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ABSTRACT

The Mittani Temples and the Middle Bronze Age–Mittani Sequence of Muqable

Ivana Puljiz

Further excavations at Muqable (Kurdistan Region, Iraq) have revealed the complete plan of an extra-urban sanctuary from the Mittani period. To date, this is the only known example of such a complex in a small site of the Mittani period. The temple is integrated into a long stratigraphic and pottery sequence that leads from the Late Mittani to the Early Mittani and finally to a newly defined Initial Mittani period, under which Middle Bronze Age layers were unearthed.

KEYWORDS

Late Bronze Age, Northern Mesopotamia, Middle Tigris Region, pottery, rural space

The Mittani Temples and the Middle Bronze Age–Mittani Sequence of Muqable

In collaboration with Bekas Jamaluddin Hasan¹

Introduction

¹ The archaeological site of Muqable III (subsequently referred to as Muqable) is a multi-period site in the centre of the Selevani Plain, located in present-day Duhok Province in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The approx. 2.5 ha large mound is being excavated since 2015.² As of 2017, the ongoing fieldwork at Muqable aims to investigate the site's organisation, function, and diachronic development during the second millennium BC.³ This is conducted in the framework of a project seeking to understand the socio-economic importance of small, non-urban settlements for the urbanised societies of Middle and Late Bronze Age Northern Mesopotamia.⁴

² Previous excavations of a step trench at the southern slope of Muqable had indicated that the site was settled during the Middle Assyrian period and that it has major occupational layers dated to the Middle Bronze Age.⁵ This was supposedly confirmed in 2017, when test trenches opened in the north of the hilltop revealed the same sequence. Since the Mittani period was missing both in the step trench on the southern slope and in the trenches on the northern hilltop, it was assumed that a hiatus must have had occurred during this time. Consequently, the project was planned to investigate first the

¹ In his capacity as the Director of the Department of Antiquities and Heritage of Duhok since 2021, Dr Bekas Jamaluddin Hasan supported the Muqable Excavation Project in manifold ways, including providing organisational support and sending experienced staff from the Department to join the excavations. His support was of utmost importance for the success of the archaeological excavations.

² Pfälzner et al. 2017, 59–82; Puljiz – Qasim 2019; Puljiz – Qasim 2020.

³ Since 2017, the excavations at Muqable are directed by the present author and carried out in close cooperation with Dr Hasan Ahmad Qasim (2017–2019) and Dr Bekas Jamaluddin Hasan (2021–present), directors of the Department of Antiquities of Duhok, to whom I want to express my gratitude for the ongoing support and fruitful collaboration. The excavation project is authorised by the General Directorate of Antiquities of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in Erbil. I am most grateful to Mr Keify Mustafa Ali, General Director of Antiquities of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, for his constant support. I also want to extend my thanks to the General Directorate of Antiquities of Iraq in Baghdad. And last, but not least, I thank Mr Bejar Sindi, director of the Duhok International Airport Project, for supporting our work.

⁴ This project is directed by the author. From 2019 until 2024 funding was provided by the German Research Foundation (DFG), project no. 427985824.

⁵ Pfälzner et al. 2017, 60–63.

Frontispiece: Overview of the Middle Bronze Age–Mittani sequence with Room CG of the 'Stone Threshold Building' in the foreground (view to the northeast)

صورة المقدمة: منظر عام للتعاقب الطبقي العائد لعصر البرونز الوسيط - فترة ميتاني حيث تظهر في مقدمته الغرفة CG التابعة لـ "بناء العتبة الحجرية" (صورة ملتقطة من الشمال الشرقي)



Fig. 1: Excavation area at the end of the 2021 season with the 'Younger Temple' of Phase H 9a indicated by a white rectangle

الشكل ١: منطقة التنقيب في نهاية موسم عام ٢٠٢١ وفيها تتضح حدود "المعبد الأحدث" على شكل مستطيل مُعَلَّم بالخطوط البيضاء المتقطعة، وذلك في المرحلة H 9a

1

Middle Assyrian level through extensive excavations on the top of the mound, and then the remains of the Middle Bronze Age.

³ In the 2017 and 2019 seasons, the excavations revealed a Middle Assyrian rural complex, most probably a *dunnu*, which was fully excavated and studied in depth.⁶ Following its complete documentation, the Middle Assyrian complex was removed in order to unearth the underlying level. However, contrary to expectations, we encountered a long sequence of Mittani period⁷ strata overlying the Middle Bronze Age strata. This illustrates that even in small sites, local stratigraphies can strongly differ. The excavated remains of the Mittani period include two buildings, belonging to two subsequent phases, which can be interpreted as temples. They represent the first and, so far, only evidence of the existence of extra-urban cultic buildings in the Mittani period.

⁶ Puljiz – Qasim 2019, 92–105; Puljiz – Qasim 2020. The final publication on the Middle Assyrian period in Muqable is currently in preparation.

⁷ In this context, the term 'Mittani period' is meant as a chronological equivalent to Late Bronze Age I–IIA in the areas controlled by the Mittani state, see Pfälzner 2007, 231–232; Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.



Fig. 2: Excavation area at the end of the 2022 season with the Middle Bronze Age–Mittani sequence exposed

الشكل ٢: منطقة التنقيب في نهاية موسم عام ٢٠٢٢ وقد تم الكشف عن التسلسل الزمني لعصر البرونز الوسيط وفترة ميتاني

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4 The Mittani levels of Muqable were investigated in 2021 and 2022 (Figs. 1. 2), with a study season taking place in 2023.⁸ The excavations yielded a sequence of eight phases, spanning the whole of the Mittani period, as well as three phases dated to the Middle Bronze Age. The results will be presented and discussed in the following.

8 Excavations at Muqable were conducted from 12 August until 14 October 2021, and from 9 August until 8 October 2022. The study season took place from 5 August until 9 October 2023. I want to express my deepest gratitude to all team members for their extraordinary commitment and their important contributions. The team included Eva Geith Hidam (2021–2022) and Nolwenn Guedeau (2022) as field supervisors; Klara Marie Puljiz (2021–2022), Nazanin Hamzeh (2021), Till Milla (2022), Emma Sakal (2021) and Solveig Vitté (2022) as field assistants; Mahmoud Mohammad (2021–2022) as foreman; Renchar Sabakh (2021–2022), Jwan Jameel Omar (2022), Mayada Nafie (2021) as representatives from the Directorate of Antiquities of Duhok; and up to 16 workmen from the village of Muqable as excavators; Julian von Kugelgen (2021), Elena Marquardt (2022), and Annika Wegner (2023) as small finds analysts; Oliver Hense (2021–2022), Saran Varma (2021–2023), Jonas Baumgärtel (2021), Pascal Edelmann (2022), Tim Hindennach (2023), Till Milla (2023), Jelena Puljiz (2021), Hannah Schmider (2022), and Eva Maria Spekhorst (2023) as pottery analysts; Marziyeh Zarekhalili (2021–2022), Pouriya Zeinali (2021–2022), Merle Möbius (2022), and Fateme Rezapoor (2021, 2023) as pottery drawers; Elham Eriss (2021–2023) as small finds and pottery photographer; Atefe Kameshki (2023) as pottery photographer; Fares Hellu (2021–2022) and Mahmoud Mohammad (2021–2022) for the flotation of soil samples; and Tina Köster (2021–2023) as database manager.

Stratigraphy

5 The original stratigraphic chart of Muqable was established in 2015 based on the results of the step trench on the mound's southern slope. The original chart included 16 phases reaching from the late fourth millennium BC to modern times.⁹ While we had noted a continuous sequence from the Transitional–Late Chalcolithic 5 to the Early Ninevite 5 period, there appeared to have been a long hiatus between the Early Ninevite 5 period and the Middle Bronze Age, and between the Middle Bronze Age and the Middle Assyrian period.¹⁰

6 The continued excavations on the top of the mound and the western slope of Muqable, however, have yielded not only a long sequence of Mittani period strata but also remains that can be dated to the Akkadian period and the Ur III period. As neither of these were attested on the southern slope they had not been included in the original stratigraphic chart. Therefore, it was necessary to establish a new, local stratigraphy for the sequence on the hilltop and the western slope. This new sequence is preceded by an 'H' for 'hilltop' to distinguish it from the sequence of the southern slope while the latter, originally comprising only numbers, is now preceded by an 'A' (Fig. 3).

7 The first five phases of both sequences, reaching from modern times to the Middle Assyrian period, correspond to each other. Below that, the sequences diverge. In the 'A' sequence of the southern slope, the Middle Assyrian period (Phase A 5) is preceded by three phases of the Middle Bronze Age (A 6–8), below which there are three phases dated to the Early Ninevite 5 period (A 9–11). In the 'H' sequence of the hilltop and the western slope, on the other hand, the Middle Assyrian period (Phase H 5) is preceded by eight phases of the Mittani period (H 6–13) comprising up to five subphases each.

8 Phases H 6 to H 13 cover the entire Mittani period. Based on careful observation of the pottery retrieved from these levels (see below, § 66 The pottery) it is possible to distinguish three subsequent stages of the Mittani period: Phases H 6 to H 9 correspond to the Late Mittani period (MMT IB period), Phases H 10 to H 11 to the Early Mittani period (MMT IA period), and Phases H 12 to H 13 to an even earlier stage for which the term 'Initial Mittani period' (MMT 0 period) was introduced.¹¹ These phases are preceded by two levels dated to the Late Middle Bronze Age (Phases H 14–15; OMT IIB period) below which there is one phase of the Middle Bronze Age (H 16; OMT IIA period). An even older Middle Bronze Age phase (H 17) and remains of the Ur III (Phase H 18; EMT V period) and Akkadian period (Phase H 19; EMT IV period) were found in the north of the hilltop, superimposing strata of the Early Ninevite 5 period (Phases H 20–21; EMT I period).¹² As of yet, it was not possible to correlate the Middle Bronze Age levels on the southern slope (Phases A 6–8) with the Middle Bronze Age levels on the hilltop (Phases H 14–17). The same is true for the Ninevite 5 levels encountered in the two areas of the mound.

9 In conclusion, Muqable was continuously settled from the Akkadian to the Middle Assyrian period; a hiatus only seems to have occurred between the Early Ninevite 5 and the Akkadian period.

9 Pfälzner et al. 2017, Tab. 2.

10 Pfälzner et al. 2017, 63. 82.

11 The introduction of the 'Initial Mittani period' is based on the study of the pottery from Muqable (see below) and sites in the Syrian Jezirah (esp. Tell Brak), see Pfälzner – Puljiz in print. This article also proposes a new periodisation system for the Mittani period in the region of the Middle Tigris, the Middle Middle-Tigridian (MMT) periodisation (Pfälzner – Puljiz in print). Traditionally, the Mittani period is subdivided into two stages, the Early and the Late Mittani period (e.g., Oates et al. 1997, Pfälzner 2007). For the introduction of the Middle Tigridian periodisation, see the contribution by P. Pfälzner in Pfälzner – Qasim 2021, 61–64.

12 The remains of the Akkadian and Ur III period will be presented in another article.

Southern slope sequence (A)	Hilltop and western slope sequence (H)	Period	Middle-Tigridian chronology
A 1	H 1	Modern times	
A 2	H 2	Modern times–Late Ottoman period	
A 3	H 3	Late Ottoman period	
A 4	H 4	Hellenistic period	
A 5a–c	H 5a–c	Middle Assyrian period	MMT II (= Middle Middle-Tigridian)
	H 6		
	H 7a–c		
	H 8a–b	Late Mittani period	MMT IB
	H 9a–d		
	H 10a–e		
	H 11	Early Mittani period	MMT IA
	H 12a–b		
	H 13	Initial Mittani period	MMT 0
	H 14		
A 6	H 15	Late Middle Bronze Age	OMT IIB (= Old Middle-Tigridian)
A 7	H 16		
A 8	H 17	Middle Bronze Age	OMT I–IIA
	H 18	Ur III period	EMT V (= Early Middle-Tigridian)
	H 19	Akkadian period	EMT IV
A 9	H 20		
A 10	H 21	Early Ninevite 5 period	EMT I
A 11a–b			
A 12			
A 13		LC–EB Transitional	EMT 0
A 14a–b			
A 15			
A 16		Transitional–Late Chalcolithic 5	

3

Objectives and strategy

10 While it was originally planned to investigate the Middle Bronze Age, the major focus shifted to the Mittani period instead when its existence at Muqable was noted. Three goals were defined for the 2021 and 2022 seasons: First, to examine the function and organisation of the site in the period preceding the foundation of the Middle Assyrian agricultural complex. It was of particular interest to find out whether there was an earlier, Mittani period rural complex, a *dimtu*, which might have served as a predecessor to the Middle Assyrian *dunnu*.¹³ Second, to investigate the sequence of Mittani period phases at Muqable not only to establish a new stratigraphic sequence for the site but also to understand its diachronic development. Third, to excavate a large Middle Bronze Age building, referred to as ‘Stone Threshold Building’, in order to gain more information on its function. This building was first discovered in 2021 below the base of a particularly deep Late Ottoman pit.

11 To achieve these goals, extensive horizontal excavations were undertaken on the top of the mound and on the western slope. This necessitated the removal of the Middle Assyrian remains after their documentation was concluded. New test trenches of 1 to 1.5 m width and 2 to 9 m length were opened in the excavation area. The balks

Fig. 3: Preliminary chart of the stratigraphic sequence at Muqable based on the 2022 excavations

الشكل ٣: مخطط أولي للتتابع الطبقي وفقاً لأعمال التنقيب التي جرت عام ٢٠٢٢ في منطقة مُقْبِلِه (موقوبلي)

13 At Tell Sabi Abyad, a Mittani period tower, discovered beneath the Middle Assyrian *dunnu*, has been interpreted as a *dimtu* (Wiggenermann 2000, 184).



Fig. 4: Thin mudbrick walls with abutting mud floor of Phase H 6

الشكل ٤: جدران رقيقة السماكة من اللبن قائمة على الأرضية الطينية المتاخمة العائدة للمرحلة H 6

4

between the trenches were removed upon reaching a floor to enable its complete exposure and documentation. Subsequently, new test trenches were opened in the same area in order to remove the already documented archaeological remains and to unearth the next level. The same procedure was applied every time a new phase was excavated allowing for careful stratigraphic observations despite of the large horizontal extent of the excavation area.

The Middle Bronze Age–Mittani sequence

¹² The second millennium BC remains investigated in the 2021 and 2022 seasons comprise eight phases of the Mittani period (H 6–H 13), two phases dated to the Late Middle Bronze Age (H 14–15), and one phase of the Middle Bronze Age (H 16). In the following the results will be presented starting with the youngest phase.

The Late Mittani period

Phase H 6

¹³ The youngest layer of the Late Mittani period was unearthed in the east of the hilltop, partly superimposed by a floor dated to the Middle Assyrian period (Phase A 5/H 5). The remains of Phase H 6 were heavily eroded and, thus, preserved to a very limited extent and only few centimetres high (Fig. 4). The architecture consisted of two short fragments of mudbrick walls which were forming a right angle. The walls were very thin, consisting of only one row of square bricks. In the corner between both walls, a small portion of a clay floor was preserved. There were a few pottery sherds laying on the floor.

¹⁴ Based on the small extent to which the remains were preserved, the function of the site during Phase H 6 cannot be determined. However, the simplicity of the preserved architecture with its thin walls, and the lack of stone foundations might indicate that it belonged to a domestic building.

Phase H 7

¹⁵ The remains of this phase were situated immediately below Phase H 6 but extended over a much larger area covering the southern half of the hilltop. Phase



Fig. 5: Sloping surface of Phase H 7a pierced by several Middle Assyrian pits (Phase H 5)

الشكل 5: سطح مائل من المرحلة H 7a مخترق من حفر عديدة من العصر الآشوري الوسيط (المرحلة H 5)

5

H 7 is represented by three subsequent floors of hard, trodden earth which are attributed to three subphases (H 7a–c) (Fig. 5). Each of the floors sloped gently towards southwest. Apart from occasional pottery sherds trodden into them, they were quite unremarkable. The only noticeable feature, found on the oldest of these floors (Phase H 7c), was a shallow depression in the centre. The depression was filled with several extremely thin, sandy layers of soil which are probably due to water accumulating in it over time.

16 The complete absence of architecture or other built features, including fireplaces or pits, in Phase H 7 might point to a period of abandonment of the site, or at least this part of the site. The three subsequent trodden floors might be tell surfaces of this time.

Phase H 8

17 Below the trodden floor of Phase H 7c, we uncovered the remains of Phase H 8. Two subphases are to be distinguished (H 8a–b). The younger subphase, H 8a, is represented by a thick deposit consisting of several horizontal layers of soft, ashy soil (Fig. 6). Covering an area of more than 200 m² in the southern half of the hilltop, it had almost the same horizontal extension as the trodden floor of Phase H 7c. The deposit had a relatively consistent thickness of approx. 70 cm. It contained considerable amounts of pottery and animal bones as well as occasional small finds, such as a terracotta spindle whorl, pins and needles of bone or ivory, or a bronze knife blade. The vast majority of the pottery retrieved from Phase H 8a consists of fragments. While this also includes small sherds, a significant proportion of the assemblage is constituted of larger sherds. Among the very few nearly complete vessels are two beakers painted with horizontal stripes. Both were found embedded in the lowest ashy layers, in only a few meters distance. One of these is a footed beaker (Fig. 7 a, cf. Pl. 18: 7), while the other has an almost cylindrical shape with a very low carination (Fig. 7 b, cf. Pl. 18: 9).¹⁴

14 For a discussion of the pottery from the Late Mittani levels, including the two beakers from Phase H 8a, see below, § 66 The pottery.

Fig. 6: Horizontal layers of ashy soil (Phase H 8a) extending over the southern half of the hilltop

الشكل ٦: طبقات أفقية من التربة تحتوي على رماد (المرحلة H 8a) تمتد حتى النصف الجنوبي من قمة التل



6

18 It would have been necessary to burn a considerable amount of organic material to produce the amount of ash that was included in the deposit of Phase H 8a. As there was no architecture or other built features associated with the deposit, it was neither related to a destruction layer nor can it be interpreted as settlement refuse. In this context, it is important to note that there were no trodden earth floors or hardened surfaces between the individual ashy layers, suggesting that they had accumulated over a short time. Combined with the deposit's consistent thickness and its large horizontal extent, this indicates that it had been deposited in the south of the hilltop intentionally. The reasons for this need to be accounted for.

19 An explanation can be found in the underlying architectural remains which comprised a rectangular building, interpreted as a Late Mittani period temple (see below), in the south of the hilltop. The building, whose construction and usage correspond to Phase H 9 (see below), was razed in Phase H 8b, leaving only low stumps of its mudbrick walls, with its northwestern wall dismantled down to the stone foundation. There are no indications that a destruction by fire preceded the dismantling. The building was filled with an accumulation of mudbrick debris. Its uneven surface was hardened, indicating that it had been trodden on, presumably when the walls were torn down, forming a floor that represents Phase H 8b. The latter was superimposing the original floor of the building (Phase H 9, see below). Thus, the trodden floor of Phase H 8b does not correspond to the usage of the building but to the time of its dismantlement.

20 The fact that the ashy layers of Phase H 8a had been deposited exactly above the temple ruin indicates a direct correlation between both features. It is proposed here that the temple was deconstructed – rather than ‘destroyed’ – at the end of its use in Phase H 8b. The remains were then covered evenly with multiple layers of ashy soil to ‘bury’ them. The purpose of the temple’s deconstruction and its subsequent burial might have been to cultically ‘de-commission’ it, and, at the same time, prevent a profane post-use. The two nearly complete painted beakers, found in the lowest of the ashy layers, could have been placed there as part of a ritual accompanying the temple’s burial.

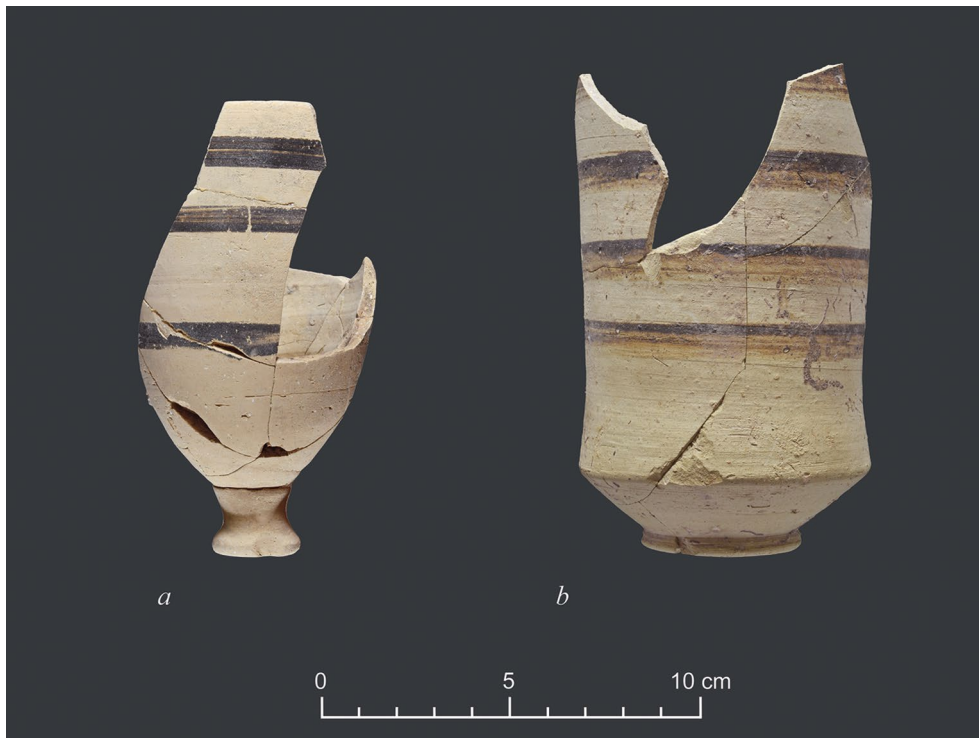


Fig. 7: Painted beakers from the lowest ashy layers of Phase H 8a (a: MUC19A-i0142; b: MUC21A-i0184)

الشكل ٧: أكواب ملونة اكتُشفت في أدنى طبقات الرماد من المرحلة H 8a (a: MUC19A-i0142; b: MUC21A-i0184)

7

²¹ The burial of temples is attested in ancient Southwest Asia in various periods and regions.¹⁵ In this context, J. Bjorkman emphasises the importance of ‘fill deposits’, which comprised broken objects and cult artefacts that were spread on the grounds of a temple or filled into its rooms or into pits to ‘de-commission’ or ‘de-sacralise’ the temple.¹⁶ According to Bjorkman, fill deposits differ radically from violent acts of destruction as they were deliberately and cultically created by the temple personnel as the ‘appropriate’ way to ‘end’ a temple.¹⁷ It is suggested here that the layers of ashy soil, under which the remains of the temple of Muqable were buried, represent another example of a ‘fill deposit’.

Phase H 9

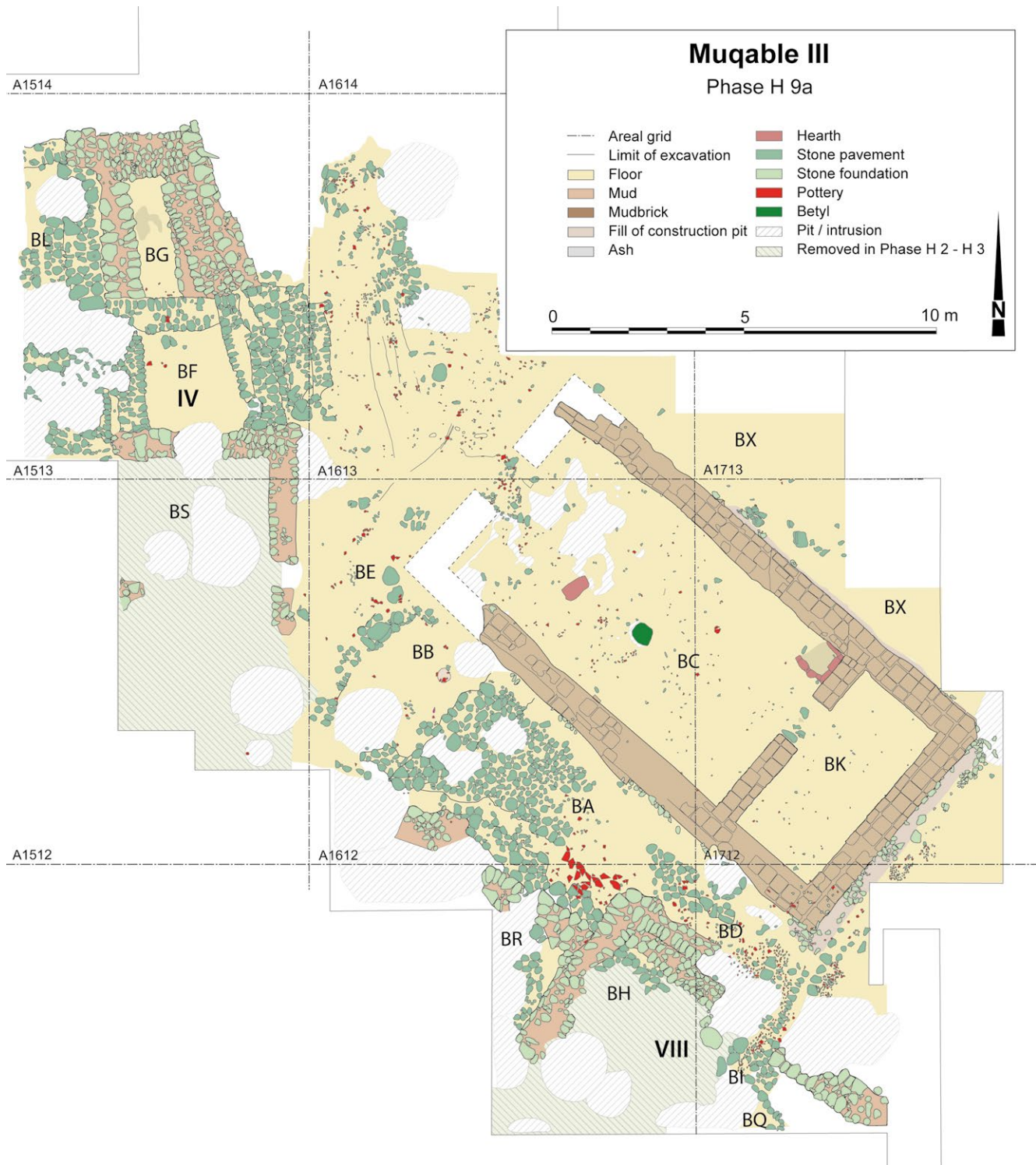
²² This phase represents a Late Mittani building complex that is interpreted as an extra-urban sanctuary. Four subphases are to be distinguished (H 9a–d). The latest of these, Phase H 9a, refers to the use of the sanctuary (Figs. 1. 8). The remains of this phase, which were excavated on an area of approx. 350 m² on the hilltop and the western slope, included different structures. The most prominent and best preserved was the central building which is referred to as the ‘Younger Temple’. Phases H 9b to 9d, on the other hand, describe three different stages in the construction of this building (see below) and are, thus, not attested outside it.

²³ During **Phase H 9a**, the ‘Younger Temple’ was the only building that existed on the top of the mound. It had a rectangular and, at 14 m length and 7 m width, very regular ground plan (Fig. 8). Its walls had been carefully constructed of square mudbricks; the outer walls were 85 cm wide while the inner walls were slightly thinner at approx. 65 cm. The building was oriented in northwest–southeast direction. It comprised only

¹⁵ For several examples of ‘de-commissioned’ and ‘buried’ temples in Mesopotamia and Syria, most prominently the Mittani period Temple A of *Nuzi*, see Bjorkman 1999. The burial of temples is also attested in the *Southern Levant*, e.g., Herzog 2002, 65–67.

¹⁶ Bjorkman 1999, 106–107; see also Bjorkman 1994, 108–111. 469–477.

¹⁷ Bjorkman 1999, 106–107. 115.



8

Fig. 8: Detailed architectural plan of Phase H 9a

الشكل ٨: مخطط معماري مفصل
للمرحلة 9a H

two rooms – one ‘*Langraum*’ (Room BC) in the front and one ‘*Breitraum*’ (Room BK) in the rear. The doorway was situated in the building’s northwestern wall providing an axial entrance; the entrance’s width cannot be securely determined as the mudbrick superstructure in this part of the building had been entirely removed in Phase H 8b (Fig. 9). The doorway which connected Room BC to BK was slightly off-centre of the building’s central axis.

24 The ‘Younger Temple’s’ plan, its axial entrance, and the fact that it was free-standing and prominently situated on the top of the mound indicate that it was a public building. Its rectangular ground plan and axial entrance are reminiscent of



Fig. 9: The 'Younger Temple' during Phase H 9a; the northwestern wall had been completely removed during Phase H 8b, exposing the stone foundations

الشكل ٩: "المعبد الأحدث" خلال المرحلة H 9a حيث تم إزالة الجدار الشمالي الغربي بالكامل خلال المرحلة H 8b، مما إلى الكشف عن الأساسات الحجرية

9

temples *in antis* in second millennium BC Northern Syria,¹⁸ even though the building at Muqable lacked *antae*. Another similarity is that the Syrian temples were also free-standing buildings which were often situated in topographically distinctive locations.¹⁹ Based on the Syrian examples, the 'Younger Temple's' *Langraum* (Room BC) can be interpreted as the cult room while Room BK could have been an adyton.

25 Both rooms of the 'Younger Temple' had a simple clay floor. While a few small stones and pottery fragments had been trodden into the floor of Room BC, the floor of Room BK, which contained no installations, was much cleaner (Figs. 8. 10). As for Room BC, there were three noticeable features in it: a large stone, in the room's centre, and two hearths (Figs. 11. 12). The large stone had a roughly cuboid shape but with rounded edges and corners. There was a small, irregular depression on its upper side. The stone was not positioned on the central axis of the room, but it aligned exactly with the southwestern door jamb of the building's entrance. Remarkably, the stone had not been placed on or dug into the floor but was abutted by the floor, demonstrating that it had been placed there before the floor was constructed. The stone's prominent location and its size indicate that it was a betyl (Akkadian: *sikkanu*).²⁰ The importance of standing, aniconic stones – betyls – for the cult practice of Bronze Age Syria is illustrated by both archaeological and textual evidence.²¹ However, these kinds of cult objects had previously not been known in the Middle Tigris Region.

26 As for the hearths in Room BC, one of them was located northwest of the stone, on the same axis (Fig. 11). It consisted of a roughly rectangular spot on the floor where the surface was reddish in colour and hardened by exposure to fire. It was covered by a thin layer of grey ash. Its vicinity to the large stone might indicate that the hearth was used to burn offerings made to the betyl. The second hearth was found in the room's

18 See for example, Otto 2013, Abb. 2.

19 Otto 2013, 359.

20 Similarly, a large stone was found in the centre of the *Langraum* of the Middle Bronze Age temple *in antis* of Tell Bazi (Otto – Einwag 2007, Abb. 3; Einwag – Otto 2012, Abb. 1a).

21 Nicolle 2005; Nunn 2010, 137–140; for betyls in Middle and Late Bronze Age temples in Syria, see Otto 2013. For an in-depth study of the textual evidence of betyls, see Durand 2005, 1–91. In Late Bronze Age *Munbaqa*, betyls can be part of curse formulas, see Mayer 2001, 20.

Fig. 10: Room BK of the 'Younger Temple' contained no installations during Phase H 9a. Note that the mudbrick walls had been evenly razed



الشكل ١٠: لم تحتو الغرفة BK في "المعبد الأحدث" على أي إنشاءات خلال المرحلة H 9a. لاحظ أن الجدران المصنوعة من طوب اللبن قد هُدمت وسُوِّيت على نفس المستوى

10

Fig. 11: Standing stone and hearth in the centre of Room BC of the 'Younger Temple'



الشكل ١١: حجر منتصب مع موقد في وسط الغرفة BC في "المعبد الأحدث"

11

eastern corner where it had been sunken into the floor (Fig. 12). This hearth was almost square with clay walls, two of which leaned against the room's mudbrick walls. It was filled with grey ash.

27 The 'Younger Temple's' foundations comprised three distinct structures which are attributed to different subphases (H 9b–d) predating the construction of the mudbrick walls. The oldest subphase, **H 9d**, corresponds to the building's stone foundations (cf. Fig. 15). These formed a rectangle of approx. 14.5×7.5 m which was, thus, slightly larger than the mudbrick building of Phase H 9a. The foundations were approx. 1 m wide and consisted of several layers of medium to large, undressed stones; the uppermost layer was covered by numerous pottery sherds. The construction pits, in which the foundations had been built, cut the underlying architecture of Phase H 10 (see below). The next phase,

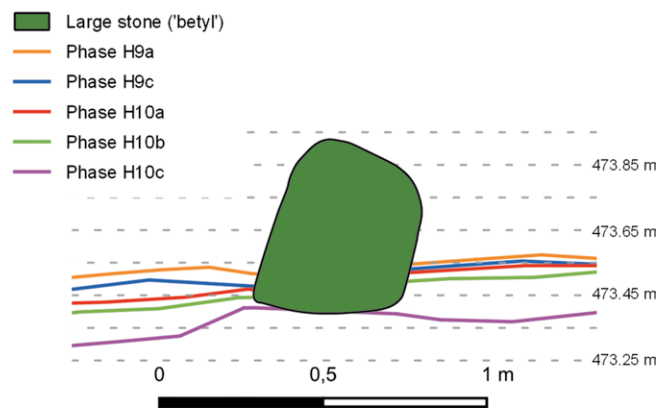


Fig. 12: Square hearth in the eastern corner of Room BC of the 'Younger Temple'

الشكل ١٢: موقد مربع الشكل في الركن الشرقي من الغرفة BC في "المعبد الأحدث"

12

H 9c, is represented by a layer of hard, light grey rammed clay with which the entire area of the 'Younger Temple' had been covered. Peculiarly, the rammed clay extended over the stone foundations covering them as well. This can be taken as an indication that the stone foundations belonged to an earlier building which had been completely dismantled at the end of its use. The rammed clay layer's height varied, being more than 10 cm thick in the south-east. On top of the rammed clay and with the same horizontal extent, a layer of reddish soil, representing **Phase H 9b**, had been spread. The reddish layer was only a few centimetres thick with a rather crumbly consistency containing numerous pottery sherds.



13

Fig. 13: Schematic section through the standing stone (betyl) with the abutting floors and foundation layers of Phases H 9 and H 10

الشكل ١٣: رسم تخطيطي للمقطع الجانبي للحجر المنتصب (بيت - إل) مع الأرضيات المتاخمة وطبقات الأساس للمرحلتين H 10 و H 9

28 Interestingly, both the rammed clay and the reddish soil layer abutted the possible betyl. This demonstrates that the stone had already been installed there when the 'Younger Temple' was constructed. As a matter of fact, the stone had been positioned at this place since the Early Mittani period (Phase H 10, see below) and had not been moved since then (Fig. 13). Consequently, the 'Younger Temple', including its foundations, was built around the stone. This highly unusual treatment of the stone supports its interpretation as a betyl.

29 The 'Younger Temple' of Phase H 9a was surrounded by irregularly shaped open areas with floors of trodden earth (Fig. 8). There were hardly any pottery sherds on the floors indicating that they had been kept clean. Southwest of the 'Younger Temple', the open area was partly paved with undressed stones and large sherds of storage jars (Area BA). Area BA was delimited by a partially preserved stone wall, approx. 75 cm in width, to the southwest. The wall ran in northwest-southeast direction, parallel to the 'Younger Temple'. It can be interpreted as the boundary of the 'temenos' area on the hilltop. Temenos areas, i.e., enclosed open spaces surrounding temples, are considered an essential feature of second-millennium BC temples in Syria.²²

22 Otto 2013, 360–365.

Fig. 14: Building IV on the western slope of the mound with a staircase leading up to the mound during Phase H 9a

الشكل 14: البناء IV على المنحدر الغربي للتل مع درج يؤدي إلى التل تم بناؤه خلال المرحلة H 9a



14

30 Access to the enclosed area with the central building was possible through two buildings (IV, VIII) situated on the western and the southern slope. Building IV had been built against the western slope in a north–south direction (Fig. 8). It had a somewhat irregular, elongated shape measuring at least 13.5 m in length and up to 5 m in width. Only the stone foundations of this building were preserved. It consisted of at least three rooms: a narrow, ash-covered room (BG) in the north, a central, roughly square area (BF), and another room in the south (BS), of which no floor but only fragments of walls have survived. Access to Area BF was possible through a 2.5 m wide doorway in the building’s western wall; one step led from the stone-paved external area (BL) in the west up into Area BF. From there an approx. 2.5 m wide flight of steps in the east of Area BF led up to the top of the mound (Fig. 14). There was a difference in elevation of 1.1 m between the floor of Area BF and the open area BE to the northwest of the ‘Younger Temple’ which was covered by five slightly irregular steps made of undressed stones. The location of Building IV on the western slope in combination with its wide entrance and open staircase, indicates that it was a public, gate-like building whose main function was to provide access to the temenos area on the hilltop.

31 Building VIII, which was located on the southern slope, seems to have had a similar function. Unfortunately, the building was heavily disturbed by numerous modern pits and Late Ottoman building activities so that only parts of its stone foundations have survived (Fig. 8). The floor plan can therefore be only partially determined. Having been oriented northwest-southeast, Building VIII was exactly parallel to the ‘Younger Temple’. The building’s northwestern wall was connected to the stone wall enclosing the hilltop. Building VIII had a minimum size of 9.2×4.8 m and comprised at least two rooms: Room BH in the northwest and Room BQ, about which little is known, in the southeast. The rooms were separated by an internal passage (BI) which led through the building. Due to their state of preservation, it is not possible to establish whether the rooms were closed off from the passage by walls or not.

32 Running from southwest to northeast, Passage BI allowed access to the open area southwest of the ‘Younger Temple’ (Fig. 8). At approx. 80 cm in width, the passage was relatively narrow. Its floor was covered by small pottery sherds and occasional an-

imal bones, bearing the characteristics of an outside area where refuse was disposed of. Along with the fact that Building VIII was connected to the enclosure wall, this suggests that it was a public building regulating access to the hilltop.

33 In conclusion, the remains of Phase H 9 in Muqable appear to have belonged to one coherent building complex whose focus and centre was the ‘Younger Temple’. Due to the lack of a cult niche or an altar postament in the ‘Younger Temple’, it could be argued that the building might have been used for profane purposes instead of religious ones, e.g., as an assembly hall.²³ However, there were no installations in the building, such as benches, that would indicate this function. Moreover, no evidence of an actual settlement in Phase H 9 has been found in Muqable so far, leading to the question: Who would have gathered in the building? Consequently, it is considered more likely that the central building on the hilltop of Muqable was a temple.

34 Several indications support this hypothesis. First, the central building was free-standing, prominently situated on the hilltop, and enclosed by a wall. Second, access to the hilltop was regulated by two public buildings situated on the western and southern slope, respectively. Third, a prominent open staircase led up to the hilltop. Fourth, the shape of the central building with only two rooms whose doorways were nearly on the same axis, the spaciousness of the *Langraum*, and the building’s proportions are reminiscent of Bronze Age temples *in antis* known from Syria. Fifth, the large stone found in the *Langraum* of the building could have been a betyl.

35 In the past century, temples of the Mittani period have been unearthed both in the empire’s core²⁴ and in regions subjected to Mittani overlordship.²⁵ Remarkably, these temples differ significantly from one another and appear to be strongly regionally influenced. For example, the Late Bronze Age temples in the Middle Euphrates region belong to the *in antis* type,²⁶ which was the dominant temple type in this region from the Early Bronze Age to the Iron Age.²⁷ Similarly, the distinct ground plan of the Mittani period ‘Temple A’ of Nuzi – both of its shrines had a bent-axis entrance – goes back to the Middle Bronze Age ‘Temple F’ of Nuzi.²⁸ Considering the pronounced regionality of Mittani period temples, it should not be surprising that the ‘Younger Temple’ in Muqable has no exact architectural counterparts in other Mittani sites.

36 The most significant difference between the ‘Younger Temple’ in Muqable and the other Mittani period temples is its remote location. Unlike the other temples that were situated within a city or town, the ‘Younger Temple’ was located in the countryside of Bassetki/*Mardaman*, 5 km to the northwest, and appears to have been isolated from any settlement. This makes it the first known extra-urban temple of the Mittani period in Northern Mesopotamia. While extra-urban sanctuaries and other kinds of extra-urban cultic space are known from other regions in Southwest Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean,²⁹ cultic space in Bronze Age Mesopotamia has so far been understood as being tightly connected to urbanism. The discovery of a Mittani period temple in Muqable challenges this conventional view.

23 The Late Bronze Age temple in Tell Bazi, which was equipped with mud benches, was probably not only used for religious purposes but also as an assembly hall (Otto 2013, 375. 378; Einwag – Otto 2019, 167. 172).

24 Tell Brak: Oates et al. 1997, 13. Fig. 28–30.

25 *Alalakh*, Level IV: Woolley 1955, 71–73; Tell Bazi: Einwag – Otto 2019; *Emar*: Werner 1994, 106–108; Nuzi, Stratum II: Starr 1937, Plan 13–14; Starr 1939, 87–115. On modes of governance and the organisation of the Mittani state, see von Dassow 2022, 484–491.

26 Werner 1994, 102–108; Otto 2013, Abb. 7–8. Temple 1 of Tell Bazi, which was located on the citadel, underwent a transformation during the Late Bronze Age and was converted into a single-room temple (Otto 2013, 372–374; Einwag – Otto 2019, 160–163. Fig. 21), thus representing a distinct type of cult building.

27 Werner 1994, 94–115. 177.

28 Novák 1999, 129–130.

29 Extra-urban and/or open-air sanctuaries are well-documented, for example, in Hittite Anatolia (Ökse 2011), Minoan Crete (Haysom 2015) and Iron Age Cyprus (Fourrier 2013). For the performance of Hittite rituals in open spaces, see Hemeier 2023.

Fig. 15: Aerial view of the 'Older Temple' of Phase H 10c and the Phase H 9d stone foundations of the larger 'Younger Temple'

الشكل 15: منظر جوي لـ "المعبد الأقدم" من المرحلة H 10c وتظهر فيه الأساسات الحجرية الخاصة بـ "المعبد الأحدث" من المرحلة H 9d وهو الأكبر حجماً



15

The Early Mittani period

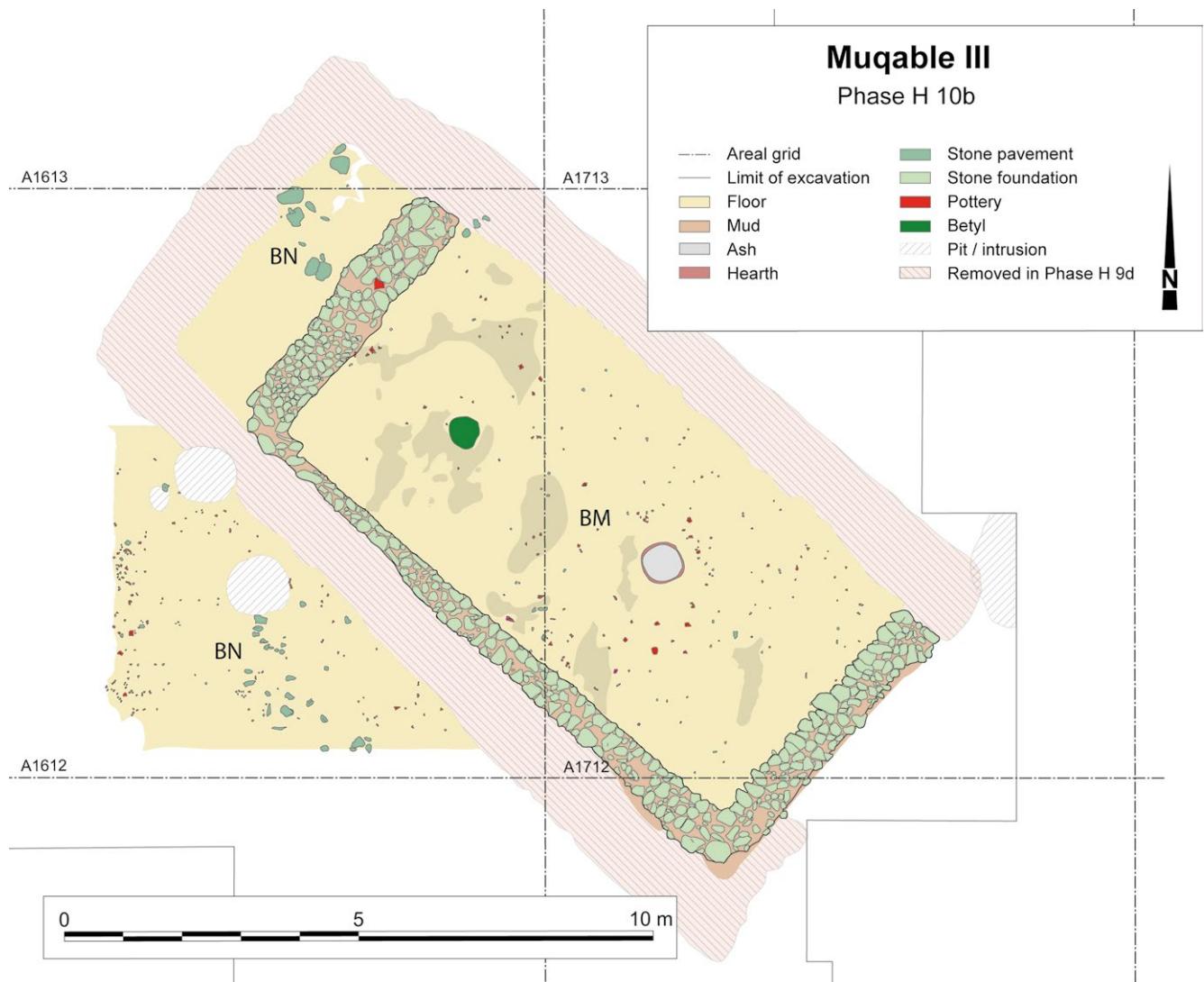
Phase H 10

37 Immediately below the 'Younger Temple' we uncovered the remains of an older building representing Phase H 10. It was a free-standing, single-room building that had the same orientation as the 'Younger Temple' (Figs. 15, 16). The building's main feature was a large standing stone placed on the central axis of the *Langraum* (Room BM). Remarkably, this was the very stone around which the 'Younger Temple' had been built (see above, Fig. 12). Due to the similarities between the two buildings and the continuous use of the large stone from Phase H 10 to Phase H 9, it is suggested that the building of Phase H 10 also was a temple which is referred to as the 'Older Temple'. It is assumed that the large standing stone was also a betyl in the time of the 'Older Temple'.

38 At 11.8 m length and at least 5.7 m width the 'Older Temple' was smaller than the temple of Phase H 9. The preserved stone footings were between 0.8 and 1 m wide and consisted of medium-sized, undressed stones (Fig. 16). The northeastern wall was entirely removed in Phase H 9d, when the construction pit of the 'Younger Temple's' northeastern foundation had been dug. The entrance of the 'Older Temple' was probably situated in its northwestern wall. However, it is not possible to securely locate it as only the foundations of the building have survived.

39 The temple was used over a longer period, as evidenced by three successive clay floors. Overall, five subphases are to be distinguished referring to the preparation of the building ground, the building's construction, and usage as well as its dismantling at the end of the Early Mittani period (Phases H 10a–e).

40 Prior to the construction of the 'Older Temple', the area west of where the building was later built was raised by filling it up with soil. This included filling in a stone-paved path (BW) and parts of an L-shaped building of Phase H 11 (see below) which were on a deeper elevation. The purpose was probably to create an even surface. The filling-in represents **Phase H 10e**. There are no built features associated with this subphase. **Phase H 10d** is represented by a thin stone wall, only c. 1 m long, of unclear function. It had been built on Phase H 10e and was cut by the northwestern stone foundation of the 'Older Temple'.



16

41 **Phase H 10c** saw the construction of the ‘Older Temple’s’ foundations and the building’s first use (Fig. 15). The oldest floor, which consisted of grey clay, was not entirely even but sloped slightly towards the southwest. Several small pottery sherds and individual animal bones were scattered on the floor. In this subphase, the betyl had been placed on the floor (Fig. 13), supported by a layer of clay that surrounded the stone’s base. Southeast of it, the floor was covered by a thin layer of ash, but a hearth could not be identified.

42 The next subphase (**H 10b**) seems to have been the main phase of usage of the ‘Older Temple’ (Fig. 16). It is represented by a clay floor that abutted the betyl. Around the stone, the floor was reddish, grey, or white due to exposure to fire (Fig. 17). This might indicate that offerings had been burnt here, similar to the ‘Younger Temple’ of Phase H 9a where there was a hearth on the floor next to the betyl. Another similarity between the ‘Older Temple’ of Phase H 10b and the ‘Younger Temple’ is the presence of a second hearth. This was a round hearth that had been sunken into the floor on the central axis of the building (Figs. 16. 18). Its thick clay walls were hardened by fire. The hearth was filled with fine, dark grey ash.

43 The most recent floor, corresponding to **Phase H 10a**, was preserved only in places along the southwestern wall and in the central part of the temple. A circular hearth, constructed on the floor, was located close to the southwestern wall. The surrounding floor was covered by ash. At the end of the ‘Older Temple’s’ use, the building

Fig. 16: Detailed architectural plan of Phase H 10b

الشكل ١٦: مخطط معماري مفصل
للمرحلة H 10b



Fig. 17: The floor next to the standing stone in the 'Older Temple' had been exposed to fire during Phase H 10b

الشكل ١٧: الأرضية بجانب الحجر المنتصب في "المعبد الأقدم" وهي تحمل آثار حريق حدث خلال المرحلة H 10b

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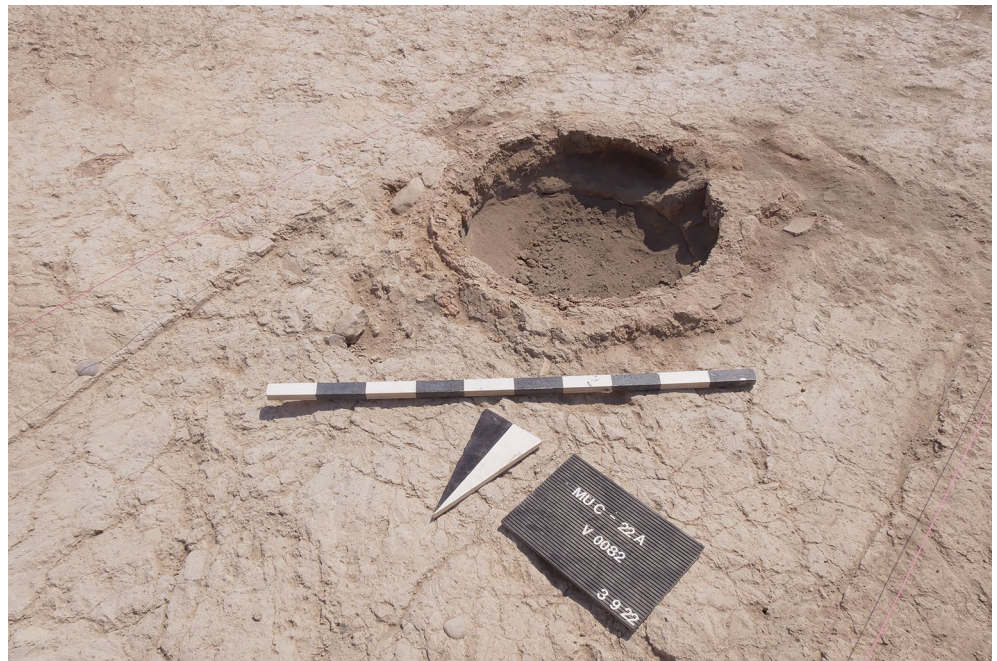


Fig. 18: Round hearth in the 'Older Temple' of Phase H 10b

الشكل ١٨: موقد دائري في "المعبد الأقدم" من المرحلة H 10b

18

was abandoned. This is represented by a thick layer of sand which had probably been washed into the western part of the building, covering the earlier floor. No remains of Phase H 10 were preserved to the northwest of the temple due to modifications in this area during Phase H 9a. An open area (BN) was located southwest of the 'Older Temple' (Fig. 16). Its trodden earth floor was covered with a few pottery sherds and pebbles. A fragment of a wall nail was found in the accumulation above the floor (Fig. 19). The wall nail consists of solid terracotta with an unglazed surface. With its flanged collar, which separated the unpreserved wall nail's head from the shank, the wall nail corresponds typologically to a second wall nail uncovered in Phase H 11 (cf. Fig. 21).³⁰

Therefore, and in view of its poor state of preservation, the wall nail from Area BN might as well originate from Phase H 11. Its findspot might be due to post-depositional processes.

Phase H 11

⁴⁴ This phase is represented by stone foundations which presumably belonged to one single large building (VII) (Fig. 20). Its remains were partially excavated in the southwest of the hilltop and on the western slope. Building VII was heavily disturbed by the building activities of Phase H 9 as well as by modern and Late Ottoman pits. Thus, it was poorly preserved leaving only its stone foundations. Except one room and two external areas (see below), no floors of this phase have survived.

⁴⁵ Building VII had an L-shaped ground plan that comprised a western room unit, oriented north-south, and a southern room unit, oriented east-west. In both units, two rooms each have been identified so far. The southern unit was at least 10.5 m long and 5 m wide, while the western unit was at least 8.4 m long and, at 3.4 m width, considerably narrower. The foundations, which consisted of large to medium-sized, undressed stones, were between 0.9 m and 1.3 m wide. Only the western unit's northern wall was relatively thin at 0.5 m.

⁴⁶ A doorway presumably existed in the northern wall of Room BO, which was situated in the east of the southern unit. The doorway's width cannot be determined as the eastern half of the room's northern wall was not preserved. Room BO was approx. 6 × 3 m large. The only preserved installation inside the room was a round pit, approx. 85 cm in diameter, which was located in the southwest corner: It was filled with light brown to reddish-brown soil that was devoid of finds; its function is unclear. The neighbouring room (BY), located to the west of Room BO, had a well-preserved clay floor.

⁴⁷ The two rooms in the western unit of Building VII were very narrow at 1.5 m in width. The northern room (BT) was 3.9 m long while the southern room (BU), whose southern wall was not yet uncovered, was at least 1.75 m long; their floors were not preserved.

⁴⁸ Between both room units was an irregularly shaped outdoor area (BV). The partly preserved trodden earth floor of Area BV was covered with a thin layer of ash. Southwest of this, at a higher level, was a stone-paved path (BW) that sloped towards the presumed entrance in the northern wall of Room BO. This path connected the building's southern unit with the northern part of the hilltop which was at a higher elevation. On this part of the mound, there may originally have been an open space or a built structure during Phase H 11, however, nothing of this has survived.

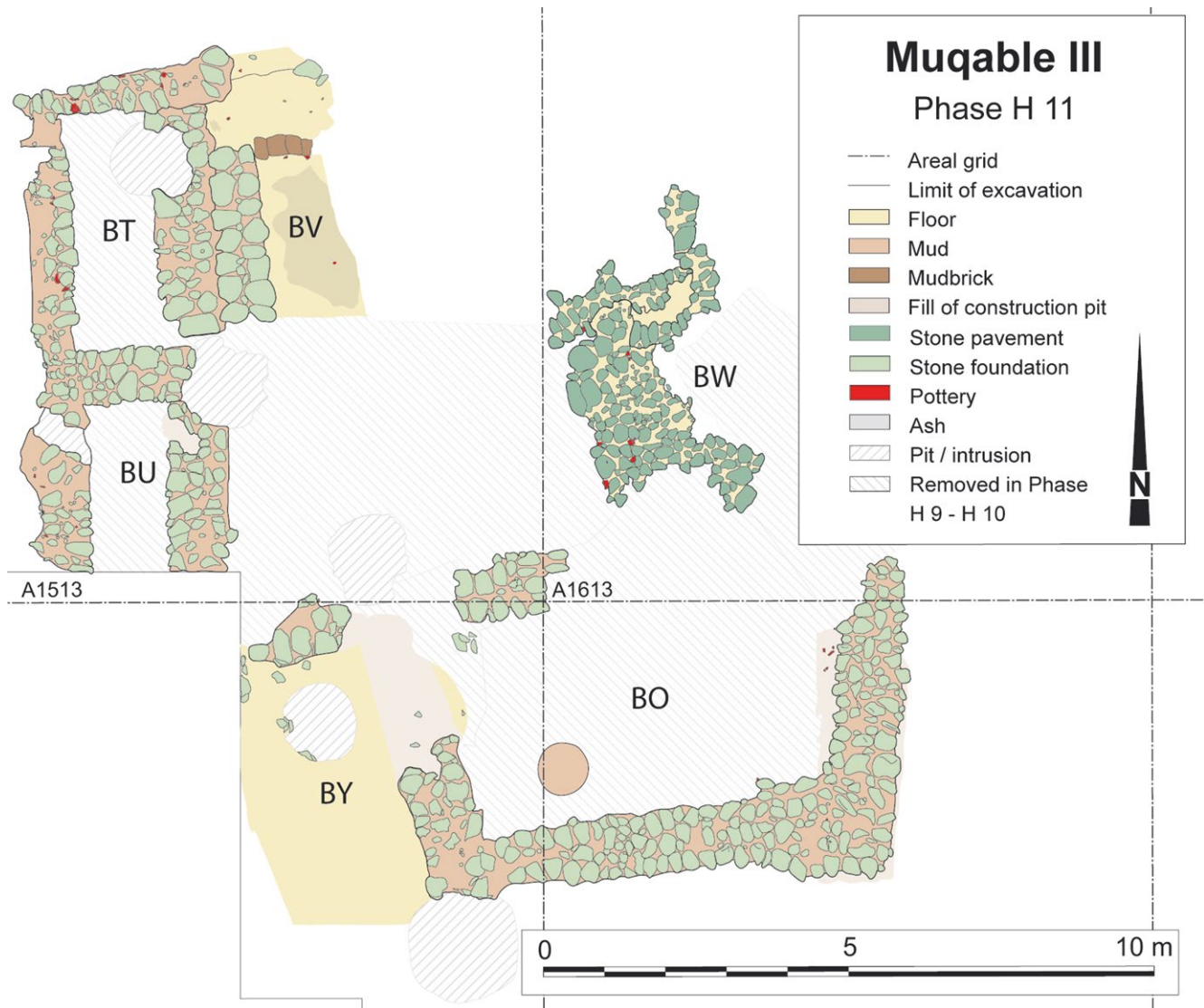
⁴⁹ Due to the poor state of preservation of Building VII, its function is difficult to assess. However, the building's wide walls might be taken as an indication that it was a public building. This is supported by the discovery of a wall nail on the floor of Room BY of the southern room unit (Fig. 21). During the second millennium BC, wall nails or knobs were generally associated with public buildings, such as temples, palaces, or city



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Fig. 19: Fragmented terracotta wall nail from Area BN of Phase H 10 (MUC22A-i0114)

الشكل ١٩: مسمار جداري متكسر من التيراكوتا مكتشف في المنطقة BN العائدة للمرحلة H 10 (MUC22A-i0114)



20

Fig. 20: Architectural plan of the remains of Phase H 11

الشكل ٢٠: مخطط معماري مفصل لبقايا المرحلة H 11

walls.³¹ The wall nail from Phase H 11 consists of unglazed terracotta. It has a flat head which is separated by a flanged collar from the cylindrical shank; the wall nail is solid. Typologically, it corresponds to the fragmented wall nail from Phase H 10 (see above). Similar wall nails were found in Temple A of Nuzi³² and the Middle Bronze Age palace uncovered at Tall al-Rimah (Site C).³³

The Initial Mittani period

Phase H 12

⁵⁰ Remains of this phase were unearthed on a relatively small area in the central part of the hilltop, below the 'Older Temple' of Phase H 10. They were partially cut by the stone foundations of Phase H 9d as well as the L-shaped building of Phase H 11. The excavated Phase H 12 architecture includes a 5 m long section of a stone wall which was 1.3 m wide and northwest-southeast oriented (Fig. 22). The wall consisted of at least two courses of undressed stones laid in a shallow construction pit. The northwestern end of

³¹ Tourtet 2013, 176–178.

³² Starr 1937, Pl. 97 N.

³³ Postgate et al. 1997, Pl. 25 e.

this wall formed a corner with a second stone wall oriented in a northeast-southwest direction. The wall's width indicates that it must have belonged to a major building which will be explored in more detail in the future.

51 Two successive floors, representing two sub-phases (H 12a–b), were uncovered abutting the wide stone wall from the south. So far it is unclear whether this area was an interior or exterior space. Several pottery sherds, animal bones, and charred cereal grains were retrieved from the floor of Phase H 12a. Several pottery sherds were also scattered on the ash-covered floor of Phase H 12b.

52 A pottery kiln (EC), uncovered in the southwest of the excavation area, is attributed to Phase H 12 as it was superimposed by the remains of the L-shaped building of Phase H 11. However, it is not stratigraphically connected to the aforementioned Phase H 12 floors.

Phase H 13

53 This phase was unearthed in the west of the excavation area and in the southern part of the hilltop. Although the excavated features of these two areas have not yet been stratigraphically connected, it is assumed that they belong to the same phase as they were on the same elevation.

54 The remains of Phase H 13 include a small building with at least two rooms that was uncovered in the west of the excavation area. The building's western walls had been partially removed when Building IV of Phase H 9 was built (see above). The southern room (EA) was at least 2.3×2 m in size. Of its walls, only the western and northern stone footings survived, which were about 40 to 45 cm wide and consisted of medium-sized to small, undressed stones (Fig. 23). The room had a clay floor, which was covered with a layer of ash. In the southern part of the room, there was a hearth on the floor, characterised by a hardened and reddened clay surface. East of the hearth lay stone tools and pottery fragments. Of the northern room (EB), only a 1.9×0.8 m small portion of the floor has survived; the room's original size cannot be determined as its western, northern, and southern walls were not preserved. This room also had a clay floor with two small round hearths and a basalt tool. Altogether, the modest width of the building's walls, the hearths, and the stone tools suggest that the house was a domestic dwelling.

55 In the southern part of the hilltop, Phase H 13 is represented by a trodden earth floor which sloped down to the west (Fig. 24). It was excavated over an area of approx. 45 m^2 . The floor's slope suggests that it was an outdoor area (Area EE). There were three hearths on the floor. Area EE was covered by ashy soil.

The Late Middle Bronze Age

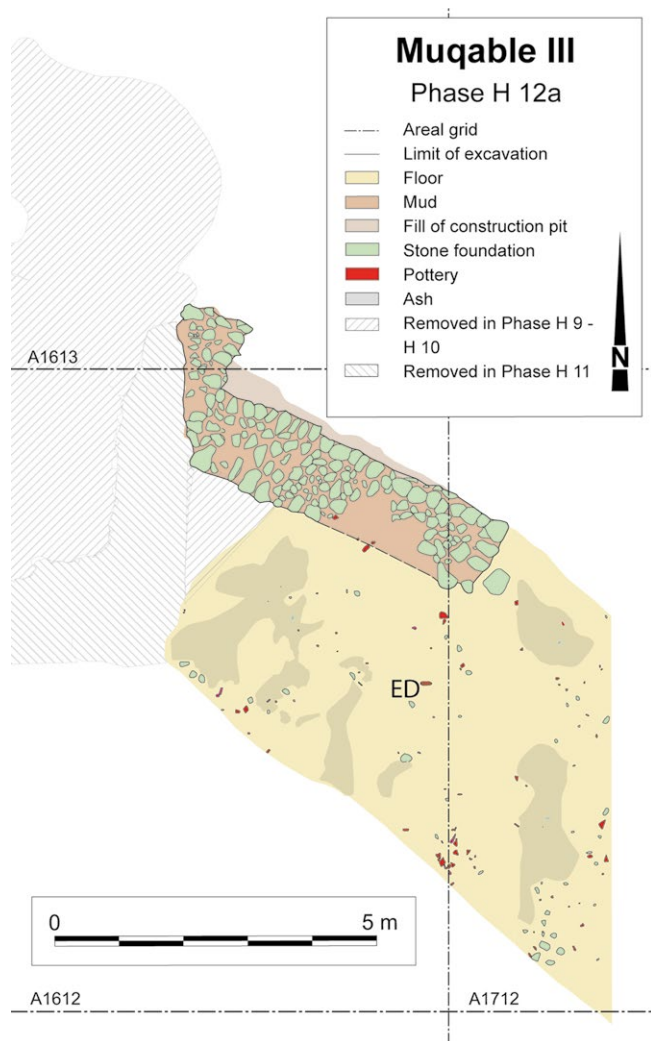
Phase H 14

56 A stone foundation wall uncovered immediately below the sloping floor of Phase H 13 represents Phase H 14 (Fig. 24). The wall was oriented northeast-southwest and had a width of 85 cm; it consisted of one layer of undressed stones. An additional row



Fig. 21: Terracotta wall nail from Room BY in Building VII of Phase H 11 (MUC21A-i0103)

الشكل ٢١: مسمار جداري كامل من التيراكوتا مكتشف في الغرفة BY في البناء VII العائد للمرحلة (MUC21A-i0103) 11 H



22

Fig. 22: Architectural plan of Phase H 12a

الشكل ٢٢: مخطط معماري مفصل
للمرحلة H 12a

to south, suggesting that it may have been an external area, e.g., a courtyard. South of Room CH, there was a second building comprising at least one room, which was only partially exposed.

The Middle Bronze Age: Phase H 16

⁵⁹ This phase is represented by a large building whose remains were uncovered in the area of the western slope (Fig. 26). It is referred to as ‘Stone Threshold Building’ due to its furnishing with large monolithic thresholds. The Stone Threshold Building, oriented approximately east-west, had been cut into the slope of the mound from south. Thus far, we identified three rooms (CG, CK, CI) and a vestibule (CL).

⁶⁰ The building had a regular ground plan with rooms arranged in a grid. Its southern outer wall was about 1 m wide, while the other walls were slightly thinner at about 0.9 m. For most of the walls, only the stone footings were preserved. These had been built very carefully with undressed stones. A smooth layer of clay, onto which large pottery sherds were impressed, had been applied to the top of the stone footings.

⁶¹ The building was accessible from the west via a vestibule (CL) measuring 3 × 1.6 m, whose floor was paved with small to medium-sized undressed stones. From there, a doorway, furnished with a 1 × 0.85 m monolithic threshold, gave access to Room CG. This prominent room was square in shape with a side length of approx. 2.8 m. Its floor was extraordinary as it consisted of large, rectangular, carefully dressed flagstones (Fig. 26). The largest were over 1 m long and up to 0.9 m wide. They had been laid with much care,

of stones laid along the north-western edge of this foundation indicates that the floor, which adjoined the wall to the northwest, might have been an outdoor area. The row of stones could have been placed here to protect the foot of the wall from erosion. The width of the foundation wall indicates that it might have belonged to a larger building.

Phase H 15

⁵⁷ Remains of this phase were uncovered in the west of the excavation area. They included thin-walled architecture built over the ruin of a large building of Phase H 16 (see below). Parts of the earlier building were also reused, which is demonstrated by the fact that younger floors, overlying the Phase H 16 floors, abutted the building’s walls. In one room (CG), Late Middle Bronze Age pottery (see below, § 66 The pottery) associated with Phase H 15 was found on the original flagstone floor. This indicates that Room CG of the Stone Threshold Building had remained continually in use until Phase H 15. However, most of the building’s walls had collapsed by this time. This is demonstrated not only by the fact that some Phase H 15 floors run over the low stumps of the walls, but also by the existence of new structures superimposing the ruin of the Stone Threshold Building. This architecture included one small room (CH), which was about 2 × 1.7 m in size. Its stone foundation walls were very thin, at approx. 25 cm width (Fig. 25). The room’s floor consisted of clay and was covered by a bluish-grey layer of ash.

⁵⁸ Area CN, to the north of Room CH, was partly covered with black ash containing numerous charred seeds. The clay floor of Area CN sloped slightly from north



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Fig. 23: The thin-walled Room EA of Phase H 13; wider stone foundations of Phase H 9a are visible in the foreground and background

الشكل ٢٣: الغرفة EA ذات الجدران رقيقة السماكة من المرحلة H 13، كما تظهر في المقدمة والخلفية الأساسات الحجرية الأعرص للمرحلة H 9a



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Fig. 24: Stone foundation of Phase H 14 superimposed by external area EE of Phase H 13

الشكل ٢٤: الأساس الحجري للمرحلة H 14 الذي تعلوه المنطقة الخارجية EE من المرحلة H 13

so that the setting exactly filled out the entire room. The floor, combined with the vestibule and the large stone threshold, resulted in a very prestigious arrangement. The only objects found on the floor of Room CG were a large mortar and a flat basalt tool. As the flagstone floor had stayed in use until Phase H 15 (see above), these objects might not be related to the building's original use in Phase H 16 but could have been placed there later.

62 Room CK, measuring 2.8×2.1 m, was located to the north of Room CG. The two rooms were connected via a 0.7 m wide doorway. The western and eastern walls of rooms CG and CK shared exactly the same alignment. A stone door socket found northwest of the doorway shows that Room CK had a door. Room CK was also paved with large flagstones, but only in its southern part, while numerous small, undressed stones formed the eastern part of the floor (Fig. 26). A pavement of baked bricks in the

Fig. 25: Room CH of Phase H 15 had been constructed over the vestibule CL of the earlier Stone Threshold Building of Phase H 16



الشكل ٢٥: شُيِّدَت الغرفة CH من المرحلة H 15 فوق الدهليز CL التابع لبناء العتبة الحجرية الأقدم والعائد للمرحلة H 16

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room's centre and extending up to the western wall, as well as a pavement of small, undressed stones in the north were later additions, presumably when the floor needed repairing. This indicates a prolonged use of the building during the Middle Bronze Age.

⁶³ A wide doorway with a monolithic stone threshold led from Room CG into the neighbouring Room CI to the east. The stone slab was 1 m long and 0.35 m wide making for a very prestigiously designed doorway (Fig. 26). Room CI, which has only been partially excavated thus far, was at least 1.8×1.8 m in size. The room's clay floor was covered with numerous large pottery sherds and a thin layer of ash.

⁶⁴ An external area (CJ), located to the south of the 'Stone Threshold Building', was superimposed by mudbrick collapse. The latter presumably originated from the building's southern wall which had fallen to the south when the building disintegrated.

⁶⁵ So far, we do not have enough information to draw conclusions on the building's function. However, its carefully planned and regular ground plan, the width of its walls, and its furnishing with stone thresholds and a flagstone floor might suggest that it was a residence of a wealthy household. Further excavations will hopefully allow us to determine the function of the Stone Threshold Building.

The pottery

⁶⁶ Based on the detailed stratigraphy, a thorough study of the pottery assemblages associated with the single phases has been started.³⁴ In the following, a preliminary overview of the stratigraphy-based study of the pottery from the Late Middle Bronze Age and the late, early, and initial stages of the Mittani period at Muqable will be presented in chronological order.

³⁴ As the study of the material is still ongoing, this preliminary overview does not include quantitative data on type or ware frequencies. Further analysis of the material may necessitate alterations to the preliminary results presented here.



Fig. 26: Overview of the Stone Threshold Building of Phase H 16

الشكل ٢٦: منظر عام لبناء العتبة الحجرية من المرحلة H 16

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Phases H 15 to H 14: pottery of the Late Middle Bronze Age (OMT IIB period)

⁶⁷ The Late Middle Bronze Age pottery assemblage was retrieved from Phases H 15 and H 14. The majority of the pottery repertoire consists of wares that are typical of the Middle Bronze Age, including Older Khabur Ware, Grey Burnished Ware, and Undecorated Chaff-tempered Ware. Alongside these, starting from Phase H 15, early variations of Red-edged Ware and Dark on Buff Animal Ornamented Ware, which will become widespread in the Mittani period (see below), are introduced. Moreover, a new bichrome precursor to Nuzi Ware, termed 'Proto-Nuzi Ware' (see below), is first documented in Phase H 15. This illustrates the gradual development of Mittani period pottery and its roots in the traditions of Middle Bronze Age pottery.

⁶⁸ Older Khabur Ware is one of the most frequently documented wares in the assemblage. Vessels of this ware typically contain medium to small amounts of chaff as well as lesser quantities of minerals. They often have a brown to reddish core and a light brown, beige, or yellow slip on the outer surface. Concerning the painted decorations, which range in colour from red-brown to dark brown and black, horizontal stripes are prevalent. Rims are usually fully painted or decorated with radial stripes. Several vessels feature paint splashes on the interior.

⁶⁹ A significant portion of Older Khabur Ware consists of closed vessels, including small pots with unaccentuated rims (Pl. 1: 4) or everted rims (Pl. 1: 5), larger pots with everted rims (Pl. 1: 6), hammer-headed rims (Pl. 1: 7), or flat-topped rims that are thickened on the inside and outside (Pl. 2: 1–2),³⁵ and bottles with flaring necks and unaccentuated rims (Pl. 2: 4). The oblique rim of a rounded pot (Pl. 2: 3) is reminiscent of later, Transitional Khabur Ware forms of the Initial Mittani period (see below).

⁷⁰ Concerning open forms, shallow rounded bowls are quite common. They can have rims that are triangular in section and painted with radial stripes (Pl. 1: 1)³⁶ or flat-topped rims that are thickened on the inside and fully painted on the top (Pl. 1: 2). In the case of another bowl with a flat-topped rim that is thickened on the inside and outside, only a section of the rim is fully painted, and in addition, there are radial lines

³⁵ Cf. Tell Rijim 'Younger Period' and Layer 5 (Koliński 2000, Pl. 38 e, Pl. 40 c).

³⁶ Cf. Tell Brak HH Level 8 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 190.214).

painted on the rim (Pl. 1: 3). The combination of a fully painted rim section and radial lines is well-attested in the pottery assemblage from Phases H 15 and H 14 of Muqable. Since it is not documented earlier than Phase H 15, it can be considered distinctive of Late Middle Bronze Age pottery.

⁷¹ Undecorated Chaff-tempered Ware is also very frequent in the assemblage. Its fabric is similar to Older Khabur Ware. Occasionally, sherds of this ware have slightly smoothed surfaces, a characteristic that becomes increasingly common in the subsequent periods (see below). Open forms of Undecorated Chaff-tempered Ware include rounded bowls with unaccentuated rims that are flat on the top (Pl. 2: 5), strongly thickened on the inside (Pl. 2: 6–7),³⁷ diagonally elongated (Pl. 2: 8),³⁸ or horizontally elongated with concentric grooves on the top (Pl. 2: 9).

⁷² Pots often have everted (Pl. 2: 10–11, Pl. 3: 1)³⁹ or hammer-headed rims (Pl. 3: 2).⁴⁰ One type of pot that is well-attested from Phase H 15 on features an oblique rim, a short neck, and a horizontal rib below the neck (Pl. 3: 3–4).⁴¹ Since this type does not occur in older levels at Muqable it can be regarded as distinctively Late Middle Bronze Age. Moreover, the earliest examples of ‘piecrust’ pot-stands, another form that is primarily associated with pottery of the Mittani period, are documented in Phase H 15 (Pl. 3: 5–6).

⁷³ Grey Burnished Ware, usually containing medium amounts of chaff, is distinguished by its burnished, sometimes even polished, surface. Examples from the Late Middle Bronze Age assemblage range from dark grey and almost black to grey-brown and light grey. Carinated bowls of this ware have very steep upper walls with horizontal ribbing on the exterior surface; their rims are either unaccentuated or thickened internally or externally (Pl. 3: 7).⁴² In addition to this type, shallow rounded bowls without horizontal ribbing are introduced in Phase H 15. Their rims can be flat-topped and strongly thickened on the inside (Pl. 3: 8–9),⁴³ horizontally elongated and thickened on the inside (Pl. 4: 1),⁴⁴ or everted (Pl. 4: 2). These Late Middle Bronze Age types of Grey Burnished Ware, often characterised by a lighter grey tone, have either channel bases, ring bases or flat bases.

⁷⁴ Fine wares constitute a very small proportion of the assemblage. They are mainly represented by thin-walled vessels with a fabric comprising small amounts of chaff or minerals. An example of undecorated fine ware is a small beaker with a globular body, an unaccentuated rim, and fine horizontal ribbing on its shoulder (Pl. 4: 3).⁴⁵ Painted fine ware is also documented. Examples include small, shouldered beakers with short necks and unaccentuated rims. These vessels are painted with thin horizontal stripes in dark colours (Pl. 4: 4).

⁷⁵ Concerning wares, which occur for the first time in the Late Middle Bronze Age, Red-edged Ware ought to be mentioned. The assemblage comprises only four examples of this ware, the oldest of which originates from Phase H 15. These are shallow bowls with rims that were painted red, dark red and red-brown. One is a rounded bowl

³⁷ Cf. Kurd Qaburstan (Schwartz et al. 2017, Fig. 25.6–7), Tell al-Rimah Level C 6a (Postgate et al. 1997, Pl. 50.373.380).

³⁸ Cf. Kurd Qaburstan (Schwartz et al. 2017, Fig. 25.9), Tell al-Rimah Level A 3 (Postgate et al. 1997, Pl. 50.379.384–385).

³⁹ Cf. Tell Rijim ‘Older Period’ and Layer 5 (Koliński 2000, Pl. 26 c), Tall Mozan Phase C 5 (Schmidt 2013, Taf. 329.K 3302).

⁴⁰ Cf. Gir-e Gomel Phase 12 (Morandi Bonacossi et al. 2018, Fig. 47.3).

⁴¹ Cf. Kurd Qaburstan (Schwartz et al. 2017, Fig. 26.13).

⁴² Cf. Tell Brak HH Level 10 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 188.170–171).

⁴³ Cf. Tell al-Rimah Level A3 (Postgate et al. 1997, Pl. 46.290).

⁴⁴ Cf. Kurd Qaburstan (Schwartz et al. 2017, Fig. 25.2); Tell al-Rimah Level A3 (Postgate et al. 1997, Pl. 44.256).

⁴⁵ Cf. Gir-e Gomel Phase 11B (Morandi Bonacossi et al. 2018, Fig. 48.1), Tell al-Rimah Level C7 (Postgate et al. 1997, Pl. 79.879).

with a triangular, slightly everted rim which is painted on the outside (Pl. 4: 5).⁴⁶ The interior surface of this bowl is smoothed. Another example is a rounded bowl with a rim that is diagonally elongated and slightly thickened on the inside. The exterior wall of the rim is slightly concave. Red paint was applied to the top and the inside of the rim (Fig. 27; Pl. 4: 6). The early occurrence of Red-edged Bowls at Muqable is paralleled by Tell Brak, where the earliest examples of this ware were found in Level 8 of Area HH, dated to the Late Old Babylonian period.⁴⁷

⁷⁶ Another ware in the assemblage from Phases H 15 and H 14, which is closely associated with Mittani period pottery (see below), is Dark on Buff Animal Ornamented Ware.⁴⁸ Two early examples of this ware were recorded. One is a fragment of a deep bowl with a slightly everted rim that is painted with black triangles. The outside of the bowl is painted with horizontal stripes between which a standing bird is depicted (Figs. 5. 6. 7. 8. 28). The other example, a body sherd, features horizontal stripes and a standing caprine, also in black (Fig. 28). In both instances, the animals' bodies are fully painted.

⁷⁷ Bichrome decorations occur on a ware which is referred to as 'Proto-Nuzi Ware'.⁴⁹ Three sherds of this ware were retrieved from Late Middle Bronze Age levels at Muqable. The earliest occurrence of Proto-Nuzi Ware is in Phase H 15, but it continues to be used until the Early Mittani period (see below). Similar to Nuzi Ware, which was only introduced in the Initial Mittani period (see below), Proto-Nuzi Ware is distinguished by light-on-dark painted decorations. Motifs in white or cream colour are painted on horizontal bands in brown or black. However, in contrast to Nuzi Ware, these motifs are rarely ornamental but consist of vertical or radial lines, and dots. Moreover, the light painting of Proto-Nuzi Ware is usually drawn with a thicker line. The fabric of Proto-Nuzi Ware vessels often comprises chaff and sand, similar to Older Khabur Ware, although later examples originating from Initial Mittani levels are sometimes fine and mineral-tempered (see below).

⁷⁸ The earliest examples of Proto-Nuzi Ware documented at Muqable are fragments of pots and deep bowls featuring Older Khabur Ware-like painted decorations with the addition of light painting. One example from Phase H 15 is a body sherd featuring several thin horizontal stripes in black, the widest of which is additionally painted with short vertical lines in white colour (Fig. 29). Thus, early Proto-Nuzi Ware, undoubtedly the precursor of Nuzi Ware, is a result of the combination of Older Khabur Ware decorations with light-coloured elements.

⁷⁹ To conclude, the assemblage from Muqable offers not only information on the wares and typology of pottery from the Late Middle Bronze Age but also demonstrates that most wares that are distinctive of Mittani period pottery have early precursors in the Late Middle Bronze Age.

Phases H 13 to H 12: pottery of the Initial Mittani period (MMT 0 period)

⁸⁰ The assemblage attributed to the Initial Mittani period derives from Phases H 13 and H 12. The term 'Initial Mittani' refers to the very beginning of the Mittani period.⁵⁰ It is during this period that Nuzi Ware and distinctive types of Mittani period pottery, such as carinated bowls with unaccentuated rims and high beakers with knob or button bases, first occur. The Initial Mittani pottery repertoire is also characterised by a large proportion of Middle Bronze Age sherds, comprising up to, and sometimes more

⁴⁶ Cf. Tell Rijim Layer 5 (Koliński 2000, Pl. 16 d).

⁴⁷ Oates et al. 1997, 67.

⁴⁸ As defined by Pfälzner 2007, 240 with regard to Early Mittani pottery; see also Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

⁴⁹ For a definition of this ware, see Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

⁵⁰ See Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

Fig. 27: Fragment of a red-edged bowl from Phase H 15 (MUC22A-q0544-5)

الشكل ٢٧: كسرة من طبق ذي حافة حمراء من المرحلة (MUC22A-q0544-5) H 15



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than, 50 % of diagnostic sherds of an assemblage. This very particular composition suggests that Middle Bronze Age wares and types had been used and produced alongside proper ‘Mittani’ pottery. The following overview presents only a selection of the Late Bronze Age types.⁵¹

⁸¹ Undecorated Chaff-tempered Ware, although very well-attested, is notably less prominent in the Initial Mittani pottery assemblage compared to later stages of the Mittani period. A small proportion of chaff-tempered sherds has a slightly smoothed surface. Regarding the forms of Undecorated Chaff-tempered Ware, carinated bowls with steep upper walls and unaccentuated rims ought to be mentioned (Pl. 5: 1–3). At Muqable, this distinctively Late Bronze Age form was first introduced in Phase H 13. Variations of carinated bowls also include specimens with a rim that is very slightly thickened on the inside (Pl. 5: 4) and bowls with a short, rather thick upper wall that is slightly inclined inwards (Pl. 5: 5).

⁸² The assemblage also comprises slightly rounded bowls with rims that are diagonally elongated and sometimes strongly thickened on the inside (Pl. 5: 6–8). These bowls can have channel bases or ring bases. While they have Late Middle Bronze Age precursors (see above and (Pl. 2: 6. 8), they do not appear to continue into the Early Mittani period.

⁸³ Deep bowls have oblique or hammer-headed rims that are usually slightly thickened on the inside (Pl. 6: 1–3).⁵² Pots with oblique (Pl. 6: 4–5) or hammer-headed rims (Pl. 6: 6) are very common. Specimens with oblique rims and a horizontal rib below the neck (Pl. 6: 4) stand in a Late Middle Bronze Age tradition (see above and (Pl. 3: 3–4). Bottles have triangular, oblique, or rectangular flat-topped rims (Pl. 6: 7–9). Large open jars typically have rectangular rims (Pl. 7: 1). ‘Piecrust’ pot-stands are also attested.

⁸⁴ Cooking ware from the Initial Mittani assemblage is represented by pots with oblique rims (Pl. 7: 2) as well as by cooking plates, one of which has a short triangular rim (Pl. 7: 3). As in later periods, cooking ware in this assemblage is handmade and usually burnished.

⁸⁵ Grey Burnished Ware, typically characterised by a light grey tone and a medium chaff-tempered fabric, occurs in a relatively small number. Very common types of

⁵¹ For further examples, see Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

⁵² Cf. Tell Rijim ‘Younger Period’ (Koliński 2000, Pl. 23 c).



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Fig. 28: Dark on Buff Animal-Ornamented Ware from Phase H 15 (a: MUC22A-i0119; b: MUC22A-i0323)

الشكل ٢٨: فخار مزخرف
بزخارف حيوانية ذات ألوان
داكنة على سطح فاتح
اللون من المرحلة H 15
(a: MUC22A-i0119,
b: MUC22A-i0323)

Fig. 29: Proto-Nuzi Ware white lines on dark stripes from Phase H 15 (MUC22A-i0412)

الشكل ٢٩: نمط فخار نوزي
الأول، عليه خطوط بيضاء على
خلفية داكنة اللون من المرحلة
(MUC22A-i0412) H 15

this ware are carinated bowls with unaccentuated rims (Figs. 5. 6. 8. 30). Typologically, these correspond to carinated bowls of chaff-tempered ware (see above and (Pl. 5: 1–4).

86 Red-edged Ware is very rare in the Initial Mittani period, being attested by only two specimens. One of these is a carinated bowl with a very short upper wall and a vertically elongated triangular rim that is painted red on the outside (Pl. 7: 6).



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Fig. 30: Fragment of carinated bowl of Grey Burnished Ware from Phase H 13 (MUC22A-q0271-48)

الشكل ٣٠: كسرة من زبدية من نمط الفخار المنكسر الحافة، ذات لون رمادي ومصقولة السطح من المرحلة H 13 (MUC22A-q0271-48)

87 A characteristic feature of the Initial Mittani assemblage is Transitional Khabur Ware.⁵³ Vessels of this ware are generally chaff-tempered. They are not thin-walled as Younger Khabur Ware but rather comparable to Older Khabur Ware of the Middle Bronze Age. However, the painted decorations of Transitional Khabur Ware are relatively limited, consisting primarily of horizontal stripes in shades of red, brown, or black. These stripes can appear as a single horizontal band on the outside of a vessel's rim or in combination with multiple horizontal stripes on the vessel's neck or shoulder. Other distinguishing features of Transitional Khabur Ware in contrast to Older Khabur Ware include the frequent absence of a slip, and, at times, a slightly smoothed surface.⁵⁴ In terms of typology, the most prominent difference between the two wares is that Transitional Khabur Ware is represented by 'Mittani' forms.

88 Transitional Khabur Ware comprises both open and closed vessels, although the latter are considerably more frequent. Pots with hammer-headed rims, which can be slightly oblique, are particularly common (Pl. 7: 9, Pl. 8: 1–2). Dark paint is typically applied to the outer edge of their rims, while the tops of their rims are usually unpainted.

Other forms include small, shouldered pots with vertical necks and tapering rims or rims that are thickened on the outside (Pl. 8: 3–4).⁵⁵

89 Open vessels of Transitional Khabur Ware include carinated bowls with steep upper walls and unaccentuated rims. The outside of their upper walls can be completely painted in brown (Pl. 7: 7). In other instances, paint was only applied to the rim and as a horizontal band along the carination (Pl. 7: 8).

90 An unusual example of Older Khabur Ware from the Initial Mittani assemblage is represented by a rounded bowl which is painted with four horizontal stripes on the outside of its obliquely oriented double-pointed rim (Pl. 8: 7).⁵⁶

91 Painted 'Grain Measures', a hallmark of Mittani pottery which first appears in the Middle Bronze Age II,⁵⁷ are well-attested in the Initial Mittani assemblage. They can feature complex painted decorations, such as cross-hatched bands and triangles, filled-in triangles, dotted rosettes, and horizontal hourglass motifs (Fig. 31). Simple horizontal bands also occur frequently (Pl. 8: 5–6).

92 There are some examples of Dark on Buff Animal Ornamented Ware⁵⁸ in the Initial Mittani period assemblage. The decorations, painted in black, brown, or red-brown, are generally similar to the more complex motifs of Painted 'Grain Measures' with the addition of stylised animals. Depictions of birds or caprines are combined with geometric motifs, such as triangles, diamonds, or hourglasses (Figs. 1. 10. 32).

93 Undecorated Mineral-tempered Ware is rare.⁵⁹ It includes fine, thin-walled rounded bowls with delicate ring bases (Pl. 9: 2) as well as high beakers with high ring bases or knob bases (Pl. 9: 3–6). The latter are usually slightly convex at the bottom. Painted mineral-tempered ware is also attested, and its frequency seems to increase from Phase H 12 onward. Younger Khabur Ware is characterised by painted horizontal stripes in dark brown or red-brown. It is represented by high beakers with concave button bases

53 First defined in Pfälzner 2007, 242–243. For an updated definition which takes into account the pottery from the Middle Tigris Region, especially from Muqable, Bassetki and Kemune, see Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

54 Pfälzner 2007, 242; Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

55 Cf. Tell Brak HH Level 7 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 195.358), Level 8 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 195.367).

56 Cf. Tell Brak HH Level 8 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 190.214).

57 Painted 'Grain Measures', a type of cylindrical beaker, are a typical feature of Initial and Early Mittani pottery (Pfälzner – Puljiz in print). The term 'Grain Measure' was first introduced in Mallowan 1946, 48. 50.

58 As defined in Pfälzner 2007, 240; see also Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

59 For the definition, see Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

or knob bases (Pl. 9: 7–9) as well as shouldered beakers with vertical necks and unaccentuated rims (Pl. 9: 10).⁶⁰ Concerning the high beakers, they are not as thin-walled as later specimens from the Early and Late Mittani period.

⁹⁴ Nuzi Ware is well attested in the Initial Mittani period assemblage, the earliest examples uncovered so far originating from Phase H 13. Early Nuzi Ware from Muqable is sometimes made of a fine fabric with small inclusions of either sand or chaff, but sherds of coarser ware were also found. In contrast to Proto-Nuzi Ware, the white-on-dark painted decorations of Nuzi Ware are usually ornamental, featuring geometrical motifs and patterns, such as cross-hatching, stippled triangles, stippled half-circles, overturning waves ('running dog' motif), and spiral bands. These are predominantly painted on narrow black panels, with red-brown panels being less frequent. While most examples of Nuzi Ware are sherds, a context from Phase H 13 produced the lower half of a high beaker with a knob base (Fig. 33).

⁹⁵ As for Proto-Nuzi Ware, only six sherds were found in the Initial Mittani layers at Muqable. Examples include a body sherd with a spiral motif in cream colour on a red-brown background (Fig. 34)⁶¹ and a rim fragment of a straight-sided beaker with horizontal bands in red-brown, onto which vertical lines in cream colour were painted (Figs. 10. 13. 34). Another example is a rounded bowl with an oblique rim decorated with radial lines in cream colour on the dark brown paint on the top of the bowl's rim (Pl. 9: 11). Strikingly, the already mentioned Painted 'Grain Measure' with a complex geometric design on its exterior surface also features a light-on-dark decoration on the top of its rim (Fig. 31). This consists of cream-coloured dots which were painted on top of slightly bigger red-brown dots.



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Fig. 31: Painted Grain Measure with geometric decoration from Phase H 12 (MUC22A-i0340)

الشكل ٣١: مكيال للحبوب ملون ومزخرف
بـزخارف هندسية من المرحلة H 12
(MUC22A-i0340)

Phases H 11 to H 10: pottery of the Early Mittani period (MMT IA period)

⁹⁶ The Early Mittani pottery of Muqable mainly derives from contexts attributed to Phase H 10 and, to a lesser extent, from Phase H 11, which was not as well preserved (see above, Phase H 11). The pottery of these phases is distinguishable from the Late Mittani period assemblage in several ways, including typology and the prevalence of painted wares, especially Transitional Khabur Ware (see below).

⁹⁷ Undecorated Chaff-tempered Ware is strongly represented but makes up a smaller proportion than in the subsequent Late Mittani assemblage. This pottery sometimes features a slightly smoothed surface. The assemblage includes numerous shallow bowls, most of which are either conical or carinated, with some being burnished on the inside. Conical bowls have rims which are very slightly thickened on the outside (Pl. 10: 1–2)⁶² or the inside (Pl. 10: 3–4).⁶³ It should be noted that conical bowls with these rims are not attested in Phases H 13 and H 12 (see above), suggesting that they were first introduced in the Early Mittani period.

⁶⁰ Cf. Tell Brak HH Level 7 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 195.354).

⁶¹ A sherd with a similarly painted decoration was uncovered at Tell Brak HH Level 8 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 199.453).

⁶² Cf. Kemune Phase A 4b (Beutelschies 2019, Pl. 1.9), Kurd Qaburstan (Schwartz et al. 2017, Fig. 28.3, 5).

⁶³ Cf. Kurd Qaburstan (Schwartz et al. 2017, Fig. 28.1).



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Fig. 32: Fragment of Dark on Buff Animal-Ornamented Ware with a highly stylised bird from Phase H 12 (MUC22A-i0122)

الشكل ٣٢: كسرة فخارية مزخرفة بزخارف حيوانية ذات لون داكن على خلفية فاتحة اللون وعليها شكل طائر منمق للغاية من المرحلة H 12 (MUC22A-i0122)

98 Carinated bowls, even more common than conical ones, often have steep, sometimes almost vertical, upper walls or walls that are inclined inwards. They usually have unaccentuated rims or rims which are very slightly thickened on the inside or outside (Pl. 10: 5–11).⁶⁴ Deep bowls represent another typical shape of Undecorated Chaff-tempered Ware. They can have horizontal or oblique hammer-headed rims (Pl. 11: 1–2).⁶⁵ As for pots, oblique rims, either rounded or rectangular, are very frequent (Pl. 11: 3–5),⁶⁶ although hammer-headed rims also occur. Bottles can have rims that are vertically thickened on the outside (Pl. 11: 6) or oblique rims (Pl. 11: 7). One large open jar has an everted, rectangular rim; its body is decorated with a wavy and a horizontal incision (Pl. 12: 1).⁶⁷ There is at least one example of a ‘piecrust’ pot-stand in the Early Mittani period assemblage (Pl. 12: 2).

Cooking ware, usually handmade and burnished, is represented mainly by pots with elongated, oblique rims (Pl. 12: 3–4).

99 Grey Burnished Ware is documented in relatively small quantities. This ware is characterised by a medium-chaff temper, a medium to light grey tone, and burnished surfaces.⁶⁸ The majority of Grey Burnished Ware vessels in the Early Mittani assemblage are carinated bowls with unaccentuated rims (Pl. 12: 5–6),⁶⁹ which typologically correspond to bowls of chaff-tempered ware (see above).

100 Early Mittani Red-edged Ware, characterised by a horizontal band painted in red colour on the inside, outside or the top of a bowl’s rim,⁷⁰ is very rare at Muqable. Typologically, however, early Red-edged Ware seems to be more varied than Red-edged Ware of the Late Mittani period (see below). Examples include a conical bowl with a blunt rim, painted on the top and the inside (Pl. 12: 7); a carinated bowl with an unaccentuated rim, painted on the top and the outside (Pl. 12: 8);⁷¹ and a carinated bowl with a very short upper wall and a rim that is thickened on the outside (Pl. 12: 9).

101 The assemblage comprises a significant quantity of Transitional Khabur Ware with painted decorations, mostly horizontal stripes. The paint colour ranges from red to brown and black. Sherds of this ware are mostly chaff-tempered, sometimes featuring a slightly smoothed surface. While the majority of Early Mittani Transitional Khabur Ware consists of closed vessel forms, open forms are also attested. These include a carinated bowl with an unaccentuated rim, featuring radial lines painted in brown colour (Pl. 13: 1).⁷² Another example is a carinated cup with an inclined upper wall and an unaccentuated rim, painted brown on the top of its rim and the outside (Pl. 13: 2). In terms of vessel shape and the placement of the paint, the cup closely resembles a red-edged bowl discussed earlier (Pl. 12: 8).

64 Cf. Kurd Qaburstan (Schwartz et al. 2017, Fig. 28.11–15).

65 Cf. Bassetki Phase A9 (Arnhold 2021, Pl. 8.16), Kurd Qaburstan (Schwartz et al. 2017, Fig. 30.2).

66 Cf. Kurd Qaburstan (Schwartz et al. 2017, Fig. 30.10, 12).

67 Cf. Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1995, Taf. 28 a), Kurd Qaburstan (Schwartz et al. 2017, Fig. 30.1, 4–5). For the definition of Incised Ware of Mittani pottery, see Pfälzner 2007, 240, 246; Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

68 See also Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

69 Cf. Bassetki Phase A9 (Arnhold 2021, Pl. 8.11), Tell Brak HH Level 5b (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 188.162).

70 As defined in Pfälzner 2007, 242; see also Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

71 Cf. Tell al-Rimah Level A 2c–3 (Postgate et al. 1997, Pl. 34.121).

72 A nearly identical bowl, but without paint on its rim, was found in the Early Mittani Phase A10 of Bassetki (Arnhold 2021, Pl. 8.6).



Fig. 33: Nuzi Ware beaker with stippled motifs, and overturning waves from Phase H 13 (MUC22A-i0287)

الشكل ٣٣: كوب من فخار نوزي عليه زخارف نقطية وموجات مقلوبة من المرحلة H 13 (MUC22A-i0287)

33

102 As for closed vessel forms, pots with hammer-headed or oblique rims are very common (Pl. 13: 3–5).⁷³ Typically, the paint on their rims is restricted to the outer edge. Shouldered pots with vertical necks and unaccentuated, slightly pointed, or rounded rims are another very common type of Transitional Khabur Ware (Pl. 13: 6–8).⁷⁴ Painted ‘Grain Measures’ in the Early Mittani usually feature a decoration of horizontal stripes (Pl. 14: 1–2).⁷⁵

103 The pottery assemblage also comprises Dark on Buff Animal Ornamented Ware, which is considered one of the most typical wares of the Early Mittani period.⁷⁶ This pottery is characterised by zoomorphic motifs painted in dark brown or black colour on a buff background. Most of the examples found in Early Mittani levels at Muqable consist of small sherds, one of which features a crouching bird with two long tail feathers (Fig. 35).⁷⁷

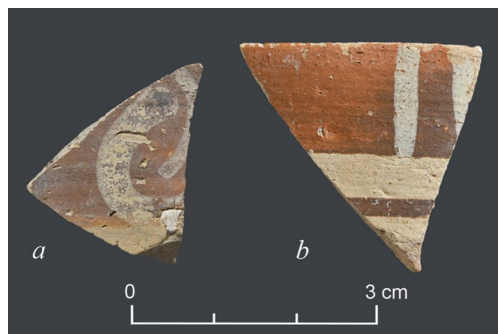
73 Cf. Tell Brak HH Level 5 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 193.309).

74 Cf. Tell Brak HH Level 4 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 192.280).

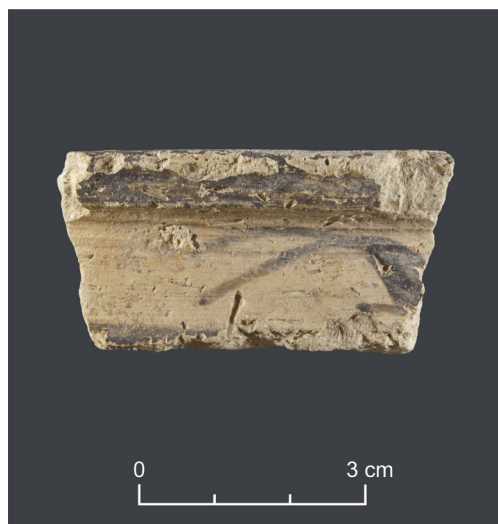
75 Cf. Tell Brak HH Level 4 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 191.257–258).

76 Pfälzner 2007, 240; see also Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

77 Cf. Tell Brak HH Levels 4–5 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 201.465, 471).



34



35

Fig. 34: Proto-Nuzi Ware from Phase H 13 and H 12 (a: MUC22A-i0408; b: MUC22A-i0174)

الشكل ٣٤: نمط فخّار نوزي الأول من المرحلتين H 13 و MUC22A-i0408 :a) H 12 (MUC22A-i0174 :b)

Fig. 35: Fragment of Dark on Buff Animal-Ornamented Ware with tail feathers of a crouching bird from Phase H 10c (MUC22A-i0356)

الشكل ٣٥: كسرة فخّارية مزخرفة بزخارف حيوانية داكنة اللون على خلفية فاتحة، ويمكن ملاحظة رسم لريش ذيل طائر جاثم من المرحلة H 10c (MUC22A-i0356)

104

Of particular interest is a fragment of a large jar with a hammer-headed rim which is painted with both figural and zoomorphic motifs (Fig. 36). These motifs, including a phallic male figure, bovines, and a crab, are arranged in at least three horizontal panels on the jar's body. Its rim is painted with stippled triangles. Individual pieces of this jar were found in different levels, the oldest of which is attributed to Phase H 10e.⁷⁸ Since Phase H 10e is not associated with architecture (see above, Phase H 10), and the jar had already been broken in this phase, it is plausible to assume that it originates from Phase H 11. Similarly shaped jars painted with geometric and zoomorphic motifs, among which one that is painted with two humans,⁷⁹ come from mixed Level 4/5 contexts at Tell Brak Area HH.⁸⁰

105

Fine, mineral-tempered wares are represented mainly by beakers. Undecorated beakers have vertical walls and knob bases, which are usually concave at the bottom (Pl. 14: 3–5). Beakers can also be painted with thin horizontal stripes in dark brown or black colour, and thus belong to Younger Khabur Ware. Both high beakers with vertical walls (Pl. 14: 6–7)⁸¹ and shouldered beakers with high or short necks (Pl. 14: 8–13) were found.⁸²

106

In addition, the assemblage comprises several sherds of Nuzi Ware with a white or cream decoration painted on bands of red, brown, or black colour. One example features a guilloche and a stippled zigzag band on black panels (Fig. 37 c), while another is painted with rows of parallel bows on brown bands (Fig. 37 b, Pl. 14:14).⁸³ A Nuzi Ware sherd features a crouching bird with two long tail feathers (Fig. 37 a).⁸⁴ This sherd was retrieved from the stone foundations of the Late Mittani 'Younger Temple' (Phase H 9d) but is attributed to the Early Mittani period based on its style.

107

The Early Mittani assemblage includes only two examples of Proto-Nuzi Ware. One of these is a fragment of a pot with an everted rim which was found in Phase H 11. Its rim is painted red-brown, with two irregular cream-coloured stripes painted on it. The outer surface of the pot features a thin horizontal band in red-brown, below which there is a broad band in the same colour. A row of standing triangles was painted in cream colour on this broader band (Pl. 14: 15).

Phases H 9 to H 6: pottery of the Late Mittani period (MMT IB)

108

Pottery of the Late Mittani period derives from Phases H 9 to H 6. Phases H 9 to H 7 yielded a substantial amount of pottery, whereas Phase H 6 produced only few sherds. The assemblage includes different wares, with Undecorated Chaff-tempered Ware being prevalent. This ware often has a slightly smoothed or even burnished surface. Concerning the shapes of Undecorated Chaff-tempered Ware, shallow bowls are prominently represented. They are often burnished on the inside. The Late Mittani assemblage is characterised by a prevalence of both conical and carinated bowls.

78 Other fragments of this jar were found in contexts of Phases H 8a, H 9a, H 9b and H 9c. One sherd each was retrieved from a mixed Modern/Late Ottoman context (Phases H 1–3) and a Middle Assyrian context (Phase H 5), respectively.

79 Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 200.456.

80 Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 200.455–457.

81 Cf. Tell Brak HH Level 4 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 194.333), Level 5b (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 194.332); Kurd Qaburstan (Schwartz et al. 2017, Fig. 30.16–17).

82 Cf. Tell Brak HH Level 4 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 195.382), Level 5 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 195.352–353).

83 Cf. Tell Brak HH Level 4 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 197.427).

84 Cf. Tell Brak HH Level 5 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 199.445).



Fig. 36: Fragment of a large jar of Dark on Buff Animal-Ornamented Ware with figural and zoomorphic motifs from Phase H 10d (MUC19A-i0391+)

الشكل ٣٦: كسر فخارية من جرة كبيرة مزخرفة بزخارف حيوانية داكنة اللون على خلفية فاتحة مع مجموعة من الأشكال التصويرية والحيوانية من المرحلة H 10d (MUC19A-i0391+)

36

Conical bowls mostly have unaccentuated rims (Pl. 15: 1–5),⁸⁵ but rims which are internally thickened (Pl. 15: 6)⁸⁶ or vertically flattened also occur (Pl. 15: 7).⁸⁷ Carinated bowls often have relatively steep, sometimes nearly vertical, upper walls and either unaccentuated rims (Pl. 15: 8–9)⁸⁸ or rims that are externally thickened (Pl. 16: 1–2).⁸⁹ Rounded bowls are also present, often featuring unaccentuated rims and one or two horizontally incised grooves in the upper part of their walls (Pl. 16: 3–4).⁹⁰ Rounded bowls with incurving walls and rounded rims are less frequent (Pl. 16: 5–6).⁹¹

¹⁰⁹ Pots can have flat-topped, externally thickened or oblique rims (Pl. 16: 7–9).⁹² Bottles have rounded, sometimes slightly flaring, rims (Pl. 16: 10)⁹³ or rims that are slightly concave on the outside (Pl. 16: 11–12).⁹⁴ Large open jars typically have square, sometimes oblique, rims (Pl. 17: 1–2).⁹⁵ Generally, ring bases are prevalent in this ware. Some fragments of ‘piecrust’ pot-stands have been recorded (Pl. 17: 3). However, compared to previous periods, they are noticeably rare.

⁸⁵ Cf. Kemune Phase A 4b (Beutelschies 2019, Pl. 1.1–4), Bassetki Phases A8–A9 (Arnhold 2021, 39. Pl. 8.1–2), Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1995, Taf. 1 e).

⁸⁶ Cf. Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1995, Taf. 2 b–c), Tell Brak HH Level 4 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 186.111).

⁸⁷ Cf. Kemune Phase A 4b (Beutelschies 2019, Pl. 1.5–6).

⁸⁸ Cf. Kemune Phase A 4b (Beutelschies 2019, Pl. 1.15), Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1995, Taf. 9 b, f–g, Taf. 10 a).

⁸⁹ Cf. Kemune Phase A 4b (Beutelschies 2019, Pl. 1.16), Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1995, Taf. 11 e, Taf. 14 d).

⁹⁰ Cf. Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1995, Taf. 17 c).

⁹¹ Cf. Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1995, Taf. 17 d, Taf. 18 e).

⁹² Cf. Bassetki Phase A9 (Arnhold 2021, Pl. 9.33), Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1995, Taf. 49 e).

⁹³ Cf. Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1995, Taf. 52 a–b).

⁹⁴ Cf. Kemune Phase A 4b (Beutelschies 2019, Pl. 2.39–40); for further examples of this type, which is referred to as ‘Kemune jar’, see Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

⁹⁵ Cf. Kemune Phase A 4b (Beutelschies 2019, Pl. 2.19–20), Bassetki Phase A8 (Arnhold 2021, Pl. 9.37), Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1995, Taf. 28 b, Taf. 30 b, d).



37

Fig. 37: Nuzi Ware from Phases H9/H 10, H 10e and H 10b (a: MUC22A-i0324; b: MUC22A-i0129; c: MUC22A-i0158)

الشكل ٣٧: فخار نوزي من المراحل H 10e, H 10 و H 9. (a: MUC22A-i0408; b: MUC22A-i0174; c: MUC22A-i0174)

110 Red-edged Ware, a hallmark of Late Mittani pottery,⁹⁶ is well-attested in the assemblage from Muqable. The majority of Red-edged Bowls are shallow and conical, featuring red paint on the inside and top of their rims. The colour typically ranges from red to red-brown, although in some instances it is brown. Red-edged Bowls have unaccentuated or rounded rims (Pl. 17: 4–5)⁹⁷ or slightly tapering walls and externally slightly thickened rims (Pl. 17: 6).

111 The assemblage also contains Cooking Ware and Red-slipped Ware, although in smaller proportions. Red-slipped Ware is characterised by a red, sometimes light brown to orange, polished slip on the outside (Fig. 38). Often, sherds of this ware are polished or burnished. The clay composition varies from rather fine and mineral-tempered to medium chaff-tempered.⁹⁸ While Red-slipped Ware is mostly represented by body sherds, there is an exception in the form of a thin-walled bottle (Pl. 18: 1).

112 Undecorated Mineral-tempered Ware is well-attested in the Late Mittani assemblage. The latter comprises mostly fragments of footed beakers with thin, nearly vertical walls (Pl. 18: 2–6).⁹⁹ In contrast, Younger Khabur Ware is very rare. While there is one nearly complete footed beaker with horizontally painted stripes in a dark colour (see above Fig. 7 a, Pl. 18: 7),¹⁰⁰ most fragments of this ware are rather small (Pl. 18: 8). A very unusual form of Younger Khabur Ware is represented by a well-preserved cylindrical beaker with a very low carination, formally reminiscent of a ‘Grain Measure’. The beaker is painted with horizontal stripes in dark brown colour (see above Fig. 7 b, Pl. 18: 9).

113 The assemblage also includes fragments of shouldered beakers with high, vertical necks and horizontal stripes; however, due to their fragmentation, they are considered residual, likely originating from Early or Initial Mittani levels.

⁹⁶ Pfälzner 2007, 246; see also Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

⁹⁷ Cf. Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1995, Taf. 1 d, f), Tell Brak HH Level 2 (Oates et al. 1997, Fig. 187.142).

⁹⁸ Pfälzner 2007, 247, defines Red-slipped Ware as a fine, mineral-tempered ware; for an updated definition, see Pfälzner – Puljiz in print.

⁹⁹ Cf. Kemune Phase A 4b (Beutelschies 2019, Pl. 2.31–33.35), Bassetki Phase A9 (Arnhold 2021, Pl. 8.22–23), Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1995, Taf. 35 e, g, j, Taf. 64 j–k).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Bassetki Phase A8 (Arnhold 2021, Pl. 9.25), Tell Bderi (Pfälzner 1995, Taf. 35 b, f).



38

114 The assemblage comprises several sherds of Nuzi Ware which mostly feature geometric decorations. One example, the lower half of a beaker with a very delicate knob base, is painted with vertical white lines and a crude herringbone-like pattern on bands of reddish-brown colour (Figs. 11. 19. 39). However, most examples of Nuzi Ware in the Late Mittani assemblage are very small sherds. Therefore, it cannot be excluded that they are at least partly residual.

Fig. 38: Body sherds of Red-slipped Ware from Phase H 9b (MUC22A-q0167)

الشكل ٣٨: كسائر من جسم وعاء من
الفخار الأحمر اللامع من المرحلة H 9b
(MUC22A-q0167)

Absolute chronology of Phases H 9 to H 16

115 In order to obtain information on the absolute dating of the Middle Bronze Age to Mittani period sequence at Muqable, samples of short-lived organic materials, i.e., charred grains and legume seeds, were taken for ^{14}C analysis. In total, thirteen samples from Phases H 9 to H 16 were analysed (Fig. 40). The samples were not obtained via flotation, but instead were collected individually during the excavation. With three exceptions (see below), only grains and seeds that were found on floors were chosen for radiocarbon dating to avoid residual material. So far, no samples from Phases H 6 to H 8 were analysed.

116 In the following, the results of the radiocarbon analyses are presented starting with the oldest level of the sequence, i.e., Phase H 16. A first and preliminary attempt at establishing the absolute chronology of the sequence is offered at the end of this paragraph.

117 For the Middle Bronze Age, ^{14}C determinations were carried out on two samples from Phase H 16. These were retrieved from two different rooms of the 'Stone Threshold Building', which were in all likelihood used simultaneously during Phase H 16. The first sample (MUC22A-q0960), found in an ashy deposit on the baked brick floor of Room CK, produced a date of 2013–1782 calBC (cal 2-sigma). The second sample (MUC22A-q1021), found on the floor of Room CI, has a shorter time range of 1883–1746 calBC (cal 2-sigma). Assuming that both rooms were used simultaneously during Phase H 16, an absolute date of this phase to the 19th century or the first half of the 18th century BC would be most plausible.



39

Fig. 39: Fragment of a Nuzi Ware beaker with linear decoration from Phase H 9a (MUC21A-i0397)

الشكل ٣٩: كسرة من كوب من نمط نوزي
بزخارف على شكل خطوط من المرحلة
(MUC21A-i0397) H 9a

118 For the succeeding Late Middle Bronze Age, two samples from Phase H 15 were analysed. One sample (MUC22A-q0926) was collected from a younger floor of Room CK which superimposed the earlier, Phase H 16 floor. However, the sample yielded a date of 2576–2471 calBC (cal 2-sigma) clearly demonstrating that it is residual. While this result is not useful for establishing the absolute chronology of the Middle to Late Bronze Age sequence, its date to the mid-third millennium BC suggests that Muqable might have been settled during the Early Middle-Tigridian III period,¹⁰¹ which has, so far, not been stratigraphically attested at the site. The second sample (MUC22A-q1474) from Phase H 15 was recovered from an accumulation of black ash covering the floor of Area CN. The deposit contained numerous charred seeds one of which was analysed. It produced a date of 1619–1517 calBC (cal 2-sigma). For Phase H 14 no sample was available due to the limited extent to which it was excavated.

119 For the earliest phase of the Initial Mittani period, Phase H 13, two samples were analysed. The first (MUC22A-q0309), which was retrieved from a thin ashy layer covering the floor of Room EA, yielded a date of 1619–1518 calBC (cal 2-sigma). The second sample (MUC22A-q0986), found on the floor of outside area EE, provided

a very similar date of 1613–1510 calBC (cal 2-sigma). Curiously, these dates correspond almost exactly to the date given by the second Phase H 15 sample. This can be taken as an indication that the Initial Mittani period follows the Late Middle Bronze Age closely in time.

120 As for Phase H 12, two samples were analysed, one for each subphase. The first sample (MUC22A-q1473) was found in a layer of medium grey ash, which comprised numerous charred grains and covered the floor of Phase H 12b. The ash layer was superimposed by the floor of Phase H 12a from which the second sample (MUC22A-q1472) was recovered. The latter was overlaid by a layer of soft and dark brown soil. Both samples produced almost exactly the same time ranges: 1504–1429 calBC (cal 2-sigma) for the first sample, and 1505–1428 calBC (cal 2-sigma) for the second.

121 The first phase of the Early Mittani period, Phase H 11, yielded no organic material from contexts that would have been suitable for ¹⁴C analysis.

122 For Phase H 10, three samples from different subphases were analysed. The first sample (MUC22A-q0315) was found embedded in a thick layer of grey soil with which the ruin of Phase H 11 was filled in (Phase H 10e). This subphase predates the construction of the ‘Older Temple’ but may be connected to the preparation of the building ground. The sample yielded a date of 1540–1444 calBC (cal 2-sigma). Although it is theoretically possible that the analysed seed is residual, as it was not found on a floor, its time range fits the date provided by the second sample (MUC22A-q1471) from the ‘Older Temple’s’ earliest floor (Phase H 10c). This produced a time range of 1506–1431 calBC (cal 2-sigma). The third sample (MUC22A-q0431), which was retrieved from the temple’s last floor (Phase H 10a), provided a slightly later time range of 1414–1280 calBC (cal 2-sigma). Taken together, the samples from Phase H 10c and H 10a reflect the extended period of usage of the ‘Older Temple’, which might have started around, or perhaps slightly earlier than, the mid-15th century BC.

123 For the succeeding Late Mittani period, two samples from Phase H 9 were analysed. The first sample (MUC22A-q0184) was recovered not from a floor but from a layer of reddish soil spread out beneath the mudbrick walls of the ‘Younger Temple’

101 For the recently introduced Early Middle-Tigridian periodisation, see the contribution of P. Pfälzner in Pfälzner – Qasim 2021, 61–64.

Period of context	Phase	Sample no.	Lab no.	14C age [yr BP]	+/-	$\delta^{13}C$ AMS [‰]	C [%]	calBC 1-sigma	calBC 2-sigma	calBC sigma ranges	Taxon
Late Mittani period	H 9a	MUC22A-q1469	MAMS-61105	3188	20	-23,5	61.1	calBC 1496–1436	calBC 1501–1422	calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1496–1476 (33.2 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1458–1436 (35.1 %)	cf. Lens culinaris, cf. Pistacio sp.
	H 9b	MUC22A-q0184	MAMS-61106	3166	20	-21,7	60.5	calBC 1492–1419	calBC 1498–1410	calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1492–1481 (14.0 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1451–1419 (54.3 %)	Lens culinaris fragment
Early Mittani period	H 10a1	MUC22A-q0431	MAMS-61107	3080	20	-27,8	61.3	calBC 1402–1301	calBC 1414–1280	calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1402–1375 (22.8 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1351–1301 (45.4 %)	Hordeum vulgare
	H 10c	MUC22A-q1471	MAMS-61108	3207	20	-26,6	62.2	calBC 1501–1448	calBC 1506–1431		Hordeum vulgare
	H 10e	MUC22A-q0315	MAMS-61109	3245	21	-29,1	59.8	calBC 1532–1461	calBC 1540–1444	calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1532–1497 (53.9 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1474–1461 (14.3 %)	cf. Pisum sativum
Initial Mittani period	H 12a	MUC22A-q1472	MAMS-61110	3201	21	-25,7	64.6	calBC 1498–1447	calBC 1505–1428		Hordeum vulgare
	H 12b	MUC22A-q1473	MAMS-61111	3199	20	-23	50.3	calBC 1498–1445	calBC 1504–1429	calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1498–1471 (39.2 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1465–1445 (29.1 %)	Hordeum vulgare, cerealia fragment
	H 13	MUC22A-q0309	MAMS-61117	3308	19	-20	61.5	calBC 1611–1536	calBC 1619–1518	calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1611–1574 (40.8 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1564–1536 (27.5 %)	Lathyrus sativus
Late Middle Bronze Age	H 13	MUC22A-q0986	MAMS-61112	3292	20	-21,4	59.0	calBC 1609–1517	calBC 1613–1510	calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1609–1577 (31.4 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1561–1554 (5.8 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1546–1517 (31.0 %)	Hordeum vulgare
	H 15	MUC22A-q1474	MAMS-61118	3306	20	-23,2	60.2	calBC 1611–1536	calBC 1619–1517	calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1611–1575 (41.3 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1564–1536 (27.0 %)	Pisum sativum, cerealia fragment
	H 15	MUC22A-q0926	MAMS-61115	4016	21	-24	61.3	calBC 2571–2476	calBC 2576–2471	calBC (cal 1-sigma) 2571–2556 (16.5 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 2543–2515 (31.8 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 2502–2488 (14.8 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 2482–2476 (5.2 %)	Hordeum vulgare
	H 16	MUC22A-q1021	MAMS-61114	3488	20	-20,1	60.6	calBC 1879–1752	calBC 1883–1746	calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1879–1862 (11.7 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1856–1840 (11.0 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1826–1766 (42.2 %) calBC (cal 1-sigma) 1758–1752 (3.4 %)	Hordeum vulgare (2 fragments)
Middle Bronze Age	H 16	MUC22A-q0960	MAMS-61116	3565	20	-21,4	61.5	calBC 1942–1887	calBC 2013–1782	calBC (cal 2-sigma) 2013–2000 (2.3 %) calBC (cal 2-sigma) 1975–1877 (86.4 %) calBC (cal 2-sigma) 1842–1824 (5.2 %) calBC (cal 2-sigma) 1791–1782 (1.5 %)	Hordeum vulgare

40

الشكل ٤٠: بيانات الكربون المشع للمراحل H 9 إلى H 16 (تقمت المعايرة وفقاً ل: Bronk Ramsey (2020); r:5; Atmospheric data from Reimer et al. [2020])

(Phase H 9b). It yielded a date of 1498–1410 calBC (cal 2-sigma). Strikingly, this time range has an extremely short overlap with the sample retrieved from Phase H 10a. Assuming the sample from Phase H 9b is not residual, this would suggest that the transition from the Early to the Late Mittani period occurred around 1410 BC. The close chronological relationship between Phases H 10 and H 9 is further supported by the continued use of the ‘Older Temple’s’ betyl in the ‘Younger Temple’.

124 The second Late Mittani period sample (MUC22A-q1469) originates from Room BC of the ‘Younger Temple’ (Phase H 9a), where it was found in a layer of soil superimposing the floor. The sample provided a time range of 1501–1422 calBC (cal 2-sigma) which predates the date given for the Phase H 10a sample. In fact, there is no temporal overlap between the time ranges of the Phase H 10a and the Phase H 9a sample. Therefore, it can be assumed that the sample from Phase H 9a is residual, perhaps originating from a disintegrated mudbrick.

125 In conclusion, the majority of samples taken for ¹⁴C analysis provided dates which can be used to establish the absolute chronology of the Middle to Late Bronze Age sequence at Muqable. The results for Phase H 16 indicate that the Stone Threshold Building can be dated to the 19th to 18th century BC, corresponding to the Middle Bronze Age I to IIA.¹⁰²

126 As for the results from Phases H 15 to H 9b, the time ranges cover a relatively short period of approximately 200 years, from the late 17th to the late 15th century BC. With a presumed duration of 30 to 50 years per phase, this results in an extremely dense, and likely almost uninterrupted, occupational sequence. This is supported by the gradual development of the pottery from these phases. In order to accommodate all relevant phases within this time span, it is assumed that the Late Middle Bronze Age at Muqable ended in the early 16th century BC. While Phase H 15 probably ended shortly before 1600 BC, Phase H 14 presumably continued into the first decades of the 16th century BC. It was followed by the Initial Mittani period (Phases H 13–H 12), which probably ended around 1500 BC. In all likelihood, this period was immediately succeeded by the Early Mittani period (Phases H 11–H 10). The abandonment of the ‘Older Temple’ around 1410 BC marked the end of Phase H 10 and initiated the transition to the Late Mittani period (Phase H 9).

127 Taking into consideration that the Late Mittani period (Phases H 9–H 6) is represented by two architectural levels (H 9, H 6) and one extended period of abandonment, attested by three successive tell surfaces (Phase H 7), it most plausibly lasted at least a century, perhaps longer. Consequently, it can be assumed that the Late Mittani period at Muqable ended around 1300 BC or during the first decades of the 13th century BC. A short hiatus might have occurred before the Middle Assyrian agricultural complex (Phase H 5) was erected in the second half of the 13th century BC.¹⁰³

128 In the future, it is planned to have more samples analysed, especially from Phases H 15, H 10, H 9, H 7, and H 6. Besides, it is hoped that future excavations at Muqable will allow us to collect suitable sampling material also from Phases H 14 and H 11. Bayesian statistics have proven very useful in the analysis of radiocarbon results from other sites¹⁰⁴ and will be employed on the material from Muqable as well. In this way, it will hopefully be possible to refine the absolute chronology of the Middle Bronze Age to Mittani period sequence of Muqable even more closely.

102 A similar time frame was recently suggested for the Middle Bronze Age occupation at Kurd Qaburstan, see Webster et al. 2023, 13.

103 For the chronology of the Middle Assyrian building complex at Muqable, see Puljiz – Qasim 2020, 114–116.

104 E.g., Webster et al. 2023.

Conclusion

129 The excavations at Muqable provide a new perspective on the Mittani period and the transition from the Middle to the Late Bronze Age. Over the course of two seasons, an exceptionally long, nearly uninterrupted occupational sequence spanning the Middle Bronze Age and the Mittani period was uncovered at the site. This is the first time such a sequence was excavated in Northern Iraq. Thus, it represents an important addition to the Middle to Late Bronze Age sequences of Tell Brak¹⁰⁵ and Tell Barri¹⁰⁶ in Northeastern Syria. Excavations at Muqable yielded not only detailed information on the development of pottery, but also a sequence of ¹⁴C dates allowing for the first time to establish a radiocarbon-based chronology for second-millennium BC Northeastern Mesopotamia.¹⁰⁷

130 Moreover, the continued large-scale horizontal exposures at Muqable revealed two successive temples, dated to the Early and the Late Mittani period. Both temples were located on the top of the mound, making them highly visible from the surrounding plain. Although the temples were spacious, they were modestly equipped. Their main feature was the same large stone, probably a betyl, which remained in exactly the same position throughout the existence of the temples. The well-preserved ‘Younger Temple’ was surrounded by a ‘temenos’ wall and was accessible via two gate-like buildings on the western and southern slope, respectively.

131 Previous excavations at sites located in the area under Mittani control have revealed a number of temples. However, the temples of Muqable are the first and, as of now, only known Mittani period cult buildings in a non-urban space with no connected settlement. Thus, their discovery provides new insights into the function of second-millennium BC small, non-urban sites. In particular, it testifies to the existence of a hitherto unknown type of small sites during this period which can be classified as ‘extra-urban sanctuary’.

132 Interestingly, the religious function of Muqable did not continue to the Middle Assyrian period, when it became the seat of an agricultural domain (*dunnu*). The latter falls into a category of small sites which can be described as ‘functionally specialised site’. Hence, the archaeological investigations at Muqable have demonstrated that the function of a small, non-urban site can change substantially from one period to another.

133 The observed complexity of small sites has to be taken into consideration when interpreting results of archaeological surveys in Northern Mesopotamia and other regions. Small sites were evidently functionally diverse. Therefore, to refer to them as ‘rural settlements’, such as ‘villages’, ‘farmsteads’ or ‘hamlets’, implying that their former inhabitants engaged (predominantly) in agricultural activities, is clearly an oversimplification. When generally applied to settlement pattern analyses this may lead to a distorted picture of ancient societies. Consequently, a new approach is needed for regional studies. It is essential to move away from the ‘rural paradigm’ and instead adopt an approach that recognises the possibility of complex structures in the so-called ‘hinterland’, rather than assuming it was solely rural.

105 Oates et al. 1997.

106 The results have only been published to a limited extent so far, see, e.g., D’Agostino 2014; D’Agostino – Coppini 2014; Coppini 2022.

107 The excavations at Kurd Qaburstan, located in the Erbil plain, recently provided an important radiocarbon-based chronology for the Eastern Tigris region (Webster et al. 2023).

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die mittannzeitlichen Tempel und die Mittelbronze-Mittannzeit-Sequenz von Muqable

Ivana Puljiz

Bei den weiteren Ausgrabungen in Muqable (Region Kurdistan, Irak) wurde ein extra-urbanes Heiligtum der Mittanischen Zeit vollständig freigelegt. Es handelt sich um das bislang einzige bekannte Beispiel einer derartigen Anlage in einer mittanischen Kleinsiedlung. Der Tempel ist eingebunden in eine lange Stratigrafie und Keramiksequenz, die von der Spät-Mittanischen über die Früh-Mittanische bis hin zu einer hier neu definierten Initial-Mittanischen Periode führt, unter der mittelbronzezeitliche Schichten zutage kamen.

SCHLAGWORTE

Spätbronzezeit, Nordmesopotamien, Mitteltigris-Region, Keramik, ländlicher Raum

الخلاصة

المعابد الميتانية والتسلسل الزمني لعصر البرونز الوسيط وفترة ميتاني في مُقْبِلِه (موقوبلي) إيفانا بولجيز بالتعاون مع بيكس جمال الدين حسن

كشفت أعمال التنقيب الجديدة في مُقْبِلِه (موقوبلي) (إقليم كردستان العراق) عن المخطط الكامل لمعبد يعود لفترة ميتاني تمّ إنشاؤه خارج المنطقة الحضرية. وهو يُعتبر حتى الآن المثال الوحيد المعروف لمثل هذا المجمع في مستوطنة ميتانية صغيرة. ويُعتبر المعبد جزءاً لا يتجزأ من تسلسل فخ اري وطبقي طويل يمتدّ من فترة ميتاني المتأخرة مروراً بالمبكرة ووصولاً إلى فترة ميتاني أولية تمّ التعرف عليها هنا حديثاً، وتحتها تمّ الكشف عن طبقات تعود إلى عصر البرونز الوسيط.

الكلمات المفتاحية

عصر البرونز المتأخر . شمال بلاد الرافدين . منطقة حوض دجلة الأوسط . الفخار . المناطق الريفية

FIGURE CREDITS

Frontispiece: Overview of the Middle Bronze Age–Mittani sequence with Room CG of the ‘Stone Threshold Building’ in the foreground (view to the northeast). Photo: I. Puljiz

Fig. 1: photo: B. Glissmann

Fig. 2: photo: T. Milla

Fig. 3: Muqable-Project

Fig. 4: photo: I. Puljiz

Fig. 5: photo: I. Puljiz

Fig. 6: photo: I. Puljiz

Fig. 7: photos: E. Eriss

Fig. 8: drawings: N. Guedeau, N. Hamzeh, K. M. Puljiz; digitizing: N. Guedeau, T. Milla, S. Varma

Fig. 9: photo: I. Puljiz

Fig. 10: photo: I. Puljiz

Fig. 11: photo: I. Puljiz

Fig. 12: photo: I. Puljiz

Fig. 13: prepared by T. Milla

Fig. 14: photo: I. Puljiz

Fig. 15: photo: K. M. Puljiz

Fig. 16: drawing: N. Guedeau, T. Milla, K. M. Puljiz, S. Vitté; digitizing: T. Milla, S. Varma

Fig. 17: photo: I. Puljiz

Fig. 18: photo: I. Puljiz

Fig. 19: photo: E. Eriss

Fig. 20: drawing: N. Guedeau, T. Milla, K. M. Puljiz, S. Vitté; digitizing: T. Milla, S. Varma

Fig. 21: photo: E. Eriss

Fig. 22: drawing: K. M. Puljiz, S. Vitté; digitizing: T. Milla, S. Varma

Fig. 23: photo: I. Puljiz

Fig. 24: photo: I. Puljiz

Fig. 25: photo: I. Puljiz

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Fig. 36: photo: E. Eriss

Fig. 37: photos: E. Eriss

Fig. 38: photo: E. Eriss

Fig. 39: photo: E. Eriss

Fig. 40: Muqable-Project; data analysed at Curt-Engelhorn-Zentrum Archäometrie, Mannheim; taxon identification by Ö. Çizer, University of Tübingen

Pl. 1: Muqable-Project
Pl. 2: Muqable-Project
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Pl. 18: Muqable-Project

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METADATEN

Titel/*Title*: Die mitannzeitlichen Tempel und die
Mittelbronze-Mitannizeit-Sequenz von Muqable/
*The Mittani Temples and the Middle Bronze Age-
Mittani Sequence of Muqable*

Band/*Issue*: Zeitschrift für Orient-Archäologie 16

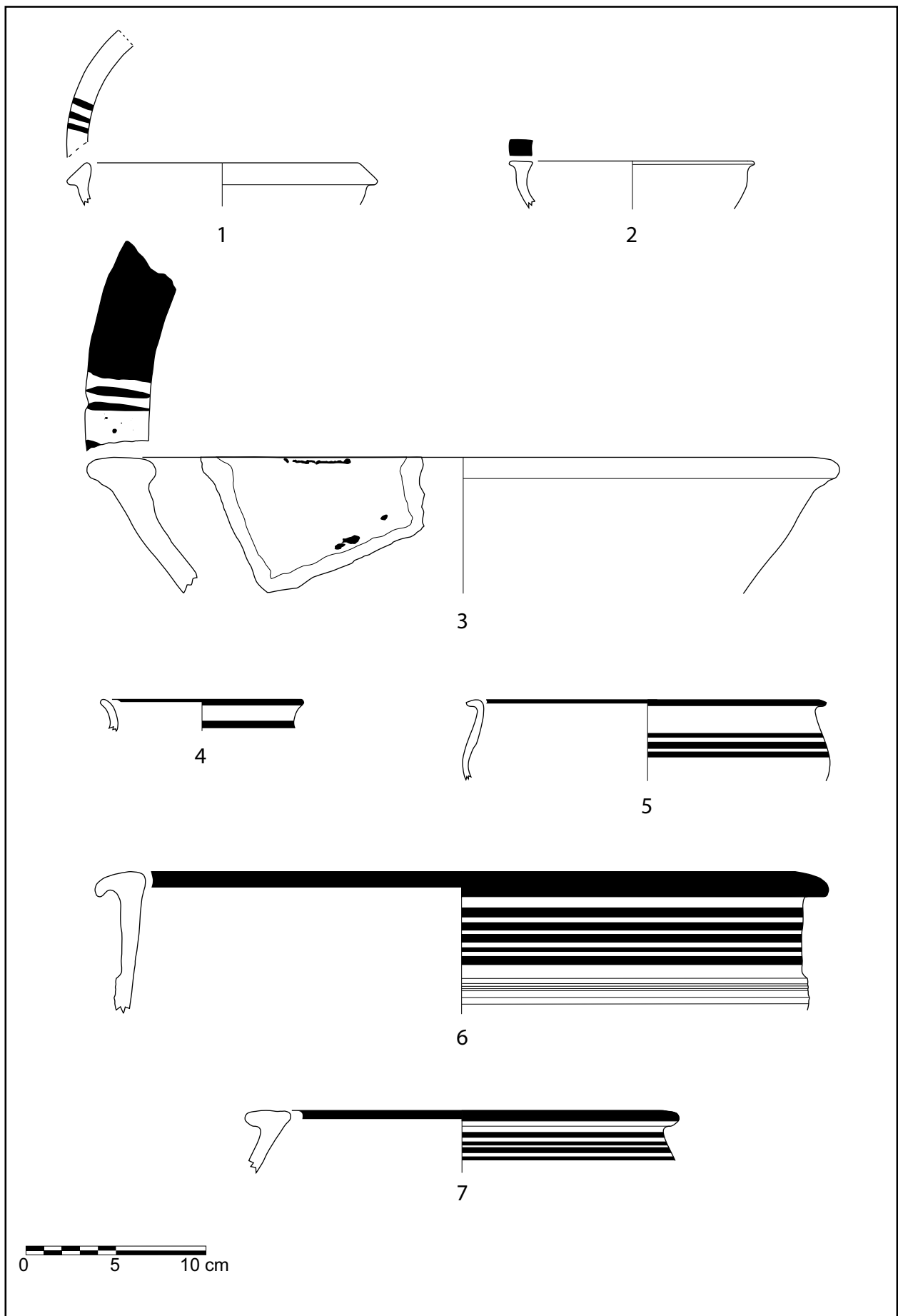
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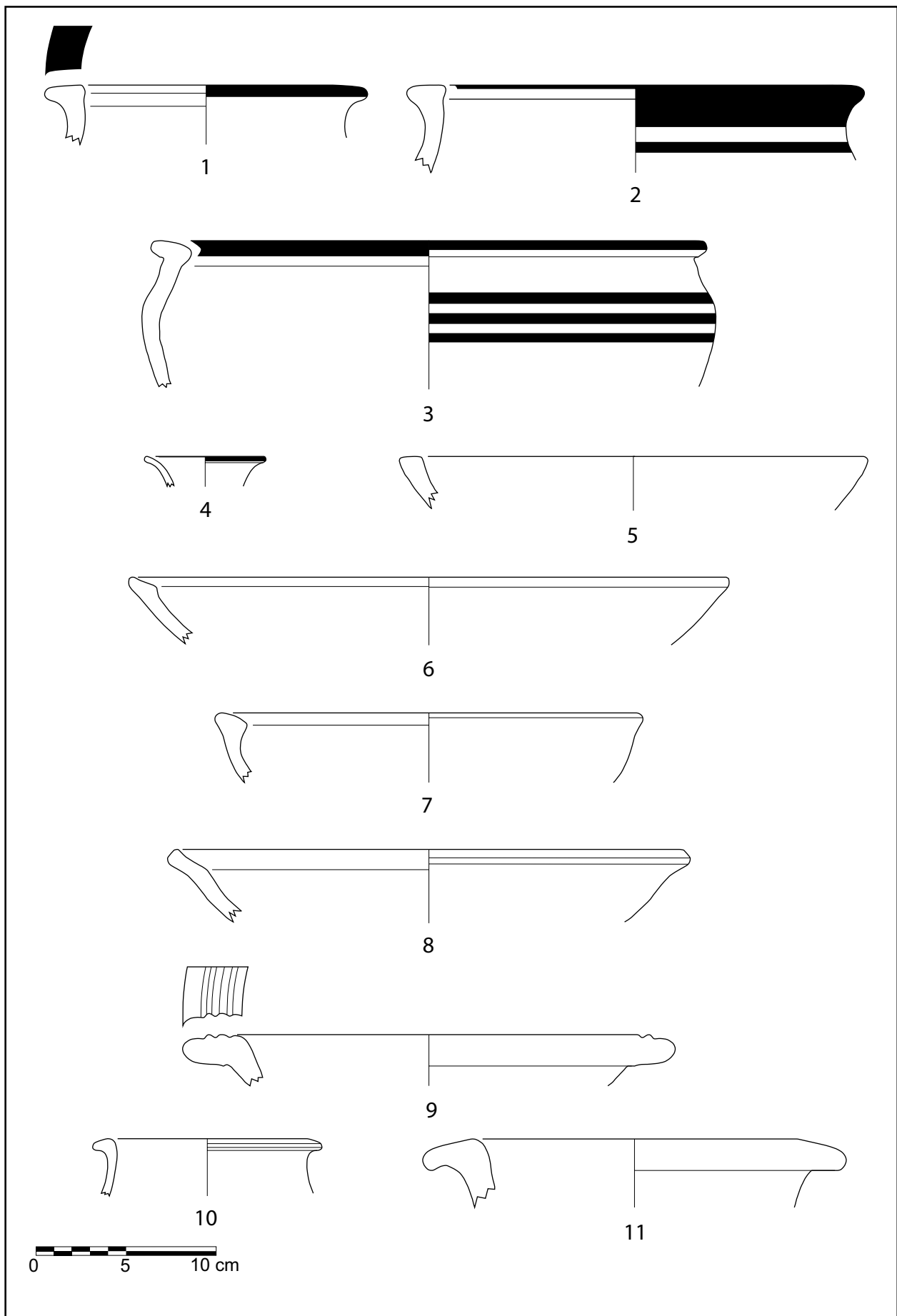
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Nordmesopotamien, Mitteltigris-Region, Keramik,
ländlicher Raum/*Late Bronze Age, Northern
Mesopotamia, Middle Tigris Region, pottery, rural
space*

Bibliographischer Datensatz/*Bibliographic
reference*: [https://zenon.dainst.org/
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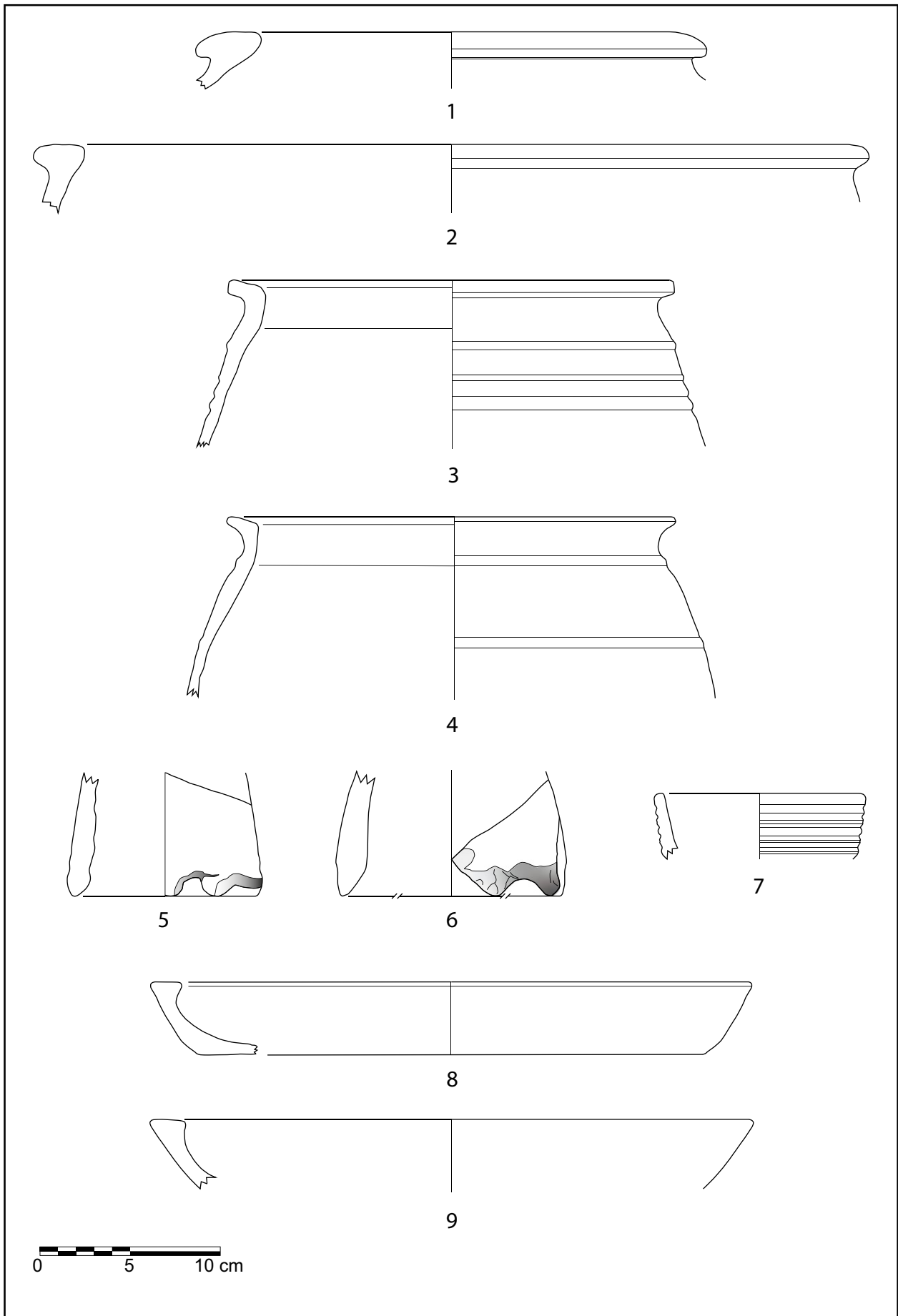
Pl. 1: Late Middle Bronze Age period pottery from Muqable

اللوحة ١: فخّار عصر البرونز الوسيط المتأخر المكتشف في مُقَبِّلَه (موقوبلى)



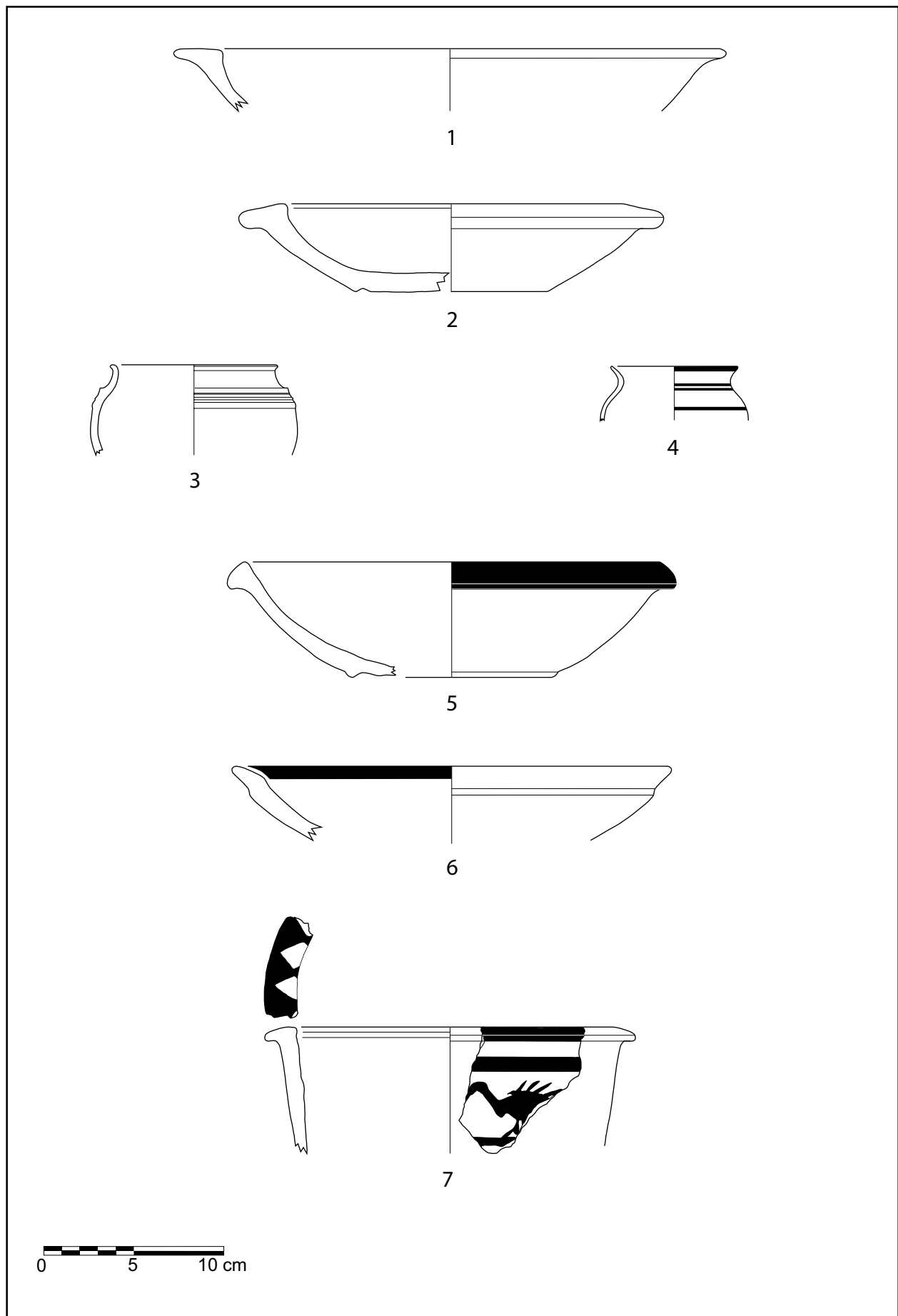
Pl. 2: Late Middle Bronze Age period pottery from Muqable

اللوحة ٢: فخّار عصر البرونز الوسيط المتأخّر المكتشف في مُقَبِّلَه (موقوبلى)



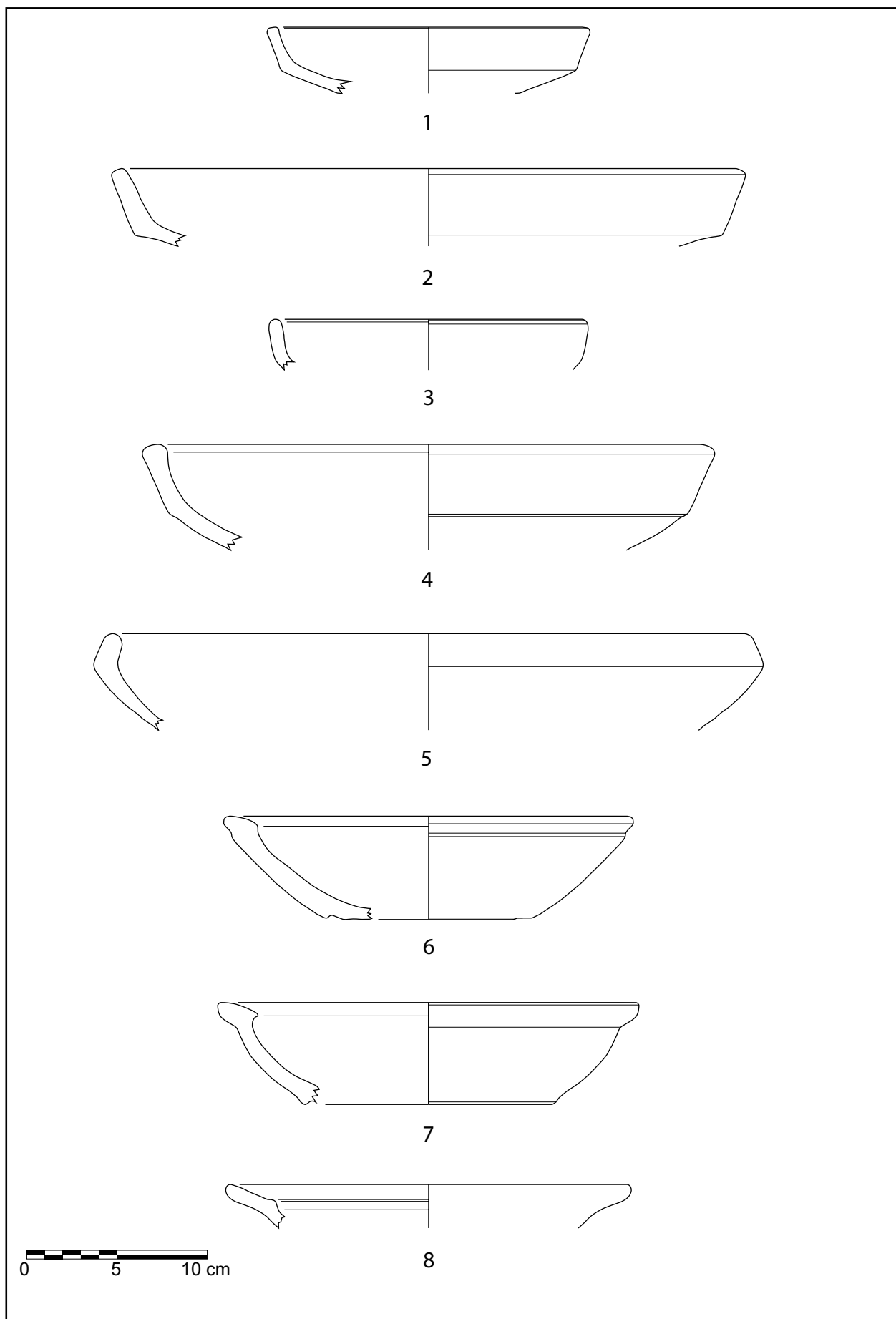
Pl. 3: Late Middle Bronze Age period pottery from Muqable

اللوحة ٣: فخّار عصر البرونز الوسيط المتأخّر المكتشف في مُقَبِلَه (موقوبلى)



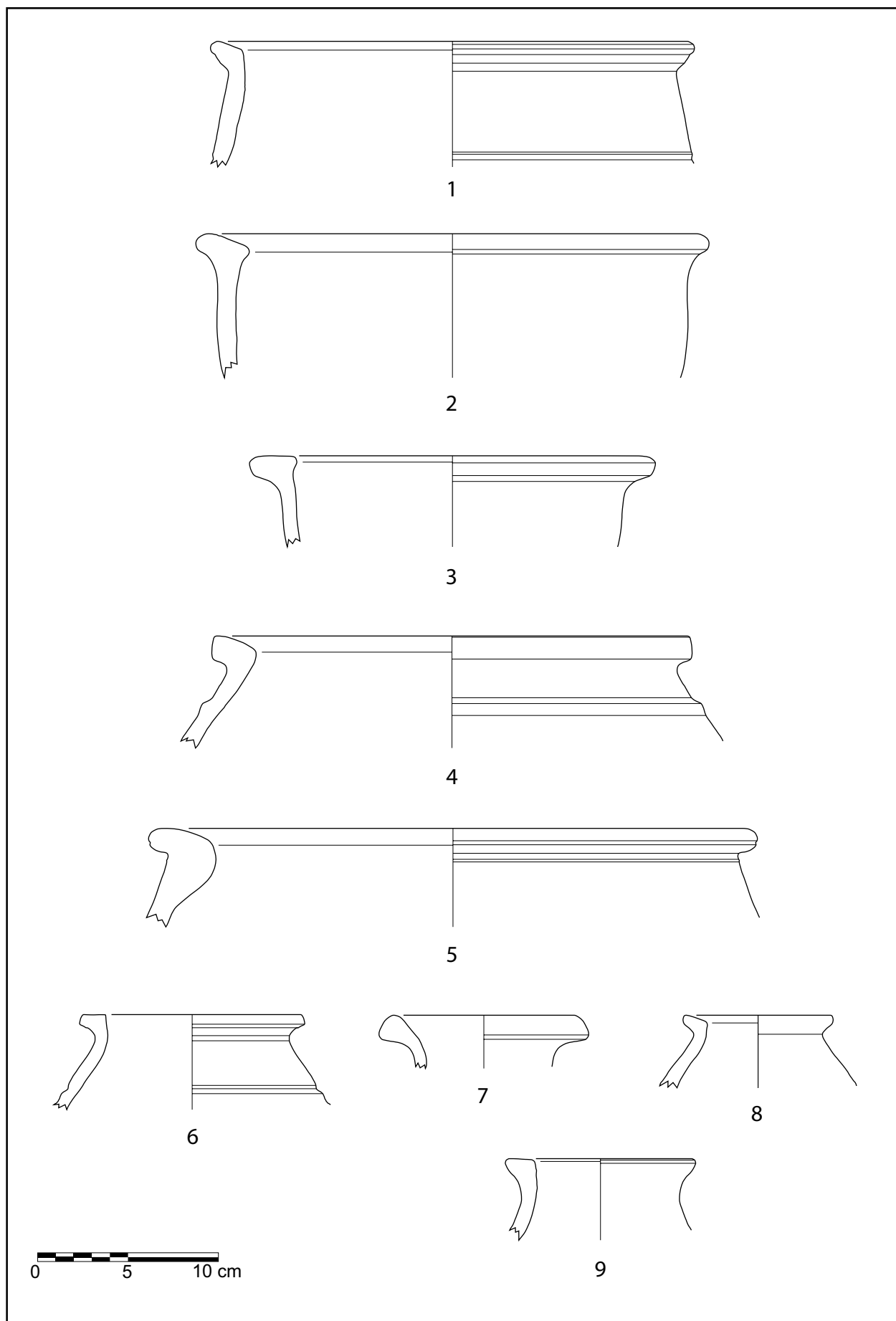
Pl. 4: Late Middle Bronze Age period pottery from Muqable

اللوحة ٤: فخّار عصر البرونز الوسيط المتأخر المكتشف في مُقَابِلَه (موقوبلى)



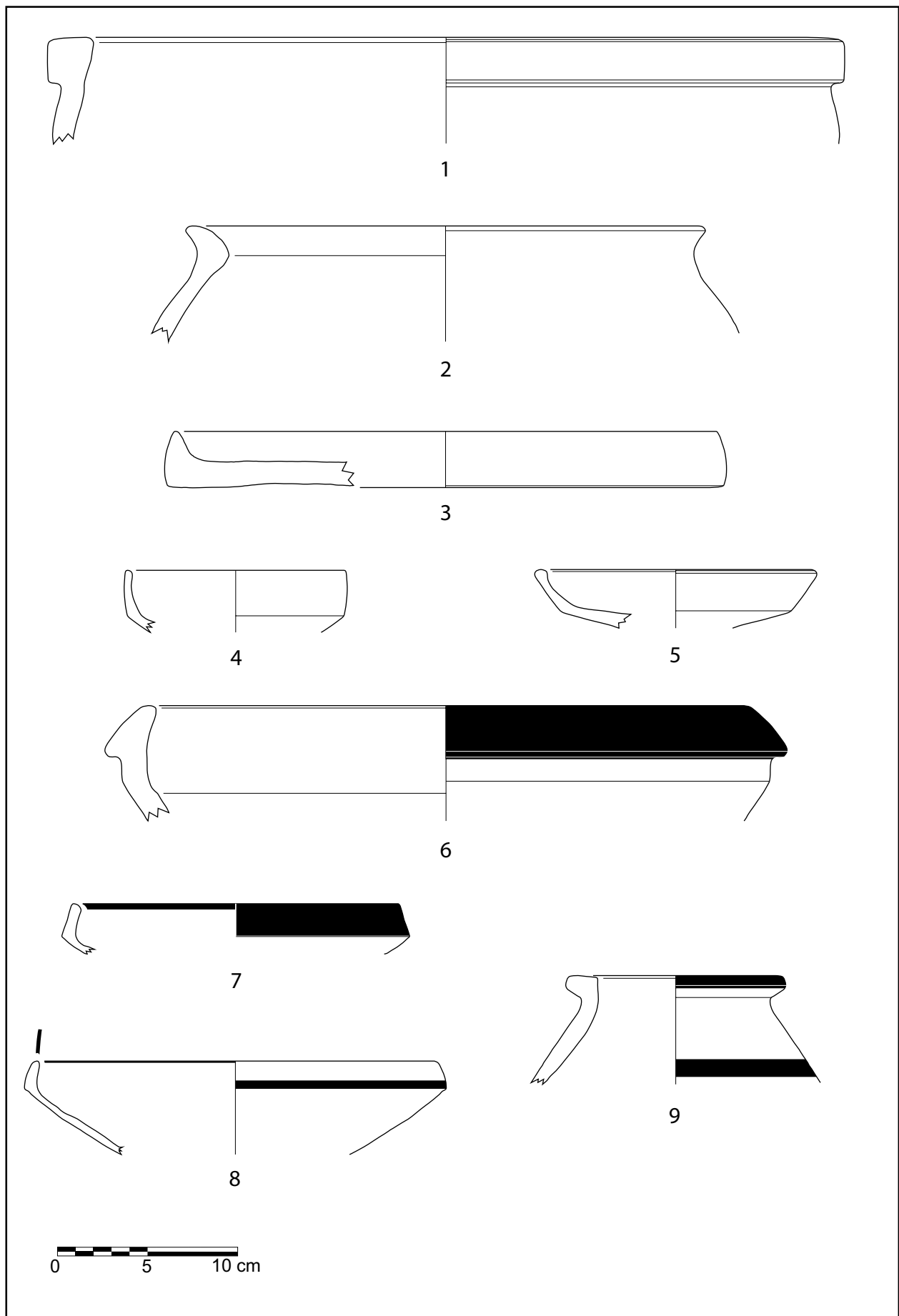
Pl. 5: Initial Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 13 and H 12)

اللوحة ٥: فخّار فترة ميتاني الأولى المكتشف في مُقْبِلِه (موقولبي) (المرحلتان H 13 و H 12)



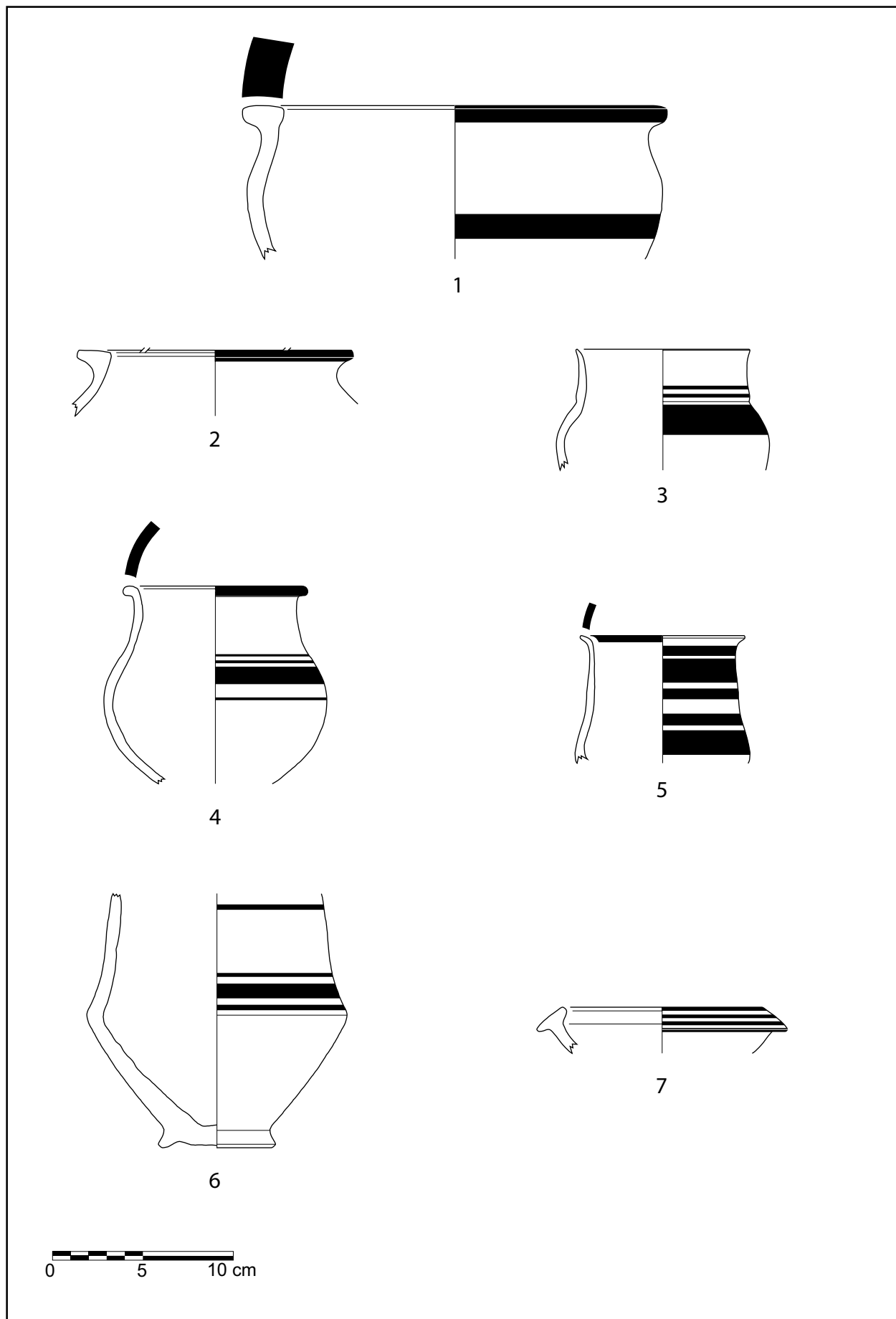
Pl. 6: Initial Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 13 and H 12)

اللوحة ٦: فخّار فترة ميتاني الأولى المكتشف في مُقْبِلِه (موقوبلي) (المرحلتان H 13 و H 12)



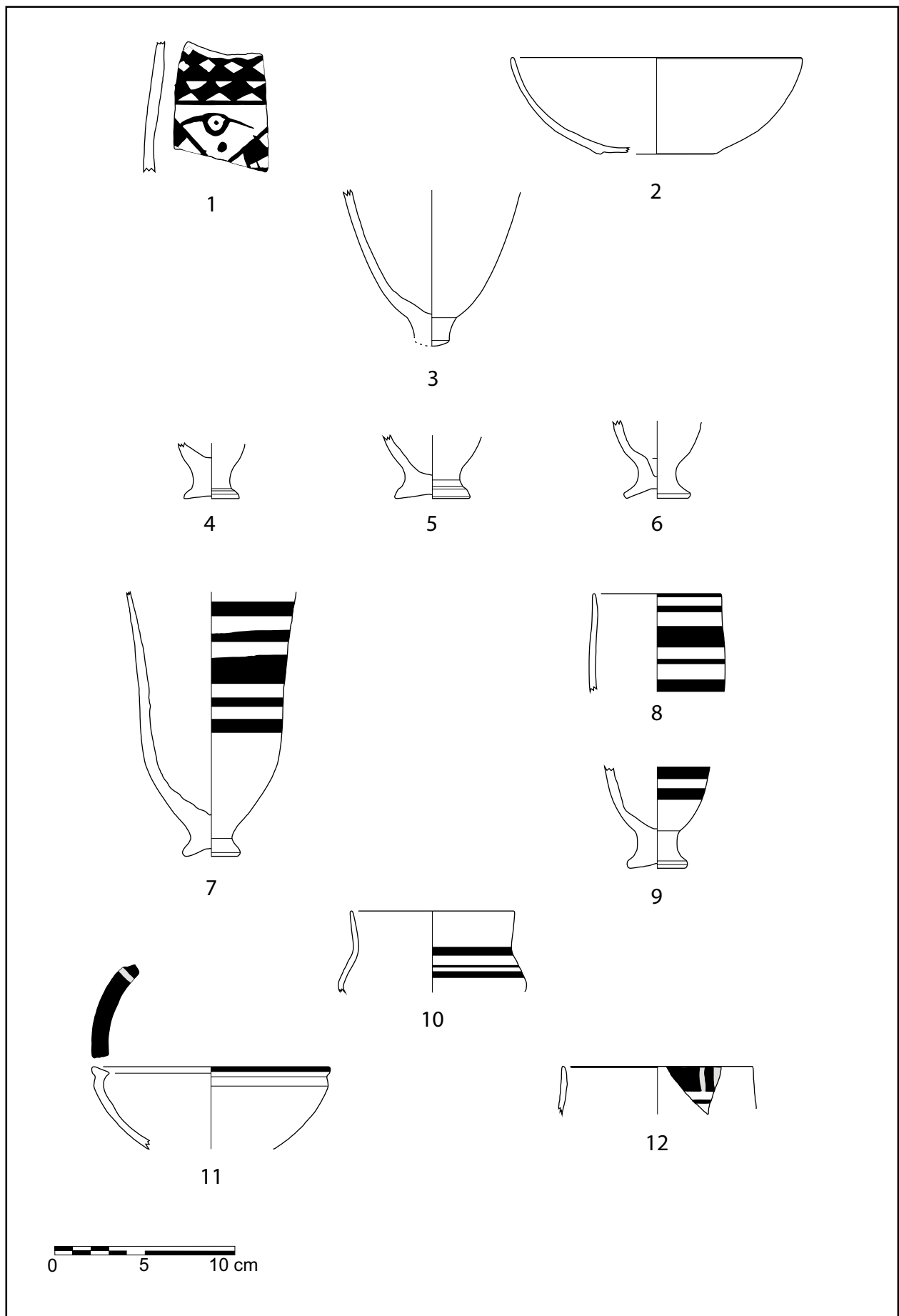
Pl. 7: Initial Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 13 and H 12)

اللوحة ٧: فخّار فترة ميتاني الأولى المكتشف في مُقَبِّلَه (موقوِبلَى) (المرحلتان H 13 و H 12)



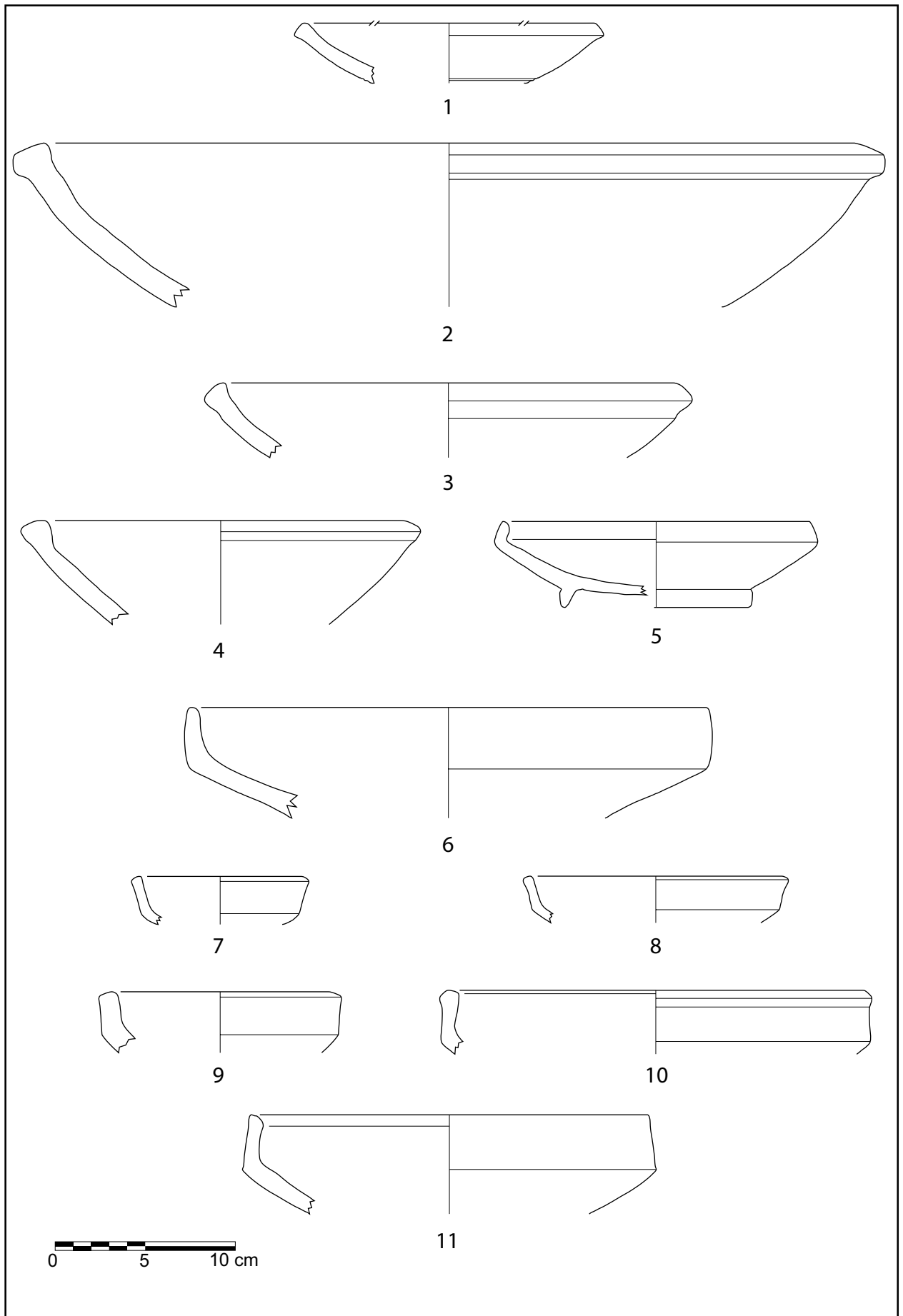
Pl. 8: Initial Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 13 and H 12)

اللوحة ٨: فخار فترة ميتاني الأولى المكتشف في مَقْبِلِه (موقوبلي) (المرحلتان H 13 و H 12)



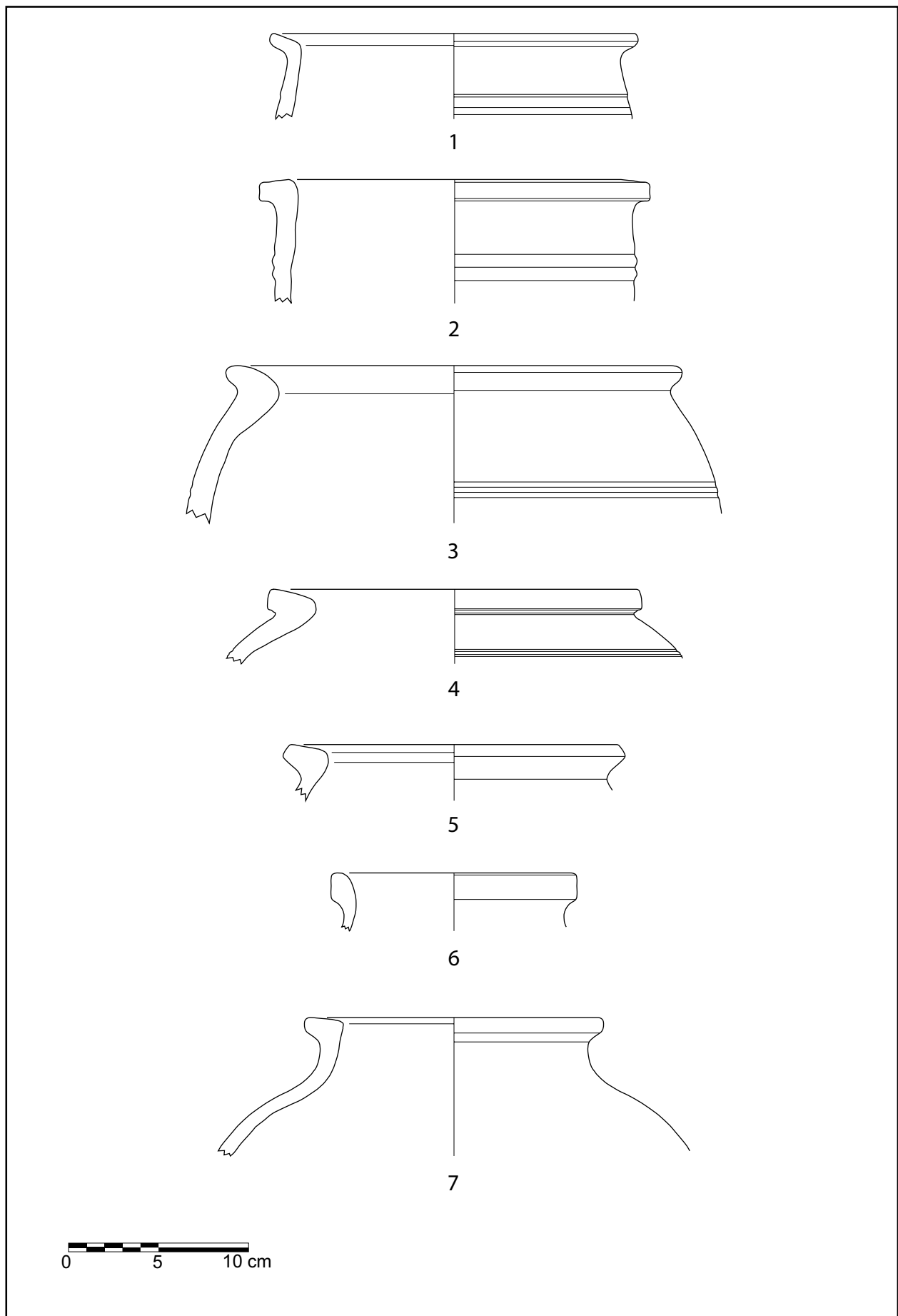
Pl. 9: Initial Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 13 and H 12)

اللوحة ٩: فخّار فترة ميتاني الأولى المكتشف في مُقْبِلِه (موقولبي) (المرحلتان H 13 و H 12)



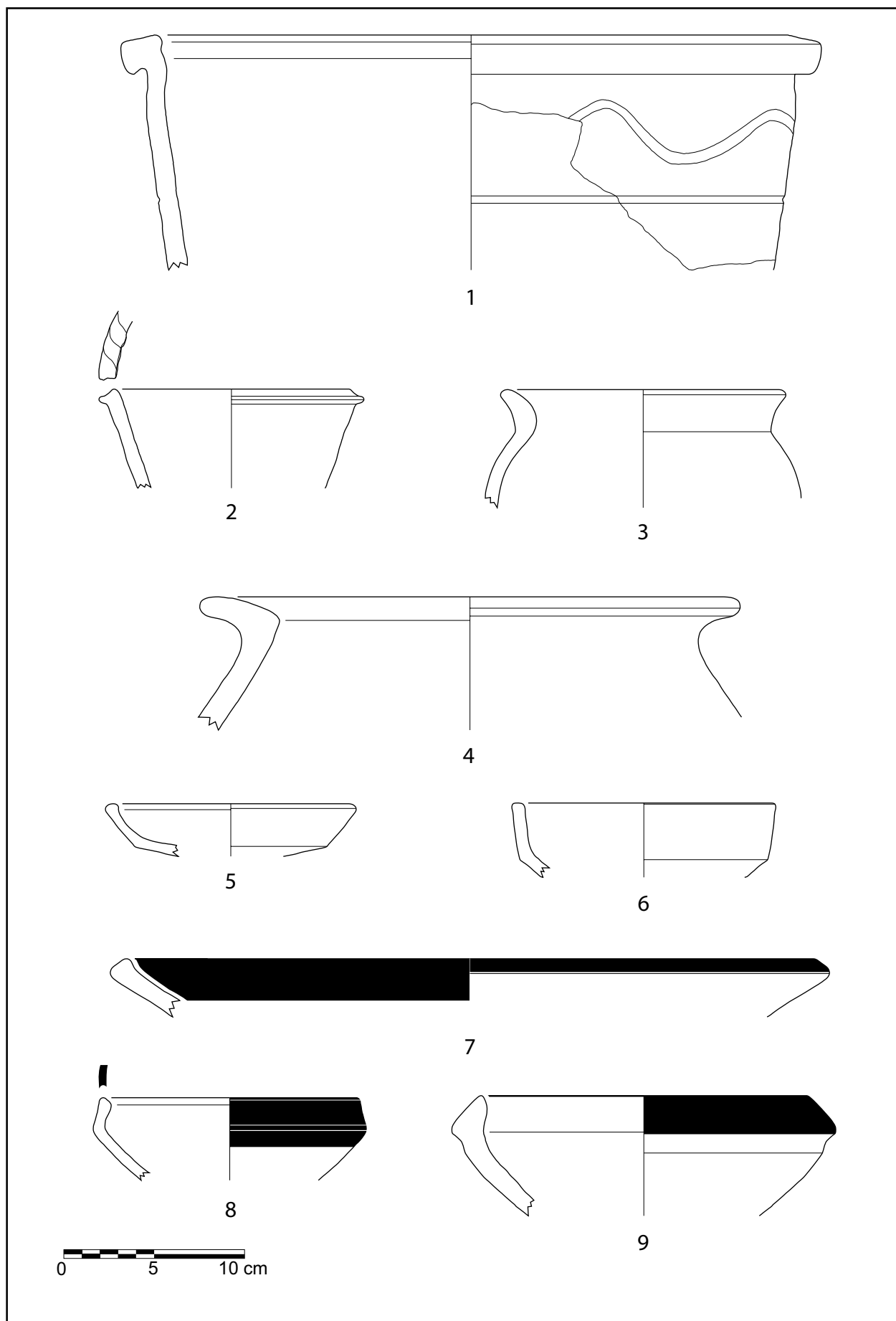
Pl. 10: Early Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 11 and H 10)

اللوحة ١٠: فخّار فترة ميتاني المبكّرة المكتشف في مُقَبِلَه (موقوبلي) (المرحلتان H 10 و H 11)



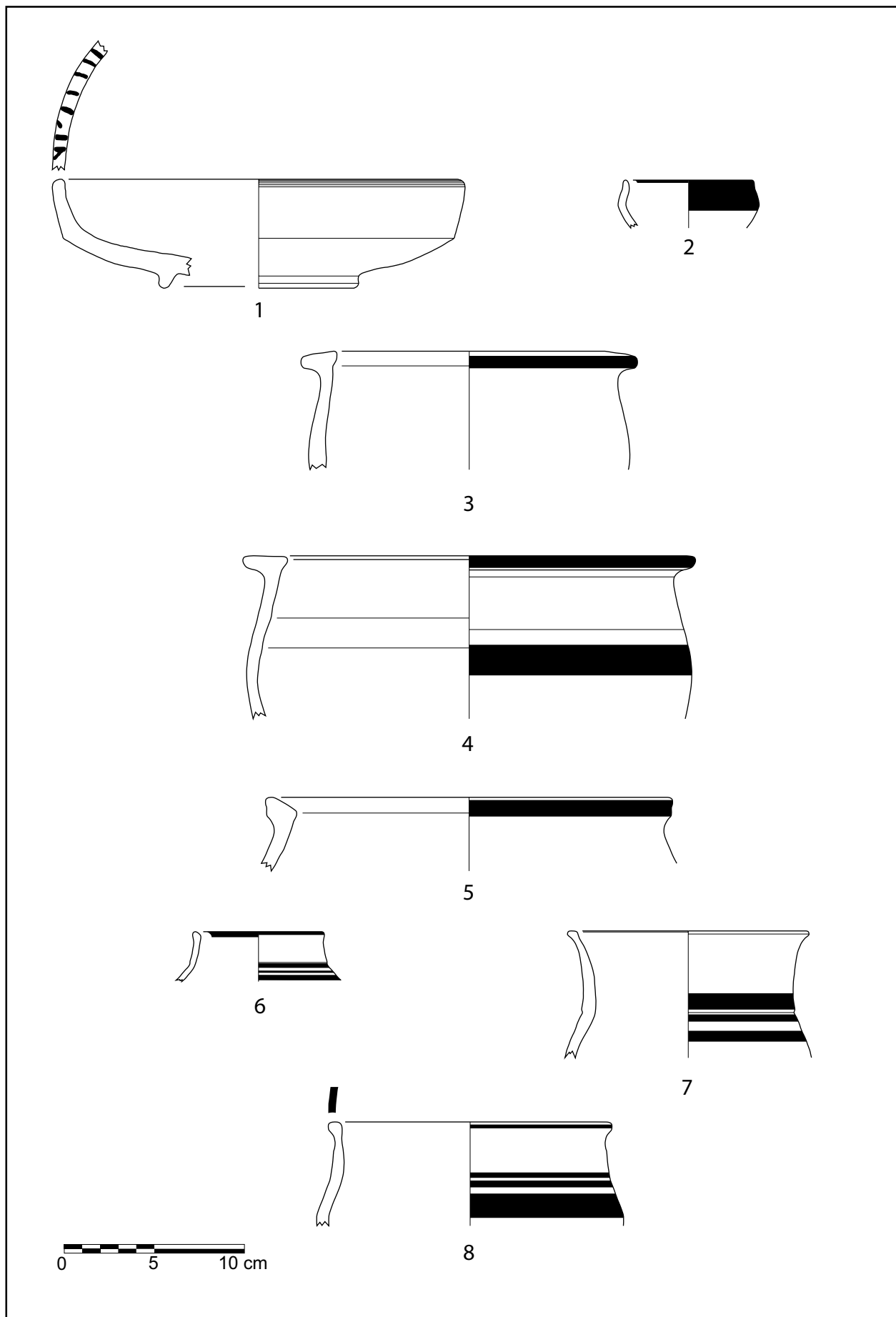
Pl. 11: Early Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 11 and H 10)

اللوحة ١١: فخّار فترة ميتاني المبكّرة المكتشف في مُقَبِّلَه (موقوِبلَى) (المرحلتان H 10 و H 11)



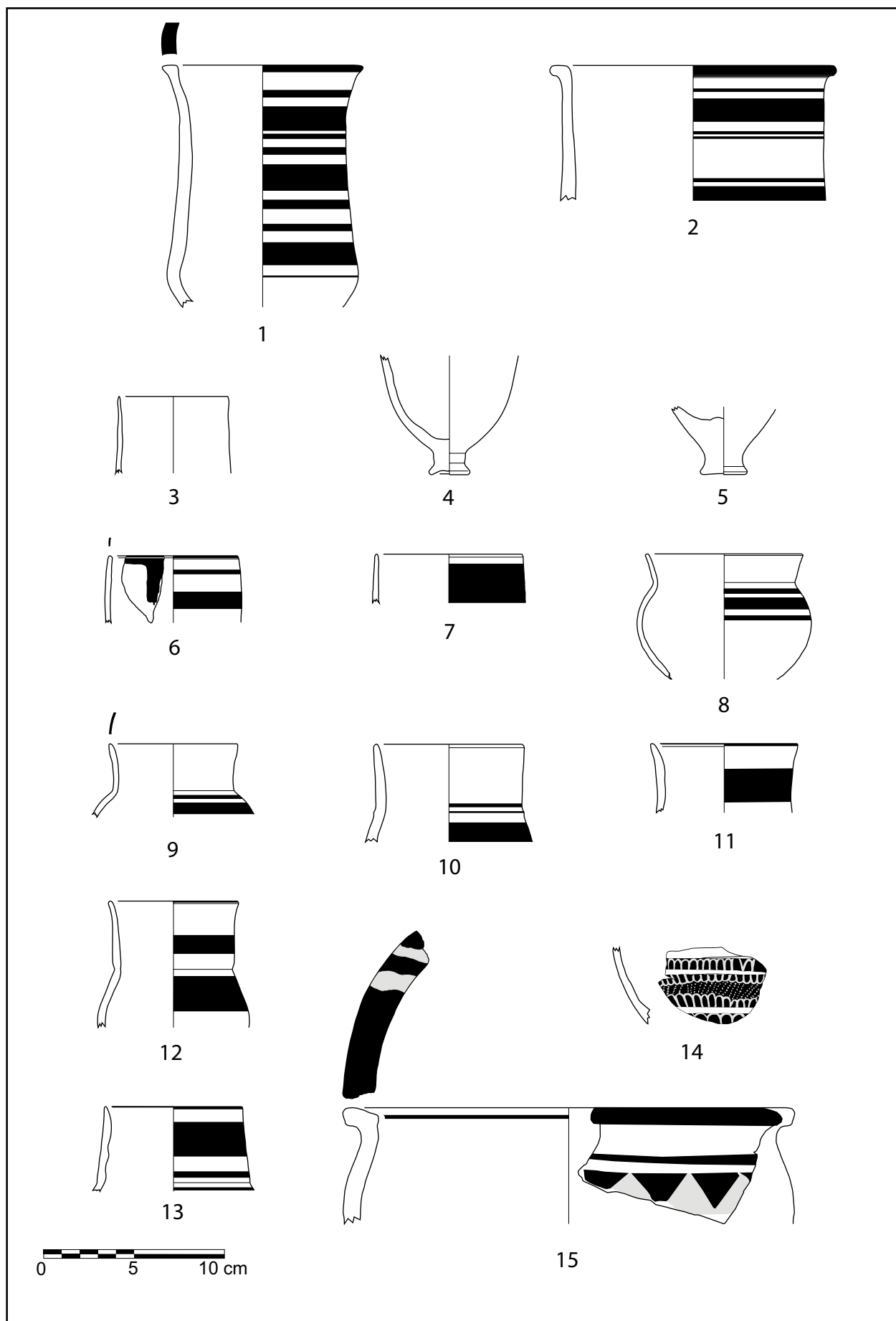
Pl. 12: Early Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 11 and H 10)

اللوحة ١٢: فخّار فترة ميتاني المبكّرة المكتشف في مُقْبِلِه (موقوبلي) (المرحلتان H 10 و H 11)



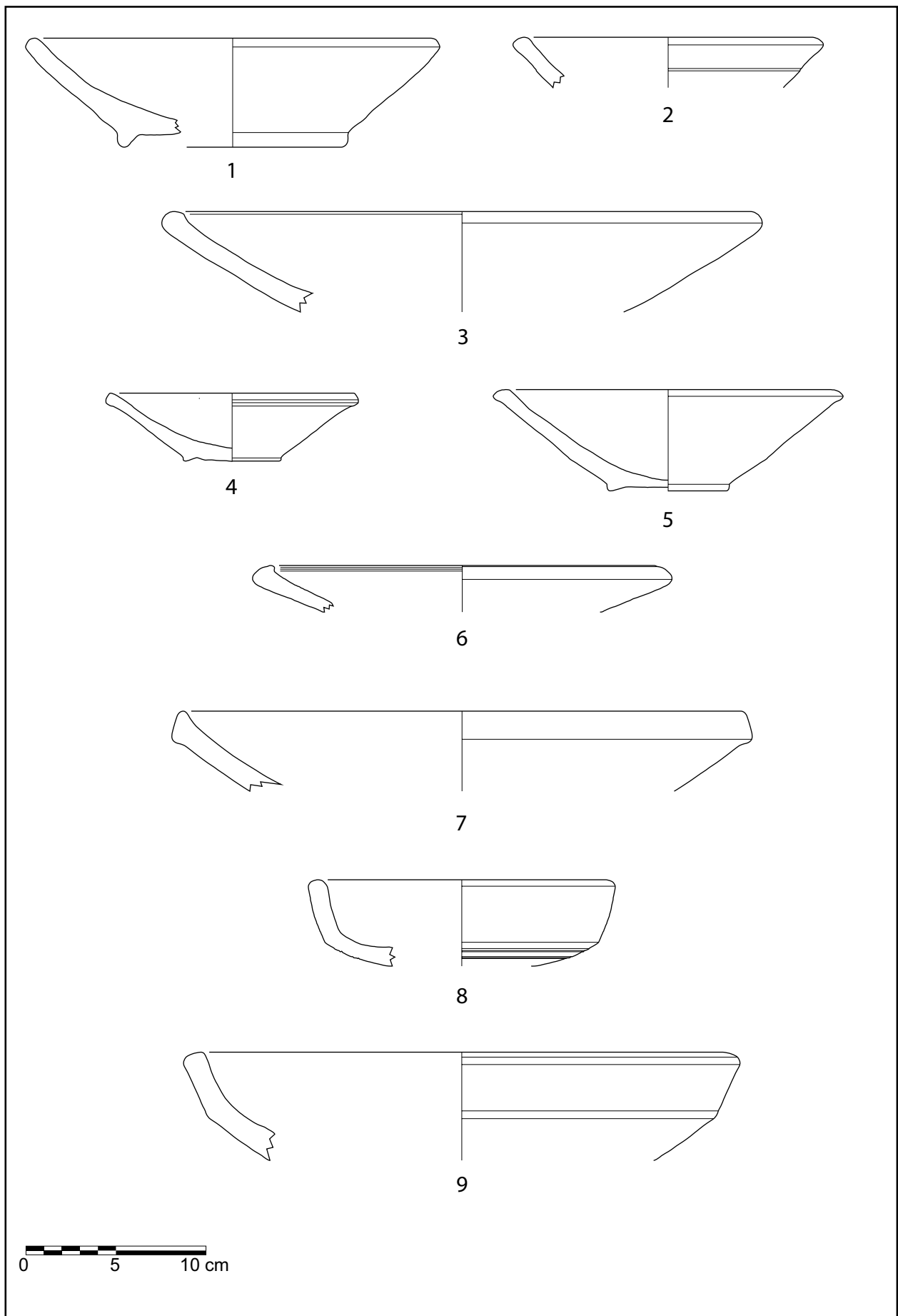
Pl. 13: Early Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 11 and H 10)

اللوحة ١٣: فخّار فترة ميتاني المبكّرة المكتشف في مُقَبِّلَه (موقوِبلَى) (المرحلتان H 10 و H 11)



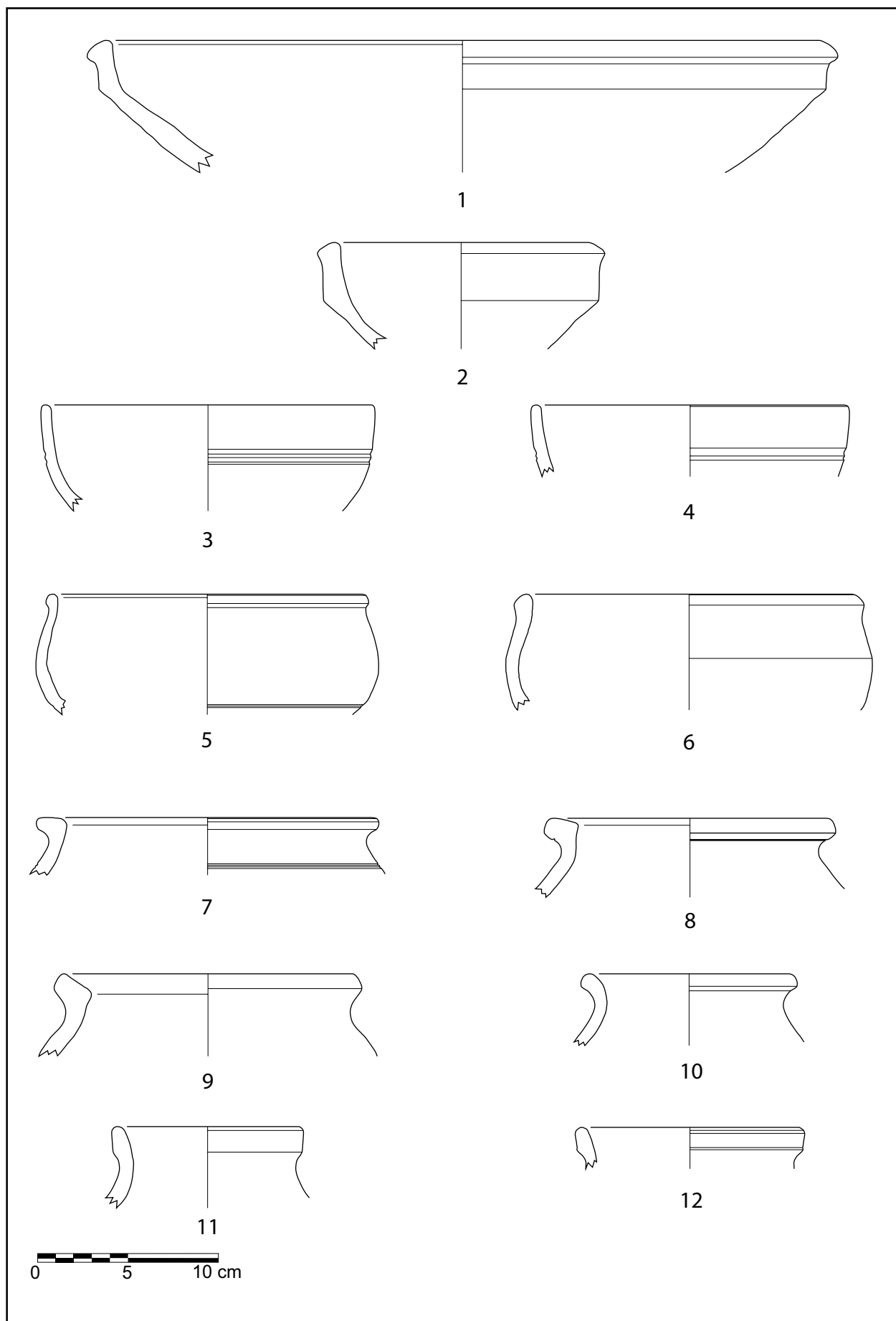
Pl. 14: Early Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 11 and H 10)

اللوحة ١٤: فخّار فترة ميتاني المبكّرة المكتشف في مُقَبِلَه (موقوبلي) (المرحلتان H 10 و H 11)



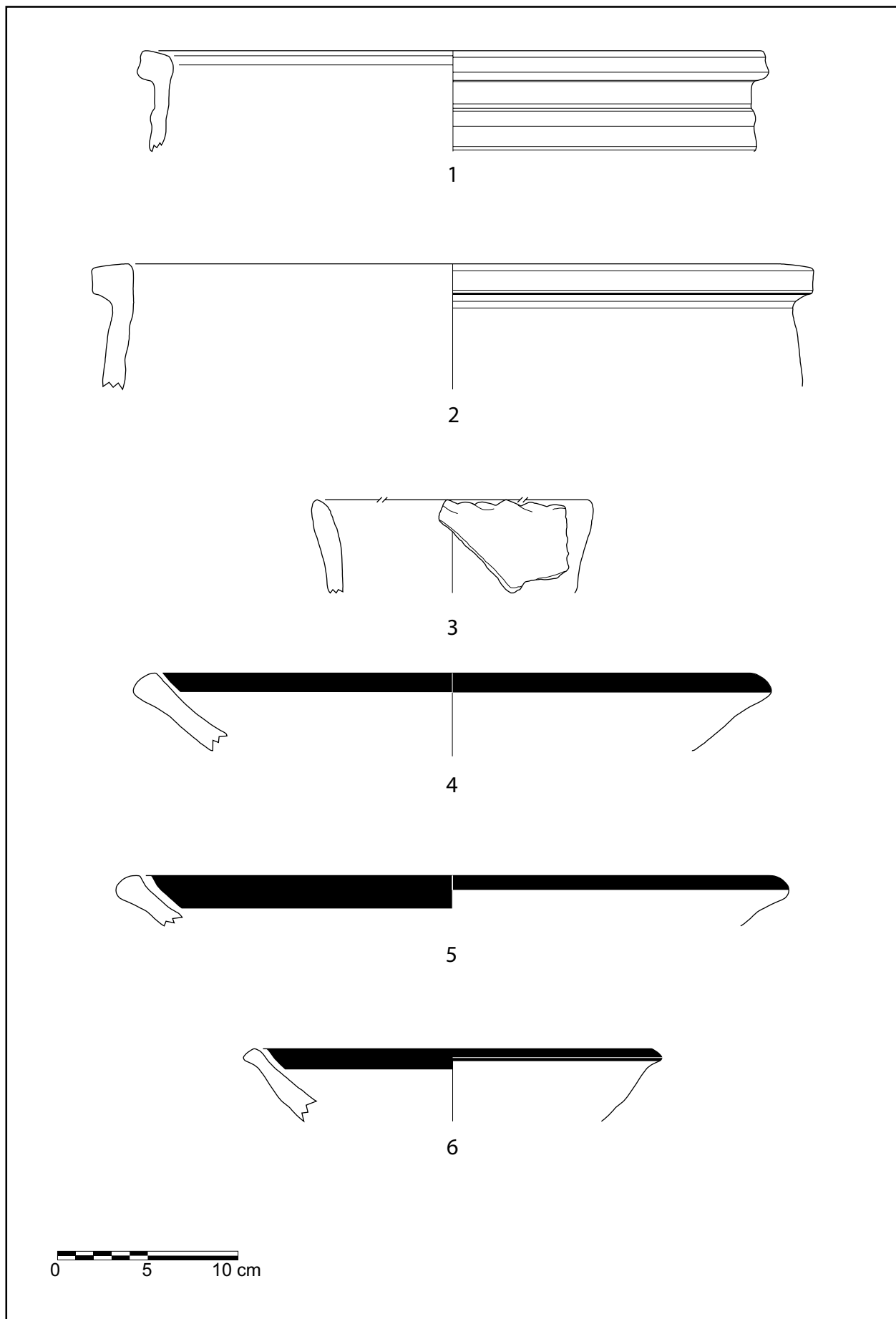
Pl. 15: Late Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 9 to H 7)

اللوحة ١٥: فخّار فترة ميتاني المتأخّرة المكتشف في مُقَبِلَه (موقوبلي) (من المرحلة H 9 حتى المرحلة H 7)



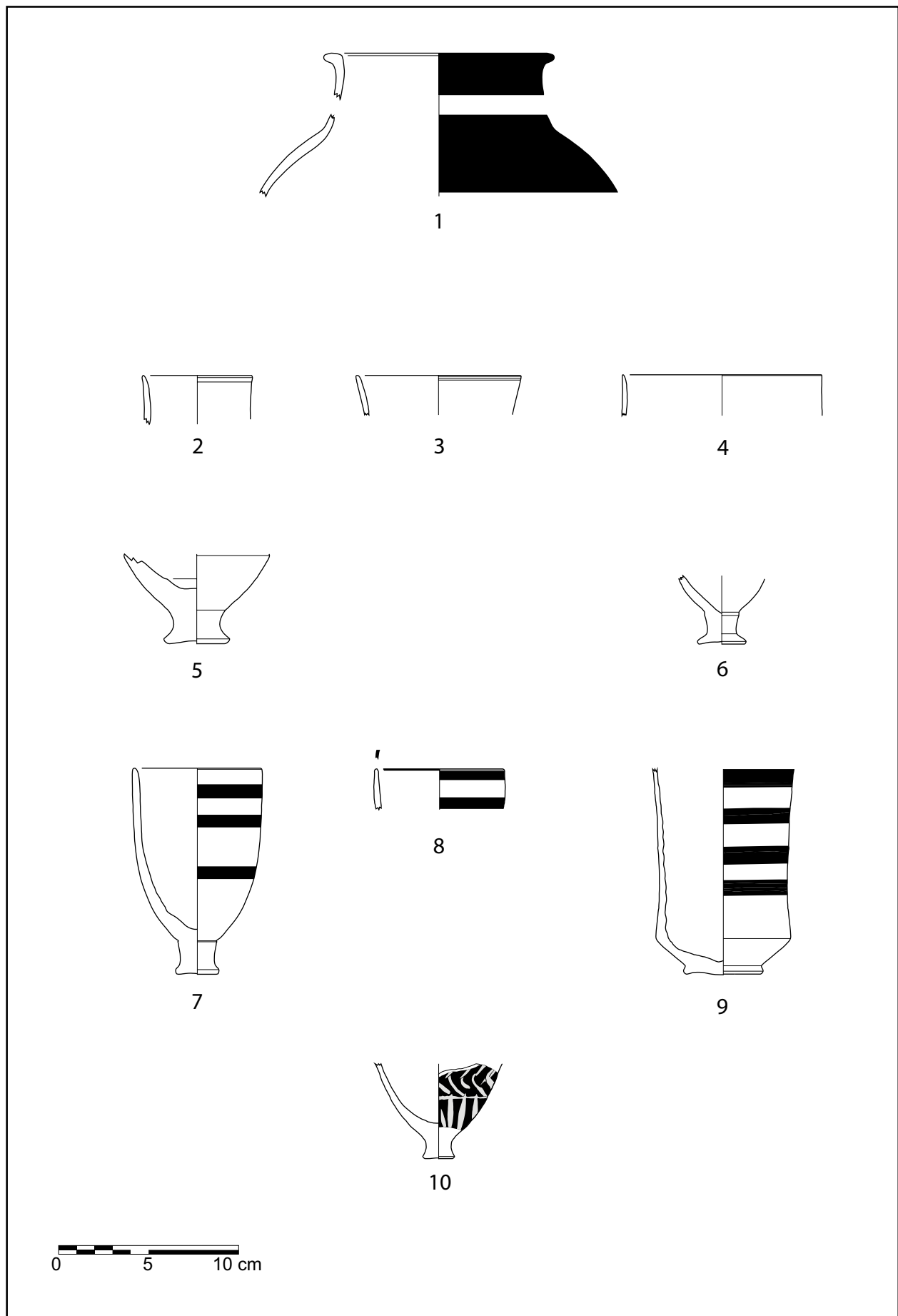
Pl. 16: Late Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 9 to H 7)

اللوحة ١٦: فخّار فترة ميتاني المتأخّرة المكتشف في مُقْبِلِه (موقوبلي) (من المرحلة H 9 حتى المرحلة H 7)



Pl. 17: Late Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 9 to H 7)

اللوحة ١٧: فخّار فترة ميتاني المتأخّرة المكتشف في مُقَبِّلَه (موقوبلي) (من المرحلة H 9 حتى المرحلة H 7)



Pl. 18: Late Mittani period pottery from Muqable (Phases H 9 to H 7)

اللوحة ١٨: فخّار فترة ميتاني المتأخّرة المكتشف في مُقْبِلِه (موقوبلي) (من المرحلة H 9 حتى المرحلة H 7)