented by short-neck jars. Large jars are the second most attested sub-category, especially in the shape with neck and conical body (Fig. 4.4-6). Pots are barely attested: only two shapes are represented, namely without neck, with conical (Fig. 3.4) or hyperboloid body (Fig. 3.5).

3.2 Level 3

In this level, we observe that the presence of closed shapes is higher than that of open and intermediate shapes, as in level 4 as well (54%). Open shapes are mostly represented by bowls, which can have a straight wall, convex wall, or an externally-carinated wall. Bowls with straight wall are the most attested. They show many inside thickened rims, either rounded or sharp⁸ (Fig. 5.3-4),

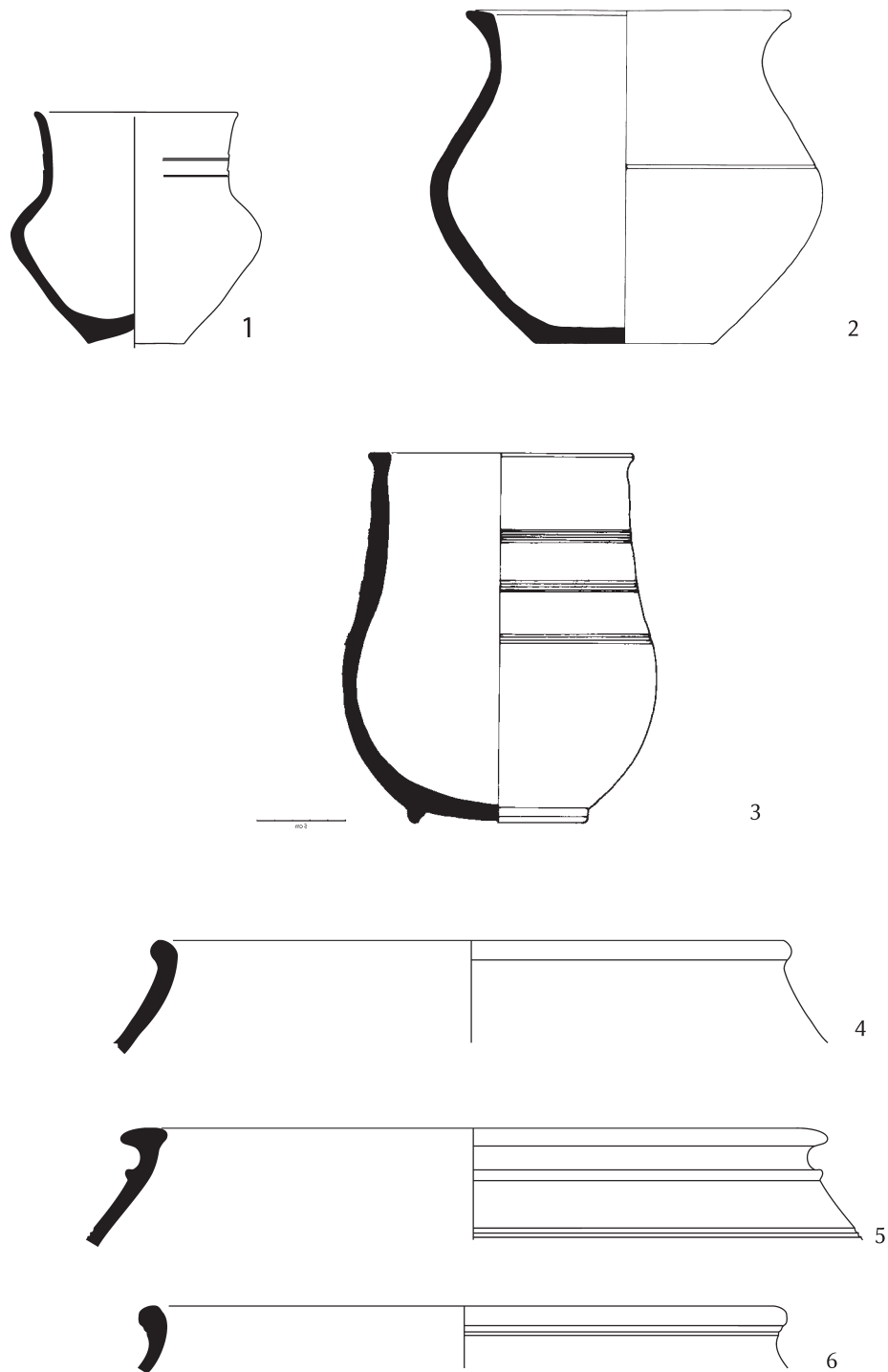
⁷ As we have already seen about level 4 walls.

⁸ A small percentage of rolled rims occur.



0 5 cm

Fig. 3: Level 4 ceramic assemblage: open and closed shapes.



0 5 cm

Fig. 4: Level 4 ceramic assemblage: closed shapes.

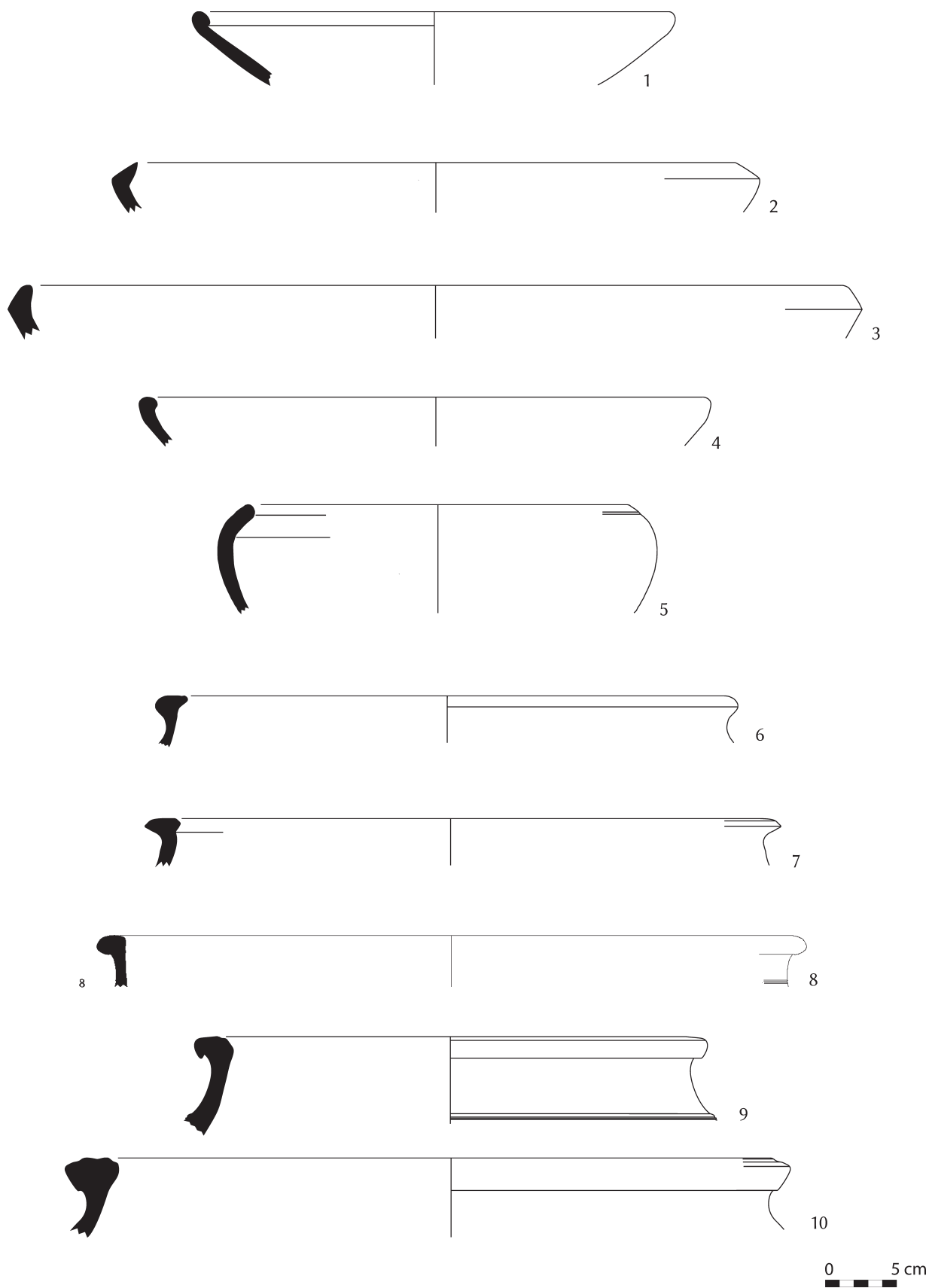


Fig. 5: Level 3 ceramic assemblage: open and intermediate shapes.

thus differing from the same shape in level 4 (see §3.1). In this phase bowls with rolled rims occur as well. A smaller part of the bowls assemblage is represented by those with convex wall, which present the same rim types as the preceding shape, but also outside thickened rims. In this level a new bowl shape is present, i.e. bowl with externally carinated wall. Plates are less attested than in the previous level: the only present shape is plate with straight wall (Fig. 5.1-2). On the contrary, deep bowls are more present, in the shape with straight wall and high-convex wall, convex wall (Fig. 5.5): we notice the emergence of new shapes in comparison with those from level 4.

Intermediate shapes increase their presence and their variety. If in level 4 we see the occurrence of one shape, here we notice that the assemblage is differentiated into three different shapes, i.e. large and deep bowl with high-convex wall and convex wall (Fig. 5.6-7), or with ellipsoidal wall (Fig. 5.8), or with high-convex and strongly carinated wall (Fig. 5.9-10) and convex or straight wall (Fig. 6.1). The shape with ellipsoidal body is the most attested, constituting the half of the intermediate shapes assemblage.

Closed shapes are more attested than in level 4. This is probably due to the type of context, as pinpointed in §2. Among them, the majority is represented by jars, which occur in higher percentage than in the previous level: pots, large jars and bottles are in this level's assemblage poorly present. Jars are attested in a large variety of shapes: the generic shape, jars with continuous neck and ellipsoid body, with continuous neck and ovoid body, and jars with small neck⁹ are the most attested (Fig. 6.7-8), and can occur with a spherical body. It is associated to a straight or to a concave neck. New elements are constituted by continuous neck jars and short neck jars, together with the already cited small neck jars. A new rim shape emerges as well: instead of the simply outside thickened rim, we register here the occurrence of the elongated rim, which can be rounded or squared outside¹⁰ (Fig. 7.1). Large jars occur in many different shapes, despite their low presence: the shape with continuous neck is the most attested and present an outside thickened rim, squared or rounded and above slightly rounded. It is noteworthy that this (Fig. 7.1) is a new shape, which is not represented in level 4. Pots register a large variety as well, meaning that significant changes in this

part of the assemblage occur: it is nevertheless very important that the most attested shape is the same as in level 4, i.e. neck-less pot with conical body, large size (Fig. 6.2). The new shapes are those with continuous neck and with high neck (Fig. 6.3-5). Pots, although few present, have three different rims: everted, squared or sharp below; outside thickened and elongated, with a groove on the external elongated part¹¹. Bottles are represented by very few specimens and are attested in the shape with hyperboloid or with concave neck.

3.3 Level 2

In this level, we register the usual majority of closed shapes (Fig. 7-9): they are here more attested than in levels 3 and 4 (62 %). The presence of intermediate shapes decrease. All bowl types (Fig. 7.4-10) share a common trait, i.e. the inside thickened rim, which continues the tradition already occurring in level 3. The type to which it is mostly associated is the bowl with straight wall (Fig. 7.8-10). Bowls with convex wall present an inside thickened rim, which can be elongated or squared. Carinated bowls are not widely represented, although we find the type with externally carinated wall: it usually occurs with an outside thickened rim, flat on top. In this level, we register the emergence of two new carinated shapes: bowls with vertical-carinated wall, or with high-convex carinated wall (Fig. 8.1-2): they both have an outside thickened rim, long and flat on top. Level 2 is characterized by a new feature, i.e. the presence of plates, which are more attested in this level than in level 4 and 3. They occur with a convex or a straight wall, all with inside thickened rim (Fig. 7.3, 5, 6): the rim can be inside long and flat on top, or elongated and rounded on top. Deep bowls occur in a larger variety, with the presence of examples with convex wall, or slightly convex wall (Fig. 8.3): they generally have a simple rounded rim.

Intermediate shapes are represented by large and deep bowls, as attested in the preceding levels¹². The shape with cylindrical body (Fig. 8.4-5) is the most attested, as in level 4. In this level, the variety already attested in level 3 persists: the presence of shapes with high-convex wall and with high-convex strongly carinated wall is attested. The shape with ellipsoidal body disappears: instead of it, we find that with high-convex carinated wall (Fig. 8.8).

9 This is another difference from level 4, where the most attested were jars with high neck.

10 The presence of an outside slightly sharp rim occurs, especially on jars with continuous neck.

11 The elongated rim is the same type already mentioned concerning jars.

12 One beaker's sherd occurs: it has a simple rim, cut on the upper part and inside slightly sharp.

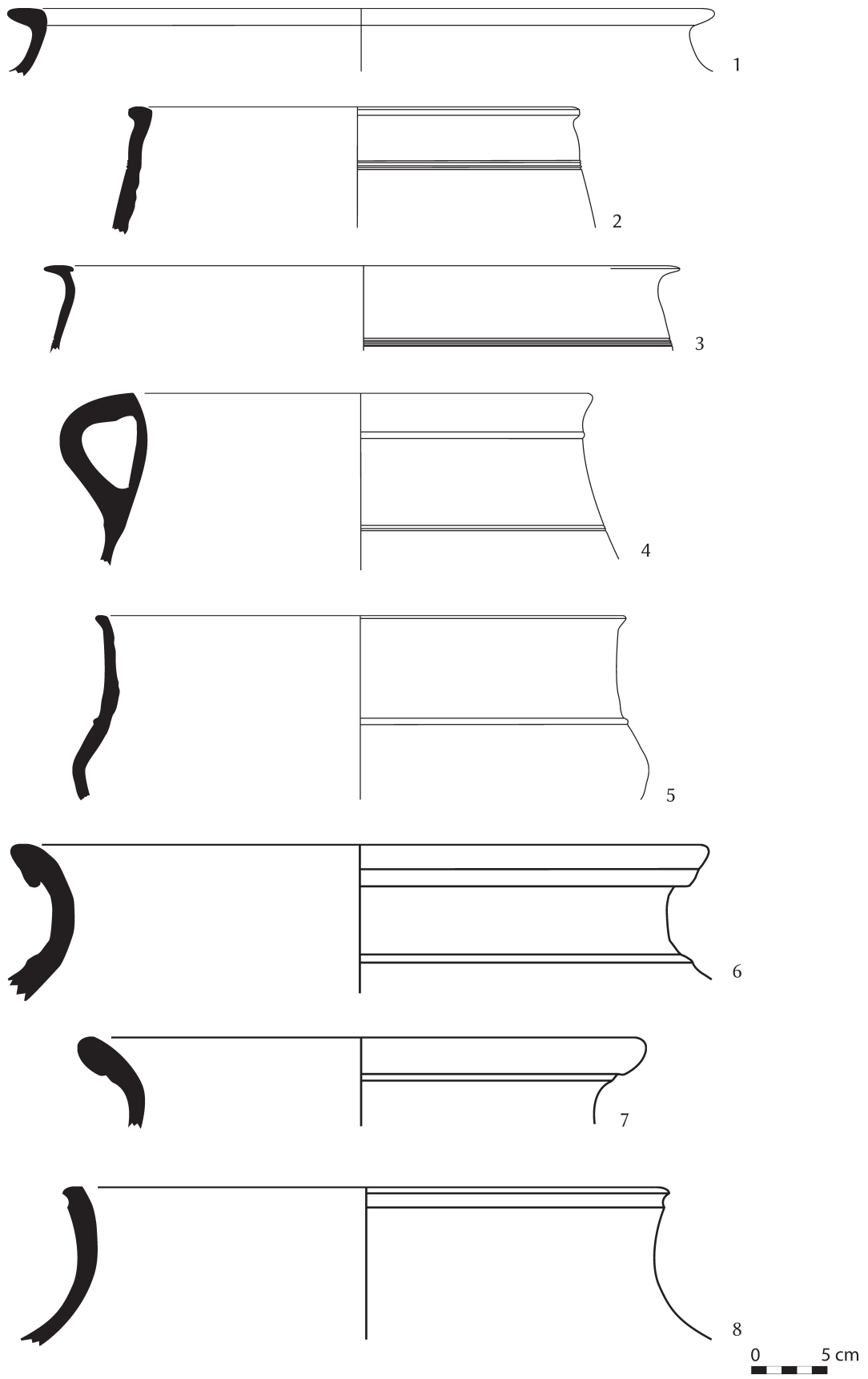


Fig. 6: Level 3 ceramic assemblage: closed shapes.

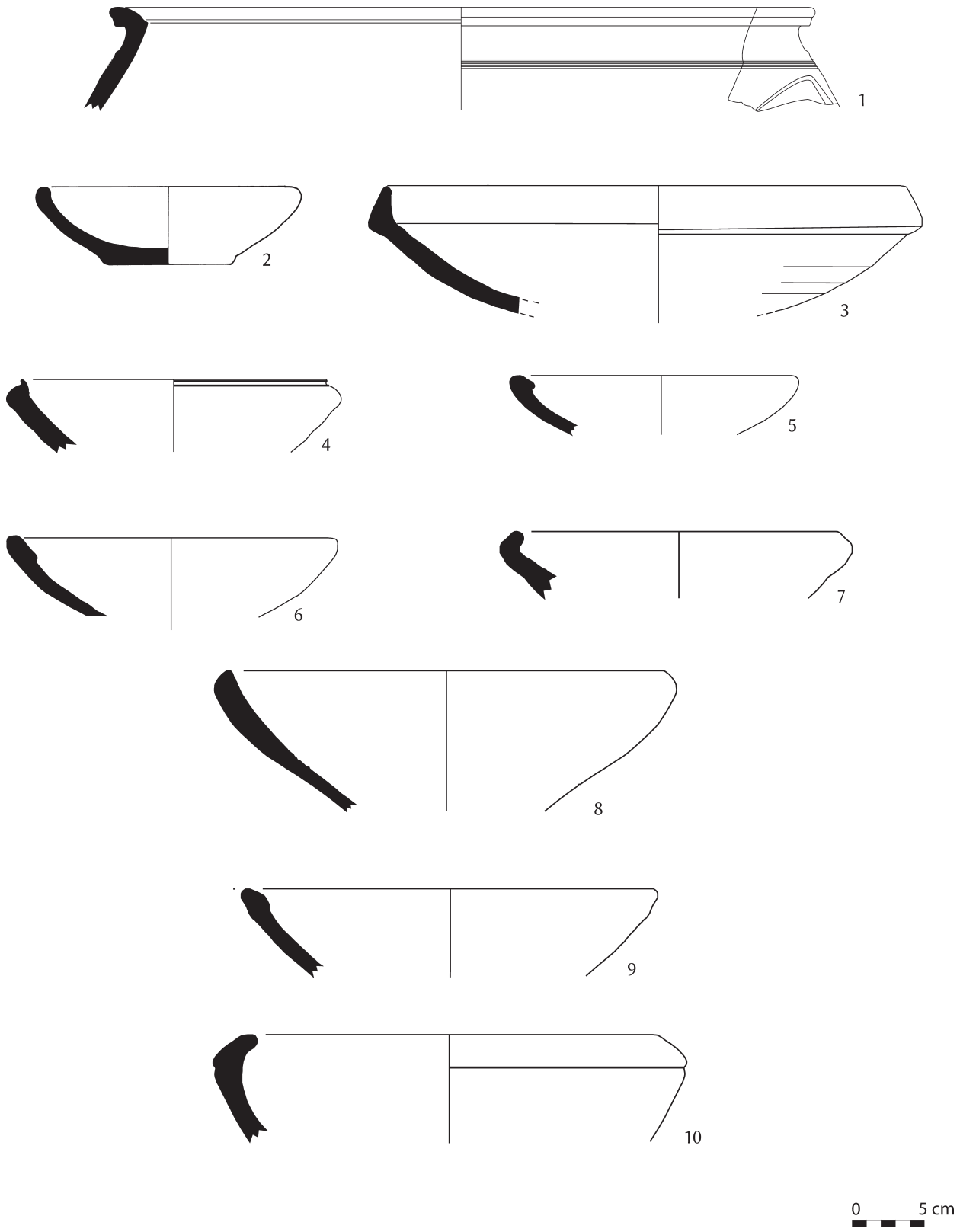
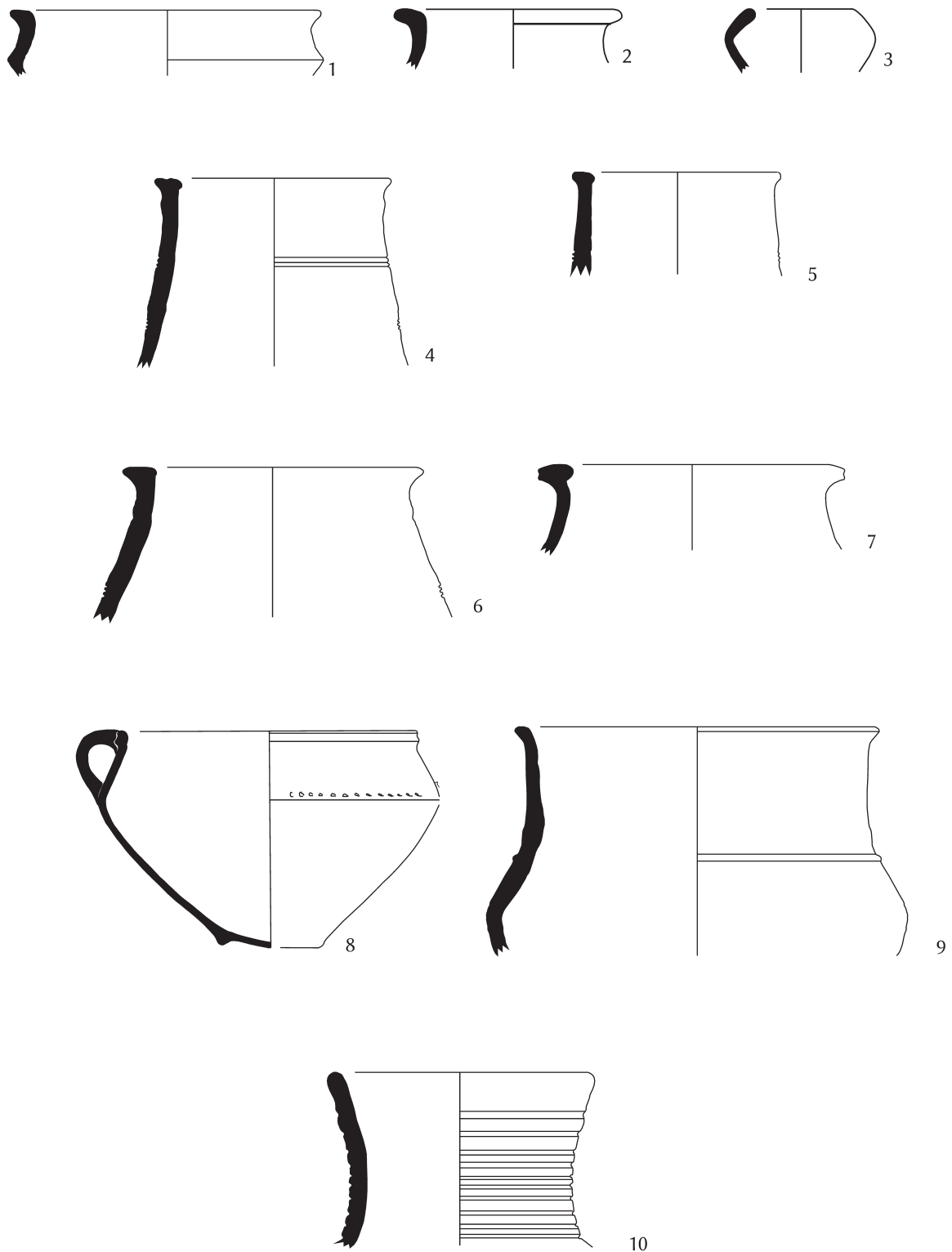


Fig. 7: Level 2 ceramic assemblage: open shapes.



0 5 cm

Fig. 8: Level 2 ceramic assemblage: open, intermediate and closed shapes.

In the spectrum of closed shapes, jars are the most attested, as usually. Nevertheless, the presence of large jars, cooking pots and pots increase. Concerning jars, we notice that they are attested in almost all shapes. Among jars types, that with continuous neck increases, especially in the shape with ellipsoidal body and straight rim (Fig. 9.2): it is characterized by an externally thickened rim. Jar with small neck, concave, and spherical body, is the second most attested shape, then confirming the presence of this shape from level 3 (Fig. 9.4): the rim is generally externally thickened and rolled, rounded. Other types with small neck present a straight or concave neck: rims are externally thickened and elongated. Among jars with short neck, the most attested type is that with hyperboloid neck, and a long, externally thickened rim (Fig. 9.8). Some exemplars present a long neck, which is generally concave and the rim is externally thickened and rounded (Fig. 9.7-9). Among large jars, we find a quite good presence of those without neck and with continuous neck: the rim is externally and internally thickened, more externally and squared. In the pots assemblage, we notice a large variety of shapes, i.e. the emergence of new shapes: they are one variant without neck and hyperboloid body, with short neck, with high neck (Fig. 8.9-10). The most attested shapes are neck-less pots with conical body, small size (Fig. 8.4); neck-less pots with hyperboloid body (Fig. 8.8). The first shape presents mostly an externally thickened rim, elongated and slightly squared. The second shape presents two different rim types: they are both externally and internally thickened, more internally, among them one type is rounded; the other is slightly elongated and slightly rounded on the upper part. In this level bottles are more attested than in level 3 and 4: most of them have a cylindrical neck, with externally thickened rim, generally rounded (Fig. 9.11). Cooking pots are more attested as well: they usually present a small concave neck, with externally thickened rim (Fig. 9.4).

3.4 Level 1

The occurrence of closed, open and intermediate shapes does not change in this level: that is to say, closed shapes prevail consistently over the others. The assemblage of level 1 is small; the recovered sherds are in small quantities. Plates, bowls and deep bowls are present, although bowls remain the most attested sub-category. Bowls with straight wall are in this phase totally absent, while they are replaced by bowls with convex wall and carinated with upright wall (Fig. 9.14), or convex wall. Plates are attested in the shape with straight wall and inside thickened rim (Fig. 9.13), as already stated for layers 2 and 3. Deep bowls are represented by the shape with thick

wall and straight wall: the rim is outside thickened and rounded.

Intermediate shapes are only represented by the large and deep bowl with ellipsoidal body.

Among closed shapes, we find jars, large jars and cooking pots: pots¹³ are totally absent. Jars are attested in shapes with continuous or small neck, with outside thickened rim, rounded (Fig. 9.15). Concerning large jars, the trend of those with continuous neck is confirmed in this level: they are the most attested shape; they usually present a spherical body (Fig. 9.17). Cooking pots have ovoidal body and everted, outside thickened and elongated rim.

4. Chronological evaluation of the Nordhang ceramic assemblage

4.1 Nordhang: chronological markers

The common trait of the whole assemblage's sequence is the constant majority of closed shapes in comparison with open and intermediate shapes: it can be ascribed to the nature of excavated contexts. As we have already stated in §2 –Stratigraphy, the contexts of level 4 are defined as handicraft; the same cannot be exactly asserted about the contexts of level 3 and 2, since any handicraft installation has been found. We can however hypothesize their storage function and almost certainly exclude a domestic function, since any domestic installation has not been found. Back to the attested categories, the large presence of closed shapes can be traced back to the storage and preservation character of those spaces. Therefore, we rely mostly on closed shapes for the chronological evaluation of the assemblage. The low occurrence of closed and intermediate shapes can help in such process, especially the open shapes sub-categories, which have a potential chronological value.

Proceeding with a typological order, i.e. moving from open to closed shapes, we must analyze the sub-category plates first. Among their shapes attested in the Nordhang assemblage, we notice that they are barely attested but in certain levels more than in others: in level 4 they can have an outside thickened rim, while since level 3 they present an inside thickened rim. It follows that the shape plate with conical body and inside thickened rim can be taken into account as marker.

¹³ Pot is defined as a vessel with restricted shape, which rim diameter is smaller than the vessel height. Jar is defined as a vessel with restricted shape, which rim diameter is smaller than the maximum body diameter.

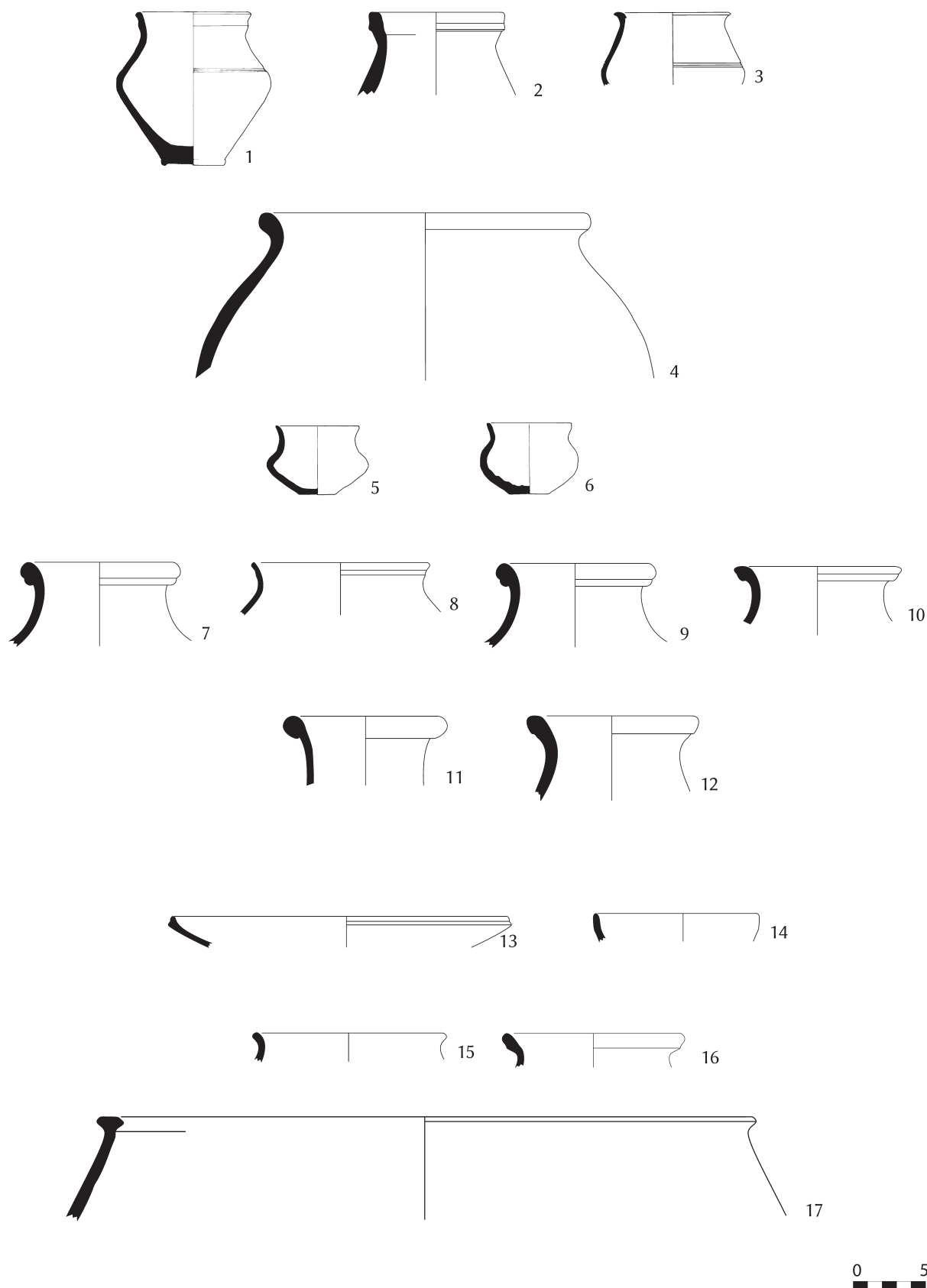


Fig. 9: Level 2 ceramic assemblage: closed shapes. Level 1 ceramic assemblage: open and closed shapes.

Analyzing the bowls' corpus¹⁴ it emerges that the bowl with outside thickened rim of level 4 is replaced by the bowl with conical body and inside thickened rim, either rounded or sharp¹⁵; since level 3 the occurrence of carinated bowls, whether externally carinated or with upright wall, is corroborated: the carinated variants present an outside thickened rim, which can be elongated since level 2. In level 1 bowls with conically body are totally absent and they are replaced by the strong presence of those with spherical body, while the carinated continue. Thus, the marker for bowls can be assigned to i) bowls with conical body; ii) bowls with carinated wall; iii) the combination of conical body and inside thickened rim; iii) the combination of carinated wall and elongated rim.

Then we come to closed shapes, the most attested category. Concerning jars, we notice changes in their presence, i.e. in the most attested shapes: in level 4 we find high-neck jars that decrease in level 3. They are replaced by small-neck jars. Together with them, a new element is the presence of continuous neck jars, before totally absent. A new rim shape emerges, i.e. the elongated rim, outside thickened. In level 2 continuous jars increase, while small-neck jars are widely attested as well, with the new trait of externally thickened rim, rolled. They continue into level 1. It follows that chronological markers are: i) high-neck jars; ii) small-neck jars; iii) continuous neck jars; iv) elongated rim; v) rolled rim. Even if pots are not widely represented as jars, we can anyway isolate chronological indicators. From the sequence it emerges that pots without neck occur continuously in levels 4, 3 and 2¹⁶; pots with continuous neck are first attested in level 3, together with the high-neck exemplars. Large jars cannot be taken into account as chronological markers, since they seem to maintain the same shape without neck¹⁷.

4.2 Upper Syrian Euphrates Valley sites

As it is already well known, the great advantage of this region is obviously the presence of the river and, consequently, the origin and development of settlements on the river's right and left bank. Thus, Tall Bazi is part of a "settlements belt", which existed during the second part

of the Middle Bronze Age and during the first part of the Late Bronze Age.

The settlement of El-Qitar, ancient Till-Abnu, is located very near to Tall Bazi and presents similar characteristics: here the presence of a defensive wall that surrounds the artificial hill resembles the situation found on the slopes of the citadel of Bazi (IAMONI 2012: 50). Middle and Late Bronze Age assemblages have been recovered in the Orthostat Building 14 and in Building 15, and in the fills of the western walls. In the Upper Settlement (Area Y) the pottery recovered indicates changes in the assemblage (McCLELLAN 2007: 54). Pottery has been subdivided into eight groups and we notice, in these groups, the resemblance with vessels from the Nordhang level 4: bowls with inverted rim (A10/11), slightly carinated bowls (A14/16), large heavy jar/krater (E3), carinated cups (C9), neck-less jars (D24/25), tall-necked storage jars (D26). To the successive phases we notice the resemblance of bowls with inverted rims (A10/11 late), lip inverted-rim bowls (A3/4, 12/13), lightly carinated bowls (A14/16; McCLELLAN 2007: 56).

Tell Hadidi, ancient Azu, is located to the south of Qitar and it was a large and important settlement, especially during the Late Bronze Age: according to Dornemann, during the Middle Bronze Age the settlement contracted to the upper part of the tell and expanded once more to the lower part (DORNEMANN 2007: 43). Observing the Bazi Level 4 ceramic assemblage, we notice similarities to the assemblages from Area and F, while the assemblages from Level 3, 2 and 1 resemble the assemblage from the Tablet Building. As for the Bazi assemblage, here prevail closed shapes on open shapes. The large presence of jars without neck and with small neck resembles the assemblage of levels 3-1. Although comparisons between the Hadidi ceramic assemblages and the Bazi ceramic assemblages are striking, this has not been helpful for the absolute dating of the assemblages, since the Hadidi C14 dating is no more up-to-date (but see this volume).

Another important settlement is located in Tall Munbaqa, identified with ancient Ekalte. Middle Bronze Age settlement is located in the Kuppe-Nord, in the area of the Mud-brick Building: pottery has been recovered from rooms 10, 15, 9. Another assemblage has been found in House AD, Rooms 21-24. Other stratified pottery comes from the areas Nordtor and Osttor (CZICHON 2008: 99.) It is noteworthy that bowls with short, inward bent rim are considered as indices of the transition Middle – Late Bronze Age: they resemble those of level 4 at Tell Bazi. The vessels defined as small pots are indicated as MBA II indicators: they remind the small jars of level 4. Examples of jars and large jars are similar to those from level 4. Pottery from Late Bronze Age contexts belongs to

14 They constitute the most attested sub-category among open shapes category in the whole sequence.

15 Bowls with spherical body decrease.

16 We remind that pots are absent in level 1.

17 Such continuity in the shape is probably due to the function of large jars: they are storage vessels and it can be assumed that their function goes beyond the fashion.

phase II-Mbq, which is subdivided into two sub-phases, or settlements periods: the first period comprises phases II-Mbq-6 to II-Mbq-4; the second period comprises phases II-Mbq-3 to II-Mbq-0 (WERNER 2008: 140). The phase II-Mbq-5/4 is recognizable in pottery from Houses A, B, K, L and O excavated in the trench Ibrahims Garten; Houses M, AK (Innenstadt); Houses G and T (Außenstadt); Houses P (Kuppe; WERNER 2008: 140). The presence of bowls with in-turned rim confirms the LBA date of levels from 3 to 1 at Tell Bazi, as well as the presence of deep bowls with spherical body. Similar are pots and jars, although the most similarities occur with the open shapes assemblage.

Meskene, ancient Emar, is situated further south on the Euphrates west bank. Middle Bronze Age levels have been excavated in the Upper Town, levels 6 to 4, and in the Town Wall area, while Late Bronze Age levels have been excavated in the Upper Town, level 2: according to Sakal (this volume), there are no levels dated to the early Late Bronze Age. The Middle Bronze Age pottery from UT 6-4 fits with that from the Nordhang, since the presence of bowls with in-turned rims and jars with a small neck is the same as in level 4 (FINKBEINER 2001: 83). The assemblage dated to Late Bronze Age from UT 2 resembles that from levels 3 and 2 of the Nordhang; especially in the shapes of plates and bowls, jars without neck or with small neck, pots (FINKBEINER 2001: 66-73; EIXLER 2003: 29).

Tell Umm el-Marra, ancient Dub or Tuba, is the only site located outside the proper Euphrates valley: it is in the Jabbul Plain, halfway between Aleppo and ancient Emar (CURVERS ET AL. 1997: 204). Periods III a-c are dated to the Middle Bronze Age, while Period II b is dated to the Late Bronze Age I: both were recovered on the Acropolis West, Middle Bronze Age levels were recovered on Acropolis East and Acropolis North, Late Bronze Age levels in the Southeast Area, Acropolis Center, Acropolis East and West Area A. Middle Bronze Age II pottery presents bowls with in-turned rim, large jars without neck (Schwartz, this volume). Late Bronze Age assemblage is well recognizable through pots with continuous neck, jars with high-neck, and plates or shallow bowls with in-turned or cut rims (SCHWARTZ, this volume).

5. Conclusions

Tall Bazi is part of a cluster of settlements that existed along the nowadays Syrian Upper Euphrates Valley in the 2nd millennium BC, and had a continuity in their occupation in the Middle and Late Bronze Age (OTTO 2011: 173). The wall system, part of which was found on the northern slope, was probably in use when the settlement limits were set to the proper mound. As the population grew and there was necessity of more space for the inhabitants, the settled area on the Nordhang was abandoned. The characteristics of the settlement in this part of the tell offer very convincing similarities to other settlements in the area, as those examined in §4.2. Such similarities are confirmed also by the ceramic assemblage recovered in the Nordhang contexts, in which the occurrence of bowls with conical body and inside thickened rim, bowls with carinated wall and inside thickened or elongated rim, high-neck jars, small-neck jars, and continuous neck jars provide evidence for a dating of the Tell Bazi Nordhang Levels 3 and 2 to the Late Bronze Age I. Level 4, on the base of comparisons, has to be placed in an earlier phase, since presence of Middle Bronze Age ceramic types is attested. Although we do not have absolute dates, i.e. from C14 samples, evidences from comparisons, both concerning pottery and settlements architecture and layout, tend to the dating of Levels 3 to 1 of the North slope (Nordhang) of Tall Bazi to the first part of the Late Bronze Age (16th – 15th century BC), while Level 4 dates to the Middle Bronze Age II, namely to its last part (17th century BC), thus evidencing the value of this level as the transitional phase from Middle Bronze to Late Bronze Age.

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