

Gaps or Transitions? North Syrian/South Anatolian Ceramics in the Early, Middle, and Late Islamic Periods

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Abstract:

As Islamic archaeology has matured, it has outgrown several large debates. Scholars now largely agree that no huge decline occurred either after the Islamic conquests in the 7th century¹ or when the ‘Abbāsids came to power in 750², nor was there an observable decline in the early 7th century during the Persian conquests. It is also thought the Umayyad dynasty did little to replace the existing societal, religious, and economic life in the Near East and beyond. Yet the ceramic evidence of the Umayyad period might tell a different story, for the ceramics of the Levant from the mid-7th to mid-8th centuries are elusive and difficult to discern or accurately date³. The 11th century is also lightly represented ceramically, as is the 15th. Both of these latter periods can be tied to political upheavals: the weakening of ‘Abbāsīd power and rise of many provincial autonomies, and the arrival of the Saljūqs in the 11th century⁴, and the weakening of Mamlūk power and rise of the beyliks, together with the arrival of the Ottomans in the 15th. Here we bring together all three of these perceived gaps as part of a seemingly uniform pattern that reflects similar politically transitional and decentralized periods. Yet in viewing them side by side, we will see that these three periods are not the same, and that more nuance can complicate this historical pattern. Although historical events can be reflected in the archaeological record, it can be difficult, as the study of al-Mina has indicated, to link changes in pottery type to such events until some centuries after they occurred⁵.

Keywords: archaeology | Islamic archaeology | ceramics

Article:

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the mid-7th to mid-8th centuries are elusive and difficult to discern or accurately date³. The 11th century is also lightly represented ceramically, as is the 15th. Both of these latter periods can be tied to political upheavals: the weakening of ‘Abbāsīd power and rise of many provincial autonomies, and the arrival of the Saljūqs in the 11th century⁴, and the weakening of Mamlūk power and rise of the beyliks, together with the arrival of the Ottomans in the 15th. Here we bring together all three of these perceived gaps as part of a seemingly uniform pattern that reflects similar politically transitional and decentralized periods. Yet in viewing them side by side, we will see that these three periods are not the same, and that more nuance can complicate this historical pattern. Although historical events can be reflected in the archaeological record, it can be difficult, as the study of al-Mina has indicated, to link changes in pottery type to such events until some centuries after they occurred⁵.

The question is, are these three periods, though not uniformly the same, represented by natural gaps in the archaeological record, reflecting political and perhaps societal change in the Middle East as periods of low productivity, no artistic or technological innovation, and decline? Or are these gaps false and, rather, products of methodological issues and lacunae in the ceramic record? As Haldon *et alii* noted: “Periods of site abandonment, which are represented by the absence of evidence are, by definition, harder to define and identify⁶.” Left unchallenged, these gaps bolster a historical narrative of Islamic civilization dictated by a top-down view that is punctuated by periods of decline whenever a strong central power weakens. Yet Byzantine and Islamic cities were often resilient to the political upheavals of changing authority. In Islamic society, the middle class—merchants and artisans—maintained the status quo and even economic prosperity throughout periods of instability⁷. Further, accepting these three gaps as permanent features of the historical narrative also implies a widespread economic contraction that substantially affected production and trade even on a local level. Yet, it is possible to have times of variety in production and innovation that does not suggest wholesale decline. The archaeological record thus needs to be closely examined, and more stratified assemblages need to be excavated or reanalyzed and published. Here we will look at these three periods in material culture and discuss the different challenges surrounding each one. Our focus is on the region of North Syria and Mesopotamia and South Anatolia since we have both conducted many excavations and surveys there. We will argue that the ceramic gaps of the mid-7th to mid-8th, 11th, and 15th centuries are not in fact natural or permanent, but rather are insubstantial, reflecting both insufficient archaeological data and historically transitional periods suggestive of variation in economic intensity and craft specialization rather than decline.

Regionalism and Methodologies

For the study of ceramics, even in internationally connected economic networks during periods of Islamic rule, regionalism is crucial; thus, each area of the Islamic world must be studied separately. Unlike the southern Levant, the area of North Syria, including northern Mesopotamia/Iraq and South Anatolia, has been less well studied (Fig. 1). Although at a recent conference—The 8th Century: Patterns of Transition in Economy and Trade Throughout the Late Antique, Early Medieval, and Islamicate Mediterranean, held in 2017 in Berlin—Paul Reynolds⁸ and Joanita Vroom⁹ presented papers on the state of ceramics, few North Syrian sites were included in their pan-Mediterranean study¹⁰. The reasons are various: (1) excavations and surveys in Israel and Jordan have been far more robust; (2) conflict in Iraq and then Syria has

impeded research in the last decade; and (3) general interest in anything Islamic, and specifically before the arrival of the Turkic Saljūqs at the end of the 11th century in Turkey, has been negligible. A large part of this last problem is the perception that Turkey is interested mainly in its Islamic past starting with the Saljūq period, thereby excluding the dominant Arab rule over much of southern and eastern Turkey¹¹. Indeed, even Saljūq archaeology is not so robust, still residing mainly in the discipline of art history.



Fig 1. Map of North Syria and Northern Mesopotamia (Jazīra) (created by Kyle Brunner).

The advantage of looking at a long overview for the entire Islamic period is that it allows us to see patterns that might not otherwise be evident. This was demonstrated in the study of the site of al-Mina, where comparing and contrasting gaps together led to conclusions about time lag and material culture. Pottery, as compared with the more firmly dated category of coins, changes at different rates. While coins may change more quickly, thereby implying more chronological specificity (though they were certainly reused), pottery types lag behind, being in use longer and changing more slowly (Table 1). This is complicated in many instances by a noticeable lack of coins in contexts with a high level of pottery. This lag in pottery compared with coins further relates directly to the asynchronous timelines of the historical and archaeological records, thus making it difficult to assign pottery to a specific time of change. While this is a generally understood tenet of archaeological research, it is important to go further and compare different periods to one another through time, because only then can we understand the significance of these cultural changes, extract more nuanced differences about the historical and archaeological records, and use these differences to examine the underlying reasons for them in each period¹². It also means that when we see a ceramic gap in the archaeological record, it does not mean this gap is an actual one¹³. Owing to the problems noted above, many pottery types lack firm dates

since it can be difficult to determine the beginning and end of transitional periods, and they are often the least secure part of the chronologies¹⁴

Tab. 1. Pottery Wares of North Syria

Polychrome painted glazed wares (yellow-glaze family)	Late 8th-early 9th (but likely continues later)
Color splash wares	9th century
White opaque glazed wares (can be with cobalt, turquoise, green)	9th century
Lusterwares (monochrome and ruby)	9th-10th centuries
Buffwares, general	Mid-8th to mid-10th centuries
Molded buffwares	Late 8th, 9th, 10th centuries
Brittlewares – holemouth	8th-10th centuries
Kerbschnitt decorative styles	8th-9th centuries
Brittleware – vertical everted rim, long tall neck	7th-8th centuries
Brittleware – casserole	7th-8th centuries
Late Roman C – Phocaeen (types 4, 10, 13)	Late 6th to early 7th centuries
African red slip (types 105 and 109)	Late 7th to early 8th centuries
Constantinopolitan cooking pots (CW 4)	7th to early 9th centuries
North Syrian amphorae (NSA)	5th-8th centuries
Late Roman amphorae 1	4th-7th centuries
Polychrome sgraffito splash wares	10th-11th centuries
Sgraffito champlévé wares	11th century
Turquoise wares	11th-14th centuries
Blue glaze (turquoise) fritwares	11th-14th centuries
Port Saint Symeon ware	13th-14th centuries
Green and mustard yellow monochrome glazed wares	12th-14th centuries
Handmade geometric painted wares	13th-19th centuries

As a foundation to a discussion on chronological and geographical methodologies, we must consider how these gaps came to exist. For the 7th century, there are few stratified assemblages in North Syria. Textual evidence is mixed: although some site descriptions suggest 7th-century occupation, as in Antioch/Antakīya, many sites were not renovated until the early ‘Abbāsīd period (mid-8th century), like Tarsūs. Yet, these texts carry their own biases as products of the 9th and 10th centuries, while we have few texts from North Syria of the 7th to early 8th. Of these latter, the Syriac texts, often showing a rural perspective, are the most promising to consider alongside the archaeological evidence. Additionally, a lot of material was not retained from the older excavations, where we now know based on historical evidence there was occupation during this period. This is because the 7th-century material was often considered aesthetically not

interesting enough, with innovations in surface decorations such as glazing, molding, and inscribing still nascent.

The 11th-century gap meanwhile was created largely as a political vacuum formed by strong chronologies on either side. It is seen as politically transitional, a moment of instability and strife caught between regime changes owing to the collapse of the ‘Abbāsīd empire and arrival of the Saljūqs at this time. In addition, the ceramic record employed in the southern Levant is strongly tied to political periods such as the Crusader or Mamlūk, a problematic method not least because the Crusaders ushered in no changes in the ceramic record or take over as artisans, although they did influence trade and distribution from the Levant. Also, the Crusader and Mamlūk archaeological periods employed often by Israeli archaeologists do not translate well to North Syria, delimiting a period of material culture from the 12th to 14th centuries, that is, from the time of the arrival of the Crusaders in 1097–1099. The 11th century thus became a gap. Archaeologically, part of this gap resulted from the powerful influence of Samarra, the 9th-century capital of ‘Abbāsīd ‘Iraq. Although Samarra’s establishment and decline was tied strongly to caliphal periods as a royal capital from 836 to 892, it continued as a settlement beyond the 9th century. Nevertheless, these political dates have considerably influenced how archaeologists have dated, and continue to date, its material culture—especially glazed wares (such as polychrome splash-glazed, polychrome sgraffito, white opaque glazed, and lusterwares)—resulting in a narrow range, known as the Samarra horizon, that has influenced ceramic records around the central Islamic lands. Yet, as we will examine, wares from the 10th century, like polychrome sgraffito, continued into the 11th, while wares dated to the 12th–14th centuries, like turquoise and champlevé, began earlier. Continuity thus exists on both ends. Nonetheless, well-stratified deposits and kiln evidence for the 11th century still need to be excavated and published, such as the forthcoming reports from Hisn alTīnāt (Tūpraş Field) and Antioch’s sector 17-O.

The origin of the gap in the 15th century derives from a combination of historical and archaeological lacunae. Politically, it was a period noted more by the absence of any strong power. Archaeologically, we lack assemblages, excavated sites, and kiln evidence. Even sites with known textual occupations, such as Antioch, have seemingly no materials, whether because of poor stratigraphic digging at these topmost layers or the discarding of materials as “recent trash” or both. The post-14th century afterlives of many Crusader, Armenian, and Ayyūbid castles in the region still preserved today are poorly understood and remain unexcavated. While the work of Balázs Major has looked at the post-Crusader period¹⁵, this is an exception. Further, specialists are lacking. Although certain types of Ottoman wares have been well-studied, often from art historical approaches, these, like Iznik and Kütahya wares, are absent at archaeological sites in this region, and the pipes date later. Coin evidence from the late Mamlūk/beylik/early Ottoman period in North Syria, while present, is also poor¹⁶ and does not correspond well either to occupation or the ceramic record, which remain little studied¹⁷. Excavations of related 15th- and 16th-century sites known to be settlements from texts such as Ottoman tax registers (defters) are badly needed.

The number of excavations in the North Syrian region has been few¹⁸, and of those undertaken, many have not been published in their entirety. The 1930s can be regarded as the “golden age” for North Syrian archaeological excavations, with considerable work done in the area around the

modern city of Antakya (ancient Antioch) in what is now Turkey. Princeton University conducted excavations in Antioch itself, revealing the ancient and modern city, while also excavating at Daphne, its wealthy suburb, and the port of Antioch, Seleucia-in-Pieria. Sir Leonard Woolley excavated another port of Antioch, that of al-Mina, while Jean Mécérian focused on the site of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger and other sites in the region¹⁹. The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago also conducted excavations and surveys in the area²⁰. While some of these excavations, such as the Princeton excavations of Antioch and Woolley's excavations at al-Mina, have since underpinned subsequent archaeological work in the region, these studies have not been without their problems. First, the excavations themselves were never fully published. In the case of the Princeton Antioch excavations, pottery was either not published in its stratigraphic context, or not published at all, leading to an imbalance of studies on these excavated materials. Second, the study of material that was examined in more detail, such as pottery, has advanced considerably since these studies appeared.

But while the material from the Princeton Antioch excavations and from al-Mina was published in some detail, other excavations did not follow suit. Although attempts have been made to publish some of this material, such as the excavated objects found by Mécérian, in other cases publication has been hampered by the fact that the artifacts can no longer be located. In the case of the Oriental Institute's 1930s excavations, pieces of Roman and Late Roman pottery and a small amount of medieval pottery from one site have been preserved, but the location of much of the later period remains is unclear. Adding to the confusion, some of this material was given to Princeton and then published in studies on Antioch.

After World War II interrupted this period of considerable activity, the number of excavations in the region dwindled, leaving our understanding of pottery based on the excavations problematic at best. Although there have been some long-term excavations, such as at Apamea, these have not been fully published, while in the case of Aleppo little has been published at all. Other sites—such as Hisn al-Tīnāt, and Wachtang Z. Djobadze's excavations at St. Symeon Stylites the Younger Monastery and other sites in the region—are more limited for studying the entire Late Roman–Islamic periods because, as Djobadze (1986) makes clear, these are not sites with long periods of occupation.

But while excavations have been few, surveys have been numerous, in part owing to the pioneering efforts of Linda Braidwood and the many Euphrates dam salvage projects in the 1980s²¹. There are, however, several methodological problems associated with ceramics from surveys. First, an inherent but unavoidable problem is that ceramics collected from surface surveys may not be the most accurate indicator of when a site was inhabited. Although they can indicate the presence of activity at the site—particularly when found in relatively high density to the surrounding landscape and in conjunction with other materials such as building stones—they cannot tell us precisely what the activity was. Second, there is the bias of field walkers finding more glazed ceramics than unglazed, drawn like magpies to shiny objects. Third, most rural sites have fewer glazed wares (indeed, glazed wares are a small percentage of any site). Fourth, most of our dating relies on glazed wares, but as we will discuss later, glazed ceramics were not widely produced until about the mid-8th century. Fifth, many surveys are intended to search for pre-Roman sites, and accordingly are not staffed with specialists of later periods. And lastly, but beyond the scope of this paper, surveys cannot easily identify the settlement nature of a site,

whether it was a farm, a village, or a small town. For our purposes here, we will use the term site to denote the spatial land designation and archaeological marker of a settlement, and settlement to refer to human-based patterns and activity at a site, often based on historical and textual evidence.

The work on the Syrian J̄bal (limestone hills or calcaire massif) indicates some of the difficulties in survey evidence and using it to assess occupation in a particular region. In this case, the survey work focused on the architectural and inscriptional evidence of the well-preserved sites in the region dating to the Late Roman/Early Byzantine periods. As a result, researchers developed models of economic activity in the region that posited a sharp decline in settlement after the Islamic conquest, when the inscriptions largely disappeared. This fit well into notions current at the time that the Islamic conquest caused a break in settlement and a general economic decline in the former Byzantine Empire, particularly in the previously wealthy North Syrian region. Only in the 1970s, when the site of D h s was excavated, did archaeologists begin to realize that the settlement continued much further into the Islamic period than had been assumed. While attempts have been made to re-date the pottery sequence, these have been hampered in that not all the excavations have been published. Therefore, we find ourselves still largely reliant on work done at the beginning of the 20th century.

Yet, many sites with only 8th- through 10th-century ceramics also had a Late Roman presence, raising questions that require looking at sites with more scrutiny regarding the negative presence of an occupation in the late 7th. These should not, however, serve as obstacles, and we should not disregard survey results. Surveys in any period are based on certain shared assumptions in ceramic typology and a certain consistency in how these ceramics are collected and accordingly how sites are dated. These problems are part of the overall error shared by all surveys. As more refined typologies from excavated sites and technologies of retrieval arise, these methods will change. Recent excavations, though many still in the publication stage, and a greater understanding of transitional and Early Islamic ceramics will also permit more accurate dating of sites previously categorized by very general (at best) or incorrect chronologies²². Even as this volume is published, new research is being conducted.

Gap 1: The Mid-7th to Mid-8th Centuries

Since the idea of a 7th-century decline following the Islamic conquests has been generally unsupported, in the archaeological context the assertion of a Late Roman– Early Islamic continuity has created a redefined transitional period encompassing the 6th to 8th centuries. This is certainly cautious, given the 200-year span, but does it help much? During this time, the first four caliphs, the Rashid ns, ruled from Arabia for 30 years, from 632 to 661, followed by the Umayyad dynasty, based in Syria, which ruled for nearly a century, from 661 to 750, before being eliminated by the ‘Abb s d dynasty, based in Iraq. In this important period, can we do better than to tell whether sites or strata are late Early Byzantine, Umayyad, Byzantine/Umayyad, or ‘Abb s d? Certainly material culture does not follow political change quickly or cleanly²³. Dividing the Early Islamic period into Umayyad and ‘Abb s d based on ceramic evidence seems an inaccurate measure of pottery and has been sharply criticized by Don Whitcomb²⁴, Jodi Magness²⁵, and Alan Walmsley²⁶. The generally agreed upon periodization has been more “archaeological”, subdividing the Early Islamic period into Early Islamic 1 (mid-7th

to mid-8th century) and Early Islamic 2 (mid-8th to mid-10th century), following cultural designations like Middle Bronze 1, 2, and so forth. Although these divisions unavoidably coincide loosely with political designations (Early Islamic 2 starting in c. 750, i.e. the ‘Abbāsīd rise to power), they reflect the well-understood point that ceramics neither are directly tied to the central political authority nor do they carry with them a political agenda; for instance, no ceramics of the ‘Abbāsīd revolution have been found, at least not yet.

A second problem exists in subdividing the Early Islamic period into Early Islamic 1 and 2, namely, that of Early Islamic 1 invisibility, especially in surveys. Thanks to the work of several ceramicists²⁷, it is now possible to distinguish 8th- to 10th-century ceramics from those of the earlier mid-7th- to mid-8th centuries by the presence or absence of several key types. What we have from surveys is a very low number of settlements in the Amuq survey of the plain of Antioch and the Kahramanmaraş survey north²⁸, especially as compared with the Late Roman/Byzantine²⁹. Yet, the Quwayq/Qoueiq survey of the plain of Aleppo showed little decline, while in the Euphrates Valley, the Adıyaman survey remained stable³⁰, while the Kurban Höyük (Samsat) survey area declined (Fig. 2)³¹. These last two surveys were not, however, examined by Islamic pottery experts.

The central Islamic lands of greater Syria (*bilād al-shām*) and Egypt (*misr*) appear to have a different ceramic tradition from the region of northern Syria and northern Mesopotamia (or the *jazīra*) and the frontier. Apart from finewares (Hellenistic and Roman sigillatas, Late Roman finewares, and Islamic glazed wares), the majority of buff- and brittlewares have rarely been given the full attention that could discern types and forms into more specific chronologies. Given the ambiguity in coarsewares, this results in the cautious readings of a general Hellenistic through Early Islamic dating. To summarize the typical North Syria/Mesopotamia and South Anatolia assemblage³²: Early Islamic glazed finewares predominantly consisted of the yellow-glaze family made locally in towns like Antioch, Raqqa, and possibly Tarsūs as early as the late-8th century until about the first quarter of the 9th century (pre-Sāmarrā), though new evidence suggests a later dating, for example mid-9th to mid-10th century (Fig. 3)³³. This type of ware was popular in North Syria, being found at port sites such as al-Mīna as well as in rural settlements in most surveys, such as those of the Amuq, Maraş, and Qoueiq. This painted glazed ware, also referred to as polychrome painted glazed ware, is mostly found in North Syria/Southeast Turkey and was apparently introduced into Iraq and Susa³⁴, although painted glazed wares are also seen farther east at Nishapur and Susa and the South Caucasus. Other glaze types include the ‘Abbāsīd color-splash (polychrome) of the 9th century. It is also clear there were local color-splash types made in North Syria that closely resemble and were perhaps inspired by the Iraqi and Central Asian types though not identical to them (Fig. 3)³⁵.

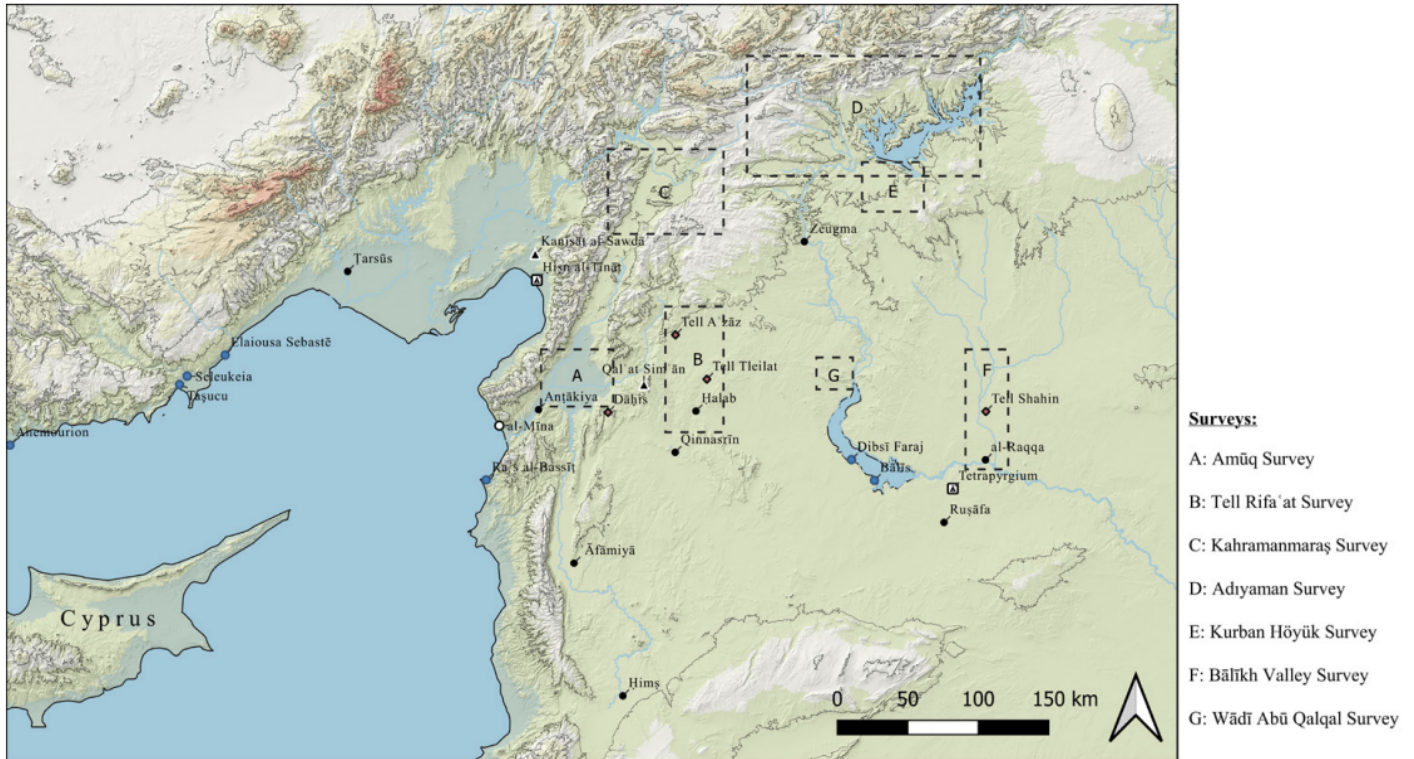


Fig. 2. Map with main surveys and sites indicate (created by Kyle Brunner).

These ceramics blossomed from the mid-8th to the 9th and perhaps 10th centuries, and recent studies have shown they were tied to consumption trends and a commercial boom during the ‘Abbāsīd period with far-reaching destinations—down the Euphrates to South Iraq to East Africa and to Iran, primarily for the glazed wares. The white opaque glazed wares, including decoration with cobalt or green, and monochrome and polychrome ruby lusterwares, are Iraqī; beginning in the early 9th century, they represent a small percentage of imports to North Syria (Fig. 3)³⁶. It does appear that the lusterwares found at sites such as al-Mīna were imports from Iraq, whereas in Armenia, for instance, lusterware consisted of both imported and locally produced types³⁷. We do, however, have some imitations, also infrequent, though some of these were carefully made. One piece from al-Mīna, now in the British Museum, clearly imitates a Chinese porcelain bowl. The bowl was made carefully to the extent that the potter attempted to craft it out of a light-yellow clay, a fabric not only extremely fine and well-levigated but also of similar weight to porcelain. Other glazed white wares from al-Mīna do not show as much care and attention³⁸.

Unglazed wares, typically the bane of sub-periodization owing to longer, sometimes localized and more slowly changing styles, consist of basic continuities in Roman and Byzantine traditions—brittlewares for cooking and cream or buffwares for liquid tableware or storage. Buffwares belong to the mid-8th to late 10th centuries, and the molded decoration to the late 8th but mainly 9th and 10th (Fig. 3)³⁹. The jugs and pitchers also feature distinct turban handles⁴⁰. This latter type, called eggshell, cream, or Mafjar ware, was produced in Raqqā⁴¹ and possibly Tarsūs, but has also been found in sites from Ayla/Aqaba to Tabarīyya/Tiberias to Hīra, Sāmārrā, and Sīrāf. A large number were found at Antioch⁴² though with no associated kilns, although

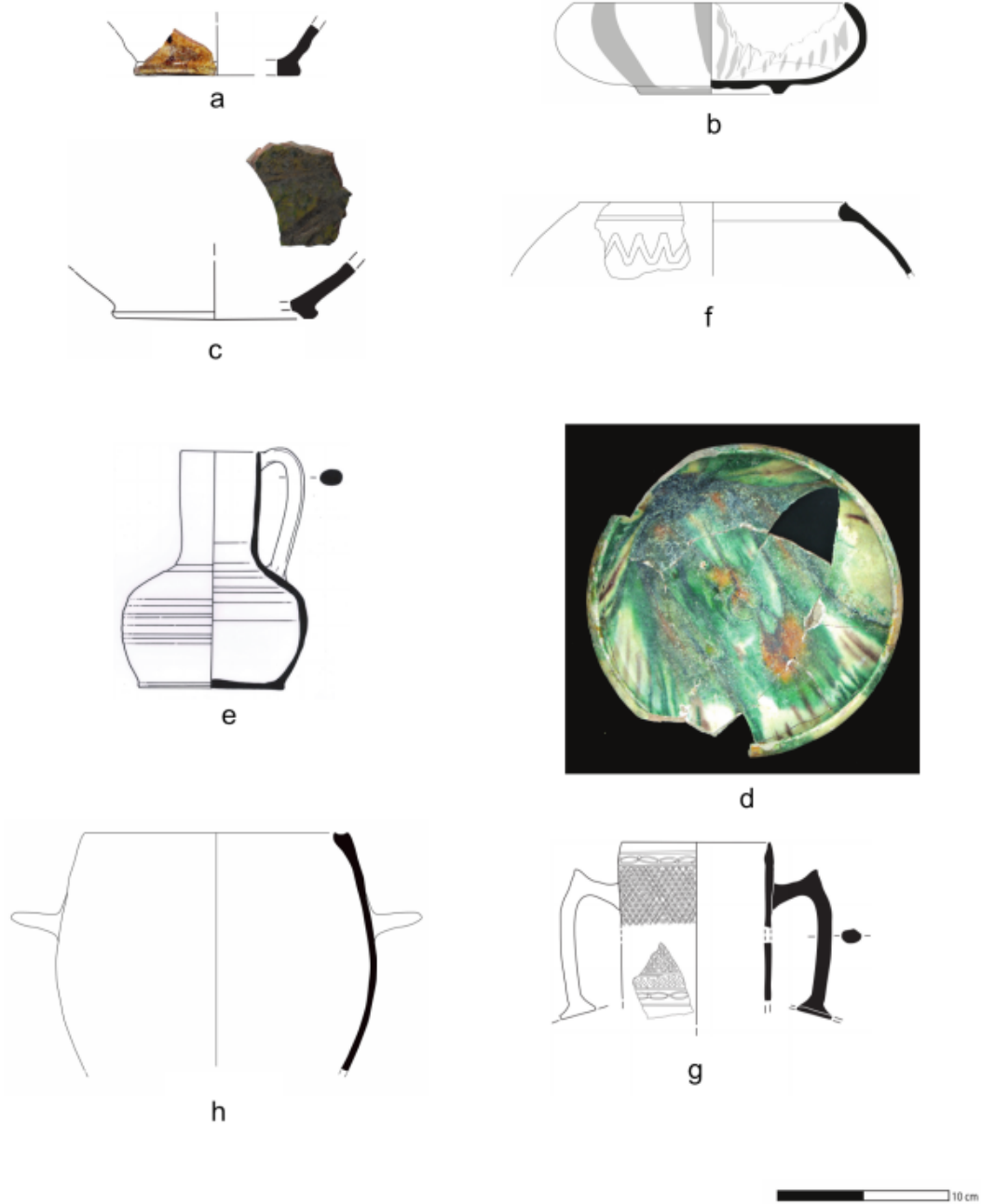


Fig. 3. Early Islamic 2:

- a. KT 27071-26, Tüpraş Field, painted polychrome bowl/plate, core: dark orange; 15 cm.
 b. KT 26423-6, Tüpraş Field, splash glazed bowl, core: orange-buff; 16.6 cm.
 c. KT 26978-1, Tüpraş Field, painted polychrome bowl, core: orange-red; 12 cm.
 d. KT 27742, Tüpraş Field, splash glazed bowl.
 e. KT 27251-5, Tüpraş Field, buffware squat short jug, core: greenish-buff; 4.5 cm.
 f. KT 23310-1, Tüpraş Field, brittleware holemouth cooking pot, core: black; 16 cm.
 g. KT 25791-6, Tüpraş Field, molded buffware jug, core: greenish-buff; 18.5 cm. h. KT 23885-1, Tüpraş Field, brittleware holemouth cooking pot, core: red; 16 cm.

Stephennie Mulder has suggested that al-Mina has distinctive types of molded jugs/pitchers⁴³. Kilns and molds of white ware were found at Bālis in the archaeological excavations there, with two molded sherds with potter's names found dating to the 12th and 13th centuries⁴⁴. Cut decorative styles (*kerbschnitt*) can further be dated to the 8th and 9th centuries (Fig. 3). Recent work on Hetty Goldman's Gözlükule excavations in the 1930s by Yasemin Bağcı outlines this assemblage well, yet also shows no Umayyad settlement on this mound within Tarsūs, nor Byzantine for that matter. Excavations at Hisn al-Tīnāt and work at Raqqa will provide good assemblages of these wares, which also begin only in the mid-8th century⁴⁵.

Agnès Vokaer's work on brittlewares is a more useful indicator of chronology, in part since they were the standard common ware and appear everywhere⁴⁶. Brittlewares, utilized since the Roman period, have a long history and large distribution, including not only North Syria but also parts of south-central Iraq. Holemouth cooking pots—characterized by distinctly shaped globular bodies and incurved thickened rims and ubiquitous throughout the northern provinces—also typically date to the mid-8th to mid-10th centuries (Fig. 3). These were a local tradition of production, with several workshops in the region of northwestern Syria, and are also attested as far as southern Iraq⁴⁷. Three main workshops were operating in the Early Islamic period—one around Apamea (workshop 4); one around Antioch (workshop 1); and another whose peak came during this period, located perhaps around Aleppo since its products were mainly found there in Dibli Faraj and Andarin (workshop 6). Paul Reynolds and Yona Waksman observed in Beirut that while forms continued from the Byzantine to Umayyad periods (700–750), the fabric seems closer to wares of central northern Syria than earlier wares. As they noted, however, the fabric does not appear to have occurred in the region in the published reports⁴⁸.

It is agreed that for the northern region, glazing did not begin until the mid-8th century. Coptic painted wares are also absent in the north. The typical 7th–8th-century assemblage is thus unglazed. Some 7th- to early 8th-century forms of brittleware comprising vertical cooking-pot everted rims and long tall necks, with ribbed exteriors, combed decoration, and very thin walls, constitute a very early Islamic transitional development from Late Byzantine forms and are seen stratified at some excavated sites such as Hadir Qinnasrin and Dêhès in the Syrian Jibāl⁴⁹. The forms with tall necks started as early as the 6th century, with most tending to date to the mid-7th–mid-8th centuries, though they can continue past the 8th century, making the need for stratified examples that much more critical (Fig. 4). Brittleware casseroles date similarly (Fig. 4). C. Toskay-Evrin worked on the brittleware ceramics from the Cumhuriyet Meydanı (Republic Square) excavations in Tarsūs undertaken from 1993, of which 30% of the entire assemblage consisted of 8th- to 10th-century holemouth cooking pots⁵⁰. A few 7th–8th-century forms (Type V in her work), however, were detected in two trenches, though it is difficult to say more. Thus, from the excavations, a small presence is attested in the lower city. These, along with other “transitional” ceramics such as the Byzantine/Early Islamic lids (possibly for amphorae), constitute the small body of recognizably Early Islamic I ceramics (Fig. 4). Furthermore, the presence of these brittlewares and absence of holemouth types, known to be Early Islamic II, are also an important distinction, as is the orangeware (sometimes with red paint) recognized at Apamea, Hadir Qinnasrin, and Tetrapyrgium (Qasr al-Saylah)⁵¹.

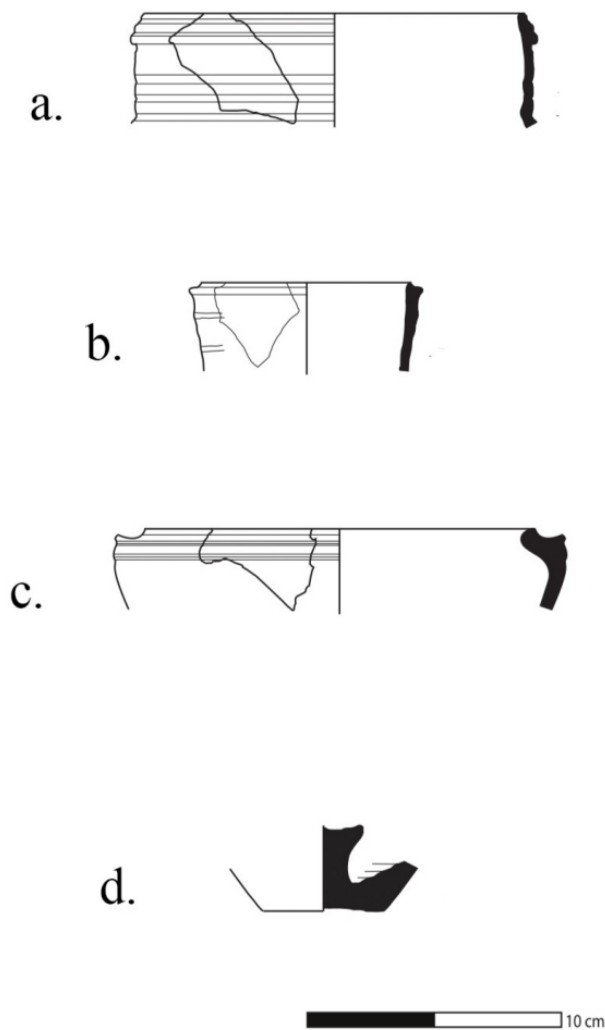


Fig. 4. Early Islamic 1:

a. AS 344, Amuq Survey, brittleware vertical rim, core: red; 16.5 cm. (Gerritsen et alii Fig. 16.2).

b. AS 345, Amuq Survey, brittleware vertical rim, core: red; 9 cm., (Gerritsen et alii Fig. 16.3).

c. AS 202, Amuq Survey, brittleware casserole; 17 cm, (Gerritsen et alii Fig. 16.7).

d. AS 41, Amuq Survey, creamware amphorae lid; 5 cm, (Gerritsen et alii Fig. 16.14).

Some “Early Islamic 1” wares should in fact be long-lasting Late Roman wares. As standardized by John Hayes, imported Late Roman finewares (Late Roman C Phocaeen forms 4, 10, and 13) ranged from the late 6th to early 7th centuries. Some African Red Slip (ARS) forms (Hayes 105 or 109) further date to the late 7th or beginning of the 8th (109B-Bonifay)⁵². Magness, Vroom, and others would push some of these Late Roman C forms through the 7th century, thus making them also “transitional”. Dêhês in the North Syrian “Dead Cities” has been re-dated thus⁵³, and Qal‘at Siman also has continuity. Red slip imitation wares have also been found in Apamea and Antioch⁵⁴. Hayes’ Constantinopolitan cooking pots from Saraçhane, like CW 4, dating from the 7th to early 9th centuries, have been found in the southern Levant, though no published examples in the north have appeared as yet.

Amphorae, too, compose part of the 7th-century assemblage. Their standardized shape makes them helpful for determining trade connections between various regions, although the same amphora shapes could be produced over a wide area in this period⁵⁵. For this region, one does not often see LRA 7 carrot-shaped, Egyptian-based amphorae⁵⁶ or bag-shaped amphorae, which have

a long history from the 5th or second half of the 6th centuries, respectively, to the 10th and 11th⁵⁷. The bag-shaped have been found mostly at Cilician sites (Taşucu, Anemurium/Eski Anemur, and Silifke) and Lycian Limyra⁵⁸, although few and far between⁵⁹. Bag-shaped North Syrian amphorae (NSA) have also been found in surveys in southern Turkey at D h s, Qal'at Siman, Aleppo, and Hadir Qinnasrin, as well as along the Euphrates and Balikh Rivers. The chronology of these amphorae remains problematic, however, although it has been suggested they continue into the 8th century⁶⁰.

From Bađcı's recent publication, two amphorae were part of the Goldmann 1930s excavations, one of which was bag-shaped⁶¹. Late Roman 1 amphorae produced in Cilicia were also present; their exact chronological span, however, has been understudied but is usually said to be 4th to 7th centuries⁶². One of the most widely produced of the Late Roman amphorae types⁶³, LRA 1 amphorae, was also produced on Cyprus into the late 7th century⁶⁴, and in the 6th–7th centuries on the islands of Cos⁶⁵ and Paros⁶⁶ in the Aegean. Some examples of LRA 1 amphorae produced at Ras al-Bassit also imitate the Cilician form of the early 5th century⁶⁷, which argues for a more widespread production of the amphorae, at least in the early Byzantine period. Although Jean-Yves Empereur and Maurice Picon suggested that LRA 1 was produced in North Syria, this has not been accepted by Reynolds⁶⁸.

There is still further evidence of Late Roman amphorae being produced over a wide area. Southern Turkey has been suggested, along with Cyprus, as a possible source for the 7th–8th-century amphora Type V from the Tantara F shipwreck, found off the coast of Tell Dor in Israel⁶⁹. In the Homs region, calcareous amphorae were very common in both the early Byzantine and early Islamic periods, perhaps produced to the southeast. Central Syrian calcareous amphorae have been found in Zeugma and the Jabbul Plain near Aleppo, apparently produced locally. Reynolds has posited that the presence of organics in some amphorae and plainwares argues for the presence of Egyptian potters, since Egyptian pottery includes organics as temper to the clay⁷⁰. There is no reason, however, to assume that foreign potters came into the region to produce these. The surveyors in the Wadi Abu Qalqal survey found kilns, showing that certain plainwares were produced in the local area rather than at larger centers such as B lis downriver. Scholars suggest that these continued throughout the 8th century into the 'Abb s d period⁷¹.

New results from Zeugma, Hadir Qinnasrin, Resafa, and Dibs  Faraj have also stratified 7th-century ceramics. A large building was constructed at Dibs  Faraj (Qasir n) in the Umayyad period and a canal in the early 8th century. Extensive damage throughout the site suggests the settlement was largely destroyed by an earthquake in 859⁷². On the other hand, the Wadi Abu Qalqal sites show continuity from the late 7th to 10th centuries; the surveyors also found a large number of sites in the Early Islamic period that they took to be the result of new settlements following the Islamic conquest⁷³. Occupation is also evident further east, such as at Tell Hamoukar, where excavators reported finding an Early Islamic level with a mudbrick building dated to around 700. This was part of a small settlement one hectare in size⁷⁴. As a result, until we have more refined dating of Early Islamic 1 and Early Islamic 2 ceramics, we need to bear in mind a possible bias in ceramic dating toward the 8th to 10th centuries when assessing the visibility of the first Early Islamic settlements.

The gap thus appears like a break in ceramic tradition. While not as dramatic as the Balikh Valley survey, which recorded no 7th- or 8th-century sites (but has been challenged by De Jong)⁷⁵, we can see it in nearly all projects. The mid-7th to mid-8th centuries were indeed a transitional period where it appears that many Byzantine forms were replaced by different ones and production and distribution increased substantially, although it took a century or so for this change to occur. We would argue that, though methodologically more work needs to be done on the 7th–8th-century gap, the overall number of settlements in the countryside did decrease during this period. Although not a decline, in many surveys it was halved from the preceding Byzantine apogee of settlement and then built up in the successive 8th- to 10th-century ‘Abbāsid period⁷⁶.

Gap 2: The Mid-10th to 11th Centuries

Settlement patterns throughout North Syria show a marked abandonment of sites between the mid-10th and mid-11th centuries. This echoes trends of a “lost century” observed throughout the Islamic Near East and discussed, for example, in the heavily debated book by Ronnie Ellenblum, which argues for climatic change and famine as causes for societal collapse⁷⁷, as already observed by Ioannis G. Telelis⁷⁸ and Richard Bulliet⁷⁹. Indeed, archaeologists such as Karin Bartl⁸⁰, Stefan Heidemann⁸¹, Cristina Tonghini⁸², Claus Peter Haase⁸³, and Sophie Berthier⁸⁴ tend to agree that if one can point to a decline in Islamic history, it is at this time. Scholars have tied the substantial drop in sites in most areas of this period to the political and economic fragmentation of the ‘Abbāsid central authority and shift toward nomadism. In North Syria and northern Mesopotamia, this period is marked historically by the rise of local Arab autonomies such as the Shī‘ah Hamdānids of Aleppo and Mosul (905–1004), the Shī‘ah ‘Uqaylids (990–1096) also based in Mosul, the Numayrids (990–1081) based in the Balikh Valley, and the Mirdasids of Aleppo (1024–1080). To these we can add the Byzantines, who reconquered the region in the 960s and held it for a century; the Armenians, who developed a local dynasty in Cilicia in 1080; and the Fatimids of Egypt, who exerted significant economic and military influence on this region. Moving away from the textual record and back to the material, we need to keep in mind that the environmental proxy data shows significant regional variation, meaning we cannot necessarily extrapolate from one region to another⁸⁵, and that the archaeological studies are not necessarily uniform⁸⁶. Further, as has been pointed out for Palestine, while the 9th–11th centuries are difficult to identify in the archaeological record, the textual sources suggest a prosperous and commercially active countryside⁸⁷.

In North Syria/northern Mesopotamia and southern Anatolia, during the Middle Islamic period (11th–14th centuries), the second largest peak in overall number of sites after the Roman/Late Antique period is observed in all surveys in which chronological separation within the Islamic periods is possible. This “minor” peak, while not as high as the “major” one for the Late Roman period, is noticeable, particularly relative to the preceding, lightly settled Early Islamic period and also in relation to other previous chronological periods. For example, in the Amuq Plain, 44% of the total sites surveyed have been identified as having Middle Islamic occupation—almost half of all sites surveyed of any period. But more finely tuned ceramic dating permits us to see that in the Amuq, Balikh, and Maraş, only about half the number of Early Islamic period sites continued to be occupied into the mid-10th to mid-11th centuries. Most sites were first occupied only from the late 11th to early 14th centuries. We can thus separate settlement into two phases: the poorly settled mid-10th to mid-11th centuries (Middle Islamic I

or Mid Byzantine), followed by the late 11th to early 14th centuries (Middle Islamic II or Frankish period).

Variations on a sub-regional level, however, show that not all areas experienced an observable decline; rather, specific areas witnessed economic development that lasted into the 12th century and later. We argue that while the various calamities of the 11th century as well as nomadization may have affected settlement⁸⁸, the ceramic industries remained untouched. Excavation evidence from Hisn al-Tīnāt on the Mediterranean coast and recent evidence from the Nahr Quwayq hinterland of Aleppo shows increased commercial vitality and local manufacture. Trade patterns also do not appear to have been disrupted. Antioch has evidence of ceramic production, while Tarsūs has evidence of pottery wasters around glass kilns. Hadir Qinnasrin and Rahba continued into the 11th century. In the Dead Cities area, we see clear signs of Byzantine restoration at the site of Qal‘at Sim‘ān in the 10th century, though the nearby site of Telanissos shows no obvious restoration⁸⁹. Along the Syrian coast, many settlements around Tartūs continued after the Islamic conquest, though it has been suggested that the scale of settlement at these sites was less than in the previous Roman and Byzantine periods⁹⁰.

The intervening “lost century” immediately following the Byzantine reconquests can be seen as simply another phase of decline, pushing the notion of decline from one transition of Islamic history (the 7th-century conquests or 8th-century ‘Abbāsids) to another. Yet part of the story of this “lost century” may in fact stem from an ambiguity in the transitional nature of pottery, as the 10th century represents both a break and a development. The break is the dwindling use of unglazed brittlewares for cooking in favor of glazed brittlewares or coarser and grittier micaceous cooking pots, while holemouth pots are no longer used. The development is the early appearance of sgraffito on polychrome splash-ware glazed vessels, the proliferation of turquoise glazes, and gouged/incised or champlévé treatments. Much more work needs to be done with stratified ceramic assemblages of this period. Polychrome sgraffitos of various types are seen at Hisn al-Tīnāt, Raqqa⁹¹, Antioch, Kanīsāt al-Sawdā’, and Tarsūs⁹², as well as Marqab Castle⁹³. At Hisn al-Tīnāt there were also found two examples of glazed sgraffito wares produced more locally in Beirut, which continued with sgraffito decoration in the 10th century (Fig. 5). Although some would push the polychrome sgraffitos earlier to the late 9th in Eastern Iran and Central Asia, they date mainly to the 10th century. But sgraffito and even champlévé with splashed wares can be seen as an intermediary step before Port Saint Symeon wares and the monochromatic yellow or green glazes (Fig 5).

Similarly, often poorer, more abraded turquoise glazes on lighter buff fabrics can be seen as intermediary before the later turquoise on fritwares (Fig. 5)⁹⁴. Our current work on the Nahr Quwayq (Qoueiq) material shows continuity from the 10th to 12th centuries with 37 sites, eight of which were newly founded in the 11th. Furthermore, two of these sites had huge assemblages: Tel Jaadiyeh, which had the same number of 10th–11th-century pottery sherds as the Early Islamic period (17), and Tel ‘Azāz, with 54 sherds, more than the Early Islamic. These wares, all known types, exhibit a significant range of variation within types, many of which have not been detected in the Amuq Plain, Antioch, or Mar‘ash. Some of these (about 10–15 pieces) are hybrids, suggesting innovation and experimentation (Fig. 5). For example, one sherd from Tell ‘Azāz (1089) has interior glazing of turquoise but with sgraffito, and exterior clear glazing like a cooking ware. A polychrome-painted, thin-walled interior bowl has an exterior of monochrome

green/turquoise. We have several of these from one small site, Tell Tleilat. Could this be the first use of turquoise? Another piece has an interior that is color splashed but an exterior that is mottled monochrome yellow more popular in the 12th to 14th centuries. Is this a precursor to monochrome glazed wares? We may conclude from this that regional local production existed; the huge

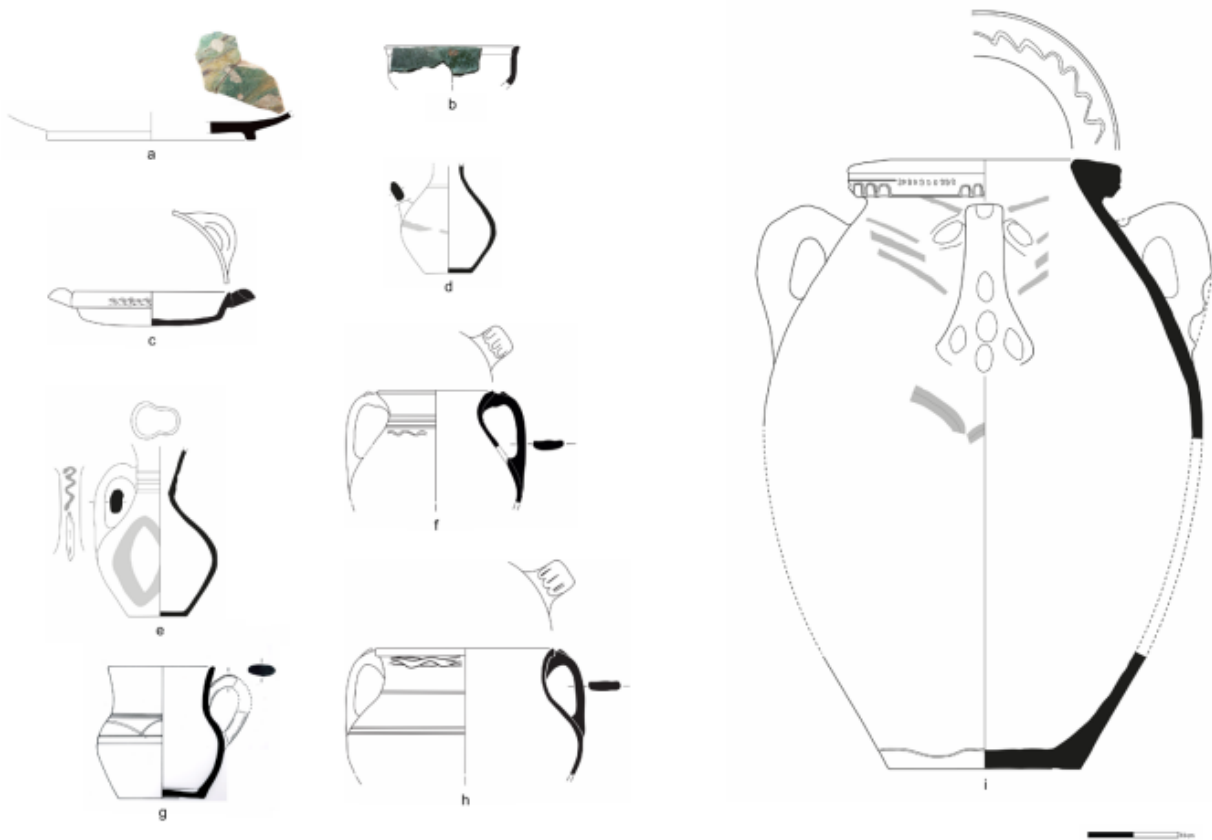


Fig. 5. Middle Islamic 1:

- a. KT 23312-2, Tüpraş Field, polychrome sgraffiato bowl/plate, core: orange; 11 cm.
- b. KT 26122-7, Tüpraş Field, olive green carinated bowl; core: orange; 23 cm.
- c. KT 26736-1, Tüpraş Field, clear-glazed brittleware frying pan/casserole; core: red; 18 cm.
- d. KT 27439-12, Tüpraş Field, clear-glazed brittleware jug; core: red; base 4.5 cm.
- e. KT 26651-1, Tüpraş Field, clear-glazed brittleware trefoil rim jug, core: red; base 17.5 cm.
- f. KT 27081-6, Tüpraş Field, orange jar; core: orange-brown; 13 cm.
- g. KT 26785-3, Tüpraş Field, burnished brown cooking pot; core: brown; 9 cm.
- h. KT 26632-1, Tüpraş Field, unburnished black cooking pot; core: black; 22-25 cm.
- i. KT 27547-8, Tüpraş Field, double banded pithos, core: grey.

numbers of sherds in settlements, likely villages and small towns, on the Quwayq River north of Aleppo further suggests that this production may have occurred not only in cities, as seen in Antioch, but also in rural settlements. Limited Byzantine sites around Tartūs on the Syrian coast also continued to be occupied into the 13th century with distinctive pottery⁹⁵. As Major noted, the Crusader conquest of the region had a significant impact, leading to a period of economic

prosperity in this area with the growth in urban and rural settlements, as well as in the neighboring Islamic regions. This included completely new settlements as well as a resettling of previously inhabited sites⁹⁶.

From ongoing work in Antioch, we have reanalyzed one sector of the city—17-O, located in the heart of the city, the presumed Forum of Valens—which was never published. Excavators in the 1930s found two courtyard houses, the western house of which had two kilns close together in the courtyard. Just west in a small room was a basin with a pipe, likely used for washing and levigating clay. While the excavators found no homogenous pottery around the kiln, they did recover wasters around and very close to it, of turquoise glazed and champlevé, including clay rods with bits of glaze used as supports. Dating is difficult because the digging was arbitrary and non-stratigraphic. Nonetheless, analysis from careful recreation of the stratigraphy indicates that the house dated to after 1050 (owing to a lead seal under the floor) and to the 12th century. In the east house, the floor of one room could be dated from the second half of the 11th century by a lead seal for a minor administrator. The lowest floor of this house was of brick, beneath which the latest coins dated to 976 and the latest pottery to the 11th century. The courtyard in this period was also subdivided into three rooms. The room closest to the threshold had an oven, and it may be that pottery was produced here as well, since clay rods were also found as well as a waster of Port Saint Symeon ware. In the same context was a 10th–11th-century Fatimid glass weight and Chinese celadon, likely of the late Five Dynasties or Song (960–1127). These were therefore pottery workshops and residences of the 11th and 12th centuries. The predominant coins of this level were of the Byzantine reconquest period after 969, so from the second half of the 10th to the first half of the 11th centuries, with many Constantinople mints. Interestingly, many Saljūq coins depicting animals, likely minted in Antioch, were also found in the houses, dating to the brief 14-year period of Saljūq rule in the last quarter of the 11th century, or from 1092–1105 and still in circulation during the subsequent Crusader occupation of the town. Crusader coins were few and found mainly in mixed surface contexts. Champlevé—found all over the Aegean and in Constantinople, though often showing Kufic or pseudo-Kufic writing and borrowing of Islamic styles and motifs—does not occur in any of the regional sites around Antioch, thus suggesting that it was an export-only market and/or for elite/urban Byzantine Christians with a taste in Islamic art.

Although the number of settlements of the 11th century is still not as high as the preceding or subsequent periods, it by no means represents a gap. We also have assemblages like that of the Serçe Limanı wreck of around 1025⁹⁷ or of Tell Shahin in the Balikh Valley, dated by excavation and absence of known early and middle ‘Abbāsīd wares, fritwares, and Port Saint Symeon wares⁹⁸, which began only in the late 11th century. Buffwares, including those with applied or incised decoration, also likely continued into the 11th but are poorly understood. At Hisn al-Tīnāt we have some good stratified contexts of the 11th century (Fig. 5), including a local tradition of brown or black paste, one-handled cooking pots with burnished brown exteriors, frequently with appliqué curvy “worms” on the handle and handmade decorations like notching. Less common was the continuation of brittleware but with clear glaze. The burnished cooking ware technique is also seen on coarseware jugs. Lids were of two types: unribbed thick brown with scalloped rims (earlier), and sharply ribbed, non-scalloped lids. Non-cooking coarsewares were mainly micaceous orangeware jugs with one handle and jars with incised or painted designs. These have not been found in some other parts of North Syria, suggesting a localized

craft specialization. Handmade cooking ware has been found in small quantities—at Hisn al-Tīnāt a couple of lids, a small jar, and basins and the same at Kinet Höyük (12th–14th centuries), and at Apamea (also 12th–14th)⁹⁹, on the Syrian coast (12th–13th)¹⁰⁰, and in the Euphrates region. Handmade pottery co-existed with wheel-made pottery. At Hisn al-Tīnāt, many pithoi with orange surfaces and grey-black pastes were found in pits, and one room, within the fortified enclosure, contained six or seven, all destroyed at once and dating to the early 12th century by coin and carbon-14 dating. The rims were wider than the later 12th–14th centuries and were scalloped, incised, and notched. At Hisn al-Tīnāt were also found Günsenin amphorae from this period, as well as examples at Antioch in sector 19-M¹⁰¹. Our familiar known bias that most of our dating of this century relies on glazed wares still exists.

The 11th-century gap is thus a methodological one, and it would be more accurate to call it a transition. Huge changes did, however, occur in the 11th century, and we see a general drop in settlement coinciding with the abandonment of classical cities that had continued into the Early Islamic period. Certain politico-economic changes also occurred with the brief Byzantine reconquest after 956. The establishment of Cilician Armenia, the rise of local dynasties, and commercial influence from the Fatimids in the south forged trans-frontier and maritime strategies. These successful and specific economic corridors and micro-regions thus stand apart from and challenge the more observable decline of landscape.

Gap 3: The 15th Century ...and Beyond

Perhaps the biggest of the three gaps, however, is found with the ceramics of the 15th century—and beyond. While the reasons for this gap differ from the previous two, we consider it important to include a discussion of it here because (1) some of these ceramics may be misdated to earlier periods and may have been in use longer than thought, (2) we wish to call attention to the resulting problems and the need for more archaeological work to address them, and (3) we want to be consistent in reviewing the gaps in Islamic chronologies. This 15th-century gap is made even more pronounced by a flurry of settlement activity, urban efflorescence, and material culture from the 12th to 14th centuries, the so-called “minor peak”, coinciding with the high point of the Mamlūk period in the Middle East. In this period in the north, Port Saint Symeon sgraffito wares dominate with numerous production sites¹⁰², and fritwares of stone paste also appear, such as the black underglaze painted turquoise wares called Raqqa wares, though they are rare on the Syrian coast at rural sites¹⁰³ and inland at Apamaea¹⁰⁴. Bright green and mustard yellow monochrome glazed wares are also very common (Fig. 6).

By the 15th century, however, the 125 inhabited 12th–14th-century sites in the Amuq Plain had dropped by two thirds. One reason for the decline may have been that the region was no longer the focus of attention of either the Mamlūks of Cairo or the Ottomans of Anatolia, apart from extracting heavy taxes. Further, this region was a frontier between both powers in the 15th century until the Ottomans’ defeat of the Mamlūks in 1516 at Marj Dabiq, outside Aleppo. Certain settlements that had been strategic in the Crusader period ceased being so under the Mamlūks when the border changed and they were no longer important military sites¹⁰⁵. Moreover, the Mamlūks’ military policy meant that the region took some time to recover. Mamlūk Marqab (Margat), for example, never recovered its former importance and by the 17th century was described by travelers as uninhabited¹⁰⁶. A possible resulting increase in nomadic

settlement in the area would, however, be difficult to observe in the survey data. The limited environmental studies suggest a downturn in agriculture, which perhaps was the result of cultural rather than climatic change and the development of new agricultural practices¹⁰⁷.



Fig. 6. Middle Islamic 2:

a. Afi 345, Qoueiq Survey, Louvre, Port St. Symeon, polychrome sgraffiato bowl/plate, core: red-brown; 26 cm.

b. Afi 342, Qoueiq Survey, Louvre, Port St. Symeon, polychrome sgraffiato bowl/plate, core red-brown; 8 cm.

c. Afi 397, Qoueiq Survey, Louvre, black and blue underglaze painted, core: white.

d. RN 148, Hadir Qinnasrin, courtesy of D. Whitcomb, handmade geometric painted, red paint.

e. RN 148 Hadir Qinnasrin, courtesy of D. Whitcomb, handmade geometric painted, dark brown paint.

f. Afi 383, Qoueiq Survey, Louvre Museum, black painted turquoise underglaze, core: white; 5 cm.

The main methodological bias is that of the recent undertaking of Ottoman archaeology as a field and the lack of excavated sites. From survey assemblages we have few ceramic indicators of anything after the 15th century and are usually forced to use Ottoman tax registers (defters), European traveler descriptions, and other textual works to understand settlement patterns. Where are the late Mamlūk and Ottoman ceramics? Are they being misdated as earlier Islamic or even pre-Islamic? Or did some 14th-century ceramics have longer lives, such as the handmade geometric painted wares we see in the Quwayq area around Aleppo and the one waster in a surveyed rural site? At Marqab, which does not appear to have been occupied after the end of the Crusader period, handmade geometric painted wares are rare¹⁰⁸ and virtually absent from Syrian coastal rural sites¹⁰⁹. At Apamea, on the other hand, they are more common¹¹⁰. Some of the more lavish glazes are visible on surveys, but still only here and there. Ottoman ceramics, however, date mostly to the 19th century, such as rouletted ware. In the northern region of Syria and Mesopotamia, Iznik and Kütahya wares are absent and Çanakkale wares few. In the Quwayq there is some evidence, yet in Antioch, a city we know was inhabited, there is nothing, though the scale of inhabitation may be a factor, as sources appear to point to the significant Mamluk and early Ottoman contraction of Antioch thus excluding most excavation areas by Princeton's team. Archaeologically at present we would have to agree, although based on defter sources, we know there were settlements in the 16th century. Thus, it is perplexing why 15th-century and later ceramics are invisible. The main evidence comes from tobacco pipes, which do not appear to have been manufactured locally, and conventionally begin only in the early 17th century (Fig. 7)¹¹¹. Our understanding of unglazed pottery in this period is also limited; indeed, the period is often a catch-all for unidentified miscellaneous pottery. Furthermore, nearly all the excavated areas in this region did not continue into this period except for Antioch, which was limited to a core area yet to be examined. From historical sources we know that many of our surveyed areas were once again the realm of nomadic groups.

Conclusion

How can we sum up this sweeping and somewhat generalized tour of gaps in North Syria/Mesopotamia and South Anatolia? Do we have a decline or transition every 400 years or so, in the 3rd, 7th, 11th, and 15th centuries? Are these transitional periods—coincidentally ones where nomadic groups dominate—then linked to settled-versus-pastoralist societies? And in this Ibn Khaldūnian scheme do we see evidence of resilience and adaptation, as has been argued for short-term cataclysmic change¹¹². It would be valuable to see whether similar trends occurred elsewhere, with the caveat that such sweeping and perhaps generalizing patterns can be dangerously deterministic to assert¹¹³. For example, what of the 19th century AD or of the 3rd century BC, that is, the Hellenistic (Seleucid) and Parthian periods? That is a pattern for scholars to explore in future work. For the present, we would argue that our knowledge of ceramics needs to be both improved and decoupled from historical events. As we have demonstrated, it is likely that many of the observed gaps in the archaeological records in North Syria/Mesopotamia and South Anatolia are a result of factors related more to having fewer well-dated excavations in the area rather than a reflection of what is on the ground.



Fig. 6. Ottoman period:

- a. RN 528, Hadir Qinnasrin, courtesy of D. Whitcomb, tobacco pipe, dark red burnished, core: dark red; 5 cm.
- b. RN 528, Hadir Qinnasrin, courtesy of D. Whitcomb, tobacco pipe, dk red burnished, core: dark red; 2 cm.
- c. RN 528, Hadir Qinnasrin, courtesy of D. Whitcomb, tobacco pipe, dk red burnished, core: dark red.
- d. RN 528, Hadir Qinnasrin, courtesy of D. Whitcomb, tobacco pipe, dk red burnished, core: dark red.
- e. RN 528, Hadir Qinnasrin, courtesy of D. Whitcomb, 31 cm, tin-glaze pottery, core: redbrown.

In the meantime, it is important that we keep this in mind when examining the archaeological survey evidence. The 11th-century transition, we believe, is mostly an issue of methodology, not of political decline. But the 7th century transition, we further believe, is a combination of both a drop in settlement owing to political and economic factors as well as shifts in ceramic style and technology. The 15th century transition is a product of multiple factors: methodology, political and economic factors and settlement decline, and possibly changes in ceramic technology.

Notes

1. There is considerable literature on this topic. See, for example, Walmsley 1988; 2000; 2007a, pp. 21-30, 48-70; 2007b; Avni 2011, 2014; Rattenborg - Blanke 2017, pp. 312, 316, 318-319; Holmqvist 2019. The view that the Islamic conquests caused a “decline” still persists, however. See Izdebski 2013, pp. 208-209.
2. See, for instance, Walmsley 2000, p. 265; 2007a, pp. 144-145; Whitcomb 1990; 1992; Gawlikowski 2004, p. 469; El Khouri - Omoush, 2015, Rattenborg - Blanke 2017, pp. 319, 324.
3. The Tantura F shipwreck, which the excavators date to the 7th-8th centuries, lacks chronological specificity. See Barkai et alii 2010.
4. A recent exhibition emphasized Saljūq art and architecture rather than focusing on questions of Saljūq settlement. See Canby et alii 2016. A different picture is noted by Haldon et alii 2014, p. 151; Peacock 2015.
5. See Vorderstrasse 2005a.
6. Haldon et alii 2014, p. 145.
7. This is the a’yan-amir system outlined by Hodgson 1974, p. 140.
8. See also Reynolds 2003
9. See also Vroom 2005; 2007
10. Walmsley 2000, pp. 266-267.
11. Eger 2016, p. 3.
12. Vorderstrasse 2005a.
13. In some cases, these gaps do not in fact exist; see Holmqvist 2019, p. 3. See also Frangipane 2012, p. 42, who considered the issue of whether a period should be considered a phase, a transition, or a gap in evidence. For gaps in other parts of the Mediterranean, see Christie 1989, p. 251.
14. Braswell 2003, p. 20; Conides 2018, pp. 178-179. For the potential problems with identifying transitions, see Frangipane 2012, pp. 40-41; Cowgill 2015, p. 27.
15. Major 2015a, pp. 39-40; Major - El-Ajji 2011, p. 265; Kázmér - Major 2015, pp. 184, 187.
16. Numismatic evidence for the Mamlūk and Ottoman periods is rather limited; see Vorderstrasse 2005b, for example. On coin circulation in the Bahri Mamlūk period, see Schultz 2004.
17. See, for example, Mason - Sunahara 2006, p. 215, who noted there was a “relatively clean later Mamluk/ Ottoman level” at the site of Tell Acharneh in inland Syria on the Orontes but did not publish it.
18. Beaudry 2014, p. 256.
19. See Vorderstrasse 2005a; 2005b; 2006; 2010; 2013-2014; 2015; Eger 2013.
20. Haines 1970.
21. For example, see Numan et alii 1999-2002; Olmo Lete - Montero Fennollós, 1999; Algaze et alii 1994; Wilkinson et alii 1990; Wilkinson et alii 2004; Serdaroğlu 1977; Loon 1967; Bahnassi 1978; Whallon 1979.
22. Forthcoming publications of Islamic ceramics by the authors include final reports on the site of Hisn al-Tināt (Tüpras Field), a re-publication of sector 17-O from the Princeton Antioch project, and a re-publication of the Islamic settlements from the Tell Rifa‘at Survey of the Nahr Quwayq (Qoueiq). The Boğaziçi excavations at Tarsūs on the Gözlükule mound are also forthcoming.
23. See p. 317, above and for more on this, see Vorderstrasse 2005a.
24. Whitcomb 1988.
25. Magness 2003, pp. 196-202.
26. Walmsley 2000, pp. 266, 312-313, 342-343.
27. See, for example, Reynolds 2003.
28. Mullane 2005; Eger 2015, pp. 44-47.
29. Gerritsen et alii 2008; Eger 2015, p. 43. Also discussed in Izdebski 2013, pp. 218-219
30. Blaylock 1998.
31. Wilkinson et alii 1990; Algaze et alii 1990.

32. See Bağci 2017, pp. 105-110, for a survey of ‘Abbāsid sites, including Hisn al-Tīnāt, Tilbeshar, Zeugma, Hadir Qinnasrin, Raqqa, Rahba-Mayadin, Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi, Apamea, Balis-Meskene, Madinat alFar, and Resafa, and other surveys (Amuq, Keban Dam, Kurban Höyük, Lidar Höyük, Birecid and Carchemish Dam, and Balikh).
33. Watson 1999; Vorderstrasse 2005a, pp. 77-78; Tite et alii 2015, p. 80; Bağci 2017; Matin et alii 2018. See also the discussion in Watson 2014, p. 128; For a more detailed recent overview, see Bağci 2017, pp. 133-136, and the later date for Hadir Qinnasrin—mid-9th to mid-10th—in Rousset et alii 2012, pp. 70-71.
34. Watson 2014, pp. 129-130; Tite et alii 2015, p. 89; Matin et alii 2018.
35. Vorderstrasse 2005a, pp. 75-77. This was also discussed in an unpublished presentation at ICAANE 2002 in Paris by S. Redford, “Early Islamic Antioch.” In that presentation, Redford stated that these were being produced in a reused bath in Antioch, which had wasters. Watson has called for a more precise definition of splash-wares and the various types that have been defined as these; see Watson 2014, p. 133. For a more detailed recent overview, see Bağci 2017, pp. 132-133.
36. For a more detailed recent overview, see Bağci 2017, p. 122: white opaque glazed ware with cobalt—first half of the 9th century (perhaps as early as late 8th); p. 127: polychrome lusterwares beginning mid-9th century, and monochrome lusterwares beginning late 9th century—end date is unknown but typically 10th century; p. 130: white opaque glazed with turquoise and other colors—mainly 9th, and perhaps mid-9th.
37. Kalantaryan et alii 2009, pp. 124-126, Pls. 23-24; Grigoryan - Mkrtychyan 2014, pp. 145, 156-157.
38. Vorderstrasse 2005a. See also Watson 2014, p. 128, who notes that opaque white glaze ware imitating Chinese types was produced at Raqqa.
39. For a more detailed recent overview, see Bağci 2017, pp. 140-141.
40. Mulder 2014, p. 156-158.
41. Gonella 1999, p. 60, Figs. 87-88.
42. See, for example, discussion and photograph in Eger 2013, p. 67, Fig. 10.
43. Mulder 2014, p. 158. This publication references only Lane’s original work on al-Mina and not Vorderstrasse’s subsequent re-study of the material from the site.
44. Mulder 2014, pp. 180-183.
45. Eger, 2010. For Raqqa, see Gonella 1999; Miglus - Stepniowski 1999; Watson 1999.
46. Vokaer 2011; 2012; 2013a, pp. 493-496; 2013b, pp. 579-589.
47. Vokaer 2013b, pp. 585-586, Fig. 8. For a more detailed recent overview, see Bağci 2017, pp. 142-143.
48. Reynolds - Waksman 2007, p. 63. There are parallels in forms between brittleware and the so-called Workshop X fabric types imported into Syria from northern Palestine (Vokaer 2010, p. 218); Vorderstrasse 2005a, p. 75 and personal observation.
49. Sodini et alii 1980.
50. Toskay-Evrin 2005, pp. 682-683.
51. Vokaer 2012; Vokaer 2013a, p. 493.
52. Kaptijn 2009, p. 215; Vokaer 2013a, pp. 485-486; Bes 2015, pp. 9, 130-132.
53. Magness 2003, pp. 198-206.
54. Vokaer 2013a, pp. 486-488; 2013b, pp. 589-590. At the site of Telanissos, which was located near Qal’at Siman, a preliminary study of the architecture revealed no evidence of the settlement being restored or reconstructed in the 6th century AD onwards. See Karakhanian et alii 2008, pp. 130-132. For situating the Dead Cities and their economy in the context of Late Antiquity, see Izdebski 2011, p. 292.
55. Rauh et alii 2013, pp. 145, 158.
56. For a discussion of LRA7 in general, see Rauh et alii 2013, pp. 160-161.
57. Uscatescu 2003, pp. 547, 549.
58. Vroom 2005, p. 252; 2007.
59. This is also true for the Homs region; see Reynolds 2014, p. 60.

60. Vokaer 2013a, pp. 490-492; 2013b, pp. 590, 592-594. See also, for example, Orssaud 1992, p. 221, no. 8, Pl. B: 2, 14 (Déhès); Konrad 2001, pp. 164-165 (Qasr al-Saylah, north of Resafa).
61. Bađci 2017.
62. Uscatescu 2003, p. 549; Vroom 2005, p. 251; Demesticha 2013, pp. 170, 172-173, 176-177. Demesticha adopts a tripartite classification of the ware, dividing it into three generations: LR1/A (4th-5th centuries AD), LR1/B (end 5th-6th centuries AD), LR1/C (7th century AD). The third-generation (7th century AD) LRA1 amphora are known to have been produced on the southern coast of Cyprus and at Elaiussa-Sebaste in Cilicia and Cos. The exact dating of the Elaiussa-Sebaste kiln in the 7th century remains uncertain. See Burrigato et alii 2007
63. Demesticha 2013, p. 170; Rauh et alii 2013, p. 160.
64. Vroom 2005, p. 251; Demesticha 2013; Leidwanger 2014, pp. 898-899. See also Autret 2012, who discusses the close connection between amphorae production in Cyprus and Cilicia in the Roman period. Autret 2012, p. 263, also notes that this connection continued with the production of LRA1 amphorae, which were produced at some of the same kiln sites that produced earlier ones.
65. Empereur - Picon 1989, pp. 236-243; Diamanti 2010a; 2010b; 2010c, pp. 58-72, 203-206, 279-328, Cat. nos. 139-247, Figs. 38-83; Demesticha 2013, p. 171; Leidwanger 2014, p. 899.
66. Diamanti 2015.
67. Reynolds - Mills 2014, p. 134.
68. Empereur - Picon 1989, pp. 236-243; Reynolds 2005; Williams 2005a; 2005b; Demesticha 2013, p. 170; Leidwanger 2014, p. 898.
69. Barkai et alii 2010, p. 99.
70. Reynolds 2013; Reynolds 2014, pp. 61-62.
71. Mottram - Menere 2008, pp. 85-86.
72. Harper - Wilkinson 1975, pp. 324, 337; Harper 1980. The forthcoming publication by Anna Leone of Durham University will helpfully clarify the chronology of the site. See <https://www.doaks.org/research/support-for-research/fellowships/reports/2016-2017/leone-2016-2017>.
73. Mottram - Menere 2005, pp. 165, 168.
74. See Gibson 2000, pp. 3, 7; Gibson et alii 2002, p. 50, Fig. 23.
75. De Jong 2012, pp. 522-523.
76. Eger 2015, p. 68. Similar conclusions appear in Izdebski 2011, pp. 309-310; Izdebski 2013, pp. 218-219.
77. Ellenblum 2012.
78. Telelis 2000; 2008
79. Bulliet 2009.
80. Bartl 1994, pp. 116, 186-187; 1996; 1999-2000, pp. 477-478.
81. Heidemann 2009, pp. 504-505; 2015, pp. 38-39.
82. Tonghini 1999, pp. 18-19.
83. Haase 1983, p. 75.
84. Berthier 2001.
85. Mcmillan 2012, p. 302; Izdebski 2013, pp. 140-141; Haldon et alii 2014, pp. 131-132; Izdebski et alii 2015; Preiser-Kapeller 2015, pp. 201, 203, 208-209.
86. Mcmillan 2012, pp. 43-44.
87. Rattenborg - Blanke 2017, p. 326.
88. Izdebski 2011, p. 300.
89. Karakhanian et alii 2008, 130-133. They also suggest that textual sources argue that the date for the restoration of the fortress was 10th century, but this is not clear.
90. Kázmér - Major 2015, pp. 185, 187-188. The survey uncovered pottery from the 13th century but apparently nothing before that, pointing to a gap in the occupation, although the article does not discuss this.
91. Tonghini - Henderson 1998.

92. For a more detailed recent overview, see Bađci 2017, pp. 132-133, 209-210.
93. Major - El-Ajji 2011, p. 276, Fig. 35.
94. Fritwares appear to have started in the 11th century; see Tonghini 2005.
95. Kázmér - Major 2015, p. 185.
96. Major 2015b, p. 195.
97. Jenkins 1992; Waksman 2013.
98. Tonghini 1995.
99. Vezzoli 2016, pp. 155-158, Pls. 32-33.
100. Major 2015a, p. 21.
101. Eger 2013, p. 114, Fig. 10, Illustration from Antioch, 19-M assemblage.
102. Vorderstrasse 2005a, pp. 119-121; Major 2015a, pp. 23-24.
103. Major 2015a, p. 24.
104. Vezzoli 2016, pp. 138-140, Pl. 27.
105. Major - El-Ajji 2011, p. 265; Kázmér - Major 2015, pp. 184, 187. The fortress of Sāfīta, for example, was not repaired after being conquered by the Mamlūks in 1271, while al-Marqab was not extensively repaired in the Mamlūk or Ottoman periods. Major - El-Ajji 2011 also suggest that earthquakes were a reason that al-Marqab was not repaired in this period. See in general Major 2015a, pp. 39-40.
106. Major 2016, p. 127
107. Kaniewski et alii 2010, p. 260.
108. Major - El-Ajji 2011, p. 277
109. Major 2015a, p. 20.
110. Vezzoli 2016, pp. 160-163, Pls. 4, 34-40. Vezzoli does not identify this ware as handmade geometric painted ware or list any parallels.
111. Gerritsen et alii 2008.
112. See Mordecai 2018.
113. See Soroush - Mordecai 2018. The work of Mordecai and Soroush also demonstrates the dangers of such an approach, though lacks specificity.

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