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SYSTEMATIC SURFACE COLLECTION FROM NEVRUZLU: A Late Halaf Site in the Kahramanmaraş Valley

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I Introduction

This paper focuses on a systematic surface collection of the mound called Nevruzlu located in the Kahramanmaraş valley of the Southeast Anatolia[1]. While dating the site by presenting the material remains recovered from the surface, the surveying strategy applied to the site is described also. The detailed presentation of the surveying strategy not only serves as an example of a practical field technique, but also allows one to assess the reliability of the data. The conclusion of the paper discusses the date of the site and the possible place and role of Nevruzlu within the Halaf world in the Maraş Valley.

At the same time, this paper should be seen as an appendix to a larger body of research that has already been devoted to the understanding of the Kahramanmaraş region in the Halaf period. This large-scale project, which includes the recent years' excavations at Domuztepe, focuses on both internal and intra-site processes of significant behaviours and interactions of the ancient communities. Such processes, in return, may help us to recognize evolutionary social developments and complexities of human groups in the past. With this research focus in mind, Nevruzlu should be examined in relation to Domuztepe as part of the same valley system. Other well-known sites in northern Mesopotamia are deliberately not addressed in this paper.

II Nevruzlu

Nevruzlu was discovered during the reconnaissance surveys carried out in the Maraş valley (fig.1), as the initial part of Kahramanmaraş Archaeological Project (Carter 1995; 1996). The aims of the reconnaissance were to establish the relative chronology of the region as well as to document the cultural developments that took place in the Maraş Valley. In addition, the region demonstrates importance for trade and interaction systems in the later time periods. It was known to have been at the crossroads of ancient trade routes, but the lack

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of any systematic research kept this part of Anatolia unknown archaeologically. Three seasons of reconnaissance surveys were fruitful and resulted in the recovery of data from more than 250 sites, dating from the Paleolithic to Medieval ages. One of the later prehistoric periods identified in the valley was the Halaf period (ca.5500-4200 BC). At that time, this period was represented by only two sites in the region: Nevruzlu, and the major site Domuztepe.

Following the initiation of excavations at Domuztepe, it has been thought that this large site could not have existed in isolation but must have interacted with other neighbouring settlements. If we wish to understand the past events that once took place at Domuztepe in the Halaf period, it is crucial to focus on the nature of the relations that this site must have had with its contemporaries. At the same time, since Nevruzlu is a small size, low mound, we thought it would be advantageous to examine it with a systematic surface collection, achievable within a reasonable amount of time. With this research plan, we hoped to obtain clues to the role of Nevruzlu with respect to Domuztepe. Due to its size, Nevruzlu may be the satellite of the larger center, if they both are contemporary. Therefore, collecting the material evidence from the surface would provide more data and serve as the first step towards evincing patterns of past behavior over this site.

Nevruzlu is a more or less an oval shaped, small site around 70 by 80 meters in diameter, and 2 meters in height at its highest points. The site is located near the modern village called Nevruzlu, which is 10 km north of Domuztepe and 1 km north of Aksu river (fig.2). Rather small settlement size was previously considered to be one of characteristics of the Halaf, but today, however, recent research shows that much larger Halaf sites exist, such as Domuztepe, Kazane Höyük and Takyan Höyük (Campbell et. al. 1999; Wattenmaker 1994; 1997; Algaze et. al. 1991).

Unfortunately, Nevruzlu, like many other sites, is under the constant threat of destruction today. Our reconnaissance visits showed that the site had met with intense agricultural activities and related disturbances. Considering its small size and low height, the regular agricultural activities cause a constant flattening of the site. At one of our visits, a rather large size truck was parked above the site during the process of harvesting sugar beets from and around the surface of the site. According to local informants, since around the beginning of the twentieth century, the site has been intensely used for agricultural purposes. Today, wheat, cotton, and sugar beets are the most common items planted over the area. The regionally well-known cotton pickers, who consist of mainly impoverished nomads from Urfa, Adana, Adıyaman and Gaziantep, are regularly hired to work during the harvesting season. Naturally, they construct their temporary tents, shades, and other domestic facilities over the site. Such preparation of modern living structures in every fall season gradually destroys the cultural layers of the site. Hence, it seems clear that the site will totally disappear in the not-so-distant future. Or, whenever the land owner may have enough funds to hire a local bulldozer in order to gain smoother agricultural land, the site will be flattened probably in less than five working days and the data with the contexts we need will irreversibly be destroyed. Equally important as a destruction factor, site is located very near to the village; in fact, a house with its garden and the village road is built adjacent to the site. Because of such modern constructions, it is reasonable to assume that the north and northeastern areas of the site may

have been partially covered by these modern structures if not destroyed altogether and these areas were not studied out of respect for the privacy of the family living in the house. According to local informants, the area of the site had served as a traditional storage area until the recent past. In order to store grain year-round, the villagers dug meter-deep pits over this site known in Turkish *kuyu ambar* or *tahıl kuyusu*. Similar activities were documented in the 1970's during the Keban Rescue Project in Elazığ province (Peters 1976:pl.80, 86;1 -2). All these activities at and around the site cause the unconscious but ongoing destruction mechanisms for the ancient remains.

III Survey and Sampling Strategy

In addition to the excavations at Domuztepe and earlier reconnaissance survey by Carter, more surveys of the valley took place, but this time the research was confined to the vicinity of Domuztepe. The questions asked were oriented towards Domuztepe and the Halaf period rather than the region and the establishment of its chronology. The main goals were to understand the landscape during the Halaf period, to establish the paleo-climatic conditions, to identify the available resources and study the patterns of their exploitation, to record the other archaeological sites in the vicinity, and, if any, to discover the other contemporary sites located in corridor between Domuztepe and Nevruzlu, which stretches approximately 10 km (fig.2). During the intensive walks in this corridor, Snead (1996) applied a sampling strategy that involved full coverage of eleven promising localities in order to detect more Halaf period settlements, but this short-term work could not produce any Halaf sites. Nevertheless, Campbell detected some Halaf pottery in the reconnaissance collection coming from sites KM 67 and KM 125, which led him to state that while there seem to be more Halaf sites, the formation processes of settlements have buried them and do not allow us to date these occupations (Campbell, et. al. 1999).

Surveying Nevruzlu consisted of two major phases. The first phase was to prepare the topographical map of the mound and lay out the sampling strategy over the site. The second phase was to collect the material evidence and date the site by studying the collected samples accordingly.

Mapping was initiated by locating the base point for topographical readings (fig. 3). The highest looking point of the site was chosen in order to see the entire surface of the site and to avoid moving the base point again for further readings. The North point was established thereafter and more than 300 necessary readings all over the site followed.

Sampling and coverage were established with the use of transects. The reasons for selecting the transects as collection units instead of circles or squares are the advantage of having already set two precise points on the North-South axis, which were established for the topographic map. Laying the first transect on this line and the others parallel to it was practical for placing them on our map. Accordingly, the first transect line was laid exactly on the base point and the N point. The length of each transects was chosen to be 76 meters, which was longer than the average diameter of the site. The transects were decided to be 4 meters wide with 2 meters on both sides of the established transect line. After the first transect was laid,

eight more transects parallel to the first one, with 10 meter intervals, were established on both east and west side of the first transect. Each transect was given a name, such as T1. Overall, these nine transects appear to cover the entire site as well as the little outside of the edges.

By choosing transects much longer than the site, it is hoped that an issue in settlement archaeology may be solved. The definition of a site and the determination of the edges of a site seem to be mainly based on the artifact density, but density does not seem to be steady in any given region and varies from one region to another and from one period to another. Also, whether the term site should include the areas in the vicinity where the fields, gardens, and various activity areas existed or only the areas where the architecture was constructed for various forms of occupational activities, is another question to be answered by the researcher. The issues of identifying a site with spatial and temporal behavioral patterns are widely discussed in the literature (Plog et. al. 1978; Sanders, Parsons, Santley 1979; Gallant 1986; Wilkinson 1989: Cherry, Davis, Mantzourani 1991; Gleason 1994). Non-occupational activity areas such as thrash middens or nearby gardens were not addressed in this work since the surface collection would be uninformative compared to an excavation. Therefore it is assumed that with the focus on the artifact density on the surface, laying transects approximately longer than the site is an adequate precaution because this allows one to identify the area and the edges of the site. In accordance, the assumption that more than four artifact fragments in one collection unit should indicate a past activity area, and artifacts smaller than 2 cm are not informative and should not be treated as evidence indicating a past activity, was accepted. Areas with fewer than four fragments or fragments of an uninformative size are likely to occur near to the edge of the site because of the erosion of the upper layers through time; this eroded soil is likely to be dispersed to neighbouring vicinities by agriculture. The entire collection procedure was made by allowing these principals to define the site and determine the activity areas with artifacts.

Since each transect covered a total of 304m^2 and would have required a long time to collect the artifacts, they were further divided into 4 meter wide squares, each of which was 16 m^2 in area. Alternating squares starting from the south of each transect were chosen to be collection units, with 10 per transect. These collection units were given individual names with the use of lower case letters a to j, such as T1a, indicating the square a of Transect 1, or T7d indicating the square d of Transect 7. In this system, equal chance was given to each portion of the site and, therefore, the chosen systematic sampling strategy utilized non-random, non-stratified applications.

This task, the mapping procedure, laying the collection units, and collecting the materials from the surface, was completed by two individuals in 15 hours, spread over three long morning shifts. The entire collected area totaled 1440 m^2, equaling 25.7% of the site coverage. It is assumed that without having employed the full coverage technique, this percentage is still high enough to represent the reliable distribution of materials and to detect the density of certain types of artifacts and the activity areas. Some similar fundamental works in settlement archaeology and sampling techniques, such as the ones conducted in Mesoamerica, also proved to be efficient and informative in determining the intra-site, inter-site settlement patterns and activity areas (Plog 1976; Flannery 1976). However, there are

some difficulties in the Near Eastern cases, such as the settlement size. The majority of the Near Eastern sites seem to be larger than 1 hectare. Also, these sites are often formed as high mounds consisting of multi-period settlements. In addition, when erosion and other geographic changes over the millennia are considered, these factors necessitate a higher percentage of sampling to obtain dependable results. Although it may not resolve all problems that are related to site surface survey, when time allows, a higher percentage of coverage should improve the reliability of the data.

IV The Archaeological Evidence (Figs. 4-7)

Artifacts were bagged and labeled with the location where they were collected. After they were washed, they were separated according to their material, such as sherds, glass, stones, etc. Since the corpus of the material consisted mainly of sherds, greater attention was paid to pottery assemblage. Meanwhile, if artifacts were intensely abraded, battered, or less than 2 cm in size, they were discarded for the reasons mentioned above. The lithics recovered were very small in number, totaling 64 pieces with the weight of 292 grams. Most fragments were flint or flint-like rocks, while only one tiny piece was obsidian. It is possible that deep plowing and harvesting pushed the small lithic fragments into the cracks of the soil and buried them beneath the surface. Also, the preservation state of the lithics sample is poor. They all seem to be broken into very small pieces as a kind of a debitage bulk. This might have resulted from the constant agricultural destruction over the surface. Thus, these stones were of very limited usefulness to the archaeologist for the analytical study, but a specialist's opinion would still be helpful.

After this initial sorting, artifacts were grouped according to ware by studying the diagnostic sherds. The procedure applied was adopted from the simple, formal typological systematic, 'medium level processing' established for the sherds found at the Domuztepe excavations (Campbell et. al. 1999). It is assumed that using similar attributes and typological scheme for artifacts would generate comparable framework for Nevruzlu and Domuztepe, which would suggest whether any relationships could be established between the two. In doing so, major attributes of artifacts were noted as much as possible, including the form, use of material, color, and surface treatments. All this observation was made macroscopically. Each ware group was counted and weighed for basic statistical purposes as well.

Since no complete representative vessel was recovered, the pottery forms are only presented in a rather general manner. Pottery forms consisted of bowls and jars. Five ware groups were manifest at the site, all of which were identified as Halaf Painted, Halaf Plain, Burnished Ware, Coarse Ware, and Late Period Ware. For comparison, Table 1 gives the quantity of each ware group collected during the survey.

Halaf Painted Ware

This group features light color buff or orange paste. A few examples also had nearly a brick red color. The temper is mostly well-distributed, fine sand together with a low number

of calcite particles. It is not clear whether calcite was added as temper or whether it was naturally available within the clay. This statement about calcite is also valid for the other ware groups. Grit was added to the clay in some examples, but in low amounts. The firing process was mostly carried out at medium level. Some sherds evidently had biscuit fabric, indicating a low temperature firing process, but a few examples had high firing as evidenced by their clinky sound when struck. Most examples show a grayish center in the wall sections of the sherds, implying reduced conditions during firing.

Painting was usually applied to the exterior of the vessel but some examples have thickly applied bands of painting on the interior of the rim area (Fig.4). Painted decorations were not limited to top of the vessel but also appeared on the central and lower parts of the body. The variability of surface decoration is not particularly high. There are horizontal bands that are limited to the rim area with crosshatch patterns under it (Fig.4: 6,11; Fig.7: 1-3,8,13), vertical parallel lines filled with dots (Fig.4: 12-13; Fig.5: 8), diagonal lines (Fig.7: 4,9,14), horizontal lines (Fig.7: 5,11, 15,16), horizontal wavy bands (Fig.4: 1,13), and zigzags (Fig.5: 3,5,7; Fig.7: 17). The colors of the paints are orange, brown, dark brown, plum red, and light red. In a few circumstances, decoration was made by incision, which usually takes the form of parallel diagonal lines limited to the upper part of the body (Fig.6: 6-8). Some painted designs seem rather complex consisting of more than two design elements (Fig.4: 12-13; Fig.7: 6-7,10)

Halaf Plain Ware

It can be stated that the fabric of this group is identical with that of the painted ware group and the attributes are similar. The exception is the lack of reddish fabric, and in a few examples the interior of the vessel had been scraped with a hard object leaving shallow but recognizable irregular striations. The surfaces are plain and seem to have a thin self-slip. Because of the similarity of the fabric of both plain and painted groups, it is possible to suggest that both of these wares were made from a similar bulk of paste. The colour of the paste, consistency of temper, and the approximate firing level also support this statement.

Burnished Ware (Fig.6: 2-4)

The paste of this group is dirty grayish with the mixture of buff, brown, or red colours. Also a few examples had grayish colour paste. Thus, for many cases, reduced conditions during firing can be suggested as a rule for this group. The core of the sherds supports this too. Such coloring may have been achieved by deliberately reduced conditions during the firing process. Burnished ware may have been placed in certain areas of the kiln where the reduced conditions were easy to achieve. Another possibility is that different clay sources with a different color and inclusions might have been exploited. Temper again consisted of well-distributed fine sand and sometimes calcite particles. However, low amounts of large grits are found in some sherds. Firing generally seems to be have been made at medium level.

The highly burnished surfaces of these sherds easily distinguish this group. Even

though the distinct pattern of burnishing is not visible, it may still be suggested that burnishing was executed with a certain manner leaving a wavy pattern. Possibly the use of the same tool with the same motion produced the consistent appearance of these burnished surfaces. However, a closer look at the surfaces shows that the motion of rubbing resulted in a mixture of thick and thin, shiny, slightly wavy lines leaving matte, untouched areas in between them. Depending on the paste colour, burnishing gave each vessel a distinct, shiny brown, red, gray or blackish colour. It may be suggested that burnishing was one form of surface decoration. Apart from that, in one case, the surface was thick burnished and in a few cases, the interior of the sherd was scraped with a hard tool.

Coarse Ware (Fig.6: 1,5)

The description of this group is straightforward. Buff color paste was combined with dense, fine sand, grit and vegetable temper. The size of the temper varies greatly, but larger than 1 cm as well as vegetable temper longer than 1 cm were common. Firing in most of the cases was in low temperature but in a few examples medium firing was also distinguished. All examples show thick dark gray or blackish lines on the cores of the wall sections. These examples had not received any particular surface treatment, except that some show signs of smoothing, possibly by hand.

Bowls

Most of the bowls are painted, (Fig.4) but heavily burnished examples also exist (Fig.6: 2-4); the burnished ones seem present as both hemispherical and conical bowls. They seem to consist of small size, conical bowls. There are examples of squat bottomed bowls suggesting a tulip-like shape, and straight-sided but inverted bowls (Fig.4: 12-13). It may be said that most of the thickly applied red or orange color band design on the flat rims is correlated with the conical bowl forms.

Jars

There are only three types of jars documented. The jars with a low but straight neck (Fig.5: 1-3; Fig.6: 5), or with a flaring neck (Fig.5: 5-6; Fig.7: 12), and whole mouth jars (Fig.6: 1). Whole mouth jars are represented mainly by coarsely made ware. Short neck jars are decorated with thick horizontal bands at the rim as well as the lower neck areas.

All the rim forms from each group always show a simplified flat or rounded form. On the other hand, the bases are simple and flat and are decorated with various patterns (Fig 5: 4,7-8).

Late Period

The Late Period pottery was identified by the use of a large amount of sand and by the

distinct sharp red colour of the paste. It appears that very fine sand was added to dark red or brick red colour paste. It may also be important to mention that all of these sherds are rather small in size, often less than 2 cm, and they are in a highly abraded state without any understandable indication of surface treatment. Apart from the sherds, there were no architectural remains located on the surface indicating this late period. Unsystematic walks around the site showed that the late period pottery is distributed widely in the vicinity of the site too.

The reasons for the poor condition of these sherds may be suggested as the result of two past activities: the ancient utilization of compost pits and the process of fertilizing the fields with manure. Such activities may have been used to enrich the nutrients of the soil for agricultural productivity. During these processes, the sherds, along with other material evidence, might have been frequently mixed with the dirt and trash from various domestic contexts, such as from a living room or a kitchen area. Later, this dirt fill was thrown into thrash pits with any other disposed material from domestic contexts, and this thrash was eventually dispersed into the fields as fertilizing agents (Wilkinson 1982; 1989; 1990; Miller, Gleason 1994). In his off-site analysis, as well as the ethnographic accounts from the Abbasid period in the Near East, Wilkinson suggested that people in antiquity might have transported their trash and sewage into the fields to improve the nutrient content of the soil for agriculture. During this process, the sherds from the various contexts of occupation areas may have been mixed with the trash and transported into fields for this kind of fertilizing. The topsoil might have included of ash, leftover food, bones, sherds, spoiled food, vegetables, wood, etc. In off-site localities, Wilkinson detected the highest density of the sherds in the Late Roman and Byzantine periods during which the population was also high in the region. This practice of composting organic material and fertilizing the fields might also be the case in Nevruzlu area, and thus, the late period sherds might have been transported through ancient agricultural practices during which the sherds might have damaged and redistributed in space.

An alternative process would be taking place during the recent decades by the locals. Villagers may have dug out some archaeological areas near the Late Roman occupation, and dispersed the soil along with sherds and other archaeological material into the fields. This process eliminates the uneven heights and the mounds of the landscape which hinder agricultural activities. Smoothing the landscape also brings up aerated soil to the fields as a sheet of new soil over the older soil to enrich the quality of nutrients over time. There must have been other artifactual remains in the new soil removed from the archaeological site, but these remains almost always receive much less attention than the sherds. If examined more carefully, there should be bone, stone, and other artifacts in such dispersed soil, especially if one considers small, single housed sites forming a very low, small size mound with short term occupation. The inconvenienced farmer, with agricultural goals in mind, can flatten it in a short time. Therefore, this small site would disappear and its material would be dispersed throughout the area used for agriculture. Therefore, if the late period material of Nevruzlu had been transported, whether in recent history or in antiquity, the site may not have any remaining evidence of cultural occupation.

Of course, the last possibility is that there actually might have been a Late Roman

occupation, or activities on Nevruzlu with the sherds of that date. Maybe the duration of activity was so short that scanty evidence exists from this period. If the low temperature in the firing process was predominated, and if we consider the natural processes as well as agricultural activities over and around the site, the pottery would have been eroding up until today. Excavations would elucidate the nature of the site formation processes that took place in the area and support one of the above possibilities.

Other Material Remains

As mentioned above, understanding the lithic assemblage was hindered by the fragmentary nature and very small size of the each piece. Whether these were part of tools or actual debitage could not be understood.

No ground stone, bone, or any other stone artifacts were recovered. A few fragmentary pieces of glass, possibly belonging to small cups or bottles, and a few blue color twisted or spiral-shaped glass bracelet fragments were found, all of which only helped to support the likely existence of Late Roman period or even later activities at the site.

V Results from Nevruzlu

Date of the Site and the Survey

Systematic surface collections from Nevruzlu yielded a sufficient amount of pottery to identify the ware groups and accordingly, to date the site. Visual comparison between the sherds collected from Nevruzlu and those recovered from the excavated contexts of Domuztepe show nearly identical characteristics, such as fabric, paste color, surface treatments, form, etc (Campbell et. al. 1999). As a result, Nevruzlu now can be dated to the Late Halaf period ca. 4750-4200 BC. In contrast to the small quantity of Ubaid pottery recovered from Domuztepe, Nevruzlu did not yield any Ubaid sherds. Ubaid-like sherds appear in the top layers at Domuztepe; these sherds were both arbitrarily and purposefully treated as separate from the Late Halaf horizon by assuming that Ubaid-like sherds may indicate the beginning of the termination, or the replacement process of Halaf traditions. This arbitrary separation in the ceramic study may provide insight into the transition processes through Ubaid-related fashions and socio-cultural indications in SE Anatolian cases. Not having Ubaid sherds at Nevruzlu, therefore, implies the absence of Post-Halaf. If there were any kind of activity at Nevruzlu indicating the transition into Ubaid, this would only be understood by excavations.

The site seemed to have witnessed some activity during the Late Roman period, the nature of which was not determined by the surface collections because of the lack of diagnostic evidence. Therefore, the presence of the Late Roman period is suggested, but in a rather uninformative nature.

According to the distribution of sherds, the Halaf period appears to be concentrated on mostly at the northwest quadrant and at the eastern half of the site (fig.8). This may suggest

of occupational activity at this part of the site and therefore, architectural remains beneath the surface. Distribution of the coarse ware is unclear not because it is not concentrated in a specific area of the site, but because of the difficulty in dating it. If there were a Late Period occupation at the site, some of the coarse ware might well belong to the Roman period. Since no clear distinction could be made between the attributes of Halaf period coarse ware and the Late Period coarse ware, the spatial concentrations of coarse ware would be misleading.

There is another and perhaps more important problem to be mentioned which may be unique to our site. In terms of systematic surveys over the sites, it might be suggested that the mapping of the distribution of distinct ware groups on Nevruzlu may be considered unreliable. The intense agricultural disturbance, on such a small size site, may have relocated the sherds and the concentrated areas. Time to time, sherds would have been moved from one location to another when the soil was disturbed and removed. Until today, such events may have occurred repeatedly. In the long run, contexts, architecture and information from artifactual evidence may have been displaced and destroyed with such continuous, undetected deformation processes. For this reason, the distribution of sherds could very well be misleading and the Late Halaf concentration at the NW quadrant of the site might only have resulted from such agriculture-based disturbances of the landscape. For the same reason, other statistical analysis, such as the distribution of Late Halaf period pottery by weight or the distribution of certain ware groups or forms, become risky and possibly pointless. If the excavations were carried out, the distribution of artifacts from our survey could be compared with the excavated material evidence and the contexts, so that the reliability of our survey would be tested.

Late period sherds show no specific concentration in any area, which again may be the result of modern agricultural disturbances or the indication of ancient fertilization processes, discussed briefly above.

Aspects of Social Complexity

Beyond similarity based on pottery analysis and chronology, Nevruzlu, in association with Domuztepe, presents a case for a brief discussion of evolutionary social development systems, leading towards the understanding of social behavior and mind in the past. Thus, it is plausible to ask questions about how to consider the dynamics of internal and inter-site politics, and economic relations in Kahramanmaraş Valley.

Models attempting to lay out functional frameworks and explaining the past events as the current research focus in archaeology are some decades old, all of which were initiated by anthropologists with the approach of neo-evolutionary schemes (Service 1962; Fried 1960; Fried 1967). Mainly based on ethnographic accounts, human groups were defined with set of attributes and classed into bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and states. One of which, chiefdom, had been defined through the focus on kinship systems, redistribution systems, the degree of egalitarian structures in the social relations, and the enforcement ability run by the group's leader if not a 'chief'. Geographically, the greater attention was paid to the New World regions, Hawaii in Polynesia being one of the most intensely studied areas (Earle 1977; Earle

1991). It now appears that the concept and the structures of chiefly societies have been argued and studied extensively. Over the decades, this classificatory 'evolutionary stepladder' research focus, especially on the chiefdom, was criticized as unilinear and not always fitting into case studies as a satisfactory scheme (Yoffee 1993). This is possibly why the definition of chiefdom has been evolving together with the focus on the range of attributes. Some of the attributes that are attached to the concept seem to work in some regions and time periods. The arguments today stress the new variables including aspects of the web of social relations, the roles of the individual, the decision making processes by the group and/or the individuals, and the various levels of inequality in relations. These aspects seem to shed more lights on how to see an ancient society and how societies were shaped and changed through their social interactions and complexities (Paytner 1989: McGuire 1983; McGuire 1992; McGuire and Saitta 1996).

In the Near East, aspects of social complexities were barely discussed in archaeological inquiry, except in some attempts by the earlier generation of American anthropologists (Redman 1978; Watson 1983; Wright 1984; 1986). Major concerns included defining the Halaf phenomenon as chiefdom and studying the processes of its development into state society. Due to nature of Near Eastern site formation and the lack of sufficient research, attributes for defining chiefly societies could not be clearly articulated and, as a result, the Halaf horizon today is weakly tied to the chiefdom. The nature of Halaf social organization and the long-term social developments are also unclear and yet to be understood. The qualitative state of available data together with the limitations of it before the 1990's, our current state of knowledge today, as well as the concept of chiefdom, derived from ethnography, were extensively discussed elsewhere by focussing on the Near Eastern contexts (Campbell 1992; Campbell 1998). With our current data, the questions of whether there was a communal leader and what roles this leader played in an emerging non-egalitarian system as a chiefdom society remain unanswered for the Halaf cases. Therefore, if one seeks answers to these questions, the term 'chief' should be defined specifically for the Near Eastern contexts. This definition will no doubt be reached through further ethnographic analogy and archaeological evidence from the Near Eastern cases.

Despite this, because of architecture, seals and sealings, miniature stone bowls, possible obsidian and pottery exchange, and possible two tier settlement hierarchy, Halaf settlements are beginning to be seen as more and more indicative of societies with the earliest emergence of social hierarchical structures within which egalitarianism was irreversibly fading (Campbell 1992; Campbell 1999 et. al.). In these circumstances, the ongoing Domuztepe excavations and the identification of Nevruzlu within the smaller Maraş region presents a promising case to study. Rather than the encompassing the entire North Mesopotamian Halaf geography, focussing on to Maraş region ensures more reliable conclusions because cultural variability with related attributes could be determined and possibly better controlled in a smaller region.

The excavated contexts from Domuztepe present various lines of evidence indicating the emergence of hierarchical social differentiation in the Maraş plain. One of the lines of evidence is the architecture. Despite the fact that no exclusively built structures exist at

Domuztepe, the exceptionally thick walled building on the highest part of the site might have some implications of non-domestic aspects; however, the excavators, for the moment, are reluctant to make definite remarks about this building and the existence of elite society since the architectural evidence is yet inconclusive (Campbell et. al. 1999: fig.8). Maybe the case from Tell Arpachiyah, so-called 'chief's house' (Mallowan, Rose 1935), can better tested and compared in the Domuztepe excavations.

The discovery of twenty-nine stamp seals from the surface and excavated contexts, probably signifying ownership and control over access to property and goods, suggests that groups or individuals with distinct social roles were established at Domuztepe (Campbell et. al. 1999). In such a case, Domuztepe would be a prime example for discussing the economy within which certain individuals gained the power to control access to food items and other goods, resulting in the emergence of new rules and new structures in the community, such as the gradually increasing importance of materialistic values, inequality, and exploitation. Despite the fact that the Nevruzlu survey did not produce any seals, seals and sealings indicating power relations, property control and trade might be found at other contemporary sites in the valley, such as KM 67. Apart from this, the preliminary level site catchment and population estimation at Domuztepe suggested that the community required additional agricultural and livestock support from outside. This condition would imply the organization of the flow of food from resources into the large community as well as the first appearance of individuals who played a role in this organization and benefited from access to resources, resulting in increased power in the long run. Seals might be the key material evidence to allow discussion of these issues.

Even though they were not found at Nevruzlu, miniature bowls made from black, brown, or dark gray soft stones recovered at Domuztepe may imply well-off individuals. Found only in small number, these well-executed, small forms with no apparent practical function, seem to indicate a purpose other than domestic. Perhaps they represent items for ostentatious display (Carter, Campbell and Snead 1999; see fig.5). Or, they may have been used by people as communal tools to execute utilitarian functions, one of which might have been ritualistic. Furthermore, Domuztepe excavations yielded a few pieces of exceptionally well-produced mahogany obsidian bowls. The excavators argued that the quality of craftsmanship, rarity of the material, and labor-intensive process would have resulted in a high value for these items. Thus, they would have likely been owned by privileged individuals who may have displayed them somehow as prestige goods symbolizing their wealth and power (Campbell et al. 1999).

Another line of evidence is the differing sizes of settlements. Through interactions in political and economic arenas, settlements may have taken on different social and economic roles; the importance of the sites would be correlated with the location and the size of the sites within a wider regional level as a cultural unity. On the basis of this assumption, when one looks at the sizes of Halaf settlements, an arbitrary two-tier hierarchy may be established. The discovery of large sites in recent years, such as the 20 ha. site of Domuztepe, the equally important 12 ha. Takyan Höyük in the Cizre-Silopi area, and Kazane Höyük in Urfa (Algaze et. al. 1991; Wattenmaker 1994; 1997), along with the rediscovery of Tell Kurdu in the Amuq

region exposing its substantial occupation of approximately 15 ha. area (Yener 2000a; Yener 2000b), indicates that there were sites which held a central position in their locales. These large sites may have maintained control of the regions – not necessarily forcefully – and maybe placed on top of the hierarchical pyramids. The sites between 3-5ha. size, such as KM 67 with its 2,5 ha. may represent the middle step of the pyramid. Grikihacıyan, might be another example in the further East (Watson, LeBlanc 1990). The smaller sites, such as Nevruzlu in the Maraş Plain, or Fıstıklı Höyük in Birecik (Bernbeck and Pollock 1999), may constitute the lowest level sites in the pyramids. Therefore, it may be suggested that two-tier settlement hierarchies existed in the regions. As Campbell suggested once, it may be more fruitful to look at the Halaf period as consisting of rather small cultural units, in different locales, with some observable materialistic variabilities in archaeological records (Campbell 1992). The Maraş plain may represent one of the Halaf locales with its distinctive hierarchy and variability.

As a result, the data from the Domuztepe excavations and the pottery from the Nevruzlu survey help us to focus on the interactions during the times these two sites existed side by side. The distance between them (also nearby site KM 67 should be remembered here), their relative sizes, and now their similar date based on the similarity of their pottery assemblages indicate that they possibly involved in close cultural activities. More evidence, apart from some amount of pottery collected from this site is required for proposing a comprehensive, reliable, and testable hypothesis that will aid to understand the characteristics of interactions that took place between these contemporary sites. Such evidence, however, can only be obtained if systematic excavations are carried out at Nevruzlu before the current destructive processes cause the site to disappear.

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Ware Groups	Number	Remark
Halaf Painted	188	-
Halaf Plain	177	No diagnostics sherds. Almost all of them are body pieces.
Burnished	73	-
Incised	13	Very rare diagnostic sherds. Belong to large size vessels.
Coarse Ware	191	Might be mixed with Late Period coarse ware. Mostly body sherds.
Undetermined	86	They may be coming from other ware groups but the attributes from the sherds are uninformative.
Late Period Ware	286	All abraded and small size sherds.
TOTAL	1014	

Table 1. Distribution of pottery collected from Nevruzlu.

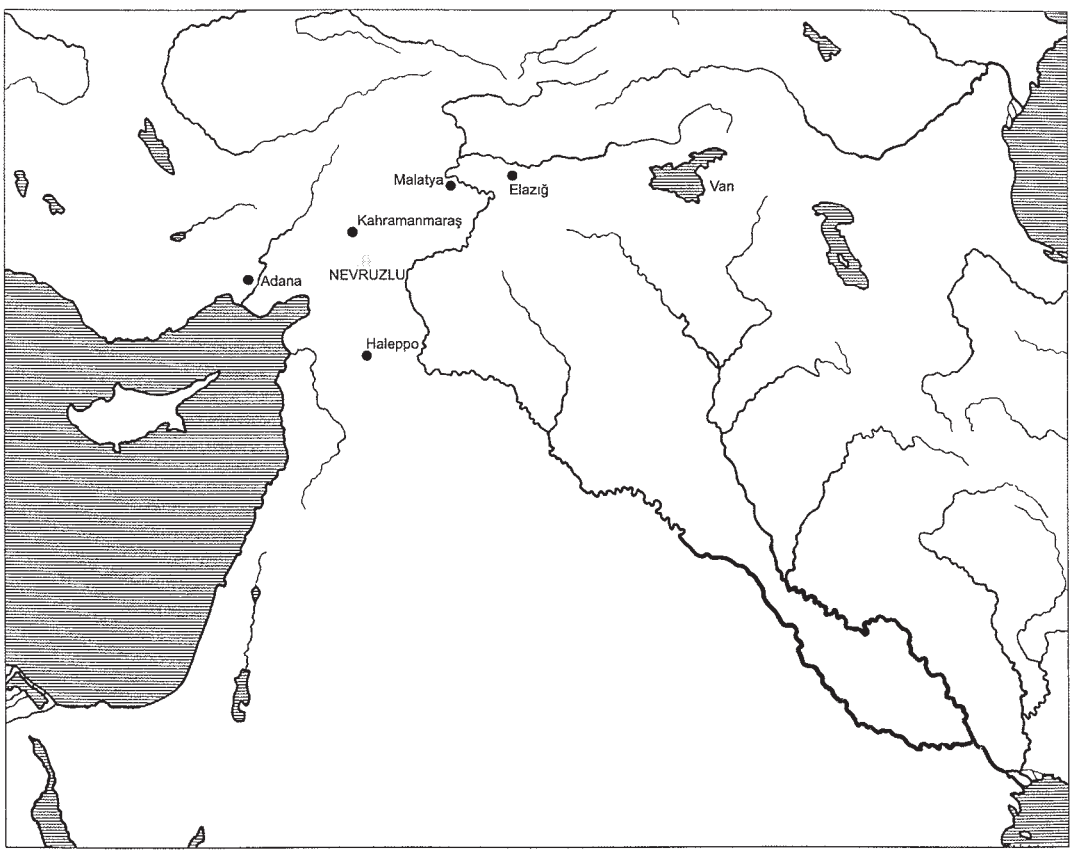

Fig. 1. Map of the Near East and Kahramanmaraş Region.

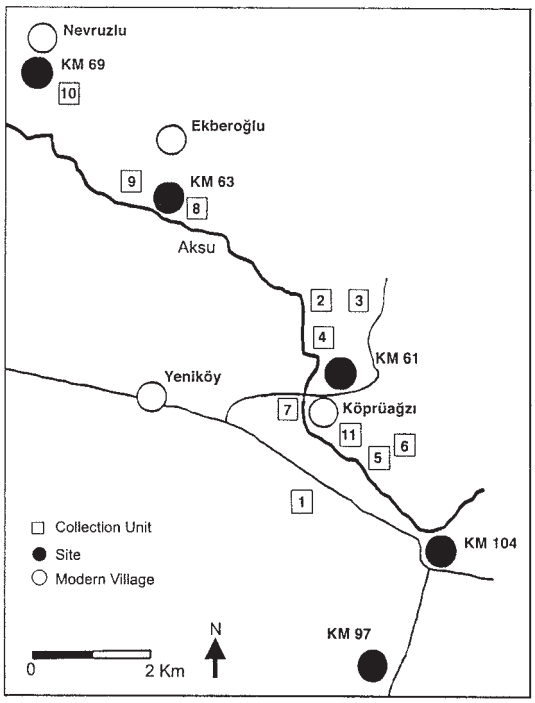

Fig. 2. Surroundings of Nevruzlu area.

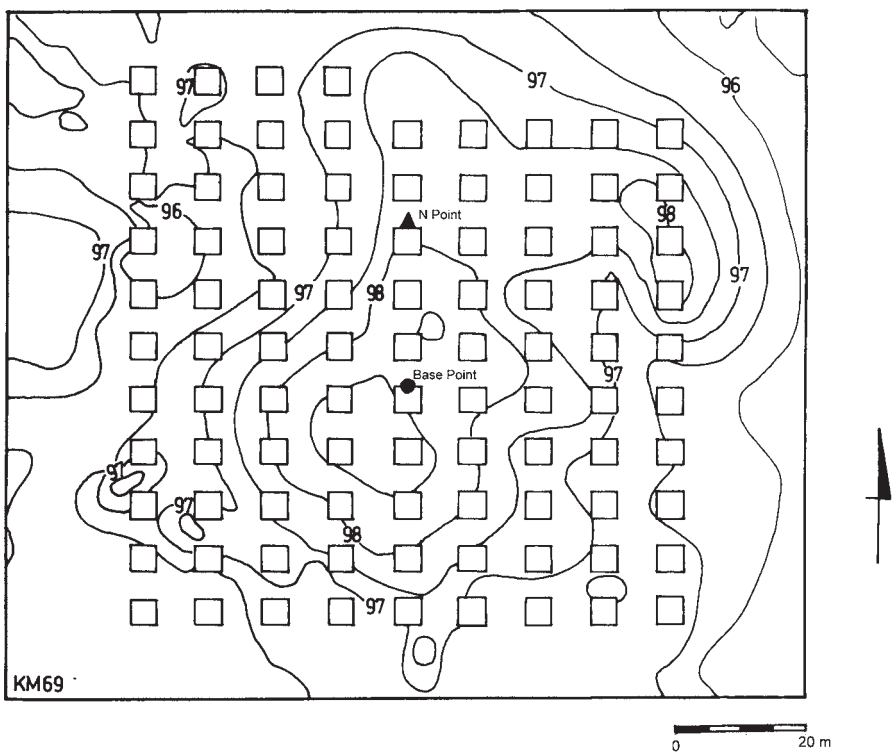

Fig. 3. Topographic map of Nevruzlu and the collection units.

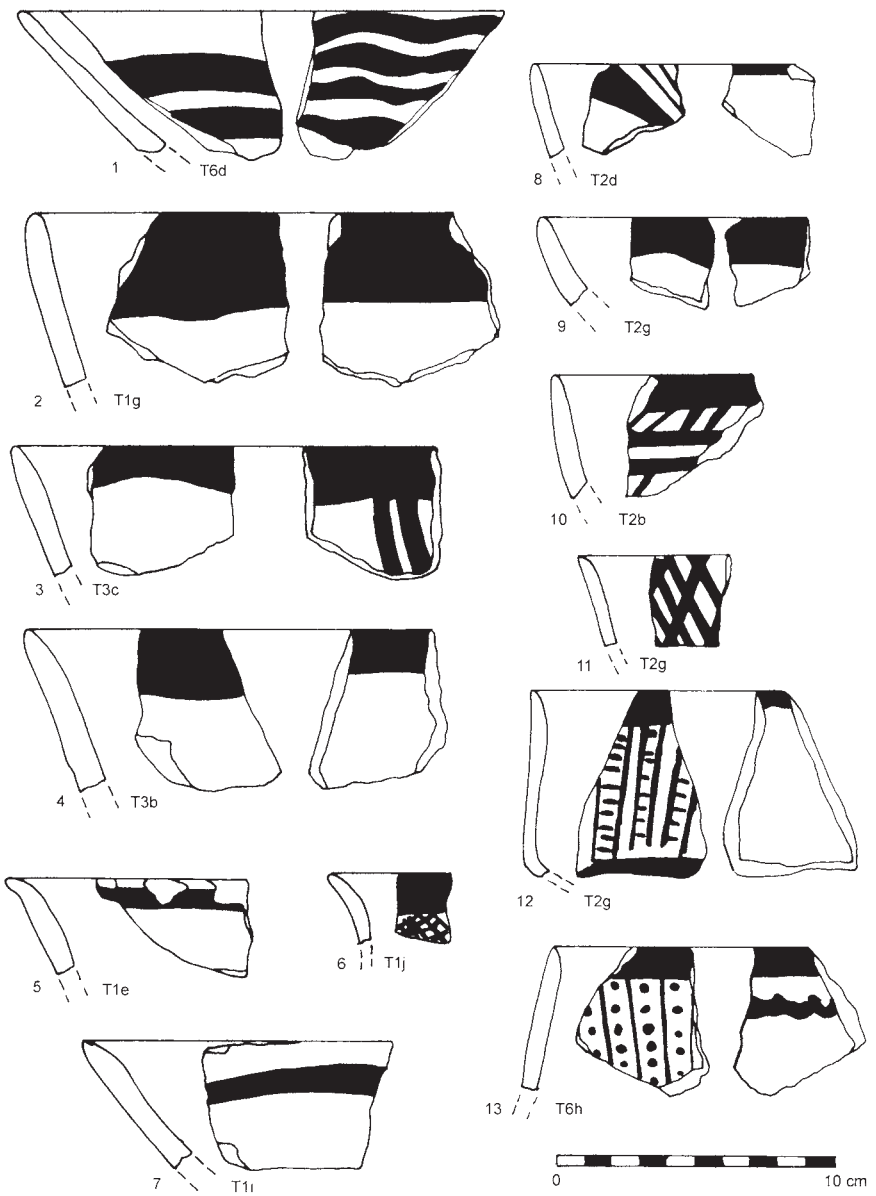

Fig. 4. Painted Halaf sherds.

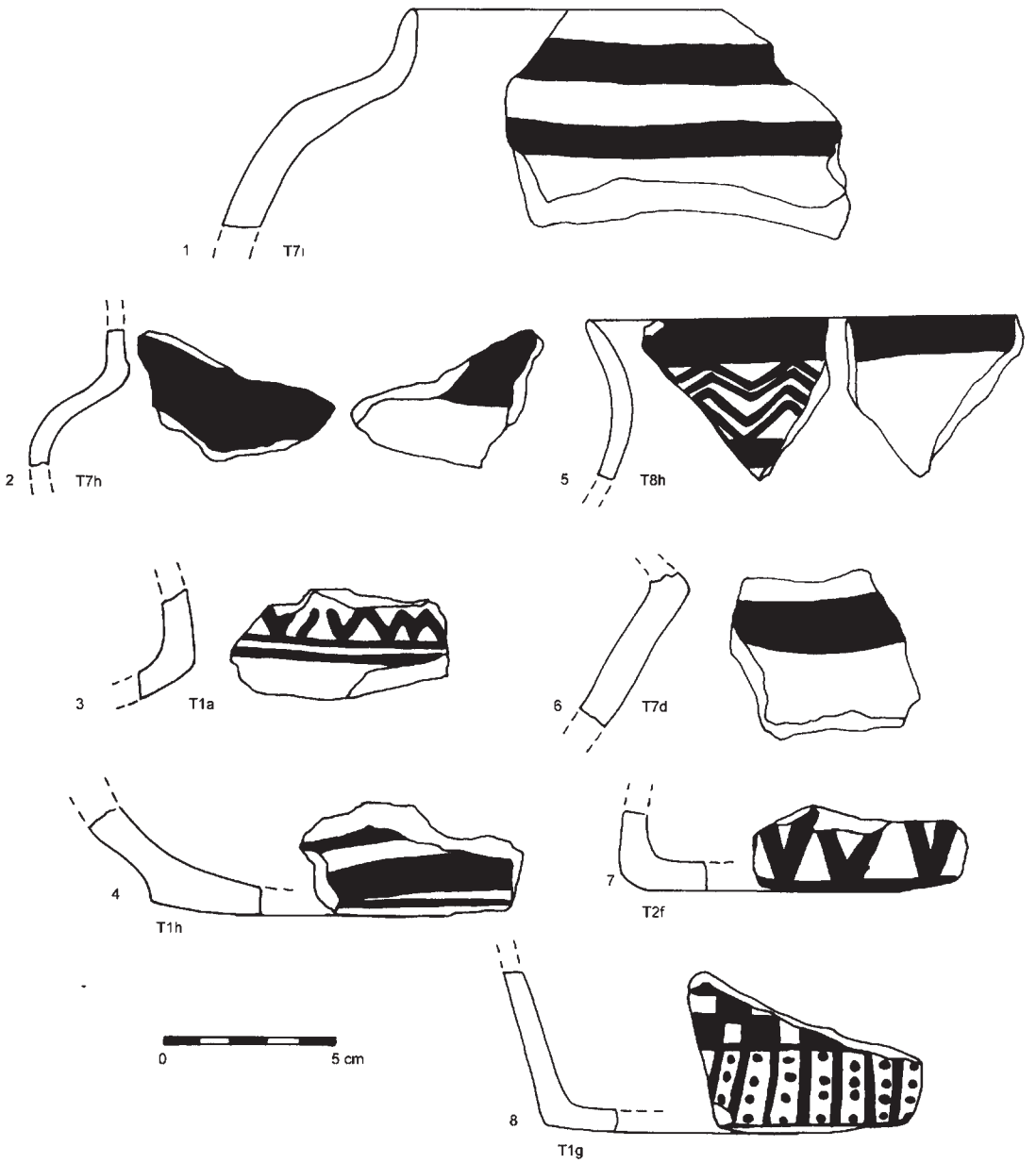

Fig. 5. Painted Halaf sherds.

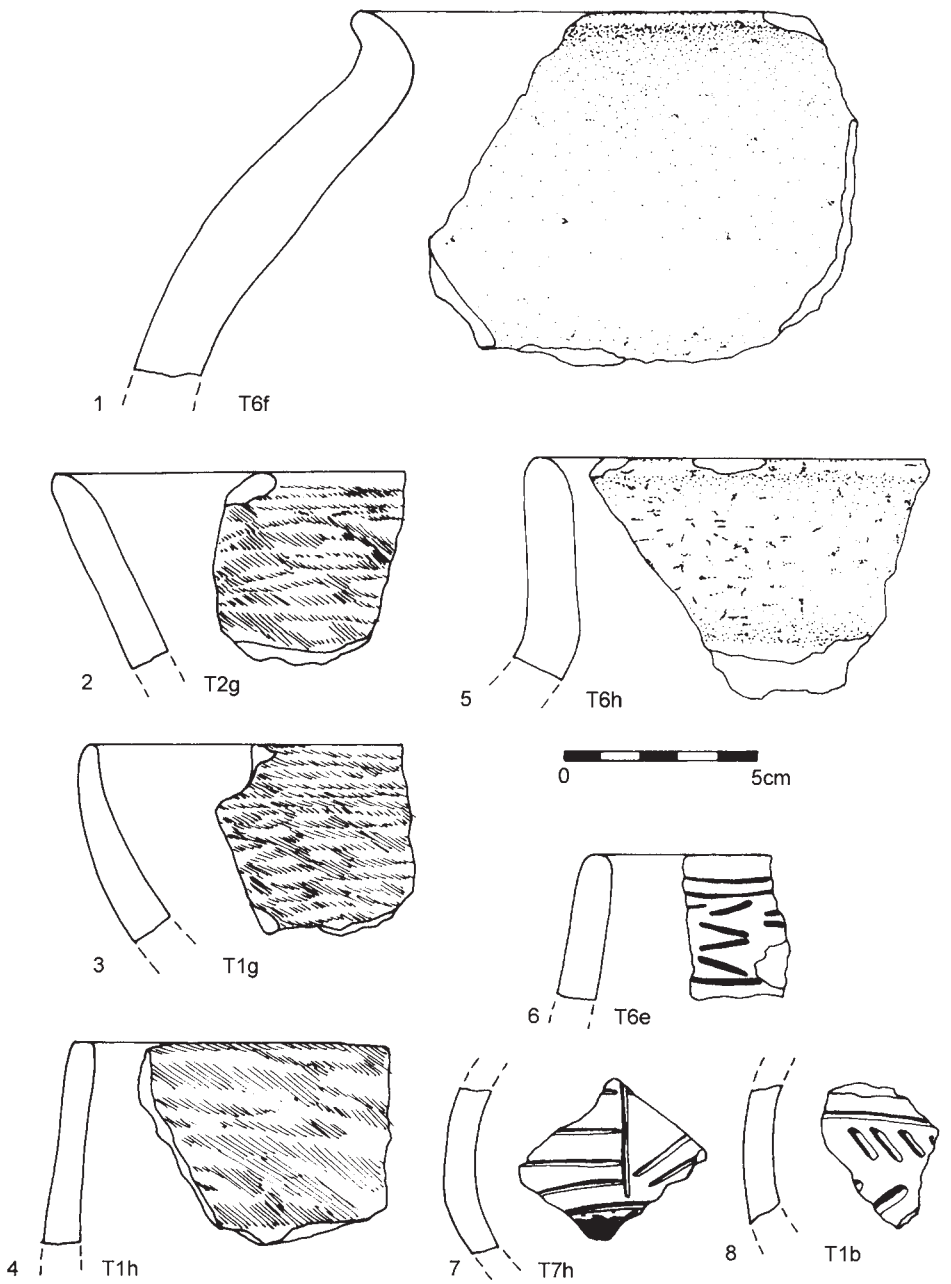

Fig. 6. Halaf Plain (1-5), and Incised (6-8) sherds.

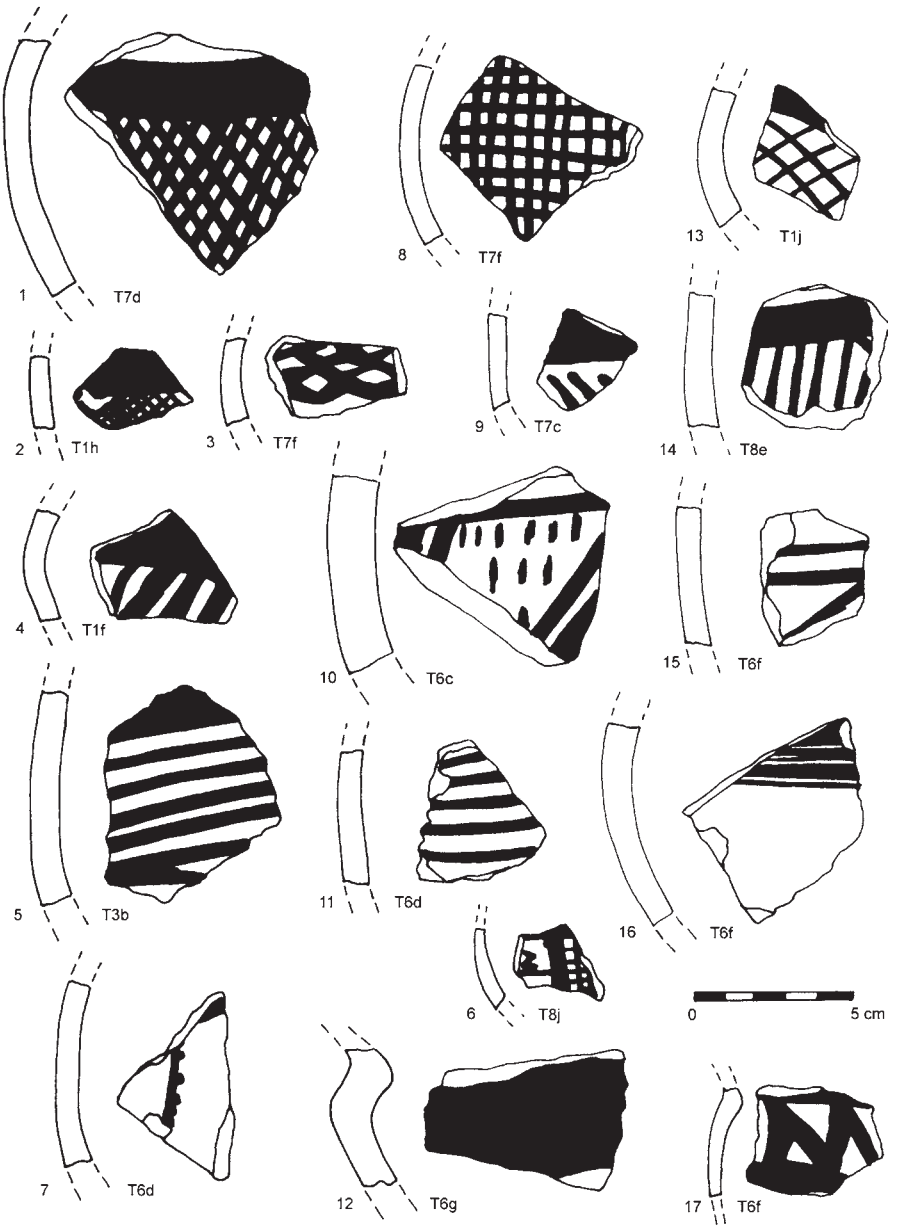

Fig. 7. Miscellaneous painted Halaf designs from Nevruzlu.

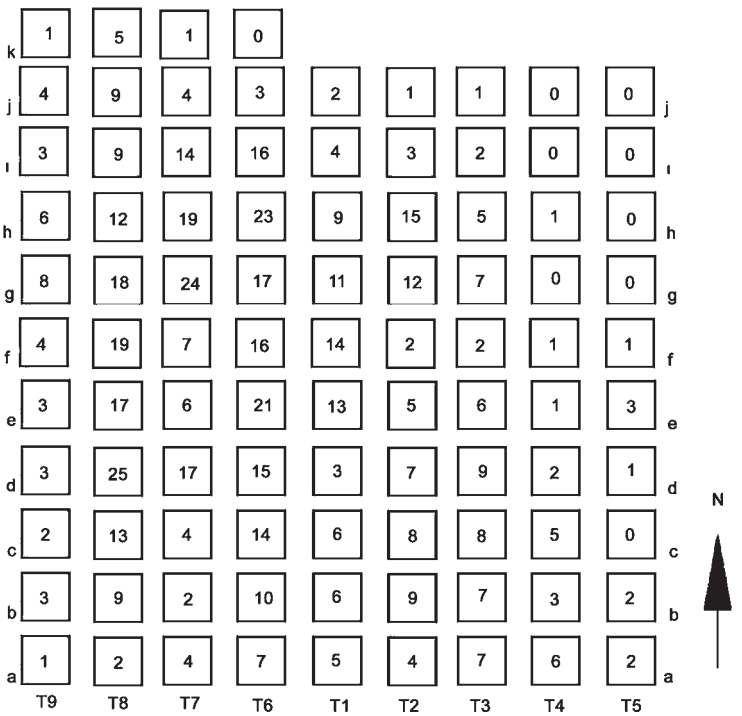

Fig. 8. Distribution of Halaf sherds by number.