

A short report on a group of prehistoric pottery

A group of pottery sherds and a large vessel containing a skeleton, both in poor condition, found at Perge Acropolis during the 1996–1997 season of excavations and thought to belong to the prehistoric period, was examined by us¹. The limited number of examples come from the trenches opened up with the aim of establishing the stratigraphy, but it is unclear yet whether or not they belong to a particular architectural layer. After initially selecting pieces from the group of finds, which came from different trenches and included specimens that were small, eroded and in very poor condition, we evaluated them according to their clay paste, production characteristics and shapes. Our observations along these lines and the conclusions we reached are given below.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE MATERIAL

A. RED WARE

The Paste and Fabrics: The mineral-tempered and compact paste is buff coloured. All the sherds examined were handmade. The red slip was applied to both the inside and outside of the pottery. It was immediately apparent that some pieces are in an eroded condition and the slip has worn off in some places. The examples are well-fired and some of them are burnished. These examples, which have thickish rims, are thought to belong to the medium and large-sized pots (Abb. 3).

Surface Colours:

Munsell 10 R 5/8 ›red‹; 2.5 YR 4/6, 4/8 ›red‹; 5 YR 5/6 ›yellowish red‹.

Shapes:

Type 1: Straight rimmed globular shaped bowl (Abb. 2, 1).

Type 2: Carinated bowl with a flaring rim. One of the examples has a string pierced horizontal lug (Abb. 2, 2–3).

B. GRAY-BLACK WARE

The Paste and Fabrics: The well refined paste is fine mineral-tempered and its colour is buff. The slip, which is applied to both the inside and outside of the handmade vessels, is gray or black in colour due to firing.

All the pieces are well-fired and some of them are burnished.

Surface Colours:

Munsell 2.5 YR N 2.5 ›black‹; 5 YR 2.5/1 ›black‹; 10 YR 3/1 ›very dark gray‹.

Shapes:

All the examples in this group are amorphous (Abb. 4).

C. LIGHT BROWN AND ORANGE WARE

The Paste and Fabrics: The buff-coloured paste is fine, plant-tempered and compact. The sherds in hand belong to handmade, thin-walled vessels. Both the inside and outside of these vessels are slipped and burnished. They are usually well-fired, but the inside of some pieces has turned gray as a result of firing (Abb. 5).

Surface Colours:

Munsell 5 YR 4/4 ›reddish brown‹; 7.5 YR 4/6, 5/6 ›strong brown‹, 6/6 ›reddish yellow‹.

Shapes:

Type 3: A rim sherd from a bowl with a small projection. It is unclear how the form developed (Abb. 2, 4).

Type 4: Straight rimmed jar with a squeezed neck (Abb. 2, 5).

A small knob on an amorphous sherd (Abb. 2, 6).

D. GRAYISH-BEIGE COARSE WARE

The Paste and Fabrics: The grit and plant-tempered paste is not compact at all, to the extent that the tempering is obvious on the surface. The sherds of the group examined are handmade. It is unclear whether or not the reddish marks on the surface of some examples are part of a slip. The firing is not successful (Abb. 6).

Surface Colours:

Munsell 10 YR 4/2 ›dark grayish brown‹; 5/3 ›brown‹; 6/4 ›light yellowish brown‹.

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to H. Abbasoğlu and W. Martini, who suggested this study of the materials.

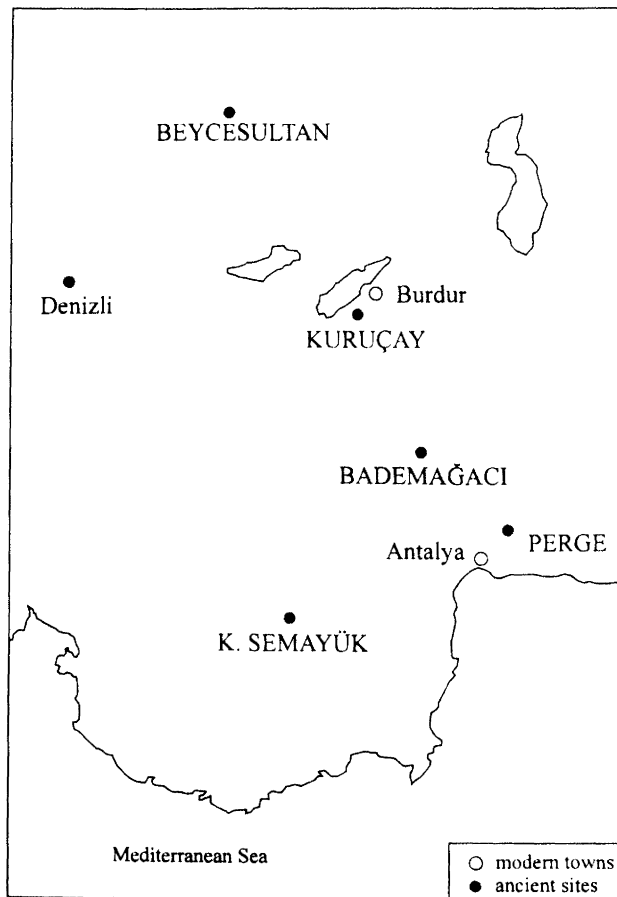


Abb. 1 Perge and the prehistoric sites

Shapes:

Type 5: Straight rimmed jar without a neck (Abb. 2, 7).

Type 6: Straight rimmed jar with an narrowing neck (Abb. 2, 8).

E. BURIAL POT
(Abb. 2, 9)

The paste is coarse, grit-tempered and not compact. The vessel is hand made and not well-fired.

The straight rimmed jar with a short neck and two symmetrical handles on the shoulders. On the lower part of each of the two handles there is a projection with its point broken-off. The base of the burial pot is broken and therefore incomplete. It contains some small bones and few teeth in very bad condition².

II. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

As we indicated above, the material examined was not linked to an architectural layer. After examining the paste, characteristics of production and the shapes,

it seemed to us that the material of the groups A to D could belong to the Early Bronze Age (EBA). Our knowledge of the prehistoric cultures of the Antalya Plain is too inadequate to give any further evaluation. For this reason, it is not possible to make any further comment on the kinds of ware and production characteristics.

If we consider the shapes of the material, the nearest neighbours of the Antalya Plain are Bademağacı Höyük, situated in the southern extension of the Burdur Region (Ancient Pisidia) to the north, the settlement of Kuruçay Höyük, situated south of Burdur Lake, Karataş-Semayük, on the Elmalı Plain and Beycesultan in the Meander Valley (see map Abb. 1).

There are similar examples to Type 1 (Abb. 2, 1) at Kuruçay from the 1st and 2nd settlements of EBA³ and at Bademağacı from the EBA level 4⁴. There are examples of Type 2 (Abb. 2, 2-3) at Bademağacı⁵ from the EBA level 2. The lug seen on one of the examples is not a stranger to Kuruçay's EBA material⁶. The very small sherd Type 3 (Abb. 2, 4) can be likened to examples from Kuruçay 1-2⁷ and Bademağacı EBA levels 1-3. An example with lugs of Type 5 (Abb. 2, 7) comes from Kuruçay 1⁸. There are examples to Type 6 (Abb. 2, 8) at Bademağacı from the EBA level 2.

As the pottery of Karataş-Semayük has not yet been published in detail, it is not possible to make the necessary comparisons. However, there are no similar examples among the small amount of pottery published so far.

The Kuruçay and Bademağacı parallels to the wares found at Perge Acropolis are dated to EBA II. For this reason, it could be said that the material examined belongs to the same period. However, it is not possible at this stage to define whether or not there is a time difference between the examples. From the point of view of production methods and form repertoire, the ware groups examined above can be considered to be linked to the Early Bronze Age pottery traditions of Western Anatolia, which covered a very wide geographical area.

² This information was obtained from a personal communication with W. Martini.

³ Duru 1996: Taf. 118f.

⁴ As the Bademağacı Excavations are still in progress, this information is given on the basis of personal communication with Refik Duru.

⁵ Umurtak 1998, Abb. 5-6.

⁶ Lloyd and Mellaart 1962, Abb. P.13/4-7.

⁷ Lloyd and Mellaart 1962, Taf. 118/25-26; 129/5; 134/6-13.

⁸ Lloyd and Mellaart 1962, Taf. 132/14.

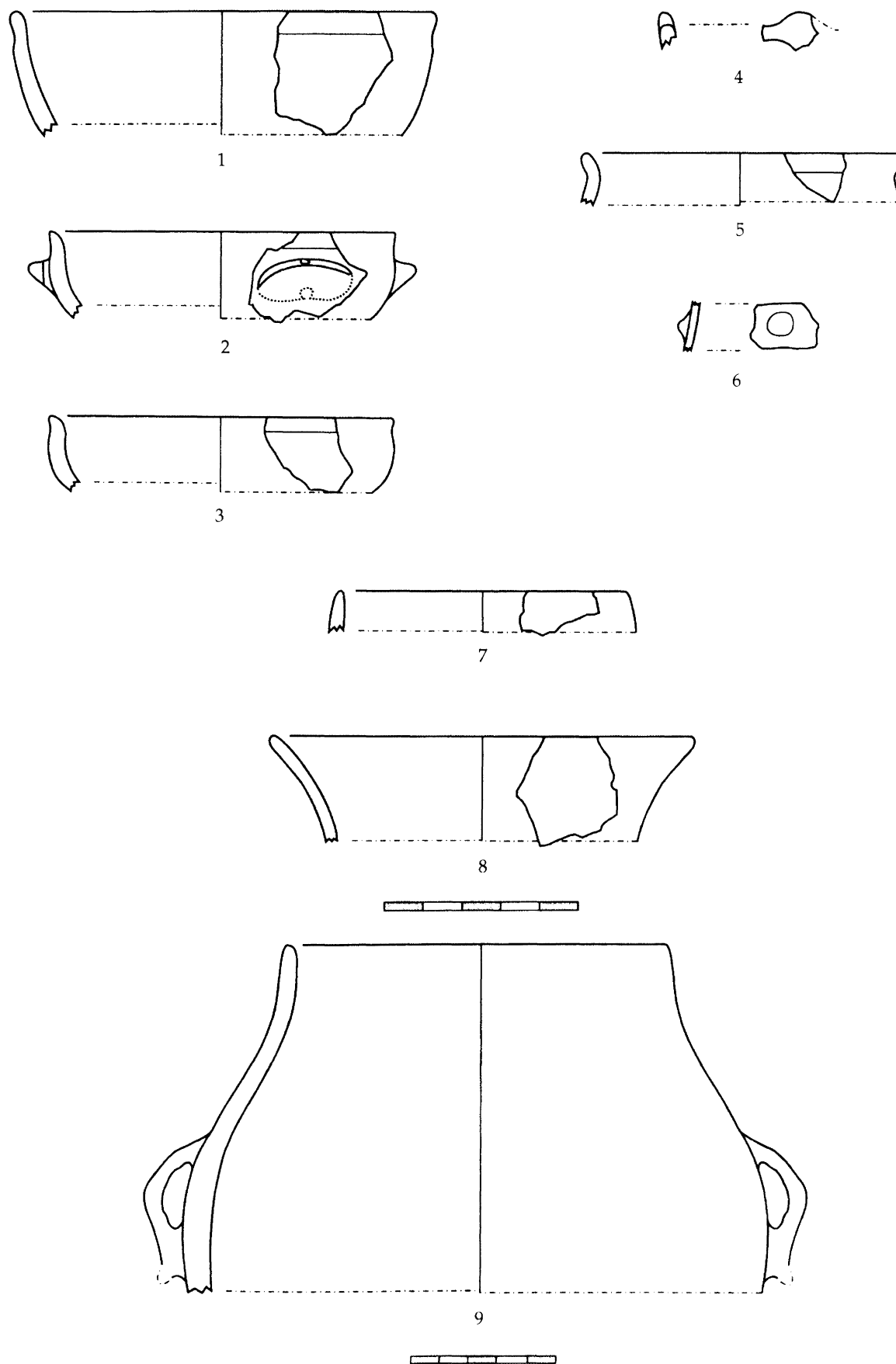


Abb. 2 1: Type 1; 2: Type 2, K 98.97.p; 3: Type 2; 4: Type 3, K 98.97.o; 5: Type 4, K 98.97.g; 6: K 98.97.q; 7: Type 5; 8: Type 6, K 98.97.c; 9: Burial pot



Abb. 3 A. Red ware



Abb. 4 B. Gray-black ware



Abb. 5 C. Light brown and orange ware

Abb. 6 D. Grayish-beige coarse ware



There are similar examples to the Burial Pot (*Abb. 2, 9*) have been identified from the Late Chalcolithic levels 6 and 3 at Kuruçay⁹ and levels XXIV and XXII at Beycesultan¹⁰.

Burial pots from these earlier periods are usually extremely rough vessels. For this reason it is very difficult to date them if they are not found in context. The pot described here is a single example and nothing that would aid its dating was found inside or beside it. It is not possible to definitely date it to the Late Chalcolithic on the strength of the similar examples from Kuruçay and Beycesultan alone. In the event of further finds in the future a more accurate evaluation can be given¹¹.

⁹ Duru 1996, Taf. 74/1–3, 75/2–3, 93/1.

¹⁰ Lloyd and Mellaart 1962, *Abb. P.13/4–7*.

¹¹ I thank Miss A. Bell (Masters student, İ.Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi, Prehistorya Anabilim Dalı, 34459 Beyazıt, İstanbul) for translating this article into English.

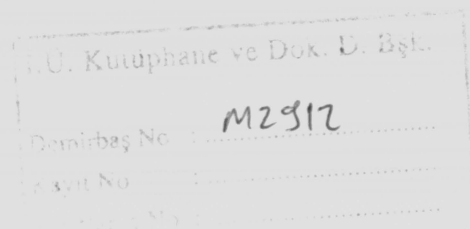
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Inhaltsverzeichnis

Vorwort	V	<i>Sedef Çokay</i>	
Abkürzungsverzeichnis	IX	Die Tonlampen	139
Abbildungsnachweis	XI	<i>Matthias Recke</i>	
		Der klassische Löwenkopf-Wasserspeier	145
		<i>Ingrid Laube</i>	
		Die frühkaiserzeitliche Panzerstatue	151
<i>Haluk Abbasoğlu</i>			
Zur Geschichte der Ausgrabungen in Perge	1	<i>Waltrud Wamser-Krasznai</i>	
		Drei Terrakottastatuetten	157
<i>Wolfram Martini</i>			
Topographie und Architektur	13	<i>Oguz Tekin</i>	
		Kurzbericht über die Fundmünzen	163
<i>Nur Balkan-Atlı</i>			
A short report on flint and obsidian finds	79	<i>Günter Neumann</i>	
		Eine epichorische Inschrift	165
<i>Gülsün Umurtak</i>			
A short report on a group of prehistoric pottery	81	<i>Sencer Şahin</i>	
		Die Inschriften	167
<i>Norbert Eschbach</i>			
Die archaische Keramik	87	<i>Martin Waldhauser</i>	
		Zur topographischen Vermessung	175
<i>Matthias Recke</i>			
Die klassische und hellenistische Keramik	103	<i>Wolfram Martini</i>	
		Historische Schlußfolgerungen	179
<i>Nalan Fırat</i>			
Roman Period Ceramics	123		
<i>Ingrid Laube</i>			
Die Amphorenstempel	131	Beilage 1–4	