

# SANEM 3

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STUDIES ON THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND THE MEDITERRANEAN



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SANEM

STUDIES ON THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

INTRODUCTION TO THE EDITORIAL SERIES

The SANEM editorial series, 'Studies on the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean', is the official channel for the scientific monographic studies of CAMNES, Center for Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies, created with the support of the publishing house Arbor Sapientiae of Rome.

The logo of the series, a chimera with wings, was chosen as a symbolic embodiment of the close connections and merging traits of Eastern and Western cultures. Indeed, the iconography of the chimera was born within the Classical ambit, but its roots are to be found in the Near East as the examples found in Ebla (18<sup>th</sup> century BCE) and in Carchemish (11-9<sup>th</sup> century BCE) demonstrate.

Works of significant scientific value are published in the SANEM series regarding the broad fields of archaeology, anthropology, history, philology and art history of the ancient past of the Near Eastern and Mediterranean cultural areas. Particular attention is devoted to modern methods of investigation for the reconstruction and the interpretation of these cultures in a time span that stretches from prehistory to the Classical period.

According to the principles of CAMNES, the SANEM series is ideal not only for established scholars but also for the publication of the works of young researchers at the beginning of their academic careers and their research projects.

Given the international context in which CAMNES operates, the works of the series are predominantly published in English, and subjected to double-blind peer review by the SANEM Scientific Committee, created specifically for the editorial series. In special cases CAMNES may also rely on a peer review outside the Scientific Committee.

All volumes in the series are published following an irregular chronological sequence and are issued in paper and in digital editions.

INTRODUZIONE ALLA SERIE EDITORIALE

La serie editoriale SANEM, *Studies on the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean*, nasce come sede ufficiale delle pubblicazioni scientifiche monografiche del CAMNES, *Center for Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies*, per iniziativa del centro studi e grazie al supporto della casa editrice Arbor Sapientiae di Roma.

Il logo della serie, una chimera alata, è stato scelto come incarnazione simbolica delle strette connessioni e delle reciproche influenze tra le culture d'Oriente e quelle d'Occidente. Infatti, l'iconografia della chimera nasce in ambito Classico, ma le sue radici sono da ricercare nel Vicino Oriente come dimostrano gli esempi ritrovati a Ebla (XVIII secolo a.C.) e a Karkemish (XI-IX secolo a.C.).

Nei SANEM sono pubblicate opere di significativo valore scientifico inerenti l'archeologia, l'antropologia, la storia, la filologia e la storia dell'arte, con particolare attenzione ai moderni metodi di indagine volti alla ricostruzione e all'interpretazione dell'antico passato delle grandi aree culturali del Vicino Oriente e del Mediterraneo, in un arco cronologico che si estende dalla preistoria, passando per la protostoria, fino al periodo classico.

Secondo i principi ispiratori del CAMNES, i SANEM sono la sede editoriale ideale non solo per studiosi affermati, ma anche per la pubblicazione del lavoro dei giovani ricercatori all'inizio delle loro carriere accademiche e dei loro progetti di ricerca.

Dato il contesto internazionale nel quale opera CAMNES, salvo eccezioni, le opere della serie sono pubblicate in inglese, e sottoposte a *double-blind peer review* (autore e revisore saranno anonimi) dal Comitato Scientifico del SANEM, creato appositamente per la serie editoriale. In casi particolari CAMNES può avvalersi anche di un referaggio esterno al Comitato Scientifico.

Tutti i volumi della serie, che sono pubblicati senza una cadenza cronologica regolare, hanno un'edizione cartacea e un'edizione digitale.

*Guido Guarducci, Stefano Valentini*  
(Direzione CAMNES)

# BETWEEN SYRIA AND THE HIGHLANDS

*STUDIES IN HONOR OF  
GIORGIO BUCCELLATI & MARILYN KELLY-BUCCELLATI*

STEFANO VALENTINI - GUIDO GUARDUCCI  
*(editors)*



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Thank you all!

*Stefano Valentini & Guido Guarducci*

## FOREWORD

STEFANO VALENTINI - GUIDO GUARDUCCI

Since the first time I met them at Tell Mozan in Syria, I think it was the Summer 1993, Marilyn and Giorgio have been a constant presence for me, not only in the field of archaeology, but also, and perhaps above all, from a human point of view. When I worked at Tell Barri under the direction of Paolo Emilio Pecorella, until 2005, we always met in Jezirah, every summer, during the excavation campaigns. It was precisely that year, on the tragic death of my Professor, that my relationship with Marilyn and Giorgio became elective. In those dramatic days, I was able to appreciate their affection, their great friendship, their human depth. In the following years, despite the physical distance and the vicissitudes of life, which unfortunately brought us elsewhere from Syria, I always felt them close to me. Whenever I asked them for advice, an opinion, they have always shown me their sincere closeness, with those manners that are so courteous and affable. Of Marilyn and Giorgio, I have always appreciated their empathy and their intellectual honesty, supported by an innate ability to communicate, share and involve the scientific community with the ultimate goal of giving life to an archeology full of humanity: made up of people and of faces, not only of pottery and of dust. Thanks to them, I gained the awareness that the archaeologist, wherever he is working, must also fulfill his task as cultural mediator: between the cultures of the past and those of the present, and between our Western culture and that of the countries that we host.

Long life to both!

*Stefano*

It is for me a great honor to have curated together with Stefano this volume dedicated to Giorgio and Marilyn. I had the pleasure to meet them during the tragic event that took place at Tell Barri in 2005. Not only they were the first to visit us after the loss of our *Müdir*, Pamî, they stood next to us, consoling and cheering us up. Last but not least, we receive a huge crate of ice-cold beer from Tell Mozan. It may not appear as so, but that was a very special gift coming after a month of hard work and the loss of our professor, besides the rarity of such a commodity! Trust me when I say that all of us who were there, still remember that crate, almost as a symbol of solidarity for our grief, and the words of comfort expressed by Giorgio and Marilyn. That same year we went to visit their site and I was amazed by the welcoming atmosphere of the Mission House and greatly fascinated by the site of Urkesh that Giorgio, Federico and Marilyn thoroughly illustrated us. Thank you very much for your kind and fundamental support during those days. Finally, I would also like to deeply thank Giorgio for accepting since the very first day, back in 2010, to become a member of Scientific Committee of the newborn Center for Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies, CAMNES, as well as his and Marilyn's constant support in the following events that we organized. Thank you Giorgio, thank you Marilyn, for your remarkable academic and scientific effort and for your precious friendship.

Con affetto e stima,

*Guido*



## GIORGIO BUCCELLATI & MARILYN KELLY-BUCCELLATI

Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati have worked for many years in the Near East, especially in Syria, Iraq and Turkey. They are at present co-directors of the archaeological expedition to Tell Mozan/Urkish in North-Eastern Syria. They work closely together both in the field and on the publication reports from their excavations, of which five volumes, plus audio-visual presentations, have appeared so far. They lead an international staff comprising colleagues and students from the US, Europe, the Near East and Asia and have given joint lectures on the excavations, and workshops on methods used, at major archaeological centers around the world as well as holding positions as visiting professors in various European universities.

### GIORGIO BUCCELLATI

Giorgio Buccellati studied at the Catholic University (Milan, Italy), Fordam University and received his Ph.D. from the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. He is Research Professor in the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA, and Professor Emeritus in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures and in the Department of History at UCLA. He founded the Institute of Archaeology at UCLA, of which he served as first director from 1973 until 1983 and where he is now Director of the Mesopotamian Lab. He is currently the Co-Director of the Urkish/Mozan Archaeological Project as well as Director of IIMAS – The International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies and Director of AVASA – Associazione per la Valorizzazione dell’Archeologia e della Storia Antica.

His research interests include the ancient languages, the literature, the religion, the archaeology and the history of Mesopotamia, as well as the theory of archaeology. His publications include site reports, text editions, linguistic and literary studies as well as on archaeological theory, historical monographs and essays on philosophy and spirituality. He has published a structural grammar of ancient Babylonian, two volumes on Mesopotamian civilization (on religion and politics; two more are forthcoming on literature as well as on art and architecture), a volume on archaeological theory dealing with the structural, digital and philosophical aspects of the archaeological record. He has authored two major scholarly websites on the archaeology of Urkish and on archaeological theory. As a Guggenheim Fellow, he has traveled to Syria to study modern ethnography and geography for a better understanding of the history of the ancient Amorites. In his field work, he has developed new approaches to the preservation and presentation of archaeological sites and to community archaeology. He has spearheaded the Urkish Extended Project, responding to the crisis of the war in Syria by maintaining a very active presence at the site.

### MARILYN KELLY-BUCCELLATI

Professor Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati has been excavating and conducting research on the archaeology and art history of the ancient Near East for over 50 years. Her Ph.D. from the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago was on the third millennium B.C. in the Caucasus. She taught archaeology and art history in California State University, Los Angeles and is now Visiting Professor at the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA.

She is Director of the Urkish/Mozan Archaeological Project, a site spanning the fourth to the second millennia BC which has provided crucial to our understanding of the history, art and architecture of northern Mesopotamia.

Her research interests include Syro-Mesopotamian seal iconography, ceramics, ancient identification markers, pre-history in the southern Caucasus. She has published many site reports based on work in Terqa and especially Mozan/Urkish, and is currently finishing a digital volume on the excavated ceramics from Urkish, to be published within the Urkish Global Record website. One of her important publications was on the function of the necromantic pit excavated in Urkish, unique in its monumentality and significance; her research on the seal impressions of the AP Palace has brought to light the artistic value of these objects as well as the complex royal court to which they give witness.

With the cessation of excavations in Syria due to the war she has returned to the Republic of Georgia to work with the Italian team from the Ca’ Foscari University, Venice. This fieldwork activity lead her to curate an exhibit entitled “Georgia Paese d’oro e di fede. Identità e alterità nella storia di un popolo” on the archaeological and artistic heritage of the Republic of Georgia.

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# BETWEEN SYRIA AND THE HIGHLANDS

*STUDIES IN HONOR OF  
GIORGIO BUCCELLATI & MARILYN KELLY-BUCCELLATI*



# GOING RED IN THE IRON AGE II: THE EMERGENCE OF RED-SLIP POTTERY IN NORTHERN LEVANT WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO TELL AFIS, CHATAL HÖYÜK AND ZINCIRLI HÖYÜK

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## *Abstract*

This paper aims at providing a general overview on the Iron Age II-III Red Slip production in Northern Levant, with special reference to the ceramic assemblage from Tell Afis, Chatal Höyük and Zincirli, emphasizing common features and differences.\*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Giorgio Buccellati in his comprehensive work on the origins of politics<sup>1</sup> sketches for the Syrian Region during the first stages of the Iron age the solid presence of Aramaeans and an Aramaean Eucumene in the following 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Since the 1960s archaeologists attempted to link archaeological material to the Aramaean presence both in carving style<sup>2</sup> and in ceramic production, identifying as “Aramaean” a specific red slip and burnished ware found in northern Mesopotamia and ascribed to a coastal Levantine production.<sup>3</sup> Although as it is already clearly emphasized by Kreppner<sup>4</sup> the term “Aramaean” for this specific production should be discarded, this specific class of pottery is considered a marker for the Iron Age II and III over a very large area ranging from southern<sup>5</sup> to northern Levant<sup>6</sup> from the Mediterranean coast to Inner Syria.

Main aim of this article is to discuss this specific pottery class with special reference to northern Levant including Inner Syria under the light of archaeological excavations carried out or published in the last twenty years in order to provide a general overview on the appearance of this class in this specific geographic region, its chronological distribution, most representative shapes and, when possible, its origin.

Red Slip Ware<sup>7</sup> is a ceramic class identified by a specific external appearance: a red/orange or brown

slip, which covers in part or completely the internal and/or external surface of a ceramic container, makes these vessels immediately identifiable. In northern Levant the pottery belonging to this class is usually also burnished (in most cases horizontally but also vertically in specific sites productions) at least in the part where the surface is slipped. The fabric does not differ from the local simple ware, suggesting that the Red Slip in northern Levant is locally produced.<sup>8</sup> The technique employed to apply the slip on the vessel has not been investigated in detail. Analysis of the slip has been carried out on some samples from Tell Afis (see below), from Sheikh Hamad and from Tell Tayinat, the colour (at least for Tell Afis) being the result of hematite reflections with a composition rich in iron oxide, potassium oxide, silicon dioxide and aluminium oxide.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. MATERIAL EVIDENCE

### *2.1. The Amuq and the arrival of the Red Slip and Burnished*

The data provided here are mainly based on the personal analysis of the Iron Age II pottery assemblages from Chatal Höyük<sup>10</sup> and of the Late Bronze Age II and Iron I assemblages from Tell Atchana.<sup>11</sup>

\* Both authors coauthored sections 1 and 3, MP section 2.1, SS sections 2.2 and 2.3.

<sup>1</sup> Buccellati 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Dion 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Hrouda 1962, 76-81, 117.

<sup>4</sup> Kreppner 2006, 62-63.

<sup>5</sup> Holladay 1990, Mazar 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Braemer 1986.

<sup>7</sup> It has been called Red Slip or Red Slip Ware (Braemer 1986; Soldi 2013; Mazar 1998), Red Slip and Burnished (Holladay 1990; Welton et al. 2019), Red Burnished (Pucci 2019b), *céramique douce polie* (Lebeau 1983) indicating the same kind of production.

<sup>8</sup> Falcone and Lazzarini 1998, the same phenomenon has been observed and proven through chemical analysis for the Red Slip production at Tell Shekh Hamad, cf. Schneider 2006, 402.

<sup>9</sup> Falcone, Lazzarini 1998, 488.

<sup>10</sup> Pucci 2019a and b.

<sup>11</sup> The Chatal Höyük publication project has been carried out in the period between 2008 and 2013 and has processed the material from the American excavations at the site (Braidwood 1937; Haines 1971). The project in collaboration with the Turkish team led by Aslıhan Yener started in 2013 and it is still ongoing. Part of the Iron Age material from Tell Atchana has been analyzed and processed by Maricarmela Montesanto in her PhD (Montesanto 2018). I would like to thank prof. Yener for her support in my work in the Amuq.



Both sites, located 32km apart from each other in the Amuq plain (fig. 1), were inhabited during the Late Bronze Age, underwent a period of decay and ruralization in the last stages of the Late Bronze Age and were still occupied during the first stages of Iron Age I.<sup>12</sup> While Atchana was probably definitely abandoned by the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, Chatal Höyük experienced a period of urban re-growth and flourishing until the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The archaeological contexts from the two sites are also very different from each other and provide different information on the Red Slip Ware. Chatal H. offers an extremely rich pottery assemblage for the Iron Age II and III (Amuq Phase O), a fairly good inventory of Iron Age I (Phase N) occupation and a quite smaller extent of Late Bronze Age archaeological exposure. By contrast, at Atchana Iron II stratified Red Slip materials were found only in two areas of the acropolis excavated by the Turkish team since 2003:<sup>13</sup> these were found in the uppermost deposits of square 42.10 and others were found reemployed in the floor of the structure identified in square 32.42. It seems likely that during the Iron Age II the site was definitely abandoned with the exception of a single structure paved with pottery sherds, which was probably erected during the Iron Age III reemploying several sherds as foundations for the floor; these sherds were probably collected from the old surface of the mound and were mixed with sherds dated to different periods.

Chatal Höyük presents in three areas a continuous stratigraphic sequence from levels ascribed to Iron Age I (with very little Red Slip ware), to levels (Phase O, Iron Age II-III) in which majority of open vessels was produced with homogenous sizes and red slip and burnish surface treatment. For this reason the site provides a good overview on the very first (beginning of the Iron Age II) Red Slip production and on the range of shapes employed in this class in these first stages. The very large assemblage of Red Slip shapes dated to the following periods (Iron Age II late and Iron Age III) will not be considered here as this part focuses mainly on the first appearances of Red Slip ware and on its relationship with similar wares in former periods.

At Chatal H. the Iron Age II-III sequence has been divided into three stages named O<sub>beginning</sub>, O<sub>middle</sub> and O<sub>Late</sub>, using the Amuq regional phase nomenclature established by Braidwood<sup>14</sup> and adding a further subdivision which applies only for Chatal H. The pottery assemblage of the beginning of phase

O includes the first appearance (and progressive increase) of red slip and burnished pottery, the progressive decrease of patterns in the monochrome painted pottery, and a very slow increase in bichrome painted pottery, whose presence was very scant in the previous phase. All Red Slip vessels are burnished. The burnishing is generally wheel made and horizontal on the open forms, while on closed forms the burnishing tends to be handmade and vertical, although some variety is seen in conical plates (i.e., external wheel burnishing and internal hand burnishing). Therefore, these Red Burnished assemblages disprove Swift's statement<sup>15</sup> that the hand burnishing predates the wheel burnishing in this specific class.

There are only three main shapes which occur in the Red Slip class in phase O<sub>beginning</sub> deposits, i.e. plates, single serving bowls and kraters/deep bowl (fig. 2).

**Plates:** Plates with a rounded or squared lip (fig. 2: a-g), conical body, and ring base<sup>16</sup> are the first shape to appear in phase O, and the one most frequently produced building more than 50% of the whole Red Slip assemblage. These are exclusively multiple serving vessels with a diameter size ranging from 220 to 340 mm, though on most pieces it is closer to 340 mm. The small Simple Ware plates (diameter of 120 mm) from phase N were only produced in small quantities in phase O, as well as very few Red Burnished examples of this smaller type with incurving rims were found (fig. 2: o); the largest production of Red Slip single serving plates imitates the same shape as the larger ones (fig. 2: h), but possibly fulfilling a different function.

**Bowls:** smaller bowl (fig. 2: n, p) with a flaring rim, low carination, and a rounded base. These bowls tend to be mid-sized (with a diameter approximately 180 mm in diameter) and have no handles. Their thinned lip and rounded base suggest their use as single serving in the drinking set. Ledge bowls: these bowls with a simple or slightly thickened rim (fig. 2: i) and low ring base have a medium-large rim size (with the diameter measuring around 270 mm), are quite short, and appear in equal numbers in the Simple Ware and Red Burnished classes. Very elongated ledge handles are applied just underneath the rim, building a ledge along the vessel with slightly protruding edges. This feature becomes typical only in the later period of phase O. The same is true for hemispherical bowls with flat rim (fig. 2: m), which sporadically appear in O<sub>beginning</sub> assemblages and will become extremely common in later periods.

<sup>12</sup> Pucci 2019a.

<sup>13</sup> Yener 2010; Yener et al. forthcoming; Montesanto and Pucci forthcoming.

<sup>14</sup> cf. Pucci (2019b, 6-8 and references).

<sup>15</sup> Swift 1958, 128.

<sup>16</sup> Only ring bases (having a diameter between 100 and 140 mm) were found as belonging to this kind of shape.

Deep Bowls/kraters: Biconical and carinated bowls have a basic geometric shape (fig. 2: o-q), which derives from a Simple Ware shape observed in phase N contexts. The shape consists of an upper cylindrical part and a conical bottom with a flat or low ring base. The junction between the upper flaring mouth and the lower conical part is often angular or S-shaped. During this beginning phase, the carination is not heavily emphasized. The lip is always thinned, the opening is slightly flaring, and the vessels are medium/large in size (although the rim was approximately 280-320 mm in diameter, the bowl's bottom part tended to be narrower). A few fragments of this shape were found in the first levels of phase O and, when they broke above the carination, were occasionally confused with conical bowls, the only differences being the thickness of the walls (the bowls have thinner walls) and the shape of the rim (which is thicker and squared in the plates). These shapes become extremely popular during phase O, with accentuated carination and flaring rims. Over time, this shape developed into several variations such as a deep biconical krater with a slightly flaring upper part, conical bottom, and a vertical loop or stranded handle, which appears in few examples already in these more ancient deposits (fig. 2: p). Amphoroid kraters (fig. 2: o), for example, were also produced with a Red Burnished treatment, begin to appear in phase O\_Beginning and will become more common in phase O\_mid and late.

Standardization is evident in terms of size, shape and surface treatment only in the plates, which definitely share not only a common shape but standardized dimensions and shape of rim and base. Single serving bowls instead vary greatly in terms of rim shape (thickened as in fig. 2: l, incurving as in fig. 2: o; thinned as in fig. 2: n, p) and represent only 10% of the whole assemblage. Standardization of larger bowls (biconical or amphoroid kraters) which build 28% of the Red Slip and burnished assemblage, is more difficult to state mainly due to their state of preservation. Red Burnished closed shapes seem to be completely absent at the beginning of phase O.

Establishing a date for the arrival of the Red Slip at the site, and, consequently, for the transition from phase N to phase O, is related mainly to the general analysis of the whole assemblage from O\_Beginning levels and in particular to imported pottery that appears at the same time as the Red Slip, which is in all excavated areas very well defined.

Imports of Black on Red I (III) juglets appear in almost all levels assigned to O\_Beginning,<sup>17</sup> as do Bichrome III jars or deep bowls.<sup>18</sup> According to neutron activation analysis carried out on the Black on

Red (BoR) ware,<sup>19</sup> all Black on Red juglets found at Chatal Höyük were imported from Cyprus. According to their shape, these BoR imports can be assigned to the end of the ninth century BC.<sup>20</sup> This date is also supported by the Bichrome III imports found in the same contexts, which, together with the BoR, all belong to a Cypro-Geometric IIIa-b period. All these elements seem to set the level O\_Beginning at Chatal to the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>21</sup>

Although the massive production of Red Slip pottery is typical only for phase O, as clearly stated by Braidwood, a couple of observation can be made as far as their origin is concerned. Sporadic sherds of Red Slip and Burnished plates were almost continuously found in the assemblages from the late Bronze Age to the Iron Age I (Fig. 3: a, c and g): at Chatal Höyük in both assemblages they represent such a low percentage (3% in the late bronze Age, both in phases M\_Mid and Late; 2% in the Iron Age I, but only 0.9 % in the beginning of Iron Age I to 2.2% towards the end of Iron Age I, phases N\_Beginning to Late) of the diagnostic fragments that they cannot be considered to be representative of those phases. Nevertheless it is evident that the technique employed was known at the site and it is not necessary to hypothesize a technological transfer at the beginning of the Iron Age. As a matter of fact, Red Slip and burnish tradition in the Amuq is known already in the Late Bronze Age II, a period during which the red/brown slipped tradition is well attested in Cilicia both at Sirkeli and at Kinet Höyük<sup>22</sup> on both open and closed vessels. Among the open vessels (both in Cilicia and in the Amuq) there are also plates with a red slip and burnished band on the internal and external rim. These plates<sup>23</sup> are well known also in the Amuq in particular in the Late Bronze Age II levels at Tell Atchana (Fig. 3: b, d and f): sometimes the red bands are also burnished, becoming very similar to the Red Slip Ware production, while in other examples, these plates are only painted in red, owing their connection to the banded ware production well known at the site.

Thanks to the work carried out on the inventories from Area 4 at the site of Tell Atchana, it has been possible to monitor the quantity of Red Slip and burnished ware that appear in a context far from the acropolis, and how this changes over time. By looking at the assemblage it became evident that large serving conical plates with ring base

<sup>19</sup> Matthers et al. 1983.

<sup>20</sup> Schreiber 2003, figs. 7-8.

<sup>21</sup> A much earlier date has been hypothesized for the phase O evidence from Tell Tayinat, cf. Harrison 2013; Welton et al. 2019.

<sup>22</sup> Kozal forthcoming; Gates 2001, fig. 2, nos. 9-11.

<sup>23</sup> Kozal forthcoming, fig. 11, no. 9.26.2

<sup>17</sup> cf. Pucci 2019b, 192 pl. 88d.

<sup>18</sup> Pucci 2019b, pls. 125c, 12b and 160a.

were a production specific for the Late Bronze Age II<sup>24</sup> in particular in the local phases 2 and 3 of this area approximately 20% of all large serving plates were decorated with a red burnished band.

Thus it seems possible to make following observations: 1) In the Late Bronze Age (phase M) Amuq, the red colour was used to emphasize specific containers for communal food consumption (plates). 2) In the neighbouring Cilician region red slip and burnish treatments were used not only on large plates (as in the Amuq) but also on closed mid-sized jars. 3) During the Iron Age I (phase N) Red Slip ware in the Amuq was still found and only on large serving plates. 5) The renewed production of Red Slip Ware in the Iron Age II, started again with the same shape, that was previously already produced in red, i.e. the plate. All these features may indicate that both the technological knowledge and the use of this specific color and treatment on multiple serving plates were never completely abandoned, but rather mirror a practice already well known. The reasons for this revival and increased production of red slip and burnished pottery in phase O go well beyond the data the material can provide us, however, the red slip and burnish production will develop so much during the phase O\_mid and O\_Late (until the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> cent. BC) that it will be not anymore a class present in only specific shapes, but rather one of the most common surface treatments employed in all shapes.

## 2.2. Tell Afis and inland Syria<sup>25</sup>

Tell Afis, in the fertile Jazr plain some 80 km south-west of Aleppo, is one of the key sites for the definition of the Iron Age pottery sequence in inner Syria. The excavations undertaken by the Italian expedition directed by Stefania Mazzoni has revealed continuous occupation at the site from the Late Bronze II to the Iron III, providing not only a reliable sequence but also an outstanding amount of Red Slip ware from various areas of the site.<sup>26</sup> Though Red Slip has been recovered from any excavation area which has revealed a Iron Age II-III occupation, it shall be stressed that the great majority of the items were collected on the acropolis,<sup>27</sup> especially in Area G, where the imposing square structure on the eastern side of the acropolis contained hundreds of large fragments of slipped ware.<sup>28</sup>

Petrographic and chemical analysis on a sample of 20 fragments of Red Slip from Area G revealed that Afis Red Slip is all locally made, sharing the same raw materials and fabrication techniques as local common ware analysed from lower town Area D.<sup>29</sup> Petrography, X-Ray diffraction and chemical analysis on the red engobe applied on the vessel surfaces distinguished two different compositions of the slip: type A, is the most common one, more bright red coloured deriving from the haematite present in clay and becoming red in a oxygen reduced environment; type B is much less frequent, dark brownish-red, very homogenous and with a different composition of haematite rich in potassium oxide, obtained by higher firing temperature and probably with vegetal ashes.<sup>30</sup> Whereas most of Red Slip ceramics were fired at 650-700 C, sharing the same technical features of common ware, Red Slip of type B was fired at temperatures higher than 800 C. We are able to recognize the results of the analysis in the ceramic record, with some specific item distinguished by the thick dark reddish-brown burnished slip usually covering the whole surface of the vessel, both inside and outside. Production is thus local and homogenous, except for some items, which are still local but produced and finished with different techniques, evidently matching peculiar functional or decorative purposes.

Morphological repertoire consists almost completely of open shapes, plates and mid to large deep bowls, reflecting the mass standardization of the common light red/orange ware horizon, even more stressed by the absolute predominance of open shapes, since almost no closed jar, amphora or pitcher are attested in red burnished ware.<sup>31</sup> One interesting feature is the association we observed between the type of slip and shapes variability: slip type B, which is the more specialised dark red slip with heavy burnishing, is mostly associated with deep large bowls with thickened double profiled rim, sometimes presenting bone-shaped ledge handles, with slip and burnishing covering the entire inner and outer surface (fig. 4: h-m).<sup>32</sup> This “specialised” Red Slip is the one we may confidently associate to the suggested skeuomorphic nature of Red Slip, with the function of imitating or reproducing, in a cheaper and more easily accessible material, bronze vessels:<sup>33</sup> such shapes are not only peculiar to Red Slip productions at Afis and do not occur in plain Common Ware, but also find

<sup>24</sup> Horowitz 2015, Horowitz forthcoming.

<sup>25</sup> I would like to thank Prof. Stefania Mazzoni and Prof. Serena Maria Cecchini, director and co-director of the Italian excavations at Tell Afis, for allowing me the study of the pottery of the site.

<sup>26</sup> Recent reassessment of the Iron Age II-III sequence at Afis in Mazzoni 2014; on Red Slip, see Soldi 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Soldi 2009, 103; Mazzoni 2014, 350.

<sup>28</sup> Cecchini 2000; Cecchini 1998.

<sup>29</sup> Falcone, Lazzarini 1998.

<sup>30</sup> Falcone, Lazzarini 1998, 488.

<sup>31</sup> Soldi 2013, 206-207: see Chart 3 and 4 comparing morphological variation between Red Slip Ware and Common Ware.

<sup>32</sup> Soldi 2013, 222, fig. 5, especially 9-12.

<sup>33</sup> Soldi 2013, 212; on the substitution of bronze vessels with Red Slip Ware, see Whincop 2009, 225.

close resemblance to bronze prototypes in the Levant and Cyprus.<sup>34</sup> This shape is attested in Red Slip in western Syria, at Tell Mastuma,<sup>35</sup> Tell ‘Acharneh,<sup>36</sup> and Mishrifeh,<sup>37</sup> but also finds good parallels in the southern Levant, at Hazor and also at Tell Jawa in Transjordan.<sup>38</sup> The peak of attestations is in Level 5 of the collapse of Area G’s L.1344, where they are found together with other more common Red Slip shapes.<sup>39</sup>

Main shapes for Red Slip in Afis, associated to the slip type A (bright red, lighter than type B), are mid and large bowls which have a certain degree of rim and profile variety. Principal shapes are hemispherical bowls with simple rim and thin walls (fig. 4: a-c), biconical bowls with simple rim (fig. 4: d-e) and bowls with triangular (or folded thickened) rim (fig. 4: f-g). These shapes are attested, though with fewer occurrences than on Afis acropolis, in nearby sites in the Idlib plain: at Tell Mardikh/Ebla<sup>40</sup> and Tell Tuqan<sup>41</sup> in the Iron Age levels, as well as Tell Mastuma,<sup>42</sup> Tell Denit<sup>43</sup> and Tell Qarqur.<sup>44</sup> Southwards Red Slip on same shapes occurs at Hama,<sup>45</sup> Tell ‘Acharneh,<sup>46</sup> Tell Khan Sheikoun,<sup>47</sup> Mishrifeh/Qatna<sup>48</sup> and Tell Nebi Mend.<sup>49</sup>

North-east of Afis Red Slip is still well attested, defining coherently all the ceramic region until the Euphrates area. It has been studied and identified as “céramique douce polie” by Marc Lebeau in Tell Abou Danne,<sup>50</sup> east of Aleppo, and found by the British excavation at Tell Rifa’at,<sup>51</sup> north of Aleppo. On the Euphrates many sites where Iron Age levels are preserved, show evidence of Red Slip among the local pottery assemblage, as Tell Shiukh Fawqani<sup>52</sup>, Tell Ahmar<sup>53</sup> and now Karkemish<sup>54</sup> clearly demonstrate.

It seems that the Euphrates area represents the eastern border of diffusion of Red Slip, which is not a statement to affirm that such ceramic is not present beyond this borderline,<sup>55</sup> but that the great diffusion of this consistent horizon tends to stop in this area,<sup>56</sup> where west-Syrian ceramic culture matches with an Assyrian-oriented horizon well attested in the Khabur area.

Tell Afis is thus in the centre of the diffusion of Red Slip in the Syrian region between the Euphrates and the coast, offering a privileged point of view on the Iron Age II and III Syrian material culture with its interactions with neighbouring regions.

### 2.3. Zincirli Höyük and the İslahye Valley<sup>57</sup>

In the İslahye Valley, on the eastern fringe of the Amanus, the main site which has provided a good documentation of Iron Age materials, including evidence of Red Slip Ware, is Zincirli Höyük, capital of the ancient kingdom of Sam’al. Beside the already known documentation from the German excavations by the Orient-Comité directed by Felix von Luschan which took place between 1888 and 1902,<sup>58</sup> new excavations by the Universities of Chicago and Tübingen are providing new evidence from different areas of the site, with new excavation areas both in the lower town and on the citadel.<sup>59</sup>

The work of the Chicago-Tübingen expedition is aimed at a general reassessment of the understanding of the local Iron Age, paying attention to the material culture in its stratigraphic and architectural context. In this regard the documentation of the pottery horizon of the Iron Age II-III includes a small but significant amount of Red Slip Ware. On a general level, it shall be stated that Zincirli in the Iron Age II and III fits very well with north-western Syria’s ceramic assemblage, showing morphological traits in common with the area of the Amuq, inland Syria and the region west of the Euphrates.<sup>60</sup> Common Ware is largely composed by a homogenous light red / reddish-yellow fabric associated to a standardized set of shapes, mostly open vessels like plates and bowls and rela-

<sup>34</sup> Matthäus 1985, 134-135, pl. 25.

<sup>35</sup> Level I: Egami et al. 1984, fig. 6: 5.

<sup>36</sup> Coupe dans la Ville Basse: Cooper 2006, fig. 3: 4; Ville Basse: Cooper 2006, fig. 7: 18.

<sup>37</sup> Phase J1: Besana et al. 2008, fig. 13: 7.

<sup>38</sup> Daviau and Graham 2009 propose an interesting connection of 7th century BC red-slipped and black-slipped and burnished pottery from Jawa with Northern Syrian and Assyrian productions, hypothesising a foreign origin of this shape with such treatment in the Jordanian area.

<sup>39</sup> Soldi 2013, 212-213, fig. 5.

<sup>40</sup> Mazzoni 1992

<sup>41</sup> Fiorentino 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Egami et al. 1984.

<sup>43</sup> Personal observation during the works conducted at the site by the Syro-Italian team in 2002-2004 within the frame of the EU financed MEDA Project: See Rossi 2011.

<sup>44</sup> Dornemann 2000.

<sup>45</sup> Hama Phase E: Fugmann 1958.

<sup>46</sup> Cooper 2006.

<sup>47</sup> Du Mesnil du Buisson 1932, 179, pl. XXXVII: 205.

<sup>48</sup> Besana et al. 2008; Russo 2018.

<sup>49</sup> Whincop 2007.

<sup>50</sup> Lebeau 1983.

<sup>51</sup> Seton-Williams 1961; 1967.

<sup>52</sup> Makinson 2005.

<sup>53</sup> Jamieson 2000, Jamieson 2012.

<sup>54</sup> Zaina 2019, 125-126.

<sup>55</sup> See the case of Red Slip from the renewed excavations at Arslan Tash: Cecchini, Venturi 2018, 26-27, fig. 8: 1-2.

<sup>56</sup> In the northern Euphrates Red Slip is attested at Lidar Höyük, (Müller 1999), and most recently evidence of attestation of Red Slip has been provided by the renewed excavations at Arslantepe/Malatya (Manuelli, Pittmann 2018, 155-156).

<sup>57</sup> I would like to thank Prof. David J. Schloen and Dr Virginia R. Herrmann, director and co-director of the Zincirli Chicago-Tübingen expedition, for allowing me the study of the pottery of the site.

<sup>58</sup> The pottery is only partially published in von Luschan and Andrae 1943; recent overviews of the German excavations in Wartke 2005; Pucci 2008.

<sup>59</sup> Schloen, Fink 2009; Herrmann, Schloen 2014; Schloen 2014.

<sup>60</sup> Lehmann 1996; Soldi forthcoming.

tively less closed shapes, namely jars and pitchers. In the local horizon a role, though minor, is played by Red Slip, present in very low percentages both in lower town's excavation areas (especially Areas 5 and 6) and on the citadel (Areas 3 and 2).

The evidence of Red Slip is mostly represented by open shapes: plates have simple rounded rims or everted rims as the most common profiles (fig 5: a-b). Bowls present a larger variety, with classical hemispherical bowls with simple rim (fig. 5: c-e), biconical or carinated bowls with flaring rim (fig. 5: f-g), in some cases with protruding knobs along the rib (fig. 5: h); other shapes are deep bowls with folded thickened rim (fig. 5: i), double thickened rim (fig. 5: j) and deep bowls with rounded thickened rim (fig. 5: k). A peculiar shape is a shallow hemispherical bowl with grooved squared rim and hollow on the inside (fig. 5: l),<sup>61</sup> which finds good parallels only in a 7th century context at Chatal Höyük.<sup>62</sup> the vessel is slipped only on the inner side, but it cannot be excluded that the red engobe was present as well on the exterior side.

Unfortunately all the fragments of Red Slip pottery coming from the lower town are very badly preserved and severely weathered on the surface, very often erasing most of surface treatments.<sup>63</sup> This element prevents a clear analysis of the technical aspect of the slip, the extension of the red coloured part (band or full covering of the vessel) and the association (or lack of it) to burnishing or polishing of the slipped surface. We can nevertheless observe that completely slipped and banded slipped items coexist in the Zincirli documentation in the phases of mature IA II and IA III. The type of slipped covering on the vessels surfaces varies from a lighter red to a darker brownish red, which is usually accompanied by a stronger horizontal burnishing, when conditions of the objects do not prevent the analysis.

Because of the fading out of surface treatments of many items excavated in the lower town, it is impossible to have a clear picture of the real amount of slipped vessels from these trenches, but it seems that the number is quite low, especially in lower town's Areas 5 and 6. The picture changes on the citadel's Area 3, where a deeper sounding on the southern limit is providing a fairly larger documentation of Red Slip.

Chronologically Red Slip is attested at Zincirli in the span of period between 9<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, as the attestations in lower town Area 5 seem to be contemporary to phase 2, dated by Katumuwa mortuary stele to mid-8<sup>th</sup> century BC and later during the inclusion of Sam'al within the Assyrian empire.<sup>64</sup> On the citadel, fragments of Red Slip have been found associated to Cypriot Bichrome IV and Black-on-Red II (IV), and to some sherds of Assyrian Palace Ware, testifying to a continuous production of this ware in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC.

A small sounding during 2018 campaign has reached the lowest Iron Age II levels in Area 3, providing a few sherds of plates with dark red inside and outside slip and burnishing, with thick walls and simple rim, very similar to the Amuq exemplars. It is still too early to evaluate this evidence, lacking the complete assemblage of the context, but we tentatively associated these earliest Red Slip exemplars to a mid-final 9<sup>th</sup> century horizon, belonging to the first monumentalization and occupation in the Iron Age of this southern sector of the acropolis.

In Zincirli the Red Slip phenomenon seems thus to have been present during the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century, but in a fairly limited proportion, not having affected the general ceramic assemblage, and confined mostly, if not only, to a few open shapes mainly used for serving and consuming solid food; the complete absence of closed shapes, such as pitchers or decanters and of drinking cups (with the exception of hemispherical bowls), seems to indicate that at Zincirli Red Slip was not commonly part of drinking sets, probably composed by bronze vessels, weakening the strict association of Red Slip to the tradition of wine consuming during banquets, even though it could have been anyway part of the paraphernalia of feasting.

The diffusion of Red Slip in the İslahye corridor connecting the area of Marash to the Amuq is attested as well in Taşlı Geçit Höyük, on the road between Tilmen Höyük and Yesemek, where a rescue expedition of the University of Bologna has opened trenches revealing a Middle and Late Bronze Age settlement reoccupied during the Iron Age III.<sup>65</sup> The preliminary analysis of the pottery of the iron Age III is consistent with the picture offered by contemporary Zincirli, with a predominance of plates and bowls in local simple ware, treated on the surface with red slip burnishing. It shall be stressed that at Taşlı Geçit red slip treatment has been observed on double-handled jars with rounded shoulders and no neck and on some exemplars of kitchen ware:<sup>66</sup> this issue is a peculiar trait recorded at Taşlı, where probably some red clay was used as bor-

<sup>61</sup> It is difficult to argue whether this rim peculiarity might be due to functional reasons or to the needs of the rim's construction technique.

<sup>62</sup> Pucci 2019, pl. 132: k.

<sup>63</sup> We suppose that the high water table of the Kara Su river in the northern part of the İslahye valley, associated to the acidity of the highly basaltic soil, is one of the reasons for the ceramics of Zincirli's lower town to be heavily damaged once recovered from the excavation trenches. This is probably one of the causes that reduces the chances of identifying exemplars of Red Slip among the assemblage of the lower town.

<sup>64</sup> Herrmann 2017, 294-299.

<sup>65</sup> Marchetti 2012; 2011.

<sup>66</sup> Zaina 2013, 68.

botine engobe, but it is likely that these items should not be part of proper Red Slip assemblage.

It is remarkable the presence of red slipped ware at Taşlı Geçit as a further element reinforcing the presence of this ceramic in this northwards expansion along the İslahye corridor.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

According to this small survey on the Red Slip production of the northern Levant, it is possible to state that, although there is a strong regional trend towards a production of pottery related to the consumption of food characterized by a specific appearance, each site provides local inventories and local tradition different from each other. All sites in northern Levant have a local Red Slip production which is site related and a set of shapes, that, although all open vessels and although mainly probably connected to food consumption, they are not identical and completely overlapping from one site to the other. Comparing shapes is quite difficult considering the different dating of the sets analyzed here: while the assemblages from Chatal can be ascribed to the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, the contexts from Tell Afis and from Zincirli are mostly related to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, with some pieces from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. It is however relevant to point out that at Tell Afis there is one specific shape which occurs only in the Red Slip class and that finds no comparisons in the assemblages from other sites in northern Levant. At Chatal by contrast no specific shapes were produced exclusively in the Red Slip class, but the most ancient deposits of Iron age II show a strong majority of multiple serving Red Slip conical plates compared to the simple ware ones. In all three sites the shapes are mainly mid- or small-sized open vessels; closed shapes are by far almost completely absent at Zincirli, very few at Afis, and approximately 1.5% (mainly mid-sized jugs, beer flask or jars) at Chatal but only in later phases.

Also red burnishing varies from site to site, at Tell Afis the slip is mainly partial, leaving the full body slip to a specific single shape, at Chatal Höyük it is since the beginning mainly full body, leaving a partial slip only to later singled out large containers. Other sites, such as Zincirli, or Tell Rifa'at present both kinds of slipped surfaces (complete or partial), suggesting that this element cannot be considered a chronological marker. The burnishing treatment is always present in the sites analyzed for Northern Levant, and the production of Red Slip mixes together hand and wheel burnishing depending on the shape of the vessel, a phenomenon different from the one observed in southern Levant.<sup>67</sup> Both at Tell Afis and in part also at Zincirli the quantity of Red Slip

pottery is higher in the contexts on the acropolis rather than in those in the lower town, likely suggesting that this specific class of pottery might have fulfilled a different function possibly as a marker for social or functional difference. This cannot be proved for the evidence from Chatal Höyük, as only the acropolis was excavated.

Red Slip developed over a quite long period of time. The evidence from Chatal Höyük suggests the second half of the 9<sup>th</sup> century for its first appearance and it is similar to the date suggested for Tell Afis<sup>68</sup> or Ras el Bassit.<sup>69</sup> This class has been continuously produced at Chatal until the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, as well as at Tell Afis and Zincirli.

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<sup>67</sup>Holladay 1990.

<sup>68</sup>Oggiano 1997; Mazzoni 2014.

<sup>69</sup>Braemer 1986.

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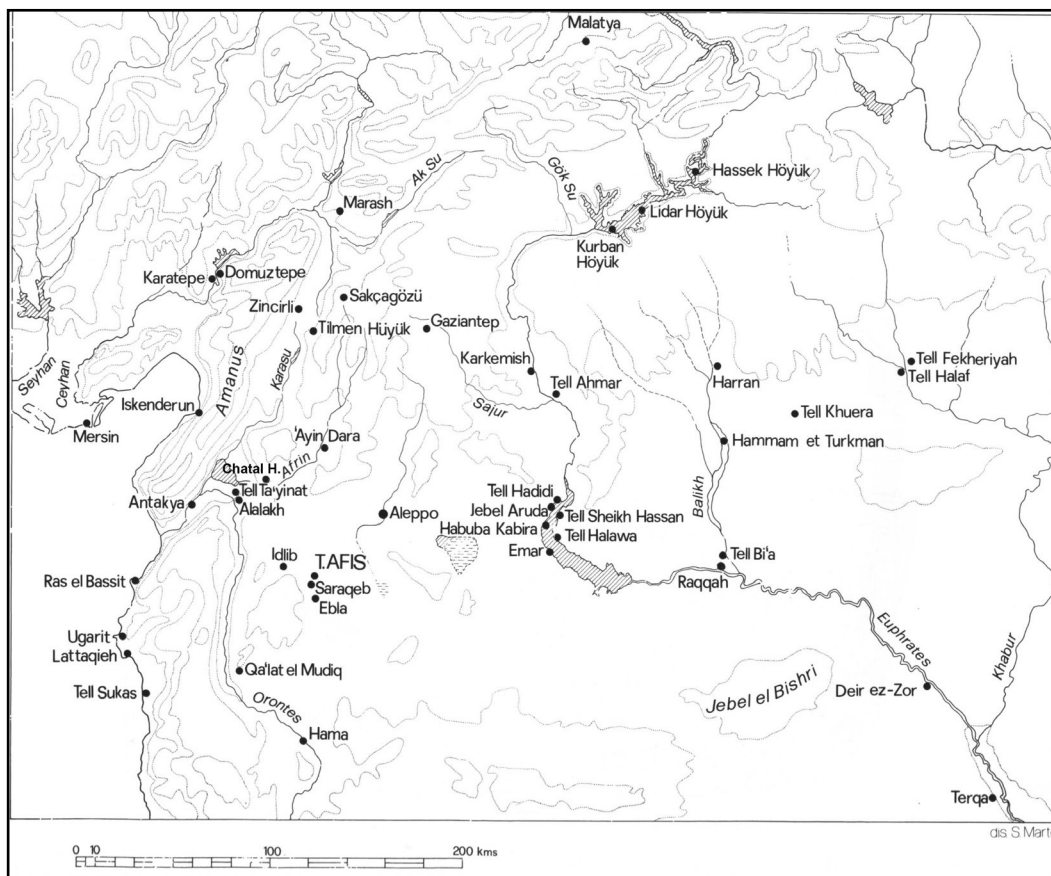


Fig. 1. General map of Levant and Inner Syria with location of sites quoted.

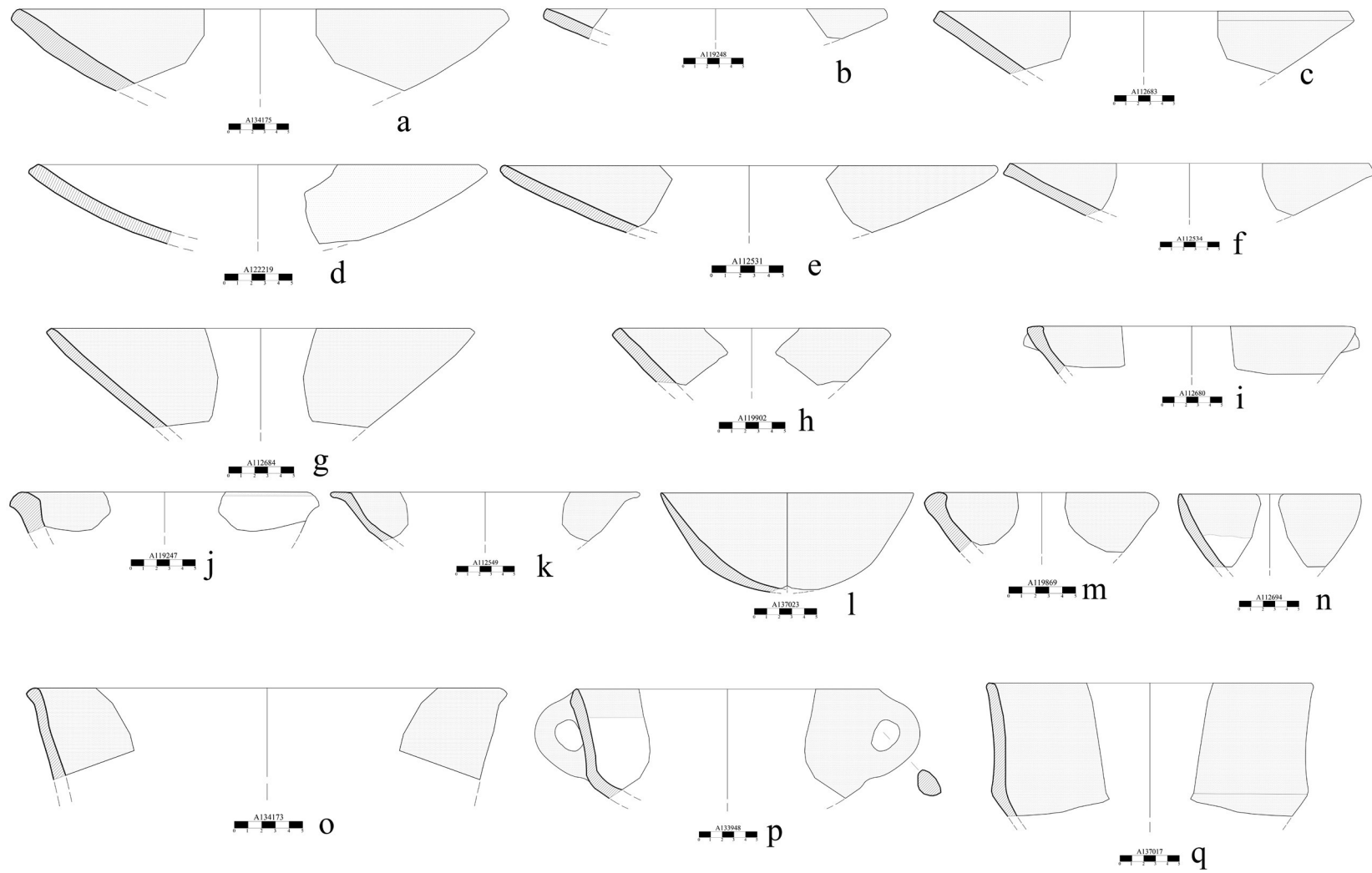


Fig. 2. Chatal H. Red slip pottery found in context dated to the very beginning of Iron Age II (local Phase O\_Beginning). Gray dots indicate red slip (paint) and burnish.

Fig. 3. Red slip (or red banded) pottery found in Late Bronze Age contexts from Atchana (d, e, and f) and Chatal Höyük (a, b, c and g). Solid grey fill or dotted fill indicate red slip and burnish.

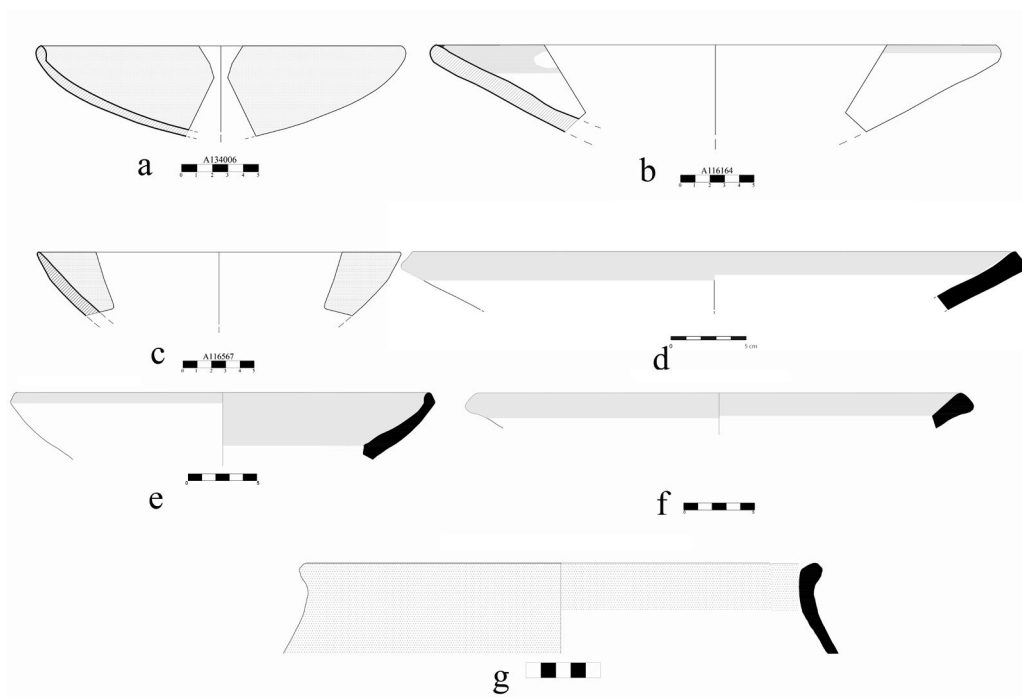
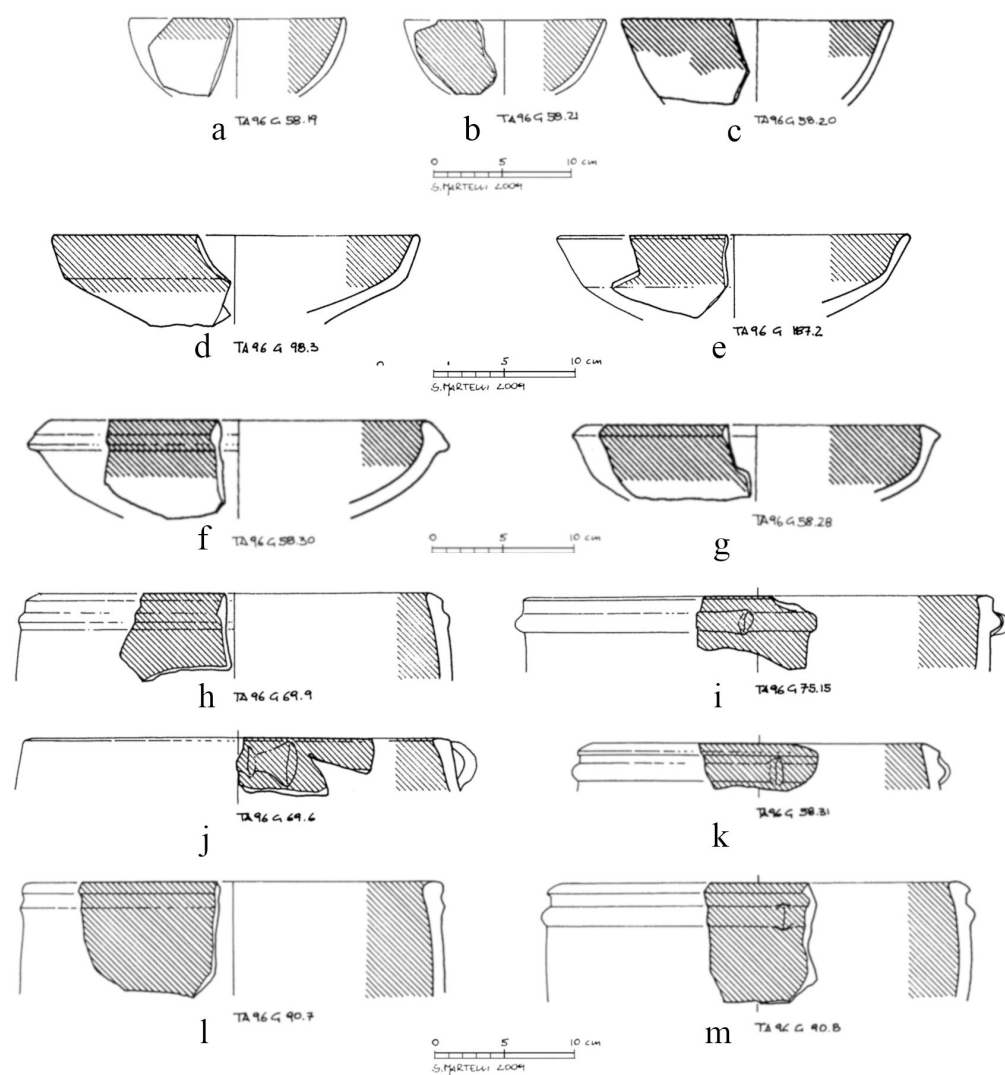


Fig. 4. Red Slip pottery from Tell Afis, Area G, Level 5.



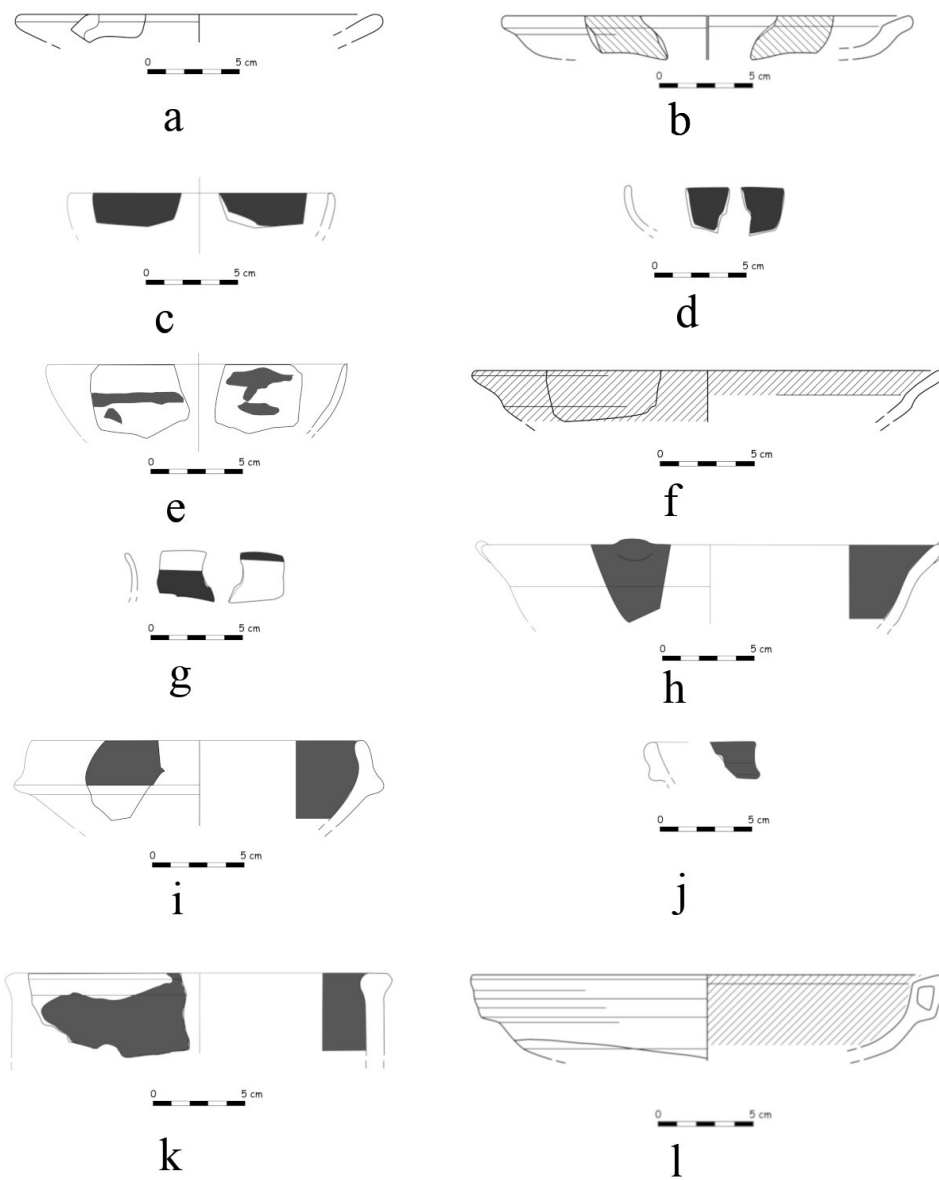


Fig. 5. Red Slip pottery from Zincirli, Areas 3, 5 and 6.