

Salat Tepe and its Vicinity in the Middle Bronze Age: Stratigraphic Sequence and Ceramic Assemblages

o. Introduction

The upper Tigris region was a *terra incognita* in the 1990s as regards the Middle Bronze Age. The cultural characteristics of this period were primarily attested at Üçtepe, one of the largest sites located to the south of the Tigris River (Özfirat 2006, 19–30). The pottery and small finds registered in a monumental building at Üçtepe constituted the primary information on the characteristics of the local Middle Bronze Age culture.

The upper Tigris region will be flooded by the lake which will be formed by the Ilisu Dam. The region has been surveyed since the 1990s (Algaze *et al.* 1991), and during the last decade several sites have been excavated within the scope of the salvage project. Two large Middle Bronze Age sites located to the south of the Tigris River are Ziyaret Tepe, *ca.* 22 km to the west of Üçtepe (Matney *et al.* 2004, 414–415, figs. 6–7; Roaf 2005, 21–23), and Hirbemerdon located *ca.* 20 km to the east of Ziyaret Tepe (Laneri *et al.* 2006, 156–157, 160). A rural Middle Bronze Age settlement has been uncovered at Kavuşan Höyük, *ca.* 5 km away from Ziyaret Tepe (Kozbe *et al.* 2004, 500).

On the northern bank of the Tigris River, Kenan Tepe presents a Middle Bronze Age site *ca.* 15 km to the northeast of Ziyaret Tepe (Parker / Swartz Dodd 2003, 36–39; 2005, 80; Parker *et al.* 2004, 587–590, figs. 11–12), Giricano is *ca.* 10 km distant from Kenan Tepe (Schachner 2002, 47; 2004, 509–510), and Salat Tepe is located *ca.* 12 km to the east of Kenan Tepe, on the eastern bank of the Salat River, *ca.* 5 km to the north of the Tigris River (fig. 1a) (Ökse / Alp 2002; Ökse 2004; 2008; Ökse / Görmüş 2006).

Five small-scale sites have been observed around Salat Tepe, spaced *ca.* 4–5 km from each other. Two of these sites are located downstream along the eastern bank of the Salat River to the south, the third site is upstream to the north, and two sites are located at natural ponds to the northeast. In the construction area of the Ilisu Dam (Ökse *et al.* 2009a, 32–33; 2009b, 77) the Middle Bronze Age material is found on five sites, also within similar distances. The dimensions of Salat Tepe with respect to these small sites and the monumental architecture uncovered on the mound summit, the distance between Kavuşan Höyük and Ziyaret Tepe, and the small sites discovered around Hirbemerdon Tepe (Laneri *et al.* 2008) together demonstrate a stratified settlement pattern of farming communities in the Middle Bronze Age. According to sherd distribution analysis undertaken in the Syrian Jazirah, the radius of the agricultural land around a settlement is estimated as *ca.* 2 km (Wilkinson 1989), therefore, the distances of 4–5 km between the abovementioned sites point to the existence of self-sufficient farming economies (Ökse / Görmüş 2012).

The earliest settlement on Salat Tepe is dated to the Chalcolithic period, from the Halaf–Early Ubaid transition until the end of the Late Uruk period. On the mound summit, five building levels dated to the Middle Bronze Age have been exposed in trenches K–L 11–14 and M–O 13. These levels are disturbed by several Early Iron Age pit-houses as well as Hellenistic–Roman and medieval granary pits. Three levels of weak medieval architecture are superimposed on the mound summit. Modern graves cover the hilltop and the skirts of the mound.

1. Middle Bronze Age levels

Level 5

The lowest architectural level has been unearthed in trench L 13, below the courtyard of level 2 (fig. 1b). The building exposed in an 8 × 10 m trench was built using red, gray, and buff colored wet mud bricks of various dimensions. The excavated rooms are filled with mud-brick debris and ash layers containing animal bones, grains, grinding stones, and sherds of large coarse pots. The depressions were then filled with mud bricks and mud, in order to create a level surface for the construction of later levels.

The pottery assemblages include Dark Rimmed Orange Bowls, Red Brown Wash Ware, cooking pots, and a few potsherds of the Early Khabur Painted Ware with fine inclusions. Hard-burned, fine-pasted potsherds resembling the Early Bronze Age III–IV wares appear in these contexts.

Level 4

A road plastered with thin pebbles crosses the mound summit from east to west in level 4 (fig. 1c). A rampart uncovered in trench K 14 joins the eastern part of this road from the south, and another rampart leading to the western slope connects to the western part. These ramparts indicate a hilltop of smaller dimensions, relative to that of level 2. The walls of the structures built with mud bricks in different colors, mostly in red, were constructed in level 5 and reused in level 4. The strongly leveled structures flanking the pebble road are damaged by storage pits from level 3.

A structure uncovered in trench L 14 is represented by a thin layer of mud mortar on the stone foundations and a *tannour* constructed on a paved stone floor. Three units of a structure to the south, in trenches K–L 14, are damaged by pits filled with ash and sherds of cooking pots. A room (findspot K 14/136/M) in trench K 14 has a narrow entrance from the eastern wall that was closed by stones in level 3. Its floor is paved with large stones. The pottery collected from the fill consists of Dark Rimmed Orange Bowls, Monochrome Ware, and Red Brown Wash Ware. The fine-tempered, hard sherds belonging to Early Bronze Age III–IV wares are represented by only a few fragments. A terracotta blowpipe and some copper/bronze pieces point to the existence of metallurgical activities.

In trenches K 12–13 a room bordered by large conglomerate blocks from the west has been uncovered. The room is filled with burned debris containing burned wood and ash. Another room in trench K 13 is filled with mud bricks and mud, and a third room to its north contains several sherds belonging to large jars. Two rooms identified in trenches K 11–12 are separated by an east-west oriented twin wall, and the western wall of the southern room is preserved. The fill of the northern room contains a great number of vessels, and hearths containing carbonized wheat corns are preserved. Only small pieces of the floors remain because of the damage caused by ash-filled pits dug into the fill from level 3.

Level 3

Level 3 is represented in a larger area (fig. 1d). The narrow road of level 4 was renewed and the structures in trenches K–L 14 were rebuilt. In trench K 14 a pebble-paved rampart, oriented in a southwest-northeast direction, is flanked by parallel thin mud-brick walls. On the eastern edge of the road, stone foun-

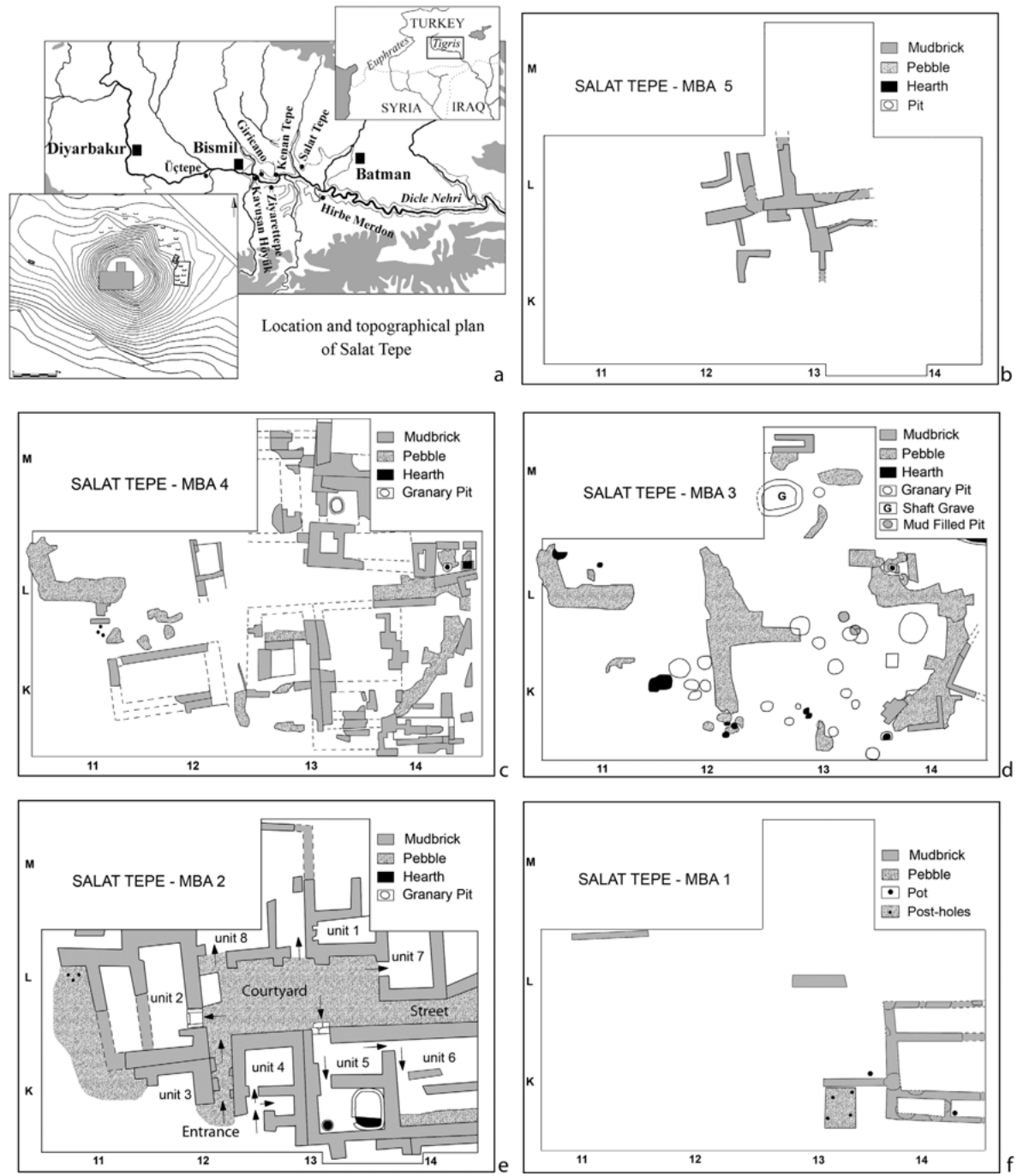


Fig. 1 | a. Location of Salat Tepe, b. Plan of level 5, c. Plan of level 4, d. Plan of level 3, e. Plan of level 2, f. Plan of level 1 (MBA = Middle Bronze Age).

datations and stone plastered floors are visible. To the west, mud-brick walls of structures are exposed, which were leveled before the construction of the upper level.

Two structures with red mud-brick walls and stone foundations were recovered under the walls of level 2 in trench L 14. The western unit is represented by two rooms, and the eastern with one room furnished by an oven and a *tannour* on the stone paved floor. The *ca.* 0.5 m high oven has a rectangular firing chamber enclosed by a plain upper surface built with mud. There is a thin smokestack at the eastern side of the plain cover. The *tannour* with a firing hole at the bottom is placed to the west of the oven.

In trench K12 a rectangular hearth surrounded with dispersed mud bricks was uncovered. The position of these mud bricks indicates an open hearth with a low wall surrounding the floor. A great amount of wheat was collected from the floor. Several pots filled with wheat and lentils, placed at the northern edge of the hearth, were probably buried into the hot charcoal. The southern room is filled with gravel overlaid by a *ca.* 20–30 cm thick mud layer that creates a plain surface. Remains of diverse hearths placed on this mud layer indicate that this room functioned as a kitchen. In trench L12 a pit filled with mud contains pieces of terracotta belonging to figurines of pigs, cows, and the horns of the latter.

The eastern half of trench M 13 is plastered with red mud bricks. A circular granary pit dug *ca.* 2 m deep into this platform is built with mud bricks. The western half of the trench is damaged by several medieval and Iron Age pits. On a compacted clay floor between these pits, three small bowls are found stacked inside each other. Each of these bowls belongs to a repertoire of different ware groups: Khabur Painted Ware, Dark Rimmed Orange Bowls, and Monochrome Ware.

To the west of this floor, a *ca.* 2 m deep oval shaft grave has been dug into the earlier levels. The oval stone wall surrounding the pit, 1.5 × 2.5 m in dimensions, is constructed of large stones placed in mud mortar. Two granary pits dating to the Early Iron Age and the Medieval Age have damaged the upper part of the grave. The fill in the grave contains whitened reed remains. On the compacted clay floor the skeletons of two adults and an adolescent were unearthed. The individuals lie on their sides in a semi-hocked position. Only two cooking pots and small fragments of bronze artifacts were found with the skeletons.

Several storage pits were dug into the earlier levels in trenches K 12–14. These pits contain ash and large amounts of carbonized cereals such as peas, wheat, and lentils. In trench L 12, a mud-filled pit containing pieces of human and animal figurines made of terracotta, as well as a pebble-stone idol found on a stone pavement in trench K 14, indicate the practice of ritual activities.

Level 2

The mound summit was enlarged and leveled by filling the rooms and pits of the preceding level with mud bricks, stones, and mud. The surface is covered by a thick red mud plaster, and medium-sized pebbles are embedded in this mud plaster. A building complex built with standard mud bricks was erected on this plain surface (fig. 1e; Ökse / Görmüş 2006, 140–141). A central courtyard *ca.* 20 × 9 m in dimensions becomes a street of 2–2.5 m width in the east. The buildings around this open area are composed of 2–3-roomed units covering areas of *ca.* 27–96 m². The courtyard has an entrance corridor (2.24 × 5.70 m) from the south, and the entrances of the units are marked with stone thresholds and door frames. The height of the walls preserved *in situ* and the lengths of their collapsed upper parts indicate two-storyed units bordering the courtyard from the south and west, and one-storyed units from the north and east.

Unit 1 has been uncovered in the southeastern part of trench M 13. The western wall of one of the rooms has two alcoves in the inner surface and carbonized wood remains scattered on the floor, which may have belonged to a piece of furniture (Tütüncüler 2008). Unit 2 consists of a large room with a doorway and a narrow room, probably the stairway to the second floor. The door has a large threshold and a frame-stone is placed at the southern inner part of the entrance. The horizontal hollow cavity on the western face of the wall indicates a door leaf locked by a wooden bolt. The *ca.* 90 cm thick mud fill below the walls of this unit was hardened and several cracks were exposed, probably because of the pressure created by the weight of the two-story building. A third room exposed to the west contains sherds of large jars and cooking pots. Unit 3 is represented by the northern half of a room.

Unit 4 consists of two rooms placed to the east of the entrance corridor. The entrance to the kitchen in unit 5 is through an open gate of *ca.* 2.55 m width with two steps constructed of large limestone blocks. In the kitchen, a *tandoor* was built in the southwestern corner and an oval formed domed oven is integrated into the eastern half. The firing chamber of the oven is in the southern part, and a cooking pot was found on the oven floor. Unit 6, which is burnt, was exposed in trench K 14. The color of the inner walls turned to red and the large pebbles belonging to the floor pavement are cracked due to the high temperatures produced during the fire. No burned wood reserves or straw remains are observable in this unit; on the other hand, several potsherds and some animal bones with thick bitumen layers on their surfaces were discovered. This part of the building may have contained pots filled with bitumen that could have caused the strong fire that occurred here.

Two rooms of unit 7 are uncovered in trench L 14. In the northeastern corner of the eastern room, a small part of an oven has been uncovered. The slag on the inner face of the oven may indicate the existence of a workshop dealing with pyre technology. Unit 8 is represented by the frame stone of a doorway leading to the courtyard.

The mud-brick fall registered in all trenches and the typical deformation observed at several walls indicate a collapse probably caused by an earthquake (Ökse *et al.* 2009c; 2010). The building seems to have been evacuated and repaired after the damage; however, the walls probably collapsed due to a second earthquake before the resettling took place. One pit dug into the mud fill contains animal bones and broken terracotta figurines of pigs and cows, and in another pit a whole sheep was laid on its right side. These finds may be remnants of sorcery rituals and blood sacrifices, probably against the catastrophe caused by the earthquake and fire.

The pottery collected from the building complex consists mostly of Red Brown Wash Ware, Khabur Painted Ware, and Buff Slipped Ware. A few sherds of Dark Rimmed Orange Bowls are found only among the debris.

Good parallels among contemporary buildings in the upper Tigris region can be found for the building complex. These are a monumental building in Üçtepe level 11 (Özfırat 2006, 19–32), the two-story Brightly Burnt Building at Ziyaret Tepe (Matney / Somers 1999, 215, fig. 3; Matney *et al.* 2002b, 62–63, 86; 2003, 178–179; Roaf 2005), a large public building at Kenan Tepe (Parker / Swartz Dodd 2003, 37–38), buildings A and C, composed of rooms around a courtyard, in Giricano (Schachner 2004, 511), and houses composed of 2–3 rooms flanking a stone paved street in Hirbemerdon Sub-Phase A (Laneri *et al.* 2006; 2008) and Kavuşan Höyük VIII (Kozbe *et al.* 2004, 469).

Level 1

The latest level was built on the debris of the previous building (fig. 1f). This level is represented by pieces of mud-brick walls and the corners of several rooms with floors of compacted clay on a thin layer of pebble pavement. In trench K 13, a pebble floor with four post holes and a pot installed in the mud-brick debris of the former building seem to have been an arbor. In trench K 14 level 1 is represented by a narrow room with a jug installed into the mud-brick wall of the previous level, and walls with stone foundations built on the earlier mud-brick walls. A room with two antlers placed in each of the corners and small pits containing pieces of animal bones and the front hoofs of cattle on pebble pavements indicate the ritual behaviors of the inhabitants. Several vessels of Red Brown Wash Ware, Khabur Painted Ware, Monochrome Ware, and Buff Slipped Monochrome Ware, as well as a few sherds of Nuzi Painted Ware, are found in these contexts.

2. Pottery assemblages

The material culture indicates continuity during the Middle Bronze Age; Red Brown Wash Ware and Khabur Painted Ware exist in all Middle Bronze Age levels excavated within the upper Tigris region. Beside these, a smaller proportion of some Early Bronze Age III–IV and Late Bronze Age wares are found in the same contexts as the Middle Bronze Age wares. A few residual sherds collected in the mud-brick debris are of the typical incised Ninevite-5 Ware dating to the first half of the third millennium BC (Numoto 1993, 86; Lebeau 2000). No levels dating to this period have yet been exposed at Salat Tepe.

Later Early Bronze Age wares

Dark-gray colored, fine-tempered and fine-walled, wheel-made, high-burned sherds are registered at Ziyaret Tepe (Matney *et al.* 2002a, 536), Üçtepe levels 13–12 (Özfırat 2006, 11–16), Hirbemerdon Sub-Phase B (Laneri *et al.* 2006, 157–158), and in levels 2–5 at Salat Tepe, although these are only a few body sherds and rarely rims or bases. The sherds belong to the characteristic Metallic Ware (fig. 2a) and its northern Mesopotamian variants dated to the Early Bronze Age III and IV (Abay 1997, 152, 364, fig. 50). The Early Jazirah Gray Ware (fig. 2b) is dated to the Early Jazirah IIb–V and Post-Akkadian period (Pruß 2000, 196, 199; Lebeau 2000, 176–177, 188, tab. V; Oates *et al.* 2001, 65, 173; Akkermans / Schwartz 2003, 255).

The Dark Rimmed Orange Bowls are fine-tempered, thin-walled, hard-fired vessels (fig. 2d). The paste is light brown or pinkish brown. The blackened outer surface of the rim is occasionally produced during firing; however, a thick black or dark brown painted band is frequently applied on the exterior of the rim. The rims are generally plain; a single groove is applied on the exterior of the rims of a few sherds.

In Salat Tepe the sherds belonging to this ware are rarely represented in level 2; however, their frequency increases in levels 3–5. In contemporary sites within the upper Tigris region, these wares are found together with the Red Brown Wash Ware and the Khabur Painted Ware (Matney 1998, 23; Kozbe *et al.* 2004, fig. 19; Parker / Swartz Dodd 2005, 80; Laneri *et al.* 2006, 157; Özfırat 2006, 26, pl. 38–39; Sağlamtimur / Ozan 2007, 26–27; Kozbe 2010, 179–182, fig. 4). Dark Rimmed Orange Bowls are found in the Akkadian and Post-Akkadian contexts dated to the Early Bronze Age III–IV periods (Early Jazirah



Fig. 2 | Late Early Bronze Age wares; a. Metallic ware from level 4: K14/0145/S; b–c. Gray Ware from level 2: L11/0051/S/06, K14/0111/S/02, d. Dark Rimmed Orange Bowl from level 3: M13/0199/S/03.

IIIb–V) (Lebeau 2000, 176–177, 188, tab. V) in the upper Khabur region (Moortgat 1965, 46–48, fig. 33; Oates *et al.* 2001, 161–162), and in the upper Euphrates region they rarely appear in Early Bronze Age III contexts (Hauptmann 1969/70, 64, fig. 12, 6–7). The radiocarbon samples taken from level 2 at Salat Tepe do not comprise sherds belonging to these vessels *in situ*, so the Dark Rimmed Orange Bowls seem to have been used until the 18th century BC at the latest.

Middle Bronze Age wares

The distribution of the Red Brown Wash Ware depicts a standard mass production spread within the upper Tigris region (Schachner 2002, 42–48; 2004: 507; Parker / Dodd 2003; Parker / Swartz Dodd 2005, 78–79; Matney *et al.* 2003, 183–186, figs. 5–8; Ökse / Görmüş 2006, 139–140, Özfiat 2006, 25–29; Laneri *et al.* 2006, 156–157, figs. 5–7, 10; Kozbe 2010, 179–182, fig. 5). The dark reddish brown (2.5 YR 3/3–3/4), wine-red (10R 4/6–4/8), brown (2.5 YR 4/4–5/4), and dark gray (7.5YR 4/1–3/1) wash applied on the surface of these vessels with a brush is the characteristic surface treatment. The wash is mostly applied on the outer surface as a large band on the rim, covering the upper half of the body, and as a band *ca.* 1 cm in thickness on the inner surface of the rim; on open vessels the thickness of the band reaches 5 cm.

The vessels mostly have rounded shapes in levels 3–5. The pots have spherical or rounded bodies (fig. 3a–b) and either short necks or none. Carinated forms are frequent in later sequences; however, carinated bowls also occur in level 3 (fig. 3c). The bowls mostly have thickened-out rims (fig. 3d), convex bodies, and flat bases, although a few bowls with rounded bases and ring bases also occur. Some of the



Fig. 3 | Red Brown Wash Ware from levels 3-4; a. L14/0197/S/03, b. K14/0237/S/04, c. K14/0232/S/01, d. L14/0207/S/02, e. Red Slipped Burnished variant from level 4: L14/0035/S/07.



Fig. 4 | Red Brown Wash Ware from levels 2-I; a. K13/0100/S/01, b. M13/0103/S/31, c. K13/0036/S/01, d. L12/0143/S/02, e. M13/0103/S/30, f. K13/0115/S/01.

body sherds have horizontal wavy lines applied with a thin white solution (fig. 3e); however, it is not always defined as a painted decoration but rather as the liquid content of the vessel that has oozed out through the fine pores of the vessel wall. A finer variant of this ware is the Red Slipped Burnished Ware, on which the outer surfaces of some vessels have vertical lines applied to them by burnishing (fig. 3f).

Carinated shapes are frequently found in levels 2–1 (fig. 4a). The wash is applied partially on the surfaces of some of these vessels. The un-slipped part is then decorated with vertical wavy lines similar to those at Giricano (Schachner 2002, 48, Abb. 38; Ökse / Görmüş 2006, 174, fig. 17), with horizontally (fig. 4b) or vertically applied thick bands (fig. 4c). Large pots and large jars are decorated with relief bands and rope impressions (fig. 4d), or with broad zigzag patterns between horizontal bands (fig. 4e); sealings are also applied on some sherds (fig. 4f).

The Red Brown Wash Ware appears in the later Early Bronze Age phases in Hirbemerdon (Laneri *et al.* 2008, 179), Üçtepe (Özfiat 2006, 19–32), and Kavuşan Höyük (Kozbe 2010, 182–186). According to their presence in the same contexts as the Khabur and Nuzi painted wares (Oates *et al.* 2001, 68, 147; Oguchi 2006, 55), the latest date for the usage of this ware, in southeastern Anatolia, is *ca.* the 15th century BC. These dates define a life-span of *ca.* 900 years.

A small amount of sherds belonging to a Gray Ware are occasionally adorned with horizontal grooves (fig. 2b), or with incised, excised, incrustated, and impressed decorations (fig. 2c). These finely pasted vessels are coated with a slightly burnished slip in colors varying from light to dark gray. These sherds are found in level 2 at Salat Tepe; however, some sherds also occur among level 1 assemblages. At Nuzi (Starr 1937, 368, pl. 56, I–T, V, W) and Tell Brak (Oates *et al.* 1997, 65–66, 74, fig. 189) the Gray Burnished Ware occurs in Old Babylonian and Early Mittani contexts.

The Buff Slipped Ware is a finely or moderately pasted, light brown coloured, occasionally slipped and burnished pottery. This ware occurs in all levels in the form of jars and bowls with rounded shapes (fig. 5b–e). A cylindrical beaker in level 3 has a unique form (fig. 5a); and beakers with globular bodies (fig. 5f) and cylindrical necks, as well as pedestaled bowls with ribs, appear in level 2 (fig. 5g). This monochrome ware is spread throughout a large area including the upper Euphrates region, northern Syria, and the Khabur region (Nigro 1998; Özfiat 2006, 25–29).

The vessels of the Standard Monochrome Ware have a rather coarse paste, tempered strongly with sand and moderately with lime. The paste is mostly light brown or gray, the exterior surface is mostly plain or wet-smoothed, and some vessels are slightly burnished (fig. 6e–g). The vessels comprise large jars and bowls (fig. 6a–d), and are similar to the Monochrome Simple Ware of northern Mesopotamia and northern Syria (Parayre 1968, Carte 1; Parker / Swartz Dodd 2003, figs. 5, 8; Özfiat 2006, 25; Ökse *et al.* 2009b, figs. 9, 12–13). Cooking pots are produced both by hand and on the potter's wheel. The characteristic triangular lugs placed on the rim are widespread in northern Mesopotamia from the third millennium BC onwards (Abay 1997, 147, Typ II).

The Khabur Painted Ware is widespread in the upper Khabur region (Oates *et al.* 1997, 63–77, figs. 190–193, 195, 200; 2001: 63, 145) and in northern Syria (Meijer 1986, figs. 23c, 24j; Oguchi 1997; Nigro 1998, figs. 4, 11). These wheel-made, light-brown pasted vessels decorated with horizontal bands applied in red or black paint are represented in the Middle Bronze Age contexts of the upper Euphrates (Kaschau 1999, pl. 9, 9; 12, 3–7; Griffin 1980, pl. 4, 156, 15H; Di Nocera 1998, fig. 9.2, 9) and the upper Tigris regions (Schachner 2003, figs. 34–35; Kozbe *et al.* 2004, fig. 20; Özfiat 2006, 25–29; Kozbe 2010, 179–182, fig. 6). In Salat Tepe the Khabur Ware is found mostly in levels 1–2 (fig. 7a; Oguchi 1997, 196–198; Ökse / Görmüş 2006, 174, fig. 16) and level 3 (fig. 7b–d). On the other hand, the pottery assemblages of levels 4–5 only contain a small number of fine-walled and fine-tempered sherds (fig. 7e–f).

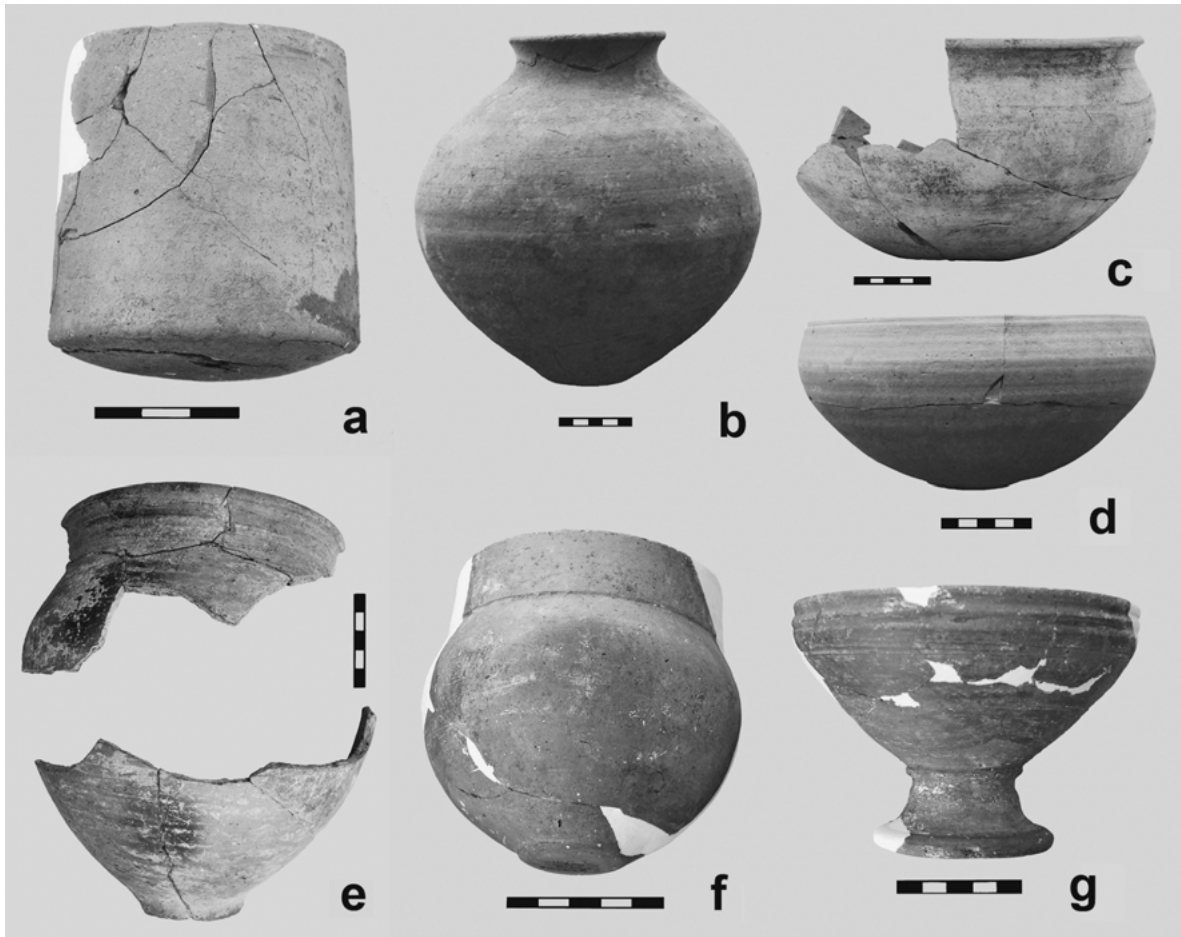


Fig. 5 | Buff Slipped Ware; a. Level 3: M13/0256/S/01, b. Level 4: K14/0237/S/10, c. Level 4: M13/0266/S/01, d. Level 4: K14/0245/S/01, e. Level 2: L14/0035/S/05, f. Level 2: M13/0079/S/01, g. Level 2: M13/0073/S/01.

The Khabur Ware is dated to 1900/1950–1600 BC (Bagh 2003, 234), with the main phase during the 17th century BC. These dates are contemporary to the Old Babylonian (Khabur phases 1–3) and Early Mitanni (Khabur phase 4) periods in the Khabur region (Oates *et al.* 1997, 62–76).

Late Bronze Age wares

Nipple-based beakers and straight rimmed carinated bowls are the characteristic shapes in the repertoire of Buff Slipped Ware in level 1. The paste is tempered with fine sand and lime, the vessels are wheel-made and a buff slip is applied on the buff or pinkish buff paste. Similar forms are registered in several Late Old Babylonian and Mittani contexts in the upper Tigris (Schachner 2004, 507; Matney *et al.* 2004, 389; Kozbe *et al.* 2004, 465; Özfiat 2006, 33–38; Sağlamtimur / Ozan 2008, 6) and the Khabur region (Pfälzner 1995, 71, 231, 235, 237, figs. 135, 137, pl. 9c, 11a, 13f, 53a–b, 173d, 178e, g; Oates *et al.* 1997, figs. 185/78–80, 188/163, 189/200, 194). The nipple-based beaker form is also represented in the vessel repertoire of the Late Khabur contexts in northern Syria and northern Mesopotamia (Oguchi 2000, 107).

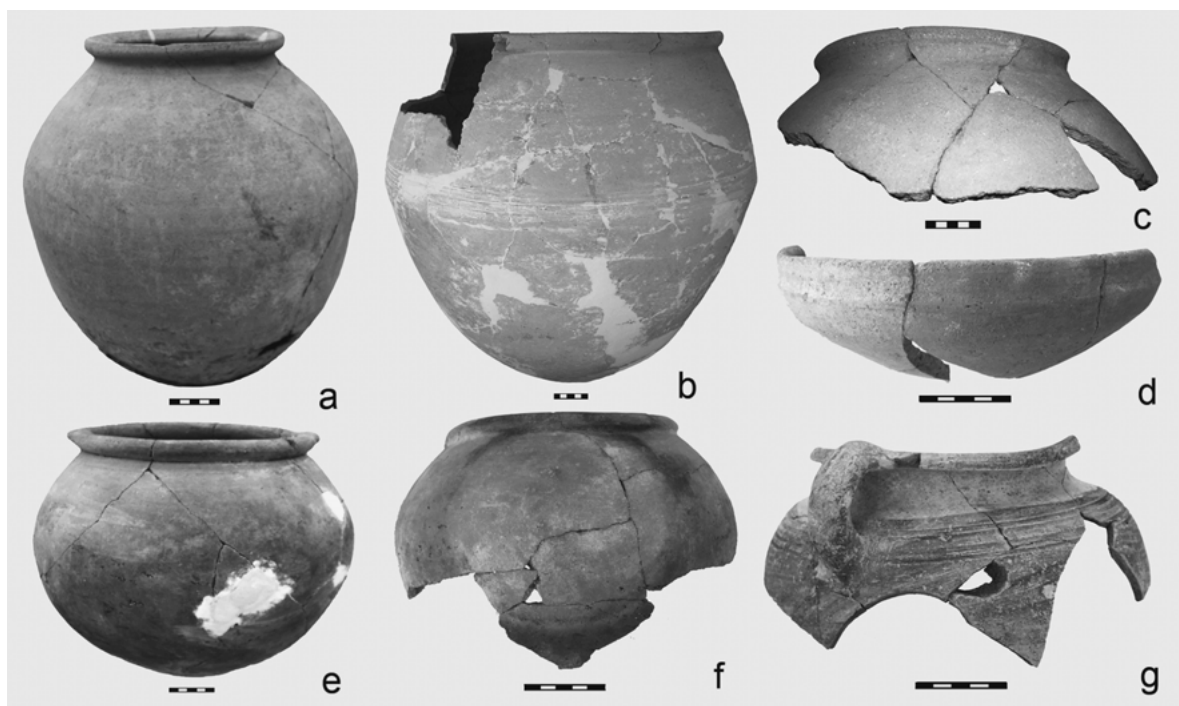


Fig. 6 | Standard Monochrome Ware; a. Level 1: K14/0089/S/01, b. Level 2: K13/0070/S/06, c. Level 3: K13/0119/S, d. Level 4: M13/0103/S/01; cooking pots; e. Level 2: M13/0129/S/04, f. Level 4: L14/0257/S/01, g. Level 3: L14/0250/S/01.

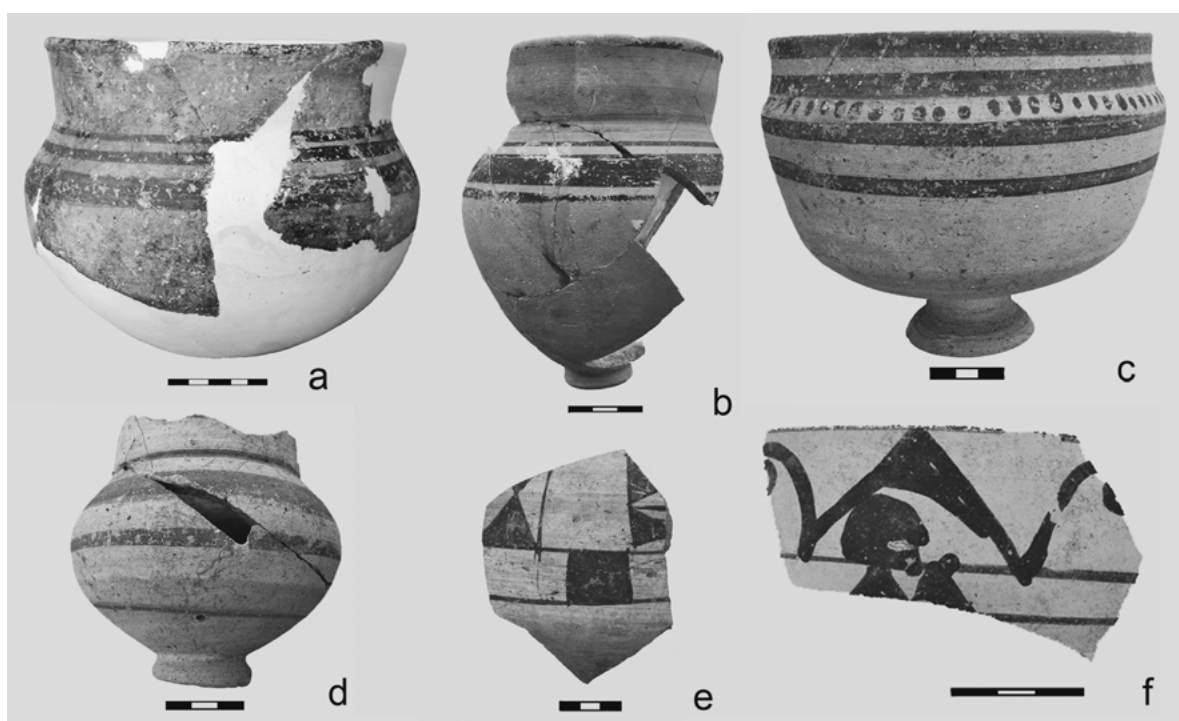


Fig. 7 | Khabur Painted Ware; a. Level 2: L13/0072/S/03, b. Level 3: L13/0182/S/02, c. Level 3: M13/0199/S/02, d. Level 3: K13/0078/S/01, e. Level 4: K14/0144/S/03, f. Level 5: L13/0175/S/02.

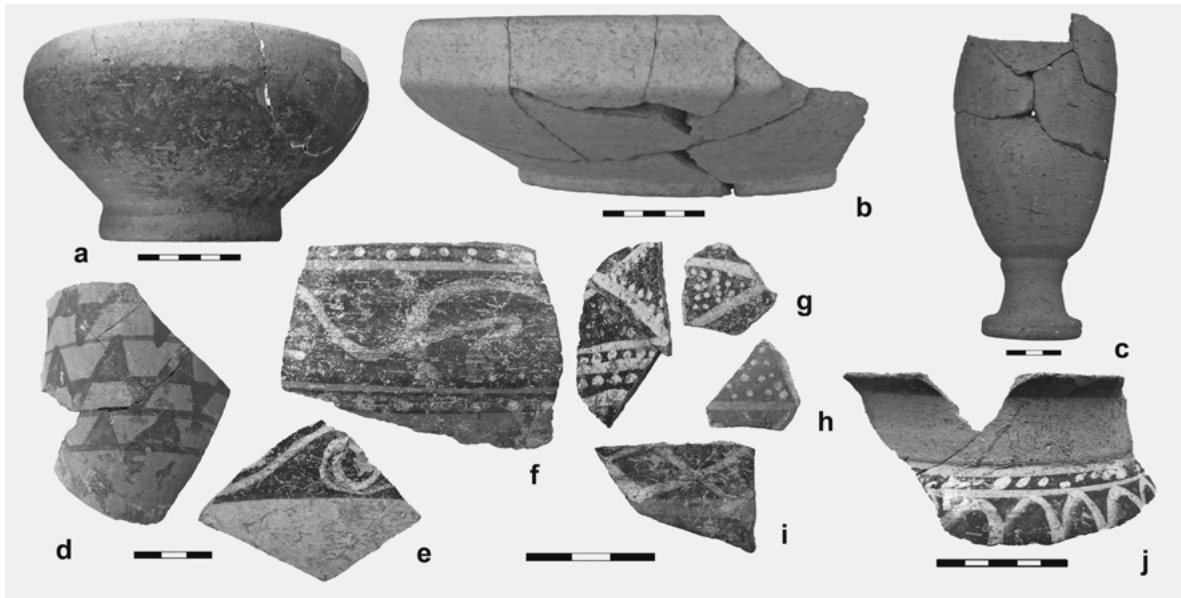


Fig. 8 | Late Bronze Age wares from Level 1; Buff Slipped Ware a. K13/0026/S/02, b. K14/0056/S/04, c. K14/0085/S/01; Nuzi Ware d. K14/0059/S/01, e. K14/0056/S/02, f. L14/0099/S/01, g-i. L14/0099/S/01, j. K14/0015/S/02.

The Nuzi Painted Ware with the characteristic light-colored decoration on a dark background is represented by a few sherds belonging to fine beakers found in level 1 at Salat Tepe (Ökse / Görmüş 2006, 142), in the mixed layer superseding the Sub-Period A at Hirbemerdon (Laneri *et al.* 2008, 179), and in the Mittani levels at Kavuşan Höyük (Kozbe 2010, 179–182, fig. 3). The appearance of this ware together with the Khabur Painted Ware dates these levels to the second half of the 16th and the 15th century BC (Stein 1984, 30; Oates *et al.* 1997, 35, 67–70, fig. 196; 2001, 68, 147; Oguchi 2006, 55). The Late Khabur Painted Ware with decoration of bird motifs (Oguchi 2000, 108–109; 2006, 46) is secondarily decorated with cream-colored triangles. It is suggested that some sherds of the Red Brown Wash Ware, decorated with light-colored wavy lines, are imitations of the Nuzi Ware made by local potters (Ökse / Görmüş 2006, 183, fig. 40). Nuzi Ware continues to be used during the Late Bronze Age in northern Mesopotamia (Pfälzner 1995, 71, 237).

3. Stratigraphic sequence and chronology

The Middle Bronze Age of southeastern Anatolia is defined by two different regional periodizations associated with two different regions: the middle Euphrates region and the upper Tigris region including the upper Khabur region. The middle Euphrates region falls into three periods (Middle Bronze Age I–III) with respect to the stratigraphic sequence of Lidar Höyük (Kaschau 1999, 152), and the Khabur region into four periods (Khabur phase 1–4) according to the development of the painted pottery (Nigro 1998, 287–289; Oguchi 2006, 55). Based on the parallelism of the material culture, the periodization of the upper Tigris region is constituted after that of the Khabur region.

The Middle Bronze Age I and the Khabur phase 1 are dated to the first two centuries of the second millennium BC. The Middle Bronze Age II–III are contemporary to the Khabur phase 2 and the first

half of phase 3 (1800–1600 BC). Between 1813–1781 BC the Early Assyrian king Šamši-Adad I ruled in the region (Akkermans / Schwartz 2003, 308). After his death local states, which are mentioned in the scarce historical records, gained independence¹ Zimri-Lim of Mari mentions *Šimānum*, *Tušhum*, and *Dirra/Dirru*, and Hattušili I corresponds with Tunip-Tešup of *Tikuanni*. The Khabur phase 4 (1550–1400 BC) is the Early Mittani period (Pfälzner 1995, 235) during the earlier half of the Late Bronze Age, succeeded by the Late Mittani and Middle Assyrian periods.

Salat Tepe is a significant and extensively excavated settlement, continuously occupied throughout the Middle Bronze Age with an archaeological sequence that provides valuable insights into the development of the Middle Bronze Age cultural characteristics of the region. Continuity is evidenced in the successive levels of occupation, with buildings improving in quality in later levels. The stratigraphic sequence at Salat Tepe permits a periodization of three Middle Bronze Age phases: the Early Bronze Age–Middle Bronze Age transition covers level 5, the Middle Bronze Age; the early phase covers levels 4–3, the middle phase level 2, and the late phase level 1, which includes the Late Bronze Age I.

The buildings constructed of red-colored mud bricks in level 5 are reused in level 4; the previous floors are sealed by new floors of compacted clay or pebble pavement, some of the rooms are altered, and some walls are repaired. The mound summit is occupied by a weak architectural level that has a village-like character. The poorly built structures, open hearths, and pillared arbors reflect a temporary settlement period in level 3. Moreover, several granary pits were dug into the ruins of the preceding levels.

Dark Rimmed Orange Bowls and sherds of Metallic Ware dating to the later phases of the Early Bronze Age also occur in the earlier Middle Bronze Age levels 3–5 at Salat Tepe, which reflects continuity in the cultural development of the region from the later phases of the Early Bronze Age onwards. The earliest radiocarbon date obtained from Salat Tepe level 2 (Ökse / Görmüş 2006, 141–142) predates the Middle Bronze Age levels 3–5 from the end of the 18th century BC to the earlier two centuries of the second millennium BC, or Khabur phase 1 to the beginning of phase 2.

The mound summit was reorganized towards the end of the 18th century BC. The architectural remains of the preceding levels have been leveled by filling the open spaces between the walls and pits with mud bricks, stones, and mud. A *ca.* 90 cm thick mud layer covers the mound summit, creating an extended flat substratum for a later occupation level. The mud surface is paved with medium-sized pebbles, and a well-planned building complex composed of several units organized around a courtyard was erected on the mound summit.

Stratigraphy and radiocarbon analyses place level 2 in the 17th and early 16th centuries BC (Ökse / Görmüş 2006, 141–142), contemporary to the Brightly Burned Building in Ziyaret Tepe (Roaf 2005, 21–23) and Hirbemerdon Sub-Phase A (Laner *et al.* 2006, 156, tab. 1, fig. 4); the public building in Kenan Tepe is dated to the 19th to the 17th centuries BC (Parker / Swartz Dodd 2003, 36–39; Parker *et al.* 2004, 587–590, figs. 11–12). In Türbe Höyük, a level with similar ceramic assemblages is dated to the 16th century BC, on the basis of an early Mittani cuneiform tablet (Sağlamtimur / Ozan 2007, 5). These levels with monumental buildings are assigned to the latter half of Khabur phase 2, and to phase 3.

After the destruction of level 2 by an earthquake, a later settlement was established on its ruins. The late Early Bronze Age wares are not represented in this level. The stratigraphic sequence and the presence of Middle Assyrian forms and Nuzi Painted Ware, found together with the Red Brown Wash Ware and Khabur Painted Ware, place level 1 into the Mittani period, and therefore into the late 16th and 15th

1 Karg 1999, 275; Radner / Schachner 2001a, 757; 2001b. According to the Kurkh Stele, Tušhum, the Assyrian

Tušhan, is Ziyaret Tepe or Üçtepe, and Šimānum, the Assyrian Šinābu, may be located to the west of Üçtepe.

centuries BC (Pfälzner 1995, 231, 235, 237, fig. 137; Oates *et al.* 1997, 35; Oguchi 2006, 55); the Late Khabur vessel with cream-colored triangles found in Salat Tepe level 1 represents a transition from the Late Bronze Age to Khabur phase 4, and nipple-based beakers and straight-sided, carinated bowls appear in the form repertoire of Buff Slipped Ware representing the Mittani period. The site was not occupied during the Middle Assyrian Period; the standard pottery of this period is collected only in a few storage pits.

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