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# Contents

## ARTICLES

Maria Vittoria TONIETTI Classification of the Ebla Language: Developments from the Ebla Archive and Contemporary Evidence.....	1
Agnese VACCA, Georges MOUAMAR, Marta D'ANDREA, Stephen LUMSDEN A Fresh Look at Hama in an Inter-regional Context. New Data from Phase J Materials in the National Museum of Denmark.....	17
Frances PINNOCK A New Dress for the <i>Maliktum</i> . Attires and Functions of Court-Ladies at Ebla in the Early and Old Syrian Periods.....	59
Paolo MATTHIAE The Old Syrian Temple N's Carved Basin and the Relation between Aleppo and Ebla.....	109
Federico MANUELLI Drifting Southward? Tracing Aspects of Cultural Continuity and Change in the Late 2 <sup>nd</sup> Millennium BC Syro-Anatolian Region.....	139
Maria Giulia AMADASI GUZZO, José Ángel ZAMORA The Phoenician <i>Marzeah</i> – New Evidence from Cyprus in the 4 <sup>th</sup> Century BC.....	187

## SHORT NOTES

1. Marco BONECHI: On the Ebla Fragments of Sumerian Lexical List <i>MEE</i> 15 40, 41, 42, 43, 52, 53 and 61.....	215
2. Paolo MATTHIAE: An Unidentified Motif of the Old Syrian Glyptic and Temple P2 at Ebla.....	221

## BOOK REVIEWS

- Francesca BAFFI, Roberto FIORENTINO and Luca PEYRONEL (eds), *Tell Tuqan Excavations and Regional Perspectives. Cultural Developments in Inner Syria from the Early Bronze Age to the Persian/Hellenistic Period. Proceedings of the International Conference May 15<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> 2013 – Lecce* (M. D'Andrea).....229
- Luigi TURRI, "Vieni, lascia che ti dica di altre città". *Ambiente naturale, umano e politico della valle dell'Oronte nella Tarda età del Bronzo* (SAQ 3) (L. Mori).....235
- Anja Hellmuth KRAMBERGER, *Die Pfeilspitzen aus Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad/Dūr-Katlimmu von der mittellassyrischen bis zur parthisch-römischen Zeit in ihrem Westasiatischen und Euroasiatischen Kontext* (BATSH 22) (D. Nadali).....241

## ARABIC ABSTRACTS

## المقالات

- تصنيف لغة أبلا: تطورات لفهم أرشيف إبلا وبعض الدلائل المعاصرة  
ماريا فيتوريا تونيتي..... ١
- نظرة جديدة إلى المحتوى الإقليمي لحماة. بيانات جديدة لمواد الفترة J في المتحف الوطني في الدمارك  
أنيزه فاكا، جورج معمر، مارتا دي أندريا، ستيفان لومسدن..... ١
- ثوب جديد للملكة. أزياء ووظائف النساء في البلاط الإبلاني خلال الفترة السورية القديمة  
فرانسيس بينوك..... ٢
- لحوض النذري المنحوت في المعبد السوري القديم N والصلات ما بين حلب وإبلا  
باولو ماتيه..... ٣
- الإنعطاف جنوباً؟ إستتباع أوجه الإستمرار والتغير الثقافي خلال نهاية الألف الثاني قبل الميلاد في المنطقة السورية الأناضولية  
فيدريكو مانويلي..... ٣
- ال Marzeah الفينيقية : دلائل جديدة من القرن الرابع قبل الميلاد في قبرص  
ماريا جوليا أمادازي - خوسيه أنخل زامورا..... ٤
- رؤوس أقلام
- حول بعض الكسر الإبلانية للقائمة المعجمية السومرية MEE 15 40, 41, 42, 43, 52, 53, 61  
ماركو بونيني..... ٥
- عنصر غير معروف في فن النقش السوري القديم والمعبد P2 في إبلا  
باولو ماتيه..... ٥

## Drifting Southward? Tracing Aspects of Cultural Continuity and Change in the Late 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium BC Syro-Anatolian Region\*

*This article analyses continuity and changes in the material culture at the site of Arslantepe during the last centuries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC. The mound, located in the Malatya province (SE Turkey), has a thousand-year history of occupation characterised by the interaction of different cultural influences. During the Late Bronze Age, the impact of the Hittite expansion could be seen in the use of typically central Anatolian artifacts. At the fall of the Hittite Empire, Arslantepe showed aspects of continuity with the Hittite tradition along with the emergence of new trends connected with the western bank of the Euphrates valley and the inner Syrian territories. After a historical and chronological introduction, this paper will present Early Iron Age material from Arslantepe and compare it with assemblages from key contemporary sites in the Euphrates and northern Levant areas, revealing aspects of both local identity and extra-regional contacts. A diachronic perspective will also allow us to integrate the Late Bronze Age material into the historical picture in order to understand transformations in the relationship pattern between the site and its neighbouring regions. The analysis will also be contextualised within a wider theoretical frame by identifying elements of continuity, transformation and change in the material culture and discussing how these were influenced by the development of cross-cultural relationships.*

### 1. Continuity, Transformation and Change: The Case of Arslantepe and the Syro-Anatolian Region at the Turn of the 1<sup>st</sup> Millennium BC

In recent years, excavations and studies of the Late Bronze and Iron Age phases at Arslantepe have been resumed.<sup>1</sup> A first round of activities, conducted at the site between 2008 and 2010, had mostly shed some light on the development of the Neo-Hittite citadel during the late 9<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, providing, for the first time, a reliable context and dating for the construction and use of the famous “Lions Gate”.<sup>2</sup> In those years, the earlier Iron Age phases of occupation were only

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1 Liverani 2012; Frangipane, Manuelli and Vignola 2017: 80–88; Frangipane *et al.* 2018.  
2 Liverani 2010: 650–657; Manuelli 2011: 70–72.

partially investigated, bringing to light a sequence stretching between the late 11<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC. The first aspect that stood out from the examination of the materials from these levels was the evident longevity of the Late Bronze Age traits, which underlined the well-known historical continuity affecting Arslantepe and its territory during the last centuries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC.<sup>3</sup> After a short break, digging activities on the Iron Age levels restarted in 2015 and 2016. The Early Iron Age phases were reached, enhancing the analysis of the material and improving our knowledge concerning the aspects of continuity and transformation at the site.

More broadly, the transition from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age in the Syro-Anatolian territory has been persistently revisited during the last years, thanks to new archaeological results and a growing corpus of epigraphic discoveries.<sup>4</sup> While it might be true that to some extent this so-called “Dark Age” was characterised by dramatic turmoil and ethnic strife, increasing evidence of cultural continuity portrays a more complex and multifaceted historical scenario.<sup>5</sup> However, despite the new discoveries, it still seems that our understanding of the Syro-Anatolian region at the beginning of the Iron Age is unequivocally fragmented. In the Hittite motherland as well as its surrounding areas, we find drastic changes relative to the previous Late Bronze Age tradition in terms of settlement patterns, economic and administrative activities and cultural customs.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, local niches of continuity, attested in south-central and south-eastern Anatolia as well as northern Syria, were essential channels for the transmission of the Hittite imperial tradition into the Iron Age and for the subsequent formation of the Neo-Hittite States.<sup>7</sup>

However, this continuity is essentially a political concept, based on the interpretation of a conclusive set of written sources testifying to the remarkable endurance of the Hittite dynastic lines into the new era and the transfer of power from the central Anatolian plateau to the southern and south-eastern territories. The identification of this continuity in the material culture of the Late Bronze-Iron Age sites of the Syro-Anatolian area is, in contrast, a more complex issue.

“Continuity” is a concept that has been regularly employed in archaeology.<sup>8</sup> Although often used inconsistently in the absence of suitable discussions of its

3 Manuelli 2012: 367–372; Hawkins 2000: 282–288.

4 The term “Syro-Anatolian” is used here to identify the region that geographically includes south-eastern Turkey and north-eastern Syria. Historically, this is the territory that more than any others was influenced, politically and culturally, by the Hittite expansion. For the use of different terminologies in accordance with historical, geographical or ethnic issues, see Gilibert 2011: 1–6.

5 Harrison 2010: 83–84.

6 See Genz 2011; Summers 2017.

7 Simon 2011; Weeden 2013: 1–16; Hawkins and Weeden 2016: 10–11; Matessi and Pieri 2017: 101–102; Payne 2017.

8 The term is for instance frequently used with respect to different fields in the framework of the Anatolian Late Bronze–Iron Age transition, see Mazzoni 1997; Müller 2003; Orthmann 2002b; Simon 2011; Frangipane and Liverani 2013; Summers 2017.

correct use, continuity generally describes something that lasts over time, surviving one “period” (or “phase”) and bridging it to another.<sup>9</sup> It highlights a persistence of human activities, implying that new cultural patterns continue to draw upon pre-existing traditions, models and lifestyles.<sup>10</sup>

However, as with any other human process involving time and its tempo, continuity might be hard to assess quantitatively and qualitatively.<sup>11</sup> This is especially evident in the case of material culture, in the sense of a tangible expression of ideas and the materialisation of activities of thought shared by a community.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, material culture constantly evolves, reshaping its traits in a pattern that is not always linear. The idea of continuity in material culture is thus not only based on the immutable persistence of attributes, shapes, customs and other patterns of behaviours but also on the gradualness of their modification. It does not rule out the possibility of change but certainly implies that variations are traceable within an uninterrupted and homogeneous line of development.<sup>13</sup> It is therefore clear how no attempt to understand continuity in material culture can dispense with the comprehension of its processes of change and transformation as well.

The concept of “transformation” is indeed linked with that of continuity. It entails the identification of progressive alterations of form, appearance, nature and character, involving slow and gradual dynamics and fluxes of modifications instead of abrupt replacements.<sup>14</sup> The concepts of continuity and transformation are thus strictly entangled, so much that we would not probably talk about a process of continuity if we did not find any trace of transformation within it, and vice versa. The idea of “change” is instead antithetical to continuity. It implies the existence of a clear and visible mutation, a substantial difference in the main traits of what comes later when compared with what existed before. In contrast with transformation, change can be radical as well as drastic and might occur suddenly over a short time.<sup>15</sup>

Aspects of continuity, transformation and change in material culture are of course induced by several factors. They are first of all related to the nature of the excavated site and assemblage, the characteristics of the material itself, as well as

9 On the relationship between the concepts of continuity and transition, see Frangipane 2012: 40–41.

10 Cohen 2009: 1–3.

11 Liverani 2009: 18–19.

12 DeMarrais 2004: 11–15; Reade 2007: 34–36. For an overview of anthropological and archaeological approaches of material culture studies, see also Hicks 2010; Roberts and Vander Linden 2011: 2–10.

13 For the importance of tracking changes in material culture in order to pursue a better idea of continuity, see Arsebük 2003: 4.

14 For a discussion of the concepts of gradualness, change, continuity and transformation in material culture and their relations to each other, see Iamoni 2014: 18–19.

15 For an overview and discussion of the actions, agencies and “movers” influencing cultural changes, see Gramsch 2015.

the historical dynamics of the period we are dealing with. One of the key points for properly analysing elements of continuity, transformation and change in material culture is probably the understanding of the complex dynamics in which aspects of local behaviours overlap and merge with external influences derived from cross-cultural contacts.

The site of Arslantepe, located on the western margin of the eastern Anatolian region between the Taurus and the Anti-Taurus chains on the eastern edge of the Malatya plain a few kilometres south of the Euphrates river, represents an excellent model to explore and investigate this equilibrium of tradition and innovation.<sup>16</sup> The long-lasting investigations have allowed the reconstruction of the site's millennia of history in which remarkable events of destruction characterise the end of each period or phase through an overall sequence of uninterrupted occupation.<sup>17</sup> This blend of episodes of dire breaks and historical development clearly creates a suitable background to identify pathways of continuity, transformation and change. The geographical situation of the site, standing between the fertile fluvial plain and the rich mountain zones, creates an even more stimulating picture. Over the centuries it facilitated the interaction of the surrounding civilisations, especially from the Anatolian, the Syro-Mesopotamian and the Transcaucasian worlds, enabling extra-regional contacts that inevitably allowed different foreign influences to take hold and to transfuse themselves with the rooted aspects of the local tradition.<sup>18</sup>

This article presents newly excavated material from Arslantepe and its aspects of continuity, transformation and change, inspected in view of the development of the cross-cultural relationships of the site during the last centuries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC.

## 2. The Euphrates Region and Beyond. History, Chronology and Problems

The Euphrates region at the Syro-Turkish border has always played a prominent role for the reconstruction of the historical events following the demise of the centralised states of the Late Bronze Age. The breakdown of the Hittite Empire at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC is still intensely debated among specialists today. The latest developments in the research have mainly pointed out the endemic causes of the crisis, rooted mostly in the economic fragility of the Hittite system and closely related to the weakness of the court of Ḫattuša and to

16 For a general introduction to the site, see Frangipane 1993: 42–43. For further physical and geographical conditions of the region, see Alparslan 2017: 213–214; Brown and Wilkinson 2017: 147–149.

17 See Palumbi 2008: 223–254; Frangipane 2010; 2014; Liverani 2012; Frangipane and Liverani 2013.

18 See Frangipane and Liverani 2013: 350.



its progressive decentralisation towards peripheral regions, such as Karkemiš and Tarḫuntašša.<sup>19</sup>

This devolution of power is certainly foundational for the political continuity seen in the territories of southern and south-eastern Anatolia as well as northern Syria at the dawn of the Iron Age. In light of what both textual and archaeological data have revealed during the last 20 years of research, scholars have started to consider the idea of a “Dark Age”, which for a long time was applied to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century BC in Anatolia and its surroundings, to be obsolete.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the political gap between the late Hittite phase of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC and the formation of the so-called Neo-Hittite Kingdoms of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century BC has been progressively filled with solid and conclusive evidence (Fig. 1).<sup>21</sup>

The political continuity of the Euphrates region at the Late Bronze–Iron Age transition is first of all testified by the renewed territorial position of Karkemiš, at least during the first part of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC. Clay sealings from Lidar Höyük attest to the presence at the city of Kuzi-Tešub, “King of the Land of Karkemiš, son of Talmi-Tešub”.<sup>22</sup> They specifically allow us to establish a perpetuation into the new era of the line of Hittite viceroys directly descending from Šuppiluliuma I.<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, old and new excavations at Karkemiš have so far provided little epigraphic information about the period preceding the magnificent 10<sup>th</sup> century BC at the site.<sup>24</sup> This historical gap is largely filled by Luwian hieroglyphic monuments coming from Arslantepe and its territory. In the rock inscriptions from Gürun and Kötükale and the stele from Ispékçür, which are all located eastwards of the Malatya plain along the Tohma Su river, the local rulers Runtiyas and Arnuwantis, the “Country Lords of the city Malizi”, both declared themselves “Grandson of Kuzi-Tešub, the Great King, the Hero of Karkemiš”.<sup>25</sup> Subsequent discoveries at Arslantepe have positioned the site at the center of this historical scenario and enrich the picture even more. Carved reliefs found reused in the so-called “Lions Gate” record the name of the “Potent King” PUGNUS-*mili*, the son of Kuzi-Tešub of Karkemiš and the father of Runtiyas and Arnuwantis.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, a *bulla* found on the top of the mound yielded

19 Seeher 2001; Schoop and Seeher 2006: 57–58, 65–69; Schachner 2011: 94–98, 109–114; de Martino 2016: 109–110.

20 Hawkins 2002; Seeher 2010.

21 Strobel 2011: 199–204; Bryce 2012: 49–63, 195–207.

22 Hawkins 1988; 2000: 574–575.

23 Hawkins and Peker 2014: 107; Dinçol *et al.* 2014: 127. For further discussions about the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC at Karkemiš, see also Aro 2013: 246–255; Weeden 2013: 6–9; Hawkins and Weeden 2016: 9–11.

24 See Hawkins 2000: 76–83; Peker 2016: 13–49; Gilibert 2015: 141–142. For a preliminary report on the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC clay sealing collection recently discovered at the site, see Peker 2017.

25 Hawkins 2000: 295–304.

26 Hawkins 2000: 306–313. For further discussions, see also Manuelli and Mori 2016: 212–216; Simon 2016.

on its surface the inscription “Runti(yas) king of the land of Ma(lizi)”.<sup>27</sup> Further written evidence from the site and its surroundings, attributed to the descendants of the above-mentioned rulers, also allows us to extend the genealogical lines of the Malizi kings up to the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>28</sup>

This bulk of Luwian hieroglyphic documents therefore reveals that while the central power at Hattuša had vanished, the political and ideological legacy, as well as the main line of the Hittite royalty, were deliberately preserved in the Anatolian Euphrates region.<sup>29</sup>

Further traces of the political inheritance of the Hittite state into the 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century BC, namely the continuity of the genealogical lines of its kings and the rhetoric of the Luwian inscriptions, are attested in other regions as well, although in a less consistent and sometimes more controversial pattern.<sup>30</sup> Despite its fragmentation, the emerging historical picture shows the rise, in the former Hittite peripheries, of a series of independent reigns that survived the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC crisis. They were linked in the way they used certain media to perpetuate the imperial idea of kingship as a concrete vehicle to legitimate their new authority.<sup>31</sup>

But how can we match this historical reconstruction with archaeological findings? And which evidence of this continuity is traceable in material culture? Moreover, how can we build a coherent and comprehensive chronological framework that considers and balances both historical and archaeological data?

It is clearly difficult to answer these questions – first of all because nowadays the number of 12<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century BC excavation sites of the whole Syro-Anatolian area that provide reliable and detailed sequences is still rather limited. Secondly, the most important sites of the region have been mainly investigated during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century AD, using out-dated approaches and methodologies and with the aim of collecting valuable artworks. In this context, the remarkable collection of bas-reliefs and figurative sculptures brought to light during those years represents the most evident manifestation of an uninterrupted strategy of political con-

27 Hawkins 2000: 575–576; Mora 2013: 271–272.

28 Hawkins and Peker 2014: 107; Dinçol *et al.* 2014: 127. For an analysis of the inscriptions, see Hawkins 2000: 304–305, 314–322.

29 Hawkins 2002: 144–148; 2009: 164–165.

30 Whether the stele from Karahöyük (Hawkins 2000: 282–283, 288–295; Woudhuizen 2003) should be attributed to the kingdoms of Karkemiš (Giusfredi 2010: 41–42; Harmanşah 2011: 68–69; Bryce 2012: 85–87; Simon 2013: 824–826) or Tarhuntaşša (Hawkins 2000: 287–289; Hawkins and Weeden 2016: 10–11) is still a matter of intense debate. The rock monuments from Kızıldağ, Karadağ and Burunkaya (Hawkins 2000: 433–442) are controversially dated to either the 13<sup>th</sup> (Sürenhagen 2008; Mora and D’Alfonso 2012: 386–387; D’Alfonso 2014) or the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC (Harmanşah 2011: 63–65; Oreshko 2017). The inscriptions from the Storm-God temple of the citadel of Aleppo (Kohlmeyer 2009; Hawkins 2013), dating to the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC, are still the subject of argument (Sass 2010; Singer 2012; Weeden 2013, 11–16; Hawkins and Weeden 2016: 11).

31 Mazzoni 1997: 307–310; Bonatz 2001; Balza and Mora 2015: 429–430; Manuelli 2016; Manuelli and Mori 2016: 229–234; Osborne 2017: 11–20.

tinuity, bridging the Late Bronze to the Iron Age.<sup>32</sup> Although figurative sculptures supply a fundamental source of information, they always show the way power was displayed by the rulers and the image that kingship conveyed to the populace, without dealing with aspects of daily life and the behaviours of the communities.<sup>33</sup> As these more prominent pieces represent works of high art, the analysis of daily and artisanal activities has been long neglected in the study of the formation of the Syro-Anatolian societies during the Iron Age. Moreover, when artefacts of daily life were taken into account, especially pottery, they have mostly been used in an attempt to reconstruct historical macro-events and political upheavals, i.e. invasions and wars as well as large-scale population movements and migrations, focusing on imported material and disregarding the development of the local aspects.<sup>34</sup> These facts had several repercussions. The most evident concerns the difficulty of establishing comprehensive chronologies at the investigated sites, since this is mostly done by means of the evolution of the stylistic and iconographic traits of the figurative sculptures as well as the presence of exogenous components.

The recent resumption of fieldwork activities at some key Iron Age sites has helped to fill this gap and shed new light on the chronological and cultural evolution of the Syro-Anatolian region during the last centuries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC.<sup>35</sup> This has also been accompanied by the development of new research methodologies that focus on understanding the dynamics of interaction affecting the societies involved through the analysis of the processes of mutual assimilation and communication.<sup>36</sup> In this framework, material culture has been used as a mean to understand elements of continuity or change, mirroring social and cultural aspects, as well as an expression of contacts, transformations and cross-cultural interactions.<sup>37</sup> We have also pursued new in-depth elaborations of the materials and the creation of intra-site sequences, as well as regional and extra-regional chronological assessments.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the fact that the establishment of local chronologies is a process currently underway, a coherent outline is slowly taking place, especially thanks to

32 Orthmann 2002a; Mazzoni 2013: 471–474; Gilibert 2015: 139–145.

33 For the visual messages and performances represented by figurative reliefs during the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC, see Mazzoni 1997: 310–318; Harmanşah 2007: 80–83; 2013: 45–50, 180–182; Gilibert 2011: 115–119.

34 For a synthesis on this problem and new discussions, see Jung 2017.

35 New insights into the 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century BC material sequences and chronologies have been recently achieved in the Euphrates region at Karkemiş (Giacosa and Zaina in press), in south-central Anatolia at Kınık Höyük (D'Alfonso, Gorrini and Mora 2016: 599–602) and in the 'Amuq valley at Tell Tayinat (Harrison 2013: 64–72; Ünlü 2017), Alalakh (Yener 2013: 20–21; Montesanto in press) and Chatal Höyük (Pucci 2013).

36 Mazzoni 2013: 466–467.

37 See Gates 2013 (Cilicia and 'Amuq); Summers 2013 (Euphrates); Venturi 2013b (northern Syria).

38 See Venturi 2007: 381–388 (Tell Afis); Blaylock 2016: 414–425 (Tille Höyük); Ünlü 2017 (Tell Tayinat).

cross-cultural associations. In the specific framework of the chronology of the Anatolian Euphrates area the situation is twofold. The lower region follows the Syrian chronology, which basically splits the Iron Age in two major periods, the Iron Age I (ca. 1200–900 BC) and the Iron Age II (ca. 900–700 BC), according to the sequences excavated at Tell Afis and Hama.<sup>39</sup> The upper region instead follows the eastern Anatolian chronology that distinguishes an Early Iron Age (ca. 1200–800 BC) from a Middle Iron Age (ca. 800–600 BC) on the basis of the periodization established at Korucutepe.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the lack of consensus around any univocal terminology, mostly due to the diversified influences and connections affecting the two sub-regions, a synchronisation of the respective chronologies is possible in view of both the general framework provided by historical information and the association of comparable excavated material sequences (Fig. 2). In this promising scenario of growing insight and complementarity of historical and archaeological data, the specific case of Arslantepe today offers one of the most stimulating contributions to our understanding of the development of the cultural aspects that affected the whole Syro-Anatolian region at the beginning of the Iron Age.

### 3. The Early Iron Age at Arslantepe: Old and New Investigations and Results

The investigations conducted at Arslantepe by the Italian Archaeological Expedition of the Sapienza University of Rome since the beginning of the 1960s have allowed researchers over the years to establish a reliable Late Bronze–Iron Age sequence and improve our knowledge of the evolution of its material over time. This has been accomplished thanks to the presence of a continuous architectural sequence as well as to the examination of its artefacts and association with radiometric analyses.

But the case of Arslantepe is also representative of the general problem discussed in the previous section. Indeed, for several years the prominent historical role of the site as known from written sources, in conjunction with the valuable archaeological discoveries, have hardly been examined together in order to comprehensively reconstruct the development of the settlement and its territory. It was only during the current round of excavations and analysis that researchers started pursuing an exhaustive picture bringing together the whole range of data. The most recent examinations have specifically been providing new insights into the formation, during the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC, of the local kingdom of Malizi, which had previously been evaluated exclusively on the basis of the Luwian hieroglyph-

39 Mazzoni 2000; Venturi 2007: 297–301.

40 van Loon 1980: 276–277; Köroğlu 2003: 231.

ic inscriptions carved on the bas-reliefs found in the past at the site and on the rock monuments widespread in the region.<sup>41</sup>

According to the above-mentioned eastern Anatolian chronology, Arslantepe divides into an Early and a Middle Iron Age. The stratigraphic sequence allows us to split the first period in an Early Iron I (ca. 1200–1000 BC) and an Early Iron II (ca. 1000–850 BC).<sup>42</sup> A description of the site's sequence is briefly presented here, followed by a more detailed analysis of the earliest Iron Age contexts.

The first official excavations at Arslantepe were conducted on the northern slopes of the mound in the 1930s by Louis Delaporte, bringing to light the famous “Lions Gate”, which provided an idea of the monumentality of the Neo-Hittite settlement.<sup>43</sup> The gateway, consisting of two adjoining chambers, was found destroyed by a violent fire associated with the conquest of the site by the Assyrian forces that, according to historical sources, occurred during the reign of Sargon II in 712 BC.<sup>44</sup> The abundance and prominence of the bas-reliefs found in the gate itself and in its proximity immediately attracted the interest and the attention of scholars.<sup>45</sup> Their iconographic and stylistic analysis for a long time represented the only basis to date the gate system, given the absence of a proper stratigraphic sequence and knowledge of the associated material. Accordingly, the dating remained quite unresolved, fluctuating between the late 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium and the first quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC.<sup>46</sup> The recent re-examination of the Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions carved on some of the reliefs and their association with those on rock monuments from the surrounding territory allowed a chronological reassessment of the sculptures, which we can now confidently date from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>47</sup> This has been also confirmed by the developments in the research on the stylistic and iconographic evolution of the Syro-Anatolian art at the Late Bronze–Iron Age transition.<sup>48</sup> This early date of the reliefs clearly conflicts with the common historical dating of the final destruction of the settlement by Sargon II of Assyria and opened the way for further considerations and hypotheses. It gradually brought scholars to consider the “Lions Gate” as a later construction for which *spolia* blocks from earlier Iron Age contexts had been reused.<sup>49</sup>

41 Manuelli and Mori 2016; Frangipane, Manuelli and Vignola 2017: 83–88; Manuelli in press.

42 See Fig. 2 for a sketch of the sequence and Manuelli in press for its details.

43 Delaporte 1940.

44 For archaeological evidence, see Delaporte 1940: 13–15, 40–43; Alvaro 2012: 348. For the written documents, see Fuchs 1994: 125–128; Frame 2009: 66–69; Elayi 2017: 109–113.

45 For an update on the reconstruction, interpretation and primary location of the slabs discovery, see Manuelli and Mori 2016: 222–227.

46 Delaporte 1940: 39–40; Akurgal 1949: 139–141; Orthmann 1971: 91–100, 463–464.

47 Hawkins 2000: 296–297. See also Dinçol *et al.* 2014: 127; Hawkins and Peker 2014: 107; Hawkins and Weeden 2016: 10–11.

48 Mazzoni 1997: 311–317; Orthmann 2002a: 156–157; Gilibert 2011: 115–118.

49 Liverani 2010: 670–671; Harmansah 2011: 71.

This was already confirmed by the findings of a second French team, directed by Claude Schaeffer, which briefly resumed the excavations at the mound in 1948, bringing to light the remains of an ancient gate system under the “Lions Gate” level.<sup>50</sup> It had already been assumed that this gateway could represent the original location of the sculptures later reused.<sup>51</sup>

The Italian expedition started working at Arslantepe in 1961, renewing the excavations in the northern part of the mound. The trench where the “Lions Gate” had been found was reopened and deepened, and new sectors investigated. The work conducted here for ten consecutive campaigns led to the discovery of the whole Late Bronze Age and Iron Age sequences.<sup>52</sup> Above all, it is important to stress the discovery of a single chambered gateway, dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC and destroyed by the conflagration, which brought an end to the Late Bronze Age settlement.<sup>53</sup> The ensuing shift in the research interest from 1971, towards the excavation of the extraordinary proto-historic remains brought to light on the south-western slope of the mound, unfortunately did not allow for a further investigation of the historical levels.<sup>54</sup>

In 2007 a new-targeted project of excavation and study started with the aim of uncovering fresh material and data concerning the development of the site during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> millennia BC.<sup>55</sup> The investigations have been carried out on a large sector of ca. 500 m<sup>2</sup> that enlarged and deepened the old “Lions Gate” trench. The aim was to better contextualise and date Delaporte’s findings and to review the site’s sequence, while also providing insights about the region during these crucial centuries of its history.<sup>56</sup>

A long and continuous sequence has been defined with ten architectural levels bridging the period between the post-Late Bronze Age destruction and the Assyrian occupation.<sup>57</sup> Concerning the later phases of this sequence, it is important to stress the discovery of two monumental pillared buildings associated with the terracing wall connected with the “Lions Gate”.<sup>58</sup> Material coming from these structures provided a confident dating for the construction of the gate system to the early 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, supporting the idea that the bas-reliefs found here were re-

50 Schaeffer 1949: 342–343; Weidner 1952–1953.

51 Meriggi 1966: 67–68; Pecorella 1975: 15–16.

52 Puglisi and Meriggi 1964: 18–30; Pecorella 1975; Manuelli 2013: 25–48.

53 Pecorella 1975: 3–6, 65–68; Manuelli 2013: 29–32, 46–48, 406–407.

54 See Frangipane and Liverani 2013: 349–352.

55 Excavations and researches at Arslantepe are funded by Sapienza University of Rome and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The 2016 campaign has also benefited from a generous grant awarded by the National Geographic Society, aimed at investigating the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC at the site (grant # 990116).

56 Liverani 2010: 649–650.

57 Manuelli in press.

58 Liverani 2011.

used from earlier structures.<sup>59</sup> The excavated sequence goes back to the early 12<sup>th</sup> century BC and, despite the fact that the transitional Late Bronze-Early Iron Age layers following the demise of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC gateway have not been reached yet, the important remains brought to light so far provide interesting insights for discussion. The Early Iron Age I phases are characterised by the overlapping of two monumental levels, which at the moment can be roughly dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> and to the 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC respectively.

The later phase is marked by the presence of a massive fortification wall of mud bricks on a stone foundation (Fig. 3). It was four meters thick and has been preserved for a length of ca. 30 meters and an elevation of up to 3.5 meters. Its destruction was particularly catastrophic, as a thick layer of heavily burnt debris stemming from its collapse has been found over a large area. Segments of a thin mud-plastered floor associated with the enclosure have been identified. Two figurative bas-reliefs and five aniconic slabs have been found lying on the floor and sealed, together with other associated material, by the collapse of the fortification.<sup>60</sup> A continuation eastwards of the city wall was identified during the first round of excavations by the Italian expedition.<sup>61</sup> It can be assumed that a gate system was originally located at the junction of the two areas.<sup>62</sup> In fact, this is the place where the deep trench was dug to remove the “Lions Gate” and relocate the stones to the Museum of the Anatolian Civilization at Ankara, and where Schaeffer excavated his trench, in which he allegedly found the gateway underneath the “Lions Gate”.

The destruction of the city wall marks an important change in the management of this part of the settlement. On its ruins a succession of pits and silos as well as few evanescent structures have been brought to light, marking an area specifically devoted to storage activities.<sup>63</sup> This phase, belonging to the Early Iron Age II (ca. 1000–850 BC), covers the whole period up to the construction of the earliest structures associated with the “Lions Gate” system.

Underneath the mud plaster floor connected to the fortification, an earlier phase with fairly monumental structures has been excavated (Fig. 4). The digging has been restricted to a smaller area, given the presence of the city wall and the impossibility of its removal. It consists of two large rooms, whose thick walls were made with greenish-coloured mud bricks (the so-called “green building”). The walls were covered with several layers of thick white plaster and have been preserved for a maximum height of ca. 1.5 meter above the stone foundations. Several phases of construction and use were identified, but interestingly no traces of a final destruction by fire have been recognised. Moreover, the scant amount of

59 Manuelli 2011: 70–72.

60 Manuelli and Mori 2016: 216–222.

61 Pecorella 1975: 15–17.

62 See Alvaro 2012: 354–356.

63 See Frangipane and Liverani 2013: 356–360.

*in situ* material seems to indicate that the rooms were abandoned after being emptied.<sup>64</sup> Once again, the integration of the results of the first round of excavations by the Italian expedition helps to interpret these findings. It specifically allows us to reconstruct the original dimensions of the northern room, at least 10 meters long, which might indicate a representative use of this space.<sup>65</sup> The association of the rooms with the above-mentioned monumental wall is ruled out for stratigraphic reasons. In any case, traces of an earlier enclosure, consisting of a round mud brick platform or tower, started to be excavated in 2016. Although the nature of this finding and its stratigraphic relation with the two rooms are not yet clear, it testifies to an uninterrupted sequence of imposing fortified architecture over the long period between the end of the Hittite Empire and the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>66</sup>

The results of radiometric analyses made on organic samples coming from the collapse of the mud brick fortification wall and from the later silos phase allow us to date the destruction of the enclosure at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> or the very beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, setting the life span of the two Early Iron Age I phases to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century BC (Fig. 5).<sup>67</sup>

#### 4. Pottery Production and Textile Activity: Classification and Analysis of the Material

Preliminary analyses of some selected assemblages coming from sealed and well-preserved contexts allow for interesting reflections on the identification of aspects of continuity, transformation and change as well as the understanding of the underlying factors at work.

Because, as mentioned, *in situ* artefacts are rather rare, the analysis includes, besides the material associated with the use of the above-mentioned structures, also those coming from the levels of construction and collapse of the fortification wall as well as from the fill layers of the “green building”. Moreover, alongside the newly excavated material, a selection of further unpublished assemblages coming from the same contexts, but unearthed during the first round of excavations by the Italian expedition between 1969 and 1971, are presented here, especially when they are well-preserved and hence allow us to retrieve more comprehensive information.

Pottery and textile productions have been selected for analysis as the most copious category of artefacts brought to light. Moreover, they are specifically suit-

64 Frangipane *et al.* 2018: 3–4.

65 See Pecorella 1975: 14–16, Pls XLIV–XLV, G–I.

66 Frangipane, Manuelli and Vignola 2017: 85.

67 The analyses have been conducted at the CEDAD (Center for Dating and Diagnostics) at the University of Salento, Lecce (Italy). For insights into the results, see Manuelli and Mori 2016: 220–221. A new round of <sup>14</sup>C analyses from samples from both the destruction level of the fortification and *in situ* materials from the two rooms has recently been completed and its results are still being processed. In any case it confirms a dating of the two Early Iron Age I phases to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC respectively.



able for comprehensively investigating aspects of cultural continuity, transformation and change, since their evolution involves both the conservation of daily habits linked with local behaviours and the simultaneous introduction of exogenous agents deriving from cross-cultural contacts.

Methodologically, these categories of material are analysed by means of their technological and typological aspects. Their production techniques and processes are inspected and classified as well as their morphological characteristics. It is important to stress that the results presented here should be considered preliminary. First of all, because despite the fact that the analysed artefacts represent the most significant and well-preserved specimens, they always depict just a part of the whole excavated assemblage. Indeed, work has not yet begun on the fragmented sherds and material coming from the rest of the investigated contexts. Accordingly, all statistical analyses of the material will be postponed until the whole collection of pottery and textile items has been processed.

A first essential trait that emerges from this analysis and brings together the whole material is its strong homogeneity and standardisation.<sup>68</sup> So far it has not been possible to identify any distinctive features allowing us to establish any distinction between the two described architectural phases or more specifically between the individual excavated contexts.<sup>69</sup>

A description, classification and discussion of pottery and textile production of the Early Iron Age I at Arslantepe is provided below. The pottery collection is represented by fragmentary and whole vessels and selected diagnostic sherds.<sup>70</sup> The pottery is in general marked by morphological and technological uniformity.<sup>71</sup> Pastes are pale in colour with a uniform distribution of the inclusions. Fabrics are mostly mixed with vegetable and mineral inclusions with an almost constant presence of small micro-cavities. Around one third of the specimens present a black or dark brown core, indicating that the firing must have often taken place in not very well-controlled atmospheres.<sup>72</sup> Surfaces are exclusively poorly smoothed or self-slipped, decorations are virtually absent and wheel marks are visible on nearly every sherd. Common wares are predominant and characterised by mixed inclusions and medium fabrics. Cooking wares and preservation wares are also well-attested, as evident from their mixed inclusions and semi-coarse fabrics. Fine wares are in contrast rare and characterised by mineral inclusions and semi-fine

68 For preliminary discussions concerning the standardization of the Early Iron Age material, see Manuelli in press.

69 Only a few specific peculiarities belonging to each single architectural phase have been recognized so far and they will be specifically described here.

70 A total amount of 1,127 specimens have been processed. 799 come from the "green building" level, and 328 from the fortification wall context. Only 10 items have been found *in situ*, all from the floors connected with the use of the "green building".

71 For a description of the Early Iron Age material from the first Italian excavations at the site, see also Pecorella 1975: 35–37.

72 Duistermaat 2008: 38–39; Orton and Hughes 2013: 72–74.

fabrics. Morphologically, the shapes show very little variation. Consequently, a limited number of typological classes define the majority of the assemblage.

More specifically, open shapes are characterised by the presence of flat bowls with straight profiles and rounded bases (Fig. 6: 1–7).<sup>73</sup> They are manufactured using two different fabrics: a finer one with small-sized mineral inclusions (Fig. 6: 8–15), and a coarser one with a dark core and abundant presence of chaff. Remarkably, when the lower bodies of the coarse-ware flat bowls are preserved, scraping marks are often present (Fig. 6: 16–24). The latter is a very distinctive trait of the Early Iron Age pottery repertoire at Arslantepe and suggests interesting considerations. First of all, it indicates that coarse-ware flat bowls might be handmade and only finished on a wheel, since the scraping technique was usually applied to handmade vessels and wheel marks are visible on all the examined specimens.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, as the practice is quite time-consuming, scraping marks probably testify to the presence of a secondary production of flat bowls, parallel and concurrent to the more frequent wheel-made production, perhaps to supply the high demand for these vessels.<sup>75</sup>

Among the rest of the open shapes, few other typological classes are represented to a significant degree. Hemispherical bowls were mostly of the small-size type with tapering-rims, and they are mainly made of semi-fine mineral fabrics (Fig. 7: 1–4). In addition, larger-size specimens with everted and upward rims and manufactured from medium-mixed fabrics are attested (Fig. 7: 5–7). An interesting selection of miniature saucers with straight or curved profiles and realised with medium-mineral fabrics also occur (Fig. 7: 8–13).

Larger and deeper variations of hemispherical bowls are attested as well. They mostly occur with thickened-out rounded or pointed rims and are made with medium-mixed fabrics (Fig. 7: 14–16). Moreover, specimens with thickened pointed rims made with medium- or semi-coarse mixed fabrics have also been found (Fig. 7: 17–18).

The abundant repertoire of kraters is remarkable. They exist in an interesting variety of types, rather diversified in size, and they are sometimes characterised by the presence of small handles attached under the rim. Kraters were usually wheel-made but it is not uncommon to note a multi-stage construction process, which involved the combination of a distinct vessel component previously wheel-made or coiled on a turntable.<sup>76</sup> Large-size types with high walls and vertical profiles are associated with rounded, pointed and grooved rims and are made with semi-

73 They represent 50% of the open shapes and almost 30% of all examined diagnostic material.

74 See Rye 1981: 86; Laneri 2009: 100–102.

75 See Baldi 2012: 403; Rice 2015: 147. It is important to stress that coarse-ware flat bowls have been found in all the excavated and examined contexts and do not show specific associations with any of them. Nonetheless, their quantity increases in connection with the fortification wall phase and shows a continuation in the Early Iron Age II levels.

76 See Laneri 2009: 70; Orton and Hughes 2013: 125.

coarse mixed fabrics (Fig. 8: 1–3). Short-necked kraters are mainly large in size and are attested with sloping rounded, squared or hooked rims (Fig. 8: 4–7). They are made of either medium or semi-coarse mixed fabrics. Smaller short-necked varieties also occur, always in association with rounded rims and made with medium and mixed fabrics (Fig. 8: 8–9).

The cooking pots collection is significantly rich. In general cooking pots are wheel-made and restricted in size, with wide mouths, bi-conical or squat bodies and pointed bases. The presence of two small handles applied between the rim and the shoulder is characteristic. Two dimensional classes can be defined. Small-size neckless pots show rounded, pointed and grooved rims, while short-necked examples are associated with grooved rims (Fig. 9: 1–9). They are both made with medium or semi-coarse mixed fabric. Less attested is the large-size cooking pots category. Examples of the neckless type, associated with pointed rims, and short-necked ones with grooved rims were found (Fig. 9: 10–13). Large-size cooking pots are usually manufactured with semi-coarse mixed fabrics.

The rest of the closed shapes are less frequent. Jugs, small- and medium-size jars, and bottles and flasks are attested. Jugs have ovoid or slightly squashed bodies with rounded bases, handles, trefoil mouths and simple everted rims (Fig. 10: 1–5). They are made from medium or semi-fine mixed fabrics and they are the only category of the whole repertoire that is decorated. They are painted with red brown colours and simple careless geometric patterns. Jars are defined by two dimensional classes. Small-size jars have ovoid bodies, rounded bases, short necks and thickened-out pointed rims. A handle is usually attached between the shoulder and the rim (Fig. 10: 6–7). They are also manufactured with medium or semi-fine mixed fabrics. An exact reproduction of this shape occurs in bigger dimensions. Large-size jars are also attested with slightly squashed bodies but are associated with a wider variety of thickened-out rims: rounded, pointed or grooved (Fig. 10: 8–12). They are made with medium or semi-coarse mixed fabrics.

Bottles are less attested than jars. They have ovoid elongated bodies and narrow and high necks. A single handle is attached on the shoulders while rims are thickened-out, rounded, pointed or grooved (Fig. 11: 1–6). They are mostly realised with medium mixed fabrics. Less attested but worth of interest is the flask category. Flasks occur with slightly lentoid shaped bodies and with tapered and high necks. A handle is attached between the neck and the shoulder (Fig. 11: 7–8). They are made with medium or semi-fine mixed fabrics. Their manufacturing technique is noteworthy, since they seem to consist of two separately wheel-made halves joined together in a second phase when the neck and the handle were also assembled.<sup>77</sup>

An interesting variety of *pithoi* is also attested. Neckless types occur with rounded, pointed and squared rims. Rarely, a cordon with incised lines is ap-

77 For different techniques used to manufacture flasks, see Venturi 1996: 148–150; Mielke 2006: 53–54.

plied to the upper shoulder (Fig. 11: 9–10).<sup>78</sup> Short-necked and necked *pithoi* are instead mainly associated with thickened outside, elongated rims (Fig. 11: 11–14). *Pithoi* are realised with medium, semi-coarse and coarse mixed fabrics. Like the kraters, *pithoi* are mostly joint-made, with the different parts wheel-made or coil-built and then subsequently combined.

Besides pottery, the most significant group of findings from the new and old Early Iron Age levels excavated at Arslantepe is represented by a large amount of unbaked crumbling clay spool-shaped objects, usually identified as loom weights.<sup>79</sup> The processed material is essentially well-preserved and includes complete and slightly fragmented items.<sup>80</sup>

Only in recent years have clay spools started receiving appropriate attention from scholars.<sup>81</sup> The lack of interest was mostly due to the fact that they are often crudely made and therefore badly preserved. Moreover, since they apparently do not show any specific trace of development over the centuries, they have also not been considered specifically useful for chronological issues.

Despite the fact that clay spools were extensively spread throughout the whole Mediterranean world during the Iron Age, their exact temporal appearance as well as function are still controversial.<sup>82</sup> Nowadays, reliable cases from the Aegean area seem to attest to their first spread during the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, according to the main specialists in the field, their employment in weaving activities has to be considered certain.<sup>84</sup> Their use as loom weights or bobbins is highly plausible especially for contextual reasons.<sup>85</sup> They have been often found in clusters, in sets of rows or stored in specific depositions or caches, and mostly in domestic industrial areas and sometimes in association with other weaving tools or even with fibre remains. In addition, their use as reels can also be assumed, considering that they can easily hold extra entwined yarn for stor-

78 The applied cordon starts to be attested during the fortification wall phase and became typical of the Early Iron Age II contexts. For similarities in the evolution of storage jars, see Venturi 2015.

79 See Cecchini 2011: 195.

80 A total amount of 34 tools has been unearthed from the above-mentioned Early Iron Age I architectural phases. 26 come from the “green building” level, while only 8 from the fortification wall context. 10 spools have been found altogether *in situ*, in association with the use of one of the rooms belonging to the “green building” complex. One hundred or so of these objects have been found by the first round of Italian investigations at the site in relation to the whole Iron Age period (Pecorella 1975: 45–46).

81 Rahmstorf 2003: 402–407; 2005: 146–160.

82 In Anatolia, clay spool-shaped objects are in fact known from the Neolithic era. Moreover, it has to be noted that their spread during the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC includes also central and eastern Europe (Rahmstorf 2003: 397–400; 2005: 154–155).

83 Rahmstorf 2011: 320–322.

84 Cecchini 2011: 195–196.

85 See Rahmstorf 2014: 8–9 with related bibliography. For a further discussion and diverse possible interpretations, see also Luciani 2005: 928–930.

age. Recent experimental testing carried out by the Centre for Textile Research revealed that, at least for findings weighing over 100 g, “spools functioned perfectly as loom weights on a warp-weighted loom”.<sup>86</sup> Smaller and lighter examples might be instead appropriate as supplementary weights or easily used for warp tension in tablet weaving.<sup>87</sup>

A further confirmation of their use comes from the pictorial representation displayed on a Cypro-Geometric vessel, where a warp-weighted loom with spool-shaped weight is depicted.<sup>88</sup>

At Arslantepe they represent the only consistent category of Early Iron Age weaving tools discovered.<sup>89</sup> They are all made with unfired clay, mostly with medium and mixed fabrics. Colours range from dark grey to brown up to pale green tones. The production is in general well-manufactured with even pastes, while no surface treatments are attested (Fig. 12).

They are fairly heterogeneous as far as weight, length, find spots and details of their shapes are concerned. Their weight varies between 80 and 210 g, with an average from 160 to 180, while the length is between 4 and 10 cm with a mean at 4.5–4.8. They do not have any hole or perforations, or any specific traits on their surface. Nonetheless, clear traces probably left by the use of a string or yarn are sometimes visible on their surfaces as faint impressions.

Typologically, these objects can be classified into three groups. Mostly they are cylindrical with slightly concave sides and flattened ends in an hourglass shape (Fig. 13: 1–6). A second type is represented by cylindrical elongated shapes with rounded and convex ends (Fig. 13: 7–8), while a third group includes smaller short squashed-body examples, with both flatted and convex ends, in a so-called doughnut shape (Fig. 13: 9).

It is important to conclude with a few remarks concerning those few clay spools discovered *in situ*. A group of 10 items has indeed been found as drop-off at the bottom of a large-sized and high-walled vertical profile krater embedded in the floor of the southern room of the “green building” complex (Fig. 14). It is first of all important to note the homogeneity of this group, which consists of spools all realised with pale green medium mixed fabric, mostly including cylindrical slightly concave shapes.<sup>90</sup> This finding further confirms the general trend of these objects to be found stored together.

86 Olofsson, Andersson Strand and Nosch 2014: 92–95.

87 See Gleba 2009: 73–74, with related bibliography.

88 Rahmstorf 2005: 156, Pl. 22: 2.

89 From the above-mentioned Early Iron Age I contexts only a couple of conical pierced loom weights and a few amount of bi-conical spindle whorls have been found.

90 Significantly, they are realized with the same clay colour with which the mud bricks of the building itself have been made. The group includes seven cylindrical concave examples, as well as two cylindrical elongated and one squashed specimen.

## 5. Drifting Southward? Origin and Development of the Analysed Material

Turning now to our primary research questions, it is necessary to incorporate the analysis into a wider geographical and temporal perspective in order to identify aspects of cross-cultural interaction and examine patterns of continuity and change. In this context, one main question needs to be raised first: where did this Early Iron Age material from Arslantepe originate from?

Concerning pottery, it is clear that the assemblage shows strong affinities with the Late Bronze Age repertoire attested at the site. Here we find fascinating aspects of continuity of the Hittite tradition into the new era, supporting the renowned historical role that Arslantepe had in the political and cultural formation of the new Early Iron Age powers.<sup>91</sup>

This evolution is specifically evident when considering the open shapes, where typical Late Bronze Age types show a direct continuity into the new repertoire or traces of slight transformations of their details (Fig. 15).<sup>92</sup> Straight-profile flat bowls, as well as deep and large-sized bowls with thickened-in rims, directly develop from typical shapes widespread at Arslantepe during the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC. Small-size hemispherical bowls with tapering rims belong to an even longer tradition that starts at the site during the 16<sup>th</sup> century BC. Similarly, miniature saucers are mostly attested at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. This trend is also visible in the closed shapes, although with more variability. Large-size high-walled vertical profile kraters, short-necked and necked *pithoi* and especially high-necked bottles develop in continuity from similar shapes attested at the site during the Late Bronze Age.

On the other hand, evidence of change is well visible in some other types, such as hemispherical bowls with upward rims and deep and large-size bowls with thickened outside rims that do not show any specific association with the Late Bronze Age pottery horizon. The same trend is followed by short-necked kraters and flasks, which are completely missing from the Late Bronze Age pottery assemblage at Arslantepe.

In general, the closed shape repertoire undergoes the most notable transformations, suggesting a lack of direct development from the previous pottery horizon (Fig. 16). During the Late Bronze Age, jars were indeed characterised by the prevalence of large-size and high-necked types, while typical Early Iron Age short-necked and handled types were only sporadically attested during the earliest 16<sup>th</sup> century BC. Concerning the above-mentioned small-size jars and trefoil-mouth jugs, they show a remarkable series of divergent details when compared with some similar shapes attested during the Late Bronze Age. In any case, the most interesting set of

91 Manuelli 2012: 367–372; 2016: 30–32.

92 See Manuelli 2013: 323–346.

changes occur in the cooking pots repertoire. Despite the fact that the typical Late Bronze Age II cooking pots at the site mostly show simple and globular shapes, they are never associated with bi-conical or squat bodies and they never have small handles directly applied over the rim. Moreover, when necked examples are attested, especially during the earliest Late Bronze Age phases, they are not associated with the short and large necks typical of the Early Iron Age, nor with grooved rims.

This new orientation of the Iron Age pottery material is also accompanied by changes in the use of textile tools, since clay spools are very sparsely attested at Arslantepe during the Late Bronze Age.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, in this period pierced elliptical and hemispherical loom weight prototypes were normally attested.<sup>94</sup>

But why and how did these new pottery shapes start to be produced at Arslantepe during the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC? And which specific association exists with the prevalence of clay spools during the same period?

A general look at the material coming from the main sites in central Anatolia, or the region that mostly has influenced Arslantepe during the Late Bronze Age, shows that the Early Iron Age ceramics were generally handmade, decorated with painting or incisions and characterised by intensive surface treatments.<sup>95</sup> A review of the rest of the Upper Euphrates region does not produce any concrete results. Material culture from sites lying in the Keban dam area, which is located on the eastern side of the river in the Elaziğ province, is completely oriented towards the eastern Anatolian world, showing the prominent presence of the so-called handmade Grooved Ware.<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, the situation of the sites located on the western bank of the Upper Euphrates, around the Malatya plain, is in contrast totally enigmatic. Here there is no apparent evidence of any Iron Age material prior to the late 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, when the presence of imported Urartian material or late Grooved Ware assemblages is attested.<sup>97</sup>

Looking southwards, the situation starts becoming more comprehensible. Interesting information comes primarily from the southern Euphrates region. At

93 Four clay spools have been found from the first round of Late Bronze Age excavations at the site (Laurito 2013: 230). It is important to stress that clay spools occur in all of the Arslantepe periods, although always in very few specimens (Frangipane *et al.* 2009: 6).

94 Laurito 2013: 226–230.

95 See Genz 2011: 346; Summers 2017: 267–268 with related bibliography. Information concerning weaving tools is as usual less frequent in publications. It is in any case interesting to stress the presence of large assemblages of doughnut-shaped loom weights uncovered from different contexts related to the Destruction Level at Gordion (DeVries 1990: 385–387) and of numerous clay spools coming from the Hittite and post-Hittite levels at Alişar Höyük (von der Osten 1937: 273, 284, fig. 307, 509, Pl. 21:4).

96 For a synthesis, see Bartl 2001 and for more details see Winn 1980 (Korucutepe); Bartl 1988 (Norşuntepe); Sevin 1995: 20–45 (Imikuşağı). For problems connected with the appearance and spread of Grooved Ware, see D'Agostino 2012: 218–227; Blaylock 2016: 15–18 with related bibliography.

97 For a synthesis, see Ökse 1988: 180–184, 225–229 and for more detail see Duru 1979: 99–104 (Değirmentepe); Bilgi 1991 (Köşkerbaba); Ökse 1992 (Imamoğlu).

Tille Höyük, material belonging to the so-called “Burnt Level” and the following earliest Early Iron Age phases, which approximately range from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, offers an essential source for comparisons.<sup>98</sup> The overall repertoire of shapes and the high amount of “wheel-made flat bowls realised with fairly crude fabric often finished by scraping the lower part of the vessels” seems to mark an exact correspondence with the Arslantepe material.<sup>99</sup> Concerning clay spools, these objects are considered “ubiquitous” in the Iron Age levels at Tille Höyük.<sup>100</sup> They have been found in very large quantities, mainly from caches or groups, but usually in deposits considered secondary.<sup>101</sup>

Not far away from Tille Höyük, but located on the opposite side of the river, the site of Lidar Höyük also offers a remarkable set for comparisons.<sup>102</sup> Pottery coming from the earliest Early Iron Age phases, namely the layers 7 to 6e dated to ca. 1200–1000 BC, reveals precise associations with the Arslantepe repertoire.<sup>103</sup> Unfortunately, no other materials from these levels have been so far published or discussed, therefore it is not possible to examine the evidence concerning weaving activities at the site.

The generalised lack of published material is also a problem for other relevant sites at the Syro-Turkish border. At Karkemiş, excavations in Areas C, G and S have brought some first results concerning the earliest Early Iron Age occupation at the site, with a pottery repertoire that shows interesting similarities with Arslantepe.<sup>104</sup> A few kilome-

98 For dating and discussion, see Summers 2013: 311–314; Blaylock 2016: 6–7, 414–415. Specific comparisons can be noticed: Fig. 6 (Summers 1993: figs 43: 4, 45: 3; Blaylock 2016: fig. 10: 8–10); Fig. 7 (Summers 1993: fig. 43: 1; Blaylock 2016: figs 11.5: 510, 518, 524); Fig. 8 (Summers 1993: fig. 51: 5; Blaylock 2016: figs 10.6: 36, 11.17: 742); Fig. 9 (Summers 1993: figs 49: 3–4, 52: 2; Blaylock 2016: figs 11.17: 739, 11.34: 1206); Fig. 10 (Summers 1993: figs 49: 5, 52: 1; Blaylock 2016: figs 10.2: 13, 10: 5, 10: 12, 10.6: 40); Fig. 11 (Summers 1993: figs 34: 6, 54: 2; Blaylock 2016: fig. 10.4: 27).

99 Summers 1993: 47–49. For the continuity of this trend into the late 11<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries BC at the site, see also Blaylock 2016: 7–8, 64–65. The main problematic issue comparing pottery assemblages at Arslantepe and Tille Höyük is the copious presence at the latter of wheel-made painted vessels (Blaylock 2016: 8–13).

100 Summers 1993: 51.

101 Blaylock 2016: 260.

102 For the sequence and its chronology, see Müller 1999: 403–404, 2003: 138–139. Specific comparisons can be noticed: Fig. 6 (Müller 1999: Abb. 4: AA01, AA05); Fig. 7 (Müller 1999: Abb. 13: AC01, 7: AB03); Fig. 9 (Müller 1999: Abb. 3: BA01, 4: BA03, 9: BC01, BC04); Fig. 10 (Müller 1999: Abb. 6: DA02, DB06); Fig. 11 (Müller 1999: Abb. 6: CA07).

103 The main problem when comparing the Early Iron Age pottery assemblage at Lidar Höyük with the Arslantepe repertoire is the significant presence of Grooved Ware at the former, which necessarily leads to an association with the eastern Anatolian world and specifically with the Keban region. For a first discussion of the topic, see Müller 2005 and for an up-to-date development of the debate, see Blaylock 2016: 19–20.

104 For a synthesis of the sequence and a discussion, see Giacosa and Zaina in press. Specific comparisons can be noticed: Fig. 6 (Giacosa and Zaina in press. fig. 7: 14); Fig. 7 (Giacosa and Zaina in press. figs 7: 2, 8: 2); Fig. 10 (Giacosa and Zaina in press. fig. 8: 5). The comparison with the Arslantepe repertoire shows that Karkemiş is still deeply linked in its main material culture traits with the Middle and Late Bronze Age tradition of the Middle Euphrates region.



ters north of Karkemış, rescue excavations at Şaraga Höyük unearthed a continuous Late Bronze and Early Iron Age sequence with a remarkable set of well-contextualised pottery material that suggests connections with the Arslantepe assemblage.<sup>105</sup>

A wider set of comparisons can be made when analysing the final Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age material coming from Tell Shiouk Fawqani Period VIII.<sup>106</sup> The excavations in Sector E revealed the presence of a possible break during the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC and a reoccupation at the very beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC. Pottery material from the latter is characterised by strong aspects of Late Bronze Age continuity, a total absence of painted pottery and an abundance of flat bowls with “no treatments and rapidly executed with rough paste”.<sup>107</sup> Apparently no trace of weaving tools has been brought to light in connection with this phase, but an interesting collection of clay spools was discovered excavating the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC productive area in Sector G.<sup>108</sup>

Moving to the inner Syrian region, remarkable comparisons can be found at Tell Afis. This is specifically evident when taking into account assemblages belonging to the final Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, corresponding to phases Vb to IVa, ca. 1250–1050 BC.<sup>109</sup> A large amount of clay spools have been found in almost all the excavated Iron Age domestic structures. Their abundance and context within the continuous sequence at the site allow us to fix a fairly certain chronological position and typological evolution over time.<sup>110</sup>

In general, pottery material belonging to the repertoire of the main excavation sites of the northern Levant region revealed suitable comparisons with the Arslantepe assemblage.<sup>111</sup> Interesting comparisons can be made with the Early Iron Age

105 For the sequence and its chronology, see Sertok, Kulakoğlu and Squadrone 2011: 232–238. Specific comparisons can be noticed: Fig. 8 (Sertok, Kulakoğlu and Squadrone 2004: res. 1: a); Fig. 9 (Sertok, Kulakoğlu and Squadrone 2004: res. 1: f); Fig. 10 (Sertok, Kulakoğlu and Squadrone 2004: res. 1: e).

106 For a synthesis of the sequence and its chronology, see Makinson 2005: 454–455.

107 Capet 2005: 395. Specific comparisons can be noticed: Fig. 6 (Capet 2005: Pl. 12: 25); Fig. 7 (Bachelot 2005: Pl. 3: 19; Capet 2005: Pl. 11: 24); Fig. 9 (Bachelot 2005: Pls 11: 87, 13: 98); Fig. 10 (Capet 2005: Pl. 11: 15). When comparing the pottery assemblages at the two sites, the most contrasting characteristic is the abundant presence of Middle Assyrian types at Tell Shiouk Fawqani.

108 Luciani 2005: 928–930.

109 For sequence and chronology at the site, see Venturi 2007: 297–301; 2013a: 228–236. Specific comparisons can be noticed: Fig. 6 (Venturi 2007: figs 48: 1, 4, 66: 2); Fig. 7 (Venturi 2007: figs 48: 11, 66: 6, 9); Fig. 8 (Venturi 2007: figs 49: 2, 8, 11, 54: 5, 60: 9); Fig. 9 (Venturi 2007: figs 62: 3, 7, 66: 6, 8, 11, 72: 5, 8–9, 76: 4); Fig. 10 (Venturi 2007: figs 54: 9–10, 56: 12, 61: 2); Fig. 11 (Venturi 2007: figs 52: 7, 11, 68: 7). The comparison between the pottery assemblages at the two sites reveals that the main difference is represented by the presence at Tell Afis of Aegean-inspired Mycenaean IIIc and local monochrome painted pottery. This discrepancy also occurs when comparing Arslantepe with the other main sites of the Levantine region (Venturi 2013b: 125–132).

110 Cecchini 2000; 2011.

111 Leaving aside Late Helladic IIIc and Aegean potteries, which, as mentioned, are completely

Phase 6–3, ca. 1200–1000 BC, at Tell Tayinat.<sup>112</sup> What is remarkable here is the presence of plates and shallow bowls that “in the earlier phases have rounded bases which were left mostly untreated, to the point that wheel marks or scraping marks towards the lower half of the body on the outside are visible”.<sup>113</sup> Also noteworthy is the high number of clay spool loom weights, occurring in a wide variety of sizes and a range of lengths and weights.<sup>114</sup> Further associations can be traced with material coming from Kinet Höyük Periods 13.2 and 12, Ain Dara transitional Level 6–5 and Chatal Höyük Phase N.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, at Ain Dara excavations have discovered clay spools in essentially all the Iron Age levels.<sup>116</sup>

Further correlations are also noticeable moving southwards, with material brought to light at Hama, in the Early Iron Age Phases F1 and F2 as well as in the necropolis Phases I–II.<sup>117</sup> At Hama as well the presence of clay spool loom weights seems to be ubiquitous during all the Iron Age sequences.<sup>118</sup> A final specific remark needs to be made concerning comparisons with material brought to light along the coastal Syrian region. At Tell Kazel, precise correspondences with the Arslantepe repertoire appear with cooking pots of the final Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, underlining fascinating aspects of long-distance cultural contact at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>119</sup>

## 6. Continuity *vs.* Change. Some Broader Considerations on the Cultural Processes of the Syro-Anatolian Region during the 12<sup>th</sup> Century BC

Arslantepe is an excellent case for analysing and understanding processes of material culture continuity, transformation and change. Its geographical location, at the margins of the main political centres of Mesopotamia and Anatolia, often fa-

missing at Arslantepe.

112 For a synthesis of the sequence and its chronology, see Harrison 2013: 64–69. Specific comparisons can be noticed: Fig. 6 (Ünlü 2017: fig. 5: 1); Fig. 9 (Harrison 2010: fig. 6: 7, 9, 11; Ünlü 2017: fig. 9: 4).

113 Ünlü 2017: 606.

114 Janeway 2008: 138–139; Harrison 2013: 70–71.

115 For sequences and chronologies, see Stone and Zimansky 1999 (Ain Dara); Gates 2013: 103–107; Lehmann 2017 (Kinet Höyük); Pucci 2013 (Chatal Höyük). Specific comparisons can be noticed: Fig. 8 (Lehmann 2017: fig. 3: 1); Fig. 9 (Stone and Zimansky 1999: fig. 27: 4, 19; Gates 2013: fig. 7: 10; Pucci 2013: fig. 6: 12).

116 Stone and Zimansky 1999: 76, 88, fig. 92. In the same context, another interesting discovery from northern Levant comes from Taşlı Geçit Höyük, where a set of clay spool loom weights has been found during the excavation of the Iron Age III residential quarters, see Marchetti 2012: 533, fig. 12.

117 For sequences and chronology at the site, see Riis 1948: 202; Fugmann 1958: 278; Riis and Buhl 1990: 18. Specific comparisons can be noticed: Fig. 7 (Riis 1948: fig. 97; Riis and Buhl 1990: fig. 78: 578); Fig. 8 (Riis 1948: fig. 56); Fig. 9 (Ibidem: fig. 60); Fig. 10 (Ibidem: fig. 66).

118 See Fugmann 1958: 150, 246–254, fig. 325; Riis and Buhl 1990: 209, fig. 96.

119 See Badre 2011. Specific comparisons can be noticed: Fig. 9 (Badre 2011: fig. 6d–e). See also Spagnoli 2010: Pls 3: 21, 23, 45: 503–504.

cilitated the introduction of external influences that played a crucial role for the evolution and modification of its cultural habits. On the other hand, the presence of an uninterrupted sequence of occupation created a perfect scenario to reveal mechanisms of stability and preservation of local behaviours over time. In the specific case of the Late Bronze–Iron Age transition, the picture is enriched by the presence of remarkable written sources, testifying to the strong aspects of continuity of Hittite political and ideological systems at this site during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century BC.

Only in recent years has the gap between the historical and archaeological record started to be concretely filled. In this framework, continuity in the means of production and forms of representation of power has been underlined and interpreted as an attempt by the new Iron Age society to preserve a cultural memory of the past.<sup>120</sup> The analysis offered here has enhanced this picture, showing the complexities of linearly defining processes of continuity, transformation and change. Indeed, cultural processes, as part of human developmental activities, are induced by a broad combination of factors and models that often makes it difficult to consistently understand their results or reasons.<sup>121</sup>

From this analysis it appears that “continuity” is concretely stimulated by the wish to perpetuate some specific local aspects of the production, while “change” seems to be always and inevitably induced by external actions and influences.<sup>122</sup> “Transformation” is of course the most challenging trait to trace, which here appears caused by both endemic and exogenous factors.

Straight-profile flat bowls probably show this difficulty more than any others, demonstrating how trajectories of evolution and modification often converge. The type is clearly widespread during the Late Bronze Age II, and its quantitative increase at the beginning of the Early Iron Age is of course interpreted as an evident feature of cultural continuity. Alongside this morphological persistence, some important technical transformations occur. The adoption of new practices to manufacture at least part of this shape reflects a local necessity to produce a high number of specimens. But things change when we take into account a wider geographical scenario and consider the generalized high quantity of mass-produced flat bowls and incidence of associated scraping marks in the examined sites. Are we witnessing local processes of transformation or a deeper change that reflects important economic reasons involving a great share of the new Syro-Anatolian societies?

In general, the trend underlined by flat bowls, where elements of continuity with the previous tradition are supported by simultaneous transformations induced by both internal development and external influences, is roughly visible for

120 Manuelli 2016: 31–32; Manuelli and Mori 2016: 229–234.

121 See Eerkens and Lipo 2007: 253–263.

122 For an analysis about the possible reasons for cultural change, see Gramsch 2015: 344–345.

every vessel category taken into account. A clear exception are the cooking pots, which concretely suggest a change, showing a complete new set of inter-cultural connections. Small- and large-size neckless or short-necked cooking pots with squat bodies, pointed or grooved rims and small handles attached to the rims are typical shapes of the Syro-Palestinian region during the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>123</sup> Besides cooking pots, the widespread change of textile tools is remarkable as well. Similarly, clay spool loom weights are spread throughout the whole eastern Mediterranean since the late 13<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>124</sup> The adoption of a new set of cooking pots and textile objects at Arslantepe during the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC might indicate some deep change in food preparation and weaving techniques. Besides stressing important connections with the Levantine cultural sphere, this concerns household activities as well as behavioural patterns linked with the mechanisms and means of domestic production.<sup>125</sup>

In conclusion, the preliminary analysis of this material shows that, within a general trend of continuity, Arslantepe might have also been influenced by the prevalent changes that characterised the eastern Mediterranean world at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC. When taking into consideration the political continuity affecting the site, as seen in the Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions attesting to the presence of local kings claiming a lineage with the Late Bronze Age Hittite royalty, it seems clear that the events that put an end to the early states of the Late Bronze Age and reconfigured the political situation of the Syro-Anatolian world only marginally reached Arslantepe and its environment. Nonetheless, it seems that the destruction of Late Bronze Age citadel at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC might have been a widespread and catastrophic event for the site. Despite the fact it did not produce any specific break in the settlement sequence, it marked the interruption of the relationships with the central Anatolian world, allowing local transformations and the emergence of new extra-regional contacts, as well as the arrival of a new set of pottery shapes and textile objects foreign to the previous tradition.

The improvement of the research at the site will enable a better understanding of the elements of continuity of the Late Bronze Age tradition as well as of their slow transformation over time. It might also allow the comprehension of the deep changes stemming from the introduction of new foreign features during the crucial last centuries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC.

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123 See Venturi 2007: 293; Spagnoli 2010: 40–45; Badre 2011: 155.

124 Cecchini 2011: 119.

125 See Yasur-Landau 2010: 28; 2011: 248.

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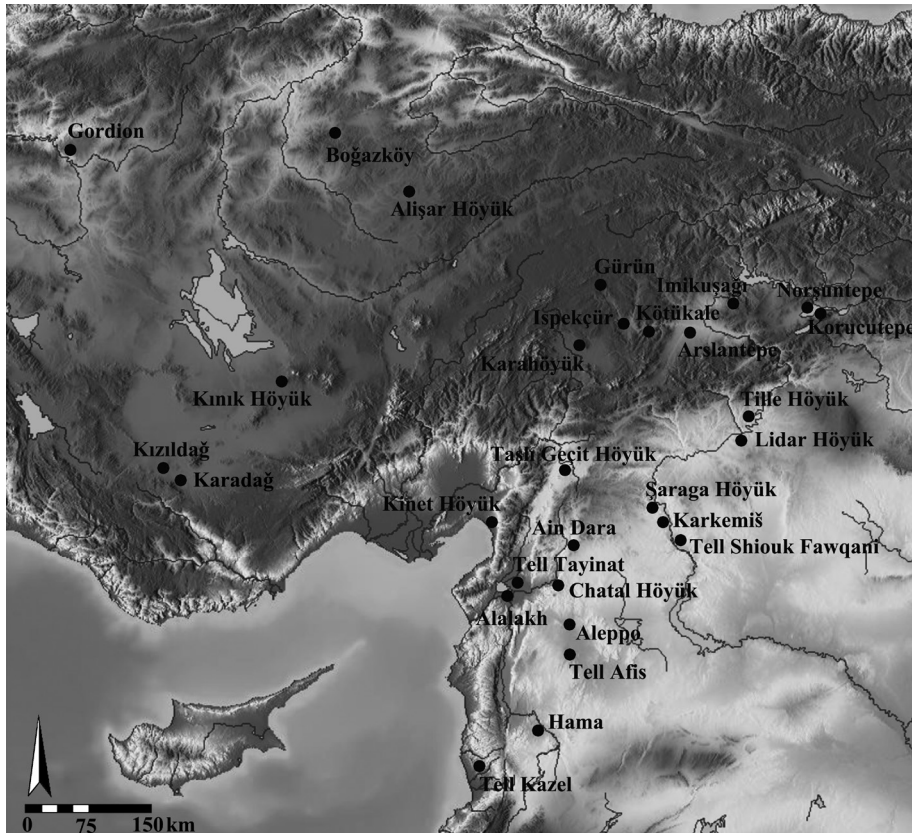


Fig. 1. Map of Anatolia and northern Syria with the main sites quoted in the text (courtesy of Free Maps).

DATING (BC)	Arslantepe	Korucutepe	Tille Höyük	Lidar Höyük	Karkemiš			Tell Shiukh Fawqani				Tell Afis	Hama	
					C	G	S	E	F	G	H		Citadel	Cemetery
650			Level VIII-IX	6b1	9a-c									
700	II B ---FIRE?---		Level VII	6b2	9a-c		Period IX				la	---FIRE---		
750	II A		Level VI		10a-b	8a-b						Phase E1	Phase IV	
800			Level V	6c1	10a-b	8a-b					---FIRE---			
850			Level IV	6c2							I c-b II c-a	Phase E2	Phase III	
900	III B		Level III	6d			Period IX							
950			Level II		II	9a-b						Phase F1	Phase II	
1000	---FIRE---	Phase K	Level I Pre-Level I ---FIRE---					---FIRE---			III d-a			
1050				6e1				Period VIII				---FIRE---		
1100	III A		Burnt Level	6e2	12a-c						IV e-a	Phase F2	Phase I	
1150				7							Va			
1200	---FIRE---		---FIRE---	---FIRE---				GAP?			---FIRE---			
1250	IV	Phase J	GAP?	LBA			Period VIII				Vb	Phase G1		
1300														

Fig. 2. Synchronic table with the final Late Bronze Age and Iron Age periodization of the main upper Euphrates and northern Syrian sites (based on van Loon 1980; Riis and Buhl 1990; Müller 1999; Makinson 2005; Venturi 2007; Blaylock 2016; Giacosa and Zaina in press).

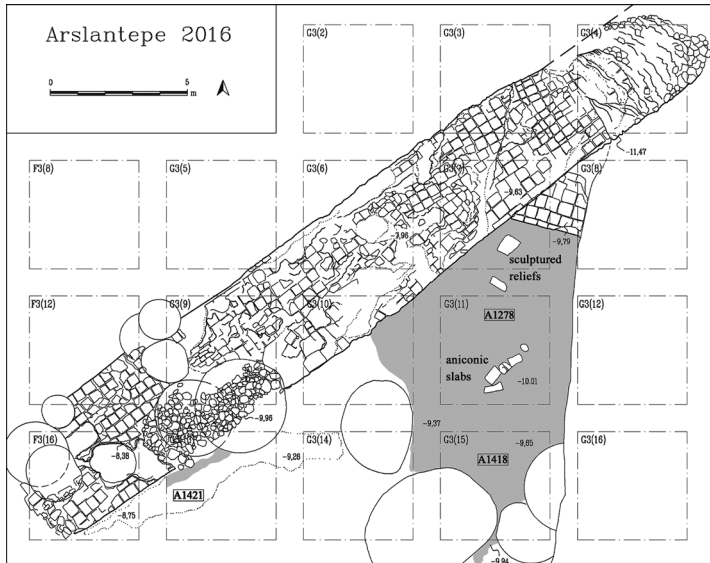


Fig. 3. Arslantepe, plan of the mud brick fortification wall, ca. end-12<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century BC (by G. Liberotti, © MAIAO).

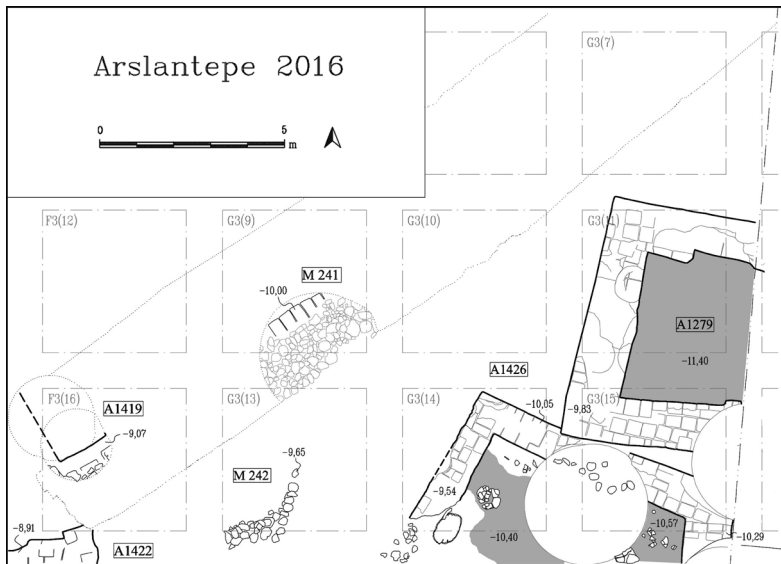


Fig. 4. Arslantepe, plan of the "green building" structures, ca. 12<sup>th</sup> century BC (by G. Liberotti, © MAIAO).

Lab. Code	Radiocarbon Age (BP)	Calibrated Age (BC) 2σ (95.4% probability)	Calibrated Age (BC) 1σ (68.2% probability)	Contexts
LTL14920A	2927 ± 45	1261 (95.4%) 1001	1206 (68.2%) 1053	charred wood ( <i>quercus cad.</i> ) from M159 destruction level
LTL14919A	2950 ± 45	1282 (95.4%) 1012	1226 (66.7%) 1084 1063 (1.5%) 1058	charred wood ( <i>quercus cad.</i> ) from M159 destruction level
LTL14918A	2746 ± 40	979 (95.4%) 812	920 (86.2%) 835	charred wood ( <i>quercus cad.</i> ) from silos K1574
LTL14917A	2774 ± 40	1010 (95.4%) 829	975 (52.9%) 891 877 (15.3%) 846	charred wood ( <i>populus sp.</i> ) from silos K1574

Fig. 5. Arslantepe, calibrated radiocarbon dating of the fortification wall destruction and subsequent level.

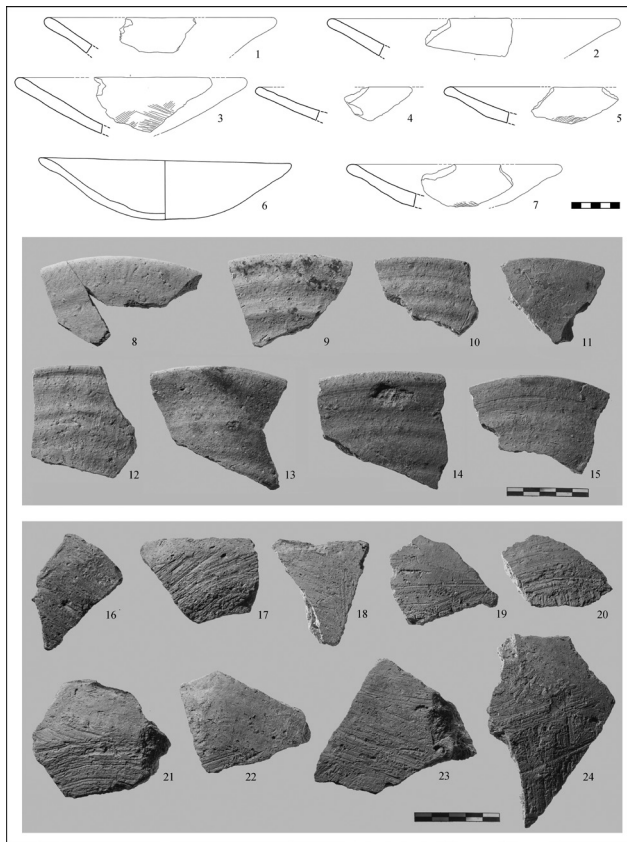


Fig. 6. Arslantepe, Early Iron Age straight-profile flat bowls (drawings by A. Siracusano, photos by R. Ceccacci, © MAIAO).

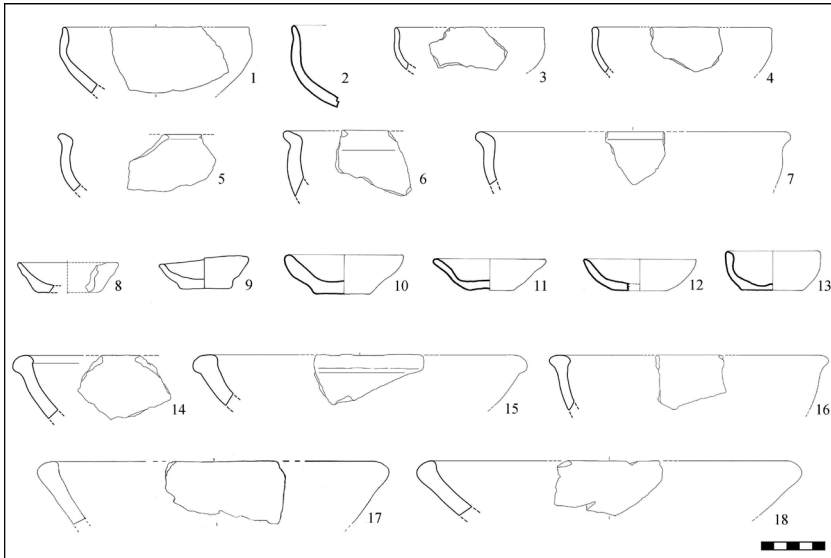


Fig. 7. Arslantepe, Early Iron Age small and large hemispherical bowls (1–7), miniature saucers (8–13) and large and deep bowls (14–18) (drawings by A. Siracusano, © MAIAO).

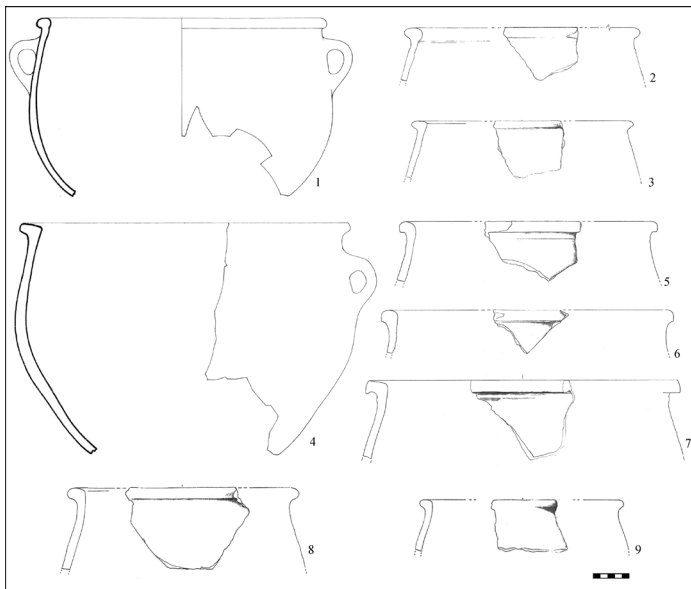


Fig. 8. Arslantepe, Early Iron Age kraters (drawings by A. Siracusano, © MAIAO).

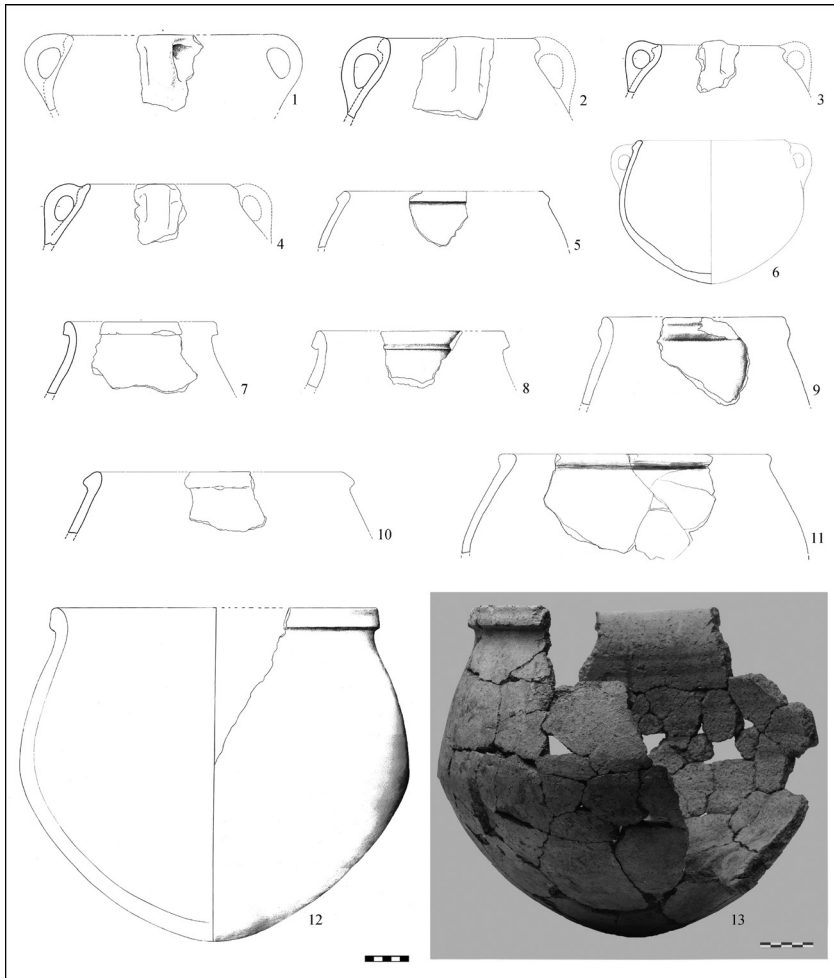


Fig. 9. Arslantepe, Early Iron Age cooking pots (drawings by A. Siracusano, photo by R. Ceccacci, © MAIAO).

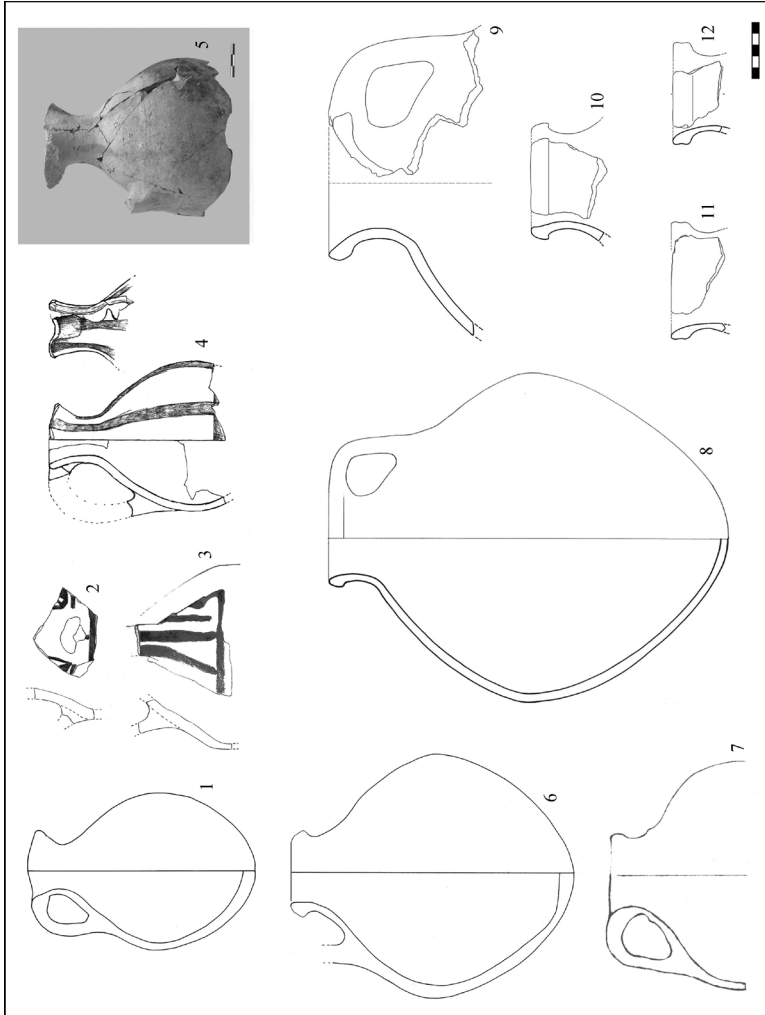


Fig. 10. Arslantepe, Early Iron Age jugs (1–5), small (6–7) and large-size jars (8–12) (drawings by A. Siracusano, photo by R. Ceccacci, © MAIAO).

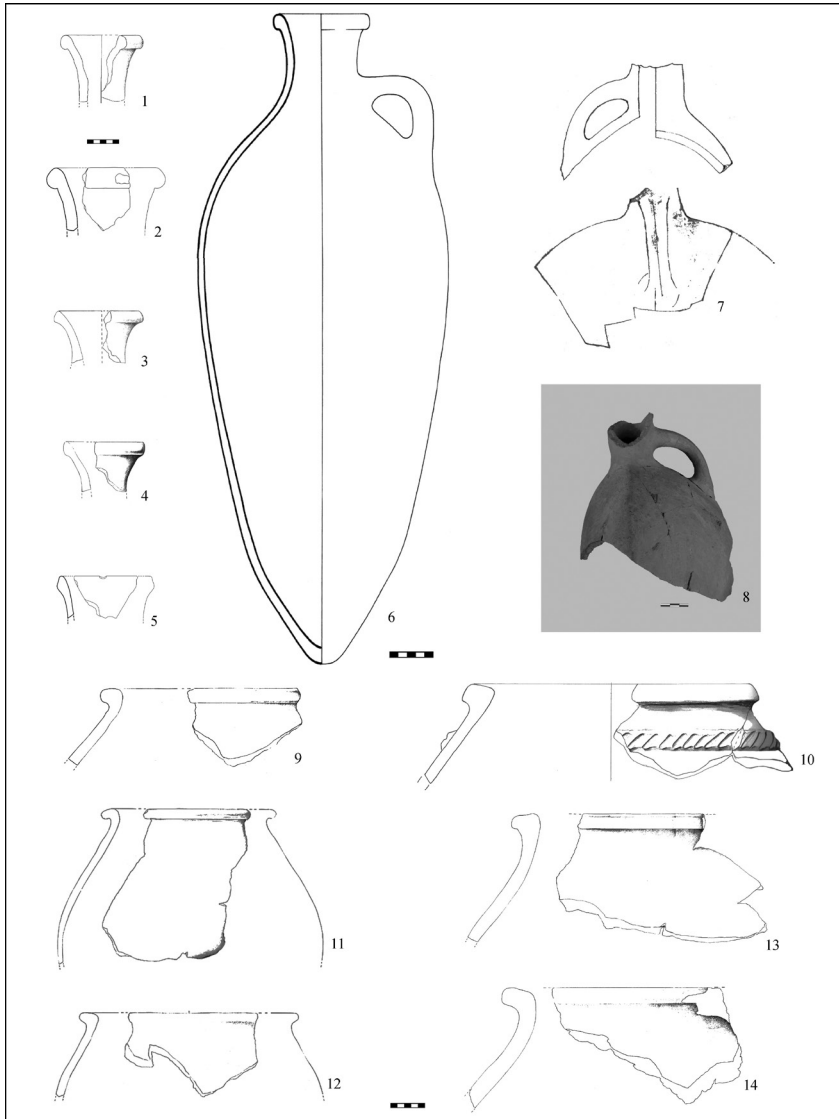


Fig. 11. Arslantepe, Early Iron Age bottles (1–6), flasks (7–8) and *pithoi* (9–14) (drawings by A. Siracusano, photo by F. Manuelli, © MAIAO).





Fig. 12. Arslantepe, Early Iron Age unbaked clay spool-shaped objects (photo by R. Ceccacci, ©MAIAO).

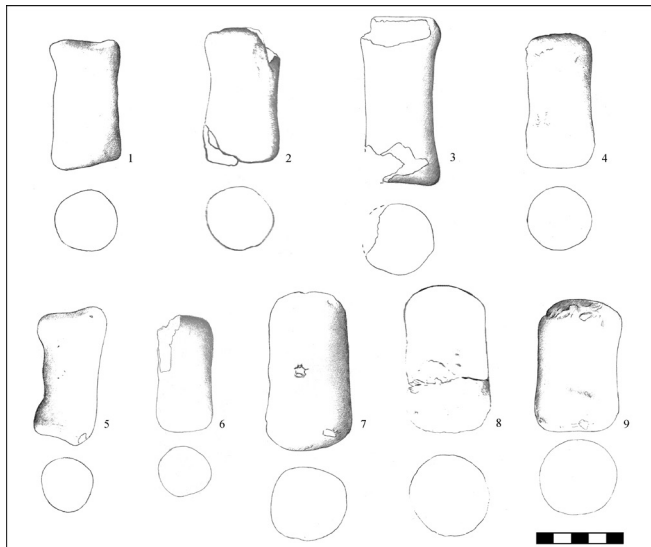


Fig. 13. Arslantepe, Early Iron Age clay spools: cylindrical concave sides (1–5), cylindrical elongated (7–8) and short squashed (9) (drawings by A. Siracusano, © MAIAO).



Fig. 14. Arslantepe, Early Iron Age krater *in situ* with a set of clay spoons inside it (photo by R. Ceccacci, © MAIAO).

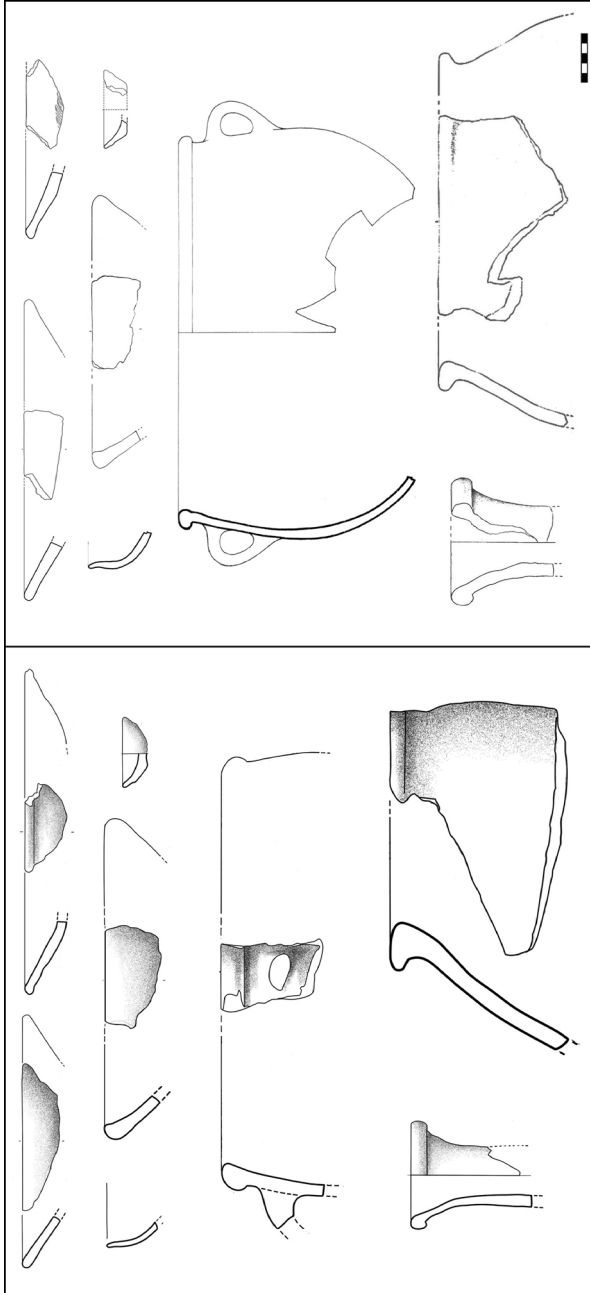


Fig. 15. Arslantepe, continuity and transformation of flat, hemispherical and large bowls, saucers, high-wall kraters, bottles and short-necked *pithoi* from Late Bronze to Iron Age (drawings by A. Siracusano, © MAIAO).

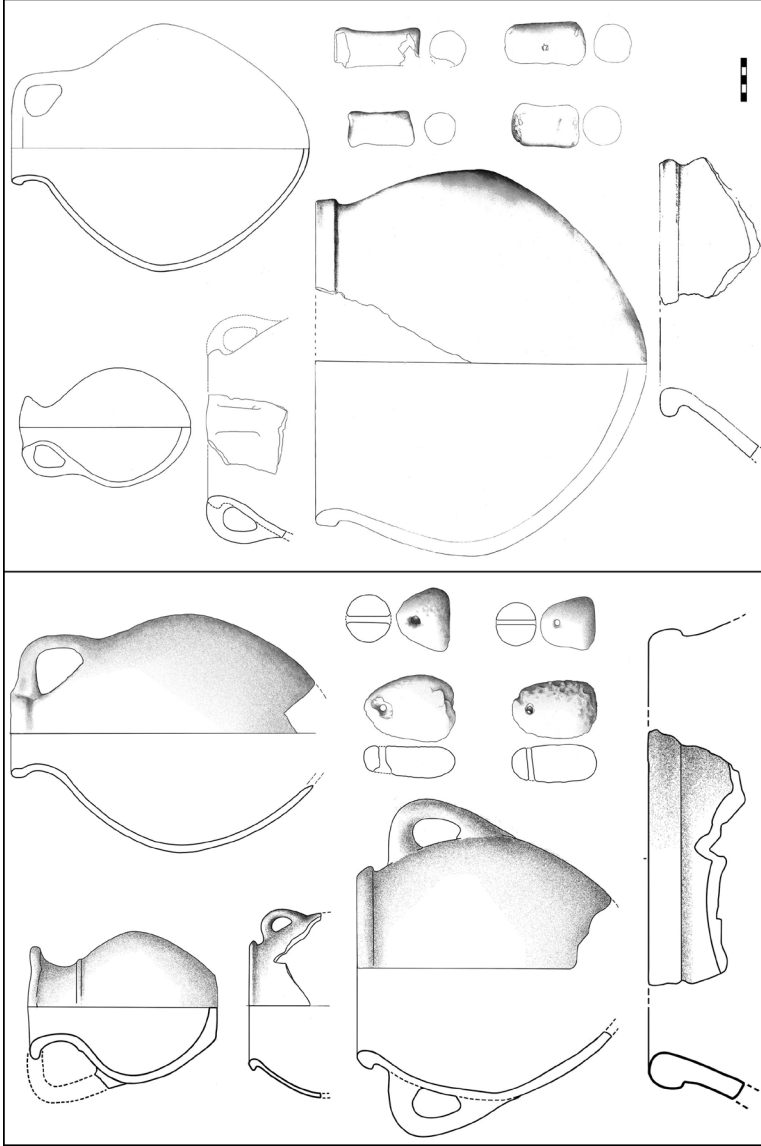


Fig. 16. Arslantepe, transformation and change in jugs, jars, small and large cooking pots, neckless *pithoi* and textile tools from Late Bronze to Iron Age (drawings by A. Siracusano, © MAIAO).