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Contents

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Pre-Classical Habitation at Tlos, Lycia

Taner KORKUT – Turan TAKAOĞLU – Kudret SEZGİN*

Abstract

In this paper we present the results of analysis of pre-Classical finds recently discovered during archaeological excavations in the area of the stadium on the eastern outskirts of the acropolis of Tlos in Lycia. These excavations have helped us identify at least two cultural layers pre-dating the Early Iron Age layer beneath the remains of the Hellenistic stadium: the first layer dates to the early phase of the Middle Chalcolithic sometime around the early fifth millennium BC, while the other represents the Late Bronze Age. Recovery of finds representing the Late Bronze Age at Tlos now complements studies aiming to prove that the lands of the Lukka were not void of habitation during this period. This evidence could also be used in favor of theories equating the Dalawa/Talawa mentioned in Hittite records with Tlos (Lycian Tlawa). The prominent position of Tlos overlooking the northern part of the Xanthus River valley, a natural route between the Lycian coast and its hinterland, was an important factor that made the site favorable for habitation for millennia.

Keywords: Southwestern Anatolia, Lycia, Tlos, Chalcolithic, Late Bronze Age, Early Iron Age, Lukka, Historical Geography

Öz

Bu çalışmada Lykia Bölgesi'nin önemli yerleşimlerinden olan Tlos Antik Kenti akropolü doğu eteğindeki stadyum düzlüğünde yapılan arkeolojik kazılarda ortaya çıkarılan erken buluntular değerlendirilmiştir. Söz konusu arkeolojik kazı çalışmaları Hellenistik Dönem'de inşa edilen stadyum yapısı kalıntılarının örttüğü Erken Demir Çağ kültür katmanı altında, birisi MÖ 5. binyılın başına tarihlenen Orta Kalkolitik Dönem'in erken evresine ait, diğeri Geç Bronz Çağ'ı temsil eden iki ayrı kültür katmanının varlığını ortaya koymuştur. Tlos kazılarında ortaya çıkarılan Geç Tunç Çağı'na tarihlenebilecek buluntular bu dönemde Lukka Ülkesi'nin iskân gördüğünü kanıtlamaya çalışan araştırmalara destek olmaktadır. Tlos'ta ele geçen bu buluntular aynı zamanda Hitit metinlerinde adı geçen Dalawa/Talawa yerleşiminin Tlos (Likçe "Tlawa") ile eşleştirilmesi gerektiği yönündeki teorileri de destekler niteliktedir. Tlos'un Lykia sahili ile iç bölgeler arası geçişi sağlayan Xanthos nehir vadisinin kuzey bölümüne hâkim önemli bir noktada yer alması burasını binlerce yıl boyunca iskân için çok tercih edilebilir bir yer yapmış olmalıydı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Güney Batı Anadolu, Lykia, Tlos, Kalkolitik, Geç Tunç Çağı, Erken Demir Çağı, Lukka, Tarihi Coğrafya

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Recent archaeological investigations conducted as part of the Tlos Excavations Project at sites such as Girmeler Cave and the lower and upper caves at Tavabaşı have already shown that this part of Lycia actually witnessed human activity from as early as the late ninth millennium BC to the mid-fifth millennium BC (fig. 1).[1] These two sites, both located in the territory of Tlos, provide us with significant new information regarding pre-Classical habitation in the region. This once again proves that the Xanthus (Eşen) River basin provided optimal conditions that attracted settlers to this area. New data from the archaeological excavations conducted in the course of the years 2009–2018 in the area of the Hellenistic stadium—located on flat ground about 463 m above sea level on the eastern outskirts of the acropolis of Tlos (fig. 2)—greatly contribute to our knowledge. The present study was conducted in the heart of the Lycian city of Tlos and reveals evidence stretching back to the early phase of the Middle Chalcolithic period around the beginning of the fifth millennium BC.[2] As far as can be deduced from the limited excavations, the stadium area was re-occupied during the early stages of the Late Bronze Age in the fifteenth century BC and continued to be settled throughout the Iron Age.

At Tlos, Middle Chalcolithic finds were retrieved from different depths during several trial trenches dug beneath the remains of the stadium. These trenches demonstrate that the Middle Chalcolithic settlement was founded at the outset on sloping ground undulating sharply eastward. Geophysical examination of the Hellenistic stadium also confirmed the steep sloping nature of the ground at the bottom of the eastern slope of the acropolis.[3] Construction of this Hellenistic stadium and subsequent use of the area during Roman and Byzantine times caused considerable destruction to the prehistoric remains, due in part to the leveling of the ground and the digging of foundations for new buildings. In the course of the 2015 field season, two trial trenches were opened on an east-west axis to determine the nature of the sloping ground on which the settlement was founded. The Middle Chalcolithic finds were identified at a depth of 0.5 m in the first sounding close to the acropolis, and the second sounding 15 m to the east yielded Middle Chalcolithic finds as well, this time at a depth of 4 m. Additional trenches were also opened during the following 2016 and 2017 seasons in order to better define aspects of the prehistoric settlement (e.g., fig. 3). One bone sample was taken from this layer for radiocarbon dating. The AMS radiocarbon determination of this bone (Beta - 445402) gave a 2-sigma range for this layer from 5200 to 4850 cal BC (95% probability). This single radiocarbon date from the soundings indicates that the remains from this layer could be placed within the early phase of Middle Chalcolithic, which probably spanned a period between ca. 5000/4900 and 4300 BC. No finds that could be attributed to the preceding Early Chalcolithic period (ca. 5700/5600–5000/4900 BC) have so far been recorded here, although such a period might be expected at Tlos considering the existence of a transition from the Early to the Middle Chalcolithic period at certain other sites in western Anatolia.[4] It should also be mentioned that evidence from the late phase of the Middle Chalcolithic period, dated to the middle of the fifth millennium BC, exists at the nearby Girmeler Cave and Tavabaşı Lower Cave, as well as at the sites of Kızılbel and Lower Bağbaşı on the Elmalı Plain.[5] Archaeological evidence regarding

1 Takaoğlu et al. 2014; Korkut et al. 2015; Korkut 2016; Korkut et al. 2018.

2 Korkut 2013, 333–34.

3 Hoşkan et al. 2014.

4 For a brief discussion, see Takaoğlu and Özdemir 2018.

5 Işın et al. 2015, fig. 4; Korkut et al. 2018; fig. 56.6; Eslick 1988 and 1992.

the Middle Chalcolithic period in the neighboring Burdur region is strikingly limited when one considers the systematic investigations conducted there.[6]

The Middle Chalcolithic settlers were no doubt attracted by the natural advantages of this locality, which is rich in water sources and has small plots of arable land on the gently sloping grounds nearby, thus allowing settlers to pursue small-scale farming to support their subsistence base. The location of the acropolis is particularly significant, as it possesses a panoramic view over the northern part of the Xanthus River valley. The extent of the Middle Chalcolithic layer cannot be estimated, but the settlement may at the outset have included the top of the acropolis, as indicated by the causal finds, such as flint artifacts, found there.[7] What is certain from the trial trenches is that the first settlers built their houses on or near bedrock (fig. 3) at the bottom of the slope of the acropolis. Parts of disturbed walls made of rude stones were identified during the opening of trial trenches in the stadium. These walls may have supported an upper structure made of ephemeral building materials such as mud and wood. No chronological subdivisions could be distinguished in terms of architecture, because only small areas were excavated, and most architectural remains representing this period were considerably disrupted during the leveling of the ground for construction of the stadium.

The Middle Chalcolithic pottery identified in this layer is quite homogeneous in character (fig. 4). The fabric of the handmade pottery includes small particles of sand and stones, though some of the sherds include chaff or chopped straw. Although the pottery is monochrome, there is considerable variation in surface color, which ranges from reddish-brown to various shades of gray-brown.[8] Most of the pots were smoothed and coated with an orangish-red slip before firing, while certain pots were additionally finely smoothed and even burnished. The variation observed in the surface color of these pots, ranging from gray-brown to reddish-brown, must have derived from the uncontrolled temperature of the firing. The most characteristic pottery type is a large open bowl with a diameter at the mouth of between 25 cm and 35 cm (fig. 4.1–5 and fig. 5.1–13). Such bowls, with either straight or convex sides, often have a flat base. Knob-like projections frequently appear on top of the rims or just below the rim on the exterior. In certain cases, vertically pierced lugs are also attested on the exterior of this type of bowl.

Open-mouthed jars with in-turned walls constitute the second most common vessel type. These open-mouthed deep jars also have flat bases (fig. 5.14–16). Closed jars with upright or slightly inwardly sloping collar necks are also common. This type of jar has an almost ovoid body, with the neck differentiated from the shoulder (fig. 5.17–22). The vertical handles vary in shape on this type of closed jar. They often have a pair of small vertical strap handles set on the belly symmetrically with the body. Vertical handles joining the collar neck to the shoulder represent another common variety. It seems that the application of a knob-like projection placed on top of these vertical handles for functional reasons was also the case at Tlos. The pottery overall could temporally be placed in the advanced stage of the Early Chalcolithic period, slightly before the beginning of Middle Chalcolithic.

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6 Vandam 2015; Vandam et al. 2019, 11.

7 For early finds uncovered during work conducted in the acropolis, see Korkut 2012, 459, fig. 7.

8 The surface colors of the Middle Chalcolithic pot sherd according to the Munsell color chart are as follows: 5 YR 3/2 Dark Reddish Brown; 2.5 YR 5/6 Red; 5 YR 4/3 Brown; 10 YR 4/2 Dark Grayish Brown; and 2.5 YR 3/2 Very Dark Grayish Brown.

The Middle Chalcolithic layer at Tlos also yielded a small assemblage of ground stone tools attesting to daily activities at the site. Among this assemblage, four examples of saddle querns made of local andesite could easily be related to the tasks of food preparation and craft production at the site, including grinding grain for flour, grinding substances such as salt and spices, and the sharpening and smoothing of celts, shells, and bone implements (fig. 6). These saddle querns are represented by fragments that are mostly broken in the middle. In size the saddle querns average nearly 35 cm at their greatest dimension, and are mainly ovate in outline and plano-convex in cross section. The grinding (ventral) surfaces are often polished over the entire area by extensive abrasive use-wear, resulting in a concave grinding surface curving upwards at each end. Sixteen stone tools, which could be called hand stones or rubber stones, were also retrieved from the Middle Chalcolithic layer. These small round hand stones were probably used as upper stones paired with the saddle querns, since they are roughly of a size that will fit the hand. They present more than one perfectly smoothed small surface on them. Besides grinding grain for flour, they could have been used in tasks such as tanning hides and crushing substances like salt, spices, or pigments. These ground stone tools will be subjected to archaeometric studies in the future to determine with more confidence their function during the time of the settlement's use.

The ground stone assemblage at Middle Chalcolithic Tlos also includes two polished stone axes (fig. 7). These two axes, both measuring 6 cm in length, are elongated in shape with an elliptical horizontal section. Both faces of the cutting edges are beveled and polished, though they both bear small work scars on their cutting edges. Such stone axes were manufactured from rocks such as diabase, basalt, serpentine, and nephrite in prehistoric times in western Anatolia.[9] The closest parallels for the stone axes from Tlos come from nearby Girmeler Cave, where such axes were ubiquitous during both the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods. Polished stone axes comparable to the ones from Tlos previously found in Lycian sites were once occasionally considered objects of the second millennium BC due to the lack of knowledge regarding the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods of the region. Because most polished stone axes in western Anatolia come from contexts with dates ranging from the initial Neolithic period to the end of the Early Bronze Age, there may have been a notable decline in the use of such stone axes in the late third and the second millennium BC. The rise in the use of metal axes may have been one reason for such a decline. The polished stone axes from Tlos in this sense could well be categorized in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic polished axe tradition of western Anatolia in general on the basis of comparable finds from such sites as Ulucak, Ege Gübre, Uğurlu, and Gülpınar.

Nearly two dozen obsidian tools were also encountered along with the pottery and ground stone tools in the Middle Chalcolithic layer at Tlos (fig. 8). Although no trace-element analysis was undertaken, it seems clear that the obsidian was imported from Melos and central Anatolian sources. Most of the transparent obsidian pieces display the characteristics of Göllüdağ, though pieces of Nenezi obsidian are also attested. This would indicate that the Middle Chalcolithic settlers of Tlos also managed to procure obsidian artifacts in the form of blades and flakes from both the Aegean island of Melos and from central Anatolian sources. The appearance of obsidian from two different sources at Tlos is clearly related to the suitable location of the settlement, which lay along the land-based route following the Xanthus River basin connecting the Lycian coast of Anatolia with the hinterland. A similar pattern has

9 Çilingiroğlu et al. 2012, fig. 16; Sağlamtimur 2012, fig 28; Erdoğu 2013, fig. 22; Bamyacı (forthcoming, 141).

previously been attested at the Girmeler Cave during the Neolithic period.[10] The obsidian artifacts were probably valued for their exotic status at the site, as is observed elsewhere.[11]

Apart from obsidian, a number of other raw materials of various colors and textures are present in the chipped stone tool assemblage, including flint, jasper, radiolarite, and chalcedony. The most dominant raw material is honey-brown colored flints with white spots. These could have been acquired from the river beds around the site in the form of pebbles or cobbles with water-worn surfaces. No unworked lumps of flint were found at the site, but blades and flakes with traces of cortex on one surface were found in small numbers, which could be used in favor of the argument that this raw material was easily obtained. Regular parallel-sided blades are rare among tools made of honey-brown flint. However, reasonably parallel-sided blades with a length measuring as much as 7 cm are recorded for this raw material. These type of blades from Tlos often have a dorsal surface with a single ridge, making them triangular in section. These complete and fragmented blades in general do not appear to have been frequently modified by retouching, and there are cases in which only one side of the blade shows signs of modification by retouching. Several examples of artifacts like blades and scrapers manufactured from the honey-brown colored flint at Tlos are illustrated in fig. 9. Flakes constitute the most numerous group among the flint artifacts.

Archaeological excavations in the stadium area have also begun to yield glimpses of finds showing that Tlos was also the scene of a settlement during the Late Bronze Age. Although the area thus far uncovered is relatively small, there is no reason not to believe that Tlos was an important settlement during the Late Bronze Age, due to its prominent position commanding the entire northern part of the Xanthus River valley. Because the acropolis is surrounded by perpendicular precipices and deep ravines on three sides, the top and eastern slopes of the acropolis may have been one of the strongholds that controlled the Xanthus River valley during this period. As is well known, the city of Tlos (Lycian Tlawa) has long been equated with the town of Dalawa/Talawa mentioned in Hittite sources. Dalawa is counted among the towns of the Lukka lands in the text mentioning the activities of Madduwatta,[12] who was a disloyal vassal ruler of the mountainous land of Zippašla somewhere in or near the land of Arzawa during the late fifteenth century BC. According to this source, Dalawa was subjected to the Hittite king until it, along with its neighbor Hinduwa (Kandyba?), joined in a rebellion against Hittite rule during the reign of the Hittite king Tudhaliya II. Madduwatta proposed to the Hittite general Kišnapili to conduct a joint military operation against these rebel towns.[13] But Madduwatta subsequently deceived the Hittites by forming an alliance with the peoples of Dalawa and Hinduwa in order to ambush the Hittite army. Madduwatta apparently detached the people of Dalawa from Hittite control and made the city subject to himself after this event. The so-called "Madduwatta Text" in this sense remains an important literary testimony to the strength of Dalawa during the Late Bronze Age. The Yalburt inscription mentioning the invasion of Lycia by the Hittite king Tudhaliya IV is another historical record that mentions Dalawa as one of the major settlements in the Lukka lands.[14]

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10 Takaoğlu 2016, 650–51.

11 Perlès et al. 2011; Takaoğlu 2016, 650.

12 Götze 1928; Beckman 1999, 153–60.

13 Bryce 1986, 10; Bryce 2015.

14 Poetto 1993, 75–84; Otten 1993; Lebrun 1995; Gander 2014.

It was before the recognition of Dalawa in the Hittite records that artifacts attesting to a Late Bronze Age settlement were reported from Tlos. Three tin-bronze objects—namely, half of a double axe, a flat adze, and a flat dagger blade—were allegedly bought by H.O. Ormerod in 1911 during his travels in southwest Turkey and then donated to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. These have long been viewed as the archaeological manifestation of a Late Bronze Age settlement at Tlos. Although their provenance is not certain, these three well-known tin-bronze objects, tentatively assigned to the fifteenth or fourteenth centuries BC, have often been thought to have come from Tlos. Most scholars now agree that they are indeed artifacts representing the Late Bronze Age past of Tlos.[15] N. Momigliano and B. Aksoy have also introduced other finds to show that Lycia was not so scarcely populated during the second millennium BC. When Hittite activity in the area is taken into the account, archaeological evidence for Late Bronze Age habitation could be expected at other major Lycian cities, such as Patara, Oinoanda, Pınara, and Xanthus. At Tlos, it would be reasonable to encounter archaeological finds that could be related to the days when this city was called Dalawa.

Material remains dating to the Late Bronze Age have been found at a depth of 3.6 m below the surface of the stadium in Trench 35. The remains of two storage vessels or *pithoi* have been noted on the Late Bronze Age surface identified below the Early Iron Age level (fig. 10). One charcoal sample taken from this Late Bronze Age layer was subjected to radiocarbon determination. The AMS radiocarbon dating of this sample (Beta - 421422) gave a 2-sigma range for this layer from 1505 to 1415 cal BC (95% probability), falling roughly within the earliest stages of the Late Bronze Age. In light of the area so far excavated, it is difficult to state explicitly whether or not the Late Bronze sequences defined at Beycesultan (levels III-I in the chronology of Seton Lloyd and James Mellaart[16]) developed in parallel at Tlos during the Late Bronze Age. Certain vessel shapes from Tlos find parallels among the Beycesultan pottery repertoire of this period. A cultural layer representing the transition from the Middle Bronze to the Late Bronze Age, such as Level IVa of Beycesultan (ca. 1550–1450 BC), may also have existed at Tlos. The presence of certain pottery elements found at Tlos recall those of Level IVa, such as the beak-spouted jugs and carinated bowls. These rare finds, however, are more likely intrusive. New excavations initiated at Beycesultan resulted in the revision of the older chronology developed previously by Lloyd and Mellaart when the site was first excavated. Levels I and II of Lloyd and Mellaart's excavations have now been renamed as Layer 4 and Layer 5 respectively. Layer 5 is dated to 1830–1635 BC, while the succeeding Layer 4 is dated to 1530–1410 BC, thus pushing Lloyd and Mellaart's dates back nearly 250–300 years.[17] The layer from which a single radiocarbon date was obtained at Tlos in this context may roughly be synchronized with Layer 4 at Beycesultan, although finds from fills mixed in later deposits point to a longer occupation than a single one at the site. In order to have a better picture of Late Bronze Age at Tlos, there is definitely a need to excavate large areas there, following the removal of some of the the classical remains.

In this Late Bronze Age layer at Tlos, besides the remains of two storage vessels found on the surface of the layer, fragments of additional *pithoi* decorated with incised chevrons (fig. 11.1–2), bands applied in relief with incised parallel diagonal lines (fig. 11.3), impressed

15 For discussions, see Przeworski 1939, 30–49, pl. 9.8–10; Moorey and Schweizer 1974, 115; Mellink 1995, 39; Momigliano and Aksoy 2015, 542, note 9.

16 Mellaart 1970, 57; 1979, 77.

17 Dedeoğlu and Abay 2014, 2.

circles (fig. 11.4–5), and rope ornaments (fig. 11.6–7) have also been found. *Pithoi* with such ornamentation were previously reported from Late Bronze Age Level II at Beycesultan.[18] This resemblance is not a coincidence, since similarities are also observed between the fine ware category of Tlos and those of Beycesultan. Indeed, the fine ware that characterizes the Late Bronze Age layer(s) at Tlos is dominated by shapes such as pedestalled bowls with plain incurved rims or carinated sides (chalices, goblets, fruit stands), as well as bowls with handles set either upon or just below the rim.[19] High pedestalled bowls could have either inward leaning plain rim (e.g., figs. 12.1, 13.1) or carinated sides (figs. 12.15–30, 13.15–30). The pedestals were decorated either by matt paint in the form of horizontal band, or by molds in reliefs (figs. 12.2–14, 13.2–14). This category of vessels was made in both fine and semi-fine fabrics from local clay.[20] The color of the fabric is generally reddish-yellow (5 YR 6/6; 5 YR 7/6; 7.5 R 7/6), but light red (2.5 YR 4/6) and pink (5 YR 8/4) clays were also utilized. These vessels were mainly red-slipped (10 R 4/6 or 10 R 5/6), although dark gray (5 YR 7/6), black (7.5 YR 2.5/1), brown (7.5 YR 4/4), and reddish-brown (2.5 YR 5/4) slips are also attested, albeit in small numbers. There are also cases in which vessels show no sign of a slip. In terms of decoration, parallel horizontal lines applied in brown or black paint on the surface also appear in this category, albeit rarely, among the Late Bronze Age pottery repertoire at Tlos. It is reasonable to argue from the pottery evidence that Tlos was also a part of the same Late Bronze cultural zone of southwest Anatolia that is best represented by sites like Beycesultan, Aphrodisias, and Bademağacı. For instance, a recent meticulous study of chalices recovered from Late Bronze Age layers at Beycesultan demonstrated that this distinctive type of drinking cup was very common in the Upper Meander River basin.[21] The chalice fragments from Tlos may represent the western extension of this local tradition of the Upper Meander River basin.

One of the most significant contributions of the excavations in the stadium area is the information gathered regarding the Iron Age, Geometric, and Archaic occupations of Tlos, dating roughly between 1150 and 550 BC. Here, the architectural remains and pottery evidence recovered from excavated areas shed new light on a poorly understood period of Lycian history. On the basis of stratigraphy and architecture, the pottery recovered from the stadium area can be categorized under three different periods; namely the Early Iron Age, the Geometric period, and the Archaic period. The settlement from this area was evidently abandoned during the Classical period, when the number of buildings on the acropolis began to rise rapidly. This clearly points to a westward shift of settlement from the stadium area to the top of the acropolis. However, little can be said about the Early Iron Age pottery found in relation to architecture (fig. 14). Previously, systematic surveys carried out at the site of Çaltılar has demonstrated the archaeological potential of the northern parts of the Xanthus River basin for revealing evidence of the Early Iron Age.[22] At Tlos, pot sherds representing the Early Iron Age were found in relation to architecture in stratigraphic contexts revealed in trial trenches.

The most common Early Iron Age vessels attested at Tlos are bowls with three loop legs (figs. 15.1–2, 16.1–2), *krater*s with outward leaning flat-topped rims (figs. 15.3–7, 16.3–7),

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18 Mellaart and Murray 1995, 24.

19 Sezgin 2017, 25–48.

20 In terms of fabric and shape, this category of ware at Tlos finds parallels in excavated contexts at Beycesultan Aphrodisias, and Bademağacı, as well as among the surface assemblage of Çaltılar. See Mellaart and Murray 1995; Joukowsky 1986, 685; Umurtak 2003; Momigliano et al. 2011; and Dedeoğlu and Konakçı 2015.

21 Dedeoğlu 2016, 15.

22 Momigliano et al. 2011, 85–97; Momigliano and Aksoy 2015.

carinated bowls (figs. 15.8–13, 16.8–13), and jars with convex necks (figs. 15.14–16, 16.14–6). The fabric used in the manufacture of vessels during this period is quite homogeneous. The color of the fabric in general is reddish yellow (5 YR 6/6; 5 YR 6/8; 5 YR 7/8), although pink fabric has also been causally attested (7.5 YR 7/14). Both the interiors and the exteriors of open vessels were often entirely slipped, with occasional use of different slips on interiors and exteriors. They were mainly red slipped (2.5 YR 5/8; 10 R 5/6), but reddish-brown (5 YR 4/3), dark reddish-brown (5 YR 3/2), and reddish gray (5 YR 4/2; 2.5 Y 3/1) slips were also used. The matt red paint (2.5 YR 4/6) was used to make simple geometric decorations such as bands, cross-hatched triangles, zigzags, and concentric circles over the exteriors of the vessels, though reddish-brown (5 YR 4/3) and dark gray (2.5 Y 3/1) paints were also occasionally used.

Analysis of recent data from Tlos has revealed several new pieces of evidence that contribute to our growing knowledge of pre-Classical Lycia. The trenches opened in the area of the stadium to the east of the acropolis show that the site was the scene of human occupation as early as the early phase of the Middle Chalcolithic period sometime in the early fifth millennium BC. In southwestern Anatolian archaeology, the Middle Chalcolithic period became a focus of interest particularly after the discovery of finds at Kızılbel and Lower Bağbaşı in the Elmalı region, which helped to define the cultural break between the latest Early Chalcolithic occupation at Hacılar (Level I) and the Late Chalcolithic period represented to a great extent by the sequences at Beycesultan (Levels XL–XX).[23] Recent archaeological studies indicate that the Middle Chalcolithic was a long period that lasted from around 5000/4900 BC to 4300 BC in western Anatolia and that can be further sub-divided into two main phases.[24] The Middle Chalcolithic period has so far been attested at numerous sites in the western Anatolian littoral from the Troad to Lycia. Girmeler Cave and Tavabaşı Lower Cave are two major prehistoric Lycian sites demonstrating that caves could also be expected during this period, in addition to sites located on the alluvial plains and the slopes surrounding them. The Middle Chalcolithic evidence from Tlos shows that the settlements of this period could also have existed in mountainous areas far from the plains. Another recent archaeological study on the Middle Chalcolithic period shows that settlements may have also existed on high elevations far from the alluvial plains, since flat settlements with short-term occupations have also been attested during this period.[25] These dates all indicate that archaeologists should not search for evidence of the Middle Chalcolithic in the form of mound-type archaeological sites. This may be one reason for the lack of data regarding the Middle Chalcolithic period during the systematic surface investigation conducted in the mountainous landscape of the Burdur region. The small-scale, short-lived flat settlements that one might one expect to find during the Middle Chalcolithic period, however, are frequently attested during the succeeding periods, along with large sites such as Kuruçay in this region.[26]

Tlos was re-settled during the Late Bronze Age when the cities of the Lukka lands appeared in Hittite records in areas around the Xanthus River basin. Because settlements occupying highly defensible positions controlling the main land-based routes may have been favorable places during the Late Bronze Age, a settlement could well have flourished at Tlos during the Late Bronze Age, since the site was located on a place that could have controlled the

23 Eslick 1988 and 1992.

24 Takaoğlu and Özdemir 2018, 481.

25 Takaoğlu 2017, 6.

26 De Cupere et al. 2017, 7; Vandam 2015; Vandam et al. 2019, 11.

land-based route following the northern part of the Xanthus River. Such may well also have been the case in both earlier and later periods. Pot sherds retrieved from Trench 35 have expanded the small number of Late Bronze Age sites in Lycia. The absence of finds belonging to the period between the Middle Chalcolithic and Late Bronze Age layer(s), on the other hand, poses a problem. Further work will surely be done to better understand the site formation processes in the stadium area, which apparently witnessed considerable changes throughout the period of its use.

The discovery of finds post-dating the Late Bronze Age in the stadium area is another important contribution of the Tlos excavations. This is because the cultural stages were not previously documented in secure archaeological contexts in Lycia. This may mean that the concept of the "Dark Age" may be re-examined in Lycia when excavations continue in this part of Tlos. The presence of a cultural sequence from the Protogeometric to the end of the Archaic period without any noticeable break at the stadium area of Tlos may ultimately be of great archaeological significance for Lycian archaeology. Much will surely be said about the period of Lycian history between 1050 and 550 BC when the results of the ongoing analysis of the stratigraphically documented new material from the stadium area at Tlos are published in an excavation monograph in the near future. Nonetheless, there is no reason at this point of research not to state that Tlos was one of the Lycian sites where there was a continuous occupation for centuries following the end of the Late Bronze Age.

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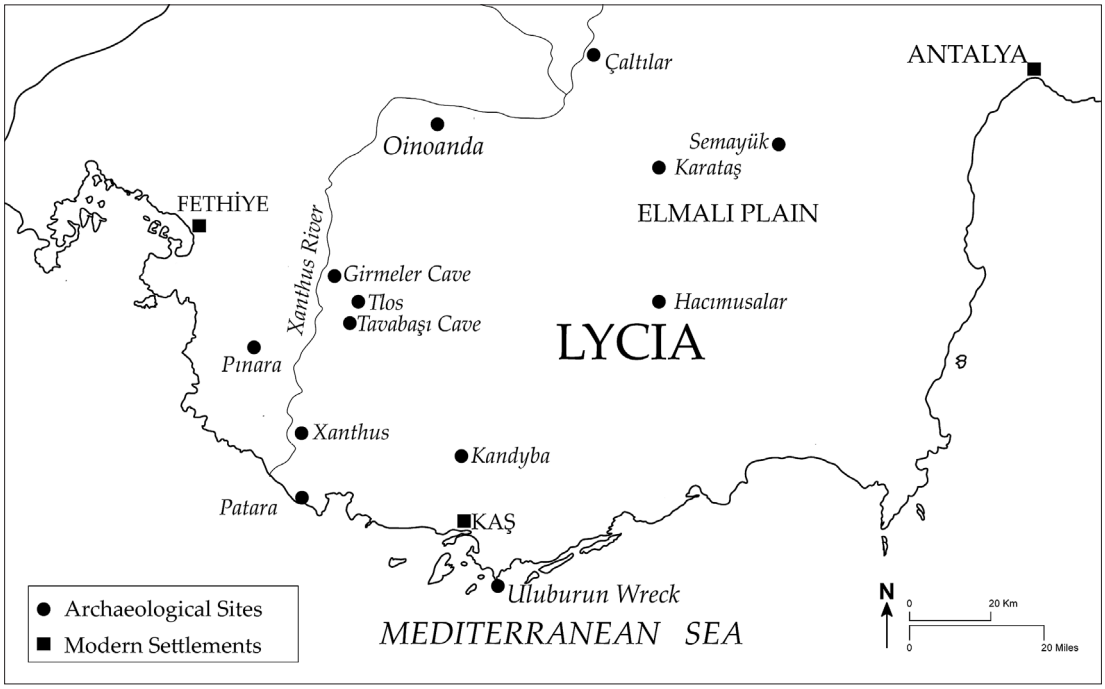

Fig. 1 Map showing Tlos and other major sites mentioned in the text

Fig. 2 Aerial view of the acropolis of Tlos from the east, showing pre-Classical remains in the area of the Hellenistic stadium. Note Xanthus River basin in background

Fig. 3 View of trial trench attesting to Middle Chalcolithic settlement on the eastern outskirts of the Tlos acropolis

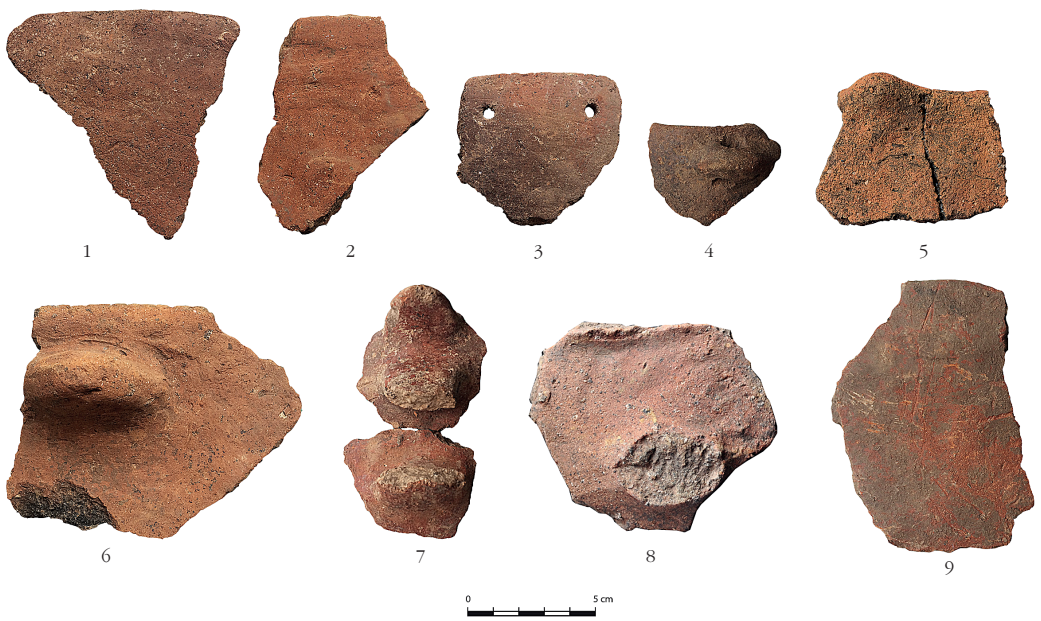

Fig. 4 Selected diagnostic Middle Chalcolithic pot sherds with dark reddish-brown surfaces recovered from trial trenches dug in stadium area

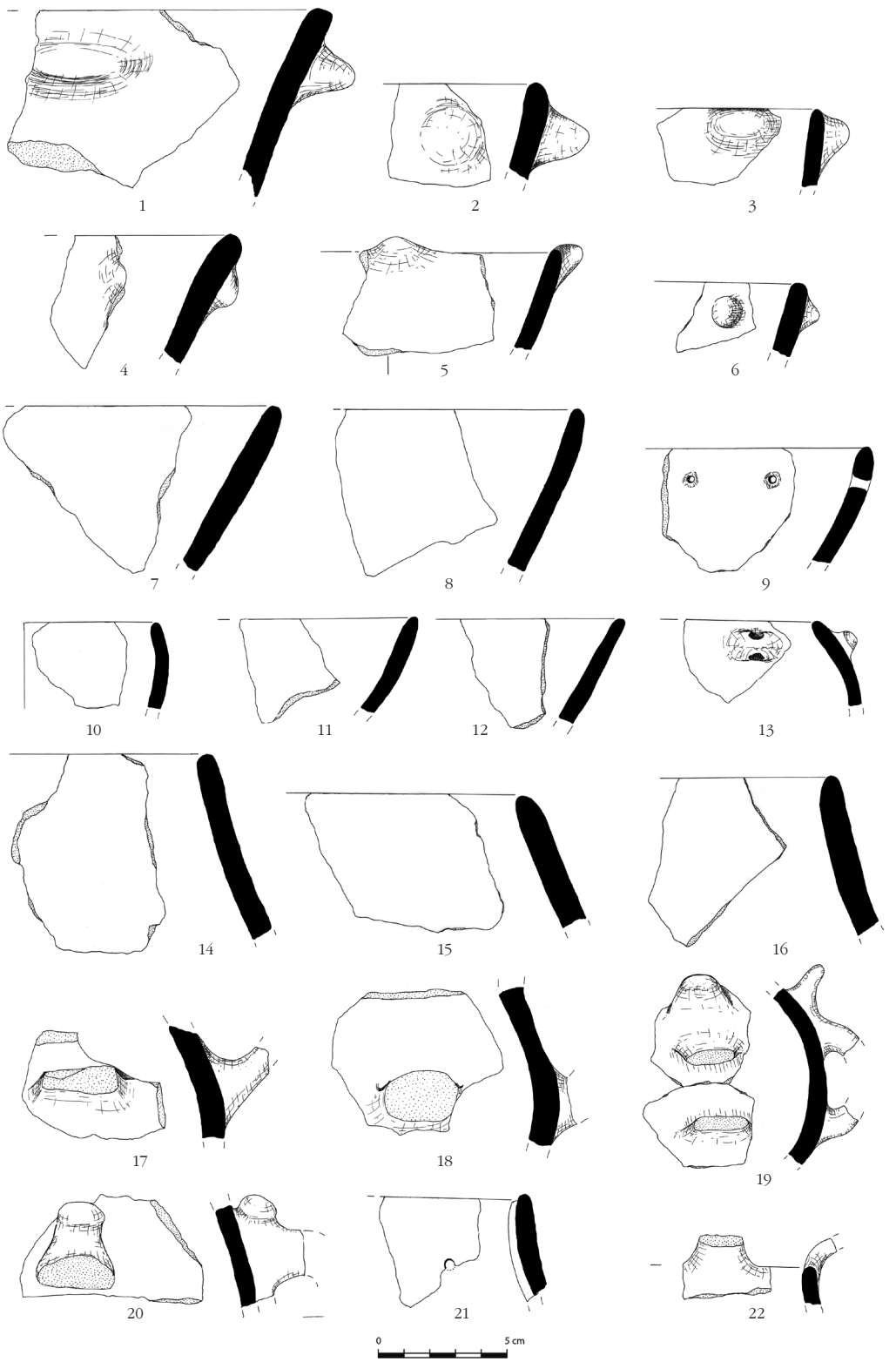

Fig. 5 Line drawing of diagnostic Middle Chalcolithic pot sherds recovered from trial trenches dug in area of stadium

Fig. 6
Saddle quern fragments recovered from habitational debris of Middle Chalcolithic layer

Fig. 7
Two polished stone axes: 1 is from habitational debris of Middle Chalcolithic layer; 2 is from fills of trench opened on eastern slope of acropolis

Fig. 8
Obsidian artifacts of central Anatolian origin recovered from habitational debris of Middle Chalcolithic layer

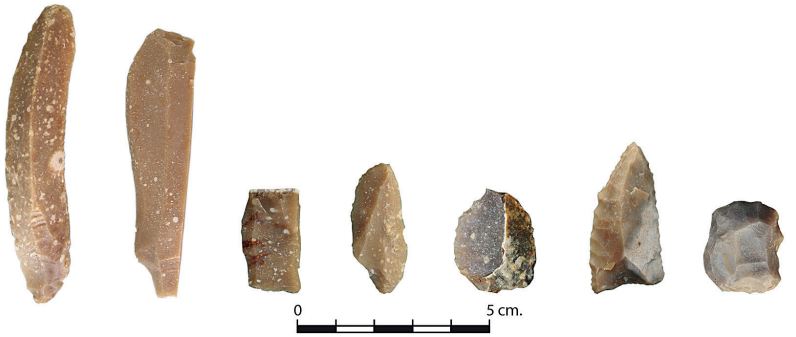

Fig. 9
Flint artifacts recovered from habitational debris of Middle Chalcolithic layer

Fig. 10
Bottom of Trench 35, showing remains of two Late Bronze Age storage vessels

Fig. 11
Fragments of Late Bronze Age storage vessels with decorated surfaces. 1–2) incised chevrons; 3) incised diagonal parallel lines; 4–5) impressed circles; 6–7) rope decoration

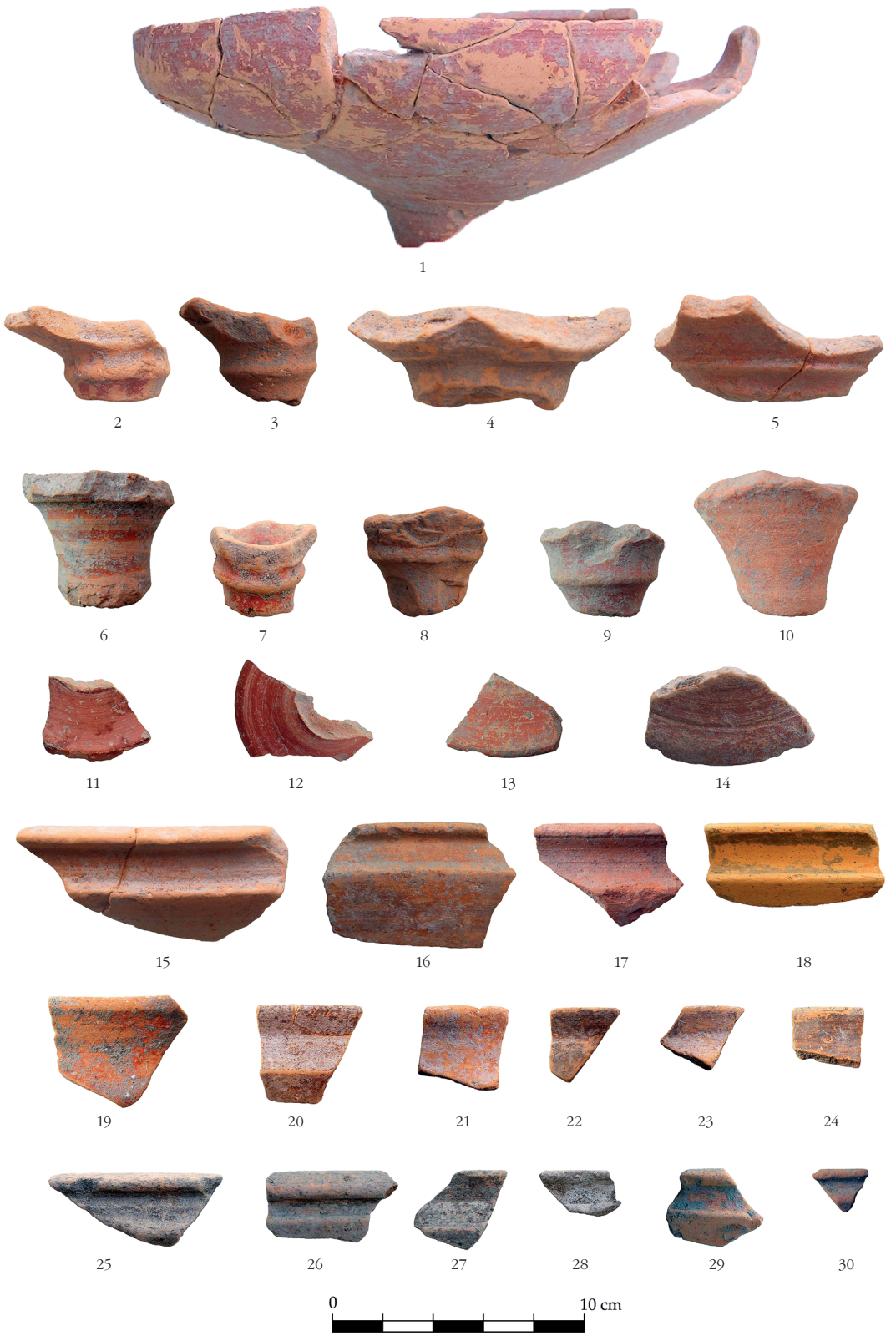

Fig. 12 Selected Late Bronze Age pots representing pedestalled bowls

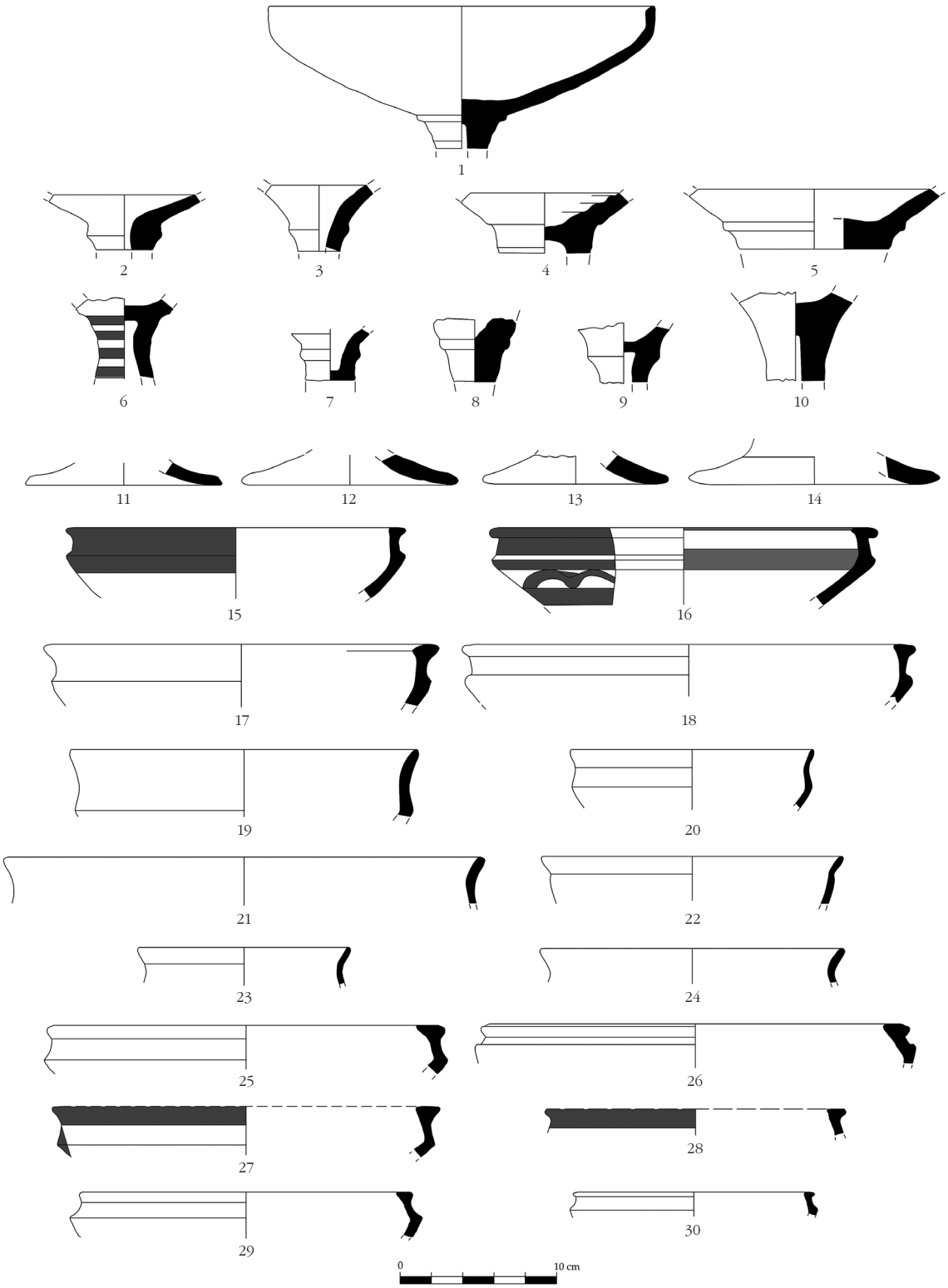

Fig. 13 Line drawings of selected Late Bronze Age pot sherds representing pedestalled bowls

Fig. 14 View of Trench 34 in the stadium area, showing Early Iron Age remains beneath Geometric period walls

Fig. 15 Selected Early Iron Age pot sherds from trial trenches in the stadium area

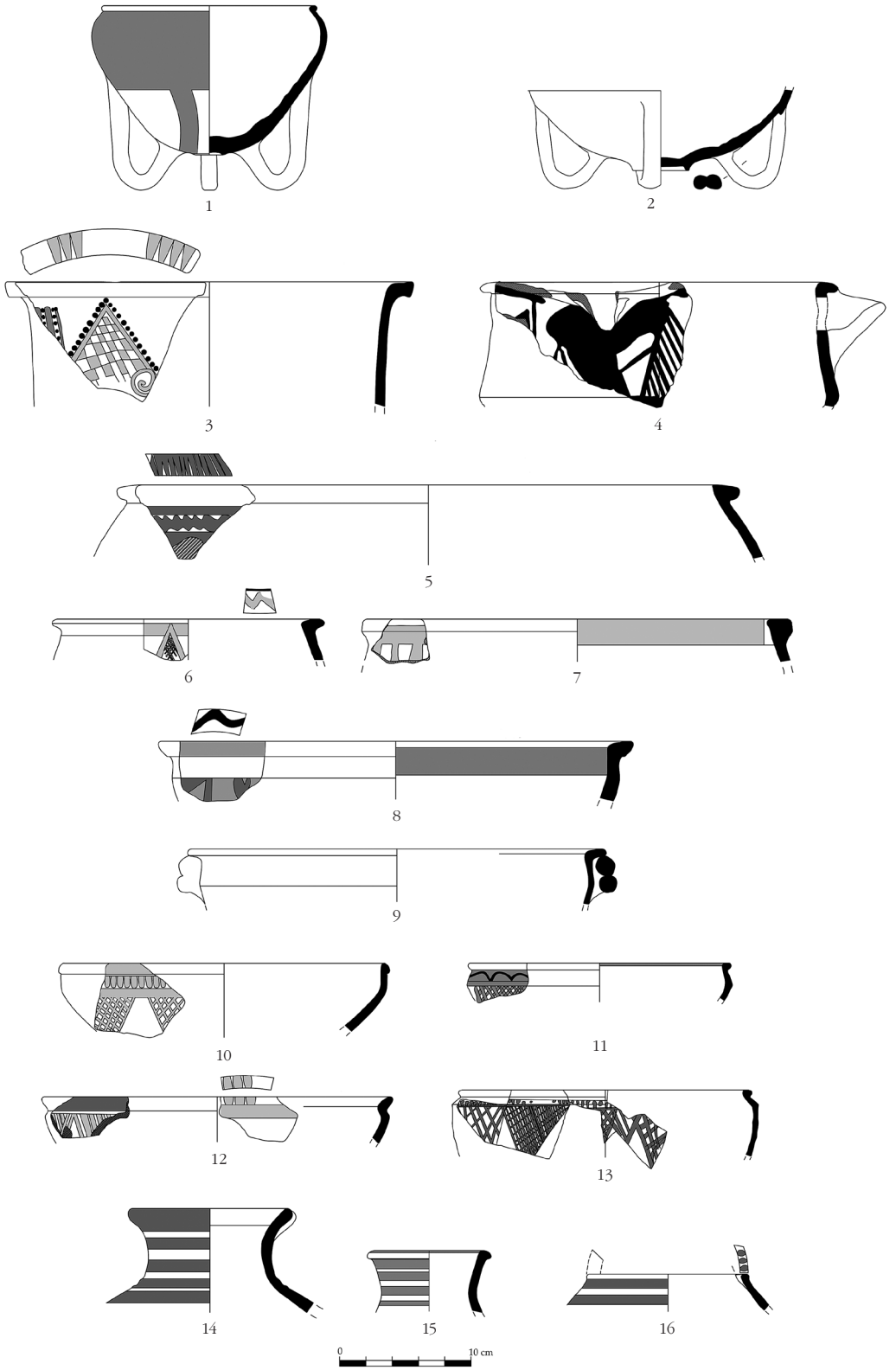

Fig. 16 Line drawings of selected Early Iron Age pot sherds from trial trenches in the stadium area